

Sterling Europa 570 £15,314



Beds for six, bunk head height for a growing brood – but a side table that’s too high... We find an easy remedy, though, in this flexible-layout caravan

The craze for triple bunks transformed caravanning life for a lot of families. Bags of choice in bags of beds flooded onto the market a couple of years ago. Now, though, a new trend is emerging, an evolution from young-kids’ triple bunks to bigger kids’ double bunks.

The Swift Group introduced two such models for 2011. The Charisma 565 (tested in Go Caravan’s February issue) and the Sterling Europa 570. Whereas the 565 puts its bunks longitudinally on the offside, the Europa 570’s young caravanners’ bedroom is across the full width of the rear. These are beds clearly designed to enable families to keep this caravan well into the offsprings’ teenage years. That’s because head height in the bunks is generous; the lower bunk, especially, is well up to adult proportions.

This is a six berth with a lot of versatility. The dining area forward of the door can be breakfast space, play room – or bunks.



Curved curtain track...

We especially liked the track of the top-bunk curtain; it’s curved, around the rooflight, so you get a feeling of greater space in this bed area; another pointer to this bunk area’s design for older children.

Surface options...

The sink is big and round and, when you’re not using the removable drainer, the working surface is adequate. If you also use the surface above the table store opposite as additional food preparation area, you’ll never struggle with the juggling of plates and food.

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The TV points are near the top of this cabinet, which also makes a useful adjunct to kitchen surface space



More bunks here

This two-person table area makes two more bunks; think of it, also, as a breakfast area, playtime location – and, if there are four, rather than six aboard, this can be a permanent dining area.

Designed for cereal packets...

The head-height locker above this dresser-style unit is tall, the ideal place for cereal packets and other lightweight stuff.

Space for tall stuff...

The shelf spaces in this cabinet are tall enough to accommodate most large soft drinks containers and the like. Both tables are stored in here.

Ample lighting...

Spotlights are numerous and give a strong light, making a significant contribution to good illumination levels throughout the caravan

TV at the front...

TV connectivity is in place, together with a power point, near to the front central two-drawer unit; that's in addition to the connection points in the area of the nearside dresser

Power point ...

This dining area is in need of a power point; the nearest is on top of the dresser, which is fine, unless that's already taken by your television. Asking a caravan retailer to arrange additional power points, is a minor issue.

The table's too high...

... or the seating's too low, whichever way you look at it, for using cutlery or a laptop (and, as Facebook goes on holiday with most families, that's important!).



The seats of the side dining area are too low for comfortable dining but if you fold the backrest as shown here, they're the correct height



The 570's kitchen gives you enough surface space especially with the hob top down



This is the TV position, between lounge and dining area and with a sizeable cupboard beneath



Two bunks, each with loads of headroom



Lots of small shelving over the wash basin and a plastic cupboard beneath

Go caravan says ...

Fixed double bunks make first class sleeping areas for kids and teens. Side dining areas are ideal breakfast rooms and table-top activity areas.

In the 570, somehow, the tall dresser unit forms a clear division between the adults' relaxing lounge area and the kids' zone. The kitchen is up to its six-person task, the shower's not as big as some will like (but that's why campsites have showers)... Overall, the 570 is a well-designed, well equipped, solidly-built good choice for four or six.

Sterling Europa 570

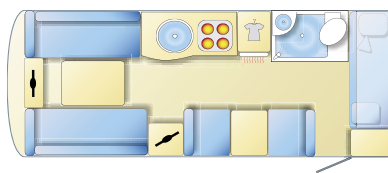
Price: £15,314

Lengths: 5.50m Body 7.19m Overall

Width: 2.23m

Headroom: 1.95m

Weight: 1,317kg (MRO) 1500kg (MTPLM)



The lounge is long enough to make two single beds (as alternative to a double, of courses) – so there's more flexibility here, too.

Squashing berths for six into 5.7 metres necessitates some pruning of other aspects of the caravan's layout, of course. The shower shares its compartment with the toilet. The only storage compartment is a pod-shaped plastic container under the washbasin – oh so stylish and IKEA-like but also rather clunky: the door completely removes when you turn a button. Getting it back into position is a bit of a fiddle, we found during our test. It's a minor negative point; on balance, though, there are a lot of positive points about the 570.

We like the generous capacity of the triple-shelf cupboard that divides the lounge from the nearside two-seater dining area. Kitchen cupboard space, though, isn't large – but, with the three shelves in this additional cupboard, you'll find enough places for stuff.

If you're looking for a six-berth caravan in this size and price bracket, it's pretty much certain you'll be looking, also, at the Charisma 565. The two have a lot in common. Our 565 test in the February issue revealed, though, one thing they share that's far from perfect. Both have pull-up bunks making from dining areas. So both have table clips above the bunk assembly that lies against the wall. And both have tables which are too high (or the seating is too low, whichever way you want to see it) for comfortable dining. That's the case for adults – and far more the case for children. In the Europa 570, though, the problem is easier to overcome, because the backrests fold out, creating half their depth, for use as the mattress of the upper bunk. So, by day, you can fold out these backrests and place them over the seat bases to increase the height.

The 570 has a lot of merits – especially the large storage area under the lower bunk, which folds upwards. And there's a slim exterior door through which to load. But before you rush into putting your awning in here, remember that awnings can easily weigh 50kg; that weight on the rear of the caravan will make your caravan's nose weight light – possibly too light, in the interests of stability. That means you have to put heavy items in the front end, under the lounge, to achieve correct balance. As that's where you'd normally put lightweight items such as duvets, loading suddenly becomes a bit of a challenge. That said, on its test tow, the 570 proved to be inherently well-balance unloaded – so you're off to a good start. Our advice is that no matter how convenient under-bunk storage may appear, heavy awnings are best in the luggage area of the car.