

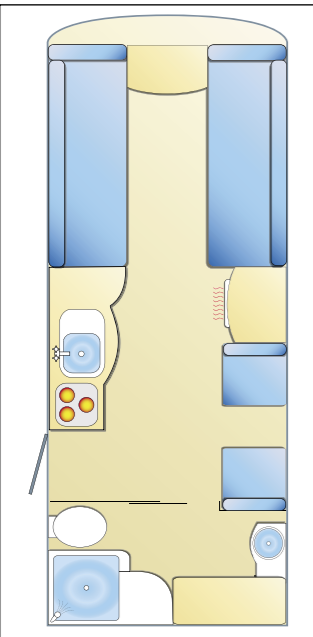
Join the club

If you're looking for exciting, innovations you won't find them here, says **Doug King**, in this popular marque that's built to last

SPECIFICATION

Price: £15,795 including VAT
 Berths: 4
 MRO: 1226kg (24.08 cwt)
 Total user payload: 214kg (4.20cwt)
 MTPLM: 1440kg (28.28cwt)
 Internal length: 5.78m (19ft 0in)
 Overall length: 7.38m (24ft 3in)
 Overall width: 2.28m (7ft 6in)
 Overall height: 2.60m (8ft 6in)
 Headroom: 1.96m (6ft 5in)
 Warranty: Three years

TOWMATCH C



1. More worktop than most 2. Two of the Lunar's five drawers 3. Single beds at 5ft 10in 4. Side dinette makes a bed and bunk

THE Lunar Clubman range seems to have been around since Adam was a boy. It has proved to be extremely popular with dedicated caravanners – not the least ralliers – who want a caravan which can take everything that rutted roads, tracks, and muddy fields can throw at it.

Although Lunar has been in the mainstream of caravan manufacturers for as long as I can remember, it isn't in the same league as the big three – Swift, Bailey, and Explorer – when it

comes to the number of units it produces each year. Nonetheless, it has built up its own band of followers – especially when it comes to the Clubman range.

So I was more than pleased to have the opportunity to give the 2008 four-berth Clubman ES a thorough inspection. It's one of three Clubmans in this year's range, the other two being the two-berth Clubman 475 CK and the four-berth fixed bed Clubman EB.

The ES has a fairly

conventional layout, with two bench seats in the front lounge, a centre kitchen, two seat dinette opposite on the offside and a rear end washroom. The bench seats are designated as either two singles or a double bed at night, whilst the two seat dinette with its wall mounted folding bunk becomes two single beds.

However, I would qualify the number of beds because at 1.80m (5ft 10in) the bench seats aren't long enough, in my opinion, to be considered single beds, whilst the



Two seat dinette makes into a single bed at night

fourth bed in the dinette is a bunk hinged on the wall that is really only suitable for a small child. In my opinion, this is really a three-berth, occasional four. Having said that, I think it'll have considerable appeal to the couple who want a caravan which they can handle easily, but which also gives extra space.

For 2008 there's the addition of important pieces of equipment that I'm sure will prove popular with buyers. First, there is AL-KO's new ATC Trailer Control System which should help reduce the risk of a snake. Secondly, the caravan also has the AL-KO Secure Lock fitted to one of the wheels which should deter even the most determined thief.

Internally, new equipment includes the Thetford C250 complete with an electric flush, an 800W 20-litre digital microwave, LED lighting in the cocktail cabinet and tinted windows to help keep out prying eyes.

Externally, there's not a great deal of change from previous years. There's the virtually obligatory new graphics – yawn, yawn – gas struts to hold the gas locker lid open, new LED rear

lights, and a one piece GRP full height rear panel. Apart from that most of the other items are basically no different to those found on similar size caravans from other manufacturers.

The door into the ES is just to the rear of the axle line and, on entering, the daytime living area is to your left. Facing the door is the offside two seat dinette, whilst the kitchen is centrally positioned to the left of the door, followed by the front end lounge. This comprises the two bench seats with a chest of drawers and a cupboard at ground level below them. And again, as in similar caravans, the top of the chest is a slide and fold occasional table.

Above the three front windows are three roof lockers, one of which has a radio/DVD player mounted in it. The speakers are under the units in the front corners and as a result they don't give as good a stereo effect as you get when the speakers are mounted vertically, facing forwards.

Between the front offside seat and the dinette is a dresser on which the Ultraheat space heater has been fitted. On the wall above the top of the dresser are sockets



Only complaint about the kitchen is the high level microwave. Worktop space is in good supply



On the wall above the top of the dresser are the connections for the TV and DVD player



Washroom has Thetford's latest C250 swivel toilet with an electric flush

for the TV/DVD and above them a small shelf and the cocktail cabinet with its LED lights.

Along with the washroom, the nearside centre kitchen is undoubtedly one of the best features in the caravan. It certainly has more worktop space than many larger caravans and comes equipped with the latest Dometic 8-Series fridge incorporating a removable freezer compartment to increase the overall capacity by several litres. Between the kitchen unit and the door is a cooker with a three-burner hob and grill, featuring electronic ignition. As the cooker is next to the door, there are folding stainless steel wind deflectors. There's an Omnivent two-way, three-speed fan fitted in the ceiling above.

But it is the rear end washroom which is the pièce de résistance. I often say that you don't live in the washroom but that doesn't mean that small is necessarily beautiful. In the case of the Lunar ES the washroom not only includes the usual accoutrements – such as the shower, washbasin and toilet – but the wardrobe is also fitted here in the offside rear corner. That means you have everything to hand when washing and dressing. There are three drawers in the bottom of the wardrobe – again a plus point since tourers of this size sometimes lack drawer storage. Coupled with the drawers in the chest and dresser the ES has a total of five.

Overall, the Clubman ES is a worthy successor to its predecessors. It's well made and the inclusion of loose carpets will also win many friends – especially those who rally or take their holidays near sandy beaches.

The upholstery was very much to my liking: a patterned mixture of fawns and browns in a luxury woven Chenille fabric. The seats were firm and supportive. ■

OUR VERDICT



Having had a chance to spend time in the Clubman ES I can understand why the marque has been so popular with caravanners over the years.

Although there is very little new to get excited about, it is a worthy successor to the line and will continue to enhance the company's reputation for producing caravans that are built to last.

If there is a downside, it's the three year factory-backed warranty. Other manufacturers also offer this, but in addition offer six years cover against water ingress and delamination. It's difficult to understand why Lunar doesn't do the same.

FOR & AGAINST

PROS

- AL-KO ATC
- Excellent shower compartment
- Tinted windows for privacy

CONS

- Rather three occasional four
- Bit pricey
- Only a three-year warranty

ALTERNATIVES

● **AVONDALE ARGENTE 550-4S**
 Very little different from the Clubman ES as far as the layout is concerned but doesn't have ATC as standard. However, it is £2000 cheaper so even having ATC retrofitted would still leave the Argente as the more economical buy.

CONTACT

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There's plenty of room for the family's toiletries in the cupboard below the washbasin