

# Triple bunks v traditional six-berth



**OUR CRITERIA:** Sleeping accommodation for six doesn't automatically mean a stack of three bunks. We look at what they offer - and we explore an alternative... Our criteria this time centres around appeal to couples and smaller families as well as those who need to sleep six.

Triple bunks are still the new kids on the block. They're all the rage - that's why we've got two here. But we've brought along a third, more established six-berth layout to remind us that there was life before three in a bed

**SPRITE MAJOR 6**  
**£12,565**

**LUNAR QUASAR**  
**546 £13,595**

**ADRIA ADORA**  
**612 DT £13,999**

TEST AND PHOTOGRAPHY PHIL STEPHENS

**TRIPLE** bunk models have become so popular I'm almost expecting my parents (in their later years of touring) to announce their imminent purchase of a shiny new one. And for no other reason than trying to keep up with the current trend. Stephens Senior doesn't like to be left out. With the unlikelihood of the stork having visited them recently, exactly what he intends to put in those stack of bunks is anyone's guess,

although the words wine and Calais seem favourite for the floor-level bunk.

But they're in luck. Being their only son, I see it as my duty to offer guidance to their minds. I'll point out that, if they want a six-berth, there are still some fine, long-established layouts providing massive living space, and without those bunks permanently sitting there taking up space.

So which model will they choose? Will it

be the completely revamped Sprite Major 6 with Diamond Pack extra spec at £12,565. Maybe the Lunar Quasar 546 at £14,645. Or perhaps, if they listen to me, it will be the Adria Adora 612 DT (£13,999) - still a six-berth, but somewhat old-school in layout.

Point is, six-berth layouts don't just appeal to families who need beds for six. Those three bunks make great storage places for couples... Take your pick.



Is a door window missed? Possibly



## SPRITE MAJOR 6

PRICE £12,565

TOWMATCH C

### LAYOUT 8/10

Starting in the rear section you'll find those bunks stacked neatly in the offside corner and a three- or four-person dining area opposite. The Sprite's 2.23m body width, while not quite matching the full 2.30m width versions of this layout, doesn't appear to suffer. A bulkhead by the entrance door stretches a quarter way across the interior and, to the eye, separates this rear living space from the rest of the interior.

Centrally, you'll find a compact kitchen with the unitary washroom and wardrobe opposite. At the front there's a very bright full-length lounge with a superb panoramic window. And that brings up another subject: the *Which Caravan* team is still dismayed that panoramic windows only appear in caravans chalked with a so-called entry-level stigma. Those huge windows are superb - so why not put them in more expensive caravans, too?

### STYLING 10/10

I thought Tanganica was some sort of Lenny Henry catch phrase. However it appears that in this Sprite it's the name of the new wood grain furniture. But in here it's far from comedy. This caravan's status is entry-level. Yet the Sprite now has styling far above its station.

Marketing speak refers to the Sprite's new furniture as having "subtle metallic accents". What this means is the nickel decorative beading and top/bottom fascia panels that endow this new furniture with a style, quality and attraction that this price doesn't deserve. Look at the brushed chrome frameless fridge, the mock-granite sink and flush upper locker light fitting. This is one caravan that truly knows its market.

### TOWING 8/10

Viewed alongside its competitors (Bailey Ranger and Xplore from Elddis) the Sprite is competitive with its starting weight of 1177kg and top weight of 1433kg.

If you're returning to touring after many years you may well be shocked to learn these figures are even uttered in the same breath as "lightweight" and nowhere near Sprite's weights of yesteryear. Manufacturers are just feeding public demand in terms of equipment even on entry-level tourers. Sales prove Sprite's weight versus kit is what the huge majority of us want.

### KITCHEN 6/10

Ok, so the kitchen's a contemporary joy and a wonder to look at for such little money. But in truth, for six, it's just not up to the job.

Unless you use tables front or back, the kitchen worktop amounts to just 37cm from the sink's widest point to the surface edge. With the drainer in place, you're left with just 6cm. Top storage for six lots of crockery and food is good. But lower storage is so woeful that there's a temptation to stow stuff that should be down in cupboards up in the lofty lockers. It's a real shame, as the fridge is extremely generous for the sector.

### WASHROOM 9/10

We love the simplicity of the bench loo and the angle of the sink that's mounted so that the maximum amount of shower space is achieved. This isn't just a token shower with the assumption that the resident half dozen will head for the shower block. It really is a realistic option so long as you're not sixth in the queue because you'll have to wait for the water to heat up again!

### SLEEPING 9/10

Almost faultless here. The built-in ladder betters the loose example on the Lunar, which it needs for its unique storage system.

Bed four in the rear builds easily and the two single/double beds up front have average dimensions for the sector.

### STORAGE 9/10

Here, Sprite shows Lunar the error of its ways. Sprite bangs in an extra set of upper lockers along the rear panel where Lunar puts a small shelf.

In this rear section there are four big lockers, though none has split-level shelving. Under-seat space is vast and, as it's free of bedding because that stays on the bunks, it's perfect for anything else. There are another six lockers to the front. It would be a 10 here but for the kitchen's lack of storage ability.

### BUILD 9/10

With my head buried deep within the dark recesses of the Sprite's gas locker, I wonder if I'll find a certain kind of build quality reserved for, well, the cheapest caravan they build. But that isn't the case.

Yep, big, more expensive brothers have more kit but the exterior build is all but identical. So you'll find the same high-build-quality bulkheads, panel bracing and floor in this gas locker as anything costing eight grand more rolling off the Swift production line.

### EQUIPMENT 8/10

Viewed against the more expensive Lunar here, it's not just in the area of electrical goodies that the Lunar is better equipped. In the triple bunk/dinette area the Sprite is noticeably dimmer because its rear and nearside window are both substantially smaller than those in the Lunar. The Sprite is basic in terms of equipment. But look under the skin and you'll find a well-specced tourer in terms of build integrity.

### VALUE FOR MONEY 9/10

Firstly, don't buy without that Diamond Pack. It's not just a marketing gimmick. It really is great value for your money. For £390 you get an AL-KO AKS stabiliser, a spare wheel and carrier, a door flyscreen, a radio/CD player and, incidentally, a pair of scatter cushions.

But the real deal here is that Sprites are now so attractive inside and out, that three, four, maybe even five years down the line, the Sprite will still look fresh to buyers where some competition will still mimic '90s interiors.



Three bunks - this layout's great asset



New Sprite interior vastly improves on its predecessor



Great for kids. And great for kids' dad and mum, too!



Who'd want to stick an extra pair of curtains in that lovely large window?



Great space, access only average



That's it for worktop, I'm afraid



Sprite and Adria share the same loo spec



Does the job. No thrills but no complaints

## LUNAR QUASAR 546

PRICE £13,595

TOWMATCH C



The separate shower gives the Quasar the edge



There is a risk these doors could get broken; they would be better if they dropped flat like the Sprite's



Three advantages. AL-KO Secure wheel lock receivers, spare wheel and err... mud flaps



Lunar gives you a more cosy atmosphere



Where's that bunk gone? Great place for storage - or even for the dog's bed!



That's a lot of timber for a caravan's middle.

### LAYOUT 10/10

Essentially the same layout, the Lunar differs from the Sprite in many key ways.

That rear triple bunk and dining area is part of the main caravan interior and not partially screened by a permanent bulkhead. In my opinion it's better for it, making the interior feel larger and brighter. If privacy is what kids (or parents) crave, partition it off with the concertina blind. There are much larger windows back here, as well as a second large rooflight. The result is that this area is not as segregated as the Sprite.

The other key difference is the Lunar's separate shower. It's made possible because the body length is greater than the Sprite's.

### STYLING 8/10

Have you seen brochures where the product pictured doesn't quite sparkle as much in real life? Beautifully-dressed caravan interiors that, when seen on dealers' forecourts without the pretty flowers and tableware, look distinctly lacking in style... Well, the Quasar is the opposite. Not that there's anything wrong with its promotional material, it's just that Quasars actually do look better in the metal and wood than on paper. You need to visit one to enjoy cabinet tone and the bright, open and airy atmosphere created by its styling theme.

The chrome-stripe-trimmed lockers match neatly with cabinet handles and splashes of chrome around the rest of the interior build keep things modern.

### TOWING 8/10

The Lunar's longer than the Sprite, better equipped, yet manages to come in only slightly heavier (MRO). There are two big reasons. Firstly, the Lunar is lower (1.90m headroom) and secondly, narrower at 2.16m - great for those who prefer not to tow full 2.30m wide caravans. There is a stabiliser, as you'd expect, but no shock absorbers.

### KITCHEN 6/10

I bashed the Sprite's kitchen - so what about the Lunar? It's better in areas but still not brilliant. There's a combination sink/drain unit which has an additional half-metre of work top to the left. Much improvement, then. But lower storage is also poor for six. Your extra money gets you a microwave but leaves only one slim upper locker.

It's a smart kitchen but lacks the Sprite style. Like the Sprite then, not a high performing kitchen for six people.

### WASHROOM 8/10

Never doubt the benefit of separate showers in any caravan layout, not least family six-berths. As adults we love them for their space, but as a parent of a large brood the time saved rinsing down tired kids in a proper shower beats unitary examples any time.

And this loo is the top model, larger-seated Thetford 250 with large waste cassette, which is an obvious advantage for six people.

### SLEEPING 9/10

With less headroom than the Sprite, the Lunar has a few centimetres less to distribute between all three bunks. Each has its own dedicated light with added practicality of two light levels, the lower one useful for reading without disturbing siblings. The fourth single bed builds easily in the same manner as the Sprite, but we felt with less sturdiness to the table base. Front singles are marginally longer thanks to those slightly longer body dimensions, though more pronounced cushion knee rolls constantly reminded you of their presence.

In summary, another near-perfect sleeping arrangement.

### STORAGE 7/10

The Lunar really does miss those upper rear panel lockers in the Sprite by comparison. Three shallow examples along the upper nearside simply isn't enough for a six-berth. And they don't have split-level shelves.

It's a real shame, particularly as this area is also where a clever bit of thinking actually does work. The transformation from bottom bunk to full-on cupboard with access from inside and outside takes place with a swift yank on the bottom base of the bunk. Two gas struts bring the base upwards, forming a solid screen to the entire lower area with drop-down hatch to access it. Not new, but still brilliant.

### BUILD 7/10

New for this year is the Quasar's exterior door with heavy-duty lock and handle. It's a better looking way to enter the caravan, with a perceived visual increase in quality.

I struggled with the cheap length of soft wood baton in the gas locker to which the gas cylinder cradle is screwed; when compared directly with the others here this looked rather DIY. Happily overall build holds no concerns.

### EQUIPMENT 9/10

Joining that new door on the spec sheet is an extra TV point instantly doubling the options for viewing. In some caravans you wonder why - but here that option is needed.

There's a new external shower point for hosing down dogs, kids and kit before you pack up. The addition of the "Super Pitch" water connection point is brilliant and something extremely rare at this level. Three rooflights seal the deal. Well done, Lunar.

### VALUE FOR MONEY 8/10

This is one very able tourer (kitchen aside). Kit level is high and the interior's practicality will hopefully keep its used value up.

New caravan buyers weaned on Audis and BMWs and even more mainstream cars where perceived quality is so important nowadays, are sensitive to things like the cheap piece of timber on show as soon as you open the gas locker. Such simple things some may laugh away as insignificant but, in reality, can actually lose sales.



Better prep space but short on performance



Nearly as bright as the astonishing Adria in here



This is an almost perfect living space



Lunar boasts the big windows that the Sprite lacks in the rear sector



Large wheeled toilet cassette. Anything less on a six berth is inconvenient



All white and a touch boring? Practical, though, and shower space is good



A tad narrow but we can't argue with the access



We'd prefer if the whole bed lifted



Sturdy table leg doubles as a bed support.



Two dining areas and a stunningly-styled and practical divider



U-shaped lounging area with hinged coffee table at the centre front



Very, very long and only one axle. That's a lot of rear overhang

## ADRIA ADORA 612 DT

PRICE £13,999

TOWMATCH E

### LAYOUT 9/10

And now for something completely different. Only it isn't. This Adora still gives you six berths and fixed beds, but gives you a permanent rear double, rather than bunks. Again mirroring the others, there's a dinette, too - but that's now set centrally rather than rearwards. You can still have bunks if you wish but the top one builds up out of that wide central dinette. But the thing that makes this Adria so different is that it's the length of most twin-axle models (meaning huge internal dimensions) yet sits on just one pair of wheels.

Not only is it wide, at the maximum allowable width of 2.30m, there's no bulky washroom in the caravan's midriff.

### STYLING 9/10

Flat-fronted upper lockers hug the ceiling with lower edges thickly embellished with wide chrome strips. To finish, the lower valance, all curved and sexy, dips away to the underside in a rich creamy tone.

The foundation of the Adria's style isn't fabric or upholstery but furniture. And, because of its dimensions, manages to pack in loads here. The division between lounge and dinette is the responsibility of a sleek chrome pole laden with shelving. It works perfectly, mixing style with practicality.

Soft furnishings? For some reason blues suit continental caravans and here's no different.

### TOWING 5/10

Don't get hung up with the Adria's hefty 1700kg fully-loaded weight. That's just a massive 320kg payload Adria has allowed but most caravaners will never load to that amount. Indeed, load it with Lunar's 210kg payload and you'll see a top weight of 1590kg, a more realistic figure.

But, inescapably, this long single-axle won't behave as stably as something of its bulk sat on an extra set of wheels.

That's not to say it's dangerous, of course. I'm sure Adria has done its sums. But towing experience teaches us to advise towing this one with a hefty vehicle.

### KITCHEN 10/10

This Adria's kitchen features one of the most ingenious pieces of caravan equipment available. A wide but low drawer unit steps out into the gangway forming the L-shape of the kitchen. Opening its beautifully-curved door reveals three deep, wide, pull-out drawers. On that door's inside face you'll discover two further small shelves and a cupboard. On top is something resembling a track. Press the button, pull the handle - and another tall, wide unit slides out across the gangway's upper half. Inside, yet more storage, with a spice-sized shelving unit that swivels, with the television mounting point on the rear.

There are three choices of work top (one pull-out), or four if you include the central table. Some will bemoan the lack of microwave in a caravan of this price.

### WASHROOM 9/10

This comes in two parts. Firstly the combination of shower and bench loo with pod-style unit sweeping up the back and over the roof where it houses a pair of lights. It's practical, with decent shower space.

Adria has done an excellent job in the basin/vanity area by the bed. There are three cupboards, all with shelves; two have curved, semi-transparent doors. So, practicality and looks here. An easy score of nine here.

### SLEEPING 9/10

There's a choice of two doubles, one permanent. It's wide, bright and modern.

The extra set of beds arrive courtesy of the Pullman-style bunk attached to the central dining area wall. I hate making these things in tight spaces. Only this isn't a tight space, it's huge. Result? It's no more hassle than setting up a double bed.

### STORAGE 9/10

The kitchen and the wash/vanity area go overboard in their provision of storage.

Judged as a six-berth, there are loads of top lockers - and you'll lose the big stuff under the seating. More stuff will go under the fixed bed but only half of that raises to allow access, although an exterior hatch helps.

### BUILD 8/10

Adrias are - and have been for many years - superbly well-built, particularly in the area of furniture and cabinetry design and are very thoughtfully engineered. If you speak to owners, a strong common story of satisfaction is told every time.

### EQUIPMENT 8/10

Disappointments first. Two mains sockets is a stretch in a six-berth, and no microwave.

A barbeque point, wet locker, exterior mains and spare wheel all make the specification list, while a CD/Radio unfortunately doesn't.

Look a little deeper, though and you'll see that lighting and furniture solutions, such as that huge pull-out kitchen unit, exceed what you'd expect elsewhere. And, yes, that is classed as equipment.

### VALUE FOR MONEY 8/10

Difficult, this. A subject and score that, in a single numeral, must reflect build, kit, residuals and withstand scrutiny against comparable models.

Adria has suffered like many others with currency fluctuations making its products less financially attractive than before. But that doesn't mean to say they're unattractive right now - and they're certainly not expensive.

Judge it solely on kit and you'll be disappointed. On build, you'll be pleased. As an overall capable and attractive tourer for the money, you should be elated with this one. And, of course, with the capability of six berths, there's a huge market out there to which this model appeals.

## ► SCORES

	<b>Adria Adora 612 DT</b> £13,999	<b>SPRITE Major 6</b> £12,565	<b>Lunar Quasar 546</b> £14,465
Layout	9	8	10
Styling	9	10	8
Towing	5	8	8
Kitchen	10	6	6
Washroom	9	9	8
Sleeping	9	9	9
Storage	9	9	7
Build	8	9	7
Equipment	8	8	9
Value for money	8	9	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>80</b>

**ADRIA ADORA 612 DT** 84/100

**SPRITE MAJOR 6** 85/100

**LUNAR QUASAR 546** 80/100

## ► SPECIFICATION

### ► ADRIA ADORA 612 DT

**Price** £13,999

**Axles:** 1

**Berths:** 6

**MRO:** 1380kg

**MTPLM:** 1700kg

**Internal length:** 6.10m

**Overall length:** 7.98m

**Overall width:** 2.29m

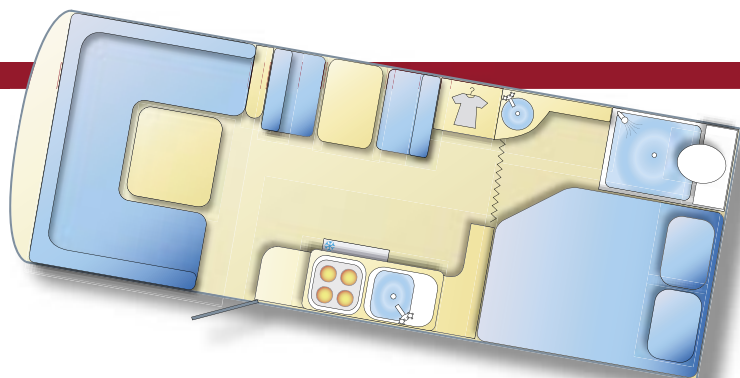
**Headroom:** 1.95m

**Manufacturers**

Adria Mobil,  
Slovenia

**Importer**

Adria Concessionaires  
Tel: 0870 7740007



**FOR & AGAINST** **PROS** ► Top, top kitchen ► Top, top styling ► Huge living space **CONS** ► Length for a single axle ► Many buyers will want a microwave

### ► SPRITE MAJOR 6

**Price:** £12,565

(with Diamond Pack)

**Axles:** 1

**Berths:** 6

**MRO:** 1077kg

**MTPLM:** 1443kg

**Internal length:** 5.50m

**Overall length:** 7.20m

**Overall width:** 2.23m

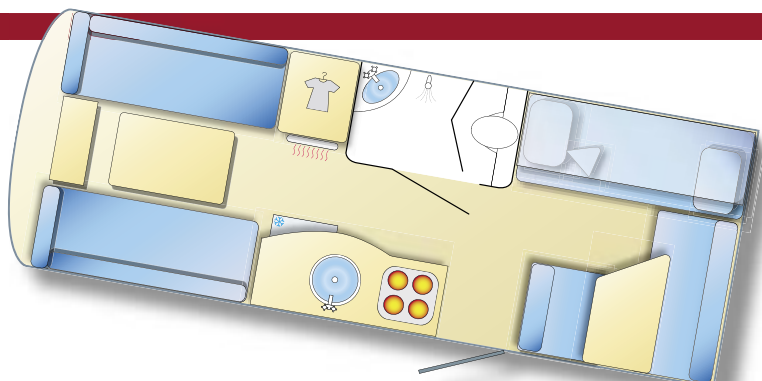
**Internal height:** 1.95m

**Manufacturer**

The Swift Group

Tel 01482 847332

Web www.swiftgroup.co.uk



**FOR & AGAINST** **PROS** ► Cheap, simple yet advanced tourer ► Takes entry level touring to new heights **CONS** ► Small kitchen

### ► LUNAR QUASAR 546

**Price** £13,595

**Axles:** 1

**Berths:** 6

**MRO:** 1230kg

**MTPLM:** 1440kg

**Internal length:** 5.79m

**Overall length:** 7.34m

**Overall width:** 2.16m

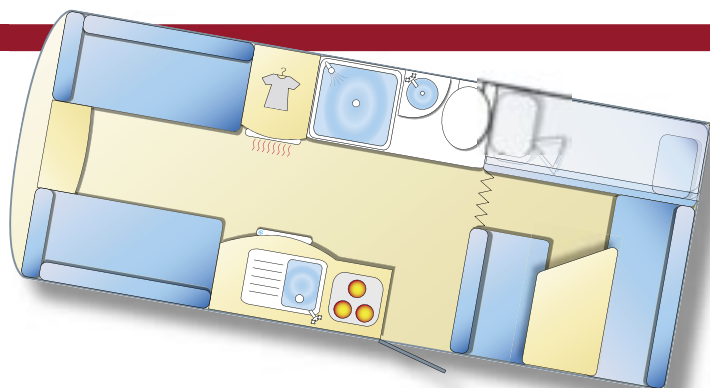
**Internal height:** 1.90m

**Manufacturer**

Lunar Caravans

Tel 01772 337628

Web www.lunarcaravans.



**FOR & AGAINST** **PROS** ► High level of equipment ► Clever storage system in bunk **CONS** ► Poor kitchen storage ► Upper locker storage for six

## ► VERDICT

Here the more expensive Lunar achieves less practically than the cheaper Sprite. In a test of couples' or luxury tourers, price isn't such an issue. But here in six-berth land it is, which is why the Lunar's storage and kitchen issues are so problematic. There are perks such as rear bunk storage, weights and separate shower, not to mention the better more open layout. But elsewhere this is not the best triple-bunk layout for six.

The Sprite's tiny kitchen has to be considered. Fortunately it goes on to provide that much-needed storage while offering brilliant styling inside. Couple that with a decent take on the triple bunk

layout, and the Sprite makes a very compelling case for itself.

Want the berths but can't be doing with that triple-bunk stuff? Maybe your brood is a little older and sneer at the mere mention of bunks. Adora proves there was life before - and now after - the triple-bunk craze. Perfect for you (and my parents) is the Adora. Brilliant in most aspects and interior space is something of which triple-bunk layouts can only dream.

You still get a separate dining area - but in the middle, where use is doubled and style is here in spades. Although weights are fine, dynamics dictate you'll need a big towcar to tame this longest of long single-axle caravans. ■

YOU'LL FIND MORE INFORMATION IN OUR COMPREHENSIVE CARAVAN GUIDE ON PAGE 60