

## BURSTING WITH VALUE

*German build quality meets Europe's best-selling commercial chassis in a marriage that should please your wallet*

*Words & pictures by Dave Hurrell*

**A**s German as beer and bratwurst sausage, Burstner has a deserved reputation for building excellent quality leisure vehicles. Around 36 models are currently listed in our Buyers' Guide - a range of low profile, coachbuilt and A-class 'vans to suit just about any heart's desire motorhome-wise. The vast majority being based on the Fiat Ducato (plus some on Renault's Master) the introduction of

this, the first Nexxo, marks a departure for the firm in several ways. I say 'first,' as this 'van's suffix-equipped title leads me to conclude that other Nexxos will arrive in due course, although I have no concrete evidence to back this up.

The biggest departure here is the base vehicle - built on the Transit, the Nexxo is the first of the marque to wear a big blue oval Ford badge on its nose. The second

departure is price. Although Burstner has recently introduced 'value for money' 'vans in the shape of its Marano range of low profiles, the Nexxo beats them to the cash register with a starting price that's well under the magic £30k barrier.

Aside from that, and its 'Burstner rare beast' chassis, the Nexxo is unremarkable as a Continental low-profile motorcaravan. Outside,



Nexxo offers excellent value for money

**AT A GLANCE**

- **PRICE FROM:** £28,810
- **BERTHS:** 4
- **BASE VEHICLE:** Ford Transit platform cab
- **LAYOUT:** Swivel cab seats, half-dinette, side sofa, offside-located caravan entrance, nearside kitchen with fridge and oven opposite, offside longitudinal fixed double bed with washroom alongside.
- **ECONOMY:** 25.4mpg



1 The entirely conventional interior sees half-dinette lounge ahead of kitchen  
2 Behind the L-shaped galley, a fixed double bed stands next to the washroom

it displays conventionally low-profile charms - its 6.73-metre length is neither surprisingly compact nor ridiculously long. Inside too, there are few surprises as a half-dinette-based lounge heads up an L-shaped kitchen and fixed double bed with washroom alongside in the rear.

**OUTSIDE THE BUDGET**

'The elegant entry into the world of mobile leisure time' is the brochure-speak used by Burstner to introduce the Nexxo to motorcaravanners. In spite of the maybe flawed translation from the German, your own, more sensible interpretation will tell you that this particular piece of blurb simply says 'entry-level'. Very firmly in the value for money area price-wise, the Nexxo also displays budget characteristics both inside and out.

Externally, the budget status is expressed in the form of wheel trims instead of alloys and roof-to-sides joins executed using alloy

extrusions rather than the more upmarket-looking GRP capping. Having said that, the trims bear more than a passing resemblance to non-ferrous wheels and the alloy joining strips are chunky and look very strong indeed. From here on in things are on the up, as GRP mouldings feel thick and strong, as do the alloy skirts that grace the Nexxo's lower flanks.

Dressed in its optional (£749) Crystal Blue paintwork, this 'van looks superb, while the simple addition of a couple of curvy coachlines high up cheat the eye into thinking that the rear body sports a sexy, radiused top. The transit's rather angular styling blends well too and the harmonious whole just does not look like a budget 'shed.'

**ENTRY LEVEL INTERIOR**

Described as 'pear wood' by the brochure, the interior cabinets look more 'mid walnut' in colour to my eye. Overtly downmarket

features of the interior start with the basic one-piece-and-windowless caravan door. That said, there'll be no grovelling with a basic manual step here, as the caravan entrance is blessed with an electrically operated cassette unit that glides forth to aid entry.

Inside, a few slightly rough-ish edges on locker doors and some exposed screw heads are the only items that shout 'budget build.' Even so, metal latches with positive locking, a strong-looking alloy hinge system and stylish trim with dark 'wood' and silver stringing conspire to sweep away the idea that this is a cheaper motorhome.

**IN TRANSIT**

The Nexxo is based on the platform cab, front-wheel drive version of the latest Ford Transit. The platform-type chassis features a flat, steel floor topped, rear frame that's lower than a standard chassis, thus making it very suitable

# On Test Burstner Nexxo t660 on 2.2TD Ford Transit



compartments, cup/bottle holders, big glove compartment and passenger door bins. Only the driver's door lacks a bin - the presence of the handbrake on this side precludes its inclusion. A clever flip-over snack table/drinks holder tops off the dash nicely.

Safety and convenience see driver and passenger airbags, electric windows and mirrors, cab air-conditioning, cruise control and steering wheel-mounted audio controls joined by a superb radio/CD player. In addition, trip computer tells tales of average speed, distance and miles per gallon. The driver's seat is, crucially, height-adjustable and it's here where the cab environment is compromised. The presence of a seat swivel added by Burstner means that even at its lowest level, the driver's seat could be a tad high for some. That said, my five-foot-ten frame found the driving position OK.

It's interesting to note that Burstner has not fitted a windscreen blind - the top rail of which could compromise the view through the screen even more.

## DRIVE TIME

Getting comfy in the driving department is easy, although (thanks to the higher seat), the nicely small steering wheel comes a tad low. Aside from this, cab ergonomics are up to the Transit's usual high standards. The 2.2-litre 130bhp turbo-diesel engine (110bhp is standard) drives the front wheels through a five-speed gearbox and fires up easily to tick over reasonably quietly.

This motor needs a good dose of throttle on take-off as, like some of the current crop of modern diesels, it appears to be slightly 'highly strung'. Whether this is down to the lean-burning needs of Euro 4 emissions standard, or a side effect of obtaining lots of power from a relatively small capacity engine, I know not: possibly it's a bit of both.

Once the Nexxo is rolling, progress

as a motorhome base. Burstner adds side and rear extensions to accept the motorhome's body and a glance underneath showed all to be neatly executed. Up front, the Transit's latest visage displays latest-fashion vertically stacked lights that match the angular styling well. Sitting on big wheels, this motorhome appears purposeful and well proportioned.

Although this incarnation of the Tranny has mainly cosmetic changes outside, it's in the cab where big alterations have taken place. The dash is just about as car-like as it's possible

to get in this class of vehicle - oozing class it even features a leather-covered, silver-trimmed steering wheel that would not look out of place in an executive car. The outstanding feature motorhome-wise is the presence of the dash-mounted gearlever that helps allow unhindered movement from cab to caravan. In addition, the handbrake has been re-sited on the right, further easing movement and allowing the driver's seat to be swivelled easily.

The rest of the cab features storage and facilities in spades with twin dash-top storage

### I LIKED

- The price!
- Ford's ever-trusty Transit
- The driving experience
- Twin airbags
- Cab air-conditioning
- Superb radio
- Interior ambience
- Comfy lounge with entertaining space
- High-level fridge
- Separate drainer/sink chopping board combo
- Large showering area
- The latest Thetford toilet
- Long bed
- Lack of conversion noise
- Excellent lighting

### I WOULD HAVE LIKED

- Better height adjustment for driver's seat
- Pullout kitchen work surface
- Surface adjacent to washbasin and in shower area

### I DISLIKED

- High-level oven



5 The L-shaped galley sports separate drainer and big drawers

6 The fridge is raised, but unfortunately so is the oven

**3** The latest Ford Transit's cab is superb: storage bins and flip-over snack table grace the dash top

**4** The Euro-lounge front end is easy to use, and a drop-in table extension helps the dinette shine

becomes ridiculously easy with steering weighted perfectly for the small wheel. Light clutch action and progressive brakes conspire with the superb gearchange to make driving this 'van very pleasurable.

Although only equipped with a five-speed gearbox, ratios seemed well judged, with fifth gear high enough to see the motor spinning at just 2500rpm at 70mph.

Handling and ride quality was very good too, while in the rear, an almost complete absence of conversion noise told the story of a seemingly strongly made motorcaravan. In short, the Ford Transit is one very good reason to buy this 'van.

### EURO LOUNGE

The Nexxo's front area features a lounge-diner that's a European classic. Thanks to the lack of handbrake and gearlever on the cab floor, the cab seats swivel easily to face a half-dinette with inward-facing sofa on the offside.

The forward-facing dinette seat provides (in the usual manner) two fully belted seats for travel. Here, best practice is achieved as a full-width frame at its back provides strength and mounting points for the fitted automotive-style head restraints. There's a step down between cab to living area floors - a side effect of the lower platform chassis - but fortunately it's a small one, and the cab seats come to the table and lounge seating at the right height.

Facilities here include rear stereo speakers and good quality rail-mounted spotlights on the ceiling and under each side's overhead lockers. Natural light is available in quantity thanks to a window each side and illumination from the



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cab. However, a big rooflight above would be preferable to the standard-fit Mini Heki. Thankfully, a Midi Heki can be had as an option - one I'd recommend. Six can lounge here and five (thanks to a drop-in table extension) can dine at the sensibly sized table. A flat-screen-only locker mounted to the rear of the forward-facing dinette seat caters for TV watching. This includes a neat, slide-out-and-adjustable plinth to take your choice of set. This Euro lounge-diner is just about as good as they come and only the bright orange upholstery might cause

some to reach for the Ray-Bans. Bear in mind there's no alternative fabric to be had. Me? I liked the soft furnishings: indoor sunshine, even in November!

### 'ELL'S KITCHEN

Another perennial feature of this oft-encountered interior layout is the L-shaped kitchen. Of course, this design is almost inevitable as the back of the dinette provides the perfect site for the L-shaped part of the galley. Typical features, both good and bad,



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are present (and most can be found in other examples of the breed). The main unit includes hob and sink, plus the welcome addition of a separate drainer which, executed in stainless steel, matches the sink. These three units take up almost all the space so there is no room for any worktop. However, not all is lost, as the expected hinged glass lid over the hob is joined by a drop-in chopping board that fits either sink or drainer.

Below, some excellent drawers and spacious cupboards mean that there'll be plenty of room for food, utensils and pots. Above, a single (internally divided) locker offers more space. Opposite is the other L-shaped kitchen favourite, the fridge, with oven above. Budget status is exposed here by the fact that instead of the more usual flipping' great fridge-freezer, there's just a smaller (but still reasonably-sized) standard fridge. This is raised (with an additional cupboard below) to a height that offers easy access, but this also serves to raise the height of the oven.

High oven syndrome is an almost perennially bad feature of this type of kitchen design. This is due, in part, to the fact that the oven/grill unit is an afterthought – Continentally sold versions of this 'van will probably not include an oven. That said, the

oven fitted is the latest curved-front model from Cramer that looks very swish. Swish it may be, but I wish the maker had done some work on the oven's interior design: as usual, the oven worked fine, but the grill proved to be laughably ineffective.

### BURSTNER BATHING

The washroom has much to offer that belies the Nexxo's entry-level status. A large washbasin is mounted at the forward end and next to the doorway. It's here that one of the few downsides of the area rears its ugly head, as there's not really anywhere to put toothbrushes, soap and other cosmetics as two big mirrors about the basin, and so precludes the fitting of an after-market shelf. To solve this problem I'd fit a rubber (plastic probably) sucker-equipped shelf to the mirror surface. Indeed a quick Internet search found just such an item for 15 quid.

Turn from the basin and you discover the crucial difference between this washroom and others of the breed. Instead of trying to cram a separate shower compartment and toilet into the rest of the area, Burstner has been much cleverer. The shower area is walk-through and enclosed by two sets of rigid doors, while beyond is the toilet, mounted



across the back wall. Again there's not a whiff of budget 'van in here as the shower tray floor feels solid as a rock and the shower and screens work very well.

Even the toilet is an upmarket item and where Burstner could have installed the ubiquitous-and-ordinary swivel-bowl loo, it has fitted the latest bench-type cassette toilet from Thetford. The C-400 offers a large capacity waste tank, is easier to service and the cassette features wheels and an extendable handle to make trips to the dump point easier.

Bathroom storage provision is good too, with cupboard shelves and cubbies above the loo and the expected good-sized cupboard space below the basin.

### NEXXO NAPPING

The Nexxo is billed as a four-berth motorhome with a transverse double bed made from the lounge seating, providing sleeping spaces three and four. The table is relocated at low level and a series of supports and flaps conspire to create the bed. In spite of the presence of a double infill cushion, I was unable to build a bed that was a convincing double, as flaps protruded and the jigsaw of cushions failed to mate effectively.

In reality, this bed will probably only get occasional use, but even so it could have been much better.

Blackout in the cab consists of a set of fabric panels press-studded in place. These pleated screens fold neatly when not in use, but were less successful in use, being rather ill fitting.

The rear fixed bed will most probably be the reason to buy this motorhome and proved to be cheese to the lounge bed's lacklustre chalk. Long and very comfortable, there are sprung slats to support and even blown-air heating outlets at the head. A Mini Heki rooflight above provides ventilation and a couple of adjustable spotlights make it almost perfect. I say almost, as a window at the head can get in the way of pillows. Readers and in-bed slurpers may have difficulty. My own Rapido suffers the



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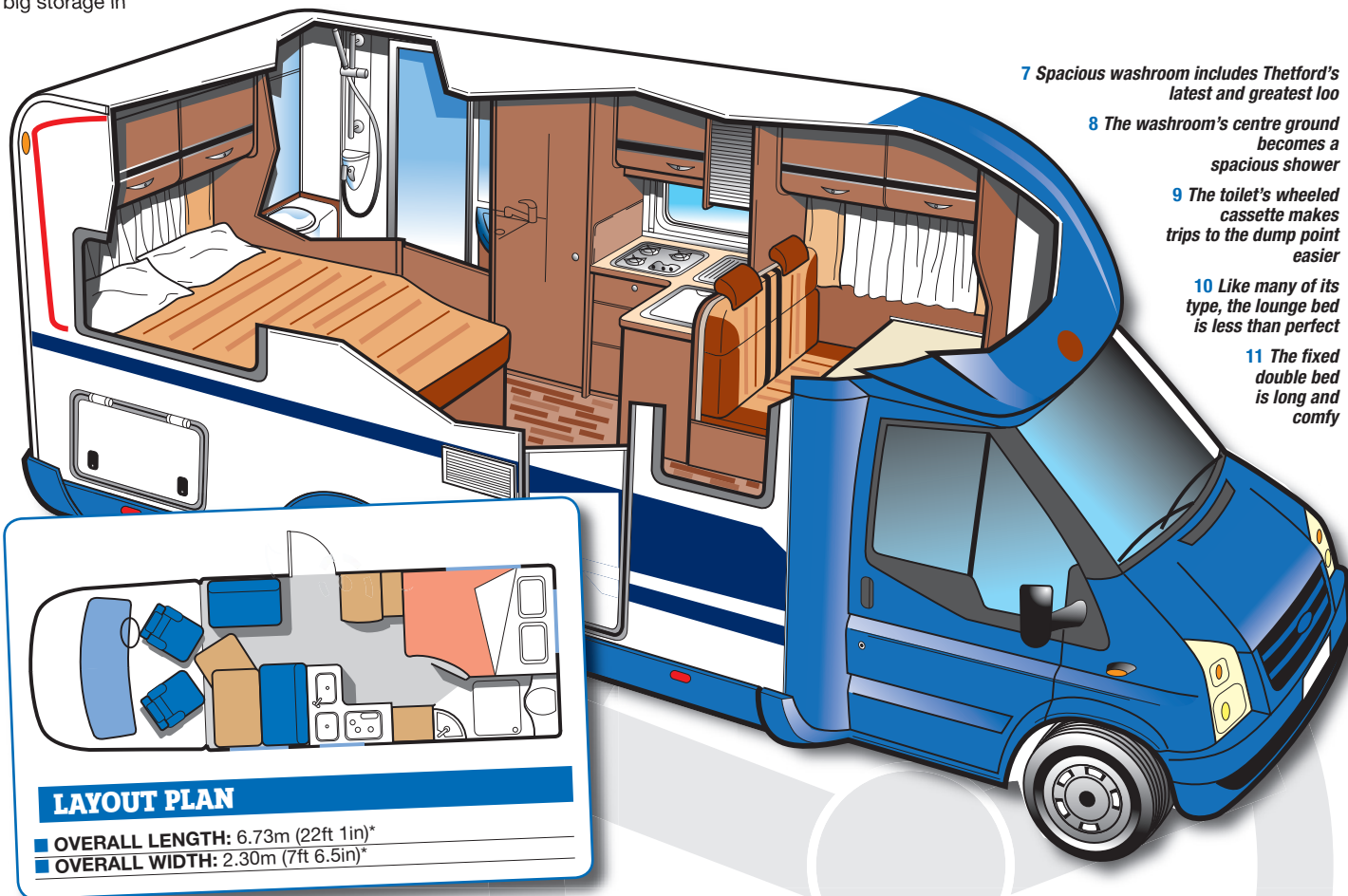
same malaise however, and I've had a (spaced away from the window and Velcro-attached) headboard made to solve the problem. This can be removed to allow vision through the window when needed.

**THE NEXXO HOLD**

As night follows day, so the fixed bed motorhome provides big storage in

the space below the permanent berth. The same is true of the Nexxo and there's a space under its double bed capacious enough for lots of bulky gear. This cavity has, however, a couple of downsides - the Truma heater takes up space here and access from inside is a little tricky as only half the bed rises, albeit on gas struts. There's a good external hatch outside however, and the Nexxo's sensible

payload should make loading up stress free. The icing on the bed's storage cake is a handy little cupboard in its foot. Another space lurks under the lounge sofa for gear like tools and pitching kit. Elsewhere inside, the storage story keeps on getting better. Eight overhead lockers and a good-sized wardrobe are joined by a full-height shelved cupboard next to the fridge and a roomy shelf above the cab.



7 Spacious washroom includes Thetford's latest and greatest loo

8 The washroom's centre ground becomes a spacious shower

9 The toilet's wheeled cassette makes trips to the dump point easier

10 Like many of its type, the lounge bed is less than perfect

11 The fixed double bed is long and comfy

**LAYOUT PLAN**

■ OVERALL LENGTH: 6.73m (22ft 1in)\*  
 ■ OVERALL WIDTH: 2.30m (7ft 6.5in)\*

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### BURSTNER'S BITS

A simple but effective control panel features an old-fashioned analogue meter to tell of levels and voltages and few enough switches to guarantee you'll not need more than five minutes to learn how to use it.

Water tanks are generous, and in fine Continental tradition, the fresh container lurks inboard under the dinette seat. The waste tank is more exposed under the rear, but comes with a big, easy-to-use drain supplied with a hose extension for those situations where

waste drains are difficult to get at. Hot water and heating is provided by the trusty Truma Combi that, sadly, works only on gas. To solve part of this problem I'd consider having refillable gas cylinders fitted, as two 11kg units'll increase capacity (over the alternative 7kg cylinders), be more convenient and gas bought at garages is easier too!

### BARGAIN BURSTNER?

As a medium-sized low-profile motorhome, the Burstner Nexxo t660 displays an unremarkable character as a motorhome - size and design-wise it's like dozens of other Continentally-produced 'vans.

The Ford Transit base vehicle is new territory for Burstner and the company seems to have married this chassis with its motorhome body very successfully indeed. If this 'van suited my needs I'd choose it, in part, for the trusty Tranny, as cheap servicing and readily available, equally cheap spare parts make it a very good bet. The Transit's equipment, build quality and ease of driving also make it a very attractive base.

Externally, the motorhome body at first appears downmarket, but closer inspection reveals that it's very well screwed together using tough materials. The presence of an electrically operated entrance step where some entry-level rivals would have you grovelling with a manual version is the prelude to an interior

that's stylish, well equipped and well made. Indeed it's the lack of 'showroom appeal' frippery that makes this 'van better, and in areas where it matters, good quality kit has



been used. In use, the Nexxo performed reliably and proved to be comfortable and capable - weather during the test was appalling and I remained warm and comfy at all times. Only the gas-only heating disappointed and the flawed lounge bed and too-high oven annoyed, while things like the strong-and-safe rear travel seat, sensible washroom design and upmarket toilet impressed.

Value for money is writ large all over this motorhome and although prices start at under £30,000, I'd recommend buying your Nexxo

as tested here - features such as the larger engine, superb stereo, air-conditioning and smart blue paint job are well worth the money.

At the time of writing this test, 'van lenders Barrons was selling this package for £31,995 on the road. At this price, (or even at the RRP of £32,077) the Burstner Nexxo t660 is a bargain. ■

**12 Plenty of overhead lockers offer lots of space and good quality fittings**

**13 Underbed storage is roomy**

## WE STAYED AT

Grin Low Caravan Club Site,  
Grin Low Road, Ladmanlow, Buxton  
SK17 6JJ (tel: 01298 77735;  
web site: www.caravanclub.co.uk)

## VEHICLE SUPPLIED BY

Barrons Motorhomes, Chapel Lane,  
Coppull, Lancashire PR7 4NE  
(tel: 01257 793377;  
web site: www.motorhomedeals.co.uk)

## LIVE-IN TEST DATA

### TYPE

- Low-profile coachbuilt

### PRICE

- From: £28,810
- As tested: £32,077

### BASICS

- Vehicle: Ford Transit platform cab
- Berths: 4
- Three-point belted seats: 4 (including driver)
- Warranty: 3 years base vehicle, 2 years conversion.

### CONSTRUCTION

Alloy-clad sandwich construction with alloy skirts and moulded overcab/transition/wheelarch panels

### DIMENSIONS (\*manufacturer's figures)

- Length: 6.73m (22ft 1in)\*
- Width: 2.30m (7ft 6.5in)\*
- Height: 2.76m (9ft 0.5in)\*
- Wheelbase: 3.75m (12ft 3.5in)\*
- Rear overhang: 1.96m (6ft 5in)
- Maximum authorised weight: 3500kg\*
- Payload: 520kg (after driver, 90 per cent fuel and water, 2 x 11kg gas cylinders)\*

### INSIDE STORY

Swivel cab seats, half-dinette, side sofa, offside-located caravan entrance, nearside kitchen with fridge and oven opposite, offside longitudinal fixed double bed with washroom alongside

- Insulation: Floor 50mm, walls and roof 38mm
- Interior height: 1.95m (6ft 5in)

### THE VEHICLE

- Engine: 2.2-litre turbo-diesel producing 96kW (130bhp)
- Transmission: Five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive
- Fuel consumption: 25.4mpg overall
- Brakes: Servo-assisted discs all round
- Suspension: Front: independent coil sprung. Rear: leaf springs on rigid axle
- Features: Key-operated central-locking, electric windows and mirrors, cab air-conditioning, ABS, ASR traction control, cruise control, radio/CD player with steering wheel-mounted controls, driver and passenger airbags, height-adjustable driver and passenger seats, passenger



door bins, dash-mounted cup/bottle/ mobile phone holders, flip-over snack table, 12V socket, height-adjustable top seatbelt mounts, trip computer, twin dash-top storage compartments, leather-covered steering wheel.

### LOUNGING & DINING

Swivelling cab seats, forward-facing dinette seat and inward-facing sofa offers lounging for up to six people. Rail-mounted, single-leg dining table includes drop-in extension to provide dining for up to five people

### KITCHEN

L-shaped main unit with single, divided and shelved locker above, two shelved cupboards and two drawers below. Fridge opposite, with oven/grill unit above, unshelved cupboard below

- Sink: Rectangular stainless steel unit with separate rectangular drainer. Inset plastic chopping board fits either
- Cooker: Cramer three-burner hob with hinged glass lid, no ignition. Cramer curved-front oven/grill with top-hinged glass door and electronic ignition
- Fridge: Dometic RM7401L three-way with full-width freezer compartment. Capacity 97 litres.

### WASHROOM

Plastic fixed basin with shelved cupboard below, twin mirror above, shower tray floor with walk-through showering area enclosed by two bi-fold rigid screens and including mixer tap and shower head on riser rail. Thetford electric-flush toilet - cassette feature wheels and pullout handle. Unit above toilet includes two cubbies, toilet roll holder, shelved cupboard and fiddle-railed shelf. Min Heki rooflight provides natural light and ventilation

### BEDS

- Lounge double
- Length: 2.08m (6ft 10in)
- Width: 1.15m (3ft 9in) max
- Fixed double
- Length: 1.96m (6ft 5in)
- Width: 1.33m (4ft 4.5in), narrows at foot to 1.09m (3ft 7in)

### STORAGE

Overhead lockers: Four in lounge, four above fixed bed. Full-width shelf above cab, amidships-located wardrobe with one shelf and front-to-back hanging rail, full-height clothes cupboard with five shelves, cupboard at foot of bed, locker

## BURSTNER NEXXO T660

beneath lounge sofa, under-bed locker with internal and external access

### LIFE SUPPORT

- Fresh water: Inboard. Capacity 120 litres (26.4 gallons)
- Waste water: Underslung. Capacity 90 litres (19.8 gallons)
- Water heater: Truma Combi 6002 boiler, gas-only operation
- Space heater: Truma Combi 6002 with blown-air, gas-only operation
- Leisure battery: 90 amp hr
- Gas: 2 x 11kg cylinders
- Lighting: Adjustable halogen spots: Four in lounge, two above bed. Halogen downlights: Two above inside of caravan door, two in kitchen, two in washroom
- Sockets: 230V: Three (in lounge, kitchen, TV locker), 12V: four (two in cab, in kitchen, TV locker)
- Control panel: Located above caravan door: Analogue meter displays fresh/waste water, vehicle/leisure battery levels, indicates mains hook-up connected, isolating switch for fresh water pump
- Blinds/curtains: All caravan windows served by pull-down blinds, windows in lounge and bed area by decor drapes/nets
- Badged as NCC EN1646 compliant: No

### OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Fitted to test vehicle

- Base: Flex Pack: Cab air-conditioning, CD player, electric windows and mirrors (£995), Crystal Blue paintwork (£749) 130bhp engine (£1150)
- Conversion: Oven/grill (£373)
- Other options
- Base: Cab carpet (£21), wood-effect dash trim (£126), rear steadies (£176), reversing sensors (£318)
- Conversion: Rear on-road heating (£361), Midi Heki rooflight (£571), wind-out awning (£442)

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