



10 Years of Van Life: How roadsurfer Disrupted the Camper Market



From 25 campers to 10,000 vehicles: roadsurfer celebrates its 10th anniversary.

July 2026 – roadsurfer is celebrating a decade of redefining outdoor travel. What began in 2016 with a fleet of just 25 Volkswagen campervans operating from Munich, Frankfurt and Hamburg has grown into the world's leading provider of campervan and motorhome adventures, with around 100 locations across 16 countries.

Over the past ten years, roadsurfer has helped transform camper travel from a niche holiday choice into a global lifestyle movement. Instantly recognisable for its colourful, branded Volkswagen campervans, the company has played a pivotal role in modernising and popularising the sector, inspiring a new generation of travellers to embrace the freedom of life on the road. Today, "roadsurfing" has become synonymous with flexible, experience-led travel, reflecting the growing popularity of camping and outdoor adventures worldwide.

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, roadsurfer's founders, Dr. Susanne Dickhardt, Markus Dickhardt, Jean-Marie Klein, and Stephie and Christoph Niemann are reflecting on a decade that has helped reshape the way people travel, as flexibility, freedom and individuality have become increasingly important to modern holidaymakers.

From Munich Start-Up to Global Vanlife Leader

What began with a fleet of 25 Volkswagen campervans in Germany has evolved into a global travel brand. By 2022, roadsurfer was doubling its rental fleet year-on-year, reaching around 5,000 vehicles. Today, the company operates approximately 10,000 campervans and motorhomes across Europe and North America, making it the world's leading provider of campervan and motorhome adventures.

The company's growth has remained strong even beyond the post-pandemic travel boom, supported by an industry that continues to expand by an estimated 8–10% annually. Major milestones include the introduction of larger motorhomes to the fleet, the company's first international expansion into France in 2019, and its subsequent launch in North America. Today, roadsurfer employs around 1,000 people worldwide and has enabled more than 420,000 travellers to experience the freedom of vanlife since 2016.

Vanlife Comes of Age

The growing maturity of the camper travel market is reflected in roadsurfer's booking data. Travellers are planning their holidays further in advance than ever before, with the average booking lead time increasing to approximately 110 days in 2026. This compares with around 80 days in 2025 and just 70 days when roadsurfer first launched a decade ago.

The figures suggest that campervan holidays have evolved from spontaneous getaways into a firmly established part of annual travel planning, sitting alongside traditional beach, city and resort holidays.

roadsurfer's customer profile has remained remarkably consistent over the years. According to a 2025 customer analysis, families continue to be the brand's largest audience, with 30% of customers travelling with children. Around 9% bring their dogs along for the adventure, while travellers aged 55 and over account for 12% of bookings. Families typically opt for larger campervans and motorhomes, while couples and groups of friends favour a mix of compact vans and fully equipped campervans.

A Reliable and Flexible Alternative

As the cost of traditional flight-and-hotel holidays continues to rise in 2026, roadsurfer has maintained summer rental rates at the same level as the previous year. As a result, campervan travel remains an attractive option for holidaymakers seeking greater control over both their budget and itinerary.

Summer rates start from £113 per night during peak season, with prices varying according to destination, vehicle type and travel dates. Travellers can also take advantage of seasonal promotions and discounted offers, including roadsurfer's popular Last-Minute Deals.

The Destinations Driving Demand

The UK, Italy and France continue to rank among the most popular destinations for British roadsurfers, while Edinburgh, London and Milan were the company's most-booked pick-up locations over the past year.

However, the standout growth story is North America, where demand continues to accelerate.

"North America remains our fastest-growing market, with growth of around 120% in 2025 and particularly strong demand from US travellers discovering the European vanlife concept for themselves," said Markus Dickhardt, Co-Founder and CEO of roadsurfer. "From day one, our ambition has been to achieve sustainable, profitable growth. Looking ahead, our focus is not simply on expanding faster, but on continually improving the customer experience while increasing efficiency across our business."

Reflecting on the company's journey, Dr. Susanne Dickhardt, Co-Founder and Chief Experience Officer, added: "When we launched roadsurfer in 2016, our ambition extended far beyond campervan rentals. We wanted to create an inspiring lifestyle brand centred around freedom, adventure and independence, while making camping relevant to a younger, more urban audience. By combining comfort, design and accessibility with the spirit of adventure, we set out to make #roadsurfing the preferred way to travel independently. Ten years later, I believe we have achieved exactly that across Europe and North America."

For more information, and to book visit: <https://roadsurfer.com/uk/>

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High-res images available to download [HERE](#)

Editors Notes

First photo on LHS – From Left to right: Markus Dickhardt, Stephie Niemann, Dr. Susanne Dickhardt, Christoph Niemann, Jean-Marie Klein.

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