



Advance is slightly narrower than top-of-the-range Autograph

ON THE ROAD

The Peugeot Boxer cab is instantly familiar. Our 665 was fitted with the optional, £1,199 'premium pack' providing extras such as cab air conditioning, passenger airbag, Remis concertina windscreen blind, removable cab carpet, DAB radio with Bluetooth connectivity and a USB connection.

We found it comfortable and easy to drive, while performance was good from its 130bhp Peugeot 2.2 HDi engine (with six-speed manual gearbox).

It was rattle-free and quiet enough to make such an extended trip bearable, probably helped by the superior quality of continental motorway road surfaces. There was plenty of room for us to spread out and rest during our regular breaks and food stops.

Having previously driven the bigger and heavier, six-berth Bailey Approach Autograph 765 to Italy, we thought the lighter and shorter Advance 665 had the edge on performance, while its narrower bodyshell, which is only just wider than the cab (2.35m compared to the Autograph's 2.41m), also made driving on tighter roads just that bit easier.

LIVING ABOARD

It was cold enough in Switzerland in mid-October to need to leave the Whale 4kW space heater and blown-air heating system on permanently.

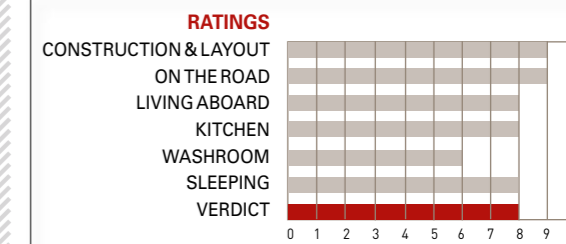
Having two lounge areas meant we could keep out of each other's way easily. The rear lounge has a side cupboard adjoining the wardrobe for drinks or watching an iPad or TV which made it a nice place to relax, away from the kitchen. Windows on all sides and a midi Heki rooflight above gave it an airy feel.

The side dinette felt a bit darker by comparison (although there's plenty of electric lighting) but with its table attached to the wall it was perfect for the four of us in terms of dining, working on the laptop or playing family games. If there were six of you, two would have to eat separately, or you would need to try and seat everyone in the rear lounge with a free-standing table.

The 665 has a payload of 543kg, and we found that the wardrobe and the lockers around both lounge areas were more than adequate. There are also deep compartments under the rear seats, while we found the storage under the rear (raised) floor was a convenient place for shoes etc.

There is room in the gas bottle locker for a 13kg and 6kg bottle, plus smaller items like chocks, electric hook-up

TECHNICAL

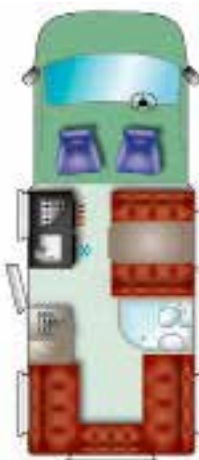


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| RRP/as tested | £40,795 OTR/£41,994OTR |
| Base vehicle | Peugeot Euro 5 Boxer |
| Engine | 2.2 HDi |
| Power | 130bhp @ 3,500rpm |
| Torque | 236lb ft (320Nm) @ 2,000rpm |
| Transmission | Six-speed manual |
| Fuel/tank/econ | Diesel/90 litres/30mpg |
| Overall length | 22ft 10in (6.96m) |
| Overall width | 7ft 8in (2.34m) inc marker lights/mirrors |
| Overall height | 9ft 2in (2.79m) |
| Max internal height | 6ft 9in (2.11m) |
| MRO | 2,957kg (58.2cwt) |
| MTPLM | 3,500kg (68.9cwt) |
| User payload | 543kg (10.7 cwt) |
| Berths | 6 |
| NCC approved | yes |
| Caravan Club insurance | The Club's Motorhome Insurance is tailored to the needs of members using our 25 years of know-how. We guarantee to beat your renewal premium by at least £25.* |

Figures from manufacturer's literature. *Premium Saving Guarantee. Subject to proof of existing renewal, including cover and price (eg a copy of your renewal notice), when cover is on a like-for-like basis. Please note, terms and conditions, eg excess(es), may vary from your current insurer. Courtesy car is subject to availability. Subject to terms and conditions and the Insurer's acceptance of the Risk. The Club's Motorhome Insurance is arranged for The Club by Devitt Insurance Services Limited, Insurance Brokers. The Caravan Club and Devitt Insurance Services Limited are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The current average premium paid by members under The Caravan Club's Motorhome Insurance scheme is £253.

Advance booking

John Rawlings is pleased he reserved a family-sized Approach for his trip to Switzerland



Early in 2015, four years after unveiling its first motorhomes, Bailey launched its second range: the entry-level Approach Advance. With maximum weights of up to 3,500kg, each of the four models in the Approach Advance line-up can be driven by anyone with a full UK driving licence. As well as being generally lighter than the successful, top-of-the-range Approach Autograph models, Advance motorhomes are also narrower.

Prices for the Advance start from £38,515. The 665 is the largest and most expensive model in the line-up at £40,795. It is the only one aimed at

families and has belted seats and berths for up to six people.

We tested it on an autumnal October half-term family holiday trip to Switzerland, where we stayed at Camping Lazy Rancho 4 (Club site booking code SO1) in Interlaken.

CONSTRUCTION AND LAYOUT

Entering by the side door, you find the kitchen on your left opposite a front lounge offering four belted travel seats. To your right, there's a



Left: John Rawlings and family
Top: familiar Peugeot cab
Above: decent workspace in the kitchen

wardrobe and the washroom opposite, leaving the rear of the motorhome for a second, larger lounge.

Unlike many six-berth motorhomes that use a (bulky) overhead cab to provide extra berths, the 665's third double bed descends, electrically, from the roof above the side lounge and, crucially, runs longitudinally, so the kitchen and cab can still be accessed while it's in use.

The bodyshell features Bailey's Alu-Tech, timber-free construction system, while (like its posher Autograph siblings) the Advance makes use of an ultra-low profile Al-Ko AMC chassis.



Clockwise from top: bright rear lounge; front dinette comfortably seats four; converted for night-time



Left and above: longitudinal bed still allows access to kitchen and cab

There was no remote locking via the key fob (so the cab can only be unlocked externally from the driver's door), and there were padded covers instead of blinds for the cab's side windows – but these are all things you can easily live without.

KITCHEN

We were particularly pleased with the cupboard space in the kitchen (ours didn't have the optional microwave oven – which we didn't miss – so there was an 'extra' cupboard).

We found the hob with three gas rings was perfectly adequate for cooking family meals. It took up less space than a traditional four-burner, leaving a useful amount of space around it for food preparation or utensils when cooking.

You can always see what you're doing as there are three spotlights under the roof lockers and three in the roof above, plus a window and a mini Heki roof light to provide ventilation.

The combined Thetford Duplex oven and grill is space efficient and adds more cooking options, should you need them. The Dometic fridge, fitted under the kitchen worktop, is adequate at 80 litres but removing the freezer compartment adds an extra five litres of space. There are 90-litre fresh water and waste water tanks, both filled and emptied on the driver's side of the vehicle.

WASHROOM

Considering the dimensions of the vehicle, Bailey has done well to make the washroom a decent size. It's not huge, and there isn't room for a completely separate shower (you'll have to upgrade to the Autograph 765 if this

is a 'must-have' for you), but it's not too cramped either.

A shower curtain protects the wall cupboard, shelving and Thetford C-260 toilet, while there's an Ecocamel shower head to save water. There are separate swivel taps for the sink and shower, plus two drain holes in the floor and hooks for four towels. The ladder for the bunk is stored on the inside of the washroom door.

SLEEPING

We certainly slept well after our busy days exploring the Swiss mountains and lakes. It was quick and easy to convert the rear lounge (using pull-out slats) into a double bed measuring (6ft 9in by 5ft 3in). It's wider at one end than the other, with the side cupboard at the narrower end and small shelves in each corner for night-time, bedside essentials. One of the blown-air outlets is covered by the bed but there's another in front of it (by a low-level light) which kept us warm at night.

The children chose to alternate between the two beds at the front of the motorhome – the front dinette converts into a second double bed measuring 6ft by 3ft 2in, while the longitudinal, drop-down above it measures 5ft 10in by 4ft 1in.

VERDICT

The Advance 665 scores highly as a practical family motorhome and offers great value for money. Driving it was easy and it acted as a comfortable, spacious base for our outdoor activities. The specification also seems more than adequate for a family's needs.



Efficient use of space in the washroom

“The 665 scores highly as a practical family motorhome and offers great value for money”

cable, etc, but if we'd been taking deckchairs to sit outside on in summer, we'd have missed having a large exterior storage area.

With various electronic gadgets to charge, we appreciated the number of power sockets (and their locations), although some USB points in the lounge would be a bonus. We thought the look and feel of the interior did it proud for the price, too.

If we're being 'picky', it would have been good to see a window in the entrance door.

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