



The UK trade body for the tourer, motorhome, holiday home and park home industries
www.thencc.org.uk



Top tips for buying a second-hand touring caravan

There is a very healthy market for second-hand - or pre-owned - caravans. As with buying second-hand cars, you can get excellent value if you look around. In early spring and early autumn, particularly, dealers will have lots of traded-in models to choose from.

Research the marketplace

Compare prices between private advertisements and your local dealer. Obviously, if a dealer is offering a warranty and the caravan has been checked and/or recently serviced, these are valuable additions.

Match your caravan and car

Matching cars and caravans can be confusing. Often private advertisements contain scant information about a caravan's size and weight. Your local NCC caravan dealer will be able to give good advice on outfit matching.

Don't waste time looking at caravans that are not a legal match for your car - the penalty for driving a mismatched outfit could be a fine, points on your licence and invalid insurance.

Keep a sharp eye and an open mind

Condition is king. An older caravan that has been little used and well looked after may be better value than a newer one that has been out and about every weekend of its life. Always check carefully for signs of damp or water ingress.

Don't deal in the dark

If you don't buy from a dealer, make sure you view the caravan in good daylight and don't go alone. Meet at the seller's house and NEVER agree to meet at a pub, service station or layby.

Request all documentation

All post-1992 caravans manufactured by NCC members are part of the Caravan Registration and Identification Scheme (CRiS) and have a unique 17 digit 'VIN' number.

When a caravan is sold, the new owner's details are sent to CRiS.

Always ask to see the caravan's service history and CRiS registration document. See CRiS: www.cris.co.uk or telephone 0203 282 1000.

Check the locks

Inspect all door and window locks for signs of force or replacement - this may mean the caravan has been stolen. Look carefully at the CRiS window markings for signs of alteration or removal.

Confirm the seller's details

Make sure the owner is who he says he is. Contact CRiS with a description of the make and model of the tourer and the owner's details to be checked against the CRiS database.

Investigate whether the caravan is on finance

Ask if there is outstanding finance and verify by checking through CRiS. If the caravan has not been paid off, it could still be the property of the finance house that could reclaim it.

Don't buy a write-off

Has it been in an accident or flood damaged? Check panels closely for signs of repair and check the caravan's history with CRiS to ensure that an insurance company has not previously recorded it as a write-off. Write-offs that are rebuilt may not be safe to return to the road.

More tips and useful information at:

www.tourerinfo.co.uk

Expert advice

Some Approved Workshops (see www.approvedworkshops.co.uk) may be willing to give an opinion on pre-owned caravans.

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