

# MOTOR CARAVAN MAGAZINE

APRIL  
1990  
£1.40

A LINK HOUSE MAGAZINE

Makes the  
going great

ON TEST: AUTOHOMES KAMEO



Two  
**KLIPPITS**  
Free  
With this issue  
CLIP 'N' SEAL

ALSO TESTED:

- ELDDIS AUTOSTRATUS EK
- HOLDSWORTH RANGER







Autohomes high-top plays more than a Kameo role, on page 56



Two-berth Ranger from conversion specialists Holdsworth. Page 90



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Latest Transporter cab with dashtop storage moulding



Shut-off valves for hob and fridge; cutlery storage

# Autohomes Kameo

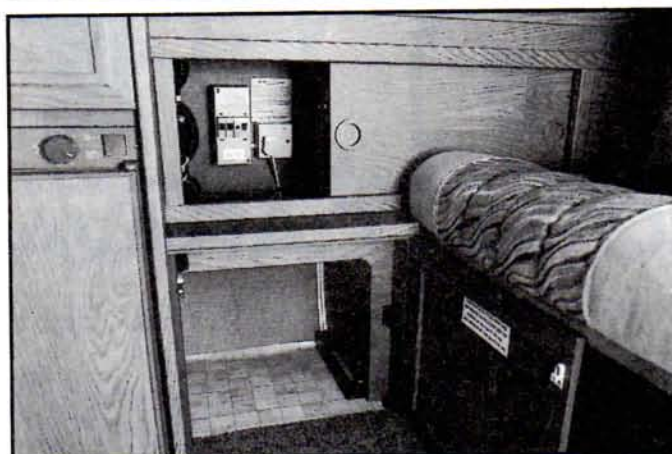
**L**ike its sister, the Komet, Kameo is a high-top model. It differs, however, in several significant respects: Kameo is designed for two people, although a child's cab bunk is on the options list; Kameo has a different high-top roof design, but still incorporates a practical rear roof rack; and Kameo is some £575 cheaper than the four-berth Komet.

Standard engine is VW's 1.9-litre 78bhp water-cooled unit mated to a four-speed manual gearbox and driving the rear wheels. There are, of course, the usual VW options of diesel, turbo-diesel and 2.1-litre fuel-injected petrol engines, plus VW's wide variety of base vehicle extras: five-speed gearbox, automatic transmission (petrol engines only), and syncro four-wheel drive.

Volkswagen's current Transporter makes both a distinguished-looking vehicle, as well as one that is easy to drive and park. At 15ft long x just over 6ft wide, its handling is not much different from that of a large car. One difference is its height – at 8ft 1in Kameo is some 5in lower than Komet.

The VW's main advantage, however, is the high cab position, giving passengers that over-the-hedgerows view denied to car travellers. And

Autohomes launched their VW Kameo six years ago in 1984, since when it has continued to hold its place in the company's highly successful range of Transporter-based conversions



Electrical safety plus floor-level storage, designed for a loo



Rear view of the Kameo shows the handy roof rack

although Kameo is designed as a two-berth, it can carry up to five in comfort. Restraint straps are fitted for two passengers on the rear settee.

The driver also benefits from his exalted position, the improved forward vision helping to anticipate traffic flow, as well as giving better all-round vision. Excellent cab door mirrors and the interior mirror provide clear vision to the rear, now even further assisted by the latest VW's heated rear window and wash/wipe system.

The Transporter is also car-like to drive, featuring light and precise rack and pinion steering, and well placed controls – gear lever, foot pedals and handbrake. Minor controls and switchgear also fall easily to hand, while the VW's simple instrumentation is clearly laid out and now includes a clock.

Total mileage and trip records are also standard, enabling motor caravanners to keep a check on distances travelled and fuel consumption. In our experience, owners should get up to 25mpg from a fully run-in engine.

Recent improvements to the Transporter – twin rectangular headlamps, front spoiler, moulded bumpers front and rear, modern wheel-trims, heated rear window with wash/wipe – are







# STAR TEST



*Island-leg dinette table locates close to settee*



*Kitchen unit is compact but well equipped and practical*

extended into the cab, where the dashtop moulding provides extra storage and somewhere to rest drinks.

There's also an illuminated vanity mirror for the front passenger, plus a driver's door pocket to add to the storage available in the VW's drop-front glove compartment. Also a recent addition is the cigarette lighter – useful as a power source for 12V appliances.

Cab seats are upholstered in an attractive and hard-wearing tweed cloth, with beige vinyl seat base and backrest panels and matching head restraints. Autohomes fit a swivel to the passenger seat as standard.

Other Autohomes cab appointments are a timber moulding on the front of the dashtop console, plus carpet on the floor and around the seat-base plinths. Ply lids, fin-

ished to match the furniture, cover the wells beneath the cab seats – the vehicle battery is housed beneath the driver's seat.

Access to Kameo's well-appointed living quarters is possible either direct from the cab or through the VW's sliding nearside door. From the cab, occupants need to keep their heads down until in the kitchen area. Autohomes retain Volkswagen's front and

rear roof reinforcement spars – an important plus-point for vehicle strength and rigidity on the road.

Once in the kitchen area, Kameo's high-top roof design gives good standing headroom of 6ft 1½in over a 3ft 4in section of the vehicle's length. Set more or less in the centre of the roof is a wind-up roof-light which is fitted with an insect mesh.

On the subject of Auto-



*Double bed is easy to make up, and comfortable*

homes high-tops, it's worth mentioning something that isn't apparent unless you have watched their construction. A sturdy timber support frame lies beneath the stylish GRP outer moulding, with a layer of styrene insulation between the inner and outer skins.

Ventilation and daylight are well catered for by opening acrylic windows in the sides of the roof, plus a large sliding window which backs on to the kitchen unit.

Kameo's interior feels spa-

cious thanks as much to the large windows fitted by Auto-homes as to its well-balanced decor, which combines neutral colours for walls with warm-look furniture and soft furnishings. The cab retains its original roof lining, while the high-top gets a linen-effect vinyl in mushroom. Walls are trimmed with a 'warm-touch' pale cream cord material, the floor is covered by a practical short-pile carpet in light brown which extends round seat bases.

Soft furnishings comprise



*Lap restraint straps are fitted for rear seat passengers*

velour upholstery for the rear settee, matched to dark red chenille unlined curtains. Lower curtains, including those that extend round the cab, are hung on metal track and kept in place at night by strips of Velcro. Curtains for the high-top windows run on top and bottom track to keep them in place.

Cabinetwork, constructed throughout in plywood, is finished in a medium-shade simulated woodgrain, slightly richer than the 'light oak' with which we are all too familiar.

The veneer is matched to beige basketweave worktops with postformed leading edges and white melamine undersides.

Hinged cupboard doors all feature push-to-open catches, eliminating the need for protruding door handles. Also virtually eliminated is the need for taped edge banding on furniture units, thanks to the latest techniques in construction employed by Auto-homes.

As in most popular VW Transporter conversions,



# STAR TEST

Kameo's kitchen unit extends down the offside from behind the driver's seat. Right behind the seat is the two-burner hob/grill which is fitted with a hinged glass top. An aluminium splash guard clips into the glass top to provide support and to protect the seat back and cab curtains.

Adjacent to the hob, a hinged worktop can be locked in the open position to reveal a rectangular sink finished in mushroom enamel, plus a small area of fixed work space. Next to this, and beneath another hinged top, is a separate drainer with its own waste outlet.

Cold water is pumped electrically to the fold-away spout at the sink from a 12-gallon fresh tank located beneath the settee. The pump is actuated by a footswitch which is conveniently located at the base of the kitchen unit. A fitted Zig control unit enables the contents of the fresh tank to be monitored.

Waste water is piped to an outlet under the van, for which a separate container is required. An underfloor waste tank is on the list of optional extras.

Plenty of daylight and ventilation are available for cooking, while a twin-tube fluorescent fitting takes care of night-time illumination.

Kitchen storage is more than generous. In addition to the Electrolux 2cu.ft fridge (gas/12v/240v operation) fitted beneath the sink, there's a large cupboard with a shelf divider under the grill. A second 'double cupboard' with sliding doors is provided in the base unit adjacent to the settee, supplemented by a small locker containing a wire basket at the rear of the kitchen unit. A sectioned drawer for cutlery is fitted over the fridge.



Three-door access to overcab storage locker

Kameo owners benefit from the more expensive Komet design in having an overcab pull-out storage drawer for crockery — the only difference is that Komet owners get the crockery in the price of the conversion. The pull-out drinks cabinet, which also extends over the cab on the nearside, is another legacy of Komet design.

General storage for clothes, bedding and holiday gear is also excellent. Cavernous lockers are situated in the high-top roof space both over the cab and the rear of the vehicle, supplemented by shallow lockers over the settee. Kameo's wardrobe is in the traditional place on VW conversions, on the offside just behind the settee.

Even more stowage space is provided in two shallow drawers, to which access is only available through the vehicle's tailgate door.

A practical touch from Auto-

homes is the vanity unit located beneath the centre worktop, adjacent to the settee. The underside of the worktop carries a face mirror, while the compartment can be used for storing toiletries etc.

As members of the motor caravan section of the SMMT, Autohomes are required to build their motor caravans — both coachbuilt and van conversions — in accordance with the new code of practice for motor caravan construction. As well as general build quality and attention to detail, the code calls for the safe installation of basic utilities such as gas, water and electricity.

Storage for two 6lb Camping Gaz butane cylinders is provided in a vented cupboard which is also designed to take a Porta Potti flushing toilet (optional extra). From here, gas is piped in copper to individual appliances via isolator valves. Gas safety is

further ensured by the flame failure controls fitted both to the hob/grill and the burner for the fridge.

Kameo comes as standard with a 240v hook-up, supplying mains electricity to the fridge and to a single 13-amp socket. The latter is conveniently located above, but safely distant from the sink, on a surface that also carries the Zig tank gauge plus a 12v socket and plug. The adjacent cubby hole — useful for storing condiments etc — is designed to take a full Zig charge control unit, which can be specified at time of order.

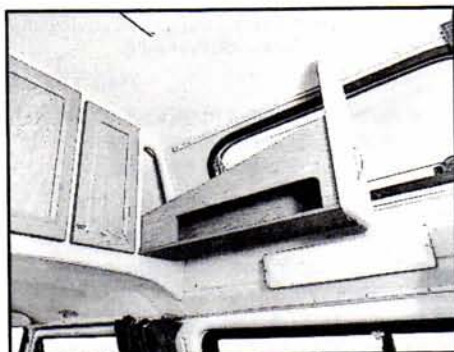
Apart from the 13-amp socket and the mains side of the fridge, all the Kameo's electrical appliances — water pump, lights and fridge — operate on 12v DC from the vehicle battery.

Mains wiring is protected by an ELCB safety cut-out and appropriate fuses.

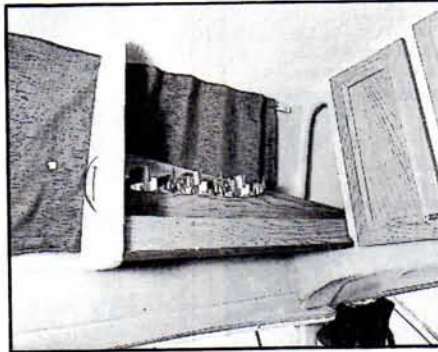
Kameo's dining arrangements are fairly standard for a Transporter conversion. Autohomes have, however contrived to create slightly more space in the central area by positioning the settee slightly further back over the engine deck. The settee's deep foam seat and backrest (fire-retardant) make it very comfortable in its dual role as seat and mattress.

At mealtimes, occupants simply have to unclip the table's single leg from the settee base and set the table up centrally in front of the settee. At 20 x 32in (max), the table is big enough for two place settings. When not required, the table top 'lives' over the engine deck.

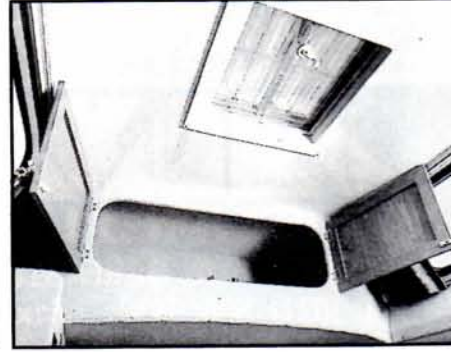
Making up the double bed is also easy. Simply pull the settee seat base forward and unclip a metal support leg, then lift the backrest into the space created. This produces



Pull-out storage for crockery...



... and for drinks



Deep storage locker over dinette



# STAR TEST



Electrics grouped together next to a handy cubby hole



## AUTOHOMES KAMEO

£14,924.70

Converter

Autohomes (UK) Ltd, 59 Old Wareham Road, Poole, Dorset BH17 7NJ. ☎ 0202 715000.

### BODY

**Type:** high-top.

**Berths:** two.

**Construction:** Volkswagen Transporter with additional windows and high-top roof. Manufacturer's original roof strengthening members retained.

**Insulation:** glass fibre mat in walls, styrene between inner timber roof frame and outer GRP moulding; double-skinned floor.

**Windows:** toughened glass in cab and body of vehicle; two opening acrylic windows in high-top; side window at kitchen unit slides open.

**Doors:** two in cab, nearside sliding door, rear tailgate.

**Dimensions:** overall length, 15ft; overall width, 6ft 1in (excluding cab door mirrors); overall height, 8ft 1in.

### INTERIOR

**Toilet compartment:** no, but floor-level cupboard will accommodate a portable toilet.

**Gas system:** vented cupboard adjacent to loo storage will take two 6lb Camping Gaz cylinders. Isolator valves for individual appliances and flame-failure control on hob/grill burners.

**Electrical system:** water pump, lights, fridge and single socket all 12v DC from vehicle battery; 240v mains hook-up wired via ELCB and fuses to fridge and single 13-amp switched socket.

**Lighting:** vehicle courtesy lights retained, plus double-tube fluorescent light over kitchen unit and spotlight over settee.

**Standard equipment includes:** VW Transporter cab with dashtop storage console, carpeted floor and passenger seat swivel; kitchen unit with two-burner hob/grill, matching sink and separate drainer, Electrolux RM212 fridge, electrically-pumped cold water supply from in-board 12-gallon tank to fold-away spout at kitchen sink, Zig tank level gauge, high and low-level storage including cutlery drawer and pull-out crockery locker. Single-leg table, settee/double bed, wardrobe and rear storage drawers.

**Factory-fitted options:** child's cab bunk, £135.24; driver's seat swivel and second table, £163.01; stainless steel rear ladder, £132.82; Porta Potti flush toilet, £55.20; blown-air

a comfortable double bed measuring 6ft 2in x 4ft. The operation is just as easy in reverse.

Simplicity of layout and ease of use, combined with a practical specification, are perhaps the Kameo's main attractions for couples who like to be on the move. Another advantage lies in the fact that those who prefer the more basic equipment level can opt for the standard Kameo, choosing or rejecting

from the list of optional extras according to their needs.

Volkswagen's Transporter also has to be a strong plus-point in the Kameo's favour. It's a superb vehicle, whether cruising down the Continent's motorways, or simply doing the daily shopping run. And bear in mind, Kameo may be just a two-berth, but it will carry up to five — not to mention a variety of loads that even a large estate car would find impossible. □

heating system, £398.48; waste water tank, £101.43; electrical control panel with battery charger, condition meter and auxiliary battery, £230.63; flyscreen for sliding window, £36.22; melamine crockery set, £41.40; built-in/removable black-and-white TV with sockets, wiring and aerial, £126.79. Autohomes can also supply a variety of bike, motorbike and surfboard racks.

### BASE VEHICLE

**Model:** Volkswagen Transporter panel van.

**Engine:** 1913cc, 4cyl horizontally-opposed water-cooled petrol; max power 78bhp at 4600rpm, max torque 104lb ft at 2600rpm.

**Transmission:** four-speed manual, rear-wheel drive.

**Steering:** rack and pinion; turning circle 35½ ft.

**Tyres:** 185R 14C.

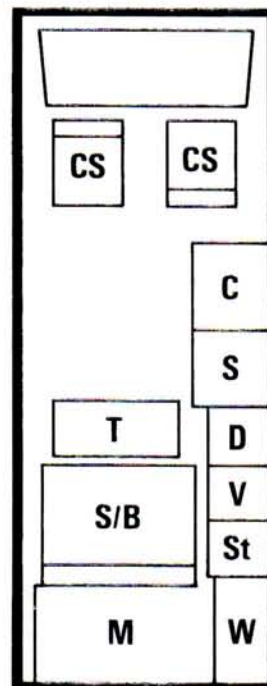
**Suspension:** front independent, coil springs with upper and lower wishbones, anti-roll bar, telescopic shock absorbers; rear independent, trailing arms, coil springs and telescopic shock absorbers.

**Brakes:** front discs, rear drums.

**Factory-fitted options:** 1.7-litre diesel, 1.6-litre turbo-diesel and 2.1-litre fuel injected petrol engines; five-speed manual and automatic transmissions (auto on petrol

engines only); syncro four-wheel drive; power-assisted steering, anti-lock brakes, electrically-operated door mirrors.

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



**Key:** CS cab seat, C cooker, S sink, D drainer, V vanity unit, St storage, W wardrobe, S/B settee, M mattress (S/B and M combine to create double bed), T table.