

STAR TEST

Not just a refreshing change of layout for the VW Transporter, but a motor caravan that offers comfort and convenience in a compact package

It's a common idea that Volkswagen's Transporter offers limited options for motor caravanners in terms of layout. Even high-top models are restricted to the vehicle's physical length and width, and in particular by the hump created by the rear engine deck. Traditionally, Transporter-based conversions feature an offside longitudinal galley/storage area, while passenger accommodation comprises the famous 'rock-n-roll' bench seat that converts to a double bed. This layout has been, still is, and no doubt will continue to be a very practical solution.

Clearly not content with this situation, Richard Holdsworth Conversions have proved that it's not only possible to create a different layout within the Transporter's confines, but that such a conversion would be a popular one with motor caravanners. Appropriately, in our opinion, its name is Vision.

Aft of the twin cab seats, Holdsworth designers have contrived to install an L-shaped lounge, the transverse leg of which is mounted on captive rails, enabling the seat to slide over to the nearside to provide a separate, single seat. The remainder of the L-shaped seating can also be converted to a single, forward-facing seat by folding back a hinged ply extension and rearranging the cushions/backrests accordingly.

Vision is a two-berth as standard, although solid bases for location over the cab are available to provide a double bed in the high-top roof area.

Access from the cab to the living quarters is straightforward, the aisle created between the rear seats lining up exactly with the space between the cab seats. If the rear seats are in the L-shaped configuration, there is room to pass between the seat and the sliding door.

Kitchen unit

Behind the rear seats, the Vision's transverse kitchen unit is built on to the forward part of the engine deck, thus actually making use of the Transporter's notorious 'hump'. Extending down the offside behind the passenger seating is a floor-to-ceiling storage/facility unit that houses a 2cu.ft Electrolux electronic ignition fridge, a high-level cupboard containing inset mouldings for cutlery and crockery and, at head level, the

vehicle's electrical services. These centre round a Zig CF8 electronic control panel with mains/charging facilities (240v mains electrics are standard on the Vision), battery condition monitor and fuses. Mains wiring is protected by a separate ELCB, which has main switches neatly inset into the furniture next to the Zig. Above the ELCB controls is a rocker switch for a two-speed extractor fan, plus a low-water warning lamp connected to the van's 10gal fresh water tank.

The wardrobe is located in the usual Transporter position at the offside rear. It's a reasonably spacious compartment for the size of vehicle and offers the extra facility of three lipped shelves as well as hanging space from a front-to-back rail set 33in above the base. Additional lockers for folded clothes are located above the wardrobe and across the back of the vehicle, above the kitchen unit. Open storage is available on a wide, carpeted shelf behind the kitchen unit. Below this shelf, and accessible through the tailgate, is a very useful 'boot' area, in which



Rear seats divide to make a central aisle to kitchen unit

items can be stored securely out of sight.

Two worktops, hinged separately on a single piano-style hinge, give access to the Vision's attractive, ivory-finished combined sink/drainer and two-burner hob/grill. The tops are supported on hinged, stainless steel flaps and are finished in a smart, wine-

coloured, leather-look plastic laminate, with white laminate on the undersides.

A sign of the quality that Holdsworth build in to their motor caravans are the solid wood edgings on worktops and as finials in appropriate areas of furniture construction. Also nice are the wooden pulls fitted to cupboard and locker doors.



Rear tailgate gives access to concealed storage and gas compartment

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Rear dinette seats combine with cab seats to create two single beds

Combined with the use of piano-style brass hinges throughout and an attractive woodgrain-effect ply for furniture, these details give Vision more than a touch of class.

Back to practicalities: below the sink a drop flap open on to storage, while twin cupboards in the base unit offer plenty of space for food and utensils. Cupboard interiors are finished in easy-clean white board - so much more sensible than bare wood.

In addition to the tasteful combination of woodgrain and the worktop laminate, the

Vision's interior decor contrives to achieve a modern look while at the same time being restful. Seats are upholstered in a horizontal/diagonal stripe velour in a colour that varies from a soft mushroom to something approaching pink/brown, depending on how the light strikes it. Individual cushions are vinyl backed and zipped for easy removal and cleaning. From the cab to the kitchen unit the floor is covered in a practical short-pile carpet that tones in well with the decor.

Also well matched is the cord carpet material used to cover

internal walls up to just below window height, where a similar material in beige takes over and continues up side walls and over the roof lining. Pleated curtains are plain beige, with ties that have a pink/wine floral motif.

Spacious interior

The atmosphere of spaciousness created inside the Vision by using VW's high-top Transporter is further emphasised by Holdsworth's provision of large windows in the living quarters. Fixed windows are fitted in the sliding door and

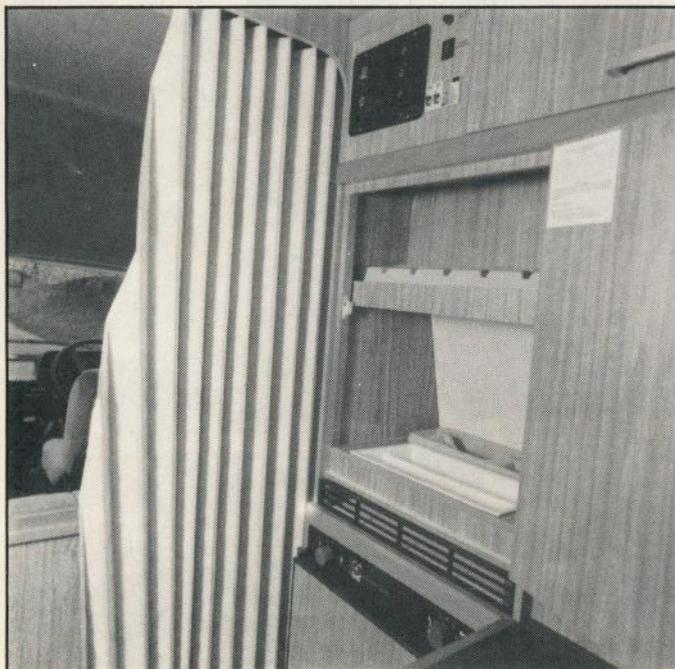
the panel behind it; on the offside behind the driver's seat a wide louvre window will provide plenty of ventilation, supplemented by sliding windows in the high-top roof.

Nor have Holdsworth neglected electric lighting in the Vision: eight-watt fluorescent lights are fitted to the rear bulkhead, above a face mirror in the roof-side over the kitchen unit, and above the nearside seat. A single corner reading lamp is also provided over the lounge area. Nice touch is an inset switch plate with four individual rocker switches that operate all four of the van's interior lights.

Separate areas

A significant feature of the Vision's layout is the way that the lounge seating effectively divides the van's floorspace behind the cab into two distinct areas - lounge and kitchen. Not content with such innovation, Holdsworth designers have taken the concept to its logical conclusion by ingeniously accommodating a lightweight concertina door in the offside storage/facility unit, where it is neatly stored behind a long, narrow door so that it does not flap around when on the move. The door can be extended across the vehicle, partitioning the kitchen area, which can then double as a washroom/toilet compartment. The locker beneath the island seat is designed to take a portable toilet, offered as an optional extra.

At mealtimes, a pivoting tubular support fitted behind the driver's seat takes the van's 30 x 19in table (an occasional table for use between the cab seats is also on the options list).



Lightweight concertina door divides kitchen from dinette



Hinged extension to seat base can be used for extra storage

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The L-shaped seats will accommodate three in comfort and the cab passenger seat can be swivelled to face the rear if needed.

Choice is also offered in sleeping arrangements: hinged extensions in rear seats can be opened out to make up two single beds in combination with the cab seats. Alternatively, a large double bed can be created by fitting a separate support board between the cab seats, and the table between the rear seats.

Vision's already capacious storage is further augmented by under-seat lockers, it being possible to extend the offside one by opening out its hinged base.

Priced at £12,750 (1.9-litre 60bhp petrol engine and four-speed manual gearbox), the Vision has a lot to offer the motor caravanner: an extremely convenient and easily manoeuvrable base vehicle with full

Concealed seat base accommodation for a portable toilet

standing headroom from front to back; a comfortable and well-appointed interior; standard features that include an under-floor fresh water tank, electric pumped water supply, fully-protected mains electrics input with 13amp switched socket; lots of practical storage space; and versatile accommodation.

Extras

Volkswagen options available for the Vision are the 78bhp and new 112bhp fuel-injected engine, 1.6-litre diesel and diesel-turbo engines, and the four-wheel drive syncro. Transmission options are a five-speed manual and four-speed automatic, the latter combined with the 1.9-litre petrol engine. Factory-fitted options are listed, with prices, in our data panel. •



HOLDSWORTH VW VISION

PRICES. All prices in this test apply to the time of original publication and may have altered. Please check current prices with Richard Holdsworth Conversions or your Holdsworth Dealer.

Converter

Richard Holdsworth Conversions Ltd, Headley Road East, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire
☎0734 692900

BODY

Type: high-top.

Construction: Volkswagen High-top Transporter with additional windows fitted by converter.

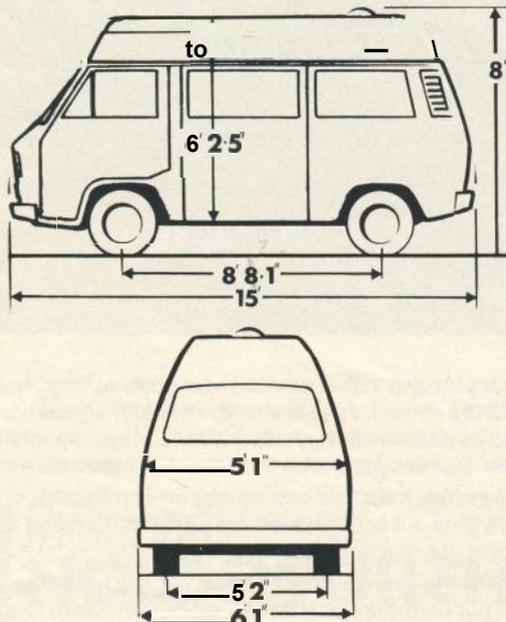
Insulation: all internal walls and ceiling lined with cord carpet material; air space between outer walls and ply lining and between floor layers. Glass fibre insulation available at extra cost.

Doors: Two cab doors, nearside sliding door and rear tailgate.

INTERIOR

Toilet room: no, but provision for portable toilet in seat base.

Gas system: on-board capacity for two 6lb Camping Gaz cylinders.



Electrical system: 16 amp input wired through earth leakage circuit breaker to Zig CF8 control/charge unit and to auxiliary 12v battery. One mains socket.

Lighting: three 8W fluorescent lights, one 10W tungsten-filament reading lamp; all four individually switched or controlled from lounge switch panel. Cab courtesy light.

Standard equipment includes: swivelling cab passenger seat, 2cu.ft fridge with electronic ignition, louvre window, under-floor fresh water tank and level gauge, vitreous enamel sink/cooker, sliding partition to divide lounge from kitchen/washroom area.

Factory-fitted options: swivelling driver's seat and occasional table £126.79; solid roof bed £114.71; flyscreens (for louvre window) £30.18, (for high-top windows) £42.26; matching cab headrests £78.49; high-roof storage shelf £54.33; blown-air central heating £356.21

BASE VEHICLE

Model: Volkswagen Transporter high-top delivery van.

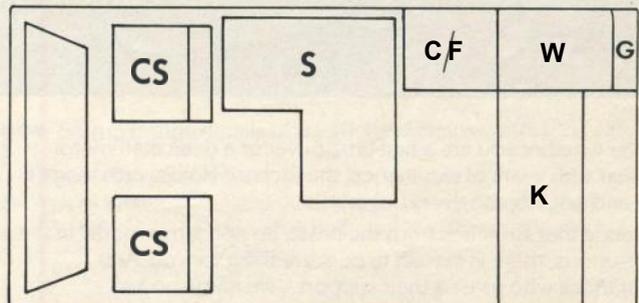
Engine: 1913cc, 4cyl horizontally opposed, water cooled. Max power 60bhp at 3700rpm, max torque 102lb.ft at 2200rpm.

Transmission: four-speed manual, rear-wheel drive.

Suspension: front independent coil springs with upper and lower wishbones, anti-roll bar, telescopic shock absorbers; rear independent trailing arm, coil springs, telescopic shock absorbers.

Factory-fitted options: 78bhp engine/four-speed gearbox £280.14; 78bhp engine/five-speed gearbox £525.26; 78bhp engine/four-speed automatic transmission £978.08; 1.6-litre diesel with four-speed (five-speed) gearbox £783.67 (£1028.79); 1.6-litre diesel-turbo engine/four-speed gearbox £1328.25; 112bhp fuel-injected engine/five-speed gearbox £1089.17; 78bhp syncro £4324.05.

Supplier: VAG (UK) Ltd, Yeomans Drive, Blakelands, Milton Keynes MK144AN. ☎0908 679121.



Key: CS cab seat, S seating (converts to two singles or a double bed), C/F cupboard/fridge below, W wardrobe, G gas storage, K Kitchen unit