First Look

Sirus Automotive

The New Caddy Conversion

Volkswagen's new Caddy has recently hit British shores and SIrus Automotive are using it as the base model for three of their conversions. Offering independent driver and wheelchair passenger solutions, Sirus were good enough to bring the wheelchair driven I-Can along to Able towers. They do seem rather proud, and, after spending some hands-on time with it ourselves, we can see why.

First let's get the tech details out of the way. The model we tested, the I-Can, is based on the 1.6 Turbo Diesel 7 speed DSG Automatic Caddy MPV from Volkswagen. A powerful yet suprisingly economical base vehicle that offers 49.6mpg and low CO2 emissions of 149g/km. Being a Volkswagen you are assured that the build quality is suitably German — so no complaints there.

Able have dealt with Sirus for a number of years so we know they are a quality, skilled company but it's still surprising to actually see how good one of their conversions is up close.

Adapting a vehicle to accommodate a wheelchair driver is no small engineering feat of course — swathes of interior have to be removed, resculpted and replaced but the Sirus engineers, mechanics and I can only assume, motoring elves, somehow merge this all seamlessly into the base structure. If I hadn't known differently I would easily have assumed that the car had come direct from the manufacturer to this specification.

To be perfectly honest though, the heart, the pleasure... the point of this vehicle is not the tech specs, or the build quality, or even the price. It is what it offers to the wheelchair driver (or passenger)— true freedom and independence.

The car can be accessed and driven by a wheelchair user without all the transfer hassles, without family, carers or friends having to aid and assist. Just press the button to open the back gate and ramp, roll on in (on your own chair) to a safe and secure driving position and off you go!

Of course, it has all the bells and whistles you would expect from a thoroughly modern car— electric windows, alloys, air conditioning, power steering and so on but it is worth keeping in mind that through Sirus you also have access to a whole host of specialist aids which make driving possible for many that may have thought it beyond their capability. It's worth a shot to contact them and find out if they have a solution for you.

All considered, the entire car is quite a fantastic achievement and we understand why Sirus are so proud of it. If I could change one thing it would be for Motability to cover more of the initial cost, bringing down the advance payment. That may keep some from purchasing what is seen as a luxury by many but, with that freedom in mind, is in actuality a true necessity for wheelchair drivers.

All of the vehicles are available on the Motability scheme, advance payment from £11,995. For more information please contact Sirus Automotive on 0121 505 7777 or visit www.sirusautomotive.co.uk