

# in the lap of luxury

As the new year begins, we go right to the top, to review the caravans dreams are made of; caravans for people who want the best of everything



Our tester, Val, tries out the kitchen of the unique Carlight Cosmopolitan 204, in the course of compiling this hotlist

## THE CONTENDERS



Best for  
**SINGLE  
AXLE**



▶ **BUCCANEER**  
CARAVEL



▶ **BUCCANEER**  
CORSAIR



Best for  
**EN-SUITE  
DESIGN**



▶ **BAILEY**  
UNICORN PAMPLONA



▶ **STERLING**  
ELITE SEARCHER



▶ **INOS**



Best for  
**WEIGHT**



▶ **LUNAR**  
DELTA TI



▶ **LUNAR**  
DELTA FB



Best for  
**SUNROOF**



▶ **COACHMAN**  
LASER 640/4



▶ **VANMASTER**  
OCCASION SBEW



Best for  
**FABRICS**



▶ **CARLIGHT**  
COSMOPOLITAN 204

The Alde heating system on Buccaneers is equipped with a facility that allows you to switch it on from your mobile phone. You can set both the timer and the temperature remotely.....

## CHOOSING THE CARAVAN OF YOUR DREAMS

In these financially difficult times, many of us are considering budget caravans, but if you've savings which aren't earning much interest, high quality holiday accommodation can begin to look like a very good practical use for that cash. So, what do you look for in your dream caravan? Is it the level of equipment? Looks? Length? These decisions are quite personal, but what is certain is that when weight is no object and the price is more than £20,000, you've a right to expect a lot from any caravan you buy.

Most of the caravans we've selected here are twin-axes (though not all). A twin-axe caravan gives you far more stability on the road than a single axle does and it'll support a longer frame.

We examine caravans in the top-spec sector, designed to appeal to caravanners who want the best of everything and for whom weight and price come second to quality. The ten models here are the ones we think most worthy of a place on your shortlist when you come to buy.

Luxury doesn't need to imply twin axes but it usually does, because people wanting a luxury caravan also tend to want a lot of space. However, for some caravanners, the emphasis is less on space than on build quality, specification and luxury equipment. The two single-axe Buccaneers in our selection are shorter in length than some of the twin axes you might consider.



### Buccaneer Caravel £26,999

Buccaneer is the highly specified but pricey flagship of the Elddis portfolio, loaded with technology and sporting a top-level, luxury feel throughout.

The Caravel packs its luxury into a relatively confined space of 6.5m. The island bed, with wardrobes and cabinets on each side, is against the rear wall, with the en-suite shower on the offside and a separate room for the toilet and washbasin opposite.

The Alde heating system is equipped with a facility that allows you to control the space and water heater from your mobile phone; you can set both the timer and the temperature remotely, by texting a sim card fixed in the caravan. The rooflight has a motorised, automatic rain sensor, closing by itself when rain starts.

Buccaneers come with TV and DVD players, solar panel connections, 40-litre inboard water tanks with mains input facility, BPW chassis with iDC system and Suretrack Tracker with integrated alarm.

Best for  
**SINGLE AXLE**

#### LAYOUT...

Four-berth, island bed

**OUR VERDICT: 7/10**

*Well specified and a good choice for a couple who prefer a luxury caravan on one axle rather than two*



### Buccaneer Corsair £23,999

Like the Caravel, the Corsair also has the Alde heating system that you can control from your mobile phone. It also has the rooflight that detects rain and closes automatically.

The Corsair is £3000 cheaper than the Caravel; it's shorter, and has its bed against the nearside wall, with the washroom running the full width of the caravan behind it. This is among Britain's most popular layouts, and occurs in all levels of specification.

The Corsair isn't just notable for its level of luxury. It has a feature that sets it apart in layout terms. It's a cabinet suite that contains a microwave at waist height – and, below it, a table with a heat-resistant surface, that pulls out to enable you put hot dishes on it as you bring them out of the microwave. It's an ingenious and practical design.

Side curtains hang on shiny steel café rods; there's a bracket on which to mount your television and then turn it towards either the bedroom or the lounge.

#### LAYOUT...

End washroom, fixed double bed

**OUR VERDICT: 7/10**

*Our pick if you want a smaller caravan – a very workable layout and the microwave cabinet is outstanding*

#### WHAT IS ALDE?

*Alde heating pipes hot water around the caravan in a radiator, much like domestic heating*

#### TWIN OR SINGLE?

*Single-axe caravans are easier to manhandle than twins. Twin axes are more stable on tow and can be reversed more accurately than single axes.*

#### WEIGHTS

*MIRO is the unladen weight of your caravan. The MTPLM is the Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass*



**Bailey**  
**Unicorn Pamplona**  
**£21,595**

This caravan offers a true en-suite, with a clever layout that also allows privacy from both the bedroom and the living area.

The shower door opens forward, completely closing off the bedroom and wash area. The door to the washroom and toilet opens towards the rear. This configuration allows the options of either dividing the washing area from the bedroom or closing it off from the lounge. The Pamplona's settees are long enough to make single beds, so this flexible screening arrangement will be valued by families using this caravan as a four-berth.

Unicorns have Alde heating, Avtex televisions and Tracker security systems as standard.

In the Pamplona there are three TV positions.

The Pamplona's kitchen has three wide, deep drawers to the left of the oven and, most importantly, a 190-litre fridge-freezer.

The bedroom dressing table has a cabinet, a mirror and power. The wardrobes are beside the bed.

Best for  
**EN-SUITE  
DESIGN**

**LAYOUT...**

Four-berth, island bed

**OUR VERDICT: 10/10**

*Top of the tree for Bailey, this new layout is practical for both families and couples*



**Sterling**  
**Elite Searcher**  
**£22,425**

The Searcher's side-bed layout allows you the option of storing folding chairs and tables under the bed via an outside locker – far easier than having to bring them inside and lift up the bed frame.

The Searcher's water and space heating system is the hot-water-based Alde and, for 2012, Swift has introduced heated towel rails in the shower rooms.

Equipment includes AL-KO's ATC stability control system, a dual fuel hob (with a mains hotplate alongside three gas burners), solar panel connections and a 175-litre fridge with separate freezer.

In 2011, Swift was the first manufacturer to introduce sunroofs, to both its Sterling and Conqueror ranges. The result was a lighter, brighter lounge. The advantage goes further, though – into the realm of storage.

The sunroof takes the place of front, head-height lockers – but lockers much larger than these replace them on the sides. These lockers reach forward, right to the front of the caravan's body line – and are far more capacious than the smaller lockers that were across the front in previous mode.

**LAYOUT...**

Four-berth, fixed bed, rear washroom

**OUR VERDICT: 8/10**

*A caravan with a sunroof, Alde heating and the practicality of a heated towel rail has to be regarded as top luxury*



**CARAVEL**



**CORSAIR**



**PAMPLONA**



**SEARCHER**

Both Deltas have a weight advantage over most other caravans of their length. The FB, at 1725kg, has slightly more furniture in its layout, so it weighs 30kg more than the TI

## HOW WE ASSESSED THE CARAVANS

We looked at the caravans on the market with the highest level of equipment. We looked at space – especially for layouts that are suitable for families. And we looked at that subjective, often indefinable element that influences whether a caravan is right for you – that's the appearance and the ambiance. We scored these caravans out of 10, working to a scale which makes full points almost unattainable. It has to be said though, that some of the caravans here are utterly spectacular in terms of build quality and design. Our scores are for their ability to compete with caravans in a particular category – in this case luxury caravans. Scores would be higher in a Hotlist where they competed with lower spec models. Feast your eyes!

▶ 1-3

Disappointing

▶ 4

Doesn't quite do what it says on the tin

▶ 6-7

Respectable but not extraordinary

▶ 8-9

Stunning. Take a serious look

▶ 10

The very best caravan you can buy, anywhere

**Scoreboard:**  
How we rate them



### Inos £36,000

The first British-built caravan with a slide-out side arrived in 2011 – and, for 2012, the Inos gets a new, longer slide out, with four layout versions to choose from.

You have two bed options – an island bed, or a bed against the offside wall. And in the lounge you can choose between two settees, or one settee alongside two individual chairs.

The slide-out section extends both the lounge and the bedroom by a metre in width; the length of the slide-out section is two metres.

Equipment includes a 40-litre on-board water tank, under-floor heating as part of the Alde hot-water-based system and extractor fans in both the kitchen and the shower room.

The slide-out is 12-volt powered; you flick a switch by the door and the extension glides out on steel wire guides. Flick another 12-volt switch and a step slides down into position by the door.

Inos caravans ride on BPW chassis and are equipped with BPW's anti-snaking system.

Inos is built by the Fifth Wheel Company in North Wales.

#### LAYOUT...

Four-berth with slide-out side, separate shower with basin and toilet opposite

#### OUR VERDICT: 8/10

Simply stunning, and beautifully made – expensive but totally unique



### Lunar Delta TI £23,795

Delta specification includes Alde heating, the AL-KO anti-snaking system, and an external shower connection point, with hose and shower head.

The roof is strengthened so that you can have an air conditioning pod fitted.

It has a "super pitch" water connection point complete with 15m hose, which enables you to connect directly to a water supply on a pitch.

There's an on-board 40-litre water tank. There's also a radiator in the shower room where there's also a laundry-basket-style cabinet. The shower head has an air intake which enhances the flow rate by causing turbulence as air mixes with water.

The fridge capacity is 180 litres, with a separate freezer. The hob has an electric hotplate and three burners.

Deltas have the Phantom Tracker security system which enables the caravan to be traced if it is stolen.

Best for  
**WEIGHT**



#### LAYOUT...

Four-berth, transverse island bed, end shower room

#### OUR VERDICT: 8/10

This is our favourite Lunar for couples, and we love the classic styling

#### GO FOR THE KILL!

Upgrade your ups spec caravan:

▶ A motor mover. Just watch the impact on the caravan's weight.

▶ Self seeking satellite dish. It's an optional extra with Buccaneers. Ask your dealer about fitting one to caravans made by other manufacturers.

▶ Upholstery options. Vanmaster offers five fabric choices, Carlight offers scores. At this price point most manufacturers offer a leather option and a stain resistant option.

▶ Awnings – you can spend more than £2000 on an awning if you want the very best and you want it big. Check out the Isabella range for robust build and high quality finish.

▶ Finally – a seasonal pitch! Many sites offer discounts for long term bookings out of season, so why not give your luxury caravan a beautiful view through its windows and use it more often? Go to [www.outandaboutlive.com/sitefinder](http://www.outandaboutlive.com/sitefinder) for more info.



**Lunar  
Delta FB  
£23,795**

With all of the same equipment as the fixed double bed TI, the FB is Delta's family option. It has two permanent bunks running down the offside just forward of the shower room that occupies the full width of the caravan at the rear.

Forward of the bunks, a wide dining area seats four and gives you the option of making a fifth bed. It's only 1.65m long, though, which means it's not ideal for adults, but the lounge settees are long enough to make full-length single beds.

Three kitchen cupboards with an array of shelving and drawers, and a large working surface make this a kitchen well designed for families.

Both Deltas have a weight advantage over most other models of their length; the FB, at 1725kg, has slightly more furniture, so it weighs 30kg more than the TI.

Best for **FAMILIES**

**LAYOUT...**

Five-berth, two fixed bunks, end shower room, wide side dining area

**OUR VERDICT: 10/10**

Fabulously practical family layout with all the equipment you could wish for



**Coachman  
Laser 640/4  
£24,265**

Coachman has given its Laser, Pastiche and VIP ranges a totally new look for 2012, with roof rails and arched corner lines that sweep down towards dark grey grab handles – and sunroofs that stretch the full width of the caravan.

The sunroof is bordered on the inside by a matt mushroom-coloured surround that incorporates curving corner lights and an overhead light.

Lasers now have Alde heating, and heated towel rails in the washrooms. Other additions for 2012 include a mains hotplate and a extractor fan.

The base for the double bed that makes in the lounge pulls out from under the offside settee; it's metal-framed and very sturdy.

Equipment includes an external shower, a stability system, and Tracker security.

Best for **SUNROOF**

**LAYOUT...**

Four-berth, nearside fixed bed, end washroom

**OUR VERDICT: 8/10**

Buy it just because the stunning full-width sunroof lets in so much light!



**INOS**



**DELTA TI**



**DELTA FB**



**LASER 640/4**



## Vanmaster Occasion SBEW £35,950

At £35,950 this caravan is among Britain's most expensive tourers. There are five layouts in the Occasion range, varying in price from £34,000 to £35,950. They're all 7.94m long, 2.3m wide and weigh 1740kg (MIRO) and 2200kg (MTPLM).

The five layouts are: twin single beds; side island bed; end island bed; offside fixed bed; and one without a fixed bed, this one has a nearside dining area.

The gas bottle locker is large enough to accommodate two 13kg bottles. Equipment includes an on-board water tank, DAB radios, speakers in the washroom, AL-KO ATC system, Tracker security system – and something very few caravans have: ceramic-bowl toilets.

The Alde system includes under-floor heating and a radiator in the shower room. Furniture is solid ash. LED lights are inset into the ceilings, which are covered with a corded carpet-like fabric. A variety of kitchen layouts are available; Vanmaster tailors caravans to customers' requirements. You can select your hob too; choose from four gas burners, or three, with an electric hotplate.

### LAYOUT...

Four-berth, single beds, end washroom

**OUR VERDICT: 8/10**

Vanmasters are bespoke caravans, hence the price



## Carlight Cosmopolitan 204 £46,500

Carlight resumed production last year after a nine-year gap. The new generation of Carlights adheres to the hand-built traditions that have been a feature of these caravans for generations. They still have "lantern roofs" – narrow horizontal opening windows set into ledges on each side of the roofline. And oak veneer panels the interior walls.

Classic though the body lines are, the new Cosmopolitan is also very 2012, with eight bright LED clusters set into the roof, and two LED strips above the kitchen.

There are literally scores of fabrics, and 40 different carpets, from which you can choose. The four-berth Cosmopolitan 204 has two metres of headroom, making it the tallest caravan in Britain. It's also among the widest, at 2.4m, which is 10cm wider than the majority of caravans. That extra width opens

### FOR MORE INFO...

...on full specification turn to our Buyers' Guide on page 88, or go to our website [www.outandaboutlive.co.uk](http://www.outandaboutlive.co.uk) to compare models

up new layout possibilities; the space enables the designers to build a dressing table alongside the bed.

Best for **FABRICS**

### LAYOUT...

Four-berth, fixed bed, end washroom

**OUR VERDICT: 7/10**

A beautiful, hand-built caravan - with more fabric options than any other



**OCCASION SBEW**



**COSMOPOLITAN 204**

in the lap of luxury	Buccaneer Caravel £26,999	Buccaneer Corsair £23,999	Bailey Pamplona £21,595	Sterling Searcher £22,425	Inos £36,000	Lunar Delta TI £23,795	Lunar Delta FB £23,795	Coachman Laser 640/4 £24,265	Vanmaster Occasion SBEW £35,950	Carlight Cosmo 204 £46,500
MIRO	1688kg	1548kg	1610kg	1654kg	2000kg	1535kg	1554kg	1681kg	1740kg	TBAkg
MTPLM	1890kg	1740kg	1773kg	1814kg	2700kg	1695kg	1725kg	1840g	2200kg	TBAkg
BODY LENGTH	6.34m	5.80m	5.29m	6.27m	7.0m	6.34m	6.34m	6.21m	6.44m	6.50m
OVERALL LENGTH	7.96m	6.47m	7.86m	7.99m	8.30m	7.91m	7.91m	7.87m	7.94m	7.70m
WIDTH	2.30m	2.30m	2.28m	2.31m	2.30m	2.28m	2.28m	2.32m	2.30m	2.40m
HEATING SYSTEM	Alde	Alde	Alde	Alde	Alde	Alde	Alde	Alde	Alde	Truma
STABILITY CONTROL	BPW iDC	BPW iDC	ATC	ATC	BPW iDC	ATC	ATC	ATC	ATC	TBA
TRACKER & ALARM	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Optional	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Optional
ON-BOARD WATER	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No