



## Family value

**ANDREW JENKINSON** gets an early look at Elddis' new small family caravan

**WHEN** Elddis launched its baby Xplore 302 last year it even took the company by surprise at just how well it sold. The 302 proved so popular that it became the springboard for a family version. Aptly named the 304, the new Elddis made its debut at the Caravan and Motorhome Show 2011 in Manchester in January and should be in dealerships by the time you read this. The 304 is designed to appeal to families who want a new tourer that's easy to manoeuvre and can be towed by a reasonably-sized car.

Repeating the success of the 302 in family format looks to be something the 304 will achieve. I took a look at the first one to come out of the Consett works on a rather snowy day.

The compact 304 looks good to begin with – Elddis has given the nearside two windows, one for the kitchen and one for the front lounge, plus smart graphics. Based on a BPW chassis fitted with a Winterhoff hitch stabiliser, alloy wheels, spare wheel and carrier, the 304 isn't exactly

entry-level spec.

The layout is one that's almost as old as the touring caravan itself. Back in the '60s and '70s it was the benchmark for 12ft and 14ft family models. Front lounge, side kitchen with wardrobe opposite and side single dinette with fold-up bunk and a nearside corner washroom. It's amazing just how spacious this compact tourer is.

Elddis has kept the L-shaped front lounge design from the 302, which works well, giving the 304 more floor space. The lounge also has a deep offside window and the rooflight is placed above the lounge area, giving plenty of light and ventilation. A small TV shelf is fitted to the wardrobe wall with points for an aerial and power connection while roof locker storage is good, though the front units are rather shallow. Lighting is excellent with corner spots, two corner units plus a ceiling light. Seating is superb and supportive with storage

beneath the beech-slatted base.

The side kitchen offers good cupboard and roof-locker storage and comes with a three-burner hob and oven with spark ignition. The sink hasn't a drainer and while worktop space is lacking, there's a 115-litre fridge in the base of the wardrobe opposite, along with the free-standing table storage.

The side single dinette is great for children to use and it comes with a simple fold-up bunk. I do feel a side window would be ideal here plus some shelves as it feels a little dark and no storage is provided for toys. The corner washroom comes with a shower and electric flush toilet plus a small wall cupboard, though it could do with a small mirror above the sink.

Fit and finish is key with the 304 – it's so easy to tow and is well specified. Its final advantage is that you can tow it with a small family car and it is likely to fit on a driveway.

**Verdict:** A great caravan that offers value and economic touring without cost cutting.

at a glance

### Elddis Xplore 304

**Price as tested** £11,299

**Prices start at** £10,599

**Club Care insurance** £256

**Kitchen** Three-burner hob; oven

**Fridge capacity** 115-litre

**Heating** Blown-air dual fuel

**Electrics** Four 230V sockets; one 12V socket

**Gas** Accommodates all touring bottle sizes

**Washroom** Handbasin; cassette toilet; separate shower cubicle

**Spec includes** Fly screens and blinds; alloy wheels; stabiliser hitch; spare wheel and carrier

**Options include** Fabric

**Length x width x height**

3.70m x 2.14m x 2.72m

**Berths** Four

**Bed sizes** Front double

1.98m x 1.30m; single

1.80m x 0.70m;

bunk 1.80m x 0.56m

**Mass in Running**

**Order** 893kg

**Maximum**

**Technically**

**Permissible**

**Laden Mass**

1,050kg

**Payload** 157kg

**Warranty** Six-year

body plus three

years on certain

equipment

**Manufacturer**

Elddis

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