



## T6 on the Frontline



**A literally brilliant campervan based  
on the new T6 Volkswagen...**

by Malcolm Street



## 2 | Day Test: Frontline VW T6 Adventurer



There's no denying the Luminous Orange of VW's new T6 will turn heads wherever you go, but you certainly won't be able to hide. Black alloys, awning and roof set the body colour off perfectly.

Even three decades or so ago the Volkswagen Kombi was an icon in the world of campervans and for many was the vehicle of choice when it came to travelling.

That has changed somewhat and to some extent Volkswagen campervans – and campervans generally – are looked down upon by those travelling in larger and more luxurious vehicles. However, there's much to be said for the lightweight travel capability and manoeuvrability of VW vans, especially for those who are still working and desire both an around town vehicle and weekend escape machine. There are also those who desire to recapture their younger years and something like a VW campervan is a great way of doing that.

One of the legends of the VW was that it was a go-anywhere vehicle. Many an off-road enthusiast has been chagrined after

negotiating a rough bush track to their favourite campsite, only to find a Kombi already there. Adding to the capability of the Transporter has been VW's 4Motion (AWD) feature, which is great for negotiating anything from wet and muddy suburban sports fields to snow covered alpine roads.

In case you haven't noticed many a campervan and motorhome is painted white and for good reasons; mostly to do with practicalities. However, every now and again a company produces something that really catches your eye. In this case it's Frontline and their Adventurer campervan based on a Luminous Orange VW T6. This is actually just one of the bright colours available in the Transporter range. Others include Cherry Red, Grape Yellow and Acapulco Blue. Frontline decided to create a bit of eye catching attention to announce the arrival of the latest generation VW and I have to say it works well.



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Like all VW designs the new T6 is a thoughtful evolution of its predecessor. There's a new steering wheel and dash, plus colour touchscreen audio unit. Occupant safety is even more car-like now, with side air bags and a raft of technological aids as standard to help keep you out of trouble.



### The New T6

Changes in the new and highly anticipated Volkswagen T6 aren't exactly obvious. The new Transporter's features are mostly more than skin deep and there's something of an emphasis on safety and driver comfort. Included in the new T6 is a driver alert system, multi-collision braking system, rear park distance control, driver and front passenger side-curtain airbags, driver's seat height adjustment and driver's seat lumbar support. In fact here's a list of the vehicle's suitably initialed systems: Driver Alert (DA), Multi Collision Braking (MCB), Electronic

Stability Program (ESP), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Brake Assist (BA), Traction Control System (TCS), Electronic Diff Lock (EDL) and Hill Hold (HH).

In many RV base vehicles the sound system has a very basic unit but now standard in the T6 is a "Composition Colour" radio with colour touch screen, Aux/USB/SD input, CD player and four speakers.

On the engine front the T6 is available with two power ratings from its 2.0-litre turbo-diesel engine: 103 kW/340 Nm and 132 kW/400 Nm. The test vehicle included



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VW's 4Motion AWD and it only comes with the more powerful engine. This isn't a bad idea for gravel and off-road travel, when plenty of oomph under the right foot is a very handy feature. There's nothing quite like a responsive engine when

you need it, especially when it drive's through the very smooth seven speed auto gearbox. Apart from anything else it allows concentration on other things, like where you are going, not what the wheels are or aren't doing.

### Inside

Frontline's Adventurer layout is what's known as a rear bed-seat layout. It's based on a two person seat in the rear of the van and provides a four person carrying capacity.



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**Top to bottom:** The rear passenger seat folds flat to make up a decent sized bed. Pop the roof, wind out the awning and you're quickly set up. The swing-out cooker keeps odours outside and is handy when standing beside the vehicle. The metho stove is a bit slow, but keeps the Adventurer LPG-free.



Given the rear seat folds down to make a bed, there's only sleeping for two unless others camp under the awning.

An advantage of the rear bed-seat is it's very quick to set up. With this layout almost all the plywood cabinetry is along the driver's side of the van. It includes two wardrobes, several drawers and a basic kitchen fit out that includes and under-bench 80-litre 12-volt compressor fridge and an under-bench microwave oven.

There aren't many alternatives with the overall layout, but one is to either have the two burner methylated spirit cooktop set in the main bench or in this case in a swing-out cabinet behind the passenger seat. There are pros and cons about each arrangement, but the extra cabinet not only means a bit more storage space, it also means the cooker can be used inside or outside the camper. Having a methylated spirits cooktop does mean no LP gas system is needed, but 'metho' does





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The test Adventurer had VW's 4Motion all-wheel drive system and more powerful engine, making it capable and fast, and equally at home as a daily driver or weekend escape machine.





**Above:** The table has a fixed position while the swing-out cooker limits use of the swivelling passenger seat. Note the microwave neatly tucked away. **Right:** The electrical control panel is compact and handy, while the small pantry unit is also within easy reach.

have a lower calorific value and therefore takes noticeably longer to cook food or boil a kettle. The passenger seat swivels but the cooker cabinet behind it does impede that slightly.

Although the VW-powered Adventurer is definitely pitched at light weight travel there is a reasonable amount of storage space in the cupboard areas, as well as under the bed base in the rear. The latter is a fairly open area but it will take a couple of plastic storage containers and if you take up the option, a Porta Potti (which fits under the rear seat). Still on ablutions, an external shower is fitted at the rear and the optional tailgate tent will provide the necessary privacy. Hot water is courtesy of an engine heat exchanger.





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For 12 volt power a 100 AH battery is to be found under the rear seat, charged by the vehicle alternator and a mains charger. An option that can be fitted to the pop-top roof is a solar panel or two. Low energy LEDs, including bed reading lights, are provided and there is a 12 V socket and 5 V USB charging outlets fitted to the electrical switch panel located under the kitchen bench.

For the keen campervan user there are plenty of options and some like insect screens for the sliding and rear doors are almost essential, but there are other useful options like a second battery, roof racks, outside-use table base and a bike rack that add to travelling pleasure.



**Top:** Frontline reckons the traditional pop-top roof provides better ventilation than the Euro-style that hinges at the rear. It can also take roof racks for added versatility.

**Above:** There's good under-bed storage at the rear, while a shower with optional hot water via an engine heat exchanger is a welcome inclusion.



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### What I think

I'm obviously one of those people who should have owned a Kombi in an earlier life. It wasn't that I didn't own a campervan, I just had something different. Consequently the opportunity to have a bit of fun in the modern day equivalent of the original humble Kombi is not to be missed. Certainly the Frontline Adventurer conversion is well set up for that and VW's latest T6 makes it even better. 🚐



**Top:** Whichever way you look at it the Frontline Adventurer based on the new Volkswagen T6 Transporter is a good looking, practical and comfortable campervan well worth investigating.





“ THE OPTIONAL AWD SYSTEM  
ADDS A DEGREE OF CAPABILITY  
TO THE FRONTLINE ADVENTURER  
THAT MAKES IT WELL WORTH  
CONSIDERING. ”



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## Specs

### GENERAL

Make	Frontline
Model	Adventurer
Type	Pop-top campervan
Berths	2
Approved Seating	4
Licence	Car

### VEHICLE

Make/Model	Volkswagen T6 4Motion
Engine	2.0 L 4-cylinder turbo-diesel
Power	132 kw @ 4000 rpm
Torque	400 Nm @ 1580-2000 rpm
Gearbox	7 speed DSG auto
Safety	ABS, ESP, MCB, BA, TCS, Hill Hold
Fuel	80 L

### WEIGHTS

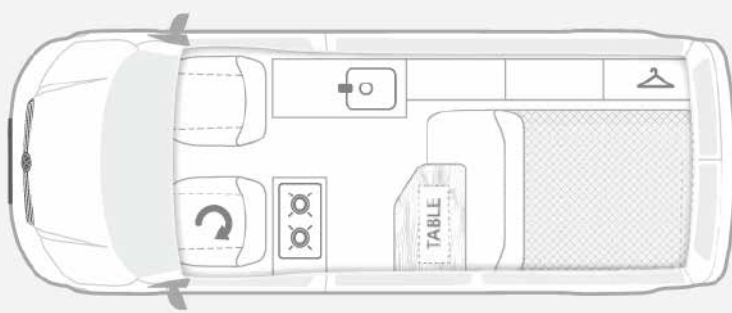
Tare Weight	2200 kg
Gross Vehicle Mass	3000 kg
Max Payload	800 kg
Braked Towing Capacity	2000 kg

### DIMENSIONS

Overall Length	5.29 m (17' 4")
Overall Width	1.90 m (6' 3")
Overall Height	2.13 m (7')
Internal Height	2.05 m (6' 9")
Main Bed	1.85 m x 1.3 to 1.17 m (6' 1" x 4' 3" to 3' 10")
Luton Bed	N/A
Dinette Bed	N/A

## Adventurer

4 Seater

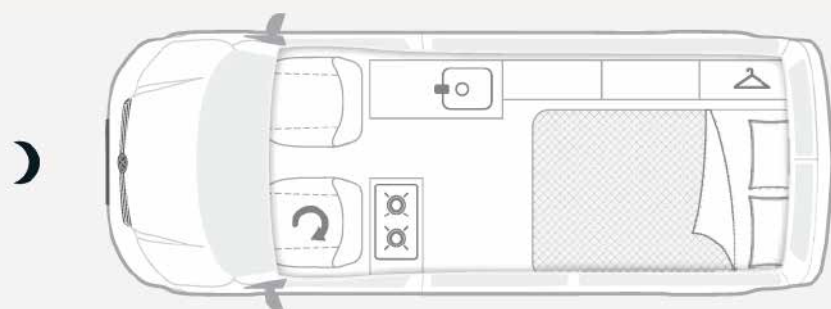




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### Specs

EQUIPMENT	
Slide-Out	N/A
Awning	Fiamma F65
Entry Steps	N/A
Cooker	Origo 2 burner Methylated Spirits
Rangehood	No
Sink	Stainless steel
Fridge	Engel ST90 F 85 L 12/240 V compressor
Microwave	LG
Lighting	12 V LED
12 V Sockets/USB Outlets	2 x 12 V, 2 x 5V
Air Conditioner	N/A
Space Heater	N/A
Hot Water System	Heat Exchange (opt)
Toilet	Porta Potti (opt)
Shower	External
CAPACITIES	
Batteries	1 x 100AH
Solar	Opt
LPG	No
Fresh Water	1 x 55 litre
Grey Water	No
Hot Water	10 L
Toilet	Porta Potti (opt)
PRICE	
From	\$69,300 on road NSW
As tested	\$88,900 on road NSW



### Pros

- Latest T6 VW
- Versatile conversion
- Lightweight traveller but still practical
- Campsite set-up doesn't take long
- Extensive options list
- 132 kW turbo-diesel makes driving a pleasure
- Great around town vehicle
- No LPG system

### Cons

- Metho stove cook times
- Slower heat exchange water heater

### Contacts

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