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Sterling Eccles SE Ruby

Is this 2015 model from Swift a little gem, as the name suggests? **STUART KIDMAN** spent a week in one to find out

Daytime use:
Our unit was equipped with a JVC stereo system. There were also plenty of 230V sockets (including an external one) to keep our various devices charged and a large skylight at the front of the 'van allowing in plenty of light. We liked the ruby red colourways used in both the curtains and some fabrics to offset the contrasts seen elsewhere. As mentioned, it felt a little small for four, but was still manageable.

FIXED BED layouts are often not seen as the ideal design for families when it comes to caravanning.

True to form, the Sterling Eccles SE Ruby that I and my family (wife Holly and boys William, six, and Toby, four) used for a week felt as though it could have done with a bit more room inside.

However, this is just about the only criticism I can level at it, because while we occasionally had to step over each other, the Ruby - replaced for 2016 with the Eccles 570 - was great in almost every other sense.

From the Grade 3 insulation, which kept the night-time chills at bay, to the copious storage and locker space that enabled us to bring loads of kit with us, the unit was a pleasure to use.

The end washroom is spacious while the fixed cut-away bed (about right for my modest height) sits opposite a large wardrobe next to a mirror beneath which the freestanding table is stored.

Up front are parallel bench seats that convert into the second double bed, along with overhead locker storage and three drawers.

Opposite the well-appointed kitchen is the entry door, with a small cut-away section of worktop on the right as you enter that's ideal for a television or, in our case, children's toys.

Throughout, Swift (our unit was loaned to us by Marquis Motorhomes and Caravans) has coupled cream interior fixtures with darker fabrics and panelling to create a really nice contrast that leads to a bright, contemporary ambience.



Kitchen:
This is home to a microwave, a hob with three burners and an electric hotplate, an oven and grill, plus a Dometic fridge freezer. In short, there's everything you'll need, along with decent storage, from the cutlery and utensil drawers to the tall cupboard housing the pull-out wire racks and draining board. Overhead is a welcome Thule extractor fan. Workspace is limited, but a fold-up section to the left helps matters no end.



Sleeping:
Though the fixed bed takes up a lot of room, the payoff is the cavernous storage area beneath it. You gain access to it either by lifting the bed on gas-assisted struts or through the external locker door. It swallowed chairs, a table, a barbecue, more chairs and the water carriers, as well as already holding the caravan's spare wheel, though in transit much of this was distributed over the axle. Up front the daytime seating easily turns into a decent-sized double, which the boys slept soundly on.



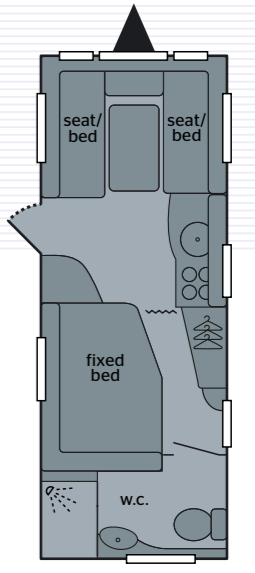
Washroom:
This is very spacious, and offers plenty of storage as well as a decent shower fitted with an Ecocamel water-saving showerhead. There's a Thetford swivel-bowl toilet, while the basin forms part of a tapering vanity unit that recedes away from the shower cubicle. There's also a heated towel rail next to the toilet.

ON TEST



at a glance

- Price as tested £21,540
- Prices start at £19,025
- Club Care insurance £287
- Berths Four
- Length x width x height 7.25m x 2.25m x 2.65m
- Mass in Running Order 1,336kg
- Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass 1,489kg
- User payload 153kg
- BE licence required Yes
- Manufacturer Swift
- Tel 01482 875740
- Web www.swiftgroup.co.uk
- Supplier Marquis Motorhomes and Caravans
- Tel 0800 026 7777
- Web www.marquisleisure.co.uk



verdict

A really well-appointed unit. Great for two with its fixed bed, though a little tight for four.