



The Daniel Connection

The Daniel Connection

THIS T4 IS A BIT OF A MOVIE STAR

After spotting the off road tuff nut T4 that Lee Davis had created, we just needed to know more about it and what inspired him to create such a beast. Turns out the T4 is to be used within a new film called The Daniel Connection

We caught up with Deborah Forrest (Head of Production) at Studio Scotland to find out about the film and how they plan to use the T4.



The Daniel CONNECTION

www.thedanielconnection.tv is an apocalyptic thriller due for cinema release later this year. It is a fast paced, end of the world movie – but the really scary thing is that it is based on a TV documentary called The Daniel Project www.thedanielproject.tv which has been seen around the world and rated as the best investigation ever made into the amazing subject of Bible prophecy.

One of the characters in the film is a Swedish techno geek called Lubert – who more or less lives in a T4 – surrounded by computers, scanners and satellite equipment! The van was provided by Lee Davis who is the film's vehicle expert and whose company Auto Repairs (Fife) has supplied some of the important cars featured in the movie.

I was first introduced to Lee by one of the actors as he had done some Film Extra work in the past. We then auditioned Lee and signed him up to play a tough guy FPF soldier in the movie. Lee's role expanded to a small speaking part – but he proved to be more than just a pretty face when he provided the funky little mini to be driven by one of the film's stars. Before long, Lee had another screen credit to his name as the Go To guy for cars.

Kitting out the T4 to the director's spec was a bit of a challenge but Lee was more than up to it and delivered exactly what was required for the scenes.



Once this was finished, the van was raised 50mm and the insa turbos were added and tested on road and off road so we could check clearances etc before body prep so that we weren't cutting arches after painting. It's tight, but everything fitted first time with only light scrubbing of the belly pan on full lock. Everything was then stripped off the van and it was sent to the body shop for preparation and 4 new arches as they were rusty and I didn't want rust coming through at a later date. Next was colour choice, it always had to be a landrover colour with a bright yellow or orange cage but when I went to the local paint supplier I settled on a Maserati colour, more because it's the closest I will ever be to owning one than anything else I think! KTM orange was then decided for the cage.

I always had a landrover type theme in my head so the snorkel was a must, it's fully functional, home made and it makes the engine bark like you wouldn't believe. That combined with the decat and egr blank as well as the timing slightly advanced gives it bags of power. After paint the van was carefully reassembled and the landrover 110 safari roof rack added which was slid forward a tad to accommodate the massive overland roof tent that occupies the rear of the T4 roof. This allows my van to be used as a 4 berth and it's probably where we will sleep come the summer.

An eberspacher d3 night heater has just been fitted to keep the inside cosy but it's not been used yet as the weather is still mild, the last time I needed one it was -18 but we are only around -4 just now!

LEE DAVIS TELLS US ABOUT THE BUILD PROCESS OF THIS OFF ROAD T4

Being the outdoors type and loving my fishing, goldpanning and walking I decided that my next T4 must suit my purpose and get me into the most remote parts of the highlands of Scotland even when the weather is at its most extreme. I spotted a post on the T4 forum that a guy fairly local to me had purchased a T4 syncro from a local scrap yard (ex transco in baby blue) and was thinking of breaking it. The van was in very rough condition and had a broken timing belt, I immediately emailed him and asked if he would sell the van complete to me. He really wanted some parts for himself and had bought the van really cheap due to its condition, he therefore knew there was good profit in breaking it. However, we agreed that he could keep the parts he needed, and I was to give him a set of good tyres, job done and a done deal with the syncro heading for Fife.

First job was strip out the engine and find the damage, turned out the cam was smashed and a few valves were damaged, no problem for us to repair in our workshop and the parts were ordered and the job completed. After the van was running and everything checked I then started doodling on the sides of it in felt pen with some of the ideas I had. I wanted a full external roll cage, a big winch, a snorkel and a big set of go anywhere tyres. Once I had my ideas all in place I stripped the inside of the van bare so we could have the cage made and bolted through all the structural points of the van and then I sent the van to a local blacksmith to build the cage and winch mount. It was all drawn on the van so he was clear what I wanted but he still had me in almost every day just to make sure it was exactly how I pictured it, and it was, what an excellent job he did!





THE INTERIOR PLANS

To date I've not fitted a kitchen or wardrobe as it's currently still on the drawing board. I really want to utilise the space in the van as much as possible. I need lots of cupboards and wee hide holes to stick stuff in for the longer trips rather than the standard type kitchen. I have bought the fridge, cooker etc but I think I'm just going to send the van to Toby at T4 Life and tell him my ideas and see what he comes up with.

I want to fit a buddy seat behind the passenger seat, the drivers seat is on a genuine rare caravelle swivel base, which will house a small portaloos and I need a tall unit at the rear to house my water heater, even though I'm Scottish and used to living rough I like the comforts of hot water and a toilet for my wife. An external hot shower will also be fitted with the roof tent acting as a roof over it, I have done this before on a tailgated van and it was a god send on times away. Water tanks will be purpose built and underslung as no one does them for a syncro as the propshaft is in the way.

The Gerry can on the rear doors is also for extra water rather than fuel. The seats have been trimmed as has the bed, which is a space saver in matching grey leather and stitched in orange with orange piping. I was going to go Bentley style but everyone has that now and as you can see I like to be different, so I drew my own designs on the seats again in felt pen and asked the upholsterer to copy the idea which he did and it turned out exactly how I wanted it.

Rear load mat is a genuine VW one which I sourced from a local breakers in mint condition for £30 and that was including the 2 captains chairs I had retrimmed... bargain! The original mat was used as it's easy cleaned and as we have two dogs and lots of muddy feet it seemed more sensible than an expensive vinyl or a wood floor.

Can't wait for the snow to fall, the van has been well tested on mountainsides and muddy tracks but I really want to go play in the snow!

Photography by Studio Scotland. Article reproduced by courtesy of MYT4VAN.