

**WHICH** 2010 motorcaravan winner → **Chausson Flash S2** awards



» Thanks to a totally new layout, the Flash S2 is genuinely different – and it's really well priced, too

to lighten up the interior [‘like something from the ‘70s’, reckoned one]. It is all a bit, er, brown... never mind, ownership should give the opportunity to brighten things up with some scatter cushions. But wait, there's actually a full choice of upholsteries, offering subtle stripes as well as abstract patterns in various hues.

The innovation doesn't stop after the sleeping arrangements, either. Across the rear is the washroom. Included here are duckboards in the tray for the fully enclosed shower, beyond which is a full-height side storage area which comes complete with shelves (removable) or can be used as a full-length wardrobe. Additional storage is available in the low-level unit just outside the washroom and immediately adjacent to the bed.

## Here is something a little bit different at a rather competitive price

The kitchen occupies the area between the driver's seat and door. Here, you'll find a three-ring hob, sink, separate grill and 90-litre fridge, but there's precious little worktop. Storage fares better, but it's fair to say the kitchen isn't the S2's strongest card. There are plenty of positive features elsewhere, though. Like the Webasto diesel-powered heating that can also be used to keep the living quarters (and rear passengers) warm while you're on the move.

You can also expect a genuinely good drive as the S2 benefits from Fiat's special motorhome chassis with 2.3-litre, 130bhp engine and six-speed manual transmission. You may want to keep tabs on the cab equipment though. A passenger airbag comes as standard here, as does cruise control. But air-conditioning is optional and there's no stereo, although it's pre-wired to accept your fitting of choice.

You could trade up to the 157bhp, 3-litre engine, but unless you also want to spend the extra on automatic transmission – we're talking the best part of £3500 for the whole lot here – it's not worth it.

Here's something that's genuinely different, and that's why it's our Budget Buy class winner. With some highly competitive pricing all round for the 2010 line-up, plus some interesting dealership gains, it should be a great season ahead for Chausson. This Flash S2 certainly lays down a challenge to all-comers. Not for the first time this season, we suspect, we've found ourselves saying: here is something just a little bit different from Chausson, at a rather competitive price, too.



### CHAUSSON fact file

**Make:** Chausson  
**Model:** Flash S2  
**Base vehicle:** Fiat Ducato 33L low-frame chassis  
**Engine:** 2.3-litre Multijet (130bhp)  
**L/W/H:** 5.99m, 2.30m, 2.71m  
**Gross weight:** 3500kg  
**Payload:** 695kg  
**Berths:** 2  
**Travel seats:** 4  
**Price from:** £34,290



as the budget base vehicle of choice, seeing off competition from Ford.

So, the Flash S2 is the second Chausson to appear in our top four low-cost motorcaravans, yet this one scoops the overall prize. Why? Because as well as its sheer value-for-money proposition,

this compact low-profile packs in a lot of something you don't always expect at the lower end of the price scale: innovation. Here is a totally new layout that, despite being unproven, looks like something that might just be a winner. And it's not even a sole attempt at something different: there are all number of interesting things to see across the whole Chausson 2010 portfolio.

For the S2, a sub-6m overall length means a vehicle like this could conceivably be considered as an alternative to the

second car, yet it definitely retains a lot of storage and living space advantages over any equivalent high-top motorcaravan.

GRP sides have long been a Chausson feature, and again this points to quality rather than cheap pricing. Ditto for the mouldings and capping to the sides and rear. Indeed, Chausson back this up with a five-year warranty. OK, so the habitation door points firmly to its non-UK origins, staying resolutely 'wrong-handed', but this hasn't proved a problem for others.

Step inside, noting the flyscreen door, and first impressions are of an incredibly roomy layout. That's thanks to a floorplan like no other – end washroom, part-fixed double bed (more of which later), and a forward lounge that starts with a double travel seat. When it comes to creating the rest of the lounge, swivel cab seats really do open up what is a remarkably airy feel inside.

Back to that bed. What looks initially like a rather too short fixed double is only

part of the story. The rest of the mattress is easily completed by releasing a single catch and folding over the forward-facing rear seat. Yes, it's that easy, and yes, it's a commendably flat bed. It even comes with its own fitted under-sheet. Also, despite lockers lining both sides overhead, there's still the opportunity to sit up in bed.

In daytime mode, that same seat – with proper head restraints and one three-point belt plus a lap restraint, plus an adjustable armrest on its outer edge – provides comfortable accommodation for two passengers, though we'd want to remove the table for safety reasons if the lap belt was being used. The best bit, though, is that the seat back can be adjusted to any angle. It's all really clever, and with four travel seats couples could use an awning or tent to take extra folk away with them.

True, also, most of our judges turned up their noses at the décor. The brown striped upholstery photographed here does little

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**JUDGING** the Budget category gave us one instant conclusion: so many of the imported brands, championed for so long as bargain buys, have simply vacated the scene. No longer able to compete on price terms, and without suitably established dealer networks to see them through any hard times, too many makes have just fallen by the wayside.

Interestingly, also, this year appears to see Fiat's Ducato re-asserting its position

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