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From daily life to driving: A wheelchair that can do more

Nine years of experience, thousands of kilometers, and a clear conclusion: For Ulrike, the Paravan PR 50 is far more than just an assistive device—it is her key to independence and true mobility.



A faithful companion for many years: Ulrike with her previous wheelchair (left) and her new Paravan PR 50 (right)—together with Stefan Ludwig, Head of Wheelchair Systems, Photo: Paravan

For Ulrike, the wheelchair is far more than a means of transportation—it is her central companion in everyday life. From the moment she gets up until she goes to bed, she sits in the Paravan PR 50. At the same time, it also serves as her driver's seat in the car. "If there's a problem, I can resolve it right away and don't have to make a special trip to the medical supply store," she says. She particularly appreciates the direct contact and the one-stop-shop approach. In addition to her wheelchair, she also gets around in a custom-fitted vehicle from Paravan—controlled via a 4-way joystick. This combination is indispensable for her, especially for her commute to work: 28 kilometers from her home.

Ulrike has been a Paravan customer for nine years. Her mobility journey began with an electric wheelchair—back then, the Piccolino model. A faithful companion that allowed her to independently manage her daily life in her hometown. "Everything—shopping, running errands. I can just put the groceries on the footrest; that's very practical. You can transport quite a lot home that way," she says. Today she uses a new model: the Paravan PR 50.

A wheelchair for daily life and work

Her wheelchair is precisely tailored to her needs—with a custom-fitted seating system as well as electric lift and tilt functions. "When people are standing around me, I can raise myself to eye level—then I'm not just there, but right in the middle of things." This makes a crucial difference, especially

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for communication and participation. The lift also provides greater flexibility in her daily work as an administrative assistant at in a social services organization. She uses the tilt function specifically to relieve pressure: "I can actively lean back and take the pressure off." A firmer seat cushion and the ability to position herself stably in a reclined position are also important to her—especially with her back in mind.

For Ulrike, many small details make all the difference. The height-adjustable footrests, for example: "For comfort. When I'm reading, I also like to sit in a way that allows me to pull my feet closer to my body." This also provides additional support when driving. New are the protectors, which have been moved from the front to the back of the thigh area: "So I can sit upright, even when I'm not feeling so well and slide forward a bit."

Once, the odometer on her old wheelchair had already reset to zero, she reports. In total, she has covered about 11,000 kilometers over the past nine years. And sometimes things get a bit adventurous: "Once I drove around a gravel pit with a friend—unplanned. If I'd known what it looked like there, I wouldn't have done it," she says and laughs. "But it worked."

Mobility as a Complete System

What seems like second nature to Ulrike is the result of a perfectly coordinated interplay—and a solution where everything fits together: With her PR 50, she drives via a cassette lift directly in front of the steering wheel of her VW T6. The vehicle is controlled via the digital driving and steering system Space Drive—using a 4-way joystick.

She has already covered nearly 93,000 kilometers with it. She operates secondary functions such as turn signals or windshield wipers via the Paravan Touch system or voice control. When her ten-year-old daughter is on board, she takes the wheel: "Turn signal right, turn signal left." Before switching to Space Drive, she was driving with a linear lever steering system. "With the joystick, it's much easier to drive long distances."

"Mobility is everything"

Her wheelchair and vehicle are the foundation of Ulrike's self-determined life.

"Mobility is everything—social connections, freedom, independence." And that's exactly what she lives every day: "I can decide spontaneously where I'm going—and I'm just as flexible on-site with my wheelchair."



Customized: The Paravan PR 50 – designed for maximum independence in everyday life. Photo: Paravan



Perfect seating comfort: Side bolsters and seating position are individually adjusted—for optimal support and relief in everyday life. Photo: Paravan



Individual fine-tuning: Controls and functions are precisely adjusted – tailored to personal needs in everyday life. Photo: Paravan



Seamless transition: With the cassette lift, Ulrike moves directly from her wheelchair into the vehicle—for maximum independence in everyday life. Photo: Paravan



Independent on the go: Ulrike controls her vehicle safely and comfortably using a joystick. Photo: Paravan

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About Paravan GmbH:

PARAVAN GmbH is the global market leader in highly customized vehicle solutions for people with disabilities. Approximately 180 employees at the Pfronstetten Aichelau site and the Heidelberg branch develop and produce custom-adapted vehicle conversions and electric wheelchairs, as well as specialized driver training. PARAVAN pursues a holistic approach with its "one-stop-shop concept." The technological highlight is Space Drive, an intelligent digital control system based on the drive-by-wire principle. Thanks to the active redundancy of the servo motors, it is completely fail-safe and the first of its kind to be approved for road use. With the help of this innovation, people with severe disabilities—some without arms or legs—can drive independently and safely. These drivers are unable to physically turn the steering wheel. Over the past 20 years, Space Drive has proven itself on over a billion kilometers of roads worldwide and is used by numerous industry customers for test vehicles in the field of autonomous driving. The system is available as a retrofit kit with an open interface for all known vehicle types. www.paravan.de