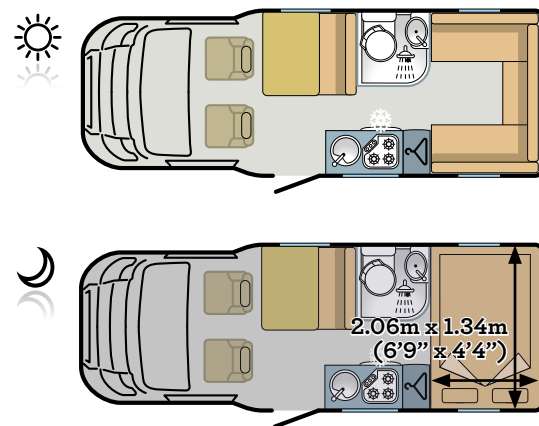


BAILEY Approach Advance 615

Approach Advance is Bailey's latest addition – a 'van designed to appeal to first-timers. **Mike Le Caplain** assesses the baby of the range

Price £38,515 OTR (plus £1199 Premium Pack) **Sleeps** 2 **Belts** 4 **Base Vehicle** Peugeot Boxer **Engine** 2.2-litre HDi manual, 130bhp **L/W/H** 5.99m/2.35m/2.79m (19'8"/7'8"/9'2") **MTPLM** 3500kg **Payload** 804kg **Water** (fresh/waste) 90 litres/90 litres **Battery** 80Ah **Gas** 2x6kg



Bailey didn't get around to building its first motorhome until 2011. And that range, the Approach SE, lives on today in the Approach Autograph line-up. But its more budget-oriented sibling, the Approach Compact, mysteriously disappeared from Bailey literature a short while back, with no mention of a replacement. Had Bailey

abandoned the idea of a smaller, more affordable motorhome range? The answer, of course, is "no". At the time of writing, only the press had seen the new models, dubbed 'Approach Advance', at a low-key launch event held in late November, but by the time you read this, visitors to the Motorhome and Caravan Show at Event City in Manchester will have

witnessed its public debut. The question is: has it been worth the wait? The Advance's predecessor was smaller and more affordable than the existing Autograph, but with the new Advance, Bailey is targeting a specific customer base. Many 'vans are bought by caravanners who no longer want the perceived hassle of towing. Bailey, however, suspects that many more would make the change were the perception of owning, running and – crucially – driving a motorhome not quite so daunting. The Advance has been specifically designed to address such concerns.

The smallest model in the new range, the 615, arguably sticks to this principle the most faithfully. At less than 6m stem to stern, it should fit on most driveways with ease, and the narrower 2.35m bodyshell – which is barely wider than the Peugeot Boxer cab – makes it almost as easy to position on even country roads as a large 4x4 or MPV. The Peugeot base vehicle is the new second-generation X/290. The Bianco white paint matches the conversion colour perfectly and comes as standard with daytime running lights, ABS and a driver's airbag. The DAB CD/radio with USB and Bluetooth wireless phone connection are part of the (essential in our view) £1199 Premium Pack, as are cab air conditioning, a passenger airbag and Remis windscreen night blind. Being wider and shorter than most low-profiles helps with driveability, but Bailey has gone a step further by offering – uniquely in this class – Al-Ko's ultra-low-profile AMC chassis, which lowers the centre of gravity further and provides a low-set step up into the conversion.



The 615's main entrance door is adjacent to the cab passenger door, so you step up directly into the front lounging/dining area. This comprises a forward-facing half-dinette (which also doubles as the rear travel seats), plus swivelling cab seats. The simple clip-on table is nicely rounded to save on space and prevent visitors from hurting themselves a sharp corner, and it's big enough to allow three people dining space at mealtimes. A fourth diner is accommodated by an extension flap beneath the table that swings out to reach the cab passenger seat. We have only a couple of quibbles: the cab seats sit higher than the half dinette seats; and the half dinette's inner occupant could really do with an additional reading light. As it stands, ☺



Contact: Bailey of Bristol, South Liberty Lane, Bristol BS3 2SS. Tel 0117 966 5967. Web www.baileyofbristol.co.uk

WIDTH 2.35m (7'8")

HEIGHT 2.79m (9'2")

LENGTH 5.99m (19'8")



SITTING ON A PEUGEOT BOXER BASE Bailey has stuck with the Peugeot Boxer as a base vehicle, in 2.2 HDi guise, the second generation X/290



PREMIUM PACK IS A MUST-HAVE Cab air con, Bluetooth phone connection and DAB radio/CD player are all part of the Premium Pack



SLIM BODY IS EASIER TO MANOEUVRE The conversion is barely wider than the base vehicle cab, so it's easy to drive even on narrow roads



ROOM FOR TWO, BUT CAN FIT FOUR There's a small step into the lounge/diner but it's spacious and comfortable. Swivelling striped cab seats and curtains add a splash of colour

CARAVANGUARD INSURANCE QUOTE **£242***



SILVER SCREENS INSTEAD OF BLINDS Removable silver screens, stored in a cubby above the cab doors, are stuck on the side windows at night



THERE'S SPACE FOR A FOURTH DINER A space-saving swing-out extension to the simple clip-on dining table easily reaches the passenger cab seat



SAFETY FIRST Fully belted travel seats will help with the school run, but they preclude the fitting of a second reading light

* FOR INSURANCE QUOTES TERMS AND CONDITIONS SEE PAGE 146

★ VAN REVIEW |

one cannot be fitted for travel seat safety reasons.

The kitchen makes the best of its limited floor space. It's well-equipped, with a spark-ignition combined oven and grill, lidded three-burner hob and a 80-litre Dometic fridge with in-built freezer. The power sockets are located higher than usual, too, the better to avoid overspill from the sink. The roof lockers are easily reached, even if you're a little short.

Worktop space is rather wanting, and the close proximity of the entrance door precludes fitment of a folding extension flap. Your best bet is to use the main table as a worktop instead.

Opening the washroom door reveals a large all-in-one area. The walls are fully lined and the shower curtain is there solely to protect the toilet from shower spray, rather than cocooning you in a clingy, clammy embrace. There's good storage space in here, too.

The 615's U-shaped end lounge is pretty good. You could easily get five or six people in there - and large windows all round ensure an airy feeling of space. There are ample roof lockers in here, too, and slits in the carpet betray the handy under-floor storage.

The settees easily make up into a large, double bed. It's comfortable and supportive, but leaves no floor space, so you'll disturb your other half should you need to visit the loo in the night. A bit more knick-knack space would be welcome, too, and the area beneath the roof lockers on the rear wall is crying out for an additional light. ☹

PRACTICAL MOTORHOME SAYS...

Minor niggles aside, Bailey seems to have hit the bullseye with the new Advance range. It's so impressive, we can't help wondering what - space aside - the bigger, dearer Autograph offers that the Advance doesn't.



SEEING RED
Vivid red curtains and scatter cushions in the lounge provide contrast and a dash of colour to the otherwise muted interior



TINY TOP, BUT WELL LIT
The kitchen is inevitably short on worktop, and close proximity to the entrance door means there's no extension, but it's well lit



EVERYTHING YOU NEED
A combined oven and grill, and good-sized fridge, provide the necessary kit and still leave room for decent storage solutions

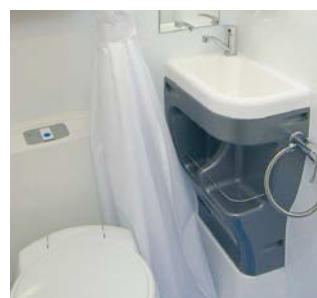


SEE OUR VIDEO REVIEW
www.practicalmotorhome.com

LARGE LOUNGE FOR GET TOGETHER
Super end lounge is comfortable and offers 180-degree views, but lacks lighting above the rear window, making this area a little gloomy



ALL UNDER CONTROL
Simple LCD controls are located above the 'van's habitation door for mains lights, water pump and the awning light



TOO COSY FOR COMFORT
Swivel, electric-flush toilet is set a little too close to the washbasin, making space in this area rather tight, but the towel ring is a bonus



ROOM FOR ABLUTIONS
Huge shower cubicle is fully lined. The shower curtain separates the shower from the toilet. There's good storage in this area, too