

Practical

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Exclusive look at eight-'van luxury line-up

Motorhome

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BRITAIN'S BEST NEW MOTORHOMES

Auto-Sleeper Fairford Plus

Want a garage, but don't want a coachbuilt? This van conversion might just be the answer. **Nick Harding** investigates space in the transformed Fairford Plus

In the latest Plus guise, the Auto-Sleeper Fairford offers loads of space at the back for luggage, and a frame to make a medium-level double bed that could be left up permanently.

This folding frame can be adapted to form inward-facing sofas, so you have an end lounge. True, there are no side windows, but you can open the back doors and there's a skylight.

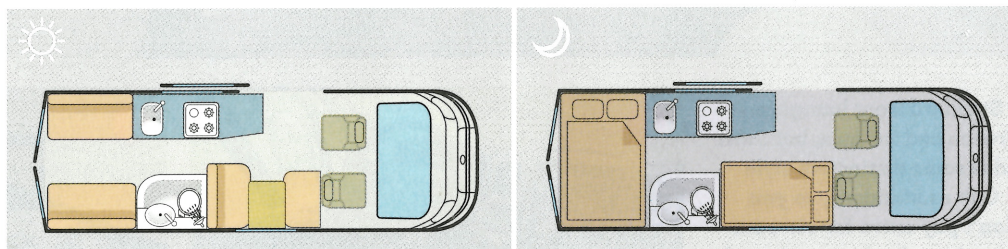
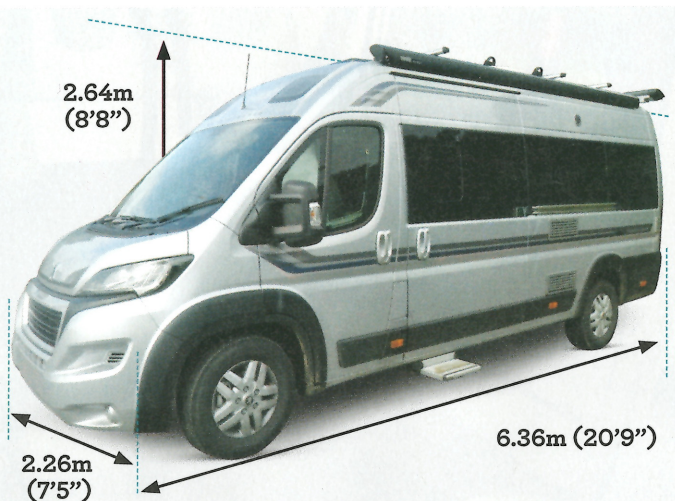
For making the bed, a couple of metal support bars slot in, allowing the seat frames to fold out flat. It's all at a height where there's still a significant amount of storage space below.

From the outside, the Fairford Plus certainly looks like a typical Auto-Sleeper model. As with all of the firm's van conversions, the windowed version of the Boxer provides the base, with alloys and a black awning adding to the appearance.

Peugeot's latest Boxer comes with new Euro 6.2, 2.2-litre engines. In the Fairford Plus, you get the range-topping 165bhp.

The cab, too, comes with the luxuries you'd expect, including the touchscreen infotainment system with sat nav, as well as ESP and Traction Control, plus a tyre pressure monitoring

- ☛ **Price** From £58,000 (ex-works)
- ☛ **Sleeps** 4 ☛ **Belts** 4
- ☛ **Base vehicle** Peugeot Boxer
- ☛ **Engine** 2.2 165bhp Euro 6.2
- ☛ **Length/width/height** 6.36/2.26/2.64m (20'9"/7'5"/8'8")
- ☛ **MTPLM** 3500kg (4000kg optional)
- ☛ **Payload** 424kg
- ☛ **Water** (fresh/waste) 69/40 litres
- ☛ **Leisure battery** 105Ah
- ☛ **Gas** Permanent underslung tank takes 25 litres



Contact Auto-Sleepers **Address** Orchard Works, Willersey, Nr Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7QF **Web** www.auto-sleepers.com **Tel** 01386 853 338

system. Unlike the prototype here, production models will get a leather-trimmed steering wheel and gearlever.

Up front, it's standard Fairford seating. There are four travel berths, thanks to the slightly curious double dinette that relies on the driver's seat for back support.

The fixed pedestal-leg table has lots of height and fore-and-aft adjustment, although the top didn't feel overly sturdy.

Along the nearside, there's a great kitchen, where the Spinflo Triplex cooker has permanent worktop either side, and a sink in matching black.

There's also a Thetford three-way fridge under the counter, plus a Dometic microwave over the sink.

Storage includes a double overhead locker, although the large locker to the right of the cooker would really benefit from at least one shelf, and the floor locker

below the oven would be all the better as a drawer.

A tambour door for the washroom is always a great space-saver. You can use the whole room for showering, too, as the handbasin slides across to give you optimum space. An extractor fan goes some way towards making up for the lack of a window.

Elsewhere, details of note range from the LED paddle reading lights on a rail, to a good selection of mains and USB outlets throughout.



Seat/bed frames fold away to optimise storage space just inside the back doors



Tambour door saves space; handbasin slides over for more room when showering



Handy pull-up mains socket tower in the kitchen



Paddle lamps on rails are practical and look smart

WHAT MOTORHOME? Four-berth van conversion



- 1** Double dinette seating relies on the driver's seat for back support. Fixed pedestal-leg table is fully adjustable
- 2** Lovely run of kitchen offers permanent worktop either side of the cooker
- 3** Rear seating option is cleverly designed, despite being a bit rudimentary and slightly lacking in legroom



Whale heating and hot-water systems are mounted under the floor – again, saving vital interior space. As does the gas tank.

Some interesting options point to Auto-Sleepers' view of the future, with a kayak carrier on the roof and a bike rack on the rear door. You might also have spotted the nifty wind-out awning over the rear doors, part of the

£595 Thule Pack, which also includes load-bearing roof rails and a foldaway ladder.

In its most basic format, the Fairford Plus starts off with an ex-works price of £58,000 (leaving aside the thorny issue of VED). You'll want to add the Premium and Winter Packs (£2500 and £295 respectively). Consider, too, the £995 Media Pack and the £1000

Climate Pack (with Truma roof-mounted air-con).

This prototype could be improved – the furnishings, for example, don't look as 'all-action' as they might otherwise.

But that rear area is a really practical bonus – as well as a fold-out floor-level partition, clips are in place to harness your pets in transit, or on-site.

PRACTICAL MOTORHOME SAYS...

The Plus Factor? More than that. Auto-Sleepers has completely transformed its standard Fairford with the three-way rear offering – seating, permanent bed, storage zone – and come up with a truly adaptable vehicle. A few tweaks would improve a very promising concept indeed.



Rear bed could be left made up permanently if preferred



Auto-Sleepers has switched to Dometic microwaves



Water-tank drainpipes dangle and are close to the exhaust



Production models will get padded steering wheel