

# Centre of excellence

John Thynne casts his eye over new caravans and trailer tents launched at Birmingham's NEC

NEARLY 100,000 people passed through the entrance doors at the industry's flagship show in Birmingham in October – and they were in for a treat. Whether they

were looking for a trailer tent or a huge fifth-wheeler, all requirements were catered for as UK and European caravan manufacturers plied their wares

over the course of six days. There was plenty of room for innovation too. Tripbuddy impressed with its stylish one-piece body, while Airstream & Company's Studio

design provided a novel take on the touring office. Here we take a look at the pick of new tourer and trailer tent models on display. Next month: motorhomes.

## The Pennine Group

Lancashire-based The Pennine Group introduced us to a new take on its Artemis folding caravan – the Artemis DL. Unlike the previous incarnation which featured a front-end fixed double bed, this neat-looking mini tourer features twin sofas at the rear that can be converted into a double if required. Costing £15,995 including awning and delivery, the Artemis DL has an overall length of 16ft 6in (5.04m) and an ex-works weight of just 990kg.



## Bailey

Bailey of Bristol has added a new model to its Unicorn range in the form of the twin-axle Cartagena. This

well-presented four-berth tourer features a conventional front lounge and central offside kitchen. Behind the latter is a bedroom with transverse double bed, while the

spacious bathroom stretches the entire width at the rear. Measuring 25ft 11in in length and with an MTPM of 1,679kg (33cwt), it has an RRP of £22,245 plus delivery.



## Vanmaster

Vanmaster introduced its new Signature edition caravan line-up at The Motorhome & Caravan Show. All Vanmasters, from the 450 to the twin-axle 640 models, are now available in Signature spec, which features high-quality Italian fabrics and solid ash locker doors and drawers (constructed with dovetail joints). A Blaupunkt audio system with base box, domestic-style taps, electric sunroof and ceramic hob are fitted as standard. Prices range from £29,950 to £39,950.



## Elddis

Consett-based Elddis unveiled the latest addition to its Affinity tourer range – the two-berth 482. Featuring parallel sofas up front that can be converted into a pair of 6ft 2in x 2ft 3in single beds or a 6ft 8in x 6ft 2in double, the 482's kitchen is amidships while the washroom stretches across the rear. It has an Alde 24hr programmable central and water heating system and luxuries such as an Avtex 16in LCD flatscreen TV with integrated DVD player and Freeview plus radio/CD player with iPod and MP3 connectivity. The 482 joins three-berth 530 and four-sleepers 540, 550 and 574 in the Affinity line-up but comes in £1,000 cheaper than those models at £17,999.



## Camp-Let

Manchester-based Camperlands, the sole importer and distributor of Danish Camp-Let trailer tents, was exhibiting the Concorde Plus package. As well as the Concorde trailer (featuring swing-out kitchen with three-burner stove

and sink), buyers at the show received the Royal Cotton canvas set, a sun canopy and side annexe for £6,335 plus delivery. As the magazine went to press, a similar deal was available on the Camperlands website.

## Holtkamper

New from Dutch firm Holtkamper is the Flyer trailer tent. Featuring the Membrane Airco System which is designed to help regulate temperature ("You can ventilate the tent and still keep the heat inside when it rains, no more problems with condensation"), the Flyer has a 6ft 11in x 4ft 7in bed and the potential to provide 1,000 litres of storage space. Available through Black Country Caravans & Motorhomes, this was the first time the Flyer had been seen in the UK. Price: £12,295 plus £295 delivery.



## Dub Box

As well as a new version of its standard retro-styled tourer which features a larger pop-top area (£13,750), Worcestershire-based firm Dub Box was exhibiting this

superb Shortie version (from £9,250). Dub Boxes are built to individuals' requirements – you choose the colours for the upholstery, work tops, cupboards, flooring and blinds.



## Gobur

Using an existing layout but featuring new LED lighting, carpets and upholstery, this Gobur Carousel 12/2TD with special 30th anniversary graphics was on sale at the show for £18,585. With an MRO of just 837kg, an overall width of 6ft 10in (2.08m) and a shipping length of 16ft 1in (4.90m), it's easy to store – and you don't need a monster towcar to pull it.



## Eriba

Importer Automotive Leisure was showing three German-made Eriba caravans featuring new 'ripple-effect' exteriors and interior wood finishes that have not been seen in the UK before. The Eriba Touring Familia 310 (£13,999), Touring Triton 418 (£14,899, right) and Touring Troll 530 (£17,369, left) have rear transverse double beds but each is available in a twin-bed version at an extra cost of £430.





## Eterniti

We were given a glimpse of new industry name Eterniti's striking-looking tourers at London's ExCeL in February and told to look out for the finished products in Birmingham. The Widnes-based company didn't disappoint as it displayed five brand-new models. Four-berth Chronicle IB4 has a front lounge, central kitchen and bathroom, while a rear slide-out enlarges the bedroom to accommodate a large double island bed. Sister model FB4 has a similar arrangement but features a sofa at the rear that can be converted into a bed. The Chronicle BB4, meanwhile, incorporates double bunks within the rear slide out and features a rear nearside bathroom. Each of the three Chronicles at the show was on sale for £23,499 – a further two-berth model (EB2) retails at £21,999. Costing £24,999, Genesis models IB4 and BB5 also have slide-outs to maximise living space. Four-berth IB4 (pictured) has a front lounge and rear bathroom, while both the rear island bed and additional kitchen area are incorporated into the slide-out on the offside. Finally, BB5's slide-out contains bunk-beds and a dinette enabling it to sleep five.

## The Fifth Wheel Company

According to The Fifth Wheel Company, the word 'Inos' is based on the Welsh 'Ty unnos', meaning 'English one-night house'. And according to Welsh tradition "if a person could build a house on common land in one night, the land then belonged to them as a freehold". I don't think the company is claiming you can use its new single-axle Inos to claim territories for yourself, but it's nevertheless a fine-looking

caravan. We reported on the previous twin-axle incarnation in the April 2011 issue, but this model is aimed at a larger audience as it can be towed by a broader range of vehicles. Featuring a 4m slide-out, prices for this luxurious caravan start at £36,000. The company also chose the NEC to unveil a new version of its fifth-wheel DreamSeeker. Sleeping up to five, the refreshed model has a larger slide-out and revamped interior. The price? From £42,000.



## Sterckeman

Available through Stafford-based Freedom Caravans is this limited-edition Sterckeman Alizé 370CE. Made in France to UK specifications, this neat little model measures just a shade over 14ft end to end and has an MRO of only 927kg. However, it is designed to sleep four courtesy of a converted front double and bunks (each 6ft 3in x 2ft 6in) traversing the rear. Add a central washroom with kitchen opposite and a remote-controlled mains air-conditioning unit and you have an impressive little tourer. Price: around £12,000.



## Hymer

German giant Hymer exhibited caravans from its new Nova LuxusLine range. Built to UK spec, the line-up comprises three models – 465 (front U-shaped lounge, central kitchen, rear fixed double with en suite bathroom), 545 (a similar but wider and longer layout, above) and

541 (twin sofas up front, kitchen and washroom amidships and U-shaped lounge at rear). Prices range from £22,995 to £24,695.



## Opus

New at the show was this smart-looking Opus trailer tent. Measuring just 13ft 8in (416cm) long when closed and with an overall width of 6ft 5in (195cm), storage should never be a problem. Once the canopy is

unfolded, fixed double bed areas at either end mean four adults can be comfortably accommodated, while a two-burner gas hob takes care of cooking requirements. The Opus was on sale for £10,000 in Birmingham.



## Danbury

Danbury's teardrop – called the, er, Teardrop – comes equipped with a rear storage compartment/kitchen area and seating and sleeping

accommodation for two. It can be customised with various options, including mains hook-up, TV/DVD player, a cooker and upholstery upgrades. Prices start from £5,995.



## Zone Leisure

This eye-catching Classic teardrop offers not only seating for two, but the choice of two singles or a double bed, a kitchen at the rear complete with a two-burner hob and chest fridge (which can be accessed from inside and by opening the tailgate), as well as a TV. The people at Zone tell us that they are happy to customise the Classic to a customer's own specification from a varied choice of colours and soft furnishings. Cost is £9,750.



## Tripbuddy

Featuring Union Flag graphics and looking like a cross between a space capsule and a bullet, the Tripbuddy was arguably the star of the show. Weighing from 1,300kg (depending on spec) and measuring 5.28m in length, its body has been designed as a one-piece monocoque to prevent water ingress and features a large rear 'clam-shell' entrance door that forms a rigid awning roof when opened. Inside are tough units made from composite GRP, stylish seating finished in leather and teak-effect flooring (teak planking can be specified). The makers say the



interior (check out the background lighting) is waterproof and completely washable. Bound to appeal to the younger, sporty set, the Tripbuddy is built to order and "everything from the outside colour to the interior layout can be designed to match your specific requirements". From £19,995.

## Airstream & Company

Looking to work from home but fancy an office that is both super-stylish and mobile? Based on the 2.5m-wide International 684 Series 2 floorplan, the innovative Airstream Studio was one of the standout models at the NEC. The caravan has an interchangeable rear end that can be either an L-shaped desk with two drawer stacks or a kingsize bed (we're promised that the conversion is straightforward and that no tools are required). Featuring an additional rear offside entrance door, the displayed Airstream was

on sale for £70,160. The company was also exhibiting its new International twin-axle 604 Series 2 model, priced £59,695 with the show spec.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Elddis	01207 699000	elddis.co.uk
Eriba	01202 600701 (Automotive Leisure)	automotiveleisure.co.uk
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Gobur	01263 8660031	goburcaravans.co.uk
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Hymer		hymer.com
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