

The Nuevo new wave

■ WORDS AND PICTURES Mark Sutcliffe

A roomy lounge combined with a proper kitchen reasserts itself with British motor caravanners as end kitchens are back in vogue

ONCE UPON A TIME – NOT so very long ago – the classic end kitchen layout looked like an endangered species. New-fangled innovations imported from the Continent like fixed French beds and opulent end washrooms looked set to render this traditional British layout all but obsolete. But in the last year or two, the leading British manufacturers have been falling over themselves to meet resurgent demand for the good old end kitchen.

Auto-Sleepers' Nuevo II EK marks an evolution of the popular Nuevo recipe to focus more closely on the needs of a couple needing just the two berths. It's over a foot longer than the original Nuevo and has more stylish trim, but otherwise, there isn't a huge amount of difference. An overcab bed version is still available, but with only two belted seats, it's not a particularly practical option for families,

so we're really looking at an out-and-out couples van, and as such, the Nuevo II EK performs well.

The cab is nicely appointed, with subtle wood-effect insets on the dash, swivel seats with two armrests each, electric windows, a height-adjustable driver's seat and dual-lens mirrors. Air conditioning and a passenger airbag are cost options though, which together will add more than £1000 to the price.

On the road, Peugeot's 120bhp HDi engine is lively enough and the six-speed gearbox makes the most of the power unit's ample torque. The Nuevo is available with the 100bhp engine and five-speed box, but this is only £900 cheaper and will struggle if the Nuevo is fully laden.

With the front seats in play, the lounge will be able to comfortably seat six – although the free-standing table (there's also a smaller pedestal table for two) – is better suited for four.

PRACTICALITY

8/10

With its classic layout, well-equipped kitchen and easily made-up beds, for a couple, the Nuevo is practical. But look closer and there are a few innovations indicative of the expertise of the manufacturer. The worktop extension over the fridge and the washing line in the washroom are practical touches that serious motor caravanners will appreciate.



Worktop extension makes a huge difference



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VAN ON TEST
Auto-Sleepers Nuevo II
From £40,575



Despite the dark cabinetry the lounge remains bright due to the windows and rooflight

The cabinetry may be a little dark for some tastes, but the lounge remains bright and airy thanks to a big Heki rooflight and two large side windows. The blue, cream and beige upholstery works well and the reflex foam cushions are comfortable and supportive, by day and night.

Come bedtime, the transverse double bed takes seconds to assemble by pulling the slatted extensions from under the settees to span the central aisle and repositioning the back cushions to fill in the gap in-between. A comprehensive suite of lighting – including circular ceiling lights, four directional spotlights and ambient LED strips above the overhead lockers offers a range of lighting options to suit the mood.

The obvious place for the television is perched on the small sideboard in front of the cocktail cabinet and because the Nuevo has four 230V sockets, other in-van entertainment options are well provided for.

The washroom employs a pair of swinging partitions to form a separate shower compartment, but space for

ablutions remains tight and in stark contrast to the traditional cabinetwork of the lounge, it's all a bit plasticky. Storage space is limited to a shallow cabinet and the odd tiny recess for shower gel; it does however, have a rather neat retractable clothes line.

There's plenty of interior storage in the overhead lockers – all of which have positive locks – and a generous wardrobe. The nearside under-seat storage also has access from the exterior and there's a further under-floor locker immediately below this in the side skirt. The user payload of 345kg is modest, but this can be uprated by 200kg if extra capacity is needed.

But perhaps the Nuevo's biggest asset – at least for nomadic gastronomes – is the well-equipped end kitchen, complete with hob, separate oven and grill, stainless steel sink and drainer, and an extractor fan. Sacrifice the cocktail cabinet and, for another £73, you have a fitted microwave.

At first glance, cramming in all this equipment appears to leave the Nuevo utterly devoid of worktop space, but root around between the fridge and vestigial sideboard and you discover a large pull-out worktop – an innovative solution to a potential shortcoming. □

BUILD QUALITY

7/10

The rear panel and side skirts all feel very solid and the quality of the interior finish is impressive, but there's quite a lot of habitation noise and we discovered a couple of glitches which let the test vehicle down. The flimsy top hinge on the swinging washroom partition wasn't really up to the job and we twice found the partition had detached itself, also, one of the lock barrels securing the under-floor locker door failed.



We've teamed up with Shield to give you an idea how much it would cost to insure a new Auto Sleepers Nuevo II.

Premium Indication £280.23

Our premium indication is based upon a 55-year-old man living in Harrogate and driving on an insured and spouse basis, with unlimited mileage and a £400 excess.

For a personal quote contact
0844 847 4478 or

www.shieldyourmotorhome.co.uk

Scores

Exterior features	8/10
On the road	7/10
Lounging	7/10
Dining	8/10
Night-time	8/10
Storage	7/10
Kitchen	9/10
Washroom	7/10
Practicality	8/10
Build quality	7/10
Overall mark	76/100

Auto-Sleepers Nuevo II EK

From £40,575



BASE VEHICLE

Peugeot Boxer chassis cab

BERTHS

2

BED DIMENSIONS

Lounge double 2100mm x 1380mm (6ft 11in x 4ft 6in)
Nearside single 1850mm x 650mm (6ft 1in x 2ft 2in)
Offside single 1750mm x 650mm (5ft 9in x 2ft 2in)

MTPLM

3300kg

USER PAYLOAD

330kg

GAS

2 x 7kg

BATTERY

110Ah

FRESH WATER

102 litres, inboard

WASTE WATER

78 litres, underslung

BASE VEHICLE

Peugeot Boxer, 2.2-litre HDi diesel 120bhp at 3,500rpm, 320Nm at 2000rpm with six-speed gearbox

CONSTRUCTION

Compact (under six metres) coachbuilt with insulated GRP bodyshell and double-glazed windows

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Two swivel cab seats, adjustable steering wheel, traction control, Truma gas/electric blown-air heater, Truma gas/electric water heater, 86-litre absorption fridge, four-burner hob with separate grill and oven, free-standing and pedestal tables, removable carpets, radio/CD player, electric windows and mirrors, driver's airbags, remote central locking for cab and habitation, electric step with automatic retraction, Thetford C-200 toilet with electric flush, rear corner steadies

MANUFACTURER

Auto-Sleepers Limited, Orchard Works, Willersey, Nr Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7QF
☎ 01386 853338 🌐 auto-sleepers.co.uk

RIVAL MODELS

Autocruise Starburst, Excel 590 EK, Swift Bolero 600EK, Autotrail Tracker EK Lo-Line, Compass Avantgarde 115

FOR

Compact footprint, excellent kitchen, robust external build quality, thoughtful extras

AGAINST

Air-con and passenger airbags bump price up by another £1000, significant habitation noise