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Auto-Sleepers

Britain's oldest motorhome manufacturer, with over 50 years' experience, is now part of the French Trigano empire

AUTO-SLEEPERS has been building motorhomes in the picturesque Cotswolds for 54 years. It built its reputation on van conversions (from the Commer in the Sixties and Seventies, through Talbots in the Eighties), so it's no surprise to find that the company has recently regained its position as Britain's top-selling motorhome brand in the van sector. And that's without an entry in the smaller, pop-top roof market, an omission that it will soon be addressing with an exciting addition to its line-up.

At the opposite end of the range, Auto-

Sleepers is one of the very few manufacturers to build in volume on the Mercedes Sprinter base. With the prestigious three-pointed star, a powerful range of Euro VI engines and a super-smooth seven-speed automatic gearbox, the appeal of the rear-wheel drive Sprinter has not been lost on Auto-Sleepers' customers.

Every layout offered on the Mercedes is also available on the lower-priced Peugeot Boxer cab (albeit with different model names). This even now includes the largest models, as Auto-Sleepers has started to offer these using the combination of

Peugeot cab and an Al-Ko chassis extension. And the lack of a Peugeot automatic is addressed by the option of a Fiat cab with Comfort-Matic gearbox (on van conversions as well as coachbuilds).

No Auto-Sleeper is complete without the addition of a Premium Pack – so budget at least £2,500 for goodies such as alloy wheels, awnings, sat-nav and much more.

At the start of the year it was also confirmed that Trigano Group had bought a controlling stake in the British manufacturer (as well as its sister company, dealer group, Marquis Leisure).



Peugeot van conversions

All Auto-Sleepers' van conversions are currently based on the Peugeot Boxer, in medium-wheelbase (5.41m), long (5.99m) or extra-long (6.36m) forms. Unusually, they are also based on window vans with factory-fitted, tinted athermic glass along the full length of each side, from the cab back. This gives a smart, automotive look but opening sections are quite limited.

Starting the range is the classic, medium-wheelbase Symbol, a stalwart of the range since the Nineties. Up front, it has a side settee and single rear travel seat, while aft are (on opposing sides of the centre corridor) the

kitchen and shower/toilet.

Next up are the two six-metre models – the rear lounge Warwick Duo and the much less conventional Stanway, with its front pullman dinette and quite expansive rear L-shaped kitchen.

The largest, 6.36m, versions have become the most popular of late, though, with the rear lounge Warwick XL (which benefits from a separate shower) and French bed Kingham leading the charge. The end washroom Kemerton XL completes the line-up.



Peugeot Al-Ko coachbuilts

Previously, Auto-Sleepers' coachbuilts made a big step up (in price, but also size) from the Broadways to the Mercedes-based Burfords. Now, the Corinium models take the Burford floorplans onto a Peugeot Al-Ko chassis, with body length reduced only a smidgeon to 7.71m.

Better still, as well as the two end washroom models (FB with French bed, Duo with single beds), there's Auto-Sleepers' first ever island bed model. As yet, there's no equivalent of the latest Corinium RB on Mercedes.

Unusually for vehicles of this size (and exalted specification), all three Coriniums can be ordered in 3.5-tonne form to suit any driver, while those with the appropriate licence can upgrade to 4-tonne versions.



Corinium RB



Corinium RB



Nuevo ES



Nuevo ES



Broadway EK

Peugeot coachbuilts

As with the vans, the coachbuilt range benefits from Peugeot's 160bhp motor as standard and there are six interior fabrics to choose from. Now, though, there's even more choice as most models come with either a low-profile body or an overcab bed, while lounges can (on most models) be had with classic side settees or a half-dinette with seatbelts.

The line-up here kicks off with a classic – the Nuevo has been a top-seller since the early 2000s. At just 5.71m long, it is shorter and more manoeuvrable than many a van conversion but it still comes fully appointed for two. There's even a four-berth version, the Nuevo ES, with half-dinette and an overcab bed.

Fancy a bit more space? Then the Broadway EK (with pullman dinette or side settees in the EK TB LP) takes the rear kitchen format of the Nuevo up a notch or two, to 6.28m.

That same overall length can also accommodate a more palatial end washroom in the Broadway EB, while the Broadway FB is the 7.16m French bed derivative.

Mercedes coachbuilts

Think Mercedes and you'll probably expect motorhomes with big bodies – and equally large price tags. That's not necessarily the case here, though, as the Stanton is just 5.94m long and it starts at just over £60k. It's the Merc equivalent of the Peugeot-based Nuevo, but it's worth noting that the Premium Pack here (at £4,000) adds not just all the usual spec but also the highly desirable automatic gearbox. Rare indeed is a manual Mercedes Auto-Sleeper...

The Bourton (like the Broadway EK TB LP) is effectively a stretched Stanton/Nuevo with a rear kitchen and corner swing-wall shower/toilet room, but a much larger lounge (and simpler single bed set-up at night).

At 7.29m, the Winchcombe, however, is much bigger than its nearest equivalent on Peugeot (the Broadway EB). Its long settees are big enough to act as near-instant single beds, while the rear kitchen and across-the-back bathroom are as big as they come.

Burford and Burford Duo are two more end bathroom models (each 7.88m overall) with the added bonus of fixed beds – French double style in the Burford, twin singles in the Duo. And, as with the near-identical Corinium layouts, the bedrooms are closed off from the living area with a full wall and domestic-style door!

The Mercedes range is completed with the 7.29m Malvern, which has a classic front lounge and rear French bed with washroom alongside (rather than beyond, as in the longer Burford).



Malvern



Malvern



Winchcombe