



**A**uto-Trail know a thing or two about manufacturing motorhomes; they have been doing so for more than 38 years. But even ‘old hands’ are always crossing boundaries and trying something new. For 2021, new means the introduction of Auto-Trail’s Grande Frontier, an A-Class motorhome, and the only one to be manufactured in the UK.

For those new to motorhomes, A-Class might seem like more jargon to learn. Put very simply, rather than the body of a motorhome sitting on top of an existing chassis and cab – a coachbuilt – an A-Class motorhome appears to look as one, seamless and integrated with the cab so that you cannot tell the cab from the body of the van. They tend to represent luxury and are aimed, mostly, at couples. The Grande Frontier, while undoubtedly aimed at couples, actually sleeps four people, potentially opening up the world of A-Class living to families.

There are three layouts to the Grande Frontier, all of which are on an Al-Ko chassis (regarded as a premium chassis for motorhomes that, being lower, can allow extra storage) with the latest, ever-more environmentally-conscious Fiat Ducato engine. The GF70 is the smallest, at 6.96m long, while the GF88 is the longest at 8.8m. The GF80 sits in between, at 8.07m. Both the GF80 and GF88 have an MTPLM of more than 3500kg, placing them out of reach of

drivers with a driving licence since 1 January 1997 without a C1 category. We focus here on the GF70; with an MTPLM of 3500kg it allows anyone with a driver’s licence to enjoy touring.

## EXTERIOR

Take a first glance at the Grande Frontier. It’s beautiful! Well, we think so. The design team should be very proud of their achievement. On style alone, it’s a winner, with its large panoramic windscreen (a classic signature of an A-Class motorhome) that, owing to the graphics, has the appearance of wrapping seamlessly around the cab and along the sides of the van. The monotone black-and-white look is classy, with a hint of gold defining the van graphics.

On the cab roof is a large, tinted panoramic skylight, which aside from allowing natural light to flood into the interior of the van, helps to break up the large expanse of white cab roof that also tends to define an A-Class. High-level electric coach-style mirrors blend in to the design.

But slick style isn’t everything. There has to be substance to make this a functional van. So, you’ll find an external door on the nearside rear for easy access to a storage area that’s suitable for an *al fresco* folding table and chairs (also accessible internally, too) and access to the toilet cassette. There’s also a fully integrated awning, a gas BBQ point and an external cold shower unit, useful if you need to hose down a muddy dog or wellies after a saunter in the



## Auto-Trail Grande Frontier

countryside, and a 100W solar panel for those that like to tour off-grid. On the rear panel is the discreetly housed, but easily accessible, spare wheel.

### LIVING & SLEEPING

Couples have plenty of space to sprawl on the two parallel sofas in the front of the van. And, if you're entertaining guests, a cosy lounge can be created by rotating the two cab seats to face the interior. A wrap-around faux-leather skirt edges the tinted privacy windows while thermal pleated blinds, including an electrically-operated blind on the windscreen, and ambient low-energy LED lighting helps to create a toasty atmosphere on winter evenings. Reading lights are positioned accordingly. Attention to detail is evident in the stitching of the upholstery, with a choice of a smoky black faux leather or a white true leather. Armrests on the sofas are lacking, though, for those who like to kick off their shoes and stretch out lengthways.

At night, a pull-down double bed above the cab creates a nest-like cocoon that leaves the living area below clear for those that prefer to stay up longer, or get up earlier. →



# First Look



However, families of four can utilise these sofas to create an extra double bed, and slumbering folk over 6' tall may also prefer this bed as it's 6'8" long, while the pull-down bed is 6'1" long.

## KITCHEN

The L-shaped kitchen, in the middle offside of the van, is a really user-friendly workspace. There's lots of room for food preparation between the sink, with elegant chrome swan-neck tap, and four-burner hob (3 gas rings and 1 electric). Beneath the hob is a full oven, separate grill and a pan store. An 800W microwave sits above. There's a 3-pin socket for a kettle or coffee machine suitably positioned above the workspace,



while an easy wipe-down splashback covers the wall area behind the kitchen unit. On the nearside, directly opposite the oven, is a tall, slimline 171-litre fridge with separate freezer compartment. Deep cupboards beneath the sink provide storage space for non-perishable foods.

## WASHROOM

We particularly like the GF70 layout for its washroom, which, but for the storage compartment situated on the nearside (accessed externally or from the washroom) stretches across the rear of the van. This allows a good-sized dressing area, with a large shower cubicle, enclosed with bi-fold doors, to one side and an electric-flush toilet adjacent to a handbasin with chrome mixer tap. There's plenty of shelving and storage space for potions, and two elegantly lit mirrors. An opening roof light provides natural light and ventilation.

## STORAGE

Airline-style lockers run the full length of the living area above both sofas, with stylish two-tone doors, finished with a chrome strip. Storage of bulky items is also possible beneath the sofas, while there are useful cubby holes above the windows either side of the cab. A wardrobe stands next to the habitation door alongside a dedicated space for the freestanding dining table.

# Auto-Trail Grande Frontier

Auto-Trail VR Ltd

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## FINAL SAY...

This is a stylish and elegant motorhome with a very practical internal layout. With Grade 3 insulation and a Combi gas/electric heating and hot water boiler (different to the GF80 and GF88, which both use Alde heating), it's usable all-year-round. There are plenty of features fitted as standard that, on other motorhomes, would generally need to be purchased additionally, such as a Media Pack with Avtex television, colour reversing camera, motorhome WiFi and motorhome-specific Western Europe Sat-Nav, together with a 12V roof fan and cab air conditioning.

One concern is the payload – occupants will need to travel extremely lightly! With very limited payload and limited options for externally accessed storage, this is not a van for adventurers that require lots of kit. It is better suited to couples that can limit the amount of materials required on tour, and those that like to stay long-term on campsites where facilities, including electric hook-up, are readily available to avoid the need to travel with water on-board or weighty gas bottles. For drivers with a C1 category licence, it is possible to upgrade the Gross Vehicle Weight to 3650kg free of charge, providing an extra 150kg of payload. •



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### BASE VEHICLE CHASSIS:

Fiat Ducato Multijet II Euro6D 140bhp  
(optional upgrade to 160 or 180bhp or  
Fiat fully-automatic 9-speed gearbox)

**MASS IN RUNNING ORDER (MIRO)** ..... 3250kg

**GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT** ..... 3500kg  
(with upgrade option to 3650kg)

**MAX PAYLOAD** ..... 250kg

**EXTERIOR LENGTH** ..... 6.96m

**BODY WIDTH** ..... 3.10m

**HEIGHT** ..... 3.04m

**BERTHS** ..... 4

**DESIGNATED TRAVEL SEATS** ..... 2

**COST** ..... from £76,345 (OTR)