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KEA AURA

George Hinton savours the ambience within this impressive four-berth

Italy's Mobilvetta is part of the Europe-wide Trigano group of companies. Originally manufacturers of furniture, Italian design is very much evident in its motorhomes, which for 2018 comprise the K-Yacht A-Class range and the Kea P low-profile line-up, each with three different layouts.

The Kea P65 we are looking at here offers twin rear beds that readily convert to a double or triple above a spacious garage. An additional double bed is cunningly concealed in the ceiling above the large front dinette seating area, accessed at the touch of a button. Optional layouts feature a rear island bed or a transverse rear double (shortening vehicle length by 1ft 4in to just 23ft). All feature the large 'garage' storage area.

BUILD QUALITY

Mobilvetta uses the proven Fiat Ducato dedicated motorhome chassis. The 2.3-litre Euro 6

turbodiesel power unit comes in various outputs, the upper-mid range 148bhp unit being the standard offering. An automated version of the six-speed gearbox is available as an option (£1,750).

The entrance to the European bodyshell is on the UK offside, but nearside entry is not difficult via the cab. Anyone who has suffered water ingress in an older van will understand why Mobilvetta has joined the band of manufacturers who have eliminated wood from their body construction. Even if water somehow penetrates the high-gloss GRP/polystyrene sandwich, it can't rot the resin frame, making this a sound long-term investment, backed up by a five-year body warranty. Habitation and chassis carry two-year warranties, the latter extendable for a third year.

Aluminium profiles join walls to the 33mm roof, which can be walked on, while the skirt panels are also aluminium extrusions and include storage lockers on both sides.

We found one kitchen cabinet difficult to close until we rectified a loose hinge, and the fuse blew on the electric bed when a grand-daughter raised it, but otherwise nothing broke or went wrong. There's a mechanical emergency handle for the bed, while the underfloor fuses and all electrics are accessible via a floor hatch.

DRIVING

With plenty of torque and six well-spaced gears, the Kea is a pleasure to drive. Ride quality is good, unspoiled by interior rattles, while two seatbelts on the dinette allow all to travel in safety. As usual, part of the L-seat can be folded down to provide foot-room.

A licence-friendly 3,500kg maximum weight is standard, aided by fitment of the optional smaller 60-litre (13-gallon) fuel tank, so the range is slightly limited, bearing in mind we averaged 23.43mpg over 388 miles.

TECHNICAL RATINGS



93% BUILD QUALITY	93% DRIVING	94% DAYTIME	89% NIGHT-TIME
88% KITCHEN	84% WASHROOM	95% DETAILS	91% VERDICT
£ Price/as tested £64,995 OTR	🚗 Base vehicle Fiat Ducato X290 Multijet	📊 MRO 3,165kg (62.30cwt)	📏 Overall length 24ft 3in (7.39m)
☂️ Caravan and Motorhome Club Insurance Please see quote provided in the 'Did you know?' roundel on this page*	🔥 Engine 2.3-litre 150	📊 MTPLM 3,650kg (71.85cwt)	📏 Overall width 7ft 8½in (2.35m)
	⚡ Power 148bhp (110kW) @ 3,600rpm	👤 User payload 485kg (9.55cwt)	📏 Overall height 9ft 6in (2.90m)
	🔧 Torque 280lb ft (380Nm) @ 1,500rpm	⛽ Fuel/tank/econ Diesel/13.2gals (60 litres)/23-26mpg	📏 Max internal height 6ft 9½in (2.07m)
	🚘 Transmission 6-speed manual (auto option)		📱 MORE ON THE APP

Figures from manufacturer's literature.

*Quote is for the model as tested worth £64,995 OTR with factory-fitted alarm and immobiliser. Based on 50-year-old banker living in Sheffield, 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. Due to the value of the vehicle a tracker device must be fitted. 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.

DID YOU KNOW?

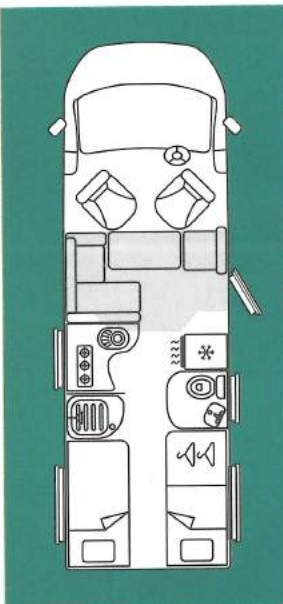
You can insure this motorhome with the Club for £610.09* per year. Please see camc.com/insurance or call 0345 504 0334 for further details

The cab area has simple curtains, while the slatted 6ft 3in x 4ft 2in electric bed has clip-in safety nets both sides to retain the restless, as well as a ladder. All beds have reading lights while the singles have hinged slatted bases to prop you up for reading. Curved doors at the feet of the

single beds (6ft 3in and 6ft 7in) give access to a large offside wardrobe and deep nearside shelved cupboard. Six roof lockers provide ample stowage for clothes etc, while even the bed steps have storage inside. There's also a night shelf and TV point with USB socket.

KITCHEN

The three-in-line gas hob is set at the back of the worktop to leave some prep space, but pull out the (top) cutlery drawer and there is the stowed sink



Opposite: comfortable twin beds sit above a garage

Clockwise from above right: drop-down bed over dinette; there's a five-year body warranty; habitation door is on offside



A free upgrade to 3,650kg gives a reasonable payload of 485kg.

Standard luxuries include cab air-con, cruise control, heated power mirrors and a reversing camera, while there's a Fiat DAB radio plus sat-nav and hands-free phone functionality. A puncture might cause problems though, as there's no spare wheel – only a weight-saving repair kit.

DAYTIME

There is a 15in step up into the vehicle, made easier with the use of a portable step. Inside impresses with yacht-style gloss white and rich cherry wood cabinetry and doors with chrome highlights, complementing cream 'Eco-leather' upholstery with inserts of Mobilvetta-branded cloth. Very practical for those with children or pets around. The walls are cream gloss GRP with décor panels in suede and leathercloth, while the PVC flooring has a continental-style tile effect, with several

storage lockers inside its double skin.

The 27in x 41in table, sitting on a massive fixed pedestal, is incredibly easy to adjust – just squeezing a single lever on the underside allows it to slide fore-and-aft 8.5in or side-to-side 17in. It also swivels, as do the cab seats. The only layout drawback is that the living area rooflight is only useable at bedtime.

If you notice a lack of heating 'butterfly' vents or radiators, that's because the Kea has underfloor heating, a first for any motorhome I've tested. Shame the weather was hot at the time!

NIGHT-TIME

Windows are dressed continental-style with net curtains as well as integrated flyscreens and blinds.



Clockwise from left: kitchen features three-ring hob and sink – the fridge-freezer and oven/grill tower are opposite; neat en-suite bathroom (shower is separate); big adjustable table for meal times



“The Kea has underfloor heating, a first for any model I’ve tested. Shame the weather was hot at the time!”

cover with integral chopping board, giving you an extra worktop. There’s an extractor fan with filter and two integral wall rails where you can hang your kitchen tools when on site, and a paper towel holder.

The 14in diameter stainless steel sink gets its hot water from a Truma 6 combi boiler under the nearside bed. Ample storage includes a deep slide-out basket system under the sink, the obvious drawers and lockers and an insulated six-bottle under-floor wine cellar. Opposite, the Thetford 135-litre fridge-freezer and oven/grill tower has a slide-out larder alongside. No microwave – no room!

WASHROOM

The shower is separate from the en-suite toilet facility, which is yacht-style again, with cherry wood finish and a polished handbasin with mirror splashbacks. There are high and low-level cupboards, rooflight and opal window, and heating. The washroom could hardly be smaller,

but the bedroom in which it sits can be closed off from the main cabin by sliding door, so there’s no real need to close the tambour door. Fittings include towel rail, loo-brush, toothbrush mug and liquid soap dispenser, plus a toilet tissue holder right by the edge of the sink. After two wetted rolls, we kept a plastic bag over it!

The curved shower cubicle has a very snazzy acrylic wall panel backlit by LEDs. There’s a chrome basket for soap and flannels and a drying rail flips down from the ceiling. Water pressure is excellent and the temperature easy to mix and stable. For the beach, there’s even an external hot/cold shower point.

DETAILS

Superb LED lighting comprises a mix of dimmable downlighters and under-cabinet striplights. The kitchen/dinette bulkhead has LEDs set into its edge, while even the entry grab handle glows in the dark. At bedtime you can bring in the blue LED night lights.

With so many lamps, you can easily set the mood to be bright or subtle. The only criticism is the washroom light switch is out of reach for small children.

VERDICT

In many ways this is the perfect small-family motorhome. It works well as a two berth or four berth, is well-made, practical, versatile and easy to keep clean, with loads of storage. Not only that, it is excellent value, with an ambience that belies the price.

With thanks to

Vehicle supplied for testing by: **Marquis Motorhomes**, The Causeway, Great Billing, Northampton NN3 9EX. Contact: marquisleisure.co.uk.