

Teardrop Turtle

Rachel Stothert lifts the lid on a brilliantly packaged compact caravan which really should come out of its shell...

SPECIFICATION

Price: £4,200
 Berths: 2
 MRO: 400kg
 Internal length: 2.00m (6ft 6in)
 Overall length: 3.94m (12ft 11in)
 Overall width: 1.75m (5ft 8in)
 Overall height: 1.70m (5ft 6in)
 Headroom: 1.10m (3ft 7in)
 Bed size: 2.00m x 1.20m (6ft 6in x 3ft 11in)

TOWMATCH A

INSURANCE PREMIUM: £N/A

Not currently insured by Shield Total Insurance



www.shieldyourcaravan.co.uk

FOR & AGAINST

PROS

- Lightweight
- Well kitted out for size
- Homely interior

CONS

- Basically a bed on wheels
- Compact interior



BUILT in Turkey by Basoglu, a company with a 25 year track record of making caravans, the Turtle is a variation on the Teardrop caravan theme. But Basoglu don't export at all - anywhere - so this is a real step forward for the Turkish company.

But now, Teardrop Trailers, the company responsible for importing Little Guy into the UK, has gone into partnership with them and created the Turtle.

Terry Smith, the owner of Teardrop Trailers, has asked

Basoglu to build the Turtle for him and they have now rolled it into their standard caravan range in Turkey.

The Turtle has been designed along the same lines as many of the teardrop trailers on the market, but more equipment has been built in to make it more practical.

It is based upon a galvanised steel chassis with a rubber torsion axle. You don't really see any of that however, as most spend time admiring the spoked alloy wheels

shod by chunky Pirelli tyres. The wheel arches house the running lights and have been designed to take triangular reflective strips at the back. Another noticeable design feature is the curvy road lights located in round plastic casings designed just for them.

What you also notice is the boomerang-shaped fin on the roof. It's not just for show though, as it is also an aerial with amplifier offering both FM radio and a TV signal. The unit inside is optional, but this allows



Padded headboard holds extra storage compartments.



Reflective triangles sit on the alloys.

for a DIY fitting or one of Teardrop's selection - from a simple CD/radio to a DVD player with integrated screen.

GRP-clad sides are adorned with simple grey graphics that will match almost any car.

And there's a front locker that holds the battery, charger, mains hook-up and fuse box. And if you want, there's also space for a gas bottle to run the fridge.

The Albe running gear and hitch is simple to use, too.

There are doors on either side, operated by what the Americans called a retro-style door handle, attached to a very chunky locking mechanism. Each door has a sliding window and curtains attached to rails that slide across at night.

Stepping inside, or rather not, there's a mattress on top of a decent lino floor. The flat mattress is in three pieces to make it easier to take out if you need to use the Turtle as a load carrier.

There's a padded headboard for sitting up at night and a small shelf behind this. Most of it lifts up to reveal three storage compartments, which would be great for books or socks alike. This shelf also has one of the three 240V sockets and a 12V

socket for versatile power needs.

In the tail of the Turtle you'll find two cupboards and a recess for even more storage. There's a shelf below this with another 240V socket as well as the speakers for the radio or TV, whichever you choose.

There's also a rooflight, with flyscreen and blind that slide across, which winds up and makes a real difference to the interior light levels.

For dark evenings there is a fluorescent light that has a nightlight setting which gives off a gentle blue glow - enough light to find the remote or your glasses.

Kit-wise, the only thing that isn't included as part of the package is the awning and the stereo. That means you can fit your own or opt for one that Teardrop provide.

All cupboards, both in the kitchen and main body of the caravan, come with nicely damped gas-assisted struts.

As with most teardrop-type trailers that kitchen sits right in the tail and with this one most of the sloping rear panel rises, also on gas struts, to provide access to the cooking facilities. Unusually this one comes with all the kit; a 35-litre three-way fridge, a small



Compact as you'd expect but unusually all of the kit is provided.

40-litre removable water tank and a Porta-Potti. All are held in place by a by rope net whilst travelling.

There's also a small gas stove as part of the package. Usefully, there's a mains 240V socket back here for things like kettles. The fridge can be powered by battery, mains or gas, and the gas bottle goes in the front locker.

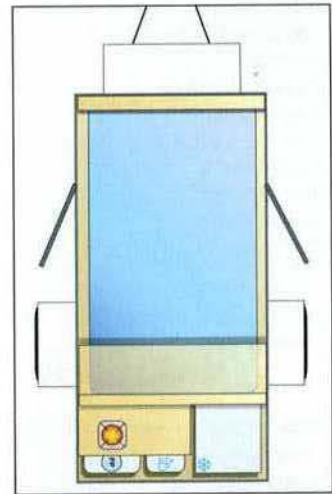
A fluorescent light, attached to the lift-up tailgate, also provides extra light, while a wooden insert, matching the rest of the work surface, fits over the fridge for extra worktop space.

Construction is hefty; a GRP skin is layered on top of two plywood panels that sandwich a polystyrene layer for extra insulation and strength. This applies to the floor and roof, which is formed over the side panels. All interior walls are lined with a suede-effect fabric.

The rear panel is moulded to incorporate a number plate position. Also there is an awning rail on each side to allow for shelters from sun or rain, accompanied by an external 'awning' light on the passenger side.

Door pockets offer extra storage and each door has an adjacent handle on the inside for improved access.

As a bonus Teardrop Trailers has agreed an insurance policy costing from £99-£108 that covers the Turtle for a year, although one recognised security device is needed to qualify for this special cover. ■



CONTACT

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OUR VERDICT



Whatever you might think about teardrop trailers - they have their place in the world. Yes, they may feel a little claustrophobic to traditional caravanners, but they are essentially a comfortable place to sleep.

The Turtle is one of the better ones, with a toilet, water container and fridge, which can be powered by gas as well as mains and battery. The internal fittings seem a little more luxurious too, and with everything but the sound system and awning fitted as standard, the Turtle is a really good value teardrop caravan.

And the fact that you can pull it with some of the smallest cars on the market is a real bonus for anyone who is even slightly nervous about towing. And you'll only need one person to manoeuvre it into place.



Mattress is split into three pieces on top of a lino floor.

ALTERNATIVES

- LITTLE GUY DELUXE
£3,495
- DANBURY TEARDROP
£5,995
- GOING WEEKENDER
£3,995