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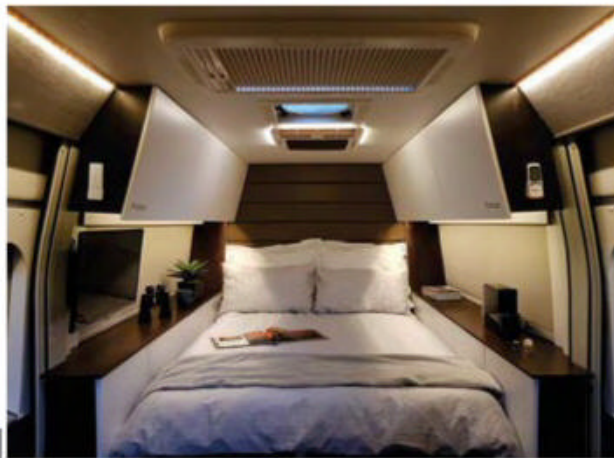
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JANUARY 2020 | ISSUE 30

Drive & Camp

ANGOLA

How to drive the Doodsakker

DRIVING IMPRESSION

FAREWELL, D-MAX

The highs and lows
of our long-termer

Green peace

Camping in the
Cape winelands

CARAVAN TEST

Stealth Evolution

The XR594 gets an upgrade

DRIVEN Audi Q3 and Lexus RX | **NEWS** A new camping spot
right outside Pretoria | **CAMP BOFFIN** We test 14 internet
hacks to see which work | **TRAIL GUIDE** Get schooled at
Spookspruit 4x4 | **GEAR** Six clever cooking gadgets for you

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MONGOLIA OFF-ROADING IN GENGHIS KHAN'S KINGDOM



TOYOTA

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THE NEW TOUGHER-ER HILUX LEGEND 50



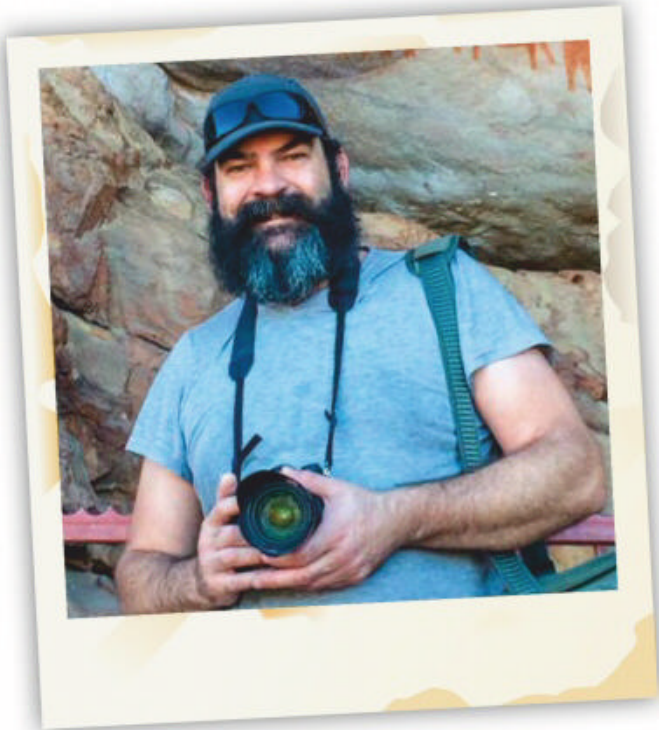
The Hilux Legend 50 is a celebration of 50 years of tougher-er, with both technological and design updates and 13 models to choose from. The exterior boasts a more aggressive grille and front bumper, unique wheel design, black styling bar, roof rails* and a tow bar; while the interior has a larger, integrated multimedia display and smart entry* with push start*. Legend 50 badging inside and out ensures the legendary legacy continues. *Available on selected models.

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HILUX
LEGEND 50

2020: already on a roll!



“

These are the kind journeys that come your way once in a lifetime if you're lucky, and I'm grateful they can share these far-flung destinations with you

”

Our office, during the final few weeks of the year is not a place for the faint of heart. In the five weeks before we leave our desks for a while to spend time with our loved ones, we still have to get through four more deadlines.

So, it came as no surprise that I just had to explain to the bean counters why the office coffee machine is suddenly grinding twice as many beans as usual.

Other than the magazine you're holding right now and the upcoming February issue, the team will also be sending our *Activity book* and this year's *Resort guide* to the printers.

You can see why we've had little time to fret about New Year's resolutions. Besides, after Cyril's trip to the Doodsakker, and Evan joining the Conqueror guys towing an off-road trailer through the desert to the Kunene estuary (and that's after exploring Mongolia in an off-road vehicle), I'm not exactly sure what remains for them in terms of bucket-list destinations in the New Year.

These are the kind journeys that come your way once in a lifetime if you're lucky, and I'm grateful they can share these far-flung destinations with you – may their tales spur on adventures of your own.

Should you opt to stay closer to home, though, and visit places more within striking distance, we've also got a treat for you: our *Resort guide* for 2020.

You get the lowdown on 60 camping and fishing resorts we've visited, but this year we've included our readers' top 20 favourite resorts. We let them tell you why they love it there and why they believe you should chill at their beloved spot.

There was a prize at stake for those readers who sent us their entries, and it was such a pleasure to let Martie and At Kruger of Bethlehem know that they can start planning a week of camping at the Forever campsite of their choice.

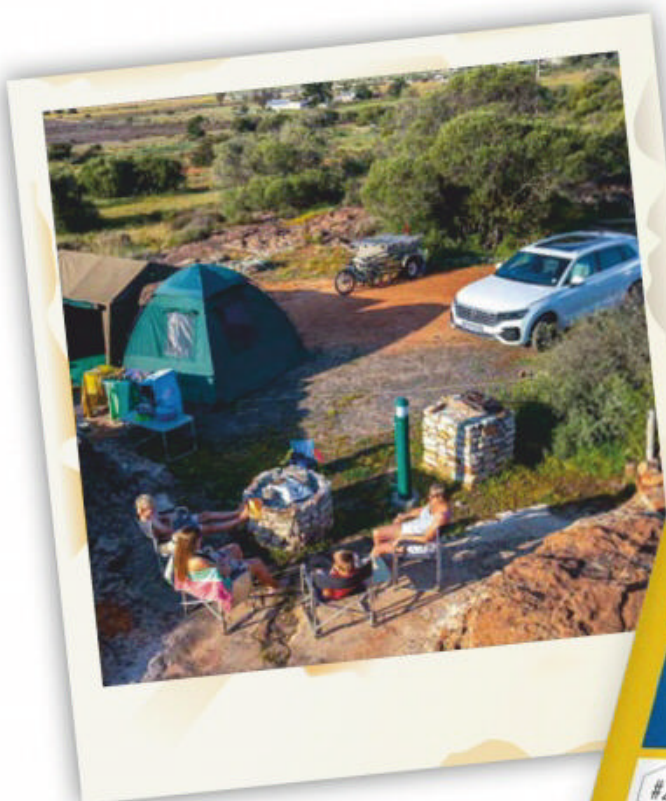
So, get the *Resort guide* and start planning your next 12 months (on shelf from 6 January), too. And remember to pick up a copy or three of the *Activity book* for your kids and grandkids – that one's already available.

Safe travels!

Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com



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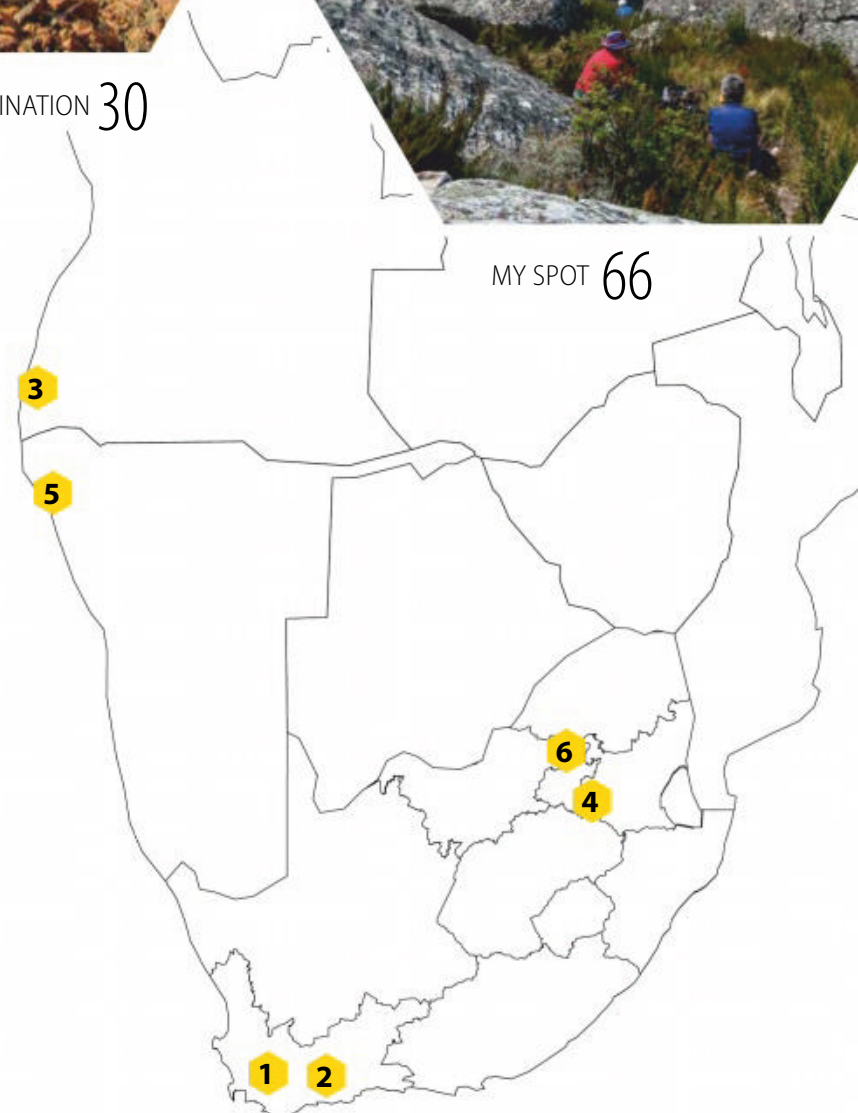
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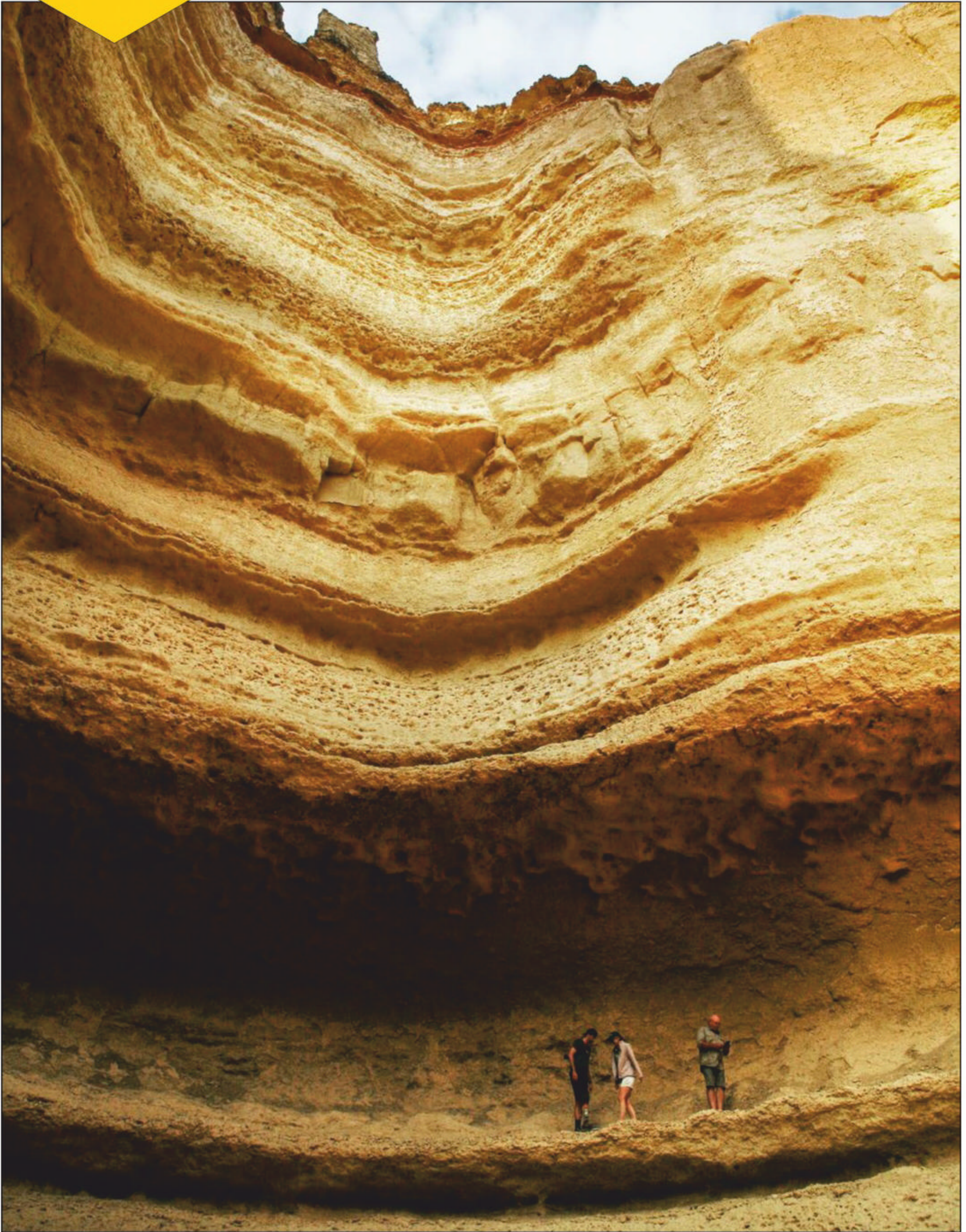
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#30 COVER IMAGE – CYRIL KLOPPER

“It was the first time in 58 years that a vehicle drove around on the Angolan island of Ilha dos Tigres and who knows if it will ever happen again. The island lies off the coast of the infamous Doodsakker and the disintegrating wreck of this unknown ship lies at least 200 m from its shore. It must have been a terrific storm to push the stricken fishing trawler this far inland.”

Camera settings Canon EOS 5D; F9;
1/250 sec; 24 mm; ISO 250



CORROSIVE ACTION At the canyon near the Flamingo Lodge in Southern Angola, there is an impressive natural amphitheatre that amplifies one's voice. The layers and terraces in the porous rock weren't eroded by a flood, but by wind.

PHOTO **CYRIL KLOPPER**

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This is real service!

I think many of us are slow to unpack a caravan so that it can be serviced. That's why I've been using the services of a mobile workshop for several years – they come to service my caravan at my home.

I am strict about these services and I replace the tyres every fourth year like clockwork, even though the tread still looks good. Recently, I again arranged for a mechanic to come to my house to service my caravan. It was definitely time, because something sounded suspicious around the caravan's coupler.

After the mechanic postponed the appointment a number of times, I got annoyed and browsed through the September issue of *Drive & Camp*. That's when I saw an advertisement for Wessel McMaster of Caravan Services & Repairs. I unpacked my caravan right there and

decided it was going to Wessel. I made the appointment on Monday, and by Wednesday they had my caravan. When it was done, Wessel got in my vehicle – with the caravan hitched – to drive around the block so he could make sure everything was perfect. I didn't even get this kind of personal attention when I bought the caravan.

Now – after the service – the caravan is also somewhat lighter, because I didn't return some of the unnecessary items I had unpacked.

You often hear about bad service, but not that frequently when people deliver good service. Thank you, Wessel, for your excellent work and personal attention. It's the best I've ever experienced.

ANTON BOTHA
Alberton



WINNING LETTER



Anton 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 lunch box and a 1,5 l cool drink bottle. The lid also has space for a coffee flask. The interior is lined with PVC, which makes it easy to keep this bag clean and hygienic. The bag has a short strap that reaches over the top and attaches with a Velcro strip, and also 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





Facebook comments



Hennie Botha

The one item that can really cause problems while towing is a caravan's wheel bearings. They can seize, but a tyre can also burst. Rather replace the bearings once a year, and if you can, pay just a few bucks extra for superior quality. Also check your tyres regularly for cracks or slow punctures. Spending a little time before your trip can save you lost time next to the road.



Piet Botha

Fortunately, we've never had problems with the caravan next to the road. I inspect my caravan's bearings once a year before I hit the long road to the coast. Test and listen for friction and noise at the wheels. I also regularly stop along the way and feel whether the rims have heated up. This is, of course, a sign that something may be wrong. The bearings may need grease or have been tightened too much. I replace the grease every three years.



Andre van Wyk

I also haven't had any trouble along the way. I've never replaced wheel bearings either. Once a year I listen and make sure there's enough lubricant in the bearings. Also make sure the tyres don't have cracks or bumps, especially on the inside of the tyre.



Ben Visagie

For your own safety it is important that the brakes, coupler and bearings are serviced regularly. I reckon once a year.



Follow @wegrysleep on Instagram and mark your photos with #wegrysleep, and we might repost them on our stream or feature them here.



COMMENT OF THE MONTH!

When asked how you keep your campsite safe, Taun Bewsher had an interesting answer.

"If camp thieves hassle you, you're camping in the wrong spot. I am more worried about the lions and elephants; I don't want to have to concern myself with people."





Body (out) of water



Drama in the air

With enough patience behind the camera lens, you can be rewarded with a winning photo – just look at this one **Vanessa Kruger** of Polokwane took of a black-backed jackal.

"I took a series of photos of a black-backed jackal at the Cubitje Quap waterhole just north of Nossob in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. I'd been watching him all morning, he tried repeatedly to capture prey next to the waterhole. Every attempt had him approach the water from the right, and then waiting for the doves to settle down. Then he'd suddenly dive into the sky in the direction of the birds – he seemed to know the birds would take off. The jackal persevered and eventually succeeded."

Most of the 11 frames Vanessa sent to us are a masterpiece in their own right. This photo is just one example and it draws attention for a variety of reasons.

First of all, a jackal is not a common sighting. If you're lucky, you'll see one scavenging around. Secondly, you don't expect live doves on a jackal's menu. And lastly, you're not sure what happens next.

In this pic, it looks as though the birds are getting away and the jackal will go hungry, but he actually catches one that time.

Here are some positive elements: the low light coming from behind Vanessa, her decent exposure, and the incredible sharpness of the image. But one of the most important yet subtle elements is the shallow depth of focus. Vanessa used a 600 mm lens on its largest lens aperture – f4 – which highlights the jackal and doves against the background.

The dove on the far right, the one that flies up right next to the jackal, may be out of focus and obscures part of the animal, but it doesn't bother you one bit. It adds to the drama and you can see the dove fleeing for its life. Very symbolically, one can see the clear shadow of this dove on the ground below the jackal.

There's a lot to say about this photograph, but we will conclude with "brilliant". Vanessa can pat herself on the back.

Three of our readers take pictures next to the water: here's a look at a jackal, a catfish and a human being.

Words **Leon Botha**

Just breathe

Water brings peace, and it's even more wonderful when paired with a blissful sunset. Just look at this photo by **Johan Nortjé** of Midrand.

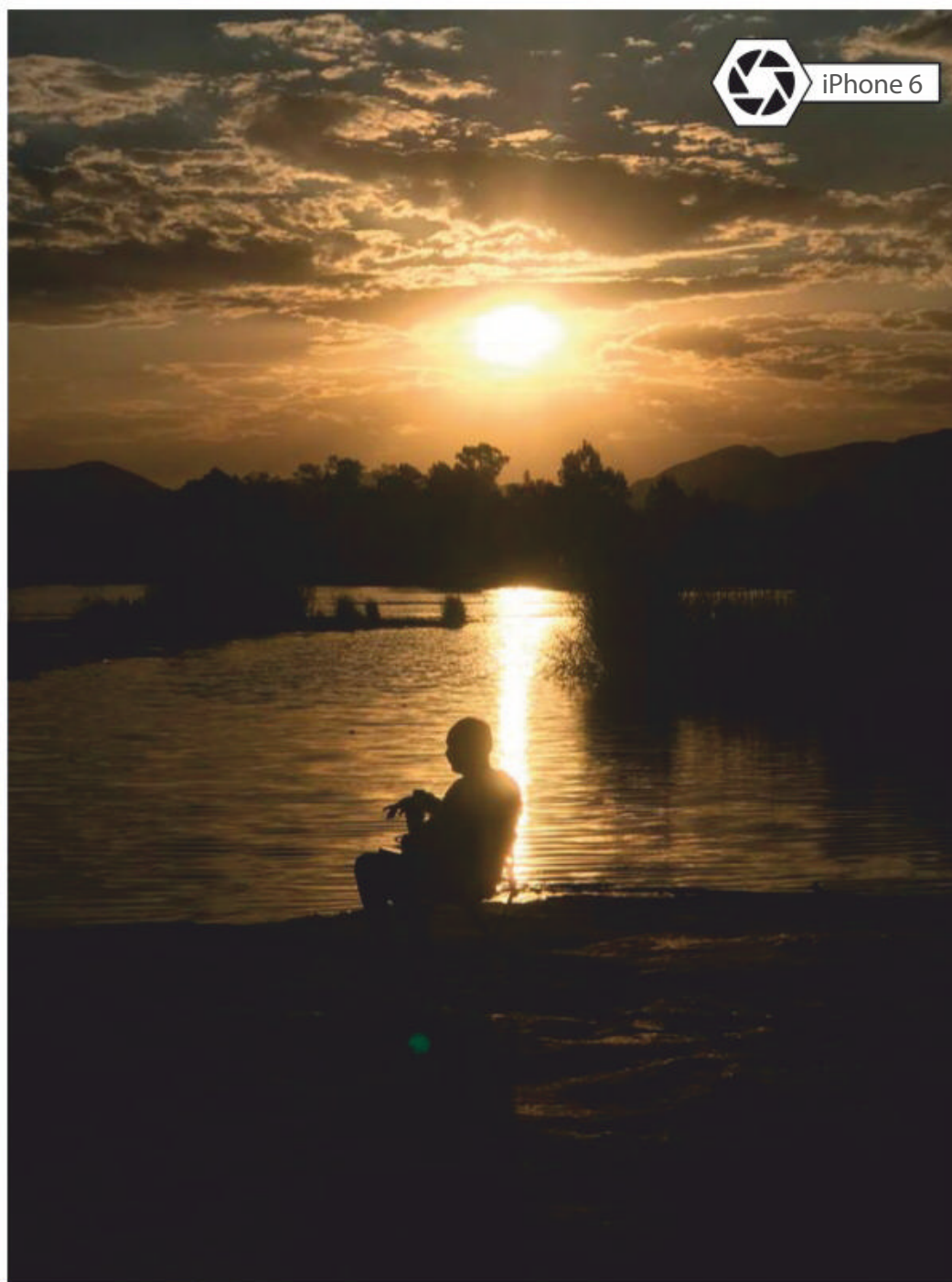
"I took the photo at the Klipdas Boskamp on the other side of Parys on the Vaal River. When my friend Paul Jonker and I arrived, you could still walk across the river from one rock to another. But water was released higher up into the river and swallowed the rocks. Here Paul basks in the last rays after a sunny day along the Vaal."

As we've pointed out before, any human figure in a photograph will attract your attention.

Without the silhouette, this would be just another sunset over water. But what gives the photo a little more kick is the reflection of the sun that points to the figure as if it's an arrow. Even though you probably see the sun at first glance, the reflection immediately takes you to the focal point.

It's a bit unsettling that the figure is looking away from the sun's beam, because you wonder what the person is looking at or what he is doing.

There is interesting detail in the clouds, but the detail in the dark sections of the foreground doesn't add much to the picture. For a stronger image, you could crop out some of the foreground.



Fish that fly?

Imagine trying to take a pic of a bird, but instead it's a fish that flies past. **Neels Meyer** of Hartenbos saw it with his own eyes. And, fortunately, his shutter finger was ready.

"My wife, Elma, and I were in the Kruger National Park and had stopped to watch crocodiles and hippos just the other side of Letaba. A spoonbill on the other side of the dam – probably about 50 m away – caught my eye, and I used my camera as binoculars to see it better. Just as I took the picture, a fish jumped out of the water!"

Just like Vanessa's photo, this isn't one

you could have planned either. But if you have a quick finger, you're able to freeze a moment you would otherwise probably never see.

Neels is slightly limited in his equipment, but that doesn't detract too much from an interesting photo. The picture is mostly sharp throughout and you can even see the plover between the spoonbill and the flying catfish.

Of course, something has scared the fish, with amazing results. The fish is slightly out of focus, but that's probably because of the movement. And because it is such a peculiar image, the slightly soft focus doesn't bother you at all.

Thanks to Neels' photo, we now know that a catfish can sometimes turn into an unusual flying object.

SEND YOUR PICTURES

and we might publish them here. We're not looking for traditional "prize winners", just regular pics that you love. Think of the type of pic you'd use as your Facebook cover photo; or something charming, such as kids warming their hands over a campfire. Whether the pic was taken with an expensive DSLR camera or a run-of-the-mill cellphone, if it's good enough for your family photo album it's good enough for us.

Vanessa Kruger wins a *Drive & Camp* camera bag worth R520 with her photo – congratulations, Vanessa!

Send your photos and contact details to

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Tranquil waters

There's a new campsite just 30 km outside Pretoria, on the Moloto Road. Ruah Park opened its gates to campers last year, and the last phase for completion started in August.

Ruah Park – the name is from a Hebrew word meaning “breath of life” – sits on a patch of land that’s just over 30 ha, and the 38 stands are set in a small gorge surrounded by ridges. A natural spring bubbles from the ground and also runs through the property.

When you arrive at the office, you will first find the Blesbok camp (the newest stands), followed by the Nyala camp, which is laid out on terraces parallel to the spring. You’ll spot some buck here – yes, including a nyala that visits the campsite.

Each stand has its own bathroom facilities that include a shower and sink. You also have your own power point, tap and braai area.

The stream’s water runs into a dam where you can try hook a black bass or a tilapia. They should of course be released.

Other than the games room for the young ones, there is more than enough cycling to do. There are also no fewer than



five short hiking trails up the slopes of the Bobbejaans Mountain if you want to see more of nature, and when you want to cool off, there are two swimming pools.

The last kilometre or so to Ruah Park is a dirt road, but it’s good enough to tow a standard road caravan.

Price R400-R600 pn per site for the first 4 campers (depending on the season), thereafter R60 pp (maximum 6 people per site).

Contact 📞 060 631 8912 🌐 ruahpark.co.za
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Dibiki comes to Riversdale

The owners of the well-known Dibiki resort in Hartenbos have breathed new life into the Takkieskloof Resort in Riversdale.

Oosie and Martie Pretorius successfully tendered to operate Takkieskloof as a holiday resort and signed a 30-year contract with the Hessequa municipality to upgrade the resort and operate it as the Dibiki Riversdale Resort.

Previously there were 16 stands with private bathrooms, but they've now given the facilities a whole new and fresh look. Each bathroom has a sink, shower, toilet and basin. They're still renovating the communal bathrooms, and the plan is to have them ready for the 12 general sites early this year.

Business looks promising for Dibiki Riversdal, as the campsite was fully booked for December and January.

The couple's children, Wietz, Hanno and Mart-Marië, are also involved with Dibiki, and Mart-Marië will in future take over the reins in Riversdale.

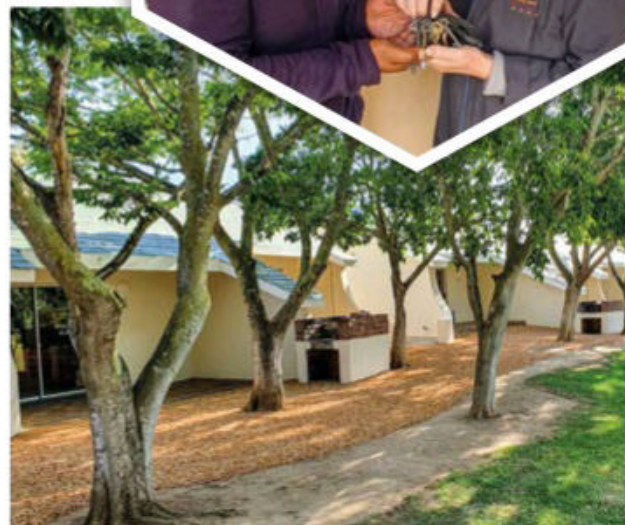
Price Stands with own bathrooms: depending on the season, R700 pn per stand for up to 4 people and thereafter R100 pp. In the quiet times, it costs R120 pppn (R70 for children 2-11). General stands: R600 pn per stand and thereafter R90 pppn. In the quiet times, it costs R100 pppn (R60 for children).

Contact 028 713 2117 or 068 213 2845

dibikiriversdal.co.za

info@dibikiriversdal.co.za

• Dibiki Hartenbos just got their fifth award from SA Tourism when it was named national winner in the four-star caravan and camping resort category at the Lilizela Awards.



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Echo4x4 cements its stake in the Cape

Gauteng caravan manufacturer Echo4x4 has purchased a building in Okavango Park in Bellville to set up a Cape Town “mini-headquarters”. They’d been renting another premises in Belville up to the end of 2019.

The new building has an undercover space of 1 600 m². Echo4x4 owner, Willie Grobler, says the new store offers a variety of services to Echo customers. The idea – just like at the Centurion headquarters in Gauteng – is to have a lifestyle centre for Capetonians.

Of course, all of Echo’s caravans will be available here, but the store will also have a fitting section where some of the new caravans will be assembled. Echo will no longer have to transport pre-built ones from Centurion to the Western Cape. Gavin Peterson is the head of merchandising in Cape Town.

New address 3 Sandpiper Crescent, Okavango Park.
GPS S33.862003 E18.698843

Contact ☎ 021 910 3737/4025 ✉ echocapetown@echo4x4.co.za



EB learner's licence test may be scrapped

The learner's licence test for the B and EB driver's licence is the same test, but oddly enough you have to take it again if you have a B licence and want to upgrade to EB.

The government is doing something about this problem. The Government Gazette of 20 April 2018 (No. 41586 27) had a notice published to amend Regulation 104 of the Road Traffic Act, the purpose of which is if you have already written an learner's test in a certain driving licence code (such as code B for light vehicles), you don't need to take the test again if you apply for a next driver's licence in the same code (in this case EB).

According to road traffic and transport consultant, Alta Swanepoel, this is a unique situation. “The comments to amend the regulation already closed in 2018. I suspect the main reason for the proposed



amendment is the strange legal situation that arises if you already have a B driver's licence and then do not pass the learner driver's licence for the EB driver's licence. In that case, you should not be able to keep your B driver's licence.”

At the time of going to print, the Department of Transport had not yet responded to our inquiry about the matter, but it appears that the amendment may come into effect by mid-2020.

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Elon's polygon bakkie

Tesla, Inc recently unveiled its electric Cybertruck. Unlike other Tesla vehicles with flattering curves, the Cybertruck is all angles. The peculiar styling has divided public opinion: on the one hand, there are the Tesla fanboys who rave about its appearance, and on the other, the haters who ridicule it.

To us it appears as if Tesla's boss, Elon Musk, tasked a three year-old to design the Cybertruck using nothing but crayons and a ruler. Inside, there are zero buttons on the dash and they are all replaced by a single touchscreen that – quite democratically – is placed halfway between the driver and the front passenger.

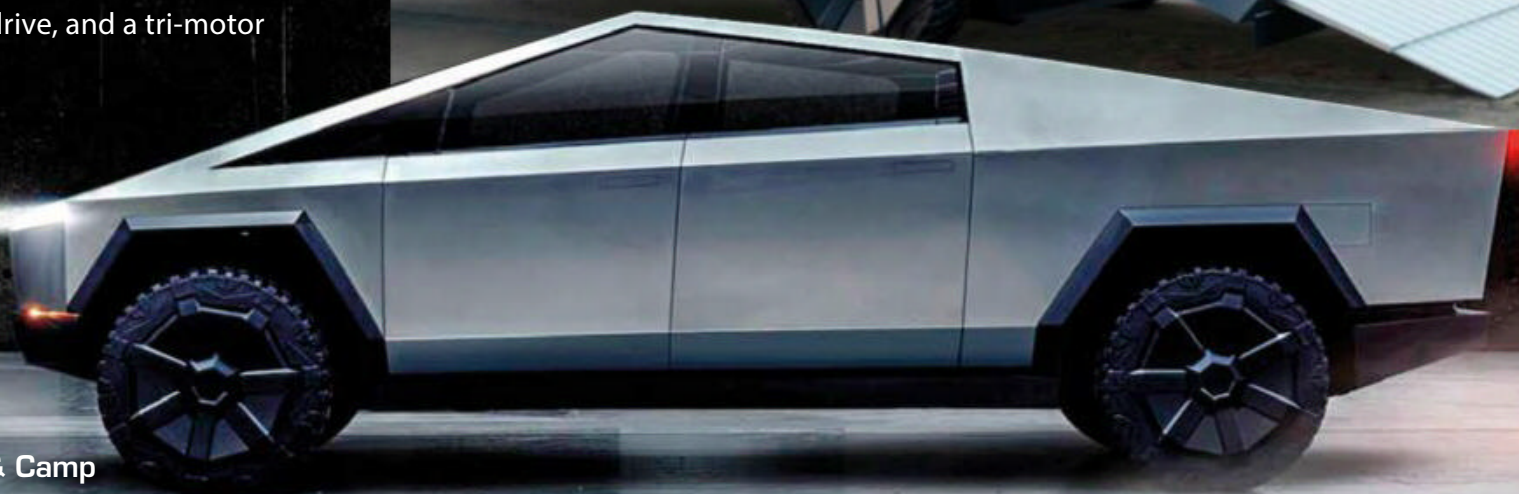
Also, it doesn't seem as if Elon understands what the purpose of a bakkie is. Those flat panels on the hull will deform over time due to metal fatigue, unless the steel is unusually thick, which adds weight. And just how exactly will you load cargo from the sides?

As illustrated on the right, the Cybertruck is optimistically shown as a camping vehicle with a drawer system and tent on the load bin. However, we know from experience that you have to be a contortionist to sleep comfortably in the back of a double-cab's load bin.

The bakkie also ignores various traffic regulations: the brake light is on the tailgate – something American law doesn't allow – and the wing mirrors are gone, replaced by cameras (something no nation on Earth allows).

The official launch was reminiscent of April Fool's Day: Elon boasted that Cybertruck's windows were unbreakable, but when one of his employees proceeded to demonstrate it, they shattered on impact.

Elon revealed his flagship Cybertruck has a range of 800 km, can reach 0 to 100 km/h in 3 seconds and can tow 6,3 tonne. Three versions will be built: a base model with one electric motor for two-wheel drive, another with two motors for four-wheel drive, and a tri-motor flagship model.



Abba takes on Renault

Jos Joubert of Abba Campers is known for his minibus-to-motorhome conversions, and now he includes the Renault Trafic Van in his lineup.

Jos builds each model according to the specific needs of his customers, which means no two models are necessarily the same. Jos transforms the Renault, for example, into a five-person motorhome

sleeping four adults and one child.

In this version, the roof at the front is like a pop-up caravan roof. As the roof lifts, it forms a surface for the “upper” bed; two adults can sleep here (the bed is 2 m long). Downstairs, the benches fold for the next two people, and the front seats swivel to form a bed for a child.

Jos can equip the Renault with everything that opens and closes – from a small kitchen inside (with a fridge and

stove) to a shelf system for groceries.

The Renault has a 1,6 l turbodiesel engine that kicks out 320 Nm, and, according to Jos, the Trafic gives you a fuel consumption of 8 l/100 km at 120 km/h. The converted Trafic is about 600 kg heavier than the standard version (1 666 kg). The GVM (3 010 kg) and GCM (5 010 kg) remain the same.

The Renault Trafic Van costs around R400 000, and at a further R450 000 you can have a fully equipped motorhome. It's a compact vehicle that fits into a standard garage.

Contact ☎ 082 893 1851

📧 safaricampers.co.za

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f: Tonga camping trailer



Rent first, then buy

As we all know, the most expensive part of camping is getting together all your camping gear. Enter new camping equipment rental company Go Camp.

Before you spend enough to buy a farm, rent it first and then decide

“Camping equipment is expensive, and people don’t want to spend a great deal of money on a trailer they might only use occasionally,” says Robert Bernatzeder, Go Camp’s marketing manager.

Go Camp started off with Alu-Cab’s Khaya bakkie camper, a unit that fits onto most bakkies and includes a kitchen and shower tent, and can accommodate four people. In the meantime, Go Camp is designing a trailer for the Khaya – for when you don’t have a bakkie.) In addition, the business has also started to rent out roof tents and fridge/freezers.

According to Robert, being able to rent equipment makes camping more accessible to everyone. The company’s motto is “No excuses”.

Customers can then buy the equipment they’d rented from Go Camp.

The business was started in Cape Town, but now also has offices in Johannesburg. Go Camp’s three shareholders are Markus Bernatzeder (purchasing and Joburg manager), Robert Bernatzeder (marketing) and Andrew Honneysett (Cape Town manager).

Contact ☎ 087 057 4775 🌐 gocamp.co.za



4x4 action in the Cape

The Western Cape's biggest 4x4 event, Battle of the Beasts, takes place outside Durbanville on 25 January. The plan is to allow 243 vehicles to participate in three arenas. Each arena caters to 81 vehicles – they'll each face nine obstacles.

The first arena challenges drivers to get their off-roader through an obstacle course without assistance. The second one involves the whole family and passengers are invited to assist the driver with various tasks. The third arena presents challenges to 27 two-wheel-drive vehicles, 27 veteran vehicles (from before 1985) and an extreme obstacle course for 27 hard-core off-roaders.

But the most popular challenge by far is the drag racing track where off-road vehicles battle one another, two at a time.

The theme for this year's rally is Mad Max and participants are encouraged to dress like the movie character and give their vehicles a post-apocalyptic look. In addition to the 4x4 activities, there is also a mountain bike race with 400 riders participating, and a tournament for radio-controlled models.

There will be food stalls, a bar, musical performances and children's activities, as well as stalls where you can view and buy 4x4 accessories.

Where? Dirt & Dust, Durbanville.

Date 25 January 2020 from 6:00 to 19:00.

Price R400 to participate and R50 to watch (R25 for children).

Contact 072 268 1551 (Denille de Kock) info@battleofthebeasts4x4.co.za



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A Mustang that isn't

Of all the major vehicle manufacturers, Ford has until recently shown the least amount of interest in electric vehicles. Yes, there have been a few electric Fords, but they were compliant cars built to appease shareholders and dodge anti-pollution taxes rather than to truly embrace the technology.

Henry Ford was notorious for disliking battery-powered vehicles. He built only one electrical prototype because his close friend Thomas Edison needed someone to buy his batteries. Edison's battery, by the way, was a dud and couldn't propel electric vehicles efficiently.

Ford's current boss, Jim Hackett, however, experienced a Damascene conversion and ordered the company to take a serious look at electric vehicles. This change of heart is probably not born from any real concern for Mother Earth, though. It more likely stems from the realisation that Ford is lagging far behind in the race to build an efficient electric vehicle.

The result is the Mustang Mach-E, a battery-powered sports utility vehicle with four doors – yes, a family car. Definitely not something a Mustang should be!

This is not the first time Ford

has messed with its muscle car. In the 1970s, it introduced the diminutive Mustang II with an asthmatic four-cylinder engine that was supposed to save on fuel. It sold so poorly that production was ceased after barely four years.

Why then does Ford call its electric SUV a Mustang? According to Ford, they hope to increase this vehicle's chances of survival by associating it with the legendary muscle car. Call us cynical, but we suspect it's a desperate attempt to market a technology that Ford only believes in half-heartedly.

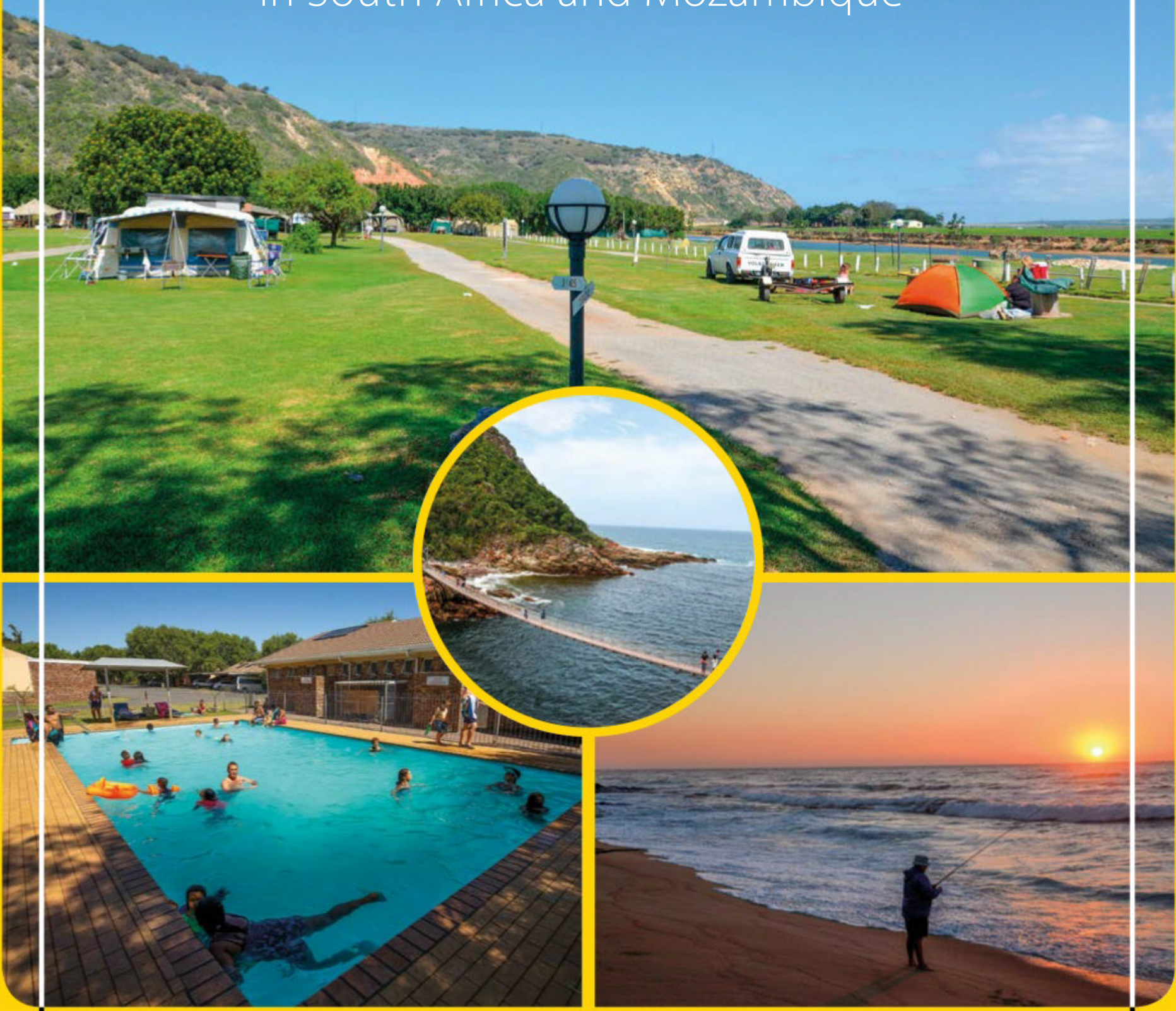
Nonetheless, we are pleased that Ford is stepping up to contribute to battery-powered technologies. Now, someone just has to sit Eskom down and convince them in no uncertain terms to get their act together. 



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Resort Guide

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Sci-fi story

The bestselling Lexus model of all time, the RX, got a facelift midway into its fourth generation. **Kyle Kock** spent time behind the wheel of this premium Japanese SUV.

Lexus drew a line in the sand way back when it launched its first vehicle, the LS sedan, 31 years ago.

The LS400 immediately took the fight to established luxury brands BMW, Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz and the USA's own premium marques like Cadillac, with quality, reliability and generally being way ahead of its time in terms of technological innovations.

Nine years later, the RX was born, the first truly luxurious SUV from the land of the rising sun. It then went on to become a hybrid pioneer with the second-generation model. And now, the fourth version of the RX has had a nip and tuck on some of its lines, received a host of tech upgrades, and there's a new model variant to boot.

What exactly is new?

There are significant revisions up front, with the massive grille featuring new L-shape motifs dominating your view and the blue-tinted Lexus logo taking pride of place in the centre, and also signifying this particular

model's eco-friendly credentials. Then there's the slimmer LED headlamps, which now feature adaptive high-beam technology across the line-up, while the range-topping 450h also boast the company's new blade scan system.

This new technology bounces LED beams off a blade-shaped mirror that spins at 12 000 rpm to not only increase the brightness of the high-beam, but also to manipulate the beam in minute detail so as not to blind oncoming vehicles. Lexus says blade scan is 10% brighter than its other LED lamps and helps drivers to see more of the road ahead by illuminating road shoulders, road signs and pedestrians.

Along the profile, the character line and chrome trim angle toward the taillights, so that the RX resembles a coupe – especially as your eyes move toward the rear. The effect is finished off with 20" wheels that fill the angular arches. A redesigned bumper and L-shaped details in the taillights complete the exterior revision.

Tech-appointed cabin

The RX, being a Lexus and all, features the same two-tiered dash that you'll see across the company's model range, but instead of the new 12,3" infotainment screen being integrated with the fascia, it is a tablet-like standalone unit that's mounted a few centimetres closer toward the inside of the cabin; and therefore within easier reach of the driver and front passenger.

You can choose to simply use the screen's touch sensitivity, a new trackpad mounted in the centre console next to the driver's leg, or voice control to navigate the infotainment menu.

To keep you better connected with the world outside, the RX comes with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto so your phone pairs seamlessly with the system. Don't worry if you don't have the app on your device yet, because the RX is equipped with an onboard wi-fi hotspot should you need to download it, or download a map or an

audiobook that will make your

RX 450h SE





CAREFUL, SHARP EDGES The soft curves of early RX models have long since bolted from the barn. You either love or hate the strong lines on the facelifted RX.

journey more pleasurable. The initial 15 GB is free and doesn't have an expiry date (cellular networks take note), and you can replenish data at any time.

There's also a wireless charger, if your device supports that technology, a dedicated smartphone slot that your mobile slides into (it'll stick out little more than halfway), and a 15-speaker Mark Levinson sound system for when you're in the mood to listen to a concert on your drive.

On the road

Despite the use of an old-school 3,5 l petrol V6 engine in conjunction with the electric motors, the RX 450h is fairly quiet about town and even when you press on after merging with a busy freeway or are enjoying a bumpy B-road – and that's not even in the electric mode. This model was extremely well-behaved as we left the halfway stop of the launch route in sleepy Oudtshoorn in the Klein Karoo.

Should your journey not require any spirited motoring, then you can quite comfortably shuffle along in Eco mode, carefully watching the 'tachometer' as it edges toward the dotted line that indicates



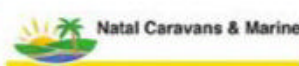
Discoverer 4 | Discoverer 6 | Discoverer iD* | Discoverer Deluxe* | Discoverer Xtreme 4x4

* standard with front swivel seats and large island beds

All models available with manual or automatic gearboxes, except the 4x4 Xtreme models



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the RX has started to wake up the internal combustion engine.

But even as you coax the engine towards loftier engine speeds, the exhaust note never really feels intrusive – it is a Lexus after all. There's a slight hint of induction noise that'll bring a smile to your face, but then you really have to be pushing it.

The CVT doesn't even make a nuisance of itself as it cleverly matches your throttle input to what it thinks you want in terms of performance. Just leave it to its own devices, in Drive, and it'll deliver outstanding fuel consumption and range – even though the RX450h's fuel tank has been cut by 7 ℓ to make room for the battery and the electric motor on the rear axle.

Lexus has also decided to make the Lexus Safety System + a standard feature

on the Hybrid, which includes a night-time pedestrian and daytime cyclist detection function, and pre-collision safety and autonomous emergency braking. There's also an all-speed active cruise control system, 10 airbags, and blind-spot monitor with rear cross traffic alert.

Conclusion

Lexus continues to push the envelope in terms of design and technology – both of which stand the company in good stead for the future of hybrid and electric vehicles. As always, the company specs its models generously, and there is precious little you would want extra. The RX450h is unfortunately not rated to tow, but at least you'll be able to sneak up on that pride of lions during your next game drive.

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	3 456 cc V6 petrol, and electric motor
Power	193 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	335 Nm @ 4 600 rpm
Transmission	CVT
Top speed	200 km/h
Fuel consumption	5,7 ℓ/100 km
Luggage space	453 ℓ
Fuel tank	65 ℓ
Warranty	7 years/105 000 km
Battery warranty	8 years/195 000 km
Service plan	7 years/105 000 km
Safety rating	★★★★★ (EuroNCAP, 2015)
Model driven	RX 450h SE
PRICE	R1 315 800



COMPETITORS Hybrid SUVs



R1 725 000 Porsche Cayenne e-hybrid

This German sportscar manufacturer has been turning heads in the hybrid and EV market. The Cayenne is pricey, but capable and well worth it.



R1 654 900 Range Rover Sport HSE P400e

Adds a touch of sportiness to the usual Range Rover brand cachet, but with the added appeal of being a plug-in hybrid as well.



R1 280 350 Volvo XC90 T8 Twin Engine Inscription

The Swedes have thrown all their eggs in one basket and vowed to cut out all internal combustion engines soon. Judging by the T8, we welcome that decision. 🌱





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DESTINATION

Off-road to the mouth of the Kunene

A group from the north of South Africa hitched their Conqueror off-road trailers and headed for one of Namibia's most inaccessible wildernesses: the Skeleton Coast.

Words and photos **Evan Naudé**



Even in this day and age, the Skeleton Coast is one of the most inhospitable places on earth. It's a strip of coastline where man pits himself against nature and survives only with careful planning. Many ships, people, animals and even business plans have been given a last resting place here.

But with smart technology and better vehicles, it is becoming far easier to visit this bucket-list destination. People have hiked to the Kunene mouth on the border between Namibia and Angola, others have cycled there, and some guys from Centurion came here in a Hilux during the school holidays to show the kids what it looks like. But one thing probably nobody has yet attempted is to tow off-road trailers here.

This is exactly what a team towing Conqueror off-roader trailers wanted to do.

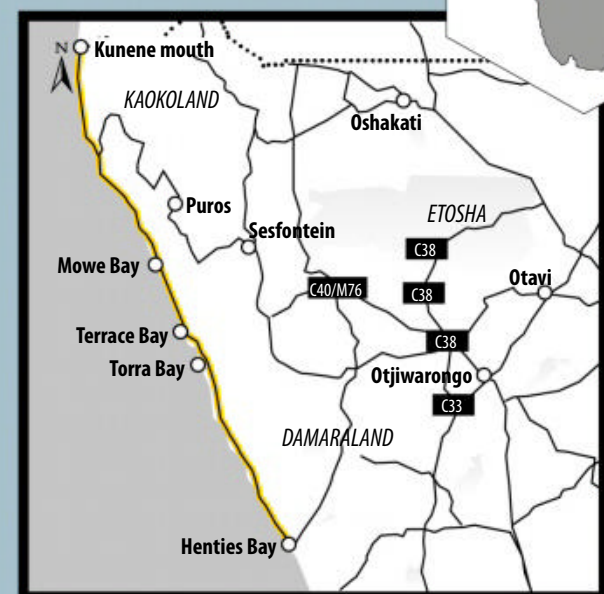
THE TOUR GROUP MEETS in Swakopmund late afternoon. Everyone is tired after the long road from South Africa, but the real challenge still lies ahead. In theory, the plan is simple: drive up to the mouth of

the mighty Kunene River towing an off-road trailer. We know Mama Africa can be capricious, especially around here, but we cross fingers that she will remain in a good mood for the next week.

The next morning, everyone is ready to go just after sunrise. We meet our tour guide, Danie van Ellewee, better known as Jakkals around here, at a garage just outside town. With him is Hein Truter, the concessionaire (Skeleton Coast Adventure Tours/OIG) for the area who'll be our convoy's back driver.

After a quick welcome, we take the road to the north with full fuel tanks and the last coffees from a machine for the foreseeable future.

It is tarred road all the way to Henties Bay and the convoy rolls along smoothly. Along the way, we stop at the wreck of the Zeila for a photo op, and past Henties we find wide orange lichen fields on both sides of the road. We pass Cape Cross and all the "Miles" and other famous fishing spots. Unfortunately, there's no time for fishing today, though some of the men looked longingly at the shore. "Guys, check out



that fishing boat," says Vivian Torlage just past Mile 108. "My car wants to take a left and head to the beach!"

A decent salt road takes us to the gates of the Skeleton Coast National Park. Portuguese seafarers back in the day dubbed this area "the Gates of Hell", an expression that was certainly the inspiration for the park's entrance, as the gates are decorated with skulls. We pay the park fees and continue on without fear.



Inside the park it's all dirt road, but other than some corrugated bits, the road is in good shape. Nevertheless, the convoy puts up protective nets between the tow vehicles and the trailers to stop gravel and pebbles from causing damage.

Just after the Koigab River, the first huge sand dunes appear to the right of the road. Other parts of the park, such as the area around Torra Bay, remind you of a lunar landscape, while the lush riverbeds like those of the Uniab stand out like an oasis in the arid desert.

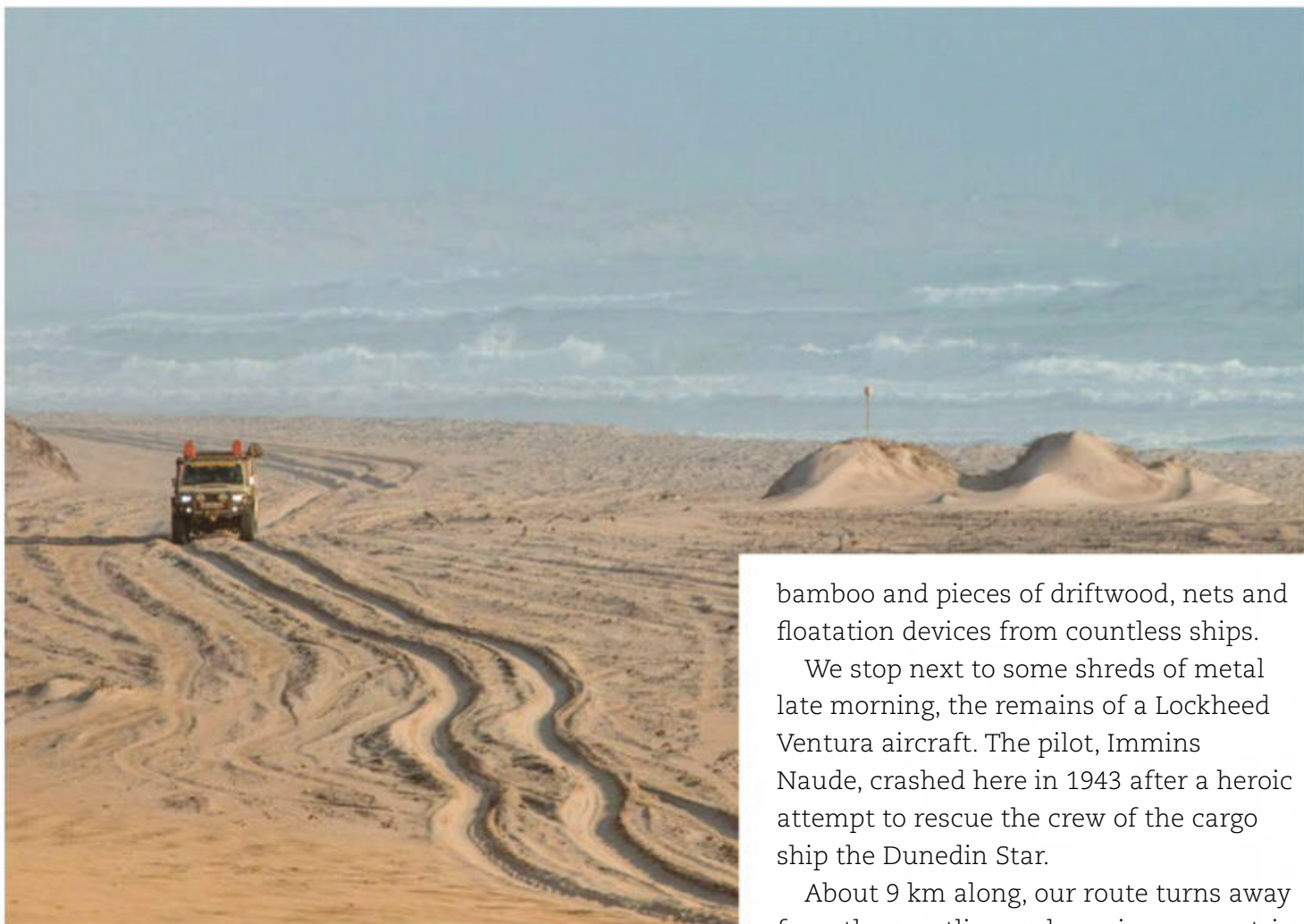
We have a late lunch at Terrace Bay and fill up our fuel tanks and jerry cans for the last time. Then the convoy aims for Mowe Bay where the gravel road officially stops and you can only drive farther north with a concession permit. We reduce tyre pressure for the sandy two-track ahead and drive another 15 km before pitching camp. And, just like that, in a single day's

drive, we swap out modern civilisation for a bald, wind-swept beach full of jackal and brown hyena tracks. Fortunately, we're not completely left to the elements, because each vehicle tows a properly equipped off-road trailer with more amenities than your average student's bedsit.

THE NEXT MORNING, the camp is shrouded in a dense fog bank, and all around our trailers are fresh jackal tracks. "Today we're going to look for firm sand, but still put bridles on the trailers so we're ready for anything," says our very own Jakkals after breakfast. And so that's exactly what we do.

The fog is still thick when we leave just after 09:00. The convoy stays on the beach and the sand is fairly solid. Here you can see where the Skeleton Coast got its name: the windswept beach is littered with whale bones, seal carcasses, withered





COASTING NORTH When you pass through the gates of the Skeleton Coast Park (top left) it's just a matter of time before the road disappears and you have to rely on the coast to lead you north. You'll occasionally cross a river (far left) and camp wild wherever you find a good spot (above, middle).



bamboo and pieces of driftwood, nets and floatation devices from countless ships.

We stop next to some shreds of metal late morning, the remains of a Lockheed Ventura aircraft. The pilot, Immins Naude, crashed here in 1943 after a heroic attempt to rescue the crew of the cargo ship the Dunedin Star.

About 9 km along, our route turns away from the coastline and we aim over a strip of dunes to the dry course of the Hoarisib River. Over the first stretch of dune field in the tour, the trailers behave well and nobody gets stuck. We stop for lunch on a high dune overlooking the river.

Jakkals leads the convoy down the river, and it's not long before we see gemsbok, springbok and a herd of cattle. Then, to our great surprise, we even see an elephant in the bushes.

The further we progress, the more lush the vegetation in the river becomes. Wild tamarisk, black iron wood, camel thorn and huge white thorn trees are plentiful. Here and there an elongated makalani palm towers over us. We drive past sandstone formations, the so-called Clay Castles, and later past cliffs that loom over both sides of the valley. In places, the dark rocks are striped with quartz ridges – it appears as though someone punched a hole in the bottom of a can of white paint and swung it back and forth across the valley to create the patterns.

The route takes us past one of the Skeleton Coast Safaris wilderness camps, a luxurious place that guests can only reach by plane. We decide not to pop in and show them the better way to see the Skeleton Coast. They might choke on their G&Ts when we show up covered in dust. Just past the camp, we leave the Skeleton Coast Park for a while, emerge from the river course and head north across

DESTINATION

a wide gravel plain. The two-track here is stony and roughly corrugated, putting the vehicles' suspension to the test. "Aim for about 40 km/h, then it's easier to kind of hover over the corrugation," is Jakkals' advice from the front. However, Andre Halliday of Nelspruit drives a Land Cruiser V8 and doesn't get what the fuss is about. "Uhm, is there corrugation here?" he teases over the radio.

By late afternoon, we reach the Khumib River and head west again. Before long, we get to a flat patch of sand where we set up camp. As darkness falls around us, the campfire is a tiny speck of light in the arid expanse. And when you look up at the sky overlaid with millions of glittering stars, one wonders if ET has such beautiful places on his home planet.

SOMETIME DURING THE NIGHT the fog rolls in again and it sticks around for breakfast. The plan of action today is to follow the Khumib to the ocean, and as we leave, a drizzle of rain falls on the windshields.

While we drive, Jakkals explains over the radio where all the stone and clay banks in the riverbed come from. Later we stop so that he can illustrate with a sketch in the sand how Namibia's rivers actually led to the formation of the country's large dune areas.

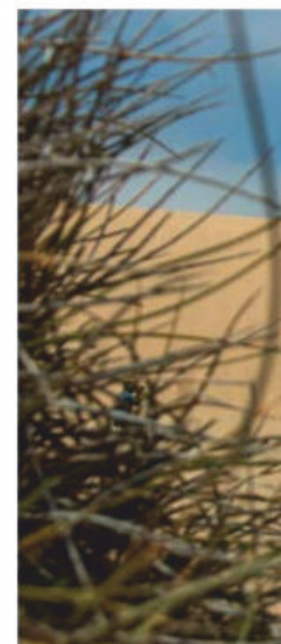
Shortly thereafter, we reach a spot in the river where Egyptian geese swim in puddles of water, gemsbok graze under shady trees, and springbok nibble on grass. There are even puddles of water in the track. It's impressive to see how just a little water seeping from below can turn a seemingly dead, arid landscape into a lush garden.

Near the shoreline, the trail emerges from the river again and turns north

across a gravel plain. We continue north, parallel to the coast, and once again the vehicles' shocks, and our patience and kidney endurance are tested to their limits. We stop at a collection of stone circles in the sand, the remains of foundations for dwellings constructed by the San who use to come here to hunt gemsbok and springbok. Finally, we reach Red View, a viewpoint at the top of the escarpment

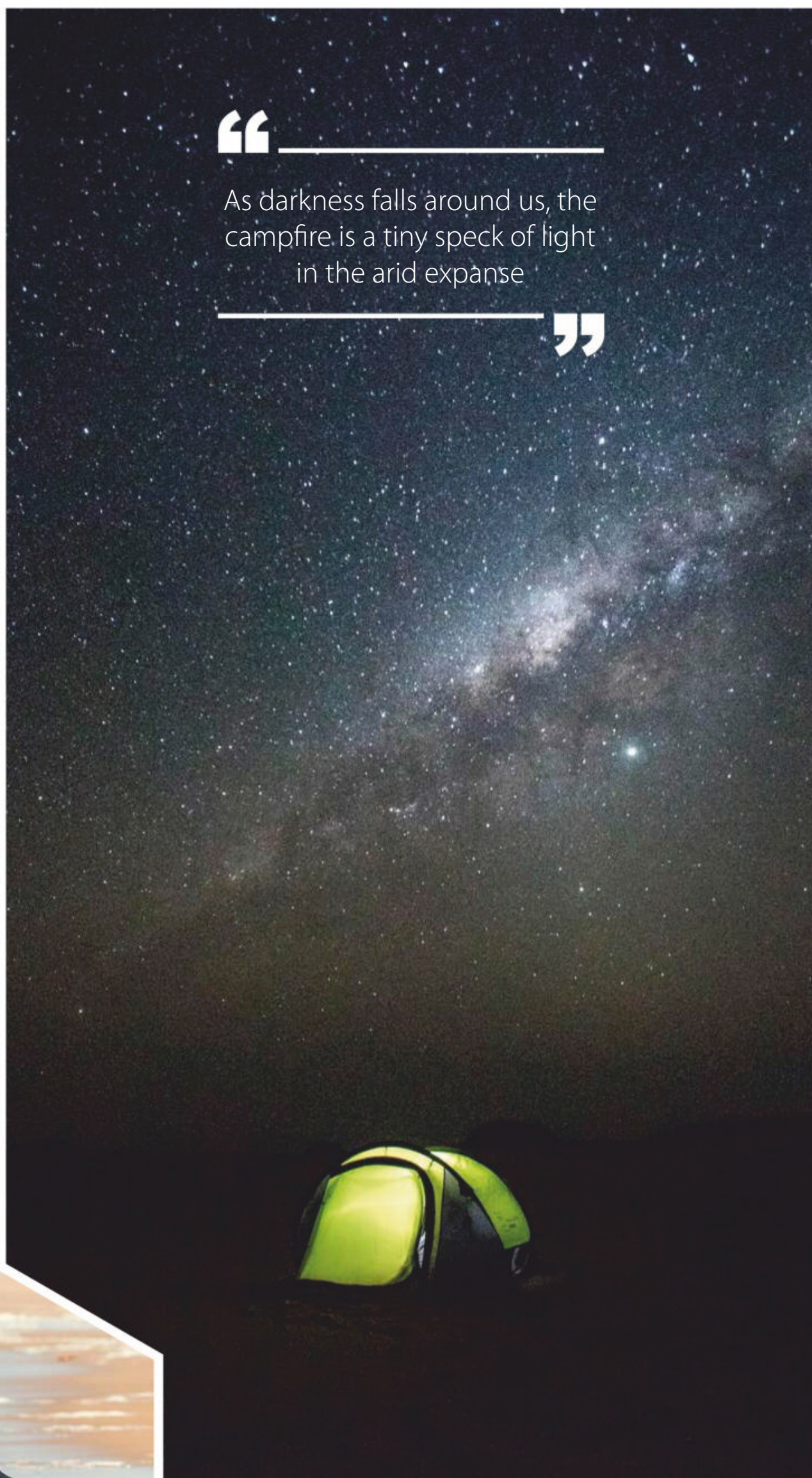
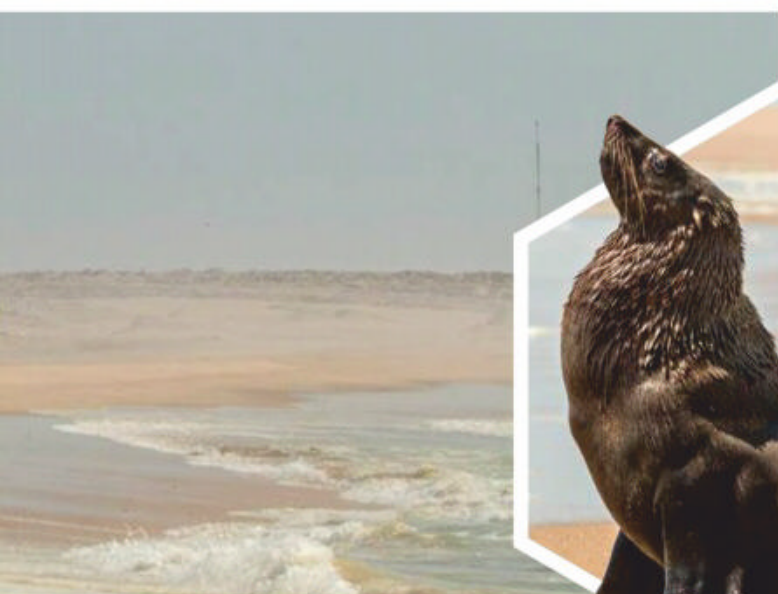
from where you can see the ocean in the distance across a large red plain.

From here, the route runs back to the sea. Long before we see them, we smell the hundreds of seals lying in the sun. And where there are seals, there are jackals, too. These watch us with obvious amazement, surprised that we drive past all the glittering protein snacks up the beach to where there is nothing to eat.



On the other side of Angra Fria, we turn onto the beach. There are few places in Africa where you can still freely drive on the beach, but our permits allow us to do so here.

Besides, in this inhospitable landscape with its inland dune fields, it's often necessary to drive along the beach. And so we get to where the Dunedin Star wrecked itself on 9 November 1942.



“

As darkness falls around us, the campfire is a tiny speck of light in the arid expanse

”

HAND TO MOUTH Although it is an achievement to reach the Kunene mouth (middle left), the true reward is to camp in exotic places and to see the weird desert sights along the way.



PLANET DESERT The group had to conquer tough terrain with their trailers in tow (below) but there were times when they could unhitch and go play in the dunes (above). There's a surprising number of wildlife in this otherwise barren landscape.





remains of a whale, and before long, huge salt pans force us back inland. The convoy stops regularly as Jakkals's bakkie finds a way through the mud traps.

Just past Bosluis Bay, a line of flamingoes flies over the waves to our left before we see the buildings of a diamond mine on our right. Suddenly there is a surprising message on the radio: "Welcome to the mouth of the Kunene," says Jakkals "And well done – this is the first time a group of off-road trailers has reached this spot."

It's as if we're holding the World Cup trophy. The drivers high five one another, we all shake hands and take triumphant team photos. We soak our feet in the river and some guys splash some water on their trailers – reminiscent of sportsmen spraying bubbly from the podium.

Our campsite for the next two nights is at the base of a dune, about 13 km south of the estuary. The next day is a rest day and the group can have a lie in, check their vehicles and trailers and cool off on the beach. In the afternoon, we leave the trailers in the camp and go for a drive in the dunes where the group's newcomers find out what exactly is meant by a slipface and sand roller coasters.

WE LEAVE THE COAST again the next morning, but turn south this time. The route takes us back to just beyond Angra Fria and then turns inland past some more wide mud flats. Again, we have to trace our route carefully so that no one gets stuck, and when the landscape becomes rocky again, the tracks in front of the convoy disappear. Clearly, nobody else has been here for a long while.

Hein explains that the parks board gave our group special permission to drive here. "It's not an ordinary tourist route. You are



The rescue effort took more than two months, and in the process a tug sank, the Ventura bomber crashed and two crew members drowned. On the beach there's a plaque to honour of Mathias Koraseb and Angus McIntyre.

We camp about 150 m from the memorial. For a while after the wreck, the beach is littered with wooden boards, rusted bits of metal, the skulls of seals and faded glass bottles. As we settle around

the campfire in our comfortable camping chairs with potjies simmering, their lovely smells making our tummies grumble, we realise what a special privilege it is to be here. Less than 80 years ago, those shipwrecked souls fought for survival in this very place. And here we are, enjoying ice cubes in our drinks.

WE LEAVE AGAIN in the mist the next day on our way north. We drive past the

DESTINATION

the first group to drive through here in ages,” he says over the radio.

The course of the Munutum River leads the convoy eastward. Initially, it is a narrow two-track between rocky banks with some delicate bends for the off-road trailers, but over time the river course becomes ever wider and littered with clumps of nara bush, herds of gemsbok and springbok, and even an ostrich or two. We camp on a flat dune in a mountain landscape that extends all the way around us to the horizon.

Shortly after we set off the next morning, we drive past a sign that says, “Skeleton Coast National Park, no entry”. And just like that, we swap the Skeleton Coast for the Kaokoveld. It’s mountainous here, and the high cliffs and deep valleys outside the bakkie windows are in stark contrast to the flat coastline. “Wow, you don’t know where to look; everything is so beautiful!” comments André on the radio.

We head south and turn east again onto the Nadas River course. A two-track leads us through the Orupembe and Sanitatas conservancies before heading south to the Puros Conservancy.

We drive about 8 km in the Khumib River to join the D3707, a properly corrugated road, which eventually leads us south again to Puros, our destination for the evening.

THE LAST DAY of the tour is one for the books. Our destination is Warmquelle, but instead of aiming straight ahead on the



‘Ó SOLE MIO You’ll lose your heart to the desert, but the route also passes through a section of the Kaokoland where you’ll encounter elephants, giraffe and rivers in flood (bottom). You’ll remember those glorious night skies (below) for the rest of your life.



THANK YOU!

This tour was made possible by Conqueror and their partners Snomaster and Opposite Lock.

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bumpy D3707, we first drive southwest along the Hoarisib River.

The Hoarisib is one of the most beautiful rivers in the whole of Kaokoland. It's lush and the convoy drives through shallow water crossings all morning. Down in the valley it's grassy green and massive cliffs rise up on either side of the convoy. Our necks turn more often than tourists on a bus on their way to Table Mountain.

The route turns south again, past the Ganas Plains and through the Sesfontein Conservancy to the Hoanib River. Here we swing east in the river course. Within minutes, we stop next to a herd of elephants with four babies, and soon after that we see a massive bull standing

under a shady tree. We count about 20 elephants before we leave the river course, drive across the Giribes Plain and join the D3707.

We camp for the last time at Ongongo Waterfall Campsite just outside Warmquelle. It's heavenly to wash off the desert dust from the last week in the shower. The cellphone signal is back and messages from home are streaming in. Later, around the camp fire, everyone plans their route home the next day.

And when we finally retire to the off-road trailers for the last time, it is with the proud knowledge that our tough little houses on wheels made it to the Kunene mouth and back again.



I also want to go!



Can I go here on my own? Not this exact route. North of Terraces Bay is a concession area that you may only visit with a tour operator who has a valid permit.

Can I tow my road caravan? No, only off-road trailers are allowed.

Can I go along without an off-road trailer? Yes, but keep in mind this tour is designed specifically for off-road trailers. The tour operator offers a similar tour for 4x4s only.

How long is the tour? 8 nights, 9 days.

Can I bring my family? Yes, definitely.

What is included? Park, guide and concession fees, two-way radios, breakfasts and dinners, a common camp kitchen, shower and toilet.

What should I bring? Your own camping equipment, chairs, lunches and snacks, and plenty of drinking and shower water for everyone in your vehicle. And make sure you bring enough fuel for at least 1 000 km in off-road conditions.

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Enter the kill zone



Just like Van Zyl's Pass in Namibia, the Dalton Highway in Alaska and the Yungas "Road of Death" in Bolivia, the Doodsakker in Angola is on every adventurer's bucket list. This is how you drive it.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

Let's get one thing straight: the Doodsakker in Angola is a dangerous destination. Even experienced adventurers, like Johan Badenhorst's Voetspoer team, got into trouble when they got caught out by a high tide. So we strongly advise against taking on the Doodsakker by yourself, but we do encourage you to one day go up to Angola with friends and tackle this bull by the horns. Here's what we experienced on the Doodsakker.

"DOODSAKKER" is an Afrikaans military term for a type of ambush in which an enemy is allowed to advance right up to concealed troops before being fired on from all sides – also known as a kill zone.

The first thing you need to ask yourself is whether you voluntarily want to enter this ambush, and then whether you want to drive it from top to bottom or the other way around. If you look at a roadmap, the route seems obvious: turn left toward the coast at the Ruacana border post in

northern Namibia, follow a couple of turns until you reach the Kunene River mouth, and from here you simply shoot up to the Doodsakker.

This is, however, far easier said than done, as this route involves driving 420 km along a horrible rocky road – and there are no fuel stations or workshops along the way. In addition, you have to cross many rivers – which can be risky in the rare event of rain. Also, Angola is literally covered in landmines. There are more than



half a million mines, in 1 200 minefields over an area of 100 million square meters that have yet to be disarmed – and many of these mines lie somewhere next to the road from Ruacana and Foz du Conene, waiting for someone to leave their vehicle for a quick wee in the bush. In 2014 nearly 88 000 Angolan civilians were registered as having been maimed by land mines. So, this is no joke.

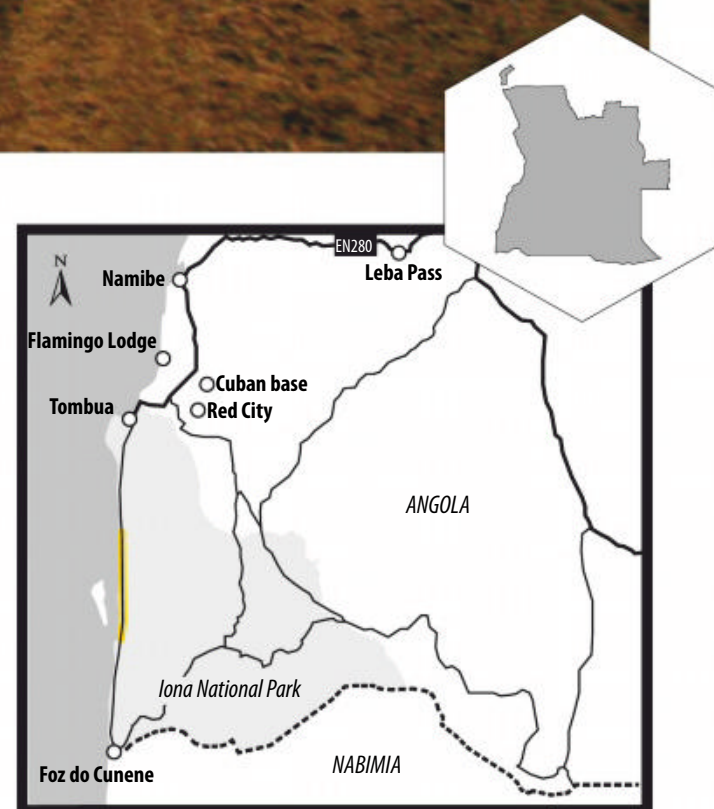
An easier and safer way to get to the Doodsakker is to take the tarred road from the Oshikango/Santa Clara border post to the city of Lubango.

Lubango's business centre is a hive of activity best avoided unless you'd like to visit the Monumento ao Cristo Rei (Christ the king) statue on a hill above the city or drive past the modern airport where a Cuban MiG-21 attack aircraft is displayed

on a pole. The local economy seems to be faring well here. In streets reminiscent of Hillbrow after New Year's Eve, you'll spot a Porsche Cayenne here and a Range Rover Sport over there. Someone is clearly making money, and judging by the new office blocks and shops popping up, the money does appear to filter down to the regular person on the street.

The road from Lubango to Namibe is in good shape with only a few shallow potholes that are continually filled with soil – by women and children. About 30 km outside of Lubango, you descend the famous Serra da Leba Pass with its dramatic rock formations and a series of hairpin bends down to the coastal plateau.

Namibe is recovering well after decades of strife. There is a large shopping mall with franchises like Shoprite, Debonairs





“

Stay at the Flamingo Lodge for a night or two and ask the manager about activities near the lodge

”

and a Hungry Lion, and the Welwitschia Mirabilis Airport just outside of town is brand new and of international quality. It appears that War's grim companions – Pestilence, Famine and Death – are leaving to make way for a brighter future.

From Namibe you drive 47 km south on an excellent regional road that was recently tarred by a Chinese company. Turn off at a road sign directing you to the Flamingo Lodge. Then drive 25 km in the dry course of the Rio dos Flamingo (the Flamingo River) to the lodge on the coast. In the river bed you will see hundreds of welwitschias. This plant is usually associated with Namibia, but here in southern Angola it grows in even greater numbers.

Stay at the Flamingo Lodge for a night or two and ask the manager about activities near the lodge. The resort's owner, Rico Sakko, is a legend in this area, but these days you're more likely to find him somewhere along Angola's 1 600 km long coastline than at the lodge itself. Rico says his days of playing host are over and he's returning to the original reason he came to Angola in 1990: to fish.

Here you can find the latest info on the Doodsakker or pay your host at the lodge

to guide you through the Doodsakker if you're not part of a larger group – the cost will depend on various factors.

When should you tackle the Doodsakker? The short answer is at low tide. The moon orbits the earth with clockwork precision and astronomers know enough about its orbit so as to predict the tides years in advance. There are many websites you can consult when planning your visit to the Doodsakker. Go to tide-forecast.com or tides4fishing.com and print a week or month-long tide chart at home to take with you. Your safest bet is to plan your visit to the Doodsakker around spring tide, when the low tide is a little lower than average.

THE TRAIL STARTS in the town of Tombua, 46 km south of the Flamingo lodge's road sign. Fill up at the Girassol petrol station on the edge of town and make sure you're carrying enough fuel to last at least 250 km in four-wheel drive, with low-range and diff locks engaged. Also lower your tyre pressure here for sand driving.

The turn-off to the Doodsakker isn't clearly marked, but it is a few metres after the garage and before you reach the town's



ROOM WITH A VIEW The lodge has accommodation for 30 guests but they also offer camping options. The cost depends on various factors – a recurring theme in Angola. Welwitschias are a common sight in the south and this behemoth (top right) is over 2 000 years old. The beach near Tombua (below) is a good place to practise your sand driving skills before hitting the real McCoy.





cemetery at S15.79831
E11.87806.

Pass behind the
cemetery, past a
windswept rubbish
dump, and follow
a sandy twin-track for

14 km south to the main gate

of the Parque do Iona National (Iona National Park). Officials will jot down your vehicle's registration number and make a note of how many passengers are in each vehicle. You then get an entry permit and pay the equivalent of R40 in local kwanza per vehicle. This tariff can vary greatly, though, and unless you're conversant in Angolan Portuguese, you won't know what you're paying for – always carry a wad of kwanzas, just in case.

From the main gate you can follow a twin track 8 km southwest directly to the sea and the wreck of the Vanessa Seafood that ran aground on its maiden voyage, and then follow the coast south.

We, however, suggest you immediately turn south at the gate and drive across a huge pan. On this pan are large cormorant colonies where thousands of birds brood. Resist the temptation to chase up the swarms of black birds with your vehicle, as it will give cunning gulls the opportunity to snatch the cormorant eggs from the unattended nests.

The sand dunes lie low along the beach and you're still close to Tombua. This is a good time to see how your vehicle performs on the loose sand of the beach. If you struggle, you need to lower your



tyre pressure even more. Discover which gear works best for this kind of terrain and build up enough confidence that you will be able to handle the Doodsakker. Your convoy will have about 40 km to practise on the beach before you hit the real deal. By this time, everyone in your group must know what they're doing, because you're about to enter the kill zone!

THE DOODSAKKER STARTS for real when the dunes along the sea grow too tall to drive up them and the width of the beach shrinks to only a couple of metres. There is no skull-and-crossbones sign with a stern warning to mark the beginning; rather it

gradually dawns on you that there's no turning back. Your vehicle feels like it's about to get stuck, the sea often reaches your wheels, and although the Doodsakker is only 60 km long, you instinctively feel a need to get it done quickly.

Our best advice is that you reach the start of the Doodsakker (more or less at S16.28427 E11.81087) about an hour before absolute low tide and proceed at a calm pace – just fast enough that you don't get stuck, but not so fast that you miss the whole experience.

Your vehicle's left-hand wheels, on the side of the dry dunes, constantly feel as though they're about to get stuck, while

those on the right on the firmer wet sand receive the best traction. The steering wheel therefore drags toward the softer, drier sand while you actually want to drive on the firm, wet sand.

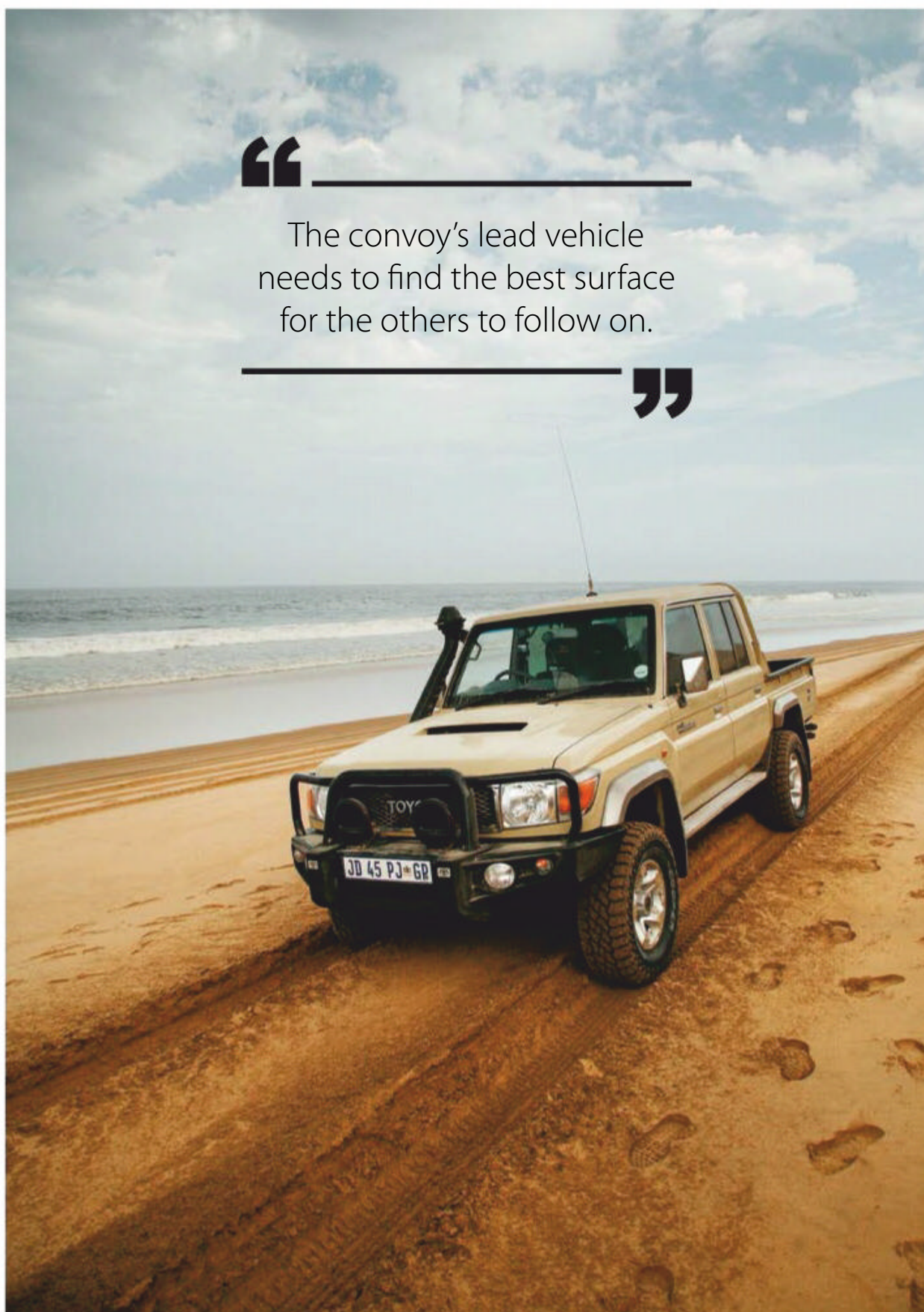
But if you drive too close to the water, you'll immediately feel it when a wave hits you – the water breaks your momentum and it's clear the ocean could swallow you whole. Yes, even at low tide you'll have to drive through the corrosive seawater – it's inevitable. There is a fine line between getting stuck and being swept away, and your convoy's lead vehicle needs to find the best surface for others to follow on. The rest of the convoy must then stay in its tracks. And remember: don't stop unnecessarily since you might not be able to get going again.

It may be hard to believe, but there is bedrock below this beach, and if the sea was turbulent the night before, boulders

“

The convoy's lead vehicle needs to find the best surface for the others to follow on.

”



BLOODY TOURISTS We weren't the only ones to visit the Doodsakker. Our convoy played leapfrog with a group of Italians (above) until we parted ways to cross the ocean (far right) to Ilha dos Tigres (below).





will unexpectedly block your way. Then you'll have to drive around them, through the sea. It's here where people have surrendered their vehicles to the ocean in the past, and where someone will undoubtedly lose a vehicle in the future.

Rico from Flamingo Lodge says that the waves only have to touch your vehicle three times: the first wave drags you down, the second wave splashes against your windshield and you know you're in trouble, and the third wave takes you out to sea... There are stories of people who didn't even have enough time to grab their wallets and passports before their vehicle was swept away.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to first talk to the guys at Flamingo Lodge and find out if the bedrock is exposed before you tackle the Doodsakker.

At the halfway point, after 33 km and about an hour into the journey, the beach becomes wide and you can safely pull over. You now have a choice: push on and finish it, or leave your vehicle here where it is safe and enjoy rare experiences in the middle of the Doodsakker.

If you want to push on, expect another 27 km of the same challenging sand before the desert opens up and you are no longer at the mercy of the tides. You're not out of the woods yet, because the sand is still loose, but if you made it to here, the battle is more than halfway won.

Now you can head farther south to Foz do Cunene (55 km from here) where police officers check the paperwork you received this morning at the Iona National Park's main gate. Afterward, you can travel back inland and northward to Namibe or head

4X4 DESTINATION

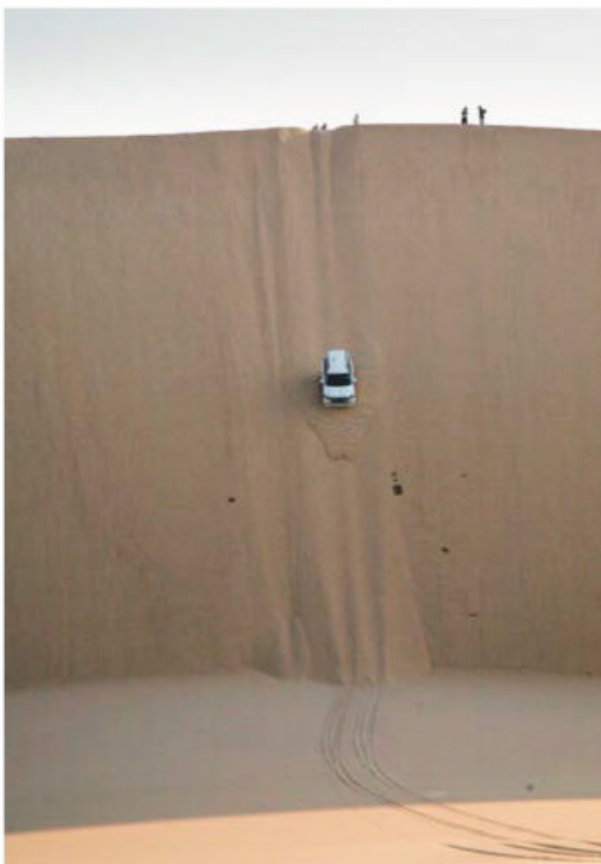
east to the Ruacana border post on that bad road we mentioned earlier.

Or you can do what we did: get on a boat and sail 12 km across the horizon to Ilha dos Tigres (Tiger Island). We headed there in the Flamingo lodge's rubber duck, but you can, of course, bring your own. A 20 HP electric motor plus the extra battery from your dual battery system, will get you across the calm sea in half an hour or use a sea kayak if you're a strong rower. But first, check with the weather bureau to make there's no storm forecast.

On Ilha dos Tigres is the Portuguese colonial ghost town of São Martinho dos Tigres, which was abandoned in 1975 when Angola attained independence. No one lives here, but the old Portuguese dwellings are strikingly photogenic and definitely worth a visit.

After your visit to the island you can return to the Doodsakker on the incoming tide. There won't be enough time to continue along the coast and you will have to pitch your tent in a campsite (S16.57494 E11.82197) that was laid out by Flamingo Lodge on a sheltered pan among the dunes.

Go play in the dunes, but take care because some of them are up to 200 m tall! Or break out the tackle and fish into the night at nearby Fred's Bay. The following morning – an hour before absolute low tide – return to Tombua and report at the main gate that you survived



the Doodsakker, or head south to Foz do Cunene where your paperwork will be checked.

If this article makes it all sound easy, don't believe it! You have to be brave to tackle this route, you must be an experienced driver and it requires higher-grade logistics.

If none of these attributes apply to you, then like us, rather rely on a guide to get you through the Doodsakker.

Either way, it is guaranteed to be an unforgettable experience!

STUFF TO DO



PHOTO: CORNEL VAN HEERDEN

A PASS SURPASSING ALL

The Serra da Leba Pass was completed in the early 1970s and was named after the pass's engineer, Mária Alice Leba. She unfortunately died before its completion. There are seven hairpin bends near the apex and the pass is known for its gentle gradient – to keep trucks from losing control and falling off the edge.

GPS S15.07185 E13.23612



CRIMSON TOWERS

If you drive inland from Shambasana via Espenheira to Foz do Cunene, you will pass the so-called Red City next to the Rio Carvalhoa (the Carvalho River). The impressive geography features sandstone cliffs infused with iron oxide that tower above you and make you feel insignificant.

GPS S15.74164 E12.13613



A SECRET BASE

Colonel Jan Breytenbach of the former South African Army may well be hopping mad that he missed this underground Cuban base when he hunted Swapo during the late seventies with Bravo Group. There are many ammunition caches throughout Angola, but this one has been declared safe to visit.

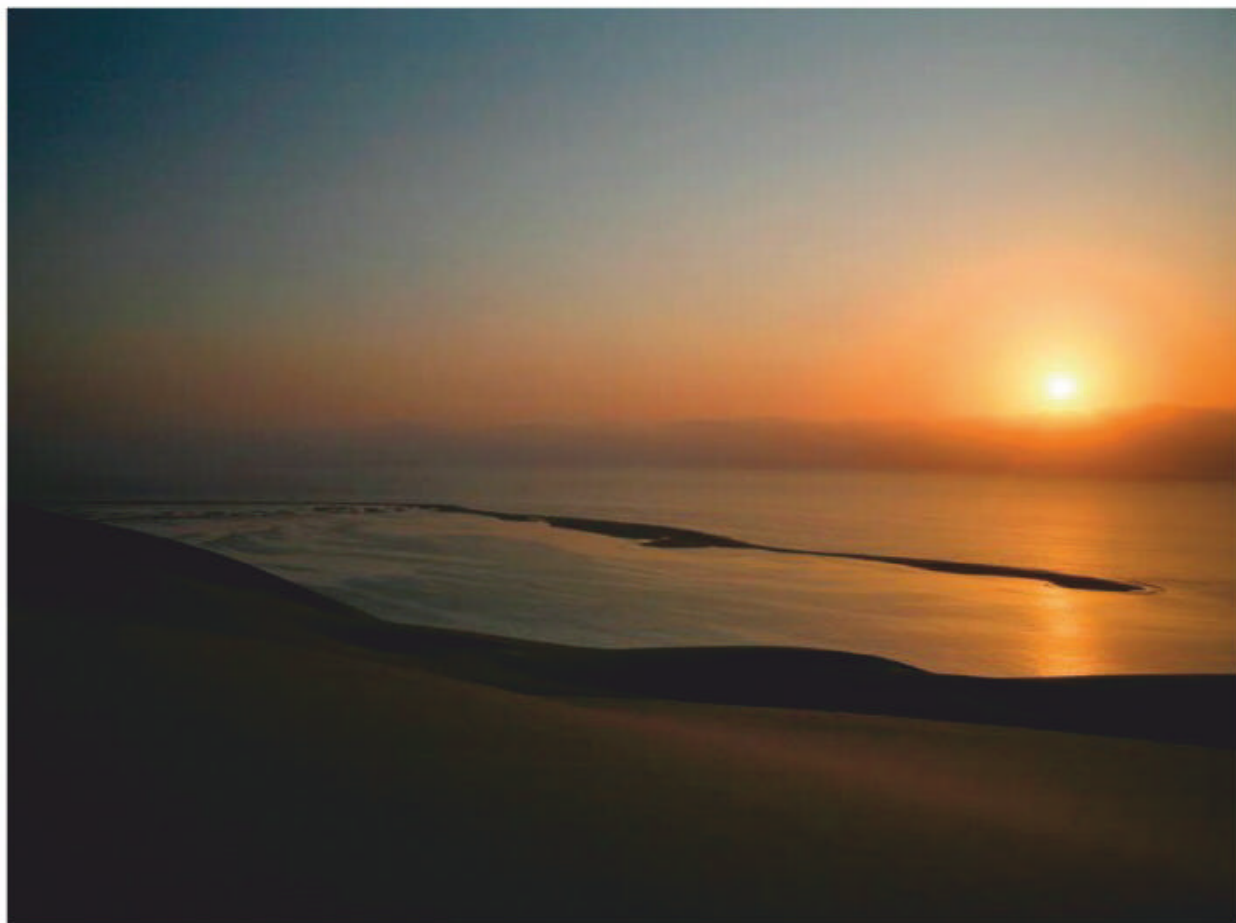
GPS S15.61692 E12.18077



THE CANYON

This canyon lies about 5 km east of the Flamingo Lodge. Although reminiscent of Petra in Jordan and other ancient cities in hidden valleys, the canyon (it doesn't have a name) is young in geographic terms. The sand is still crisp and the cliffs were carved by wind rather than by water.

GPS S15.58130 E12.05441



KEEP CALM & CARRY ON After our visit to Ilha dos Tigres (left) we returned to the Doodsakker (top middle) and played in the dunes until sunset. At the next low tide just before midnight, we tackled the Doodsakker once more to head to the Flamingo Lodge – a memorable feat we have no wish to ever repeat and we strongly advise against doing the night drive.

How we did it

Toyota South Africa delivered seven Land Cruisers to the Flamingo Lodge. The vehicles came from Gauteng, through the Oshikango border post in Namibia to Lubango in Angola and were taken from there to Namibe. Afterward, they were returned to Gauteng, a journey of more than 5 000 km.

Eight journalists, including Cyril, flew from South Africa via Namibia into Angola. Toyota South Africa paid for the flights and accommodation. The purpose of the trip was to launch the new Toyota Land Cruiser 79 Namib (see *go! Drive & Camp* #29), although Cyril drove the Doodsakker in a Cruiser 200.

Cyril explored Ilha dos Tigres with a Cruiser 79 Namib. The vehicle was taken

there by raft and returned in the same manner along with five other journalists. The raft started to come apart halfway through the return voyage and the rope snapped, but that's a story for another day...

That same night, at 22:00, at the tail end of high tide, they drove back through the Doodsakker. On the pan near the park's main gate, a flock of startled cormorants dive-bombed the convoy. The lead Cruiser's windshield, snorkel and grille were knocked out and the convoy had to drive without lights as not to attract more bird strikes. Cyril claims that cracking open your first beer of the day at midnight after a hard day behind the wheel is the most rewarding feeling on earth. We believe him.



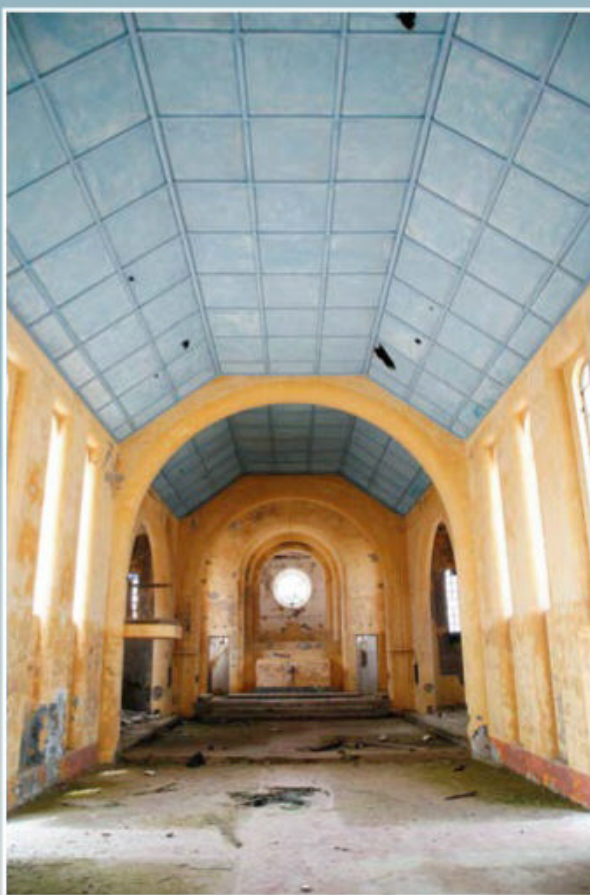


THE DEATH OF SÃO MARTINHO

A powerful storm raged along the coast of Portuguese Angola on the night of 14 March 1962. The residents of the town of São Martinho dos Tigres were able to take shelter in their homes, but at dawn they discovered that the peninsula on which their town stood had turned into an island. The narrow land bridge that used to connect the town to the mainland had been washed away... and in its place was 12 km of open sea.

All three fish factories on Baía dos Tigres (Tiger Bay) – now unexpectedly renamed Ilha dos Tigres (Tiger Island) – had their freshwater supply from the Kunene River cut by the storm. The fish factories were the only reason for São Martinho dos Tigres's existence, and the Portuguese government immediately wanted to remedy the situation because the export of fishmeal and canned seafood generated a substantial income for Portugal.

The pipeline, however, could not be repaired and for 13 years barges had to operate continuously between Foz do Cunene's pumping station and Ilha dos Tigres with tanks full of precious fresh water. The profit from canned fish clearly exceeded the cost of diesel. It was an inconvenient solution, but the citizens of



São Martinho nevertheless persevered.

Then, five years later, another disaster struck: the South Angolan Air Taxi Service operated two weekly flights from Moçâmedes (now Namibe) to Ilha dos Tigres. Captain Carlos Teixeira left Moçâmedes under dense fog on the morning of 17 June 1967. On board the six-seater Beechcraft Bonanza was Dr José

“

...at dawn they discovered that the peninsula on which their town stood had turned into an island

”



Marques, who ran the hospital on the island, and four schoolchildren: Carla Martins, 14, Conceição de Carvalho, 12, Laurinda Nascimento, 14, and Tereza Margarido, 16 (pictured, opposite page).

The flight usually took an hour, and it was a route the pilot had flown hundreds of times, but by noon there was still no





sign of the plane. Fishing boats sailed up and down the Zona de Riscos (or Risk Zone, the Doodsakker's original – less dramatic – name) in the hope that Captain Teixeira may have made an emergency landing on the narrow beach. However, no sign of the Bonanza was found, but one vessel reported that its crew briefly spotted a reflection in the dunes just before sunset.

Tereza Margarido's father, Hilario,

a single parent, was beside himself with worry and sailed to the Doodsakker early the next morning on a fishing boat in search of his only child.

Hilario was accompanied by eight Angolan fishermen who took pity on him. After 36 hours in the desert's scorching dunes, with bloodied feet and no water, the men were spotted by an airforce plane that dropped a letter instructing them to return to the Doodsakker where a convoy of rescue vehicles from Porto Alexandre (now Tombua) would pick them up – the Bonanza's wreck had been found...

Hiraldo was overcome by grief and so exhausted that he couldn't walk back



to the beach. He was later rescued by journalists in a Jeep who reported on the tragedy for the publication *Notícia Luanda*.

The burnt wreck of the Bonanza lay on the windward side of a 120 m dune. There were no survivors.

The incident affected São Martinho's people to such an extent that they barely paid attention to the political turmoil happening simultaneously in Portugal and Angola. The town slowly began to empty, and in October 1975, a few weeks before Angola's independence, they finally threw in the towel. The residents of Ilha dos Tigres, joined the thousands of Portuguese refugees – the so-called *retornados* – who returned to their country of origin to escape the civil wars in the former colonies, even though a large number of them had never set foot in Europe before.

SOURCES: *Notícia Luanda* (24 June 1967) and *Angola Under the Portuguese* (1978) by Gerald J. Bender



With advice from experts (also Fido and Felix!) on pet care.



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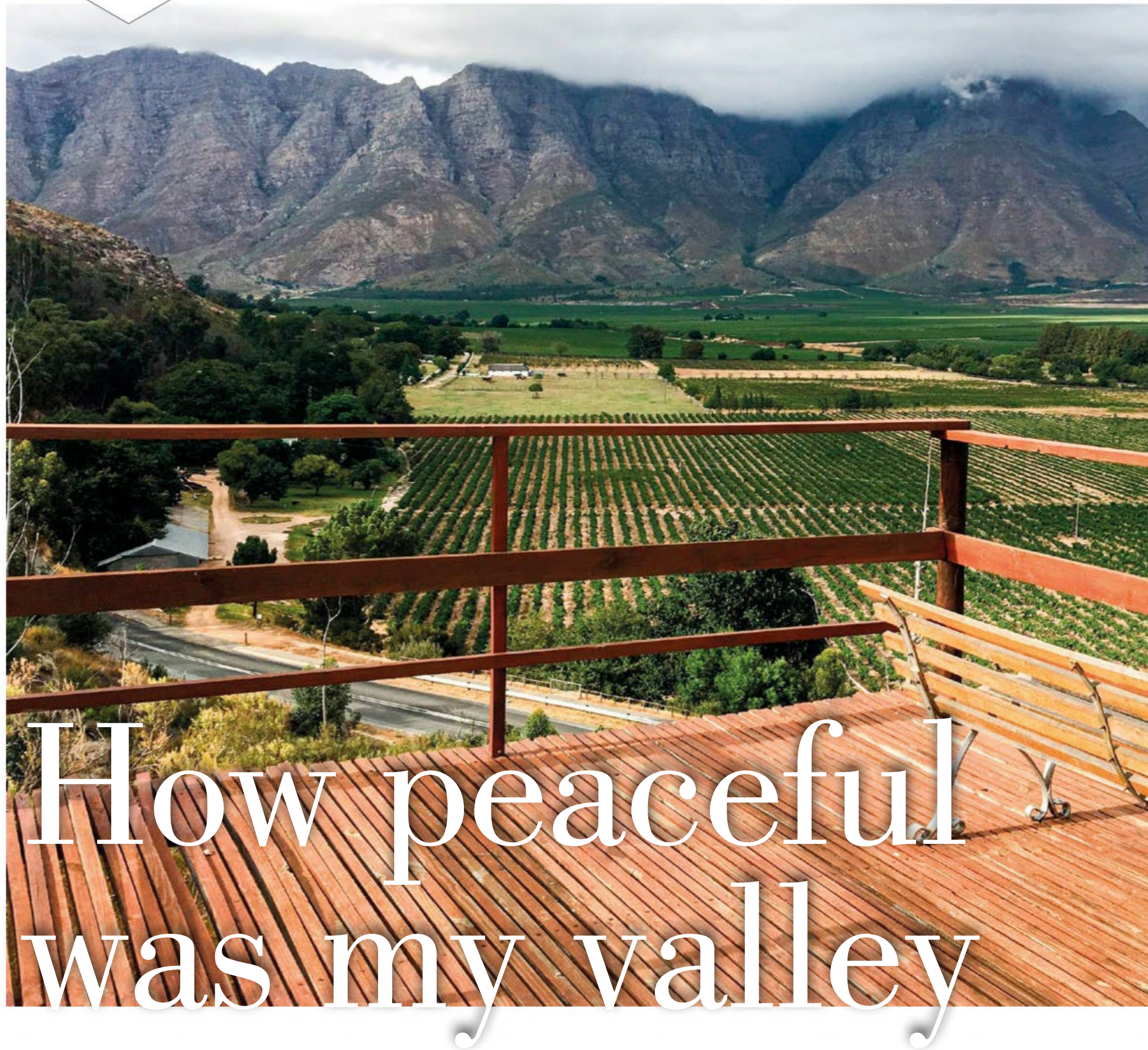
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How peaceful was my valley

The Slanghoek Valley outside Rawsonville is known for its vineyards, fruit trees and surrounding mountains. In this beautiful valley, just over 100 km from the Cape, lies the **Slanghoek Mountain Resort** on the slopes of the Badsberg conservancy.

Words and photos **Liana Mocke**

Slanghoek is centrally located between Ceres, Wellington and Worcester, and you camp here among vineyards and fruit trees. The stands are on lush green lawns, under shady trees and next to a stream where the strands of weeping willows quietly sway back and forth in the rippling water.

At night, you hear frogs croaking. There are plenty of birds and insects, too, so pack your guide books, insect repellent and hiking boots, because you're going to love camping here and exploring this stunning part of South Africa. The resort is just over an hour's drive from Cape Town.



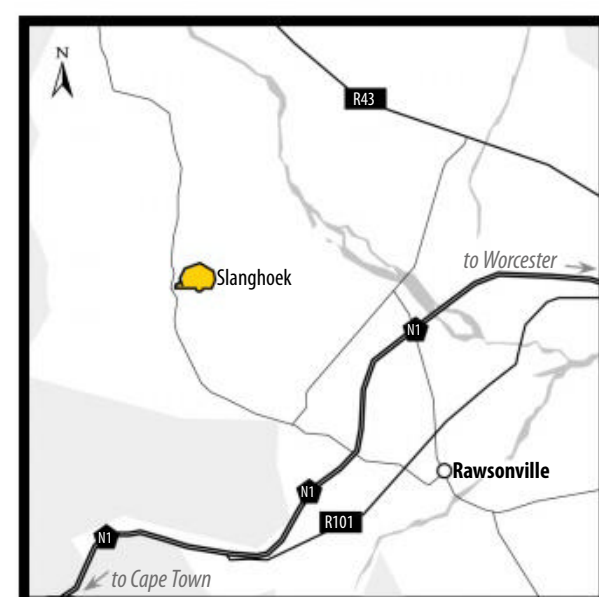
After the Huguenot Tunnel, turn off the N1 onto the R101 to Rawsonville. Shortly after that, you turn left again at the signpost to the Slanghoek Valley, and for the next 10 km, you meander past Goudini Spa, Jason's Hill and the Slanghoek Wine Cellar until you get the sign for Slanghoek. Turn right and park at the main entrance, which is almost right next to the tar road. Here you get out of your vehicle and enter the resort through the pedestrian gate on your left.

The resort's shop is also next to the parking lot, and the reception is just a few metres in front of you in the main building. Here you sign in and get

directions, a map of the campsite and the code for the boom gate. If you didn't book a specific stand in advance, you will now find out which number has been assigned to you.

Although it is a large resort with various accommodation options, leisure facilities, activities and buildings, you don't have to worry that all the hustle and bustle will deprive you of tranquillity; you will be able to listen to the quiet sounds and the rippling water in silence, as the campsite is about 500 m from all the action.

Once you've sorted out the paperwork, pick up tonight's wood and ice at the





shop. Or come back later and quietly walk through the gift section and buy olive oil and rusks for the people at home.

Drive out of the parking lot and cross the tar road you've been driving on, to the dirt track across the way. At the boom, type in the code they gave you at reception, and depending on where you camp, either turn right in front of the bridge or drive over the bridge to the other section of the camp.

Trees and green grass certainly count as bonus points for any campsite, and for that the resort gets many tick marks. In addition, shrubs have been planted between you and your neighbour's stand for more privacy. The stands are pretty big and you won't have to whisper if you want to chat around the fire late at night.

Call the office when you book and ask for advice on the best and most suitable stands for you – not all are suitable for a caravan, and some of the stands are opposite the jungle gym and near swimming spots.

Should you want to camp along the Slanghoek stream, you should specifically ask for stands on the shore, but just be aware that the lush reeds and other plants will mean that you won't necessarily see



the water – and during the dry months, there may not even be a significant stream of water.

There are 18 stands of which only number 1 doesn't have grass, but it is under large shady trees. This and number 2 are the only stands that are separate from the others and therefore a good choice if you're a larger group. There

are also stands with little to no shade, including 17 and 18. Fortunately, the resort has erected shade cloths at the stands – like number 3 – where there are no trees.

IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN DISAPPOINTED by the pool at a campsite, this resort's swimming pools will have you smiling. The campsite itself boasts two shiny



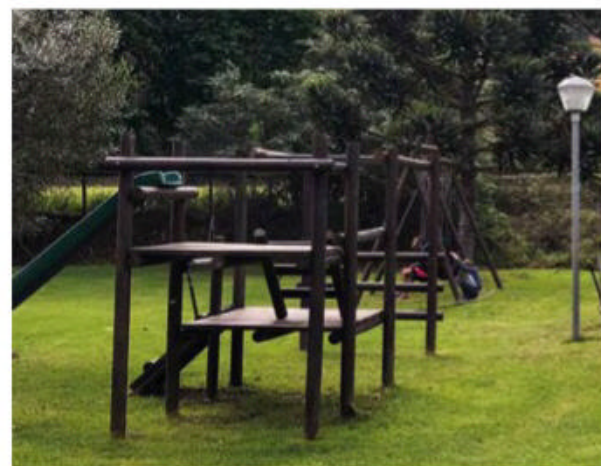
clean pools, and then there are two more near the shop and reception. If you're on stands 3-12, you walk over the stream on a suspension bridge to get to the pools.

The stands at the pools (1-2 and 13-18) have nice shady trees and the large lawn between the stands is a fabulous attraction for those who play cricket and other games. The young ones have two jungle gyms to choose from – one by the swimming pools and the other right next to stand 12. If you're camping without kids, avoid stands 12-15 and 17-18.

Another great thing about camping here is that you don't have to share ablution facilities with strangers, because each stand has its own private bathroom. The bathrooms – log cabins with a shower, basin and toilet – don't have frills, but they're spacious, well laid out and have

everything you expect from ablution facilities at a campsite.

You get a key to lock your bathroom, and inside is toilet paper, a mop, broom, bucket and even some detergent that you can use to clean and dry the tile floor. The shower cubicles are a standard size with a shower curtain – we suggest that you



GREEN, GREEN GRASS You can leave your Crocs at home because you won't need them on these lovely lawns. Bring enough camping chairs for everyone to relax in and listen to the joyful birdsong.



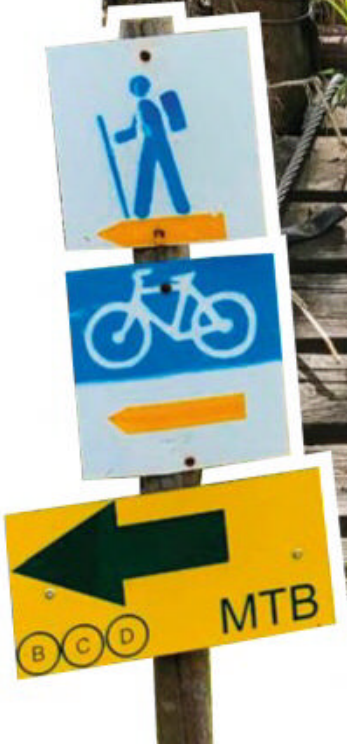
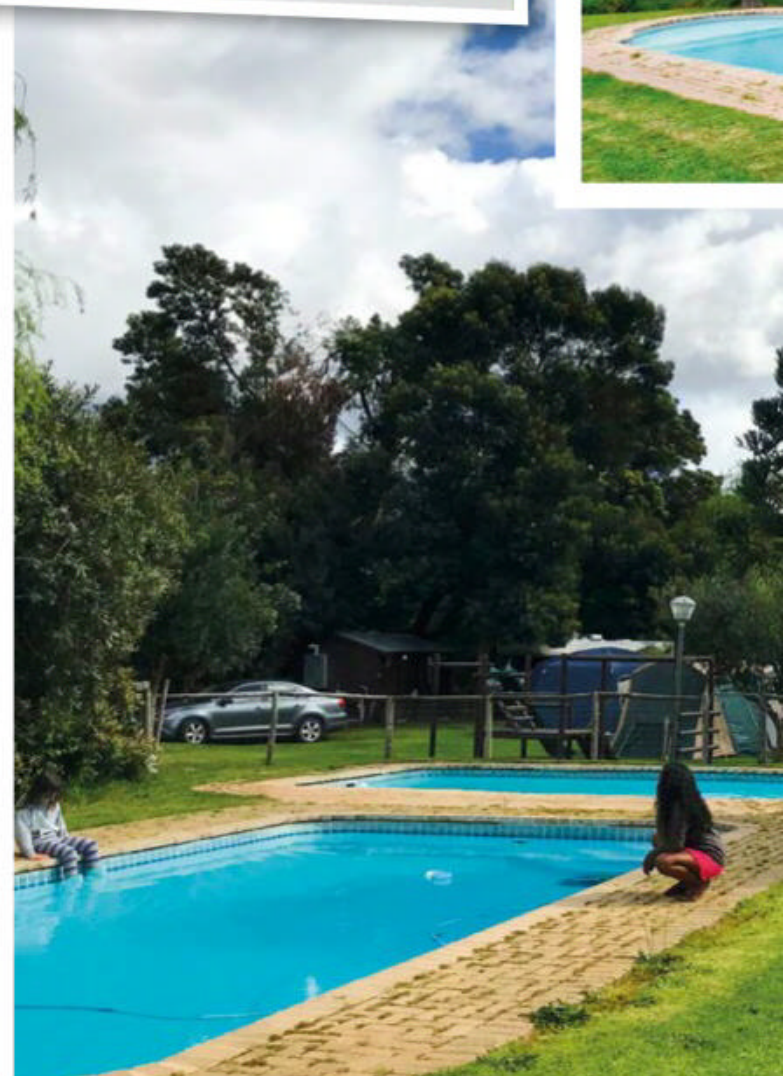
WEEKEND BREAK



bring an extra bath mat to put on the floor by the shower.

You put your clothes and toiletries on the plastic chair and the wooden beams on the walls work well for body cream, toothbrushes and sprays. Fortunately, there are plenty of hooks on the walls for towels, wet clothes and facecloths. Most of the bathrooms also have mirrors by the basins.

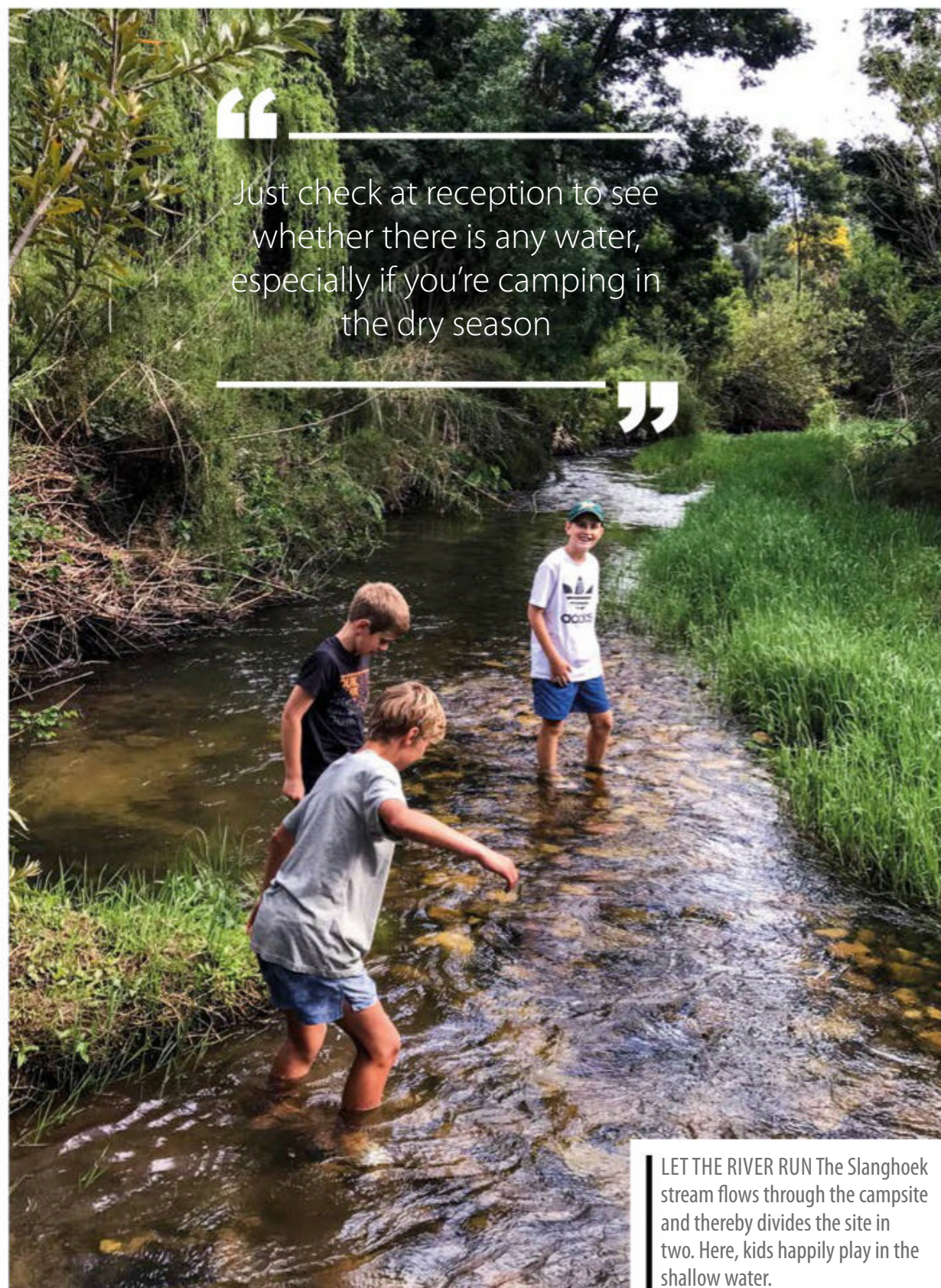
Your power point (domestic three-prong socket) and tap are at the bathroom



building and dishes are washed here in a single sink where there's also storage space for some plates and pots. Stands 4 and 5, 13 and 14, and 17 and 18 share a sink between their respective bathrooms. The gas geysers on the outside provide hot water.

You get your own black garbage bin with a lid, and for your convenience, there's already a black bag inside. The resort regularly cleans the bins and replaces bags.

The braai spots for each stand are large with enough space for your grid and a potjie to rest on the coals next to each other. Some of the braais are made of stone and cement and others are cut-open cement water pipes. You provide your own seating and camping table around the braai area; pack your camping table so you have a spot to unpack the salad and braai



LET THE RIVER RUN The Slanghoek stream flows through the campsite and thereby divides the site in two. Here, kids happily play in the shallow water.

stuff – and don't forget your grid. A braai triangle will also come in handy, especially if you want to cook a chicken potjie and boerewors at the same time.

And leave Coco and Baxter at home; no pets are allowed in this idyllic place.

THERE ARE ACTIVITIES APLENTY for the fitness fanatics and adventure seekers, including hiking and mountain biking trails, mini golf and horse riding for the youngsters. Get the mini golf clubs and ball (R10 pp) at the resort's shop and aim for the small hill where you'll find the 18-hole course. It may not be that easy to get the ball in the cup on these slopes, but who's really counting all the

strokes? On your way there you will also see the beautiful stone church they use for weddings, the reception hall, chalets and self-catering tents.

The hiking trail starts at the mini golf course and it is a circular route that will take you about an hour. Don't forget your binoculars and camera, because at some point you will stop at the lookout platform to take a selfie with valley as a backdrop.

If you want to walk for longer, take the 4,5 km route to a waterfall. Just check at reception to see whether there is any water, especially if you're camping in the dry season.

On Saturdays, kids can go horse riding between 09:00 and 11:00, weather



PRIVATE PRIVY Each stand has its own WC with coat hooks on which to hang towels and a clean change of clothes. They even supply cleaning liquids, a broom and mop and toilet paper for you to use.



permitting. Wait at the campsite for the horses and guides to show up and pay the R10 for your child. The guides walk with them, so you don't have to worry the horse will go running off with Johnny holding on.

There's an existing mountain bike trail you can tackle, but it's not well marked and most of the original trail has had to make way for fruit trees. For information on the many other mountain bike trails in the area where you can test your skills, visit the Slanghoek Wine Cellar.

Once you've conquered the 18 holes, hand in the golf clubs at the shop and then buy an ice cream and cool off in the resort's other two swimming pools. The shop opens at 08:00 every day and closes Mondays to Thursdays at 18:00, Fridays only at 20:00; Saturdays at 17:00 and Sundays at 13:00. (Times can change over long weekends and public holidays.)

There's plenty to explore in the valley, especially if you like visiting wine farms and restaurants. Check out the Slanghoek Wine Cellar (slanghoek.co.za), Opstal Estate (opstal.co.za) and Jason's Hill Private Cellar (jasonshill.com). The Breedekloof website (breedekloof.com) provides ideas and information about activities and attractions in the area.

After 23:00, it's only time for everyone in the campsite to stop making noise and be as peaceful as the surrounds.



Briefly | Slanghoek



Campsite 18 stands. A maximum of 6 people are allowed per site (children included) and only 1 caravan per site. Extra tents are allowed.

Ablution facilities Each stand has its own private bathroom with a shower, basin and toilet in a log cabin.

Price R655-R750 p/n per site depending on the season and day of the week.

Contact 023 344 3138

slanghoekresort.co.za

info@slanghoekresort.co.za

Arrival and departure times Between 14:00 and 20:00. By 10:00 you should be packed up and leaving.

What does the road look like? Tar except for the last 500 m of dirt road to the campsite.

GPS S33.628699 E19.227619

Drive & Camp says Don't worry about security – the campsite has cameras. 📹

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Test your skills in the Highveld

Just an hour outside of Johannesburg there's a trail where you could imagine that you're participating in a 4x4 competition.

Words and photos **Schalk Jonker**

The Spookspruit 4x4 trail lies between Heidelberg in Gauteng and Balfour in Mpumalanga and is a place where you can test your skill and your off-roader's ability to the absolute limit.

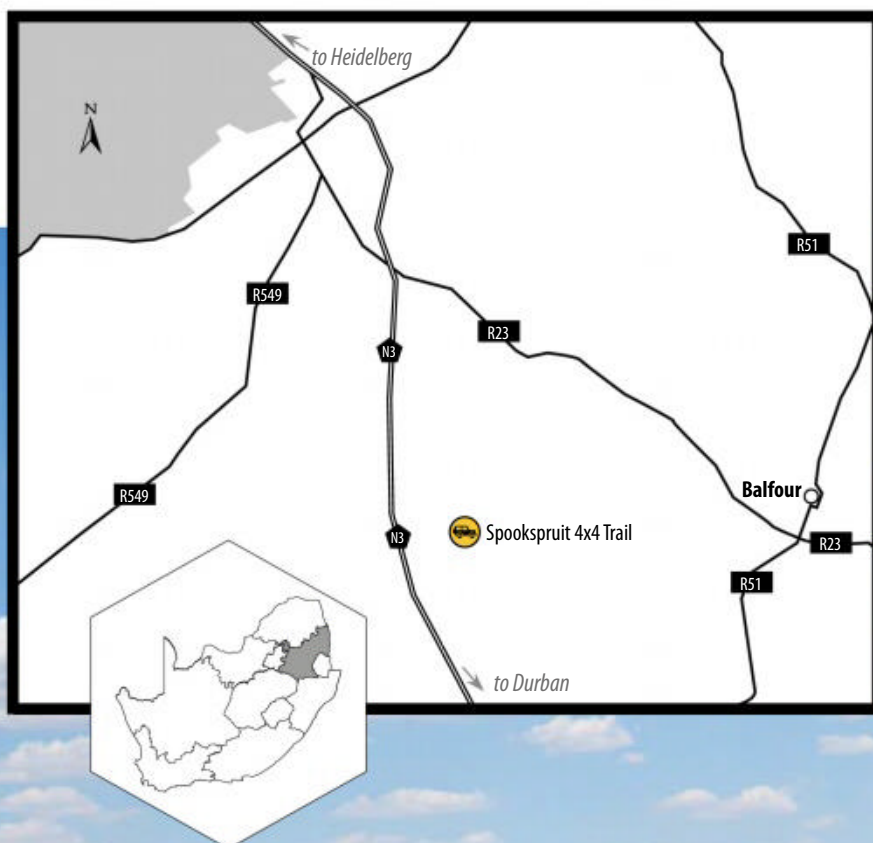
Johan and Elsie Havenga, who runs Spookspruit 4x4, used to work as course officials at the popular Bridgestone Challenge events for seven years. So, it's no surprise that their 4x4 playground in

the Highveld is a highly technical route. But you're not only put to the test here. As it is a guided tour with Johan taking the reins, you can also learn a range of new and advanced skills to make you a better off-road driver. He guides you through every obstacle and shows you the best lines for your skill set and your truck's capability. He clearly knows what he's doing: listen to him if he advises you to rather use one of the more challenging

obstacles' escape route. No one knows better whether you will be able to make it or not. And before you head off – while enjoying coffee and rusks – he will first talk to each person to determine what you and your truck's abilities are.

On this circular route you can expect everything from mud and water to stone steps and loose sand. And, as mentioned, there's an escape route for each one if you are still a bit inexperienced.





“

...rocks are hidden underwater during the rainy season and present a very different challenge

”

Johan and Elsie celebrate their love for nature here on the track and therefore – except right at the beginning – there are no man-made obstacles to be found. The challenges also get tougher as you progress; so there's plenty of time to find your feet before you get to the more difficult obstacles.

The other great thing about Spookspruit, is that the route changes depending on the season. So, if you show up here again after three months, many other challenges await. For example, where you have to clamber over big rocks in the stream during winter or fall when you venture into Rocky Road, those rocks are hidden

underwater during the rainy season and present a very different challenge.

There are obstacles for all kinds of vehicles – from standard bakkies to rock crawlers. You do need a 4x4 vehicle with good ground clearance, low range and multi-terrain tyres. Johan and Elsie also strongly recommend a rear diff lock. And underbody protection and rock sliders are a good idea, too.

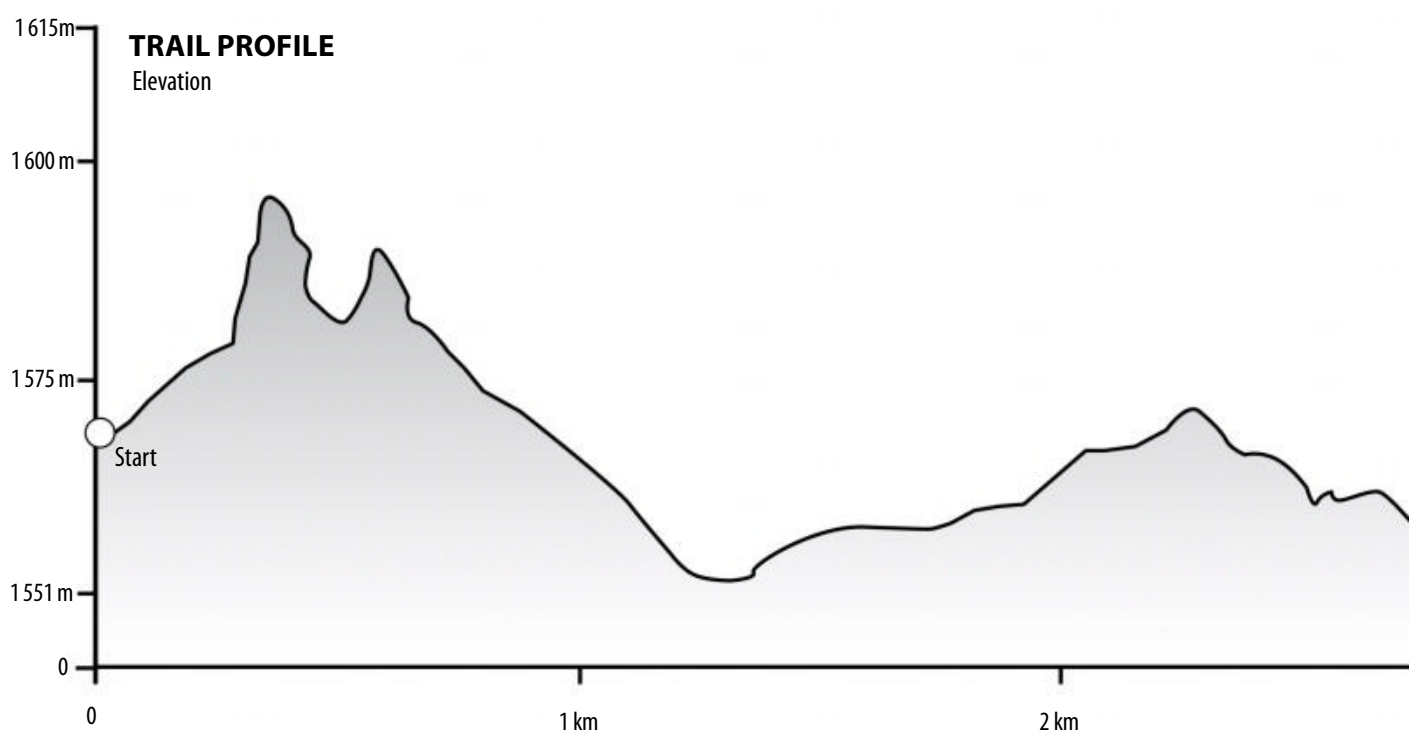
Most challenges tend to be around a grade 4, and in some of them you can give your off-roader – and your self-esteem – a proper blow if you're not careful. Highlights include the Hill Climb where you can choose whether

to tackle the steep hill at a difficulty of 3 or 4; the track through the forest with treacherously narrow bends; and a variety of axle twisters plus Rocky Road, which is a different kettle of fish when there's water.

However, it is when you get to Hilux Hill and Mineshaft that you see why so many people come here on weekends. (By the way, the track is only open on Saturdays and Sundays, and it's important to book in advance.) Hilux Hill is a rocky hill where you can choose one or more from several lines to see if you can master it. It's steep on the way up and you drive across technical terrain. Johan stands at the top,



BOULDERING Spookspuit 4x4 offers all manner of obstacles to test your off-road skills. From river crossings and axle twisters to rock crawling and steep inclines. One of the best things about Spookspuit is that you can pitch a tent and make a weekend of it.





What you need to know



Maximum number of vehicles 15.

Do I get a map? No. You are guided along the route and there are directions everywhere.

Will I scratch my vehicle? Yes, if you're not careful.

Do I need to take a compressor? Yes.

Can we braai along the way? Only at the campsite at the end of the trail.

Can I turn around halfway? Yes.

Is there cellphone signal? Yes, but spotty in places.

AROUND THE ROUTE

Best time to go? All year.

Can I take my family along? Yes.

Just for the day or the weekend? You can come for just the day, but you can also camp for the weekend.

How long does it take? 4-5 hours.

Are there ablution facilities? Yes.

Directions Johan says most GPS devices will take you on a detour to Spookspruit. He recommends you search for it on Google Maps and follow those directions.

Price R300 per vehicle.

Contact 082 391 1402

johanhavenga26@gmail.com

facebook.com/spookspruit4x4

GPS S26.676498 E28.422668

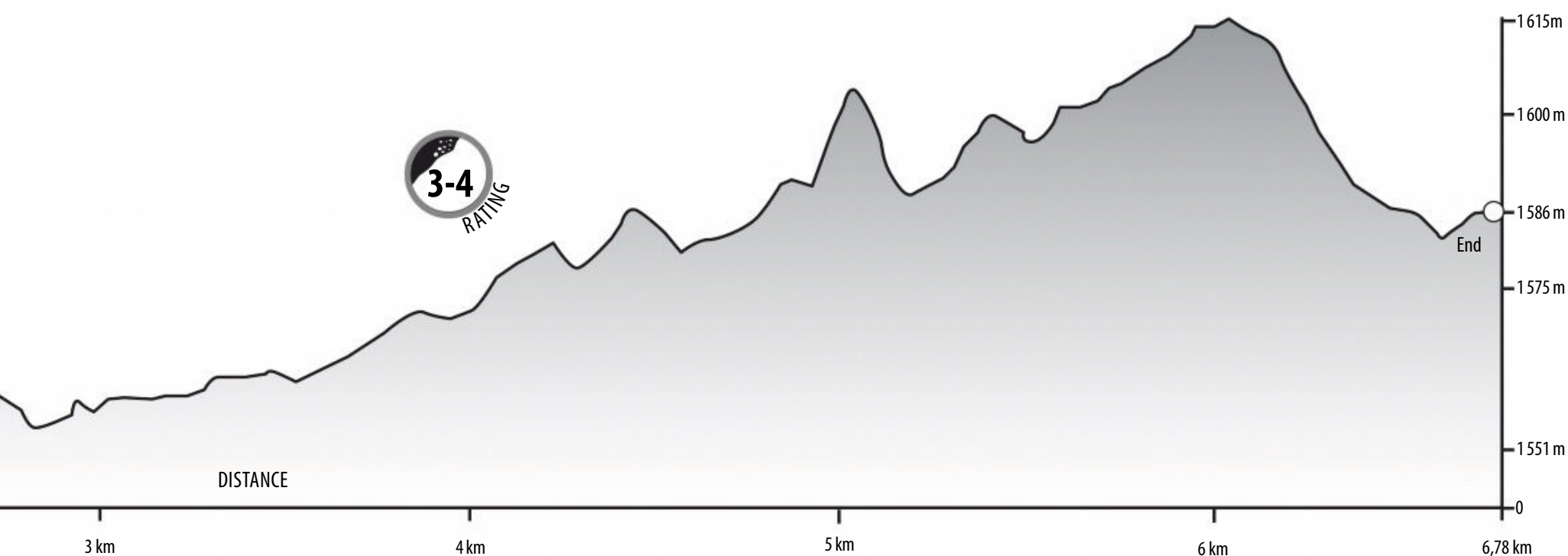


pointing the way, but in places you will see only the tip of his fingers sticking out above your dashboard. Here you have to be in complete control of your driving, otherwise you will be in trouble.

Mineshaft is equally exciting and, as always, you need to know what you're doing as you slowly make your way down the loose rocks here.

You can also bring your camping gear and spend the weekend at the campsite at the end of the trail, with its green grass, lovely shade trees, large swimming pool, a jungle gym for the little ones, neat ablution facilities and electricity.

What more could you ask for?



Beautiful Buffeljags

Positioned between the slopes of the Langeberg Mountains and the banks of the Buffeljags Dam, Umshanti is the perfect peaceful getaway says **Susan Skog** from Onrusrivier.



“ Our group of hiking buddies had just completed the Swellendam Trail in the Marloth Nature Reserve and decided to rest our weary feet at Umshanti – a private campsite between Swellendam and Suurbraak. It’s about 250 km from Cape Town, and most of the route is tarred. You only hit dirt at the entrance to the campsite.

WHAT IS IT LIKE?

What more could you ask for with those mountains and a mass of water?



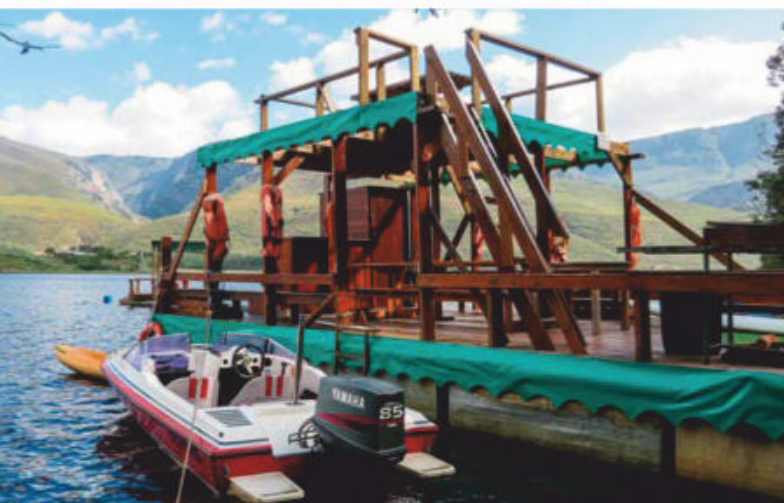
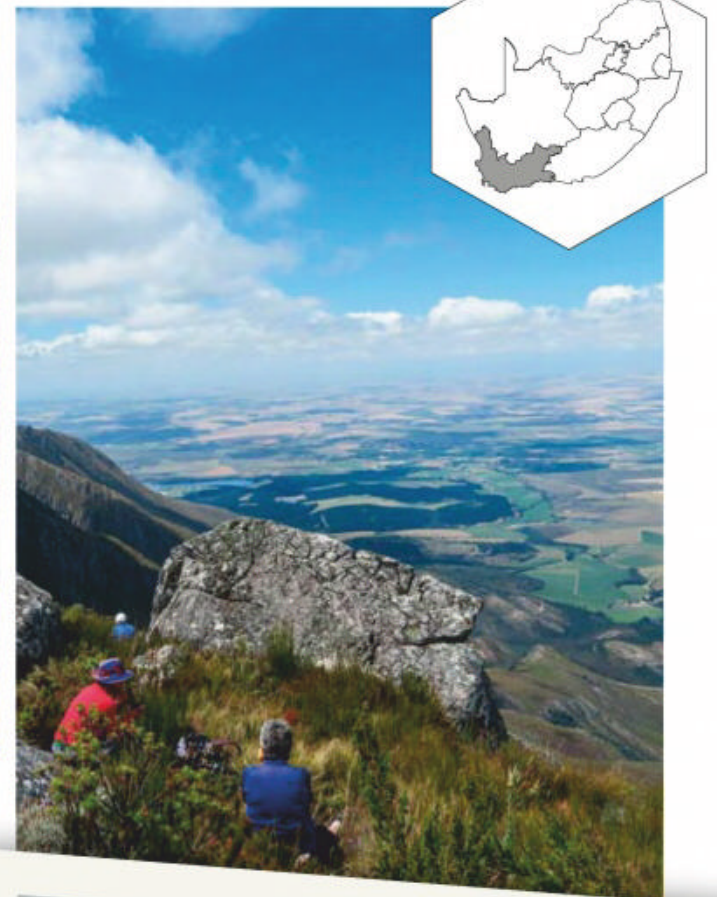
The campsite is dotted with lovely shade trees that keep you cool in the Overberg summer, and each stand has its own braai facilities, shade netting and wooden table and chairs made by the owner, Kosie van Zyl, himself. The campsite supplies electricity to the three stands, and enough firewood that you don’t have to worry about running out of fuel for the campfire. The ablution facilities are adequate, with warm water available for your showers and freshening up in front of the basins, with clean toilets.

WIN Susan wins a **Camp Cover** camera bag worth R818.

Check out the superb range of protective covers on their website:

campcover.co.za

CAMP COVER



HOW DO YOU PASS THE TIME?

Children will love the sprawling lawns to run, jump and throw a ball around, and this campsite is also bicycle friendly. You can hike in the surrounding hills but the main attraction here is water sports. There are canoes available for you to go and paddle out into the dam, or you could just ask Kosie to take you on a sunset cruise in his boat, which holds up to 35 people. It has an open deck, braai and toilet facilities. The more adventurous types can go water-skiing, but those who prefer to spend some

quiet time with rod in hand can also go angling. There are nearby rock pools if you want to swim alone.

Umshanti is definitely a water lover's paradise. If you don't mind leaving solid

ground, then you can also take a flip in Kosie's microlite aircraft, which is a fantastic opportunity to take great photographs of the world below.

ARE THERE OTHER ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS?

Yes, you can opt for one of the five 10-sleeper chalets, or three wooden cabins that are ideal for couples who prefer a bit of privacy. Even the smaller cottages have their own private view and braai area. Nice!



CONTACT

028 512 3787

umshanti.co.za

GPS S34.019402, E20.538901



Everything just keeps going right

You have more options than ever if you're in the market to buy something to tackle our many 4x4 trails, but **Chris Beater** from Pennington wouldn't have anything other than a trusty Toyota.

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2017 TOYOTA HILUX 4x4 RAIDER DC and BUSH LAPA VLOOI

There's a reason that Chris has been purchasing Toyota vehicles for the past 40 years, and it's not that he's biased, being a scientist and all...

“ I used to drive a **Fortuner 3.0 D-4D 4x4** for two years before I upgraded, eventually seeing that the old turbodiesel motor was not as refined and economical as the new engine. I also didn't have as much space to pack all the equipment needed for my off-

road adventures. There was no doubt in my mind that I'd buy another Toyota and I considered **no other brands** before making my purchase – especially because my dream vehicle would be a Prado.

I settled for this **used Hilux 2.8 GD-6 4x4** double cab – purchased for **R519 000** a year and a half ago.

There are a number requirements a vehicle has to fulfil before I even consider it: the motor has to have **sufficient torque for towing duty**; the **standard ground clearance** must adequate for most off-road conditions; it must have **proven reliability and proper 4x4 ability**; be **relatively fuel efficient** and, finally, its suspension

and chassis needs to be capable of being bumped around in off-road environments.

I think Toyota should consider **fitting better tyres** more appropriate for off-road conditions, particularly if the client is about to buy a 4x4 model, and then maybe the side steps could be a little more robust.

Otherwise I can't fault my Hilux. It's already proven that it's **more than capable** off the beaten track and has excellent manners on the road as well. It offers a comfortable ride and has **enough packing space**. To make my trips more epic, I also installed a **long-range diesel tank**, an **additional battery** and charger for the fridge-freezer and then also replaced



the stainless-steel side steps. It's also got a **steel canopy**.

The Hilux tows like a champ, pulling my **Echo Chobe** caravan around with little fuss before I opted to replace it with a Bush Lapa Vlooi just ahead of my recent trip to the Kruger. At the pumps, it's achieved a **12,6 ℓ/100 km** average fuel consumption while towing, and **8,5 ℓ/100 km** without a caravan hitched. My ownership experience has so far been flawless, except for a sidewall puncture experienced on a previous 4x4 excursion. I remedied that by fitting more appropriate all-terrain tyres.

So far, my favourite place to visit must be the **Baviaanskloof**. Being a qualified geologist, the many and vast rock formations 'talk to me' regarding violent upheavals in the region in the ancient history of the earth. And then there's also the scenery, and **fantastic flora**.

FUSS-FREE Chris has been driving Toyota vehicles for the past 40 years and his latest Hilux is perfectly suited to his camping excursions and off-road adventures through places like the Baviaanskloof.



Show us your wheels

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The 4x4 adventure of a lifetime

A group of South Africans traverse Mongolia's Gobi Desert, discover camels, yaks and deer, visit Buddhist monasteries and chill with the locals, recounts **Evan Naudé.**

Few countries are more pristine than Mongolia. It is the least densely populated country in the world and a place that has largely escaped urban development. In fact, it's twice the size of Namibia with barely three million people, half of whom live in cities. This, together with an incredible landscape, unique animals and an iconic nomadic culture, places the country at the top of any adventurer's wish list.

Here in SA, we also have a strong outdoor culture and many of us would agree that the best way to properly explore a place is via the back roads. So, that's exactly how a group of South Africans tackled the wide steppes of Mongolia on an 18-day tour with Live The Journey.

“THE TOUR GROUP, with its members hailing from Vereeniging, Sandton, Paarl and Cape Town, meet in Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar after spending a day or two in the air. We stay in a hotel in the city centre, and after dinner we hit the sack to combat the jet lag.

The first day of the tour is a tranquil one so everyone has a chance to recover before we start covering some proper distances. Our local tour guide, the cheerful and knowledgeable Baatar Navaan, uses the day to tell us more about his country.

We ride a minibus to a 40 m statue of Mongolia's most famous leader, Genghis Khan, about 54 km outside the city. Khan ruled practically the whole of Asia with an iron fist. Under the statue is

a museum depicting the history of the ger, a traditional round hut. Over the years, this structure's building materials have improved, but the basic form still survives today and many Mongolians live in them.

Back in the city, we buy local SIM cards, exchange cash and visit the Mongolian Natural History Museum in the afternoon. We marvel at the city's shiny new skyscrapers, dilapidated Soviet-era factories, the long chimneys of power plants pumping out colossal smoke clouds, the impressive Sükhbaatar city square and the hundreds of Toyota Prius cars that look to be the most popular transportation choice in the country .

THE NEXT DAY, we're up and about before sunrise. In the hotel's parking lot are three Land Cruisers and a Lexus 470,

each equipped with a roof tent. Baatar's car is a dark green UAZ-469, a 2,2 l military 4x4 petrol vehicle built in Russia. They're reminiscent of the old Willys Jeep with a short wheel base: just as sturdy and uncomfortable. “But you can drive it anywhere and it's easy to fix,” says Baatar.

We check the vehicles one last time, load our luggage and test the two-way radio in each one. A member of the Mongolian team has left a few white splashes on our front tyres. “Milk,” explains Baatar. “For happiness.”

We head off and out of the city. Before long, we leave behind traffic, skyscrapers and factories, and the landscape slowly unfolds around us. The weather is beautiful today and for the first time we see exactly how sprawling



Baatar Navaan
MONGOLIAN GUIDE

“I've been to South Africa and your country reminds me a lot of Mongolia, except you have fences everywhere and we don't. South Africans are very generous and you are survivors with a love of nature. Much the same character as us Mongolians.”





the leafy grassland really is over here. It is a scene that a Karoo farmer couldn't imagine in his wildest dreams. "Hey people, this is the real Mongolia now," Baatar proudly chuckles over the radio. "This is my country, how do you like it?"

For the rest of the day, the convoy keeps south, passing heavy laden coal trucks and groups of gers along the road, where locals sell fermented horse milk, a popular drink called "arak".

When we reach our campsite near the Baga Gadzrin mountain range in the northern Gobi Desert by late afternoon, we are surrounded by grassy plains that extend all the way to the horizon. The scent of wild herbs surround us and there is no fence, notice board or any other sign of civilisation to be seen.

Later, around a campfire – the Gobi has no trees – we look up at the same magnificent Milky Way that the mighty Genghis Khan must have stared at hundreds of years ago.

'WATER FOR EYES', says a blue sign in the middle of nowhere the next morning as we drive southeast on a twin track. "People around here believe the fountain's water has healing properties," explains Baatar.

At one point, a herd of dzeren, a Mongolian antelope somewhere between a springbok and an impala, runs across the road, and soon there are large herds of horses along the way. Baatar has heard about a local festival being held today and so we head toward Baga Gazariin Chuluu, a nature reserve in the Dundgovi province.

“

...we look up at the same magnificent Milky Way that the mighty Genghis Khan must have stared at...

”

WELCOME TO MONGOLIA Away from the hustle and bustle of the capital, the rolling grasslands open up and the mountains offer prime vantage points. There are no trees in the Gobi, and therefore nothing that can block the bright night sky from lighting up your campsite.





We walk around the festival's colourful tents. Apart from a few bright traditional outfits and the language, we may as well be at a show in the South African platteland: there is a row of stalls, kids eat candyfloss and ice cream, you can try to win a teddy bear in a game, and over on the side, a bunch of guys are having a braai behind their car.

We are invited into a ger and are seated in a circle. In the middle of the room is a large pot of arak, a plate of steamed meat and a tower of cheese. In turn, each of us gets a bowl of arak. The taste is... different,

like when you have a spoonful of yoghurt turned sour, but after a few swallows you overcome it – there is, after all, a touch of alcohol in it. The cheese, a hard affair almost like a strong parmesan, is less overwhelming – provided you love exotic cheese. "This is the traditional welcome in our culture," explains Baatar. This is how families, friends and strangers gather and break bread, he says. On the rest of the tour we often find ourselves in a circle inside someone's ger. And every time out of decency, as we were brought up, we have a sip of arak and chew the cheese.

In recent years, large quantities of gold and copper have been discovered in the Gobi. The mining industry, Mongolia's largest economic driver, is still growing. Dalanzadgad is full of tall buildings and even more are under construction. "All built in the last 10 years," says Baatar.

That afternoon we reach a ger camp near the Yolyn Am Valley, or the Lammergeier Valley (Yol means bearded vulture), in the Gurvan Saikhan Mountain. Mongolia is covered in these tourist camps where you spend the night in varying levels of luxury in your own ger. Inside are beds and a fireplace, the bathrooms are en suite or shared ablution facilities, and at night you dine in a restaurant – sometimes in a colossal ger.

The next day we aim west along the foot of the mountain range. It's a long day on the road, but it's an interesting journey: we visit a Bronze Age graveyard, cross several dry riverbeds, drive past deserted nomad winter stables and stop and greet a few locals. We drink arak, we eat cheese.

After lunch, we drive down a very long corrugated road in a broad valley in the direction of Bayandalai and then aim for

Tonight's campsite is close to Tsagaan Suvarga, a series of impressive sandstone cliffs against an escarpment that has been weathered by centuries of erosion down to colourful layers.

WE GET TO A TAR ROAD late the next morning and drive to Dalanzadgad, a large mining town in the south of the country.

Luzanne van Niekerk and Jack Eksteen

PAARL

"Our first impression was that Ulaanbaatar is ugly. The country's beauty certainly lies outside the city. It's a soul-cleansing experience and there's so much variety on the tour. It's definitely a country for looking far and wide."





George, Yvonne and Ivy Michlo
SANDTON

"It's a fantastic tour, different to any other place we've visited. We're not campers, but we really enjoyed the camping. Nature's beauty and variety is incredible and the people are exceptionally friendly."

Khongoryn Els, a 100 km dune strip in the south of the Gobi. The cream-coloured dunes contrasts with the green landscape.

With our tents at the foot of Mongolia's largest dunes and the sun setting across the Altai mountain range, you can almost imagine you're camping somewhere in the Namib and overlooking the Saag

PAINTED BY GIANTS Jack Eksteen and Luzanne van Niekerk gaze across the hilly landscape at Tsagaan Suvarga where erosion across millennia has resulted in the sandstone cliffs being dotted with colourful pockmarks and dongas.

Mountains at Solitaire. The only difference is the grassland between the dunes and mountains, Solitaire's never seen a green carpet like this.

AFTER BREAKFAST WE EXPLORE the dunes to the west. During the course of the morning we again stop at gers and drink arak and eat cheese, but this time the first family teaches us how to distil vodka and the second family teaches us how to ride camels. The camel farmer shows us a fountain among the dunes where a herd of horses are cooling down – it's a picturesque oasis scene straight out of a children's book.

We turn east again, cross the dunes at a comfortable spot and drive a rotten corrugated road in a northwesterly direction through a valley with high cliffs on either side of the road. There's a lot of traffic, mainly UAZ-452 minibuses

full of tourists from the surrounding ger camps. We pass a convoy of Vespas, a bunch of Italians who have driven up from Ulaanbaatar. Their spines must be suffering on this road.

We camp near the site where, in 1971, a team of paleontologists discovered the fossil of two dinosaurs that are over 80 million years old, the so-called Fighting Dinosaurs. They died in the middle of a fight and hold onto each other in a death grip for all eternity.

THE NEXT DAY we fill up in Bulgan, a town surrounded by vegetable fields, before heading north again. Our next destination is Bayanzag, or the Flaming Cliffs (the cliffs glow bright orange at sunset), where another historic dinosaur discovery was made. This is where American paleontologist Roy Andrews discovered the first dinosaur eggs in the 1920s, along with a large variety of skeletons.

We continue north on the awful road, past more ger camps, arak and cheese, as this is the main tourist route to the north. The vegetation along the road is sparse and reminiscent of parts of the Karoo, but the landscape feels even more stretched and the horizon farther than anywhere else.

Tonight we sleep in a lovely ger camp on the banks of the Ongi River. We visit the ruins of the Ongi monastery on a hill near the camp. Once upon a time, hundreds of monks lived and studied here before the monastery, like so many others in Mongolia, was destroyed by the communist Soviet Union in 1939.

Not even the Land Cruisers' soft seats can protect our lower backs from the long, bumpy, corrugated road as we head further north. Nevertheless, we say goodbye to the Gobi, and by lunchtime we find ourselves in Central Mongolia.

After lunch, a traditional braai at a restaurant (no arak and cheese), Baatar leads us to Karakorum. Shortly before we reach the town, we see for the first time signs of big farms when fields of golden yellow canola suddenly appear.

Karakorum was once the capital of the Mongol Empire and this is where Genghis Khan apparently recruited his soldiers for his later campaigns. The country's oldest Buddhist monastery, the Erdene Zuu, was founded in the 16th century and still stands outside the town today. In the late afternoon we visit the monastery before we find a campsite on a hill near the village.

“TODAY, THERE’S A SHORTER DISTANCE, but the driving will take longer,” Baatar tells us the next morning. After a quick visit to the Archaeological Museum in Karakorum, we depart for the Arkhangai Province.

The Orkhon Valley is one of Mongolia’s most beautiful places. “It is in this valley where Mongolian culture was born,” Baatar says proudly. The Orkhon River meanders through vast flat pastures covered in barley and thousands of livestock. Here and there are herds of yaks. “Guys, they look just like a cow with a skirt!” declares Jack Eksteen over the radio.

Down in the valley, we take pictures at the 20 m high Orkhon Waterfall, Mongolia’s highest, before turning back, crossing the river and turning north across the Khangai Mountains. The higher we climb, the more beautiful it gets, and later we drive through pine forests with carpets of wildflowers next to the road. We can’t stop staring and take countless pics.

At the Tsenkher Hot Springs, we sleep in a ger camp, this one with many local tourists rather than just foreigners. In the one pool, a group sits chatting while drinking beer, and another pool is filled with large guys in their underpants. Later, when it’s dark, you hear families singing as they sit around the fireplaces in the family-sized gers. We also light ours before we go to bed, because the farther north we travel, the colder it gets at night.

FIELDS OF WILDFLOWERS and forests of Siberian larch lead us further north over the Khangai Mountains. Baatar aims for Tsetserleg, the largest town in central Mongolia. It is a place filled with colourful buildings and huge stretches of abandoned Soviet-era factories. After a museum visit and a stop at a coffee shop, we leave the town on a busy, steep and dusty dirt road pass that groans under lorries and Priuses.

Before long, we leave the provincial borders of Central Mongolia and move into the north. We camp at the top of a bend in the Orkhon River with the clear ice water flowing far below us in the gorge. When we finally go to bed, it’s not long before the rain comes down.

It’s cold and overcast when we leave the following morning and head west past Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake. There was once was a volcano here, Baatar explains, showing where you can still see the volcanic layers of the Khorgo Crater. We drive through several water crossings and the track is full



WARM WELCOME Traditional gers are nonetheless equipped with modern comforts (middle) and the friendly residents (left) will invite tourists in for a bite of cheese (insert) and a sip of arak (above).

SPECIAL REPORT

of mud as we turn north after the lake and begin to climb a mountain pass. Then we drive through a beautiful valley on our way to Jargalant.

When we leave the town, we cross the Ider River and another mountain pass has us climbing higher than 2 100 m. Here the gers make way for timber homes, because this area gets heavy snow in winter. “Sometimes this part is called the Switzerland of Mongolia,” Bataar says. “In winter it can reach -40°C.”

BY LUNCHTIME THE NEXT DAY we find ourselves in Moron, the capital of northern Mongolia. It’s a busy place with lots of traffic and so we soon leave the town on a tar road and aim for Lake Khovsgol in the far north.

At 2 760 km², the Khovsgol is the second

largest freshwater lake in the country. It extends over 130 km and is the younger sister of the world’s largest freshwater lake, the famous Lake Baikal in Russia, barely 200 km northeast from here. After a long and tough drive, we camp on the edge of a forest near the southern tip of the lake.

We spend the next day at the lake and sleep at a ger camp about 30 km away. It’s a welcome break before we head south again the next day. In the afternoon, we explore the lake by boat and even meet a family who farms with red deer (the kind that pulls Santa’s sleigh). They show us these interesting animals, tell us about their lifestyle, and we enjoy arak and some cheese, of course.

It rains during the night – and the next day our route is full of water crossings and mud tracks. Nevertheless, we follow



GOT ALL THE GREEN Mongolia is a water abundant country and you cross several rivers, alongside dams like Erkhel Nuur (bottom) and waterfalls like the Orkon (left). On the way you’ll come across ancient stone obelisks upon which depictions of deer have been engraved.

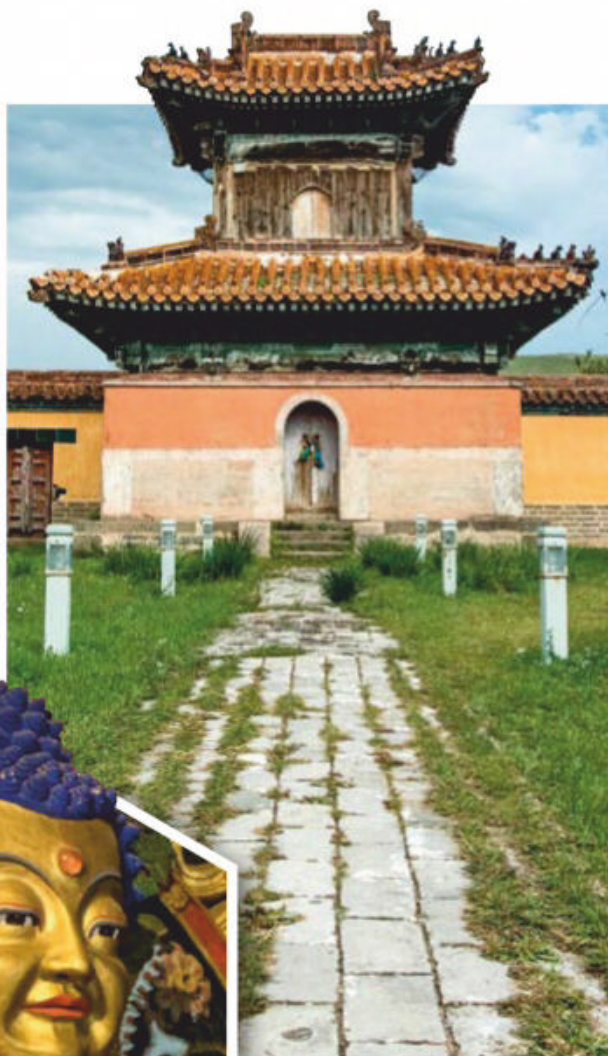
a scenic route back toward Moron which leads us across wide grasslands to Lake Erkhel Nuur. “People, I just want to say, for a farm boy like me, this is just incredible,” comes Jack Eksteen’s voice over the radio.

Late that morning we drive through a landscape reminiscent of the Wild Coast. If you replace the gers with thatched huts and the yaks with goats, you have the same undulating green hills.

After lunch in Moron, the convoy drives east on a tar road. “Boring, right?” teases Bataar after we’ve been driving on dirt roads for so many days. The road, however, runs through beautiful scenery and you’d struggle to get bored. Pastel green pastures lie on either side of the Selenge River, which meanders through clumps of forests. Pure white clouds are stacked over folding mountains in the distance, and everywhere you look it is green and lush. It looks a bit like the Overberg after good winter rains. Later, we drive past wheat and canola fields in a somewhat flatter landscape that reminds me of the Swartland, and then we set up camp near Khutag Undur, a small village along the Selenge River.

THE PENULTIMATE DAY of the tour takes us through the towns of Bulgan and





Erdenet to the Amarbayasgalant Monastery in the Iven Valley, about 350 km northwest of Ulaanbaatar. This monastery is one of few that partially escaped the Soviet Union's devastation, and the original old buildings full of colourful decorations, statues and prayer flags are something to behold. On a hill above the monastery sits a golden Buddha overlooking the valley.

Tomorrow, it's back to the city and then home. So I go for one last long walk in this lush green landscape with its endless vistas full of grass, friendly people, camels and cows in skirts. And, of course, hard cheese and arak. A sense of calm washes over me as I say goodbye to it all and I know: this enchanting country will see me again one day.

A PLACE OF OF CALM If you can't find inner peace in the scenic landscape and spectacular campsites (top middle), perhaps you'll be enlightened at one of the Bhuddist temples (top and insert) along the way.



Josef and Nelie Coetzee

VEREENIGING

"Mongolia feels like that old-world country where our grandfathers lived. What we will remember best is the treelessness of the Gobi Desert, the green undulating landscape, the undisturbed animals, the rough roads and the double-humped camels. It's an incredible sensory experience!"

I also want to go!



What will you drive? Each couple, group or family gets their own Toyota Land Cruiser or a similar 4x4 with low range and diff lock.

What is provided? All meals, lodging, vehicle, fuel and park, toll and guide rates are included. Each vehicle is equipped with the necessary camping equipment.

What should I bring? Outdoor clothing for hot and cold weather, battery chargers and adaptors, a headlight, insect repellent, personal medication and a valid international driver's license.

Where will I sleep? In Ulaanbaatar, you sleep in a hotel and in the countryside, accommodation varies between camping in the rooftop tents, and formal tourist camps where you sleep in your own ger.

What about meals? The food your guides prepare as well as the restaurants in the ger camps are adapted for Westerners (also vegetarians), although there are traditional dishes on the menu as well.

Do I need a visa? Yes. It costs around R450 and the tour operator helps with the paperwork.

For how long? The tour lasts 17 nights and 18 days.

When? The next tour is 5-25 August 2020.

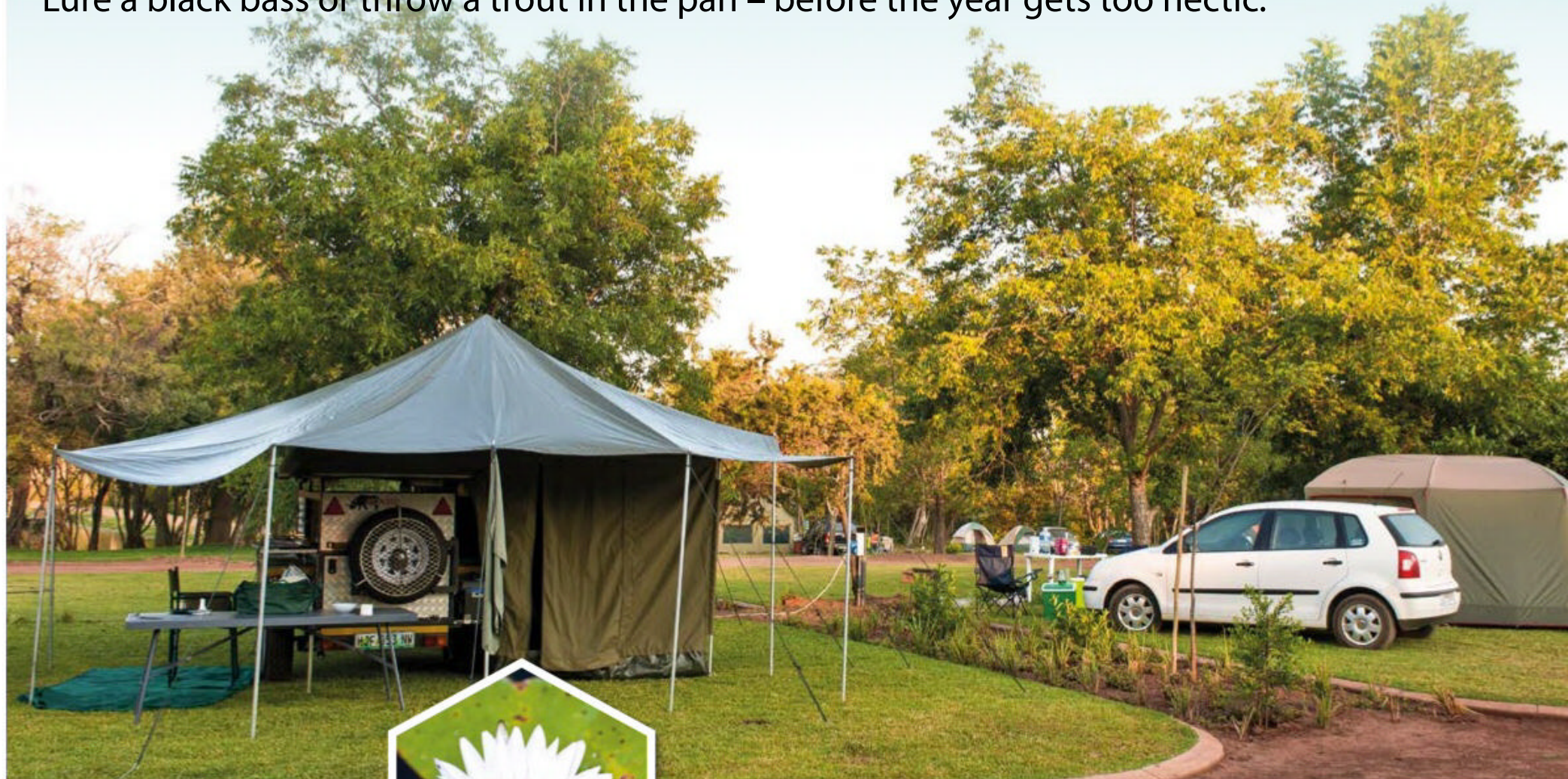
Contact  livethejourney.co.za

 weg@livethejourney.co.za

 021 863 6400

By the still waters

Lure a black bass or throw a trout in the pan – before the year gets too hectic.



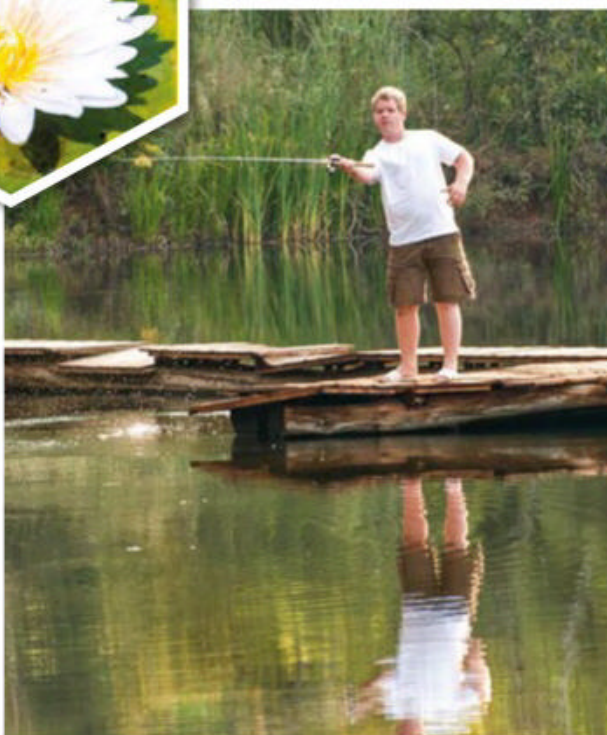
BASS LAKE LUXE CAMPING

There aren't many campsites where you get greeted with a drink as would happen in a luxury hotel. At the Bass Lake lodge, your camp is barely pitched before the staff approach with a tray bearing a glass of juice for everyone. Get ready for a wonderful visit, because there is no shortage of hospitality here.

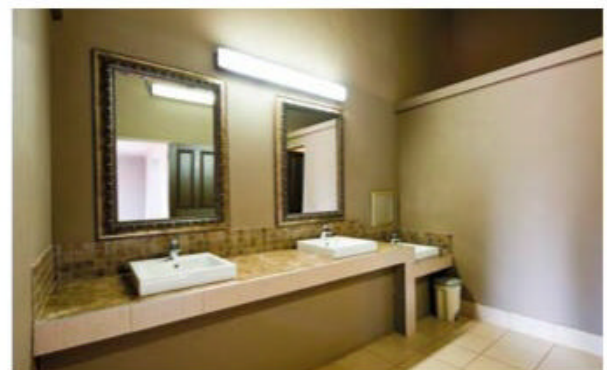
"Camp" and "luxury" aren't often used in one sentence, but resorts increasingly focus on the comfort of campers, especially north of Pretoria. It's clear that Leon and Meléne van den Heever, the owners of Bass Lake, have made this approach part of their management style.

CAMP LAYOUT

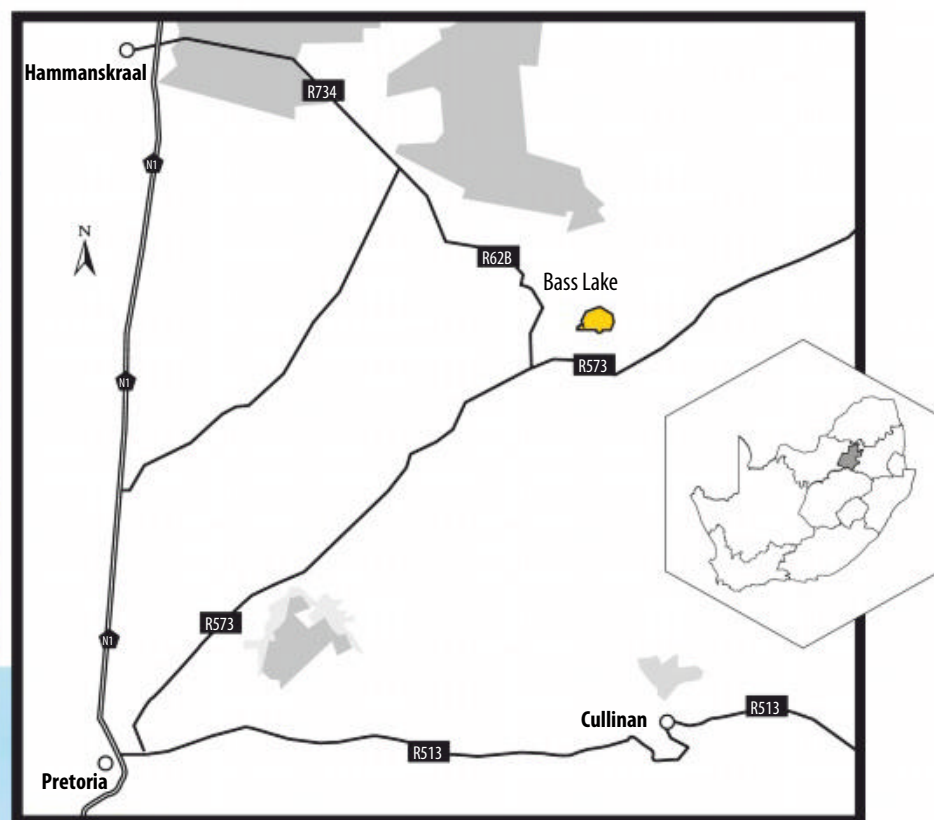
The 34 neatly demarcated stands are laid out on either side of two "main streets" and each has a neat curb all around with a garden bed next to it.



Leave your spirit level at home, because here you won't have to struggle at all to get the caravan level. In fact, the green buffalo grass carpet on the stands is flat enough to make any bowling enthusiast's heart beat faster. Like the fence, some of the trees between the stands are still on the young side, but the stands in the western



row (19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29 and 30) have some large trees that give wonderful shade in the afternoon. By the way, stands 28, 29 and 30 are best for people in a wheelchair because the bathroom facilities adapted for wheelchair use are close by. Most stands are larger than 100 m², and big enough to accommodate even the largest imported



caravan – standing straight or crosswise – and there's plenty of room for your tribe.

The power points are between the stands in the garden beds; each point with its caravan-type socket is shared between 2-4 stands, and depending on where you are, you will need a 10-15m extension cord. You share the tap and garbage bin with your neighbour.

Next to the reception area is a small shop with sweet treats for everyone – from toffee apples and a variety of jams to rusks and cookies. You can also buy basic items such as wood, soft drinks and ice cream here. Although there are no credit card facilities, there is an ATM where you can draw cash.

WASH IN STYLE

Ask any camper what their first condition is for a decent campsite, and the answer will usually be the bathrooms. If prospective property owners want to see how this is done, pay this place a visit.

The two bathrooms are located at opposite ends of the camp. One is closer to the reception and pool, while the other is closer to the dam. From the outside, these

round thatched buildings look ordinary, but walk inside and it looks like a bathroom in a wealthy neighbourhood. The basins stand on a marble top, and on the wall are mirrors in whose frames a Van Gogh painting would look good. It's not only the finishes that are excellent, the layout is also practical: on the one end, next to the larger washbasins, the marble top is lower, with its own mirror, especially for the kids.

The shower cubicles are more like a wet room. You have enough hanging space for your clothes and there's a bench on the dry side and a glass door on the shower side. There's even a make-up room on the women's side. Meléne says things can get quite busy in that room. Just like the bathroom, there is also a marble top with framed mirrors.

Next to the women's facilities is a family bathroom for everyone, and both bathrooms have an undercover sink for washing dishes.

BRING YOUR FRIENDS

There's also a private bush camp if you and your camping friends want to camp together. It's secluded and about 300 m

Briefly | Bass Lake



Fish Black bass and breams.

Campsite 34 large, level and demarcated stands on lovely grass, plus a private bush camp for up to 4 families.

Ablution facilities 2 blocks that make you feel like a king, plus another in the bush camp.

Price Depending on the season and specific day, R275-R700 pn per site for the first 4 people at the usual stands, plus R55-R140 pp thereafter (maximum 6 people). R1 125-R1 950 pn for the bush camp (for up to 16 people and 4 vehicles).

Arrival and departure times Peak times 12:00 in both cases, but times change depending on the season.

Contact 012 735 1650

basslakelodge.co.za

info@basslakelodge.co.za

Nearest town Cullinan, 26 km.

What does the road look like? The last 2,5 km is a dirt road and good enough for a road caravan.

GPS S25.51502 E28.48862

Drive & Camp says If you and the black bass are still duelling, the kids won't be bored. On most Saturdays, there is a tractor with a trailer that takes the kids on a game drive where they can see anything from kudu and zebra to black impala and blue wildebeest.

away from the other stands. There's enough space for four families, and even though it is a bush camp, there are three power points (the blue plug type). In addition, this camp has its own modern ablution block that blends neatly with the surroundings and consists of a shower, toilet and wash basin.

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

Leon says they have owned the land and lodge, which is barely 100 meters from the campsite, for several years. "It has always been our dream to develop a luxury campsite like the one you see

here today. Right from the start, the focus was on indulgence. We know campers are particular about bathrooms, and your resort gets judged on that as well." Leon and Meléne are themselves campers, and so they know what they would expect.

The name, "Bass Lake," does not seem to have much to do with camping. But Leon explains many campers also like fishing and they added black bass and breams to the dam. Just remember, the fish should be returned to the water after you catch it.



FISHING GEAR

A weighty business

Although you associate the name Cheburashka with a Russian comic book character from the 1960s, it is also the name of a piece of fishing equipment that comes in handy when trying to outwit a fish with artificial lure.

Fishing gear distributors Adrenalin imports the Cheburashka Jig Head from Poland. In essence, it is a loose lead weight that fits between the line and the hook. You do get hooks with a permanent weight – known as a jig head – but the Cheburashka is separate from the hook, which makes your lures more versatile in the water.

The weight has a flat hole through the middle into which a hooked shape wire fits, almost like a paper clip. When you push the wire through the weight, it forms an eye on either side. The hook's eye fits through one eye and the line to your fishing rod knots to the other side.

So it's a great combination for anglers using artificial bait, especially those wanting to catch bass, but the heavier weights work just as well if you're in an estuary, for example, looking for a cob.

The weights are available in 10 different sizes – from 2 g to 40 g (the 28 g and 40 g work well for ocean fish).

In addition to the natural lead colour, you can also choose between black, red and olive.

Price Depending on the size, R30-R45 per pack of 10 (The 28 g and 40 g versions have five in a pack).

Contact Adrenalin Importers & Distributors (importers) 021 982 1510

adrenalinfishing.co.za

catches@4adrenalin.co.za



FISH DISH

PAN-FRIED TROUT WITH CREAM Everyone's favourite

Any fish can be cooked this way in a pan over the coals. Make sure you have some bread to dip in the creamy sauce. You can also use fish fillets – simply adjust the cooking time.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 red onion or 4 shallots, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely crushed
- 1-2 fennel bulbs, thickly sliced
- 1 small trout or another firm fish
- 1 cup cream

Here's how

1 Melt the butter in a pan and sauté the onions, garlic and fennel until the mixture is glossy and almost tender. Don't allow it to brown.

2 Place the fish in the pan, cover and braai for 15 minutes over moderate heat or until the fish is almost cooked.

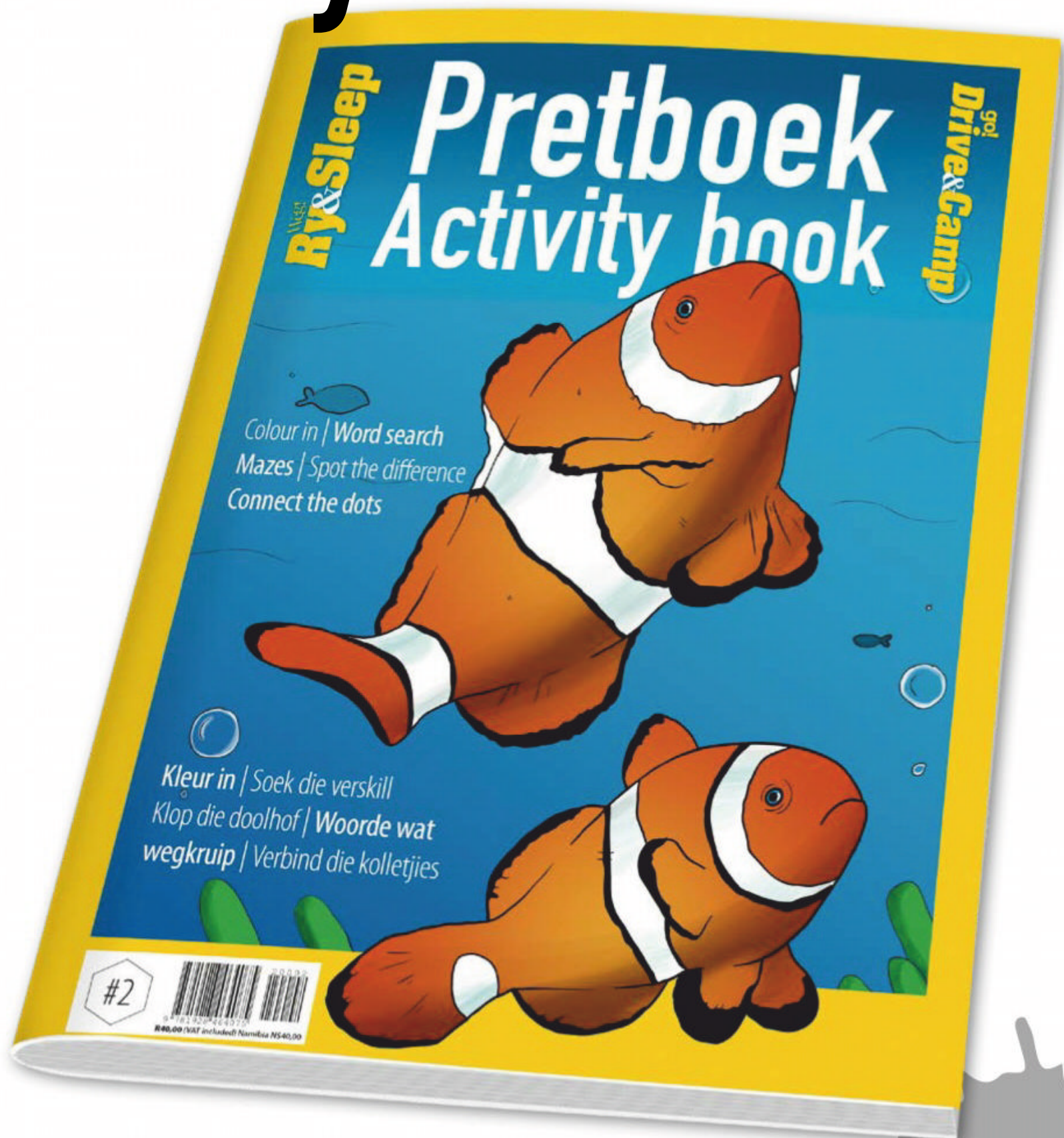
3 Add the cream, season with salt and black pepper and allow to simmer.

4 Remove the pan from the heat as soon as the fish is cooked. Serve with mashed potatoes.

Drive & Camp says It takes a mere five minutes to get everything ready, and half an hour later, you can serve the meal.



Add some colour to your life...



Our newest colouring and activity book has just landed in time for the holidays – pick one up and keep your kids entertained for hours.

go!
Drive&Camp

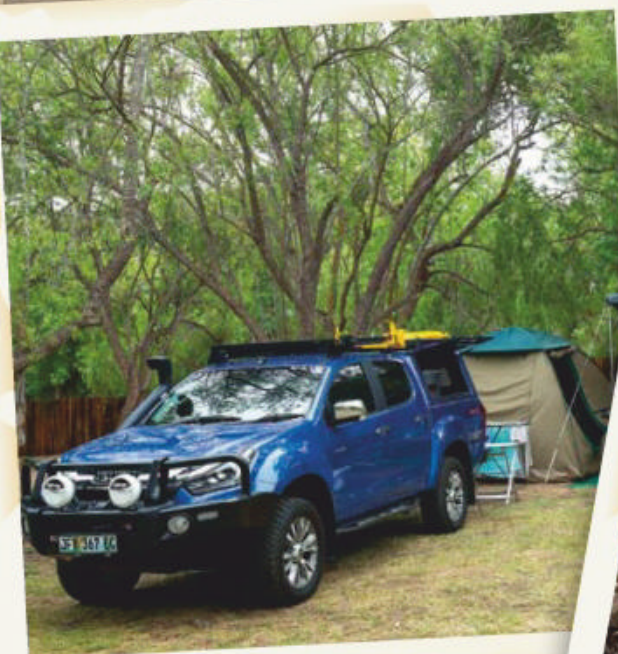
**Now on
sale in
shops**

Thanks for the memories...

We say goodbye to our long-term test vehicle after a year filled with adventures. With 43 172 km behind us – almost all of them from long-distance trips and plenty of dirt roads – we got to know the D-Max rather well. Here are our final impressions.

Words **Cyril Kloppe** Photos **Leon Botha, Evan Naudé, Cyril Kloppe**

ISUZU D-MAX 3.0LX 4X4



When we took delivery of the Isuzu D-Max in October 2018, we wrote that we were looking to give it a nickname, but motoring journalists rarely get sentimental over vehicles and for the greater part of the year, we simply referred to the D-Max as, well, "the D-Max".

But sometimes when we spent several days in the D-Max and relied on it for a good article, its name was "Big Blue". It may be an obvious nickname, but we nevertheless used it with affection. It wasn't until the end of its testing period at *Drive & Camp* that Schalk came up with "Ou Grote" (Ol' Big Guy).

This name comes from deaf Afrikaans rugby commentator Zandberg Jansen who concluded his weekly show with the salutation "Nag, ou grote" and sometimes added a cheeky comment like: "Will you be dancing tonight or does your neck hurt?"

"Ou Grote" was, of course, Zandberg's nickname for Frans "Domkrag" Erasmus, a prop for the then Eastern Province who was known for his powerful scrumming and devastating rushes. The name seemed to fit our D-Max, because besides the fact that both Erasmus and the D-Max hail from the Eastern Cape, the D-Max also powered over obstacles and chased down challenges.

What did we like?

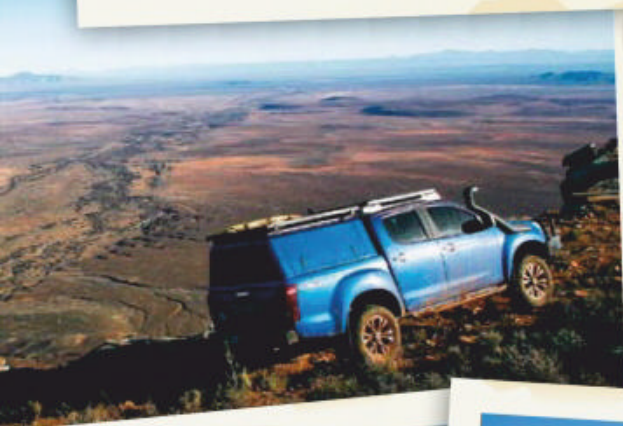
Back then, we wrote that our D-Max drove as if it were a ship out at sea, but that the vague steering action would be a good thing on technical terrain. Later, our Ou Grote would smartly swerve around hundreds of potholes and the "vague steering" was never an issue.

We also mentioned that its brakes were not particularly sharp, due to the tonne of accessories, but we were able to stop fast enough when a kudu jumped out in front of us in the Tankwa Karoo National Park.

After thousands of kilometres on corrugated dirt roads, dust never leaked into the cabin and there were no squeaking noises. Reading these words, it may seem that Isuzu have us in their pocket, and the editorial team dug deep to find negative issues to highlight, but in the end, there really was very little to complain about.

What wasn't that great?

Our D-Max behaved well, but it remains a machine and no machine is infallible. In March 2019 in Thabazimbi, we heard a clicking sound from the right front wheel and found grease leaking from the CV joint boot. An Isuzu mechanic from Potchefstroom determined that a damaged transverse shaft



LONG-TERM DRIVING IMPRESSION

had damaged the CV joint. But, apart from this mechanical fault, the D-Max never put a foot wrong.

The optional extras, however, are a different story...

- The T-Max 12 500 winch's fuse burnt out after we recovered an off-road caravan in Mozambique – fortunately there *is* a fuse that prevents the winch from overheating and conking out!
- The Desert Armour rock sliders did a great job protecting the body when we crawled over rocks, but the body paint on the rear wheel arches got roosted because the rock sliders couldn't prevent gravel and pebbles from hitting the paintwork.
- Front Runner's roof rack on the cabin held fast, but the same company's bracket for the T-Max-48" high-lift jack began to rattle after a while. Upon closer inspection, we discovered that the bracket was coming apart, and we had to either leave the high-lift jack at home or chuck it in the back where, of course, it would slide around freely and cause havoc with our camping equipment.
- The Desert Armour sliding frame for the Engel fridge/freezer severed its power cable and we had to redirect a new cable to where it would not be cut.
- The RSI canopy leaked dust after months of use and especially the cutlery in the kitchen cupboard was regularly covered in a layer of dust. RSI's SmartRack roof rack also came apart on the corrugated tracks of the West Coast National Park and we had to secure with cable ties lest it fell off on its own.
- But the biggest issue was with the extra 60 £ fuel tank that supplemented the standard

“

There were some hiccups, but they mostly had to do with the accessories and we could always leave with confidence on a trip...

”



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	3.0 LX 4x4
Engine	2 999 cc, four-cylinder turbodiesel
Power	130 kW @ 3 600 rpm
Torque	380 Nm @ 1 800 rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Fuel consumption (tested)	11,8 ℓ/100 km (8,5 km/ℓ)
Tank	80 ℓ + 60 ℓ
Approach and departure angles	30° and 22,7°
Wading depth	600 mm
Ground clearance	220 mm
Warranty	5 years / 120 000 km
Service plan	5 years / 90 000 km
Safety rating	★★★★ (Euro NCAP, 2012)

PRICE (when we got it) R594 500

PRICE (today) R640 500

FULLY LOADED. The was never an order too tall for the D-Max, and it trudged on through mud, soft sand and over rocky trails. The accessories always came in handy, and the D-Max also towed effortlessly.

80 ℓ tank. This really messed with the Isuzu's tin brain. We expected this to happen, but what we couldn't predict was that the range readout would often indicate that we had an estimated 200 km left over, and then, immediately, the fuel light would blink on and we'd have to cross fingers in the hope of reaching the nearest petrol station inside the remaining 60 km.

In conclusion

Just like Frans Erasmus, our D-Max has done itself proud, even if it hasn't quite achieved the legendary status of Ray Mordt and Syd Nomis. There were some hiccups, but they mostly had to do with the accessories and we could always leave with confidence on a trip, knowing that this blue bakkie would always get us back home safely.

Goodnight, old man. Look after the people who'll be travelling in you next.



COMPETITORS

Large capacity double-cabs with four-wheel drive and automatic transmission.



R592 800

Mazda BT-50 3.2 SLE 4x4

There's nothing wrong with the BT-50, but it's as popular as a dental appointment.



R629 300

Ford Ranger 3.2 TDCi XLT 4x4

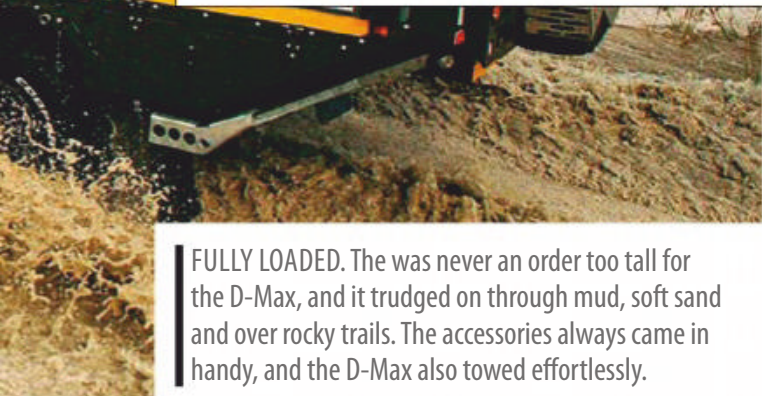
Ford gives its 2.0 double turbo preferential treatment, but the 3,2 ℓ diesel actually rules.



R675 500

Toyota Hilux 2.8 GD6 4x4

Still the top seller – with the biggest range of after-sales accessories.



Queue up!

It might not be obvious at first glance, but there's nothing wrong with Audi Q3's towing muscles!

Words and photos **Leon Botha**



AUDI Q3 35 TFSI S LINE



Thanks to technological advances over the last few decades, today's vehicles are more economical, safer and much stronger than before. The Audi Q3 is a perfect example. Half a century ago, Audi's most similar sized petrol engine – the 1,5 l in the 1972 model Audi 60 – produced 114 Nm. Nowadays, the Q3's 1,4 l petrol engine kicks in with more than twice that much power, which of course means you tow with a smile.

Three Q3 models are available, all with the same petrol engine (1 395 cc) that gives 250 Nm and 110 kW. And all three models have the same smooth automatic transmission. The price of the cheapest and the most expensive model differs by around R34 000, and if you fork

out an additional R10 500, you can equip the Q3 with the optional towbar.

What do the numbers say?

According to the booklet, the Q3 can tow a braked caravan of up to 2 000 kg, but that weight is different on the specification plaque in the door. I reads you're limited to 1 800 kg. If you subtract the gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 2 055 kg from the gross combination mass (GCM) of 3 855 kg, it does leave you with a maximum permissible tow load of 1,8 t.

This is only theoretical, however, because its tare weight is 1 435 kg; the caravan's GVM may not exceed 1 435 kg. In addition, the electric towbar has a load test index

of 12,6 kN. This is equivalent to 1 285 kg. You're not limited to this weight, but it is the mass at which the towbar's certification test was performed.

A sticker on the car says the towbar has a maximum vertical weight limit of 90 kg, while the towbar itself is certified for 100 kg. This is also the maximum allowed by the legislation for the nose weight of your caravan.

These figures are a good fit for a medium-sized road caravan. So, we hitched a new Sprite Swing with a GVM of 1 240 kg to see how the Q3 performs.

Ready for action

This is the second generation of the Q3 and it's slightly larger than its predecessor: 9,6 cm longer and 1,8 cm wider (the wheelbase is also 7,7 cm longer).

When you get in, the car feels roomier, too, and when it comes to electronics, it doesn't stand back for its big brothers – not even the huge Q8.

The storage space in the doors is so spacious that you can squeeze almost your whole arm into it, and the people in the back seat can't complain either: other than similar storage space in the doors, they also get an elongated narrow container on either side of the seat in which the little ones can place pencils or extra flash drives. Good and practical.

As with most new SUVs, the Q3 has an electric towbar, in this case an Oris-Matic. But it's just the release mechanism that's electric. To swing the towbar from behind the bumper, pull a button on the right at the back of the boot. This activates the release and the towbar swings out halfway. Now you have to swing it around the bumper by hand and lift it until it clicks into place. To retract the towbar, you pull the same button and it swings down again, after which you push it the last bit behind the bumper. (This button doesn't work when the car is moving or when the boot is closed.)

The detachable light fitting must be plugged into the shaft portion of the towbar to work with locally manufactured caravans.

When you reverse toward the caravan and want to use the reverse screen, switch on the Trailer View early. Now a straight line on the screen points away from the towbar. As you turn the steering wheel, the line curves in the direction you reverse, and it helps you get right to the coupler of the caravan





What does our towing expert, Pieter Crous, think?

“It’s surprising how comfortable the Q3 tows a caravan in the city. You hardly feel the caravan, and it’s hard to believe the car has such a small engine.

In many automatic vehicles, you cannot see which gear you’re in. In the Q3, you don’t have that problem, even in Drive mode. In addition, you get a digital speed reading as well as the electronic analogue display.

Because the Q3 is front wheel driven, you expect the steering to pull straight if you pull away with the wheels slightly turned, but that’s not the case at all.

On the highway, the Q3 is perfectly happy towing the caravan of almost a tonne. At 110 km/h, the gearbox chooses fifth gear and the revs are around 2 500 rpm. The small engine retains the momentum of the tow combination, and you can even accelerate if you have to deal with some uphill. You can hear the engine working hard, but it certainly doesn’t struggle. And its road-holding ability is like that of a sports car – even

when going around bends with the caravan.

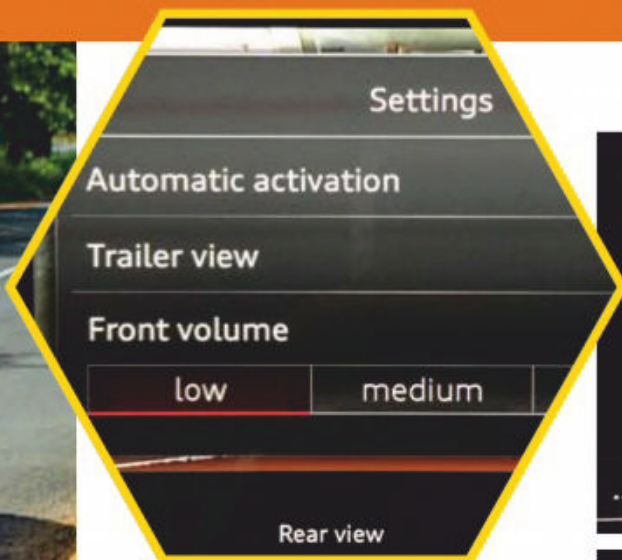
During the tow test, there was a strong wind from the side, but I didn’t feel it. This is surprising, especially when you look at the physical size and area surface of the caravan. The Q3 is actually a relatively light vehicle.

At first I didn’t think its 250 Nm would be sufficient, but it was more than enough and it felt stronger than the numbers suggest.

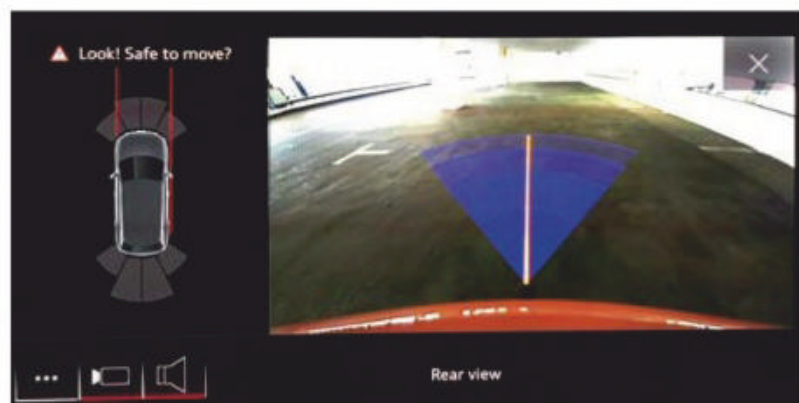
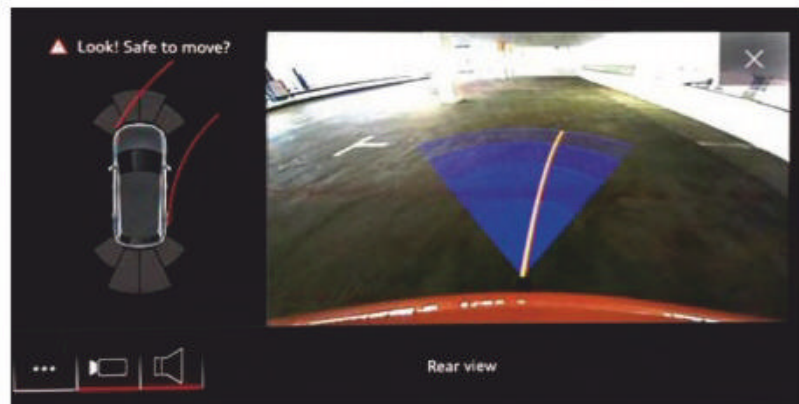
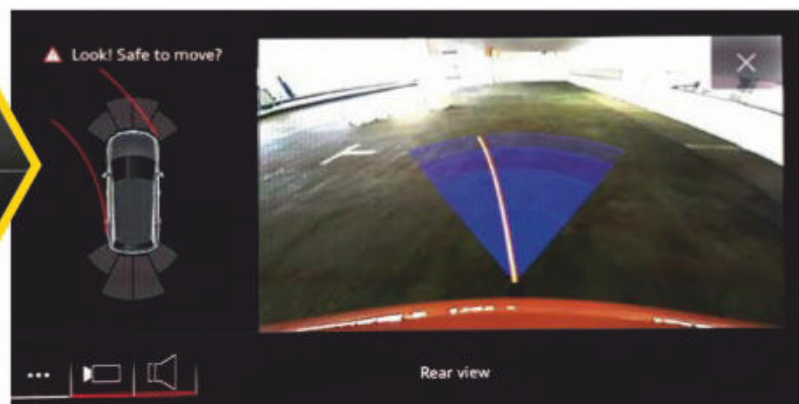
The car’s acceleration of 80-120 km/h surprised me the most: only 13 seconds, which compares well with more powerful vehicles (though it was in Sport mode).

Fuel consumption is high, but that’s to be expected because the petrol engine has to show off to compensate for its size. With its 14,5 l/100 km (that’s 6,9 km/l), you can tow just over 400 km before you have to fill up again.

I feel about Audi the way I do about Volkswagen: every time I tow with one, I’m impressed. I have to say, though, that it comes with a solid price tag.”



LET ME HELP WITH THAT The Trailer View is perfect for those who wish to use their Q3 for towing. A yellow line appears in the reverse camera display and bends as you turn the steering wheel.



TOW TEST

The caravan

Make Sprite

Model Swing

Year model 2019

GVM 1 240 kg

Loaded weight on axle during test 940 kg

Drive & Camp borrowed the new Sprite Swing from Tygerberg Caravans. Call Wesley Dempster on 021 982 4670 if you want to take a closer look at the Swing.
tygerbergcaravans.co.za



without any assistance. Once you hitch the caravan, the computer knows it and disables the Trailer View; also the reverse sensors remain silent when reversing with the caravan.

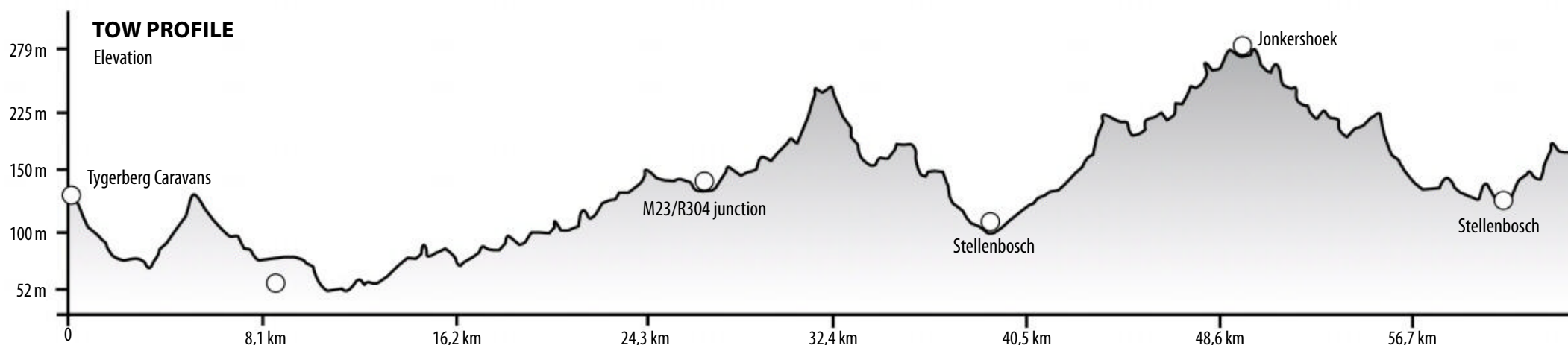
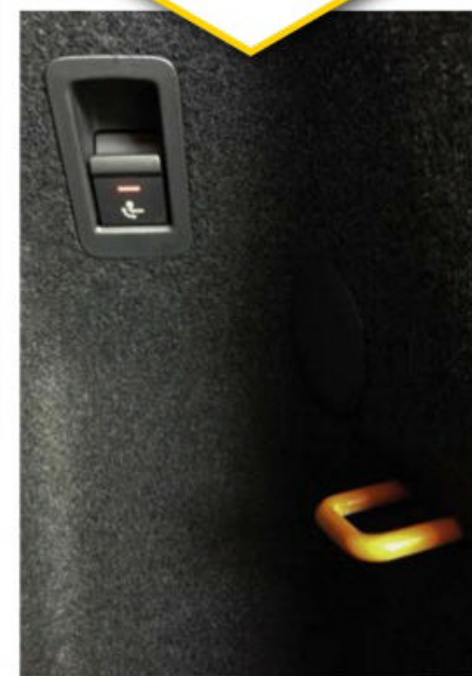
In the background, the Q3 also keeps an eye on the caravan lights. When you use the indicators, a double green arrow flashes to the left of the dashboard. It means everything is working as it should. If it doesn't flash twice as fast as the indicators, something is wrong with the lights.

The Q3's caravan stabilisation system is an integral part of its electronic stability control (ESC), which kicks in as soon as you exceed 65 km/h. You can also use a stabiliser on your caravan, but Audi warns you not to tow faster than 80 km/h. With a stabiliser, they advise not faster than 100 km/h.



ON HAND The electric hitch hides behind the rear bumper when not in use. When you need to use the hitch you only need to press a button and wait for it to deploy.

Drive & Camp says
The towbar can take a bicycle rack with a total weight of 75 kg.





SPECIFICATIONS

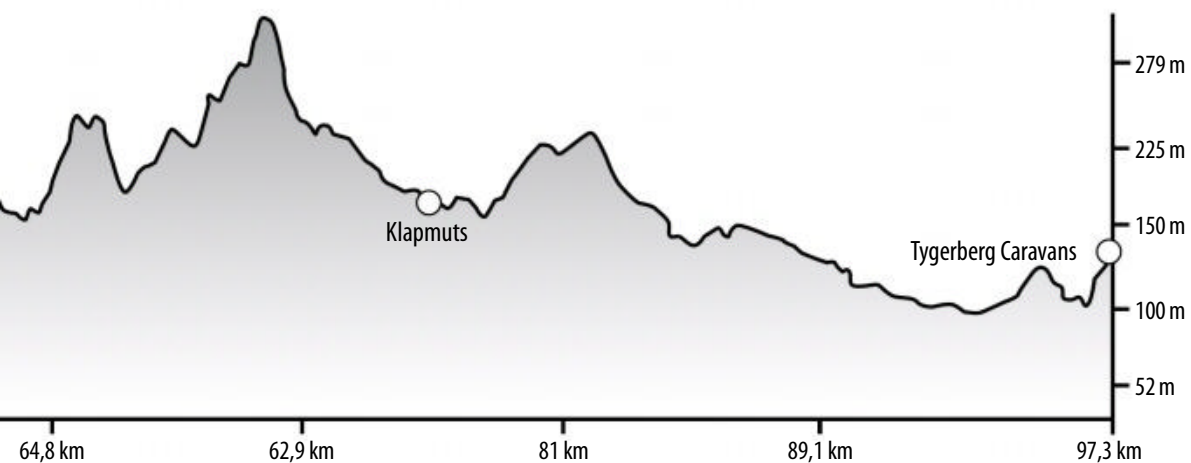
Model	35 TFSI S line S-tronic
Engine	4 cylinder turbo petrol
Power	110 kW
Torque	250 Nm
Transmission	6 speed automatic
Drive	front wheel
Tank	64 ℓ
Fuel consumption with caravan	14,5 ℓ/100 km (6,9 km/ℓ)
Range with caravan	442 km
Tare weight	1 435 kg
Weight during test (nose weight of caravan included)	1 900 kg
GVM	2 055 kg
GCM	3 855 kg
Combination mass during test	2 840 kg
Towing capacity	2 000 kg
Towbar's maximum pulling weight D-value	12.6 kN (1 285 kg)
Towbar's maximum vertical weight	90 kg
Is the towbar removable?	No
Does a drop plate fit?	No
PRICE	R599 000
PRICE AS TESTED	R782 750

Distance 97,3 km

Average speed 39 km/h (freeways, back roads and built-up areas)

Driving time 2 hours and 30 minutes.

Weather 21°C, partly cloudy with a strong south-southeasterly wind of 31 km/h. 🌪



From the competitors (SUVs with petrol engines)



R559 000

BMW X1 sDrive18i

220 Nm



R532 322

Mercedes-Benz GLA 200 FL

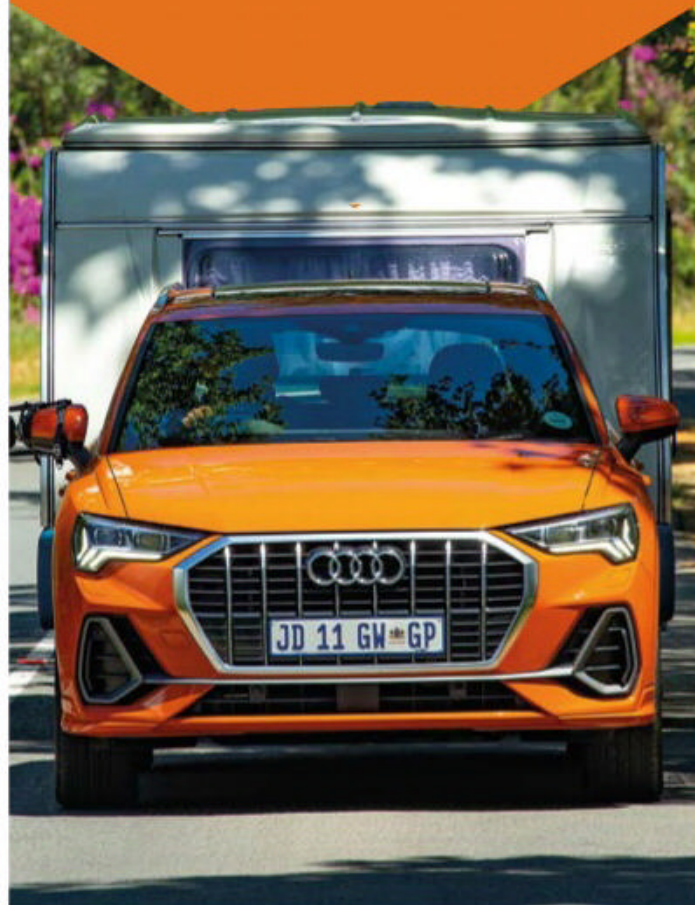
250 Nm



R311 500

Mazda CX-3 2.0 16V

206 Nm



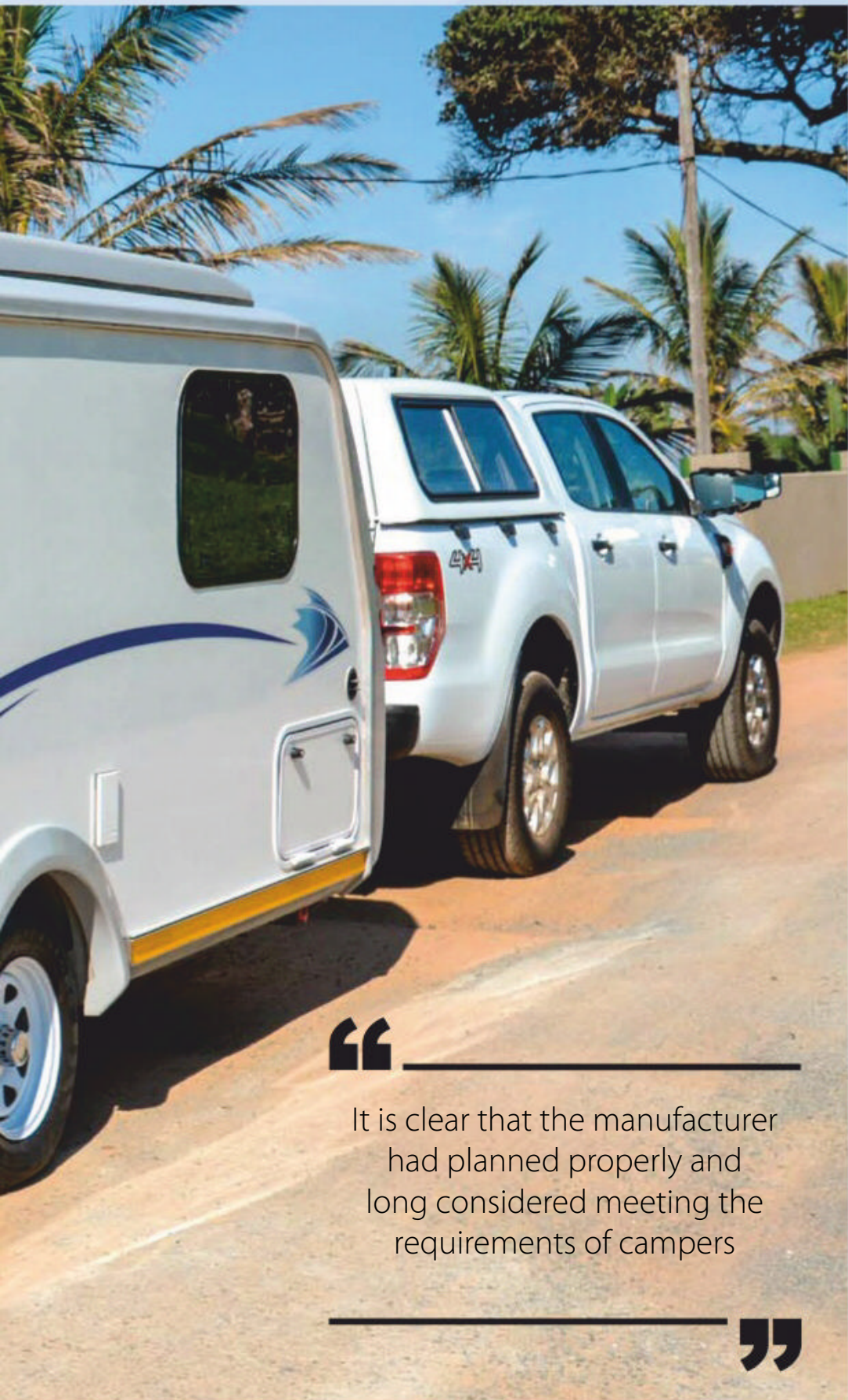


STEALTH EVOLUTION XR594

Swish Stealth

Durban caravan manufacturer Stealth constantly improves its models. The Evolution XR594 is a telling example.

Words and photos **Schalk Jonker**



“ It is clear that the manufacturer had planned properly and long considered meeting the requirements of campers ”

Stealth's caravans made an impression as soon as it opened shop a year ago. It is clear that the manufacturer had planned properly and long considered meeting the requirements of campers. This range of road caravans, for example, has no wood in the panels and fits into a standard garage.

Any manufacturer, however, needs to keep his eyes peeled for other elements to improve, and it's gratifying to see how Stealth is constantly making adjustments to keep track with the market. Just look at the XR594: this caravan has enough space for four people and it now boasts many clever new features.



At every corner

The caravan's front and rear corner steadies differ – not something you see every day. At the back are two scissor struts, while the front two are the same as the corner steadies you get on off-road trailers.

Because of their design, the front ones work easier and quicker, and although they can't swing at an angle when standing on an uneven surface, they work equally well to get your caravan steady.



Storage stories

The door is on the left of the caravan, to the right of the wheel. An outside cupboard, with its door folding down as a worktop, sits diagonally to the left above the wheel. A pole support the surface when you fold it down and it's at a comfortable hip height.

In the cupboard are three shelves with a 220 V double socket to the left of the middle shelf. Below the surface is a weatherproof 220 V socket. The crockery sits on the bottom shelf and is stored in cut-outs. Above the shelf on the hull is an LED to provide light.



Kitchen tales

A drawer with a twin-plate gas stove and a plastic basin for dirty dishes draws from the left cupboard near the nose. The sink is at the far end of the caravan and recessed. Next to the basin is a nozzle connected to a water hose.

With the drawer pulled out, the stove fits crosswise in the surface. Between the stove and the basin at the other end is an

open area measuring 44 cm, which is enough work space to prepare a meal.

A screen, as wide as the stove, sits against the caravan's hull and prevents fat from splattering on it. A side screen then folds out on the opposite corner and hooks into this one. It forms a 36 cm high L-shaped screen against the wind.

The stove is by Defy like the

other appliances (microwave and fridge). It's not connected to the gas cylinder; you need to remove the loose cylinder from the nose and carry it around to the kitchen.

A cutlery drawer pulls out between the stove and the basin, with a loose stainless steel slab that hooks in at the top of the drawer and serves as an extra worktop.





Front and centre

The lid at the Stealth's front lifts up and out of the way, and it's great that the opening (151 x 50 cm) is about the size of the space itself. It makes it easy to load stuff in and out.

The 25 ℓ water container sits on the left inside and the 5 kg gas cylinder on the right, with the spare wheel in the middle.

On either side of the nose,

below the corners of the hull, are white pilot lights that are connected to your car's lights. When you look in the wing mirrors, you see both lights just past your car's body.

It comes in handy if you want to reverse straight in the dark, because once the caravan swerves, the lights will warn you of it.



Step inside!

Because the door has a recessed step, you don't have to take along a portable one.

The grocery cupboard is inside the caravan, directly to the left of the door. The shelves are accessible from outside.

The switches for the interior and exterior lights as well as the water pump are under this cupboard and above the fire extinguisher. The interior lights comprise of two flat LED strips on the ceiling.

The pop-up roof rises an extra 46 cm and measures 1,91 m above the floor. As you get in, you face a fridge, against the opposite wall. To the right is a dining area that converts into a double bed and on your left is the main island.

When you step in and look back toward the door, there is a cabinet to the right of the door

with four distinct spaces. The top left one opens into the same space as the one you open from next to the door. The cupboard directly below it has no shelves, but houses the circuit breakers (and the wheel arch takes up some of the space). The top right one also has three shelves, the bottom two of which form the open backs of the outdoor kitchen cupboard. This one (as well as the one under it) each has two sliding doors.

The 158 ℓ refrigerator has two plastic clips with nylon straps that snap together to lock the doors when you're towing. The microwave is chest height to the left of the fridge with a spacious cupboard for pots below.

A basin is to the left of the microwave, below a mirror and there's a 220 V power outlet and two USB ports.



On the other hand

On the right side of the hull is a cupboard that is an extension of the kitchen cupboard space. The track for this drawer slides almost a metre deep, away from the door, and this space is great as extra storage. The Evolution's power connector is also over here, next to the wheel.



That leaves the bathroom

About a year ago, Stealth launched its unique outdoor shower as an optional extra for the Evolution.

It is a pop-up shower with two compartments: a dry cubicle as you get in, then next to it is the section where you shower. The water pump is an improvement over the one used in the first models and the electric geyser is a standard fixture.

The shower fits existing

models and is attached to the back of the caravan. It has a fibreglass roof that is almost as long as the caravan is wide and is fastened with hinges to the caravan. As you lift the roof, the canvas sides lower to the ground to form the two cubicles.

The shower cubicle has LEDs in the roof and a PVC floor with a mesh edge around it to allow the water to drain.



Dreamland awaits

The island bed is queen sized but tapers toward the foot-end. Beside and above the bed are no fewer than 15 cupboards and drawers for your clothes, and two drawers that pull out from under each side of the bed – something not seen in many caravans. Furthermore, you each have your own bedside table.

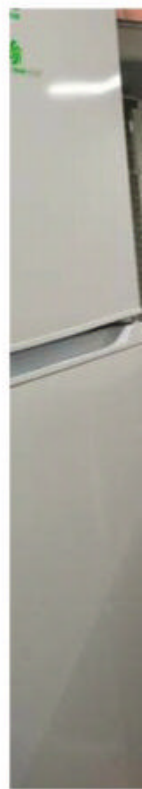
Above the bed are three cupboards that span the entire width of the caravan. The pillows are directly underneath it – be careful when you sit up straight so you don't bump your head.

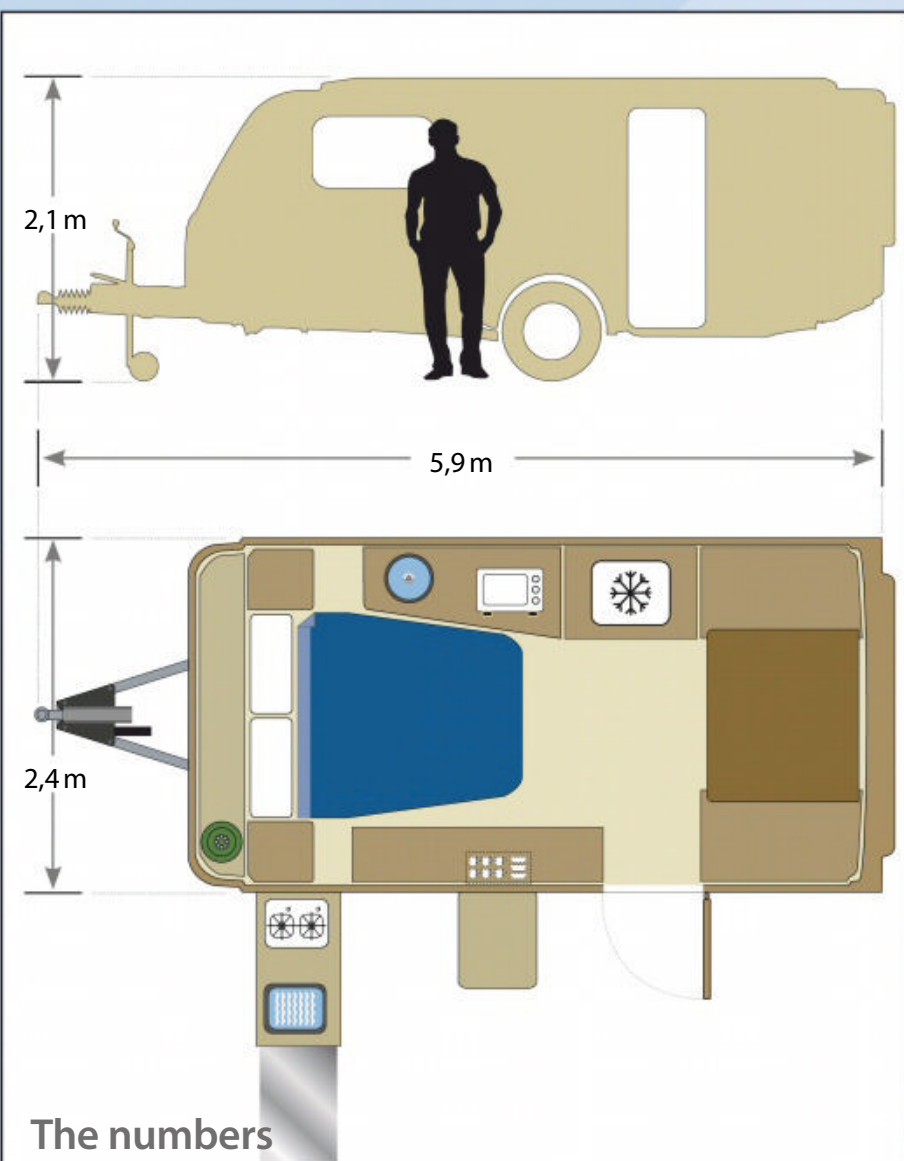
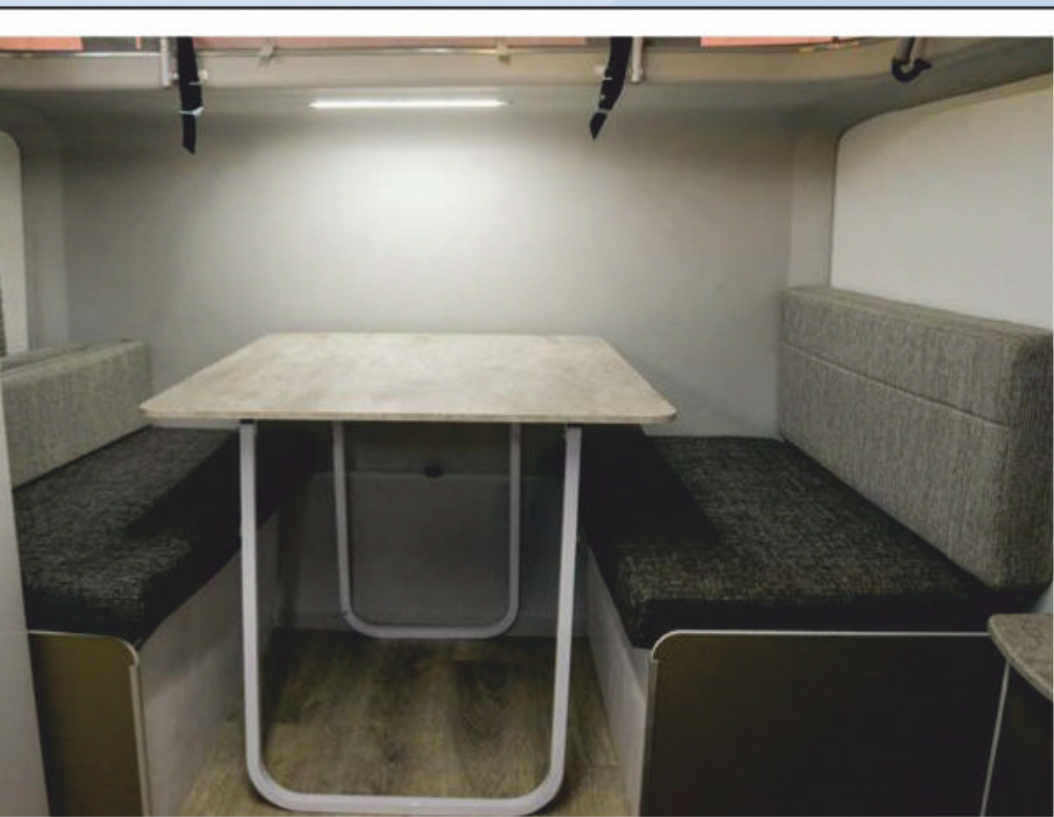
In the left-hand cupboard is a power socket, similar to the one at the basin.

On either side is a reading lamp with a flexible arm.

The dining area is at the back, to the right of the door as you enter. On each of the back corners is a couch with a table top that folds out between them. It's spacious enough for four people. There's storage space under each of the two benches.

The table top can be folded flat for the second bed – a double bed that spans the entire width of the caravan.





The numbers

Length 5,9 m
Width 2,4 m
Height 2,1 m
Headroom 1,91 m
Net weight 1 200 kg
Carrying capacity 300 kg
GVM 1 500 kg
Price From R314 500

Drive & Camp *borrowed the caravan from the manufacturer.*

Drive & Camp says The shower costs an extra R25 000. 🗣️



Plus

- The pop-up bathroom is a good idea, because you have the convenience of a bathroom without sacrificing living space inside the caravan.
- The screen around the stove is a brilliant idea.
- You could hardly ask for more storage space.



Minus

- The worktop has a lip where crumbs can get stuck.
- The electrical equipment doesn't operate without a 220 V power supply. However, a 12 V conversion is available as an optional extra.

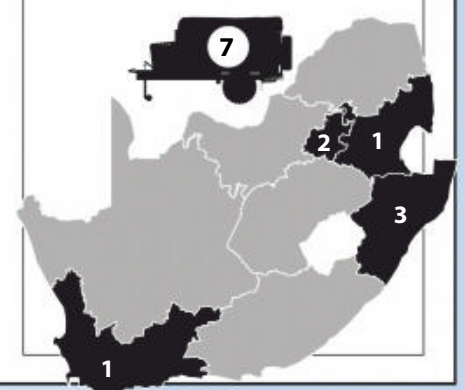
Dealer network

Head office in Durban and six dealers nationwide (Caracamp in the Western Cape, Loftus Caravan City and Kempton Caravans in Gauteng, Natal Caravans & Marine and Newcastle Leisureworld in KZN and Middelburg Caravans in Mpumalanga).

Contact 📞 031 713 8900

🌐 stealthcaravans.co.za

📧 admin@profibre.co.za



Genius hacks

Sure, there are plenty of products out there that solve every single camping problem, but have you considered that you already have much of what you need around the house?

Words and photos **Kyle Kock**

By now, most of you will have found a list on one of the popular social media platforms that supposedly has all the answers for your camping questions. There are camping hacks

aplenty on the web, but some are more effective than others. We tried some of the more popular ones ourselves so that you can make an informed choice before you cut up anything.

Fire-lighting made easy

What is it?

A cardboard tray that holds 18 eggs should do the trick. Wood is the preferred fuel of choice for many an avid camper but when you're in a pinch, placing briquettes in the individual egg holders will work just as well.

Does it work?

We recommend using the instant lighting briquette variety, otherwise you'll light

the four corners of the egg carton only to end up with a smouldering mess.

The instant lighting briquettes ignite a lot easier, but usually come in brown paper bags that end up as little pieces of burnt paper that leave ashes all over the place.

With an egg carton, there's no unnecessary ash. Yes, this one works. But you need to be patient.



Tape when you need it

What is it?

It's a roll of duct tape or insulation tape around your lighter (we used the Bic brand for the photo). The logic is that you'll never have to go scratching around in a toolbox or anywhere else you might think you've stashed this sort of gear. If you're a smoker, it might just be in your pocket or cigarette packet.

Does it work?

Provided your roll of duct tape isn't wider than the lighter (insulation tape is usually narrow enough for you to make clear lines around a lighter), then we don't see why not. Both are certainly very handy when you need them, such as having to seal a tear in your tent or quickly cover some exposed wiring.

Hand-wash station

What is it?

If you live in a water-scarce region or have had to queue for water where you live, then you'll know all about these 15-20 l cans.

Basically, you fill one of them with potable water and have your soap and kitchen paper at the ready for when you need to prepare food or sit down for a meal.

Does it work?

Absolutely. Okay, you'll need one of these cans, and

hopefully your municipality has lifted the water restrictions in your area.

But then you simply need some string, one leg from a pair of pantyhose (preferably new) and of course your favourite brand of anti-bacterial soap. After filling the can, string up the roller towel to the top and then drop the soap into the pantyhose and wrap that around the tap's neck. Easy peasy. And there's no worries about where to place the wet soap afterward.



Waterproof matches

What is it?

Everyone loves good old-fashioned matches, and if you store them properly, then you'll be able to do something that's a little trickier with a lighter.

It should be possible for you to fall into water with these and still be able to use them afterward to start the fire you need to dry your clothes and start the evening meal.

Does it work?

Yes. These small plastic containers come with a screw cap and should be good for a quick dip.

Rather than gluing the lighting strip to the top of the container as the original camping hack recommends, you should rather stick it to the inside of the lid where the red phosphate won't be damaged.

Don't fall for the same guy

What is it?

Some tents come with brightly coloured guy lines so that you don't make the mistake of tripping over one when you rise before dawn to catch a few stealthy beasts at the watering hole or when you've had one too many. But there's an easy solution for those whose lines blend in with the surroundings.

Does it work?

The pool noodle is quite versatile – as you'll see later, too. Here, you simply cut a slit in one side, and slip it over that pesky line, and you'll be sure to watch your step, especially if the noodle is brightly coloured. Two noodles should be enough for large family tents.



CAMP BOFFIN



Spice rack

What is it?

Daily medication containers are the suggested alternative to lugging along your entire Ina Paarmans and Robertsons collections.

Does it work?

Definitely,

if you're cramped for space.

But to make life easier once you're at the campsite, remember to label each compartment at home after you've filled them.

Use masking tape or stick-on labels.

Night light

What is it?

A semi-translucent plastic bottle, around 2ℓ, filled with water and with your headlamp strapped around it and pointing in toward the bottle.

Does it work?

The dairy-based

sweetened drinks like Tropicana come in bottles that are probably more suited to this type of application.

A Coke bottle might produce light that's too harsh, depending on your mood. But this soft light is palatable in just about any situation.

Padded cell

What is it?

The interlocking mats that you use in the kids' bedroom, like what you might find at a crèche or pre-school, or even at the gym, should also make an excellent floor for the inside of your tent, right?

Especially when your children are old enough to no longer need them.

Does it work?

A ground sheet doesn't really

make the inside of your tent comfortable. Even if you don't have kids, these are relatively inexpensive.

Just make sure that the section of the stand you pitch on is quite level, or that the grass isn't long, because if your tent floor has humps and bumps, it will affect how well the mats connect.

Get it right, and it makes for a good place to lay down your foam mattress.



Short drop

What is it?

When you're wild camping and don't have access to ablution facilities, it doesn't mean you're forced to squat low somewhere in the bushes. A bucket, pool noodle, twine and small spade will make a stately throne.

Does it work?

You'll need to cut a slit in the

pool noodle and then twist it around the bucket's lip to cut the noodle to just the right size. If your bucket still has its handle, then you can use that to hang your toilet paper from, or just use twine, gut or string. Cut a hole in the bucket's floor and dig a small pit under the bucket's hole. You can move the bucket around too.

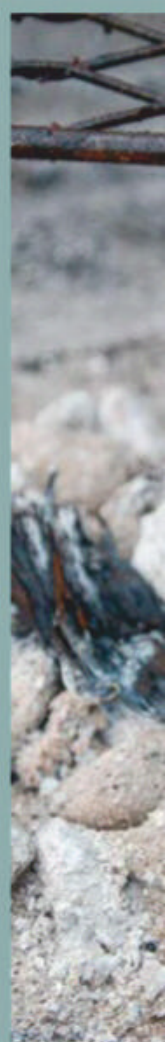
Popcorn in a can

What is it?

Your cold beverage of choice doesn't really matter, because the can is going to be empty of the liquid anyway. Don't throw it away. Rather add a teaspoon of cooking oil and enough popcorn kernels so the base is covered. Throw it on the coals after your meals are prepared and you'll have popcorn in no time.

Does it work?

Yes. This is a fun way to get the kids involved with cooking their story time snack. Because who doesn't like a scary camp story? An adult will have to cut the can though – lest the little ones make an oopsie and break some skin.





No flying zone

What is it?

The theory is that burning a handful of dried sage keeps mosquitos at bay from around your fire – ideal for when you want to enjoy a meal around the embers but aren't looking forward to having your exposed skin filled with bites.

Does it work?

We didn't manage to get hold



Hook me up

What is it?

An old belt, a few of your camp kitchen utensils and a tree close to your fire make for an easy place to reach your tools as and when needed.

Does it work?

It depends on how your

ladles and egg lifters are shaped. The newer utensils would require you to use a meat or door hook in addition to your belt to hang them off.

And then the tree also must be thick in diameter. Just don't forget them there when you leave.



Plug safe

What is it?

You know those electric covers that are usually comprised of an orange pill-shaped plastic box that fits your extension leads and socket?

Yes, well those are going to set you back at least R100, but this solution means you get to enjoy a nice tub of ice cream as well make use of the plastic container afterward.

Does it work?

Definitely, and you just need to cut large enough holes so the leads can slip in on either end. Simply cover with the container's lid afterward.

For added peace of mind you can always use the duct tape to wrap up the holes to make it more weatherproof, and you can line the bottom of the tub with newspaper and cotton wool in case of water ingress.

“

There are camping hacks aplenty on the web, but some are more effective than others

”



Pre-made breakfast

What is it?

Instead of lugging around a fragile tray of eggs, why not just reuse the cold drink or water bottles that have a pull spout? These could even come with your plastic sauce bottles.

Does it work?

Well everyone must agree on

scrambled eggs first. You can easily fit 18 eggs in a 500 ml bottle, plus some milk and cream cheese for some added flavour.

Got a few more of these bottles lying around? Prepare other favourites for breakfast, such as pancake or flapjack mix. Keep them chilled.



What's in a canopy?

How difficult can it be to build a canopy for a bakkie? We visit Rhinoman's factory in Rosslyn, Pretoria, and discover it takes higher-grade engineering to do it properly.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

Rhinoman started out as a specialised metal manufacturer making parts for state-owned enterprises, including Denel. However, the three founding members, Ferdie and Johan van der Merwe and Ferdie "Pottie" Potgieter, started looking at other

sources of income during 2014.

The three partners first considered constructing off-road trailers, and Ferdie van der Merwe loaded the hull of a prototype trailer on the back of his bakkie and travelled through Namibia. On his return to Rosslyn, Ferdie was so pleased with the hull of the

planned off-road trailer that he convinced his partners that they should definitely be building aluminium canopies for bakkies. Rhinoman recently joined the Motus Group and builds aluminium canopies for the lifestyle market plus galvanised-steel canopies for the commercial market.



The foundation

South African aluminium forge Hulamin delivers 3 mm aluminium sheeting on pallets to Rhinoman's Rosslyn factory. The Rhinoman marketing team receives an order from a customer or an agent and the sheets are then laser cut into panels and bent by a hydraulic press brake to the desired shapes.

The shaped aluminium panels and square tubing are then loaded in a crate along with a consignment note indicating who the customer is, plus the type of canopy that is to be built with the panels, and what the client's choice of paint colour is.

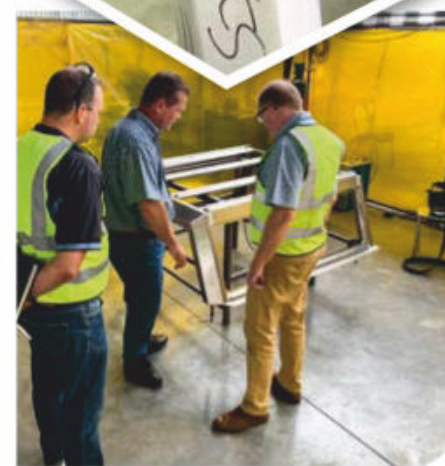
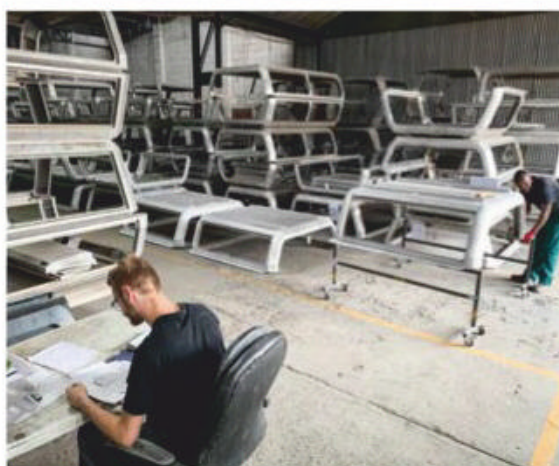
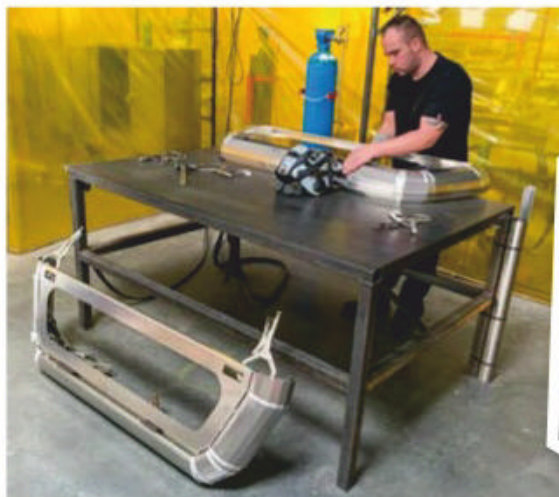
The crate full of parts is now taken from the cutting shop to the nearby assembly shop.



Taking shape

The kit for each canopy is uncrated and stacked on shelves. Each kit is assigned to a metal worker who welds the pieces together. The consignment note follows each canopy right through the manufacturing process.

There are three versions of Rhinoman's aluminium canopies: RhinoCab, RhinoLite and Rhino Superlite. All three are made to fit on all bakkies launched since 2013. Each canopy is then sandblasted and scrutinised by an inspector. The inspector returns any non-compliant canopy to a metal worker.



A pop of colour

About 700 unpainted canopies for popular vehicles – enough for a month – are kept in stock. Only when a large order is received, are they painted and shipped to the customer.

Canopies made to order and that are approved by an inspector go straight to the spray booth. Rhinoman gives their canopies a powder coating, usually in white, while the doors are painted grey or black. However, you can ask them to combine any of these colours in several ways. If you want the canopy to match the colour of your





bakkie, it can be done, but then the canopy will be sent to a contractor where it will be covered with enamel paint according to your bakkie's bodypaint colour code.

The hinges and doors are then attached and the canopies are tested to ensure they're waterproof.



All done?

The painted canopies are now bubble-wrapped and stored on shelves until they're ready to be shipped. Often, they're placed in a crate within three days of being painted.

They're not only sold in Africa, but also exported to Europe and Australia. About 25 aluminium canopies and just as many galvanised-steel ones leave the plant daily. Each canopy has a two-year warranty.



CLEVER COOKING

Yes, this is the season to be sitting around the fire, cold beverage in hand. But here are some different takes on your meal preparation in camp this festive season.

Text **Kyle Kock** Photos **Kyle Kock & supplied**



ALVA BUTANE OVEN Just like home

It looks like a microwave oven but isn't. This is the real deal: a pukka little oven, though you're limited by the size of oven dish that fits in it. At least you won't miss out on that chicken Veronique dish for Christmas lunch. It uses a 220 g gas cylinder that you'll need to purchase separately.

Price R2 695 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says It comes with a handy carry bag, because while it's not particularly heavy (9 kg), it is cumbersome to lug around on a hike.

WONDERBAG Innovative

Time magazine honoured the Wonderbag company in 2018 in its top 50 Genius Companies in the World – a massive honour for the KwaZulu-Natal operation. It was on our Christmas Wishlist in 2017, and we finally got to cook with one. The polyurethane-blend beads in the bag's wall and lid creates a layer of insulation that allows for thermal slow cooking – for up to 12 hours after you've removed the pot from the heat source.

You simply start your pot of food on the stove or fire, and once it's boiling you remove it from the heat and place it in the bag. If it's a long drive you're facing before you get to your camping destination, your meat will be falling off the bone by the time you get there.



Price: R160 – R455, depending on cloth design and size, from Takealot.

Drive & Camp says The Wonderbag's clever design also means that it not only works for heating but cooling as well. Throw in a few ice bricks, and it becomes an impromptu cooler.



GECKO GRILL PIZZA Pepperoni pie, please

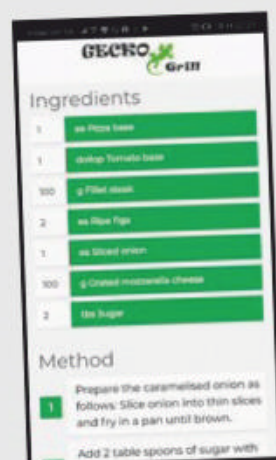
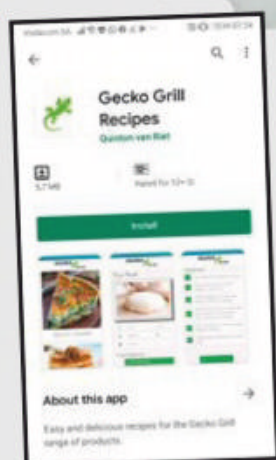
Nobody's going to say no to a hot pizza made right in front of them next to the campfire, but until now your options have been limited to the possibility of a pizzeria in the nearby town, or the restaurant that opens on weekends only.

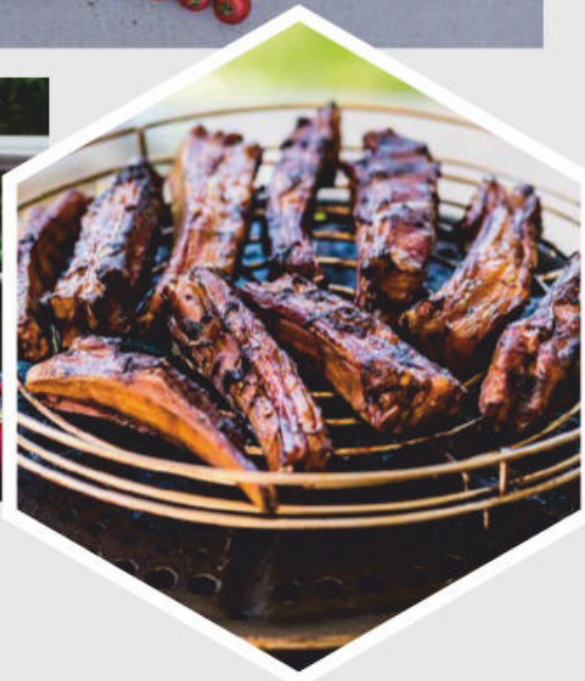
Now you can simply make your own, with exactly the toppings you want. The stainless-steel Gecko Grill is a sturdy locally

made product that also has its own recipes app on Google Play – sorry, iPhone users. They even show you how to make your own pizza base.

Price R1 200 from Gecko Grill.

Drive & Camp says There's an extra base plate you can order for R150 so you can make two pizzas simultaneously – one on each height setting.





COBB PREMIER PLUS All-in-one

Is there anything this Russian-doll lookalike can't do? You can grill, fry, bake, smoke, boil and warm your meals in here, so the Cobb really is versatile.

It's lightweight enough for you to chuck into the back of your vehicle and start cooking five minutes after you get to your camping destination.

Price: R2 560 from Cobb.

Drive & Camp says This version includes what the previous version didn't: a fenced roast rack and Cobb's Griddle+ for the ultimate Cobb experience.



COBB PREMIER GAS But wait, there's more

If you're a Cobb fan, but also like the idea of cooking with gas, then there's the option of having a Cobb cooker ready to use at the touch of a button – complete with temperature control. It uses a disposable gas canister.

Price R2 570 from Cobb.



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WEBER Q1200 GAS GRILL No mess no fuss

Everyone loves Weber, but your trusty kettle braai, amazing as it is, is just not portable enough for when you want to whip up a quick meal before your game drive or on the side of the trail you're exploring.

That's where this little guy comes in, and because it uses gas, you don't have to clean up any ashes after your 'braai'. There's a removable drip tray underneath

and the grille has porcelain-enamelled cast iron cooking grates, so the Q1200 should be easy to clean.

Price: R5 210 from Weber.

Drive & Camp says That built-in thermometer on the lid ensures that you always know what's going on underneath.



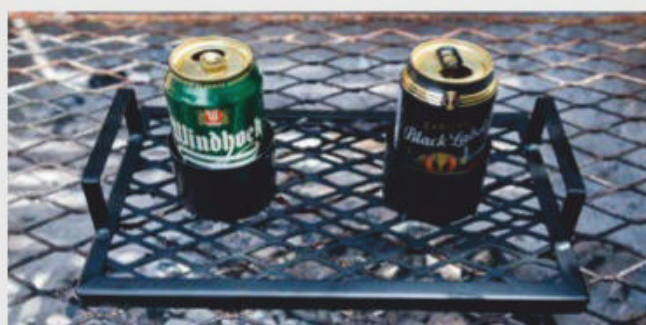
BRAAI BIRD DOUBLE GRID Finger lickin' chicken

For such a plain-looking device the result sure is amazing. You get the beer bird in a single configuration as well, but because the chicken is sitting upright you can get other meat over the coals, too.

With the double, you're free to experiment with flavours and different types of beer. Lay a big sheet of tinfoil over the chicken, or bird of your choice, so the heat is retained and the beer boils properly. It works even better if you can place a kettle braai's lid over everything.

Price R230 from Cape Union Mart.

Drive & Camp says The manual says to leave about three quarters of beer in the tin, but we found that just over half works better. When the internal temperature of the chicken hits 75 °C, after an hour and a half or so, you'll have really tender chicken.



Come, let's *(skottel) braai!*



A skottel braai wasn't designed only for that impressive egg and bacon breakfast. Here are a few fantastic ideas of putting it to use.

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

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FRIED RICE WITH BACON AND PRAWNS

Stirring stuff

I regularly cook too much rice so I can use the leftovers for just such a stir-fry. I've served this version – with Spanish flavours – as a late breakfast as well as lunch and dinner. Deliciously versatile.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 thick smoked pork rashers, chopped
- 1 red pepper, sliced
- 1 cup peas (fresh or frozen)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely crushed
- 1 red chilli, finely sliced (or to taste)
- 1 bunch spring onions, finely sliced
- 3 cups cooked rice
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 300 g cooked prawns
- fresh lemon juice, to taste

Here's how

1 Heat the skottel, add the oil and braai the bacon until golden brown. Stir in the red pepper, peas, garlic, chilli and onion and stir-fry for a few minutes until fragrant. Make sure the garlic doesn't burn – it turns bitter.

2 Stir the rice and turmeric into the stir-fry and season to taste with salt and pepper. This is the fun bit: the rice has to fry without burning, but you can't stir it too vigorously as then you turn the rice into porridge. Tricky!

3 Add the prawns and heat until just warm – they are cooked already. Taste to make sure there's enough salt and pepper (add more chilli, if you like a bite) and squeeze in some lemon juice. Turn off the flame and enjoy immediately while the rice is still warm.

Drive & Camp says Beat some eggs and make thin omelettes in the bacon fat before you carry on with the stir-fry. Roll up the omelettes, slice thinly and use them to garnish the rice.



HAM, CHEESE AND EGG SANDWICHES

Bull's eye!

These double-layered sarmies, fried in butter, are a favourite treat after a boisterous night before around the campfire.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 8 slices fresh white bread
- 6 tablespoons soft butter (yes, real butter)
- 4 slices gypsy ham
- 1 heaped cup grated cheddar
- 4 large eggs
- sriracha sauce or tomato salsa (optional)
- a drizzle of olive oil

Here's how

1 Butter all 8 slices of bread, making sure to cover the whole surface (that's about 1 tablespoon for every two slices). Turn the bread over so the buttered sides face down, then divide the ham and cheese

between four of the slices. Top with the other four slices of bread, butter side on top, to form four sandwiches.

2 Heat the oil in the skottel with the flame on medium. Now fry the sandwiches until light brown and crisp. Carefully turn them over and immediately cut a round hole in each with a metal camping tumbler. Place the cut-out circles in the pan, too.

3 Divide the rest of the butter between the holes in the sandwiches and break an egg into each one. If you have a large lid at hand, cover the egg sandwiches (and the smaller circles) in the skottel to help the eggs cook quicker. Turn down the heat as low as possible and fry the bread until the undersides are golden brown and crisp, and the eggs are nicely cooked and ready. The cheese should just start oozing out.

4 Eat immediately – with or without condiments. The bread circles are great for dipping into the soft egg yolks!

Drive & Camp says Smaller eggs work better in this recipe as they cook in the time it takes the bread to brown.





MIELIE FRITTERS WITH BACON Let's get corny

This is a versatile dish that takes hardly any time at all.

Ingredients

(makes 12 fritters – serves 4)

- 1 egg
- 1 can (410 g) creamy sweetcorn
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 12 rashers bacon
- 2 tablespoons honey or syrup

Here's how

1 Beat the egg with a fork. Stir in the sweetcorn and flour until the mixture forms a smooth batter. Set aside.

2 Heat the skottel and melt the butter. Now fry the bacon rashers in the butter until nicely golden brown and cooked.

Spoon out the bacon and set aside, but keep the fat in the pan.

3 Add 6 tablespoons of batter to the fat and flatten them slightly with the back of a spoon to form fritters. Fry the fritters for a few minutes until the bottoms are nicely browned – keep the heat low so they don't burn – and gently flip them over. Now brown the other side, too. Once the fritters are cooked, remove them and repeat the process with the rest of the batter.

4 Place the bacon back in the hot pan and drizzle over the honey or syrup. Fry until sticky and serve with the fritters.

Drive & Camp says Play with other toppings such as tomato, cheese and avocado slices or enjoy these easy fritters as is with your braai meat.

NOODLES WITH CASHEW CHICKEN Delicious late breakfast

Feel free to jazz up this stir-fry with garlic, fresh ginger and chilli.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 4 chicken breast fillets, each cut into 6 strips
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ½ cup flour
- 200 g cashew nuts, finely chopped
- 300 g stir-fry vegetables such as marrows, sugar snaps and baby corn
- 3 tablespoons peanut oil
- 300 g egg noodles, cooked
- 3 tablespoons sweet-and-sour stir-fry sauce
- 3 spring onions, finely chopped

Here's how

1 Roll the chicken strips first in the flour, then dip them in the egg and then in the nuts so

they have a brittle outer layer. Set aside.

2 Wash the vegetables and slice the bigger ones (the marrows, for example).

3 Heat the oil in the skottel. Slowly fry the chicken until nicely crispy. Keep the heat low as you don't want to burn the nuts or eat raw chicken. Once the chicken has a nice colour, move the strips to the cooler edge of the skottel and fry the vegetables until cooked to your liking. Now turn up the heat.

4 Stir in the noodles, barbecue sauce and spring onions as well as the chicken. Mix everything together until fragrant and cooked through.

Drive & Camp says Slide the noodles to one side in the pan and make scrambled eggs from the leftover egg you used to crumb the chicken. Mix the cooked egg through the chicken and vegetable mixture and serve.





HALLOUMI SALAD Say cheese!

This salad is so full of texture, you won't even miss meat!

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 300 g halloumi cheese
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 200 g porcini mushrooms, thickly sliced
- 90 g long-stemmed broccoli florets, cut in half lengthwise
- 3 tablespoons Thai pesto (we used Pesto Princess)
- 3 tablespoons roasted sunflower seeds
- 2 large handfuls (about 150 g) baby spinach
- 1 handful (90 g) wild rocket leaves
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (optional)

Here's how

1 Slice the cheese into 5 mm slices, roll them in the flour and set aside.

2 Heat 2 tablespoons of oil

in the skottel and fry the mushrooms until golden brown. Add the broccoli and stir-fry for a few more minutes until the broccoli turns bright green (it will still be crispy). If you're able to, first dip the broccoli in boiling water before roasting, but if not, enjoy the extra texture in your salad.

3 Spoon the vegetables from the pan and immediately top with the pesto and sunflower seeds (while the vegetables are still warm). Season to taste with salt and pepper.

4 Heat the remaining tablespoon of oil in the skottel and fry the slices of cheese until golden brown all over.

5 Mix the slightly cooler pesto vegetables with the spinach and rocket and finish with the fried cheese. I drizzle lemon juice over just before serving. Delicious.

Drive & Camp says Dilute the pesto with a tablespoon or so of water to make it easier to mix into the vegetables.



POTATO FRITTERS WITH PORK SAUSAGES AND TOMATOES Breakfast deluxe

For best results, make sure these potato fritters are nice and thin.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 6 medium-sized potatoes
- 1 small onion, peeled
- 2 tablespoons self-raising flour
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 12 small chipolata pork sausages
- 200 g cherry tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons of your favourite braai sauce (we used Hasty Tasty Sweet & Sour)
- a sprinkle of fresh micro herbs (optional)

Here's how

1 Grate the potatoes and onion on the coarse side of a grater. Turn out the grated vegetables onto a dry dishcloth and squeeze out all the moisture. Place the dry mix into a mixing bowl and stir in the flour. Season with salt and pepper.

2 Melt the butter and oil in the skottel. Spoon a heaped spoonful of the potato mixture into the centre of the pan and flatten it with the back of a spoon to form an even fritter. Fry it

a little on the one side, right there in the middle of the pan, before turning it over and moving toward the edge of the dish, where the heat is more moderate. Press it flat with your spatula and neatly re-assemble it where needed. The batter is loose and can be re-formed if a fritter breaks.

3 Place a second spoonful of potato in the hot centre of the dish and repeat this process until you've used all the batter. Now fry them until golden and crisp all over – add more oil if needed.

4 Slide the crispy fritters closer to the edge of the platter to keep them warm and fry the sausages in the centre until golden. After about 5 minutes, add the tomatoes and continue to fry until the sausages are cooked and the tomatoes burst and start forming a bit of a sauce.

5 Glaze the sausages with the braai sauce and sprinkle over the herbs. Serve with the potato fritters. It's delicious to wrap the crispy fritter almost like a taco around a sausage with a spoonful of tomatoes!

Drive & Camp says For this recipe, you need too much rather than too little butter – to make sure the potatoes are crispy and cooked through. Forget about the cholesterol and enjoy the treat! 🍴

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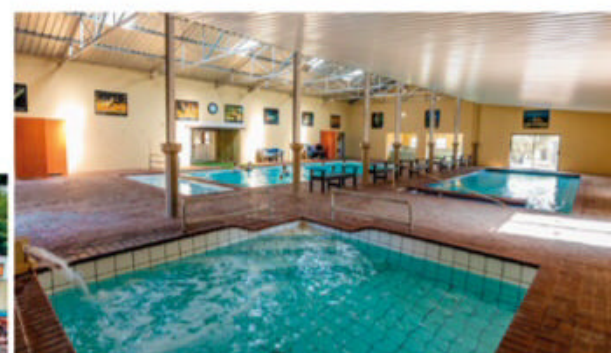
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The TX-8 radio is easy to use and has a solid feel to it. Its slim design and small size makes handling and communicating effortless. There are 16 pre-programmed license-free channels that use the 446 and 464MHz bands.

Channels can be adjusted using the small side buttons and the channel number is announced as the channels change. The side rubber PTT (press to talk) button is large and well placed. Speech is very clear and audible even at distances at 500 m indoors, 3 km outdoors and more than 10 km with elevated line-of-sight.

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options available, a single box and twin pack. Any of the radios can be linked together as they are pre-set with the same channels and an optional PC programming cable is available to set in more private license-free channels.

Each radio comes with a belt clip case that fits around the radio and also protects it from falls. Recharging is done by inserting the radio into the included desktop cradle or plugging in a USB cable on the side. Battery life is excellent with 25 hours of average use per charge. The radios use standard Li-ion rechargeable batteries which are fairly common. There are a variety of optional headsets available.

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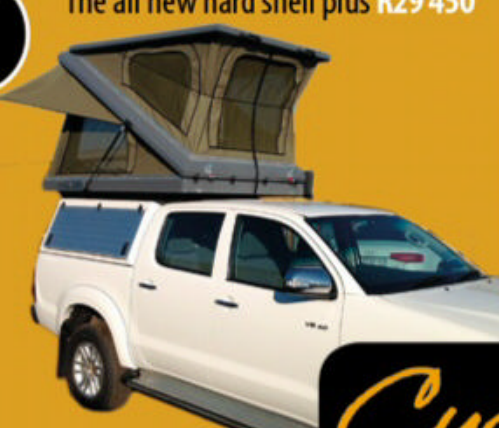


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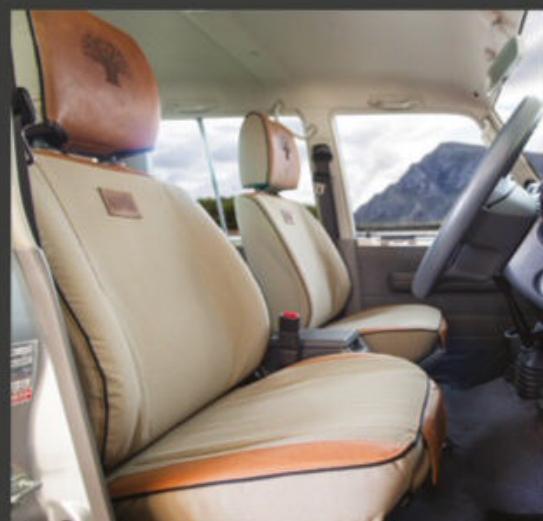
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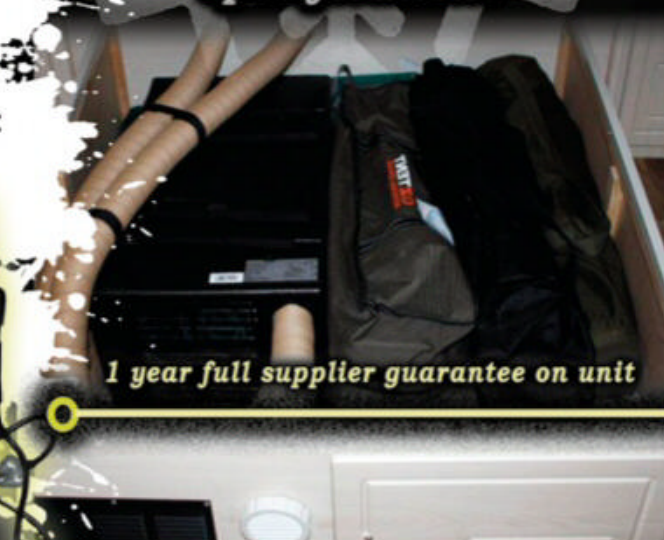
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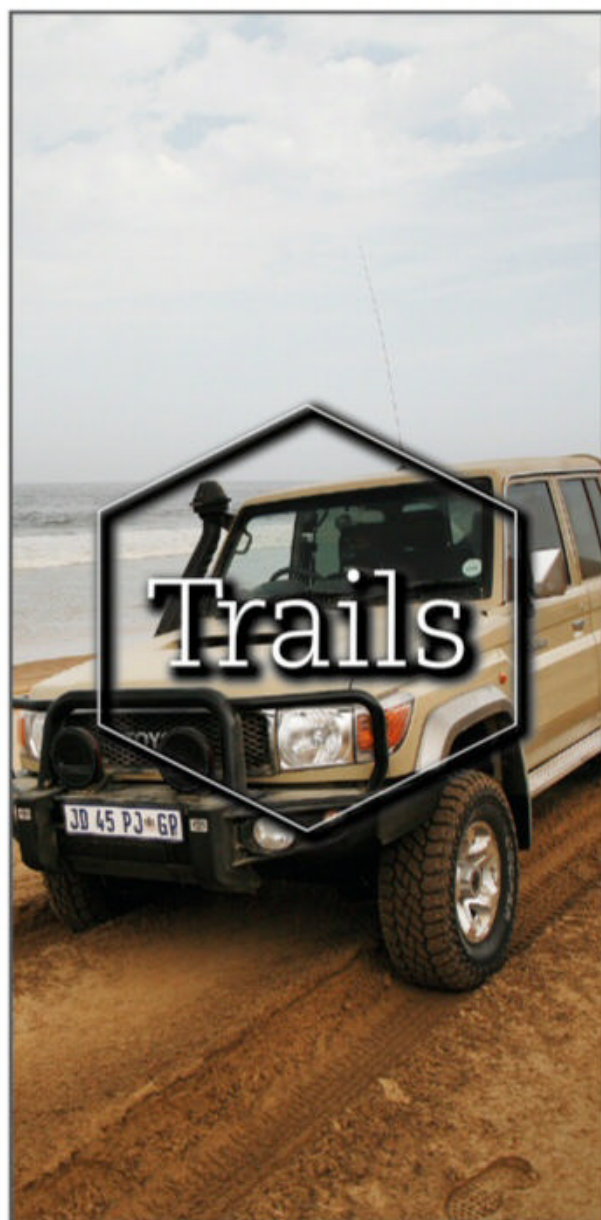
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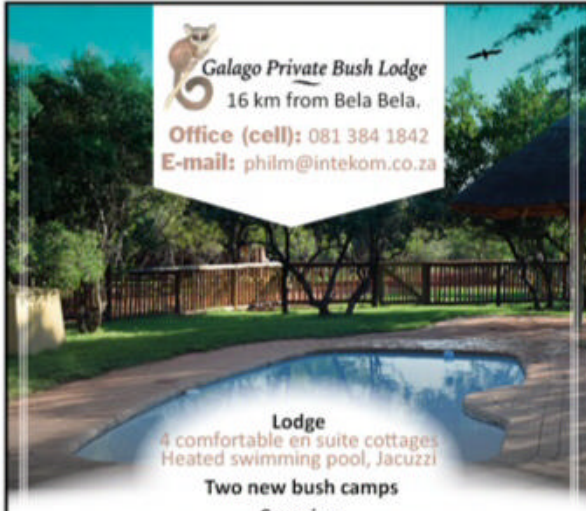
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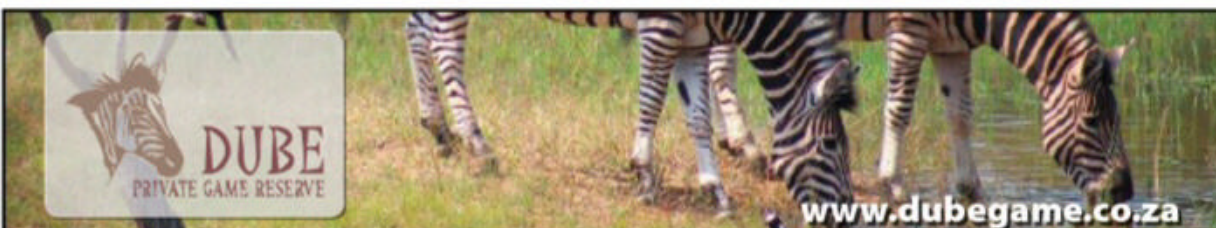
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CROSSWORD

Letricia van Niekerk from Franskraal has won **Van Loveren's Tangled Tree** wine worth R1 000 for her entry in the November 2019 crossword competition. Complete this one and e-mail a picture of it to drivecamp@gomag.co.za. Or do it at <https://bit.ly/2DAnkPj>. Last month's solution is on p 119.

			Town in the Boland	Place for swimming	Cerium (symbol)	Lock of hair	Treacherous 4x4 route in Angola (5,4)			
			Pictured ... and behold		Maths symbol			Period of time		
Ocean	Popular (2,6)	Handle	South-east (abbr)		Cut off	Sicilian volcano		Coral island	Passage	Remit
					Fire residue		Journey			
					Perform		Farm sound			
Kitchen tool				Allow		Triangular treat				
Loaded										
Land measure			Radiate				Least quiet			
Not off			Musical work							
		Speck			Register			Fishing gear	Without emotion	
Earl Grey vessel					Female deer		A bakkie brand			
Greeting					Exist					
		Convent resident		Not having	Marry	myself and I				
Marine fishes				Fresh-water fish	You and I	Text message				
			Titanium (symbol)		In ... of (replacing)		Glowing coal	Low tide	Capture	
			Skill					Decline		
					Rhenium (symbol)		Striped equine			
							Seeps			
			Electrical unit		Low range (abbr)					
			Sedate		Sleep					
Water entertainment	Potato		Pair		Long period		Consumed	Francium (symbol)		
	Samovar				Snake		Cask	Not later		
						Street				
Blue			Ruthenium (symbol)	As well		Skin blanket				
					Anxious feeling					
								Soaked		

COMPILED BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

Win some wine!

Life is rosy with Perlé de Jean

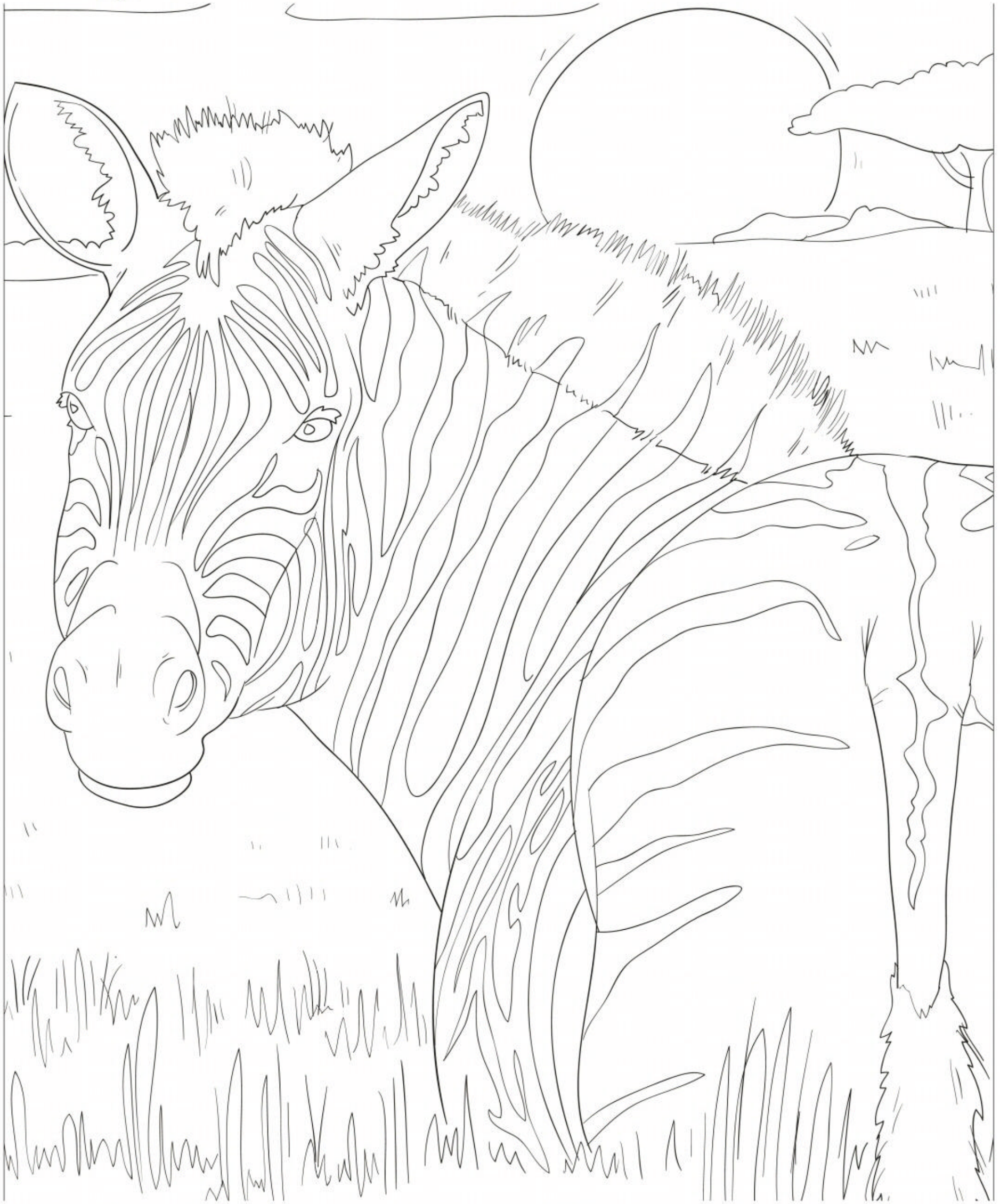
Van Loveren's Perlé de Jean, is a celebration of the Retief family's love of gardening. This dry rosé wine, with its beautiful rose petal hue and slight sparkle, is the perfect partner to your favourite prawn dish, such as prawn curry, prawn skewers,

marinated king prawns or prawn linguine.

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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 DIFFERENCE

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.

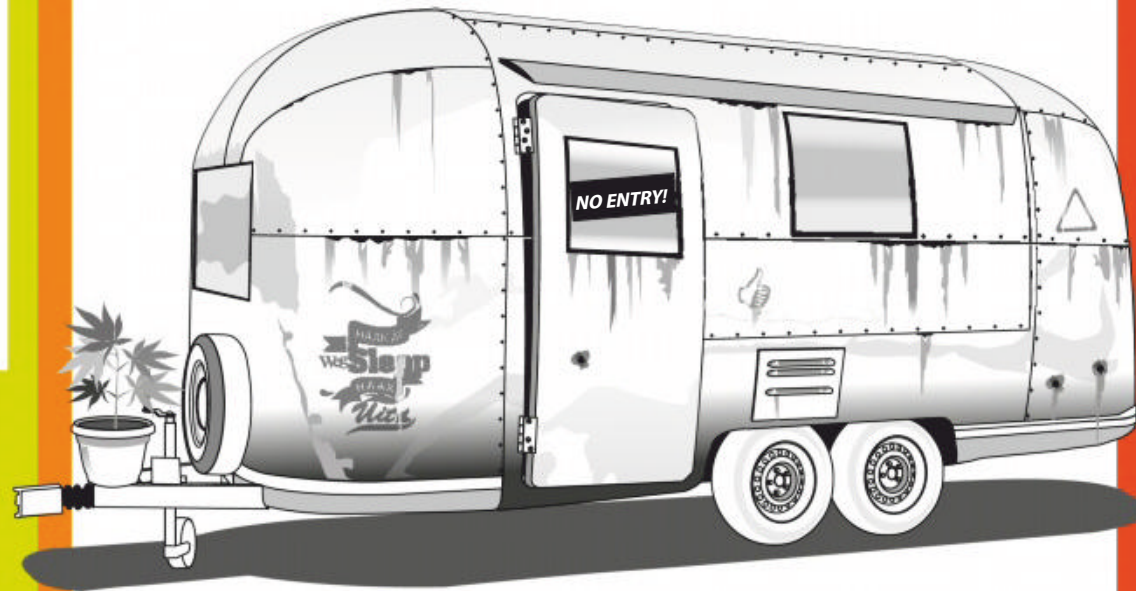
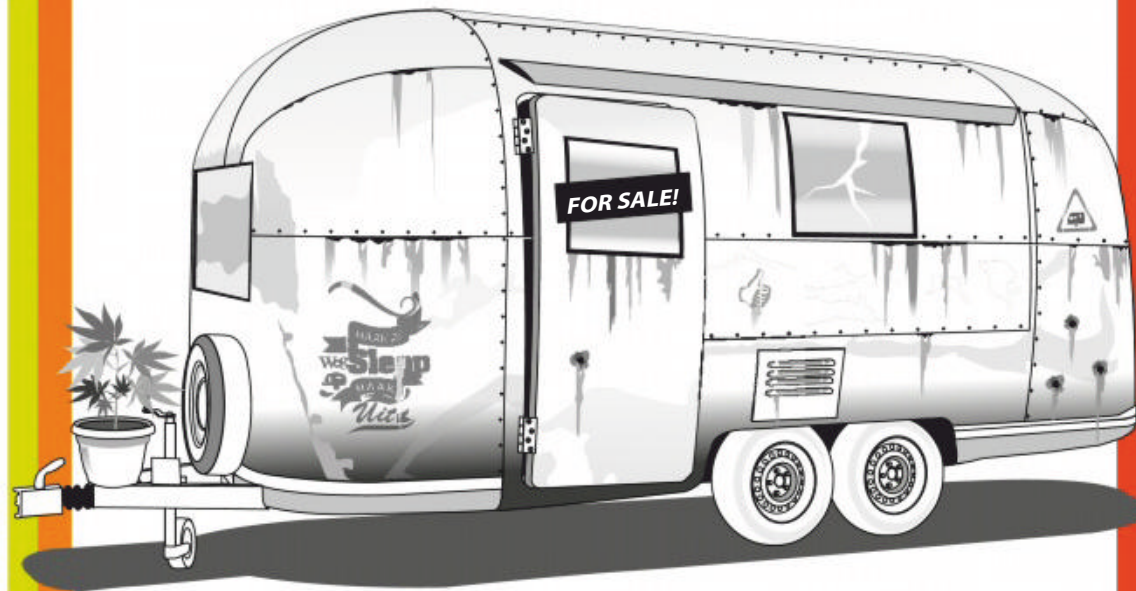
Word search

UCRZQZDPONVERVETMONKEY
 HYENAMCISUMDFJUUEHDWVF
 LXDZGRRERGIUGXKRMQENVY
 J JTKKGFEAWIYQAQTAPZTTT
 OUNPAPDUZYAIRCQTYDYDSTM
 GORYXDUIKERBYTVFGSXHF
 OROLAXVSBPEPHDFRYWPRMF
 GELFLFKQJZTAIIQEOYETIR
 TCFCTPTGEGVYKYUPIZLWVSE
 PULQZGXALFJSGPQPFRSXZV
 PNRMVXXDXNBFQPXIOICLXE
 GPQGTGMRBTLHYNZYHOAIEL
 SMLEOPARDMCUBKKTNSGUA
 LBCKIHPXCDCQHNDJEJEEQDP
 CQPCQQINFQJCSOFBIRZDHH
 SERV ALHAGWQMMZOOESBXOA
 PXKJVARAWMSJWITGXONPON
 IPLSTAYLLMJKNNTDAEDGDVT
 KVDEITWIIIVYRUARIZSPQVZ
 HSEYVKIFXKFJBZZZOQOMWW
 BHNQHHLWJ MAYZGGTZUSGGE
 CFDYNKDFKKEOEVGHEILOOB
 FPSVTPEKPN AQWWYQNRSTSQX
 GVNUNFBKOQJJDPZZVRGITM
 BNNOAOEHIXMYZCTGPEVAQH
 MGWLNGEBLUPQLZAWMLKKCX
 UIAIALSLKKRCTUQHMRWPGL
 DYHCFVTCICZZTJRFEFRDYI
 NRPFLEXVRMNKLNHEHTRLWO
 FG YDKXTLDRIEERM YTKOHCN

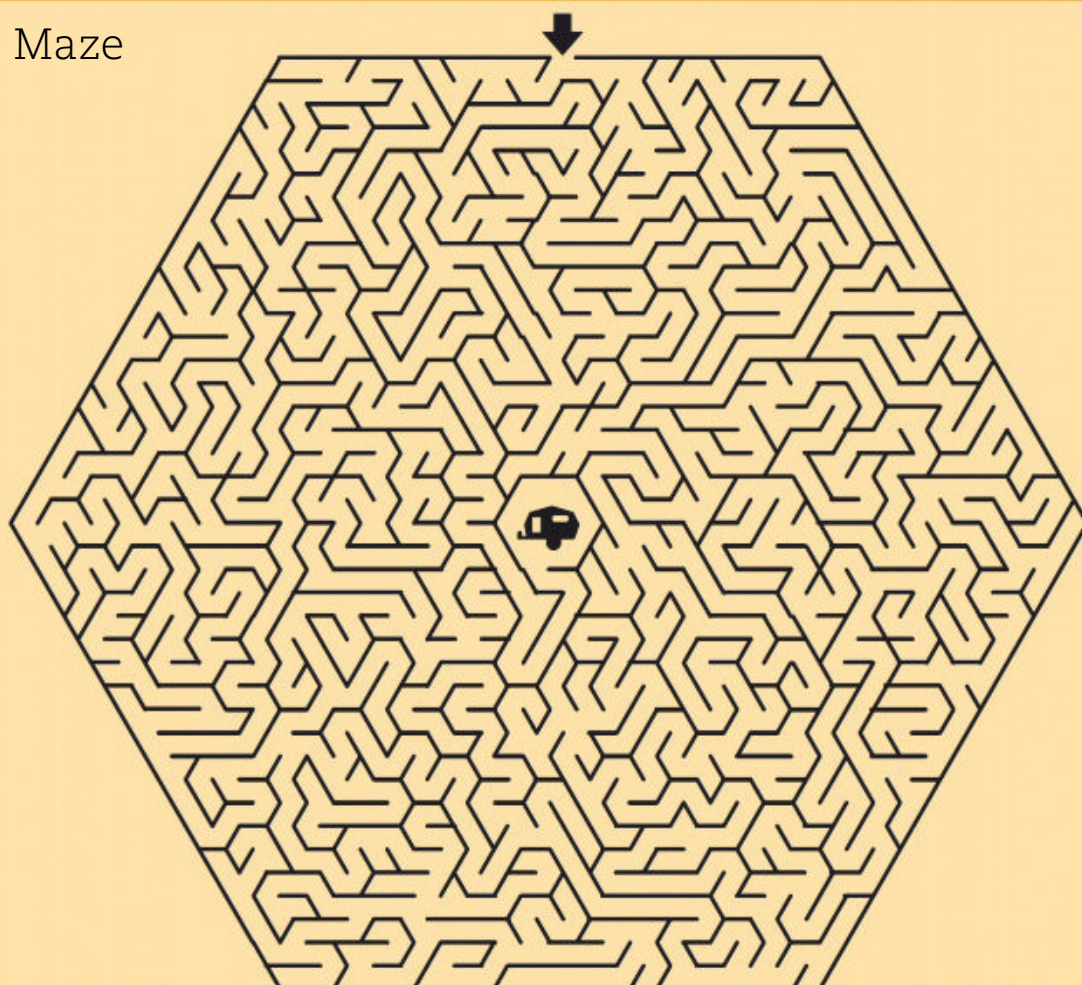
ANIMAL KINGDOM

Vervet monkey	Lion	Honey Badger
Cheetah	Leopard	Rhino
Duiker	Meerkat	Zebra
Squirrel	Nyala	Hippo
Oryx	Elephant	Serval
Hyena	Puff Adder	Wildebeest

Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts



BOTTLENOSE DOLPHINS (THE GENUS *TURSIOPS*)

- Bottlenose dolphins are usually grey in colour, and measure around two to four metres in length.
- They have to surface for air but can hold their breath underwater for around seven minutes.
- They can reach speeds of over 30 km an hour and dive as deep as 250 m below the surface!
- They are great at communication and send each other messages through squeaking and whistling.
- They are carnivores and eat mostly fish, but will also eat squid and crustaceans, such as shrimp.

Nature's internet

Many people who air their opinions on the internet tend to state their particular experience as absolute fact and are often quite intolerant of the opinions and experiences of others, says **Mic van Zyl**.

They say that with age comes wisdom and while it sounds good, I have often realised that the wisdom part of this phrase can have different meanings. Some folks do indeed gather wisdom throughout their lives in the form of facts and knowledge of various subject matters. Speaking to these people is like speaking to Wikipedia. Another interpretation of the word wisdom encompasses gathering the lessons learnt in life from making mistakes or observing the mistakes of others.

People who know me, know that I am a bit of a technology addict. I am also somewhat lazy when it comes to certain things. I don't like doing things twice so tend to do it right the first time, making sure the result is correct and will stand the test of time.

I absolutely hate struggling with stuff, especially computers. For some years now I have been using the same manufacturer's laptop computer, tablet and phone. They simply work. An email sent on my phone is immediately available on my tablet and laptop. It is seamless and perfectly suits my "lazy" nature.

ANOTHER MODERN-DAY piece of tech I thoroughly enjoy is the internet. It has to be one of man's stand-out inventions. I listened to an interesting lecture recently on the inventions of the modern era and the effect these inventions have had on man's evolution. The ability of mankind to develop new things to make life easier and get things done in less time is astounding and, again, very suited to my "laziness". What with the wheel, electricity, the automobile, the integrated circuit, computers and the internet, I am very grateful for the fact that I was not born in any other era but this one.

The lecture focused on the way these technological inventions have changed man for better – and for worse. The internet is basically a digital rendition of our world. Its crux is the search function. They say you can find anything on the internet if you search correctly.

While the internet is full of fantastic information that can be truly life-changing, it also contains everything that is wrong with the world and with us. It is one of my greatest challenges currently to guide my nine-year-old son to the good

side of the internet. He is almost as tech-savvy as his dad but to my mind he is too young for the evils that the internet holds. Filtering out the bad is just so difficult.

WHILE THE INTERNET has an abundance of "evil" bad, it also has a massive amount of "stupid" bad. I refer specifically to user forums for 4x4 communities. Don't get me wrong here. It is a great place to find information about everything and anything 4x4-related. If you're a 4x4 enthusiast like me, a couple of keystrokes can get you the correct info and save you time, money and yes, even your life.

Sadly though, it is also full of bad, ill-informed opinions and advice. People tend to state their particular experience as absolute fact and are often quite

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I am very grateful for the fact that I was not born in any other era but this one

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intolerant of the opinions and experiences of others. The challenge here is to filter the good from the bad and opinion from fact.

All of this makes me relish the opportunity to get away from the "Internet of Things" and sit by a fire, out of cell range, sans phone and tablet, and just take in the quiet and solace. This is something I failed miserably to do often enough in 2019.

My 2020 New Year's resolution is to get away from it all much more often and spend more time in nature's internet.

How about you?



From bush to coral coast



The spectacular palm-covered coastline of Mozambique that was off limits to us South Africans for such a long time, is now once again available for us to explore and enjoy.

DAY 1 We meet at Punda Maria Camp in the northern section of the Kruger National Park, where we will spend our first night camping in tents.

DAY 2 We make our way to the Pafuri Gate, where we cross the border and enter Mozambique. After about 80 kilometres, we reach the village of Mapai, where we cross the Limpopo. (Should the Limpopo be in flood, an alternate route will be considered).

DAY 3 Early to rise and, after a hearty breakfast, we break up camp and continue on to Machaila, then the town of Mabote and lastly on to our destination at Inhassoro. At Inhassoro we'll be sleeping in chalets almost on the beach with a view of Bazaruto Bay where we will enjoy the evening together.

DAY 4 We take a boat trip to the beautiful Paradise Island and hopefully get to see dolphins and turtles in the crystal clear water of the Bazaruto Sanctuary with its bounty of marine life. In the late afternoon we return to our camp as the sun sets over the palm-lined beaches of the mainland.

DAY 5 Today we head north onto the

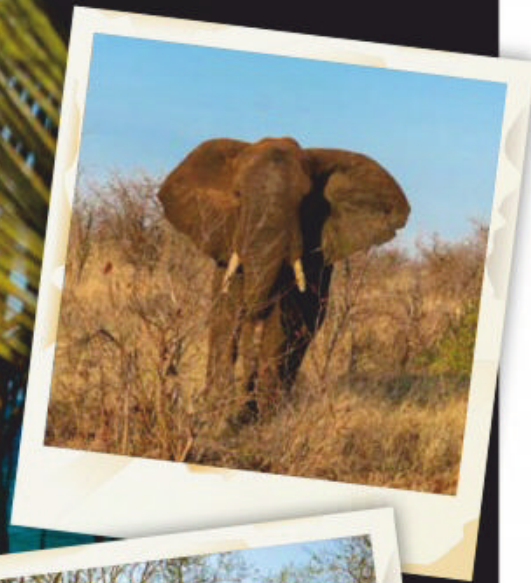
Inhassoro peninsula, driving along the top of the dunes, with the sea on our right and the lagoon to our left. Here again we explore the coastline, snorkel and swim.

DAY 6 We have the whole day to relax. As our beach driving permits are still valid, those of you who want to head up the beach will be more than welcome to do so. Or you might want to go shopping in Vilanculos – it can be a very interesting and fun excursion.

DAYS 7 & 8 We have a long drive down to our campsite, just north of the town of Xai Xai. Here we spend two nights camping and have a day to relax and enjoy the magnificent coast.

DAY 9 From Xai Xai, we head inland towards Masingir and enter the new Limpopo Transfrontier Park at its southern gate. We spend about two hours driving through the park and camp at a magnificent campsite overlooking the Masingir Dam.

DAY 10 After breakfast, we sadly say our goodbyes and you make your way back into the Kruger National Park via the nearby Giryondo border post, just north of Letaba.



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Snakes alive!

There is no reason to panic when you encounter a snake on your stand, says **Neels van Heerden**.

Lots of campers have plenty to say about what to do if you encounter a snake in the campsite (or how to keep snakes away).

In my opinion, the advice can be divided into three groups: there's the one that suggests several snake deterrents; the group that thinks they should be killed immediately; and then there are those who believe snakes play an important role in the ecosystem and should be left alone.

The guys who believe you can keep snakes away – they are in the minority – claim you should sprinkle grains of chlorine, garlic or

mothballs around your tent, put Jeyes Fluid or old oil or diesel in containers outside, or plant rows and rows of geraniums between stands. Scientists at Wits University, however, have found there is no evidence that snakes can be kept away (or chased away) by chemical concoctions or home remedies. (That's because a snake's sense of smell works differently to ours.)

Snakes in the campground are after food, with frogs, rodents, bird chicks and eggs, and other snakes being the main targets. So avoid stands near rubble, piles of wood and densely wooded spots.

THE THIRD GROUP is mercifully still in the majority. They believe that snakes play a very important role in controlling rodents, and we as campers need to realise that we are actually entering their habitat. Therefore, we must leave them alone.

They suggest we try to understand a snake's habits. Then we'll know how to act when we encounter one while camping (plus, we'll know which are dangerous).

Adders and cobras are responsible for up to 90% of snake bites, while amateur birdwatchers in particular are most at risk of stepping on a puff adder. At night, you have a greater chance of encountering a night adder on the way to the toilet.

I always take a cane or walking stick when I walk in the veld and constantly tap on the ground. Snakes feel these vibrations and will hopefully make way. And then I use a head lamp to illuminate the path to the ablutions.

AND THEN THERE are the people who believe that one should rather use that cane to crush a snake's skull. According to them, the only good snake is a dead snake.

I think it's stupid to go looking for trouble with any snake. Of course,

when a snake feels threatened, it will certainly be aggressive. Just look at how far – and accurately – a spitting cobra can spit.

It doesn't have to be a case of choosing between the snake and you. A few years ago, campers in Scottburgh saw a professional snake handler remove a boomslang. The snake had made itself comfortable in a wild rubber tree at stand 63. The red-winged starlings first spotted it, and their chirping got the attention of the cleaners at the ablution block.

One of them quietly informed the campers at stand 63 about the visitor a few metres above their rally tent. The family quickly walked away and the camp manager called a friend who catches snakes.

The friend put a ladder against the tree and removed the snake without any fuss – the snake didn't even get aggressive or try to get away. He then explained to bystanders that he's an experienced snake handler who removes snakes that come close to people along the KwaZulu-Natal coast almost weekly.

With guys like him around, there's no reason to panic.

You can also check out the African Snakebite Institute to learn more about snakes and their habits.

africansnakebiteinstitute.com

“

It doesn't have to be a case of choosing between the snake and you

”



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How I met your mother

When technology fails you in the middle of nowhere, your mind visits some strange places, says **Cyril Kloppe**.

Where has the trail gone? I wonder as the dry riverbed I'm driving in ends against a black wattle thicket. Wait a minute... ah, up ahead it takes a sharp left, over the river's embankment. I frown when I see how high the embankment is. The Isuzu mu-X I'm driving isn't really designed for such obstacles.

I'm in the Eastern Cape, scouting for an interesting back road from Gauteng to the Addo Elephant Park. When I was planning my trip, the Katberg Pass seemed like a good candidate and my wife told me about the nearby Devil's Bellows Pass she had tackled 13 years prior with a VW CitiGolf. Back then, we were newly wed and she worked for Nature Conservation. She had to drive the Devil's Bellows to take census of invasive alien plants, and she remembers how she had to stack rocks to get her Golf through ditches and holes.

But she never mentioned embankments!

I get out to have a look. Yip, I'm going to have to stack rocks. The mu-X doesn't have the necessary approach angle and ground clearance to get over this embankment without assistance.

I find only sand and twigs in the riverbed, and so I walk up a slope to collect rocks from a ledge. Along the way, I discover the overgrown remains of the original road – this is probably where my wife drove in her Golf. I hadn't seen it earlier and mistakenly followed the river's dry course!

It takes me almost an hour to carry enough rocks from the ledge to the riverbed, but I'm finally ready to attempt it. I get back behind the wheel, push the starter button and crawl up my ramp. Occasionally, I peek through the open window to see if the front wheels are pointing in the right direction.

I carefully make my way up the stone ramp and the Isuzu's nose lifts skyward. The front wheels come to a rest on top of the embankment and I lift my foot off the accelerator pedal and pull on the handbrake. Goodness, but the Isuzu is at such an angle, it feels as though it could launch like a rocket to the moon!

To make sure the rear wheels are going to follow up the ramp, I open the door and look back. Yes, it's looking good. Suddenly, the Isuzu's engine stutters and dies. What the hell? I hit the starter button and the motor cheerily sings: "Chee-chee-chee-chee-chee..." but achieves nothing.

I SIT THERE for a while and ponder the issue. Surely it has to be fuel, but the tank is a quarter full? Then I realise the Isuzu is at such an angle that the diesel is at the bottom end of the tank, and now the pump is sucking in empty air.

I climb down the running board and stand with arms akimbo next to the stricken vehicle. If I could just get the Isuzu level, the pump will draw diesel again. I could put the automatic transmission in neutral and try to push the Isuzu from the top, but then there won't be anyone to pull up the handbrake – and if this car gets rolling, it will tear headlong into that black wattle thicket. And

“

...I do remember a giraffe's coarse tongue against my face and a little blonde girl beaming with delight as she embraces a llama

”

that could lead to huge damage.

My wife was lucky to be able to follow the original trail and not deal with this embankment. It's our 14th wedding anniversary today and I would like to call her to say thank you for the good years thus far and for our beautiful child, but there is no cellphone reception at the foot of Devil's Bellows.

My wife and I met in England in 1999, when we both worked in London in an effort to make enough money so that we could tour Europe. Six years thereafter, in a lion research hide in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, I went on bended knee to ask for her hand in marriage.

Suddenly my nostalgia is interrupted by a cunning plan: I can get the Isuzu off the bank by digging out the soil behind the front wheels so that the Isuzu can roll back on its own accord while I keep my hand on the handbrake. I pick up a branch and start digging away. It's hot and I understand where the pass got its name. After stabbing at the dirt for about an hour, my hands are raw and bloody, but the wheels are free and the Isuzu should roll back when I let go of the handbrake.

I get back in, push the starter button – “chee-chee-chee” – so that I can jam the gear selector into neutral. Then I lower the handbrake ever so slightly and the Isuzu indeed slowly rolls back. Success!

BACK ON LEVEL ground, I press the starter button, now with full confidence that the pump will draw diesel. The starter motor is eager, but the engine refuses to cooperate. A light with a wrench symbol flashes on the instrument panel. I press the button repeatedly, but nothing. The fuel hoses or perhaps the injectors are blocked by air

bubbles, I realise. I get out and sit morosely in the shade of a tree and sip on my dwindling water supply.

I'm so miffed at that starter button. In older vehicles, you can turn the key one click until the diesel pump and the coil switches on (without starting up the engine). Then you switch everything off again, turn the key one click again to prime the system, and repeat the process until, with a little bit of luck, the air bubble is flushed out. With this newfangled automatic starter button, such delicate MacGyvering is impossible. Damn you, technology!

Settle down, don't despair.

It's not entirely true that I met my wife in England. I think back to the day our parents were first introduced to one another. Her dad and my mom chatted about holidays in the Cape and discovered that both our families vacationed in the High Noon Game Reserve near Villiersdorp in 1978. My wife and I were both six-year-olds at the time.

My future father-in-law spoke of his daughter who so loved the llamas. My mother completed his sentence by recounting how she saw a girl who held a baby llama by the neck and screamed blue murder when her parents tried to separate her from the animal. My father-in-law asked in amazement if we were the family who scrambled out from a Chev Nomad when a giraffe stuck its head through an open hatch in the roof.

My memory of 1978 is hazy at best, but I do remember a giraffe's coarse tongue

against my face and a little blonde girl beaming with delight as she embraces a llama.

I hit the starter button for the umpteenth time, and the starter motor sings its annoyingly cheerful tune: "Chee-chee-chee-chee-chee", but the engine still won't take. It's no good to sit here and feel sorry for myself. Judging by the lack of tyre tracks it could be days or perhaps weeks until someone does the Devil's Bellows again.

I LAY OUT THE following on the bonnet of the Isuzu: one handheld GPS that shows the nearest town, Whittlesea, at 40 km away; one wind-up torch in case it gets dark before I get to Whittlesea; two bags of peanuts and raisins, because Napoleon said an army marches on its stomach; one Navy SEAL knife for when I have to defend against a hungry beast; and two phosphorus

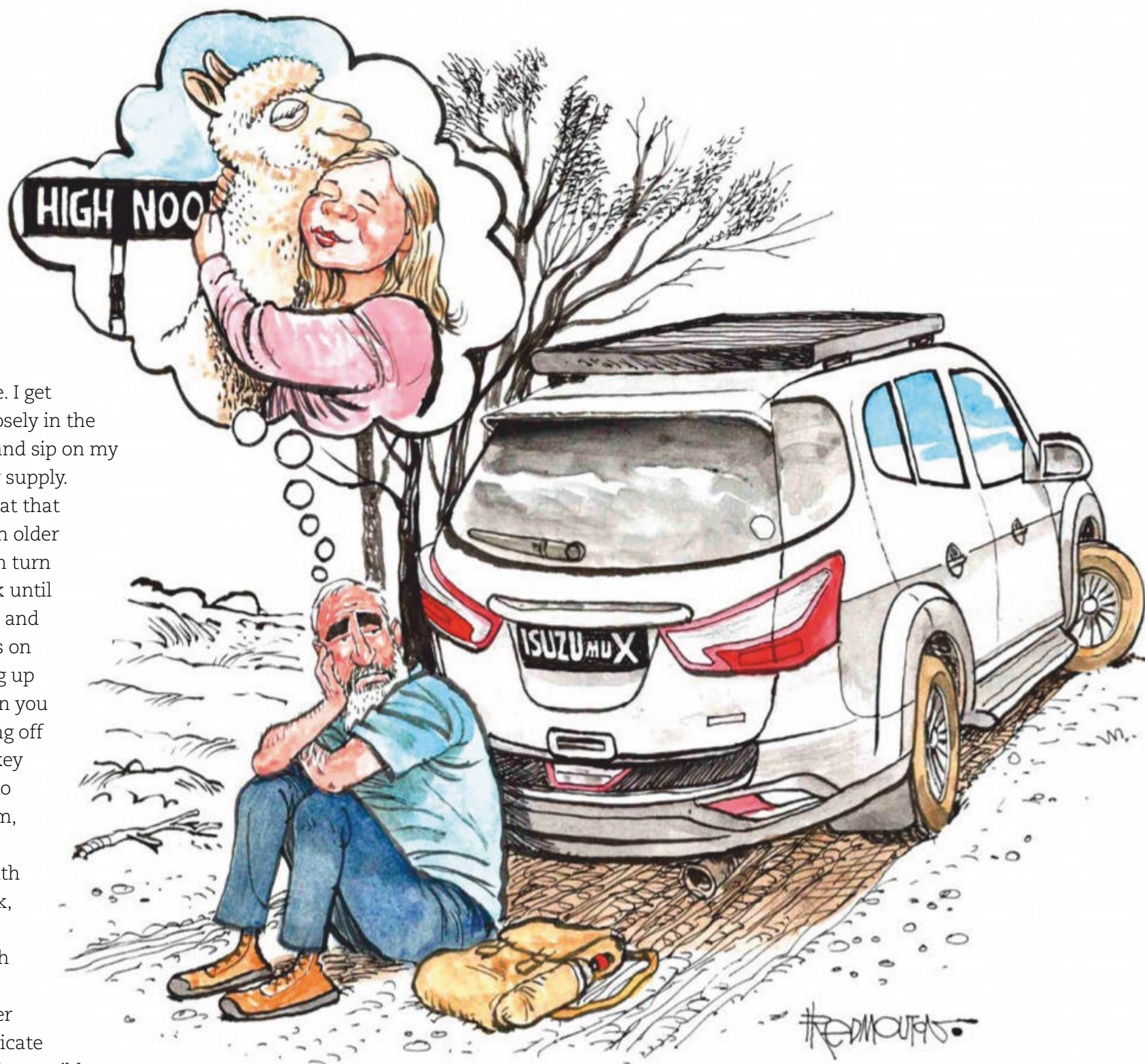
glow sticks, who knows what for.

I stuff everything in a knapsack along with a windbreaker and write a note to place in the Isuzu's windshield: "Engine trouble. Name, ID number, on foot en route to Whittlesea. Departed at 3pm, Monday, November 4th. Call my wife on this number if I didn't make it." Drama queen.

My stomach feels hollow at the thought of abandoning the vehicle and hiking out of the mountains on foot. If only I hadn't stopped against that embankment. If only I'd done it in one go. I wouldn't be in this predicament. But it's no use crucifying myself. It's time to start walking if I want to be in Whittlesea before midnight.

I turn around for one last time and take a hard look at the Isuzu. Maybe I should give that starter button one last try.

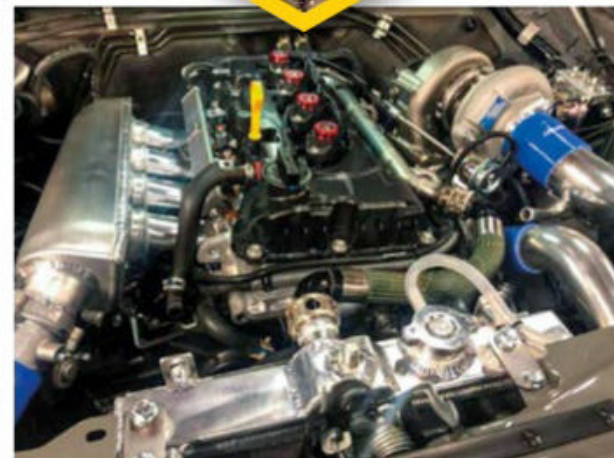
"Chee-chee-chee-chee-chee-chee-chee-chee-chee-chee-chee. Vroom."



... AND FINALLY

Jimny on juice

Most Suzuki Jimny owners would agree that if they were to upgrade, they'd most likely opt for a bump in power. That's exactly what a Japanese custom parts company addressed in Las Vegas recently.



Suzuki's legendary little rockhopper has been around for 50 years in various guises under numerous model codes and has undoubtedly become a cult classic, with the latest fourth generation model proving to be every bit as popular as its predecessors.

The Jimny's credentials off the beaten track leave little to be desired, with its go-anywhere ability approaching giant-slaying proportions when you compare it to much larger 4x4 vehicles that have conquered Africa. It's no surprise when you consider the low mass, proper low-range gearing, decent ground clearance and aggressive approach and departure angles.

You'd think that the little Japanese rock-crawler's appearance Stateside would raise an eyebrow or two, because the Jimny isn't available in the US. That didn't detract show goers and members of the motoring media, however, who were more than pleased to find it parked

at the Las Vegas Convention Centre.

But even the most die-hard fanboy would declare the Jimny's off-road prowess is somewhat dimmed by a relatively asthmatic little normally aspirated engine. That's exactly the problem Japanese custom auto parts shop Car Style tackled when it modified a Jimny to appear at the Speciality Equipment Market Association (SEMA) trade show in Las Vegas recently.

Even though official outputs haven't yet been released, given the size of that Greddy turbocharger and associated turbo plumbing on the K15B engine, it could well be three times the 75 kW stock power peak and easily double the 130 Nm of factory

torque. We've heard people say that more power would be appreciated, perhaps by using the same engine as the Swift Sport hatchback also by Suzuki, but there's no better way to make a statement at a place like SEMA than with a big, fat turbo.

Speaking of fat, you've probably noticed the 90 mm fenders flares by now – which are already a Car Style staple despite the short time that the fourth generation Jimny has been around. Then there's also the custom front and rear bumpers – the latter featuring central exhaust exits that leave no room for your registration plate. The look is finished off with Volk Rays TE37 wheels wrapped in chunky Toyo rubber.

Suzuki's come up with the brilliant Jimny, but perhaps Car Style hit the pinnacle of perfection with their build. You'll probably have to approach a local tuning shop to do the engine modifications on your own Jimny, but the body kit should be available if it really catches your eye.



Have you spotted any wacky wheels on your travels? Tell us about it and send a photo to *go! Drive & Camp*, PO Box 740, Cape Town 8000 or drivecamp@gomag.co.za

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