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Eddis Xplore 302

► PRICE £9999 ► www.eddis.co.uk



AT A GLANCE: One of the most exciting innovations in caravan layout this year - even smaller than an Adria Action or a T@B

TEST VAL CHAPMAN | PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN CHAPMAN

TOWMATCH A

THE tiny Xplore 302 is just 3.2 metres long and weighs 950kg - and that's the MTPLM!

Eddis has managed to create a caravan of such miniscule proportions by turning the traditional two-berth layout on its side - literally. The 302's lounge has L-shaped, instead of parallel, seating. This faces towards a picture window on the offside - and there's a lovely panoramic front window like all other caravans in the Xplore range. You make up a double bed by sliding a slatted base from under the settee that runs across the front of the caravan. This leaves the rear-most section of the nearside settee in position, so you have one area in which to sit even with the double bed made up. Daytime seating is ample for at least four, even six.

Giving this caravan an L-shape, rather than parallel, lounge is the major way in which Eddis has been able to create a caravan with a body length of only 3.2 metres. (That's smaller than the Adria Action at 3.61m, the smallest T@B at 3.87m, the Sterling Europa 390 at 3.38m and the Lunar Ariva at 3.63m.)

The innovation doesn't stop at the small size. On production models when it's launched in February at the NEC, there will be an access wet locker door leading into the shower area, ideal for popping in wet walking gear. The shower hose can be stretched to reach outside - perfect for washing muddy dogs or boots after a walk.

There's something else innovative about the 302. The blown-air heater unit, made by Whale, is mounted underneath the caravan. That saves layout space - and removes the rigid imposition on design that is inevitable with every other blown air system. Like the standard Truma blown air central heating systems, it can be powered by either gas or mains electricity and is selectable between 500 watts, 1kw and 2kw.

There are just two outlets for the warm air in the lounge, both under the front settee. On the five-degree-temperature day of our test the unit warmed the caravan within minutes; temperature can be selected by means of a rotary thermostat switch.

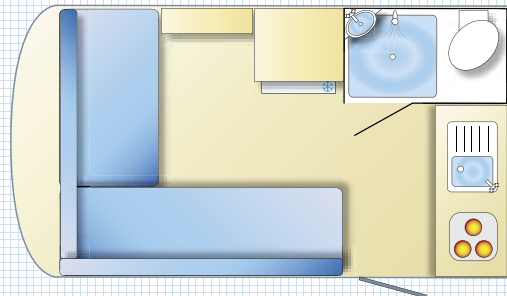
The fridge is beneath the wardrobe - another departure from traditional caravan layout design that enables this short length to contain everything you need.

Storage is immense for such a small caravan. The wardrobe hanging space is larger than that found in many caravans designed for four and more people. And the kitchen has a double-fronted cupboard under the sink plus another large cupboard under the combination oven-grill that's beneath the three-burner hob.



► LAYOUT IN A NUTSHELL

- L-shaped lounge
- Fridge under wardrobe on offside
- End kitchen
- Shower and toilet in the offside corner



For such a tiny caravan, the showering arrangements are impressive. Shower and toilet share the little room and the showering area is surprisingly large and light in aspect.

Bright, light styling is a feature of the living area, also. Upholstery inevitably dominates the look of a caravan which is only just over three metres long and whose settees are more prominent than any other furniture feature - so colour matters much more than in a larger layout where there is more variation of furniture to draw your attention. Here, the Xplore range's plain seat bases with huge circles of terracotta defining the back rests works even better than in its bigger stable mates. A small (but comfortable) seating section under the offside picture window makes it possible to seat up to six people. Upper storage is five lockers, plus two more over the kitchen and two deep corner shelves. ■



The one-piece front window and offside long window let in plenty of light



The combination oven and grill saves space and weight



The shower is surprisingly large for a caravan of such small proportions



The television table hinges up on the offside beside the deep window



When the bed is made up the end of this seating area is still available.

► FOR & AGAINST

- PROS:**
- Lots of floorspace
 - One person can push it
 - Light, airy feel
- CONS:**
- Not for you if you prefer full-length single beds

► SPECIFICATION

- Axles:** 1
- Berths:** 2
- MRO:** 796kg
- MTPLM:** 950kg
- Width:** 2.14m
- Overall length:** 4.68m
- Headroom:** 1.90m



The tiny 302 looks and feels much larger than it is because its lounge is L-shaped

► OUR VERDICT

This is one fantastic caravan for its size. Everything a couple needs is here. It's all practical to use, it doesn't feel cramped - and the Xplore 302 can be easily manoeuvred by one person, as I discovered during our test. Not only is it packed with innovative features like the underfloor-mounted heater that saves space, and the exterior hatch into the shower area, the 302 feels more spacious than it is. That's because the L-shaped lounge creates good floor space and because the one-piece window lets in so much light.