

# Practical Motorhome

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Marquis Majestic 196  
1 The Lee, Bucks

haymarket



February 2018

£4.20

# MARQUIS

## Majestic 196

Marquis Leisure's well-priced dealer special model has an impressively high level of kit, but can it offer true comfort for six on tour? Our team finds out

### WHERE WE STAYED

Home Farm Camping & Caravan Site

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This small site in Buckinghamshire is a short drive from the M40, with wonderful views over the Chilterns. The site has basic but adequate facilities, with plans to upgrade, and is only a hop from The Crown, a village pub that offers astoundingly good food.

Price £50,495 OTR Sleeps 6 Belts 6 Base vehicle Peugeot Boxer Engine 2.0-litre 160bhp turbodiesel, Euro 6 L/W/H 7.34/2.69/2.82m (24'1"/8'8"/9'3") MTPLM 3500kg Payload 508kg Water (fresh/waste) 100/70 litres Battery 80Ah Gas 2 x 7kg

**M**arquis Leisure's Majestic range of dealer specials has been in its current guise since 2010, when Elddis took over from the now-mothballed Autocruise as the brand on which these motorhomes were based.

When the former Explorer Group, including Elddis, was sold to the Erwin Hymer Group in February last year, there was some question about whether dealer specials would continue – they're rarer on the Continent.

So it was reassuring when Marquis announced not long after this that it had signed one of its biggest ever orders with Elddis, to ensure the continuation of the popular range for at least this season.

Now seems an appropriate time to reassess just what you get in these dealer specials; in this case, with the one 'van in the range that's really designed for large families: the Majestic 196. This is a six-berth with no fewer than six travel seats.

It costs £50,495, compared with £43,681 for a standard Autoquest 196, on which this Majestic is based. Is it worth paying the higher price for the dealer-special model? Our testers spent time in it to find out.

### DESIGN



In terms of the external design, Marquis has left the Autoquest pretty much as it would be with Elddis.

You get a silver cab – which makes the vehicle look rather classy – and,

of course, you get the Majestic branding, with its recognisable crown.

You also get a sunroof, something that isn't included on the optional extras list with a standard Elddis. Marquis has added a roll-out awning, too.

The 196 is 7.34m long, so not hugely lengthy.

But it does have a substantial overhang at the rear, so you might need to take care on steep ferry ramps – especially with a bike rack on the rear, which this 'van comes ready-primed for.

### ON THE ROAD



The Marquis Majestic sits on a Peugeot Boxer with a 2.0-litre Euro 6 turbodiesel engine beneath the bonnet.

One advantage you get in going for a Majestic 196, rather than the Autoquest equivalent, is apparent as soon as you put your foot on the gas pedal: Marquis has selected the 160bhp engine over the standard 130bhp unit (Elddis doesn't offer this upgrade as an option). The 258lb ft of torque also helped us to drive out of a muddy Chilterns field without any difficulty.

When we were looking for an elusive Certified Location down a number of single-track sunken lanes, the 'van coped admirably with every unexpected turn and bump.

And again – possibly thanks to that large engine – the long overhang didn't seem to pose any problem when we were driving. We certainly didn't feel any buffeting at the



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**WHAT MOTORHOME?**  
Six-berth low-profile



**IT'S BEHIND YOU**

At the back of the 196 there's a rear-view camera – it allows you to keep an eye on the vehicles behind you when you're on the road



**POWERING UP**

Connecting up to a site's electricity is a relatively simple job, with the hook-up point tucked away inside the battery locker



**ACCESS ALL AREAS**

Although technically an entry-level 'van, the 196 offers external access to some of the underseat storage areas



**AWESOME AWNING**

Along with the sunroof – which isn't listed as an optional extra on the standard Elddis – you also get a roll-out awning



**DINING IN STYLE**

The lounge upholstery is in an Aquaclean fabric, which can be cleaned with water. It's also pet-friendly, so can minimise claw damage



**TAKE AFTERNOON TEA**

The generous rear lounge has 1.97m of headroom, and more than enough space to set up the sizeable foldaway table when it's time for tea



**CULINARY DELIGHTS**

The kitchen offers plenty of space for meal preparation, and a four-burner dual-fuel hob and microwave are fitted as standard



**TABLE TUCKS AWAY**

The folding table can easily be accessed when needed in the rear lounge, then stored away in the wardrobe when not being used



**PRODUCT PLACEMENT**

Although the microwave slightly restricts kitchen storage space, there are four drawers next to the 85-litre fridge, plus a pan locker

# ★ LIVE-IN TEST



## MAKING THE BED

Lower the table and use a couple of infill cushions to make up the front double, which also offers a perching spot during morning tea



## ROOM TO RELAX

Simply pull together the two sofas in the rear lounge, then add one thin infill cushion, to make a flat, comfortable double bed



## CLOSING DOORS

For privacy and quiet, the rear-lounge area can be separated off from the rest of the 'van by closing the two concertina partitions

## DROPPING OFF TO SLEEP

You don't have to remove any lounge cushions before the drop-down bed is lowered, but its height means you will need the supplied ladder to access it



rear of the 'van in cross-winds or at higher speeds.

At the back of the 'van, you'll notice a camera. This is a dealer-fit rear-view unit, not just a reversing camera, so you can keep an eye on who is behind you even when you're on the road.

The display is clipped to the rear-view mirror with plastic clasps; these felt a little flimsy to our testers, so you'd need to treat the clasps with a bit of care.

There are other goodies included in the standard Peugeot cab. You get air-con here, a passenger airbag and cruise control, all of which are part of a Lux pack that, on the standard Elddis, costs an extra £1218. There are also cab blinds, for which Elddis charges a further £438; you get sat-nav, too.

## LOUNGING AND DINING



In the lounge, the main difference from the standard Autoquest is the alternative upholstery.

It's an Aquaclean fabric, designed so you only need to clean it with water. It's also pet-friendly, with a tight thread that's designed to withstand the worst damage your dog's claws can inflict. On standard Elddis models, this option is only offered in the luxury Encore range.

The colour scheme chosen by Marquis, with its crimson accents, looks rather more upmarket than the standard beige you tend to see in this price bracket.

Upholstery aside, the rest of the two lounge areas is fairly standard Elddis. There's a good-sized grab handle to help you in through the habitation door, but taller people will need to be aware of the drop-down bed that is located above the front dinette and which makes this motorhome a six-berth. Because of it, headroom



## SHOWER SHORTFALL

There's no separate shower cubicle, just a curtain to contain the water from the showerhead, located to the left of the handbasin



## STOWING AWAY

The underseat areas in the rear lounge are mostly clear for storage. A fold-down front panel allows you to load them with ease



## TAKE CONTROL

All the electrical controls in the 196 can be found on a panel by the habitation door, so are easily accessed whenever they're needed



here is only 1.78m (5ft 10in). However, the lounge doesn't feel quite as dark as it does in the standard Autoquest 196, with that drop-down bed in place of any rooflight, because daylight streams in through the sunroof at the front of the 'van.

Night-time lighting is good, too, with three LED lights in an elegant panel underneath the bed, four spots and ambient light. A mains socket (one of six in this 'van) is cleverly hidden high up, where it can also be used by whoever is occupying the bed.

The side sofa is a good size but, although you get four travel seats in the dinette, the clip-on table that fits here is quite small. The swivelled passenger-side cab chair is a fair distance from the table, too. And there is no heating vent located under here, so it could be a little cool in winter.

Step back down through the central kitchen (where headroom rises to 2.06m) – past a useful mirror outside the washroom – and you reach the altogether better rear lounge (which has 1.97m of headroom available). This area has a sizeable foldaway table that is easy to access.

The large windows on all three sides and the rooflight make it feel bright in here, and there is a well-placed heating vent to keep you cosy.

The TV sockets are up on one side, so any television that you might fit can only be comfortably viewed by those on the other side.

### KITCHEN



The kitchen is often where the extras you get in a dealer special come into play, and the Majestic is no exception.

A standard Autoquest only has a three-burner gas hob for chefs to make use of, but here you'll find a dual-fuel four-burner hob and, up above, a

'The kitchen can be where dealer special extras come into play, and the Marquis is no exception'

microwave, which with Elddis is a £190 option.

You have plenty of work space to show off your culinary expertise, especially because you also get an extension flap that opens out by the door.

Two sockets nearby should be more than adequate for a kettle and any other gadget you might bring. The space is also well lit, with lights above and below the lockers.

The only small negative is with the microwave: because of the surround that goes with it, it takes up what would otherwise have been two overhead cupboards, which would have been ideal for food storage. With this arrangement you might have to resort to using one of the overhead lockers in the rear lounge for food – so it's good that there are six of them.

Alternatively, you could use the four drawers that sit between the 85-litre three-way fridge and the oven, with its separate grill and integrated pan locker. These all have characteristic Elddis dovetail jointing, but they aren't particularly big. The locker at the bottom is also partly taken up by the wheelarch.

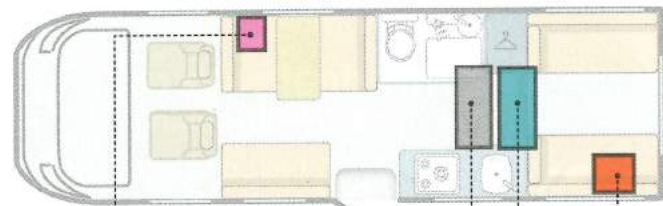
One final plus point is the Omnivent unit that you get in the roof over the aisle.

### WASHROOM

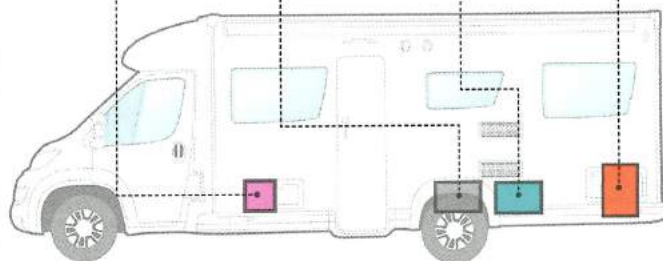


Our testers found the step at the entrance to the washroom area slightly irritating. You don't get a separate shower cubicle, either – just a curtain to

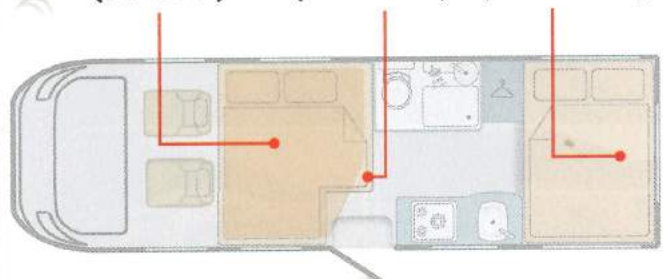
## LAYOUT



**BATTERY** 80Ah    **WASTE WATER** 70 litres    **FRESH WATER** 100 litres    **GAS** 2 x 7kg



**Drop-down double:** 1.85 x 1.41m (6'1" x 4'8")    **Front double:** 2.08 x 1.20m (6'10" x 3'11")    **Rear double:** 2.08 x 1.48m (6'10" x 4'10")



## THE MARQUIS STORY

Starting from one depot in Hampshire which in 1986 acquired its first franchise (Swift, closely followed by Elddis), Marquis Leisure has grown to the point where it's now the largest dealer



The UK's largest dealer network

network in Britain, with 12 branches, most recently taking over what was Michael Jordan Caravans to make it Marquis Surrey.

Along the way the firm has also stepped into manufacturing, acquiring Auto-Sleepers in 2000. Both companies spent four years under the ownership of the now-defunct Italian group SEA, before being bought out by management again in 2009.

Early in 2017, however, French-based motorhome manufacturer Trigano Group – which had become a minority shareholder in the company that owns both brands – increased its stake to become the majority shareholder.

# WHAT MOTORHOME? Six-berth low-profile



contain the water from the showerhead located to the left of the basin.

However, the designers have been rather clever in positioning the basin over the wheelarch, so the latter doesn't get in the way; in fact, it could serve as a useful footrest.

There are only two narrow cupboards available for storage, but you do get a heating vent in here to keep things warm, plus a toilet-roll holder, an LED light and even a small rooflight. There is a large towel rail hidden behind the curtain, and there's also a good-size mirror.

## SLEEPING



The two sofas in the rear lounge pull together, and you then only need one thin infill cushion (which is easily stored in the wardrobe) to make a flat, comfortable bed. This area can also be separated off with two plastic concertina partitions.

You don't need to remove any cushions from the lounge below before lowering the electrically operated drop-down bed. It does mean that the bed itself is higher than you would find in some other 'vans, so you'll need to use the supplied ladder to climb into it.

Once you're up there, though, you'll find this a comfortable space, with two lights available for night-time reading, and that socket.

The third double bed, in the front-lounge area, is a solid affair. You need to lower the dining table to make it, and you also require one large and one thin infill cushion. But once it's been made up you still get a little bit of extra space that someone can perch on while making tea in the morning, even if all three of the beds are being used.

## STORAGE



For what's still technically an entry-level 'van, it's impressive that the 196 includes underseat slats that stay up on struts when you open them, and external access to some of the space beneath the sofas. The underseat areas in the rear lounge are mostly clear, as is the area under the front side sofa.

In the dinette itself, the front underseat is taken up by the fuse box and other electrical systems.

The rear underseat area provides access to the water tanks, but is clear itself.

The central wardrobe is a reasonable size for the clothes of six people, although the TV aerial fitting takes up some of the space. The four drawers and small locker at the base of the wardrobe are ideal for underwear or similar.

Just as good is the provision of overhead lockers: six in the back, three of which are shelved, and four smaller ones in the front (smaller because they need to drop down with the bed), which are not shelved.

There's also a large shelf over the cab - which taller people will be reminded of if they aren't careful when trying to climb in from the main part of the 'van.

## EQUIPMENT



The extra equipment supplied here is towards the upper end of what you would expect in a dealer special.

On top of the standard Elddis spec, you get a roll-out awning, an external barbecue and shower point, alloy wheels (Elddis charges £650 for these) and a solar panel. Some of these items are not included on Elddis's list of optional extras.

Both underslung water tanks are insulated, but not heated. All of the electrical controls, meanwhile, are easily accessed on a panel by the door. ☺

## OUR TEST TEAM'S NOTES



ALASTAIR CLEMENTS

"If you tour with kids, it's worth considering whether bunks will suit them better than the doubles here. That said, this is full of clever touches; not least the fact that a key is needed to drop the roof bed, so little ones can't play with it."



SARAH WAKELY

"The amount of kit that's packed into this dealer special model is amazing - the drop-down bed is even electrically operated. It's a shame the washroom is a little compact, but the 196 still represents an awful lot of motorhome for the money."



PETER BABER

"Fitting six berths into a motorhome this length while still retaining a degree of comfort is quite an achievement. Marquis's extra spec includes a lot of stuff that you will probably want, and saves you the hassle of sourcing it independently."

## + LIKES



### PLENTY OF POWER

You really notice the extra power of the 160bhp engine that is exclusive to Marquis's Majestics



### ADDITIONAL EXTRAS

Items such as the roll-out awning are included as standard, removing the hassle of having to fit one yourself

## - DISLIKES



### ROOM TO MANOEUVRE

The washroom is cleverly designed, but a little poky for a six-berth

## PRactical MOTORHOME VERDICT



When Elddis launched the Autoquest 196 in 2016, it moved into the market for larger-family motorhomes. The Marquis Majestic does the same, with bells on, offering above-basic comfort and performance.

It's a little tricky to determine whether you could get the same result by adding extras to a standard Elddis, because the Marquis additions aren't always the same as you'd get with Elddis or any third-party supplier. But, given what is included - particularly the engine upgrade - the price difference feels very justified. If you want a British-made 'van for a large family, with a great spec and plenty of style, the Marquis Majestic 196 is one to consider.

DESIGN	★★★★★
ON THE ROAD	★★★★★
LOUNGING & DINING	★★★★★
KITCHEN	★★★★★
WASHROOM	★★★★★
SLEEPING	★★★★★
STORAGE	★★★★★
EQUIPMENT	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

## TECHNICAL DATA



### BASE VEHICLE

**Chassis** Peugeot Boxer with low-level chassis  
**Engine** 2.0-litre Blue HDi turbodiesel, Euro 6 with AdBlue, three-year unlimited-mileage warranty  
**Power** 161bhp/120kW @ 3750rpm  
**Torque** 258 lb ft/350Nm @ 1750rpm  
**Transmission** Six-speed manual

**Features** ABS brakes, emergency braking assistance, tyre-pressure monitoring, hill assist, cab air-con, cruise control, touch-screen console with DAB radio/MP3 and sat-nav with USB port, Bluetooth hands-free, steering wheel-mounted controls, driver and passenger airbags, daytime-running headlights, tinted cab windows, cab blinds, captain's chairs



### CONVERSION

SoLiD construction, one-piece aluminium sides with GRP underskin to floor and ABS bumpers. Three-year manufacturer's and 10-year body-integrity warranties



### LOUNGING AND DINING

**Front dinette:** four travel seats, side sofa, clip-on table  
**Rear lounge:** parallel sofas and foldaway table



### KITCHEN

Four-burner dual-fuel hob, oven and grill, three-way 85-litre Dometic fridge with removable freezer, worktop extension, microwave, Omnivent



### SLEEPING

**Rear double** 2.08 x 1.48m (6'10" x 4'10")  
**Drop-down double** 1.85 x 1.41m (6'1" x 4'8")  
**Front double** 2.08 x 1.20m (6'10" x 3'11")



### EQUIPMENT

Whale 4kW dual-fuel space heating, Whale Expanse dual-fuel underslung eight-litre water heater, Whale Duo Control combination controller, Teleco Teleplus X2/39U TV aerial, interior LEDs, six mains sockets



### DEALER SPECIAL-SPECIFIC KIT INCLUDES

Engine upgrade, sunroof, awning, passenger airbag, cab air-con, cruise control, sat-nav and stereo, four-burner dual-fuel hob, exterior barbecue and shower points, solar panel, Thatcham conversion alarm with GPS Tracker, rear-view camera, exclusive upholstery

## OR YOU COULD TRY...



### CHAUSSON 716 FLASH

From £49,500 OTR

★★★★★

If you only need four berths, this new model offers a radical rethink on the family-berth layout: it has two drop-down bunks at the back, and loads of space to move around in. We gave it a four-star verdict in our last issue.



### ROLLER TEAM AUTO-ROLLER 747

From £49,737 OTR

★★★★★

The closest six-berth match to the Majestic has a less powerful engine than the latter. There's a similar spec level, though: you get an AES fridge and a bike rack, but only a three-burner hob.