

USED VAN TEST



On the road, this Moonraker looked in nearly new condition, including the elevating roof

1982 Devon Moonraker

Here's a good example of a popular Transporter-based motor caravan which still has plenty to offer for a young family

Devon Conversions may well have decided to leave the field to their competitors as far as motor caravans are concerned, but there are still plenty of previously owned Devons around the country – along with one or two unsold new ones, we suspect.

One that caught our eye while collecting/returning test vehicles to Brownhills of Newark was a smart-looking 1982 Moonraker that had two previous owners, but had only covered 31,223 miles.

Back in January 1982, when this Moonraker had been first registered, we calculate the price would have been around £9600, based on a specification that includes two-tone paint and head restraints, two-litre air-cooled engine and automatic transmission. The first owner had also specified a 1cu.ft fridge on the original order – at that time an optional extra on Devon's price list.

Brownhills' asking price of £7495 reflects the low rate of depreciation to which motor caravans – especially, perhaps, popular Transporter-based models – are subject.

Close examination of the bodywork failed to reveal any damage on this X-registered example. The two-tone caramel/beige paint looked as good as new, and even the original Devon logos were in place. The same applied to the bumpers, wheels and tyres, the last appearing to be the original covers which still had plenty of tread.

'Non-standard' exterior details which had been added by one of the previous owners were a tow-bar and electrics plus a rear window wash/wipe.

Also in pristine condition was Devon's 'Double-Top' elevating roof. There were no breaks in the vinyl walls, and the roof went up and down smoothly on its gas-filled struts. The only detail that detracted from the original speci-



Wide access to rear storage; towing bracket and electrics had been fitted by a previous owner



Ready for the road – but the sliding door needs closing first

USED VAN TEST



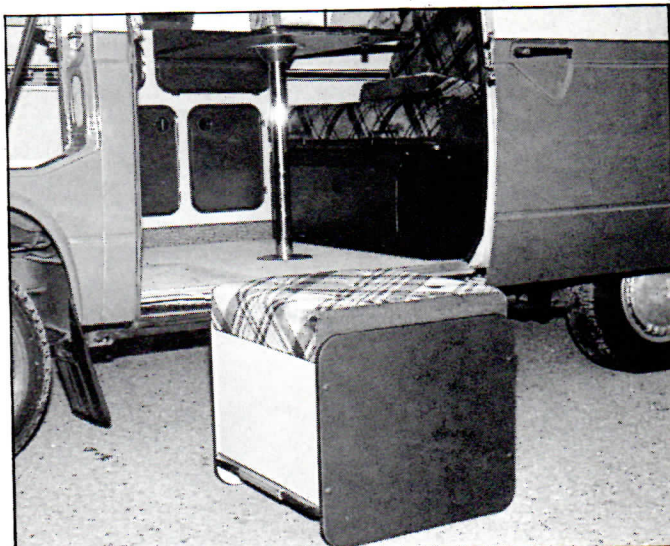
Downstairs double bed is easy to make and unmake; generous curtains cover all windows



Interior set up for dining – single seat on left extends into a double bench



Transverse settee provides comfortable seating for rear passengers



Single 'box' seat can be lifted out to create more space inside

fication was the use of two rusty split pins to lock the over-centre catches in place.

The roof transforms the Moonraker's interior. It extends almost the full length of the vehicle, from the cab at the front to the transverse settee at the rear, providing standing headroom over the entire living quarters. Access is no problem either from the cab or through the Transporter's wide-opening sliding door. This, too, operated smoothly and locked securely in the fully open position.

Inside, and especially in the cab, this two-owner Moonraker was particularly clean. The black rubber mats on the cab floor looked showroom new and, although the foam floor covering in the living quarters showed signs of wear, it was still serviceable.

Additions in the cab provided a stereo radio/cassette player with speakers in the living quarters. A handy map reading light had also been fitted, together with a ball-point pen on a loop of cable, both located on the nearside for the 'navigator'.

Otherwise the cab was original VW, with excellent all-round visibility and comfortable seats upholstered in dark brown brushed nylon with matching adjustable headrests. The long-handled auto gearshift falls easily to hand and is quite straightforward to operate. Movement is simply up and down between the 1, 2 and D positions, while a lock button on the side of the T-bar enables reverse and park to be engaged.

Automatic transmission certainly gives smooth progress when the gearshift is in 'D', producing almost imperceptible changes up and down the ratios. It's also a boon when driving in heavy traffic, although the fluid drive does have an adverse effect on fuel consumption: expect about 20mpg when touring, dropping to around 18mpg around town.

Aft of the cab, the living quarters were almost 100% Devon, with few modifications by the vehicle's

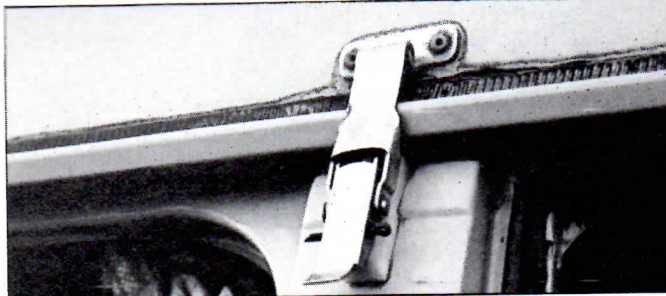
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two previous owners. Diagonal stripe velour upholstery in dark and light brown was original and still in excellent condition. Curtains were also as supplied from the Devon factory, a rather open-weave tweedy material in pale yellow. Interior wall-covering – dark brown cord carpet material up to window level and similar material in beige above was clean and unmarked.

One area of a motor caravan that gets most use has to be the kitchen, especially the hob and grill. Inevitably the pan support over the hob's two burners gets blackened even after only a season's use. Such was the case with the Moonraker, but that was all. The stainless steel of the sink and drainer was almost unmarked, and the hob generally clean. The same went for the fridge which was clean and fresh inside.

In fact the kitchen generally, including the plastic laminate facings, cupboard doors and worktops were all in remarkably clean condition. Taken together with the general level of smartness, we were of the opinion that both the previous owners had looked after their Moonraker.

One of the owners had fitted a Zig charge control unit and mains electrics. The 240v wiring had been brought in through the wardrobe at the rear offside corner, and here we had to criticise the wiring, which was a little untidy to say the least. Nor could we find any evidence of the wiring being protected by an ELCB, even



Split pins had been pressed into use to lock the roof clips

though connected to a double 13-amp switched socket outlet.

The Zig unit had been positioned on the forward wall of the wardrobe, where it is easy to operate and to see what the various LEDs have to report. However, the unit needed to be properly 'boxed in' inside the wardrobe itself.

Interior lighting had also been improved. A 13-Watt fluorescent light had been mounted over the kitchen area, supplemented by separate 8W striplights over the settee and attached to the front of the wardrobe door, presumably in order to shed more light over the rear parcel shelf.

One rather strange 'addition' to the standard equipment was the black polythene lining of the deep larger locker forward of the wardrobe. We can only presume that this had been done in order to protect the interior of the locker, but we have to say that it looked rather untidy – and we wonder whether it was there in order to cover something up?

Seating was unchanged, comprising a removable rear-facing 'box' seat and the traditional transverse settee to be found on most VW Transporter conversions. The single seat retained its extension and spare cushion, required in order to turn into a double bench for mealtimes. Also still there was the single-leg table which can be positioned between the seats. When not required it locates behind the cab passenger seat and its stainless steel leg can be kept in a moulded recess in the rear parcel 'shelf', one corner of which had sustained slight damage.

Storage is available in both seat bases, the single seat having a lift-top and the settee a drop-front door. There are also cupboards and a cutlery drawer in the kitchen unit.

Water supply is from a 7½-gallon removable tank located behind the wardrobe and reached through the VW's rear tailgate. The tank can be filled *in situ* or removed and wheeled to the

nearest tap. A submersible 12v pump operated by a push switch supplies fresh water to the spout at the kitchen sink.

Sleeping accommodation for four people – two adults and two children – is available in lower and upper beds. 'Downstairs', the settee is built on what has come to be known as a rock 'n' roll mechanism. Simply pull the base forward using the two hand grips provided; the backrest drops to align with the upholstered foam cushion over the engine deck to provide a comfortable double bed suitable for two adults.

Sliding bases in the elevating roof have foam cushion facings to provide a choice of two singles or a double bed. There is plenty of space in this upper 'bedroom', especially for young children, light and ventilation being provided by a central roof-light in the elevating roof's glass fibre moulded cap.

All in all, this 1982 Devon Moonraker appeared to us to be a good example of a popular motor caravan. The additions made by previous owners were useful and practical, although our advice to a potential buyer would be to get the selling dealer to check the safety of the electrical equipment and wiring installed by previous owners – even if it involved paying for the privilege.

Otherwise this Moonraker looked in excellent condition all round; clean, smart and eager to take its third owner into the wonderful world of motor caravanning. □

1982 Devon Moonraker

£7495

Converter

Devon Conversions (CP) Ltd, Vulcan Works, Water Lane, Exeter, Devon EX2 8BY. (Motor caravan conversions now discontinued).

Dealer

Brownhills Ltd, A46 Farndon Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire. ☎ 0636 704201.

BODY

Type: elevating roof.

Berths: four.

Doors: two in cab, sliding door on nearside.

INTERIOR

Toilet room: no.



Overall length, 15ft; overall height (roof down), 7ft 3in; overall height (roof up), 9ft 9in; overall width, 6ft 1in

Gas system: vented locker takes two 4.5kg cylinders; piped supplies to hob/grill and fridge.

Electrical system: 240v input wired to double 13-amp switched socket and Zig mains/12v control unit for fridge, lighting and water pump.

Lighting: one 13W and two 8W fluorescent lights; cab courtesy light.

Equipment fitted: Electrolux 1 cu.ft fridge operating on 12v/gas; stainless steel sink/drainage and hob/grill with heat shield; pumped water supply from 7½-gal tank; stereo radio/cassette with rear speakers; map-reading lamp.

BASE VEHICLE

Model: Volkswagen Transporter Kombi.

Engine: 1970cc 4 cyl horizontally-opposed.

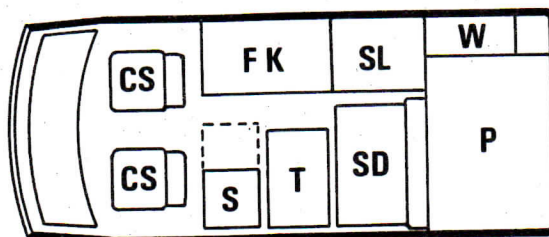
Transmission: three-speed automatic, rear-wheel drive.

Steering: rack and pinion.

Suspension: front double wishbones, coil springs, hydraulic shock absorbers, anti-roll bar; rear semi-trailing arms, coiled springs, hydraulic shock absorbers.

Brakes: dual-circuit front discs, rear self-adjusting drums.

Importer: VAG (UK) Ltd, Commercial Vehicle Division, Frankland Road, Blagrove, Swindon SN5 8YU. ☎ 0793 40231.



Key: CS cab seat, F/K kitchen with fridge, SL storage locker, W wardrobe, P parcel shelf, SD settee, combines with P to make double bed, S single seat.