

First Sight ▶ New caravans Swift Challenger SE 480

Swift Challenger SE 480 **£18,149**

A classic couples' choice



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Plain, pale fawns and lots of light coming in at roof level. Lighting is a new feature in Challengers, on the edge of the kitchen and within its wall. Lights run along both sides of the mirror. Concealed, and pleasantly bright, lights are above the lockers.

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Light is a theme of the new-for-2013 Challenger SE range. Lighting design creates special décor effects in the kitchen and shower room – and one piece of new standard equipment takes advantage of natural light. A solar panel is mounted on the roof, to top up your battery when your caravan is in storage or you are away from mains hook-ups.

The Challenger SE range has layouts for all needs – including buyers looking for a traditional two-berth set-up.

Aside from the solar panel, most of the changes undergone for the 2013 model year are cosmetic, but combined together, the effect is quite dramatic.

The 480 is a classic couples' layout with a good level of specification. The long settees give plenty of room to seat four adults, even six at a pinch, and the standalone table is big enough to seat four for dinner comfortably.

The kitchen is fine for two and workspace is extended by drop-down flap. Lighting is significantly improved by the introduction of ambient LEDs behind the worktop at the edges of the splashback and

at the forward edge of the worktop. It's a really nice cosmetic touch, which is both functional in terms of improved task lighting, and looks beautiful in the evenings. Main task lighting comes courtesy of a bright LED strip light under the overhead cabinet.

As you'd expect, kitchen equipment is comprehensive and incorporates the new Dometic 112-litre fridge with digital controls and a microwave. There's reasonable storage above and below the worktop, and more in the dresser opposite. Elsewhere, storage is good and the new lockers with their cream in-fills and chrome detailing are pleasing to the eye.

New for 2013 are deeper-pile carpets. The fabric colours are very safe, being a symphony in brown, beige and biscuit.

Cosiness is further enhanced by the upgraded heating, which now boosts the Alde central heating's

output to 3kw for faster warm-up.

The shower room is roomy, with a large shower cubicle. But the most notable change in here for 2013 is a cosmetic one. That's the introduction of LED back-lighting around the large mirror. It's a lovely cosmetic touch which adds to the overall luxury appeal of the Challenger range.

There's a heated towel rail in here and a huge wardrobe with double doors and integrated drawers with a courtesy light triggered when you open the door. A hanging rail to dry damp clothes in the shower cubicle is another useful addition. Other little interior tweaks include low level LED lighting just above carpet height to aid nocturnal navigation.

But the big news is the introduction of the 20-watt solar panel with smart charge controller which will top up the battery by as much as 8.5 amps a day in sunny conditions. **MS**

WHAT WE LIKE

- ▶ New solar panel
- ▶ LED lighting
- ▶ Thicker carpets
- ▶ More powerful heating

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- ▶ Conservative interior decor

TECHNICAL STUFF

BERTHS 2
LENGTH BODY 4.4M
OVERALL 6.06M
WIDTH 2.25M
HEADROOM 1.95M
WEIGHTS MIRO 1161KG
MTPLM 1282KG

OUR VERDICT

With lots of lighting features, the SE range puts on the style. The 480 is a practical, traditional two-berth, end shower room layout that still has appeal and stands up well to the stiff opposition from twin-bed caravans.

Lighting behind the kitchen splashback and at the edge of the worktop is a nice touch; it looks beautiful

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