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Benimar

Primero 283

Only six metres long but this Spanish 'van still manages to squeeze in two separate lounge areas



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato

PRICE FROM £45,995

BERTHS 3

TRAVEL SEATS 4

LENGTH 5.99m

WIDTH 2.30m

HEIGHT 2.89m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg
(3,650kg option)

PAYLOAD 870kg

ALSO CONSIDER

Elddis Accordo 135

Swift Escape Compact C402

THE Primero range is new to Benimar for the 2019 season and aimed at the value end of the market. Significantly cheaper than the existing Mileo, Primero should compete directly with similarly priced models from the likes of Elddis, Lunar and Swift.

Coming in at under the six-metre mark, the Primero 283 looks every centimetre the typical continental low-profile. But one important feature stands out – the habitation door on the UK nearside.

Step aboard and the first view of the front end appears typically European – swivelling cab seats and a half-dinette. Unusually, though, the table is a tiny circular job. Then, as you move towards the

rear of the 'van, things become increasingly British in design. The kitchen is well equipped and, in the rear, a cosy twin-sofa lounge finishes off the layout. And it's here that the main dining table resides.

The base vehicle is, of course, from Fiat, with the lowered, wide-track Camper chassis. And the good news continues with a DAB radio, air-conditioning, cruise control and passenger airbag.

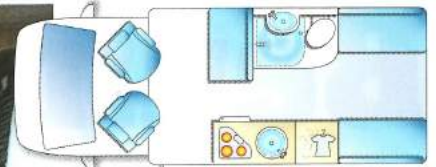
With cab seats swivelled, the front seating area has an excellent feeling of light and space. The former is due to the large sunroof above the cab, the latter most likely a result, in part, of the lack of a full-sized dining table.



Décor is in the usual neutral colours found in most modern motorhomes. However, the most noticeable feature is the fact that the cab seats are not retrimmed – they retain the original Fiat upholstery. This is one of the first indicators of money being saved. The other is that cab blackout is provided by quite modest curtains, where most 'vans would have screens or even blinds.

At the opposite end of the 'van, a comfy sofa per





BUY A BENIMAR FROM...

The Benimar brand is sold throughout the Marquis network, with its 12 outlets covering most of England – from Golden Cross (Sussex), Poole and Plymouth in the south to Preston and County Durham in the north.



In Scotland and Ireland Benimar motorhomes are sold through Marquis' partners – The Motorhome Company in Perthshire and Anchor Point Motorhomes in Co Tipperary.

The Benimar range imported by Marquis has specification and layouts that have been developed especially for the UK, including placing the habitation door on the British nearside.

WHO IS BENIMAR?

This Spanish maker developed a strong following here in the late 1990s and early 2000s based on great value for money, primarily with its Europe and Europe Top overcab coachbuilts. It then disappeared from the UK scene, before being reintroduced by Marquis in 2014, firstly with Mileo low-profiles on Fiat.



The Mileo range has grown to include a wider choice of layouts as well as overcab coachbuilts, while Tessoro low-profiles added Ford-based models to the line-up. New for 2019 are a more entry-level Primero range of coachbuilts on Fiat and a pair of Benivan van conversions, the latter actually built in the UK by Auto-Trail.

Benimar is owned by the French Trigano Group, which also encompasses manufacturers including Adria, Auto-Sleepers, Auto-Trail, Chausson, Mobilvetta, Randger and Roller Team, as well as major retailer (and Benimar importer), Marquis.



resident and the possibility of some quality feet-up time continue to make the rear lounge design especially attractive to couples. The lounge here is described as cosy, so the short sofas are not long enough to allow stretched-out lounging or provide alternative single beds to the transverse double.

However, beds made from twin sofas are often some of the easiest to construct, using a simple system that sees sofa bases slide together and backrests dropped in behind to complete. The same is true here, but only the nearside base is equipped with sprung slats. And just one backrest is used to help make the bed, the other

space filled by the supplied pair of soft armrests.

The front dinette also makes into a bed, but this bed is only 5ft 1in long and it could do with a mattress topper to level out the surface.

In the kitchen the influence of importer, Marquis, shows with plenty of kit. As is often the case, work surface is in short supply, but this is solved by a useful, strong panel that lifts up at the forward end of the unit. The three-burner hob is partnered with a circular sink that's a good size and comes with removable drainer. Good levels of storage feature, too, and there's a Thetford Duplex oven/grill.

An easy-sliding tambour door gives access to the washroom. Big mirrors, good lighting, a roof vent, an opening window and nice accessories partner the practical design here with a semi-integral shower. The latter features two drains and a semi-circular rigid screen which encloses a good area that includes the washbasin.

So, the new Primero is aimed at those on a budget. But, although the specification is less comprehensive than the Mileo's that shouldn't compromise a comfortable motorhoming life. The new layout (also now available as a Mileo) is spacious and appealing, too.