

Elddis

Autoquest 194

German ownership appears to be influencing the layouts offered in one of Britain's favourite budget coachbuilt ranges...



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Peugeot Boxer

PRICE FROM £44,949

BERTHS 4

TRAVEL SEATS 4

LENGTH 7.34m

WIDTH 2.20m

HEIGHT 2.82m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg

PAYLOAD 586kg

IT'S a case of one in, one out for the top-selling Autoquest range this year. Out goes the 195 layout with its twin parallel settee lounges front and rear. And in comes the new 194 with its fixed single beds over a rear garage. Perhaps German ownership is having an influence in the decision making at Consett, County Durham now? Or maybe it's just that this floorplan has become as firmly rooted in the UK market as it is in the rest of Europe, and especially Germany.

The garage here is a good size, with 1.09m maximum interior headroom – enough for bicycles. There's a plastic floor, two loading doors and four (fixed) tie-down points, though

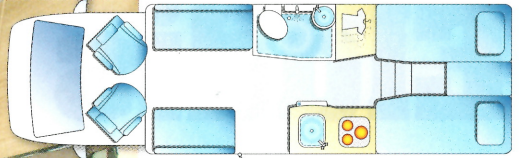
the load height is not as convenient as some as there's no dropped floor level aft.

Inside, the twin beds sit 1.25m above the main floor with two high steps providing access. At 1.80m (nearside) and 1.82m (offside) bed lengths are relatively modest (and certainly less than we'd expect in a Teutonic 'van) but there's no impediment to sitting up comfortably in bed – an all-too-rare feature. Reading lights are provided and there's a TV bracket at the foot of the offside bed, while the central infill between the beds can be extended from 0.91m to 1.26m with a slot-in panel and cushion.

Where the Autoquest really differs from its

imported opposition is up front. Some continental makers (Adria, Chausson, Pilote, Rapido) are offering side settee lounges like this now, but the Elddis goes its own way when it comes to travel seats. Rather than adapting the settees to face forward, cushions are removed, bases folded away and a pair of folding Aguti passenger seats is revealed.

In lounge mode there are armrests and scatter cushions to enhance sprawling comfort, while drop-front doors provide easy access to under-seat storage. Four reading lights are a plus, but the lack of an overcab sunroof means there's not as much daylight here as in some



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Elddis has 45 motorhome dealers across the UK, including one in Northern Ireland – Thompson Leisure – and one in Southern Ireland – Anchor Point.



The company also has nearly the same number of approved service centres, too.



WHO IS ELDDIS?

Acquired by German giant, Hymer, in 2017, the parent company of Elddis (and sister brand, Compass) is now known as Erwin Hymer Group UK. The company, based in Consett, County Durham, has been making well-priced, primarily entry-level, motorhomes since the 1980s, although its back catalogue includes a varied selection from small campervans to large A-classes.



Today, the Elddis range includes four Accordo compact, slimline low-profiles, six budget Autoquest coachbuilts (from two berths to six) and four higher spec low-profiles under the Encore banner. All are based on the Peugeot Boxer and many can also be found with different brand names as dealer special editions from some of the country's top motorhome retailers.

New for 2019 is a pair of Elddis van conversions, based on Fiat Ducato.



rivals. It's worth noting, too, that the settees (which can convert into a transverse double bed) are an unequal pair – 1.27m long on the offside, 1.03m opposite.

If you're comparing the Autoquest 194 with the likes of a Chausson 767 GA Flash (see page 29 for the same model in Titanium spec), the British 'van predictably wins on kitchen space and cooker spec – with a separate grill and oven – but loses out significantly in terms of fridge size. Here, it's just an 85-litre under-counter Dometic 8-Series and only a basic model with push-button ignition for the gas

mode. The galley also features a central stack of four small drawers and a worktop extension flap by the doorway.

As you enter the motorhome, a tall mirror faces you on the bathroom wall but there are no coat hooks here. In the washroom itself, the design is attractive – complete with countertop-mounted basin – but you'll need to pull a curtain around for showering and there's just one drain in the shower tray. Most continental models would put a greater emphasis on freedom from using campsite showers, but here extra space has been allocated to the kitchen instead.

Alongside the bathroom, the wardrobe features high and low-level hanging rails, as well as a stowage location for the free-standing table. Under the foot of each single bed, tall lockers could act as further wardrobes but lacked hanging rails in the prototype.

As ever, Elddis pricing is very keen on this newcomer – at sub-£45k – but you'll need to find an extra £1,218 for the Lux Pack (cab air-con, passenger airbag, cruise control). Also, look out for enhanced spec dealer special versions of this Autoquest coming to a retailer near you very soon.