



Elddis Avanté 554 £15,749



A caravan for growing families, with two fixed bunks and a separate shower, plus good storage space – and a unique layout

A family layout that won an award before it left the drawing board, this four-berth's combination of separate corner shower and two fixed bunks could be a trend-setter.

The award? Elddis introduced a competition for its employees to design a caravan. This layout won. Its designer, Mark Hall, a member of the caravan production line team, won a holiday. And Elddis put the 554 into its 2011 portfolio.

The fixed bunks are on the nearside, running longitudinally just behind the door. Because there are two, rather than three bunks, there's ample headroom; an adult could comfortably sleep on the bottom bunk. That immediately places this caravan into the category for teenage families, rather than little ones. It also puts it in a pigeonhole marked "caravans that will last through all the growing years."

The shower's in the offside corner, in a washroom that gives you plenty of space for dressing. Between bunks and shower is a wardrobe, with large cupboard beneath.

GET IN TOUCH
ELDDIS
Tel: 01207 699000
Web: www.elddis.co.uk



This long lounge gives you the option of making up single beds rather than a transverse double



Distinctly kitchen...

White fronts distinguish Avanté kitchen top lockers from those in the living area; one houses the microwave (which has an automatic defrost and cooking timer function), the other has fittings for tableware.

Perfect place for the toys...

This wardrobe, which spans the distance between the bunks and the shower, has a large cupboard beneath; that's the toys and books taken care of, we think.

The TV station and more...

There are television connection points on the surface – and a circular aperture through which to feed wires to a shelf below, designed for a Sky box, X-Box or other important electronic family holiday entertainment equipment.

Plenty of space here...

This dresser's as large as any you'd expect to find in a classic two-berth, end shower room layout. It contains a double-doored cupboard and two drawers, providing a huge amount of storage opportunity for kitchen paraphernalia; you can really get organised in this kitchen.

A storage challenge...

Kitchen storage is in short supply; there are only two narrow drawers and an equally narrow cupboard between the oven and the fridge.



Good illumination

The two front corner lights give good illumination – and we love this chunky, pale cream housing that’s in all the 2011 Avanté models

Easy access...

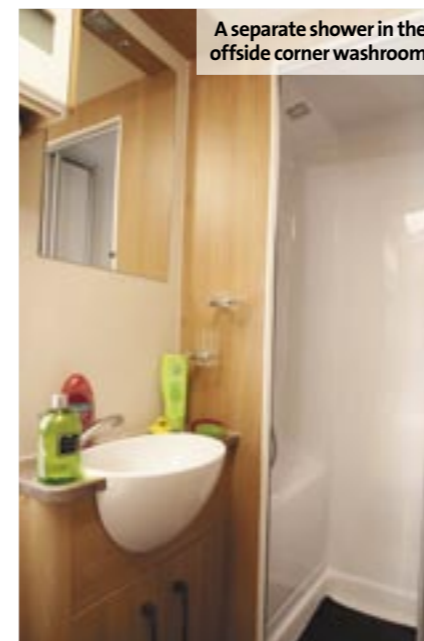
Under-bed storage gets our full marks, not just because there are three areas (under the front settees and under the lower bunk), but because the drop-down access hatches here at the front are the full width of the lockers; we found extracting and stowing bedding here was easy.

Sleeping options...

The lounge settees are adult sleeping length provided you’re not more than six feet tall, so you have the option of making single beds or a large double.

A moving carpet!

There’s a three-centimetre gap between the two pieces of carpet at the front of the caravan. The gap enables you to admire a bit of the bamboo-effect floor covering – but the front carpet creeps along the floor. We found ourselves frequently putting this section back in its place during our test week.



A separate shower in the offside corner washroom



Not much surface, even with the hinged extension in place



The long dresser - one of the 554's best features



The forward of the two wardrobes, with a useful suite of drawers



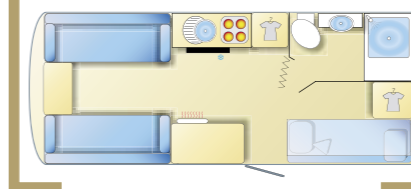
Two fixed bunks, each with plenty of headroom and large windows

Go caravan says ...

A superbly designed layout for the needs of a growing family, the 554 offers so much in terms of practicality and storage. We love the large dresser with its shelf for entertainment equipment, its double cupboard and drawers. And we also love the practicality of the dark brown carpet colour. Just a few tweaks like a longer front carpet section, wooden shielding the full length of the wire ducting channel its designed to cover beside the dresser and some hinges that hold up the lower bunk would supply the finishing touches to a caravan that is otherwise pretty near perfect in its class.

Elldis Avanté 554

- Price: £15,749
- Lengths: 5.59m Body 7.34m Overall
- Width: 2.23m
- Headroom: 1.95m
- Weight: 1318kg (MRO) 1490kg (MPLM)



This caravan is full of surprises. Just forward of the shower room is a second wardrobe, every bit as large as the one at the rear. This one has three drawers beneath it.

More surprises occur in the centre of the caravan – again on the vital subject of storage. The kitchen is short of storage. But that’s not an issue – because opposite the kitchen is a huge dresser. Your television goes on the top of this unit. Even when a television is in residence more than half of the dresser surface is available for use as an adjunct to the kitchen; you’ll need it, because surface is limited to an area beside the sink and a hinged extension to the left.

We found that raising and lowering the bunk base was a bit clunky as it catches on the metal ladder that’s fixed to the end of the bunk housing. Gas-filled hinges would have transformed operations here, though; this bunk base is quite heavy to hold up while you dig for stuff inside. And, as this is the ideal position for your waste and fresh water tanks in transit, an exterior hatch would have made life a lot easier.

So many layouts have short lounges; it’s great to spend time in one with plenty of seating length. Full marks, again, to designer Mark Hall!

There is, though, one shortcoming in the lounge – literally. The section of carpet between the settees is too short to meet up with the carpet in the central section of the caravan. That three-centimetre gap means that the front section of carpet slides when you walk on it, frequently up and over the junction between itself and its neighbouring carpet piece.

Something else (minor) that involved an annoying gap in the 554 was purely visual. A section of covering for electrical ducting that runs against the wall in a corner, parallel to the front edge of the dresser didn’t quite reach the top. That half-centimetre gap is very obvious from the vantage point of the offside settee. And a piece of plastic bordering that runs across the top of the wall within the dresser area is seven centimetres short of the width of the wall. In a caravan so solidly built and with such beautifully-crafted cabinetry, these gaps seemed incongruous. Those minor things apart, the 554 is set for a great future.

Elddis Avanté 554
£15,749 £198.09 per annum

4 years claim free caravanning. New for old cover with caravan stored on a CaSSOA Silver site.
0844 847 4473
 shieldtotalinsurance.co.uk

INSURANCE QUOTE **take cover...**