



Definitive Guide to Buying a Horsebox





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Introduction

Let's face it. The responsibility of choosing the right horsebox to safely transport your beloved equine friend is a big one.

But while it's easy to get excited over the fixtures and fittings or the fabulous paintwork there are some important issues that need to be taken into consideration before parting with your hard earned cash.



Buying A New Build

A new build horsebox offers buyers the ability to choose exactly how their horses travel, living accommodation requirements and layout as well as accessory 'must haves'.

However, there are still some important considerations to bear in mind before ordering your new horsebox. Below are some tips to help you avoid common pitfalls.

Shop around

Research really pays off. Ask friends or colleagues if they're happy with their horsebox and its manufacturer and whether there's anything they would change with hindsight.

Ensure that the manufacturer is reputable by asking for references and testimonials. Think about creating a check list to make sure that the horsebox you are considering ticks all the right boxes.

The screenshot shows the JSW website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the JSW logo, a Union Jack background, and links for 'Horseboxes', 'Trailers', and 'Showjumps'. A search bar is present on the right. Below the navigation bar, the 'Testimonials' section is visible. The first testimonial is from Paul Cannon, Plymouth, who thanks Alan and the company for a 'Cleveland Two' horsebox. To the right of the text are two images of horseboxes: a smaller blue van-style box and a larger silver multi-horse lorry. The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and a system tray with the date 18/11/2013 and time 20:06.

Testimonials

Cleveland Two

Thank you very much, I have just found the service book etc. just where Alan said it was (don't you love him!) I would also like to thank Alan and yourself, for having the forethought to build such a brilliant box, where you turn something on, and it comes on, nothing falls of the box, and it does the job it was built for, I'm so happy and proud of my new Cleveland two, I even feel safe while I'm carrying horses in it. Since collecting on Monday, I've done 1,700 miles in 'her', carried four horses, and she performed impeccably. Once again, Thank you to you all.

Paul Cannon, Plymouth

JSW New Build

After careful research of some of the most well known manufacturers of horseboxes seven years ago, we decided on a JSW new build. One of their first commitments was to ensure that we had a lorry that could carry the number of horses we required and remain within the law. The product has strength. JSW understood the needs of travelling horses and how destructive they can be when standing in a horsebox.

JSW were understanding regarding our preferences for our accommodation in the lorry and guided us against what was extravagant, but advised what would be a sensible resolution.

When such a purchase has been made the next most important part is aftercare. At the end of the eventing season it is sensible to return the box with a list of all the day-to-day issues that have arisen, so that they can be rectified. JSW make the time to ensure that this all important task is carried out with care and diligence.

A Taylor



Do Your Homework

Familiarise yourself with commonly used terms (see our jargon buster below) so you can tell your conversions from your genuine coach builds.

Research what materials the leading horsebox manufacturers are now using. Reputable coachbuilders like JSW will only use the best materials such as alloy planking (used for flooring and side panels in larger vehicles), and honeycombed partitioning, which may drive up the cost but offer peace of mind and many, many years of safe transportation.

Sub-standard materials may cut the pennies but won't last the distance and could even become a hazard for your horse.

Safety is important particularly increasingly smaller horseboxes. Check that the box offers safety features such as quick release breast doors, a wide groom's door (which you could get your horse through in an emergency) and a proper bulkhead. It's worth bearing in mind that 3.5 tonne horseboxes should be stalled rear facing to ensure that the weight is carried over the axles correctly.

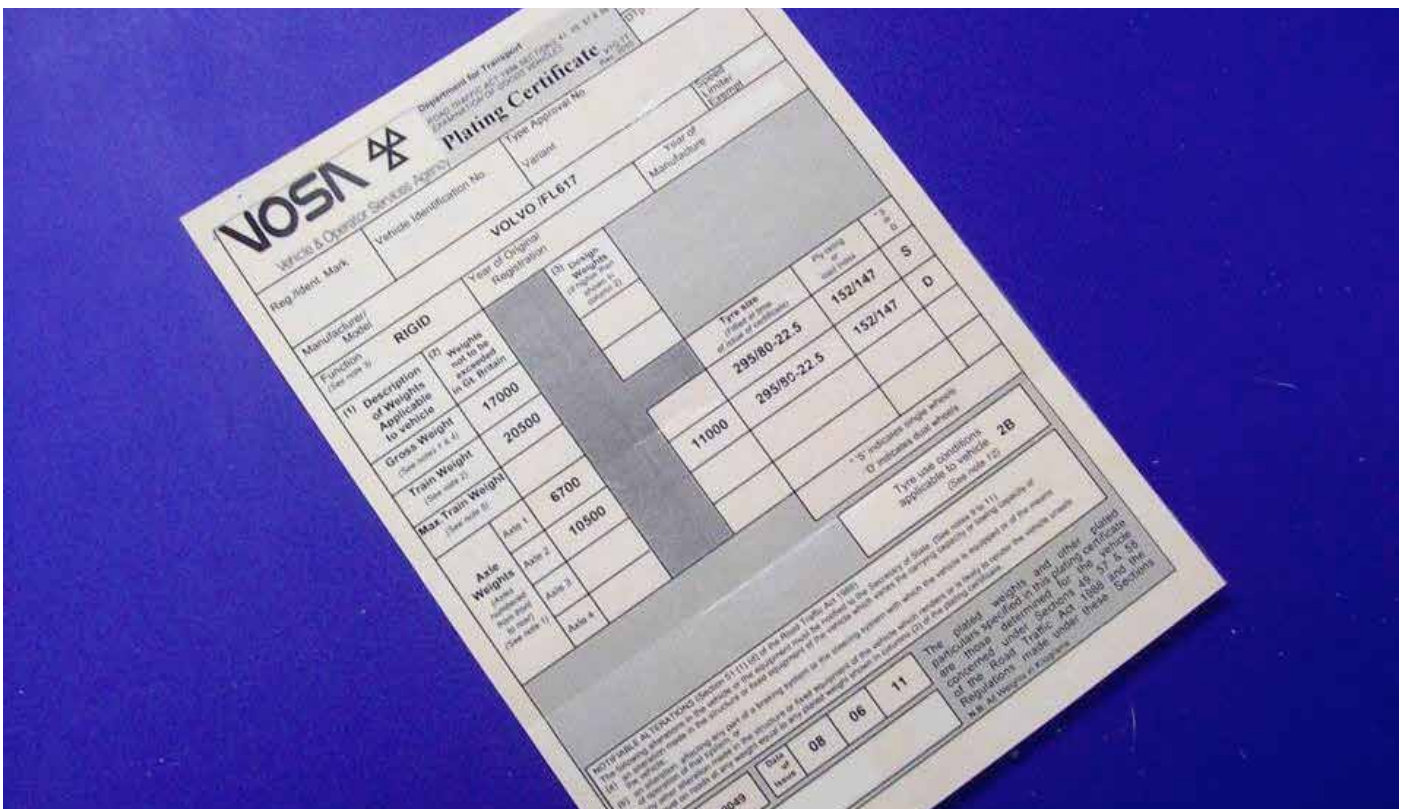
Remember to pay attention to the horse area before considering living accommodation or the latest technical gadgetry. After all that's what the vehicle is for! Make sure that the vehicle has plenty of headroom and space as well sufficient ventilation. Check that the partitions are strong and safe to ensure relaxed travelling.
another aspect for the popular



Am I Overweight?

It's important to understand what weight the vehicle you're buying is legally plated to carry. That means not only taking into account the combined weight of any horses you'll be carrying but all your equipment. Being overweight could result in a hefty fine and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) is currently targeting private horseboxes.

For detailed information on legal carrying weights visit the VOSA website. The Government agency has also produced a useful guide on the technical and legal aspects of horse trailer ownership: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-horsebox-and-trailer-owners>.



Take it For a Spin

A test drive will often help you decide whether the box you're considering is really for you so it's vital that you take the newly built horsebox or a similar chassis for a spin to see if you're happy with how it drives.

Checks and Balances

Before driving away your new horsebox, make sure you test everything from ramps to storage lockers, electrical appliances in the living area to CCTV if any. Don't be embarrassed to get the coachbuilder to print you off a 'cheat sheet' if you think you'll forget how to connect the water or change the toilet cartridge. At JSW we spend time with new owners showing every detail on their new box and how it works as well as test driving it. If you're not offered that level of service, then ask for it!

Buying Second Hand

While buying second hand is probably the most economical way to purchase a horsebox it requires a little more effort. So while all the tips above are just as important here are a few more pitfalls to be aware of.

The Devil's in the Detail

Whether you're buying privately or from a manufacturer or dealer it's important that you're buying a vehicle with a full service history and an HPI check (www.hpicheck.com). Again, ensure that the vehicle is the appropriate weight for your requirements and has the correct paperwork to back that up.

Is it Mechanically Sound?

Second hand vehicles usually have some wear and tear. Therefore it's important to check for signs of rust, leakage or rotting.

Check that moving parts such as hinges and springs are all in good condition and that the ramp can be opened and closed safely and easily. Ensure that the horse area has the right space and ventilation and that the partitions are in good condition. Check the floor is solid - particularly important for older boxes - but just as important for younger models.

Make sure there are no oil leaks in the engine or that any warning lights come on when the engine is started. Check that all gauges, lights, indicators, wipers, horns and warning lights are working.

Even though the living area might look clean and tidy, check for leaks or damp patches. The lighting for the living and horse area should run from a separate battery to the main vehicle battery.

Consider a professional pre-purchase inspection for peace of mind and legal assurance.

Always take the vehicle for a test drive as faults will often reveal themselves while on the road.

JSW's Jargon-buster

Coach built - where a brand new body is built onto a chassis.

Conversion - where an existing body such as a parcel delivery wagon is converted from a donor body.

'Cut & Shunt' or Cut Out – this is when horseboxes are created from vehicles that are all one piece such as a delivery or parcel van. Because the body is cut away to be replaced by a horse carrying unit, the vehicle's original strength and integrity is diminished. It also means that any safety tests that the vehicle passed prior to conversion are no longer applicable.

This is most common in the 3.5 tonne category of horse boxes.

Although it isn't currently illegal to refer to this as a new build or coach built it doesn't offer the owner any safety assurances and means that the van's integrity in an accident could be severely and potentially fatally compromised.



The alternative is to use chassis and floor cabs, which have a separate body and cab. Since the cab is not tampered with in the build process, the safety integrity of the vehicle remains intact. JSW is one of the few manufacturers to build in this way.



Once the horsebox is built it can be difficult to spot the difference. However, if there is almost no space between the cab door and the 'cuff' where the body begins then it is probably a 'cut & shunt'. If there is a good distance as shown in the photo below, it is probably built on a chassis cab.

However if in doubt ask what type of chassis has been used.

For further information on 3.5 tonne boxes JSW builds as well as larger vehicles visit us on [Facebook](#).





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