



Quality

Not bad shape for a 14-year-old vehicle

SECONDS

Looking to buy a motorhome but can't afford to buy new? Our test expert George Hinton finds three used models to suit different budgets

Make and model: Auto-Sleeper Symbol
Year of manufacture: 1998 (W reg)
Current price: £14,995

All motorhomes reviewed at: Marquis Motorhomes' Northampton branch. Marquis can demonstrate any vehicle from its national stock at any branch by prior arrangement on payment of a £250 refundable deposit. Call 0800 0267777 or see marquismotorhomes.co.uk. For smartphone users, Marquis has launched a free app – see the website for details.

This Auto-Sleeper Symbol is based on the 2.0-litre petrol Peugeot Boxer chassis. The classic medium-wheelbase interior layout consists of a passenger swivel seat, offside bench seat and single seat opposite with one rear seat belt. Towards the rear you have a full kitchen area and bathroom opposite.

The spec includes blown-air heating, hot/cold water, Spinflo oven/grill and three-ring gas hob, three-way 60-litre fridge, dark green enamel steel sink with drainer, gold-coloured fittings and folding cover, blinds and flyscreens, overhead locker, fresh and waste water tanks.

The seats convert to a 5ft 11in-long transverse double bed, plus the optional make-up cushions are present to form two singles instead, if desired.

Although a pre-2002 vehicle, as it is not diesel-fuelled, it is exempt from the current London Low Emission Zone charge. It has very low mileage so should have years of life left in it, but if you intended to use it extensively it could be

worthwhile investing in an LPG conversion to halve fuel bills. On petrol it will typically achieve 18-20mpg.

In keeping with its age, the cab has manually-adjusted windows and door mirrors, and from its external condition it has obviously lived in the open all its life, with some peeling and cracking of decals, faded plastics and signs of surface rusting on wheels and on the rear step substructure.

It will be sold with a new MoT, which gives assurance all tyres will be legal etc, but it has an odd mixture with three Firestones and one Chinese Westlake, all with excellent treads, and a new-looking Michelin as a spare.

Inside, there are no strange smells, the green velour upholstery is excellent with no visible wear, the woodwork is almost new in appearance, as befits Auto-Sleepers craftsmanship, and the original crockery set is intact. A standard Heki rooflight makes for a bright lounge area.

In the washroom some of the plastics are yellowing with age, the blind on the sliding door is in need of repair and the cover is detached on one of the cab seat armrests. A previous owner has fitted security deadlocks all round and there's a Blaupunkt radio/cassette player in the cab. ■



Some plastics are beginning to age in the washroom



Low mileage is a good sign



Upholstery is excellent

VERDICT

A good entry point into motor caravanning for a couple, backed by an excellent warranty, and a little expert pre-sale detailing by Marquis will knock years off it. When new, this Symbol was priced around £26,150, with a new one today listed at over £46,000.

TECHNICAL

Base vehicle: Peugeot Boxer
Engine: 2.0-litre petrol
Mileage: 33,310
Overall length: 17ft 4in (5.28m)
Overall width: 7ft 2in (2.18m)
MRO: n/a
MTPLM: 3,300kg (65cwt)
User payload: n/a
Berths: 2



Make and model: Ci Carioca 644
Year of manufacture: 2007 (07 reg)
Current price: £24,995

Fiat Ducato based, this Carioca 644 is powered by the 130bhp 2.3-litre turbodiesel engine. Layout comprises a fixed offside rear bed with washroom (including a separate shower cubicle) in the opposite corner, centre kitchen and large L-shaped lounge in the front with cab seat swivels.

Standard specification includes C200 cassette toilet, two belted rear seats, double glazing, 60-litre three-way refrigerator with separate freezer, flyscreens and blinds, four-burner hob with grill and blown-air heating.

This may be an Italian motorhome, but it was designed and built specifically for the UK market, hence the habitation door on the UK nearside and the grill/cooker. General condition is excellent, with unmarked aluminium sides, a full set of well-treaded Michelin XC 'Camping' tyres and only 17,357 miles on the clock.

The only exterior faults we picked up were some stress-cracking at the corners of the ABS rear bumper panel and the front offside cab step, which is quite common and not serious. It was spotless under the bonnet.

The cab shows where the original price was pared, with manual mirrors and windows, but previous owners have added a walnut dash embellishment kit and Perspex wind deflectors to the windows. The screen for the added reversing camera is attached



“This may be an Italian motorhome, but it was built for the UK market”

to the interior mirror. The clutch bite point was extremely high, indicating adjustment or replacement was necessary.

Other additions and improvements made during its life include a twin-cycle rack, Safari Room awning enclosure, filtered kitchen water supply with dedicated faucet, kitchen towel and tea-towel holders, an additional fold-down work surface and some extra mains power points. A further mains socket and TV aerial cable and twin speakers were found in the overcab shelving. The dark blue upholstery was in good shape

Clockwise from top left: front seats swivel; exterior is in great nick; kitchen boasts four burner hob with grill/cooker; washroom is nice and clean

throughout and the versatile seating can be configured for travel or for up to four diners. A non-standard 24in occasional table fits in a new floor socket while you also have the standard free-standing table measuring 38in x 20in.

At 3ft 1in x 6ft to 6ft 5in long, the seating also converts to a bed suitable for two children or a single adult. The fixed bed is a good size at 6ft 4in x 4ft 3in and lifts for easy access to the storage beneath, shared with the Combi boiler, but there is also external access. ■

VERDICT

Marquis was unable to research the price of this exact model when new, but it was in the region of £34,200, which makes this example look outstandingly good value for money.



TECHNICAL

Base vehicle: Fiat Ducato
Engine: 2.3-litre turbodiesel (130bhp)
Mileage: 17,357
Overall length: 20ft 4in (6.2m)
Overall width: 7ft 3in (2.2m)
MRO: 2,790kg (54.9cwt)
MTPLM: 3,400kg (67cwt)
User payload: 610kg (12.1cwt)
Berths: 4

Settees convert into 6ft 10in transverse double



“Stepping into this Stargazer was like stepping into a brand new vehicle”

Make and model: Autocruise Stargazer
Year of manufacture: 2008 (08 reg)
Current price: £37,995

Built on a Peugeot Boxer chassis, the Stargazer boasts a classic rear kitchen interior layout with large washroom to the offside, generous wardrobe, two long bench seats, swivel driver and passenger seats and storage lockers throughout.

Standard specification includes Truma heating and hot water system, kitchen with full cooker including one electric disc, blinds and flyscreens, Thetford C200 swivel toilet, three-way fridge and loose fitted carpets.

Stepping into this Stargazer was like stepping into a brand new vehicle: apart from some minor scuffs inside the stainless sink, the kitchen and cooker showed no signs of use, not even discolouration of the pan supports. Likewise, the large 105-litre Dometic 7391 refrigerator. This reflected the outside, where the GRP-panelled

sandwich-construction body was unmarked, and there was a good set of matching Pirelli Chrono tyres all round, including the spare.

Autocruise may have been the UK originator of the swinging washroom wall – here used to good effect in creating extra space just when needed. The only possible downside is that the shower head has to double to fill the basin, but it has its own special holder for the purpose. Washroom lighting is excellent with no fewer than five halogen downlighters operated by a ceiling cord switch, so even children can reach. Final gloss for this heated room is the cupboard door giving direct access to the adjacent wardrobe, effectively making it into a dressing room.

Comfortable six-foot sofas give the option of either two instant single beds or a 6ft 10in-long transverse double. ■

VERDICT

This must be as near to a new vehicle as you will find in today's market, saving you a couple of grand over the original selling price, with extras such as a towbar, TV aerial and bike rack thrown in.

TECHNICAL

Base vehicle: Peugeot Boxer
Engine: 2.2-litre HDi (120bhp)
Mileage: 12,641
Overall length: 21ft 1in (6.43m)
Overall width: 7ft 7in (2.3m)
MRO: 2,994kg (58.9cwt)
MTPLM: 3,500kg (68.9cwt)
User payload: 506kg (10cwt)
Berths: 2

MARQUIS WARRANTY

Every vehicle offered for sale at Marquis is fully tested and guaranteed under the company's exclusive AutoMarq warranty scheme, which includes:

- 3-year unlimited mileage warranty
- 3-year water ingress warranty
- Multi-point habitation inspection
- Multi-point mechanical inspection
- HPI verification
- MoT and road fund licence
- Satisfaction guaranteed or exchange
- Nationwide Service Network
- Priority aftersales appointments
- Professional valet
- Full working demonstration
- Discount accessory voucher (terms and conditions apply)



Classic rear kitchen layout



Space-saving washroom

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