

#44

CAMP FOOD SHREDDED AND DICED FOR FINE DINING

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2021 | ISSUE 44

go! Drive & Camp

Namibia

Circle the Brandberg and conquer Divorce Pass

Eastern Free State

Camping between a rock
and a far place

Dinokeng

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GEAR Cheerio, winter! | **4X4 PROF** Five facts worth remembering | **READER STORY** Tiny house migrates south | **NEW CARAVANS** Jaguar and Tuff Cats are upwardly mobile



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URBAN CRUISER

The true meaning of joy



“

Happy people are generally healthier, more successful, have better relationships and can handle stress and trauma better.

Now that sounds like exactly what many of us need at this time

”



None of us needs any convincing that we're living in a time of trouble. As I write this letter, our country is in the grip of a third COVID-19 wave, and to make matters worse, violence and looting have erupted, hurting our already frail economy even further. It's so easy, therefore, to get discouraged about the general state of affairs.

I don't believe it's healthy to sulk. I decided to read up a bit on what you can and should do to try and maintain a happy state of mind. I am well aware that one should 'count your blessings', but that's often easier said than done and I had to dig a little deeper.

I came across a talk by Sonja Lyubomirsky, a researcher of positive psychology, and while I don't know much about her, her message touched a nerve. She describes true joy as the experience of joy, contentment or positive well-being, coupled by a feeling that your life is good, meaningful and worthwhile.

But how do you get there? Lyubomirsky says her research shows that roughly 50% of your happiness is dependent on your genes and a further 10% is determined by your current circumstances. The good news is that you can take responsibility for the remaining 40%.

And so how do we make the most of that solid percentage left to us? Lyubomirsky has a long list of suggestions, but three caught my eye and I realised that this is exactly what we do anyway when we load the car, hitch the caravan and hit the road.

- **Spend time in nature** The closer you are to nature, the greater your experience of positive emotions, zest for life and joy.
- **Make time to sleep** Get your sleep, especially when you're on a getaway. Leave your watch at home and turn off that alarm clock. Enjoy an afternoon nap if you feel so inclined, without feeling guilty. There's research that says one extra hour of sleep a night is better for your mood than a pay increase at work.
- **Get more active** As with everything in life, balance is the key. It's not only about sleep. Get up and go for a walk or ride a bike with the grandkids. Have your heart beat a little faster and get the blood flowing through your veins. Lyubomirsky claims that some exercise is probably the easiest way to get a boost for a happier state of mind.

Happy people are generally healthier, more successful, have better relationships and can handle stress and trauma better. Now that sounds like exactly what many of us need at this time.

Stay safe!

Schalk

EDITOR

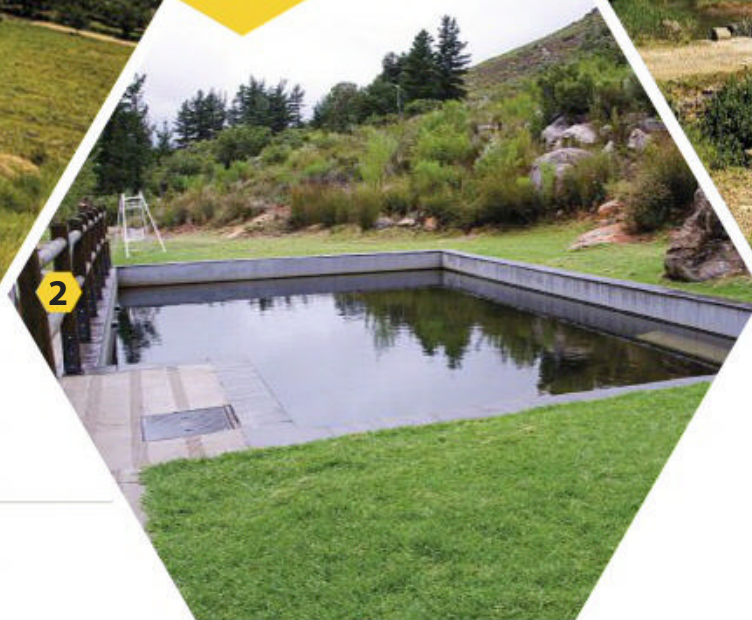
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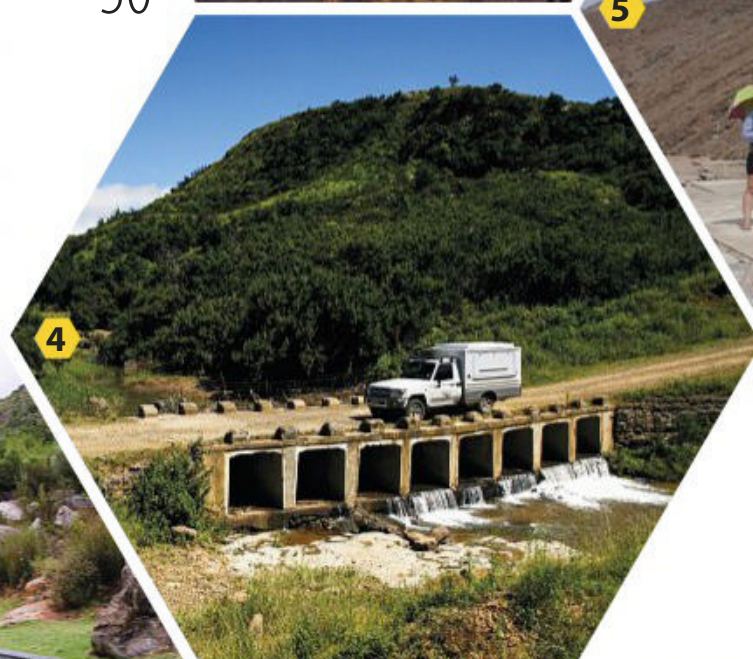
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4x4 DESTINATION 40

REEL & WHEEL 70

#44 MAIN COVER IMAGE – TOAST COETZER

“I took this photo where our route ran through the orange lichen fields near Cape Cross. That’s my friend Quinton van Rooyen’s Cruiser. The mountain on the horizon is Brandberg – still 70 km away! – and the ridge in front of that is the outer rim of Messum Crater. This road is very corrugated, but stick to the existing road as any off-road driving will damage the lichen field irreparably.”

Camera settings Fujifilm X-S10; f/5.6; 1/2 500s;
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SOCIAL DISTANCING. The gravel plains around the base of Brandberg, Namibia, have received very little rain over the past few years and virtually all livestock farming has ground to a halt. These isolated houses are near the entry point to the famous White Lady rock art site, which provides some employment to locals guiding tourists to the site, or by selling curios next to the road leading to the nearby town of Uis.

PHOTO **TOAST COETZER**



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All quiet beyond the border

My wife Alta and I were fortunate enough to hitch our caravan and join our longtime friends Dave and Lorna Rees for a four-week trip beyond the border.

We met the Reeses in Johannesburg, from where we entered Botswana to drive a large anticlockwise loop until exiting southern Namibia. We towed our Sherpa Tiny Rough Roader with our Toyota Fortuner, and Dave towed his Jurgens Exclusive with a Prado.

Most roads were fairly quiet, and at the majority of campsites we could choose where we wanted to set up our camp. The spots in the Caprivi – now called the Zambezi region – were amazing with lovely grass and thorn trees for shade.

It was quite sad to see all the empty chalets in the camps; at least half the stands were empty. The visitors looked as though they were Namibian enjoying their school holidays. Here we realised how badly the Covid-19 pandemic is affecting the tourism industry. I understand that at some of the camps, staff had to accept a reduction in salary.

I would describe the Namibian roads as pretty good, and where you do see potholes, they're usually a crew working on them. Over the past decade, quite a few new tarred roads have been built here, which means you can mostly stay on tar today if need be. Our trip was approximately 6 500 km and none of us even had a flat tyre. A good thing as the roads don't really have shoulders where you can pull over.

Botswana's roads are also good, though



they're quite narrow when you look at the amount of trucks on them.

Our Sherpa easily tiptoed over the roads. Initially, we decided to mostly stay on tar – probably about 95% of the time – as Dave tows an Exclusive. But the dirt road through the Etosha was not in the best condition after the rainy season. As if the dirt road wasn't enough, the Reeses forgot to lock the fridge door – you can imagine what their reaction was when they opened the caravan door with its contents lying all over the place.

Obviously, the Exclusive's cupboard doors were not built for this type of road, because some of them broke off. I think a tar road that's been patched to cover potholes has a similar effect to a corrugated dirt road on your caravan – helping things to break loose over time.

The arm of the stabiliser Dave used also broke just before Johannesburg – most likely also thanks to the conditions of the roads.

But trouble on the road is nothing new. At Vioolsdrif, the people in the queue ahead of us told us about cupboard doors breaking off in an off-road caravan, and then there was that time in Kasane when a caravan unhitched as they pulled off.

Looking back now, despite the trouble, it was a wonderful holiday – with such beautiful weather to sit around the campfire every night. Also, fuel is cheaper over there!

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Where are the other Hymers?

I recently purchased this 1963 Hymer Eriba Troll Tourer 9 caravan for R49 000. The caravan is in great condition and completely standard. Items such as the pillows, curtains, gas stove and sink look untouched. And there is actually a heater – if you look at the roof, there is even a small chimney for the hot air.

The previous owner says the caravan was first registered in the country in 1980. Its kerb weight is 713 kg and the gross vehicle mass is 900 kg. It's therefore also equipped with brakes.

I wonder how many of these special caravans there still are in South Africa.

I purchased the Hymer early this year and haven't taken it camping yet. I've had quite a few Slipstream pop-up caravans, but my back bothers me a bit – so I might sell it before we get to camp.

JOE VAN ASWEGEN
Moffat View, Johannesburg



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COMMENT OF THE MONTH!

On one of our Facebook posts, we talk about preparing for a long tour. **Cedric Pieterse** believes a big issue is weight.

"I've spent more than six years travelling through Africa. Most of the people I met who had trouble had overloaded their vehicle. So, for instance, a tyre burst or the chassis gave way. Even if you have the best suspension on your bakkie, the chassis remains the 'weak point'. Keep your vehicle as light as possible and rather save the money you might spend on unnecessary items."

Does this gold tarnish?

We've been privileged to camp at no less than 13 of the 19 SANParks campsites over the past 23 years – more than once at some of them as the service and facilities are great.

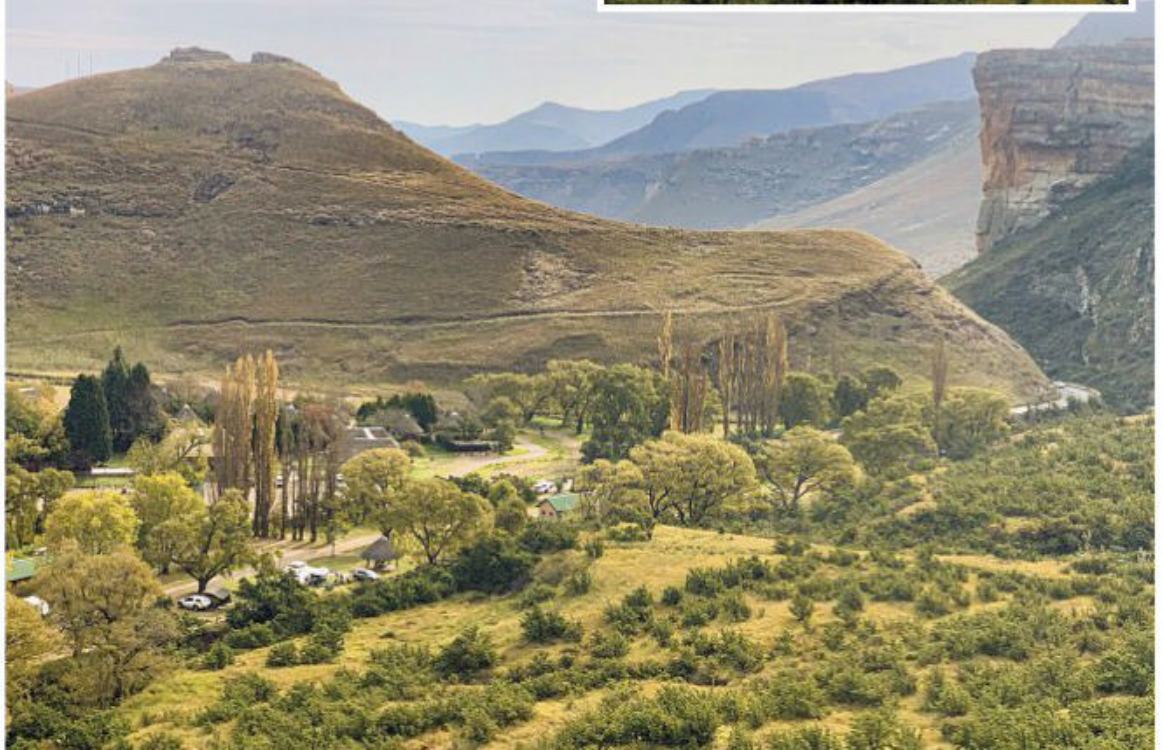
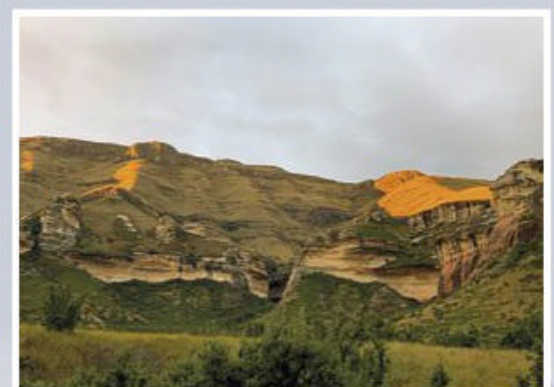
We recently made another detour to the Golden Gate Highlands National Park, but it was a slight disappointment. The campsite was untidy and neglected. We had to ask the cleaners to come and clean the braai area and empty the rubbish bin. We think the management of this park needs urgent attention.

The beauty of the northeastern Free State's scenery and mountains with all the unique sandstone

formations, however, remain special.

FANIE AND ERIKA HARTZENBERG
Pretoria

Do read our camping destination article on p 32 – Leon went for a walk in this part of the Free State. – Ed





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The good old days on the North Coast

In the seventies, camping on the KZN North Coast was quite different to today. You could even camp 'wild' in places with no amenities – it was not only free but also safe.

One such place was at the Amatikulu beach and the so-called 'flat rock reef' north of Richards Bay. Only a few people knew where to turn off the R102 onto the twin-track leading to this secluded beach. This was of course before the days of the N2. Getting to the beach meant serious business for your off-roader. I had an old Series 3 Land Rover Defender and my friend Mike Hutchons an even older 2A. Kevin Holland, another friend, had the latest Landy with its new six-cylinder in-line petrol engine.

The first thing you did when you arrived at the beach is open the bonnets to check the oil and water. Mike always arrived last and we joked they had to adjust his speedometer to "furlong per two weeks". (A *furlong* is around 200 m. – Ed). Then we used the Landies to drag stumps closer for that night's big fire. Those were the days when you could still drive anywhere on the beach. The fire burned all night – for braai meat and water for coffee.

We parked the Landies side by side with a tarpaulin stretched in-between them and that's where the women and children slept. The men slept next to the fire under the stars.

We fished, of course, and I remember a story that people will probably have a hard time believing. It was evening, and Kevin pulled a strange thing out of the water. We were angling in an estuary, but Kevin could cast really far. He had cast it over the mouth, to the opposite bank – without knowing it – where a farm pig had actually picked up the bait. And so he caught a pig!

Sodwana was just as popular. Those were the days when you would barely count four boats on the beach. The campsite was basic, with only pit toilets. You didn't really see off-roaders on the beach as you know them today, but there were beachbuggies and Mazda 1600 bakkies with 185 tyres. We regularly drove the 90 km from here to Cape Vidal, but you also had to find out when the navy was training so that you would not end up under fire.

Mabibi is about 30 km north of Sodwana and has some of the best

snorkelling spots in the country. We could still drive all the way on the beach to get there.

Things have changed a lot, and some days we're not sure if we're worse off today or not, but the North Coast is still one of my wife Marianne and my favourite destinations.

We have been avid travellers all our lives who like experiencing places, and we like to call ourselves the 'Crows of the Back Roads'.

My son Ruben once claimed that there probably aren't many children who grew up like him and his sister Liezel – in the back of a bakkie, on their way to somewhere.

HENRY TERBLANCHE
Assagay, Durban



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At sea, on land and in the air

Centipedes and Cape fur seals... from the Kruger to Cape Cross. Photos like these has you travelling back there in the blink of an eye.

By **Leon Botha**

Bon appetit!

On a quick weekend to get away from the pandemic-ridden world, Piet van Rensburg and his wife Amanda from Pretoria came across a bunch of greedy lilac-breasted rollers in the Kruger National Park.

"We camp with an Echo 3 off-road trailer and spent the night in Lower Sabie. That day we drove out on a dirt road east of the camp. There was quite a bit of wind when we came across a flock of lilac-breasted rollers feasting on centipedes. Some of

the lilac-breasted rollers even flew in front of the car for a bite before sitting on a branch next to the road again. I also saw one catching a chameleon. I took this photo with my long lens and a teleconverter, without needing to crop it afterwards."

Even if you visit the game park for the big animals, you'll still have many other special moments along the way – as Piet can testify.

As a general rule of thumb, it's wise to avoid using the centre

of a photo as a focal point, as it can be quite boring. But that also depends on what happens inside the frame...

This photo has plenty of other dynamic elements. You first see the insect curling out from the bird's mouth, and that immediately gives life to the photo – you know instantly that worm stands no chance.

The lilac-breasted roller looks a little odd as you don't see the entire bird. If you focus on this for a moment, the bird looks almost like a stuffed trophy

– while its eye is watching you closely.

The background plays an important role in a photo. The branches in the background are nicely out of focus, but you can still make out leaves – something that gives a spontaneous depth to the photo.

The two leaves on either side of the bird's head resemble the centipede's legs, and then you can't but look at the poor creature again, which in turn curls in defiance against the lilac-breasted roller...



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The cat that got the cream

She's not that keen a photographer, but after this special photo in the Kruger National Park, **Lynette Pretorius** from Vanderbijlpark and her husband **Martin** will be going back to the park to look for more special photos.

"I used my happy snap camera to shoot this leopard near Berg-en-Dal. The sun was behind us and its final rays caught the leopard before disappearing behind the ridges. That's when I could capture this moment. The pic was my phone's wallpaper photo for a long time."



Canon PowerShot SX740 HS

Seeing a leopard is more than special already, but to then get a photo of it! Yet there is much more to the picture than just the elusive leopard.

The composition is fantastic, and Lynette gets full marks for that. Even if the section with the leopard doesn't take up much of

the frame – less than a quarter of the total area – you know exactly where to look.

The tree stump in the top left corner does most of the work. When you're looking from a distance, you first see the two dark knots on the stump, and they're like two fat

fingers pointing to the leopard. Secondly, the stump on which the leopard lies is a repetition of the diagonal angle of the upper stump, but it is almost as if it acts like a bowl in which the leopard has settled.

The leopard itself is on the vertical third line – a safe

approach for composition. Its leg hanging down gives the photo a little more energy, and you're not sure if he's getting comfortable or on the verge of running away.

The green twigs on the edge of the frame can disturb, but it remains a striking photo.



Canon PowerShot SX540

Beach party

It is one of those attractions you absolutely must experience, says **Nikita van der Walt** from Emalahleni about

a visit to Cape Cross in the Skeleton Coast.

"In December 2019, I had an exceptional experience at Cape Cross. There are apparently over

200 000 Cape fur seals there: some of them lie around on the rocks and others swim in the sea. These myriad animals are quite noisy while baking in the sun. I made the photo black and white so that colour don't distracts you."

One can only imagine the noise! The photo is full of detail and you can gaze at it for a while. One of the strongest elements is the repetition of shapes, so you get a good idea of what's going

on in front of the lens. And because you see the Cape fur seals from front to back, it also adds depth to the photo.

The black-and-white aspect certainly provides greater impact. But in a busy photo, the silent winner is the seal who appears to be asleep in the middle – blissfully unaware of the surrounding noise. It is in fact the focal point, because once you see it, you can no longer overlook it.

SEND YOUR PICTURES

we might publish them here. We're not looking for traditional "prize winners", just regular pics that you love. Think of the type of pic you'd use as your Facebook cover photo; or something charming, such as kids warming their hands over a campfire. Whether the pic was taken with an expensive DSLR camera or a run-of-the-mill cellphone, if it's good enough for your family photo album it's good enough for us. **PIET VAN RENSBURG** wins a *Drive & Camp* camera bag worth R650 with his photo – congratulations, Piet!

Send your photos and contact details to leon.botha@media24.com



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TONGA

Wild Accessories brings a canopy update

The outdoor equipment manufacturer Wild Accessories adapted its range of canopies and says they are now even more dust- and waterproof.

According to owner Christiaan du Toit, the team at the factory in Silverton, Pretoria, are constantly looking for ways to improve their products. "We've been in the industry for almost four years by now, and you cannot rest on your laurels. That's why we're constantly looking for ways to improve. We also use the latest technology to make sure we give our customers not only value for money, but also peace of mind that they don't have to be nervous about the dirt roads in Africa. That's why our canopies are guaranteed for two years."

Wild Accesories canopies are made of lightweight aluminium and are rust resistant. A system that creates positive pressure inside the bakkie, coupled with a vented rear window, ensures you

don't need to worry about dust, and the waterproof solid hinges keep the wetness outside, where it belongs.

Unlike many standard canopies, the rubber seals on those from Wild Accesories sit inside the door and not on the body, which means nothing can damage the seal when you load and offload stuff.

Furthermore, they have a unique way of using the gas struts of the side doors – they sit high on the frame and low on the door. This, together with the placement of a stiffener, means that the door cannot but shut tightly, and is therefore more water- and dustproof.

Each canopy has large gullwing side doors plus a Hi Line LED brake light at the back, aluminium slide roof rails and keylike double action locks. You can also have your canopy colour matched to your bakkie.

Contact 012 771 7940 [wildacc.co.za](mailto:info@wildacc.co.za)
info@wildacc.co.za



TAKE CARE OF YOUR LEATHERMAN

– SO IT CAN TAKE CARE OF YOU

A dull tool doesn't necessarily mean you have to return your Leatherman. Sharpening its blade or giving it a proper clean might be all it needs. Here are tips from Leatherman SA on how to care and clean your Leatherman so that it never has to leave your side.

THE LEATHERMAN WARRANTY EXPLAINED

Any Leatherman multi-tool has a 25-year limited warranty (for tools purchased for personal use only), and Leatherman SA is more than happy to repair tools that don't qualify for the warranty, but broken parts will be charged for. Every now and then, however, returned "broken" tools don't need to be replaced; they just need some TLC. Leatherman SA will gladly service tools at a minimal cost, but first prize would be to protect and maintain your Leatherman at home to ensure that it's always ready for an adventure.

If you do need a repair or service, always send your tool directly to Leatherman SA instead of via a retailer. Click on the warranty link on our website (leatherman.co.za), complete and submit the warranty form and follow the courier instructions.

Please email trackingnumbers@awesometools.co.za to track your repair in our system.

MAINTAIN YOUR KNIFE/MULTI TOOL AT HOME

- Clean excess grime or dirt using water and a cleaning solvent. Avoid harsh detergents.
- Dry the knife completely with a cotton or chamois cloth to remove water spots, moisture and fingerprints.
- Spray or wipe down each joint of the knife with cleaning oil and spread it thoroughly over the knife's surface (including the handle). Trisol (gun oil) works great.
- Check your knife often for trouble spots. You may not know that you've missed a spot until it shows up as rust oxidation, and tarnishing is common with knives made of carbon steel.
- Remove any sticky residue with nail polish remover on a rag. Clean inside the knife with toothpicks, cotton buds and cotton swabs.
- Search "how to clean a multi-tool" on YouTube.

HOW TO REMOVE RUST

- Cut two slices of potato (skin and all). The slices must be large enough to cover both sides of the knife blade. Rub the potato slices on the blade for a few minutes.
- Pour ½ cup of baking soda into a bowl. Run a soft-bristled toothbrush under water and dunk it into the baking soda, covering the bristles well. Scrub both sides of the blade with the toothbrush for a few minutes.
- Wipe with a paper towel and repeat the cleaning steps until all the rust is removed.
- Add ½ teaspoon of light, general-purpose oil on both side of the blade. Wipe with a microfiber cloth.

CARE AROUND SALTWATER

- Before saltwater exposure, ensure that all the pivot points and the whole tool has been saturated with engine oil.
- After exposure, rinse in fresh water and shake it dry. This should be enough, but you can occasionally wipe the tool down with an oily cloth.
- Rust on stainless steel (normally light staining only) can usually be repaired with steel wool and engine oil.
- Awesome Tools doesn't recommend using spray-penetrating oils or products like "WD40" as they don't leave a protective oil film (a must in highly corrosive environments).
- Use a nylon instead of leather pouch because nylon pouches are machine washable.

BLADE SHARPENING

- Straight-edged blades can be sharpened using any standard equipment, including whetstones, rods, dry stones (diamond embedded) and various kits.
- Leatherman's standard sharpening angle for plain-edge blade sections is 32° (16° per side). Serrated blade sections are sharpened to 20° (one sided).
- Serrated blades need a sharpening system specifically designed to accommodate serrated edges to maintain the curvature of the serrations. Sharpen serrated blades only on the edged side. Sharpening the flat (back) side of the blade will cause the serrations to wear away, reducing the blade's effectiveness.

www.leatherman.co.za



Disco gets a new beat

The latest Land Rover Discovery – in its third iteration – was launched in early 2017. As is customary with vehicle manufacturers, the time has arrived for its first facelift after five years.

The 2021 model has new uninterrupted LED strips in its headlights that look more complete than its predecessor's LED daytime running lights. The front bumper's air intakes are slightly larger and the rear bumper's skid plate, that used to be faux metal, now matches the body paint.

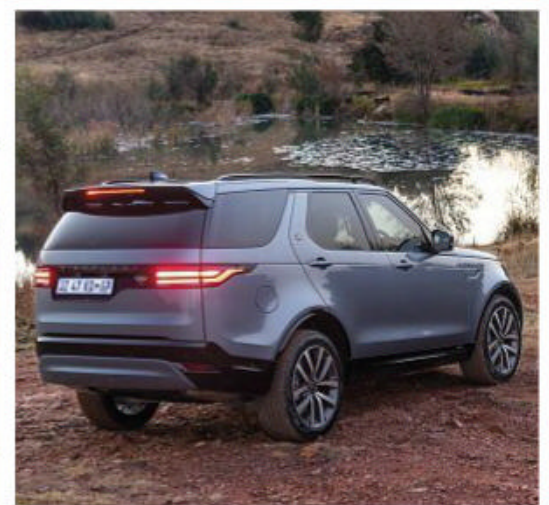
The license plate cavity in the rear hatch remains asymmetrical – designer Gerry McGovern insists it's the best place for a license plate – and it is now highlighted by glossy black plastic panel to drive Gerry's opinion home.

Inside, the touchscreen in the centre console has been replaced with a larger 11.4" screen with so-called Pivi Pro software that allows automatic updates using your home's WiFi. The Pivi Pro system uses a more powerful computer that responds faster to your commands, and where you previously had to scroll through multiple screens to get to the right function, the menu is redesigned so that a single tap of a finger should bring you the setting you want.

The previous steering wheel makes room for the same four-spoke version the Land Rover Defender has, and a number of buttons, including those for the air-con, have been replaced with new switches.

Speaking of air-conditioning: thanks to PM2.5 material that filters out dust particles, pollen and all sorts of organisms from the air, a road trip is made more comfortable for those who struggle with allergies.

The middle row seats have been redesigned so that passengers have more legroom, and the air-conditioning's air vents have been moved from the B-pillar to between the front seats where they can distribute cold or hot air more efficiently. The middle row passengers can also



suspend their tablets in useful mounting points on the back of the front row's head restraints – there are USB-A ports nearby.

The latest Land Rover Discovery gets Terrain Response 2 technology that automatically adjusts the vehicle to the road condition. There's no any need to use the controls to switch from road mode to sand mode – the Disco does this on your behalf (you can, of course, make the switch yourself if you want to). The computer also has wading depth mode that prepares the vehicle for deep water, but this you do have to activate yourself. Should you forget to turn it on and drive through a river, the Discovery will automatically brake to prevent engine damage.

And that brings us to the engines: there are two new 3 l six-cylinder engines. The petrol version – the P360 – has plenty of hybrid technology that uses a 48 V electric motor to support the internal combustion engine and thus saves on fuel and increases

performance. The P360 kicks out 265 kW and 500 Nm of torque and accelerates within 6,7 seconds from 0-100 km/h.

The D300 diesel engine generates 221 kW and 650 Nm and accelerates to 100 km/h in 6,8 seconds.

Prices start at R1 452 700 for the base model Discovery D300 S, while the most expensive diesel model, the Discovery D300 HSE R-Dynamic, will set you back R1 675 900. The cheapest petrol model is the Discovery P360 S which costs R1 487 600 and the flagship model, the Discovery P360 HSE R-Dynamic costs a hefty R1 710 900.

Visit Land Rover's website to build a virtual Discovery in your favourite body colour and load it with all the gadgets your heart desires. Once you're happy with your dream vehicle, simply press the 'Order' button and Land Rover will contact you regarding payment and delivery. Visit landrover.co.za for more.

GRILLING ON THE GO

Cook delicious meals and experience five-star dining wherever you are with the new Weber Traveler™ portable grill.

Just because you love the outdoor life, it doesn't mean you have to compromise on food. You can have your rugged adventures in nature and still enjoy amazing, versatile meals with the new Weber Traveler. Recently launched, this grill is designed for the grilling enthusiast who wants delicious food away from home.

Whether you're camping, picnicking or off-roading, the Weber Traveler's sturdy, compact design makes for a seamless experience – from setup to storage. Savour the journey, and travel with a taste of home, no matter where the adventure takes you.

THE DESIGN

The Weber Traveler grill reflects the signature design and high-quality materials characteristic of Weber products, including a porcelain-enamelled lid, cook box and cast-iron cooking grates. Porcelain-enamel offers superior heat retention and durability, while the cast-iron grates promote even heat distribution across the entire grilling surface to help grillers create evenly cooked food and that coveted, delicious sear.

KEY FEATURES OF THE WEBER TRAVELER INCLUDE:

- **Compact size:** The compact fold and overall design of the Weber Traveler grill make traveling and storage a snap. It takes up minimal space and easily fits in the boot of a compact car.
- **Versatile temperature range:** This broadens your food options on the road. The grill's low-to-high temperature range provides the ideal heat to sear steaks, grill juicy chicken and even bake muffins.
- **One-handed setup and fold:** The

Weber Traveler grill has an innovative, one-handed setup and assisted fold-down, and the grill is attached to the cart so you can get grilling in no time.

- **Automatic lid lock:** The grill's unique lid lock automatically latches once the grill folds.
- **Large grilling area:** It features a category-leading 2 065 cm² grilling area that can accommodate up to 15 burgers or 20 sausages so that the entire meal is ready at the same time.

EFFICIENT GAS SYSTEM

Weber engineers designed the Weber Traveler grill to utilise gas optimally. Based on internal product testing, engineers observed a cook time of up to two hours on a single gas canister.

The Weber Traveler grill also offers a patented, easy-to-use single burner design and a large side table with tool hooks to accommodate various cooking utensils. Additionally, the heavy-duty, all-terrain cart frame with rubberised wheels makes outdoor transportation of the grill over various terrains a breeze.

WHERE TO BUY ONE

The Weber Traveler grill is available for R9 999 from weber.co.za or from various retail and outdoor stores nationwide.

For more information on the Weber Traveler, visit weber.co.za

ABOUT WEBER

Weber-Stephen Products began perfecting grilling in 1952 with the invention of the revolutionary Weber® Kettle Grill. Decades later, Weber has proven its dedication to superior grilling by continuously innovating with new grills, techniques, and expertise, enabling its loyal fans to discover what's possible with Weber. The company's extensive portfolio of high-quality grills and grilling accessories has stood the test of time and helped countless grillers explore all the possibilities of grilling with Weber.



DISCOVER WHAT'S POSSIBLE



JAGUAR SABOR



Cool cat

Jaguar caravans are renowned for their off-road caravans, but with the Sabor, the company is headed in a new direction, says **Leon Botha**.

Have you heard of the Inkwe, Kovu, Zazu and Zaki? These are all existing models of Jaguar caravans, and all the names refer to big cats. But this is not where the similarity ends: all these caravans share the same pop-out folding bed (or two).

These types of beds have become the norm in many off-road caravans, but not all campers like them, because in the bush only a thin canvas separates you from wild animals.

One solution to this dilemma is a return to conventional caravan design. Here, the bed is inside the caravan with solid walls, but it retains the capabilities of an off-road caravan. Jaguar's answer to this is the Sabor.

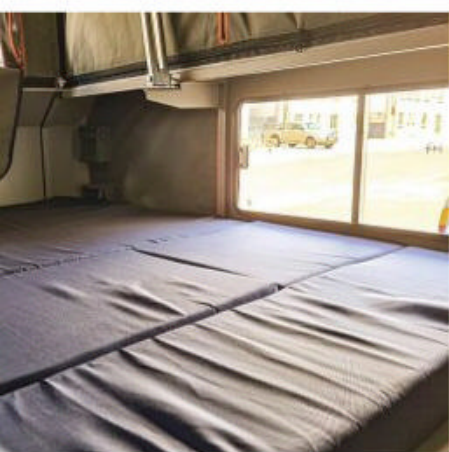
Up close

Besides sleeping safely inside the caravan, the owner of Jaguar,

Jacques Serfontein, thought of a number of important elements. The Sabor – named after a leopard in the animated movie Tarzan – fits into a standard garage, for example, and the chassis and hull are stainless steel. And, to keep the weight down, aluminium is used for the pop-up roof and door panels.

The door is on the left rear corner with the bed then left at the nose when you get in. In front of you, against the opposite panel, is a washbasin with the power box to the right of this, against the back panel. Here you can control the 230 V and 12 V circuits for the water pump, fridge/freezer, lights and solar panel. There is also a 230 V plug, a screen where you can see the battery's reading, and the control buttons for the geyser under the sink. At the very bottom is a sliding frame that





fits your cassette toilet.

Against the back panel are wardrobes (with hanging space).

Of course, the bed, which stands lengthwise and is slightly larger than a double bed, occupies a large section of the interior. But you can also convert it to form two benches with a tabletop in between.

The pop-up roof provides more than enough space above your head as the floor-to-ceiling height is a good 2 m.

As with most off-road caravans, the outdoor kitchen sits in the left panel. Here you have three doors: one above the wheel that folds down to become a worktop and leads to a cupboard in the hull, one at the nose where the fridge/freezer pulls out, and then another above the fridge/freezer with more storage space.

In the middle cabinet is a 230 V socket and a multi-plug. The fridge/freezer can be up to 90 ℓ in size, and at the end of its sliding frame sits the gas stove.

At the rear, diagonally below the spare wheel, there's a frame with space for a dishwashing sink and drying rack.

All in one

The Sabor is almost fully equipped and ready for the campsite. All you need to get if you like, is a fridge/freezer, an extra battery and side panels for the canopy. Standard items include: the fold-out table, basin, wardrobe, cassette toilet, LED lights with charging system for the towing vehicle, crockery for 6, a 270 ° awning, spare wheel, geyser and the scullery frame with its sink and drying rack.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Sabor
Sleeps	2
Length	4,3 m
Width	1,85 m
Height	2 m
Wheels	15"
Tare weight	1 100 kg
Load capacity	500 kg
GVM	1 600 kg
Standard price	R295 000
Contact	073 333 5554 jaguarcaravans.co.za
	jacques@jaguartrailers.co.za



R295 000

Jaguar Sabor

GVM 1 600 kg

From the competitors

Metal built off-road caravans for two without a fold-out bed, with a GVM of 1 600 kg or less that fits in a standard garage



R215 000

Adventure Xtreme Warrior

Has a steel chassis with an aluminium hull.



R295 953

Summit Karenga

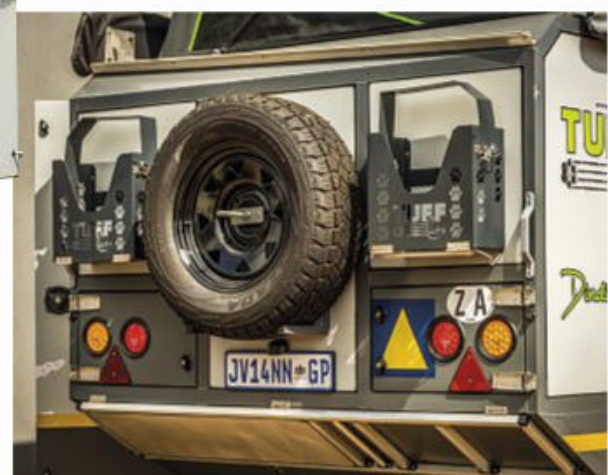
Has a stainless-steel chassis with an aluminium hull.



R368 000

Infanta Enkulu 1

Has a steel chassis with aluminium hull.



TUFF CATS DINDINGWE

King of all the jungles

The Dindingwe, the new flagship model from Tuff Cats, boasts the manufacturer's first fully built-in bathroom, says **Leon Botha**.



BOTH HERE AND THERE. It doesn't matter what type of campsite you visit, the Dindingwe will be equally at home in a caravan park and a wild camp. With its built-in bathroom you'll have an edge over other campers because you'll never have to wait in line for the loo, nor race to a stand close to the ablution block.

In South Africa, buyers can choose from a multitude of off-road caravans, but only a handful of them have a built-in bathroom. Tuff Cats has joined the club with its Dindingwe. A timely decision when you consider the COVID-19 pandemic. When you have your own private bathroom, you don't have to share facilities in the campsite.

But it's not just the bathroom that appeals. The outdoor kitchen and sleeping area are wonderfully spacious, and the caravan is perfect for a couple or even a family of four.

Pride of place

As with the other three Tuff Cats models – the Nzudzi, Shumba and Mbada – the Dindingwe has a galvanised chassis and an aluminium hull. All have

an indoor basin and space for a cassette toilet, and the three other models have a shower tent you pitch outside.

The bathroom sits in the nose of the Dindingwe and follows the diagonal lines of the A-frame. It has two doors: The one separates the shower and the other the shower and toilet. The entire shower cubicle is made of fibreglass. The shower head is an extension that's hooked to the ceiling. Both sides of the shower cubicle has a window that can open.

Die rest of the interior

The door is in the left panel at the back and has a mesh cover – an element that would be welcome on all off-road caravans. As you enter, there's a couch on your right that extends down the rear end

of the caravan, which can also serve as extra sleeping space. For families with two children, there's a suspended bed above the bottom one.

As with the Mbada, the main bed pulls in capsule form from the right-hand panel, but this one's bed is bigger. It is a queen-size bed (instead of a double bed) and you can sit upright on the bed. Opposite the bed, against the back of the outside kitchen, are all the interior cupboards (with hanging space next to you).

The vanity corner is at the foot end, with a large mirror above the worktop.

External features

Besides the door where you enter, there are another six other doors in the left panel that all form part of the outdoor kitchen – with everything from grocery shelves to space for the fridge/freezer and stove.

The fridge/freezer pulls from of the hull on

a sliding frame as per usual, with the microwave in also in one of the shelves. The two-plate gas stove is not mounted on the worktop. It pulls out over the top of the worktop on a sliding frame.

There's a frame with a sink and drying rack – with space for two plastic sinks – that pops up at the tail end, and here you also have a tap with cold and hot water in the small cupboard above the frame.

The pop-up laundry line is attached to the side of the bed capsule and you can open it as soon as the bed is pulled out.

Wat comes standard?

Standard items include the following: three 17" wheels (two alloy, and the spare wheel with its steel rim); a 120 l water tank with pump; crockery drawer with six plates, six cups, eight glasses, four wine glasses and four dessert bowls; a Hansen gas/electric geyser; a 200 Ah lithium

battery; a smart power system; indoor bathroom; L-awning; two-plate gas stove; pop-up laundry line; and 28 l microwave oven.

Among the extras are side panels for the awning (R18 055), a 160 W-12 V solar panel with wiring and clamps (R1 725), movers (R22 425), 12 000 BTU split unit air-conditioning (R12 650), sound system (R12 075) and a Tuff Cats duvet cover (R2 128).





R495 899 *

TUFF CATS DINDINGWE

GVM 2 000 kg

From the competitors

Off-road caravans with an inside bathroom



R408 304 *

Imagine Cruiservan 4

GVM 1 750 kg

Galvanised chassis with an aluminium and fibreglass hull.



R495 000 *

Gecko Extreme

GVM 1 900 kg

Galvanised chassis with an aluminium and fibreglass hull.



R650 000

Infanta Enkulu 3

GVM 1 900 kg

Galvanised chassis with an aluminium hull.

* Standard price

SPECIFICATIONS	
Model	Tuff Cats Dindingwe
Sleeps	2-4
Length	5,5 m
Width	1,98 m
Height	2,7 m
Wheels	17"
Tare weight	1 160 kg
Load capacity	840 kg
GVM	2 000 kg
Standard price	R495 899
Contact	083 609 6947 tuffcats.co.za jaco@tuffcats.co.za

The 300 has landed

The latest Toyota Land Cruiser has just arrived in South Africa – and many South Africans are licking their lips, says Cyril Kloppe.



TOYOTA LAND CRUISER 300

The international launch of the Toyota Land Cruiser 300 took place on 10 June this year via a video broadcast on YouTube. Ten days later, the first vehicles were sold in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, and by the time you read this, a cargo ship with the first consignment of Land Cruiser 300s will have moored in Durban's harbour.

The 300 series is built at the Yoshiwara plant in Japan – it's always a good sign when a product is manufactured in its country of origin.

What do we have here?

The 300 Series is the first new Land Cruiser since the 200 Series made its appearance in 2007. At the time of going to press, Toyota was still cagey with the exact details, but what we do know is that the 300 series will be sold in South Africa with two engine choices.

The 3,5 l V6 petrol engine (series number V35A) comes from the Lexus LS 500, where it has already earned a reputation

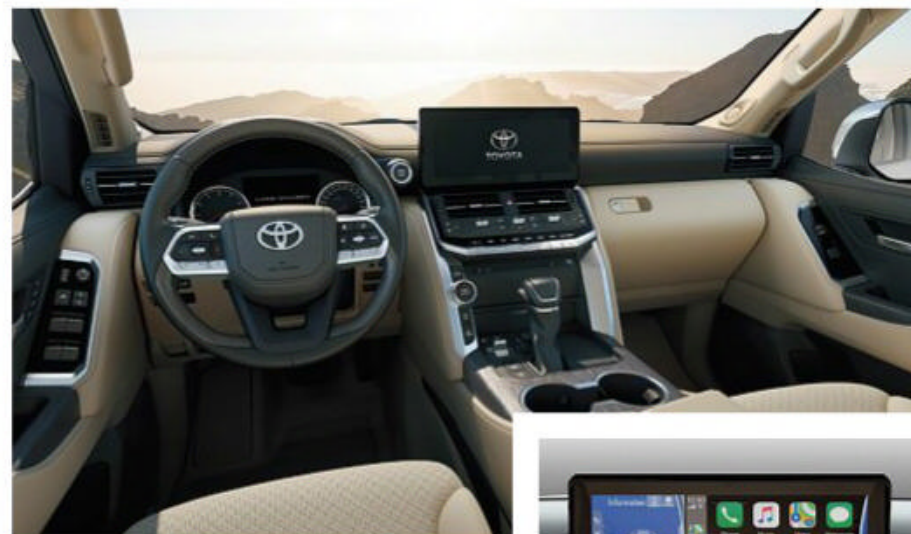
for smooth power delivery. This engine uses twin turbos and provides 305 kW of power and 650 Nm of torque. The 3,3 l V6 turbodiesel (the F33A) is brand new and generates 227 kW of power and an impressive 700 Nm of torque (according to Toyota). The 3.3 V6 replaces the outgoing 4.5D V8 that generates 195 kW and 650 Nm.

Both engines are mated to a 10-speed automatic transmission.

Inside and out

The dimensions of the 300 Series remain basically the same as those of the 200 Series. In terms of weight, however, the petrol version is a full 200 kg lighter, while the diesel has lost about 100 kg. This weight saving is due to Toyota's new TNGA chassis (it stands for Toyota New Global Architecture) and the way the bodywork is attached to it.

New welding techniques and a change in layout of the drive system allowed Toyota to further strengthen the chassis. This is good news for 4x4 enthusiasts



as well as those who regularly put foot.

The 4x4 enthusiasts among us will be further pleased to see that the solid rear axle has been retained, with only the front wheels using independent suspension.

Besides the two engine options, the 300 Series will be available in three trim levels: The GX-R, ZX and GR-Sport. The former is the base model, although the word 'basic' certainly cannot be mentioned in the same breath as 'Land Cruiser 300'; the ZX replaces the 200-series VX-R model; and the GR Sport is, well, the



one that excites us the most.

This rig has a stronger focus on off-road driving and you will recognise it by the black grille, wing mirrors and wheel arches (hardly any chrome). Toyota is reticent about the mechanical bits, but the name GR Sport is usually associated with upgraded suspension.

Inside, there are large digital screens in the instrument panel, in the centre console and



AROMA. Some say it's not about what's inside, but on top. They're wrong and the 300 Series proves it. Toyota stuck with a solid rear axle and ladder chassis and fans will thank them for it.



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	3.5 V6 petrol/3.3 V6 turbodiesel
Power	305 kW/227 kW
Torque	650 Nm/700 Nm
Transmission	10 speed automatic
Maximum towing weight	3 500 kg (braked)
Ground clearance	230 mm
Approach and departure angles	32° and 26,5°
Seats	7
Safety rating	Unknown
Warranty	3 years/100 000 km
Service plan	9 services/90 000 km
PRICE	Unknown

behind the headrests of the front seats. The largest of the screens on the centre console shows a 360° image through several cameras, including what goes on under the front bumper – a 4x4 aid already being used in the new Land Rover Defender.

If you're not a touchscreen fan, we've got good news for you. The interior of the 300 Series teems with physical buttons for the radio, driving modes, air con and seats.

What about the competition?

The Land Cruiser 300 competes with the Nissan Patrol, Land Rover Defender and Mercedes-Benz G-Class.

The Patrol does not have the same prestige in South Africa as, for example, in Dubai or Australia, although one of Toyota South Africa's bigwigs confided to us in a campfire conversation that he considers the Nissan Patrol to be a worthy opponent.

The Land Rover Defender sells

well here on the southern tip of Africa and you typically see a large number of them in the leafy suburbs of Johannesburg and Cape Town.

But Land Rover has decided to distance itself from its humble beginnings as an honest, basic vehicle – something that grieved traditional Landie owners. In contrast, Toyota has decided to retain quite a few elements of its original Land Cruiser.

The Mercedes G-Class may be a competitor in terms of category, but let's be honest: the kind of person who buys a G-Class probably wouldn't consider a Toyota.

The outgoing Land Cruiser 200 sold an average of 80 units a month before the pandemic hit us, which is not bad at all for a specialised vehicle that costs more than a million rand.

We believe the 300 Series will equal and even surpass these sales figures, provided the economy recovers after the scars left by the pandemic and state capture have healed.

Some of the competitors Large SUVs ready to head into Africa.



R1 159 100 Land Rover Defender 110

Not everyone loves its appearance, but this Englishman is definitely noticeable.



R1 571 700 Nissan Patrol

It was built for the long haul and the desert – if you can afford the fuel it burns with gay abandon.



R2 892 840 Mercedes-Benz G400d

Expensive and unique. Every football star in the Premier League probably owns one.

Local is lekker

NISSAN NAVARA

The Nissan Navara is now being built in South Africa – and it has had a number of upgrades, says **Cyril Klopper**.

The 2021 model Nissan Navara's technology, safety and performance have been upgraded and, according to Nissan South Africa, the result is greater driving pleasure, greater comfort and improved load capacity, making the Navara a leading bakkie in its category.

"Our continuous improvement process has seen us re-engineer the entire range of models to produce a Navara that's perfectly suited to South African and ultimately African conditions," says Stefan Haasbroek, head of marketing at Nissan South Africa.

What do we have here?

The latest Nissan Navara is powered by the well-known 2,5 l turbodiesel engine that's been in service for some time. The biggest advantage of continuing to keep employing the faithful old engine is that customers, especially businesses, can budget in advance for operating costs such as fuel consumption, maintenance and services.

The 2.5 diesel is now available in two power levels: a 140 kW model that delivers 450 Nm of torque, and a 120 kW model with 403 Nm of torque. Nissan also uses a 2.5 petrol engine that kicks out 118 kW of power and 233 Nm of torque, but this is only available in the XE entry-level single-cab model.

When it comes to gearing, you can choose

between a seven-speed automatic and a six-speed manual transmission. However, the gearbox choices are limited to the double-cabin models, as all single-cabin Navaras only have manual boxes.

"We are excited and proud to be introducing the latest Nissan Navara which has been locally produced for the first time," continues Stefan.

Inside and out

The new Navara boasts the NissanConnect infotainment system on an 8" touchscreen in the centre console. Apart from the new touchscreen, the steering wheel is new with extra buttons and there are a few small changes to the trim levels and materials used throughout the cab.

Externally, it's mainly the bumpers, especially front, and the headlights that have been revamped.

Speaking of bumpers: the new Navara is safer than ever thanks to sensors in the front bumper that monitor traffic. The computer alerts you when it detects sudden and unexpected movements. And if you don't act fast enough, the computer will brake for you.

The artificial intelligence also warns you to pull over and take a breather if you've been driving for too long, especially if it decides your driving style has turned 'sloppy'...



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	2.5 DDTi Pro-4X 4x4
Engine	2 488 cc, four cylinder turbodiesel
Power	140 kW @ 3 600 rpm
Torque	450 Nm @ 2 000 rpm
Transmission	7-speed automatic
Tank	80 ℓ
Load weight	1 003 kg
Maximum tow weight	3 500 kg
Approach and departure angles	32,6 ° and 26,5°
Ground clearance	221 mm
Wheel size	255/65 R17
Safety rating	Unknown
Warranty	6 years/150 000 km
Service plan	6 years/90 000 km
Price	R740 000

ACTION PANTS. The Navara, one of the original luxury bakkies, looks ready for a bit of rough and tumble. All it needs is an off-road canopy and a kayak strapped to a roof rack.



At night, the headlights automatically dim when a vehicle approaches from the front when you omit doing so. Sensors in the rear bumper warn you against pedestrians and traffic as you reverse. Jeepers, modern vehicles certainly look after their owners!

What about its competitors?

On paper, the Navara generates more power than Toyota's 2.4 GD6 Hilux (110 kW) and Isuzu's D-Max 300 (130 kW), but Ford's 2.0 bi-turbo is bonkers at 157 kW. In terms of 4x4 capability, the Navara has the best approach and departure angles of all competitors – 32,6° and 26,5° compared to the runner-up, the D-Max's 30° and 25,5°. The Ford Ranger's ground clearance of 237 mm, however, is better than the Navara's 221 mm.

If you're worried about the Navara not fitting into your garage, we have good news. It's the shortest among its competitors at 5,26 m – a whole 9,4 cm shorter than the large Ford Ranger.

The theoretical towing capacity of the Navara is 3,5 t, but legislation limits it to 2 110 kg, the Navara's kerb weight. The runner-up is the Ford Ranger with 2 044 kg.

The biggest difference, however, lies in Navara's factory warranty that is valid for six years – this compared to Isuzu's five years, Ford's four and Toyota's three years.



SOME OF THE COMPETITORS 4x4 double cabs built locally



R621 700

Toyota Hilux 2.4 GD6 4x4 Raider

This front runner in sales just can't put a foot wrong.



R728 200

Isuzu D-Max 300 LX 4x4

One of South Africa's most beloved bakkies is soon to be upgraded.



R797 500

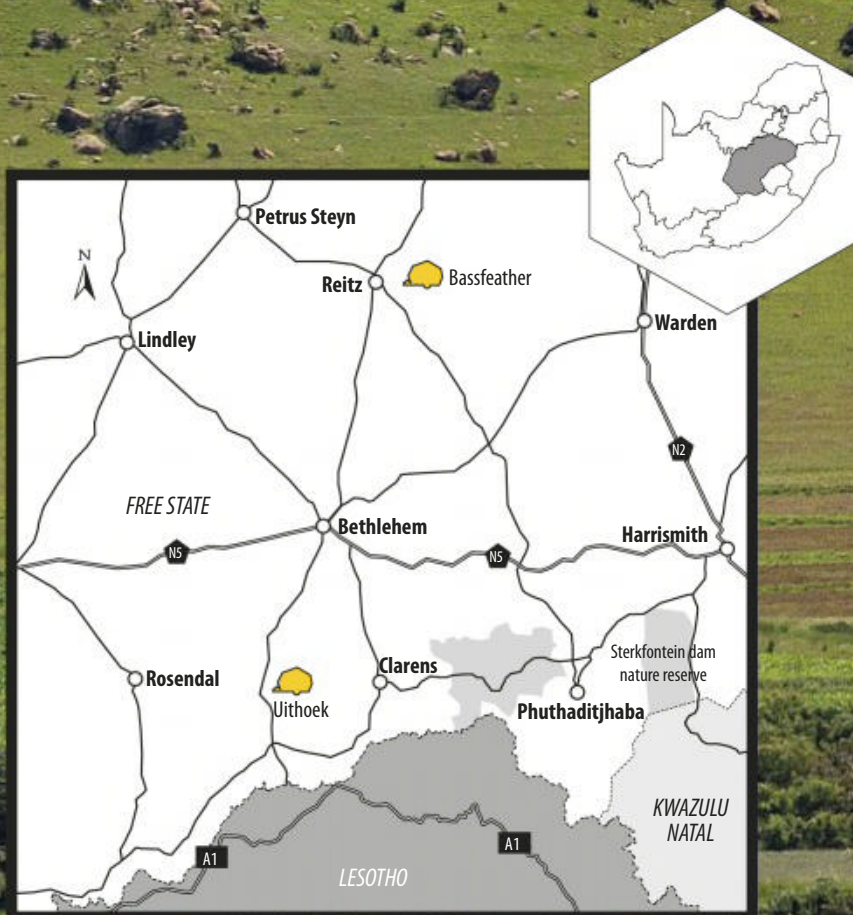
Ford Ranger 2.0 BiT 4x4 Wildtrak

A wild one, indeed, but also the most expensive of the lot.

Of mountains and meadows

The two sides of Bethlehem show you the two faces of the Free State: camp among sandstone cliffs or on the plains next to vast maize fields. We get our stand at Uithoek and Bassfeather.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**



The Free State landscape is mostly expansive and flat, but it's a different story on the province's eastern border: the Maluti mountain range runs like a natural cut line between the Free State and Lesotho, and that's where you find the world's most famous natural phenomenon, the Brandwag rock in the Golden Gate Highlands National Park.

Golden Gate is therefore high on many a tourist's list, but oddly enough, you can count

the number of campsites in the area on one hand. Besides Golden Gate's own campsite, Glen Reenen, a visit to the Uithoek Nature Park is worthwhile. It is the newest campsite in the area, a place where you can relax in absolute silence at the northern foot of the Ventersberg.

If you want to stay in the area for longer, visit the Bassfeather Country Lodge near Reitz. It's just as peaceful here, and do book a couple of days if you travel with your fishing rods.

UITHOEK NATURE PARK

Just around the corner

Uithoek's turn-off is 8 km outside Fouriesburg on the R26 to Bethlehem. From here it is a dirt road (2,8 km) with some rocky section. If you take it slow while towing a road caravan, it won't bother too much, though. During our visit, the Eastern Free State got soaked in a proper rain shower, and just a day later the road had baked dry and was still in a good condition. There were some muddy spots, but keep to the tracks on the road till you get to the gate on your right.

Ventersberg lies ahead of you, with the sandstone ridges stretching to your left and right – almost as if it's two small Brandbergs on either side of you. In the morning, the right ridge glows in the sun's first rays, but when the sun starts setting, the other side brightens.

Also keep your eyes peeled for the black wildebeest, springboks and zebras grazing on the right of the road. You can see them better from your car, because if you get out and try to walk closer, they run away. The road runs along a barbed-wire fence, and just in front of the campsite there are a few oak trees on the right. So, if you're towing a wide caravan, you'll need to drive closer to the fence to make sure it doesn't hit the trees.

THE CAMPSITE IS roughly laid out as a large triangle. The stands are mainly on the sides, with a few in the middle. The ablution block is also in the middle and the pool sits at the far end. A paved road runs in a wide circle through the resort and gives access to most stands. There is a lovely green lawn, too.

As you enter the campsite, you'll find a neat sandstone building on the left that serves as an office and kiosk. There are shade trees dotted around, but at the stands directly after the office there is an avenue of oak trees to the left down the boundary fence, and on the other side of the bathroom building there are large eucalyptus trees. Each stand has a numbered plaque affixed to the paving.

The power points (ordinary three-point sockets) are fixed against sandstone pillars. At each power point there is also a rubbish bin and tap plus a sprinkler. There are lots of loose skottel braais with adjustable grids.

At the last stand on the inside of the road – opposite the stands by the lane – is a lapa with paving underneath. It also has a number of power points and is a great spot to socialise when a group of friends come camping together. To that end,



“

Keep your eyes peeled for the black wildebeest, springboks and zebras grazing on the right of the road

”





SUMMER & WINTER. The Free State weather is better in summer, but camping at Uithoek can be done throughout the year due to its location.



there are a number of braai drums for when there's lots to braai.

AT THE STANDS ON the farthest leg to the left, there is a stream that runs in the rainy season to a dam not too far from the stands. Large willow trees line the banks of the stream, but you don't really have shade at your stand. Nevertheless, these stands – just like the ones in the middle – are flat and level.

Next to the final stand is another lapa, and the dam on its other side. Under the roof is a special braai – a minecart – with a cleverly designed grid that has two handles – one on the right-hand corner next to you and the other one on the far left corner.

For golf lovers, Uithoek has a unique challenge: on the dam floats a green with a hole in the middle. See if you're the one that can sink a ball from the side. On the side is a steel frame with a few clubs, and you play on the honesty principle: there's a safe for your R10 for every ball you take from the bucket.

You're welcome to hook a black bass





MATERIAL THINGS. The sandstone buildings – like the office and bathrooms – is so typical of the Eastern Free State. The material blends in well with the landscape and the buildings look good both on the inside and out.



or carp, but it's strictly catch and release. The dam's water level depends on the rain, which means summer is the best time for fishing.

AS YOU WALK BACK to the campsite, the bathrooms are ahead of you with the row of eucalyptus trees behind them. Just in front of the bathrooms – inside the loop in the road – is a lovely stone table made of sandstone that probably weighs a few tonnes. Even if you don't use it for a table, it is monument-like and suits the environment and campsite.

The ablution block, also built from sandstone, has a washing-up area on the far left under a roof, followed by the women's facilities, and then the men's facilities are on the far right. Inside are three modern basins mounted on one solid piece of wood – it looks as though a tree has been cut lengthwise. The three basins are a tad close to each other and at most two people will be able to stand here at the same time. There are also three shower cubicles with only a wet section, but you at least have a bench and hooks to keep your things dry. The

Briefly | Uithoek Nature Park



Campsite 50 stands on a lawn with lots of shade trees.

Ablution facilities Neat bathroom buildings between the stands.

Price R100 p/n per stand plus R100 p/ppn. (R50 for children under 12; free for those under three).

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 072 660 0840 or 071 400 5013

uithoek.com info@uithoek.com

Nearest town Fouriesburg, 11 km.

Road condition The last 2,8 km is a decent dirt road fine for towing a road caravan.

GPS S28.542495 E28.213146

Drive & Camp says Dogs of 12 kg and less are allowed here.

shower head is slightly low – if you're six foot tall, you'll have to bend over to wash your hair.

The last row of stands is all out in the open, lining up along the fence from the entrance to almost at the pool. Their numbers are attached to the fence behind them and some of the stands also have a slight slope. Under the eucalyptus trees there still more few stands, but here the grass is obviously not that lush.

Between the last stands and the pool is another lapa with paving. The pool has a shallow side, but it is rather meant for primary school children and older.

For off-road enthusiasts, there is a 4x4 trail up the mountain – a warning sign at the starts says it is only for four-wheel-drive vehicles. Access is free if you overnight at Uithoek.

Look closely at the blue sky between the ridges and you'll spot cables stretching from one side to the other. That's the zip line with its four cables that make up a total of 1,1 km. It costs R500 per person if you want to glide between heaven and earth from one ridge to the next.

Sightseeing

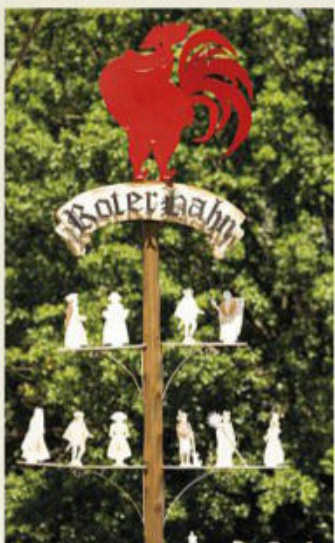
You are in one of the most beautiful parts of the Free State, you may just as well make a detour to Golden Gate and stop in at Clarens.

The public road between Clarens and Phuthaditjhaba (the R712) runs through the park. About 17 km outside Clarens, drive through a gate (unmanned when we were there). The Golden Gate Hotel is 3 km down the road on the right, with the Sentinel towering over the area to the left of the road. To the right, just before the turn-off to the hotel, is one of those large yellow steel frames through which you can take a photo of the area. It is a few steps up the hill, and here the family can pose inside the frame for your photo with the Sentinel in the background. Late afternoon is the best time because the sun illuminates the enormous piece of sandstone beautifully.

The SANParks office is a kilometre away, with a filling station. The Glen Reenen campsite – part of SANParks – is just across the road. At the time of our visit, the dinosaur interpretation centre next to the campsite was still under construction. In addition, it seemed as if a lawnmower had not come close to the campsite for a very long time – and that's not the kind of neglect you'd expect at a SANParks campsite.

Clarens is one of the Free State's most popular tourist towns. Here you will find a variety of interesting shops ranging from art galleries to candy stores. The Nutty Bears boast that they have the largest variety of plush teddy bears in the Free State.

The Afrikaner leader Paul Kruger and his men fought the Basotho in the area more than a century and a half ago. The town was named after the Swiss town of the same name where Kruger spent his last days in exile. Keen to experience more of this nostalgia? Walk down a block in Van Zyl Street at the bottom of the circle. Find the red rooster on a tall wooden post. Here you'll find the Roter Hahn restaurant with its distinctive German menu. Schweinshaxe, anyone?





BASSFEATHER COUNTRY LODGE

At the water's edge

Coming from Uithoek, it's a mere 100 km to get to Bassfeather: drive through Bethlehem to Reitz, and the resort is barely 10 km outside the town.

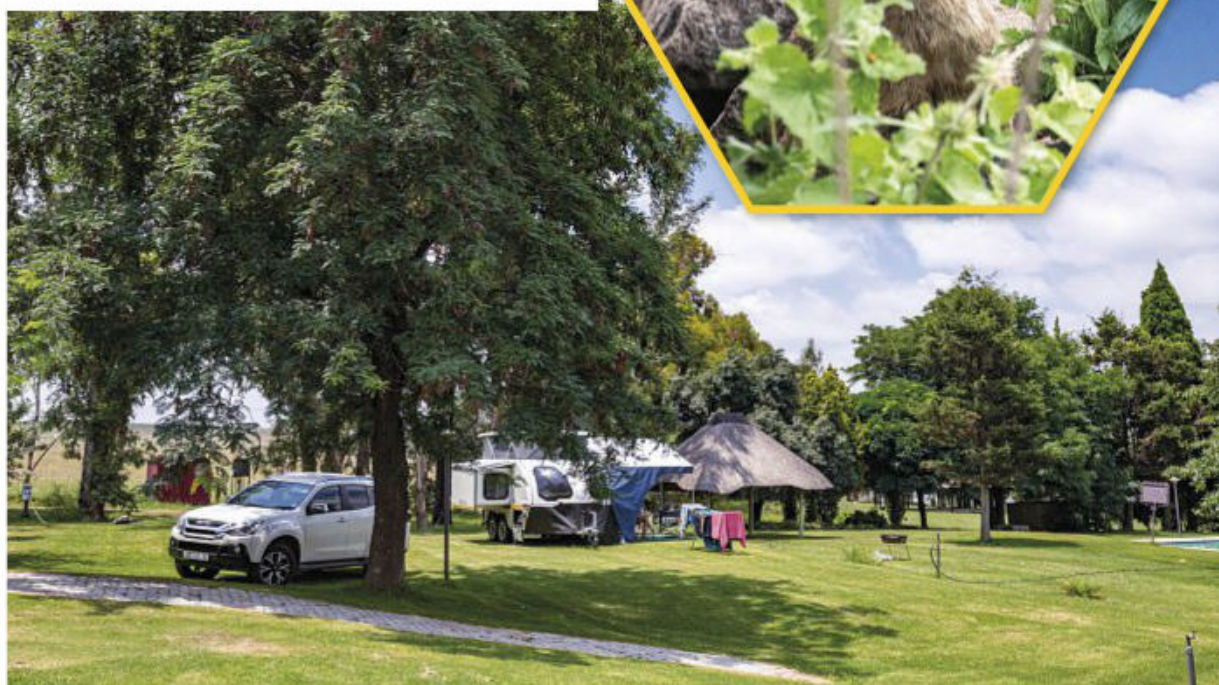
You're now leaving the lovely mountainous landscape. As the plains stretch out on either side of the road, you experience the other beauty of the Free State. We chose to drive through Reitz because we also wanted to visit the Nayela caravan manufacturing plant (see the caravan test on p 84).

To get to Bassfeather, head north out of Reitz past the grain silos on a tar road that has seen better days. Eventually, turn right onto the Warden Road, which runs past the township Petsana. This road is just as hopeless and you have to take it slow, especially in the bad sections. Look out for road users who aren't too worried about rules. Luckily, Bassfeather is only 4 km away, and your frustration melts away as you look at the green lawns.

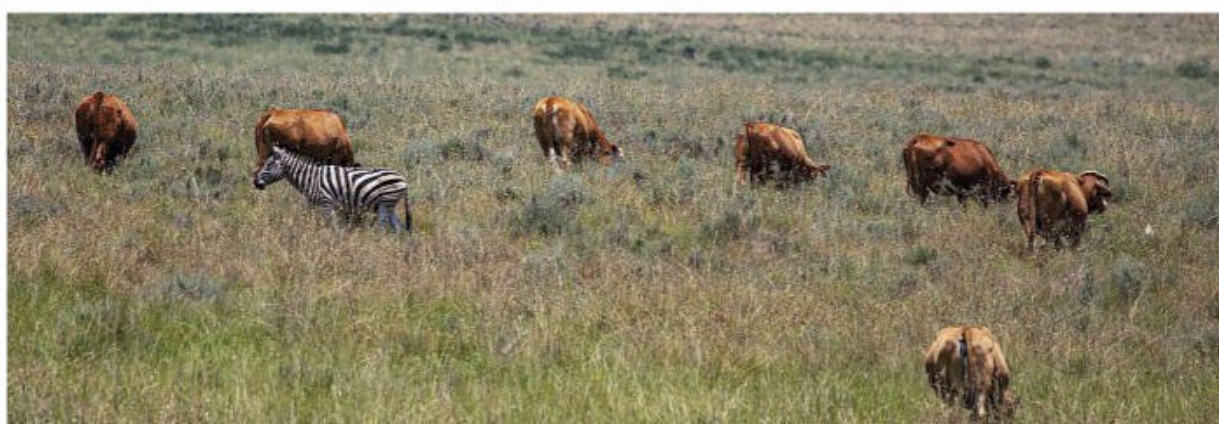
AS YOU CAN DEDUCE from the name, fishing is a big part of the camping experience here. The dam wall is on the side of the road where you turn in, with the Langspruit entering about 1,8 km upstream. A large lawn stretches out next to the water. The willow trees add to creating the perfect spot for anglers.

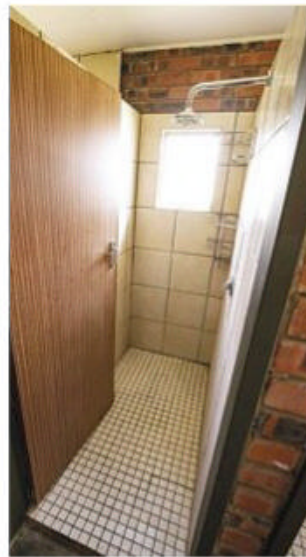
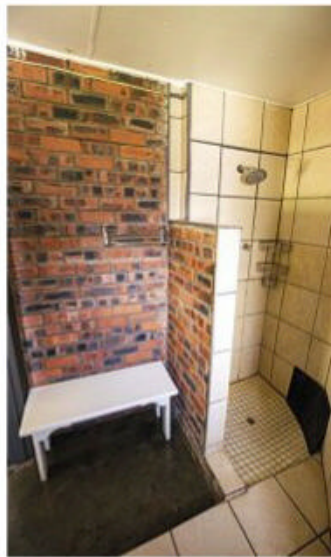
To get to the office from the tar road, you drive 1 km on a good dirt road to reception. The lawn starts just after the dam wall on your right. As with Uithoek, there are also a number of oak trees to the right of the road, but they don't get in your caravan's way.

Reception sits on the right of the boom



FISH & SWIM. You camp right next to a farm dam, but don't worry, you won't be tripping over rods when taking a stroll next to the water. There are also stands farther away from the dam and closer to the swimming pool if you prefer.





Briefly | Bassfeather Country Lodge



Campsite Unmarked stands for 21 caravans on a lovely lawn with lots of shade trees.

Ablution facilities 1 building. The men have 2 showers and 3 toilets, and women have the same, plus 2 extra baths.

Price Depending on the season, R200-R220 p/n per stand plus R80 pppn. (R30-40 for children under 12; free for those under six).

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 11:00.

Contact 082 378 6991

bassfeather.com

info@bassfeather.com

Nearest town Reitz, 9,6 km.

Road condition The last 1 km is a good stretch of dirt road.

GPS S27.812397 E28.504346

Drive & Camp says Fishing is free, but do release the bigger fish you catch.

gate, where there is a notice for boat owners to bring their paperwork. The children's play park is also behind the office and boasts swings, a high slide and a roundabout – you can see they have been in service for several years.

This area had good rains earlier this year, and that was also when we visited. The water covered those stands closest to the shore, and even the braai spots were halfway under water, but the power points were at least on dry land. (They use the blue caravan sockets, which look brand new.) So, the 14 or so shore stands weren't going to work for us, but there are a total of 21 stands here, which means we could at least get a spot.

As you drive through the boom, you

come to a large lapa with a thatched roof. Keep left around the building until you get the ablution block to your right. The rest of the stands are laid out here, a good 140 m from the water.

The first few stands to your left are on a levelled terrace. Next to it are tall eucalyptus trees that cast shade in the early morning and late afternoon. To the right of this, closer to the pool, are three more terraces where you can also pitch your camp.

If you want to keep an eye on the kids in the pool, choose the lower terrace. Those who camp here block the view of the two upper terraces.

The bathrooms are basic and the shower cubicle has a door that opens

inward. At least there are shelves to keep your things dry. The shower cubicle at the far end is larger and it has a basin.

IF YOU WANT TO SEE the area from a height, walk up the hill behind the campsite. Black wildebeest and other animals graze here. The hill requires barely 50 m of vertical climb, and the highest spot is only 300 m from the campsite. It is covered with grass and it takes you barely 10 minutes to the top from where you can look out over the entire dam, campsite and the plains around you. On top are a few rock crevices from which gleaming eyes watch you – a whole colony of dassies checking you out.

Brandberg, and beyond!

Namibia's Brandberg has one foot in Damaraland and the other in the Namib. This three-day route takes you from Henties Bay clockwise around Brandberg. Along the way you'll see an ancient volcano crater, marvel at the desert plants adapted to survive here, and drive a gnarly mountain pass called Divorce Pass!

Words and photos **Toast Coetzer**

Henties Bay is famous for its fishing waters that attract anglers from across Southern Africa. But a hundred years ago there was no town here. Back then, in 1929, Hendrik (Hentie) Stefanus van der Merwe shot a rhino. He had heard about an American museum offering good money for a complete skeleton of a rhino, so he took a small hunting party into Damaraland to find one.

Rhino shot and bones collected, Hentie and his party ran out of drinking water. They headed for the coast, and then southwards until they found water near the mouth of the Omaruru River.

Once he had sent off the bones and collected his reward Hentie returned the following December to build himself a small holiday shack. Gradually, more people did the same and that's how Hentie's Bay came to be.

Today the town is busy during summer holidays but a sleepy hideout for the rest of the year. House names like Rendezvous, A-Team and Ougat reflect the kind of people who have an affinity for Henties: retired Namibian farmers who drive around town in their 1970s Cruisers, families who gather here once a year, and fishermen who don't mind a bit of good, clean fun around the braai fire.

But what if you come here to fish but the fish aren't biting?

The following route offers three days of escape from the chilly fog of the coast – a perfect antidote if you're not one of those people who are happy to stay indoors and fill out a crossword puzzle. The route is 478 km, so make sure you fill your tank (and take an extra can or two) before you leave Henties as your next fuel is only in Uis on the third day of the route. You also need to buy a permit to access the Dorob National Park.

Get onto the C34 (also called the salt road) and drive northward out of Henties toward Cape Cross. Where the C35 (the road from Uis) joins the C34, stop and zero your odometer (S22.06678 E14.25713).

Keep going on the smooth salt road, which makes a lovely swooshing sound under your tyres. You'll pass fishing spots like Popeye, Sarah se Gat and Mile 72, and see salt works and small roadside stalls where you can buy quartz and salt crystals. These stalls are unmanned, so if you stop and take a piece of quartz, leave your R50 in the tin.

At 47 km, just past the turnoff to Cape Cross, you turn right (S21.73393 E13.98764). Stop and deflate your tyres – you will drive some bad corrugations and later sandy and then stony sections of road.

ONCE YOU'RE A COUPLE of kilometres into the seemingly featureless desert, stop and get out. Breathe in and listen



“

Get down on your haunches and take a close-up look at the ground, which seems to be covered in an orange carpet

”



They say

Calvin Guruseb is a guide at Brandberg White Lady Lodge.

“We had 8 mm in December 2020 and another 23 mm in January 2021, but it’s still dry here, we need more to carry on with livestock farming. There are about 38 desert elephants in the Ugab area, most of them in three herds. The Mama Africa herd is the biggest and numbers 19, the Ugab Small Herd has five members and G6 consists of five cows and a calf. They currently roam in the green mopane veld east of here, on the Herero farms. But in July they’ll be back around Brandberg.”

to how quiet it is. Get down on your haunches and take a close-up look at the ground, which seems to be covered in an orange carpet. The orange fluff is a type of lichen – you’re actually in the middle of a vast lichen ‘forest’! Lichen thrive here thanks to the moisture that drifts in from the Atlantic Ocean. Lichen aren’t plants at all, even though they photosynthesise. They’re compound organisms that consist of a fungus living in a symbiotic relationship with either an algae or cyanobacteria. Small as they are, they play a big role in the environment by absorbing carbon dioxide, breaking down nitrogen and even serving as food for some antelope species.

The mountain you’ll see straight ahead is Brandberg – the peak Königstein is



Dorob permits

Dorob National Park was proclaimed in 2010 to protect the sensitive coastal zone and adjacent desert from Walvis Bay to the Ugab River. Even if you just drive through this area you need to be in possession of a permit obtainable from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (generally just referred to as the MET).

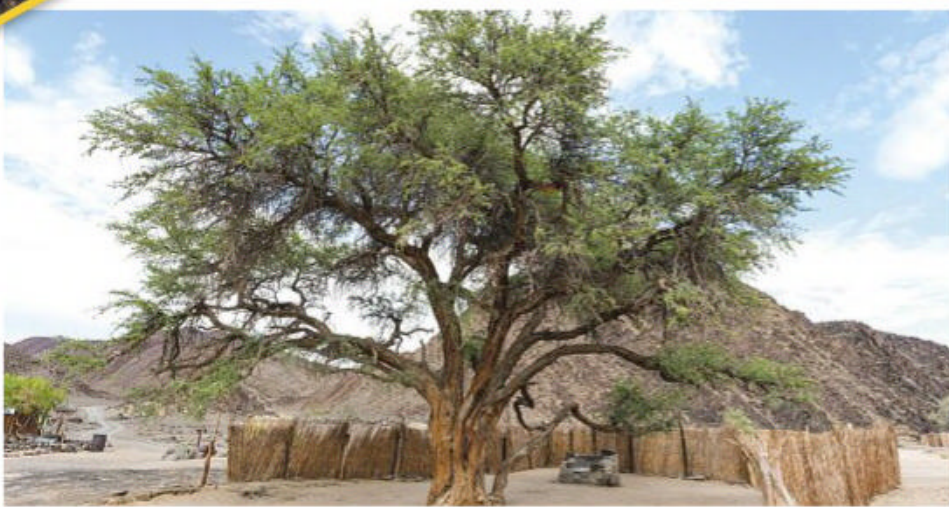
Day tariffs for SADC residents: R100 pp (free for kids 8 and younger, R50 per child 9-16 years.) Namibians pay a little less and overseas visitors more.

Where are the offices? Swakopmund: Corner of Sam Nujoma Avenue and Bismarck Street (S22.67860 E14.52395) ☎ 264 64 404 576

Walvis Bay: In the most north-easterly street connecting First and Second streets (S22.94498 E14.50492). The office looks derelict from the front. Enter the yard and park at the back, that's where the entrance is. ☎ 264 64 205 971



FOREST. The lichens (opposite top and insert) resembles an orange carpet while the welwitschia (opposite middle) are the giants of the Namib. Ugab Rhino Camp (this page) is currently closed due to the lion attacks.



Namibia's highest point at 2 573 m. To the left of Brandberg is a lower range called the Goboboseb. The Brandberg massiff is huge and 23 km in diameter from south to north and 27 km from east to west.

About 24 km after you've turned off the salt road, you'll encounter the first good stand of Welwitschia mirabilis at the foot of a koppie (S21.57155 E14.13694). Even an average welwitschia can have a lifespan of 1 500 years. They are truly remarkable desert survivors.

The road forks 5 km further, keep right (S21.53665 E14.16953). If you take the left fork, you'll drive to the foot of a blackish hill called Koppiealleen which you'll see from where you are. The road there rejoins your route a little further.

The best navigational tool for this trip

is a GPS with Tracks4Africa route maps loaded. It is often hard to figure out which track is the 'main' track, and which is just a side road – with Tracks4Africa you'll have peace of mind.

About 7 km along, the track swings into the hills; this is the southern edge of the Messum Crater (S21.49288 E14.20455). This crater is about 20 km in diameter and formed 130 million years ago when a volcano collapsed into itself. Messum Crater and Brandberg date from about the same time when the supercontinent Gondwana was breaking up and Africa and South America were violently being torn apart.

To view the remnants of this spectacular volcanic action someone has conveniently put up a picnic table!



4X4 DESTINATION

(S21.47669 E14.20651) Get out your flask of coffee and take in the scene.

At 92 km the road forks, keep right (S21.41891 E14.18894), and continue to Bakkrans (S21.39432 E14.20303), an archaeologically important site where the ruins of shelters put up by the nomadic Damara can be seen.

Turn around and head westward. You'll drive past a few welwitschias as big as teenage elephants! After 22 km you reach the Messum River (S21.39208 E14.02337) where you turn right (north). Drive until you reach the D2303 and turn right (S21.30053 E14.04168). The D2303 is the main gravel road which connects the salt road with Ugab Rhino Camp. (If you left Henties late and don't have time for the Messum Crater loop, you can use the D2303 to make up time.)

For the final 13 km approaching Ugab Rhino Camp the road enters hills with a jagged, splintered appearance. You're now outside the Dorob National Park, and that's why you only need a park permit for day one of the route. You drop about 200 m of altitude as you drive down into the Ugab River where you'll find Ugab Rhino Camp (S20.96290 E14.13371). It's been a hard day in the saddle – dig out a beer already!

This community camp also serves as a base for Save the Rhino Trust that works to protect the black rhino. Parts of Damaraland – in which you now find yourself – offer perfect habitat for black rhino, but your chances of seeing one are slim. If you do, stay in your car, and keep your distance as they can be grumpy.

This is also lion country. Be very careful when you camp here and children, especially, should not wander around. Pay attention to your immediate environment. Look for signs such as fresh tracks in the sand. In April 2021 there was a (non-fatal) lion attack close by. (See sidebar – *Ugab Rhino Camp closed temporarily in June 2021 until the lion situation is sorted.* – Ed)

ON DAY TWO, you'll drive just 107 km, but don't be fooled – it will take you all day. Double back (along the road you used to reach the camp yesterday) and turn left after 7 km (S21.01512 E14.15701). Drive up a short incline and you'll see the remnants of buildings which housed miners during the operational years



GNARLY. Tough trees like the phantom tree (*moringa*), corkwood (*commiphora*) and shepherd's tree survive in Damaraland. Elephants (footprint below) sometimes walk along the Ugab river. On day two of the route you follow a rocky road to the Brandberg West Mine (opposite middle) and experience the Divorce Pass (opposite below).



They say

Johannes Ndumba has been the caretaker at Ugab Rhino Camp for 22 years.

"This past summer the Ugab carried water twice, but there wasn't much of a flood. The elephants aren't in the area at the moment, but we've been visited by lion. A couple of years back I was stuck in my house one day as four lions rested against the walls of my outside bathroom. I didn't go to the toilet that day..."





The Ugab's 'lion situation'

Just two weeks after our visit to the area (in April 2021), a lion attacked 72-year-old Charlie Ward while he and his son David were at Divorce Pass. David tells the story:

“It was late afternoon and we planned to drive up the pass in the morning. In the meantime, we found a place to camp and walked up the first section of the pass to fill any holes created by previous vehicles spinning. We suddenly heard a grunt behind us. I looked over my shoulder and saw a lion in full lunge – its right paw swiping toward my father’s lower body. That’s it, I thought, we’re dead. I grabbed a rock, bellowed a roar of my own and launched the rock into its side where it stood above my father, just a metre away.

By some miracle it broke the attack. It leapt five metres away and turned to face us again. My father was now next to me and joined in the barrage of stones and bellows. The lion retreated 20 metres up the hill and lay down to look at us as we walked backward slowly while facing him and keeping up with the shouting and rocks.

Only then did I realise my father had been struck on the shin and there was blood all down his leg. We treated the wound and packed up the Landy. I drove all through the night back to Windhoek. By 7am we were at the Mediclinic where a doctor gave him some 20 stitches. He has recovered well.

ACCORDING TO ANDREW MALHERBE, Chief Operating Officer for Save the Rhino Trust (SRT), this male lion terrorised Ugab Rhino Camp just prior to the above incident. “Johannes Ndumba, caretaker at the camp,

was basically held hostage in his house for three days, the lion circling around the house,” Andrew says. “Eventually he managed to escape but it was a really traumatic experience for him.”

Shortly after the Divorce Pass incident a lion also attacked Helge and Irene Denker, who were camping in the Numas River, closer to Brandberg, but were not injured. The lion has since been darted and relocated to N/a’an ku sê, east of Windhoek. Although the assumption is that it was the same lion involved in all these incidents, Andrew is worried that other lions in the Ugab area could exhibit similar aggressive behaviour.

“We suspect that there has been some human interference with these lions: they have either been fed, or meat has been left out for them. They are now associating vehicles and humans with food, which is why this lion wasn’t scared of humans. We decided to close our camp because our staff don’t feel safe there. Tourists visit the camp at own risk and there is no dedicated team there to provide any kind of service.”

Follow David Ward on Facebook at “Road Trip Namibia”. For more information about desert lions, see desertlion.info and follow the Save the Rhino Trust at savetherhinotrust.org Helge Denker tells his story on conservationnamibia.com.

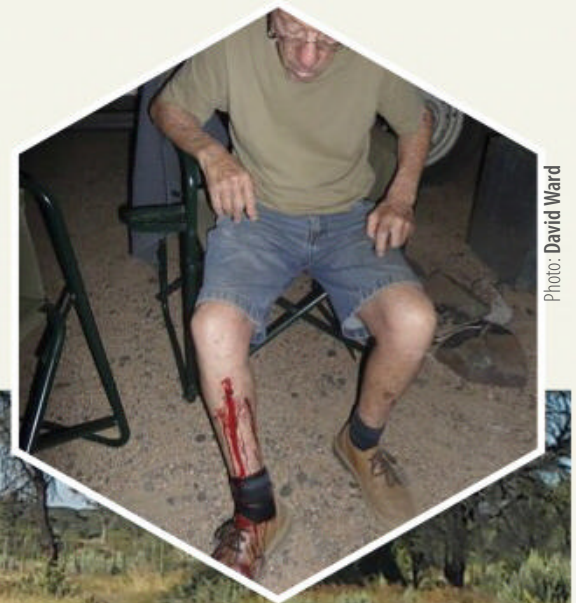


Photo: David Ward



Photo: N/a’an ku sê Foundation

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

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4X4 DESTINATION

of the Brandberg West Mine. Tin and tungsten were mined here from 1946 to 1980. Drive up to the edge of the open cast mine (S20.99854 E14.15673). You can drive down to the inviting pool of blue-green water you'll see below. You can swim in it, but don't open your eyes under water and definitely don't drink from it. Afterwards, rinse yourself with fresh water (bring a container for this purpose) otherwise your skin might itch because of the high mineral content in the water.

Beach day over, exit the mine area at this point: S21.00834 E14.15837. Head east for 1 km along a narrow riverbed and then turn left (to the north, S21.01017 E14.16766). Soon you'll see an old car wreck (S21.00696 E14.16972).

This stony track is easy enough to drive but take it slow. Eventually it brings you to the top of a barren mountain ridge which leads you further north in the direction of the Ugab River again. Stop to

take a pic – the views are epic! Once the descent towards the river valley start you should engage 4x4 low range. There is a bad step at these coordinates: S20.95760 E14.20004.

Once you're in the Ugab River, turn right (east) and stop a kilometre or so along to appreciate the impressive rock formation you can see at S20.96308 E14.21183. Keep binoculars handy as the rare Augur buzzard seems to like the scenery here too. You won't see many bigger mammals, so keep a tree list instead. Along the river you'll see ana trees, camelthorns and a bright green – and rather stinky – bush called a mustard tree, or salvadora.

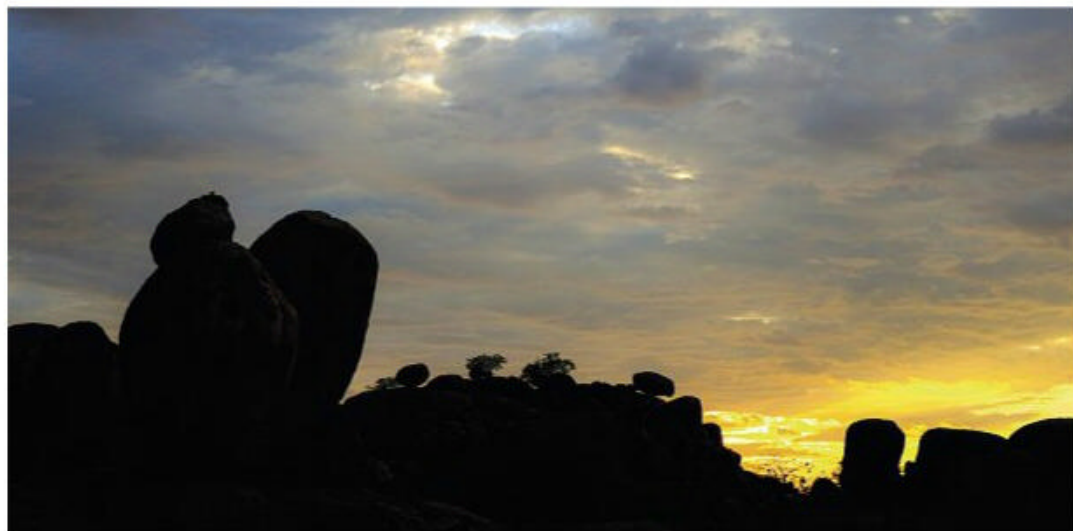
A kilometre later, turn left and leave the riverbed (S20.95850 E14.21629). This is the start of Divorce Pass and the only technical piece of driving you'll have to do on the route. Engage low range 4x4. Walk the first couple of hundred metres

to inspect the condition of the road. Stack rocks where needed. This section is the trickiest; it gets easier the farther you go. The vehicles in your convoy should drive this section one by one. Make sure each is safely through before the next starts – there is no space to turn around!

You'll be able to breathe easier when you reach S20.94675 E14.21675 – stop here and look at the beautifully preserved Damara stone shelters on your left.

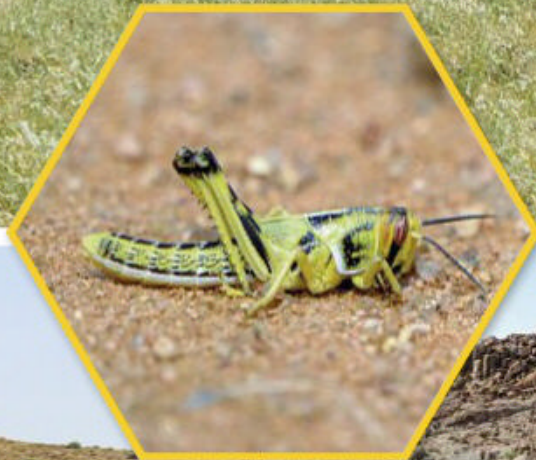
When you cross the Goantagab River (S20.82371 E14.32194) – a tributary of the Ugab – you're about halfway for the day, but you'll make faster progress now as the veld opens up and you drive across sandy plains or along stony drainage gullies. The hills to the northwest shield the Doros Crater from view. (Our route doesn't make a detour to Doros, but you should check it out if you're curious.)

Turn right at the T-junction (S20.72891 E14.34694). In good years you'll see



REST. The granite koppies at Madisa Camp (below) make for lovely silhouette photos (above) while the ruins of the Brandberg West Mine tells a story of past glory (left). On the final day of this route you'll drive across sandy plains (opposite top) until you reach Brandberg White Lady Lodge (opposite below) where you will find curious rocks (opposite middle).





livestock in this part of Damaraland and your route now passes a usually deserted cattle post (S20.74827 E14.37992). Don't rely on getting water here. You soon re-enter the Goantagab riverbed (S20.75234 E14.39834). Follow the sandy track for 7 km and then exit the riverbed again to the left (S20.76779 E14.44426). From here it is 21 km to the D2612 gravel road, where you turn right (S20.65797 E14.56755). Follow the D2612 for 15 km until you reach Madisa Camp on the right – this is where you are staying tonight (S20.72484 E14.68068).

ON DAY THREE, it's easy enough to head straight back to Henties along the main roads after refuelling at Uis. But if Damaraland has worked its charm and you're keen to spend another night out here, Brandberg White Lady Lodge is on your route today for setting up camp.

Find the track that exits Madisa Camp to the south (S20.72970 E14.68457). After a while you leave the granite koppies and mopane veld behind and enter an open, desert-like landscape (the farm is called Duineveld). After 14 km you reach a cattle post (S20.84464 E14.66254) where a prominent tree stands all by itself on top of a dune.

This dune is the only big dune on the route. If your tyres are still soft, you'll

I also want to go!

Can I drive it on my own? For your own safety, travel in a convoy of two or more vehicles. Sections of the route are very isolated, especially on day two. You must be fully self-sufficient and carry enough food and water, including for an emergency day or two.

How long is it? About 478 km, but it can easily become more than 500 km once you drive a couple of extra loops. It takes three days, but four is better.

What should I drive? You need a 4x4 with low range. Don't drive a fancy vehicle with bits and bobs that can scrape off when the going gets rough.

How much fuel do I need? If you fill your tank in Henties you should make it to Uis but definitely take a jerry can (or two) of extra fuel.

What about emergency equipment? Tyre fixing stuff, tow rope, compressor pump and anything else you might need to get yourself out of a spot of bother.

Can I tow? We didn't travel with a trailer. Most of the route can be done towing a proper off-road trailer (but not a caravan) but Divorce Pass would be high risk. Rather leave your trailer at home. Alternatively, you can access all the campsites mentioned here via district roads which are fine for towing an off-road caravan.

Good resources Johan Snyman's Damaraland guide (R350) can be ordered from johans@iway.na; InfoMap's Damaraland/ Western Namibia map provides a good overview of the area (R138, infomap.co.za)

Local emergency numbers ☎085 900 or ☎00 64 500 346 (Henties)

Covid regulations Keep an eye on the news to see if there are new border regulations for visiting Namibia. At the time of going to print you needed a negative PCR Covid test not older than seven days.

4X4 DESTINATION



cross it easily using high range. For the next 12 km, the route continues almost dead straight as you start a very gradual descent to the Ugab River. There are some spectacular photo opportunities and one of the best is at a farm called Saulstraat (S20.93793 E14.72065) where a bright brick-red house has Brandberg looming large as a backdrop. The road makes a kink at the farm and 9 km later you reach the Ugab and with it the campsite of Brandberg White Lady Lodge. Drive to reception (S21.01347 E14.68653) and order an ice-cold Coke at the restaurant. (Day visitors may not use the pool. If it just looks too tempting, book a night. It's lekker here.)

From Brandberg White Lady Lodge you can drive out for 10 km to see the White Lady rock art site (S21.09373 E14.67625, entrance costs R80 pp), or you can drive down the Ugab River to photograph rock formations which look every bit like the bubbles in an Aero chocolate (S21.00842 E14.73215). Desert-adapted elephant move through the area from time to time. Again, be vigilant: there can be lions.

If you're in a hurry to get your lines wet, take the D2359 from Brandberg White Lady Lodge to the C35. Turn right and you'll be in Uis 15 km later. Fill up your tank at Engen (S21.21944 E14.86927) and then sit down for lunch at the nearby Brandberg Rest Camp (S21.21932 E14.86761) or Cactus & Coffee (S21.21631 E14.86305) at the north-western tip of Uis.

It is another 123 km along the C35 to Henties Bay. It's a long goodbye, but a good one.

Thanks to Fujifilm for the Fujifilm X-S10 camera they loaned us for this trip. Visit myfujifilm.co.za

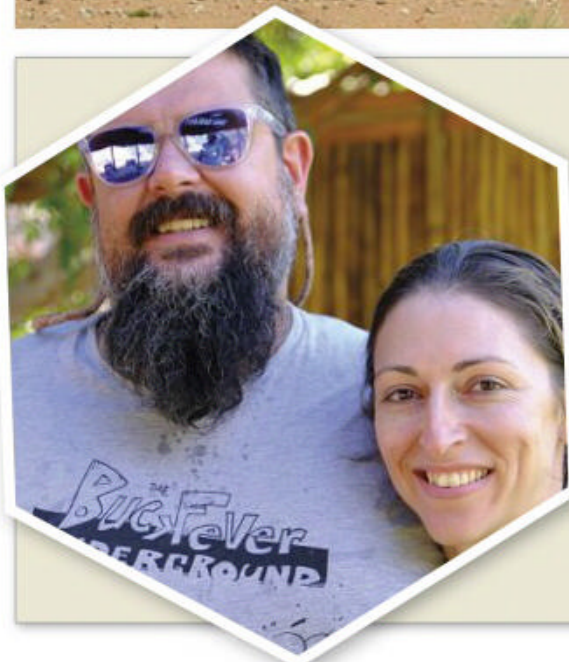


“

There are some spectacular photo opportunities and one of the best is at a farm called Saulstraat

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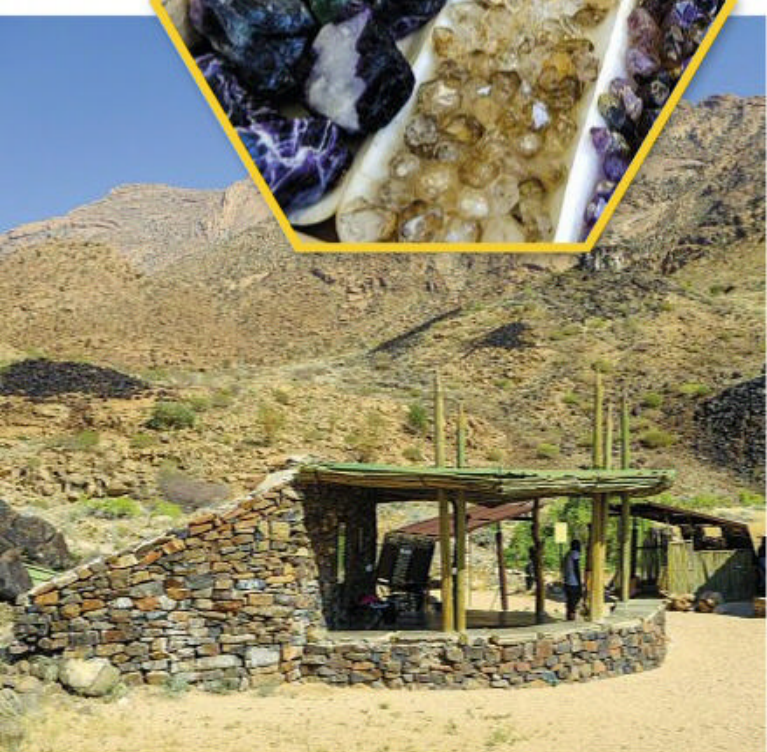
BURN. The area around Brandberg (above) is known for its semi-precious stones (insert) like rose quartz, amethysts and agate that you can buy at stalls along the road. Brandberg White Lady Lodge (opposite top) is an excellent base from which to visit the White Lady rock painting. Zander van Wyk and Thomas Kapadhi work at Madisa Camp (opposite below), where you can see red-billed francolins (top left).



They say

Quinton van Rooyen lives in Walvis Bay and drove the route with his girlfriend, Lynne Haylett.

“I always say a proper trip into the hinterland of Namibia only really starts when you have Brandberg in your sights and can look forward to lonely jeep tracks – and peace and quiet. The stillness of the landscape makes one feel that there is something else present, something bigger than you. And then you spot the lion tracks...”



OUR OVERNIGHT SPOTS

UGAB RHINO CAMP

Important This camp is currently closed because of the 'lion situation'. You visit at own risk. In normal times they offer cold water showers and pit toilets. Bring your own drinking water. No power.

Price A donation towards Save the Rhino Trust Namibia. We suggest R100 to R150 per person (bring cash).

Contact None. You can just arrive. There is no cell phone signal.

MADISA CAMP

The private stands are big and each has a covered area where you can relax in partial shade. You have your own shower (hot water) and flush toilet. Bigger groups can stay in the overlander site with its shared bathroom.

Price R240 per person sharing (max 6 people per stand) for a private stand and R180 per person sharing on the overlander site (max 10 people).

Or book into a dome tent (R300 pppn) or one of their very neat safari tents (from R500 pppn).

Contact 000 264 81 698 2908;

madisacamp.com

BRANDBERG WHITE LADY LODGE

Their campsite is spread out next to the Ugab River where big trees like ana trees, camel thorn and leadwood grow. You share a bathroom with your neighbour. The caretaker lights a fire under the donkey in the morning and evening for hot water. No power, but you can charge devices at reception. Meals available at restaurant.

Price R150 pppn and R50 per car, once off. They also offer more luxurious lodge accommodation, check their website.

Contact 000 264 64 684 004;

brandbergwllodge.com

BRANDBERG REST CAMP

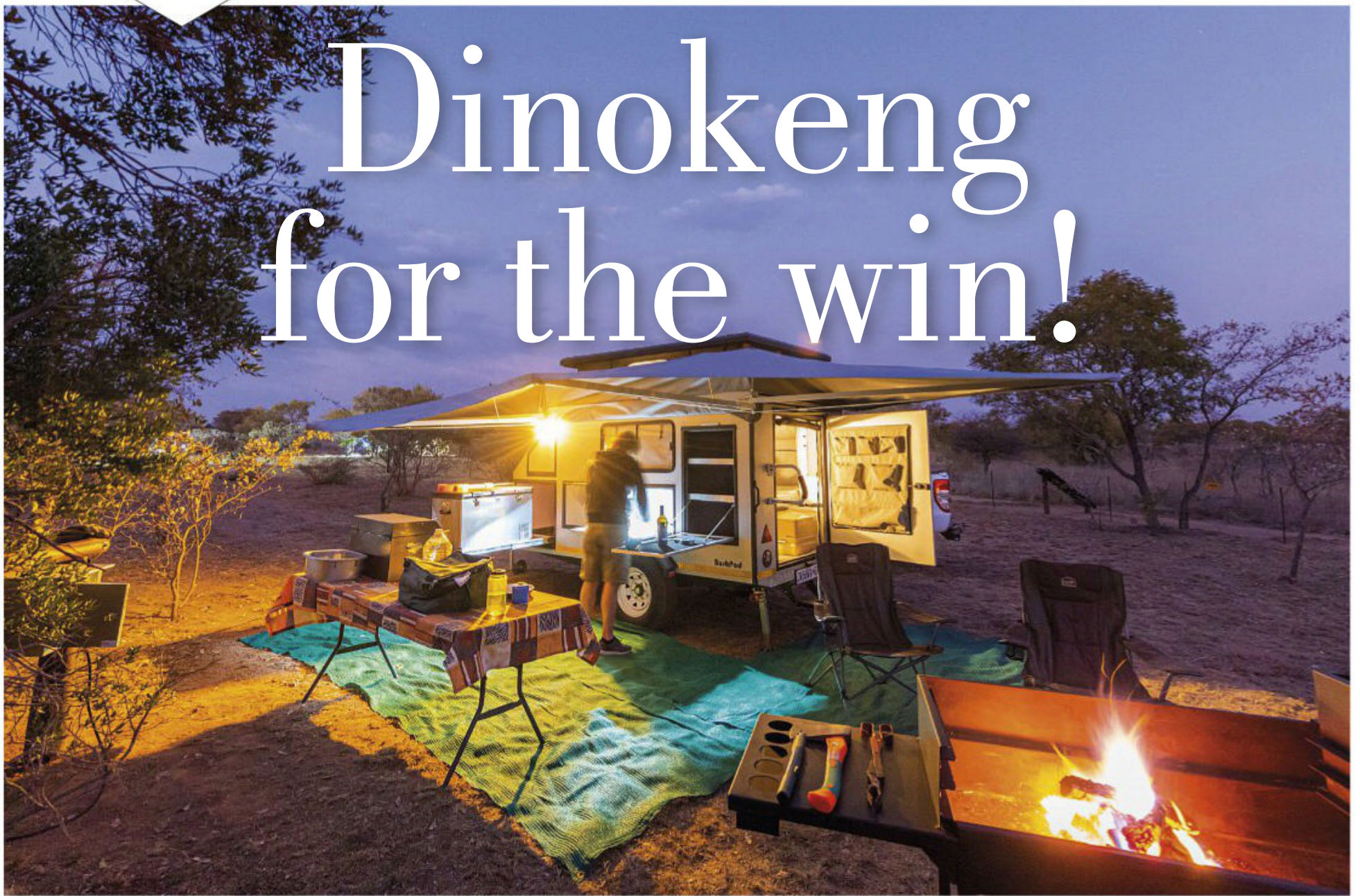
Co-owned by Basil Calitz, this well-established place in the main street of Uis has one of those back stoeps ideal for listening to late-night stories. They have camping (with power), neat rooms, a restaurant, and a pool that's half Olympic sized. (The mine uses the pool as reservoir and sometimes pump the water out.)

Price Camping costs R150 pppn and rooms start at R500 pp sharing.

Contact 000 264 64 504 038;

brandbergrestcamp.com

Dinokeng for the win!



Once the Dinokeng bites, it won't leave you. This Big Five reserve on the doorstep of Pretoria is becoming one of Gauteng's most popular weekend and holiday getaways.

Words and photos **Helenus Kruger**

It's easy to figure out why Dinokeng is so popular. Where else can you drive for about an hour from a city, pitch your tent in the Bushveld and watch the Big Five from your own vehicle? Also, the winters north of the Magaliesberg are much more bearable, and on warmer winter days you can even get out your shorts and cozzies.

Back when the Dinokeng Reserve was established, there weren't many campsites, but nowadays things look quite different and it seems as if a new campsite pops up every month or so.

The Afsaal Caravan and Bush Camp is one such place. Owners Pieter and Louise Snyman settled here a few years ago when they retired. A while later, they started thinking of a campsite and they got to work at it, full steam

ahead. Almost immediately, though, the Covid-19 lockdown stopped them in their tracks. After what felt 'like an eternity', they could get going again – and on 12 March this year, they booked in their very first guests.

PERSONAL SERVICE is the order of the day at Afsaal. Before arrival, Pieter sends all information via WhatsApp to the weekend's campers, and after the weekend, he deletes the group. Upon your arrival, they greet you in person, and Pieter and Louise come around regularly throughout the weekend to make sure everyone is happy. Late afternoon, it's the turn of their son Blake who comes to hear if anyone needs wood.

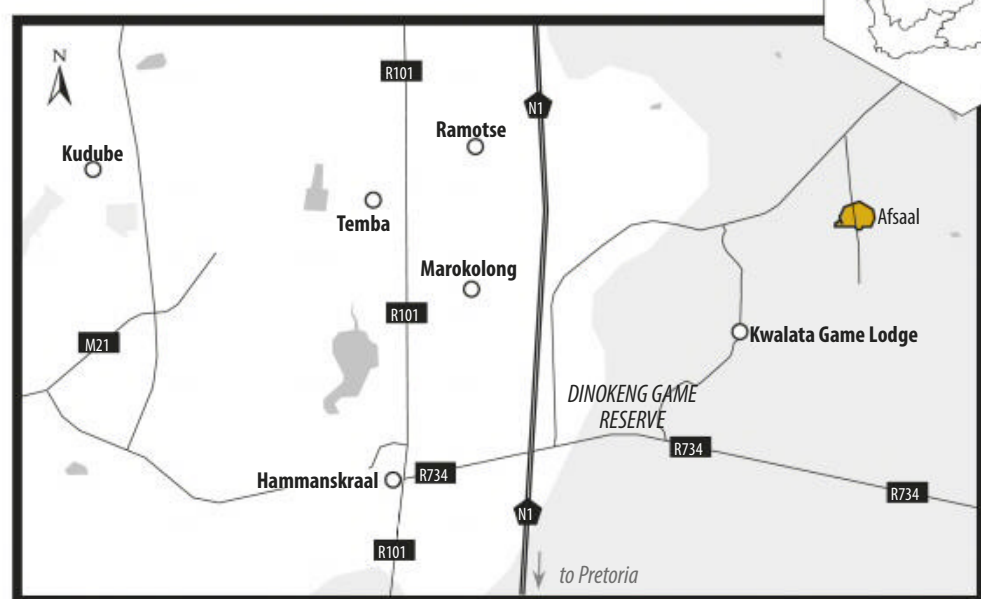
Afsaal's campsite has been laid out to disturb nature as little as possible. Pieter



says it took a lot of measuring to mark out the stands; 15 small trees had to make way, but he immediately replaced them with monkey thorns.

To fit nicely among the trees, the 15 stands are spread throughout the camp. The average size of a small yard, your stand has more than enough space and, thanks to the 20-30 steps between the campsites, pretty private, too. The camp has many deciduous trees that give glorious shade in summer, but in winter allows the sun through to dispel the morning cold. The whole site has short-cut veld grass that creates a pleasant bush camp feel.

Nine of the stands (4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15) are next to or very close to the boundary fence. If



you're lucky, a lion or a herd of elephants will walk past your tent, mere metres away. Fortunately, you're safe thanks to the electric fence between you and the animals.

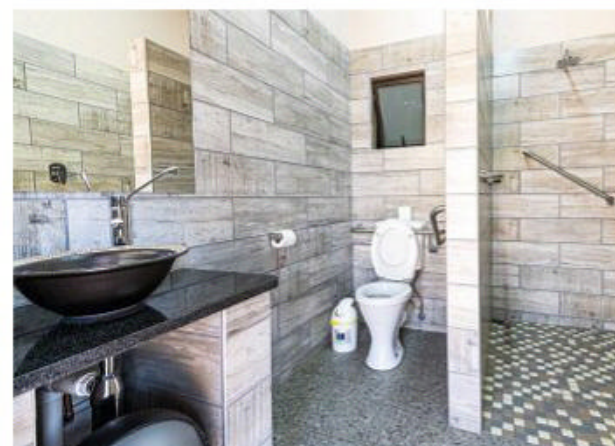
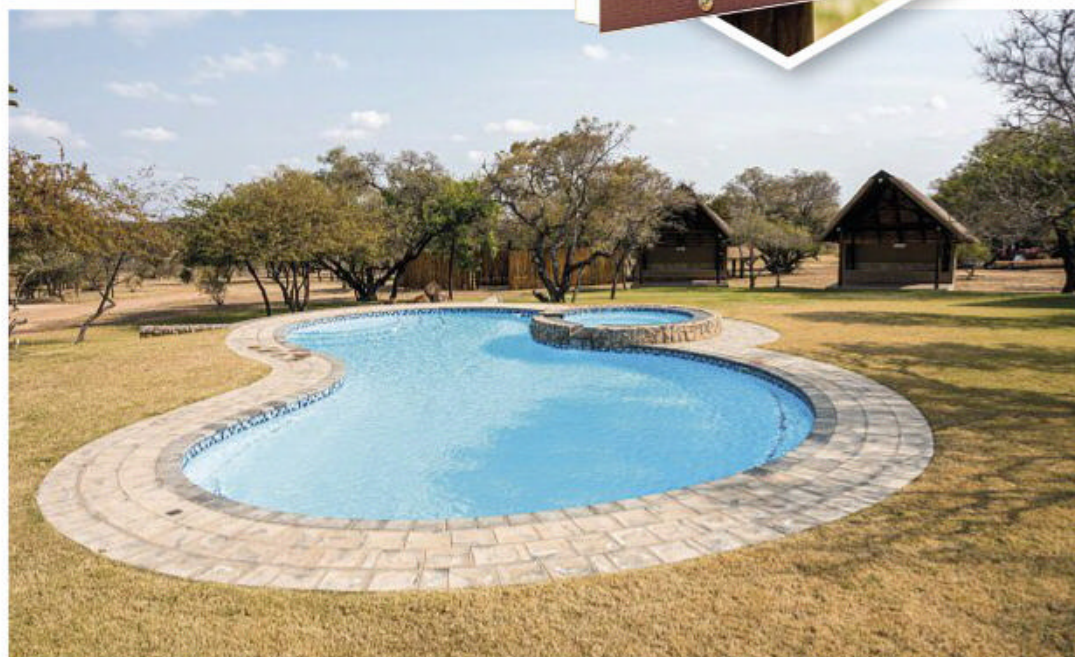
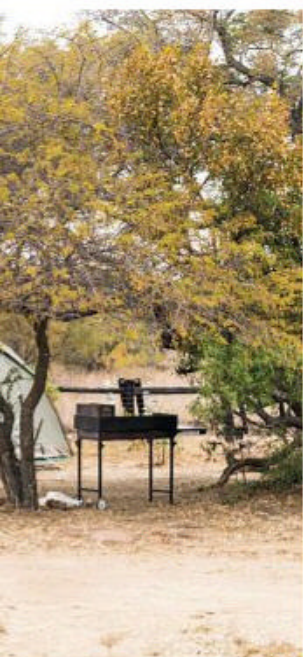
Stands 13 and 15 are excellent choices if you want to be somewhat separate. And if you dislike dirt underfoot, there are five sites with a gravel square in the southeast corner of the camp.

Each stand has a braai-on-wheels with a grid, a power point (ordinary socket), tap and rubbish bin. Remember your potjie and triangle stand, because there are braai spots dotted around when you like getting down on the ground.



NOBODY WILL BLAME you if you overlook the ablution facilities, because from the outside the building looks like a stable for horses, complete with wooden stable doors.

It has eight 'stables' – four on each side of the long building – and if you close the door behind you, you have sole use of the bathroom. Six of the bathrooms are equipped with a shower, one with a bath



CALM YOURSELF. You can really recharge at Afsaal. The biggest decision you have to make here is whether you should go swimming or to remain at your tent and watch the animals. Bring a bird guide and binoculars.

WEEKEND BREAK

and the eighth is for wheelchair users.

Inside, the finishes are modern with tiles in earthy colours. The round basin looks almost like a ceramic work of art, and the taps have a copper finish. The granite countertops on either side of the sink are large enough for your toiletries. In front of the sink is a large mirror. Two tiled benches, one in the dressing area and one in the shower, have storage space for your clothes and bath bag.

In quieter times (when there are eight or fewer bookings) you get your own bathroom where you can leave your stuff.

On one side of the building is the dishwashing sinks, and a small room next door is where you flush your cassette toilet.

THE MOST POPULAR HANGOUT at any campsite is probably the swimming pool, especially in the Bushveld, and especially

in the summer. The one at Afsaal is big enough for everyone in the camp, but small enough so the water doesn't get too icy in the winter. In the middle is a small round pool with a built-in bench where Mom and Dad can sit while they watch the little ones. A thick kikuyu carpet surrounds the pool with a bunch of trees, and on the edge of this are five thatched shelter, each with a tiled floor and one enclosed side.

There's a boma and lapa are next to the pool and, as with the shelters by the pool, a first-come-first-served principle applies – you can't book them.

Just outside the back gate of the camp is a small dam. Late afternoon, you can drive to the top of the dam wall for a cocktail while waiting for the animals to come and drink (ask Pieter to open the gate for you). There are also have a few basic items such as



They say

Derrick and Madeleine Maree from Pretoria, their children, Altus (5), Zak (4) and Mienke (1), and the kids' nephew Markus (3) camp with a Sprite Splash they tow with a Volkswagen Caravelle

"The stands are spacious and we like that you're some distance from your neighbours. The ablution facilities are very nice and it is lovely to have a bath for the little ones.

The area around the pool is a great place to hang out, especially under the thatched roofs. The kids are also on their bikes all day. And then, of course, there are the game drives!"



GO WILD. The excitement of your chances to see the Big Five – especially one of the great cats – can sometimes lead you to completely overlook the little guys. Be on the lookout for birds, mongooses and warthogs. Even black wildebeest drinking water is a sight to behold.





wood, ice cream and sweets for sale.

THE DINOKENG RESERVE has two options for game viewing: you can go on a guided game drive with one of the lodges, or you can take your own vehicle on the self-driving routes. The route is open every day from 06:00 to 18:00 and includes 120 km of dirt roads that meander through the reserve. Remember, for the self-driving routes you need a permit – buy it online at dinokengreserve.co.za, at the reserve gates or at Dinokeng Events in the Safari Mall (S25.347443 E28.370807), about 7 km from the Tau gate. Dinokeng Events is open Mondays to Saturdays from 08:00 to 17:00 (Sundays 08:00-14:00).

Buy yourself a map (R30) when you get your permit. It divides the reserve into 12 sections and it shows all the routes and signposts – so you know where you are at all times. The map also shows all the 4x4 trails, picnic spots and restaurants. The route is suitable for sedan vehicles.

The map also shows the most abundant five game species for each section – of course, sections 2 and 3, where the cheetahs and lions like to hang out, are the most popular. Remember, Dinokeng is a Big Five reserve and you may only get out of your vehicle at picnic spots. If you forgot your picnic basket at the camp, you can stop by one of the many lodges for something to eat.

When you get tired of driving around,

Briefly | Afsaal



Campsite 15 stands with deciduous trees and veld grass.

Ablution facilities 8 bathrooms, 1 of which is equipped for wheelchair users.

Price R400-R500 per stand, depending on when you camp. In the high season, 6 people are allowed per stand and in the quieter times up to 8. A maximum of 2 extra campers are allowed per stand at R100-R180 pp. Also remember the reserve's entrance fee, which is a conservation fee of R80 pp. (R50 for children) and a vehicle fare of R50. Self-driving permits cost R250 pd. (R380 for 3 days; R450 for a week).

Contact 079 754 5442

info@afsaalkaravaanenboskamp.com

afsaalkaravaanenboskamp.com

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Nearest larger town Pretoria, 40 km.

Road condition Tar all the way.

GPS S25.379424 E28.336794

Drive & Camp says You will need more than a day if you want to explore all the game trails – so buy a self-driving permit that's valid for three days.

chill at Larry's pond (section 3, signpost 470A) opposite the Dula Nokeng picnic spot and watch the waterfowl and animals come to drink. Keep your eyes peeled for fish eagles.

Frontiers and 4x4 fun



There are several gravel mountain passes on the border between the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. A few of them were used by the Voortrekkers and two of these historic passes have become so deteriorated that they're perfect for 4x4 vehicles.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

The route starts on the R74 regional road at the lower end of the Sterkfontein Dam in the Free State. At a road sign (S28.52302 E29.07693) for the Retief Pass and Retiefklip, follow the S19 Bergville Road for 2 km to a signpost for the Kaalvoet Vrou and Retief Pass.

Here you can turn left and visit the statue of Susanna Smit – according to legend, this Boer woman squared off against a British commissioner and told him: “I’d rather cross the Drakensberg barefoot than be under English rule.” The Retief Pass to which the road sign

refers is on private land and you must get permission from Sollie Prinsloo of Dumbe Berg Accommodation to drive there. This pass was declared a Heritage Site in 1977 because the Voortrekker Piet Retief led his trek through here in 1838. But Retief Pass will take us in the wrong direction, so we won’t be going there today. Continue for 600 m to a signpost for Retiefklip (S28.50272 E29.08663) – turn right here.

A twin-track takes you across the Modderspruit via a low-water bridge and then up to the cliffs of the Kerkenberg (Church Mountain). So named by Rev

Erasmus Smit, the pastor and diary writer of the Retief Trek, and also the brave husband of Susanna “the barefoot woman”. The Retief Trek waited here while Piet went to get permission from the Zulu king Dingane to enter Natal.

Return to the S19 Bergville Road and turn right toward Harrismith. Follow the road for 4 km and turn right again onto the S796 farm road. Follow the S796 for 10 km until it joins the S800, then turn right again toward Geluksburg. After 9 km you will come across a rusty road sign of which only the “urg” of Geluksburg can be read – turn right here.

You are now driving on the Tintwa Pass, a beautiful gravel road that winds up a mountain called Die Maanhaar (The Mane). At the crest, the gravel road of the Tintwa Pass makes way for the tar of the Middledale Pass. This would take you down to Geluksburg, but instead, look out for a turnoff on your left roughly 800 m after the transition from gravel to tar (S28.47025 E29.31717). There is no road sign, just a few thatched roof rondavels and a cattle enclosure, and a short distance away you drive through a sagging wire gate: this is the beginning of the Sandspruit Pass and 4x4 fun!

THE SANDSPRUIT PASS is almost forgotten – you won't find it on GoogleMaps nor GoogleEarth, and also not on a 1:500 000 topographic survey map. It's immediately clear that the road is rarely used, because it is almost completely grown over with grass and the twin track is hidden in places.

According to some sources, this is the route Gerrit Maritz's trek took (another

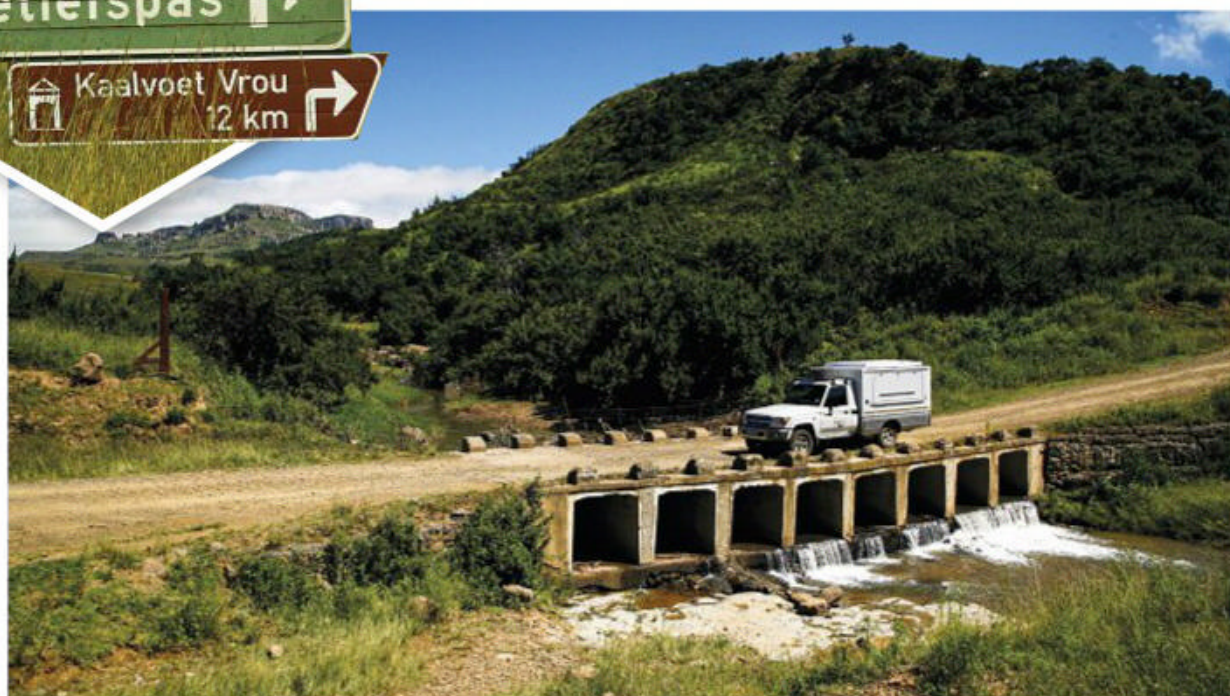
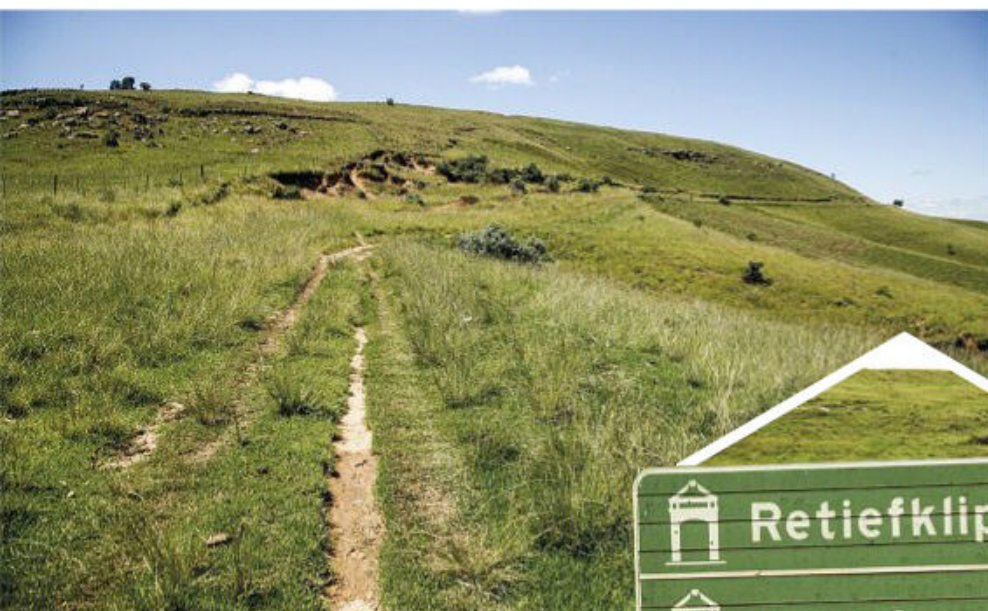
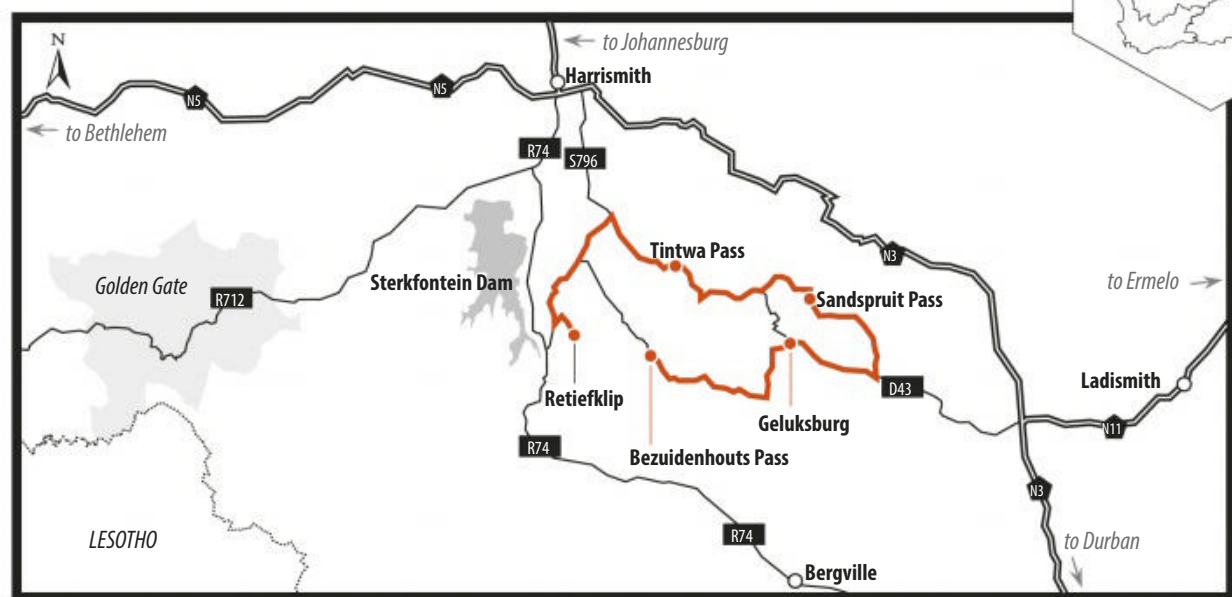
Voortrekker party) but others believe the Maritz Trek crossed farther north over the De Beers Pass. It is also alleged by some that Piet Retief took this route on his first visit to Dingane.

On our previous visit in 2013, the Sandspruit Pass was a lovely road with a difficulty rating of 2 out of 5. With this visit, however, we gave it a 3.

Exactly 3 km after the wire gate, you

drive around a spur of Die Maanhaar and then up a rock ledge before the mountain pass descends again. The views are magnificent, but you won't get too many opportunities to appreciate the scenery as the road will require all your attention from here on out.

Our rented campervan had good ground clearance but a dismal departure angle, and therefore we had to use



TRAIL GUIDE

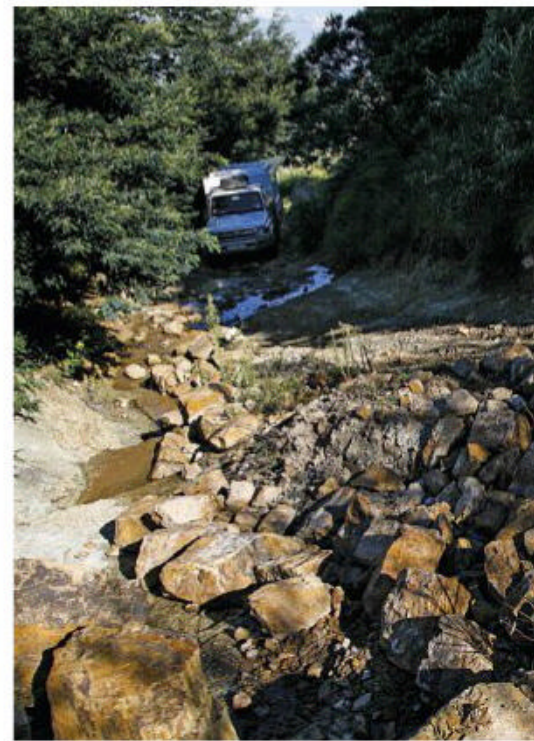
the tiny bottle jack that came with it repeatedly so we could pack rocks under the wheels. Who knows whether the Sandspruit Pass will ever be repaired? It's probably the 4x4 community that will keep it in a drivable condition.

In 2013, we completed the Sandspruit Pass in about 45 minutes, but on our latest visit we had to set aside three hours for the 16 km mountain pass. A soft-roader like a Subaru Outback definitely won't make it, and if it snows or rains hard, we wouldn't even want to tackle it with a Unimog.

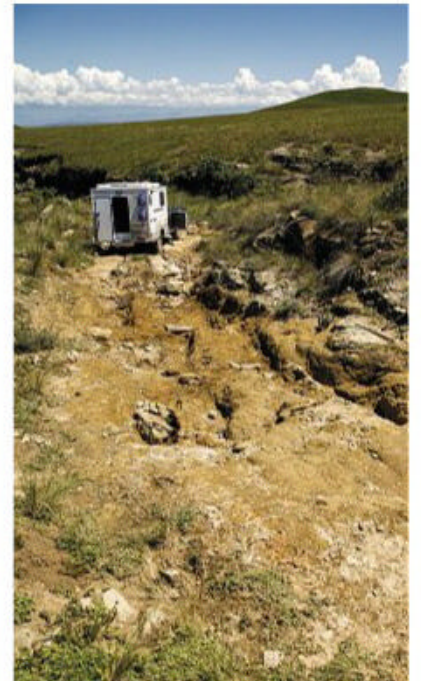
After conquering the Sandspruit Pass, take the D43 regional road to Geluksburg. From there, drive south toward Bergville and cross the Venterspruit.

About 7 km outside Geluksburg you will come across a signpost for the Kwaggashoek Game Reserve – turn right here. Stop in front of Kwaggashoek's impressive main gate and look left. You'll see an ordinary farm gate behind which a twin-track winds up a ridge. This is the Bezuidenhout Pass. This one does appear on GoogleMaps, but heaven forbid you tackle it in an ordinary bakkie, because it's even more challenging than the Sandspruit Pass – we rate it a lower side of 4 out of 5 on our difficulty scale. During our visit, the folks at Kwaggashoek tried to dissuade us from tackling Bezuidenhouts Pass with our vehicle. But did we listen?

The trouble starts 6 km after Kwaggashoek's gate where the Bezuidenhout Pass proper begins. The first rocky ledge is not too bad but you will need to engage diff locks and low-range gears. The ledge is barely behind you before you get to a mudhole with bushes and trees on either side. This is not a watery type of mud, but rather the sticky kind that throws you around as



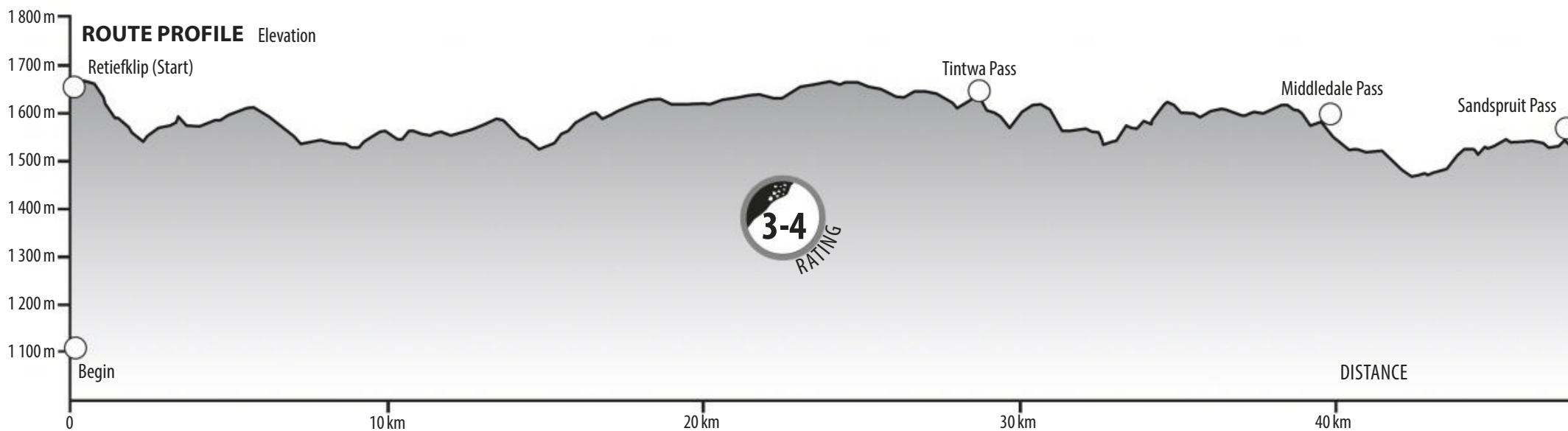
CRAWLER. Bezuidenhouts Pass (above) is more challenging, but Sandspruit Pass (below) has the better views. We suspect that the route will be easier if done in the reverse direction.



you plough through it. If you manage to get through here without hitting a tree, there are some dongas up ahead where you'll have to stack rocks.

There are a number of hairpin bends on Bezuidenhout Pass and each of them offers its own challenge. Stop and get out of your vehicle before each bend to

check what's going on on the other side, because there may be a surprise ahead. One such hairpin twist was particularly muddy, and we had to tackle it with momentum to prevent us from getting stuck. Unfortunately, the post-bend surprise was a fairly substantial hole, and the aluminum panels on the back of our

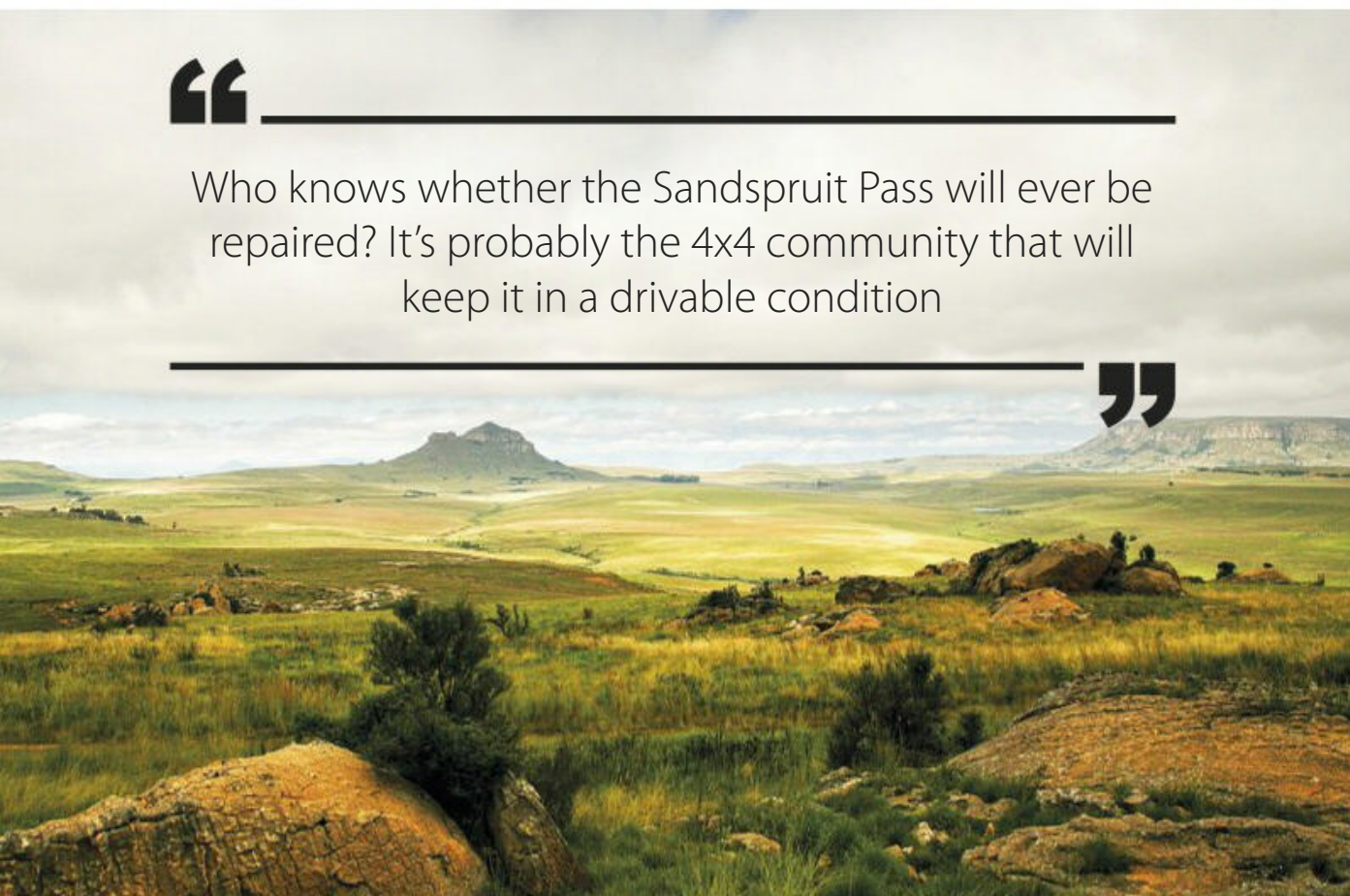




“

Who knows whether the Sandspruit Pass will ever be repaired? It's probably the 4x4 community that will keep it in a drivable condition

”



rented holiday vehicle received no small amount of damage.

We're not sure how many times we used the bottle jack and spade on Bezuidenhouts, but the calluses on our hands suggest it was often.

The last obstacle on the route is a pile of stones and ledges, and judging by the notches and scuff marks left by previous vehicles, this obstacle is nobody's playmate. We spent some time here to work on our stone stacking skills.

About two hours after embarking along the 5 km pass, you'll finally reach the top

(S28.53568 E29.20348).

Drive through a farm gate before joining a good gravel road that takes you back to the Bergville Road.

If you mastered the Sandspruit and Bezuidenhout passes in a pukka off-road rig – as opposed to the more pedestrian rental that we drove – you could also head over to the nearby Retief Pass for a hat trick before returning to your campsite at Glen Reenen.

By now you'll have a pretty good idea of what the Boer pioneers managed with their ox carts back in the day.



What you need to know



Will I scratch my vehicle? The chances are good, yes.

Do I need to take a compressor? Yes.

Can I braai along the way? There are no braai facilities. Please don't set the veld on fire.

Can I turn around halfway? The passes are narrow, but there are spots to turn.

Is there cellphone signal? Mostly yes, but not in the deep ravines.

Best time to go? In the summer months. The passes are deadly when it snows.

Can I take my family along? Yes, they can help pack rocks!

Just for the day or is it a weekend trip? A weekend.

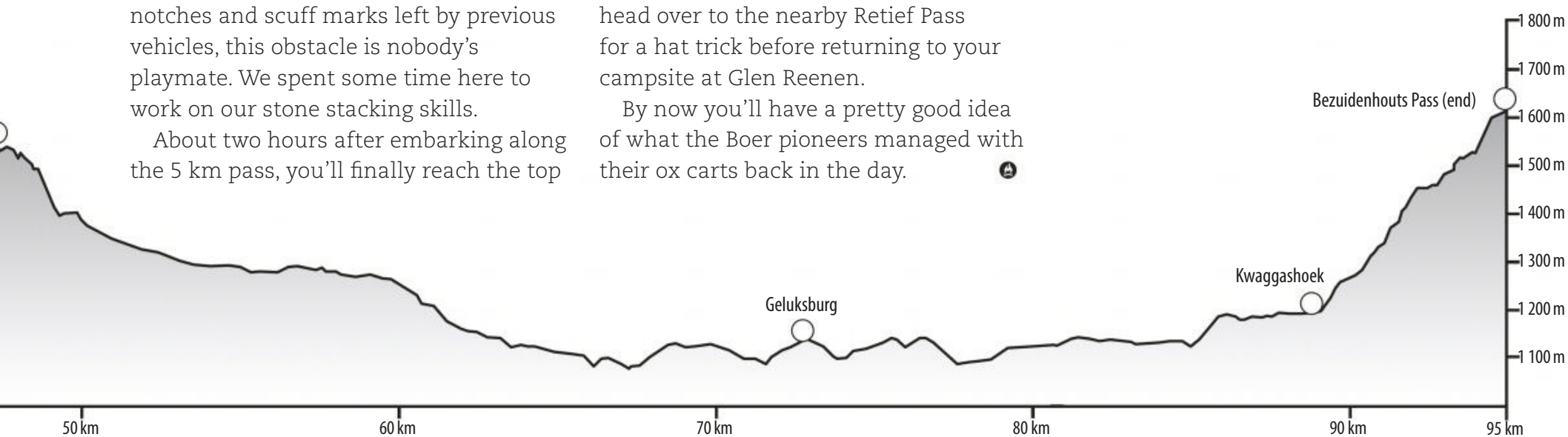
How long does it take? A full day.

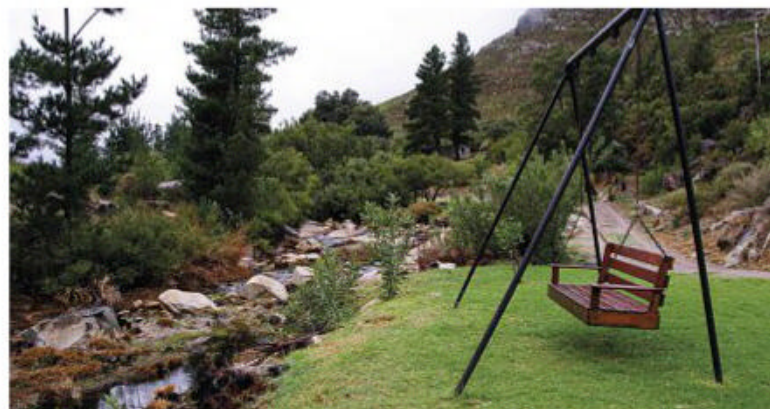
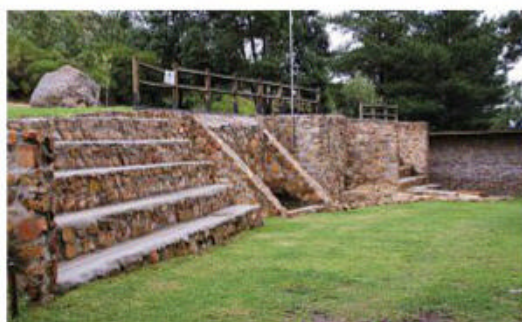
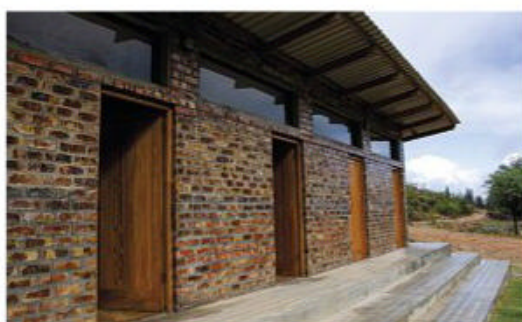
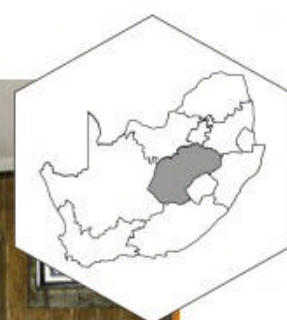
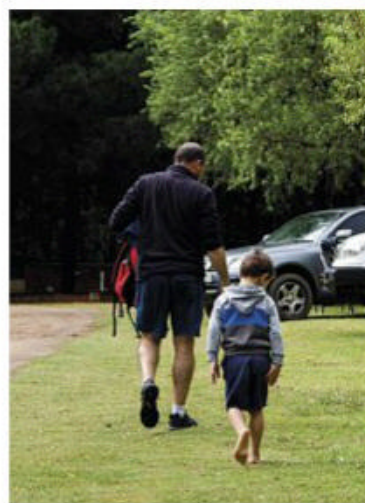
Are there ablution facilities? No.

Directions The passes lie between Harrismith and Bergville, exactly on the border between the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal.

Price Free – these are public roads.

GPS S28.47034 E29.37141 (Sandspruit Pass) and S28.54326 E29.20936 (Bezuidenhouts Pass)





Shining star

As you drive through the gate at Blinkwater, you know right away that you're in for a relaxing time. **Jacques and Jeanne Brand** from Klapmuts in the Western Cape tell us what they love about the place.

“We've been camping with our tents for many years and also raised our children, Gretha (7) and Marius (5), to enjoy and appreciate this lifestyle. The biggest tantrum Marius ever threw was because we didn't go camping!

This past Easter weekend, we looked for a spot to relax and I found the Blinkwater campsite at the Citrusdal Lodge online. Reviewers had only good things to say about the place, about 10 km outside Citrusdal. As it's not too far from our home, I made an enquiry. The rates were quite acceptable, we loaded the car and headed there.

TELL US MORE ABOUT THE CAMPSITE?

We were pleasantly surprised with it. The photos on their website don't do justice to how neat and well thought through it all is. Everything is in its place and you couldn't ask for more. There are 14 sites in a gorge with the Boontjies River flowing past nearby. I must mention that you don't see the river from all the stands, but there is an abundance of grass and trees. Each stand has a free-standing steel braai, power point (blue and ordinary socket) and tap. There is also a communal braai

lapa if you and a bunch of friends want to braai together, and there are three fridges you may use to keep your food fresh. Then there are also a number of unmarked stands, but they're quite far from ablution facilities. When we were there, those campers drove their cars to the bathroom. I heard, though, they've got plans to develop more ablution facilities.

HOW ARE THE ABLUTION FACILITIES?

I've never seen anything like it. I'm not exaggerating when I say the bathrooms are bigger than ours at home. You get a full bathroom for yourself with a bath, shower, basin, toilet and all that. It's especially suitable for people with children, like our family. There are four of these bathrooms in the ablution block and they have a full-time cleaner on duty. The place is therefore clean and tidy throughout the day. There are also dishwashing facilities at the ablution block.

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO THEY HAVE?

You come here to relax. But I have this to say about Blinkwater's pool: they divert water from the river in and out of the pool; so you swim in fresh water that is

hasn't been treated with chlorine. And it's a full 3 m deep! We swam over Easter, and I'm sure in the hot summer months it's a welcome respite. But the most important thing is that our children are safe while camping – and here they are. They could play and walk up and down the river without any trouble. There are also hiking and biking trails here.

IS THERE A SHOP?

No, but they sell wood and ice – there's an honesty box for money. ”

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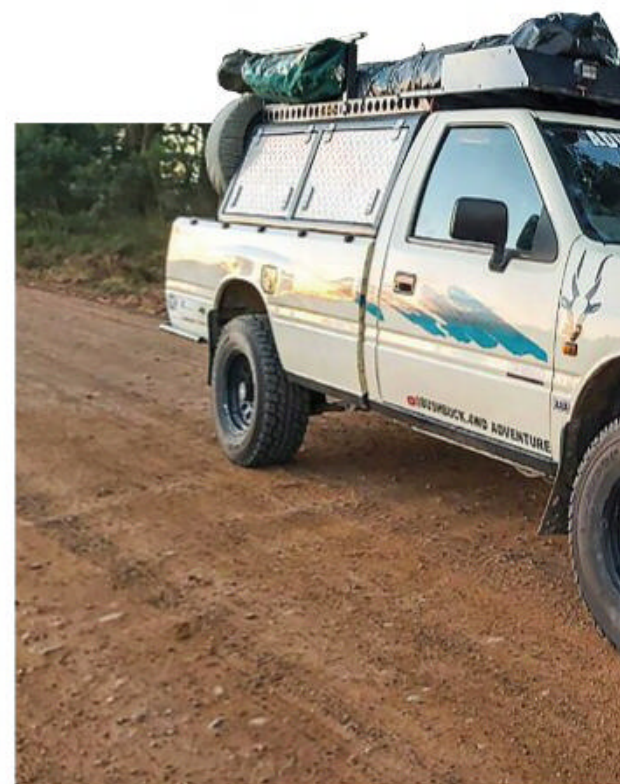


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Sentimental value

Bitten by the off-road bug but looking for something that offered a little more breathing room, **Jeandre Marais** from Gqeberha was gifted an old Isuzu KB by his grandfather and has cherished every minute of it.

“ My off-roading hobby was kickstarted when my parents gave me a **Suzuki Jimny**. The Jimny isn't the biggest vehicle and pretty soon I started to run out of space. Luckily my grandfather Johan Marais offered his **Isuzu KB 280 LE single cab** to me a year and a half ago. He purchased it **brand new in 1997** and had meticulously maintained it in the 22 years he owned it.

In the time that I've owned the KB, it's been through **extensive modifications** to keep up with my touring expectations. Speaking of which, this bakkie's taken me all around South Africa's coastline and along our borders.

The KB's got a club-cab canopy over the load bed, with **dual spare wheels** behind it. It's also got an **auxiliary diesel tank** and a water tank as well. A **fridge/freezer** that





slides out on top of a **drawer system**.

There's a pair of **Hella Pencil Beam** driving lamps up front that are supplemented by a quartet of **Lightforce** items up on the roof rack. The rack also carries diesel Jerry cans, **recovery tracks** and not one but two awnings. The most recent modification was the **off-road bumper** up front.

The suspension system's been made a little more durable thanks to a set of **Old Man Emu shocks** and **Tough Dog leaf springs**, and the KB rides on a set of 15-inch **Dunlop GrandTrek AT3G** off-road rubber.

The engine is still stock standard, and from the time it left the showroom floor it's only



GRANDPA'S TRUCK. A well-maintained Isuzu can last you a lifetime, claims Jeandre Marais. It may be an old-school vehicle, but Jeandre has brought it up to date with off-road components. The engine has reasonably low mileage, for the generation vehicle, and so Jandre expects to get decades of use out of it.



covered **180 000 km**. It has to be one of the lowest mileage old KBs around. Obviously, my grandfather kept his hand on it, but the Isuzu's **legendary reliability** has taken me to and from all corners of our country. My grandfather and I visited the **Richtersveld** together; he in his Iveco Daily 4x4 and me in the KB. Even in the sand, the KB returned a fuel consumption average of **9 L/100 km**. If I wasn't constrained by a budget, then I would opt to have a camper shell fitted on the load bed just to make camping a little **more luxurious**. But as it stands, I think my KB shows that you can have an overlander that doesn't have to cost you an arm and a leg. Still, the modifications have set me back close to **R100 000** so far.

I won't mess with anything mechanically, because modifications will negatively affect reliability. I own a few other vehicles and am also building a Prado at the moment to go off-roading in, but I'll always have a soft spot for the Isuzu.

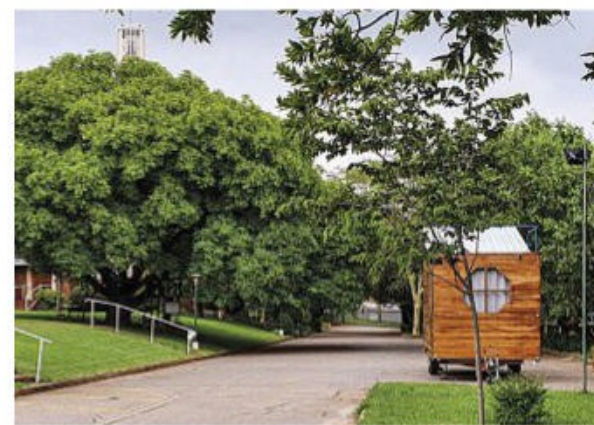
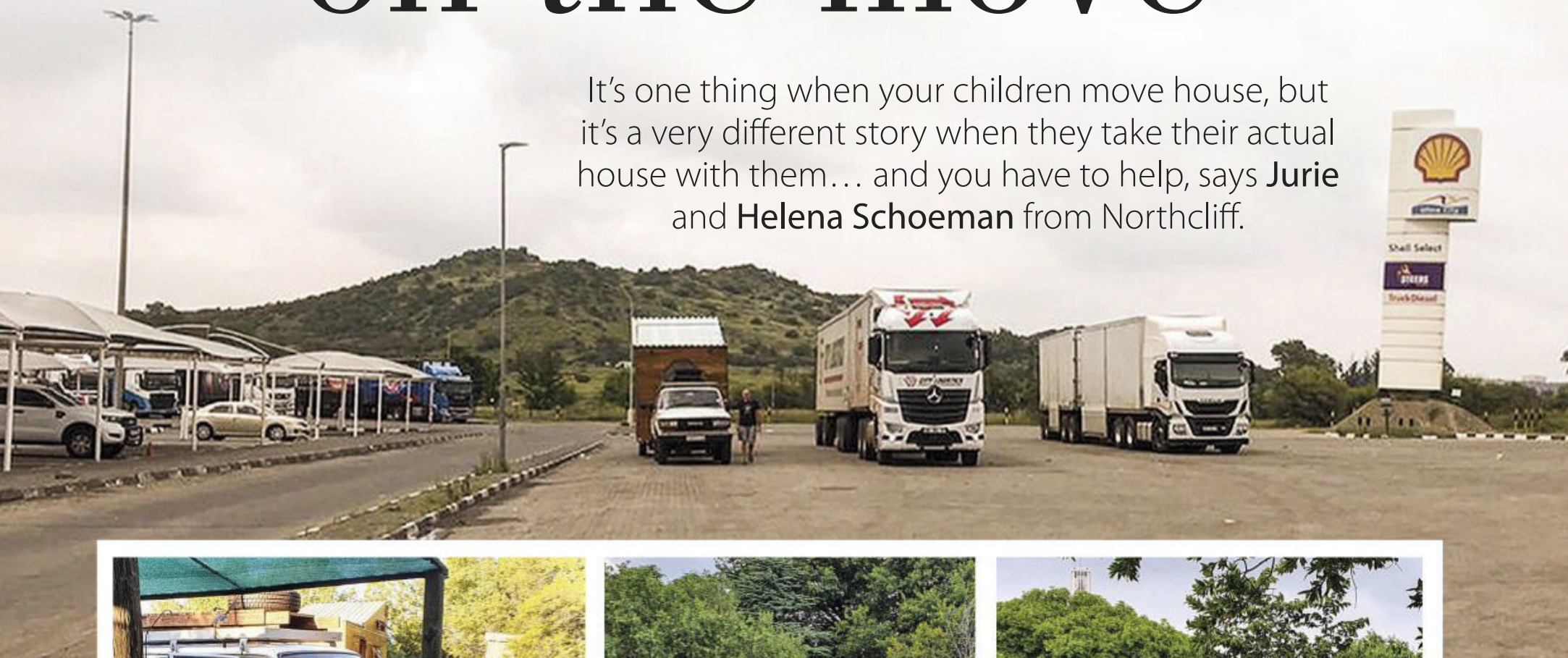


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A tiny house on the move

It's one thing when your children move house, but it's a very different story when they take their actual house with them... and you have to help, says **Jurie** and **Helena Schoeman** from Northcliff.



From when their children were young, the Schoemans encouraged them to think for themselves, and so today they still do, sometimes quite unconventionally. Jurie reckons Helena should get the credit, as she's the one who has always encouraged them to embrace their creativity.

Their second child, Stefanie – or Dita, as everyone calls her – not only has a passion for plant-based food, but shares an interest in small mobile living spaces, called tiny houses, with her partner, Jaydon Meidlinger. Jaydon, with his architectural genes, built them a tiny house with reclaimed wood.

The construction followed after many hours of reflection and discussion – sometimes quite heated – with Stefanie. Finally, the tiny house is 6 x 2,4 m in size

(and 4 m tall) with a bedroom upstairs that overlooks a deck when the roof is raised. Below are the living spaces with a well-equipped kitchen and plenty of storage space. It's all built on a double-axle trailer and the weight is limited to 2,5 tonnes for towing.

Dita and Jaydon's tiny house was completed during lockdown on the holiday farm Tegwaan near Waterval Boven, owned by friends of theirs.

When Jaydon and Stefanie decided to enroll their children at the Green School in Cape Town, the tiny house had to be moved from Waterval Boven to the Cape. Jurie says it was interesting to see how much attention the tiny house received – many people took pictures as they drove past, and Jaydon was properly peppered with questions wherever they stopped to

refuel their towing vehicle.

Speaking of which, they would need a capable towing vehicle, but luckily they own a 1988 Toyota Land Cruiser, though that 4-litre petrol engine is thirsty.

The Cruiser used to belong to Philip Reyneke, a retired urologist, so they christened the stately rig Flippie. Flippie had just under 200 000 km on the clock and has been on many trips to our neighboring countries. Flippie showed what he's made of yet again on this trip.

Flippie had 2,4 t to tow – the goal was to maintain an easy 80 km/h, but even that was a struggle at times.

Grandpa Jurie and grandma Helena were invited to join this epic trip to Cape Town, as the couple's second vehicle, a Nissan X-Trail with its own trailer, needed to get to the Cape as well. There

would be room for the two grandchildren, Noah and Rein, the dogs, Prophet and Sky, and everyone's luggage.

But the challenge suddenly became much greater when Jaydon found out that he could not tow such a heavy trailer with his driving license. Instead, Jurie had to get behind the wheel of the Cruiser. The party vowed they would not travel more than 300 km a day with the little ones and the dogs – and told Jurie he could decide on the itinerary. He tells us more...

“The first shift – all 290 km of it beckoned. Our departure point was near the Aan-die-Berg church in Northcliff and we headed for the Bundu camp next to the N1 near Ventersburg.

On Wednesday, 13 January, both vehicles stood ready with their trailers. We left later than we'd planned – no surprises there – and followed Beyers Naudé Drive onto the N1, heading south.

On the first stretch of road, I felt the anxiety grip me as the tiny house started to sway. I could see in my mind's eye how the whole jaunt could go awry and my throat tightened up.

I grew up around trucks and experienced a lot of things, but I felt out of my depth here. It wasn't going to work at all... We limped to the first Engen One Stop and stopped. Jaydon rearranged items in the interior and swapped stuff between the Cruiser and the tiny house.

I told him he would have to drive as my nerves weren't going to make it. But back on the N1, we towed the 2,4 t house with ease. I was still somewhat traumatised, but Jaydon's smile and the calm pace helped settle my nerves. We stayed in third gear at 3 000 rpm, but we were making progress.

The Bundu camp outside Ventersburg is a beautiful place, looked after by Chené Welgemoed. They've got several self-catering units, including several

rondavels that can accommodate several people. The place is right next to the Sand River and everything was lush green after good rains.

FOR OUR SECOND SHIFT on the Thursday, the Gariep Dam beckoned. At 311 km, it was slightly farther than we'd agreed, but we decided it was doable.

Early that morning we tucked into some coffee and rusks before I got behind the wheel, still feeling a bit nervous. I had to engage low range to not destroy too much of the wet grass, but as soon as we got back onto the N1, I could accelerate. Everything went smoothly and the double axle would do its usual hop-hop, but the tiny house stayed in Flippie's tracks.

I stuck to my self-imposed speed limit of 80 km/h, and before long, I could not only relax, but also start to enjoy it. I had the precious lives of loved ones with their entire existence in my care, and driving has always been fun for me. The Nissan



THINK SMALL. Tiny houses have become all the rage in the US and in Europe, and now, thanks to Dita and Jaydon, they may become a common sight in South Africa too. The advantage of a tiny house is that it's mobile. Don't confuse it with a caravan, though, because you typically move a tiny house no more than once or twice in, say, a decade.



READER'S STORY

X-trail stayed faithfully in the rearview mirror and I envied its occupants their calm mood.

Bloemfontein came and went, and after good coffee, the second shift felt good. We like to stop at the Kuilfontein farm stall just outside Springfontein as their food and service are exceptional. The last few kilometers to the Gariep N1 chalets flew by quickly.

The little ones immediately jumped into the farm dam and frolicked non-stop. And the dogs ran around merrily while a lone turkey checked them out, not quite trusting them.

We slept in an old building that was probably a store in days gone by. It was comfortable, but had too little light and fresh air. Around 02:00 the floodgates opened – it was pouring with rain and I got worried about the possibility that we could get stuck on our way back to the N1. I got up to look, but all I could see was the turkey, braving the storm on one leg.

Daylight brought new perspective and hope, and we got underway with no problems. Puddles everywhere and farm dams overflowing. You could see the sun reflecting off puddles of water far into the veld. The Karoo was overflowing with the blessing of rain. There were, of course, side effects like entire platoons of mosquitoes attacking us and causing lots of itchy welts.

THE THIRD SHIFT on the Friday had us push to the Cape province. At 363 km, it was the longest shift.

We refuelled at Colesberg, and from here the road surface gradually deteriorated. You may not notice it in a modern sedan, but the 33-year-old Flippie with his leaf springs and the colossal weight behind him did. The trip turned into an uncomfortable ordeal.

The fuel lasted until Richmond, where my tired son-in-law slid in behind the wheel. He persisted and we arrived safely at X-Ventures. Dead on our feet.

ON OUR WAY there, we had one quick challenge: shortly after turning off the N1, Jaydon swerved for a puddle – and the Cruiser ended up in a muddy ditch. Imagine... a muddy ditch in the Karoo? It took a while of rocking back and forth in low range, but we finally reached our destination and let out sighs of relief.



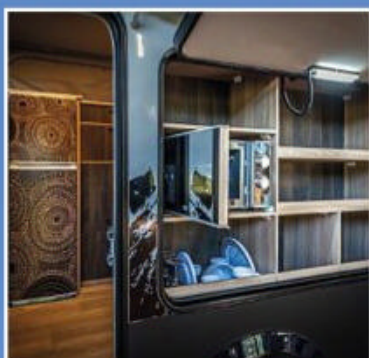
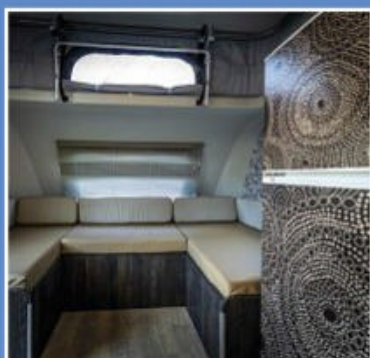
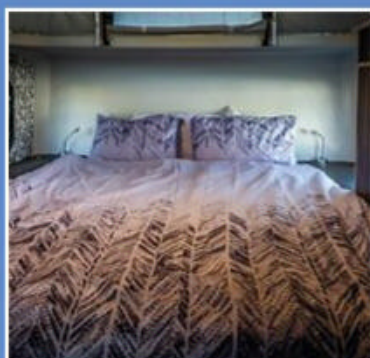
HIPPY SHAKES. The tiny house movement became popular during the 2007 financial crisis when these homes allowed Americans to achieve a sustainable lifestyle. Their children have chosen a road less travelled by embracing a life with a tiny carbon footprint, and Jurie and Helena couldn't be more proud of them.





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STEALTH GRAVEL EN-SUITE



SPECIFICATIONS

DESCRIPTION
X-COUNTRY
EN-SUITE

TARE MASS
1320 kg

GROSS VEHICLE MASS (GVM)
1600 kg std /
1800 kg
optional

HEIGHT
2 200 mm

WIDTH
2 400 mm

LENGTH
6 100 mm

PAYLOAD
280 kg

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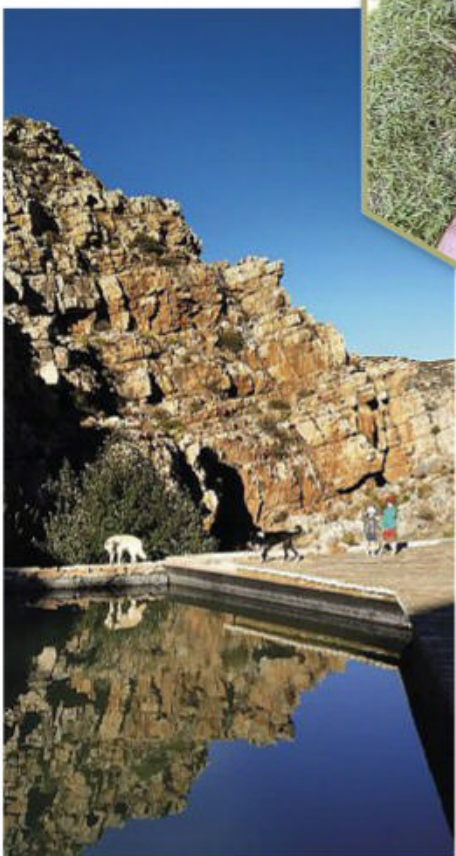
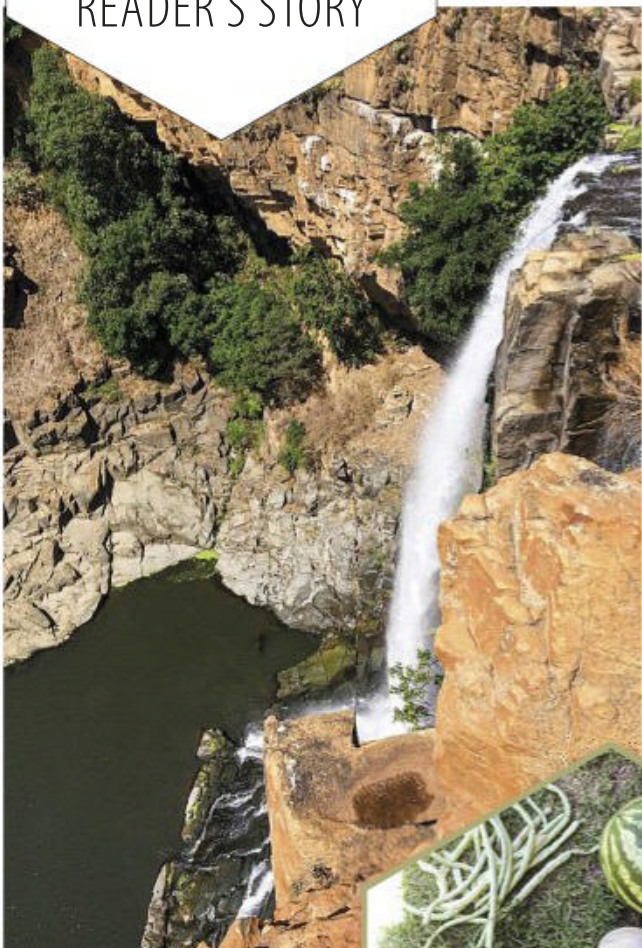
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EXCITING. The family was so impressed by X-Ventures in the Karoo that they stayed an extra day. Owner Jaco Marais was equally impressed by the Meidlinger family and offered them fresh veggies from his garden.

“

Sometimes you have to be flexible when your planning doesn't work out the way you hoped

”



X-Ventures is a refreshing oasis in the heart of the Karoo and it's obvious a lot of creative thought has gone into it. I don't know if an oasis is the right word, though. There are a host of activities and the little ones can play in the pool and the long slide. The energy that Jaco Marais and his team has is contagious and you realise that the potential and imagination South Africans possess really can get us through any crisis.

We relaxed so much that we decided to extend our trip by a day. We ended the day with a braai – the vegetarians got mushrooms – and ended the meal with a watermelon from Jaco's garden.

WE LEFT ON SUNDAY on our fourth

shift to Laingsburg – or that was the plan. According to my itinerary, we only had to drive 209 km, but it eventually came to 322 km. Sometimes you have to be flexible when your planning doesn't work out the way you hoped.

We hit the road and refueled in Beaufort West. At the filling station, where we also checked all the fluid levels, I spotted a classic American caravan, and involuntarily Gert Vlok Nel's song "Beautiful in Beaufort-West" came to mind. Somewhere he sings how they play around on a Ford Fairlane's back seat...

Jaydon now drove his faithful Cruiser himself and we took the N1 deeper into the Karoo. The many puddles of water now made way for the typical dry Karoo

veld. It speaks to you; the beauty of the expansive veld. As far as the eye could see were expanses of muisbos and rhino bush. With dry, barren cliffs watching us from afar, as they have done for millions of years.

Suddenly there was an LED notification: "Mandatory stop for rest!" My heart beat in my throat. What if they realise Jaydon's driving license doesn't allow him to tow? He'd get a fine and their money was a bit tight at the time.

The police diverted all the traffic to a pleasant camp next to the road and the staff came closer, greeted us warmly, asked after our well-being – and my driving license. I handed mine over and tried to see what was happening at the

KENNIS CARAVANS & MOTORHOMES

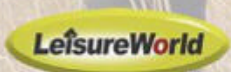
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MOTORHOME-WORLD



READER'S STORY

Cruiser. The man at our window wished us a good journey and I got in behind Flippie, who was also leaving. The officer even took a pic of the house on wheels.

When we were back at speed again, I called Jaydon. He giggled; the officer looked at his driver's license and returned it without saying a word.

We carried on and reached Laingsburg at a decent hour, but now we were in for another shock: the caravan park where we booked did not match the photos on the website. My wife and daughter refused to stay there, with little Rein loudly supporting Grandma and Mom.

We pulled over under a shade tree and started searching online – after several calls, it turned out that there was room at the Karoo 1 Hotel & Village. That was another 110 km, just past Touws River. We headed off, and shortly past the solar farm, we got to our lodgings. The quality of the place and the service delighted us. It was under new management and their restoration work involved a huge amount of effort to preserve the character of the old sheep farm.

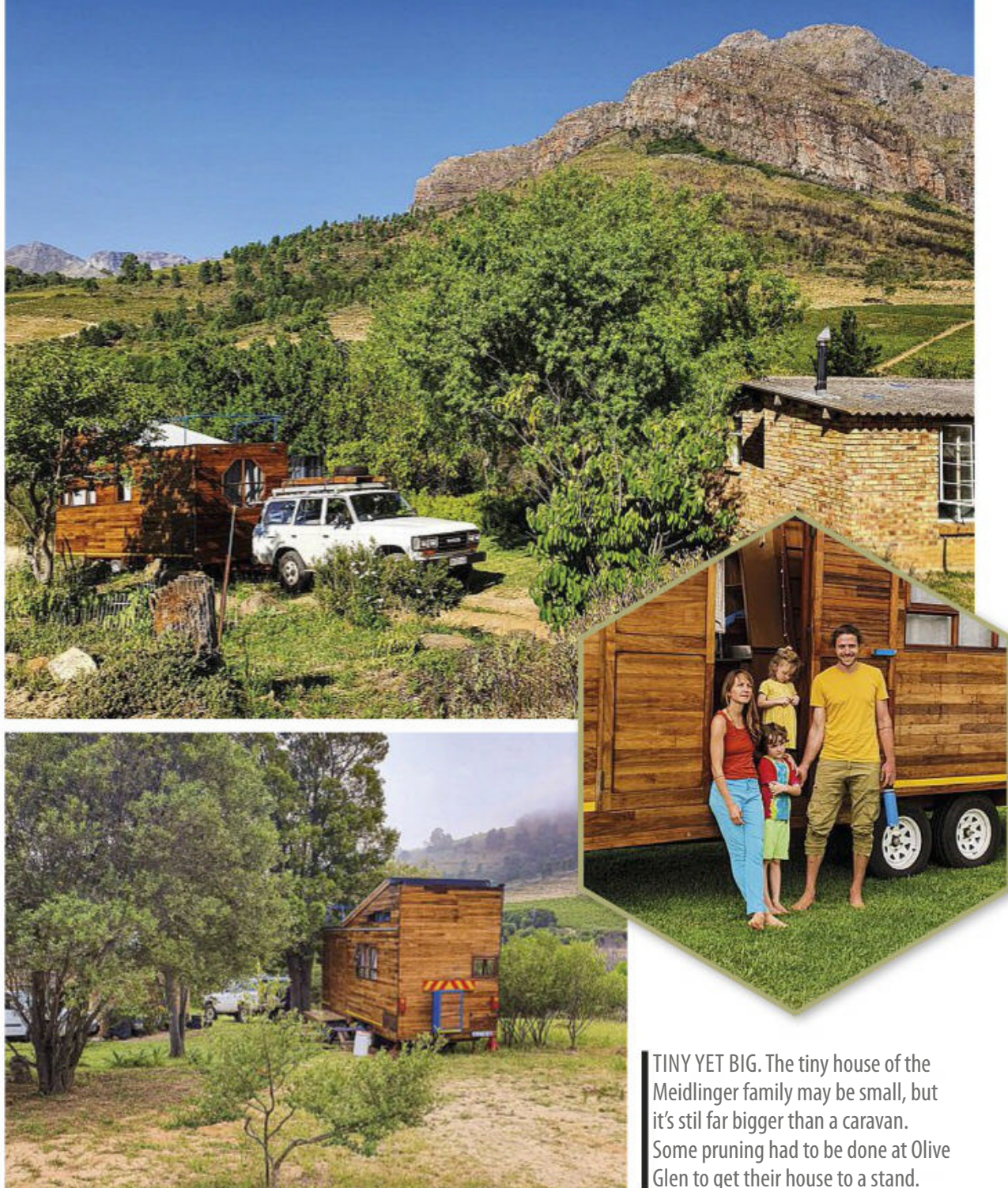
We went for a walk in a gorge, where a beautiful rock pool awaited us. Again, the little ones and the dogs had a whale of a time in the water.

THE FIFTH AND FINAL shift of 204 km turned out to be only 211 km. The hostess at our destination suggested we take the quieter route – the R46/R44, through Touws River and Tulbagh – and from there the R101 to Olive Glen. That way we also avoided the strong wind.

By now, Jaydon was comfortable behind the wheel, but the road was narrow with many ups and downs and very sharp turns. It was also scorching hot and the dogs' tongues were out. The two little ones started getting impatient and we all looked forward to our arrival at Olive Glen. It's a piece of land that lends itself to camping for mountaineers, but they would like to remain a hidden gem.

The owners, Bruce and Avril Powrie, are such pleasant and hospitable people, and they had agreed that the Meidlingers could rent a stand for a few months.

SOMEWHERE IN TRAFFIC we lost the Cruiser and we were very grateful to be the first to arrive at Olive Glen. The entrance is narrow, as is the road – and



TINY YET BIG. The tiny house of the Meidlinger family may be small, but it's still far bigger than a caravan. Some pruning had to be done at Olive Glen to get their house to a stand.

there were overhanging trees. I was worried about whether we'd get the 4 m tall tiny house through there. Bruce guided us through and pointed out where to go; he would wait for Jaydon.

A short while later, he called and asked us to come to the entrance with a saw and a ladder. We had to cut down many branches to clear the road, crossed a very narrow bridge and finally reached our destination. All in one piece.

After the children settled down, we had dinner as a family, and prayed together to give thanks. We had covered 1 497 km with no real mishaps. The two dogs sat there reverently – it almost seemed as though they understood the prayer.

ON THE PLANE BACK home, Helena and

I reflected on the daring journey and what could have inspired our children to set this course in life. They are young South Africans, who love our country and its people. They want to stay here and make a difference. They make me proud and I am grateful for them.

I also remain an ardent Toyota fan. Flippie behaved flawlessly, and we forgave him his thirst. I remember the words of Anton Goosen's song "Kruidjie roer my nie". His conclusion is that it doesn't matter where he and his beloved live – in Waterkloof Ridge or next to Parrafontein.

Jaydon and Stefanie have each other and their two children – plus the dogs – and they are carving their own pioneering path. Our children are brave creatures.

CAMP COVER www.campcover.co.za

Jurie and Helena wins a Camp Cover Bundu Bag worth R400. This multipurpose 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 campcover.co.za.



WIN

BECOME A CHALLENGER WIN A FORTUNER

FORTUNER CHALLENGE 2021

One lucky *go! Drive & Camp* reader* will team up with a South African sports hero for the chance to win a Toyota Fortuner.

INTERESTED? Take a photo or make a video (optional, but it will make your entry stand out) and visit toyota.m24lifestyle.co.za to fill in the online entry form. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details.

WHO ARE THE HEROES?

Oupa Mohojé

Cheetah and former Springbok rugby player

Giniel de Villiers

Dakar Rally racing driver

Ashleigh Moolman Pasio

Olympic cyclist

Zaakirah Khalek

Fitness trainer and influencer



TOYOTA

LEAD THE WAY

UP FOR GRABS

OVERALL WINNER

TOYOTA FORTUNER 2.4 GD-6 RB 6MT

RETAIL VALUE: OVER R540 000

Specialized Stumpjumper Alloy 29er mountain bike valued at more than R40 000

Garmin fēnix Multisport Smartwatch worth over R10 000

Salomon Active gear worth over R5 000

CONTESTANT PRIZE

(one per title)

Garmin fēnix Multisport Smartwatch worth over R10 000



*One finalist will be chosen from *Weg/go!*, *Weg Ry & Sleep*, *go! Drive & Camp*, *Rapport* and *City Press* entrants. Entries close 11 September 2021. The finalist will compete in a series of physical challenges during a weekday event in October.



GARMIN. salomon





Catch an ocean fish inland

Big Fish is no tall fisherman's tale; it's a camping spot on the Gamtoos, with loads of fish to entice you.



BIG FISH CARAVAN PARK FISHERMAN'S PARADISE

Barely 700 m from where the N2 at Jeffreys Bay crosses the Gamtoos River, you'll find the Big Fish Caravan Park on the shore.

The resort runs for almost a kilometre down the river, and its barely 5 km from where the river flows into the sea. That means you'll find marine fish 'inland'.

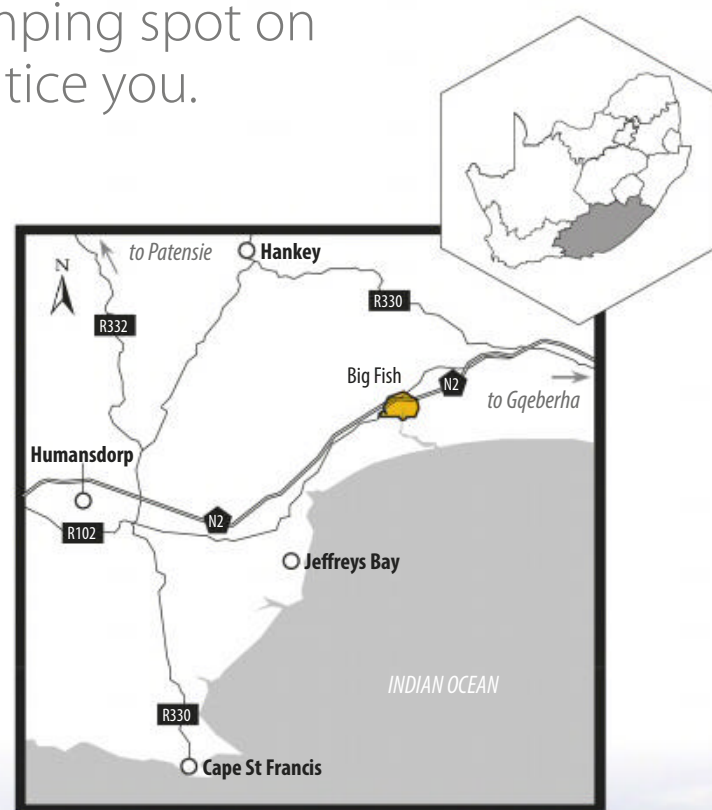
There are 38 sites, 14 of which are in a row next to the water. All the stands are nicely level and on grass. Each has a tap

with municipal water, a built-in braai (with a grid), a light with its own switch, and a power point (blue Fredlin plugs).

Two separate bathroom buildings contain 14 family bathrooms, each with a sink for washing dishes next to it. Each bathroom has a bath or shower, plus a flush toilet.

The children's play park has two trampolines, swings, seesaws and a jungle gym as well as a swimming pool from where you have a view of the river.

When it comes to fishing, all campers





Briefly | Big Fish



Fish Southern mullet, cod, small spotted grunter, bluefish, steenbras, Cape elephantfish, bartail flathead, Indian threadfish, eel-catfish, white barbel and garrick, among others.

Campsite 38 level stands on grass, half of which have shade trees. Fourteen are on the water.

Ablution facilities 14 family bathrooms for everyone's use.

Price Depending on the season, R350 or R550 pd per stand for up to 2 people and 1 vehicle. Thereafter, R75 or R100 pp (max 6 people per stand). Depending on the season, kids 2-16 years or 7-16 years camp for free.

Arrival and departure In season, 12:00 and 11:00 (on weekends out of season it is 08:00 on Fridays and 16:00 Sundays).

Contact 079 202 5143

info@bigfishcaravan.co.za

bigfishcaravan.co.za

Nearest town Jeffreys Bay, 20 km.

Road condition You will drive at least 1,2 km on a good dirt road.

GPS S33.940875 E25.015927

Dive & Camps says The resort is on the working dairy farm Cosa-Moo-Selot that belongs to Christo and Adelé Bain. Take a look at the white Holstein dairy herd with their black spots.

have easy access to the river shore, but remember, you need a fishing permit.

If yours has expired or you don't have one, stop at the post office in Jeffreys Bay. Just be sure you know the type and numbers of fish you may catch.

The owners are in favour of catch and release, but if you want to have fresh fish on the braai tonight, that's okay.

Want to fish from a boat? There is a launch site just past the last stands.

Near the pool, the owners are setting up four private stands next to the river. Each of them gets paving and, of course, each will have its own bathroom.



FISHING GEAR

Cranking up your bait

When you've got your eye on a black bass, tigerfish or even yellowfish and the water depth is 1-2 m where you expect the fish, consider Komatsu's Shallow Shad Crankbait.

The so-called crankbait lures have a hard body and two sets of tri-hooks, and the different sizes of lips determine its diving depth.

The larger the lip, the deeper the bait goes. When you let the line go, the bait floats upwards. If you then start reeling it in again, it heads back down.

The Shallow Shad is an excellent imitation of a fish and 8 cm long. It has an enticing swimming movement as

you reel it in, and there are five versions available: Perch, sardine, bream, baby bass and mullet.

It weighs 13 g, which means you can cast it about 25 m. With its two sets of hooks, your chances of catching a curious fish are almost doubled.

Price R125 each.

Contact Available in angling stores nationwide, also in Namibia.

catches@4adrenalin.co.za

adrenalinfishing.co.za



FISH DISH

QUICK FISHCAKES Snack attack

These quick fish cakes are a great way to use any fried leftover fish – it's perfectly fine to use different types of fish together.

Ingredients

(makes 4 snacks)

- 3 cups cooked fish, flaked
- ¾ cup of panko breadcrumbs (or use regular breadcrumbs)
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 4 spring onions, chopped
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- olive oil for shallow frying
- mayonnaise and lemon wedges to serve

Here's how

1 Mix the fish, breadcrumbs, eggs, spring onions, lemon juice and season with salt and ground black pepper.

The mixture should not be too dry or too runny – either add more crumbs or more fish if so.

2 Heat a generous splash of olive oil in



a pan and spoon the fish mixture in to form the cakes.

Press them a little flat with a spatula and then fry the cakes over medium heat until both sides are nice and golden brown. Set aside as you fry the rest.

3 Eat the fish cakes while still piping hot, with your favourite dipping sauce – I like them with peri-naise.

Drive & Camp says If you don't have leftover fish, you can use smoked fish, or simply pan-fry or steam some.

Recipe and styling Johane Neilson Photo Ed O'Reilly

Jeep, Jeeper, Jeepest



2006 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE LIMITED 3.0

He is no fanatical supporter of any brand – he has, after all, owned several vehicles over the years – but his Jeep Grand Cherokee has his heart, says **Berno Punt** from Grabouw in the Western Cape.

This is my third Jeep. The first was a 2003 Grand Cherokee 4.7 HO, but I sold it because of its high petrol consumption. After that I owned a number of other vehicles, including a Mitsubishi Triton, Nissan X-Trail and a Kia Sportage, but the Grand Cherokee stood out for me.

Then I bought another Jeep, this time a 4.0 Grand Cherokee, also in the WJ series. Unfortunately, it struggled to tow my Sprite Swing. I then sold the 4 l petrol and started looking for a 3 l turbodiesel in the WK series. I finally found one on Gumtree and got it from a guy in Simon's

Town. The car smoked a bit, but its R65 000 price tag convinced me to take a chance on it.

The opulence you get, the leather seats... it has everything you need. The paint was still good – sure, it had some scratches, but overall it was a bargain.

Interior and future plans

The cups of the interior door handles are perishing and I'm looking for someone with a 3D printer who can print new ones for me. Other than that, everything still looks good.

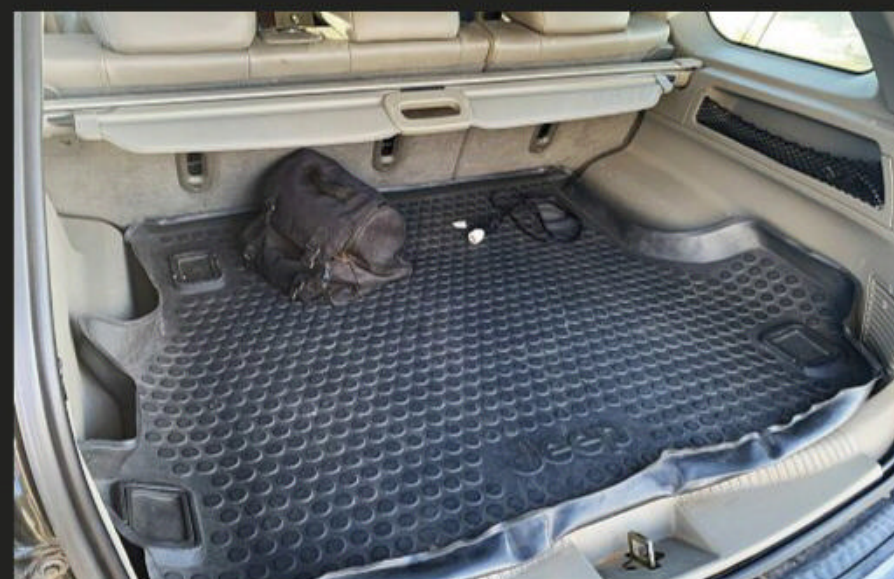
This is not my daily driver: I also have a farm bakkie I use for



THEN & NOW



THAT NEW CAR SMELL. The interior shown here is not quite the same spec as Berno's model, but the buttons in Berno's Jeep still look brand new with no faded lettering or loose spring mechanisms.



PATINA. Don't think the dust on the engine is a sign of negligence, rather, it shows that the Jeep is being used for what it's made for. Toolbox for what? Berno says he only carries an air compressor.

work, and my wife, Liezel, drives a Mercedes-Benz C180.

She likes her Merc and sometimes we argue about what we'll be driving on the weekend – but the Jeep usually wins out, because that's the only chance I get to drive it. In the year and a half I have had it, I have only put 8 000 km on the clocks.

Liezel and I and our two sons, Adriaan (13) and Heinrich (10)

often visit my father in De Kelders where I drive on Die Plaat. We've been to Hartenbos, up the West Coast and gone snow-watching in Ceres, but due to lockdown, we haven't been farther up the East Coast than Mossel Bay with my Jeep. I'm planning a trip through Namibia, though, as Liezel has not visited there yet.

As far as conversions go, I'm going to keep my Jeep stock

standard. No roof racks, mud tyres or anything butch like that.

Power delivery

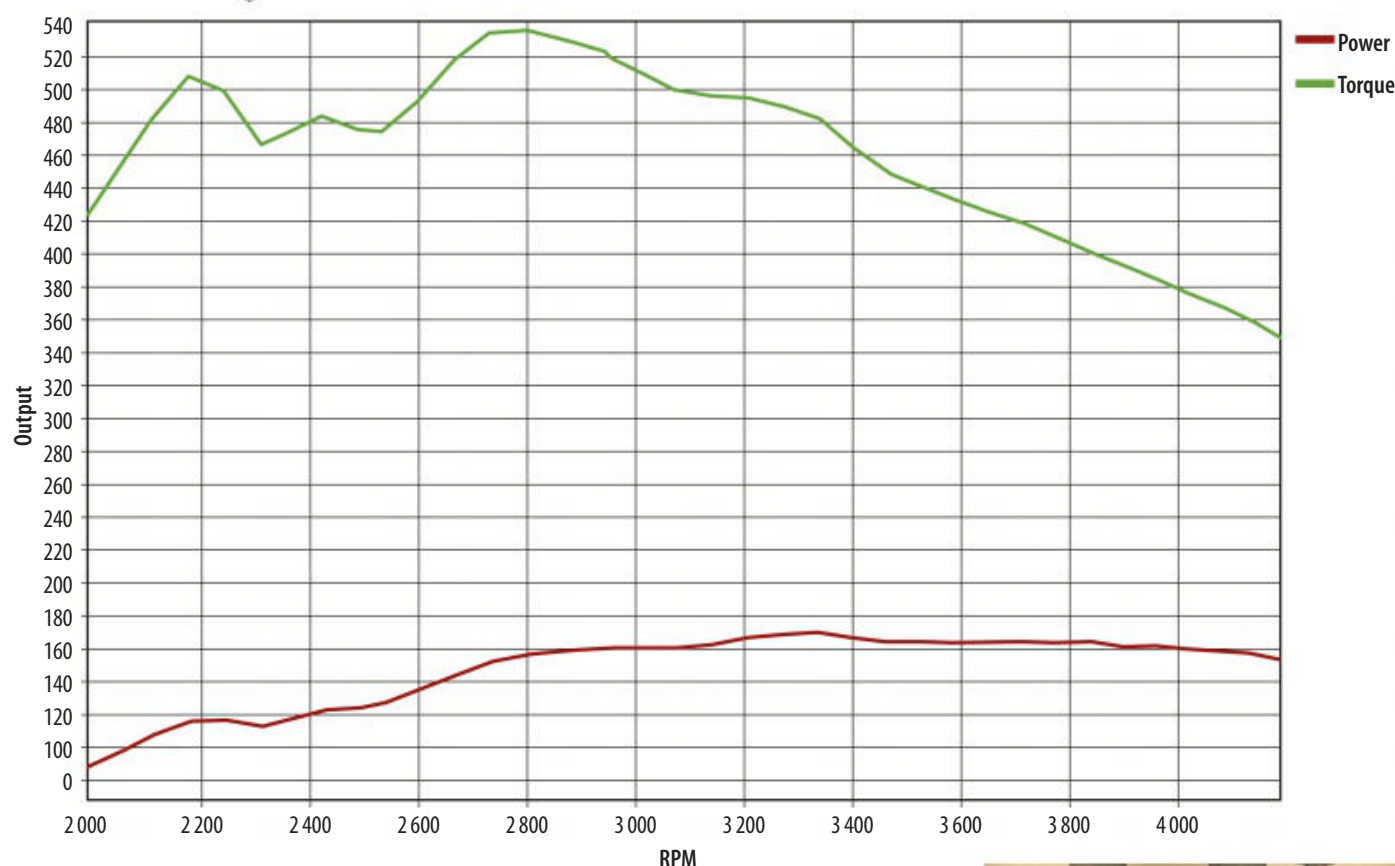
My Jeep had a microchip when I bought it, but I removed it immediately, because I feel the 3 l turbodiesel has enough power for my needs.

At first my Jeep felt a bit sluggish, though, and after a fruitless search I took it to L&M

Automotive in Stellenbosch.

They examined the air intakes and discovered that the swirl flaps were stuck. These valves lower pollution, but also inhibit performance, especially when stuck. The mechanic removed them, as well as the catalytic converter, and after rewriting the software in the engine's electronic control unit (ECU), my Jeep pulls like a beast!

SECOND WIND



Wear and tear

The smoke I noticed at the start are a result of the high-pressure diesel injectors failing. I have replaced three of them so far and there are three more to go, but they cost a staggering R9 500 each and have to be ordered from Germany.

The front suspension and transverse axles need adjustment, but it is an old vehicle and therefore not unexpected – it has a permanent four-wheel drive, after all, which puts extra strain on the front suspension in particular.

I also replaced the bushes in the front diff and the air-conditioning pump. Besides the purchase price, I spent a

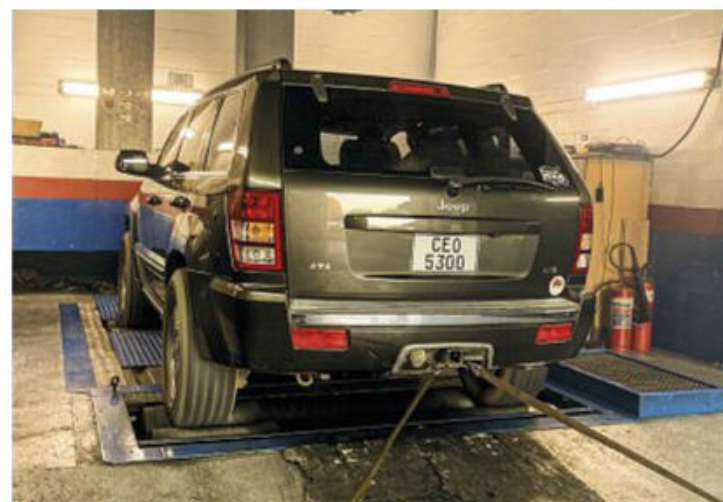
total of R35 000 on my Jeep.

Here's the thing with a second-hand vehicle: you must accept that there will be costs to get it up to standard or to fix something. Since I paid so little, I didn't mind spending money and improving the vehicle with each new part.

It is not at all an exotic vehicle and parts are relatively easily available from Jeep agents.

Scrap yards also have many Jeep parts and I find all kinds of plastic panels and so on there. I really never struggle to get my hands on parts.

Of course, it helps to join a Facebook group for Jeep owners and the Jeep forum on 4x4community.co.za for advice.



ENGINE SPECIFICATION

Series.....	Mercedes-Benz OM642
Cylinders	Longitudinal V6
Capacity	2 987 cc
Fuel supply	High-pressure injection, diesel
Air supply	Turbocharger
Camshaft	Dual overhead camshafts (DOHC)
Valves.....	24 (4 per cylinder)
Bore and stroke.....	83 mm and 92 mm
Compression ratio	18.0:1
Maximum revolutions	≈ 4 200 rpm (electronic limit)
Cooling.....	Liquid
Transmission	5-speed automatic

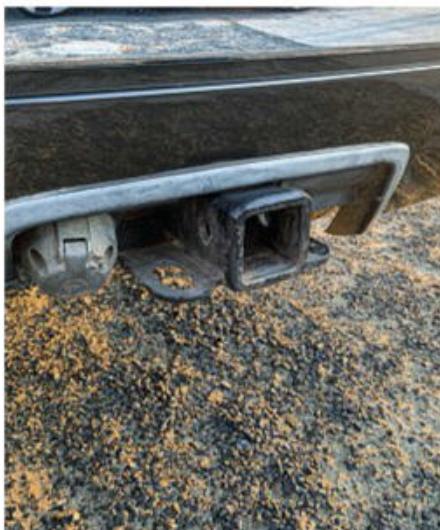




Show us yours!

This is the fourth in a series of articles focusing on older vehicles and specifically how they compare now to when they were new.

This time we scrutinise the Jeep Grand Cherokee of *Drive & Camp* reader **Berno Punt**, and we invite you to enter your own rig for some honest critique. We will pay for the dyno test and scour the archives for your vehicle's original specifications. Send your contribution to cyril.klopper@media24.com.



STARS AND STRIPES. To say that Berno (pictured in the top-most image) loves his Jeep would be an understatement. The boys love it when dad pulls the Jeep out because it means they're going on a trip.

THEN AND NOW

Make and model	Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited
Year model	2006
Odometer reading now	189 200 km
Maximum power then	160 kW @ 4 000 rpm
Maximum power now	169 kW @ 5 879 rpm*
Difference	5,63%
Maximum torque then	510 Nm @ 1 600 rpm
Maximum torque now	530 Nm @ 2 581 rpm*
Difference	9,92%
Weight then	2 142 kg
Weight now	2 142 kg
Difference	None
Power-to-weight ratio then	0,0747 kW/kg
Power-to-weight ratio now	0,0789 kW/kg
Difference	5,62%
Fuel consumption then	13,1 l/100 km
Fuel consumption now	12 l/100 km
Difference	8,4%
Purchase price then	R494 900
Value now	R100 000**
Difference	-79,79%

* tested by Dynotech, Kaapstad

** based on prices at cars.co.za

Should I buy secondhand?

Definitely! In the 15 years that Liesel and I have been married, we've owned 18 vehicles between the two of us. It doesn't matter how old it is; the Jeep drives comfortably, it's large enough and he has enough power for my needs.

I appreciate the packing space, and although our two boys are old enough that we do not need space for prams and baby carriages, we always have lots of baggage. The Jeep

is reliable and I won't hesitate to drive it to Durban – I'm not at all worried about it not making it.

On the open road, it gives me a consumption figure of 11,1 l/100 km (9 km/l) and in the city, it drops to 13,3 l/100 km (7,5 km / l). But really, is it any surprise considering the nature and weight of the vehicle? I don't think I will drive anything other than a Jeep again.



Flight of the Bumblebee

BMW R 1250 GS ADVENTURE '40 YEARS GS'

BMW's GS motorcycle family has come a long way. The latest flagship model pays homage to more than 40 years of adventure for this iconic name.

Words **Cyril Klopper** Photos **Supplied**



The first of BMW's GS motorcycles, the R80G/S, was introduced in 1980 and dominated the Dakar Rally from 1981 to 1985. Adventurer Ed Culberson then used an 80G/S in 1987 to drive the entire Pan-American Highway – from Prudhoe Bay in Alaska to Ushuaia in Argentina – crossing the infamous Darién Gap for the first time with a land vehicle.

The GS was therefore never an obscure motorbike, but it was a niche machine in a time when the rest of the world obsessed over superbikes. People paid little attention to adventure motorcycles back then.

The GS evolved over the years into the 100GS (980 cc), followed by the 1100GS and then the 1150GS. The latter was a breakthrough model for BMW when actor

friends Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman travelled from Britain across Eurasia to America in 2004 on the 1150GS, giving rise to a popular TV documentary.

The world was finally ready for adventure motorbikes, and BMW's two millionth motorcycle in 2011 was a 1200GS – at that time the most popular large-capacity motorcycle in the world.

What do we have here?

The BMW R 1250 GS Adventure Special Edition 40 Years of GS – goodness, what a mouthful! – launched in Europe in 2020, but due to the pandemic and economic reasons, it only arrived much later in South Africa.

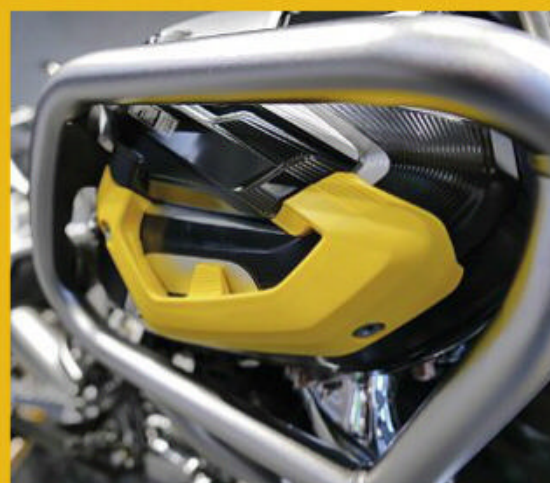
It's a huge motorcycle that uses all of BMW's latest technology. And if the colour



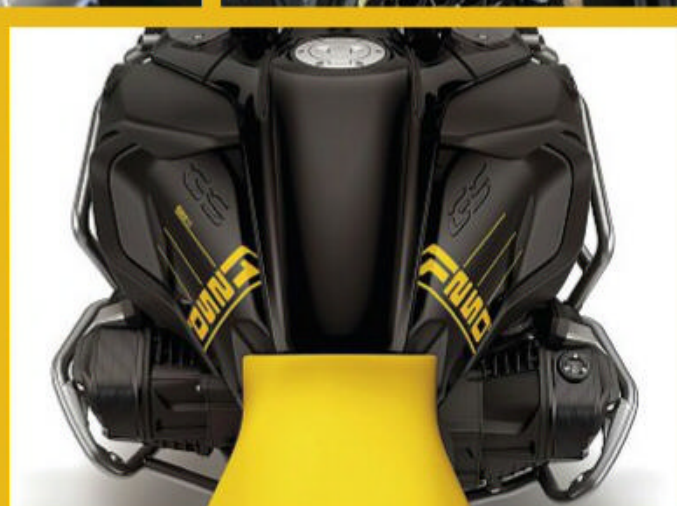


SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested	R 1250 GS Adventure 40 Years GS
Engine	1 254 cc, two cylinder boxer
Power	100 kW @ 7 750 rpm
Torque	143 Nm @ 6 250 rpm
Transmission	6-speed constant mesh
Top speed	209 km/h
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	3,16 sec
Fuel consumption	4,75 l/100 km
Tank	30 l
Seat height	890 mm/910 mm (adjustable)
Weight	268 kg
Front wheel size	120/70 R19
Back wheel size	170/60 R17
Warranty	5 years/unlimited kilometres
Price	R368 700



BIG DADDY. The '40 Years GS' celebrates the 1987 Bumblebee (left) with its yellow and black colour scheme. The engine capacity of the GS has grown from 797 cc in 1980 to 1 254 cc in 2020. Whether the size war among big duellies will ever reach a climax is anyone's guess.



scheme and stickers seem a tad old-fashioned, that's because it pays homage to the eighties when primary colours dominated. The 1987 model R100GS – also known as the Bumblebee – had a similar colour scheme.

The GSA 40 Years – let's use its abbreviated name – is a collectible, and although it certainly won't be as rare as the 1996 model R80GS Kalahari, it is nevertheless the heart's desire of many a BMW fan.

Standard gear

All R 1250 GS models brought to South Africa come with second-generation anti-lock brakes (ABS Pro), a major improvement over the previous anti-lock braking system which didn't always work that well on gravel roads.

The GS also gets Hill Start Assist, and when it comes to lighting, we get full LED headlights that automatically swivel left and right as you weave through the bends.

Power points are standard, and you get a 12 V Hella socket and a 5 V USB port. Besides traction control, there are also three standard ride modes: rain, eco and road. If you plan to spend a lot of time on gravel roads, we suggest you opt for the complete ride mode package that includes the Enduro Pro mode – this mode deactivates all electronic aids, including the ABS, and allows you play at being an actual rally racer.

How's the ride?

If this is your first time on a GS Adventure, its size might intimidate you. It seems almost impossible to keep the large bike upright, but it's just an illusion. Thanks to the flat boxer engine that keeps the centre of gravity down low, it actually handles surprisingly easily.

Yes, if you do fall over, you'll have to wrestle all that 268 kg back on two wheels, especially if there's luggage attached, but it's completely doable if you know how.

At the local launch, BMW gave us the opportunity to ride the regular GS and the GS Adventure in quick succession on gravel roads, and all the motoring journalists agreed that the Adventure feels more stable than the regular GS. That may be true, but it could also be because the fat fuel tank and higher windscreen creates a false impression of solidity because the two versions are mechanically identical, especially in terms

of tyres, suspension and performance.

After the original 80G/S's Dakar successes, BMW stopped punting the GS as an off-road motorcycle. The GS's smallish 19-inch front wheel testifies to BMW's decision to focus on tar and graded gravel roads rather than a proper off-road bike that could carve new tracks through a jungle or desert.

The GS Adventure does indeed feel exceedingly comfortable on the slab and we could easily drive from Johannesburg to Cape Town via the N1 – with the occasional dirt road detour thrown in for fun, of course.

Conclusion

The cheapest R 1250 GS these days costs R322 900 – that's the standard GS with white body paint – which puts it out of the reach of most young riders. The GS as depicted in the photos here costs a staggering R368 700, but if it is your heart's desire to own a modern version of the Bumblebee, surely no price is too high.

In addition to the standard equipment already mentioned, there are several optional extras such as heated seats, panniers, a BMW branded GPS, an alarm and a function that automatically calls the emergency services if you've crashed and cannot make the call.

It is a great bike that's well suited to South Africa's back roads as well as visits to our neighbouring countries. We'd avoid the dunes of the Sahara – the Bumblebee is too heavy for that – but a nicer ride between Lüderitz and Swakopmund or Francistown and Maun we could scarcely imagine.



FROM THE COMPETITORS
Big bikes equally good for highways and back roads



R301 900 Ducati Multistrada 1260 Enduro Sand

This Italian stallion is exotic, yes, but you shouldn't underestimate it.



R305 000 Honda Africa Twin Adventure Sport DCT

Japan's balanced offer makes sense and its DCT gearbox works brilliantly.



R315 000 KTM 1290 Super Adventure R

Austria's big firebrand kicks sand in its competitors' faces.



“ It is a great bike that's well suited to South Africa's back roads as well as visits to our neighbouring countries ”

*Life is a trip,
travelling is
living twice*

OMAR KHAYYAM



go!
Motorcycle

AVAILABLE ON SHELF SEPTEMBER 2021

Big boned, not much muscle



You could pretty much ferry a campsite's worth of kids around in the Ford Torneo, but it's a little less able when it comes to towing weight.

FORD TORNEO 2.0 LIMITED

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

Minibuses are some of the best types of towing vehicles available: not only do you have more than enough space for passengers and luggage, but your caravan also won't hold you back due to its wind resistance. Just about every off-road trailer and bush caravan – and some road caravans – are small enough to hide behind a minibus.

A less obvious advantage is reversing. Because the towbar sits almost on top of the rear axle, a caravan won't jack-knife so easily and reversing is easier. The longer the distance between the rear axle and the towbar, the more sharply the caravan reacts as you



turn the steering wheel – and if the caravan's wheels are also close to the towbar, it's even worse. That's why it's significantly more difficult to reverse when towing a Venter trailer than a Penta.

One of five

Ford has five variants of its Torneo Custom: three with the 2,2 ℓ turbodiesel engine and manual transmission, and two 2 ℓ models, also diesel, both automatic. Our test vehicle was the 2.0 Limited.

The towing capabilities of the two engine sizes differ significantly. The 2.2's three models can tow up to 1 600 kg, but the 2 ℓ limit is almost two thirds of that: the 2.0 Trend can tow a weight of up to 1 tonne and

the Limited may only tow 950 kg.

Meanwhile, the competitors up the ante. Hyundai's H-1 Bus 2.5 VGTi and Toyota Quantum 2.8 GL Bus can tow up to 1 500 kg, while Volkswagen's Kombi 6.1 Trendline TDI trumps them with its 2 500 kg.

If you were to simply consider the test vehicle's weight, you may think you could tow the 9 m Destination Dream All Terrain caravan, as its GVM is 2 400 kg, while the tare weight of the Torneo is 2 420 kg looking at the specifications list. But because you may only tow 950 kg according to Ford's own regulations, you don't have much of a choice of when it comes to a caravan. For example, you can only tow two new road caravans: Gypsy's Lite and the Sprite Sprint, and also only if you do not have much luggage as the latter's tare weight is 910 kg. You do, of course, have plenty of off-road trailers to choose from – including the Jurgens Oryx we used for the tow test.

Towbar of note

Even though you're limited by the towing weight, the opposite is true for the towbar. Our test vehicle was equipped with a Bosal that has a load test index

of 15,07 kN. This is equivalent to 1 536,7 kg, and the vertical weight may not exceed 112 kg. It's therefore more than strong enough for the towing capacity of the Torneo. The same applies to the ball section with its D-value (the load test index) of 20,2 kN (2 059,8 kg) and vertical weight of 150 kg.

The tow bar itself has two sets of holes where you can attach the ball – on the test model the ball was in the top setting. When you hitch a caravan in this position, the rear door cannot open as the upper part of the caravan's coupling is in the way. You must push the coupling back at least 30 cm if you want to open the back door. If you bolt the ball into the bottom two sets of holes, it sits about 55 mm lower.

The lighting wire socket is of the 13-point type. So you need the 13/7 pole adaptor for your caravan's plug. Our test vehicle didn't have such an adaptor, but we were easily sorted by our nearest parts dealer. The adaptor costs R320, and just like the blue Fredlin plug for the power point in your campsite, it is a good idea to keep one of them in the cubby.

When you insert the lighting



Here's what Pieter Crous, our towing expert, has to say.

“You can't complain about all the storage space for cooldrinks at each of the front seats. There's space in the door, at the end of the panel and in the centre section in front of the gear lever.

The side mirrors are nice and big, and, what's more, there is a smaller wide-angle mirror under the top one in which you can keep an eye on your blind spot. It works well: you almost don't have to specifically check the blind spot, and even if all three of the rear seats' headrests are on the highest setting, you can still see through the rear window.

Because there were only two of us in the Torneo, I could feel the back of the car give way through some dips. This is obviously includes the weight of the Oryx's nose weight on the ball of the towbar. You should feel it less when the vehicle is carrying a load.

You'll also need to get used

to the steering wheel, as I could detect some understeer. I'm obviously used to my own vehicle's steering wheel, but this one I had to turn further if I wanted to turn at the same angle. But the Torneo can turn on a dime. If you're on the left shoulder of the road, you can make a U-turn in one movement – and that's while towing a caravan. It is impressive and convenient.

The automatic gearbox changes smoothly, even with the load we were towing, and it also doesn't search among the gears. When it selects a gear, it sticks to it until it's really time to change.

On the open road, the engine pulls well up the hills, but you can feel it won't be the same when the Torneo is fully loaded. It accelerates comfortably to 120 km/h and stays there on a level road. I know the towing load is limited to just under a tonne, and I can also feel it won't be comfortable with anything over 1,2 tonne.

If you buy the Torneo as a towing vehicle, you will be limited by to the towing weight. I think matters would improve if Ford uses its new 2 l twin-turbo engine in the Torneo. The vehicle itself is heavy enough for an Exclusive, but the engine can't keep up.

It is as clear as daylight: this Torneo isn't primarily for towing.”



TOW TEST

plug, electronic aids such as the blind-spot sensors and reverse alarm are deactivated, and the vehicle also brings this to your attention via a message in the dashboard. The computer is therefore aware of the caravan and there's no alarm signal when you reverse with the caravan. The reverse screen also has adjustable index lines that move as you rotate the steering wheel. And you have a choice between two reverse screens: at the normal angle or at a higher angle from above the coupler.

“

The computer is therefore aware of the caravan and there's no alarm signal when you reverse with the caravan

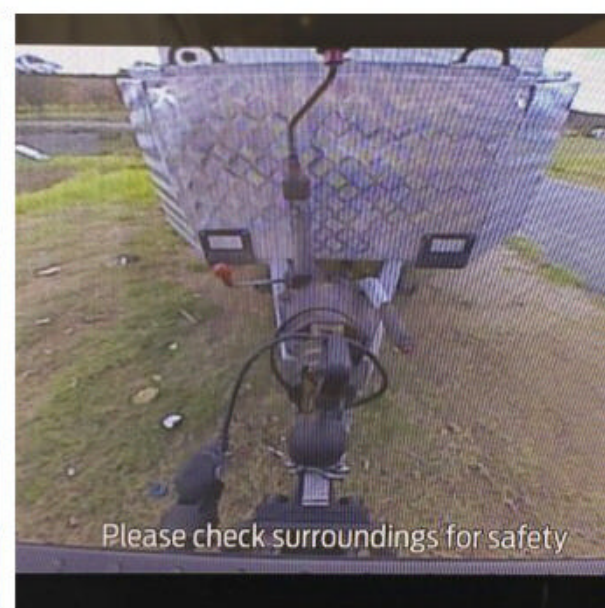
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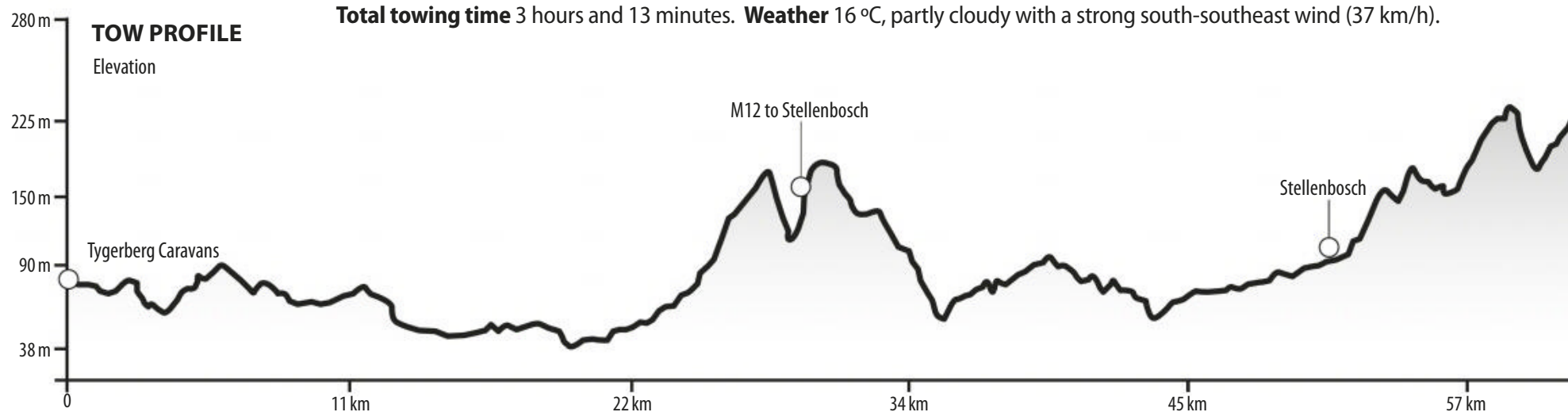
Drive & Camp says Don't be fooled by the size of the Torneo. Double check what's written on the caravan plate before you hitch it.

”



Distance 94,2 km **Road** Highways, back roads and built-up areas.

Total towing time 3 hours and 13 minutes. **Weather** 16 °C, partly cloudy with a strong south-southeast wind (37 km/h).



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	2.0 Limited SWB HP
Engine	4 cylinder-diesel
Power	136 kW
Torque	415 Nm
Transmission	Six-speed automatic
Drive train	Front wheels
Tank	80 ℓ
Fuel consumption while towing	14,08 ℓ/100 km (7,1 km/ℓ)
Reach with caravan	568 km
Tare weight	2 420 kg (2 061 kg according to license disk)
Weight during test (nose weight of caravan included)	2 700 kg
GVM	3 240 kg
GCM	4 240 kg
Combination mass during test	3 520 kg
Towing capability	950 kg
Towbar's load test index	1 536,7 kg (D-value 15,07 kN)
Towbar's maximum vertical weight	112 kg
Is the towbar removable?	No, just the ball.
Place for a drop plate?	Yes, but towbar has two settings to change height
PRICE	R778 500



What we towed

Manufacturer Jurgens Safari

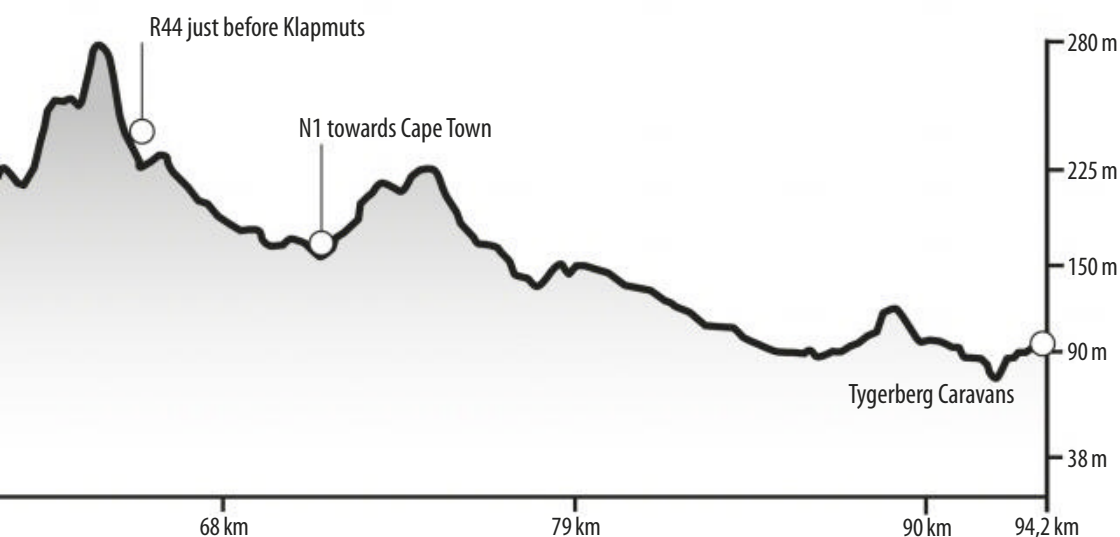
Model Oryx

Year model 2008

GVM 1 250 kg

Load weight on the axle during test 820 kg

Drive & Camp loaned the Jurgens Oryx from Tygerberg Caravans. Call Wesley Dempster on 021 982 4670 if you want to take a closer look at the Oryx.
tygerbergcaravans.co.za



R778 500

Ford Torneo 2.0 Limited SWB HP

415 Nm

From the competitors Minibuses for families and caravans



R683 200

Toyota Quantum 2.8 GL Bus

420 Nm

No automatic models; can tow 1 500 kg.



R743 900

Hyundai H-1 Bus 2.5 VGTi

441 Nm

Has a five-speed automatic transmission, the strongest engine (in terms of torque) and can tow 1 500 kg.



R758 100

VW Kombi 6.1 Trendline TDI

340 Nm

It may have the least torque, but can legally tow the most: 2 500 kg. It has a seven-speed automatic gearbox.

A horse of a different colour



NAYELA OKAPI

When you hitch the Nayela Okapi, you take a hotel room to the bush.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

Caravan design is a specialist field. Then there are also seasoned architects like Bennie Cilliers from Bethlehem who come up with a caravan that's quite simply in a league of its own.

Although Bennie is the mastermind behind the Okapi, the business in the meantime has been sold to the owners of Van Zyl steelworks in Reitz in the Free State. But, for such a new product, there is already a lot of interest if you look at the waiting list.

With its round nose, the Okapi looks quite different from other caravans, and inside, the layout and luxurious finishes are as original.

The hull is made of fibreglass, which means the caravan is virtually maintenance-free. What's more, the Okapi is up to taking on Africa's worst roads.



Press all the buttons

The crank-handle for the Okapi's corner steadies is neatly fitted to the inside of the cupboard door on the right. The 3 kg gas cylinder is in the same cupboard and fastened with a strap.

Stuff won't easily open while you're towing, as the caravan is equipped with a number of double clips. So, as you put the crank-handle back in its place, open the two clips in the right panel so long. This section of the right-hand panel looks like a large door and this is where the bed pulls out from the hull. Now walk around and loosen each of the clips on the corners of the pop-up roof. Stand by the door to lift the roof and loosen the bed from the inside.

The switch for the roof sits to the left of the door, just above the power box. The roof lifts within 48 seconds almost 50 cm and comes to rest 2,085 m above the floor.

Before the bed is pushed outwards, there is a small corridor of about 30 cm at the narrowest point to the back of the caravan where you can pack bulky upright items while towing.

At the bottom of the bed base is another switch that retracts the telescopic arms that keep the bed inside on its sliding frame – they allow you to push the bed door tightly against the hull when you tow and are the perfect answer for keeping out water and dust.

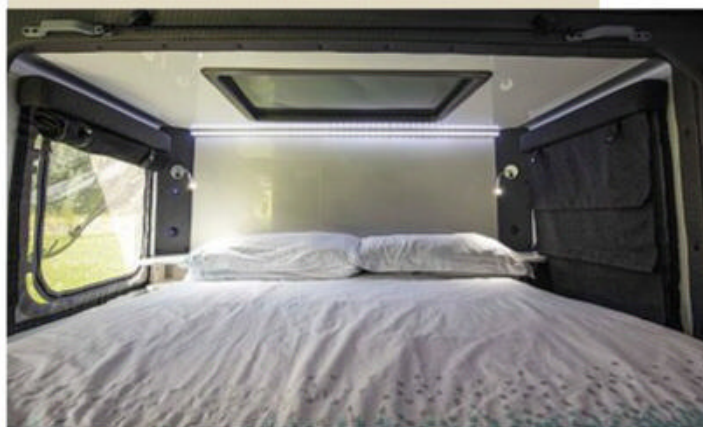
Now get out to extend the bed. First thread



the flysheet that fits over the bed onto the hull, otherwise you need a ladder if the bed is already pulled out. Lastly secure the two metal wedges near the telescopic arms so that the bed stays put.

With the bed base extended, the base on which the mattress rests inside stands upright against the right-hand panel and swings down over a storage space. Now unfold the mattress over the base.

There's a reading light on both sides of the bed with USB sockets plus two windows that can open, and a narrow surface length wise also on both sides on which you can place some items you might need at night. The window has a mesh that can also be zipped open plus a canvas blind. Inside, the ceiling is 67 cm above the bed, which means you won't be able to sit upright.



Hop inside

Once the bed is in place, there are two sections to the interior of the Okapi. The lounge area is in front of the door and the bathroom sits in the rear.

The door is nice and wide, and when you're inside, the lounge is in a U-shape to

the left. A big plus is the upright fridge to the right of the door, especially as off-road caravans usually have a chest fridge/freezer. The fridge hinges are designed that you can also access it from the outside.

In the lounge is a narrow worktop



that flattens out. It works well for coffee and rusks, but it's a bit small for a three-course meal.

The Okapi's round nose has the panel behind the benches arch up to the roof. Above the benches are two rounded windows – they don't open, but do have curtains. Between the two windows, there's an upholstered strip that runs up to the roof with three lights. This motif is repeated against the roof, and you can even choose a blue atmospheric light.

The rest of the interior

The foot of the bed forms an island, and there's more than enough space to move past the cupboards. To the left of the bed, which is just slightly narrower than a double bed, are two cupboards with the vanity corner to the right, at the end of the bed. Behind it is a mirror with cupboards at the bottom and a larger one on top. The mirror is a little bit low, and you'll need to bend down to comb your hair. There are also four 220 V sockets.

Opposite the end of the bed are three cupboard doors and two sliding doors. The sliding doors and the two smaller ones open into the back of the outdoor kitchen. The large cupboard on the left has three built-in shelves, with the hanging wardrobe in the lower section.

The bathroom has a separate flush cassette toilet and shower cubicle, but it is not completely separate from the living space. The toilet, with a hand basin next to it, is at least behind a panel that has a mirror.

The spacious shower cubicle has a door that's chest high, while a shower curtain prevents you from getting everything wet. The shower head is not permanently mounted, but part of an hand held extension.



Kitchen tales

Above the wheels in the panel on the left are two identical cupboard doors. One pops up and the other becomes a worktop. Each cupboard has a bottom and a top shelf, and the microwave is on the right at the bottom. In addition to all the groceries that can fit inside, each cupboard also has sponge cut-outs: The glasses and cups stay on top, and the plates and bowls are at the bottom. To the left of the worktop is a multi-socket and above you is a light.

To the right of the two cupboards is a third door that houses a two-plate gas stove and sink. (The two-plate stove has meanwhile been replaced by a three-plate one. – Ed) When not in use, swing each of the glass covers down over the stove and sink to create another worktop. The sink has a swivel tap with hot and cold water.

Inside the hull, from where the worktop folds down, are shallow shelves for items such as spices and sauces – there are also pouches for items such as serving spoons, tongs and a tin opener.

A rally tent covers the entire left-hand side.

The Okapi does not have a nose cone, but there's a flat section on the A-frame that extends partly under the curvature of the nose. A bag or two of braai wood can go here.

The spare wheel is at the back at the chassis.





SPECIFICATIONS

ManufacturerNayela
Model Okapi
Sleeps 2 adults
Size 5,685 x 1,998 x 2,094 m
Wheels 15"
Axle Double 2 t rubber axle
Tare weight 1 150 kg
Load capacity 600 kg
GVM 1 750 kg
Chassis Galvanised
Hull Fibreglass
Standard price R540 000

Dealer network Factory and office at Reitz
 ☎ 058 863 1027 Also available at Loftus Caravan City ☎ 011 792
 1456 and Cara-Camp Caravan & Outdoor Center ☎ 021 852 8215
Contact 📧 nayela.co.za 📧 info@nayela.co.za



R540 000

NAYELA OKAPI

GVM 1 750 kg



Drive & Camp says The twin axle gives peace of mind. The caravan tows easily, especially on bad roads, and you don't have to rely on a single wheel per side when you encounter trouble at a high speed. Of course, manoeuvring it by hand is not easy. That is why a mover (R22 000) is a must.



THE TWO COMPETITORS

Fibreglass off-road caravans



What comes standard?

Standard items include a 130 Ah gel battery, a gas/electric geyser, 12 V standing fridge, 105 ℓ water tank, three-plate gas stove and sink, 220 V-12 V power box with a Victron smart charger, Dometic flush cassette toilet, full bathroom, microwave oven, cutlery and the spare wheel.

Among the extras are the rally tent with sides (R17 000), a full tent (R36 000), spare wheel rack (R6 000), extra 70 ℓ water tank (R3 500), extra sink with extension (R3 000) and extra bed for children (R4 000).



R509 600

ECHO KUNENE

BVM 2 240 kg

You need a big vehicle to tow this, but it sleeps four.



R538 000

MOBI LODGE
CONTINENTAL

GVM 1 750 kg, 1 950 kg
or 2 250 kg

Has a separate and built-in bathroom, and few caravans on the market trump all the open space inside.

More solutions

PLAN B?

Some of our readers have come up with ingenious ways to solve problems while camping.

By **Kyle Kock**

Many of us, when given the option to purchase yet another gadget rather than struggle to MacGyver something, probably go with the former.

However, some of the serious camp boffins among us prefer to don their smartie caps, pull out some superglue, and go through their household items to put something clever together.

DIY dishwashing

Just two issues ago we featured a folding dishwashing table with folding worktops that doubles as a workspace. Luckily for Yvonne Siebrits Hattingh from Vredenburg, her husband is quite the handyman, and put one together for her himself.

"My husband Gideon built this sturdy dish-washing station for me. It's a little high, but I can wash what I need to in soapy water in one basin, rinse off in the next and place the clean wet items in a drying rack. Unfortunately, it's not a folding item, but stows quite snugly in our little caravan. We lie it on its side on the double bed, and place the microwave in-between its legs with a few other loose items to help secure it.

Drive & Camp says It seems simple enough to fashion quickly and will come in handy when you're pitched far from the ablution facilities.





How's this for a fire starter?

A campfire is probably the biggest must-have when you spend a night outdoors. But if you haven't brought a trusty box of Blitz, you can always use female sanitary products to get the flames licking says Caira-lee Durand from Cape Town.

"Tampons are an alternative – albeit an expensive one – to traditional fire-lighters in an emergency like we once were. We were visiting the Breede River and realised we had forgotten to pack firelighters for the many braais we planned on having that weekend. My sister

Nicky is a bit of a female version of Bear Grylls and she was our first point of call. We learnt that you could get a lot more use out of tampons than we thought, particularly when it comes to starting a fire.

Those tiny cotton fibres catch fire like no other. Just unwrap the unused tampons and tear them apart so that the cotton fibres are as separated as possible. The more the better."

Drive & Camp says Hey, if it works, it works! It's certainly lightyears better than not being able to get a fire going at all.



Quick fix

Dealing with the cold as a newbie can put you off using an air mattress, but Andrea Jacobs from Strand found a quick way to fend off condensation.

"We learned the hard way that using an air mattress on ground that is moist can have serious consequences after waking up with damp sections

of my bedding after our first night. But this problem was quickly solved by making a sandwich of newspaper and two layers of cardboard from old boxes sourced at a shop down the road."

Drive & Camp says Invest in a good groundsheet or tarp, as a preventative layer underneath your tent.



Even stevens

You know that frustrating feeling when you're sitting on an uneven chair or trying to work on a table that wobbles because one or two legs don't reach the ground? Fred Visser from Lichtenburg makes sure his surfaces are also level.

"I use a three-legged pedestal to help my gas

cylinder stand upright when I'm cooking or braaiing outside.

Another nifty item of mine is that the table I use has adjustable legs so that I can keep the worksurface perfectly level even on uneven ground."

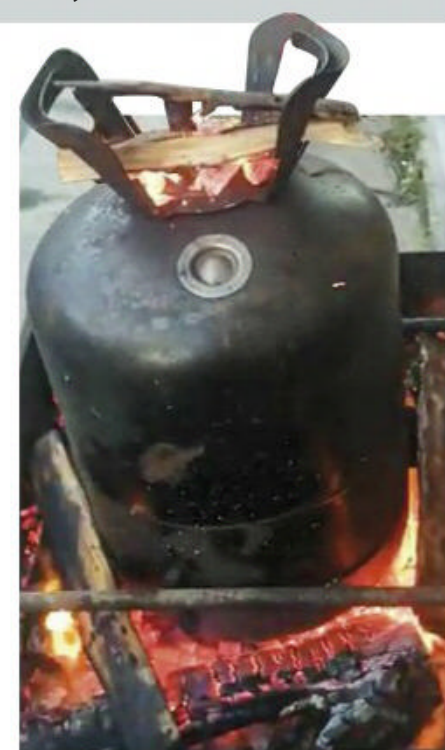
Drive & Camp says A small stool would probably also work really well in this instance.

Two-in-one

A camping experience goes hand in hand with a braai. But if you want your meat and veg that much more flavourful, like Chadwin Daniels from Kuilsriver, then a 5 kg gas cylinder will apparently do the trick.

"Rather than just a regular braai, we created a bullet smoker from a gas bottle. Inside, there's a pole welded in the middle of a small cut-out from a grid. Underneath that is a small pan filled with water. And right at the very bottom you throw in apple or cherry wood chips. We used it for the first time at Palmiet."

Drive & Camp says The water pan acts like steamer, which



keeps the meat moist.

The chips right at the bottom are heated by the bottle's contact with the flames.

FORGOTTEN 4X4 FACTS

Five important elements of off-roaders
that often get neglected.

Words **Cyril Kloppe**

Air supply

If you've ever been on a guided 4x4 tour, you may remember how the tour guide instructed everyone to deflate their tyre pressure to a certain number.

He either bellowed "Zero point eight!" or he was the guy who went to each vehicle in the convoy and suggested a particular pressure that matched the vehicle in question. The latter is a sign of a team leader who knows his stuff.

Not all tyres use the same air pressure, and even if each vehicle had the same BF Goodrich multi-terrain tyres, their GVM would differ

significantly – it is also about how heavily loaded each rig is, and how experienced the driver.

We will not recommend the best tyre pressure for all types of surfaces, as we believe that advice would be flawed.

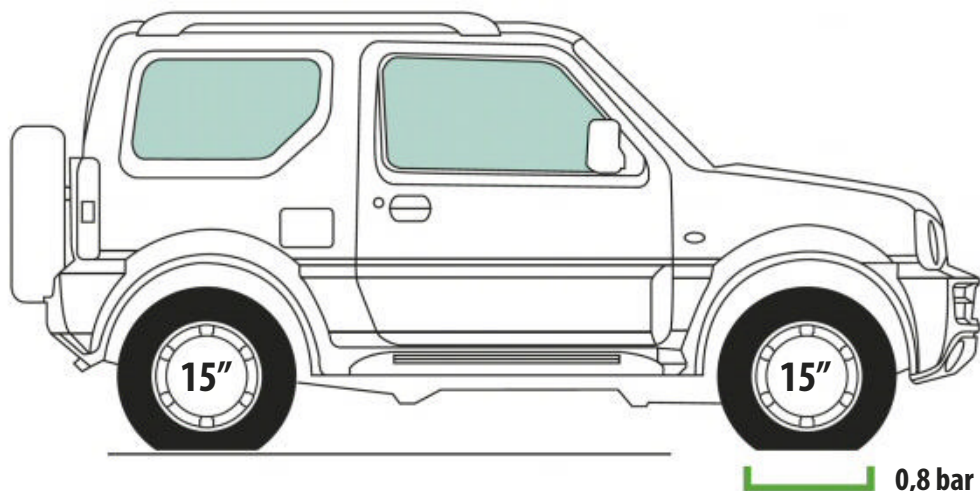
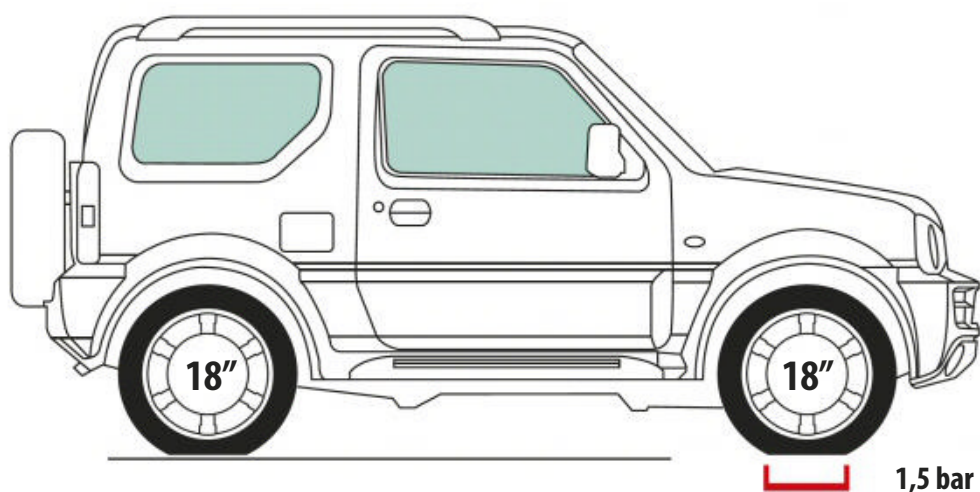
There are simply too many factors to consider – including whether you're dealing with morning or afternoon temperatures.

Drive your rig for several months and change the tyre pressure until you get the right pressure that works for you. "Zero point eight!" is not best tyre pressure for everyone.

“

Drive your rig for several months and change the tyre pressure until you get the right number that works for you

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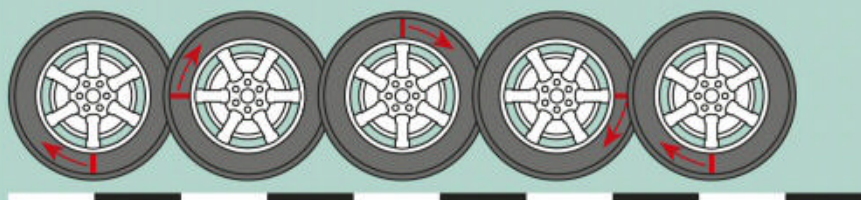
Go bigger, roll faster

A speedometer becomes inaccurate when you fit larger tyres. For every inch you go bigger, your speedometer to reads 3-4 km/h slower than the speed you're actually going.

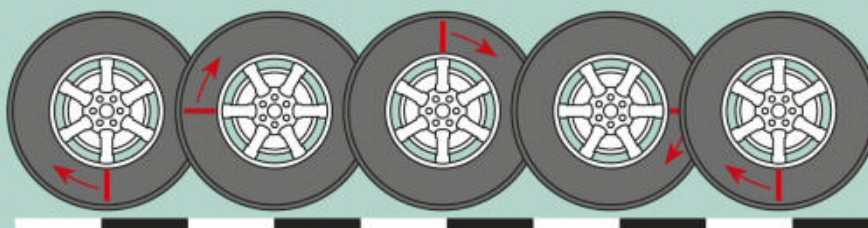
Let's use a 2021 model Jeep Wrangler Rubicon as an example: this vehicle comes with 32" BF Goodrich mud tyres on 17" rims (245/75 R17). If, for example, you replace them with 33" Maxxis MT772 tyres, your speedometer will only be out by 4 km/h, which isn't the end of the world. But, replace them with a set of 35" Maxxis Bighorns, and your speedometer will be

out by 11,6 km/h. This means you think you're driving at 120 km/h, but your GPS speed is, in fact, 131,6 km/h. Traffic officials usually give a grace of 10 km/h over the speed limit, but there's always that one speed cop who will be within his right to fine you for the illegal 1,6 km/h.

Toyota calibrates the speedometer of its Land Cruiser 200 for its 285/65R17 tyres with a wheelbase of 31,6 inches. Should you lift the suspension by four inches and fit a set of 37" Goodyear Wrangler MTRs, the speedometer will be out by almost 20 km/h.



32" tyres



35" tyres

Hit the roof

Your vehicle owner's manual should state how much static weight (for a stationary vehicle) and dynamic weight (for a moving vehicle) you may load on its roof. This weight, especially the dynamic weight, is usually relatively low because vehicle manufacturers know that weight on the roof can dramatically affect the handling and safety of a vehicle.

These weight limits set by the manufacturer are based on normal road conditions, though, and not for off-road driving. A Toyota Fortuner's

maximum allowable dynamic weight on the roof racks is around 80 kg (it varies among year models) and many owners assume that a roof rack increases this load capacity. Front Runner's Slimline II roof rack can indeed carry over 80 kg, but the company has stopped mentioning the carrying capacity of their roof racks because people regularly exceed the vehicle manufacturer's allowable load capacity because they assumed the rack would allow them to do so. A Smartline roof rack for a Fortuner weighs

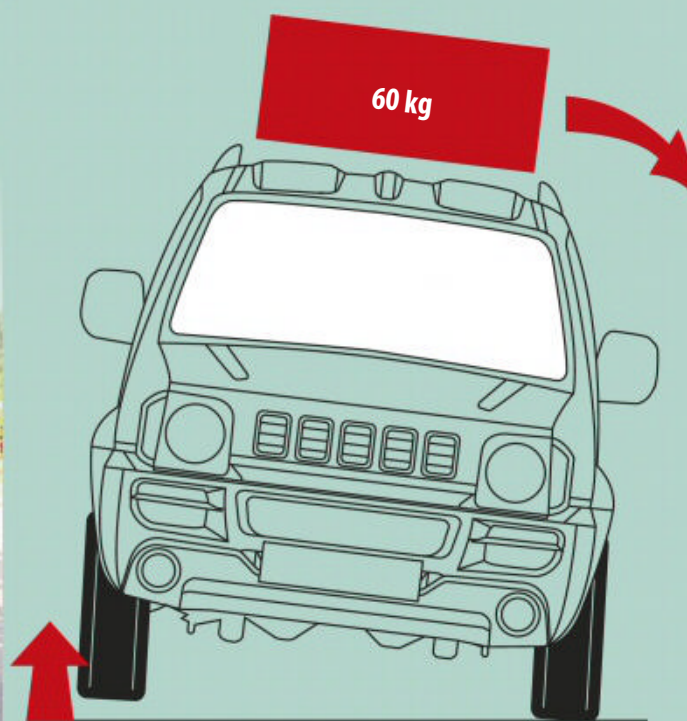
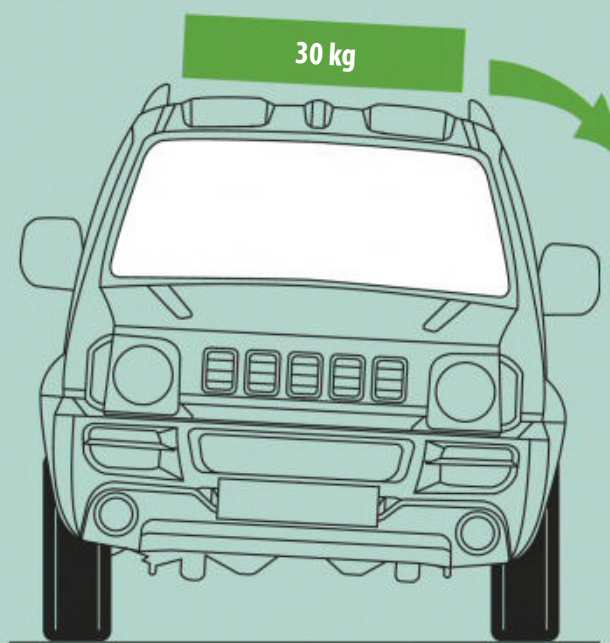
33 kg, which leaves you with 47 kg for cargo – that's enough for a roof tent (43 kg), but too little for more than three (full) 20 l jerry cans.

A Suzuki Jimny's maximum allowable dynamic weight on the roof is a mere 30 kg and its Front Runner roof rack weighs 22 kg, which leaves you with a meager 8 kg. We want to clarify that both a Fortuner and a Jimny can carry more on the roof than the owner's manual stipulates, but if you overturn and your insurer finds out you exceeded the weight limits, they may reject your claim.

“

These weight limits set by the manufacturer are based on normal road conditions, though, and not for off-road driving

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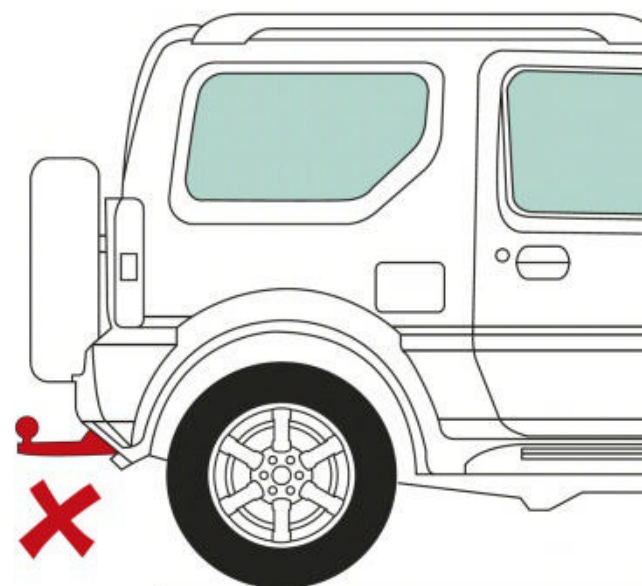


Recovery fails

It's amazing how many people still recover their four-wheel-drive vehicle using the ball of the towbar. Their reasoning is that if the ball is strong enough to pull an off-road trailer or caravan, then it is surely strong enough for recovery. But that is simply not true.

The towbar is not designed to receive an enormous amount of energy within a fraction of a second.

There are countless stories of a ball breaking off and flying through the air like a cannonball – and some of these incidents have led to fatalities.

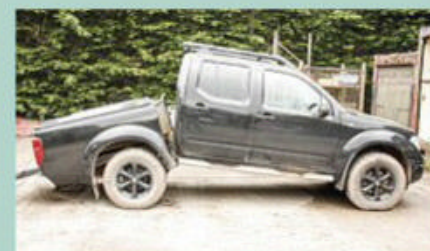
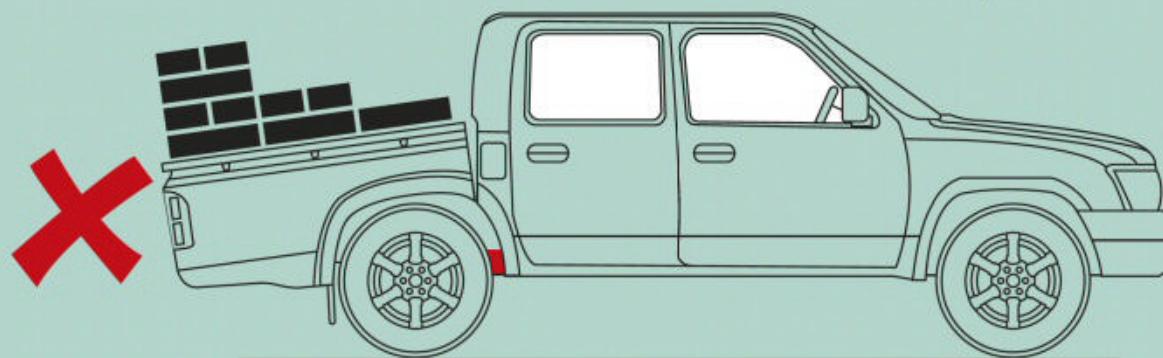
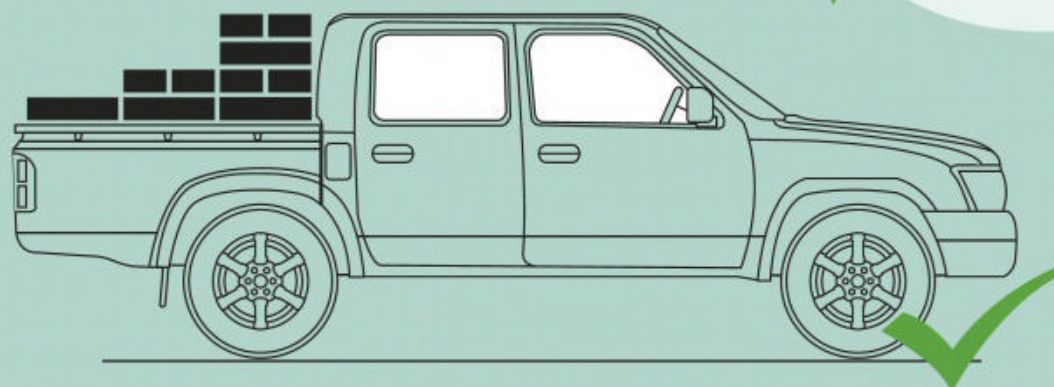
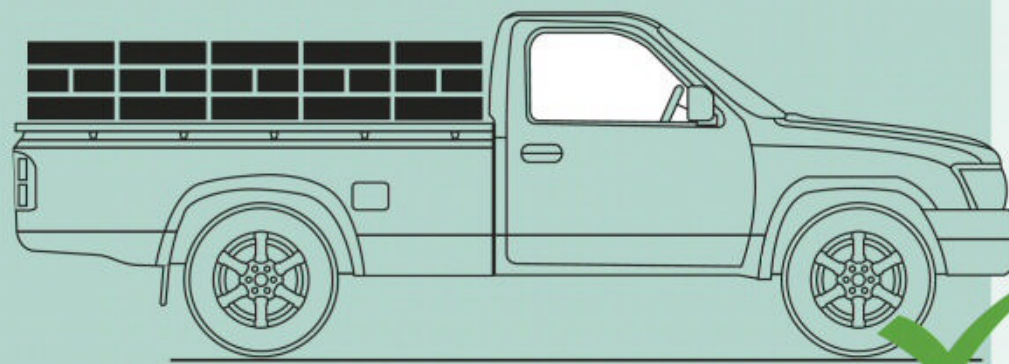
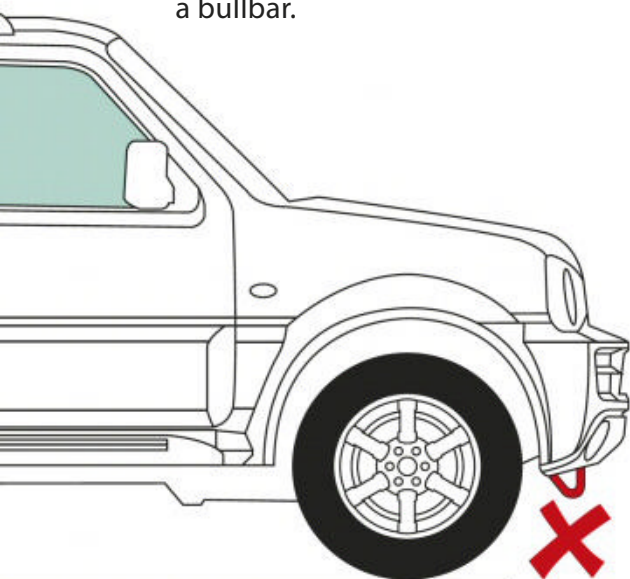




The metal hoop on the left front under your vehicle's bumper is also not a suitable recovery point.

Although it is indeed there to tow a vehicle, it is not designed to handle that kind of forceful jerk and it will bend – and possibly even sheer off – if you try to yank a heavily loaded off-roader out of a mudhole with a kinetic strap.

For 4x4 recovery, we suggest using the vehicle's chassis (where it won't damage other components), the solid axles or the custom recovery points on a bullbar.



The final straw

The problem with double-cab bakkies is that most of the cargo weight lies behind the axle rather than on top of it, as with single-cabin bakkies.

This sometimes leads to the chassis cracking.

Manufacturers are well aware of the potential dangers, and besides the fact that they strengthen the chassis to account

for an unbalanced load, manufacturers warn that their double-cab bakkies should carry less weight than their single cab versions.

But hey, we're all human, and we sometimes pack light camping gear against the cabin with heavier items near the tailgate.

Every time you speed up, brake and drive on dirt roads,

the uneven load flexes the chassis bit by bit, until it finally snaps like a US postal worker.

If your off-road rig is loaded with camping gear and you're towing an off-road trailer – plus you have two spare wheels on the rear bumper – don't be surprised when the chassis snaps in half in the whoopsies of the Central Kalahari dunes.

Return to the outdoors

We're looking forward to leaving the colder months behind, and what better way than with some of the must-haves for spring?

Text **Kyle Kock** Photos **Supplied**

As South Africans hopefully flock back to resorts, parks and campsites, the weather should be warming up nicely for the camping season.

Here are 10 items that will make your return to camping – or your first time in the outdoors – a much more pleasant experience.



NATUREHIKE CANVAS HAMMOCK

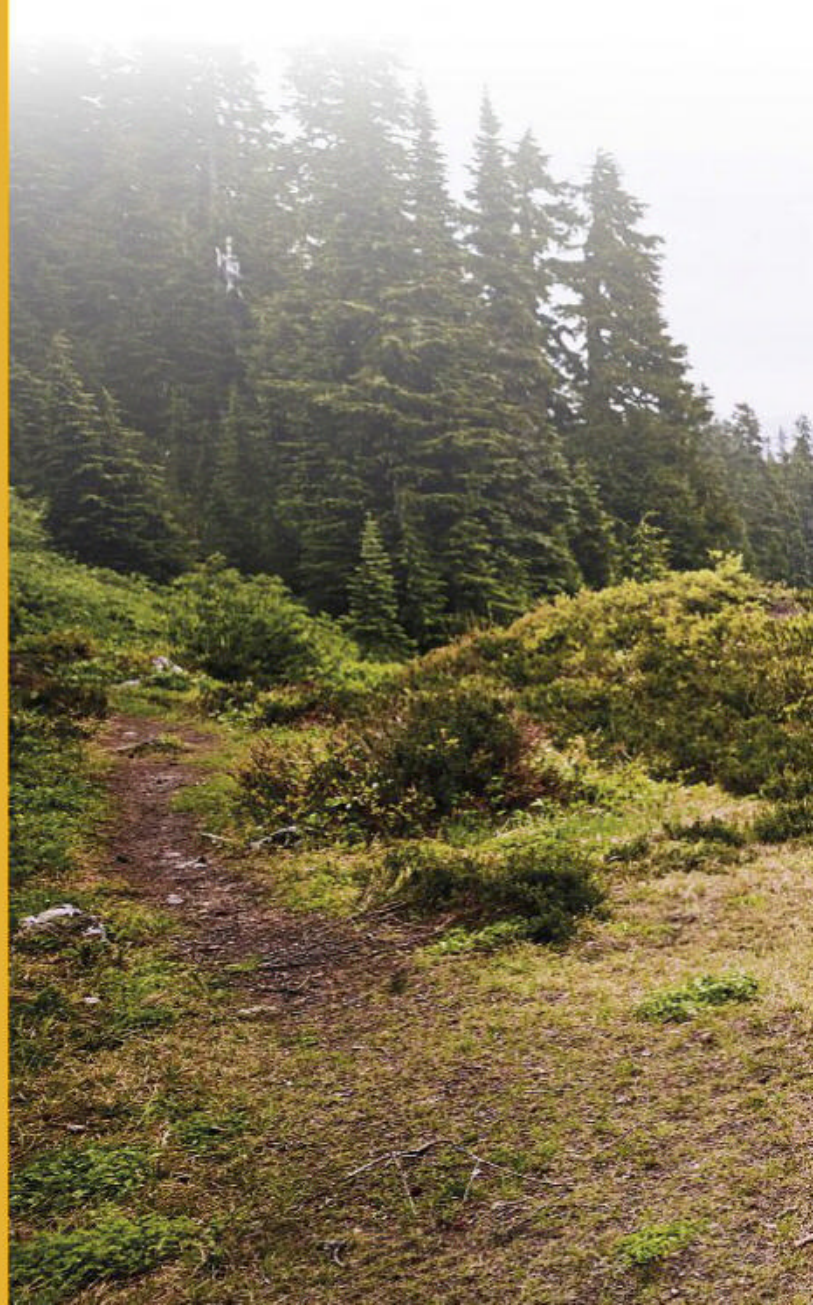
Doze off

Why opt for one of the cheaper offerings when you know this one will last a lifetime? It's made of wood, canvas and rope and comes with two daisy chains that allows the user to choose between 15 adjustment positions.

It's 3 000 mm long and 900 mm at its widest point and weighs just 2,5 kg.

Price R2 200 from Naturehike.

Drive & Camp says The heavier among us might want to avoid this one. It's rated to carry only 100 kg.





FIRST ASCENT DOWN COMPACT BLANKET

Sleep easy

Not as hot and stuffy as a regular blanket, but with enough goose down filling to keep you warm on top of your stretcher at night, this lightweight and compact item from First Ascent stuffs into itself via an internal pocket in the ripstop nylon outer.

It's 2 000 mm long, 1 350 mm wide and weighs just 620 grams.

Price R2 300 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Drive & Camp says Think of this as a handy replacement for your duvet at home.



TENTCO SENIOR SAFARI BOW DELUXE TENT

A roof over your head

Local canvas experts Tentco are dab hands at making quality tents, and the Safari Bow Deluxe might just be the upgrade that makes all the difference on your next camping experience. Everything about it is heavy duty, with a 330 GSM polycotton canvas hybrid, a 540 GSM PVC groundsheet and a high-tensile steel frame that's been electroplated to resist corrosion. It also has three windows.

Price R5 600 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says You don't have to worry about how long this tent will last as Tentco's warranty is comprehensive.



PETZL ACTIK CORE RECHARGABLE HEADLAMP

Light your way

Just because the skies are holding a little more light doesn't mean that your path to the ablution block is going to be well lit. Make your trip a little easier with this headlamp from adventure experts Petzl. There are two brightness settings: 130 lumens and 450 lumens. In the former setting, the manufacturer claims 130 hours of usage, while the latter burns bright for two hours.

Price R 1 194 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says Although it's got a rechargeable core, the Petzl Hybrid Concept also allows this unit to run on AAA batteries.





SEAFLO 20ℓ PORTABLE CAMPING TOILET **From the throne room**

Carry it on the load bed of your bakkie as an emergency roadside loo, in your caravan as an alternative to flushing and cleaning your Sprite's system or just in a toilet tent if you're bush camping.

It holds 13 ℓ of flushing water, holds 20 ℓ of waste, and can support up to 150 kg thanks to its durable ABS plastic construction. It weighs just under 5 kg when empty.

Price R995 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says The best thing about one of these is that it doesn't require any external power or water source.



NATIONAL LUNA 12KG ICE MAKER **Mr Cool**

Now what good are sundowners around the fire, only to discover that you've got to drink room temperature beverages? Avoid that mishap with a portable ice maker from refrigeration specialists National Luna. It boasts a stainless-steel finish, removable ice bucket, a low water level indicator so you know when to top it up and a full ice indicator, so you know when to pour another round. It takes between 6 to 13 minutes for your cubes to form from liquid.

Price R2 494 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says National Luna recommends a minimum of 1000 W for your pure sine-wave inverter to run the ice maker from a battery



NATUREHIKE OCEAN PACK 20ℓ MARINE DRY BAG **Keep H²O out**

If you have an affinity for water sports like kayaking or stand-up paddle-boarding, but you don't want to leave your valuables at your camping stand, take them along in this bag from NatureHike.

The 500 Denier waterproof fabric is laminated for extra protection against moisture, and the dual shoulder straps allow you to wear it like a backpack. It will keep sand and snow out too.

Price R320 from NatureHike.

Drive & Camp says If the lime hue is not your colour, then you can also have a turquoise, purple or orange one.



GET YOUR GEAR HERE

Camp & Climb campandclimb.co.za

Outdoor Warehouse outdoorwarehouse.co.za



GRÄNSFORS OUTDOOR AXE

Whosoever is worthy

Swedish firm Gränsfors Bruks has been forging axes for more than 100 years, and they worked with Scandinavian military survival expert Lars Fält to create this one.

It's been designed as a general outdoor purpose item, but the protective steel collar near the head allows it to perform wood-splitting duty safely. It weighs just 500 grams, and the handle is 37 cm long.

Price R2 670 from Just Like Papa.

Drive & Camp says The axe also comes with a classy, tanned leather sheath.



LEATHERMAN WAVE PLUS

Mega man

The legendary American brand synonymous with innovative pocket-sized multitools threw everything but the kitchen sink into the Wave Plus, which features 18 essentials for a budding handyman or expert camper.

Four of the blades can be accessed in the closed position, while there's another seven tool blades that can be accessed when open. The tools include a small and large bit driver, medium screwdriver, bottle opener, can opener, ruler, saw and spring-action scissors.

Price From R2 575 from Awesome Tools.

Drive & Camp says Leatherman products also come with a 25-year warranty.



RED-E RSP80 8 000 MAH POWER BANK (WITH SOLAR PANEL)

Use the sun

Any power bank worth its salt should be able to provide you with at least two full charges for a device such as a mobile phone or iPod.

You can charge both simultaneously with this Red-E model, which has dual 2,1 A/5V outputs. It's quite chunky, at 156 mm long, 85 mm wide and 28 mm thick. It features four built-in solar panels that fold up to about the same size as the power bank.

Price R900 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Drive & Camp says On a sunny day, this power bank should be able to get to a full state of charge from zero in 12 hours. ☀️

Just Like Papa 📍justlikepapa.com

NatureHike 📍naturehike.co.za

Awesome Tools 📍awesometools.co.za

Shredded it!

Dishes with shredded meat – think pulled pork, pea soup and chicken potjie – go far. With the right recipe, it's easy to turn even leftover braai meat into a dish fit for royalty.

Recipes and styling **Johané Neilson**

Photos **Ed O'Riley**

PROPER PEA SOUP

Slow food is good food...

This slow-cooked dish is comfort in a bowl when it's cold outside.

Ingredients

(serves 8)

- 1 packet (500 g) dry split peas, rinsed and drained
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped or grated
- 1 smoked eisbein (cured pork hock), around 450 g
- 2 large potatoes, diced
- 2 l chicken stock
- 1 packet (250 g) frozen peas

Here's how

1 Mix all the ingredients for the soup except the frozen peas in a large pot, heat it to boiling point and then lower the heat so that it simmers slowly. Boil the soup with the lid at half mast for about three hours. Scoop off any foam that forms on top and discard.

2 Remove the melt-in-your-mouth pork from the soup and use a stick blender or potato masher to liquify the rest. Add the frozen peas, stir and heat the soup for as long as it takes you to shred the pork off the bone.

3 Stir the shredded pork back into the soup and simmer for a few more minutes until all the peas are tender. The extra peas add colour and a bit of texture to the soup, but they're optional. Taste before you season with salt and pepper – I find that the stock and smoked pork flavour the soup more than enough for me, but decide for yourself. Serve steaming hot with some toast to dip.

Drive & Camp says If you want to save even more effort, buy a pack of ready-sliced soup vegetables so you don't even have to chop the onions.

SHREDDED PORK WITH BALSAMIC VINEGAR AND WHISKEY

Oink sarmie

Pulled pork, coleslaw and bread rolls are three fantastic building blocks to ensure conviviality around the campfire.

Ingredients

(serves 8-10)

- 1 pork shoulder, around 2 kg
- ½ cup whiskey (we used American Honey Jack whiskey)
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 cups warm water
- 2 large onions, coarsely chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cup of ready-made braai marinade of your choice (we used the Woolworths Original BBQ Braai Marinade)
- bread rolls and coleslaw, to serve

Here's how

1 Mix together all the ingredients in a potjie and heat it to boiling point. Simmer for 3-4 hours until the meat is tender – stirring occasionally, making sure the liquid always covers the meat.

2 Remove the pork from the sauce and allow to cool slightly. Remove the bone and shred the meat using two forks. Scoop off the excess fat from the sauce and place it back over the coals so it can simmer without a lid and thicken slightly.

3 Stir the meat through the sauce and taste to see if you want to add any salt and pepper. To serve, spoon the meat into fresh bread rolls and add a spoonful of coleslaw.

Drive & Camp says For the most delicious coleslaw, mix 2 cups of grated cabbage and carrot with 4 chopped spring onions, a cup of creamy mayonnaise and a cup of Greek yogurt. Then carefully stir in 1 ripe avocado (that's been sliced into cubes), a handful of chopped salted peanuts and, if you feel like it, a cup of bean sprouts.





CREAMY PAPPERT WITH BOEREWORS On the ball!

This marvelous comfort food is so filling, it makes a great lunch or serve as a luxurious side.

Ingredients

(serves 8)

- 6 cups boiling water
- 3 cups maize meal
- 1 generous pinch dry mixed herbs
- a large lump of butter
- 1 spiral of cooked boerewors, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup grated cheddar
- 1 packet brown onion soup powder
- 2 cups cream

Here's how

1 Boil the water with a pinch of salt and herbs and whisk in the maize meal – make sure it does not form any lumps. Turn down the heat and simmer until the maize thickens. Cooking times differ so read the instruction on your package, but it usually takes about 15 minutes and you only stir it occasionally once it starts

simmering. When the maize is nice and thick, stir in the butter, taste for salt and remove it from the heat.

2 While still hot, divide the maize into even portions by scooping portions onto a cutting board or other clean work surface. Allow to cool until you can handle it.

3 Press each portion into the palm of your hand, place a few pieces of boerewors and a pile of cheese in the middle and form a large ball again. Repeat until all the maize/pap, boerewors and cheese have been used. Arrange the filled balls in a greased flat-bottomed potjie.

4 Beat the soup powder into the cream until smooth and pour over the dish. Bake it over coals with the lid on, as you would with pot bread, with a coals under the pot and a few on the lid. It should be ready to serve within 30 minutes.

Drive & Camp says If the onion soup-and-cream mixture is too little for you, add extra cream or add a little milk or stock. Another alternative is to cover the balls with tomato and onion relish plus a sprinkle of grated cheese before it goes onto the coals.



PENNE WITH CHEESE Say cheese...

For this recipe you can use any leftover meat: try smoked pork rashers, chops or pulled pork. Or simply fried bacon. A bonus is that the dish is served within half an hour.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/3 cup flour
- 2 cups hot milk
- 1 cup shredded leftover meat – we used smoked pork off the braai
- 4 spring onions, chopped
- 2 teaspoons dijon mustard
- 2 cups grated cheddar
- 300 g penne pasta, cooked in salted water for 8 minutes

FOR THE TOPPING

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 200 g cherry tomatoes
- ½ cup crushed cheese-and-onion flavour potato chips, optional

Here's how

1 Melt the butter in a saucepan and whisk in the flour. Fry the mixture for a minute or two until fragrant. Remove from the heat and whisk in the milk little by little until you have a nice smooth sauce. Place the sauce back on the heat and stir with a wooden spoon until it thickens. Cook for a few minutes until the sauce is cooked and no longer tastes of flour.

2 Stir the meat, spring onions, mustard and cheese and season to taste with salt and ground black pepper. Finally, add the hot cooked pasta.

3 Prepare the topping Heat the oil in a pan and fry the tomatoes until they burst open. Spoon the hot tomato on top of the savoury pasta immediately... and if you want a crunchy extra, sprinkle the crumbed chips on top. Serve the pasta hot!

Drive & Camp says You can of course take a shortcut with a packet of sauce instead of making the white sauce yourself, but we think home-made tastes best!



CHICKEN POTJIE WITH RICE

Ode to the olive

This fragrant potjie makes a lovely dinner for a family of four. If more campers arrive, just double the recipe.

Ingredients

(serves 4-6)

- 8 chicken pieces – drumsticks and thighs work well
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dry mixed herbs
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely crushed
- 1 chilli, finely chopped
- 2 red peppers, thinly sliced
- ½ cup of white wine
- 1 cup tomato passata (or use tomato purée)
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 100 g green olives, pitted and coarsely chopped
- 1 tablespoon capers, coarsely chopped

Here's how

1 Braai the chicken pieces in the oil until they are nice and golden brown all over. Sprinkle over the cumin and mixed herbs, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove the chicken from the potjie. Now sauté the onion, garlic, chilli and pepper strips in the same potjie until glossy.

2 Add the chicken back into the potjie and add the wine. Allow to cook briskly until almost all the liquid has evaporated. Stir in the tomato passata and stock, cover with the lid on and simmer the potjie gently for two hours.

3 Stir in the olives and capers and simmer – without the lid – for another 20-30 minutes or until the sauce has thickened to your liking. It's delicious with yellow rice, mashed potatoes or polenta.

Drive & Camp says This potjie is also delicious when you make it with chicken breast fillets that you shred after cooking.



GREEK TORTILLAS

Mediterranean flavours

Look, it's not often we have leftover lamb after a braai as lamb chops are a firm favourite. But if you have leftovers after a leg of lamb lunch or some chops, make these delicious wraps for lunch. You could, of course, replace the lamb with cooked chicken or beef mince.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2-3 large cooked lamb chops, deboned and cut into thin strips
- 1 large or 2 medium-sized eggplants, cut into 1 cm slices
- 4 large tortillas or pita breads
- ½ cup hummus
- 1-2 ripe red tomatoes, sliced
- 2 wheels feta cheese, crumbled
- fresh flat-leaf parsley, to serve

Here's how

1 Heat the oil in a pan and fry the strips of meat for a minute or two to reheat and refresh the flavours. Spoon the meat from the pan and fry the eggplant slices in the fragrant oil until cooked. (You could use a griddle pan, of course.)

2 Braai the tortillas over the coals or in a dry pan until hot and pliable.

3 Spread a thick layer of hummus on each tortilla and then layer some of the fried eggplant, lamb, tomato, feta and parsley on top. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper, fold the tortilla and tuck in.

Drive & Camp says These flavours work equally well in a pasta salad – you could also replace the parsley with cucumber cubes.

go! **Drive & Camp** BUYER'S GUIDE



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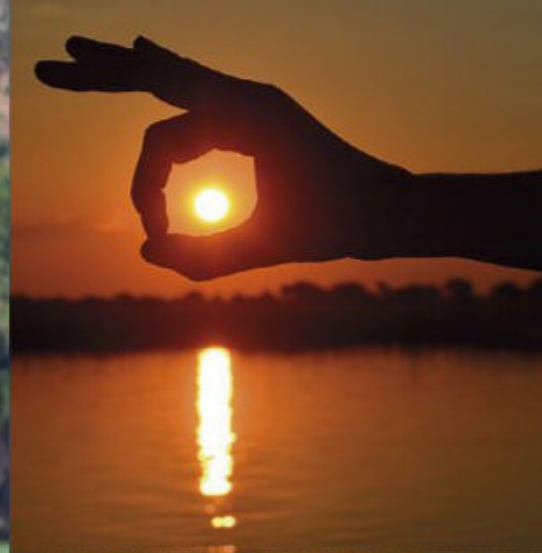
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Game-rich northern Botswana!

Our latest adventure into Botswana introduces a few new destinations while keeping some firm favourites. Explore this country on the journey of a lifetime and discover some of Africa's wildest places.

Our northern Botswana tour begins at the community-based Khama Rhino Sanctuary in central Botswana, where we spend our first night before moving on to the spectacular Kudu Island, a granite rock outcrop on the Makgadikgadi Pans, for a night under the stars. The next morning after enjoying coffee and rusks against a backdrop of the iconic baobabs, we head north along the edge of the empty salt pans, testing our 4x4 driving on the sandy terrain.

We have a light picnic lunch en route to our next campsite. We spend two days on the banks of the Boteti River, 30km from Maun. There will be an opportunity to do a flight over the Okavango Delta (own expense), explore the local markets or simply chill in camp before a late afternoon cruise on the Boteti River.

Then we continue to the Khwai River, north of Moremi, for three days of camping. The area is renowned for prolific game, beautiful scenery and magnificent birdlife. Next on the itinerary is Chobe National Park, where there are excellent game-viewing opportunities. It's one of the best places to see elephants, as well as lions, leopards, hyenas and wild dogs.

(A mokoro experience is included in the tour package.)

Leaving Khwai behind, we traverse the Savuti section of Chobe National Park to our camp on the Chobe floodplain, close to Ngoma in northern Botswana. Our transit through the park is yet another chance to watch game.

By the time we arrive at our camp in the late afternoon, the Bhejane team has dinner on the fire, so the only thing left is to wash off the Savuti dust before enjoying a sundowner.

Go on a self-drive tour along the Chobe River to explore at your own pace. The area is known for its large herds of elephant and buffalo. Our camp is situated close to the Ngoma entrance to Chobe National Park, so you can easily do a drive along the riverfront and floodplains in the park – good places for birdwatching and game.

And finally, we'll spend two nights on the Chobe near Kasane. There are no fences between the park and the town so it's quite common to see wildlife wandering through town!

A visit to Chobe would not be complete without a sunset cruise on the river, watching the animals make their way to the water. What a fitting way to round off the adventure.

DATES AND RATES

27 March – 6 April 2022

R18 250 per adult;

50% per child under 10

Duration: 11 days, 10 nights

Start: Khama Rhino Sanctuary

End: Kasane

WHAT WE SUPPLY

- Tented accommodation
- Specialist guide
- Two-way radios in all vehicles
- Three meals per day
- Entry fees to all parks and activities
- 4x4 assistance if required

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

- Your own vehicle – a 4x4 is essential (fuel is for your own account)
- Your own travel insurance
- Cool drinks, alcoholic drinks and snacks
- Personal items such as medication, sunblock, binoculars, camera etc.
- A camping chair each

Contact  bookings@bhejane.com or call  082 724 0442 for a complete itinerary and a list of tour dates.



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CROSSWORD

Frikkie Andreas from Durban has won a **cooler bag worth R220** for his crossword entry in our April-May 2021 issue. You can win too. Complete this crossword puzzle and e-mail a picture to drivecamp@gomag.co.za. Or do it at <https://bit.ly/3AVe0St>. Last month's solution is on p 107.

				Town in KZN	Dirt	Either ...	Rude	Branch of the Tugela river				
								Mercury (symbol)				
Wicked							Office hours (abbr)					
Halo												
Excellent		Pinch	Stop			Self-satisfied			Intellectual		Heavy hammer	
Before July									Residence		Spy	
				Carriage		Metre (abbr)	Took public transportation	Fuss	Buffet, eg			
									Russia (int code)			
Personal assistant (abbr)			Arm or a leg				Adjust					
			Be able to				Snooze					
						Intrepid						
Computer accessory		Pismire				In a short while			Hummed			
		Bristle										
								Slender				
								On time				
Forsaken	Iodine (symbol)		Astatine (symbol)			Multitude	Behind		Repair	Town in the Northern Cape		
Sense instinctively							Protruberance					
				Yours and mine	Therapist Alliance							
						Pessimist					Asserts	Father
						Not off					Can	
				Corner				River mouths				
								Paddle				
A wild pig	Cloak		Earl Grey, eg	Small hotel			Capture		Uttered			Skill
	Gorilla			Fodder					Lay			
						Serviette						
						Barium (symbol)					Maths symbol	
Song of praise						Uproar					Public relations (abbr)	
Settle												
					Buddy (British)					Sketch		

PHOTOS CYRIL KLOPPER & TOAST COETZER

COMPILED BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

Win with Van Loveren wines

Tangled Tree recently expanded their eco-friendly range to a three-litre bag-in-box. This lovely range consist of a Chocolate Cabernet Sauvignon, Butterscotch Chardonnay, Spicy Shiraz and Tropical Sauvignon Blanc.

The Tangled Tree range, with its lower carbon footprint, is not merely an embodiment

of Van Loveren's commitment to sustainable winemaking but also tells a story of love, find out more at tangledtree.com.

Follow Tangled Tree wines on social media at @tangledtreewines (Facebook & Instagram).

Prize includes a mixed case eight three-litre Tangled Tree wines.



Colour in



COLOUR IN

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

WORD SEARCH

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

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

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

MAZE

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

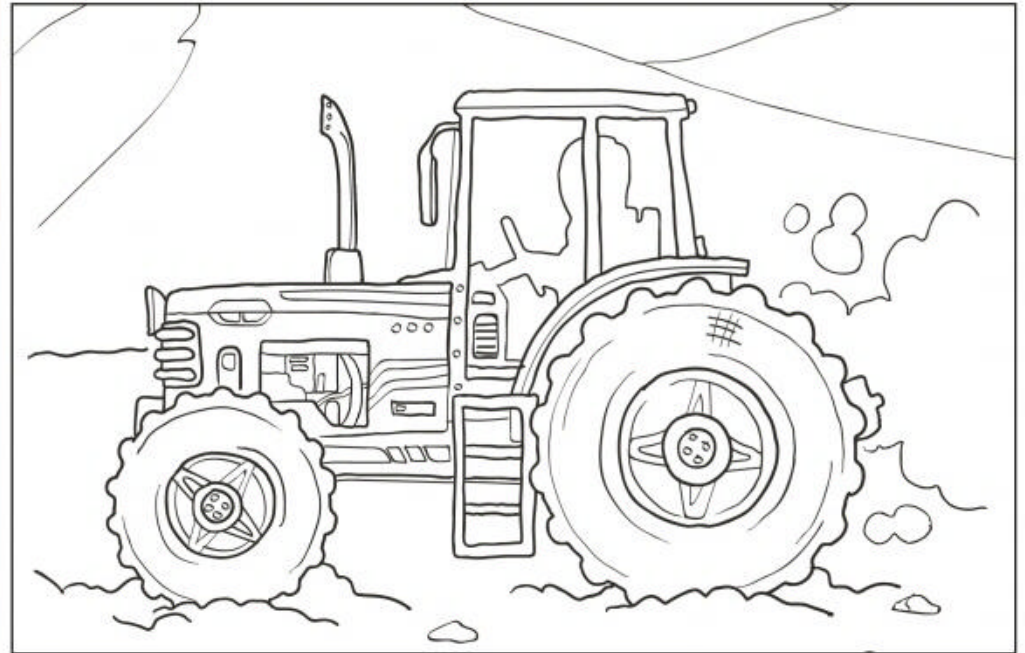
Word search

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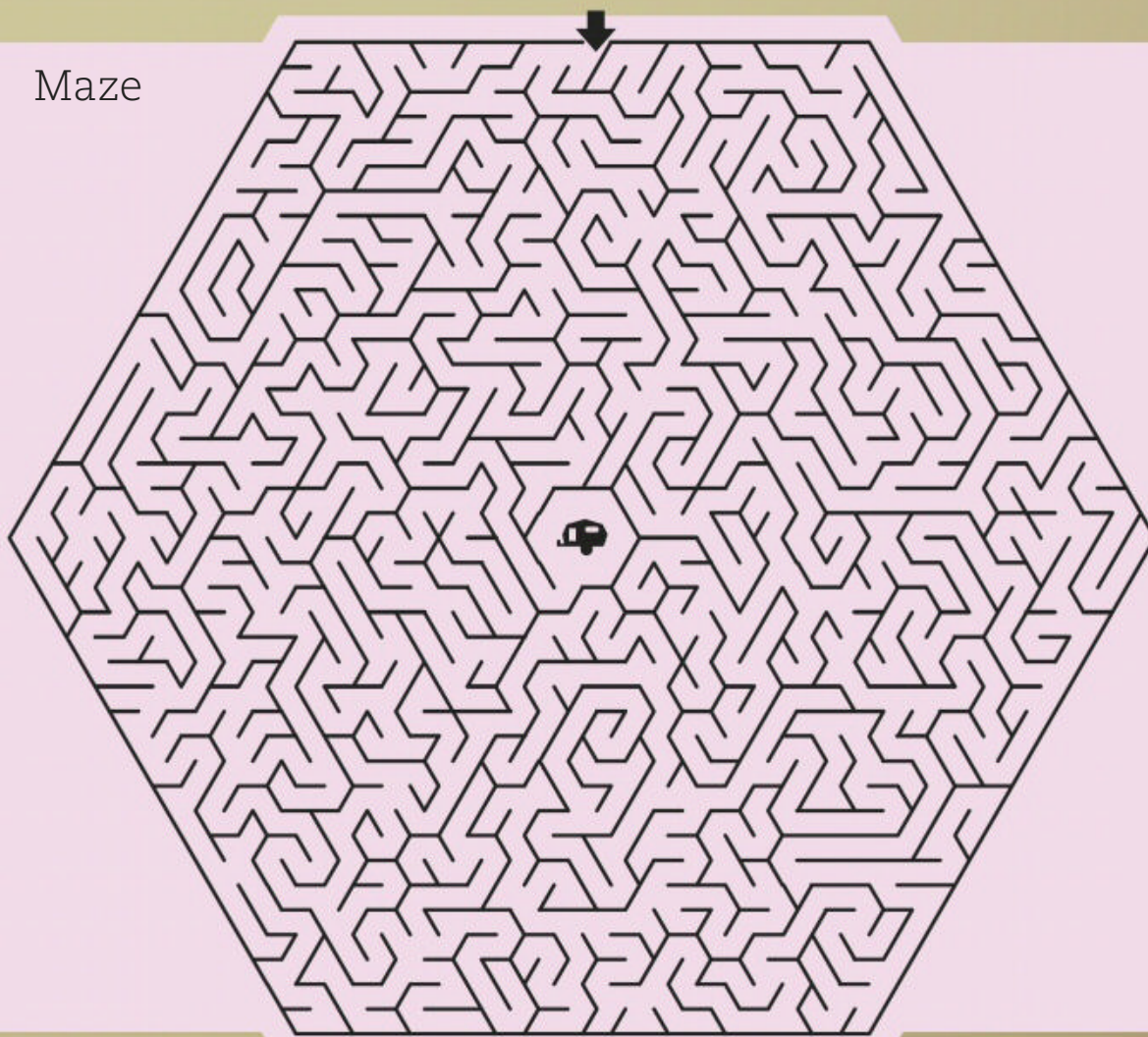
TRANSFORMERS (DECEPTICONS)

Megatron	Thundercracker	Mixmaster
Galvatron	Reflector	Kickback
Soundwave	Bonecrusher	Bombshell
Skywarp	Scavenger	Shrapnel
Shockwave	Devastator	Dead End
Starscream	Thrust	Wildrider

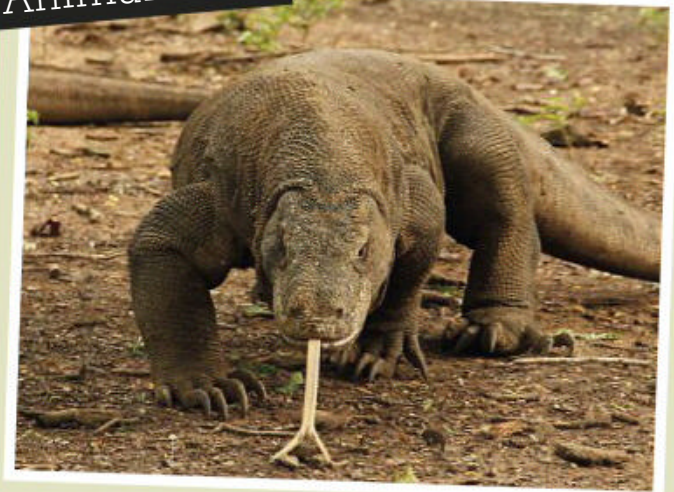
Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts



KOMODO DRAGONS (*VARANUS KOMODOENSIS*)

- Wild Komodo dragons are found only on Indonesia's Lesser Sunda Islands.
- Komodo dragons will eat almost anything they find, including deer, water buffalo, pigs, smaller Komodo dragons and occasionally humans!
- They have powerful legs, sharp claws, shark-like teeth and even poisonous saliva.
- Dragons will calmly follow their bitten prey for miles, using their keen sense of smell to find the victim's corpse.
- They have huge appetites and have been known to eat up to 80 percent of their body weight in a single feeding.

My issue with electric vehicles

He's done some research and there seems to be a number of issues no-one talks about when it comes to electric vehicles, says **Mic van Zyl**.

I have always had my misgivings about the advent of electric powered vehicles (EVs). They offer very little tactile feel through the vehicle controls and the worst feature has to be the artificial exhaust note from the stereo speakers. More than that, though, the science and the facts behind EVs just don't add up.

The Volkswagen Group announced that many of their brands will stop developing new internal combustion engines by 2026 and stop producing internal combustion vehicles by 2033. That's just over a decade

away. And VW is not the only major vehicle manufacturer with this type of message. I am very suspicious about the true impact that the wholesale production of EVs is going to have on us and, more importantly, the environment.

When the time comes when there will be no more internal combustion vehicles, what new unforeseen and foreseen (but ignored) issues are we going to have to deal with?

EVS HAVE TO BE charged using electricity. This electricity has to be generated at power stations using either non-renewable resources such as coal, gas and nuclear or renewable resources, including solar and wind. With more and more EVs, we're going to need a whole lot more electricity with massively increased mining for these non-renewable energy sources.

We would all wish for this electricity to come from renewable resources such as solar and wind, but there are a number of fundamental problems with this. I came across some seriously interesting and sobering facts behind the generation of electricity by means of solar and wind.

Solar and wind power generation only works when the sun shines or the wind blows. The maximum efficiency for solar power generation is around 33% with our best efforts currently at only 26%. For wind, the maximum efficiency is around 60% with current levels around 45%.

This generated electricity would need to be stored for when the sun doesn't shine or the wind doesn't blow. This means more batteries. Consider then that the world's largest battery factory owned by Tesla would need 500 years to produce enough batteries to power the USA for just one day. That is another huge amount of non-renewable resources to manufacture

all of these batteries. And when the batteries are no longer serviceable, what do we do with all the waste?

CONSIDER FURTHERMORE THAT the equipment used to harness the power from the sun and the wind are manufactured from huge amounts of non-renewable resources. A single 100 MW wind farm that can power 75 000 homes requires 55 000 tonnes of concrete, 31 000 tons of iron ore and 1 000 tonnes of other non-recyclable materials to build. Wind turbines then go on to produce waste material in the form of damaged and worn components, not the least of which are thousands of fibreglass turbine blades after being used for as short a time as 20 years.

For solar farms, the material usage can be up to 1,5 times as much with an appropriate amount of waste. Consider then that gas turbine generators can last 50 years and more.

Building one giant wind turbine costs around the same as drilling one oil well. In one hour, the wind turbine produces energy equivalent to one barrel of crude oil, while the oil well produces 10 barrels. It costs around R5 to store one barrel of oil but you need R3 000 worth of batteries to hold the energy contained in that one oil barrel.

Personally, the most worrying fact is that this massive increase in demand for these non-renewable resources is going to drive mining operations into pristine wilderness areas. There has never been a good result when this happens.

My money would be on the continued development of cleaner burning fuels and increased efficiencies for the internal combustion engine coupled with hybrid technology that does not require external recharging.



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Who or wat is killing tourism?

It's worrying that in this difficult time there are senior decision-makers who don't seem to understand the tourism industry, says **Neels van Heerden**.

In a recent Sunday newspaper I read that the bottom of the tourism industry is dropping out, with the institutions that rely on international tourism in particular struggling to survive.

Unfortunately, this situation won't soon improve as South Africa is certainly not on the radar of prosperous tourists from the northern hemisphere at the moment. Travel to South Africa

declined so sharply that tour operators and tour guides in the broader tourism industry has had to look elsewhere for clientele.

Domestic tourism is also struggling to survive, and the damage suffered in 2020 will leave its mark for a long time. Besides the sharp decline in the demand for accommodation, the situation on the supply side is equally dire. That's because tourism businesses had to close their doors to stop the spread of the virus. Many institutions did have policies that were supposed to protect them against anything that obstructed business operations. Something like a COVID-19 pandemic. But guesthouses, hotels and restaurants have been waiting for months already for insurers to pay out their claims from not being allowed to do business during lockdown.

THE ORGANISATION Insurance Claims Africa recently released research figures with the help of a highly respected South African economist that shows how insurers laughed all the way to the bank. He found that the undivided profits of short-term insurers increased to a record amount of R53,5 billion in 2020, while the value of unpaid claims increased to R49,4 billion – another record.

Further legal action is now being considered to claim damages as the insurers are delaying settling outstanding claims. Initially, insurers argued the financial damage suffered was due to lockdown and not directly as a result of the pandemic. The court, however, found that lockdown and the pandemic go hand in hand. When a business folds, the unskilled workers are the first victims.

THE CAMPING INDUSTRY also wasn't spared, despite research showing that camp breakaways within provincial borders are not the so-called super-spread events the government claimed it was.

One can only hope that senior political decision makers in the national and provincial tourism departments understand this. The low risk of camping and the prevention of job losses in rural areas should be the two most important considerations when making decisions about interprovincial camping.

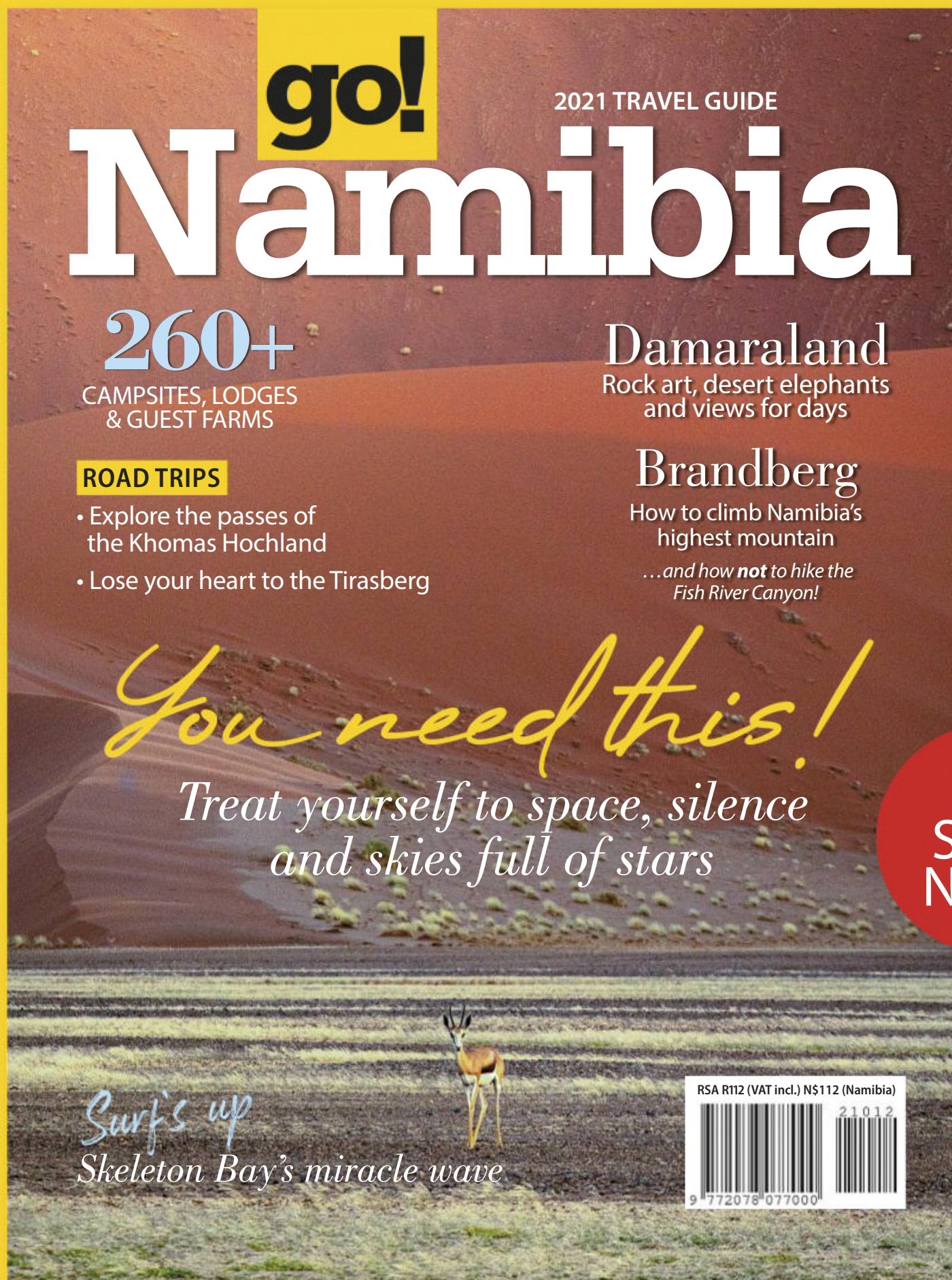
Hopefully, the comprehensive documentation sent to the office of the minister and other decision makers in 2020 are simply stuck somewhere and not lying in someone's bottom drawer. Perhaps the decision makers will then realise that job losses must be combated, especially to protect the future potential of domestic tourism.

Agriculture, mining, financial services and domestic tourism will need to anchor the South African economy in the next three to five years against new waves of viruses. However, the ideology behind the disbursements from the National Tourism Support Fund shows that there are still senior decision makers who don't understand the tourism industry.

Camping is a people-driven industry in which those who have jobs support an extensive community. Any decision therefore that harms the growth of domestic tourism in the future must be fought with great zeal. For that, representatives of every form of tourism – from hotel groups to bush-camp operators – need to come together to oppose decisions based on underhanded political ideologies.



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Brothers in arms

It was after countless repetitions of Ballyhoo's "If there's a man on the moon, can you hear me calling you?" that **Leon Botha** realised there'd be trouble in the campsite that night, and it wouldn't come from the man in the moon.

I am the eldest of three children, and my younger siblings, Hugo and Paul, have shunt some stumbling blocks more than once in my life. We arrived in intervals of two years, and had our disagreements, of course, but we were brothers.

Our family has been camping for as long as I can remember, and our parents criss-crossed the country – kids in tow – more than once, socialising around the campfire at night. We all ended up playing squash – and we'd even go jogging a few kilometres in the morning. (But, not all of us enjoyed running.)

Dad loved motorbikes, but he no longer wanted to take to the road alone, so he bought us each one. Now we could also challenge one another on various motocross tracks.

When at home, we had no choice on Sundays: everyone had to go to church (until Paul announced one day he didn't want to anymore, but that's a story for another day...) And so we'd all be together in church: Dad, Hugo and me with our guitars, and Paul getting rid of his frustrations behind the drums. Yes, we were our church's band and so Dad also got us to church on Fridays (for youth group) and Sunday evenings (for the evening service). Besides our usual camping, we also attended youth camps all over the country.

AS WITH ALL FAMILIES, we went our separate ways after school. My parents

moved to the coast from the Free State, I became a student, Hugo disappeared to the border for two years and Paul dated a girl who was into horses and dressage. We were scattered across the country.

One morning I opened the newspaper and spotted a series of black-and-white photos that showed a cyclist launching himself over an obstacle after a mountain bike race and crashing backwards. It was my brother Paul! Little did we know then that bicycles would become our next common denominator.

Even though all three of us had our own lives now, we all happened to be in Pretoria, and yes, indeed, all of us would cycle. We were together again. All of us – Dad included – would take part in cycling races weekend after weekend. After a while, these were no longer enough. Just as every long-distance athlete has a Comrades dream and rowers fantasise about the Duzi Canoe Marathon, cyclists cannot wait to tick off the Cape Town Cycle Tour – in those days still called the Argus. But after the umpteenth Argus, that too was no longer enough for us.

That's how we ended up together one night at a campsite in Louis Trichardt. Mom and Dad, now Grandma and Grandpa, camped with all three of our families – all in their own tents, with my family in our rooftop tent.

It was time for the annual Kremetart bike race in Louis Trichardt – a great challenge for 'serious' cyclists. It's where

you cycle 175 km in four stages around the Soutpansberg. You head off in the morning and by late afternoon, you hopefully make the end. Another notch we all wanted in our belts.

We were all amped and chatted about all things cycling around the campfire that Friday night. The next day would be a long day, and we all agreed to not stay up late, as a decent night's sleep would count in our favour.

The campsite, of course, had many other cycling enthusiasts, and everyone had the same idea: go to bed early.

But part of the weekend's programme a dinner for all participants at the campsite the night after the race. The designated potjie team were appointed and, as we all know, a good potjie – this one would be a venison one – is not something you throw together quickly. No, you'd start it the night before.

What a great idea.

IT WAS WINTER AND therefore darkness had already descended as we headed to bed. At eight o'clock, the guys next to the potjie were having a fabulous time. Also at nine o'clock, then ten o'clock... their merriment had no bounds.

Music in a campsite is always a sensitive issue, but having to hide your head under a pillow late at night to escape it is not fun. At half-past eleven the sounds echoed throughout the campsite yet again: "If there's a man on



ILLUSTRATION FRED MOUTON

the moon, can you hear me calling you?" And that was when I saw a side of Paul nobody would want to experience.

No matter where you camp, at some point in the night it gets absolutely quiet – so quiet that you open the tent's zipper extra slowly when you have to go to the loo. (For some inexplicable reason, that sound of the zipper cuts through you late at night.)

Paul and his wife were (trying to) sleep in the tent opposite us, and their zipper shot open at the speed of light. "That noise stops now!" he roared, adding a series of words I won't repeat here.

I knew instantly we had trouble. But

even before I could get my bearings properly, Hugo's tent zipper also shot open – he would not pass up the opportunity to join Paul in silencing the potjie brigade.

Yes, they may be younger than me, but they're not the kind of guys you want to have an altercation with. Paul was on our school's first rugby team at the age 16, and Hugo spoke with his fists first and then asked questions. Paul and Hugo accosting these guys now could have disastrous consequences for the next day's race.

I prefer diplomacy and realised I could not leave them to their emotions.

Paul furiously approached the five men around the potjie with Hugo hard on his heels. I grabbed my glasses so I wouldn't miss anything. Paul picked one of the five he thought to be the ringleader, walked up to him and said, forcefully: "You will not turn down the music, you're going to turn it off completely, right now!"

I watched in trepidation, because I saw Hugo behind Paul, ready to land the first blow if they met with any opposition.

But luckily reason prevailed and nobody exchanged any blows. And I was deeply grateful – also that the poor guy in the moon now could get his well-deserved rest.

...AND FINALLY



Revitalised first responder

It's not every day you come across a campervan that used to be an ambulance, riding on a truck chassis. But that's exactly what **Stefus Jansen van Rensburg** from Middelburg has managed to put together.

“ My father-in-law and I actually planned to do a similar project together, as both of us are fond of travelling. But what we didn't realise at the time was that our taste in the finished product would be quite different. Whereas he prefers something that is simply practical, I appreciate what is aesthetically pleasing.

In August last year I came across an ambulance shell that had gone up for sale. I went to have a look, immediately realised the potential and bought it. Then I found a double-cab Iveco truck and purchased it. After only having a rough plan in my head and a few sleepless nights, the project started. I had a lot of assistance from local expertise in the area; including a skilled spray-painter who did a good job overall, and then I also called upon a Mozambican national who is a handy panel beater.

After four months, the campervan was travel-ready for our first trip on 16 December 2020.

Every time we get back from an extensive trip, I make a few tweaks to this and that.

I'm a little embarrassed to admit how much I've spent and my wife, Lize, covers her ears every time I talk about how much more this and that is still going to cost. The shell was a bit of a bargain, though, and the truck I also picked up for a good price, but we had to have the 3.0 l turbodiesel engine reconditioned before we started anything else. The camper averages about 7 km/l on the open road.

There's a 300 l water tank, solar panels, laminated flooring, built-in shower and separate toilet. My campervan only sleeps my wife and I, but the truck is a seven-seater. I'm planning on adding a roof-top tent later for those who might want to join us as well.

With our campervan we've visited the Kruger extensively, having been to places like Balule, Letaba, Maroela, and Skukuza. We've also been to Forever's Swadini resort.



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



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