



Cool cream shades carry through from the kitchen surface to the lounge fabrics

# Sprite Major 4 SB

This is the lowest-priced transverse island bed caravan on the market; the new, award-winning Major SB is a star in many ways



Island beds are certainly one of the biggest fashion statements in current caravan layout trends.

Every manufacturer offers this layout; there are more than 20 from which to choose.

One, though, stands out from the crowd with affordability. The Sprite Major 4 SB is the lowest-priced model of this layout on the UK market.

This model made its debut in October and went on to win the *Caravan* magazine award for Best Couples' Caravan Under £15,000 for 2015. It earned its high scores because it presents a new option for couples looking for the luxury of a transverse island bed in a lightweight, inexpensive caravan.

Since the first Sprite was built in 1949 by the legendary caravan designer Sam Alper, the name

#### TESTED BY

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#### PHOTOGRAPHY

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Sprite has been synonymous with low-cost caravanning. The first Sprite had a price tag of less than £200. If that sounds absurd, it's all relative; Sprite value has endured the decades of economic change and remains, today, an icon of affordability.

The listed price of the SB is £14,560. Even when you add in the cost of the Diamond Pack, £475, with which all Sprites are



**WINNER**  
 Caravan magazine  
 2015 Awards  
 Best Couples'  
 Caravan under  
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equipped, the SB comes in at only £35 over £15,000.

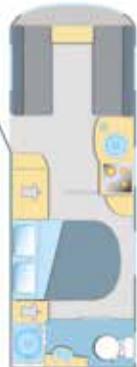
The Diamond Pack provides an AL-KO AKS 3004 stabiliser, an AL-KO Secure wheel lock receiver, alloy wheels, a door flyscreen, a microwave oven, plus a radio/CD/MP3 player with iPod connection and two scatter cushions.

You could opt for the ATC stability control system, for £285, and your Sprite would still look good value for money.

There's more, though, than straightforward figures to appeal to you about the new SB. There's a general ambience which creates the impression of a caravan that's above budget status. That's down to the look and feel of the fabrics, the general high standard of finish and the luxury of having a sizeable shower room stretching across the width of the caravan.

**TECHNICAL STUFF**

- BERTHS** 4
- LENGTH** 7.48m
- BODY** 5.83m
- OVERALL** 7.48m
- WIDTH** 2.23m
- HEADROOM** 1.95m
- WEIGHT MIRO** 1184kg
- MTPLM** 1385kg



**SHOWERING**

Measuring 80cm at its deepest point, the floor space in the SB's washroom isn't enormous by comparison with some end-shower room models. The shower, at 56cm x 74cm, isn't among the largest, either, but, again, most buyers will find it to be large enough. Keeping in mind Sprite value and the modest dimensions of the SB, we'd say so far, so good.

There are two elements of the shower room that won't meet with everyone's approval, though. One is the absence of carpet (cold feet is never ideal). If we bought this model we'd get a bathmat to place in the centre of the floor area. The second element is the lack of plastic lining on the shower. It's wallboarded, just like the rest of the caravan. This may draw criticism from some prospective buyers. But on the basis

of having used a long-term-test Adria with wallboarding in the shower for almost a year, giving it many times more shower use than would be normal for a caravan in holiday and weekend use, we'd say wallboarding is not a concern. The amount of water sloshing around the little room produced no adverse effect on the walls.

**SLEEPING**

The bed expands and retracts, by 20cm, so that you can have a wider corridor towards the shower room. When it's expanded to its full extent the bed is 1.86m long, with only slight corner shaping, so length isn't reduced appreciably.

We love the triangular dressing table, with mirrored corner cabinet and points for a television. This touch of luxury seems a surprise given the SB's budget status; it's





Sprites are theoretically in the budget category but the Major 4 SB's bed arrangement looks luxurious



Sprites have a choice of two fabric schemes; this is the optional Darwin upholstery

The mirror above the dresser hides a triangular cabinet



The forward-facing dresser is equipped with television connections



Measuring 80cm at its deepest point, the floor area in the SB's washroom isn't enormous but there's certainly enough space



The vanity unit contains two cabinets and two deep shelves

Two hooks for towels plus a loop, and you can hang one over the shower door to dry, too



a pointer to the fact that, in this model, light weight and low price don't mean light on luxury, for this bedroom is simply splendid.

## STORAGE

The mattress feels feather-light as you raise the bed base to get at the storage opportunity beneath.

There is plenty of space here for all normal holiday needs. The cross-shaped metal structure that allows you to retract and expand the bed base restricts the size and shape of objects you can store here, though; some folding chairs and tables, for instance, would be too large. And even though there's an exterior hatch, the location of the spare wheel would frustrate attempts to feed in chairs from the outside. Don't let this put you off buying an SB, though; just buy chairs and a folding table that fit the caravan!

Wardrobes are on each side of the bed; the forward one is 72cm wide, with three shelves tucked away around the corner from the door. Two deep drawers, 42cm wide, plus a drop-down-door cabinet, are beneath this wardrobe.

The second wardrobe has 40cm hanging width but the door is only 20cm wide, so patience would be required in getting stuff in and out if the wardrobe were anywhere near full. The storage arrangement below this wardrobe is a two-shelf cabinet, ideally sized for shoes.

Full-length hinge-down doors give you easy entry to the storage spaces under the settees.

## DINING

The pull-out chest-of-drawers top gives you a level table space that's 60cm wide and 72cm deep, which is larger than many front tables.

The freestanding table lives in the forward wardrobe, in a position from which it's easy to get it in and out.

### WHAT WE LIKE

- ▶ The light weight
- ▶ The good-value price
- ▶ The ample kitchen surface
- ▶ The general feeling that this is not a budget caravan when in fact it is!

### WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- ▶ Lack of carpet in the shower room; the purchase of a bathmat cures that, though!
- ▶ Restriction on the size and shape of folding chairs that you can store under the bed



With the extension surface hinged up, the SB's kitchen surface is 1.15m long

## LOUNGING

Sprites have a choice of two fabric schemes. Our review example is equipped with the optional Darwin upholstery, delightfully pale and creating an exceptionally light and airy look. The curtains and cushions inject shades of palest green and cream into the décor. This fabric combination will add £145 to the price of your Sprite.

But if you prefer a more practical brown shade for your caravan seating, go for the standard fabric scheme, called Berto. The curtains and cushions are almost white, with a bold pattern that looks just a little bit like spiky, geometric leaves.

The settees are 1.6m long; easily enough space for four to sit in comfort, or for two to recline against the lovely squash bolsters with feet up, cocooned in the blown-air warmth provided by the Truma Combi 6 central heating system.

## KITCHEN

With the extension surface hinged up, the SB's kitchen surface is 1.15m long; that's plenty of space in which to prepare meals for two. (The SB is of course a four-berth but the caravan's main appeal is to couples).

The microwave is flanked by two good-sized cabinets. There's a slim cupboard and drawer between the oven and the fridge, plus a cabinet in the dresser opposite. With careful planning, this would be enough lower kitchen storage space for most buyers. Factor in the two large head-height lockers in the lounge for kitchen items and you could safely say the SB's storage capability would seldom present challenges.

## TOWING

The SB's 1385kg MTPLM is crucial to this model's appeal; it's easily within tow-scope of a vast range of medium-sized cars. Our test tow this time was brief but it doesn't take long to establish a caravan's handling characteristics and this one is up there with the best in its class. For our money, we'd go for the electronic stability control option, just for belt-and-braces additional security in high winds and on exposed motorway stretches.

### ALSO CONSIDER...

*The Xplore 504 – £14,399; fixed bed, although not the same layout; 1300kg*

### OPTIONS TO GO FOR...

*The Darwin optional fabric scheme at £145, perhaps, and ATC at £285*

### OUR VERDICT

*The SB opens up new caravanning opportunities for couples looking for home-from-home bedroom comfort in a light, low-priced caravan. This is the sort of caravan that will entice first-time buyers, restricted, perhaps, on weight and not wanting to expend vast sums of money. The SB proves that touring is affordable. For that, it's to be applauded. And that's a major reason why this brilliant caravan won our 2015 title of Best Couples' Caravan Under £15,000.*

THIS IS THE SORT OF CARAVAN THAT WILL ENTICE FIRST-TIME BUYERS. THE SB PROVES THAT TOURING IS AFFORDABLE.

