



Owner report

Russ Whitely explains why he has owned three of the same model in a row...and would buy another

2013 Swift Kon-Tiki 679



In 2007, I had a couple of weimaraners, and there was no way they would be going into kennels for their holidays.

As a result, I bought a motorhome, so the dogs could go on holiday too. In the time that has passed, the dogs are running free at the Rainbow Bridge, but the motorhoming continues on and on and on!

The first tag-axle I owned was a Kon-Tiki 669, the model with the island bed. A year or so later, the low-line model was introduced so I ordered a 679 low-line, this time a garage layout with a transverse rear bed above.

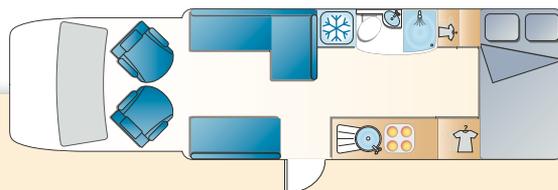
After a few long holidays and three years of ownership, more and more friends wanted to travel, too, so I decided on a high-line model at renewal time. Searching the market, we returned to the Swift brand for another 679, but with the overcab double in addition to the fixed rear.

I had looked very carefully in the market for a replacement for the low-line, but there were many factors that had to be considered – a full oven for example, not the tower type. Another consideration was the rear headboard! Now, as daft as this may sound, many garage-variant motorhomes have a window at each end

of the bed; this meant there was no headboard, nothing to lean against when watching TV in bed or whilst enjoying a goodnight tippie, so the natural replacement was another 679.

Eighteen months later, and after hearing so many people rave about the pros of the Alde heating system, I was in the market again, this time for a 'van fitted with Alde. A search, including variants from Dethleffs and Bürstner, led me back to another 679 and, like the previous model, it was a 679 high-line with the same layout. So, that's three 679s in succession. ►

Price from: £56,995 **Berths:** 6 **Travel seats:** 4
Base vehicle: Fiat Ducato
Length: 8.67m **Gross weight:** 5,000kg





Plenty of space for family and friends to join us

DRIVING

This five-tonne beauty is powered by Fiat's Euro V, 3.0-litre engine delivering 180bhp. I am not technical and these numbers do not mean a great deal to me, but I can tell you that the motorhome drives more like a car than a 'semi-commercial' vehicle, with plenty of power when needed. Even the long trans-Pennine hills of the M62 motorway between Huddersfield and Rochdale, or the Apennine Mountains in Italy are no match for the mighty Multijet – she just marches on and on.

The interesting thing is fuel economy. The last long drive to Italy, at just over 1,100 miles from door to door, including climbing the Simplon Pass, averaged 27.9mpg, according to the onboard computer. Calculated manually, it was 27.6mpg, so quite remarkable for this heavy machine.

The cab offers many comforts, with radio/CD player, electric windows, six-speed manual box, rear-view monitor with two different settings, electric and heated door mirrors and, of course, swivel seats that form part of the lounge from time to time. Both cockpit seats feature twin armrests and concertina blinds are fitted.

Within the cab area are two 230V power points. These only work when

on hook-up but are great for plugging in the mobile or laptop. Two swan neck reading lights are also fitted, and these do not require mains power to function.

CONTROL CENTRE

All the main controls are above the habitation door, along with controls for the Alde heating.

The instrument panels allow an at-a-glance view of fresh and waste water levels, battery state, water pump, awning light and also the master switch for interior lighting.

As the Kon-Tiki is often overseas on low amperage sites, we had the Alde load monitor fitted to help prevent tripping out when using the electrical heating element of the boiler. We also had an Alde battery back-up device fitted to ensure the clock and timer do not require constant reprogramming when stopping and starting, etc.

LOUNGE

The front lounge consists of an L-shaped seating area with two belted seats and also a side-facing sofa. There is plenty of storage under the seats and this is where we tend to keep books, maps and tourist guides,

Why we bought it

The ability to load up for long trips without having to be concerned about the weight of everything on board, plus a place for our well travelled twin tub!

What we love

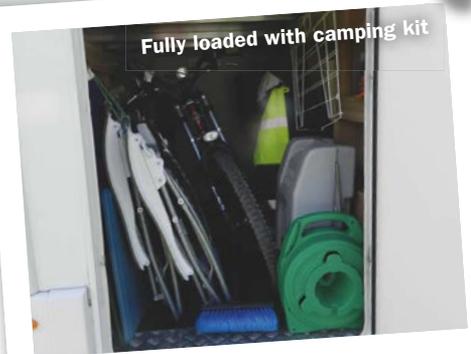
The long, transverse over-garage bed is about 6ft 9in long, so we've room to stretch – and with Alde heating at the bottom end, it's great in the winter too!

How we would change it

Well, an American-style slide-out or two might be useful!

When we buy our next 'van

Call us creatures of habit, but three 679s have travelled extensively with us, so its replacement is likely to be another!



plus a few 'bottles' for enjoying on arrival at our destination!

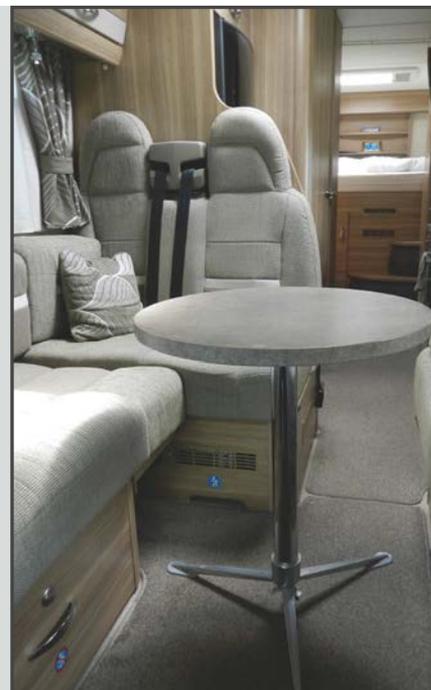
Entertainment is provided by the fitted TV point, although I moved this to behind the driver's seat, purely on personal preference. It was behind the passenger seat. Fiat's CD player is also wired through to the lounge and bedroom, so listening to CDs and the radio is easy.

High-level over-cupboard lighting, LED spot lighting, plenty of 230V power points and 12V sockets complete the picture, with five cupboards also providing ample high-level storage.

The main fusebox is located at eye level within a cupboard in the lounge, making this 'service centre' easy to see and access when required. An on-board reverse polarity indicator is also located here – a useful feature when touring overseas. ►



Kitchen is more than capable of catering on long holidays



Free-standing table for two

DINING

The Kon-Tiki came with a swing-arm coffee table behind the driver's seat, but I modified this by removing the 'arm' and replacing it with a free-standing base and leg – these items are available from Fiamma. The coffee table can be moved about easily and can be taken outdoors.

There is also a regular dining table that lives in one of the two rear wardrobes. The homemade coffee table is an ideal size for two to dine, whilst the larger table comes into its own when entertaining. The full-sized table is solid and sturdy, yet lightweight enough to move about.

KITCHEN

Some of our holidays have been long, ranging from five to 10 weeks. With this in mind, it is fair to say that *a la carte*, or even *a la Kon-Tiki*, cooking and dining often takes place. A digital microwave is fitted as standard and, at 700 watts, it does not cause issues by tripping overseas' hook-up posts.

The Thetford cooker features three gas burners, an electric hotplate and a separate gas grill and oven. The electric hotplate draws about four amps, so again, no bother overseas on low amperage sites. There is a

Dometic extractor over the hob, whilst beneath the oven is storage for oven trays and the like. The cooker is fairly quiet when the 'van is in motion, even whilst hurtling along the not so smooth Belgian motorways at 65mph!

Three undercounter cupboards (two of which have pull-out wire storage racks), a drawer and three high-level cupboards add to the storage in this area.

More or less opposite the cooker, sits a Dometic RMD 8555 fridge/

“So, that's three 679s in succession and we'd have another one”

freezer. I acquired an extra shelf to increase fresh food carrying capacity.

Beneath the fridge/freezer is a fairly deep cupboard that houses heavy ovenware and pans. Above the fridge, another cupboard has become home to the satellite receiver! A nice touch in the kitchen is the backlighting of the wallboard around the window area.

WASHROOM

Thetford's C260 toilet takes care of the day-to-day ablutions, with a cassette that has a fitted handle and wheels. The shower is a good size and totally separate, so there is no wet floor and so on! The shower is fairly powerful and is usually used in preference to on-site facilities.

A cupboard beneath the sink and one above forms storage for toothpaste, shower gel and suncream. There is no window but a Midi Heki provides light, along with three LEDs, one of which is positioned over a mirror. We added an extra towel ring just after acquiring the motorhome.

SWEET DREAMS

The primary bunk is a fixed double, atop the rear garage. This transverse sleeping palace is 6ft 9in in length, allowing even long-legged types – like me – to stretch out in comfort.

A bedside shelf at each side is ideal for specs, the night-time tippie and the mobile phone. Power points are plentiful, with two at each end of the bed. Those near the foot end of the bed are joined by a 12V power point and also the TV connection point.

Clothes storage is good, with a double and a single wardrobe, ►



We prefer to use the motorhome shower



Plenty of storage and space

a couple of drawers and a smaller cupboard beneath. The double wardrobe had a fitted shelf at the top, but I got an extra shelf to be fitted, doubling the space available for shoes. A full-length curtain closes off the bedroom from the front.

Above the cab is a good-sized double bed. This area is light and airy with a window at each end and a light. If required, the lounge sofas will form a double or maybe two shorter singles.

STORAGE

This is excellent, with the large rear locker, often referred to as a garage, taking top marks. This houses a couple of reclining sun loungers, two 'li-lo' sunbeds, a table, the hosepipe, a water trolley, a bicycle and our twin-tub washing machine, in addition to other accessories. Even with this lot on board, there is always room for a few crates of cheap ale from France!

A pull-out drawer takes care of levelling ramps, waste water hose and so on, whilst a locker door gives access to an underfloor storage area.

Worthy of a mention is the gas locker – this houses two 13kg Calor cylinders and so, by using the larger cylinders, the gas is great value for money.

TOURING

The 679 is used for holidays, both UK and overseas, long stay and short breaks. The 'van is very stable to drive even in the roughest of weather – we were one of only a handful of units on site during the February storms! Alde heating, fresh and grey tank heaters and Grade III insulation sees us on the road 12 months of the year.

Occasionally, the 679's length is an issue, more on overseas sites. In Florence, we stayed on a large campsite with small pitches – but it had an area for coaches. We were content for a few days! In France, we stayed on a tennis court one night!

The only other tricky part about tag-axle ownership is levelling from side to side, but we use three short pieces of wood. These are lightweight and take up very little space in the locker. **MMM**

FACTS AND FIGURES



PRICE

Price new today: £72,890

Price of similar aged 'van today: £56,995



BASICS

Berths: 6

Travel seats: 4

Length of ownership: 1 year 7 months

Annual mileage: 9,000 so far



DIMENSIONS

Length: 8.56m (28ft 1in)

Width: 2.35m (7ft 9in)

Height: 2.98m (9ft 9in)

Gross vehicle weight: 5,000kg

Payload: Approx 700kg after the allowance for the driver, 90% fluids and gas



BASE VEHICLE

Type: Fiat Ducato, Al-Ko

Engine: 3.0-litre 180bhp Euro V

Fuel economy: Close to 28mpg



BEDS

Rear transverse double:

2.04m x 1.30m (6ft 8in x 4ft 3in)

Lounge double: 2.08m x 1.38m (6ft 10in x 4ft 6in) or two short singles



RUNNING COSTS

Base vehicle service cost:

£200

Insurance: £235

Habitation service: £167

Road tax: £165

OPTIONS

Factory-fitted extras: Rear ladder, upgraded engine to 3.0-litre and Dometic roof air-con

Accessories added: Kathrein satellite system, Alde load monitor, Alde battery back-up, free-standing table, Bose sound system, hidden-away waste bin, carrier bag holders and extra towel rings

WHAT WENT WRONG

Three internal bulbs failed – replaced for £3.60

FURTHER READING

May 2014 *MMM*: Swift Kon-Tiki 679 Black Edition

May 2009 *Which Motorhome*: 26-page special on Swift Kon-Tiki models

WANTED

Want to earn £250 for writing about your motorhome? Send up to 2,000 words ● Info for 'Why we bought it', 'What we love',

'How we would change it', 'When we buy our next 'van' and details for our facts and figures panel ● Ten or more photos, including one of yourself.

Rachel Stothert, *MMM*, Warners Group Publications, West Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH rachels@warnersgroup.co.uk