

iMotorhome magazine

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Orange is the **new White**

**Frontline breaks the
white van hoodoo...**



**Frontline might just have
started a revolution...**

Review and images by Malcolm Street

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There's no denying the eye catching appeal of Frontline's brilliant orange VW, set off by a black roof and alloy wheels.

There's some sort of unwritten rule that suggests most campervans and motorhomes need to be white. In many ways white, often offset by some striking decals, is a practical colour. However, there's no doubt there are other colours around, like the striking orange of one of Frontline's latest pop-top campers, that catches your attention in spades.

Frontline's Peter Farrugia has used a bright

orange VW T5 van for his latest Adventurer conversion, contrasting the body colour with a black pop-top roof and awning! As I said, all very eye catching...

The Vehicle

Because it's a bed seat camper; i.e. the rear seat folds down to make up the bed, the Adventurer conversion is

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There's a valuable safety edge in the brilliant orange finish. The T5 Volkswagen also makes a handy daily driver and with optional rear seat belts can double as a versatile, small people mover.

available for either a Toyota HiAce or a Volkswagen T5 van. As noted above, the latter has been used for this campervan. Although the HiAce is a cheaper base vehicle there are a couple of reasons the VW T5 is more practical. It's mostly to do with the flat floor design that allows movement to and from the cab seats into the rear area. Another for the adventurous is that VW is available as an all wheel drive – VW calls it 4Motion.

There are several turbo-diesel engine variants available in the VW T5 range and Frontline usually opts for the 103 kW/340 Nm version with a 7 speed DSG 'automatic' gearbox, which it has done in this instance. However, the more powerful 132 kW/400 Nm motor is an option and standard on the 4Motion.

One of the things that distinguishes a campervan from a motorhome is that whilst the latter is usually built on the back of a cab- chassis, in a van conversion most



of the body is retained – it just has a number of holes cut in it (campervans also don't have bathrooms - Ed). In this case the largest hole accommodates the pop-top roof, but there are also fridge vents and water fillers. Because this camper has a methylated spirits-fired cooktop there's no need for a gas cylinder bin. Of course there are a few bolt-on items like the Fiamma awning. An item of note is that the pop-top is integrated very well into the van profile, only the black colour makes it and the awning stand out!

On The Road

I have to say that driving the VW is quite a pleasure. Even with the 103 kW engine the van is a very smooth performer and the gearbox moves through the gears without hesitation (except occasionally from a standstill). The vehicle handles the contours and curves of undulating roads without a problem. All the controls are readily to hand and the front seats, despite looking rather ordinary, are quite good on long journeys. My one beef would be with the standard radio/CD player which is just that and not much else. Mr



“ The swing-out stove helps keep cooking odours outdoors. ”

The stove works best when outdoors, putting it at standing height. It runs on methylated spirits and is slower than gas, but eliminates the need for gas.

VW, would it cost that much more to put in a unit that matches that of even the cheapest Korean cars?

Stopping for the Night

There's no doubt campervans have much less interior space than their motorhome brothers, but one of the most obvious

advantages on the road or in the car park is its size. Although it's a pop-top that has to be raised, setting up the Adventurer for day use does not take long at all. A matter of opening the sliding door and releasing the four pop-top roof straps, then pushing up the roof – something made quite easy by the gas struts. One of the advantages of the rising

full roof is that air circulation is most effective in warmer weather.

Although it looks very much the add on that it is, the Fiamma awning does a good job of protecting the side of the van from both the sun and rain. Many people only think in terms of the sun, but a partially open awning is great for vans and very effective at

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The interior is simple but functional, with good stand-up room throughout thanks to a full pop-top roof. Electrical controls are easily reached, too.



keeping the rain away from the opened sliding door – just be careful of pooling water and high wind! Speaking of opened doors, it depends how you travel and camp, but an option for consideration might well be velcro-attached insect screens for both the sliding and rear door. These simple screens don't take up much space but help keep the bugs out!

Inside

Inside the Adventurer the layout is quite simple, with a kitchen/storage cabinet along the offside and a day/night lounge/seat taking up the mid section. The lounge/seat can be used for passengers when travelling (two seat belts optionally available), just for sitting on when camped by day or folded into a bed by night. The rear area has a platform and large cushion that mate to the seat to form the bed.





“ THE BED IS WIDER THAN USUAL, THANKS TO A NARROW WARDROBE UNIT. THERE’S GOOD STORAGE BELOW THAT’S ACCESSED FROM THE REAR. ”

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With the stove swung out you're able to swivel the front passenger seat around. Below-stove storage is handy for bulky cooking utensils and even things like thongs.



Behind the passenger seat a swivelling cooktop cabinet can be used inside or from outside. With the cabinet swung out, the passenger seat can be swivelled around.

Fitted into the offside rear area is a sliding door cabinet; the front half having shelves and the rear a small hanging space. Right in the rear corner is a small shelf that on this camper held an optional external shower hose.

Under the bed at the rear is a good storage area; the front half being partly used by a Thetford Porta Potti. From behind the rear area can be accessed by opening the back door. Part of this space is taken by the house battery and charger, but the rest can be used for general storage. I reckon a couple of large plastic bins would work well and keep things neat.

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Lighting in the van consists of two fluorescent fittings in the ceiling and two LED reading lights in the rear.

Time to Eat

In a van this size it's not surprising that the kitchen area is split across the van, but this doesn't make it impractical. Directly behind the passenger seat is a swivel cabinet that contains a cupboard below and Origo two-burner cooktop above. It uses methylated spirits for fuel, thereby making the Adventurer LPG free. The spirit fired cooktop is certainly slower than LPG, but does save on the space

needed for a cylinder, not to mention an annual gas inspection at rego time. Having the cooktop on a swivel mount means it can be used inside or out and being at standing height, it's definitely easier to use outside, which also minimises cooking odours inside.

In the offside bench there's an 80 litre Engel fridge directly under a cutlery drawer, while the stainless steel sink is supplied by a flick-mixer tap. This leaves room for a surprising amount of bench space up top. Under the sink is a two shelf cupboard and a simple but effective 12 V switch panel that includes both 12 V and 5 V USB socket chargers.

Bench space is good thanks to the cooker being in a separate unit. Note cut-out to accommodate the wider bed.



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After Hours

Setting up the bed is relatively simple – done by releasing catches on either side of the rear seat and laying it flat. The bed measures 1.88 m x 1.29 m (6 ft 2 in x 4 ft 3 in) which narrows down to 1.15 m (3 ft 9 in). The bed width can be expanded by not having the offside rear cabinet, but that does mean a substantial reduction in storage space. Making up the bed can be easily done by two people, one at the rear door and one inside.



What I think

I'm a bit of a fan of VW vans and given I'm still working for a living, this Frontline Adventurer campervan has some considerable appeal. In many eyes it might be seen as too small for comfortable camping, but for those still working and/or who live in a city it's a very affordable budget motorhome that can also be used as around town transport.

The van is also easy to park, not to mention being able to transport four people quite easily, while it doubles as a great little weekend escape machine, which in today's pressurised work environment is a real plus.

And the orange colour? Although it catches your attention I suspect many a buyer will opt for something a little less attention getting when reality hits the road. It's certainly a fun colour though and a brave face for an anti-white-van revolution!



The rear seat folds flat and butts up against a matching cushion to form the bed. It's extra width, at the cost of some cupboard space, seems a compromise many buyers will be more than happy to accommodate.

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With a wind-out awning and lift-up tailgate Frontline's adventurer provides a fair degree of protection when the weather turns inclement.

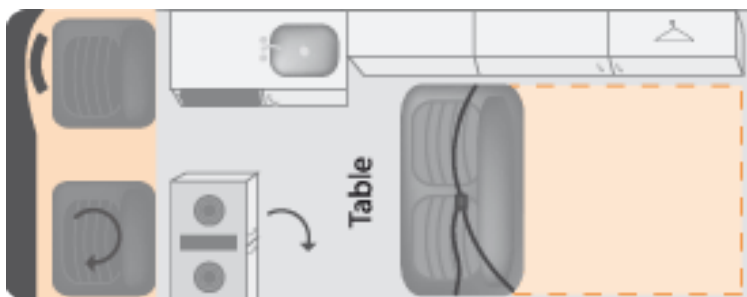


“ The adventurer doubles as a great weekend escape machine.”

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Specifications

Manufacturer	Frontline Campers
Model	Adventurer Bed Seat Pop-Top
Base Vehicle	Volkswagen T5 Transporter
Engine	2.0 litre turbo-diesel
Power	103 kW @ 3500 rpm
Torque	340 Nm @ 1750-2500 rpm
Gearbox	Seven speed DSG auto
Brakes	4-wheel ABS disc
Tare Weight	2200 kg
Gross Vehicle Mass	3000 kg
Towing Capacity	n/a
Licence	Car
Approved Seating	n/a
External Length	5.29 m (17 ft 4 in)
External Width	1.90m (6 ft 3 in)
External Height	2.48 m (8 ft 1 in)
Internal Height	2.03 m (6 ft 8 in)
Internal Height (Roof down)	1.5 m (4 ft 11 in)
Rear Bed Size	1.88 m x 1.3 m - 1.15 m (6 ft 2 in x 4 ft 3 in - 3 ft 9 in)
Cooktop	Origo 3000 2 burner
Fridge	Engel 85litre 12 V compressor
Microwave	LG
Lighting	12 V fluorescent & LED
Batteries	1 x 100 AH
Gas	n/a
Heater	n/a
Solar Panels	4 x 200 kW
Air Conditioner	n/a
Hot Water Heater	Optional – heat exchanger
Toilet	n/a
Shower	External
Fresh Water Tank	55-litre
Price (on road NSW)	\$79,640



Pros

- Seats four people
- Swing-out cooktop
- Swivelling passenger seat
- Well ventilated with roof up
- Seat bed simple to set up
- Bed wider than others

Cons

- VW radio/CD player
- Metho cooking slower than LPG
- Bed length for taller people

Contact

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“ I’M A BIT OF A FAN OF VW VANS AND GIVEN I’M STILL WORKING FOR A LIVING THIS FRONTLINE ADVENTURER CAMPERVAN HAS SOME CONSIDERABLE APPEAL ”