



REVIEW

COACHMAN

Amara 580/5

The new 580 with an open-plan layout family caravan with twin bunks and an offside dining table



For many families, the essence of a good holiday environment is giving the children their own space. That way they're happy – and if the children are happy, the chances are the parents will have a great holiday, too.

Coachman has produced a new family layout in its Amara range for 2013 which satisfies the appetite for kids' zones in two ways. There's a twin bunk area in the nearside rear corner, a cosy night-time environment that enables two children to feel as if they're in their own bedroom, reasonably separate from parents. And, by day the young caravanners get their own area, too, in the shape of a two-seater dining/playing area opposite the kitchen. Importantly, there are two power points nearby.

The 580 is a well-designed family layout – but there's much more than practicality to hold your attention here. Simple, modern, style and a general air of high quality in furniture and fittings will endear this Amara to discerning family buyers. In particular, the lighting design makes this a

stunning caravan when the daylight fades into evening relaxing time. Unique to Amaras, strips of LED lights are encased in white oblong shades that are set into the structure of the top lockers. This is not mere ambient lighting. These five strips of light give good illumination as well as style.

Big white front corner lights enhance the light, bright look already created by pale woodwork.

But, back to the practicalities – and one area in which the new 580 excels is in the keeping-clean and preening department...

Showering

It's almost as if the designers of the 580 have thought of the children first, in terms of shower room location. It's right alongside the bunk beds – and the little room is of an ingenious shape which integrates with the bunks and the wardrobe, to create a cohesive children's dressing-washing area. The circular shower is on the right of the shower room, tucked in behind a panel fronted by a deep mirror (and a power point beneath

TESTED BY

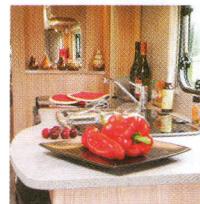
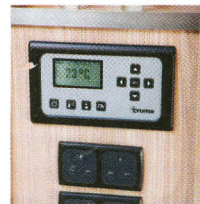
Val Chapman

PHOTOGRAPHY

John Chapman

TEST LOCATION

Woodland Waters,
Ancaster, Grantham,
Lincolnshire



IDEAL FOR Young families looking for quality and space

THE REAL COST
£19,040

That's the cost of the caravan plus the £545 dealer delivery charge



This open-plan layout is very appealing to families

The bunks are so separate that you hardly notice them from within the living area



The entrance to the shower room is on a slant, to make the best use of floor space in the room and outside it

it so that you can use a hairdryer here). A large Belfast-style washbasin is in the offside corner, with the toilet opposite. The entrance to the shower room is on a slant, to make the best use of floor space both within the room and in the bedroom area outside it. That's important, because this alcove is a dressing area, with the wardrobe just forward of the shower room.

A towel loop on the door and two hooks elsewhere take care of three of the four towels; an additional hook (one for each person) would have made towel accommodation perfect. There's an outlet for the blown-air heating system here, to speed towel drying; power comes from the Truma Combi space and water heating system, installed out of the way under a settee.

There is one aspect of this delightful bunk-shower-dressing space that's slightly missed an opportunity, though. Had the designers put a door across the entrance (which is just about door-width), the little room (and the occupants of the bunks) would have been more effectively separated from the living area.

Sleeping

Two children get the lovely little bunk room; a third can sleep in a single bed that makes up in the dining area. The table leg folds easily, by clicking a spring release mechanism, and rests on ledges on each seat edge, to make the centre of the bed. But this bed is not just for children. It's 1.83m long (which is six feet) – and that means this layout is a great option for a family who sometimes takes a grandparent along on holiday.

And the parents? They can make single beds, too, provided they're not tall; the settees are 1.74m long. More likely, though, they will stretch out in the double; the bed base on Amaras is drawn out from under the offside settee.

Storage

Again, it's the kids who win. They have space under the lower bunk. They'll probably bag the two good-sized drawers under the wardrobe, too.

But there's space for everyone's stuff in the 580. The wardrobe has full hanging depth. Although the top lockers are not as deep as in some other caravans, they are numerous enough to provide all you need (three over the dining area, six more over the lounge).

Under the dining area seats, you get into the storage space by drawing back the slats; we think this is much easier than the more-often-found method of raising the seat base.

The front under-settee space is accessed by a drop-down door; the offside one can't have a front door because of the slide-out bed frame; you get in from the top here.

A slim dresser-style unit that separates the lounge from the dining area gives you a two-shelf lower cabinet plus a 20cm-wide top cupboard.

Dining

Lots of options for family versatility here. Two can dine without the need for the freestanding table; a table pulls out to make a surface that's level with the top of the front central chest of drawers. Two more can dine at the side area.

For when four want to dine together, the freestanding table is housed in its own cabinet that's integral with the wall at the foot of the bunks. The area above it is used to stylish and practical benefit, in the form of a shelf (perfect for keys and phones) and a mirror, with an LED cluster down-lighter set into the top of this recess.

Lounging

Four squashy bolsters and four large scatter cushions enable you to get cosy here. Your television sits on a cabinet that divides the dining

WHAT WE LIKE

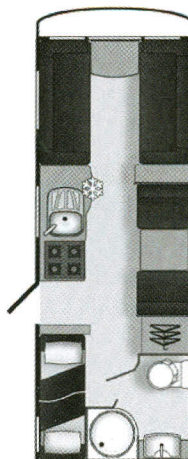
- ▶ The bunk-shower room configuration
- ▶ The large drawers under the wardrobe
- ▶ The top-locker integral lighting design
- ▶ The amount of kitchen surface
- ▶ The 1.83m dining area bed length

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

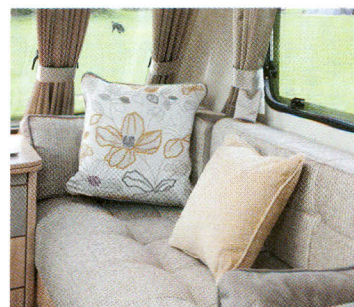
- ▶ Lack of a door to close off the bunk and shower room.

TECHNICAL STUFF

BERTHS 5
LENGTH
 BODY 5.85M
 OVERALL 7.51M
WIDTH 2.26M
HEADROOM 1.95M
WEIGHT
 MIRO 1399KG
 MTPLM 1575KG



The breakfast room, perhaps? It can be converted into a single bed



Large sweeping corner lights add style and give a good amount of illumination



This mini dresser divides the dining area from the lounge



The washbasin is wide and deep

TOW MATCH

**Caravan weight
MTPLM: 1575kg**

**To tow this caravan
at 85% you need a
car kerbweight of:
1852kg**

*Never tow a caravan heavier
than your car's kerbweight.
We recommend towing a
caravan no more than 85%
of the kerbweight*



**AUDI A3
1378KG**



**FORD FOCUS
1501KG**

At 100% → 1575KG



**MONDEO ESTATE
1654KG**



**FREELANDER 2
1785KG**

At 85% → 1852KG



**HONDA CRV
1890KG**



**KIA SORENTO
2008KG**



**LAND ROVER
2583KG**

area from the offside settee. Connectivity for the terrestrial aerial and satellite points are here, plus two power points, beneath the Truma Combi control panel.

Kitchen

Surely the hub of family holiday activity – when weather precludes barbecue activity, that is – the 580's kitchen isn't enormous but there is enough space to make meals for five. If you factor in the dining table directly opposite for extra space when serving food onto plates, this kitchen would work well.

There's a 39cm-wide surface to the right of the sink – and, because the surface here protrudes from the front line of the kitchen to accommodate the fridge beneath, it's 71cm deep.

Coachman's design team stay with fixed drainers, rather than removable ones, which do create more space. But fixed drainers are easier to use, we think. And when the cover over the sink-drainer unit is down, you have a surface measuring more than a metre.

In-keeping with Coachman's established style, the microwave is hidden from view in a top-hinged cabinet, above the cooker. It's a high-end model, with auto-cook facility for popcorn, pizza and more.

Cooking options extend to a mains hotplate along with the gas burners.

The cutlery drawer, between the oven and the fridge, is larger than you find in most caravans, at 40cm wide, with a cupboard beneath it. Although the wheel arch intrudes into the lower space here, when you add in the two top cabinets, we think there's just about enough kitchen storage here for your needs.

Towing

Amaras don't attempt to compete in the lightweight arena but, at 1575kg MTPLM, the 580 is certainly no heavyweight, with a wide selection of towcars suitable for its weight.

The 580's road test took place with a Volvo XC90, which is way over the top for its needs in terms of weight, as is our usual Kia Sorento. But handling characteristics can be judged all the same, and the 580 proved to be the easy tow we had anticipated.



Fabrics are subtle in shade; the overall effect is very tranquil



The bunk area wall creates a place for a mirror and shelf alongside the door



The shower rose is an unusual slim, cylindrical shape, very modern and neat



Two bunks – well hidden from view



Lighting is set into the locker frames – a neat design!

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BUY THIS IF...

You're looking for a practical layout laced with style and quality

ALSO CONSIDER...

Bailey Pegasus Ancona, at £17,495; also has bunks and a dining area

OPTIONS TO GO FOR...

ATC stability control, at £495

OUR VERDICT

One to consider if your choice is not governed by the need to keep under the magic 1500kg MTPLM and if you and your children value a separate bunk area. There's a quality character about an Amara, and the lighting style that makes a great contribution to the modern, light, bright décor will sway you towards this model if style matters as well as practicality, which the 580 has in spadesfull.