

# NOBLE HOUSE

Marquis Majestic 130 on 2.2-litre Peugeot Boxer

*MMM's resident pauper mixes with royalty...*



**M**arquis is one of our biggest multi-outlet motorhome dealers and, as such, offers its own-brand dealer specials. Previously built for Marquis by Autocruise, the recently re-launched

Majestic marque is now based on the hugely successful eight-model Elddis Autoquest range. For the benefit of new readers, I'd better just explain that the appeal of dealer specials is that they can offer a significantly higher specification than the manufacturer's basic model - including fabrics and finishes that aren't otherwise available. Many can also be had for a lower price than if the extras had been specified from new or retrofitted.

Marquis uses a crown as its logo and the royal connection of the range name is self-evident. Let's see whether this particular 'noble house' is suitable for both princes and paupers...

## GRAND TOUR

Welcome aboard. Entrance is via an electrically-operated auto-retract step and a one-piece unglazed door. The Majestic 130 is a relatively compact overcab coachbuilt and is likely to find favour with young families, or

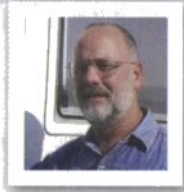
couples who occasionally take along friends or grandchildren, or perhaps, those who just prefer using an overcab bed and leaving the lounge intact at night. The cab seats don't swivel so can't join in the fun with the rest of the seating accommodation, which is located immediately behind the cab. The kitchen is across most of the back wall with the washroom occupying the rear offside corner. A tried and tested layout, which makes good use of the conversion space.

One cannot make a first impression twice, so it's nice that the new ash framed Noce Prosecco locker doors (with full-width brushed aluminium handles) really hit the mark. Lockers and cabinets in the Majestic are all flat-fronted - something we judged to be pleasingly simple and elegant. The removable tobacco-coloured carpet, and 'very beige,' subtly patterned soft furnishing fabric, are both well chosen. Thankfully, we've got away from the 'explosion in a jam factory' style of décor, which always looked strong and vibrant at first, but which we quickly tired of in a confined space.

## REGAL RELAXING

The lounge/diner layout is exactly the same as the one in our 'van, and after decades of





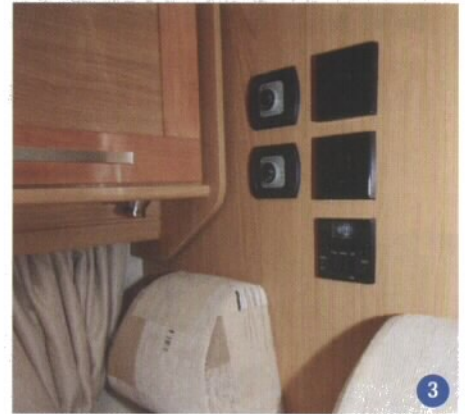
Words and pictures by Jonathan Lloyd

testing we still feel it is the most flexible and practical in this size of motorhome. Additional settee armrests and scatter cushions added a touch of luxury to what was already comfortable lounge seating. The light, but stable table performs well and has dedicated stowage in the wardrobe. Only two cheers here though, because in its current form it would be too small to accommodate five diners and too far away from Billy no-mates sat on the settee. As the 130 can sleep up to five people this is relevant, though I suspect four or less will be the usual complement - principally, because there are only four belted travel seats.

It may come as a surprise to learn that although Eddis has recently been quite traditional in its fare (not true now, after the recent launch of the upmarket Aspire range), decades ago it was an extremely innovative manufacturer: it was among the first in Europe to fit three-point restraints and high backs to passenger seats. Unsurprising then, to discover that the installation in the Majestic was above the minimum standard required and even included some anti-submarine squab bracing that's absent on some 'vans costing twice, or three times as much as the 130.

If this were our motorhome we would add a swivel to the cab passenger seat: Peugeot seats are comfy enough for commercial drivers to sit in for extended periods, so to not utilise the best seat in the house when on-site seems to be nonsensical.

The panoramic rooflight fitted to the rearward sweep of the overcab ceiling lets in welcome light during a very grey day. Blinds and flyscreens are not of the full cassette type, but of the top-roller design. Many prefer these, as there is no bottom cassette on the wall, just



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above the backrest, to dig into the backs of relaxed settee occupants. The 12V and 230V sockets are thoughtfully placed, adjacent to the worktop upon which, folk are likely to place the 'Idiot's lantern,' and mobile for charging. It does seem parsimonious though, to only have a single 230V outlet here - a far more useful double socket would only have cost fractionally more.

It was great to see front access doors to the under-seat storage areas, so one wouldn't always have to disturb folk and lift bulky cushions to gain access to these spaces. Conspicuous by its absence, however, is an exterior door to the under-settee storage, which is a shame.

There isn't really a control panel as such - instead a collection of switches, and a rather quaint analogue meter are grouped together on the forward-facing wardrobe wall. At first I thought it would have been better to have a smart purpose-built panel. However, the more I thought about it, the more I warmed to this arrangement. My reasoning is that it'll be easier to trace faults, and much cheaper to replace a single (universally available) malfunctioning switch than a complete panel. The 230V and 12V distribution units are usefully located behind the access door in the seat box of the rearward-facing dinette pew.

1 Lounge/diner worked very well. The special soft furnishing fabric and additional cushions are Majestic features

2 The view rearwards shows the author's favourite family layout in a six-metre 'van

3 A rather quaint collection of controls, but any necessary repair or replacement will probably be relatively inexpensive



### FOOD FIT FOR A KING

With just a few exceptions, all the equipment any budding Jamie or Nigella could possibly wish for is present and correct. The plastic washing-up bowl and removable drainer are good ideas and the hob has plenty of room for the big pans required for family refuelling. Untidy cooks can utilise the adjacent worktop - forward of the entrance door - for important tasks like slicing lemon for a sundowner.

The cupboard below this worktop is both commodious and shelved. Its top shelf would be the perfect place to store (and use) a microwave oven. Unfortunately one wasn't provided - but hey, thirty quid for a 'hot' top shelf is a price worth paying! Make no mistake, this kitchen works well, though I would have liked better task illumination: it was all a bit gloomy after dark. Secondly, I was concerned to see unprotected gas pipes in the pan cupboard.

### KING'S KIP

Majestic 130 offers five adult sleeping berths. These consist of a transverse double over the



#### I LIKED

- The price
- Family-friendly accommodation in a six-metre 'van
- Lightweight construction - well under 3,500kg GVW
- Silver cab and matching graphics
- Elegant, unfussy furniture
- Cruise control and cab air-con
- Exterior access leisure battery box with enclosed hook-up

#### I WOULD HAVE LIKED

- Passenger seat swivel
- Larger fresh water tank
- More powerful lighting in kitchen

#### I DISLIKED

- No fire extinguisher or fire blanket
- Unprotected gas pipes in saucepan store

cab (which can be left and stored made up), a longitudinal double converted from the dinette, and a single berth on the settee.

A commonly utilised alternative to the longitudinal double is to not employ the seat-box extension flaps, but instead, make up the dinette as a wide single berth. Perfect for porkers like me.

Privacy is assured by lined curtains in the cab, though cassette pleated blinds are available as a £359 extra-cost option. Controversially, we prefer curtains. They feel rather fragile, and wouldn't stand being 'opened' by Pip, our over exuberant and spectacularly badly behaved lurcher/border terrier cross.

Mature reflection has led me to deduce that motorhome manufacturers must have thicker-soled shoes (or feet!) than the rest of us: why else would they persevere with such uncomfortably thin rungs on overcab bed ladders?

### ROYAL FLUSH

You could call the 130's washroom utilitarian, or practical and clutter-free. Your call. We favour the latter description. Neither 'management' nor I lean towards the 'footballers' wives-style' of ablutions. We are, as a couple, seriously under equipped in the cosmetic department: we still put all our regular toiletries into sponge bags, so we only have to remember the bag and a towel when visiting the facilities block on campsites. Others, of course, will have other (just as valid) priorities. So our verdict is that this little room has more than enough storage for us, though it might not have for you.

As long as there is enough illumination for trimming the beard and 'placing' the few remaining hairs on the bonce (me) and for slapping on 'Midnight in the Fens' parfum and a spot of 'panda' eye shadow (management), that's really all we require.

As a fully paid up Southern Softy, I welcomed the inclusion of an outlet for the blown-air heating and all will appreciate the modesty blind on the (opaque) window. As an aside, will somebody please explain to me why some manufacturers insist on fitting clear glazing to the comfort station? Seriously though, the drop-down basin, bench-type loo and shower-tray floor provide capable facilities, albeit in compact fashion.

### QUEEN'S HIGHWAY

At the risk of being lynched by the terminally dissatisfied, I will repeat my position on the current Sevel-built base vehicle. Despite early teething problems, I still feel it is a wonderful platform on which to build a motorhome. It's worth remembering that it wasn't that long ago that the top 2.5-litre turbo-diesel motor



4 The galley has an additional work top forward of the entrance door

5 The bench-type loo is below the tip-up washbasin and mirror-fronted storage cupboard. Plain? Well yes, but practical and unfussy

6 Seat-to-bed conversion shown in progress. Seat box side extension flaps needn't be deployed if the dinette double is made up as a wide single

# On Test Marquis Majestic 130

## TEST EXTRA SPECIFICATION

- **Price:** £36,755 OTR
- **As tested:** £36,755 OTR
- **The vehicle:** Peugeot Boxer chassis cab; 2.2-turbo-diesel engine producing 100bhp; five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive
- **Warranty:** Three years base vehicle and conversion, six years water ingress
- **Dimensions and weights:** Length 6.13m (20ft 1.5in); width 2.20m (7ft 2.5in) including mirrors; height 2.99m (9ft 10in); gross vehicle weight 3,300kg; payload 500kg
- **Belted seats:** 4 (inc driver)
- **Beds:** Overcab double: 2.05m x 1.37m (6ft 9in x 4ft 6in); dinette double: 1.87m x 1.21m (6ft 1.5in x 3ft 11.5in); settee single: 1.82m x 700mm (5ft 11.5in x 2ft 3.5in)
- **Space and water heating:** Convector space heater with blown-air, gas-mains operation; storage hot water boiler, gas-mains operation
- **Tanks:** Fresh water 45 litres (9.9 gallons); waste water 45 litres (9.9 gallons)
- **Gas:** 2 x 7kg cylinders
- **Options fitted to test vehicle:** None
- **Other options available:** None

(powering far heavier motorhomes) was praised for pushing out a 'healthy' 95bhp. Our test vehicle is fitted with the engine with the lowest output of the current range - this is frequently referred to as having 'only' 100 horses. At best this is illogical; at worst it panders to the idea that the smallest power unit, in this size and weight of motorhome, is somehow inadequate.

Thankfully, nothing could be further from the truth, as this Majestic proved. In fact, I think this motor, linked to the five-speed gearbox, is a perfect combo. It's the least fussy of them all and doesn't require constant cog-swapping when 'pootling.'

Petrol-heads will now be jumping up and down, whilst pointing out that the overall top gear ratio is too low. It is lower than the six-speeders, but not by much (3,000rpm at 70mph).

That said, some of us who occasionally tow heavy trailers (a caravan in our case) may wish for the extra grunt provided by the 130bhp engine option. Annoyingly and illogically, it's not available on this model, but is on the longer 155 and 180 models. The bigger 'vans share the same shape with the rest of the range and are broadly speaking



Leisure battery box with sheltered hook-up socket is a great feature

of very similar unladen weight. So why the discrimination? Surely the option should be available on all, or none?

Elddis makes great play of the fact that it uses the standard (full-height box section) Pug chassis, not the lightweight, lowered camper-specific version. It's claimed that this adds to long-term rigidity and longevity, and this makes sense to me, although it's probably cheaper for Elddis to buy too.

### BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT?

Not sure what our Monarch's preferences are with regard to motorhomes, so this is a difficult question to answer directly. There were a few examples of 'negative progress' (notably the small fresh water tank with its seemingly flimsy drain tap), but overall this magisterial Majestic is the best 'Royal Variety Performance' we have seen for a while. Marquis has succeeded magnificently, in raising the profile of an already worthy Autoquest. Congrats to all.

In a nutshell, the Majestic 130 is brilliantly executed and offers fantastic value for money. ■



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