

# THE ULTIMATE POP TOP ROOF BUYER'S GUIDE



Everything you need to know  
before buying – written by  
the UK's leading pop top manufacturer  
add £5k–£10k to your van's value



# Introduction: Why This Guide Exists

Buying a pop top roof is one of the biggest decisions you'll make in your camper conversion journey. It's also one of the most confusing.

There are dozens of manufacturers, conflicting advice in Facebook groups, and a minefield of technical jargon that makes it hard to know what you actually need.

**That's why we created this guide.**

At T29 Customs, we manufacture & install over 1000 pop top roofs a year. We've seen every mistake, answered every question, and learned what really matters when choosing a pop top.

This isn't a sales pitch. It's a straight-talking guide that will help you make the right decision – whether you buy from us or not.

**By the end, you'll know:** - How much a quality pop top really costs (and why cheap ones cost more in the long run) - Which features actually matter (and which are just marketing fluff) - How to choose the right roof for your specific vehicle - What questions to ask any manufacturer before you buy - How to avoid the most common (and expensive) mistakes



# Chapter 1: What Is a Pop ?

A pop top roof (also called an elevating roof or rising roof) is a fitted roof section that raises up to create additional headroom and sleeping space in your van or vehicle.

**The benefits:** - **Stand-up headroom** – No more crouching or hunching over - **Extra sleeping space** – Most pop tops include a bed platform - **Better ventilation** – Fresh air without opening doors or windows - **Increased resale value** – A quality pop top can add £5k–£10k to your van's value - **Natural light** – Especially if your pop top includes a skylight

**Who needs a pop top?** - Weekend campers who want more comfort - Full-time van lifers who need the extra space - Families converting a van for holidays - Professional converters building campers to sell - Anyone who's tired of hitting their head on the ceiling

**Who might not need one?** - If you're only using your van for day trips (a fixed high roof might be better) - If you're on a very tight budget (a quality pop top is an investment) - If you never plan to sleep in your van

**Bottom line:** If you're serious about van life or camper conversions, a pop top is one of the best upgrades you can make.

**Extra sleeping space** – Most pop top buyers want a bed inside the pop top

**Resale value** – A quality pop top can add up to £10k to your van's value

Anyone who's tired of hitting their head on the ceiling & and wanting a 2nd bedroom area



## Chapter 2: How Much Does a Pop Top Roof Cost?

Let's talk numbers.

**Budget pop tops:** £1,100–£1,400

Often poor fitment, leaks, fading and quality issues. No warranty

**Budget pop tops:** £1,000–£1,500 - Usually imported kits with no support - No warranty or very limited coverage - Home installation with bad or no instructions - Often poor fitment and quality issues

**Mid-range pop tops:** £1,500–£2,000 (supply only) - UK-made, better quality materials - Some manufacturer support - Fitting instructions included - Limited warranty (1–2 years typical)

**Premium pop tops:** £2,500–£4,000+ (supply and install) - UK-made by established manufacturers - Full installation service available - Comprehensive warranty (3-5 years) - quality canvas, stainless steel components - Ongoing support and spare parts availability

**At T29 Customs, our pricing is:** - Supply only starting from £1750+VAT and £2,400+VAT supply and install

**Why the price difference?** - Materials: GRP fibreglass, marine-grade canvas, stainless steel hinges - Manufacturing: One-piece powder-coated frames, precision engineering - Quality control: ISO-9001 certified processes - Warranty: 5-year parts warranty - Support: Fitting instructions, training, spare parts availability

**The hidden costs of cheap pop tops:** - Poor fitment = water leaks = interior damage (£500+ to fix) - Weak hinges = roof won't stay up = safety risk - Thin canvas = cold, noisy, fades quickly = replacement needed (£700–£900) - No support = you're stuck when something goes wrong

**Our advice:** Buy the best you can afford. A quality pop top will outlast your van.

**Why the price difference?** - Materials: GRP fibreglass, marine-grade canvas, stainless steel hinges - Manufacturing: One-piece powder-coated frames, precision engineering

- Quality control: ISO-9001 certified processes - Warranty: 5-year parts warranty

- Best in Class Support: Fitting instructions, trade training, spare parts availability

# Chapter 3: Supply Only vs. Supply & Install

## Supply Only (Trade/DIY)

**Best for:** - Professional converters with in-house fitting capability - Experienced DIYers with the right tools and skills - Anyone who wants to save money and has the confidence to fit it themselves

**What you get:** - Complete pop top kit (roof, canvas, hinges, fixings) - Detailed fitting instructions - Technical support via phone/email - 5-year parts warranty

**What you need:** - Workshop space with good lighting - Jigsaw or cutting tool for roof aperture - Drill, rivets, sealant - 1–2 days of time - Confidence working with your hands

**Best for:** - Van owners who want a professional finish - Anyone without the tools, space, or time to DIY - People who value peace of mind and warranty coverage

**What you get:** - What you get: - Complete pop top kit - Professional installation by our team - Nationwide valet collection and delivery (UK mainland) - 5-year parts warranty

**What you need:** - Nothing – we handle everything

**Installation time:** 1–2 days

**Lead time:** 1–2 weeks (even during peak season)

**Our recommendation:** If you're a professional converter or confident DIYer, supply only is a great option. If you're a van owner who wants a perfect finish without the stress, supply and install is worth every penny.

# Chapter 4: The Features That Make The Biggest Difference

**The T29 difference:** We're the only UK manufacturer fitting skylights.

**The T29 difference:** Our hinges are best in class, they're so good that we supply our competitors with them

**The T29 difference:** We make all our canvases in-house. If you need a replacement or custom colour, we can do it at no extra cost. Plus, all our canvases have three windows/blinds as standard

**Why it matters:** - Weak frames = structural failure - Poor fit = gaps and leaks - Difficult installation = higher labor costs

**What to look for:** - One-piece construction - Powder-coated finish (rust-proof, durable) - Precision-cut to fit your vehicle

**The T29 difference:** Our frames are one-piece, powder-coated, and double as cutting templates for faster and safer installation.

**The T29 difference:** 5-year parts warranty.



# Chapter 4: The Features That Make The Biggest Difference

## Technical Specifications

### How much height does a pop top add to my van?

When closed, a T29 Pop Top increases the overall height of your vehicle by approximately 50mm.

This small increase has virtually no effect on day-to-day driving while giving you all the benefits of a full elevating roof.

### How much weight does a pop top add?

Our complete roof system adds approximately 30kg to the vehicle. This has minimal impact on driving characteristics while providing a strong, durable sleeping platform and roof structure.

### Will I lose headroom when the roof is closed?

No. Our roof system is engineered so there is no compromise to the factory headroom inside your van when the roof is closed. You retain the same comfortable driving position and interior space you had before installation.

### How is the roof opened and closed?

Opening the roof couldn't be simpler. Release the securing system, then use the internal handles to give the roof a gentle upward push. The gas struts do the hard work, lifting the roof smoothly into position.

Closing is just as easy—pull the roof down using the handles, tuck the canvas neatly inside and secure the roof ready for driving.



# Chapter 4: The Features That Make The Biggest Difference

## Over 30 canvas colours available.

### What is the roof made from?

Every T29 roof is manufactured from high-quality GRP (Glass Reinforced Plastic), often referred to as fibreglass laminate.

Unlike thin moulded plastics, GRP is incredibly strong, lightweight and durable. Each roof is carefully hand laminated to produce a rigid, long-lasting shell that's built to withstand years of use in all weather conditions.

### Colour Options

One size doesn't fit everyone.

Choose from over 30 different canvas colours to match your van or create a completely unique look.

Our GRP roofs are also available in a range of finishes, including:

White Gel Coat

Black Gel Coat

Grey Gel Coat

Colour Matched Paint Finish

Custom Colours on Request



# Chapter 5: Choosing the Right Pop Top for Your Vehicle

## Vehicle Compatibility

We manufacture pop tops for 20+ vehicle types, including: - VW T5, T6, T6.1 - VW T4 - VW Caddy - Nissan Elgrand - Toyota Alphard - Mercedes Vito - Ford Transit Custom - Vauxhall Vivaro - Renault Trafic - Horse boxes

**Why vehicle-specific matters:** - Roof curvature varies between models - Structural reinforcement requirements differ - Canvas dimensions must be exact - Hinge placement affects headroom

**Our advice:** Always buy a pop top designed specifically for your vehicle. Generic “universal” kits rarely fit properly.



# Chapter 6: Installation Process

Whether you're fitting it yourself or having it professionally installed, here's what happens:

**Step 1: Preparation** - Remove interior lining and insulation - Mark cutting template on roof - Protect interior from debris

**Step 2: Cutting** - Cut roof aperture using jigsaw or cutting tool - Smooth edges and remove burrs - Clean and degrease surface

**Step 3: Frame Installation** - Position one-piece frame on roof - Drill pilot holes - Secure frame with rivets and sealant

**Step 4: Pop Top Fitting** - Attach hinges to frame - Fit gas struts - Install pop top cap - Adjust tension and alignment

**Step 5: Canvas Fitting** - Attach canvas to frame and cap - Ensure even tension all around - Check for gaps or wrinkles

**Step 6: Sealing & Finishing** - Apply weatherproof sealant - Reinstall interior lining - Test operation and check for leaks

**Time required:** - Professional installation: 1–2 days - DIY installation: 2–3 days (first time)

**The problem:** “warranty” sounds great until you read the fine print. The fix: Read warranty terms carefully and ask questions.



## Chapter 6: Installation Process (continued....)

### How is the roof secured when driving?

Every T29 roof is secured using our tried-and-tested cleat and strap system, providing a secure and reliable method of holding the roof firmly closed during travel.

For customers wanting the ultimate in security, we also offer our exclusive T29 External Safety Latch.

Unlike many alternative systems on the market, this provides a highly visible, mechanical locking point that offers an additional level of safety and peace of mind.

We believe it is the strongest and most robust external safety system currently available for a pop top roof.



# Chapter 7: Common Mistakes to Avoid

## **Mistake #1: Buying Based on Price Alone**

The problem: Cheap pop tops cost more in the long run (leaks, failures, replacements). The fix: Buy the best you can afford.

## **Mistake #2: Ignoring Lead Times**

The problem: Some manufacturers have 6–8 week lead times. The fix: Ask about lead times upfront. At T29, we deliver in 1–2 weeks.

## **Mistake #3: Not Checking Warranty Terms**

The problem: “5-year warranty” sounds great until you read the fine print. The fix: Read warranty terms carefully and ask questions.

## **Mistake #4: Choosing the Wrong Installation Option**

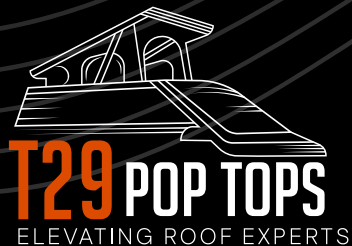
The problem: Overconfident DIYers end up with leaks. The fix: Be honest about your skills and available time.



# Chapter 8: Questions to Ask Any Manufacturer

**Before you buy, ask these questions:**

1. What's the lead time? (Ours: 1–2 weeks)
2. What's included in the price? (Canvas, hinges, fixings, trims, lights)
3. What's the warranty? (Ours: 5 years parts)
4. Do you fit skylights (a good manufacturer will offer this service)
5. Do you offer deliver? (Ours: yes, nationwide)
6. Can I see examples of your work?
7. What happens if something goes wrong?
8. Do you supply fitting instructions? (Ours: yes)
9. Can I visit your workshop? (Ours: yes, anytime)
10. Do you offer a collection/return service? (Ours: yes, nationwide)



# Why T29 Customs?

Over 1000 customers a year T29 Customs. Here's why:

- Only UK manufacturer fitting optional skylights
- Short lead times (even during peak season)
- ISO-9001 certified quality
- 5-year parts warranty
- 20+ vehicle types (including horse boxes and Japanese imports)
- Nationwide valet collection & delivery
- In-house canvas production
- Stainless steel universal hinges
- Trade training available
- First-class support

Ready to get started? Visit [t29customs.uk](https://t29customs.uk) or contact us to discuss your project.



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. How much height does it add?**

Approximately 50mm.

**Q. How much weight does it add?**

Around 30kg.

**Q. Do I lose headroom?**

No.

**Q. How do I open it?**

Release the straps, then a gentle push allows the gas struts to raise the roof.

**Q. How is it secured?**

Cleat and strap system, with the option of our exclusive T29 External Safety Latch.

**Q. What is it made from?**

Hand-laminated GRP fibreglass.

**Q. What colours are available?**

Over 30 canvas colours plus multiple roof finish options.

