



# Welcome break

Chausson have shoe-horned an island bed into a sub-7-metre couples' van. **Mark Sutcliffe** takes a closer look at the new Welcome 72 and reckons they might just be onto something



Kitchen has a grill, but only limited worktop space, no oven and little storage space

**M**otorhome manufacturers are getting ever more innovative in responding to changing customer needs and Chausson's new Welcome 72 is an excellent example of the sort of experimentation that can move motorhome design forward.

We Brits are sometimes slow to accept the more revolutionary layout concepts dreamed up on the continent, but every so often, a really good idea is embraced wholeheartedly – largely because it works for the customers concerned.

So it was with integrated garages, low-profile coachbuilts and fixed island beds. Well guess what? The Chausson Welcome 72 combines all three in a sub-seven-metre van which, fully laden, tips the scales at 3500kg.

With such a desirable range of features, the Welcome ticks a lot of boxes, but what compromises have been made to accommodate such a comprehensive combination of attributes?

Externally, at first glance, it's unremarkable. Chausson's low-profile outline is pretty enough and the Silver Pack specified on our test model makes it look that little bit more expensive. At £1626, it appears quite a pricey option, but as well as the paint, Chausson also throw in cab air-

## At a glance

### CHAUSSON WELCOME 72

on Fiat Ducato 130 Multijet

**Type:** Low-profile

**From:** £39,995 on-the-road

### Or try a...

Bürstner Nexxo t 687

Rapido 790

conditioning, making it pretty good value. The only other distinguishing features are the large sunroof in the slender overcab and external hatches on the offside wall and in the back panel providing access to the rear external storage.

Step inside and you're immediately struck by how open-plan it all feels. The compact lounge is bright and airy thanks to the large rooflight immediately overhead and this

## Supplied by

### MIDLAND INTERNATIONAL MOTORHOMES

Wall Hill Road, Allesley, Coventry CV5 9EL

☎ 02476 336411

🌐 [www.midland-international.co.uk](http://www.midland-international.co.uk)



The washroom and kitchen squeeze central gangway. There's a shallow step up to bed

sense of space and light continues forward into the cab, whose headroom isn't in any way compromised by the overcab, much of which is taken up by that big sunroof.

Moving backwards, the curved wall of the nearside washroom and the kitchen opposite create a short but narrow gangway back towards the bedroom where the Welcome once again opens up around the big island bed. There are his and hers wardrobes either side of the bed and a vanity unit with mirror and laundry basket underneath and the whole room can be shut off from the living area by a thin concertina screen.

For a sub-seven-metre van, it all feels incredibly spacious and if there is a criticism, it's that with all those windows and the open-plan approach, some people may feel there isn't quite enough privacy on offer.

Looking at the Welcome spec in greater detail offers more evidence that some serious thought has gone into this vehicle. The cab is unfussily finished with pleasant wood-effect veneer and sports the full range of electric controls, cruise control, a brace of airbags, a decent CD/radio and two rotating and height adjustable seats.

It feels good on the road, with lively performance from the standard 2.3-litre 130bhp Multijet engine and little in the way of habitation noise.

Compromises have inevitably been made to slot so much into a relatively compact footprint and this is apparent in the lounge, where two forward-facing, belted travel seats have been incorporated into an L-shaped settee. It's a compact area better suited to dining than lounging and if mounted on the extendable bracket, the telly is only really viewable from the cab seats. From a dining perspective, the thoughtfully positioned non-removable table, which moves in two planes, will accommodate six at a pinch, and four comfortably.

Another area of compromise is the kitchen, which is compact and relatively sparsely equipped, lacking an oven and offering little storage space. There's a triangular three-burner hob, circular stainless steel sink, Smev overhead grill and a 97-litre Dometic fridge, but little in the way of preparation space.

The washroom is less of a compromise and, like the rest of the Chausson, is light and airy thanks to an opaque window and a rooflight. A grey plastic tambour door makes the most of the available space and it all feels nicely finished, sporting a Thetford C-250 swivel cassette toilet

## Fact File

**Price from:** £39,995 on-the-road  
**Price as tested:** £41,621 on-the-road  
**Options fitted:** Silver metallic paint pack (includes cab air-con) £1626  
**Base Vehicle:** Fiat Ducato Light 35 wide-track lowline chassis  
**Engine:** 2.3-litre Multijet producing 130bhp  
**Travel seats:** 4, including driver  
**Berths:** 3 (with option of 4)

## Weights & Measures

**Length:** 6.84m (22ft 9½in)  
**Width:** 2.30m (7ft 6in)  
**Height:** 2.76m (9ft 2½in)  
**Internal height:** 1.98m (6ft 7in)  
**Gross weight:** 3500kg  
**Payload:** 475kg  
**Bed sizes:** Rear island bed 1.90m x 1.40m (6ft 4in x 4ft 8in), dinette bed 2.15m x 0.50m (7ft 3in x 1ft 8in)  
**Fresh water:** 140 litres (inboard)  
**Waste water:** 105 litres (underslung)

## Spec check

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| ▶ Cab air-con:      | Optional         |
| ▶ Airbags:          | 2                |
| ▶ Swivel cab seats: | 2                |
| ▶ Boiler:           | ✓                |
| ▶ Heating:          | Diesel blown-air |
| ▶ Hob:              | 3                |
| ▶ Grill:            | Smev             |
| ▶ Oven:             | X                |
| ▶ Fridge:           | 97 litres        |
| ▶ Toilet:           | Swivel cassette  |
| ▶ Mains sockets:    | 3                |



Lounge area is compressed, but windows, a rooflight and the overcab sunroof let in loads of light



The bedroom is very open plan but can be closed off by a concertina partition. The bed measures a generous 6ft 4in by 4ft 8in

and a circular shower base with revolving partition. The warm air from the diesel-fired blown air heating is channelled in here and there's plenty of storage space, two towel rails and two spotlights over the vanity unit.

The star turn however, has to be the bedroom, which has a 6ft 4in by 4ft 8in fixed

bed at its centre. There's ample room either side for both parties to access and exit the double bed without disturbing one another and plenty of headroom beneath the run of overhead lockers for sitting up to read. Individual spotlights and ambient lighting plus a big ceiling light provide illumination at night and while there's no rooflight, the two large side windows provide ample natural light here.

The separate wardrobes either side of the bed have a shelf and hanging space and there's also a brace of bedside tables. Our test vehicle had only decorative curtains, which privacy-minded customers may want to replace with the real thing and a ventilator fan above the bed, which could be a desirable addition for those hot summer nights in southern Europe.

The bed base lifts on gas struts to reveal a deep drawer and a decent amount of storage space divided up into separate compartments. There's also access into the semi-garage under-bed locker from here. Together, these capacious storage areas compensate for the absence of any under-seat storage in the lounge. However, the under-bed area is too shallow to accommodate a full-size bike. A folding bike would be one solution although Chausson have thoughtfully included anchor clips for a cycle rack on the back panel.

An additional overnight guest can be accommodated in the lounge by dropping down the dining table to form a single bed

base and for an additional £200, Chausson will supply a base extension to form a 3ft 8in by 7ft 3in double bed.

With full tanks, four adults on board and all their clobber, space might be at a premium and the 475kg payload begins to look just a little on the light side, but for couples this van has all bases covered.

**WHICH motorcaravan says...**

The new Welcome 72 has an unbeatable combination of attributes for a couple who want a manageable motorhome for foreign and domestic touring. With just two on board, it's roomy and comfortable and there's additional room to entertain friends. The kitchen may be a little Spartan for British tastes and the under-bed isn't as capacious as a full garage, but that big island bed is a major plus and the high standard spec suggests it should carry a significantly higher price tag. At just a shade under £40,000, this appealing low-profile should give couples considering trading down to a compact fixed bed coachbuilt an awful lot to think about.

CHAUSSON WELCOME 72 ★★★★★



Washroom is pleasantly finished and a tambour door makes the best use of space

**CHAUSSON WELCOME 72 £39,995 on-the-road**

✓ Under 7m long ✓ High standard spec ✓ Great island bed ✓ Value for money ✗ Small lounge ✗ Finish of travel seats ✗ Basic kitchen



English taste with French style!

▲ Allegro 96

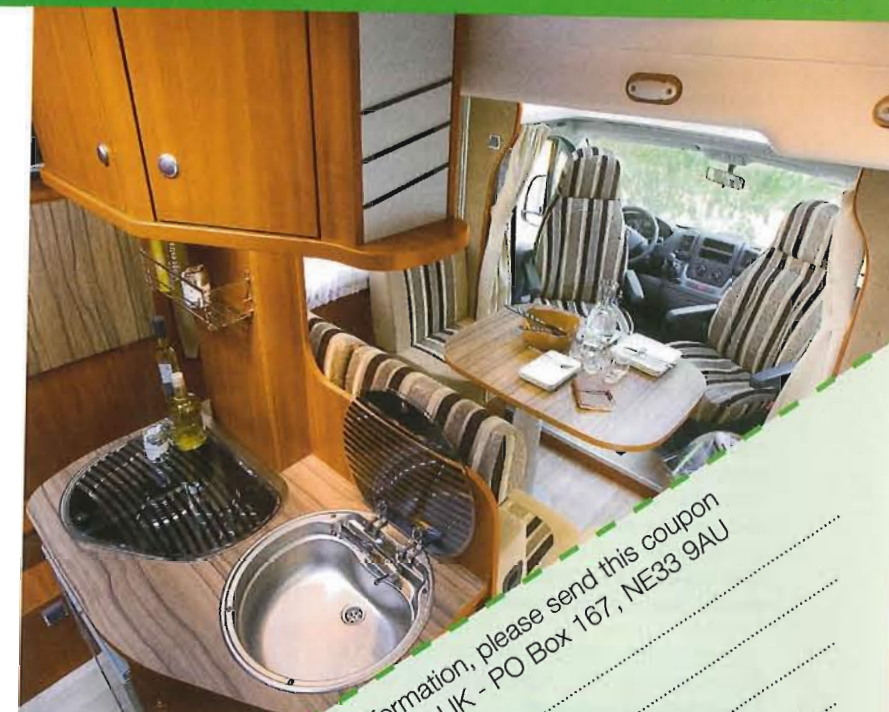
▼ Welcome Suite

**30 years of success**

From design and innovation home grown in France for you, a great reason to celebrate with Chausson!

So come on and witness an illuminating display of equipment, ingenious interior design with the latest features, providing five star luxury all for astonishing on the road prices. Prepare to take to the open roads with the all new Chausson collection, Bon Voyage.

*Providing pleasure for 30 years!*



For more information, please send this coupon to CHAUSSON UK - PO Box 167, NE33 9AU

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_



Chausson is a TRIGANO brand.