

#43

CAMP FOOD YOUR WEEKEND MENU — JUST ADD FIRE

JUNE-JULY 2021 | ISSUE 43

go! Drive & Camp

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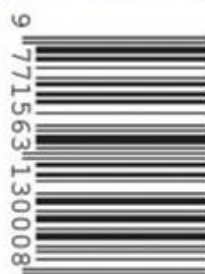
READER'S STORY

Namibia or bust: one
couple's bucket-list trip



DRIVING IMPRESSION Ford's Ranger brings the Thunder | **TOW TEST** The tiny Suzuki Jimny shows its mettle | **GEAR** 14 ways to stay warm | **CARAVAN TEST** The Infanta Ingane thrives on dirt | **NEW CARAVAN** Proudly South African plastic caravan | **TRAIL GUIDE** Fun at Hobby Park

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“

An article I particularly enjoyed in this issue is our reader's story where Terrence and Debbie Cook of Amanzimtoti tell us about their epic journey through South Africa to the south of Namibia and back

”



The last two or three days just before we send the magazine to print, is always exciting. Sure, there's a mountain of work every time it seems there are too few hours in the day, but this is when I start seeing exactly how the words and photos team up to tell you more about all the interesting places our readers and staff have visited.

This month is no exception. I always leave this letter to do right at the end – my team simply roll their collective eyes – but when I finally get there, I know exactly what is waiting for you inside these 124 pages.

We love doing what we do, and if you're reading this, I'm assuming you enjoy travelling and camping. Not for us sitting still in one place.

In April, I took an unforgettable journey to Meob Bay in Namibia in the company of some farmers from Patensie and the guys from Algoa Nissan in Humansdorp. (Read my impression of the Patrol we were driving on page 76. I'll be writing out the trip in an upcoming issue.)

An article I particularly enjoyed in this issue is our reader's story where Terrence and Debbie Cook of Amanzimtoti tell us about their epic journey through South Africa to the south of Namibia and back.

They're such good narrators, it feels as though I'm right there with them. I wish it had been me, but it was great to do the road trip vicariously through them.

It is, of course, a great pity to learn they became one of the crime statistics on home soil, but the way they took this setback in their stride, gives me courage.

Thanks for sharing, Terrence and Debbie. It was lovely joining you on your travels.

Stay safe!

Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com

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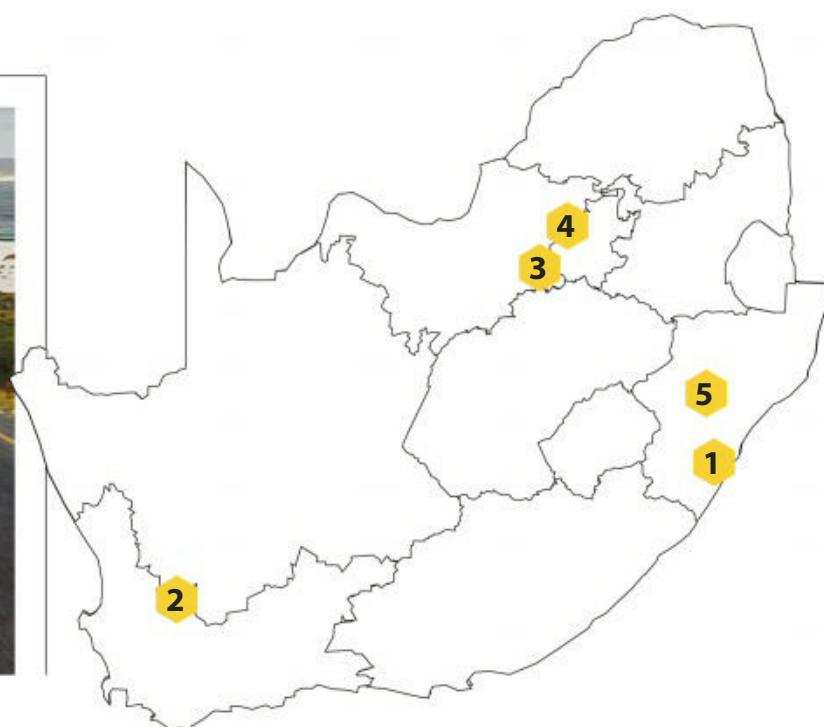


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#43 COVER PHOTO – EVAN NAUDÉ

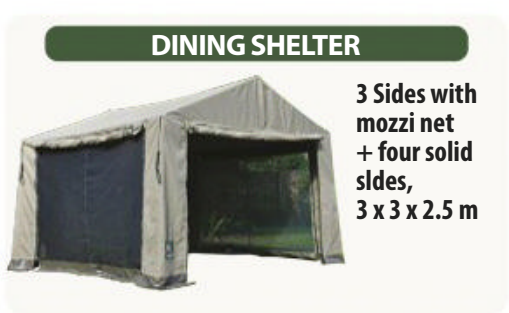
“ It was fairly late in the afternoon when I set up my tripod for this photo. I snapped several pics while the colours in the sky changed and night began to close in. In the end I prefer this image with its layers of pink, yellow and cyan. My girlfriend, Samantha Rietmann, and I enjoyed the camp fire and tranquil water. ”

Camera settings Canon EOS 80D; f9; 1/30 s;
18-35 mm; ISO 400

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



A shortcut turns into a mountain pass

We were taking our newly acquired caravan on its second, and our first solo, journey to see the falls at Augrabies. We decided to spend a night at the Witsand Nature Reserve and consulted Google maps for possible routes there from Postmasburg. We could choose between two dirt roads, so naturally chose the one shorter by 45 km, thinking it would save us half an hour.

And so we set off with our Volkswagen Amarok V6 towing the caravan. In the first hour and a half everything went well, but in the last three quarters of an hour, we started to realise there wasn't much other traffic on our route. We also needed to somehow get over that rather imposing mountain blocking our path. I suggested we turn around, but Bryan wanted to keep going. He said we'd already made a lot of progress and reassured me it would all work out. But the road started getting narrower and rougher until we could no longer pretend that this was a good choice. But by now it was too late to turn around, even without the caravan.

I saw what appeared to be a rusted water pipe diagonally running along an extremely steep mountain side and jokingly said, "I hope that's not the road we have to take". It was. Brian was amazing. He never lost his good humour and handled the 4x4 like a pro.

At the top, I could breathe again and from there on it was all downhill. Still a very narrow, bumpy, rock-strewn 4x4 track, but before long we were back on a more decent dirt road.

Later we would find out that road with its sharp turns was the Bergenaarspad Pass. We feel pretty proud of ourselves...

WINNING
LETTER



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





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but actually it had been irresponsible. Had something gone wrong, we would have been in serious trouble. There was no cellphone signal, no soul for miles, and nobody knew where we were.

When we had signal again, I found out more about the Bergenaarspad pass on mountainpassessouthafrica.co.za. It

says there the steepness is unexpected because it feels like your eyes are deceiving you.

The maximum gradient is apparently more than 1:3 and you're advised not to risk it with an ordinary vehicle. They also warn that it is easy to get lost in this part of the world.

And we ventured up there with our caravan...

At the end of the information piece, they tell you not to take any shortcuts suggested by your GPS – stick to the main routes. Now they tell us!

LINDA PENNY
Klerksdorp

Power without the kick

I refer to an article by Neels van Heerden in the November 2019 issue called “Don’t mess about with electricity”, and again would like to emphasise safety of electricity in the campsite.

I’ve been an electrician for 40 years, and as Neels points out, you can buy a cheap device with which you can test the power point in the campsite. There are different brands available, but it won’t cost you much more than R450. This tester has three lights, and all three needs to light up when you plug it into your stand’s power point. When you arrive at the campsite, immediately test the power point before you plug in your extension cord. If two or less lights up, there’s something wrong. Notify the resort management immediately.

The tester also indicates what the problem is: it shows a ground, neutral or live wire fault, or should the live and neutral wire or the live and ground wire have been swapped.

It can be life-threatening if the live and neutral wire is swapped, for example. Remember, a switch breaks the live wire, and when the wires are swapped, the live contact stays live.

The tester can also determine if the

earth leakage circuit breaker is working as it should. The tester has a knob that rotates to determine at how many milliamps the earth leakage circuit breaker kicks out. Up to 30 mA is safe for humans and should therefore trip before or at 30 mA. The earth leakage circuit breaker will either be located at the power point itself or on the distribution board from where the power comes. It’s not the amount of volts that can be lethal, but the current – measured in ampère.

Extension cords can also cause problems. Rather, use a thicker one. One with 2,5 mm² wires is better than a thinner version, as it can easily handle a current of 20 A, while you will typically get a 16 A power point in the campsite. When a cord is too thin for the amount of current, it can melt and cause a fire. Furthermore, it is a good rule of thumb to extend only once – don’t use more than one extension cord at once, and leave your red lawn

mower one at home. It only has a live and a neutral wire and therefore nothing will be grounded in your caravan.

Finally, about multi-plugs: if you have to use one, choose the type with a built-in circuit breaker.

ANDRÉ OLIVIER
Klerksdorp



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Proper service!

I bought my Crown Trax off-road caravan from Motor King & Marine in Pretoria. Part of the deal was to have the caravan slightly customised to my requirements. For example, I asked for gas cylinders instead of the jerry cans that go on the back. They did it with pleasure. After our first tour, there were a few things that needed attention – one rubber leaked, for example, but nothing serious.

Back home, I called the manufacturer of the Crown Trax, Jan-Albert van Niekerk. His factory is in Springs, but Jan-Albert told us he'd

come get the caravan from us. Five days later, it was returned to us.

Now that's proper service. Doing business with such people is a pleasure, and it gives you as a customer peace of mind, because you have the necessary support.

Thanks to Jan-Albert and Nico Barnard, the salesman, and his staff. The Crown Trax is compact, sturdy and comfortable. And it sets up really easily, even for young people in their eighties like us!

**OUBAAS AND
MARIETJIE COETZEE**
Pretoria



Peak traffic

I took this photo last December in the Addo Elephant National Park. When you meet a cop at a stop street, you could maybe try your luck, but in the Addo you stop!

RIAAN AND ELISE NEL
Jeffreys Bay



Take-along reading

Wherever my husband, Nols, goes, all the old publications of *Drive & Camp* and *go!* come along. Nols distributes it among our fellow campers who thoroughly enjoy it. There are even people who have come to ask us for magazines. You could say that's how we keep our friends happy, and then people want to know when the next *Drive & Camp* will be on shelf.

Some of us nowadays also enjoy the digital version.

ANTOINETTE SCHOEMAN
Riebeeckstad 🇿🇦



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Drinks of the gods

If you look closely, you'll see the world teeming with small bugs, says **Louise Henderson** of Kempton Park.

"We have a lavender bush in our garden that attracts a lot of insects. It's really obvious when you look closely. This butterfly sat there quietly and I could get my phone very close to take the picture. I used pic-editing software on my phone to darken the edges slightly."

At first glance, this looks as though it was shot in a studio. The lighting is excellent – you could easily think Louise used a professional camera. The lens is focused on the butterfly, and thanks to the shallow depth of field, the background is out of focus, giving the photo a three-dimensional feel. Even the butterfly's antennae, which would otherwise disappear against the busy background, are well-defined.

The composition is a tad complicated: the plant on the left anchors the pic, with the butterfly "hanging" onto it. Because Louise crops out a section of the butterfly's wings, its curved shapes are even more pronounced. This is repeated in the patterns on the wing.

Obviously, the butterfly's head is the focal point, and this is where Louise's use of the photo-editing software is clever. Darkening the edges – known as a vignette – forces your eye to the centre, away from the dark to the lighter bits. The head is also the brightest portion of the photo, which gives it a double accent. Clever!

Natural beauty

Opportunities for gorgeous pics are sprinkled through life – whether it's on the beach, in the game park or even in your garden.

By **Leon Botha**



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Back a buddy

Sixteen-year-old **Lisa de Swardt** from Centurion loves portrait photography and nature scenes, but when given the chance, she's just as happy taking pictures of wild animals.

"In September last year, we were in the Kruger National Park and I shot many photos of wild animals. This photo of the oxpecker on the impala is near Skukuza, shot from the car. I've had my camera for about three years and use a 75-300 mm lens."

The oxpecker is very clearly the focal point, but the background also plays an important role, without you even realising it: you've barely registered the bird when your eye immediately seeks more to better understand what's shown here. Lisa makes clever use of the cropping around the bird, because that negative space contains no distracting detail and the bird remains the focus. On the contrary, it's quite abstract, but you see just enough detail to realise the bird is sitting on an impala.

The front impala is nicely in focus, but not the one behind it, plus that one is standing crossways. What's more, the one at the back is darker, and all these elements lend depth to the photo.

Even though the pic is static, the viewer still "feels" the bird's grip. You see the one claw holding onto the animal's coat... and that as the bird peeps at you.



Canon EOS 1100D

SEND YOUR PICTURES

and we might publish them here. We're not looking for traditional "prize winners", just regular pics that you love. Think of the type of pic you'd use as your Facebook cover photo; or something charming, such as kids warming their hands over a campfire.

Whether the pic was taken with an expensive DSLR camera or a run-of-the-mill cellphone, if it's good enough for your family photo album it's good enough for us.

LOUISE HENDERSON wins a *Drive & Camp* camera bag worth R650 with his photo – congratulations, Louise!

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



Canon EOS 200D

Sunrise special

Waiting for the sun to rise always holds the promise of a special photo, as **Charl Jackson** of Simon's Town proves here.

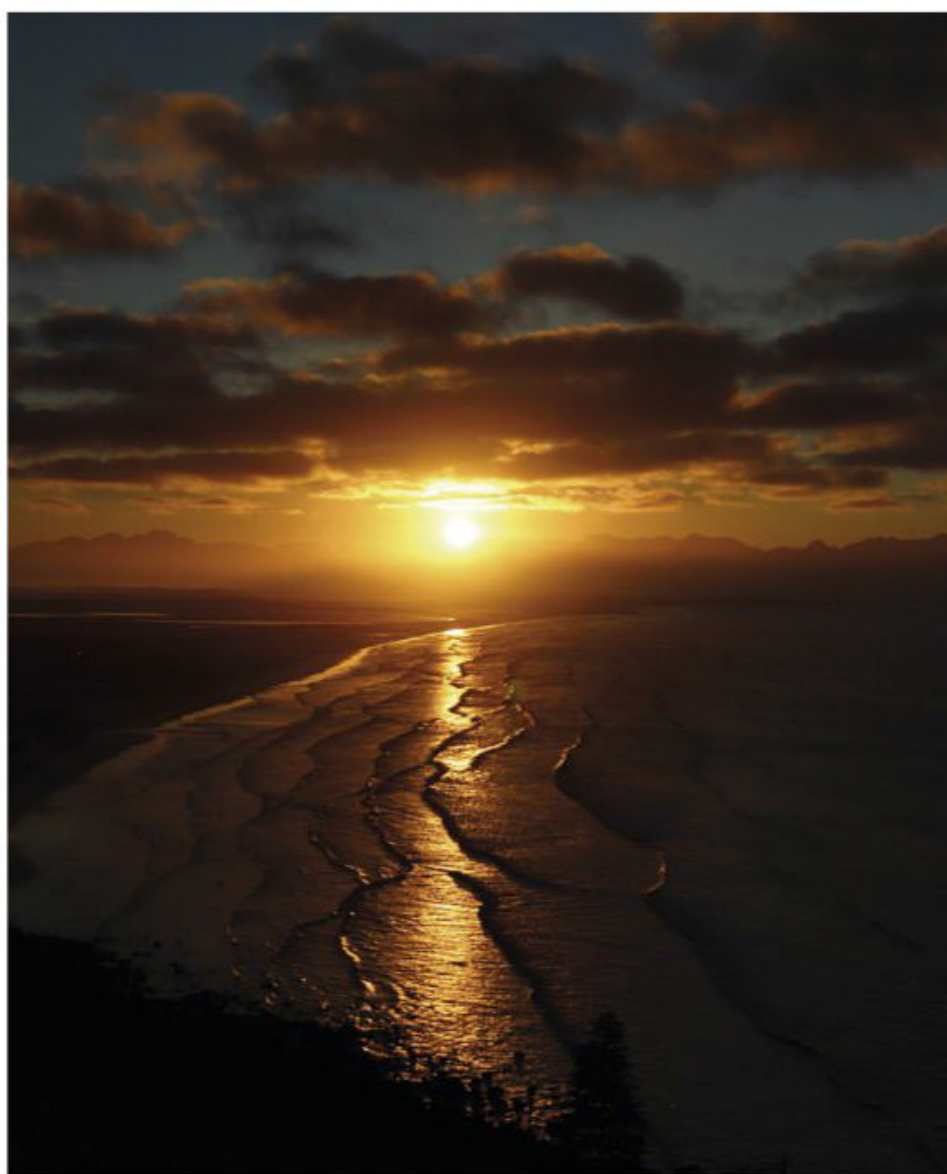
"I took this photo from the famous Boyes Drive, from where you look out over Muizenberg's beach. That morning, I wasn't the only photographer with the same idea: by the time I arrived, many people had their cameras ready."

The angle from which you take your photo can make the difference between an average photo and one that's special.

Looking at Charl's photo, it feels almost like he's sitting in an aircraft, and there's a sudden awareness of patterns you don't see every day. The reflection of the sun adds to this by accenting the waves.

The sun, the horizon and the reflection are all around the centre lines. This can easily result in a monotonous photo. But when you add a dynamic element, you get the opposite effect.

In this pic, we have two such elements. Firstly, in your mind's eye, you can see the waves rolling toward the land – they give the photo energy, and you pay attention for longer to the detail. And secondly, the photo consists mainly of shades of warm colours. The blue sky therefore creates a quiet colour contrast that neatly balances the photo as the waves keep rolling.



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Dinokeng's bursting at the seams

If you consider the Dinokeng area, it certainly looks as though caravan parks are doing well. Another two, Afsaal and Roratau, have just opened here.



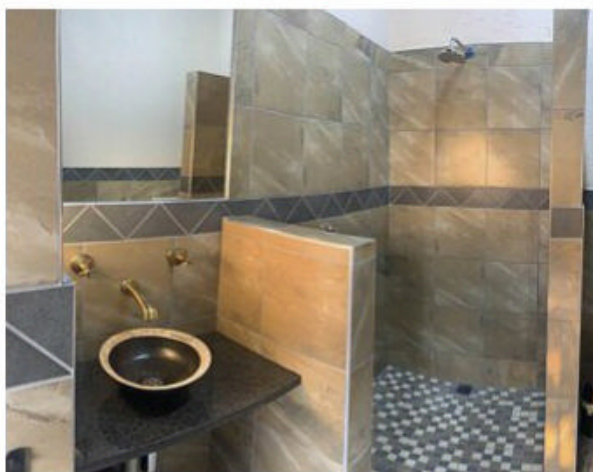
Afsaal Caravan Park and Bush Camp

Afsaal's campsite is a four-hectare fenced camp on Pieter Snyman's 24-hectare land. So you're camping in Dinokeng, but you don't have to worry one of the Big Five will come sniffing around your tent.

As you drive into the campsite, the stands are to the left and a swimming pool to the right. The pool has a shallow section for kids that border on the larger pool. The pool is surrounded by a large kikuyu lawn and four small thatched lapas with tiled floors.

The stands sit in an L-shape with seven on one leg and eight on the other. Six of them have a gravel-covered 6 x 6 m square, and the rest are a mixture of wild grass and soil. Most of them have shade trees. Each stand also gets a fire pit, a freestanding steel braai, two household power points and a tap.

The ablution facilities sit between the two rows and consist of eight rooms, each with a shower, basin and toilet. One



has a corner bath, basin and toilet, and there is a room with wheelchair-friendly facilities. There is also a spot where you can clean your cassette toilet.

Price Depending on the season, R400 or R550 pd per stand for up to six people. Thereafter R100 or R180 pp (maximum eight people). In season, you must book for a minimum of two nights.

Contact 079 754 5442

info@afsaalkaravaanenboskamp.com

afsaalkaravaanenboskamp.com

Roratau Bush Camp



Roratau is part of the Leeuwgedacht Conservancy and shares a 6 km border with the southern part of Dinokeng.

The campsite belongs to Rob and Elsie du Preez – the conservancy is divided into blocks of 21,5 ha. Leeuwgedacht covers more than 1 000 ha, and about 650 ha of that is unfenced. This means that animals such as hartebeest, blue wildebeest, blesbok, zebra and giraffes roam freely. Roratau is also unfenced and antelope often graze in the campsite.

There are five stands set in the bush, and there's plenty of shade. The stands are also quite private and you camp on a spot that's been cleared. Each has a power point (ordinary household socket), a tap and a built-in braai area.

The pool and bathrooms are next to the stands. The pool is really just a splash pool measuring 3 x 3 m. A boma with a braai area and chairs is next door if you want to socialise.

There are two family bathrooms, each with a shower, basin and toilet in the ablution facilities.

Farther up the road are two stands great for groups: Bosvark and



C A M P E R T R A I L E R



- Only B License required
- Sleeps 2-4 people
- Fiberglass canopy & Body Panels



Contact details: 021 945 2142 (Office/Michelle)
admin@tongasa.com

www.tongasa.com

 Tonga Camping Trailer

3 Uranium street, Unit 2, Bellville Triangle farm 7530

TONGA



Vlakvark. Bosvark has room for two caravans and Vlakvark for up to four. The former has its own bathroom and Warthog has double facilities.

Price Regular stands, R400 pn per stand for four people (thereafter R50 pp, with a maximum of six people) and R200 pn for the second caravan or tent that

shares the site. Bosvark costs R500 pn and R250 for the second caravan, and Warthog is R1 000 pn for the first two caravans and R350 each for the third and fourth one.

Contact 084 603 9289 or 083 267 2145
info@roratabushcamp.co.za
roratabushcamp.co.za

Matroosberg heats up

Matroosberg has just built its first pool... and it's an indoor heated one! The swimming pool has been built in the reception hall and visitors to the reserve may use it, whether they're day visitors or overnight guests. The pool is 1,4 m deep and 10 x 4 m in size. There's also a small restaurant and bar.

Matroosberg is a popular destination, especially in winter after it has snowed.

Contact 023 312 2282

info@matroosberg.com

matroosberg.com

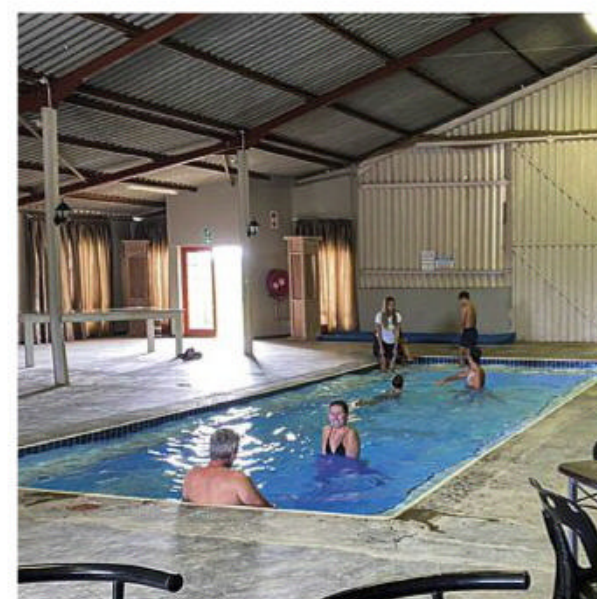


Photo Didi Van Matroosberg

Volvo turns up the voltage

Volvo is drawing a line in the sand on the internal combustion engine – it plans to be a fully electric car company by 2030.

Even more impressive is that by 2025, the company is aiming for 50 % of its sales to be that of electric vehicles, while the other half will be hybrid models.

This is part of the brand's climate plan, in which the goal is to reduce the carbon footprint per vehicle. Volvo's CEO Håkan Samuelsson says this is a necessary step as to remain successful, they need profitable growth. "We are fully focused on becoming a leader in the fast-growing premium electric segment," he says.

After the release of the XC40 Recharge last year, Volvo also unveiled its latest hybrid, the C40. Designed to be an fully electric vehicle, the C40 is also the first Volvo to be leather free. Powered by a 78 kWh battery that Volvo claims can be fast charged to 80 % in around 40 minutes, it will have a range of 420 km.



A LEADING LIGHT

Whether it's for everyday use, work or the outdoors, the reinvented **Ledlenser P-Series flashlights** provide the right light for every usage.



In everyday life, on construction sites or during outdoor activities – you need a different type of flashlight for each. That's why **Ledlenser** is ushering in a light revolution by offering their P-series flashlights in three versions – Core, Work and Signature.

ONE PRODUCT, DIFFERENT USES

The Core versions are the basic line for every day, whereas the Work flashlights are extra robust, and Signature stands for the most demanding applications.

All models in the P-Series are reliable torches in a clear design that offer selected features (see box). With their intuitive operation via the multifunction switch, ergonomic design and powerful LEDs, the high-quality headlamps provide precise light in every situation.

We take a closer look at the three different versions of one model in the P-Series: the P7R rechargeable flashlight.

P7R CORE – BRINGING LIGHT TO EVERYDAY LIFE

This is the base product with all the technologies you would expect from **Ledlenser** for everyday use. It's equipped with Flex Sealing Technology, which protects it against dust and water according to IP67 protection class.

P7R WORK – GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

This version has the same features as the Core but is extra robust. It was designed to provide construction and industrial workers and craftsmen with a constant working light. Thanks to special features, the P7R Work is also suitable for harsh environments. A non-slip rubber coating protects it from falls. The extra front screen is shock-resistant

and can also be replaced. The lamps are protected against damage from chemical substances such as oils, diesel, brake fluid or solvents.

P7R SIGNATURE – HIGH-TECH PERFORMANCE FOR DEMANDING USERS

This version is the premium product line and was designed for demanding outdoor activities. It's characterised by extraordinary technical features and extreme robustness. The hard-anodised surface protects against wear and corrosion. In addition to the basic features of the core models, this model has a programmable switch on the lamp head that can be assigned to the preferred lighting functions. This allows direct access to the strobe or red-light function.

For more info, visit www.ledlenser.co.za or www.awesometools.co.za/new-p-and-h-series/

MORE ABOUT LEDLENSER TECHNOLOGIES

Ledlenser Technologies has more than 20 years expertise in lighting solutions. They pride themselves on their excellent German engineering and design. From innovative lenses to future-oriented batteries – they're on the cutting edge of technology and design. They have over 100 patents (and believe there are about 100 more to come). Here are some of their top innovations:

ADVANCED FOCUS SYSTEM (AFS)

Galileo swore by the power of lenses, Newton swore by reflectors. **Ledlenser** simply combined the two (but better than anyone before). The resulting AFS allows a seamless transition from homogeneous low beam to sharply focused high beam.

MAGNETIC CHARGE SYSTEM

With this system, the charging cable can quickly and easily attach to the lamp via magnetic contacts. When the contacts approach, the charging cable automatically pairs with the lamp. The connection is automatically released under load.

SMART LIGHT TECHNOLOGY

This innovation turns a **Ledlenser** into your personal lighting tool. Using a microcontroller, you can program your individual range of functions with different touch and switch combinations. That way you always have the optimal light function at hand.

FLEX SEALING TECHNOLOGY

This seals off the electronic parts of the lamp head, protecting it against water and dust penetration. This flexible system maintains the seal, even when the AFS is used. The focus can even be used underwater.



ADVANCED
FOCUS SYSTEM



SMART LIGHT
TECHNOLOGY



FLEX SEALING
TECHNOLOGY



EDGEOUT

Plastic fantastic!

Banter in the campsite can lead to new caravans – just look at South Africa's first plastic caravan, says **Leon Botha**.

That's right: the new Edgeout caravan is not made of wood, fibreglass or aluminium. It's made of plastic, and some of it is even recycled plastic.

But that's not the end of this caravan's unique features. With its modern and oblique shapes, it looks like something from Star Wars. Plus, Vonnie Heyns, the mastermind behind the Edgeout, and industrial designer Retief Krige provided several new elements.

How it all began...

Vonnie, owner of 4EVR Plastic Products that manufactures a wide range of plastic products, camps annually at Jamaka in the Cederberg. One day his friend Mike Smit asked him, "Why don't you build a plastic caravan?"

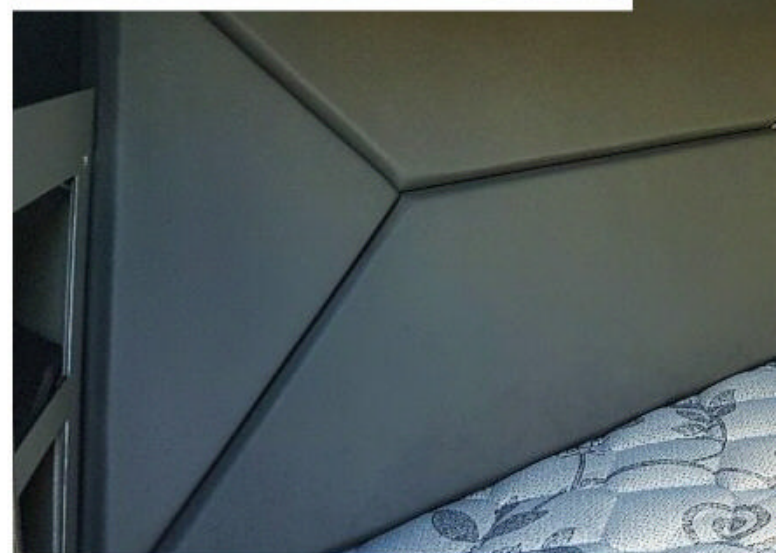
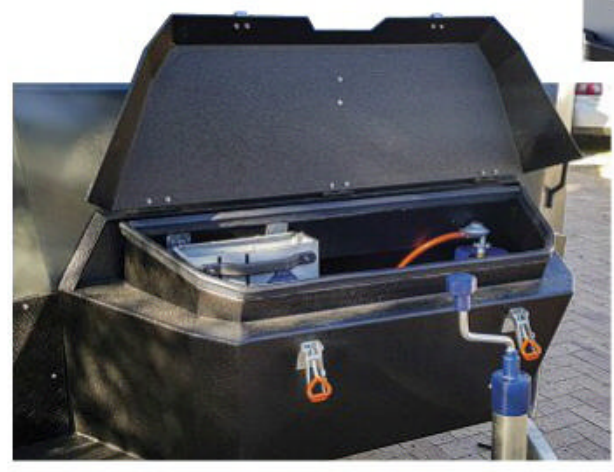
The seed was planted, and Vonnie immediately started thinking about a teardrop caravan, a bed-on-wheels with a spacious outdoor kitchen at the back. Retief and Vonnie then set about making it happen and, two and a half years later, they completed the first

Edgeout. For the chassis, Vonnie decided on one from Burquip. It's galvanised and custom made for the Edgeout. Vonnie didn't consider leaf springs an option and so the Edgeout boasts an independent torsion bar axle. The axle is equipped with brakes. With a gross vehicle mass of 1 300 kg, the caravan is light enough to tow using an ordinary sedan.

Bed and breakfast

The Edgeout's hull consists of two sections cast separately: the sleeping cabin and kitchen. They are seamless and fit together on the chassis, but don't get the same finish.

The kitchen unit consists of a single layer of plastic 8-10 mm thick, but the cabin consists of three layers. The outer layer is 4 mm with a 10 mm plastic foam layer on the inside. Acoustic panels form the third layer and all this results in the panel being 25 mm. This acoustic layer is made from recycled plastic bottles. This panel as a whole provides proper insulation for both temperature and sound.



With a typical teardrop design, the Edgeout has a door on each side near the A-frame. The top end of the bed – with a stacked shelf on each side and reading lights on the roof – is closest to the door. Above your feet are a number of built-in cabinets, their shape repeating the oblique exterior design. The headboard is not perpendicular to the mattress as per normal, but at a bit of an angle – perfect for leaning against while deciphering your last Sudoku for the day. The bottom end is adjustable and can slide out towards the nose, which has the mattress lengthen by a good 15 cm. The bed is now 2 x 1,4 m, just slightly wider than an extra-length double bed.

The mattress folds up into three sections, and underneath are three shallow cupboards where you can store items such as the ground sheet and other camping equipment. The door that gives you access to the outside kitchen opens like a hood, with two gas struts that lift it until it forms a roof over the kitchen. The light on the inside of the door is then above your head and the 136 x 35 cm worktop is just across from you.

The microwave sits in the middle behind the worktop, and on either side a cupboard. They

have plenty of room for groceries: on the left is an open shelf and a drawer sits on the right.

Your fridge/freezer (up to 56 ℓ) sits on a sliding frame on the left below the worktop. A canvas bag in which you can store pots and pans fits in right behind it. Then the drawer that contains the two-plate gas stove pulls out from the right under the worktop. It can also serve as an extra workplace, as there's a glass cover that flips down over the stove. At the end of the sliding frame are two smaller drawers – one for cutlery and the other with cut-out foam for glasses and plates.

On the right-hand side of the drawer, there's a frame for a loose sink. Next to it is a tap with a swing mixer – for hot and cold water – with the gas cylinder for the stove around the corner. The inline geyser sits in the nose cone next to its gas cylinder.

What comes standard?

Standard items include a spare wheel, 12 V and 220 V power system with a deep-cycle battery, plugs, lights, a microwave, 110 ℓ water tank with pump, geyser, basin and tap. The rooftop tent, fridge/freezer, awning, solar panels and canvas dressing room are optional.



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Edgeout
Sleeps	2-4
Length.....	4,33 m
Width	2,15 m
Height.....	1,98 m
Wheels	15"
Tare weight.....	700 kg
Load capacity	500 kg
GVM.....	1 300 kg
Standard price	R229 000
Contact	082 372 8800 edgeout.co.za sales@edgeout.co.za



R229 000 **EDGEOUT** GVM 1 300 kg

The competitors
Robust built, extra-small caravans for two with a GVM of more than 1 000 kg



R205 425 **Raasblaar** GVM 1 600 kg

The hull consists of galvanised steel plate and aluminium, and a rooftop tent fits on top.



R218 000 **Mobi X** GVM 1 500 kg

The Mobi X also has space for a rooftop tent and is made of fibreglass.



R295 000 **Badger Extreme** GVM 1 750 kg

Also fibreglass, but nothing beats this one's interior space in this market segment.



NORTHSTAR 600ATV

A detachable tortoise shell

With a camper shell you easily convert your bakkie into a motorhome. Now the newly introduced Northstar 600ATV will ensure you do it in style, reports **Leon Botha**.

You get two types of camper shells: those where the load bin is replaced by a sleeping unit that's bolted on the bakkie's chassis (see page 90), and the type that simply slides on and off the load bin and you don't have to permanently lose your bakkie's cargo space. Examples of the former are Echo's Chobe RV, Infanta's Inkunzi and Bush Lapa's standard Bosluis.

The Northstar 600ATV hard wall-camper shell falls into the second category. This shell, like a number of other models on the market, has a further advantage: it has legs, which means you can lift it off the bakkie in the campsite. If you're only overnighting somewhere with the unit still fitted, simply lower the two legs at the back and you're ready for bed.

The story behind the story

Gregory Renault from St Francis Bay has been importing Palomino and Northstar models from America since November 2014. The Northstar 600ATV model is the very latest.

As the units are imported, some minor changes are made to adapt it to South Africa – the electric outlets for instance.

You don't need a special driver's license, because the unit simply fits on the back of your bakkie. The vehicle also doesn't have to be re-registered to adjust the weight, and your





SPECIFICATIONS

Model Northstar 600ATV
Sleeps 2-3
Length 4 m
Width 1,98 m
Inside height 1,95 m
Wet weight 753 kg
Standard price R539 000

Contact 072 227 9752
 northstarsa.co.za info@northstarsa.co.za



UPS AND DOWNS.
 The single biggest benefit of a camper shell is that you can off-load it in a campsite if you want to go on a game drive, or leave it at home when you use your bakkie for work.



standard papers will still be valid.

The unit fits on any bakkie, whether it's a single cab or a double cab. On a single cab, you can close the tailgate, but the double cab's tail gate stays open. This unit also gets its own taillights as it blocks those of the bakkie.

Stretch those legs

The 600ATV is attached to the anchor points of the bakkie with four straps. Off-loading it is as easy as pie: simply loosen the straps and slide it off the load bin.

At each corner is a leg that can be extended to the ground. It works mechanically with a crank-handle, but you also get a special fitting if you want to use a drill. There is even a third choice: electrically operated legs. They work with a remote control and you can lower all four legs at the same time or each individually. Once the legs are in place, simply drive the bakkie out from under the unit and then lower the shell so it's easier to get into it.

Hop on in

The panels are made of marine ply and finished with fibreglass skins, and the door sits at the back with a wide step underneath.

As you get in, a cassette toilet is on your left in its own cubicle, which doubles as a shower cubicle. This is undoubtedly the 600ATV's biggest selling point.

Next to it is the twin gas burner and basin with a tap that extends much like a shower head does.

Against the opposite panel is a bench that stretches from the door down the wall. Here you can set up a small table top for meal times

or turn it into a bed so one more person can sleep here.

You climb onto the main bed using a step that sits between the basin and the end of the bench. The water tank is mounted under the step and the bar fridge is to the right.

The bed section extends over the roof of the bakkie. The bed itself is 1,85 x 1,42 m in size – slightly wider than a double bed. The area above your head is high enough for you to sit upright on the bed, and there's a window on each side that can open. Each window has mosquito mesh and blinds.

To the right of the bed is an open shelf with flat lid in the middle. You can use this as a bedside table, but also lift the lid to store some of your valuables inside a sunken cupboard where they're out of sight.

A gas cylinder is mounted outside in its own cupboard at the bakkie's left rear door. Just to its right is an extendable shower head, just in case you want to set up an outdoor shower tent here.

The 600ATV comes with a 100 Ah deep-cycle battery, so when it's not connected to 220 V power, equipment including the lights, water pump and fridge work with 12 V shore power. The geyser uses gas.

What comes standard?

Standard items include the fridge, cassette toilet, gas stove and inverter.

Items including air-con, a 22" TV (12 V), the electrically operated legs, a 160 W solar panel with its control system, and the rearview camera and screen are just some of the many optional extras.



R545 000 **NORTHSTAR 600ATV** **Sleeps 2-3**

LOCAL COMPETITORS

Standard prices, but none of them have a built-in shower cubicle and flushing cassette toilet.



R322 000 **Bush Lapa Slip-on Bosluis 2** **Sleeps 2**

Dry weight is 651 kg, it's 23 cm narrower (175 cm) and it's made of stainless steel and aluminium.



R189 700 **Stealth Bakkie Mate** **Sleeps 2-3**

Dry weight is 480 kg, it's 4 cm wider (202 cm) and made of fibreglass.



R172 500 **Obiqua Slide On/Off** **Sleeps 4**

Dry weight is 230 kg, it's 18 cm narrower (180 cm) and also made of fibreglass.



SUBARU OUTBACK



Same difference, or better?

Subaru values evolution above revolution. How many minor adjustments have been made to the brand new Outback?

Cyril Klopper takes a look.

Subaru says its latest Outback is its best vehicle in the brand's history. For the first time in Africa, buyers can choose from two trim levels: the Field and Touring models, priced at R699 000 and R729 000, respectively. This allows customers to choose the right Outback for their lifestyle.

The Field version – pictured here – has a stronger focus on adventure, while the Touring is more luxurious. The Field has, for example, fabric upholstery compared to the leather seats of the Touring. The Field has black

emblems, black side mirrors and black wheel rims, while the Touring's finish is predominantly silver and aluminium.

What do we have here?

No, the new Subaru Outback is not simply a facelifted version of the previous model. It's brand new, although to the untrained eye it may look the same as the previous model. Subaru is particularly proud of the changes that has been made.

"The all-new Outback is the representation of everything for which Subaru strives to achieve

– unmatched safety, capability, practicality and especially in this case, a premium driving experience on any terrain," says Nteo Nkoli, marketing lead at Subaru South Africa.

In terms of safety, the latest Outback has not yet been subjected to NCAP crash tests, but the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) recently tested it in the United States where it got a perfect score. According to Subaru, the crumple zones in the Outback's shell frame can absorb 100% more impact than before, despite the chassis

being 70% more rigid.

The Outback also uses sensors, cameras and computers that can predict if you're heading for danger and then warn you against it – and even intervene if you don't react fast enough.

The Outback's capabilities have been improved, as 80% of the continuously variable transmission has been redesigned for better performance. The gearbox now weighs less and apparently also responds faster. The suspension has been adapted for better comfort on dirt roads – not that the Outback ever had



a problem with that – and sound-absorbing materials in the body and the doors aid in reducing road noise.

Inside and out

The new Subaru Outback is 50 mm longer and 35 mm wider than before, which creates a larger interior. There is more legroom and shoulder room and the boot is also slightly larger. The luggage space's cover is height-adjustable,

and there are hooks with which to secure camping gear.

The tailgate is now automatic and you simply hold your hand over the Subaru logo to open it. When Subaru renews a vehicle, the differences are usually subtle, but the Outback's centre console has been dramatically transformed. Now there's an 11,6" touchscreen reminiscent of Volvo's huge tablet interface. You use the screen to control just about

everything in the car – from ride modes to the excellent Harman/Kardon sound system with 12 speakers. Speaking of ride modes: The X Mode software has two settings that automatically adapts to snow, mud, rocks or soil.

How does it compare?

The Subaru Outback's closest competitors are the Audi Q3, the Honda CR-V and the Volvo XC60 – all equipped with all-wheel drive and seating for five.

If the size of the boot is important to you, consider the Audi Q3 with 550 ℓ (more than that of the CR-V and XC60) compared to the Outback's 522 ℓ. Despite its enormous luggage space, the Q3 is almost 40 cm shorter than the Outback, which means you'll also have more space in your garage. At 8,2 ℓ/100km, the Q3 is the thirstiest of the

competitors, though.

When it comes to warranties and service plans, you're better off with a Honda CR-V, which boasts a five-year/200 000km warranty and five-year/90 000km service plan. The CR-V is also the only vehicle of the four that has a full-size spare wheel, but its low ground clearance (202 mm) is the worst of the lot.

In terms of power and torque, the Volvo XC60 comes out tops with 187 kW and 350 Nm compared to the Outback's 138 kW and 245 Nm. The XC60 can also tow the heaviest weight (2 400 kg) – the rest may not tow anything over 1 500 kg. It is also, of course, the most expensive.

All the competitors have their strengths and weaknesses, but the Subaru Outback rules the middle ground and performs well in the final calculation.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Subaru Outback 2.5i-Field ES
Engine	2 498 cc flat "boxer" four-cylinder
Power	138 kW @ 5 800 rpm
Torque	245 Nm @ 3 400 rpm
Transmission	Continuously variable transmission (CVT)
Fuel consumption	7,3 ℓ/100 km (claimed)
Tyre size	225/60R18
Maximum towing weight	1 500 kg (braked)
Ground clearance	213 mm
Approach and departure angles	19,7 ° and 22,6 °
Luggage space	522 ℓ (1 267 ℓ with seats folded down)
Safety rating	Good (IIHS)
Warranty	5 years/150 000 km
Service plan	3 years/75 000 km
Price	R699 000

From the competitors Five-seater station wagons with all-wheel drive



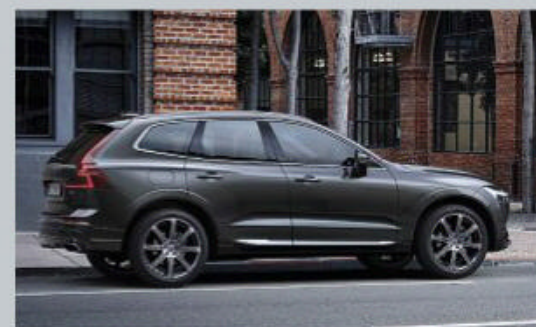
R717 600 Audi Q3 quattro S-tronic

A great gravel road family car with a surprisingly generous interior.



R721 400 Honda CR-V AWD

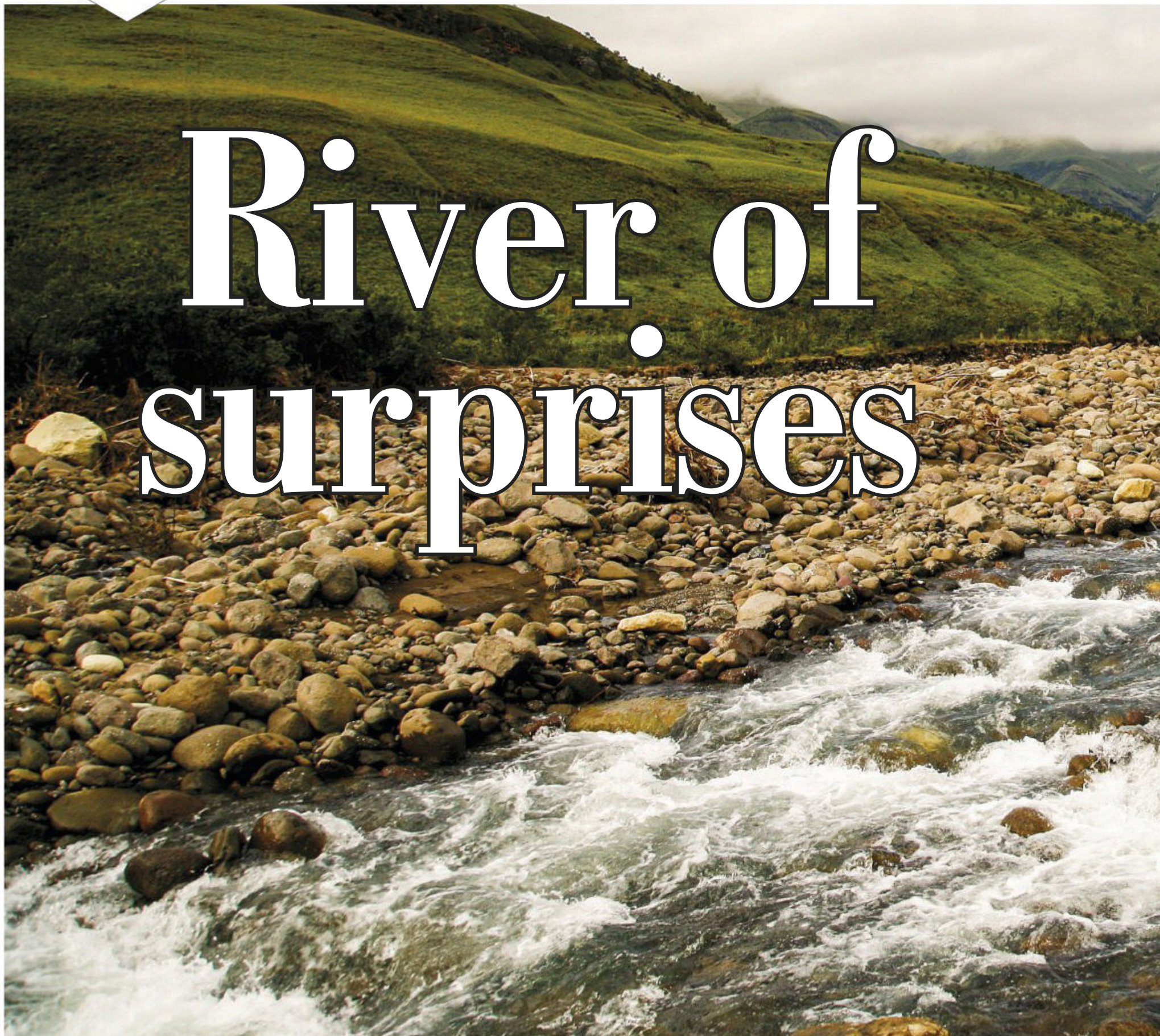
Possibly the most reliable vehicle you can get, but not exactly exciting.



R807 000 Volvo XC60 Momentum

"Stylish and upbeat" are just two words that describe this one.

River of surprises



The Tugela River lies in 10th place on the list of the longest rivers in South Africa. It is also the biggest in KwaZulu-Natal, where it's called the uThukela in Zulu. Let's follow the water all the way from its source to its mouth.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

The route starts at Mont-aux-Sources in the Royal Natal National Park. The Tugela Falls, the highest in the world, crashes down the Drakensberg Amphitheatre and several streams coalesce at the foot of the dramatic cliff.

At the car park (S28.70953 E28.94022), from where you watch the scene, the Tugela River is still young, barely five metres wide and only ankle deep, with its water crystal clear. About 500 km east, however, where the Tugela empties into the ocean, it looks entirely different...

Day 1

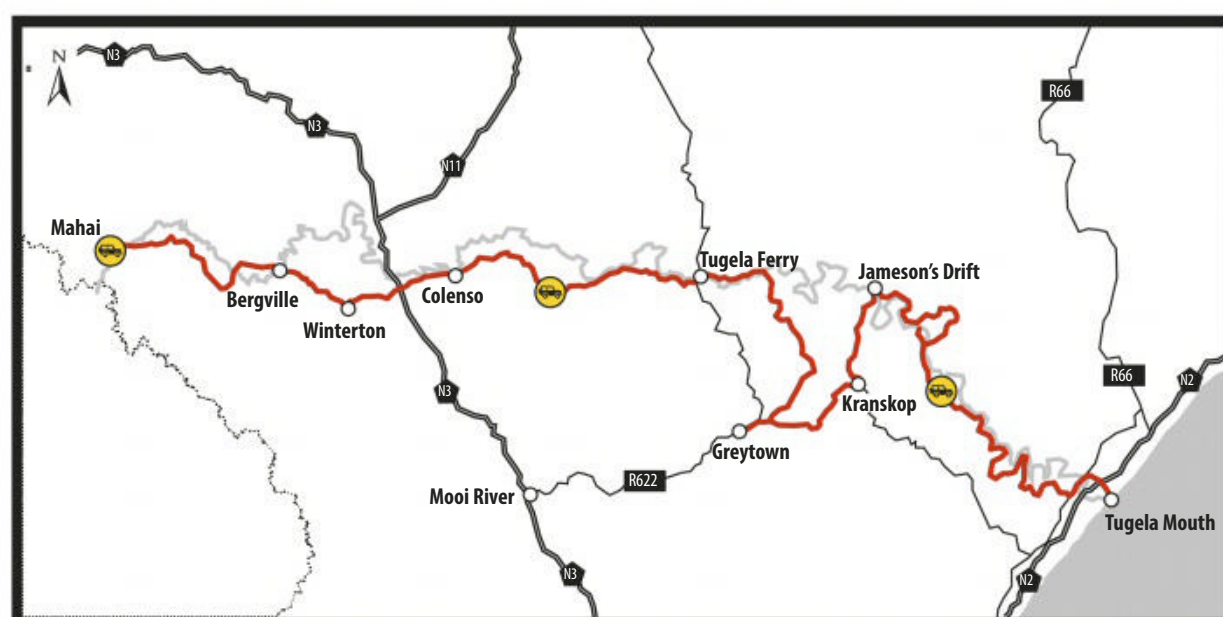
A RUN THROUGH HISTORY

A bumpy tar road runs along the Tugela River to a picnic spot next to a dam. Stop here and shoot a gorgeous pic of the Amphitheatre. From here, drive past the visitor centre and shortly afterwards, leave



the national park at the main gate.

Barely 200 m outside the gate, will you cross the Tugela for the first time. It seems as though the river has already swollen and become deeper in the past 6 km since leaving the car park. Follow a pothole-riddled tar road for 7 km and turn right at a road sign for Dukuzu (S28.67535 E29.03577). From here a decent tar road takes you past several settlements with interesting architecture. One remarkable house next to the road resembles an aircraft, or maybe it's a boat? The designer clearly had big dreams, but his budget and



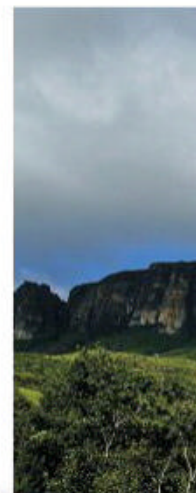
talent betrayed him. Now this flightless corrugated iron titan, with its VW bus windows, is slowly rusting away.

There are several speed bumps along the road and you should keep an eye out for cattle and goats that have no qualms with strolling into the road exactly when you approach them. After 26 km, you'll reach the Woodstock Dam, the first of three dams in the Tugela River.

A 394 m long bridge takes you over the dam and then the tar road descends to behind the 54 m high earth dam wall that holds back 373 million cubic metres of water. Here you cross the Tugela River – which has now swollen to 50 m wide – for the second time (S28.75747 E29.25145).

The road rises again and crosses the Tugela Canal that supplies water for an irrigation scheme in the surrounding agricultural area. To the right of the road lies the Driel Dam, the smallest of the three along the Tugela. You won't be able to see it from the road, though, due to the hilly landscape. The first biggish town along this route is Bergville. The British blockhouse in Bergville is the last remaining fortification of its kind in KwaZulu-Natal. During the Anglo-Boer War, the British built nearly 8 000 blockhouses and forts – some were little more than stone kraals while others were impressive strongholds – and relatively few of them remain standing today.

Continue east on the R74 regional road, toward the ocean, and cross the Tugela River for the third time on the outskirts of Bergville. The Tugela veers to the north here and feeds the Spioenkop Dam – the



“

After 26 km, you'll reach the Woodstock Dam, the first of three dams in the Tugela River

”



third, and last, dam in the river's course.

If you're up for a 90 km detour, do visit a famous battlefield site near the dam. Several legendary figures participated in the Battle of Spioenkop (1900) in their own way: a young journalist named Winston Churchill would later become Prime Minister of Britain; an equally young stretcher bearer, Mahatma Gandhi, eventually lead India's independence from Britain; combatant Colonel Robert Baden-Powell would form the Boy Scout and Girl Scout movements after the war; and Boer general Louis Botha would become the first prime minister of the Union of South Africa soon after.

WE WILL, HOWEVER, stick to the R74 and drive to Winterton, as the crow flies



AIM HIGH. The aeroplane house of Dukuza (above) stands proudly below the sandstone cliffs of the Drakensberg (left). From the Woodstock Dam (below) the Tugela Rivier grows substantially and changes its colour (bottom left).



12 km south of the Tugela. This town lies along the Little Tugela River, in Zulu the Njesuthi, or “the satisfied one”.

Winterton was founded in 1905 and originally called Springfield, but renamed five years later for the then Natal Secretary of Agriculture, HD Winter.

In the town’s main street, Springfield Street, turn right onto the Colenso Road. This turns into an appalling dirt road after 6 km. We love dirt roads, don’t get us wrong, but this one was awful during our visit. Judging by the tracks running parallel through the veld, local residents feel the same way. After 15 km, an underpass takes you under the N3 highway. Another 12 km later, you’ll reach the Kitchener Bridge over the Doringspruit River on the outskirts of Colenso. The bridge is named after Lord

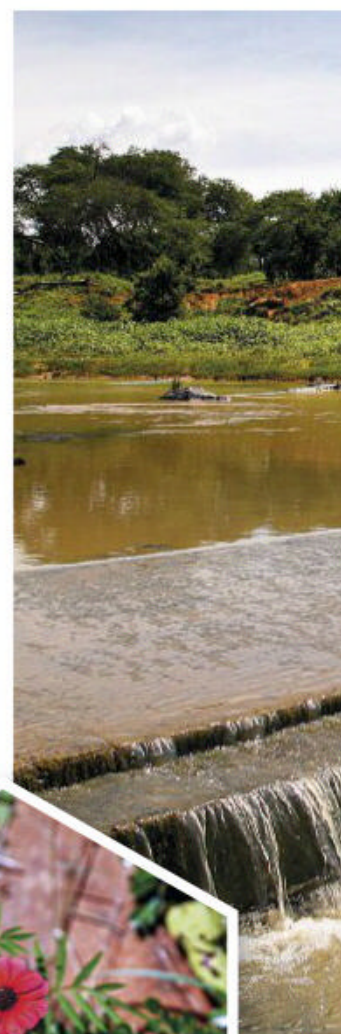
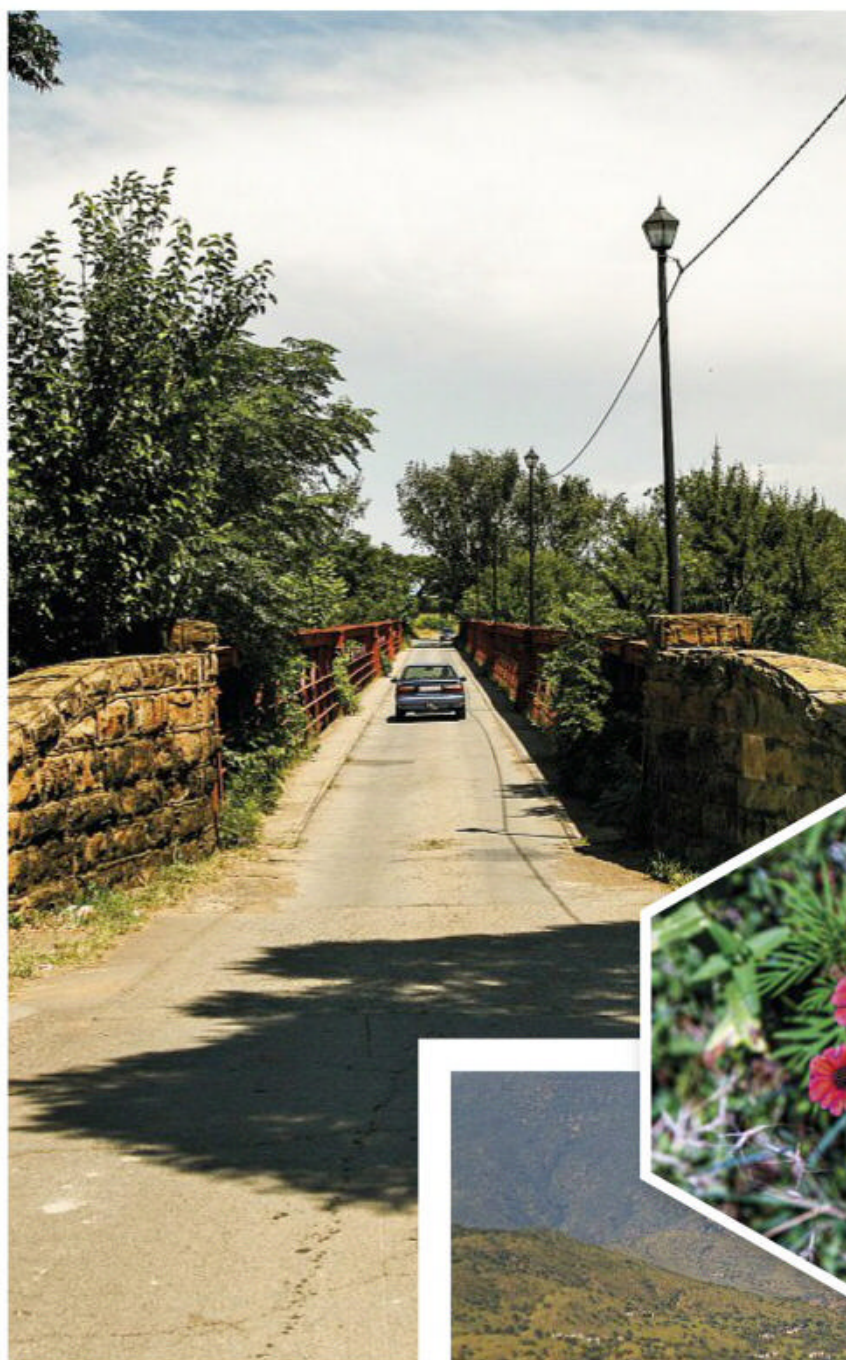
Herbert Kitchener who led the British forces in the Second Anglo-Boer War. Kitchener gained notoriety in Britain and locally for his controversial scorched earth policy and for the concentration camps in which an estimated 50 000 women and children from various ethnic groups died of disease and starvation.

Drive north on the R103 past Colenso, cross the Tugela River for the fourth time (S28.74198 E29.81899) and after 500 m turn right, back to Colenso. You cross the Tugela here for the fifth time via Bulwer Bridge. The bridge is constructed of steel and locally quarried stone and is named after Sir Henry Ernest Cascoyne Bulwer, a former governor of the Natal Colony. There’s also a town and a type of pheasant (*Lophura bulweri*) that bear Bulwer’s

name, but little is recorded of Sir Henry in history books. We actually know more about the bird than the man.

TURN OFF COLENZO’S main street, Sir George Street, into West Street and cross the railway line that runs through the town. To the left of the road are 12 white markers indicating the positions of British artillery pieces that were used during the Battle of Colenso.

In this battle, 4 500 Boer fighters, led by General Louis Botha defeated a superior force of nearly 17 000 British soldiers under the command of Sir Redvers Buller. “Reverse” Buller, as his men called him behind his back, eventually begun to understand the Boer war tactics and the British army learned from Buller’s defeats



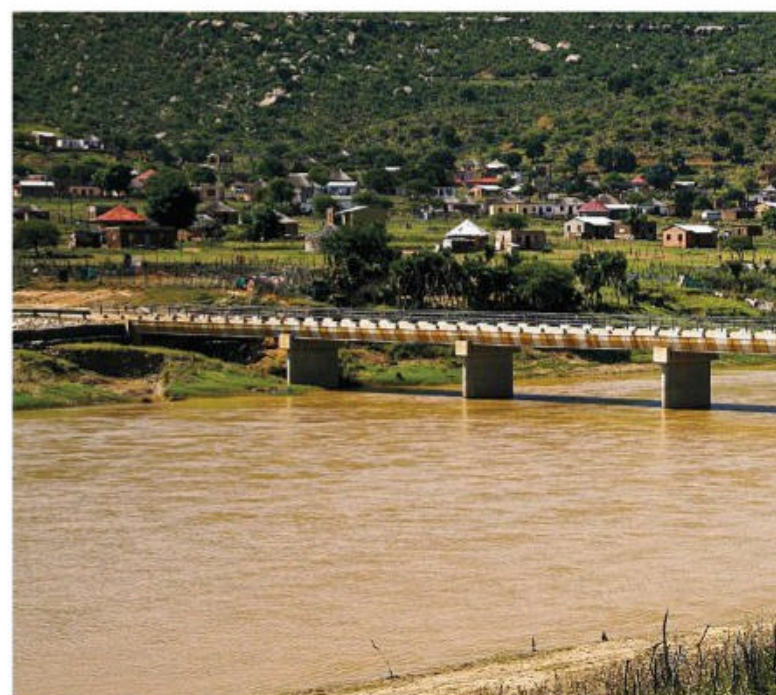
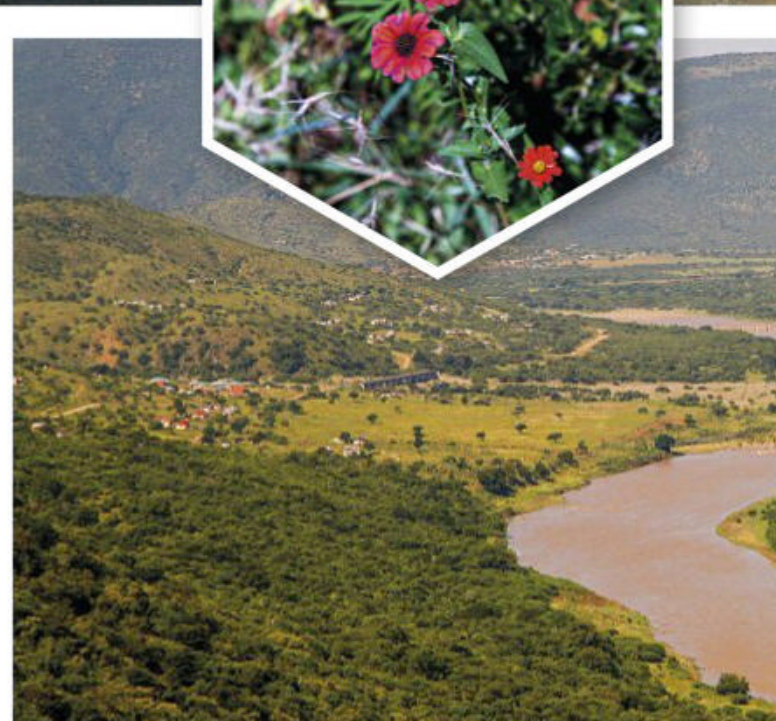
how to beat Germany in the First World War. Leave Colenso from the Inkanyezi neighbourhood – “the star” in Zulu – and follow a dirt road (S28.73842 E29.84225) to the Thukela Biosphere Reserve. Here you’ll need to engage four-wheel drive for the first time on this route.

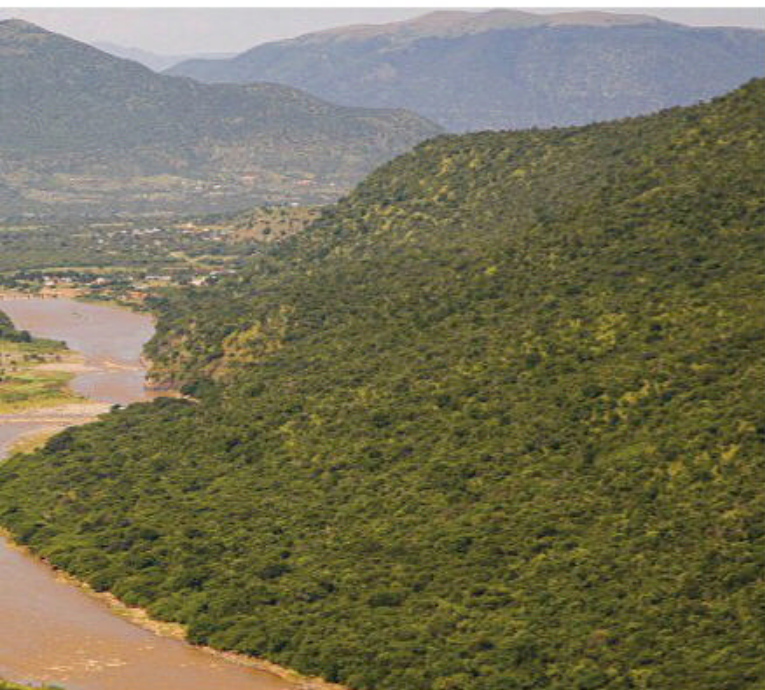
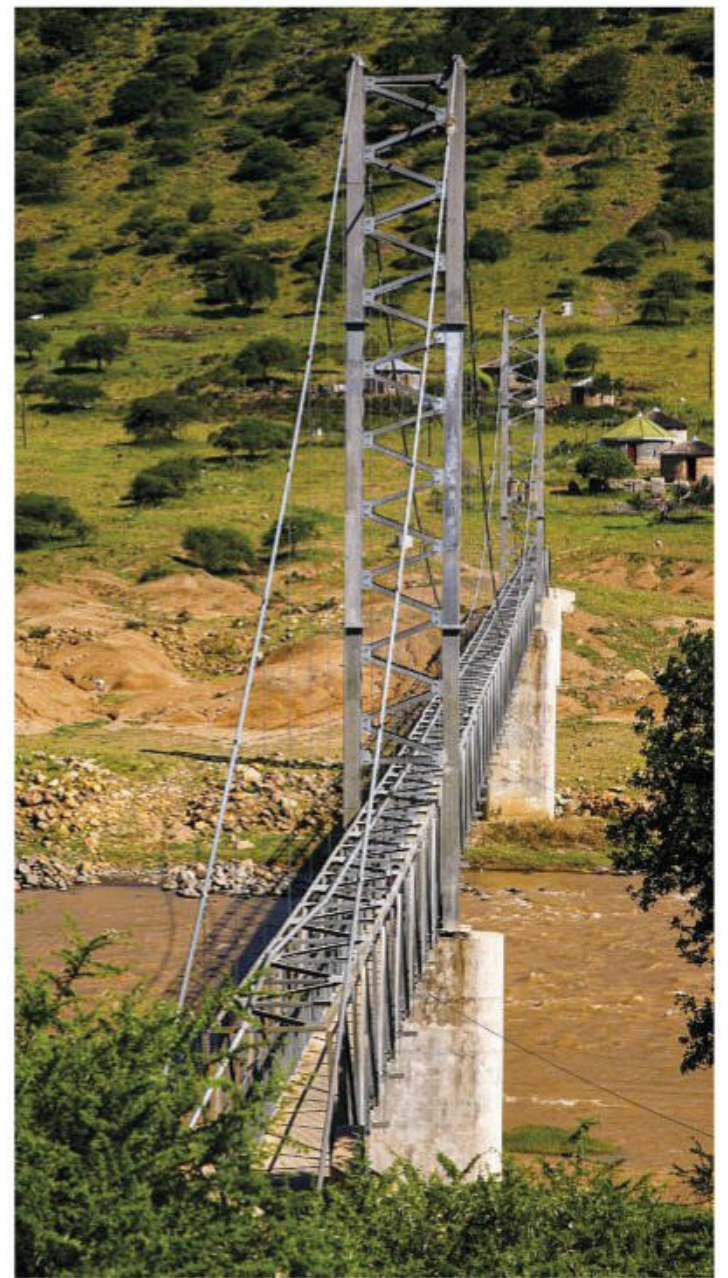
A narrow twin-track winds through thorn veld and thick bush, and we spotted lots of small game jumping and dashing across the road. The dirt road eventually crawls down a rocky bank to the Bloukrans River (not the same one as in the Garden Route) far below. It is quite steep, and it’s probably a good idea to engage low-range gears here, especially if your vehicle is heavily loaded. Down in the narrow valley the surface becomes loose with watermelon-size river stones poking out of the sand.

About 10 km after the rocky bank you’ll cross the Bloukrans River via a low-water bridge and this is where you turn left (S28.78815 E30.10125) first onto a grassy twin-track and then a broad gravel road that reunites you with the Tugela River.

There are several homesteads and villages along the Tugela River – in fact the banks of the Tugela from here on out, almost all the way to the sea, have a nearly uninterrupted human presence. Roughly 45 km after crossing the Bloukrans River, you join the tarred R33 regional road. Turn left here toward the town of Tugela Ferry and cross the Tugela for the sixth time via a single-lane steel bridge. The town’s name is derived from a ferry that operated here before it was replaced by a bridge.

Tugela Ferry is a hive of activity, with food and clothing stalls spilling onto the streets, and trucks and minibus taxis wrestling for right of way. Less than 1 km from the river, on the northern edge of Tugela Ferry, you turn right onto a gravel road that follows the Tugela River – now a giant of more than 90 m wide – towards the sea. The gravel road severely corrugated, but the stunning views of the Tugela River valley make up for any discomfort. After 20 km, you cross the Tugela for the seventh time (S28.73998





RIVER TALES. The twin-track through the Thukela Biosphere (opposite left) is somewhat challenging and aside from the Tugela, which you repeatedly cross via bridges, you'll have to wade through tributaries (above) if the water level allows it.

E30.61816) at a settlement whose name we could not find on any map.

The road from here is once again tarred, but eventually and abruptly reverts to a well-travelled gravel road that takes you farther and farther away from the Tugela River to the ultra-smooth R74 regional road outside Greytown. As the crow flies, you're 35 km from the Tugela River. You're forced to take this detour because the roads in this area service various villages, but none connect to form a continuous route along the river. Besides, it's getting late and Greytown is the only town for miles and miles that offer camping. Make your way to The Beehive Family Resort (S29.07542 E30.56002) on the outskirts of town and pitch your tent on a huge lawn. You covered 270 km of the route today and, if like us you stopped often to take photos, this first half probably took you around nine hours to complete.

Day 2

A LAND THAT TIME FORGOT

You've got 250 km to cover on the second day of the route and it shouldn't take you more than 7-8 hours on the road.

Leave Greytown and follow the tarred R74 regional road through plantations to Kranskop. Kranskop is named after a 1 155 m high rock that looms over the town – its Zulu name is Ntunjambili. Legend has it that Zulu girls were tired of carrying water from a nearby river across the mountains and they whispered: "iTshelika Ntunjambili" (allow me into your home). A cave opened in the cliff face and the girls were lured inside by cheerful sounds. Barely had they stepped inside when the cave's mouth slammed shut and the girls were never seen again...

There is a road sign for Nkandla in Kranskop's main street: this is where you take a left onto a tarred road that cuts through a plantation for the next 7 km. If you're on a motorcycle, you'll love the sweeping bends that allow you to ride like Brad Binder, but watch out for potholes and logging trucks.

The tar eventually runs out and you're back on gravel. 27 km after leaving Kranskop you'll reach Jameson's Drift, named after HB Jameson, a former superintendent of Natal who had the road built from Kranskop to this spot. Back in

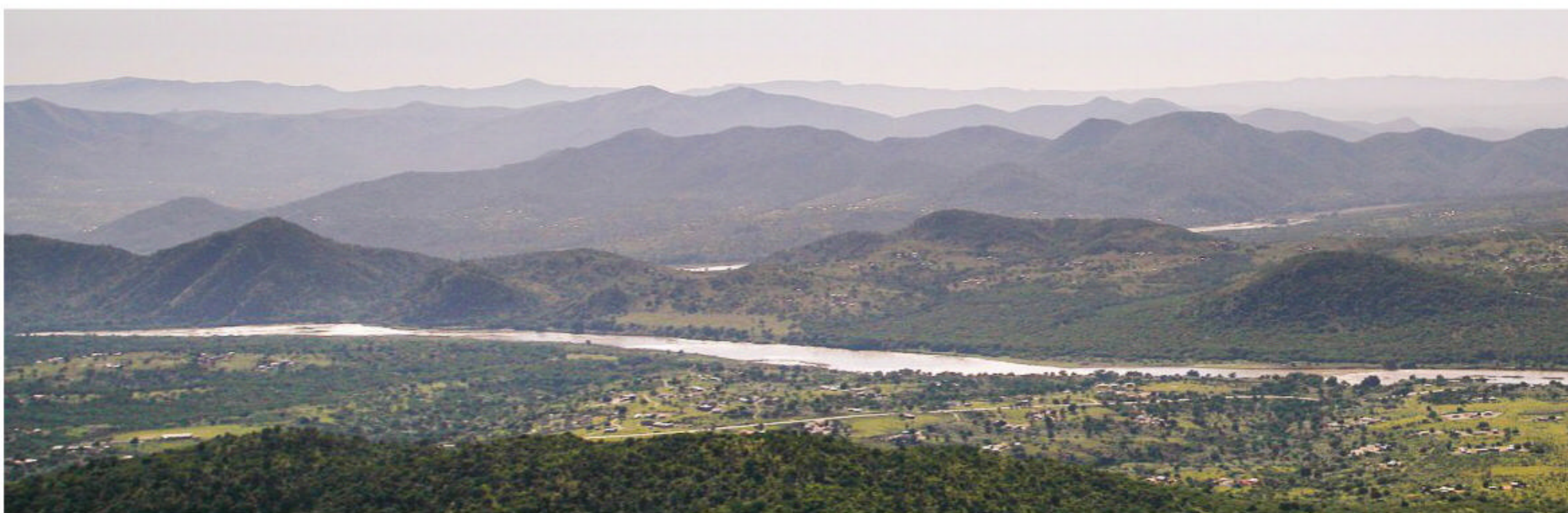


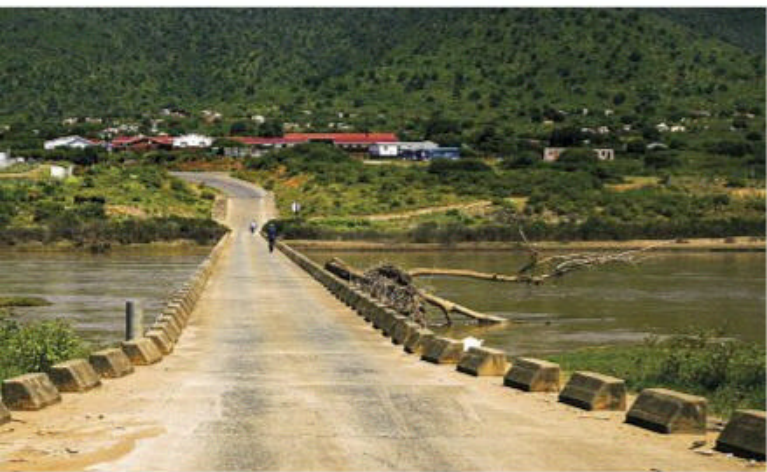


the days before there were bridges over the Tugela, there were only two places reasonably close to the coast where you could cross the mighty river on foot. These crossings are at Jameson's Drift and Middeldrif, which we'll get to soon enough.

On the 25th of March 1593, a Portuguese carrack, the Santo Alberto, ran aground near the Kei River. Because it happened long before Jan van Riebeeck's time, the survivors had to walk to Maputo Bay in present-day Mozambique to catch a ship that could return them to Europe.

The 285 survivors: 160 slaves from India and 125 Portuguese, including two noblewomen, were led by one Nunho Pereira on an inland route to Maputo Bay. After many ordeals, the group crossed the Tugela River here at Jameson's Drift





(before it was called such) on 4 June 1593 – with the assistance of the local Nguni people. The two noblewomen were carried on litters all the way, from the Kei to Maputo Bay, by slaves and sailors. Many of the survivors (mostly the slaves) decided along the way to start a new life in Africa instead, and by the end only 65 slaves and 91 Portuguese made it to Maputo Bay.

CROSS THE TUGELA for the eighth time at Jameson's Drift, this time via a large steel bridge, and stay on a decent gravel road along the Tugela River for 33 km until you join a tarred road.

Turn right and drive through a shallow valley below Ntembeni village. Look out for a group of thatched houses and rondavels on the slope of an opposing hill. This is

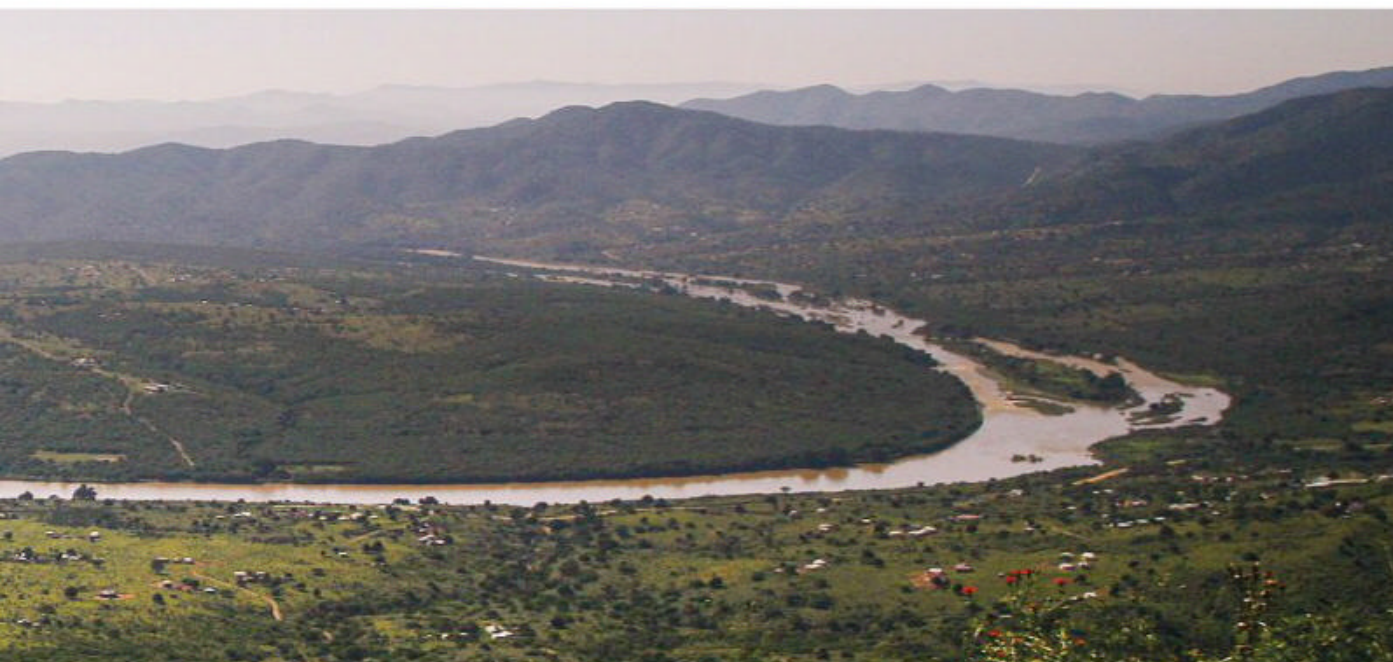
former president Jacob Zuma's infamous Nkandla homestead (S28.84571 E31.09895) that cost more than R246 million to build. According to one political commentator, the biggest scandal isn't the corruption, but that the Nkandla homestead is so unimpressive despite the sheer amount of taxpayer money that was spent on it.

We snapped a quick photo of the homestead (opposite page middle), but be warned that security vehicles sometimes patrol the road and there is a risk that you'll be confronted if you try to paparazzi Zuma's home with a zoom lens.

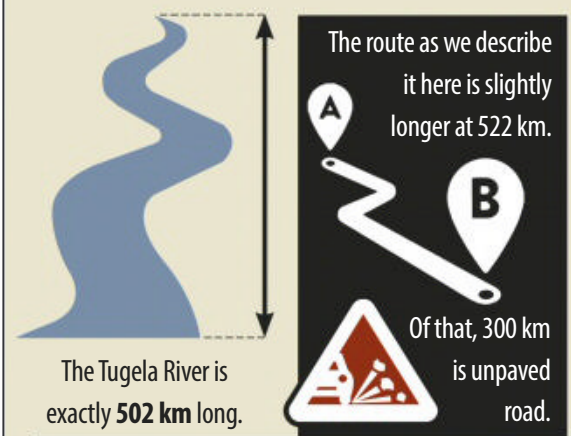
Carry on for 10 km until you cross the Tugela River for the ninth time with a single-lane, low-water concrete bridge. A little farther downstream, out of sight behind a bend in the river, is a shallow 700 m-wide expanse that was once known among Trekboers and hunters as Middeldrif – the other historic crossing besides Jameson's Drift.

Shortly after the bridge, turn right onto a subsidiary road and follow it for 5 km north to Shu Shu, an island and hot spring in the Tugela River where generations of families have been bathing naked under the stars every June holiday. Our sister magazine *go!* visited here in 2013 ("Bare bums in Zululand", *go!* # 91), but during our visit, the water level was too high for us to spy the baths.

Drive back to the single-lane bridge over the Tugela River, but now turn right, away from the river in the direction of Kranskop. Just 2 km from the river you turn left again (S28.91284 E31.01582) onto the D1533 gravel road; there's a road sign for the Mphise Clinic if in doubt. What follows is 93 km through a Zululand where time seem to have stopped. A narrow



Fast facts



In 2016, the Tugela Waterfall was officially recognised as the highest in the world at **983 m**. The highest uninterrupted waterfall is the Angel Falls in Venezuela (807 m).



x10

You cross the Tugela 10 times on this route. The shortest bridge – at the Royal Natal National Park – is **39 m** and the longest – the R102 near the estuary – is **416 m**.

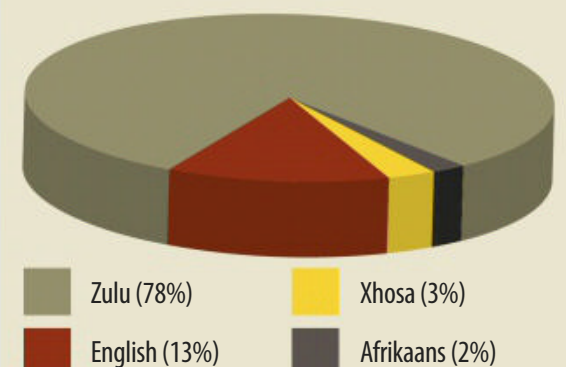


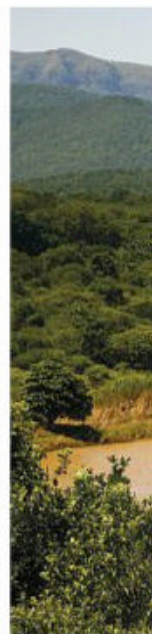
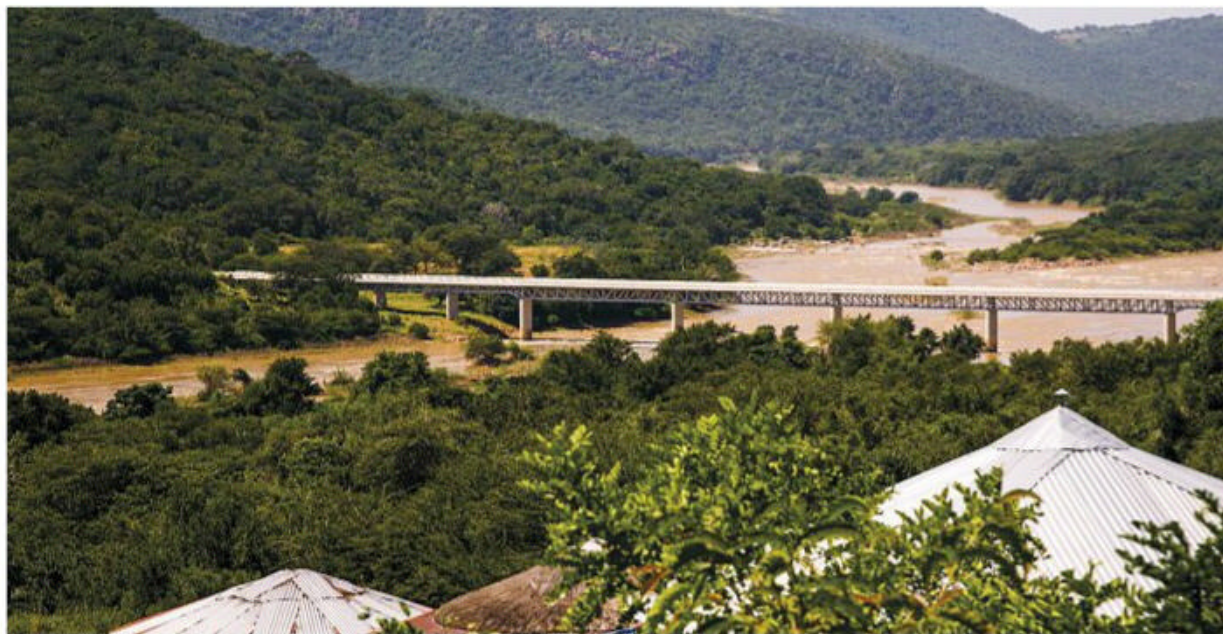
The river's full Zulu name is umfula uThukela, which means "river (umfula) that surprises (uThukela)". This is because the water level can rise surprisingly fast.



The first record of Europeans having to cross the Tugela on foot was written by the survivors of the Portuguese galleon the **São João** that ran aground near Port Edward on **8 June 1552**.

According to the 2011 census, the four main home languages in KwaZulu-Natal are:





trail winds through deep gorges and rises and falls over hills. It is densely wooded, and occasionally you'll see a pillar of smoke rising from the forest, followed by a traditional thatched hut with brightly coloured cloth on washing lines. Children smile and wave in passing while elders raise an open hand in greeting.

As you enter the Maphumolo Reserve (S28.99378 E31.07447), the houses dwindle in number – the reserve is apparently kept in a trust for the Zulu nation.

EVENTUALLY, YOU JOIN THE R102 tar road and you cross the Tugela one final time, your tenth crossing. The river measures 350 m wide here and the golden brown mass of water pushes eagerly toward the ocean. Shortly past the bridge is a clearing where you can pull off the tarred road. Here you'll find a memorial for the Battle of Ndongakusuka.

The words engraved in granite slab commemorates 2 December 1856, when the eldest two sons of the Zulu king Mpande fought each other. The firstborn, Prince Cetshwayo, was the legal successor, and he commanded 20 000 spears to affirm his claim. But the younger prince Mbuyazi was King Mpande's favourite son and chosen heir. Because prince Mbuyazi had only 10 000 warriors, a white settler named John Dunn was summoned to broker peace. Dunn was born in Port Alfred, but grew up among the Zulus after his parents died and he was left to fend for himself at a young age. Dunn was fluent in isiZulu and well acquainted with the culture. He decided to support Prince Mbuyazi with 35 armed colonial policemen and 100 hunters after his attempts at reconciliation between the brothers failed. Mbuyazi successfully repelled Cetshwayo's first attack, but





the second wave was unstoppable and Mbuyazi met his end.

John Dunn and his colonial force fled by boat and Cetshwayo ordered that all Mbuyazi's supporters – men, women and their children – be put to the *iklwa*: the stabbing spear. According to oral history, around 20 000 Zulus died on that day, and the sandbank in the mouth of the Tugela where the bodies washed up was called Mathambo: "place of the bones".

King Mpande was heartbroken, and he never forgave Cetshwayo until his death

in 1872. John Dunn, however, would gain Cetshwayo's trust and eventually received some land along the lower Tugela – not far from where you stand now. Here Dunn established himself as the first white chief in the Zulu kingdom, along with 48 Zulu wives and 117 children.

Leave the memorial and drive just 500 m farther along on the R105, where you take a slipway onto the Tugela Mouth road. Tugela Mouth is a tiny holiday spot with two caravan parks: the Tugela Mouth Resort and Lobotes Caravan Park. You can't park your vehicle at the mouth itself; to see it you'll have to book in and leave your car at one of the caravan parks and walk 500 m along the beach.

The Tugela River here is a far cry from the bright and bubbly stream you encountered yesterday morning at the foot of the Drakensberg. It's as if along the way it became burdened by the sweat of brave shipwreck survivors, the tears of desperate Zulu girls trapped in a cave, and the blood of thousands of warriors, black and white alike. Here the umfula uThukela willingly loses cohesion – finally, no more surprises – and becomes part of a great ocean. 🌊

I want to go too!

Can I drive it on my own? Yes, and we suspect it's safer here along the Tugela River than in most cities. And the people are definitely friendlier.

How long is it? The route is 522 km long and lasts two days.

What should I drive? A soft-roader will do, but the roads are corrugated and washed away in places, making you wish you've come in a Land Rover instead.

How much fuel do I need? You need a range of 180 km. Jerry cans are therefore not required.

What emergency equipment should I pack? Feel free to bring a tyre repair kit, but you will drive so slowly that you probably won't use it.

Can I tow? Sure. Some bends along the route are tricky, though, and a long off-road caravan may cause endless headaches, but it is possible. An ordinary road caravan won't make it.

AN ENDING. The N2 highway speeds over the Tugela near its mouth (left below), and the Tugela Mouth lighthouse (top left) guards over the place of bones.

Where we stayed

Mahai Camp

Choose from 44 sites on grass and under shade trees along the Mahai River with an unbeatable view of the Drakensberg.

Price R150-R450 pppn in the peak season for a minimum of 3 people.

Contact 📞 033 845 100 📧 kznwildlife.com

The Beehive Caravan Park

During our visit, the new owners were setting up luxury tents and making other changes. There are unmarked stands for hundreds of tents, as well as a pool.

Price From R100 pppn.

Contact 📞 081 858 6724 (Zeenath)

📧 zeesuperbody@gmail.com

📧 thebeehive.co.za

Tugelamond Resort

There are 39 stands, each with power, a tap, braai and trees. They've also got a shop, and you have access to the beach. Enquire about special rates for Swallows.

Price R230 pppn.

Contact 📞 082 803 6339 (Tessa)

📧 info@tugelamouth.co.za

📧 tugelamouth.co.za

Our vehicle

The 4x4 rental company Britz loaned us an Orion. *Drive & Camp* paid for the insurance and fuel, but Britz waved the rental fee.

The Orion is based on a single cab Toyota

Land Cruiser 79 and the conversion was done by Travelstar in Knysna.

Contact 📞 011 230 5200

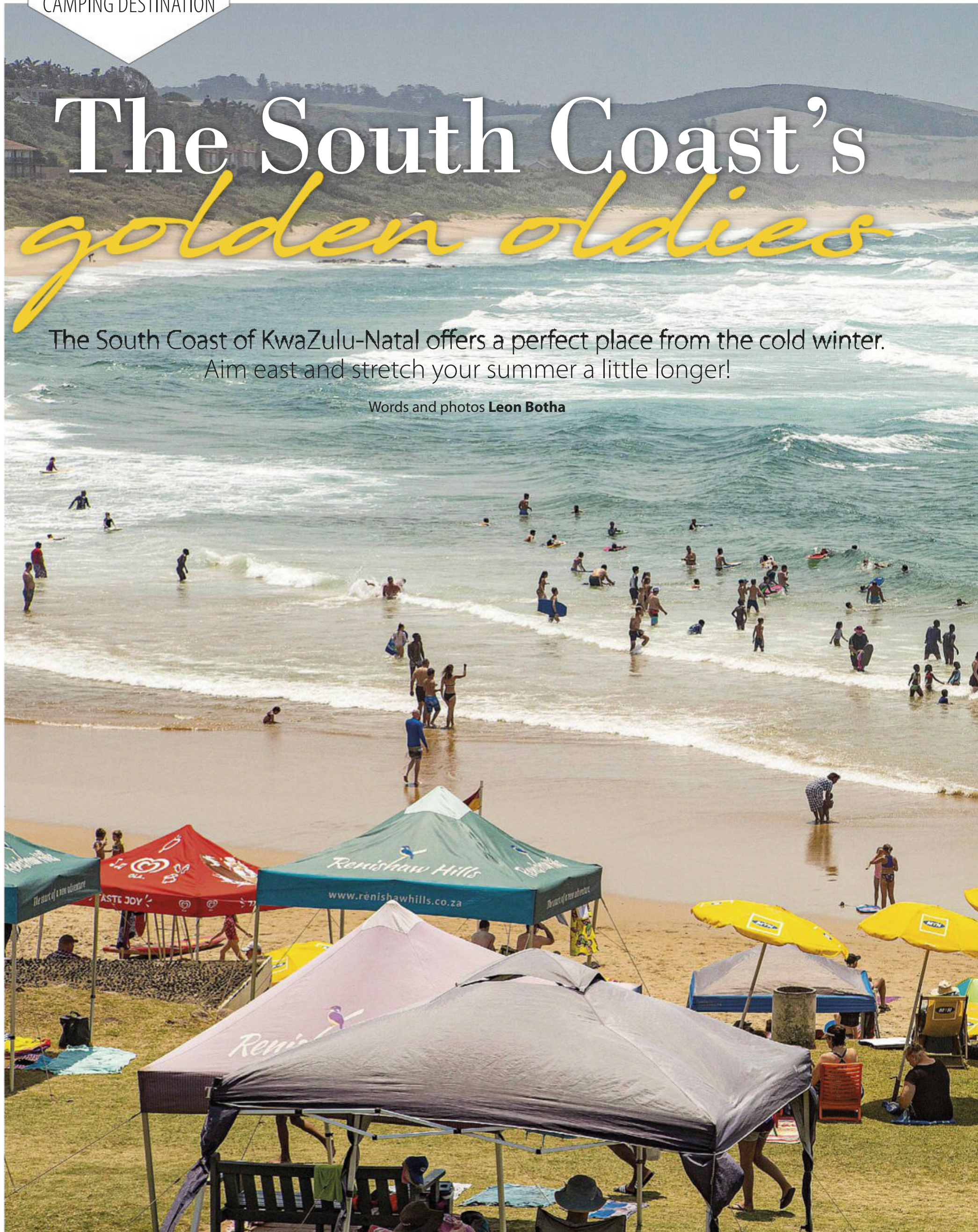
📧 bookings@britz.co.za 📧 britz.co.za

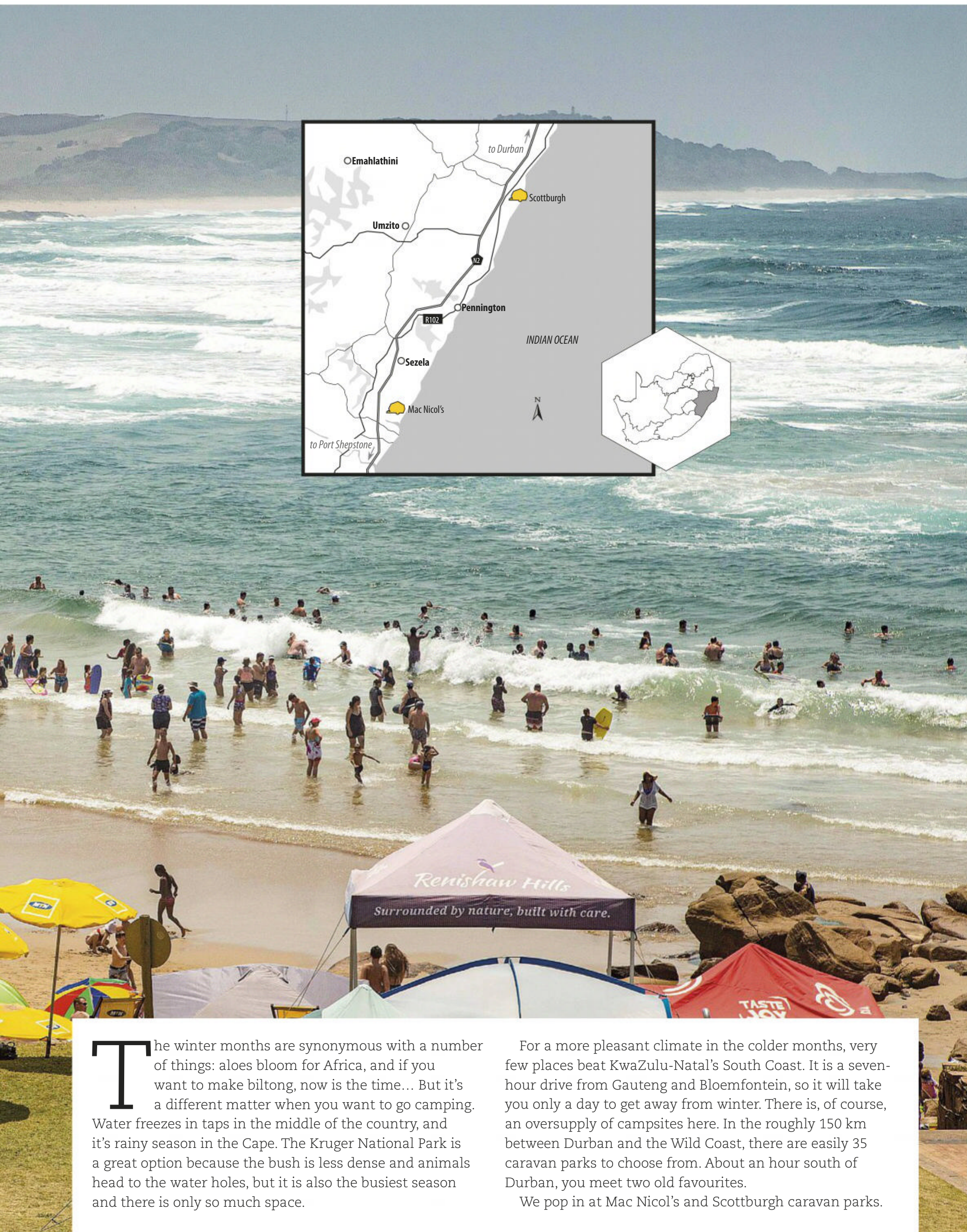


The South Coast's *golden oldies*

The South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal offers a perfect place from the cold winter.
Aim east and stretch your summer a little longer!

Words and photos **Leon Botha**





The winter months are synonymous with a number of things: aloes bloom for Africa, and if you want to make biltong, now is the time... But it's a different matter when you want to go camping. Water freezes in taps in the middle of the country, and it's rainy season in the Cape. The Kruger National Park is a great option because the bush is less dense and animals head to the water holes, but it is also the busiest season and there is only so much space.

For a more pleasant climate in the colder months, very few places beat KwaZulu-Natal's South Coast. It is a seven-hour drive from Gauteng and Bloemfontein, so it will take you only a day to get away from winter. There is, of course, an oversupply of campsites here. In the roughly 150 km between Durban and the Wild Coast, there are easily 35 caravan parks to choose from. About an hour south of Durban, you meet two old favourites.

We pop in at Mac Nicol's and Scottburgh caravan parks.

MAC NICOL'S CARAVAN PARK Golden anniversary

The famous 111 km railway line between Durban and Port Shepstone, which was completed in 1907, divides resorts along this coast into two groups: there are those by the sea and, across the railway line, the rest are inland.

Mac Nicol's gate is 130 m from the beach, and the train track runs between the gate and the beach.

This is a special year for the Mac Nicol family, as it marks 50 years of being in the camping industry. The first campsite they acquired was Ifafa Caravan Park. Next came Mac Nicol's as we know it today. The resort was also a pioneer in terms of layout, because when the family bought in 1983 – until then it was known as Hi-Lee – some sites already had private bathrooms. These days, more and more campsites build private facilities on stands from the outset.

There are just over 120 stands, and they're divided into nine groups. Have a look at their website where you can see what they all look like. This includes a map of the resort that shows where the campsite groups fits into the larger resort, plus a description of these sites and a summary of the nearest bathrooms. Very informative.

THE RECEPTION and shop are next to each other directly after you've passed through the gate, and from here the resort runs to the left around a small hill right up to the Ifafa lagoon.

The shop is what you'd expect from one in a typical seaside resort: you'll find everything from general groceries, such as rice, tomato sauce, eggs and soft drinks to ice cream, sweets and beach balls. Drinks – and even hard liquor – are also for sale here.

The first group of eight stands is just past the office. They're laid out back to back and are the ones with the private amenities. The stands are demarcated with fences of high shrubs that make it fairly private, even though your neighbours are nearby. Compared to the rest of the resort's stands, these are some of the smallest, but they're still spacious enough for a towing vehicle and mid-size caravan with its tent.

Mac Nicol's has a multitude of shade trees, but they're sparse in this group of



SEASIDE TOWN. Although the larger shops are in Scottburgh roughly 30 km from here, there is no reason to go there. Mac Nicol's shop has everything holidaymakers and beach bums need, they even have free Wi-Fi. If you prefer private facilities over a communal ablution block, you'll have to book early because only eight stands have these luxuries. That being said, there's nothing wrong with their shared facilities.





stands. So you're responsible for your own shade here.

Your bathroom building has two rooms: the shower stall, toilet and basin are in the one, and the sink for dishes next to it. A gas geyser supplies the hot water.

The power point is toward the back corner of the stand and uses a standard three-point household plug.

PAST THE PRIVATE stands, the road veers to the right, with the rest of the stands following on from here. The first ones are laid out on several terraces with the wonderful trees providing shade, it's reminiscent of a tropical garden. Some

stands also have shrub fences. These 40 odd stands are part of the original caravan park the Mac Nicol family acquired. The grass is lush where the trees don't give too much shade, but obviously the grass is not quite as thick in the sections that get less sun.

The Lagoon and the Froggy Pond stands are diagonally behind the second group of stands and they are more in the open. There are also terraces, grass and trees, and your power point (each seem to serve two to four stands) plus a rubbish bin is nearby. There aren't many taps, but they have a one metre square trough to prevent muddy pits forming.



“

The stands higher up have fewer shade trees, which means the grass is beautiful

”



If you drive straight ahead from the gate, you'll get to the six large stands just in front of the play park with its two trampolines and a jungle gym, swings and a slide. These are the stands belonging to the Mango Valley and Stream sites.

Keep following the road, and it runs past the back of the Lagoon sites to the lagoon. There's another playground here: a wooden jungle gym and a volleyball court on sand. Several canoes await paddlers on the shore. You can rent paddles from the security guard for R20.

The eight stands of River View are laid out next to the Lagoon sites.

Just past the trampolines, a road on the right leads up the hill to the farthest stands: Fish Eagle. These are also the newest ones laid out on high terraces in 2000. Most of them seem to use the blue electric sockets. The stands higher up have fewer shade trees, which means the grass is beautiful and lush. These taps don't have a concrete trough, but the grass is so dense you won't need to worry about puddles.



NOISES OFF. Most of the activities occur near the swimming pools, and at the shop near the gate. The newer – and quieter section – is at the farthest end of the resort. Just like in other parts of the caravan park the bathroom facilities are close. If you want to head to the beach as well, though, you'll need to add a couple of minutes. The latter stands are near the lagoon though, if you feel like rowing instead.



The lower stands closer to the water boast more trees for shade, and just past the lower end is a wooden deck right next to the water. Here you'll find some built-in braai areas with grids for socialising right by the water.

THERE ARE LOADS OF ablution facilities right throughout the resort. Two of them are at the Fish Eagle stands. Their shower cubicles are huge and you have a bench to sit down as well. The top of the basin is a tad low – around mid-thigh – but

there's plenty of space for toiletries and the like. There's a laundry with a washing machine and tumble dryer in the middle of the building. These work with tokens that are available at the shop for R20.

The bathrooms at Lagoon are larger, with more amenities, including a laundry. A little bit along is another building with two doors marked, one for men and one for women. One has a bath and the other a shower, and there is also a laundry.

The older part has the larger amenities.

Briefly | Mac Nicol's



Campsite 121 stands ranging from demarcated to open. Most of them have grass and shade trees.

Ablution facilities A few bathroom buildings scattered throughout the resort, plus a group of pitches with their own facilities.

Price For the regular stands, it costs R200-R450 pppn (children R100-R225), depending on the season, plus R85-R230 pn for the private ones. If you bring your dog, it's R35 pn but they're only allowed when it's quiet.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:30.

Contact 039 977 8863 or 073 153 0818

macnicol@scottburgh.co.za

macnicol.co.za

Nearest town Scottburgh, 27 km.

Road condition Tar up to the resort.

GPS S30.451379 E30.654005

Drive & Camp says There's free Wi-Fi available in the section right in front of the shop.



The two pools lie between the original stands and the Lagoon ones. One of them is shallow enough for children, and the deeper one is heated, even this time of year. There is also a lapa and some braai areas should you want to relax here.

The large gate in front of the resort is closed, but if you want to walk to the beach, you use the small gate inside the bigger one. That one is closed but not locked. The security guards keep an eye on it, and during our visit, there were lifeguards on the beach.

SCOTTBURGH CARAVAN PARK

Beached

Scottburgh was the first town to be established south of Durban, and in 1964 it got his own municipality. The town's economy rely on two anchors: sugar cane and tourism.

The Scottburgh Caravan Park is considered one of the most popular resorts on the South Coast. It's the opposite to Mac Nicol's. Scottburgh stretches almost 800 m down the beach, and the railway line runs past the top of the resort. Yet, even though the caravan park has its "own" beach on its doorstep,

we didn't see that many people walking to the beach from the campsite.

Keen to check where the stands are before you book? Also check out the map on the resort's website. It gives you a good idea of the layout.

We camped here for just the one night, and about half the place was occupied – so there was no need to book in advance.

As we check in, the one receptionist tells us there's a strong wind coming, and we should rather choose a stand to the right of the road as you come into the resort. This was great advice, because on the left we'd have been closer to the sea and more in the open... and, of course,

at the mercy of the wind. We also get a list of available stands to look at before we make a final decision. There is even a concise description for each one: "No shade, near playground", "Banana trees on front right", "Afternoon shade, slight sea view", "No shade, next to pool, no sea view" and so on.

At reception, after checking in, you get a voucher to show at the Scotties Tea Garden, next to stand 27, to get a free coffee, tea or soft drink.

The campers who got here before us have armoured themselves against the wind with all sorts of storm ropes and cargo nets... they're ready for it. One





HALF MILE BEACH. Scottburgh's beach is around 800 m long and Seewinde Laan is practically on the water. Other than this beach some holidaymakers head to Scottburgh – the town – where there is another beach and several restaurants with lovely lawns and palm trees plus other interesting things to see.



camper, in “Seewinde Laan” (the stands facing the beach), even created his own windmills from plastic cool-drink bottles. Diagonally behind them, someone hoisted a faded windsock.

Seewinde Laan appears to be the place to be when you look at how the campers line up here. There is only a road and a sparse lane of trees between you and the beach. There's no security fence, but there are notice boards on the beach side that forbid access. Judging by the campers who leave their bikes in the open here, there don't seem to be problems with

thieving. Security guards are on duty here day and night, after all.

Keep to the right if you want to shelter from the wind – all along the campsite's border on the right are decent large trees with plenty of shade that also protect you from the sun. Closer to the sea there are trees, but they aren't as big.

THE STANDS are well signposted. Find the number on the roadside or on the power boxes. The power box has your plug point (normal household socket) as well as TV antenna points with

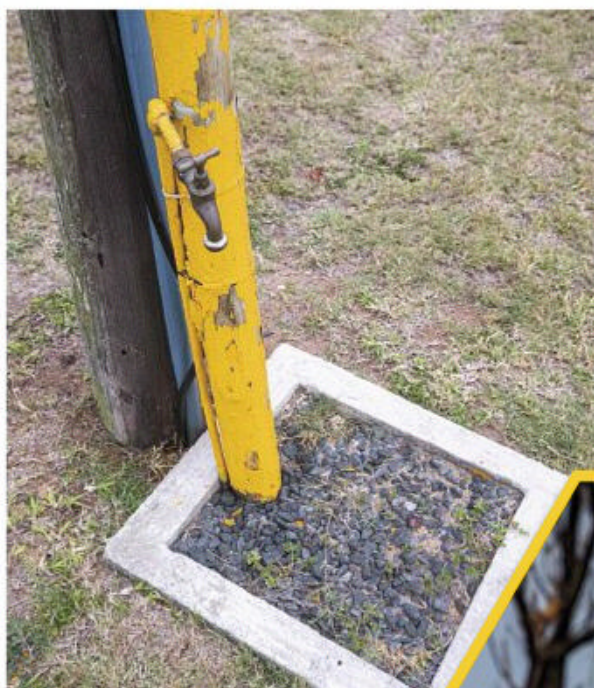
SABC 1, 2 and 3 as well as e.tv.

The surface of the stands also differs widely. Some are covered in grass, while others have a dirt section in the middle with an edge of grass all around. There's no scarcity of taps, and they're clearly marked with yellow paint. Some taps have drainage points, some don't.

Although most of the stands are to the left of the main road lower down towards the sea, there is a piece of higher ground closer to the other end of the resort. Here you'll find a smallish grassy hill with trees that give little shade, nevermind stop the



WEST IS BEST. Try to find a stand that faces the ocean, even though the resort stretches from north to south. At daybreak, you'll be one of the first campers in the country to greet the new dawn. Visit the teagarden soon after dawn while the kids seek out friends, and while grandpa and grandma take a siesta, the moms and dads can visit Scottburgh Beach to watch the game at a local watering hole.





wind. But if you're looking for a lovely lawn to camp on, this is the spot.

There are a number of bathroom buildings scattered throughout the resort. You can see they did not build the facilities yesterday, but they are neat and clean – there are even flowers next to the basins. The shower cubicles have wooden doors and a shower curtain that prevents the water from wetting the world. The basins are also from a bygone era, but you don't need a marble top. They're spaced far apart and there are mirrors – and storage space – for Africa. You can also flush your cassette toilet here.

As for wheelchair-friendly facilities, Block 3A, a small building on its own, is an example. It's usually locked, and if you want to use it, get the key at the office. Note, it's for the exclusive use of the disabled and infirm.

The resort has two separate swimming pools. Both are situated amongst the sites on the right-hand side. The first is almost halfway through the resort next to site 68. It is fenced and similar in size to a home pool. The ablutions next door is like the first block. There is also a scullery behind it with several basins, but in stead of the

Briefly | Scottburgh



Campsite 242 stands with varying degrees of shade.

Ablution facilities Several bathroom buildings through the resort with some large sculleries. There is a flushing area for cassette toilets.

Price R230-R1 535 pn per stand, depending on the number of people and what time of year. Dogs (out of season) cost R30 pn.

Arrival and departure 12:00 and 10:00.

Contact 039 976 0291 or 079 612 5769

caravanpark@scottburgh.co.za

scottburghcaravanpark.co.za

Nearest town In Scottburgh.

Road conditions Tar to the resort.

GPS S30.283132 E30.759464

Drive & Camp says Keep your eye on the wind. At the beach you'll feel it, but the stands closer to the railway line are more sheltered.

tilled floor, it is painted green.

The second pool is next to stand 170, also with a bathroom.

Right next to the office is another bathroom with a laundry where you pay R35 for washing or drying. The sinks here are loose-standing and have no storage space next to them. Inside the resort there are two more laundry rooms, but there you hand in your clothes to have them laundered.

The shop forms part of the tea garden and is more of a tuck shop. Next door is a playpark with a couple of trampolines, a swing, a jungle gym and a roundabout. The games room sits behind the tea garden and has, among other activities, DStv, table tennis and pool tables. But you're at the beach, and it's time to wet your feet in the warm Agulhas current. Most campers seem to leave the resort using the entrance. On the other side of the gate is a spacious parking space in front of the resort, but today it's full. Scottburgh's beach with its beautiful bay is barely 250 metres along and that teems with people. It's not only the beach that attracts visitors, there are plenty of restaurants and palm trees too. 🌴



An oasis in the Tankwa

Somewhere in the arid Karoo is a campsite with lush lawns, dozens of shade trees and a river for swimming and fishing. If this sounds like a tall tale, you've probably never heard of Die Mond.

Words and photos **Evan Naudé**

The Tankwa Karoo is synonymous with drought, dust, arid plains with sparse vegetation and heat. In a way, it's this remoteness that makes the region so beautiful, and there could hardly be a better place for escaping from humanity. Now if only there was a lovely river somewhere that would provide relief from the heat...

The good news is that such a place does exist – on the western edge of the Tankwa.

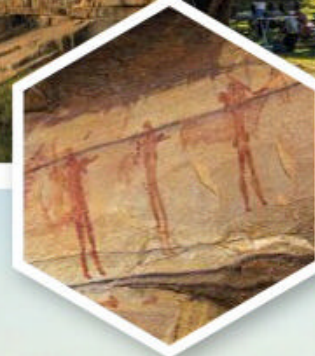
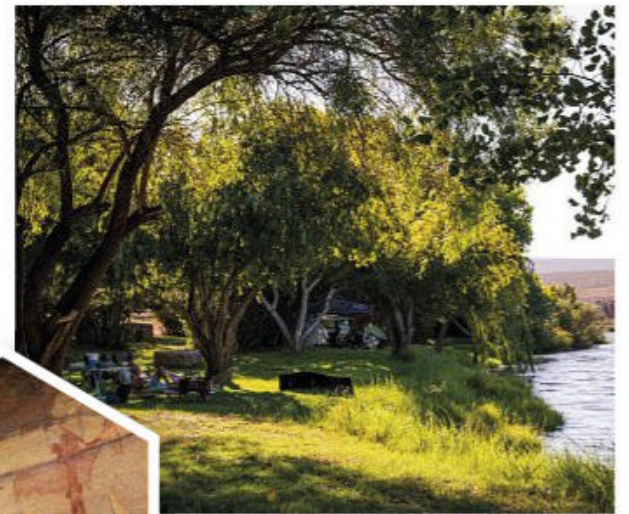
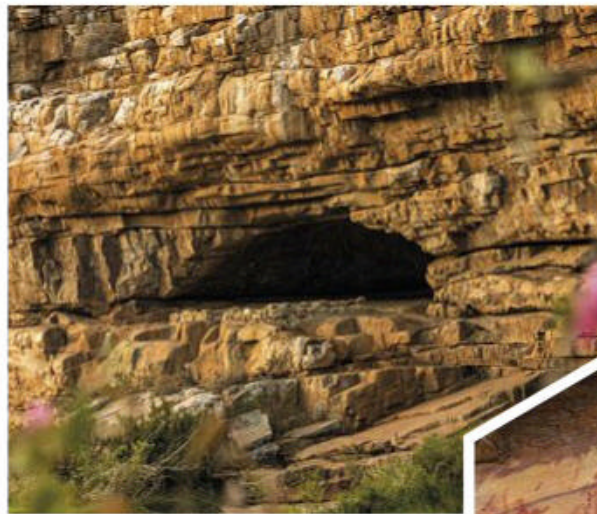
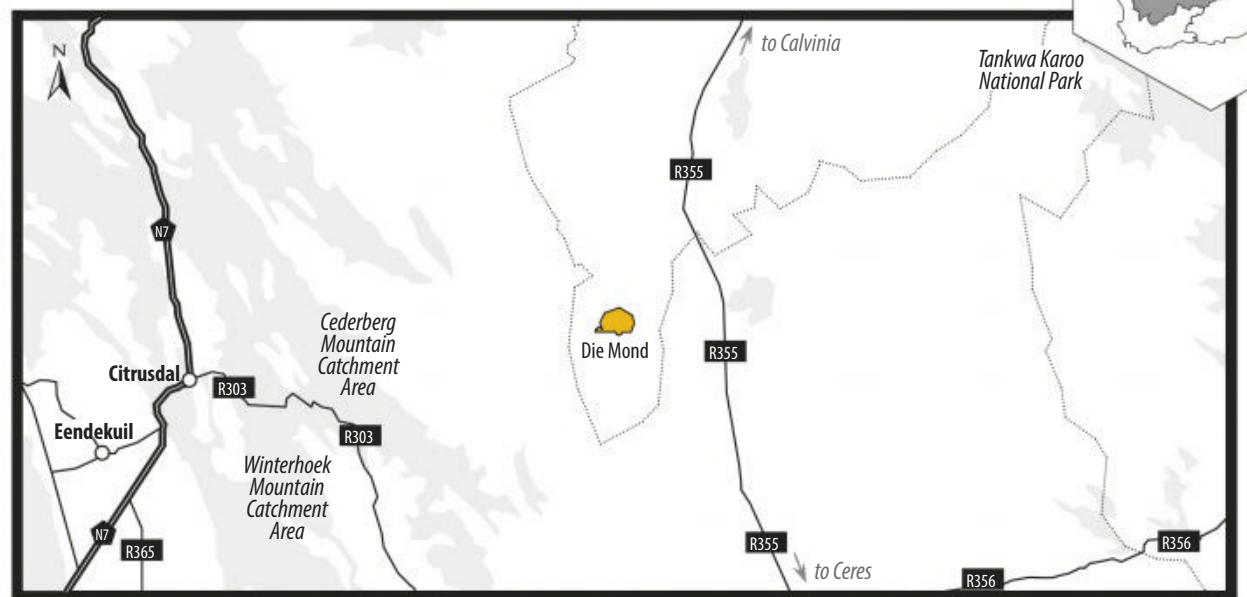
Die Mond is truly an oasis in the desert, with the camp on the banks of the Grootrivier, a wide strip of water that carves through the dry landscape. The

pitches, in the shade of large trees, are so close to the water that you could almost fish from your tent. And, just like a true oasis, Die Mond is slightly hidden – the greenery quite unexpected after the long drive through the desert. Once you find out where this sacred source of comfort lies, the temptation is great to tell no one else about it.

DIE MOND'S TURN-OFF is on the main route through the Tankwa-Karoo, the 250 km stretch of the R355. This is South Africa's longest uninterrupted dirt road connecting two towns – Ceres and Calvinia

– and quite an experience to drive, especially if you like wide open spaces. But the R355 is notorious for chewing tyres; so always adjust your vehicle's tyre pressure for dirt road driving and you hopefully won't need your spare wheel. Besides, your butt will thank you for that lowered tyre pressure on the bits of corrugated road you'll encounter.

Buy your last Wimpy coffee in Ceres before taking the R46 in the direction of Touws River. About 40 km outside of town, you'll come across the Touws River turn-off, but you keep straight on until you get to the spot where the tar road turns into



ARRIVE ALIVE. Just when the R355 gravel road begins to feel like it has no end, several signs for Die Mond appear to out of nowhere to invite you to a hidden secret.

dirt. Now you're on the R355.

It's tradition to stop at the Tankwa farm stall (another drive 40 km along) for an ice cream or an ice-cold cool drink. The shop also stocks a variety of snacks and trinkets, as well as emergency spares and tyre-repair equipment in case you had trouble on the road. Feel free to strike up a conversation with the owner, Hein Lange. He is the one with the blonde dreadlocks and he has many interesting anecdotes about the Tankwa and its people to share.

About 30 km past the farm stall, be on the lookout for a tractor tyre next to the road. This is where you turn off, and 20 km

later you reach Die Mond's entrance gate. A lane of palm trees leads to reception, which is a room in the farmhouse. Suddenly, it's as though you've closed the door of an inner courtyard behind you: after the hot, dusty plains of the Tankwa, you suddenly find yourself in a lush green affair. Kick off your shoes, you won't find grass like this anywhere else in this region.

Lindie Haugh welcomes guests at Die Mond. She says her parents-in-law, Hannes and Linda Haugh, decided in the late eighties to build a campsite on the greenest spot of their 11 000 hectare farm. "Back then, there was only one house and

one or two trees," she says. "Over the years, they constantly expanded and planted trees, and look at it now." Nowadays, the Haughs farm with sheep and lucerne, and the farm is all around the campsite. On the one side lie a collection old tractors and rusty implements and at the far end of the campsite is an enclosure for sheep. Chances are good that Hansel, Gretel and Heidi, the farm's tame goats, will stop by your camp at some point for a visit.

THERE ARE NO DEMARCATATIONS in the campsite. You simply pick a spot somewhere along the 200 m river bank

and set up camp under the best shade tree. If all the stands by the water are taken, there's still plenty of space further back from the shore, plus an overflow area closer to the farmhouse. They've had up to 100 people camping at Die Mond; so you don't need to worry about whether they'll have for you.

Close to the bathrooms are three built-in braais, but the rest of the braais are drums welded to wheelbarrows so they're easy to move around. Just remember to bring your own grid and stand or tripod. There are no power points here, but several taps are distributed around the site.

The bathroom lights work with solar power and the shower water is heated with a donkey from early morning right through the day. The bathrooms for men and women each boast three showers and three toilets. Next to the bathrooms are two sinks under a canopy for cleaning all the Jimmy Steakhouse Sauce off your plates after dinner.

Should you prefer to sleep in a real bed, there are five self-catering cottages behind the campsite that each accommodates six people. They don't have bathrooms, however, and you need to use the campsite's ablution facilities. There are

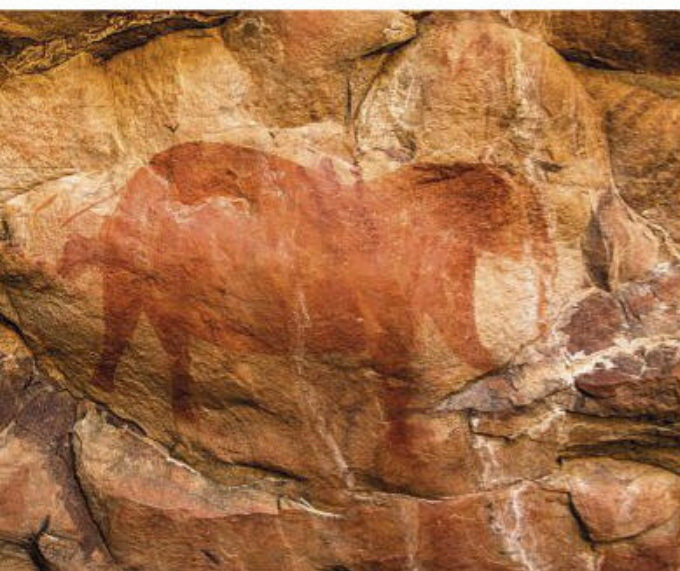
also two larger houses with bathrooms for families of up to seven.

If you tarry longer at Die Mond than you planned – nobody will blame you – you can buy ice (R20), wood (R35), petrol (R20/ℓ), cooldrink (R25 for 1,5 ℓ) and farm jam from Lindie. Just remember this is a working farm and the office hours are only from 09:00 to 11:00 and then again from 15:00 to 16:30. You can also arrange with Lindie in advance for braai packs.

REMEMBER TO PACK your fishing rod, a bunch of spinners and your favourite lure, because the Grootrivier is full of smallmouth, largemouth and spotted bass. They've also got two endangered species, the Clanwiliam yellowfish and sandfish. There is a strict catch-and-release rule for them, but if you hook a perch (they're intruders) you can throw it on the braai. "Not everyone likes its taste," laughs Lindie, "but if you spice it right, it's delicious!" For a tasty dinner, she suggests that you clean the fish, pack it with onions and tomatoes and then wrap everything in a foil parcel you cook over the coals.

Also don't forget the little ones' bikes, rugby balls and frisbees. The camp's large





OL' MAN RIVER. You could say that Die Mond is evergreen, because it lies snugly against the Groot River in the arid Karoo. You won't find supertubes, putt-putt or game rooms here, instead there is only bliss and reflection. You won't get bored of it, though, because there are plenty on interesting sights to see and places to ride you bike or jog to. And don't forget the fishing rods!

lawn is the right size for a match and you can also go for walks on the farm roads. Bring along a canoe or inner tube and explore the river. There are two canoes for rent, but boats aren't allowed.

Do yourself a favour and go for a walk next to the river. Walk past the bathrooms and look out for a ladder over a wire fence. From here, follow a footpath along the rock walls for about 1,5 km next to the river. The landscape is beautiful, especially in the late afternoon sun, and if you're lucky, you may see the colourful malachite kingfisher among the reeds. Die Mond has more than 100 bird species that, like you, have discovered this oasis in the aridness. Occasionally you see a fish eagle or even a black eagle.

TAKE A GOOD LOOK at the rock walls as you walk, there's an impressive collection of rock art with rare black and yellow

pigment. In one spot, you'll find three large elephant drawings and in other spots, you'll see handprints, slender human figures and even an ostrich. Across the river is a cave, which is a great place for a picnic (no fires allowed). To reach the cave, walk past the sheep encampment at the bottom of the campsite and cross the river via a low-water bridge.

When the sun finally sets, Die Mond has one more ace up its sleeve. Along with the darkness, a deep tranquillity descends around you, and when you take your eyes off the flicker of your bush television for a moment and look up, there's a dazzling, Milky Way hanging in the night sky. These are the scenes that stay in your mind's eye, especially once you're back home and lighting a braai fire with your city friends.

This is when you have to decide which friends deserve to know about the oasis in the Tankwa Karoo.

Briefly | Die Mond



Campsite The stands are informal and you camp wherever you want. There are braai drums and taps, but no electricity.

Ablution facilities Separate facilities for men and women, each with three showers and three toilets, as well as two basins with mirrors.

Price R100 pppn.

Contact 023 317 0668

 diemond@breede.net

 Die Mond on Facebook.

Nearest town Ceres, 160 km (dirt road).

Road condition The R355 is mostly a good dirt road, but here and there are pieces of corrugation. Your off-road caravan won't complain, but a road caravan will struggle a little.

GPS S32.543559 E19.542576

Drive & Camp says This is honestly one of the coolest places in the Tankwa!

Play all day

A stone's throw from Johannesburg, and nestled above a botanical garden and nature reserve, Hobby Park in Krugersdorp will offer hardcore off-roaders and newbies an opportunity to test their mettle.

Words and photos **Kyle Kock**

Befitting its name, Hobby Park is where you come to indulge your outdoor interests. Besides 4x4 driving, the facility is mostly geared toward mountain bikers who want to improve their skill on Hobby Park's tough outrun trail, as there is a training school on the grounds. Owner Mike Gonsalves greets you at the reception/bar area and runs you through the rules and indemnity.

There is also a paintball range on the property, which offers would-be gunners a chance to mow down their buddies in a hail of paint-filled nylon

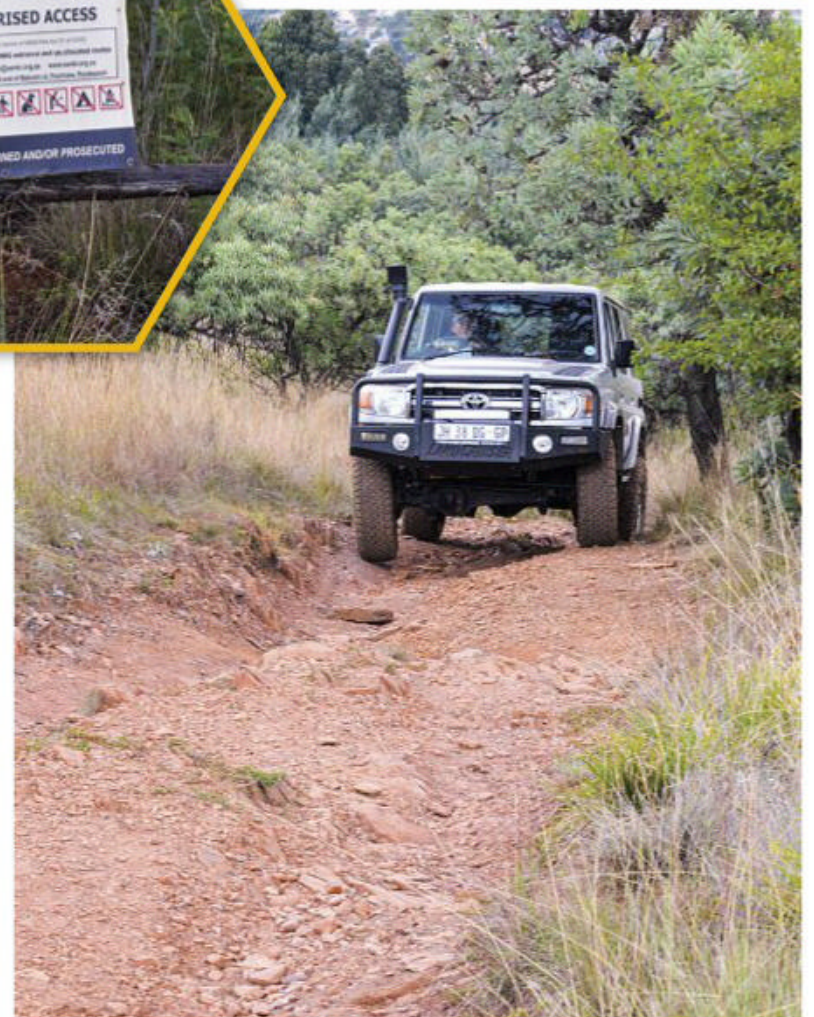
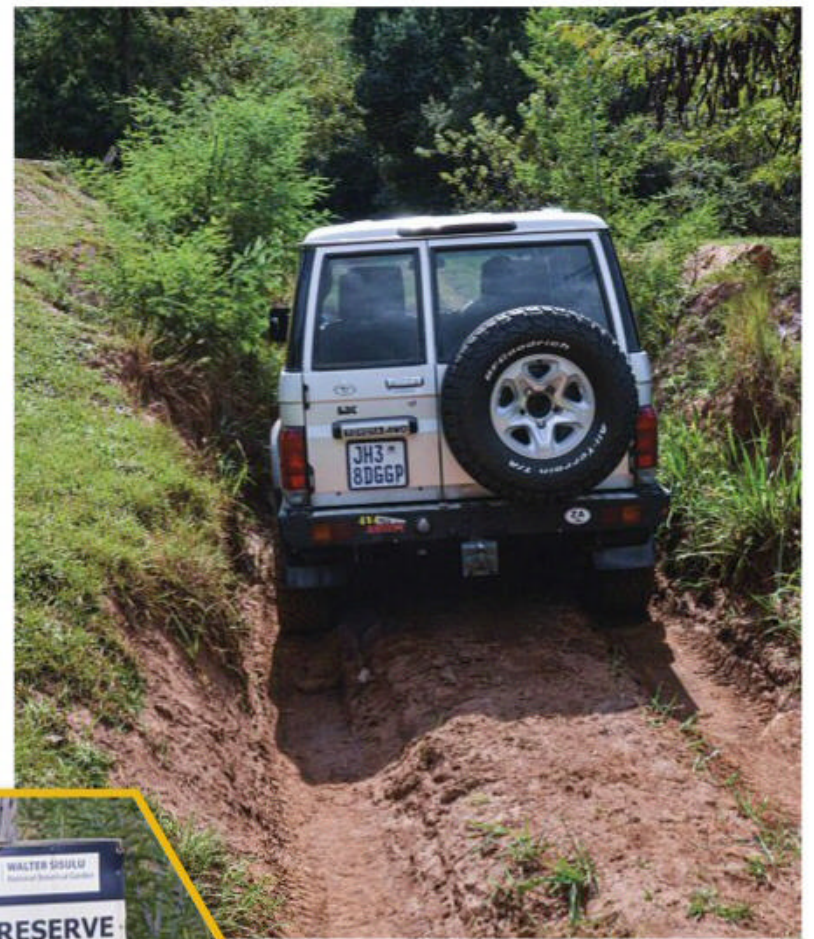
projectiles until someone cries uncle. You can also bring your rod, and try to hook barbel, bass or carp. Just remember to let them go after getting photographic evidence of your catch.

But you're here for the off-road driving and, luckily, it is the chief attraction. There are a couple of obstacles near the farm's dam on which to hone your skills if you're not that confident. Consider this if you have not yet earned your off-road stripes, because here they throw you into the deep end. Literally.

While the Green Trail is itself pretty,

you can conquer it with a 4x2 equipped with a diff-lock if you know what you're doing. But Hobby Park is all about the Action Trail. If you are unsure of what to expect, call on Hobby Park manager Wicus van Zyl, who knows the layout like the back of his own hand, to give you a quick crash course.

The obstacles, which are straight ahead as you turn right toward the shop and reception, start with an axle twister decline into a pit that requires low range, make sure your rear diff lock is engaged, and then a sharp right, away from the property's border.



When there's decent rainfall, the next obstacle gets quite interesting. It is called a water crossing, but it's basically another pit. Unfortunately, it wasn't full of water at the time of our visit, but you still need to keep your wits about you because you're basically driving through mud here.

Wicus reckons that around 1,6 bar of pressure on a decent off-road tyre should see you through most of these obstacles, and while a raised suspension system isn't a must, it's definitely going to help with clearance on some of the hairier challenges. And if you're still driving

around with your stock running boards, it might be a good idea to remove them before your visit. But up until this point, it's all pretty uneventful.

The third obstacle is an even longer water trough that only just turned the soil under the tyres into mud, but it does taper towards the end, which requires the driver to hold the correct line from entry to exit.

Some axle twisters just behind the reception area leads you around a horseshoe to the fourth challenge. It's one that requires some finesse – even when it's not completely soggy. This drop

into mud will require you to maintain a little momentum to make it up the slippery incline.

Things get serious as you approach the sixth obstacle. Here, you need to decide if you're properly equipped for the challenge of thick mud in which you have to round a 90-degree left-hander. Management advises at least front and rear diff locks, a raised suspension and recovery equipment. It's also not encouraged to do this one on your own.

You can of course choose to avoid number six and head directly for seven, a simple log bridge – all that's required

TRAIL GUIDE

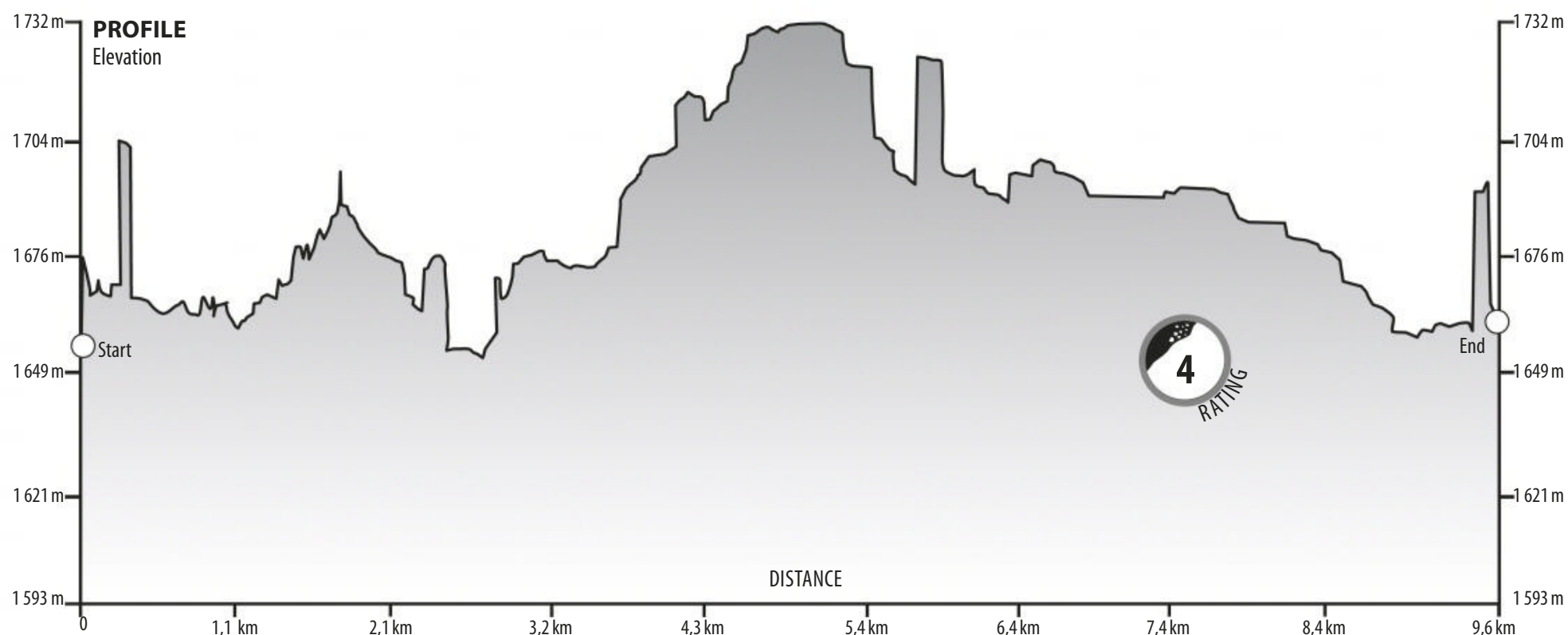
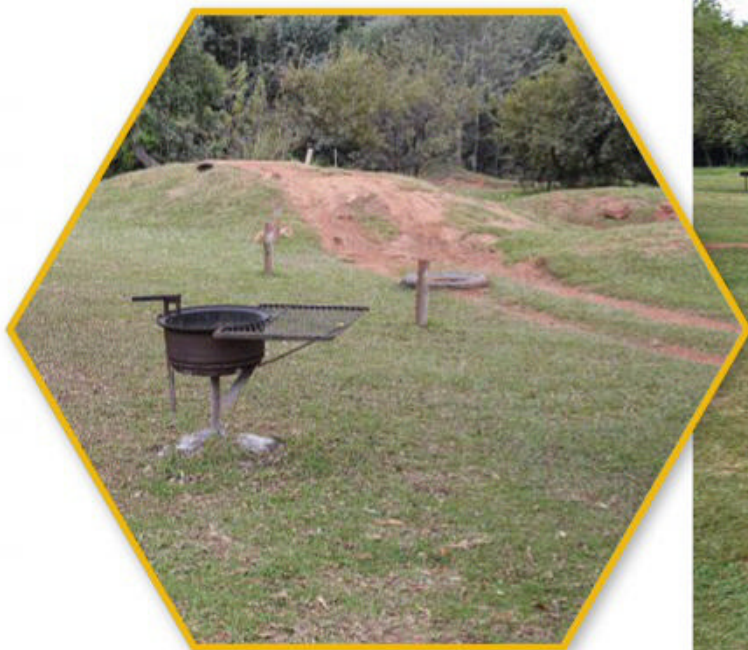
here is that someone guide you across.

Obstacle nine is a rocky ascent and decline, that side-slopes toward the passenger side. Obstacle 10 has a name and it's called "last survivor". Management doesn't suggest you try this in a standard 4x4 vehicle. Front and rear diff lock come highly recommended, and they want to know up front if you plan to tackle this one. Looking at it from up front is very intimidating – it's a 43-degree incline of smooth rock. You're supposed to drive back down it again to earn street cred around Hobby Park.

You've got some breathing room at 11 and 12, before gritting your teeth for the next two obstacles. Up on the top of a ridge, you look down to the right towards 13 (a descent down ragged rock shelves and, just a little farther along, 14 (which you have to climb up after having successfully traversed 13.)



AN EXPENSIVE HOBBY. The Action Trail is 3,6 km long and the milder Green Trail is 6 km. These trails will challenge experienced and novice off-roaders alike, and if your passengers are a nervous bunch, you can drop them off at the mall across the road or they can pedal the many mountain bike routes.





What you need to know



Maximum number of vehicles?

Between 30 and 40 on the Action Trail.

Do I get a map? No, but you can look up the obstacle guidelines online. And the trails are marked out at reception. They're also easy to follow.

Will I scratch my vehicle? It's very likely.

Do I need to take a compressor? Yes.

Can I braai along the route? No, but there are demarcated braai spots near reception.

Can I turn around halfway? Yes.

Is there cellphone signal? Yes.

Best time to go? Year-round, but it will

be more fun after recent rain.

Can I take my family along? Bring them along for a braai, pack in the kid's bicycle and your paintball marker.

Just for the day or the weekend? Day visits only.

How long does it take? You'll need at least two-and-a-half hours.

Are there ablution facilities? Not on the trails.

Directions You can't miss the turnoff from Robert Broom Drive. Hobby Park's entrance is across the intersection at Led Hersch Drive, opposite the Noordheuwel Shopping Centre.

Office hours Wednesday to Sunday, 7am to 5pm.

Price R250 for vehicle, driver and three passengers.

Contact 082 565 5634

hobbypark.co.za

GPS S26.088674 E27.819512

These are really not for the faint of heart and only meant for experienced and confident 4x4 enthusiasts to tackle. You also need a guide and, of course, plenty of patience. There are telltale scars scraped into the rocks on 14, along with some side-window deflector debris left behind from a previous off-roader who must have overturned or rolled their vehicle down the obstacle.

From here you can figure out if you're brave – or kitted out enough – to tackle the last two serious challenges. You can

turn around and head straight for 16, which is a rocky decline that will require some feather braking.

You can also choose to halt the day's activities and stop for a snack at the demarcated braai areas or continue onto the Green Trail and enjoy a more leisurely jaunt. Most 4x2 drivers experienced with diff-lock should be able to handle this trail without any trouble.

The trail continues to the lookout point, which is basically inside the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden. This

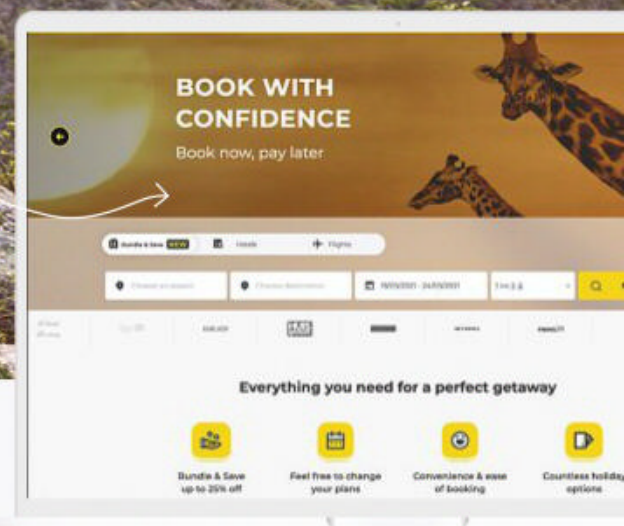
is a restricted area, but Hobby Park has an agreement with local government to go no further than this point. From here you have a bird's eye view of the border between Krugersdorp and Roodepoort.

The last challenge here is right back where you started, close to reception. Passing the paintball field on your left, you approach obstacle 17 – the water hole. It posed no threat during our visit. So, phone ahead and ask if it's rained recently. If it has, then you and your buddies are in for a 4x4 treat. 🚗

go! HOLIDAY

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Need a break? South Africa's popular travel and outdoor magazine Weg/go! now has a website where you can safely and securely book your next holiday – go-holiday.co.za.

For months, we were confined to our homes due to Covid-19, and it seems like it's going to be a while before we'll be able to travel across borders or head to international destinations with ease. So, why not explore your province and South Africa with the help of go-holiday.co.za?

What is go! Holiday?

Local travel expert Weg/go! magazine has established an online travel agency that allows you to book your local (and later international) holidays safely and easily.

How does it work?

Not sure about where you'd like to go for your next trip? Head to go-holiday.co.za for inspiration. Or if you

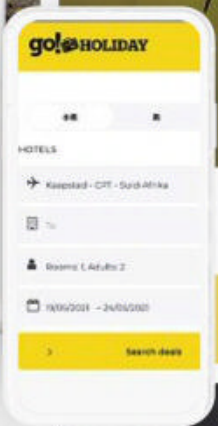
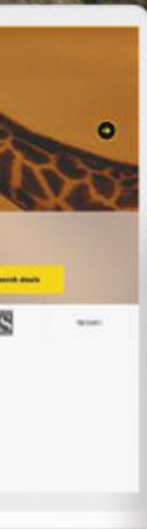
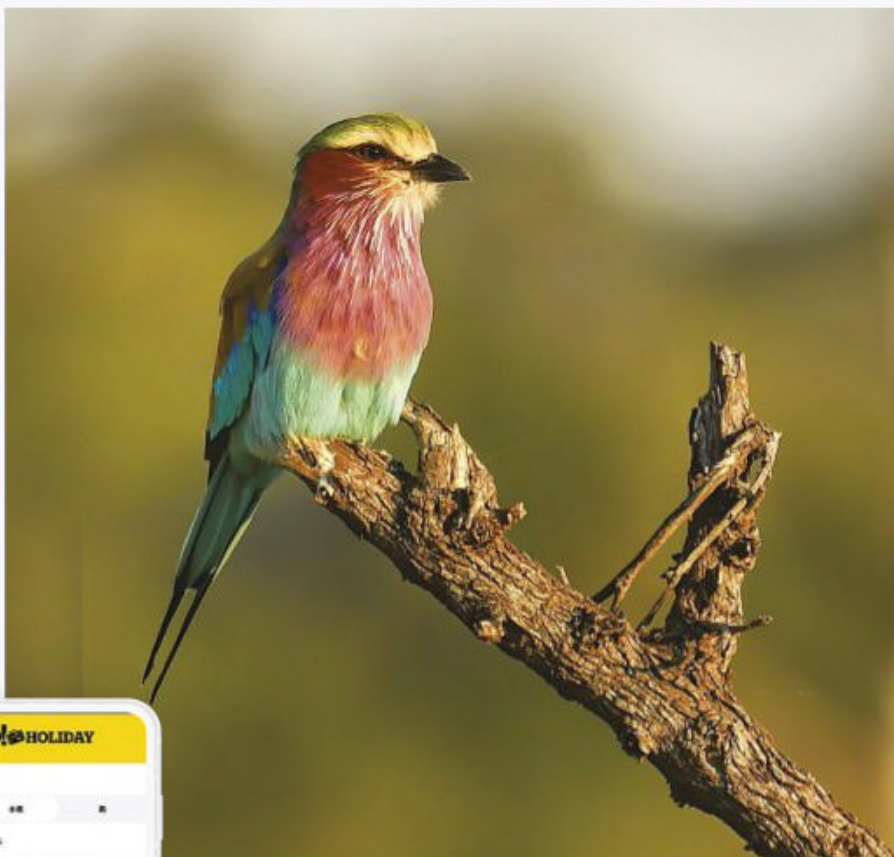
have a specific destination **in mind**, use the search engine to find accommodation and flights. More than 8 000 establishments (hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, reserves and even a couple of campsites) are listed. You can also compare flight costs. Choose, click and book. It's that easy!

And keep an eye out for special offers and package deals (where we bundle together accommodation and flights for a special price).

If you're looking for a different experience, you can also book hikes or safari trips on go-holiday.co.za.

If you have to cancel due to Covid-19?

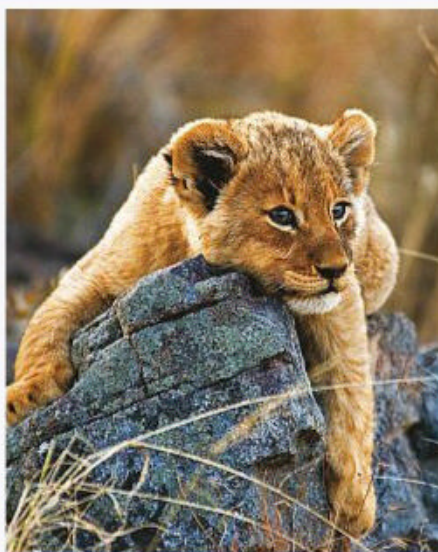
The accommodation options indicate which establishments allow you to cancel, so you can book with peace of mind.



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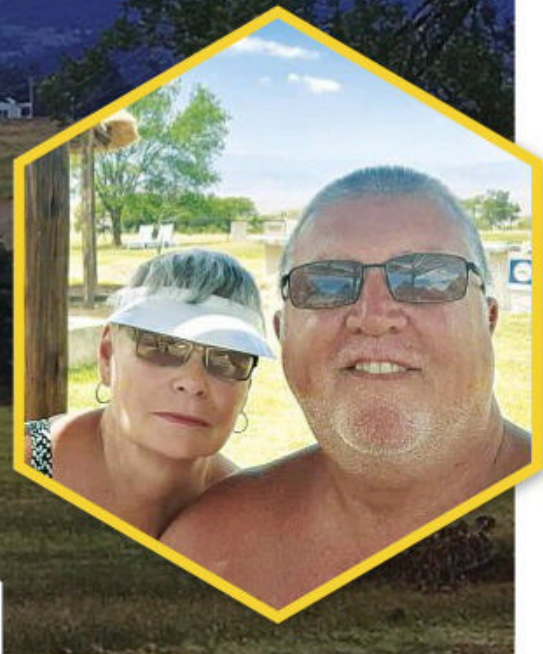


Romantic weekends

go-holiday.co.za

At home in *the mountains*

The first time **Frikkie and Marisa Potgieter** of Welkom camped at the ATKV Drakensville was in 2009. They've often been back since.



“ We retired five years ago and made a conscious decision to relax and enjoy life – for us, this means camping regularly. Drakensville is a fantastic resort, and we love visiting it. In the 12 years since our first visit, we've been here often.

It also helps that it sits exactly in the middle between Welkom and the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, almost to the kilometre. When we head to the coast, we first spend a week here and then another week on our return trip.

TELL US ABOUT THE CAMPSITE

They've got more than 80 stands and most of them have paving. We tow a Penta and pitch its rally tent as well as the main tent, and our stand is more than big enough for it all. On your stand, you'll find a power point (blue plug), rubbish bin and tap. Staff deliver a free-standing braai with a grid as you arrive. There are enough lights throughout the campsite.

Not all stands have shade, but if you like camping under some, there are spots where you can settle in under an eucalyptus and other trees. We're not bothered with shade and prefer the stands in the front, with the mountain views – when we book, we always ask Cathy at reception office to keep one of them for us.



Contact

036 438 6287

drakensville@atkv.org.za

drakensville.co.za

GPS S28.609833 E29.127671

WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE ABLUTION FACILITIES?

There are two large ablution blocks that are only about 50 steps away from most of the stands. The facilities are modern, clean and neat, as you'd expect from an ATKV resort. They are serviced regularly, and we've never had any problems, including running out of hot water, etc. We must add we camp when it's quiet, so haven't experienced the campsite when it's packed.

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO THEY HAVE?

Two heated pools – one of which is undercover, and another large pool. The slide is a source of great fun for the youngsters, and there's also a mini golf course, playground, hiking trails, archery and horse riding. Staff are happy to help you arrange some adventure sports.

IS THERE A SHOP?

Yes, and there's plenty on its shelves. If you've forgotten any basic groceries, you'll probably find them here. You can also buy liquor, beer and wine and then they sell ice, wood, cooldrinks, sweets, ice cream and even clothing. There is also a restaurant and a kiosk at the pool where you can order takeaways.

WIN Frikkie and Marisa wins a **Camp Cover** Camera bag worth R400.

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

campcover.co.za

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Home away from home

After looking for a motorhome for about a year, **Clifford Augustyn** from Crawford in Cape Town, found one for the right price, and it's been on seven trips in less than a year.



“My wife Glenda and I are new campers and have in the past done more of the budget-type getaways on people's farms in chalets and the like. Our issue with any new accommodation is that the **first night is often uncomfortable** because the surroundings are unfamiliar to us.

Towards the end of 2019, a friend of ours was gracious enough to loan me his Hyundai camper so we could experience a weekend away at Goudini Spa. **We immediately took to the lifestyle**, but then had to find our own vehicle for the right price.

It took about a year to track one down that was reasonably priced just in case we didn't like it, so that we could sell and get our money back. We considered my buddy's Hyundai, but it was over our budget. We also looked at a **Volkswagen Autovilla**, but that had been treated to a Ford 3,0 l V6 engine swap and was a bit lopsided, so we gave that a miss too.

Then we came across this **1996 Mitsubishi L300 Explorer**. The seller and his wife were getting on in years and they hadn't been camping in about a year. They let it go for **R80 000**. Because the Mitsubishi had been stationary for a while before we bought it in October 2020, **I replaced the tyres** and **had the brakes sorted** so it





could be roadworthy again. The previous owner also mentioned that he never saw the need to use fifth gear because **he seldom exceeded 80 km/h**. After I became confident that I could go a bit faster, I couldn't actually engage the last ratio. My mechanic is busy fixing it as we speak, as well as **changing the cambelt**. He also previously **changed the fluids and filters** for me.

On the online forums I've joined, guys talk about changing the standard carburettor on this 2,0 l motor to a **bigger Weber carburettor**. My mechanic convinced me that for the slight bump in power and tiny increase in fuel efficiency, the money would be better spent on **a major service and repairing the gearbox** for the time being.

We have cleaned it up nicely, but I have considered an upgrade or two. My major battle now is that the L300 doesn't stand at our house and is instead **sleeping over at my son's friend's place**. It doesn't fit under our carport, so I've decided to **remove my front garden** to make space for the motorhome so that it's easier for me to work on it over the weekends.

I have religiously recorded its fuel consumption on our six trips, as well as the trip my son's taken it on. The Mitsubishi averages between **16,6 and 17,2 l/100 km** and from what I've read up on the forums, some guys have managed to get between 12,5 and 13,3 l/100 km after **changing the carburettor**.

Since the Mitsubishi became ours, we have no problem sleeping on the first night, because we really are at home no matter where we find ourselves with it.

So far, we've been to **Montagu Caravan Park, Yzerfontein Caravan Park, Berg River Resort in Paarl**, then **Mountain Breeze** in Stellenbosch, **Imhoff** in Kommetjie and most recently we were at **Jamaka** in Citrusdal. My son also did a trip to **Goudini Spa** with it.

They've all been great, and I can't choose a favourite between Montagu and Yzerfontein. We prefer campsites that enforce strict rules. ”



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In the nick of time

They managed to squeeze in an epic journey, says **Terrence and Debbie Cook** from Warner Beach, Amanzimtoti, just before everything went into lockdown.



Early last year, the Cooks went on a road trip and made their way to Namibia for their first visit. They didn't know it then, but they did it just before the Covid-19 lockdown. Terrence tells us more...

“ We left our home on Thursday, 6 February 2020. We had a late start as we had to stop in Springfield Park for a quick repair to our home for the next three weeks (our rooftop tent) at Canvas Safari Tents. Nelson, the owner, who I have known to always go the extra mile, assisted us and within no time we were on the N3. I wanted to get to Bloemfontein for an overnight stop and had booked at the River of Joy caravan park just outside the city.

We only reached our destination after 19:00 and as we did, the heavens opened up and it started to rain. Bertha, the

resort's manager, was waiting for us, we settled our account and she told us we could choose any stand. The park is clean, and we felt safe.

We set up our rooftop tent in no time and then settled down under our awning to braai. Through the course of the evening, the campsite's friendly cat and ducks came to say hello.

AS WE LEFT a busy Bloemfontein on the Friday morning, we set our GPS for Sandgat, a campsite on the banks of the Orange River near the Van Der Kloof dam. We did not know what to expect, as we've not been there before. I had been talking to the owner Lisa on WhatsApp, and she had sent our stand number and pin code to be used at the gate. Once again, the heavens opened as we passed Koffiefontein and Luckhof, and the heavy rain made it difficult to see the potholes in the road.

By midday we were at the gate and drove a short distance on a dirt road to the camp. To say Sandgat blew us away would be an understatement. The green grass, the spotless modern ablutions, the farm dam swimming pools and the owner's creative touches visibly make Sandgat a truly special destination. Being a weekend, the park was busy and the local primary school also had their yearly excursion there. We were on stand 4, only 10 metres from the river and could not have asked for a better one. Being coastal people, we are not too familiar with river fishing, but a fellow camper soon put on the right track with mielie bombs. Well, between Debbie and I we had never caught so many fish from a river. The yellow fish were small, and we released all of them to grow bigger in the clean water flowing past us. The river made us think of the ocean as it also has "tides". The sluice

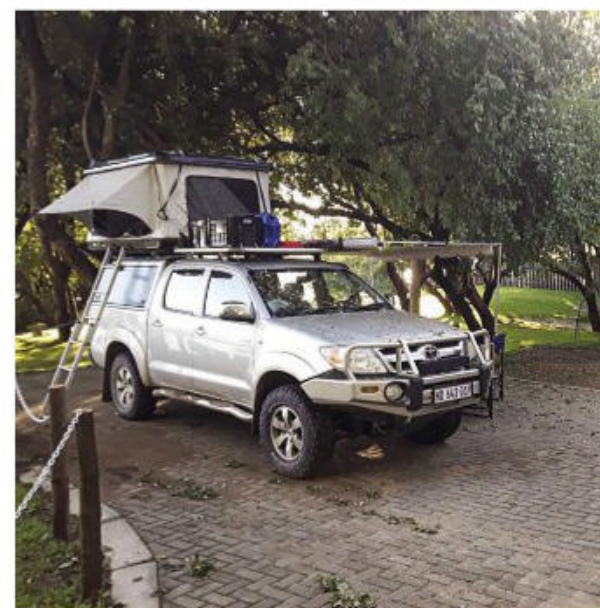
gates at the dam wall are opened every day at 6 am and again at 6 pm, raising the river by a about metre in the mornings and evenings.

After two nights it was time to move on. Aan-die-Oewer at Orania was our next stop. The drive was not long, about 40 km. We have stayed at the Oewer before and it did not disappoint. The camp is clean, safe and always busy. It's a popular stop over for caravans.

Our next day was a long drive via Hopetown, the dirt road to Douglas, on to Campbell and then the tar road to

Griquatown. The turn-off to Witsand Nature Reserve is about 80 km after Griquatown, followed by a 40 km dirt road to the park.

Here the white dunes meet the red Kalahari sand. It was our first time at the park and the neat camp site and spotless ablution facilities impressed us. The swimming pool near our camp site made for welcome relief from the afternoon sun. A storm brewed that evening and we set up camp near the ablution block. We slept through the storm and rain falling on the hard shell roof, interspersed by occasional



CONTRAST. The white dunes of the Witsand Nature Reserve lies in stark contrast to the red sand of the Kgalagadi and its green thorn trees.



wild-animal howls during the night.

The next morning was another early start, the 40 km of dirt road after the rain proved interesting, with the Hilux sliding across some of the muddy patches. I always place the bakkie in “4 H” while driving on gravel roads and deflate the tyres. I enjoy dirt roads but must admit that I was relieved to get to the tar road heading to Groblershoop. We passed Groblershoop and Upington but quickly stopped at the Kalahari Vleishuis in Keimoes and the Pink Padstal in Kakamas. After this it was us and the N14 to Pella. We decided to try Klein Pella as we had never been there before. The Klein Pella guest house on the Karsten’s farm did not disappoint us at all.

We met Glenda in the office who showed us their camp sites. Lush green

grass, a swimming pool and private ablutions is what they offer in almost desert-like conditions, making it an oasis. The heat during the day here in February is almost unbearable. After a good night in Klein Pella, we headed west along the dirt roads to see Goodhouse and the surrounds in this barren region. Goodhouse is a ghost town, where a couple of livestock farmers occupy abandoned buildings. Soon we on the N7 heading for Vioolsdrift, where we planned to stay over at the Growcery. We had not been there before and I was secretly hoping it would be a gem as it was also Valentine's Day. We had a 20 km drive west along the Orange River to get there.

Luckily, we were not disappointed. The staff met us as we drove up; they showed us around and introduced us to the friendly dogs who never left our side. The sites are well kept and the river is close by to take a dip to escape from the Northern Cape heat. The Growcery has a pub, and we had a few drinks there, exchanging travelling tales with other guests. The staff know the area well and handed us forms which we needed to fill in to cross the border the next day. The stars seemed close and fireflies came out to play.

The next morning we drove the 20 km back along the river to get to the border post. Having our forms already completed at the Growcery sped up the process, and within twenty minutes our Hilux was in a different country. As advised by the staff at the Growcery, the first stop would be the Engen garage just over the border. This is where petrol is about R 2,00 cheaper – my pocket and my Hilux loved this.

THE WINDING TAR ROAD took us from Noordoewer to Aussenkehr, where the dirt road began

and we headed on the C 37 to Ai-Ais. The dirt roads in Namibia are very good and seldom corrugated. We would travel at about 80 km/h in “4 high” along these roads. There were cars going faster, but I wanted to use the same Hilux on the same dirt road again, so I was more cautious. We had sightings of gemsbok and other buck along the road. Fences do restrict animal movement in this country.

We arrived at Ai-Ais during the early afternoon and the big pool looked inviting. As it was still Valentine's weekend, we cashed in on their special where you payed for one, but two could stay. The campsite is dry with little grass around, there is enough shade but be wary of baboons who prowl around taking what they can.

The big pool turned out to be a heated pool, it must have been about 35 degrees. With 40 + degrees outside, it was going to be a long afternoon. We had just settled down under a tree for a braai when a dust storm came out of nowhere. The sky turned brown with dust and a few drops fell. It left as soon as it came, and the afternoon was considerably cooler.

After a quick swim in the pool the next

morning, we were ready for another day in a new country. Our first stop for the day was the Fish River Canyon at Hobas. It is massive, and the view is breath-taking.

On the road again, we stopped the Canyon Road House. This is a campsite, fuel station, shop, bar, clothing store and restaurant (with takeaways) in the middle of nowhere. A tour guide at the Growcery had told us about the wild desert horses in this part of the world and a petrol attendant in Aus told us that the watering hole is about 20 km out of town towards Lüderitz. We set off to find the horses. Debbie would make me stop every few kilometres to check if she saw a horse, and it often would be a gemsbok. We did not see the horses and, feeling disappointed, we pushed on to Lüderitz about 80 km from Aus. As we approached Lüderitz, the landscape changed to dunes. We passed the ghost town of Kolmanskop about 10 km before Lüderitz and decided to visit it the next day. We set up camp at Shark Bay, overlooking the harbour in a peaceful setting. The ablutions are old but clean.

The next morning we made our way to the tourism office in Lüderitz. It costs





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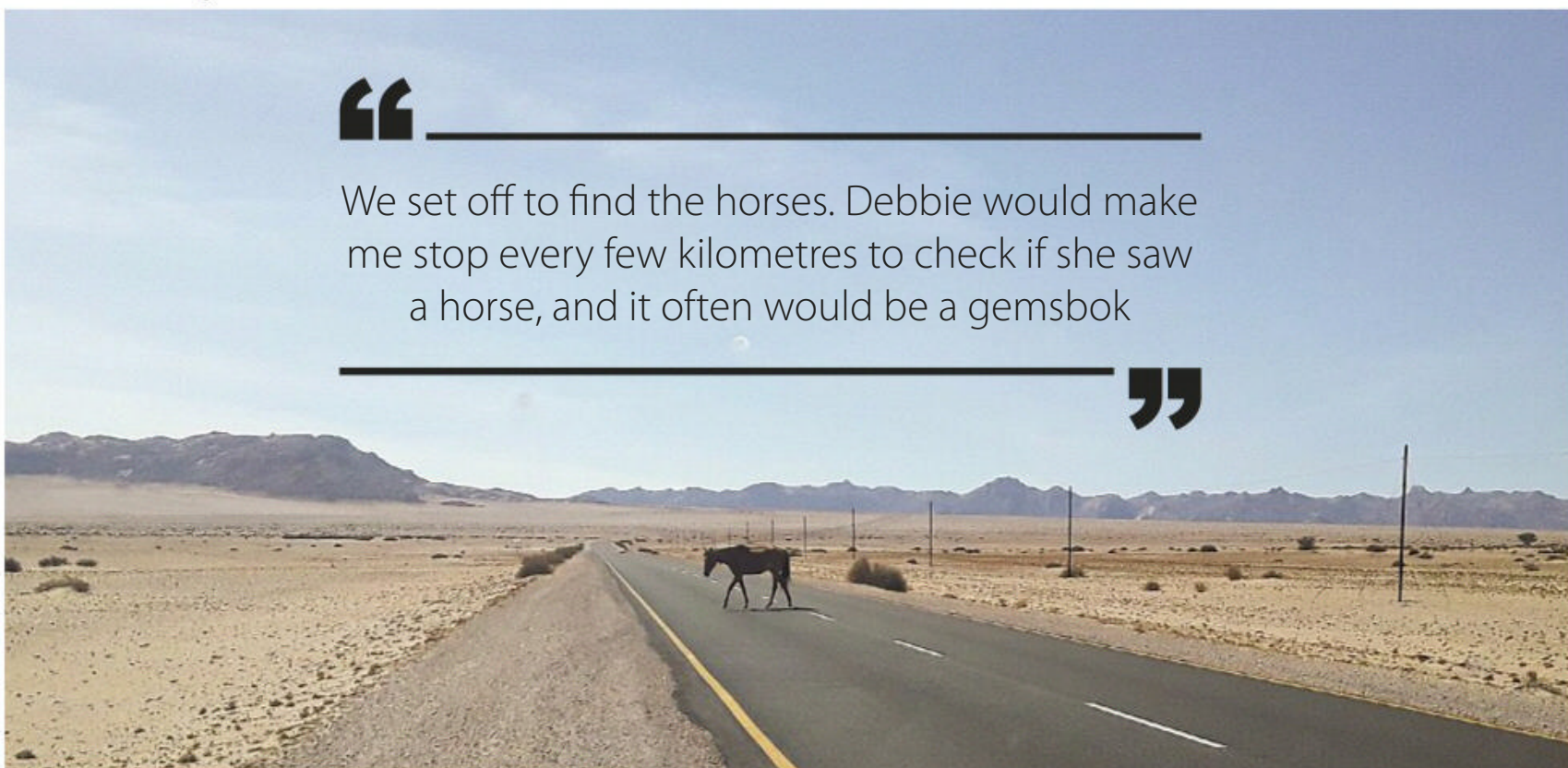
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“

We set off to find the horses. Debbie would make me stop every few kilometres to check if she saw a horse, and it often would be a gemsbok

”



R100 to visit Kolmanskop and you pay either at the gate or at the tourism office. If you arrive before 11:00, you get a free guided tour that lasts around 45 minutes. We found our tour guide knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the buildings and its history. We spent the rest of the day exploring the routes around Lüderitz and visited a shipwreck at Grosse Bucht.

We spend two days in Lüderitz and on the second night the famous winds came through. Our rooftop tent stood up to it, but it was a noisy night. We headed back to Aus to look for the desert horses and were delighted when we found about 30 horses at the watering hole. They seemed oblivious to us. We left feeling privileged that we had seen them in their natural habit. A few minutes later on the road to Aus, four horses crossed the main road in front of our bakkie. We stopped to take pictures. The horses did not look at us. Just walked slowly across the tar and onto the sand. We were in their territory.

We were on the road to Rosh Pinah, a town on the southern border of Namibia. Rosh Pinah is a zinc mining town surrounded by rugged mountains and desert scenery. On the way to the border, the road winds along the Orange River and the scenery is spectacular.

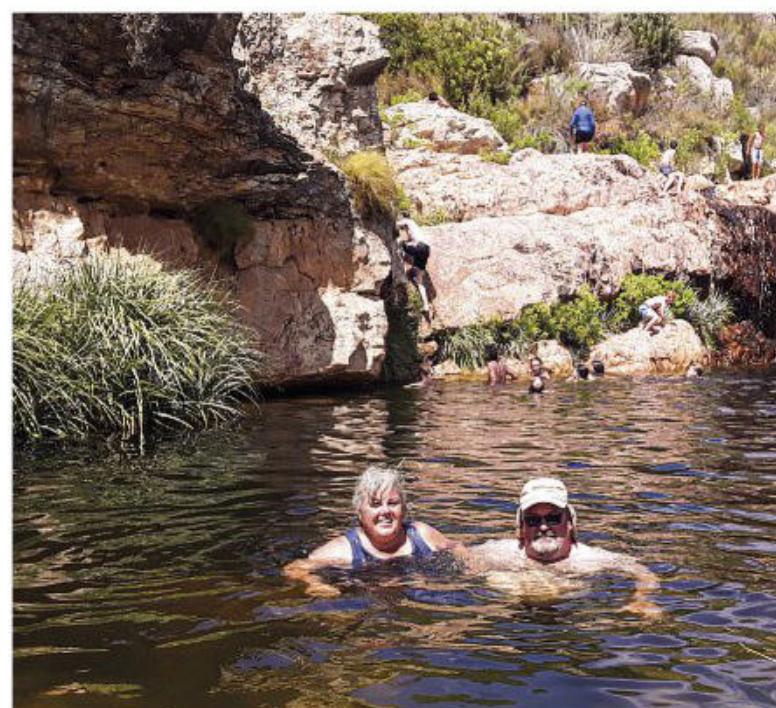
WE CROSSED THE BORDER at

Oranjemund and crossed the single-lane bridge with no issues at all. Now we were back in South Africa with 90 km to go to Port Nolloth. We camped at MacDougall's Bay Caravan Park, a place we've camped

at before. It is a municipal park and has unfortunately fallen into a state of disrepair. The fence to the beach is full of holes and the ablutions are ancient and in dire need of some TLC.

But Port Nolloth is a beautiful place, and we paid for two days. At night we made sure we locked everything away and did not even leave camp chairs or tables out. But some low life decided our rooftop tent ladder was an excellent target. Waking up and looking down from two metres up with no ladder in sight is no joke. I managed to get down and assisted Debbie to the ground. According to the security, some of another couple's items were also stolen, but they had left already. I opened case at the police station, because I think it is important for the police to know about the thefts that occur at the park.

We could not find a suitable new ladder in Port Nolloth, and I had to change our route from the West Coast National Park to the tar road back to Springbok. In Vredendal, I found some suitable pieces of aluminium and built my own ladder in Strandfontein Caravan Park. Strandfontein is the jewel of the West Coast as the sign says as you enter the small village of mainly holiday houses. The caravan park has two sections: the horseshoe that's a street or two up from the sea and the sea section that has spectacular views across the Atlantic with private ablutions. They have recently refurbished the ablutions. The park a firm favourite of ours. The sunset over the Atlantic in the evening from here is something to experience.





LIQUID RELIEF. The Cooks grabbed every opportunity to cool off in whatever swimming pool or river they could find for some respite against the intense summer heat.



the stands aren't demarcated. We picked a spot under a shady tree and settled in. There is also no power or cell phone signal. There is a shop selling most things from ice, wood, meat and liquor. If you take only one thing from this story, it would be to visit Beaverlac. We took a short walk to the natural rock pools. The water is clear and crisp and the little fish nibble away on your feet as you stand in the water. There is also a safe overhanging rock from which to jump into the water. That night we braaiied under a canopy of stars, I had not seen so many stars so clearly since the Richtersveld.

THE NEXT MORNING we closed up our rooftop tent and headed south. We were going to the southern Cape coast, a place we have not explored properly. The drive was scenic, passing little towns we had not heard of like Gouda and Wolseley. We continued passing Robertson and Ashton. At Swellendam, we turned west onto the N2 towards Cape Town. Debbie must have thought I was losing it by turning this way, but I had a plan and after 13km we turned south on to the dirt road, heading for Malgas.

I had always wanted to take the ferry

across the Breede River and this was a good opportunity. The road had lots of traffic from the opposite direction. People were heading home after the weekend.

We joined a short line of cars waiting for the ferry and soon they directed us onto it. Ours was one of three cars and the guys operating the ferry began pulling a steel cable and pulled us all over manually. I have never seen this before. Even more surprisingly, there was no charge.

We made it to our second Witsand of our journey by midday and enjoyed a meal at the Anchorage restaurant on the beach. Witsand is on the banks of the Breede River and is considered to be the whale nursery of the South African coastline. It's an angler's dream with a small craft harbour and decent slipways into the river. A place well worth the visit.

We camped in the municipal park close to the restaurant. The park is neat with clean ablutions. It was very windy that day, but according to the locals, that is quite common here.

The next morning we packed up early and hit the R322. After a few kilometres we took the dirt road towards Vermaaklikheid. There is not much along the road apart from cattle farming. But a dirt road is

Our next destination was Clanwilliam via Klawer. There is a dirt road from the southern side of Doringbaai to Klawer, it cuts out going through Vredendal. We had information that two of recent "Boer soek 'n Vrou" ladies of the 2019 series were in this area. We located Hantie in Clanwilliam and Sanel in Leipoldtville. Both ladies were friendly and posed for photos with Debbie.

We decided to camp at Dwarskersbos near Veldrift. Being a Friday, the park was full and a festive with fires and children enjoying the outdoors.

Next we headed to Beaverlac in the Cederberg. The camp site was full and



HOOKED. No road trip through South Africa would be complete without a visit to both the Indian Ocean at Plett and the Gariep Dam near the centre of the country.



better than a tar road. Soon we were in the little town of Jongsfontein. The caravan park, which is right on the beach, was full, so we drove on to Stilbaai a few kilometres down the road.

There is nothing quiet about Stilbaai. It is a busy little town with the Goukou River separating the eastern and western halves of the town. There are two caravan parks there, but we drove to Gouritsmond. We'd never been there before and were impressed by the small, clean holiday-home village on the banks of the Gourits River. There is a municipal caravan park in town and it's well-kept with green grass and some shaded stands. After a night in the park we left early in the morning heading for the N2, our destination was Plettenberg Bay.

We've stayed in Plettenberg Bay before at the Keurbooms Lagoon Caravan Park, and this year we wanted to try another park. Further up the Keurbooms River is the Plettenberg Bay Forever resort. The park was fairly full with long-term campers. We were lucky to get a stand on the river in this immaculate park. There are no other words to describe it. We spend two days in here and will definitely be back for another visit.



OUR NEXT DESTINATION would be another Forever resort, one that was about 850 km from this one: Gariep Dam. I had studied the map and options and added a bit of dirt road to our trip. We left the park early and turned up the R340 towards Wittedrif. After about 30 km on tar, we were on a dirt road going towards the Prince Alfred Pass. The road is narrow with spectacular views. It was a long day in the bakkie with lots of rain along the way; I am sure the residences of Graaf-Reinet and Middelburg appreciated the rain.

Soon we were on the N1 passing Colesberg and on route to our favourite dam. The road was busy with trucks plying their trade between the Cape and Gauteng. Finally, we were in the Forever Gariep resort and camping on the green grass near the dam. They had redone the bathrooms since we had last been there, impressive, but that is what we expect from this group of resorts. The dam was close to 80% full and it was a lovely sight with more than 30 yachts moored in the safe cove harbour of the dam.

Once we set our rooftop tent, we went down to the water to try our luck fishing. The small yellow fish were on the bite and within about an hour we must have caught and released 10 yellow fish who put a good fight on our light tackle.

We had a braai and that night again the stars overhead amazed us - another awesome night in the Karoo. We spend one more leisurely day in the park as it filled up with the weekend campers.

We left on Saturday morning with the long haul of more than 800 km back to Amanzimtoti. It was another glorious holiday we thoroughly enjoyed.

As a week or so passed and the restrictions, border closures and lockdowns under Covid-19 came to pass, we realised how privileged we were still to have something positive for the beginning of an uncertain 2020. ”



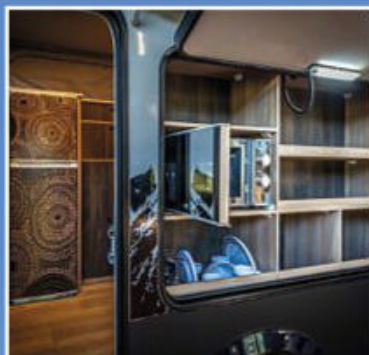
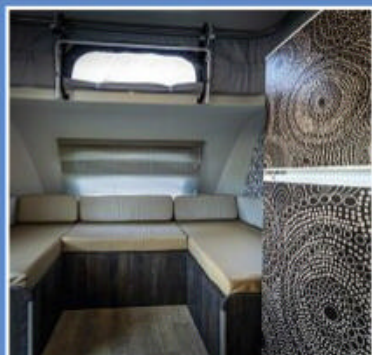
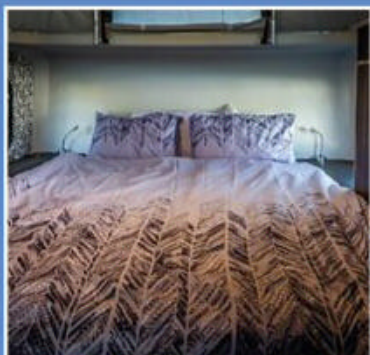
Terrence wins a Camp Cover Bundu Bag worth R400. This bag is so versatile that it could house lots of nifty first-aid items or double as a weekend case. Check out Camp Cover's range on their website. campcover.co.za





STEALTH BUSH LODGE

NEW EVOLUTION IN CARAVANNING



KEY FEATURES AND SPECIFICATIONS

- Length 6.1 m
- Width 2.35 m
- TARE 1350 kg est.
- GVM 1800 kg
- Gas electric geyser
- Awning in a bag
- 150 lt water tanks
- 158 lt/12V fridge
- Stainless steel slide-out kitchen with extension worktop
- Stealth's unique cabin pressurisation system
- 15" alloy wheels with Wrangler AT tyres, 2.5 mm galvanised
- Duplex steel chassis with 3 mm A-frame
- 1800 kg rubber torsion axle
- Large pantry hatch with additional hatches for quick access under the main bed and dinette



STEALTH BAKKIE MATE

NEW EVOLUTION IN CARAVANNING

KEY FEATURES AND SPECIFICATIONS

- Beds: 1x Queen-sized – 2 adults
- Water tank: 40 lt + water pump 12 V/5 lt
- Tare mass: 450 kg payload, 250-400 kg depending on vehicle
- Overall length: 3640 mm (excluding rear gas bottle)
- Overall height: 1755 mm (roof closed), 2350 mm (roof open)
- Overall width: 2020 mm
- Optional extras: Porta Potty / 60 lt fridge / awning / shower unit

Features: Interior kitchen cupboard with worktop / wardrobe with hanging space / work surface on pantry drop-down door / cold water mixer tap on 2 m-extension hose

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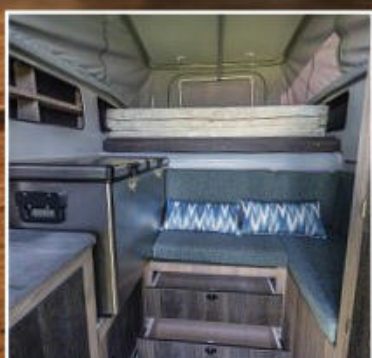
Newcastle LeisureWorld

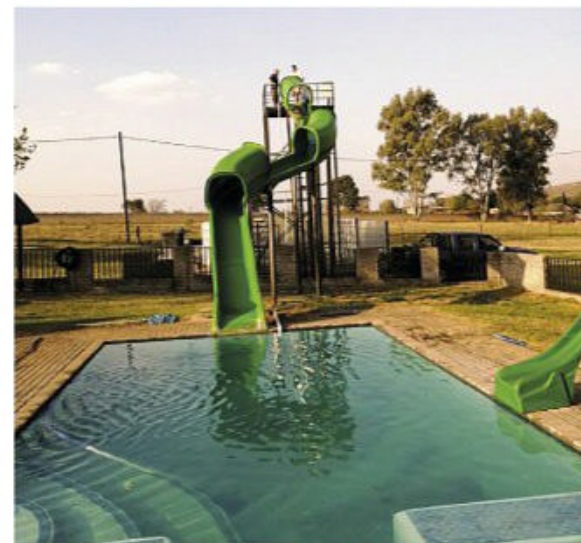
CARA-CAMP

Loftus Caravan City

Middelburg Caravans

Silver Lakes Caravans





Camp Aquatic

The Woelwaters resort sits on the North West's side of the Vaal River, at Lindequesdrift and about 30 km from Parys.



FISHING RESORT

WOELWATERS RAPIDS AND SANDBANKS

Choose from one of 30 sites next to the river – you'll never be more than 100 m from the water anywhere. The campsite is laid out on three terraces: on the top two,

most of the stands have grass with shade trees, but down below by the river, there aren't any trees.

The stands on the bottom two terraces are the largest and good for caravans, while the very top one is only suitable for campers with tents. These stands each have their own concrete braai with a grid, and there are also two power

points that each have two of the normal household sockets – remember a 30 m extension cord in case you're not close to one of the two power points.

The second terrace has room for seven caravans. With grass and shade, these stands are the best of them all. Here you get your own concrete braai with a grid, and each stand also has its own tap.



FISHING GEAR

Rod rack

Storage space for fishing rods can be a real headache, and if you don't store them properly, your rods can easily get damaged.

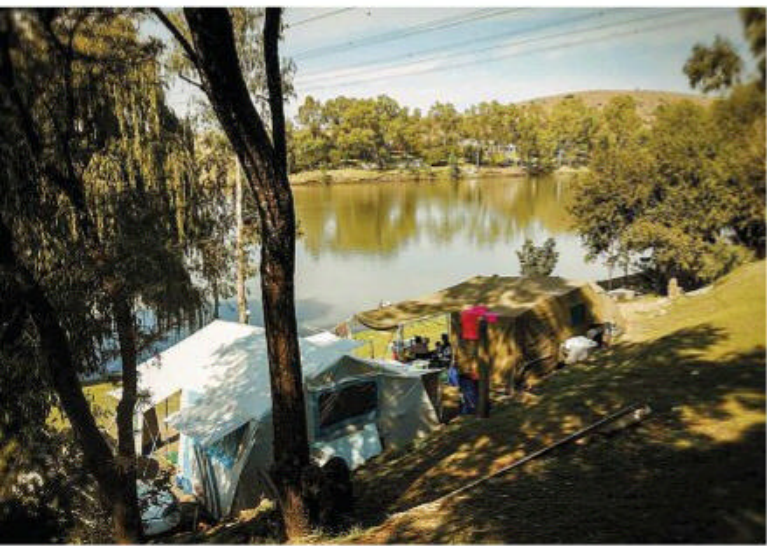
You don't want to stack them on top of one another, or stand them upright one next to the other as the reels bump into each other, and when there's still a hook

on a line, it get entangled in the other fishing rods. That's not even mentioning those delicate tips.

A good solution is a horizontal plastic shelf specially designed for fishing rods.

It looks a bit like a bookshelf, but instead of a shelf, there are three notches for three rods and their reels.





There's a power point at every fourth stand. On the lower terrace all the stands have free-standing braais.

Behind the third terrace, up the stairs, you'll find one small ablution block that's a good 150 m from your stand. On the men's side are two toilets, two showers and a basin. The shower cubicles don't have doors; just a shower curtain separates you from the open room.

Woelwaters has grown and now extends 400 m next to the river as opposed to the previous 100 m. A new bathroom has also been added where men and women have access to four private bathrooms, plus there's a separate bathroom with wheelchair access.

The office and shop are at the top end of the resort. It stocks basic provisions, and if your two teenagers want to take each other on over a pool table, they can line up here. It works with R5 coins.

The two heated indoor pools – one that's also a new addition – are opposite the office, each in its own room with a passage between the two.

In the summer months, cool off in the pool in front of the office while the kids frolic on the slide. You can also get a set of clubs at reception for the mini golf course.

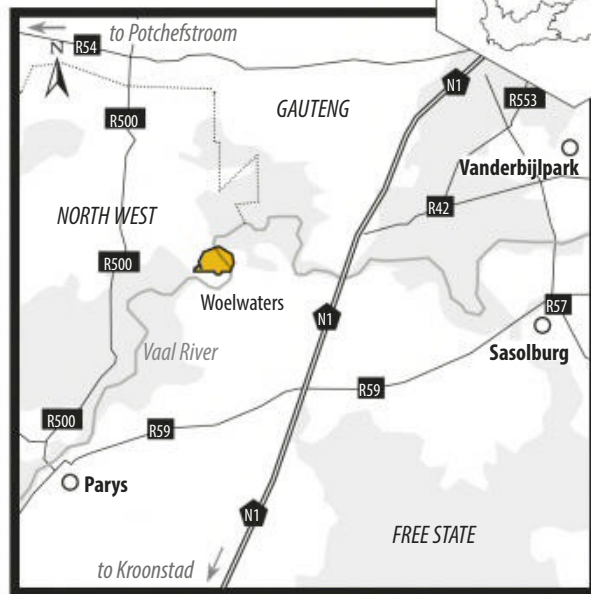
The length of your rods will determine how far apart you place the two supports.

Price R109 per set (screws included).

Contact Available in fishing shops nationwide – also in Namibia.

☞ catches@4adrenalin.co.za

☞ adrenalinfishing.co.za



Fishing, however, is the thing to do at Woelwaters, especially now the shoreline has been extended. Previously, thanks to the rapids, mainly fly-fishermen could fish here, but now those who aim for the deeper water now also have a better chance. You now have access to a sandbank where you can get decent carp and catfish.



Briefly | Woelwaters



Fish Yellowfish, carp and catfish.

Campsite 30 stands, most with grass, some with shade.

Ablution facilities 1 older building, plus new facilities with private bathrooms.

Price Depending on the season and day of the week, R280-R480 p/n per stand for up to 4 people. Thereafter R100-R120 pp, maximum 6 people (free for children under age two). You also pay an administration fee of R75.

Arrival and departure 12:00 and until 20:30.

Contact ☎ 016 987 7932 or ☎ 066 228 2830 ☞ info@woelwatersresort.co.za ☞ woelwatersresort.co.za

Nearest town Parys, 28 km.

Road condition Tar road all the way.

GPS S26.776556 E27.575289

Drive & Camp says Just before Easter, an 18 kg catfish was caught here, and at the end of the long weekend, there'd been an 8 kg carp and a 1,8 kg yellowfish caught here too.



FISH DISH

SNOEK WITH GARLIC BUTTER AND TOMATO-AND-PEPPER JAM

Tangy Snoek

This sweet butter sauce is a variation on the classic apricot jam winner.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- ½ cup garlic butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons tomato-and-chilli jam
- 1 lemon
- 1 fresh snoek of at least 1,7 kg, butterflied
- some cooking oil to baste the grid

Here's how

1 Mix together the butter and jam. Taste and season with the lemon juice and grated lemon zest.

2 Baste the inside of the grid with oil so the snoek doesn't get stuck. Place the fish skin side down on the grid and baste it generously with the sweet butter sauce.

3 Braai the fish over medium coals until it starts to cook – the meat will turn white in places. This takes around 7-10 minutes, depending on how hot the coals are. Turn the grid over once so that the top colours and the fish is cooked through.

5 Turn the grid one last time and baste the fish again generously with the sauce. Test a thick section of the fish: if it flakes, it is ready. Serve with sliced and fried sweet potato.

Drive & Camp says Prepare the garlic butter ahead of time, then you won't have to bother with fresh parsley at the campsite. Use the salt and pepper sparingly – remember, butter is already **deliciously salty!**



Recipe: Johann Malan Photo: Ed O'Riley

A SWANKY RUFFIAN

NISSAN PATROL

The Nissan Patrol needs no introduction. Anyone who owns one – and those who'd love to own one – will eagerly list the virtues of this giant SUV. They'll tell you it's tough, formidable, reliable and up-for-anything, yet luxurious. And let's be honest... the fans are right.

Words **Schalk Jonker** Photos **Schalk Jonker, Pierre du Plessis** and **Jakoos Scheepers**

The new Patrol launched online last year during the national COVID-19 lockdown. This meant many a motoring journo sat drooling at the pics on their computer screen instead of slipping behind the wheel. You have to pity them, nobody can get the true experience of the power (and sound) of that 5.6 l V8 engine from a YouTube video. No, you've got to drive it.

So when given the chance, we grabbed the whole hand instead of just a pinky, installed a roof rack, tied down a brace of jerry cans – and ventured on an epic trip to Namibia – driving 6 000 km on tar and dirt, and over dunes for days on end.

What do we have here?

In the market for a new Patrol? Well, your choice won't be a hard one to make. It's either the Nissan Patrol 5.6 V8 LE or a second-hand model. Yes, only one model is available in South Africa,

but this is the seventh generation of the Patrol, and Nissan's been building the car for more than 50 years. To date, the new one is the best version of this reliable vehicle.

You do get to pick a colour. There are seven to choose from: black, white, dark brown and silver, and then also the more exotic Desert Dune, Gun Metallic and Titanium.

The Patrol is huge – it is 5 165 mm long, 1 995 mm wide and 1 940 mm high. This means you take up a fair amount of real estate on the road and pretty much look the drivers of small lorries straight in the eyes.

Inside and out

Let's explain it this way: on the trip, there was also a Nissan Navara double cab, and when you (somewhat reluctantly) had to give another driver a chance in the Patrol and get into the Navara, the difference in space was so marked, it was almost as though you'd switched to





sitting in a Nissan Micra.

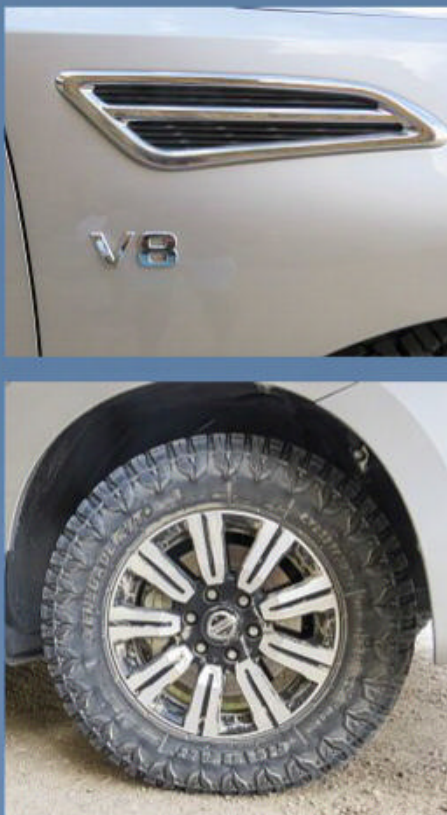
The interior is as luxurious as it gets. Leather seats (of which the front two are temperature controlled and can remember up to three of your favourite positions), neat finishes, air-conditioning for the front and rear passengers, an information and entertainment system with everything from Bluetooth, USB sockets and satellite navigation to a tyre pressure monitor, fuel-consumption calculator and even a bar fridge in-between the front two seats where you can keep up to six pints. We especially liked the Bose sound system, and also that you're still able to play CDs. You also use this slot for DVDs that play on eight-inch screens on the back of the front head rests.

Road noise is surprisingly low – all you really hear is the engine growling as you put foot.



WHO'S THE BOSS? The Nissan Patrol has a commanding presence that oozes attitude. But it's not smoke and mirrors, because it really is up for any job when it comes to off-road adventuring.





When it comes to gadgets, the Patrol has them all. In the centre console is a round button where you can choose which driving mode you want – road, rocks, snow or sand – so you don't have to do any thinking. Simply press the right button.

The outside revamp is stylish, with just enough chrome finishes, daytime running lights and an aggressive grille.

Under the bonnet

The Patrol uses a 5.6 l V8 petrol engine and seven-speed automatic transmission.

And, yes, here's the answer to the second question everyone asked us along the way... It's indeed a thirsty beast.

On the open road – with 140 l petrol in the tank and even more on the roof rack, three passengers and all their luggage for a week – it returned a consumption of 16,5 l/100 km at a typical speed of 130 km/h. It was a different story in the dunes: here the fuel consumption

needle constantly hovered on 30 l/100 km.

But for that you're rewarded with an oversupply of power and a gearbox that shifts effortlessly every time, in any given situation.

By the way, the first question everyone asked was about the price tag...

How's the ride?

The Patrol eats up the miles. We drove all the way from Humansdorp in the Eastern Cape to the border, through the Namib to Meob Bay, along the beach to Walvis Bay and

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The Patrol is like a great blended wine in which exactly the right elements are combined for something that has your heart beat a little faster

”



back past Solitaire... and not once did anyone in the vehicle complain that they were no longer sitting comfortably.

On the trip, we also tested some of the technology up front, especially the adaptive cruise control. It works astonishingly well. The car brakes itself when there is slower traffic up ahead, and then accelerates as you leave your lane to overtake. As for the gearbox, we had no complaints, but there is a manual mode if

From the competitors Luxury sports utility vehicles for those who have a solid standing at the bank



R2 892 840 **Mercedes-Benz G400d**

If you absolutely have to drive in this prime specimen of a German SUV, with all the gadgets, you'll have to cough up another R1,3 million.



R1 561 200 **Land Rover Discovery R-Dynamic SE**

For about R10 000 cheaper you can buy this brand-new Discovery. That's provided you find the new design appealing, of course.



R1 606 600 **Toyota Land Cruiser LC200 4.5D V8 VX-R**

This top model in the 200 series is the Patrol's closest competitor on all levels, but it's a little more expensive.



you want to rather take care of the changes yourself.

On sand, the Patrol has no equal. Turn on the sand mode, turn off traction control, and you drive up and down the dunes as though you're an old hand.

The only way you improve this experience is by fitting aftermarket front and rear bumpers that would give you slightly better approach and departure angles on some of the steeper dunes and slipfaces.

Conclusion

The Patrol is like a great blended wine in which exactly the right elements are combined for something that has your heart beat a little faster. Nissan has created a vehicle in which technology, driving pleasure, luxury and reliability work together brilliantly. That engine!

The Patrol Brigade needs no convincing. They already know this. Perhaps this model will deliver more converts. 🚗

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Nissan Patrol 5.6 V8 LE
Engine	5 552 cc 8-cylinder petrol
Power	298 kW @ 5 800 rpm
Torque	560 Nm @ 4 000 rpm
Transmission	7-speed automatic
Ground clearance	272 mm
Approach and departure angles	34° en 26°
Standard tyres	265/70R18
Tare weight	2 746 kg
Load weight	754 kg
Safety rating	Unknown
Warranty	6 years/150 000 km
Service plan	3 years/90 000 km
PRICE	R1 571 700

Red alert!

The Ford Ranger Thunder is based on the Ranger Wildtrak, but with red detailing and other gadgets to put a smile on your face.

Words **Cyril Kloppe**

FORD RANGER THUNDER

The Ranger Thunder is Ford's temporary flagship model. We say "temporary" because Ford calls the Thunder a "limited edition", but they don't elaborate on the nature of this limitation – will only a certain number be built? Will they stop manufacturing it after a certain time? What we do know is that the Thunder is a tier above the Wildtrak.

The Ranger Thunder has the same 2.2 biturbo diesel engine and 10-speed automatic

transmission that the Wildtrak and the Raptor use. Unlike those models, the Thunder is also available with Ford's 3.2 engine – for those who prefer engine capacity over extra turbocharging. The 3.2, however, is only available in rear-wheel drive, but with the 2.0 models, you're able to choose between rear-wheel or four-wheel drive.

Here's the pecking order of Ford's double-cab Ranger bakkies: the Ranger 2.2 TDCi base model, followed by the XL, XLS, XLT, FX4,

Wildtrak and then the Thunder. The Ranger Raptor is certainly next level. It is, after all, the most expensive of the bunch, but because it fills its own niche, we won't place it in the same category as "regular" Rangers.

So, what's different?

The Ford Ranger Thunder sports some unique design elements. There's the grille with its hexagonal honeycomb pattern and red "nostrils" on either side of the grille; the wing



RED HOT. The Ford Ranger Thunder is an attractive bakkie and one almost feels bad about taking it off-road – not that it can't 4x4, it can! The key that opens the tailgate (right) pulls out of the remote control fob and you have to take care when using it because it's dainty and it feels as though it can bend or break when manhandled.



DRIVING IMPRESSION

mirrors that are painted black; the tailgate and the bottom of the front doors have three-dimensional Thunder nomenclature in red. The 18" alloy wheels are also painted black to give the Ranger Thunder a sporty look.

The same sports bar as on the Ranger Wildtrak loops behind the cabin over the load bin, but on the Ranger Thunder the bar is painted black with red stripes. This bar offers no protection should the Thunder end up on its roof. Tradesmen also should also rather not attach ladders and cans of paint to it – it's purely cosmetic.

The load bin is lined in plastic to protect the metal, but we suspect it won't be able to endure a load of bricks or building rubble. It's clear the Ranger Thunder is designed with the lifestyle market in mind. People who wouldn't load tougher stuff than mountain bikes and camping gear. The load bin also has a moveable partition so you can separate your fishing gear from your camping stuff.

You can further secure your load bin with an optional lockable roller shutter (R20 000) that closes fairly tightly. Some dust made its way past the shutter on our test vehicle, and after hosing down the bakkie, we also discovered splashes of water inside the load bin. We also don't understand why we have to lock and unlock the tailgate using a key – and a flimsy one at that. How hard can it be to have the tailgate lock and unlock along with the central locking system?

Inside, the Ranger Thunder boasts Thunder decals embroidered on the seat upholstery and red contrast stitching. This distinguishes it from the Wildtrak's orange stitching and the usual XLT's silver thread.

What comes standard?

The Ford Ranger Thunder has the same gadgets as the XLT and Wildtrak models. These include three 12 V power sockets (front, rear and in the load bin) plus a converted 230V/150 W one for the passengers in the back, LED headlamps with daytime running lights as well as LED fog lights, a programmable four-inch screen in the instrument panel and an eight-inch touchscreen in the centre console, plus two USB sockets up front with the latest Android and Apple software to control your phone.

The eight-inch touchscreen has a satellite map, but you can choose to use your phone's navigation – even though it eats through data – if you want to see what traffic is like on your planned route, something the Thunder's free satellite navigation can't do.



In terms of safety, there's lane-keeping assist that vibrates the steering if you drift out of your lane – it will even turn the steering wheel back automatically if the computer suspects your attention is wandering.

The computer can also scan parallel parking spaces to see whether the Ranger Thunder will fit. It will let you know when it detects a suitable parking space, after which you allow the car to take over the steering wheel – and all you have to do then is engage drive or

reverse, step on the accelerator or brake pedal. We tested the automatic parking system, and although the Thunder did indeed stop between two vehicles and within the lines, we found it a bit too nerve-wracking for our taste. Apparently people get used to it, but we prefer to turn the steering wheel ourselves, thank you very much.

What's the ride like?

In June 2019 we wrote about the 2.0 biturbo



SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested	Thunder 2.0 BiT 4x4
Engine	1 996 cc, four-cylinder twin turbodiesel
Power	157 kW @ 3 750 rpm
Torque	500 Nm @ 1 500 rpm
Gearbox	10-speed automatic
Fuel consumption	7,8 l/100 km (claimed)
Tank	80 l
Load weight	860 kg
Maximum towing weight	3 500 kg
Wheel size	265/60/R18
Ground clearance	237 mm
Wading depth	800 mm
Safety rating	★★★★★ (EuroNCAP, 2012)
Service plan	6 years/90 000 km
Warranty	4 years/120 000 km
Price	R830 900

POSH BAKKIE? Although cheaper workhorse variants obviously still exist, it's the smart lifestyle bakkies that generate the big bucks for manufacturers. Luxury items like satnav (right) and 230V-sockets (below) to charge your laptop are great for visiting clients in rural areas.



engine with its 10-speed transmission (see *Drive & Camp* # 24) and nothing much has changed about it. In that article we expressed our concern about the engine's reliability, but we can now confirm that in the past two years we have not heard or read anything that's overly negative about these 2 l biturbo engines – so they seem to be reliable.

The 10-speed automatic transmission is still smooth, but we prefer the 3.2 with its regular six-speed gearbox that provides a more satisfying experience. Ford, however, will continue to promote its biturbo as it is more economical and environmentally friendly than the big bore five-cylinder.

Conclusion

There was a time when South Africans would have a fit at hearing that manufacturers were charging R800 000 plus for a bakkie, but nowadays this isn't a ridiculous price point. The Ranger Raptor, for example, costs more than R900 000 and the VW Amarok Extreme will set you back a million bucks!

The Ford Ranger Thunder may be expensive, yes, but it is your reward for all those late nights at the office and the weekends you had to sacrifice for your career. So hitch your fishing boat to the back of a Ranger Thunder and head off to Sodwana in style. Because you've earned it.



FROM THE COMPETITORS
Flagship bakkies for the lifestyle market



R699 995 **Mitsubishi Triton 2.4 4x4 Xtreme (automatic)**

It remains our favourite bakkie when it comes to off-roading.



R713 900 **Isuzu D-Max 300 LX 4x4 (automatic)**

One of South Africa's most beloved bakkies, and it's about to be replaced.



R868 100 **Toyota Hilux 2.8 GD6 4x4 Legend RS (automatic)**

This winner simply can't put a foot – or tyre – wrong.



SUZUKI JIMNY GLX

Featherweight champ

It's easy to understand why people would hitch a Suzuki Jimny to the back of a motorhome. But a caravan behind this little guy? Let's see how it performs.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

By now, the Jimny has more than proven itself as a great little off-roader that can run with the big dogs any day of the week.

But when it comes to towing, it's not quite the same scenario. The Jimny's 130 Nm torque from its petrol engine limits the load you can tow, plus its weight of just over a tonne is too light to legally tow most caravans.

Remember, this is a small vehicle. Up front, nobody can complain about the space, but only a kid who's still in primary would be able to sit comfortably in the back. And if you have rear

passengers, your luggage space is all but gone – then your kit and caboodle must go either on the roof or inside your caravan.

How heavy is too light?

Suzuki reckons the Jimny's towing capacity is 1 300 kg. This may reflect the capability of the engine and gearbox, but our legislation disagrees. In South Africa, the gross vehicle mass of the trailer (with overrun brakes) may not exceed the towing vehicle's tare weight. A caravan with overrun brakes is a different story, but that's irrelevant here as almost all braked caravans in the country



are equipped with overrun brakes.

Suppose you have a caravan that weighs 910 kg. It may not exceed the Jimny's tare weight, but if its GVM is 1 110 kg (like that of a Sprite Sprint), you won't be allowed to tow it with the Jimny as the car's tare weight is 1 095 kg.

Therefore, you're only able to consider caravans with a GVM of less than 1 095 kg if you want to tow with your Jimny. Examples like Sherpa's Tiny (GVM 1 000 kg), the Badger Lite (950 kg) and Panther Alpha (800 kg). The majority of other production caravans under 1 000 kg have a GVM of 750 kg, however.

Then there is also a second legal requirement, even if the caravan's GVM is lower than the



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The Jimny is stable and sits well on the road, and despite its boxy shape, there's not much wind noise
”



towing vehicle's tare weight. This affects caravans which are not equipped with brakes. In such a case, the tare weight of the towing vehicle must be at least double the GVM of the caravan. The tare weight of the towing vehicle for an unbraked caravan with a GVM of 750 kg must therefore be 1 500 kg. Suzuki has clearly taken this into account, as it only recommends a trailer with a GVM of 350 kg if it is not equipped with brakes.

Matchmakers

The optional towbar is a Bosal and costs R5 717 (excluding installation costs). The Jimny has a ladder



What does Pieter Crous, our caravan-towing expert, say?

“ As you pull away and with every gear shift, the gearbox feels 'mechanical'. You also don't struggle getting to 100 km/h. Then you're in fourth gear, but if you shift to fifth while on a slight uphill, you'll

have to downshift to fourth again to keep your momentum. It's fast enough that you don't hold up the road users behind you. But, should you end up behind a truck, you'll have to be patient, because you don't have the speed or the power to overtake at 100 km/h while towing something. By the way, Suzuki is modest when it comes to maximum towing speed: 80 km/h. For our test, the Jimny happily did 100 km/h, and faster is obviously not necessary. Actually, I was quite impressed, because we drove at 100 km/h with the air-conditioning on.

Maybe you're looking for a little more torque – a turbo or diesel engine may be the answer.

But you can't really complain when you look at how the 1,5 l engine behaves in front of a caravan; you simply mustn't be in a hurry.

The 9,3 l/100 km (10,7 km/l) we achieved with the test is more than fair, because the engine has to work hard to maintain the speed. The Jimny is stable and sits well on the road, and despite its boxy shape, there's not much wind noise.

I like keeping an eye on the engine temperature, but the Jimny doesn't have a gage for this. The mirrors on the sides are large and you can clearly see what's happening behind you. The same goes for the analogue rev and speedometer that is

clearly visible behind the wheel. The buttons for operating the windows are also in a clever spot as there's no space on the doors. They sit in front of the gear lever in the centre console.

I was expecting it to be basic inside, but the Jimny is actually sophisticated when you consider the air-conditioning and the large touchscreen where you operate the radio and connect to your smartphone.

There's plenty of space in the front. I'm tall and there's still heaps of headroom and at the top edge of the door on the right. There isn't much storage space in the door, though, and I had to keep my wallet in the cubbyhole. ”

TOW TEST

frame chassis and the towbar bolts onto both side beams thereof. It looks like the towbar you see on bakkies.

Like some other off-landers, the spare wheel is attached to the rear door, which makes hitching and unhitching a pain. It's also bothersome when you tow a boat, for example, as some of these trailers have a ratchet pulley upfront that can bump against the spare wheel when make a sharp turn.

The Bosal towbar has an extended arm and the ball sits past the spare wheel – 32 cm from the number plate. In addition, the arm is removable and you don't even need tools to do so. The towbar has a thick round bar that fits crosswise through the arm and is held in place with a safety clip. Simply pull out the clip and the arm is then easily removed.

Inside the vehicle, in the narrow space behind the rear seats, there's a shallow space where you can stow a few tools. Unfortunately, the removable part of the towbar won't fit in there.

The Jimny's rear door swings open from left to right, and when something is hitched, the door only opens part way – you'll have to worm yourself in to get to the emergency triangle.

A drop plate could fit on the towbar, but Bosal has no approved drop plate. According to Suzuki's own requirements, the ball should be 45-49 cm above the road, while the law says the distance can be 35-46,5 cm. 🚗

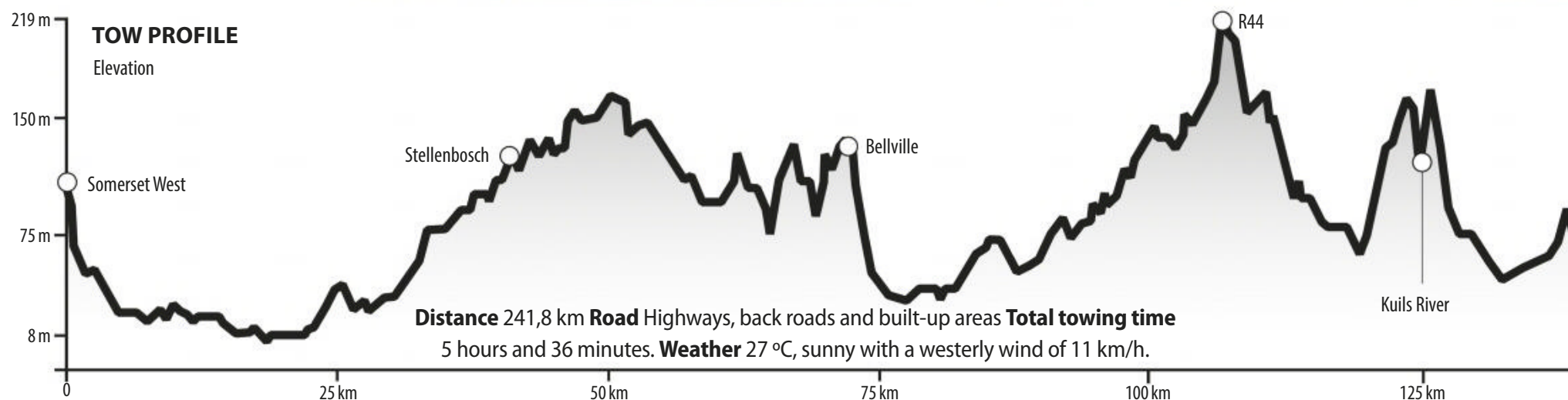


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Drive & Camp says

According to Bosal's instructions, the installation of the tow bar requires two hours. You may fit a bike rack for two hanging or three standing bicycles, depending on the rack.

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SPECIFICATIONS

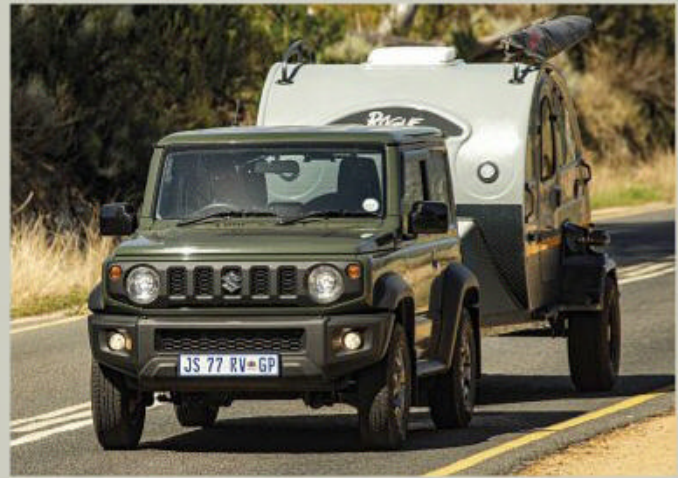
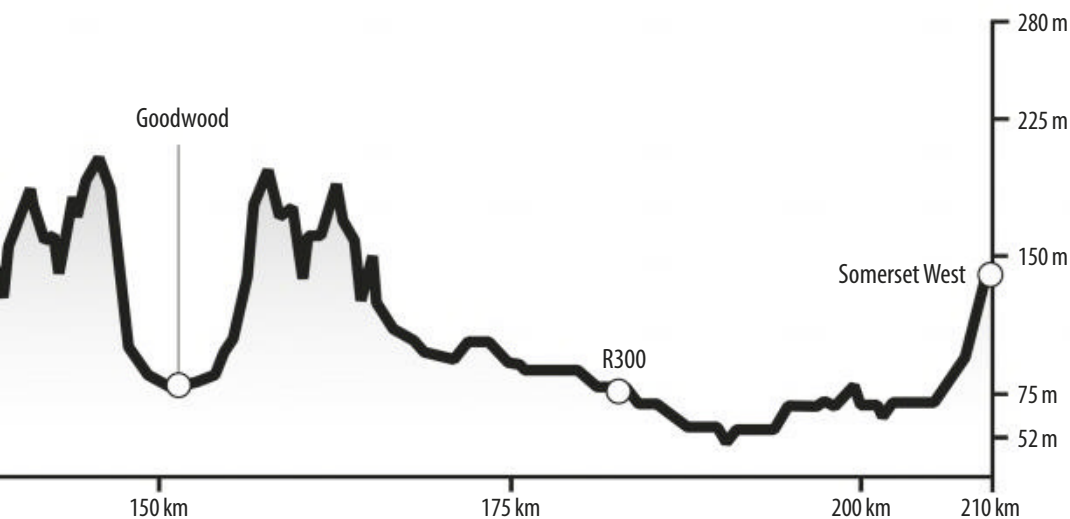
Model	GLX 5 MT
Engine	4-cylinder petrol
Power	75 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	130 Nm @ 4 000 rpm
Transmission	5-speed manual
Propulsion	Part-time 4x4 with transmission transfer box.
Tank	40 ℓ
Fuel consumption with caravan	9,3 ℓ/100 km (10,7 km/ℓ)
Reach with caravan	428 km
Tare weight.....	1 095 kg
Weight during test (caravan's nose weight included).....	1 280 kg
GVM	1 435 kg
GCM	2 735 kg
Combination mass during test	1 920 kg
Towing capacity	1 300 kg (braked); 350 kg (unbraked)
Towbar maximum weight	1 300 kg
Towbar maximum vertical weight.....	75 kg
Is the towbar removable?	Yes, the arm and ball.
Is there room for a drop plate?.....	Yes, but not a certified Bosal one.
PRICE	R344 900



The caravan

Brand Vagabond
Model Rogue
Year model 2021
GVM 750 kg (braked)
Weight on the axle during test 640 kg

Drive & Camp borrowed the new Vagabond Rogue from the manufacturer. Call 074 601 0271 if you want to take a closer look at the Vagabond.
vagabondsa.co.za
explore@vagabondsa.co.za



R344 900

Suzuki Jimny GLX

130 Nm

Call it what you want, just don't call it petite

From the competitors
Sub-compact 4x4 vehicles



R361 900

Renault Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4x4

260 Nm

Has a 1 500 kg towing capacity, but is only allowed to tow 1 320 kg.



R518 883

Jeep Renegade Trailhawk

230 Nm

May tow up to 907 kg, but it's expensive compared to the others.



R305 999

Mahindra Thar TCI-CRDE

247 Nm

Even though its tare weight is 1 745 kg, you're only allowed to tow 750 kg.

Small, but spacious

The Ingane is Infanta 4x4's smallest camper, but its abundance of convenience – and packing space – gives it an advantage in the off-road trailer market.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

INFANTA INGANE

The Western Cape manufacturer Infanta 4x4 entered the market 20 years ago with an off-road trailer, but today it focuses mainly on its two large off-road caravans. But with last year's Covid-19 lockdown, owner Jurie Swart decided to breathe new life into that original trailer again.

One of the big problems with off-road trailers is that there is seldom enough open space where you can store your stuff. There may be drawers and cupboards everywhere, but that's usually at the expense of storage space for larger items.

You won't find room to complain about this when it comes to the Ingane.



“

This ensures better ground clearance at the coupler for when you have to go over a tall dune

”

Settling in

When you're towing it, especially off-road, remove the heavy-duty jockey wheel and fit it on top of the A-frame. This ensures better ground clearance at the coupler for when you have to go over a tall dune, for example.

The Ingane has a back corner steady on each side, and this is the swing-down type common on off-road trailers. It works quickly and easily and only requires a couple of turns with the crank-handle before the trailer is steady and level.

On our test model, the tent opens to the right and forms a large room next to the Ingane. You zip the tent bag open, stand next



TRAILER TEST

to the wheel on the right and then pull out the ground sheet section of the tent. Now the tent unfolds effortlessly, almost as if it's an accordion being opened. What remains are two loose poles you need to get into place. Knock in some pegs for the ground sheet, and rig some guy lines to keep the poles upright.

The two cupboard doors on the side open into the tent room. The door on the left swings flat with six equally sized shelves for your clothing. The cupboard on the right is large enough for a folded duvet and pillows, but you can also hang clothes in it.

The mattress sits 1,53 m above the ground and you climb onto the bed using a short ladder.



Packing space for Africa

There's ample packing space in the Ingane. Get access to this cavernous cargo hold from the rear. After swinging open the back door, the hold is 130 cm deep, 73 cm wide and 84 cm high. There's room for bulky director's camping chairs and even our semi-collapsible laundry line fits just fine.

Most water tanks are mounted near the chassis – some of them even fit on either side of the axle – but the Ingane's also goes in this large volume. The Ingane's 100 l tank stands upright and a transparent hose at the door shows you the water level.

A jerry can fits to the right of the door, and to the left of the door is a 5 kg gas cylinder.



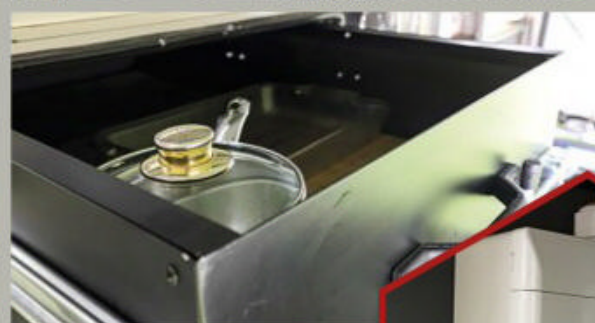
Cooking on the veranda

The Ingane's 270° awning folds open over the kitchen and extends to over the top of the nose cone. Unfolded, it lies on the edge of the hull. There's an arm at each of the awning casing that lifts it by 40 cm when you want to unfold it. The canvas roof has five aluminium support beams: The first one swings around to the top, perpendicular to the A-frame. Here it is supported by an arm that swings from the hull. Now pull the last beam across to the rear, parallel to the hull, where it is held in place with an anchor rope. Each beam has a folded foot that's adjustable. You can secure them with guy lines when camping somewhere windy.

On the left side are two doors in the hull. The fridge/freezer pulls out from behind the left door, and the right door swings flat to form a worktop (122 x 53 cm). The worktop is covered by a layer of melamine, and the edge is at an angle of 45° – clever, as it prevents stuff rolling off it and you can still wipe it down without any bits of food getting stuck in the corners.

The single-burner gas stove is on the right side of the worktop – close to the gas cylinder where you open and close the valve.

In the hull behind the worktop are six cupboards of different sizes for kitchen



utensils. The light is at the top in the right-hand cupboard, the 220 V double plug in the cupboard at the bottom left and in the middle is a volt meter, two USB ports as well as a Hella and a Brad Harrison socket.

The fridge/freezer's sliding frame is big enough for a 90 l fridge/freezer, and next to it is a shelf with foam cut-outs for your spices.

A flat drawer for your pots and pans pulls out from above the fridge/freezer and it's just as welcome as the spacious storage space in the back. The drawer is 90 cm long, 56,5 cm wide and 15 cm deep – you're going to love it in the kitchen.



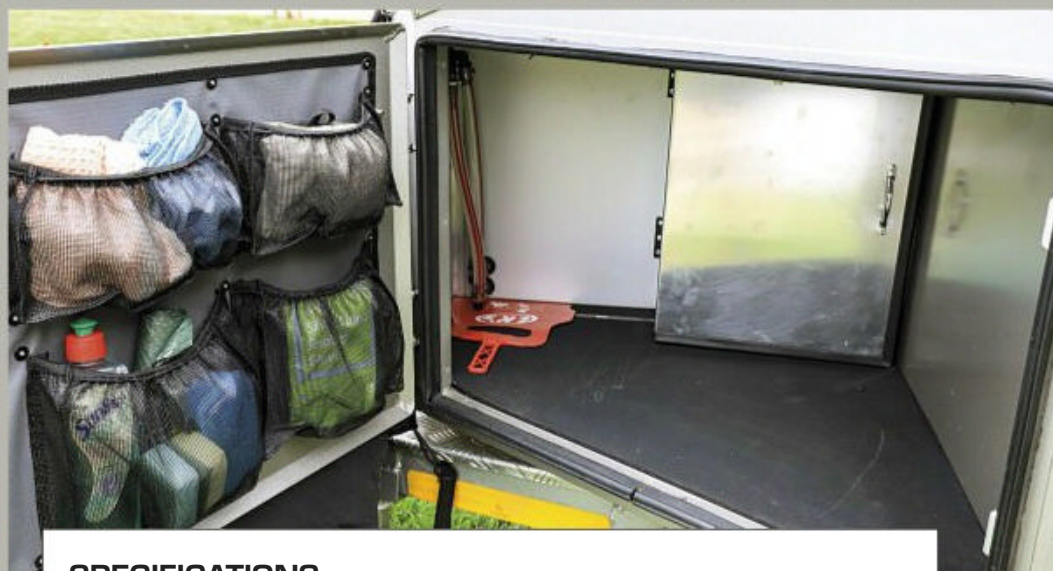
Dishing the nose

The detachable frame that holds the two plastic sinks hooks into the nose cone over the A-frame. Above it is a hot- and cold-water tap.

Also above the nose cone, there's a lid that opens like a car bonnet. It's one of Infanta's characteristics: a handy storage space near the two sinks.

The nose cone has a door on both sides – the one on the kitchen's side is great for items including extra pots and pans or groceries, but nothing stops you from packing a portable compressor or ground sheet in here.

The other side has less available space, because the geyser is here, as are the smart chargers.



SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer	Infanta 4x4
Model	Ingane
Sleep space	Rooftop tent – buyer's choice
Size	4,6 x 1,83 x 2,04 m
Wheels	16"
Axle	2,5 t
Tare weight	600 kg
Carrying capacity	1 000 kg
GVM	1 600 kg
Chassis	Galvanised
Hull	Aluminium
Price	From R212 750

Dealer network Factory and office in Buffeljagsrivier
 028 512 3663 • infanta4x4.co.za • info@infanta4X4.co.za
Branches ... Garden Route Camping and Caravans 044 695 2602
 East Rand Caravan World 011 025 7639
 Carnival Camping and Caravans 010 005 0499





What comes standard?

Standard items include the 100 l water tank, a 5 kg gas cylinder, a single burner gas stove, built-in kitchen, 74 Ah battery with 10 A Victron charger, frame with two sinks and recharging system with Brad Harrison plugs.

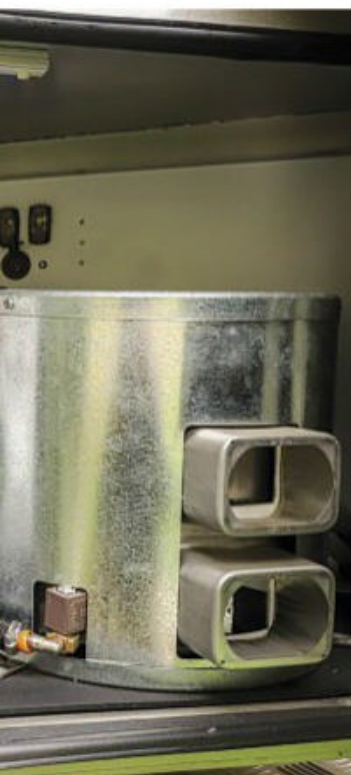
Items including a Howling Moon

rooftop tent (R34 500), 270° awning (R20 700), sliding frame for fridge/freezer (R2 300, without the fridge/freezer), 12 V water pump with plumbing (R6 325), 220 V gas geyser with cold and hot water to the sinks (R5 175) and an aluminium table (R2 875) are optional.

“

The detachable frame that holds the two plastic sinks hooks into the nose cone over the A-frame

”



R212 750

Infanta Ingane

GVM 1 600 kg

“

Drive & Camp says A rooftop tent is not standard, you can decide which manufacturer you prefer for yours.

”

SOME OF THE COMPETITORS
Off-road trailers in a similar price range with a 2,5 t axle (standard prices)



R195 500

Bush Nest Witkruisarend

GVM 2 000 kg

Intended for heavier towing vehicles due to its GVM, but you can load more than 1,5 t into it.



R190 457

Conqueror Compact Platinum

GVM 1 500 kg

Conqueror's cheapest option. Its GVM is 100 kg lower and the trailer is 9 cm narrower.



R229 000

Summit Everest

GVM 1 800 kg

The chassis is made of stainless steel and a fridge/freezer is included.



Hire or buy?

Does it make financial sense to own an expensive expedition bakkie when you only use it on the odd occasion? Might it be better to rent? And is the devil in the details of a lease agreement even more troublesome than the depreciating value of a vehicle? We crunch the numbers.

Words **Cyril Kloppe** Photos **Cyril Kloppe** and **Tracy Derbyshire**

Oil tycoon John Paul Getty once said the following about the topic: "If it appreciates, buy it. If it depreciates, lease it."

According to Getty's logic, nobody should own a car unless it's an exotic that

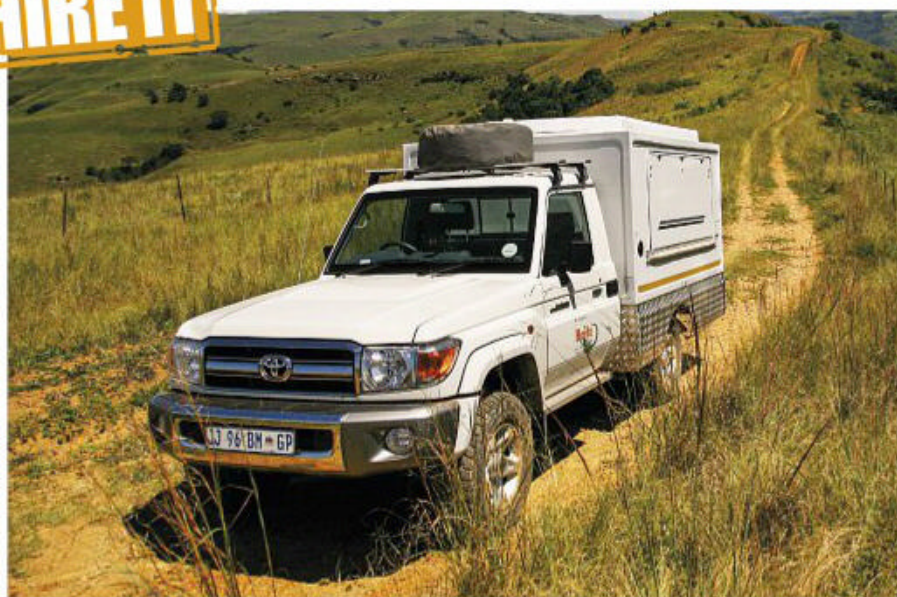
increases in value.

A new LaFerrari, for example, sold for \$1,4 million in 2013, but nowadays they fetch up to \$3,5 million at US auctions.

Will you receive a similar bountiful harvest when you sell a expedition bakkie after a time, or was Getty spot on?



HIRE IT



CASE STUDY Britz Orion

Rental company THR SA – short for Tourism Holdings Rental South Africa, the parent company of Britz and Maui – uses a Toyota Land Cruiser 79 4.2 diesel single-cab bakkie worth R670 200 and then sends it to Travelstar, a motorhome specialist in Knysna that converts it into the Britz Orion at a cost of R395 000.

Your vehicle is ready for camping as you walk out of the airport. It comes equipped with a 40 l fridge/freezer, a cassette toilet and basin in a small cubicle, bedding, towels, cutlery, cooking utensils and camping equipment for two.

All you have to take care of is food and drink for tonight's braai. By the way, you don't get a grid, because 80% of their customers are foreigners, and Dieter and Sabine probably

won't know what to do with it. THR SA sorts out maintenance and licensing, but you pay an extra levy for road tax (R250), admin (R250) and a letter to cross the border (R1 000).

Altogether, equipment included, the Britz Orion is worth about R1 080 000. To hire in the busy month of June will set you back R1 983 per day – excluding the levies – with the minimum period seven days. (The maximum rental period is 49 days, but you can renew the contract every month if you want to use the Orion for longer.)

As far as insurance is concerned, standard cover is included, but we suggest you take out comprehensive insurance at R350 per day. Daily kilometres are unlimited – but the fuel is for your own account.

Let's look at the calculations.

What is the rental cost? *

	Per day	Per week	Per month
Vehicle	R1 983	R13 881	R57 330
Insurance	R350	R2 450	R10 500
Border letter	R1 000	R1 000	R1 000
Admin fee	R250	R250	R250
Road tax	R250	R250	R250
Total	R3 833	R17 831	R69 330

* Values valid for June 2021

What happens to the load bin?

THR SA has a workshop where they keep all the load bins collected off the Land Cruisers.

Every two to three years, they replace their vehicles, and then THR SA removes and restores the Travelstar shells, refit the load bins, and sell the used Land Cruisers to the public.

The spare wheel, which is usually bolted to the back of the Land Cruiser's load bin, moves onto a roof rack above the Toyota's cab.

BUY IT



CASE STUDY Bush Lapa Bosluis 2

Let's say you take the same Land Cruiser to Bush Lapa, an off-road trailer manufacturer in Paarl. Bush Lapa's most basic Bosluis conversion costs R322 000, which brings the minimum value of your expedition vehicle to R992 200. If your bank manager is a bosom friend, you can finance the truck over five years at 10% interest, which amounts to a monthly instalment of R17 759.

However, you still need gas cylinders, solar panels, a fridge/freezer and camping gear that will set you back R90 000 if Bush Lapa fits them for you. We would, however, advise you to do these purchases as and when you need them. The final tally should be around R1 080 000, exactly the same as the Britz Orion.

In contrast to the Britz rental, you are responsible for the vehicle license fee, which

amounts to R2 364 a year (3 500-3 750 kg) in Gauteng, as well as the services. We asked Barloworld Toyota in the Cape and confirmed that small and large services for the 4.2D alternate every 10 000 km. They're R2 000 and R9 000 per service, respectively. If you put 40 000 km on the clock every year, you'll need to budget a minimum of R22 000 annually for services. (If the Toyota is brand new, you obviously get a service plan and you won't have to pay for them.)

And then there is insurance. We asked TuffStuff to submit a quote on comprehensive cover and it came to a monthly premium of R2 145 – this insures the tyres, rims and the usual concerns including extraction and recovery from all African countries south of the equator, including Kenya.

What's the cost to own? *

	Per day	Per month	Per year
Instalment (10% interest, 5 years)	R592	R17 759	R213 109
Insurance	R72	R2 145	R25 740
Border letter (bank fee)	R50	R50	R50
License	R6	R197	R2 364
Services (2 small + 2 large)	R62	R1 833	R22 000
Total	R782	R21 984	R263 262

* Based on a five-year finance plan, at 10% interest.

What happens to the load bin?

Bush Lapa will remove it, but they won't buy it from you and it therefore remains your property.

Toyota dealers did at one point offer to buy the load bin back from customers, but this no longer appears to be common practise and customers usually sell the load bin to a second hand parts dealer.

The original spare wheel that's usually bolted on the back of the Land Cruiser now shifts to the right of the Bosluis 2's back door.

HIRE IT



Cyril's take on hiring

“ This may sound strange coming from a travel writer, but I get bored when I have to travel the same way year after year. I also have ants in my pants and can't stay in the same place for days on end – I have to keep moving.

My daily driver (a Jimny) can handle 4x4 trails, sure, but the main reason I have it is to save on fuel and maintenance.

The monthly rate of R69 330 for a rental vehicle may sound hectic compared to the R21 895 per month were I to own the same expedition vehicle, but I take comfort in the fact that I'm completely done with the vehicle the moment my journey is over. Should I get the urge for another epic overland trip in a year or three, I'll hire a newer model with low mileage and not have to worry about corroded

parts so typical of a vehicle that has been left standing.

When hiring, I'm not bound by a five-year contract and I don't have to worry about renewing a license, arranging services, paying insurance. The absence of repayments also means I can use my money to take a cruise ship to Bazaruto or a plane to Italy next year! *(If you can afford such vacations, you're getting paid too much, Cyril. – Ed)*

Yes, I'll concede that it's lekker to customise your own vehicle and kitting it out just the way you like it, but why should I burden myself with debt when I can rent? ”

Drive & Camp says Cyril spent a week exploring the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal in a Britz Orion – read his story about the Tugela River on page 28.

BUY IT



Peter's take on owning

“ We've helped quite a few tourists in rented vehicles because the wrong jack was installed, the emergency tyre was flat or the fridge/freezer wasn't working properly. These vehicles often don't even have a compressor, spade, heavy-duty jumper cables or tyre-repair kits – so for me renting is out!

Renting also doesn't make sense to me if, like us, you use the vehicle for more than 60 days a year. Tracy and I go camping on average twice a month. When it's a long weekend, we often take an extra day off from work. In addition, we take a trip to Botswana or Namibia every year for at least 30 days, often longer.

Our expedition vehicle is extremely convenient for

overlanding and even for shorter weekends where you only camp for a night or two. Anything longer, and it could become a pain when wanting to take a daily game drive. The Bosluis 2 is super easy to set up and extremely practical with a well laid out kitchen area.

The jury is still out on whether we keep this vehicle or change for something bigger like an Iveco Daily 4x4 camper. We might even go back to towing our Miskruier so we can take along extra beer, braai wood and fresh provisions. ”

Drive & Camp says Peter Howard and Tracy Derbyshire from Cape Town travel with a Bosluis 2 mounted on a Land Cruiser 79.



Conclusion

Perhaps we make it sound as though it's better to rent than buy, but we need to point out a few drawbacks: a rental company often has a list of destinations that are off-limits – THR SA, for example, will not allow you to travel farther north than Vilancoulos in Mozambique and Harare in Zimbabwe in one of their vehicles.

THR SA also makes it clear that you may only travel on 4x4 roads that are "public recognised". And you may never drive through water "deeper than your ankles".

You're also expected to refill empty gas cylinders, clean the cassette toilet, and wash the Orion if it is muddy before returning it – and the fuel tank must be topped up before checking it back in. You're not allowed to smoke inside the vehicle and your pets can't come along either. In case of negligence or unacceptable behaviour, you could lose a large chunk of your deposit.

The insurance you take out on the Orion – even the comprehensive cover – has a number of conditions and we suggest you carefully read the small print. For example, despite opting for comprehensive cover, we had to pay R4 500 after accidentally breaking a fold-out stepladder. THR SA's insurance

regards the ladder as "extra" equipment, and in addition to the replacement costs, there was also an excess fee of R750 on the claim.

Despite the strict conditions for renting, a private expedition vehicle is not necessarily a better option. Yes, Benji may lie with his head on your lap and you may puff merrily on rum and maple while driving, but if your bakkie's engine conks out, you're the one who has to deal with it.

Then your insurer will have to identify a mechanic and have your vehicle towed. Your excess payment could be considerable depending on how much of a pickle you are in, and you may have to check in at Hotel Kampala while your rig is sorted.

On the other hand, a company like THR SA will immediately dispatch a replacement vehicle if your rental breaks down.

When it comes to decreasing value of a private vehicle, an expedition bakkie is not



PHOTOS SUPPLIED



necessarily the millstone around your neck you might expect. Yes, it's a niche market, but on Gumtree we saw this type of vehicle holds its value surprisingly well.

“

Yes, Benji may lie with his head on your lap and you may puff merrily on rum and maple while driving, but if your bakkie's engine conks out, you're the one who has to deal with it

”

We asked Bush Lapa about this phenomenon. Wessel Fourie, an agent of Bush Lapa in Paarl, explains that customers often don't want to wait months to have their bakkie refitted. Also, Bush Lapa and Toyota's reputation for reliability play a major role in the vehicle's excellent resale value.

Ultimately, your personal needs will determine whether you should rent or buy. If you've never owned an expedition bakkie before, we suggest you rent it first for a week or two. If the bug bites, then consider buying your own, but only if you take to the road as often as Peter and Tracy do.

If, however, you only do one epic trip a year, we suggest you rent instead as it would be a crying shame to pay off a million rand worth of vehicle for it to be parked in a shed and seldom used.

Okay, it is your money and you can do with it as you please, but don't make the mistake of believing you use an expedition bakkie for your daily driver. That would be akin to having a rhinoceros for a pet instead of Benji, the beagle.



Keeping out the winter chill

Take advantage of the out-of-season specials winter brings to camping, and use these products to keep the cold at bay.

Words and photos **Kyle Kock**

The South African camping scene gets a little quiet during the months between May and August. And for good reason too, as some parts of our country are downright miserable.

It's not appealing to have to pitch a tent in that. (Besides a few

exceptions like the KZN coastline, where we camped for this issue on page 38, of course. - Ed.)

Even at a secluded campsite that's protected from the howling wind that doesn't usually have torrential rain for you to worry about, the winter temperatures can send a chill down your spine.



HIGHLANDER 1.2L ALUMINIUM WHISTLING KETTLE

Sing-a-song

When last have you actually heard one of these at full tilt, with its distinctive high-pitched whistle as the steam passes through the valve in the cap?

The lightweight aluminium construction means it won't add too much weight to your load, and it features the enamel coating we South Africans are

so familiar with.

The plastic handle ensures you won't burn your hand.

Price R195 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says The whistling kettle is also available in other sizes, in case your camping crew is bigger than just you and your partner.



FIRST ASCENT LADIES TRANSIT DOWN JACKET

Cover up

Of all the inner stuffing you can buy, down is consistently rated as some of the most efficient for natural heat retention. The Transit jacket also features a wind-stop zip baffle that keeps the cold out. But you have to hand wash this when you get home, as a machine cycle will compromise its

quality. There are two colours available: pink and navy blue.

Price R2 000 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Drive & Camp says The Transit is also super compactible, as you can stuff the entire jacket into its own side pocket.



HIGHLANDER SERENITY 250 SLEEPING BAG **Extreme performer**

This is the range-topping sleeping bag from the Camp & Climb house brand.

With its 250 GSM hollowfibre filling, 210 T polyester lining and 210 Ripstop shell, the Serenity 250 can comfortably sleep an adult laying in 1 °C. At its limit, it'll keep you warm

enough in -4 °C chill.

Price R880 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says Many sleeping bags make you struggle to roll it up and pack it away in its carry case, but not the Serenity 250.



FIRESIDE FIRE BASKET **Portable pit**

What is a campsite without a campfire? This is especially pertinent during winter, when the campfire lends a little bit more than just hot coals to cook food on.

If you're sleeping a little far from the demarcated braai area, this fire basket will allow you to bring the flames a little

closer to home.

Price R1 200 from Outdoor Warehouse

Drive & Camp says The coal plate measures 600 mm x 600 mm – big enough to make sure you don't toast the lawn you're pitched on.



LK'S INFRARED GAS HEATER **Canned heat**

You don't have to sit in the chilling cold just because you're worried about the circulation of air when you're using a gas heater. This LK's unit doesn't need a regulator and you screw it directly onto a gas cylinder between 3 kg and 6 kg. Open the cylinder and hold a lit

match or lighter against the steel mesh and the ceramic panel will ignite.

Price R500 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says LK's claims that this heater uses just 125 g of LPG per hour.



KARU SHEEPSKIN WOOL SLIPPERS **Cosy inside**

We've got you covered when you're outside, but what about when the sun's gone down and you're enjoying your favourite novel inside your tent or caravan?

You can keep your feet warm at home or in the campsite in these slippers from Karu.

The outer skin made of 100 % leather, with 100 % wool and 10 % sheepskin inner and collar.

Price R700 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Drive & Camp says The EVA sole should last a lifetime.



COGHLANS ALL-PURPOSE THERMAL BLANKET

Emergency services

You're all enjoying a blissful winter camp, but someone spends little too much time in cold water or gets lost on a hike and comes back to camp, teeth chattering.

This is exactly the device you use once you get the individual out of cold wet clothes. The aluminium polyethylene inner reflects

body heat back onto the body, and it's even waterproof and windproof.

Price R300 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says Even below 0 °C, the thermal blanket will retain its flexibility and will not stiffen or harden.



CADAC SAFIRE HEATER

Some sun

Another brand that's well known and liked in South Africa, Cadac also offers a gas heater they state can safely be used indoors provided there's some circulation of air.

If your tent is large enough, then why not? The element is housed in a heat-reflective bowl that points warmth in the

direction its facing.

Price R800 from Outdoor Warehouse

Drive & Camp says It also features a piezo ignition, so you're able to switch it on electronically provided the gas cylinder is open.



COGHLANS LIGHTWEIGHT PONCHO

Rain-o-mac

So, what if you didn't pack your Bear Grylls thickly padded waterproof and windproof jacket? If you have a couple of these nylon ponchos lying in your cubby or centre console, you'll see off most off the rain you'll encounter.

It keeps your body dry by

way of welded seams, and is long enough to keep your upper legs dry as well.

Price R95 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says It's still up to you to make sure that you're layered enough underneath so to keep warm.



FIRESIDE 3-IN-1 JAFFLE MAKER

Soul food

Last night's leftovers need not be eaten cold the next day. Why not enjoy it in a heart-warming jaffle? This advantage of this unit is, of course, that you can make three all at the same time.

Plus, the cast-iron construction means that you can use the jaffle maker

on almost any heat source without fear of it warping. Just don't burn your jaffles.

Price R400 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Drive & Camp says The wooden handles help you to not burn your hands.



HIGHLANDER HPX200 HIGH PERFORMANCE TREKKING STOVE

Warm food fast

If you're in a hurry for something to warm you up and you have some tinned food available, heat it up in a little pot with the HPX 200 from Highlander.

It features a piezo electronic ignition switch, so you don't have to hold a match against the gas outlet and you can

control the flow of gas easily with the switch.

Price R495 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says You can match this little guy with a gas cartridge from Eiger, also available from Camp & Climb. This 230 g example costs R75.



STANLEY TRAVEL MUG

Hot cuppa

The reputation of the Stanley brand goes back decades, and it never fails to disappoint. This mug holds 350 ml of your preferred warm beverage warm for five hours thanks to its double-walled vacuum construction. The plastic is BPA-free and when you get home you can chuck it in the

dishwasher for convenience.

Price R550 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Drive & Camp says It'll also keep your drinks cool for eight hours – which increases depending on how much ice you've thrown in.



COGHLANS DISPOSABLE FOOT WARMERS

Toasty feet

Somehow, our local socks don't quite cut the mustard when the temperatures fall below 0 °C.

When your feet are freezing in your boots, use a pair of these foot warmers inside your shoes and underneath your socks after shaking them up a little and feeling the heat come on.

It'll bring the temperature in your boots up to between 58 and 65 °C.

Price R120 from Camp & Climb.

Drive & Camp says Don't apply the pads directly to bare skin and use with caution if you know your skin is sensitive.



FIRST ASCENT THERMAL TRAVEL LINER

Silver lining

When the temperatures threaten to affect the performance of your sleeping bag, you can always call on this nifty and lightweight liner from First Ascent to add up to another 5 °C to the inside of your sleeping bag. It's made of a lightweight composite material that feels like cotton,

and ties to the inside of your bag to keep it secure.

Price R450 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Drive & Camp says Its machine washable, so you can also keep the inside of your sleeping bag clean.



GET YOUR PRODUCTS HERE

Camp & Climb campandclimb.co.za

Outdoor Warehouse outdoorwarehouse.co.za

CAMP FOOD

Weekend Special

This easy weekend menu is easy, yet fragrant and delicious.

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



CHILLI CON CARNE Fast for a Friday night

This dish is ready within 20 minutes of the coals being ready – and the perfect choice for the night you arrive at the campsite.

Ingredients

(serves 4, with leftovers)

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 500 g mince meat
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 packet (50 g) chilli con carne spices (we used one from Woolworths)
- 500 g tomato passata
- 2 cans (400 g each) red kidney beans, drained
- 250 g nachos or tortilla corn chips
- 1 cup grated cheese
- 2 ripe avocados, diced
- 1 cucumber, diced
- sour cream or Greek yoghurt

Here's how

1 Heat the oil in a small potjie and fry the mince meat until nicely browned – keep breaking it up with a spatula. Add the onion and spices to taste and fry everything for a few minutes until the onions are tender.

2 Stir in the tomato passata and beans, and allow the potjie to simmer for 15-20 minutes or until the mixture is thick and fragrant.

3 Spoon the mince into bowls and jazz it up with some of nachos, cheese, avo, cucumber and sour cream. Tuck in right away.

Drive & Camp says If you like your chilli con carne to have bit of a bite, use the whole spice pack. If you prefer moderate, use your judgment and start with a quarter of the packet. This recipe easily doubles if you want to make enough for Saturday afternoon's jaffles!



CHICKEN IN A BAG WITH POTATOES Let's braai, people!

Place the chicken in the marinade in a ziplock bag while you're still home for added convenience for Saturday night's braai.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 8 pieces of chicken (we used thighs and drumsticks)
- 4 medium potatoes, washed
- 1 tablespoon butter
- lemon wedges and sour cream to serve

FOR THE MARINADE

- 2 tablespoons cajun spice mixture
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt, dissolved in ¼ cup of boiling water, then cooled
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 thyme twigs
- 1 tablespoon worcester sauce

Here's how

1 Mix together all the marinade ingredients in a large ziplock bag. Place the chicken in the marinade and gently massage it. Carefully squeeze all the air from the bag and seal it. Refrigerate until needed.

2 Prick the potatoes all over with a fork, spread them with butter, season with salt and pepper to taste and carefully cover each potato in a double layer of foil with the shiny side facing inwards.

3 Allow the chicken to reach room temperature. Drain most of the marinade and pat the the chicken dry. Braai over medium coals until golden brown and cooked through.

4 At the same time, arrange the potatoes in a bed of hot coals. The potatoes should be turned regularly, and keep a close eye on them – they're ready when the skin is crispy on the outside while the inside is nice and tender.

6 Serve the chicken with the lemon wedges. Once the potatoes are tender, cut them open and serve with a spoonful of sour cream.

Drive & Camp says Pickled beetroot salad is delicious as a side dish with this meal.



SAUSAGE AND EGG FRITTATA

All-in-one breakfast

If you're packing up or there's no time to light a fire, this rich frittata can easily be made over a gas flame. You can replace the smoked sausage with sliced leftover braai meat or a packet of bacon, crisply fried.

Ingredients

(serves 4-6)

- 4-6 bacon and cheese grillers
- a lump of butter and teaspoon of olive oil
- 6 eggs
- 1 cup cream

Here's how

1 Score a few notches into each sausage and fry them in a cast-iron pan using the butter and oil until they're golden brown all over.
2 Beat together the eggs and cream, season with salt and pepper to taste and pour the mixture into the pan with the sausages. Make sure the whole pan is coated with oil and that the sausages

are spread out in the pan before adding the eggs – so that it won't catch here and there.

3 Keep the heat low and fry the eggs gently. Every now and then, use a folding action with your spatula to lift the cooked egg away from the bottom and edge of the pan so the raw egg can slip in underneath. When the frittata looks halfway cooked, stop interfering, put a lid on the pan and allow the frittata to bake on its own.

4 Remove the pan from the heat, allow it to rest for a few minutes and cut the frittata into slices. Serve with fresh bread or crisp toast.

Drive & Camp says This dish is already rich, but if you like, you can make like an omelette and add a sprinkle of grated cheese, chopped spring onions and fresh tomatoes at the end. For a lighter meal, replace the cream with milk, but the texture will then be less firm and you might end up with gourmet scrambled eggs... still yummy on toast!



BREAKFAST BARS WITH OATS AND DATES

Switch on that kettle!

These breakfast bars are also delicious snacks in the afternoon.

Ingredients

(makes 12 bars)

- ¼ cup boiling water
- 1 cup tightly packed dates
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup unsweetened peanut butter
- 1½ cup rolled oats, toasted
- ½ cup coconut
- 100 g mixed nuts, coarsely chopped
- a handful of dried banana chips or apricots

Here's how

1 Grease a 23 x 23 cm square pan with butter or, even better,

line it with wax paper.

2 Pour the boiling water over the dates and allow to cool for 5 minutes. Put the date mixture, honey and peanut butter in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until it starts to come together almost like a dough.

3 Spoon the 'dough' into a mixing bowl, add the rest of the ingredients and mix. Spoon the mixture into the prepared pan and flatten it all over to compact it. Cover the pan and refrigerate until the mixture is firm. Cut into bars and keep these in an airtight container stored in a cool spot.

Drive & Camp says Sprinkle an extra layer of coconut over the bars to make them less sticky – for extra flavour you can, of course, toast the coconut in the oven.

GINGER-FLAVOURED CARROT SALAD Bottle it!

Pickles and pickled salads like this one are delicious stalwarts in any camping pantry.

Ingredients

(makes 1x 650 ml jar)

- 1 bunch of carrots, peeled and cut into rings (roughly 3 cups)
- ½ cup of sugar
- 1 piece (2 cm) fresh ginger, peeled and sliced into thin sticks
- 2 teaspoons cornflour
- ½ cup of white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 2 bay leaves

Here's how

1 Boil the carrot rings in salted water until just tender, then drain.

2 Mix the sugar, ginger and cornflour in a saucepan and whisk in the vinegar gradually to prevent it from forming lumps. Place the saucepan on the stove and simmer over low heat for a few minutes until the sauce thickens.

3 Stir in the cooked carrot, oil, lemon zest and bay leaves and simmer for about 5 minutes. There's not too much sauce, so be careful that it doesn't reduce too much. Spoon immediately into a sterilised canning jar and seal.

Drive & Camp says Keep the salad in the fridge after opening.



MUSHROOM ON STICKS Hors d'oeuvres are served

Consider increasing the number of skewers per person, this delicacy is a crowd pleaser!

Ingredients

(makes 8 skewers)

- 16 mushrooms
- ¼ cup garlic butter
- 8 peppadews
- 8 cubes of 1 x 1 cm mozzarella
- 8 strips of bacon

Here's how

1 Remove the mushrooms stalks

and stuff all 16 mushroom heads generously with garlic butter. Arrange the mushrooms two by two on a chopping board.

2 Put a block of cheese in each peppadew, then place that between two of the mushroom heads, wrap a strip of bacon around it all and use a skewer to keep it all together. Repeat the process until you have 8 skewers.

3 Braai the skewers over medium coals until the bacon is crispy and the cheese has melted inside.

Drive & Camp says Remember to soak the wooden skewers in water so they don't catch alight over the coals.



go! Drive & Camp

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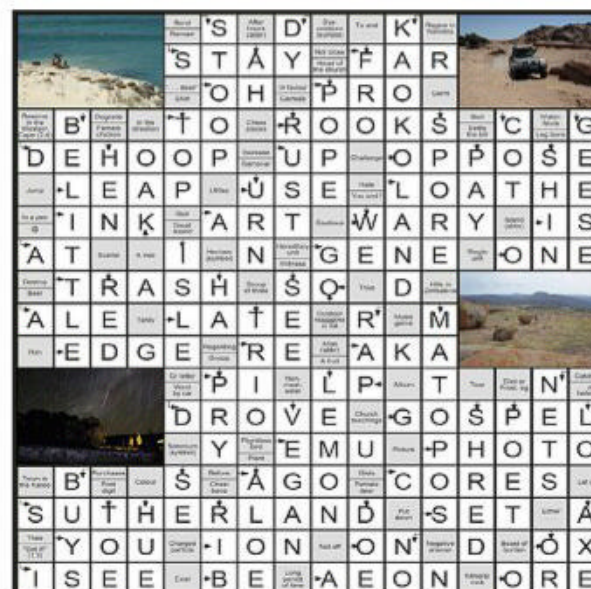


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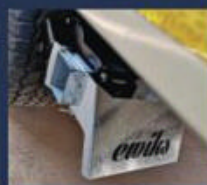
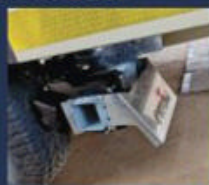
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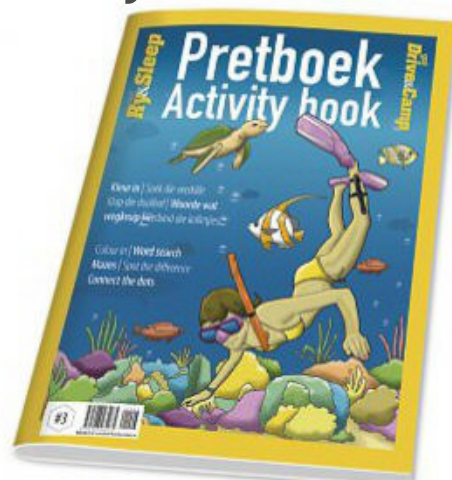


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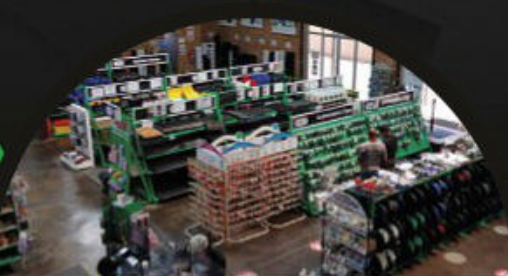
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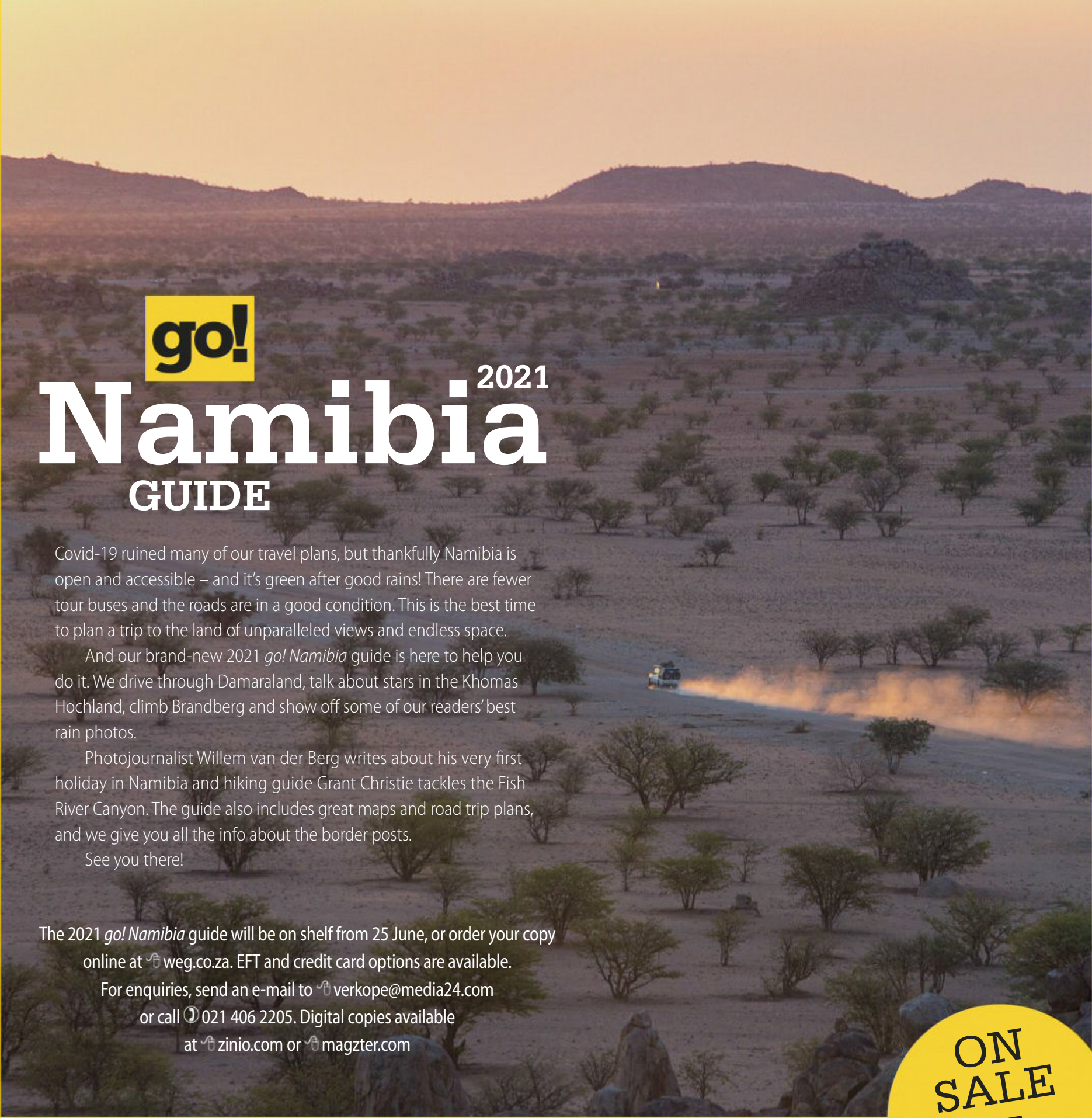
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go! Namibia²⁰²¹ GUIDE

Covid-19 ruined many of our travel plans, but thankfully Namibia is open and accessible – and it's green after good rains! There are fewer tour buses and the roads are in a good condition. This is the best time to plan a trip to the land of unparalleled views and endless space.

And our brand-new 2021 *go! Namibia* guide is here to help you do it. We drive through Damaraland, talk about stars in the Khomas Hochland, climb Brandberg and show off some of our readers' best rain photos.

Photojournalist Willem van der Berg writes about his very first holiday in Namibia and hiking guide Grant Christie tackles the Fish River Canyon. The guide also includes great maps and road trip plans, and we give you all the info about the border posts.

See you there!

The 2021 *go! Namibia* guide will be on shelf from 25 June, or order your copy online at [weg.co.za](https://www.weg.co.za). EFT and credit card options are available.

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CROSSWORD

Toenka Steynberg from Centurion has won a **cooler bag worth R220** for her crossword entry in our February-March 2021 issue. You can too. Complete this crossword puzzle and e-mail a picture to drivecamp@gomag.co.za. Or do it at <https://bit.ly/3tD10NJ>. Last month's solution is on p 102.

			National park in Namibia (8,5)	Make smooth (4,3)	Buro	Embankment	Dry salt expanse close to Kenhardt				
Uneven	Receive	Winter sport	Rubber	Securing (door)	Performed			Female sheep (pl)	Works on a tan	Copernicium (symbol)	Club
Anti-climax	Neither			Valley							Called
						Rhenium (symbol)		Blemish			
Spuds							Nguni tradition of compassion	Eco-community			
Senior (abbr)		Noisy				Samarium (symbol)			Hide		
		Rubidium (symbol)							Atop		
		Hire				Majestic					
		Unit of land				Beer					
Maths symbol				Winter ailment	Indefinite article		FM and ...				
Touch					Zone		Sign				
			Young stallion				Not out				
							Single entity				
Each							Blood line	Providing	Dam in Mpumalanga		
Assert											
						Obfuscate			Lifted	Gala	Selenium (symbol)
									Charming		
						Utilise	Applies				
						Tantalum (symbol)	Female chicken				
						Scent	Short greeting	Caustic	Fry lightly		
							A pair				
Town in the Great Karoo		A desert	Purpose						A bird		Spicy
		Vessel	Devour						Rodent		
							Got up				
							Gallium (symbol)			Not you	
Constrictor											
Tiny						Humour	Small fruit			Molybdenum (symbol)	
						Thus					
						Electrical unit				Musical piece for two	

COMPILED BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

Win with Van Loveren wines

Tangled Tree recently expanded their eco-friendly range to a 3-L 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

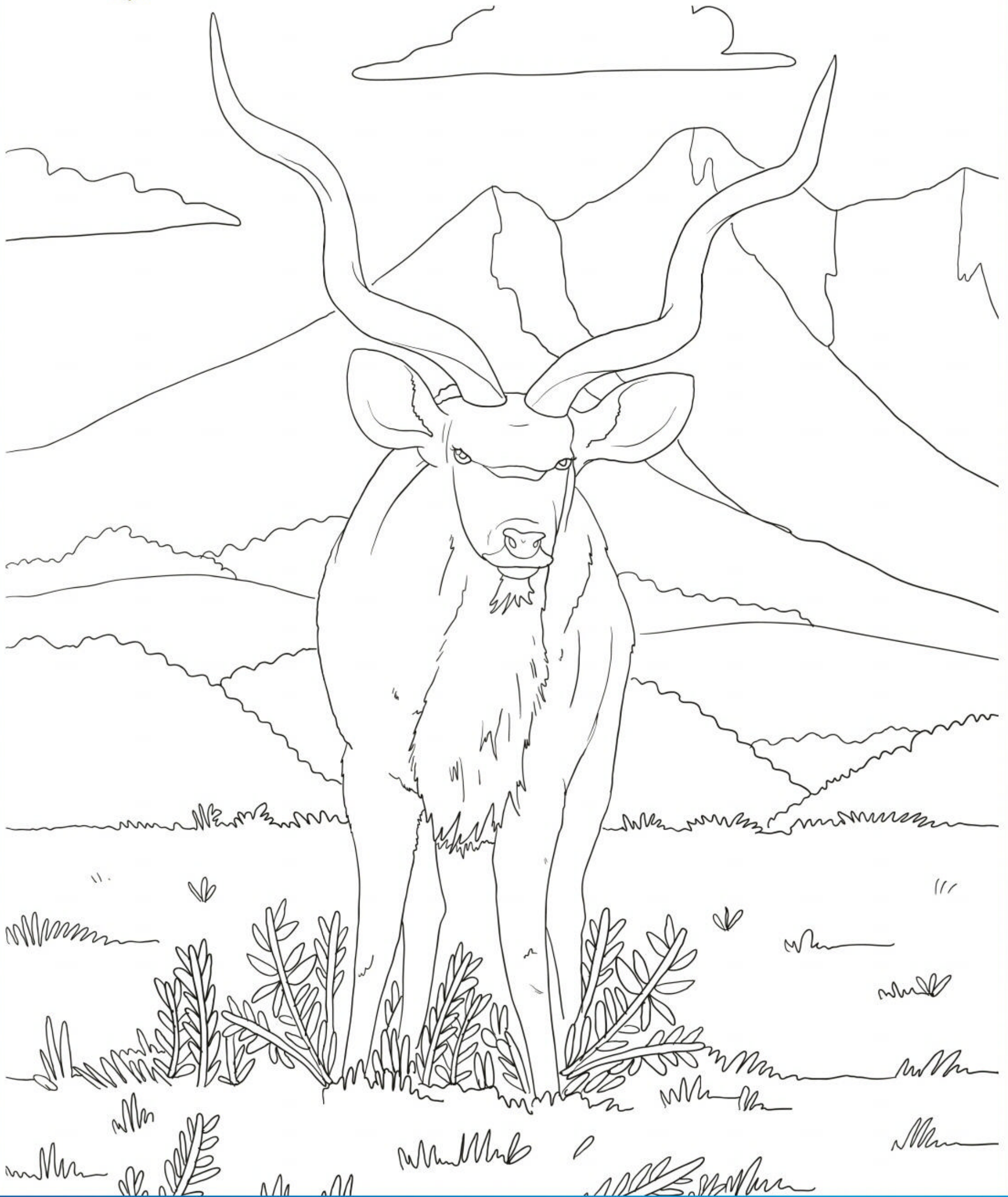
of Van Loveren's commitment to sustainable winemaking but also tells a story of love, find out more at tangledtree.com.

Follow Tangled Tree wines on social media at @tangledtreewines (Facebook & Instagram).

Prize includes a mixed case eight, 3L 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.

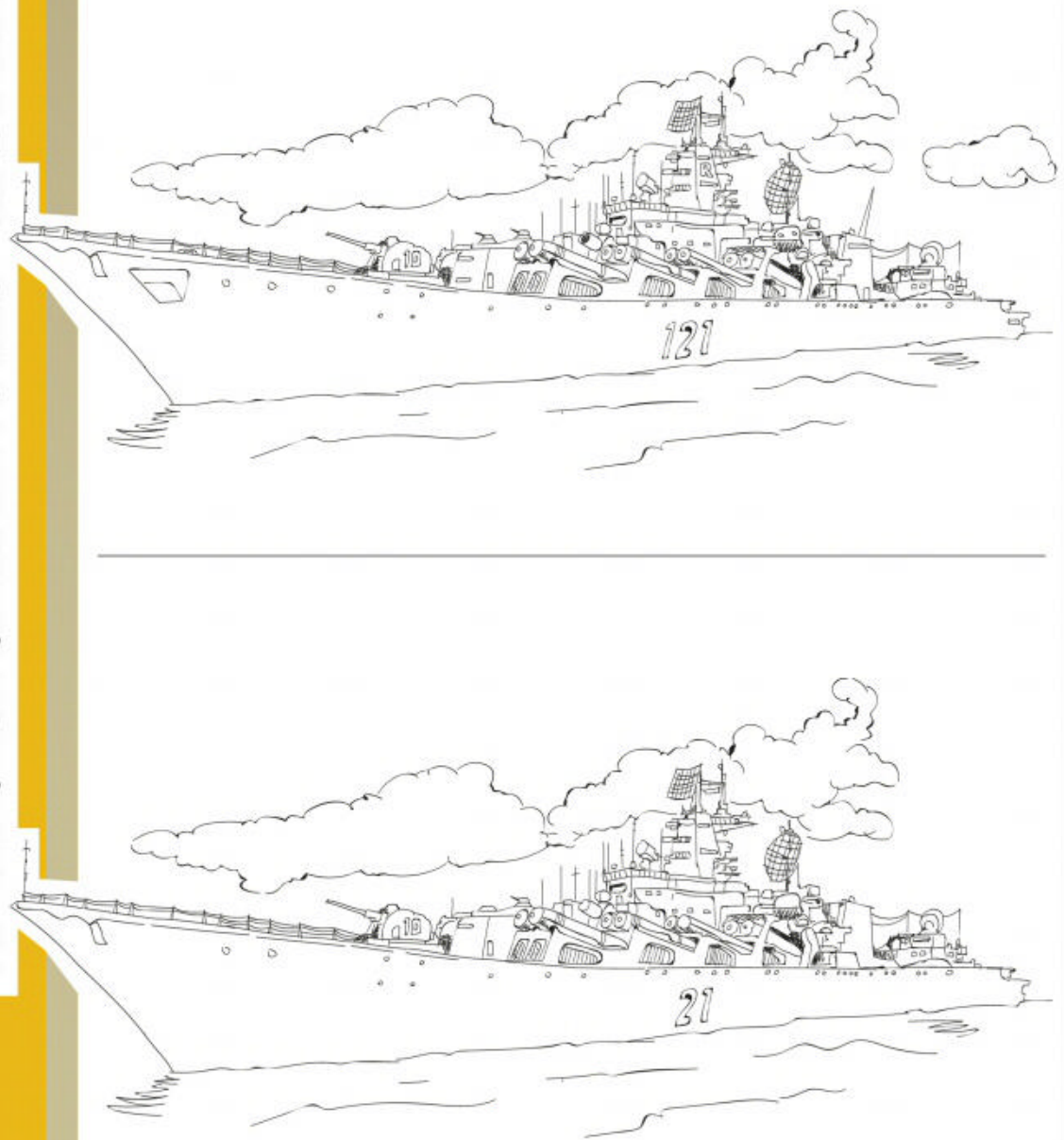
Word search

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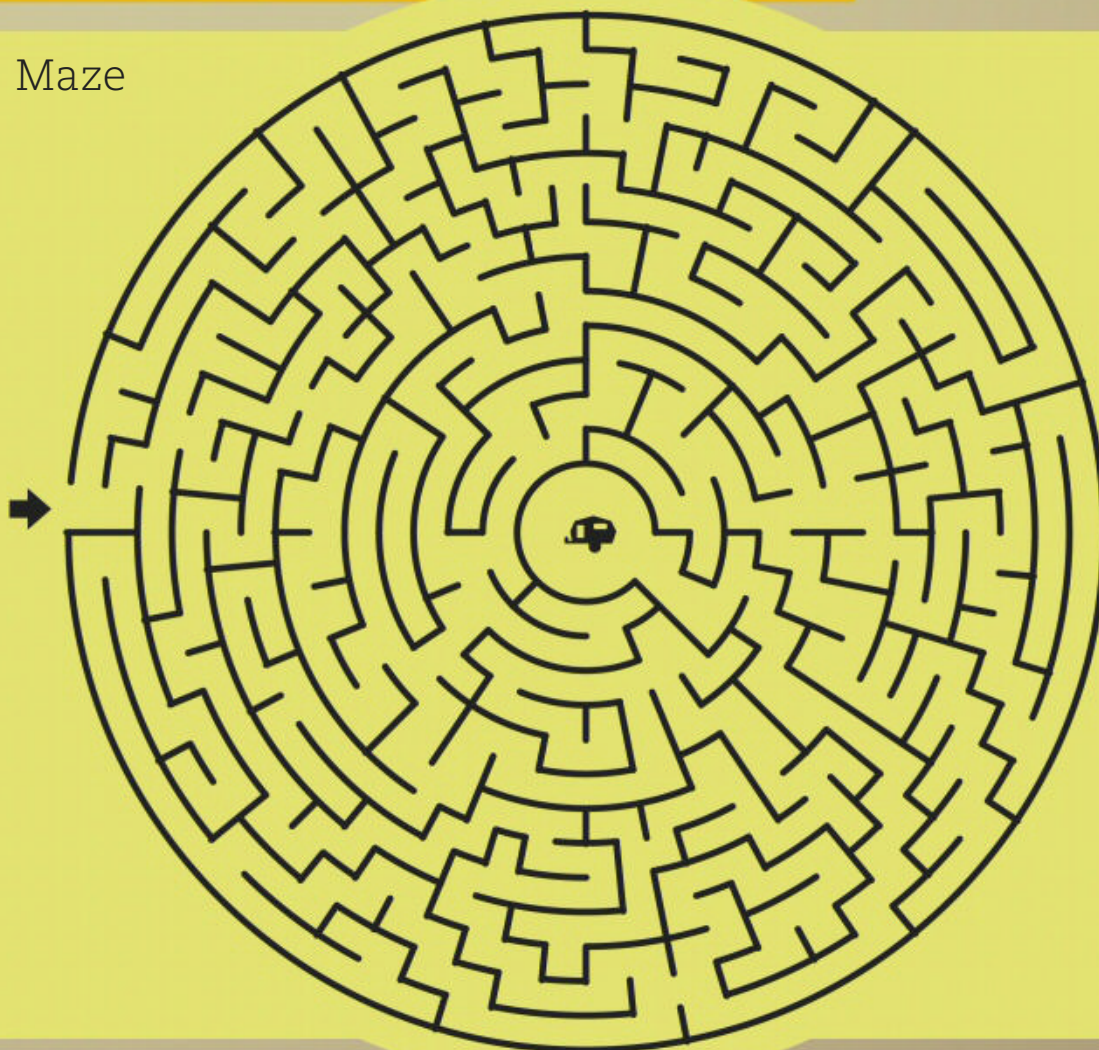
COMPUTER GAMES

Skylanders	Minecraft	Pokemon
Fortnite	CounterStrike	Halo
Plants vs Zombies	Mario Brothers	Metal Gear Solid
Crash Bandicoot	The Sims	Final Fantasy
Call of Duty	Tetris	Angry Birds
Ratchet & Clank	Pacman	Skyrim

Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts



WOLF (CANIS LUPUS)

- Wolves are the largest members of the dog family.
- They are known to roam large distances – as much as 20 km in a single day.
- Once a wolf has found a mate, they usually stay together for life.
- Wolves are not that fast, with a top speed of about 45 km/h. They instead rely on their hearing and sense of smell to detect prey.
- Wolves live and hunt in packs and a single wolf can consume 9 kg of meat in one sitting!
- Territory size depends largely on the amount of prey available, anything from 65 to 2 600 square kilometres.

Bull bars... again!

The debate around bull bars is a contentious issue. **Mic van Zyl** takes another look at why they're good – and why they're not.

A customer recently visited our store to have a bull bar fitted. He had been in a collision with an animal which damaged his existing bull bar to such an extent that it needed replacing. The donkey lost the battle, unfortunately.

The bull bar that was fitted to the front of that vehicle prevented two important, potentially life-threatening issues. Firstly, the vehicle did not suffer mechanical damage that would have otherwise rendered the occupants stranded in the middle of the night in a deeply rural area.

In many countries this may not be such an issue, but here in South Africa, our crime statistics tend to indicate otherwise. They were able to proceed to the nearest town for assistance.

Secondly, the animal was stopped from penetrating the passenger compartment of the vehicle. This could have had deadly consequences as we have seen so many times before.

This scenario is exactly what led to the initial development of bull bars on vehicles and long-haul trucks. Prevent vehicle damage which may render it inoperable and keep the animals from killing the occupants of the vehicle. It's that simple.

THERE IS OF COURSE a flip side to this coin. The anti-bull bar lobbyists love to tout at least two major problems with this piece of equipment. The first is the effect that a bull bar has on the vehicle's built-in safety system and the second has to do with pedestrian safety when hit by a bull bar-brandishing 4x4 vehicle.

The first point is quite easy to answer. Reputable bull bar manufacturers design their products to comply with laws that govern vehicle safety and the correct operation of the vehicle's built-in safety equipment (including crumple zones and airbags). In Australia, for example, it is a legal requirement that these products are certified to conform to these rules and laws governing their design.

The second point is a bone of contention. I am the first to admit that were I to find myself in the way of a vehicle bearing down on me, I would prefer one without a bull bar. I'm sure the impact would be a bit softer.

One can probably accept the fact that pedestrians are likely to suffer worse injuries from vehicles with bull bars than

those without. Bear in mind, there is a speed at which point any vehicle would be deadly to a pedestrian, bull bar or not.

Pedestrian accidents are a terrible occurrence, not only for the pedestrian but for the driver of the vehicle as well as the families of those involved. This is one of the reasons why bull bars were banned outright in Europe.

IT IS INTERESTING that there is a push back to these regulations by the Scandinavian countries. The reason? Animal strikes. Scandinavia is less populated by people and very much more populated by wayward reindeer than the rest of Europe. I have on occasion heard rumours surrounding South Africa implementing these European regulations surrounding the fitment of bull bars to vehicles and I believe this would be fundamentally wrong.

Our country is more like Australia, the USA and Scandinavia – wide open spaces with people touring cross country and travelling after dark. Here in South Africa, we not only have an abundant wildlife population often roaming our rural roads, we also have a strong livestock population doing the same. Unlike Australia, the USA and Scandinavia, we also have a high population of impoverished people who rely on getting around on foot in rural areas after dark. A fair amount of pedestrian accidents also involves the abuse of alcohol by both pedestrians and drivers alike.

So, whose life do we put first? I don't have the answer. What I do know is that banning bull bars will not in all likelihood solve the pedestrian accident rate. It will however endanger the life of somebody who hits a kudu or donkey out in the sticks. There has to be a solution other than simply banning it.



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Bridging the divide

Research shows different generations of campers have different needs. **Neels van Heerden** suggests it would be wise for campsites and manufacturers to consider this.

I would think that all students of tourism would be exposed to a concept called market segmentation, where a specific market – including the camping one – is divided into groups or segments.

Each segment consists of large numbers of consumers who are likely to respond in a similar way to marketing strategies of campsites or caravan manufacturers, for example. Most consumers in such a segment have the same interests and needs

when it comes to holidays, weekend getaways and buying camping equipment.

Of course, every person's tastes,

habits and preferences differ. That's why one person would rather not be near a TV when camping, while others would never leave home without one.

SEGMENTATION BY YEAR OF BIRTH

is a process that is gaining worldwide acceptance. An American foundation doing research about camping uses generational segmentation to analyse consumer patterns – and they've noticed a number of interesting trends.

According to their research, the largest segment is the so-called millennials. They're between 23 and 38 years old and have a great love for the outdoors. Because they're hardworking and have school-going kids, their getaway weekends are mostly limited to a radius of 100 km from home. They want to see gorgeous pics online, participate in activities in and around the campsite, and their kids need activities. They also like visiting campsites that are popular and have a greater loyalty to places that meet all their needs.

Generation Q, the so-called Baby Boomers, includes people born shortly after the end of World War II (1946), during the Korean War (1950-1953) and the early years of the Cold War (1947-1962). Most of them are close to retirement and look for affordable options when camping. They also avoid busy campsites, especially on weekends.

Many people who fall within these two generations do, however, camp during peak times as they spend time with their grandchildren – during school holidays in particular.

Generation X are the folks born between 1965 and 1980. Gen X-ers are self-sufficient, resourceful and individualistic. They value freedom of choice and love challenges. They don't necessarily want to sit still under a rally tent when they go camping.

Those in Generation Y were born

between 1981 and 1996. They're passionate about technology, family focused, performance oriented and love working in a team. They enjoy attention, work hard and like visiting new campsites and attractions.

Generation Z, also known as Zoomers, was born from the mid to late nineties to early into the new millennium. They like diversity and vary between camping and staying in more solid buildings, such as guesthouses. They are also the first digital natives and enjoy researching a campsite's website.

Generation Alpha (or GenAlpha for short) was born after 2005 and is the potential camping segment of the future. One researcher found that up to 97% of GenAlpha respondents would enjoy camping if it meant their parents could relax. Although most of them are still quite young, GenAlpha will, as they get older, be the most advanced generation yet, thanks to the technology and all the information at their immediate disposal. They'll have pretty unique expectations regarding holiday choices in the future.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE LITTLE

information on South African camping segments, and I sometimes wonder how carefully caravan manufacturers analyse consumer needs.

There is a campsite in Dinokeng that bursts at its seams over long weekends and school holidays. They offer a comprehensive product, in my opinion, to Gauteng campers that manages to meet the diverse needs of the various generations – from a water slide to private stands.

There are also examples where campsites offer unique experiences and focus on smaller market segments with great success. Their campsite layout is intimate, stands are spacious, ablution facilities are modern and campers have to keep themselves occupied.



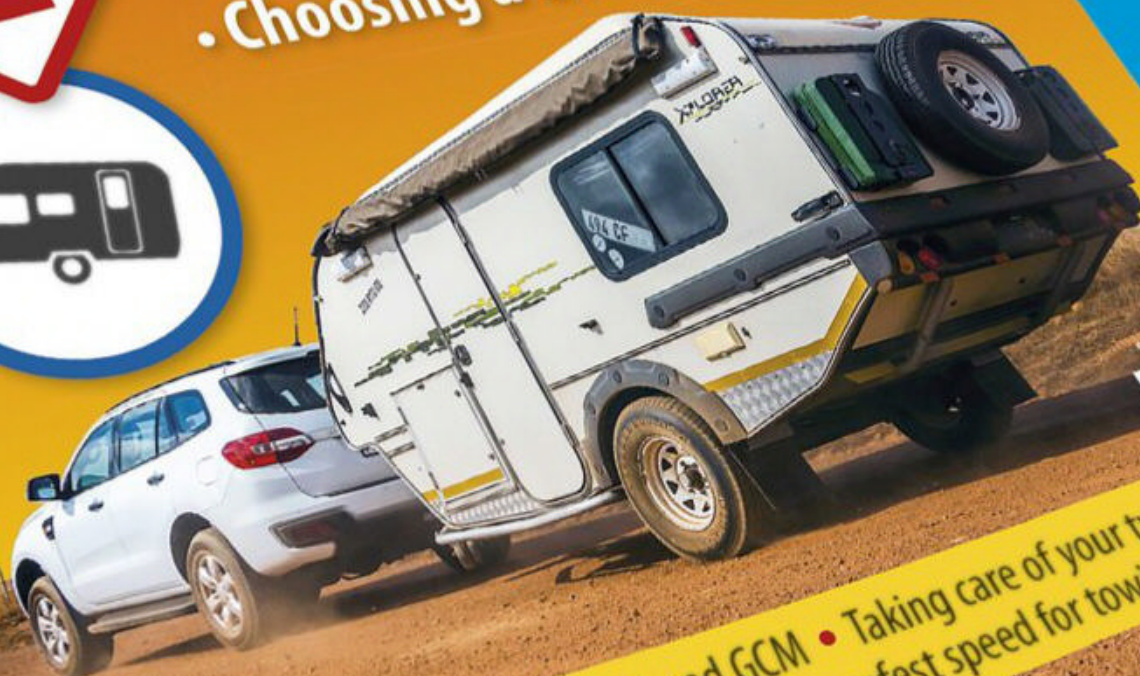
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- You are allowed to carry your handbrake while towing.
- You are allowed to look out of the window to help you position the trailer while reversing after shunting.
- You are allowed to use your foot on the clutch pedal for all manoeuvres in the yard except once the 40 m reverse.

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Camping with Cacofonix the bard

Think twice before agreeing when someone says, "we should go camping sometime". **Schalk Jonker** had an experience that brought home this lesson.

At the start of each academic year my child's school hosts a picnic on their rugby field, and so, obeying COVID-19 regulations, every family spread their blankets two metres apart. Our daughter and the son of the couple next to us are good friends, even though they are a year apart, and so we had never really socialised until then.

But that's what these school picnics are about: mingling with other parents. And so that's exactly what we did.

Before long, we were having a fat chat and when I told my neighbour what I do for a living, he was instantly excited. "We have to go camping sometime!" he exclaimed and turned to his wife who was standing some distance away, also chatting. "Lovey! We have to go camping with these guys, they also camp," he shouted and pointed at my wife and me.

I'm reluctant about agreeing to go camping with people I barely know, so I nodded and responded with a "Sure, we'll have to do it one day..." I didn't commit to anything as far as I was concerned. By the time the sauvignon blanc was out of our systems the following day, it would all be forgotten, right?

Wrong. The next morning, there was a message waiting for me on my phone: "Howzit! Thnx 4 gr8 chat last nite. Got place 4 1st weeknd in mrch at place u said is nice. Just booked 4 us. Ur coming along. Lets braai!"

Clearly, our new friends interpreted "one day" as the first weekend in March. That was well played, I had to admit.

The date was too far ahead in the future for us to claim we already had other plans. So, we were stuck and I answered with: "Great, man."

Okay, I'm making it sound worse than it was. My wife and I get along well with pretty much anyone and I'd happily share a meal or socialise at a school picnic; so I decided maybe it would be nice to go camping with this friendly couple. It helped, of course, that our children got on well and would want to play together non-stop.

IT'S THE FIRST FRIDAY in March as we hit the road, feeling quite excited to go camping with our new friends. Since the picnic, we've gotten together once or twice and my apprehension about camping with them had mostly been allayed.

We join them early in the evening at the campsite, quickly set up our camp and light a fire. We have a great braai and supper, then we stoke the fire for the evening. It's Friday, this wine won't drink itself and nobody has to drive home.

Shortly after we fully analysed Siya Kolisi's move to the Sharks, my friend gets up, opens his car's boot, and takes out a guitar. Evidently my talking points are not entertainment enough



and the evening's events are shifting up a gear. Time for a musical number.

I was a member of the Voortrekkers in primary school, and if I cast my mind back far enough, I can still remember the words to some of the camping songs. But something tells me tonight's programme won't include those songs. In fact, I won't be required to sing at all.

He straddles a tree stump and starts plucking on a string. Pling-plong-plang... he shakes his head, tunes a peg and lowers his ear to his instrument... pling-pong-ping... not quite ready, another turn... pang-ping-pinc... a nod, there it is. Next string, same process.

After listening to the tuning for a good ten minutes (mercifully it isn't a 12-string guitar), he's ready to begin.

His wife has made a valiant effort to keep talking, but eventually relents, smiles and settles in for the show.

"Ahem", he clears his throat and plays a chord. No, something is still not quite right... ping-ping-pinc...

"Today is gonna be the day..." he opens with "Wonderwall" by Oasis, but right off the bat, it's clear he's either only recently learnt how to play the guitar, or he simply doesn't have the knack for it. His pitch is way off point, especially when we get to the chorus: "and after aaaaaaall, you're my wonderwaaaaaall".

There are several stops and starts as he retries two or three chords before hitting the correct one.

My wife and I exchange wide-eyed glances and a lyric from the Afrikaans

rock group K.O.B.U.S! comes to mind. Translated, it goes, "We are all hostages in one big music-festival tent. Being entertained by people with more confidence than talent."

Look, it doesn't bother me that he likes to play the guitar and sing – however badly. What annoys me is that, until about 15 minutes ago, I was having a great time. I could hear the crackling of the fire and sounds of the night between the topics of conversation. But now I'm being forced to listen to a one-man show that I didn't sign up for, and a guitar that can't keep its tune. He only knows about three chords and half of any given song. In what universe is this entertainment?

"Lisa se klavier" is next for the chopping block and he does a smashing job of butchering this venerated Afrikaans song. "*Ja, die hele wêreld word stil, en luister in die donker uur.*" I wish our troubadour would mind the lyrics...

My wife suggests we join in when he starts murdering "Sweet Caroline", but when she does, she gets one of the dirtiest of looks from the artist. So she rather keeps quiet.

HERE'S THE THING. Those with true talent would never subject you to something like this. I have two friends who play and sing beautifully, and they will only pick up the guitar when someone asks them to do so. (By the way, I always request Simon and Garfunkel's "The Boxer"). They know when it is appropriate to play, and when to rather leave the guitar in the boot.

They'd never dream of interrupting an enjoyable conversation just so everyone could listen to them sing. There are times when having someone play the guitar and sing actually improves the atmosphere... and then there are times when they just want attention. My new friend here definitely belongs in the latter category.

I start yawning, big and obvious ones, to signal I'm ready to call it a night. My friend clearly catches the hint and announces he'll perform one final opus. "Imagine there's no heaven..." he digs deep to channel John Lennon, but his rendition is slower than John's, and lower by an octave or two. He is showing he's got soul, you know.

You may say he's a dreamer, but he's not the only one.



... AND FINALLY

Archival quality

His passion for older vehicles is quite apparent, as **Cobie Kemp** from Letsitele in Limpopo visits camp-sites with his vintage towing combination.

“I came across the 1971 Mercedes-Benz W108 280SE about 18 years ago. It used to be the company vehicle for the director of a firm in Johannesburg. When the gentleman passed away, the company kept the car in storage before eventually deciding to sell it. Because it had been locked away, the car was in good condition; but most importantly it was still original, as nobody had ever restored it.

I came across this 1965 Gypsy, also known as an Africaravan, five years ago when a friend of mine alerted me to the deceased estate of what can only be described as an elderly pair of hermits – and also mentioned that there'd be some old cars up for grabs. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the caravan, because you rarely come across one as old as this that's in fairly complete condition.

When I checked out the interior, everything was in its place and seemed stuck in the 1960s, from the cupboards and old Electrolux refrigerator to

the mosquito nets and even the original venetian blinds. There's also the original ice tray, in which there are individual ice block moulds. We had to spruce up the upholstery, including replacing the foam in the cushions, but otherwise we have left it as is.

Even the main cabin light, which originally operated with gas, is still in its spot. But because I wasn't too keen on the use of gas inside such a confined space, I fitted some wire inside the gas line and installed an LED system. It still gives off the gas-style glow.

The project, as all of them do, started off with me thinking that it would be a quick restoration and that the caravan would be a straightforward job given its fairly decent condition versus its age. But after it arrived at home and I started ripping off the panels, I realised that there was a fair amount of wood rot underneath. I had to, unfortunately, put my caravan project on hold for a few years.

Fortunately, the first hard



lockdown of 2020 allowed me to dedicate much time to the caravan. One of my employees, Freckson Phiri, was my right hand as we embarked on the full restoration. He got his hands dirty with the sanding and painting and so on. I still want to change the registration to Freckson 1 – L in honour of his hard work. We finished the project

together in just two months.

The combination of the 280SE and old Gypsy drew lots of attention on its maiden voyage when we pulled into the Kruger's Skukuza Rest Camp in October last year. It brought back lots of happy memories to our fellow campers who came over to admire this caravanning history. ”



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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