

Growth continues in European caravan market

Sales up in first three quarters of 2003

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The European caravan market continued to register robust sales growth during the first three quarters of 2003, with 3.7 percent more caravans (96,379 units) rolling out of European dealers' showrooms than during the same period last year. 41,952 motor caravans were sold in Europe during this period, an increase of 7.1 percent over the prior year. As in the past, the British, Scandinavian and French motor caravan markets accounted for much of this growth.

In the first three quarters of 2003, UK caravan sales were up 10.2 percent (20,055 units sold), while the number of new motor caravans plying British motorways increased by 24.3 percent to 6,174 units. Thus, sales of new caravans in Britain ranked third in Europe just behind Germany (20,658 units), while the Dutch were the sales leaders with 22,619 vehicles sold.

“Britain is set to overtake Germany this year and become Europe’s second most productive caravan market,” noted Hans-Karl Sternberg, general secretary of the European Caravan Federation (ECF). “Sales growth in the British market continues unabated, while turnover in the German market declined in the third quarter.”

In Scandinavia, 15,301 caravans found new owners between January and September of this year, with sales growth rates ranging from 4.4 percent in Norway to 18.3 percent in Finland. 3,881 motor caravans rolled out of dealer showrooms in Scandinavia during this period, the lowest growth rate being a respectable 15.7 percent in Denmark and the highest 36.6 percent in Norway.

The French market registered its strongest growth in the motor caravan segment. The 15,234 new motor caravans on French roads in the first half of 2003 represent a 10.3 percent increase over the previous year's figures.

In August, the European caravan market closed out the 2002-2003 season with a substantial increase in both caravan and motor caravan sales. Between September 2002 and August 2003, European caravan dealers sold 114,794 caravans and 64,525 motor caravans. Compared with the 2001-2002 season, this represents a 5.6 percent increase for caravans and a 7.9 percent rise for motor caravans.

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