

on test

Back to the future

By Andy Jenkinson



One of the most famous names in caravanning history is back: the Sprite Musketeer. Just hours after its launch we hitched it to Daihatsu's new Terios SX for a road test!

Sprite Musketeer TD

Price: £11,295 plus £390 option pack

Length: 4.74 m

Width: 2.25 m

MIRO: n/a kg

MTPLM: n/a kg

Pros: Stylish interior, excellent storage, under-seat access flaps, quality build, good spec, Musketeer name, fantastic value, very modern and up-to-date.

Cons: No full rear back moulded panel, no glazed stable door, flimsy front fold-down flap in front dinette, no blown air outlet at front dinette.

The Sprite Musketeer has been given a makeover with new graphics.

WHEN you were a child, if your grandparents owned a caravan it was probably a Musketeer. First introduced in 1958, this classic name is now making a comeback in the new Sprite range for 2010.

Fresh graphics give a first class look to the exterior, but internally the Musketeer TD has even more going for it than its appearance suggests. Step inside this family model, and you immediately feel as if you're in something posh. The layout follows a once-popular formula that was last used by Elddis, but Swift's development team have given it new life, incorporating a front double dinette, side kitchen with dresser opposite, wardrobe and corner washroom, and a double side dinette on the nearside.

Borrowing a smart design feature from their Escape motorhome range, Swift have installed deep roof lockers with a strong opening and shutting mechanism. Roof lockers abound in the front dinette, with a central light in the front ones and spots for more concentrated lighting. It's a comfortable area, but the fold-down flap table looks flimsy, and there's no blown warm air outlet. You do, however, get base access flaps - a super feature - and beech slats. The upholstery is comfortable, and

comes with matching cushions and bolsters.

On the nearside, a small side dresser with a drawer houses the Truma heater and controls in its base, and provides extra worktop. The side dinette has a shelf



The front dinette is spacious for four; good furniture finish and stylish design give the Sprite far more appeal.



Good front roof lockers with solid stays; a light is fitted in the roof locker.

Side dresser has extra worktop and houses the Truma heater.

above and more useful roof lockers, while a heater outlet is placed in the base of the seats. It's a good, comfortable area which makes into a double bed with a side bunk above. Although two large windows allow plenty of daylight to stream through, artificial lighting here is down to a one-strip, 12-volt unit – not the best, and we'd be inclined to add at least two spots.

In the corner, a silver sliding door beckons you to explore its hidden contents - a washroom with smart moulded hand basin, shower tray and a swivel cassette loo which is manual flush. There's a good-sized mirror, and it's roomy enough, with a roof vent for light and ventilation. However, we reckon that the sliding door could prove a little flimsy if a young family are let loose!

The well-designed adjoining wardrobe provides storage for the table, and is a decent size with full-length double doors and shelving. The side kitchen comes with deep roof lockers, a decent worktop, useful storage, and a Thetford oven and fridge. We particularly liked the granite-effect sink basin. A window is fitted here, while a single mains socket is fitted near the roof locker.

Overall, we liked the Sprite's build quality, its modern feel, and the standard of its fittings. The TD layout works well, but it's the finish that's so good - the rich wood-effect furniture looks so stylish. A triple front window may not have gone amiss, and a glazed stable door would also have been good.

Externally, no full-length rear panel has yet emerged, which is a little disappointing, but not enough to put you off; similarly, a

glazed door is lacking from the option packs, which, for just over £300, provide alloys, spare wheel and carrier, AKS hitch and radio/CD player.

If you're after a cracking-value tourer with no strings attached, look no further - the new Sprite Musketeer TD is a really hot choice!

Don't miss our next issue with a full live-in test on the Alpine 4.



The marble-effect sink unit is new for 2010; the kitchen is big enough, with some worktop and decent storage.



DAIHATSU TERIOS

Daihatsu Terios SX

Price: £14,995

Engine: 1.5 petrol

BHP: 103

MPG: 34.5

Top speed: 99 mph

Kerb weight: 1200 kg

Towing limit: 1350 kg

Pros: Exterior profile, exterior finish, spacious for size, reasonable handling, off-road capabilities, reliability record.

Cons: Build doesn't feel as tight as some, coarse 1.5 petrol engine, notchy gear change.



TO test the Musketeer, Daihatsu loaned us their recently-launched Terios SX - a small, petrol-engined 4x4 which recently withstood a tough going-over from Jeremy Clarkson on Top Gear. This Terios received kinder treatment on our 600-mile test, although we did ask it to pull virtually its maximum weight with our unladen Sprite.

DAIHATSU TERIOS



Daihatsu profile looks good - the decent paint finish and panel fit will please even the most critical.



In terms of appearance the Terios isn't too bad, and it's very compact - shorter than a VW Golf, in fact. It would be better if the spare wheel wasn't on the back door, which wouldn't open once the car was hitched to the Sprite. In general the paint and panel finish was well executed, but the build didn't feel too solid.



Cabin is plain and simple, but for the price it shouldn't be a surprise.

The interior is plain - we liked the cloth seating - and although the dash feels a little cheap it isn't badly laid out, with a tidy radio/CD player. Compared to other makers, the plastics have a cheap overall quality. The controls were fairly easy to operate, apart from the switch for the electric mirrors, which was located on the dash next to the four-wheel-drive switch, and was fiddly to use.

With small compartments, the front cabin storage isn't bad, but door storage is scant. The rear is the same, but there's sufficient seating and legroom for three. Rear boot space is good, mainly due to the spare wheel being on the back door.

On the road, the Terios' driving position feels comfortable enough, but the engine sounds coarse. Performance-wise it was slow off the mark, but once on the move the car went along well. Some body roll was evident on back roads, especially when it was pushed through corners, but this wasn't as bad as it could have been. Over rougher surfaces, the Terios damped the potholes quite well.

With the Sprite attached, the Terios was at its towing limit, but it coped well once on the move. Despite a stiff breeze, the outfit remained stable as we towed the Sprite around some of East Yorkshire's B-roads. Power-wise the engine struggled from rest, and during some tricky reversing we smelt the clutch. With the reversing sensors, solo parking proved an easy manoeuvre, and the car seemed nimble enough to park in the tightest of spots.



Rear door opens onto the drawbar.



Rear boot space could take some luggage - more than you'd think in a 4x4 of this size.

The Daihatsu Terios SX is priced at a fiver short of £15,000 (metallic paint finish is an extra £370). Its spec is fairly basic, road tax is a hefty £215, and it comes with a five-year warranty. We covered all types of driving, and managed around 35+ mpg, depending, of course, on how it was driven. Although voted best small 4x4 by one magazine, as a used car the Terios will take a hit when being traded and you would need to hang onto it for a number of years to get your full money's worth.

Is this enough to sway a buyer to part with their cash? After living with the Terios for a week, we found it to be a good, practical small car, and for the price it doesn't look bad value. However, we believe that its towing limit is aimed more at folders or small vans such as the Lunar Ariva, and for this reason it's going to be too small for most people. A larger, diesel engine would improve Terios' towing qualities, and then it could be in with a chance.