



## Sprite Alpine 4

**SIMON McGRATH** checked out the latest Sprite model from Swift when he pitched up at this year's National Feast of Lanterns

**THE LAST** caravan I tested from Swift was in 2012 when I took out the Challenger SE 565. That 'van was certainly at the luxury end of caravanning.

This time around it was the more affordable - and lighter - Sprite Alpine 4. And in many respects that's where the comparisons begin and end. The Sprite range is known for its lighter weight and is often viewed as a good starter caravan.

I towed the Alpine 4 behind an Audi A4 Avant to this year's National Feast of Lanterns (NFOL) at Somerley Estate in Hampshire and it behaved itself pretty well - just the usual twitches to keep you on your toes, mostly caused by the wind.

Outside the unit, Sprite fans will notice it has an updated front design

with an optional panoramic roof window (price £335) that adds extra light into the living area. The front door splits into two, stable door style, and also has a mesh screen to ensure a good airflow while keeping out the bugs. One gripe I had was that the door came with a magazine rack rather than an actual bin. One of the comments I made about the Challenger was to compliment its good-sized bin. It's a bit of a bugbear of mine and I would have thought this is a basic bit of kit that should come as standard. The alternative is to hang a carrier bag on the door handle, as I did.

The Alpine 4 is a four-berth unit but I think it will appeal to a couple who want a generous caravan, or to grandparents who occasionally want to take their grandchildren away with them.

**Getting some sleep:** There's a comfy fixed bed that's partitioned off with a curtain and a blind to the kitchen area. There's also a fitting for a flat-screen TV in case you want to catch-up on your favourite programmes in bed. Beneath the bed is plenty of storage space accessed through spring-loaded arms inside the 'van or via a locker door from the outside.



**Living space:** The living area is nice and light, thanks in part to the optional roof window, and the bench seats convert into the second double bed. There are LED reading lights, which was good to see for a unit of this price, a useful small folding table, and also a good-sized wardrobe - again this felt quite generous given the overall dimensions of the Alpine 4. The blown-air central heating and hot water are provided through a Truma dual-fuel system controlled from an easy-to-use panel above the front door.



**Cooking and eating:** The kitchen area was compact and neat but it did lack the kind of space to prep food that I like and would have benefited from a fold-away extension to the left of the work surface. However, there's always the freestanding table neatly stowed to the right of the cooker. The cooker itself has three gas burners, a grill and oven, though there was no microwave in this model - it's an option at £150. At 113 litres, the Thetford fridge is a good size, and I ran it on gas during my stay at the NFOL. Above the kitchen area are three storage lockers, two more cupboards below and one 230V socket. Despite the slight shortage of workspace, the granite-effect sink was a good size and comes with a removable extension drainer.



**Keeping clean:** The wash-room sits snugly next to the bed and is effectively a wet room containing a shower and Thetford swivel toilet. It was compact but adequate. Outside the bathroom, you'll find the washbasin with a good-sized mirror above it, plus shelving to the left and below the sink itself. I have to say it's not a layout that I personally like as I find myself shaving in the bedroom, but it is an effective way of making use of the available space.

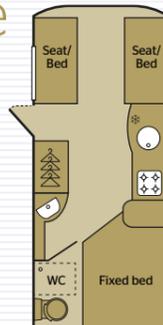


ON TEST



### at a glance

- Price as tested** £13,770
- Prices start at** £13,610
- Club Care insurance** £221
- Berths** Four
- Length x width x height** 6.39m x 2.23m x 2.64m
- Mass in Running Order** 1,047kg
- Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass** 1,222kg
- User payload** 175kg
- BE licence required** No with suitable vehicle such as Vauxhall Astra 1.6i 16v Active 5-door
- Manufacturer** Swift
- Tel** 01482 875740
- Web** swiftgroup.co.uk



### verdict

A good, comfy lightweight caravan but expect a few compromises on space and accessories