

Middle England's Masterpiece

Jonathan Lloyd casts an expert eye over the Auto-Sleeper Cotswold - an award-winning two-berth luxury coachbuilt...



Left: General views forward and backwards show the spacious and uncluttered interior layout.



Cook's Tour

Cotswold's target market is largely one in which Auto-Sleepers hasn't really competed in before and yet their first serious effort has won plaudits from both press and public alike. Cotswold is currently available in two flavours. Cotswold (no suffix) is a four-berth featuring a permanent Euro-style rear corner double bed with a washroom adjacent and a forward lounge. The subject of this test, the Cotswold EB, replaces the permanent rear bed with a full-width changing room containing clothes storage, cassette loo, hand basin and a walk-in shower cubicle. Moving forward, one enters the kitchen split either side of the central aisle; then the lounge which is the size of Wales and features a pair of inward-facing settees plus a brace of swivelled cab seats.

OTR (on-the-road)

Underpinning the Cotswold is the Boxer long wheelbase chassis-cab which looked to be one with standard-height rails. I'd have opted for

a low-line independently-sprung Al-Ko Kober set-up on this their flagship model. Further, because Auto-Sleepers favour Peugeot rather than Fiat, there is no automatic option, which may well stall a few sales. Autocruise has got around this by switching to Fiat when auto is specified. Perhaps the Broadway crew will follow suit?

The 2.2-litre 130PS engine is standard fare and the 3-litre 160PS engine a £1,350 extra-cost option. The smaller engine is more than adequate, powering the Cotswold along with consummate ease. The range topping 160 motor is one of the best currently available in its class, providing a smooth delivery of power and torque throughout the rev range. Although it doesn't incur much of an initial cost penalty, you'll pay for that extra performance at the pumps.

The problem with the current Boxer/Ducato is that they are ubiquitous and because we are all so familiar with them, we sometimes take them for granted. Early



Forward lounge-diner offered a choice of tables, plus top and front access to under-seat storage areas.

ON TEST



Boxer driving environment was spoiled by a too-high seat squab caused by the fitting of a naff swivel. See much improved 'mirror-style' rear vision monitor



Knowledge base

Auto-Sleepers are our oldest volume motorcaravan converter celebrating their 50th birthday this year. Originally family owned, the company became part of the pan-European SeA group for a short while. Thankfully it has now returned to British ownership and under the MD Mike Crouch, is flourishing again. Auto-Sleepers also build the well-received Marquis Mercs. Auto-Sleeper motorcaravans have always been built in the picturesque Cotswold village of Broadway, in the heart of Middle England.



Full-width across-the-rear changing and washroom is practical and spacious. It has all the kit plus some contemporary illumination

teething troubles aside, they are generally an extremely reliable bit of kit and one which doesn't feel as commercial as many rivals. Despite its higher than many stance and a low-line overcab which is not a true low-profile, Cotswold was very well-behaved in strong blustery crosswinds and remained extremely sure-footed during some fairly challenging press-on miles along unfamiliar country roads. Late braking and sudden changes of direction are two things one should avoid, but it was very reassuring to find that despite this unwise combination, the Cotswold went precisely and unflappably where it was pointed. Perhaps that Al-Ko

chassis won't be missed as much as I first thought.

Standard equipment included a very good colour reversing camera with a (much improved) 'interior mirror' style monitor. Previously I've always found these to suffer more than most from unwanted glare and reflections, but this one was top banana.

My only gripe was the seating position. Spectacularly incompetent seat swivels added an incredible 48mm to the seat box making it far too high for me (long back - short legs!) to drive without having to stoop to ensure 20:20 vision forwards. If ever I was fortunate enough to be able to afford a

Cotswold, I would intend getting an engineer to cut down the seat boxes as soon as it was out of warranty, but I bet I would just remove the driver's seat swivel.

Main salon

Stretching the tape to 7.165m, it equates to a big van for an Auto-Sleepers' dedicated two-berth. Significantly they have resisted the temptation to overfill it with furniture...just because they can. Instead they've opted for more free space. This, I suggest, is the secret of Cotswold EB's appeal...It felt as though you could hold a county ball in there. A spacious, light, airy, and open interior. Perfect...just perfect.

The Cotswold

Award-winning and worthy of it's place!



Auto-Sleepers
MOTORHOMES OF EXCELLENCE

Still traditionally made using the same high standards of hand craftsmanship, Auto-Sleepers remain the most well respected manufacturer in the industry. We are proud to present the distinguished Cotswold range. Extensive research and development has culminated in a fusion of award-winning functionality and form - proving that we are still on top of our game and gaining momentum.

- All new exterior styling
- Security safe
- Driver and passenger swivel seats
- Powerful 130bhp Peugeot turbo diesel engine
- Superb storage solutions
- External BBQ and TV point
- External gas tank
- Thermostatically controlled space and water heating system
- Luxurious Bathrooms
- Remote single key locking



Winner Cotswold EB The 2010 Caravan Club Industry Motor Caravan Award



Winner Cotswold EB Theford Washroom of the Year Award for Motor Caravans




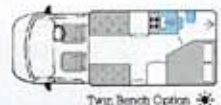
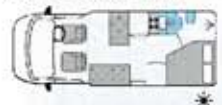
Motor Caravan Club Design & Drive Awards 2010


OVERALL WINNER Auto-Sleepers Cotswold EB

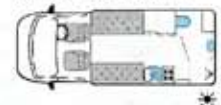
Motor Caravan Club Design & Drive Awards 2010

WINNER Coachbuilds over £54,000 Auto-Sleepers Cotswold EB

Cotswold 



Cotswold EB 



For more information call 01386 853 338 or visit www.auto-sleepers.co.uk



Thoughtful well-laid out and comprehensively-equipped kitchen is Auto-Sleepers most successful to date.

the cab and lounge during the day and by well-placed low-energy lighting at night.

The standard spec idiots' lantern was 'hidden' in a cupboard and the manually-operated satellite dish looked well up to the job, though I didn't try either, preferring to listen to the (rather good) CD player.

Galley

Auto-Sleeper coachbuilds did suffer from under-developed kitchens a while ago (our own van is one of them), though this is a beaut. Domestic-style cooker, 230V microwave, two door fridge-freezer, rubbish bin, plenty of worktop and 'creating space' pushed all the right buttons. That said, it was the small details that elevated it into the 'master-class'. Just loved the fact that A-S had changed their supplied crockery so it can be used safely in the microwave (no metal strip), plus the inclusion of a kitchen paper roll holder, the draining baskets and rack on the underside of the sink

There were two tables, each with dedicated storage, a coffee one and a larger dining one. The latter was

freestanding so could be used for al-fresco eating. 'Light and airy' was achieved via the large skylights over

Tech Talk

Base vehicle: Peugeot Boxer LWB chassis-cab

Motive power: 2.2-litre 130PS turbo-diesel. Front wheel drive, 6-speed manual gearbox

Will it fit?

Length: 7.165m (23ft 6in)

Width: 2.32m (7ft 7.25in) + mirrors

Height: 3.015m (9ft 10.75in)

MTPLM: 4005kg

Payload: 645kg (130PS) less 123kg essential habitation allowance

Sleeping berths: 2

Travel seats: 2 inc driver

Kit count: Electrically-adjustable mirrors, central locking, electronic engine immobiliser, driver and passenger air-bag, CD/radio, cruise

control, 2 X cab seat swivels. Electrically-operated exterior step, rear corner steadies, acrylic double-glazed windows with cassette pleated blinds and flyscreens. Leisure battery, charge management system, 230V hook-up cable. LPG tank, diesel/230V combined space and water heater with blown-air distribution. 3 gas + 1 electric hob, grill and thermostatically-controlled gas oven. 230V microwave oven. 2-door domestic-style gas/12V/230V fridge-freezer.

Full-width rear changing room with separate walk-in shower cubicle, designer glass bowl, electric-flush wheeled-cassette toilet and clothes storage.

Indirect mood lighting, main salon and reading lights (all low

consumption). Smoke alarm, Carbon Monoxide alarm and fire extinguisher.

Additional Pack: Cab air-con & alloy wheels (£1,222)

Bottom line: Prices from £47,442 OTR (130PS), £48,792 OTR (160PS) + VAT at current rate.

2011 Auto-Sleeper Cotswold kindly offered for evaluation by Marquis Motorhomes (Northamptonshire branch), The Causeway, Great Billing, Northampton, NN3 9EX. Tel: 01604 402 888 Web: www.marquismotorhomes.co.uk



cover, and finally the sliding tea towel rail. Our own van's kitchen always looks untidy because there is nowhere to store the oven mitts and drying up tea-towel so inevitably they end up draped over the grill flap handle, on show and in the way!

Comfort station

We've already given an overview of the full-width changing/wash room in our Cook's Tour. Once again though, it's the detail that is important. Most significantly, the basin isn't the usual white inset effort, but a designer see-through bowl that sits proud (and proudly) on the cupboard top. A monobloc mixer tap provided the water and 'Darth Vader'-style blue LED's inset into the mirror were responsible for visual entertainment! I'd be tempted to ask, 'Why the rash of lights?' The less grumpy would



Auto MASTER
CARAVAN & MOTORHOME SERVICE CENTRE

- Electrical Repairs
- Security
- Mechanical Repairs
- Habitation
- Towbar Fitting
- Exhausts
- Body/chassis Repairs
- Tyres

Approved by all UK manufacturers for service and warranty
We are pleased to announce recent approval by Adria and Pilote

Telephone: 01443 222234
Email: peter@auto-master.co.uk
www.auto-master.co.uk

Unit 3 Llywna Farm, Llanharry Road, Brynsadler, Pontyclun, Mid Glamorgan, CF72 9DB

SOLAR SOLUTIONS
C.M.C. car motorhome caravan workshop

The South Coast's leading supplier of Solar Panels & Electrical Equipment for Motorhomes & Caravans

Beat The 2011 VAT increase

If you want to get an End of Year Bargain then calling us is the right choice. We offer fantastic service with 1st Class installations and to make your experience even better, we are offering "FREE" mobile fitting until the end of December. (within 150miles)

For more product idea's please visit our website

CALL: 01202 632488

www.solarsolutionshd.co.uk info@solarsolutionshd.co.uk
Unit 9, 565 Blandford Rd, Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset BH16 5BN

If you just want a product supplied call us for a quote. We buy in bulk and can offer the savings to YOU. However, if you already have a product and just want it fitted we can do that too.

ON TEST

rightly counter with, "Why not?"

The walk-in shower was of generous size and bi-fold opaquely-glazed doors kept the dry area dry. I would have preferred some lighter-coloured (pretend) grouting to break up the unremitting black walls of (faux) tiles in the shower. The new Eddis Aspire has this and it really lifts the area.

For decades I have put together the MMM Mobility Supplement, so I am well aware of the need some folk have for a carer to assist them with ablutions, the Cotswold's comfort station would be just the ticket!

Berths

Two longitudinal singles with a clear central aisle for ease of access and egress, or an all-over transverse double that still leaves the rearward ends of the settees available for seating...the choice is yours. In practice this means that those with non-synchronised going-to-bed and getting-up times can sleep in a double bed and the non-somnolent partner will still have somewhere to sit.

Mod cons

Standard spec is high and included all the toys on the base vehicle, diesel/230V combined space and water heater, wind-out awning, LPG tank, BBQ point, safe, plus more importantly - a smoke detector, Carbon Monoxide alarm and fire extinguisher.

Cotswold in a nutshell

Luxury two-berth of thoughtful design and high specification. Auto-Sleepers continued popularity in the used market, high residuals, and first-class spares back-up make this a gilt-edged purchase.

