



REVIEW

BAILEY

Olympus 540-5

This caravan is packed with features for families: it has bunks for two, a wide dining area, a big shower room and plenty of storage – all under 1272kg

When Bailey launched its Pegasus Ancona last year the unique layout, with its three bunks and slightly triangular shower room on the nearside, it was an instant hit among families seeking loads of beds and loads of space on a single axle.

Then Bailey launched its new Olympus range, lighter in weight, with less specification, lower prices – and with a derivative of the Ancona among the layouts. This one, the Olympus 540-5, is £1400 cheaper and 39kg lighter than the Ancona. Any other differences? The fixed-bunk count has gone down from three to two – and consequently the headroom for each of those beds has gone up. And that means the Olympus 540-5's bunks are suitable for older children as well as tinies. Like the Ancona, it's a five-berth caravan; a single bed makes up in the dining area on the nearside.

SHOWERING 9/10

The layout feature that marked the Ancona out as unique is here in the Olympus 540-5. It's the shower room, spanning the width from the

bunks to the nearside, and cleverly angled at the front, to maximise on space inside.

The shower is large, at 60cm wide and 90cm at its longest point; it's slightly tapered, to form a triangular shape at the front end. The importance here is that the shape creates a wide entrance to the shower, so that a parent can easily shower a child. And there's enough floorspace outside the shower tray for family towelling and dressing to take place easily.

The washbasin is rectangular and deep. There's a sizeable, two-shelf cabinet beneath it, and a wide shelf above the window.

We love the use of a pull-cord for the light – so that small children can reach it.

The shower room gained marks with us for good towel accommodation, too – a feature that's so often lacking in caravans. There's a towel loop on the door – and three hooks in a row on the rear wall. On the outside walls of the shower room are two more rows of hooks, each fitted with three. These are perfect for coats, or for hanging more towels to dry.



Superbly deep sill...

Deep windowsills are so practical – especially when you want to put a table lamp here. Whether you choose wrap-around or parallel seating, you'll appreciate space here.

Style and light...

We love the white plastic door insets of the top kitchen cabinets. They're practical because they save on weight – but they also add style. Six circular LED lights give good kitchen surface illumination.

Space – or a table...

You have the option of wrap-around seating instead of this chest of drawers with pull-out table. Which you choose depends on whether you prefer maximum seating, or an extra table.

Extra shelf needed...

Good cutlery accommodation is here in this cabinet but the space below it would have been more practical with an additional shelf below the pull-out wire basket drawer.

The games zone...

Kids will love this wide side dining area for table-top activities. There's a power point just forward of it – but this is for a television; an extra socket on the base of the seating would be an advantage.

**THE REAL COST
£16,340**

Bailey's normal delivery charge of £545 is added to the price. Our test caravan has the option of the front central chest do drawers, which costs an additional £286

Great hanging space...

Six coat hooks on the outer wall of the washroom – brilliant! There's just about enough space for everyone's garments in the 58cm-wide wardrobe, too – and 10 top lockers for the rest.

Mirror, mirror...

There's something missing in the 540. The only mirror is in the washroom. One is needed on the wardrobe door or the outside of the washroom – and a mains socket nearby, please!

Enough surface...

Kitchen surface space is fine for the needs of five, with a central space between the hob and the sink, plus space to the left of the sink and a little extra on the right of the hob.

TV points...

Here's your perfect television position, with a mains and 12-volt power point plus an aerial connection on the pillar that links the surface to the microwave and cabinet above.

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SLEEPING 9/10

The bunk zone is screened off by a folding pleated partition which tracks at an angle to meet the outside wall of the shower room. It gives you just enough space to get in and out of bed without opening the partition.

The top bunk has a substantial fixed metal ladder and a wooden guard to stop anyone rolling out.

These bunks are suitable for offspring well into teen years; they're 1.90m long, 66cm wide, and made to support people of up to 75kg.

The lounge turns into a double bed for parents and, importantly, the settees are just long enough to make single beds as an alternative. That's a useful feature especially if you make a brief overnight stop on a long journey; you don't have to make up the double be in order to take a rest.

The fifth bed, which you make up from the nearside dining area, is almost full adult length, at 1.70m. And it's as wide as a domestic single bed, at 77cm. It uses the table as the centre of the bed base; you unclip it from its monopod leg and lower it onto plastic ledges on the edges of the seating base – easy and quick!

STORAGE 18/20

Under the lower bunk is a brilliant storage area, accessed easily by raising the slatted tops. No gas filled struts or exterior opening here – just good, straightforward storage access. Even though the slatted tops don't stay up on their own, we found no difficulty in hauling duvets and other bulky items in and out. This area is also a perfect hideaway for toys, we think!

Further forward, there's an impressive amount of lower storage, under the long settees of the lounge and also beneath the nearside dining area seating.

Although none of these four under-seating areas has a front hatch, that's not a problem. You get into the storage areas under the nearside dining area seating by

simply lifting up the lightweight wooden bases – and we found you don't need to remove the upholstery to do this.

Sprung hinges take care of the lifting when you need access to the spaces under the lounge settees. Would we miss front access hatches? Given that this is one way in which Bailey has been able to shave 39kg off the Ancona's weight to create the Olympus 540-5, we think we can live with it.

Ten upper storage lockers would be ample to hide the chattels of five people, especially as the steep front body shape of Olympus caravans creates massive lockers above the front windows – these are 44cm deep and 40cm tall at the highest point.

DINING 9/10

Any caravan with two dining areas is likely to score well in this section of a *Caravan Buyer* test. The 540-5 gets its 9/10 here because the side dining area is wider than average, at 77cm. Four small children could sit here comfortably.

When you all want to dine together the freestanding table sits in the U-shaped lounge. (It's stored in a slot within the kitchen cupboard and slides in and out easily.)

In our test example, there's a third dining option, created by pulling a two-seater table out from under the top of the front central chest of drawers. This unit is a £286 option and it adds 13.6kg to the MIRO. If you don't need the extra dining space that the pull-out top of the chest of drawers gives you, we suggest you save £286...

LOUNGING 8/10

You have two options – seating that envelops the entire front of the caravan, or conventional parallel settees with a chest of drawers in the centre. How to decide in terms of lounge comfort? If you need maximum seating, choose the wrap-around option. You get the bonus of a larger double bed, too.

Lounge lighting is confined to four spotlights and two corner lights

WHAT WE LIKE

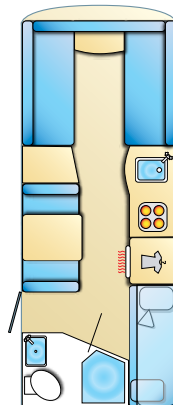
- ▶ Big on storage
- ▶ Twin bunks with good headroom
- ▶ Wide side dining area
- ▶ Big separate shower
- ▶ Good kitchen for five
- ▶ Loads of hooks for towels and coats

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- ▶ Lack of a shelf in the kitchen cupboard
- ▶ Subdued lounge lighting

TECHNICAL STUFF

- LENGTH**
BODY 5.67M
OVERALL 7.25M
- WIDTH**
2.19M
- HEADROOM**
1.96M
- WEIGHT**
MIRO 1272KG
MTPLM 1450KG



The side dining area is just about wide enough for four little children to sit to eat or play



A deep, rectangular Belfast-style washbasin with cupboard beneath



Big, bold splashes of black in the form of cushions ensure the overall look is eye-catching



Bunks, storage beneath – and plenty of coat hooks in this kids' bed area

Bailey ▶ Olympus 540-5

TOW MATCH

Caravan weight
MTPLM: 1450kg

To tow this caravan
at 85% you need a
car kerbweight of:
1705kg

Never tow a caravan heavier
than your car's kerbweight.
We recommend towing a
caravan no more than 85%
of the kerbweight



AUDI A3
1378KG



FORD FOCUS
1501KG

At 100% → 1450KG



MONDEO ESTATE
1654KG

At 85% → 1705KG



FREELANDER 2
1785KG



HONDA CRV
1890KG



KIA SORENTO
2067KG



LAND ROVER
2230KG

with white shades. But these two lights lack brightness – and, on test, we quickly decided a table lamp on the window sill would be essential. Perhaps Bailey had thought of that possibility too, for there is a socket on the offside corner in the perfect place for it...

KITCHEN 15/20

Bailey designs kitchens well. All Olympus, Pegasus and Unicorn models have domestic-sized, four-burner hobs and rectangular sinks with flush-fitting chopping board covers. In the Olympus 540-5, there is a 34cm wide surface between the hob and the sink, plus a 12cm strip to the right of the hob. There's a third, curving area, 22cm at its widest point, to the left of the sink. In total, this gives you a working surface that's practical for the needs of a family of five.

The cupboard between the fridge and the oven contains a good-sized cutlery drawer and a pull-out metal basket shelf. But the deep space beneath this basket isn't put to as good a use as we'd have liked. There's a bit of wheel arch intrusion, and some piping and wiring, but that's not a problem. This cabinet would have been transformed by adding a shelf at wheel-arch height, and this would have doubled its capacity. We support ways of cutting down on total caravan weight – but a shelf here would have been a few extra grams well spent; so we marked it down.

Opposite the kitchen, a 34cm-wide dresser-style cabinet divides the lounge from the dining area; most families will use this for kitchen storage. There are two shelves here, one 37cm deep, the other 33cm – two good, useful spaces. The lower, taller, shelf space will accommodate two-litre fizzy drinks bottles easily, as well as tall cereal packets and other large food items.

We love the 540-5's three upper kitchen cupboards. The outer two have double doors and are fitted with tableware racks. One has a shelf. The smaller, centre cupboard has a shelf, too.

Overall, counting the dresser cabinet in on storage, we say this kitchen is capable of catering well for the needs of five mouths.

BUILD 9/10

Bailey's Alu-Tech construction isn't all about being wood-free and



Spotlights above and below these lockers give excellent illumination on the kitchen surface



Practical and spacious, the shower area is an unusual shape to give good floor space



All Olympus models have this deep window sill; the table-top drawers unit is an option



The big, rectangular sink has a chopping-board cover that's level with the kitchen surface

having a 10-year anti-water ingress guarantee. It's about the design of the front locker arrangement too. Gas is housed on its own, centre-front, in a locker that's not designed to provide room for much else. On each side of the caravan, doors open to reveal large hatches for the other items you'd store in exterior lockers. Spending quality time in a succession of Alu-Tech models has taught us that this triple locker arrangement works much better than anything one full-width locker can offer. That's because, in three smaller lockers, stuff doesn't fall over and get into a jumble every time you tow. We find you can get much more organised over what goes where – and it stays there.

TOWING 8/10

Olympus caravans don't reach high enough in Bailey's line-up to get the AL-KO ATC stability control system. Would you miss ATC? Yes, in that many caravan specialist insurance companies give you a discount for it because it improves safety margin; and yes, because it's there to help keep you safe. But these are budget caravans; losing ATC has to be seen in that context.

Out behind the Kia Sorento that takes most of our review caravans on their test tows, the 540-5 showed itself to be inherently well-balanced and stable. **VC**

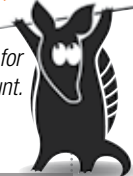
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BUY THIS IF...

You have kids whose height means they need plenty of bunk headroom

ALSO CONSIDER...

The same layout, with three bunks, in the Pegasus Ancona, at £1400 more

OPTIONS TO GO FOR...

An AL-KO secure wheel lock (£194)

GRAND VERDICT: 85/100

A great layout with more space than its dimensions would suggest

We scored this model for its suitability for a growing family