



The new Carlight Commander 162 EW offers top touring quality for those fortunate enough to be able to afford this 21ft two-berth

Commanding presence

When Carlight invites us to view a new model, there's a lot of oohing-and-ahing in the office as we prepare to be amazed once again by this top independent maker. And, once again, it did not let us down, this time with its new Commander 162 EW.

You won't find fibreboard cupboards here, nor locker flaps. Instead, each cupboard door fits into its locker wall so perfectly that you couldn't even get a knife blade between the gap. Pull out a drawer and you will see beautifully-tailored,

dovetailed joints. And again, not a scrap of fibreboard or plastic in sight, merely hand-crafted, lightweight beechwood.

All the 162 EW's hinges, stays and catches seem a nautical mile ahead of those from mainstream makers – boat suppliers provide Carlight with all these attachments, so they're stronger, more solid and far more attractive to look at.

The whole ambience of the front dinette is more like a cabin cruiser than a caravan. Indeed, even the oven and hob are supplied by SMEV, another marine manufacturer. And adding to the

quality of the kitchen is a green baize-lined cutlery drawer and Doulton china set.

This tourer is unquestionably sumptuous. Carlight's upholstery is chosen by the customer, supplied by a local clothmaker, and oozes satiny class. Deep red cushions offset the bright and pleasant lemon upholstery – a combination which works well.

What surprises most about this new Carlight is not its staggering luxury but the surprising degree of practicality that complements it. Outside the van, the insulated gas locker reveals enough space for two 6kg bottles or a single

13kg unit. In addition, the base on which they sit pulls out, providing superb access. The principle is applied to the battery box, too. The battery slides out on rails for total access. Next to this is a locker, offering combined access to all gas taps, the water filter, and fresh water ports.

Practical genius

Best of all, though, is the Fiamma winterised waste system. A wide-bore expandable tube has twist-fit connectors between tank and van, so it's completely enclosed and, in theory, there should be no smells or spillage.

Inside the van, the oven cover doubles as a tray. In the lovely end washroom, there is a pull-out stool so you can sit in front of the mirror and dresser. Near the door is a compartment with a flip-top bin and above the door another contains a fire extinguisher and rechargeable torch.

Most impressive, though, is the double bed layout. The entire nearside bunk slides into the centre of the floor to join the offside bunk so there's no hand-to-hand combat with mattresses – sublimely simple. Even as single beds, both bunks pull out six inches or so from the wall, so you don't have to find somewhere for the backrest cushions.

Exclusive, exquisite and practical. Fancy a Commander? You won't get much change from £27,000 but then you are paying for the best. **ADM**

● Don't miss next month's live-in test of this super tourer



Above & left The dinette oozes class and the woodwork glows. Far left Practical touches include a slide-out battery box

CARLIGHT COMMANDER 162 EW

SPECIFICATIONS

Price	£26,985
Warranty	1 year factory
Mass in running order	1280kg
MTPLM	1600kg
User payload	320kg
Interior length	4.97m/16ft 3.5ins
Shipping length	6.52m/21ft 4.5ins
Width	2.16m/7ft 1in
Berths	2
Spare wheel	yes
Blinds / flyscreens	yes
Heating	Carver 5500
Blown-air heating	yes
No of burners	4
Fitted stereo	opt
External mains / BBQ	opt
Cassette toilet	yes
Alarm	opt



INTERIOR LAYOUT