

# Aztec gold

WORDS AND PICTURES Ed O'Connor

It's been a while since we've seen a Devon conversion on a Fiat Ducato, but if the company's new Aztec is anything to go by, it's been well worth the wait

**D**EVON MAY BE ONE OF the industry's quieter players, preferring to let its products speak for themselves rather than trumpeting them from the rooftops, but it has an annoying – by which we mean annoying for its rivals – habit of coming up with some of the best van conversions in the business.

In recent years, the County Durham-based company has concentrated mainly on motorhomes built on the venerable Renault Master, with occasional models built on the Mercedes Sprinter (Sapphire), Iveco Daily (Diamond), Volkswagen Transporter (Moonraker and Sundowner) and Toyota Hiace (Sunrise). Devon also used to build on the Fiat Ducato but this was dropped a while back.

Now, however, the red roundel is back with a vengeance in the guise of the latest X2/50, and Devon's response has been to build a spacious end-lounge conversion on both the medium and long wheelbase 2.3-litre Multijet models.

I first clapped eyes on this handsome newcomer at the Caravan Club's Design & Drive competition earlier this year, and remember the 120bhp engine and six-speed gearbox being an admirably potent combination, even on the bigger long wheelbase version. You can specify the more powerful – still 3.0 Multijet engine too, although I suspect most buyers who do this will be looking more for the Comfort Matic automatic transmission that is unique to this engine, rather than any more grunt. The ride is typically firm (especially compared to the more



Spacious: Plenty of room to unwind

## PRACTICALITY 9/10

Couples will find there's almost as much space in the long-wheelbase Aztec as there is in a small coachbuilt. Good storage, an excellent kitchen and a perfectly usable washroom add up to a seriously practical motorhome.

### VAN ON TEST

#### Devon Aztec

From £32,940 OTR



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The well-equipped kitchen offers generous worktop space for all your culinary essentials

compliant Ford Transit and Renault Master), although the payoff is class-leading handling and stability.

Of the two models available, you could perhaps argue that the long wheelbase model featured here is the one to go for. Quite apart from offering the versatility of two 6ft 3in-long single beds as well as a 6ft 1.5in-wide double (the MWB can only muster a four foot 3in-wide double bed), the bigger derivative also sports a considerably more generous payload (920kg compared to 510kg on the MWB) thanks to the extra 500kg deployed by its higher 3500kg gross vehicle weight. As an added incentive, even the LWB's added inches fail to make it breach the magical 6m overall length, beyond which ferry prices (among other things) can increase dramatically. That said, the 5.4m-long MWB will be even easier to manoeuvre and park.

Inside, the layout is reassuringly familiar, with a large U-shaped lounge out back, well-lit by day by four large windows, and by night, by surprisingly potent and mainly low-power-drain LED lights. Bed make-up is quick and easy, too, and you'd be surprised at how many people you could feasibly get

around the dining table. In short, this is one king-sized – and extremely comfy – lounge.

Up front, you can kick back and relax on the swivelled driver's seat (the passenger seat swivels, too), using the handy worktop on top of the generous 90-litre fridge as somewhere to place your book, glass and wine bottle, while the dinky little window behind the fridge makes what could otherwise have felt quite a dark corner pleasingly bright and airy. The raised cab floor relative to the rest of the motorhome also means even shorter owners won't suffer from the dreaded 'dangling feet syndrome'.

The remaining space in the middle of the conversion is filled by the nearside kitchen and the offside wardrobe/washroom. The former is surprisingly comprehensive, with a Smev 401 domestic-standard spark ignition cooker allied to a good-sized stainless-steel sink and a useful fold-up worktop extension by the sliding door. The washroom opposite, while of the inevitable all-in-one variety, somehow manages to feel reasonably spacious, with a good-sized shower tray and familiar mirrored vanity unit/tip-up washbasin. Finding potentially wasteful twin taps in lieu of a preferable single mixer tap is one of very few disappointments to be found in this motorhome. □

### BUILD QUALITY

9/10

No real surprises here – the day we test a poorly-made or poorly-finished Devon motorhome is likely to be the day we spot a hen sporting a full set of teeth. Some of the cabinetry could, however, be deemed just a little plain and we would have preferred higher-quality pleated blinds and flyscreens to those actually fitted, but elsewhere, no complaints whatsoever.

# Motor Caravan

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## Scores

Exterior features	8/10
On the road	9/10
Lounging	10/10
Dining	10/10
Night-time	9/10
Storage	9/10
Kitchen	9/10
Washroom	7/10
Practicality	9/10
Build quality	9/10
<b>Overall mark</b>	<b>89/100</b>

### BASE VEHICLE

Fiat Ducato LWB panel van, 120bhp

### BERTHS

Two travelling, two sleeping

### BED DIMENSIONS

2 x singles 1.92m x 0.63m (6ft 3in x 2ft 0in)  
Double bed 6ft 3in x 6ft 1.5in

### MTPLM

3500kg

### PAYLOAD

920kg

### GAS

2 x 4.5kg Calor

### BATTERY

110Ah

### FRESH WATER

66 litres, underslung

### WASTE WATER

50 litres, underslung

### BASE VEHICLE

Fiat Ducato LWB panel van, 2.3-litre MJ diesel, 120bhp at 3600rpm, 320Nm at 2000rpm. Front-wheel-drive. Six-speed gearbox.

### CONSTRUCTION

Standard panel van with factory glass rear windows and converter-fit double-glazed plastic side windows

### STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Twin swivel cab seats, CD/radio, electric windows and door mirrors, remote central locking, Thetford cassette toilet, Truma Combi gas/electric space and water heater, 90-litre Dometic RM8461 fridge with in-built freezer, Smev unitary cooker, post-type freestanding tables, fire extinguisher, bound edge removable carpets

### MANUFACTURER

Devon Conversions Ltd, Mainsforth Road, Ferryhill, Co. Durham DL17 9DE  
☎ 01740 655700  
🌐 [devonconversions.com](http://devonconversions.com)

### RIVAL MODELS

Autocruise Rhythm, Swift Mondial RL, Auto-Sleeper Warwick Duo, IH Tio RL, Vantage Sol, Danbury Family 4

### FOR

Build quality, base vehicle, huge lounge, well-equipped kitchen

### AGAINST

Compact washroom, unpainted front bumper, twin washroom taps