

A D V E N T U R E ,

In a departure from its range of traditional family tourers, Swift Group decided to make a different type of caravan. It's called BaseCamp and **CANDY EVANS** was given an exclusive early look at it

Let us know what you think of the BaseCamp on Twitter by sending your messages to **@FriendlyClubMag**, using the hashtag **#BaseCamp**



IT'S A BOLD NAME that evokes challenging expeditions, mountain ranges and the promise of exciting adventures to come. BaseCamp is a name that might be more at home in the Himalayas than in a muddy quarry somewhere in Warwickshire, but that's where we managed to grab an exclusive early glimpse of this compact but stylish unit.

Over the years the Swift Group has been known for its smart, comfortable caravans for families and couples, many of whom have been enjoying Swift caravans for years. Perhaps even >>

PHOTOGRAPHY: TIM WALLACE

O N A S M A L L E R S C A L E



decades. BaseCamp seeks to break the mould and put the company at the centre of adventurous camping, targeting those whose holidays could include cycling, surfing or anything that pushes the boundaries.

Talking of pushing the boundaries, we decided to bring in a real adventurous soul to help us assess if BaseCamp could live up to its name.

Step forward adventure runner Jamie Ramsay. He's just finished a 17,000km solo run through the Americas. It involved a fair amount of camping as you can probably guess, and even when he's back at home in the UK Jamie's no stranger to spending time in a small motorhome, being the owner of a Mazda Bongo campervan conversion. So he seemed the ideal candidate for an adventurer's-own view on BaseCamp's credentials.

He said: "It's perfect for someone who wants to get out there and do something a bit more adventurous. Just chuck in the bikes, the wetsuit – whatever you need to do – just get out there and have an adventure.

"People think you can't camp at a campsite if you're being an adventurer but sometimes the campsite can be your base camp. Whatever challenges you is an adventure and whatever brings you

enjoyment. It doesn't have to be huge."

You can read more about Jamie and his running expeditions on page 36 or visit www.jamieramsay.net to find out more about him.

Swift itself has been tight-lipped ahead of the caravan's UK debut, but it's marketing BaseCamp as a 'crossover' camping vehicle, ideal for would-be buyers who hold B-category licences.

Swift's Head of Marketing Andy Newhall said: "Swift is thrilled to be launching Basecamp, our exciting new venture specifically designed for life's adventurers who want to get out and do more, all through the year. Towable by

Above: Adventurer Jamie Ramsay relaxes in the BaseCamp. Bottom right: The clean lines of the living area. Bottom left: Some of the eye-level storage is removable

smaller cars, with 13 different graphic packages to choose from and a host of helpful features such as anchor points for large kit, Basecamp is the fun, fresh and funky way to enjoy the great outdoors."

It remains to be seen if the BaseCamp will strike a chord with adventurous UK caravan buyers as its official launch was held at the Motorhome and Caravan Show at Birmingham's NEC from >>



Swift BaseCamp exclusive |||||

at a
glance

Price as tested £16,535

Prices start at £15,940

Club Care insurance £383

Berths Two

Bed size Double 1.95m x 1.83m
or two singles 1.83m x 69cm

Kitchen Three-burner hob; grill; oven

Electrics Five 230V sockets; 12V socket with TV aerial point; USB socket

Gas Mountings for two 6kg cylinders

Length x width x height 5.10m x 2.28m x 2.71m

Mass in Running Order 904kg

Maximum Authorised Mass 3,500kg

Maximum Technically Permissible

Laden Mass 1,015kg

User payload 111kg

BE licence required No, with suitable vehicle such as Jeep Renegade 2.0

MultiJet 140hp 4WD 9-speed Auto Low

Warranty Three years parts and labour; ten years water ingress

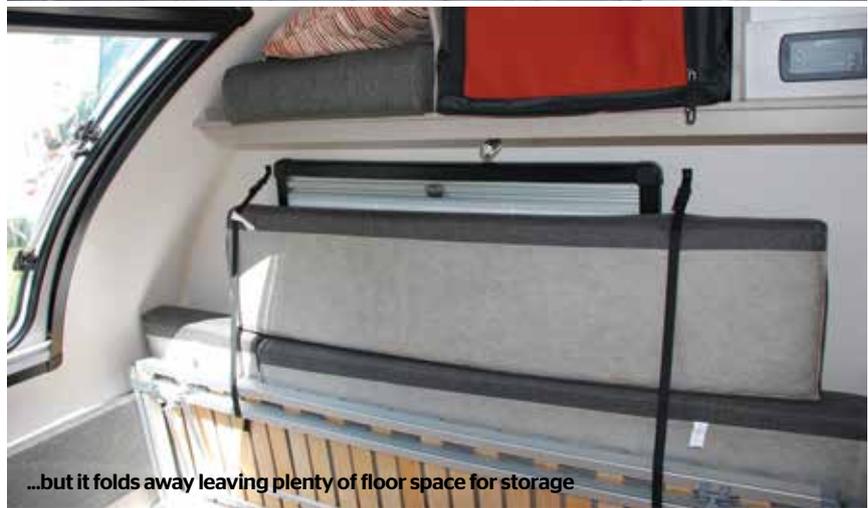
Supplier Swift

Web www.swiftgroup.co.uk

Tel 01482 875740



The double bed is vast when made up...



...but it folds away leaving plenty of floor space for storage

11 to 16 October.

So, how does the BaseCamp measure up? On the practical side BaseCamp starts by locating the main door at the back so you can load larger equipment easily.

The squared-off exterior follows the trend for rugged-looking SUVs and cross-over vehicles, such as the Jeep Renegade we used for our photo shoot.

There's a good collection of exterior graphics to choose from – ours happens to match the Jeep – but if you prefer a Union Flag decal or bright stripes, they are available.

Inside, at the front of the caravan, is a large, flexible space. Two bench seats readily fold away to give room for a couple

of bikes, also revealing fixing points on the floor to keep them held securely.

At night those same seats convert into an enormous, comfortable double bed. No fussy knee rolls to worry about when you're making it up either.

Storage is flexible, so although there aren't bed boxes under the seats, there's plenty of space for removable boxes or bags. Swift extends this concept at eye-level-cupboard height, where the traditional lockers are replaced by fabric baskets that can be taken out of the 'van for packing, co-incidentally reducing the caravan's overall weight in the process by avoiding too many heavy cupboards.

Nevertheless, BaseCamp is neither

as basic, small nor lightweight as some Continental activity caravans. In our test unit, equipped with the Plus Pack, there was a full kitchen including a hob with three gas burners, separate grill and oven, fair-size three-way Dometic fridge and funky pop-up pillar with electric sockets. There was even a security alarm. Scatter cushions bring a touch of the exterior colours inside and the window flyscreens have a sleek lined pattern. The washroom is also fully fitted with a water-saving EcoCamel shower, cassette toilet and more.

I don't think you'd find any of these at a traditional expedition base camp.

Nevertheless, it's an eye-catching, rugged-looking caravan that definitely attracted attention on our trip around Warwickshire and Oxfordshire.

So does BaseCamp live up to its name? My first impression is it will still be at its best in a campsite setting (probably with an electric hook-up) rather than in the foothills of the Himalayas, but if you're in the market for a campervan or similar to give comfort after a full day's activity, BaseCamp is a fun, practical option.

■ Head online to www.myccc.co.uk/ magazine to see more pictures and a video of the BaseCamp. 



There's a three-way Dometic fridge



The separate grill and oven comes with the Plus Pack