

The interview

Steve Lumley from London-based campervan hire and accessory company CamperVanTastic (www.campervantastic.com) explains how he achieves marital harmony on a camping trip and why it's important to go for as long as you can and plan as little as possible

What Buses have you owned, do you have one at the moment?

I started with a 2003 T4 Westfalia California, left-hand drive and with a powerful 2.5 TDi 150 BHP engine and still have this today, lovingly maintained and cared for with nothing but original VW parts.

Since forming CamperVanTastic in 2007 we've worked through every model and have seen every detail change right through to the latest T6.1. However the fleet expanded in 2020 to include the VW Grand California based on the Crafter chassis in both 6m and 6.80m models. Beyond these we are hoping to get our hands on the new VW Caddy California which I was fortunate to test drive at the UK press launch, and of course we are eager to welcome the electric derivatives as soon as they launch! So we are extremely lucky to be able to experience the developments and put them to the test on road trips and camping weekends.

So what was your favourite Bus?

Our first, the T4 Westfalia California. Without this we might never have had so many adventures.

Where's the weirdest place you've camped in your Van?

Now that's a tough call but I guess free camping in -20C at the foot of the ski slopes in a car park in France with my wife and children who were 4 and 5 at the time. We ended up staying three nights having a blast sledging and skiing – it was amazing.

Have you got any oddball camping rituals, like always having to have a pair of slippers on inside, or pitching up facing the toilet block?

Make sure the Illy coffee and Bialetti Moka are in the accessible cupboard so I get my caffeine fix and I don't have to disturb my wife in the morning! I am all for marital harmony.

Never leave home without it camping gadget?

I am afraid I am a bit annoying in that sense, with a shop full of gear there's always plenty things to try out. Being a bit of a digital nomad, I always have my laptop. That way I can still work and stay away for longer.

What was your funniest/strangest VW campervan moment?

This was also the scariest when we were touring Morocco and we found a deathstalker scorpion in the campervan at bedtime while we were camping on the edge of the Sahara! After the shock and screams my wife wanted me to kill it but I just flicked it out and thankfully it was gone by the morning!



Old or new camper?

It has to be newish, so definitely water-cooled and with plenty of power and the comfort of air conditioning that can get us reliably to the sunshine.

Cook inside or out?

It's always been mainly outside cooking up a feast on a Cadac cooker or Grillo Chef BBQ. Inside cooking is just for when the weather is terrible or for a quick cuppa en route.

Would you ditch fossils fuels and go electric?

Without a doubt if we could get a similar range but that's the main issue so we might have to wait a bit longer for technology to improve.

Are you a minimalist or do you take the kitchen sink?

I know what my wife would wish for! We have a love of all outdoor sports and as the boys have grown so has the kit list – bikes, surfboards, and now kite surfing gear. There's certainly no minimalist activities for us so we have recently invested in a trailer!

Prefer going solo, or take all the family?

We've always taken the whole family and often make a convoy with other families.

Favourite post-pitch tipple?

A cold Peroni always hits the spot after the drive, cheers!

Where haven't you been that's on your list of must-visit places for 2022?

The list is endless and gets more adventurous every year. We'd love to take the ferry to Iceland and explore the island in our own campervan. We would also like to check out Turkey maybe travelling there via Eastern Europe which we haven't explored much. With so much uncertainty around travel the campervan gives us the flexibility to decide last minute, so who knows where we will end up.

Finally, your golden rule when away in a Campervan?

Go for as long as possible as what you originally allow for is never long enough. Oh, and plan as little as possible so that you have the flexibility to stay longer or move on when you want. 🇬🇧

