

# First look



## Swift Challenger SE 480



The sunroof allows plenty of daylight to flood the lounge

New, flat-faced overhead lockers are a sensible change with this narrower interior

The reduced internal length has affected the seats little; the shorter, offside one is still a reasonable 1.76m

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Swift updates the Challenger range's equipment list while reducing weights to attract more caravanners a little further upmarket – and to differentiate it from the Challenger Sport

Price .....	<b>£18,149</b>
Berths .....	<b>2</b>
MiRO .....	<b>1161kg</b>
Payload .....	<b>121kg</b>
MTPLM .....	<b>1282kg</b>
Awning .....	<b>877cm</b>

outgoing model, allowing it to be towed safely by a small diesel hatchback. However, it's also 40cm shorter and 6cm narrower overall. Swift continues with its factory-backed 10-year warranty for all caravans it builds, and for the new season introduces a Tracker Retrieve tracking system. Other kit upgrades include a new roof-mounted 20W solar panel, and an LED awning light operated via the caravan's key fob.

### Pitch and set-up

The Challenger is based on an Al-Ko chassis, with an AKS 3004 stabiliser and ATC trailer stability system fitted as standard. The button-free handbrake is easy to apply and release when pitching up, and the heavy-duty steadies are

readily accessible. The battery box houses the hook-up point. As you'd expect of a luxurious mid-market tourer, it's also fitted with external gas and three-pin electric points.

One of the key kit upgrades is Alde's wet heating system, which features radiators in the front seat boxes and a heated rail in the washroom. Alde's touch control panel is easy to use, as are all other aspects of setting the Swift up.

### Lounge

The lounge space is comfortable and cosy for up to four people. The sunroof is fitted as standard and does a good job of flooding the lounge area with light by day. At night, over-locker lighting creates a classy internal ambience. The reduction in overall width is barely

noticeable in terms of legroom for anyone seated on the sofas.

The centre chest is standard and the pull-out top provides sufficient space for two people to enjoy a meal without being too cramped; a well-proportioned free-standing table has space for four. LED corner spotlights provide battery-friendly illumination for reading.

All the windows get full pleated blinds, flyscreens and curtains. The sofa backrests also get backboards to reduce condensation against the interior walls in cooler climes.

### Kitchen

It's the kitchen area that bears the brunt of the 34cm reduction in internal length compared with last season's model: there's less fixed food preparation space, although



The Alde system gives the full-width end washroom a heated towel rail



The kitchen layout is compacted and tweaked, squeezing storage



The backlit mirror sets off the washroom, and the shower is large

a hinged extension has been introduced as a space-saving measure. The tweaked kitchen now includes a second cutlery drawer between the fridge and the worktop.

The area has also been restyled, with an attractive new LED-lit splashback, and LED strip lighting underneath the work surface's leading edge. When combined, this gives the kitchen plenty of showroom appeal.

The fridge is the latest 110-litre model from Dometic, with an easy-to-use, push-button control panel. The hob retains three gas burners and an electric hotplate, with a separate oven and grill, and a microwave sited above.

A welcome addition to the kitchen is a three-speed, two-way Omnivent extractor fan for banishing cooking smells and cooling the interior.

Storage here is a little squeezed, but if you keep your plates and cereal bowls to a minimum, everything can be accommodated.

### Washroom

The full-width end washroom houses the wardrobe, which gets a new light that switches on when the door is opened. The main mirror gets new back lighting, too, which does wonders for the showroom sizzle of the van. There's plenty of legroom around the toilet, and a heated towel rail alongside it. There's a large – if rather shallow – handbasin, and



Slide-out slats that stay on the track ease making up the large double bed

a spacious, fully lined separate shower cubicle, that features a hanging rail for drying.

### Sleeping

The two lounge beds may well be long, wide and comfortable enough to accommodate single occupants: the nearside one is 1.86m long, the offside's is shorter at 1.76cm. Alternatively, it makes a large transverse double – with the slide-out slats retained on a track.

### Storage

The rounded, aircraft-style lockers of the outgoing Challenger are replaced by flat-faced ones, which reduces their capacity slightly.

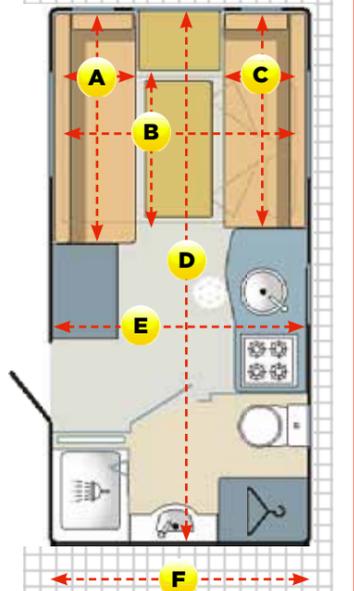
The under-seat storage in the front lounge can be accessed by raising the self-supporting seat-box lids or via the drop-down flaps at the front of each.

**Need to know**

- Alde heating
- Smaller & lighter
- Classy lighting

## Swift Challenger SE 480

Price	£18,149	Berths	2
MiRO	1161kg	Payload	121kg
MTPLM	1282kg	Shipping length	7.25m
Awning	877cm		



**Measurements**

<b>A</b> Nearside single	1.86m x 0.72m
<b>B</b> Double bed	2.02m x 1.76m
<b>C</b> Offside single	1.76m x 0.72m
<b>D</b> Interior length	6.06m
<b>E</b> Interior width	2.15m
<b>F</b> Overall width	2.25m

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**Web** www.swiftgroup.co.uk  
**Dealers** 65

### Verdict

This classic two-berth layout has been cleverly repackaged within smaller, narrower confines for 2013, leading to a substantial weight reduction of 128kg. Combine this with Alde central heating, a roof-top solar panel and thoughtfully positioned lighting, and the Challenger SE 480 looks to be more appealing to a wider audience of touring couples.

**Good**  
 Its lower weight means you no longer need a big towcar. It boasts a large lounge, good looks and a spacious washroom.

**Bad**  
 Could do with more kitchen storage. The outgoing model felt more spacious front-to-rear.

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ILLUSTRATION: ALAN ELDREDGE