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Motorhome

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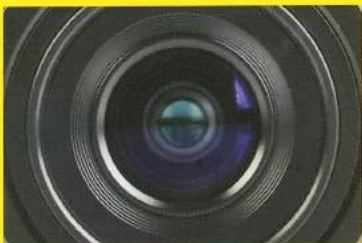
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Marquis's Charlie Brinton (left) showed us around the Mileo 283

A seminar on Benimar

Marquis Leisure introduced Benimar back into the UK three years ago, and since then, we have got to know the Spanish manufacturer's models pretty well.

We went for a spin in at least one Mileo in their first year back in the UK, and took a Tessoro all the way to northern Scotland and back.

While we've generally been impressed with the spec level and build quality, and the Continental design you'd expect from

a factory on the Mediterranean, one thing we have sometimes been less enthusiastic about is the size of the lounge – especially in motorhomes with a fixed bed at the rear.

Whether or not it's true that our Continental cousins aren't too worried about lounges because they spend much of their time outside, it seems Benimar's designers have taken this idea to heart.

So we were intrigued by the latest Benimar

to feature as a long-term loan vehicle for *Practical Motorhome*. The Mileo 283 features a rear lounge – which in theory, should appeal much more to a UK audience.

It also manages to do this in less than 6m, so it should be quite a nippy little thing, especially as the Marquis models have a 150bhp Fiat Ducato engine.

We haven't had a chance to give it a full test drive yet, but we did give it a thorough inspection at

Marquis's new dealership, formerly Michael Jordan Caravans, in Surrey.

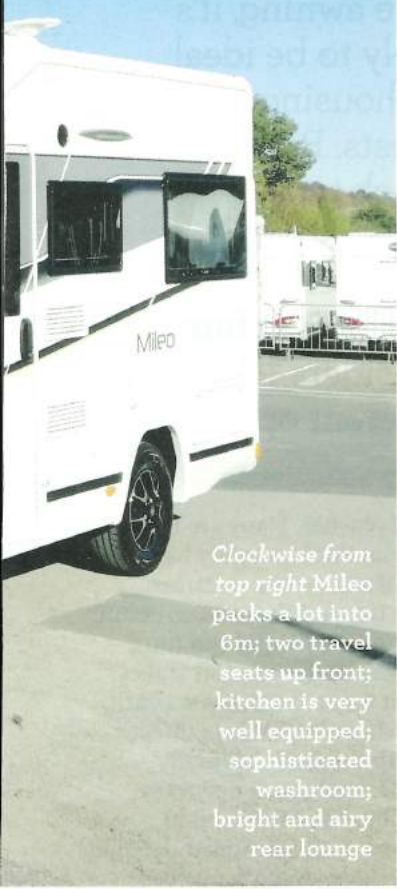
We were shown around the motorhome by Marquis's Charlie Brinton, and very cosy the motorhome looks and feels, too.

That rear lounge is lit up by three large windows. The two sofas easily make up into a transverse double bed; you simply need to pull out a solid platform under the offside sofa and a slatted platform under the nearside sofa.

The table – which is stowed away to one side of the offside sofa – clips to the wall at the back of the 'van and should provide enough space for at least four people to dine in comfort.

All of this is close to the nearside kitchen, and the latter has been given a thoroughly British spec level, so you get

NEW 'VAN!



Clockwise from top right Mileo packs a lot into 6m; two travel seats up front; kitchen is very well equipped; sophisticated washroom; bright and airy rear lounge



+ **LIKES**
Good specification level in the kitchen

- **DISLIKES**
Step up to washroom

a microwave here, as well as an oven. Both of these are set at a sensible height below the kitchen worktop, not way up out of reach of all but the tallest people.

And on top of this, we really weren't expecting to find an extractor fan in a coachbuilt costing just under £52,000 - particularly when the hob is so close to the door, anyway (but mostly shielded from any draughts by a wooden bulkhead).

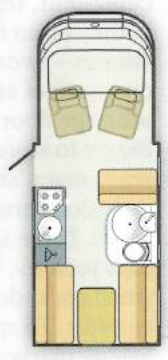
For quick snacks on the move, the Mileo 283 also comes kitted out with a

smaller occasional table in the front dinette, just ahead of the two forward-facing travel seats.

This area does include platforms that can be pulled out to make up a third berth, although it possibly isn't one you'd want to sleep on every night. It should be fine for the occasional guest or a child, though.

But at least having these two additional travel seats means that four people can travel in this motorhome, making it even more useful as a day-to-day vehicle. And having that extra lounge means an early riser has somewhere to sit when the rear lounge is still functioning as a bed for a sleeping partner.

I think it's most likely we will be using the Mileo as a generously spaced



Benimar Mileo 283

Price.....	£51,995
Berths.....	3
Belts.....	4
Base vehicle.....	Fiat Ducato
Engine.....	2.3 litre, 150bhp, Euro 6
Length.....	5.98m
Width.....	2.30m
Height.....	2.89m
MTPLM.....	3500kg
Payload.....	650kg

two-berth. That being the case, the one bit of the motorhome we haven't so far mentioned - the washroom - seems well up to the task.

You do have to step up into it, and there is no separate shower cubicle - there probably isn't the space for that in this length of 'van. But there is still plenty of room,

and it's one of the most sophisticated washroom areas we have seen in a long time: it comes complete with a large lit mirror, a soap dish, a toothmug and, for once, a sizeable handbasin. That's all you really need for a pleasant weekend away - and we're looking forward to a few in the coming months.

Peter Baber

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