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## BEST NIGHT'S KIP

**9-PAGE  
ISLAND BED  
SPECIAL**



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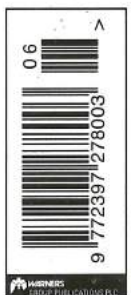
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# Benimar

## Mileo 294

This Spanish low-profile comes with a more unusual variation on the island bed theme, with a wall at the foot of the bed



### FACT FILE

**BASE VEHICLE** Fiat Ducato

**PRICE FROM** £56,995

**BERTHS** 4

**TRAVEL SEATS** 4

**LENGTH** 7.35m

**WIDTH** 2.30m

**HEIGHT** 2.89m

**GROSS WEIGHT** 3,500kg

**PAYLOAD** 260kg



**B**ENIMAR offers island bed layouts both in its Ford-based Tessoro range and the slightly more expensive Fiat-based Mileo. Both come in at under 7.4m long, with the Mileo costing a grand more than the Tessoro. While base vehicle bias or driving characteristics may sway you one way or the other, though, it's as likely to be the bedroom design that is the key buying decision. After all, choosing an island bed layout is all about bedroom bliss.

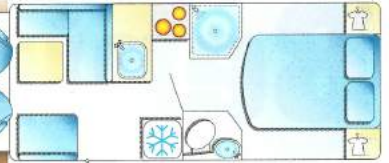
The Tessoro 494 (see December 2017/January 2018 issue) has a typical continental layout, but its sister model seen here is slightly more unusual. Open the sliding, Japanese-

style, panelled door between the galley and the fridge/freezer and instead of seeing the double bed in the centre of the 'van ahead of you, you'll get an eyeful of... yourself! A full-height wall faces you, with a tall mirror hiding slim shelved storage. The bedroom itself is hidden behind here, with shower and loo facilities to either side.

There's no doubt that this does create a more private bedroom (still with his and hers wardrobes at the head of the bed), but with a solid wall at the foot of the bed you'll need to check its dimensions if you're tall. Claimed figures are 1.90m by 1.39m.

Of course, we've seen island bed floorplans like this from other brands but, usually, the washbasin takes up centre stage on the reverse side of the bedroom wall. Here, it is instead over on the nearside, along with the cassette toilet (mounted on a plinth, so check for comfort). The basin itself is one of those 'designer' clear-bowl-on-a-plinth types, too. Then, on the other side of the vehicle, is the separate shower, while two more sliding panels close off all the ablutions from the





**WHO IS BENIMAR?**

This Spanish brand developed a strong following in Britain in the late 1990s and early 2000s based on great value for money (particularly with its Europe and Europe Top models). It then disappeared from the scene here, before being reintroduced by Marquis in 2014. The Mileo range came first, followed by an expanded choice of layouts, then overcab versions and, finally, the Tessoros on Ford.



Benimar is, today, owned by Trigano, which acquired retailers, Marquis (and its sister company, Auto-Sleepers), at the start of 2017. Other Trigano brands include Auto-Trail, Chausson, Mobilvetta and Roller Team.

**BUY A BENIMAR FROM...**

The Benimar brand is exclusive to Marquis, with its 12 branches around England – from Golden Cross (Sussex), Poole and Plymouth in the south to Preston and County Durham in the north.

The UK Benimar line-up has been developed hand-in-hand with Marquis and includes eight Mileo low-profiles, five Mileo overcab coachbuilts (all on Fiat) and six Ford Transit-based Tessoro low-profiles.



bedroom beyond.

The rest of the layout is pretty much as you'd expect – albeit with the habitation door on the UK side, which is rare amongst imported models. Up front, there's a big sunroof over the swivel cab seats, while an electric drop-down double bed is a standard feature above the lounge. The front bed is said to measure 1.90m by 1.40m, while the lounge – with an L-settee and side bench – is made more practical by the folding tabletop.

The kitchen area – in the typical L-shape, backing onto the lounge – is quite small but unusually well appointed. As well as the dual-

fuel hob with extractor hood and combined oven/grill, there's a fitted microwave mounted over the 145-litre fridge (which features automatic energy selection).

But the microwave is just one aspect of the Benimar's high-spec kit list. This is one of those (too rare) motorhomes where you won't have to examine a long list of options packs and extra cost items. Even the 150bhp motor is standard, though you'll pay £1,900 more for an automatic.

Also included in the basic price are cab air-conditioning, cruise control, ESP, automatic headlights and wipers, alloy wheels and LED

daytime running lights. Then, you'll also find cab blinds, removable carpets, a TV aerial, 6kW heating, a solar panel, exterior shower and barbecue points and framed double-glazed windows are all standard, too. Even a security tracking system with a year's subscription and 12 months' insurance (subject to terms) are within the list price.

The only downside of so much spec is a limited payload remaining of just 260kg. As long as you have a C1 licence, though, that's upgradeable. Going up to 410kg capacity is free of charge, while a whopping 1,120kg payload is possible with the 4.4-tonne Maxi chassis.