

# Camping for couples

Looking for a twin-bedded motorhome for winter touring? **CANDY EVANS** sees whether the Auto-Sleeper Hampshire is up to the task

**THE AUTO-SLEEPER HAMPSHIRE** is a twin-bedded motorhome based on the Mercedes Benz Sprinter chassis.

It's a classically designed two-berth unit with a central kitchen and washroom area – but with a unique twist. The twin beds at

the rear are blessed with the snappily-titled Frolexus Orthopaedic Electric Bed System, making it a great unit for a couple on long touring holidays. No need to clamber over your partner for night-time excursions to the washroom...

On the road the Hampshire feels solid and dependable, even in the heavy snow we encountered en route to site. Driving aids such as anti-lock brakes and Acceleration Skid Control make it even safer.

The driving position is good, with a small steering wheel that makes the large vehicle feel reasonably car-like. The long rear window enhances visibility, so you can use the rear-view mirror.

An automatic gearbox would not be my preference – its gear changes were not as slick as I'd choose and it was challenging to use on a muddy pitch – definitely something to consider if touring in winter. The standard Hampshire comes with a six-speed manual box. The auto is part of the Anniversary Pack Option, alongside alloy wheels, cruise control, cab air-conditioning and a £3,000 price tag.



This is a lovely bright unit inside. During the day the large roof light and three windows around the living area let the sunlight flood in. At night there are plenty of lights, including halogen lamps around the living area and individual spots over the cupboard and microwave doors, which only come on when you open the relevant door.



The sleeping accommodation is wonderful. The two spacious orthopaedic single beds, well-sprung and comfortable for long trips, are at the rear. And the ability to lift both the head and foot ends independently gives limitless opportunities for lounging, dozing or watching the flat-screen TV.



at a glance

Auto-Sleeper Hampshire

- Price as tested £53,370
- Starting price £49,995
- Club Care Insurance £347
- Base vehicle Mercedes Benz Sprinter LWB
- Engine as tested 2.1 litre 150bhp
- Length x width x height 7.29m x 2.35m x 3.13m

The Hampshire boasts a well-specified kitchen with an 88-litre fridge. The hob has three gas burners and an electric hotplate – extremely useful if you're already paying for an electric hook-up. The area is enhanced by classic Auto-Sleeper white crockery and lead crystal glasses – both stored in glass-fronted overhead lockers.

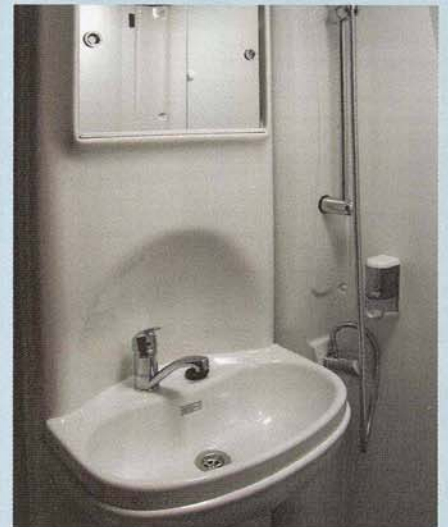
However, the microwave is above the L-shaped,

extending work surface so I had to be very careful when removing piping hot food. And who decided on the position of the smoke alarm? It is right above the hob so goes off whenever you cook. Auto-Sleeper is looking to improve some of these issues in production models. The fire extinguisher, conspicuously by the exit door, is perfect – though we hope you will never need it.



As you might expect in a motorhome of this size, there's plenty of storage. Above the cab is a cavernous load area, neatly cut away so you don't bump your head when you enter from the living area. You can, however, choose to swap this for an overcab bed, reducing the price by £375.

Overhead lockers, underbed storage, a chest of drawers, kitchen cupboards and a wardrobe with hanging rail give even more space for your luggage. But there are some limitations – there's no room for a tall breakfast cereal packet and you need to take everything out of the wardrobe in order to remove the freestanding table from its storage bay or use the main switches underneath the wardrobe floor.



Keeping yourself clean is easy in the small-but-perfectly-formed washroom. Step inside and you find a toilet and shower – and a small carpet to keep your toes warm. Move into the shower and the basin wall peels away, meeting another folding wall from the other side to give a completely enclosed shower cubicle – no clammy shower curtain here.

There are 91-litre fresh-water and 79-litre waste-water tanks underneath the vehicle – but these are not insulated. This means you risk damaging the system if you store water and the temperature drops below freezing – a big disadvantage in the depths of a winter.

## Verdict

The Auto-Sleeper Hampshire is a well-built motorhome matched to a high-quality chassis. Its unique twin beds are supremely comfortable, while excellent storage facilities and the neatly-fitted out kitchen and washroom make it ideal for a couple touring in winter. However, the water tanks are not insulated so you'll need to keep a separate store inside on chilly nights.

**Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass** 3,880kg  
**User Payload** 420kg  
**Supplier** Marquis Motorhomes,  
 The Causeway, Great Billing,  
 Northampton NN3 9EX. Tel: 01604 402888,  
 marquismotorhomes.co.uk