

Practical Caravan

Subscriber edition

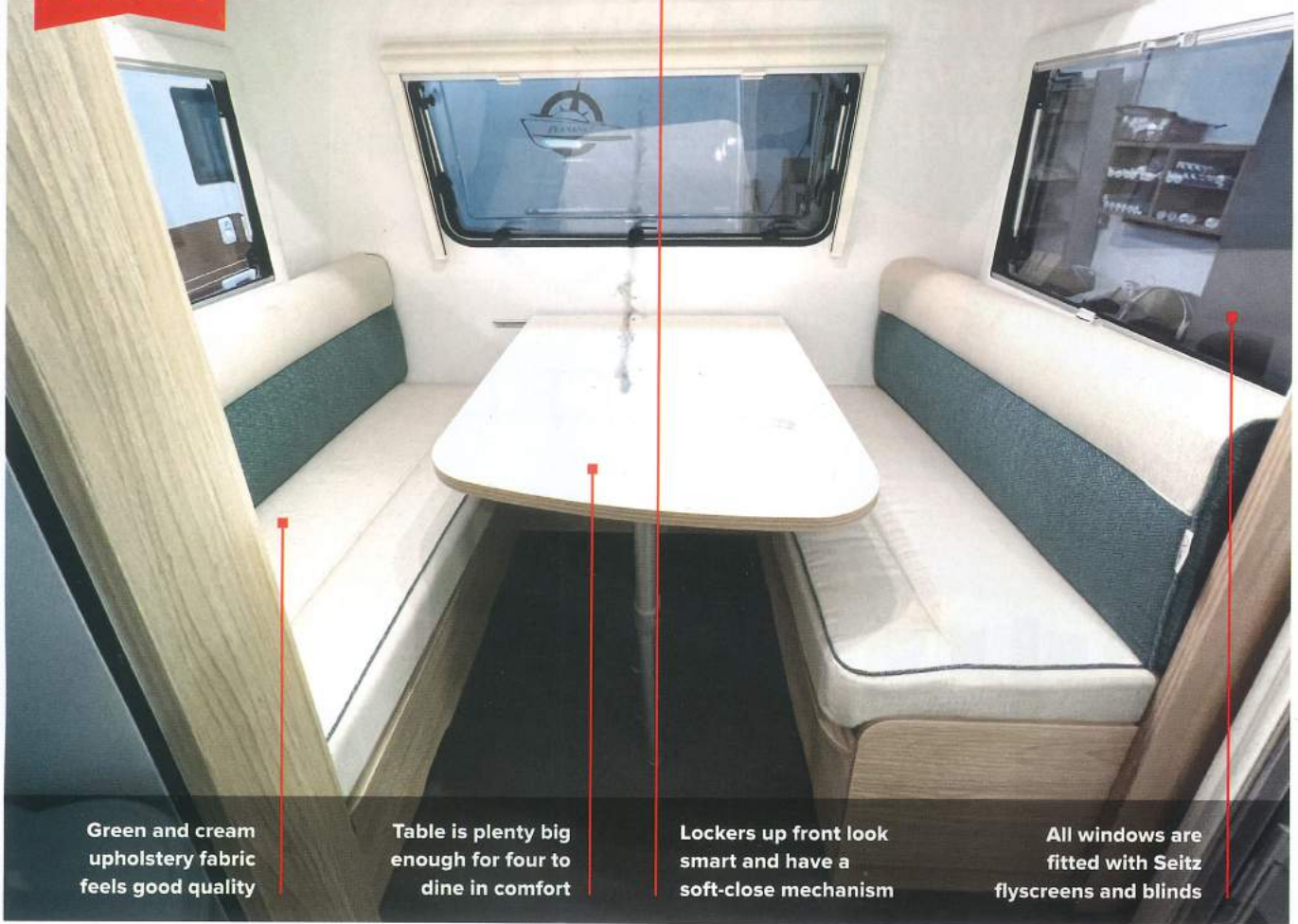
SEE WONDERFUL WALES!

Explore Caernarfon & Anglesey on a summer tour you won't forget
Plus... Northumberland, Oxford, and 10 sites where you can learn a new skill!



Caernarfon Castle, Gwynedd

FIRST LOOK



Green and cream upholstery fabric feels good quality

Table is plenty big enough for four to dine in comfort

Lockers up front look smart and have a soft-close mechanism

All windows are fitted with Seitz flyscreens and blinds

LA MANCELLE FANTASY 440 CL

Price £29,995 **Berths** 4 **MTPLM** 1420kg **Max payload** 349kg

Continental flair combines with high-quality construction in this smart four-berth from the upmarket French brand

Words and photos **Sarah Wakely**



Fantasy models feature Al-Ko stabiliser along with heavy-duty corner steadies

LAST MONTH in *Practical Caravan* (issue 464), we took an exclusive look at the new quartet of French-built La Mancelle vans now being brought into the UK by dealer giant Marquis Leisure.

This issue, we're stepping inside the larger of the two Fantasy models – the four-berth 440 CL – to find out exactly what it can offer British caravanners.

Pitch and set-up

With their white-and-brown exteriors, the La Mancelle Fantasy models look smart and certainly stand out on site. The quirky 'porthole' windows towards the rear are another stylish touch.

The Fantasy caravans feature an Al-Ko AKS 3004 stabiliser, for increased safety on the road, and heavy-duty corner steadies will help with stability when you're pitched up.

On the exterior you'll also find a barbecue and 230V mains point, as well as the filling point for the on-board water tank.

Note that the La Mancelle models at Marquis currently have their door on the Continental side (the UK offside).

Lounge

A pair of facing sofas at the front of the caravan make up the 440 CL's lounge; they're longer than those in the model's 360 CL sibling, and should be more than comfortable enough for four on tour.



A Kitchen work surface is a touch limited, but the extractor fan is a fantastic addition to the kit level here **B** Rear island bed is comfortable and well lit, thanks to a plethora of lights and plenty of natural illumination **C** Porthole-style windows look smart and stylish **D** No separate shower in washroom, but the compact space is well designed

The interior is smartly dressed in cream and green fabrics, which look and feel very hardwearing. Three large windows – all of which feature Seitz flyscreens and blinds – around the lounge help to flood the area with natural light. Up above are light-oak and cream lockers with soft-close catches.

Kitchen

There's not a huge amount of workspace in the kitchen – a lift-up flap at the end of the galley would help here – but if you make use of the glass hob and sink lids, it should prove practical enough.

Pleasingly for a Continental model, there's a combined gas oven and grill, located beneath the deep sink; there's also a two-burner gas hob to the left of the latter.

Your food is kept cold by the Webasto Isotherm 85-litre fridge, which also features a handy freezer box. A very useful addition to the kitchen is the Dometic extractor hood – ideal for keeping your caravan free from cooking smells – which also features a light and a digital clock display.

Washroom

The fully lined washroom in the 440 CL is relatively compact – in part because of the large amount of footprint taken up by the rear island bed – but the space within it has been cleverly used. A swivelling electric-flush Thetford C262 toilet sits to the right, with

an opaque window above. The base of the toilet is within the shower floor, but the latter features a pair of plugholes, so any water should drain away quickly.

The handbasin is oval and large, and neatly designed to swivel around out of the way when you want to use the shower; the showerhead doubles up as a mixer tap for the basin.

The washroom lies opposite the kitchen, but there won't be any issues when opening the washroom door – it has a tambour/sliding door.

Beds

The star of the 440 CL's sleeping arrangements is the longitudinal island bed at the back of the caravan. It's a good size, at 1.85 x 1.40m (6'1" x 4'7"), and features a smart headboard. Each occupant gets their own spotlight – perfect for reading before sleep – and the cubbyholes on either side of the bed are fitted with one mains and one USB socket, making them ideal for charging your devices overnight.

The second bed in the 440 CL is made up from the pair of sofas in the lounge. This is very easy to do – you simply drop the table leg, slot the unit into the resulting space and rearrange the sofa cushions.

TECH SPECS

Price £29,995 **Berths** 4
MTPLM 1420kg **Payload** 349kg
Spec list Al-Ko AKS 3004 stabiliser
 • Heavy-duty corner steadies • Exterior gas BBQ point • Two-burner gas hob • 85-litre fridge • Truma iNet X control panel
 • Combined gas oven and grill • Onboard water tank • Flyscreen door

Measurements

Overall length 6.41m **Overall width** 2.05m
Overall height (exc TV aerial) 2.58m
Rear double bed 1.85 x 1.40m
Front double bed 1.90 x 1.40m
Contact marquiseleisure.co.uk



Once it's made up, the bed in the lounge is even bigger than the one in the rear, at a generous 1.90m x 1.40 (6'2" x 4'7").

Storage

The Fantaisy 440 CL provides a whopping payload of 349kg, and there are loads of storage solutions within to help you make the most of it. The biggest area is below the island bed (although you'll want to reserve this for light items), but otherwise, there's a large wardrobe, narrow shelved units either side of the rear bed, lockers all around the van, and multiple cubbyholes, shelves and drawers – you won't be short of storage, even with four on tour.

Verdict ★★★★★

La Mancelle has been building caravans since 1960, so has a long experience of construction – the Fantaisy 440 CL, like its brand siblings, feels solidly built, with high-quality materials.

There's not a huge amount of work surface in the kitchen in this model, but otherwise the level of kit throughout is good. If you're a couple or four on tour, and you can live with that smaller kitchen area, the 440 CL will definitely be worth considering. **PC**