

OUR 'VANS, OUR MONTH

The Topaz caused quite a stir at the Snetterton race track



Reassuringly expensive?



I had to wrestle the keys to the Topaz from our Jeremiah this month, as I wanted to use the little high-top as a base when staying at Snetterton for the next of my partner Matt's Caterham races. It was the first occasion that I'd been away in the Topaz and I loved the washroom; the space dedicated to it is

excellent, and makes the Topaz a contender as a suitable wild-camping 'van. It does mean space elsewhere suffers, however, and there is little work surface in the kitchen. I found myself needing to utilise the freestanding lounge table when cooking.

The lounge is excellent, mind: the sofas are comfy and I like the fact that there are two different-sized tables

to offer increased flexibility. The bed that's created from those seats is really comfy, too. I'm not so keen on the suction-cup-mounted blinds in the cab, though: they're really awkward to get to once the front seats have been swivelled, and didn't stick on particularly well.

Our motorcaravanning friends at the track expressed quite an interest in the Topaz,

- +** **LIKES**
The washroom's a great size for such a small 'van; the spacious lounge area
- **DISLIKES**
The lack of storage space; the stick-on cab blinds; that large price tag

with a number of people asking to have a look inside; they couldn't quite believe that a practical washroom could be squeezed inside such a compact van conversion.

While they agreed with me that this is a clever little 'van, they, too, balked at the price – at nearly £54,000, this faces really strong competition from other sectors. And while I like the Topaz a lot, this is where it might struggle on the forecourts.

SARAH WAKELY

Auto-Sleeper Topaz
Price £53,495
Mileage 4117
Economy 28.3mpg
Faults NONE
Expenses NONE

Improved reception for our Wellhouse



Our Wellhouse Granvia long-term test 'van has certainly been eating up the miles over its first month of testing. It's already got around 1500 miles on the clock. Luckily, it's an absolute delight to drive.

One of its shorter trips was a visit to our local Halfords to have a new Sonichi stereo radio/CD player fitted. It has

digital radio reception and the fitting involved took less than an hour but included a new aerial (they told us that the more upright a digital aerial is, the better the reception).

We've also been discovering some of the more offbeat places to fill up with LPG; 70p per litre is the best price we've found so far. By our own calculations, we've been getting the equivalent of nearly 20 miles per gallon. Now while that might not sound that impressive,

remember we're paying half the price for our fuel.

We have had one issue, though. The gas tank is located under the 'van, where the spare wheel used to be stored. Wellhouse left the spare wheel carrier on, for a bit of extra protection. However, this means the underside of

the 'van clashes with the ground every time we go over a speed bump, with sufficient force to unclip the carrier, much to the driver's embarrassment. It seems to serve no other useful purpose, so we've taken it off altogether.

NICK HARDING



Nick has had a new Sonichi digital radio fitted in the Wellhouse

- +** **LIKES**
It's great to drive; the new digital stereo system; the option to run on gas
- **DISLIKES**
The superfluous spare wheel carrier

Wellhouse Toyota Granvia
Price £19,000 approx
Mileage 1500
Economy 20mpg
Faults NONE
Expenses NONE