

Practical Motorhome

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SLADE CASTLE AND HARBOUR,
IRELAND, p20

Ireland's narrow roads were easy to navigate in the 122



An Irish adventure for the Benivan 122

Stepping inside the Benivan 122 at Marquis Leisure's Surrey branch, I quickly decided that this was my favourite Benimar 'van so far. The reason? Comfort.

It has parallel sofas at the rear, which meant I didn't have to fold my 5'9" frame into the cramped space of a front dinette with the table in place.

Also, its size: the Benivan was to be my home-from-home for a trip to Ireland I was sharing with colleague Bryony, and the compact dimensions would take the stress out of driving unknown Irish lanes.

But first we had to get there. Unforeseen events

resulted in a 230-mile dash to make the late ferry at Fishguard, rather than the leisurely drive I had planned. This was a four-hour-plus drive, but with its 150bhp engine, the Benivan was

Benivan 122

Price.....	£46,495 OTR
Berths.....	2
Belts.....	4
Base.....	Fiat Ducato
Engine.....	2.3 Euro 6 (150bhp)
Length.....	6.36m
Width.....	2.05m
Height.....	2.53m
MTPLM.....	3500kg
Expenses.....	None
Previous reports.....	None

pretty nimble, and the comfortable cab seat felt as though it was giving me a hug. There are plenty of cupholders in the Fiat Ducato cab, and USB and 12V sockets.

Not all motorhomes come with sat nav, of course, so I was very pleased that the Benivan had a 7" touch-screen version, which doubled as a radio/



Pitching on grass was really no problem in glorious weather

MP3 player and a rear-view camera. The camera you could keep on while driving, to see what was happening behind you as well as in front. It's a useful aid for checking the person behind hasn't decided to overtake at the same time as you!

The 11.45pm Stena Line ferry disembarks at 4am, and it took less than an hour to reach the site at Duncannon Beach Holiday Park, where we had been directed to a field with hook-ups reserved for late - or in our case, very early - arrivals.

On the phone to the site manager, I had worried ☹

OUR 'VANS, OUR MONTH

A pit stop along the Copper Coast route



about the field being too wet and us getting stuck in the mud, but Ireland had been blessed with stunning weather that continued throughout our stay. In fact, with all our comings and goings in the 'van, we never made it onto the site proper.

The earlier unforeseen events saw Bryony sharing the 'van with me, which meant a sofa each for sleeping. The sofas in the 122 are over 6ft (1840mm) long, and the 2'2" (660mm) width is fairly standard for a twin-singles layout.

We managed pretty well with storing our individual kit, too. The space above the cab was probably the most useful for easy access.

Storage in the kitchen area was limited, though. It could be improved by the removal of the microwave if you felt the two-burner gas hob was adequate for cooking. There is a cutlery drawer, and two small

cupboards below, but one houses the gas taps.

With two of us in the 'van, it might have feel a bit cramped, but we took turns to prepare food, using the extension flap in the kitchen.

This 'van has four belted seats, but the two belted seats behind the cab were narrow and would be most comfortable for small adults, or children.

The cab seats swivel, but the cab area is raised, which meant on the passenger side in particular, legs would be dangling. Space is a bit tight here; with the cab seats swivelled, you couldn't have someone sitting in the two facing passenger seats because there is only room for one set of knees.

Out and about, the 'van was put through its paces. I worried that the 3500kg MTPLM might prove too heavy for the small ferry carrying vehicles across the River Barrow to Passage

The Benivan 122 on the ferry to Passage East



East; it was fine, but it was sadly too heavy to park on Duncannon Beach, as many other people were doing.

The 122 had no problem tackling the twisting and

+ **LIKES**
Parallel sofas, compact size, easy to drive

- **DISLIKES**
Step up into cab area. Cramped space in front dinette

undulating R675, which follows the Copper Coast, and the rear camera was put to good use when it came to turning around in a tight space. We drove it up the 268m-high Sleivecoiltia, next to the JFK Arboretum in Co Wexford, for fantastic views – I could have been driving a car, it was that easy to manoeuvre!

Claudia Dowell

For more info on Benivan, see www.benivan.co.uk/

Our 'vans are stored at Camberley Secure Storage (01276 670 066; www.cassoa.co.uk), a CaSSOA Silver award-winning site