



BUYING ADVICE

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS GATHERED FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF OUR MEMBERS AND IT IS PROVIDED SOLELY FOR GUIDANCE AND IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR YOUR OWN JUDGEMENT WHEN MAKING A PURCHASE.

CARTHAGO OWNERS UK CANNOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ERRORS OR OMISSIONS.

Buying a motorhome, new or used, is probably the most expensive item that you will purchase after your house. They are very complex pieces of equipment with a huge number of variations and designs. It is important to spend quality time determining your requirements. Carthago is probably the best quality build that you can buy and they offer a wide choice from a van conversion in the Malibu range, through the Carthago range from economy under 3.5 tonnes up to 7 tonnes, luxury class motorhomes.

Our members are delighted with their Carthagos whatever version they have chosen and are always happy to talk about their motorhomes and their experiences.

The advice that follows is common for all manufacturers and all models and versions. Most of the advice is common sense and you will already be aware of many of the subjects mentioned. Maybe something will trigger an awareness of a subject that you may have overlooked in your enthusiasm.

First of all, let us set your expectations correct on a few matters. As we said, above, motorhomes are complex equipment. Not only do you have the van chassis and engine to consider but the habitation area and all the equipment that is installed, fridges, freezers, radio, tv, fresh water system, waste water system, toilet cassette, boiler, heating, gas cooker, shower, 12v circuits, mains circuits, etc. etc. These are all installed for you and then you drive over potholes, bumpy roads, lumpy fields, take them to the North Cape, take them to Morocco, use for winter ski-ing and we expect everything to work perfectly. Well, sometimes they do not! Carthago is an excellent quality controlled build and you are welcomed to visit their factory in Aulendorf to see the quality of manufacturing for yourselves. However, whilst some of us have been fortunate enough not to have any problems it is more usual that somethings will need attending to during your ownership. Nothing in our technical world is perfect.



When you visit your selected Carthago dealer you like to think that they know everything there is to know about Carthago and all the models and options. They do not! Usually the dealership is selling several manufacturers motorhomes and each of these have large model ranges. To make matters worse the manufacturers change specifications every year. It is impossible for the dealership salesman to keep pace with every manufacturer and every model. As with all salesmen some are better than others at knowing their products but our advice is CAVEAT EMPTOR (Buyer Beware). Do your own research, check out all the information, ask questions, get written confirmation where necessary and only when you feel comfortable that you have fully understood what you are buying do you place the order.

SUBJECT	NEW	USED
Warranty Work (Geography)	<p>If you are buying from a dealer, whether new or used, it is <u>only</u> that dealer who is legally obliged to carry out warranty work for you. You can go to any Carthago dealership and ask them to carry out warranty work but it is at their discretion. Often dealers do not have the capacity to take on warranty work for motorhomes that they did not sell. They may agree to do so but this is a special agreement on their terms and is not to be expected.</p> <p>In view of this, please think carefully about the distance between your home and the dealership. An attractive sale price may be wiped out if you have to travel long distances to return to your dealer for warranty work and the essential annual inspections.</p>	
Warranty Work (Chassis)	<p>The Carthago dealer will not usually undertake warranty work on the chassis. The chassis warranty is supported by Fiat / Iveco / Mercedes dealers. The Carthago warranty is for the habitation (motorhome) part of your vehicle. The chassis manufacturer provides a separate warranty which may or may not be the same duration as the Carthago warranty.</p>	
Warranty Work (Inspections)	<p>Carthago provide a 6 year or 10 year Warranty against Water Ingress depending upon the model. (There is usually an option to upgrade from 6 to 10 years BUT only at the time of sale). To ensure the continuing cover you must return your Carthago to an</p>	<p>If you are buying a used Carthago you should make yourself aware of the information in the column on the left.</p> <p>Ensure that your Carthago has a record of proof of the annual Leak-proof Inspection having been</p>

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<p>Warranty Work (Inspections) continued</p>	<p>approved Carthago dealer once per year for the Leak-proof Inspection to be carried out and to receive the inspection certificate stamp (a Black Sticker) in your Proof of Maintenance Book. Please make sure that your dealer explains this process to you and that a Proof of Maintenance Book is provided with your vehicle.</p> <p>In addition to the above, an All-in one Service Inspection has to be carried out each year for the first 2 years, by an approved Carthago dealer and an inspection certificate stamp (a Black Sticker) put in your record of inspections.</p>	<p>carried out by an authorised Carthago dealer. The official Black Stickers authenticate that a bona fide dealer performed the inspections on the declared dates. These stickers were mandatory after June 2013. Before that, a dealer stamp was accepted.</p> <p>If you do not have proof then your vehicle's Water Ingress Warranty has probably lapsed and cannot be restarted. If out of warranty, enquire whether a Leak-proof Inspection has been completed and try to negotiate for an All-in one Service Inspection to be completed before collection.</p>
<p>Certificate of Conformity</p>	<p>Your dealer must provide you with a Certificate of Conformity / Homologation Certificate. The document is prepared by Carthago in Germany. It may be sent on to you a week or so after you have taken delivery.</p> <p>This document certifies the standards with which the vehicle complies in Europe and UK. If you visit some European countries and in particular, Austria and purchase a Go Box, you will be required to prove the emissions rating. The standard V5 (log book) does not provide that proof.</p>	<p>Check that this important document is provided to you by the seller.</p>
<p>User Manuals</p>	<p>In addition to the Proof of Maintenance Book, you should be provided with a complete set of User Manuals which will include your model of Carthago, plus EVERY other piece of equipment e.g. boiler, battery charger/s, satellite TV, fridge/freezer, gas hob, gas regulator, inverters, water</p>	<p>Check all these documents are handed over with the vehicle.</p>

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<p>User Manuals continued</p>	<p>pump, heating system and controls, etc. etc.</p> <p>You should also have manuals for the chassis and other fittings like towbars and awnings.</p> <p>Wiring diagrams are not provided for the motorhome habitation area.</p>	
<p>Vehicle Weight</p>	<p>**IMPORTANT**</p> <p>This is the area that causes most consternation with new owners. You must thoroughly investigate and understand this subject.</p> <p>It is against the law to drive a vehicle which is over the permitted weight limits on any axle or overall. Doing so may also invalidate your insurance.</p> <p>Even getting near the limits you will experience degraded handling and an uncomfortable ride.</p> <p>The salesmen and brochures will quote the specified Mass in Running Order (MIRO) to you. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75kg Driver 20 Litres of water, 50 litres e-line 90% Fuel 1 Aluminium Gas bottle <p>But BEWARE because in the small print there is a clause which says quoted weights may be + or - 5% (5% of 3,500kg = 175kg!). You may not have the payload that you expect.</p> <p>You should also understand how these quoted figures are arrived at. For example, they do not include a passenger or large dogs and exclude ANY extras, upgrades or</p>	<p>**IMPORTANT**</p> <p>This is the area that causes most consternation with new owners. You must thoroughly investigate and understand this subject.</p> <p>It is against the law to drive a vehicle which is over the permitted weight limits on any axle or overall. Doing so may also invalidate your insurance.</p> <p>Even getting near the limits you will experience degraded handling and an uncomfortable ride.</p> <p>The salesmen and brochures will quote the specified Mass in Running Order (MIRO) to you. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75kg Driver 20 Litres of water, 50 litres e-line 90% Fuel 1 Aluminium Gas bottle <p>But BEWARE because in the small print there is a clause which says quoted weights may be + or - 5% (5% of 3,500kg = 175kg!). You may not have the payload that you expect.</p> <p>You should also understand how these quoted figures are arrived at. For example, they do not include a passenger or large dogs and</p>

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<p>Vehicle Weight continued</p>	<p>luggage that you may select.</p> <p>Work out the weight of personal possessions that you plan to carry and remember that placing weight in the garage will remove weight from the front axle and load the rear axle by more than just the weight itself. We can provide a spreadsheet to help you calculate the weight distribution.</p> <p>When placing your order the salesman should provide you with a written estimate of the revised weight taking into account your chosen extras. The Carthago catalogue price list itemises the weight of all extras and options.</p> <p>Because of this, consider going for the heaviest chassis option that your pocket and/or your driving licence will permit.</p> <p>Consider air suspension options as these will improve the handling, comfort and in some cases, increase the permitted axle ratings.</p>	<p>exclude ANY extras, upgrades or luggage that you may select.</p> <p>Work out the weight of personal possessions that you plan to carry and remember that placing weight in the garage will remove weight from the front axle and load the rear axle by more than just the weight itself. We can provide a spreadsheet to help you calculate the weight distribution.</p> <p>Therefore, request a current weighbridge certificate to establish the actual weights of the motorhome before you buy.</p> <p>It may have had several extra items installed which are not recorded.</p> <p>If no certificate is available, then ask to have the vehicle weighed before you commit.</p> <p>Also check that the Weight Plates are attached to the motorhome.</p>
<p>Carthago v Retrofit.</p>	<p>Be quite clear who is fitting your extras. Are they being installed by Carthago or are they being supplied and installed by a third party.</p> <p>If the latter understand who they are, what is their warranty and have you understood the additional weight distribution.</p> <p>Sometimes owners think that their extra has been installed by Carthago but in fact it has been installed by the dealer or third party. Just check you know who is doing what when placing your</p>	<p>Not applicable unless the vehicle is still under warranty from Carthago.</p>

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	order.	
Tyres	<p>Motorhome chassis are usually fitted with 'camping' tyres. These have stronger sidewalls and are usually rated M+S (mud + snow). There are now 'all season tyres' available and they are mandatory in Germany and other European countries during the winter months.</p> <p>However, sometimes the chassis has standard van type tyres fitted which are OK but not best suited to motorhomes.</p> <p>When you place your order request that 'camping' rated tyres are supplied.</p> <p>BE AWARE that a spare wheel is NOT included as standard on some of the Carthago range and adding one will reduce available payload.</p>	<p>Tyres on motorhomes rarely wear out their tread unless they cover a very high mileage. But if the vehicle is more than 4 years old check carefully that there are no signs of hairline cracks in the sidewalls. These cracks can be an MOT failure and a new set of tyres can be expensive.</p> <p>Check that the tyres that are fitted are the correct load rating for the axle load. Tyre companies websites normally have an explanation as to how to recognise the load rating and to interpret this code to a maximum weight loading that the tyre will carry.</p> <p>For example: if your maximum axle weight is, say, 1950kg then each tyre should be rated at 975kg or more. For double wheeled rear axles divide the axle load by four for each tyre.</p> <p>Check if a spare wheel is included (see opposite) and be aware of the weight.</p>
Batteries	<p>How many leisure batteries do you order? The answer is determined by your own particular touring profile. Additional leisure batteries will give you extended 12v away from hook up but at the cost of payload.</p> <p>Take advice on your needs.</p>	<p>Leisure batteries have a finite life and can deteriorate more quickly if they are discharged too much too often.</p> <p>You should not replace one battery without replacing the other/s.</p> <p>If the motorhome is more than 4 years old and has been left standing for a long time away from hook up, before the sale then it may be prudent to get a third party</p>

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Batteries continued		<p>to test the batteries for you. Try and negotiate for a new set of leisure batteries. You will not know how long they have been off charge or constantly on charge. If they have been allowed to discharge below 10V on some occasions, then the battery life and performance will be severely reduced.</p> <p>Mains hook up will charge both the leisure batteries and the chassis battery. If solar panels have been installed, then ask whether the solar panels charge only the leisure or both leisure and chassis.</p>
Left Hand Drive	<p>UK dealers have to declare to the authorities that LHD vehicles have been converted to UK specification i.e. the headlamps dip to the left, that the speedometer indicates miles per hour and that the rear fog lamps are on the offside.</p> <p>LHD vehicles leaving the Carthago factory are usually configured for Europe and it is the dealer responsibility to convert to UK.</p> <p>They can be prosecuted for making false declarations.</p> <p>Do not accept delivery of a new LHD vehicle if it has not been converted.</p> <p>For your information, approximately 50% of UK owned Carthagos are LHD largely because our members travel extensively in Europe.</p>	<p>If you are buying a used LHD Carthago then it should have already been converted to UK specification.</p> <p>However, if you buy in Europe then you need to make the changes before you can register the vehicle in UK.</p> <p>It is straightforward for a technician to switch the headlight dip direction. The rear fog lights normally operate on both offside and nearside so these are not a problem.</p> <p>Kilometres per hour only speedometer dials can be swapped for a miles per hour by changing the dial face. A company called Lockwood sell dials for all types of vehicles and their website gives instructions on how to swap the dial faces.</p>

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Gas	<p>The traditional, exchangeable gas cylinders are not compatible from country to country in Europe.</p> <p>If you are planning to tour in Europe then you may wish to consider installing a refillable LPG system.</p> <p>There are several choices of system available to you e.g. Gaslow, Alugas, or you may prefer to order a larger on-board LPG tank.</p>	<p>Get a gas safety check carried out either before taking delivery or as soon as possible afterwards.</p> <p>You should have this check performed every year.</p>
Insurance	<p>Make sure that your vehicle insurance provides adequate cover for your needs like number of days in Europe. In particular, check that the policy provides for adequate windscreen replacement costs. A windscreen for a Chic A class can cost in excess of £5,000.</p>	
Alarm Systems	<p>Your insurance will probably require a Thatcham Approved alarm system to be fitted. Do not be tempted to purchase a car type system but go for a proper motorhome system.</p> <p>These will normally allow you to set the system to provide door and locker security whilst allowing you or your pets to roam around inside the vehicle.</p> <p>Go for a system that has a substantial siren.</p>	<p>If an alarm system is installed then make sure that you are provided with an instruction manual, normally two controllers and that you understand how to set and reset the system.</p>
Breakdown Cover	<p>Take out Breakdown cover from the outset whether the vehicle is new or old. If going abroad, make sure that your European cover includes all the countries you are visiting, plus the period you will be away. We can all suffer a puncture at any time and it is not a very pleasant experience trying to change an offside wheel or use a puncture repair kit on a motorway, in darkness.</p> <p>New vehicles can also breakdown and although they are covered by the chassis providers warranty, this may not provide the type of recovery,</p>	

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<p>Breakdown Cover continued</p>	<p>accommodation and repatriation that you may wish for.</p> <p>Make sure that your Breakdown policy covers the weight of your vehicle. There are limited insurance providers for over 3.5 tonnes if you are a private individual. Recovery costs can be significantly higher than for lighter vehicles and typical car recovery policies are not suitable.</p> <p>Check if you policy requires you to carry a spare tyre.</p>	
<p>Vehicle Handover</p>	<p>When you take possession of your Carthago allow plenty of time to fully understand how everything operates. Take notes, photos and ask questions until you are sure.</p> <p>Do not allow yourself to be allocated a 4:00pm Friday afternoon handover as it will inevitably be rushed. Much better to defer the handover until you have a good 2 hours to discover everything. Once you have been shown, stay at the dealers and run through everything again on your own to make sure you are comfortable.</p> <p>If you are not going directly home then check the gas is operational for heating and cooking and that you have adequate fresh water on board.</p>	
<p>Personal Safety</p>	<p>Finally, if you are new to motorhoming, here a few key points, that come with experience, about being aware for your own safety.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Never, ever park up for the night in motorway service areas. You are at high risk of being robbed. You think you would be woken but these thieves are experts at their trade. It is usually safe to use the Aires and Stellplatz in European towns and villages where you will often find electric hook up, fresh water and waste facilities. The European motorhomers use these Aires and Stellplatz more than campsites and usually you will not be alone. Follow your senses and if you do not feel comfortable – move on. 2. You should both know how to explain exactly where you are at any time. If you have a medical emergency or an accident it is vital that you can tell the emergency services how to locate you. You may not have the luxury of time to go and find someone to ask! 3. Take care not to leave your valuables on display. Put them away safely out of sight. Find a good hiding place – you will find plenty! Do not leave handbags and keys on a hook or on a seat where they can be grabbed through an open door/window. 4. If you take the motorhome to the supermarket for shopping then be aware of the situation around you. Most rural supermarkets 	

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<p>Personal Safety continued</p>	<p>are fine but in some areas, it is best not to leave the Carthago unattended. In high risk situations one of you goes shopping and one stays in the motorhome. It is so easy for thieves working together to follow you in and then one will raid the motorhome while the other keeps an eye on you to see when you reach the checkout.</p> <p>Please do not be alarmed by the above, simply be aware. Our members travel many thousands of miles every year, in all different countries without incident.</p> <p>We hope you love your Carthago as much as we all do and we wish you many happy touring expeditions and we look forward to welcoming you as members of our owners group.</p>	