

van review

BENIMAR TESSORO 840

With its bargain Freedom Drive pack of extra kit, the Tessoro 840 well suits an adventurous couple, writes Peter Baber

We first had a look at this motorhome back at the start of last year (issue 295), when it was a newcomer in Benimar's Ford-based Tessoro range. We thought it might be worth a revisit, especially as this year Marquis Leisure is adding a Freedom Drive pack to all new Tessoro models for an extra £95, which makes this model exceedingly good value.

This pack, which includes kit worth £9749, features automatic transmission as standard, alloy wheels and exterior BBQ and shower points. It also includes a bike rack, an awning, a 200W solar panel, habitation air conditioning, a 12-inch Ford touch-screen radio with sat nav and a rear camera, and a vehicle tracker. Whew! So does all that make this 'van an exceptional buy?

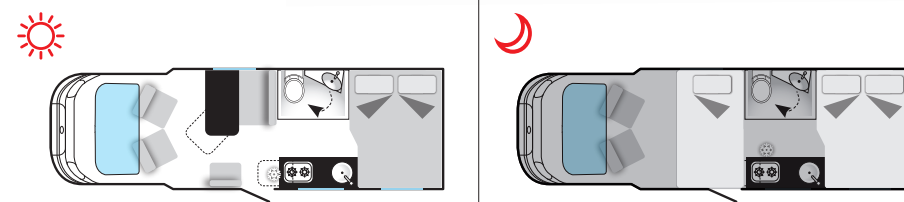
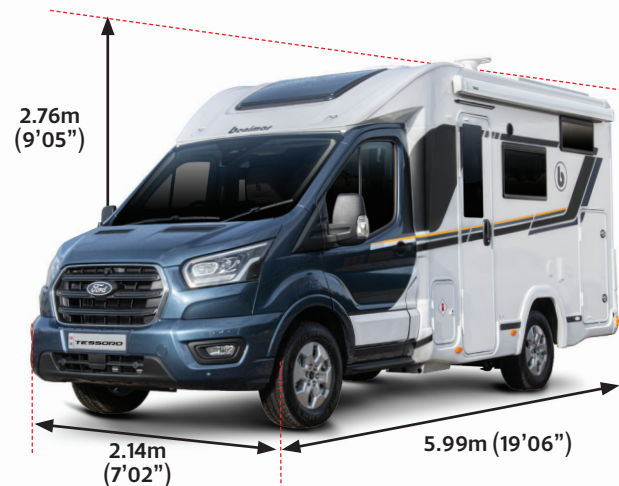
Well, it's certainly a compact model, being less than 6m long and only 2cm wider than the Adria Compact reviewed in this issue (p66).

Yet you still get a spacious front dinette with a table that, including its extension, is huge for the three people in this 'van. There's space to spread out, too, even if the side seat by the door is right in front of a cupboard. And the area is flooded with light either from the sunroof in the day or from huge LEDs at night.

In the kitchen you face a bit of a compromise. The designers have included an extension by the door, but it's a clip-on unit that didn't feel hugely stable to us, so you might be better off using the permanent space in front of the two-burner hob and circular sink.

UK models come with an oven (although that does limit space for storing big pans) and you do get an

Price £75,090
Sleeps 3 **Belts** 4
Base vehicle Ford Transit
Engine 2.0-litre, 165hp engine with automatic transmission
Length/width/height 5.99/2.14/2.76m (19'06"/7'02"/9'05")
MTPLM 3500kg
MiRO 2874kg
Payload 626kg
Water (fresh/waste) 100/105 litres
Leisure battery 100Ah
Gas 1 x 6kg



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extractor fan. The fridge is only half height, but at least it sits at the end of the kitchen peninsula, where it can be reached easily from both inside and outside.

The washroom includes a swivel partition with, on one side, a roomy (considering the size of the 'van) shower, with a roof light, and a big, well-lit basin with mirrors on the other. There are two drainage holes, and we didn't have the same issue with the tambour door getting caught as we did on the last 840 we looked at.

There are two ways to access the transverse bed at the back: either by steps that you fold out, or via a ladder that is also provided.

Thanks to the Freedom Drive pack, our model had an air conditioning unit over the bed (previously there was an Omnivent here).

There's a large headboard and two adjustable spotlights for reading, while all the light switches are easily accessible from here.

The bed that you make up from the seats in the front lounge is less



1 Front dinette is flooded with light and there's plenty of room for dining

2 The kitchen is a little limited for workspace even with the extension fitted

3 Washroom is well-lit with a decent-sized basin and some handy mirrors

4 There's a roomy shower with two drainage holes



intuitive, and relies partly on platforms that you bring in from the garage. It would likely be most suitable for a smaller child.

Storage in this 'van is heavily weighted towards the back, and not just because of the garage (which is partly taken up with a spare wheel, along with the bed platforms).

A door behind the steps up to the bed - which looks as though it is going to give you access to the garage - actually opens out to a medium-sized wardrobe with shelves.

There are also two large overhead lockers at the back.

Up in the front dinette, you only get one overhead locker, plus the hanging wardrobe behind the side settee that is clearly designed for coats and anoraks, being near the door.

There are three large overhead lockers in the kitchen (one partly taken up by the extractor fan duct); then, in the base unit below, there is a small locker under the oven and a drawer with a cutlery tray above it. Good for dry food storage, then.

For pans you don't want to put in an overhead locker, there is a narrow cupboard at the end. The washroom features a cupboard next to the basin.

PRACTICAL MOTORHOME SAYS...

We previously rated this motorhome highly, and the inclusion of the Freedom Drive pack continues to make it very attractive. Its layout works well, thanks to its large garage, versatile kitchen and spacious lounge - it would be an excellent choice for a couple touring with a grandchild.



up close



The Freedom Drive pack includes a 12-inch Ford touch-screen radio



Half-height fridge is fine for a couple and is easy to access from inside or out



LEFT There's a ladder to the transverse bed at the rear of the 'van...

RIGHT ... or you can use the fold-out steps to get there



Transverse bed has a headboard, two spotlights and air conditioning

Front bed is suitable for a child, but it's a faff to assemble with boards from the garage



The garage is big enough for bulky kit including bikes. The area is lit, too



Three big lockers above the kitchen are ideal for storing your dry goods