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## ROAD AHEAD

### NEW MOTORHOMES ARE A DREAM TO DRIVE

Paul Myles

Carrying a home on your back often used to mean the driver ended up feeling like a petrolpowered snail.

But the new generation of motorhomes have changed all that and, like the SEA Newlife 48 I tested, bring enjoyment back into the equation as well as providing truly huge living accommodation.

The Newlife is based on the superb Fiat Ducato 130 Multijet van and boasts all the power you could want for high-speed, high-mileage touring work.

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The eager 2.3 turbo-diesel engine puts out 130bhp with, more importantly, 295ft-lbs of torque for pulling. Anyone who has ever driven a van will find virtually no performance difference with this well-balanced chassis.

The driver's instruments display a comprehensive range of information, including trip averages, range and fuel consumption although, even at the brightest setting, they are a bit difficult to read.

Even novices will soon find the drive safe and dependable - high motorway speeds are no problem.

Yet the efficiencies of the modern Fiat motor mean that fuel consumption in a mix of motorway and city work comes out at 23mpg - impressive for such a big beast.

And big the 48 certainly is, boasting up to seven beds. The interior seating and bed platforms can be arranged in minutes and still allow for four passengers to be strapped in the back during trips.

Creature comforts are also well catered for. A fridge using gas, mains or van electrics means all your foods keep chilled even on the move.

The rear-located loo and shower were space-saver items but big enough and well kitted out. Fabrics hark back to the 80s but, hey, aren't they back in vogue?

Gas-powered heating on our test van is augmented by a roof-mounted Dometic air-conditioning unit although this only operates on mains electricity and, with no air-con in the driver's cab, long trips in hot climes can be a bit sweaty.

And here's the point - at just £37,495 on the road, the 48 is a whole lot of motorhome for your money so there will be some cost corners cut. Examples include a flimsy fly screen on the main van door and a button on the air-con unit - both of which broke during the test.

I also noticed that the skin on the frontal lobe, which houses the overhead double bed, had been rippled by air blast alone.

Personally, I think the Newlife's main competition will come from higher spec low-mileage used motorhomes. But buying new comes with the free ICE pack worth £2,500 and includes the air-con, beer keg and wine coolers, bicycle rack, oven/grill, alloy wheels, electric mirrors and matching seat covers.

For details on this or other motorhomes call free on 0800 026 7777 or [www.marquismotorhomes.co.uk](http://www.marquismotorhomes.co.uk)

Sea Newlife 48

Engine: 2.3 TDi Power: 130bhp Top Speed: 100mph 0-60mph: 16secs (approx) Economy: 23mpg Insurance: 12A Price: £37,495

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