

# Help us to buy...

...a fixed-bed end-washroom van for £15k

**1** Bailey Pageant Series 7 Limousin £13,995

**2** Ace Jubilee Viscount £14,585



**ON TEST**

**Bailey Pageant Series 7 Limousin**

**Price** £13,995 + £485 OTR

**Berths** 4

Pageant has become Bailey's range that combines stylish good looks with a terrific spec and great value

**Ace Jubilee Viscount**

**Price** £14,585 + £485 OTR

**Berths** 4

Recently revamped, the Ace Jubilee shares the same platform as the Abbey Vogue 2, Swift Charisma, and Sterling Europa



**THIS MONTH WE HELP**

**The Dines Family from Dover**

**CARAVANNING HISTORY**

Sally, Paul, and five-year-old Hayden started caravanning three years ago. After much research Paul found a nearly new Bailey Senator Series 5 Arizona with a rear washroom and a side dinette. They went away in it a few times but then an accident left Paul unable to drive for two years.

**LOOKING FOR AND WHY**

Now Paul can drive again, the Dines are itching to return to caravanning. Paul has trawled through caravan brochures and is keen to try a fixed bed van. Sally insists on a separate shower, but will such a layout really suit their needs with a young son?



**OUR EXPERT**

Andrew Ditton has been caravanning since he was in nappies and has been touring the country in his own caravan for many years. As a result, his critical eye is very much appreciated by readers and even some manufacturers



**CARAVAN BUYER 2008**

Your essential guide to buying a new or used caravan. Order your copy at [aarons-books.co.uk](http://aarons-books.co.uk) or on 01562 69296. Price £4.95 P&P is FREE!

# 1

# BAILEY PAGEANT SERIES 7 LIMOUSIN



Welcoming lounge in the Limousin has been fitted with an optional upholstery finish



Washroom lacks a handle on the shower door. Open storage unit limits practicality



Kitchen storage is great but there's little workspace

## CARAVAN SPEC

### PRICE

£13,995 + £485 OTR

### CONTACT

Bailey Caravans, South Liberty Lane, Bristol, BS3 2SS

☎ 0117 305 2939

🌐 bailey-caravans.co.uk

### BERTHS

4

### DIMENSIONS

**Internal length** 6.24m

**Overall width** 2.28m

**Shipping length** 7.83m

### WEIGHTS

**MIRO** 1378kg

**MTPLM** 1589kg

**User payload** 221kg

### BED SIZES

Front Double 6ft 10in x 4ft

6in/208cm x 137cm

Or Two Front Singles 5ft 9in x

2ft 3in/176cm x 69cm

Rear Fixed Double 6ft 4in x 4ft

6in/193cm x 137cm

6-year body integrity, 2-year

component

### WARRANTY

6 years ingress, 3 years

component

### HEATING

Truma mains/gas space heater

with blown air

## Andrew says

### I LIKE

Incredible value for money, ATC stability, contemporary interior, good wardrobe

### I DISLIKE

Low lighting levels, awkward door to shower cubicle, no front hatches to seat bases, no socket near mirror

## EXTERIOR

'Look at me!' screams the not-very-discreet Bailey, wearing its oversized funky graphics with pride. Subtlety is not the Pageant's strong point, as Bailey is keen to pitch the brand as the van for trendsetters with an eye for style and value. But look beneath the swirls and stripes and you see a van that is 100 per cent Bailey, thanks to its fairly upright front and flat, strong, bonded roof profile. It may not have the exterior water tank of the Ace, but the Limousin does come with AL-KO ATC electronic stability to complement the AKS hitch, alloy wheels, and shock absorbers. A mains socket is also provided, perfectly positioned to perform in an awning.

8/10

## LOUNGING

Sally and Paul thought the lounge area in the Bailey appeared to be slightly 'more finished off' than the lounge in the Ace. This is no doubt attributed to the fact that the seats are of equal length, and back supports and bolster cushions are provided in all four corners. The upright front panel also allows for proper feet-up lounging to watch the TV in comfort. Your only option for the TV is to place it on the sideboard as, unlike the Ace, there is no aerial socket (though there is a mains socket) by the front chest. There is an extra window over the sideboard unit, and this compensates for the light lost to the Omnivent ceiling fan at the centre of the caravan.

8/10

## DINING

Paul's delight at finding the table placed conveniently under the kitchen sink (as opposed to in the washroom, as in the Ace) quickly turned to dismay as he tried to prise it out of its snug hidey-hole. It's not an easy operation to say the least. This job is made all the more difficult by the fact that the table itself is extremely heavy. Sally tried to erect it and only just managed it. However, once they'd got it in situ, the drop-down leaves proved useful for combining a large eating surface with easy accessibility to the seating. On its own the table accommodates four people with ease, and combined with the chest top, there was ample room to invite six people to dinner.

8/10

## NIGHT TIME

Up front, the Limousin's two seats are of equal length, which means making up the double is an easy job, although at only 5ft 9in long they are a little short to be used as singles. The main fixed bed is comfortable, and Sally and Paul found that the reading lights and shelves for the tea mugs were all well thought-out. However, we couldn't achieve a decent level of overall lighting to the front lounge area. Low-energy LED chains over the side windows conserve the battery, but the light they give off has rather a Shrek-like green tinge to it. And there are only two spotlights to the front lounge, thoughtlessly mounted directly underneath the rather dim wall lights.

7/10

## SCORES

10 BEST I'VE SEEN 9 TOP NOTCH 8 REALLY GREAT 7 PRETTY GOOD 6 CAN LIVE WITH IT  
5 AVERAGE 4 BELOW AVERAGE 3 QUITE POOR 2 NOT WORTH CONSIDERING 1 LEAVE IT ALONE

## NEW CARAVANS



Cut-off to the mattress allows better access to the wardrobe



Despite the darker teak finish, the Limousin has a bright, fresh interior



The Bailey has a Truma mains/gas space heater with blown air



Star of the kitchen show is the Dometic Series 8 fridge, with ice box and LED lights



### STORAGE

In some areas the Limousin excels over the Viscount, and in others the Ace runs rings around the Bailey. It is in the front seating area that the Limousin struggles. There are no fold-down flaps to allow access to the bunk bases, and we found it a struggle to lift up the seat bases. However, the smooth handle-free roof lockers are in plentiful supply which makes arranging the nik-naks within an easier job. We also found that the wardrobe was far easier to use than the Viscount's, especially when retrieving folded clothes. Paul was thrilled to find in the Bailey as in the Ace that there is an exterior hatch to allow access to the underbed area.

7/10

### KITCHEN

Here we have another galley that offers a decent amount of workspace until you get the draining board out. Sally commented that the four-burner hob would be rather difficult to clean, especially the fiddly area near the control knobs. In a different tack to Ace, Bailey has fitted an Omnivert extractor fan over the kitchen instead of a Heki roof light, although a new larger window is fitted. Personal choice dictates which option you will prefer. Star of the show is Dometic's latest Series 8 fridge, complete with removable ice box and very sexy blue LED lighting inside. Storage is fairly good, thanks in part to two proper sliding baskets in the kitchen cupboard.

7/10

### WASHROOM

In the Limousin's smallest room we have yet another shower compartment where the door rather inconveniently opens into the cubicle. Although this presented few problems for Paul, his shorter wife almost became trapped in the shower as the door has no handle on it! You have to grab the frame at the top of the door in order to open it. Storage is also a downfall in the Bailey, as most of it is open and not enclosed, so all those vital creams and potions will need to be stowed every time you hitch up to tow. Sally also searched in vain for a mains socket that was anywhere near a mirror, which many ladies find extremely important when drying hair.

7/10

### FINISH AND BUILD

It is hard not to be wowed by the smooth finish both inside and outside the Bailey. Bonded construction techniques make for a super strong body that is guaranteed for six years, so this should eliminate worries about the two sealing strips that lie flat on the roof. Upon close inspection, all seals were oozing an acceptable and reassuring amount of mastic. Inside, we were all impressed by the superb finish of the Technoform furniture, the durability of the cost-option fabrics, and the thickness of the lavish carpet. We could find just a couple of minor irritations: curtain ties not affixed to the wall, and some of the lino edges could have done with better trimming. Hardly show-stopping stuff!

8/10

# 2

# ACE JUBILEE VISCOUNT



This great table lines up well; it's a shame it is stored a long way away in the washroom



Spacious washroom isn't quite in the same league as those in two-berth vans



No side window in the Ace, but a clear roof light over the kitchen is compensation

## CARAVAN SPEC

### PRICE

£14,585 + £495OTR

### CONTACT

Ace Caravans, Dunswell Road, Cottingham, East Yorkshire HU16 4JX

**t** 01482 847332

**w** ace-caravans.co.uk

### BERTHS

4

### DIMENSIONS

**Internal length** 6.27m

**Overall width** 2.29m

**Shipping length** 7.96m

### WEIGHTS

**MIRO** 1431kg

**MTPLM** 1685kg

**User payload** 254kg

### BED SIZES

Front Double 7ft 0in x 4ft

6in/213cm x 137cm

Or Front Single 5ft 6in x 2ft

4in/167cm x 72cm

Plus Front Single 6ft 3in x 2ft

4in/190cm x 72cm

Rear Fixed Double 6ft 4in x 4ft

6in/193cm x 137cm

### WARANTY

Six years body integrity, three years component

### HEATING

Truma mains/gas space heater with blown air

## Andrew says

### I LIKE

Fantastic quality, Heki over middle of van, 40-litre inboard water tank, good lighting

### I DISLIKE

It's narrow between bed and wardrobe, shower door opens inwards, lack of kitchen storage and workspace

## EXTERIOR

Ice white and as cool as a cucumber, the smart Viscount epitomises the look of a sleek modern van without trying too hard. Minimalist blue and grey graphics set off the one-piece aluminium sides with style. The Jubilee's sleek looks are partly to do with the fact that there are no fussy protrusions such as barbecue points, exterior sockets, or wet lockers getting in the way. Of course, the upshot of that is that there is no barbecue point, exterior socket, or wet locker provided! This is of low importance to Sally and Paul who do not intend to use an awning. Shock absorbers to the alloy wheels and an AKS stabiliser hitch assure that there's a smooth ride on the road.

8/10

## LOUNGING

Paul immediately noticed the additional TV point by the front chest, complementing the main TV socket by the sideboard. However, as the nearside sofa has no bolster support next to the door, putting the TV on at the front is not an attractive option. Snuggling into the front corners caused our couple to bash the blinds with their heads, thanks to the sharply raked front panel, but Sally found the lounge cushions to be 'fine'. What impressed our couple most of all was the amount of natural light flooding into the caravan, mainly thanks to the central mini-Heki unit that replaces the Omnivent of yore. It's a clever feature that gets round the need for an extra side window.

7/10

## DINING

Most purchasers of vans like the Viscount will be couples, and for them the fold-out table at the front chest will be perfectly adequate to use for most mealtimes. However, if the TV was mounted here it would have to be lifted off every time you fancied a snack as the table extension lifts up and over. As the Dines go away as a family, the table is required at every mealtime. It did not impress Paul to learn that the table is stored next to the shower in the washroom, meaning he would have to haul it through the caravan and back three times a day. But once you've got it all in place the table does seat four people comfortably, or five if you pull out the chest top too.

7/10

## NIGHT TIME

One area in which the Viscount shines, literally, over the Pageant, is the lighting. There are four spotlights and two mains lights over the lounge, and the rest of the van is equally well served by both general and directional lighting. By the fixed bed, shelves are provided for the essential morning cuppa, but Paul was dismayed to see that one shelf was less than three inches wide; certainly not large enough for a tea cup. One of the front single beds is a mere 5ft 6in long, although the other is a full 6ft 3in long so at least that one is future-proof in case Hayden becomes a lanky teenager. A generous double may also be made at the front.

8/10

## SCORES

10 BEST I'VE SEEN 9 TOP NOTCH 8 REALLY GREAT 7 PRETTY GOOD 6 CAN LIVE WITH IT  
5 AVERAGE 4 BELOW AVERAGE 3 QUITE POOR 2 NOT WORTH CONSIDERING 1 LEAVE IT ALONE

## NEW CARAVANS



A gorgeous bed, but lack of cut-away makes for a narrow corridor

The Viscount has a contemporary interior and is lighter than the Bailey



Fabulous bright interior in the Ace, but the raked front takes up space



All mod cons, even a microwave, but poor storage and worktops



### STORAGE

First glance around the Viscount reveals a generous amount of storage space, but as we found during our test, all was not as it first seems. The roof lockers are enormous, and we found that we had difficulty effectively managing the copious space within them. A few have shelves, but others were just huge caverns with limited appeal. At least the seat lockers received a full thumbs-up, as the front panel effortlessly folds down to allow easy access to the storage space. The wardrobe came in for sharp criticism from the whole family. Not only does its design make retrieving folded clothes a challenge, but it's so close to the bed that it's hard to get at any clothes inside.

7/10

### KITCHEN

Sally was a little disappointed by the kitchen, as she was hoping for a larger working area than provided, although she commented that the low sideboard opposite would come in handy as an overspill area. With the draining board in place there isn't even room to stand a kettle. Storage is also fairly limited in the area. It is necessary to open the cupboard door to access the narrow cutlery drawer, and the basket unit beneath is fixed; it doesn't slide out which is a little tricky. As mentioned earlier, the mini-Heki roof light brightens the area and does an admirable job of evacuating cooking steam. The new Thetford fridge is a smart 107-litre electronic job.

7/10

### WASHROOM

Not all end-washrooms are the same. The Viscount's smallest room is lovely, but it's not quite in the same league as the end-washroom on, say, a two-berth van. Paul was highly critical of the shower door, which opens inwards. I found it easy to use, but strong, broad-shouldered caravanners like Paul will find it a struggle to squeeze past. It is also a pity that there is no drying rail in the shower cubicle. Sally was far more taken with the mains socket right next to the mirror in the bedroom, pointing out that it would prove extremely useful for her hairdryer. Storage in the washroom is very good: shallow, shelved, and spacious, which is just right in this area.

8/10

### FINISH AND BUILD

Possibly the most important category, and one in which the Ace excels. Try as we might, it was very difficult indeed to find fault with the Viscount. Some caravanners are not fans of the plastic-framed furniture, but there's nothing inherently wrong with this. In fact, I'm a huge fan of this system's solid moulded drawers that slide effortlessly on metal runners. Outside the van, a fine tooth comb failed to reveal anything that might cause concern. One area where Swift Group vans sometimes fall down is the locks to the exterior hatch doors, but even these operated effortlessly and effectively. I didn't even need to slap the battery box door to make sure both locks engaged!

9/10

## NEW CARAVANS

### OTHERS TO CONSIDER

#### ADRIA ADORA

#### PLUS 642UP

Price £15,226

Berths: 4

If it's kitchen space you want, this van has more than enough to prepare a feast. No rear washroom though, but the fixed bed may be configured as a double or twin singles

#### ELDDIS AVANTE

#### CLUB 624

Price £14,895

Berths 4

A viable alternative to the two vans on test, the Avante Club is finished in a contemporary style and rides on a BPW chassis. 2009 specification has yet to be announced.

#### DETHLEFFS CAMPER

#### DL 640 DB

Price £15,950

Berths 4

This German alternative may blow the budget, but in return you are getting a solid tourer that will last for many years. At 2000kg MIRO it's a bit of a heavy bruiser

#### SWIFT CHARISMA

#### 620

Price £14,585

Berths 4

This is a great caravan to consider from the Swift stable, but only do so if you have a hefty towcar - this one's a twin axle.



#### INSURANCE QUOTE

Typical insurance premium indication  
Contact [www.shieldyourcaravan.co.uk](http://www.shieldyourcaravan.co.uk)  
or call 0844 847 4478

Ace Jubilee Viscount £14,585  
£255.59 per annum

Bailey PS7 Limousin £13,995  
£245.54 per annum

(All New for Old cover quotes are based on 4-years claim free caravanning, with the van secured on a CaSSOA Gold storage site)

Many thanks to the wonderful team at the Camping and Caravanning Club's Normans Bay Site at Pevensey in East Sussex

## Final scores

1



#### BAILEY PAGEANT SERIES 7

Practicality ..... 8/10

Will stand up to abuse, but awkward side beds and entry-level fridge will frustrate

Value for money ..... 9/10

Commands a premium for its quality but still lacks the toys you would expect at this price

**Caravan**  
Our rating

78/100

2



#### ACE JUBILEE VISCOUNT

Practicality ..... 8/10

Easy to use generally; but the narrow corridor by the bed, awkward shower and dining table location are all drawbacks

Value for money ..... 9/10

Superb value for money given its impressive spec. Seriously, why would you pay more?

**Caravan**  
Our rating

78/100

### OUR TESTER'S CONCLUSIONS

It came as no surprise when I added up my scores that these caravans drew a tie in this neck-and-neck race. Funnily enough, even their main weaknesses are similar, that is, in both vans the shower cubicle doors are awkward and both store their dining tables in inconvenient places.

My personal taste means that I prefer the Heki roof light over the kitchen in the Ace, as opposed to the Ominvent in the Bailey, but others may disagree.

The front TV point in the Ace may also be an attractive draw for some, although open-ended seats and a fold-over chest top limits its appeal somewhat. Provision of a fourth interior socket near the bedroom mirror is a class touch, much appreciated by women, and the lighting is slightly better in this van.

However, rally fans, who are trying to

conserve precious battery power, would probably prefer the LED mood lighting of the Bailey. I think it's also an amazing feat that a van boasting attractive new features such as the classy Dometic Series 8 fridge and AL-KO ATC passes through the tills at such an incredible price.

It all comes down to personal choice at the end of the day. If towing such a large van fills you with fear, then go for the Bailey, with its ATC electronic stability system.

If hardcore winter touring is more your scene, then the underslung water tank of the Ace will delight. Other factors such as locality of your nearest dealer should also influence your decision.

Both caravans are great in different ways, so make your buying decision on what is right for your lifestyle!



### WE CHOSE

#### Bailey Pageant Series 7

'If we had to choose between the two vans, we would definitely go for the funky-looking Bailey Pageant. Niggles such as getting stuck in the shower due to the lack of handle on the shower door and the snug-fitting dining table are all forgivable as we love its more contemporary style. We also like the Ace and since they're similar prices this has not been an easy choice for us to make.'

**NEXT MONTH** Exclusive 2009 models! Avondale Sandpiper versus Abbey Spectrum 418