

Murvi Morocco XL

It seems we want our van conversions ever bigger. That means using Fiat's extra-long Ducato? Like Murvi has just done

AT A GLANCE • PRICE FROM £50,179 • BERTHS/TRAVEL SEATS 2/2

An exclusive invitation from Murvi? A new model from the highly regarded independent producer from Devon could only mean a response in the positive. But, I wasn't expecting big surprises. The general drift in the van conversions market is to ever more configurations, with the extra-long-wheelbase Fiat Ducato now featuring in a lot of converters' workshops. It was no surprise then, to discover what was in store here – a new model on Fiat's longest Ducato. Not that I was disappointed.

Murvi's Morocco has been gaining in popularity since its introduction some three seasons ago. It's been a bit of a slow-burner, but that probably suits the Murvi way (sister model Morello is well on the way to its third decade now and shows no signs of tiring – it's still Murvi's best-seller).

But it's the Morocco that's just been given the stretch treatment, with the XL announced exclusively here. And first impressions are it looks excellent value – that's if you base it on the £2,000 premium you pay over a standard model (see also June 2012's *Which Motorhome*).

For your extra 37cm, the further you go back the more space you get, it seems.

For it does indeed make perfect sense to retain what is one of the best lounges you'll ever get in any motorhome – exactly the right blend of space, comfort and indeed location. Because it's strictly two-berth, there's no need to worry about travel in the back, so all efforts go on a massive Chesterfield of a settee with a generous high backrest. But equally, it's the floor space here that's also so appealing.

At night, the settee converts easily enough to two single beds with a gap down the middle allowing you to get up at any time and visit the washroom or kitchen and not disturb your sleeping partner.

Murvi is not the only one discovering the more practical delights of two single beds. Here, you get one shorter/one longer, but can also make the sofa into what's quite likely to be the largest double you'll ever see in a van conversion – and still there's just a bit of space to get around two sides of the bed to the washroom.

You sleep with heads towards cab, with the swiveled

Words & pictures
Nick Harding



1 Washroom features GRP mouldings for washbasin and floor



2 High-level microwave and vent with extractor



3 Optional TV is safely hidden from view when not needed



4 Lots of kitchen choices. Here it's the three-burner hob and bigger fridge



- FOR** • Quality materials and fittings throughout
- Oodles of space • Built to individual specification
- AGAINST** • Expensive



seat bases acting as a kind of headboard to keep pillows in place (Murvi is one of the few manufacturers to supply a couple of cushions large enough to do duty as a place to rest your head). Duvet or sleeping bags? Up to you. There's sufficient easy-access storage in the settee base.

Let's nip round to the back, then, where the interior space within the rear nearside door is a 'blank canvas' (Murvi boss Rex Kneebone's words). One key difference between this and a standard Morocco comes here, where the nearside door opens directly into a lined storage area, rather than acting as a second access point to the washroom beyond. The first Morocco XL customer order was for it to be lined but otherwise untouched, but there are endless possibilities for it as a wet locker, with hanging rails, shelving and more.

Back indoors, it's the usual Murvi rear area, split between kitchen (nearside) and washroom (offside), both extending across the rear. There's plenty of kitchen choice, too. It depends on the particular type of camping you do – hence there's the offering of a variety of cooking and refrigerating configurations. For example, you could opt for a smaller (60-litre) fridge, with a grill/oven above and a four-ring hob. Another alternative is a high-level oven, which frees up space for a larger fridge. Or, you can forego gas altogether with a diesel hob.

That kitchen worktop area along the nearside is even further extended by a flap and it's interesting to note that, whilst most manufacturers would use the space here to add another locker, Murvi keeps it clear to add to the marvellously uncluttered feel of the interior.

As for the washroom, although – as mentioned – not accessible from the back door (as in sister shorter models), it's pretty spacious by van conversion standards anyway.



Two singles is the favoured sleeping choice, but you can also make a double by simply sliding the beds together



Lounge with high-backed settee is one of the Morocco's strongest cards

There are plenty of other hallmark Murvi features throughout the Morocco XL, such as the underslung gas tank in lieu of a locker for (costly) cylinders, Webasto programmable heating and hot water system, exclusive GRP mouldings in the washroom, and those one-piece, solid-colour furniture doors – exemplifying the sturdiness of build to everything Murvi does.

Part of the beauty of dealing with an established pedigree manufacturer like Murvi is that every vehicle produced is as specified by its owner. Indeed, this example might be the most expensive van conversion I've tested since the last Murvi. It's a world away from the mainstream and I've a feeling its success will come from Murvi owners who, despite seeming to hang on to their vehicles longer than many other marques, might feel they want a bit of extra space next time. Which begs the question, what price a Morello XL? You'd better ask...



Plenty of kitchen to play with – but owners can ring the changes regarding equipment

FACT FILE

PRICE FROM £50,179

PRICE AS TESTED £58,077

TYPE APPROVAL Individual Vehicle

OPTIONS FITTED 3-litre engine (£1,920), Comfort-Matic automatic transmission (£1,421), ESP with ASR, MBA and hill-hold (£419), cab air-conditioning (£1,026), metallic paint (£419), cruise control (£191), awning (£900), 18½in flatscreen TV (£660), TV aerial and amplifier (£234), microwave with oven/grill (£264), SOG toilet system (£144), Nature Pure water filter (£300)

BERTHS 2

TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER) 2

DIMENSIONS 6.36m L, 2.05m W, 2.57m H

INTERIOR HEIGHT 1.90m

MAXIMUM WEIGHT 3,500kg

PAYLOAD From 390kg

BEDS Two singles 1.93m x 0.84m and 1.85m x 0.69m, or double 1.93m x 1.52m

FRESH WATER 60 litres (inboard)

WASTE WATER 38 litres (underslung)

LEISURE BATTERY 2 x 90Ah

MAINS SOCKETS 3

BASE VEHICLE

FIAT DUCATO MAXI XLWB PANEL VAN

ENGINE 3-litre, 177bhp, front-wheel drive, six-speed automatic (as tested)

COOKING/HEATING

COOKING Smev three-burner hob with spark ignition, Kenwood 800W microwave/grill (optional)

FRIDGE Dometic 90-litre three-way, with removable freezer

GAS Underfloor 10-litre tank

HEATING Webasto Dual Top programmable 6kW, operating from diesel/mains

BOILER As above

RIVALS

Autocruise Forte

IH Oregon RL

Vantage Neo