

Benimar

Mileo 323

A true family motorhome – and one which has the payload to cope with six people and all their gear



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato

PRICE FROM £54,995

BERTHS 6

TRAVEL SEATS 6

LENGTH 6.75m

WIDTH 2.30m

HEIGHT 3.05m

GROSS WEIGHT 4,400kg

PAYLOAD 1,200kg

D ID you watch last year's Channel 5 programme *Five Go Motorhoming*? If you did, then you'll have witnessed Melvyn Hayes (*It Ain't Half Hot Mum*), Don Warrington (*Rising Damp*) and Nick Heyward (frontman for Haircut 100) touring as motorhoming virgins in a Benimar Mileo 313. Well, maybe they'd have been better off with this 323 model, which has a similar bathroom and rear bunk beds but a much bigger lounge, thanks to 800mm of additional body length.

Indeed, the Mileo 323 has much in common

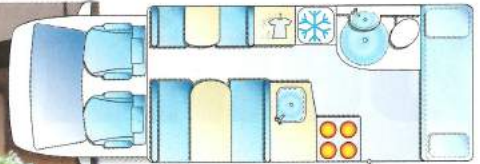
with its little brother, from the overcab body style to the habitation door on the UK side and the impressive list of standard spec. Subject to terms and conditions, the list price of your new Benimar even includes a year's insurance.

Unlike most other bunk bed motorhomes, the 323 also comes as standard on a 4.4-tonne Heavy chassis – so check that you possess a C1 category on your driving licence. It's still a Fiat Ducato, but the beefier derivative allows you a massive payload of 1,200kg. And it comes with the 150bhp motor as standard, too, so you'll not be relegated to life forever in the slow lane

when you load up. If you want an automatic, Fiat's robotised gearbox is available – for an extra £1,900.

Key to the layout here is the double pullman dinettes up front – surprising in a body that's still usefully less than seven metres. There's a 'full-sized' four-seater arrangement on the nearside, where the wall-mounted table has a swing-out extension leaf, while the smaller nearside dinette seats two, with a smaller table in between. The clever – and unusual – bit, though is that the larger dinette can be extended widthways, so the rear-facing seats actually join





WHO IS BENIMAR?

This Spanish brand developed a strong following in Britain in the late 1990s and early 2000s based on great value for money (particularly with its Europe and Europe Top models). It then disappeared from the scene here, before being reintroduced by Marquis in 2014. The Mileo range came first, followed by an expanded choice of layouts, then overcab versions and, finally, the Tessoros on Ford.



Benimar is, today, owned by Trigano, which acquired retailers, Marquis (and its sister company, Auto-Sleepers), at the start of 2017. Other Trigano brands include Auto-Trail, Chausson, Mobilvetta and Roller Team.



BUY A BENIMAR FROM...

The Benimar brand is exclusive to Marquis, with its 12 branches around England – from Golden Cross (Sussex), Poole and Plymouth in the south to Preston and County Durham in the north. The UK Benimar line-up has been developed hand-in-hand with Marquis and includes eight Mileo low-profiles, five Mileo overcab coachbuilts (all on Fiat) and six Ford Transit-based Tessoro low-profiles.



up to create a bench across the full width of the 'van. Meanwhile, the forward-facing squab can be made wider, too, for a little more 'bottom space'! It certainly makes for a very family-friendly eating area that will also serve well for board games and the like.

But, then, this is a motorhome that can sleep four fully grown human beings and two smaller ones. The overcab bed is a huge 2.05m by 1.55m, and the rear transverse berths are 2.10m by 0.80m, according to Benimar. And, if you need berths five and six, then the lounge can be converted into another bed that's a

more modest 1.67m by 1.33m.

The kitchen sits forward of the habitation door and on the nearside, with the large (145-litre) fridge/freezer opposite and the microwave above that (where shorter chefs will need to take extra care with hot liquids). The cooker is a dual-fuel gas/electric model with combined oven/grill and there's an extractor hood above.

At the pointy end, the Fiat Ducato cab comes equally well specified, with alloy wheels, automatic lights and wipers, a DAB radio, sat-nav, reversing camera, ESP, traction control and

Hill Assist. Meanwhile, the Benimar body has 99% wood-free construction, exterior shower and barbecue points, a 120-litre heated and insulated fresh water tank, a roof-mounted solar panel, Grade III insulation and a Category 6 vehicle tracking system with a one-year free subscription.

Few rivals can come close to this level of standard equipment either at this price (£55k) or in a true family 'van. Maybe it wasn't enough to entirely convince Melvyn, Don and Nick of the benefits of a Benimar, but it could just sway you towards this Spanish import.