

Auto-Sleepers 2021



Sixty years on from the first Auto-Sleeper campervan, the range includes Peugeot, Fiat and Mercedes base vehicles, van conversions and coachbuilts, and models from 5.4m to almost 8m. We take a look at the current range...

IT'S easy to split up the current Auto-Sleeper range into campervans, Peugeot coachbuilts, Peugeot Al-Ko coachbuilts and Mercedes-based coachbuilts. However, while the company has had a long affiliation with Peugeot and uses the Boxer window van for all its 2021-season campervans, it's worth noting, too, that every Peugeot model (van or coachbuilt) is also offered on the closely related Fiat Ducato, simply

because the latter has an automatic option that's missing from the Boxer's repertoire. However, while even the smallest Peugeot Auto-Sleepers get a 165bhp engine, the Fiat automatics can be specified with 140bhp (£2,000 extra) or 160bhp (£3,000 extra).

The only new model this year is the Broadway EL, a Boxer-based coachbuilt with a rear U-shaped lounge. Fans of the marque will see

this as a return of a previous nameplate, but the new EL is more compact of length than its predecessor (which actually hasn't figured in the range since about 2015), as well as adopting the wider body of the bigger Coriniums. At 6.63m long, the latest Broadway's key feature is, of course, its rear lounge but, with large windows and a centrally positioned habitation door, it manages to feel more spacious than you'd expect.

PACK IT IN

The Premium Pack has become an integral part of Auto-Sleepers' offering and you're never likely to see a vehicle emerge from the Cotswold factory without it. The pack adds alloy wheels, cab air-conditioning, cruise control, a Thule roll-out awning, colour reversing camera and sat-nav; plus, on the campervans, Top Drive semi-air suspension. On the Mercedes range, the pack also adds the Sprinter's MBUX multimedia display and the seven-speed automatic gearbox. The cost is £2,500 on Peugeot-based campervans and motorhomes and £4,000 on the Mercs.

Typically, Peugeot-based models will also receive the Winter Pack (£295), which replaces cab curtains with blinds and adds heater blankets for both fresh and waste water tanks, as well as upgrading the heating on coachbuilts and including wheelarch insulation blankets.

Auto-Sleepers also reports greatly increased demand for its Truma habitation air-conditioning option (priced at £1,000), which is now fitted to around 50% of all the vehicles it sells.

All models are available with a choice of Sagrada or Casa Mila upholstery, both of those coming in five different colours.

We expect it to become a very popular model in the range.

Of course, Auto-Sleepers has also unveiled the special anniversary edition of its best-selling baby coachbuilt, the Nuevo. As well as the two-berth EK reviewed on page 38, this is also offered in ES form with a half-dinette lounge incorporating rear seatbelts and an overcab bed, making this a four-berth. We'd expect the 60th anniversary models to hint at the look of the 2022-season range.

There are also some specification changes across the Auto-Sleeper line-up this year. Lithium leisure batteries have become standard on all models, with a 60Ah capacity (double that figure for an approximate equivalent in a traditional battery). This can then be upgraded to 84Ah for £150 or 100Ah for £250.

The Mercedes coachbuilts now receive Remis blinds in the cab (replacing Silver Screens), while Peugeot campervans switch to Seitz blinds.

CAMPERVANS

The campervan range is based on the Peugeot Boxer, in medium-wheelbase, long and extra-long forms but, whichever size you go for, it will be a window van with factory-fitted athermal glass, rather than the typical plastic double-glazed motorhome windows. These are quite heavily tinted and give the Auto-Sleeper range a unique look but do result in rather small opening sections that are in positions fixed by Peugeot, not necessarily ideal for every layout.

All models meet Grade III insulation standards and come with a 25-litre underslung LPG tank for cheaper gas refills, while kitchens have a microwave as well as an oven and grill.

The range kicks off with a single 5.41m vehicle, the Symbol, which also has the longest-serving floorplan in the entire Auto-Sleepers portfolio. It can trace the origins of its front lounge/rear kitchen layout back to the Symphony of the early 90s. Despite its compact size, the Symbol incorporates a washroom in the rear nearside corner, while the lounge can be converted into twin single beds or a double.

The Symbol Plus is a newer development of the theme, with the extra space of the 5.99m van used to accommodate a more expansive L-shaped kitchen that blocks off the back doors. Like the standard Symbol, it has a single rear travel seat and a side sofa facing the sliding door.

Also based on the long-wheelbase Peugeot is the Warwick Duo, with its classic rear lounge layout. Then, the remaining five campervan models are all built on the extra-long (6.36m) Boxer.

The Warwick XL is, of course, a more spacious rear lounge two-berth. The extra length allows for a lounge without the intrusion of an overhanging wardrobe, while the washroom gets the desirable benefit of a separate shower – a rare find in its class.



Symbol is the smallest in the range



Warwick XL with a spacious rear lounge

The Fairford is another model with a rear lounge, but this time also featuring a pullman dinette up front – each seating area makes a double bed, so this is a practical four-berth. Or, if you want beds and seatbelts for four but with more storage, the Fairford Plus (the newest member of the campervan range) swaps the end lounge for a double bed that folds to each side to create a huge load area.

The Kingham also has a rear bedroom, but this time a fixed double running lengthways with the washroom alongside. It's our pick of the range as a great luxury two-person motorhome that would suit anyone downsizing from a coachbuilt – and there's nothing else quite like the Kingham on the market.

Finally, the range is completed by the Kemerton XL, which has a lounge rather similar to the Symbol but with the benefit of a spacious washroom across the rear.

Auto-Sleepers' campervan prices start at £56,200 (excluding the packs).



Our favourite model, the unique Kingham

PEUGEOT COACHBUILTS

This is a range of classically British layouts that are all built on a 3,500kg Boxer chassis-cab. It starts with the super-compact Nuevo (see page 38) in both two-berth EK and four-berth ES (photo below) forms.

Larger models all carry the Broadway name, starting with a choice of three models featuring a modest 6.32m overall length. These include the EK – an old UK favourite that's hard to find now from other manufacturers, featuring an end kitchen and a front lounge with a pullman dinette and side settee. It's the most family-friendly coachbuilt in the Auto-Sleeper range.

A variation on this theme is the EK TB LP, which swaps the pullman seating for a second



A rear lounge returns to the Broadway range this season

sofa, so it lacks rear travel seats but feels more open plan inside.

Then there's the EB (end bathroom), which again has twin side sofas but its shorter lounge allows more room for the ablutions, which include a separate shower and run right across the back of the van.

Of course, the new EL is an important newcomer in the range, while the largest Broadway model is the FB, at 7.20m. This French bed model is Auto-Sleepers' smallest fixed bed coachbuilt and

comes as standard with a side settee lounge.

All Broadway models (except the EK, which has rear travel seats as standard) can be ordered with a lounge incorporating a forward-facing bench with two seatbelts, instead of one of the settees, at an extra cost of £1,000. Those needing extra berths can also opt for a luton version with overcab double bed in place of the standard low-profile body style, which comes with either a large opening Skyview sunroof or additional cupboards.

Nuevo prices start at £59,200, with Broadways commencing at £63,700 (excluding the Premium Pack).



PEUGEOT AL-KO COACHBUILTS

Wider bodywork (2.35m), now shared with the Broadway EL, and an Al-Ko chassis are features of the Corinium range, which offers two layouts that differ only in the bedroom. The FB is a French bed model with a dresser and wardrobe on the opposite wall, while the Duo has low-level single beds either side of a corridor, with suspended wardrobes over the foot of each bed.

The standard Corinium lounge has twin sofas, while a rear travel seat is available as an option but, if you need four berths, you'll be converting the front lounge at night, as the overcab option seen on the Broadway is not available on this range.

Powered by Peugeot's top-of-the-range 165bhp diesel motor, only the Corinium Duo is offered on a 3.5-tonne chassis. The FB version (which is slightly heavier) comes as standard with a 4-tonne maximum gross weight

(and, therefore, a healthy payload of 723kg), and this upgrade is also available as an option for the Duo.

These are large motorhomes, at 7.75m long, with similar floorplans to the Mercedes-based Burford, but with prices starting at a lower level – from £67,805 (excluding packs). Key to the appeal of both versions is the full-width washroom across the back, beyond the bedroom, with a walk-in separate shower. Not only can the bathroom be considered a separate room, but the bedroom, too, as a wall with central door completely divides it from the front living area of lounge and kitchen.

Previously, the Corinium range included an island bed model but this has been discontinued, leaving Auto-Sleepers without this type of layout in the range.



Corinium comes with a choice of French bed or twin singles





Mercedes models come with rear-wheel drive and a seven-speed automatic transmission

MERCEDES COACHBUILTS

Since the arrival of the latest-generation Sprinter, the Mercedes-Benz three-pointed star has been appearing on more and more motorhomes from an ever-increasing selection of brands. Auto-Sleepers, however, has been offering Merc-based coachbuilds continuously for over a decade (and dabbled with the Sprinter briefly before that with the monocoque-bodied Medallion). Not only is there a long association between the two brands, but Auto-Sleepers is one of the very few makers to build coachbuilt motorhomes on the rear-wheel drive derivative of the

current Sprinter. That also gives a clear differentiation (and a plus for towing) between Auto-Sleepers' Mercedes range and its Peugeot-based models.

Surprisingly, the Merc range is not just made up of large motorhomes for those with a C1 category driving licence. In fact, it kicks off with the Stanton at under 6m long and both this model and the Bourton are offered on a 3,500kg chassis (the Stanton actually has a lower 3,200kg gross weight as standard). The 5.98m Stanton and 6.48m Bourton share a similar front lounge layout with end kitchen

and corner washroom and both are pure two-berth models with no rear travel seat option. The Bourton uses its extra length to provide longer settees that can be used as single beds without incorporating the cab seats.

The 7.33m Winchcombe is the first of the Mercedes range to have a 4,100kg chassis as standard, while it, too, is a pure two-berth with a front lounge. The big difference is its generous rear bathroom, including the wardrobe and a separate shower.

A similar length to the Winchcombe is the first fixed bed model in this range, the Malvern. A side settee lounge is, once again, standard, but this French bed model is also offered with a rear travel seat option.

Finally, the Burford and Burford Duo replicate the Corinium layouts with Mercedes instead of Peugeot power. These 7.92m motorhomes are the largest ever offered by Auto-Sleepers and offer the choice of a French bed or twin singles and either a side sofa lounge or a half-dinette with rear seatbelts.

With the seven-speed automatic gearbox included in the Premium Pack, you're unlikely ever to see one of these vehicles in manual form. All models except the little Stanton also get the 163bhp engine as standard.

Prices (excluding the packs) start at £70,995 for the Stanton and rise to £81,995 for Auto-Sleepers' flagship Burford and Burford Duo.



A classic British two-berth floorplan in the Bourton