

Volkswagen California Ocean 2.0 TSI 204 PS 7spd DSG

Rob Ganley checks out the latest, top-of-the-range iconic campervan 75 years after the launch of VW's T-series



The California rolls off Volkswagen's factory lines as a complete camper, and as a result has a level of fit and finish you'd expect in a luxury car. And it's based on the VW T7 Multivan, instead of the Transporter, adding nearly 30cm in length.

There's a diesel engine option, and in time there will be the option of a petrol plug-in hybrid engine, but the model reviewed here is the 204PS (201bhp) petrol engine, allied to a seven-speed automatic gearbox.

The lowdown

The new model isn't cheap. Starting from a little over £80,000, the model as tested – supplied by Campervantastic in South East London – is £85,000 on the road. So you've got to really want one. But who wouldn't? The California continues to set the standard for campervans.

1 An important new feature is that the California now comes with sliding doors on both sides of the van, with power latching so they don't need to be slammed shut. The rear seats are adjustable individually – the angle of the seat backs can be raked, plus the seats slide on runners so passengers in the back can be as near or as far from those in the cab seats as suits everyone. They come with

storage drawers beneath them. There are four belted seats in total, and sleeping berths for four.

2 This is the top of the range Ocean model, and the cabin comes with a digital driver's display and a large touchscreen. There's also a reversing camera, lane change assist, blind spot monitoring, and height-adjustable heated cab seats. ➔



Watch online



Watch Rob's review in the magazine app or at [YouTube.com/CampAndCaravanning](https://www.youtube.com/CampAndCaravanning)



3 The layout remains a VW camper classic – nearside kitchenette, with the fridge now below the cooker, a single-gas-burner hob and sink. There's also space between the kitchenette and cab seat for you to leave the living quarters on the nearside.

4 A new 5in touchscreen camper control panel in the sliding-door pillar operates air conditioning for the living quarters, as well as heating and lighting.

5 The rear seats convert to a double bed, and a mattress topper with a solid base make for a flat surface on top.

6 Not all campervans offer a roof bed, but the California's is one of the best – with the electrically-operated roof raise, it features a one-piece base. There's still no elegant solution to getting in and out of it, though, other than clambering up from the cab area.

7 The living quarters represent a feat of space-saving design brilliance. Camping chairs zip into a tailgate pocket, a freestanding table now stashes in the rear beneath the parcel shelf, and there's a separate fold-out table on the kitchenette for al fresco use. The canopy awning on the UK nearside is standard kit.

8 The gas cylinder is seated within a moulded freshwater container at the rear, which is a smart use of space but does restrict your choice of cylinder. The release taps for the water tanks remain inside the van, and the freshwater inlet point is now also inside the van. And it comes with a funnel to reduce spills.

9 While the largely unchanged grey interior colour scheme continues to divide opinion, there's little doubt the California retains its appeal.

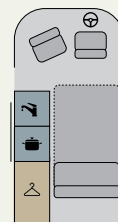


Thanks to Campervantastic for its help with this feature – it offers the new Ocean and Beach models for hire, including the Plug-in Hybrid EV. [Campervantastic.com](https://www.campervantastic.com)

Key facts

Prices from **£80,392**
Berths **Four**
Travel seats **Four**
Maximum
Authorised Mass
2,850kg
User payload
456kg

For more information
volkswagen-vans.co.uk



The rivals



PRE-OWNED

2023 Bilbo's VW Celex Continental

Bilbo's two-berth Celex can be upgraded to a four berth by opting for a Continental front-elevating roof. The layout features a kitchenette on the driver's side.

Price around £58,000



PRE-OWNED

2022 Rolling Homes VW Livingstone

Based on the VW Transporter, the Livingstone features a rear elevating roof, with an unusual fixed toilet and rear corner kitchen layout.

Price around £50,000