

LIVING WITH A...

...2010 Chausson Flash 06

Phil and Dawn Hall took the plunge, buying their first new motorhome – a budget low profile from France

- I LIKED**
- Comfy cab seats
- Large fridge/freezer
- Fixed double bed
- Drop-down double bed
- WE WOULD HAVE LIKED**
- More mains sockets
- A spare wheel
- WE DISLIKED**
- No spare wheel!
- Heater controls location
- Lack of handle to lift/lower the fixed bed



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6



It all started one sunny Sunday afternoon. We were fixing our old 'van for more weekends and required some bits and bobs from our local supplier.

Now, I'm sure we are the same as most motorhome owners, in that whenever we go for accessories we also have a quick look around the 'vans for sale. This is just to get ideas for our 'van of course!

However, this time we stepped inside a Chausson Flash 06 and instantly fell in love with the layout.

While on holiday we'd discussed what we would want if and when we bought a new motorhome. This included a larger fridge, a fixed bed and all in a low profile model, as we didn't like using the bed above the cab of the motorhome that we had.

The Chausson had all of the desired features, plus the additional benefit of a pull-down roof bed. This means we wouldn't have to make any beds up at all – bonus!

TAKING THE PLUNGE

The following week after much thought and debate, we took the plunge. We had secured a good deal on the screen price and on our part-exchange, so this was it – our very first new motorhome. Nervous was not the word, we had never spent this much on anything before, other than our house.

A couple of 'essential' accessories were ordered: a bike rack and an awning. Cab air-con and cruise control were already fitted.

As soon as we picked the 'van up it was loaded, checked over and we set off for our first weekend away.

Most of our camping is done on a weekend, based no more than one hour from home. This means that we can set off after Sophie, our teenage daughter, comes in from school (on Friday afternoon) and be pitched with time to relax before our evening meal.

We also go for single weeks away and for our main summer break, during school holidays.

One of the Chausson's many features we

have come to appreciate is the low-level chassis. This makes access to the living area so much easier on the knees.

RUNNING IN AND AROUND

The base vehicle handles very well, with plenty of power when required, and has light steering with a good turning circle. We have to park up in a very tight spot at home and reverse in, so the turning circle could have been an issue for us.

In fact this 'van is very car-like compared to our old motorhome, which was based on the previous model Fiat Ducato. I don't hang around when on tour, and so I'm getting around 26-29mpg. When on motorways, I do find that the 'van sometimes gets stuck in the ruts in the inside lane – the ones created by the constant pounding of heavy lorries. However, a little re-positioning soon sorts this.

The cab seats are comfortable (and swivel) and the air-conditioning and cruise control are nice extras that help to make our motorhome very car-like when we're travelling.

COOK AND EAT

When it comes to dining in the camper we have found the kitchen to be more than adequate, as long as only one person does the cooking. There's a three-burner gas hob and a grill if you need one, but the real feature for us is the large Thetford fridge/freezer. This is great for keeping all the essentials, fresh and frozen, and means we can pack for a few days without food shopping halfway through.

There is plenty of drawer and storage space and, when it comes to eating, the dining area provides plenty of room for four and could accommodate six at a squeeze. There is an excellent sturdy table, which easily extends. However, doing this restricts access to half the seating area – tricky if you need to move while the table is extended.

The sink is equipped with a mixer tap and a plastic drainer that needs to be placed over the hob to use. This can cause a few problems when cooking, but not when we are clearing up. I try to use the campsite's washing-up area,

to both save the 'van's facilities and to catch up on any gossip with anyone who's unfortunate enough to be in the washing-up area at the same time as me!

Back in the kitchen, we've added some additional chrome wire storage units on the side wall, just to give a little extra shelf space while we are cooking.

WASH 'N' GO

The washroom is a good size and fitted out with a vanity unit basin with adequate storage and a mirror. A Thetford electric-flush cassette toilet and a shower are fitted at the rear. The shower can be separated off from the rest of the room and its contents dry when using the shower.

Although a small towel rail was provided, we have added a few extra hooks so that we can hang our three towels up to dry during the day. The room comes complete with a frosted-out 'white' window and a small ceiling vent.

BEDTIME FIXED

Bedtime is very easy for the three of us and our puppy. We always sleep well in the very comfortable fixed double bed, which has plenty of shelf/storage space around the bedhead area and even a magazine rack.

Sophie sleeps comfortably in the pull-down double bed over the dining area, while puppy, Rosie, sleeps under the table in her basket. Both the beds have adequate lighting.

1 On pitch with their first new motorhome. Left to right, Sophie with Rosie the pup, Dawn and Phil Hall

2 An L-shaped kitchen stands aft of the lounge

3 The Chausson features a desirable fixed bed in the rear

4 Plenty of drawers and cupboards in the kitchen

5 We love the big fridge/freezer

6 Plenty of seating in the lounge – six could be squeezed in at dinner time

On Test 2010 Chausson Flash 06

Although we have never made up the double bed that uses the dining furniture, I can't imagine it's the easiest to make. And with this bed you only get a small amount of headroom up to the bottom of the lowered bed overhead. I would imagine this would make access difficult and make the bed a little claustrophobic.

A RELAXING DAY

Relaxing in the 'van during the day is easy. There's plenty of comfortable seating and we can always lie on the fixed bed if we fancy observing the inside of our eyelids.

I've fixed a TV rack on the wall at the end of the fixed bed that allows the set to fully swivel around so that it can be comfortably viewed from the seating area, and just as easily as when you are tucked up in bed.

SUPPORT AND STORE

We find the heating and ventilation to be good. Large windows and a Heki sunroof let lots of natural light flood in and, as all of these can be opened, we also get a good breeze inside.

The dual-fuel Truma Combi heating (gas/mains) is fantastic, as it means when we're hooked up we can save gas. The system keeps the interior very toasty. However, the controls are located in a thoughtless position: low down on the side of the bed and in the walkway to the washroom. This means we can easily catch them with our legs when we're walking past and, during the night, if the duvet falls down off the bed, it rubs against them.

I have twice woken up in a hot sweat because the heating had been turned up by one of these methods, so I've fixed a stiff plastic protective cover over the controls, which also protects them from accidental damage.

Lighting is adequate with LEDs providing most of the main illumination. Spots at the bedhead are good for bedtime reading. I will, however, fit an outside awning light, as we miss this feature from our last 'van.

The massive storage space under the fixed double bed can be accessed by lifting up the bed frame or, from outside, via a locker door at the rear. Although access either way is good, I've fitted a strap-style handle on the

bed frame to make inside access safer, as we found we often trapped our fingers when letting the frame down.

Another feature we have added is a curtain at the end of the fixed bed, which gives us more privacy at night. The curtain also makes the rear area into a great changing room – ideal when you want to get changed or ready in the morning, as it sections off the washroom, wardrobe and bed from the rest of the interior.

Apart from in the kitchen, all windows in the living area have nets and curtains, as well as pull-down blinds, which have the option of a flyscreen as well. The cab has curtains, but as we always use our external silver screens, we've never used these.

Other storage space is good, with a decent-sized wardrobe, two large base cupboards in the kitchen, a large cupboard over the cab and no fewer than 11 overhead lockers around the interior. There's also a large shoe/wet-wear space under a double lounge seat (the fresh water tank is located under the other seat) and good cupboard space in the washroom.

Two mains and one 12V socket are fitted – the latter I use to power the TV. Ideally we would like some extra 230V outlets dotted around so, no doubt, this will be another job for later in the year.

BETTER THAN BUDGET

Although our Chausson Flash is classed as a budget motorhome, we feel that it has all the right features to make it seem better than that. The fixtures and fittings used are of good quality, especially considering the price.

So far, we are very pleased that we took that plunge needed to get our first new 'van and we have every intention of enjoying it for years to come. ■

7 The washroom is sensibly designed and features a separate shower

8 We added a privacy curtain, which also creates a useful changing area

9 Sophie sleeps comfortably in the drop-down double bed

FACTS AND FIGURES

- **Conversion:** 2010 Chausson Flash 06
- **Base vehicle:** Fiat Ducato camper chassis cab
- **Power plant:** 2.3-litre turbo-diesel producing 130bhp, six-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive
- **Gross vehicle weight:** 3,500kg
- **Payload:** 585kg
- **Layout:** Swivelling cab seats ahead of half-dinette with side seat, drop-down double bed above. Nearside kitchen and washroom, offside fixed double bed. Caravan door on UK offside
- **Exterior measurements:** Length 6.69m (21ft 11.5in), width 2.30m (7ft 6.5in), height 2.89m (9ft 6in)
- **Berths:** 6 (4 belted seats)
- **Bed sizes:** Lounge double: 2.12m x 1.04m (6ft 11.5in x 3ft 5in), drop-down double: 1.97m x 1.16m (6ft 5.5in x 3ft 9.5in), fixed rear double: 1.96m x 1.36m (6ft 5in x 4ft 5.5in)
- **Length of ownership:** 10 months
- **Supplied by:** Discover Leisure
- **Mileage covered:** 1,965
- **Fuel economy:** 26 – 29mpg
- **Accessories added:** Fiamma three-bike rack, Fiamma awning, GardX Armourgard paintwork and upholstery protection, cruise control, radio/CD player, cab air-conditioning
- **Base vehicle service:** £225 (Discover Leisure, Darlington)
- **MOT:** N/A
- **Recalls:** N/A
- **Habitation service:** £249 (Discover Leisure, Darlington)
- **Insurance:** £307 (with two named drivers, 7,000 restricted mileage, UK roadside breakdown assistance)
- **Price new today:** £40,750
- **Cost of similar aged van today:** £34,995 (estimated)
- **What went wrong:** N/A
- **Further reading:** Visit www.outandaboutlive.co.uk to see a review of the Flash 08. This 'van has the same layout, but without the drop-down roof bed
- **Contact:** Chausson, BP 109, 07302 Tournon, Cedex, France
Web: www.chausson.tm.fr



WANTED

TELL US ABOUT OWNING YOUR MOTORHOME

We want a report on **your** motorhome. Let your fellow readers know the good, the bad and the statistics. You could earn yourself £250 if your report is chosen for publication. Once you have used your 'van for at least six months, send us up to about 2,000 words (including an 'I like', 'I would have liked', 'I dislike' panel) and details for our facts and figures box, plus a dozen or so good quality photographs - including one of yourself with the 'van (sharp prints, slides or best quality digital pictures on CD are all acceptable), and leave the rest to us! Send your report to Rachel Stothert, MMM, Warners Group Publications, West Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH