

SWIFT Rio 325

The big brand adds two models to its highly successful Rio line-up. **Niall Hampton** tries out the larger of the duo

- Price £45,244 OTR
- Sleeps 2
- Belts 4
- Base Fiat Ducato
- Engine 2.3-litre turbodiesel, 130bhp
- L/W/H 5.99/2.26/2.78m (19'6"/7'4"/9'1")
- MTPLM 3500kg
- Payload 662kg
- Water (fresh/waste) 86/68 litres
- Leisure battery 75Ah
- Gas 2 x 7kg

Swift's Rio was one of the most distinctive British-made motorhome launches last year. A low-profile coachbuilt sporting a rear tailgate to create an open aspect from the rear lounges, the inaugural 320 and 340 models have now been joined by two siblings.

Both eschew the tailgate, although the 325, on test here, retains its innovation credentials with a height-adjustable transverse rear bed over a garage; the 5.99m 310 has a parallel lounge and end washroom.

The USP of the Rio is its compact dimensions based on the footprint of a panel-van conversion. Sitting close to the ground, it obviates the need for an entrance step. The overcab moulding sweeps back pleasingly into the habitation area and Swift's designers have made good use of black accents to offset against the white cab and sidewalls. These feature in the overcab moulding, headlight surrounds and black radiator grille, plus the three-quarter length window in the habitation door. Swift's house-style red bridges the gap between the two tones.

All Rio models ride on the standard Fiat Ducato chassis cab. Motive power is provided by a 2.3-litre, 130bhp turbodiesel engine, which is more than up to the task of propelling the 2838kg MiRO 'van. Ride quality is good and, with a wheel at

each corner, handling is assured. Power steering, driver and passenger airbags, ABS, daytime running lights and electronic brakeforce distribution all come as standard equipment.

Two belted seats in the dinette bring the total to four. Legroom in this position is agreeable and a large side window allows good sightseeing in transit.

The large sunroof over the cab brightens the dinette, already helped by the mid-tone cabinet work. These surfaces combine well with the oatmeal-and-brown upholstery, relieved by a turquoise accent. The light worktops match the unmistakably Swift Group beige mouldings overhead.

Extra guests can easily join you for meals and snacks,

courtesy of a clip-on lounge table and swivelling front seats. The choice of seating will also work well for a couple, who can face each other rather than sitting side-by-side on a seat bench.

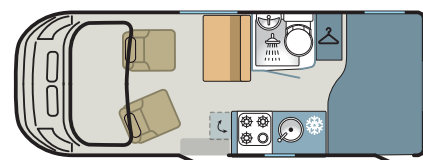
Equipment in the Rio 325's galley is generous. A dual-fuel cooker, a separate oven and grill, and a fridge with a separate freezer compartment top the list, supported by a microwave oven and a circular sink. There's style to go with the substance, too, thanks to an illuminated splashback and cream locker facings.

Preparation space is not extensive, but this should not present a hardship for

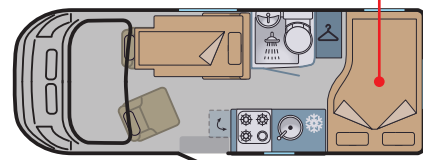
tidy cooks. Close the cooker lids, fit the sink infill cover and extend the tip-up flap to the right of the cooker and there's some decent work surface to play with. To the left of the worktop is a 230V socket that is ideal for toasters, a sandwich-maker or a coffee machine. A rooflight above the microwave can rid the 'van of cooking odours and steam.

A transverse bed above the rear garage tops the sleeping arrangements in the 325. It measures a respectable 1.85m x 1.3m (6ft 1in x 4ft 3in).

On a body length of 5.99m, the washroom was always going to have to be a multi-function space. Step into the



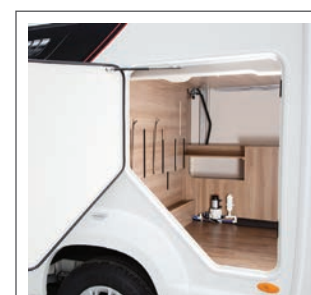
Drop-down double bed 1.85m x 1.3m (6'1" x 4'3")



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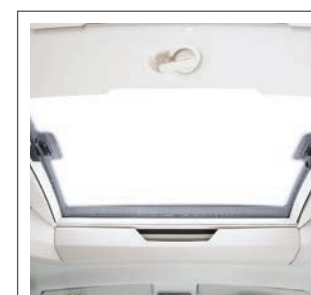
RAIL CONVENIENCE
The single-piece GRP rear panel has rails for fitting a bike rack. When in transit, bicycles can be stowed in the rear garage



HEIGHT OF PRACTICALITY
The rear bed has two height settings. Use it in the position above while in transit when you need the garage's full headroom...



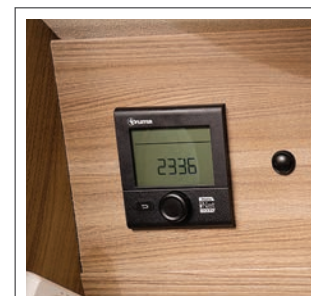
FLEXIBLE STORAGE
...Once on site, with the items removed, simply press the button to drop the bed smoothly to its lowered 'sleeping' position



LET THE SUNSHINE IN
The large sunroof over the cab lends the front dinette a bright and roomy feel. Its retractable action will be welcome in warmer climes



DÉCOR DE JOUR
With 'Aralie Sen' cabinet work and 'Loxley' soft furnishings, the Rio 325 has a pleasing interior vibe. Lighting throughout the 'van is provided by low-energy LEDs



REMOTE CONTROL
The Rio 325 is Truma iNet ready, so you can add control for Combi4 heating via smartphone or tablet, using GSM or Bluetooth



SAFETY IS THE KEY
Controls for drop-down bed feature key operation as a fail-safe to prevent bed from being raised or lowered by curious little fingers



HANG UP AND PLUG IN
A TV point is located on the washroom bulkhead. It has power and aerial connections, plus a bracket for attaching a TV stand



WELL-EQUIPPED CAB
Rio's cab lacks steering wheel controls for the audio system, but cab air-con and a passenger airbag come as standard equipment

| 'VAN REVIEW |

combined shower tray and toilet floor where there's a swivel, electric-flush Thetford. Behind this is a moulded unit containing a sink and a mixer tap that doubles as the showerhead. A curtain on a U-shaped track keeps spray from the wooden door, and users also get a half-length mirror.

A rear garage, accessed only on the nearside, heads up the storage options in the Rio 325. Two lockers are fitted in the lounge, while two in the kitchen boast crockery racks. These are joined by a cutlery drawer, a narrow cabinet and a pan cupboard under the oven.

Three lockers hang on the rear wall above the bed. A wardrobe next to the bed features restrainers to stow the dining table in transit.

Standard kit in the 325 includes pleated cassette blinds, flyscreens, roller blinds, removable carpets and LED lights throughout. A spare wheel is in an underslung carrier, the rear panel has fixing rails for a bike rack and a 100W solar panel sits on the roof.

Water and space heating are covered by a dual-fuel Truma Combi 4 with digital control panel. Winter fridge vent covers, fresh- and waste-water tank heaters and underfloor waste pipe insulation are all included.

Among the cost options is the Lux Pack of cab air-con, cruise control and a Status 570 TV aerial (£995); this enables the upgrade to Fiat's Comfort-Matic auto 'box (£1695). A reversing camera (£599) and detachable towbar (£595) are also available. ©

PRACTICAL MOTORHOME SAYS...

With a more conventional design - minus the rear tailgate - this new Rio should prove popular with traditionalists looking for a compact and well-equipped two-berth. In addition to the garage, there are plenty of storage options.



GUEST ROOM
Two belted travel seats are in the dinette. The seats are shaped for optimum comfort and there's plenty of legroom for passengers



FULLY EQUIPPED
Kitchen is compact but has all the essential kit. Buyers get a microwave, separate oven and grill, fridge and worktop extension



SIMPLE OPERATION
The ergonomic and intuitive combined control panel by Swift is one of the best you'll find anywhere. It's above the habitation door



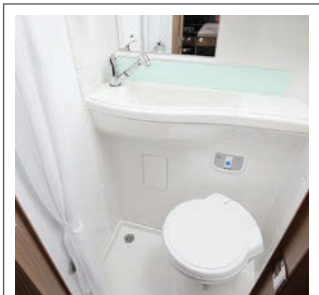
REMEMBER THIS
As with all Swift's fixed-bed motorhomes, the rear bedroom in the 325 sports a Duvalay memory-foam mattress. The bed measures 1.85m x 1.3m (6ft 1in x 4ft 3in)



EASY TO ADD A BERTH
Front dinette offers an occasional berth, by using a grey infill cushion to plug the gap between the travel seat bench and driver's seat



TALL ENOUGH
The half-length wardrobe is next to the bed and is large enough to take a couple's touring finery. Its top forms the bedroom TV station



CAN-DO WASHROOM
Multifunction washroom has a shower tray that doubles as the floor. The space is well lined to keep splashing water contained