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THE ULTIMATE TOURER



WORDS AND IMAGES: MAX TAYLOR

THE LATEST CARAVAN BY KOKODA IS
UNLIKE ANYTHING THIS MANUFACTURER
HAS BUILT BEFORE...

A WHOLE NEW KOKODA!



The Kokoda Commando F226 family van is a different breed of caravan. In fact, it looks entirely different from the rest of the Kokoda line-up. This composite fibreglass sandwich panel van is clearly intended for offroad, off-grid touring for extended periods.

Our review van is the product of real-world R&D. The husband and wife owners of Kokoda took the prototype on a long trip away with their kids, with the intention of incorporating their experience, ideas and areas for improvement, into the final design.

EXTERNAL INNOVATION

The F226 is the first van in Kokoda's new Commando range. It tips the scales at 3477kg, with an ATM of 4500kg. However, you can opt for a 3500kg ATM on the standard model F226.

The design is such that despite having a body length of 22ft 6in, when unhitched on a site in a van park, it takes up much the same room as a 21-footer, thanks to a couple of design tricks. By fitting a custom rear bar (with in-built storage space!) and mounting the spare wheels to the van rather than the rear bar, Kokoda has saved at least 300mm in length.



There is a lot to appreciate about this van's exterior. For example, rather than mounting a garden-variety fold-down picnic table to the nearside, Kokoda has customised a mini kitchen with a table made of composite fibreglass.

One of the key features of the Commando F226: this is a gas-less caravan, a trend of which we are seeing more, made possible by advances in lithium battery technology. This van uses the 51V, 14.3kW/h DCX lithium system by OzXCorp with a 5000W inverter. The battery is mounted between the chassis rails, fully protected. However, this is an upgrade. The 7kW/h DCX system is standard.

The battery can accept massive amounts of solar input, too. The van comes standard with 1600W of solar, but the 'Take Charge' option adds a twist. There are eight panels on this van, but instead of being spread around the roof, they are 'stacked' in two sections. The upper panel of each section is on an electric slide-out tray. Push a button and these trays will slide out from both sides, exposing the lower panels to the sun and revealing an upgraded 3200W of solar panels.

The storage box on the A-frame has three containers at the front, and a laser-cut slide-out tray to suit a 96L Evacool portable fridge/freezer with storage tray above on the nearside. The offside, however, contains a front-loading washing machine. You might be wondering if carrying your washing outside in a basket will become tedious. Well, Kokoda has placed a locker next to the washing machine with a built-in laundry chute in the bathroom. Just drop your washing in and let it collect in the locker below!

I am really only scratching the surface on this van's externals. As I said, there is a lot to take in, including air-bag suspension that can be controlled by an app on your smartphone.

SURPRISING LAYOUT

The innovation continues on the inside. A king-size, foam, ergonomic bed (which you can actually lift the corners of to dress) fills out the rear of the van, above the cutaway. By foregoing traditional bedside wardrobes, instead providing 'his and hers' lockers on the nearside, not to mention lots of overhead lockers, Kokoda has created a functional space that allows for a larger and more comfortable mattress.

Further, by omitting the traditional cooktop, griller and oven, and instead providing an induction electric cooktop only, the kitchen feels more spacious than it otherwise might. The cooktop runs off the DCX inverter, backed by that massive battery capacity. This battery will also simultaneously run the reverse-cycle air-con and any other 240V appliance.

Our van was equipped with onboard Starlink. This isn't a standard feature; however, should customers want it, they need to provide the system themselves and Kokoda will fit it at the factory.





Two bunks are fitted in the front of the van, though you can opt for three. Each bunk has a 12V Sirocco II fan, a reading light, charging point, and there's a wardrobe with three drawers.

That leaves the offside-front bathroom, a well-appointed space. Nothing feels cramped or out of place, and that laundry chute is a simple but very clever feature.

Again, we have only scratched the surface. I will, however, mention that the fit and finish is excellent.

SUMMING UP

The Kokoda Commando F226 is one of the most appealing and fit-for-purpose vans that I have seen in some time.

It makes excellent use of available technology and everything has a clearly defined purpose. Yes, it weighs nearly 3500kg at Tare, and you'll need a tow vehicle that can manage 4500kg if you intend to make full use of the available payload capacity.

That said, this caravan brings a great deal to the table. It's not about bells and whistles with this van. It's about a lifestyle... and I think Kokoda has squarely hit the mark.





RATINGS

FIT & FINISH

5.0 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LAYOUT

5.0 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

INNOVATION

5.0 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

VERDICT

HITS

- Truly fit for purpose
- Excellent battery and solar setup – no gas required
- The lateral thinking throughout – love the laundry chute idea

MISSES

- As shown here, it is quite heavy; however, you can opt instead for a lighter version with a 3500kg ATM

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THE SPECIFICATIONS

WILL IT FIT IN YOUR GARAGE?

Overall length: 9.1m

External body length: 6.86m

External width: 2.48m

Internal height: 2m

Travel height: 3.18m

WEIGHTS

Tare: 3477kg

GTM: 4104kg

ATM: 4500g

Unladen ball weight: 396kg

Group axle capacity: 4500kg

INTERNAL

Cooking: Electric induction cooktop; portable induction cooktop for external use

Refrigeration: 274L Dometic compressor; 96L external Evacool portable fridge/freezer

Microwave: Yes

Shower: Separate cubicle, fully-moulded fibreglass

Toilet: Cassette

Washing machine: 3.5kg front loader

Lighting: 12V LED

Hot water: Electric

TV: 32in smart

EXTERNAL

Construction: Composite fibreglass sandwich panel

Coupling: DO45

Chassis: 6in chassis rails; 6in drawbar

Suspension: Independent level-four self-levelling air bags

Brakes: 12in electric

Wheels: 17in alloy

Fresh water: Upgrade to 3x110L – 2x110L tanks are standard

Grey water: 40L portable bladder

Awning: Electric

Battery: Upgrade to 14.3kW/h DCX with 5000W inverter (7kW/h system is standard)

Solar: 8x400W – 4x400W is standard

Air-conditioner: Reverse-cycle

Sway control: No

OPTIONS FITTED TO THIS VAN

Upgrade to 14.3kW/h DCX battery system; Starlink; 3x110L water tanks; 2x56L drinking water tanks; steel chassis-mounted storage boxes

PRICE AS SHOWN

\$214,000

Base price: \$179,990