

Auto-Sleeper Clubman GL



Plus points: Durable, superbly shaped GRP body shell. Twin single bed facility

Minus points: Flimsy casings for the window blinds. Cupboard catches awkward (new type fitted to later Clubman models)

Borrowed from Brownhills stock for the test report in our March 1993 issue, the vehicle had covered barely 2,000 miles since new. Styled with subtlety to match the

curvy new VW shape, with its unobstructed centre lounge the Clubman is an ideal, compact coachbuilt for two.

At just a little over 17ft long and a hairsbreadth under 6ft 9in wide she's at home in town or country.

We said: "Auto-Sleeper have achieved their usual balancing act of combining a quality feel to the product with a reasonable-looking price tag".

Foundation of the Clubman is the Volkswagen Transporter chassis cab with a maximum gross weight of 2,810kg and, in this case, the two-litre petrol engine. The majority of Clubmans sold have been powered by one of the two diesel motor options.

There is no doubt that Volkswagen's Transporter is the most technically sophisticated light commercial vehicle we have yet seen on this planet. Ford comes close and the imminent new Fiat will also but neither of these have four-wheel independent suspension which is the key to the superbly comfortable ride offered by this VW chassis.

While this early Clubman was without power steering, and consequently heavy at low speeds, all current models will have the refinement as a standard feature.

Initially I'd felt she was a mite sluggish but it was me not using what I had on tap; an impressive 84bhp from only two-litres. With it we achieved a respectable 82mph top speed and a nimble 24 seconds for the 0-60mph time.

No matter what angle you look at the Clubman from the shape is pleasing and well balanced. I think the shape could benefit from some altogether bolder graphics but maybe that's heretical to this most

conservative of manufacturers.

Not only has this GRP body a high resistance to damage, it is also a positive factor for maintaining the investment value on account of its enduring qualities.

The layout gives the best of several worlds: it looks more extensive than you might reasonably expect of a motorcaravan having a length of 17ft. It gives immediate day beds for the after lunch nap and, at night-time makes possible the alternatives of one exceedingly generous double or two full single beds.

To the relatively sober grey/blue diagonal striped upholstery fabric is added the agreeable contrast of cream with floral curtains and light oak for the woodwork.

Shy on workspace, the kitchen nevertheless is well appointed with a full oven cooker, hob and grill, stainless steel sink and a fridge comfortably away from floor level in its own console close by the galley proper.

Heat resistant tops for the appliances put them out of mind after the meal, and although the two tables are equally well finished they are both somewhat small for the job in hand.

Though small the bathroom is essentially practical. It has a separate faucet for the shower head, a sensible foldaway sink and sufficient elbow room to use the loo without feeling cramped.

The Which verdict: On the road she performed with exceptionally good manners, and the high standard of build plus Auto-Sleepers' meticulous attention to detail, underline the inherently good value for money.

John Page

Spec check Spec check Spec check

Make: Auto-Sleeper Model: Clubman GL Test date: March, 1993

Performance data

Fuel consumption: 20mpg
Comfortable cruising speed: 58-62mph
Maximum speed attained: 82mph
Acceleration times: 0-60mph: 25 seconds, 40-60mph: 20 seconds

Base vehicle

Make: Volkswagen
Model: Transporter
Type: Chassis cab
Power unit: Two-litre, fuel injected petrol motor, producing 84bhp @ 4,300rpm

Conversion

Type: Overcab coachbuilt
Overall length: 5.29m (17ft 4in)
Overall width: 2.05m (6ft 8³/₄in)
Overall height: 2.62m (8ft 7¹/₂in)
Basic construction: Glass fibre shell with plywood interior wall and Styrofoam insulation
Gas storage capacity: Two x 7kg cylinders
Water heating: Carver Cascade gas heater
Space heater: Truma 3000 gas convector heater
Refrigerator: Electrolux 2200 operating from gas/12V/240V
Cooker: Oven cooker with two-burner hob and grill
Toilet: Thetford Cassette flushing toilet
Bed sizes: As singles 6ft 2in x 2ft 6in. As double 6ft 5in x 4ft 4in
Electrical equipment: Mains electric input with circuit breakers. Automatic charging and auxiliary battery. 12V lighting
Lighting: All fluorescent fittings
Windows: Double-glazed acrylic
Manufacturers: Auto-Sleepers Ltd, Orchard Works, Willersey, Worcs WR12 7PT, tel: 0386 853338

