

Bailey Ranger 620/6

It has six berths, a fixed bed and you can tow it with an estate car. **Mark Sutcliffe** asks if Bailey's new twin-axle Ranger is the ultimate family 'van

SPECIFICATION

Price: £11,595 plus delivery
 Berths: 6
 MRO: 1281kg
 Total user payload: 249kg
 MTPLM: 1540kg
 Overall length: 7.89m (25ft 11in)
 Internal length: 6.29m (20ft 7in)
 Overall width: 2.19m (7ft 2in)
 Overall height: 2.71m (8ft 10in)
 Internal height: 1.9m (6ft 3in)

TOWMATCH D

INSURANCE PREMIUM: £321.30

(CaSSOA storage required)

Premium indication provided by

www.shieldyourcaravan.co.uk



FOR & AGAINST

PROS

- Price ● Weight
- Superb kitchen ● Flexibility

CONS

- Small washroom

ALTERNATIVES

- **SPRITE QUATTRO** £11,995
- **ADRIA ADIVA 612UP** £12,199
- **FLEETWOOD SONATA SYMPHONY** £12,895

SINCE the launch of the first Ranger more than a decade ago, Bailey has established a deserved reputation for building attractive caravans, which offer outstanding value for money.

Not content to rest on its laurels however, the Bristol-based manufacturer is rapidly beginning to establish its credentials as an innovator. In the last year or two it has introduced two extremely innovative layouts to the UK: the Senator Virginia and the Pageant Burgundy - both of which have been hugely successful and widely copied by other manufacturers.

This year, Bailey has done it again with the launch of the 620/6 - a roomy six-berth twin-axle complete with side dinette and fixed rear bed. It's also light enough to tow with a family estate car or people carrier and costs less than £12,000.



Re-launched last year, the Series 5 Ranger has proved immensely popular as a solid entry level family caravan, but this is the first time Bailey has built a twin-axle Ranger and boy, has it crammed in a lot.

Fleetwood and Adria must take credit for first introducing this particular floorplan to the UK - but Bailey has stretched it and mounted it on a twin axle platform to provide even more space for a big family.

Step inside through the windowless stable door and you're greeted by a huge front lounge with long opposing sofas comfortably capable of seating six adults. The customary fold-over and pull-out coffee table sits atop a central chest of drawers which is perfect for tea for two.

The larger dining table is cleverly stowed in the bulkhead between the rear sleeping

quarters and the huge kitchen. It's a reasonable size for four - but inadequate for six, leaving owners with a dilemma when faced with feeding all the campers on board. Happily, there's a choice of solutions. Either park two of the children in the side dinette while the remaining diners sit around the main table or alternatively, why not push the boat out by combining the stowaway table with the front occasional table to form a six-person banqueting suite and throw a proper dinner party? This isn't as daft as it sounds once you've experienced the Ranger 620/6's kitchen.

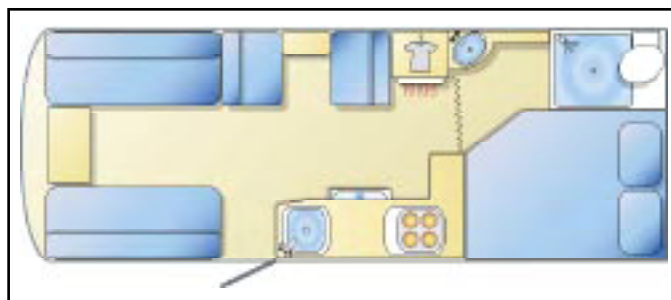
Located amidships on the nearside, the galley is as big as anything I've ever encountered in UK caravan. Not only is it fully equipped with separate domestic-style oven and grill plus a 96-litre fridge, there's also a cupboard either side of the oven and fridge,

three overhead lockers and ample preparation space which can be further increased by a large drop-down work surface over the foot of the fixed bed.

It has to be one of the best caravan kitchens available on the UK market and is actually capable of catering for the full complement of six, if required.

Opposite the kitchen is a side dinette, which converts to a brace of bunks for the little'uns, and a reasonably-sized wardrobe - although this isn't full-height because the Truma gas/electric room heater sits underneath.

Come night-time, with six aboard, it's always going to



Fixed double is fine for six-footers.



Superb kitchen and huge front lounge (inset) mean catering for six is feasible.

be a tight squeeze, but with two smallish kids in the side dinette, there's ample room to accommodate a brace of larger children on the two front sofas, without going to the trouble of making up the mammoth double bed by extending the pull-out slats between the two sofas.

Unbelievably, this still leaves a cosy and private double bedroom with en suite facilities at the back for mum and dad. The mattress sits on a lightweight gas-strut supported frame, offering easy access to the storage space underneath, but if you're much over six feet tall, legroom may be somewhat lacking. A lightweight concertina partition screens parents off from the kids - although they will obviously need to trundle through the rear bedroom if they need the loo.

The washroom itself is where Bailey has chosen to compromise. Whilst offering a separate swivel toilet and shower - just - it's a

tiny affair which really wouldn't cope with ablutions for a family of four - let alone six. So while catering for the multitude is a serious option - a nightly trip to the shower block will be in order to get the kids scrubbed up and ready for dinner.

The washroom is so small that, like the Senator Indiana, the sink and vanity unit are actually located in the back bedroom. Because this area is effectively separate from the rest of the caravan, there's still an element of privacy, but if a large changing and beautifying area is a priority, this particular layout is lacking.

When it comes to storage, however, the 620 really excels. Eye-level lockers, with varying shelf schemes contained within, circle virtually the entire caravan and there's a huge void - incorporating a lined wet locker, under that generous fixed bed at the back. The only area where the big Ranger is lacking is its wardrobe.

In terms of creature comforts, the interior décor is friendly and warm, combining coppery tones with pastel blue and beige. The mid-brown drop-in carpets are practical and hard-wearing and the cabinetry, while not exactly expensive-looking, is pleasant enough to live with.

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Sink and vanity unit are in bedroom.



Although natural light - particularly towards the back of the 'van - is at a premium, Bailey has addressed this issue with a vast array of electric lights. There are no fewer than 20 separate lights of varying types located around the cabin - and this doesn't include the awning light or the striplight in the washroom. There are also three 230-volt sockets and a Status aerial, but don't expect a radio or CD player for this sort of money.

Whilst it's billed as a six-berth and, indeed is capable of sleeping and feeding six in comfort, in the same way that a lot of four-berth 'vans are actually used as spacious two-berths, this big Ranger is most likely going to be used as flexible four-berth.

This unique layout means that mum and dad can have their privacy out back, while two small children can snuggle down in their dens in the bunks, or two larger children can bunk down on those huge front sofas.

In either scenario, the Ranger 620/6's biggest advantage lies in its ability to accommodate two adults and two children without the need to dismantle a bed before anyone can sit down to eat. As anyone who has spent an extended period in a caravan with two children will testify - this is often the biggest hassle of touring with kids and Bailey has neutralized it in the big Ranger.

For the larger family, the extra space afforded by the twin-axle

OUR VERDICT



Bailey has arguably done more to make caravanning accessible to young families on a budget than any other UK manufacturer. The Ranger 620/6 takes this campaign into twin-axle territory.

It was the Swift Group that broke the mould and 'democratised' the twin-axle market with the introduction of the value-for-money Sprite Quattro last year. Sprite's 2007 Quattro is even more aggressively priced and offers excellent value for money, but now it has a serious competitor in a sector it previously had to itself. Sensibly, the Ranger 620/6 takes a very different tack to its rival from Hull, and even if we put these two outstanding vehicles head to head, it would still be almost impossible to pick a winner because they approach the same problem from very different directions. However, if after comparing comfort, quality, price, practicality and flexibility, the deciding criteria were innovation and originality, we suspect the Bailey would snatch it - just.

platform means carrying the full contingent is feasible without an awning - but sites with decent bathing facilities will be a must.

Furthermore, although it's a twin-axle, a decent payload still only takes the MTPLM up to 1540kg - meaning its towable by a large family estate or MPV - thus bringing the 620/6 within reach of customers who previously perhaps thought a four-wheeler was beyond their means.

And finally, if you're beginning to think this 'goldilocks' combination is just too good to be true and the hidden drawback is a hefty pricetag, think again. The Ranger 620/6 will retail at just £11,595 plus delivery. ■



Washroom is small and pretty basic.