

VW Sportvan: the lowdown

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Volkswagen will launch a sleek MPV in 2009, as its niche model offensive gets into full gear. For so long reliant on its volume staples, the people's car maker is finally branching out into popular, growing segments. In 2008, the Scirocco coupe and Tiguan SUV arrive; a year later, the Sportvan follows, to take on Ford's S-Max.

The 4.85m-long space cruiser will land in the range between the Sharan II and the Phaeton saloon. It shares key components with today's Audi A6 Avant, runs four- and six-cylinder engines and has two rows of seats. Expect the base car to cost a few quid less than £20,000.

Insiders are buzzing about the Sportvan, which is codenamed VW518. One source described it as dynamic and elegant – 'an R-class that really works'. Visually, Wolfsburg's new niche model is less slab-sided than the Touran but nowhere near as ornamental as Merc's R-class. As for its size, the Sportvan is pretty close to the six-seater Merc.

It's an unusual step for Volkswagen to use Audi hardware. But the Passat platform wasn't big enough for the Sportvan, so the R&D team had to look elsewhere within the group. They found the answer in Ingolstadt, where the current A6 will be phased out in 2010. Instead of scrapping the tools, VW decided to adopt and transfer them for the Sportvan. This approach saves time and money, and it proves that even in the highly competitive intra-corporate environment synergies do exist.

Thanks to the Audi connection, four-wheel drive and the MMI control interface will be readily available. Adding more powerful engines would be easy, and interesting high-tech options like height-adjustable air suspension could be offered at relatively short notice.

Power will be transmitted via a six-speed manual, stepless multitronic auto (front-wheel drive) or a seven-speed DSG 'box on four-wheel drive models.

Petrol Diesel

177bhp 2.0-litre turbo four 140bhp 2.0-litre four

200bhp 2.0-litre turbo four 190bhp 2.7-litre V6

265bhp 3.2-litre V6 235bhp 3.0-litre V6

With a length not far off five metres and just five seats over two rows, there will be heaps of space inside the Sportvan. And not just for people: a useful 515 litres of luggage can be accommodated behind the second row.

The rear seats fold flat and swivel, allowing a quick and easy conversion from a conference van to a luxury bedroom on wheels. So expect decent quality and excellent functionality from the

Sportvan – a pet project of the VW brand chief Wolfgang Bernhard.

[Quelle](#)