

CARAVAN SALON 2019: Caravans and motor caravans are versatile, interconnected and comfortable – but still compact

The trends of the next season will be shown in Düsseldorf

The CARAVAN SALON will once again live up to its position as a showcase of new products with many innovative products and world premieres this year. From 31 August to 8 September 2019, over 600 exhibitors will be presenting around 130 caravan and motorhome brands and more than 2,100 leisure vehicles in a wide range of price categories on an area of 214,000 square metres. "The CARAVAN SALON is the industry's leading trade fair and trend barometer. In Düsseldorf, all well-known national and international manufacturers will present the latest generation of leisure vehicles, but will also take a look at the future of mobile travel with studies and prototypes. The range and variety of products is greater than ever before," says Director Stefan Koschke.

Owing to the demand for caravans and motor caravans, which has been rising for years now, new makes come on the market all the time. And what's more, the well-established manufacturers continually expand their model ranges. Thus for example, many manufacturers of premium caravans and motor caravans are increasingly bringing more compact and less expensive entry level vehicles on the market, while some manufacturers of compact vehicles are tending to venture more into the middle and upper class model sector. The fact that a greater range of makes and models is now available works to the benefit of customers, as Daniel Onggowinarso, Managing Director of the caravanning industry association CIVD explains: "This trend promotes product development, in that the manufacturers are now channeling their specialized expertise into other caravan and motor caravan segments."

Compact caravans and motor caravans increasingly popular

The popularity of compact caravans and motor caravans is also in evidence this year. In fact, conversion/custom vans now account for a growing share of the motor caravans made by German manufacturers and have supplanted mid-sized vehicles as the best-selling models. One of the main advantages of these compact models is that they are more readily maneuverable in city traffic and are thus suitable for everyday use as well. The demand for comfort options, accessories and electronic aids is also on



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the rise. Virtually all devices in caravans and motor caravans can be readily operated by means of a central, intuitive control panel, and users can view the charging status of batteries and the filling level of water tanks and gas bottles using a smartphone app.

Innovative use of light-weight materials, in order to keep vehicle weight down

But of course, additional features add to the total weight of a leisure vehicle. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the basic models have in any case become more “corpulent” owing to the integration of growing numbers of devices that make the operation and use of the vehicles safer and more comfortable. In the European Union, drivers with an ordinary driving license are only allowed to operate vehicles weighing 3.5 tons or less. Thus, manufacturers need to keep the weight of their leisure vehicles below this limit. When it comes to caravans, the problem is that there are increasing numbers of compact cars on the road that are subject to trailer-weight limits. In order to ensure that the vehicles remain readily maneuverable despite the many equipment extras installed, and so that the vehicles can succeed in the delicate task of meeting the in some cases contradictory wishes of today’s customers, the manufacturers use innovative lightweight construction methods that have long since exceeded the bounds of replacing heavy materials with lighter-weight alternatives. “A growing number of these companies are completely rethinking the conventional ways of making leisure vehicles,” Mr. Onggowinarso notes.

Variable leisure-vehicle interior configurations and modern designs

A modern leisure vehicle needs to have a modern look and feel about it. “The exterior designs of today’s caravans and motor caravans are notable for their sporty and striking lines,” Mr. Onggowinarso. This evolution is also in evidence in the interiors of modern caravans and motor caravans, for today’s customers are far more exacting in this regard than was the case in the past. In the interest of making caravan and motor caravan interiors as cozy and homey as possible, manufacturer now use, for example, lighter-colored upholstery and decor elements. Leisure vehicle manufacturers are also increasingly looking beyond their own back yards, and are deriving inspiration from interior designers, or are developing innovative lighting concepts in collaboration with specialists in the field.



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Another key trend in this regard is the advent of more versatile floor plans and modular interior designs that allow for an open and contemporary ambience. One example of this trend: electrically operated bed lift systems, which are usually placed above the driver's seat. The large round sofa that is a familiar feature of so many caravans has now found its way into motor caravans as well.

Large selection of basic models

The selection of basic motor caravan models is wider today than ever before. Demand is on the rise for the Citroën Jumper and Peugeot Boxer, whose configuration is identical to that of the market leader Fiat Ducato. A new generation of Crafters has been on the market for two years, and VW is now making the model completely on its own again, now that its joint venture with Mercedes-Benz has come to an end. The MAN TGE, whose configuration is identical to that of the Crafter, came on the market last year, while Mercedes launched its new Sprinter, likewise last year. For the third generation of this van, Mercedes has deployed extensive amenities – with the aim of appealing to very exacting customers. “As is well known, competition stimulates business – and so manufacturers are jockeying for position by offering appealing extras and portfolios,” Mr. Onggowinarso explained. Hence, the new greater range of makes, models and options works to the benefit of customers.

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