

# A sparkling **DIAMOND**

Our Snapshot search for bargain campers has literally turned up a Diamond this month. Dave Hancock casts an eye over a Volkswagen conversion different to all others.

**Just another VW conversion? Actually, no. This Diamond RV Autocruiser has a surprisingly comprehensive specification and an unusual layout.**



**A**ll VW conversions are much the same, aren't they? You've seen one, you've seen them all. Seat and bed across the back, work surface and cooking facilities down one side, maybe an additional seat in the middle, more often than not a wardrobe at the rear — this sums up over 90% of conversions of older Volkswagen Transporters. Okay, some have provision for a portable loo but shower rooms are definitely restricted to the campsite.

Er, actually, no. This Diamond RV Autocruiser includes a shower compartment — I got in it, just — and it's a Snapshot bargain at £6,995.

Thankfully the shower curtain extends into the living area for added elbow room — although there's no provision to catch drips. What strange twist of fate made the designer incorporate a shower room into the specification of the Diamond RV Autocruiser we'll never know. One-upmanship, possibly. Extreme shyness, maybe. Whatever, it turns a "day 'van" into a serious, but smaller, competitor for many motorcaravans. Ideal for a weekend away on a remote site.

Naturally, the other equipment has been shuffled around to accommodate this get wet facility. The kitchen area is now across the rear of the 'van, built

in to a useful unit that contains a sink in brown enamel and a two-burner hob with a warming plate above the grill. The glass burner lid folds to the side to deflect splashes. There is very little work surface area — choose between using the wooden cover to the sink, the glass lid over the hob or the narrow strip behind.

Beneath, there is a cutlery drawer and further good-sized storage space. Above and to the side there are useful lockers and next to the shower room is the Electrolux 122 fridge — you need to lean over the sink to gain access.

Open the tailgate and you'll discover another cupboard, a small cupboard to one side and

**A shower in a VW conversion — it is possible. However, the writer demonstrates that showering would be akin to shaving and the likelihood of getting the carpet wet would be high.**



**Left, the kitchen unit has a hob and sink plus useful storage space but no permanent work surfaces.**



## Which Snapshot: 1983 Diamond RV Autocruiser

# £6,995

### Fact file

Model: Diamond RV Autocruiser  
 Base Vehicle: Volkswagen  
 First registered: 1983  
 Price: £6,995  
 Price includes: Full service, one-year MOT  
 Dealer: Cleveland Motorhomes, Teesside Airport, Darlington, County Durham DL2 1RH. Tel: 01325 332626/333111. Fax: 01325 333835  
 Manufacturer: Diamond RV, no longer in existence  
 Owners' Club: None



the Vaillant gas-fired water heater. Oh, and there's plenty of room for bedding on the flat floor above the engine. Talking of sleeping, it's back to the main living area. Pull out the metal framed backrests to the seats and use them as extensions to the seat squabs and two single beds begin to form. The front seats come into play, too — pushed forward with their backs fully reclined. The result is not as cosy as the slide-out double bed fitted in many VW conversions but the two singles looked comfortable enough.

Reassemble the seats and you can eat around a single pedestal table — if the one who draws the short straw puts up with leaning

forward from the front-facing seat. The upholstery in brown and cream is light and hard wearing. Buyers of new 'vans in fashionable dark colours should take note of how shabby secondhand examples can look. Likewise the pretty cream curtains with blue flowers in this Diamond RV — sure, they were becoming grubby, but a light patterned material wears better than something dark.

The driver's seat had fared less well, but a seat cover would be a cheap way to hide the torn fabric. Other things to note inside are the Zig unit for a mains supply when on a suitably equipped site, the locker above the cabin area and a good number of lights —

including a fluorescent in the shower area.

Outside there is some evidence of rusting but, importantly, the window frames appeared sound. The 50,000 recorded miles were supported by the paperwork which included seven MOT certificates and records of services.

A 1983 'van whose 1.9-litre petrol engine had plenty of life left in it and whose well laid out and featured-filled interior could easily and cheaply be tidied up, would be a fair conclusion. Perhaps, sometimes it pays to be different. ●

**Driver's seat is torn and would benefit from a seat cover. Mileage of 50,000 appears genuine. VW engine should last.**

**More storage space in the rear — useful cupboards and plenty of room for bedding. Note the water heater with controls only accessible from the rear of the 'van.**



**The fridge is to one side — not easily accessible. Note the table stored above the cooking area and the handy spotlight.**

