

# Home from Home



Ian Lamming goes adventuring in the VW California Camper Van

**M**OST of us live in a house and it takes the majority of our time and our money.

It is by far the most expensive thing we ever buy and it is only paid for, generally, just before we die.

It needs painting, maintaining and the taxman and utility companies know where we live. And the worst thing? The view always remains the same.

Does life have to be this way – perhaps not.

Lying in my double bed the DVD plays Harry Potter on an LED screen while the audio belts out the soundtrack through eight surround sound speakers.

The lights, fridge and kettle are just an arm-stretch away and my five-year-old boy is snuggled down in another double bed about 18in away from me in the roof. Tell me, does a man need any more? And when you take the little man on a road trip, the view is always different.

VW's Camper is a legend loved passionately by those who buy and hire its delightful form. It is so incredibly endearing that within minutes it becomes part of the family as it cossnets its lucky occupants in a body that is spacious but as manageable as your average MPV.

Based on the VW Transporter, that is pretty much what Camper is and it remains completely car like when you are driving, parking and reversing through life.

But inside the redesign replaces seats for beds, cupboards and kitchen appliances making the Camper a more than comfortable home for four.

From the driver's seat it is pure VW and could be anything in the range. It's only when you look rearward that you see there is the cabin luxury and space of a private jet.

The bench seat is comfortable and there is a stow-away table for convenience. To the side there are cupboards, a two-burner gas hob and stainless steel sink complete with

electric tap.

In the sliding door there is a pullout outdoor table and the deck shares are zipped into the tailgate. There's also a windout awning.

Sit down and feel around your ankles for a lever and the bench seat slides forward. Pull a chord and the rear of the seats folds flat to meet the rest of the double bed that has been hiding in the capacious boot. It's that easy.

From the driver's seat it is an easy reach to a panel in the roofliner that operates electrically the high-rise roof and auxiliary heating. It rises in seconds to create space for the second double bedroom and the roof-liner also pushes up on two gas struts when the bed is not in use to create standing space downstairs. It is simple, it is genius, it is fantastic.

The single side door slides and there are pull-up and down blinds for the rear windows with magnetic stick on curtains for the front. With all these in place Camper is cosy and private and with the secondary heater blowing it is warm and inviting too.

If you opt for a site there is an incredibly easy to use hook up cable giving you mains power and there's even wi-fi in the glovebox; how cool is that?

There's no loo or shower, but there is gas and water storage and it is just so much better than camping – as we find when we arrive down south late at night in the pouring rain.

Full-sized campers can be a bit intimidating to those unused to their size but the VW Camper scores by being no more unwieldy than your average car. The 2.0 diesel returns close to 40mpg giving a range of more than 700 miles and the clutch and gearbox are a delight.

It really is a vehicle for all occasions – shops, school run, music festival or full-on touring – and you don't need a mortgage to buy one.

## Fact File

Model: VW

California

Engine: 2.0 litre,  
turbo diesel

Drivetrain: six speed  
manual

Power: 140PS

Top speed: 107

0-62mph: 14.2

Insurance group: -

Miles per gallon  
(combined): 39.2

CO2 (g/km): 189