

Poetry in Emotion

When it comes to class, luxury and stylish flourishes, the Pilote Emotion passes with flying colours, discovers Malcolm Street

I always think there's a little bit of a mystery about A-class motorhomes. Like for instance why few local manufacturers in New Zealand seem to produce any, especially smaller units, when there is something of a demand for them. Consequently, it's been left up to the importers to fill that gap with a ready supply from Europe – some in quite short lengths and relatively light weight, some quite long and luxurious.

Such is the case with the Pilote Emotion G781C available from DeLuxe RV in Blenheim. It also happens to be the premier model that DeLuxe RV currently bring to New Zealand from the French manufacturer.

The Pilote motorhome has an external length of 7800mm, which does give a considerable amount of internal space for a designer to play with. In addition, having a GVM of 4500kg and a tare mass of 3550kg gives the G781C a very good payload capacity – something like 950kg, depending on options fitted. Not to be forgotten is that fresh water tank capacity of 205 litres/kg has to be subtracted before anything else!

Beneath the motorhome body is a Fiat Ducato Multijet 150 bolted to an AL-KO chassis, hence the slightly low look.

EXTERIOR

Underneath the fibreglass roof and body is thermal acoustic insulation Styrofoam, 28mm for the sides and a thicker 50mm for the floor. The polyester roof is designed to give hail protection (always a potential hazard with any RV), and underneath the motorhome, an impact-resistant polyester skin is used. In addition to the offside habitation door, the G781C also has a cab door for the front passenger. Given the fitted swivelling cab seats, it makes it fairly easy for getting out on either side. There are several storage bins on either side of the body, but the most obvious is the rear garage area – not as big as some I've seen but certainly more than adequate for all the camping essentials and a bit more besides.

Identifying the motive power under most A-class motorhomes is often difficult because little of the original cab bodywork is used. However, in this case the basic cab shape, if not quite the original body parts, gives a few clues. Given the Ducato is the Multijet 150, it comes with the 2.3-litre 110kW/380Nm and the six-speed AMT gearbox. Considering the weight and size of the G781C it would be nice if the



Long and luxurious, the Pilote Emotion is well worthy of its price tag

Images supplied



The front has a decent-sized table and the drop-down bed

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more powerful 130kW/400Nm turbo diesel was an option. For anyone prepared to wait, there's been good news out of the Fiat factory in recent times; not only are the engines being slightly updated but a new nine-speed torque converter, i.e. full automatic, gearbox will be available. It should be much better than the somewhat hesitant ageing AMT unit!

Behind the steering wheel, everything is very Ducato; well, at least when looking forward. A feature I did like was



The squarish benchtop does allow for a bit of vege cutting space

Specifications

Vehicle make/model	Pilote Emotion G781C
Engine	Fiat Ducato 2.3L109kW/3600rpm
Transmission	6-speed AMT
Berths	4
Approx overall length	7800mm
Approx overall width	2300mm
Fresh/grey water tank	205L/120L
Gas	2 x 9kg
GVM	4500kg
Price	\$209,990

the bus-style electrically operated wing mirrors, which give an excellent rear view. I'll also have the panoramic vision anytime you like!

INTERIOR

Inside, the layout looks familiar – and that's because it's a fairly standard one that comes out of Europe, one that's just expanded or contracted depending on

the overall length of the motorhome. In this case there is plenty of room to move around the interior, which consists of a front lounge/dining area and kitchen in the front with a split bathroom and bedroom in the rear. The colour scheme is a dark faux timber look for the cupboards and cabinetry, with much lighter shades for everything else, including the matching leather upholstery on all the seating. ▶▶



TV viewing is best done from the front seats

Most of the bin doors are for storage





Plenty of storage is just one of many luxury touches in the bedroom

LED lights – strip, spot and reading – are fitted everywhere, the brightness obvious even in daylight. The overall impression is of a motorhome with a luxury fitout.

There are three floor hatches – two in the kitchen/lounge area that are just shallow storage compartments, and a third in the rear that gives access to the water tanks.

Forward of the habitation door is a comfortable lounge/dining area. Both cab seats swivel round and they mesh in well with both the L-shaped lounge behind the passenger seat and the sideways-facing lounge on the offside.

The table – which seats four to five – is a larger one-piece item mounted on an any-which-way frame, and can be pushed to the side if not needed. TV viewing is best done from the swivelled cab seats, the television being mounted on the fridge cabinet in the door entry area. Overhead lockers are fitted on both

sides above the seats but there are none around the front area because that's where the drop-down bed is. It does require the cab seat backs to be folded over when the bed is lowered, which is done manually.

KITCHEN

Fitted into the nearside benchtop is a round stainless-steel sink and a two-burner hob. Both have smoked glass lids, and while there's not a huge amount of benchtop working space, there's enough for the basics. In the under-bench space are fitted the grill/oven and three drawers. One of the drawers is for cutlery and the other, much larger, has a small garbage bin and a wine bottle holder. Additional storage space is provided by a couple of overhead lockers and a full height slide-out pantry that adjoins the 150-litre Dometic two-door fridge facing the kitchen bench.

BATHROOM

Moving towards the rear, there's a small step up into the bathroom, the shower cubicle being on the nearside and the toilet cubicle opposite. The latter is well appointed with a Thetford cassette toilet, washbasin, a good selection of cupboards, upper and lower, and a decent wall mirror. Fully opening the cubicle door closes off the bathroom/bedroom from the front of the motorhome and there's even a sliding door on the bedroom side.

BEDROOM

This has all the tell-tale signs of a luxury RV. The 1900mm x 1500mm bed, with its Bultex foam mattress, looks similar to most, but for daytime use has an electrically raised backrest. There are the usual bedside wardrobes and overhead lockers, but the bedside cabinet is much longer than usual



Plenty of space for the golf clubs



Extra under-floor storage bins



The toilet cassette is easily accessible



The toilet area is quite generous

(mostly because of the garage storage underneath) and there are a couple of extra shelves built in under the wardrobe, complete with mains power sockets and charger outlets. Finally, there are two drawers fitted into the base of the bed and a couple of corner cupboards. There is no shortage of general storage here.

For freedom camping purposes, the G781C stands up quite well, with its

205-litre water capacity, 100AH battery and 150-watt solar generating capacity. Having a three-way fridge is a great help, but a second house battery would be a consideration. Many a European manufacturer seems to like the Truma Combi 6W water/space heater, and that is exactly what you get here. Two 9kg gas cylinders are going to be useful for winter travel.

VERDICT

Très chic comes to mind here; the Pilote G781C is a classy motorhome with a fitout and finish par excellence. This is as you might expect of course, with the plus \$200K price tag. Perfect for those who like to travel dans le style to which we'd all like to become accustomed. ■

For more information visit deluxegroup.co.nz



- Very well-appointed motorhome
- Great attention to detail
- Bed area fitout
- External storage and payload
- Perspective from driver's cab



- Doesn't have the most powerful of the Fiat Ducato 2.3-litre engines
- I didn't have long enough to play – six months would have been nice!
- Not a particularly large kitchen bench area.

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