

# Love Island

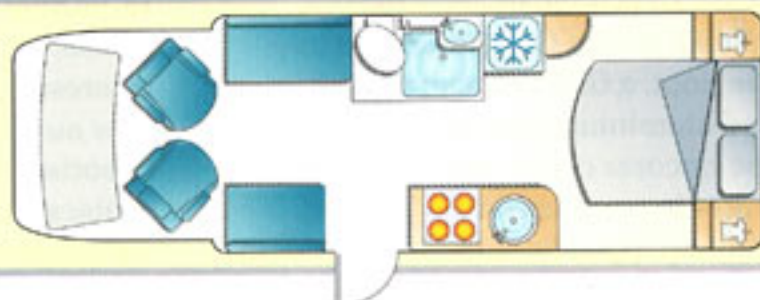
A more conventional lengthways island bed proves to be a great asset in the new Elddis Encore 250



*The Bromleys*

## ELDDIS ENCORE 250

Price from: £54,949  
 Berths: 4 Travel seats: 4  
 Base vehicle: Fiat Ducato  
 Length: 7.41m  
 Gross weight: 3,500kg





A classic side settee lounge with added armrests and scatter cushions creates a very comfortable area to relax in

The 2020 Eddis motorhome hierarchy runs from the stalwart, six-model Autoquest range, via the four compact Accordos, to the luxury Encores, with a quartet of layouts. Last year's Encore 254 has disappeared, replaced by this new 250; the key difference is the lengthways location of the island bed, unlike the transverse position in the 254. However, the motorhome's overall length remains the same at 7.41m.

Despite Encores being at the top of the Eddis pyramid, they're very competitively priced – all models cost the same, starting at £54,949. Using Eddis' established SoLiD (Strong, Light, Dry) bonded construction system, with a GRP underskin to the floor, a GRP overcab moulding and aluminium one-piece sides, the Encores come with a 10-year water ingress warranty. They're well-equipped as standard, too, with

Alde 'wet' radiator heating (gas and electric) being the outstanding feature.

#### OUT-BOXED

Interestingly, this year the base vehicle has changed from Peugeot Boxer to Fiat Ducato. Both are built together at the Sevel factory in Italy, so the main differences are the engines and transmissions.

This year, Ducatos join the mainstream by using AdBlue to meet ever more stringent European emissions legislation (Euro 6d). The engine still displaces 2.3 litres but the output has risen from 130bhp to 140bhp and torque from 320Nm to 350Nm. However, probably more interesting to many will be the brand-new automatic gearbox. Unlike the robotised manual Comfort-Matic it replaces, this is a 'proper' nine-speed torque converter 'box. Unfortunately,

these seem to be in short supply currently, so the test Encore had the familiar six-speed manual.

With the new gearbox costing a reasonable £2,000 extra (or £3,000 if combined with the 160bhp upgrade), we'd expect a majority of Encores to be automatics in pretty short order. Peugeots (and their Citroën siblings) still lack any form of automatic gearbox, so doubtless this will be one reason why Eddis changed to Fiat.

The Encore has new graphics, smart champagne sidewalls and copper-coloured highlights. The low-profile GRP forehead blends smoothly with the cab and alloy wheels (£650 extra) set off the crisp looks. Whilst not standing out from the crowd, it looks perfectly agreeable.

What is noticeable is the large (2.4m) overhang – rear steadies would avoid that 'did the earth move' feeling on site, while we found the



The front bed has a privacy screen



The Aguti travel seats store neatly away



Surplus cushions when the Aguti travel seats are in use



View forwards from the bedroom

#### SECOND OPINION

*"It's a classic layout with a high spec and a great USP in the form of the fold-away Aguti travel seats"*

PETER VAUGHAN ROAD TEST EDITOR

lack of a rear camera worrying on the road. Large overhangs can swing alarmingly when manoeuvring, risking unintended contact with walls, bollards and gateposts, so any assistance is useful. Fortunately, a camera is a must-have £365 option.

Inside, the cab remains familiar. The Fiat Ducato may have been refreshed for 2020, but you'd hardly know. The steering wheel still lacks rake adjustment, the handbrake is still low to the driver's right and the fascia is still a sombre black in low-rent plastics. However, the comfortable seats are multi-adjustable and, behind the scenes, there are new features, including stop/start, which also involves a new smart alternator, plus a tyre pressure monitoring system.

The steering wheel, whilst not leather-bound, has the usual controls for audio and phone, and air-con and cruise control are both standard.

Driving the Encore, with its new 140bhp engine feels... just like driving the previous Ducato. The motor has a slightly more raucous sound compared with the equivalent 2019 Peugeots (though the Boxer's engine has also been updated to comply with the Euro 6d regulations and we haven't driven that yet) and the extra 10bhp isn't obvious.

There were a few minor rattles from the rear (mainly from the cooker) but these would be easy to silence with some well-placed tea towels and the suspension, being Fiat's own low-line motorhome chassis, was supple and smoothed bumpy surfaces quite well.

#### KINGS OF LEON

Courtesy of the low chassis, no external step is needed to enter, just a moulded internal one. The layout is a classic British interpretation of

a familiar theme with the swivelled cab seats facing a cosy lounge, with two inward-facing settees and a free-standing table. The kitchen is centrally located on the nearside, with the washroom opposite and, at the rear, is the bedroom.

Internal ambience is modern, light and airy, the Leon upholstery being a pleasant tweedy mushroom colour, with coordinated scatter cushions. The cab has easy-to-operate Remis blinds and all habitation windows have concertina blinds, plus curtains in the lounge. Last, but not least, there are several skylights: a large opening one above the cab, another over the lounge, a smaller Heki above the kitchen aisle, and a fourth (medium-sized) above the rear bed.

As well as looking inviting, this lounge is very comfortable. On holiday (in Britain at least) you'll probably spend considerable time inside and ►

LIKED



- Well-equipped kitchen
- Alde 'wet' central heating system

DISLIKED



- Location of washroom towel rail
- Amount of storage (and therefore potential weight) behind rear axle

WANTED

- Rear corner steadies
- Rear-view camera as standard



The Hypnos mattress is firm and comfortable; the bed can be retracted during the day

here you can relax, feet-up, on settees. The nearside settee is slightly shorter than the offside's, but you could still happily seat five, six at a pinch. It helps that the cab and lounge share a level floor with just a small step down to the main area. This reduces lounge headroom to 1.88m, but that's still adequate for most.

The table (with its own dedicated cupboard) will accommodate four and can be taken outside. The all-LED illumination is reasonable, with reading lights for the cab seats, and two more for each settee, though there are no ceiling clusters, just a couple of ambient strips over the high-level cupboards. There's a wall-mounted TV bracket (plus aerial point) in the front offside corner of the lounge, plus 12V and mains sockets and, with softly wafting warm air rising from the Alde heating outlets under the seats and in the floor, it feels very civilised.

FOR FOUR

The two settees combine to form an extra double bed, thereby making four berths, and anyone familiar with Eddis knows the company's mantra: 'belts equal berths.'

Remove the cushions (into the rear bedroom, we'd suggest, though they do rather fill it), raise the settee bases against the wall, and you'll find two Aguti seats, curled up, 'asleep'. Very cleverly, they unfurl to form two slim but supportive seats with three-point belts and (in production models) Isofix fittings. You sit quite low relative to the windows, but adults and larger children can see out satisfactorily and there's reasonable legroom. Though undeniably useful, when folded away they reduce storage, although some under-settee capacity does remain.

The kitchen provides nearly everything (bar an integral draining board and an extractor) for any

discerning chef. There's reasonable work surface (increased by a lift-up section adjacent to the doorway) containing a large sink and a Thetford cooker comprising three auto-ignition gas burners and a mains electric hotplate, separate grill and oven. But that's not all, as easily accessible above the cooker is a microwave.

There are two well-placed mains sockets and considerable storage, both at high-level (two large cupboards, one with crockery racking, plus a smaller one above the microwave) and, in the main kitchen unit, three good drawers and a cupboard under the sink, plus a locker under the cooker. Meanwhile, opposite the kitchen there's yet another cupboard below the slimline, 134-litre, Dometic AES fridge (with removable freezer compartment). All is illuminated by four overhead clusters, and the opening window, thus completing a practical kitchen.



The free-standing table is ideal for two and the overcab sunroof adds daylight up front

## CURTAIN COMPROMISE

If you have a large lounge and a well-equipped kitchen, you're going to have to compromise somewhere, otherwise you'll be driving an 8m behemoth! Here, it's the washroom that suffers.

The Encore lacks the separate shower that features in many rivals. An all-in-one affair, the shower tray forms the main washroom floor and the swivel toilet sits slightly above, to one side. There's a shower curtain protecting the door and cupboards and the washroom walls are sealed together, rather than being a superior one-piece moulding. There's only one drainhole, which is correctly positioned at the front of the tray.

There's reasonable elbow-room and some nice fittings, including an Alde heated towel rail (though perhaps it would be better mounted elsewhere) and a pull-out drying rack. On a corner shelf is the round, plastic

washbasin with swivelling mixer tap, there's a Halo eco-showerhead on a riser bar and there are mirrors seemingly everywhere. There's also a rooflight, a big cupboard over the toilet, and a loo-roll holder and toothbrush mug.

Overall, it's reasonable use of a confined space, but the shower facilities may not appeal to those who camp wild or on aires, etc.

At the rear, the bedroom now has its island bed centrally, framed by two wardrobes with drawers (offside), and a cupboard (nearside) below, and overhead cupboards between. The bed can be retracted during the day, giving extra room around the foot, but, even when fully extended, there's adequate space to squeeze past. The mattress measures a reasonable 1.87m by 1.33m maximum, though, as always, we advise couples to test it together, ensuring both are comfortable with

the truncated bed ends. It's worth having a lie-down, anyway, on Eddis' new Hypnos mattress – a £200 option, this promises slumber fit for a queen – Hypnos is 'By Appointment'!

There are two cupboards and a surface in the front offside corner of the bedroom, and also a TV bracket and socket, and the floor is sensibly flat throughout (no tripping on nocturnal wanderings). The Alde boiler lives under the bed and there are vents for warm air at either wall.

Don't forget the front bed, either. Whilst the rear bedroom lacks any privacy, there's a pull-out concertina screen up front, isolating the lounge bed. The two settees just pull together to make a very long transverse double, but, as one settee is shorter than the other, width decreases on the nearside. With a slight knee-roll on the seat cushions, you may wish to turn them, and there's a slim infill cushion ►



A compact, yet well-designed washroom

The Aguti travel seats have three-point seatbelts



### THE VERDICT

A competitively priced and well-equipped motorhome, the Encore 250 is now built on the Fiat Ducato with the benefit of its new nine-speed automatic gearbox option. It is spacious and comfortable and has the benefit of Alde central heating and those pop-up Aguti travel seats. The lack of a separate shower may take it off the must-see list for some buyers.

to complete the bed.

There's cubbies above the cab, overhead cupboards in the lounge, and limited storage under the settees. However, there's fairly generous space under the island bed. The base lifts on gas struts, while there's also a drop-down front flap and (a rather small) exterior hatch at the rear. Overall, storage for two is quite reasonable, but four travellers would have to pack carefully – and the 430kg payload is similarly geared more to two.

There are mounting rails on the back panel for a bike rack and, hidden behind sliding covers, an external mains socket, plus aerial, satellite and 12V sockets for al fresco TV watching. A Winter Pack is included

as standard, with tank heaters, waste pipe insulation and fridge vent covers, so the underslung tanks (100 litres for fresh water and a small 60 litres for waste) should be capable of withstanding most winter conditions. The Encores also have a spare wheel as standard. [www.eddis.co.uk](http://www.eddis.co.uk)

#### MOTORHOME SUPPLIED BY

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### FACTS AND FIGURES

**PRICE**  
 From: £54,949  
 As tested: £55,799

**BASICS**  
 Berths: 4  
 Travel seats: 4

**Warranty:** Three years base vehicle and conversion, ten years water ingress  
**Type approval:** European Whole Vehicle

**DIMENSIONS**  
 Length: 7.41m (24ft 4in)  
 Width: 2.35m (7ft 8½in)  
 Height: 2.82m (9ft 3in)  
 Gross vehicle weight: 3,500kg  
 Payload: 430kg

**BASE VEHICLE**  
**Type:** Fiat Ducato chassis-cab  
**Engine:** 2.3-litre, 140bhp, Euro 6d, six-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive

**KITCHEN**  
**Cooker:** Thetford hob, grill, and oven, with three gas burners and one mains hotplate. Russell Hobbs 800W microwave  
**Fridge:** Dometic Slimline, 134-litre, AES, removable freezer compartment

**BEDS**  
**Rear island bed:** 1.87m x 1.33m max (6ft 2in x 4ft 4in)  
**Front lounge bed:** 2.10m x 1.24m/0.97m (6ft 11in x 4ft 1in/3ft 2in)

**ESSENTIALS**  
**Fresh water:** 100 litres (underslung, insulated and heated)  
**Waste water:** 60 litres (underslung, insulated and heated)  
**Space/water heating:** Alde 3020 gas/mains 'wet' central heating  
**Leisure battery:** 95Ah  
**Gas:** 2 x 11kg

**OPTIONS**  
**Fitted to test vehicle:** Alloy wheels (£650), Hypnos island bed mattress (£200)  
**Other options available:** Nine-speed automatic gearbox (£2,000), 160bhp engine and automatic (£3,000), sat-nav upgrade to DAB radio (£530), awning (£575), rear view camera (£365), leather upholstery (£1,650), two-bike rack (£235), automatic satellite system (£1,699)

**THE ALTERNATIVES**  
 Adria Coral Plus 670 DC £62,995  
 Chausson 768XLB £50,250

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