

Roman holiday

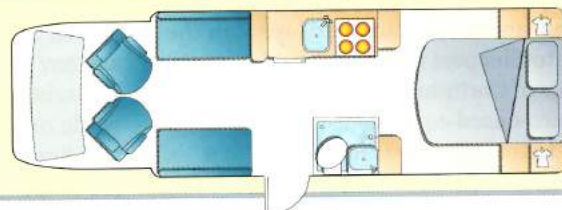
This luxury British motorhome has some classical elements but doesn't take an entirely conventional route to the island bed layout



The Bromleys

AUTO-SLEEPER CORINIUM RB

Price from: £66,505
Berths: 4 **Travel seats:** 2
Base vehicle: Peugeot Boxer
Length: 7.76m
Gross weight: 4,005kg





The view aft with the bedroom door open; the lounge is spacious but aisle narrows where the washroom intrudes

Auto-Sleepers names most of its models after picturesque Cotswold villages and towns. However, you'll search your road atlas in vain for Corinium – unless you have the year CCCL edition. Yes, Corinium Dobunorum was the Roman capital of Britannia Prima province, nowadays called Cirencester.

The RB completes the trio of Corinium models at the summit of the Peugeot-based branch of Auto-Sleepers' family tree. It's the equivalent of the Burford and Burford Duo on the Mercedes bough, but costs considerably less; we're talking roughly £70,000, rather than £83,000 fully loaded. Surprisingly, the RB is the first, and only, island bed layout in the Auto-Sleepers range; unlike the other pair of Corinium floorplans, there's no Merc-based equivalent.

Externally, the Corinium RB is a large low-profile motorhome with

traditional, restrained decals. Alloy wheels, colour-coded bumpers and door handles and platinum-grey GRP sides finish the ensemble. Only the noticeably large rear overhang strikes a cautionary note – extra care will be needed when boarding ferries.

As with all of its Peugeot range, Auto-Sleepers upgrades the 2.2-litre engine from 130bhp to a more sprightly 160bhp as standard. This is certainly noticeable when driving and, combined with an Al-Ko chassis, this big (7.76m) beast hustles along in an enjoyable, sure-footed fashion.

In production, the interior mirror will become the reversing camera's monitor and the integrated media screen on the fascia will show the sat-nav (on our test 'van we had a windscreen-mounted Garmin), while rear parking sensors are a belt and braces option that we'd adopt – particularly useful when manoeuvring

with such a long overhang.

With cruise control, air-con and a leather steering wheel, the cab has everything, including one feature we hadn't met previously. Trundling decorously down a dual carriageway, a loud, alarming metallic drumming sound began, which we thought indicated a mechanical problem. No, it was the Lane Alert reprimanding the driver for encroaching towards the white line and it repeated the alarm ad nauseam (as ancient Corinians would say). This Lane Alert can be switched off, which we did.

Auto-Sleepers caters for youngsters who passed their driving tests post 1 January MCMXCVII (1997), by producing the Corinium RB on a 3,500kg chassis, but payload is restricted to just 263kg – and that's with no water in the tanks.

This might work, with care, given that it's purely a two-traveller



Hang your towel on the door handle when showering



No external access to the under-bed locker so kit will need to be carried through the 'van

SECOND OPINION

"Auto-Sleepers was late to the island bed party and has not just copied all its key competitors"

PETER VAUGHAN ROAD TEST EDITOR



The kitchen has everything a chef needs – apart from an integral drainer – and the fridge is quite modest

motorhome, but the weight issue would be a nagging concern.

The test 'van, however, was on the Heavy chassis, with 16-inch wheels and a 4,005kg maximum weight giving a much more reassuring 713kg payload. It also enables Auto-Sleepers to include a spare wheel, whereas the lightweight variant carries only a can of gunk. Just remember the lower speed limits sometimes applicable to 'vans over 3.5 tonnes on the Continent.

If you wish to carry four travellers, there's an option to replace the offside settee with a half-dinette. And you can also specify an luton overcab instead of the standard low-profile front, but, in either case, it would only be appropriate on the heavier chassis.

INTERIUS

The sturdy habitation door comes with a window, flyscreen, rubbish bin

and key tray, plus a tall grab handle, with another on the wall. Auto-Sleepers has also provided an external step, which is quite narrow so you'll need to disembark with feet sideways. On the plus side, the step retracts automatically, the door is included in the central locking system and, once inside, the floor is level throughout.

Inside, it all feels light and airy, with large opening skylights to the cab, lounge and bedroom, plus plenty of LED lighting. You will feel comfortable whatever the season and whatever the weather.

Though island beds have long sold well in Europe, they've often been combined with the sometimes rather cramped front Euro lounge layout with a half-dinette.

Auto-Sleepers, however, has mated its end bedroom with a sumptuous lounge with parallel 4ft-long settees and a free-standing table. Located to

the front of the kitchen, the top of the table's dedicated storage cupboard is probably where you'd place the TV, close to the aerial, 12V and 230V mains sockets.

We were smitten by the lounge which, incorporating the swivelled cab seats, could seat six in great comfort, with a reading light apiece and oodles of legroom.

CULINA

Another difference compared with many continental designs is the kitchen, with the Corinium living up to the expectations of a top-class British motorhome. It's not huge, but everything is included.

The cooker, with three gas rings, an electric hotplate, separate grill and oven and a pan store, plus an extractor fan above, is backed-up by a Daewoo microwave at a sensible height. >



The bijou washroom has everything one expects although it does lack storage

The under-counter AES fridge has a reasonable 105-litre capacity, which, although not the largest, should prove sufficient for most.

Worktop space is excellent and is greatly increased by a pull-out surface above the fridge. The worktop is quite heavily textured, though – we would have preferred a smooth, more easily cleaned, surface.

There is also a bank of sockets handily placed so that the kettle can stand on the surface below.

A modest-sized plastic drainer tray is also supplied and there is a small cutlery drainer, which clips to the underside of the sink lid, although it has limited use as it doesn't hold much and teaspoons can slip through.

Of three overhead cupboards, one has glass and bottle holders, one a crockery rack (glasses and melamine plates are supplied).

There's also a cutlery drawer and

large shelved cupboard with kitchen roll holder.

LAVATORIUM MINIMUS

Every motorhome design requires compromises on available space – even when, as here, you have nearly eight metres of overall length. The Corinium RB's full-fat kitchen, spacious lounge and new bedroom mean here it's the 'smallest room' that suffers. Many competing island bed designs have a completely separate shower cubicle and toilet/washroom on either side of the aisle, with these facilities then combining to create an en suite across the whole width of the motorhome.

The RB's washroom combines both shower and toilet and is, to be kind, quite bijou. It does have a Belfast-sink-type basin upon a large unshelved cupboard, but the basin's rounded

edge can't fit flush with the wall so leaves an uncleanable gap, which, we have been informed, will be sealed on production vehicles.

There's no wall unit; instead a couple of metal racks are fitted, plus a mug holder, soap dish and a single towel ring. The swivel-loo fitted here, with its own flush-water tank (which you have to remember to fill separately when you drive to the motorhome service point), was one of the last of its breed. In subsequent vehicles this venerable toilet is replaced by its successor, the larger-bodied C223. However, it's no longer feasible to specify the flush tank, so water will come from the main 91-litre fresh water tank. Space for the toilet is tight and, when raised, the lid rubs against the toilet roll.

The tap doubles as the showerhead, clipping to a riser bar, and the substantial duckboard has two drain



Cosy and well-appointed bedroom has a rather narrow bed, but plenty of floorspace, with no steps to trip over

holes below. With a waterproof tambour door (which in the test 'van had a habit of springing clear of its runners), no clingy shower curtain is used, but tambour doors render wall space unusable, so there are no towel hooks present.

When showering the bedroom door knob outside the washroom can be used to hang your dry towel. However, it's easy to be critical and the RB's washroom will do its job, especially if you're the type of motorhomer who does not always rely on your own on-board washroom facilities.

CUBICULAE

And to the rear bedroom, which is behind a privacy door. It's a large space on a large overhang, so rear steadies are provided, meaning you won't feel seasick when turning over in bed.

The room isn't dominated by the bed – whether shortened with the bed head raised, or stretched out flat, there's still ample floor space all around – and no awkward steps.

Storage is excellent, with either side of the bed head having a wardrobe, chest of drawers, and handy surface (and mains and USB sockets, plus a light switch for discreet floor-level 'location lights', so you should be able to avoid disturbing your partner when making nocturnal forays).

The two lockers over the bed, though capacious, are high enough not to interfere with sitting up for TV viewing – the offside cupboard in the front corner of the bedroom has television sockets adjacent.

The thick and comfortable mattress overlies a slatted base, but the bed's rather narrow – at just 1.22m – although it is more generous in length (1.94m). It may not suit everyone

as, like many other island beds, the rounded-off corners means one person may be supremely comfortable in the centre, but the other...

There is a second sleeping option as the lounge settees pull together into the centre and quickly form another long double, with the addition of a couple of slim infill cushions. It's not entirely flat, as the seats have a small kneeroll, but with a mattress topper, it could be excellent.

Unlike some continental models with height-adjustable beds, there is no garage, nor any externally accessed space under the bed.

The Corinium offers storage space below the mattress, which is all accessed internally. The island bed lifts on gas struts, revealing a large space underneath, notwithstanding the Truma Combi 6E in the corner. The large plastic trough sunk into the floor is ideal for footwear. ►



The lounge bed is very long and it's four feet in width. Remember the standard layout has only two travel seats

THE VERDICT

This is a well-built and traditionally British luxury motorhome with a very comfortable lounge and good kitchen facilities. The island bed may be narrow for some, although it does allow for greater bedroom floorspace. The washroom is compact, and payload is minimal on the standard chassis so we would recommend taking the optional four-tonne chassis upgrade.

In the lounge, each settee base lifts easily on gas struts. Under the offside base there's plenty of space with the twin 90Ah leisure batteries hidden beneath a false floor, while, on the nearside, space is unencumbered, and there is also a small safe here, although with external access to this locker, the safe may be better in the offside locker.

There's also a further nearside external locker just below, in the aluminium skirt, which is ideal for mucky cables, wellies and ramps.

What some may feel is missing is the usual large externally accessed space for outdoor recliners, etc, that you expect with a fixed bed layout.

We found the Truma heating to

be superb, with outlets in every part of the motorhome. It's operated by a digital control panel (or via your smartphone) and can also be used whilst on the move. It's dual-fuel (mains electricity or gas), but we used gas, which is stored in an underslung, 25-litre tank. [www](#)

MOTORHOME SUPPLIED BY

Marquis Leisure, Preston

08000 267777

marquisleisure.co.uk

INSURANCE

0800 980 7023

shieldtotalinsurance.co.uk

Quote details on *Secondhand Choice* pages



FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE
From: £66,505
As tested: £71,590

BASICS
Berths: 4

Travel seats: 2 (optional 4)
Warranty: Three years base vehicle and habitation, six years water ingress
Type approval: European Whole Vehicle

DIMENSIONS
Length: 7.76m (25ft 5in)
Width: 2.32m (7ft 7in)
Height: 2.93m (9ft 7in) inc satellite aerial
Gross vehicle weight: 3,500kg (4,005kg as tested)
Payload: 263kg (713kg as tested)

BASE VEHICLE
Type: Peugeot Boxer AI-Ko
Engine: 2-litre, Euro 6, 160bhp, front-wheel drive, six-speed manual gearbox

KITCHEN
Cooker: Thetford Caprice MkIII, three gas burners, electric hotplate, separate oven and grill. Daewoo 800W microwave oven
Fridge: Thetford 105-litre, automatic energy selection

BEDS
Rear island bed: 1.94m (max) x 1.22m (6ft 4in x 4ft 0in)
Front lounge bed: 2.21m x 1.22m (7ft 3in x 4ft 0in)

ESSENTIALS
Fresh water: 91 litres (underslung)
Waste water: 71 litres (underslung)
Space/water heating: Truma Combi 6EH gas/mains with iNet remote control
Leisure battery: 25-litre gas tank
Gas: 2 x 90Ah

OPTIONS
Fitted to test vehicle: Premium Pack - DAB radio with sat-nav, reversing camera, 80W solar panel, alloy wheels, cab air-con, cruise control, awning (£2,500), Media Pack - automatic satellite system (£995), Winter Pack - cab blinds, fresh and waste water insulation, heater upgrade to 6EH, wheelarch insulation (£295); chassis upgrade to 4,005kg (£1,200), Sargent Tracker annual subscription (£95)

THE ALTERNATIVES

Auto-Trail Delaware	£73,444
Rapido 7096F	£68,500
Swift Bessacarr 599 Lounge	£63,205

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