

# New releases

John Thynne seeks out new caravans at the October show in Birmingham

OCTOBER'S MOTORHOME & Caravan Show gave manufacturers of all sizes the chance to show off their latest products – and visitors were in for a treat. Where caravans were concerned, there were some inspirational models on display, from the stunning, bullet-shaped IH Monopod to a wheelchair-friendly caravan with wide access door from Adria. Small was certainly beautiful in Birmingham, with trailer tents and caravans such as the Turtle 1500 from Teardrop Trailers and East Neuk's Fifer Pod showing that you don't need a great deal of space or money to enjoy a touring break. What's more, neither of these vehicles needs a big towcar to pull it – great news economically and environmentally. Next month: motorhomes!



## Pennine

A first for trailer tent specialist The Pennine Group is this neat, two-berth 'folding compact caravan' – the Artemis. It's easier to tow than a conventional caravan, while still offering the likes of an oven, central heating and external shower point. The Lancashire-based company says the metamorphosis from trailer to solid-walled home-from-home takes just two minutes. Boasting a towing length of 11ft 6in, towing height of just 5ft and an MTPLM of 1,100kg, the Artemis costs £14,995 plus delivery.

## Teardrop Trailers

Exhibited for the first time at a major show was the eye-catching Turtle 1500 from East Sussex company Teardrop Trailers. The teardrop concept isn't new in the caravanning world but visitors to the NEC were astonished by what could be done in such a small space. The interior is taken up by a double bed that will comfortably accommodate those over 6ft tall and once the awning (£350 extra) is fitted, even those with a touch of claustrophobia will be at home. The rear locker on the Turtle opens up to reveal a sink with shower extension and coolbox, while a small stove is included in the £5,995 on-the-road asking price.



## Trigano

Two very different small caravan concepts from European giant Trigano were showing at the NEC. First up was the Camclair XL trailer tent (above). For towing purposes the trailer is just 10ft 6in long but once the tent has been erected on site, you have what can only be described as a huge living space measuring a total of 12ft 10in x 19ft 4in. There's even a kitchen area (cooking facilities come at an additional cost) with wardrobe. The XL costs just £2,800 plus delivery, while a slightly smaller S version will set you back £2,600. Alternatively, you could opt for the Silver 420 caravan with pop-up roof (inset), being displayed by Welsh company OBI Camping & Leisure at the NEC. Thanks to a double dinette, it comes with two double-bed options and costs £16,849 on the road.



## Airstream

We reported on Airstream & Company's Series 2 International 684 in the August issue, but we had the opportunity to see the caravan in its aluminium glory at the NEC. Of particular interest was the 2.5m-wide incarnation that sported a second entrance door (£1,730 extra) at the rear offside next to the fixed double bed. Such beauty comes at a price, however – the four-berth 684 costs over £57,000 on the road.



## Camp-let

Camperlands of Northenden near Manchester was exhibiting '5th generation' Camp-let trailer tents from Denmark. Each based on the same new fibreglass body, there are six models in the range, from the Basic (£5,275) to the Premium (£7,550; above), the latter featuring a breathable acrylic canvas material and latex mattress toppers as standard. With unladen weights of between 250kg and 275kg the Camp-lets are easy to tow and take up very little space – they can even be turned on their side and placed on a garage storage bracket.



## Carlight

It was good to see the famous Carlight name return to the NEC. New 2012 models on display were twin-axles Continental 235 (£48,000; above), Cosmopolitan 204 (£46,500) and Commander 184 (£45,000). The first is a smart five-berth with fixed offside longitudinal rear double and front U-shaped lounge, while the Cosmopolitan features a nearside rear double and twin settees up front. The Commander, meanwhile, sleeps three courtesy of converted front bench seats and a side dinette; separate toilet and shower rooms traverse the rear of the caravan. Carlight has always prided itself on the quality of its workmanship – real oak furniture, plush upholstery and a cream exterior finish certainly make its caravans stand out.



## Calder Leisure

West Lothian's Calder Leisure was showing an enormous Elkridge Express fifth-wheel caravan from American manufacturer Heartland. Once the slide-out is in place, the interior really does take on the look and feel of a domestic property, right down to the flagstone-effect floor in the kitchen/bathroom areas. The £24,995 on-the-road asking price buys you a lot of caravan – of course you'll need the pick-up truck to pull it!



## Lunar

We reported on Lunar's latest offerings in the September issue but didn't have a chance to see the new Quasar 494 at the Lancashire press launch. Fortunately, the new four-berth was on display at the NEC and it didn't disappoint. Boasting an MTPLM of 1,255kg and offering a high specification that includes grill, oven, four-burner hob and radio/CD/MP3 player, the new model certainly lives up to Lunar's 'lightweight luxury' mantra. It costs £14,995 plus delivery.



## Holtkamper

Showing for the first time in the United Kingdom was Dutch company Holtkamper with its Cocoon and Kyte trailer tents. Perhaps most impressive is the Kyte awning, which needs no upright poles to support it. The canvas is kept taut by a suspended carbon mast that points upwards and outwards from the trailer, giving the on-site structure a Sydney Opera House-like appearance. Available in a range of sizes, the Holtkampers are priced between £8,950 and £14,790 plus delivery, the Kytes coming equipped with a kitchen including three-ring gas cooker. Numerous additional tent and trailer options add further to the prices. The Holtkampers are available in the UK through Airstream & Company (see panel for contact details).





### IH Leisure

The IH Leisure stand is always a popular one at Birmingham shows, the company's boldly-styled motorhomes never failing to make an impression. But this time it was an innovative-looking trailer caravan that stole the limelight. The Monopod 660 sports a bullet-shaped, one-piece bodyshell (the display model had a metallic-gold sheen – white is standard but a colour of your choice can be specified at an extra £5,500 cost) on a twin axle. It can be built to customer requirements – the brochure shows options with either a fixed rear bed or end bathroom, for example. As you would expect from the company, the interior is finished beautifully, but such luxury doesn't come cheap – the starting price for the Monopod is £41,995.



### Elddis

Elddis unveiled its new Avanté 574 at the show, offering a pair of twin beds up front and another to the right of the entrance door. Separated from the rest of the caravan by a door in the centre of the aisle is a washroom that traverses the entire rear. Costing £15,949 before delivery, the 574 joins nine other models in the Elddis range, all of which benefit from new-look graphics, a GRP underskin to the floor, 'Easy Glide' bed technology and improved kitchen lighting in 2012.



### Swift

We reported on the launch of Swift Group's new Challenger Sport and Sterling Eccles Sport ranges as well as tweaks to other lines in the September issue. However, the NEC gave us the chance to have a look at the company's all-new Sprite line-up. The latest incarnation of the famous name sports a redesigned aerodynamic bodyshell featuring refreshed graphics, while inside there are new soft furnishings and locker doors with long, styled handles and positive catches. The seven-strong line-up sees new layouts in four-berth Major 4 and six-sleeper Major 6, while the Musketeer EB (above) becomes a four-berth (the rear triple-bunk being replaced by short parallel seats and bunk above). Prices start at £12,031 before dealer's delivery charge.



Perhaps even more interesting was the launch of a completely-new Sprite Lite range. Stripped of heavier items such as a shower and cooker, Lites 2, 4 (top) and 5 are designed to be pulled by smaller cars and to offer "the ideal entry point for anyone looking for their first new caravan". The Lite 2 has an MTPLM of just 1,039kg and costs £9,910 plus delivery.

### Eurocruiser

The STT Group was displaying a selection of American-made fifth wheelers as well as an innovative caravan. Selling for £22,995 and £23,495 respectively were pick-up friendly Eurocruisers 845 and 865, while an extra £13,000 buys you the enormous Eurocruiser Elite 955 (right) which boasts two huge slide-out sections. Meanwhile, the Eurocruiser 640 traditional caravan (from £26,495) features an impressive slide-out at the rear that is home to a king-size bed measuring 7ft 2in x 7ft 4in.



### Adria

A stand-out model at this year's show was the Adria Axxess wheelchair-friendly caravan being sold exclusively by Fry's Caravans of Cranswick in Yorkshire. Built by Adria to Simon Fry's specification, interior furniture has been pushed back to create more manoeuvring space, while an extra-wide, 2ft 4in entrance door, ramp, easy-access wet room and rear double bed with individually-adjustable backrests are all designed to make life easier for users with disabilities. The standard model costs £19,995 while bespoke items such as electric hoist (£2,100), electric bed backrest (£495) and wetroom chair (£150) can also be fitted.



### Bailey

Bristol manufacturer Bailey used the NEC to show off two additions to its Unicorn range – single-axle Cabrera and four-wheeled Pamplona (above). Both feature fixed double beds at the rear plus a central en-suite area with toilet and shower room either side of the aisle. Parallel seating up front converts to a double bed or two singles for night-time use. The Cabrera (MRO 1,441kg) costs £19,795 before delivery, while the Pamplona (1,610kg) is £21,595. Also on display, and bringing the Pegasus range up to six models, was the new Rimini. Sleeping four courtesy of twin beds fore and aft of the entrance door and sporting a full-width rear washroom, it costs £16,895 before delivery.



### AS Caravans

The new Westminster joins Kensington, Mayfair and Grosvenor in the caravan stable from AS. A four-berth, front seating converts into a 5ft 2in x 7ft double while the rear seating makes up a 4ft 2in x 6ft 6in bed. Costing just under £30,000, this smart-looking model has an internal length of 18ft 4in and an MRO of 1,643kg.



### Vanmaster

Wigan-based Vanmaster chose the NEC to launch its new, two-berth Darwin 440, named after company founders John and Cyril Darwin. By night, a couple can share a 4ft 9in x 6ft 10 double or take a 2ft 5in x 6ft 2in single each. Costing from £23,950 on the road, the Darwin features Alde wet heating and underfloor heating as standard. In keeping with the company's 'Caravans of Distinction' tag line, customers are offered a range of soft furnishing options to personalise their new vehicle.

### Hobby

On the Hobby stand was this sleek-looking UK Premium 700 caravan from Germany. Beautifully finished inside and featuring classy touches such as a glass-fronted drinks cabinet, it costs £23,675 plus delivery. It's available through Hobby Caravans UK Ltd in Derbyshire.



### East Neuk

Designed to be towed by a small car but still offering everything an outdoor lover could need, the Fifer Pod 'micro caravan' weighs just 510kg and has an MTPLM of 750kg. There's not room for much more than a pair of beds (or a converted double measuring 5ft x 6ft 4in) once you've opened the rear entrance door, yet the manufacturer has still managed to squeeze in a two-burner removable cooker, microwave with grill and 240V blown-air heating. Included in the £8,450 asking price is an awning – so living space needn't be a problem. Bound to appeal to younger, sporty types, you can just see the Pod being towed behind a VW camper.

**DID YOU GO TO THE NEC SHOW? IF SO, WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU – WHAT DID YOU THINK WAS THE MOST INNOVATIVE CARAVAN, MOTORHOME OR ACCESSORY ON DISPLAY AND WHY? WE'LL PUBLISH A SELECTION OF YOUR VIEWS IN A FUTURE ISSUE.**

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Company	Telephone	Website
Adria (Fry's)	01377 271383	frys.co.uk
Airstream	01539 624141	airstreamandco.com
AS Caravans	01386 853338	ascaravans.co.uk
Bailey	0117 305 2939	bailey-caravans.co.uk
Calder Leisure	01506 880411	calderleisure.co.uk
Camplair (Trigano)	-	trigano-trailertents.com
Camp-let	0161 998 8523	camperlands.co.uk
Carlight	01529 488837	carlight.co.uk
East Neuk Campervans	01333 310440	eastneukcampervans.co.uk
Elddis	01207 699000	elddis.co.uk
Eurocruiser	0844 686 1100	eurocruiser.info
Hobby	01773 853900	hobbycaravansuk.co.uk
Holtkamper	01539 624141	airstreamandco.com
IH Leisure	07811 360722	ihleisure.com
Lunar	01772 337628	lunarcavans.com
Pennine	01254 385991	thepenninegroup.co.uk
Swift	01482 847332	swiftgroup.co.uk
Teardrop Trailers	01825 840059	teardroptrailers.co.uk
Silver (Trigano)	01446 772498	obicampingandleisure.co.uk
Vanmaster	01942 212194	vanmaster.net