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Your Majestic?

If you're looking to sleep six, this could be the motorhome for you. **Nick Harding** checks out Marquis' new addition



Marquis Leisure's Majestic 196 uses the Elddis Autoquest 196 as a starting point before piling on extra specification and adding new soft furnishings and exterior graphics. This motorhome is the largest of the 14 models that make up the 2017 Majestic range – but is it a case of bigger than ever, better than ever? Time for a closer look...

BUILDQUALITY

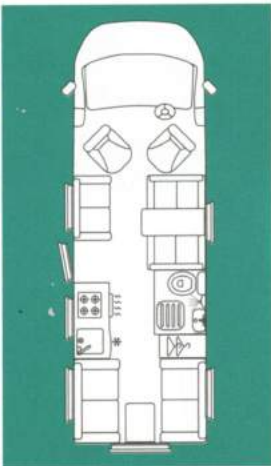
Elddis's SoLiD construction system, backed by a 10-year water ingress warranty, is once again the basis for this coachbuilt. The signs of 'Majestic' treatment are immediately obvious but it's a

shame that there's no window in the habitation door, while the single-point lock is a bit disappointing. There's just the one exterior-access storage hatch, too – to the nearside front settee.

Without wishing to be too negative, there are some 'maybes' to consider: maybe the windows should be flush-fitting; maybe there should be concertina blinds instead of the cheaper sprung roller versions; maybe drawers and lockers should have a soft-close function. But let's not forget that this motorhome is still some way shy of £50,000 even after the bells and whistles have been added.

On a much more positive note, the 196 features a sleek silver cab, solar panel and full-length Dometic awning. Note the layout, too. Not only is this Majestic on the low-level Peugeot Boxer chassis, it also has a low-profile; yet it's a full six-berth. The secret? There's a drop-down bed over the front lounge.

The standard 3,500kg chassis means it is an option for most holders of full driving



Clockwise from below: eye-catching silver cab; quality furnishings, Peugeot cab; rear lounge converts to a double



TECHNICAL RATINGS

78% BUILD QUALITY	83% DRIVING	80% DAYTIME	80% NIGHT-TIME
80% KITCHEN	55% WASHROOM	72% LIGHTING	75% VERDICT
£ Price/as tested £48,995	Engine 2.0-litre Euro 6 Power 161bhp (120kW) @ 3,750rpm Torque 258lb ft (350Nm) @ 1,750rpm Transmission Six-speed manual, FWD	MRO 2,990kg (58.86cwt) MTPLM 3,500kg (68.89cwt) User payload 510kg (10.04cwt)	Overall length 24ft 1in (7.34m) Overall width 7ft 3in (2.20m) Overall height 9ft 3in (2.82m) Max internal height 6ft 8in (2.03m)
Caravan and Motorhome Club Insurance Please see quote provided in the 'Did you know?' roundel on this page*	Fuel/tank/econ Diesel/19.8gals (90 litres)/28-34mpg		

Figures from manufacturer's literature.

*Quote is for the Marquis Majestic 196 model worth £48,995. Based on 55-year-old male living in Sheffield S13, who has no accidents, claims or convictions and keeps vehicle on drive, 3,000 miles per year, excess of £350 with 5 years NCD unprotected. Cover and premium are subject to underwriting. The Club's Motorhome Insurance is arranged for the Club by Devitt Insurance Services Limited, Insurance Brokers. Caravan and Motorhome Club is a trading name of The Caravan Club Limited. The Caravan Club Limited and Devitt Insurance Services Limited are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

licences. If you think the 510kg payload isn't going to be sufficient for your needs, a chassis upgrade can be arranged, but there's a cost of some £350.

DRIVING

The new BlueHDI two-litre, Euro VI engine from Peugeot is proving a winner, but again Marquis happily takes things a step further – offering the more powerful 160bhp version as standard here (Elddis doesn't even make this available for its standard Autoquest). It's certainly a smooth operator, the only downside being there's still no automatic transmission option, although the six-speed manual doesn't lack for slickness.

There are also plenty of cab upgrades, notably the automatic air conditioning and the DAB stereo radio with rear-view monitoring, while overhead there's an opening sunroof plus shelving. Other luxuries range from Remis side window and windscreen blinds to silver vent trims, which helps

to lift a cab environment that's barely changed in over a decade. The standard Peugeot steering wheel controls are welcome, though.

As a full six-berth, there are four three-point seat belts behind the driver. The seat backs are somewhat upright, and there's nowhere obvious to stow the side-fixing table; the recommendation is to take it down for safe travel if you're carrying any passengers in the back. Another slight surprise is that the Whale heating system doesn't have a facility for use while travelling.

DAYTIME

This is definitely a motorhome for folk who like a lot of lounge. Not only is there a rear seating area – with twin settees, flip-up table, generous windows to three sides and a Heki rooflight overhead – there's also a front lounge, comprising the aforementioned double dinette as well as an inward-facing short settee. Both cab seats swivel, too.

You're unlikely to want for much more, unless something like a full satellite TV system is something you consider essential.

Indeed, no factory-fitted options are offered, although dealer extras can always be specified, ranging from a Motorhome Starter Pack (for first-timers) for £299 to a four-bike rack at £480.

Storage throughout is particularly good; most of the seat bases offer space for your luggage.

NIGHT-TIME

Three double beds are available, the best of the bunch being the one that glides down electrically over the front seating. Its sculpted shape ensures that it doesn't impede access at

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DID YOU KNOW?

You can insure this motorhome with The Club for £351.19* per year. Please see camc.com/insurance or call 0345 504 0334 for further details



Clockwise from above: kitchen features drop-down extension; adequate washroom; drop-down double is the most comfortable; lounging options are varied; useful microwave



the main door, and the one-piece mattress will always guarantee greater sleep comfort than converted seat cushions.

The second most popular bed will surely be at the back, where the settee bases come together to make a transverse double. If you're determined to go the whole hog and sleep six, you can make another transverse double from the front lounge. Where this third bed is concerned, there's not a great deal of headroom available once the drop-down double has been brought into play, but it's certainly nice to have the fifth and sixth berths as an option.

KITCHEN

This is where a special edition motorhome can really come into its own, and in this case Marquis has taken a fairly standard kitchen and improved it no end.

There's a dual-fuel hob, separate oven and grill, microwave oven (set a little high, admittedly), and despite all of the above there's also a generous worktop (with flip-up extension as well as space either side of the sink) and plenty of storage.

WASHROOM

In direct contrast to the kitchen, there's little of note in the washroom other than a branded mirror. The wheel arch intrudes (although there's a solid plastic covering) and the swivel-bowl toilet sits too high. Meanwhile a wall locker provides the only storage. All things considered it's an adequate if unspectacular washroom.

LIGHTING

There's a typical mix of downlighters and ambient LED lighting here, but the reading lamps in the front and rear lounges (four apiece)

are tungsten-bulbed. You might miss having a ceiling light in the rear lounge, but the good choice of mains sockets throughout should help you overcome any perceived shortcomings with regard to illumination.

VERDICT

A three-pronged attack on space, specification and pound sterling make the Marquis Majestic 196 a triple winner, although the washroom lets the side down a little.



With thanks to

Vehicle supplied for testing by: **Marquis Leisure** (Northants branch), The Causeway, Great Billing, Northampton NN3 9EX. Contact: marquisleisure.co.uk, 01604 402888.