

tec-nical marvel

An innovative low-profile from Geist's impressive new RoTEC Lift range

AFTER years in the second division of European motorhome manufacturing, TEC are suddenly vying for a place in the Champions League with an exciting new range of innovative and appealing motorhomes at affordable prices.

Firstly, the Geist RoTEC 697G took *Which Motorhome's* Innovation Award for its unique pop-up roof option, after making its UK debut at the NEC show last year. Secondly, the new UK importers, who source the 'vans from the TEC factory near Münster and rebadge them as Geists for the UK market, have perhaps been more daring in selecting which models they bring to the UK. And thirdly, like a number of other European manufacturers, TEC have incorporated the centrally-mounted drop-down double bed and - in the all-new RoTEC Lift 652 - it seems to work exceptionally well.

This particular RoTEC Lift (one of four models) combines the classic rear garage transverse bed and L-shaped lounge/diner continental layout with a generous roof-mounted drop-down bed. By day, it lives in that distinctive hump in the roof, and is barely noticeable as there's still just over 6ft of headroom in the lounge. That headroom is a big plus over some rivals.

Mounted on a push-button operated manual mechanism, the bed drops down to around 4ft 6in off the ground, so while it requires a ladder to access it, there's still

room to access the lounge area and cab from inside. A cutaway section at the foot (offside) end, means the entry door can also be used with the bed in the 'down' position and the roomy kitchen and offside washroom remain unhindered by the bed.

And what all this means in practical terms is you can have a viable four-berth 'van on the footprint of a two-berth - with genuine family-friendly flexibility. If mum and dad want to sit up in the lounge in the evenings, as long as they are happy in the drop-down bed, the children can sleep in the rear double.

Even the dog can come along and live in the large rear garage - which is now available with a dog box which slots in on caster wheels. That garage really is a huge space - with ample room for a couple of full-size bikes plus at least one child's bike. It's not accessible from the interior, but it does have internal illumination, and a second door on the nearside is available as an option.

The RoTEC range is built on Fiat's wide-track Camper chassis, twinned to the 2.3-litre Multijet 130bhp engine with six-speed 'box - and although the 160 Multijet Power is available as an option, the 130 should be fine for most customers.

Stepping inside, there's just a simple step recessed into the chassis floor and the handle inside the 'van is a fair stretch to reach to haul yourself inside, but once you do, the interior immediately impresses. What's

FACT FILE

PRICE FROM £53,995

PRICE AS TESTED £56,750

OPTION PACKS

1, 2 & 3, when ordered together, cost £2755 and include: cab sunroof, cruise control, cab climate control, electric windows and mirrors, body-coloured bumpers, awning light, entrance door with window, door running boards, 'comfort' seat covers in cab, slatted bed bases with adjustable head section, cold foam mattress on fixed bed, upgraded 95Ah leisure battery, door flyscreen and passenger airbag

BERTHS 4

TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER) 4

DIMENSIONS 6.97m L, 2.32m W, 2.87m H

INTERIOR HEIGHT 1.80m

MAXIMUM WEIGHT 3500kg

PAYLOAD 578kg

BEDS Rear double 2.04m x 1.43m, drop-down double 1.96m x 1.11m

FRESH WATER 102 litres (inboard)

WASTE WATER 95 litres

LEISURE BATTERY 75Ah (95Ah as tested)

MAINS SOCKETS 2

BASE VEHICLE

FIAT DUCATO X2/50 WITH WIDE-TRACK CAMPER CHASSIS

ENGINE 2.3 Multijet 130bhp

COOKING/HEATING

COOKING Spinflo 3-burner hob and Spinflo combi oven/grill

FRIDGE Dometic 106-litre three-way

GAS 2 x 6kg

HEATING Truma Combi 6E gas/mains blown-air

BOILER Truma Combi 6E gas/mains

RIVALS

ADRIA MATRIX M 680 SP

BÜPSTNER IXEO IT 710 G

RAPIDO 773FF

most noticeable, is how light the interior is in what can be a rather gloomy layout. This is thanks in part to the three mini rooflights in the ceiling (including one above the drop-down bed) plus that large cab sunroof - which is available as part of Option Pack 3.

The second revelation is the sheer size of the kitchen - which can be almost an after-thought in this layout. The worktop seemingly stretches away for yards - facilitated by clever positioning of a circular sink - and full use of it can be made with the drop-down bed lowered. A useful 106-litre Dometic fridge, with removable freezer section, combi oven/grill and compact three-burner hob are all standard.

The washroom is pretty compact, but nicely finished, with a sliding basin and integrated shower which share the same mixer tap. There's a posh Dometic loo with cassette level indicators and a ceramic bowl, while a partition keeps the water from the shower in the tray.

In the fully-specced demonstrator we tested, the big transverse bed at the rear had twin mattresses with slatted bases underneath and adjustable head sections which prop up on ratchet mechanisms for reading in bed. On top of the colossal garage, storage is good throughout, with plenty of overhead lockers - although the hanging wardrobe near the rear bed is pretty tiny. Low energy LED lighting is comprehensive and runs exclusively on the 12V circuit, while the elegant LED strips above the heads of both beds look fantastic.

The cab is mercifully free from ill-conceived plastic wood inlays and veneers, and if you go for the equipment packs, comes with simple-to-operate climate control, dual airbags, cruise control and electric windows and mirrors. In base spec however, the RoTEC has only the bare minimum of kit. Separately the packs cost £2560, £1811 and £1086 respectively, but order them together and they add just a much more reasonable £2755 to the asking price.

WHICH motorhome says ★★★★★

A well-finished and superbly executed low-profile with drop-down bed, plus realistic space for a family of four.



Words & Pictures | Mark Sutcliffe



TECs are rebadged as Geist for the UK market

