



Bessacarr E695

at a glance

Bessacarr E695 Elegance

Price as tested £51,238 (including VAT at 17.5%)

Prices start at £50,243 (including VAT at 17.5%)

Club Care insurance £324

Base vehicle Fiat Ducato 'Heavy' chassis-cab

Engine as tested 2.3 litre Multijet turbo-diesel 130hp six-speed manual gearbox

Cooker Three gas burners plus one electric hotplate; grill; oven; microwave

Fridge capacity 105 litre

Heating Gas and electric boiler; blown-air distribution

Electrics Five 230V sockets; one 12V socket

Gas locker Space for two 6kg cylinders

Freshwater 90 litre underfloor tank

Length x width x height 7.08m x 2.33m x 3.05m

Berths Four sleeping; four travelling

Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass 4,005kg

User payload 560kg

Warranty Two years base vehicle; three years conversion

Plus points Grand layout for growing family; crisp styling; option of engine upgrade and automatic transmission

Minus point Short nearside rear single bed

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A firm family favourite

JONATHAN LLOYD evaluates a popular home-grown motorhome designed with the family in mind

FOR THE benefit of newer members, I'd better start by mentioning that Bessacarr is part of the Swift Group, which is now the UK's biggest motorhome producer.

This is important as rear lounge motorcaravans are still overwhelmingly the preserve of those built in Britain. Their popularity is probably down to the fact that they are all triple aspect – they have windows on three sides. This allows oodles of natural light to enter the living area, important to us as we have fewer hours of sunshine than many of our European neighbours.

The reason why this particular layout is so suitable for growing families can be summed up in one word – separation.

The E695 has squeezed in a four-seat dinette at the driving end, giving a totally separate additional living area. Thus it's possible for different family factions to indulge in varied pastimes without disturbing each other. Also, different bedtimes will not be a problem as the dining area remains available when all the beds are deployed.

The rear lounge converts into an enormous transverse double bed or into two longitudinal singles,

if that's more appropriate.

However, the nearside single is only 5ft 9in long and this might be a problem for some.

The dining table extends cleverly so that whoever is sitting in the swivelled passenger seat won't need gorilla arms to reach the food, and it's more stable than in previous versions of this unit. An additional freestanding table can be used in the rear lounge or outside.

The unit's well-equipped galley includes three gas burners and one electric hotplate, a separate grill, a thermostatically-controlled oven, plus a high-level 230V microwave. Those washing dishes have a big round bowl and a removable grey plastic draining surface. Store the latter and a hint of worktop is revealed. It's sufficient rather than generous, though of course heroically untidy cooks such as yours truly will always commandeer part of the adjacent table as a worktop extension anyway.

In the washroom the Bessacarr continues to use Swift Group's well-received 'teleporter' style walk-in shower cubicle with curved acrylic opaquely-glazed door. There is plenty

of storage space for a few spare toilet rolls, and the tons of toiletries and make-up that seem to be essential for some teenagers.

Lengthwise the E695 stretches the tape to 7.08m so it's a bit long to use as a 'car' but not extended enough to be awkward. Perfectly poised on the road, the Fiat's wide track chassis offers pin-sharp road-holding with minimal roll on cornering, though the suspension was a little hard.

The Elegance option pack included a reversing camera and monitor, cab air-conditioning and cruise control. All this for an amazingly sharp £975. Terrific value.

Verdict: A well thought-out interior layout makes the E695 a good choice for a growing family. Roomy on site but easily manageable on the road.

