

first sight | autocruise rhythm compact

shave to the rhythm

Autocruise have shaved over half a metre from the length of the best-selling Rhythm

THE Swift Group's van conversion brand, Autocruise, is now firmly established as the UK market leader in this sector, so it's no surprise to see the range growing again for 2013. There's an extra-long-wheelbase (6.36m) model, the Forte, for the first time - with a forward half-dinette (inherited from the bunk bed Quartet) and a transverse rear lounge; the two seating areas converting into a pair of double beds. Our focus here, though, is on the medium-wheelbase Rhythm Compact - basically the top-selling rear lounge (6.00m) Rhythm layout squeezed into a 5.41m van.

Like all Autocruises (except the budget-priced Rhythm Sport), the Rhythm Compact comes with new graphics and, for 2013, only in metallic blue. Internally, there's bold new Italian Ash furniture with striking white gloss doors and chrome detailing. It looks superb. Overhead lockers have been redesigned to incorporate stylish ambient lighting and a Drive-Safe regulator allows the heating (now Truma Combi 2) to be used while driving. A tracking system (Tracker Retrieve) now protects your investment - likely to be in the order of £39,000.

Inside, the Compact boasts new moulded GRP trims on the rear doors, but it's when the weather allows these doors to be flung open that the layout comes to the fore, as you relax inside with a panoramic view of your surroundings. At night, the side settees

simply slide together to make a 1.86m by 1.27m double bed, with a convenient TV location on the bathroom wall for bedtime viewing. And if your partner stays in bed in the morning, then the swivel cab seats come into play, providing a secondary seating area (but no table). The latter seems surprising as this 'van (like the 'full-sized' Rhythm) comes with small (round) and large (rectangular) tables for the rear lounge.

The washroom has a new Adria-style tip-up basin, which is in a different league to traditional folding washbasins. Space is a bit tight for showering, but fortunately the wardrobe and bathroom location doesn't impinge too much on the driver's seat travel.

The compact central galley has a useful extension flap at the forward end for vital added worktop area. The Thetford Triplex cooker includes an oven/grill (as well as three gas rings), but the overhead microwave eats into the already restricted kitchen storage space (the gas locker steals a lot of low-level capacity). Across the aisle, under the wardrobe, the fridge is the latest Dometic 8-Series model with 85-litre capacity and a removable freezer.

The Rhythm Compact is a worthy addition to the range, giving buyers the choice now of front lounge (Jazz) or rear lounge floorplans in the medium-wheelbase van, which is so much more practical for everyday use and town parking.

AUTOCUISE RHYTHM COMPACT

PRICE FROM
Estimated £39,000

BERTHS 2

TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER) 2

DIMENSIONS 5.41m L, 2.05m W, 2.72m H

MAXIMUM WEIGHT
3300kg

BASE VEHICLE

PEUGEOT BOXER MWB
ENGINE 2.2HDI 110bhp

COOKING/HEATING

COOKING 3-burner hob, oven/grill

FRIDGE 85-litre three-way, removable freezer

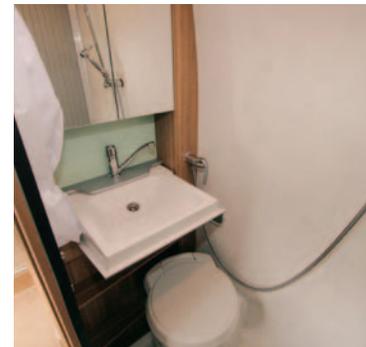
HEATING Truma Combi 2 gas/mains blown-air, Drive-Safe regulator

BOILER Truma Combi gas/mains

RIVALS

IH T10

VANTAGE CUB



Short and sweet - Rhythm layout now squeezed into 5.41m van



WHICH motorhome says

Rhythm Compact looks great inside and out, and it'll fit in a normal parking bay (just) - perfect for the era of downsizing.



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