

Value for money

The Bailey Autograph 79-4 offers plenty of interior space and a functional layout without too many compromises. Malcolm Street reviews.



Images supplied



There's a fairly long overhang, which allows for the rear tunnel storage

Blenheim-based DeLuxe RV Group is a very international organisation, having a range of motorhomes from France, Australia, and Britain on its books. The British being represented by Bristol (UK)-based Bailey motorhomes.

MOTIVE POWER

Bailey has several models available, one being the 79-4 model, which has a body length of 7988mm and a GVM of 3850kg. It's based on a Peugeot Boxer cab bolted to an AL-KO AMC chassis. In case you think the Peugeot looks a bit like a Fiat, it's because the Boxer is a badge-engineered Ducato. Motive power is a Peugeot unit, though being a two-litre turbo diesel, that puts out a maximum of 119kW@3570rpm and a healthy torque of 350Nm@1750rpm. A little surprisingly in this day and age, the Peugeot has a six-speed manual gearbox—good for those of us who like to drive a vehicle, rather than just turn the wheel—and it's a smooth and slick change even when having to use the left foot.

BODY BUILDING

For the B-class body construction, Bailey uses a fibreglass composite structure, which has a polystyrene core and fibreglass inner and outer skins.

Extruded Alu-Tech rail is used to keep the walls and roof all together in one piece. Awning style, double-glazed acrylic is used for all the windows and the door (on the nearside) is a typical Euro product, complete with window and garbage bin. A good-sized tunnel boot is fitted across the rear of the motorhome. It's not 'garage sized' à la the style of some of the European motorhome builders but still offers more than enough space for all the camping essentials.

From a driving perspective, the 79-4 does seem to have rather a low body line and a fairly long overhang. Obviously, this motorhome is not built for rough bush tracks but high dips in the road and steep gutters and driveways should certainly be approached with caution.

INSIDE

When stepping inside the motorhome, a benefit of the slightly extended L-shaped seating behind the driver's seat is immediately obvious. Together with the swivelled cab seats and second smaller lounge seat behind the passenger seat, there's plenty of room to lounge around.

The rest of the motorhome layout consists of a nearside kitchen bench, mid area shower/toilet cubicle, and a rear island bed. A light colour scheme, even with the darker hues of the faux timber-

Specifications

Vehicle make/model	Bailey Autograph 79-4
Engine	2L turbo diesel, 119kW @3570rpm & 350Nm @1750rpm
Transmission	6-speed manual
Berths	4
Approx. overall length	7988mm
Approx. overall width	489mm
Tank	93.5L fresh 93.5L grey
Gas	2 x 6kg
GVM	3850kg
Price (as reviewed)	\$152,990

look cabinetry results in an airy and light interior. Concealed and not-so-concealed LED strip lighting is used extensively, which not only looks good but is also quite effective. Also looking good are the curved airline style overhead lockers; they nicely offset the squarish look of the rest of the cabinetry.

There are several floor hatches. Some give access to items such as the water tanks and Alde water/space heater while others provide a shallow, discrete storage area for small/valuable items. ►►



It's a surprisingly spacious motorhome

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The table is stored under the floor when not being used



Front area can be closed off from the bedroom if needed

This one is a nice compromise between using excessive space while still being functional



Cupboards, mirrors, and extra shelves are found in surprising places



Dinette can be made up into an extra bed

LOUNGING AND DINING

Up front, there's plenty of room for two people to kick back and relax without getting in each other's way, even with the two pole removable table in position. One, feet up in the rear seats, and the other across the partly swivelled front seats. What more could you want? Especially as the TV is mounted above the nearside seat. Four views might have more of a problem.

In case you're wondering where the table is stored, look no further than under the table mountings—the small step up to the front area is a hinged lid storage space for both the table and poles.

Under the lounge behind the driver's seat is where the electrical control panel is to be found. Getting to it is a bit awkward because it's behind the bed extension and right at floor level. Anyone who wears multifocal glasses or isn't particularly mobile will understand the problem.

The 79-4 can easily accommodate four people. Two seat belts are fitted to the rear seat and the seat cushion in front of the wall side seat can be removed to create the necessary foot space. At bedtime, the offside lounge can be folded down to make up a 1700mm x 1020mm bed. In quite a few ways, the front area is typically European (that includes Britain, despite Brexit) in being functional and multi-purpose, and it looks good.

CATERING

Not so typically European is the kitchen area. It is not oversized but it includes both a conventional and a microwave oven, the latter being above the 145-litre, three-way fridge. Also included is a four burner (three gas, one electric) Thetford hob and a stainless steel sink, which is set back slightly and excludes a fixed drainer, thus ensuring a bit of workbench readily available.

To extend the workbench area, a hinged flap can be extended into the doorway area. In addition to the three overhead lockers, there are some good sized drawers for all the cooking essentials.

BATHROOM

Like many Euro built motorhomes, this one is a nice compromise between using excessive space while still being functional. It looks like a combo unit but the shower does have a railed curtain that keeps the water from spraying the cassette toilet and vanity cabinet. It's also ▶▶

The 79-4 offers plenty of interior space with quite a functional layout

designed to be dry floor. There's a decent-sized wall cabinet and a wall mirror, which goes well with the pedestal style wash basin.

REAR SLEEPING

In some ways, the rear bed area looks a bit plain but it isn't. In the middle is the 1900mm x 1400mm island bed with wardrobes on either side, plus a bit of beside shelf space. The bed itself sits quite high but there are steps on both sides which are used to create underfloor storage. In addition, there's a drawer built into the base of the bed and low height diagonal cupboards fitted into each corner.

For those who prefer the practicalities of single beds, there is a similar layout, the 79-4T, which just has two beds in the rear area rather than the island bed.

FREEDOM CAMPING

On the electrical and water front, the motorhome has a 110AH house battery, a 100-watt solar panel, and both fresh and grey water tanks with a capacity of 93.5 litres. It's good for a night or two camping off the grid, especially as both the Alde water heater and fridge have the gas powered option.

VERDICT

To date, I have only seen Bailey caravans, so it's good to check out something with an engine up front. Certainly, the 79-4 offers plenty of interior space with quite a functional layout without too many compromises. It does accommodate a couple quite easily but at the same time can be used by families or those with grandchildren without any problem. ■

For more information, call DeLuxe RV Group on 03 927 2216 or visit deluxegrup.co.nz.



A shower screen will keep the rest of the bathroom area dry



Peugeot is a easy vehicle to drive, even with a manual gearbox



Rear tunnel boot offers plenty of storage



- Spacious front lounge/dining area
- Good storage inside and out
- Soft-close drawers
- Large window and roof hatch areas



- Low ground clearance
- Long overhang
- Fridge has a manual selection and ignition
- Stepped areas back and front
- Electrical panel location