

SOUTH PACIFIC

Pilote Pacific 62 on Fiat 2.8JTD

Peter Vaughan headed south (well south-east) with the new Pilote Pacific, soothed by the orchestral accompaniment of its Fiat 2.8JTD engine

Every summer Jo and I escape the office for a couple of weeks with a test vehicle. The destination is usually a little vague, often decided on a last minute whim, but the motorhome is booked months ahead. Even our long-term test vehicles do not always see such an extended period of use in one, uninterrupted go, so this test vehicle is not one that is decided upon lightly.

Not all manufacturers or importers are able, or willing, to lend a registered vehicle in the height of summer for over two weeks, but the list of 'possibles' can be quite extensive. So here comes the good bit - choosing something that we are sure we will enjoy living in (and driving) for so long.

Pilotes, over the years, have figured in our tours on a number of occasions and I admit to holding the marque in high regard. So this year we returned to Hayes (Leisure) cap in hand, and gratefully accepted the keys to a brand-new Pacific 62 with just 180 miles on the clock.

The model was our choice from the whole range. We could have opted for the flagship Mercedes A-class, but that could have been cumbersome when parking. No, for two, the Pacific 62 seemed to have it all - fixed bed, lots of storage, separate shower, and still an overall length of just over 6m (fractionally under 20ft). Even better, 'ours' was specified with the optional 2.8JTD powerhouse.

A day after it arrived on our driveway, we were off for 17 nights of touring. The Czech republic was our destination, then on to Vienna before wending our way home.

Pacific specifics

The Pacific range is Pilote's low-profile series and includes Mercedes, Fiat and Peugeot-based models. The 62 is the smallest version sold in the UK.

The two digit model number indicates a lower level of standard specification than those with three digit tags, such as the longer Pacific 690, though features such as a Heki sunroof can be added from the options list.

The base vehicle is a long wheelbase Fiat Ducato, but in platform cab form rather than the usual chassis cab. That means that behind the driver's compartment the Ducato has a complete steel floor (like a panel van), instead of the usual ladder-frame chassis of a chassis cab. It seems like a more substantial base onto which to build a coachbuilt motorhome and does enable Pilote to keep the body commendably low. You have to have this Pilote on a Fiat, however, instead of the Peugeot normally favoured by Pilote UK, as the Boxer is not available in this form with right-hand drive.

With Ducato and Boxer now sharing turbo-diesel motors in both 1.9 and 2.8-litre derivatives, the badge will really only concern you in relation to the location of your nearest dealer. And you can have this Ducato powered by either size of TD motor. The larger capacity will set you back an extra £1730, but as we weren't paying and Steve Hayes was offering...

All white

The all-white Pilote body (including skirts and rear bumper) blends well with the Fiat cab, which suffers not for its lack of colour-keyed front bumper. Bold graphics add a summery, leisure vehicle look, even on the gloomiest of days, and the low overall height lends a compact impression to what is still a long wheelbase motorhome.

The French have long favoured the low-profile body style for their coachbuilts and this Pacific's neat looks show those years of experience. When it comes to the details, however, one that we were especially pleased by was the low entrance to the caravan door. There's no need for a fiddly,

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Unusually this Pilote has its access to the underbed locker at the rear, rather than the side. Hatch is big enough to accept outdoor chairs or a folding bike.



Ducato cab has blue dials that include a rev counter. Also fitted as standard are electric windows and a radio/cassette with two speakers.



Rear offside corner is home to the gas locker, which will hold two 13kg cylinders - more than most rivals.

hand-dirtying manual step (nor an electric one, which might fail in future years) and Pilote also fit a practical mat in the entrance, as well as a flyscreen door. There's no awning light, but an interior light switch is just inside the door.

The one-piece door is on the nearside, for all UK Pilotes are right-hand drive with their layouts properly adjusted to suit. Along this left-hand side you'll also see the fridge vents (partially obstructed with the door clipped open) and, further to the rear, the cassette toilet servicing hatch. Below the nearside skirt is the large diameter drain for the underfloor waste water tank. The valve release is a large twist handle, and a screw-on hose (clipped under the rear nearside skirt) is used for those occasions when you cannot drive sufficiently close to an emptying point.

On the offside, at the rear, is the gas locker with capacity for two 13kg cylinders, plenty for a long tour. Further forward are the fresh water filler and the boiler flue. The water tank is inboard for better frost protection, and the key to the filler is the same one that opens the caravan door, as well as the storage, gas and toilet hatches. Just one other key serves all the base vehicle functions, so you only have two keys and a rather smart embossed Pilote key fob to clutter your pocket.

The large under-bed locker is, unusually, accessed from the rear of the motorhome. The gas locker and rear wheelarch prevent the siting of a further hatch on the offside and the door in the back may actually be more convenient for loading long items. The hatch measures 850mm by 350mm (33.5in x 14in) and it can be clipped open for loading. Its lock and handle are also much more user-friendly than the usual motorhome locker catches.

Ducato driver

The novelty of 2.8JTD badges on the front wings may whet the appetite for driving, but inside this Fiat cab is completely familiar. Loose seat covers (to match the Trinity fabric in the rear) and removable cab carpet add a little luxury in a totally practical way, and there's a Kenwood radio/cassette with



The cab roof has been cut away for an easy walk through. On the left is a TV shelf (but no power point) and a shelf above the 'screen is perfect for guidebooks and maps.

removable fascia panel. It plays through just two cab speakers, but the wiring is in situ to add rear speakers. The stereo will operate without the ignition key and radio reception was excellent.

The driver's seat is the multi-adjustable type with height and tilt variation for the squab, which does enable greater fine-tuning of the driving position. The dinette behind does not restrict movement of the seat for taller drivers and, while the passenger seat has just reach and rake adjustment, both chairs have a single armrest.

Fortunately, Pilote have resisted the temptation to add a layer of extra trim to the dashboard and claim a walnut-effect fascia. No Ducato will ever look like a Bentley from behind the wheel and these trims only look like walnut before I put my glasses on - and I'm very short-sighted! If you want extra features in the cab, they are here in the form of electric windows and a rev counter - much more useful.

The 2001-model Ducato also has a lock for its glovebox, but still no passenger door pocket. The double lens door mirrors are a great benefit and the cab is generally well thought out, including height-adjustable upper seatbelt mountings and headlamp angle adjustment from the fascia. Skirts below the seats hide the ugly metal box bases, and Pilote stow the auxiliary battery under the passenger's backside. The driver's seat has storage underneath. Up above, the cab roof has been cut-away for an easier walk through and the shelf added above the windscreen is the perfect home for maps and guide books.

Common-rail technology

With the addition of common-rail technology to the direct-injection turbocharged 2.8-litre diesel Fiat engine, comes a little extra power (5bhp) and torque (up by 15Nm). Hardly huge, earth shattering gains, but useful nonetheless, especially as they are claimed to accompany improved emissions and fuel consumption figures. The old 2.8idTD was itself the recipient of many favourable words in these pages and the new JTD version



loses nothing to its predecessor.

Despite arriving with minimal mileage, this Ducato immediately felt lively, easily living up to its claimed 127 horses. Even more pleasingly, it also showed a marked improvement in refinement over its pre-common-rail cousins. No longer do you have to have the radio blaring at motorway speeds; and, at a relaxed fifth gear cruise, the new Fiat engine is impressively subdued. Accelerate hard and it's more vocal, but never unpleasantly so. And Pilote have done their bit and kept conversion rattles at bay. The Smev grill needs a tea towel wrapped around the grilling rack and the cobbled streets of some Czech towns caused all manner of additional noises, but that is hardly a fair test.

Lack of noise results in a more relaxed driver, and more torque means fewer gearchanges, so more relaxed still. Indeed, the JTD Fiat produces 20 per cent more torque than the 120bhp Ford Transit 2.4TD and at fewer revs too. It shows, for this Pilote would pull away effortlessly from under 20mph in fourth gear. It amazed us too, with just how few gearchanges were needed, even on the longest gradients.

On the motorway, 70mph cruising was a doddle from the start and, as the engine loosened up, performance improved noticeably. With more than 2500 miles added to the odometer during this test, the Pilote turned into a real flyer - 75-80mph became quite relaxed on the level and top speed was at least 90mph. No doubt the reduced frontal area and sleeker shape of this

Pacific also helped in this regard, for the lack of sway from crosswinds or passing HGVs was as good as any coachbuilt we have tested.

Fuel economy also showed improvement as the engine loosened up. Our first fill-up resulted in the worst mpg figure of just 22, but soon that became a consistent 26-27mpg, with gentle touring resulting in a best of almost 32mpg. With European diesel prices so much lower than here, motorcaravanning becomes much more affordable.

The low-profile design also results in a lower centre of gravity that, combined with the long wheelbase and modest rear overhang, creates a fine handling vehicle. On twisty roads the Pilote always felt remarkably surefooted.

With good mirrors, excellent power steering and a slick dashboard-mounted gearshift, the Ducato seemed to have pretty much all that a motorhome driver could wish for. Through visibility is very limited though, due to the high back of the forward-facing rear passenger seat.

Join the Euro

If you are a pro-European who thinks we should join up, hook line and sinker, straight away, then this Pacific 62 is probably for you. If you are more of a gallons and inches, tweeds and pound notes sort, then perhaps it will be less your cup of tea. You see, the Europeans now go for these fixed bed, low-profile models in a very, very big way. We were a bit (well, more than a



General view looking forward with the kitchen on the left, dinette on the right. You'll pay extra for a swivel cab seat, which would be a useful addition.



Looking back from the Fiat cab. Dinette and fixed bed are on the offside, kitchen, caravan door, wardrobe and bathroom on the nearside.

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bit) slow to catch on to the advantages here, but more and more motorhomes of this style are finding British buyers - and some UK manufacturers have even joined the fray.

The Pacific 62 is about as small as this type of motorhome gets. After all, you have to find room for the kitchen, bathroom, dinette and the all-important bed. Rapido and Laika have models that are a few inches shorter, but Hobby and Benimar low-profiles are all notably longer, as are British fixed bed 'vans from Auto-Sleepers and Swift. In terms of price, the Pilote is well above budget low profiles (from the likes of McLouis, Elnagh and Caravans International) but it undercuts most non-Italian fixed bed models.

The layout follows a conventional pattern, reversed to place the door on the 'British' side. That means the dinette and bed live on the offside, with the kitchen, caravan door, wardrobe and bathroom running along the nearside. Large windows in the lounge and bedroom let in plenty of daylight

and the Pacific avoids the slightly cramped feel of some of its competitors. It also looks classy; benefiting from the same curved fronted locker doors and high gloss worktops as the pricier Galaxy A-class models. We also liked the modern, predominantly green, upholstery, although two abstract alternatives are on offer. Walls trimmed with 'wood panelling' are a distinctive touch that is also highly practical, as we discovered when a cake decided to leak strawberry juice out of a high-level locker. Fortunately, and miraculously, it missed the seats and carpet!

Dinette for four

Unlike many other models in the Pilote range, which have an L-shaped lounge for UK buyers to relax in, the Pacific 62 retains a conventional dinette. Now some will bemoan the fact that a simple dinette, on its own, does not make a great lounge. As I've said, though, you can't have



Conventional Pullman-style dinette has space for four around the wall-mounted table. Side window has net curtains and decorative drapes.



Folding flaps on the ends of dinette seats are the bed extensions, but they can also double as coffee tables.



Forward-facing dinette seat has head restraints and three-point belts, but upright seatbelt mounting could be better hidden and protected. False floor between seats ensures comfortable seat height.



The kitchen - all folded away. Glass lids cover sink and hob, but tap had a tendency to dribble on the closed lid.



The kitchen again - opened for action. Hob has three burners, but no spark ignition. Stainless steel sink has integral drainer.

► Rear double bed is mounted on a slatted base, which tips up to access the storage below. We found room for a folding bike, outdoor chairs and table, beach bag, windbreak, mains cable, and the beer and wine we brought home!



everything in a 20ft 'van - and the Pilote's dinette is actually a great deal more inviting than some. Add the optional swivel passenger cab seat (only £105 to you, squire) and I, for one, would have no complaints at all.

The large wall rail-mounted table is rock solid and it slides easily for access, aided by wheels on the bottom of its single leg. Dining for four is quite possible, and for two it is spacious indeed. A raised floor (by four inches) between the dinette seats results in a comfortable seat to floor ratio that others would do well to copy, whilst also giving a good view from the large top-hung side window. There's nowhere specific to stow the table, but if you want it out of the way it's not difficult to lay it on the bed (or under the bed when motoring).

The forward-facing dinette seat is equipped for two travellers. It has two three-point belts hung from a centre support, but despite twin head restraints the support itself is rather too exposed and could be hit by the back of a passenger's head when recoiling from the inertia locked seatbelt. The seat base has a steel frame and the belts and clasps tuck unobtrusively away when not required. Rear passenger heating is an unusual option that should stop your back seat travellers from huddling together under blankets in winter weather. It could tip the scales in favour of the Pilote if you regularly travel with more than two on board.

If you cannot survive an evening without Eastenders, then you'll be relieved to see the TV shelf positioned above the driver's seat. Then joy turns to disappointment when you find no power points, though a 12V lead might reach to the dashboard cigar lighter. A properly fitted-out TV cupboard can be specified for an extra £103.

Cordon bleu kitchen?

The cooking department is fitted with the now definitely 'en-vogue' glass-lidded flush-fitting hob and sink. These, however, are Cramer items, rather than the usual Smev ones. The cooker has three burners (one with larger pan stand), but no push-button ignition. The sink, also stainless steel, has an integral drainer but, when we swivelled the tap to close the lid, it usually dribbled annoyingly onto the worktop. You also have to take care not to turn

the tap on when twisting it to open the sink lid. Better detailing was the use of glass guards to prevent burns or stains to the surfaces around the cooker and sink.

In common with most motorhomes with this style of layout, the Pacific does lack kitchen worktop space, unless you have either the hob or sink lid closed. Once both are raised, you have to turn around and use the dining table.

The fridge is a 103-litre three-way model with electronic ignition, while alongside, a Smev grill takes care of the British need to burn slices of bread each morning. With push-button ignition and a light, the small Smev unit can also be used as a warming oven.

Above the grill is a large cutlery drawer, capable of holding long knives and all manner of culinary gadgets. Why several British companies still cannot fit a decent cutlery drawer like this is beyond my comprehension.

Below the grill is a largish locker (which contains the RCD), while two high-level cupboards complete the adequate, if not generous, kitchen area storage. A fluorescent tube light directly illuminates the cook's chores and a roof vent above is sensibly placed for frying smells to escape.

On the front of the kitchen unit is a covered three-pin mains socket, which seemed a fairly sensible location. Disappointingly, though, this was the only mains power point provided.

Stowage for everything

One of the beauties of a fixed bed layout is the storage space provided under the bed. Accessible from outside, as already described, the under-bed locker can also be reached from within. The mattress end tips up, supported by twin gas struts, and unlike many others, Pilote have provided struts that can support the extra weight of pillows and duvet. The space beneath is huge and even those who like to take something for every eventuality will struggle to fill it. It's darned useful for stocking up with beer and wine when returning from the Continent too, and the Pilote has a reasonably generous payload to help keep your vehicle legal.

The forward-facing dinette seat is full of fresh water tank, all 140 litres ►

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Just to the rear of the caravan door is the wardrobe, with the Trumatic heater below. Wardrobe has good hanging length from its side-to-side rail.

of it. With that much water you can shower regularly without spending all your life driving back to the tap. The rear-facing seat houses the boiler, still leaving over half the space empty, while the false floor between the seats makes a slim hidey-hole under the carpet. Carpets, incidentally, are removable in sections. We left the dinette and cab ones in place, but didn't use the carpet for the entrance and kitchen.

The wardrobe is a fair size and can accommodate dresses on its side-



Roll back the carpet and you'll find a hatch in the dinette floor - it's no safe, but it is at least a fairly concealed stowage area.

to-side rail. The remainder of the storage capacity is in a series of high-level lockers above the dinette and rear bed.

Bedtime

As the member of the Vaughan household charged with responsibilities for motorhome bed making, it is always a relief to be testing a vehicle with a permanent bed. As the one who is more prone to poor sleep, it is also a relief to find a bed with a one-piece mattress sitting on a slatted base. The more I use them, the more I like fixed bed layouts. This, I think, is the smallest motorhome we've tested to be so equipped and, despite a solid week of cool wet weather, we never regretted our choice of test vehicle. At the end of the day it was always good to be able to just climb in under the duvet. Jo also liked the bed as a place to sprawl with a book after dinner.

The specification table gives the dimensions of the mattress itself, but it is worth adding here the dimensions between the walls, the usable sleeping space if you like, of 1.88m by 1.31m (6ft 2in by 4ft 3.5in). That's adequate, if not huge, but this bed does not suffer the severely chopped off corner of some rivals. It's not quite rectangular, but it's a lot closer than most. This bed is also very comfortable and bookworms will be pleased to note the twin swivel reading lights. A roof vent is above the bed and a privacy curtain pulls around, though we'd have preferred this to include the bathroom and wardrobe, to create an en-suite bedroom. That's always handy so that I can get up and draw the blinds in the lounge while I breakfast, leaving Jo still in bed.

The dinette can be turned into a second double bed, should you need it. The table drops between the seats and extension flaps are sited at the ends of the benches. A long additional cushion makes up the extra width (and can be stored under the rear bed, lying on top of the gas locker and wheelarch) and there's one other tiny infill cushion required. The resultant bed is flat and actually larger than the fixed bed. In reality, though, it's rarely



The dinette bed is actually bigger than the permanent bed, but only those using the Pacific as a four-berth will ever bother to make it.



Rear bed has a less chopped-off corner than many rivals. Bed is not huge, but it's extremely comfortable and has well-positioned reading lights.



likely to be used, as most customers will probably be couples.

Spotlights in the lounge can be swivelled for reading, while ceiling-mounted halogen lights provide general illumination. Blinds and flyscreens are fitted at all the windows, while stylish net curtains and decorative drapes are also fitted for the lounge and bedroom windows. The roof vents have blinds as well as flyscreens and the cab windows are covered with insulated internal screens that affix with suckers.

The small room

Alongside the rear bed is the bathroom, behind an unusual sliding door (this

is why the bed corner does not need to be cut off very sharply). Inside you'll find the usual swivel cassette toilet (with electric flush) plus a deep corner hand basin and both high and low-level storage lockers.

A roof vent and opening window provide ventilation and a fluorescent tube adds light. The cupboards have curved wooden doors, in place of the usual flimsy plastic mouldings, which definitely adds a touch of class. Then, beyond the loo, there's a proper walk-in shower cubicle with folding doors.

The shower is excellent with simple on/off and temperature control, a good jet of water and room to move. There's only one drain hole, but it is a decent size. So the shower gets top marks.



Rear bed can be curtained off from the rest of the vehicle for privacy. We'd have preferred curtain to include bathroom and wardrobe to create an en-suite bedroom.

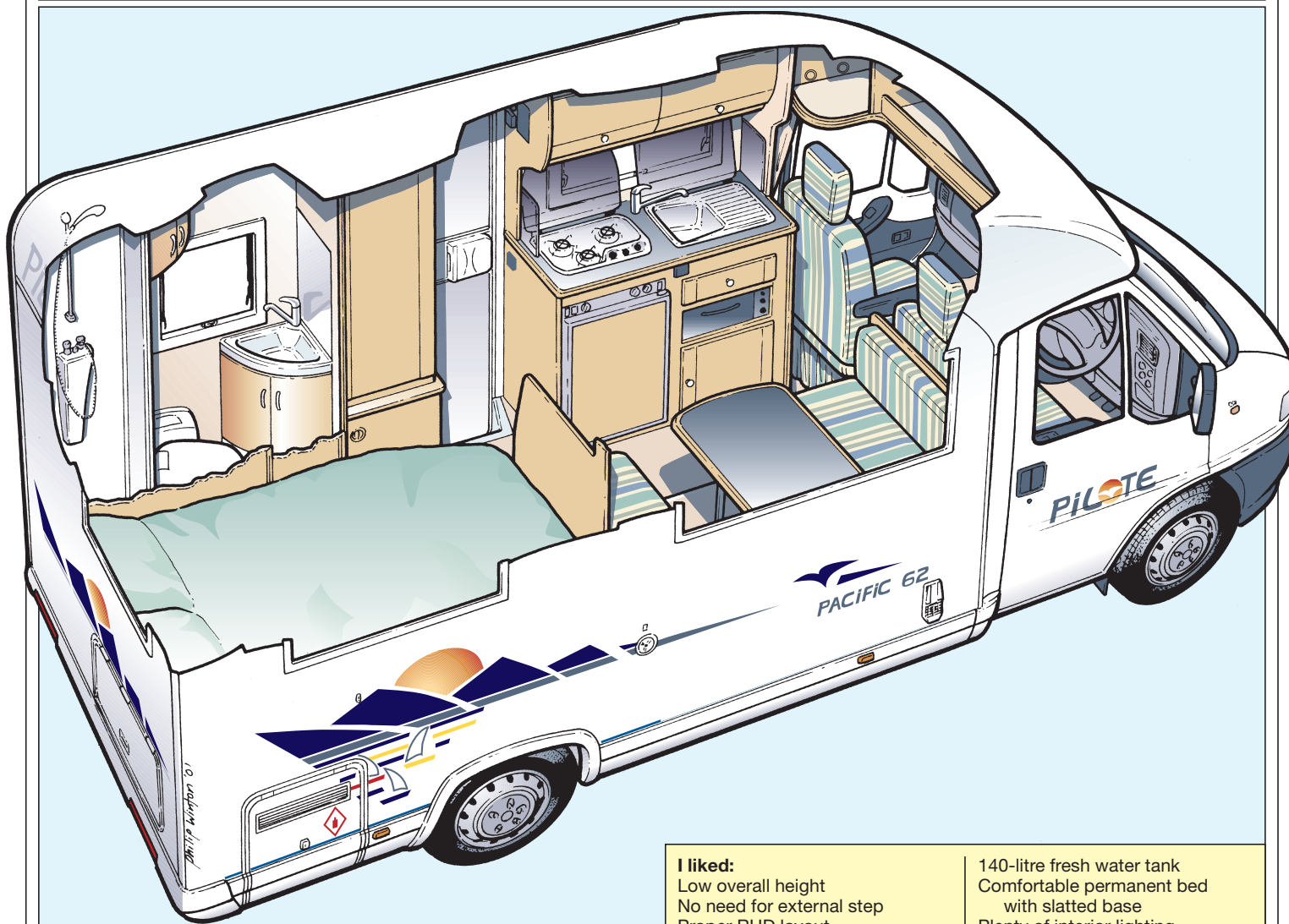


Beyond the toilet is the separate shower with proper folding doors. There's plenty of room to shower and a large bore drain hole ensures that water flows away well.



Bathroom has swivel cassette toilet, corner hand basin and wooden locker doors, as well as separate shower. Lack of floor space and poorly positioned mirror are the downsides.

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Less successful is the toilet/washing area. Floor space here is a little tight and the mirror is hopelessly positioned for shaving - you have to sit on the lid of the loo, which will flex under the weight of any adult. A second mirror is needed above the window, or Pilote could do away with the window and have a bigger mirror here. Toilet roll and towel holders are also notable by their absence and there's a lack of flat surfaces on which to place toiletries or make-up.

The bathroom benefits from the Truma gas-fired blown-air heating system, which also has outlets in the dinette and under the rear bed. A separate gas/mains boiler provides hot water (with adjustable temperature when gas fired).

Conclusions

Relatively compact and a pleasure to drive, this Fiat proves that not all Ducatos are the same from behind the wheel. The Pacific is a better Fiat, but is it a better motorhome? Well, we certainly found a lot to like and, whilst the bathroom is compromised, we would tolerate that willingly for its inclusion of a separate shower. An extra bathroom mirror would be a simple DIY addition, while a swivel passenger seat, rear speakers and an extra mains socket or two could all be added inexpensively by your dealer.

As we said at the outset, this Pilote seems to have it all, and in a package that is neither too large nor pricey. It certainly has a European flavour, but also gives you a taste of the qualities that have ensured Pilote's position as number one in France. If I were about to buy a sub-£40 000 coachbuilt motorhome, the Pacific 62 would most definitely be on my shortlist. □

I liked:

- Low overall height
- No need for external step
- Proper RHD layout
- Large gas locker
- Only two keys for whole vehicle
- Large under-bed locker with rear hatch
- Height/tilt-adjustable driver's seat
- Quality radio/cassette works without ignition key
- Electric cab windows
- Rev counter
- Useful shelf above windscreen
- Refinement of new JTD engine
- Superb handling and stability
- Good performance and economy
- Curved locker doors to high-level cupboards
- Choice of modern fabrics
- Wood panelling walls
- Large, sliding dinette table
- Raised floor between dinette seats
- Large dinette and bedroom windows
- Option of rear passenger heating
- Glass kitchen splashguards
- Large cutlery drawer

- 140-litre fresh water tank
- Comfortable permanent bed with slatted base
- Plenty of interior lighting
- Modern net curtains
- Blinds for roof vents
- Insulated screens for cab windows
- Wooden locker doors in bathroom
- Separate shower with doors

I would have liked:

- Awning light
- Rear stereo speakers
- Passenger cab door pocket
- Swivel passenger cab seat (optional)
- More kitchen worktop
- Privacy curtain at rear to create en-suite bedroom

I disliked:

- Lack of concealing/padding to upright rear seatbelt mounting
- Dribbling sink tap
- Only one mains socket
- Poorly positioned bathroom mirror



SPECIFICATION

The vehicle

Base vehicle & engine type: Fiat Ducato 14 long wheelbase platform cab with 2.8-litre direct-injection common-rail turbocharged and intercooled four-cylinder diesel engine

Output: 94kW (127 bhp) @ 3600 rpm

Max torque: 300Nm (221 lb ft) @ 1800 rpm

Compression ratio: 18:1

Gearbox & drive: Five-speed manual gearbox, gearshift on dashboard, front-wheel drive

Brakes: Dual-circuit, direct-acting servo assistance, load sensitive proportioning valve on rear circuit, front self-adjusting discs, rear self-adjusting drums

Steering: Power-assisted rack and pinion, 3.65 turns lock to lock

Suspension: Front - independent MacPherson struts, offset coil springs, telescopic hydraulic dampers, and anti-roll bar. Rear - tubular rigid axle, leaf springs and telescopic dampers

Tyres fitted: 215/70 R 15 (Michelin XC Camping)

Spare wheel position: In underfloor cradle, at rear of vehicle

Fuel tank capacity/type of fuel: 80 litres (17.6 gallons), diesel

Instruments: Fuel level, coolant temperature, speedometer with trip mileage recorder, rev counter, digital clock

Warning lamps: Headlamp main beam, side lights/dipped beam, hazard warning lights, indicators, handbrake/brake fluid level/brake pad wear, battery charge, oil pressure, coolant temperature, blocked air filter, water in fuel, low fuel level, rear fog lamp

Windscreen wiper controls: Two speeds plus intermittent and flick wash, stalk control operation

Immobiliser/alarm: Electronic engine immobiliser automatically activated by ignition key; alarm not fitted

Other features: In-cab headlamp angle adjustment, lockable glovebox with pen and cup holders on inside of lid, cab seats with loose covers, single non-adjustable armrests, driver's seat with height and tilt-adjustable squab, removable cab carpet, Kenwood radio/cassette with removable fascia panel and two speakers, electric front windows, double lens door mirrors, cut-away cab roof, door pocket on driver's side, height-adjustable upper seatbelt mountings

Performance & economy

Achieved 30 - 50mph acceleration time: 8.0 seconds (3rd gear)

Fuel consumption during test: Overall 26.2mpg (10.8 litres/100km), best 31.8mpg (8.9 litres/100km), worst 22.0mpg (12.8 litres/100km)

The caravan

Body type & construction: Sandwich construction bodywork with glass fibre outer skin and aluminium framing; aluminium side skirts; moulded glass fibre overcab section, rear wheel arches and rear skirt

Insulation: 25mm Styrofoam in floor, walls and roof

Conversion NCC approved: No

Warranty: One year on base vehicle and conversion, five-year body seal warranty

Number of keys required: Two - one for cab doors, ignition and fuel cap, one for caravan door and external services (gas locker, cassette toilet, water filler and under-bed storage)

Windows & doors: Double-glazed acrylic caravan windows (two top-hinged on offside, one sliding and one top-hinged on nearside, one top-hinged at rear). One-piece caravan door on UK nearside with automotive-style door lock and door handle, inner flyscreen door

Additional ventilation: Three five-way roof vents, all with blind and flyscreen (one over bathroom, one over rear bed, one over kitchen area). Fixed mushroom-type vent over shower cubicle

Blinds/curtains: All double-glazed windows fitted with blinds and flyscreens, insulated screens attached with suckers to cab windows, divider curtain for rear bedroom, net curtains and decorative drapes for bedroom and lounge windows

230V AC system: Mains hook-up, RCD and two MCBs, automatic battery charger, one unswitched covered three-pin socket in kitchen

12V DC system: Auxiliary battery under passenger cab seat, control panel adjacent to caravan door with 12V power switch

Capacity of caravan battery: 72 amp hr

Lighting: Fluorescent tubes above kitchen and in bathroom, two halogen spotlamps in moulding around roof vent over kitchen/lounge with switch by caravan door, swivel halogen reading lights (two in lounge, two in bedroom)

Cooking facilities: Three-burner Cramer hob with flush-fitting glass lid, Smev grill/warming oven with internal light and push-button ignition

Extractor fan/cooker hood: Not fitted

Refrigerator: Electrolux RM4401 103-litre gas/12V/230V fridge with electronic ignition and full-width two-star freezer compartment

Sink & drainer: Stainless steel sink and integral drainer with flush-fitting glass cover

Water system: Inboard fresh water tank (fitted below forward-facing dinette seat); water tank filled by lockable external filler; gas/mains boiler; self-priming water pump serves kitchen mixer tap, washbasin tap and separate shower

Water heater: Truma C3400 gas/mains boiler with 30-70 degrees Celsius variable settings on gas, 10 litres capacity

Fresh water tank: Inboard, 140 litres (30.8 gallons)

Fresh water level gauge: On control panel, push button to read, read-out as 3/4, 1/2 or 1/4 LEDs

Waste water tank: Underfloor, 90 litres (19.8 gallons)

Waste water level gauge: On control panel, full warning light only

Space heating: Trumatic S3002P gas-fired blown-air heating (includes bathroom)

Gas locker: Externally-accessed lockable compartment with vents in door and floor, capacity for two 13kg or 15kg cylinders

Shower compartment: Walk-in bathroom in rear nearside corner with Thetford cassette swivel-bowl toilet with electric flush, fixed corner hand basin with mixer tap, high and low-level storage lockers, opening window with blind and flyscreen, separate shower with folding door, mirror, fluorescent tube light, and sliding bathroom door

Seating: Two cab seats with one armrest each, Pullman-type dinette with two forward and two rearward-facing seats

Table(s)/storage: Wall-mounted table with single leg fitted with wheels at base, no table storage provided

Berths: Sleeping accommodation for four (two double beds). Travel seats for four

Rear restraints: Forward-facing lounge seat fitted with two lap and diagonal restraints

Wardrobe: Side-to-side hanging rail, space heater below

Flooring: Vinyl flooring with removable two-piece carpet over, separate removable carpet for cab

Additional features: Under-bed storage area with external lockable access door, fixed bed with slatted base tiltable on gas struts for access below, flyscreen door, high-level rear brake light and exterior marker lights, large cutlery drawer, overcab TV shelf, control panel with battery condition gauge

Dimensions

(* denotes figure supplied by base vehicle manufacturer or converter)

Overall length: 6.08m (19ft 11.5in)*

Overall width (excl mirrors): 2.20m (7ft 2.5in)*

Overall width (incl mirrors): 2.54m (8ft 4in)

Overall height: 2.69m (8ft 10in)*

Length of wheelbase: 3.70m (12ft 1in)*

Length of rear overhang: 1.55m (5ft 1in) - 41.9 per cent of wheelbase

Turning circle (kerb to kerb): 13.7m (44ft 11in)

Driver's max leg length: 1030mm (40.5in)

Step-up height to caravan: 355mm (14in), then 210mm (8in)

Door aperture: 1.90m (6ft 3in) x 0.51m (1ft 8in)

Interior length from dash: 4.83m (15ft 10in)

Interior length behind cab: 3.82m (12ft 6.5in)

Interior width at waist height: 2.14m (7ft 0in)

Interior height: 1.95m (6ft 5in)

Work surface height: 0.94m (37in)

Table dimensions: 1030mm x 630mm x H 680mm (40.5in x 25in x H 27in)

Bed dimensions:

(1) Rear fixed bed

mattress length: 1.83m (6ft 0in)

mattress width: 1.28m (4ft 2.5in)

mattress depth: 115mm (4.5in)

(2) Dinette bed

mattress length: 1.89m (6ft 2.5in)

mattress width: 1.36m (4ft 5.5in)

mattress depth: 130mm (5in)

Shower compartment: 1470mm x 815mm x H 1950mm (58in x 32in x H 77in) incorporating shower cubicle 545mm x 815mm x H 1950mm (21.5in x 32in x H 77in)

Wardrobe: 440mm x 530mm x hanging height from rail 1220mm (17in x 21in x H 48in)

Gas locker: 630mm x 350mm x H 625mm (25in x 14in x H 24.5in)

Gas locker door aperture: 585mm x 545mm (23in x 21.5in)

Max authorised weight: 3200kg* (standard 1.9TD version)

Unladen mass: 2668kg* (includes full fresh water, 90 per cent full fuel, and one 13kg gas cylinder)

Load capacity: 532kg* (standard 1.9TD version)

Price (all prices include VAT)

Standard model: £30 590 ex works (with 1.9-litre turbo-diesel engine)

As tested: £32 320 ex works (see options below)

On the road charges: £997 (includes delivery by transporter from France, pre-delivery inspection, number plates, Road Fund Licence, vehicle registration fee)

Optional extras (starred items fitted to test vehicle)

Base vehicle options: 2.8-litre turbo-diesel engine (£1730)*

Caravan options: Swivel passenger seat (£105), roof rack and ladder (£458), rear automotive heater (£299), Heki 2 sunroof (£386), trim change (£257), TV cupboard with swivel base (£103), external shower (£90), kitchen extractor fan (£184)

Pilote Pacific 62 kindly supplied for evaluation by:

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