

EXCLUSIVE

# All white now



*Peter Vaughan*

There's much more than just a change to Bianco cabs with the latest-generation Bailey, which moves more upmarket

## BAILEY AUTOGRAPH II 75-4

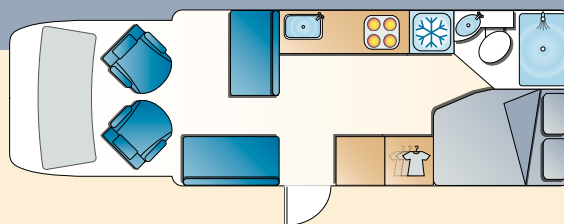
**Price from:** £51,995

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

**Base vehicle:** Peugeot Boxer Al-Ko

**Length:** 7.51m

**Gross weight:** 3,500kg





A classic and ever-popular French bed floorplan but one that's extra-wide



The top lockers have massive doors, but the fridge is only a basic model



A removable Joseph Joseph draining board is a stylish addition in the kitchen



The Media Pack Plus includes a second TV and portable speaker (seen below screen)



A practical washroom with separate shower in contrasting grey finish

The first thing you spot about the new Bailey Autograph is its all-white exterior but, if the changes on the outside at last give the Bristol company a motorhome with the looks to match the rest of its qualities, then wait until you see the inside. Bailey's Marketing Director, Simon Howard, says the new 'vans are "unlike anything we've done before, in motorhomes or caravans," and he's not over-selling them.

The new range is also the first product to come out of a restructured company and is the result of 18 months of listening to retailer and customer focus groups. "It's not a typical Bailey product," says Simon.

Perhaps that's because the number of design staff has ballooned from six to 30 and a dedicated prototyping team and homologation specialist have further increased resources.

Whatever the cause, the result is a more modern, more stylish and better equipped motorhome – and one that seeks to address previous key areas of warranty claims (exterior locker doors, drop-down beds and showers). That has to be good news.

Equally promising is that the range retains the best-selling French bed layouts (with and without rear travel seats), while also including a revised six-berth (see the October issue of *What Motorhome* for an exclusive road test) as well as wholly new garage, single bed and island bed floorplans. The first examples are at dealers now, though you'll have to wait for the October motorhome show at the NEC to view the 79-6 G garage model.

And, before we proceed further, perhaps we should just explain the new model designations – this 75-4 is a 7.5-metre 'van with four travel

seats (there's also a 75-2 that differs only in its lounge area), while that forthcoming 79-6 is a 7.9-metre motorhome with six belted places. How refreshingly straightforward.

#### SIGN HERE

If there was an obstacle to putting your own autograph on the paperwork for the previous, err, Autographs, it was the rather lumpen body shape, which was particular fussy around the rear.

The new Autograph II suffers no such handicap. The styling is much cleaner, with neater skirts, a larger overcab sunroof, Aero-style windows (not the fully framed, flush type but still smoother than before) and bold Bailey branding, including the stylised 'B'. But it's at the rear where the biggest improvement has been made,

with much more than a token effort now being given to appearances and slim LED strip tail-lights adding an almost transatlantic slant.

The tried and tested Alu-Tech construction is unchanged, complete with six-year water ingress warranty (extendable to a decade, at extra cost). And the Autograph remains the widest motorhome in its class, while underneath it's still an Al-Ko AMC ultra-low chassis (for better handling and a lower overall height).

The news isn't just about making Baileys prettier, though. An awning is now standard (with teardrop mouldings – not seen here – to merge it into the bodywork) and a 100W solar panel and exterior gas barbecue point join the spec, too. Unfortunately, the sometimes-inconvenient Whale water filler and the slow-to-empty, small bore waste drain (which is also

very close to the ground) still show areas where Bailey could learn from its continental competitors.

That said, the double seals on all the exterior hatches and new compression locks are as good as you'll find on many a posh A-class.

#### ADDING ADBLUE

The prototype model tested was built on a Euro V cab but all production specimens of the new Autograph will get the latest Peugeot cab with downsized 2-litre engines conforming to the Euro VI emissions standard. To do so, they will use AdBlue injected into the exhaust system, but Peugeot says that a typical motorhomer will be able to simply get the reservoir refilled as part of an annual service. If you cover many more miles and have to top it up yourself, the filler will be

conveniently located under the diesel filler, behind a single trapdoor.

Of more interest to most buyers will surely be Bailey's move to offer the new 160bhp engine as standard, though still only with a six-speed manual gearbox. Other changes are the addition of ESP (electronic stability programme), colour-coded door handles, a battery isolation switch and captain's style seats.

The centre cab console will also switch from the storage bin to the double cup holder arrangement already familiar from the Fiat Ducato sister cab.

#### BRAVE NEW WORLD

It's the new look inside, however, which will sell the Autograph II. The classic layout may be much as before on this version but the feeling inside ►

## LIKED



- Shaped lounge/travel seats combined with flat beds
- Hugely improved looks, both inside and out

## DISLIKED



- Thin mattress on front bed
- Very cut-off corner of rear bed

## WANTED

- Auto energy selection fridge
- Automatic gearbox option



Despite the Bailey's extra width, the French bed still suffers a very cut-off corner



Under-bed locker is segregated with a wet area accessible from outside



The free-standing table stores away safely for travel but restricts access to cab seats when in situ

is of a more contemporary, more luxurious vehicle. Simon calls it a "brave new world".

Up front, this example has the (extra cost) leather option; there are two fabrics – Berkeley or Grosvenor – on offer within the standard price. The hide is nicely finished but the more important feature is the Bailey DreamSleep bedding system (previously used in Bailey caravans), which means backrests are not required in the bed make-up.

As a result, the seats offer more shape and more comfort. That's most obvious in the rear passenger seats, which look far more automotive and much more suitable for long journeys.

Aside from this, the lounge area is quite conventional, presenting a half-dinette behind the driver and a two-seater sofa opposite. The extra width of a Bailey means that it is a comfy

area for four or more, too.

An extra cushion (missing from this prototype) turns the travel seat into an L-shape on site, so the table is a free-standing unit rather than one mounted on a more typical wall rail. It's a good-sized table but it does restrict movement when in place, especially from the cab chairs. At least it stores away easily in the wardrobe, which, of course, is safer for travel.

All the other lessons learned from Bailey's extensive crash-testing work are also incorporated here, making this one of the safest coachbuilts in which to travel.

## SWEET DREAMS

The front bed is pretty easy to make, with pull-out supports from both the side and forward-facing benches. The squab cushions are then turned over

(so you sleep on fabric, not leather) and unfolded. But that does mean that the mattress depth is just 75mm (compared with 190mm for the rear fixed bed). When I climbed onto the bed, I found that it 'bottomed out' and I could feel the supports underneath, while the front offside corner of the bed is insufficiently supported – but this was the prototype.

Clever is the way the shaped backrests of the side settee can be used as pillows, though this is probably more practical with the fabric seating.

What you won't want for is light – natural or artificial; although only the neat little cab reading lights are directionally adjustable.

At the back, the main bed instantly feels a hundred times more comfortable with its thick, anti-allergy, honeycomb mattress.

There's a padded headboard, too, and no window or too-low lockers to prevent you sitting up. That's just as well as the main TV position is at the foot of the bed, where the 24in Avtex TV is part of the Media Plus Pack, along with a neat Bluetooth speaker that can also be removed and used inside or out.

Clever bedroom details include clever corner shelves, one with a mains socket, the other with a USB port. And, with so many fresh-faced designers on the team, it's no surprise to find another USB socket over the door – with a pocket just the right size for a smartphone.

Under the bed, meanwhile, there's been just as much thought given to how people really use their 'vans, so there's a 'dry' area and a 'wet' area (also accessed from outside) for your outdoor chairs, etc.

## FEET FIRST

The kitchen, gently illuminated from below, appears to hover above the carpet because at floor-level it is recessed, so your feet can go underneath rather than kicking the skirting sections. It's only a detail, but I really liked that. It shows new thinking and not just bling.

You'll also walk into this 75-4 and see the galley first, so it's important that this area makes the right impression. And it does just that. Effortlessly.

The satin-finish, white-faced drawers are capacious and glide close with a smooth soft-shutting mechanism. There's a decent amount of worktop space but, more than that, there's lots of floor space, too. It makes the Bailey feel very open plan and it'll be perfect if you've got a dog.

Up above, the new duo-tone

(Mendip Ash and gloss white) locker doors are huge. You just push on the fronts to click them open and inside you are faced with an array of split-level storage. No fiddly catches, no opening lots of individual doors. The same big door cupboards are above the lounge and bed, too, and, hopefully, the fact that one of them popped itself open on the road is just a matter of catch adjustment.

Fittings are comprehensive, as well – a three gas ring/one mains hotplate hob, a combined oven and grill and a tall fridge that will keep even the thirstiest motorhomes well stocked with pop in the hottest of climates. It's a removable freezer compartment model but it doesn't have the auto energy selection you might expect – Bailey says these more basic fridges are more reliable.

Above the cooler, the microwave ►



Rear end styling is much more cohesive

is around eye-level for adults, so there are none of the balancing-soup-above-your-head antics seen in some 'vans.

With two mains sockets here, a flat (easier to clean) blind rather than concertina-type fitted in the lounge and bedroom, a chopping board sink cover and a very designer Joseph Joseph draining board, Bailey seems to have covered all the bases.

### ALMOST ALL-INCLUSIVE

It's typical Bailey in its high level of standard spec, too. Alde radiator-type heating is standard, as is central locking that includes the habitation door. The only options are the alloy wheels, leather trim and a pair of media packs. Here, it's the pricier Media Plus with Pioneer radio/sat-nav, Waeco reversing camera, two TVs (a free-standing 19in one for the front lounge), a sub-woofer, extra speakers and a telescopic TV aerial.

That just leaves us to discuss a totally new washroom with separate shower. The white toilet area and segregated grey shower look great and new details like the pull-out clothes drying rail and twin shower drains under a mini-duckboard all suggest

it will be just as good to use. In fact, spending a couple of days with this new Bailey left me wishing for more time to really live with it.

Make no mistake, Autograph II is a big step forward for its maker. **MMM**

### THE **MMM** VERDICT

*Not just a facelift, Autograph II is a whole new range and Bailey's best ever line-up by a country mile. Its looks are in a different league to its predecessor but there's real improvement in practicality and comfort, too. Kitchen and bathroom areas are vastly enhanced and we love the new lounge seating.*



### MOTORHOME SUPPLIED BY

**Bailey of Bristol**

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### INSURANCE

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Quote details can be found on page 198



## FACTS AND FIGURES

**PRICE**  
From: £51,995  
As tested: £56,884

**BASICS**  
Berths: 4  
Travel seats: 4 (inc driver)

**Warranty:** Conversion and base vehicle 3 years (extendable to 6), water ingress 6 years (extendable to 10)

**Type approval:** European Whole Vehicle

**DIMENSIONS**  
Length: 7.51m (24ft 8in)  
Width: 2.49m (8ft 2in)

Height: 2.78m (9ft 1in)  
Gross vehicle weight: 3,500kg  
Payload: 315kg (estimated)

**BASE VEHICLE**  
Type: Peugeot Boxer AI-Ko  
Engine: 2-litre turbo-diesel, Euro VI, 160bhp (see text)

**KITCHEN**  
Cooker: Three gas burners and mains hotplate, combined oven and grill. Daewoo 800W microwave  
Fridge: Dometic 8-Series 3-way, 155 litres, with removable freezer section

**BEDS**  
Fixed rear double: 1.83m x 1.29m narrowing to 0.90m (6ft 0in x 4ft 3in/2ft 11½in)

Front transverse lounge bed: 2.04m x 1.28m narrowing to 1.03m (6ft 8in x 4ft 2½in/3ft 4½in)

**ESSENTIALS**  
Fresh water: 100 litres (underfloor, heated)

Waste water: 100 litres (underfloor)

Space heating: Alde Hydronic Compact 3020 programmable radiator heating, 3.4kW gas and 3kW electric

Water heating: 110Ah

Gas: 2 x 6kg cylinders

### OPTIONS

Fitted to test vehicle: 15in alloy wheels (£995), Media Pack Plus – sat-nav, reversing camera, Status TV aerial, 19in free-standing TV for front lounge, 24in Avtex TV in bedroom, 300W door and lounge speakers with remote control and sub-woofer, Bluetooth awning speaker (£2,399), leather upholstery (£1,495)

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