



Sprite Musketeer: one for all?

Andy Jenkinson wonders if the new **Musketeer EB** is the best-ever **Sprite...**

EVER since its launch, the new Sprite has sparked interest among buyers who want a light tourer that doesn't look too basic.

The layout of the Musketeer EB originates from the late 1960s, when it was known as the 'C' model, but the Sprite of 2012 is a very different tourer.

Exterior

The Sprite has leanings to its Challenger and Eccles Sport siblings, but there's no sun roof and a one-piece window is fitted.

Bold graphics enhance the one-piece sides, though a darker blue would have looked better. The one-piece front panel has a superb front locker with easy access, while the rear panel is a one-piece, full-height moulded unit. The chassis is by Al-Ko.

Good additions are offered with the Diamond pack in the form of alloys, AKS hitch, Al-Ko wheel lock receiver, spare wheel, radio/CD player and scatter cushions. It represents good value - something we're very keen on.



The Musketeer looks impressive for entry level, and overall finish was excellent. Reversing lights are standard.

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| Model: | Sprite Musketeer EB |
| Price: | £13,159 (including Diamond pack) |
| Length: | 4.74 m |
| Width: | 2.23 m |
| MIRO: | 1093 kg |
| MTPLM: | 1268 kg |
| Berths: | 4 |

We like: Sprite badge, solid build, style, spacious, well equipped and finished, quality soft furnishings.

We don't like: Pull-out coffee table isn't stable, no rear power point, glass side shield by hob, no glazed door.



Respite from the rain. We all agreed that a glazed stable door would be better.

The Sprite is relatively easy to move around, and we liked the solid, chunky grab handles. An LED awning light is fitted, along with a side wall radio aerial and a roof-mounted Status 530 TV aerial. Water and waste connections are on the offside.



Front seat bases have excellent access via the large flaps; the electrics are here, too.



Large front lounge makes it easy to stretch out and relax.

Lounge

If you're looking for a good-sized lounge in a compact shell, you will find it in the Musketeer. The twin settees are 1.9 metres in length, with sumptuous cushions. We weren't keen on the colour at first, but it does grow on you. Scatter cushions are provided.

Access below the seats is via large flaps, so there's no need to disturb the seats to get at bedding, for instance.

There are roof lockers over the front and side windows. The top of the central chest of drawers slides out to make a coffee table, but (as with the Challenger Sport) this is unstable if pressed on from the rear - a design flaw, in our book.



Speaker and one of the four spots over the front lounge; two more are in the rear dinette..

Night lighting is provided by four spotlights and a dome ceiling light. They are brilliant, giving the lounge area plenty of light. A radio/CD player is placed in a side front locker, with speakers above the front window. Sound quality is super - for some reason, we thought it was better than that in the Challenger Sport.

The plastic moulded window shelf has twin mains sockets plus the water heater control switch. A small cupboard doubles up as a TV shelf, complete with mains, room heater and TV aerial connection point.

Above the entrance door, the touch control panel for the lights and pump is relatively easy to use. On a wet weekend in December, the Truma heating kept us warm as the rain hammered down.



The side kitchen has a fridge, oven with spark ignition and more storage.

Kitchen

The side kitchen in the Sprite offers a good overall design; worktop, for instance, satisfied our requirements.

Roof lockers offer good storage for crockery and cereal packs. Another roof locker comes with a mains socket, so a microwave oven can be fitted.

A fridge, hob and spark-ignition oven are standard fit, but the hob has only three burners. There's a small side window and a large clear roof vent above. Night-time



Kitchen roof lockers have deep storage facilities, and a large locker next to these will take a microwave.



The glass hob shield kept getting knocked; it should be easy to remove when not needed.

illumination comes from a dome ceiling light and a strip light beneath the roof locker.

One rather annoying feature of the kitchen was the glass shield near the door, designed to protect the hob flame. It simply got in the way, and it would be better if it was detachable.



The end dinette is ideal for two. There's a blown-air outlet and a clear roof vent, but an electrical socket is lacking.

Beds & seating

At the rear of the Musketeer is a single dinette, which makes up into bunks at night. As a dinette, it's big enough for two adults to use (the Musketeer would make a great couple's van!) while Jackie and I both tried it as a single bed and found it fine for length and width. The small table is substantial, with a leg that clips into the floor.



Soft furnishings are good quality, and we have grown to like the dark brown!

Two corner spotlights and a dome ceiling light are fitted here. We felt the rear window could have been made slightly larger.

The front lounge converts to either a large double bed (using slats) or twin beds. The deep cushions meant we all had a good night's sleep with plenty of support.

Storage

Storage in the Musketeer was very good. Our bulky items fitted easily into the deep roof lockers, and under-seat storage was very good. There was easy access from the tops of the seat bases, and we found the small cupboard in the lounge to be a very handy addition.

The central wardrobe was impressive: on a weekend trip we had plenty of space left over, so longer hauls shouldn't be too much of a problem. In the washroom, good storage was provided by plastic shelves and a cupboard. Likewise, the kitchen offered excellent storage.



The wardrobe was ample for our weekend away.

Washroom

With a corner light and a clear roof vent, the well planned side washroom is surprisingly spacious, and you could shower in it without too many issues. The fixed cassette loo has an electric flush. The hand basin is deep enough, and is fitted with a cupboard below. There are several moulded shelves, and a large mirror.



The side washroom has good floor area for a tourer of this size.



For hair drying in front of the mirror we had to stretch the cable across the kitchen.

Overall impressions

Externally, the Musketeer is stylish - the chrome handles add class - and the overall feel of the interior is right. Yes, we got used to the dark brown upholstery!

There were a couple of niggles... for example, we'd take a power point from the front and pop it at the rear. This would be useful for hairdryers, especially as Sprite have added a mirror on the outside of the washroom.

The Sprite Musketeer EB is a cracking tourer for the price. Teamed with the Skoda Octavia, you get a reasonable outfit for just over £30,000 - equivalent to an entry-level, coach-built family motorhome.

In terms of towing stability the Musketeer proved a joy to tow, and the Octavia made it easy as we battled through heavy sleet and side winds. After a very enjoyable weekend, we were inclined to think... is this the best Sprite yet?



Brilliant front locker size - easy to access, too.

Where we stayed...

It isn't much fun setting up in the dark, but the wardens at The Camping and Caravanning Club's Delamere Forest site helped us find our pitch and reversed us on, too. The site was very busy, even though it was mid-December and wet.

More information:

Sprite Musketeer www.swiftgroup.co.uk
Skoda Octavia www.skoda.co.uk

Our thanks to Stewart Longton Caravans of Blackpool, and to the wardens of The Camping and Caravanning Club's site at Delamere Forest.



The Musketeer EB and Skoda Octavia made a stable outfit. We love the Musketeer's profile - and the Octavia's isn't bad, either!

Our tow car

Our tow car was the Skoda Octavia SE Plus estate with 1.8-litre petrol engine

The Skoda badge offers solid build and good spec at a price that won't break the bank. The kit includes sat nav, rear parking sensors, Bluetooth and 16-inch alloys.

The petrol towing limit and kerb weight meant that we were towing at around 97%. For experienced caravanners, this ratio won't present any problems. In fact, through very wet and windy conditions the Octavia towed the Sprite extremely well.

The punchy engine made light work of the Sprite. Ride and handling were predictable and comfortable, too. Inside, the Octavia is laid out with good leg room and an excellent load area. One complaint we had was about the lights socket, which is buried under the rear bumper, making connecting the electrics very difficult.



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| Model: | Skoda Octavia SE Plus |
| Price: | £17,120 |
| Engine: | 1.8 TSI petrol |
| BHP: | 152 |
| Combined MPG: | 40.9 |
| Top speed: | 139 mph |
| Kerb weight: | 1300 kg |
| Towing limit: | 1300 kg |

