

# Today's versatile vans

Van campers or van conversions are one of the fastest-growing types of recreational vehicles in the country. Why? Because of their versatility.

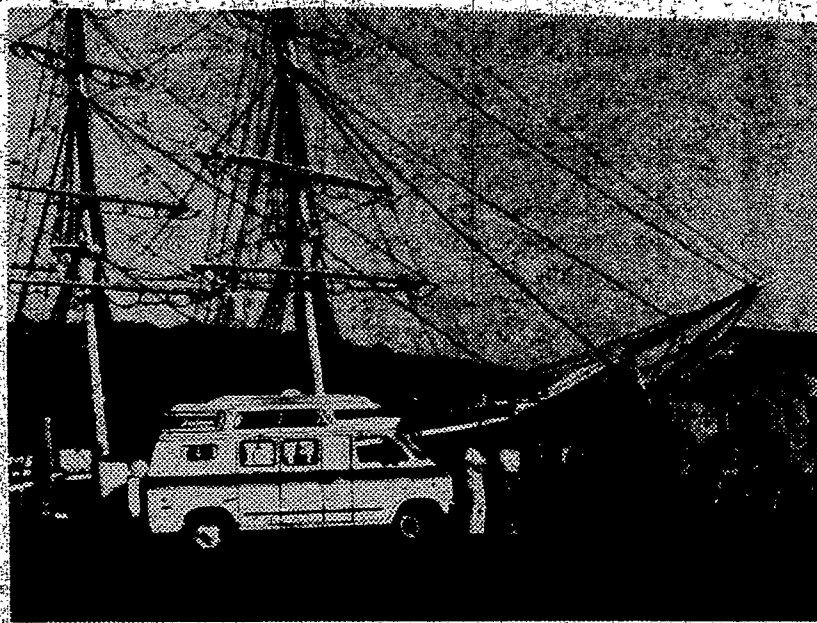
Coachmen Industries, a major van conversion manufacturer, believes more and more families are discovering the split personality of vans. During the week, they carry groceries, haul kids, take the dog to the vet and serve in the neighborhood motor pool. On weekends, they take off their work clothes and become the family's pleasure cruiser.

#### Capacity increased

This combination of utility and fun is possible because a van is first of all a vehicle. The chassis is usually a standard van like the ones used by stores for deliveries. Generally, they will have an automatic transmission, power steering and power brakes.

Their high load capacity is increased with heavy duty shock absorbers and a larger cooling capability. The driver's compartment includes the niceties of a deluxe vehicle such as a padded dash and bucket seats. The addition of a fiberglass top to the roof of the van permits adults to stand upright. It also provides space for the installation of a slide-out bunk.

Starting with this basic chassis, van conversion manufacturers like Coachmen then transform the barren interior into a cozy living area full of practical



comfort. The degree of features offered varies between models, so you can choose what fits your needs and your budget. Economy models, such as the Coachmen Modelay, come equipped with the necessities: two-burner stove top, ice box and sink. Cabinets and drawers provide ample storage.

#### Deluxe unit

The Coachmen Modelbee is an example of a more deluxe unit. It includes an oven, a refrigerator instead of an icebox and a toilet. Optional goodies such as air conditioning and 8-track stereo tape with AM/FM radio can be added for extra on-the-road luxury.

With the inside equipped for comfortable living, the van conversion is ready to serve its dual role.

The weight of the van camper contributes to its

practical use as a second car. At 4,700 lbs. to 5,500 lbs. it weighs less than many luxury automobiles. Thus its operating cost makes it a reasonable addition to the family garage.

Another characteristic that enhances the value of a van as your number two car is its size. Because it starts as a vehicle designed for city streets and isn't lengthened or widened, the van is at home in city traffic. Women quickly feel comfortable driving it and aren't awed by the thought of parking it.

Although the van won't carry as many passengers as a nine-passenger station wagon (the Coachmen Modelbee carries six), it has plenty of space to carry groceries, packages and other errand-related cargo.

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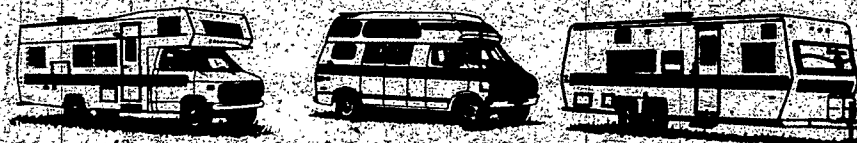
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