



# COMFORT ZONE

**BOASTING AN ELEGANT FIXED BEDROOM AND FULL-WIDTH WASHROOM, THIS MODEL IS A TOURER'S DREAM, SAYS ROB MCCABE**



**T**HE COMBINATION of fine comfort, good equipment and light weight has long made the Lunar Clubman a popular range among British caravanners, and it has found special favour among those dedicated souls who tour all year round, often in out-of-the-way places.

The arrival of the brand-new SE model for 2010 adds an extra string to the Clubman bow – namely a fixed bedder with a top-spec, full-width washroom at the back. Like the Swift Charisma 550 we tested recently, the Clubman delivers this much-admired layout on a single axle.

Let's take a closer look.

## CONSTRUCTION

Lunar's own publicity material makes copious use of the word 'lightweight'. It's

true that the Clubman SE's 1299kg MRO isn't too bad at all – but the upmarket Senator California from Bailey boasts a near-identical layout and leaves the factory 40kg lighter. It's considerably cheaper, too.

So, let's not bandy the L-word around too readily with regard to the Clubman. It looks and feels like a sturdy beast, which is obviously not a coincidental observation: the almost-over-engineered double-bed frame must weigh a proverbial tonne by itself. Open every door and every locker, and evidence of fine workmanship awaits you.

Here's another Lunar that, where build quality is concerned, cements the firm's reputation as a caravanning heavyweight (gosh – can I use that word?).

## TOWABILITY

The Clubman comes with Al-Ko's hitch stabiliser as well as its ATC (automatic stability control) system, which springs into action if sensors detect a whiff of lateral instability. It momentarily applies the caravan's brakes as necessary; and in many instances, the driver will never know it has been activated.

With these two on-board safety fitments as standard, each trip out with the Clubman should be a journey along Easy Street, given a good match and a sensible loading regime.

## USABILITY

On paper it's a four-berth but in reality the SE – like nearly all fixed-double-bed tourers – will be used as a two-berth. In this regard, it really delivers.

Of course, the main draw in all similarly laid-out caravans is the double bed. Once you've attached your undersheet and thrown on a duvet, that's pretty much it bedmaking-wise for the rest of the holiday – and you won't encounter much more user-friendliness than that.

The SE is 7ft 6in wide too, so you can glide effortlessly past the bed on your way to the full-width washroom at the back and enjoy a fortnight of not treading on toes in the front lounge. It feels delightfully roomy throughout, particularly so around the important kitchen area towards the middle of the caravan.

There are probably more cupboards and lockers than a couple will need – especially given the vast amount of stowage space available under the bed – and there's a generous sprinkling of open shelving as well. The store for the free-standing table is right behind the lounge, so there's very little manhandling involved if you decide to use it – the front chest top extends simply and securely to take care of most need-a-table situations.

Storage space is boosted by the absence of a space heater – there's a usefully huge cupboard where you'd normally find that. No, Lunar doesn't expect you to bring your own fan heater or just pull on an extra jumper when it gets a bit parky. There's an on-board Alde central heating system, with cunningly concealed outlets in all the important areas of the caravan.

The very early production status of our test model meant that I couldn't try the system, but I've spoken to caravanners who have – and the consensus is that it's a terrific set-up, being not only unobtrusive and quiet, but also effective.

The fabric-look concertina window blinds look fantastic when they're in use, imparting an air of class on the already impressive Clubman interior. By their very nature, though, they don't present an impermeable barrier to mosses and midges – so, given the lack of flyscreens



on any of the windows, they're actually something of a weak spot.

If you want to keep winged pests at bay while enjoying some fresh air, you'll have to use the flyscreen-protected sunroofs – the bedroom and the lounge have one each – or entrance door.

## LIVING AND SLEEPING

Lunar states that the Clubman's front lounge can provide either a double bed or two singles. That's stretching it a bit, seeing as how not many of us would be stretching much on beds that are just five feet long. But the double is quick to make up, comfy and plenty big enough for any occasional overnighters.

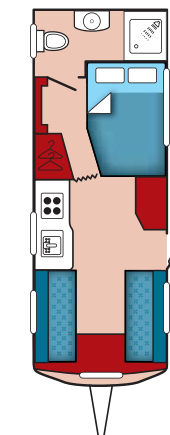
In daytime mode, each sofa has five upholstery pieces to its name – two scatter cushions, two substantial bolster cushions for leaning into and a longer roll cushion for that wee bit of extra lumbar

support that I'm sure many owners will appreciate. Even if you use them only for appearance, that's fine – just stick them in a bedlocker the rest of the time. Either way, the lounge really makes the grade as a comfortable place to be.

Caravan manufacturers frequently tell me that an increasing number of buyers are looking for more traditionally upholstered lounges – and when they look as appealing as they do in the Clubman, it's perhaps not too difficult to see why.

The bedroom gives off the same aura of restrained elegance. The bed is as peachy as it looks, and each occupant has his or her own reading light (placed well out of the way so you're not rubbing shoulders with it) and a shelf. Specs and a small beaker of water is about all you'll accommodate on the latter, but it's not too much of a struggle to reach up to one of the more capacious overhead lockers. >>

ABOVE: Kitchen is well equipped but a little short on light and workspace  
OPPOSITE  
BOTTOM: Appealing lounge





Good to see a mains socket in here, too – perfect for the hairdryer/straighteners or for charging up your mobile phone overnight while keeping it close at hand.

Following usual form, a sliding door closes the bedroom off from the rest of the caravan and a venetian blind shuts off the hatch by the dresser. When this hatch is open, you can turn the TV around and watch the late film in bed.

### KITCHEN

The only real question mark hanging over this area is a lack of work/serving surface, although you can at least use the drainer area next to the sink or the glass lid. The gloss-black finish of said sink/drainer (as well as the hob) will cause much showroom debate, I'm sure. Personally, I don't think it has the class of brushed stainless steel.

Lunar took a big leaf from the Swift Group's book when it copied its innovation of implementing a three gas/one electric hob configuration on some of its 2009 models. There's nothing wrong with that and it's good to see it here. With separate grill and oven, microwave, ceiling-mounted extractor and nice, big fridge – not to mention plenty of space to move around in – it's a kitchen that very nearly ticks all the right boxes.

### WASHROOM

First impressions do count for a lot, and the SE's smallest room (although it's a very big example of the breed, running the full-width of the caravan) is impressive to behold as soon as you open the beefy, domestic-style door.

First to catch the eye is the polished tubing for the central heating system along

the back wall: it's a high-profile reminder that you're in a tourer with a generous helping of panache.

The nearside of the washroom is dominated by the spacious, fully-sealed shower cubicle, which offers sensible stowage for shampoo and shower gel. With an overhead locker, a cupboard under the wash-hand basin and open shelving, it's all very sensible on the other side of the shower as well.

You'll have no condensation worries: there's a frosted window and, pleasingly, a wide-opening sunroof to expel any moisture and to help make the room feel pleasantly light and airy.

As usual, the loose-fit carpet extends all the way around the loo, which regular readers will know I find less than appealing – but, really, this is a washroom almost without peer.

### LIGHTING AND ELECTRICS

There's no so-called 'mood' lighting in the Clubman – unless, of course, you want to include the snazzy, cool-blue-lit Lunar logo under the cooker that comes on with the rest of the lights.

The rest of the lights are very good, offering lots of options in all areas (except the kitchen which, again, gets one little striplight). The washroom, for example, has a ceiling dome light and a separate lamp for the shower, plus a downlighter above the mirror – all very commendable.

The cocktail cabinet benefits from a neat little LED cluster to show your gin and whisky off to their best effect – what a shame Lunar couldn't find it in its heart to plonk another one above the hob.

Mains sockets are all where you'd expect them to be; the one by the nearside dresser

is next to the usual aerial and 12V sockets, plus a satellite point.

**VERDICT**  
This is expensive, but definitely worth a place on your shortlist if the fixed-bed, full-width washroom 'dream ticket' is what you're after. It's hard to fault, really, although the lack of bug protection on all the windows will be an issue in summer – especially in warmer overseas climes. ■

ABOVE  
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Check out that bed! It's as comfy as it looks; top marks for this full-width washroom with central heating; just like at home – the shower cubicle is spacious and fully-sealed; a perfect spot for the telly – just turn it around to watch in bed



Insurance: 01342 336610  
Info: lunarcaravans.com

Technical	
RRP	£18,390 OTR
Internal length	5.79m (19ft 0in)
Shipping length	7.36m (24ft 2in)
Overall width	2.28m (7ft 6in)
Overall height	2.65m (8ft 8in)
Internal headroom	1.96m (6ft 5in)
MRO	1299kg (25.6cwt)
Payload	191kg (3.7cwt)
MTPLM	1490kg (29.3cwt)
Berths	4

