

Style AND substance?

The new Bailey Senator Arizona Series 6 certainly comes kitted out with a feast of hi-tech goodies - but can style and substance ever become comfortable bedfellows, asks **Shaun Gibbons**...

SPECIFICATION

Price: To be confirmed
 Shipping Length: 7.194m
 Internal Length: 5.61m
 Overall Width: 2.28m
 Overall Height: 2.58m
 Internal Headroom: 1.90m
 Awning Size: 1009cm
 MPTLM: 1500kg
 MRO: 1264kg
 Payload: 236kg

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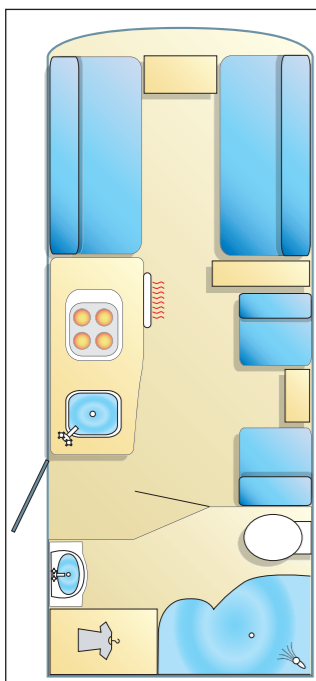
FOR & AGAINST

PROS

- Build quality
- Fantastic bathroom
- Goodies

CONS

- Flimsy partition rail
- 'Wedge' cushions



If New Labour is the new Senator Series 6 Arizona, and Alistair Campbell the archetypal caravan salesman, then no doubt the sales patter would inevitably start off with the obligatory 'state-of-the-art' this, and 'all-new' that...

But not everyone is gullible enough to swallow the 'style', preferring instead to concentrate on the substance. We want answers to questions like, "Will I need to master ancient Yogic techniques in order to squeeze my 6ft 3in frame into the shower?" or "Will the wife be able to apply mascara in comfort

and privacy?" OK, I'm poking fun - but you get the general gist.

First impressions on seeing the Series 6 Arizona sat on its pitch is that of, well...style! Its clear lines, unfussy graphics and classy front and back end make the Arizona understated and refined. Not very New Labour at all...

As well as its snazzy looks, the Senator series will be the first UK caravan range to feature the AL-KO anti-snake ATC trailer control system, which uses special sensors to apply the caravan brakes independently of the car's brakes if

it detects 'snaking'.

The Senator Series 6 will also be the first to include, as standard, a TRACKER Monitor Stolen Vehicle Recovery system. And what's more, the first twelve months subscription fee will be thrown in. Couple the TRACKER with the AL-KO's Secure portable wheel lock, and you could be looking at one of the most secure caravans on the market at the moment.

Stepping in, I was impressed with its look and feel - lots of light as well as a good-sized,



Nifty cushion set-up makes it easy to convert the dinette to twin bunks.

uninterrupted walkway. The cream-patterned upholstery, grey granite-effect worktops and pale wood finish create the impression of a modern living space.

The layout is made up of an end washroom, two side-facing settees at the front end - that can be made up to make a double bed - and in the middle, a kitchen opposite a small dinette that converts into bunk beds (a luxury two-berth, you'd probably say, but with room to fit a couple of kids or grandkids for the weekend).

Let's start with the best thing about the Series 6 Arizona - and that is, undoubtedly, its bathroom. With a heated towel rail, full-size step-in shower with Perspex surround and a mammoth wardrobe, this bathroom is possibly one of the best I've ever been in. That's the style, but what about the substance? Well, from a practical level, this bathroom is supremely

functional. Take, for instance, the full-size shower with a decent Perspex surround. There's also the wardrobe, from the Lion and the Witch fame. OK, it might not lead to Narnia, but it will no doubt swallow all your weekend gear, that's for sure. And what's more, the new Arizona features the all-new Thetford cassette toilet...

Next up is the lounge. As mentioned, the lounge comprises two side-facing settees that can be made into a transverse double bed by sliding out the struts from the fixed drawer between both settees. The settees are very comfortable, albeit a little shallow, but are of a good length. One small criticism: the stylish 'wedge' cushions at either end aren't very useful - maybe decent sized full cushions would make the comfortable settees well...even more comfortable. Worthy of note are the low-energy strip lights

that run along both settees. These give off good, ambient lighting, but there are four spotlights (two for each settee) if you intend to get stuck into that Peter Kay autobiography the in-laws bought you for Christmas.

If books aren't your thing, then you'll have to console yourself with another standard goodie... and that's the 17-inch flat-screen TV with combined radio/CD/DVD player.

There is a decent sized HEKI manual rooflight in the middle of the lounge that gives out an impressive amount of natural daylight as well...

Last up is the kitchen. Possibly the best aspect of the Arizona's kitchen is the large upright cupboard opposite the sink, oven and hob that has a fantastic slide-out metal storage rack - perfect for your tins and packet food. The kitchen area itself comprises a



There's an impressive amount of natural daylight in this Arizona.



Kitchen comes with new Dometic 115-litre fridge.



Fantastic walk-in shower.

OUR VERDICT

This caravan is a winner from start to finish. Luxury two berth, or practical four-berth, whatever you say about this caravan is that it does deliver. The Series 6 contemporary exterior, aligned with the nifty techno goodies inside really does, in our opinion, stand up to scrutiny. The finest aspect of the Arizona is its fantastic end bathroom...with a great step-in shower, heated towel rail and mammoth-sized wardrobe. But that's not all, the fittings and fixtures are specified to a high standard, and those 'soft closing' doors will have interior design aficionados up and down the land getting ever so excited. We'll await prices before making a final verdict.

ALTERNATIVES

- SWIFT CHALLENGER 530
£14,645
- ELDDIS ODYSSEY 524
£13,515
- COACHMAN VIP 520/4
£15,845

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new 115-litre Dometic fridge, a microwave oven stored in a compartment above the food preparation area and a four-ring gas hob above a grill and oven.

Another fine aspect of this kitchen, for the anally-retentive among us, are the two 'soft closing' shallow drawers.

On the opposite side of the fridge is a two-seater dinette. As previously mentioned, this can be converted to make either a single or double bunk, thanks to some nifty cushions that are unfolded to make two mattresses. My only criticism of this space is the flimsy curtain rail that can be used as a partition once the kids are in bed. Mind you, a reinforced concrete wall with barbed wire and Alsatians patrolling outside is the only way to stop giddy toddlers, so I guess it's really an observation, rather than a criticism.

So, there you have it...a caravan that does have style and substance. The next time you see Tony and Cherie shopping in your local Tesco's, you can tell them that the two can be comfortable bedfellows... ■