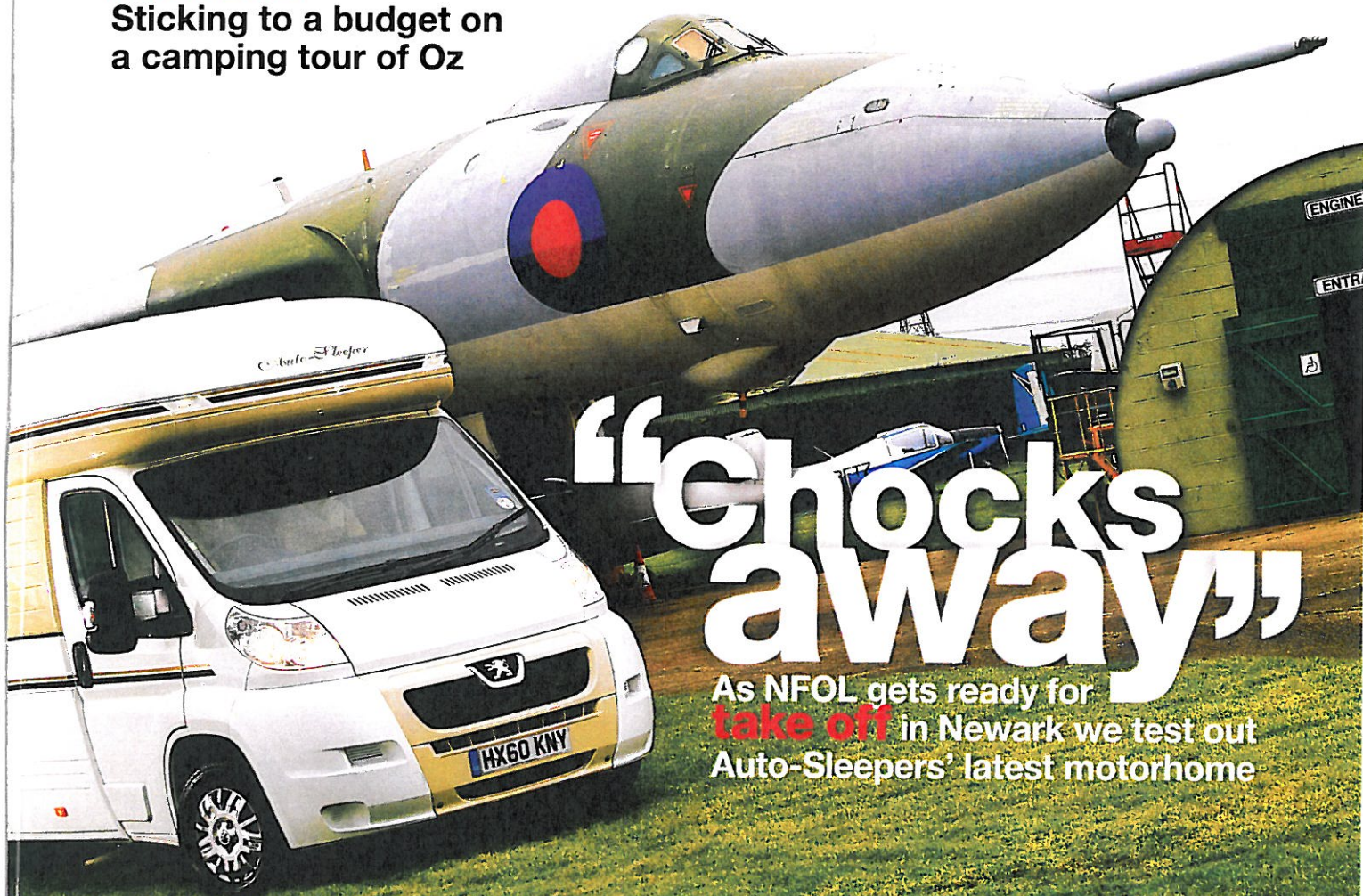


# Camping & Caravanning

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## **Aussie** rules

Sticking to a budget on a camping tour of Oz



# “Chocks away”

As NFOL gets ready for **take off** in Newark we test out Auto-Sleepers' latest motorhome

## **Loads of options**

Check out roof storage systems from racks and boxes to baskets and bags

## Whose **round** is it?

Kick back with a pint and a pitch at a pub campsite

**inside:**

WE'VE GOT A NEW CLUB SITE - FIND OUT WHERE ON PAGE 13



**ANDY MORGAN** takes a trip back in time in Auto-Sleepers' retro motorhome, released to celebrate half a century of the company

## Back to the future

**Auto-Sleepers is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary and has launched the Executive Limited Edition motorhome to celebrate passing this milestone. This retro-styled motorhome uses the robust one-piece GRP monocoque shell that has been successful in many of its previous products.**

**The limited edition has a high standard specification including satellite system, electric awning, alarm and cruise control to name but a few. The unit we tested also included the optional cab air-conditioning and alloy wheels.**



**1** The Executive uses the latest Peugeot Boxer chassis with the 2.2-litre HDI 130BHP engine and slick six-speed gearbox. The motorhome also boasts traction control and ABS brakes as standard. The driveability was excellent, it felt very car-like with a light clutch and effortless steering. The ride was very controlled with good handling while still remaining compliant on today's pot-holed roads. It was a joy to drive on anything from motorways to country lanes. The Executive also delivered very reasonable fuel consumption at just over 36mpg on the trip computer. At a little more than six metres long and 2.3 metres wide (with mirrors folded) the unit is manageable and easy to manoeuvre. Reversing and parking is also straightforward with the excellent mirrors and compact dimensions. The cab has central locking, but the retro entrance door has a manual lock that appears to be lifted from a 1970s Morris Marina.

**2** The main living area has twin parallel seats, which quickly and simply make up into a generous comfortable double bed. The seats can form two single beds using the quirky fold-down armrests and the supplied spacer cushions. The seats are upholstered in beige patterned, high quality fabric. This combined with the 'Mocha' carpets and crafted furniture give the interior a classy ambience, enhanced by LED pelmet and reading lights. There are two pedestal tables and two mounting positions, so both can be used together to give extra space. There is adequate storage with the over-cab

locker easily swallowing two pillows and a king-size quilt. The tinted privacy windows are a matter of personal taste. I liked them on bright days but during overcast weather or at dusk I found they cut out a bit too much light. They also hindered reversing in the dark as side visibility became difficult.

**3** The kitchen area is compact and the only position for the kettle is next to the sink, so you would need to move it whenever the sink was in use. There is a useful large pull-out worktop above the fridge but it blocks movement through the van and I found it was only really suitable for occasional use. The cooker is a smart full size Spinflow with separate oven and grill, but I wonder if a more compact three-burner hob would free up some much-needed workspace. The microwave was located above the fridge at a sensible height with two drawers beneath it. There was reasonable storage in the kitchen areas but none of the cupboards accommodated a full size cereal box. There's a nice crockery set in the locker above the microwave and next to it four wine glasses, but sadly no room for your wine bottles.

**4** The bathroom has compact dimensions with a Thetford bench toilet and fold-down space-saving basin. The basin works reasonably well but needs to be closed carefully when emptying to prevent spillage. There is a GRP shower tray and small shower screen that covers the bathroom door. The shower worked well, as long as you don't mind drying the toilet afterwards. Storage in the bathroom area was limited with only a small, mirrored vanity cabinet and a corner wire tray. Unfortunately there was no toilet roll holder in our test unit.

**5** For your viewing pleasure there is a bracket-mounted 16-inch Avtex widescreen TV and a manual Teleco satellite system. This makes satellite set-up a breeze with its wardrobe-mounted satellite finder. In practice it was easier than setting up a TV aerial, but it could be affected by surrounding trees if they block the dish's view of the satellite. It's slightly let down by rather clunky satellite receiver operation and untidy wiring. The electric wind-out awning further simplifies set-up when arriving on site. A Whale autofill system allows easy filling of the freshwater tank from a barrel if you do not want to move the motorhome to a water point. Heating and hot water come courtesy of the Truma Combi 4E boiler. This efficient gas and electric blown-air system quickly raises the room temperature with two outlets into the main living area and one into the bathroom. It's a shame the fourth outlet is blanked off as it would have been useful to provide heat in the cab area where cold spots often occur.



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at a  
glance

**Auto-Sleeper Executive Limited Edition**

**Price as tested**  
£59,245 on the road

**Prices start at** £57,995

**Club Care Insurance** £502

**Base vehicle** Peugeot Boxer X250

**Engine** 2.2-litre HDI 130bhp, six-speed manual gearbox

**Length x width x height**  
6.06m x 2.29m x 2.82m

**Berths** Two travelling and two berth

**Maximum Technically**

**Permissible Laden Mass** 3,500kg

**User payload** 490kg

**Mass in running order** 3,010kg

**Warranty** Three years

**Manufacturer** Auto-Sleepers

**Tel** 01604 402888

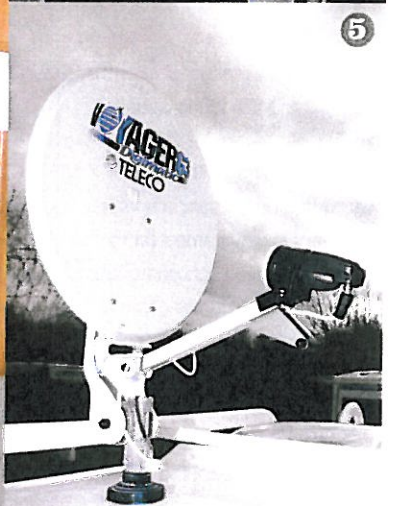
**Web** auto-sleepers.co.uk



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**Verdict:** Auto-Sleepers has chosen to celebrate its 50th anniversary with a beautiful retro-styled van brought bang up to date – though it has a hefty price tag.