

On Test Moovéo C707 on Fiat Ducato 130 Multijet



THE DEFINITION OF SIMPLICITY...

...is a Moovéo C707. This may be a budget family motorhome, but its heritage is pure Pilote



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1 Fiat's Camper chassis and 130 horsepower engine impress

2 The latest Ducato cab adds modernity to the C707's look

3 A very plain entrance door and manual step give a hint of budget status

Moovéo is fairly new to the UK, being a relative newcomer to the market as a whole. The brand is built by French company, Pilote, but offers entry-level products for those on a tighter budget. There are some great family layouts, like the C707 tested here.

The 'van was less than three months old when I looked at it, but had already served three months of a summer hire season with Road Trippin of Doncaster. Looking like new both inside and outside is proof that budget status doesn't necessarily mean badly built.

Moovéo was first seen in the UK at the NEC in Birmingham last October and launched for the first time in Europe the year before. The marque has grown for 2008, with new models including an A-class, but models like this C707 have defined its success.

LOOKING GOOD

For just over £30,000 you get a decent level of equipment as standard – as well as comfortable, simple interiors.

This particular model seems quite compact on the outside, with plain white alloy-skinned sides. The large orange and purple graphics break up the white panels well, but will not appeal to all. The motorhome's profile could be better described as simple and chunky rather than streamlined, but the smart new Fiat Ducato cab serves to make the whole vehicle look more modern. The overcab looks generous from the outside without being too bulbous.

Normally I'd talk about the cab first, but there's not much to say that hasn't been said already about this ubiquitous one-and-a-bit-year-old chassis. It's actually the wide-track version (dubbed Camper chassis) aimed at motorhomes, unusual in a 'van of this price. This is just one of the many standard features that I didn't expect to be included in this entry-level range. All the essentials are there; it's just that some of the little luxuries and refinements are missing.

The engine is superb, offering power when you need it, meaning that you needn't hold the traffic up. And it weighs in at that all-important 3500kg, the weight that many younger families

and drivers looking to get into motorcaravanning may be restricted to licence-wise.

This means that payload might be an issue if you plan to take six people, the barbecue and the kitchen sink, but if you're careful and try to use lighter items like kettles and pans you should be able to manage OK for four.

Usefully, as a six-berth, there are travel seats for six; including the driver and passenger cab seats, there are three-point belts on the two forward-facing seats and lap belts on the two rear-facers in the large dinette.

SPACE RACE

Step inside through a very plain door – no window and no flyscreen, but there is a catch to hold it open. There's even a step – it's a plain, pullout one but comes in very handy,

I LIKED

- Feeling of space inside
- High level of standard kit
- Good-sized kitchen sink
- Overall washroom size for this layout

I WOULD HAVE LIKED

- More general lighting
- Washroom light switch better placed
- Catches to hold gas locker and garage door open

I DISLIKED

- Narrow shower – fine for kids, a little cramped for adults
- Payload may be on the low side for a family of six



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even though the recessed interior step isn't that high.

So, you've stepped up into this motorhome expecting a six-berth layout, but what you don't expect is the generous overall space of the L-shaped kitchen, large lounge and decent washroom.

The layout is fairly common: fixed bunk beds sit at the rear nearside with the washroom (with separate shower) running across the rear wall next to the caravan door; the L-shaped kitchen sits opposite the fridge, oven and wardrobe; and there are both a double Pullman dinette (seats four) and a single dinette (for two) behind the cab.

Interior light levels are surprisingly good considering that there is no large rooflight. The russet orange fabrics are neither modern nor traditional, blending the two – as well as being a practical colour for a family 'van. They work

well in a vehicle of this size, making it cosy but not too enclosed.

Orange net-style curtains complement the scheme and do an excellent job of hiding the rather obtrusive cassette blinds and flyscreens (although practical, cassette blinds are not pretty). Commendably, every window, including the one in the overcab bed, benefits from a blind and 'screen.

The overcab bed is a double, although one half of the slatted base slides under the other and the mattress folds in half for better cab access during the day and a much more open-plan lounge area.

Both cab seats, with armrests as standard, swivel to offer extra seating should it be needed for friends (or stray kids that your brood have adopted). Not that there's a lack of seating, with four able to dine comfortably in the main dinette and two in the single dinette.

SNOOZING AND RELAXING

The first two beds are the instantly available twin rear bunks (of which, more later).

Upfront, the dinette/lounge/bed system is extremely flexible.

The main dinette becomes a double bed easily. First unclamp the table and lift it off its wall bracket. (This table, although big, was light enough for me to handle easily.) Fold the leg in half and rest the table on the base lip to fill in the gap between the seats. Backrests from the seats, and an extra filler cushion, make the bed.

The single dinette can stay as it is, or it could be made up into a child's single (an extra seventh berth) or even made into a sofa (all you need are small cushions for a backrest). It would be a perfect lounging seat for a parent while the kids are occupied in the main dinette. The table unfixes from the wall





bracket and slots between the seats in the same way as the larger main table.

If there are only four using this motorhome you could sleep the kids in the fixed bunks and use the overcab for your bed, leaving the dinette as it is.

The overcab bed is roomy but you'll need to cope with the restricted headroom – 600mm at the highest point. If you do need to put some children up here, a cargo net fixes to the ceiling to stop them from rolling out in the middle of the night – the same goes for the upper fixed bunk.

As mentioned earlier, there is plenty of space to eat and sleep. But if you want more lounging space for whiling away the long evenings, you could easily remove the tables completely, storing them in the cab.

The one fly in this 'van's lounging ointment is the location of the TV locker. Its ceiling-



level position means that only window-seat occupants of the full dinette could watch in comfort. Alternatively, you could sit in the swivelled driver's seat.

CAPABLE KITCHEN

So, the lounge and sleeping cater for six with ease, but what about cooking? As with many L-shaped kitchens, the only usable worktop space is in the corner between the three-burner hob and sink. It's a bit of a stretch to use it, but there is plenty of space.

The sink is good, and square too, taking a plastic bowl big enough to do a session of family washing up - that's if you don't send the husband/kids/whoever off to the site facilities!

Unusually, the compact, combined oven and grill is standard so you don't have to sacrifice valuable storage space if you have one fitted. It's also in the perfect position just above the fridge. At my eye level, no stretching is required to remove the hot grill pan to check the toast. However, if you opt for the larger 141-litre fridge/freezer, the oven will presumably be moved up higher, where an overhead locker is normally located.

Speaking of the fridge - even at this price, you get a decent-sized unit with simple-to-understand digital controls and indicators. It offers 97 litres of space and there's a small freezer compartment for ice cubes (and lollies to keep the kids happy on hot days). I was surprised that the door didn't match the rest of the furniture, though.

ROOM TO CLEAN

The one area I expected to be a compromise in this 'van was the washroom. At first glance, the white moulded plastic units did appear a little basic in places, but it all seemed workable and practical.

A decent-sized basin with swivelling tap sits on the wall next to the bunks and a shower lies on the left. There's plenty of legroom surrounding the swivel cassette toilet – even for people taller than my 5ft 4in frame.

The separate shower has a door that works a little like a horizontal roller blind. Its opaque plastic material is fine, but because it covers quite a long space, adult elbows may keep clouting it.

The green plastic cupboard doors – on the high-level locker and basin unit – are bright, but a little garish as well as a touch flimsy.

There's no window in here but a rooflight lets in plenty of daylight. The single electric light may not be enough at night though, and the switch is actually mounted on the light so you'll have to fumble around for it in the dark.

FOR THE KIDS

One vital element of this 'van is the fixed bunks. Each bunk has a spotlight and an opening window with cassette blind and flyscreen. The top one also has a netted storage pocket.

The bottom bunk easily swings up – from the outside – to create a spacious 'garage' area. The large external access door has simple push-and-twist catches for easy access.

STUFF SPACE

Storage-wise (for a six-berth) the C707 is a little lacking in the kitchen although the cupboard below the hob is really big. The cutlery drawer slides out from underneath the sink and above the Truma heater (there's a matching Truma 10-litre boiler for hot water).



4 This is certainly a family-friendly layout

5 Twin dinettes dominate the front end

6 Practical washroom offers a separate shower, but one that lacks elbow room

7 The rear-located bunks are the star of this 'van's show

8 Kitchen features corner worktop and a good-sized sink

9 Overcab double bed, is big but headroom is a little compromised

10 Twin dinettes offer versatile sleeping, eating, and lounging space

11 The oven is at a sensible height above a decent-sized fridge

12 A big external door and fold-up bunk create garage-style storage

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Usefully, the cutlery drawer has a plastic inset for teaspoons, knives, forks and normal spoons, as well as a section to the side of this for larger utensils – that vital corkscrew comes to mind!

The wardrobe would be perfect for the adults' clothes, whilst the kids' stuff would have to go in the five high-level lockers in the lounge. There is, however, storage space

under all the lounge seats apart from the main two-seater forward-facer where you'll find easy access to the fresh water tank.

THE WORKS

Everything is clearly marked – especially the location of the waste water emptying lever, which can often be difficult to find.

Lights can be quite scarce in budget

motorhomes, and this one is no exception.

The single kitchen light seems quite bright and the four lounge spotlights supplement a ceiling light – too high to provide anything other than general illumination. There is also a single light in the overcab bed.

The control panel is simple to use – a good thing as some, more expensive units, can over-complicate things. There's a switch for the battery and water pump, a simple traffic light LED system to indicate the level of the battery and indicators for the waste and fresh water tank levels.

ON BUDGET

As already mentioned, the payload is not mean, but it would be a stretch to carry a whole load of equipment for a two-week holiday; along with two adults and four kids. If there's just two-plus-two, and you opt for lightweight accessories, you should be fine.

Some fittings are a bit basic and there are no catches to stop the gas locker and garage doors from swinging around when open.

However, this Moovéo does have equipment that is normally not standard at this price – an oven and grill, plus removable carpets are the first to spring to mind.

I'd certainly look twice at this motorhome if I was on a limited budget, wanted to buy new, and had a couple of junior Stotherts to consider... ■

TEST EXTRA SPECIFICATION

MOOVÉO C707

- **Price:** £30,850 OTR
- **Price as tested:** £32,540
- **Base vehicle:** Fiat Multijet 130 Camper chassis cab; 2.3-litre turbo-diesel engine producing 130bhp; six-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive; ABS; central-locking, electric windows and mirrors;
- **Warranty:** Two years base vehicle and conversion, five years water ingress
- **Sizes and weights:** Length: 7.10m (23ft 3.5in); width: 2.30m (7ft 6.5in); height: 3.09m (10ft 1.5in);
- **Maximum authorised weight:** 3500kg
- **Payload:** 460kg
- **Belted seats:** 6, including driver
- **Beds:** Main dinette: 1.75m x 1.06m (5ft 9in x 3ft 5.5in); bunks: both 1.90m x 720mm (6ft 3in x 2ft 4.5in); overcab double: 2.03m x

- 1.17m (6ft 8in x 3ft 10in)
- **Garage size:** Height: 1.30m (4ft 3in); length 1.90m (6ft 3in); width 700mm (2ft 3.5in)
- **Other features:** 130-litre fresh water tank; 80-litre waste water tank; 85 amp hr leisure battery; 2 x 13kg gas cylinders; 97-litre fridge; Truma Ultrastore water heater; Truma Trumatic convector-type space heater
- **Options fitted to test vehicle:** Comfort pack includes heat exchanger, roof rack and ladder, comfort seat covers (£390), cab air-conditioning (£1000), two rearward-facing lap seat belts (£300)
- **Other options available:** Bunk for single dinette (£215), caravan door flyscreen (£175), cab/lounge curtain (£175), 141-litre fridge/freezer upgrade (£470)



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