

AUTOCRUISE

Jazz

Its layout may not be unique, but its competitive price and traditional furnishings help this 'van stand out

Price £37,786 Sleeps 2 Belts 4 Base Fiat Ducato MWB Engine 2.2 litre 100 Multijet L/W/H 5.41m/2.05m/2.55m (17'9"/6'9"/8'4") MTPLM 3300kg Payload 450kg Water (litres) 66-litres (Fresh)/40-litres (Waste) Battery 85Ah Gas 2 x 7kg

Autocruise continued to stake its claim as Britain's leading volume van converter with the public launch of the Alto and Jazz at last October's International Caravan and Motorhome Show at Birmingham's NEC. This swelled its ranks to six steel high-tops on the Boxer or Ducato, and one elevating-roof model, the Pulse, on the Scudo. We featured a sneak preview of the Alto, with its revolutionary longitudinal double-bed layout, in our December issue last year. And editor Rob Ganley and his family have now enjoyed a week living with the Jazz.

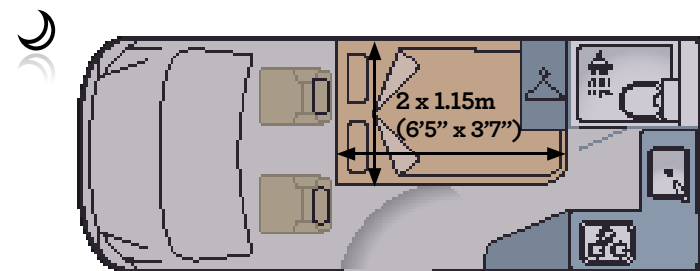
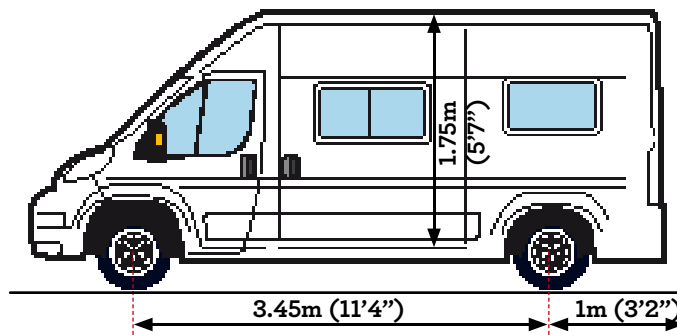
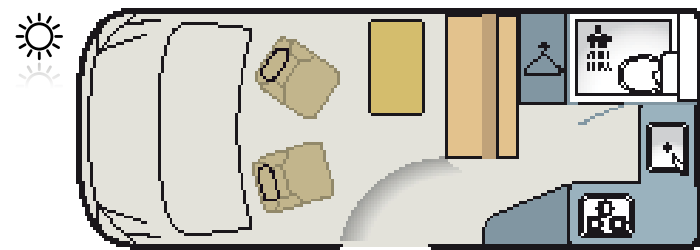
Unlike the Alto, the Jazz isn't a unique layout - we've seen this corner kitchen and washroom floorplan in a MWB Ducato before, in the Murvi Piccolo (reviewed in our July 2008 issue). While Murvi is

lauded for its engineering and specification levels, the stylish and functional interior plastics of the Piccolo might put off more traditional customers; which is perhaps a market the Jazz is targeting with plenty of warm, wood-veneer on show throughout. And at just 5.4m-long, this dedicated two berth 'van, with crash-tested rear passenger seats, is as happy as a daily vehicle as it is a fully equipped motorhome.

DESIGN

The attractive silver metallic paintwork, with colour-coded front bumper and grille, comes as standard. The water tanks are underslung and at 66- and 40-litres for fresh and waste respectively, they're a good size for a camper; the fresh tank is wrapped for better insulation, too. The windows in the living quarters are double-glazed

WHAT MOTORHOME? MWB front-lounge van conversion



plastic, and come with cassette blinds and flyscreens. A nearside sliding door has an electric entry step, plus an overhead LED strip light. The swoosh-type sidewall graphics neatly complement the black rear bumper and sidewalls. With gas bottles, leisure battery and toilet area all accessed through the opening rear doors, the nearside is free of any flaps,

lockers or other utility-access doors. On the driver side, the electric hook-up inlet flap and the fresh water inlet cap are both colour-coded.

Improvements to the van-conversion range for the 2010 season include re-shaped overhead lockers and LED lighting throughout. A waste bin is now fitted as standard, and there are two mains



LEVEL LOUNGE
Autocruise's designers should be applauded for deciding to raise the floor in the lounge making the cab and lounge seats level



SPACIOUS KITCHEN
The L-shaped kitchen layout leaves plenty of galley space for access to the washroom. It's well equipped for a compact 'van



TAMBOUR DOORS
Tambour doors are a great space saver. This kitchen cupboard and the washroom entry door benefit from them



INSULATED FRESH TANK
The 66-litre underslung fresh water tank is wrapped with foam. Both fresh and waste tanks have their own drain taps fitted to rigid pipes



CARAVANGUARD INSURANCE QUOTE £257.75*

COMPACT CAMPER
The layout in the Jazz is similar to that of Murvi's Piccolo, but more traditional buyers might prefer the former's wooden cabinetwork



SMART ON STORAGE
There's a storage rack with a lid in the lounge and, beneath the drop-in carpet, there's a space built into the floor for storing valuables



SLEEPING SPACE
The RIB seat makes for a flatter sleeping surface than traditional dinettes. With the infill cushion it measures 2m in length, and 1.15m wide



WORKABLE WASHROOM
The fold-down basin is a sensible space saver, and there's a separate shower head with its own mixer and slider bracket in the corner



WARDROBE FOR TWO
The half-height wardrobe offers plenty of hanging space for a couple's clothes. Below, the bed extension doubles as a storage shelf

*FOR INSURANCE QUOTES TERMS AND CONDITIONS SEE PAGE 154

LIVE-IN TEST

AUTOCRUISE Jazz

sockets in the kitchen and an insulated fresh water tank.

ON THE ROAD ★★★★★

We mentioned that Autocruise van conversions are available on either the Peugeot Boxer or Fiat Ducato base; we're told Autocruise would have liked to continue building its campers solely on the Boxer, but there have been supply problems in the last couple of years.

The model tested here is on the MWB Ducato, is powered by the 2.2-litre 100 Multijet engine as standard and is allied to a five-speed manual transmission. This represents more than enough guts for a 'van of these proportions.

On the road, the MWB doesn't quite have the same stability in corners and crosswinds as a LWB version simply because of its smaller footprint, but it has a gutsy engine and a good gearbox, with sensible ratios. There's limited through-vision from the driver's seat, via the small

"I like the panoramic window - it gives passengers a decent view"

window above the kitchen unit. Cab and living quarters are lockable from a single, remote key fob.

It's the passengers in the Jazz who get spoiled, though. Up front, a passenger air bag is now fitted as standard. Further back, Autocruise has opted for a two seater, crash-tested RIB seat, which is light years ahead of the usual deep seat squabs and upright backrests. The seat back rotates through 90 degrees to double as the bed base, and in transit is gently reclined for comfort.

"The headrests are adjustable and are great for comfort and safety; they look

great, too," said Rob's wife Anna. "Plus, I like the panoramic window - it gives passengers a decent view on the road."

LOUNGING & DINING ★★★★★

The interior walls are upholstered with an oatmeal fabric that neatly complements the seating upholstery, and drop-in press-stud carpets give this 'van the kind of homely feel you might expect from a coachbuilt 'van.

As in its sister 'van, the Pace, the lounge floor in the Jazz is raised, ensuring the passenger seats are level with the cab seats, which is a major boon at mealtimes and when entertaining guests. It means that with both cab seats swivelled, the occupants won't find their legs dangling.

"This is great," said Anna. "I haven't got the longest legs and in lots of 'vans I've had to perch my feet on something."

One of the unusual, but rather classy, styling quirks across the Autocruise's van conversion range - introduced prior to the buyout by Swift Holdings and thankfully continued - is the wood-look window 'ledge' to the lounge windows.

Two circular ceiling lights, a rooflight over the lounge, a directional spotlight over the half-dinette and spots over the cab seats make this a well-illuminated 'van, day or night.

Two ceiling speakers pipe music into the living quarters from the cab CD/radio player. A slide-out TV cupboard has its own space above the RIB seats, and has an extending mounting bracket for a 15in flatscreen TV that is good for viewing from both cab seats.

The dining table stows in the overcab locker while you're in transit, and clips onto a wall-mounted rail when in use. With both cab seats swivelled it's a perfectly serviceable half-dinette.

The electric control panel, which is positioned over the sliding door, is also very simple and intuitive to use.

+ LIKES



CONTROL PANELS
The control panel and water and heater controls are sensibly sited and easy to use. A welcome find in these times of ever-more complicated control panels



ADDITIONAL CAB LIGHTS
Few converters consider the occupants of the cab seats at night time, so well done Autocruise for adding secondary lights over the cab area



WOOD-LOOK WINDOW LEDGE
We love the wood-look window 'ledge' that has become a distinctive design motif across all of Autocruise's high-top van conversions



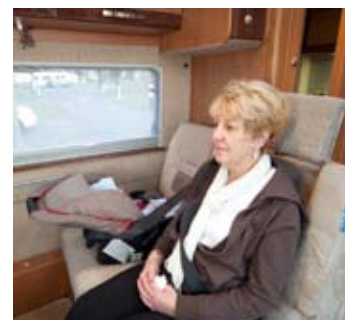
LED LIGHTS *
LED lighting throughout is a strong sales message in any camper in these energy-conscious times, but we find the light they give off rather pallid and ineffective



CURIOUS INFILL CUSHION *
We're not really sure what the infill cushion to the bed adds. It certainly won't take much weight upon it



REAR ACCESS
Accessing all the services through the rear doors makes sense for the neat lines of the van's exterior, but in foul weather there's always the chance you'll soak that lovely woodwork



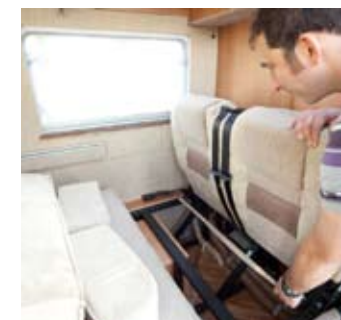
PASSENGER COMFORT
The RIB seats are supremely comfortable. The integral headrest can be set to suit height, and a panoramic window gives good views



KITCHEN STORAGE
The large, single locker above the hob swallows up food stuffs, and there's plenty of room to manoeuvre in the kitchen galley



TABLE STOWAGE
The kitchen table has a dedicated stowage space over the cab when not in use. The shelf has a lip and clips to hold it secure in transit



RIB SEAT AND STORAGE
With the seat squab rotated through 180°, the fabric-covered bar releases the backrest, which lies flat. Underneath is useable space



LEVEL LOUNGE
It's a stretch for the occupant of the cab passenger seat to reach the table for dining, but the raised, level lounge floor makes for comfy seating



TIGHT SQUEEZE
Space between the kitchen and washroom can be tight when the kitchen is in use, but as a 'van for two it doesn't prove too big a problem



SLEEPING AND LIGHTING
Ceiling lights, a directional spotlight and cab lights do the job of illuminating the lounge area. Plus, the flat bed surface is very comfy



GAS AND BATTERY
Access to gas bottles and the leisure battery is via the opening rear doors. This means fewer holes are cut in the panel van's walls



SPACIOUS WASHROOM
Even at 1m deep by 0.6m wide, the washroom is surprisingly useable. A small mirrored vanity cupboard is enough for two

AUTOCRUISE Jazz

KITCHEN ★★★★☆

At the rear, the kitchen and washroom are surprisingly spacious. On the driver's side, the food-preparation surface tapers to a radiused point by the sliding entry door, making the most of the galley. A tambour door to the shelved area underneath this work surface means it doesn't impinge on access to and from the kitchen.

A three-burner hob, separate oven and grill, and Waeco 72-litre fridge/freezer are set up in an L-shape, all beneath a sink with lid and drainer. A rather

At the rear, the kitchen and washroom are surprisingly spacious

meagre striplight illuminates the latter, and there's no dedicated extractor fan. Kitchen storage is ample, and includes a chrome-finish crockery rack.

"I'm quite taken with the venetian-style blind at the rear window," commented Anna. "It's a stylish alternative to cassette blinds."

WASHROOM ★★★★☆

Tambour doors to washrooms in compact 'vans are a good idea: they avoid the problem of an inward- or outward-opening washroom door, and deflect water so there are no worries about keeping them dry at shower time. The fold-down basin is fine as a space saver, if not the most practical for ablutions, and a separate shower head with its own mixer tap and slider bracket is sited in the corner of the room.

With the standard mirrored vanity cupboard, it's a minimal and basic washroom, but offers enough leg room for comfort while seated at the

swivel bowl Thetford. As such, it's a serviceable and usable solution in a compact space.

SLEEPING ★★★★☆

Pleated windscreen and insulated side-screen blinds do the job of cabin privacy at night. The RIB seat squab rotates through 180 degrees, and the seat back through 90 degrees to create a flat and comfortable, if rather narrow, double bed. The wardrobe is sited above the foot end of the bed, which is fine, although a rather pointless infill cushion slots into place at the head of the bed to extend the sleeping area to 2m (6'5"). The trouble is that it rests on the cab seat pedestals, and without being hardbacked gives way at the slightest pressure.

STORAGE ★★★★☆

Compact dimensions demand clever use of storage space. The Jazz goes some way to meeting this requirement: the wardrobe is sufficient for the clothing of two, there's reasonable storage space beneath the RIB seat squab, the overhead lockers are deep and have push-button positive catches, and there's a lidded storage rack by the lounge seat. There's also storage space for valuables built into the floor underneath the half-dinette, which hides under the drop-in carpet, although it's not lockable.

EQUIPMENT ★★★★☆

Equipment levels are fairly basic, as you'd expect in a compact camper. Heating and hot water come courtesy of the gas and electric Truma Combi 4, with three vents dotted around the 'van for blown-air heating. A Status 315 omnidirectional TV aerial is fitted as standard. Among the option packs, the Comfort Pack of cab air-con, cruise control, alarm and reversing sensors (£1195) seems good value, although we don't think the engine upgrade to 120bhp (£1527.50) is a necessary expense.

TECHNICAL DATA

BASE VEHICLE

Chassis Flat Ducato MWB panel van
Engine 2.2-litre turbodiesel
Power 100bhp @ 2900rpm
Torque 184 lb/ft @ 1500rpm
Transmission Five-speed manual
Features Driver and passenger airbag, ABS, EBD. Remote central locking. Electric windows & mirrors. Radio/CD. Pleated windscreen blinds.

CARAVAN BODY

Steel-panelled high-top van body. Body insulated with 3M's Thinsulate

LOUNGING AND DINING

Layout Rear L-shaped kitchen and corner washroom. Front half-dinette. Nearside sliding door for habitation access. Removable carpets on vinyl floor. Two-seater RIB bench, with two three-point belts

Seats Four **Dining** Four

KITCHEN

Sink Stainless steel with glass cover **Cooker** Three-burner gas hob, combination oven and grill.

Fridge Waeco 72-litre fridge/freezer

WASHROOM

TOILET Thetford swivel cassette toilet with electric flush. Fold-away basin. Shower mixer with riser bar.

SLEEPING

Double 2 x 1.15m (6'5" x 3'7")

EQUIPMENT

Water and space heater Truma Combi 4E gas/electric water and space heater

Leisure battery 85Ah **Gas** 2 X 7kg **Lighting** LED lighting throughout **Sockets** 3 x 240V

OPTIONS

120bhp engine upgrade, available only in conjunction with Comfort Pack (£3,775)
Comfort Pack, includes cab air conditioning, cruise control, alarm and reversing sensors (£1,195.00)
Roll out canopy awning (£633.48)
Alloy wheels (£597.72)
HAL-Locate tracking system, dealer fit (£638.59)



LONG-TERM TESTER NOTES



ROB GANLEY
"Compact van conversions are seeing a real surge of interest from buyers right now. This little MWB conversion isn't perfect, but its washroom and kitchen have a tardis-like feel."



SARAH WAKELY
"The Jazz is a joy to drive, and a genuine alternative to owning both a car and a motorhome. I'm not a big fan of LED lighting though - developers still need to work at producing a warmer light."



JEREMIAH MAHADEVAN
"The two-seater RIB seat makes for the comfiest passenger experience I've had in a motorhome, but the double bed it converts to is rather on the skinny side, despite being a flat and comfy surface."



THE VERDICT

The Jazz is a sound, well-designed and thoughtfully assembled van conversion. It's easy to drive thanks to its compact, MWB proportions, and it's just as easy to live-in and use, both day and night. Yes, it's similar to Murvi's successful Piccolo, from that automotive RIB seat down to the venetian-style blind, minus only the externally accessed washroom. However, it's competitively priced in comparison, and anyone with a liking for woodwork in their motorhome may well prefer its internal styling. Also, we think that the front lounge is a step on from that found in the Piccolo, thanks to its raised floor that puts both cab seats and the passenger seat bench on the same level.

It's a worthy addition to Autocruise's impressive van-conversion stable, and establishes the firm as a leading player among volume British van converters.

DESIGN	★★★★☆
ON THE ROAD	★★★★☆
LOUNGING & DINING	★★★★☆
KITCHEN	★★★★☆
WASHROOM	★★★★☆
SLEEPING	★★★★☆
STORAGE	★★★★☆
EQUIPMENT	★★★★☆
OVERALL	★★★★☆