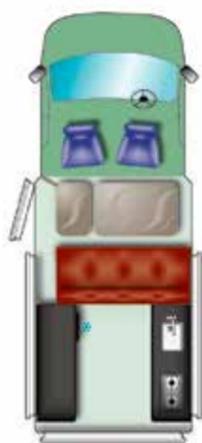


Home is where the heart is

George Hinton travels far and wide in a Volkswagen Transporter-based camper from Nomad



Nomad Campervans is a relatively new company, with just a five-year history. It was born out of Beckenham Motor Caravans, an official Reimo agent building a variety of VW conversions.

After two years in new ownership as Nomad, the company was on the market again, which is where Bunk Campers stepped in. This is a UK hire company that mainly lets out coachbuilds, but is increasing its camper fleet to meet demand. It also has a camping goods website, Camperworks (camperworks.com).

A company that manufactures its own campers for the rental market will know a thing or three about building durable, practical vehicles. Its range of Nomad retail models – mostly conventional,

proven camper layouts of which it builds around 30 a year – is available with a multitude of options.

CONSTRUCTION AND LAYOUT

The brand new Nomad Ranger is built on the VW Transporter Kombi. This features factory-fitted windows and a



Comfortable cab

second row of three fully crash-tested and detachable seats in the form of a double and a single. The 'business area' is at the rear, so in order to provide the required headroom, the elevating roof is a front-hinged Reimo Easi-Fit. To access the double roof bed, an alloy ladder is provided, stored on the bed for travel.



Front seats swivel for on-site use

The standard base vehicle is a short-wheelbase (3m) T30 Transporter Kombi, but this T6 demonstration model, the first into the UK, is a high-spec T32, raising MTPLM from 3,000 to 3,200kg. However, with an MRO of just 2,375kg, that extra capacity is unneeded. The double-skinned, insulated roof has an



Table clips into a wall rail

anti-condensation lining and can sleep two, a downstairs double adding further options. Alternatively, two RiB single seats can make single beds. The Vohringer lightweight furniture is available in three colour options.

ON THE ROAD

The Transporter has a longer history as a campervan base than any other and is a pleasure to drive.

The 2.0-litre 102bhp Euro 5 engine with five-speed gearbox is standard for the Ranger, our demonstrator having the 138bhp upgrade with seven-speed DSG automatic, giving more than sufficient power and performance. Accelerating from 0-50mph takes just 9.4 seconds, while long gearing requires just 2,000rpm at 70mph.

Both versions come with eco-start-stop for economy – we averaged 32.1mpg during our test.

Ride quality is firm but the conversion is notably quiet and rattle-free with no roof wind noise. Goodyear 60-series M+S tyres adorn 17in rims, while a full-size steel spare sits in a rear cradle.

Cab comforts include the usual electric windows and mirrors, cab seat swivels, twin airbags and air-con. The Highline trim spec includes colour touchscreen DAB radio infotainment system with USB and MP3 inputs, rear reversing sensors, privacy glass and the offside sliding window.

LIVING ABOARD

With no additional steps and a 17in floor height, plus a 3½in internal step, we packed a plastic one. Headroom is 4ft 7in until you release the three webbing straps and elevate the roof on its gas springs. This gives you 7ft 6in at the back.

Access from cab to rear is tight, with just 7in between the cab seat armrests, but swivelling the seats to face rearwards overcomes the restriction. We left the rear detachable single seat out for our test, to aid kitchen access.

The 20in x 29½in table clips to a wall rail. A second 16in x 18in table sits on a cranked tubular leg, clamped into a bracket behind the cab passenger seat.

The excellent lighting is all LED, apart from the VW interior lamps, the roof area having a fold-away stalk lamp. The roof features the usual openable PVC rear window and mesh panels at the sides, all covered by zipped canvas screens.

There are effective tracked stretchy grey blackout curtains to all the lower windows except the cab, where Reimo silver insulated screens fit with suckers.

Optional heating is by Webasto diesel heater, supplied from the van's fuel tank.

TECHNICAL

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RRP/as tested	£39,500/£50,850 OTR
Base vehicle	VW T6 Transporter Kombi T32 SWB
Engine	1,968cc TDi 4cyl 16v
Power	138bhp (112kW) @ 4,000rpm
Torque	295lb ft (400Nm) @ 1,500-2,000rpm
Transmission	Seven-speed DSG automatic
Fuel/tank/econ	Diesel/17.6gal (80 litres)/32.1mpg
Overall length	16ft 1in (4.89m)
Overall width	7ft 6in (2.28m) inc mirrors
Overall height	6ft 9½in (2.07m)
Max internal height	7ft 6in (2.29m)
MRO	2,375kg (46.75cwt)
MTPLM	3,200kg (62.99cwt)
User payload	825kg (16.24cwt)
Berths	2/4
NCC approved	no
Caravan Club insurance	The Club's Motorhome Insurance is tailored to the needs of members using our 25 years of know-how. We guarantee to beat your renewal premium by at least £25.*

Figures from manufacturer's literature. *Premium Saving Guarantee. Subject to proof of existing renewal, including cover and price (eg a copy of your renewal notice), when cover is on a like-for-like basis. Please note, terms and conditions, eg excess(es), may vary from your current insurer. Courtesy car is subject to availability. Subject to terms and conditions and the Insurer's acceptance of the Risk. The Club's Motorhome Insurance is arranged for The Club by Devitt Insurance Services Limited, Insurance Brokers. The Caravan Club and Devitt Insurance Services Limited are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The current average premium paid by members under The Caravan Club's Motorhome Insurance scheme is £253.



Two-burner hob and sink combination



“The Ranger cleverly doubles as a four-door, five-seat car and a practical weekend camper”

Clockwise from above: kitchen has decent storage; alloy ladder gives access to roof bed... which measures 6ft 6in by 3ft 7in

(This will have had a small adverse effect on our fuel consumption.)

KITCHEN

The 3ft 6in-long kitchen unit incorporates a SMEV two-burner stainless steel hob/sink combination on the offside. Twin black glass covers double as work surface and you get a 6in x 13in strip of laminate at the rear end.

There's no cutlery drawer, but several places where you can stow a wallet of camping cutlery, with space beneath for a 49-litre slide-out water tank.

The fold-down tap supplies cold water, while you can plug in a mains or 12V electric kettle at the rear end of the kitchen

unit. Two further 13A power outlets plus a USB socket are fitted at the lower front end of the nearside unit. The sink discharges through the floor, so you need to carry a waste tank.

Two shallow lockers divided by a galleried shelf on the offside offer the only high-level storage. Main kitchen storage comprises two cupboards under the cooker, one a foot cube, one deeper. There is also some space within the internal gas locker, between the lift-up silver tambour door and the steel container within, that takes a Gaz 907 cylinder.

Above the nearside 40-litre Waeco compressor fridge are two shallowish galleried shelves behind a vertical tambour door. To the left is a deep, 9in-wide shelved cupboard with 110Ah battery beneath.

Finally comes a taller cupboard, 12in wide, that hides the Sargent charger/distribution unit and circuit breakers under its false base, with the mains hook-up inlet under the nearside back bumper.

SLEEPING

The roof bed measures 6ft 6in x 3ft 7in. The lower bed was still in the prototype shop for our test, but it's a clever concept. The rear seat backrests are folded flat and the cab seats turned to face each other.



A folding tubular frame with support legs then fits across this space on brackets just below window level, beech slats carrying the 2in foldable mattress.

This should give you a comfy double measuring 6ft 6in x 4ft 7in. Stowage is under the nearside cupboards with the mattress in the roof. It promises to be a good bed, if rather fiddly to set up. There's no dedicated cabinet for a portable toilet, but there is space for one between the rear seat and the kitchen.

VERDICT

The Ranger cleverly doubles as a four-door, five-seat car and a practical weekend camper. The base price is £39,500 OTR, without options – I would especially recommend the awning and heater. Aside from these and upgrades already mentioned, the test vehicle featured numerous options including metallic paint, leather seat upgrade, sat-nav etc which took the price up to £50,850. The warranty is three years for both van and conversion, 12 years for corrosion.

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