

Auto-Sleeper M-Star

The most luxurious campervan ever from a UK mainstream manufacturer



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Mercedes Sprinter

PRICE FROM Around £115,000
(price to be finalised)

BERTHS 2

TRAVEL SEATS 2

LENGTH 7.15m

WIDTH 2.02m

HEIGHT 2.90m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,880kg

PAYLOAD 480kg

ALSO CONSIDER

IH 690 RD

RP Explorer 2

WE make no excuses for including the M-Star in this A-class special issue.

Firstly, at an anticipated cost of £115,000, it's in the same territory as some A-class motorhomes. Secondly, as the most upmarket van conversion ever to come from a major UK maker, it's competing for similar buyers. And, perhaps most importantly, we couldn't wait another month to bring you our review of this exciting newcomer.

At over 7m long, the M-Star is a big step up in size, as well as price, from Auto-Sleepers' familiar Peugeot-based campervans. It's also the company's first ever Sprinter-based van conversion (although the brand has long offered

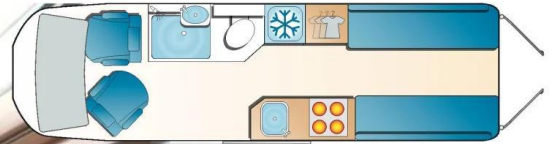
Mercedes coachbuilds). Like the coachbuilds, it is based on a rear-wheel drive chassis (Sprinter 417) with the latest 163bhp engine and nine-speed automatic gearbox.

Here, the spec goes a lot further, as it needs to in order to justify the hefty price tag. So, the M-Star comes with the Mercedes Parking Package with integrated reversing camera, Crosswind Assist, heated Comfort cab seats with full leather trim, and Electric Closing Assist on the sliding side door. Externally, it has alloy wheels, a choice of four body colours and automotive-style flush glass windows. A 30-litre underslung gas tank, 110W solar panel and 100Ah lithium leisure battery are also standard.

More importantly, Auto-Sleepers says this is the first ever van conversion to be fitted with Alde 'wet' central heating. Boasting no less than six radiators, plus two fan-assisted radiators for the cab and the area around the sliding door, the system also includes Alde Flow for continuous hot water on demand, up to the 70-litre fresh water capacity.

Revealed as a prototype at the Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show at the NEC, the first M-Star features a classic rear lounge, two-berth format, similar to the well-established (Peugeot/Fiat-based) Warwick XL. However, other layouts are expected to follow to create a three-model M-Star range.





BUY AN AUTO-SLEEPER FROM...

Auto-Sleepers has 31 dealers around the UK, including Highland Campers, Dicksons of Perth and BC Motorhomes in Scotland, Central Motorhomes in Northern Ireland and 3 A's Leisure and Stowford Leisure in Wales.



In England, its retailers include all 13 branches of Marquis, as well as numerous independent motorhome dealers.

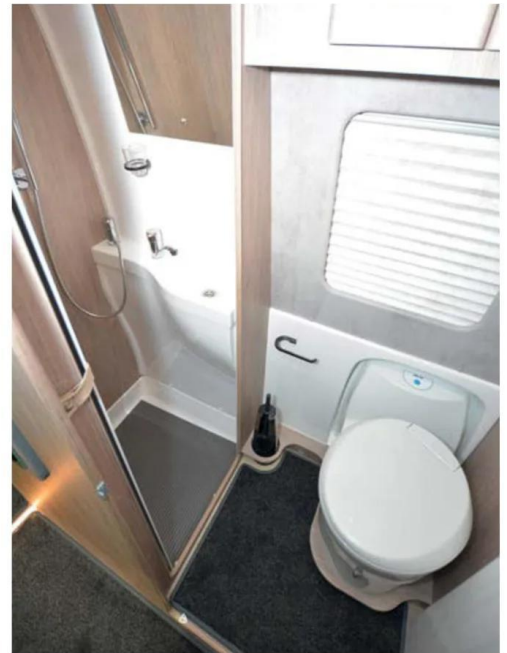
The company also has dealers in Belgium, Holland, Germany, New Zealand and even Thailand.

WHO IS AUTO-SLEEPERS?

The picturesque Cotswold village of Willersey seems like an unlikely home for a motorhome manufacturer but Auto-Sleepers has been here for over 60 years. What started out as a family business under the Trevelyans, following the conversion of a Morris van for their own use, is now a company producing up to 700 vehicles a year as part of the Trigano Group.



Its range includes the pop-top Air on Ford Transit Custom (marking a return to this sector), eight Peugeot Boxer-based campervans, plus nine Peugeot coachbuilts (two on Al-Ko chassis) and five Mercedes coachbuilts. The latest addition to the range is the M-Star, the company's first Mercedes Sprinter campervan, while Peugeot models can be ordered on the Fiat chassis instead when an automatic gearbox is required.



The first of the line-up has a generous rear lounge with side settees, retaining access through the rear barn doors, where a wide step will be added in production. In typical Auto-Sleeper style, there are scatter cushions and armrests, while full leather upholstery here is just about the only extra-cost item from the factory. The sofas are each 1.86m long (manufacturer's figure), so they can quickly be converted into twin beds, or you can fill the aisle with the backrest cushions to form a 1.66m-wide lengthways double.

When the rear of the motorhome is in use as a bedroom, the cab can double up as a secondary seating area. Both front seats swivel and Auto-

Sleepers has added pockets and trim above the windscreen to better integrate this zone with the rest of the living area. As usual in a Merc, there's full-height walk-through into the cab.

Of course, the main entrance is the wide sliding door and, as you enter, a large mirror faces you on the washroom wall. Inside, the ablutions include a separate wet area with the moulded basin and shower, while the swivel toilet is in the carpeted part with a cupboard above.

To the rear of the bathroom, the full-height furniture continues. Next comes the super-sized (157-litre) compressor fridge with removable freezer section, above which is a Dometic microwave. Then there's a generous wardrobe

and, in the ceiling above, you'll spot the habitation air-conditioning – another standard feature in this fully loaded campervan.

On the nearside, the kitchen doesn't look as expansive at first, but that impression soon changes when you deploy the folding worktop flaps at either end – the forward one is huge and can be raised and lowered with one hand. Also fitted here are a Thetford cooker with three gas rings, a mains hotplate and separate grill and oven – just as you'd expect in a large Auto-Sleeper coachbuilt. In production models, this is also expected to better coordinate with the black fittings, such as the sink, tap and cupboard handles.