

Elddis Avanté 526

► PRICE £14,599 ► www.elddis.co.uk



AT A GLANCE: Beds for six in a short length on a single axle - the latest Avanté will be unveiled at the February NEC show

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THE latest clever creation from Elddis is the six-berth single-axle 526, with a fixed bed and offside two-seater dining area.

It's a reduced-length version of a layout that has established its popularity in twin-axle territory. The 526 brings this layout into the land of lighter weight and lighter price.

The new model gives you a short-length lounge and a nearside kitchen turning into a slight L-shape that creates the divider between living space and bedroom.

On the offside of the bed is a compact washroom with a tip-up basin over the loo and bi-fold plastic shield to confine shower splashes. There's just enough room to shower in here - but tip-up basins tend to attract criticism for their clunky emptying system. The up-side, though, is that the basin is large.

Where this layout saves space and still manages to create an offside dining area is by the absence of a piece of furniture between lounge and dining area, and also by keeping the lounge length to transverse double bed proportions - not long enough to make single beds. It's a good compromise, especially considering you have a single bed with a pull-up bunk above it which makes from the offside two-seater dining area.

Kitchen storage isn't generous. There is just a slim cupboard - but then that's a sacrifice you have to make for this caravan's ability to sleep six in a short length. Although we mention "compromise" and "sacrifice", we are of course comparing this model to its bigger cousins which offer basically the same layout in a stretched form - and we are sure this cut-down version will win fans among families who like the layout but prefer a smaller, lighter and cheaper caravan.

In practice, the appeal of the 526 will, we believe, extend beyond six-family-member needs. It's the flexibility of use of this layout that is its strong point. As a four-berth, you can sleep two in the double bed and two more in the offside dining area bunks. That option gives you a permanent lounge-diner. Or you can make up the double bed and leave the side dining area permanently in day-mode.

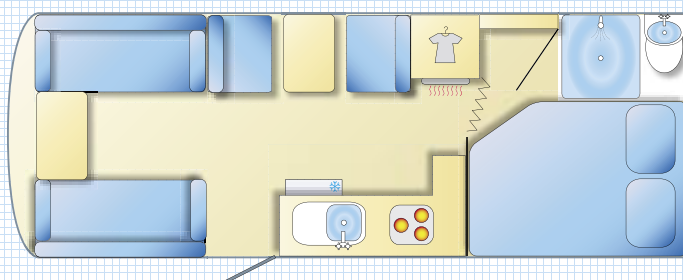
This model has couple-appeal, too. You can have effectively three distinct rooms - bedroom, dining room and lounge, all permanent - and all in just 5.43 metres of body length.

Avanté styling for 2010 makes a bold statement of white swirls on a grey background; that's the pattern on the seat backs and that's the prominent décor feature you notice as you walk in. Seat bases are plain fawn and curtains are light-reflecting prominent-weave mid-brown fabric with



► LAYOUT IN A NUTSHELL

- Nearside double bed
- Offside shower-toilet room
- Nearside kitchen
- Offside dining area for two
- Short lounge



Tip-up sink and large plastic folding partition

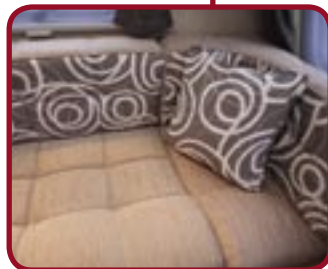
same-colour ties. The whole effect is coolly modern - and designed to appeal to a wide variety of tastes by its subtlety of tones. Carpets in this year's Avantés win our praise, too, for their dark colour. They're not deep pile. They don't pretend to look luxurious. What is important is that they are a durable colour and therefore essentially practical. The word "practical" best sums up the layout, too ■



A fixed drainer is a big advantage



Ample locker space - edged by wooden frames, creating a quality look



A swirly pattern on the cushions and seat backs create impact



Plain but certainly not boring - these curtains have a light-reflecting quality



Useful coat hooks just where you need them, alongside the door

► FOR & AGAINST

PROS:

- Six berths, lots of options
- Single axle
- Lighter than twin-axle alternatives of a similar layout

CONS

- Tip-up washbasin not to everyone's liking

► SPECIFICATION

Axes: 1

Berths: 6

MRO: 1332kg

MTPLM: 1545kg

Overall length: 6.40m

Width: 2.23m

Headroom: 1.90m



The offside dining area - a superbly practical and versatile layout feature

► OUR VERDICT

This newcomer gives caravan buyers a refreshing option of a layout concept usually found in bigger, heavier caravans in just 5.43 metres of body length. As a family caravan it would work well, although storage for six would need careful planning and an awning would be pretty much a necessity for a long holiday. For a family of four it would work better because storage would be less of a challenge.