

ON TEST



Jerba Sanna

IAIN GEDDES looks at a Scottish campervan in its home country

CAMPERVANS, motorhomes or motorised caravans, call them what you will, I find these compact vehicles are among the hardest to test as you have to get into the mindset of the potential buyer to appreciate them properly.

So what better way to test one than taking it from the factory in North Berwick and going on a circular tour of the Scottish Highlands and West Coast?

The Volkswagen Transporter T5 is long established as a popular base vehicle for conversion and its 138bhp engine had enough power to get along the mountainous roads with comfort, even delivering a reasonable fuel economy considering how many times I stopped to take photographs. There are other engine options, the less powerful versions are more frugal but may lack the necessary oomph a fully-equipped campervan would need. There's also a 177bhp engine for those that need plenty of get-up and go, all to the Euro 5 emissions standard.

The driving position is good with a sensible layout and the seating is sufficiently comfortable to allow long drives without excessive weariness and fatigue getting to the driver.

Once you've parked it's Jerba's work rather than VW's that is put under the spotlight. The interior fit is clean and simple with some good details. For example the worktop edges are finished with a heat-bonded strip rather than a more common knock-in type that can be dislodged if you're clumsy like me.

Jerba maintains a small rental fleet of campervans and this Sanna is part of it. If you fancy trying a motorhome tour, hiring one could well be the best way to give it a go.

Numbers:
This Jerba layout sleeps four (without the roof bed it sleeps two), there are also four travelling seats. There's a double bed in the pop-up roof and the front seats convert into a pair of singles or they can be slid together to produce a double. The first time I made up the bed I found it a little tricky but with practise it became quite straightforward. The upper bed pushes up to allow headroom during the day and the seats can be configured in a vis-à-vis arrangement with tables for dining.

Attention to detail: There are lots of little details I found that highlight the high level of craftsmanship that has gone into the Sanna. For example, I like the way the factory plastic panel at the rear is converted to become the mains and water inlet cover. The fixtures such as the catches for the cupboards are of a high standard and feel almost yacht standard. There's a good spread of LED lighting throughout the camper to keep darkness at bay.

Fixtures and fittings: The fit of the furniture is to a high standard, with the structure made from 15mm lightweight poplar plywood with a robust Egger laminate surface that should retain its good looks for years. The kitchen is basic with a simple three-burner inset hob and sink. A small fridge is opposite but this layout has plenty of worktop to use. The cabin is kept warm with a Webasto diesel heater leaving the gas for the hob. Above the fridge there's a handy shelf that I found particularly useful when it came to recharging my gadgets.



Round the back: Even with the cycle carrier fitted (but not loaded) the tailgate remains fully functional and it's through this you can see the rather clever arrangement for the cassette toilet. Something you'd expect to see in much larger tourers, Jerba has thoughtfully placed this in such a way that when you configure it for use the wardrobe door is used to create some privacy and everything is easily put back afterwards.

The gas cylinders and toilet cassette are both accessed with the tailgate open. The gas locker is built a little like a safe and this robust box can accommodate two small cylinders.

at a glance

- Price as tested** £42,598
- Prices start at** £39,250
- Club Care insurance** £216
- Base vehicle** Volkswagen T5
- Engine as tested** 2-litre, 138bhp, six-speed manual gearbox
- Emissions category** Euro 5
- Electrics** 12V socket; two 230V sockets; two 75Ah leisure batteries
- Gas locker** Space for two 4kg propane cylinders
- On-board tanks** 38-litre fresh water
- Length x width x height** 5.30m x 2.28m x 2.0m
- Berths** Four sleeping (with roof bed option) and travelling
- Bed sizes** Double 1.86m x 1.2m or two singles 1.86m x 0.6m; roof bed 1.9m x 1.1m
- Mass in Running Order** 2,393kg
- Maximum Authorised Mass** 3,000kg
- User payload** 607kg
- C1 licence required** No
- Warranty** Two years unlimited mileage for conversion; three years base vehicle
- Manufacturer** Jerba Campervans
- Web** jerbacampervans.co.uk
- Tel** 01620 890374

verdict

Excellent build quality comes as standard with this superb van conversion.