

8 Ball Deluxe

Got a T5 van and fancy a camper? 8 Ball Camper Conversions could have the answer with one of its fully fitted packages

AT A GLANCE • **PRICE FROM** £15,600 (conversion only) • **BERTHS/TRAVEL SEATS** 4/4

THE team at Yorkshire-based 8 Ball Camper Conversions has been making campers and day vans for 10 years now. For 2014 they brought all that experience together into two camper conversion packs that can be fitted to customer-supplied vans.

The Classic and Deluxe packs feature a traditional side kitchen layout, RIB bench seat/bed and a colour-coded Austop lifting roof and roof bed. Both packs also come with a two-burner hob, Waeco 50-litre compressor fridge and a large (for a T5 camper) gas locker that will take a 3.9kg cylinder.

A Classic conversion costs £12,600 (inc VAT) to supply and fit to a customer's T5 van. But on test here is 8 Ball's higher spec Deluxe conversion. Extras over the Classic include a 100W solar panel and digital charging system, touch-LED lighting, rear speakers and extra 12V and 230V sockets, while the price rises to £15,600. Both conversions can be fitted to long-wheelbase T5s for an extra £600 and there is a wide

range of finishes and cost options available.

The base vehicle spec shown here may not be typical, but it does give an indication of what you can create if you have the funds. It's a 2011-registered, 180PS, 4Motion (four-wheel drive) with DSG automatic gearbox. The base van alone cost more than £26,000 (secondhand! – a new one would be at least £36k), but you could save £10,000 and get something with a little less spec and still have the same experience at the campsite.

That experience begins when you slide back the door and gaze inside. The high-end – and highly polished – Vöhringer veneer on the cabinets is dazzling and modern. With the roof released and sent upwards, standing room is more than two metres where it matters, over the kitchen area. The galley's two-burner hob is a combination unit with a relatively large sink, both closed off with dark glass lids that add to a reasonably large fixed worktop area at the end of the unit.



Words & pictures
Ben Field



Useful mini-lockers add extra storage above the kitchen



Proven RIB seat/bed unit is trimmed in leather. Note lack of window alongside





Stainless-steel combi unit includes two-burner hob and sink



Cutlery drawer houses a fitted chopping board, too



-  **FOR** • High-quality build • Good storage • Well priced
-  **AGAINST** • No waste water tank • Not Type Approved
- Resale value less than for a well-known brand





Bed is rather narrow, just over 6ft long



Both cab seats swivel. Leather trim and high-gloss furniture create an upmarket appearance

Kitchen storage comes from two narrow overhead cupboards, a large, two-shelf cupboard underneath and two drawers, the left-hand one with a built-in cutlery tray and chopping board. A rail for a clip-on table runs along the front of the kitchen. All the cupboards and drawers are soft-closing and all feature solid bound edging.

The wardrobe, alongside the bench seat, is a particularly neat feature. It is relatively large and has two doors – one inside and one accessed when the tailgate is open, so you can hang your clothes when you're packing without clambering through the interior. On the subject of packing, the Deluxe has space for luggage behind – and under – the bench seat. There are two further small cupboards above the back seat.

The RIB bench seat folds forward and flat in its well-engineered way to create a bed that's 1.84m long (that's a fraction over 6ft) by 1.11m (nearly 3ft 8in) wide. There's still room left at the forward end of the bed to stand up,

and you can still access the fridge. Up above, the roof bed shares exactly the same dimensions as the one downstairs. It's comfortable, light and airy up there, thanks to the combination of a thick mattress, a near full-height front window and meshed opening side windows. Kids or adults will feel right at home.

At night, Van-X curtains on the side and rear windows shut the world out very effectively. Unlike a lot of curtains found in campers, they run on upper and lower tracks, stay close to the window and help to keep the interior warm.

Supplying your own (already registered) VW van to 8 Ball for conversion means that the completed vehicle doesn't have to be tested for Type Approval conformity. Essentially this helps to keep the cost of the conversion down. But by specifying – and correctly fitting – units like the crash-tested RIB bench/bed, 8 Ball keeps safety to the fore in all its builds. As with any non-mainstream brand, resale value might be a bit more uncertain.

The quality of both fit and finish in the 8 Ball Deluxe is very good indeed, though. A number of the more mainstream T5 converters are lacking in comparison as 8 Ball's small team evidently obsesses over the details that get forgotten in (relative) mass production.

You could point out that the loo has to be stored inconveniently in the boot. And that the 12-litre fresh water container in the cupboard is rather too small to be practical. And that there's no waste water tank, just an exterior tap that you drain into a bucket. But many buyers of an 8 Ball conversion may be new to the campervan scene and quite used to taking a container to a tap to fill up. The waste water will be more of a chore, but at least a collapsible bucket is easy to store.



Loo goes in the boot. Wardrobe reached via rear doors

FACT FILE

PRICE FROM £15,600 (conversion only)

PRICE AS TESTED £42,750

EXTRAS FITTED Webasto diesel heating (£750)

TYPE APPROVAL None (see text, used base vehicle)

BERTHS 4

TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER) 4

DIMENSIONS 4.89m L, 2.05m W, 2.00m H

INTERIOR HEIGHT 2.10m (roof up), 1.36m (roof down)

MAXIMUM WEIGHT 3,000kg

PAYLOAD 350kg

BEDS Lounge bed 1.84m x 1.11m, roof bed 1.84m x 1.11m

FRESH WATER 12 litres (inboard)

WASTE WATER No fitted tank

GAS 1 x 3.9kg

LEISURE BATTERY 110Ah

MAINS SOCKETS 2

BASE VEHICLE

VW TRANSPORTER T5 SWB

ENGINE 2-litre, 178bhp, Euro V, 4Motion (four-wheel drive), six-speed DSG auto

COOKING/HEATING

COOKING Two-burner hob

FRIDGE Waeco 50-litre compressor fridge

HEATING Webasto Air Top 2000 diesel blown-air

BOILER None fitted

RIVALS

CMC Reimo TrioStyle White Line

Rolling Homes Columbus

WHICH
motorhome

says ★★★★★

Good ideas from 10 years of campervan conversions have clearly gone into the 8 Ball Deluxe. This is a well-priced, high-quality conversion – just add your own T5.

campervan
FREEDOM TO EXPLORE

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