



BIG CHANGES AT ELDDIS

A plethora of new models and major improvements greeted **Gary Martin** as he attended Elddis' 2012 preview in Consett at the beginning of July

JUDGING BY the number of all-new and significantly-improved tourers and motorhomes at the Elddis 2012 model preview, the Consett-based company's design and production teams must clearly need to catch up on their sleep!

On arrival at the Elddis factory in early July, I was greeted by 28 caravans and eight Autoquest coachbuilt motorhomes, all of which featured much more than just a change of upholstery colour for the year ahead.

However, among all the exciting new developments and layouts, perhaps one of the most important

messages to come out of this launch is that all Elddis-branded (the company is also responsible for the top-end Buccaneer range) 2012 caravans have gone on a diet – weights of the company's Xplore, Avanté, Odyssey and Crusader models are all down compared with last year. For example, new Xplore 504 is, at 1,320kg, 80kg lighter than the model it replaces, Xplore 540; Avanté 540 has lost 83kg compared with last year's model and now weighs in at 1,412kg; while Odyssey 540 is now 1,490kg, 60kg less than its 2011 counterpart. And, despite being larger this year, flagship Elddis

Crusader tourers are also a little trimmer for 2012 – Supersirocco, for example, has shed 40kg.

Bearing in mind that specification levels have not been reduced, how has Elddis managed this? Not a gifted technical man, let me give it to you straight from the horse's mouth: "We have achieved these weight savings through the use of advanced materials technology and construction methods identified as a result of an extensive ongoing research and development programme. The Avanté weight savings have been achieved through the introduction of a new fully-bonded

roof construction, improved interior furniture construction and an all-new fully-bonded floor featuring a waterproof GRP underskin which not only saves weight but offers greatly improved protection from the elements and water ingress.

"A recent significant investment has allowed us to build thick structural furniture components such as gables using a bonded foam sandwich construction method that is not only stronger but is lighter in weight than the plywood it replaced."

So, let's look at the newcomers and range improvements in a logical



Avanté 372 – note low-level microwave



Clean lines: Avanté 372 shows off the new white powder-coated exterior extrusions



Triple bunk arrangement of Avanté 566

order, starting with the company's entry-level tourer line-up – Xplore.

The new Xplore 504 (£13,599) is a different take on the popular single-axle, fixed rear nearside bed, end washroom layout. Whereas the majority of, if not all, rival tourers with this interior arrangement have a wardrobe running along the offside wall opposite the bed, Xplore 504's wardrobe is found to the right of the entrance door, in front of the bed on the nearside. A vanity unit with sink then takes the vacated space. Benefits of this simple change are two-fold – firstly, it 'opens' up the area beside the bed, and secondly, combined with the fact that all Xplores now come with Whale's space-saving underfloor heater, the wardrobe stretches unimpeded from floor to ceiling to offer greater storage.

Elsewhere, Xplore 304 gains a new dinette window, while changes common to this five-strong model line-up include new high-security locks, improved rear quarter panel and lights, the use of 'Cappuccino stone' worktops and the introduction of hardwood 'Noce Prosecco' doors with positive catches on kitchen lockers.

Something the eagle-eyed among you will probably have spotted from the accompanying photos is that Xplore, Avanté and Odyssey now feature white powder-coated exterior extrusions which, the company claims, will minimise those annoying, difficult-to-remove black streaks. The proof of the pudding, of course, will be in the eating.

Moving one step up the Elddis caravan ladder, Avanté boasts a couple of newcomers to become a nine-model range for 2012. Of these two fresh arrivals, 372 (£13,599) is the eye-catcher. Based on the innovative and award-winning Xplore 302, Elddis claims the Avanté 372 to be an exclusive layout to its stable – I certainly can't think of another manufacturer offering something alike in a caravan of its ilk. As suggested by its number designation, 372 is a



Buccaneer Caravel's silver sides are made from impact-resistant GRP



Caravel's attractive-looking washroom



Crusader: out with the old, in with the new

two-berth with a spacious L-shaped lounge, offside central kitchen and end washroom. Like the Xplores, compact 372 is fitted with the underfloor Whale heater (it is the sole Avanté to have this heater), which allows for crucial space saving inside, thus maximising storage potential.

Six-berth 566 (£15,949) is the second new Avanté. An excellent family choice, this model boasts a triple bunk set-up and single bed at the rear, with sleeping arrangements completed by a traditional front lounge-derived double. Offside washroom (including separate shower) and nearside kitchen fill the central positions.

In common with all 2012 Avantés, 372 and 566 feature stylish new windows and graphics (helping to modernise the exterior look of this popular mid-range collection), a new domestic-style washroom door and what Elddis is calling 'Easy Glide' bed technology (smoother pull-out slats to you and me!), designed to make bedmaking quicker and easier. Elddis tells us this system "retains the slats in the runners and allows the slats to automatically rotate when stored for ease of use".

Our next step up the Elddis ladder takes us face to face with Odyssey, which welcomes one new addition for 2012, bringing the total models in the



Fixed double in 2012 Crusader Cyclone

range to four. Twin-axle 650 (£19,449) is a four-berth with twin single fixed beds and spacious rear washroom (à la Crusader Supercyclone and Buccaneer Clipper).

Although Odysseys benefit from 'Easy Glide' bed technology, new bathroom storage and cocktail cabinets (which take four bottles of wine!), improved kitchen lighting, new fitted TV brackets and 170° opening wardrobe doors to improve access, the biggest changes to these models are on the outside. In addition to the white powder-coated extrusions, latest Odysseys feature silver skirts, wheel arches and hitch covers which combine to give a really stylish look.

Ready to step up to the next rung of this new model ladder? We now arrive at Crusader, which sits atop the Elddis tourer brand. Counting a new addition and major changes inside and out, Elddis has clearly spent much of its efforts on the development of this sextet. Even if newcomer Shamal (£20,299), a single-axle four-berth, hadn't been unveiled, there would be



Shamal's granite-effect washbasin



New look: stylish raking front and flush-fitting windows of the Crusader Shamal

plenty to get excited about with Crusader – this really is a very different beast compared with 2011.

Reminiscent of the latest-generation Swift Conquerors and Sterling Elites, the all-new Crusaders (and for that matter the Buccaneers) come with stylishly-raked front GRP panels, attractively-shaped moulded roof lines, flush-fitting front window panels and full-width gas lockers. Front window rain shields, larger entrance doors, new-style step-on A-frames, chrome-effect grab handles and new wheel arches add to the attractive appearance of these models. All Crusaders also come with one-piece aluminium sides and 46mm thick floors.

Shamal is another fine twin fixed single bedder with rear washroom

but is shorter than Supercyclone and previously-mentioned Odyssey 650 (it's at the front lounge that the compromise on space is evident).

Step inside any of the latest Crusaders and you immediately notice the generous 6ft 5in of headroom as well as the opulence of your surroundings – standard fittings include an Avtex TV/DVD, a stylish new shower cubicle with LED lighting (selected models), curved overhead lockers with chrome-effect handles, eye-level (except Shamal) microwave, quick-release TV brackets, new Thetford toilet with auto-fill water system and electric flush, plus new 'Night Sky' granite-effect kitchen sink and integrated drainer.

Onto the last rung of tourers now, before we turn our attention to the

company's motorhomes, for a look at the luxury Buccaneer line-up. As mentioned previously, 2012 Buccaneers have been seriously redesigned in line with the Crusaders, differing externally in one obvious way from their Elddis cousins – eye-catching silver sides made from impact-resistant GRP are the order of the day here. Interior improvements for this top-of-the-range quartet (Clipper, Caravel, Corsair and Schooner) include longer fixed beds, new dual-fuel hobs, highly-polished domestic-style curtain poles, concealed mood lighting, 195-litre fridge freezers with removable freezer sections (twin axles only), retractable clothes dryers, 40mm deep 'Stainguard' carpets, electrical sockets on

front window shelves with USB chargers and granite-effect washroom handbasins.

On the motorhome front, Elddis has left its Aspire range untouched (it was only launched last year), but has given plenty of attention to entry-level Autoquest on Peugeot Boxer – introducing a new addition and improving the seven existing models. First, the newcomer. Low-profile 165 is a four-berther with four dedicated belted seats (seatbelts handily feature a height-adjustable function) and a fixed rear double bed. A rear nearside ensuite washroom, offside central kitchen and lounge comprising inward-facing and forward-facing settees complete the interior picture. At mealtimes, a wall-mounted table with clever hinged extension provides the space required for a full complement.

Elddis has made notable changes across the coachbuilt range, both inside and out. Exterior-wise, low-profile models feature a one-piece GRP overcab pod, while all models boast new and stylish rear panels, new windows and white powder-coated extrusions to minimise black streaking.

The employment of Whale's underfloor heater has added valuable storage space inside, while all models bar the 180 benefit from new 90-litre on-board fresh water tanks. Improvements have also been made to washrooms, kitchens and materials to ensure this budget-priced coachbuilt range remains at the very top of its market sector.

We understand that until Elddis receives delivery of the new Euro V Peugeot Boxer base vehicles (which will be later this year), prices of 2012 Autoquests remain virtually unchanged from 2011 models.

For further details, call 01207 699000 or see elddis.co.uk



Low-profile 165 joins the Autoquest line-up, and is a true four-berth motorhome



Bed and ensuite in Autoquest 165



Silver skirts, wheel arches and A-frame give Odyssey 650 an eye-catching exterior appeal



504 extends the Xplore range for 2012



Twin single fixed beds in the new Odyssey 650 are comfortable and well sized



Where there'd normally be a wardrobe, a vanity unit is next to the kitchen in Xplore 504

A stellar cast at Adria launch

The Slovenian caravan and motorhome manufacturer unveiled its latest line-up at Walton Hall in Warwickshire. **John Thynne** reports

'DESIGNED FOR Great Britain – built by Adria' – that's the catchphrase the Slovenian company wants the UK market to digest. And on the evidence of its latest offerings, buyers are in for a treat. The company unveiled a completely new caravan – the Astella 613 HT – as well as three new coachbuilt motorhome layouts and a van conversion at a sun-drenched Warwickshire launch event in June.

Perhaps the most impressive element in the Slovenian company's new tourer is the 'Ergo' bathroom. Opening the door between the twin beds in the rear bedroom, you are greeted by a clever, centrally-located, drop-down sink and mirrored vanity unit flanked by the toilet to the left and shower-room to the right. The shower itself has a definite 'hotel-like' quality to it, while the dark wood finishing throughout adds a touch of class.

The Astella has a neat lounge up front with sofas converting to an offside double, while the kitchen (boasting three-burner hob, oven, grill and microwave) stretches the width of the caravan on the left as you enter. Sleeping four and with an MTPLM of 1,800kg, the retail price is £17,990 excluding delivery charges.

Astella joins the Altea and Adora ranges which have been given a facelift for 2012. All the latest caravans feature new interior lights, microwave pre-installation and lifting headrests on fixed beds. Remember, you have a chance to win an Adora 612 DT worth £16,000 in our free-to-enter prize draw on p71.

We reported on Adria's new Matrix Supreme 687 SL and 677 SC motor



All-new Astella 613 HT



Sink in the Ergo bathroom

caravans, based on the new Renault Master chassis, in the July issue, but at Walton Hall we were introduced to the Matrix 650 SF and 670 SC, built on the Fiat. The former offers a longitudinal fixed double bed at the rear offside

beside the washroom, while the kitchen sits midship. Up front seating converts to a transverse double at night. The rear double in the 670 C, meanwhile, sits in the rear centre of the vehicle. The washroom is centrally-located while sleeping arrangements at the front involve a drop-down transverse double.

Joining the 680 SP and 680 SL, the new Matrixes each cost £53,890 and come with the 2.3-litre, 130bhp engine as standard. A 3.0-litre, 180bhp unit is an option for an extra £3,000.

Also based on the Fiat and new to Adria's Sonic range is the 700 ST. This model sleeps four courtesy of a fixed offside rear double and an electric, drop-down bed up front. Unlike the other models in the line-up, the bathroom stretches across the back of the vehicle rather than sitting in the centre. The 2.3-litre costs £62,890, while the 3.0-litre version retails at £65,890.

Meanwhile, a new addition to the van conversion line-up is the Twin SF. Offering a French bed at the nearside rear beside a small, new 'Ergo'-style

bathroom, there is room for another single up front once the seating's been rearranged. The Twin SF has the 2.3-litre 130bhp unit as standard, while a 150bhp engine is available as an option. The prices are £39,890 and £41,390 respectively, again excluding on-the-road costs.

For further details, call 01787 888980 or see adriaconcessionaires.co.uk



Kitchen is opposite the entrance in the new Matrix 650 SF



Twin SF comes in at around £40,000

NEW MODEL NEWS NEXT MONTH

During June we were granted a special sneak preview of two more exciting ranges from the Swift Group. Swift Challenger Sport and Sterling Eccles Sport not only feature all-new exteriors and completely restyled interiors compared with the mid-range models they replace, they also boast favourable MTPLMs. Full details and pictures will be available in our September issue, in which we will also hope to bring you details of new models from Bailey, Coachman and Lunar.