

On Test Bürstner Ixeo Time it 585



TARDIS TIME

Bürstner Ixeo Time it 585 on 2.3-litre Fiat Ducato

Our Deputy Editor time-travels to Norfolk on a first tour with MMM's 2011 Motorhome of the Year



I'm not The Doctor (although I do have a fetching range of scarves) and yet I find myself in charge of what appears to be a kind of Tardis. Bürstner's new Ixeo Time it 585 is not only a worthy winner of our Motorhome of the Year accolade, it's also MMM's latest long-termer and ours to scrutinise for the next six months.

I was unable to make it to the Bürstner 2011 model launch event in Germany, but even from the pictures we received from our sister magazine, *Which Motorhome*, it was clear that this 'van was likely to be a winner. Cute and compact on the outside, yet seemingly very spacious on the inside, this Ixeo model was surprising, and possibly perfectly suited to the desires of UK motorhomers. My first chance see the 'van in the flesh was at the Dusseldorf Caravan Salon, where I discovered that those pictures

had not lied. The Ixeo Time it 585 was my personal favourite at the Salon - impressive, considering this is a show that each year, displays the biggest selection of new models in Europe.

European manufacturers sometimes struggle when trying to please us British motorhomers, and for good reason: Continental 'vanners get a fair proportion of sun, whereas we are used to the rain (my waterproofs go everywhere with me). They spend a lot of time living outside - the barbecue and the fridge are often the only things they need for sustenance. Meanwhile, indoor cooking and the ability to grill bread is an essential requirement for most UK motorcaravanners; therefore ovens and grills become more important.

This outdoor lifestyle also means that easy-to-use beds are more important than comfy lounges - hence the Europeans' fascination with fixed sleeping spaces.

We Brits are eternal optimists, but often need to spend time sitting in our lounges waiting for the weather to improve.

That's why this 'van is such a surprise: It's just six metres long (19ft 8in), yet manages to offer a comfortable and spacious lounge, large kitchen, roomy washroom *and* a fixed bed.

How? Well, the answer is in very clever fashion. The it 585 utilises a drop-down bed above the large lounge to minimise the compromises found in a small motorhome.

TIME TRAVELLER

Because of this 'van's compact dimensions, you shouldn't really need to upgrade from the 100bhp engine to the 130 horsepower unit that the test model is fitted with. But I would suggest opting for the chassis upgrade as it gives you an extra 200kg of payload for just a few hundred quid extra.

However, the more powerful engine does make for a very sporty little motorhome



Words & pictures
by Rachel Stothert



1 A generous lounge belies
this Ixeo's overall length

2 The rear end is home to a
spacious kitchen and
corner washroom



AT A GLANCE

- PRICE FROM: £42,630 OTR
- BERTHS: 2 (optional 4)
- ECONOMY: 26.8mpg

- achieving motorway speeds with little effort. One thing to be mindful of is the fact that thanks to the presence of the roof bed, the low profile body is higher than the norm; winds can buffet you around.

On-the-road noise depends very much on loading, and this model was relatively quiet when empty; the only thing that rattled was the lounge blinds. However, when hastily packed, items in the offside underseat locker created some interesting sliding sounds too. Note to self: 'must improve my packing methods'.

FLIGHT DECK

As with the many other modern Fiat Ducatos we've reviewed, the wing mirrors proved excellent, and handy enough in this model, the kitchen window offers good vision through the 'van, which is great when reversing.

Items such as cruise control, air-conditioning and a trip computer (showing fuel economy, distance to empty and driving times)

are useful standard-fit items.

Another significant in-cab item is a light mounted to the right of the steering wheel. This lights up red whenever the engine is started and the caravan door's external step is still out. Unlike on more expensive models, this step doesn't automatically retract - it's electric, but you still need to press the button to make it disappear back under the 'van before you hit the road.

RELATIVE TO THE RANGE

With its gold-coloured cab and clean white lines, you may not instantly guess that this is an entry-level motorcaravan. The gold is an optional extra, but even with the standard all-white body and cab, with simple red and grey graphics, it looks modern and classy.

The Ixeo lineup has three key ranges: the entry-level Ixeo Time, the standard Ixeo range and the luxury Ixeo Plus. All have one common feature - that drop-down roof bed.

The it 585 layout is only available in the Time range, but with a massive list of optional extras, you could make it as luxurious as you want - at a price, of course.

DECEPTIVE DIMENSIONS

Wherever we went, 'Iggy' and I drew attention to ourselves. People just strolled over and commented that it was a nice looking little 'van. And when I showed them inside, the admiring look often turned to pure astonishment.

The absolute best thing about this 'van is that it is so spacious on the inside. I'm just not sure where that feeling of space comes from in a motorhome that's no longer than many panel van conversions currently on the road.

Yes it's a little wider and a little higher, but it still doesn't explain it - the first time I stepped into this 'van I did a double take and had to walk round the outside, just to check there was no trickery involved. Maybe The Doctor had a hand in its design?

On Test Bürstner Ixeo Time it 585

ON THE INSIDE

So let's discuss that spaciousness. The light fabrics and light wood may go some way to explain it. As does that large open-plan feel, the corner washroom and adjacent wardrobe are the only parts of the interior that aren't wide open for the world to see. Unlike many, this motorhome completely lacks any kind of corridor effect.

My one concern was about light levels, as there's no large rooflight of the kind that we've got so used to in modern motorhomes. However, it doesn't seem to be much worse off. On darker days the interior does feel a little gloomy, but not oppressively so. There's a rooflight above the cab and another one between the kitchen and lounge, which seem to do the job just as well.

The lounge is the star feature in this motorhome. It's simply - and accurately - described as massive, with a long L-shaped sofa and an inward-facing sofa opposite. All told, if you wanted to pack your friends in for a few drinks of an evening, you'd be able to seat at least eight people in here. There'd be a few 'mobility issues' around the rather large table, but at least everybody will have plenty of space to rest their drinks and nibbles.

A big table, but it's actually smaller than was seen in the launch model. It's a little



lighter too (although it's still solid), which means it's much easier to move the top around on its sliding mechanism. I did as the handover man (from Camper UK in Lincoln) told me and left the table unfixed while on site. This means you can just push it and slide it out of the way when you need to move around the seating.

When you're on the move, it's easy to lock it in place over the L-shaped sofa and out of the way, allowing you to move from cab to kitchen and washroom, and vice versa. At mealtimes, you could realistically seat five for a full meal, and with plenty of space to spare.

The only downside with the extremely comfortable sofas is that the tall backrests cover up about a third of the side windows. If they were lower they would allow in more natural light, but then they might not be as comfortable.

It's also worth remembering that there is limited height in the lounge, as there's a small step up and the drop-down bed looms above, making the lounge ceiling lower: there's only around 5ft 9in of headroom in here. Fine, if you're sat down (the high-level lockers don't seem to have impact on this), but for taller people, the passage from kitchen to cab might involve stooping.

Plentiful halogen-powered spotlights (mounted in the base of the bed) mean that this is no dingy lounge in the evenings. Depending on your needs, you can have all eight on at the same time, or just the left, or the right, four.

IN STASIS

At bedtime, you simply push up the bed slightly and press a centrally-mounted button to release the locking mechanism. The bed drops down slowly without the need to heave on it or stop it from descending too quickly. It's a good solid action. You just have to remember to flip the three sofa backrests down to allow the bed to travel to its lowest possible position.

I'm going to confide in you, dear readers, and admit that I was overjoyed at the sight of a more-than-decent ladder for the

bed. Maybe that's as sad as it sounds, but with memories of thin, un-foot-friendly steps, and me gingerly exiting overcab beds as a child, you might not blame me. This one's more of a 'stair' ladder than a simple rung affair; the top slots on to the edge of the bed as normal, but big platform steps fold out for a wide, comfy foothold. You have to try it to understand my enthusiasm, but this is one of the very best bed access ladders I've had the pleasure to use.

Once in bed, there are security nets that can be erected on both sides to stop you falling out in the middle of the night - one big one at the forward end, two smaller ones at the rear. Lowering just one of the rear ones allows easy exit from the bed. There are two spotlights at one end - you don't have to sleep with your head at this end, but will need to if you want to read.

A good thing is that the mattress protrudes out slightly at the forward end, and into the cab area, increasing its width by nearly a foot. This makes a big difference space-wise, when two are abed.

A concern (and one I'll be seeking advice on from Camper UK) is that the bed didn't want to stay locked up in the roof with the bedding still in place. I tried various things and eventually resorted to storing the bedding elsewhere. It's really a good job that this motorhome has so much storage space - more on this later.

SPACE FOOD

And so to the kitchen - another great feature, with plenty of welcome space on the menu. Arranged as a large L-shape, there's a long unit running aft along the offside, which houses large drawers and provides plenty of worktop. Across the rear is a cutlery drawer, cupboard housing a waste bin, the fridge and above, the hob and sink. Three high-level lockers add more storage opportunities. Two decent-sized windows let plenty of light into this area and allow for good ventilation when cooking. The three-burner hob, sadly, has only manual ignition: I really must stop using



Live-in Test report



5

3 Lounge sofas are very comfy, but backrests partially block the windows

4 L-shaped and roomy, the kitchen provides good amounts of storage space and lots of worktop

5 The drop-down roof bed is a reason-to-buy feature. Inset: A great access ladder to the bed

6 Galley star is the sink, with proper drainer and divided lid

7 Stylish fridge sports sexy blue lighting

a standard gas lighter and get a fit-for-purpose longer one before I finally burn my fingers!

The adjacent sink is brilliant - it's big enough to wash the pots from dinner, and you can leave everything to dry on the good-sized integrated drainer. Its two glass lids allow extra flexibility: leave the one covering the sink bowl lowered while you cook - for extra work-surface - and you still have the drainer available for hot pans. Come pot rinsing time, you can simply reverse the positions. Meanwhile, the centrally-

mounted tap makes it easy to draw water - lids up or down.

The stylish-looking fridge offers good capacity and the usual features: door compartments, a freezer compartment and shelves. It has bright blue internal lights, which switch on when you open the door and is a standard three-way device, with manual energy selection.

