



# In the lap of LUXURY

Rob McCabe spends the best part of a week in the company of this new Eddis and comes away feeling rather pampered

**Vehicle supplied for test by:**  
Eddis, Delves Lane, Consett, Co Durham DH8 7PE.  
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**T**he proposition with the new single-axle Eddis Crusader Shamal is delightfully simple: hand over your £20,700 and take away a caravan that promises a twin fixed-single-bed layout and virtually every caravanning luxury (including Alde central heating, TV/DVD player, stereo radio/CD and satellite connectivity) as standard.

Potentially, it's a clever move. The majority of the folk who want to make their next caravan a twin single-bedder are mature types, devoid of mortgage and childcare responsibilities, and able to raise the 20-plus grand to make sure they ain't gonna slum it when they go caravanning – which will be often.

Here's what we make of the upmarket newcomer...

## CONSTRUCTION

The Shamal's all-new bodyshell is an impressive structure, the show-stealers being the huge, smooth, single slabs of aluminium that make up each sidewall. These pass the 'thump' test resoundingly – and they do pretty well at the stand-back-and-admire-the-profile test, too. The wheelarches are set at an incline for that 'go faster' look and the flush-fitting windows – strongly tinted for privacy – are set off nicely against that gleaming bodywork. The Shamal is quite a looker.

Same again indoors, where beautiful wood, polished chrome detailing and subtle lighting combine to produce a highly-appealing and, for the most part, very well finished caravan.

For the most part? Well, yes, there were a couple of letdowns in our test vehicle. One

of the two hydraulic struts that support the offside bed base when it's lifted had come adrift from one of its mounts, rendering said bed base decidedly unsupported. And the strips of white plastic beading surrounding the entrance to the shower cubicle were just appalling. Merely brushing against one was enough to dislodge it – and closer examination revealed that the other bits were all quite happy to dislodge themselves in solidarity with their mate.

## TOWABILITY

As well as a Winterhoff hitch stabiliser, the Shamal is protected by chassis maker BPW's iDC (Intelligent Drive Control) anti-snaking device. This works in pretty much the same way as a modern car's ESP (Electronic Stability Programme), intervening instantly when its electronic

nose detects the merest whiff of instability by operating the caravan's brakes gently to keep the outfit calm and balanced. You, in the driver's seat, will never know it's even done so as you continue serenely along.

Even with these powerful allies accompanying you on every trip, you still need to make sure you have a well-matched outfit to begin with, of course; and with this high-spec tourer your options are limited to chunkier motors such as a Hyundai Santa Fe or Mercedes M-Class.

### USABILITY

To be fair, there's not much more Elddis could have done to make life any more hassle-free. From carpet sections that are compact and easy to stow away, to exterior-access lockers under both single beds, a lamp illuminating the gas locker and more storage facilities than a family of four would need, never mind a couple, the Shamal is in the Premier League for user-friendliness.

This is perhaps best typified by the number of interior mains sockets – there are seven of the things, for crying out loud, which means that you're never more than about a foot away from one, regardless of where you stand in the caravan.

Control panels for the 12V electrics and the Alde central heating/hot water system are right by the entrance door: the latter is programmable, so you can go out for the day and come back to a nice, toasty caravan, or set it to come on in the morning while you're still under the duvet.

It's a fine system that performs well, featuring radiators behind the sofas and beds and in the washroom. But it does take a little while to get into its stride and, in a quiet caravan, the gurgling noise coming from the header tank in the wardrobe is, I would say, audible enough to wake really light sleepers.

The side-window blinds, which can't be used fully with the flyscreens, are quite awkward to deploy single-handed.

Now onto all that storage. As well as the big under-bed lockers, there's front-hatch access to the space beneath the sofa in the lounge, 10 roomy overhead lockers, plenty of drawers (attractively lined, which is a nice touch), a massive floor-level cupboard opposite the kitchen and a deep wardrobe.

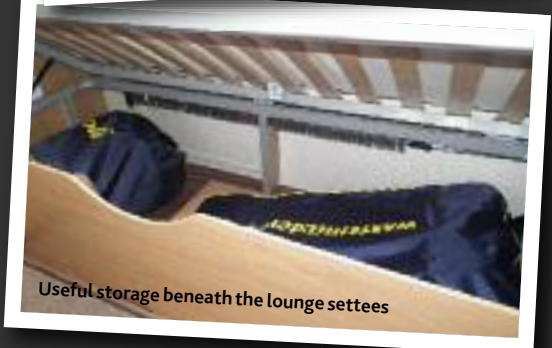
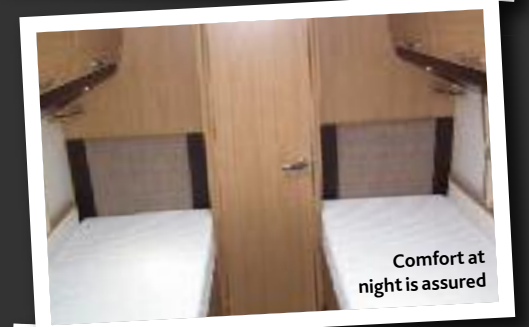
There's plenty of space for you, as well. Good use has been made of the 7ft 6in width and there's 6ft 5in of headroom. Sadly, that latter stat doesn't apply right at the front of the lounge, where several samples of my DNA have been deposited on the underside of the front overhead lockers, courtesy of my bonce coming into contact with it.

### LIVING AND SLEEPING

Dinky, isn't it? Okay, let's be kind and call the lounge 'bijou'. Tell you what, though – it ain't half comfy. You can sink happily into any of the four corners, rearranging the generous allocation of cushions and bolsters to suit. The upholstery is supportive but not too firm and, should the need ever arise, it converts quickly into a bed that will make a sumptuous single or a perfectly-acceptable-if-not-overly-massive double.

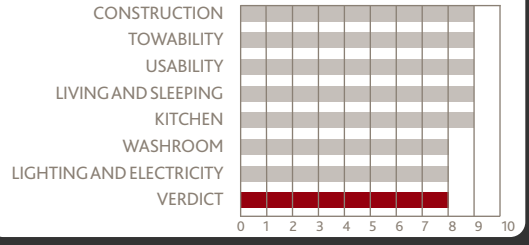
Lighting is both generous and multi-adjustable, allowing you to set just the tone you want. Stick some music on the stereo, liberate that nice bottle of red from the illuminated cocktail cabinet, sink back into your favourite corner and enjoy your fine surroundings.

Then, at lights-out, get thee to bed – another experience you'll feel smug about. The mattresses on the single beds are of excellent quality: maybe a tad on the soft side if you prefer orthopaedic-type



## TECHNICAL

### RATINGS



“Eight mains sockets? That's got to be some kind of record”



RRP	£20,794 OTR
Overall length	24ft 5in (7.43m)
Overall width	7ft 6in (2.3m)
Overall height	8ft 6in (2.58m)
Internal length	19ft (5.8m)
Max internal height	6ft 5in (1.95m)
MRO	1,482kg (29.1cwt)
MTPLM	1,650kg (32.4cwt)
User payload	168kg (3.3cwt)
Berths	4
NCC approved	yes

Figures supplied by manufacturer

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“Hard on the heels of Bailey’s posh-showhome-style Belfast sink comes Elddis’s retort”

support, but I found them really comfortable. You have your reading light, of course, and a little shelf on the wall behind you that has a secure rail to make sure your cocoa stays upright. A mains socket means you can charge your mobile overnight or plug in your digital radio. Or if it’s the late film rather than *Book at Bedtime* that takes your fancy, the supplied telly can be fixed to the supplied bracket, and away you go.

A retractable concertina blind separates the bedroom from the rest of the caravan – useful for when you want to use it as a changing room.

### KITCHEN

This is pretty much a kitchen with everything. It has a fitted microwave, a hob with three gas rings and an electric hotplate, a separate grill and oven, a fridge with a commodious freezer compartment, an overhead extractor fan, lots of storage space (including sturdy, pull-out steel baskets), decent workspace that can be extended by a little pull-out shelf, two mains sockets, a glass-covered, granite-look sink with fitted basin and drainer and very good lighting. You almost feel like you’re being short-changed because there’s no dishwasher.

### WASHROOM

Hard on the heels of Bailey’s posh-showhome-style Belfast sink comes Elddis’s retort – a shaped, granite-effect

number straight out of *Grand Designs*. Very nice it looks, too, in a room that places a lot of emphasis on style.

As elsewhere in the caravan, lighting is superb. A trio of lamps are thoughtfully positioned – one on the left, one above the wash-hand basin/mirror in the middle and another in the shower cubicle on the right. The only minor downside is that they’re not switchable individually, so you get the full works if you need some light for a middle-of-the-night visit, rather than just the gentle, helping glow you’d probably prefer.



Washroom – style and substance

The attractive fabric blind on the unfrosted window is purely for show, although you’ll be pleased to know there’s a ‘proper’ blind and flyscreen, too. Two cupboards will keep all your toiletries tucked away and there’s a useful window shelf as well.

The shower is nice and roomy, with a raised footrest and a tray for soap or gel – another shelf for products wouldn’t have gone amiss, though.

### LIGHTING AND ELECTRICS

Eight mains sockets? That’s got to be some kind of a record. Seven are indoors, encompassing one in the bedroom (ideally placed for straighteners/shaver use by the mirror in the nearby washroom), two in the raised compartment for the supplied TV/DVD, two in the kitchen, one on the alternative TV viewing shelf by the entrance door and one on the front window shelf. The exterior one lives in a locker on the nearside wall.

The two TV viewing locations also offer satellite/aerial and 12V inputs, and there’s a really neat USB charging socket in the front lounge – no need to use up one of your precious mains sockets for your smartphone or MP3 player!

Lighting is great – everywhere. Concealed strip-lighting behind the tops of the lockers in the lounge and bedroom is attractive, providing a lot of useful illumination into the bargain. There’s an additional mood-lighting strip on the underside of the lockers above the front window, too.

With the lounge also benefiting from two wall-mounted lamps and a quartet of reading lights, the options here are multi-fold. Even the gas locker’s not left out – there’s a small inspection lamp to help out with night-time rummages or cylinder switchovers.

While many owners would no doubt rather have a few quid off the cost of the caravan and choose their own TV, the supplied Avtex set has plenty of features, including a built-in DVD player, two HDMI sockets for attaching a games console or Blu-Ray player and a USB port: slide a memory stick in here and you can record straight on to it for playback later.

A caravan for the plug-and-play generation, most certainly. ■

### VERDICT

Yes, it’s expensive – but it really delivers. This is one of those caravans that you’ll want to take away just for the pleasure of being in it.

