

CHRISTCHURCH CARAVANS



Seven Things To Look For When Buying A Second Hand Caravan

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If you have requested a copy of this report then presumably you have an interest in buying a second hand caravan. Here at [Christchurch Caravans](#) we market only top quality second hand UK caravans which are acknowledged as among the best in the world.

There are lots of second hand caravans on the market in the UK and the purpose of this free report is to let you in on the seven secrets of ensuring that the van you have your heart set on is a "good un" and not a lemon!

We come across lots of people looking to buy their first caravan and the majority of these people have no idea whatsoever what to look for in a second hand caravan. It is similar to buying a car in many ways. You see the exact nice shiny model you are after on the dealer's forecourt in just the colour you want. It's got good mileage, has all the rights toys, bells and whistles, is on the market at a great price and you've fallen totally in love with it and just want to drive it away!

Asking all the right questions such as

- Is the odometer reading correct?
- Is it a repaired write-off?
- Is there a service history available?
- How many owners has it had?

Sometimes it just seems too difficult when all you want to do is take home your new toy and show it off. Well, it's a bit the same with a caravan, and the purpose of this report is to tell you the seven things you need to watch out for when buying a used caravan.

1. Check the Windows and Bodywork for Cracks

You should do a walk around the van and check the windows and body work for signs of cracking and damage. Because you are looking at buying a second hand caravan you will inevitably find the odd scratch as well as some minor dents. Be sure to check that the skin has not been punctured.

In most caravans the front and rear panels are made of fibreglass or sometimes plastic mouldings. You should check these for signs of cracking also. It is quite common to get hairline cracks in the gel coat of the fibreglass. If the crack has damaged the fibreglass it's generally not the end of the world and a fibreglass patch can usually be put on the inside of the panel. Alternatively it could even be filled and sprayed.

In the case of cracks in the front panel one useful tip is to check behind the front panel by looking in the front locker. Whilst you are at it you should check the floor of the front locker. If this compartment has been overloaded the floor of the front locker will often be damaged.

2. Check the Corners of the Caravan and Awning Rail

You should check the corners of the caravan. If the corners have been damaged in an accident at some time whilst the van is being reversed or manoeuvred then this can sometimes lead to a break in the seal between the side and the front or rear panel (whichever the case may be). This can lead to water ingress and leaks.

You should also check the awning rail to ensure that it is in good condition and has not been squashed or damaged in any way.

3. Check Underneath the Caravan

You should always check underneath a caravan before buying it to ensure that everything looks to be in good order and condition. All caravans have an galvanised chassis but some have a steel axle which can sometimes be rusty. You should give it a poke to be sure it is not too far gone. A small amount of rust should not do any harm but following purchase you would be well served to remove rust with a wire brush and then give it a coat of paint.

4. Check The Tyres

You should check the tyres on the caravan before making any purchase. Whilst caravan tyres generally wear pretty well and are unlikely to be worn down, they do have a tendency to crack or perish over time due to lack of use. This should be picked up when it has a WoF but they have been known to miss perished tyres. Check if the caravan has a spare wheel. These are not standard with many caravans so don't be surprised if there isn't one! You should be able to pick one up quite cheaply from a wrecker's yard.

5. Check the Inside Of The Caravan For Signs Of Damp

Moving inside the caravan you should be careful to check it thoroughly for damp. You will generally get an instant sense of dampness if the caravan has a musty smell inside. From time to time you will find that a caravan floor may suffer from delaminating which results in a springy floor.

This is not the death knell for a caravan but it is something which you will need to attend to in the fairly near future if you buy such a caravan. The most common way to fix such damage is to buy a floor repair kit. These are readily available and it is a very simple fix.

You should look in all the cupboards at head height. If there is any sign of leakage or damp you will generally be able to see staining in the corner and, in bad cases, mould growing on the walls. You should always look in the front and rear corners of the caravan from the top to bottom. You will need to move the seat cushions to see right down. Tap all walls with your knuckles to ensure that they all sound nice and solid, because a soft wall is often a sign of damp.

You should check in the washroom to ensure that the sink and shower do not have any cracks. In the case of the shower if there are any sign of cracks then water will often leak onto the wooden floor underneath which can cause damage to the structural timbers. If you find signs of such damage, generally this is a relatively simple fix.

6. Check The Appliances and Interior Fittings

In no particular order you should check;

- The squabs for signs of any rips or tears. You should pull the bed slats out to ensure they are all in good condition.
- The blinds and fly screens (if fitted) to make sure they are all in good working order.
- The window catches and stays.
- All cupboards and doors to see that they open and close properly without sticking and that all stays are in good working condition.
- That all appliances are in good working order and condition.
- That the caravan has a current electric certificate of compliance, electrical warrant of fitness, road warrant of fitness and registration.
- That the caravan has had a gas safety check. It is a legal requirement of anyone importing and selling a caravan with second hand gas appliances to have this carried out. Most caravans have at least four such appliances and the last thing you want is to get gassed or blown up by a faulty appliance.

7. Check The Age and Legal Status Of The Caravan

All UK caravans from 1992 onwards have a 17 digit number etched on all windows and you can do an easy and quick visual check which will confirm the age of the van. The 10th digit is the clue to the age of the caravan. This is how it works.

N = 1992	Y = 2000
P = 1993	1 = 2001
R = 1994	2 = 2002
S = 1995	3 = 2003
T = 1996	4 = 2004
V = 1997	5 = 2005
W = 1997	6 = 2006
X = 1999	7 = 2007

If you have the 17 digit code we have referred to and you are serious about buying the caravan then you can do a CRiS check by going to <http://www.hpichack.com/caravans.html>. In doing so you will be able to check for sure that the caravan is not stolen, does not have outstanding finance on it and importantly, is not a repaired write-off.

The first two points are unlikely to occur as the 17 digit numbers are checked prior to a caravan being released from the UK for shipping overseas, but it is always useful to know for sure that the caravan you are about to buy has not been a write-off and 'fixed up'.

Be aware that there is a tendency in the UK to write off caravans, often for the smallest reasons, so sometimes a simple repair can have the van looking and feeling like new again. It is however useful to know the reason that a van was written off if this is the case.

At Christchurch Caravans we specialise in importing quality second hand UK caravans into New Zealand for re-sale and rent. In doing so we take all of this work off your hands and we ensure that all our vans are thoroughly checked by our agents in the UK before shipping. We will always supply a large number of photographs of the actual caravan we are offering for sale, not just an example of a similar model.

In addition, Christchurch Caravans sells all of its caravans with a current electric certificate of compliance and electrical warrant, a current gas safety check, warrant of fitness and registration. We also ensure that all of our caravans have had a CRiS check completed so that you can be 100% sure that they are not repaired write-offs, subject to finance contracts or listed as stolen property.

We hope that you have found our free report useful. We have a wide selection of caravans for sale at any given time and will source them to suit if at all possible if you have a particular type of caravan in mind. We will take all of the hard work off your hands and see to it that your caravan arrives in New Zealand in top condition ready for your use and enjoyment.

To check out our range of caravans for sale go to the [Christchurch Caravans](#) website.