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Time for bed

An island bed layout arrives in this fully spec'd dealer special edition range from Marquis



Peter Vaughan

ELDDIS MARQUIS MAJESTIC 150

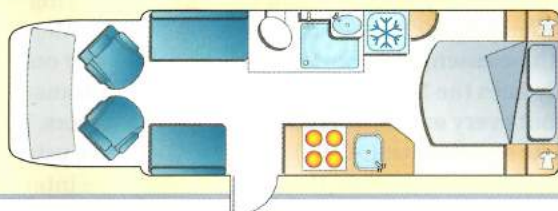
Price from: £55,995

Berths: 4 **Travel seats:** 4

Base vehicle: Peugeot Boxer

Length: 7.34m

Gross weight: 3,500kg





The unequal-length sofas come with scatter cushions and armrests

When Elddis adds a new layout to its line-up, as sure as night follows day, you'll find that addition in dealer special editions, too. So, the arrival of the island bed Autoquest 150 has resulted in a higher-spec version of the same floorplan in the Majestic range, built exclusively for the UK's largest dealer network, Marquis.

It fills an obvious gap in the portfolio, with a 7.34m low-profile featuring one of today's most popular layouts at a price that seems highly competitive when you examine the extensive kit list (there was already an island bed layout in the more expensive Majestic Premium range). For once, £55,995 really is the cost, with no essential packs to add. Not only does the Majestic 150 have just about every option offered by Elddis on its standard (sub-£50k) Autoquest, but a number of extras that are not

usually available. About the only additional item you'll need to budget for is a TV (for which there is already an aerial and sockets front and rear, but no mounting bracket).

POWER TO PLEASE

With an upgrade from the usual 140bhp Euro 6d motor to 165bhp, the Peugeot base vehicle is where the extra spec starts and more power here results in a more relaxing drive with fewer gear changes – and the additional oomph isn't the only benefit for the driver. All the expected toys are present and correct, from a leather steering wheel to cruise control, while the Majestic also gets features that are rarer on motorhomes, such as automatic headlights and windscreen wipers. There's a reversing camera, too, using a colour display clipped to the interior mirror – it can be left on

all the time or simply switched on when you're backing up.

Then there's the DAB radio with Bluetooth, which also has TomTom sat-nav built in; it's just a shame that the display is rather small. Even the air-conditioning is upgraded to automatic climate control in which you just dial in the desired temperature. But perhaps the biggest surprise of all is heated cab seats – great for touring in winter and so rarely seen in motorhomes.

Of course, the rest is familiar Sevel fare, with a firm ride (eliciting quite a few rattles from the habitation area), good on-road stability and an easy gear change – manual only, of course, because the Boxer doesn't have an automatic option.

The cab comes in metallic silver and the 15in alloy wheels are standard. It's a 3,500kg gross weight, so anyone with a car licence can drive



The radio has sat-nav and the air-con is the more sophisticated climate control



A concertina screen encloses the front bed but leaves no floor area around it



The Aguti foldaway travel seats require the settee cushions to be stowed when in use



Even when extended for sleeping there's plenty of room to move around the foot of the bed

SECOND OPINION

"It's the comprehensive standard spec that makes a difference here, so no optional extras need to be costed on top"

DANIEL ATTWOOD MANAGING EDITOR

it, and, despite the extensive spec, a payload of over half a tonne seems pretty generous.

Even your insurance broker will smile when you tell him that the Majestic has both an alarm and a tracker as standard. That should save you a few pounds on premiums, too.

SOLID AS A ROCK

Elements such as the caravan-style windows that sit proud of the body and a habitation door that's not linked with to the central locking hark back to the Majestic's entry-level roots but, outside, you'll also discover more added spec. As well as an external barbecue point, there's a 4.5m Dometic roll-out awning, a roof-mounted solar panel and, while you'll need a key to open the door, it has a flyscreen and a low entrance that needs no external step. It should be

noted, though, that this 'van comes with four keys when most now manage with just one each for base vehicle and conversion.

The body uses Elddis' SoLiD construction, backed up by a 10-year water ingress warranty, and insulation meets the Grade III standard. Water tanks (fresh and waste) are underslung and both are heated and insulated, although the grey tank's fiddly drain tap and small-bore outlet will make your times at the motorhome service point longer than ideal. Heating (Whale's CompleteHeat gas/230V blown-air system) is also mounted under the vehicle to save space, but it did seem to favour the bedroom over the lounge in its distribution of warmth on a chilly spring evening.

Although the layout includes that desirable island bed, there's no garage on this model. The only external

storage is accessed via a small (280mm by 730mm) flap in the back wall. This leads into the large under-bed locker but the maximum height in here is around 350mm – plenty for outdoor chairs, etc, but not larger items. Bikes will have to go on a rack, for which the mounting brackets are already in situ.

What looks like another exterior locker on the offside is just for the leisure battery and mains hook-up. Don't be tempted to leave this hatch open as the exhaust for the space heater is just beneath and this had already distorted the battery locker door; Marquis is aware and will be addressing the issue.

OPEN ALL HOURS

Inside, the Majestic feels quite different to most of its continental competition, with much less ►

LIKED



- Everything included pricing policy
- Excellent interior lighting

DISLIKED



- Four different keys required
- Daylight coming in below window blinds

WANTED

- Central locking on habitation door
- Stronger gas struts to support the raised rear bed



The kitchen features a microwave and a removable draining board

separation of the bedroom. There's a clear view through the interior on the nearside and a much more open feel to the layout. The downside, of course, is that the bed is always on show during the day.

Up front, too, the Elddis adopts a very British format, with side settees forming the lounge along with swivel cab seats – all of which are trimmed in a smart ActivCare upholstery that is said to be wipe-clean and pet-friendly (sadly, not tested by my German Spitz on this occasion).

A large push-up Heki rooflight and wind-up overcab sunroof ensure there's plenty of daylight, while artificial illumination includes a quartet of reading lights as well as ambient strips above the top lockers.

It's an inviting place to relax, with room for four or five folk. Scatter cushions aid sprawling, but the armrests inhibit feet-up lounging; I'd

be tempted to leave them at home. Curtains (in addition to the blinds) make it feel homely, but you may find the sofas rather too high for comfort, when it comes to mealtimes and you sit more formally, unless you have very long legs.

The table is a free-standing unit that stores in its own cupboard at the end of the galley. Sturdy and sensibly sized, it can be used outside, too.

The only step inside the 150 is between the lounge and the kitchen, where the floor level is 100mm lower. That results in headroom of just over two metres, so there's plenty of room to admire the excellent galley.

Worktop is enhanced with a flap at the forward end, while space alongside the sink allows room to deploy the removable draining board. Twin 230V sockets are ideally placed for mains appliances to be placed on the worktop extension.

Storage includes plate racks in the top lockers, three drawers (but no cutlery or utensil holder in any of them) and a couple of floor-level cupboards (with some loose wiring looking a tad vulnerable in the locker below the oven). More than cupboard space, it's the standard spec that, once again, impresses here. The Thetford cooker has three gas rings, a mains hotplate and a separate grill and oven, while above is a Russell Hobbs microwave, so all cooking bases are covered. Then, opposite, is a tall, slim fridge/freezer with 139-litre capacity and automatic energy selection.

IT'S CURTAINS

If the galley impressed immediately, I admit to initial reservations about the washroom, especially as this test was carried out in April when campsite showers were still closed. The sight of



It's a much more open-plan interior than many island bed layouts, but the bed is on show in the daytime

a curtain in this 'van's cubicle was enough to make me consider extra spraying of Right Guard as an alternative to showering but the fact that it pulls across just one side of the washroom, to cover the loo and cupboard above, saved the day. Showering in here was, actually, more than acceptable, enhanced by the excellent Ecocamel water-saving showerhead.

Of course, the downsides of not having a separate shower (wet walls and floor in the loo area) still stand and having just one outlet in the shower tray meant that suds were a little reluctant to depart. I also noticed a very small amount of water had escaped through the washroom door, and I'd have liked a plastic-lined compartment, rather than wallpaper on the walls. Overall, however, for a small ablutions space, this works pretty well.

DOUBLE DOUBLES

If the washroom appears petite, the bedroom seems anything but. Partly that's because of the open-plan design, but also the extremely generous floorspace around the foot of the bed.

Of course, all is not quite as it first appears because this spaciousness is with the bed in day mode. However, even when the mattress is pulled out to its full length, there's still more room to move around the bedroom than in most rivals. Even better, there's a halfway position with the end of the mattress standing vertically as a backrest for you to sit up and use the reading lights to devour your MMM.

His and hers wardrobes beside the bed are the norm and, on the offside, there are three drawers, too. On this side, at the foot of the bed, there's also a vanity unit but sit on the end of the bed and you'll be lucky to see more than just your scalp in the mirror...

If you should be tall enough to see your face you'll not fit in the island bed, which is only a modest 1.83m long at most (and radiused at both sides). And it's worth noting that, while the whole bed lifts on gas struts for easy access to the locker below, the rams aren't strong enough to support the additional weight of a duvet.

If you need four berths, though, the Majestic 150 serves up a second double bed made from the lounge settees. The slatted seat bases here simply slide together and the cushions are reversed to form a flat and long bed that narrows from 1.23m on the offside to just 0.95m opposite.

Privacy can be provided for sleepers up front via a concertina screen that pulls out from forward of the habitation door and clips to the washroom wall. It gives some seclusion for the front bed, but provides no floorspace. Blinds in ➤



The free-standing table has its own locker at the end of the galley



The small all-in-one washroom works better than expected

THE VERDICT

Above all, it's the spec – everything from an alarm to alloys, from the awning to the automatic air-con in the cab – that really impresses. The kitchen is a highpoint, too, while the layout feels more spacious (but provides a less private bedroom) than most continental designs. Details such as the waste water drain could be usefully improved, but value for money remains a strong card of the Majestic range.

both bedrooms are the basic type that leave a gap at the bottom; if you're a light sleeper the amount of dawn illumination creeping in under them might wake you earlier than you'd like.

At this point you might be wondering why Marquis has taken the trouble to incorporate a second double bed when there appears to be just two travel seats. That's where Eddis plays its 'berths = belts' slogan with its two foldaway Aguti chairs.

You do have to remove – and stow – all the settee cushions but, having done so, the seat bases fold up against the side walls and the Agutis unfurl, creating two forward-facing pews with integral three-point seatbelts. There's more legroom for the offside occupant

but each seat is more restricted in space for shoulders than legs, while Isofix is now standard for easy fitment of child seats. **MAM**

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FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE
From: £55,995
As tested: £55,995

BASICS
Berths: 4

Travel seats: 4

Warranty: Three years on base vehicle and conversion, 10 years water ingress

Type approval: European Whole Vehicle

DIMENSIONS
Length: 7.34m (24ft 1in)
Width: 2.20m (7ft 2½in)
Height: 2.82m (9ft 3in)
Gross vehicle weight: 3,500kg
Payload: 535kg

BASE VEHICLE
Type: Peugeot Boxer Low Line chassis-cab
Engine: 2.2-litre, Euro 6d, 165bhp, front-wheel drive, six-speed manual gearbox

KITCHEN
Cooker: Thetford cooker with three gas burners, mains hotplate, separate grill and oven; Russell Hobbs microwave
Fridge: Dometic 139-litre with automatic energy selection

BEDS
Island double: 1.83m x 1.37m (6ft 0in x 4ft 6in)
Front lounge bed: 2.06m x 1.23m/0.95m (6ft 9in x 4ft 0½in/3ft 1½in)

ESSENTIALS
Fresh water: 100 litres (underfloor, insulated and heated)
Waste water: 70 litres (underfloor, insulated and heated)
Space/water heating: Whale CompleteHeat 4kW gas/electric blown-air
Leisure battery: 95Ah
Gas: 2 x 6kg

OPTIONS
Fitted to test vehicle: None

THE ALTERNATIVES

Auto-Trail F-Line F74	£48,285
Bailey Adamo 75-4i	£61,099
Chausson 788 Titanium VIP	£55,840

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