

A taste for excellence

I always enjoy catching up with Paul and Rochelle Cook from RnRV. The Auckland-based dealers not only pride themselves on delivering genuine quality, they're also genuinely nice people. Last month, I caught up with Paul and took a look through the latest Rapido models to arrive at his dealership.



Did you know? The three figures featured within the Rapido logo represent the three generations of the Rousseau family.



It's not often you hear a dealer describe a motorhome layout as 'delicious', 'gorgeous', or 'magnificent', but that's exactly how Paul talks about the latest Rapido A-class motorhomes sitting proudly outside his office in Silverdale, Auckland.

It doesn't take long to see why the lavish adjectives come so easily. The French-manufactured Rapido brand definitely has the 'wow' factor. And that's a good start. But, as Paul explains, what potential buyers should be more interested in is the quality/value ratio that Rapido represents.

RnRV currently has three variations of the Rapido A-class integrated motorhomes in stock – the 8096 with a front lounge layout (in either dark or light timber) and the 8094df with a rear lounge



The French-manufactured brand definitely has the 'wow' factor

(as reviewed in MCD issue 171) – each offering prime examples of French engineering and innovation.

LOVING THE LIGHT

It's the light timber 8096 – or 'Castello' – front lounge layout that Paul describes as magnificent. "The light timber is very popular with a lot of customers," he says. And I can see why. Walking inside, there's a real sense of luxury and comfort. The front lounge offers generous seating for six within a layout that also provides a sense of openness and space, helped immensely by the huge front window that provides a panoramic view of the great outdoors. The kitchen, while compact, has been thoughtfully positioned to allow the chef to face those in the lounge while preparing dinner.

DELICIOUSLY DARK

I'm equally enamoured with the 8096 in the darker timber – or 'Elegance' – which surprises me given I usually find dark timber décor a bit, well... dark. But this model does it very well. The contrast of the creams and whites in the furnishings, kitchen cabinets, walls and ceiling mean those lovely caramel/coffee-coloured panels offer warmth and prestige without being dominating. A bit like a chocolate slice that has a good dollop of cream to balance out its sweetness. Just enough to make it... well, delicious.

AN OPEN, INVITING LAYOUT

In the rear is a very inviting king-sized permanent bed (1980 x 1600mm). With the garage sitting directly beneath, the

Specifications	
Vehicle make/model	Rapido 8094df/8096
Engine	2.3L turbo diesel
Transmission	6-speed AMT Auto gearbox
Berths	4
Approx. overall length	7490mm
Approx. overall width	2350mm
Tanks	130L fresh / 130L grey
Gas	2 x 9kg
GVM	4400kg
Price (as reviewed)	\$XXXXX

Images by Claire Smith / Rebekah Robinson



The huge front window provides a panoramic view



The rear lounge of the 8094df model



The light decor enhances the sense of space



The practically designed kitchen

bed height can be electrically adjusted to suit the cargo in tow, and to make it that much easier to get in and out of the bed for those with dodgy knees or troublesome hips. There's a decent amount of bedroom storage on offer too, with overhead cabinets, his/hers wardrobes either side of the bed, and a pull-out drawer at the foot of the bed. I particularly like the little cubbies at pillow level – the perfect home for books, reading glasses, and a sneaky chocolate

treat to enjoy with your book.

Extra travellers can be accommodated in the over-cab bed. Designed to be effortlessly pulled down and pushed forward over the cab seats, the bed utilises the full width of the motorhome. And because it encompasses only the cab space, you can still use the lounge area while the bed is down. Another great example of the advantage of integrated models.

The bathroom is split, with the shower

stall on the driver side, and the toilet, basin and cabinetry kerbside. Multiple shelves, cabinets, and towel rails mean there's plenty of space for keeping everything tidily tucked away. The quality continues into the smallest rooms with a contemporary square thermomoulded basin and brass mixer, gloss cupboards, and a backlit Plexiglas-finished shower column. With doors closing off the bathroom zones from both the bedroom and living area sides, the shower and



The drop down bed in position



The rear bed of the 8096 model



The separate shower



Even the smallest room presents quality

AN ELEGANT OPTION

The lovely caramel tones of the darker 'Elegance' decor



toilet zones converge into one spacious, private bathroom.

UNDER THE HOOD

Built on a Fiat base, the 8094dF and 8096 are paired with an AL-KO low chassis with an extra wide axle. The low chassis allows for a heated double floor that provides extra storage which is accessible both internally and externally. Under the hood is Fiat's 2.3-litre Multijet 180hp Euro 6 rated turbo diesel engine driving the front wheels through Fiat's six-speed AMT auto gearbox.

QUALITY AT EVERY TURN

Back to that quality/value ratio I mentioned earlier. If you're looking for a bargain priced RV that will get you started on the road, this isn't the motorhome for you. But if you're looking to invest in a motorhome that will give you as much

delight in five or 10 years' time, as it does the day you drove it home, then this could be the one.

From stem to stern, attention to detail is evident at every turn – the finishing is meticulous. Try as I might, there was not a crooked handle, a misaligned cupboard, or a sloppy stitch to be found. And that goes beyond surface-level; the same level of quality can be found in the hidden corners of cupboards and beneath the hatches where new buyers might not usually look.

Rapido uses 'Novatech' construction which includes 100 percent shock absorption polyester providing roof, side walls, and underfloor protection. All windows are double-glazed with polyurethane frames, and each includes high quality cassette blinds and flyscreens. ■

THE RAPIDO GROUP

Many motorhome brands now on the market have been around for decades, and Rapido is no exception. The brand was founded in 1948 by craftsman cabinetmaker Constant Rousseau, who was joined by his son Pierre in 1976. Constant's first foray into RV manufacture was an extendable caravan, a design that eventually resulted in more than 35,000 units over 30 years. In the early '80s, as the caravan market showed a decline and the motorhome market began to grow, Constant and Pierre released the company's first motorhome, the Rapido Randonneur 410. However, it wasn't until 1992 that the first Rapido A-class model was released, and in the years since, the Rapido Group has grown its brand portfolio, becoming one of the biggest recreational vehicle groups. In 2014 Pierre's son Nicolas became the third generation within the company and now heads management of sales and marketing.