Air-Volution Ultima Air 390

Whale Ultima Air 390



IN A NUTSHELL SunnCamp simplifies erecting an awning frame by making it inflatable. Its Air-Volution is low in weight and price, but how well will it stand up to the elements?



AWNINGS HAVE COME a long way in the past few years, with lighter frames and more durable materials. They weigh less than earlier models and will last longer, protecting your investment into the medium-term.

One thing that has changed little is how you put them up. For the uninitiated, stretching fabric over a metal or glass-fibre frame as it's being built is tricky. To paraphrase the old joke: what's the quickest way to a divorce? Buy an awning.

So it'll come as a relief to many that there is an alternative: an awning with an inflatable frame.

The Air-Volution Ultima Air 390 is being launched this month by SunnCamp, a brand well known for its affordable polyester awnings with lightweight frames. The Ultima Air dispenses with poles, apart from weather-seal ones, replacing them with inflatable tubes.

The Ultima Air 390 goes up in less than 15 minutes and can easily be erected by one person. Feed the beading through the awning rail and, as you inflate the tubes with the

Pitch perfect Clever thinking delivers an awning that is easy to erect and goes up quickly. At around £400, it's good value, too.

Bent peg There's only one colour scheme: grey, black and light brown. You'll need a spare tube and valves for peace of mind.

supplied foot pump, the structure soon takes shape. The pump has its own pressure gauge to stop over-inflation (in the event of any problems, the tubes and valves are easy to replace). Once the awning is up, you peg it and the high-visibility guy ropes down as normal.

The tubes are housed in polyester support tub es with polyethylene linings. These fit inside zipped sleeves for structural integrity.

The awning's two side and two canopy doors all have secondary meshes for protection against the elements. A wing over the side doors provides extra tension for the roof and some protection from rain. The three front and two side windows all have internal curtains.

Tried-and-tested weather-seal poles and pads may not exclude

draughts, but they do reduce them. The poles fit in pockets in at the roof's corners and the pads attach to the poles using Velcro.

A draught skirt and four heavy-duty storm straps are standard kit, while replacement air tubes cost £40, and a pack of two air valves £4.50. Alternatives to the Ultima Air 390 include the Kampa Rally Air 390 (£599); the Ultima Air 280, at 280cm (w) x 240cm (d), costs £340.

Verdict

The Ultima Air goes up and packs down quickly, thanks to its unusual inflatable frame, which is breeze to use. And at £400, it's good value.

Dimensions 390cm (w) x 240cm (d)

Price £419

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Putting it all together



The air tubes are inflated using the supplied foot pump



Weather seal poles attach to the awning via pockets in the roof



All the windows have internal curtains that roll up and down



Sturdy pegging ladders make tensioning straightforward



Flaps over the side doors offer protection from the elements