



PERFECT harmony

Nick Harding examines a super-sturdy trailer tent that offers a fine alternative to regular caravanning

Not quite fully pegged out (hence the concave front), but I had a train to catch!



View from the back

CAMP-LET TRAILER tents are high-quality products – if you want confirmation, look no further than the Club’s own Lightweight Leisure Trailer Awards, at which the Danish-built models have won four times in as many years.

From its base on the outskirts of Manchester, Camperlands is the largest retailer of the Camp-let range of trailer tents in Europe, and the only one in the UK. As Camperlands boss Dominic Ryder puts it: “Basically what Camp-let is doing is tapping into the huge caravan market as customers are looking to save money but want something that goes up quickly, is of good quality and is light, easy to tow and handle, as well as being cheap to insure and store. And they want to get away from setting up the damn caravan awning!”

However, that’s not to say there’s not a setting-up procedure associated with the Camp-let Concorde I’m about to review. Read on...

CONSTRUCTION

Why do we just know to expect quality when it comes to camping and caravanning products from Denmark? The Camp-let doesn’t let the side down, using classy GRP work that could last a few lifetimes. The canvas part of this unit is supplied by another Danish operation, Isabella – best known for its high-grade awnings.

Even the briefest of looks around a Camp-let leads you to suspect excellent build standards. If you’re expecting the resulting unit to be heavy, it’s not – the starting weight is just 250kg. Most sales are of unbraked versions, but a more expensive, braked Concorde is also available.

You appreciate those build qualities all the more once you arrive on site, where it’s simple to manhandle the unit into any position you want.

Having already been given the most thorough of handovers at Camperlands, including a full demonstration of how to set things up (there’s a DVD for good measure), my only slight issue when I got

to the Club’s Burrs Country Park site, near Bury – it’s about half-an-hour from Camperlands – was where to place the unit on my allocated pitch.

“Just use the marker as the middle of your pitch,” was the useful reminder from the warden here, noting perhaps my slight disorientation (well, the front of the unit when towing becomes the back when pitching, if you get my drift). He couldn’t help adding: “We’re selling tickets to everyone who wants to watch you put it up.” More later, but I really needn’t have worried.

TOWABILITY

What a revelation. Here’s an outfit that is more economical when towing than driving solo. How so? Restricted to normal towing speeds – 60mph on motorways and dual carriageways, 50mph maximum elsewhere unless advised differently – the mighty little diesel Volkswagen Polo I used as a tug here was pushing up to 60mpg.

If you’ve only ever reversed with a caravan, you might be surprised to learn it’s actually harder with a trailer like this on the back. However, such is the ease with which it can be manhandled, it’s hardly an issue. You arguably don’t even need a jockey wheel, although it’s available as an option.

USABILITY

I am proud to report that I managed to put up the Concorde solo. Bearing in mind the considerable canvas structure, I opted for one of the flat grass pitches with electric hook-up around the perimeter at Burrs Country Park. A perfect, almost summer’s day – sunny, with little breeze – the conditions could hardly have been better; the only interruption came when, having not quite fully pegged out, I dashed to try and photograph the unit as an East Lancashire Railway train steamed (literally) past.

The beauty of the Camp-let’s design means it can be considered for weekends as well as longer holidays. There are a few little tricks to remember along the way, but it’s largely straightforward to erect and doesn’t require much in the way of physical strength, either.

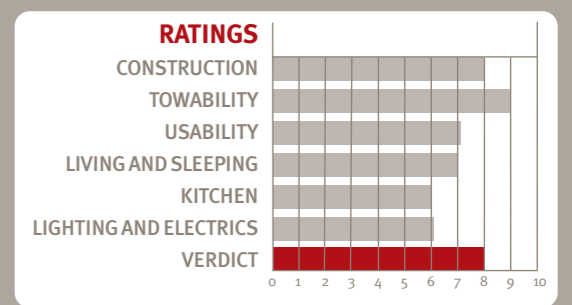
In terms of storage, there’s room for an array of folding crates on the bed mattress when the whole unit is folded down and an optional exterior locker (that could house a gas cylinder for transportation purposes only) is available that sits on the drawbar.

If you’re concerned about stowing away wet canvas, a quick fold-out when you get home should resolve any potential mildew issues. In addition, some of the canvas panels can be zipped out altogether and hung out to dry.

Storing a trailer tent like this couldn’t be easier. You can even pay £123 for mobile brackets that allow the Camp-let to be >>



“From hitching to pitching, this really is a smart little camping unit”



RRP	£5,799 + £187 delivery/OTR charge
Overall length	10ft (3.04m); 17ft 3in (5.25m) pitched
Overall width	5ft 3in (1.60m); 13ft 1in (4m) pitched
Overall height	3ft 1in (0.95m) folded; 7ft 7in (2.31m) pitched
Max internal height	7ft 7in (2.31m)
MRO	250kg (4.92cwt)
MTPLM	500kg (9.84cwt)
User payload	250kg (4.92cwt)
Berths	4

Figures supplied by manufacturer
Club insurance: 01342 336610 • Info: camperlands.co.uk



“ The Camp-let uses classy GRP work that could last a few lifetimes ”

Above: hinged out and ready to start pitching

Right: running water to the sink

Below: on site the Camp-let is so easy to manoeuvre, as well as hitch and unhitch

Supplied for test by: Camperlands Ltd, Mill Lane, Northenden, Manchester M22 4HJ. Call 0161 9983467

kept on its side – one of a number of extras well worth considering.

There's currently an excellent £99 'Time and Petrol' options pack that includes spare wheel and carrier, Campastore box, awning carpet and slatted bed kit. Bought individually, these items would have set you back some £500.

LIVING AND SLEEPING

This ain't caravanning. But it's not quite camping either. First, there's the benefit of two bedrooms, between which a rail fixes to create a 'wardrobe', and flat beds on comfortable mattresses. That slatted base option for the main bedroom doesn't just add a few extra degrees of comfort, it also alleviates one of the bigger issues with units like this – condensation under the mattresses. It was a comfortable night's sleep alright, but who doesn't sleep well under canvas?

There's plenty of ventilation throughout the unit, an additional mains light proved a boon, and the curtains and their associated fittings seemed far superior to those found on many such trailer tents.

KITCHEN

By caravan standards, the kitchen is fairly basic – but it's clever. There's a two-burner hob, some worktop (surprisingly, not heat-resistant), a storage shelf, two open lockers and more within the kitchen unit, which can also be unlocked and swung out for use en route to a destination without having to put up the whole living quarters.

Slide out the extender bars at the right of the kitchen and you have somewhere to slot the washing-up bowl (supplied). There's a pumped water supply to here, too. By the time you've set yourself up with a coolbox of some sort, what more could you possibly need?

WASHROOM

That'll be the toilet block at Burrs Country Park, then? Seriously, if you want your own toilet facilities with a unit like this you're probably best off considering a separate toilet tent. Or perhaps the £579 annexe option that could be used as an emergency toilet room.

LIGHTING AND ELECTRICS

I was more than grateful for the optional mains kit, which gave me three 230V sockets (surely sufficient for most folk?) but you might just decide you're happy to do without this even. After all, there are all kinds of portable lights and other



gizmos these days – battery-powered, self-charging or even solar.

VERDICT

If you're thinking caravan alternatives, start at the top of this report. Okay, you don't get the home-from-home comforts that only a caravan or motor caravan can give you – eg heating, insulation, plumbing – but that's not really what the Camp-let Concorde is all about.

From hitching all the way through to pitching, this is a really smart little camping unit with wide appeal. It's pretty straightforward to set up on site, easy to tow, economical, can be stored relatively easily... and I'm sure the rather attractive starting price won't have escaped your notice.

Plus, if you think your current caravan is a touch flimsy, you should check out the sturdy qualities of this little wonder. ■

