

# The Enhanced C2045E and M1235 From ABC Companies

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Photos courtesy of ABC Companies



ABC Companies recently announced a major round of enhancements on both their M1000 mid-size bus as well as their Van Hool C2000 coach. The M1000 will get an improved chassis, a one-piece windshield, and several driver improvements. Shown here is the C2000 which received major styling improvements, state-of-the-art lighting, and a totally new front stepwell.

One of the more interesting developments in the bus industry in the summer of 2006 is a round of enhancements on both the Van Hool C2000 and ABC's M1000. Not only are both models somewhat unique but both are also the leaders in their respective classes. Moreover, the

improvements are so extensive that they have prompted new model numbers. ABC is so proud of these improvements that they are planning a party in August to show off both models. Following is some information on both models and their respective enhancements.

## M1000

The M1000 model was originally developed by the ABC staff to meet specific customer needs. Around the turn of the century, ABC salespeople were approached by customers looking for a bus that was the right



One of the major improvements on the new M1235 is an improved chassis with increased wheelbase. The new front design, which includes a one-piece windshield and new hood is obvious. Noteworthy also is the upgraded interior with fiberglass trim panels.

size for transporting smaller groups but had big coach features and amenities. They wanted a bus that they could put in their fleet along with their big coaches and would offer similar features for smaller groups. The bus operators also wanted a quality vehicle with some durability and longevity.

Such a vehicle did not exist on the market at that time. Major bus builders had given up building shorter coaches because their purchase price and operating cost were not much different than the big coaches. The solution that ABC came up with was to partner with General Coach America, a subsidiary of Thor Industries, one of the oldest and largest builders of smaller buses.

This partnership resulted in developing what came to be known as ABC's M1000 model. ABC and General Coach America took the body-on-chassis cutaway concept and engineered it to new quality levels that had never been seen in the past. As a result, the M1000 is easily the highest quality bus in its class on the market. Moreover, as an ABC product, it is also the best supported small bus on the market in the areas of parts and service.

ABC introduced their M1000 model at the Bus Con show in September of 2001. It immediately became a success as a higher quality body-on-chassis bus for groups of up to 35. The M1000 is built at the GCA plant in Imlay City, Michigan and offered by all of the ABC locations. It has become increasingly popular for transporting smaller groups and after five years continues to remain at the top of its class in both quality and sales.

### New M1235

The new enhanced 2007 model will be known as the M1235. Noteworthy improvements include a new and improved Freightliner Chassis. The wheelbase has also been increased by seven inches to provide an improved ride. Front styling has also been improved with a one-piece windshield and a new factory hood design.

In addition to giving the M1235 a more modern appearance, the new one-piece windshield improves safety and enhances passenger viewing. Drivers will appreciate the new, unobstructed view to the front which provides a better view of the road. Passengers will delight in the improved forward visibility which enhances their travel experience and gives the bus a more open feeling.

You will find several mechanical and system improvements on the new M1235. Air drum brakes are now standard equipment and the battery box has been improved and has a new type of door. The air conditioning system has been beefed up with two separate improvements. TM 21 compressors are now standard as are new accumulators. At the rear, the M1235 will have a new cargo door and handle and a newly designed rear step release lever.

Drivers will also find several improvements in their area. A National Seating 2000 driver's seat is now standard equipment. The dashboard has been redesigned in an automotive style with improved dash heater controls. At their left side, drivers will find a new storage area. The M1235 also boasts larger exterior mirrors for increased safety and driver convenience.



The new one-piece windshield improves safety by giving the driver an unobstructed view to the front. It also improves viewing for the passengers.

Passengers will like the upgraded interior with new fiberglass interior trim panels. Wheelchair lift operations are also improved with lift controls now integrated into the electrical box.

ABC will begin delivery of the new M1235 model in the fall of 2006. The new M1235 will be shown at the forthcoming open house and introductory event at all of the ABC locations in August.

### C2000

The C2000 model is one of several great things that developed from the ABC-Van Hool relationship that dates back to 1987. In 1996, ABC introduced their new T2100 model built by Van Hool in Belgium and based on an existing European model. It immediately became the best selling imported coach in the United States.

Several ABC customers expressed an interest in a coach that could combine the European styling of the T2100 with generic, bread-and-butter features as well as significant durability and longevity. As a result, the ABC and Van Hool staffs put their heads together and came up with a unique design that had never been seen before in either Europe or America.

ABC introduced the resulting C2045 model at the UMA Motorcoach Expo in Orlando in January of 2000. To say it was an immediate success would be an understatement. Within a year it not only became the most popular imported coach in the United States but outsold all the other imported coach models combined. Operators pur-





Both the left and right front wheel fenders on the C2045E have been modified with a new design. This joins the sweeping curved lines down the side of the coach.



The front stepwell has been completely redesigned. Safety is improved with white nosed rubber step treads and a nice handrail to assist passengers while boarding.

chased the C2045 for tours and charters while Greyhound operates it in scheduled service, making it the most versatile imported coach in decades. In addition to all its obvious attributes and abilities, operators claim that the C2000 is economical to operate, and the service and parts support from ABC is first class. Its high stainless steel content gives it impressive durability and longevity.

In 2004 the C2045 received several improvements. They include seamless side glass, modernized electrical components including LED lighting, and maintenance-free king pins. The C2045 also offers full independent suspension on both the steering and tag axles, maintenance-free hubs and disc brakes on all six wheels, and an impressive 442 cubic feet of underfloor luggage space. This new round of improvements for 2007 will make the C2045 even more impressive.

### The Enhanced C2045

For 2007, the C2045 will have new styling lines on the front sides and rear, as well as interior enhancements. Parcel rack doors, the restroom door and even the evaporator door are now rounded – breaking up the straight lines of the previous coach. The cockpit area has received several improvements including the dashboard, instrument panel and even the stepwell. In addition, new colors will be available. The resulting coach will now be called the C2045E, with the “E” standing for “Enhanced.” Following is a list of some of the more important changes.

There are several major changes to both the exterior and interior styling of the new C2045E. They tend to eliminate many of the straight lines of the earlier design and give the new coach a more modern, more

rounded, and frankly a more interesting appearance.

From the front, the most noteworthy item is the new headlight doors. Van Hool’s engineers borrowed this wedge design from their transit bus line. This new design starts out with triangle-shaped headlight doors above the bumper level and then the styling lines work around to the sides of the coach and up to the side letter boards above the windows. While the design is unusual, as well

as eye-catching, the hinged headlight doors are very practical. Opening these doors permits easy replacement of the new turn signals as well as the smaller high and low projector beam headlamps.

It is noteworthy that the interchangeable windshields have been retained for ease of stocking and maintenance.

This new styling continues around to the side of the C2045E where the upper side let-

**While the C2045 can boast of several improvements, the new interior and exterior styling with more rounded lines is among the most noteworthy. Here, you can see how the wedge-shaped headlight doors are the starting point for sweeping curves which continue down the side of the coach. Safety has been improved with state-of-the-art LED lighting.**



ter board panels have been restyled to match the original upper moldings. This provides a full sweeping panel that flows from the headlights to up to the letter board side panel, breaking up the traditional square lines of the coach. These same new styling lines carry through the entrance door upper and lower glasses on the right or curb side and the driver's service door on the street side. Both left and right front wheel fenders have been modified to join in this sweeping line on the side of the coach.

Side lighting has also been improved with smaller LED side identification lights offering the reliability of LED lighting. The light fixtures located near the drive wheels have been relocated to a new position between the two axles for driver convenience and visibility while making tight turns. In addition, the old flat white rectangular side approach lights have been replaced with oval fixtures. As an added driver convenience and safety feature, all four white side lights turn on when in reverse, thus giving the driver better side illumination while backing at night.

Like the front and side of the coach, the rear has received several improvements. Among the most noteworthy changes is a new rear cap. A new rounded design replaces the older flat rear cap design and provides an inset for an optional rear window. In addition to making the entire coach feel more open, the rear window goes a long way to towards making that last row of seats more inviting to passengers.

Van Hool engineers retained the traditional pantograph engine compartment door. However, the door has been redesigned to reflect the new more rounded body lines of the upper rear cap. The top of the engine compartment door is flat for easy cleaning while the lower portion carries the wedged body line from the top of the tail lights down to the bumper line. A new polished stainless steel trim molding located above the license plate location gives the door some additional styling. It is also interesting that the Van Hool engineers have relocated the door latch handle so that it is not visible.

New LED lighting is also used on the rear of the coach. High mount cat's eye LED stop light fixtures are built into the rear window styling lines. LED lights have also been used on the lower stop and tail light fixtures for increased visibility and longer life.

The new and completely restyled front stepwell is noteworthy from the standpoint of both design and safety. Regularly spaced steps are covered with white nosed rubber step treads for maximum safety. On the right (front) of the coach is a new dashboard that directs passengers towards the aisle for easy loading and unloading. It incorporates a useful and substantial handrail that again



New curved lines are continued on the interior with rounded parcel rack doors and a rounded restroom door. The restroom itself is slightly larger and more appealing.

improves safety. Stepwells have a bad habit of picking up dirt, and the fact that the Van Hool engineers have used fiberglass in the stepwell for easy cleaning is a big plus.

Another safety feature is that the Van Hool engineers have put the aisle and driver's area on the same level. There are no additional steps once you reach the top of the stepwell.

Drivers will find several improvements on the new C2045E. Among the more obvious is a smaller steering wheel. It comes with



The rear of the coach has been redesigned with a new cap, more rounded body lines and LED lighting although the pantograph engine compartment door remains.

a new style steering column that can be repositioned to suit most any driver. Another safety feature is that the parking brake has been relocated to the left side of the driver. This substantially reduces the possibility of a passenger releasing the brake.

The instrument panel has been redesigned to allow easier access by your maintenance staff. Switch layouts have been grouped by function to make things easier and more logical for the driver. Hence, the driver will find the lighting, HVAC, and mechanical switches grouped in their own appropriate rows. Effec-

Drivers have not been forgotten in the C2045E improvements. In addition to a smaller steering wheel, the instrument panel has been redesigned and has switches grouped by function. The HVAC operation is incorporated in the coach multiplex system and the parking brake has been relocated to the left side of the driver's seat.





tive with this 2007 model, HVAC operation is now improved by being incorporated into the coach multiplex system.

Van Hool's new rounded styling is carried into the passenger area. Overhead parcel rack doors are now rounded and blend into the restyled evaporator doors at the center of the aisle. You can select various fabric colors and designs for the new parcel rack doors to compliment or accent your interior and seat colors.

The new rounded design carries through with fewer seams and more rounded corners in the interior. Even the new restroom door is rounded while the restroom itself has been redesigned to provide a little more interior space. If you add in the optional rear window, you end up with a very open and modern design that should be very appealing to passengers.

ABC will start to deliver the new C2045E model following the August introduction at all of the ABC locations.

#### **Open House and Tailgate Party**

These enhancements to the M1235 and C2045E have caused a great deal of interest among bus operators. As a result, ABC Companies has scheduled an Open House and Tailgate Party on August 21 and 22 at all of the ABC locations including Florida, New

Jersey, Minnesota, Texas and California. In addition to showing off their new M1235 and C2045 models, ABC will also have specials on pre-owned coaches as well as parts and service. Each ABC Region will have a Grand Prize Giveaway. In addition to the

ABC sales staff, there will be a Caterpillar representative and an ABC financial representative at each location. Contact your ABC sales representative or nearest ABC facility for details. □

**The enhanced and restyled C2045E will undoubtedly be a hit with customers at ABC's Open House and Tailgate Party in late August to introduce the new model. It is scheduled for August 21 and 22 at all ABC locations. Deliveries of the new C2045E will start after this event.**



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