

Review 10220: Volkswagen T1 Camper Van

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Pictures by *LEGO® Systems A/S*

Set: Volkswagen T1 Camper Van
Set number: 10220
Number of parts: 1332
Recommended retail price: 99,95€

"Dear Mr. LEGO,

When I was little my parents bought a first series Volkswagen Camper at a police auction. The camper had been confiscated in a border control operation between Spain and France, as there were drugs found in it.

That Volkswagen witnessed some of the best moments I spent with my family. My father installed a kitchen, a small sink and a cupboard. He modified the windows and doors to place an extractor over the cooker. We travelled all over Spain and Europe with it. From Barcelona and at 90 km/h we went all the way to Copenhagen and Berlin, among many other places. People would greet us on the road as we drove an iconic vehicle.

When we kids grew up, the camper fell in disuse and to avoid it deteriorating, we sold it to a collector who would restore it and give it a new life.

¿Why do I write all of this? Well, because I often get nostalgic and I'd love it if you could make a brick-built reproduction of this mythical vehicle. I would like it to remind me of those first models that came onto the market, and for it to have a fully equipped interior. I remember the front seat was a single bench and the back seat could be converted into a bed. Lastly (although I realize this is much to ask) I'd like it to be green,



like the one we had as any other colour simply wouldn't be the same

I hope my suggestion is well received and that soon I'll be able to buy this marvellous model, icon of hippy culture and an essential part of my childhood.

Lluís Gibert

This fictitious letter shows my particular story with this set and the emotion I felt when I saw the first images.

I normally concentrate on building techniques, pieces, etc... In this case I will simply talk about the details (which I know first hand from the real model) and marvel while reviewing a piece of my childhood.

Building the set takes about 3 hours, including organising the pieces. As with any vehicle, construction begins with the chassis and the axles for the wheels. After this "less attractive" part the interesting gadgets begin. First among those is the engine. Although built with few pieces, it shows the essence of a simple engine (the same one as in the VW Beetle) that was practically indestructible. The designers have added the alternator belt, and when you open the bonnet what you see looks like an engine ready to start working.

The next building step is the rear compartment. For me it is one of the essential parts as the details that are included in this part mark the quality of the reproduction of this vehicle. Evidently each Camper had different interior equipment, but there are some details that are common to all Campers which are reproduced in this model. The rear bench, for example, which can be converted into a bed, joining it with the tray that



covers the engine. In the LEGO® Camper this seat takes up approximately 2/3 of the width of the cabin, allowing 2 people to sleep on it. The other 1/3 is taken up by a cupboard to which the designers have added one of those gadgets we like so much: a t-shirt with the slogan “Make LEGO models, not war”. It’s a small twist to the famous “Make love not war”. I suppose that for a toy “Make love” was inappropriate...

This rear part also has a foldable table (it needs to be folded to be bale to extend the bed), a sink with a tap and a cupboard underneath, another seat so you can use the table on both sides, and small decorative elements like spotlight, a lamps, a small plant and wonderful curtains that give some privacy to the people using the van.

The front cabin has a similar level of detail and I can assure you it is identical to the original. For example, the instruments, though austere, are faithfully reproduced. The position of the steering wheel, the pedals and above all the gear lever make you want to sit down and drive it. The single front bench has not been forgotten, in favour of the individual or 2/3 - 1/3 seats of later models. One thing that has surprised me is that the front windows open towards the front. Our camper didn’t have that possibility

The exterior is also up to par as far as details are concerned. Starting with the front, you’ll see the reproduction, though difficult due to the many curves, is quite faithful to the original. The shape and position of the headlights is essential for the model to evoke the original and (as obvious as it may sound) the pieces that have been used are exactly right. We all know how “square” LEGO designs tend to be, so making a curve on the front, separating two colours was a difficult task. The designers have done a scaled transition from red to white and have added two curved hoses to conceal this transition. The VW logo on the front is also essential.

The front doors are very close to the original design. For example, only the left door has a rear view mirror, as in those times it was not compulsory to have a right mirror. The doors can open and their insides have been carefully designed as well. The grips on the doors are made with hoses that are normally used in City, but the piece is a good fit. Had they been chromed or metallic silver they would have been perfect.

The rear part reproduces the windows on the left side and the two doors on the right side. Only one of the doors has a handle as the other one could only be opened from inside. Continuing towards the rear, there are ventilation grilles for the engine and, on the right side, a lid for the fuel tank. From the window behind the doors the hippie t-shirt can be seen (looking through the curtains).



I was very positively surprised by the great appearance of the rear part. Both the placing of the license plate and the knob for opening the engine housing or door to the rear of the cabin are perfectly represented. The rear lights, although square (the original ones were ovals) don’t stand out nor diminish the feeling of realism. Below the rear bumper the exhaust pipe has been added.

Talking of bumpers, I’d like to mention that the front and rear bumpers are different and that they fit in well with the rest of the vehicle.

Lastly, though no less important, the roof. The part that covers the front cabin is fixed and reproduces the curve of the original model well. The part that covers the rear can be opened, which allows access to the interior. The roof contains one of the best known accessories in these models: the Westfalia(R), an element that allows the roof to be “lifted” so a person can stand upright inside the van. In this case it is the “small” model, but it works (it includes a cloth element) and increases the height of the van in the area of the table. I have seen models with a larger Westfalia that allow the incorporation of bed in the roof. The orange cloth is very striking and if you leave the model with the Westfalia open, your eyes are immediately attracted to this element as it breaks (in a positive way) the carefully crafted look of the model.

Behind the Westfalia there is a small roof rack for suitcase or other elements that don’t fit inside the cabin.

Conclusions.

¿What can I say? I like it. The work that has been done on this model is splendid and I would never have imagined that the Camper from my childhood would become a reality in this way. I can’t help but be fascinated to see what can be done “piling up” bricks, and although there are no especially noteworthy building techniques, the set is worth all the praise that can be given.

Unfortunately it isn’t green...

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