



ON BROADWAY

Set to star in Auto-Sleepers' 2012 ranges, the latest version of this classic low profile has had radical cosmetic surgery

Words & pictures by Dave Hurrell

With the same layout and name, you may be forgiven in thinking that the 2012 Auto-Sleeper Broadway EK TB is much the same as this year's incarnation. But you'd be wrong – Broadway 2012 has had radical cosmetic surgery, lost weight and changed materials and kit in key areas.

There's little that's surprising – both outside and in – with the Broadway EK TB: it's a six-metre low profile coachbuilt, riding on a standard Peugeot Boxer chassis cab, that contains a long-lived and popular British layout.

This layout offers a pair of sofas that provide great lounging and a big double bed or two singles. Aft, stands a good kitchen and a corner washroom. And that's about it – you'll find similar models on offer from the likes of Swift, Auto-Trail, Elddis, et al.

BROADWAY'S BROAD WAYS

Some shameless hacks (read 'expert' motorhome journalists), myself included, accused the previous Broadway of having externals that tended towards the porcine. Its rounded flanks and raised roofline (designed to integrate an awning and hide roof-mounted kit) gave an impression of bulk. Of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and the Broadway's looks did nothing to water down the fact that it performed very well as a compact, well equipped tourer for two.

As you might imagine, the grandees at AS were less than pleased by my comments, so I'm happy to report that the new model is a complete sweetie. Stem-to-stern, the 2012 Broadway appears light and lovely. Modern graphics adorn the flanks and there's a stylish new rear panel, with high-level black section. Down below, the skirts have changed from GRP to alloy, while above the new overcab moulding gets a wind-up sunroof.

The caravan door is now by Hartal and its locking is electrically-operated – linked to the cab's remote central locking system, with a dedicated button on the key. At time of writing latest versions of the Boxer hadn't arrived, but this Euro 4 Boxer performed with aplomb. The Euro 5 compliant version should be even better and, importantly, less thirsty.

DETAILS

A one-touch button sees the external step extend and stepping aboard, you're confronted with an interior that'll be very familiar to all who know the latest generation of Auto-Sleepers' products – changes in here are down to details, albeit important ones. Dark-coloured woodwork is the current AS fashion, partnered with chrome trim and chunky locker handles. It's funny, but I was rather shocked by the orangey, terracotta-coloured upholstery. I've become so used to 'neutral' interiors that this one made an impression and a good one too: it's about time that motorhome interiors were

cheered up (I love colour), and I'm hoping that the Broadway's options list will offer a choice of other interesting hues for 2012.

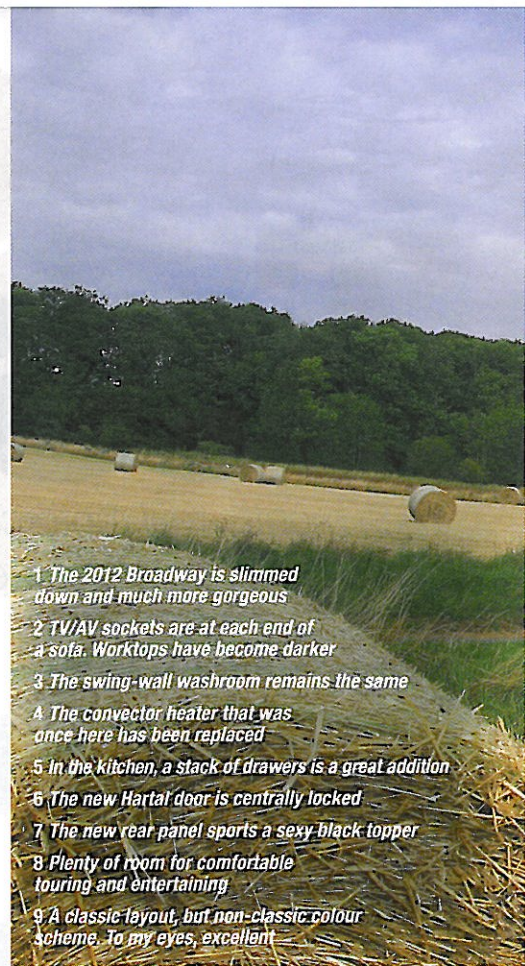
The most obvious new feature in here is the aforementioned sunroof, which is flanked by a good-looking pair of wall lights. The standard-fit Avtex TV/DVD is fitted up front above the nearside sofa, but a set of sockets, at the aft end of the same sofa, allows it to live there too. And both locations are equipped with a full set of sockets that feed audio-visual signals – think digiboxes, satellite systems, etc. The TV aerial is a standard-fit item too.

Swivelling cab seats and long sofas make this 'van great for both relaxing and entertaining, and same pull easily together to make a giant double bed. For a pair of singles you simply pull the bases out slightly so the backrests can drop in – vertically – behind. There's good news here too, as the supporting frames are now executed in strong alloy and supported by gas struts when raised. This is much better than last year's plywood and flimsy metal props that did the job. Again, I moaned about these (as did others of my breed) not befitting of a high quality motorhome – did Auto-Sleepers listen? I hope so, but anyway, I can only give gentle applause, as Broadway sofa/bed engineering is now back to full strength – literally.

Heating next, and gone is Truma's trusty Trumatic convector, replaced by the equally trusty Combi. This heats the water too, so there's no need for the separate boiler that partnered the convector space heater. Pros and cons? Well, the convector is awfully good at providing near-silent warmth on chilly nights, and when blown-air isn't used it consumes little or no 12V power to work – great, if you're away from hook-up. On the other hand these heaters tend to rattle annoyingly – like a box of tin trays – when travelling. The Combi is a good unit and quite quiet with it, while the absence of a separate boiler has probably freed up stowage space in Broadway's lockers. Lighting features lots of LEDs, but not all are so powered: the wall lights in the lounge and lamps in the cooker hood are fitted with power-sapping halogen bulbs. I'd seek out LED replacements.

The kitchen remains pretty much the same, and it's very well equipped. Full cooker and superb, deep, sink-drainer are standout items, but now there's a bigger fancier fridge (up 10 litres and sporting sexy black frontage and digital controls). And there are some very nice new drawers. Oh yeah, and worktops have changed – light to dark – and now in faux marble. The washroom features a shower-creating swing-wall and remains pretty much the same as 2011's version.

Looking for a compact front lounge-based low profile? If so, check out the 2012 Auto-Sleeper Broadway, it's a classic well refreshed for 2012.



- 1 The 2012 Broadway is slimmed down and much more gorgeous
- 2 TV/AV sockets are at each end of a sofa. Worktops have become darker
- 3 The swing-wall washroom remains the same
- 4 The convector heater that was once here has been replaced
- 5 In the kitchen, a stack of drawers is a great addition
- 6 The new Hartal door is centrally locked
- 7 The new rear panel sports a sexy black topper
- 8 Plenty of room for comfortable touring and entertaining
- 9 A classic layout, but non-classic colour scheme. To my eyes, excellent



SPEC CHECK

- **Price:** £51,995 OTR
- **As tested:** £55,190 OTR
- **The vehicle:** Peugeot Boxer chassis cab, 2.2-litre (Euro 5 for 2012 models) turbo-diesel producing 130bhp, six-speed gearbox, front-wheel drive
- **Warranty:** 3 years base vehicle, 2 years conversion
- **Dimensions and weights:** Length 6.28m (20ft 7.5in); width 2.69m (8ft 10in); height 2.97m (9ft 9in); gross vehicle weight: 3,500kg; payload: 596kg
- **Belted seats:** 2 (incl driver)
- **Beds:** Lounge double: 2.10m x 1.93m (6ft 10.5in x 6ft 4in); alternative singles: 1.93/1.86m x 700mm (6ft 4in/6ft 1in x 2ft 3.5in)
- **Space and water heating:** Truma Combi boiler with blown-air, gas-mains operation
- **Tanks:** Fresh water 102 litres (22.4 gallons); waste water 71 litres (15.6 gallons)
- **Gas:** 3 x 7kg cylinders
- **Options fitted to test vehicle:** Coloured body sides (£695), Premium Pack - alloy wheels, cab air-con, front fog lights, cruise control, wind-out awning, microwave, solar panel, tracker, TV aerial (£2,500)
- **Other options available:** Hill Start Assist (£TBA)



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