

Benimar

Benivan 122

Built in Britain under a Spanish brand name, the Benivan is exclusive to Marquis



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato

PRICE FROM £52,495

BERTHS 2

TRAVEL SEATS 4

LENGTH 6.36m

WIDTH 2.05m

HEIGHT 2.53m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg

PAYLOAD 515kg

ALSO CONSIDER

Auto-Trail Tribute 680

Elddis Autoquest CV40

Swift Select 184



BADGE engineering was once rife in the car world. Remember when Austin and Morris would produce virtually the same car, with just a few tweaks? It's often been an approach used in the motorhome market, too – think Compass and Elddis, or Carado and Sunlight, for example. The advantages for the manufacturer obviously lie in economies of scale. Not only that but you can display two ranges to new customers through separate dealer networks.

One of the newer results of this approach are sister models – taking advantage of a booming van conversion sector – from four

different Trigano Group brands, Auto-Trail, Benimar (as here), Chausson and Roller Team. All are built in Grimsby.

The Benivan will outperform its sister models, though, because it has the new Euro 6d 160bhp motor as standard.

With 19% more torque than the 120bhp unit, it adds an effortless nature to driving and that can be further enhanced by the new nine-speed Fiat automatic (a £3,000 option).

In line with Marquis and Benimar's usual policy of everything included in the specification, the Benivan has a well-appointed cab. Cab air-conditioning, cruise

control, a passenger airbag, leather steering wheel and automatic headlights and windscreen wipers are included, as is a DAB radio with sat-nav and reversing camera.

The Benivan comes only in white, but being built in Britain means that it has its sliding door on the UK nearside. There are two models (there's also a shorter Benivan 120 without rear travel seats), and the 122 adopts what is reckoned to be the UK's most popular



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The Benimar brand is sold throughout the Marquis network, with its 12 outlets covering most of England – from Golden Cross (Sussex), Poole and Plymouth in the south to Preston and County Durham in the north.



In Scotland, Benimar motorhomes are sold through Marquis' partner, The Motorhome Company, in Perthshire, while in Northern Ireland Camper NI has been appointed.

The Benimar range imported by Marquis has specification and layouts that have been developed especially for the UK, including placing the habitation door on the British nearside.

WHO IS BENIMAR?



This Spanish maker developed a strong following here in the late 1990s and early 2000s with a reputation based on great value. Then it disappeared from the scene, before being reintroduced by Marquis Leisure in 2014.

Today, its range includes Tessoro and Mileo coachbuilts on Ford Transit and Fiat Ducato, respectively, with design and spec that are extensively reworked for our market. New last season, though, was the addition of two campervans under the Benivan name. These differ even more widely from their continental cousins as they are effectively rebranded Auto-Trails and are built not in Peñíscola, Spain but the slightly less sunny climes of Grimsby, north Lincolnshire.



layout for larger van conversions.

There are no surprises inside the Benivan, then, but where this model differs from some of its rivals is in offering four travel seats but only two berths. To some that might seem nonsensical but it adds versatility for those who may need to carry a passenger from a younger or older generation from time to time. And, if grandchildren are the passengers, they may well prefer sleeping separately, in a tent or awning. Certainly, a benefit of the half-dinette bench not having to double up as a bed is that it can be shaped properly as a seat.

Of course, here there's a rear lounge, too – one that adapts easily into beds – with a choice of sleeping lengthways in twin beds (1.78m and 1.80m long) for easier access or across the 'van in a longer double bed.

Night-time pluses are upmarket concertina-style blinds, reading lights in all four corners of the lounge/bedroom and a slim surface atop the table's locker for bedtime drinks, etc.

The galley comes with a two-burner hob and sink combination unit, while a gas oven replaces the previous microwave for the 2020 season. Storage is in a large cutlery drawer,

two floor-level cupboards (more drawers would have meant less bending down) and a small top locker. Under the adjacent wardrobe is the 85-litre three-way fridge with removable freezer compartment.

The washroom will, again, be familiar to Tribute owners, and has the same foibles such as a toilet that requires long legs for comfortable sitting and a mirrored cupboard that could do with straps to hold shampoo bottles, etc, in place. That said, the Benivan's washroom is well finished and reasonably roomy for a campervan.