

La Vista Ibiza

One Track Mind. Small refinements to a popular layout make the La Vista Ibiza worthy of a second look.

Senors and señoritas, just in case you didn't know, Ibiza is a Mediterranean island about 80km off the western coast of Spain. Apart from anything else, it's a well known tourist destination, especially in Europe and has caravans, caravan parks, and ferries to get there from the Spanish mainland. It also happens to be the name of the latest caravan off the production line at La Vista Caravans. La Vista's Ibiza, a 21ft (6.4m) tandem axle van, might have a Spanish name, but it's built in the caravan capital of Australia, Vic. Hola!

La Vista is a relatively small company that wisely produces a limited range of caravan designs, thus keeping a handle on both product refinement and quality assurance. To date, the single axle Seville and the tandem axle Majorca have been the La Vista line-up, but they are now joined by the Ibiza.

"The La Vista range works well for us," he told CW. "It complements our other caravan ranges quite well and makes us a one-stop shop for van buyers."

LARGE BATHROOM

In caravans around the 21ft (6.4m) mark, it's hard to get away from the very popular layout of a front bedroom, full-width rear bathroom, and the Ibiza layout certainly follows suit, with a few refinements, of course!

Twenty-one-feet gives designers a bit of space to play with, and a full-width bathroom can be fitted in without compromising too much space elsewhere. The bathroom itself has room to turn around in with a separate shower cubicle on the nearside, Thetford cassette toilet on the offside and a vanity cabinet filling the rear wall.



In addition to the wash basin and cupboards below are overhead lockers above and a linen cupboard in the offside rear corner. Features of note are the slimline fluorescent light above the mirror, the soap dish, glass holder and powerpoint. The bathroom is ventilated by a hatch above the shower cubicle and a hopper window above the toilet. Outside the bathroom, a large red clock adorns the wall by the door.

Catering is handled by the full-length kitchen bench. As you move from the back towards the front, you'll find a Stoves four-burner cook-top, grill and oven, a stainless steel sink avec drainer, a Samsung microwave set under benchtop and a Dometic 150L three-way fridge. The cooktop has a flush-fitting lid and there is even a moderate amount of benchtop space adjoining the sink.

Kitchen storage space consists of a two-door cupboard, four overhead lockers, two drawers and two floor lockers. A bit more kitchen space is provided by the cabinet between the entry door and the dinette, which contains a small slide-out pantry.

The dinette itself is L-shaped, with contoured foam cushions and a slightly odd shaped table that allows easy ingress and egress. The eye-catching striped upholstery of the seat back matches that of the pelmets and the area around the bedhead shelf.

Above the dinette are the usual overhead lockers and below is the usual under-seat area, partly occupied by the wheel arch but with a drawer at the base of the L.

It's a bit hard to get away from the standard bedroom design of an island double bed. La Vista introduced a couple of refinements like a shelf at the back of the bed and the corner cupboards at the foot. This one has the usual features of side wardrobes and overhead lockers around the bed, plus bedside drawers and cupboards. The bedhead shelf is a welcome asset as the bedside shelves are very narrow (as they often are).

The bed base is built out of timber slats and a metal frame, and lifts up with the assistance of gas struts to give access to the storage area underneath.

Entertainment in the La Vista is supplied by an AM/FM radio/DVD player that's fitted into the overhead lockers alongside the fridge. There's also a flatscreen TV on a swivel arm above the fridge, which can be seen from the bed or the dinette. Two 95L tanks supply water to the taps via a 12V pump. The water is heated by a 23L Suburban gas-fired unit.

ON THE ROAD

Although it has an exotic name, the La Vista is built in a relatively standard way, with a timber frame, insulation and aluminium cladding. Tinted bubble-style hopper windows are fitted all round and the roof is quite busy, with three hatches (one bathroom, two in main area), Winegard TV antenna and a Dometic air-conditioner.



Underpinning the van is a DuraGal box section chassis riding on standard tandem-axle load-sharing suspension. The corners are supported by quick-drop stabilisers and the jockey wheel is centrally mounted on the drawbar. Two 9kg cylinders will keep the gas flowing for some considerable time.

Inside the galvanised-sheet-lined boot, there is lots of empty space, a 12V power supply and 12V fuse panel. That other item sometimes found in the boot, the spare wheel, is mounted at the rear of the van on a looped end bumper bar.

Weighing in with an ATM of 2640kg and a Tare of 2240kg, means the Ibiza offers a decent load capacity and is towable by a wide range of vehicles. Indeed, our tow vehicle of the day, a Toyota Prado, had no trouble coping with the Ibiza.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Anyone looking for a new caravan certainly doesn't face the problem of a lack of choice of either manufacturers or models. There are plenty of both around and while in some ways that makes it difficult choosing which caravan suits you best, it also means that you can look for the finer points of a van's design. That's certainly the case with the Ibiza.

While it looks similar to a few other vans around, it has a several features that make a second look worthwhile.

Liked

- Well appointed bathroom with room to move and good storage
- Full stove as a standard feature – ideal for travelling chefs
- Generally open feel about the van's interior
- Back-of-bed shelf
- Odd shaped dinette table works well with dinette arrangement

Would have liked

- Larger roof hatches and one above the toilet
- Larger bedside shelves – I didn't find the existing ones particularly useful

For more information, contact La Vista Caravans on (03) 9308 5300, or visit www.lavistacaravans.com.au

By Malcolm Street, as featured in *Caravan World* issue 458, October 2008.