

Light heavyweights

Judge **Danny Cobbs** brings you details of the lightweight leisure trailers that packed a punch in our prestigious 2012 awards

THE CLUB'S 2012 Lightweight Leisure Trailer Awards, which run alongside the Caravan Design Awards,

attracted a healthy entry list of 31 touring units – ranging from trailer tents costing less than £3,750 to caravans weighing between

750-1,100kg. The experienced judging panel (made up of design and technical experts) considered a variety of attributes of each

vehicle, from day and night-time practicality to the helpfulness of the handbook, to come up with these results...



The Kyte XL, with its futuristic floating awning and attention to design detail, is a worthy class winner. Ease of use, the employment of lightweight carbon-fibre materials, a clever ventilation system and a quality kitchen area with numerous shelves and drawers put this double-bed trailer tent in a class of its own. At £14,790 for the basic model, it is also expensive, but it seems a fair price to pay for something that boasts such luxury and excellent workmanship.



Class 2
TRAILER TENTS
over £3,750

Winner:
Holtkamper
Kyte XL
Price: £14,790

The most keenly-contested of the six classes in this year's competition, the Holtkamper Kyte XL battled against nine others to take the category win.

As well as some old favourites, there were also a number of new models in this class, including two from Dutch manufacturer Holtkamper. Although it has been in the trailer tent business for over 80 years, Holtkamper has never before had representation in the UK.



Winner:
Camplair XL
Price: £2,895

In a category of just one (unfortunately, the other entrant in this class did not make the journey to Birmingham's NEC), there could of course only be one winner.

The Camplair XL might be small on price but it is big on ideas. It was the ease with which it emerged from its trailer to form spacious four-berth living accommodation that impressed most.

The 100% cotton canvas tent incorporates a metal framework

which then unfolds in an up-and-over action. One person could, with a little practice, have the Camplair XL ready for use in a matter of minutes. The sleeping area is divided into two separate compartments, both of which boast useful storage space below a foam double mattress. There's seating for four, as well.



Runner-up:
Holtkamper Cocoon XL
Price: £9,470

Taking many of its design cues from its class-winning, bigger sibling, the Cocoon XL shows the same flair for innovation. It also boasts

similar levels of workmanship and use of materials.

The integrated frame allows for automatic pitching of the front extension when on site, leaving a large ground-sheeted area for either additional sleeping accommodation or useful living space.

This is a highly-versatile and strong two-berth trailer tent.

Third place:
Trigano Olympe 2012
Price: £4,995

No stranger to the trailer tent market, Trigano demonstrated with the Olympe 2012 why it remains one

of the industry's leading lights. Carrying a competitive price tag, the Olympe is a well thought out product which opens easily to offer almost 26sq.m of space in the shape of two separated rooms, a large cabin and a generously-sized awning. Completing the picture is a portable kitchen with a two-ring gas burner.



Class 3
FOLDING
CAMPER

Winner:
Conway
Crusader
Price: £11,495

Retaining its title, Conway's Crusader is little changed since the awards were last held at February's NEC show – even the price, which includes a three-year manufacturer's warranty, is the same.

Unfurling the Crusader's four-berth 'Isacryl'-covered tent from its fibreglass trailer housing is simplicity itself. It opens up to offer a lounge area, free-standing dining table, shower, toilet and kitchen – complete with sink, three-burner stove, oven and fridge.

There's also a full-height wardrobe, central heating and two raised bedroom compartments, each with a sprung-interior double mattress.

Mains hook-up is standard and there is also an abundance of storage compartments. With a permissible

maximum laden mass of just 750kg, the Crusader can be towed behind the smallest of family cars.



Runner-up:

Conway Countryman Deluxe

Price: £9,995

The Countryman Deluxe has been designed very much with families in mind. Clever use of interior space has created sufficient room for four (six at a squeeze) to sleep comfortably.

This folding camper's fitted kitchen area, which has been built to a class-leading standard, includes a three-way fridge and hot-water heating system.

As with its class-winning stablemate, Countryman can be



Class 3
Continued

unfolded both quickly and easily – the result of which is living accommodation that measures a respectable 4m x 4.2m.

By using the cost-effective, yet high-tech and low-maintenance 'Isacryl' covering, Conway has kept Countryman's price under £10,000.

Third place:

Pennine Quartz 2

Price: £9,945

Although the Pennine Quartz 2 is technically a four-berth folding camper, the second sleeping area is more of a bed-settee affair. That said, when it's folded down it does make a good-sized double bed. This folding camper has a quality feel throughout – its fit and finish are superb, especially the kitchen. Standard equipment includes



an Isabella-supplied Isatex cabin and awning, a space-saving heater system and a mains-only water heater.

Class 5

CARAVANS
750kg and under

Winner:

Freedom Jetstream 1st Class

Price: £10,695

A cutting-edge design in this competition doesn't automatically mean a winner's medal, a point succinctly proved by the victor in this category.

Freedom's Jetstream 1st Class showed that value for money is still just as important to the scoring as a high-tech kitchen or iPod connectivity.

Compact, two-berth Jetstream is back-to-basics caravanning. It is not the most aesthetic thing you will ever see, but it is well built and offers practical touring accommodation.



Its GRP bodysell sits on a fully-galvanised chassis. Step inside and you'll be greeted by a practical L-shape seating area (which converts into sleeping accommodation at night) at one end and a functional kitchen with a four-burner hob and grill at the other. A hot water system and Truma gas heater are both standard items, too.



Class 4

FOLDING CARAVANS



Runner-up:

Gobur Carousel 12/2TD

Price: £18,585

The Carousel 12/2TD sits at the top of the Gobur range and is packed full of the sort of things you'd expect to find in a modern touring caravan – including a washroom, kitchen, mains electrics and plumbing. There's a lounge area,

as well, which converts into a double bed at night.

The method of folding and unfolding this unit is simplicity itself – when taking down at the end of your holiday, most of the modular interior remains in situ while the exterior walls collapse around it precisely and elegantly, leaving the roof to form the top of the trailer.

With 25mm insulated walls and roof, which interlock perfectly and self-seal, this Gobur offers year-round accommodation.

Third place:

Gobur Carousel 12/4

Price: £16,130

Sharing the same platform and folding mechanism as the second-placed Carousel 12/2TD, the 12/4 differs by offering four berths and by not having a washroom. It is cheaper though, with prices starting at £16,130. Total floorspace measures 7.45sq.m and within these confines there is a fully-functional end kitchen and numerous storage lockers sited along the vehicle's internal walls.



Runner-up:

Fifer Pod

Price: £8,450

A more compact caravan you couldn't wish to see, but those clever people at East Neuk Campervans (who have tasted success in the Club's Motorhome Design & Drive Awards

in recent years) have cleverly utilised every inch of the Pod's available interior space.

Headroom may be at a premium, yet Pod shows exactly what can be achieved when intelligence is applied at the start of the design process. The living area features a lounge/double bed, rudimentary kitchen and a few handy storage cupboards. Quite brilliant!



Third place:

Turtle 1500

Price: £5,995

This sleek teardrop design will certainly make it an attractive proposition to the fashionista caravanner looking to spend a night or two away at a summer festival.

Turtle 1500's double bed takes up the majority of the floorspace, but open the tailgate and you'll reveal a two-ring gas stove, 240V coolbox and water tank with tap. A single mains socket is standard issue, while an entertainment system and awning are available on the optional extras list.



Winner:

Pennine Artemis

Price: £14,995

For many years the folding caravan market in the UK has been dominated by Gobur – until this year thanks to the introduction of the Pennine Artemis.

Pennine is best known as a major player in the trailer tent market, but it has taken all that knowledge and expertise and applied it to this clever folding caravan. The judges

were unanimous that the Artemis was best in class.

Converting the Artemis from trailer to caravan takes just a few minutes and once erected it will comfortably accommodate up to three people. A hot water and heating system are included in the £14,995 price tag, as is a fully-functional kitchen. The washroom, with its cassette loo, is practical if not that spacious, but then again the Artemis only has a footprint of 3.5m x 1.98m and is light enough to be towed behind a car as small as a Nissan Micra.

Class 6

CARAVANS
between 751kg
and 1,100kg

Winner:

Bailey Orion 400-2

Price: £12,395

Orion 400-2 retains the title it so rightly earned in the 2011 awards. Its lounge and kitchen areas are delightful, while the large, well-equipped rear washroom is something you wouldn't expect before stepping inside. At £12,395, this two-berth is one of the



cheapest models in the Bailey line-up, but that hasn't stopped the Bristol-based manufacturer from putting as much attention into the detail as it does with its more upmarket caravans.

Indeed, it is built to a very high standard, with both the

mentioned washroom and kitchen (with microwave oven) well equipped for year-round caravanning. Lockers and cupboards all open and close with a great sense of purpose.

Orion comes with 10-year bodyshell and three-year component warranties.



LIGHTWEIGHT LEISURE TRAILER AWARDS 2012 ENTRANTS

Class 1: Trailer tents under £3,750

Camplair XL

Note: the Sunncamp Holiday 400S Acrylic was entered but wasn't brought to the show

Class 2: Trailer tents over £3,750

Camp-Let Basic 2012

Camp-Let Basic Plus 2012

Camp-Let Concorde 2012

Camp-Let Concorde SE 2012

Camp-Let Premium

Holtkamper Cocoon XL

Holtkamper Kyte XL

Trigano Alpha

Trigano Odyssee 2012

Trigano Olympe 2012

Class 3: Folding campers

Conway Countryman Deluxe

Conway Crusader

Pennine Quartz 2

Class 4: Folding caravans

Gobur Carousel 10/2 Slimline

Gobur Carousel 12/2 Slimline

Gobur Carousel 12/2T Slimline

Gobur Carousel 12/2TD

Gobur Carousel 12/4

Pennine Artemis

Class 5: Caravans 750kg and under

Dub Box

Fifer Pod

Freedom Jetstream 1st Class

Turtle 1500

Class 6: Caravans between 751kg and 1,100kg

Adria Altea 390DS

Bailey Orion 400-2

Elddis Avanté 372

Elddis Xplore 302

Elddis Xplore 304

Lunar Ariva

Runner-up:

Elddis Xplore 304

Price: £11,599

Elddis promotes its recently-launched Xplore 304 as the United Kingdom's 'lightest and smallest' four-berth caravan.

The judges were impressed by its versatile, family-friendly bunk bed layout and its corner washroom, which is of a decent size.

For £11,599, the 304 comes well equipped – a domestic-style 115-litre fridge and a Spinflo hob (with one electric and three gas burners) are standard issue, as is Whale's

space-saving underfloor heating system. The 304 has many other clever space-saving ideas, too, including a boot-locker wash area.



Third place:

Lunar Ariva

Price: £13,595

Ariva is a light and airy caravan which is packed full of gear usually reserved for higher-end models, although at £13,595 it can't match other caravans in this sector of the market in terms of price. That aside, the two-berth Ariva is extremely well constructed and comes with an AKS stabiliser and a multi-directional TV aerial as standard.

