

#64

go!

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DECEMBER 2024-JANUARY 2025 | ISSUE 64

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Kaokoland

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ROUTES

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THIS FRIDGE/FREEZER FROM

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Head to Montagu

Mountain trails and campsite tales

Bull Run 2024: Dust and good times

NEWS BFGoodrich shows its latest knobblie | **GEAR** Bags and crates for all your stuff | **ROOFTOP TENT TEST** Sleep high and dry in a Thule Approach | **VEHICLES** Mitsubishi Pajero Sport & Kia Tasman



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24
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Climate of confusion

Perhaps the time has come for even those ostriches with their heads buried deepest in the sand to start conceding that the climate-change crowd might be onto something.

Let me start by saying I'm not in any way an expert on the subject. Heck, I'm not even all that interested. If I happen to catch a video, hear something on the radio, or see an eye-catching headline, I'll usually stop to watch, listen or read to get a sense of what's going on.

Climate change is also not a topic I'd use to reignite a conversation around the campfire if it starts to die down for a moment. I almost feel like this touchy topic, with its impassioned supporters and fervent sceptics – each as painfully convinced of their own standpoint as the other – belongs with money, politics and religion on that list of subjects we were always told not to talk about. It's a topic that basically guarantees you'll be left completely alone in seconds, because as soon as it's raised, souls in the other camp chairs around the fire instinctively pull back, and the people at the table virtually evaporate.

But... (and yes, I'm laughing at myself for that word I just typed after saying in the previous sentence that it's a taboo subject), I'm beginning to realise more and more that climate change and its effects on our world aren't merely the imaginings of doomsayers.

If you're still reading this, first of all, thank you for your patience. Well, I hope it's patience and not that you're stewing over that irate email you're going to send me. Secondly, you're probably wondering why I also believe that climate change is not only a reality but that its far-reaching consequences are headed towards one thing – a total disaster for our planet and every being that calls it home.

This is where someone who believes so strongly in something would start reciting all the research and projections from some of the world's brightest minds, following up with theories from those who believe it's all a hoax, before countering those theories with more research and evidence.

However, I'm not that guy. I haven't even read a single book on the subject. My opinion is based simply on what I'm experiencing these days. We've lost two whole seasons – what's happened to autumn and spring? It feels like we're simply switching between winter and summer now. The delightful transitional period that spring and autumn always brought is just no longer a thing.

In my mind's eye, I picture the four seasons being called in for a meeting and then noticing that the head of human resources is there too. They have to listen to a presentation by management on recent challenges and how the outlook isn't too rosy for the future, and that immediate action is needed to secure their existence. On the whiteboard is an organogram of the current structure, which consists of four seasons. And on the next slide is the proposed new structure's organogram... and the four boxes have been replaced with two.

Clearly, autumn and spring's applications were unsuccessful, and they've been laid off, meaning summer and winter now have to share all twelve months of climate between them.

You can feel it, because just like with any restructuring, there are people left who must pick up the work that was previously the responsibility of those laid off. But this doesn't mean they know 100% how to do it. Winter thus tries to hold onto autumn's role for three months of the year, but it's clumsy and full of mistakes, and it's not comfortable with it for a moment. Summer feels exactly the same when it has to wear spring's hat. That's why one day we're sweltering and can't stray farther than 10 metres from shade, an air-conditioned room or a swimming pool... and the next day we're donning three layers because the cold has resurfaced.

Why am I talking about this, and why now? Well, I'm writing this letter in the first week of November. It's Tuesday night, and it's so cold outside that I had

to turn on the gas heater in the TV room.

And I have a reservation to go camping at a popular family resort this coming weekend. There are plenty of swimming pools, slides and all sorts of other fun things synonymous with warm summer weather. But it doesn't look like it's going to warm up before then, no matter how intently I glare at the weather app on my phone these past few days.

So, instead of items like "cozzies, sun umbrella, goggles and extra cooler box for ice," my camping list now reads "thick jacket, beanie, extra blankets and soup ladle." That's not right, surely?

Safe travels.



Schalk

EDITOR

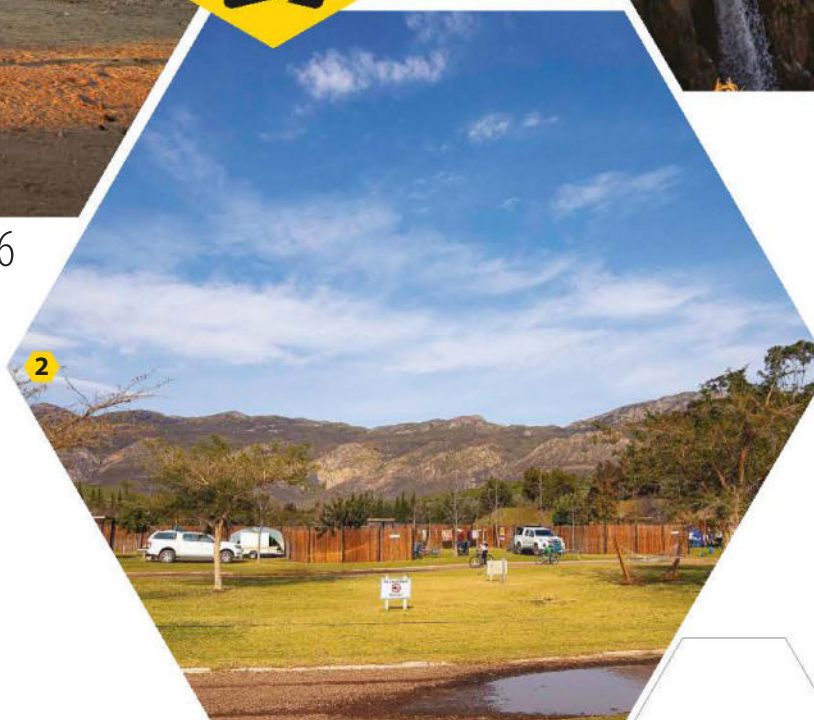
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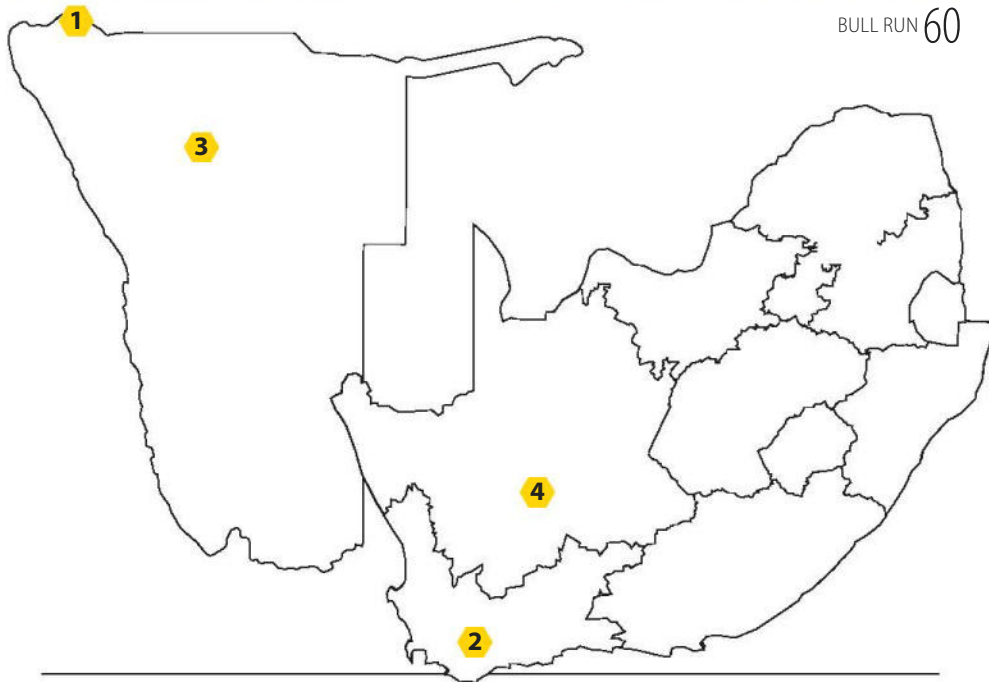
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BULL RUN 60



#64 COVER IMAGE – LEON BOTHA

“It may not be everyone’s idea of fun to cover a brand spanking new Invader Quattro X in mud, but when there’s camping to be done, no amount of inclement weather can stop us. This was the last bit of sunshine we saw before snowstorms hit the Cape.”

Camera settings Canon EOS 6D Mark II; f7.1;
1/2 000 s; 35 mm; ISO 500

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R130⁰⁰

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PICNIC TABLE



R399⁰⁰



MULTI FUNCTION TABLE

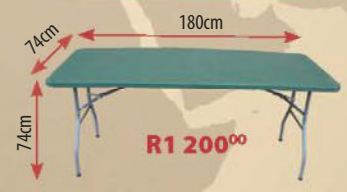


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We'd love to hear what's on your mind! Write to us at drivecamp@gomag.co.za, and please remember to include your full address and contact details. *Drive & Camp* reserves the right to edit and shorten letters – and to use them at its discretion in the magazine, on the website, and elsewhere.

Here's to Charles!

In 1991, I was in matric at Victoria Girls' High School and would love to comment on Charles Foster's reader story in the August-September 2024 issue. Charles was the deputy head when we were at school in what was then Grahamstown (now Makhanda) and certainly the best history teacher any of us had.

I got a message on our Class of '91 WhatsApp group saying that one of our classmates had spotted an article by Mr Foster in *Drive & Camp*. Messages about one of our favourite teachers and his stories immediately spread through the group – among those of us now in our fifties.

He had a way of bringing history lessons to life while sharing his own life experiences with us, and he was also genuinely interested in our lives. Back then, he often told us about his fishing trips.

He usually arrived at school in his white beach buggy because there wasn't enough room for his fishing rods in his car. For a keen angler, it was by far a more practical way to get around. I doubt any of us were surprised to hear about his three-day trip along the coast.

Mr Foster, we remember you fondly and wish you well as you continue to embark on exciting challenges in



your golden years.

Charles, we salute you!

TRACY FRANCIS
Claremont, Cape Town

The Atherstone Society was, as you can see from the group photo, a history society. Tracy sits to the left of Charles. Tracy also went into teaching and has been in the classroom for the past 28 years. – Ed



Tracy wins a cooler bag worth R220. Whether you're a camper, fisherman, or sports fan next to a cricket pitch, this cooler bag has room for a lunch box and a 1,5 L coolrink bottle. The lid also has space for a coffee flask. The interior is lined with PVC, which makes it easy to keep the bag clean and hygienic. The bag has a short strap that reaches over the top and attaches with a Velcro strip, as well as a longer shoulder strap if you're going to carry it over longer distances. It's an ideal picnic accessory or a padkos bag for a road trip. winkel.weg.co.za



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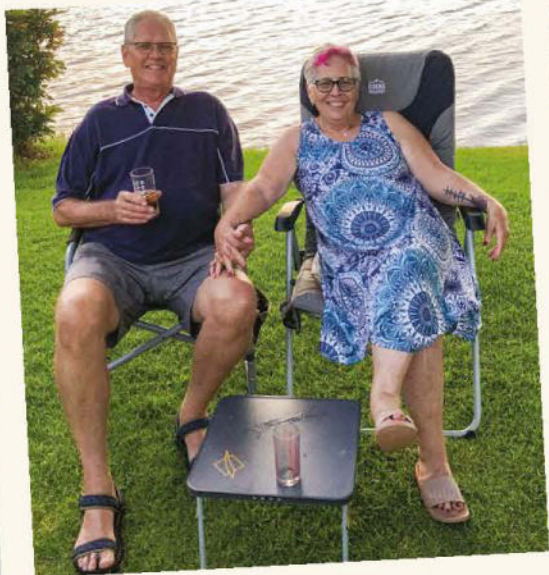
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Wild wind

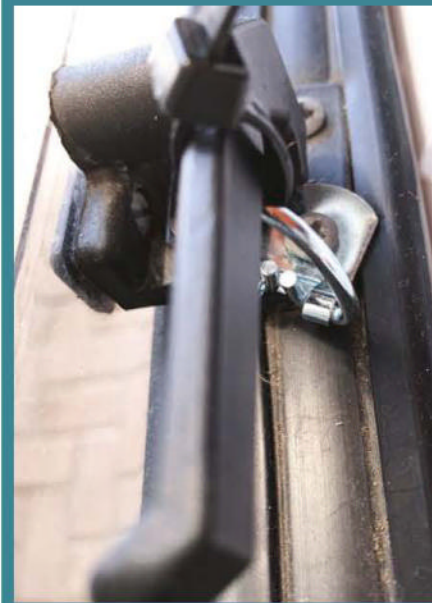
I'd like to share a recent rough experience with a simple solution that fellow caravan owners might find useful. But first, let me say how much I look forward to each new issue of your wonderful magazine.

We live in Durbanville and were eagerly awaiting our first camping trip after a long, wet, and gloomy Cape winter. With the caravan hitched, we set out early northward on the N1, planning to drive through the Huguenot Tunnel. With summer on the way, the wind was blowing as it usually does.

At the tunnel, we were advised to drive over the pass instead. As you might know, lorries have been blown over on the bridge before the tunnel, and a caravan even recently went over the railing. Keen to continue on our camping trip and not turn back, we proceeded over the mountain as the wind howled.

After a few kilometres, I was dismayed to see a side window of the caravan popping open and moving up and down. It ran the risk of breaking off. I immediately thought I hadn't latched it properly.

I pulled over, and my wife Sunette helped from the outside while I climbed in to secure the latches. We had to try a few times. Eventually, Sunette suggested using duct tape to hold the window in place as the wind increased.



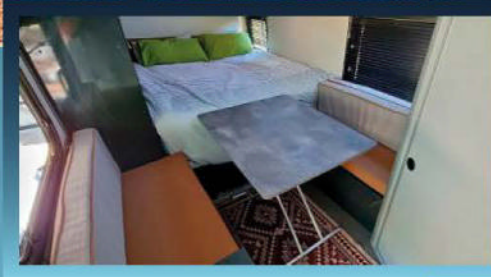
It was a temporary fix, and when we arrived at Hartenbos, we set up camp and made a stop at Hartenbos Caravans & Outdoor. The saleslady said the solution was simple and handed us a short tent pole. I wasn't sure how it would work, but as you can see in the pic alongside, you can use it to hold the window in place from inside. Truly a straightforward solution.

While I was looking for duct tape in the shop, I spotted picture frame hooks. Those, along with cable ties, gave me a more permanent way to keep the latch closed. I should also mention that it was our first visit to the ATKV Hartenbos campsite. It has fantastic facilities, and we highly recommend it.

VIV REYNEKE
Durbanville, Cape Town

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A granny's touch

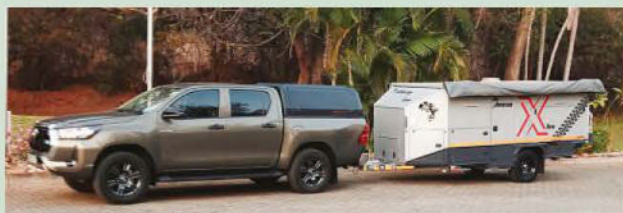
It's the morning of Sunday, 11 August. My husband, Hein, and I are here at our caravan beside the beautiful Blyde River at the Forever Swadini resort, and I'm reflecting on the long weekend.

The weather is fantastic – 30 °C and warmer. Ever since Thursday, caravans have been entering. From morning till evening, cheerful children are on bicycles. Smiling families stroll past, heading for the swimming pools. In the road in front of us, a 10-year-old boy loses control of his bike and falls. My neighbour and I immediately rush over to help. Fortunately, nothing is broken, and there's no grazed skin or blood, but I can see tears welling up in his eyes. My neighbour picks up his bike, and he slowly pushes it back to his campsite. I watch him go and feel tears in my own eyes, with a longing for my two grandsons. It's a granny thing to always have a band-aid ready. Now I sit here, feeling a twinge of nostalgia as I watch each caravan drive out on their way home. I know they would have loved to stay longer. Lord, thank you for all the privileges that each of us may enjoy in this beautiful country of ours.

RIA LISSE
Molteno 🇿🇦



■ Ria and Hein with their grandsons JG (13) and Heinrich Coetzer (14).



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"Cool shot"

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The idea behind National Luna's TB20 model isn't only to fit in a small boot; it's aimed at someone wanting one fridge for various uses. Do you need a cooler for a fishing weekend? A mobile bar fridge for your white wine? Or perhaps a fridge for a golf weekend with friends? The TB20 was developed for all these purposes.

What initially seemed like an impractical size for a fridge/freezer has ironically become the one you'll use most often because it fits in any vehicle and is light enough to carry on your own. In fact, this is precisely the feature National Luna focuses on. Cool it down in your car and then carry it down to the beach. Or plug it into a wall socket and use it by the braai.

An electric fridge/freezer is, after all, better than an ordinary cooler box because you can bring the internal temperature down to an icy -18 °C.

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National Luna is giving away one of these fridge/freezers to a lucky winner. Simply SMS "National Luna," followed by your name and surname, home or postal address, and email address to 35121. Each SMS costs R1,50 (free SMSs do not apply). The closing date is 31 December 2024.



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New BFG knobblies

BFGoodrich recently launched its latest all-terrain tyre, the T/A KO3, in South Africa.

The KO3 is an improved version of the popular KO2 and now has a sharper focus on dirt roads, sand, rocks and mud. At the launch held at the Lion & Safari Park outside Johannesburg, guests were invited to put the new tyres to the test by driving on various challenging trails – from muddy paths to steep, rocky slopes and uneven dirt roads.

The KO3 introduces several innovations, especially in rugged and varied landscapes. The advanced tread design provides stronger grip on surfaces like soft sand, loose gravel and rocky terrain, making it a suitable tyre for the kinds of environments South African drivers frequently encounter. Whether you're tackling rural dirt roads or rough mountain paths, the KO3 is designed to excel in all conditions.

Additionally, BFGoodrich has employed

its CoreGard technology to further strengthen the KO3's sidewalls – offering protection against potholes and sharp gravel. This technology is particularly useful in rocky conditions, where the risk of sidewall damage is high. Furthermore, the tyre's optimised tread (thanks to a new compound and design) ensures longer life and consistent performance, making it ideal for long-distance drivers who travel on urban roads and 4x4 routes alike.

"The KO3's debut is an exciting moment for off-roaders and bakkie drivers in South Africa. With its enhanced durability and performance, the KO3 is designed to handle the toughest conditions, offering drivers peace of mind on all terrains – whether they're venturing into the wilderness, navigating gravel roads, or tackling daily work routes," says Ashutosh Jha, BFGoodrich Marketing Director.

"We've done a lot of racing and

research in the 10 years since we launched the KO2 tyre, so a decade of data, feedback, technology, and experience went into the development of the KO3," says Harold Phillips, BFGoodrich Global General Manager. "We are our own competition, and we knew it was time to take the all-terrain tyre to another level. It will be exciting to see what consumers will do – at work and at play – with the KO3."

The KO3 tyre is currently available in 37 sizes for 16-inch to 22-inch wheel rims, with more sizes to be introduced during 2025.

BFGoodrich draws on 50 years of motorsport experience to develop high-performance tyres for both road and off-road use. Follow BFGoodrich on social media like Facebook, X, and Instagram at @BFGoodrichTyres.

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Busy times at Cara-Camp

The caravan dealership Cara-Camp Caravan & Outdoor Centre in Somerset West has new owners and is now trading as All Out Caravan & Leisure Cara-Camp.

Customers now have an even wider range of new caravans to choose from. Previously, Cara-Camp was an approved dealer for Tuff Cats, Nayela, Swift, Okto, Stealth, Invader and EdgeOut, but now Quantum Caravan World products are available too: Quantum models and Sprite.

Ernie Jacobs takes over as dealership head, and together with his team of 13, they continue to handle sales of new and second-hand caravans, as well as camping and workshop services.

The business began as Kara-Kamp years ago, after which a second owner changed the name to Cara-Camp. Later,



Arnold Prosch took over in the early 2000s. Arnold says he left the corporate world back then "to serve clients in a positive frame of mind," and describes his years at the dealership as a privilege.

Hours Monday to Friday 08:00-17:00; Saturday 08:00-13:00; closed on Sunday.
Contact 021 852 8215 or 083 290 3389
 📧 cara-camp.co.za
 📧 sales@cara-camp.co.za

Centennial for Ford



Ford South Africa celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. The company's first plant was a converted wool warehouse in Port Elizabeth (now Gqeberha), as shown here.

"To be in business for so long and still standing strong is a remarkable achievement – and a very humbling one," says Neale Hill, President of the Ford Motor Company in Africa. "Ford South Africa is defined not only by our legacy of resilience and innovation but by the people who bring it to life every day. Our strength lies in a deep commitment to supporting one another and uplifting our communities."

According to a media release, this celebration is a collective one that resonates across generations. "It reflects a legacy shared by Ford's diverse workforce, which carries forward a pride and identity rooted in the rich history of Ford's contributions in South Africa. Every story, memory, and milestone over the past century lays the foundation for the future, inspiring the next 100 years of Ford in South Africa." Congratulations, Ford!

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New campsite on the West Coast

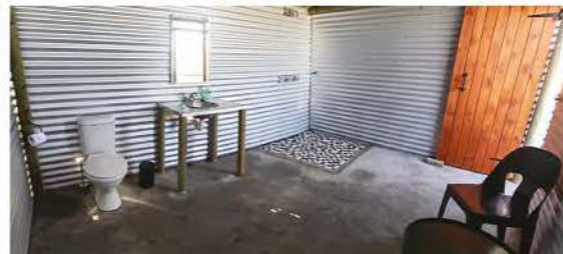
Wacky Adventures near Hopefield is a playground for young and old – and they've added a new campsite.

Entertainment varies from quad bikes, go-karts and trampolines to a selection of pools and waterslides. Best of all, campers have free access to the water park.

Wacky Adventures, located 22 km inland from Langebaan as the crow flies, is still a relatively new enterprise that arose from the COVID-19 pandemic, explains owner Chris Hatton. They were on holiday in Scotland when the virus struck, forcing them to stay longer than planned. As a result, Chris's initial venture took a hit. He then decided to make use of his 40 ha patch of land in a different way.

He started with six quad bikes and go-karts, and before long, guests were looking for somewhere to cool off. Hopefield can get very hot, so the first pool was built. Three more followed, and then a new need arose: his visitors wanted camping spots.

The campsite is set up next to the water park. It's a huge grassy





area with 34 stands, each 9 x 9 m, equipped with a tap, a 3 x 3 m shade net and a standalone braai drum. You'll just need to bring your own grid.

The six bathrooms are each 3 x 4 m and neatly lined up. They're fantastic family-friendly facilities with an open shower, basin, toilet, table and two plastic chairs. Between the third and fourth bathroom is an open area with dishwashing facilities and two chest freezers. Gas geysers provide hot water, but there is no electricity at the campsite.

Chris is busy setting up another 34 stands. His plans also include a heated pool and electricity. **Price** R200 pppn (free for children under two). Minimum booking of two nights (three during peak season). No pets, generators or music allowed.

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CENPRO OFFROAD CAMPING SOLUTIONS

Beasts on the move!

Two local off-road caravan models have just rolled in: Cenpro Offroad Camping Solutions is a new South African manufacturer making its debut with some exciting innovations, says **Leon Botha**.

Nothing beats experience. So, when a seasoned camper decides to build his own caravan, chances are he'll get it right. That's certainly true for Michael van Schalkwyk, who embarks on overland trips deep into Africa twice a year. He's owned a string of off-road campers but finds some too complicated for his taste.

The results of his 50 years in the steel and engineering industry and his love for camping are two caravan models he designed himself, each boasting a unique touch or two.

The Nyathi (Sotho for "buffalo") is based on a teardrop design, while the Indlovu (Zulu for "elephant") leans more towards the traditional off-road caravan style.



Two or four? NYATHI

Although the Nyathi resembles a teardrop caravan, it has several features that set it apart from other models. The obvious similarities are that the entire interior is a bed, there's a door on each side, and a kitchen at

the rear. But that's where the similarities end.

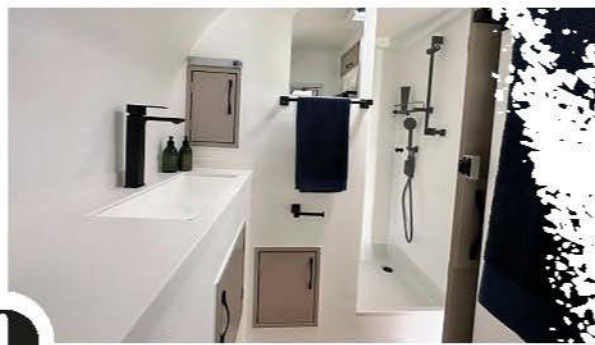
Inside the body, there are two shelves stacked vertically – next to them, you can set up a frame with a basin and drying rack, and to the far left is a swing-out tap to get water for the basin. As an extension of the kitchen,

the Nyathi also has a cupboard with three shelves above the left wheel, designed more like those in off-road caravans. The same applies to the stove, which, along with the fridge/freezer, slides out from the nose cone.

It's to the right between the wheel and kitchen where you'll

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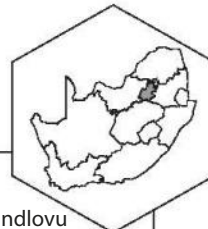


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NEW CARAVAN



find the Nyathi's most unique feature: a tall drawer, as high as the body and fitted with several shelves, slides out.

When pushed back in, this cupboard stands at the foot of the bed, meaning when it's pulled out, you have open space at the end of the bed – a luxury you won't typically find in any other teardrop.

On the A-frame the spare wheel sits inside a frame covered with canvas, while the power box and geyser are housed in two separate cupboards against the right panel.

INDLOVU

It has two fold-out beds: the larger one folds out on the right, and the other over the A-frame. The former works a bit differently than usual, as there's no door opening to form a bed platform over which a tent is stretched. Instead, the door opens to form the roof of your sleeping area, with canvas enclosing it.

At first glance, there's nothing special about the A-frame bed, but Michael added a clever feature to make it easier to climb onto the bed. The nose section opens up like a bonnet, after which the base of the bed and its side flaps unfold. So, standing by the entry door, the bed opens to the left, and instead of a step, there's a cupboard with a counter on top. The idea is that the kids, as with a rooftop tent, use a ladder to climb in from outside.

Although there's a cupboard between the open space inside the caravan and the bed, you still have direct access to the kids.

By the way, the cupboard's counter is L-shaped, with one section in front of the bed and the other along the main bed.

The Indlovu's washing-up station at the back is similar to that of the Nyathi, as is the slide-out frame for the stove and fridge/freezer. However, the spare wheel is located close to the nose, next to the main bed.

The cupboard above the left wheel has a canvas door at the rear, so you can access items on the shelf from inside as well.

SPECIFICATIONS

Models	Nyathi / Indlovu
Sleeps	Two / four
Size	5 x 1,8 x 2,05 m / 5 x 1,8 x 2,1 m
Tare	920 kg / 1 260 kg
Payload	580 kg / 540 kg
GVM	1 500 kg / 1 800 kg
Axle	2 t / 2,5 t
Wheel size	16 inches
Chassis	Galvanised
Body	Aluminium and stainless steel
Price	R280 000 / R380 000

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Birds of a feather

Both caravans' hulls are made of aluminium and stainless steel and are equipped with a galvanised chassis and 16-inch wheels. Other shared features and standard items include:

four corner steadies; a 270° awning; kitchen drawers; a gas geyser, two gas cylinders, and gas stove; rear washing-up station with hot and cold water; and a 12 V battery system with a 220 V charging system.



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Mission: Possible

Manufacturer Mission has launched its second off-road trailer, and this one is making waves far beyond our borders, says **Leon Botha**.

The Mission brand is no stranger to the world of off-road trailers, with its first model debuting shortly after the start of the new millennium.

About a decade later, Calculus Products, a manufacturer primarily focused on various components, bought the business.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Mission even exported its campers to Australia. In fact, for every one sold in South Africa, Australians bought five. Unfortunately, the writing was on the wall when the pandemic hit, but it also opened up new opportunities.

A fresh start

Two years ago, Christie Coetzee became the owner of Calculus, marking a new chapter for Mission. For instance, the galvanised chassis was replaced with 3CR12 stainless steel, and CNC machines were introduced for precise fitting. These newly-built models weren't just higher quality; this development also paved the way for a new variant, the Mission X.



The Mission X features some notable differences, and we can thank Australia for that. Parts of the chassis, like the shock absorbers, plus the power system and tent options, come from Down Under.

In the standard model, the 50 l fridge/freezer sits in the nose cone, and you access it through the lid. On the Mission X, the nose cone gets an extra side door, and the larger 60 l fridge/freezer is mounted on a slide frame, so you can pull it alongside the work surface.

The worktop in the outdoor kitchen has also been redesigned. In the standard model, the washing area is part of the same surface, but in the Mission X, it's separate. This means you can still wash dishes while the worktop is covered.

The solid rear panel of the standard model is now a door on the Mission X, and the right-hand door has been split into two. This means the ladder to climb into the rooftop tent is no longer blocking the door. The far right door can now open with the ladder in place.



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So many choices...

Beyond the basic unit, there are no fewer than 35 options to further equip your Mission X. These include a kitchen unit for six, two drawers for groceries, a slide frame with two containers and a three-burner gas stove (R32 563). The electrical system includes a 100 Ah lithium battery, a charger, multiple outlets (three-prong, two-prong, USB), LEDs, and a solar regulator (R26 195). The 100 W solar panel comes with a 10 m cord (R2 199; 120 W costs R5 704, and 150 W is R7 045).

The drying rack, sink, tap, and frame for the washing area cost R5 479, and the water system is R18 118. This includes the 12 V water pump with pressure switch, a water level meter, a 14 l gas-electric geyser and various water connection points. The 80 l water tank is stainless steel and costs R12 636.

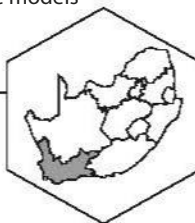
In addition to the Mission Family tent (R44 275), you can choose from four other

tents – ranging from R54 995 to R74 995 – and three awnings (R19 900 to R24 995).

The road ahead

This part of Calculus is now independently known as Mission Outdoor. A smaller Mission model, the Lite, is in the pipeline (with a GVM of 750 kg). It's aimed at lighter tow vehicles and people with a standard driver's licence. Plans are also underway for an off-road caravan, the Mission X-tream, and possible exports to Australia and America are being explored.

The most significant change at the moment is the wheel size, Christie explains. It's not about rim size, but as the motor industry is shifting away from 16-inch tyres, it's about the availability of the tyres themselves. Future models will be equipped with 17-inch wheels. 🚗



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Mission X
Sleeps	Rooftop tent
Size	3,45 x 1,79 x 1,92 m with rooftop tent;
	2,06 m high with an awning
Tare	400 kg (fully equipped 960 kg)
Payload	1 100 kg
GVM	1 500 kg
Axle	2,5 t
Wheel size	16 inches
Chassis	Stainless steel
Body	Fibreglass
Price	R199 093 (basic model)

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MISSION X

GVM 1 500 kg

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KIA GETS A BAKKIE

The Tasman is Kia's very first bakkie, and right from the start, it makes a strong impression. **Cyril Klopper** takes a closer look.

Rumours have circulated for years that Kia would make a bakkie, but it wasn't until April 2024 that the Korean automotive giant officially confirmed the name Tasman. The name is inspired by the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand, as Kia considers these two countries crucial markets for their bakkie. In fact, Kia calls the Tasman "the most Australian vehicle" it has ever developed – Kia Australia indeed contributed to its design and engine choices.

The vehicle was unveiled at the end of October, sparking plenty of discussion. On Kia South Africa's Facebook page, we read the following comments:

Jeanette Slabbert: "I'm sorry but it looks like a Lego car. Kia you lost the plot with this."

Wayne Coetzer: "Looks like the car you draw when you first learn to use crayons."

Matthew Purdon: "That is about the ugliest vehicle I have ever seen."

George Fisher: "The interior and rear I like, but Kia, what



happened to the front? I was expecting something along the lines of the Sorento. I don't think this will sell at all, it is hideous! Very disappointed in Kia, was someone smoking their socks? I would not drive this if I was paid to!"

There was, however, some positive feedback. "I love the design. Wow!" said Shockwave Anderson, but on social media, the reaction among South Africans was mostly negative.

Unlike many new bakkies, the Kia Tasman is not a rebadged version of an existing platform – think of the VW Amarok's

“ Looks like the car you draw when you first learn to use crayons ”

connection to the Ford Ranger – but an entirely new bakkie.

Although the Tasman is Kia's first bakkie, it's technically not the first Kia on a ladder frame chassis. Kia has a military division, the Special Vehicle Division, which

manufactures armoured vehicles for the South Korean military. Kia wanted the Tasman to pay homage to its Special Vehicle Division and to evoke thoughts of a military truck.

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follows its own path – not the competition. The Kia Tasman combines true pickup values with exceptional capability and practicality, and advanced features that defy conventional thinking. This essence is instilled in our global slogan ‘Dive into a New Dimension’, enabling customers to broaden their horizons. It offers world-first solutions for those seeking a lifestyle vehicle for leisure and outdoor activities while meeting the needs of small business operators, such as traders and farmers,” says Ho Sung Song, president and CEO of Kia.

The bakkie’s reason for being is said to be practical use, good off-road ability, and an unusual appearance that deliberately resembles no other bakkie. For example, the front is distinguished by a vertical grille and vertical strips of LED headlights.

At the time of going to print, specifications were still sparse, but what we do know is that it will come with two engine options: the 2.5 ℓ Smartstream petrol engine (206 kW and 421 Nm) that has been in the Kia Sorento since 2020, but here it’s adapted for rear-wheel drive; and the 2.2 ℓ Smartstream diesel version (154 kW and 441 Nm).

There will also be two transmissions: a six-speed manual and an eight-speed automatic with four-wheel or rear-wheel drive with an automatic differential lock. You can also choose between a single or double cab.

The Kia Tasman is expected to theoretically tow 3,5 t with a maximum load weight of around 1 t. Kia is upfront about aiming to compete with bakkies like the Ford Ranger, Toyota Hilux and Isuzu D-Max, hoping to replicate the successes it’s already achieved with its sedans and SUVs.

The Kia Tasman boasts multiple touchscreens inside, including two 12,3-inch screens and an optional Harmon Kardon sound system. There are also practical



GI JOE. It’s a face only a mother can love, but this might be its biggest charm. Do you remember how we felt when the Ford Sierra first appeared? And do you also remember how well that car eventually sold?



touches like a spacious storage bin between the front seats, which can also serve as a sort of table.

Despite all the electronic gadgets, the cabin has a minimalist look, and Facebook comments indicate that South Africans do indeed like the interior.

The Kia Tasman will make its debut in

2025 and will be sold in Korea, Africa, the Middle East and, of course, Australia and New Zealand. There’s no indication of pricing yet, but we expect the Tasman to be costly, as the expense of developing a bakkie from scratch isn’t insignificant.

And that cost has to be recouped somewhere to balance the books.

From the competitors 4x4 double-cab bakkies in Kia’s sights



R711 400 Toyota Hilux 2.4 GD-6 4x4 Raider (auto)

This trusty stalwart is due for an update soon, and we’re looking forward to it.



R978 600 Ford Ranger Tremor 2.0 Bi-turbo-diesel 4x4 (auto)

This is an excellent bakkie, and we’re surprised it didn’t place higher in the Bakkie of the Year competition.



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New

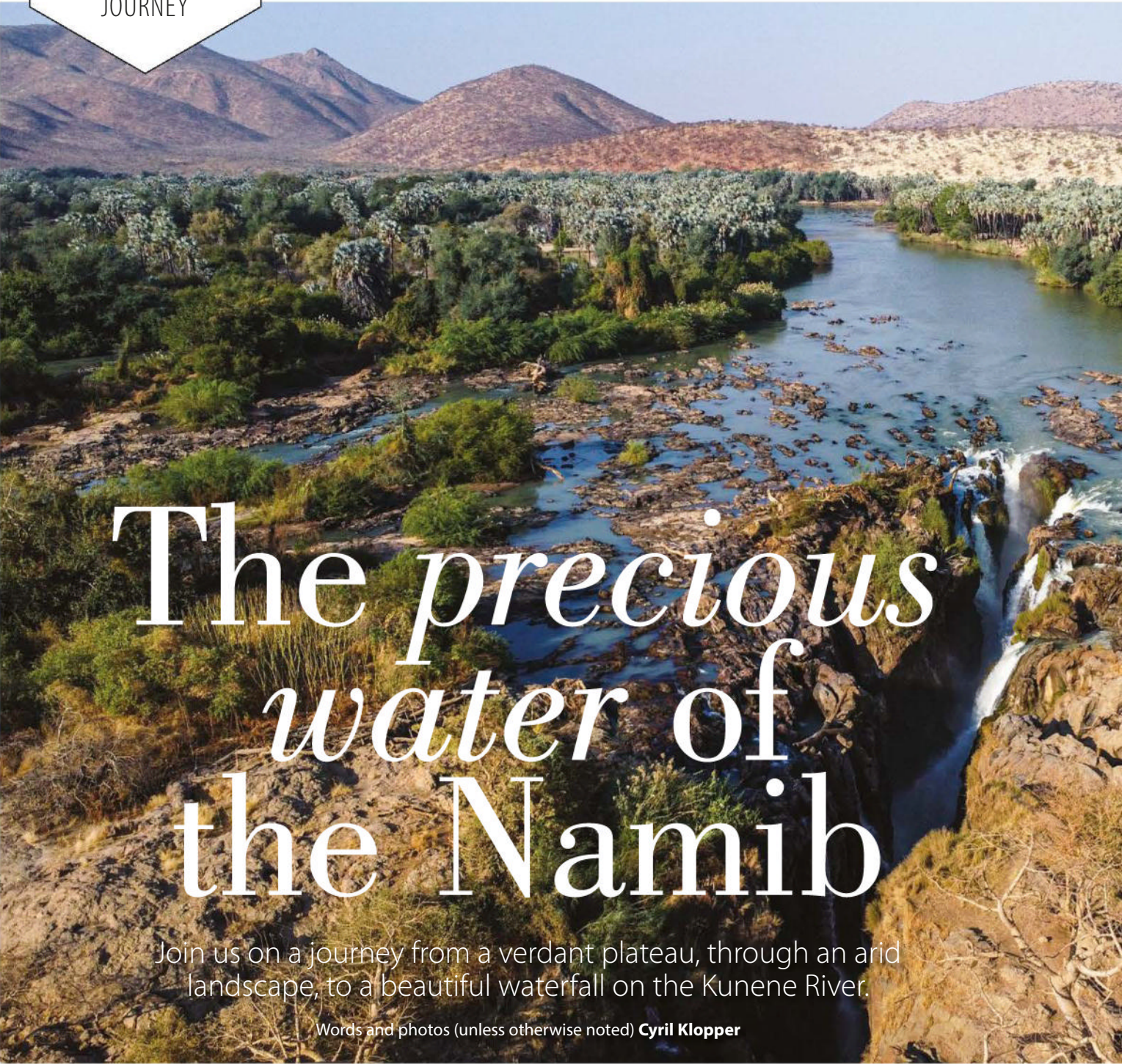


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Words and photos (unless otherwise noted) **Cyril Kloppe**

Travel with us over two days and 925 km from Namibia's Waterberg to the equally green Epupa Falls. Along the way, we visit bustling towns, Namibia's last standing finger rock (as far as we know), and a valley full of baobab trees. Pack your bag, hop in, and let's explore the Damaraland and Kaokoland.

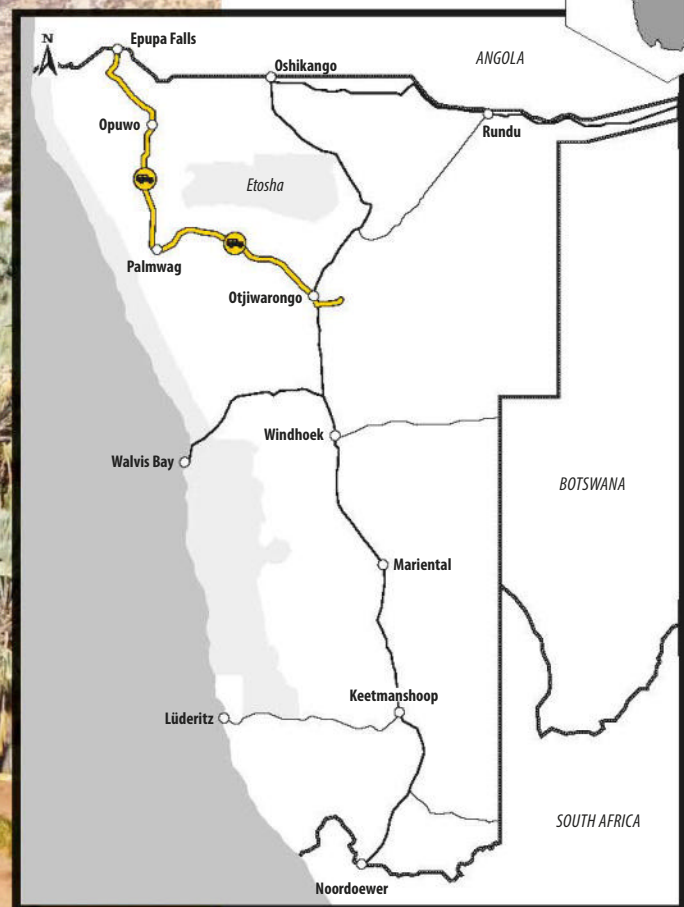
We're up bright and early on the first day, with 580 km ahead of us. It may not sound like much, but most of the route

is on gravel roads, with stops planned for sightseeing and a resupply.

Leave the Waterberg Wilderness Lodge, our overnight stop (see our previous issue for details), and make your way to the main B1 road, where we turn right towards Otjiwarongo. This is the largest town in the Otjozondjupa region, with a population of around 50 000, according to Namibia's 2023 census. The name means "pleasant place" in Herero, and Otjiwarongo indeed lives up to this, especially in spring when the jacarandas

and bougainvillea are in bloom.

However, it's a working mining town with few tourist attractions. One spot worth visiting is the crocodile farm on Henk Willem Street. Entry costs N\$65 (N\$35 for children) and includes a guided tour. The farm is open seven days a week, but do keep in mind that the crocodiles are only fed in the summer months (11:00 sharp on Saturdays), as they eat nothing at all during the winter. The restaurant offers various crocodile dishes, like a crocodile steak served with mushroom



sauce, grilled pineapple, rösti and Greek salad (N\$285 per person).

Trainspotters can gawk at the number 41 steam locomotive at Otjiwarongo's train station, which we'll drive past anyway. This 2-8-2 wheel layout locomotive was built in 1912 by Henschel & Sohn in Germany and brought to the former Deutsch-Südwestafrika to transport copper ore from Otavi to Swakopmund (via Otjiwarongo).

After stocking up on supplies and refuelling, it's time to follow the regional

C38 road for 70 km towards Outjo. This narrow tarred road has only one lane in each direction, but the grassy shoulder is broad enough to pull off if needed.

Outjo, meaning "small hill" in Herero, was a tiny settlement until quite recently, but today it's one of the fastest-growing towns in the Kunene region. Outjo's current population of 20 000 (compared to 8 400 in the 2011 census) has access to three primary schools, two high schools and a private school. There are also cultural attractions, including the Naulila

Memorial in Station Street, the Franke House Museum on the corner of Herholdt and Tuli Streets, and the old water tower on the corner of Trudie and Krupp Streets.

However, these three attractions pale in comparison to Outjo's most impressive sight: Namibia's last standing finger rock (even though it's a bit out of town).

Drive 80 km along the tarred C39 regional road, aka the Khorixas road, until you find a left turn-off, where a road sign directs you to the finger rock via the D2743 gravel road. Follow the D2743 south for 19 km to the entrance of the Vingerklip Lodge.

Initially, there were two finger rocks, the more famous being the Mukarob, or the Finger of God in the Nama language, near Keetmanshoop, which disintegrated on 8 December 1988. It was initially thought that a strong gust of wind had toppled Mukarob, but geologists later determined that the Finger of God's days were numbered due to its precarious attachment to the ground – which was precisely why it was so striking. The devastating 1988 earthquake in Armenia (the tremors of which were felt as far



Source: Wikipedia

STANDING TALL. Outjo's vinger rock (above) is far bigger than the Finger of God used to be, but its stance is also less precarious and therefore you're less anxious about standing right next to it. The Ongongo waterfall (opposite right) is worth a visit and its campsite (below) is nestled in a shallow valley.



Alan Middleton





“

Namibia's last finger rock outside Outjo will certainly fall one day, although it is currently standing rock-solid...

”

away as Windhoek) was the true cause.

Namibia's last finger rock outside Outjo will certainly fall one day, although it is currently standing rock-solid, so you might as well take the opportunity to visit it. The finger rock's GPS coordinate is S20.38314 E15.43373, and day visitors pay N\$15 to view it up close.

Now head back on the D2743 gravel road and turn left again onto the C39 tar road. Follow this road to Khorixas in Damaraland. This town, with a population of about 9 000, has fuel stations and workshops. There's also a lodge with campsites if you decide to stay a day or two and visit the nearby Twyfelfontein rock engravings, the Organ Pipes, and the White Lady rock painting at the Brandberg volcano.

On this tour, however, we're pushing on through Damaraland on the C39 until it eventually becomes the C43, and we then follow the road to Palmwag and northern Namibia's Red Line.

This veterinary cordon fence is a physical barrier stretching from Torra Bay, south of the Etosha Pan, north of Grootfontein, right across Namibia. Palmwag's checkpoint is located at the coordinates S19.88414 E13.94887, and its purpose is to prevent the spread of foot-and-mouth disease. Be warned: if you head back south on this road, Namibian

officials will search your vehicle and confiscate any meat products.

To the north of the checkpoint, there are four fuel pumps – two diesel and two petrol – though availability of the right kind of fuel is never guaranteed.

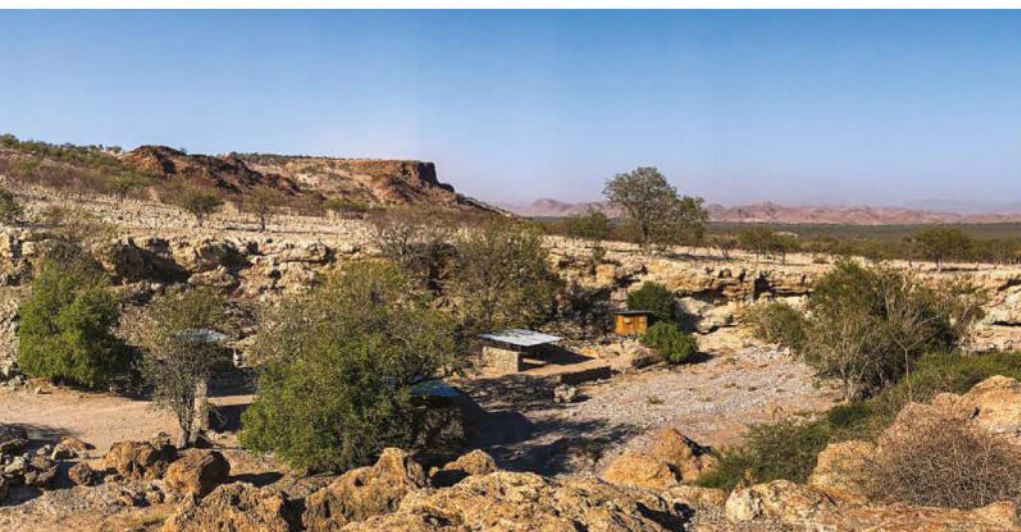
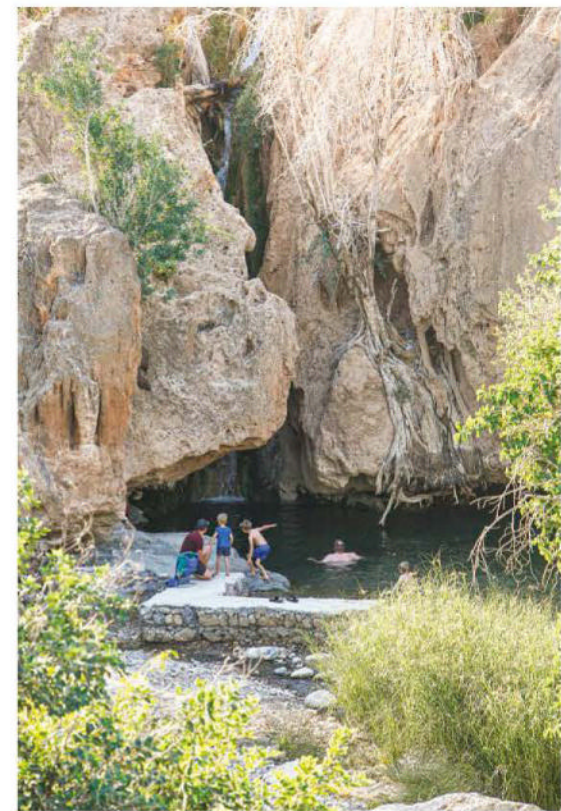
From the Red Line, we follow the C43 gravel road for 75 km to the village of Khomarib and the Khomarib Lodge, our campsite for the night. You should arrive by late afternoon, provided you didn't linger too long at the finger rock.

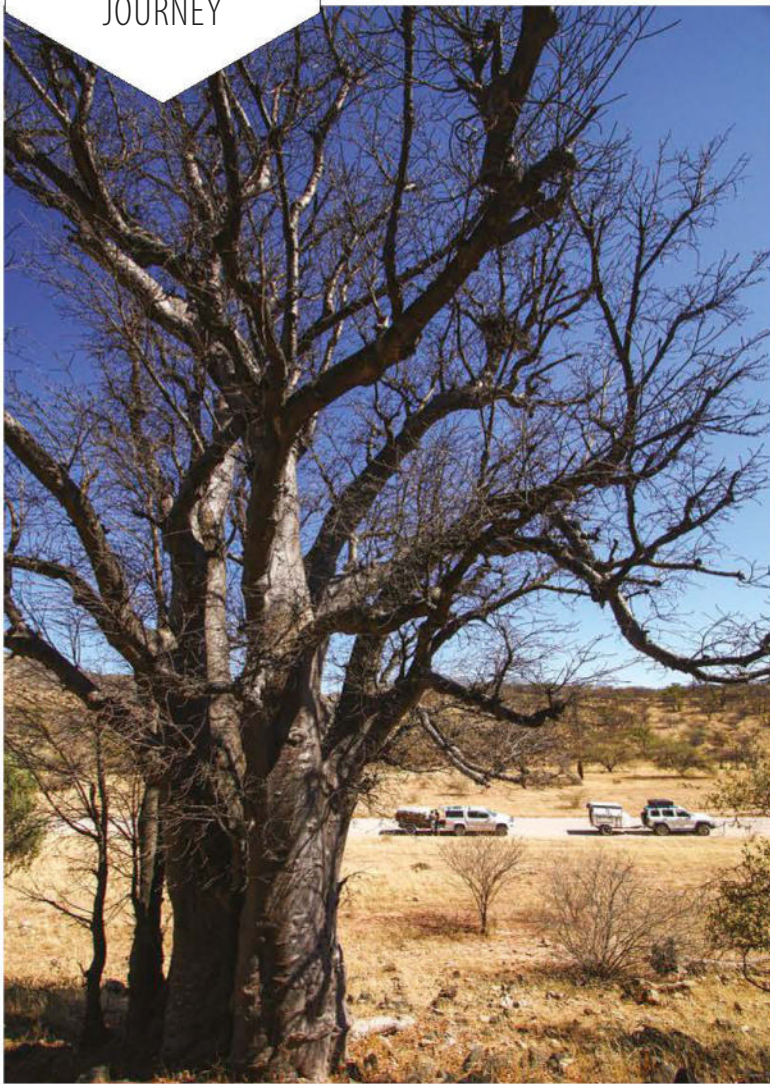
Unhitch your trailer and dive straight into the campsite's pool, which is set amidst a lush green lawn, before ordering a cold one at the bar. Tonight, you'll make a fire at the foot of the Etendeka Mountains, and we're keeping fingers crossed that the desert elephants will amble along the Hoarib River past your campsite.

On the second day of our journey, we're only tackling 350 km, so you can sleep in this morning if you like. After breakfast, we leave the Khomarib Schlucht and resume the C43 gravel road, but only 12 km from the campsite we turn off at the Warmquelle settlement.

From here, we follow a rocky trail 5 km into the mountains in search of the Ongongo waterfall. If you're uncertain which track to follow, simply ask one of the many Himba people farming in the area where the waterfall is. Parking for day visitors wanting to visit the waterfall is located at the GPS coordinate S19.13977 E13.81874.

Day visitors pay R70 per person for a guided tour to the waterfall and swimming pool, but if that sounds too steep, you can stand free of charge on a cliff opposite the waterfall and peer longingly through binoculars or a zoom lens camera. In the gorge below you, there are nine campsites with private ablution facilities and hot showers. In fact, if we did this trip again, we'd probably camp here rather than at Khomarib Lodge – visit ongongocampsite.com to book.



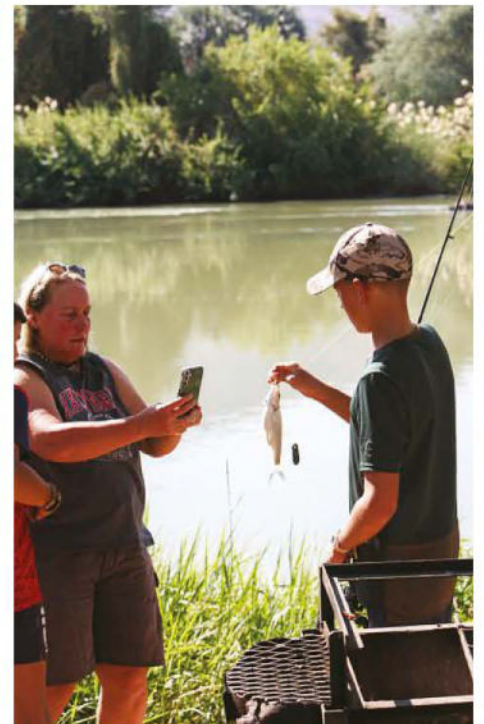


UPSIDE DOWN. Baobab trees (above) in these parts often have branches that resemble root systems. The swimming pool (right) at the Omarunga Lodge is a welcome sight after days of driving through the hot desert.

Afterwards, head back to the C43 and turn right onto the Opuwo road at Anabeb. If you end up in Sesfontein, you've missed the turn-off and will need to backtrack for 11 km and turn left towards Opuwo.

The C43 first takes us over the steep Otjomatempa mountain pass, with its concrete road, followed by the beautiful Otjombande Conservancy, lined with countless baobab trees on both sides of the gravel road. Pull off at Baobab Bend – S18.36631 E13.77271 – for a quick picnic under the branches of dozens of these 'upside down' trees before we enter the last major town on this journey.

Opuwo is the main town in the Kunene region, with a population of more than 12 000, according to the 2023 census. The town's name means "it's enough for me" in Himba. Here, there are shopping centres – your last chance to buy fresh supplies – and workshops offering tyre





repair services. Prepare yourself for the throng of hawkers and beggars who don't take "no" for an answer. It's no use buying anything either, as even more hawkers will then appear out of the woodwork. You'll need to literally turn your back on them and walk away, or get into your vehicle and roll up the windows before they might leave you alone.

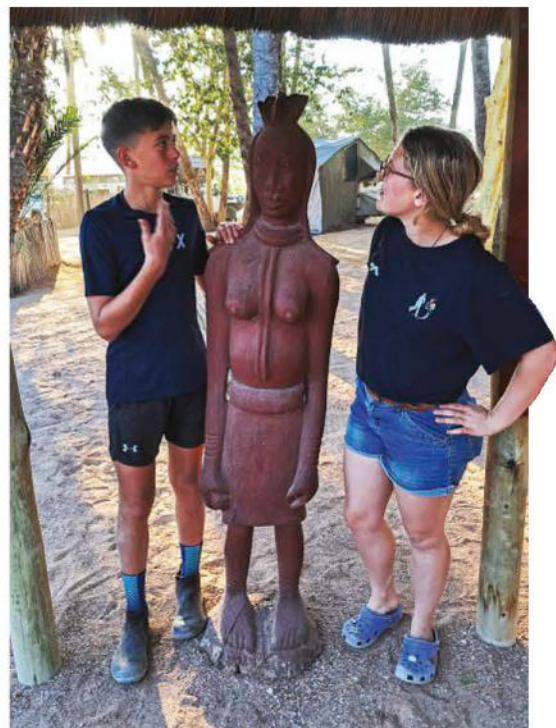
Fill up, bag your groceries, and get out by taking the C43 northwards through Kaokoland – Opuwo was indeed "enough for me". The landscape here in the north is bone-dry, and the proud baobabs of Damaraland gradually give way to Kaokoland's smaller mopane trees and wandering combretu (*Rhigozum virgatum*).

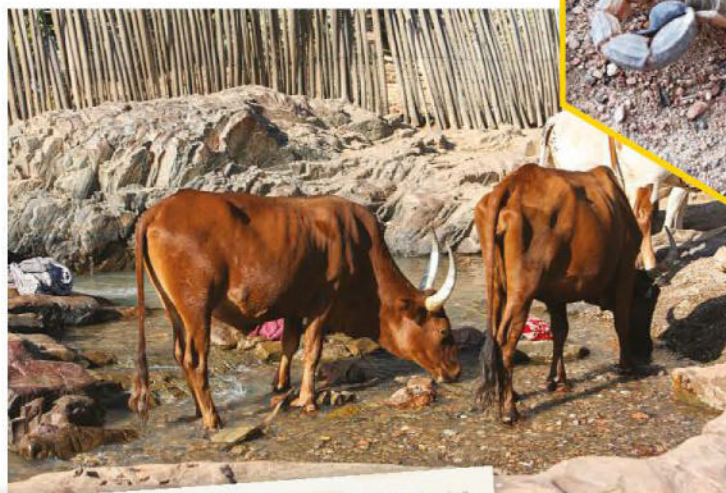
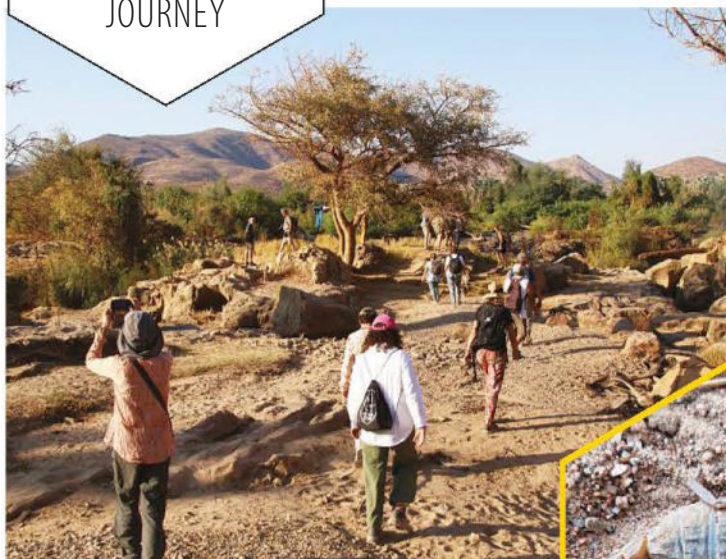
Just 100 km past Opuwo and 3 km before Okangwati, there's a memorial to Chief Tjipikita Hipondoka. You can

learn more about this interesting leader in our "Trail guide" article (page 56).

We cross dozens of dry riverbeds with low-water bridges, including the larger Otjiveze and Ombuku Rivers. During our visit, these rivers were dry, which is normal, but the damage to nearby trees and the bent depth marker posts along the low-water bridges indicate that the rivers occasionally come down in force. The Ombuku River, for example, flowed so strongly in 2008 that the settlement of Okangwati, which we're now driving through, was almost washed away. In fact, a total of 42 people drowned in northern Namibian, and 52 000 other lives were affected by food shortages due to the 2008 floods. Keep an eye on the news and weather forecasts before tackling Kaokoland.

About 70 km past Okangwati,





They say

Retired Caledon residents Danie and Hilga de Waal tow an Infanta Enkulu 3 with a Isuzu D-Max 3.0 V-Cross, while their travel companions, Ludwig and Catherine Etsebeth, tow a Gecko Extreme with a Toyota Hilux 2.8 GD-6.

"We've been travelling together since 2015, and our biggest challenge was when one of our trailers rolled down Van Zyl's Pass. Once our visit to Epupa Falls is over, we're heading to Khaidum, through the Zambezi region, to Mana Pools in Zimbabwe and Lake Kariba in Zambia."

FALLING FOR YOU.

It's easy to be impressed by the Epupa Falls, especially when the Kunene is in full flood, but it can also be a huge disappointment when the river dwindles to a mere trickle. We were fortunate to see at least some water during the month of July.

you'll spot the tops of innumerable lala palms on the horizon. We're now on the home stretch of our journey towards the Kunene River and our final destination, the Epupa Falls.

Stop briefly at the foot of a hill, where a road sign directs you left to the Epupa Falls viewpoint. You'll need to pay N\$70 per person to view the falls from above – that's coincidentally the same price

a senior citizen would pay for a cableway ride up Table Mountain – but, like Table Mountain, you'll be able to snap excellent photos of something remarkable. There's also a campsite here called Epupa Falls Viewpoint Campsite with a fantastic view of the falls. However, it's a community campsite with basic facilities and, in our opinion, not the best place to stay near the Epupa Falls.

Rather drive down to the river, where

three more campsites await. In order, you'll pass Okapupa Falls Community Camp, Epupa Falls Lodge, and finally, Omarunga-Epupa Falls Lodge. The first was still under construction when we visited in July 2024 and accepted no bookings at the time of writing.

The second campsite is an excellent choice, although the spirit of Epupa Falls Lodge has sadly diminished since the passing of its founder, Koos "Kunene"



Verwey. Oom Koos, also known as the White Himba, remains a legend in the area, having also established Camp Syncro. His memorial service on 30 November 2023 was attended by Chief Hikuminue Kapika. According to

Himba tradition, Oom Koos was buried at Ovizorombuku at the foot of a hill not too far from his beloved Epupa Falls.

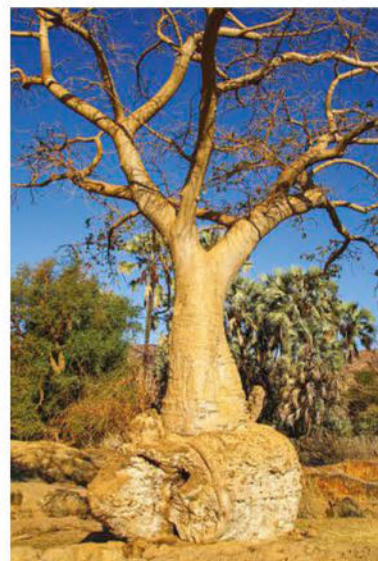
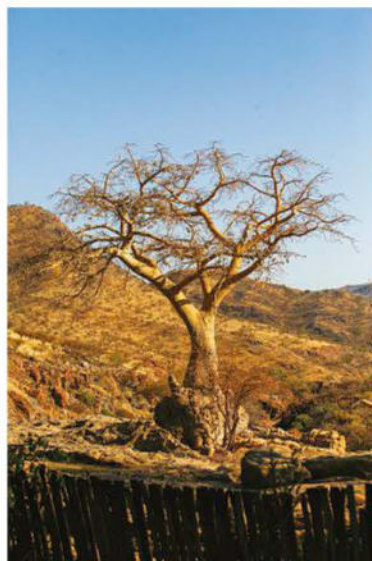
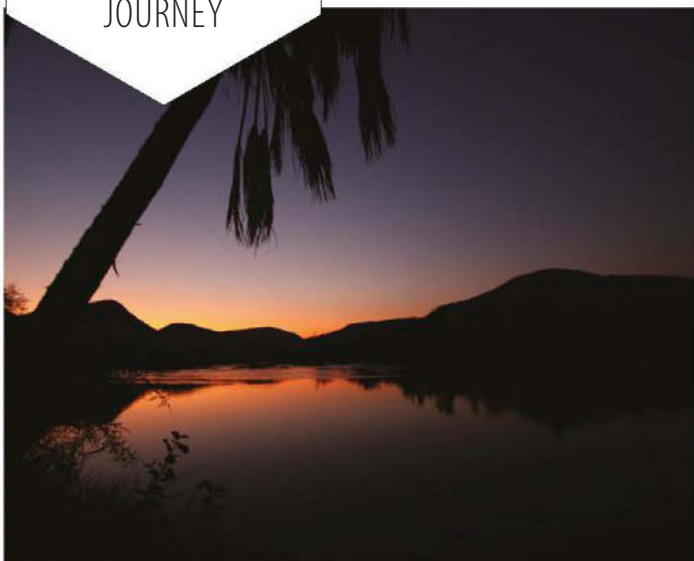
We settled at the third camp, Omarunga Lodge, right next to the upper reaches of the falls. You should arrive

early here, giving you plenty of time to take a stroll.

Turn right as you exit the lodge's main gate – you can push it open and close it by hand – and walk 150 m past Epupa Falls Lodge and the unfinished Okapupa Falls Community Camp to a row of stalls selling crafts. The Himba women here mainly sell bracelets, carved wooden bowls, woven reed baskets and lala palm seeds engraved with charming designs. Prices are lower than those asked by the pushy hawkers in Opuwo, and you won't be bothered by beggars.

After this, continue on to the upper pools of the falls, where cattle drink, and the local community washes clothes and bathes. It's considered impolite to photograph people washing clothes without asking first, and it's completely taboo to photograph anyone bathing, especially women and children. So, rather point your camera away from the pools as you pass by.

The edge of the falls is a dangerous place, so be careful where you step to avoid falling in. If you get too close to the



edge and slip, you'd better hope you miss the rocks on your way down and that the churning currents don't drown you. If you miraculously survive the fall and the whirlpools, there's still one final hurdle awaiting you: crocodiles lying in wait downstream in the quieter waters, ready for a meal.

At the lodge, one of the staff members told us, wide-eyed, about a foreigner who tried to swim across the Kunene River a few weeks earlier, to naughtily touch Angola's border without a passport. He vanished, screaming, under the water, and his remains were never found...

A pale baobab tree grows by the falls (its trunk is whiter than those of the other trees nearby) with dozens of names carved into it. These are, according to local lore, all the lives the Epupa Falls have claimed over the years.

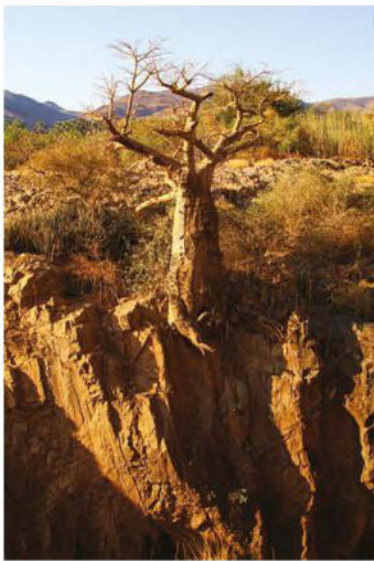
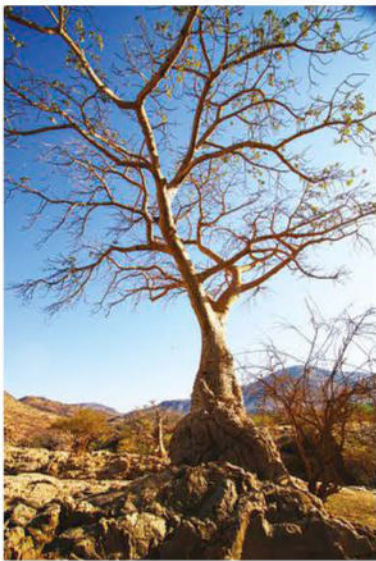
Omarunga Lodge offers a range of guided tours that will take you upstream or downstream on foot with a guide who will keep you safe from foolish decisions and share tales of previous tragedies. A tour lasts around two hours and cost approximately N\$450, depending on which tour you choose.

But we're certainly not ending our story

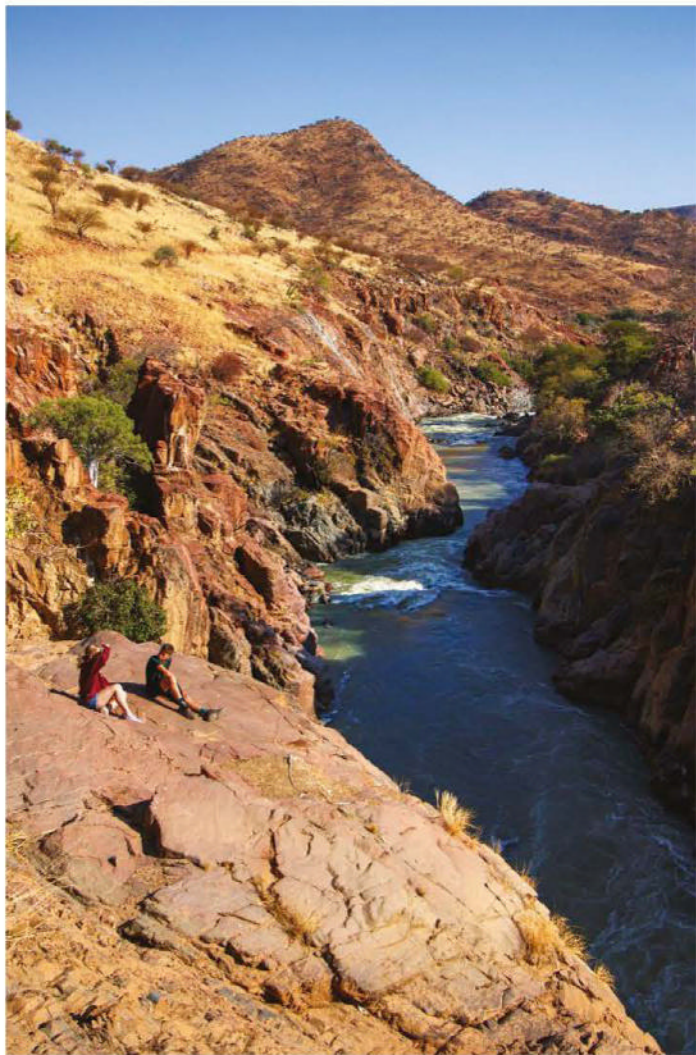
on a grave note! Relax under the towering canopy created by the dense lala palm leaves. Listen to the rush of the waterfall while you fish from your riverside spot. Wish the monitor lizard waddling past you on its way to the river good luck with its hunt – even if it nearly gave you a heart attack! – and keep an eye on the bobber on your fishing line, as fish bite surprisingly easily here in the upper reaches of the falls.

Tonight, we'll light a fire and pull out a deck of cards. There's so much more to see and do in the Kaokoland, but for now, it's enough to sit back and unwind.

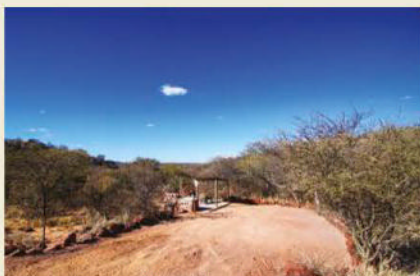




EVEN FLOW. Don't be tempted to swim in the quieter parts of the Cunene (opposite bottom) because there might be crocodiles lurking in the deep. Do chat to the local Himba, though, as they are a friendly people who are eager to know more about you and where you hail from.



Where we stayed



WATERBERG WILDERNESS

The Waterberg Plateau Lodge has eight rondavels; Waterberg Wilderness Lodge has nine rooms; and Waterberg Valley Lodge has nine permanent tents, each with a double bed. All three lodges have a restaurant, electricity, and free WiFi. There are a total of 20 campsites across two campgrounds, though they don't have electricity, and the local troop of baboons can be a nuisance, so please don't leave food outside.

Price N\$400 per person per night to camp.

Contact 00 264 67 687 018

✉ info@waterberg-wilderness.com

🌐 waterberg-wilderness.com



KHOWARIB LODGE

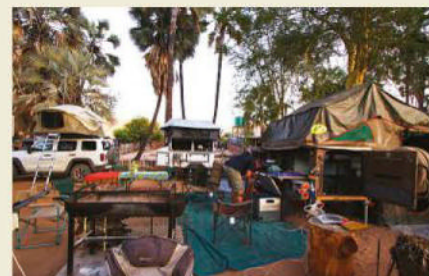
The lodge offers 10 campsites with 220V power supply, each with its own light, tap, and washing-up area under a shade net, plus a braai area and bin. Campers share a tidy ablution block with washbasins, showers, and flush toilets. There's also a pool and an open-air restaurant. The restaurant is open from 06:00 to 22:00, and a beer costs N\$40. They also sell braai packs for N\$80 and wood for N\$40 per bundle.

Price N\$600 per night per couple to camp.

Contact 00 264 81 219 3291

✉ reservations@khowarib.com

🌐 khowarib.com



OMARUNGA-EPUPA FALLS CAMP

There are 10 campsites that vary in size – some can accommodate overland trucks, while the riverside sites (numbers 1–5) can hold two bakkies and two off-road trailers. Each site has electricity, a tap, light, bin and a braai. The single ablution block has flush toilets, washbasins and hot showers. There is (slow) WiFi at the restaurant – an average three-course meal costs N\$395 – and there's also a swimming pool with an outdoor bar.

Price N\$295 per person per night to camp.

Contact 00 264 83 000 7307

✉ bookings@gondwana-collection.com

🌐 gondwana-collection.com

Montagu bound... *come what may*

You don't need to choose between a dirt road up the mountain or a wide tarred road to your campsite. In Montagu, you get to do both.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

The tunnel through Kalkoenkrans, between Ashton and Montagu in the Western Cape, is considered the gateway to the Klein Karoo. It's not an imposing tunnel nor one that worms through the earth for kilometres, but simply a 15 x 5 m opening that looks almost natural and catches you off guard.

From Ashton's side, the R62 meanders along the Kogmanskloof River for a few kilometres, and you

can't help but marvel at the rock formations. Suddenly, it feels like the road will run straight into the mountain, and there before you is Kalkoenkrans. The tunnel also feels like a boundary between good and bad weather. We went camping there this past winter, and when we left the Mother City, it had been raining for days, with fireplace fires burning instead of campfires. But at the Glen Eden campsite, just a few kilometres past Montagu, the

sky was blue, and children were running around as if it was the height of summer.

Montagu, 85 km from the sea, sits barely 220 m above sea level, but the elevation increases quickly on the way to African Game Lodge. Deep in the mountains, after driving 30 km of gravel road and climbing a good 500 m vertically, you arrive at a campsite where you feel you should have booked for a week instead of just a weekend.



AFRICAN GAME LODGE

Close to heaven

Sometimes your camping plans don't go as expected. The weather isn't playing along, and you leave the city later than planned. And no one wants to arrive at a campsite in the dark, especially one you've never been to before. The fact that it's deep in the mountains and the gravel road feels endless didn't help either.

It's one concrete drift after another, but you can't complain about the road... until a sign tells you to turn right. The wide road narrows, and then it's twists and turns with a number of cattle grids. And you just keep climbing.

Thankfully, the gate of African Game Lodge appears on the left after about 24 km (after the fourth grid). You press the intercom button, and the gate slides open in the pitch-black darkness. You know you've climbed quite a bit, but the end is not yet in sight. Just when you start to wonder how far you are from civilisation, a few white buildings appear out of nowhere. Someone is there with a torch, motioning you closer. At this point, it's better not to know that the end is still not in sight.

You're now in front of the office, but your stand is farther along... on a dirt road.

Monwabisi Merile, the farm manager, introduces himself, and it's great to meet the kind person behind the phone voice. He asks if you brought enough firewood, if not, there are a few bags at your stand for which you can pay later. "Firelighters?"

From here, you follow Monwabisi over a rocky ridge before turning left. The shrubs grow right up to the path, and it's clear that you're only camping with your off-roader, as this area isn't meant for a road caravan. Finally, Monwabisi stops at the campsite. He walks around a building and switches on a light, showing you how the gas geyser in the bathroom works before bidding farewell.

It's then that you realise you're camping as close to heaven as possible. It feels as though you're sitting on top of the mountains, and not only do you see the thousands of bright stars of the Milky Way, but it also seems as though there are huge gossamer clouds in the sky, almost like spider webs.

As you settle into your camping chair next to the fire, you realise there's no



You know you've climbed quite a bit, but the end is not yet in sight



A GATE WITH NO GATE. You drive through no fewer than four gates to reach African Game Lodge. Along the way, you're climbing mountains – so much so that even a cellphone tower can no longer see you. Now, you're far from everyone.





EVERYTHING IN ORDER. Decent bathroom facilities can make or break a campsite. At African Game Lodge, they don't just set a proper standard; you get your own bathroom right at your camping spot.



clock dictating when you should camp. Camp time is anytime, always. You sit here late into the night, feeling like you're in the front row of the universe's natural spectacle. And this is just the beginning because tomorrow is when you'll truly see what's around you. Those plans that initially didn't work out turn out to be a blessing.

There's only one campsite, but feel free to bring your friends along, as up to twelve people are allowed, and at least two off-road campers can fit in here. (No tents are allowed, though.)

We're camping alone, which means it's like a private site. You have almost all the amenities at your disposal except for cellphone reception and electricity. So, you need to bring your own power, which is usually standard for off-road caravans, and the lights here run on batteries. If you need the internet, you'll have to drive back to the office. The WiFi is free, but there's still no cellphone reception.

You park your camper next to a 7 x 12 step concrete floor. One camper can easily fit on the short side's head, and another on the long side as you drive in. If you work carefully, you might even get a third trailer in. Surrounding the concrete is a paved section where you can park one wheel of your camper to fit your awning.

For those on the head side, provision has even been made for the awning's guy ropes: there are three steel eyes in the concrete to which you can tie a rope. They're neatly spaced, the right distance

from the camper, and work really well. Around the paved shoulder are raked crushed peach pits.

A shade net is stretched over a section of the concrete floor, and behind it is a roof that not only blocks the sun but also the rain. The one half between the roof and the floor is covered with mesh netting, and the opposite side is open. The washing-up area is in the enclosed corner, with a sink and large work surface next to it. This is where the bags of wood and an extra gas cylinder are stored.

The door on the right gives you access to the bathroom – the door handle is part of an eland skeleton. It's a narrow space that's just as wide as the concrete floor but spacious enough. On the far left is the toilet, and in front of you is a deep freestanding bath you'd find in a fancy home's bathroom.

To the right is a table with a basin, and there's even shampoo, soap and body wash, as if you're staying overnight in a hotel room. Behind it are two paraffin lamps that look brand new. The shower is in an open shelter at the back of the building. Around you is thatch, and even though there's no roof, it still feels private.

If you're up for lighting a fire, you can get the hot tub going, which is next to the shower entrance. Next to that is a braai, and there's even a fold-up grid. Here, you can sit back and appreciate the spectacle of the Milky Way.

You're now camping on a 45 km² farm, and even though there's other

DESTINATION



Briefly | African Game Lodge



Campsite One stand on a 4 500 ha farm deep in the mountains without electricity or cellphone reception. Up to three off-road campers can fit, and 12 guests are allowed. The restaurant, swimming pool, and WiFi are at the office, 1,7 km away.

Ablution facilities Neat facilities with a modern bath, outdoor shower, and a covered seating area with a washing-up spot.

Price From R600 pn for the first two people to R1 200 for 12; R150 pn for pets.

Arrival and departure 12:00 and 10:00.

Contact ☎ 023 614 3176 or 010 001 9190 📧 info@afriangamelodge.co.za

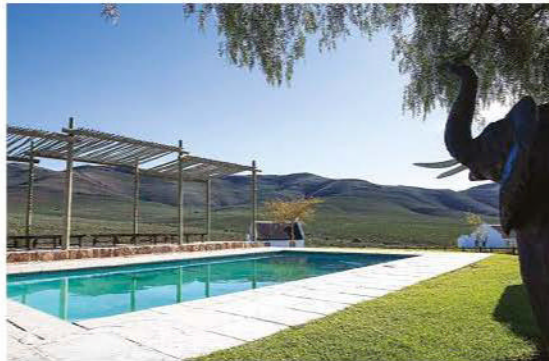
🌐 afriangamelodge.co.za

Nearest town Montagu, 32 km.

Road conditions The last 29 km is a gravel road in varying conditions – from good to narrow and rocky. You don't need a 4x4 vehicle though.

GPS S33.716563 E20.365209

Drive & Camp says African Game Lodge's campsite is still new. If you just want to escape from everything and everyone, book now... for the next time too, because you'll want to return.



accommodation, you'll probably see no one else unless you visit the office.

Just before the office is the most interesting mini-golf course with all kinds of twists and turns to guide a golf ball into the hole. At the office and across the path to the swimming pool, life-size statues await you. Behind it is a hall that looks like a massive living room in a luxurious lodge, with the restaurant next to it and the games room at the far end. Here, table tennis, pool and mini-golf are free... as is the coffee in the restaurant.

You can drive around the farm to

view wildlife, but for that, you must pay a once-off fee of R400. It's better to invest in a guided wildlife drive with Monwabisi; you'll learn much more about the area and climb the mountains to where you can see the distant blue mountains on the horizon. Monwabisi says it's more of a nature outing than a wildlife drive. You'll see eland, black wildebeest, giraffe and springbok, along with plants like the butter tree and guarri bush. Monwabisi's name means "origin of joy and happiness" in Xhosa, and that's exactly what he brings on the drive. It costs R600 per person and includes snacks.

“

Camp time is anytime, always. You sit here late into the night, feeling like you're in the front row of the universe's natural spectacle

”



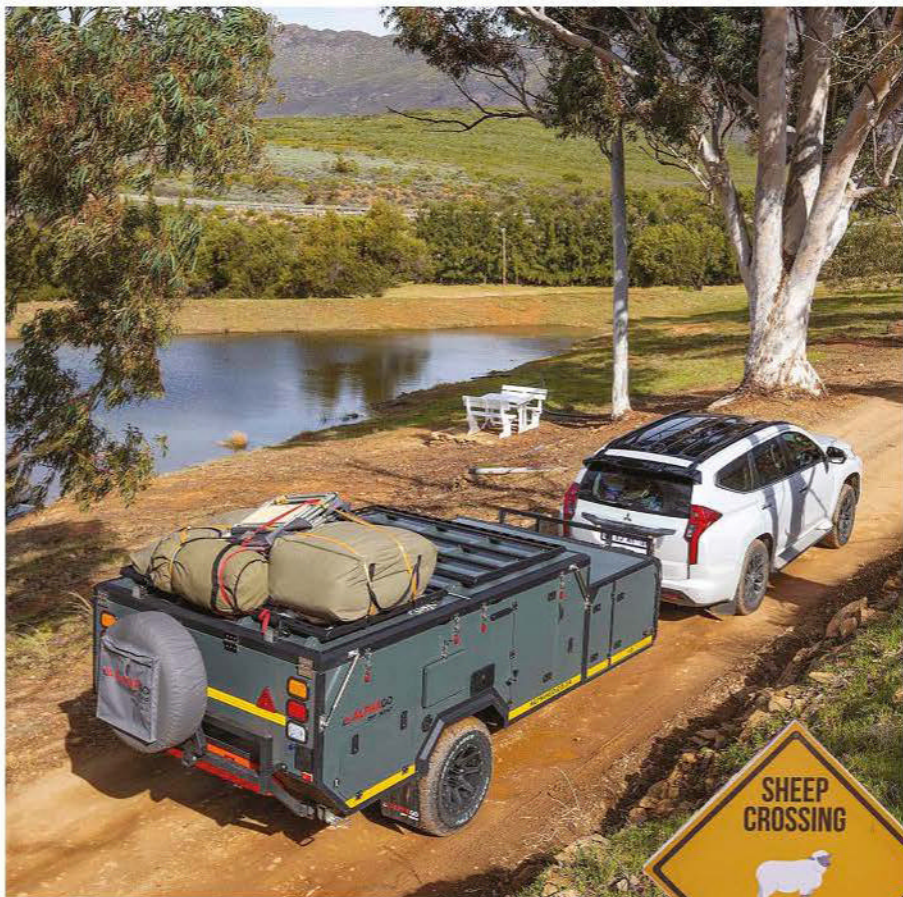
GLEN EDEN

Green pastures

On the R62, just 13 km from Montagu, sits Glen Eden's gate on the left side of the road. Here, you'll find what are probably the biggest demarcated campsites in the country. Each has a reed fence around it, and you camp on a neatly kept lawn. Moreover, the campsite is still fairly new, and everything is well maintained. The only bit of dirt road between you and the stand is just 300 m long, with 40 m of that being concrete. One family even camped with their swanky Swift Coastline Deluxe caravan.

Before you even arrive at the gate, Carol Challis has already sent you a WhatsApp with your camping details, such as which stand you're getting and how to get there. She also mentions that your stand has 10 bags of wood— you only pay for what you use (R30 per bag) – and that ice and firelighters are available at the kiosk. Lastly, she gives the gate code and WiFi password. The WiFi is free, and even though we were on the farthest stand from the bathrooms, the signal was still strong.

The road past the gate runs along the ridge of a small hill, following the contour through eucalyptus trees that look like they've been here forever. To the right of the road, down the slope, is an elongated farm dam, with the campsites beyond it on the "plain". Along the neat gravel road, a few signs are planted with quirky sayings. One of the first hits the nail on the head: "Silence is



NO LOST SHEEP. The last stretch requires a sharp turn and a descent down a hill. The campsite itself is level with some of the largest camping spots in the country. Sheep graze undisturbed, and behind the campsite, a host of other farm animals await.



golden; duct tape is silver.”

In the middle of the lawn between the stands is a sign that says, “No loud music.” The campsite was fully booked during our visit, and there was no need to quiet anyone down.

At the last sign, you turn right down the slope – that’s where the concrete path begins. The sign has a U-turn arrow and shows that those towing should take a wide turn. It’s a 90° turn, but there’s more than enough space to make it. The concrete twin-track helps significantly.

At the foot of the slope – barely 40 m along – a reed fence begins to the left

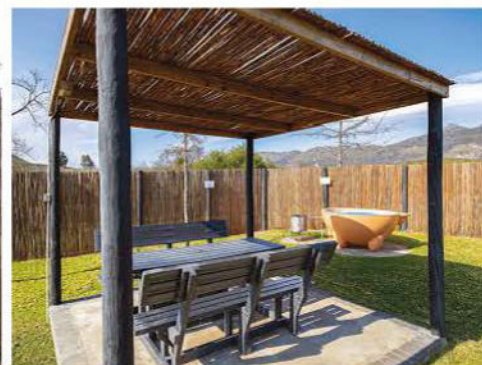
of you. This is the backside of the three stands on this side. After 60 m, you turn left and enter the campsite. This part of the farm is known as Little Eden.

An rectangular patch of grass is across from the first three stands, almost like a courtyard. It’s 20 m wide, and the length matches the three stands next to each other. Beyond the courtyard, there are three more stands, with a fourth at the end (with a few private rooms). The bathroom building is at the end of the courtyard, with the two rows of stands on either side.

On a Google Maps photo of the campsite, you can see that the stands are all more or less the same size, averaging 17 x 17 m. You’ve got a campsite of just under 300 m², on which you’ll definitely be able to fit more than one caravan. (Up to six people are allowed per stand.)

The stands aren’t numbered, but they have names. Across the way are Elf, Fairy and Sprite, and on the side you drive in, are Gnome, Dwarf and Leprechaun.

The trees on the stands still look as young as the campsite itself, but each stand has a neat reed shelter with a concrete floor and a bench set for six



FOR EVERYONE.
The bathrooms have separate shower stalls and toilet cubicles shared by men and women.



people. Behind the shelter is a built-in braai (without a grid), your tap, and the power point (a regular double household socket). The extra bags of wood are under the braai.

Next to the entrance of each stand is a round tub above the ground with a fire pit. It's the same idea as the wood-fired tub at African Game Lodge.

You can't fault the bathrooms. It's a rectangular building with a wooden deck at the front. Behind the three doors on the left is a shower cubicle each, with the three toilet stalls behind the doors on the right. It feels like you're standing

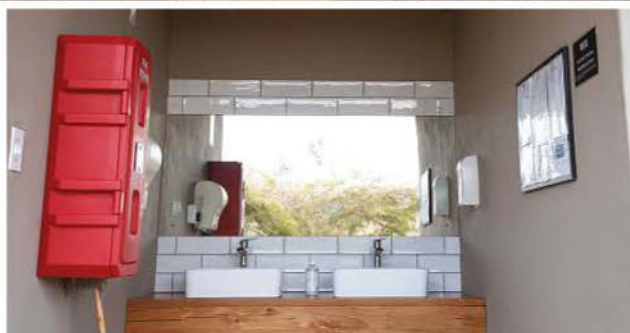
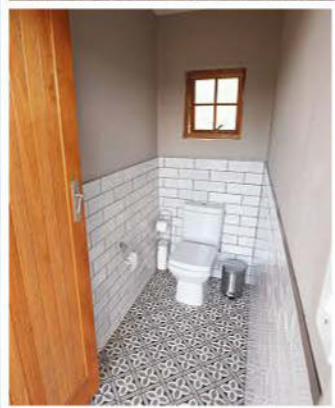
on a stage from where you can spy on the entire campsite. Each door opens directly onto the deck, and you can see from your stand if a shower or toilet is available. The washbasins are between the two sides in the middle and still under the roof.

The toilet and shower cubicles are neatly tiled. Your shower cubicle has a glass panel roughly in the middle that serves as a divider for the open shower area, and by the door is a basin and mirror. Next to it is a small shelf for your toiletries bag. The hooks for your towel are at the shower door, but unfortunately,

there's nothing to put your things on. You don't struggle with hot water, though, as each shower has a gas geyser.

The dishwashing area with two double gas burners next to it is on the right end of the building. At the other end are a fridge and chest freezer.

A passage runs between Fairy and Sprite to an open lawn, roughly 70 x 45 m in size. In the middle is a small park with a jungle gym, and there's even a red tractor so the youngsters can "plough". The swimming pool is on the far left with an open lounge next to it. There's also



“ The trees on the stands still look as young as the campsite itself... ”



a bar, and in the open space next to it, there's a pizza oven – this is the social spot known as Beaney Peanut's.

Carol introduced herself to us when we arrived and said the farm animals are fed the next morning at 09:30. It's a must for the little ones and a nice outing even for the older people. You could hold an auction with the variety of farm animals: sheep, goats, chickens, peacocks, cows, pigs, alpacas, donkeys and dozens of rabbits. If you prefer a target over a farm animal, consider archery. The range is to the right of the dam as you drive in. It costs R180 per person (R140 for children under 12).

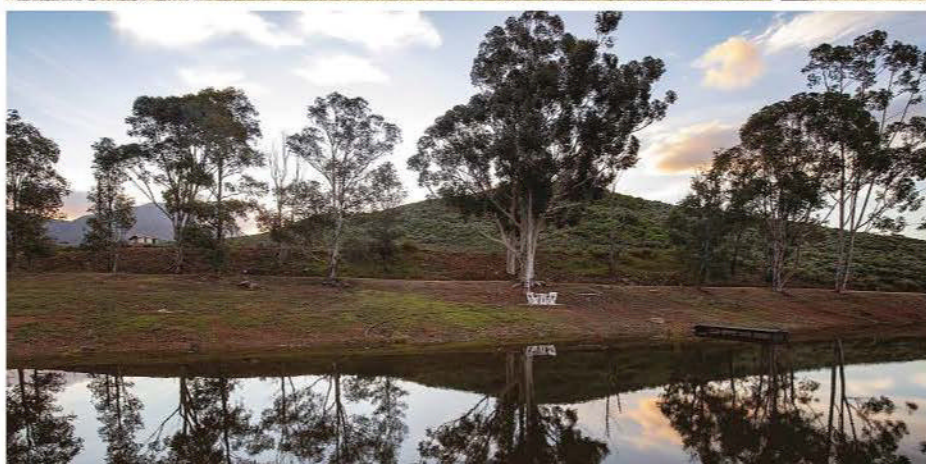
BRINGING THE FARM TO LIFE. For city kids, the closest they get to farm animals is on TV. At Glen Eden, they have the chance to meet animals in the flesh.



“

In the middle is a small park with a jungle gym, and there's even a red tractor so the youngsters can 'plough'

”



Briefly | Glen Eden



Campsite Six extra-spacious, demarcated and level stands on a lawn. You get your own shelter with seating underneath and a round wood-fired tub.

Ablution facilities More or less in the middle between the two rows of stands. It's 60 m from the furthest stand. Everyone shares the three showers and toilets, and you can't fault the facilities.

Price Depending on the season, R250-R350 pppn (R150-R250 for children under 12).

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 071 100 2782

📧 glenedenfarm.co.za

📧 glenedenfarmmontagu@gmail.com

Nearest town Montagu, 13 km.

Road condition 300 m of neat dirt road.

GPS S33.853796 E20.244115

Drive & Camp says Any camper will find peace at Glen Eden, and the kids can run around carefree.

Find culture along the Kunene

Relaxing at the Epupa Falls in Namibia is a treat, but after a while, you'll get restless... and this circular route provides the perfect remedy.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**



Leave your campsite early while it's still cool outside, as we'll be stopping often for photos along this first leg of the route.

Follow the D3700 gravel road eastwards, passing a soccer field on bare ground at the bottom end of Epupa's airstrip. From here, we drive past the Kapika Waterfall Lodge, over a hill, and back to the Kunene River. In fact, on this first stretch, we'll follow the Kunene for 90 km before we turn inland and head back towards the Epupa Falls.

At the river, we pause for photos at a scenic viewpoint overlooking the Kunene. There's also a Himba village called Omukazeze nearby, and before long, children emerge from the bushes, calling out, "Sweets, sweets!" During our visit to Epupa Falls, a Stellenbosch outreach group was trying to persuade the Himba to avoid sweets due to the scarcity of toothpaste, toothbrushes and dentists in the area.

Next, we cross a small riverbed and follow the D3700 behind a ridge away from the river. When we rejoin the Kunene, we cross the wide Ombuku River. It was dry during our visit, and the sand was deep. Switch to four-wheel drive before you get stuck, as the sand is also fine and loose. If the water level is high, it's best to turn back rather than risk the crossing.

From here, we drive through four more dry riverbeds before reaching the next Himba village: Okandombo. Unlike the

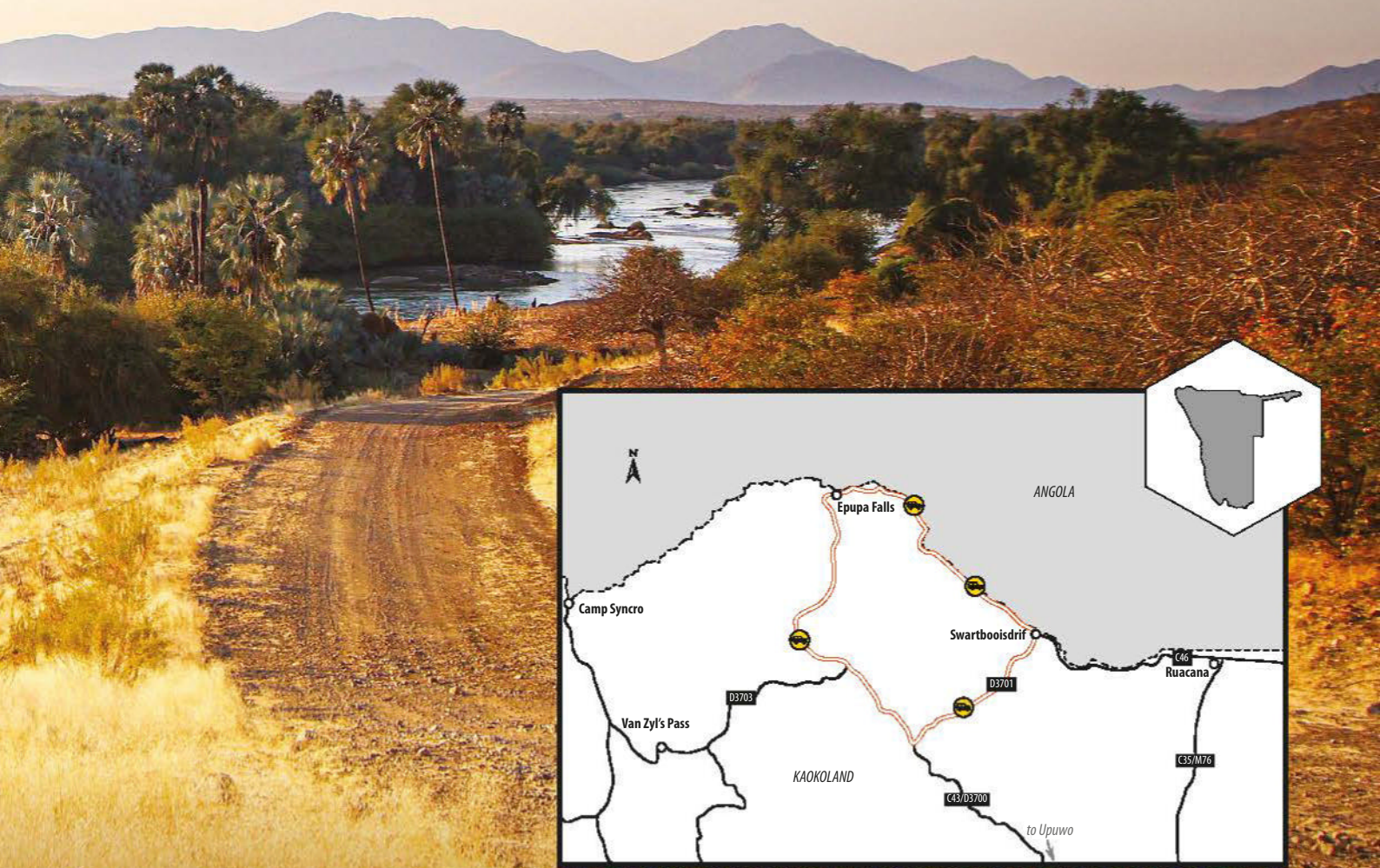
previous village, this settlement isn't visible from the road, but the children have heard you coming from a distance and are already waiting by the roadside. "Sweets, sweets!"

Our next stop is Camp Cornie on the banks of the Kunene. It's even more enjoyable here than the main camps near Epupa Falls, but unfortunately, it's 30 km away, too far to walk to the falls, especially if it's hot. *(I wouldn't walk 30 km, Cyril. Regardless of the weather. – Ed)*

Follow the Kunene past several half-hidden villages and through dry riverbeds until we reach Swartbooisdrif, 60 km later. This is where the Dorsland Trekboers crossed the Kunene in 1928, on their way back from a disastrous search for Jerusalem.

The Dorsland Trek had several motivations, with the two main ones being a bitter hatred of the British and an unshakeable belief that they were God's chosen people who, like the Israelites in the Bible, had to trek through a desert to reach the Promised Land.

However, Jerusalem was significantly farther away than they had estimated... Approximately 600 people left the Transvaal between 1874 and 1880, and by 1883, 325 destitute Afrikaners were in Angola. They were devastated when the Portuguese authorities informed them how far Jerusalem actually was from there and forbade them from moving further north through Angola.

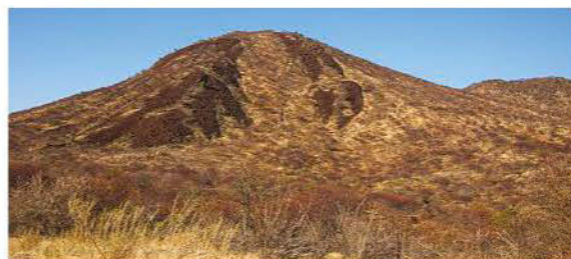




“

They say that the Kaokoland is an anvil upon which people are forged into dignity and humility

”



A Portuguese count who visited the Dorsland Trekboers in 1882 (we couldn't confirm his name) described them as follows: "As a group, I have never seen tougher people; the gruelling seven-year journey had undoubtedly led to the survival of the strongest."

Our account of the Dorsland Trek above is a brief overview, and we recommend reading books by Nicol Stassen, PJ van der Merwe, and Prof. JP Jooste for deeper insights into the reasons behind the trek.

A memorial was erected here at Swartbooisdrif in 1953 to honour their return to the Transvaal, which was then part of the Union of South Africa, under British influence. Ouch...

We leave the memorial with its tragic

history and follow the D3701 gravel road southwards into the interior. The road rises and falls over hundreds of dunes and ridges until it eventually joins the C43 dirt road 50 km later. Here, we turn right and head back to Epupa Falls.

To the left of the road, the 1 616 m Otjivize Mountain towers above the flat landscape, and 26 km after we turned right onto the C43, there's another monument next to the road (S17.45430 E13.31666). This memorial honours Chief Tjipikita Hipondoka.

Hipondoka was born on 6 June 1922 in Angola as a member of the Ovadhembra tribe – around the same time the Dorsland Trekkers were returning to South Africa. When the Portuguese government made schooling compulsory,

the Tjipikita family (according to Ovadhembra tradition, the surname is pronounced before the first name, like in Japanese) fled to Namibia because they didn't understand the value of formal education and couldn't afford it anyway.

The nine-year-old Hipondoka and his parents joined a Namibian Ovadhembra tribe led by Chief Kosombo. The young Hipondoka would go on to experience many adventures in Namibia, and he also became well-liked among the local Himba. For instance, when Swapo accused him of spying on the freedom fighters, Himba paramount chief Muniomuholo Kapika personally convinced Swapo of Hipondoka's innocence.

The 50-year-old Hipondoka later



HERITAGE. The dry riverbeds can get pretty sandy (above) and the level of the Kunene can drop low enough to wade through, just like the Dorsland Trekboers did in 1928 (below) on their return journey.



came to the aid of his ageing chief, when Kosombo was attacked by Himba paramount chief Hikuminue Kapika, son of Muniomuholo Kapika, and tied to a tree so lions could eat him. Hipondoka pleaded with Chief Kapika to spare his chief, as the small Ovadhembas tribe posed no threat to the larger Himba nation.

Chief Kapika was so moved by Hipondoka's plea that he did indeed release Kosombo. Hipondoka's adopted tribe was deeply grateful, and Chief Kosombo appointed Hipondoka as his successor.

Hipondoka, now Chief Tjipikita, would later become an advisor to the Kapika Himbas until his death in 2010 in a car accident – the memorial marks the spot

where Hipondoka passed away.

The story above is based on an academic paper by Tjipikita Kauuola, the youngest son of Chief Tjipikita Hipondoka, for his BA degree in education at Midlands State University in Zimbabwe.

From here, we drive around the 1 723 m Omuhonga Mountain and return to Epupa Falls, where you can rest before tackling the rest of Kaokoland.

There you have it, now you know a bit more about the Himbas – and the Ovadhembas too – and perhaps understand just how determined the Dorsland trekkers were.

They say that the Kaokoland is an anvil upon which people are forged into dignity and humility.



What you need to know



Maximum number of vehicles? It's a public road with unlimited access.

Will I get a map? No, but it's impossible to get lost as there's only one road.

Will my vehicle get scratched? No, the road is wide.

Should I bring a compressor? Yes, although you probably won't need it.

Can I braai halfway? There are no formal braai facilities.

Is there cellphone reception? Little to none.

Best time of year? We visited in July when the Kunene River was flowing fairly strong.

Can I bring my family? Absolutely.

Day trip or weekend? Kaokoland is far from the nearest city – stay for at least a few days.

How long does it take? The route as described here is 250 km long and takes about four hours with regular photo stops.

Are there ablution facilities? Only in the villages.

Directions The circular route begins and ends at Epupa Falls.

A first time for everything

The *Drive & Camp Bull Run* is synonymous with old cars, roaring engines, lively participants, dust... and loads of fun. Words like "rain" and "mud," however, have never been used when describing this event. Until 2024, that is.

Photos **Piet van Wyk**

Any Bull Runner would agree that you have to be ready for anything when you arrive in the Northern Cape town of Vanwyksvlei for the last weekend of the short school holidays and one of the most popular and exclusive events for South African petrolheads and adrenaline junkies.

It's well-known that the annual *Drive & Camp Bull Run* is unlike anything else. And how could it not be? For an entire weekend, close to 160 teams show up with their pimped-out rides – cars manufactured before 1985 and worth no more than R40 000 – to compete against each other in a series of unique and exciting challenges. Amid the roaring engines, racing and playing, there's also plenty of partying and fun.

Hulle weet nie wat ons weet nie? Bull Runners know! They know the first

part of the event is the rally on the local roads. And if you don't follow the organisers' instructions to the letter, you'll get lost sooner rather than later and miss a checkpoint – or a few checkpoints, as a large group of participants found out on the Friday. So much so that one of them had to climb up a windpump to see if they could spot the next checkpoint in the distance.

Bull Runners also know that Saturday's fun day traditionally comes with dust. Lots of dust. Piles and piles of dust. But not once in the previous 12 events have rain and cold ever been factors. Until this year, when clouds gathered over the pan and an icy rain shower turned the dust into mud in the blink of an eye. Mud and rain on Vanwyksvlei's pan, this time of year? There's a first time for everything, right?

The rain turned the pan into a slick

and slippery affair that not only tested the participants' skills to the max but also provided grand entertainment. Thanks to the nearly 60 dedicated track officials, under the expert guidance of Gerrie van Eeden and Thys de Jager of Stofgevreet, the entire event took place in a safe environment where participants could rev their engines without compromising anyone's safety.

After two exciting days of activities, the points were tallied, and the champions were crowned. Rubberducks, the team of Frans Bronkhorst and his crew, reigned supreme in the rally, while Corné Pienaar and his Mad Max team walked away with the laurels on the pan.

However, it was the guys from Four Beers Garage in Poplap, with their 1976 Ford Cortina station wagon, whose consistency over the two days earned them the title of overall winners for 2024.



DONKEY LONG TONG





Pap nek soos 'n warm fizzer



BULL RUN 2024

For the four team members, Francois, Hercu Schoombee, Hendri Stroebeel (all from Boksburg) and Sarel Haasbroek from Lichtenburg, this was their fifth Bull Run, and Francois says it was a big surprise when they heard on Saturday night that they were the winners – especially as every year's Bull Run has its own challenges, and you never know what to expect. Their previous best performance was when they finished fifth overall last year.

This year's *Drive & Camp Bull Run* is another one we'll remember for a long time. It was made possible by our fabulous main sponsor Leatherman, and secondary sponsors Stanley and Northern Cape Tourism. Then, of course, also our partners DP Print, Albertinia Furniture Transport, Under Canvas Events, Donkey Long Tong and Autozone.

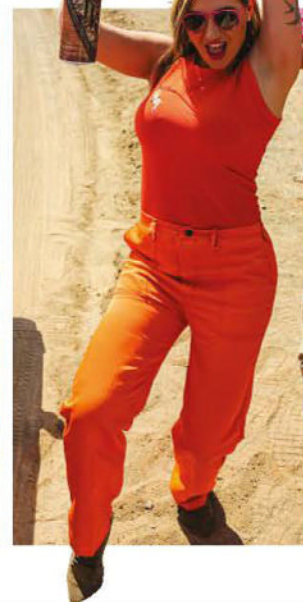
The people of Vanwyksvlei also deserve the highest praise for their excellent hospitality – they went out of their way to look after us. It's truly amazing to see how the facilities improve year after year when we come to visit.

We especially thank Alucius Oberholzer and his parents Rudi and Trudie, Karel Kemp, Frances van Schalkwyk, and Rev Marisa Pienaar and her husband FA, who took charge of the local arrangements to ensure yet another legendary weekend.

Everyone is already planning in full swing for the 2025 Bull Run, which will be held from 9-11 October. We can't wait! If you're interested in joining the fun, keep an eye on our Facebook page for information. 📱 facebook.com/wegrynsleepbullrun









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between the kloof.
Huizen, Hidden Peaks.
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Sarel Haasbroek, Hercu Schoombee, Francois Swart and Hendri Stroebel proudly display the winner's trophy after Poplap, their 1976 Ford Cortina station wagon (pic below), claimed victory at the 2024 Drive & Camp Bull Run.



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MINERAL



The perfect pair

This towing combo is just like two peas in a pod: both have four wheels, they're the same colour, and both only come out when it's time to set up camp. **André Wilkens** from Klerksdorp tells us more.

André's camping journey began as a child in his parents' Jurgens Penta. The campsite, Pine Lodge in what was then Port Elizabeth, is still close to his heart because it's where he met his wife, Elaine, in 2000.

With the arrival of children, camping took a back seat. But as the kids grew older, André bought a Mobi Lodge in 2016 so the family could explore the bush – with a Toyota Land Cruiser 200 leading the way. Before long, several of André's friends joined in with their own Mobi Lodge caravans.

After many years of enjoyable bush camping, it was time for a new adventure.

“I considered another caravan, but you get used to all the luxuries. I'm not one for tin caravans with all those storage pouches.

One day, while sitting in the dentist's waiting room, Elaine flips through a magazine and spots our next caravan: an Overlander. Naturally, it's best to see the Overlander in person; so, we set up a meeting with the owner, Rudi Pretorius, and fly down to Cape Town.

Rudi, who also builds luxury yachts, spends half a day with us.

The Overlander is available in two models: the 500 Custom and the 590 Custom. They're almost identical, but the latter has a double axle, which is the one we're interested in. The Overlanders are white, and my Land Cruiser 79, which I bought in the meantime, is beige. Rudi explains that it's possible to customise the Overlander's colour. In the meantime, I consult an architect friend to create computer renderings to get a more realistic idea of how the caravan would look in a different shade.





CAMPING BUDDIES.
When André Wilkens climbs into his Cruiser, the destination is set: the next campsite with his Overlander.



MY WHEELS



ANY COLOUR AS LONG AS IT'S DESERT SAND. The Overlanders' standard colour is white, but this one had to match the Cruiser.



“

Rudi always has two answers and two solutions at the ready; it's as if he has your dream in his mind

”



We consider green and grey, but the Cruiser's beige works best. However, the Overlander has several silver trimmings that would look better in black with the new colour scheme. Rudi always has two answers and two solutions at the ready; it's as if he has your dream in his mind.

We change the wheels to a five-bolt configuration so that the Cruiser and Overlander wheels are interchangeable.

Now that we've settled on the colour, we also have to look at other details: Elaine flies down one last time to inspect the kitchen amenities.

We farm with game just outside Klerksdorp and use a Cruiser 79 on the farm that I bought from a friend 13 years ago. It's the 4.2 single cab, a real farm bakkie with a seriously bumpy ride. Then in 2020, I bought a new 4.5 V8 model.

This V8 has a single purpose, and that's towing when we go camping. It's also fully equipped, even with a rooftop tent. On the back is a canopy

with various shelves and storage compartments. The outdoor kitchen is in one drawer, and in another, there's even a small "workshop". There's space for camping chairs and a table, plus additional room for storage crates. The Cruiser also has a 100 l water tank and two 200 Ah lithium batteries.

Regardless of towing conditions, the fuel consumption remains consistent: between 18,2 l/100 km and 22,2 l/100 km. Fortunately, I have a 200 l long-range tank, but keep in mind these figures are for a heavily loaded combo: five people in the vehicle with a loaded caravan. Three years ago, I went to Namibia with friends, two of whom also drove 4.5 V8s. This was a good opportunity to compare fuel consumption, especially since our

vehicles' engines were set up differently. One had only a software adjustment, while my Cruiser has the so-called G-Turbo 350 package. This includes modifications like a better air intake to the engine, a larger feed pipe to the turbo, a bigger turbo, high-flow injectors, and a heftier radiator. Despite these substantial differences, the engine's consumption only differed by a mere 2%. Remarkable.

We've had our share of setbacks too: last year, I snapped the Cruiser's driveshaft in Botswana, 2 000 km from home. This obviously meant there was no drive on the rear wheels, but I managed with the front wheels. I towed through thick sand with the diff lock engaged and the help of my friend PW Roos. I had to deflate the tyres to 0,4 bar. Naturally, it was easier on tar. The Cruiser really showed its mettle.

The boxy caravan and Cruiser are a good match. The Cruiser now has 40 000 km on the clock – and all of them are camping kilometres. • ”



What about your wheels?

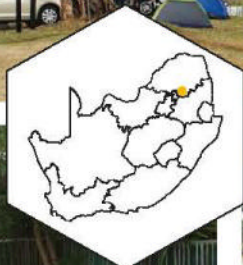
Send us an email at drivecamp@gomag.co.za and tell us about your ride.

Tails on trails

Here are eight more campsites in eight provinces that welcome your pet.

Compiled by **Leon Botha**

RUBY RIVER RESORT



Pet conditions Dogs must be on a leash and not disturb other campers. Up to two pets per stand.

Have we visited? Yes, July 2017 (*WegSleep* #101).

Campsite 35 numbered stands on grass. Some of the stands don't have power points, but all have a braai area (with a grid). Cell reception is spotty, and you need to be careful near the river because there are crocodiles.

Ablution facilities Two bathroom buildings: one by the river and one by the upper stands. Both have electric geysers and dishwashing facilities. The upper facilities also have a family bathroom.

Arrival and departure 09:00 and 15:30.

Contact 013 262 4941 or 063 748 9857

admin@rubyriverresort.co.za

rubyriverresort.co.za

Nearest town Groblersdal, 23 km.

Road condition Tarred road to the resort.

GPS S25.311099 E29.424871

MAC MAC FOREST RETREAT



Pet conditions Pets may roam freely, and the staff will even look after your pets if, for example, you want to pop into the Kruger National Park for the day. There are also farm animals like horses, donkeys, and rabbits.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite 20 stands in two groups – all on grass with plenty of shade. Each stand has a braai area with a grid included.

Ablution facilities Two separate bathroom blocks a larger one by the upper stands and a smaller one by the lower stands. Both have dishwashing facilities. The kitchen is between the two groups of stands.

Arrival and departure No fixed times, but let them know if you'll be late.

Contact 081 749 3228

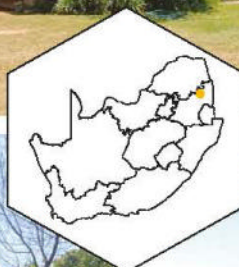
info@macmacforestretreat.co.za

macmacforestretreat.co.za

Nearest town Sabie and Graskop, 14 km.

Road condition Tarred road up to the entrance.

GPS S24.991944 E30.812259



PIGMY LODGE



Pet conditions Owners must supervise their pets. There are dogs on the premises, but they are kept separate when campers with pets arrive.

Have we visited? Yes, March 2012 (WegSleep #42).

Campsite Stands in a garden with shade and grass. There's space for four to five caravans.

Ablution facilities Next to the stands, with separate facilities for men and women. Dishwashing area included.

Arrival and departure No fixed times.

Contact ☎ 083 734 4615

✉ albie@pigmylodge.co.za

🌐 pigmylodge.co.za

Nearest town Delareyville, 3 km.

Road condition The last 800 m is a well-maintained gravel road.

GPS S26.701006 E25.444143

OLD MILL DRIFT



Pet conditions Pets must be socialised, as there are free-roaming horses and geese on the farm. An additional fee is payable.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite Five individual stands ranging from 143 m² to 224 m², each with a fire pit, braai area (with a grid), two power points and a bin. You may also camp elsewhere on the 666 ha farm, so you may choose to be next to the mountain stream. There is no cell reception at the stands, but WiFi is available (for a fee).

Ablution facilities Two toilets and showers in separate facilities for men and women. There are also two sinks for dishes, and a gas geyser provides hot water.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact ☎ 066 466 2106

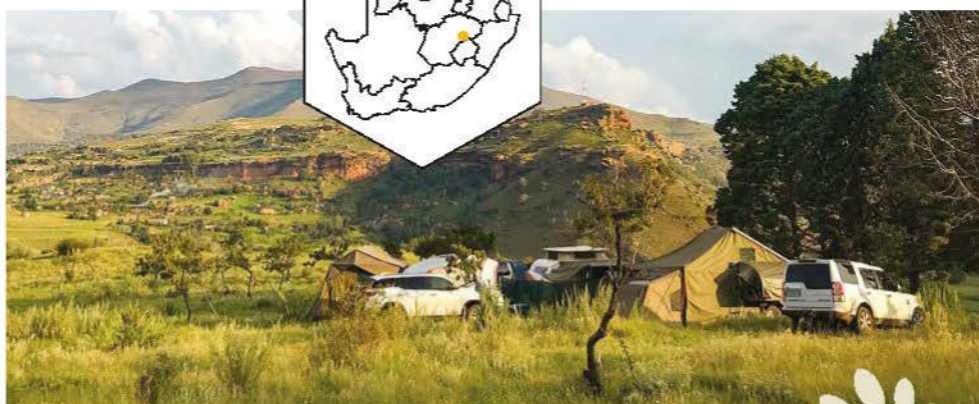
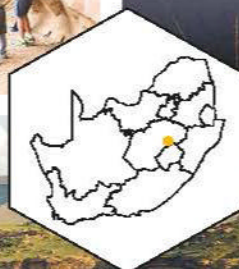
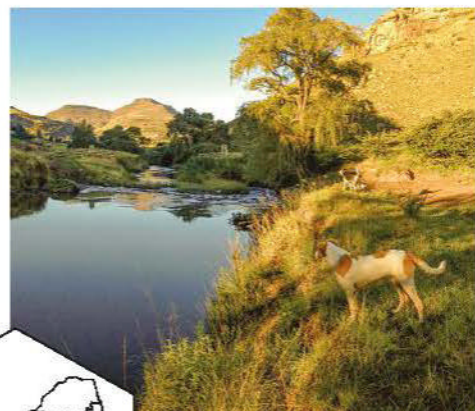
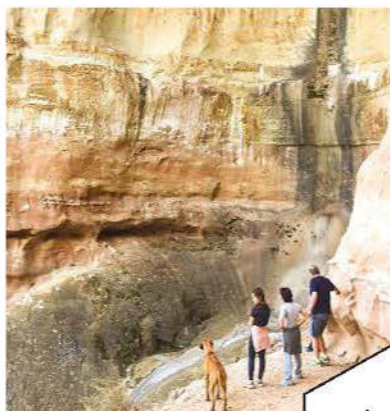
✉ bookings@oldmilldrift.co.za

🌐 oldmilldrift.co.za

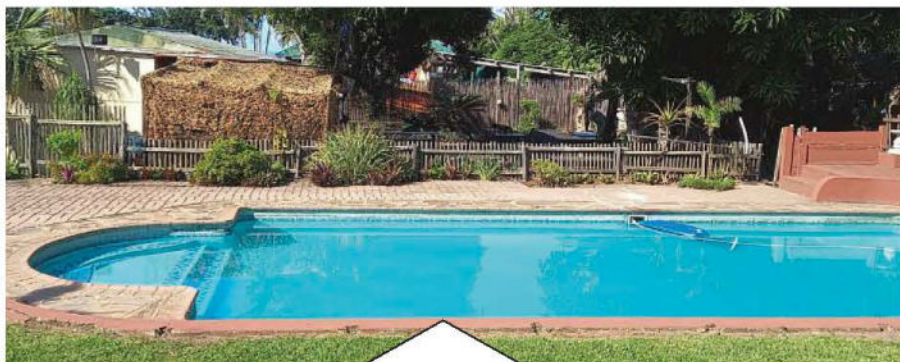
Nearest town Clarens, 27 km.

Road condition The last 3 km is a gravel road, but caravans are only allowed if towed by a 4x4 vehicle.

GPS S28.610146 E28.453316



LOBOTES



Pet conditions Campers must look after their pets and ensure they don't disturb other campers.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite Eleven stands on grass, each 10 x 10 m. These include a power point with occasional shade. Braais (with grids) are brought closer if needed. Campers have a view of the sea, and you have direct access.

Ablution facilities Separate facilities for men and women, with dishwashing areas – a laundry service is also available.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00 (unless otherwise arranged).

Contact 084 515 3488 (WhatsApp)

info@lobotes.co.za

lobotes.co.za

Nearest town Mandini, 15 km.

Road condition Tarred road to the campsite.

GPS S29.219463 E31.506381

RED SANDS



Pet conditions Let them know in advance if you're bringing a pet. Use a leash when walking around.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite Nine communal stands on gravel with occasional shade, plus five stands with private facilities. Each stand has a braai area with a grid and a power point. WiFi is available at the restaurant and office.

Ablution facilities Depending on your stand, either communal or private, and these include dishwashing areas. There's a laundry room for clothes, and you pay at the office.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 053 712 0033 or 082 801 4414

enquiries@redsands.co.za

redsands.co.za

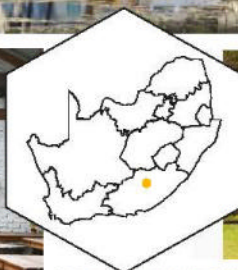
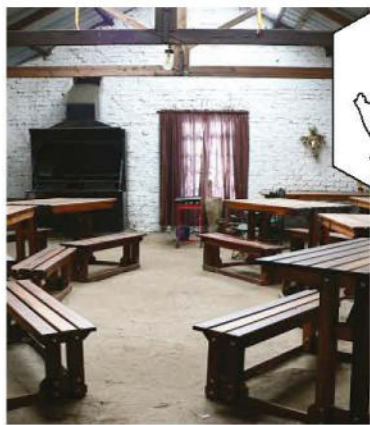
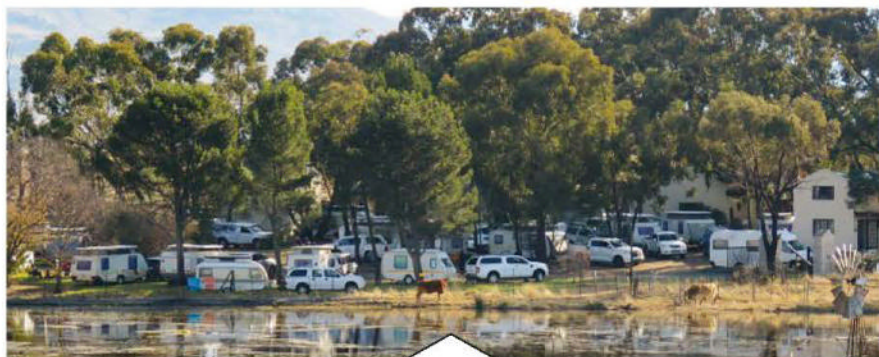
Nearest town Kuruman, 17 km.

Road condition The last 2 km is a mix of sandy and rocky terrain, but suitable for a sedan.

GPS S27.509895 E23.303989



VALSCHFONTEIN



Pet conditions The campsite is fenced with plenty of open space where dogs can run around. You pay an extra fee for your pet.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite There is space for up to 30 people on grass (in summer), with eucalyptus and pine trees providing shade at some stands. There are loose-standing braaiers and 12 power points. WiFi is available right next to the campsite.

Ablution facilities Five private bathrooms. Depending on the number of campers, they serve as either private or communal facilities.

Arrival and departure You must check in no later than an hour after sunset, as the campsite is locked at night, and there are no fixed departure arrangements.

Contact 082 928 0442

valsfontein@gmail.com

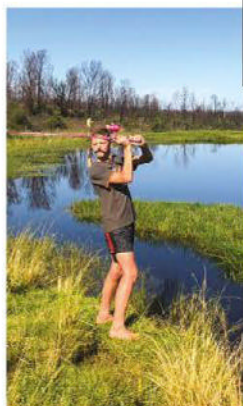
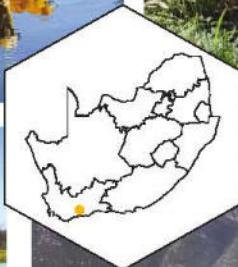
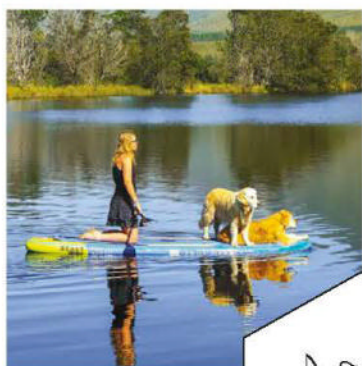
Valschfontein Caravan Park

Nearest town Sterkstroom, 32 km.

Road condition 400 m gravel road.

GPS S31.489527 E26.699183

WINDHOEK



Pet conditions Pets must be under the owner's control. You may walk without a leash, but they mustn't chase the cattle.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite Two separate camps one for about eight caravans on grass next to a dam with four power points, and a second camp for 4x4 campers by the upper reaches of the Vet River. It's a terraced grass area, but without power or cell reception. There are loose-standing braais with grids at both camps, and WiFi is available at the main building, The Barn.

Ablution facilities Communal bathrooms at both camps, and you heat water with a donkey boiler.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 11:00.

Contact 071 643 2704

heidiphillips0@gmail.com

Windhoek Farm Accommodation

Nearest town Riversdale, 23 km.

Road condition 20 km gravel road, which is manageable for a regular vehicle.

GPS S33.990333 E21.193707

Triple Crown



F800GS



F900GS

We rode three GS models over three weeks to determine which one is the best for certain trips. Here are our thoughts.

Words **Cyril Kloppe**
Photos **Cyril Kloppe** and **supplied**



R1300GS

GERMAN HEAVY METAL. You may very well prefer another brand over BMW, but there is no denying that the GS changed the motorcycling scene forever.

BMW offers a total of seven GS models, with the smallest being the G310GS and the largest the R1300GS Adventure. BMW's Cape Town representative invited us to ride the F800GS, the F900GS Adventure and the R1300GS Trophy consecutively.

What have we here?

It's hard to believe the F800GS and F900GS are essentially the same bike, as they feel like entirely different machines. The F800GS is ridiculously easy to ride, while the F900GS Adventure, with its huge fuel tank and larger front wheel, feels comparatively cumbersome.

The most surprising experience was with the R1300GS, which feels like it fits somewhere between the F800 and F900 in handling, yet when it comes to raw power, it literally pulls way ahead.

On the tar

For the narrow suburban streets, we choose the BMW F800GS without giving it a second thought. This bike is nimble around bends, giving you the confidence that you won't lose control and fall when swerving to avoid a stray dog darting across the road.

We aren't fans of the F900GS Adventure in this regard, as its wide fuel tank and heavier weight (20 kg more than the 800) constantly make you worry about what you'll do after a fall. The concern isn't about injuries but rather about how on earth you'd lift this hefty bike back up without a crane or someone to help.

With the R1300GS, we didn't have the same concern, and it's not just because it weighs 10 kg less than the F900GS Adventure. The boxer engine, with its protective bars, prevents this bike from lying flat on its side; instead, it leans over at a 45° angle, making it relatively easy to get it back on its wheels.

When heading onto the highway, however, the 1300GS was by far our favourite, thanks in part to its 149 Nm torque. As any motorcyclist knows, accelerating away from dangerous trucks and careless motorists as quickly as possible is important.

Our second choice is the F800GS with its agile handling. Its performance is more than adequate for the highway, although its power output is the lowest of the three. The F900GS Adventure also performs well

RIDING IMPRESSION



SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested	F800GS
Engine	895 cc
Power	64 kW @ 6 750 rpm
Torque	91 Nm @ 6 750 rpm
Gearbox	Six speed
Tank capacity	15 l
Standard tyres	110/80 R19 front and 150/70 R17 rear
Weight	227 kg
Seat height	815 mm
Warranty and service plan	Optional
Price	R188 200

SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested	F900GS Adventure
Engine	895 cc
Power	77 kW @ 8 500 rpm
Torque	93 Nm @ 6 750 rpm
Gearbox	Six speed
Tank capacity	23 l
Standard tyres	90/90 R21 front and 150/70 R17 rear
Weight	246 kg
Seat height	875 mm
Warranty and service plan	Optional
Price	R248 750

on the highway, and its large 21-inch front wheel rolls over any pothole without fuss. Its larger wind shield – the biggest of the three – directs the airstream over your head, so your neck muscles won't get as tired.

Gravel roads

This is where the F800GS falls slightly short of its siblings. The standard tyres it comes with feel a bit slippery on gravel, and it's best to lower the tyre pressure when you see sandy patches ahead.

The F900GS Adventure performs better here than the 800, possibly due to its heavier weight, but certainly because of its suspension, which is more suited for this type of surface. Once again, it lingered in our minds that if we were to fall here, it would be a pain in the backside to wrestle this bike back onto its wheels.

The king of the dirt road, however, is the R1300GS, with its Metzeller Karoo 4 all-terrain tyres that grip like glue. The low centre of gravity of the boxer engine provides

additional peace of mind, as you feel from the outset that this bike will stay upright, even in deep sand.

Conclusion

If you're looking for a long range, the F900GS Adventure is your best choice, and for commuting, the F800GS is better. For everything else, the big R1300GS is our pick. It's at the top of our wish list for touring Namibia or Botswana, tackling tedious highways, and even playing in the dunes. 🏜️



“

The king of the dirt road, however, is the R1300GS

”

SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested	R1300GS Trophy
Engine	1 300 cc
Power	108 kW @ 7 750 rpm
Torque	149 Nm @ 6 500 rpm
Gearbox	Six speed
Tank capacity	19 l
Standard tyres	120/70 R19 front and 170/60 R17 rear
Weight	237 kg
Seat height	850 mm
Warranty and service plan	Optional
Price	R300 000



COMPETITORS

KTM's answer to the GS



R200 000

KTM 790 Adventure

KTM doesn't have a direct competitor for the standard F800GS, but the 790 Adventure will do.



R269 000

KTM 890 Adventure

The 890 Adventure is a near perfect overlanding bike.



R380 000

KTM 1290 Super Adventure R

This beast is in a league of its own and outclasses the big GS in almost every category.

Mr Consistent

The Pajero Sport has gained two new family members – proving the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**



MITSUBISHI PAJERO SPORT ASPIRE (4X4)

When we towed with a Pajero Sport three years ago, the Exceed model was the third addition to the range. Since then, two more family members have joined, expanding your choice to five models.

The Pajero Sport Aspire is available in both two- and four-wheel drive, but the five models are almost identical in

many respects, with just over R100 000 difference between the base model and the Exceed as the flagship.

The Exceed is four-wheel drive and boasts a sliding sunroof and automatic tailgate, while the Aspire (our test model, also 4x4) is R30 000 cheaper. The latter distinguishes itself from the other four with its black rims, grille, roof rails, and front and rear bumpers, as well as

an electrically adjustable driver's seat.

If you compare the technical details of the base model, the Exceed, and the Aspire (4x4), there's no difference. In both, the engine delivers 133 kW and 430 Nm of torque, you get an eight-speed automatic transmission, the ground clearance is 218 mm, and the fuel tank holds 68 l. The turning circle is also 5,6 m* across all models.

Identical figures

The information on the vehicle plate from three years ago matches 100% with the current test vehicle's. It was also a 4x4 variant with the same gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 2 775 kg and gross combination mass (GCM) of 5 565 kg. This means that with your fully loaded Pajero Sport, the towing load may not exceed 2 790 kg. According to the brochure figures, the two-wheel-drive version has a towing capacity of 2 700 kg, while the 4x4 model's is 2 850 kg.

This aligns with the tow bar figures. The tow bar, still manufactured by Bosal, has a limit of 2 700 kg for the 4x2 model and 2 790 kg for the 4x4. The limit for the vertical weight is 120 kg.

Getting hitched

Hitching your caravan is hassle-free, thanks to the rear-view camera, which allows you to reverse right up to the ball of the coupler. However, although the screen has guide lines, they're static and don't help with the approach angle if you're not reversing straight towards the caravan. The camera lens is slightly above and off-centre to the tow ball, meaning the ball isn't in the centre of the screen.

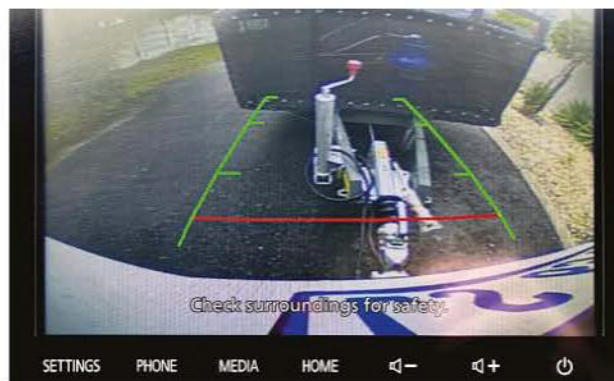
Like the previous model, the computer doesn't know you have a caravan hitched, but you can silence the reverse sensors with a button by your right knee.

When you switch off the Pajero to step out and hitch the caravan, the electronic handbrake engages automatically – you don't even hear the mechanical action. Looking down at the handbrake button, the red light will have turned on. When you restart the car, you don't need to deactivate the handbrake – everything happens automatically, as if there's no handbrake at all. The system works particularly well, especially when towing and frequently stopping on an incline.

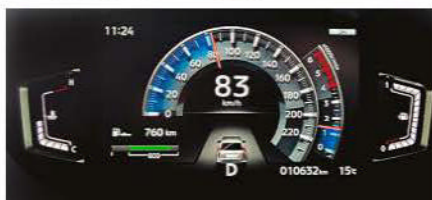
When you start driving, the doors lock automatically. They also unlock automatically when you put the Pajero Sport's gearbox into Park.

Fuel matters

A seven-seater like this is an ideal towing and holiday vehicle. You've got a strong enough engine and loads of packing space. Plus, with four-wheel drive, you can head into the deepest bush. But how does the weight of the towing combination



LOOK AGAIN. The instrument panel display can be adjusted: you can, for example, make speed or revs the main display and then choose between revs and fuel consumption to its right.



TOW TEST

affect fuel consumption?

In our previous test, we got a figure of 13,7 ℓ/100 km (7,3 km/ℓ). This was over a distance of 146 km, towing a Mobi Lodge Continental. It weighed in at 1 660 kg on the axle – a large caravan. For the Aspire test, we towed an AlphaGo S6 Air V4, which tipped the scales at 1 460 kg at the weighbridge.

The caravan weighs a little less, and it offers almost no wind resistance as it fits neatly behind the Pajero Sport. You'd expect better fuel consumption, therefore, but after 150 km, the Pajero delivered 13,9 ℓ/100 km (7,2 km/ℓ). The computer was slightly more optimistic at 12,1 ℓ/100 km (8,3 km/ℓ).

So, you could tow for just under 500 km without refuelling, but then the tank would be bone dry. For safety, you should rather refuel every 400 km, which means you won't make it to the coast from Gauteng without stopping. The fuel light comes on when there are about 9 ℓ left in the tank (around 60 km if you're towing).

We loaded two more adults and headed for Montagu from Cape Town for the weekend. We towed the same caravan, but the weight of a weekend's groceries for four, plus all the bedding and an extra dome tent, added up. From the far south of the Mother City, there were 230 km between us and the campsite. The consumption was higher, but not as much as you'd expect: 14,9 ℓ/100 km (6,7 km/ℓ). The fully loaded range is therefore 456 km. The fuel consumption remains quite consistent.

* According to the figures available at mitsubishi-motors.co.za.

Here is what Pieter Crous, our towing expert, has to say

“ I can't complain about the 2,4 ℓ engine's torque of 430 Nm, but the engine does sound noisier than other new engines. However, the gearbox is fairly responsive, even when towing a caravan.

The seats are really comfortable with decent lower back support. They're the most comfortable seats I've encountered in a towing vehicle so far. The window buttons on the door panel are too close to your body.



Moreover, the door handle arches over them, making it a bit obstructive.

The steering is slightly stiffer than what you might be used to, but I prefer it that way.

The suspension feels spongy, as if there's some rocking

in the length of the towing combination. The bad spots on the road (like potholes) aren't bothersome, but I prefer a firmer suspension.

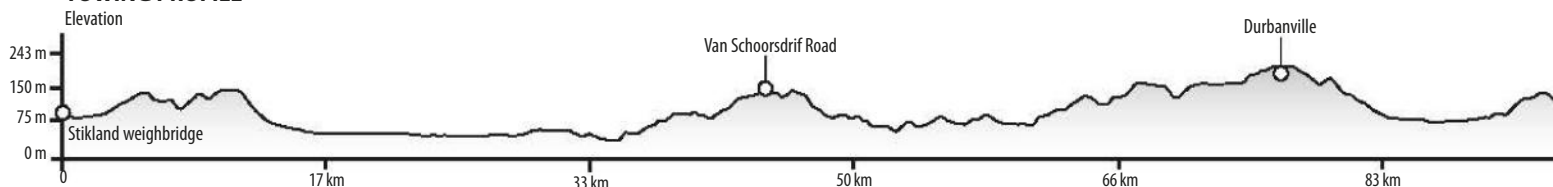
You probably need to get used to the digital panel in front of you, with the rev counter around and the fuel consumption on the side, but it's easy to read and actually works well. As I pointed out in the previous test, the rear window is really small, and you can hardly see anything through it. The Pajero's turning circle is nice and tight, but the clear winner is definitely the comfortable seat. **”**



Drive & Camp says Since this test, a sixth variant has been added: the Shogun, which is also 4x4. It has the same engine figures and also features black rims. Prices start at R914 990.



TOWING PROFILE





From the competitors
Seven seats, 4x4, diesel and automatic



R739 100 **Toyota Fortuner 2.4 GD6 4x4 AT** **400 Nm**
Has a six-speed gearbox and can tow 3 300 kg.



R913 000 **Ford Everest XLT 2.0 Bi-Turbo 4x4** **500 Nm**
Has a 10-speed gearbox and can tow 3 500 kg.



R922 300 **Isuzu mu-X 3.0 LS 4x4** **450 Nm**
Has a six-speed gearbox and can tow 3 500 kg.



What we towed

Manufacturer AlphaGo

Model S6 Air V4

Year model 2024

GVM 2 000 kg

Loaded weight on axle

during test 1 460 kg

Drive & Camp loaned the AlphaGo from the manufacturer.

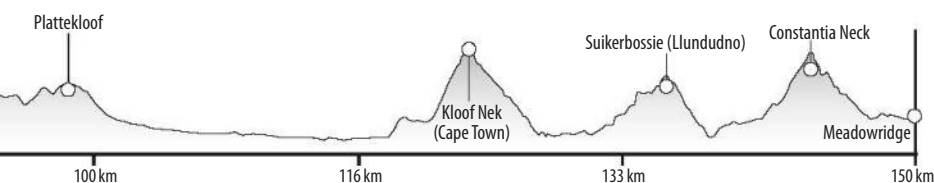
Contact 072 362 3175

info@alphago.co.za alphago.co.za

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	2.4L DI-DC eight-speed auto 4x4
Engine	Turbodiesel
Power	133 kW @ 3 500 rpm
Torque	430 Nm @ 2 500 rpm
Transmission	Eight-speed automatic
Drivetrain	4x4 with rear diff lock
Tank	68 l
Fuel consumption with caravan	13,9 l/100 km (7,2 km/l)
Range with caravan	490 km
Tare weight (license disc)	2 060 kg
Weight during test (including nose weight of caravan)	2 440 kg
GVM	2 775 kg
GCM	5 565 kg
Combination weight during test	3 900 kg
Towing capacity	2 850 kg
Tow bar (towing capacity)	2 790 kg
Tow bar's maximum vertical weight	120 kg
Is the tow bar removable?	No, only the ball
PRICE	R874 990

Distance 149,8 km. **Road** Highways, back roads, urban areas. **Total towing time** Four hours and 11 minutes. **Weather** 15 °C, cloudy to rainy with a northern wind of 29 km/h.



Outstanding quality



THULE APPROACH

Thule is known for its roof boxes and bike racks, but the Swedish company also offers several rooftop tents. We took one camping to see what it offers.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

The Thule Approach is spacious, comfortable and attractive. It has an almost impenetrable rainfly and large windows to let in a breeze. The materials are of excellent quality, and it's easy to set up and take down. So, what makes it different from other rooftop tents?

A breeze to set up

We visited Thule's store in Bellville, Cape Town, where it took the crew just a little over five minutes to unbox the tent and bolt it to the roof rails of our vehicle.

They started by assembling two Thule roof bars, securing them to our vehicle's roof rails, and lifting the tent onto the roof bars – for this, you'll need two people who can lift 60 kg overhead. Lastly, the tent is bolted to the bars (Thule supplies a torque wrench free of charge), and the mounting pieces are locked to prevent theft of your rooftop tent.

Driving around with a tent on your car's roof all the time is a waste of fuel. Thule has made it easy to remove their tent: unlock the four foot pieces on the roof bars, unscrew them from your vehicle's roof rails, and call on your travel partner to help lift off the rooftop tent. Thule also sells a pulley system (R4 000) that allows you to single-handedly raise the tent up to your garage ceiling.

The Thule team also quickly showed us how to pitch and lower the tent. The former is straightforward: unzip the weatherproof cover, pull it off, roll it up and pop it in your bakkie's load bin. The next step is to fully extend the ladder and use it as a fulcrum to raise the tent. One person can manage it, but you'll need to be able to bench press 30 kg.

The tent unfolds automatically thanks to inner cables and pulleys, with no poles to adjust. Set the ladder to your desired angle, and the final step is to insert four spring steel

rods into the base to keep the rainfly taut. The entire process takes about one or two minutes, depending on your experience.

Folding up the tent takes a bit longer. Pull out the rainfly rods and stow them inside the tent. Push the tent closed using the ladder and tuck in the bits of material sticking out the sides of the two floor halves – it is this that makes stowage take longer than setting up – and finally, zip up the cover. It's a breeze for tall people, but if you're short, you'll need a step ladder.

Cozy up top

People interested in a rooftop tent want a comfy mattress and protection from critters crawling or walking on the ground. Another perk of a rooftop tent is likely never having to worry about rainwater flooding in, plus, of course, your view is improved.

After 14 nights in the Approach, we're



convinced that it is one of the best we've ever camped in. The mattress is as comfortable – or more so – as any other rooftop tent we've tested, but what makes this tent stand out is the amount of space inside. Most rooftop tents use three U-shaped hoops to form the roof, but Thule uses four of them to create a more rectangular shape, providing extra space inside.

The sense of roominess is further enhanced by four roof windows, a window at your head, and the entrance, which also doubles as a window. All the openings can be zipped up completely – though we wouldn't recommend it, as you want fresh air to enter – or zipped open fully for maximum ventilation. Each opening has mesh to maintain maximum airflow and light inside while keeping out the mozzies.

There's a pouch on either side of the mattress to store your car keys, phones, headlamps and other small items. Thule also provides optional shoe bags that you can tie to the ladder to let your boots dry outside. (See our gear article on page 98 for these and other storage solutions.)

As for space, the Thule Approach (medium)



comfortably accommodates two adults side by side, with room for a baby or toddler lying across the head end. Thule also sells a larger Approach that's 4 cm longer and 20 cm wider, for R70 000, and sleeps three adults.

SPECIFICATIONS

Length (open)	240 cm
Length (closed)	124 cm
Width	143 cm
Interior peak height	102 cm
Depth (closed)	28 cm
Weight	58 kg
Static load capacity	300 kg
Price	R60 000

DEALER NETWORK

Twelve branches in Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Eastern Cape
Contact ☎ 066 212 6800 📍 thulestore.co.za 📧 thulestore@sportandcargo.co.za

From the competitors

Rooftop tents with comparable mattress sizes



R16 660

Tentco Safari 1.4

64 kg

tentco.co.za



R29 995

Ironman 4x4 Uber Light

47 kg

ironman4x4.co.za



R45 299

Dometic TRT 140

48 kg

frontrunneroutfitters.com



STEALTH OVERLANDER 634ES

In stealth mode

Stealth has something for everyone, allowing you to choose between road caravans, gravelroaders and off-road caravans. Among the latter, you have a choice of three Overlander models: the Cub (we tested it a few months ago), the Bunk, and for this review, the 634ES.

As you'd expect from a top model, the interior includes a bathroom, a proper bed and a lounge area that can be converted into extra sleeping space. The outdoor kitchen is on the left side, and for the 634ES, the entry door is on the right rear end. Lastly, the dishwashing basin is located at the rear.

We travel for days with the 634ES along tar roads, a steep dirt track or two, and narrow sandy paths – and quickly realise the wild is where it belongs.



The Stealth Overlander models are built for the bush, so the 634ES variant was right at home during our recent visit to the wild reaches of KwaZulu-Natal.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**



Room for plenty

The extra-large nose cone is immediately noticeable – it's also where the fridge/freezer slides out on a pull-out frame. In the lower part of the cone, a 122 x 59 cm drawer pulls out. The upper section forms a flat shelf for other bulky items that can be easily accessed from the outside.

On the other side of the nose cone, there's space for two gas cylinders, and it also contains storage for the loose gas geyser. When you want to use the geyser, hook it at the rear of the caravan where it is close to both the indoor bathroom and outdoor wash area.

Between the wheels and the nose is a flat open compartment that runs the entire width of the caravan, accessible from both sides – a welcome space for fold-out camping tables, camping chairs and other bulky items. The portable gas stove has its own shelf on the top right, allowing easy access to take it out. The cupboard door has an adjustable foot to hold it open horizontally, creating a spot to put things down.

The door hinges on the cupboard above the lower compartment are on the top, which means it swings open like a small roof. This cupboard has several shelves and includes 220 V power outlets and a light on the inside of the door. So, you can store anything from groceries to pots and pans. The lower right shelf has foam inserts for glasses, cups, plates and bowls.

The wash station's frame folds up against the body. When swung out, it's supported by an adjustable foot. The frame has space for two separate and collapsible basins and an area on the left to put things down. The tap is behind the white hatch on the right side of the counter (in the body) and an extension hose with a nozzle allows you to pour water into both basins.



The interior

On the inside of the door, there's a cupboard with space for a few wine bottles and glasses. The power panel is located just past the doorframe on the left, with switches for the geyser, water pump, fridge/freezer, and indoor and outdoor lights.

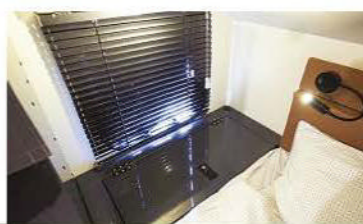
Opposite the panel is a series of cupboards with canvas flaps that zip close. The cupboard closest to the door has space for hangers, and next to it is one of the same size with two shelves. Beneath it are a few smaller shelves with their own flaps. This layout allows you to stand outside the door and easily access the nearest cupboard. The lower shelves have a sloped back that follows the curve of the hull – a good spot for shoes.

The bathroom is located on the right in the corner as you enter. It's more of a wet room because the shower and toilet are in the same space. The upper third of the room has canvas as a partition. This setup ensures privacy between the pop-up roof section and the bottom half when the roof is raised.

The toilet is on the left as you open the door, and the vanity cupboard is to the right along the back panel – with a recessed washbasin. The cupboard is spacious. The tap has a spray nozzle with an extension, allowing you to hook it to a handle on the pop-up for a standing shower. The compartment is comfortably roomy: 140 cm at its longest point and 82 cm wide.

If you look from the bathroom towards the front, the bed occupies the entire space against the farthest wall. It also stretches right to the sides, with two benches in front of it. This area is where a surface can be placed to form a three-quarter bed.

The main bed is 184 x 154 cm (queen size). On the right, it reaches the side wall, and on the left, it reaches the back of



Drive & Camp says

Stealth's three Overlander models are also exported to Australia. The 634ES is called the Dingo there, the 574 the Emu, and the Cub is known as the Echidna.



the outdoor kitchen. The upper section of this cupboard has a few shelves with canvas doors, and the top is open space next to the bed. Just don't forget your water bottle or any loose items here when lowering the pop-up roof, or they'll get crushed.

As in the Overlander Cub, there's a flat cupboard next to the left side where one person

sleeps. It's another handy place to set items down, but the surface is actually a lockable compartment with a lift-up door, where you can keep valuables out of sight.

There are also windows on either side of the bed, above each bench, each with a blind. This includes the bathroom window, and all can be opened.

Both sides of the headboard

have adjustable reading lights, and there's a power outlet – with two-prong, three-prong and USB sockets – at the foot of the bed.

H-frames support the pop-up roof, and three tie downs keep the roof in place when you close it. You simply fasten the tie downs front and back in stages until the roof is secure – it couldn't be easier.

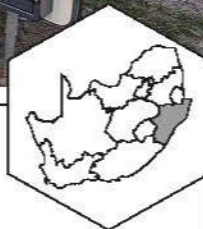


SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer	Profibre Products
Model	Stealth Overlander 634ES
Sleeps	Four
Dimensions	6,35 x 2,034 x 2,385 m
Wheels	15 inch
Axle	2,5 t
Tare weight	1 250 kg
Load capacity	550 kg / 700 kg
GVM	1 800 kg / 1 950 kg
Chassis	Galvanised
Body	Insulated fibreglass
Price	R575 000

Dealer network The head office is in Pinetown. Visit the website for your nearest dealer.

Contact ☎ 031 713 8900 🌐 stealthcaravans.co.za



What comes standard?

Included in the standard package are mud flaps, a two-burner gas stove, a 15 A Victron power system with a 100 Ah lithium battery, Bluetooth, a DC-to-DC and solar charger with a 200 W panel, an 8 ℓ / min water pump (12 V), kitchen sink, vanity basin, shower, geyser, cassette toilet, 100 ℓ water tank, 5 kg gas cylinder, and a 360° awning. The fridge/freezer and microwave are optional, as are the awning's side panels. Additional extras include a second 100 ℓ water tank, a digital water-flow meter, and a rear camera compatible with your smartphone.



R575 000

STEALTH OVERLANDER
634ES

GVM 1 800 kg /
1 950 kg

FROM THE COMPETITORS

Off-road caravans with an indoor bathroom*



R530 500

ADVENTURE XTREME
SAMURAI

GVM 1 600 kg

Sleeps two, with an aluminium body.



R558 900

INFANTA ENKULU 3

GVM 1 900 kg

Sleeps four, with an aluminium body.



R580 000

SUMMIT KILIMANJARO

GVM 1 800 kg

Sleeps two or four (depending on layout)
with an aluminium body.

** The price is an indication of a standard caravan.
How fully equipped each model is varies between
manufacturers. (Models and prices as published in
the 2024 Buyers' Guide.)*

*Drive & Camp loaned the Overlander
from the manufacturer.*

Caravans on the menu



Tell any sweet tooth they must choose one dessert from 68 types of ice cream with 282 flavours, and they wouldn't know where to start. That's exactly the situation we're in when it comes to new South African caravans.

Words **Leon Botha** Illustrations **Dominic Wienand**

Should you pick an Invader or Stealth? What about Nayela, AlphaGo or Overlander, or any of the other 63 caravan manufacturers? Is the Quattro X or Bush Lodge the one for you, or does a Sahara X, an S6 Air V4 or a 590 Custom tug at your heartstrings?

It's an impossible task to visit every showroom, and if you go online, you'll simply get lost down the rabbit hole and definitely overlook a model or three. In our *2024 Buyers' Guide*, everything is in one place, and you get a overview of the local caravan industry's menu – from the cheapest to the most expensive.

When you compile the information in the guide, a picture emerges that wouldn't otherwise be possible.

Rands and sense

How much you'll spend on a new caravan is probably one of your biggest considerations, and let's be honest: there's a massive difference between the cheapest and most expensive models. At R65 800, Alu-Star's X Camper is the cheapest, while you'll need to fork out just under a million (R972 440) for the Overlander 590 Custom, the most expensive new caravan model currently in South Africa. The X Camper is more of a trailer prepared for a rooftop tent, and the Overlander is a luxury hotel suite on wheels, with the rest falling somewhere in between these extremes.

Of course, you won't decide on a caravan based on price alone. But if you look at the average price of a new caravan in the



ALU-STAR X CAMPER

country, you get a clearer picture of the price bracket in which caravan buyers are spending.

The vast majority of caravans (80%) cost between R151 000 and

R600 000. Most (12%) fall between R401 000 and R450 000. Both price brackets (R151 000-R200 000 and R351 000-R400 000) each represent 10% of the market. At

9%, caravans between R551 000 and R600 000 are the next most popular price class.

Even though there are 282 new models available in the country, some of the caravans are available in more than one variant. Take *Sherpa's Rambler A* as an example: for this one model, you have three choices – one with a GVM of 1 200 kg, 1 400 kg or 1 600 kg. So, if you summarise the variants of the 282 models, you effectively have a choice of 327 models.

Taking all the models in the country into account, the average price for a new caravan is R379 942. You could consider the *Mission off-road trailer* (R379 995) and *Summit's Karenga* (R380 000), an off-road caravan, as the embodiment of that.

Two years ago, we compiled similar statistics, and in 2022, the average price was R365 691. If you factor in inflation (we used inflationcalc.co.za), it's the equivalent of R398 311 today. That means the average price has dropped by nearly 5% over the past two years.

Tar, gravel to no roads

You can categorise caravans into three groups: traditional road caravans, gravelroaders, and off-



2011 SPRITE TOURER



MISSION OFF-ROAD TRAILER



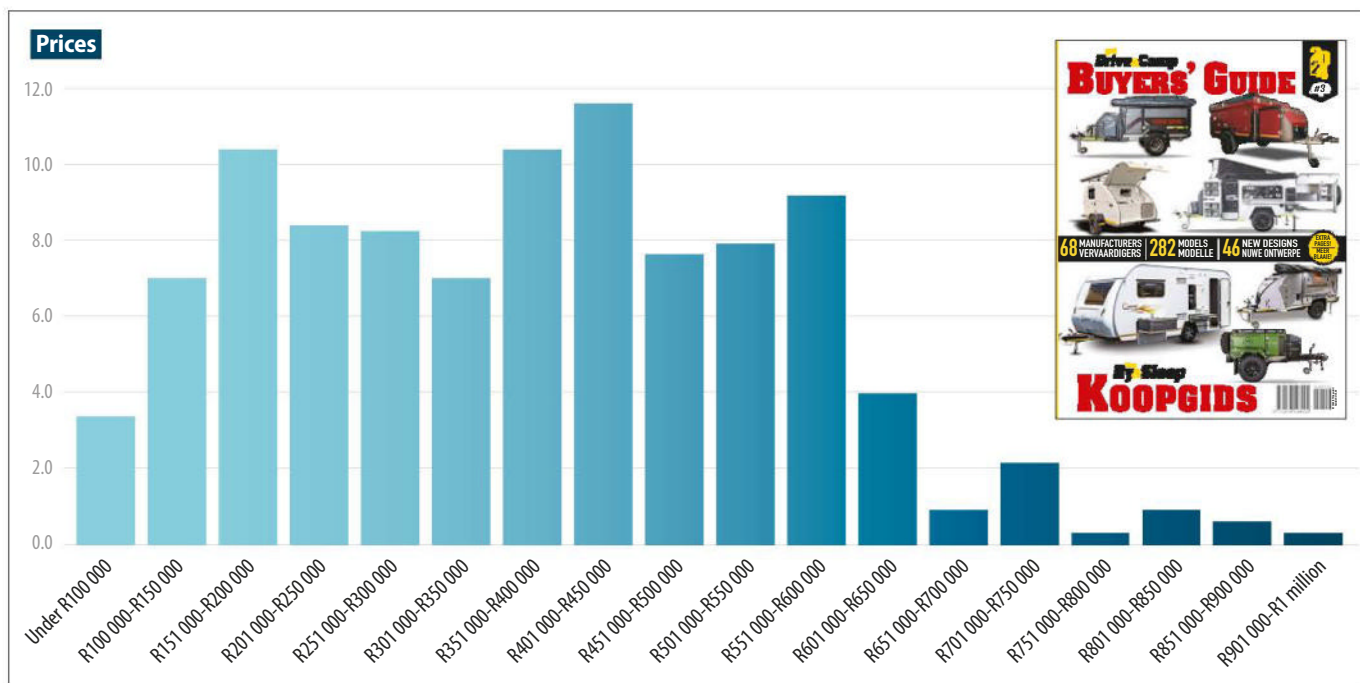
SUMMIT KARENGA

road trailers and caravans. This is where you see the biggest trend shift compared to the last decade or so. In our first *Resort Guide* (2010), we included a towing guide with a list of 82 caravans. The striking thing is that you could choose from only 10 off-

road caravan models – today, this segment offers the widest range of options. Interestingly, there was no sign of gravelroaders yet.

The first *Sprite Tourers* (2011) can be considered the forefather of gravelroaders thanks to prior work done with

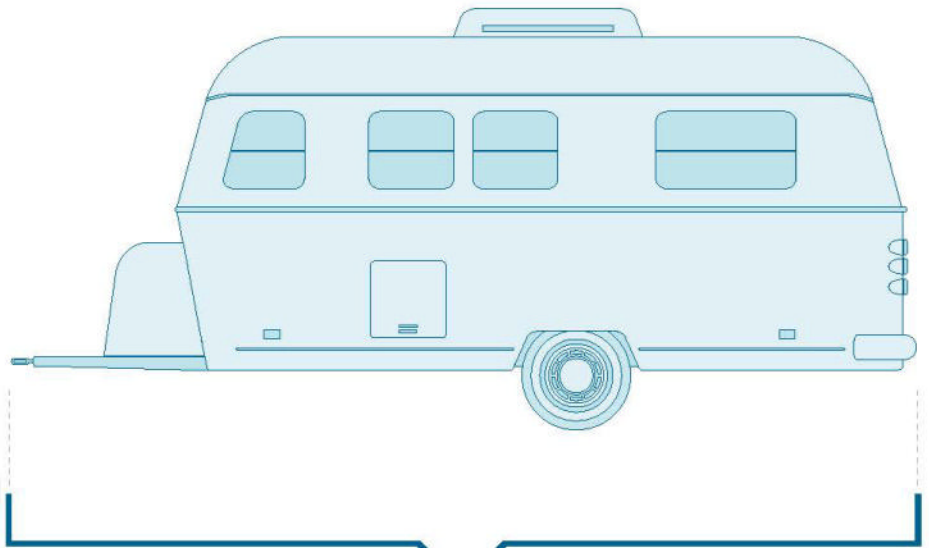
the *Sprite Scout* (in the form of the *Nomad* conversion). Today, you can choose from more than 70 variants. In the same towing guide, road caravans made up 18% of the options, but today, a decade and a half later, road caravans stand at 8% (it was 10%



Fast facts

TALLEST 2 725 m

Quantum Comfort Country



MOST EXPENSIVE R972 440

Overlander 590 Custom

HEAVIEST TARE 2 480 kg

Overlander 590 Custom

LONGEST 8,8 m

Destination Journey



two years ago). This means more caravans are now being built for gravel roads (22%) and off-roading (70%).

Road caravans are generally wider, and you'll also need to be prepared with special parking space, as only a few will fit in a standard garage.

The average tare weight is just over 1 200 kg, and the load capacity is 300 kg. This brings the average GVM to 1 500 kg.

When you look at the load capacity, this is also the segment where you'll find the lightest weights because the entire group of off-road caravans has a load capacity of over 600 kg (on average). Only one or two caravans have a GVM of more

than 2 000 kg, which means you can tow almost all of them with a regular double-cab bakkie.

By the way, the vast majority are fitted with 14-inch wheels.

Quantum Caravan World is the largest manufacturer in terms of model variety (41%) – this includes brand names like Quantum itself and Sprite. Next is Okto with 33%, and Stealth 22%.

Interestingly, you have the most choice when it comes to caravans that sleeps two (37%), with models for four coming in at a close second place (33%). The average road caravan costs R437 118. Stealth's Cub Lite is the cheapest (R215 000) and Quantum's Oasis

(R720 000) is the most expensive.

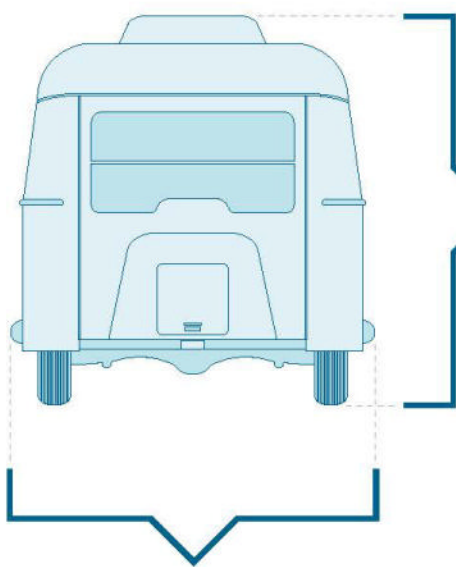
Gravelroaders are mostly built with two people in mind (61%), while the figure for four people stands at 22%. This is also where

rooftop tents (4%) start to appear, although you mainly see them among the off-roaders.

Destination has some of the most luxurious gravelroaders, ranging from R560 000 to



QUANTUM OASIS



WIDEST 2,45 m

Quantum Carnival and Destination's Wish,
Magic, Nature, and Journey



HIGHEST GVM 3 000 kg

Overlander 590 Custom



Caravan types on the road



Off-road Gravel Road

R730 000, with Cascade being mentioned in the same breath (R525 000 to R720 000).

You would expect bigger wheels on these caravans compared to road caravans, simply because of the road conditions, and the numbers

confirm this: most gravelroaders (63%) are fitted with 15-inch wheels, with a few 13-inch and 16-inch versions.

The average gravelroader is cheaper than road caravans: R352 730. Sherpa's Rambler B comes closest at R355 000.

Off-roaders represent the largest range of camping trailers and caravan options in terms of variants. This 70% share of the market is divided among 79% of the local manufacturers.

As mentioned earlier, this is also where you'll encounter the

most rooftop tents (17%). This typically involves a trailer with a tent on top – and here is where the distinction is made between an off-road camping trailer and an off-road caravan: you sleep on top of an off-road trailer (most likely in a rooftop tent), but inside an off-road caravan. We include integrated "rooftop tents," which aren't separate tents on top of a trailer, in the off-road trailer category. An example of this are the Invader products.

Off-road trailers are more affordable, and you don't need to make special space for them at home as the models generally fit into a standard garage.

The average price is R167 513, with Desert Wolf's Kampa 4x4 being the closest at R167 000. The average off-road caravan costs R423 393, and Aloe's Camperi XL compares best with this at R423 223. (The Camperi XL's price ranges from R413 626 to R432 820, depending on the layout.)

With 54%, 15-inch wheels remain the most popular on both off-road trailer and off-road caravan models. However, you do see more 16-inch wheels (29%), and 13% are equipped with 17-inch wheels.

Two people typically sleep in a rooftop tent, but space for two is also the common thread among off-road caravans, as it's the case with 63% of all models (excluding off-road trailers). A good quarter of these caravans (24%) are aimed at four people, with a few designed for five or six.

Did you know?

If you parked all the new caravans in a row, you'd form a train that's 1,583 km long, enough to transport an entire school, because they would sleep 854 people. And if you wanted to buy the whole train,

you'd need to cough up R124 million.

This article was compiled from the 2024 *Buyers' Guide*, which is currently available in shops. All the specifications and prices in the guide apply to the standard version of

that specific caravan model, and VAT is included. Do keep in mind that manufacturers' standard models are not all equipped in the same way. 🚐

Price
R124 million



HERE'S HOW TO PICK A WINNING BAKKIE



The Bakkie of the Year competition was launched in 2023, and *Drive & Camp* was there. This year, we were invited again to evaluate the next group of entries near Worcester in the Cape.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**



This year's Bakkie of the Year competition format had some changes: last year, there were three categories and one overall winner – the VW Amarok V6 – but this year had four categories with no overall winner.

All double-cab 4x4 bakkies launched locally between September 2023 and August this year were eligible to participate in the second annual Bakkie of the Year competition. Unfortunately, this disqualified manufacturers including Volkswagen, Mahindra, Mitsubishi, Nissan, and Peugeot.

The organisers invited the following manufacturers to enter their bakkies: Ford,

Foton, GWM, Ineos, Isuzu, Jeep, RAM, Toyota, LDV and JAC. Four manufacturers didn't participate: LDV initially entered, but later withdrew its T60 because they wanted to make changes to the current vehicle; JAC simply didn't want to participate; and Ineos was keen to participate, but their Grenadier Quartermaster wasn't available in time. Then, Toyota also declined the invitation as they felt that their latest Hilux is nearing the end of its lifecycle and wouldn't compete fairly against newer bakkies.

The first category was the 100-125 kW group with two entries, the Foton Tunland G7 4x4 and an Isuzu D-Max 1.9 X-Rider 4x4.



The second category was the 126-160 kW group with a Ford Ranger 2.0 Bi-Turbo Tremor 4WD 10AT and a GWM P500 2.4T 9AT 4x4 Luxury. The third group's power output category was 161-200 kW, in which we tested the GWM P500 HEV Ultra Luxury 4x4 9AT (hybrid) and RAM 1500 5.7 V8 HEMI Rebel 4x4 RHD (petrol). The fourth category was the specialist group with three entries: a Jeep Gladiator Rubicon 3.6 V6 8AT (petrol), a RAM 2500 6.7 Laramie (diesel), and a Ford Ranger Raptor 3.0 twin-turbo V6 AWD 10AT.

"While we would have liked to see representation from all brands with qualifying models, we received a credible list of entries this year with interesting participants, such as the two models from the American brand RAM – imported by US Trucks in Richards Bay – as well as the first bakkie with hybrid technology available locally," says Dirk Gallowitz, the

competition's organiser.

"Although the competition was once again mainly aimed at double-cab lifestyle bakkies, the new specialist category added a fresh dimension to the competition," Gallowitz added. "What this interesting mix of models showed was how far and fast things have moved in the bakkie market in just one year..."

The eight jurors consisted of three motoring journalists (*Cyril represented us. – Ed*) and five experts from the 4x4 industry, including an off-road caravan manufacturer, three 4x4 trainers, an overland traveller and even a drifting champion. Collectively, the jurors had 250 years of professional experience in their respective fields.

The evaluation covered dynamic handling, towing, and 4x4 capability. This article focuses mainly on the latter test. The dynamic tests (acceleration and braking tests) were conducted back-to-back on the same road and captured with VBox technology. According to the results, the production bakkie that accelerated the fastest was the Ranger Raptor (0-100 km/h in 6.4 seconds) followed by the hybrid GWM P500 HEV (7,3 seconds) and the HEMI V8-powered RAM 1500 Rebel (7,4 seconds).

The dynamic test included handling, where the Ranger Tremor performed best in the

standard double-lane and slalom tests, while the recently launched GWM P500 models and the RAM 1500 Rebel impressed with their ride quality.

The towing tests involved each bakkie taking a turn to tow a fully equipped Mobi Lodge Continental caravan with a base weight of roughly 1,5 tonnes. The towing tests were conducted in Worcester's typically windy conditions, and

here the massive RAM 2500 Laramie (it's more of a truck than a bakkie) with its large 6,7-litre diesel engine excelled. However, bakkies with smaller engines – like the Isuzu and Foton – kept up surprisingly well, even on steep inclines.

The 4x4 test kicked off with technical measurements. All dimensions, including unladen weight, wheel articulation,



and approach, departure and breakover angles, were measured.

The Jeep particularly excelled in the axle-twister test, where each bakkie had to climb ramps with the right front wheel and left rear wheel. With all the bakkies except the Jeep, the rear wheels lifted off the ground – in some cases, the suspension was so stiff that the wheel hung as much as 40 cm above the ground. However, all four wheels of the Jeep Gladiator remained on the ground, although the left rear wheel barely touched. When we disconnected the front anti-sway bar, all four wheels were firmly on the ground, something no other bakkie could achieve – not even the Raptor.

Next, we performed water crossings. The river was approximately wheel-deep. Everyone made it through except the Futon Tunland G7 4x4, which experienced electrical problems shortly after the water crossing and eventually stopped working altogether. The manufacturers were asked to send two vehicles for this very reason, so we completed the test with the backup Tunland – though we didn't dare driving it through the water again!

After this, it was time to hit the dunes. The standouts here were the powerful Ford Ranger Raptor in first place, followed by the Jeep Gladiator Rubicon – its long wheelbase caused it to get hung up occasionally – and



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The evaluation covered dynamic handling, towing, and 4x4 capability. This article focuses mainly on the latter test

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then the RAM 1500 Rebel with its massive wheels. We were also impressed with the GWM P500, which nipped at the heels of the three frontrunners.

The final test was conducted in a quarry, where we compared the traction and speed of the low-range gears in the respective bakkies.

Afterwards, we adjourned to the Klipbakkop conference hall and recorded our findings on a questionnaire. There were more than 150 sections, each of which had to be scored out of 10. Calculations that included the cost of ownership, taking into account factors such as

insurance, fuel consumption and depreciation, were left to auditors who specialise in this. The questionnaires were submitted to be audited by an independent body, and the results were announced on 14 September at Nampo Cape in Bredasdorp.

Before the announcement, we predicted Ford's Ranger Raptor would win the specialist category and possibly also the 161–200+ kW category, but the Raptor was unfortunately disqualified at the last minute because it wasn't officially entered by Ford South Africa but by a Ford agent.





TESTING, TESTING, 123. The Jeep Gladiator (above) did well in every 4x4 test as was expected, and so did the Ranger Raptor (right), which was unfortunately with-drawn. The biggest surprise, however, were the RAM bakkies (left) that finished every task with aplomb.



And the winners are...

100-125 kW Foton Tunland G7 4x4 8AT TLX
 126-160 kW GWM P500 2.4T 9AT 4X4 Luxury
 161-200+ kW GWM P500 HEV Ultra Luxury 4x4 9AT
 Specialist category Jeep Gladiator Rubicon 3.6 V6 8AT
 As for the lowest cost of ownership, the Isuzu D-MAX 1.9 X-Rider 4x4 AT was a winner.



BAG IT UP

When hiking the Fish River, you carry a backpack; when flying, you drag a wheeled suitcase around; and when it's time to camp, you use a duffel bag. But when you're road-tripping, not all essentials fit neatly into your usual luggage. Here are 14 ideas that think outside the bag.

Words Cyril Kloppe Images Supplied

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campandclimb.co.za campcover.co.za frontrunneroutfitters.com thulestore.co.za booxe.co.za outdoorwarehouse.co.za



TENTCO BAKKIE BAG

Got your back

The narrow space behind your double-cab bakkie's rear seat is often underused. This bag has four compartments – two large and two smaller – where you can store items like a fire extinguisher, high-visibility vests, a tyre-repair kit, and extra fuses and bulbs.

The bag is made from Oxford nylon and hangs on an aluminium sliding track that you bolt or glue onto your bakkie. You can, of course, also bolt the bakkie bag to a trailer for extra packing space. The bag's dimensions are 96 x 40 cm.

Price R290 at Camp & Climb



CAMP COVER DASHBOARD ORGANISER

Dashboard declutter

Your rig's dashboard has the potential to be a useful storage space with one of these organisers. It attaches with Velcro to the dashboard and is an excellent place for binoculars, bird guides, maps and sunglasses.

The organiser is made to fit in a Fortuner, Hilux (pictured here), Ranger, Everest and Land Cruiser, but you can ask Camp Cover to make a unique product for your vehicle if it's something other than a Toyota or Ford.

Price R1 100 at Camp Cover



FRONT RUNNER TYPHOON ROOF BAG

Come rain or shine

This bag has a maximum volume of 90 ℓ, meaning you can load two ammo boxes full of camping gear inside. However, you can also use it as a duffel bag with a smaller volume, as the opening rolls up and buckles shut. Front Runner claims the bag is 100% water- and dustproof so you can tie it to a roof rack.

The bag is made from 1000D PVC material underneath and 500D PVC on top. The bag is 66 cm long, 45 cm wide and weighs 2,3 kg. A floor pan is included to reinforce the bag's base, but Front Runner's boxes are an additional expense (R429 each).

Price R2 222 at Front Runner



THULE TEPUI DOUBLE SHOE BAG

High and dry

Thule's double-door shoe bag consists of a bar with a bag on each end. You attach the bar with Velcro to the top rung of your rooftop tent's ladder so that the bags hang on either side of the ladder beneath the tent door. You sit in the doorway with your feet on the ladder, take off your shoes and socks, and place your shoes in one of the bags and your socks in the mesh pocket at the front of the bag.

Now your shoes can dry out in the air, and your tent won't smell of stinky socks. It's also better to keep your shoes up here off the ground, where a scorpion can't crawl in or a jackal snatch them away.

Price R2 000 at Thule



TENTCO AMMO BOX

Built for the bush

An ammo box is essential for an overland trip, and Tentco's one is particularly tough. It's far better than the military's old ammo boxes that conscripts had to carry. The corners are stronger thanks to a double wall, and so are the clasps that secure it.

It has grooves so you can tie it down with straps, and V-shaped reinforcements on all four sides mean you can stack these boxes high without the bottom ones breaking. The carrying handles are also rounded, so the plastic edges don't feel like they're cutting into your hands. Its dimensions are 50,55 x 39,35 x 23,55 cm.

Price R215 at Camp & Climb



CAMP COVER BUNDU BAG

Bathroom in a bag

This multipurpose bag has two compartments that make it especially suitable as a bathroom bag. You fill one half with towels and washcloths, and the other section holds your soap, shampoo and other toiletries. There's also a pocket at the front where you can store a copy of *Drive & Camp* for some good reading material on the porcelain throne.

The bag has a hook so you can hang it in the bathroom. Its dimensions are 34 x 28 x 16 cm, and its volume is 15 ℓ. Best of all, you can win it when you share your travel stories with us. Email your story to drivecamp@gomag.co.za for consideration.

Price R1 000 at Camp Cover

**BOOXE BOOT BOX****Hidden in plain sight**

Booxe designed its Boot Box specifically for a Toyota Fortuner. The Fortuner has a footwell for the sixth and seventh seats in the third row, and the chest fits perfectly inside. You can also get Booxe's floor mat to cover it (it costs R1 695 extra) to hide it.

Booxe also makes one for other SUVs called the Boot Box Ultimate. This sits on the floor of, for instance, a Nissan X-Trail. You can't hide the Ultimate, but it's definitely not unattractive.

Price R1 995 at Booxe

**NATURAL INSTINCTS FOAM FORMS****Silence in transit**

These sponge blocks have various holes where crockery for six people can be stored. The set consists of two blocks: the bottom one has 13 forms for small plates and cutlery, while the top block has 11 forms for items like dinner plates and mugs.

The two blocks fit on top of each other inside a standard ammo box. (The dimensions are 20,2 x 44,8 x 33,8 cm if you want to make sure.) The crockery and ammo box aren't included in the price below.

Price R800 at Outdoor Warehouse

**CAMP COVER SADDLEBAG****Saddle up!**

The transmission hump between the front seats often has a small storage space between the gear lever and centre console, but this saddlebag drapes over it with pockets on either side of the gear lever. It's a handy and logical place to store items like snacks, an extra water bottle and lip balm.

The saddlebag is adjustable so it will fit various vehicles. The bag's outer dimensions are 67 x 24,5 cm, with a thickness of 5 cm when empty. Its is available in dark grey and khaki to match your seat covers.

Price R500 at Outdoor Warehouse

**TENTCO SUN VISOR POUCH****Handy overhead**

This pouch attaches to the driver's sun visor and is an excellent place to store a few banknotes for toll gates, as well as your driver's licence, sunglasses and phone. You can buy a second one for your travel partner's sun visor, but then they'll have to forfeit their flip-up mirror.

The pouch is made from Tentco's durable ripstop material. The dimensions are 27 x 14 cm, and it's 5 cm thick when empty.

Price R190 at Camp & Climb



CAMP COVER BUCKET BAGS

Pack, hang and go

Camp Cover's bucket bags are incredibly versatile. You can load them with sand, for example, and use them as anchors for your tent's guy ropes. You can also transport items like dog food, toys and tools in them. The bags have loops so you can fasten them to your rooftop tent's ladder or a rally tent pole, giving you a handy rubbish bin for your camp kitchen.

They're sold as a set of two, and when you don't need them, you simply roll them up and store them in a drawer. The bags are made from durable PVC and each has a volume of 5 ℓ.

Price R325 at Camp Cover



TENTCO SEAT ORGANISER

Entertainment matters

We've now used the dashboard, gear shift hump and sun visor for extra storage – what's left? The backs of Mum and Dad's seats, of course! This organiser hangs from the front seat's headrest, and there are straps below to secure it firmly.

There's space for four pens, water bottles, a colouring book or road map, snacks and a phone. The dimensions are 60 x 39 cm.

Price R230 at Camp & Climb



ROOF RACK WATER TANK

Oasis on the roof

This water tank is designed to lie on top of your roof rack. Because it's only 8 cm thick, it will barely be visible over the edge of the roof rack. The tank is made from UV-stabilised polyethylene, and it contains no BPA (Bisphenol-A) that might make you sick. It has a filler cap on top and a spout to which you can attach a hose with a tap.

The tank's dimensions are 120 x 60 cm, and it holds 50 ℓ. According to the American National Health Institute, 50 ℓ should be enough to keep four people going for four days in the Sahara.

Price R2 000 at Outdoor Warehouse



THULE TACT CHEST BAG

Keep it close

You can wear this bag snugly around your hips or loosely on your back. Young people these days wear their moon bags across their chests for extra security, and that's really what Thule had in mind with this bag. With a volume of 5 ℓ, it's big enough for valuable items like your expensive Swarovski binoculars or your whole family's passports and other documents. You don't want to leave such items in your car at a busy and shady border post.

Price R2 200 at Thule

A festive *feast*

Give these classic crowd-pleasers the gourmet treatment.

Recipes and styling **Johané Neilson**
Photos **Ed O'Riley**

MOCK CASSATA ICE CREAM CAKE

Sweet temptation

Use the quantities below as a guideline when making this cassata, and feel free to swap out the ginger and citrus peel for creamy fudge chunks and mini marshmallows if your little ones object to grown-up flavours.

Ingredients

(serves 8)

- 200 g Tennis biscuits (or your favourite), coarsely crumbled
- 500 ml vanilla ice cream
- 50 g toasted almonds, coarsely chopped
- 50 ml chocolate chips
- 1 can (360 g) caramel
- 2 tablespoons Amarula cream liqueur (optional)
- 2 tablespoons cream
- 500 ml chocolate ice cream
- 500 ml berry ice cream
- 1 tablespoon chopped candied ginger
- 1 tablespoon candied citrus peel (we used Trumps Mixed Citrus Peel)
- 12 glacé cherries, coarsely chopped
- Extra treats for garnish
- Chocolate sauce

Here's how

1 Line a large loaf tin with cling wrap (or use a 2-litre ice cream tub) – measure your camp freezer before the holiday and choose a container that fits comfortably.

2 Sprinkle a layer of biscuit crumbs at the bottom of the prepared tin.

3 Mix the vanilla ice cream with the almonds and chocolate, then spoon it over the biscuit crumbs. Smooth the top and return the ice cream to the freezer.

4 Beat the caramel with the Amarula and cream until thick and smooth. Pour half of this over the ice cream layer and freeze the mixture until set.

5 Spoon the chocolate ice cream over the caramel layer, smooth the top, sprinkle a layer of biscuit crumbs, pour over the rest of the caramel, and freeze until set.

6 Mix the berry ice cream with the candied fruit and glacé cherries, then spoon it into the tin. Sprinkle the remaining biscuit crumbs over the top, press down firmly, and wrap with cling wrap. Place the tin in the freezer for at least 24 hours.

Drive & Camp says The cake looks incredibly impressive when turned out, decorated, and sliced, but if it's scorching hot, consider placing the tin with the ice cream cake in a large ice-filled bowl instead. Slice the cake in the tin and serve the slices. Let everyone decorate their slice with treats, and pass around the jug of chocolate sauce.



CHICKEN POTJIE PIE WITH POLENTA TOPPING

Cluck and braai!

Polenta is really just yellow Italian pap. Regular soft pap works just as well.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1,2 kg boneless chicken thigh fillets, halved
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 celery sticks, chopped
- 300 g mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1½ litres chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 1 cup cream
- 1 litre milk
- 2 cups instant polenta (it's fine and cooks super quickly)
- A large knob of butter

Here's how

1 Melt the butter and olive oil in a flat-bottomed potjie and brown the chicken without stirring too much, until nicely golden. Season generously with salt and pepper. Remove the chicken, but retain the oil in the potjie.

2 Stir-fry the onion, carrot, and celery until glossy. Add the mushrooms and garlic and fry together for a few more minutes. Return the chicken to the pot, add 2 cups of stock, and let it simmer gently for 20 minutes. Mix the cornflour with a bit of water to make a smooth paste, then stir it in along with the cream. Let it simmer gently while you make the pap.

3 In a second pot, bring the remaining stock and milk to a boil, then gradually whisk in the polenta until smooth – use a balloon whisk. Simmer the mixture for 10 minutes until done (or follow the packet instructions).

4 Pour the smooth, cooked polenta over the chicken pie in the flat-bottomed pot, dot it with butter, and cover with a lid. Simmer gently for another 10 minutes. We decorated the finished polenta with very thin red onion rings for a nice touch.

Drive & Camp says Boneless thighs are pricey but quick and easy to make. You can also use a braai pack of chicken pieces for this recipe. Simply cook the chicken in the stock until tender. Debone and shred the cooked chicken, return it to the sauce before adding the cornflour and cream, and spoon the polenta on top.



CURRIED LAMB SOSATIES

Spice is nice

Make the sosaties a day or two before the braai, as the flavour improves in the fridge.

Ingredients

(makes 6 sosaties)

- 2 kg boneless leg of lamb, cut into 2 cm cubes
- 2 green peppers, cut into 2 cm cubes
- 1 red onion, halved and cut into wedges
- 16 lemon leaves
- Salt and white pepper to taste

FOR THE MARINADE

- 2 large onions, sliced into rings
- 1½ cups brown vinegar
- ½ cup boiling water
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 cup smooth apricot jam
- ½ cup chutney
- 2 tablespoons mild curry powder
- 2 teaspoons turmeric
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 1 bay leaf, crushed

Here's how

1 Prepare the marinade. Simmer

the onion in a bit of water until soft. Drain, then mix with the vinegar, boiling water, brown sugar, apricot jam, chutney, curry, and turmeric, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for a few minutes. Mix the cornflour with enough water to form a paste, then whisk it into the sauce. Boil until slightly thickened. Let cool completely.

2 Pour the cold marinade over the lamb cubes, add the bay leaf – I add a clove of garlic and a teaspoon of grated ginger too – and marinate overnight in the fridge. The meat can marinate for up to three days, as long as it's covered in sauce. Stir it occasionally.

3 Thread the meat with the peppers, onion pieces, and lemon leaves onto skewers.

4 Braai the sosaties quickly over high heat until just cooked. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Drive & Camp says You can, of course, add chilli to taste and also thread dried apricots onto the skewers if that's to your liking.

PRAWN COCKTAIL FLATBREADS

On the Ritz

Serve the prawns in their pink sauce directly in halved ripe avocados for a fun retro starter, or stretch the decadent ingredients further by using them as a topping for flatbreads.

Ingredients

(serves 4–6 as a starter)

- 300 g cooked prawn tails
- 5 frozen or heat-and-eat flatbreads (we used 400 g Frozen Plain Paratha from Checkers)
- 2 ripe avocados, sliced – drizzle with lemon juice to prevent discolouration
- 8 peppadews, coarsely chopped

FOR THE PINK SAUCE

- ¾ cup creamy French-style mayonnaise

- 2 tablespoons tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- A few drops of chilli sauce (like Tabasco) to taste

Here's how

1 Mix the sauce ingredients together. Chop half of the prawn tails and mix them, along with the whole tails, into the sauce.

2 Grill the flatbreads over the coals until golden brown, cooked, and warmed through.

3 Spoon the prawn mixture, avocado slices, and peppadew pieces onto the warm flatbreads and slice into wedges. Tuck in immediately!

Drive & Camp says Pop the cork immediately when you serve the warm wedges. The starter tastes even better with a bit of bubbly in hand. Cheers!





LOADED POTATO SALAD

You say potato, I say potahto

This side dish is so delicious, I could eat the whole bowl all by myself!

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 500 g baby potatoes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 200 g bacon, chopped
- 200 g mushrooms, sliced
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 6 small gherkins, chopped

FOR THE DRESSING

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon mustard powder
- ½ teaspoon dried Italian herbs
- A pinch of sugar
- ½ garlic clove, very finely chopped
- Aromat or salt and pepper to taste

Here's how

1 Boil the potatoes in salted

water until tender. Drain and peel them once cool enough to handle. Break the warm potatoes into chunks to create a larger surface area for the dressing to coat.

2 Heat the oil in a pan and fry the bacon, mushrooms, and onion until fragrant and cooked.

3 Whisk the dressing ingredients together, then taste and adjust to your liking – the secret is to taste as you go.

4 Combine the warm potatoes with the bacon mixture, gherkins, and dressing. A sprinkle of fresh parsley is optional but gives the salad a nice finish. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Drive & Camp says You can also use large potatoes and simply cut them smaller after peeling. Peeling baby potatoes is quite the labour of love...

FESTIVE BEETROOT SALAD

All dressed up

A handful of rocket looks and tastes wonderful in this salad, but if it's accidentally frozen – as we all know, fresh greens have a short shelf life – and you can't use it fresh, chop it finely and mix it into the dressing.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 500 g cooked baby beetroot
- 200 g strawberries, halved
- 100 g feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- A handful of wild rocket or watercress leaves
- 200 g peanut brittle, coarsely chopped

FOR THE DRESSING

- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- Juice of ½ an orange, freshly squeezed
- 2 teaspoons wholegrain mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey (or to taste)

Here's how

1 Whisk the dressing ingredients together.

2 Drain the cooked beetroot, cut into smaller pieces if needed, and mix a dash of dressing through. Season generously with salt and pepper.

3 Arrange the marinated beetroot with the rest of the salad ingredients on a flat platter – I find it works better than a salad bowl because the beetroot doesn't turn everything pink – and serve the remaining dressing in a jug on the side for guests to help themselves.

Drive & Camp says My supermarket sells vacuum-packed cooked beetroot. I like this convenience product because, unlike pickled beetroot, it doesn't already have a strong vinegar flavour. Remember to adjust the vinegar content in the dressing if you're using pickled beetroot.



Choose a road trip whip

Looking for a new car for the holidays? You might want to consider one of these 23 models.

Compiled by **Cyril Kloppe**

There are hundreds of types of touring vehicles available in South Africa, and for every model, there are often dozens of variations. That's why we didn't compile a comprehensive list but set limits to provide a meaningful offering.

For example, we were tempted to include double-cab bakkies, mini buses and sedans – think of how lekker an Audi A8 would handle a road trip – but ultimately, we focused on SUVs and set a price limit of under one million rand. We also only mention one model per vehicle manufacturer that's currently available in local showrooms. The holiday vehicles on our list all had to be able to handle gravel roads, but they didn't necessarily need to have four-wheel drive. There had to be seating for at least five people and everyone's luggage, whether in the boot, in a roofbox or in a trailer.

As mentioned, the list is by no means comprehensive but merely our opinion based on test drives we've personally undertaken over the past few years. Note, we only mention the entry-level models, and their specifications are sourced from official press releases and the manufacturers' own documentation.

Figures such as ground clearance and vehicle width are debatable, as some manufacturers measure the highest point of the chassis above the ground while others give the point closest to the ground. Others, again, include the wing mirrors in the vehicle's width, and some don't. And then we're not even talking about their fuel-consumption claims, which is a controversial topic to say the least.

Here are our suggestions for great touring vehicles, in alphabetical order, to consider for your next holiday.

Happy travels!



ALFA ROMEO TONALE

It's exhilarating to drive an Alfa Romeo over mountain passes, and the Tonale is no exception. It might not be as spacious as its bigger Alfa brother, the Stelvio, but at R500 000 cheaper, you'll have enough money left over for plenty of road trips.

Model	Alfa Romeo Tonale Ti
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 469 cc (1,5 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	118 kW @ 5 750 r.p.m.
Torque	240 Nm @ 1 500 r.p.m.
Transmission	Seven-speed automatic dual-clutch gearbox
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	210 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	8,8 s
Tank	55 l
Fuel consumption	5,7 l/100 km
Estimated range	960 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	152 mm
Luggage volume	500-1 500 l
Load capacity	610 kg
Towing capacity	1 250 kg (braked)
Tyre size	235/50R18
Dimensions	4 528 (l) x 2 082 (w) x 1 601 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	5 years/100 000 km
Service plan	5 years/100 000 km
Price	R799 951

Drive & Camp says It can handle dirt roads, but it's more at home on tar.



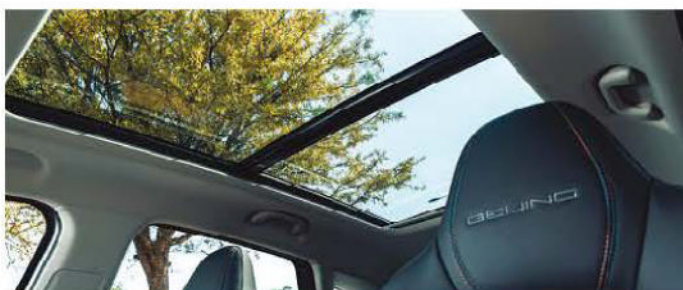


AUDI Q3

It's a bit bigger than the Q2 but smaller than the Q5 and Q8, both of which cost well over a million rand. The boot is reasonably large at 530 ℓ, and you can triple the packing space if you fold down the rear seats. The Q3 might be pricey, but it's frugal with fuel.

Model	Audi Q3 35 TFSI Advanced
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 395 cc (1,4 ℓ)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	110 kW @ 5 000 rpm
Torque	250 Nm @ 1 500 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed automatic
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	207 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	9,3 s
Tank	60 ℓ
Fuel consumption	5,9 ℓ/100 km
Estimated range	930 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	144 mm
Luggage volume	530-1 525 ℓ
Load capacity	585 kg
Towing capacity	1 800 kg (braked)
Tyre size	235/55R18
Dimensions	4 484 (l) x 2 024 (w) x 1 616 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	1 year/unlimited km
Service plan	5 years/100 000 km
Price	R760 100

Drive & Camp says It's a stylish ride without being extravagant.



BAIC BEIJING X55

You get plenty of value for your money with this vehicle. Our only complaint is that the boot, at 350 ℓ, is relatively small. And the load weight – at 420 kg, the lowest of all the vehicles on this list – is barely enough to carry five people, let alone their luggage!

Model	BAIC Beijing X55 Dynamic
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 498 cc (1,5 ℓ)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder (hybrid)
Power	130 kW @ 5 500 rpm
Torque	305 Nm @ 1 500 rpm
Transmission	Seven-speed automatic dual-clutch gearbox
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	200 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	7,8 s
Tank	53 ℓ
Fuel consumption	7,7 ℓ/100 km
Estimated range	680 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	160 mm
Luggage volume	350 ℓ
Load capacity	420 kg
Towing capacity	1 500 kg (braked)
Tyre size	215/60R17
Dimensions	4 620 (l) x 1 886 (w) x 1 680 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (C-NCAP)
Warranty	5 years/150 000 km
Service plan	5 years/60 000 km (optional at R16 800)
Price	R429 900

Drive & Camp says It's a pity about the modest packing space, because it's a great touring vehicle otherwise.



CHERY TIGGO 7 PRO MAX

Just like BAIC's Beijing X55, this Chinese manufacturer offers a fantastic touring vehicle at a reasonable price. It does, however, have more packing space, although by law it can't carry much more weight. Chery's SUV is nevertheless perfect for something like a long weekend on a guest farm in the Karoo.

Model	Chery Tiggo 7 Pro Max Distinction
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 598 cc (1,6 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	145 kW @ 5 500 rpm
Torque	290 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission	Seven-speed automatic dual-clutch gearbox
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	215 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	9,5 s
Tank	51 l
Fuel consumption	8 l/100 km
Estimated range	630 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	162 mm
Luggage volume	626-1 672 l
Load capacity	458 kg
Towing capacity	1 500 kg (braked)
Tyre size	225/60R18
Dimensions	4 513 (l) x 1 862 (w) x 1 696 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (ANCAP)
Warranty	7 years/200 000 km
Service plan	5 years/60 000 km
Price	R529 900

Drive & Camp says The Tiggo 7's popularity is growing rapidly – and for good reason too.

CITROËN C5 AIRCROSS

The French manufacturer has been building cars since 1919 – in Citroën's early days, their four-seater Torpedo travelled the countryside. It's fair to say Citroën knows what it's doing. The C5 Aircross's boot is large (720 ℓ), even with the rear seats in use, and its plastic panels underneath are resistant to gravel debris.



Model	Citroën C5 Aircross Feel
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 589 cc (1,6 ℓ)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	121 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	240 Nm @ 1 400 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed automatic
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	189 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	10,5 s
Tank	53 ℓ
Fuel consumption	7,9 ℓ/100 km
Estimated range	670 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	230 mm
Luggage volume	720 ℓ
Load capacity	475 kg
Towing capacity	1 200 kg
Tyre size	235/55R18
Dimensions	4 500 (l) x 2 099 (w) x 1 654 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	5 years/100 000 km
Service plan	5 years/100 000 km
Price	R649 900

Drive & Camp says It's a practical ride with plenty of character.



FORD EVEREST

Ford's largest SUV in South Africa – the Territory and Puma are indeed smaller – also boasts the most torque (500 Nm) of all the vehicles on these pages. In theory, that means you can tow 3,5 tonnes, and with a load capacity of 759 kg, you can load it up without fear of a weigh bridge.

Model	Ford Everest XLT 4x2
Fuel	Diesel
Engine capacity	1 996 cc (2 ℓ)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	154 kW @ 3 750 rpm
Torque	500 Nm @ 2 000 rpm
Transmission	Ten-speed automatic
Drive	Rear-wheel drive
Top speed	180 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	9,97 s
Tank	76,5 ℓ
Fuel consumption	7,5 ℓ/100 km
Estimated reach	1 000 km
Seats	Seven
Ground clearance	220 mm
Luggage volume	259-1 823 ℓ
Load capacity	759 kg
Towing capacity	3 500 kg (braked)
Tyre size	255/65R18
Dimensions	4 940 (l) x 2 234 (w) x 1 844 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (ANCAP)
Warranty	4 years/120 000 km
Service plan	6 years/90 000 km (optional)
Price	R904 200

Drive & Camp says It's luxurious and capable; it's just a pity it costs over R900 000!





Model	GWM Tank 300 Super Luxury
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 967 cc (2 ℓ)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	162 kW R 5 500 rpm
Torque	380 Nm @ 1 800 rpm
Transmission	Eight-speed automatic
Drive	Four-wheel drive
Top speed	170 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	9,9 s
Tank	75 ℓ
Fuel consumption	11 ℓ/100 km
Estimated reach	650 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	224 mm
Luggage volume	400 ℓ
Load capacity	470 kg
Towing capacity	2 500 kg (braked)
Tyre size	265/60R17
Dimensions	4 760 (l) x 1 930 (w) x 1 903 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★ (ANCAP)
Warranty	Seven years/200 000 km
Service plan	Five years/75 000 km
Price	R725 950

Drive & Camp says It's a pukka 4x4 that offers a comfortable driving experience, and it looks the part too!



GWM TANK 300

We recently toured through Namibia with this guy, and it impressed us. Its poor fuel consumption – a common ailment among many Chinese vehicles – is, however, its Achilles heel, although its excellent four-wheel drive system and impressive seven-year warranty make up for the fuel bill.





Model	Honda HR-V Comfort
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 498 cc (1,5 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	89 kW @6 600 rpm
Torque	145 Nm @ 4 300 rpm
Transmission	Continuously variable transmission (CVT)
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	187 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	12,1 s
Tank	40 l
Fuel consumption	6 l/100 km
Estimated reach	650 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	187 mm
Luggage volume	304-1 247 l
Load capacity	467 kg
Towing capacity	No towing allowed
Tyre size	215/60R17
Dimensions	4 345 (l) x 1 790 (w) x 1 590 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	Five years/200 000 km
Service plan	4 years/60 000 km
Price	R520 900

Drive & Camp says You could lose the warranty if you have a tow bar fitted.

HONDA HR-V

Honda is known for its reliable vehicles, something that provides peace of mind when you embark on a road trip. The European NCAP only gave it four stars because its bonnet could be deadly if you hit a pedestrian. If you have no moral objections to this, you'll find the HR-V is an excellent touring vehicle.



HYUNDAI SANTA FE

The Santa Fé holds the record when it comes to load capacity, as at 815 kg, it's almost as heavy as the All Blacks' scrum! It's spacious inside with seven seats, and the 2,2 ℓ engine delivers swift acceleration and a solid top speed, allowing you to overtake trucks on the N1 with ease.



Model.....	Hyundai Santa Fe Executive
Fuel.....	Diesel
Engine capacity.....	2 151 cc (2,2 ℓ)
Engine layout.....	Inline four-cylinder
Power.....	148 kW @ 3 800 rpm
Torque.....	440 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission.....	Eight-speed continuously variable transmission CVT
Drive.....	Front-wheel drive
Top speed.....	205 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h).....	9 s
Tank.....	67 ℓ
Fuel consumption.....	7,9 ℓ/100 km
Estimated reach.....	840 km
Seats.....	Seven
Ground clearance.....	176 mm
Luggage volume.....	571-1 649 ℓ
Load capacity.....	815 kg
Towing capacity.....	2 500 kg (braked)
Tyre size.....	235/60R18
Dimensions.....	4 785 (l) x 1 900 (w) x 1 705 mm (h)
Safety rating.....	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty.....	Five years/150 000 km
Service plan.....	Five years/75 000 km
Price.....	R931 900

Drive & Camp says In our opinion, it's one of the best touring vehicles on our list.





ISUZU MU-X

The mu-X won't blow anyone away with its performance, but it's the embodiment of the saying: slow and steady wins the race! The large fuel tank allows you to drive from Alberton to Durban and back without stopping for diesel – as long as you take it easy.

Model	Isuzu mu-X 1.9 LS
Fuel	Diesel
Engine capacity	1 899 cc (1,9 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	110 kW @ 3 600 rpm
Torque	350 Nm @ 1 800 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed automatic
Drive	Rear-wheel drive with diff lock
Top speed	175 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	10 s
Tank	80 l
Fuel consumption	7 l/100 km
Estimated reach	1 100 km
Seats	Seven
Ground clearance	235 mm
Luggage volume	311-2 138 l
Load capacity	739 kg
Towing capacity	2 100 kg (braked)
Tyre size	265/30R18
Dimensions	4 850 (l) x 1 870 (w) x 1 820 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (ANCAP)
Warranty	Three years/100 000 km
Service plan	Optional
Price	R736 900

Drive & Camp says The mu-X also reminds us of another saying: old but gold.



Model	Kia Carnival 2.2 CRDI EX
Fuel	Diesel
Engine capacity	2 151 cc (2,2 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	148 kW @ 3 800 rpm
Torque	440 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission	Eight-speed automatic
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	190 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	10,7 s
Tank	72 l
Fuel consumption	9,6 l/100 km
Estimated reach	750 km
Seats	Seven/eight
Ground clearance	172 mm
Luggage volume	1 135-4 110 l
Load capacity	742 kg
Towing capacity	1 588 kg (braked)
Tyre size	235/60R19
Dimensions	5 155 (l) x 1 995 (w) x 1 775 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (ANCAP)
Warranty	Five years/Unlimited km
Service plan	Six years/90 000 km
Price	R938 995

Drive & Camp says The six-year service plan is an extra boon.

KIA CARNIVAL

Heaven knows whether it's an SUV, a mini bus or a station wagon. What we *do* know is that the Carnival is a delight for touring. You can equip it with up to eight seats (seven is standard), and with an impressive 1 135-4 110 l, the boot is the largest of all the vehicles on these pages. It has the same length as a double-cab bakkie, but it's fantastic!





MAHINDRA SCORPIO-N

Its price looks good, its towing capacity is good, and its ride quality feels good. There's very little bad to say about the Scorpio-N. However, we would rather opt for the Z8 model with four-wheel drive than the Z4 we're discussing here. That extra R100 000 for the 4x4 system and additional electronic features is worth it.

Model	Mahindra Scorpio-N Z4
Fuel	Diesel
Engine capacity	2,2 l
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	128 kW @ 3 500 rpm
Torque	400 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed automatic
Drive	Rear-wheel drive
Top speed	165 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	11 s
Tank	57 l
Fuel consumption	7 l/100 km
Estimated reach	800 km
Seats	Seven
Ground clearance	187 mm
Luggage volume	460 l
Load capacity	545 kg
Towing capacity	2 500 kg (braked)
Tyre size	245/65R17
Dimensions	4 662 (l) x 1 917 (w) x 1 857 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Global NCAP)
Warranty	Five years/150 000 km
Service plan	Five years/100 000 km
Price	R477 199

Drive & Camp says This purchase will be guided by both your head and your heart.





MERCEDES-BENZ GLA

The GLA's 1300 engine is the smallest on this list, but it's a beastie. It's the most affordable Merc in the GL range, yet it's pure Mercedes-Benz – stylish and solid. The plastic panels underneath will protect the body paint from gravel road debris, but you'll need to replace the city tyres.

Model	Mercedes-Benz GLA 200 FL
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 332 cc (1,3 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	120 kW @ 5 300 rpm
Torque	270 Nm @ 1 250 rpm
Transmission	Continuously variable transmission (CVT)
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	210 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	8,9 s
Tank	43 l
Fuel consumption	5,6 l/100 km
Estimated reach	750 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	183 mm
Luggage volume	435 l
Load capacity	525 kg
Towing capacity	1 400 kg (braked)
Tyre size	215/65R17
Dimensions	4 412 (l) x 2 020 (w) x 1 616 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	Five years/100 000 km
Service plan	Optional
Price	R839 896

Drive & Camp says It's more at home in the city than in the bush, but we can't see why you shouldn't tackle the Karoo in it.



MITSUBISHI PAJERO SPORT

Just like with the Mahindra Scorpio-N, we prefer the Pajero Sport in four-wheel drive rather than rear-wheel drive, because a Pajero must be able to 4x4! Nevertheless, the 4x2 model is a pleasant touring vehicle that doesn't shy away from regular dirt roads. The eight-speed automatic transmission is lovely, and there's ample packing space.

Model	Mitsubishi Pajero Sport 4x2
Fuel	Diesel
Engine capacity	2 442 cc (2,4 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	133 kW @ 3 500 rpm
Torque	430 Nm @ 2 500 rpm
Transmission	Eight-speed automatic
Drive	Rear-wheel drive
Top speed	186 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	11,3 s
Tank	68 l
Fuel consumption	8,1 l/100 km
Estimated reach	830 km
Seats	Seven
Ground clearance	218 mm
Luggage volume	193-1 488 l
Load capacity	665 kg
Towing capacity	2 700 kg (braked)
Tyre size	265/60R18
Dimensions	4 785 (l) x 1 815 (w) x 1 805 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★ (Asian NCAP)
Warranty	Three years/100 000 km
Service plan	Five years/90 000 km
Price	R789 990

Drive & Camp says There's a new Triton on the way – and therefore also a new Pajero Sport. Don't be shy to ask for discount.

NISSAN X-TRAIL

Nissan's 2,5 l petrol engine is the largest on these pages, but apart from that, it doesn't particularly stand out. It's more of a Jack of all trades. Its specifications are average in the sense that nothing will disappoint you. It's a good choice if the journey matters more to you than the car.

Model	Nissan X-Trail Visia Ctronic 2WD
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	2 488 cc (2,5 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	135 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	244 Nm @ 3 600 rpm
Transmission	Continuously variable transmission (CVT)
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	195 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	10,4 s
Tank	55 l
Fuel consumption	7,4 l/100 km
Estimated reach	740 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	211 mm
Luggage volume	585-742 l
Load capacity	500 kg
Towing capacity	2 000 kg (braked)
Tyre size	235/65R17
Dimensions	4 680 (l) x 2 065 (w) x 1 725 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	Six years/150 000 km
Service plan	Three years/90 000 km
Price	R687 900

Drive & Camp says The interior is exciting, with plenty of gadgets to play with while waiting at those tedious stop/go points on the N1.



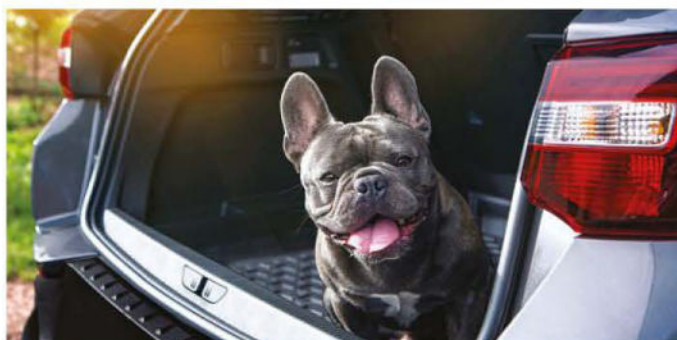
OMODA C5

Omoda is relatively new in South Africa, and like quite a few Chinese vehicles, it carries a reasonable price tag. At R360 000, you get a stylish car with modern technology, but the estimated range of 500 km is a concern. Your route will be dictated by the availability of fuel stations.

Model	Omoda C5 Style
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 498 cc (1,5 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	115 kW @ 5 500 rpm
Torque	230 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission	Continuously variable transmission (CVT)
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	191 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	9,9 s
Tank	51 l
Fuel consumption	6,9 l/100 km
Estimated reach	500 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	145 mm
Luggage volume	378-1 075 l
Load capacity	475 kg
Towing capacity	1 300 kg (braked)
Tyre size	215/55R18
Dimensions	4 400 (l) x 1 830 (w) x 1 590 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	Five years/150 000 km
Service plan	Two years/25 000 km (Five years optional)
Price	R359 900

Drive & Camp says The C5 is a beautiful machine and perfect for a long weekend getaway.





OPEL GRANDLAND

Going by Opel's figures, the Grandland is the fastest SUV on this list with a top speed of 222 km/h. The Grandland is a mid-sized SUV with plenty of interior packing space. And that's just as well, because its towing capacity of 600 kg is nothing to write home about.

Model	Opel Grandland 1.6T
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 599 cc (1,6 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	121 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	240 Nm @ 1 400 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed automatic
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	222 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	9,9 s
Tank	53 l
Fuel consumption	7 l/100 km
Estimated reach	750 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	123 mm
Luggage volume	514-1 652 l
Load capacity	600 kg
Towing capacity	600 kg
Tyre size	215/65R17
Dimensions	4 477 (l) x 2 098 (w) x 1 609 mm(h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	Five years/100 000 km
Service plan	Five years/100 000 km
Price	R604 900

Drive & Camp says The ride quality is good, and the maximum load capacity is more than sufficient.



PEUGEOT 3008 SUV

If these specifications look familiar, it's because Peugeot's 3008 SUV is almost the same vehicle as the Opel Grandland overleaf. Both brands indeed belong to the same holding company, Stellantis, although the respective press releases differ in terms of performance figures and a few other measurements.

Model	Peugeot 3008 SUV Active
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 599 cc (1,6 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	121 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	240 Nm @ 1 400 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed automatic
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	201 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	8,9 s
Tank	53 l
Fuel consumption	7 l/100 km
Estimated reach	750 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	219 mm
Luggage volume	514-1 652 l
Load capacity	600 kg
Towing capacity	600 kg
Tyre size	225/50R17
Dimensions	4 477 (l) x 2 098 (w) x 1 624 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	Five years/100 000 km
Service plan	Five years/100 000 km
Price	R613 900

Drive & Camp says Do you prefer a lion or a lightning bolt badge?



RENAULT DUSTER

The Duster has found its way deep into the hearts of South Africans, and the second generation will soon be replaced with a brand-new model. That means there's an off chance you could get a discount on this outgoing Duster.

Model	Renault Duster DCI Zen 4x2
Fuel	Diesel
Engine capacity	1 461 cc (1,5 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	66 kW @ 3 750 rpm
Torque	200 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission	Five-speed manual
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	155 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	14,8 s
Tank	50 l
Fuel consumption	5,1 l/100 km
Estimated reach	980 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	205 mm
Luggage volume	478 l
Load capacity	596 kg
Towing capacity	1 200 kg (braked)
Tyre size	215/65R16
Dimensions	4 341 (l) x 2 052 (w) x 1 693 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	Five years/150 000 km
Service plan	Three years/45 000 km
Price	R644 310

Drive & Camp says It's by no means a speed demon – 0-100 km/h in 14,8 seconds – but the fuel consumption is excellent.





SUZUKI GRAND VITARA

Suzuki's Grand Vitara, at R355 000, is the most affordable car on our list, and it's surprising that it doesn't sell in larger numbers. Suzuki's reliability is legendary, and although the luggage space is modest, the Grand Vitara is always ready for a road trip.

Model	Suzuki Grand Vitara GL
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 462 cc (1,6 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	77 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	128 Nm @ 4 400 rpm
Transmission	Five-speed manual
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	170 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	11,3 s
Tank	45 l
Fuel consumption	6 l/100 km
Estimated reach	750 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	210 mm
Luggage volume	328 l
Load capacity	460 kg
Towing capacity	1 000 kg (braked)
Tyre size	215/60R16
Dimensions	4 345 (l) x 1 795 (w) x 1 645 mm (h)
Safety rating	Unknown
Warranty	Five years/200 000 km
Service plan	4 years/60 000 km
Price	R354 900

Drive & Camp says It's surprisingly spacious inside despite the compact outer dimensions.





TOYOTA FORTUNER

Yes, the Land Cruiser 300 and new Prado are way better holiday vehicles, but they're expensive compared to the good old Fortuner. Speaking of old, the third-generation Fortuner is on the way, and as with all models at the end of their run, you should use this information to try to convince the salesperson to give you a discount. The Fortuner has a massive 80 ℓ tank, allowing you to travel far and wide.

Model	Toyota Fortuner 2.4
Fuel	Diesel
Engine capacity	2 393 cc (2,4 ℓ)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	110 kW @ 3 400 rpm
Torque	400 Nm @ 1 600 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed manual
Drive	Rear-wheel drive
Top speed	175 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	13,9 s
Tank	80 ℓ
Fuel consumption	6,8 ℓ/100 km
Estimated reach	1 100 km
Seats	Seven
Ground clearance	279 mm
Luggage volume	200-1 080 ℓ
Load capacity	605 kg
Towing capacity	2 500 kg (braked)
Tyre size	265/60R18
Dimensions	4 795 (l) x 1 855 (w) x 1 835 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (ANCAP)
Warranty	Three years/100 000 km
Service plan	Nine services/90 000 km
Price	R679 100

Drive & Camp says You can't compile a list of road trip vehicles without including a Toyota.





VOLKSWAGEN TIGUAN

This new Tiguan is mere weeks old, and Volkswagen is relying on it to boost the company's financial outlook. We haven't personally taken the brand new Tiguan for a spin yet, but it's sure to impress those who take it on long journeys.

Model	Volkswagen Tiguan 1.4 TSI
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 395 cc (1,4 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	110 kW @ 5 000 rpm
Torque	250 Nm @ 1 500 rpm
Transmission	Seven-speed continuously variable transmission (CVT)
Drive	Front-wheel drive
Top speed	207 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	9,2 s
Tank	55 l
Fuel consumption	7,6 l/100 km
Estimated reach	720 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	191 mm
Luggage volume	652-1 650 l
Load capacity	756 kg
Towing capacity	1 900 kg (braked)
Tyre size	215/65R17
Dimensions	4 539 (l) x 1 843 (w) x 1 631 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	Three years/120 000 km
Service plan	Five years/90 000 km
Price	R651 500

Drive & Camp says As you can deduce from these figures, the Tiguan is synonymous with long road trips.





VOLVO XC60

Just one long weekend short of R1 million, the last holiday vehicle on our list is also the most expensive. However, it has a lot going for it. It leads the pack in terms of power and also accelerates the fastest (0-100 km/h in 6,9 seconds) which is bonkers for a car this size. The XC60 also comes with all-wheel drive, providing extra peace of mind on a trip.

Model	Volvo XC60 B5 Essential
Fuel	Petrol
Engine capacity	1 969 cc (2 l)
Engine layout	Inline four-cylinder
Power	183 kW
Torque	350 Nm
Transmission	Eight-speed automatic
Drive	All-wheel drive
Top speed	180 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	6,9 s
Tank	71 l
Fuel consumption	7,6 l/100 km
Estimated reach	930 km
Seats	Five
Ground clearance	209 mm
Luggage volume	483 l
Load capacity	497 kg
Towing capacity	2 400 kg (braked)
Tyre size	235/55R19
Dimensions	4 708 (l) x 2 117 (w) x 1 655 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	Five years/100 000 km
Service plan	Five years/100 000 km
Price	R988 400

Drive & Camp says The XC60 is polished and cool, and it concludes this list on a high note.



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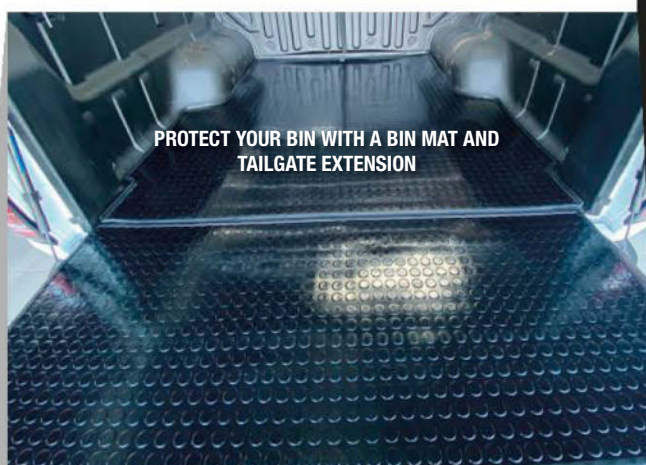
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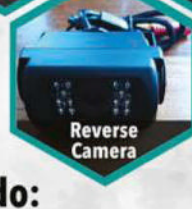
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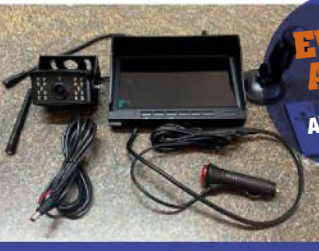
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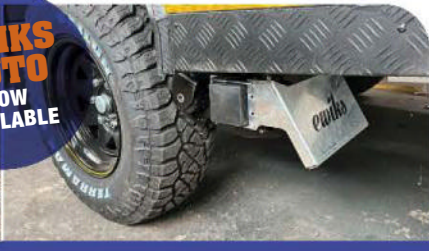

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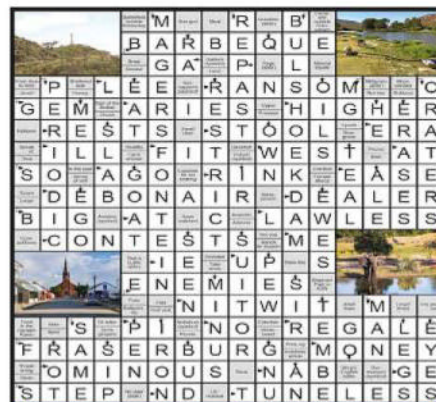
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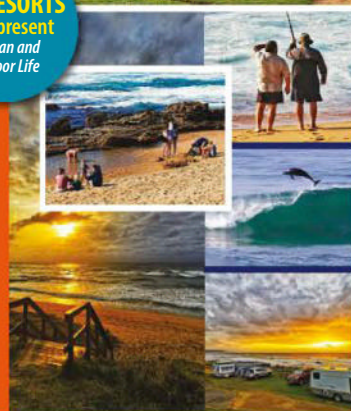
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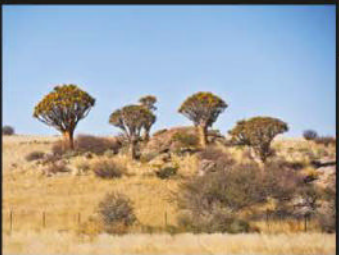


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CROSSWORD

Exercise your brain with this crossword puzzle. Research suggests it is not only beneficial to your language and cognitive skills, but it's also a great way to relax.

Get a pencil (and eraser) and enjoy. The solution to the previous puzzle is on page 133.

			Namib- ... Park	Springbok ... Snyman	Me, myself and ...	Blue- print	Large succulent (6,4)			
			Burrowed			Seed cover	Critical			
					In the middle of One time					
Fear	Slender		... and behold	Not off		Six (Roman numerals)		Portion	Trans- mitted	
Set of bells	Republic (abbr.)			Singles				Flying mammal	Offspring	
						Talkative				
Give up						Motive				
						Dad (inf)				
Primate			Payment asked			Payment (abbr.)		Caravan and ...		
Indefinite article			Tidy			Mollusc		Exists		
	Pismires									
	Wilde- beest				Indian attire					
... and tonic			Shrek, eg	Middle ground	North (abbr)	East side (abbr)				
		Pacify						Lake area in KZN (4,3)		
Your mother's sister				Away	Trendy (inf)		Theatres	Recordings	"Easy!" (2,5)	Receive
			Other- wise		Scandium (symbol)	Tin (symbol)				
			Pitchers			Arriving				
					By the skin of one's ...			Female deer		
								Shell		
			Diplo- macy			That man's				
			Expert (inf)			Finest				
Type of holiday accom- modation	Classical poem	Knot		New paragraph (abbr)	Facial hair					Old rifle
						Ruthe- nium (symbol)				
Surrender		Entrance			Platters				At the same time	
			Infectious disease					Young child		Rupees (symbol)

COMPILED BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

Colour in



COLOUR IN

Get your crayons and colouring pencils out and bring life to this line drawing.

WORD SEARCH

Search for the hidden words in the list and tick them off as you find them.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

There are at least 10 differences between the two illustrations. See if you can find them all!

MAZE

Show the maze who's boss. Remember to first do it in pencil, just in case you make a mistake.

Word search

Y M C O L L A T E R A L N W Q Z A O K R H J
T H E M U M M Y A X E D Z A N I Z T R T U E
H R A E T V C O W N U W I O J Z G P H S A R
O J W P I B Y R B A S I R B O N D E J I B R
B V W F K N T E E H R N T S X S L E O D S Y
F A R A N D A W A Y T O G W I A A U E J I M
A L Q G I U C P O C W A F C S W X R F P N A
V K X B G S I F W Q G Y Q T Y I A D A A O G
F Y T K H I X E J C O V S S H L H N M J M U
V R R W T E S F T K T A Z T I E C O I V A I
P I O Q A S K W N E M S W C Y P W W N A S R
T E P D N I T G B U S L R S Z F V O O N C E
F K I I D W O X R O B I U H O Y J W R I T N
Y M C G D A C A Q K P V R K S O A M I L J D
E W T T A F I T I O B L I V I O N G T L D Z
S B H E Y Y R C E M Z T A Z E F O L Y A D S
B T U Q D F J A C K R E A C H E R O R S N D
Y L N Y D A N H Q C P M F K N U A N E K B M
C N D J R M Y U B W U J M L D O I Z P Y O V
Z E E F D S T S I F N B Q O O J N T O N O H
M B R S I E B C O C K T A I L O M C R P L U
U E S G J T Q O L F U E E I T O A U T T C W
J S C N F S R B M Y T T A U E L N F Z J M G
W O E T N G F U Q D L H Y C C C L E D J S A
G M A G N O L I A N W J U P N J X S S G U T
C V K H O E E T J K G A G N Z Z E D U Q J O
T I U S A M E R I C A N M A D E J W H Z F P
Y E P E Q Y U V E Z F Z C M Z E O Q G P A G
X R I S K Y B U S I N E S S L O R C U D Y U
G T A M B Z P C Y W S H Y D O L Y J T Z H N

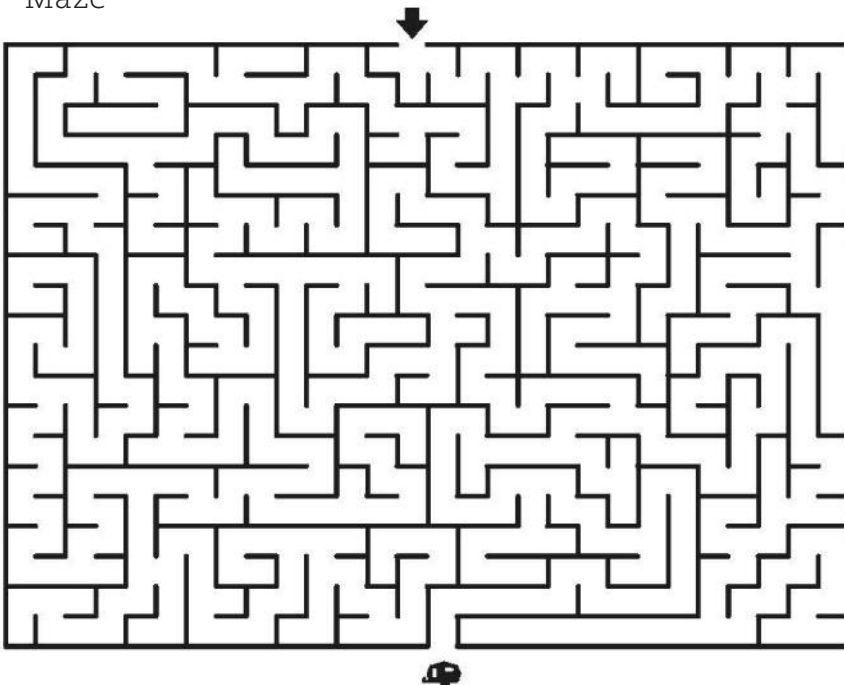
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Top Gun	Valkyrie	Jerry Maguire
American Made	Tropic Thunder	Far and Away
The Mummy	War of the Worlds	Days of Thunder
Oblivion	Collateral	Rain Man
Jack Reacher	The Last Samurai	Cocktail
Knight and Day	Minority Report	Risky Business

Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts



ANTEATER (VERMILINGUA)

- There are four species of anteaters: giant anteater, silky anteater, northern and southern tamandua.
- Their average lifespan in the wild is 10 to 15 years, while living up to 26 years in captivity.
- Anteaters have no teeth and use their tongues as their primary tool for gathering food.
- These organs can be up to 60 cm in length and come covered in small, spiny bumps and sticky saliva.
- They can eat up to 30 000 ants and termites in a day, with rapid-fire flicks of the tongue, devouring hundreds at a time.
- They have the lowest body temperature of any mammal at approximately 32 degrees Celcius.

The how and why of tyre rotation

There are several factors that must be considered when rotating your tyres, says Mic van Zyl.

How should I rotate the tyres on my 4x4 vehicle to ensure they last as long as possible?

This is a fair question that crops up often – and the answer is not as straightforward as one might think. To give some clarity, let us first look at why we do it and then how.

The reason we should rotate the tyres on our vehicles regularly lies in the fact that the tyres on the four corners of any vehicle experience different forces and therefore different rates of wear to each other.

This has not only a cost implication, but also potentially a safety implication. Typically,

the front tyres experience steering forces, most of the braking forces and, on front-wheel drive (FWD) vehicles, all the driving forces. The rear tyres are experiencing less of these forces except in rear-wheel drive (RWD) vehicles where the rear tyres experience all the driving forces. With all-wheel drive (AWD) vehicles, depending on the type of AWD system, the front and rear tyres may experience varying degrees of forces and thus wear during their lifespan.

In South Africa, where we drive on the left-hand side of the road, left turns are sharper than right turns. The left front tyre experiences more scuff and wear than the right-hand front tyre when making a small radius left turn as opposed to a large radius right turn.

With specific reference to 4x4 vehicles, there are a number of additional considerations. Rear, centre and front differentials may be subject to unnecessary internal diff pinion or spider gear rotation while driving, should your tyres have different diameters left to right, or front axle to rear axle.

This could lead to premature diff wear. Varying tyre diameters for the same size of tyre may be caused by differing tyre pressures or tyre wear. With reference to load carrying or overlanding 4x4 vehicles, often the rear tyres are inflated higher due to the load on the rear of the vehicle compared to the front, which affects tyre working temperatures and tyre wear.

An important factor to consider when determining how to rotate your tyres is the type of tyre that is fitted to your vehicle. In this instance, I am referring to symmetric, asymmetric, rotational and non-rotational tyres. Symmetric tyres are most common and feature the same tread design on both sides of the tread patch. Symmetric tyres can rotate in any direction both clockwise and anticlockwise when fitted to a vehicle. They can therefore be rotated in any

manner during your periodic tyre rotation practice, ensuring even tyre wear and promoting longer tyre life.

Asymmetric tyres feature different tread blocks on the outside and inside of the tyre tread. This allows for a design that can enhance both dry-weather grip and wet-weather traction. In addition, asymmetric tread patterns can also help to reduce road noise. Neglecting to rotate your tyre has more of an effect on asymmetric than symmetric tyres.

Asymmetric tyres have an “inside” and an “outside” marking on the tyre to ensure correct rim fitment and placement on the vehicle. Asymmetric tyres can either be non-directional or directional.

A non-directional asymmetric tyre can thus be fitted to any side of the vehicle and can rotate either clockwise (right-hand side) or anticlockwise (left-hand side) of the vehicle as long as the “outside” marking faces away from the vehicle. With directional tyres, there is a clear arrow indicating either the clockwise or anticlockwise rotation of the tyre.

Directional tyres tend to be higher performance tyres with the best water dispersion properties. They are of course less flexible when it comes to tyre rotation and can only be moved front to back on the same side of the vehicle.

There are several factors that must be considered when rotating your tyres. In the context of the most popular of 4x4 vehicles, the part-time 4x4 rig or bakkie, I have experienced the best results with tyre rotation, tyre wear and tyre life by doing the following: rear tyres go straight forward, front tyres cross over to the rear and then right rear tyre swaps with the spare.

This is done every 5 000 km along with a wheel alignment. Monitor your tyre pressures with a tyre pressure monitor. I do this not only for tyre life but mostly for safety.



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The Great Hunger

Going camping is not just about taking a break from your daily life and its never-ending challenges. Camping also satisfies a much deeper need within each of us, says **Neels van Heerden**.

Sir Laurens van der Post said that the indigenous people of the Kalahari Desert recognised two types of hunger – the “Great Hunger” and the “Small Hunger”. The latter is the hunger for food in the belly, but that Great Hunger – the greatest hunger of all – is the hunger for meaning.

This might explain why so many of our friends and family seem constantly angry and dissatisfied. They're probably struggling to connect their

humanity to a sense of meaning.

They are unhappy within themselves because they struggle to feel “this is where I belong.” Perhaps because there isn't much for them to look forward to.

I read that psychologists say as soon as anything you do has meaning for you, it doesn't matter whether your feelings swing between happy and unhappy. The most important feeling is one of contentment. A realisation that you are not alone and that you belong.

The concept of the Great Hunger has a profound human need for meaning, in turn, brings meaning to why people go camping. Whether you camp with a tent, caravan or motorhome, this lifestyle choice is about much more than escaping daily routines or enjoying nature. It also fulfils a need for a connection to the bigger picture of authenticity. It creates a sense of belonging.

I've touched on it before, but camping and the outdoor activities that go along with it – think hiking, tree-spotting, bird-watching and cycling – provide an escape from the daily struggle to make sense of where I fit in my everyday existence.

Everything I do and experience when camping strips my life down to a more basic level of shelter, warmth and companionship. This simplicity brings a feeling of contentment. Along with that, shared moments – like a gathering around a campfire, the first visit to a new campsite, or when you help your neighbours set up their camp – create a sense of unity and purpose.

In the context of Van der Post's Great Hunger, these experiences feed the hunger for a connection not only with others but also with nature. Seaside holidays link

me to the rhythm of the waves, wind and rain, and the wildlife in the rock pools. Camping in the forest also brings a unique experience. The fauna and flora in the forest are distinctive, and the tranquillity is different.

No matter where I camp or for how long, I get the chance to break away from my daily grind. Camping allows me to resonate with the rhythm of nature. I tune in to sunrises and sunsets. I experience every quirk and quiver the weather can throw my way, and it's an experience that gives perspective on where my place in life is.

In a way, this sense of “belonging” also reflects Van der Post's idea of meaning. It's not about continuous joy, but a steady and fulfilling connection with the climate, the things close to you, and also the surrounding environment. The mountains, sea, rivers, dams and forests...

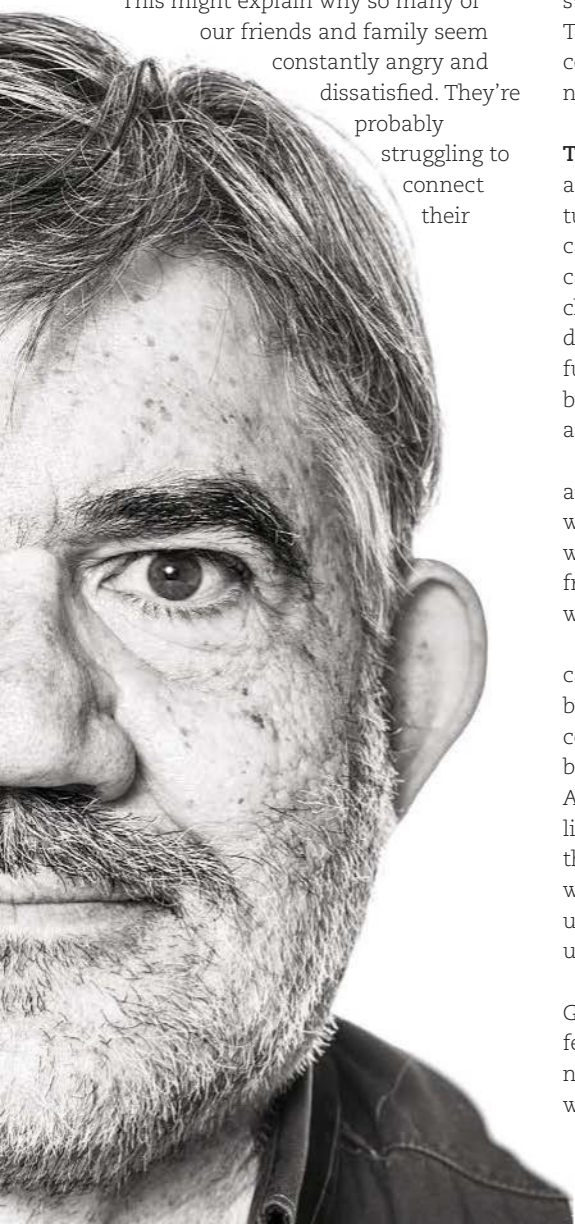
Sometimes, camping is a form of personal pilgrimage, a way to re-evaluate life, seek clarity, or simply exist in a space where your spirit does not feel alone.

Those times when you camp, even if only for a weekend, provide an anchor of meaning. It's a place where the Great Hunger is satisfied, even if just for a brief moment.

“

...psychologists say as soon as anything you do has meaning for you, it doesn't matter whether your feelings swing between happy and unhappy

”



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Time to watch the sunset



A Christmas carol

For a child, a gift lying beneath the Christmas tree is just as thrilling as the entire December holiday by the sea.

Pieter Redelinghuys remembers one in particular.

My parents weren't exactly big on giving Christmas presents, and various "foolproof" reasons were put forward over the years to justify this decision.

As a young boy, I heard on more than one occasion that Father Christmas was unbelievably busy in the run-up to his

gift-giving rounds and therefore couldn't reach the caravan park in Mossel Bay in time. He did, however, send a telegram saying that he'd delivered my big gift to our house in the Boland – he supposedly had a key to the garage – and I'd find it there after the holiday.

In the meantime, here's a little

something so you're not left with nothing. And so, you graciously accept the bag of marbles, the Coca-Cola spinning top and the Schmeisser toy gun, even though you could swear these items weren't crafted by a team of ingenious elves at the North Pole, as you'd seen them with your own eyes just before the holiday in the

“

Wow, what can I say? Engelbert Humperdinck!
Wow. I didn't see this coming. Thank you so
much, guys. I'm actually speechless

”

“Bargain Bin” at Baumans General Store in town.

Incidentally, that promised big gift supposedly waiting in the garage? After three weeks of holiday, it was always completely forgotten. A win-win situation for the parents.

Once the Father Christmas bubble finally burst in my early teens, my parents could offer less flimsy reasons for why I found gifts like an Old Spice soap-on-a-rope, North Star trainers and a new swimsuit under the Christmas tree while my peers stormed the campsite with their Chopper bikes, Blaupunkt cassette players, or – if your parents were really cool – a Sony Walkman. Preferably a yellow or blue one.

“You’re now old enough to have your own soap,” my father would explain. Or I’d hear how my other trainers were worn out and that I needed new ones. Later, he would simply be honest: there wasn’t money for expensive gifts. This free holiday and accompanying pocket money is your gift. Be grateful, because there are thousands of children in China who have never holidayed by the sea... Why he always singled out the poor children of China, heaven knows.

It wasn’t that my parents were stingy. I think that, with three children on a civil servant’s salary, there just wasn’t money for luxuries like expensive gifts. The second-hand bike, after all, rode just as well as the new Chopper and, yes, the Panasonic radio in the caravan’s kitchen wasn’t nearly as cool as a Walkman, but the music played just as well and constantly – it never got switched off.

As a child, I might not have understood it, but later I realised I never had to beg for a new tennis racket, cricket bat or rugby ball during my school years. So, there were indeed plenty of big and costly

gifts in my childhood; they just weren’t under the Christmas tree.

There was, however, one specific holiday that I remember as clearly as yesterday, precisely because of the gift with my name on it. As usual, we went to camp at The Point Caravan Park in December. I was about 15 and convinced that a career in rock & roll would be my future. I’d spent the whole year begging my dad for Queen’s album *The Game*. That’s the one with hits like “Another One Bites The Dust” and “Crazy Little Thing Called Love”.

In our town, there was no such thing as a music store. You had to travel far to one of the bigger towns if you wanted to buy music, or brave the big city.

As luck would have it, my dad had to attend a conference in Port Elizabeth just before the December holiday that year. My mother, I think, subtly passed along the message. For Christmas, please buy the boy Queen’s *The Game*. At the CNA in PE.

When my dad returned with something (already wrapped) that looked suspiciously like an LP, I was beside myself with excitement but sly enough to act as if I suspected nothing. I promised myself that I’d give my best performance there before the pop-up Christmas tree in our tent. “And the Oscar goes to...” Surprise, joy, unbridled delight!

It was a long four weeks to get to 25 December. But the morning finally arrived, and my dad, as was customary, handed out the presents. By then, we were all old enough that he could do this without the Father Christmas mask, cotton wool beard and red outfit.

“And this one’s from me, to my dear wife.” Ah, it’s Audrey Blignault’s latest book. “And this one’s from the kids to Mum.” Oh, lovely! It’s LL

Pansegrouw’s *Crossword Dictionary*.

“To our little girl, from grandma Issie and grandpa Piet...” It’s a manicure set, just adorable! My dad stretched out the proceedings, my eyes fixed on that flat, square gift at the back.

Finally! “And the last gift... from Dad and Mum to our youngest. Hope you enjoy it!” And there it was in my sweaty hands. I could feel it was an LP. I could already hear Freddie Mercury’s voice. Brian May’s whining Fender Stratocaster. On a blistering Mossel Bay morning, the wrapping paper covered in the repeating image of an overweight Father Christmas knee-deep in snow with a large red sack of toys slung over his shoulder.

I peeled off the paper in one swift motion. And... *Engelbert Humperdinck’s Greatest Hits*. With a large yellow sticker in the corner: “Including hits like ‘Please Release Me,’ ‘Spanish Eyes,’ ‘Quando, Quando, Quando,’ and many more!”

Had I been about four years younger, there might have been tears of disappointment. A full-blown tantrum, even. But I was as brave as the guy who missed the Olympic bronze medal by a hundredth of a second. No place on the podium for you, my friend.

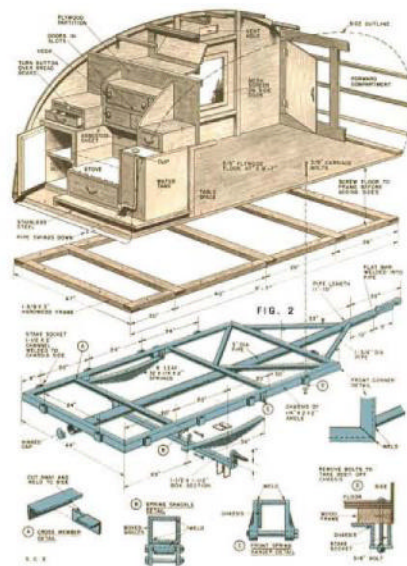
“Wow, what can I say? Engelbert Humperdinck! Wow. I didn’t see this coming. Thank you so much, guys. I’m actually speechless.”

About three months later, my mother casually mentioned one day: “You know that record we got you for Christmas? Your dad actually did buy the Queen record, but then left it in his car in PE. The sun warped that record so badly it was bent like a Simba chip. Unplayable. We tried everything to save it, but in the end, we had to throw the record away. And that Saturday morning when Dad left so early for work had nothing to do with his job. He drove from one town to the next, searching for another Queen record for you. Finally, at the CNA in Paarl, he gave up – *The Game* was nowhere to be found.

“When he then asked the guy there what the kids were listening to these days – as Dad only listens to classical music – the guy said, ‘Sir, you can’t go wrong with Engelbert Humperdinck.’ And that’s what Dad bought for you...”

To this day, I still have that record. *Engelbert Humperdinck’s Greatest Hits*. And I treasure it with all my heart. ●

Back to the future



By the 1950s, fuel prices dropped to as low as 10c per gallon, and vehicles became bigger and stronger. It was a prosperous time for Americans, and the humble teardrop camping trailer, as it



As the global economy has weakened, the modern teardrop caravan now seems like a wise and distinctive option, a nostalgic nod to a time when the future looked brighter with every passing day. 🏠



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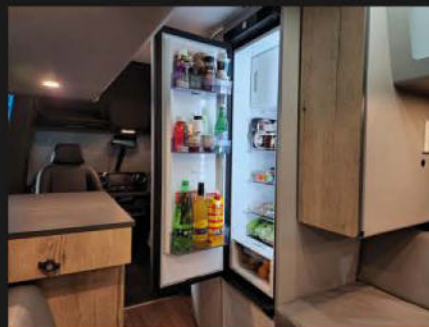
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