



Peter Vaughan

# Rare bird

Mixing Italian style with a very British layout, the latest Kea from Mobilvetta has a bold and unique new look



## MOBILVETTA KEA 80

Price from: £89,995 • Berths: 4 • Travel seats: 4  
Length: 6.99m • Gross weight: 3,650kg

Motorhome supplied by: Marquis Leisure [W marquisleisure.co.uk](http://www.marquisleisure.co.uk)



New face-to-face lounge makes for a more spacious feel in the front of the motorhome

It's quite a contrast. When collecting this brand-new Mobilvetta from Marquis' Northampton branch, I was able to compare it side by side with last season's model and, not only has the format of both its front and rear lounges changed, but the décor is night and day different. Gone is the dated woodwork and brown upholstery, replaced by one of the most avantgarde motorhome interiors on the market.

This is the new Kea 80, launched at the Caravan, Camping and Motorhome Show at the NEC in February. Following on from the Kea Kompakt's debut last October, it's the latest model in the Mobilvetta line-up to get the marque's striking new look (along with its sister A-class, the K-Yacht 80). This autumn, the rest of the range will follow suit.

This isn't just a change of fabrics and furniture, or a new colour

scheme, and the change starts on the outside, where a metallic black cab, black graphics, black framed habitation windows and black skirts were enough to cause a rash of positive comments from neighbours on the Caravan and Motorhome Club's Warwick Racecourse site.

Of course, like other Trigano Group imports from Marquis Leisure, it's also UK handed, so the habitation door (with low entrance, flyscreen and central locking) is on the nearside.

### DESIGNED FOR BRITAIN

That's not the only addition to address British tastes, as the Kea comes with an external barbecue point and a Teleco TV aerial.

It also has NCC (National Caravan Council) approval, and the VIN Chip security marking system, as well as a Trackstar S7 tracker with a year's subscription.

Meanwhile, Marquis' usual 'no

extras' policy on specification means that alloy wheels, LED headlamps, front fog/cornering lights and a 200W solar panel are also included within the £89,995 list price.

That figure even encompasses the Nero Pack (bike rack, Thule awning and Truma roof-mounted air-con), said to be worth £4,000.

With so much kit fitted as standard, it's no surprise to find that the Kea comes on a 3,650kg chassis, so you'll need a C1 category licence to drive it. It's also a typical coachbuilt width of 2.35m, although its length (6.99m) is more modest than many other twin lounge layouts.

That's another surprise, because the Kea 80, despite showing its Italian heritage with its Milan catwalk design, has one of the most traditionally British of motorhome layouts. Could this actually be the best of both worlds, or will it be more like fish and chips with a side order of spaghetti?



Not quite a garage but a large exterior locker



Tall fridge/freezer with oven below



Star of the show – the U-shaped rear lounge with comfy faux leather sofas

### FIT FOR AN EMPEROR?

With no rear bedroom to accommodate it, there's no bike-swallowing garage here, but you might squeeze a couple of folding cycles – or at least a good selection of outdoor furniture – in the locker running under the rearmost part of the lounge.

This space has loading doors on either side, a mains socket, fixed lashing points and headroom of up to 54cm, while the outside shower fitting is also located here. You won't be troubling the 300kg limit but it's worth noting the lack of a spare wheel. Total payload (with the Nero Pack) is 449kg.

Whilst peering underneath, note the underslung (heated) waste water tank with 90-litre capacity and simple T-handle for emptying (the outlet is in the centre of the 'van). The fresh water is inboard and generously sized at 120 litres.

Mobilvetta's body construction is

completely wood-free – described as iTech 4.0 insulating technology – and comes with a 10-year water ingress warranty.

Up front, it's the familiar Fiat Ducato cab with the 140hp motor. Once again, though, plenty of boxes have been ticked when it comes to the standard specification.

Most importantly, the Kea has the eight-speed automatic gearbox, while also included are the electric parking brake, digital air-conditioning (set your desired temperature rather than just switch it on/off), leather steering wheel and a wireless phone charging pad.

Safety systems include Traction Plus, ESC, Hill Descent Control, Hill Assist and tyre pressure monitoring.

The expected central touchscreen (from Pioneer) has a 9in display and features Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, as well as being linked to the reversing camera, while the instrumentation on the dash is in

Fiat's fully digital format.

On the road, it's the smooth automatic gearbox that's the star of the show and the number of rattles that's the biggest disappointment. Performance is adequate, with comfortable motorway cruising, as expected, and the Ducato's firm ride ensures good stability at all times.

### IT'LL BE ALL WHITE

By now, you'll have looked at the photos here and probably already made up your mind about this Mobilvetta. There's no doubt that the white faux leather upholstery and grey/white furniture make a bold statement as soon as you step inside the latest Kea.

That look won't be to all tastes (and might not be practical for those travelling with dogs), but for some it'll be an instant hit. Not quite Marmite, but some will certainly fall for its flair.

Far less divisive will be the ►



### ADVANTAGES

- Bold new décor
- Two comfortable lounges
- Alde diesel/230V heating
- XL-sized compressor fridge
- UK-handed layout
- Under 7m long

### DISADVANTAGES

- Rear bed not especially wide
- Front bed obstructs doorway
- Fourth travel seat is rear-facing



Supersized drawers in the kitchen but worktop space is rather lacking

changes to the layout. Previously, the Kea 80 had a half-dinette lounge at the front, where the new model goes for a more fashionable – and far more spacious – side sofa arrangement.

With the fixed dining table folded in half and daylight pouring in through the supersized overcab sunroof, this feels like an inviting place to be. The 1.35m-long offside settee is a comfortable spot to relax with your feet up, while the swivel cab chairs (pity about the wonky armrest covers) make the best place to watch TV – there’s a bracket on the washroom wall, along with 12V, 230V and aerial sockets, but you’ll have to add your own screen.

Unfold the sturdy table and its 80cm by 74cm size should cater for four place settings, but anyone dining from the settees may find it a little high. This is because the front seats are taller as the cab floor is up a step (which includes welcome

vents from the Alde heating).

It’s also possible to convert the sofas into travel seats. The change is quite simple and both pews have a three-point belt and a head restraint, but the nearside seat is rear-facing with almost zero view out.

Under that seat, you’ll find the 100Ah AGM leisure battery (we might have hoped for lithium) and associated electrics, while the fresh water tank is beneath the offside settee. That leaves limited under-seat storage here but there are top lockers, including small but useful ones above the cab (where many ‘vans have pointless open shelves).

### U KNOW U WANT TO

If the front lounge is good, the rear lounge is great. Gone is the old model’s L-shaped sofa and sideboard, swapped for a proper U-shape with space to sprawl and enjoy the views through three large windows. Or you can deploy the

Roman blinds if you want a little more privacy.

There are speakers under the across-the-rear top locker and sockets for another telly. Reading lights are found on the nearside, with ambient lighting built into the base of the drop-down bed above and, despite that bed, there’s still 1.89m headroom. Look up and you’ll also spot the premium, suede-style headlining.

You can dine here, too, as a free-standing table is stored in the wardrobe. It’s awkward to extract without disturbing your clothes, though, and quite heavy, so probably best left for when the weather makes you want to eat outside.

As well as the aforementioned upper cupboard, there’s an underfloor compartment (hidden when the removable carpets are in place) and a small locker below the nearside settee for additional storage here. The offside sofa houses the



Looking rearwards from the cab shows how the pale colours inside this Kea give the impression of a bold, roomy interior

Alde boiler while the rest of the under-seat space is accounted for by the external 'mini garage' locker.

### **ELECTRIC DREAMS**

At night, it's a joy not to have to play cushion jigsaws and instead simply press a button. Not only that, but the electric bed here now comes right down to seat height, just 78cm off the floor, so you can flop in without recourse to a ladder.

There's room to leave a duvet on top (but not pillows) when you stow the bed, increasing the convenience, but the firm mattress is not especially wide, at 1.27m, its size being restricted by that top cupboard on the rear wall. Note, too, that the side and corner backrest cushions have to be removed to allow the bed to come down to its full extent.

The heating kept things cosy despite cold nights on test but a fan running under the driver's seat

meant that it wasn't the usual Alde silence. That's a pity as there seemed to be a nice spread of heat throughout the motorhome.

Over the front lounge, there's a second electric bed – again long in mattress (1.99m) but less impressive in width (and this one narrows towards the offside). This time you do need to use a ladder as it parks 1.40m off the floor. That still means you have reasonable headroom (63cm) and, as in the rear, there are twin reading lights.

You could still use the cab seats but not the settees, with the bed lowered, and you'll have to limbo out of the door. More annoyingly, the ladder blocks the washroom door, although you can fix this by simply raising the bed by about 4cm (Mobilvetta is investigating this).

### **GAS-LITE**

Even with both beds occupied, access to the kitchen is unaffected.

Here is another aspect of Mobilvetta's contemporary take on motorhome aesthetics, with charcoal grey and white providing contrast and LED strips adding to the effect.

On the plus side, the two huge drawers provide excellent storage and there are useful little shelves for oddments. The cooker mixes gas and induction rings and, alongside, the tall compressor fridge further reduces your reliance on gas (there's room for just one cylinder in the external locker). Not so good is the lack of worktop once the sink (which is beautifully integrated into the counter) has been uncovered.

To the left of the main galley, the oven/grill sits under the fridge – a little low, perhaps, but safer than being too high. The Thetford cooler is unusual, too, in having a large freezer drawer under the fridge section, resulting in the top shelf of the latter being rather too high if you're vertically challenged. ►



Stylish washroom with good storage



Rear bed comes down to seat height



Front bed comes across the entrance



Swing-wall shower includes a shelf for your gel

There are no such challenges in the washroom and, although you step up into this space, headroom is still 1.91m. The stylish, textured basin matches the finish of the kitchen counter, while the tall cupboard has upstands for its shelves (so necessary, so often lacking). It's not a huge room but there's plenty of shoulder and legroom on the swivel cassette toilet, while the Alde radiator should dry towels hanging alongside more rapidly.

Unsurprisingly, the Kea now incorporates a swing wall to create a

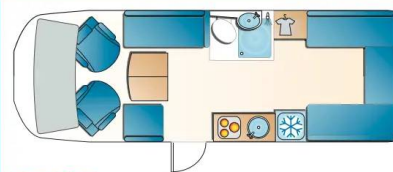
decent-size shower. The basin's wall simply turns to the left, covering the loo, while a folding screen completes the cubicle. The showerhead is at a fixed height (or can be handheld) but water pressure is impressive and so is the way soapy suds flow away effectively through the twin drains, while a final positive note goes to the shelf for your shower gel.

Adjacent to the washroom is the wardrobe, which has a hanging height of 92cm, with two small shelves below (behind these is the gas locker). [www.mmm](http://www.mmm)

### THE MMM VERDICT

This strikingly modern motorhome isn't just about the looks, it packs in a lot of kit for £89,995. It also combines a popular UK layout with that Italian design flair. Storage might be tight for four but for couples seeking space, this could be just the ticket. In the end, though, you may buy it simply on style.

## FACTS AND FIGURES



### PRICE

From: £89,995

As tested: £89,995

### BASICS

Berths: 4 Travel seats: 4

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

Type Approval: Full GB Approval

### DIMENSIONS

Length: 6.99m (22ft 11in)

Width: 2.35m (7ft 8½in)

Height: 2.89m (9ft 6in) including air-con

Gross vehicle weight: 3,650kg

Payload: 524kg (449kg with Neo Pack)

### BASE VEHICLE

Type: Fiat Ducato low-frame chassis-cab

Engine: 2.2-litre, 140hp, Euro 6E, front-wheel drive, eight-speed automatic gearbox

### KITCHEN

Cooker: Thetford induction hob with two gas rings

Fridge: Thetford 174-litre compressor, including 33.5-litre freezer drawer

### BEDS

Rear drop-down: 1.99m x 1.27m (6ft 6½in x 4ft 2in)

Front drop-down: 1.99m x 1.29m/1.11m (6ft 6½in x 4ft 3in/3ft 7½in)

### ESSENTIALS

Fresh water: 120 litres (inboard)

Waste water: 90 litres (underslung, heated)

Space/water heating: Alde Compact 4000 D diesel/230V 'wet' central heating

Gas: 1 x 6kg

Leisure battery: 100Ah AGM

### OPTIONS

Fitted to test vehicle: Neo Pack (bike rack, awning and Truma habitation air-con) included in the price

### THE ALTERNATIVES

Bailey Autograph 81-5

£93,999

Bürstner B66 744 TD

£85,995

### INSURANCE

T 0800 975 1307

W [shieldtotalinsurance.co.uk](http://shieldtotalinsurance.co.uk)

For quote details: [motorhome.ma/QuoteInfo](http://motorhome.ma/QuoteInfo)



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