



Typical Carlight touches abound, such as these grouped in-board tank controls

## A Command Performance

There's a certain art attached to laying your hands on a Carlight for the sole purpose of magazine evaluation. Whereas other, more bread-and-butter manufacturers can produce a specific model from their heaving ranks seemingly at will, a spot of detective work is required to locate something as rarefied as a £27,995 Commander.

We tracked 'our' Commander down in deepest Buckinghamshire, and it took just one glance inside for us to realise that this was no ordinary example of the breed.

It's common knowledge that fortunate Carlight customers can stipulate the design of their particular model at little or no extra cost. When the customer in question is himself a designer by trade, you might expect a little more thought to have gone into the make-up of the caravan and, indeed this is the case. Cliff Dorling, however tends not to do things by half. The 'base' caravan is a three-birth Commander 182 EW, featuring a main front dinette, smaller side dinette, nearside kitchen and a rear offside corner loo/washroom.

Externally, everything seems perfectly familiar, from the king-sized grab handles and running lights, through to the rear 'boot' and old-fashioned



Innocent-looking kitchen (left) conceals such modifications as re-profiled surface edging, removable hob lid, more modern cooker and sink, and perfectly aligned cabinets

awning light. Clamber aboard, however, and the first of many modification hits you right between the eyes: the familiar, heavy-feeling door is one-piece, not split. The reason for this is simple: Cliff doesn't need a stable door, and Carlight was happy to accommodate. There's an extra, continuous bracing strut over the door, too, although only Cliff knows it's there!

More tweaks abound once you explore the ostensibly ordinary interior. The mirror inside the doorway is twice the width of those fitted to regular Carlights, and while the Dorlings chose the upholstery from Carlight's own upholsterer's books they asked for piping to be added for the sake of contrast. The dividing curtain, too, is three-quarter length, not full length.



The lavish upholstery contrasts with the added piping and mile-deep pile carpeting

Eagle-eyed types will notice that the chamfered wood edging to the kitchen work surfaces has been inverted ('it looks better that way up') and that the traditional, trademark stainless steel hob and sink have been junked in favour of more modern Stoves cooker and colour keyed sink/drainer.

The fact that the glass hob cover now fouls the overhead panels has been overcome by the fitment of a removable lid, which has its own home behind the side dinette.

The rear wardrobe hasn't escaped attention, either: the hanging depth has been increased to a whacking 57 inches and there's a collection of shoe racks to the right, complete with courtesy light.

Fitment of air conditioning was considered, then discarded; instead, there's an automatic fan light over the sink which raises electrically, and closes again automatically in the event of a sudden shower.

No Carlight would be complete without its full complement of Wedgwood crockery (three pieces) and glasses (24 in total), and this one-off special is no exception

**VERDICT** This Carlight is more special than most. We've heard of an even more remarkable Carlight lurking in the wings but, for now, this is the most fascinating examples we've seen.

### Fact file

CARLIGHT COMMANDER 182 EW

Price £27,995

Berths 3

Ex-works weight 1475kg/29cwt

Loading margin 285kg/5.6cwt

Body length 5.6m/18ft 3in

Typical towcar

Land Rover Discovery TDi

Rivals include Buzzard Charisma

530/4; Vanroyce 560 ETL; Vanmaster

Occasion 560