

AUTOCRUISE Starburst

Base Fiat Ducato
 Berths Two
 Engine 2.3-litre 130 MultiJet
 Torque 236 lb/ft @ 2000rpm
 Power 130bhp @ 3600rpm
 Fuel 90 litres
 Contact Autocruise
 Motorhomes, Swinton Meadows
 Ind Est, Meadow Way, Swinton,
 Mexborough, South Yorkshire,
 S64 8AB Tel 01709 571411
 Web www.autocruise.co.uk



SWIFT Bolero 630 EW

Base Fiat Ducato
 Berths Two
 Engine 2.3-litre 130 MultiJet
 Torque 236 lb/ft @ 2000rpm
 Power 130bhp @ 3600rpm
 Fuel 90 litres
 Contact Swift Group,
 Dunswell Road,
 Cottingham,
 Yorkshire HU16 4JX
 Tel 01482 847332
 Web www.swiftgroup.co.uk



Practical Motorhome TWIN TEST

Low-profile rear washrooms

While a rear-end washroom pushes the rest of a motorhome's layout forwards, the advantage is that the space provided in the 'smallest room' is unrivalled. There is more room to prepare for your day, spacious dressing conditions, and should two of you want to use the room at the same time, there's a better chance of doing so.

The two motorhomes tested here are both mid-market, 2009 low-profile models, and are from the same stable (Swift Holdings), but they're built at separate factories to different designs, and are therefore no clones. They feature the same interior layout – that is, twin sofas offering a comfy lounge up front, central kitchen and rear washroom – and are both dedicated two berths. The many differences, though, are in the detail.

FOUNDATIONS

AUTOCRUISE STARBURST

★★★★☆

SWIFT BOLERO 630EW

★★★★☆

Since Swift Holdings' acquisition of Autocruise in 2007, the brand has shifted from building exclusively on Peugeot Boxer to building on both the Fiat and Peugeot badge-engineered platform. The result is that both Autocruise and Swift models tested here are powered by the same Fiat

2.3-litre 130 MultiJet engine, offering 130bhp and 236 lb/ft of torque, ideal for pulling the 7m bodies along. But they are on different chassis: the Starburst, from the marque's Star Plus range, is based on the Fiat/AL-KO low-line chassis, with rear corner steadies. The Bolero makes do with Fiat's own low-line chassis, with wide rear track. The Starburst has a MTPLM of 3500kg and a maximum user payload of 475kg. Partly because of the lighter construction of the AL-KO chassis, it benefits from a greater payload than its Bolero rival, which has the same MTPLM, but a lesser payload of 365kg. Each of the 'vans offer a driver's airbag as standard and both are fitted with radio/CD players. Both the models we tested were also fitted with optional cruise control, reversing cameras (very useful) and satellite navigation.

BODYWORK

AUTOCRUISE STARBURST

★★★★☆

SWIFT BOLERO 630EW

★★★★☆

The Autocruise is a pure white motorhome, broken up by the squared Autocruise graphics. The GRP body is 1.5mm thick, and well sculpted at the rear, with a reversing camera built into its roofline. The front, while low-profile in design, does feature a rolled around small Luton area for storage. External access doors to the underseat lockers are low down on each side, and are long but narrow, while the gas locker is situated at the rear of the body, at an ideal height just above the skirt, and will easily hold two 7kg bottles. There is a Truma Ultraflow connection for the water system, providing external access to an additional filter.

The Swift is finished in eye-catching silver, with aluminium sidewalls and a GRP rear panel. It gets a more aerodynamic sweeping roofline at the front, plus a large skylight to sit above the cab area. The locker doors are shorter than those in the Autocruise, if slightly taller, and the gas locker will hold two 7kg bottles, located on the offside of the vehicle, again low down above the skirt with easy access.

Both motorhomes have underslung fresh and waste water tanks, although the fresh tank on the Swift is insulated for sub-zero temperatures. Both also feature a slide-out electric step, which retracts automatically once the engine is started, and both are fitted with an awning as standard – the Bolero's neatly recessed version looking the tidier option.

The roof bars, rear ladder and towing bracket on our test Bolero are all cost options.

INTERNAL DESIGN

AUTOCRUISE STARBURST

★★★★☆

SWIFT BOLERO 630EW

★★★★☆

Both motorhomes feature a rear-end washroom, a space-saving L-shaped kitchen, and twin sofas up front. The Autocruise enjoys a slightly larger lounge than the Swift, while the Bolero gets a more spacious rear washroom.

Both motorhomes are suitable for taller people, who won't feel the need to stoop down at any point. The Autocruise has an internal height of 193cm, and the Swift has 187cm in the lounge and 198cm in the kitchen.

The large skylight over the cab area gives the Bolero the advantage in terms of natural

light flooding the lounge. Both have similar cherry-tree wood trim, and the upholstery is similar, too, the Autocruise going for a beige fabric design, while the Swift features a cream and peach ensemble.

The floor of the Autocruise is flat throughout, with a step of 16.5cm leading up to the cab. The Swift's floor has a 11cm step at the end of the lounge, leading down into the kitchen.

LOUNGING AND DINING

AUTOCRUISE STARBURST

★★★★☆

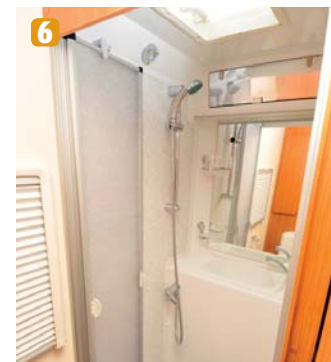
SWIFT BOLERO 630EW

★★★★☆

The swivel cab seats and facing sofa layouts adopted by both models is a more sociable arrangement than a half-dinette layout. Although the Autocruise is the shorter of the two motorhomes, its lounge is the longest, with the main



1 The make up bed in the lounge area measures 1.6 x 2.1m **2** Plenty of height throughout *Inset* Note the fold-out extra work surface **3** The Autocruise offers the best storage **4** A wine rack is a useful addition **5&6** The washroom is slightly narrower than on the Swift but there is a separate shower with overhead cupboard **7** The spacious wardrobe has netted pockets on the wall **8** The attractive kitchen offers good levels of work space **9** The Autocruise has more lounge space than the Swift, but the cushions aren't as comfortable



sofa opposite the door measuring 1.74m, but at only 53cm to the rear cushion, the seat base is rather narrow. The leg bolsters are also quite high and the sofa itself is very firm. This leaves you sitting quite upright and feels less than completely comfortable, although with the second sofa measuring 1.6m, two people can lounge, feet-up, in relative comfort. The step to the cab has been set just far enough forward to allow feet to sit flat on the floor, but not quite as comfortably as if the floor were completely flat.

For dining, the Autocruise has a freestanding table that stows in a separate cupboard beside the kitchen. There is also an extension to the kitchen worktop – at the end of the large sofa – which can be used as a side table.

The Swift has a shorter lounge; the main sofa

measures 1.33m, yet with a base of 60cm you are able to sit deeper, while the cushions seem softer than those in the Autocruise. With a flat lounge floor, the cab seats can be used in comfort. The Swift also has a collapsible table located in a separate cupboard, but this features a folding extension. However, when using this, there is barely any room for someone to sit behind it, and may be best used for al fresco dining. There is no separate table in the Swift.

SLEEPING
AUTOCRUISE STARBURST

★★★★☆
SWIFT BOLERO 630EW
★★★★☆

Neither the Autocruise nor the Swift has a fixed bed, meaning both must be made up at the end of the day from the two side sofas. With the longer lounge, the bed in the

Autocruise is the biggest at 1.6 x 2.1m. Being so long does make it more difficult to put together, though, as the length creates a levering effect. The best solution is to have one person either end before pull the base straight out. For the best results, the cushions should be arranged so the base bolsters are at each end, otherwise they will dig into your back during the night. Despite the length, the Autocruise bed is the easier to make up, as the legs are already in place.

The Swift's bed is assembled from a shorter lounge, so measures just 1.33 x 2.15m. It has used a folding-leg arrangement in which the legs are tucked up beneath the sofa bases, and need to be extended after the base is pulled out. They can be awkward, especially when putting the bed away, as the legs have

a tendency to catch or get stuck on the slats beneath the sofa. The cushions in the Swift seem softer though, and therefore offer a slightly more comfortable bed.

KITCHEN
AUTOCRUISE STARBURST

★★★★★
SWIFT BOLERO 630EW
★★★★☆

There is a clear winner in this category, where both motorhomes plump for an L-shaped, space saving kitchen. The Autocruise has the largest working surface, improved further by a cupboard that swings out and locks in place to provide an extension. The sink is complemented by a separate steel drainer with its own plughole, and both are supplied with wooden covers to allow for further food preparation surface. A folding

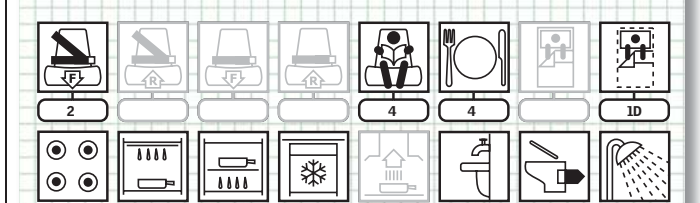
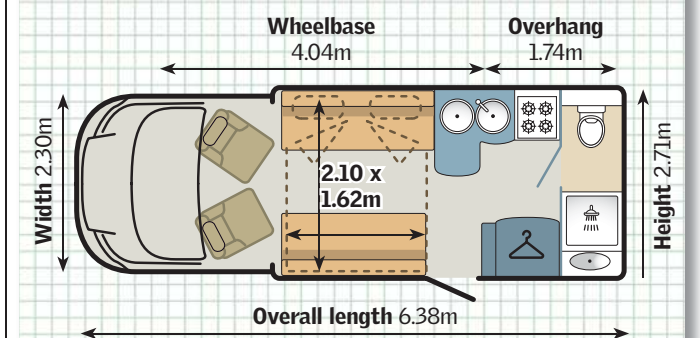
table also provides more workspace as well as a table for the lounge. The swing-out section holds a tall cupboard, and when open reveals shelves and access to the water pump. The addition of a full-sized oven with separate grill, three gas hobs and an electric hotplate provides plenty of cooking options. There's a wine rack, too; in fact, the only thing letting this kitchen down is its fridge, which is set low down and has a capacity of only 113 litres.

The Swift also has a good kitchen, but it lacks workspace in comparison. It is slightly shorter and, because the sink is at the end of the L-section, the workspace is consigned to the corner, with an extra tier above to provide additional space. The cupboard below opens out to reveal a carousel for storage and cutlery. Again, a full-size



BIG GROUP TEST | **AUTOCRUISE STARBURST** £43,330.21 OTR
AS TESTED £45,470.21

Base vehicle Fiat Ducato **Berths** Two **Engine** 2.3-litre MultiJet
Torque 236 lb/ft @ 2000rpm **Power** 130bhp @ 3600rpm
Fuel 90 litres **MTPLM** 3500kg **Payload** 475kg **Gas** Two x 7kg
Battery 120Ah **Fresh water** 88 litres **Waste water** 73 litres



Base vehicle Front-wheel drive. Six-speed manual gearbox. Anti-lock braking system. Driver's airbag. Radio/CD player.
Construction GRP sidewalls, rear panel and roof. Side skirts. Chassis extensions for optional towbar.
Interior Heki rooflight. Mini Heki rooflight. Flyscreens and blinds on all opening windows.
Equipment Three-burner hob with electric hotplate, large oven and grill. Thetford N112 113-litre fridge. Truma Combi 4 blown-air heating and water heater with electric and gas options. Thetford C200 swivelling toilet with electric flush.
Options fitted Lux Pack: portable sat nav; reversing camera; 15-inch TV with built-in Freeview and a roll-out awning (£975). Driver's Pack: cab air conditioning and cruise control (£1165).
Other options 160bhp engine with Comfortmatic auto gearbox, air conditioning and cruise control (£4492). 15-inch alloy wheels (£582). Microwave Oven (£113). Skyview Rooflight (£553).

AT A GLANCE ★★★★★
FOR Lots of storage. Clever design for a large kitchen. **AGAINST** Smaller washroom. Small fridge. **SUMMARY** This is a good motorhome for entertaining, with plenty of well thought-out space. However, the bigger lounge is just not as comfortable as it should be.

Contact Autocruise **Tel** 01709571411 **Web** www.autocruise.co.uk
Seen at West Country Motorhomes, Bristol Road, Highbridge, Somerset, TA19 4HG **Tel** 01278 761200 **Web** www.westcountry-motorhomes.co.uk
(Key to icons and acronyms, p94)



1 Extending-leg arrangement for the bed is awkward **2** Plenty of light and height, plus twin-level kitchen worktop space **3** Glass-fronted cupboards are not as chic as those in the Autocruise **4** The large rooflight lets in plenty of natural light **5** Well designed, super-spacious washroom **6** There is good storage space above and below the sink **7** The large fridge and separate freezer **8** Handy, triple-tiered carousel, but it's short on workspace **9** Flat floor throughout, plus comfy cushions



BIG GROUP TEST | **SWIFT BOLERO 630EW** AS TESTED £44,344.36 | **£43,369.36 DTR**

Base vehicle Fiat Ducato **Berths** Two **Engine** 2.3-litre MultiJet
Torque 236 lb/ft @ 2000rpm **Power** 130bhp @ 3600rpm
Fuel 90 litres **MTPLM** 3500kg **Payload** 365kg **Gas** Two x 7kg
Battery 110Ah **Fresh water** 90 litres **Waste water** 68 litres

Wheelbase 4.04m **Overhang** 2.40m

Overall length 7.04m

2

4

4

10

Base Vehicle Front-wheel drive. Six-speed manual gearbox. Anti-lock braking system. Driver's airbag. Radio/CD player.

Construction Aluminium sidewalls with GRP rear panel and roof. 70mm sandwich construction floor. 34mm sandwich construction roof.

Interior Large panoramic skylight over cab. Heki rooflight; Mini Heki rooflight. Flyscreens and blinds on all opening windows.

Equipment Three-burner hob with electric hotplate, large oven and grill. Thetford N150 150-litre fridge/freezer. Truma Combi 4 blown-air heating and water heater with electric and gas options. Thetford C200 swivelling toilet with electric flush.

Options fitted Vogue Pack: cruise control; cab air conditioning; reversing camera and portable sat-nav (£975). Roof rack and ladder (£440). Detachable towbar (£465).

Other options 160bhp engine with Comfortmatic auto gearbox (£3328). Microwave oven (£113). Roof rack and ladder (£440). Detachable towbar (£465). Winter pack: fresh and waste water tank heaters and fridge vent covers (£113).

AT A GLANCE ★★★★★

FOR Comfortable lounge. Very large washroom.

AGAINST Small kitchen workspace, no drainer.

SUMMARY The rear washroom on this 'van is fantastic for the price range, while the kitchen and storage are perfectly adequate for a couple.

Contact Swift Tel 01482 847332 **Web** www.swiftgroup.co.uk
Seen at West Country Motorhomes, Bristol Road, Highbridge, Somerset, TA19 4HG **Tel** 01278 761200 **Web** www.westcountry-motorhomes.co.uk
(Key to icons and acronyms, p94)

a very large rear washroom: 1.23m wide. It features a large separate shower unit with a seat and pull-around shower door, a Thetford C200 toilet and a separate washbasin at the other end. There is a full-sized wardrobe with drawers and three-quarter-height hanging space, plus three shelves for storage. There is also plenty of storage space in the cupboard beneath the sink. It feels like a proper domestic bathroom. Both motorhomes have a large window in the rear wall, and a small skylight with fly net.

STORAGE
AUTOCRUISE STARBURST
 ★★★★★
SWIFT BOLERO 630EW
 ★★★★★

Neither the Swift nor the Autocruise has an external garage, but both have external access to the underseat lockers.

In addition, the Autocruise benefits from internal access doors beneath the seats. There are nine overhead storage lockers, including a large one above the cab, and a special crockery cupboard with a rack and straps for plates, bowls and cups. There is also a wine glass case beside the habitation door, finished in burgundy suede to add a touch of class to the interior.

The wardrobe measures 0.97m high and 0.51m wide, and offers good hanging space. There are also pockets located around the interior for maps and papers, while the TV cupboard is beside the door, with a tambour door.

The Swift will only allow access to the underseat lockers from the outside or by lifting the sofa bases on their gas struts – there are no internal access doors. There are just four overhead lockers in the

lounge, and side pockets above the cab. There are two large cupboards in the kitchen, too, in addition to the carousel beneath the sink. One has a glass-fronted door, but neither has a dedicated crockery area.

The wardrobe is very large. Located in the washroom, it offers a hanging height of 1.27m, and has three basket-type drawers behind the door.

SPECIFICATION
AUTOCRUISE STARBURST
 ★★★★★
SWIFT BOLERO 630EW
 ★★★★★

All the equipment mentioned in the test so far comes as standard, and both have very similar options available.

As standard, the 120Ah battery and Truma Ultraflow system are pretty good. The Truma Combi 4 gas and electric heating system is also another good piece of kit at

this price. Should you choose the Starburst you can also add a microwave for the kitchen as well as a roof rack and ladder, roll-out awning and panoramic skylight above the cab.

The version we tested had the Autocruise Lux pack fitted, giving satellite navigation and a reversing camera, a 15-inch television with Freeview and the roll-out awning. It was also fitted with the Driver's pack, consisting of air conditioning in the cab and cruise control.

The Swift already comes with the large skylight above the cab, and the 150-litre Truma fridge/freezer complementing the 110Ah battery, plus Truma Combi 4 gas and electric heating. The model we tested had the optional Vogue pack fitted, consisting of cab air conditioning, cruise control, colour reversing camera and portable satellite navigation.

VERDICT
AUTOCRUISE STARBURST
 ★★★★★
SWIFT BOLERO 630EW
 ★★★★★

Both 'vans have specific advantages and, given the very similar layouts, picking a winner was tough.

Although the Autocruise is the shorter 'van, it does a remarkable job of hiding this fact. It has a fantastic kitchen area and the larger of the two lounges. But despite its size it is not as comfy as the Swift. In its favour, the Starburst's flat floor throughout gives a more connected feeling along the length of the 'van, making the kitchen feel part of the lounge. The washroom is a good size and there is plenty of storage.

However, the overall winner is the Swift. While the lounge area (and therefore the sleeping area) is smaller, it is more comfortable and relaxing

thanks to the deeper, softer seats, and it has a more unified feeling with the cab seats swivelled, because everyone sits at the same height.

While the kitchen is smaller and not in the same league as that in the Autocruise, it does boast a better specification fridge with separate freezer. The deciding factor, however, is the washroom, which, in this type of layout, is the most important aspect of all. The three separate sections within mean no chance of wet feet, and with so much space inside, you can comfortably spend time in there getting ready for your day. In fact, it feels more like an ensuite bathroom in a house than a washroom in a motorhome.

Lounge storage is in short supply compared with the Autocruise's, but what is provided should be ample for a couple on tour.