

21 | Tested: Bürstner Argos Time A650

Just in Time



**That's Bürstner's
Argos Time A650...**

By Malcolm Street



Despite 155,000 km of rental use the Bürstner was in good condition and ready for a long and useful life in 'comfortable retirement'. Having the bike was a real bonus, especially for all the times I forgot the bread and milk (as we motorhomers are apparently want to do!).

Not so long ago I had a rather last minute job and needed a motorhome for a few days and fortunately, Smart RV was kind enough to lend me one of its ex-rentals. Most of the time in this fine magazine we get to play with new motorhomes, but in this case it's an older model having served time in the Wilderness rental fleet. With about 155,000 km on the odometer, apart from anything else, I was keen to see how the Bürstner stood up the rigours of rental service.

In many ways the Argos Time A650 is well suited to rental service because it is a six berth motorhome. The clue for that is the rather distinctive Luton peak; one curved in a rather appealing way that makes it stand out less than it might otherwise do. It also makes this a C-class motorhome. With an external length of 6.5 m (21' 4"), the A650 isn't a long motorhome, which does mean a bit of a challenge in the layout department.

Like just about all the Bürstner fleet, the motive power for the Argos Time is the ubiquitous Fiat Ducato. In this case it's the Multijet 130, which comes with a 2.3-litre turbo-diesel that has maximum power/torque figures of 96 kW/320 Nm. With a tare mass of 3010 kg this is a relatively lightweight motorhome and has a good load capacity of 990 kg, which I suspect won't really be used.

There is but one external storage locker and it gives access to the rear under-bed area. It's quite deep and accommodates the spare wheel standing upright. At the kerb-side rear are both the gas cylinder (1 x 9 kg and 1 x 4 kg) and cassette toilet lockers. A feature I quite liked was the Fiamma bike rack – complete with a push bike in this case! In the late afternoons it was handy for pedalling around the local area for some exercise and sightseeing.



Interior Look

It's definitely interesting what can be achieved in a motorhome by compressing a few features. Like for instance, fitting a French bed in one rear corner allows enough space for a combo bathroom in the other. Having a Luton peak over the cab means an extra double bed can be fitted in, while the café-style dinette allows for a bed as well. About the only feature that isn't particularly useful in this design are the swivelling cab seats; the passenger one having a dinette seat behind it, while the driver's has the kitchen bench partly behind it.

Large windows are essential in a motorhome like this as are good sized/well placed roof hatches. All windows are double-glazed acrylic awning style, including the kitchen, which did require care in positioning because of the entry door opening.

Top: The older Fiat Ducato was still going strong.

Above: Interior space is efficiently used to provide seating and sleeping for six.



Sleeping Everywhere

As mentioned there are three different beds in the A650. In the rear nearside corner – my choice because it required the least effort to use – the French bed measures 2.07 m x 1.3 m - 1.06 m (6' 9" x 4' 3" – 3' 6"). Above the cab the Luton bed measures 1.9 m x 1.4 m (6' 3" x 4' 7") and gets a larger than usual window on the driver's side. Both beds can be left made up, but the third, the 1.8m x 1.05 m (5' 11" x 3' 5") dinette bed, does of course require setting up every night.

All the space above the rear bed is taken up by overhead lockers and a small hanging wardrobe at the foot of the bed, which is quite a good use of space without being in the way of anything. There's also a full length curtain if privacy is required for the rear bed. In a similar way, the Luton bed has a curtain and the necessary ladder for climbing up and down.



Although it sleeps six this Bürstner would be ideal for a family of four, leaving the dinette free at night. Decor is modern and there were few signs of wear or tear and few extra rattles, if any.



Compact but Usable

By necessity the kitchen bench is quite small. However, fitted into the bench top is a combo three-burner hob and a stainless steel sink. Under the bench a 114-litre 3-way fridge fits in very neatly, alongside a single cutlery drawer and a shelved cupboard. Underneath the overhead lockers, in addition to the rangehood there are a couple of downlights and a single 240 V outlet.

Combo Bathroom

No surprises there's a combo bathroom fitted, complete with flexible hose shower, bench style cassette toilet and a small wash basin that swings out from the wall when required. Above the sink a good sized shaving cabinet is fitted. For keeping water off the toilet, a couple of clear plastic panel doors can be swung out, but because of where the bathroom door is it's a wet bathroom, not a dry one – i.e. the floor has to be dried after use. In a previous Bürstner



Top: The kitchen is small but workable, although the fridge is a bit small for six people without regular shopping stops. **Above:** Plastic screens keep water off the loo, but it's still a 'wet' bathroom as you need to dry off the floor after showering. Considering the size limitations it's not a bad compromise



motorhome I looked at the bathroom light switch was tucked away under a hanging cupboard, but this one was a little more obvious on the wall.

Wilderness Camping

One thing Wilderness does well is set up its rental motorhomes for remote travel. So although there isn't a solar panel, 2 x 90 AH deep-cycle batteries should provide enough 12 V power for stays or a day or two. I made use of the 600 W inverter the night I was free camping on the road north of Miranda Springs, overlooking the Firth of Thames. No problem with it, but I did have one problem that particular night: The motorhome was well equipped but lacked a box of matches or any method of firing up the gas hob! Fortunately some nearby campers were able to help me out. Funny when you forget some of the basics...

What I Think

Okay, so there were some obvious clues that this Argos Time motorhome had done a bit of service, but even with that in mind, I thought it was well presented and the Smart RV team had done a nice job on the refurbishment. Driving along there were a few rattles and squeaks, but not as many as I was expecting and less than in some new motorhomes I have come across. This motorhome will certainly suit a couple with its bed and sleeping arrangements, but will be even better for a family that desires the motorhome lifestyle.

SPECS

GENERAL

Make	Bürstner
Model	Argos Time A650
Type	C-class
Berths	6
Approved Seating	6
Licence	Car

VEHICLE

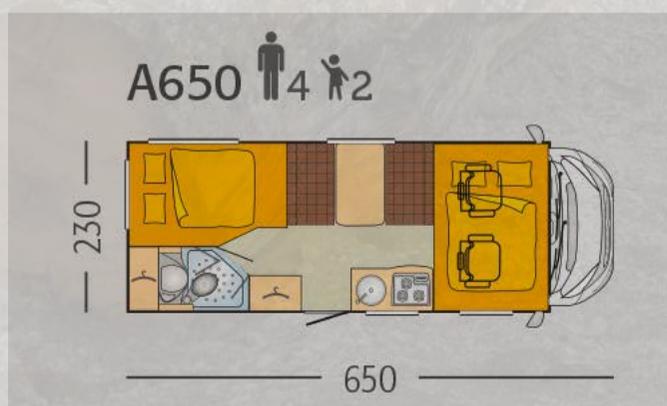
Make/Model	Fiat Ducato Multijet 130
Engine	2.3-litre 4-cylinder turbo-diesel
Power	109 kW @ 3600 rpm
Torque	350 Nm @ 1500rpm
Gearbox	6 speed automated manual (AMT)
Safety	ABS, ESP, Hill Hold, Dual airbags
Fuel	90 L

WEIGHTS

Tare Weight	3010 kg
Gross Vehicle Mass	4000 kg
Max Payload	990 kg
Braked Towing Capacity	2000 kg

DIMENSIONS

Overall Length	6.50 m (21' 4")
Overall Width	2.40 m (7' 10")
Overall Height	3.20 m (10' 6")
Internal Height	2.09 m (6' 10")
Main Bed	2.07 m x 1.3 m - 1.06 m (6' 9" x 4' 3" - 3' 6")
Luton Bed	1.9 m x 1.4 m (6' 3" x 4' 7")
Dinette Bed	1.8 m x 1.05 m (5' 11" x 3' 5")



SPECS

EQUIPMENT	
Slide-Out	No
Awning	No
Entry Steps	Electric
Hob	Dometic 3-burner combo
Rangehood	Yes
Sink	Stainless steel combo with hob
Fridge	114 L Dometic 3-way
Microwave	No
Lighting	12V LED
12 V Sockets/USB Outlets	TBA
Air Conditioner	No
Space Heater	Truma Combi 4E LPG/Electric
Hot Water System	Truma Combi 4E LPG/Electric
Toilet	Thetford cassette
Shower	Flex hose combo
CAPACITIES	
Batteries	2 x 90 AH
Solar	No
LPG	1 x 9.0 kg, 1 x 4.5 kg
Fresh Water	120 L
Grey Water	90 L
Hot Water	10 L
Toilet	17 L
PRICE ON-ROAD NEW ZEALAND	
Used – as tested	\$79,900

PROS...

- Compact but practical layout
- Good looking motorhome
- Spacious interior
- Well priced for family
- Freedom camping ability
- Bike rack
- Reversing camera included

CONS...

- Limited external storage
- Small kitchen
- ‘Wet’ bathroom
- Six might be a problem at the dinette

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