

Spirit world

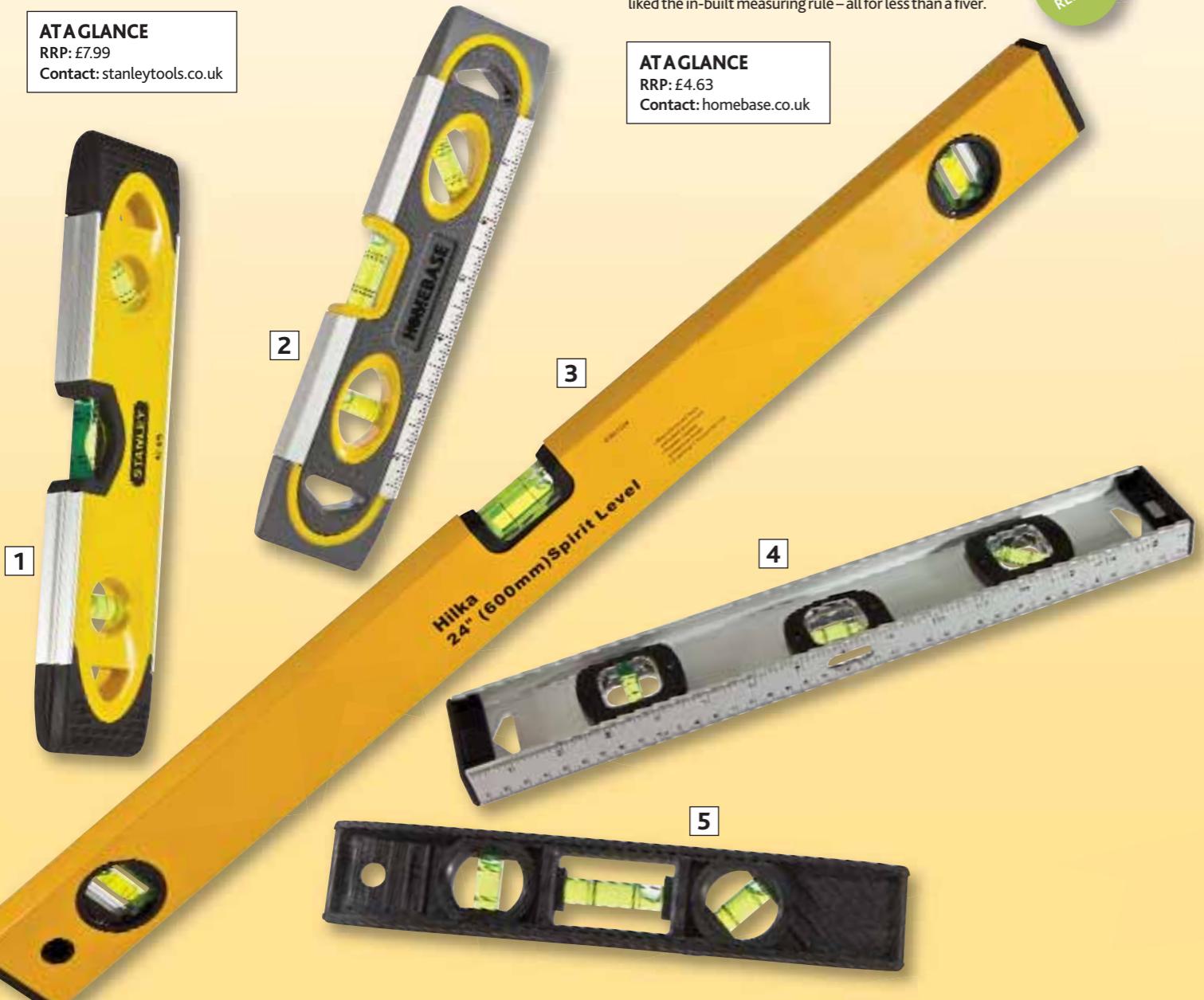
Michael Le Caplain does his level best to unearth six caravan-friendly products

1. Stanley Torpedo Level

This is practically twice the price of the other Stanley product on test (No 5), but is considerably better made. I liked the rubberised end caps and part-aluminium design plus the bubble vials are very clear and easy to read. The central window is left exposed so it can be viewed from above when the level is stood on its side. It's a bit heavier than the cheaper Stanley, but still easy to carry and store.

AT A GLANCE

RRP: £7.99
Contact: stanleytools.co.uk



2. Homebase 9in Torpedo Level

Unless you're lucky enough to own a large tag-axle caravan or motorhome, this is probably all the spirit level you'll need. Made from rubberised plastic embellished with a central aluminium chassis, it sits flush on a work surface despite the rather unsightly presence of two exposed screw heads on the base (which are countersunk). The central bubble vial on the edge is exposed so it can be read from above (useful in tight spaces). We liked the in-built measuring rule – all for less than a fiver.

AT A GLANCE

RRP: £4.63
Contact: homebase.co.uk

3. Hilka 24-inch Spirit Level

In principle, the longer the spirit level, the greater the accuracy. At least a third as long again as the next biggest product in our test – the Tesco example – this sits utterly flat and rock solid on its powder-coated extruded aluminium base and gives a steady, accurate reading. It features an exposed central bubble vial and the plastic itself looks and feels thicker than on any of the others here. Portability is an issue, although it would easily fit into a bedding locker or cupboard.

AT A GLANCE

RRP: £9.99
Contact: hilka.co.uk



5. Stanley Short Level

It's hard to believe this little Stanley level costs just £4. However, where the similarly-priced Tesco level feels like it would survive a direct hit from a missile, the Stanley appears more fragile. The flipside of this is that it slips easily into a pocket and is feather-light.

AT A GLANCE

RRP: £4
Contact: stanleytools.co.uk



6. Challenge 42-piece Household Kit

Twenty quid for this little thing? Well, yes – but it's accompanied by a set of tools including an adjustable wrench, eight hex keys and 20 screwdriver bits as well as a set of cable ties. They're all housed in a handy little toolbox that's small enough to fit into a kitchen roof locker. While the spirit level is by far the most basic one here (the plastic casing in particular feels quite brittle and the exposed screwheads look cheap), it's a reasonable size and unique in this company in that it boasts a magnetised strip sunk into the base.

AT A GLANCE

RRP: £19.99
Contact: argos.co.uk



4. Tesco 400mm Spirit Level

I actually stumbled upon this level while doing the weekly shop! It's a pretty good one, too – the all-aluminium casing belies its budget price, although the corners are a little on the sharp side, plastic end caps notwithstanding. Like the other levels here, you get three different bubble vials, although the central one will be used the most. It proved to be at least as accurate as some of the pricier examples here and features a handy, inbuilt cm/in ruler. If there is a minor criticism, it's that it's hardly pocket-sized.

AT A GLANCE

RRP: £4
Contact: tesco.com

