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JERBA CROMARTY

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In a market that has hitherto been dominated by the likes of Bilbo's and VW's own California, it takes a brave soul to step into this sector with a new challenger, not least when the bar has been set so high. Jerba, however, appear to be made of sterner stuff than most, exploding out of obscurity and managing a four-star rating within these very pages (for the ground-breaking gas-free T3ee) inside just four years.

And the company went on to further reinforce the notion that they are not in the slightest bit intimidated by big names, offering me the keys to their long-wheelbase Cromarty for a few days and asking me to do my worst. Which I promptly did, by spending a few days in it under some seriously adverse weather conditions. And upon my return all I could find to criticise was the slightly high-set rear seat and weedy standard 102bhp engine. Impressive, then? Impressive enough for me to suggest that it's a match for the equivalent Bilbo's.

So what's the big deal? Simple really: the Cromarty takes the perfect base vehicle



A relative newcomer to challenge the likes of California and Bilbo's, and it's impressive



(VW's latest LWB Transporter window van), applies the perfect conversion (big kitchen, elevating roof, wide rear settee-cum-double bed) and uses painstaking attention to design detail to create a finished product that, while hardly visually arresting, ticks every box that matters.

And what really matters with any VW camper is its roof. The California utilises its own design, of course, as does Bilbo's with its side-hinged affair, but where most after-market converters turn to Reimo, Jerba instead approached German roof specialist, SCA, wanting the best possible

FACT FILE

MAKE	Jerba
MODEL	Cromarty
PRICE FROM	£36,850
BASE VEHICLE	Volkswagen Transporter T5 LWB
ENGINE	2.0TDI 102bhp (more powerful derivatives at extra cost)
DIMENSIONS	5.29m L, 1.90m W, 1.99m H
MAXIMUM WEIGHT	3200kg
PAYLOAD	686kg
BERTHS	4
TRAVEL SEATS	4



engineering and a roof-down overall height below the all-important 2m mark. It's a bit Straps-R-U's inside, but the sheer quality is there for all to see.

And it's quality that sets the Jerba aside from the masses. Every locker, every catch, every piece of wood feels engineered, not merely manufactured. You'll need to look elsewhere if your chief concerns are funky colours and design novelties, but the Jerba has it where it counts, from the enormous kitchen and ample storage, to the absence of conversion noise on the road and a bed that's easier to make up than the California's, and noticeably more comfortable.

