

CHAUSSON FLASH 05



FAMILY FAVOURITES

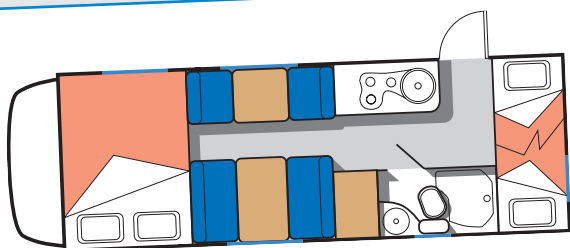
Chausson Flash 05 and TEC Rotec 670G

Great holidays for mum, dad and the kids beckon as two generous coachbuilts offer bunks and more

A motorhome parked on the drive, capable of providing family-sized holiday accommodation, is an attractive prospect - especially when you consider the myriad of uses that mum, dad and the kids can make of it - and all at a moment's notice. From days out and weekends away to long summer trips - all are in prospect. Such a 'van can make financial sense too if you

add up the cost of more conventional holidays - it ain't cheap for four people to go away, especially during high-season school breaks.

Both the Chausson Flash 05 and the TEC Rotec 670G sit firmly in the seven-metre class - an overall length that offers enough internal room to banish motorhome claustrophobia and offer fully-loaded comfortable family accommodation. Layouts are very similar, with



LAYOUT PLAN

- OVERALL WIDTH: 2.24m (7ft 4in)
- OVERALL LENGTH: 7.04m (23ft 1in)



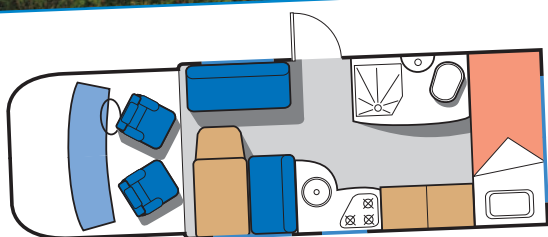
RIGHT: Chausson cab is very well equipped, even including air-conditioning as standard.

FAR RIGHT: Manually-winding windows and manually-adjusted mirrors compromised the TEC cab.

Words & pictures by Dave Hurrell



TEC ROTEK 670G



LAYOUT PLAN

- OVERALL WIDTH: 2.32m (7ft 7.5in)
- OVERALL LENGTH: 6.94m (22ft 9in)

both featuring front-end lounges, midships-ish kitchens and washrooms, plus a pair of all-important bunks across the rear.

French manufacturer Chausson's Flash range stalks the entry-level value for money end of the market and the 05 seems to be very competitive at a whisker under thirty grand on the road. If you want one, one of the many Barrons motorhome centres must be your destination as that's where the 05 is exclusively available here in the UK.

The TEC Rotec range goes further upmarket, price-wise at least, and if you've more cash to spend, the prospect of perceived German build quality (and hopefully increased longevity) should reassure you.

Both 'vans offer fresh, modern interiors with silver trimmed mid-toned wood and cool blue upholstery that works well. Differences between the two are evident in detailing with the more expensive TEC sporting things such as double-skinned ABS skirts outside and curvy furniture and wood-edged surfaces inside - as starters in justifying its higher price over the more simple and budget-conscious Chausson.

MOTIVE POWER

These French and German motorhomes are nonetheless powered and underpinned by the doughy and seemingly omnipresent Fiat

Ducato chassis. Both Chausson and TEC offer motorhomes on other base vehicles (Chausson on Ford and Renault, TEC on Ford), but the trusty Ducato still looms large in their ranges, as it does with just about every European manufacturer. Standard long wheelbase chassis have quite a high stance and both Chausson and TEC

display classic coachbuilt character, standing tall at over three metres head-to-toe. Both cabs will be very familiar to old hands as Europe's most popular motorhome base here displays a now slightly dated character both inside and out. (Note: Motorhomes on the new Ducato should by now be beginning to filter through the system, so the choice may be yours if you are willing to wait.)



CHAUSSON FLASH 05

I LIKED

- Excellent value for money
- Range-topping motor
- Cab air-conditioning
- Driver's airbag
- Versatile lounge-diner
- Easy-clean washroom
- Oven with grill
- Garage storage

I WOULD HAVE LIKED

- ABS
- Better lighting
- Mains electric heating

I DISLIKED

- Clingy shower curtain

In the cab, the Chausson's budget status is betrayed by the presence of seats unadorned with living area upholstery - and indeed they remain separate from same, having no swivels to let them join the caravan component once on site. There's no ABS or ASR traction control here either, but this is where economy style ends as driver's airbag, air-conditioning, electric windows and mirrors and key-operated central locking impress, especially at the price.

The more expensive TEC seems full of contradictions as it featured welcome ABS, ASR and (optional) air-con, but no airbag, no central locking, and - horror-of-horrors - wind-up windows and manual mirrors. Even the passenger-side door bin is missing. The consequences of two drivers, who are also partners, working as a team to manually adjust the nearside mirror every time they swap seats does not bear thinking about - a recipe for domestic disharmony if ever there was one! As is often the case with German motorcaravans, the options list (and an extra clump of cash) will be your port of call if you desire the things that - these days - most of us would expect to see fitted as standard. A cynical way to separate us from more of our hard-earned? Surely not!

The TEC was found wanting under the bonnet too as it was fitted with the 2.3-litre mid-range motor - the Chausson comes with the range-topping 2.8 as standard. Of course, TEC'll be happy to supply same (I think you know where to find it), just have £3700 ready - that's £217 per extra 'horse'!

ROAD MANNERS

It's immediately more comfortable in the Chausson's cab as it has no seat-raising swivels fitted. The TEC's half-dinette layout demands cab pews that turn to join the living area and these raise the seats - degrading the driving position and potentially leaving cab passengers' feet swinging in mid-air.

It may lack the bigger engine of the Chausson, but the TEC still performed very well on the road. Fiat's mid-range engine is known for punching above its weight and - coupled with the lower ratio top gear - it revved enthusiastically and pulled this bulky but lightly-loaded 'van along with ease.

The Chausson sported the same low ratio top, making it an even more relaxed performer. Just as bulky as its rival, and again lightly-loaded, it was very easy to drive, pulling away comfortably in top from 45mph.

Both 'vans exhibited the best-feature characteristics of the Ducato with light, positive steering, slick dash-mounted gearchange and powerful disc brakes making for an easy drive. This model Ducato may be a bit long in the tooth, but these great features mean it still compares well with the current batch of chassis from other manufacturers.

The Ducato's rather stiff suspension does well with big motorhomes like these, producing good handling with little roll - another on-road pleasure provider as driver confidence is boosted. The cab air-conditioning fitted to both 'vans was an almost essential feature during the test, as temperatures hovered in the low 30s (this motorhome tester would consider in-cab cooling an essential piece of kit even in the UK, but especially for foreign touring). The Chausson scores points big time here as cab air-con comes as standard.

Both 'vans also provide cutaway cab roofs with overcab bed bases rising on gas struts to make entry and exit from the cab easier. I'd expect this feature on the dearer TEC, it's a surprising, but welcome, addition on the much

FROM THE TOP: The Chausson's linear galley offers worktop and a grill, but lacks the big fridge-freezer of its rival.

The Chausson's big sofa provides real feet-up lounging and plenty of space for comfortable entertaining.

A classic layout of Pullman dinette and sofa upfront, leaves the cab seats out of the living area equation.

Mealtimes should be a pleasure as two dinettes offer very versatile eating.

cheaper Chausson.

On-road conversion noise, too, was very muted in both - the TEC's slightly less vocal performance may be a testament to that German build quality.

As family-friendly 'vans, both should be able to convey all their residents in safety and that means enough seatbelts for all. Five berths and a total of four three-point belted seats sees the TEC fall short of the mark in this respect, but in reality this 'van will probably only be used by up to four people. The TEC's forward-facing dinette seat provides two belted places attached to a strong steel frame.

Meanwhile, the Chausson offers a similar set-up on its forward-facer plus two lap-only belts on its rearward-facing dinette seat. Although seven berths and six belted seats is almost commendable, the lap variety falls somewhat short in the safety stakes when forward-facing three-point, inertia-reel seatbelts are the accepted norm for safe travel in any vehicle.

LOUNGE AND DINE

Comfortable, capable lounging and dining that suits everyone will be an essential in any motorhome hoping to provide family-sized accommodation. This is especially true in the UK, as wet weekends will probably see the whole tribe trapped indoors from time to time.

Both 'vans provide spacious lounge-diners upfront - the TEC offering one of the most popular Continental set-ups - the half-dinette with side sofa. Cab seats swivel to face the table, while a good-sized sofa here helps make the dinette into a proper lounging space. The aforementioned cab cutaway and rising luton bed base help make this area easy to use and six people can relax while the generously-sized table is perfect for wet-weather game playing. There's a good reason why this design is popular with Euro-zone manufacturers - it makes very good use of available space and is versatile (including, of course, those all-important travel seats). The TEC's version is a very good example of the breed with good quality seating at a comfortable height.

The Chausson also offers a classic set-up in the form of Pullman dinette with side sofa opposite. This arrangement is less 'open' in feel but still allows seating for up to for seven, while the slightly narrow (but long) side sofa offers proper feet-up lounging for one lucky member of the family.

It's at mealtimes that things get more interesting in the Chausson as the sofa converts to a second dinette. The centre section of this seat is actually supported by a small table and it's the work of a moment to raise it to full height and reposition sofa backrests at either end. This creates a neat little two-seat diner - great for a couple of kids. Six can now eat in comfort with four people occupying the main dinette. Indeed, twin dinettes could even be quite good for keeping warring sprogs apart at mealtimes!

The TEC's table employs an extension that drops onto slide-out supports at its outboard end. This gives good eating-space for four or five as two diners can now reach the table from the side sofa and swivelled driver's seat.

A motorhome with twin-dinettes might seem very unfriendly lounge-wise, but when one eatery converts easily to a sofa as in the Chausson, you really do get the best of both worlds.

COOK'S QUARTERS

Both galleys benefit from the dubious charms of an ignitionless three-burner hob and drainerless circular sink.

I LIKED

- Build quality
- Stylish furniture
- Excellent range of lighting
- Rigid shower screen
- Large rear bunks
- Lots of storage
- Tanks, etc in semi-double-floor
- Big fridge-freezer

I WOULD HAVE LIKED

- 2.8-litre engine
- Electric mirrors
- Electric windows
- Central locking
- Driver's airbag
- A grill

I DISLIKED

- The price

TEC ROTEC 670G



FROM THE TOP: Better storage and a big fridge-freezer make the galley a winner.

The TEC's side sofa and swivel cab seats offer good quality lounging space.

Good use of half-dinette and L-shaped kitchen, one of the most popular layouts in the business.

At mealtimes a slot-on table extension helps provide space for more TEC diners.

Arguably more stylish by several 'country kilometres', the TEC kitchen features a pull-out wire-shelf-equipped larder unit and an oven (but no grill) below decks - its L-shaped design slavishly following the current Continental vogue.

The Chausson culinary department displays its linear tendency forward of the caravan door. It's simpler in design and execution - flat unadorned locker doors and basic lighting in here help betray the 'van's budget status. Even so, there's a Smev mini oven (with grill and ignition), a couple of decent cupboards, and a sensible cutlery drawer below the worktop. And worktop there is too, as once the slightly odd-looking removable plastic drainer is stowed, a usable slab is revealed twist hob and sink.

Sadly, the Chausson's single divided

overhead locker is no match for the TEC's quartet of high-level storage spaces - two large with stylish 'fuzzy' acrylic door fronts and two small with drop-down flaps below. There's little worktop in the TEC galley - but a big cutlery drawer, two further low-level storage spaces, recycling bins set into the worktop and a 150-litre fridge/freezer, all conspire to leave the Chausson cook's quarters somewhat out of breath.

There's a decent-sized fridge in the Chausson galley, but cook will very much appreciate the TEC's big cooler, while the kids will instantly know how much ice cream'll go in the freezer. Of course, it'll take dad a while longer to work out how much beer he can manage to hide in the fridge!

The Chausson's kitchen lacks storage - both ambient and chilled - but makes up for it with

a grill and some worktop. The TEC galley is a model of the Continental breed, you just need to use the hinged glass hob and sink covers for prep and buy a toaster - both a stove-top model (for periods away from hook-up) and the electric variety can be had for around a fiver.

BATHING SPACE

The quintessential Continental motorhome washroom includes a decent separate shower compartment - a feature that's even more important to have with sprogs on board. The opportunity to hose down grubby ankle-biters (especially the very young) without dragging them to the facilities block will be much appreciated by harassed mums and dads.

Both Chausson and TEC offer excellent



ABOVE TOP: A vision in plastic, this washroom should be easy to keep clean.

ABOVE: The Chausson bunk beds are comfy and practical but narrower than the TEC's.

HEAD-TO-HEAD DATA - CHAUSSON 05

PRICE

- From: £29,995 OTR
- As tested: £29,995 OTR

BASICS (*manufacturer's figures)

- Berths: 7
- Three-point belted seats: 4 (including driver)
- Warranty: 2 years base vehicle and conversion
- Badged as NCC EN1646 compliant: No
- Construction: GRP-clad sandwich construction overcab coachbuilt with ABS plastic mouldings
- Length: 7.04m (23ft 1in)*
- Width: 2.24m (7ft 4in)*
- Height: 2.99m (9ft 9.5in)*
- Wheelbase: 3.70m (12ft 1.5in)*
- Rear overhang: 2.45m (8ft 0.5in)
- Maximum authorised weight: 3500kg*
- Payload: 422kg* (after the weight of the driver (75kg), gas, fresh water and fuel tanks at 90 per cent of capacity)

THE VEHICLE

- Chassis: Fiat Ducato LWB chassis cab
- Engine: 2.8-litre common-rail turbodiesel producing 127bhp
- Transmission: Five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive
- Brakes: Discs all round
- Suspension: Front: Independent. Rear: Rigid axle
- Features: Driver's airbag, cab air-conditioning, electric windows and mirrors, key-operated central locking, twin door bins, adjustable steering column, flip-up map holder

INSIDE

- Layout: Overcab double bed ahead of twin dinettes/side sofa, offside kitchen, nearside separate-shower washroom, across-the-rear bunks convert to garage
- Insulation: Floor 75mm, walls and roof 32mm
- Interior height: 2.10m (6ft 10.5in)

KITCHEN

- Sink: Circular stainless steel unit with single lever mixer tap and removable drainer
- Cooker: Smev three-burner draining hob, no ignition. Smev mini grill/oven with electronic ignition
- Fridge: Dometic RM7401, manual energy selection, capacity 97 litres

WASHROOM

- Toilet: Thetford swivel-bowl electric-flush cassette

- Basin: Vanity unit with single-lever mixer tap
- Shower: Separate showering area enclosed by curtain. Shower mixer and head on fixed high-level bracket, single outlet tray

BEDS

Overcab double

- Length: 2.23m (7ft 0in)
- Width: 1.50m (4ft 11in)
- Headroom: 620mm (2ft 0.5in) max

Dinette double

- Length: 1.71m (5ft 7.5in)
- Width: 1.27m (4ft 2in)

Lounge single

- Length: 1.85m (6ft 1in)
- Width: 620mm (2ft 0.5in)

Transverse rear bunks

- Length: 2.11m (6ft 11in)
- Width: 810mm (2ft 8in)
- Upper headroom: 720mm (2ft 4in)
- Lower headroom: 790mm (2ft 7in) max

EQUIPMENT

- Fresh water tank: Inboard. 70 litres (15.4 gallons)
- Waste water tank: Underslung. 109 litres (24 gallons)
- Water heater: Truma Combi boiler, gas-only operation
- Space heater: Truma Combi with blown-air, gas-only operation
- Leisure battery: 95 amp hr
- Gas: Capacity 2 x 11kg cylinders
- Lighting: Single filament lamps over cab, bunk beds and kitchen, adjustable halogen reading lamps in dinette, 2D fluorescent ceiling fitting in lounge, two halogen downlights in washroom
- Sockets: 230V: Five (two in lounge, in TV locker, externally-accessed storage locker, kitchen). 12V: Two (in cab, TV locker)

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Fitted to test vehicle

- Base: None
- Conversion: None

Other options

- Base: None
- Conversion: Choice of Dakar or Dorine upholstery (FOC)

washrooms with good separate showering areas. Indeed, the formula for both is very similar with swivel-bowl Thetford throne, vanity basin and shower, all in a spacious enclosure.

The Chausson's need for economy in this department is exhibited in the form of a 'plastic palace' approach to furnishing, with acres of the shiny stuff taking the place of more expensive wood. However, it's an ill wind... and all that plastic is gonna be easy to wash down especially after the little darlings have indulged in a spot of 'enthusiastic' bathing. Oodles of storage above and below are favourite features in here while disappointments include a lack of blind or flyscreen on the window (a flyscreen will be very important in hot weather to allow decent ventilation and keep bugs at bay) and the fact

there's a curtain enclosing the shower. Believe me, these curtains develop an irresistible urge to attack and enfold your soapy body once you get a good shower-steam-generated updraft going.

Wooden furniture, better mirrors, and a shower with strong, rigid folding screens raise the upmarket flag in the TEC washroom. A rooflight provides good illumination in this windowless space and storage is good in here too. The shower compartment may be enclosed by rigid doors but it's a bit smaller than the Chausson's generous douche. Cupboards above and below are joined by a small drop-down-door locker above the toilet - storage for spare loo rolls methinks. The TEC's washroom was difficult to criticise - only the lack of a window and the somewhat disconcerting

presence of a mains socket in here attracted the attention of my big red pen.

BEDTIME

Mum, dad and two kids (just four people) living aboard both 'vans will be the best recipe for family motorcaravanning bliss. That's because come bedtime the only problem that'll arise will be the fight to see who gets top bunk! Also, with the sprogs safely tucked up in the rear, the lounge is left as a peaceful haven for tired parents to relax in. Both sets of bunks here do a good job, the TEC pair being very wide and comfortable.

Indeed, groups of adult friends could easily make use of these bunks as they are bigger than standard domestic singles and very comfortable.

MMM HEAD-TO-HEAD DATA - TEC ROTEC 670G

PRICE

- **From:** £36,995 OTR
- **As tested:** £38,465 OTR

BASICS (*manufacturer's figures)

- **Berths:** 5
- **Three-point belted seats:** 4 (including driver)
- **Warranty:** 2 years base vehicle and conversion, 5 years water ingress
- **Badged as NCC EN1646 compliant:** No
- **Construction:** GRP-clad sandwich construction overcab coachbuilt with ABS plastic mouldings
- **Length:** 6.94m (22ft 9in)*
- **Width:** 2.32m (7ft 7.5in)*
- **Height:** 3.06m (10ft 0.5in)*
- **Wheelbase:** 3.70m (12ft 2in)*
- **Rear overhang:** 2.27m (7ft 5.5in)
- **Maximum authorised weight:** 3850kg*
- **Payload:** 610kg* (after the weight of driver (75kg), gas, fresh water and fuel tanks at 90 per cent of capacity)

THE VEHICLE

- **Chassis:** Fiat Ducato LWB chassis cab
- **Engine:** 2.3-litre common-rail turbodiesel producing 110 bhp
- **Transmission:** Five-speed gearbox, front-wheel drive
- **Brakes:** Discs all round
- **Suspension:** Front: Independent. Rear: Rigid axle
- **Features:** ABS, ASR, cab air-conditioning, driver's door bin, adjustable steering column, flip-up map holder

INSIDE

- **Layout:** Overcab double bed ahead of half-dinette with swivel cab seats and side sofa, nearside L-shaped kitchen, offside separate-shower washroom, across-the-rear bunks convert to provide garage
- **Insulation:** Floor, walls and roof 30mm
- **Interior height:** 2.03m (6ft 8in)

KITCHEN

- **Sink:** Circular drainerless unit with hinged glass lid and integral folding mixer tap
- **Cooker:** Cramer 3-burner hob, no ignition; Spinflo oven, no ignition, no grill fitted
- **Fridge:** Dometic RM 7651L fridge-freezer, with internal illumination, manual energy selection, capacity 150 litres

WASHROOM

- **Toilet:** Thetford swivel-bowl electric-flush cassette
- **Basin:** Oval vanity unit with single lever mixer tap

- **Shower:** Separate compartment with rigid alloy-framed folding doors, mixer tap/showerhead/riser rail, single outlet tray

BEDS

Overcab double

- **Length:** 2.01m (6ft 7in)
- **Width:** 1.42m (4ft 8in)
- **Headroom:** 680mm (2ft 3in)

Dinette single

- **Length:** 2.11m (6ft 11in)
- **Width:** 1.2mm (3ft 11in) max

Transverse rear bunks

- **Length:** 2.11m (6ft 11in)
- **Width:** 960mm (3ft 2in)
- **Upper headroom:** 630mm (2ft 1in)
- **Lower headroom:** 820mm (2ft 8in)

EQUIPMENT

- **Fresh water tank:** Inboard, 100 litres (22 gallons)
- **Waste water tank:** Underslung, 100 litres (22 gallons)
- **Water heater:** Truma Combi boiler, gas-operation only
- **Space heater:** Truma Combi with blown-air, gas-operation only
- **Leisure battery:** 75 amp hr
- **Gas:** Capacity 2 x 11kg cylinders
- **Lighting:** Two adjustable halogen reading lamps in lute bed, four adjustable halogen reading lamps and one triple halogen downlighter in lounge, fluorescent task lighting in kitchen, three halogen downlighters in washroom, auto-illumination in wardrobe, one adjustable halogen reading lamp above each rear bunk, triple porch/awning light above caravan door
- **Sockets:** 230V: Four (in lounge, kitchen, washroom, TV locker). 12V: Three (in cab, kitchen, TV locker)

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Fitted to test vehicle

- **Base:** Cab air-conditioning (£1132)
- **Conversion:** Additional garage door (£426)

Other options

- **Base:** Comfort pack (electric windows, mirrors, central locking (£452)
- **Conversion:** Truma C6002 heating upgrade (£338)

E&OE



ABOVE TOP: Wooden furniture and rigid shower doors are part of the TEC's more sophisticated washroom.

ABOVE: The TEC overcab bed snatches the prize owing to a few more inches of precious headroom.

CHAUSSON FLASH 05



FROM THE TOP: These lounge beds are versatile, although the double may be too short for some.

In the rear, the kitchen and washroom are in close company.

Chausson's useful and capable garage is, nonetheless, narrower than its counterpart's.



The Chausson's bunks are narrower but still good and I particularly liked the built-in access ladder.

Upfront, both overcab double beds are good examples of the breed, but the TEC steals a lead on its rival with almost three inches of extra headroom. Each has one side window and a roof ventilator that'll be essential in hot weather.

Downstairs, the TEC completes its five-berth status by offering a transverse bed made from the dinette and side sofa. With plenty of length and at nearly four feet wide, this bed is quoted as a single, but if visitors came to stay, two slim adults could sleep here too. This berth is quite flat once you've arranged the cushions to best effect - but also requires the use of three additional infill cushions. Many joins do not a perfect bed make, and if I planned to use this berth on a regular basis I'd invest in an overlay to smooth things over.

The Chausson lounge offers a single and a double bed. The former made from the side sofa is easy to deploy; just remove the backrests and you're in business. The dinette double emerges using the table lowered with two pull-out supports helping to increase width in the aisle. A neat infill stored along the wall sits securely on these extensions and just one other narrow infill joins backrest to make this berth. This bed is wide enough to be called a 'proper' double but falls short - literally - as it comes in at around 5ft 7in long. Of course, female motorhomers are often of modest stature so if your desire is for single beds these could make his'n'hers downstairs.

It really is 'horses for courses' bed-wise, single sleepers may well find the Chausson a more attractive proposition while the TEC's bigger bunks will be more comfortable for adults.

STORE ROOM

Generally speaking, family life means carting lots of kit and this is just as true (maybe even more so) on holiday. From baby buggies to bikes and beyond, all this gear needs to travel and the truly capable family motorhome'll have a home for it. Here it's the bunks layout that's the answer as in both 'vans the bottom berth swings up to create a slim garage.

Of course, there's still a big chunk of storage space under these beds when they're down - but once raised, must-have holiday kit like bikes (or maybe even a scooter) can be carried. External doors give access to these spaces (the second unit fitted to the TEC being another extra-cost option). In addition, TECs wider bunks mean a wider garage adding to the space on offer.

Payload and particularly axle loadings (a loaded motorhome must balance its loaded weight between front and rear axles) are important too and therefore I was pleased to discover a maximum weight figure for the TEC's garage (150kg - though subject to rear axle load) clearly displayed in the rear.

Even so, I'd always recommend that you visit your local public weighbridge with your motorhome loaded. An overloaded vehicle is potentially dangerous and the penalties for same can be steep.

The Chausson's garage may be narrower but it should still be plenty big enough for family holiday paraphernalia. Elsewhere, the Chausson sports a decent wardrobe, and storage space under rearward-facing dinette seats and side sofa - the latter being a modestly-sized space albeit with an external access hatch.

The TEC comes up trumps all-round storage-wise, as it features space under both lounge seats plus a metal-bodied skirt locker that would seem to be perfect for mucky kit and tools.

LIFE SUPPORT

One of the reasons for the TEC's superior storage provision is the fact that its fresh water tank and leisure battery/charger are neatly enclosed within a semi-double-floor under the main living area. The Chausson's inboard fresh tank is located under a dinette seat. Both offer a frost-free location for plumbing but the TEC does this in a more sophisticated way, providing hatches in the floor and easy access for maintenance.

Lighting, too, is different - with the TEC showing a plethora of halogen-equipped spots at almost every location. Auto illumination in the wardrobe and a stylish triple spot unit outside above the caravan door are icing on its cake. Heating and hot water is taken care of in both cases by Truma's trusty Combi. Sadly, in both 'vans and with both functions, there's gas-only operation available. This is something I find more difficult to excuse in the more expensive TEC, but it has to be said that gas-only fired heating and hot'n'cold is often the norm - even in expensive Continental motorhomes.

So what of control? Well, you'll be pleased to discover that both 'vans feature simple, easy to use control panels that tell you of tank and battery levels and allow the control of life support systems without the need to spend hours reading an instruction manual.

CONCLUSION

Both these motorhomes tick just about all the boxes on the family motorhome wish-list. They offer plenty of room within, sensible payload, and good levels of storage.

To my mind, 'vans with bunks like these are the very best for family-friendly motorcaravanning. Aside from providing desirable garage space, the kids'll love the separate, instant sleeping accommodation in the rear.

This should lead to less stressful holidays for mum and dad as they can relax in the lounge when the little ones are in bed. Also, all the family can easily get to the toilet at night. Come the dawn, parents can leave the kids in bed, and out from under their feet, while they make breakfast and get ready for the day ahead.

Sleeping space upfront is very different in these 'vans and the Chausson has the edge here with a better choice of beds. The Chausson lounge-diner, too, is very versatile and comfortable and, of course, there's no need to swivel those cab seats to provide accommodation as it's waiting there just behind you as soon as you're pitched on site.

Equally, it is, in part, the presence of the TEC half-dinette lounge that frees up extra space aft to allow a better kitchen with big fridge-freezer, plus wider bunks and bigger garage too.

I found it very difficult to criticise the Chausson Flash 05 as it offers superb value in a comfortable family motorhome for under thirty grand, especially when you consider the amount of desirable kit fitted as standard.

Conversely, the TEC Rotec 670G did disappoint as I was somewhat shocked to find wind-up windows and manual mirrors on a £38K motorhome. Add the 2.8-litre engine option to bring the specification up to the Chausson's and you'll smash the forty grand barrier to smithereens.

That said, the TEC majors on providing a more sophisticated living area with better quality furniture and lighting, plus desirable features such as a big fridge-freezer and stylish washroom.

Even so, I be very tempted to sign for a Flash 05 and treat myself to my very own 'cashback' bonus.



FROM THE TOP: The lounge bed could accommodate two slim sleepers.

Offside washroom and nearside wardrobe sit ahead of transverse rear bunks, here things seem a little more spacious.

Wider bunks mean a wider garage; there's more space for bulky holiday gear in the TEC's rear.



VEHICLES LOANED FOR EVALUATION BY:

- Chausson Flash 05: **Barrons Motorhomes**, Chapel Lane, Coppull, Lancs PR7 4NE (tel: 01257 793377; web site: www.motorhomedeals.co.uk)
- TEC Rotec 670G: **Brownhills North West**, Blackpool Road, Preston, Lancs (tel: 0800 8140300; web site: www.brownhills.co.uk)

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