



# SMART MOVERS

Rob McCabe checks out the 2014 caravan and motorhome models from Swift Group

If you wanted to apply a theme to the country's biggest caravan and motorhome manufacturer's 2014 offerings, it would have to be 'out with the old'. The traditional caravan construction method is the biggest casualty – see the 'Caravans' section for more details. Meanwhile, no fewer than 13 touring caravan variants – mostly Sterlings – have been dropped, and

an entire range of motorhomes has been renamed and upgraded. Hot news: every single vehicle that rolls off a Swift production line, from the entry-level Sprite tourer to the dripping-in-luxury Kon-Tiki coachbuilt motorhome, now meets the coveted Grade 3 heating and insulation standard that promises warm, comfortable accommodation in the coldest winters.

A Swift exclusive for the new model year is the inclusion in fixed-bed caravans (SE upwards) and coachbuilt motorhomes of the Duvalite mattress from Duvalay. If the Duvalay name rings a bell, it may be because you saw Hilary Devey buying into it on television's *Dragons' Den*. The Duvalite weighs less than a traditional

fixed-bed mattress, is hypoallergenic and uses memory-fibre technology promising high levels of comfort and pressure relief. On the evidence of an admittedly quick try-out, it's brilliant.

On many caravans and motorhomes you'll encounter the colourfully-named Eco-camel shower head. Using injected air, it is designed to improve flow and reduce water consumption – less need to 'hump' water containers to and fro, then.

## CARAVANS

We have had Alu-Tech from Bailey and Explorer Group's SoLiD offering; now Swift is getting SMART.

SMART stands for 'Solid, Modern, Aerodynamic, Resilient, Tested' – but what it means in essence is a new method of construction for all the company's touring caravans, the basis for which is a polyurethane-based (PURE) body frame that varies in density according to the strength needed in each area.

The 10-model Challenger Sport line-up includes the new six-berth, twin-axle 640 offering two parallel-seating lounges and overhead bunks at the back. The Sterling Eccles Sport 640 shares the same layout.

All Sports now have a 40W solar panel and new furnishing scheme. As with all models, there's the option of the easy-clean Impala fabric that has a pleasingly soft, nubuck-like texture.

The Challenger SE couldn't do any wrong in 2013 as it left the showrooms in unexpectedly high numbers. Half the 10 models in the range are twin-axes, one of which is the impressive-looking new 630 six-berther that heralds the return of an L-shaped front lounge to the Swift portfolio. It also features a fixed double bed and a big end washroom. This layout is replicated in the Sprite Quattro EV and the Sterling Eccles SE Coral.

The Sterling Eccles interiors really catch the eye with bold – you might even

say brave – zoned colour schemes that are a direct result of feedback the company received from visitors to February's NEC show in relation to the Colour Concept, er, concept tourer that Swift displayed on its stand. Proof that manufacturers do listen to the caravan-buying public. It will be interesting to see if other models in the group get similar treatment in the future.

## MOTORHOMES

Swift has lived up to its name by acting quickly in the aftermath of a poor sales year for the twin Sundance and Bessacarr E400 ranges. Both have been dropped – in name, at least – and replaced by the Esprit and Bessacarr 400 series. Would-be buyers are being tempted into the fold by higher standard equipment levels across both line-ups, and there are three new layouts.

The new all-white bodyshell imparts a classic look, but the emphasis inside is on creating a more modern ambience. The new (and, I must say, highly attractive) oak-effect vinyl flooring is covered by bespoke-sectioned carpeting. The new furnishing schemes are hard to fault – restrained but smart and easy on the eye.

Seven out of the eight Esprit/400 layouts feature a separate shower compartment – recognition from Swift designers that this is an important consideration in the motorhome market.

The entry-level Escape was the best-performing motorhome range in the entire Swift empire last year, a huge hit with customers who were won over by the 'why pay more?' argument. The Escapes benefit from the across-the-board heating/bedding upgrades and we're glad to report the return of a standard spare wheel in place of the unpopular emergency repair kit.

The Autocruise models continue to be the UK's most popular panel-van conversions: upgraded heating system aside, it's 'as you were' for the six-strong range, although a sporty-looking Carrera 4

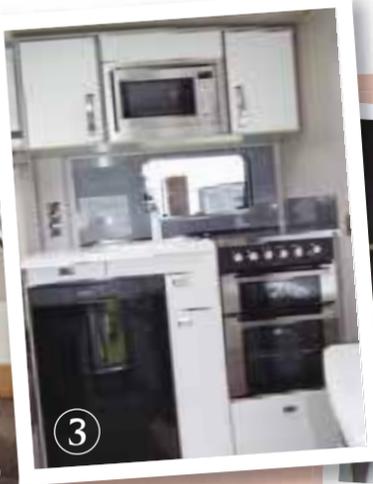


Top: Bessacarr 584  
Above: Escape 686

version (based on the existing Pace model) will take its bow at the NEC in October.

The Swift Bolero/Bessacarr 500 (the 'E' part of the latter's name has gone) range has been trimmed from seven to five models, with subtle enhancements that include revised exterior paintjobs and flusher-fitting windows.

Look out for a what-more-could-we-possibly-fit-into-a-motorhome Kon-Tiki Black Edition at the NEC show. As with all the caravans and motorhomes here, there are no prices yet but word is that the three-model Swift flagship range will cost no more than last year's, despite the hike in standard equipment. ■



- 1 Sprite Quattro
- 2 Sprite Quattro – spacious L-shaped lounge arrangement
- 3 Sterling Eccles SE – radical new colours
- 4 Sterling Eccles SE
- 5 Esprit 484
- 6 Esprit 484 detail