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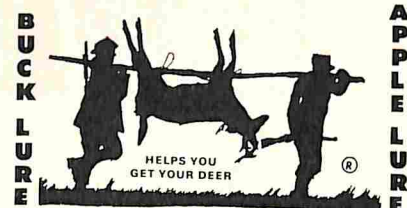
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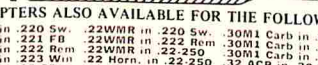
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Camping & Travel

By Hank Andrews



Versatile Vans

THERE is one kind of automobile that you can use as a conventional car and also as a camping unit. And I am talking about the box-like mini-truck called a van.

Vans are popping up everywhere, and many people are buying them for second cars. The young people are purchasing them, too, and making them into rigs that can be used for camping or for just cruising around home.

Chevrolet, Ford, GMC and Dodge all offer vans in various sizes and prices. Actually, vans are sometimes hard to find, being purchased as soon as they hit dealers' lots.

There are van clubs and the clubs often host van rallies which bring in young people from all over. There are contests for the most attractive conversion, best paint job, best interior, best window van, best homebuilt, best overall, and best personal conversion, plus various other competitions.

I have been poking my head into numerous vans lately and I have been amazed at the ingenuity shown by many young people in converting vans.

I have met people who have put as much as \$15,000 into a Chevrolet van. Others may buy a 1969 model, or older, and convert it. You can go many routes.

The basic conversion that most young people favor is one with a double bed in the rear, plus a cabinet with a re-

frigerator. The interior is carpeted and usually over foam padding. You can sleep on this in a pinch. Up front are two high-back captain chairs.

Actually, you can find literally scores of different conversions. Some have four captain seats in them with a table for eating. Others carry more camping equipment.

Some people buy the simplest of vans, getting one with just a single seat and no insulation in the rear. They then convert it or have it done at various van conversion shops that are popping up all over the nation. Some people go in for wild paint jobs, usually of a scene, on the exterior. I have known people to spend \$1,000 and more just on a paint job.

Actually, a fisherman or hunter or trapper could buy a van and make it into a real utility vehicle by giving it some thought and planning.

I own a van myself with a raised roof, and it has been one of the best investments I ever made. I bought mine in 1972 and paid around \$6,200 for it then. It still is worth around \$5,000, I am told. Many deluxe autos that cost \$6,000 in 1972 are now selling for around \$2,000, so you can see how a van holds its value.

Let me advise you to be sure to shop around if you buy a van, especially if

(Continued on page 41)



Some vans are equipped with a high roof and it makes an ideal camping unit like this one.

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Grouse Hunting—Bobcats—Midland Pheasants

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