

Sterling Eccles Elite Amber



The Elite Amber has presence on site - true kerb appeal. The front of the Elite is a stylish bit of design work - very nice!



The one piece-back panel is smartly designed and aerodynamic.

Solidly built and very smart, with a great specification and good storage - does the new **Elite Amber** have any drawbacks at all? **Andy Jenkinson** finds out.

Price:	£21,395
Length:	5.60 m
Width:	2.31 m
MIRO:	1516 kg
MTPLM:	1670 kg
Berths:	4

We like: Dual-fuel hob, external shower, full specification, good looks, solid build, smart interior, back-lit kitchen splash, good lighting and storage.

We don't like: CD/radio speaker sound lacks depth, no main ceiling lights, not a lightweight 'van; little else.



Excellent storage in the large front gas locker.

THE Sterling Elite has become a popular luxury range, and after a face-lift a few years ago it is now stunning in terms of looks and interiors. When they were launched, the new-look Elites were seen as a revolution in tourer design, and sales began to rise at once. Caravanners and non-caravanners alike couldn't fail to be impressed, and that is still the case several years on.

We checked out the single-axle Amber, a fixed-bed end-washroom layout offering four people a very comfortable tourer for year-round use.

Our brief test was carried out at the end of the season, when wet and cold evenings were becoming the norm. Alde heating is fitted in the Amber, with a colour screen to make it more user-friendly. If you're not familiar with Alde, it does take a while to get to grips with the control system.

Exterior ★★★★★

With silver sides, an extremely smart front with built-in sunroof, and a high quality, stylish back panel, the Elite has instant kerb appeal. Quality solid build and heavy duty corner steadies show the build's quality at a glance.

A large front gas locker offers plenty of storage. Other fittings include a barbecue point, an exterior mains socket and an external hand shower for washing the dog or muddy boots - or even the front of the 'van!

The Elite simply ticks all the boxes - this is the exterior that spawned the great revolution in caravan design!

Lounge ★★★★★

The front lounge is spacious and modern, with smartly finished roof lockers and, of course, the sun roof. The addition of a Heki roof vent means that this really is a light and airy place to be, yet you still maintain your privacy at the same time.

A chest of drawers is fitted and there's a moulded sill for oddments. Two mains sockets are included. Access flaps on the seat bases are large, and allow easy access to bedding.

The radio/CD player is a bit of a let-down. Its speakers are placed either side of the sun roof, and it looks fine but sound-wise



Smart and spacious front lounge - loads of natural light, yet you still have your privacy!



The sun roof is a great idea, though not new.

it lacks depth. Eddis tried the idea of putting speakers in the ceiling area on the Crusader range back in the 1990s, and that didn't work well, either.

On the plus side, you have great lighting (but no mains lights any more). The lights over the lounge are quite harsh and cold. What would have been nice, especially at this price tag, would have been the inclusion of a digital clock, perhaps over the lounge area.

Kitchen ★★★★★

Fittings include a fridge, microwave, full oven and dual-fuel hob. The cream roof lockers blend well with the light pine-effect wood. Worktop space is generally good - with a pull-out extension at the front of the kitchen, and a fold-down extension flap, the kitchen has not been sold short of worktop.



The side kitchen offers great night lighting, good spec and ample worktop.

The side kitchen is quite something in terms of lighting! The splashback glows and there is LED lighting beneath the worktop - all very classy, meaning that using the kitchen at night is a joy.

Although the discreet lighting above the side roof lockers adds to the ambience of the interior, we'd like to see two ceiling lights for more central lighting in the kitchen area and towards the rear bedroom.

Beds and seating ★★★★★

The seating is very supportive, which makes relaxing in the lounge area a delight. There are two long settees which can be used as single beds or (with the slats) as a large double bed. The lounge has two scatter cushions and two bolster cushions, but we would like to have seen four of each, considering the luxury slot the Amber is placed in.

The side double bed is large and very comfortable, with a supportive mattress.



The side fixed double bed is large and comfortable, and there's great roof locker storage.

Storage ★★★★★

Storage is a strong point, with good sized yet stylish roof lockers and a decent wardrobe. The side dresser offers more cupboard storage and a place for the TV. There are roof lockers over the fixed bed and, of course, there's more storage under the bed itself.

The kitchen has enough storage, and in the washroom are shelves and two cupboards.



Exterior shower could be extended and used to clean the 'van!



The washroom has a Thetford cassette loo and a side window.

Washroom ★★★★★

The washroom is not the largest, but it is well designed which means that floor area isn't lacking. A side window and a mini-Heki allow good natural light and add to the ventilation.

The Thetford electric flush loo is standard, and a heated chrome towel rail is fitted. There are several shelves, along with speakers for the radio. Lighting is very good. The shower cubicle is a moulded unit, large enough in size. The hand basin is deep and has a cupboard below.



Practical design and a moulded one-piece shower cubicle in the washroom.

Overall impressions ★★★★★

The Elite Amber is a cracking tourer, and it certainly lives up to expectations. It's neither cheap nor lightweight, but it is solidly built and very smart in looks, and it has all you need when going on tour. There are plenty of plug sockets, and with good lighting and the comfort factor built in, the Elite Amber is a tourer to add to your shortlist.

Most buyers will be couples, and for them it is an ideal two-berth with room for a couple of grandchildren too, if they wish to come along.

This is a competitive sector of the market, but one in which the Elite Amber remains very strong. By the time you read this, some good discounts will be in the offing, making the Amber exceptionally good value for its price ticket.

More information: www.swiftgroup.co.uk
Our thanks to Peter and Janet Washington