

Auto-Sleeper Nuevo EK Limited Edition

A special edition version of this popular petite coachbuilt



WHO IS AUTO-SLEEPERS?

As a company that began building elevating roof campervans (the very first was on a Morris van), it's appropriate that it is the UK's largest manufacturer of van conversions – today based on medium, long and extra-long versions of the Peugeot Boxer (or Fiat Ducato if you want an automatic). Of course, its range also includes a wide variety of coachbuilts, from the sub-6m Peugeot-based Nuevo up to the near-8m Burford on the rear-wheel drive Mercedes Sprinter. Classic British layouts with a front or rear lounge make up a big part of the range, but there are fixed beds, too, either French bed or twin singles.

Auto-Sleepers has never been a brand to compete at the entry-level and its vehicles come with a very high spec. Its designs tend towards conservative British tastes, but it offers plenty of choice in terms of fabrics, as well as overcabs and rear travel seats as options for those who need them.

Always based in the Cotswold village of Willersey, where it remarkably builds over 700 vehicles per annum from a relatively small site, the company is part of the Trigano Group.



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE	Peugeot Boxer
PRICE FROM	£63,995
BERTHS	2
TRAVEL SEATS	2
LENGTH	5.75m
WIDTH	2.32m
HEIGHT	2.90m
GROSS WEIGHT	3,500kg
PAYLOAD	626kg

ALSO CONSIDER

Auto-Trail Tracker EKS



THE Nuevo first featured in this magazine in the January 2002 issue and it has made regular appearances ever since. This is a small 'van with a big following and, as its maker celebrates its diamond anniversary, the Nuevo has been part of the line-up for a third of that time. Not even classics like the Trident and Talisman can claim to have been so important to the Cotswold firm for so long.

Of course, the Nuevo of today is significantly different to the one of two decades hence, but the recipe remains resolutely the same – a Sevel (Fiat/Peugeot) base vehicle, compact size and a front lounge/rear kitchen layout with a corner washroom. There's an ES model (featuring an

overcab bed and rear travel seats) and Auto-Sleepers even dabbled briefly with an EL (end lounge) version, but the EK (end kitchen) is the original Nuevo at its two-berth best.

Where most rivals (and there have been many) measure a gnat's whisker under 6m in length, the current Nuevo is only 5.75m long, making it one of the shortest coachbuilts on the market. The Auto-Sleeper has seen off most of its opposition and the equivalent Auto-Trail Tracker is now nearly 6.5m long, so no longer really a direct competitor. And, while the Swift Group no longer has a version of this floorplan in its portfolio, the Nuevo continues to be one of the best-selling coachbuilts made in Willersey.

It's hardly surprising, then, that the company chose it as the model to carry a 60th anniversary special edition.

Don't expect this birthday boy to be wildly different from any other Nuevo, though – Auto-Sleepers is just not that sort of company. Instead, there's the gentlest of cosmetic evolution inside and everything that buyers always loved about the model is left intact.

On the outside, the Peugeot Boxer cab is adorned with a new anniversary motif and it's the 165bhp motor under the bonnet. The usual Premium Pack adds alloy wheels, cab air-conditioning, cruise control and a DAB radio with sat-nav and reversing camera. The body has

grey sides, while cab, bumpers, skirts, etc, are all in white and a Thule awning is neatly attached atop the nearside, rather than adding to the vehicle's width. Habitation air-conditioning has been added on the roof as a delete option (so you get it unless you request otherwise), reflecting increasing buyer demand.

Unlike on some motorhomes, you don't lose any of the rooflights with the addition of the Truma air-con unit. There's still a big overcab sunroof (which opens via a crank handle), a large push-up Heki rooflight over the lounge and a small roof vent above the galley. In another change to the spec, however, the solar panel is no longer fitted, as the leisure battery has now been

upgraded to an 84Ah lithium type.

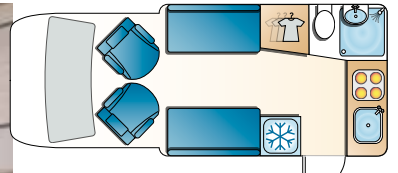
The biggest – or, at least, most noticeable – change on this special edition is inside, where the new Pebble upholstery with Mustard accents gives a refreshingly different vibe to the vehicle. It's a very tactile fabric that's also claimed to be extremely hard-wearing. The layout is unchanged, though, with swivel cab seats rotating to join a pair of comfortable side sofas, complete with scatter cushions and armrests. A small coffee table can be added adjacent to the front seats, or a larger free-standing table serves for dining. Both tables store in the wardrobe.

At night, it's a simple matter to convert the lounge into a transverse double bed. That

would be our choice but, if you must have singles, then they are possible with your feet resting on the cab chairs.

You might expect such a diminutive motorhome to have a galley of dolls' house proportions but that's certainly not the case. The main kitchen unit runs across the back wall, where you'll see another of the anniversary model's special features – a new splashback with stronger colour contrast making it stand out. Also here is a full cooker with three gas rings, a mains hotplate and separate oven and grill. There's even an extractor hood above.

Alongside the hob is a glass-lidded sink and then a useful worktop surface where you can



BUY AN AUTO-SLEEPER FROM...

As one of the UK's best-known motorhome brands, you'd expect Auto-Sleepers to be available all around these isles and it boasts 31 outlets, including 13 branches of sister company, Marquis Leisure. There are three Auto-Sleeper dealers in Scotland (BC Motorhomes, Dicksons of Perth and Highland Campers), two in Wales (3 As Leisure and Stowford Leisure), and one in Northern Ireland (Central Motorhomes), while England's Auto-Sleeper outlets stretch from Plymouth to County Durham.



You'll also find a select few franchisees for this very British brand on the Continent – Belgium, Holland and Germany – as well as further afield (New Zealand and even Thailand!).



deploy the removable draining board. There are plenty of drawers for kitchen storage, although the handles may seem awkward if you're left-handed. A bin is mounted on the habitation door and there's a kitchen roll holder on the wall but it's worth noting that the chef may curse the comings and goings of his/her partner through the habitation door.

There's more to the galley than this, though, with the three-way fridge located forward of the entrance with a microwave positioned above, at a sensible working height for once. You'll even find a set of crystal wine glasses stored here, as well as more worktop created by a large pull-out panel.

Opposite the fridge, the wardrobe is a decent

size and has a large mirror on its door, as well as a drawer below that's warmed by the heater – perfect for socks and underwear.

In the back corner is the washroom and here there's another slight change but one that probably only the most devoted Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club members will spot – a new grey GRP shower tray. That aside, the bathroom continues with its familiar format. There's a swivel cassette toilet with small medicine/toiletries cabinet above and a large mirror adjacent. There's another small cabinet above the basin, which is attached to a moulded wall (still in white) that turns through 90 degrees to create the shower cubicle. A towel ring, pull-out clothes

drying rack and toothbrush mug (oddly sited over the loo) are provided, as is a small roof vent above the toilet. It all works well enough and the use of space is practical but we'd like to see plastic lining for the whole of the shower cubicle and better bathroom storage. If there's one area of the Nuevo that's overdue an update, the 'little room' is it.

A skirt locker and a hatch into the nearside under-seat space provide the only external storage, while an underslung gas tank frees up space. The Nuevo still lacks anything as trendy as a drop-down bed but its loyal fans will probably be pleased that changes to this special Limited Edition version are so slight.