

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND?

Louise Turner and her family put the SunnCamp Breton 500 Plus to the test



Let's start with the basics. The Breton is heavy when packed, but pretty robust when pitched due to its combination of metal and fibreglass poles. Joining them together is an "elbow" – a handy little system which allows you to poke the steel pole in the bottom and the bendy fibreglass one into the top. This combination gives the tent good rigidity and the inclusion of metal poles inside the tent which run front to back means it stood up well in the wind.

The bedrooms come hung within the tent, so we had the whole thing pitched first time within 40 minutes. This also made for a pretty fast getaway as you don't have to separate out the constituent parts and pack them separately.

I'd describe this as an entry-level tent as it has all of the basics, but not a huge amount of bells and whistles. Storage in particular was a bit of a problem as there's not a lot of room in the living area of the

tent and limited pockets in the bedrooms. But it does have a choice of two doors, both with fly mesh, an electric hook-up point and good light through large windows. You can buy a porch as an extra and we'd certainly need this if camping in it for longer than a couple of nights.

What it does have in abundance is guy ropes – 19 of them to be exact. They are a bright yellow colour so easy enough to see, but when you peer out of the front door it looks like a scene from CSI. Your only option is to walk straight out for about two metres, regardless of which direction you'd like to go in. The doors don't have the folding down bits at the bottom so there was always a trip-hazard for our two children. And no, it doesn't matter how many times you point it out, someone always goes flying.

The four of us in the 3+2 bedroom combination were a little snug on our self-inflating mats once we put our rucksacks in. Maybe that's because we're

used to an eight man tent and the kids having a room each to spread their stuff around into. We also felt a bit squashed in the living area, which was filled by our camping table and chairs, leaving little room for anything else.

However we were impressed with the Breton 500 Plus. It's a decent, good value tent which would be fine for short getaways, but would probably be a little squashed for a family of four on longer breaks used to an eight-man tent.

Overall though this is a good tent and would certainly be fine for the odd long-weekend. The only faults were a couple of loops for rolling up blinds which weren't properly attached. Annoying, but they didn't affect the integrity of the tent.

DESCRIPTION

A decent 5-berth tent with adaptable sleeping areas separated by a curtain and a small-ish living area with some storage pockets. ☺

"THE BRETON 500 PLUS IS A DECENT, GOOD-VALUE TENT. WE LOVED THE EASE AND SPEED OF PITCHING THIS TENT AND TAKING IT DOWN."



The green/white combination makes the tent bright, which is great during the day, but meant sleeping masks were a necessity at night. Fly mesh was included on both doors – one front and one side – and an EHU entry point makes it practical. The windows were large and all had roll-down curtains for privacy. There was even a loop for holding back the cord and a hook if you wanted to suspend a light, so there's clearly been some thought put into the little things.

There is one bedroom at the back, arranged in 3+2 and separated by a curtain which can be tied back if you wish.

The combination of metal and fibreglass poles means this is both a rigid and a flexible tent. The metal poles inside running front to back along the roof made it nice and firm in the wind, although they are easy to forget when taking the tent down!

OUT AND ABOUT

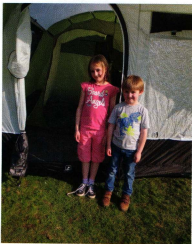
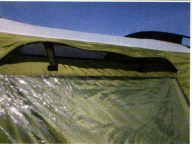
We took the tent to Aberford Caravan Site near Leeds just after Easter. We had a fabulous few days at this small Club site, which is also home to lots of animals – donkeys, goats, pigs, chickens of all shapes and sizes and the odd lamb in need of bottle feeding.

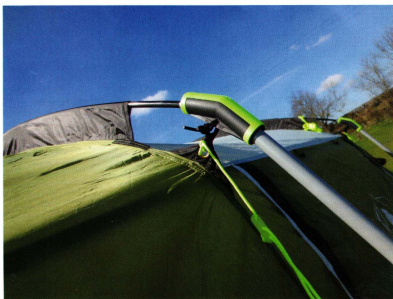
We pitched on grass in the well-kept field which had a slight incline that made the trip hazard at the bottom of the doors even more acute. The site's friendly owners made sure we had EHU and invited the children to feed the lambs and baby goats each evening. The alpacas in the field behind certainly didn't seem too enamoured by the tent, but they didn't view it as food either, so we were grateful for small mercies.

This site has won the Club's best family site and best new site and I can see why. It's small but perfectly-formed and had all we needed for a few nights away to take advantage of the beautiful weather before the children went back to school. We were pleased we chose to get away after the bank holiday weekend as it meant we had the field to ourselves for one night and were joined by just two other families throughout our stay, meaning there was lots of room for everyone.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

More storage in the bedrooms would help keep some order. A fold-down bit at the





bottom of the door would save lots of grass stains and bumped knees. A darker fabric would also make sleeping a little easier. If the canopy at the front of the tent was a little bigger it would provide some shelter for storing shoes. It serves little function as it is.

WHAT WE LIKED

We loved the ease and speed of pitching and taking this tent down. It also feels like a lot of tent for the approximate £200 online price. There appeared to be little chance of snapping the fibreglass poles as they weren't under as much tension as in a traditional fibreglass pole tent. We expect this will mean fewer repairs in the longer-term. Although the 19 guy-lines were a bit of a niggle, it certainly meant the children had a job to do when pitching and putting it away! ☼