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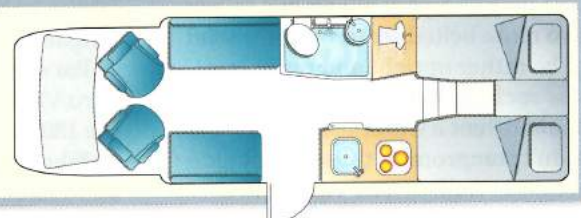


Peter Rosenthal

A sociable side settee layout, or rear travel seats for the grandchildren? With this Elddis you don't have to choose...

ELDDIS MAJESTIC 194

Price from: £50,995
Berths: 4 **Travel seats:** 4
Base vehicle: Peugeot Boxer
Length: 7.34m
Gross weight: 3,500kg





While the dining table is quite narrow it is large enough for four place settings. It lives in the wardrobe when not in use

Few would argue that the most convivial layout for a motorhome lounge is to have a couple of long side-facing settees facing each other. Loads of people can relax on them and chat facing each other. Plus, if you need to head to the kitchen to grab another cold one, everyone has equal access to the central walkway. And, when there's just two of you, you can have a sofa each and put your feet up.

The downside to having a twin side settee layout was usually that you'd only have two travel seats (those in the cab). Alternatively, the common half-dinette layout allows you to have two more belted seats, but they tend to be rather upright and result in a less sociable lounge. If only someone could invent a travel seat system that didn't compromise those comfy side settees... Well, several companies

have, of course, including Elddis with its Autoquest 194, from which this Majestic dealer special is derived.

Comfy lounge with twin side settees? Tick. Rear twin fixed beds? Tick. Four travel seats? Tick. Modern low-profile body style? Tick.

FULLY LOADED

As a dealer special for Marquis Leisure, the Majestic comes crammed with a host of extras for a £6,046 premium over the equivalent standard Autoquest. And these aren't just detail differences, such as alternative fabrics and different decals, but real tangible stuff.

For starters, the Peugeot Boxer's Euro VI engine gets upgraded from the 130bhp engine to the flagship 160bhp engine, which makes it far more relaxing to drive without making

any major impact on economy. According to Peugeot's price list this is worth about £1,100 and it isn't even listed as an option for the Autoquest.

Then there's cab air-conditioning, cruise control and a passenger airbag (£1,218 from Elddis) and it's worth noting that the air-conditioning here isn't the manual on/off system but the more sophisticated automatic version that allows you to set a desired temperature.

The cab also gets built-in blinds as part of the Marquis upgrade (worth £450), together with a mirror-mounted screen for the rear view camera (usually £365), which can be left permanently on to give a handy rear view on the road.

Best of all, you also get a built-in TomTom sat-nav as well as Bluetooth integration for your mobile phone and a DAB radio.



The retrimmed seats are comfortable and each has twin armrests



These fold-away Aguti travel seats have steel frames and three-point seatbelts



The kitchen has ample storage and a grill, oven, microwave and compact fridge

SECOND OPINION

"Mixing a continental-style single bed layout with a British-style lounge is sure to be a popular formula."

DANIEL ATTWOOD EDITOR

So far, we've totted up £3,133 of goodies and we've not even mentioned the built-in alarm, standard-fit GPS Tracker, the solar panel, massive overcab rooflight, kitchen ceiling fan and the external barbecue point. Not to mention the silver paintwork to the cab. But you get the point. With all the extra kit, the screen price of £50,995 seems reasonable for a fully loaded 7.34m low-profile. Unusually for a test vehicle, it didn't come with any options fitted – it already has all the toys as standard.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

Loading the van proved easy, thanks to the spacious rear garage that's been fitted with large doors on either side. On the road the 7.34m length didn't prove to be much of an issue and, with the elephant's ear-sized mirrors and

the rear view camera, it was easy to position on the road, even around the narrow streets of Tewkesbury.

The 160bhp engine is matched to the vehicle size perfectly and the new AdBlue-snorting 2-litre engine is smoother and slightly quieter than its 2.3-litre Ducato cousin, too.

With standard fit sat-nav (and a decent TomTom system at that), cruise control and an extra airbag to protect your loved one, there's little to complain about in the cab. Except for the steering wheel and gearknob, which are the basic plastic items rather than the much more tactile leather-clad versions that would seem more in keeping with the aspirations of this motorhome.

Both cab seats are fitted with a pair of adjustable armrests and, despite their swivel bases, are not uncomfortably high. The Marquis seat

trim is a bit beige for my taste but it's inoffensive and the colouring helps to lighten the cab.

ON-SITE SURPRISES

With both cab seats swivelled around on site (with only a minor adjustment of the driver's seat needed to clear the steering wheel), it's time to check out the lounge. To keep it on the same level as the cab, the floor here is raised and there's a small step down to the central kitchen/washroom area. Even with this raised floor, though, there's still 1.93m of headroom, rising to 2.03m in the kitchen area.

You could probably seat eight people in the lounge, or six with bags of room, so it's a great social space and, thanks to radiused edges on the underside of the four roof lockers, head/furniture interfacing >

LIKED



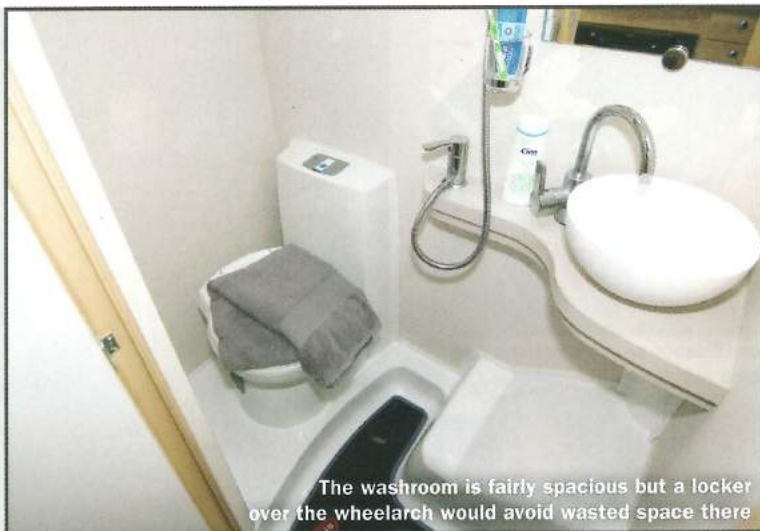
- Garage with twin access doors
- Clever folding travel seats that don't compromise sofa comfort

DISLIKED

- Only one drain hole in shower tray
- Flimsy lock on washroom door

WANTED

- Longer rear single beds
- Concertina-style side blinds



The washroom is fairly spacious but a locker over the wheelarch would avoid wasted space there



The high twin rear beds are mounted over the garage

is minimised. A free-standing table (which lives in the wardrobe) fits between the sofas at dining time and is large enough for four.

With two large side windows, a wind-up sunroof over the cab and a large Heki rooflight overhead, there's plenty of light flowing into the lounge.

However, it's underneath the side settees that you get two pleasant surprises. With all the cushions removed (they can be stored on top of the rear fixed bed), the settee bases lift and fold flush to the sidewalls. Nestled under each settee is a fold-up Aguti travel seat, complete with a beefy steel frame and a built-in three-point seatbelt. They unfurl like something out of a *Transformers* film. Smaller kids might struggle to look out of the side windows but, overall, these seats work really well. I'd have liked some shoulder padding

on the folded settee front, but this could easily be added (closed cell foam wrapped in matching vinyl and attached with Velcro). For seats that will only get used occasionally when the grandkids are on board it's a great solution and gives you a completely uncompromised side settee lounge (although there is, of course, some loss of under-seat storage).

ALL THAT CHEF STUFF

Speaking personally, it's always a mystery why anyone would choose to cook in a motorhome when they're on holiday. That's what gastro pubs are for! But few people share this view and keen chefs will be impressed by the level of standard kit here.

As well as a three-burner gas hob with piezo ignition, there's also a handy 800W mains hotplate to help

you conserve gas when hooked up. A fold-down glass cover adds extra worktop space when the hob isn't in use and also features a built-in shut-off valve for extra safety.

Also finished in a matching black enamel is an inset sink with a smoked glass cover, and there's a reasonable amount of worktop space surrounding the hob and sink, plus an additional flip-up worktop section in front of the Hartal entrance door.

Underneath the counter is a Thetford grill and oven, together with a three-way fridge that has a useful removable freezer box if you'd rather have more cooling space. At 85 litres, it's quite small for a four-berth, though, especially compared with the tall fridge/freezers seen in most continental vans.

Completing the grub heating kit is an 800W microwave that's built



It's a sociable layout thanks to the side-facing settees. The floor level steps down from the lounge to the galley

into a locker above the hob. Next to the microwave are a couple of roof lockers with plate and mug holders. Thoughtfully, there's a roof vent with an extractor fan above the galley, too.

Pots and pans can be stored beneath the oven, while a quartet of small drawers can consume your cutlery and other chef's implements.

SCRUBBING UP

Opposite the galley is the washroom, which is accessed via a rather flimsy door with an equally flimsy lock mechanism. Inside, there's a bit of wheelarch intrusion, but the shower base has been moulded around this and the basin sits on an L-shaped worktop to make good use of the space. It would have been better to have had a vanity unit between the wheelarch and the washbasin, though,

as the space can't really be used for anything else.

The basin itself is an attractive standalone bowl, fed by a decent-quality Caraflo swan-neck tap, and there's plenty of worktop for your toiletries. On the road, you'll store your bits and bobs in the double-doored locker above the loo. Next to this are a couple of towel hooks.

A Thetford swivel bowl toilet sits alongside the shower tray. A shower curtain slides across the loo area to keep the spray off it.

Pleasingly, the shower has a separate tap and there's 2.00m of height between the shower tray and the overhead steam vent. It also has an Ecocamel shower head to help conserve water from the 100-litre underslung tank.

Hot water is supplied from a Whale system that holds eight litres and can

be heated by either gas or via a mains hook-up. But, if you shower regularly in your motorhome, it's worth noting that most imported rivals have a separate shower that won't need mopping down, or require you to use a shower curtain.

NIGHTY NIGHT

When it's time to retire, the cab is sealed off with Remis blinds, while sprung cassette-type blinds cover the side windows. I'd have preferred to see the concertina versions, which are less prone to springing up when they get old. But that's nitpicking; these do the job perfectly well.

The front bed is a decent double and is intuitive to make up – there's no cushion Jenga here – as you simply lift up the two settee bases and pull them together to meet in the middle. >



The front bed is adult-sized, if slightly narrow at one end, and can be made up in seconds

The backrests then fill the central hole, forming a generously long (2.07m) transverse bed.

The fixed rear beds will be the first choice, though, and these longitudinal twin berths are accessed via a couple of steps (with shoe storage cupboard built into the treads). The beds themselves are 1.81m and 1.79m long, so my 1.88m frame didn't fit – especially as there's a wall at each end so no room for feet to overhang. Thankfully, there are no roof lockers above, so you can sit up in bed.

There's also a bridging infill section, so you also can alternatively sleep transversely and use the bed as a double, but that rather defeats the object of this layout, and you'll have to climb over your partner to get out.

Under the beds are his and her wardrobes, with a third wardrobe sandwiched between the bed and washroom. At the base of that one is a bank of 12V fuses and the mains consumer unit – an excellent location that makes it easy to get to the electrics. The rest of the services are located under the first step to the rear bed and include the water pump, drain down taps and gas taps, all in one handy locker. www.elddis.co.uk

THE VERDICT

Normally this is the point where you find out that the test vehicle wasn't £50,995 but £65,000, thanks to all the options fitted, so it's very pleasing to report that what you see is what you get – including those clever fold-away travel seats. So, the Majestic is good value, there's loads of storage space in the garage, and the kitchen has everything bar a big fridge/freezer, but the rather short rear beds will restrict its appeal for taller buyers.

THE ALTERNATIVES

Chausson 767 GA Welcome	£48,190
Elddis Autoquest 194	£44,949
Rapido 666F	£56,400

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FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE
 From: £50,995
 As tested: £50,995

BASICS
 Berths: 4
 Travel seats: 4

Warranty: Three years base vehicle and conversion, 10 years water ingress

Type approval: European Whole Vehicle

DIMENSIONS
 Length: 7.34m (24ft 1in)
 Width: 2.20m (7ft 2½in)

Height: 2.82m (9ft 3in)

Gross vehicle weight: 3,500kg

Payload: 608kg

BASE VEHICLE
 Type: Peugeot Boxer low-line chassis-cab

Engine: 2-litre, Euro 6, 160bhp, front-wheel drive, six-speed manual gearbox

KITCHEN
 Cooker: Thetford three gas rings and electric hotplate, oven and grill. Russell Hobbs 800W microwave

Fridge: Dometic three-way, 85-litre

BEDS
 Rear single beds: Offside 1.81m x 0.80m, tapering to 0.64m (5ft 11in x 2ft 7½in/2ft 1in), nearside 1.79m x 0.80m, tapering to 0.64m (5ft 10½in x 2ft 7½in/2ft 1in)

Alternative transverse rear double: 2.07m x 1.27m (6ft 10½in x 4ft 2in)

Front lounge bed: 2.07m x 1.29m, narrows to 1.05m (6ft 9½in x 4ft 3in/3ft 5½in)

ESSENTIALS
 Fresh water: 100 litres (underslung)

Waste water: 70 litres (underslung)

Space/water heating: Whale 4kW gas/mains blown-air with 8-litre boiler

Leisure battery: 100Ah

Gas: 2 x 7kg

OPTIONS

Fitted to test vehicle: None (no options listed)

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