



Text: David Photography: Cee and David

KARISMATIC

Elaine Whiting fell in love with VW buses at the tender age of 16, and subsequent holidays in Cornwall just fuelled her ambition and dream to own one. Then last year, with the big three O approaching she decided it was now or never!

She spotted this Lime Green lovely on E-Bay, with what she describes as, “really rubbish pictures of the poor thing parked under a tree looking all sorry for herself and abused, but the colour just got me.” She had decided a T3 was her best option price / condition wise and this fixed top Karisma offered a retro feel combined with plenty of well appointed internal living space. Plus there was that striking and distinctive colour! After a few negotiations on price over email, and a lot of research into what to check and look for when buying a T3, she went to have a look and when they pulled

up behind it she says, “it looked 10 times better than the pictures and I couldn’t believe my luck!” After the initial shock of no power steering, she quickly settled into the quirky nature of an old bus on a test drive and a deal was struck there and then.

The Lime Green paint (which Elaine simply adores) had been done the previous year and the bodywork and mechanics were in basically good order, and the 1.9 water cooled engine was actually clean and tidy looking, as well as sounding sweet. The interior was intact with original fittings and cabinets and, though shabby inside with what she describes “silly little things which had broken and not



The rear section of the Karisma high roof features a roof carry rack, accessed by a fixed stainless steel ladder.



New upholstery for the seats and door cards has updated the tired interior.



The kitchen units featuring hob, sink and fridge are all sited in the traditional run under the windows.



Additional storage is in the rear of the fixed high top.

The most distinctive feature of the Auto-Homes Karisma is the fixed high roof which has an integral roof rack (accessed by fixed stainless steel ladder) on the rear section.

been fixed,” the worst thing was probably the high top roof, which had a rip and was covered in tree sap.

The most distinctive feature of the Auto-Homes

Karisma is the fixed high roof which has an integral roof rack (accessed by fixed stainless steel ladder) on the rear section. The interior is essentially the same as other Auto Homes models, with wood faced cabinets that house cooker, sink and fridge running under the side window, hanging space in the rear and lots of storage everywhere you

look! The high roof gives additional storage as well as headroom, with drawers and cupboards as well as open storage space and includes two slide out sections flanking the front section which are designed for carrying bottles and crockery.

The bus immediately went to Steve at Johnsons Autoworks for him to check over and, as well as a full service, he fitted four new tyres, replaced the fuel lines and MOT’d it. Elaine has found Steve to be more than helpful saying, “if I have any silly questions he’s always on the end of the phone, and he also recommends good campsites, which is a bonus!” Elaine’s first job was to tackle the roof. >>



Elaine is completely new to the joys and tribulations of owning a classic bus, but is more than willing to have a go at stuff and learn, adding, "I like to get a cup of coffee and the Haynes manual out on a Sunday morning and have a look, see what's under there, and I'd like to have a go at doing some service bits when I get a bit more confidence."

The stainless steel hob and circular sink have cleaned up to look like new.



After fibre glassing the rip she set to with non abrasive caravan cleaner which soon had it looking like new again. Then she removed the plastic wheel trims and, with a wire brush and lots of elbow grease, the steel wheels were returned to original appearance and set off with original chrome hubcaps. New speakers were fitted in the doors, an old interior light replaced with a new version and Elaine also fixed a few bits and pieces inside like cupboards, a work top which was hanging off and some broken catches, as well as copious amounts of cleaning! New cab carpet and green curtains made the interior look fresh and new.

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She has just had the door cards, cab seats and rear seat / bed re-upholstered (with new foam for the cushions) in hard wearing fabric in green fleck pattern and brown – the design is reversed for cab and rear seats making for a design break and, with the addition of new carpet in the living area, this has really finished off the interior and brought it all together. Tockfield in Derbyshire carried out the work and Elaine says, "I would recommend them to anybody, and they also do interiors for caravans, boats and motorhomes, and they gave us the option to camp on their campsite in the beautiful Derbyshire countryside



All the original Autohomes cabinets and fittings are still in original condition.



The front area of the high roof features two pull out drawer sections for storing bottles and crockery.



whilst they did the work which is great if you don't live close." Also all of their work is guaranteed, and they have the latest fabrics and leathers or can use the customer's own fabric.

Her next jobs include attention to rust areas around some of the seams, waxing the underneath and making up some curtains in matching green fabric for the roof windows.

Apart from actually doing things to the van, she plans to have lots of holidays travelling the UK, and would like to tour Scotland, Wales, and the south coast. She is loving everything about living with her camper, from fixing little things herself and buying bits and bobs to getting out the barbie and sitting chilling with a glass of wine, watching the world go by. Her mum and dad absolutely love the camper to bits and it is always the talking point around the table with a cup of tea, telling her dad what she plans to do next and talking about the shows. "They love her just as much as I do!" ☺

Elaine

Would like to thank:

Tockfield in Derbyshire "for doing a brilliant job of the interior re trim, it's been a pleasure throughout. And the end result blew me away."
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Steve at Johnsons Autoworks in Wymswold Leicestershire "for looking after the mechanical side and all of his advice."
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 Tel: 01509889552
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All the members of club 80-90 "if you own a T3 joining this club is a must." www.club80-90.co.uk

And "my wonderful Mum And Dad for all the advice, help and support, and for just being there for me to talk to about the van and camping trips, and sharing my passion for VW's