

Touch of class

Bailey has added finesse to the compelling Alu-Tech package with the new Unicorn. Will it convince our experienced testers?

BAILEY Unicorn Seville

Price	£16,999
Berths.....	2
Overall length.....	6.48m
Width	2.28m
Overall height.....	2.63m
MTPLM	1433kg
MiRO	1304kg
User payload	129kg

* TERMS EXPLAINED ON PAGE 160



BAILEY ALWAYS WOWS the crowds with good-value caravans fitted with the latest kit. But sometimes that isn't enough. Caravanners buying at the top of the market want good value and lots of kit. But they also need a tourer that makes them feel special, one with which they can fall in love.

Since introducing its distinctive Alu-Tech construction last year, Bailey heard from customers and dealers about the first of its new-construction ranges: the Pegasus. Regardless of how cutting-edge the building process was, people still wanted traditional interiors.

The manufacturer set about responding to the feedback and the result is the Unicorn. This new range offers the same 10-year body warranty and other advantages of

its Pegasus and Olympus ranges, but adds more craft and traditional design inside.

There are three Unicorn models on offer. The fixed-bed Barcelona and Valencia will be big sellers but we've decided to test the end-washroom, two-berth Seville. If Bailey really is going to tempt buyers into exchanging their swish Coachman and Lunar tourers, getting this most mainstream of layouts right is a must.

Early exchanges

A winding climb up Cheddar Gorge brought us to the Camping and Caravanning Club's Cheddar Mendip Heights site, where Tessa and Gary Challenger were busy settling into the Seville.

Gary couldn't wait to give us his views on the Seville's exterior.

The caravan had already attracted a lot of attention and Gary was not surprised that it had.

"It looks great," he said. "The badges are lovely. They feel nice and are posher than you get on a car. In fact, all the exterior graphics are good. The caravan really stands out on site."

Gary was surprised when asked about the Unicorn's white gas locker door and surround. Bailey had fitted grey ones to Olympus and Pegasus models, and customers had complained.

"I know some people didn't like the grey locker door, but it didn't bother me. I like the positive lock, though. It works very well."

It wasn't just the superficial stuff that impressed Gary either. He was on the lookout for more practical details as well.

"The step on the A-frame is really handy for washing the front of the van. It's not a new feature but it's very useful. The gutters over the locker doors and windows are sensible, too. We have had problems with water running into the front locker of our caravan so I can see the benefit of diverting water away from them."

Elsewhere, the waste drains were noticeably tucked under the skirt of the van, making access trickier than on rival tourers. But the removable water tank and twin wet lockers were a hit.

"I'm always happy to have the external barbecue point in case I need it," Gary said. "We use an awning, so the external mains socket and LED awning light are fantastic. They'll be great for when I'm painting in the evening."



The Unicorn comes with its own water carrier and dedicated locker



Radiators like this one carry heat from the Alde compact boiler



The waste drains are tucked under the skirt and tricky to access

Gary and Tessa tow with a Kia Sorento so weight is not an issue. Compared with similar vans from the 2010 model year, the Seville's 1460kg MTPLM is good. "This is impressive for the amount of equipment the van's got."

Top kit

Inside the Seville, Tessa noticed all this equipment as she started to prepare lunch. The first thing she commented on was how much storage space there was for all their caravanning kit.

"This storage above the sink is brilliant, and well lit, too," said Tessa. "Our crockery and glasses are easily and safely accommodated."

"In a lot of caravans the food-preparation area is very dark and dingy, but not here. I've prepared lunch and the lighting is great." >>

This month's testers

Gary and Tessa Challenger

Gary and Tessa have caravanned for the past 11 years in a variety of vans. Their current tourer is the compact 2001 Avondale Dart 350/2. They like it but the end-kitchen two-berth is cramped when they and Fifi the dog are on board, especially with the bed made.

The allure of Bailey's new Unicorn range had them itching to get inside. The new tourer would also be a safe match for their 2005 Kia Sorento, which is a very capable towcar and a favourite among caravanners.



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Tessa was glad to find that the wardrobe was extra spacious. The shower was reduced to make room for it, but the shower is still a good size

Practical Caravan Live-in test End-washroom, two-berth



Dedicated drinks cabinet harks back to tourers of the past



The 16in flat-screen TV has a built-in DVD player and card reader



Tessa and Gary relax over lunch in the spacious lounge. The Unicorn provides much more living space than their current two-berth caravan. When the meal is cleared away, the lightweight table goes into a dedicated cupboard

"It's the little touches that make the van special," explained Tessa. "Even the tap feels solid. I like the microwave, too. They are usually mounted next to the roof but this one has been moved lower, which makes it much easier for shorter people like me to reach."

It didn't stop there either. The 115-litre fridge with removable freezer proved popular with Tessa "It's a wonderful size for a two-berth caravan."

Gary also felt the table storage worked well, and that the pull-out wire trays were very practical and would solve one recurring problem. "We often find things at the back of the cupboard after five years and think, 'Ah, that's where I left it!'" he recalled with a laugh.

They still had a couple of reservations. "The oven is on the small side for me," said Tessa. "It's perfect for two but I'm used to something a little bigger for when we have guests to dinner."

The lack of a roof-mounted extractor fan was not considered a problem. The mini Heki over the kitchen not only let in plenty of light but would also permit sufficient ventilation when open.

Good
Great finishing touches throughout, from the comfortable, practical lounge and bed area to the bright, spacious kitchen. A huge washroom and Alde heating complete the package.

Bad
Heating controls are confusing at first and the oven isn't huge. Some of the detailing outside is still a little clumsy, such as the securing screws for the corner bumpers.

Heating up
One of the big selling points of the Unicorn is the inclusion of the advanced Alde heating system. Tessa and Gary were impressed when its benefits were explained, but the most noticeable improvement is that the main unit is hidden away, unlike the conventional blown-air heaters, which are often found under the wardrobe or fitted in the sideboard. This frees up valuable storage space in the centre of the



The kitchen is well designed to provide ample work surface and is bright and airy, thanks in part to the mini Heki roof light just above it

van. Still, Gary was left scratching his head as he studied the Alde's control panel.

"It looks confusing but the same thing is true of all new gadgets these days - like our new digital camera! It is always hard to use them at first, but it soon gets easier," he reasoned.

Tessa noticed one of the Alde's radiators under a lounge seat but did not believe it encroached on space. "I've read that it can be slower to heat up than normal

caravan heating. But I like the space it frees up and it doesn't take that long to work at all. Everyone says once it is warm, it stays warmer for longer. I like the sound of that."

Bailey has been accused of putting specification above everything else. Aside from the heating system, there is a 16in, flat-screen TV, with built-in DVD player and data card reader for viewing holiday snaps. Once the novelty of these features had worn



OUR BEST BIT



Storage is well thought out, including a large drawer under the basin for potions and lotions

The large rectangular basin was a hit with the Challengers, but not as much as the laundry bin just to the right of it. They never know where to put their dirty clothes in their current tourer



The Seville's big double is easy to assemble and is comfortable. The lighting is effective and you can turn it off without getting out of bed

off, it was clear that Gary and Tessa were still wowed by the Unicorn's interior.

"Everything inside has a high-quality feel and finish," Tessa said while sitting in the lounge. "I love the pull-out sections that turn the seats into day beds. It's a great way to relax and I'd happily sit here reading during the day."

Gary grinned broadly and agreed. "These seats are very

comfortable," he said, putting his feet up. "I like the blinds Bailey has fitted in here, too, but the clasps feel fragile so they need careful handling."

The same mechanism that makes for pull-out leg rests by day makes it easy to convert the lounge into a bed. Both of them cooed when they saw just how simple the process was. "This is much easier to set up than our

current bed," Gary said as he dropped the backrest cushions into position.

There are also thick, curved armrests, bolsters and an extra deep, removable front shelf. One thing that has drawn criticism in recent Bailey models is poor lighting. Tessa had no such complaints. "The lighting is warm and cosy," she said. "The bed arrangement is great and the lighting is quite subtle, but it's effective. It has a lovely ambience."

Gary agreed: "The lights and switches are perfect. In our caravan, we have to stand up to turn the lights off. But here the switches are easily accessible when you're lying down."

Space race
Two-berths with this layout are universally popular because their end washrooms are spacious. This is the final area of the Seville to come under the Challengers' scrutiny. Because Gary and Tessa's current van has a small washroom, we expected them to be impressed by the Seville's. But it was the way the space was used that impressed them the most.

"There is a huge amount of room in here. It is lovely," said Tessa. She approved of the generous wardrobe, but this came at the expense of the shower cubicle, which was smaller than those in rival tourers. But this did not concern the Challengers. >>

We say



Nigel Donnelly says The Unicorn range are the first Alu-Tech vans you could fall in love with. In two-berth Seville form, it combines traditional interior styling with cutting-edge construction. Well-specified, attractive and desirable.

Live-in test: End-washroom, two-berth

“Yes, the shower is smaller than in other vans, but it’s not small,” she said. “Considering how much wardrobe space you get as a result, I don’t mind at all.”

Gary also seemed happy with the Bailey’s washroom. “The heated towel rail is a brilliant touch – not something you see a lot. The hooks above the rail are

great, too, so wet coats can be hung to dry.”

Tessa said, “The little touches, such as this lovely basin and the shaving mirror on the wall, make the whole experience more luxurious. The laundry basket is one of the best. We can never find a place for dirty washing and this keeps it all out of sight.”

Decision time

After thoroughly rooting around inside the Seville, we made our way back outside to collect our thoughts on this latest offering from Bailey.

“I’m tempted to return to a bigger van because of the space,” admitted Tessa, “and this would be a lovely way to do it. You get

a lot for your money and it would be money well spent.

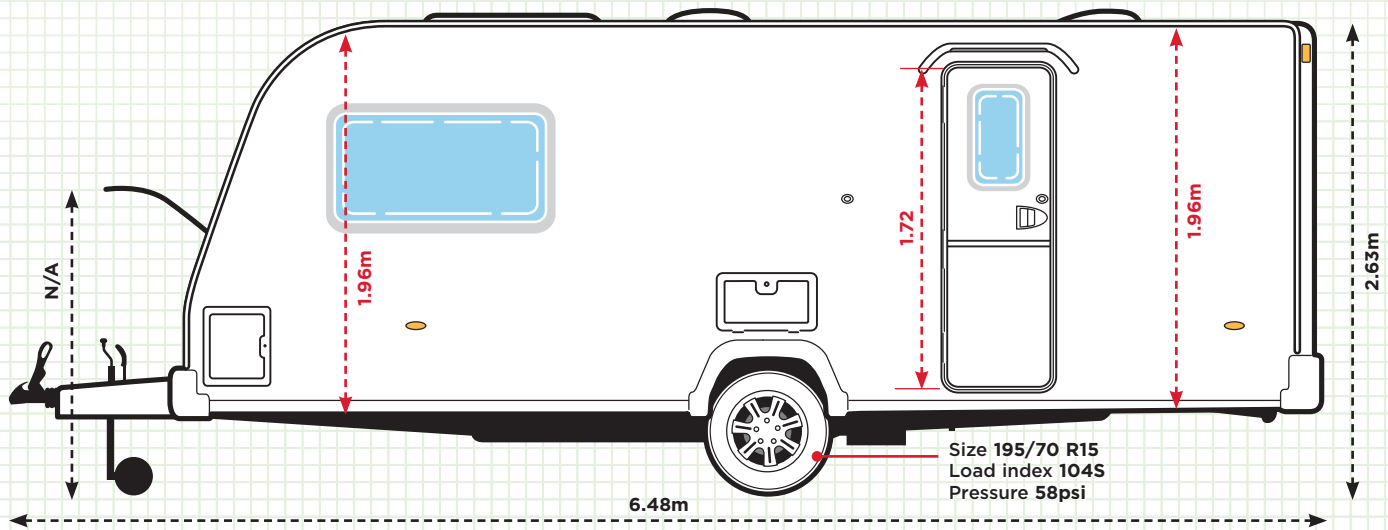
Gary agreed: “You can tell a lot of thought has gone into this caravan. It shines through again and again. There are clever details everywhere – the badges and graphics, lighting and heating. And that is what’s really impressive about the Seville.”

BAILEY Unicorn Seville

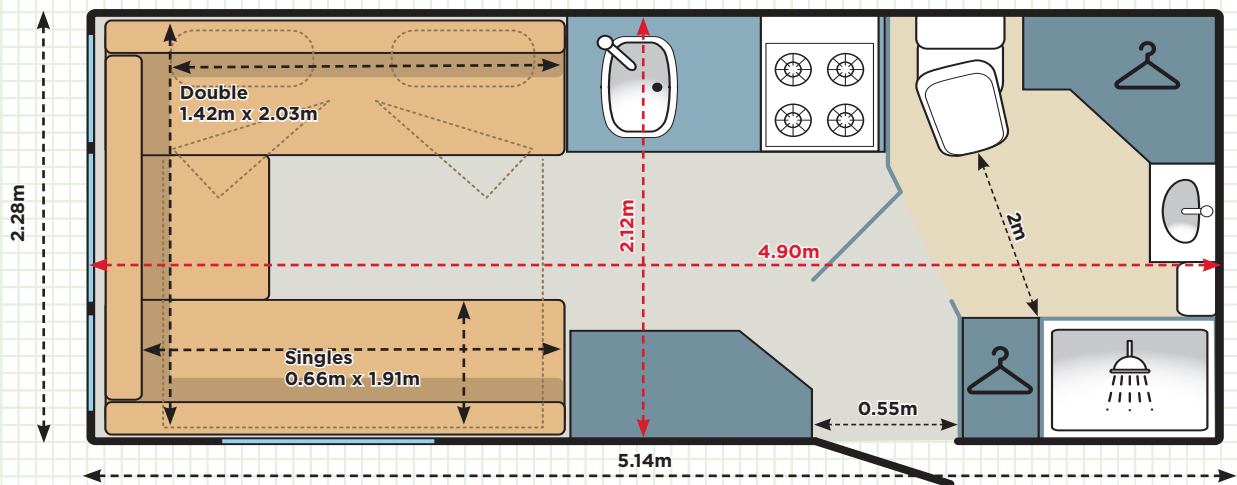
Bailey of Bristol, South Liberty Lane, Bristol BS3 2SS
 Web www.bailey-caravans.co.uk Dealers 80

Vital stats

Price £16,995 Berths 2
 MiRO 1304kg MTPLM 1433kg
 User payload 129kg
 Awning 968cm



CARAVANGUARD
 INSURANCE
 QUOTE
 £188*



STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Construction Aluminium/GRP sandwich sidewalls, seamless roof and front panel, extruded aluminium frame. Al-Ko chassis.
External equipment Al-Ko AKS 3004 stabiliser and ATC system. Buttonless handbrake. Alloy wheels. Spare wheel and carrier. Two-piece door with flyscreen. External gas/mains output.
Heating Alde radiator heating and water heater.

Lounge Blinds and flyscreens to all windows. Drop-in carpets. Slide-out units to front bed boxes. Heki roof light. TV and DVD player. Radio/CD/MP3 player. Stereo speakers. Clock.
Kitchen Dometic 115-litre fridge with detachable freezer compartment. Four-burner gas hob. Combined grill and oven. Recessed sink with removable draining board. Microwave oven.
Washroom Thetford C-250 swivel cassette

toilet. Separate shower. Heated towel rail.
Security CRiS identity number etched to all windows and chassis. Concealed data chip. Al-Ko Secure wheel lock. Tracker alarm.
Warranty 3 years parts. 6 years water ingress plus free 4-year extension – 10 years in total.
OPTIONS
 Choice of upholstery (no charge). Bed linen (£199). Wraparound seating (£245).