

REVIEW

HILLTOP ERYRI ADVENTURER



This Welsh company makes great-value campervans on a variety of bases

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REVIEW

NEW VANS

only travel with one.

It might not be an issue for all, but I find the small pull-tab catches – also fitted in many other campervans – fiddly and painful to use and have lost count of the number of nail breakages.

The rear seat is a Vulcan model that converts into a double bed pretty simply. It makes a very flat bed, too. However, the rear parcel shelf, where most campervanners store their bedding, is a touch small. It would be OK for a couple of soft cloth bags, but you would have to take care opening the rear doors.

The benefit of the Vulcan seat is that the backrest can be set at different rake positions. The well-regarded Mobiframe is an option and this does come with more rear storage.

You can still access the cutlery drawer and water storage with the bed in place – handy if you need a teaspoon for your morning cuppa or need to top up the water supply.

The under-bed space can be accessed through a rear hatch but this is quite small – I'd like to see a bigger door here, or a drawer that slides out, the latter of which Hilltop can now offer.

The storage unit at the back is not quite full height, but this does create a useful shelf while on site. The front section is accessed through a tambour door, while the rear has a shelf, with the lower part for the electrics and storage and the upper section a good space. While the model previewed did not offer access

to this top section from the inside, there will be a hatch from the wardrobe in future models.

The lowermost locker at the rear stores the 105Ah lithium battery and offers more storage but this is likely to be where the gas locker is on the models with LPG systems. I'd like to see some of the wires ducted off to protect them. However, it's important to note that, because of the space available, you can increase the battery capacity: one customer had 500Ah installed. Plus there is a 200W solar panel on the roof for helping to keep charge flowing back into the battery. The Viectron app helps you stay on top of power usage and demands.

However, there is a mains and 12V socket handily located between the electrics and the battery locker. Perfect for inflating awnings, outdoor gear or more.

Up top, the pop-top is a Van-Lite model. It lowers and raises easily on gas struts. This model is fitted with the Premium fabric, though the Deluxe is the standard on Hilltop campervans. Whichever you opt for you get a windoed customers can choose from different mattress types.

Lighting wise there's a spotlight in the pop-top with a USB socket. There are four spotlights along one along the roof near the door; they touch on and touch off. Then there's two spotlights also with USB C and A ports at the back of the seats. The lights under the bed are dimmable and then there's strip lighting under the kitchen too.

FACT FILE

HILLTOP ERYN ADVENTURER
Price from £52,950 (as reviewed £56,950)
Base vehicle Renault Traffic Extra LWB 2.0i.e.
150hp manual (170hp auto available on Extra Sports model)
Berths 4
Travel seats 5
Length 5.40m
Width 1.96m
Height 1.97m
Gross weight TBC
Payload TBC

VERDICT

This is a solid practical camper and the fact that Hilltop offers Renault base vehicle options for customers is great – not everyone wants a van with a pop-top. The price is another big factor, with the standard model coming in at around £50k – and that includes features like the lithium battery, solar panel and more. The model we reviewed was £56,950 (with the Vanshades blinds, stitched leather seats and the Willes hub: all being options). Plus, you can get the specification tailored towards your needs. If you're interested, get in touch with Hilltop and book into view the workshops and demonstrator models.



NEW VANS



Hilltop is based in Wales and has been around for 20 plus years. Owner, Phil, told us that while the company will convert many different vans he prefers the Renault that this model is based on. He states "the squareness of the Renault gives it more room and I like the way they drive as it feels more car like." In addition, Renaults also offer great value for money in terms of standard specification normally.

This model is the Eryri Adventurer, one of a new range of layouts, with two more set to follow; the Nomad and Explorer. While the Renault is the standard conversion the model can also be ordered on the Ford and VW vans. That's not the only option however, because everything is built in-house, so Hilltop is able to tailor models to each customers' individual needs.

This is the LWB model, measuring 5.40m, but you can order the model in SWB (4.99m) form, too. And the model we previewed was a gas-free option with a Wallas hob/heater powered by diesel; you can order it with gas systems if preferred. A 2,000W inverter will be standard fitting going forward with an uprated 220Ah lithium battery.

What's interesting to see in this model is the Renault double passenger cab seat. The innermost seatback can be dropped down to create a drinks holder and snack tray. Use it on the road if there's just two up front, or even when on site as a coffee table.

This allows for five belted seats, three up front and two in the rear. The double cab seat swivels round to face the back seats and the Vulcan system used allows

it to slide forward, too. You do have to undo five bolts to do this – make sure those bolts are stashed away carefully, as you wouldn't be able to drive without them fitted. Hilltop told us a drawstring bag could be provided to help keep these important bolts all in one place when the seat is swivelled.

And while it does slide forward, it's not enough for four to dine at the one table. We'd probably want to see another table offered – maybe a free-standing Loeb that can be stashed away in a recess on the sliding door. Hilltop said it will provide a slightly wider table for future models, but anything much bigger would get in the way. The table is currently stored above the cab, but the company is working on a new table with dedicated storage.

This is a side kitchen model that is pretty well specced. The 50-litre fridge (from Alpicool) is a decent size with a small freezer compartment and two door shelves. It's got Bluetooth, which allows you to control the temperature of the fridge and freezer using an app. This sits below the sink, again a good size with a good-quality swan neck tap in on-trend black.

Next to this is the hob. As already alluded to, this is diesel-powered with a flat glass cooking plate and space for two pans. It also can act as a heater, too. The gas version comes with a double-burner gas hob and Autoterm heating.

There are USB A and C sockets and a mains socket near the kitchen as well as the simple control panel. The lower part of the kitchen under the hob has two locker doors. The lowest one contains two water tanks, though if you wanted to save space you could always

PROS

- Great value
- Easy to make bed
- Lots of options for base vehicles and more
- Space for 12V battery upgrade



CONS

- Table won't allow four to dine at once
- Small parcel shelf at rear

