

#59

go!

ONE-PAN RECIPES FEWER DISHES, MORE HAPPY TUMMIES

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2024 | ISSUE 59

Drive & Camp

Off to the beach!

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six with five doors

GEAR 14 coolest gadgets to ward off the blistering heat | **CARAVAN TEST** Mobi Lodge gets it right with their XL | **READER STORY** From Parow to Ponta do Ouro – and back – with a 1981 Sprite in tow | **CAMP BOFFIN** Sound advice for caravan owners after Leefek stops production



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The more the merrier

My phone pings beside me, and I see it's a message from my good friend Gareth. He's sent me a photo of their dome tent pitched next to a rocky outcrop, on what looks like a beautiful patch of land. Seconds later, my phone pings again... "Remind me what pics you want?" he asks.

Gareth and I worked together about 15 years ago at a popular sports magazine and quickly became friends. He's quite a bit younger than me, but thanks to a bunch of shared interests, similar views on various aspects of our everyday lives, and his sense of humor, we continued to hang out even after we stopped working together.

He'll be the first to admit that he was late to catch the camping bug. In fact, he had to meet the right woman first, and she introduced him to camping. Thanks, Tamsyn!

Now, they camp so often that I regularly receive a pics like this one from Gareth. Given the nature of my job, I always ask him to take more photos and gather a bit more information as we might write about that campsite in this magazine. But Gareth's usual excuse is that he "remembered too late."



To be perfectly honest, it sounds to me like just a weird way of saying he forgot.

So, I smile this morning when I get the message, because this time he remembered in time. I ask him to take anything that illustrates the campsite well. Don't worry about the copy now; we can handle that later.

"This place is amazing," he tells me in a follow-up message. "There are even six permanent tents, each can sleep six people. That means 36 people can camp here together for relatively little money!"

I hesitate before responding because I don't want him to think I'm referring to him. "I'm not sure there are 36 people I would want to camp with, my friend."

When I go camping, I want to get away from everything and everyone, with only those closest to me around me. That is my sole purpose. I enjoy going away sometimes (but certainly not always) with family and friends, but then that group shouldn't be too large either. Once the plus-ones and their plus-ones start coming along, I quickly get restless.

But of course, that's my personal preference, and I know many people believe the more, the merrier. I have no problem with that at all; it's just not for me.

“

Once the plus-ones and their plus-ones start coming along, I quickly get restless

”



YOU'RE PROBABLY USED TO reading this particular message from me at this time of year, but I would be remiss if I didn't remind you that our latest *Resort Guide* is currently on the shelves. In the 2024 edition, Leon and the team have gone to great lengths to compile information and photos for a full 163 resorts (including more than 20 brand-new ones) to help you plan your camping adventures for the next 12 months. The guide is divided into nine popular camping regions; so you don't even have to drive far from home to find that well-deserved break.

Travel safely.

Schalk

EDITOR

✉ schalk.jonker@media24.com

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#59 COVER IMAGE – HELENUS KRUGER

“ I took the picture from a three-quarter rear angle to accentuate the caravan. The bridge adds an extra dimension, but I also wanted to separate the vehicles. Rather than switching to a wide-angle lens, I stepped away to give a natural perspective. Now you can see below both the vehicles to differentiate the bakkie from the caravan. ”

Camera Settings Nikon D600; f7,1; 1/250 sec; 24-70 mm lens; ISO 320

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MEDIA24

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SAVANNAH BOW

(260gsm CANVAS, 320gsm PVC Floor, 1 Window)



2.1m x 2.1m x 1.5m
R3 530⁰⁰
2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m
R4 580⁰⁰
3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R5 430⁰⁰

SAFARI BOW

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2.1m x 2.1m x 1.5m
R3 810⁰⁰
2.1m x 2.1m x 1.8m
R4 290⁰⁰

WANDERER BOW

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R3 810⁰⁰
2.1m x 2.1m x 1.8m
R4 290⁰⁰

SAFARI DELUXE BOW

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2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m
R6 220⁰⁰
3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R7 700⁰⁰

JUNIOR SAHARA



4.5m x 2.9m x 2.65m
R12 000⁰⁰

SAHARA LODGE



8.0m x 2.9m x 2.65m
R22 170⁰⁰

SAHARA GRAND



8.0m x 2.9m x 2.5m
R23 090



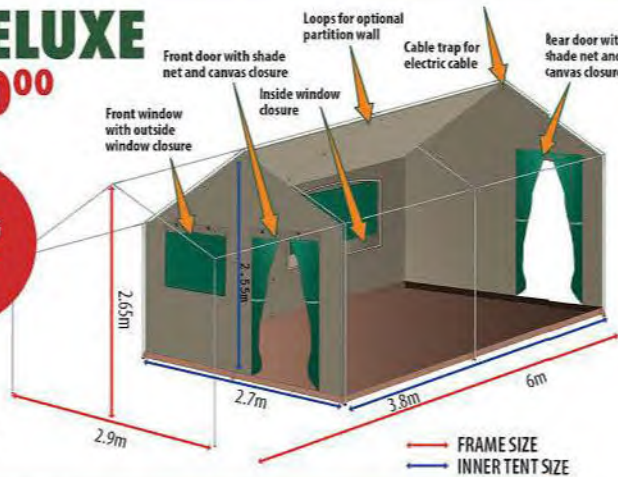
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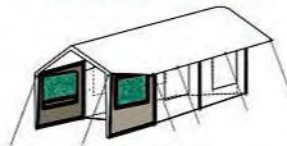
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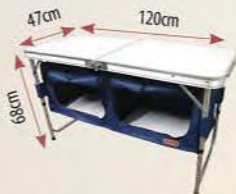
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We love hearing what's on your mind! Write to us at drivecamp@gomag.co.za and please remember to include your full address and contact details. *Drive & Camp* reserves the right to edit and shorten letters – and publish them in the magazine, on the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

1, 2, 3, in a Mazda 323



The cover photo of the October–November 2023 *Drive & Camp*, featuring the Volkswagen Amarok on the Eselbank Pass, takes me back to a Sunday in 2007. We had driven from Kromrivier to Clanwilliam and back.

At the top of the pass, I engaged low gear in third and let my Isuzu KB300 descend the steep slope using the engine's compression. I had to brake frequently to prevent the Isuzu from running away. Some way down the hill, the roof of a vehicle appeared, and we heard the high revs of a screaming engine as it slowly climbed the pass. We pulled over and waited.

Eventually, the vehicle emerged, its

struggling engine in first gear, smoke billowing from the exhaust pipe. It was an early-eighties Mazda 323. The occupants appeared to be from Eselbank, returning from a church service in Wupperthal. The front passenger, dressed in a suit and hat, sat with a cake on his lap. The woman in the backseat wore a huge floral hat and her best Sunday dress.

And there we were, in a 4x4 with low-range gears, a differential lock, and antilock brakes, cautiously descending

the pass. Meanwhile, these people ignored 4x4 warning signs, making the journey every Sunday in a 25-year-old 1,3-litre car. This speaks volumes about the mechanical toughness of those early Mazda 323s, which were bestsellers in their day.

BRIAN HALLOCK
Pinelands, Cape Town

WINNING LETTER

Brian wins a cooler bag worth R485. Whether you're a camper, fisherman, or sports fan next to a cricket pitch, this cooler bag has room for a lunch box and a 1,5 l cooldrink bottle. The lid also has space for a coffee flask. The interior is lined with PVC, which makes it easy to keep the bag clean and hygienic. The bag has a short strap that reaches over the top and attaches with a Velcro strip, as well as a longer shoulder strap if you're going to carry it over longer distances. It's an ideal picnic accessory or a padkos bag for a road trip. campcover.co.za





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Thirty years ago in Malawi

For those of us lucky enough to live in Africa, any journey on the continent is special, but today I reminisce about a 1994 trip to Malawi with my wife Sue. We flew into Lilongwe, the capital located in the central part of the country, near the Zambian and Mozambican borders.

An interesting piece of history not widely known is that the then-president, Hastings Banda, studied medicine in America and reportedly had a relationship with a woman named French. (According to newworldencyclopedia.org, Banda was quite controversial: Some viewed him as a hero, while others called him a political tyrant. He died in 1997 in South Africa, while the penniless Ms French passed away in 1976. – Ed).

We wanted to camp at Cape Maclear, where the Livingstonia mission station was established in 1875. Cape Maclear had a harbour but also suffered from tsetse flies, which feed on blood and can cause sleeping sickness.

While camping at the Sunbird Nkopola Lodge next to Lake Malawi, we ate fresh

papayas daily. A young man would climb the papaya trees in the campsite to pick the fruit.

Sue and I had never tried hitchhiking before. However, feeling safe in Malawi, we decided to give it a go. Sue stuck out her thumb, a truck stopped, and we hopped on.

I also fondly remember eating



Himalayan berries there. Delicious, juicy and fresh!

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TONGA



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"Looking good" @richter_heinrich



"Sandy tracks in Moremi Game Reserve, Botswana" @travel_africa_4x4

COMMENT OF THE MONTH



We asked on Facebook what essential spices are needed for your braai. Many readers think salt and pepper suffice, while Pieter Bronkhorst prefers lemon. Gerhard du Toit advocates for moderation:

"Rather too little than too much. I suspect most people don't actually like the taste of meat. Why else would they smother it in sauces and spices?"



"Mariental Rest Camp, Namibië" @francoisdmeier



"Our kind of fun!" @za_trax



"On the road in Tanzania Lakeshore, Tanganyika" @jewel4travel



"Where are you heading to this weekend?" @thecrausecrew



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SCAN ME



Pitch perfect

Here are five new camping gems that have opened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

LYLIUS

Nestled in the Cederberg region, Lylus stands as one of its best-kept secrets – a must-visit for any camping enthusiast. If you've ever camped at Algeria in Cederberg, you were probably unknowingly close to Lylus, situated between Citrusdal and Clanwilliam, just 4,7 km off the N7. Spanning 1 700 hectares, the farm Krieger is home to Corné and Lydia van der Westhuizen, who cultivate rooibos and buchu.

The secluded Forest Camp, suitable for tents, contrasts with Taaibos, set on higher ground overlooking other stands collectively known as Grassfields. These consist of four separate stands.

Forest was completed in 2019, with the others following post-pandemic, the last one in 2022. Despite there being only six sites, they accommodate numerous families, with each one designed for multiple groups, though you can opt for a private spot.



Reaching the Forest Camp requires crossing two wooden footbridges over a stream. It fits three tents (10 people) comfortably. Shared amenities include

ablution facilities, a lapa with power and lights, and a kitchen.

Taaibos offers a premium spot perched on a ridge, overlooking Grassfields.



This approximately 1 000 m² area can host about four caravans (10 people), featuring power supply, lights, a picnic table, and ablution facilities with a shower, basin and toilet. Each stand has a fire pit, braai grid, and even tongs.

The four stands of Grassfields – Mango, Marula, Karee and Pear – ensure privacy, each with a 400 m² space for up to three caravans (eight people), including power and lights.

A communal swimming pool and jungle gym are located near Mango, alongside a cozy gathering spot under a canopy with benches and a fire pit.

Lylius boasts four hiking trails ranging from 1 km to 14 km, and you may take your dog with you. Depending on the trail, you'll have views of rooibos, buchu and even rock paintings. The longest trail includes a 4x4 route.

Rates R500-R600 per night for four guests (depending on the stand); additional guests at R50 each.

GPS S32.371463 E18.986672

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AVONDRUST BUSHVELD CAMP

The owners of Avondrust, Pieter and Annetjie Olivier, acquired this patch of land adjacent to Dinokeng 42 years ago, well before it became a Big Five reserve.

Avondrust is located just south of Tshikwalo and roughly in line with Kyleu within the reserve. It borders Dinokeng, but is not part of the reserve itself. They started getting the campsite ready right next to Dinokeng three years ago.

There is a variety of wildlife here, including nyala, impala, blue wildebeest, and a few duikers, and they often visit the campsite. Recently, Annetjie tells us, visitors identified 168 different bird species at Avondrust.

"None of the animals are dangerous and it's completely safe, even for children to ride their bikes on the dirt roads." The property is fully fenced with an electric fence – campers receive a remote control for the gate.

You set up camp in a cleared spot among the bushes – it has an almost Shingwedzi-like feel. Nine caravans fit easily, though Annetjie and her team have allowed more. There are movable braai drums, each with its own grid, which you can bring closer to your setup.



Avondrust has three power points, but they ask campers to be mindful of their power usage. A camping fridge is fine, but your air conditioner will need to take a break.

You have a choice between two family bathrooms, each with a shower, sink and toilet, and then there are three separate showers and toilets. The dishwashing area is opposite the family bathrooms. All the hot water is supplied by a donkey boiler kept going by the owners.

There are two swimming pools as a respite

from the Bushveld sun, each surrounded by a lawn, along with a boma featuring a large fire pit and some braai drums.

There is cellphone reception, but pets are not allowed. The last section of dirt road to the campsite is suitable for a regular sedan and road caravan.

Rates R250 per night per site.

GPS S25.372584 E28.350006

Contact 083 661 8986

avondrustbosveldkamp@gmail.com

Avondrust Bosveld Kampe





PHANGWA BUSH CAMP

Just less than a decade ago, this slice of Bushveld was a serene escape from city hustle for Melanie Hudson, as recounted by her daughter Lee-Anne Atherton. But when COVID-19 hit, it became their sanctuary. Alongside her husband, Matthew, they decided it was the perfect time to create a campsite – welcoming their first campers in May 2022.

Phangwa Bush Camp, a neighbour to Dinokeng, is situated on the eastern side, not far from Nyani, recently featured in *Drive 7 Camp*. (See the *Weekend Break* article on page 52 of the October-November 2023 issue. – Ed)

Access is primarily from the Moloto Road (R573), with a 13 km dirt road that's navigable for most vehicles and caravans.

While not inside Dinokeng, the camp is frequented by a variety of wildlife, including kudus, blue wildebeest, impalas, nyalas and blesbok. These creatures are quite tame, often wandering peacefully through the camp.

Phangwa offers eight widely spaced



stands, each with its own bathroom. Every two stands share an ablution block. Your dishwashing area, also sheltered, is located outside the bathroom entrance. The toilet has its own room, while the larger adjoining space houses the shower



and basin. A gas geyser ensures hot water is always available.

The swimming pool, closest to the second bathroom building, is far enough for some quiet. For those seeking utmost tranquillity, the stands by the fourth ablution block, at the far end, is ideal.

Campers set up in a cleared area in the bush, shaded by abundant trees. Besides the power point in the bathrooms, there's another at your site (both with regular household sockets). A standalone braai with its own grid is also provided.

Though you're among wildlife, the area is safe enough for children to cycle around on the paths.

Rates R250-R475 pn per stand for four (depending on season and weekday); additional guests at R75 each.

GPS S25.418298 E28.470151

Contact 067 874 9085

📧 phangwa.info@mweb.co.za

🌐 phangwabushcamp12.wixsite.com/phangwa-bush-camp



COMBRETUM ECO PARK

Combretum has opened its gates to campers a mere 35 km from Brits, towards Thabazimbi. As the crow flies, you're camping about 8 km east of Roodekoppies Dam, with the nearest access being a 12 km dirt road from the R511 tar road right to the gate.

Spanning 800 hectares and fully enclosed by a game fence, Combretum's campsite is on a plot measuring 300 x 400 m. It features 24 stands, grouped in threes. Each group shares a concrete slab in the middle for communal gatherings, complete with a built-in bench on one side. The groups are spaced far enough apart around the slab for ample privacy.

Each stand boasts a newly built private bathroom. Half of your bathroom area is roofed over the toilet and basin, but the adjoining shower is open to the sky. For hot water, you'll be stoking a donkey – a bag of wood is provided daily for this purpose. You can buy additional firewood at the office.

Your stand includes a tiled block next to your bathroom for setting up your camp if you like. While there's no electricity, a freestanding steel braai with a grid is provided.

Combretum offers plenty of walking in the



bush or dirt tracks for mountain biking. Expect to see wildlife including blue wildebeest, impalas, giraffes, zebras, duikers, nyalas, steenbok and warthogs.

Cool off in the swimming pool, also equipped with a donkey boiler for the chillier months.

A security guard is on duty at night.

Rates R600 pn per site for up to four; thereafter R100 per person (children under 12 stay free). Check-in is between 14:00 and 16:00, and departure is by 10:00.

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Contact 082 851 9768 (WhatsApp)

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Caravans**



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Leonard and Truida-Mari Laage, avid campers from Mpumalanga, jumped at the chance to establish a campsite. Truida-Mari tells us they vacationed in the Kosi Bay area two years ago and enjoyed it so much they decided to acquire a one-hectare plot there.

Eden@Kosi is barely 2 km away from the Kosi Bay border post to Mozambique, and the estuary itself is 5 km in the opposite direction. First, they erected the Boshuis (that sleeps up to eight people), and now the brand-new camping site has been added. Two stands have been built next to each other, and there are plans to expand this to seven.

Sandy roads are common in this area. You take the same dirt road from the P522 tar road to the Kosi Bay estuary, but then 1,5 km later, keep right. The last 1,8 km is a regular dirt road and only the final 390 m a sandy twin-track. So, don't show up with your city sedan, but anything with a reasonable height and a diff lock won't struggle – you don't need four-wheel drive.

The two stands are each separated by a high reed fence and are immediately to the right as you enter the campsite. As expected, you camp on a sandy surface, but Truida-Mari says they have already planted grass. Both stands have plenty of shade, and you also get a power point (ordinary domestic socket), a free-standing steel braai with a grid, and a tap right at your stand.

Each stand has its own bathroom built with upright wooden poles and reeds, with a concrete floor and zinc roof. The shower and basin are in one room, and the toilet is separate. The dishwashing area is outside the room but still under a roof, featuring a double sink with a worktop alongside. One donkey provides hot water



for everyone, and someone is on duty to ensure it works properly. Campers must supply their own wood, but it's easily obtained in this area.

The cellphone signal is weak and disappears entirely during load shedding. The lagoon of the Kosi Bay estuary is known for its fish traps and snorkeling, and also for the sea turtles that breed in the area. If you want to experience this firsthand, Leonard and his team can help arrange it.

Rates R600 pn per site for four, then R100 per person.

GPS S26.878416 E32.841824

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LEONARD AND TRUIDA-MARI with their children, Sally (18), Michelle (14), Bernard (16) and Raymond (16).

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Suzuki's stellar year

Despite a challenging 2023 for the automotive industry in South Africa, Suzuki South Africa experienced the opposite, introducing several new models, including one of the country's most affordable commercial vehicles, and setting multiple new sales records. They even broke a new Guinness world record!

Brendon Carpenter, Marketing Manager of Suzuki South Africa, said, "This was definitely the busiest year ever for Suzuki Auto since we opened our doors in South Africa in 2008."

The year's successes began early with the launch of the Suzuki Eeco panel van. Joining the Super Carry, the Eeco stands as one of South Africa's most affordable commercial vehicles in terms

of purchase price, maintenance costs, and fuel consumption. It boasts reliability and low fuel consumption with a 1,2-litre petrol engine, ABS brakes with EBD, ESP stability control, dual front airbags, air conditioning, and a lockable sliding and rear door. The little Eeco can even be converted into a tiny camper van by ingenious vanlifers!

April 2023 saw the introduction of Suzuki's flagship model, the new Grand Vitara, offering new levels of luxury, technology and driving comfort. In August 2023, the sporty coupe-like Fronx joined the compact SUV segment, and the XL6 was also launched. The XL6, with its extra-large cabin accommodating six people, quickly became a family favourite, thanks



to its economical yet willing 1,5-litre petrol engine and unique cabin layout featuring two captain's chairs in the middle row and a 50:50 split seat in the rear.

But that wasn't the end, as in November 2023, the company introduced the five-door version of its Jimny – read our impressions on pg 80.

Suzuki has also made international headlines with the unveiling of its eVX, a fully electric SUV displayed at the Auto Expo in India, and a new Swift was introduced at the Japanese Motor Show.

While the new Swift is still in development, there's no stopping the current version. The Swift is a bestseller for Suzuki and one of the most popular hatchbacks in South Africa, contributing to the company setting several new sales





records and maintaining its position as the third top-selling vehicle brand in South Africa with a passenger vehicle market share of nearly 15%.

According to Suzuki, it was the second-best performing dealer network in the country in 2023. The company set a personal record with 49 863 vehicles sold in one fiscal year.

In August 2023, the brand sold its 200 000th vehicle. It took Suzuki nine years

Driven to conserve

Over the past three and a half decades, more than 2,7 million kilometres have been covered in Volkswagens in the fight against rhino poaching. Additionally, Volkswagen has enabled over 67 000 vulnerable youngsters to experience nature and has provided humanitarian aid benefiting over 500 households.

This record was highlighted by the Wilderness Foundation Africa (WFA) in reference to its vehicle fleet sponsored by Volkswagen South Africa (VWSA).

VWSA has been collaborating with the WFA since 1988, starting when the company first supplied vehicles to the WFA's sister organisation, the Wilderness Leadership School, under the guidance of the late Dr Ian Player.

Since 1995, the WFA has been receiving Volkswagens for its social programmes. In 2015, VWSA provided Kombis and Caddys

to support the WFA's youth development programme.

"We are incredibly grateful for 35 years of partnership with VWSA. It has enabled us to make a difference in the conservation of South Africa's endangered rhinos and the support of education and development of South Africa's vulnerable youth," says Dr Andrew Muir, CEO of the WFA.

Martina Biene, dhaiperson and managing director of VWSA, remarks, "It goes without saying that we believe in the important work of the Wilderness Foundation Africa. We are proud to play a role in a range of conservation and youth development projects, as these priorities align with VWSA's efforts to make a difference."

The photo below shows Biene handing over the key of an Amarok to Matthew Norval, Chief Operating Officer of the WFA.



to sell its first 50 000 vehicles. The last 50 000 vehicles were all sold in 2023!

Suzuki was also nominated in various consumer awards. The Baleno and Grand Vitara were awarded as the best economic hatchback vehicles, and the brand was a top performer at the Maamsa Accelerator awards. Naamsa also named the Baleno as the top performer of 2023. Suzuki also won the category for top-imported vehicle of 2023 for its popular Swift and, as we wrote in the previous issue, Suzuki set a Guinness world record for the most vehicles turning on their lights simultaneously.

Lastly, Suzuki dominated at the Simola Hillclimb in Knysna, entering three Swifts in the Class A1 category for turbocharged production vehicles with two-wheel drive. In this race, a Swift Sport driven by Wesley Greybe finished second after a Porsche. Two of the Swift Sports participated in the final elimination, with the second one driven by Sudhir Matai.

"As we reflect on the past year, we are very grateful for the support of South African customers. They have opened not just their wallets to us, but also their hearts. We look forward to a wonderful 2024!" says Carpenter.

New vehicle sales hit a low

According to vehicle financier WesBank, new vehicle sales in November 2023 reached a new low point. This was the company's worst month since the beginning of 2021 when the market started to recover after the COVID-19 lockdown.

Figures released by Naamsa show that new vehicle sales year-on-year fell by a significant 9,8% to 45 075 units in November 2023 – 4 911 fewer than in November 2022. This marked the sixth month of declining sales and the fourth consecutive month of negative growth.

Vehicle manufacturers could take solace in the fact that November is traditionally not an outstanding month. For example, 385 fewer units were sold than in October 2023. However, the problem lies in the fact that year-to-date growth has significantly decreased to 0,8% due to the economic challenges faced by motorists and the automotive industry.

Consumers also had to grapple with another interest rate hike in November. "The high lending rate, combined with high inflation and relatively lower household incomes, restrict major purchases like new vehicles," says Lebo Gaoaketse, head of marketing and communication at WesBank.

The volatility of the energy crisis is also putting pressure on consumers and denting business confidence. "That limited household income and business revenue streams make an alternative energy solution more important than a new vehicle," says Gaoaketse. "With the return of load shedding, it can be expected that sales in December 2023 and January 2024 will experience a higher than usual wait-and-see approach to purchase decisions."

More tellingly, Gaoaketse says, is the significant increase in applications for used vehicles, which were double that of new vehicle sales. "WesBank's ratio now stands at 1,92 used vehicles financed for every new vehicle."

All segments of the market showed losses in November. Passenger car sales dropped by 12,1% to 29,384 units – a significant 4 052 fewer than the same month last year. The



Top 5 selling vehicles



traditionally more vibrant market for light commercial vehicles fared the best among the losses, with a decrease of 3,9% to 12,941 units. "

The consideration will now be whether the new vehicle market can show any growth at all in 2024."

• Naamsa also identified the top five sellers. They are the Toyota Hilux with 3 073 units, Ford Ranger with 2 234, Volkswagen Polo with 1 913, the Toyota Corolla Cross with 1 766, and the Isuzu D-Max with 1 662 bakkies finding homes.

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Volvo's EV has arrived!

Volvo South Africa has confirmed the arrival of the new fully electric EX30, with the country's first shipment already en route – by the time you're reading this, they should be rolling off the ship in Durban.

The EX30 is set to be one of the most affordable electric vehicles (EVs) in South Africa, starting at R775 900. Since September 2023, Volvo has received over 150 pre-orders for this compact Swedish luxury SUV.

Greg Maruszewski, managing director of Volvo South Africa, highlights that the country is among the first globally, outside Sweden, to receive the EX30.

"Typically, South Africa isn't in the first wave of a new model's global launch. However, this has changed with the EX30, meaning we'll see them on local roads simultaneously with major markets in Europe, North America, and Asia," he says and adds they're anticipating the EX30 to be a top-seller among electric vehicles in South Africa.

Before arriving in South Africa, the EX30 was one of seven contenders for the prestigious European Car of the Year award, a title won by the XC40 in 2018.

The XC40 Recharge – dominating South Africa's fully electric premium C-SUV segment – triumphed in the New-Energy Vehicle category at the

2023 Old Mutual Insure South African Car of the Year competition.

In a press release, Volvo South Africa states the brand-new EX30 is the cornerstone of Volvo's global electrification growth ambitions. The 315 kW Twin Motor Performance model is reportedly the fastest accelerating Volvo yet, achieving 0-100 km/h in a mere 3,6 seconds.

The extended version of the single motor drive system (rear-wheel drive) boasts a range of 480 km, according to Volvo.

The arrival of the EX30 is set to bolster Volvo South Africa's formidable presence in the rapidly growing new-energy vehicle space and significantly enhance the accessibility of electric cars for many South Africans.

📍 volvocars.com/za



A petrolhead paradise

The date for this year's Festival of Motoring has just been announced.

Marking its seventh occurrence, the event is touted as one of the largest motor shows in Africa.

The excitement kicks off on 30 August at the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit in Midrand, Gauteng, and runs until 1 September 2024.

Michael Dehn, managing director of event organiser Messe Frankfurt South Africa, says, "The Festival of Motoring is an unmissable event on the annual motor community calendar, and we are thrilled to extend our partnership with WesBank for another three years.

This partnership enables us to enhance the attractions and activities and continue building on the event's allure."

Ghana Msibi, CEO of WesBank, comments, "The festival is a key highlight on the local automotive calendar, attracting car enthusiasts from across the country."

At the festival, visitors will have the opportunity to ride around the track as passengers in luxury vehicles. Additionally, there will be stalls where enthusiasts can purchase accessories for their vehicles, along with exhibitions showcasing new rides and vintage cars.

Tickets will be available for purchase from March 2024 on their website.

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FORD RANGER TREMOR

The Earthquaker

The upcoming Ford Ranger Tremor is designed for adventurous individuals seeking a rugged bakkie for overland trips. **Cyril Kloppe** checks the specs.

The Ranger Tremor employs the same 2.0 twin-turbo diesel engine producing 154 kW and 500 Nm of torque, combined with full-time all-wheel drive and the Trail Turn Assist feature from the Wildtrak X, allowing the bakkie to make sharp turns (More on this later). Additionally, the Tremor boasts Pro Trailer Backup Assist, which assists when reversing with a trailer hitched. This electronic aid comes standard on the Tremor and Wildtrak X, as well as on the upcoming Ranger Platinum and Ranger Raptor.

"The new Ranger raised the bar for comfort, practicality, performance and safety, and we are broadening both its appeal and capability even further with the addition of the Ranger Tremor," says Doreen Mashinini, General Manager for Marketing at Ford South Africa. "Tremor is aimed at customers who require enhanced capability and confidence in conquering challenging off-road conditions, as well as owners that typically customize their vehicle for



overlanding adventures."

While the Tremor strongly resembles the Wildtrak X, it's actually based on the more affordable XLT model, but with additional features such as a unique grille and the same daytime running lights and bumpers as the Wildtrak X. Please note that the Ranger Tremor in some of the photos in this article is the European left-hand drive model, and the appearance of the South African version may differ.

The unique features don't end here: the Tremor gets wider

wheel arches to accommodate the robust 265/70 R17 General Grabber AT3 off-road tyres with white lettering, and a black Ford emblem instead of the traditional blue oval and Tremor emblems on the body.

The Tremor features steel plates on the undercarriage to protect the drivetrain and fuel tank. Off-road capability is further improved by adjustable position-sensitive Bilstein shock absorbers originally developed for the

TREMOR

Wildtrak X. These shocks raise the body by an additional 24 mm and widen the track by 30 mm.

For an extra touch of exclusivity, the Ranger Tremor is available in Conquer Grey – a colour option previously limited to the Ranger Raptor, but the Tremor is also available in seven other colours, including Agate Black, Lucid Red and Lightning Blue.

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NEW WHEELS



The interior

The seats are finished in water-resistant black vinyl with light grey stitching. The front seats can be adjusted in six directions and feature the Tremor logo embroidered in orange on the backrests. Instead of ordinary floor mats, the Tremor sports vinyl flooring that can be hosed down after playing in the mud.

Ford has installed a panel with six switches on the ceiling. These

switches can be wired so that you can control extra lights and other electrical gadgets. Provision is also made for an additional battery in the engine bay, so you don't have to reroute bottles, pipes and wires to make space for one.

As with the Wildtrak X, the Tremor is equipped with cameras all around the body that provide a 360° view on the 12-inch touchscreen. Beneath the touchscreen is a wireless



induction phone charger.

The load bed is coated with a protective plastic layer, and there's a 12 V socket for a portable fridge/freezer.

transfer case (eMTC) linked to the 10-speed automatic transmission with eShifter technology and an electronic parking brake. The all-wheel-drive system includes 4H, which evenly distributes power to the front and rear axles, and 4L for challenging obstacles. There is also two-wheel drive (2H) which disconnects the front axle.

The so-called Trail Turn Assist brakes an inner wheel when you need to make a sharp turn in off-road conditions at speeds below 19 km/h. This tightens the bakkie's turning radius by up to 25%.

Reversing with a trailer is also a breeze. Simply keep an eye on the reverse camera's image on the touchscreen and turn a knob near the gear lever in the direction you want the trailer to go. The Tremor will take care of the steering. It doesn't get any easier than that. 🚙

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Ranger Tremor
Engine	1 996 cc four-cylinder turbodiesel
Power	154 kW @ 3 750 rpm
Torque	500 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission	10-speed automatic
Seats	Five
Tank	80 ℓ
Standard tyres	265/70 R17
GVM	3 280 kg
Payload	946 kg
Towing capacity	3 500 kg
Wading depth	800 mm
Safety Rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP 2022)
Warranty	Four years/120 000 km
Service plan	Eight years/135 000 km (optional)
Price	Unknown at time of going to print

In the veld

In addition to the position sensitive Bilstein dampers and General Grabber AT3 off-road tyres, the Tremor gets various electronic drive modes: Normal, Eco, Tow/Haul, Slippery, Mud/Ruts, Sand, and Rock Crawl. The system adjusts accelerator response, gear shifts, traction and stability control, rear differential lock, as well as the steering and braking system to suit the given terrain.

As mentioned earlier, the Ford Ranger Tremor is equipped with a full-time four-wheel-drive system. This consists of an electromagnetically controlled

From the competitors Luxury bakkies built for challenging overland adventures



R1 159 900

Isuzu D-Max Arctic AT35

A powerhouse of a bakkie, and those massive tyres roll over almost anything.



Yet unknown

Mahindra Global Pik Up

It will be unveiled later this year, and rumours suggest it will be an overlanding favourite.



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Jeep Gladiator Rubicon

In terms of pure off-road capability, it's one of the best bakkies money can buy.

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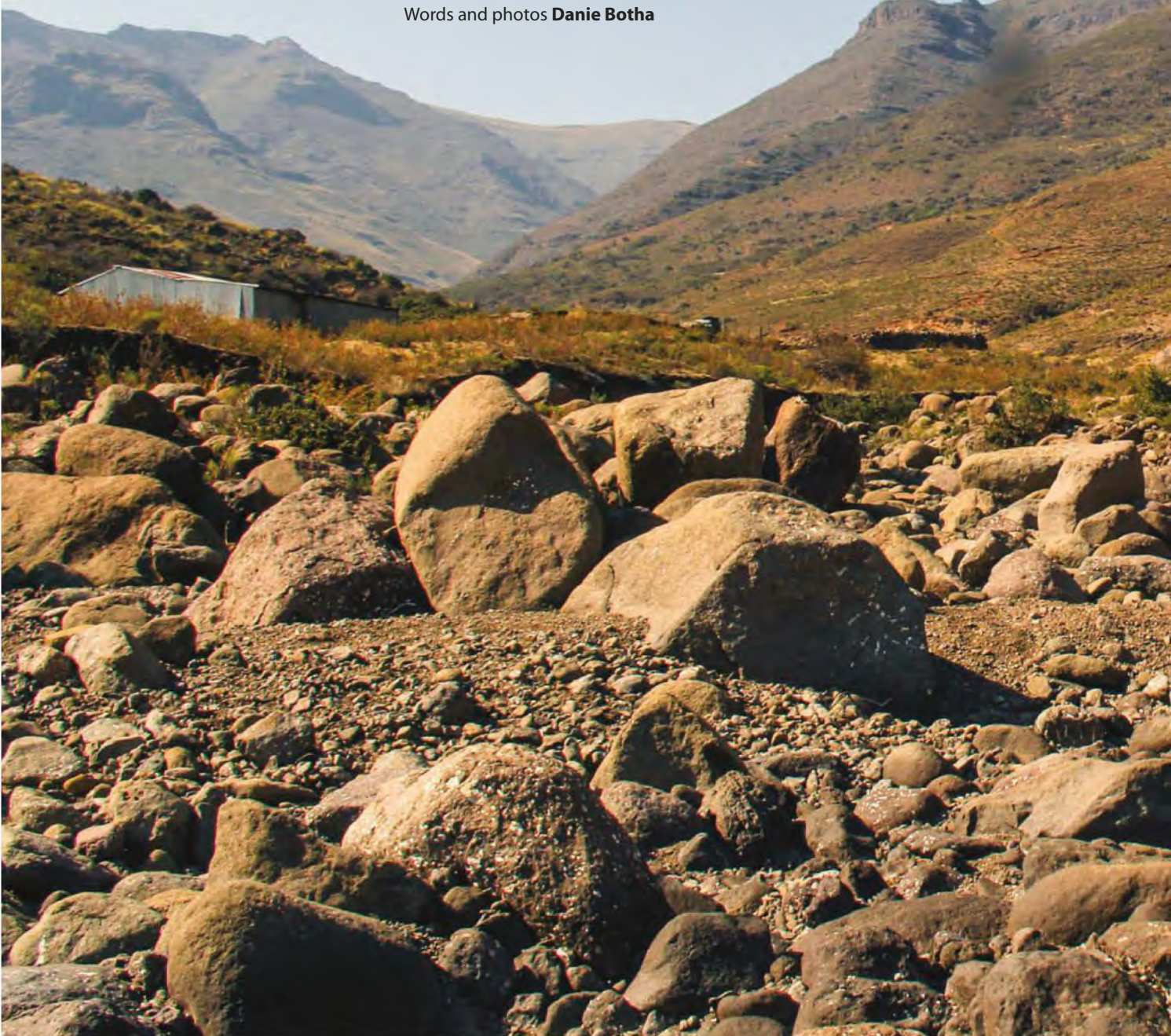


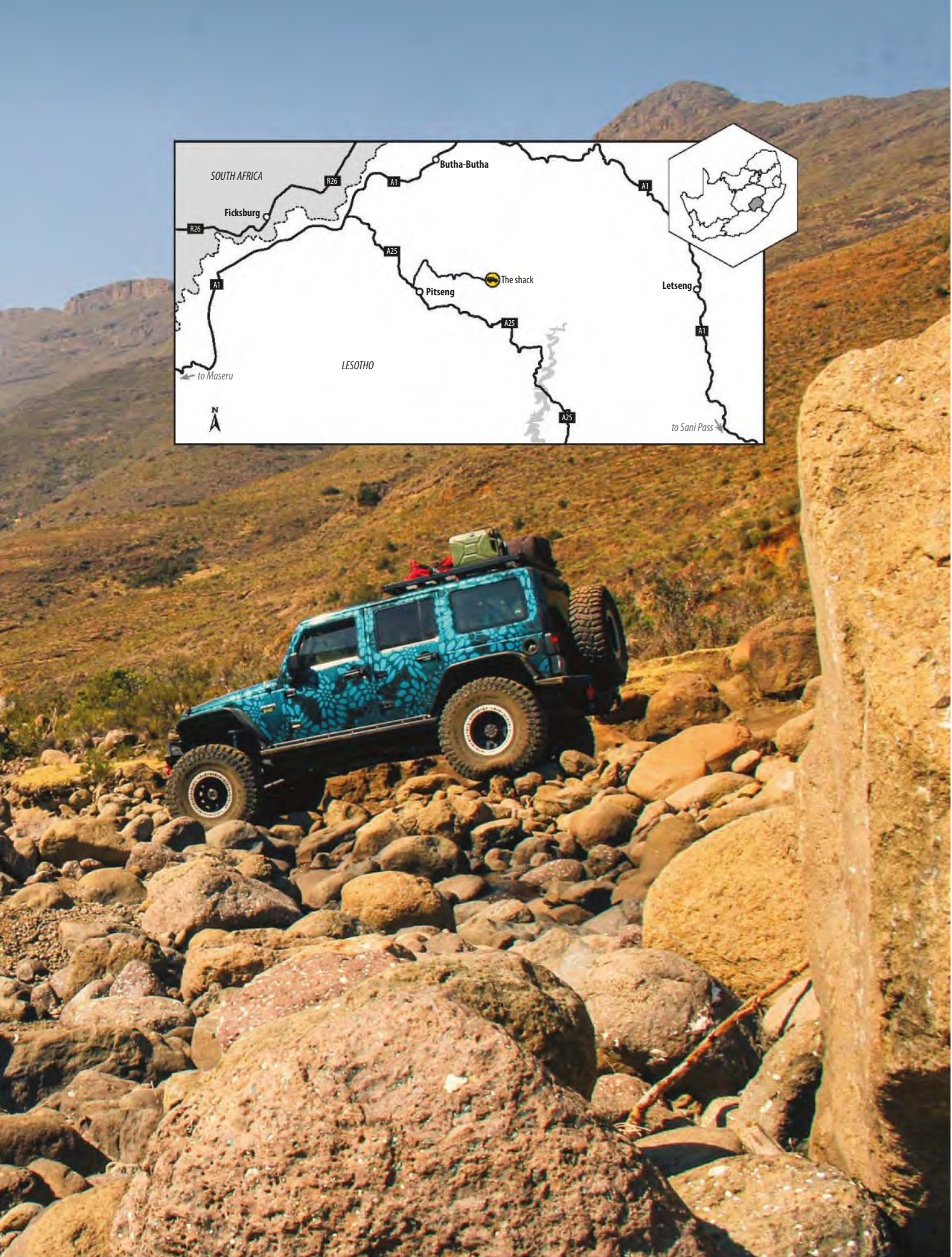
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Rock solid!

Calling the Letele Pass in Lesotho a “pass” is akin to calling an elephant bull a carrier pigeon. It’s not just a pass, but rather a torment for man and machine that winds through ravines and up mountains for 6 km.

Words and photos **Danie Botha**







“

The V8 under the hood of Nico Stockoff's Toyota Hilux double cab roars so loudly that people in Fouriesburg across the border can probably hear it

”

There is nothing in this world that one's body and soul cannot adapt given a little time, a wise man once wrote. But this wise guy clearly spent too much time in his study and never dared to tackle the Letele Pass in Lesotho.

The pass is only 6 km long, and it's essentially simply a general direction in which man, beast and vehicle navigate through the gorge and then aim uphill. In the olden days, the pass apparently led to the Letele gold mine, and even at its best, it was rough going. Since then, the mine has built a new gravel road on the other side of the mountain, and even

a Corolla can make it up that pass.

Thanks to this new mine road, the old mountain pass was quickly forgotten and not maintained. Rain has washed away pieces of the road that once bypassed the worst rocky outcrops. Nowadays, you have a choice between big rocks, bigger rocks and enormous rocks.

The 4x4 vehicles arrive at a corrugated iron shack. This dwelling serves as an overnight accommodation for locals and marks the official starting point of the pass, just over 2 km above sea level.

But first, Henk de Klerk needs to give his Frankenjero – a Mitsubishi Pajero

chassis and 2,8 l engine with a Willys Jeep cabin – some love. Henk owns a Mitsubishi Pajero workshop, hence the Pajero's internals.

The Frankenjero is an intriguing experiment. The Pajero chassis is basically sliced in two, and the cabin and load bin are connected by a custom-made driveshaft that can work at all sorts of unearthly angles. Henk's 4x4 rig is based on a so-called Willock swivel frame design that was used in a handful of Dodge Power Wagons in the 1950s. That Dodge was super cool, but the concept never took hold in the larger 4x4 market.

In short, the cabin and load bin can



FRIENDLY LOCALS. The villagers of the Mountain Kingdom welcome South Africans in big rigs with open arms and wide smiles (above). Except when Frankenjero starts acting up (top), then the locals keep their distance, fearing that they may be asked to help.

each bend in their own direction. Thus, the cabin can lean to the left while the load bin leans to the right; Henk can more or less control the angle by adjusting the chains between the two sections.

The Frankenjero is an untested 4x4 recipe, however. Long before we reached the zinc house, Henk had to tinker under the hood a few times to fix minor issues.

The V8 under the hood of Nico Stockoff's Toyota Hilux double cab roars so loudly that people in Fouriesburg across the border can probably hear it. The suspension system has had an upgrade, but it only has one differential lock for the rear driveshaft.

Jas du Preez also drives a Hilux, but the load bin has been replaced with a custom-made one. There's also a powerful Lexus V8 engine waiting to be unleashed, and the shorter single cab has differential locks front and rear.

In Kola de Klerk's Jeep TJ, the suspension has been lifted, and there are ARB diff lockers front and rear, with 35" mud tyres rounding out the picture. Kola is clearly an old hand with 4x4 tricks – a valuable asset in a place like Lesotho.

Lourens Rautenbach's "mine-is-bigger-than-yours" Wrangler Rubicon is a Jeep of a different colour. The drivetrain and suspension system are bigger, better, stronger, more expensive and smarter than any standard Rubicon's. This monster's 40" mud tyres stand over a metre tall – he doesn't have to drive around a rock, just go over it.

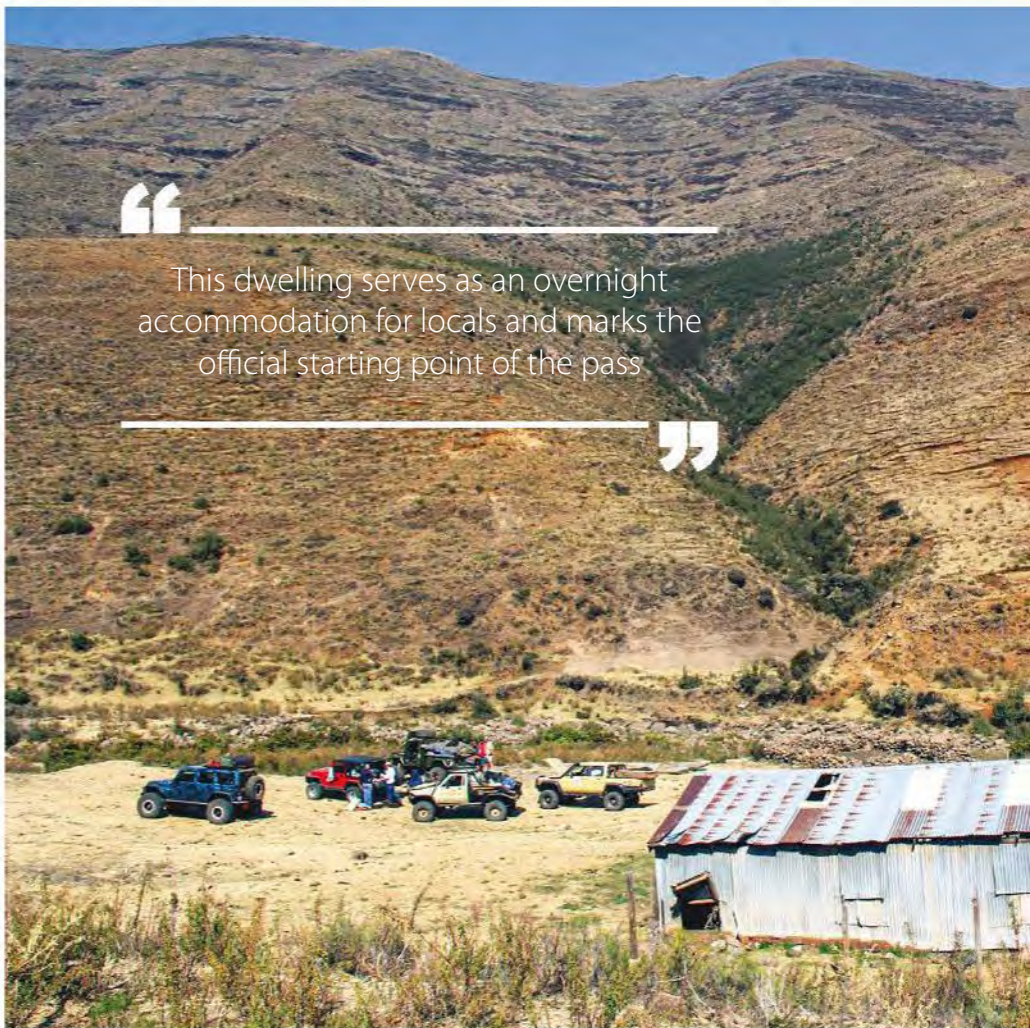
By lunchtime, the five rock crawlers tackle the pass. The first 50 metres are easy; just a few rocks on a descent and through a bit of water. But then the mountain bares its teeth: a steep and narrow climb, through and over deep gaps. Lourens' big Jeep is at the front of the line, and he tries to straddle the deep gap. But the Jeep is heavy and wide, the angle is tough... and the Wrangler's right wheels fall into the gap. Lourens locks the front and rear differentials, the big Cooper tyres spin, but the Jeep doesn't move. He tries to reverse, but the wheels just spin... followed by a sudden and ominous clunking sound. Later, we find out the right rear wheel's driveshaft broke.

Jas has a plan. With great effort and

“

This dwelling serves as an overnight accommodation for locals and marks the official starting point of the pass

”



CORRUGATIONS. And rocks, yes. And a shepherd dog! A new knocking sound emanating from Jas du Preez's Hilux, before they even reached the pass proper, had everyone a little concerned. The front axle was properly inspected (below) before the group tackled the pass. Boulders await Lourens Rautenbach's Jeep (opposite page) around a corner.





They say

Jas du Preez, owner of Jas Motors Toyota
Hilux V8 single-cab

"I love a 4x4 challenge, but the time I spend in nature,
the campfire, the people... that's life."





FRANKENJERO. It's part Pajero, part Jeep with a Willock swivel frame. Here its roll-over angle (above) is put to the test. Rather than causing issues, the heavy spare wheel on the roof acted like a mooring fender against the rocks when the vehicle toppled over, saving the Jeep cab from damage. "Hold it!" calls Jas, before Nico Stockhoff also flips his heavily modified Hilux.

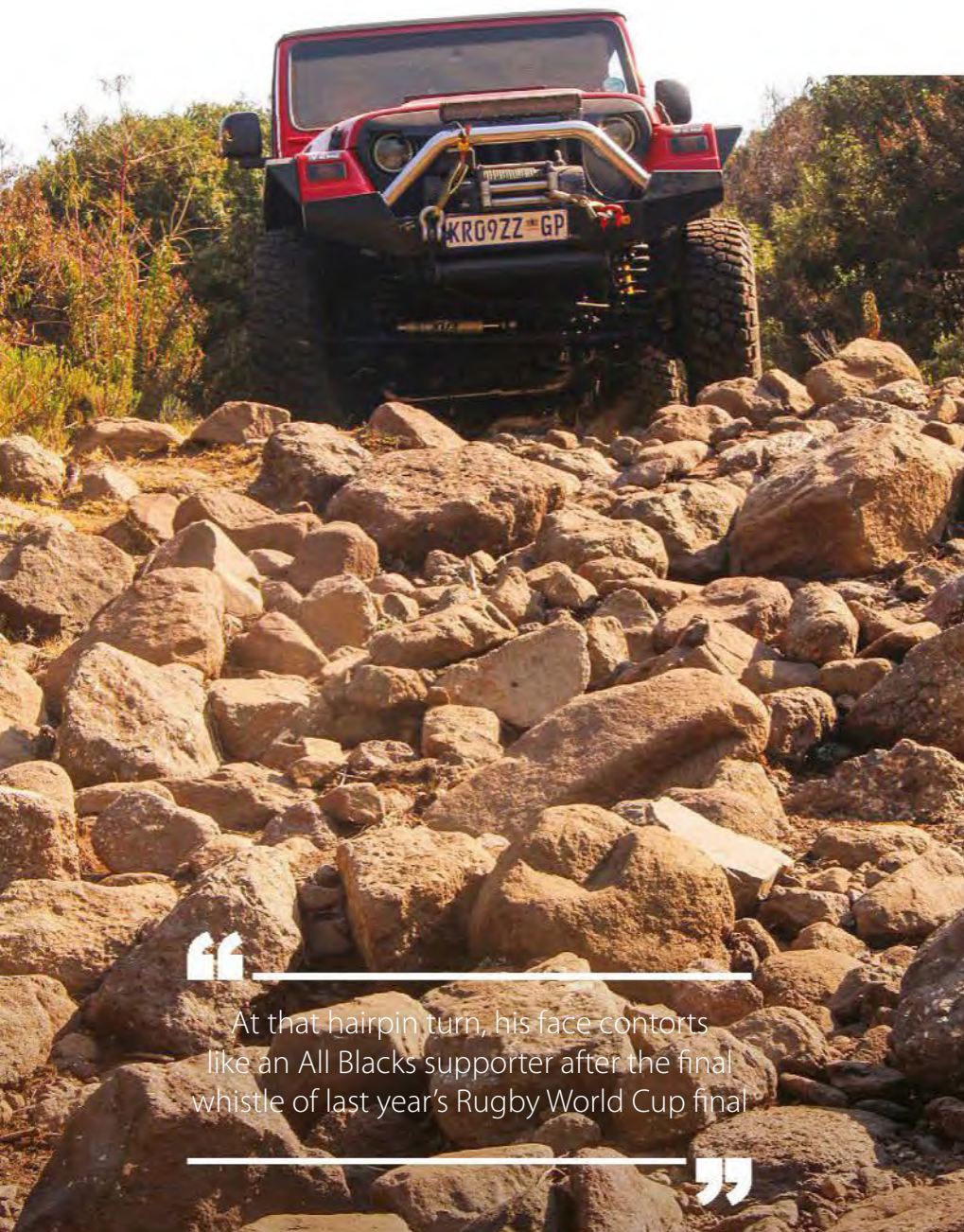


They say

**Nico Stockhoff, owner of Ruff & Tuff 4x4
Toyota Hilux V8 double-cab**

"It's the 4x4 challenge that attracts me, and this 4x4 test is a tough one. The very steep side slopes in these mountains, with added cliffs, however... not so much!"





“

At that hairpin turn, his face contorts like an All Blacks supporter after the final whistle of last year's Rugby World Cup final

”



a few testy moments, the Hilux inches past the Jeep. Everyone jumps in to help and stack rocks in the gap – at least there's no shortage of them here. The Hilux is used as an anchor point for the Jeep's winch cable. With Goliath standing on the Jeep's side step to help prevent it from rolling over, the Wrangler eventually pulls itself out of trouble. Goliath – his real name is Jacques Swart – is a farmer from Potchefstroom standing at 2,1 metres tall and weighing 160 kg. Surprisingly, he fits in the Frankenjero's clever cabin, albeit snugly. When something heavy needs to be moved, Jacques is there first, moving it himself.

With extra rocks in the gap, the Jeep TJ and Hilux double cab make it up the hill. Henk and his Frankenjero take their turn, but there's a problem because the front diff lock won't engage. Henk is not one to give up easily, but to make it through the gap, he needs to build up some speed – not the best plan for this obstacle. The cabin leans left, the bed leans right, rocks fly in all directions, dust hangs in the air... and the cabin leans so far over that the Frankenjero's roof rests against the side of a mountain.

If it weren't for the mountain, Frankenjero would have toppled over. Well, the cabin would have. Goliath and a few of the guys jump in and rock the Willys cabin back to the ground. Henk fires up the Mitsubishi engine again and lets the clutch go. And there goes Frankenjero, uphill, with wheels only touching the ground here and there. And it's through! The guys cheer, and Henk's smile is as broad as the mighty Orange River in flood.

That's precisely why these brave adventurers take on the Letele Pass. To look something seemingly impossible in the eye and declare, "Whatever! I'll show you how it's done!"

The next 50 metres are easy. It's almost as if Mother Nature teases us with false hope while enjoying a box of popcorn. But then things get ugly, Thabo Bester ugly. There is no longer a road, just a river of rocks with boulders and steep slopes. There's even ice in parts of the river.

It's one of those situations where you ask: Really? How are you supposed to drive anything through this? And also: Why? Why would you even want to?

The guys inspect the rocks, the ice, the seemingly impossible climbing angles, the hairpin turn where tipping over is a strong possibility, and then hold a council meeting. It's late afternoon, and it will take at least two hours to build a route through this rocky challenge. Then we can finally set up camp before the sun goes down – just before the rocks, where the ground is more or less flat.

By twilight, the campfire burns high. It's early August, and as soon as the sun dips behind the mountains, the temperature drops sharply. Most of us sleep in pop-up tents – those ones you just simply take out of their bags and they erect themselves. After a braai and a good dose of Dutch courage, we crawl into our sleeping bags early to find some warmth.

The second day on the pass dawn, and it's freezing. The thermometer may read -10, but outside it feels closer to -20. For

breakfast, Nico prepares vetkoek with mince, which goes down well with a cup of espresso.

But the rocks await...

Lourens' big Wrangler is up front again. With its 40" wheels, the Jeep easily crawls down the steep slope, but the uphill struggle proves challenging. Something's amiss with the Jeep. Lourens thinks it's the rear diff locker that's not working. We anchor the Jeep's winch to an enormous rock, and Lourens winches himself up the rocky trail.

Next up is Kola's shorter TJ, and he barely makes it over the bump before a large rock hooks onto the Jeep's undercarriage. With both rear wheels hanging uselessly in the air, the TJ's winch is brought into play.

Now the Frankenjero takes on the rocks. Without the front diff lock, the climb is going to be interesting. Henk makes sure of his line, revs up the

Pajero engine, and lets it rip... and lo and behold, the Frankenjero bounces and bends its way all the way to the top without needing a winch. The guys cheer in unison. One man's victory, whether small or large, is everyone's victory.

The two Hilux bakkies finally make it through this first challenge, which has eaten up two hours of our time.

Now for the next 30 metres. It involves ice, water, rocks, a steep slope, a sharp turn at an unpleasant angle, and, to top it off, a foreboding abyss.

Henk and the others construct an impressive winching system with multiple anchor points up the slope. The plan is to anchor the vehicles to these systems so they can be safely winched up the slope.

Lourens' injured Jeep is still up front, but clearly, something is wrong. With great effort and a stream of invectives, he makes it. The first one is through!



They say

**Henk de Klerk, owner of Pajero
Maintenance Services
'Frankenjero'**

"I find these experiences to be therapeutic, a chance to clear my head. What's better than the mountains and all that fresh air, and a good 4x4 challenge?"

“

It's early August, and as soon as the sun dips behind the mountains, the temperature drops sharply

”



NO PAIN, NO GAIN. Can you actually drive here? The pensive 40" guy, aka Lourens Rautenbach, wonders what could be coming next. So far it's been rocks, rocks and rocks. Jacques 'Goliath' Swart (below right) has no fear of rocks.





Guys, leave the rocks. First come and see what's happening here



HEAVY METAL. Letele Pass is tough as nails. Both man and machine are tested to the limit. And a little past the limit. A 40" Cooper tyre (insert) lovingly embraces a rock.



Slowly but surely, the vehicles climb through the obstacle. Nico, the man with the double-cab Hilux, has a thing for slopes. At that hairpin turn, his face contorts like an All Blacks supporter after the final whistle of last year's Rugby World Cup final, but he makes it up nonetheless.

Henk's Frankenjero is last. Its winch is connected to the winching system, but the winch breaks... and now there's trouble. Without the winch, the Frankenjero will never make it out of here. Luckily, Jas again has a plan: his Hilux also has a winch on the rear bumper, and that's how the Frankenjero is hoisted up the slope with Jas' winch.

Everyone made it!

But the clock is ticking. We left at 09:00, and now it's past noon... and

we've barely covered 50 metres.

As is the norm, the Letele Pass teases us with an enjoyable smooth twin-track for the next 50 metres. And then... trouble. The road descends into a valley that looks entirely impassable, with enormous boulders – definitely not mere rocks – scattered everywhere.

There seems to be an alternative route that climbs up the mountain on the left, but it's strewn with rocks and innumerable gullies. A few guys decide to hike up, but it quickly becomes clear that it's not a realistic option.

Henk has driven this route before and indicates that the old road goes through the valley and the rocks. The guys venture forward to assess the options, while a few others start stacking rocks to build a road in the meantime.

In Lourens' Jeep, the radio crackles.

It's Nico, who's in the valley with Henk: "Guys, leave the rocks. First come and see what's happening here."

The rest of us walk through the valley, climbing over the rocks. We find Henk and the rest of the group at a nest of rocks. Water had completely washed away the bit of route that was still there a few years ago, says Henk. He points to where the pass used to run – now, it's an expanse of giant boulders. And all the ground that was there during Henk's previous visit, which at least formed part of the pass, has been washed away. Jas and Nico hike further along the route and see in the distance that a section of the pass against the mountainside has completely disappeared – probably due to a rockslide.

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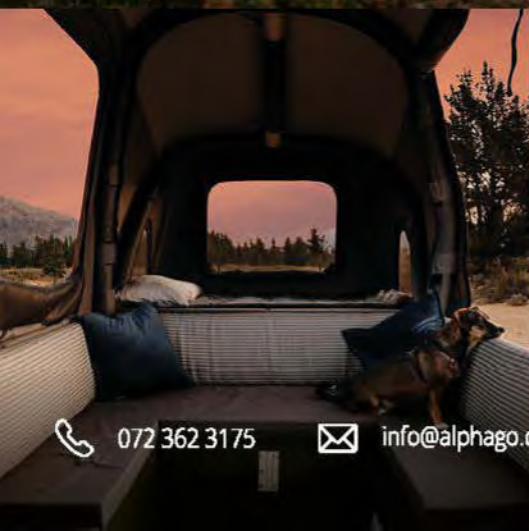
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I also want to go!

Can I go on my own? Absolutely not. The Letele Pass is beyond tough. You need a bunch of smart and experienced 4x4 drivers and co-drivers.

How long is it? The mountain pass is only about 6 km long, but you'll need more than a week to complete it.

What should I drive? A standard 4x4 vehicle won't cut it here. You need plenty of ground clearance, at least 35" off-road tyres, preferably two differential lockers, a winch that can work hard and persistently, and a few buddies in tough 4x4 vehicles who know their stuff.

How much fuel should I take along? There's a filling station at Pitseng, the

nearest major village before the pass. If you top up there and tackle the pass with a full tank, you'll probably be fine. Nevertheless, we carried extra fuel in jerry cans.

What emergency equipment to take along? Everything you can fit, including a satellite phone.

Can I tow? Not even close!

Good resources The route is on Tracks4Africa. The local community is also helpful in giving directions.

Local emergency numbers There's little cellphone signal in this part of Lesotho. A satellite phone is your best option for emergencies.

GPS S28.98750 E28.36904 (the corrugated iron shack)

GO BIG. A mushroom and fillet breakfast puts hair on your chest. Jas and his 'Toy' (right). The De Klerk brothers (below). Kola and Joe (bottom). Goliath is over two metres tall! This giant of a man with a heart of gold towers above Jas and Marco Olivier (bottom right).



The guys confer again. There's something wrong with Lourens' Jeep. The Frankenjero's front differential lock is no longer working, and the winch is also kaput. The team has three days left. Even if we make it through these rocks with great difficulty, it will take a lot of time. And then, there's no guarantee that the vehicles will make it past that washed-out section against the mountainside. They would have to go back through the same obstacle to exit the pass.

We all agree that it's time to turn around. The pass has won this round.

The convoy heads back to the corrugated iron shack. With the downhill road now well-built, things move faster, but not without drama. There's an electrical short circuit in the Frankenjero's engine, and the vehicle almost catches fire. Jas drives one of the Hilux's tyres off the ledge. And Lourens' Jeep struggles on a climb, slicing the sidewalls of one of those pricey 40" Cooper tyres.

When we finally stop at the shack, the sun is setting. We set up camp and braai again. And we discuss the Letele Pass around the campfire.

Is it possible to conquer this pass? Well, nothing is impossible, but you need a lot of time, patience, the right team of people and the right 4x4 vehicles.

For this group of 4x4 enthusiasts, the battle may be lost, but the war is not yet over. This tough-as-nails challenge beckons them like a moth to a flame... They will be back for more.



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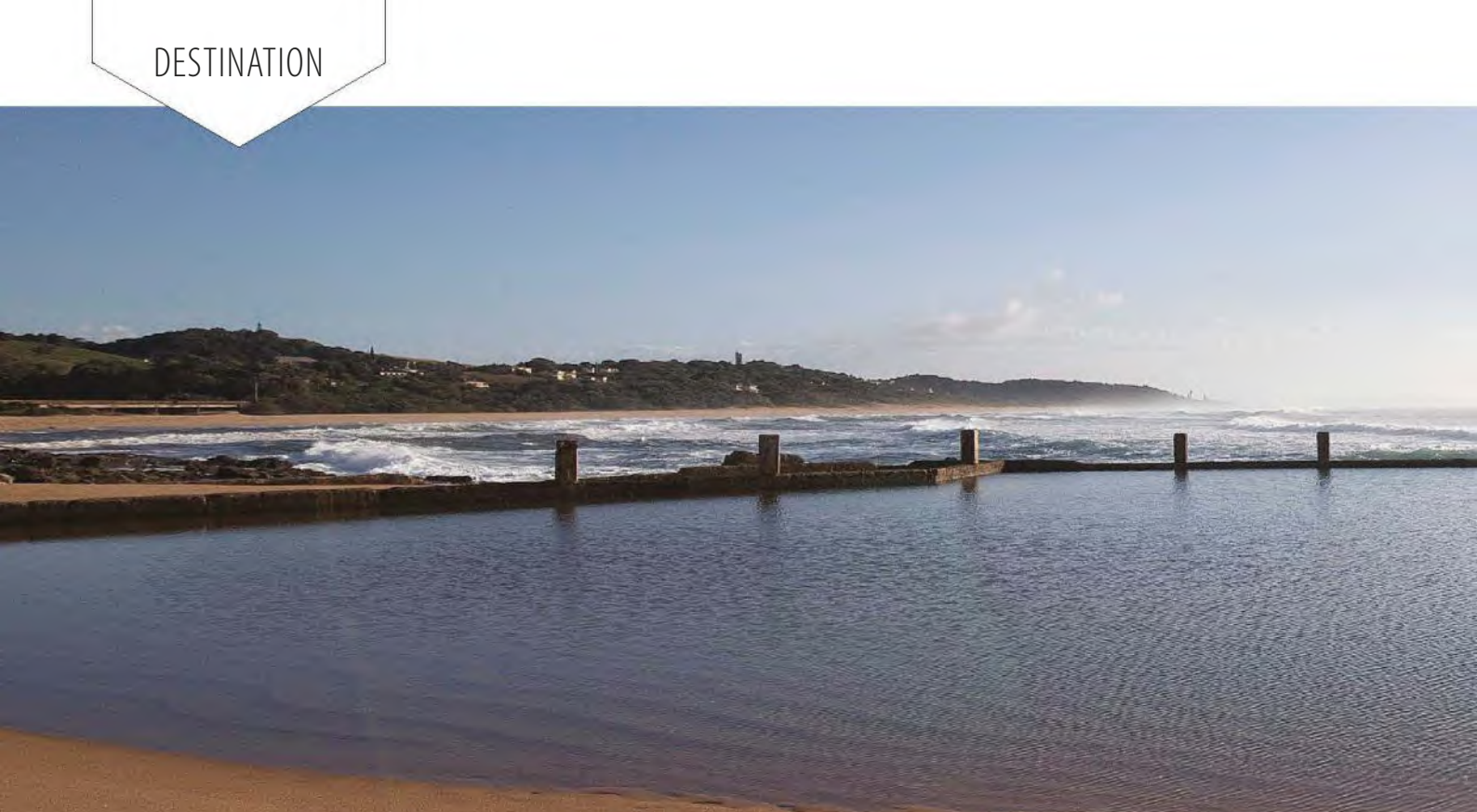
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A fresh experience

Keen to explore a new campsite? Next time, set your sights on these two resorts in the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

It's not every day that you discover a campsite in the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast for a first-time visit. This is particularly true for us at *Drive & Camp*, as over the years we've checked out nearly every one of the resorts along this popular coastline.

It was therefore an unexpected experience to pitch our tent at Mtwalumi and River Valley. Not only was it our first time at both resorts; they are also places we can wholeheartedly recommend.

Mtwalumi is near Mtwalume, about 90 km south of Durban, and shares its

name with the river that flows into the sea on its northern side. The campsite is perched on a hill, 450 m from the river mouth as the crow flies. Moreover, Mtwalume's beach is just 100 m along.

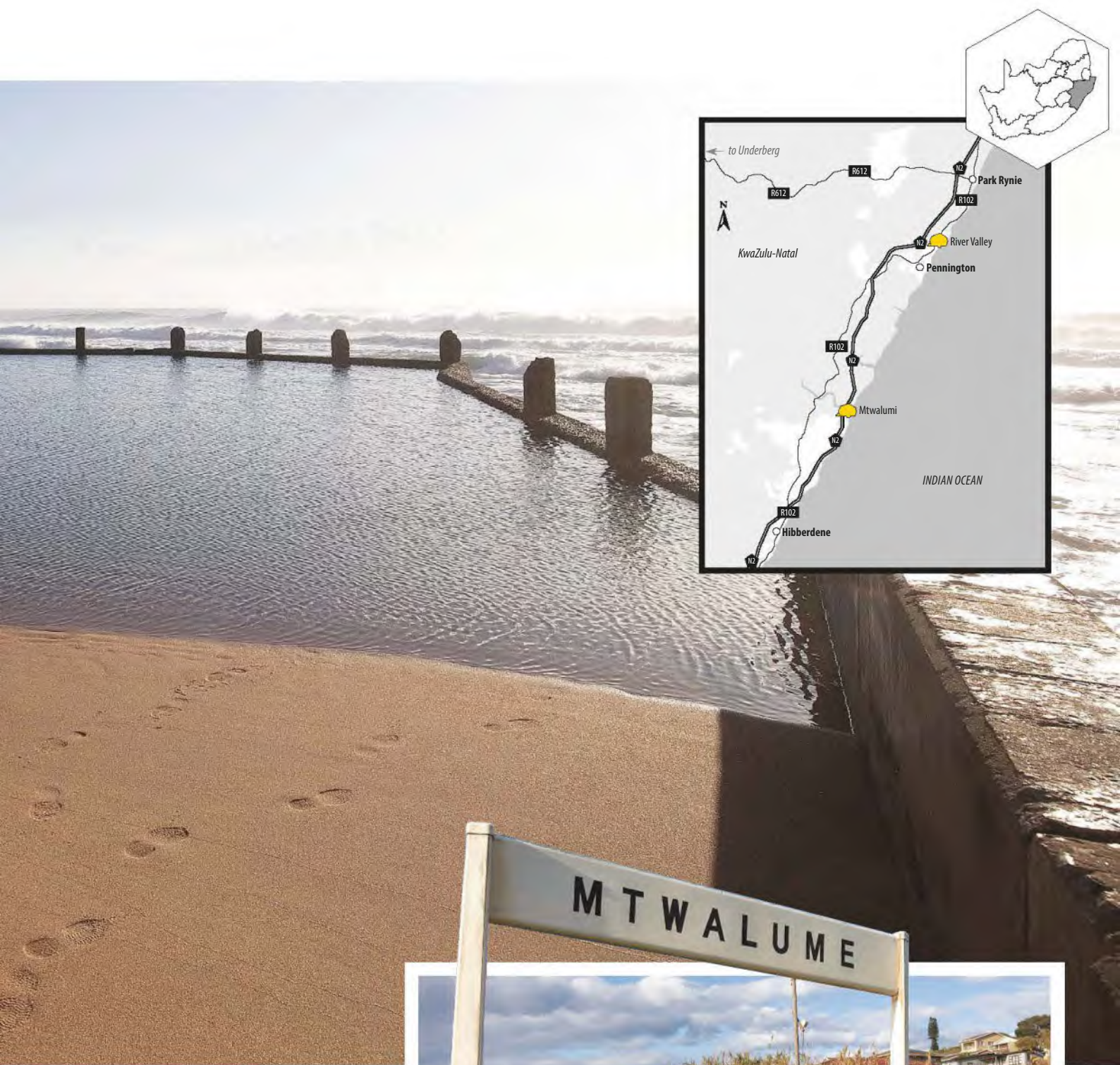
River Valley is equidistant from the beach as Mtwalumi, but this beach is less accessible. That doesn't matter, though, because you camp on the northern tip of Pennington and its beaches.

What makes River Valley so special is the campsite itself. It's one of the neatest campsites we've ever seen and makes you want to settle there full-time.

MTWALUMI **Family friendly**

According to Wikipedia, the isiZulu word "mtwalume" (as the town's name is spelled) refers to the upright trees growing along the river – the resort's name ends with an "i" and not an "e", though.

The river originates 85 km from here. There's a lovely fenced playground for children, the swimming pool is also fenced, and there are several different types of stands to choose from. During our visit, the weather was stormy, and



the wind blew stronger than 60 km/h.

You might think you'll find no shelter, as the campsite is on high ground, but there are quite a few trees that can serve as a barrier. You've barely pulled up when one of the staff members approaches to help you choose the stand with the best shelter. We were also the only visitors, which means we could pick the best spot.

The campsite lies straight ahead as you drive in, with a road running around it like a track, with stands on either side. At the far right end, there are several



tall eucalyptus trees – the staff member suggests that it's not the safest place for now, as he had already removed broken branches from under them that morning. But shortly after you turn right with the entrance road, there's a long alley between trees that offers by far the best shelter from the wind. He explains that the wind either blows from the north or the south, and here you will be protected on both sides.

Mtwalumi's upper section consists of permanent residences that look like holiday homes, while the campsite is on lower ground.

As you drive towards the resort, you first see the houses on your left and then come to an electric sliding gate. The office is directly after the gate on the right, but there's no parking space for your towing combination. When the office staff lets you in, keep going and find a spot further on to park.

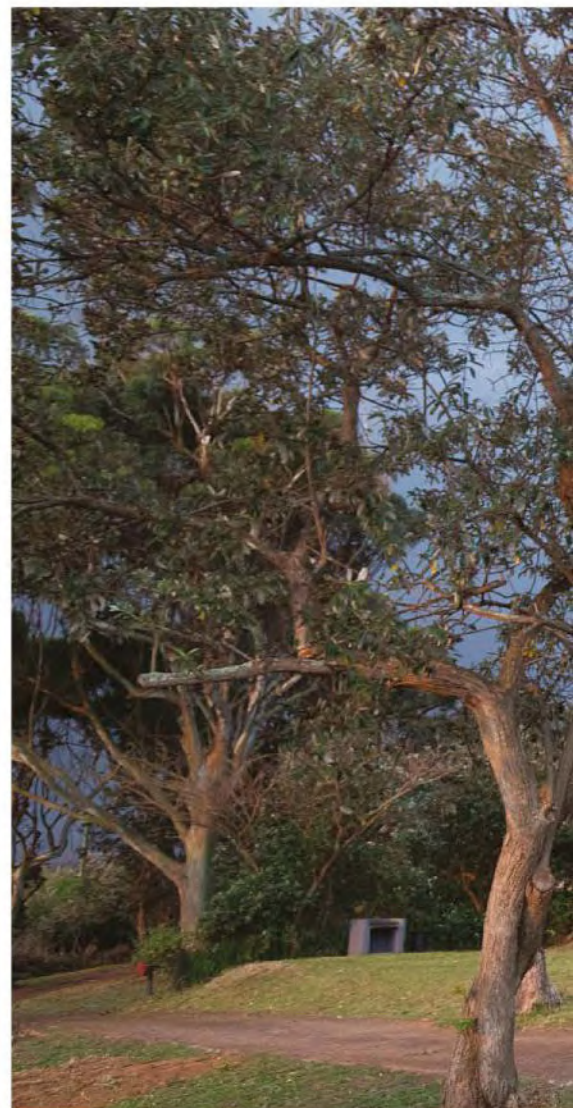
The check-in process is thorough. Even if you've pre-booked and paid, you still have to fill out a bunch of paperwork, after which you receive a sticker for your vehicle's windshield and a remote control for the gate. When you step out of the office, there is a sort of gutter in the wall outside the door. That's where you return the gate's remote control when you leave.

The stands are numbered, so it's clear where you should set up. If you drive clockwise on the paved road as you enter, the elongated stand where we could set up camp is one of the first on the left. It's level, there's grass, and your power point, rubbish bin, tap, and a built-up braai are nearby. The grid is chained to the masonry, which means each of the braais in the resort still has a grid.

Farther along the road, also on the left, are stands next to each other that are more open and a little smaller. The bathrooms are across from these stands, behind the office.

On the other side of the office, the stands start on both sides of the road up to the bend under the eucalyptus trees. A short distance along, on the right-hand side of the road, are five neat stands laid out on terraces. Here there are hardly any shade trees, except for the middle two stands that share a shady spot. From here, the noise from the highway is more audible. The N2 runs 100 m down below in the distance, but it's less disturbing at the first stands.

The swimming pool is down the hill towards the highway, opposite the terrace stands, and the playground is in the upper bend of the road, almost forming a separation between the campsite and the houses. Here children



“

...feel free to put on your cozzies,
as there's a decent tide pool

”



AN ASIDE. The swimming pool is on the opposite end of the resort from where you enter it. It's actually beyond all the stands. Rowdy swimmers won't be a bother, and it's also safe for little ones since the pool is completely fenced off.

can have a blast on the pastel-painted jungle gyms with various slides and swings. There's also a trampoline in one corner.

Had someone teleported you here and dropped you in front of the ablution block, you'd think you're in a campsite somewhere in Mozambique. To the right, a palm tree stands tall above the building, and at the women's and men's facilities, there are a few hand-painted murals – a lighthouse for the women and a sailboat for the men. Each side also has a painting of palm trees and a wave with a large sun behind it.

The ablution block is a long building with a narrow covered porch where two sinks for dishwashing are all the way to the right. As you enter the men's facilities, there's a row of single basins on the left against the wall, each with a mirror behind on the wall and wire racks next to it where you can set your things down.





WHAT WEATHER? We didn't exactly have perfect weather during our visit, but it didn't seem to bother fishermen and swimmers. One brave couple even headed to the beach during a mini sand storm, though their visit didn't last long (opposite page).



The row of shower cubicles is on the right and is somewhat basic. There's no seat in the cubicle, and you need to find somewhere else to put your dry stuff, but there are one or two hooks on the inside of your cubicle's door. The room is spotlessly clean, but the cubicles could do with tiling to finish them off better.

Due to a large reef, Mtwalume's beach is better for anglers than swimmers. But feel free to put on your cozzies, as there's a decent tide pool. Even with the severe storm during our visit, children played here among the waves while the unruly sea was on the other side of the wall. You have to cross a train track to get to the beach, but judging from the rusted tracks, no trains pass here anymore.

There's a parking lot just beyond the track with a bathroom building next to it and another parking lot further on. A neat lawn stretches from the first parking lot past the other one, and there are several benches from where you can look out over the sea. The tide pool is 50 m from the lawn.



Briefly | Mtwalumi



Campsite 19 stands of varying sizes on grass with varying shade and privacy. One or two have a concrete slab. The braai is built-in and has a grid.

Ablution facilities Simple and clean. The shower cubicles could use tiling.

Price Depending on the season R160-R290 p/n per stand plus R20-R80 pppn and a R50 admin fee. (These were the rates during our visit; the latest were not available at press time.)

Arrival and departure Monday-Friday 14:00 and Saturdays 11:30, and 10:00.

Nearest town In Mtwalume, 16 km from Hibberdene.

Contact 083 800 5356 reception@mtwalumiholidayresort.co.za mtwalumiholidayresort.co.za

Road condition Paved all the way to the resort.

GPS S30.489072 E30.629095

Drive & Camp says You pay an extra R25 per day for your pet.

RIVER VALLEY Neat as can be

River Valley is without a doubt one of the neatest resorts we've ever visited, and they do a few things differently than what you might be used to.

The resort is at the northern tip of Pennington where Dolphin Road ends at the resort. There's an electric gate, and the road that now runs downhill reminds you strongly of the entrance road of the Queensburgh campsite in Durban. Like at Mtwalumi, the office is right after the gate, but if you've pre-booked and completed the payment, you only stop for a few moments.

The office staff are quick to help. You even get a River Valley sticker for your next license disc, and a paper with everything typed in capital letters. At first glance, it looks like a bunch of rules, but the heading reads: "PLEASE NOTE THINGS NOT TO FORGET". This is to remind you that noise must quiet down by 22:00 and



that ice, cold drinks, water, firelighters and charcoal are available during office hours. Also, your vehicle, trailer, or caravan must be parked on your stand. If you want to park your vehicle elsewhere, you can get help at an extra fee per day at a designated spot. (As a camper, you may not use the parking lot of the restaurant and bar, Uncle Bob's, which is directly after the office on the right before you reach the stands.)

You must also stick to the arrival and departure times, because if you check out without previous agreement after 10:00,



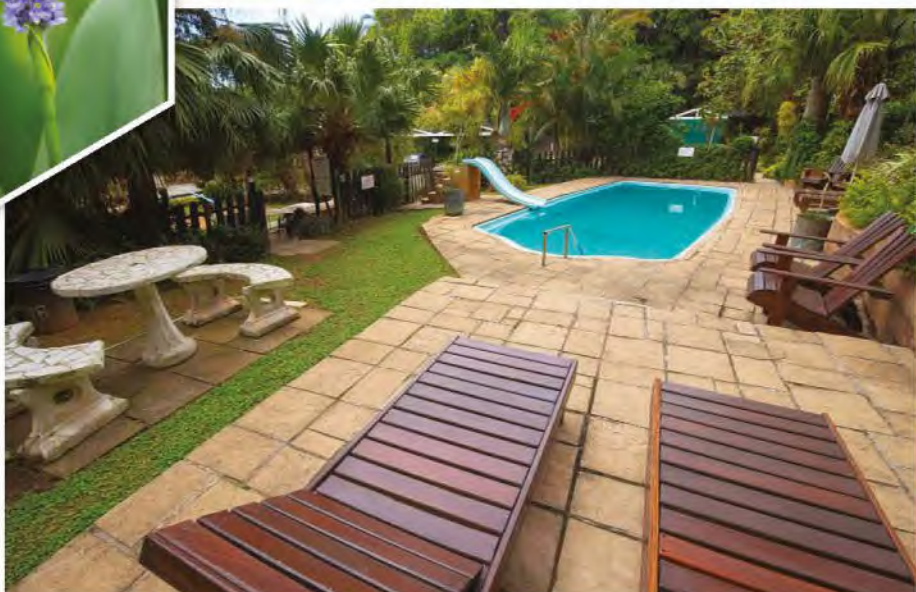
POWER OF ATTORNEY. These days people are well aware of the importance of a reliable electrical supply, but the power point at you stand has the final say. You control the switch with a key, but do keep your eye on the meter, because you are paying for however much you used.



you'll get an extra bill of R100 per hour.

One standout item is under point 3. It says when you arrive at your stand, you must unlock your power box and pay attention to the kWh reading. Along with your paper, you also get a remote control for the gate with two keys. One key is for the power box. The power socket – the Fredlin type – is outside the box, but the power is not switched on.

After you've unlocked the power box and moved its cover out of the way, there's an electricity meter and circuit breaker. So, you need to push the circuit breaker's



switch up so that the socket will work. Part of the money you pay for your stand is an extra R250 deposit for the remote control and the electricity you use. The resort staff will contact you after your visit to refund the balance if you used less electricity than you paid for. A resort map is also attached to the quote of your initial booking, and it gives you the first taste of how well-organised River Valley is. Not only does it show where each stand is; it also indicates how big the stands are, and exactly where your nearest tap and power point are. According to this, the smallest stand is 7 x 5 m and the largest 13 x 9 m.

The concrete road eventually forms a long rectangle around the stands. So, the stands are always on your right until you've driven around the block and are back where you entered. The exception is a short road that runs from the middle of the top side to the middle of the rectangle.

Obviously, this is to get to the middle stands. On the outer edge, there are neat permanent residences where residents go about their business. Even if you camp alone, there's a sense of life, and it feels more like you've temporarily become part of a peaceful community without being disturbed at all.

The stands are separated by shrub hedges that look like they've been measured with a tape measure before being cut. They form camping cubicles, and some of the stands are more accessible than others. On some stands, you must perform your best reverse parking ever to get the caravan perpendicular to the stand.

The first stands up to the opposite corner have grass, but the rest – a good 10 of them – have a gravel block with an equally neat concrete edge around them. It works so well you don't even need to throw out your woven groundsheet. Not only do you know your caravan is level, but there's also no water pooling at your front door. The only thing you don't get at your stand is a braai spot. For this, you'd need to camp at one of the middle stands to be close to the communal braais. There's also a concrete bench and table or two.

At your stand, you encounter another set of rules: no fires directly on the lawn, and your braai must be at least 300 mm above the ground. By the way, there's another sign on the bathroom door with

resort rules. According to this, you also may not make a fire on your square, and if you brought your own braai, it must be at least 700 mm high. (While we're on the subject of rules: remember that bicycles, mopeds and push bikes are not allowed on the resort's roads.)

You camp among the loveliest shade trees, and it almost feels as though you're in some exotic garden. Flowers bloom everywhere, and you see plants you've never seen before. Also, it's unlikely you'll see leaves lying around; the gardeners are busy all day. You'll have to search far and wide for a cleaner campsite.

There are also animals to see... well, more or less. A blue-headed rock lizard enjoyed the last sun against one of the trees late afternoon, while a mole decided to see what's happening on top of the grass. It sniffed around as if it couldn't find the entrance to its tunnel again. All this while loeries provide background music.

The bathrooms are on the far opposite corner as you drive in, outside the rectangle. So, if it's important to be close to them, you must mention this to the resort staff in advance. This applies to the laundry and scullery (in the same building), as it's between the men's and women's facilities. The dishwashing basins are on the right in the room as you enter, and the washing machines and





AN EXAMPLE TO ALL. There is no set rule about how a campsite should be decorated, but if campsites were to be graded on their gardens, River Valley would receive multiple awards. The garden isn't only lush, it's also well maintained.



tumble dryers in the other part. The tumble dryer uses R45 tokens, and the washing machines cost R30.

At the bathrooms, you initially feel unsure whether you can enter, because you hear chatting inside – it's actually a radio that's on and keeps you company the whole time. The inside of the room confirms the resort's cleanliness. As you enter the men's facilities, there are three recessed basins in a counter in front of you with round mirrors behind them. It's quite practical, as the mirrors are at different heights.

There's also a bench, and together with the blue-striped curtains, it feels more like you're in someone's house. The shower cubicles are down the corridor on the right and are actually a wet room.

The first few don't have hooks, but those further down the corridor do. If you really have to find fault, the water pressure in the shower we used were a bit iffy.

A final notice on the wall gives you peace of mind: if you leave anything like soap, shampoo, towels or clothes behind in the bathrooms and it's found by staff, you can collect it at the office.



ONE LIKE THE OTHER. The ablution facilities are just as nice as the garden. If you accidentally leave something behind, it'll be taken to reception for safe keeping.

The recreational area is behind Uncle Bob's as you drive in, opposite the first stands on the right. It's just as neatly finished, and the children can come swing, master the jungle gym, and try the slide. The duck pond is between the playground and Uncle Bob's, and the swimming pool is behind that. It again feels like a private pool at someone's house. It has paving around it plus concrete and wooden chairs where you can relax by the water.

Lastly, there's a canopy between the pool and the park for socialising with friends – there are also a few tables and benches plus a communal braai next to it.

If you want to stretch your legs, consider the bush path to the beach. The locked

gate (it's the second key you received) is behind the bathrooms. From here, you walk through a small jungle on a cleared path to a train track 275 m further. The Mzinto River is beyond the track and between you and the beach. There's no real crossing, and the resort staff recommended we keep left on the track over the train bridge to the beach. With this route, you emerge 380 m later right by the waves.

To regain your energy, make a stop at Uncle Bob's. You can choose between various starters, from burgers, grilled sandwiches – even braaibroodjies – to nachos and boerewors rolls. Nothing costs more than R145.



“

The recreational area is behind Uncle Bob's as you drive in, opposite the first stands on the right

”

Briefly | River Valley



Campsite 20 stands in the loveliest garden. Some are on grass and others on gravel blocks with a concrete edge and a shrub hedge around you. There are communal braais, but none on your stand. You pay for the power you use.

Abution facilities Closer to the farthest stands and include a scullery for laundry and dishes.

Price Depending on the season R155-R325 pppd (R100-R170 for children under 16). A minimum of three nights in mid-season and 10 nights in peak season. A minimum rate of R680 per day for two applies in peak season.

Arrival and departure 14:00 to 18:00 and 10:00 to 12:00.

Nearest town In Pennington.

Contact 039 975 1805

info@rivervalley.co.za

rivervalley.co.za

Road conditions Tar to the resort.

GPS S30.366139 E30.704858

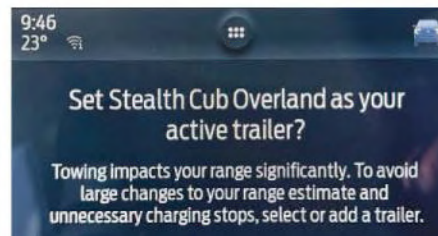
Drive & Camp says It's one of the neatest resorts in the country and belongs on any camper's bucket list.



MATTHEW BUCK, dealer principal of CMH Ford Ballito (far left) with his team. The dealership has 54 staff, and both new and used vehicles are available.

connected, it calculates the fuel consumption specifically while towing. Included are the towing distance, and all this data is displayed on the central panel.

* See our tow test of the XLT 4x4 model on page 82 of our previous issue (December 2023-January 2024).



TEXT LIMIT. It's great that you can program in the name of your trailer, just note that "Stealth Cub Overlander" may have more characters than is allowed.

Our towing vehicle

A big thank you to CMH Ford Ballito for the use of a Ford Ranger XL 4x4 double-cab bakkie. We hitched a Stealth Cub Overlander (tare weight 840 kg, GVM 1 500 kg) and covered 326,2 km along the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast. We towed for most of the distance, though we also drove around without the trailer.

The Ranger provided a decent fuel consumption of 11,36 ℓ /100 km (8,8 km/ ℓ) as a combined figure.

The towbar is optional on the standard vehicle, and the bakkie itself has a towing capacity of 3 500 kg. The XL is more basic compared to other double-cab models*, but does cater for towing with a number of extras. The main reason is the computer system behind the scenes.

The reverse camera's screen has dynamic index lines that curve in the direction you're reversing. This includes a centre line to precisely align with the trailer's coupling. When you're close to the coupling, you can even choose a top view to get a better look at the distance between it and the tow ball.

When you connect the trailer's plug to the Ranger's loom, a note appears on the bakkie's centre console saying it detects a trailer is connected. Then you have the option to enter a new trailer's details or select a standard trailer. If you've previously entered the details, you can register it as the "active" trailer.

The computer also gives you options to turn the trailer sway control on or off, and it even has a checklist you can review to make sure everything is in order before you hit the road. You can quickly check if the trailer's lights, for example, are working while driving, and because the computer knows a trailer is



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	XL 2.0L SiT 4x4 6AT (double cab)
Engine	2 ℓ turbodiesel
Power	125 kW @ 3 500 rpm
Torque	405 Nm @ 1 750-2 500 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed automatic
Drive	Four-wheel or rear-wheel
Tank	80 ℓ
Combined fuel consumption (with and without caravan)	11,36 ℓ /100 km
Combined range	704 km
Tare weight	2 243 kg
GVM	3 190 kg
GCM	6 300 kg
Towing capacity	3 500 kg
PRICE	R663 100

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A little gem *in the mountains*



The Nooitgedacht Trout Lodge lies in the mountains of the Mount Anderson catchment area, a 200 km² private reserve established in 1989. Nooitgedacht's bush camp is one of the best-kept camping secrets in the country. Apart from a Facebook page, there isn't much information available online. Even the lodge's website doesn't mention the camp.

From the turnoff at the Finbury road marker on the R36 (S25.034209 E30.481168), it's a 16 km dirt road

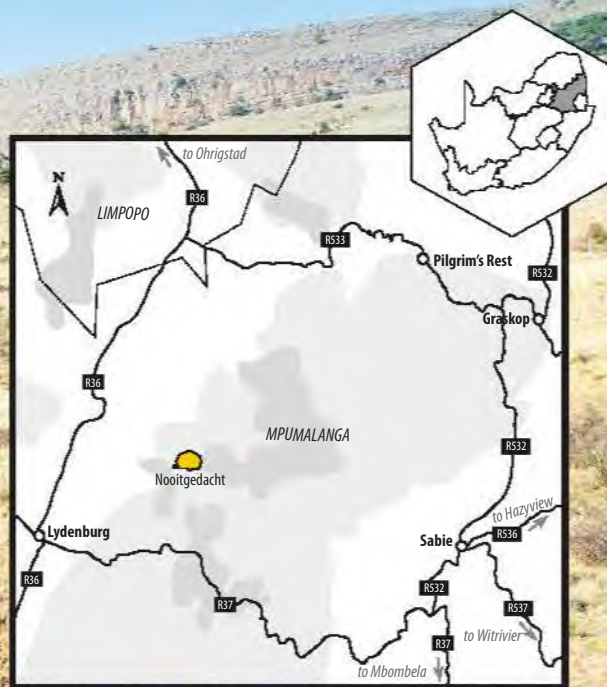
(10 km of which is within the reserve) to Nooitgedacht. You open the reserve's gate (S25.052269 E30.524963) with the code sent by manager Arabel Hunter.

For the next 10 km, the road winds over hills and through valleys to Nooitgedacht's main gate. The road is mostly a single-track with a few steep hills and numerous blind heights and turns. There are also quite a few humps in the road to prevent erosion, which means you progress quite slowly. The 16 km from the tar road to the lodge is definitely not suitable for road caravans

and can easily take you an hour to drive.

At the lodge, Arabel is ready to take you to your camping spot. The winding road there crosses the Spekboom River five times – three of them through the water over a low-water bridge packed with stones. You need to aim carefully over the bridges because if you turn too wide or too sharp, your camping buddies will have to come help you out of the river. This road is only suitable for vehicles with high ground clearance.

Don't worry, the road is quickly forgotten when you enter the campsite



Nestled between Lydenburg and Sabie – surrounded by mountains and on the banks of the Spekboom River – lies an intimate camping spot where you can escape to silence

Words and photos **Helenus Kruger**

and a feeling of bliss washes over you. The camp is surrounded by the river and hills, and the tranquillity is palpable. Here, you will only hear nature's sounds.

Arabel warns right away that you should be careful and not go for a walk outside the camp at dusk. Leopards have also made this piece of pristine nature their home, where small game is abundant. Although leopards cannot enter the campsite, you are in their part of this protected area as soon as you step beyond the boundary fence.

The source of the Spekboom River

is in the direction of Mount Anderson, as the crow flies, about 7 km south of Nooitgedacht. From here, the river winds to the lodge and past the campsite to where it flows into the Nooitgedacht Dam. You won't easily find cleaner and clearer water. You can even scoop your drinking water from the river; coffee tastes so much better when made with river water.

Those who rise early can sit quietly with a cup of coffee and rusks by the river and watch the sun paint the cliffs in the west a reddish-brown. The hill behind the camp hides the sun, and the camp

remains in the shade for an hour or two longer.

The camp's feathered residents are busy from early in the morning. The swallows have returned from their summer holiday in the north and glide gracefully through the air. The wagtails patrol the camp on foot, and a team of ferrets scurry from bush to bush. Kingfishers are abundant and swoop at speed low over the water, while a fish eagle calls from the dam's side.

The river is also the camp's swimming pool, and there are a few pools upstream

WEEKEND BREAK

and downstream where you can jump in. Don't float all the way downstream to where the river makes a sharp left turn, as this is where the dam begins and swimming is strictly forbidden here. Until the seventies, before the dam was built, gold was mined in the area. The area where the dam is now was the richest, and there are quite a few open mine shafts under the water.

The campsite is 60 x 25 paces and can accommodate up to 10 caravans if you line them up next to one another. The entire site has grass, but no trees. The ground slopes slightly towards the river, but if you set up right on the bank, the ground is more level. The part farthest from the water, right at the foot of the hill, has bushes, but you won't get your caravan under them. The advantage, especially in summer, is that the sun only starts baking you later, and there is shade to sit under. The disadvantage is that you are a bit away from the river.

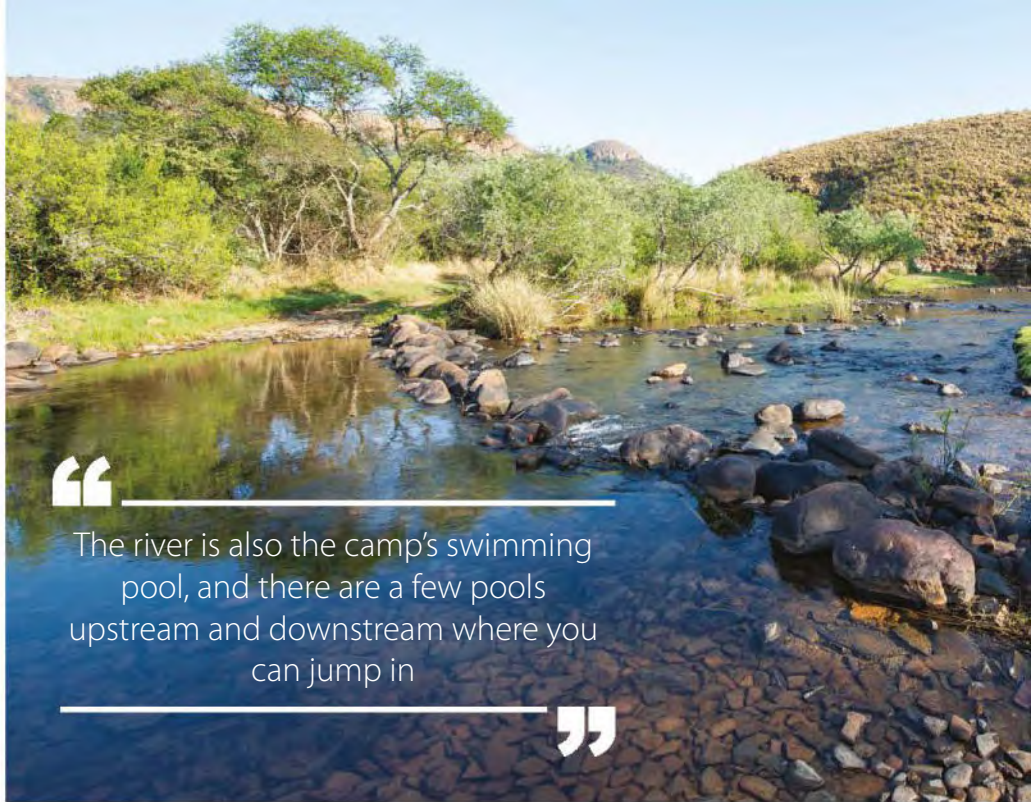
With most caravans having awnings, camping in the sun is not a problem, but remember your gazebo if you come to camp in a tent.

The camp has no electricity or cellphone signal, but on top of the hill across the river, there is weak reception (just strong enough to text).

The entire camp can be exclusively for your party if you make a reservation for two or more families. Solo campers will share with others if there are still spots. The social area is in the middle of the camp, near the river. Here the ground is paved, and in the middle is a round fire pit with two built-in braais with grids and work surfaces alongside. Under the braais is a stack of blue gum wood (We used about a third and paid R100).

The only ablution facilities in the camp, shared by men and women, are between the trees to the right as you drive in. There is little space inside with only room for one person at a time. A hook inside the door keeps it locked. Remember to replace the hook on the outside when you're done; then your campmates know there's no one inside.

The basin is right in front of you as you walk in, with two separate rooms to the left and right where the toilet and shower are. Hot water comes from a gas geyser. Each room has an LED, and to save power, each can be individually switched on



“

The river is also the camp's swimming pool, and there are a few pools upstream and downstream where you can jump in

”



AFTER ACTION, SATISFACTION. The road that brought you here may be rough, but it will all be worth it once you've passed through the gates (above). The soothing sound of the flowing river and the crackling of your fire strips away the layers of stress that built up over time.







GO FISH! Remember to bring a rod and reel, but if fishing isn't your thing you can always go horse riding.



and off with the remote control against the wall by the door. Outside, next to the building, is the sink with cold and hot water for dishes.

For those who can't sit still for too long, Nooitgedacht has a number of activities. Go fishing at the dam next to the main building or in the river... the trout are waiting for you. It costs R350 to fish, and to rent fishing gear is R150. You must release what you catch.

They also offer horse riding (R300 per hour) and remember your hiking shoes, as there are various paths calling your name. You don't have to be super fit, and the path around the hills around the camp isn't too difficult – plus, you're rewarded with views over the camp, river and mountains. The cliffs along the river and dam look as if a craftsman has carefully stacked the layers of slate on top of each other. Aloes cling stubbornly to the cliffs.

If you don't feel like cooking after your hike, you can dine at the lodge's restaurant, but book in advance.

You can also ask Arabel to take you through the trout hatchery, where the entire process of raising trout – from egg harvesting, fertilisation and growth in



Briefly | Nooitgedacht Trout Lodge



Campsite Open terrain with no marked sits and no trees.

Ablution facilities One ablution block shared by men and women.

Price R230 pppn (R180 for children under 12).

Contact 071 088 0606, 063 002 2355

✉ enquiries@nooitgedachttroutlodge.co.za

🌐 nooitgedachttroutlodge.co.za

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Nearest town Mashishing (Lydenburg), 22 km.

Road condition From Pretoria, it's 180 km highway to Belfast; then 90 km tar (through Dullstroom) to Lydenburg. Thereafter a 6 km tar road to the Ohrigstad road (R36) and then the final 16 km is a dirt road.

GPS S25.056101 E30.565785

Drive & Camp says The weather in the mountains can change quickly. When the mist descends, it can get icy cold, even in the summer months – so remember to pack warm clothes.

the trout ponds – can be seen. Trout are also regularly released into the river. To prevent otters from coming for a fresh fish meal, the parent ponds are enclosed with electric fences. Birds, especially giant kingfishers and reed divers, also become a nuisance, and so there's shade netting over some of the ponds.

If you want to explore the area, take the road to Hops Hollow Country House (S25.14104 E30.616977). Hops Hollow is on the Long Tom Pass and, as the crow flies, just 9 km from Nooitgedacht, but to get there you will have to drive the 43 km through Lydenburg.

Beer lovers will feel at home here, as Hops Hollow brews their own beer. The names are as creative as the unique style in which the beer is made – you can choose from Old Bull Bitter, Leila on the Lash and The Axe, among others. At R70, tasting 10 beers is good value for money.

The restaurant has bar-style food that can be enjoyed in the bar or outside on the wooden benches. Kylon's Pilgrim Platter (R195) is very popular and serves two. There are also burgers (R95-R130), pork sausages with mashed potatoes (R110), steak and chips (R210) and a lamb curry (R210) for the cold days when the mist descends on the pass.

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Shingwedzi Cliffs calling

Venture out of the Kruger to Shingwedzi Cliffs via a 4x4 track in Mozambique's Limpopo National Park.

Words and photos **Tred Magill**

Watching the impala and waterbuck nervously navigate their way around the crocs to get to the waterholes in the Shingwedzi riverbed in the Kruger National Park, you might be wondering where along this river the beautiful Shingwedzi Cliffs you've heard about are.

Dig out a map and you'll find the cliffs are a mere 40 km southeast as the crow flies, about 20 km on the other side of the border with Mozambique. And, after being moth-balled during the COVID pandemic, the wild campsites in the Limpopo National Park are open again. The Shingwedzi Cliffs are accessible via a 4x4 track of 30 km, which should take you

around just 2,5 hours from the Goriyondo border post with Mozambique.

Of course, you can't fly as a crow, but you can drive the 100 km or so from Shingwedzi Rest Camp or 40km from Letaba Rest Camp to the Goriyondo border post.

You'll have had to spend at least one night in Kruger National Park before crossing the border, as the authorities want to avoid having the R447 road used as a thoroughfare for trucks carrying cargo. So, make sure you have a receipt for your booking in Kruger National Park. Also, get to the border before the gate closes at 16:00 in summer (October to March) and before 15:00 during winter.

South Africans do not need a visa but

must present a passport that is valid for six months after the date of your return. You will also need your vehicle registration papers as well as papers for any trailer you're towing; as well as compulsory Mozambican third-party insurance and two red emergency triangles in your vehicle.

If you don't own the vehicle (or driving a rented vehicle), you will also need a letter from the owner to take the car out of South Africa. Your South African driver's license is valid in Mozambique.

When they are experiencing computer problems on the South African side, service from the Home Affairs officials can be painfully slow and then you can expect to wait about 20-30 minutes



for each person they need to process. On the Mozambican side, where you will have to pay the entry fees, the manual processing system went a lot quicker for us.

The Mozambican border post will take payment in Mozambican meticaais, or in South African rand, which makes things a little easier. Entry is 600 metical (about R174) per person per day, another 600 metical per vehicle (up to six seats) and 400 metical per day for a wild campsite without any facilities.

And there are no facilities, whatsoever. Shindwedzi Cliffs is pristine wilderness and that's the attraction; but you'll need to be well equipped with enough food, water, fuel and all the necessary 4x4 and camping equipment. GPS satellite reception is good, and a GPS receiver is well-advised.

Now you're on your way, bearing in mind that the speed limit in the park varies between 20 and 40 km/h.

The R447 from Giriyaondo Gate is a well-used road that runs 70 km south, down to the Massingir Dam. And just 1,5 km after Giriyaondo, you find the start of the 4x4 track on your left (S31.670464 E23.590621). It's a very rough track that will require a 4x4 vehicle with high clearance.

There are two river crossings that are dry in the winter and pose no serious obstacle in the summer months according to park officials. You'll also encounter an outcrop of solid rock which fortunately is relatively flat and quite easily navigated. Over the 30 km, the track



UPSIDE-DOWN. Boabab trees (above) are a common sight in this part of the world. You're likely to encounter river crossings during the summer rainy season, but don't let this deter you from visiting the Shingwedzi Cliffs.

TRAIL GUIDE

descends from 386 m above sea level at Giriyondo to 200 m at Shingwedzi Cliffs.

From the start, the track heads northwest for about 7 km and then for 23 km northeast to bring you to the banks of the Shingwedzi Cliffs – a stunning location on a large loop of the river that creates large waterholes, where you can expect to see plenty of hippos and crocs.

Limpopo National Park is not as well populated with game as the Kruger, but since the former became part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park in 2002, “strategic” sections of the fence between the Kruger and Limpopo parks have been dropped to encourage wildlife to roam freely. As a result, the wildlife has steadily increased.

We sighted giraffe, buffalo and impala, and there was evidence of elephant by the dung and broken trees that littered the track. At times you might have to alight from your vehicle to clear the track of these trees. According to the park brochure, zebra, wildebeest, kudu and diverse birdlife can be expected. Although less abundant, the park also features lion, leopard, cheetah and sable roan.

As you approach your destination (S31.670135 E23.408260), the track climbs a ridge to the campsite overlooking the Shingwedzi riverbed below... and the cliffs appear before you.

The Giriyondo border post between South Africa and Mozambique opened in 2005, making the Limpopo National Park accessible to South Africans. The park is part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, officially established in 2002, and very much still in development.



The transfrontier park includes the Kruger National Park in South Africa, the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique and the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe – a giant conservation area of some 35 000 km².

The transfrontier “peace parks” are part of the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela, envisioned to create shared, borderless conservation areas. Development of the park towards the realisation of the transfrontier vision is

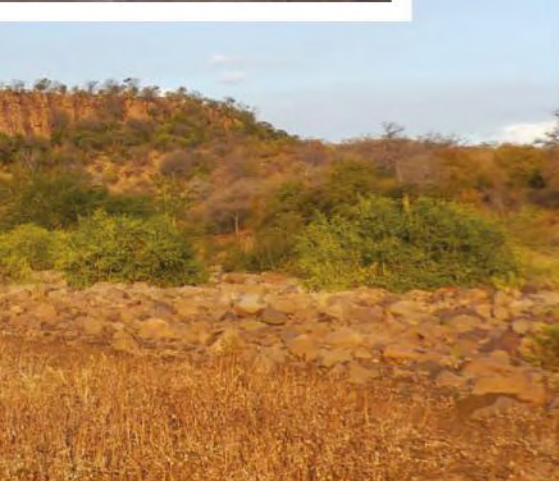
supported with finance and technical expertise of the Peace Parks Foundation.

And herein lies the beauty of this simple 4x4 track – it takes you into the heart of the Limpopo National Park and opens other areas of the park for you to explore and – in the future – up into Zimbabwe via the Sengwe Corridor.

From Shingwedzi Cliffs, the track joins another which goes north, following the river for about 25 km towards Makandezulo; and from Makandezulo



AFRICA. The continent that likely birthed modern humans is simultaneously hostile and peaceful. Conservation areas like the Limpopo National Park needs rangers (opposite top) to keep this environment as natural as possible.



another track will take you to the Mapai Gate and the R423, which you can follow to the Pafuri Gate back into Kruger National Park, a mere 3km from Crooks Corner; creating a wonderful circular route that includes much of both parks.

Alternatively, you could venture south, joining a track going down to Machamba, Tchonguene, Bingo, Mavodze and ultimately the Massingir Dam on the southern border of the Limpopo National Park. From there, Komatipoort would be the obvious way back into South Africa.

In future, the larger Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation area (TFCA), measuring almost 100 000 km², will include the Banhine and Zinave National Parks, the Massingir and Corumana areas and interlinking regions in Mozambique, as well as various privately and state-owned conservation areas in South Africa and Zimbabwe bordering on the transfrontier park; thus promising to create an enormous area to explore and enjoy.

And, like the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park – covering areas of South Africa, Namibia and Botswana – visitors will be able to travel throughout the park without having to pass through customs, unless exiting the park into a country that differs from your entry point. ➡



Good to know



Maximum number of vehicles? No limit on the number of vehicles, but the track is narrow and vehicles will have to travel in single file.

Do I get a map? No – a GPS receiver is strongly recommended

Will I scratch my vehicle? Possibly. You will need to take care when driving through long grass and when passing branches of trees.

Should I take a compressor? It's highly recommended, as the track is very rough and a puncture is always a possibility.

Can I braai along the way? The track is only 2,5 hours and the Shingwedzi Cliffs is the best place to braai.

Can I turn around halfway? Yes, you can.

Is there cellphone signal? There is no cellphone signal after leaving the Goriyondo border post.

Best time to go? All year round – summer months might require some river crossings, but that should not stop you.

Can my family join me? Yes, definitely.

And my dog? No. Pets are not permitted into either of the two parks.

A day trip or the whole weekend? This is a day trip, but can be used to access other areas of the park for long periods of time.

How long does it take? The route takes about two and a half hours.

Are there ablution facilities? No, there are no facilities whatsoever, so it is critical that you are properly prepared and equipped.

Directions The 4x4 track is available in GPX format to use with a GPS receiver. You will need other GPS information if you wish to venture further into the Limpopo National Park, which can be purchased from Tracks4Africa.

Contacts: ☎ +258 843 011 719

✉ pnlimpopo@gmail.com

✉ Isalinha6@gmail.com

✉ limpopopn.gov.mz

Costs 600 meticaïs (around R174) per day, plus 600 meticaïs per vehicles, plus 400 meticaïs per night for wild camping.

GPS S31.670135 E23.408260

Campsite with a catch

Treat yourself and invite your friends to a farmstay.



NIEMANDSLAND EVERYONE'S WELCOME

If you and a few friends want to swap city life for a temporary farm life, the campsite Niemandsland, a mere 15 km outside Worcester, is a great choice. It's a working farm with vineyards, citrus, peaches, goats and cattle. Owner Pieter Niemand also has a separate game camp with, among others, duikers, steenboks and springboks.

The campsite is a fenced lawn of 40 x 60 m nestled inside this game camp.

As you turn off the tar road (the Eilandia-Scherpenheuvel road) onto the farm road, watch for the smaller dirt road turning left after 530 m. The dam, with black bass, carp and catfish, is 200 m down this road. Otherwise, continue straight on the initial dirt road to reach the campsite.

After about 2 km, you'll pass the last vineyard and turn right into the game camp. The campsite is another 600 m along the road.

The lapa where everyone gathers is practically in the middle of the lawn. It has a waist-high wall built with river stones, and the entire space under the roof is paved. There's a gap between the roof and the wall, and if the wind gets bothersome there's a roll-up canvas to close the gap. In the lapa, there are a few loose steel tables and braai drums, but remember to bring your own grid. It's also not necessary to transport wood; you can simply buy it here. There are also braai facilities by the dam and a shade net for, well, shade.

The ablution block is a bit farther on your left and has showers, toilets and basins for communal use. The dishwashing area is outside the bathroom building, and there's also a clothesline and rinse area for cassette toilets.

The lapa and bathroom lights operate on batteries – do remember, there is

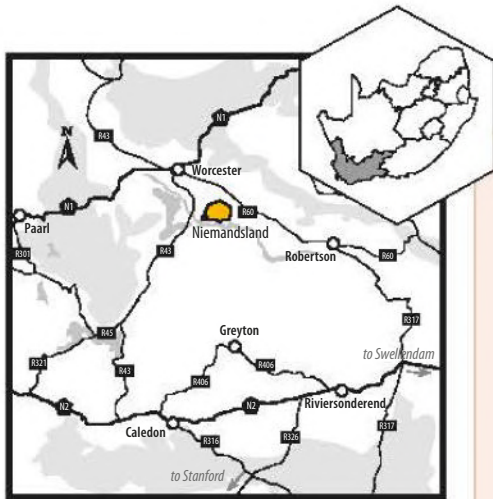


no electricity here at Niemandsland.

To cool off, there are two round swimming pools: The smaller one is intended for children, and the larger one has a deck next to it for adults. You're not allowed to drive into the veld, but you are welcome to explore it on foot. In fact, there are running, biking and hiking routes of 5 km. Depending on the specific

route you choose, you could keep running for 8,3 km.

If you want to see the world from a higher vantage point, climb the Sandberg hill. From here, you can spot the Brandvlei Dam near Worcester. The antelope keep their distance, but expect to also possibly see a secretary bird, blue cranes, Verreaux's and fish eagles.



Briefly | Niemandland



Fish Black bass, carp, catfish.

Campsite A large lawn with space for up to four groups. When you book, the place is yours – up to 4 vehicles are allowed. The water is meant for washing, not drinking.

Ablution facilities One bathroom building with two showers, toilets and basins. There is no electricity – a gas geyser provides hot water and battery power for the lights in the bathrooms.

Price R1 200 per night for the entire campsite – a maximum of two adults and three children per vehicle is allowed.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 16:00.

Contact 📞 Niemandland kampterrein
✉️ niemand@breede.co.za

Nearest town Worcester, 15 km.

Road condition The last 2,7 km is a decent farm road passable for a road caravan.

GPS S33.723778 E19.530483

Drive & Camp says If some of your friends don't yet have camping gear, invite them anyway. There's an old sheepherder's caravan set up for two adults, and it's included in the camping fee. They just need to bring their own bedding.



FISHING GEAR

Everything in its place

Part of fishing is always being prepared with a few extras, as there's a good chance you might lose a hook, sinker, lure or even a whole rig in the water. Naturally, you carry these bits of equipment with



FISH DISH

PRAWN PASTA

Tickled pink

In the mood for a seafood pasta? Dig out the prawns from the camp freezer. I prefer the prawns with shells on as they add extra flavour to the dish, but you can peel them if you prefer eating with a knife and fork.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 1 tablespoon each butter and olive oil
- 600 g thawed prawn tails, intestines removed
- 1 tablespoon tomato puree
- 200 g cherry tomatoes (if you're in a pinch, a can of chopped tomatoes will do)
- 3 spring onions, chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh garlic
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped (optional)
- A pinch of sugar
- 300 g spaghetti, cooked al dente
- Grated zest of 1 lemon
- A handful of fresh basil, torn into strips (fresh parsley is also nice – or combine the two)

Here's how

Melt the butter and oil together in a pan until the butter starts to foam. Add the prawns and fry them until they're bright pink on one side. Turn them over and add



the tomato puree, cherry tomatoes, spring onions, garlic and chilli.

Stir-fry everything for a few more minutes or until the prawns turn pink all over, the tomato skins burst and the aromas make you hungry! Season the sauce with salt, pepper and a pinch of sugar.

Stir in the pasta, sprinkle over the lemon zest and fresh herbs, and serve immediately.

Drive & Camp says If you're feeling generous, a half cup of cream in the sauce is lovely. And a sprinkling of grated Parmesan cheese enhances the flavour even more.

you in your fishing tackle box. If you want to make it even easier, consider Adrenalin's rig wallet. As the name suggests, it's a wallet in which you can carry these extras. It takes up almost no space, and the pouch has a carabiner clip if you want to hook it to your belt.

Velcro strips ensure it stays closed, and when you open it, there's a zippered pouch where you can put hooks – the material is such that a hook's barb won't pierce it. The wallet also has six transparent pockets that can seal – you can store different rigs in these, which you can then easily access if you need to change lines quickly.

Folded, it measures 21 x 13,5 cm, and when opened, the dimensions are 21 x 33 cm.

Price From R140 in fishing stores nationwide (also in Namibia).

Contact 📞 catches@4adrenalin.co.za
🌐 adrenalinfishing.co.za



A trip to the border



Their recent tour from the Cape to the Mozambican border was a delight – proof that even pensioners, with a bit of planning and common sense, can enjoy a safe camping journey in South Africa, say **Johan and Elmare van Staden** from Parow.

The Van Staden believe our country has too many beautiful places for us to sit at home and complain. Yes, unfortunately, there's always concern about your safety when hitting the road, but with careful planning and using your head, they say you can still travel wonderfully and camp safely.

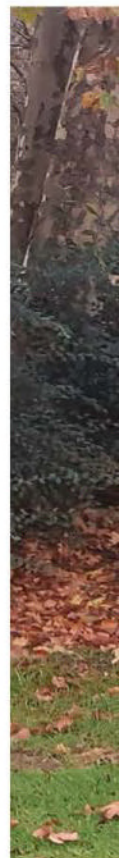
These two pensioners have travelled quite a bit recently, camping at various places and driving on many a bad road. However, they never really felt unsafe, threatened or stranded. They drive

short distances each day and usually travel outside of the holiday season. They do make a few phone calls in advance, but even without prior reservations, they have never had trouble finding suitable camping spots. They adjust their travel plan as they go, and after 20 000 km over a period of 13 months, they have suffered no significant breakages.

In 2022, the Van Staden visited the Kruger National Park, but also camped at places like Crook's Corner near the Pafuri border post, the Mazhou Camp in Mapungubwe, Bontle Camp in Marakele,

and the Manyane Camp in Pilanesberg. Then they visited places like Morgan Bay and St Helena Bay before last year embarking on an epic journey from Parow to the Ponta do Ouro border post in Mozambique.

Usually, Johan and Elmare, better known as Bossie, tow their 1981 model Sprite Sport with a 2005 model Isuzu KB300, but for this trip, they left the faithful workhorse in the stable and invited Annette and David (Orrie) Muller, Elmare's sister and her husband from Worcester, to join them using their 2008

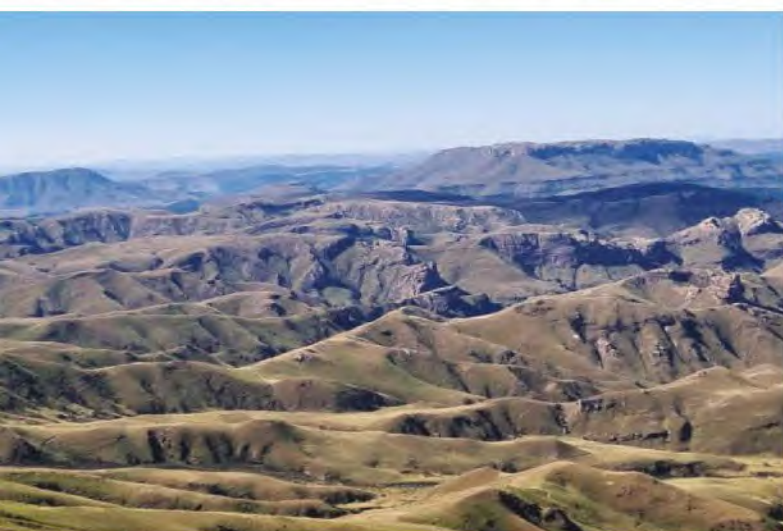




“

Here we had a delightful camp at Lazy Days. The campsite was in the town, but quite peaceful and safe

”



LOOK BUSY. Our intrepid travellers didn't vegetate whenever they reached a destination. No, they would immediately start exploring their surroundings both inside and outside the camp grounds.



model Toyota Hilux D-4D. Johan tells us about it...

“ On Sunday, 30th April, we drove with the Isuzu to the Mullers in Worcester and departed the next day to Beaufort West, where we had a delightful overnight stay at Steenbokkie. We enjoyed the hospitality, clean facilities and farm atmosphere. Elmare even got the chance to bottle-feed a lamb again.

The next day, we did the relatively short trip to Forever Gariep, where we had camped before, and were glad to see that

the facilities and grounds were still in good condition. We arrived early enough to first drive the old road to the iron bridge at Norvalspont and back over the dam wall to the campsite.

On Tuesday, we drove over Bethulie and then took the long bridge with its many arches over the Orange River to Venterstad before taking the R58 to Barkly East. Here we had a delightful camp at Lazy Days. The campsite was in the town, but quite peaceful and safe. The ablution facilities were probably what the clever people would call “Spartan”. Here my

brother-in-law Carel van der Merwe and his wife, Marie, joined us. They're avid birdwatchers and had driven all the way from Windhoek to camp with us for two weeks in their equipped Metalian, tent and gazebo.

During our previous visit, we drove most of the beautiful passes in the area, but Otto du Plessis and Bastervoetpad were still on our list. So, on Wednesday, we drove over the Greylings and Killians passes to Dordrecht, bought tasty meat and biltong at the local butchery, and

returned to Barkly East over the Indwe Pass and the beautiful Otto du Plessis Pass. The latter was somewhat neglected but still entirely drivable, and it seemed like large parts of the road were still used by local farmers.

On Thursday, we took the beautiful dirt road over Moshesh's Ford to the Bastervoet road. We drove slowly, as it appeared the road had fallen into complete disrepair. Hardcore 4x4 enthusiasts probably like it this way, but for ordinary nature lovers, it will likely soon be inaccessible. The views from the ridge in the direction of Ugie were some of the most beautiful I had ever seen. We returned to Barkly East via the

tar road through Elliot.

On Friday, we looked for more unsighted birds near Lady Grey and enjoyed the beautiful Joubert Pass again. Our German sister-in-law, Marie, couldn't understand why one would choose such roads when there were good tar roads available. She almost resigned from the pass-driving club.

It was Saturday, and our time in this region was coming to an end. We packed up and drove via the R58 over Elliot, Mount Fletcher and Kokstad to Underberg in KwaZulu-Natal. The tar roads were all in good condition, and maintenance was being done on large

sections. The endless number of speed bumps are probably necessary, but they keep you on your toes when towing a caravan. Near Matatiele, one of these unmarked speed humps caught me off guard. The result was so severe that even the ice in the Sprite's freezer jumped out of the trays.

Outside Underberg, we had a wonderful camping experience at Khotso. The world was wet and it rained hard at times, but we were the only campers and ate, played Rummikub and enjoyed ourselves in the communal kitchen. With the strong-flowing mountain stream at the campsite and the sound of rain showers hitting the



“

From here, we explored
St Lucia and the Hluhluwe-
Umfolozu Reserve

”

roof, we slept warmly in our caravan.

The next morning, however, it cleared up and we could enjoy the gorgeous road and surroundings up to the border post under the Sani Pass. At the Himeville Arms Hotel, we enjoyed a delightful Sunday lunch in front of the fireplace.

The next day, we once again packed up. Fortunately, we only had the awning to take down, and Carel bundled their wet dome tent in the back of the Hilux. With all that rain and mist, we didn't get much sightseeing done on the road over Howick to Durban, but it was a good drive and we camped at Bahati outside Hluhluwe that night. It's a stunning campsite with free-roaming wildlife.

A grey duiker even came close enough for us to scratch its ears.

Each stand had a concrete slab and a canopy – we didn't even need to set up the awning. Once again, we were the only campers and had the whole ablution block to ourselves. The Namibians weren't keen on their wet tent and took up residence in one of the cottages.

We stayed two nights at Bahati, one of the nicest campsites on our tour. From here, we explored St Lucia and the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve. We had no reservations and decided to explore Maputaland from Sodwana Bay. Upon arrival, we were the only campers in the campsite. We didn't feel comfortable

leaving all our camping equipment unguarded while we explored, and after consulting the internet, we chose Umdobi, a campsite about 5 km from Mbazwana towards Jozini.

Every camper surely had their own favourite, but for me, Umdobi stood out on this tour of ours. As soon as we turned off the tarmac onto the overgrown, sandy twin-track, the Sprite had to squeeze in behind the Hilux. I even considered engaging four-wheel drive. Those with larger caravans might have struggled here a bit. We arrived unannounced and on short notice, but in no time, Mien Calitz and her son Daniel had our stands



SAME CURTAINS, DIFFERENT VIEWS. Johan set up the travel itinerary for both the Van Stadens and their companions. He made sure everyone knew what the next stop would be and when they would reach it... with the odd exception, of course. And what a journey it was, with spectacular views and interesting places from the Cape all the way up to the border.



ready. They live on the premises and manage the camp, regularly checking in to ensure everything was in order. The stands were private inlets in pristine bush, each with an electrical point and water tap. Braai drums were provided. Some stands has their own shower, toilet and washing-up area, but there are also neat communal facilities. There's even a washing machine you could use for free.

In the evenings, Daniel stokes the donkey for hot water – a unique and very efficient system that also stores the hot water in an insulated geyser – we could still shower in warm water the next morning.

Our camping at Umdobi was peaceful and safe, and from here we visited the mouth of the Kosi River, marvelling at the fish traps and beautiful nature. We stopped at the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and explored the Mkhuze Reserve. Our birdwatching family was, of course, in their element.

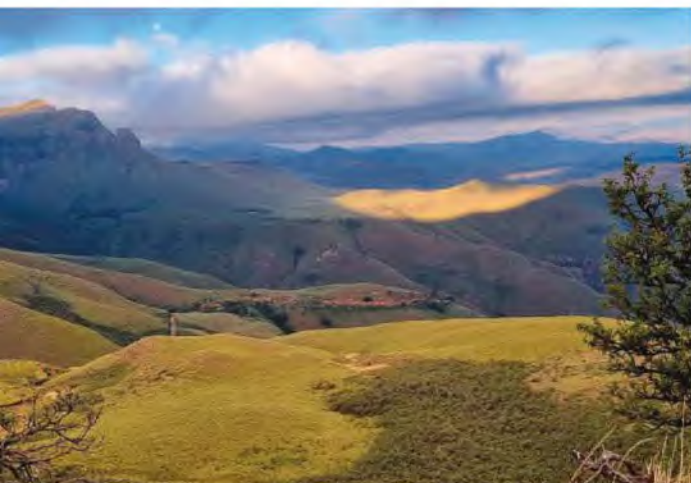
However, the time came to bid farewell to the Namibians. Carel and Marie headed over Jozini to the Itala Reserve and from there to Winburg, where they spent the night before heading back to Windhoek through the Northern Cape. We, however, turned south and over the next few days drove short distances each day to experience a bit more of the coast. We spent a night at Sugarloaf to fit in a boat ride on St Lucia Lake, then headed for the lovely campsite at Tugela Mouth, followed by two nights with the friendly folks at ATKV Natalia. From there, it was a short haul to TO Strand at Port Edward. Each day we explored the surroundings of these campsites.

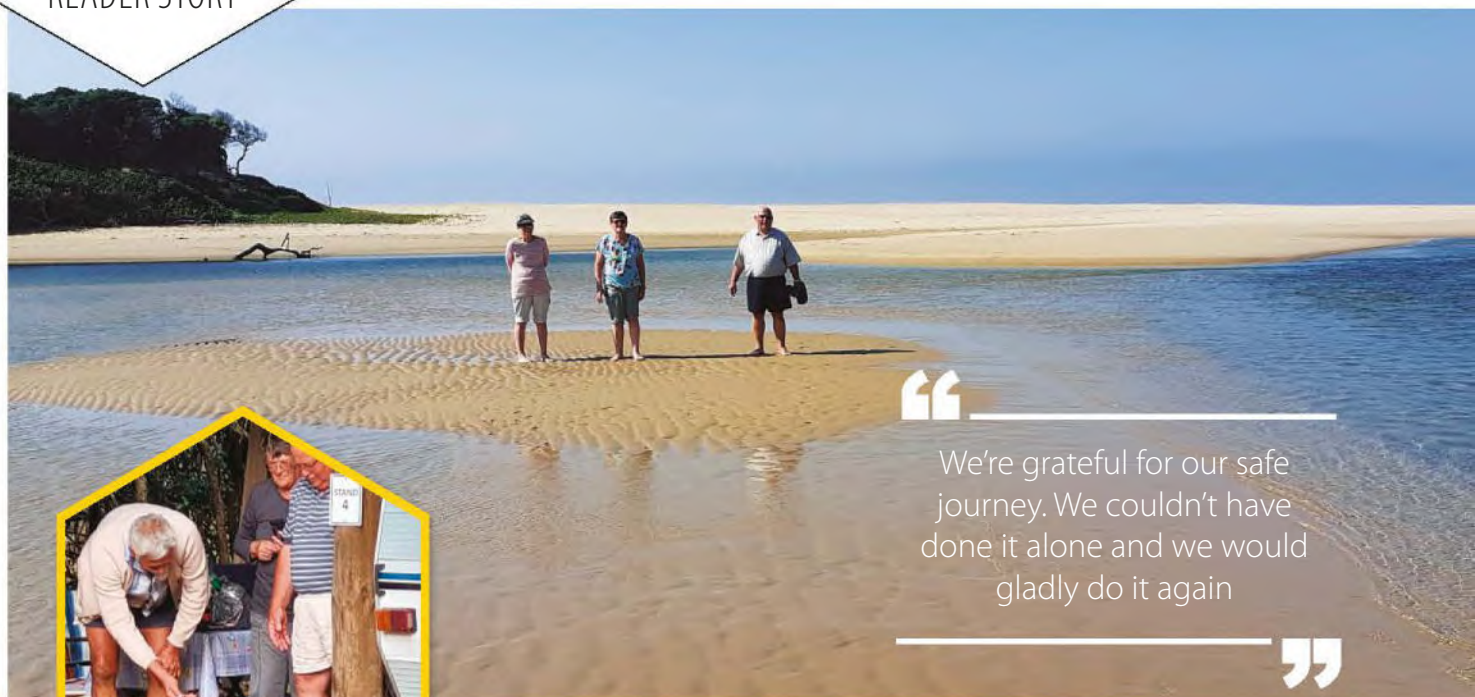
On Friday, 19 May, we left Port Edward in the rain and drove over Flagstaff and Lusikisiki to Port St Johns. At times, it rained hard – there were literal streams of water on the tar, making it hard to differentiate between water puddles and potholes in the worn road. Our drive was particularly slow. Even in the towns, traffic was heavy: vehicles, pedestrians, animals... We were fascinated by the way everything, dead or alive, was traded. We Capetonians know about boxed wine, but I had never before seen





FAMILY TIME. The travellers hope that this retelling will inspire others to hitch their caravans and hit the road – particularly those of a similar age. Yes, there are always risks involved when travelling in South Africa, but Johan en Elmare firmly believe it can be mitigated, and at the end of the day it will be well worth it.





“

We're grateful for our safe journey. We couldn't have done it alone and we would gladly do it again

”



live chickens being sold in boxes.

At Port St Johns, we camped at a soaking wet Cremorne on the banks of the Mzimvubu River. At the reception, they recommended we set up at the farthest campsite because the grass was thicker there and the site more accessible, but the downside was that we had to drive to the ablution facilities. We're seasoned campers, and if you want to camp in winter, you don't complain about the weather. We treated ourselves to a warm meal in their restaurant that evening.

From Port St Johns, we headed to East

London. On a busy Saturday morning, we maneuvered through a bustling Mthatha with the Sprite in tow. Elmare, who enjoys sewing, was fascinated by the women sitting on the sidewalks with their Singer machines, making and selling items. She handled this sight much better than the outdoor butchery on a table in the rain in a previous town.

The road is in good condition, the weather had improved, and the scenery was something to appreciate. By early afternoon, we called to arrange accommodation at Areena near Gonubie. Here we stayed another three nights to

explore the beautiful surroundings of Cintsas, Morgan Bay and Kei Mouth. We were pleasantly surprised by the initiative of the local residents to beautify the sidewalks and open areas in Gonubie. They deserved praise for their excellent work. On Sunday, we enjoyed a tasty buffet meal at Areena's restaurant.

From there, we took the scenic route over Port Alfred to the N2, spending the next night at Canon Rocks. We hadn't braaied for a while and enjoyed the good weather to around the campfire. With the sound of the breaking waves as background, we had a good night's rest.



WHAT ON EARTH. Johan and his companions were often surprised by oddities not common at home. Like the live food trade where you can buy boxed chickens, and no, we don't mean KFC box meals...



Fuel consumption

With their Kruger trip in 2022, the Van Stadens covered 7 996 km with the Hilux, of which 5 356 km was with the Sprite in tow. Their average fuel consumption over the entire distance was 10,11 ℓ /100 km.

Last year, they travelled 6 174 km, of which 4 115 km was with the caravan. With KwaZulu-Natal's hills and a bit more rain and wind, the average consumption over the entire distance was 11,01 ℓ /100 km.

"Even an Isuzu fan must compliment the D-4D," says Johan. "For the skeptical readers questioning our consumption, I can also add that the Hilux's original 16" wheels had been replaced with 17" rims, and the odometer was very close to accurate according to the GPS."

From Canon Rocks, we first stopped at the Oakly roadside stall for a roosterkoek breakfast and then pushed through to Storms River Mouth. Since our last visit, two new suspension bridges have been added. We were early enough to set up our stand and then fit in the walk over the bridges before dark. That evening was calm and our fire burned close to the high-water mark.

Though we could have driven from Tsitsikamma straight home, we spent another two nights at Dwarswegstrand. As if there were no shops in the Cape, Elmare first bought fabric in Mossel Bay and we also supported the Elvis Brew roadside stall in George.

On Saturday, 27 May, we could find no more excuses. We had to head home, as Elmare promised our grandchild Ella-Rose she would be back for her birthday. So, we only stopped at the Wimpy in Heidelberg for a bite to eat and then dropped the Mullers off in Worcester. We swapped the Hilux for the Isuzu... and before dark, we were unhitching at home.

We're grateful for our safe journey. We couldn't have done it alone and we would gladly do it again. We want to advise other pensioners, to do the same. Despite the negativity, there is a lot to enjoy. It was lovely to share the experience with friends.



Johan and Elmare win a Camp Cover Bundu Bag worth R400. This bag is so versatile that it could house lots of nifty first-aid items or double as a weekend case. Check out Camp Cover's range on their website. www.campcover.co.za



WIN

Size matters



SUZUKI JIMNY

For the first time in its 50-year history, Suzuki's beloved Jimny is available in a five-door version. But does bigger necessarily mean better? We embarked on an adventurous journey through Botswana's Tuli Block region in search of answers (and elephants).

Words **Pierre Steyn** Photos **Colin Mileman**



The iconic three-door Suzuki Jimny has achieved cult status over the years as an unbeatable off-roader that won't break the bank. Its short wheelbase, AllGrip 4x4 system with a low-range transfer case, and a ladder-frame chassis that barely tips the scales at a tonne have given the little car's owners quite a confident swagger when it comes to off-roading. I know, because I have an olive-green one in my garage.

While the Jimny's off-road prowess is unquestionable, its engine has its shortcomings. The 1,5-litre engine has you strategising extensively when attempting to overtake a convoy of lorries on the N1 between Beaufort-Wes and Laingsburg. In a strong southeast wind, it feels as if you're the skipper of a sailboat rather than a driver. Its cabin space is modest, with the rear seats seemingly there just to fold down to accommodate your groceries and ammo boxes. It's an off-roader (and a compact city car) for no more than two adults. And that is where the five-door version comes in.

ROUGH AND TUMBLE. Yes, the breakover angle and turning radius has been affected by the longer wheelbase, but it's still miles better than most other SUVs. By adding the rear doors, Suzuki had to shorten the front doors, which isn't a bad thing because now a driver can egress inside a garage and not worry about hitting the door against the wall.



“

With two extra doors and more cargo space, the five-door Jimny offers more than it takes away

”



What do we have here?

By adding two extra doors to the Jimny, it has now, for the first time in its history, become a practical family car that will capture the attention of a much broader market. It's hard to believe it took Suzuki a full 50 years to take this simple step! This larger Jimny, manufactured in India, has been stretched by 340 mm – enough to create significantly more space for rear passengers without compromising the car's off-road abilities.

At first glance, the five-door Jimny looks very similar to its three-door sibling. Both models are 1 645 mm wide and 1 720 mm tall, with the ground clearance remaining at 210 mm. The car retains its distinctive boxy shape. The larger Jimny sports a chrome grille instead of the two-door version's black grille, and there are now additional rectangular windows on each side between the rear door and the rear pillars.

The five-door Jimny is available in two trim levels, the GL and the better appointed GLX, with a choice between a five-speed manual transmission or a four-speed automatic gearbox. All versions of the new Jimny has the K15B 1,5-litre naturally aspirated petrol engine, delivering 75 kW. (More on this later.)

Equipment

Drivers familiar with the three-door Jimny will feel right at home in the newcomer. Thanks to the large, upright windows, visibility is excellent – a significant advantage when navigating off-road terrain or squeezing into tight city parking spots. The interior is functional and practical rather than luxurious, with all buttons logically arranged and within easy reach. The multifunctional steering wheel's height can be adjusted, and all models feature a colour screen that features Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. The GL model

offers basic air-conditioning, while the GLX comes with full climate control.

All four passenger doors have electric windows, and at the rear, there are parking sensors and a reversing camera. The rear two seatbacks can be folded down either individually or together, increasing the rear cargo space from 211 litres to 332 litres. Unfortunately, the rear seatbacks do not fold completely flat, which is a bit disappointing. According to Suzuki, rear seats that fold completely flush would be less comfortable to sit on.

What is nice, though, is that the front seats can fold flat, too, and when combined with the rear seats, they create a makeshift bed – for when you need to sleep in your car because lions are sniffing around your tent.

All Jimnys feature electronic stability control, anti-lock brakes, and three-point seatbelts for each seat, along with ISOFIX

SPECIFICATIONS

Tested model	Suzuki Jimny 5-door GLX 4AT
Engine	1,462 cc, 4-cylinder petrol
Power	75 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	130 Nm @ 4 000 rpm
Transmission	Four-speed automatic
Top speed	Approximately 145 km/h
Wheel size	195/80 R15
GVM	1 200 kg
Ground clearance	210 mm
Wading depth	300 mm
Approach and departure angles	36° and 47°
Fuel consumption	8.4 ℓ/100 km
Tank	40 ℓ
Towing Capacity	1 000 kg
Dimensions	3 820 (l) x 1 645 (w) x 1 720 mm (h)
Safety rating	★★★ (Euro NCAP, 2018 for the three-door)
Service plan	Four years/60 000 km
Warranty	Five years/200,000 km
Price	R480 000



anchors for child and infant seats at the back. The GL comes with two front airbags, while the GLX has six.

How does it drive?

The elephant in the room hides under the bonnet. How does the 1,5-litre engine perform in a car that's now 100 kg heavier and carrying more luggage? In sand and over rocks, you never feel underpowered, but on a long stretch of highway, you may wish for more oomph. Just like its smaller sibling, the new Jimny feels most comfortable (and fuel-efficient) at 110 km/h, with the rev-counter hovering just below 3 000 rpm.

On smooth roads, the manual gearbox offers more control, especially when overtaking. In off-road and city driving, the automatic transmission is easier to live with. Personally, I prefer the manual gearbox.

A welcome surprise is the improved stability

of the longer car on the open road, thanks to its extended wheelbase. And that longer wheelbase doesn't significantly compromise its off-road capabilities. The approach angle of 36°, breakover angle of 24° and departure angle of 47° are only slightly less than those of the three-door Jimny. It therefore remains a formidable off-roader.

Conclusion

With two extra doors and more cargo space, the five-door Jimny offers more than it takes away. It's now a practical family car that can accommodate dad, mom, brother and sister every day of the week and go on enjoyable bush and beach vacations. All of this for just R40 000 more than the three-door version (and the entire package costs less than half a million rand!).

Suzuki South Africa won't be able to keep up with the orders.



FROM THE COMPETITORS

Affordable 4x4 family SUVs



R436 000

Renault Duster Zen 4x4

One of the most affordable five-door 4x4s in South Africa with a powerful turbocharged diesel engine. An underrated off-roader.



R575 000

BAIC B40

A new Chinese off-roader, larger than the Jimny, equipped with a strong turbocharged diesel engine – if you're daring enough to try something new.



R605 000

Mahindra Scorpio Z8L Diesel 4x4

A surprisingly capable off-roader with seven seats and every technological gadget you can think of.

Luxury camper for two

Mobi Lodge's new Mobi XL boasts the same top-class finishes and luxuries as the popular Continental model, but in a smaller and more compact version.

Words and photos **Helenus Kruger**



MOBI XL

Setting up

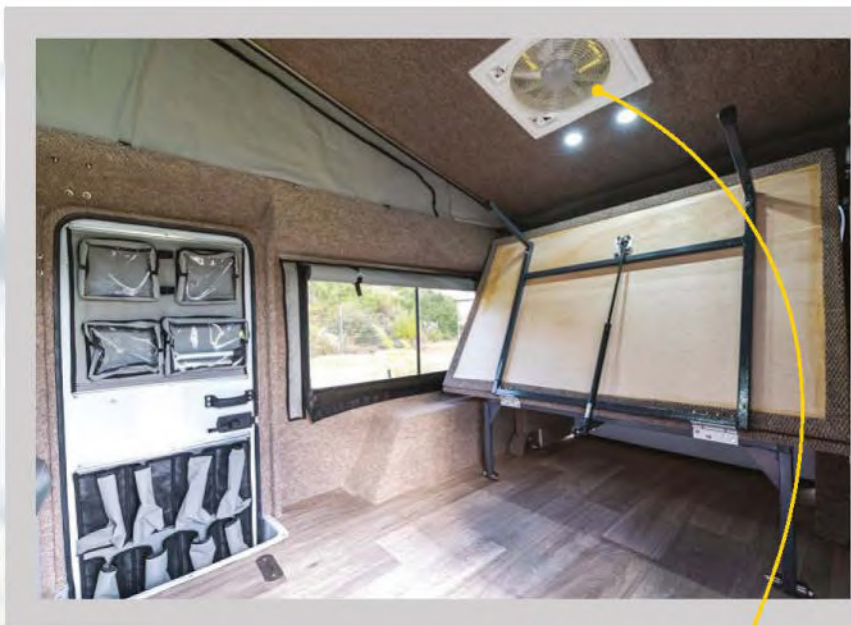
When setting up, you first need to swing down the rear corner steadies before pulling out the slide-out cupboard. If you don't do this, the weight of the slide-out and spare wheel at the back of the caravan will press down to the ground. The caravan has corner steadies at the rear only, but it's quite stable nonetheless. The jockey wheel's shaft arm is attached to the caravan. The wheel first drops down, and then the inner part of the arm swings down to the ground. The spirit level on the A-frame helps you level the caravan.

Four clips secure the slide-out in place. As an extra measure to prevent the slide-out from opening while driving, the manufacturer has added flat bars to the corner steadies to help keep it closed in case one of the clips happens to pop open.



Mobi Lodge Manufacturing, the makers of the popular Continental flagship model and the X entry-level model, has now introduced the Mobi XL.

This camper fits neatly between the aforementioned two; it's almost like an X model with enhancements. The Mobi XL is longer than its little brother, offering more internal space with more room to move around, and it has more storage space – there's even a small dining area.



Settling down

The head end of the XL's bed is fixed to the slide-out. To fit the slide-out inside the body, three-quarters of the bed needs to be folded towards the cupboard side. The mattress folds into three segments and lies on the part of the base that isn't folded. Once the slide-out is extended, the bed moves along, after which you can fold down the bed base, unfold the mattress, and make the bed. With the slide-out stowed inside, there's lots of storage space under the bed.

Before you climb in to fold down the bed, you must unclip



the front of the caravan so you can lift the roof. The roof only lifts at the front and requires only a light push on the handle before the two sturdy gas struts take over. The canvas between the roof and caravan has zip-open windows with mosquito netting.

The entire interior of the caravan is covered in heavy-duty synthetic industrial carpet, while the floor has a faux wood finish.

The space between the foot of the bed and the dining area in the nose of the caravan is as wide as the door (600 mm). At first glance, it might seem cramped, but thanks to the 2 m roof height and the space in the dining area, it feels quite spacious.

The mattress is 18 cm thick and made of high-density foam, ensuring a comfortable sleep. In some caravans, there's a significant difference between the widest and narrowest parts of the mattress, but in the XL, the foot end at 1,25 m is only 10 cm narrower than at the head. If you're taller than 1,85 m, your feet might start to hang off.





Interior

As you climb in through the main door, the dining area with a table and two seats is to your left. The table is on the small side (60 x 60 x 70 cm), so it's better to place your wine glass in the cup holders under the table where they're about knee height and conveniently within reach.

Keys, cellphones and headlamps can be stored in the two open shelves – one above and one below the table. A power point with a three- and two-prong socket is under the cup holders. The two LEDs above the table, like the two above the bed, can be switched on and off individually by pressing the light.

When you lift the seats, there's storage space for beach towels and bedding, and when the weather takes a turn and



everyone moves inside, you can fold up the bed for an extra metre of space where two camping chairs can fit.

Your clothes can go in three cupboards (25 x 50 x 30 cm) right above the bed. On the left side of the bed, there's a drop-down shelf above your head for things you might need during the night and also a fold-up holder for your water bottle.

The sliding window is 48 x 130 cm and has a removable mosquito net and a roll-down flap for privacy. The fan above the bed provides a cool breeze on warm summer nights. Two LEDs next to the fan illuminate the sleeping area, and on the right of the bed at the head end, there are two three-pin sockets, a USB and Brad Harrison socket. The battery charger is next to it and is neatly covered with a piece of canvas so that the light doesn't bother you at night.



Step inside

The XL has two doors (57 x 136 cm) opposite each other, just behind the nose, with a mosquito net that you attach to the door opening with Velcro and a zipper for easy entry and exit.

Just inside the doors are zippered pouches for storing loose items. The panel with the circuit breakers, lights, water pump, fan, and fridge switches, and the battery's voltmeter and water tank meter, is at head height on your right as you enter.



Canopies

The caravan's two canopies – one on each side – are made of the same material as your bakkie's tarpaulin and are quite easy to set up. You simply swing the four swing arms open and hook the ropes on the two swing arms at the front and back to the clips on the body. The clip to which you hook the rope is on the other side of the caravan, meaning the ropes are crossed when the other canopy is also set up. At the back, there are two tarpaulins that zip onto the canopy and cover the pull-out cupboard.



Now it's time for the poles: four upright poles with ropes to hold up the canopy and four poles that fit horizontally between the upright poles at the outer edge. When the wind bothers you, zip a side panel between the two middle poles.



Kitchen tales

As in most caravans, the XL's kitchen is on the left side. The kitchen cupboard with its drop-down door becomes a large work surface with the two-plate gas burner to the left of it. The gas cylinder is mounted on the A-frame and is permanently connected.

Your crockery, cutlery, pots, a pan and kettle fit in the foam moulds inside the slide-out and have Velcro straps to ensure nothing falls out when the road gets rough.

In the middle of the slide-out is a two- and three-prong socket. The LED strip over almost the entire width of the slide is

positioned so it doesn't shine in your eyes, and it can shine either yellow or white.

Nobody really likes washing dishes, but when it's your turn, do it to the right of the worktop. The sink and drying rack frame hook onto fittings above the deep-cycle battery cupboard. The cold and hot water taps are just around the corner at the back of the caravan. The caravan is equipped with a fibreglass water tank and a 12V/220V geyser for hot water. However, the geyser is in the nose of the caravan; so it takes a while for the hot water to reach the tap.

The 220V socket where you plug in the camp power is just

to the left of the sink, while the solar panels can be plugged into the Brad Harrison socket under the taps.

The two jerry cans, one on each side of the caravan, are mounted right at the back. The rest of your kitchen is in the slide-out, behind

a lift-up door. Just like on the right side, there's an LED strip at the back of the caravan that shines into the slide-out cupboard. The cupboard is divided into two: on the left is the space for the fridge/freezer and on the right, the pantry.



Pack it in

The right side of the slide-out cupboard also has a lift-up door with two shelves behind it. The top one runs the entire length of the slide-out (150 x 40 x 40 cm), while the middle shelf is divided in two (half as high as the top one).

Right at the bottom is a deep cupboard also divided in two. At the back of the caravan is the water tank's filling point, and right at the top is the pole cupboard. The shower is at the back

on the right side of the caravan. Under the jerry can is a cupboard with the shower head and taps, and above it is a hook for hanging the shower head. Between the shower taps and side window is a rail into which the side of the shower cubicle threads, separating the shower area from the rest of the tent.

The rear canopy opens in the same way as the front. The canopy has zippers all around for side panels.



Drive & Camp says *The Mobi XL continues Mobi Lodge's tradition of luxury caravans with top-notch finishes and an extensive list of standard equipment.*



On the front

If you happen to get stuck in the sand or want to stir the braai fire coals, there's a shovel mounted on the left side of the A-frame. The nose's protective canvas is made of the same material as the gas cylinder cover. The XL has a cable to your vehicle so the battery can charge while driving.

The light cable has a socket on both ends; so it's easy to remove it.

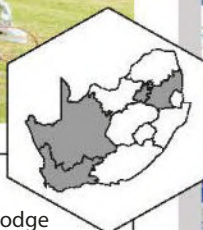
Standard equipment

The XL is fully equipped to the teeth, and you'll only need to fill the water tank and pack your food and clothes. Some of the standard equipment you don't always get with other caravans includes a full tent, shower, camping chairs, stainless steel braai, extension cord, garden hose, bedding and a cassette toilet.

Additionally, you'll find the following:

- Dinette with a table and benches
- Fully equipped kitchen with a gas burner and lights
- 6 m² shower tent
- Hot and cold shower tap with a 12 V/220 V geyser

- Gas cylinder
- 15 m 220 V extension cord
- Two 180° Batwing awnings
- Shovel
- 20 m garden hose
- Seven-phase AC-DC battery charger
- Two 20-liter jerry cans
- 214-litre water tank
- Bedding
- Mobi Lodge stainless steel braai
- Two camping chairs
- 65-litre fridge/freezer
- Cassette toilet
- Dishwashing rack
- Tool set
- Full tent
- Front stone guard



SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer	Mobi Lodge
Model	Mobi XL
Sleeps	Two
Size	4.7 x 1,85 x 2,05 m
Tyres	6"
Axle	2,5 t
Tare weight	947 kg
Payload	553 kg
GVM	1 500 kg
Chassis	Galvanised
Hull	Steel-reinforced fibreglass
Price	R488 000

DEALER NETWORK Factory and headquarters in Middelburg, Mpumalanga; dealerships in Middelburg, Pretoria and Malmesbury, plus a service centre in Upington.

Contact 013 246 1080 • marius@mobilodge.com • mobilodge.com



R488 000

Mobi XL

BVM 1 500 kg

and payload of 553 kg

From the competitors

Unique off-road fibreglass campers for at least two



R378 400

Echo Chobe Tec

BVM 1 500 kg

Payload of 740 kg



R455 000

Badger Extreme

BVM 1 750 kg

Payload of 510 kg



R408 000

Invader Duo X

BVM 1 500 kg

Payload of 590 kg

* The caravans are not necessarily equipped the same, and the price is for a basic model.

Life after Leefek

Manufacturers come and go, but what does the road ahead hold for campers with a Leefek caravan?

Words **Leon Botha** Photos **Supplied**

As we wrote in the October-November 2023 issue, Leefek has ceased all caravan manufacturing. This affects models such as the Exclusive, Classique, Penta, Splash, Sprint, Swing, and various Tourer and XT trailer models. Leefek has, however, committed

to fulfilling its warranty responsibilities.

We spoke with most Leefek dealers (see list on p 93). A notable example was Eben Grobler, owner of Eastern Cape Caravans & Safari Centre, who shared his experience of recently completing repairs on a caravan still under warranty. The caravan came in for its

six-month service, requiring a part repair. They were smoothly assisted by Leefek.

At the time of writing this article, several new Leefek caravans were still available at about half of the dealerships.



The end of the road

The end of Leefek also signifies the end of a once mighty business if you include the former Jurgens Ci.

This brand was the largest caravan manufacturer in the country, producing popular caravans like Jurgens' Penta, Exclusive, and Sprite's Splash, Sprint, and Swing – now almost national treasures.

Leefek continued to build caravans at the Jurgens Ci plant in Ga-Rankuwa, north

of Pretoria right to the end. The plant, operational since 1990, once delivered 600-800 new units per month says Hans Koekemoer, former marketing director of Jurgens Ci with 32 years of service.

The last model rolled off the production line, reminiscent of the final Volkswagen Beetle. Also locally produced, Beetles once surpassed Ford Model T's production record of 15 million in 1972, thanks to the classic Beetle. After more than 60 years

and 21 million units, the production of this iconic car ceased.* While new Beetles are no longer made, they are still seen and serviced today. Volkswagen continued with a next generation Beetle, but the writing was on the wall.

Similarly, the Leefek plant's story is on a smaller scale. The caravans will continue to exist, regardless of the model year, but like the Beetles, the once leading models have landed in the second-hand market.



An end that keeps going

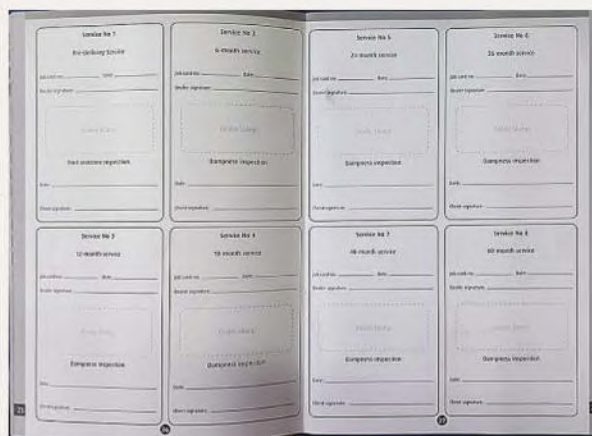
As mentioned, there are still a few new models available. As of December 2023, when this article was written, these included models from the Tourer series, a Purple variant of the Penta and Exclusive, and the Classique at East Rand Caravan World in Boksburg.

Owner and head of the dealership, Francois Swart, respects Leefek's warranty on new caravans, provided the caravan had its first six-month inspection and a service after the first year at the dealership. This also applies to new models sold recently.

Most caravan parts are still available, including for older models, so there's no worry about discontinued production. Francois notes some exceptions, like lights for much older models, but they find solutions.

After the first year, there aren't strict rules for caravan servicing intervals. A good habit would be at least once a year, but some campers prefer servicing before a vacation or after the caravan has been idle for a while. At this stage of the caravan's life, it's up to the owner.

Caravans previously built under the Jurgens brand had a service booklet. It was a service record for the first 60 months (five years), offering greater peace of mind to (second-hand) owners concerned about their caravan's service history. Over these 60 months, the caravan is serviced eight times, with the first service before delivery and then every six months up to the fifth service. Thereafter, up to the eighth service, the caravan is serviced annually.



A service typically involves a chassis service, with caravan owners pointing out specific deficiencies. This varies from customer to customer, but a typical chassis service includes checking the floor bolts, brakes, corner supports, handbrake and coupler. A typical service takes two days and costs between R1 900 and R2 500 (R2 700 for a double axle).

Francois says first-time caravan buyers

do look at second-hand models, typically costing between R150 000 and R200 000. East Rand Caravan World has over 90 caravans on the floor, with at least two-thirds being second-hand models. Of the 90, at least 60 are regular road caravans, mainly manufactured by Leefek or Jurgens Ci.

Going forward, certain models will become increasingly scarce, especially the popular Tourer series.

Value might increase

The value of Leefek caravans might even increase, says Echarde Kuhn, manager of Garden Route Camping & Caravans, as new models are no longer being built.

The dealership has 40-50 caravans on the floor, including a few new Leefek models like a Splash, Swing, and a Tourer SW-X. Echarde mentions that the vast majority of their second-hand caravans are still products of Jurgens Ci or Leefek, but they assist customers with warranties and services.

The workshop manager, George Harrison, says that as a rule, a service takes no longer than a day – the caravan comes in the morning and is ready by the afternoon. The chassis service for a single axle is R1 950 and R2 500 for a double axle, excluding parts.



Room for old and new

The factory warranty has as it were become a dealer warranty, says Jacqui Jordaan, sales manager of Pretoria Caravans & Outdoor. (You can say this is similar to the support provided when Chevrolet left the country in 2017, and Isuzu dealers assisted Chevy owners.)

In their showroom, there are at least six brand-new Leefek caravans, including two Tourers, a Swing, Splash, and the very last Xcape that was built. They have about 70 caravans on the floor – new and second-hand – 90% of which are road caravans, mostly from Leefek or Jurgens Ci.





Dealers we spoke to

East Rand Caravan World (Boksburg) ☎ 011 025 7639
Benoni Caravans & Campworld (Benoni) ☎ 011 973 3747
Pretoria Caravans & Outdoor (Pretoria) ☎ 012 329 2259
Silver Lakes Caravans (Pretoria) ☎ 012 944 1919
Elite Auto Leisure (Vereeniging) ☎ 016 422 1400
Middelburg Caravans & Campworld (Middelburg) ☎ 013 243 5060
GC Caravans (Emalahleni) ☎ 013 697 5121
Lowveld Caravans (Mbombela) ☎ 082 425 9790
Eastern Cape Caravans & Safari Centre (Gqeberha) ☎ 041 581 5363
Tuinroete Camping and Caravans (Mossel Bay) ☎ 044 695 2602



Jacqui says they provide full support for these caravans. Since Jurgens Ci faced difficulties a few years ago, they got fibreglass moulds in place for most models' front and back sections to assist with repairs. They can also obtain all parts and easily support owners of most models made since 2000.

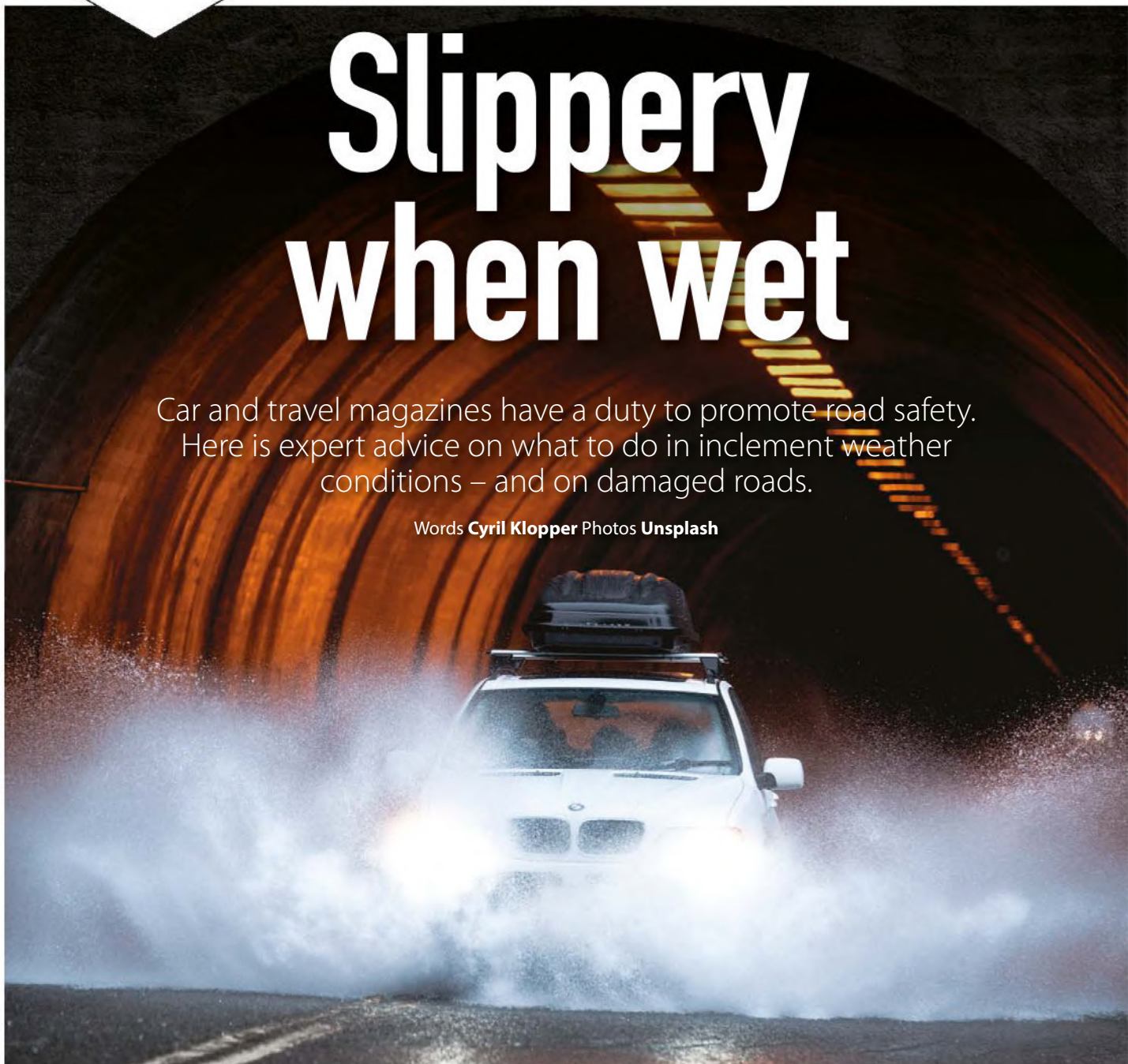
They also assist caravan owners with insurance claims daily.

Customers were more negative about the product during Jurgens Ci's challenging times, but Leefek's production cessation seems to have had little impact. Depending on how busy they are, a chassis service takes one to three days, costing R1 650 for a single axle and R2 000 for a double axle.

Slippery when wet

Car and travel magazines have a duty to promote road safety. Here is expert advice on what to do in inclement weather conditions – and on damaged roads.

Words **Cyril Klopper** Photos **Unsplash**



MasterDrive, an advanced driving school, was established in 1999 and CEO Eugene Herbert is dedicated to safer roads in South Africa. The company trains bus, motorcycle, truck and car drivers in everything from defensive driving techniques to how to respond in a hijacking.

We've used Eugene's professional advice to compile

a list of tips for climate change, where South Africa can go from drought to heavy storms and floods in a matter of months.

Harsh weather

Some South Africans have a reputation for not being able to drive in the rain. According to Eugene, motorists should do the following:

- Turn on your vehicle's main headlights. The daytime

running lights in new vehicles are often too dim to be seen in heavy rain.

- Maintain a larger following distance than usual between you and the vehicle in front. This gives you enough time to react in an emergency.
- Drive slower than usual, as it reduces the risk of your vehicle aquaplaning on a wet road.
- If your vehicle does skid, simply take your foot off the

accelerator and gently press the brake pedal. Do not pump the brakes or jerk the steering wheel. Simply turn the wheel in the direction you want your vehicle to go.

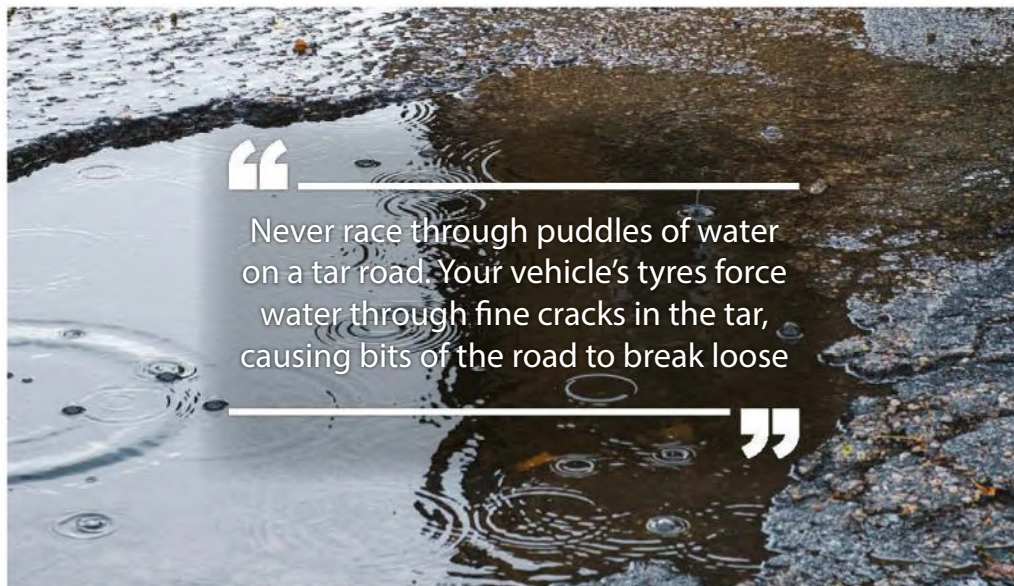
Rain

Heavy rain results in pools of water on the road and even flash floods. Keep the following seven tips in mind:

- Avoid puddles deeper than

your wheel hub, especially on dirt roads. It's always better to step out and see exactly how deep the water is.

- Never race through puddles of water on a tar road. Your vehicle's tyres force water through fine cracks in the tar, causing bits of the road to break loose. Sooner or later, there's a pothole on the road.
- Avoid fast-flowing water across a road. Water is powerful enough to sweep trucks away, and your small vehicle doesn't stand a chance against a strong current.
- If there's no other way, maintain a steady speed – not too slow or too fast – and drive through in first or second gear.
- If your vehicle stalls, and you're sure the current won't carry you away, climb out and make sure the air intake is still above the water level before restarting the engine. If you suspect there is water in the engine, it's better to ask for a tow, drain the contaminated oil, and replace it with fresh oil before continuing. Also, rather leave this task to a mechanic.
- You've followed the above advice, but halfway through the stream, you notice your bakkie starting to float. Open a door immediately to let water in. This will make your vehicle heavier, allowing you to maintain grip on the road surface.
- If there's no way to stop the



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Never race through puddles of water on a tar road. Your vehicle's tyres force water through fine cracks in the tar, causing bits of the road to break loose

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flash flood, and your vehicle is definitely going to be swept away, jump out as soon as it's safe and swim, buddy!

Wind

It's not only water you need to watch out for, but also strong winds. The following dangers can spoil your journey:

- Be especially cautious when driving through tunnels and over bridges and mountains. Many a Gautenger heading to the Cape in December are terrified when they exit the Huguenot Tunnel and get tossed around by the southerly winds, and as soon as you hit the bridge outside the tunnel, it feels like the wind is going to push you over. Trucks have

indeed been blown over on this bridge by the wind.

- Keep an eye on high-voltage wires running above a road. Also, be alert to caravans when passing them – a gust of wind can easily push a caravan onto a collision course with you.
- If you wrestle with the steering wheel on a highway, think twice about overtaking a heavy vehicle. The sudden calm next to a truck can cause you to over-steer and collide with the trailer. And brace yourself for gusts of wind that return with a vengeance as soon as you pass the truck.

Mist

Mist doesn't damage roads, but if you're not careful, it can pose

the same dangers as heavy rain. Pay attention to the following:

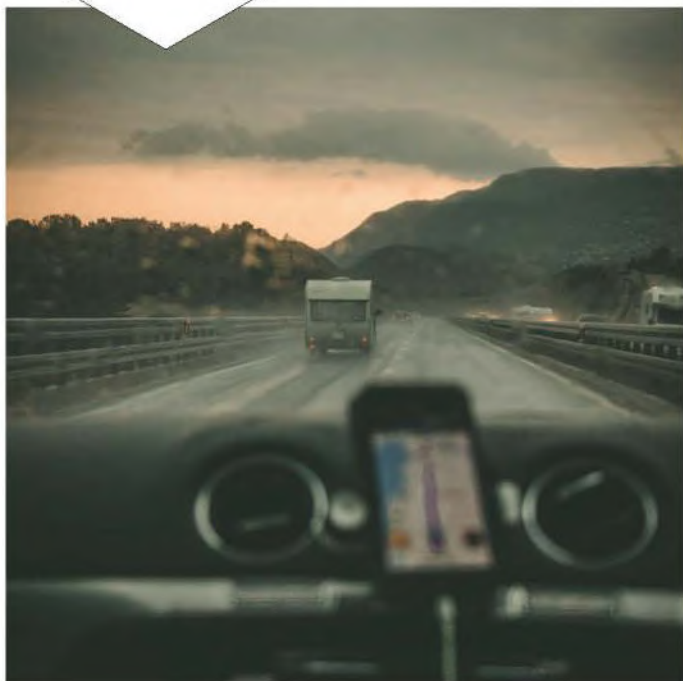
- Drive just as slow or even slower as you would in torrential rain.
- Turn on your main headlights but keep them dimmed. Also, turn on your vehicle's fog lights if equipped.
- Many people turn on their hazard lights, but Eugene of MasterDrive believes this can be misinterpreted by other motorists. They might think your vehicle has broken down, and then they'll overtake you without being able to see if there's oncoming traffic.
- To add to the previous point: stay in your lane, don't swerve, and definitely don't attempt to overtake the car in front of you.
- It's better not to pull over on a gravel mountain pass covered in fog. The precipice may be closer than you think...

Bad roads

Harsh weather damages infrastructure, especially our roads. "Avoiding roads where you can't be sure of your safety is not optional but a necessity," says Eugene. "Even when taking alternative routes to avoid dangerous roads, you will likely encounter incidents that require extra care and experience." Expect the following after a recent storm:

- The storm may be over, but





there are still pools of water on the road. You may have driven a particular road hundreds of times, but today, there's a new submerged pothole. So, do drive slowly through puddles on the road.

- Water damage can be unseen. A flash flood can erode the ground below a tarred road, and once you drive over it, your vehicle breaks through the crust, and a sinkhole swallows you whole.
- The owner of a 4x4 vehicle that tackles a flood must make it clear to other motorists that he has the necessary experience and that his 4x4 vehicle is capable of handling the obstacle. Many have seen a novice in a regular car get washed away while trying to follow a 4x4 vehicle.
- If authorities close a road, you have no right to bypass the signs. It is a traffic offense, and you can be fined, regardless of your 4x4 experience.

Bad roads can cause damage to your vehicle's tyres. Here's what to do if a tyre unexpectedly bursts while driving:

- If you feel a hard hit after driving through a pothole, take note: your tyres or rims may be damaged. Prepare for a possible

emergency until you have a chance to inspect the wheels.

- Maintain a firm grip on the steering wheel as soon as you hear or feel a tyre burst – not a death grip with white knuckles; just firm.
- On a tar road, you will hear rubber splatter against the bodywork and see smoke, but on a gravel road, you may only notice it when you struggle to control your vehicle.
- Gently press the brake pedal. If a front wheel has burst, and you slam hard on the brakes, your vehicle will likely pitch forward and roll over.
- Focus on keeping your vehicle on the road, and once you feel things are under control and you're driving slowly enough, you can gradually pull over to the shoulder of the road.
- Turn on your hazard lights as soon as it's safe to take one hand off the steering wheel. You don't have to wait until you come to a complete stop.

Take a break

Harsh weather and bad roads are exhausting. You may think you're alert because the conditions keep you on your toes, but your mental faculties actually slow down with every passing minute.

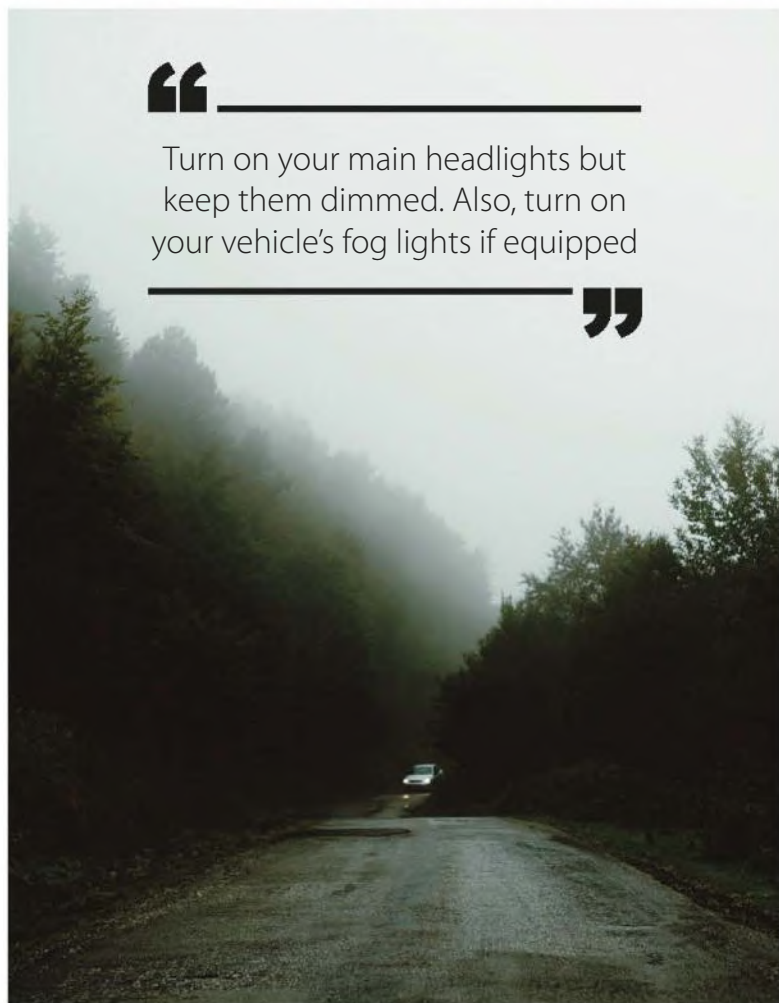
According to the American



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Turn on your main headlights but keep them dimmed. Also, turn on your vehicle's fog lights if equipped

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National Safety Council, drowsiness is responsible for about 100 000 annual road accidents, 71 000 injuries, and 1 550 deaths a year in that country. Yes, these are overseas figures, but the average American spends about as much time behind the wheel as we do because they, like us, don't have the kind of public transportation found in Europe.

The American Automobile Association (AAA) says 75% of drivers don't pull over when they get drowsy behind the wheel, and that truck drivers are more likely to underestimate their drowsiness levels because they spend more time on the road. This is especially true for those who drive at night when drowsiness is most prevalent, between 21:00 and 6:00. The most worrying fact that has come to light is that even drivers who know they are drowsy

continue to drive!

In the AAA's study, American truck drivers were given the chance to take a break every 20 minutes, but most of them chose to keep going. We're all guilty of this to some extent. If you repaired a flat tyre earlier in the day but also booked a campsite, you'll continue on, even if the sun sets and you know you might hit a kudu.

Daydreaming, loss of concentration, yawning, drifting across lanes, rubbing your eyes, delayed reactions and regular variations in speed are all signs of drowsiness. Microsleep, where you unconsciously drift away for a few seconds, is also something to watch out for. If you experience any of the above symptoms, pull over and rest immediately. It's not only for your own sake but also for the lives of your passengers and other road users.

Who's the best driver?

In conclusion, we'd like to share an interesting tidbit that caught Eugene's attention. He recounts the findings of a group of vehicle accident attorneys in America who wanted to know which age groups are the safest drivers. They compared their own records with statistics from the National Highway Traffic Administration and found that the so-called Millennials are the worst drivers. These are people between the ages of 23 and 38. The safest drivers are supposedly the Baby Boomers. These drivers, aged 63 to 72, were involved in the fewest accidents, averaging only 14 per 100 000 incidents.

The next safest group is Generation Z – youngsters aged 12 to 22. They were involved in an average of 44 accidents per 100 000. This is significantly higher than the older generation but not as bad as their parents, Generation X. Gen X – people in their forties and fifties – fall somewhere between Millennials and 'Gen Zee' when

it comes to road safety.

The study also shows that Millennials are involved in the highest number of alcohol-related accidents, while Gen Z is more aware of alcohol abuse with the lowest cases of drunk driving. Of course, it helps that Americans obtain their driver's license at 16 but can only legally drink alcohol at 21 (depending on the state).

However, Gen Z is distracted by things like text messages, while the Baby Boomers have the strongest focus on the road.... according to the statistics, anyway.

The conclusions – as with all statistics – are debatable because there are many factors that can play a role, such as the fact that older and younger people don't spend as much time on the road as Gen X and Millennials do.

What is worrying, however, is that some Millennials exhibit reckless behaviour when it comes to road safety.

You can see it in their drinking habits, disregard for traffic laws and lack of consideration on the road. 🚗



Heatwave, begone!

These days, it feels like there are only two seasons: one that's too cold and the other way too hot. And climatologists tell us *another* El Niño is on the way. Here are 14 products that will make your campsite a bit cooler this year.

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



LK'S CHAMPAGNE FLUTE SET

Bottoms up!

Steel is a good conductor of heat, and according to the second law of thermodynamics, heat spontaneously flows from a warm medium (your hand) to a cold one (your drink). This glass, made of stainless steel, should have been a bad idea scientifically speaking, but LK's was smart and gave the glass a double wall. There's air between the outer and inner walls

– a poor conductor of heat – so your sparkling wine stays colder for longer, especially if you also throw in an ice ball (see below). (*Cyril, you need to stop putting ice in your bubbly – Ed.*) The glass also has a lid with a spout for sipping. It prevents your Method Cap Classique from spilling when your speedboat is jostled by waves on the Vaal dam. The glasses are sold in a set of two, and each holds 150 ml.

Price R400 at Outdoor Warehouse.

EASYICE 6 BALL ICE TRAY

On the ball

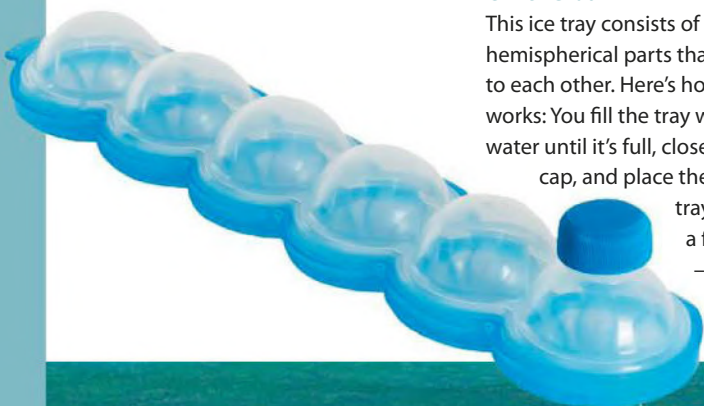
This ice tray consists of two hemispherical parts that attach to each other. Here's how it works: You fill the tray with water until it's full, close the cap, and place the ice

tray in a freezer – upright or

upside-down (it doesn't matter, as it's watertight). An hour or two later, you pull the two halves apart, and then you have six ice balls. The advantage of a sphere over a cube is that an ice ball has a smaller surface area than an ice cube with the same volume of ice, meaning that an ice ball will last longer in your drink before melting. The ice tray is made from

BPA-free plastic that meets food standards, and the cap is universal so you can replace it with a regular cool drink bottle cap if it gets lost. Smart! For an extra touch to your well-deserved gin and tonic, the manufacturer suggests placing herbs or fruits in each cavity before freezing the water.

Price R100 at Outdoor Warehouse.



GET YOURS HERE

Outdoor Warehouse, Cape Union Mart, Camp & Climb, Tentco, Seagull Industries, Adendorf, CJ Aircons, MacLaren Air

TENTCO BIG BOY CAMPING CHAIR

Breezy backs

Tentco's camping chair is made of 600D Oxford nylon with a 22 mm thick steel frame. Tentco guarantees its chair can carry 130 kg, which means even the Springbok prop Frans Malherbe can sit down in it with peace of mind. The reason we include the chair on this list is the mesh on its back panel and the twin

cup holders on the armrests. Settle yourself in this sturdy chair and feel a breeze cooling your back. Put LK's stainless steel bubbly glass in one cup holder and a mist fan in the other – both products are discussed on these pages – and stay cool all day. The chair weighs 4 kg and comes with its own carry bag. The dimensions when folded in its bag are 100 x 23 x 23 cm.

Price R820 at Camp & Climb.



MIST FAN

More than a fan

This device combines a water bottle with a fan. You unscrew a cap at the bottom of the bottle, fill the bottle with water and ice cubes, and screw the cap back on tightly. Now you turn on the fan and occasionally pull the trigger that pumps ice-cold water through a spray head behind the fan's blades. The

mist fan emits a fine spray that reminds one of cold fog rolling in over the sea in the morning. The fan operates with two AA batteries (not included) and has a cord you can wrap around your wrist or hang from your tent's roof. The fan is available in four colours: red, green, blue, and pink – one for each family member.

Price R170 at Camp & Climb.



TRAIL BOS PORTABLE FAN

Cool and fly-free

This fan's blades have a diameter of 25 cm with two speed settings. The fan pushes a large volume of air around – enough to keep pesky flies attracted to your sweat off your body. You can plug it into a 12 V cigarette lighter socket (it comes with a 1,8 m power

cord), but it can also take eight D batteries (not included) if you want to make it fully portable to take to the beach. It draws 8,5 W at the highest speed setting and 6 W at its slowest. The fan has an adjustable stand if you want to set it up and blow the wind upwards, but it also has a hook if you'd rather hang it from your tent's roof.

Price R500 at Outdoor Warehouse.



TENTCO EXTREME 90L COOLER BOX

Surf and turf

As the name suggests, this cooler box is a bit on the extreme side. It's actually intended for serious anglers looking for a wheeled cooler box they can pull from a parking lot to a harbour wall where they pull out sizable fish like stumpnose or shad. The lid has an engraved ruler specifically for this purpose. You can, of course, use this large

cooler box for any purpose, as Tentco says its cooler will keep ice frozen for up to a week depending on how often you lift the lid. The lid can be locked with padlocks, and there's a drainage plug at the bottom. All metal parts, including the bottle opener, are made of stainless steel that won't rust. As Tentco is a South African company, you can easily get parts for this cooler box if something goes wrong. Yes, it's certainly not the cheapest, but consider it a family heirloom.

Price R4 900 at Camp & Climb.



GEAR



NATIONAL LUNA 12 KG ICE MAKER

Eish...

This ice maker only works with 220 V, so you need access to the national grid. However, you can get by with a battery provided you use a pure sine wave inverter with a power delivery rating of at least 1 000 W. The machine's casing is made of stainless steel, and there's a panel on its front that indicates if its water level is low and its ice bucket is full. You can set the ice maker to make small (20 x 25 mm) or larger ice cubes (25 x 30 mm) – we say "cubes," but they are more pellet-shaped. The tank holds 2,2 ℓ water, and the ice bucket is large enough for 700 g of ice. If you let it run day and night, it can make up to 12 kg of ice within 24 hours provided the ambient temperature stays below 43 °C. It weighs 7,8 kg, and its dimensions are 242 x 358 x 328 mm.

Price R3 000 at Outdoor Warehouse.

NATIONAL LUNA 45 LEGEND FRIDGE/FREEZER

Travelling cold room

As you can deduce from the name, this fridge/freezer has a single compartment with a volume of 45 ℓ – or 45,3 ℓ, to be exact. Inside the single compartment are three baskets that hold enough provisions for a long weekend. We like the Legend 45 because its weight of 22 kg and dimensions of 634 x 480 x 392 mm make it small enough to fit in a sedan car's boot, but not so small that it's almost pointless. In terms of

its electricity needs, it can work with 9,5-31,5 V direct current (DC) as well as 100-240 V alternating current (AC). This means you can use anything from a motorcycle to a truck battery as well as American and local electrical currents. All of National Luna's new fridge/freezers now have an app for your phone that communicates with the appliance via Bluetooth so you can check while on the move that everything is still working 100%.

Price R10 800 at Outdoor Warehouse.



BESTWAY FAMILY FUN INFLATABLE POOL

Let's dive in!

With dimensions of 213 x 206 x 69 cm and a volume of 575 ℓ, this pool is large enough for two adults and one child – perhaps two – to splash together, yet it folds up tiny so it doesn't take up much space in your vehicle's boot. It has two

seats, two built-in headrests, and two cup holders. The pool is made of thinner polyester – that's why it folds up so small – and is therefore not suitable to stand for years in your backyard. It's rather intended for a couple of summer holidays in the shade of a tree or gazebo.

Price R1 100 at Seagull Industries.

FALKSON BUSH GAZEBO

A roof over your head

Falkson's gazebo is 3 m long, 3 m wide, and 2,2 m tall, which is big enough for a table with six to eight seats or an inflatable pool such as the one above. Falkson says it will take you about 10 minutes to set it up, and its 320 gsm ripstop fabric and 22 mm steel will stand up to harsh weather. The gazebo weighs 20 kg, and its dimensions zipped in its carry bag are 130 x 20 x 20 cm. The fabric is UV, mold and mildew resistant, and you can also buy side sails with windows for R1 178 and door sails for R887 from Falkson.

Price R3 650 at Falkson.





TENTCO REFLECTO REFLECTIVE COVER

Shining star

The African sun is unforgiving, and even if your caravan has a white roof or your tent has thick canvas, a reflective cover is often necessary to stay cool. Tentco's Reflecto covers are available in various sizes ranging from 3 x 3,5 m to a long 8 x 3,5 m as shown in the photo here. The material is UV resistant and treated against mold and mildew. It's a blessing if you venture into the Karoo or Kalahari at their hottest.

Price R2 160 at Tentco.

MACLAREN AIR ROOFTOP AIR-CON

Grace from above

This 12 000 BTU air conditioner (BTU stands for British Thermal Unit) draws 3,5 kW of electricity and is designed to be mounted on top of your caravan or motorhome's roof. The 12,000 BTU is strong enough to cool a room of 40-50 m² – more than enough for a regular caravan. The outdoor unit on the caravan's roof (the heat pump) has

a shell made of ABS plastic that can handle the African sun, while the indoor unit against your caravan's ceiling (pictured here) has three speed settings. The indoor unit also has mood lighting and is flat so you won't easily smack your head against it. The device can also warm your caravan if you go camping in cold weather. The price below excludes installation.

Price R36 960 at MacLaren Air.



INFINITY SPLIT AIR CONDITIONER

Bask in cool air

CJ Aircons, based in Germiston, Gauteng, has 20 years of experience with air conditioners. They install, among others, MacLaren Air's rooftop air-cons, but also split Infinity units like the one in the photo alongside. The compressor unit is often built into a caravan's nose cone with the fan unit in the caravan itself. With motorhomes and off-road trailers, the compressor unit is typically mounted at the rear. It was virtually impossible to establish a price

over the phone as a host of factors play a role. It is best to call Cindy at the number below. By the way, Cindy informed us that a shipment of split 12 V air conditioners is on its way, which is excellent news for campers who want to go camping without Eskom power or portable generators.

Price On request at CJ Aircons.

Contact 072 413 3899 (Cindy)

cj-aircons.co.za (send email through the website)

MAC AFRIC 3,2 KW GENERATOR

More reliable than Eskom

The country's power utility will be struggling for a long time yet. If you want to generate your own electricity, this device is worth a look. It weighs 48 kg, but there are wheels and a pop-up handle with which you can drag it to where you want it. This 212 cc generator generates 3 200 W, which is converted by a pure sine wave inverter into 230 V at 50 Hz and 13,2 A per phase. You can

plug sensitive devices including a TV set, camera battery chargers, laptops, and small air-cons worry-free into two USB and two household sockets thanks to the pure sine waves. Despite its generous power output, it runs relatively quiet at 65 Db – no louder than a typical vacuum cleaner. Its dimensions are 61 x 55 x 50 cm (larger than a microwave oven, but smaller than a bar fridge) and Adendorff gives you a one-year warranty.

Price R12 950 at Adendorff.



One-pan wonders

One-pan dishes mean less washing up and quicker cooking times over to a fire. You can, of course, also use a gas cooker and simply enjoy the fire for what it is.

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

COLA CHICKEN LIVERS

With brandy and Coke!

My aunt Elna Loubser taught me the trick of marinating livers in Coca-Cola before cooking it. I even defrost the livers in the cola when I've frozen them for camping. It might sound strange, but trust me... these livers are extra tasty!

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 500 g chicken livers, cleaned and cut into bite-size pieces
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Coca-Cola
- 2 thick smoked pork rashers or use 200 g bacon, chopped
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons cornflour
- 1 shot (25 ml) brandy
- 1 can (400 g) white beans, drained
- 1 can (400 g) chopped tomatoes
- roosterkoek, butter and hot sauce for serving

Here's how

1 Pour the cola over the liver and marinate for about 15 minutes – it makes the livers wonderfully tender.

2 Fry the rashers or bacon, onion and garlic together in one tablespoon oil until the mixture is fragrant and cooked. Remove from the pan.

3 Drain the livers and roll them in the cornflour. Season with salt and pepper, and fry the livers in the remaining olive oil until beautifully brown and crispy. Add extra oil if necessary.

4 Stir the brandy into the pan and cook the mixture until it's almost dry. Now stir in the fried bacon mixture, beans and tomatoes and heat until warm. You can add a sprinkle of fresh parsley if you have it on hand.

Drive & Camp says Buttered roosterkoek with a dash of your favourite hot sauce are perfect companions for this one.



CHILLI BEEF FOR TWO

Inspiration from the East

If you prefer your steak a bit more cooked, this delightful treat for two fits the bill perfectly. Of course, you can also flame-grill the steak, slice it, and then mix it with the chilli-and-onion sauce if you don't feel like messing around with bicarbonate of soda and cornflour.

Ingredients

(serves 2)

- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 400 g sirloin steak, fat removed and thinly sliced against the grain
- 2 tablespoons cornflour
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh garlic
- 1 teaspoon finely ground ginger (optional)
- 1 tablespoon tomato sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sweet chilli sauce
- 3 tablespoons low-salt soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon vinegar

Here's how

1 Mix the bicarbonate of soda well with the meat slices and marinate in a cool place or fridge for 30 minutes. This makes the steak very tender – a technique called velveting.

2 Rinse the meat and pat it dry. Mix the meat with the cornflour and season to taste with salt and pepper.

3 Fry the coated slices in 2 tablespoons oil in a hot pan until crispy and nicely brown. Work in batches if your pan isn't big to do everything at once.

4 Remove the meat, add the rest of the oil, and fry the onion until glossy. Stir in the chilli, garlic, ginger, and tomato sauce and fry everything together for another minute. Stir in the sweet chilli sauce, soy sauce and vinegar and heat the mixture until warm.

5 Add the crispy meat back into the sauce. Stir to combine and serve with rice or noodles. Cucumber salad or steamed green vegetables are great side dishes.

Drive & Camp says This dish cheats and dirties a second pot to cook rice, but you'll forget about the extra washing up once you've tasted it.

LEMON CHICKEN WITH GNOCCHI

Rich and creamy

This creamy campfire favourite is ready in a jiffy... and it's delicious!

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 350 g mini chicken fillets
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Grated zest and juice of 1 small lemon
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic
- a handful of baby spinach (or use 1 cup frozen peas)
- 2 cups weak chicken stock
- 400 g potato gnocchi
- ½ tub (250 g) crème fraîche or sour cream
- ½ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

Here's how

1 Mix the chicken with the olive oil and a sprinkle of salt and freshly ground black pepper. Then fry it in a hot pan until nicely golden brown. Remove the chicken, cut it into bite-sized pieces, and season to

taste with the lemon zest and juice. Set aside.

2 Stir the garlic, spinach and stock into the pan where the chicken was fried and heat to boiling point. Stir in the gnocchi and cook for 5 minutes or until al dente – the gnocchi should preferably be covered with liquid while cooking. If there seems to be too much liquid, you can reduce it later – remember, the gnocchi's starch will thicken the sauce.

3 Add the sour cream, lemon-flavoured chicken pieces and cheese to the pan and simmer everything together for another minute or two. Serve with extra black pepper – and I like to also drizzle a bit of good olive oil over.

Drive & Camp says If your sauce splits, eat by candlelight and don't sweat it. These flavours are meant for each other, even if they don't like to get warm together. You can also use long-life cream instead of sour cream in a pinch.



PORK STROGANOFF

Mushroom champion!

My secret weapon for an onion flavour without having to chop and fry onions is a sprinkle of ready-made crispy fried onion flakes. It works especially well if someone in your group doesn't like onions.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 600 g pork fillet
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 400 g chopped mushrooms
- ½ teaspoon finely chopped garlic
- A sprinkle of dried thyme
- 1½ cups weak chicken stock
- 200 g fusilli pasta
- ½ tub (125 g) crème fraîche

Here's how

1 Rub the pork fillet with 1 tablespoon olive oil and season well with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

2 Heat a pan until very hot and sear the meat until golden brown

all over and just cooked. Allow the meat to rest on a cutting board.

3 Fry the mushrooms in the remaining oil until brown. Stir in the garlic and fry for another minute. Now add the thyme and stock, and heat to boiling point.

4 Quickly cook the pasta in the stock until al dente. It's important that the pasta is covered in liquid, otherwise, it becomes chewy. Stir and keep an eye on it – eight minutes isn't a long time to watch a pan.

5 Stir the crème fraîche into the cooking liquid and remove from the heat. Slice the perfectly fried fillet into thin slices and mix it through the pasta or place it on top. Sprinkle onion flakes and a little fresh parsley over if you have it on hand and serve immediately.

Drive & Camp says We recently learned you can enjoy good quality pork fillet pink – then it's deliciously juicy, but feel free to go for well done if you prefer.





CHEESY FLAPJACKS

In a flap!

These delicious crispy flapjacks are pure indulgence!

Ingredients

(makes 10 flapjacks)

- 1 cup self-raising flour
- A pinch of salt
- 1 extra-large egg
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup fresh spinach (or use a mix of soft herbs like mint, fennel and parsley, chopped)
- 200 g mozzarella, cut into 1 cm cubes
- Sunflower or canola oil for frying

Here's how

1 Whisk the flour, salt, egg and water together to make a medium-thick batter. Stir in the spinach and cheese cubes.

2 Heat 2 cm of oil in a deep pan or flat-bottomed potjie until warm, but not too hot. You want the flapjacks to be cooked

through before the outsides get too brown.

3 Test a drop of batter: if the oil starts to bubble, you can start spooning in the batter to form the flapjacks. Don't overcrowd the pan and remember, the oil tends to get hotter as you go – so keep an eye on the heat.

4 Fry the flapjacks until golden brown all over and then drain on kitchen towel. Repeat until all the batter is used. Enjoy them warm while the cheese is melted.

Drive & Camp says You can make these flapjacks without the fresh spinach or herbs and instead stir in a pinch of dried herbs or use chopped frozen spinach. Just make sure it's properly defrosted and squeeze out all the moisture.



GOLDEN SYRUP DUMPLINGS

Sweetly syrupy

My friend Deon de Goede sent me the inspiration for this recipe by Sarah Brown on Instagram. When I saw it, I knew it was the perfect one-pan dessert!

Ingredients

(serves 12 with ice cream)

- ¼ cup butter
- 1½ cups self-raising flour
- 1 tablespoon golden syrup
- ¾ cup milk

FOR THE SYRUP

- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup golden syrup
- ¼ cup butter
- 2½ cups boiling water

Here's how

1 Rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs (you can also grate the butter into the flour). Stir in the milk and golden

syrup to form a thick batter.

2 Melt the ingredients for the syrup together in a deep pan and let it simmer gently.

3 Drop spoonfuls of batter into the syrup to form the dumplings. Simmer the dumplings for 20 minutes over medium heat until cooked. Stir carefully now and then, ensuring all dumplings are dipped in the sauce. Turn them as needed and make sure the syrup doesn't catch and burn. Serve with ice cream and/or custard (both for me, please!).

Drive & Camp says It's crucial to use a fireproof pan that's deep enough to simmer the pudding. We used the Jan Braai 28 cm carbon steel pan from Woolies.

go! Drive & Camp

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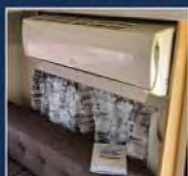


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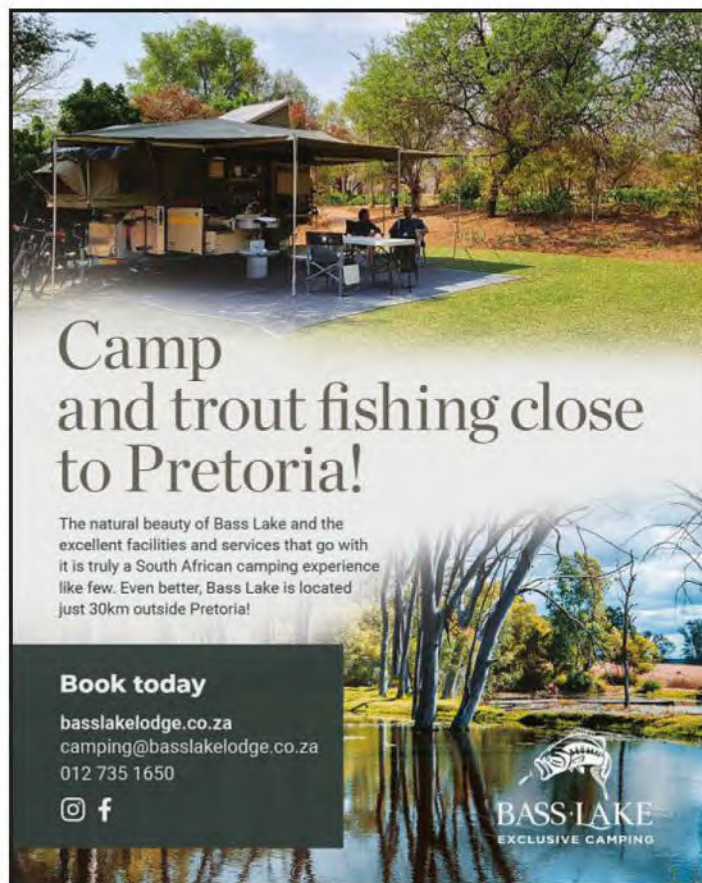
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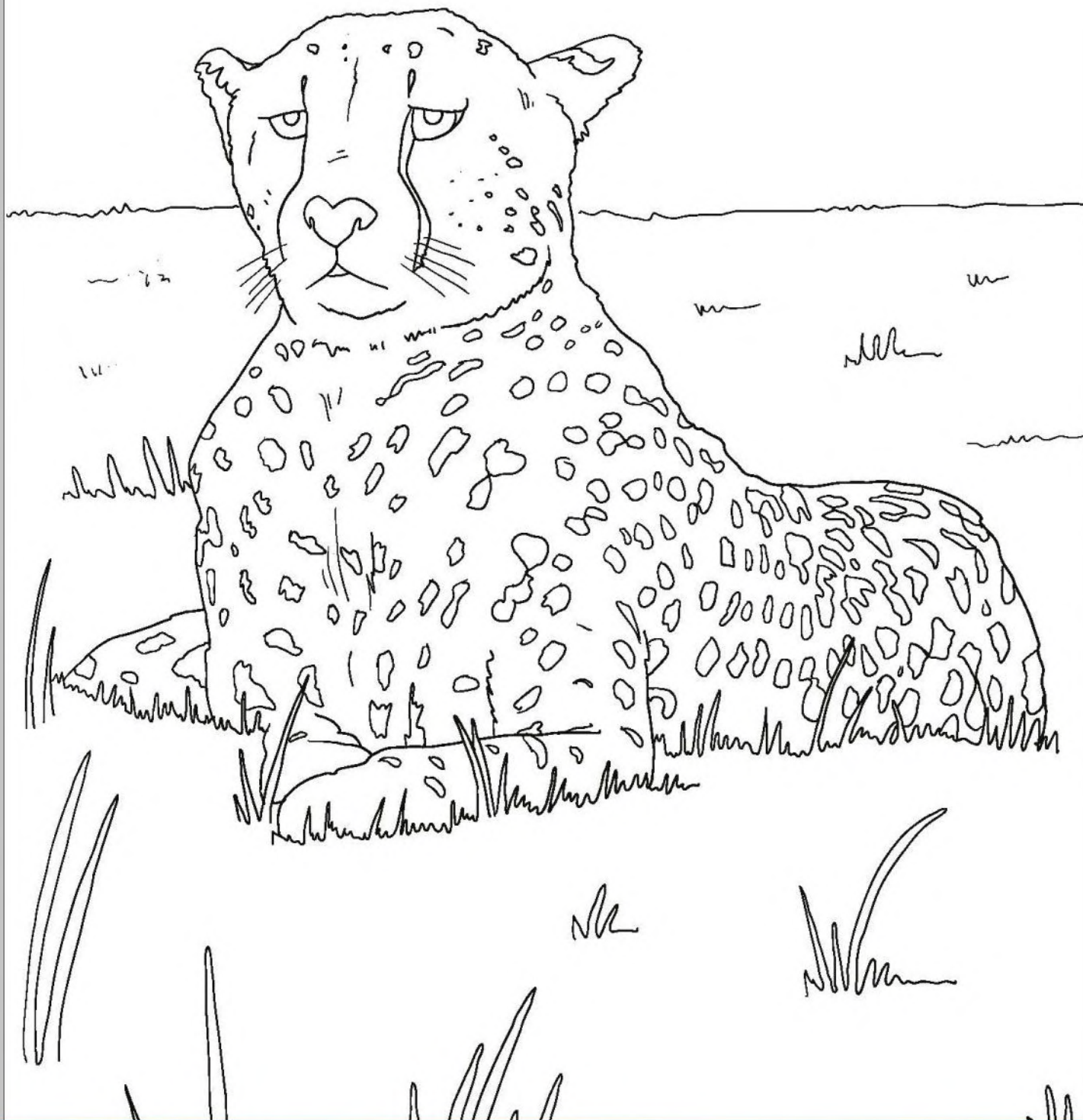
BASS LAKE
EXCLUSIVE CAMPING

Clara Potgieter from Vereeniging has won a cooler bag worth R220 for her correct entry in our October-November 2023 issue. Congrats, Clara!

The previous issue's solution is on page 110.

				Camp site in KZN (6,5)	Battering device	Niobium (symbol) Paradise	Scoundrel	Gravel road near Sutherland (6,4)				
				Braai		Apply gently		Casual attire				
				Arts degree		Maraud						
Defender		Alcoholic drink		Hindered					Insect egg		Rice field	
District		Bikini top		Farm structure					Can		Guitar part	
					Radon (symbol) Crimson		Part of the eye Key					
Cabinet							Set alight					
Period of time												
				Comply with			Whirl				Cadmium (symbol)	
				Patron			Male swans					
Afternoon rest period		Utilised					Mollusc			Heaven (literary)		
		Self-esteem										
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Silver (symbol)			United States (abbr)	Chromium (symbol)		Indefinite article	Senior (abbr) II					
Compass point								Decree				
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						Place Perform						
				Helper				Tortoise				
				Liver spread								
Town in the Western Cape		Ponder	Postpone					Cargo				Type of fish
		City in Israel	Swamp					Rest on a chair				
						Dal segno (abbr.)		Bowl over			Southeast (abbr)	
Calmed							Hectare (abbr)		Hello (short)		In order to	
Wall shelves												
					Strewn							

Colour in

**COLOUR IN**

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

WORD SEARCH

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

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

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

MAZE

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

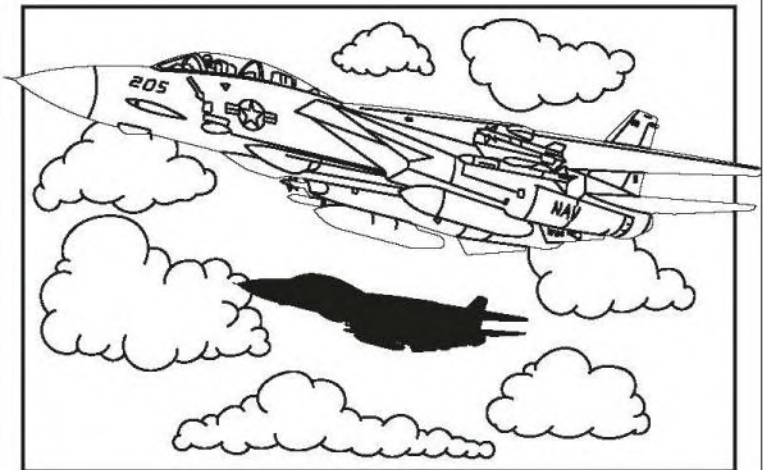
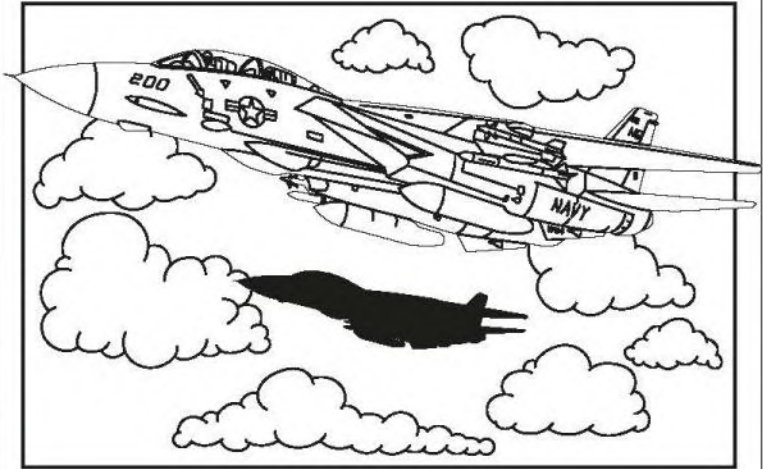
Word search

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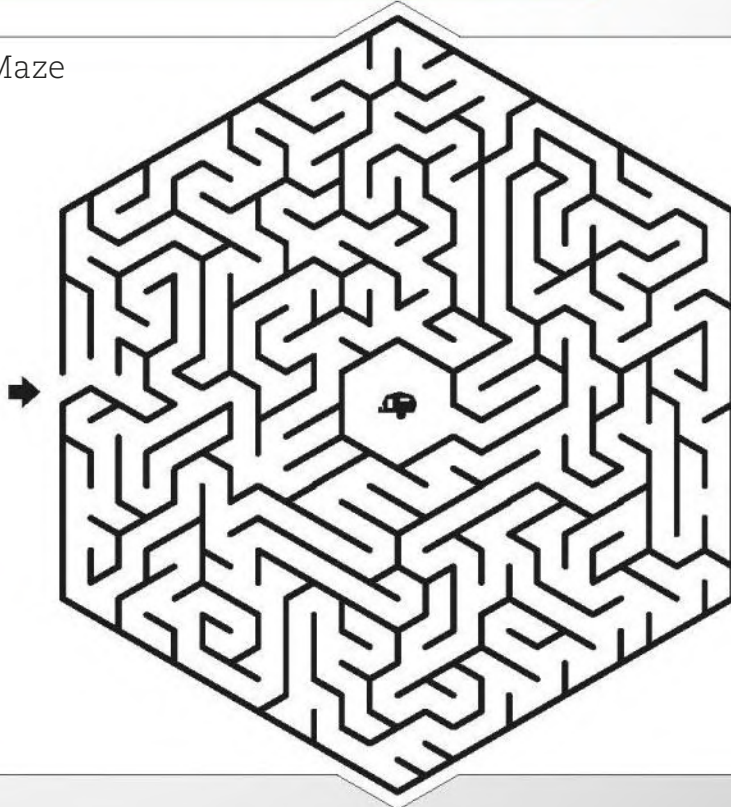
2 FAMOUS PAINTERS

Vincent van Gogh	Gustav Klimt	Édouard Manet
Leonardo da Vinci	Auguste Renoir	John MW Turner
Pablo Picasso	Jan Vermeer	Salvador Dali
Michelangelo	Paul Cezanne	Henry Moore
Claude Monet	Edvard Munch	Camille Pissarro
Frida Kahlo	Paul Gauguin	Eugène Delacroix

Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts



FOXES (*VULPES VULPES* LINN)

- With the exception of Antarctica, foxes live all over the world and thriving in all kinds of habitats.
- The fennec fox is the smallest species while the red fox is the largest fox species and most well known.
- Their size varies from 57,6 cm to 106,5 cm, which includes their bushy tails, depending on species.
- Though they have more of a feline appearance, foxes are actually part of the canidae family, making them closer related to dogs, coyotes and wolves!
- They are the only kind of canid in the world that has retractable claws – just like cats!
- Foxes are vocal, from sounding like a dog barking to a woman's scream when scaring away predators.

Be mindful of these mistakes

Here are the three biggest overlanding mistakes consistently being made by newbies and seasoned travelers alike, says **Mic van Zyl**.

I consider myself to be more of an overlander than a hardcore 4x4 enthusiast. I have a very capable and reliable 4x4 vehicle that has been kitted out to allow me to sleep, eat and perform ablutions far away from any civilisation in the wildest parts of nature – in safety and relative comfort.

I have battery and solar power to ensure my food stays fresh and that I have ample lighting for campsite evenings. I also have recovery equipment to get me out of most situations on the odd occasion that my common sense lets me down.

As the head of one of the countries' leading 4x4 companies, I have the privilege of dealing with like-minded customers all the time. Notwithstanding my fair amount of knowledge on the subject, I am grateful that I learn something new almost every single day.

Most customers however do not have this privilege as they are only in "overlanding mode" a couple of times a year. Here are the top three mistakes I see constantly made by new and even seasoned 4x4 overlanders.

1. Failure to do a shake-down run of your newly built overlanding vehicle or any new additions and modifications.

This is the most common mistake I see. Newly completed vehicle builds or upgrades on existing vehicles should be tested before embarking on your major, expensive overlanding tour. Finding problems while on tour could spoil your holiday and that of your fellow tour buddies. It's better to find out about an issue close to home with ample time to fix it before your big trip.

I always pop away for a weekend close to home and test everything before I embark on a long trip. This is especially true for electrical systems installed or worked on just before a big trip. An electrical system that is not working properly may cause refrigeration and lighting to not work properly resulting in spoilt food and camp site darkness. If the malfunction is more serious, you may even end up with a vehicle on fire.

2. Choosing the right vehicle.

A vehicle purchase is second only to a home purchase, yet I am astounded at how many overlanders get it wrong initially. Building a successful overlanding rig starts

with the type of vehicle that you need to base your build on. Some vehicles look like they would be great for overlanding, but in reality, they may not always suit your requirements.

Good 4x4 off-road vehicles such as the Jeep Wrangler, Toyota FJ Cruiser or Suzuki Jimny are not necessarily good for long distance, family-based overland travel. The type of vehicle you choose must be guided by the size of the traveling family as well as the ultimate requirements at camp at the end of a long day's travel.

Your intended destination may also play a role in what type of sleeping accommodation would be required such as ground tents vs roof-top tents. The vehicle fuel type and fuel range are something to consider should you be traveling in areas where fuel availability is a problem.

3. Over-outfitting your vehicle.

There is a fine balance to be reached with an overland vehicle build when it comes to what to fit and what to leave off the list.

Space and weight are two issues that need constant attention. Vehicles have a GVM limit to be adhered to and available space is pretty much dictated by the type of vehicle chosen.

From experience I can confidently state that very few vehicles start out perfect first time out. I have come across many people at camp sites with brand new overland vehicle builds that realise early on that not all is as desired. It is always my advice to start out with the very basics and build on that with every passing trip.

This is your best chance to make your overlanding vehicle just as you want it and to avoid spending money on unnecessary gear or equipment. A vehicle setup that works well will ensure maximum enjoyment of your overland travels.



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How do you protect yourself?

Three incidents of caravan manufacturers and dealers biting the dust under questionable circumstances has him pondering the future of the industry, says **Neels van Heerden**.

The liquidation of Tygerberg Caravans in 2022 was big news, especially in the Western Cape, and a previous issue of *Drive & Camp* discussed the closure of caravan manufacturer Leefek.

It seems that few people realize Leefek operated from the premises in Ga-Rankuwa where Jurgens Ci was once the largest manufacturer of the most well-known caravan brands.

Leefek's management cited its reasons for the closure in a press release, blaming, among other things, an unfavourable business climate that hindered sustainability. I, however, heard speculations about alleged "creative" accounting, and that caravans were sold for much less than the established retail price on online sales websites.

Last year, a third shock came when Kennis Caravans in Roodepoort also pulled its tent pegs after a 53-year presence in the camping industry. It was astonishing news for me that such a well-known brand, synonymous with the sale of second-hand motorhomes, among other things, also succumbed.

Investigative journalist Devi Govender, who initially became known on *Carte Blanche* for her bloodhound ability to sniff out fraudsters and their malpractices, revealed the story behind Kennis's demise on her programme on 16 July 2023.

She conducted interviews with campers who, in good faith, entrusted their camping gear and motorhomes to Kennis to sell on their behalf. Kennis privately sold caravans and an expensive motorhome – often for cash – but the legal owners did not receive their money. The owners claim the directors pocketed the money. These allegations are similar to the alleged sales practices practiced at Tygerberg Caravans.

Devi visited the private homes of Kennis's two directors and noted that they certainly looked affluent. The owner of the well-known and reliable service provider Venture Tents believes that Kennis's directors should be jailed for fraud, as he was not paid for many services. He had to write off tens of thousands of rands in invoices.

“

These case studies leave a bitter taste in one's mouth...

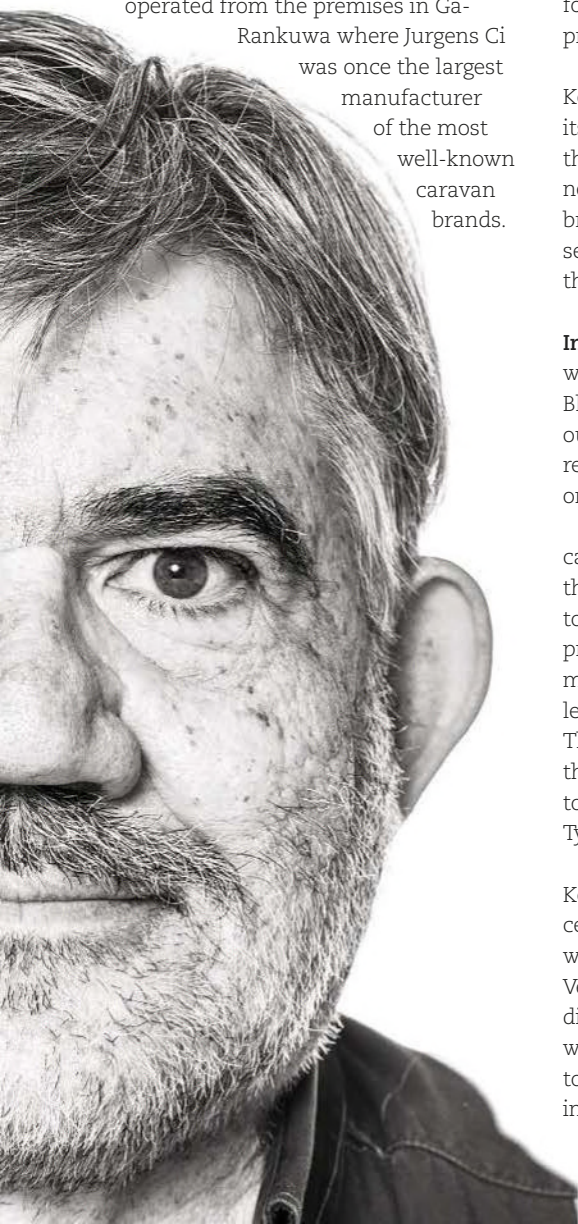
”

A lawyer specialising in liquidations believes these owners will receive little after liquidation. The directors' legal representative tried to persuade the original owners by letter to withdraw the theft and fraud charges, promising they would receive their money after the liquidation was settled. The lawyer Devi consulted, however, stated clearly that liquidation is unrelated to the criminal charges of theft and fraud. Essentially, the liquidation process and the criminal proceedings are separate, and resolving the former doesn't impact the latter.

The programme also mentioned

hundreds of caravans destined to be sold at a liquidation auction in May or June 2023. It was an alleged attempt to dispose of inventory and generate cash. To my knowledge, however, the auction was cancelled.

One of Kennis's directors absolved himself of all blame, blamed his lawyer, and also used the excuse that the dealer was caught in unfavourable market. These case studies leave a bitter taste in one's mouth, and I really wonder how the honest and excellent manufacturers and dealers will henceforth protect their own image and reputation.



go!
Drive & Camp

Resort Guide

2024

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In our *Resort Guide 2024*, we've compiled all the information you need on more than 160 camping destinations to plan all your getaways for the year. It's never been easier.



The ancient art of braaing

A campfire can rightfully be declared compulsory in the campsite because without a fire, you're not truly camping, says **Leon Botha**.

As children, we blindly believed our parents: if you drink too much coffee, you'll get fleas in your stomach; if you swallow chewing gum, your intestines will knot up; and, yes, if you play with fire, you'll wet your bed. Today, we know these were just stories to scare us, although we still understand that you should indeed not play with fire. But a fire

remains a revered thing ... especially at the campsite.

You could consider the campfire as the cornerstone of the camping world – and this applies to young and old alike. Which child hasn't asked to light the braai at the campsite? Here I sit today, decades later, having lit more campfires than the number of summers anybody will see in a lifetime.

Just as those of us who grew up in a camping family developed a love for nature and the great outdoors, you quickly understood the value of a campfire. It's the focal point of everything happening at your campsite. It's one of the first signs that dinner is on its way – and not just any food, as you could argue that the braai might be even more important than the fire itself. One

cannot do without the other.

The braai fire also deserves all the praise for the smell of grilled meat. Who hasn't sat at home, with the neighbour's braai aromas wafting over the wall, and you practically inhale all the deliciousness in the air? Nothing beats the smell of a braai, although the aroma of morning coffee brewing is also not to be sneezed at.

Even though we live in a modern world, a fire dates back to prehistoric times. And in this regard, there's something remarkable about a fire. Even though humanity has barely spent a century in caravans, there is no comparison between the first caravans and today's super-luxurious ones. In contrast, your campfire is exactly the same as a fire from centuries ago.

A fire still only needs three basic elements to burn: oxygen, heat and fuel, which in our case is wood. Starting the fire has changed because those first fires were definitely not started with matches or lighters. Our ancestors had more of a struggle because they had to rub sticks together or strike rocks against each other in the hope of a spark.

Here, humanity has made noticeable progress (and let's include the braai grid there). Judging by what I see on television, the ancient braaiers had some kind of skewer contraption over the fire or just held a long stick with a piece of meat on the tip over the fire to cook it. Nevertheless, once the fire is going, the aim is the same as it was centuries ago.

If you want to learn more about your fellow campers without shaking hands and exchanging ideas, wait for the fire-lighting ceremony. You can easily spot your neighbour's relationship with their campfire. For some, it's second nature, like reversing with the caravan, but there's always someone in the campsite struggling with their pile of wood.

This poor soul will disappear behind a thick smoke screen later (and of course, the wind will blow it in your direction). His wife might stand nearby with a big lid to fan the fire – as if the wind isn't enough – but it just sends more billows of smoke into the campsite.

It's at this point that you wonder if they will go to bed hungry, or if they might resort to more drastic measures. You wait for someone to bring a can

of petrol, and in your mind's eye, you already see a huge "whoosh!" as they temporarily breathe life into their braai fire.

By the way, the last thing you want to do is complain about a braai spot. But a permanent braai has its frustrations. It's lovely to have one at your campsite, except it's not always in the right place. So, you must consider the braai spot first when setting up. And if the wind changes direction, you'll have to live with the smoke blowing into your caravan because the braai can't move.

Back to the neighbour's smoke: wet wood simply doesn't work, unless you chop the first pieces extra small – and then you have to know how to get the fire going and keep it that way. This is one of the main reasons why, if possible, I pack proper dry firewood when we go camping. The bags of wood are bulky and quite heavy, but it's a small price to pay for a decent campfire. In addition to the braai wood, I also pack another heavy, bulky item: my braai.

Over the years, I have lived in various homes, but one project was always part of it: building my own braai in a prime spot in the yard. Hopefully, they're all still standing today in three of Pretoria's suburbs.

Around 25 years ago, I received a very special gift. My late father-in-law, Koos van der Westhuizen, gave me a stainless-steel braai. My two brothers also got one each. That very braai still accompanies me on camping trips today and has covered thousands of kilometres. It has been to every corner of the country and in neighbouring countries including Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. That braai has turned woods of sekelbos and camel thorn into ash to cook a farm full of animals.

This is the one camping item that

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I have never forgotten at home, and I even take it along when there are braai facilities at the campsite.

So, I'm not too bothered if I arrive at a campsite, and there's no braai at my site because my faithful camping friend has come along anyway. This, of course, applies when driving to a campsite, but for articles, us travel journalists sometimes have to fly closer to a destination, where we then hire a vehicle, hitch a caravan, and head to the campsite. Then my braai has to stay at home. Fortunately, there's usually a good chance that the campsite will have a braai spot somewhere.

Then there's only one variable left to clarify: does the campsite's braai come with a grid? I have heard from several campsite owners that grids easily go missing, but a braai without a grid is only half a braai. So, you'll have to at least show up with a grid, which means you might as well bring your entire braai. (By the way, it doesn't bother me to braai on a grid that strangers used the previous night – the flames of the fire are a foolproof "disinfectant.")

At one campsite on the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, they rented out grids during our visit, and more recently, at another campsite in KwaZulu-Natal, we saw that the grids were actually chained to your braai spot. At more than one campsite, I've had to go and buy a folding grid to be able to use the half braai provided.

Whether you bring your own braai or stand next to the permanent skottel braai in the Kruger with its adjustable grid; maybe you've made peace with a communal braai spot that's some distance away... we should give the campfire the necessary recognition.

Let's raise a glass to a warmth that you only encounter in the campsite.

Long live the campfire!

...AND FINALLY

A snug bug for two

The Xbus is a charming electric vehicle recently launched in Europe – we love the look of its camping version.

German vehicle manufacturer ElectricBrands announced in 2022 that they were going to build a compact battery-powered van. This vehicle is now finally available to the public, and by the time you read this, there should be a bunch of them buzzing around Europe.

There are nine variants, including the camper van version you see here as well as single- and double-cab bakkie variants. All four wheels are driven by electric motors, and the standard 15 kWh battery provides a range of 200 km. However, there is provision for three batteries, totalling 45 kWh taking you as far as 600 km on a single charge.

The dimensions of the Xbus are 3 945 x 1 633 mm, and it stands 1 970 mm tall. Its ground clearance is an impressive 299 mm, and the torque is an equally impressive 1 200 Nm!

ElectricBrands says the 15 kWh battery charges from 10-80% within three hours when plugged into a standard household socket, while it requires under an hour with a fast charger. Its top speed is over 100 km/h, which means you can hit the highways.

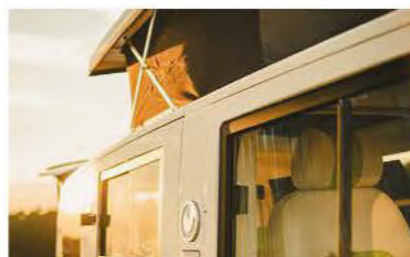
The camper van has a pop-up roof and a slide-out module lengthening the sleeping area. The double bed (210 x 130 cm) converts into a two-seater bench, and the compact kitchen has a cupboard with a sink, water tank, fridge and stove.

A screen for watching movies or gaming is mounted above the kitchen cupboard.

The battery can be charged through optional solar panels on the roof. ElectricBrands predicts it's conceivable to drive 600 km,



Have you spotted any whacky 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



camp for a few days while the sun recharges the battery, and then drive the 600 km back home.

Will this cute bus come to South Africa? The Xbus is sold in 31 European countries, including Ireland and the UK. Which means it is available in right-hand drive, just like in South Africa. And anything is possible if the

demand is high enough, right?

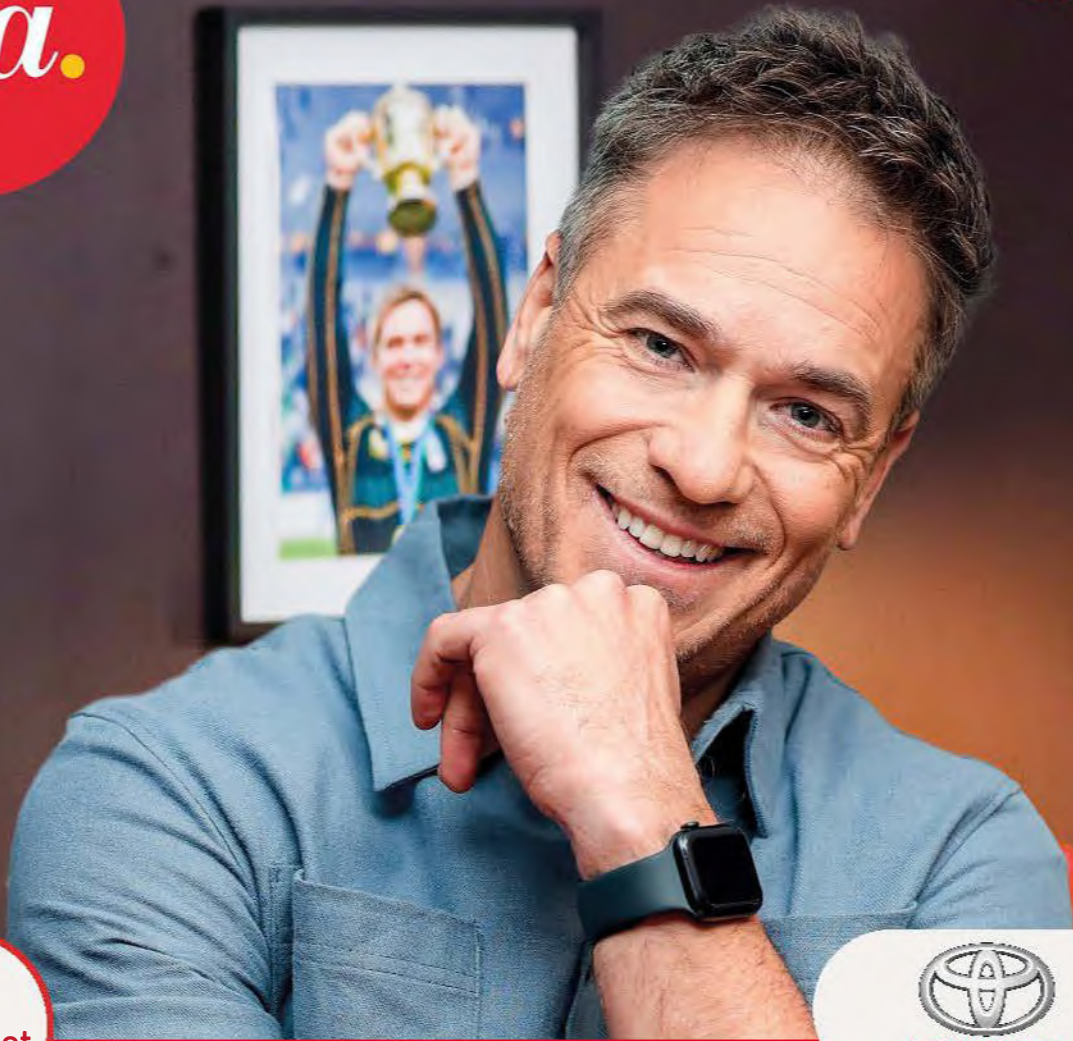
The basic bakkie version costs €18 260 (about R365 000), while the camper van you see here will set you back €29 450 (approximately R590 000).

Visit electricbrands.de and request that the Xbus be brought to local shores... or offer your services as an import agent.





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