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GERMAN *Adaptability*

Geelong-based Achtung Camper prioritises intuitiveness over all else in its offerings. The Achtung VW T6.1 Campervan proves no exception, combining an impressive mix of features in a van perfect for a getaway of almost any duration.

WORDS AND PICS SINEAD REILLY



The campervan concept has, in recent years, spiked hugely in popularity. The range of vans out there on the road can seem intimidating — especially for first-time owners — and what is needed in terms of a base vehicle is always dependent on the needs of the camper-to-be. It's refreshing when manufacturers can balance a supreme level of customisation without sacrificing quality in all aspects of the end product. This is where Achtung Camper shines among its competition.





A proven VW Transporter base



The T6.1 handled all driving conditions

BEHIND THE WHEEL

The Achtung VW T6.1 Campervan finds an excellent base in the Volkswagen Transporter van, currently up to its new 6.1 iteration. Volkswagen Transporters have long since proven themselves to be at the top of their class, and the updated model demonstrates this perfectly.

The driver assistance systems in particular stood out to me and were amazingly handy, especially as someone who does not drive a van on a regular basis. This system includes Blind Spot Monitoring, Rear Traffic Alert, Crosswind Assist, and a rearview camera with rear park distance control. The Transporter 6.1 also houses an impressive array of functional equipment including electro-mechanical power steering, an electronic immobiliser, automatic

headlights with rain-sensing wipers, and cruise control to name a few.

My review trip through Great Otway National Park had this campervan traversing a broad range of terrain with serious ease.

The Transporter was as smooth as custard on isolated rougher tracks and dirt roads in the heart of the National Park as it was on the highways connecting Geelong to Apollo Bay, Lorne, and Port Campbell.

Being quite unfamiliar with driving a van on rougher tracks, I did wonder at times whether I had cause for concern, though the Transporter proved me wrong at every turn, showing its considerable amount of power underfoot was more than capable of handling everything thrown its way for the entirety of the four-day trip.



Ideal for coastal driving

“ The difference in size offers more floor area in addition to an extra storage cabinet in the kitchen

SPECIFICATIONS

VEHICLE

Base vehicle 2019 Volkswagen Transporter T6 TDI340
GVM 3000kg
Licence Car
Occupants Up to four

MECHANICAL

Engine 2.0L four-cylinder turbodiesel
Power/torque 103kW/340Nm
Transmission Seven-speed DSG automatic
Wheels 17in alloy
Brakes Discs all round, ABS and ESP

DIMENSIONS

Travel length 5290mm (17ft 4in)
External body width 1904mm (6ft 3in)
Travel height 2040mm
Main bed size 2050mm x 1170mm x 130mm

EQUIPMENT

Fresh water 55L
Battery AGM
Solar 180W
Air-conditioner Optional
Hot water 12/240V
Cooking Two-burner Primus Kinjia portable stove / ECOheat smart touch induction cooktop
Fridge Waeco 65L 12V/240V
Toilet Dometic Porta-Potti
Shower Rear tailgate, drop-down curtains and plumbing point
Lighting 12V LED
TV Nebula Capsule projector with streaming capability (optional)

PRICE (AS TESTED)

\$97,240 (drive away, Victoria)

OPTIONS FITTED

Nature Pack (rooftop solar panel, Thetford Porta-Potti, Dometic awning); Bluetooth projector; side door insect screen; swivelling passenger seat; induction cooktop and more

MORE INFORMATION

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The Waeco fridge/freezer did the job



The back seat can legally carry passengers while underway

MADE TO MEASURE

In terms of base vehicle options, Achtung offer both a long wheelbase (LWB) model measuring 5.3m, and a 4.9m short wheelbase (SWB) model. The vehicle tested was the former, measuring 40cm longer than its SWB counterpart. This difference in size offers more floor area in addition to an extra storage cabinet in the kitchen. This measurement may not sound like much but, after inspecting the interiors of both models to compare, it quickly became evident it does make quite a difference.

A group any larger than two members would tangibly benefit from the extra space offered by the LWB model. When I entered the showroom, a family of four were checking out a SWB model, but after chatting to Achtung's Nerida they quickly realised that a crew of their size would need the extra legroom and storage offered by the LWB model.

There are two engine sizes — the TDI340 or TDI450 (our review vehicle had the former) — and buyers can choose the number of windows, and whether the exterior paint colour is solid or metallic.



The LWB model offers more room to groove inside, and extra storage

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Achtung prides itself on making its campervan conversions highly customisable to suit every kind of travelling style. This extends to everything from a legal back seat, an induction cooktop, and the amount of storage space to the colour of the pop-top roof and inclusion of a small movie projector which doubles as a speaker. For those conscious of injecting their personality into their conversion, a complimentary Zoom call with an interior designer can be made to discuss the colour scheme and interior of the van.

The amount of storage cabinetry and shelving — which is custom-made by hand for each individual van — is impressive, incorporating little details such as a small bookshelf.

The back seat converts easily to a comfortable sleeping space, taking just a few seconds to set up. This sleeping space can accommodate two. While I'm 5'9 and had no

problems with the length of the bed, those 6ft and over may find it a little trickier to stretch their legs out.

The kitchen bench is large enough if cooking for just one or two, however those catering for a group may find it a little trickier to manoeuvre inside and might opt to cook outside instead.

The review van's upright Waeco 65L CR-50 fridge/freezer did a fine job at keeping everything cool and ran noiselessly. When combined with an Ecoheat slimline induction cooktop, which can be used both indoors and outdoors, whipping up a favourite meal away from home can be done in a pinch. The only drawback with induction cooktops is that they require special induction-friendly cooking equipment, but for those who plan to adventure regularly, this can be seen as a longer-term investment.

The water tank fitted to the review vehicle had a 55L capacity, which for a lone reviewer was fine, but

groups planning to venture away from running water for longer than a few days at a time will likely find themselves wanting to carry extra.

In terms of power, a fully sealed deep cycle dual battery system with automatic charging takes care of everything and is quite inconspicuously tucked away behind the driver's seat.

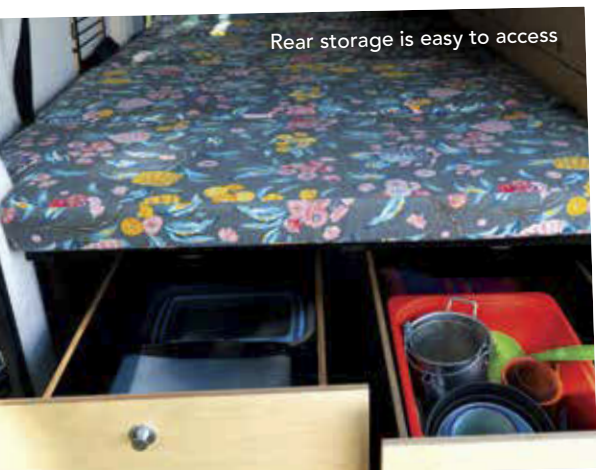
One 240V power outlet in addition to three 12V outlets ensure that there's plenty of power to go around for everyone, and a 180W slimline solar panel is fitted to the roof of the van.

For ablutions, a flexible hose shower at the rear of the vehicle with drop-down curtains stands in as a makeshift bathroom area replete with a medium-sized mirror, while a Dometic Porta-Potti is bracketed into a storage space underneath the back seat — both very handy for those planning to venture away from the facilities of holiday parks.

CREAM OF THE CROP

The review campervan was fully kitted out with all the extras, and a number of these stood out in terms of bolstering its liveability. Touch on/touch off LED light strips fitted to both the exterior and interior of the van ensure you'll never be blindly reaching around in the dark for anything. Attached to the two LED reading lights inside the van are USB ports, which were quite nifty in terms of charging devices during downtime.

Finally, the pop-top roof really adds a sense of spaciousness to the van once set up — and, similarly to the back seat bed conversion, this can be done in seconds thanks to its gas strut assists. The European-style tilting roof equals greater stability in less-than-ideal weather, and this was put to the test on each night of the review trip. Despite gales and lashing rain each night, the pop-top felt very solid with not a single drop of water getting inside.



Achtung Camper does a solid conversion



The seat drops easily to form the bed



A sturdy pop-top roof offers a sense of space and weather protection

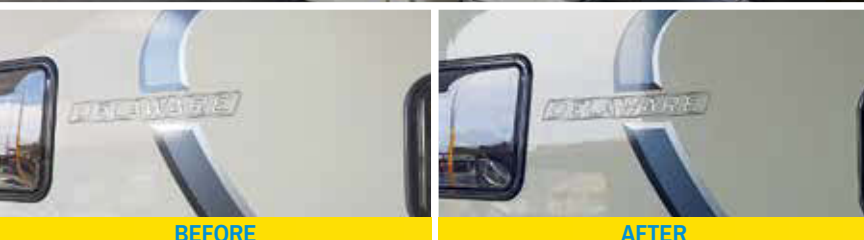
“Despite gales and lashing rain each night, the pop-top felt very solid

IN BRIEF

Achtung Camper does an outstanding job of converting its base vehicles into highly customised campervans and motorhomes. In prioritising quality of craftsmanship and the tailored needs of its customer over all else, it has found a loyal customer base that, in my opinion will only grow over time as the demand for this style of travelling continues to swell.

The term 'home away from home' is often overused, but it's exactly what Achtung Camper has managed to create. 🚐

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