



There are upholstery options but with the standard one as gorgeous as this, there's really no need to look further

BUCCANEER

Schooner

REVIEW

A caravan that closes its own rooflight when it rains grabs attention – and there's much more to like about the big Buccaneer than intelligent technology

buccaneer is the most luxurious touring caravan in the UK. The opulent Buccaneer range has more features as standard than any other caravan." It's not often that we begin a caravan review with a quote from the manufacturer's website but this time we felt the words merited inclusion here because they seemed to sum up our first impressions of

the caravan, when we stepped inside at the start of our analysis.

Our Buccaneer is on loan for the review from Marquis; we'd hitch it up at Marquis's Preston branch and tow it to a little farm caravan park a few miles away. We have a day in which to explore those website details.

We'll examine the quote bit by bit: Luxurious? Opulent? These are big

TESTED BY

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PHOTOGRAPHY

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statements; a caravan has to be very luxurious indeed to be described as opulent. Not that we are doubting in any way the accuracy of Explorer's description; more, we are determined to take our time to decide if we would also reach for a word that has a dictionary definition of "ostentatiously rich and luxurious or lavish".

More features as standard? That's

**THE
TOTAL PRICE
£28,294**

That's the price of the caravan plus the £495 retailer delivery fee



The dark grey tile-effect wall covering in the shower looks spectacular



The dresser features a TV bracket and illuminated drinks cabinet



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Test caravan on loan from Marquis Caravans' Preston branch. Marquis also displays caravans at its branches in Sussex, Northamptonshire, Durham, Suffolk and Hampshire 0800 026 7777

where to start. Take a deep breath, it's a long list: offside light, solar panel, television, ceramic toilet, external shower, waterline for direct connection to a mains supply, 40-litre water tank, extractor fan... Now we get to the interesting techy bits. A motorised, remotely-controlled rain-sensing automatic rooflight that closes itself when rain starts, an Alde

TEST LOCATION

Little Orchard Caravan Park, Weeton, Lancashire

heating system that you can turn on and off remotely, by using your mobile phone... and Whale's intelligent control unit that turns off your pump if the water runs out... The list goes on and by now we are well on board with the quote about more features...

Then there's the construction. GRP underskin to protect the caravan from road moisture. A construction

method called SoLiD, involving bonding, designed to eliminate the possibility of water ingress.

We continue to peruse the equipment, in no particular order. Two small but bright lights, at floor level, that you can leave on at night to illuminate your first footsteps as your return to the caravan after dark, a light that comes on

The rich, dark shade of woodwork in Buccaneers creates an obvious quality look



automatically in the wardrobe, a roof-mounted 65-watt solar panel, IDC intelligent drive control anti-snaking device, Thatcham-approved tracker with 12-month subscription, alarm system, external cold water shower (that's for the dog and the welly boots!)

Showering

Time to investigate the showering department for humans, though. We'd been so awestruck by perusing the level of equipment that, until now, we'd taken in the Schooner's fixed-bed, rear shower room layout without noticing it. The walls of the shower are tile-effect, in mid-grey. No other caravan shower looks like this. And there's a feature in the shower that's much more important than looks. A rail for four towels pulls out from the shower wall; you retract it when it's not in use. So simple and so brilliantly practical. There's also a towel bar above the Alde heating outlet, and a twin-hook on the wall alongside the shower.

The shower measures 66cm x 78cm. The floor space is 1.12m at its deepest point; it's angled to give space for the bed but still gives you a shower room that's large enough.

It's in the shower room that the Buccaneer's embossed texture wall boarding is most noticeable simply because there's so much of it visible; it's pure white and the ridges in the pattern catch the light from the three LED clusters.

Sleeping

Buccaneers have memory foam mattresses with Coolmax technology which is designed to keep you at an even temperature. They're deep, at 18cm, and feel exceptionally firm when you sit and lie on them. This bed is also exceptionally large, at 1.8m wide and 2.08 long, with one of the smallest corridor cut-off areas in any caravan; you only lose 20cm of width at the foot of the bed.

Two single beds can be made at the front; they're 70cm wide and

WHAT WE LIKE

- ▶ The phone control of the heating system
- ▶ Rain-sensing rooflight
- ▶ The twin-axle stability
- ▶ The general high level of equipment

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- ▶ The privacy windows. But you can opt for clear, at no extra cost

TOW MATCH

**Caravan weight
MTPLM: 1895kg**

**To tow this caravan
at 85% you need a
car kerbweight of:
2229kg**

*We recommend towing a
caravan no more than 85%
of the kerbweight*

**Not sure what your
car's kerbweight is?
Check it out at**

CaravanTOWMATCH
outandaboutlive.co.uk

1.8m long. That puts the Schooner firmly into the bracket of fixed-bed caravans that are well up to family capability.

Storage

The Alde unit is under the offside settee but you won't notice the space it occupies; there's a vast amount of storage space in this long lounge. The water tank is under the bed but, again, there's so much space here that you won't notice that it takes up a little of it. Six top lockers around the lounge and three more over the bed and a cabinet under the dresser take care of foldable items. And the wardrobe? That's a star! It has a light which comes on when you open the doors, and three rails which give you, in total, more than 120cm of hanging space. We think the storage element of the Schooner is well up into the luxury class.

Dining

The dining table hides away in its own cabinet on the forward end of



The washbasin is awesomely stylish, looking like real granite and sitting up above its cabinet



A large domestic-style fridge-freezer, opposite the kitchen



Three drawers and a full-height cabinet give you ample storage

BUY THIS IF...

You love technology and equipment!

ALSO CONSIDER...

Bessacarr Cameo 625, a similar layout at £27,999 (Coupland Caravans' special edition of a Swift, with extra kit)

OPTIONS TO GO FOR...

Clear windows in lieu of privacy style windows – that's free. A sprung mattress in lieu of the memory foam one (also free) and maybe a self-seeking satellite dish at £1449

OUR VERDICT

The Schooner is a top-luxury option for couples or families of four who love gadgetry (rain-sensing rooflight, phone control of the heating system) and who appreciate the finest caravanning can offer. That's not just about a high level of equipment. It's about quality fabrics and finesse; everywhere in the Schooner looks and feels simply superb. Opulence? Well, so long as you don't look too hard at the dictionary definition about ostentation, for the Schooner is not over the top; it's straightforwardly very special in terms of equipment level and quality.

the kitchen. When just two are dining, you'd probably leave the table stowed away, because the pull-out section of the chest of drawers gives you an area measuring 81cm x 65cm; that's plenty of space for two place settings.

Lounging

An Avtex television comes as standard; you can fix it to a bracket facing the lounge.

We sit down in the lounge and analyse its ambience, within the frame of those words "luxury" and "opulence". Curtains hang on chrome poles. They're exquisitely made, with panels across the top of a different green fabric. There's a pattern going on here but that's the only pattern you'll see in the Schooner. The look is very modern; the predominant colour in the seating is white, teamed with pale brown for the seat cushions which precisely match the (very close pile, very high quality) carpet.

A strip of bright light runs under the

front top lockers. More white light comes from above the lockers; the level of lighting in the lounge and elsewhere is excellent. That's another tick in the luxury box, then. And opulence? We remind ourselves of the definition, which refers to "ostentatiously rich and lavish" and can't help thinking that, actually, it's better than this, for the Schooner's look is essentially modern, gorgeous in its simplicity and, importantly, will appeal to most tastes.

Kitchen

The kitchen is 1.75m long. Its dual-fuel hob and sink with recessed (proper!) drainer is finished in gloss enamel. Four lights create excellent illumination where you need it. And a strip of LED lights is concealed under the front edge of the work surface, running the whole length of the kitchen. (Lavish? Luxury? Ostentatious? No, just awesomely nice.)

The surface area forward of the drainer is about 53cm wide (it

TECHNICAL STUFF

BERTHS 4
LENGTH
 BODY 6.34M
 OVERALL 8.05M
WIDTH 2.3M
HEADROOM 1.95M
WEIGHT
 MIRO 1735KG
 MTPLM 1895KG



curves, depending on precisely where you measure it – any which way, it's enough.

Three drawers, each 57cm wide, and a full-height, two-shelf cabinet give storage capacity, even before you've factored in the top cabinet run. The microwave, set above the 155-litre fridge-freezer, is at chest-height for people of average stature, which is fine.

Towing

The journey from the Marquis Lancashire branch at Preston to Little Orchard Caravan Park at Weeton is only about 10 miles but that, with stretches up to 50mph, and a short spaghetti of narrow lanes, is enough to judge the Schooner's road manners. The stability enhancement provided by twin axes makes for relaxed open-road towing and greater predictability when precision corner positioning, and reversing is required. The Schooner was a joy to tow – and it has the safety asset of iDC anti-snaking control.