



Seal of Approval

If you like the idea of a VW California, but also like the idea of standing out from the crowd, maybe you should consider a VW Approved custom Camper, like this one from Vanworx

Words Mark Walker
Photos Andy Saunders/AS Design

When Dave Garnsworthy, owner of Dorset-based Vanworx, decided in 2007 to start doing Campervan conversions, he quickly realised there were very few options available for customers wanting a bespoke T5 or T6 Camper with proper motorhome type approval. You can go to Volkswagen and order a California, of course, but, let's be honest, there are plenty of them around, and they all look a bit, well, the same. Off-the-peg colours and bland, admittedly very functional, interiors are okay for the masses but, as readers of *VWt*, I'm pretty sure you'd find the factory offering a bit staid, especially when compared with some of the high end, custom-built conversions available these days.

Dave recognised this problem a long time ago, and has worked very hard to obtain the necessary certification for the company to be able to sell its Campers as just that – official Campers, not just converted Vans.

First step was to achieve Conformity of Production (CoP) certification, and that he did in 2013.



► Allow us to present the Vanworx four-berth Slipper conversion, but with a custom red leather twist

Style STEAL

Model:
2017 T30 T6
Highline

Engine:
2.0 TDi 150,
with DSG

Exterior styling:

Factory Mojave Beige with Sportline front spoiler and side bars; genuine VW bike rack; LED headlights; removable tow bar; reversing camera; front and rear parking sensors; H&R -40mm springs; 20in BBS wheels; T32 front disc brake upgrade with candy apple red brake calipers

Interior:

Comfort dash; App connect; swivel heated seats; adaptive cruise control

Camping interior:

Vanworx 4-berth Slipper conversion; Dometic cooker and sink, low-energy Waeco fridge; LED lighting, leisure battery; 240V hook up, multiple power sockets; Reimo elevating roof with Open Sky option; Porsche Rosse leather re-trim with GTD cloth on bed; Staron work top; Webasto night heater; Altro flooring; awning



▲ Tasteful red detailing on things like the fridge front and table really lifts this interior. Those twin swivel seats are heated, too. Nice



Dave: “We’re committed to maintaining quality and safety, and welcome the regular audits carried out by the Vehicle Conduct Authority (VCA) on behalf of the industry. The VCA is responsible for scrutinising our build processes and quality management systems to check that Vanworx consistently meets the necessary standards.”

VW Approved

The other huge feather in Vanworx’s hat is VW approval. This means Vanworx can convert new, unregistered Volkswagen commercials and Kombis into Campers and, once the relevant inspections have been completed, they can be officially registered as a motorhome on the V5 and sold as ‘Approved by Volkswagen’.

“Our VW Approved Camper conversions are a great source of pride to us,” says Dave proudly. “We make every effort to ensure all elements are finished to factory standard, or better, as well as performing at a remarkable level in all safety tests.”

For the company to maintain its VW approval, and to pass the strict safety standards demanded by Volkswagen, everything from the pop-top to the bed has to be stringently tested, or already approved. For example, Vanworx uses Reimo pop-tops, and is also an approved fitter. But every detail matters to Vanworx, right down to getting a perfect silicone seal on the finished installation.

When it came to the beds, the pull-tested RIB was the industry standard for years, but Dave and the team realised early on it wasn’t the prettiest of things, or particularly easy to get to the correct height once upholstered, so designed their own fitting frame, which performed excellently in pull tests.

When it came to getting VW approval, everything needed dissecting and looking at in minute detail. The distance from the rear seat to the roof opening being just one of the obstacles the Vanworx team had to work hard to perfect. As Dave says, “It’s one thing

“officially registered as a motorhome on the V5 and sold as ‘Approved by Volkswagen’”

getting a vehicle to pass an Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) test, but in those tests the inspectors only really ever do a visual inspection, whereas the more stringent WVTA (that’s the European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval) tests involve pull-testing the bed and pop-top to see how safe they’d be in an accident. This test sets the

standard for safety, security and environmental requirements in the UK.”

Fully loaded

Of course, it’s not only about safety and passing tests at Vanworx, and the Mojave Beige T6 here is anything but boring beige in the looks and spec departments. As this is one of the company’s demo Vans for its top-of-the-range Slipper conversion, it is, to coin a phrase, fully loaded.

Dave and the Vanworx team have

◀ **Contrasting VW Golf GTD cloth on the bed is an inspired touch, and really works with the Porsche red leather. Use of space is ingenious**

▼ **Fuseboard is tucked away in the lower rear cupboard, where it is also easily accessible**



**“We make every effort
to ensure all elements
are finished to factory
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◀ Yes, it's VW Approved, but you won't see anything as cool looking as this in a regular VW showroom. That's the gap in the market Vanworx spotted and now successfully fill

▼ We love the Sportline front spoiler and GTI-esque red detailing, and how about those candy apple red brake calipers?

▶ 20in BBS rims, low profile rubbers, H&R lowering springs and T32 front disc brake upgrade all add to the kerb appeal

◀ If VW is happy to put its name to it, you know you are getting quality components – Reimo pop-top with Open Sky canvas and a genuine VW bike rack are just two examples of the high-end parts used in these conversions



researched and developed every single aspect of its camping conversions, so you can be sure of the best quality and best performing materials throughout. From the UK-sourced lightweight, pressure-tested wood of the cabinets to the ThermoFleece natural wool insulation, Thule awning and Reimo Open Sky roof canvas.

Looking beneath the high-end veneer and diving into the contents of the conversion, there's a Dometic cooker and sink, low-energy Waeco fridge – we love the matching upholstered fridge door cover – low-energy lighting, leisure battery and 240V hook up, a multitude of power sockets and Altro flooring.

As with all Vanworx products, any of these conversions can be professionally fitted to your existing Van, or the company can supply a brand new, VW Approved, ready-converted Van at any point in the VW model range.

Limited Slipper

The Van in the pictures is a 2017 short wheelbase T30 Highline Kombi with the 150 TDi engine and DSG (list price: £18,000 inc. VAT).

As such, it was a high spec Van in the first place, that's now even more impressive with the full Slipper conversion onboard. Being a demo vehicle, you won't be surprised to hear the spec has been boosted further still with some additional optional extras, such as Porsche red leather upholstery (from £1,800), an Audison sound upgrade, and genuine VW swivel seat bases.

Although the interior is a sight to behold, it's the exterior that first catches your eye. This is mainly thanks to a set of -40mm H&R lowering springs and those black and polished 20in BBS XA alloys, but also the use of a Sportline front spoiler and powder coated sidebars.

As there's nothing worse than seeing tiny brake discs peeking out from behind big-inch rims, the front discs have been upgraded to T32 spec, and the calipers detailed in candy apple red for a custom / performance look.

Sure, there are lower and infinitely more radically modified Vans out there, but the point with this one is it looks like something Volkswagen could, or should, offer straight off the showroom floor. It looks 'factory' in every respect and, at £62,500 inc. VAT with

approx 5,000 miles on the clock, the price is competitive against a new VW California, especially when you consider how much more you get for your money, and the fact this is a custom Van, not just another one off the VW California production line.

Given all that, it's no wonder Vanworx is a popular option for those in the market for a high-end Camper, with the additional kudos of VW Approved. ■

The Ed says...

What I really like about this latest offering from Vanworx is the attention to detail and sense of flow you get when looking at every aspect of the Van, from the black powder coated genuine VW bike rack, through the similarly treated Sportline additions to the wheels and the plush red leather upholstery.

Everything about it looks and feels factory, which is exactly what you expect from a VW Approved converter.