



Europe's recreational vehicle population grows

A dazzling finish for the 2003-2004 caravanning season

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The European recreational vehicle market closed out the 2003-2004 season with a significant surge in sales. According to the European Caravan Federation (ECF), a total of 192,548 recreational vehicles rolled out of European showrooms between September and August of 2004, registering a 6.8% increase over the previous year. Sales growth was particularly robust in the motor caravan segment, in which 69,308 new vehicles (up 8% over last season) hit the streets of Europe. Meanwhile, the caravan market was not far behind, registering 6.1% sales growth (123,240 vehicles sold). The UK, Scandinavia, and Italy were the sales leaders, while the 10 EU accession countries registered strong sales growth, although at a relatively low level.

The UK recreational vehicle market grew by 20.9% with sales of 44,424 vehicles. The British have traditionally favored caravans over motor caravans, and this season was no exception. 36,433 new caravans were delivered (up 22.9%) while 7,991 motor caravans found new homes (up 12.5%). Scandinavian motorists are also devout caravan fans. Of the 23,559 recreational vehicles (up 10.6%) newly registered in Scandinavia, 18,286 were caravans (up 9%) and 5,273 were motor caravans (up 16.25%). The Italians, on the other hand, prefer holidays in a motor caravan. Of the 16,596 recreational vehicles acquired by Italians (up 16%), 13,486 were motor caravans (up 15.9%) while 3,110 were caravans (up 16.5%).

The recreational vehicle market grew by 12.3% in the ten new EU countries, which registered cumulative sales of 2,251 units. Of these, caravans accounted for 1,404 units (up 8.8% over 2002/2003 season) and 847 were motor caravans (up 18.46%).

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