



Way to go

A two-week tour is a tough test for any unit, but would a folding camper stand up to IAIN GEDDES' choice of four campsites? He put the Pennine Quartz 6 through its paces

Having previously tested Pennine folding campers, including the Conway Cruiser convertible caravan last year, I already knew they're easy to tow, quick and easy to pitch and generally give a superb night's sleep. I asked a little more of this Quartz 6 this time and I rarely found it wanting.

Our family tour involved a spell at a Temporary Holiday Site so we could take in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. We then moved on to the National Feast of Lanterns at Balado Park near Kinross. We followed this with a stay at the recently refurbished Club Site at Scone and made a final one-night stop at Tebay Services in Cumbria as we headed back south. All these places were very different, with varying levels of on-site facilities, but the Quartz 6 did not fail us.



The optional awning added an extra dimension. We found ourselves using this as the dining space with the table from inside the unit. The quality is high, since all the fabric is by Isabella and took all that the weather could throw at it.

Like any awning it can be a bit of a chore to attach, especially running the joining zip through. A cord is attached for those who can't reach the apex, but we found it easier to step inside the unit to get the zip through this section.



There were two very comfortable fixed beds in this unit. The draped cotton bedroom liners created a space that we found quite relaxing. Even in strong

Scottish winds we all slept very well. The horseshoe lounge converts into a third bunk and this makes a very useful guest bed, though the climb up into the beds may put some people off.



The horseshoe lounge was quite convivial – a good place to eat or play games. When the children had gone to bed we used the low-lying lights for soft illumination. This was a useful feature I'd like to see in more units.

The windows allowed plenty of air to circulate via the lower vents held open by flexible poles. These worked well even in the heaviest deluge, allowing good air circulation without water coming in.



The kitchen has all you need for practical, no-nonsense camping. The hot running water relies on an electric hook-up and since we stayed for several

days on sites without one, the kettle was pressed into service frequently. Once on a hook-up we found the little water heater was pleasantly effective and, with a power consumption of 300W, it won't be an issue on small sites with low amperage. There are lots of well-placed lights around the workspace, which are both useful and add to the night-time ambience.



The Quartz 6 benefits from high-end fabric. The roof is made of PVA-coated polyester, while the sidewalls are Isatex, a breathable acrylic-coated polyester used in Isabella awnings. Being breathable helps prevent condensation and the nature of the material means it can be easily wiped clean and will be less susceptible to problems if you have to pack it away wet.

The core unit can be pitched within 15 minutes by one person, though the job is even quicker when the whole family helps.



The washroom is perhaps the only fiddly bit of the assembly. A little bit of a knack is required to get the door on, though it's nothing too onerous. The fold-up sink over the cassette toilet works well

enough. There's a shower but this is outside, built into the offside panel. I can appreciate not everyone will like this but we found it useful. Also, a dog owner may find the external shower helpful in the event of a muddy pooch.

at a glance

Pennine Quartz 6

- Price £11,995
- Awning £1,345
- Club Care Insurance £252
- Sleeps Six
- Pitched size with awning 6.2m x 4.6m
- Unladen weight 820kg
- Maximum laden weight 1,000kg
- Bed sizes 1.98m x 1.37m; 1.98m x 1.22m; 198m x 1.22m
- Pitched height 2.2m
- Kitchen Oven; grill; three burner hob; combined sink-drainer; fridge
- Electrics 12V, two interior and one exterior 240V sockets
- Heating 230V fan heater and hot water boiler
- Manufacturer The Pennine Group
- Tel 01254 385991
- Web thepenninegroup.co.uk

Verdict:

A viable touring unit that works best on an electric hook-up. You can also tow it with a less powerful car than you'd need for a similar-sized rigid caravan.

The optional awning is worth the extra cost and time when on longer stays.