

#39

CAMP FOOD STICKY CHICKEN TO COWBOY BEANS OVER THE COALS

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2020 | ISSUE 39

go!

Drive & Camp

KRUGER

All 13 campsites revisited

Golden Gate

A Free State emerald

HIGH 5!

Pick the perfect tent

4X4 PROFESSOR

5 top trips this side of the border

GEAR

Caravans for code B holders

REEL & WHEEL Catch the big one at a trout farm | **READER STORY** DIY bush trailer
NEW WHEELS Mercedes-Benz V300d | **NEWS** Land Rover's high-tech towing gadget

NEW CARAVAN

Armadillo reveals its XTR 302

Cape Vidal to Kosi Bay

Exploring Maputaland's lakes and beaches

SECOND WIND

How does a Jimny hold up after 10 years?

CAMP BOFFIN GIVE SOME TLC TO YOUR CAR'S BATTERY P 62



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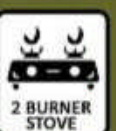
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COROLLA

The enchantment of the Kruger



“

I must admit, however, that if I lived further north, the temptation would have been very great to head to the Kruger National Park instead

”



Isn't it wonderful to be able to travel again? (I just hope the president won't gather us together again on a Sunday night for a "go wait for me in the bathroom" speech in the time between me typing these words and you reading them.)

Getting into our car with my family to hit the road was the one thing I looked forward to the most since March while trapped mainly between the four walls of our house. As soon as the school holidays arrive, we're joining a group of friends and doing the West Coast route between Hondeklip Bay and Koekenaap – the one my colleague Cyril reported on just a year ago in *Drive & Camp* # 27. You can feel the excitement in our home.

I must admit, however, that if I lived farther north, the temptation would have been very great to head to the Kruger National Park instead. And it's not just because I haven't been there for a number of years, but rather because there probably is no better place anywhere in the country where you can escape from everything.

Clearly I'm not the only one who feels this way, because the day after President Ramaphosa announced that we may again travel to other provinces, the SANParks website crashed thanks to all the people trying to book a spot. We're all keen to take a break away from all the drama 2020 has already dished out.

Most of us have some ties that bind us to the Kruger. Maybe you used to go there as a kid on holidays with your parents, or maybe you're a swallow who camps there in the winter months to escape the cold. Whatever your connection, there aren't many places that rival the allure of the Kruger.

This month, we take a look at all 13 campsites inside this iconic holiday destination and tell you what you need to know and what to expect.

Maybe the time has arrived for you to try a different campsite to Skukuza. Just remember to book your spot way in advance.

JUST A REMINDER that *Drive & Camp* will appear bi-monthly from now on. The December-January issue will be on shelf from 27 November. We are, however, already working hard on our 4x4 guide, which will be available from 23 October.

Till then, stay safe!

Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com

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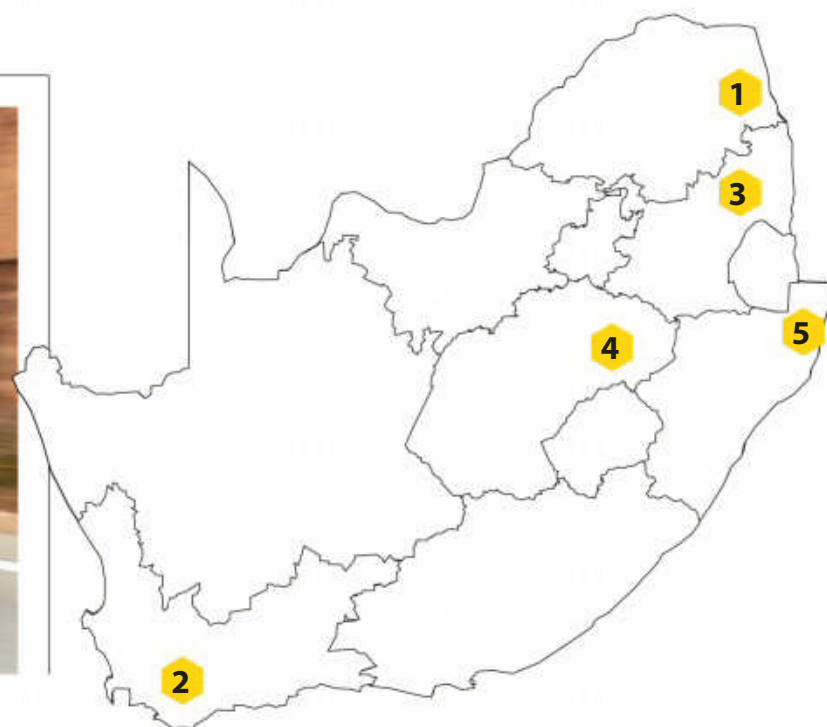
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SECOND WIND **76**



#39 MAIN COVER PHOTO – LEON BOTHA

“The Balule camp lies on the provincial border between Limpopo and Mpumalanga. It's on the south bank of the Olifants River, which forms the border.

The picture was taken shortly before six o'clock in the morning and it wasn't long thereafter that the table had to reserve the spot for the absent humans who left to go on a game drive.”

Camera settings Canon EOS 50D; f7.1;
1/640 s; 22 mm; ISO 500

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WHAT'S IN A NAME? There are a number of special, hidden beaches along the South African coastline. Black Rock is one such a beach and lies about 11 km south of the Kosi Bay lake system. In our 4x4 destination article (page 26), we follow the back roads in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park from Cape Vidal to Kosi Bay, passing by close to Black Rock.

PHOTO **LEON BOTHA**



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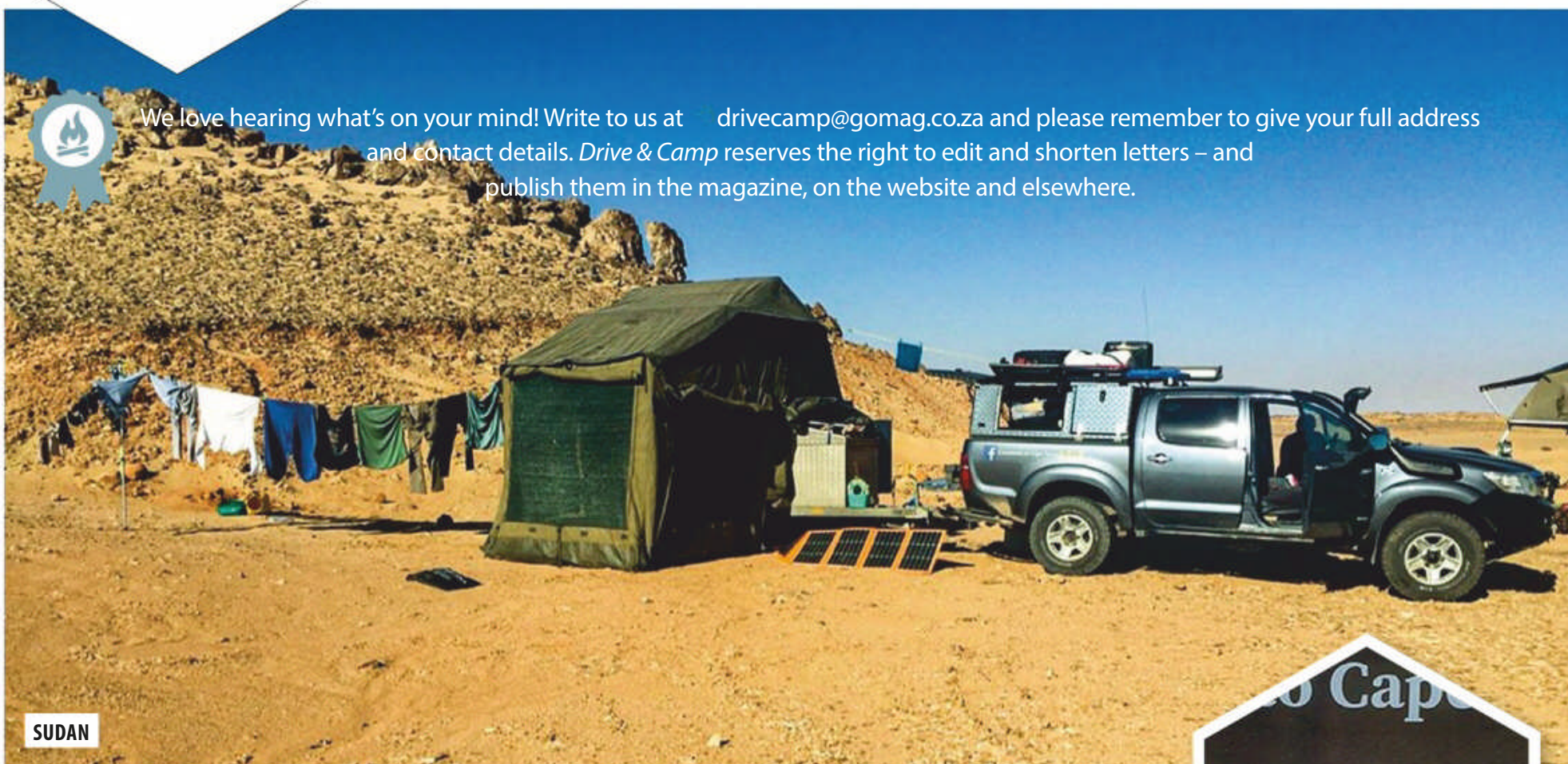
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We love hearing what's on your mind! Write to us at drivecamp@gomag.co.za and please remember to give your full address and contact details. *Drive & Camp* reserves the right to edit and shorten letters – and publish them in the magazine, on the website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



SUDAN

Crossing two continents to get to the ZA sticker

My wife, Lorraine, and I are currently on a self-drive tour from Scotland on our way through Africa.

When we arrived in Nairobi, Kenya, we bought your July issue that had the magnetic ZA sticker.

Now, your sticker has found its place on our UK-registered Toyota Hilux, between the mandatory 'GB' sticker and our Scottish one that says 'Ecosse'. (*'Ecosse' is French for Scotland.* – Ed)

We're still on our way to Cape Town, but have been in Kenya since 3 March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We began our journey on 13 June last year and have already travelled through 27 countries. Most of them so far – 23 in total – have been in Europe. We even made a detour to the famous Nordkapp peak in Norway.

After that, we sailed from Greece to Egypt in early December. From there, we toured through Sudan and Ethiopia to eventually get to Nairobi where



GERMANY

we bought your magazine.

Lorraine is South African and we plan to eventually – when we arrive in Cape Town – to settle down there.

But it looks like as though that might only be early next year.

KEN MCLUCKIE
Scotland

Follow Ken and Lorraine as they travel through Africa on their Facebook page called 'Caledonia to Cape Town' or in real time on polarsteps.com/KenMcLuckie. According to that site, they'd been on the road for 445 days having driven 31 041 km at the time of going to press.

WINNING
LETTER

Ken 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





ETHIOPIA



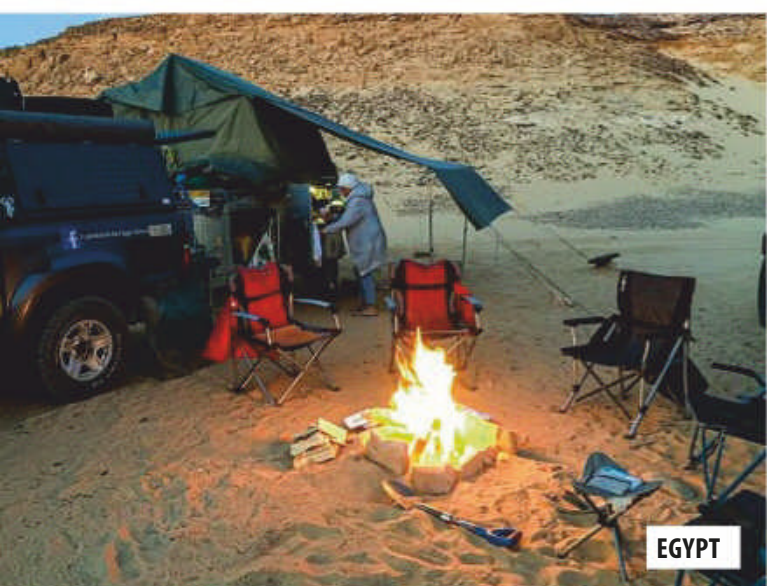
COPENHAGEN



TWIGA LODGE



KENYA



EGYPT

‘We camp because it’s great’

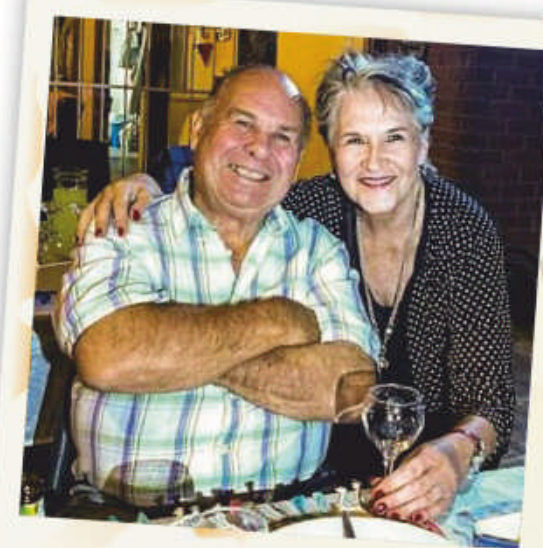
My wife Andriëtte and I love camping. People often ask us why we like it so much. Here are some reasons – and these are also some of the prerequisites for where and how we camp.

We believe you should keep things simple. We make do with the minimum. I pack according to a list I compiled – and stick to it. It helps to not take along unnecessary items. Instead of camping in a caravan or off-road trailer, we prefer a dome tent or our rooftop tent. It’s a cheaper option and that way I save interest on my capital. Not that caravans bother me – all of us enjoy camping, after all.

We like making friends in the campsite. It’s one of the first things we do at a new campsite. It won’t be long before we meet someone who also knows someone we know. Then the conversations carry on over a glass of wine at the campfire. Furthermore, we like to walk through the campsite to look at the clever ideas of other campers. Campers like sharing tips and this also results in great chats.

Talking of friends: we enjoy going camping with old friends, too. That’s been some of our most enjoyable camping experiences.

We place a high premium on the bathrooms. Of course, you don’t return to a campsite where things aren’t great. This is where SANParks gets our vote. Their facilities are an example of



how it should be done. That includes the new facilities in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, in the Nossob and Mata Mata camps. As with Nossob, you can get your own bathroom facilities on your stand for a bit extra. That’s even better.

It may sound as though I’m complaining, but please stick to the rules. Enjoy the silence and the peace of nature. Surely that’s why you visit this type of campsite.

We live in the real world, so you need to ensure your safety in the campsite. Lock everything up if you’re going to be away from your stand for a while.

Finally, the idea is to go and enjoy yourself. Grant it to yourself – and everyone around you.

DIRK BURGER
Kleinmond



The best issue yet

I've been a regular *Drive & Camp* reader since the beginning – and buy it in either English or Afrikaans, whatever is available in the shops. Many a trip has been planned using your magazines.

The August 2020 issue has been the best issue this far – by far.

I had a similar experience to the one Tinus described in his letter where his Skipper had to brave some hectic roads. We had the same happen to us in southern Namibia. I strengthened the door hinges by drilling out the bolts on the hinges to one size bigger and installing stainless-steel cap screws. I also replaced the hasp and staple type latch on the door with the kind that can't jump open. I've done some serious corrugated roads since the modification without any problem. It also improved dust insulation.

I made other modifications to my Skipper Oyster: I swapped the 220 V bar fridge for an Engel 220 V/12 V fridge/freezer. I have a separate mobile battery



pack with solar panels for running this fridge when we're in remote areas without electricity. While driving, this fridge is run from the dual battery from my vehicle as the Skipper has the necessary Brad Harrison connector.

I've also exchanged the standard pipe-type back corner steadies with proper wind-down corner steadies. I don't use these steadies to level the Skipper, however as it is not good practice. I use levelling blocks under the wheels rather or dig a hole for the wheel when it's possible.

The snow article was very helpful as we normally get good snowfall during

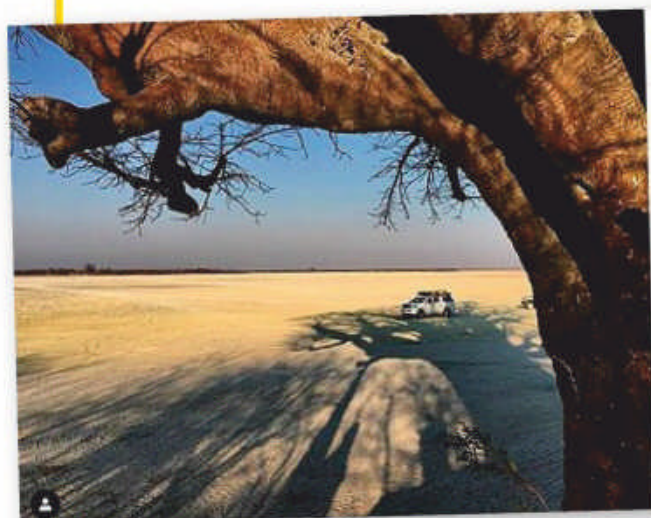


our visit to the Sani Pass in September.

The article on the Kgalagadi was fantastic. We've got a booking there in February next year. And then to top it all, there was an article on the Caracal 4X4 Eco Route in the Namaqua National park. We're planning a visit there in October.

HENRY TERBLANCHE

Assegay 📍



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COMMENT OF THE MONTH!

We posted a column by Neels van Heerden on our Facebook where he claimed your behaviour says a lot more about your status than your caravan and camping gadgets. Ben van Niekerk agrees.

"True' campers are their own species. Any status resulting from equipment, tents or caravans has absolutely no effect on these very human humans."

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Kruger magic

Over the past 10 years, he's visited the Kruger 70 times... Yes, **Johan Marais** from Lydenburg says he's in love with the place. He takes almost a thousand photos each visit, using his Canon EOS 550D or 450D, a 18-200 mm and a 150-500 mm lens as well as a 2x teleconverter.

By **Leon Botha**



Monkey tricks

"I took this photo at Skukuza where this vervet female was watching visitors closely – she was probably hoping for some leftovers. The little one had been drinking from her for a while, but fell asleep in her arms."

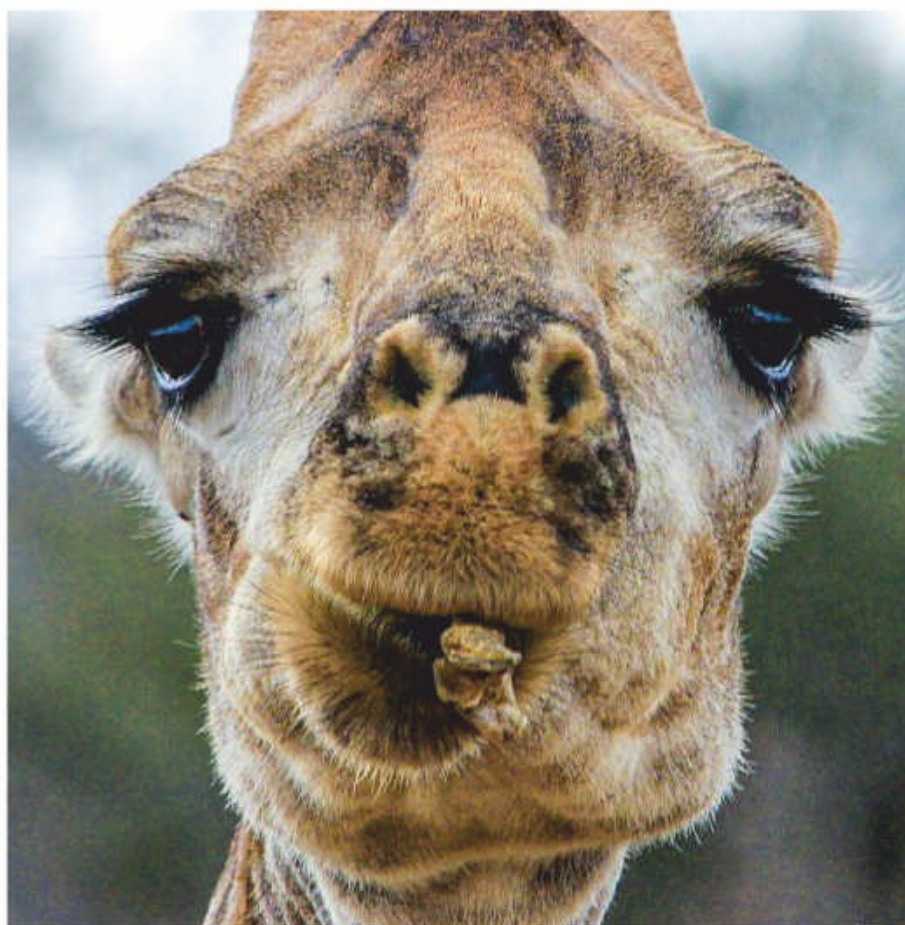
You can't help but smile when you see this photo. Even though the mother takes up by far the largest section of the pic, you can't miss the peaceful face of the little one. Even if you look at the mother's face first, your eye is drawn to the little one, which makes it the focal point. Also, the adult monkey looks away from the young one, outside the photo border, and that also spontaneously draws your eye to the little one.

Other than identifying with that little monkey's serenity, there's another element to this beautiful moment: the placement of little one's face looks quite uncomfortable. And it's precisely this 'discomfort' that makes it a more interesting photo.

In the original photo, the third on the right is unnecessary. There's no detail to be seen here and it also doesn't contribute to the negative space in terms of composition. Besides, the mother's foot is cropped off.

To make the photo even more striking, you could change it to black and white. But that in itself isn't enough – lighten the pic and increase the contrast, and a lot more detail jumps out at you. (You also get rid of the grey background and you see more of the bigger monkey's face.)

You could also make the white shades even more white – then you can just about sense every single hair on the two animals.



Give a giraffe a bone...



"This was a young giraffe cow near Mopani that was actually standing there chewing on a piece of dry bone. That while watching us with her big eyes and long lashes."

A giraffe is one of the most elegant animals, but also one of the most unique in terms of appearance. And, as you can see in Johan's photo, it's also odd.

First of all, you don't expect a herbivore to chew on a piece of bone. What's more, the bone is framed beautifully in the middle of the photo and you can't help but notice the animal's mouth first. Her lower jaw is lopsided, which gives you the impression that she's busy chewing. Meanwhile – and as Johan points out – she's looking right at you, almost as if wondering what you're looking at. It gives the pic a comical feel.

To animate the pic more, enhance its technical side. It's slightly underexposed, and due to the cloudy conditions (or the absence of direct sunlight) slightly dull. You can brighten it up and make it 'warmer' by increasing the pic's colour temperature. Simply put, you increase the yellow.

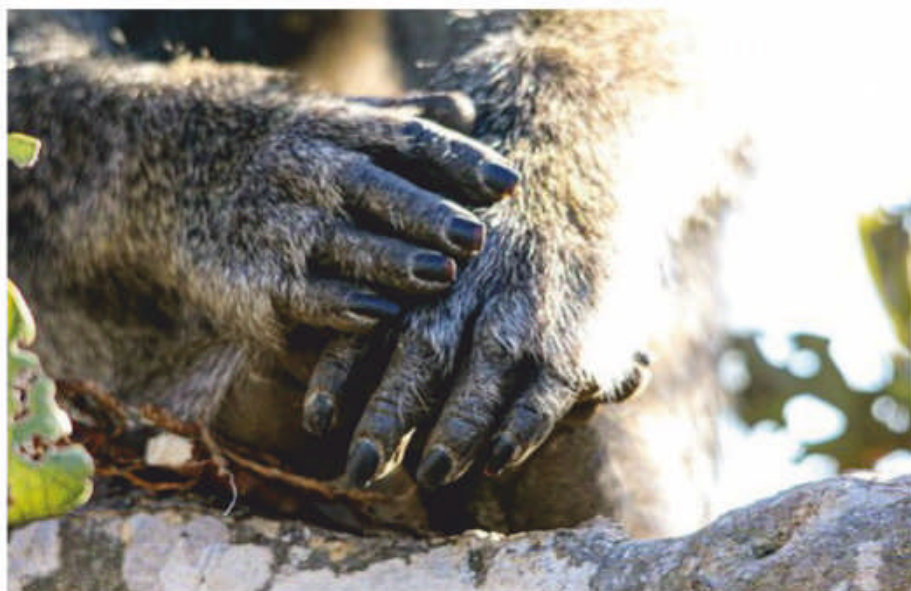
To further emphasise the animal's oddity, crop the pic around the animal's face. Here, however, things become more subjective and not everyone will agree with me. For example, you can cut off its horns – it's fine, because you know you're looking at a giraffe. If you stand back now, you see the following strange phenomenon: the face is indeed pentagonal!

In his hands

"It was early morning and this baboon male was sitting in a tree near Skukuza, watching his troop. You can see the detail on his hands beautifully – for me it is special."

This certainly is special, and it seems as though he's sitting with his hands neatly folded. It's not every day that you can see a baboon's hands. This close, you can see how closely related we are to them. You even see fingernails.

If Johan wanted, he could once again crop the pic closer around the focal point (the hands). The bright sections on the right in the photo and the bit of green on the left don't contribute to the overall picture. You only see one thing: those two folded hands with those neat nails...



SEND US YOUR PICTURES

and we might publish them here. We're not looking for traditional 'prize winners', just regular pics. 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 cellphone, if it's good enough for your photo album it's good enough for us.

Johan Marais wins a Drive & Camp camera bag worth R650 – congratulations!

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

Land Rover gets tow happy

Land Rover has just announced that it will now make its Advanced Tow Assist system available on all its models.

Nowadays, trailer sway control is no longer a novelty and it's widely available on several new cars, including Land Rover models. (It's an electronic system that kicks in as soon as it becomes aware of your trailer or caravan swaying. It typically reduces engine power and applies brakes to certain wheels to counteract the sway.)

But with the Advanced Tow Assist system, Land Rover trumps other manufacturers in terms of towing a caravan. In addition to the reverse camera (these days commonly used by manufacturers), Land Rover now adds four more tow-friendly gadgets: you can adjust the height of the tow ball above the road surface before you hitch, the vehicle tests the lights when the caravan is hitched, and the tow bar has a built-in scale to measure the weight of the coupler on the ball. Finally, you are able to reverse with the caravan without touching the steering wheel while the computer helps you – so there's no more reversing in stages until you're in position.

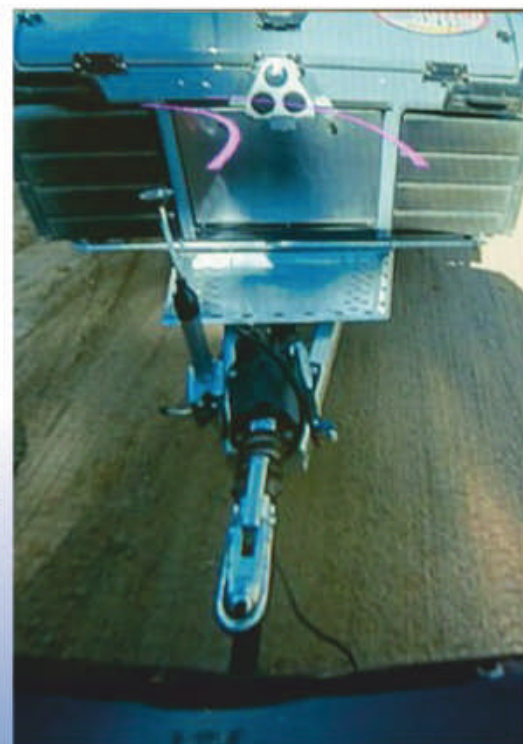
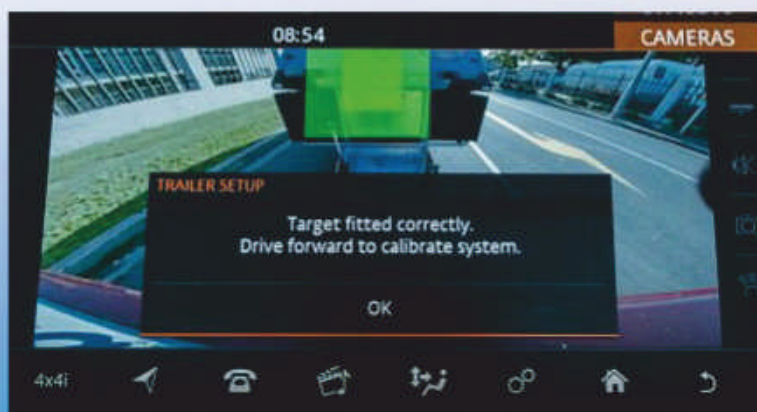
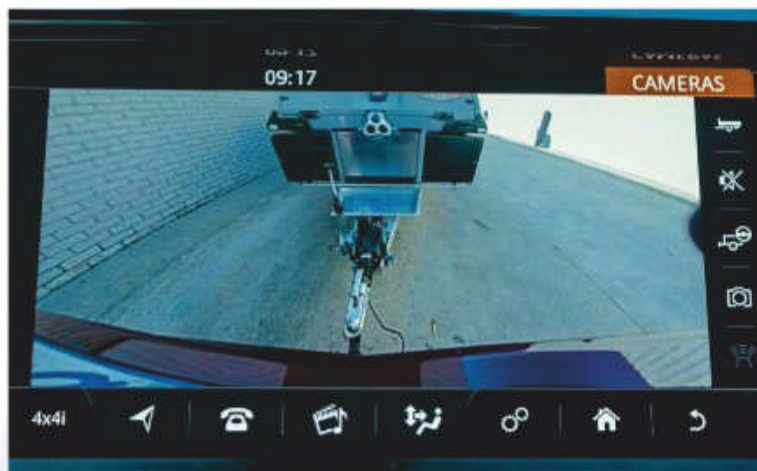
The ball-height adjustment is only possible on models equipped with air suspension. This applies to the Discovery, the new Defender and Range Rover, as well as the Range Rover Sport and Velar. This is useful, for example,

if you have more than one trailer or caravan with their different coupler heights. The height adjustment is, of course, also great if you have to load heavy items in and out of the back of the vehicle.

Once you've hitched, you usually check the lights of the caravan. You need help for this exercise, because someone has to stand behind the caravan and tell you whether the

lights are working or not. Now Land Rover's computer helps to determine whether there are any lights on the caravan that aren't working. The light test applies to Land Rovers and Range Rovers equipped with the optional electronically deployed towbar.

The heavier the weight on the tow ball, the more stable your caravan will be, but it's really easy to exceed the 100 kg legal limit. That's



UP TO DATE. The Land Rover Discovery HSE Si6 Luxury is an example of a model that came equipped with these gadgets two years ago. Today most Landies have it.



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where the Nose Load Measurement system on the Discovery and new Defender come in. The system reads the weight electronically and alerts you when overloading.

The Advanced Tow Assist also allows you to reverse at a specific angle. That rotary controller you use to select road conditions becomes your 'steering wheel'. As in the case of our Discovery test two years ago, two index lines appear on the rear screen in this mode. Lines that appear green mean you're reversing straight back; a curve to the left or right means you're turning; and red warns that the caravan is about to be jackknife.

During this tow test with the Land Rover Discovery HSE Si6 Luxury we said at the time that this vehicle had no equal in that market segment. It would seem these were prophetic words.



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Infanta's shop is open for business

In the Western Cape, the shop and production line of off-road caravan manufacturer Infanta 4x4 are now fully up and running after the local authorities gave them a green light to continue operations.

Owner Jurie Swart says the eight hectares of land where the 3 000 m² building stands, was initially earmarked as agricultural land. The manufacturer therefore had to apply for rezoning so the caravan plant and the showroom could fully operate as a business.

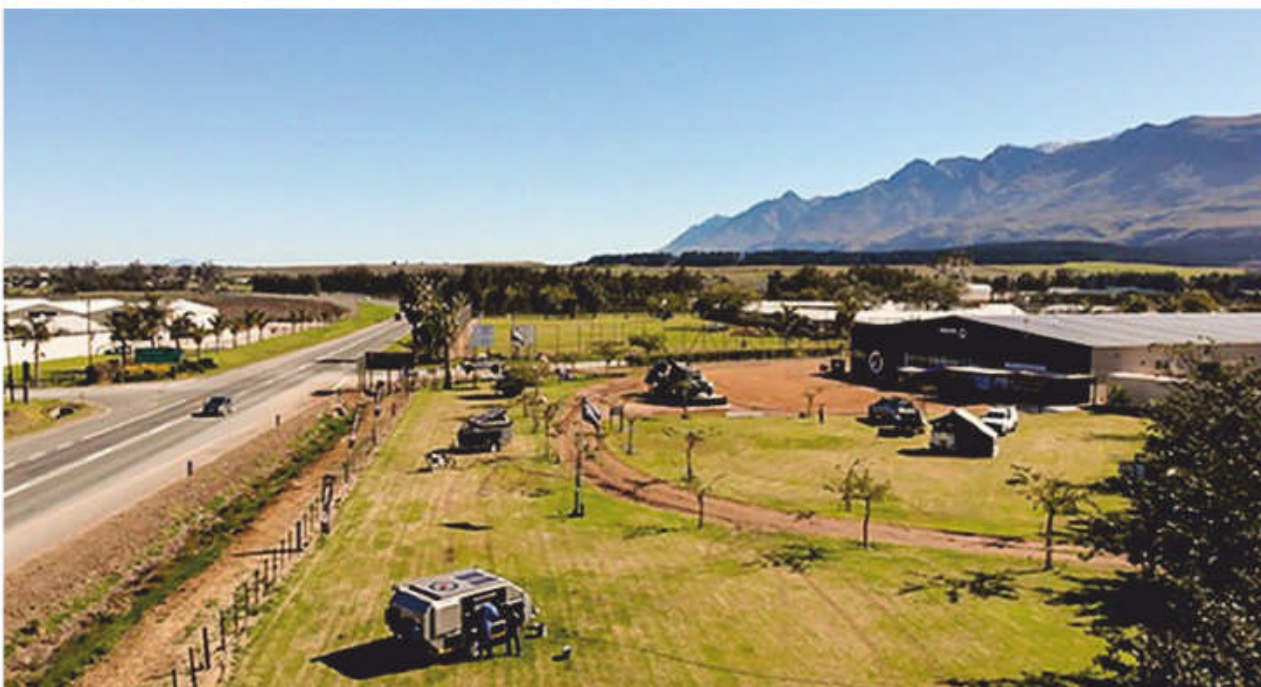
Infanta was started about 20 years ago by Jurie's father, JW. Jurie sold

his agricultural contractor business five years ago, took over his father's business and immediately got to work with Infanta's first off-road caravan, the Enkulu. Today, you have a choice between two models, the Enkulu 1 and Enkulu 2, and Jurie has just launched their very latest product, the Ingane off-road trailer. In addition to the Inkunzi bakkie camper, Infanta will also launch two new imported Black Series off-road caravan models in mid-October.

Contact 028 512 3663

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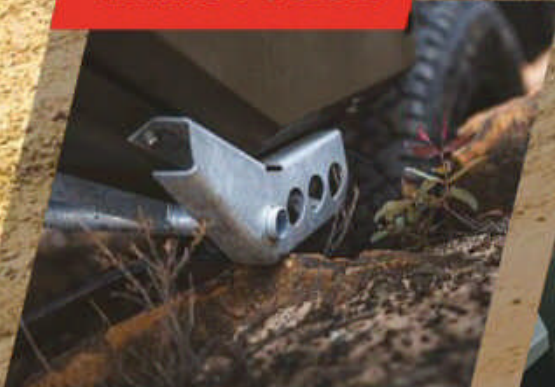
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Bigger gets better

Nissan has just facelifted its Patrol in anticipation of its 70th anniversary in 2021. The Patrol got a new, V-shaped grille with boomerang-shaped LED headlights. It also boasts a new tailgate (also with boomerang lights) and new 18" wheels. Inside is a Bose sound system with 13 speakers and two 8" screens in the back of mom and dad's headrests so the little ones can watch their favourite DVDs – with headphones so they don't interfere with mom's playlist.

As befits any new vehicle, attention is paid to safety equipment such as automatic brakes that engages when a pedestrian walks out in front of you. The Patrol also has adaptive cruise control that maintains the following distance between you and the vehicle in front of you, as well as sensors that keep a watchful eye on the driver and raises the alarm if the artificial intelligence suspects you're nodding off.

Mechanically speaking, however, the Patrol remains unchanged and is still powered by the same 5.6 l V8 petrol engine that generates 298 kW and 500 Nm. Prices for the Patrol start at R1 515 700.

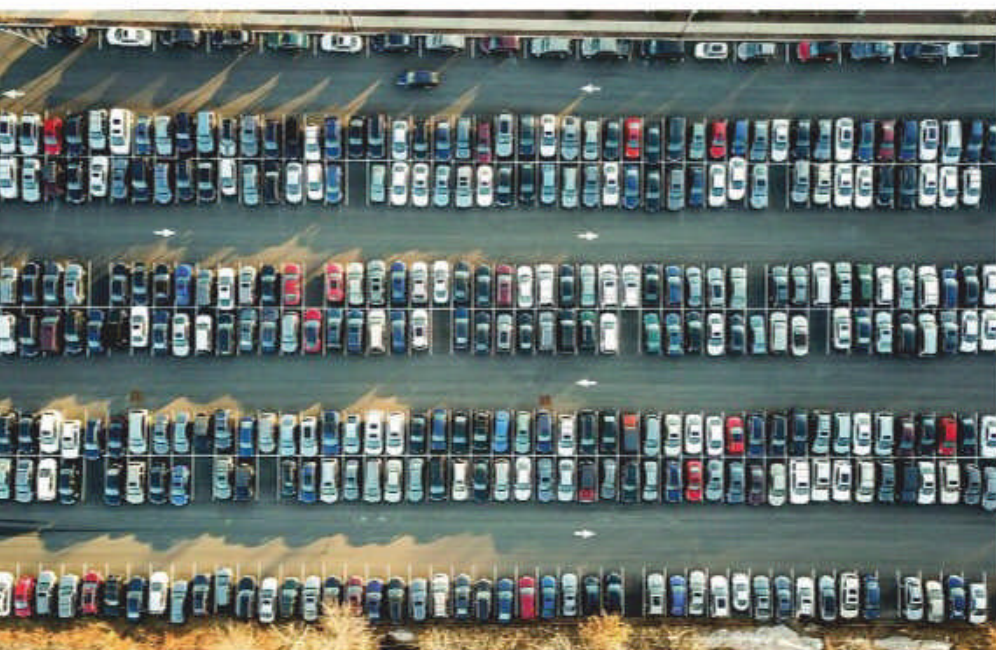
The VW Transporter range has been facelifted as well and will henceforth be called the T6.1 series. The change in name and appearance applies to all six versions, including the bakkie, panel van, Kombi and Caravelle.

The T6.1 series gets a new, larger grille that's been styled to be more in line with other Volkswagens. In fact, the entire front end is new – except for metal components like the bonnet and front quarter panels.

The T6.1 gets electric power steering for the first time, as well as safety systems such as electronic stability control, tyre pressure monitors, parking sensors, a rear-view camera, automatic brakes and many other elements to make life easier (and safer).

There are three engine choices: a 2 l model that generates 81 kW, a 2 l model with 110 kW and a 2 l model with two turbochargers that produce 146 kW.

Prices range from R412 800 for the single-cab bakkie version to R1 196 500 for the California Coast BiTDI 4Motion.



The virus is still suppressing sales

New vehicle sales figures are starting to rise after the national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. NAAMSA reports that 147 365 passenger vehicles, 66 942 light commercial vehicles and 13 883 medium to heavy vehicles were sold in August 2020.

These figures are 26% lower than those of August 2019, but they are an improvement on the preceding months after the start of the pandemic.

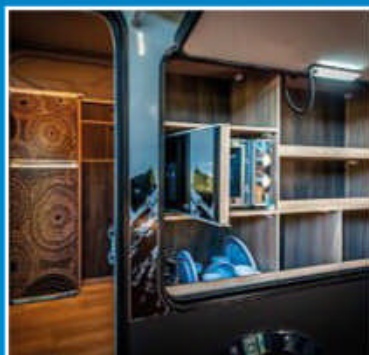
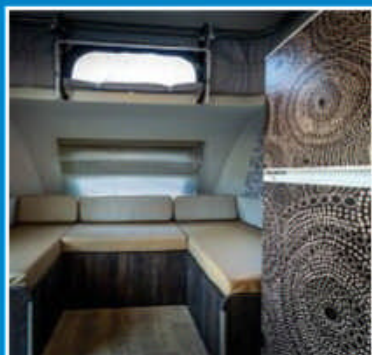
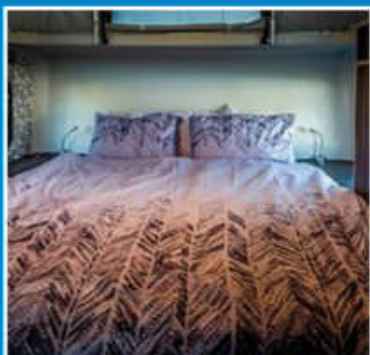
Toyota SA leads the way with 7 743 total sales in all vehicle categories, followed by Volkswagen with 5 181, Ford's 2 810, Hyundai with 2 460 and Nissan with 2 198 new vehicles sold.

Somewhat more worrying is the sharp decline in vehicle exports. It has fallen by 47% compared to 2019, but industry experts say exports will increase once international borders reopen and trade returns to normal.



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
- 100 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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KEMPTON CARAVANS & LEISUREWORLD

Natal Caravans & Marine (est. 1960)

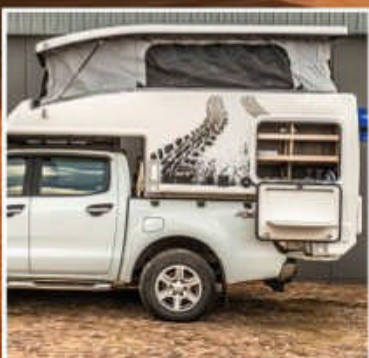
Newcastle LeisureWorld

CARA-CAMP

Loftus Caravan City

Middelburg Caravans

Silver Lakes Caravans



Get on the bus!

The Mercedes-Benz V-Class V300d has just landed and it definitely has potential as a luxury camper van, says Cyril Klopper.



MERCEDES-BENZ V300D

The V-Class was launched in South Africa in 2015 and was surprisingly successful given its steep price and relatively small target market. Then, in 2019, it got a facelift and Mercedes-Benz South Africa says sales figures of the V-Class exceeded its wildest expectations.

It is with this renewed confidence in the V-Class that the new V300d, which is even smarter than its brothers, comes to Mzansi.

What do we have here?

The V300d almost boasts with all the luxuries of a Mercedes-Benz S-Class, but at the same time it also wants to distinguish itself from a suit's company car and market itself as a tour van for a prosperous family.

The V-Class is a minibus similar to the VW Caravelle, but more luxurious than the Hyundai H-1 and Ford Torneo. It is 5,14 m in length (longer than the Caravelle, but slightly shorter than both the Hyundai and Ford) and offers a maximum of eight seats – compared to the Caravelle's seven and Hyundai's nine.

The V300d is powered only in the rear wheels, as Mercedes' 4Matic all-wheel drive is not available in South Africa.

The V300d is available in three trim levels: the entry-level Avantgarde, Avantgarde AMG and the Exclusive. The latter is the flagship model that boasts a panoramic sunroof,



temperature-controlled seats for front and rear passengers, and a chilled cubby in the centre console.

Inside and out

The standard seat layout of the V-Class is two seats in the front, two in the middle and a three-seater bench in the back (seven in total). However, you can ask for six seats (three rows of single seats) or eight seats (two front and two rows of three-seat benches in the middle and back, as shown above).

You can also remove seats should you need extra luggage space. If you're a family of five, for example, it's possible to take out the middle two seats, move the three-seater forward, and thereby create an enormous space at the back for all your luggage and camping gear.



And yes, you can take out all the rear seats and have the V-Class converted into a motorhome. The Marco Polo version, for example, has a pop-up roof and seats that can be converted into a bed next to a compact kitchenette. Unfortunately, the Marco Polo conversion is not sold in South Africa and you'd have to import it yourself – at great cost – if you desperately want one.

Speaking of luggage space: you don't have to open the entire rear hatch to get to your beach bag and towels – the back window swings open on its own hinges to give easy access to the luggage space.

In terms of safety, the electronic aids include blind-spot sensors and airbags throughout the interior (optional). It doesn't offer quite as many electronic safety devices as a typical Volvo, but it still received five



THE VAN LIFE. It's not an off-roader but you could easily convert it to something similar to the Marco Polo (right). Lift out the middle row, it's really easy, and face them backwards. With the table folded out it's a perfect place for a game of cards (below).



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Mercedes-Benz V300d Exclusive
Engine	1 950 cc four-cylinder turbodiesel
Power	176 kW @ 4 200 rpm
Torque	500 Nm @ 1 500 rpm
Gearbox	9-speed automatic
Tank	70 l
Fuel consumption	6,1 l/100 km
Top speed	220 km/h
Load weight	730 kg
Towing weight	2 000 kg
Luggage space	730 l
Safety rating	★★★★★ (EuroNCAP 2014)
Warranty	2 years
Service plan	5 years/100 000 km
PRICE	R1 645 880

stars in a European NCAP crash test.

During the launch, via the internet because of the COVID pandemic, Mercedes-Benz South Africa was particularly pleased with the interface system. The previous COMAND system has been replaced by a new MBUX system. The 10,25-inch touchscreen connects to your phone via Bluetooth and Apple CarPlay or Android Auto, listens to your voice commands and has a built-in Burmester audio system with 16 speakers throughout the interior.

Under the bonnet

Don't let the model name confuse you. The V300d isn't a 3 l but rather a 2 l engine with a capacity of 1 950 cc, the so-called OM654 engine that is also used in the S-Class. This engine generates 176 kW of power and

500 Nm of torque, and the torque can be increased by a further 30 Nm for short periods during hard acceleration. That's significantly higher than any of its competitors.

The V300d also uses the Mercedes-Benz 9G-Tronic automatic gearbox (nine gears) that was originally introduced in the S-Class and is now also available in the E and C classes.

The V300d's top speed is 220 km/h with an acceleration rate of 7,8 seconds to 100 km/h. That's way faster than its competitors, especially the Hyundai H-1 that needs a glacial 17 seconds to reach the same speed, and that with a 2.4 petrol engine compared to the Merc's modest 2 l diesel.

Not that you'd ever drive that fast with your family, especially not between Skukuza and Punda Maria where this van would truly come into its own.



COMPETITORS

Vans for contractors, soccer moms and visits to game reserves.



R695 600

Ford Torneo 2.2 TDCi LWB Trend

It's great for work and play – a favourite among contractors who also go mountain biking on the weekends.



R704 500

Hyundai H-1 2.5 VGTi

Mom's favourite van to cart kids from school to the sport fields.



R1 149 400

Volkswagen T6.1 Caravelle

Arguably the very best vehicle on earth for visiting the Kruger National Park.



The refined Armadillo 302

Cape Town caravan manufacturer Xtreme Outdoor is forging ahead. Take a look at the new Armadillo XTR 302 model and you'll see why, says **Leon Botha**.

Earlier this year, Xtreme Outdoor's owners added the Armadillo XTR 302 as a new model to its range. The sleeping area of this caravan, designed for two people, extends from side to side to the right of the door as you get in.

This newly completed caravan has also taken into account suggestions and feedback from their customers, says co-owner Jason Collie.

While up to three designers were involved in designing (and redesigning) the Armadillo range of caravans, with the

302 they have now established a solid foundation for caravans going forward.

The manufacturer uses Al-Ko products for the axle, brake system, jockey wheel and corner steadies.

The frame of the chassis itself is made of steel – and for some

of the beams, they've used 3 mm steel instead of 2 mm. The metal is also galvanised before the Al-Ko components are put in place.

The body's framework consists of aluminium square tubing covered in a double layer of aluminium plate – inside and

out. The most common powder-paint finish is its well-known Oyster Silver, but buyers can also choose white or dark grey. Compared to previous versions, the chassis is now 3 cm higher above the ground, with 15" wheels making way for their 16" brothers.

freezer in and out a few times. This framework now gets a second spot at the nose cone. Because it comes equipped with an adjustable support pole, an uneven stand doesn't pose a problem.

A welcome change in the kitchen is that the single-plate

gas stove is gone; from now on the standard is a two-plate one. The two 3 kg gas cylinders sit in a cabinet of their own toward to the tail.

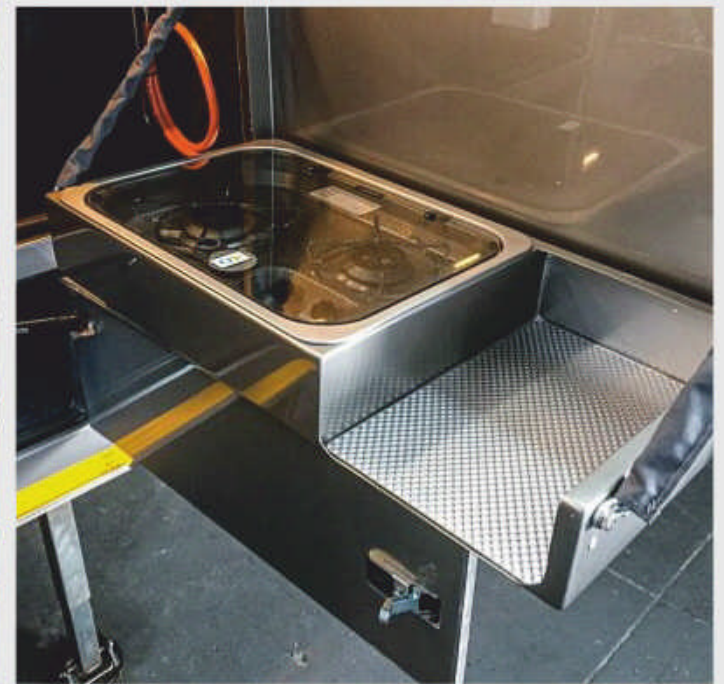
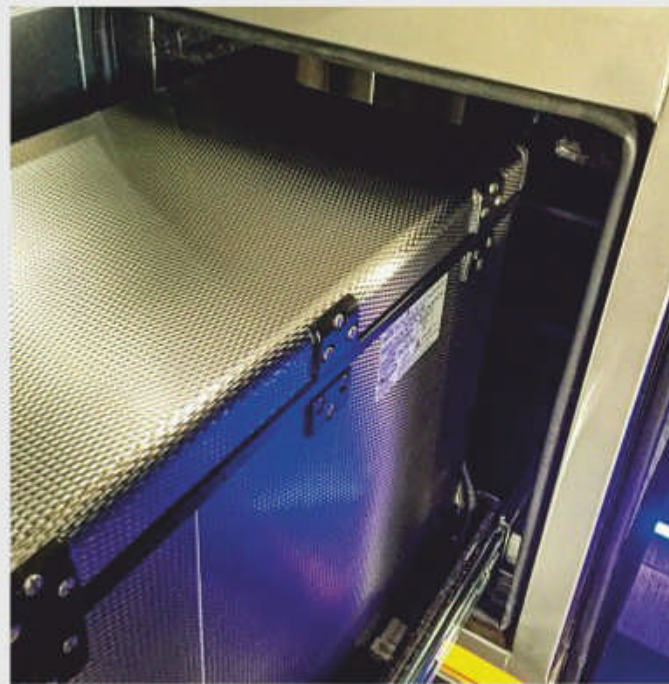
Jason says the gas piping that goes through the caravan is signed off by a qualified expert, but it is the new valve

between the two cylinders that catches the eye. Both cylinders are connected to the same valve so you can switch from one to the other when the gas runs out. Next to this is a gas regulator for the supply to the stove and geyser. This means that the geyser and gas stove is

Kitchen tales

The fridge/freezer's sliding frame is to the left of the door, and the opening for the sliding frame has been enlarged by 6 cm on top and side. This means that even some of the largest fridge/freezers, such as National Luna's 90 l model, can now fit on the frame.

The frame for the dishwashing sink and drying rack that fits onto the tip of the fridge/freezer's sliding frame can be a hassle at times, especially if you have to pull the fridge/



TWO INTO ONE. The gas cylinder is located in a cabinet in the tail section. Both have their own valves and are connected where they meet at the regulator. Here you'll find yet another valve for additional safety.



NEW CARAVAN



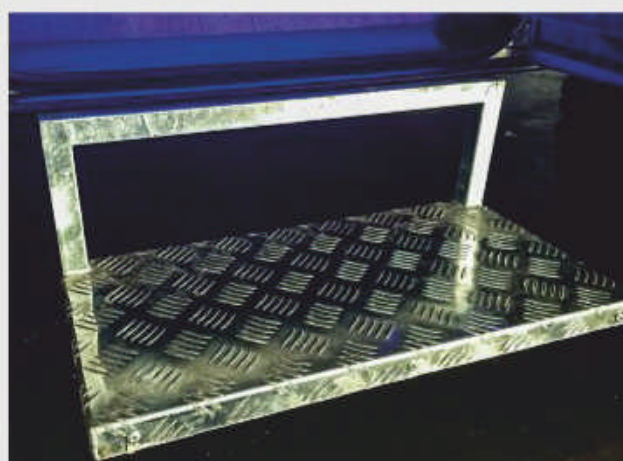
supplied by low-pressure gas.

Around the corner, by the tail on the right-hand panel there's a new laundry line that should come with every caravan. We've seen such ideas elsewhere, but the 302 takes it a step further: the frame for the laundry line, which rests against the bodywork, swings upward but it's behind a flat lid that you first have to raise.

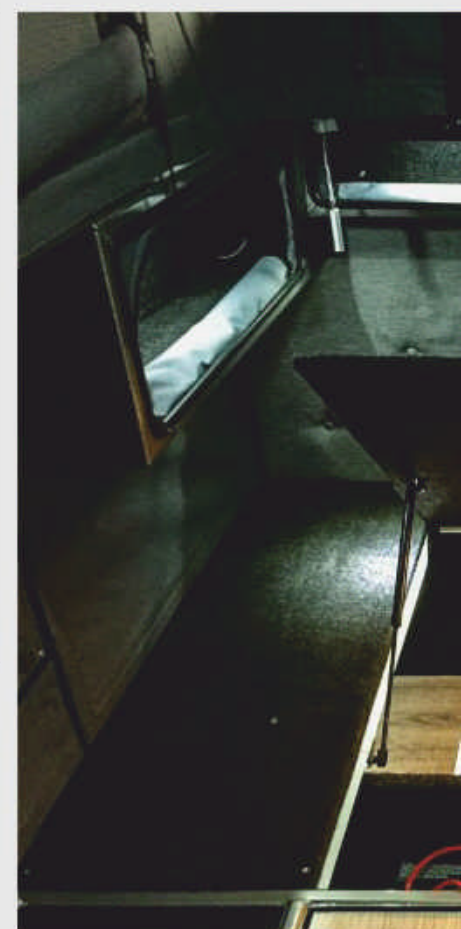
This means that the laundry line has a roof over it when a rainstorm catches you off-guard in the campsite. What's more, the cupboard door under the washing line gets a gas strut so that the wind can't blow it shut while it's open (the same goes for the cupboard on the opposite side), and the storage rack for wood on the nose cone gets a few round anchor points.

Because the hull of pop-up caravans is so low, the top of the door frame is usually quite low.

To make it easier to enter, a step now fits under the doorstep in the hull – it sits about halfway between the floor and the outside. In road caravans, you often see a sunken step inside the caravan, but with this step outside, you'll probably be able to get into the caravan without knocking your head. Without a step – as happens sometimes – it means stretching your legs for the climb... and then ducking for the frame.



FIVE STARS. The electrical system of the 302 has been completely overhauled and the interior is well illuminated. The lights are grouped in five circuits, each with its own switch. And every single light has its own dedicated switch.



Power and lights

The electrical panel was previously to the left of the door as you got in, but this has now moved to the cupboard on the right of the door. It makes room for a 20 l microwave oven with a 220 V plug directly next to it (this socket has a three-point, two-point and a USB port). A second similar socket sits at the bottom right of the floor and also has a 12 V main switch that can cut off the battery power.

The 105 Ah deep-cycle battery with the standard 100 W solar panel is now upgraded to a 150 W model solar panel.

Inside, the 302 has several cupboards along the top, each with a canvas door, but they now also have their own lights,

each with its own switch. And Armadillo takes the lighting system one step further with its own control panel at the door. The switches divide the interior lights into five groups, each with its own switch. (This is for the cupboard lights in the back, the ceiling lights, the two reading lights and the lights to the left of the door.

The fifth switch is for the lights in the cupboard under the bed.) A lid under the mattress lifts to give access to this cupboard, and to make things easier, the loose lid now also gets gas struts.

Finally, the edges of the cupboard openings get a pinch welt rubber edging and the panels next to the bed a full canvas lining. Previously it was just a narrow strip. 🐾



Armadillo caravans have until recently only been available only in the Cape, but they now have a dealer in Gauteng and one in KwaZulu-Natal: Waterworld in North Riding, Johannesburg, and Natal Caravans & Marine in Pinetown.



R289 000 Armadillo XTR 302 BVM 1 800 kg

COMPETITORS

Aluminum off-road caravans for two.



R290 000 Summit Karenga BVM 1 450 kg

The chassis is made of stainless steel.



R335 800 Infanta Enkulu 1 BVM 1 600 kg

The roof lifts electrically and is a standard feature.



R353 000 Tuff Cats Mbada BVM 1 800 kg

The bed is part of an aluminium drawer that slides out from the hull.

The lakes of *Maputaland*

Take a sandy track along the coast from St Lucia to Kosi Bay – to your left crocodiles eyeball you from their lakes, and to your right beaches stretch out next to a tropical ocean.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**



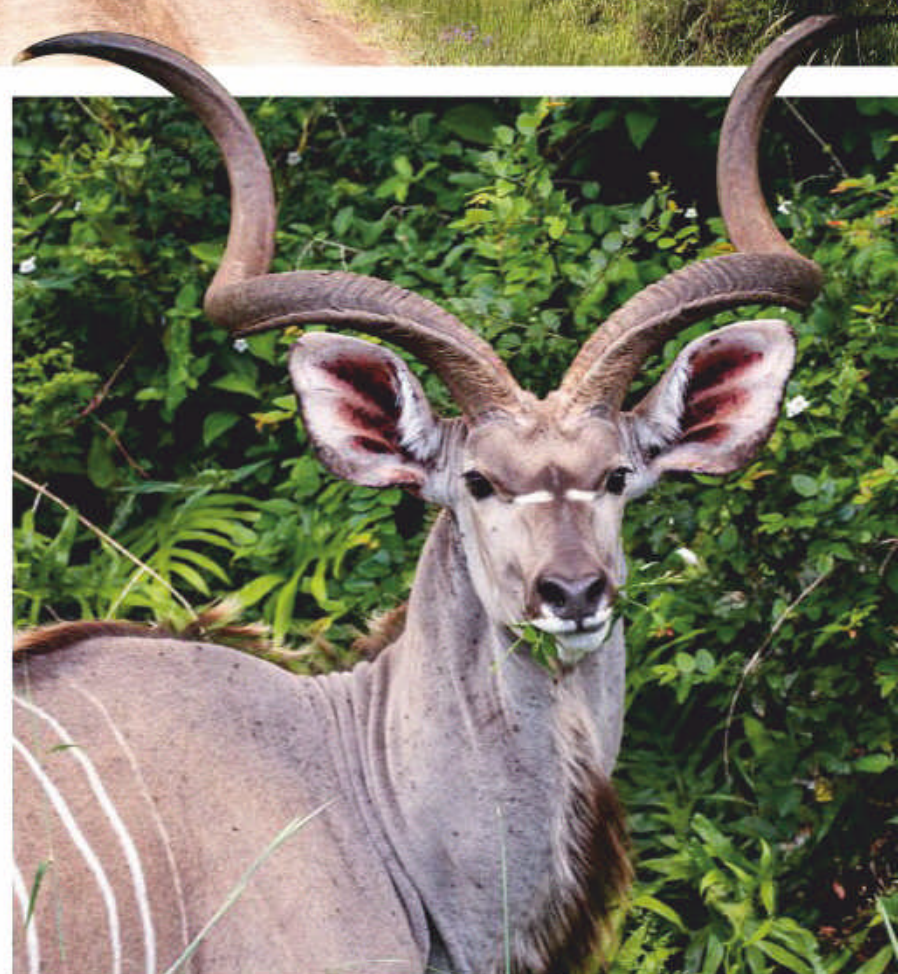
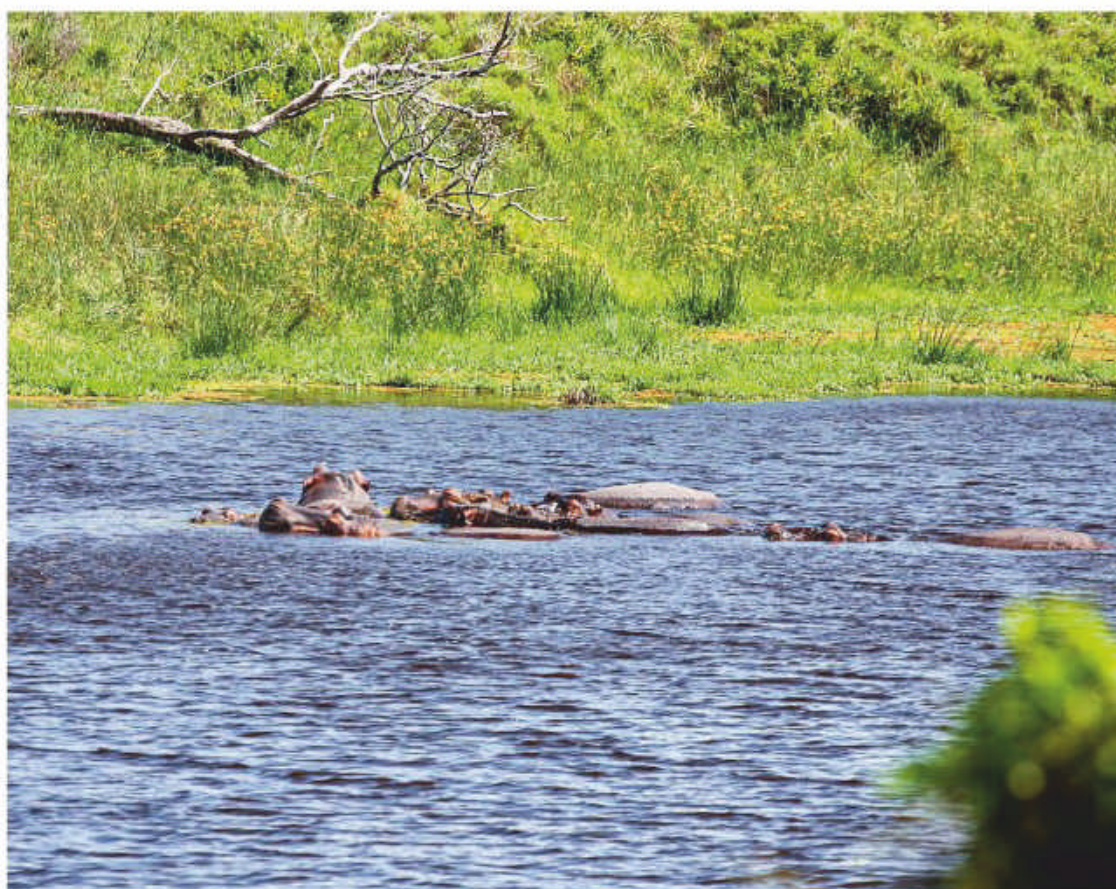


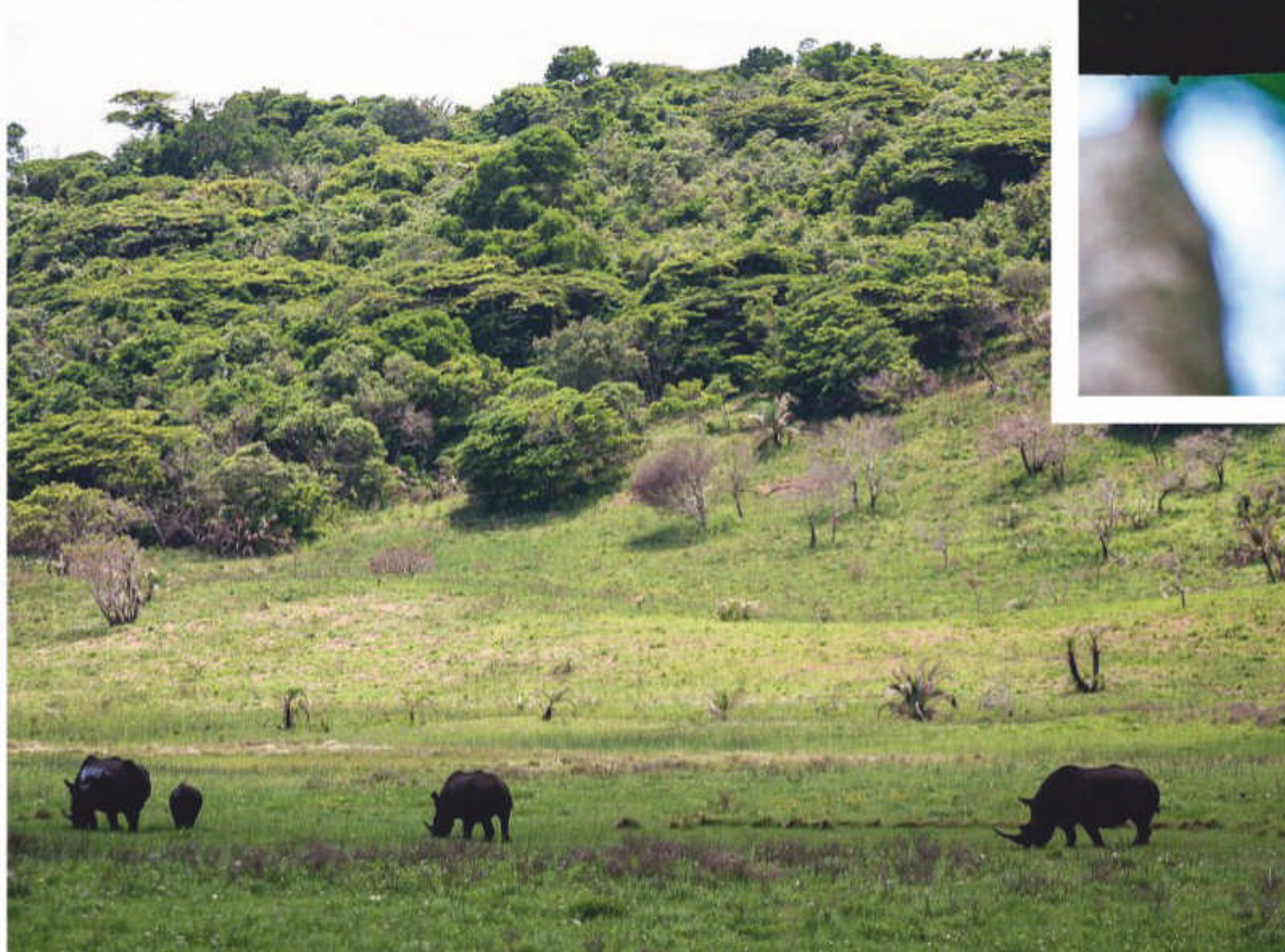
Maputaland in northeastern KwaZulu-Natal is a flat, sandy and wet region with Mozambique on its northern border, the Tugela River to the south and the Lebombo Mountains to the west. Geologists say the wide coastal plain was submerged 100 million years ago, and today Maputaland is characterised by dozens of lakes, lagoons, wetlands and grasslands, as well as huge dunes more than 150 m tall that remained after the sea receded.

If you stay on tar, you could easily drive the length of Maputaland in five hours, but why not take a back road? It first takes you through elephant country and from there along the coast to the Mozambican border. If you remember your passport – and lockdown rules allow – you could even visit Ponta do Ouro for shrimp, peri-peri chicken and 2M beer.

YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS at Cape Vidal, a popular campsite 30 km north of the KwaZulu-Natal coastal town of St Lucia. The Cape Vidal resort is located on a bay that's protected from incoming waves by a reef. It has 50 stands, each with water and electricity, and neat ablution facilities. It is a popular destination, and you have to book well in advance if you

HARD OR SOFT? The road connecting Cape Vidal and St Lucia is tarred, but there are several smaller loops that lead to interesting sights and, to top it off, you'll see more animals on these side roads.





GAME ON. Hippos, rhinos, waterbuck, kudu, hoopoe and many other animals await you in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. In the nearby Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve you'll encounter elephants.

plan to be there in peak season.

A mysterious ship named the Dorothea ran aground on 31 January 1898 at Cape Vidal. According to legend, the then president of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger, had sent a load of gold bars from the Witwatersrand to Delagoa Bay (today Maputo Bay). The gold bars were loaded into the Dorothea to be taken to an unknown destination and a layer of concrete was poured over the treasure so the crew couldn't get their hands on it. Unfortunately, the gold and concrete was such a heavy combination that the ship

began to take in water during a storm. The Dorothea sailed to the coast where she ran aground on Cape Vidal's reef. Wreckage is still being discovered at Cape Vidal, but that gold under its concrete layer has yet to be found.

So, while spear fishing between Cape Vidal and Leven Point, keep your eyes peeled for something shiny on the seabed.

After a few days at Cape Vidal, drive south through the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. According to a recent census, there are at least 700 hippos here and your chances of seeing one are therefore

pretty good. There are also nearly 1 000 crocodiles and 350 bird species, including pelicans, flamingoes and fish eagles.

You leave the park at the southern gate (near the crocodile centre) and drive into St Lucia. This town has everything you need, including fuel and the latest edition of *Drive & Camp* in the shops.

St Lucia was founded in 1885 and at one point nearly became a ghost town when the proposed harbour was given to Richards Bay and the lagoon silted up. The town was fortunately saved years later by the sport-fishing and tourism industry.



When Cape Vidal is full, you can stay at the Futululu Caravan Park, about 15 km outside St Lucia. The Eden Park and Sugarloaf campsites in town unfortunately leave a lot to be desired in terms of cleanliness. Also, sporadic crime will have you thinking twice before staying there overnight.

After completing your shopping, follow the R618 to Matubatuba. If you're in a hurry, take the N2 north to Hluhluwe, but we recommend that you take a detour through the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve instead. This reserve, established in 1895, is the oldest conservation area in Africa, and its name is derived from the rivers that flow through the reserve. The park is about 1 000 km² in size, but because you enter the park in the middle at the Nyalazi gate, you'll only see the northern half of the reserve during this visit. Vegetation here consists mainly of Zululand thornveld, and as far as animals are concerned, expect to see lions, elephants, a variety of antelope and rhinos. In fact, the park was created to save the white rhino from extinction, and the rangers are ready to defend these endangered animals against poachers. Leave the park through the Memorial gate and follow the D856 tar road to the town of Hluhluwe.

From Hluhluwe, keep going north on the R22 across the Mzinene River, past hundreds of subsistence farms to the

“

...the twin-track leads through dense forests that open up here and there onto wide grasslands and wetlands for 17 km

”



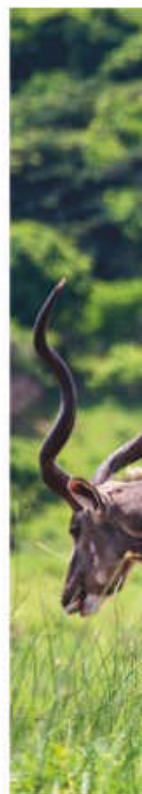
FOR THE BIRDS. The Muzi forest birding trail leads through dense woods (far right) which occasionally opens up onto grasslands (above).

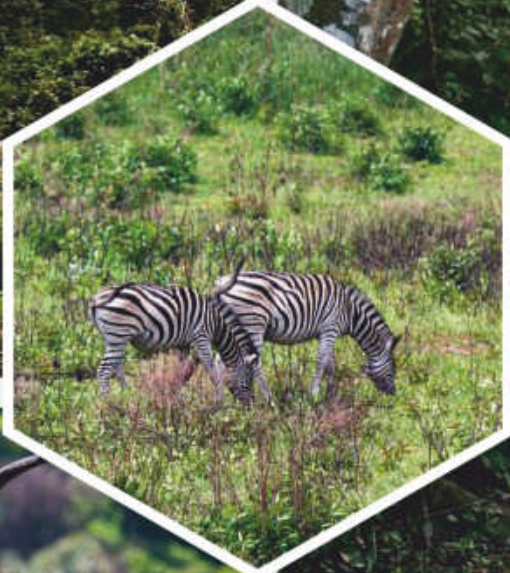
Mkuze River. About 5 km beyond the Mkuze is the Muzi forest birding trail. The southern entrance of the track – which you encounter first – is difficult to see off the main road, as it is an insignificant dirt track that slips away into the bushes. Use the coordinates S27.61497 E32.43525 to find the turn-off or continue to the northern entrance (S27.57929 E32.47267), which is considerably easier to find.

You don't pay to drive this trail and the twin-track leads through dense forests that open up here and there onto wide grasslands and wetlands for 17 km. Four-wheel drive is a must here and your

vehicle's bodywork might get scratched in the dense bush. Be on the lookout for lilac-breasted rollers fluttering from tree to tree across the savanna.

Your next destination is the town of Mbazwana where you will find a petrol station, ATMs, a Spar (with a Tops) and several shops selling trinkets. After filling up and stocking up on groceries, the road signs and the A1108 tar road lead to Sodwana. If you are directionally disabled, you simply have to wait along the road until the next bakkie towing a fishing boat on a trailer passes by – then follow it to the ocean.



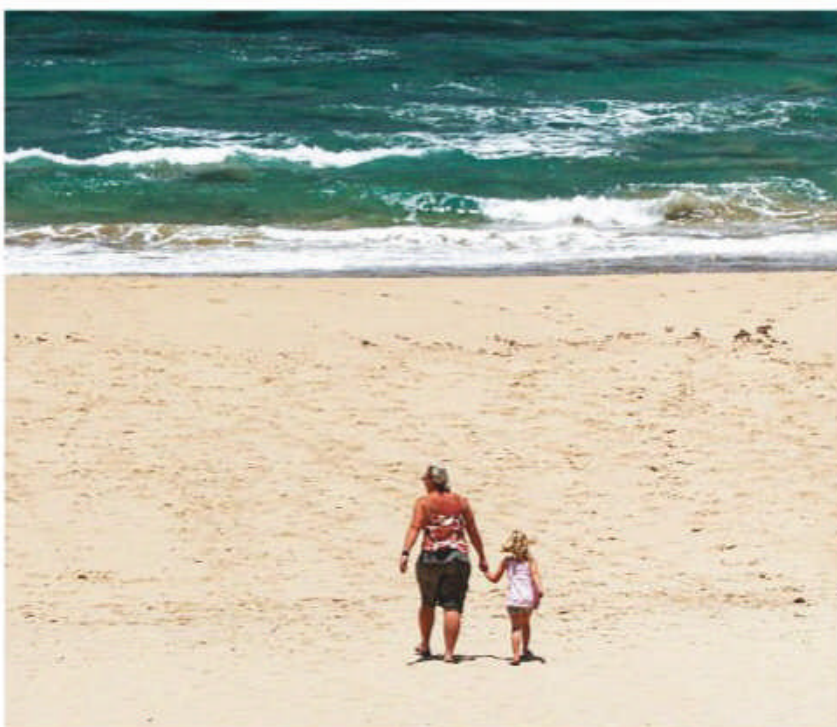


The Sodwana Bay National Park lies within the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and Lake Sibaya in the north, and despite the 'national park' in its name, it's managed by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife rather than SANParks.

The name Sodwana is a distortion of the Zulu word *sedwano* that means 'little one on its own' – it refers to the smallish Sodwana lake that lies on its own, not

part of the more impressive network of lagoons on Maputaland's coastline. Sodwana Bay was also considered for a port for the Natal North Coast, but just as with St Lucia, its residents had to make peace with the decision that Richards Bay would get the mass cargo port.

If you thought Cape Vidal was overflowing with holidaymakers, then you should steel yourself for the masses in



Sodwana. There is a total of 413 stands (some without power points), which includes the 33 sites in the Gwalagwala camp (all with electricity). In the peak season, at least two thirds of the stands are occupied.

Stay here a few days to scuba dive, for the coral reef is considered one of the five best dive sites in the world. It's also here that a colony of coelacanths (*Latimeria chalumnae*) was discovered in the year 2000 after being thought to be extinct. Even if you don't see this rare fish species, there are different shark species, dolphins, whales and pelagic fish here.

FROM SODWANA, retrace your route for 6 km. Then, 700 m past the gate of the Sodwana Bay Lodge, is a turn-off to the

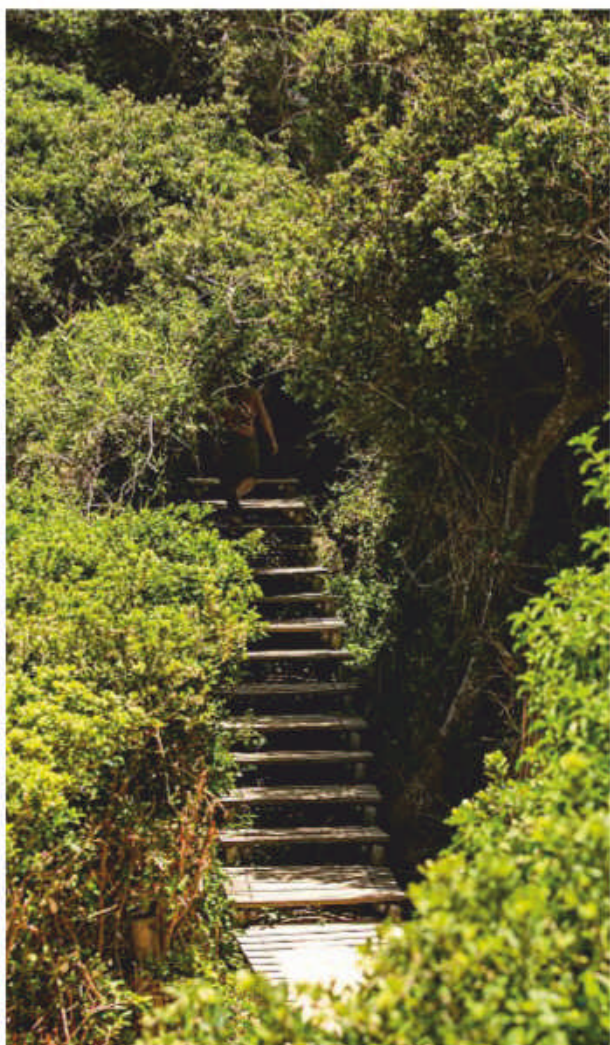
right (S27.50781 E32.65371). Here you'll find a network of tracks that meander through the bush, but if you follow the clearest trail, it will take you to the Baya gate at the southern tip of Lake Sibaya. If you're worried about getting lost, leave the back road and follow the D1848 from Mbazwana to the Baya gate, but you should know that this road is a bit boring.

When we visited, the gate was open and unmanned, and we simply drove through. Note, however, that according to the iSimangaliso website, you need to pay the following before you can drive through the park: a conservation fee of R28 pp (R16 for kids), an entrance fee of R29 per vehicle, and a community charge of R5 pp.

You are now driving through evergreen coastal forest, which in Zulu is called



STRANDED. Mabibi's beach is broad and because it is relatively remote, it isn't overrun by hordes of tourists. The twin-track (left) that brings you here is sandy and you'll need to engage four-wheel drive.



dukuduku. It means ‘a place where you grope around in the dark’ – an apt description of the dark lanes through the dense bush. An off-road vehicle barely fits, and we’d definitely not tow a road caravan here. A large motorhome will cause havoc and may break off the upper branches of the wooded lane and leave a trail of destruction. The twin-track is also very sandy, and you will have to engage four-

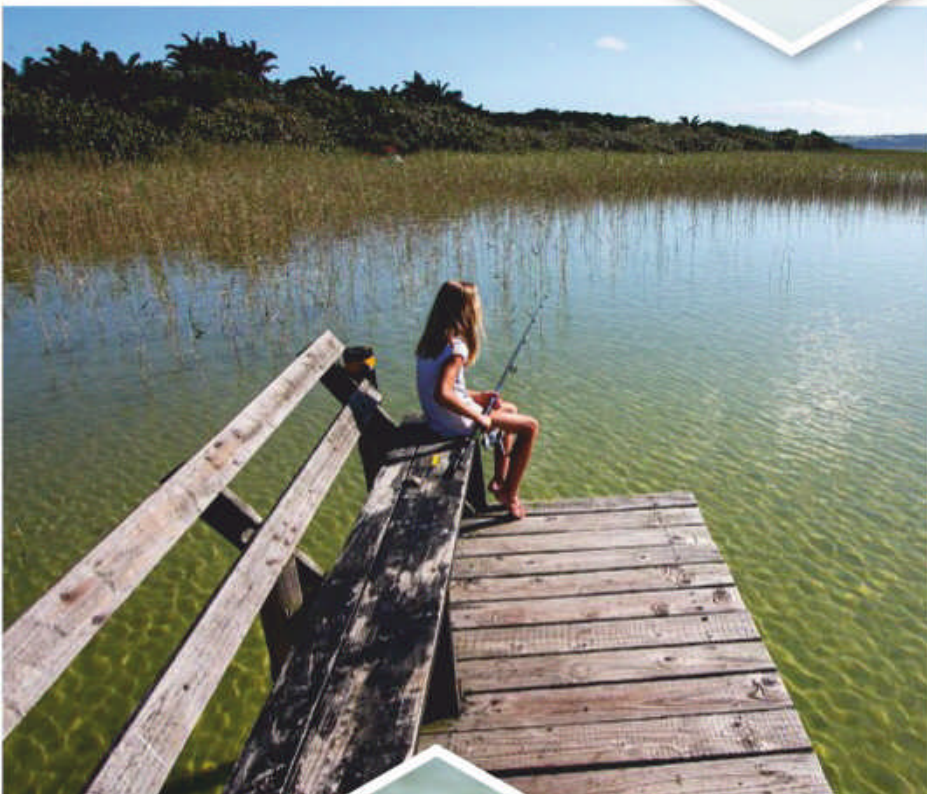
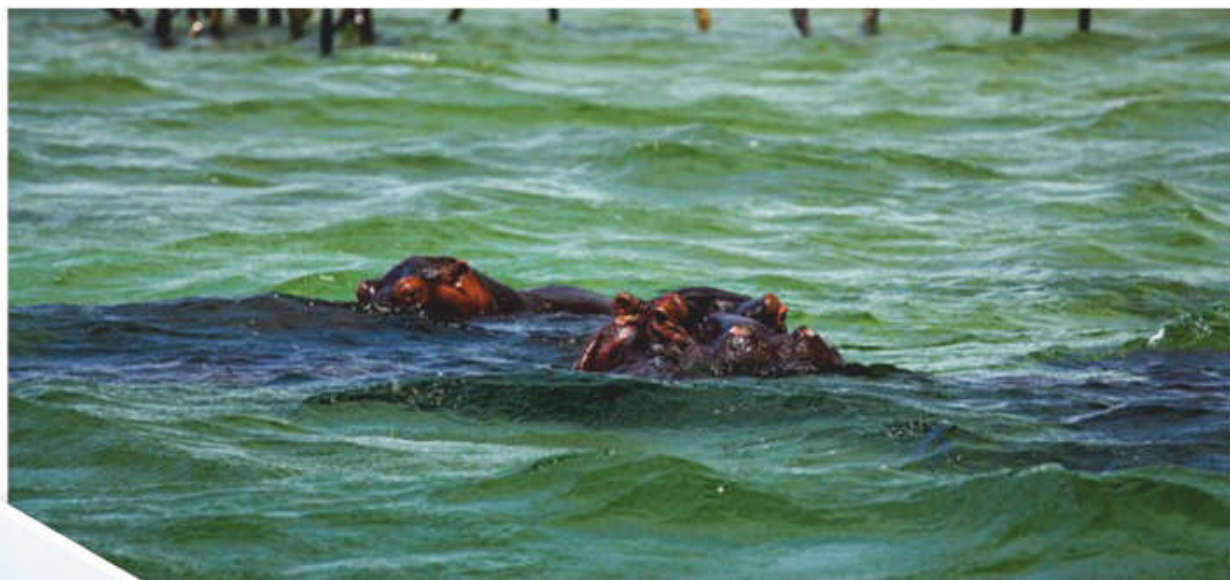
wheel drive and high-range gears.

Every now and then the bush opens up and you see Lake Sibaya on your left. Crested kingfishers sit on dry branches and stare intently at the water while a hoopoe calls out somewhere in the bush. There are plenty of spots where you can pull over under fever trees and have a picnic, but do be wary of hippos and crocodiles. The Zulu word *tsibayi* (from which Sibaya is derived) means ‘enclosed place with no visible exit’ and it describes the lake well: numerous streams flow into the lake, but there is no outlet to the sea. The water level is maintained by evaporation and seepage.

About 10 km after passing through the Baya gate, the D1849 turns off to the left

from the D1848 and takes you close to the high dunes at Mabibi. Mabibi’s beach is bright white and the sea is crystal clear – great for snorkelling. To get to the beach, you have to walk along a boardwalk and down a high set of stairs on the sea side of the dunes. It’s definitely not wheelchair friendly, and if you want to take a gazebo, cooler boxes and camping chairs all the way to the beach, you will need to be in good physical shape.

After a short visit to Mabibi, drive back along the way you came for 1 km and then take the D1848 north again for 8 km to the Manzengwenya gate. Here a ranger kindly asked us what the purpose of our visit was – after we explained that we were on our way to Kosi Bay, he waved us



through. No permit and no payment.

After 6 km through the *dukuduku* there is a ranger post and another unmanned gate. Turn right to go down to Lala Nek's beach. Lala Nek is similar to Mabibi, but without a campsite. The toilets were dilapidated during our visit – so if you didn't go to the loo at Mabibi, you'll need to squeeze until you get to Kosi Bay or brave the bush.

Lala Nek is followed by Rocktail Bay, Black Rock (see page 6) and Bhanga Nek. We, however, decided to turn inland at Rocktail Bay and drive along the wide grasslands of Lake Kuwzndini and took a short cut across the Malangeni River to Manguzi on the R22 regional road.

Follow the R22 for 5 km. Once you cross the Kunkanini River, turn right toward Kosi Bay (the turn-



BLUE LAGOON. The savanna near Lake Kuwzndini (top left) stretches far and wide and a twin track leads across it to Kosi Bay (right) where you settle in.



off is clearly marked). Tonight you'll be camping on the shores of Lake Kosi in the Kosi Bay resort and we suggest you base yourself at this resort and explore the rest of Maputaland from here. There are 15 stands of which stands 1 to 3 are nearest to the water. There is also a launch and moorings for private boats, hiking trails through the forest and a jetty that stretches a few metres into the lake. You can fish here, too.

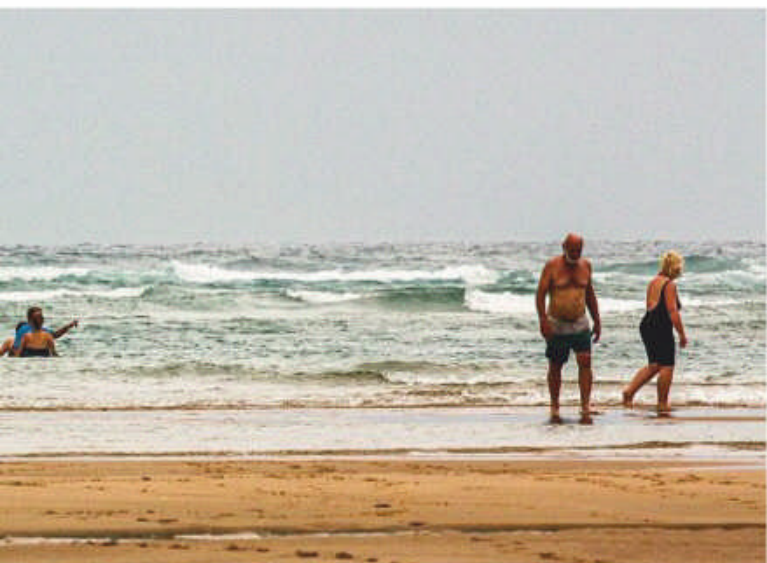
THE KOSI BAY NATURE Reserve consists of four lakes: Amanzimnyama, Nhlanga, Mpungwini and Makhawulani. The Nhlanga lake is also called Lake Kosi and, at 5 x 4 km, it's the largest of the four lakes. There are a number of tour operators who do chartered boat trips, but remember, you're only allowed to be on the Nhlanga, Mpungwini and Makhawulani lakes. Your guide will also show you where it's safe to snorkel and

which of Kosi Bay's famous fish traps you're allowed to look at from close up.

For the past 700 years, the local community has relied on the fish caught in these traps as their main source of protein. So, don't get too close to the fish as you'll scare them away.

The four lakes are connected by meandering watercourses and end in the Kosi estuary, also called the enKovugeni.

Wait, is Kosi getting a name change?



The name Kosi is not really recognised by the local people, because it is after all a survey mistake committed in 1822 when a captain William Owen mapped the east coast of Africa. In the then Delagoa Bay (from where the Dorothea also sailed) Owen heard about the Mkuze River – an important river for the Zulu nation – that flows into a large lagoon. He sailed south with two ships, the HMS Leven (Leven Point at Cape Vidal was named after Owen's flagship) and the HMS Barracouta (the latter under the

command of captain Alexander Vidal...), and mistakenly thought the Kosi lake system was the Mkuze lake system that he was actually looking for – this is in fact the Lake St Lucia into which the Mkuze empties. What's more, Owen could not (or would not) pronounce Mkuze correctly, so it simply became Kosi. St Lucia's name therefore should really have been Kosi Bay, or Mkuze Bay, if Owen pronounced the name correctly, and Kosi Bay might have been called Nhlanga Bay if Owen had not gotten quite so lost.



“
The four lakes are connected by meandering watercourses and end in the Kosi estuary, also called the enKovugeni
”



WARM BATH. Young and old play in the warm waters at Kosi Mouth. It occasionally happens that a hippo will appear out of the thicket and join in the fun. Humans should keep their distance and wait until the animal is done bathing before returning to the water.

4X4 DESTINATION

The Kosi estuary is 17 km from the Kosi Bay Resort. Should the resort be fully booked, pitch camp at the Utshwayelo Kosi Mouth Lodge and Camp. We wrote about these two resorts in the October 2019 issue of *Drive & Camp* and you can use that informative article to decide which one of the campsites you would most like to visit.

Utshwayelo has 14 stands and you're farther from the water than in the Kosi Bay Resort, but a big advantage of staying here is that you are guaranteed a permit to visit the Kosi estuary. By contrast, you must apply for a permit a day in advance at the Kosi Bay Resort and hope that the maximum number of visitors allowed per day has not already been reached.

The Kosi Bay/Ponta do Ouro border post to Mozambique is only 1 km from the Utshwayelo camp and 13 km from the Kosi Bay Resort. We found it easy and fast to cross the border and it took us a little over an hour from the Kosi Bay resort to reach Ponta.

Sit down at one of the dozens of seafood restaurants in Ponta do Ouro. The shrimp at Florestinha do Indico is amazing, but we've since learnt that the Mango Tropical Cafe's food is even better. Once our country's borders open, we will return to Kosi Bay as soon as possible for a day trip to Mozambique to enjoy tasty peri-peri chicken and 2M beer in Ponta do Ouro. See you soon, Maputaland!



I also want to go!

Can I drive there on my own? Yes, definitely.

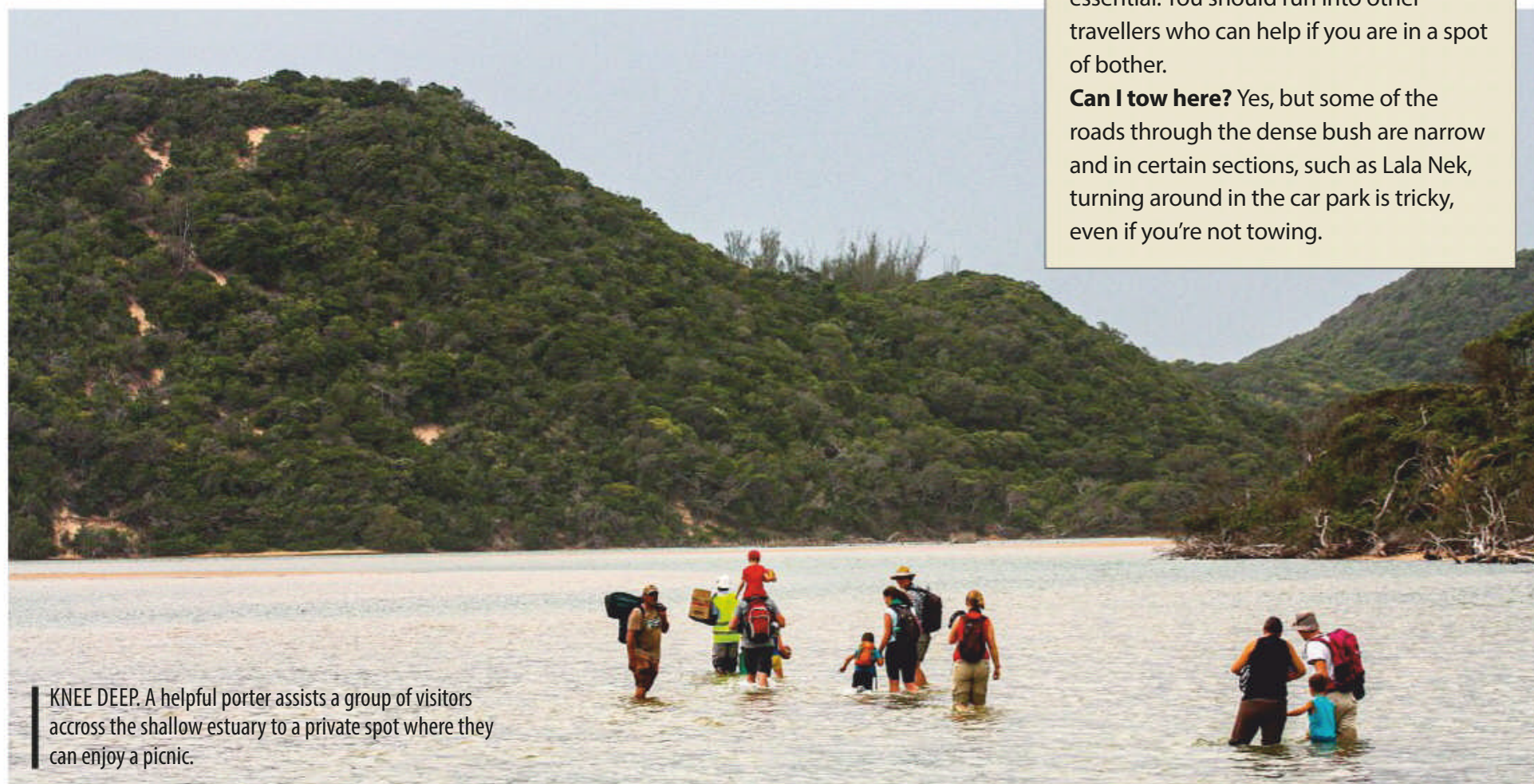
How long will it take? The route will not last longer than two days – you can even do it in one day if you leave out the visit to the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve, but why rush?

What should I be driving? The sand can be thick in places. That's why four-wheel drive – and especially good ground clearance – is recommended.

How much fuel do I need? This doesn't need to be a concern, as there are petrol stations on the way and the route is only 350 km long.

What equipment should I pack? Sand tracks are always useful, but they aren't essential. You should run into other travellers who can help if you are in a spot of bother.

Can I tow here? Yes, but some of the roads through the dense bush are narrow and in certain sections, such as Lala Nek, turning around in the car park is tricky, even if you're not towing.



KNEE DEEP. A helpful porter assists a group of visitors across the shallow estuary to a private spot where they can enjoy a picnic.



CAPE VIDAL



KOSI BAY



FUTULULU



SODWANA

Where to stay

There's plenty of accommodation in Maputaland's coastal strip. Here are the campsites where we either spent the night or investigated and found the facilities satisfactory.

Cape Vidal has 50 stands, all with electricity, under dense shade trees and next to the sea. It's a popular resort so consider yourself lucky if you get a stand at short notice.

Price R280 pd out of season and R840 in peak season.

Contact * 033 845 1000 📞 isimangaliso.com 📧 bookings@kznwildlife.com

The **Futululu Caravan Park** is located 17 km south of St Lucia and there are 35 stands under giant trees that cast more than enough shade. There is also a swimming pool and the management runs guided tours to surrounding attractions.

Price R250 pn for 4 people out of season and

R400 in the peak season.

Contact * 035 550 4431 📞 futululu.co.za 📧 info@futululupark.co.za

Sodwana Bay has a total of 413 stands – some with power points and others without. The resort's shop is a supermarket with everything you need for a wonderful holiday by the sea.

Price R230 pd out of season and R270 in the peak season.

Contact 📞 033 845 1000 📞 isimangaliso.com 📧 bookings@kznwildlife.com

The **Mabibi Beach Camp** has eight stands, each with a tap and braai area, but no electricity. The water is not potable and is only suitable for washing dishes and ablution facilities. Don't rely on getting hot water in the showers.

Price R146 pppn (half price for children). Minimum R292 per stand.

Contact 📞 035 474 1504

📧 res@mabibibeachcamp.co.za

📧 mabibibeachcamp.co.za

The **Kosi Bay Resort** has 15 stands, all in shade and within walking distance from the lake. The narrow path with its sharp turns inside the resort makes it a bit difficult to tow an off-road caravan, but it is possible if you keep your head.

Price R230 pd out of season, and up to R660 in the peak season.

Contact 📞 033 845 1000 📞 isimangaliso.com 📧 bookings@kznwildlife.com

The **Utshwayelo Kosi Mouth Lodge and Camp** has 14 sites, most of which are fenced, all with water and electricity. There's plenty of shade, but not all stands are level.

Price R235 pppn (R120 for children 6-12).

Contact 📞 082 909 3113 📞 kosibay.info 📧 info@kosimouth.co.za

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Lucky 13

It is quite understandable that people think the Big Five is the main drawcard that makes the Kruger National Park one of the most popular camping destinations in the country. This is, of course, partly true, but the management of the Kruger's campsites must get credit too as they provide consistently good service.

Apart from the satellite camps – Balule, Tsendze, Malelane and Maroela – you'll find fuel at the rest. The shops are also known for being fully equipped and stocked.

You won't see an overflowing rubbish bin in any campsite, and even in winter someone is always somewhere keeping the place tidy by raking leaves. (By the way, you don't get to camp on a green lawn, so remember your woven ground sheet.)

The power points also testify to consistency in service delivery, as all are equipped with blue caravan sockets. (Balule and Tsendze are exceptions, of course, because they have no electricity.) Just remember to bring a 30 m extension cord,

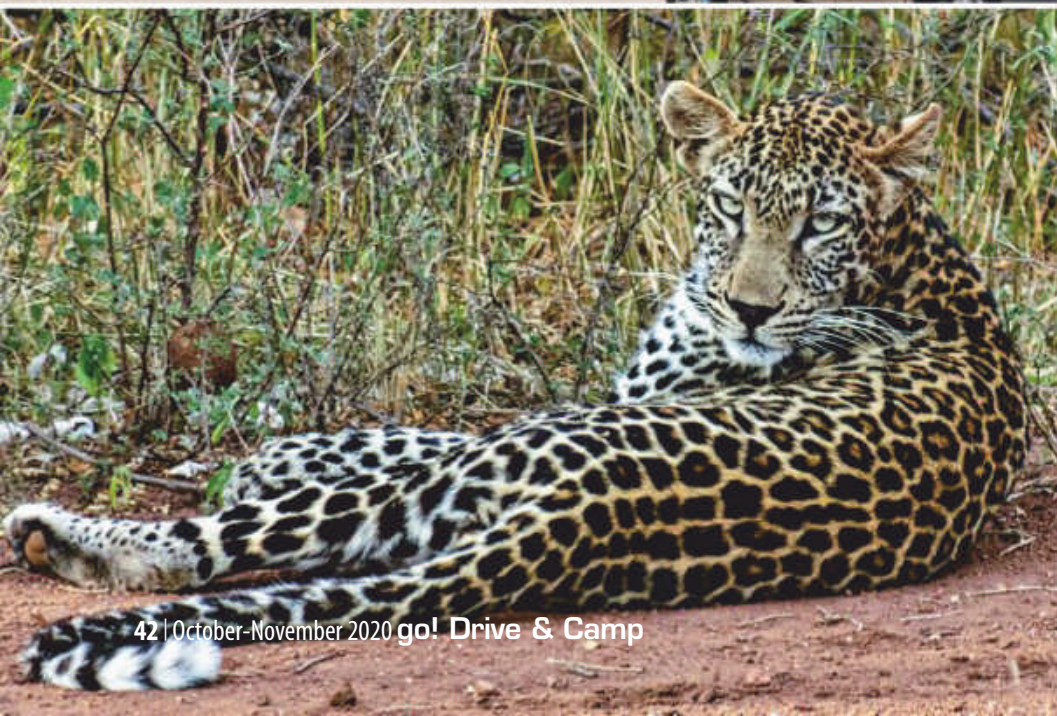
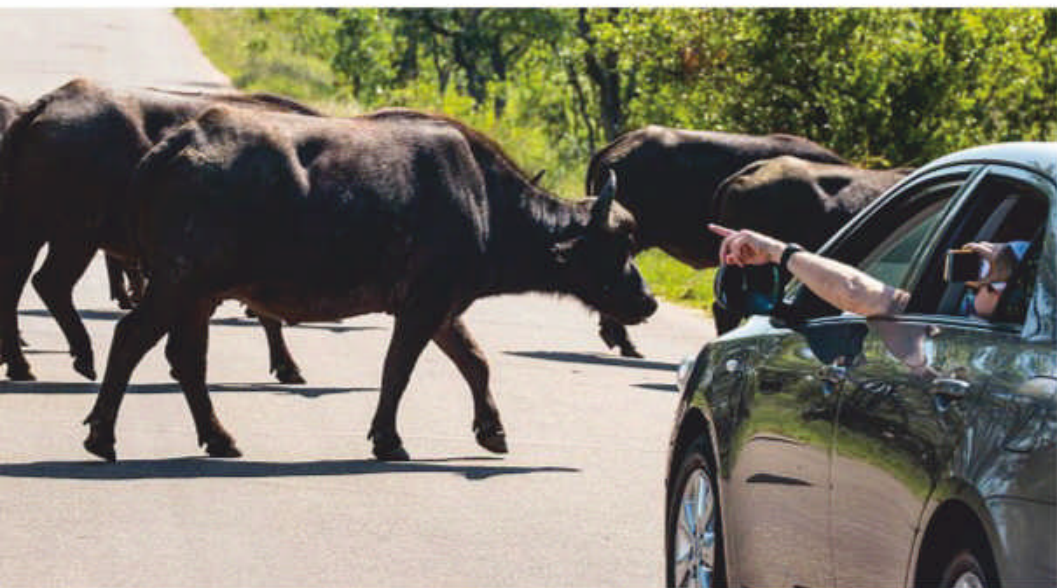
because if you arrive in a crowded campsite, chances are good that the nearest power box will take on the appearance of a spider web with all the leads running from here to the different stands.

We must also praise the washing-up areas in the Kruger: here, you can not only come to wash your dishes, but the square buildings are also equipped with two-plate stoves and appliances that provide instant boiling water. You could arrive in a Datsun Go with a two-man tent, because the rest is here.

And then there are the bathrooms: while they aren't all brand new, you would have to search far to find cleaner amenities.

All the main routes between camps are well-maintained tar roads, but you can safely tow your caravan to the satellite camps, too – the last kilometres or so of the dirt roads are decent enough to allow that.

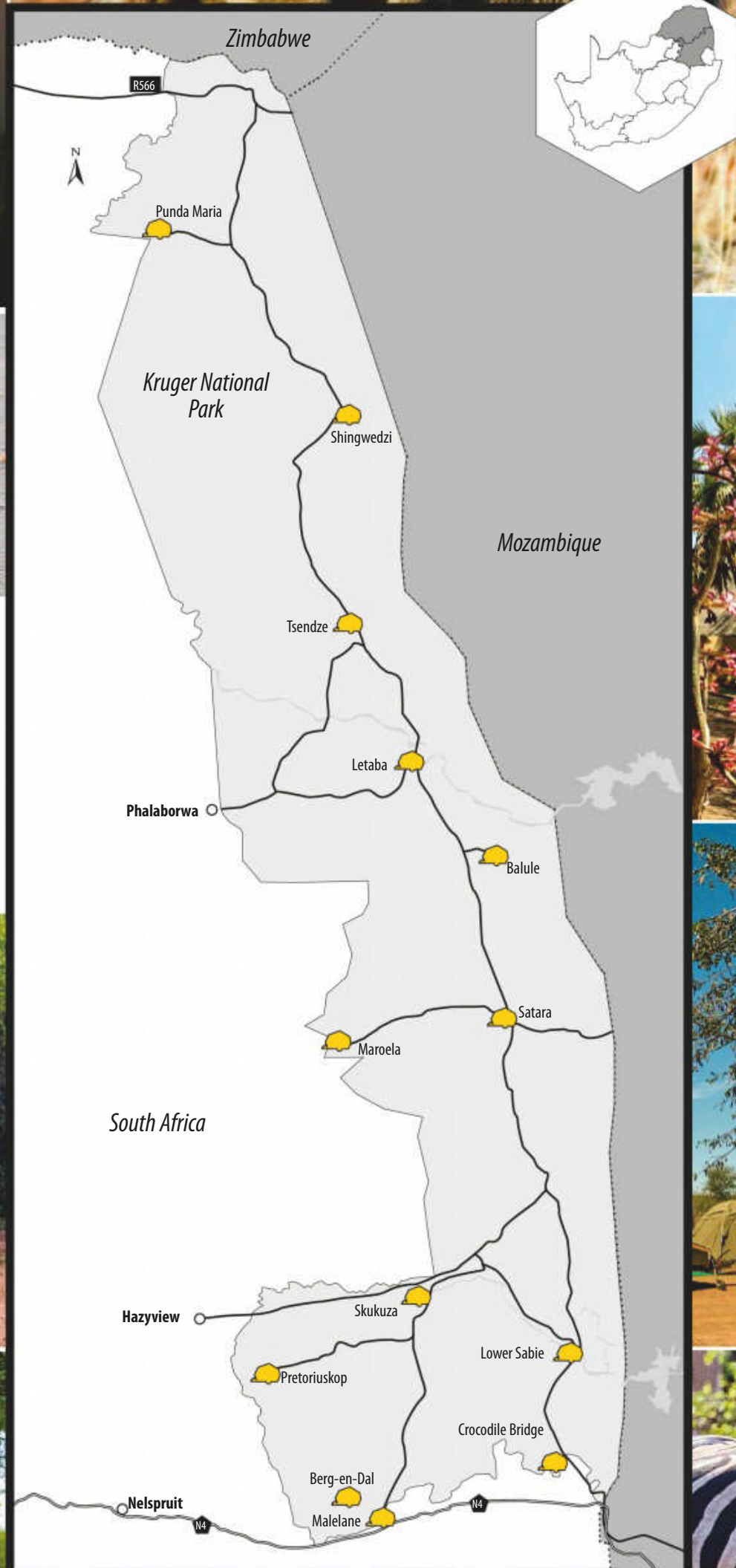
We enter the Kruger at Crocodile Bridge in the south and explore the camps all the way north to Punda Maria.





The Kruger National Park's campsites are almost as diverse as the wildlife you find here: there's everything from a bush camp to a campsite that has a bank – yes, complete with cashiers. We visit all 13 of them.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**



CROCODILE BRIDGE

Excellent company

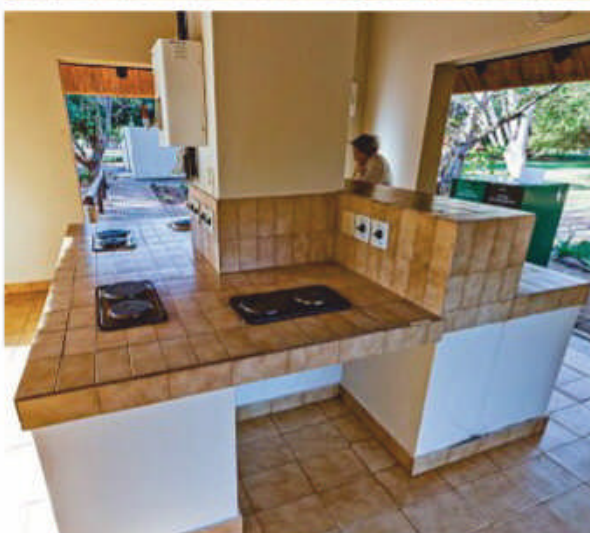
Crocodile Bridge is a small campsite, but it could hardly be any better – which is why it's so popular with visitors. The receptionists will have you feel right at home and the staff are justly proud of their work.

As you enter the campsite, the stands are all laid out on your left – and just under half of them face the fence. You camp on a level piece of land with ground that reminds you of Shingwedzi, but it is very tidy. It also seems that everyone gets a bit of shade here too.

The fallen leaves are raked early morning, and the metal parts on the fire extinguisher next to our stand was even polished to a shine. They not only dispose of the ash in the free-standing steel braai at your stand every morning, but also rinse it out with water. There are numerous square green boxes that house the rubbish bins. The boxes each have two doors: one for recyclable products and the other for ordinary rubbish. There are two taps next to the road, but you'll have to look for the others.

The 20 stands are right across from the ablution block. On the one side of the tall building is space to empty your cassette toilet as well as a laundry room (the washing machines and tumble dryers use R5 coins).

The kitchen is across the road, at

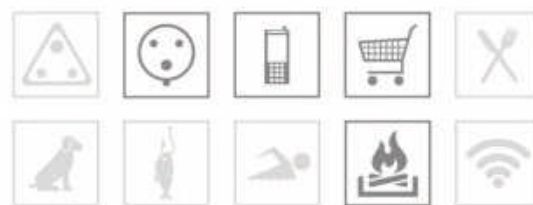


the gate where the stands begin. It is an open plan room with two sinks, four electric two-plate stoves and instant boiling water.

The garage is at the camp entrance with the shop to its right.

A family of warthogs roam like backyard chickens, and the monkeys are skilled burglars – so keep fresh produce safely locked away.

Briefly | Crocodile Bridge



Campsite 20 level stands (with power) on soil with fair shade.

Ablution facilities Neat facilities next to the stands that aren't next to the fence.

Price Depending on the season, R310-R410 p/n per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 6012 or 082 801 9898

Nearest gate Crocodile Bridge, 160 m.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Lower Sabie (35,8 km) and Skukuza (80,7 km). Malelane is 64 km if you follow the N4.

GPS S25.358475 E31.893490

Drive & Camp says The chances of you getting a booking here over the holidays are slim. So book Crocodile Bridge first if it's going to be a part of your greater Kruger experience.





Briefly | Malelane



Campsite 15 stands that aren't level with little shade.

Ablution facilities Small and neat.

Price Depending on the season, R310-R410 p/n per stand for the first 2 people; thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 6152

Nearest gate Malelane, 4,3 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Berg-en-Dal (10,9 km) and Skukuza (63,5 km).

GPS S25.476487 E31.511640

Drive & Camp says There is no reception here and you must first check in at the Malelane gate before pitching your tent.

MALELANE

Living the wild, wild life

Malelane, about 11 km from Berg-en-Dal, is the southernmost camp in the Kruger National Park. The average game-park camper would usually head for Berg-en-Dal, as it is a large, neat camp. But not everyone favours comfort, and that's where Malelane comes in. Here, you get only a stand, a bathroom and nothing else.

The stands are to the left of the gate

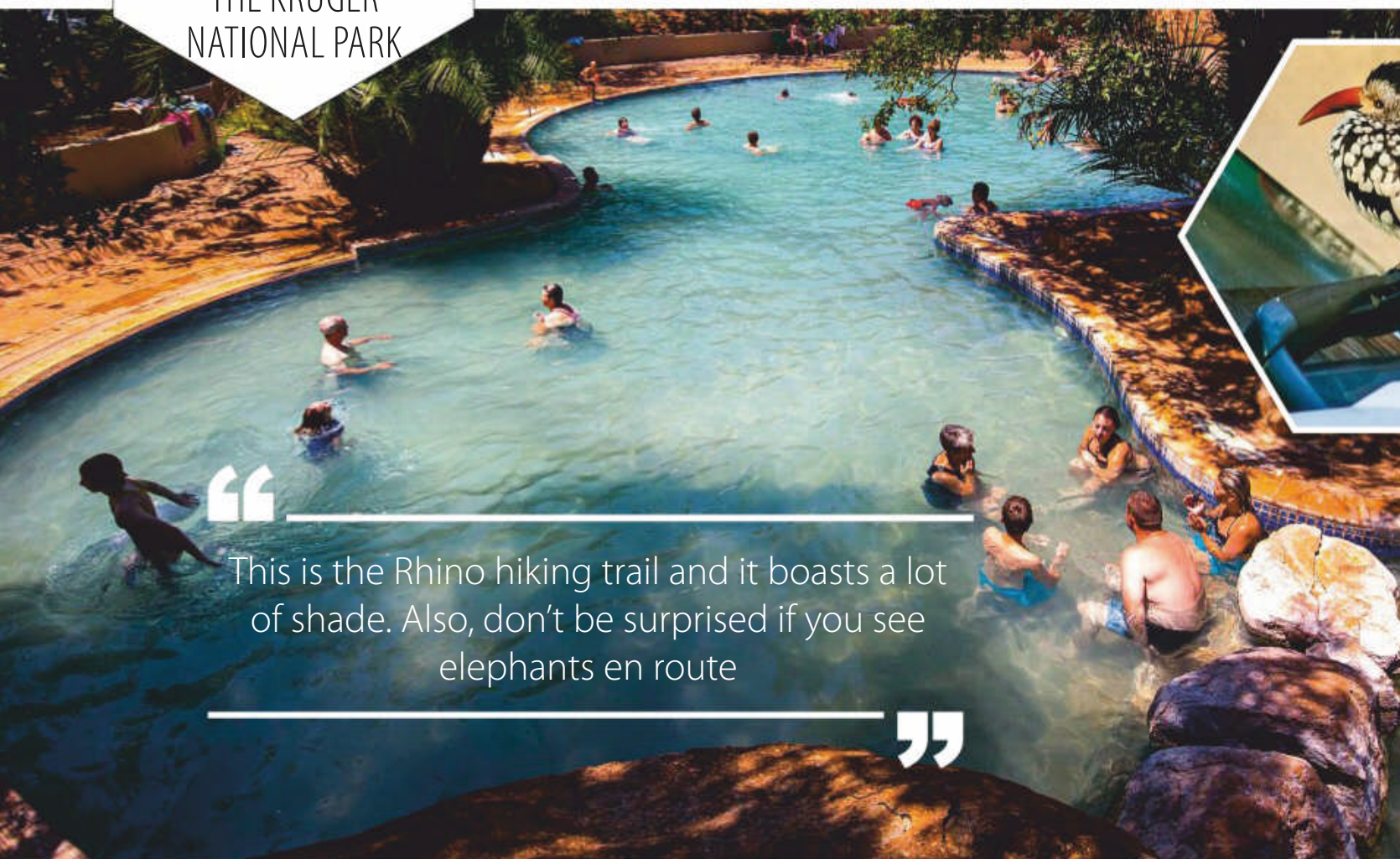
and extend in an L-shape away from you. The short leg of the L runs in the direction of the Crocodile River. The stands all slope down to the river and there trees are few. The recycling bins are all over, while the taps are more hidden.

Look for a power point before you pitch camp – we only saw four of them. If you pitch in the corner, your extension cord will have to be about 50 m long to reach the power point, and the people closer to the other side will probably

need around 40 m. There are also a number of loose steel braais.

The bathroom is on the right as you turn into the campsite. Next door is an enclosed kitchen with, among other things, a chest freezer, a fridge and gas stove, and next to it an open kitchen with a sink, boiling water and another fridge.

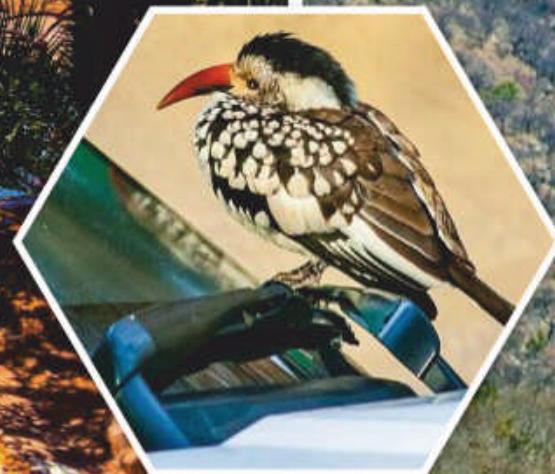
Next to the fence is a large lawn from where you look down onto the Crocodile River, but there's a lot of bush in front of you and you don't see very much.



“

This is the Rhino hiking trail and it boasts a lot of shade. Also, don't be surprised if you see elephants en route

”



BERG-EN-DAL

Quiet and peaceful

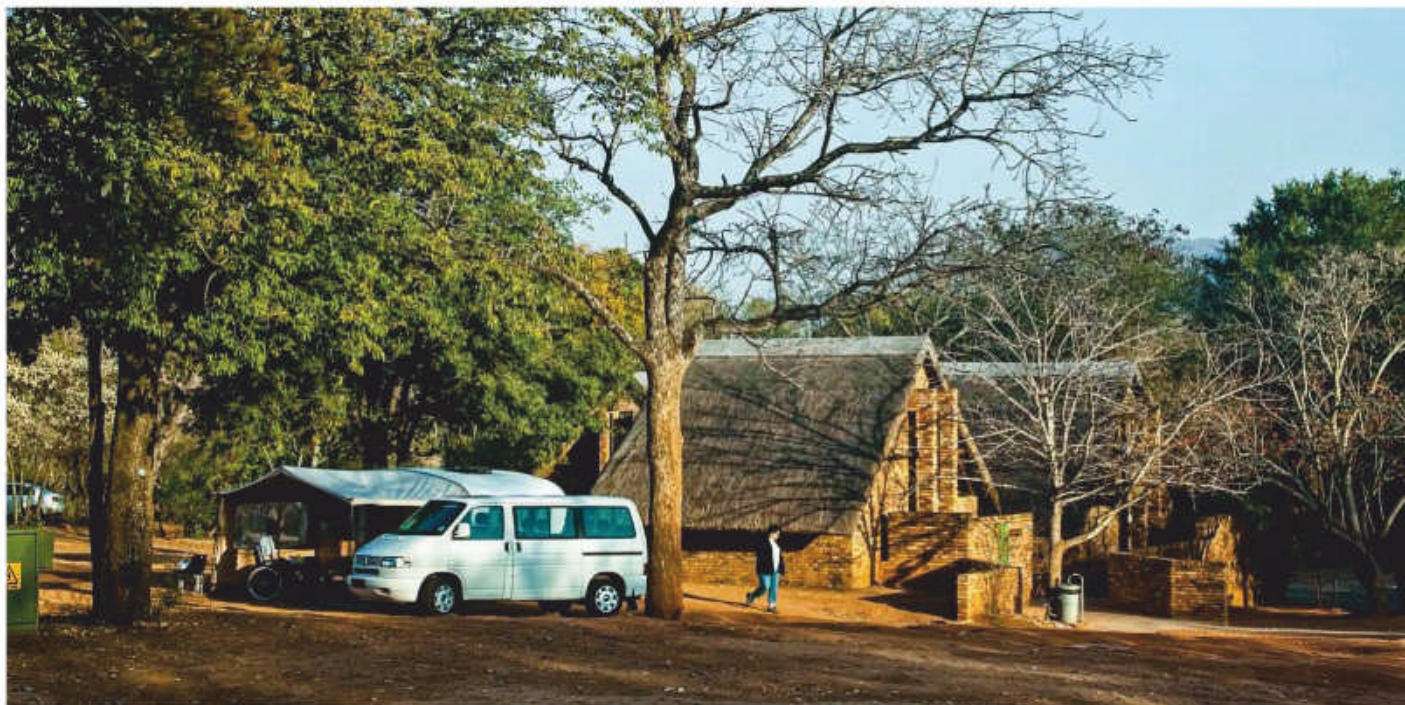
If you come from the Free State or KwaZulu-Natal, Berg-en-Dal is the closest campsite if you choose to not camp at Malelane. This camp has the highest rainfall in the park and lies among granite hills on the banks of the Mtjula river.

You head back a good 400 m after checking in at reception to get to the campsite. As you drive in, you could choose a stand to your left or right, but the spots down by the game fence are obviously the most popular. If you carry on driving, the road ends in a narrow lane where fewer campers fit. It's more private here and is also next to the fence.

Even when the campsite is completely full, the stands are of such a nature that you have enough space around you, and they are mostly level as well. If you'd like to camp under one of the largest shade trees in the campsite – right next to the fence, too – keep to the far right when you enter the campsite.

Bring an extension cord of at least 10 m, because the power points and shade trees are often far apart. There are also lights at the power points, but they sit low and are slightly hidden. Instead of illuminating the area, it casts more of a spot light. So bring your flashlight to walk to bathrooms after sunset. There are three ablution blocks and each of them has wheelchair-friendly facilities with washing-up areas at the back.

Coming from reception, the laundry



and pool are to your left, just before the campsite. The washing machines operate with R5 coins and the pool has quite a few shade trees for chilling under.

The shop – next to reception – is awkwardly too close to drive to, and too far to walk to, especially at the height of summer. So make an excursion of

it and walk along the fence towards the reception as if you would hike to town. This is the Rhino hiking trail and it boasts a lot of shade. Also, don't be surprised if you see elephants en route. When you get this close to them, you'll realise again just how big these gentle giants really are.



Briefly | Berg-en-Dal



Campsite 82 stands – with the fence on the right of the campsite. The first stands are away from the fence, but closer to the pool and office.

Ablution facilities 3 bathrooms spread throughout the camp, with more than ample dish-washing space.

Price Depending on the season, R310-R410 pn per stand for the first 2

people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 6106/7 or 082 802 1201

Nearest gate Malelane, 12,7 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Malelane (10,9 km) and Skukuza (71,9 km).

GPS S25.426516 E31.449517

Drive & Camp says The monkeys in the camp can cause a lot of trouble. We were warned that the little creatures can even wriggle their way through the canvas of your caravan's pop-up roof.



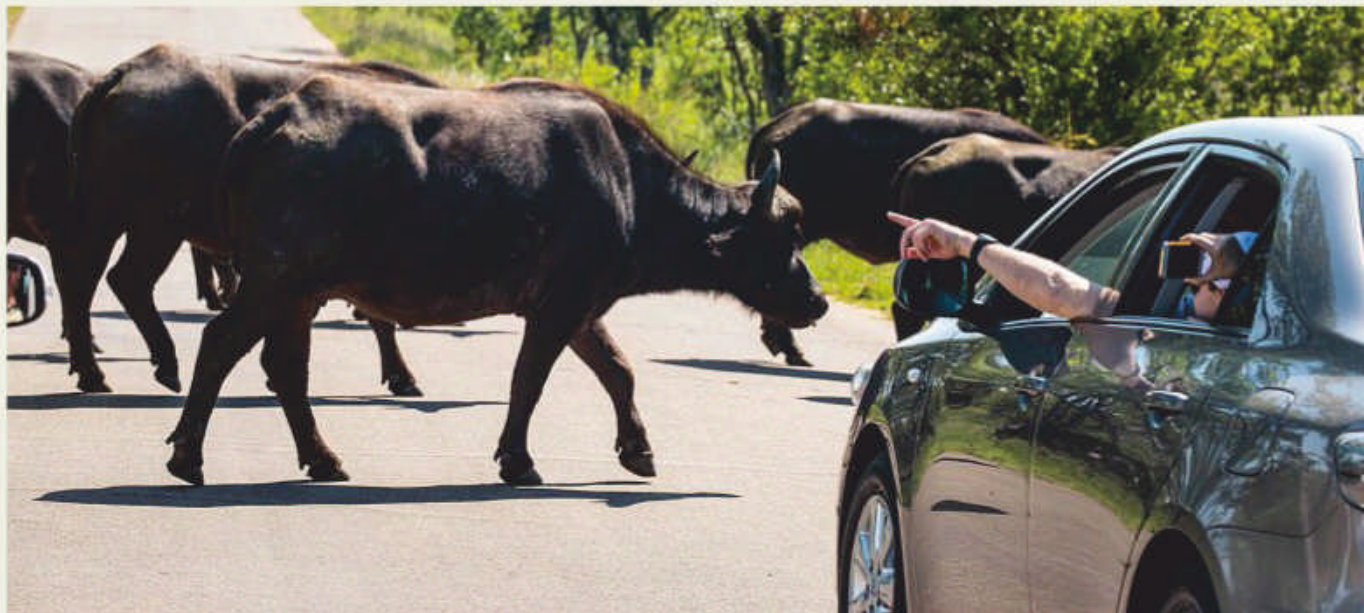
PRETORIUSKOP

Grandfather of the Kruger

This is the oldest of all the camps in the Kruger National Park. There are four groups of stands next to one another, all more or less along the fence. About 10 of the stands against the fence each have a permanent tent and are held back for special bookings.

It is a great camp with two bathrooms – one by the first stands and the other at the farthest point. The laundry is more or less in the middle and the machines operate with R5 coins. To wash dishes, you walk past the first bathrooms. The kitchen is in the square building that has no side walls (as in most of the Kruger's campsites). Here you'll find a washing-up area, a couple of electric two-plate stoves and instant boiling water.

If Pretoriuskop won an award, it would be for its pool. Okay, it's probably one of the pools in the Kruger that is the farthest from the sites, but the five-minute walk to get to it is well worth it. The pool is built on the side of a rock that protrudes several metres above the ground, and the water is crystal clear. On



THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

top of the rock there's even a splash pool for the kids from which a stream cascades into the larger pool. Even in the heat of the day when the campsite is chock-a-block, the pool never gets too busy.

If you're not right by the fence, you can still appreciate the wildlife. The guinea fowl in the camp are as tame as chickens and wander around like a slow whirlwind from one stand to the next – you can take pictures up real close. (Don't be alarmed when you zoom in, because then that wrinkled head looks like that of a predator from the distant past.)

Not all the monkeys in the camp get up to mischief. Some of them simply hang around in the tree next to your stand, as if they are on holiday just like you are.



LOWER SABIE Animal heaven

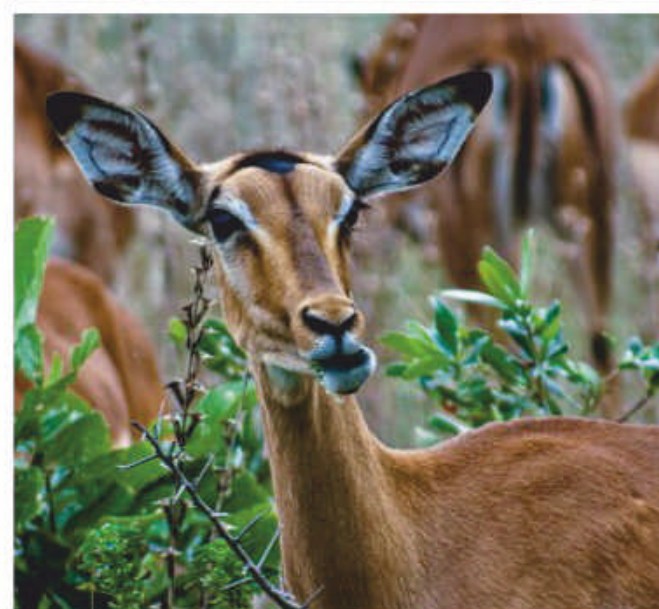
Lower Sabie is on the banks of the Sabie River and is a lovely rest camp where it is teems with wildlife.

The campsite is directly in front of you as you enter Lower Sabie, with the parking spaces for reception to your left. It is nicely in the middle of the camp and close to the shop and restaurant. The swimming pool is at the farthest point on the right – a good 300 m walk away.

The campsite has trees that are big enough to give good shade and there are also smaller trees among the stands that provide a little more privacy. On top of that, the stands are level and it is easy to get your caravan level. There are power points, taps and braais.

The dishwashing facilities are well equipped with the usual electric stovetops and boiling water.

Light the braai fire early and head over to the restaurant for a cocktail on the deck after supper. Then sit back and watch the seemingly endless stream of animals that come to slake their thirst at the river. There's also a good assortment of noisy little weavers, as well as a variety of waterfowl including green-backed and giant herons.





Briefly | Pretoriuskop



Campsite 43 stands with electricity, though some of the stands have permanent tents.

Ablution facilities A bathroom at both ends of the campsite, a laundry in the middle with the kitchen at the top. There are also wheelchair-friendly facilities.

Price Depending on the season,

R310-R410 pn per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 5128/32 or 082 802 1203

Nearest gate Numbi, 8,5 km.

Nearest 2 camps along the main routes Skukuza (49,1 km) and Malelane (56,2 km).

GPS S25.169094 E31.268733

Drive & Camp says If a large swimming pool will keep your family happy, book here with complete peace of mind.

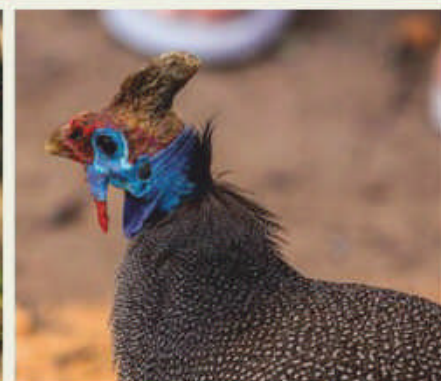
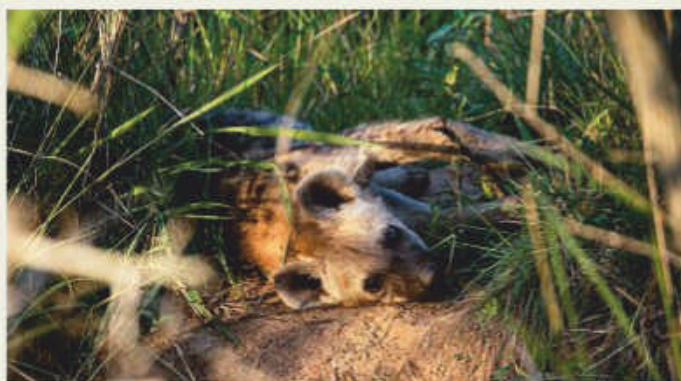
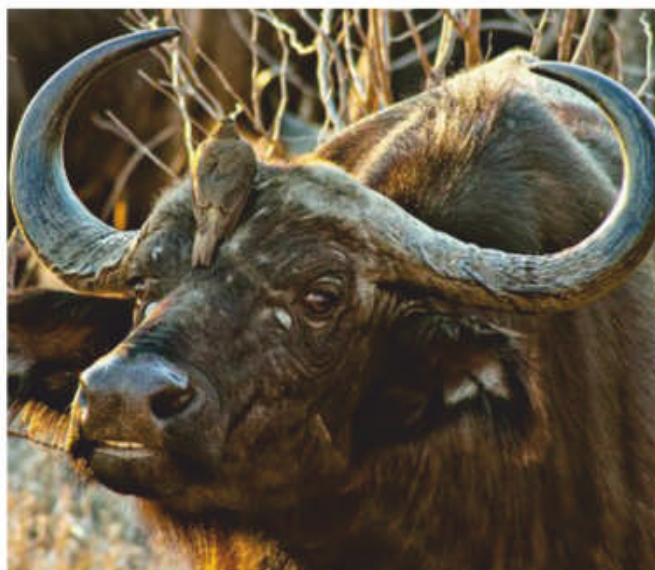


Photo Mike Lester-Olivier



Briefly | Lower Sabie



Campsite 34 small stands with power and neat brick edges all around.

Ablution facilities Extremely neat, including a laundry.

Price Depending on the season, R360-R410 pn per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 6056/7 or 082 888 6562

Nearest gate Crocodile Bridge, 35,7 km.

Nearest 2 camps along the main routes Crocodile Bridge (35,8 km) and Skukuza (45,3 km).

GPS S25.119452 E31.915727

Drive & Camp says It's not every day you get a demarcated stand in the Kruger.



Photo Neels van Heerden

Photo Neels van Heerden

SKUKUZA

Pappa Bear

If you want to know exactly how popular a campsite is, check out how busy it is when weather conditions are less favourable. In the Kruger, that would be the middle of summer, because then the mercury will hit 40 °C, summer rains will cause lush and green forests, and malaria might be in full swing.

In Skukuza, the game park's main camp, you will have to make peace with the crowds, all year round, but here you can keep yourself busy with some things that aren't available at other camps. There are also a multitude of birds sitting and singing and scurrying around in the trees.

As you drive in, there is no parking for your car and caravan in front of reception. Just continue past the building; at the back is a large open car park where you can wait while your significant other completes the paperwork.

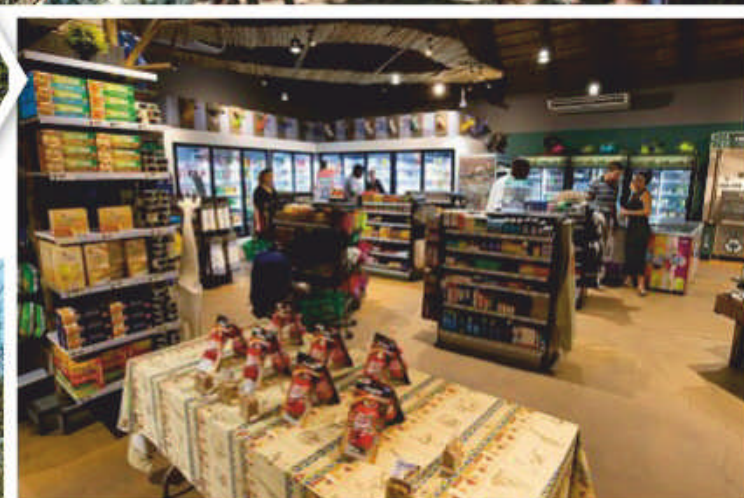
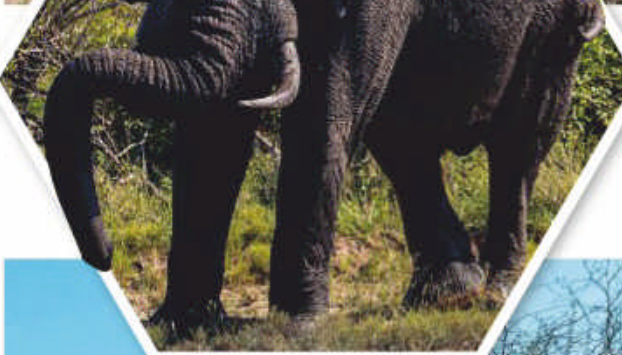
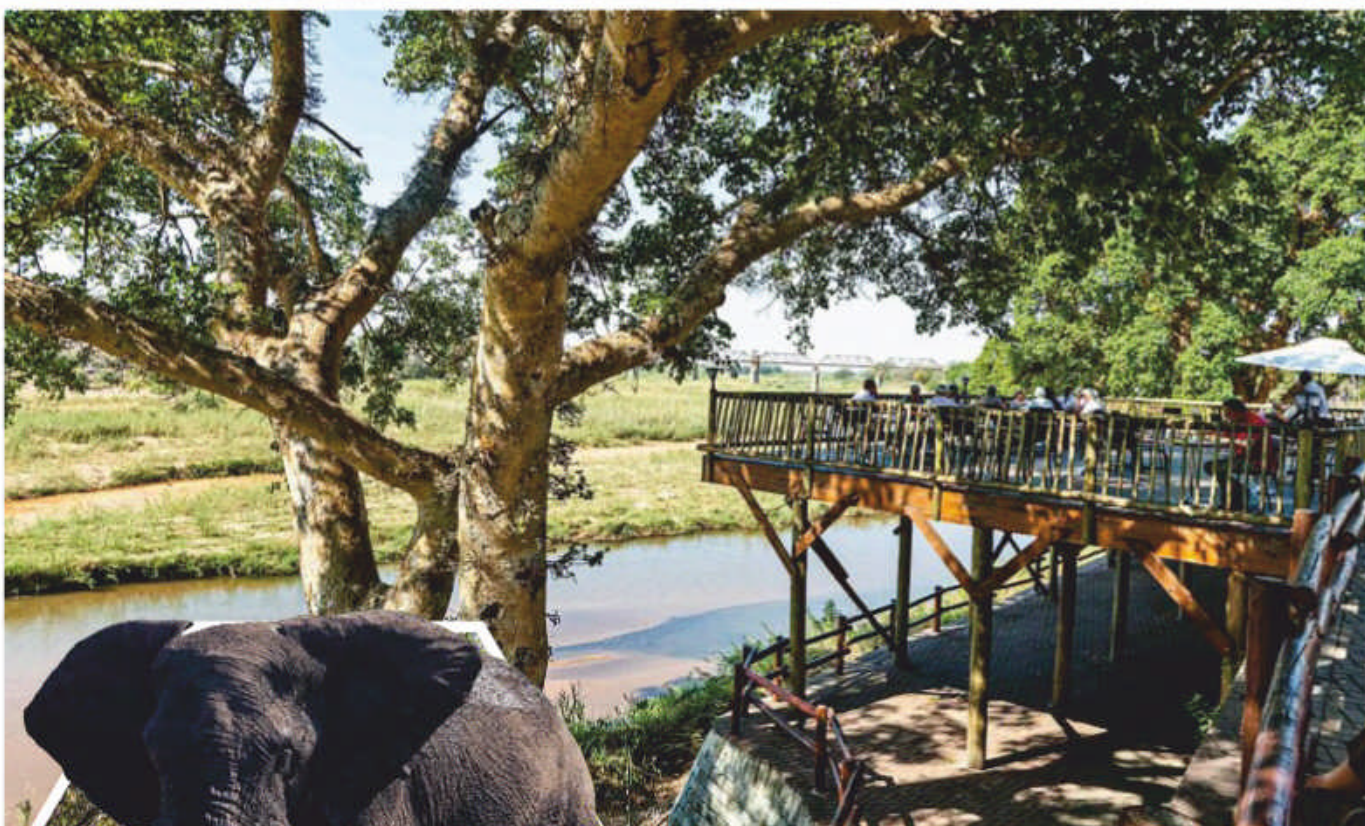
At Skukuza you get everything – from a post office (with post boxes) to a full-fledged FNB branch (with cashiers). To the right of reception is a work by the sculptor Phil Minnaar against the wall: three faces that are a reminder that Paul Kruger shouldn't get all the credit for the park. On either side of the statesman you see the faces of Piet Grobler, then Minister of Lands of the Union of South Africa, and lieutenant-colonel James Stevenson-Hamilton, the Kruger's first chief warden.

The stands are to the left and right of the tarred road on which you enter the camp. Both sides are laid out on a hill with a bathroom on either side. On the left you camp on levelled terraces, built with three-quarter moon concrete blocks, and on the other side, stone walls steady the stands. Some of the stands are spacious, but your Exclusive won't fit in some of the others.

The campers on the left are the closest to the pool, which is modest if you considering Skukuza's status.

Don't arrive here in the summer without a fan or your car's air-conditioner, as it the heat gets intense.

Early morning can get very busy at the bathrooms – it almost feels like you're attending a family reunion. Strangers greet you as you walk into the bathroom. Even when it's busy, you won't have to wait for a shower cubicle.





Briefly | Skukuza



Campsite 85 stands with power on either side of the main driveway (more or less divided in half). The fence is on the right and the pool on the left.

Ablution facilities You will have to live with small shower cubicles and shower curtains.

Price Depending on the season R310-R410 p/n per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 4196 or 082 802 1204

Nearest gate Paul Kruger, 12,1 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Lower Sabie (45,3 km) and Pretoriusskop (49,1 km).

GPS S24.995723 E31.592046

Drive & Camp says This is a place for campers who love people and wildlife alike.

MAROELA

Bush, but not quite

The Maroela Camp is barely a five-minute drive from the Orpen Gate, and this is also where you need to check in when camping here.

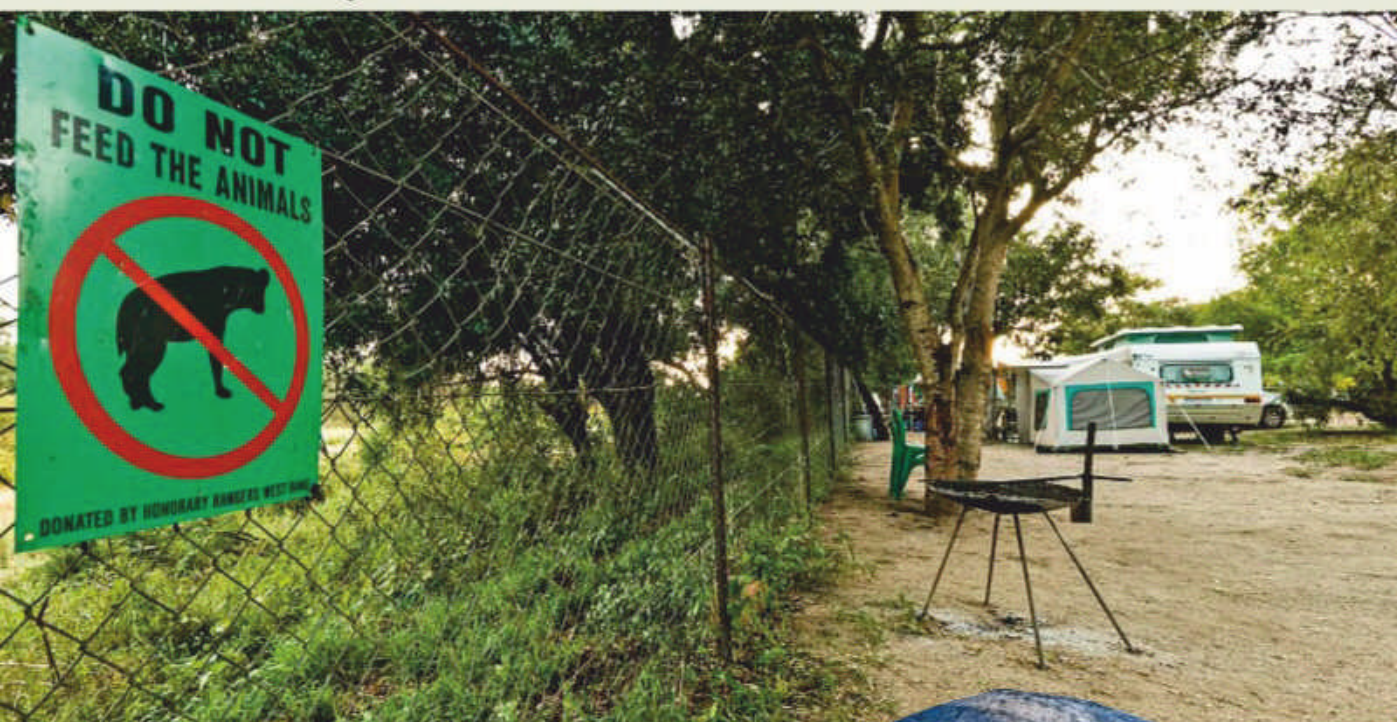
Maroela is therefore a satellite camp – and together with Tsendze and Balule one of the bush camps. But even though it's so deep in the bush, you'll be surprised when you first see it, because there are loads of road caravans.

The stands don't get allocated. So if you arrive early, you can choose a campsite against the perimeter fence, close to the game. The first prize is one of the stands on the river side where your chances of seeing animals are even greater.

Something you don't expect in a 'bush camp' – Balule and Tsendze have no electricity – are the power points. The sockets are neatly encased in boxes.

The stands are laid out on a slight slope, with lots of shade





trees. Unfortunately, not everyone gets a rubbish bin, a steel braai or a tap. In the middle of Maroela is a large Kalahari apple leaf tree that gives lots of shade.

The bathrooms are what you'd expect from SANParks, and on the other side is a scullery with some two-plate electric stoves and a chest freezer.



Briefly | Maroela



Campsite 20 stands with power with considerable shade. Not all are level.

Ablution facilities Very clean and closer to the stands near the gate.

Price Depending on the season, R310-R410 p/n per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 6355 or 082 802 0686

Nearest gate Orpen, 3,2 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Satara (46,7 km) and Balule (95,9 km).

GPS S24.456351 E31.399463

Drive & Camp says A bush camp close to civilisation, but far enough in nature so you get tranquility and peace.

SATARA

Lion country

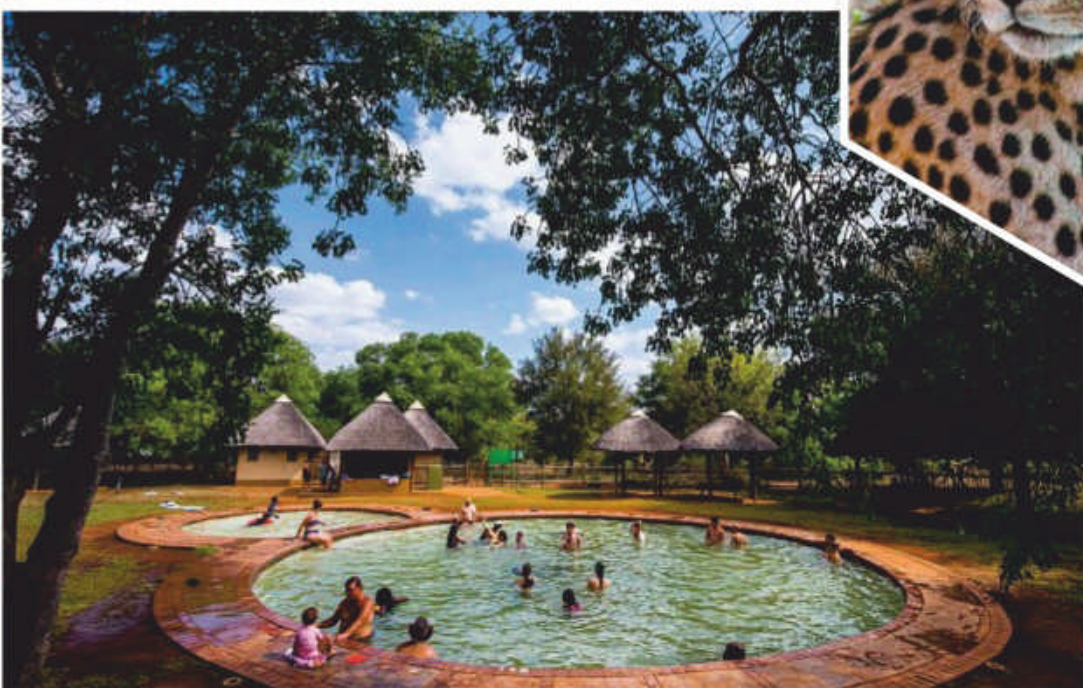
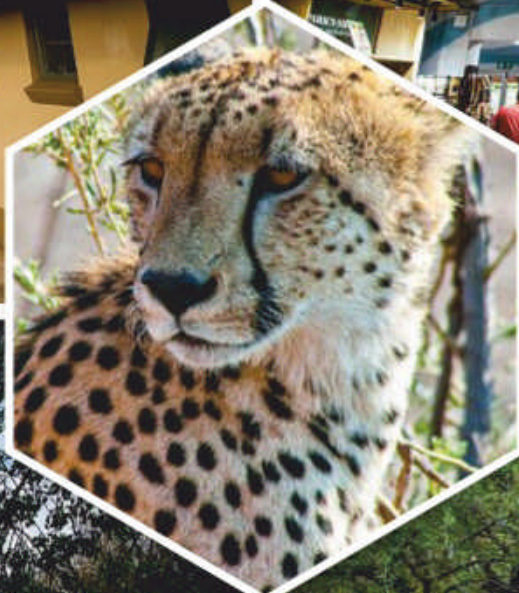
Satara is synonymous with big cats: lions, leopards and cheetahs, and as you get closer to the camp, the large old fever trees with their yellow-green trunks stand out against the rest of the veld. The office, restaurant and shop are next to the trees and this is where Satara is busiest.

The campsite is half a kilometre down the road, past the swimming pool, petrol station and chalets.

You can divide the camp into three sections – two are to your left and right (each with an ablution block), and then there is a strip that lies against the fence, also with an ablution block.

If you want to pitch camp on one of the fence stands, first drive down the fence to see if you can get a spot. Judging by who is here already, your chances of getting a spot here are greater if you have a caravan, as we saw only three dome tents. Obviously, most of the 100-plus stands are located away from the fence. The stands without electricity are to your left and right as





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Even when the campsite is booked out, the layout is such that you're not camping on top of your neighbour

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you enter the campsite, and the trees in the camp are sparse, if you are looking for a shady spot. Pick a stand close to the bathrooms near the fence if you prefer newer amenities.

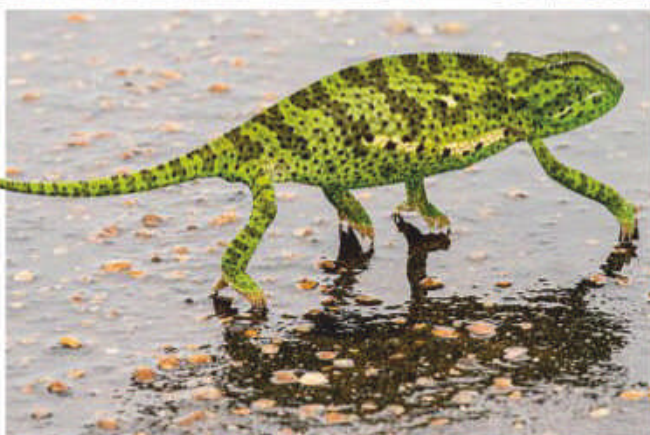
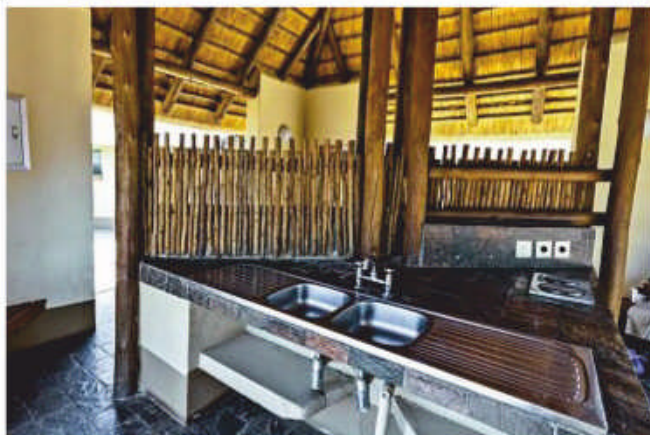
You can't complain about the neat slate work around the sunken basins, and there are mirrors on the back of the wall. The shower cubicles are unfortunately very small and you have to get into the shower before you can close the door behind you.

Even when the campsite is booked out, the layout is such that you're not camping on top of your neighbour. It gives you a sense of space and you don't struggle to find space for your towing vehicle either. Obviously, this is not the case with the front row; here you are right next to your neighbour.

The planted steel braais and power points are dotted around randomly. The brightly polished copper taps at the kitchen buildings are proof of how clean SANParks keep the facilities.

The pool is about the size of a round farm dam. There is also a smaller pool for the kids and a jungle gym.

THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK



Briefly | Satara



Campsite 88 stands with power and 15 without – with minimal shade.

Ablution facilities 2 older blocks and 1 with new trendy facilities (which include dishwashing areas).

Price Depending on the season and stand, R260-R410 p/n per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

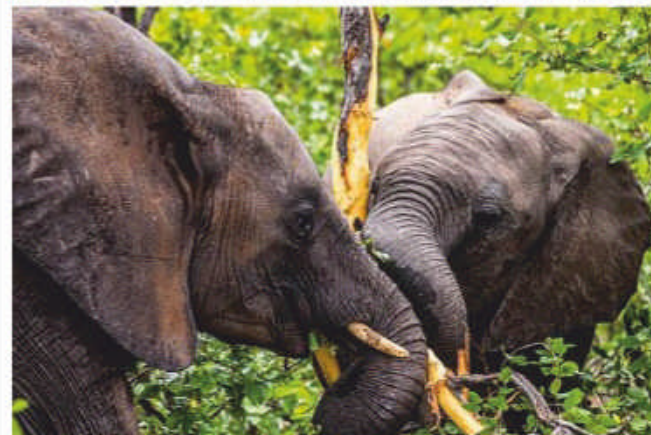
Contact 013 735 6306/7 or 082 802 1209

Nearest gate Orpen, 45,5 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Maroela (46,7 km) and Balule (47,9 km).

GPS S24.392865 E31.779552

Drive & Camp says Although Skukuza is the Kruger's main camp, Satara has 18 more stands – a total of 103.



BALULE

Nature calling!

With only 15 stands each, Malelane and Balule are the camps in the park with the least amount of stands.

Balule is almost square and looks to be just a tad smaller than a rugby field. The stands have all been laid out along the fence, but aren't properly demarcated. Here and there, you'll find a stand number screwed to a pole, but it is unclear who needs to pitch where. Campers come in and choose a spot next to the fence, but not everyone spares a thought for their neighbour.



The same happens here as in an open parking lot where two cars are parked too close and another car can't then fit in-between them. This wastes the precious space next to the fence.

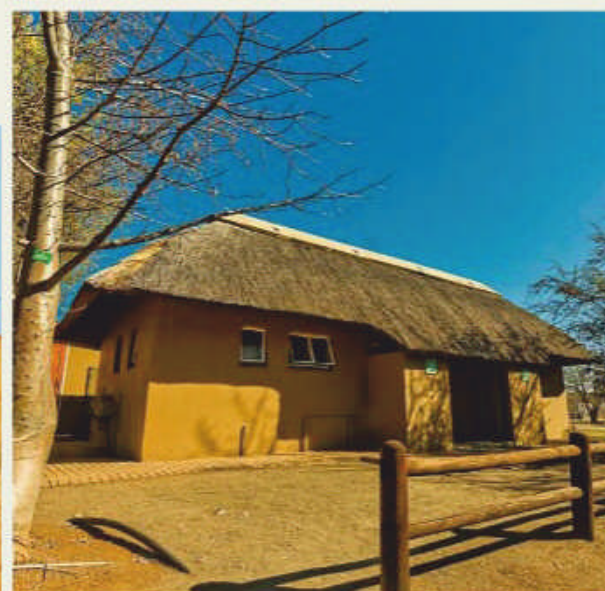
On the far right, you could pitch camp some distance away from the fence, and then there are also a few stands on the left just past the gate.

At your stand, it gets quite dusty and the ground is also slightly rocky. At first glance, it looks as though you'll struggle getting your tent pegs in, but surprisingly, it doesn't take too much effort. And when it's time to pack up, you can get them out again without straining a muscle. There are many trees here, but nothing that could be described as giving decent shade. Steel braais are planted some distance apart, but because

campers set up camp at randomly, you can't simply take ownership of one. At least there are some loose steel braais around too that you can bring closer if you haven't brought your own. Taps are scarce and you have to look carefully to spot them, especially in winter, because then they are just as dull as the surroundings.

The green grass in the middle of the campsite reminds you of a town square where people take lunchtime breaks. This is also where the kitchen sits under a thatched roof.

The bathrooms are to the right of the driveway and at night paraffin lanterns are placed in the bathroom to provide light. It's good enough to orient yourself in the room, but that's about all. The lanterns burn all night.



Briefly | Balule



Campsite 15 level stands without electricity, most of which are along the perimeter fence.

Ablution facilities Small and neat with a dish-washing area in the middle.

Price Depending on the season, R300-R390 p/n per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 6606/7

Nearest gates Orpen, 94,8 km and Phalaborwa, 96,3 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Letaba (47,2 km) and Satara (47,9 km).

GPS S24.053941 E31.733340

Drive & Camp says You don't check in at Balule; first report at Olifant or Satara.

LETABA

Mopane motel

Letaba lies, in a manner of speaking, in the bellybutton of the Kruger. This is elephant country; even in Phalaborwa, tour guides refer you to the 'Elephant Museum' in Letaba. If you're interested in these giants, feel free to set aside an hour to visit the Environmental Education Center behind reception.

A massive fibreglass elephant awaits you in front of the door. The centre feels a bit like an above-ground graveyard of these creatures. See how big a real elephant heart is, measure yourself against the skeleton of one of the titans, and even go and look at their own wall of legends. Also part of the exhibition is the ivory that belonged to some of the biggest of the big that have ever walked the park. Among them is Mafunyane, who according to experts was one of the most famous 'Big Seven' elephants of the Kruger. His name means 'the irritable one' and he breathed his last near Shingwedzi at the age of 57.

Wildlife viewing in the area requires a bit of work, because the world here is littered with dense mopane bush (you also camp among the mopane trees). When you find yourself next to one of the trees, you realise they're bigger than you think – they even give nice shade. But even though they are everywhere, you can still park a caravan underneath.

The stands are numbered with painted concrete blocks, but not demarcated. The power points are also spread over the campsite – as are the green water taps, each boasting a proper built-in base.



Briefly | Tsendze



Campsite 34 level stands without power, each on a clearing in the bush with fair shade.

Ablution facilities Neat, bug-free with indoor and outdoor showers.

Price Depending on the season R300-R390 pnp per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 6535/6 or 082 802 1113

Nearest gate Phalaborwa, 68,4 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Letaba (42,5 km) and Shingwedzi (66,9 km).

GPS S23.556463 E31.444190

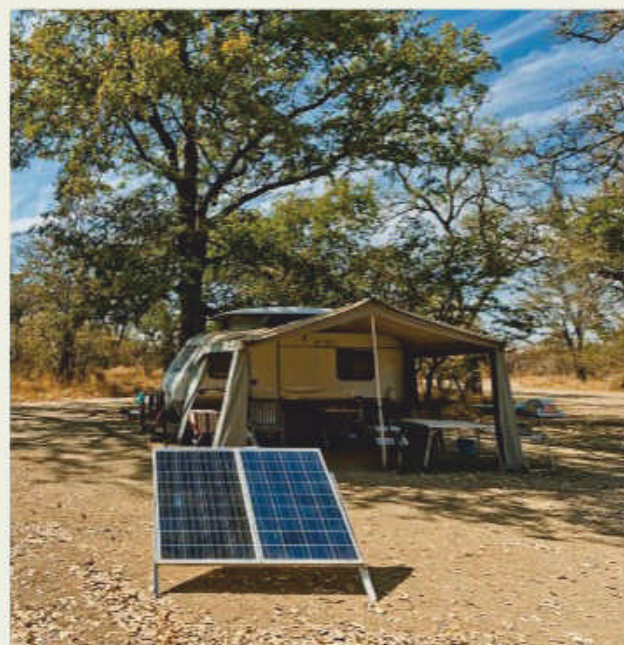
Drive & Camp says While you check in at Mopani, you can also get some fresh produce in the shop and fill up on diesel before unpacking in the bush at Tsendze.

TSENDZE

Deep in the bush

Tsendze is a campsite you simply have to check out, even if it's only to see with your own eyes why so many campers single it out as their favourite campsite of all.

It doesn't have its own reception, so you have to drive a few kilometres to the Mopani camp to check in. At Tsendze, everything is in order and each stand is clearly numbered. The official where you sign up also emphasises that you have to camp at the stand they assign to you.



You open Tsendze's chest-high wooden gate yourself to drive inside the camp. Take a good look around before someone jumps out of the car to perform this task, as there may be wild animals around. On our visit, we came across elephants just a few hundred metres from the turn-off to the camp.

Directional signs show which turn-off you should take to which stand. The sites are large cleared spots in the forest, some very private and others slightly closer to one another, but nobody will get





Briefly | Letaba



Campsite 60 stands with power between mopane trees.

Price Depending on the season, R300-R390 p/n per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 6636/7 or 082 802 1255

Nearest gate Phalaborwa, 50,7 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Tsendze (42,5 km) and Balule (47,2 km).

GPS S23.853953 E31.574657

Drive & Camp says In this campsite in the bush, even the roads are swept each morning.



in anyone's way. In the middle of the day, it gets dead quiet in the camp – it feels almost like a Sunday afternoon.

The area outside around Tsendze mostly has trees the height of an adult with grass underneath. But along the H1-5 tar road, near the Mooiplaas picnic site, there are many large trees on a spot that looks like a forest from the outside. Inside the forest is the Tsendze camp, where you can see how large mopane trees can get (here are also leadwood trees that are four storeys high). You're pretty much

guaranteed shade at your stand, even if it is only in one corner. Then, there are only three items at your stand: a site number, a rubbish bin and a planted steel braai. The braai areas aren't in the same position on each stand, and some of them could be in the way if you want to set up your caravan in a certain spot. If braaiing is an important part of your camping life, it's safer to bring your own.

Two ablution blocks are situated quite close together. They look identical and are roughly in the middle of the camp.

Many campers go to the bathroom and stop in front of the door – then they aim for another door, because on both sides of each entrance are open-air showers. They're private, and your ceiling is the blue sky – it just feels as though you're really in the middle of the bush. You get a bench for your stuff, and a towel rail. The shower itself is spacious enough.

The bathrooms inside have lights, but they only work at night, most likely because they're connected to a day-and-night switch.





SHINGWEDZI

Down to earth

This camp is head and shoulders above the rest when it comes to level stands, and then you still get giant mopane trees on top of that.

Shingwedzi was the first of all the Kruger's camps to allocate stands by the fence in advance, and to charge more for those. (Shingwedzi's stands are also the most expensive in the Kruger.)

Because you're in a row against the fence, you are camping right on your neighbour's doorstep, but it's a small price to pay for your unobstructed view through the fence.

The other half of the stands lie behind the fence stands and it is noticeable how much space you have around you, even

when the campsite is fully booked.

The power points are randomly placed and at first it doesn't bother you, because you can choose a spot near one. But with some of the stands you have no choice but to have your extension cord cross the road to get to the power point.

Some of the steel braais are planted with a swing grid, but there are also free-standing ones you can move closer to your stand.

The location of the bathrooms is a bit odd. One building is at one of the entrances to the campsite and the other one is in the middle, across the road and among the chalets, and outside the boundary of the campsite. Luckily you have a choice, and there are wheelchair-friendly facilities.

The shower cubicles are similar to those at Satara and just as cramped. The laundry is next to the other bathroom, but be patient, because some campers sometimes forget their laundry in the washing machines and you have to wait your turn.

One of the Kruger's typical square kitchen buildings stands near the pool and the other is closer to the middle.

Shingwedzi's fenced pool is huge. The gate to get there is by the upper stands, on the opposite side of the lower bathrooms. When the sunshine wanes, kids can continue to frolic, because there is a large floodlight next to the pool that comes on automatically as soon as it gets dark. You may swim until 21:00. No midnight skinny dipping.



Briefly | Shingwedzi



Campsite 60 level stands with power and plenty of shade. About half of them are next to the fence, but you pay extra for those.

Ablution facilities 2 blocks closer to one side and 2 kitchen buildings closer to the other side.

Price Depending on the season and stand, R300-R450 pnp per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 013 735 6806/7 or 082 889 4376

Nearest gate Punda Maria, 72,5 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Tsendze (66,9 km) and Punda Maria (71,7 km).

GPS S23.108452 E31.435543

Drive & Camp says If there were such a thing as a camping spirit level, you could calibrate it at these stands.



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When the sunshine wanes, kids can continue to frolic, because there is a large floodlight next to the pool

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PUNDA MARIA

Looking north

Punda Maria is the northernmost campsite in the Kruger; here you are just a few kilometres from our border with Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

About a century ago, Punda Maria was a ranger post with Captain JJ Coetzer in charge. Of the first animals that Captain JJ saw on arrival here were zebras. The Swahili name for a zebra is 'punda malia', and the captain's wife, Maria, had a preference for clothes with black and white stripes; so he named the place Punda Maria.

It is laid out at the foot of a hill, and as soon as you drive past the filling station after going through the gate, you have to take a steep path up to reception. But first unhitch your caravan before you drive up there. The stands are to the left and there's a sign warning that caravans may not go any further. If you accidentally miss the sign, you will be able to turn around at the top of the parking lot, but chances are good you will have to unhitch, turn around and the hitch again.

The stands are just as spacious and far apart as at Shingwedzi, but against the fence some of the stands are right up against one another and others more private. As in the other camps in the Kruger, there is no green lawn to be seen at your stand, but a piece of cleared soil. The stands aren't demarcated and you pick a spot for your caravan.

If you aren't in time to nab a spot against the fence, here is a consolation: there are sections where nobody is allowed to camp next to the fence, which means people who stand further away also get a chance to see the wild animals next to the camp. A storey-high bird hide with a thatched roof is at the fence, from where you have an excellent view of the adjoining waterhole. On either side of this, probably a good 20 m to each side, nobody may pitch camp.

One bathroom sits diagonally behind the bird hide and the other one is between the campsite and the footpath that leads up to reception.

The braai areas and the power points are randomly placed and there are a lot of shade trees. If you're dependent on electricity, the length of your extension cord could mean the difference between shade and sun.





Briefly | Punda Maria



Campsite 40 stands with electricity and 21 without at the foot of a hill with enough shade, but some of the stands aren't level. The first prize is one of the three stands on either side of the bird hide where you only have the fence between you and the waterhole.

Ablution facilities 2 identical ablution blocks and 2 kitchen buildings roughly in the middle of all the stands.

Price Depending on the season and

stand, R250-R390 pnp per stand for the first 2 people, thereafter R100 pppn (R50 for children). Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

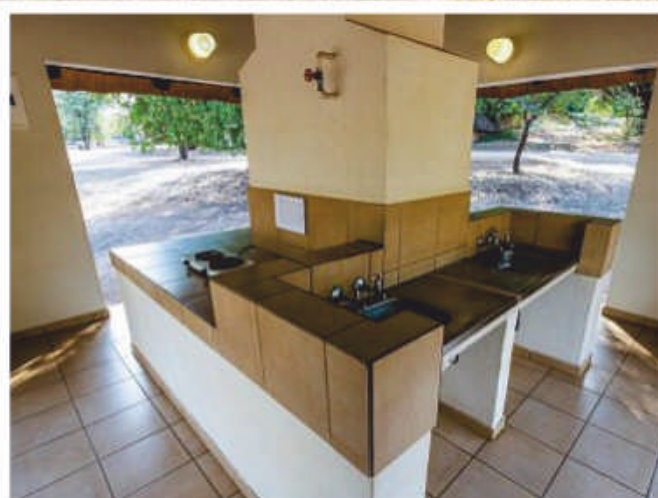
Contact 013 735 6873 or 082 802 0066.

Nearest gate Punda Maria, 8,4 km.

Nearest two camps along the main routes Shingwedzi (71,7 km) and Tsendze (125 km).

GPS S22.692072 E31.018108

Drive & Camp says The pool is near the ablution block closest to reception, and the laundry room is just up from these bathrooms.



PRACTICAL MATTERS

Rates The rates are valid from 1 November to 31 October 2021, but exclude the conservation fee. Adult rates apply to anyone over the age of 11 and the children's rate is for children aged 2-11. The conservation fee is calculated per person per day. So if you're planning to sleep there a few nights, get a Wild Card instead. The card is valid for one year (you can renew it) and gives you and your family free unlimited daily access to any SANPark reserve. You can choose from different options for your Wild Card and it costs just over R1 000 per year. The adult conservation fee for the Kruger is just over R100 pppd, which means that if a couple stays in the park for only five days, you've paid for it already.

Contact details We provide each camp's telephone numbers, but it's better to make your reservation through central booking should you wish to move from one camp to the next. 012 428 9111 or 082 233 9111
reservations@sanparks.org

Speed limit On tarred roads in the Kruger you may not exceed the 50 km/h speed limit – keep this in mind as you plan your itinerary, and make provision for game viewing and a break or two. 🚗



Fields of green...

The Golden Gate Highlands National Park has lovely hiking trails, but there is also a 13 km long winding road that you can drive with an SUV.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

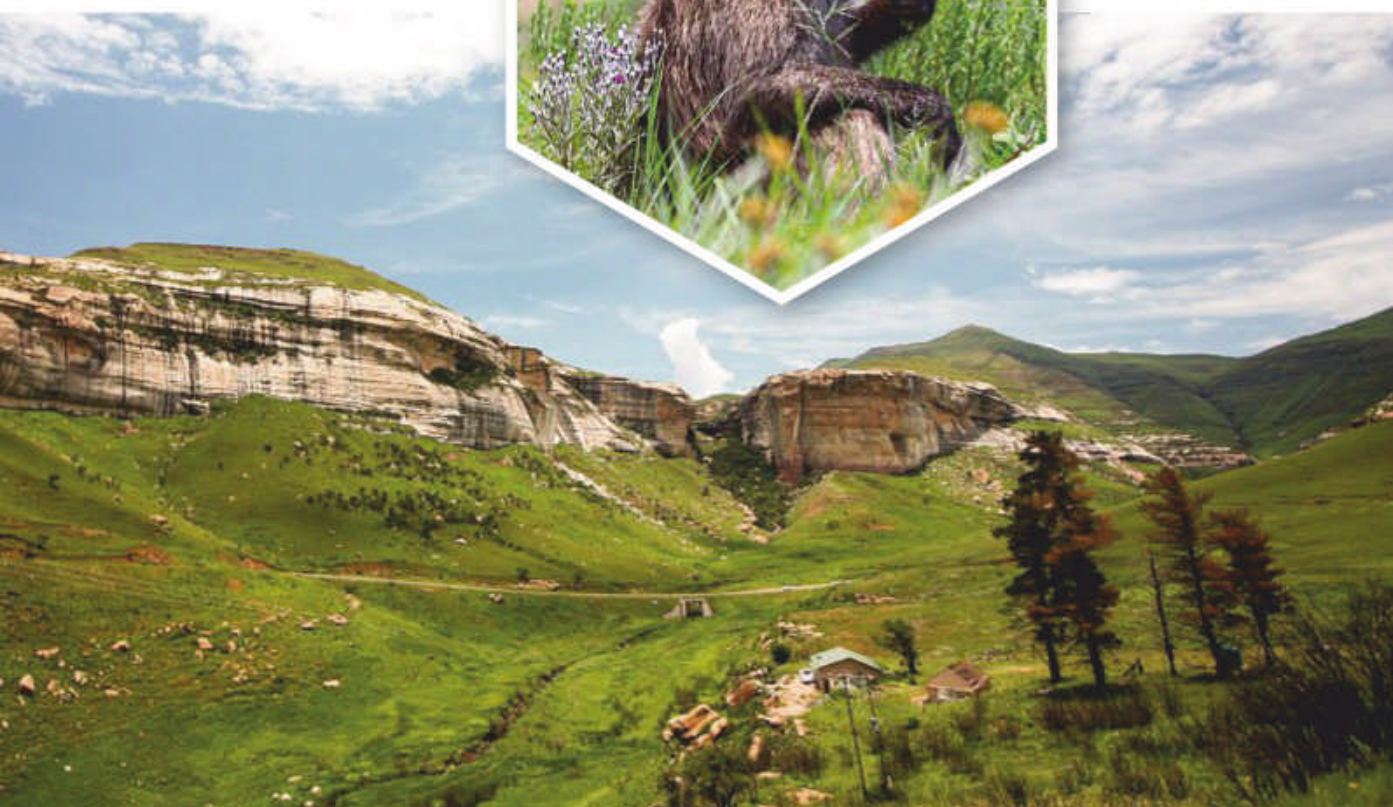
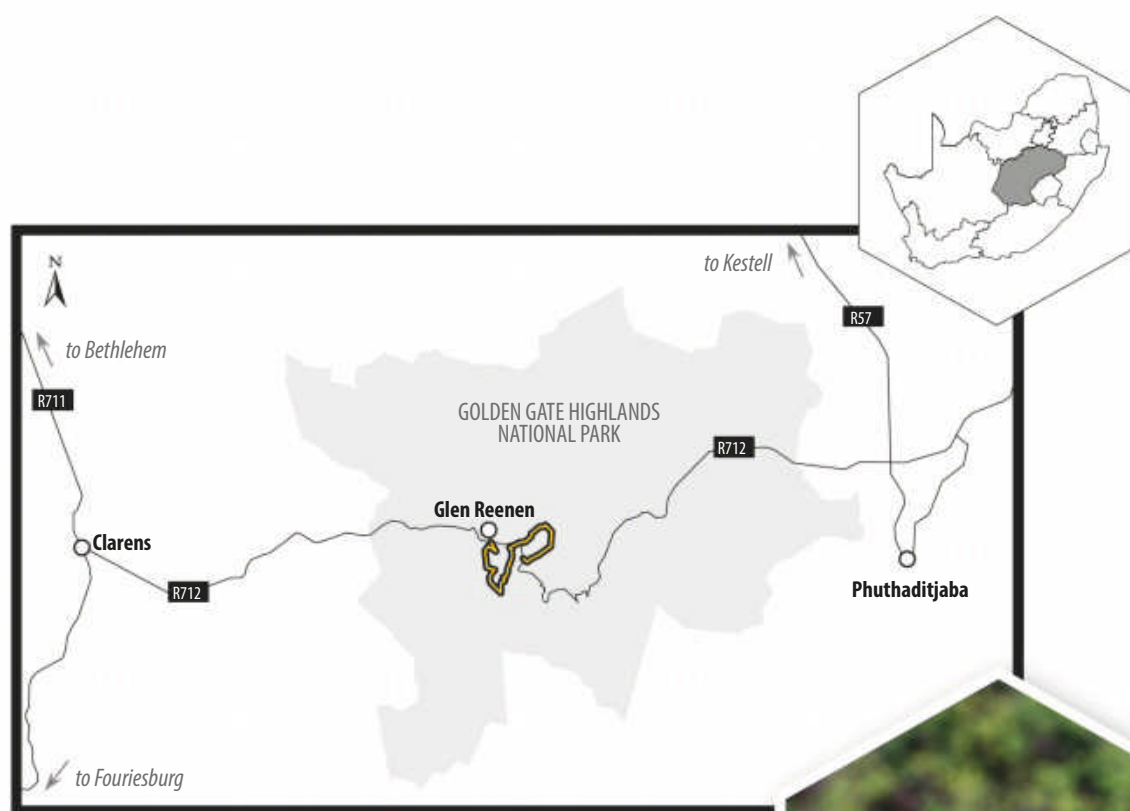
The route kicks off 850 m east of the Glen Reenen campsite on the R712 regional road. A brown road sign with the standardised symbol for a mountain pass marks the turn-off. Turn right here and drive up the mountain on the 9 km Blesbok loop. It is a tar road maintained by park management and any sedan will be able to handle it. However, we would advise against towing your caravan here as the road is quite narrow and you're likely get hooted at if your towing combination blocks another motorist.

Unhitch the caravan at the Glen Reenen campsite rather and drive the trail after setting up camp.

At the first fork, roughly 1 km after leaving the R712, turn right to get to the Langtoon Dam lookout. From here you can see the hiking trail that starts at the Glen Reenen campsite and winds for 30 km through gorges, past the Cathedral Cave and Woodhead Peak, and back again to Glen Reenen.

Then it's back to the Blesbok loop – follow it up the mountain to a second lookout point,





SENTINEL. The eastern Free State is known for its sandstone formations, particularly around Clarens. The Golden Gate Highlands Park is a great weekend destination since it's only three hours from Jo'burg.

the Zuluhoek, with even more beautiful views over the national park. Barely 2 km after the turn-off to Zuluhoek, you get Generaalskop, the highest vantage point on the route at 2 153 m above sea level. Now you head downhill to rejoin the R712 regional road. Turn right and after a mere 100 m, you get the turn-off for the Oribi loop, which is also tarred. This loop is on more level ground than the previous one, and although you won't get any lookout points, there's a lot more wildlife to be seen here. Look out for eland, zebra, springboks, blue wildebeest

TRAIL GUIDE



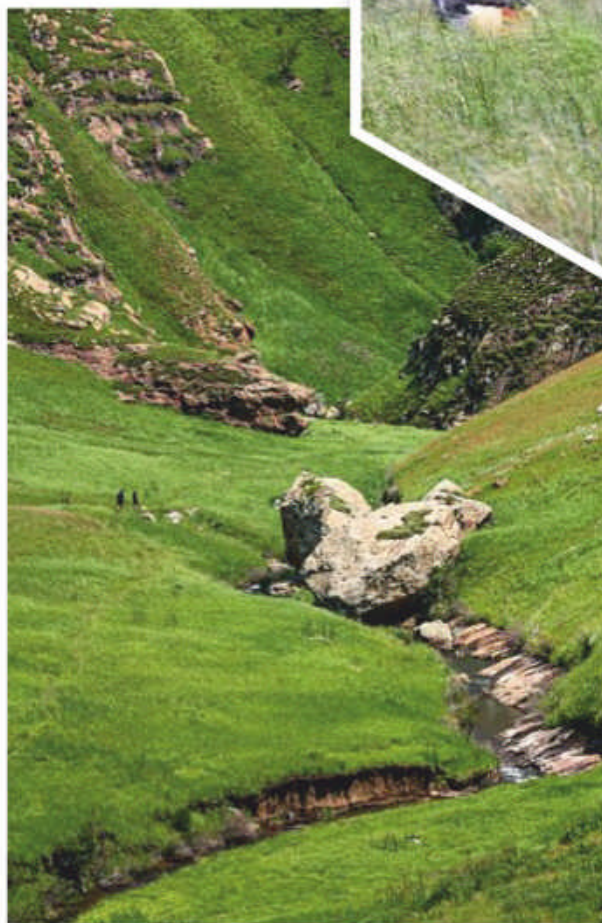
and, of course, oribis – the loop is named after them, after all!

As for birds, keep a close eye on the cliffs for Verreaux's eagles and bearded vultures, while the grassland abounds with blue cranes and secretary birds.

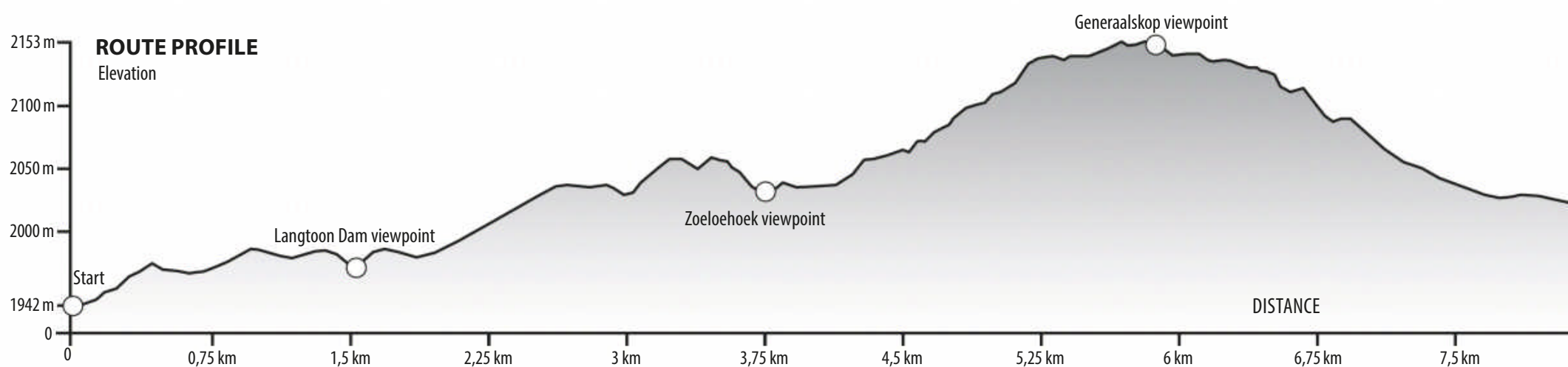
The Oribi loop is 4 km long, and your first stop is at a car park near the vulture restaurant. A hiking trail takes you 300 m up a rocky ridge to a hide with a view of carcasses dumped here by the rangers. You're sufficiently far away so the stench is carried away by a breeze, but close enough that you can see the vultures reaching neck-deep into a zebra's chest to get to a morsel of meat.

A short distance from the vulture restaurant's car park is the Drakensberg lookout point from where you have fantastic views of the Blesbok loop, at the foot of the Drakensberg, on which you've just been driving.

If you feel like driving around a bit more, head east over the Lichens Pass to the Basotho cultural village, where you'll find cultural attractions. After this, it's back to your stand at Glen Reenen to



light a fire, all the while humming: "I saw above me that endless skyway, I saw below me that golden valley. This land was made for you and me..."





Good to know



Maximum number of vehicles?

Unlimited.

Do I get a map? No.

Will I scratch my vehicle? No.

Do I need to take a compressor? No.

Can I turn around halfway? No, the route is one way.

Is there cellphone signal? Yes.

Best time to go? Shortly after the rainy season.

Can I take my family along? Yes, definitely.

Is it a day trip or good for a weekend?

Come for the weekend as there are many other things to do in the area.

How long does it take? About an hour.

Are there ablution facilities? No, but the campsite is close by.

And fuel? Yes, at Glen Reenen.

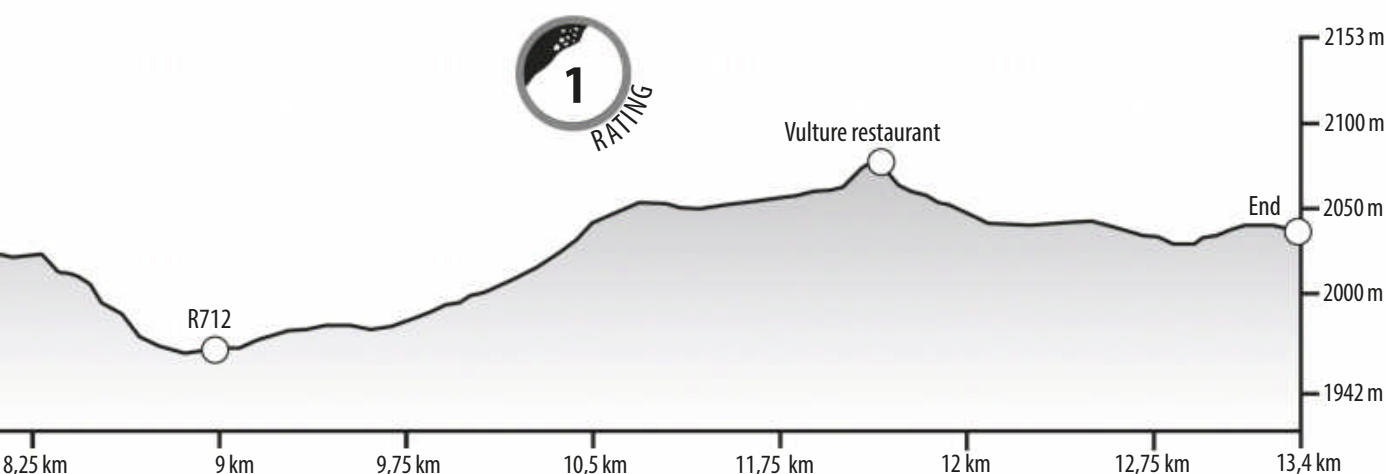
Cost A conservation fee of R56 pp (R28 for kids). Free with a Wild Card.

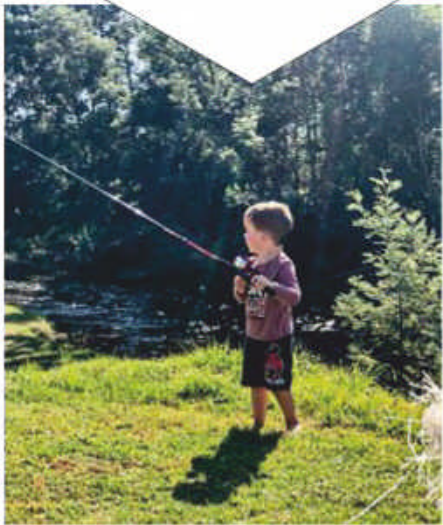
Contact 058 255 1000 (park office)

sanparks.org

GPS S28.50948 E28.62460 (Blesbok loop)

S28.50963 E28.63883 (Oribi loop)





Dog days at the endless river

About 9 km outside Greyton, in the direction of Riviersonderend, is a spot where you can camp with your family in the middle of nature, says **Nico Heunis** of Durbanville, Cape Town.

“As soon as lockdown regulations allowed us to travel within provinces, my wife Marelize and I decided take our two sons, Jesse (5) and Jamie (3), and our dog, Juno camping. We searched online for pet-friendly campsites and came across Kleine Eike just outside Greyton. This excellent campsite was a pleasant surprise.

WHAT IS THE CAMPSITE ALL ABOUT?

The whole campsite is laid out along the Sonderend River and it's fantastic because everyone camps next to the water. There are 14 stands of varying sizes, each with a power point, tap, picnic bench and braai area.

About 120 people can fit in here and

the campsite is laid out in such a way that nobody pitches camp in front of anyone else.

What is really important to us is the fact that our dog, Juno, could come along. You simply need to let the resort staff know in advance.

WERE YOU HAPPY WITH THE ABLUTION FACILITIES?

Because the campsite is practically brand new, so is the ablution block. It is a large and modern building of stone, concrete and corrugated iron with separate facilities for men and women. Each has four shower cubicles with space for your toiletries and hooks for your dry items.

There are also dish-washing facilities.

The ablution facilities are cleaned three times a day over weekends. So, there's nothing to complain about.

WHAT ACTIVITIES KEEP YOU BUSY HERE?

There isn't a pool or a water slide or that kind of activity, but kids won't get bored. As I said earlier, you camp next to the river, so you can cool off in the glorious river water when it's hot. And do bring your fishing gear and canoe. There's barbel and carp and other fish. The boys and I really enjoyed fishing here.

You camp on a farm that's mainly export fruit, but there are also horses, cattle and sheep. As long as you behave, you have access to the whole farm, and you can arrange with the staff if



your kids want to go horse riding. Then there are also many hiking, running and cycling routes and you are, of course, close to Greyton, a town that's definitely worth a day visit.

IS THERE A RESORT SHOP?

No, but Greyton isn't very far away if you need something. Should you need wood or ice, however, arrange it with the owner, Nic Scholtz, to deliver it directly to your stand. ”

WIN Nico Heunis wins a **Camp Cover** Camera bag worth R400.

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

campcover.co.za

CAMP COVER 



CONTACT

082 809 9896

info@kleineeike.com

kleineeike.com

GPS S34.102617 E19.669205



Contact details:

Tel: 021 945 2142

Cell: 0748930748 (JP)

Cell: 083 306 6654 (Etienne)

Cell: 084 628 2954 (Michelle)

Email: admin@tongasa.com

Website: www.tongasa.com

 Tonga Camping Trailer

3 Uranium street, Unit 2,

Triangle farm, Bellville

TONGA



Triple ton and ticking

He's conquered much of South Africa and Botswana in his Nissan Sani, but **Alain Beltran** from Hillcrest says there's still plenty to see.



I bought this **1995 Nissan Sani 3.0 V6 4x4** in 2000, which had clocked up just about 100 000 km in the five years before I owned it. After my wife Danielle drove it around town for two years, we decided it's time that it got used for overlanding excursions. Now we call it '**Bush Master**'.

Over time I gradually kitted the Sani out with the usual modifications associated with trips like these, including an Old Man Emu **raised suspension**, Front Runner **roof rack** and **drawers, dual-battery system** and a National Luna **fridge/freezer**. On the roof rack we carry an Oztent RV5 canvas touring tent, jerry cans and sand tracks.

Depending on where we're going, we also pull out a **Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D** to tow our **Jurgens Xcape**, though that's

only if we're going to places accessible to caravans. But we really enjoy camping in places where other people don't camp, and for the remote areas the Sani is my weapon of choice.

On a normal tar road, even with my roof rack loaded with tent and jerry cans that negatively affect its aerodynamics, the Sani averages between **11-12 ℓ/100 km**. If the driving conditions require the use of 4x4 mode for extended periods, the fuel consumption can climb to **18 ℓ/100 km**.

Fortunately, I've not had any major issues with the Nissan except that the **gearbox was opened** at 200 000 km because of a noisy second ratio. I then had the **transmission rebuilt** and changed the clutch as well. I've never been stranded, but one thing I would like to add to my setup is a **rear diff lock** for



“...we really enjoy camping in places where other people don't camp”

the soft sands I regularly encounter.

What I really appreciate about the Sani is that this is a vehicle with **minimal electronics** and, if you have a bit of **mechanical know-how**, can still be fixed with some duct tape and wire. In the 200 000 km I've owned it, there were two roadside repairs I had to perform. The first was due to a **bearing that collapsed** in the prop shaft and was remedied by **stuffing cloth in the housing**. That was enough to get us from Ithala to Durban.

The second was an **overheating issue** in Botswana, caused by a small hole in the radiator hose – nothing **a roll of duct tape** couldn't solve. I subsequently lost the radiator cap and fashioned one out of a **beer can and wire** using my Leatherman tool, which was enough to get us from Khama Rhino to Serowe so we could purchase a new one.

Everything has held up remarkably over the last 18 years, and **'Bush Master'** is now nearing **300 000 km** on the odometer.



Last December was our last big trip and the lockdown had us so frustrated that Danielle decided to **pitch camp right in our backyard** with the Xcape until we could stretch our legs on the open road once more after lockdown.



Show us your wheels

Send an email to drivecamp@gomag.co.za and tell us about what's in your garage.



From regular to rugged

His kids love bush camping, and after they invited him to join them he decided to build his own bush trailer, says **Bakkies Kruger** of Polokwane.

Bakkies and his wife, Petro, are no strangers when it comes to camping. They've camped several times with their children in a tent at the boat club at the Ebenezer Dam near Tzaneen.

Bakkies is a qualified electrician and decided it was time for an off-road trailer. He started his search by checking out ads for one. But because he lives a few hours' drive from Gauteng, he couldn't get one of those as they'd already been sold by the time he could go to take a look. He therefore decided the time had come to build one himself.

The only question was whether to build one from scratch or whether to buy an existing one and then rebuild it.

The latter option won the toss. Bakkies tells us more about it...

“I decided on a new open trailer from Bon Voyage Trailers because it met my requirements. The manufacturer is in Vereeniging and the trailer cost R13 000.

My original plan had been to use a rooftop tent on the trailer, but we didn't like the idea of having to climb up a ladder to get to the sleeping area. Then

there is the hassle of the almost upright ladder. The solution was to buy a free-standing tent and set up the trailer so it became part of the tent.

That meant I had to look for a tent. I decided on the popular dome tent combination that has a room next door, and Tentco's Senior Deluxe Combo fit the bill. It's 7,6 m in length, 3 m wide and 2,3 m high when erect. I would park the trailer lengthwise next to one of the tent doors and that way we'd have access to the trailer. In its bag with the poles, the tent weighs 73 kg and it cost just a little more than the trailer: R15 078.

The idea was to set up the sides of the trailer for a fridge/freezer, a kitchen (inside the tent) and a sliding frame that would hold ammo boes. It would then get a rack on top for the tent, and a box on the A-frame.

THE FIRST CHANGE was to remove the sides and mudguards of the trailer. This is where I built my own steel frame for the drawers and cupboards I had planned. I used 25 x 25 mm and 40 x 40 mm square tubing as well as 40 x 40 mm angle iron.

I decided to keep the existing door that swing open to the left at the back, and bolted the spare wheel to it (it previously sat on the A-frame). Behind the nose

cone which I got for R1 480 from Pioneer Plastics in Pretoria, I made room for an upright cupboard. It's great for items like my grid and pop-up washing line.

After all the welding, I coated the raw steel with primer paint. All the panels would then be covered with aluminium sheeting. That included the aluminium checker plate over the rear door and for the upright cabinet behind the nose cone. But first I spray-painted the frame.

The sheet for the upper section, which would be under the roof rack, is thicker than the regular sheets and I had to order the 2 mm one specially. The aluminium is available in a size of 1 200 x 2 400 mm, but that was just a tad too narrow as the trailer is 1 300 mm wide.

I didn't want to have joins in the sheet and therefore had to look at the larger (and more expensive) sheet at 1 500 x 3 000 mm. It ended up costing R4 353.

The whole affair now got another layer of paint (the paint cost me R1 439).

I fastened the nose cone as well as the two corner steadies at the back. The steadies are next to the taillights and are simply supports attached to a round pole that gets lowered; not the jack type.

Now it was time for the roof rack. I fixed meranti planks with a thickness of 10 x 32 mm along the length of the trailer, on top of the frame I built for it, leaving 30 mm between the planks. The cupboard for the kitchen had to sit above the left mudguard. I also made the





INSIDE OR OUT? The trailer is parked in the doorway of one of the tents with its kitchen facing inwards so they can cook even during inclement weather.

kitchen shelves from wood. All the wood worked out to R1 664.

The cupboard on the left front and on the other side above the right wheel each got a sliding frame. The right-hand one (R579) carries the ammo boxes, and the other one (R1 694) the fridge/freezer. The latter is, of course, also longer and can carry a heavier load. We decided to spend a bit more on the fridge/freezer and paid R9 000 for an 85 l SnoMaster. The two-plate gas stove sits on the same sliding frame as the fridge/freezer, right at the end. It is a Cadac 2 Cook 2 Pro and cost R1 200.

The power box – a unit that only costs R580 – fits in the cupboard next door. It has space for three ordinary plugs and has circuit breakers.

On the inside of the back door I made room for my spade. I placed the jerry-

can holder on the right back corner, and a toolbox in the front corner which has its own lock. Finally, I made a bag of ripstop canvas. It's 1,3 m x 2 m x 40 cm and fits on top of the roof rack to store loose items including the tent and camping chairs.

The original vehicle's gross vehicle weight was 750 kg and the tare weight 320 kg. Currently, its dry weight is 410 kg, which means the trailer is now 90 kg heavier than before. So it still gives me 340 kg for everything I want to pack – the loose tent and groceries included. The axle is certified for 900 kg.

INITIALLY I worked on my trailer over weekends, but then lockdown happened. I already had all the materials and this gave me enough time to finish the trailer.

Now it's only the paperwork* that's

left to do to report the changes to the authorities.”

* The paperwork Bakkies refers to is to report the conversion to the National Regulator for Compulsory Specification (NRCS), says road traffic law expert Alta Swanepoel. For the conversion, you submit a Letter of Authority. You must also submit the following with the application: a copy of your ID, an affidavit from the police which includes, among other things, the chassis number and a description of the conversion, a clearance certificate, a roadworthiness and weighing certificate, at least three photos showing the side and back, and of course proof of the advance payment (R1 800) for your application. The approval process can take up to 120 calendar days.



Trailer	R13 000
Tent	R15 078
Steel	R830
Aluminium	R4 353
Paint	R1 439
Wood	R1 664
Nose cone	R1 480
Sliding frames.....	R2 273
Fridge/freezer	R9 000
Gas stove	R1 200
Jerrycan holder	R573
Loose items such as the license plate holder, reflectors, hinges and locks	R1 554
Hardware including welding rods, angle grinder discs, sandpaper and screws	R1 730
Power distribution box	R580
Total	R54 754

Trout's haven at Lydenburg



NOOITGEDACHT TROUT LODGE

TROUT BONANZA

You get places where the fish bite all day... and then you get a spot like the Nooitgedacht Trout Lodge where you pitch camp right next to a hatchery. It's located just past Lydenburg and has existed for more than half a century. Nooitgedacht's campsite is a short distance from the hatchery, right next to the Spekboom River.

You need a vehicle with a high ground clearance to visit Nooitgedacht: the last 16 km to reception is a dirt road, and in the 1,5 km from there to the campsite you have to do three water crossings.

The campsite itself is a neat lawn. The river with its clear water forms one boundary, and there are some trees between you and the veld. A brick-layered braai area has been built in the middle of the lawn, and next to it is a round stone fire pit for when you want to boast about the day's catch after dinner.

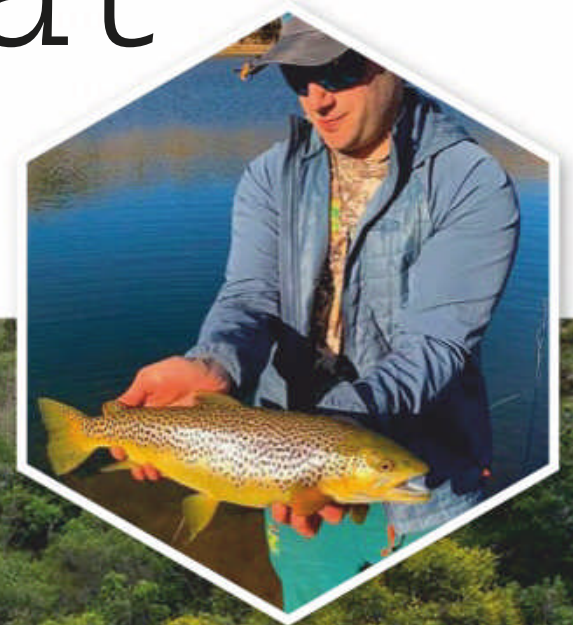
If more than two families make a booking, the owners can reserve the entire place for you. It has room for up to 30 guests.

You need to be self-sufficient here, because there is no electricity and also no cellphone reception. You don't have to brave cold showers – a gas geyser provides hot water in the bathroom.

If you enjoy fly fishing, you will be in heaven. Camp right next to the river and you can basically fish from your camping chair. You pay a once-off R350 rod fee and the catch-and-release rule applies. If a fish is severely injured, then you are expected to keep it and pay for it.

The camp is next to the Nooitgedacht Dam, one of the two large dams on the farm. You may fish in this dam, too – and if it's still not enough, there are another three smaller dams.

Your own camp site with your own trout... what more could you ask for?



Briefly | Nooitgedacht Trout Lodge



Fish Brown and rainbow trout.

Campsite 1 large lawn next to a river with space for up to 30 people.

Ablution facilities One with hot water.

Price R200 pppn (R150 for children; free for kids under two).

Arrival and departure No set times.

Contact 071 088 0606 or 063 002 2355

nootitgedachttroutlodge.co.za

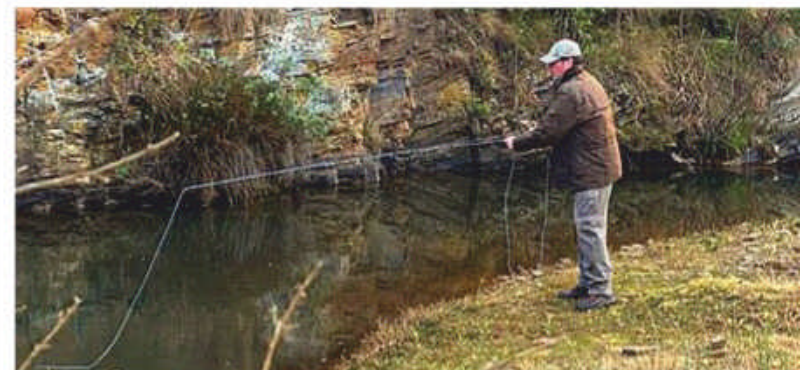
enquiries@nootitgedachttroutlodge.co.za

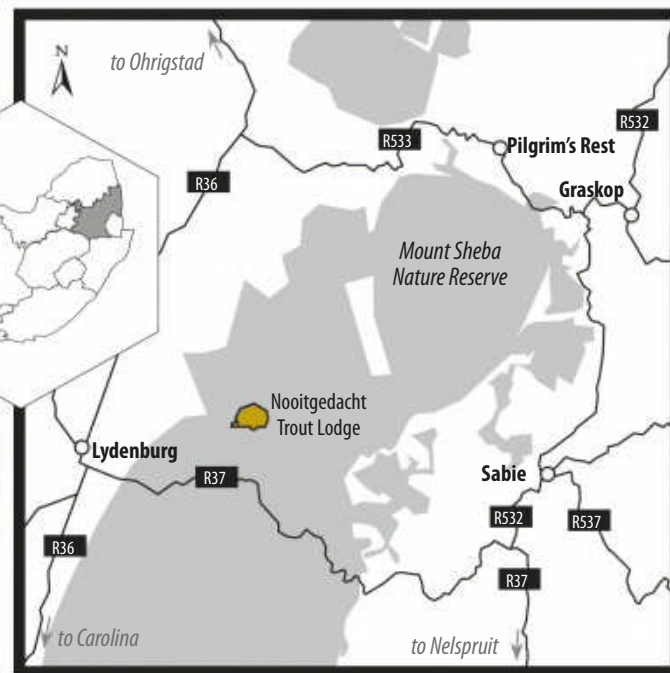
Nearest town Lydenburg, 22 km.

Road condition Dirt road for the last 16 km, and you need to navigate three water crossings to get to the campsite.

GPS S25.067153 E30.574511

Drive & Camp says Pets are welcome, but make arrangements before you arrive.





FISH DISH

MACKEREL WITH ORANGE

Small portions, big flavour

Small whole fish – mackerel, mullet and sardines – are so much more than just bait.

Ingredients

(serves 2)

- 2 fresh mackerel
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 orange, sliced into half moons
- 1 naartjie or orange, cut in half

Here's how

1 Slice open the fish's abdominal cavities and clean out the insides. Rinse the fish well. If you slice carefully, you can also remove the spines and butterfly the fish open with the heads still attached. Use a sharp knife and carefully score each fish with five diagonal cuts through the skin, all along the body – on both sides.

2 Rub the olive oil over the fish and season it with salt and pepper. Place the orange slices inside the stomach cavities and fold the fish closed. You can add chopped red onion, garlic and even fennel if

you like, but plain and simple is also delicious.

3 Braai the fish and extra citrus halves over moderately hot coals. The size of the fish determines the braai time – probably around 10 minutes. You want crispy skin and cooked flesh. The oil on the outside is for flavour and to prevent the fish from sticking to the grid. Serve immediately with roosterkoek and butter, or yellow rice. Remember to drizzle the fish with the juice of the fried naartjie or orange.

Drive & Camp says Invest in a grid you use for seafood only and keep it sparkling clean.



Recipe and styling Johané Neilson Photo Ed O'Riley



FISHING GEAR

A mullet makes it easy

The mullet is a proper world citizen when you look at how widespread they occur. Worldwide, there are no less than 70 species, of which a good 16 occur in our waters – and predatory fish love them. So, it's what you need if you're considering a bait to lure as example a garrick or cod.

LiveTarget's Commotion Mullet is an imitation of a young mullet. The largest section of the bait (the body) consists of a collapsible synthetic material through which the double hook goes. The barbs curve against and on either side of the body. This means it won't easily get stuck in seagrass or underwater structures.

When the predatory fish strikes, the body gives in to allow the hook to, well, hook its mouth.

The bait's tail section is a spinning Colorado blade that leaves a trail of bubbles as you reel it in. Closer to the real deal you can't get.

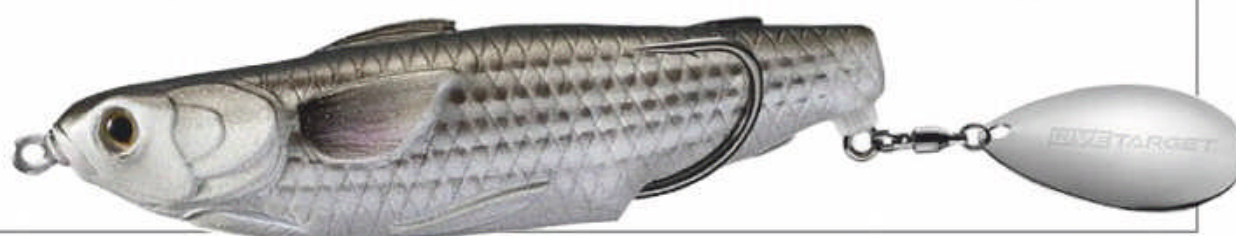
Because the bait has a lead weight at the bottom of its body, it causes the bait to 'swim' upright.

Mullets prefer sandy, sludge and muddy

beds. So stop by the nearest estuary or docks to try out your Commotion Mullet.

Price The bait is available in two sizes and costs the same: 90 mm (18 g) and 100 mm (21 g). From R225 each.

Contact Available nationwide and also in Namibia at angling shops. Adrenalin Importers & Distributors 021 982 1510
catches@4adrenalin.co.za
adrenalinfishing.co.za



10 years living with a Jimny

I bought a brand-new Jimny in September 2010, which makes it exactly 10 years old today. Because it is mainly used for holidays, it has passed the milestone with less than 100 000 km on the clock. My Jimny has been to Mozambique, lesotho, Eswatini and Namibia (the latter three times).

It only has a few modifications: a Front Runner roof rack and Thule roof box, a T-Max winch, Old Man Emu suspension and breather hoses for the diffs so I can drive through deeper water – just not too deep because a Jimny is light enough to drift. To date, my Jimny hasn't let me down, but it does have a few drawbacks.

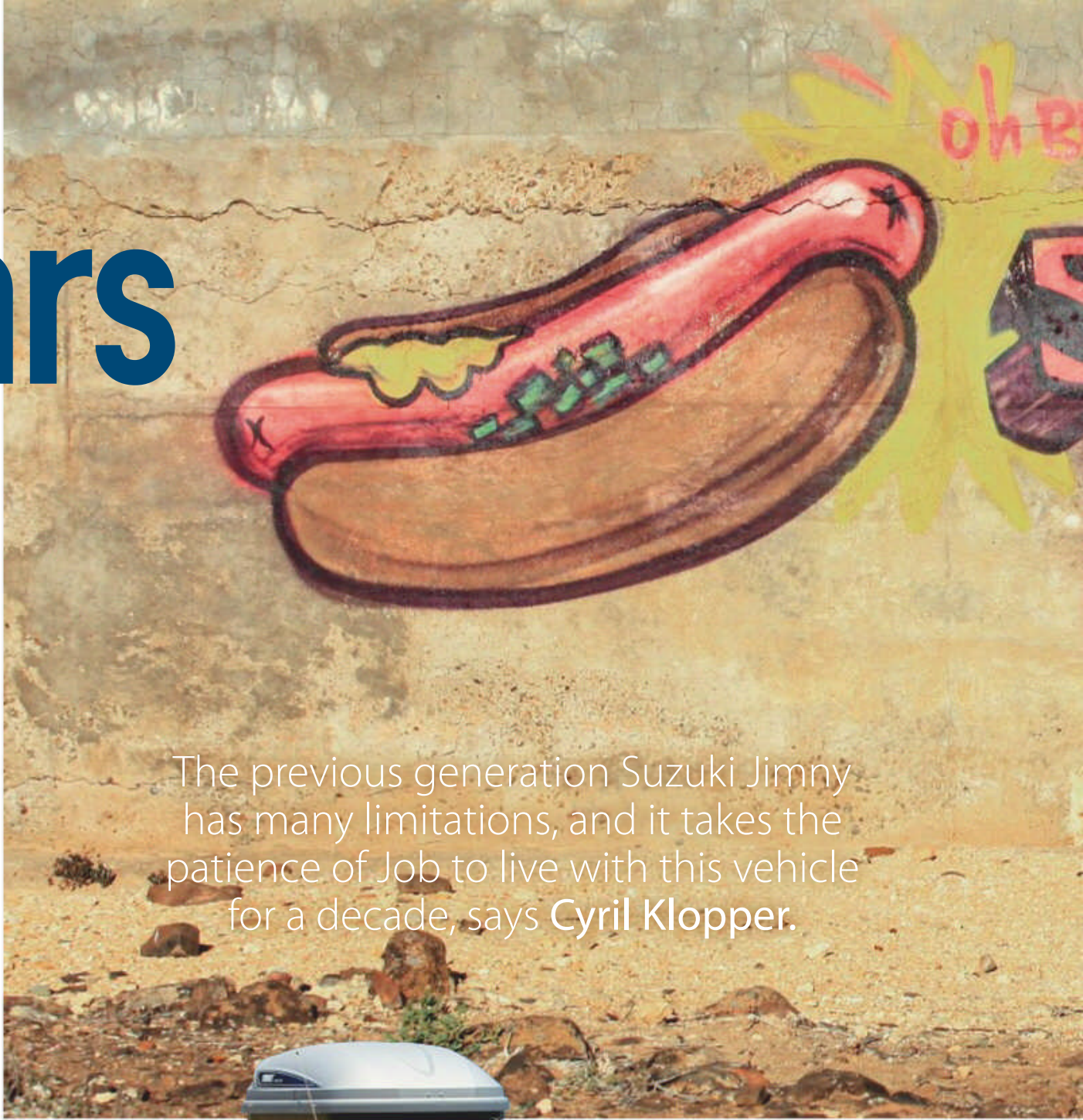
Inside and out

On our first test drive back then, we liked the seating position and the upholstery was comfortable. These days, though, I can feel hard bits inside, and the seats will need to be re-upholstered soon.

All the electronics – of which there really isn't much – still work. It's just the CD player that swallowed my Tears for Fears CD and stubbornly refuses to give it up. For the past three years, I have been listening to the radio because I'm fed up with the song "Shout".

The interior has aged well and all the letters

The previous generation Suzuki Jimny has many limitations, and it takes the patience of Job to live with this vehicle for a decade, says Cyril Kloppe.





SHOW US YOURS

This is the first of a series of articles focusing on older vehicles and specifically how they compare nowadays to when they were new. Cyril's Suzuki Jimny is our guinea pig and we invite you to enter your own rig and provide honest critique. We will pay for the dyno test and scour the archives for your vehicle's original specifications. Feel free to send your contribution to cyril.klopper@media24.com.

and symbols on the buttons are still legible. There are no squeeks, the doors don't rattle (the back door, however, does need to be adjusted every now and then), and the seats don't shake in their tracks.

The trailing arms that hold the front and rear axles in place do creak when I turn sharply. This is a common complaint with Jimnys with no permanent solution.

Of course, the vehicle doesn't have much luggage space and you need to have a roof rack or tow bar fitted if you want to use a Jimny for touring. And you *can* tour with a Jimny, just not very fast. Also, you and your front passenger need to get on really

well because your elbows touch all the time.

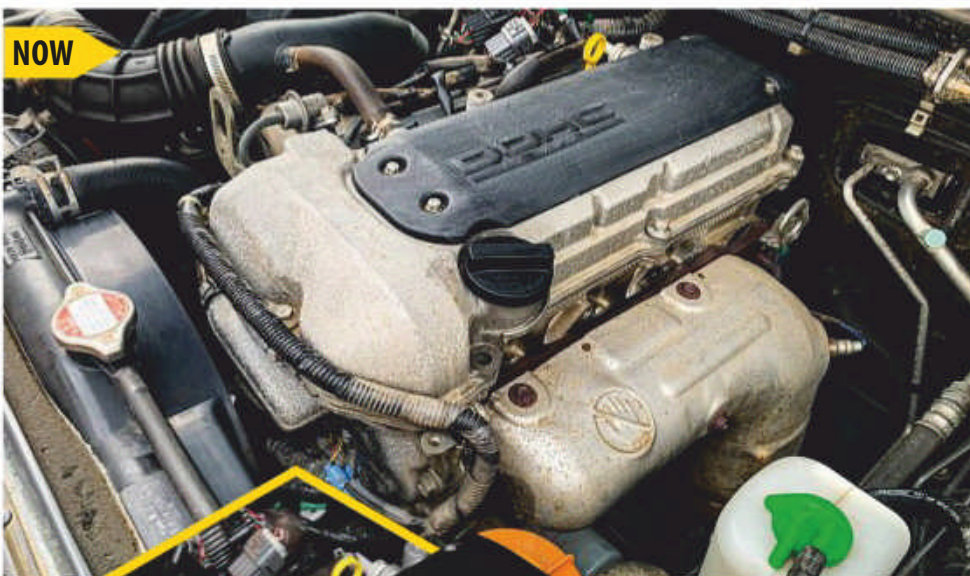
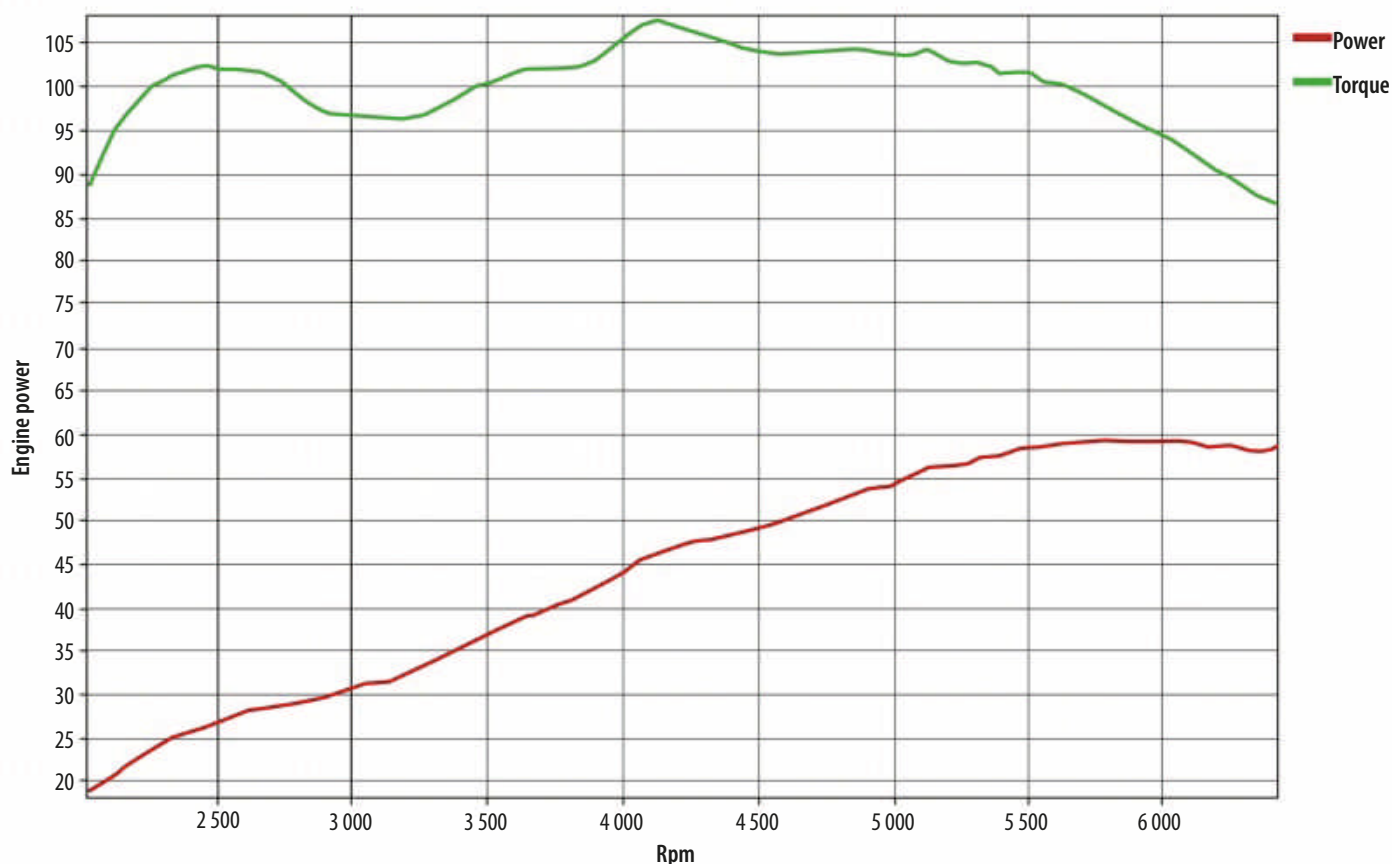
Power losses

During that first test drive, the car felt nimble and spirited – even if it wasn't particularly fast – but after I bought my own and swapped the standard 205/70 R15 Goodyears for 215/75 BFGoodrich all-terrain tyres, it was noticeable how much power was lost due to the slightly larger diameter wheels.

On top of that, any engine loses power over time. Okay, a brand-new engine loosens up significantly in the first year, but after a number of years it's definitely weaker than when it was new – it's just one of those things

that motorists have to live with. My Jimny has lost power and torque of 3 kW and 2 Nm respectively over the past decade. It may not sound like much, but the engine generates relatively modest power and torque in the first place.

In terms of fuel economy, my Jimny could never match the 7,2 l/100 km promised by the brochure and the sales people. I average 370 km with a 40 l tank, which equates to 10,8 l/100 km (or 9,2 km/l). This consumption figure is slightly better than what I got at the very beginning – and, by the way, this is with three people and all our camping gear, up and down through Lesotho.



ENGINE SPECIFICATIONS

Series	Suzuki M13AA
Cylinders	Four, straight arrangement
Capacity	1 328 cc
Fuel supply	Multi-point fuel injection, petrol
Air supply	Normal, no turbocharger
Camshaft	Double overhead camshafts (DOHC)
Valves	16 valves with variable valve timing (VVT)
Bore and stroke	78 mm and 69,5 mm
Compression ratio	9,5: 1
Maximum revolutions	7 200 rpm
Cooling	Water
Gearbox	5-speed manual



So I guess it's not too bad.

My Jimny can maintain 120 km/h on a level highway, but I have to downshift to drive up the slightest hill. The Jimny's top speed is 140 km/h, but I seldom see that.

Wear and tear

My favourite mechanic, who I've been going to for the past six years after the factory warranty expired, says my vehicle requires very little maintenance thanks to the low mass that puts little pressure on parts. With the latest service, at the time of writing this article, the fan and alternator belts plus the brake shoes were replaced for the first time in the 10 years that I've owned it.

The BFGoodrich tyres were coincidentally replaced in the same week – they also lasted for 10 years, but they were toast! The tread depth was still legal, but the rubber had begun to perish due to their age. I don't expect the General Grabber AT3 tyres that I had fitted to last 10 years as well, but they

cost a third of what BFs do nowadays.

My Jimny has gone through two batteries and one set of windscreen wipers, but otherwise it has required nothing else. A typical service cost me R800 six years ago (the service plan ran out after four years), and due to inflation I now pay around R1 200 for a service done by my independent mechanic.

The body paint has held up nicely and hasn't faded noticeably. The other day, I pulled off an old ZA sticker and found that the colour under the sticker still looked the same as the paint around it.

The engine's aluminium block has a white rust layer, but that's understandable seeing as I live near the coast. The rubber hoses and plastic inside the engine bay hasn't yet started to perish and actually look remarkably good still.

My daughter will be going to university in seven years' time and I am confident that the Jimny will serve her dutifully until she can afford her own first car.

“

My daughter will be going to university in seven years' time and I am confident that the Jimny will serve her dutifully

”



THEN AND NOW

Make and model	Suzuki Jimny 1.3 4x4
First registration date	September 2010
Odometer reading now	98 325 km
Maximum power then	62,5 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Maximum power now	59,3 kW @ 5 677 rpm *
Difference	-5.12%
Maximum torque then	110 Nm @ 4 100 rpm
Maximum torque now	108 Nm @ 4 148 rpm *
Difference	-1.82%
Weight then	1 070 kg
Weight now	1 112 kg
Difference	+42 kg
Power-to-weight ratio then	0,0584 kW/kg
Power-to-weight ratio now	0,0533 kW/kg
Difference	-0.0051 kW/kg
Fuel consumption then	11 l/100 km
Fuel consumption now	10,8 l/100 km
Difference	0,2 l/100 km
Purchase price then	R188 900
Value now	R149 900 **
Difference	-R39 000

* tested by Dynotech, Cape Town

** based on the prices at * cars.co.za



BANTAM WEIGHT. This generation of Jimnys weren't aggressively marketed by Suzuki. Even the motoring media largely dismissed it as a novelty car. It was word-of-mouth praise by fans that made it so successful.

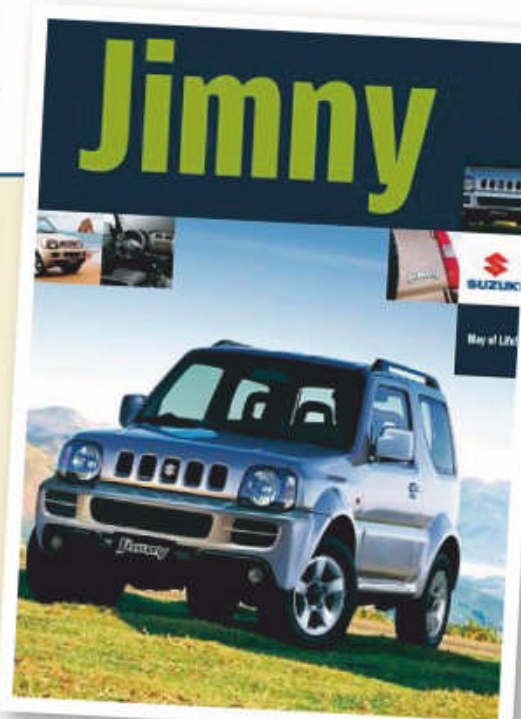
Should I buy secondhand?

The average Jimny almost never leaves the suburbs and sleeps snugly in a garage every night. You won't go wrong buying one of these and gearing it up for adventure. Mechanically, they're reliable and the materials are durable.

A Suzuki Jimny retains its value particularly well. You can buy a 2010 Honda CR-V, a Jeep Cherokee or a Nissan X-Trail for the same money as a 2010 Jimny, for example, which all offer loads more seating and luggage space. If you're okay

with an even older vehicle, you could buy a 2008 BMW X5, a 2007 Land Rover Disco 3 or a 2005 Mitsubishi Pajero for R130 000 – that leaves you with R20 000 in your pocket that you could spend on an epic trip!

The problem with a second-hand Jimny is therefore its high resale value, minimal packing space and low top speed. On the other hand, you get reliability, ability and – and I'm sure you will agree – it's a flipping cute vehicle.



A BIG TOP OF YOUR OWN



We asked some veteran campers for the five most important elements to consider when you're about to buy your first tent.

Any camper will tell you that a tent is a singularly important purchase when you're going camping.

There are a number of factors that you need to

consider as you start your search for the perfect tent.

Our Facebook friends shared what they've learnt in their years of camping – and everyone seems to agree on these five tips for rookies.

“

“I suggest you get two different tents... a lightweight nylon one for normal camping, and a canvas dome tent for when you go camping in the wilderness.” – **Harald Spiwak**

”



1 How many will be sleeping in it?

This may sound strange, but don't buy a four-person tent if there are four of you. That 'four' implies you are squeezed in like sardines, sometimes with someone lying squarely across the entrance. This leaves no room for things like clothes and other gear inside the tent.

And forget about fitting in four camping mattresses. It's

more practical to double the number of people. So buy a four-man tent if only two of you are going camping. And remember, it's not only about the floor space. Make sure you can at least stand upright in the tent.

*“Look at your needs, including the number of kids and how many beds need to fit in the tent. Don't buy cheap. It gets expensive later.” – **Piet Botha***



2 Going up and down

That tent with its two bedrooms, kitchen, living room and veranda may look great in the shop, but think it over before swiping your credit card at the till. Do you even know how long it's going to take to pitch?

How many people are needed to put it up? You don't want a tent that takes an entire rugby team to pitch – and you certainly

don't want to struggle for hours when you arrive at the campsite, especially not when it's late in the day.

"Camping should be fun for everyone in the family, and therefore all the work, including pitching camp and taking it down needs to be divided equally. Otherwise, some work themselves silly while the rest have all the fun."

– **Machiel Myburgh**



3 What's it made of?

Other than size, your biggest decision is the tent's material. There are two popular choices: a canvas tent, and one made of nylon or polyester. Depending on your needs, both have their pros and cons. A canvas tent is undoubtedly more durable, but it's heavy and won't fold up nice and small to fit behind your driver's seat when you hit the road.

A polyester or nylon tent is lighter and folds up smaller, but it may not last

as long as a canvas tent. Also remember that it is warmer in a canvas tent. So it's lovely in the winter months, but if you find yourself in the Kruger National Park or the Richtersveld in December, you'll probably wish you had a nylon or polyester tent. In terms of being waterproof, a nylon tent generally does more to keep you and your belongings dry.

"Pay more and buy yourself a decent canvas tent. You won't regret it." – **Albert Swart**



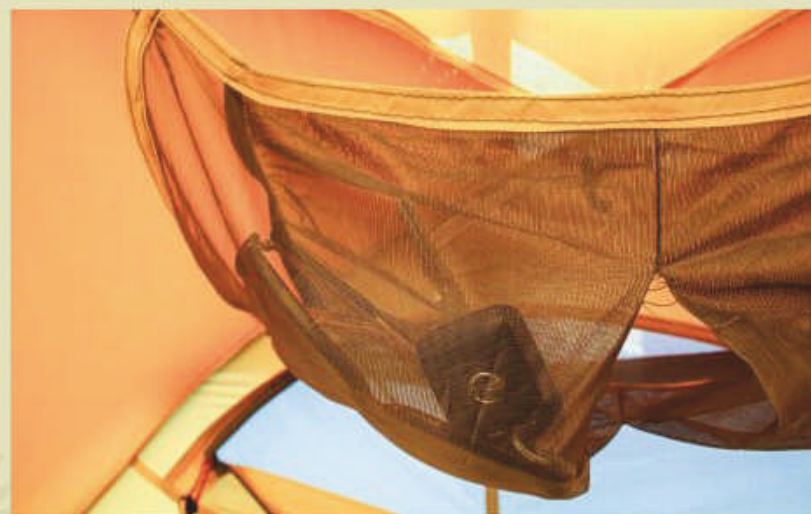
4 Fresh air

Make sure there are enough air vents and openings in the tent, because nobody likes sleeping in a stuffy atmosphere. Never mind the fresh air, it is also unpleasant to wake up in a tent with a wet interior because the material won't wick away moisture.

Everything – including your bedding and clothes – may get damp or wet due to overnight condensation. Proper ventilation is key.

"Make sure the tent has proper ventilation, especially if you're going to camp somewhere warm."

– **Chris and Alida Laing**



5 This and that

Once you have clarity on the first four factors, it's time to reflect on the other elements you want in a tent. How many doors does the tent have? Two doors is better than one, because then you don't have to climb over people to get out.

Does it have pockets where you can store phones, wallets and keys? Does it

have an awning over the door? And while we're at it, take a good look at the quality of the floor as well. Make sure it is durable. And get proper steel tent pegs right off the bat.

"Pitch your new tent at home before you go camping. Then mark the poles clearly, so it's easy to see what goes where."

– **Henk van der Berg**

Fully charged

At one point or another, many of us have been the victim of a flat battery. But you can fight back if you know how.

Words **Kyle Kock**

Maintaining a vehicle involves taking care of all its components, not only the usual items that are replaced during your annual service. An often-forgotten piece of the puzzle is your battery, probably because it's one of those units that only really need replacing every few years or so.

But the national lockdown and travel restrictions didn't help matters much, leaving not just thousands of campers stuck at home, but regular Joes who've never pitched a tent before. It didn't take long before neighbours and family members called around asking for a jump or a push. Here at *Drive & Camp* we received an email from reader Hansie Myburgh, who wanted to know how to keep his towing vehicle's battery in good nick while he wasn't camping.

Drive when you can

It sounds so ridiculously obvious that it can't be true, but it is. To keep your battery in a decent state of charge, you'll need to start your car every few days and have the engine running for 10 or 15 minutes.

This is the first line of defence for the battery, but it's unnatural for a car to be running while stationary in your garage (imagine the fumes) or on your driveway. Take it a step further and do an essential shopping run, because this will also allow a good flow of air into ducts, vents and radiators; as well as allow the fluids to reach peak operating temperatures.

A round trip of 20 to 30 minutes should be sufficient for most vehicles.



Don't simply disconnect

If you have a basic understanding of electric systems you may think that if you disconnect the battery terminals then your vehicle's ancillaries (the radio, clock, audio and security systems) won't be sapping power. You'd be partially correct, but it all depends on how old your vehicle is.

Modern vehicles, especially the more expensive German models, have complicated electronics that act like your vehicle's brain, and disconnecting batteries may have an adverse effect on your car's ancillaries.

The safe bet if you're not driving a tough old workhorse, is to invest in an intelligent maintenance charger that will allow you to keep your battery permanently connected. Some of these, like the 5 Amp model from National Luna keeps the battery's output charge down to the minimum required for prolonged life. This also ensures your vehicle's electronics have a consistent source of power.



Honest mistakes

Just because you let the battery go flat once doesn't mean that you have to now resort to forking out for a new battery, because you probably just need a jump start.

Most motorists have a set of jumper cables in the boot, but that means you'll have to wait for – or find – a good Samaritan on your next camping trip. Be sure to protect your own vehicle's electronic systems by not confusing the red (positive) and black (negative) clamps

and terminals, or you risk blowing fuses or messing with other ancillaries.

Ensure the vehicles aren't touching and connect the red clamp to the dead battery's positive terminal, and leave the black clamp disconnected. Connect the clamps on the donor battery and then find a good grounding spot (a piece of bare metal that does not connect to an electronic ancillary or a moving part) for the remaining black clamp. Attaching the black clamp to the terminal

may ignite fumes in the engine bay.

It's a good idea to invest in a portable power pack, which will pack enough power to fully boost a dead battery. Certain models are slimmer and more compact than others, but units like the Avanty are ideal for overlanders even if they are a little bulkier.

It packs as much as 30 starts, and offers other features – such as a built-in air compressor, and can power up your devices in the middle of nowhere or at the campsite.



Watch out for the white stuff

When your vehicle's been standing for an extended period and won't start, open the bonnet and check out the battery (some vehicles, like the E53 BMW X5, have its battery in the boot). If there's a build-up around the negative plate and terminal, then there's a strong chance that you've got a bad case of sulfation on your hands.

Sulfation is the process in which lead sulphate crystals form and deposit on the negative plates, resulting in a white layer that restricts the flow of electrons. According to John 'JR' Coetzee, product manager of the Probe Group's battery division, this process is similar to the crystallisation of honey.

"When the voltage drops below 12,4 V because your vehicle hasn't been used in a long time, sulfation takes over the active material. When your vehicle is in use, the active material is in constant contact with the electrolyte, which creates electric energy. When the crystals cover the active material, you're left with very little contact with the electrolyte. The result is that your battery and vehicle in turn will not be able to perform," says John.

When it drops to under 12,4 V, the longer the battery stands, the faster sulfation occurs and that in turn means that you may need to

replace your battery. John says that though some products claim to be able to reverse sulfation, and that it is possible to break down the crystals, it's a risky business. That's because batteries are sealed these days, so you'd have to charge it **at high voltage in high temperatures**.

The manufacturers of some charging products claim to have the chemical solution to be able to reverse the process, but that depends on the severity of the discharged state and there's still not enough evidence to suggest that the claims are 100 % accurate.



When all else fails

If your battery is beyond help, then you can't avoid replacing it, but it's not as simple as just walking into a shop and picking out one that's a similar size.

"Because of the innovation of stop/start systems and the specific cranking requirements of certain vehicles, battery technology has had to change quite a bit. Even in lower-priced models with entry level stop/start, they require at least an enhanced flooded battery, which caters for high cranking capacities and high cycle life," says John.

The more sophisticated stop/start systems require a glass mat, or valve-regulated lead acid, battery in which the polyethylene separators inside the battery have been replaced by glass mat separators that suck up the electrolytes. Not only is the cranking capacity of modern vehicles quite high, but the manufacturer requires the current to keep flowing.

For example, in some vehicles like the E53 BMW X5, there's a positive and negative feed point in the bonnet, so that you can maintain the current available in the vehicle while you replace the battery.

The latest vehicles require that you reset all the fault codes by essentially registering the new battery with the vehicle, which must conform with the required specifications lest you compromise the electronics. ⚡



THE INVISIBLE HERO



Suspension is not something you often see when you first look at a vehicle. But when you need it suspension is the single most important upgrade you can make to your vehicle.

SPRINGS COIL & LEAF SPRINGS

Available in a wide range of load ratings to maintain optimum ride height and control.

PRO-FORGE UPPER CONTROL ARMS

Designed to optimise wheel alignment and increase clearance with raised height suspension.

SHOCKS FOAM CELL TECHNOLOGY

Build for superior endurance in all conditions, the micro-cellular foam insert maximises cooling efficiency and reliability. The robust twin-tube design withstands impact and debris in the most challenging environment.

Original equipment suspension is set up to support your vehicle for on-road conditions with a reasonable amount of weight. When you start to add vehicle accessories, attach a trailer or caravan and increase your load, the way the suspension handles the load changes. Couple that with uneven surfaces and off-road conditions, the OEM suspension can no longer take the additional strain.



#SaferStrongerSmarter

www.ironman4x4.co.za | Tel: +27 11 058 3026



5 fabulous 4x4 routes

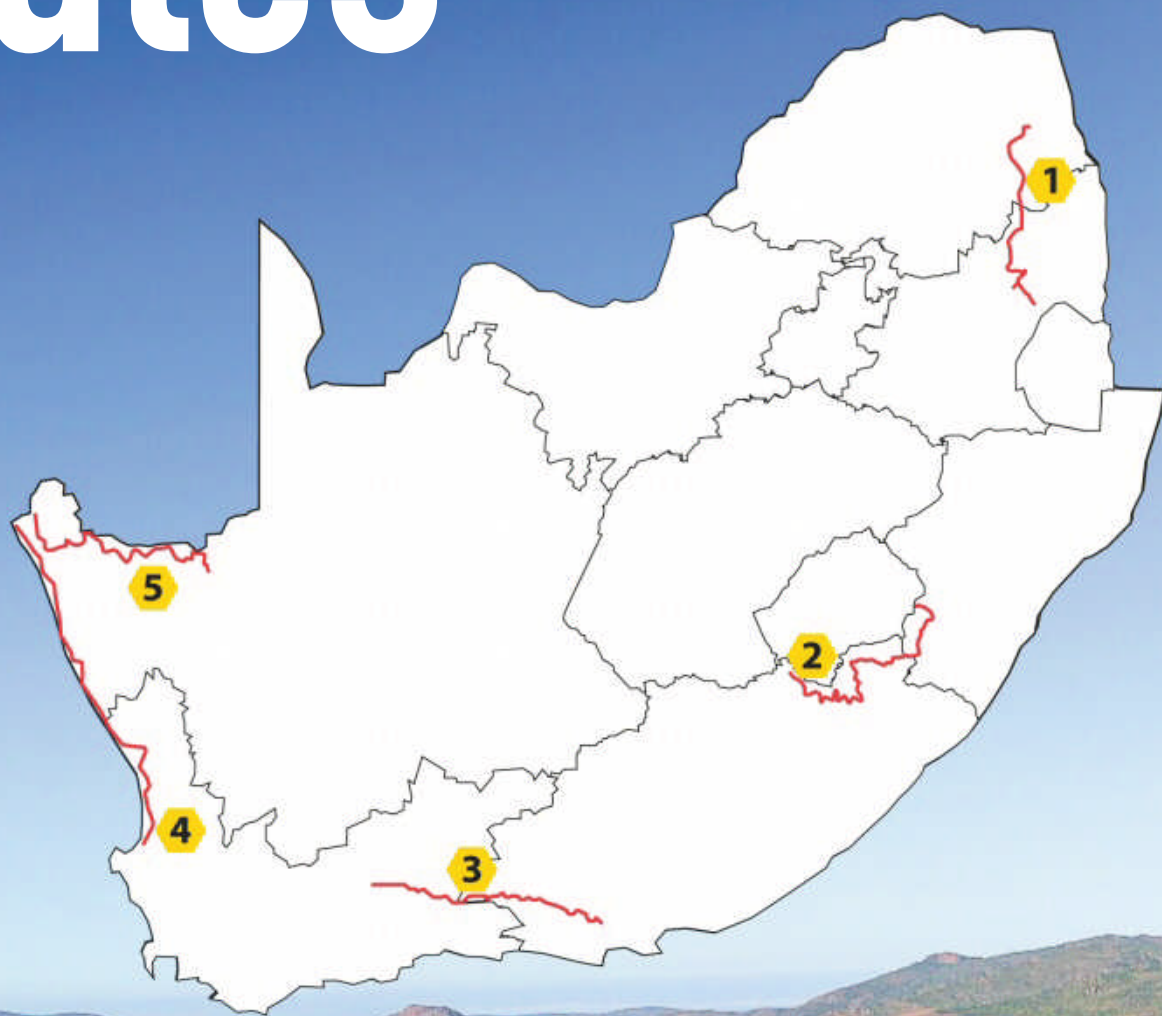
The provincial borders are open again and it's time to take a tour with your off-road rig. Here are five favourite routes inside South Africa's borders.

Words **Cyril Kloppe**

Level 2 of the COVID-19 lockdown measures won't allow us to cross our country's borders – but that's no problem, because there's so much to see in South Africa. Each route we mention here will keep you busy for longer than just one day. So pack your tent or hitch your off-road trailer, and pack enough food for about a week.

Please note that we haven't chosen South Africa's most challenging routes, although each one does have at least some challenges should you choose to tackle them. Or you could simply skip them and take things easy.

We also list five important items we strongly advise you to pack. Enjoy the drive... and take lots of pics!



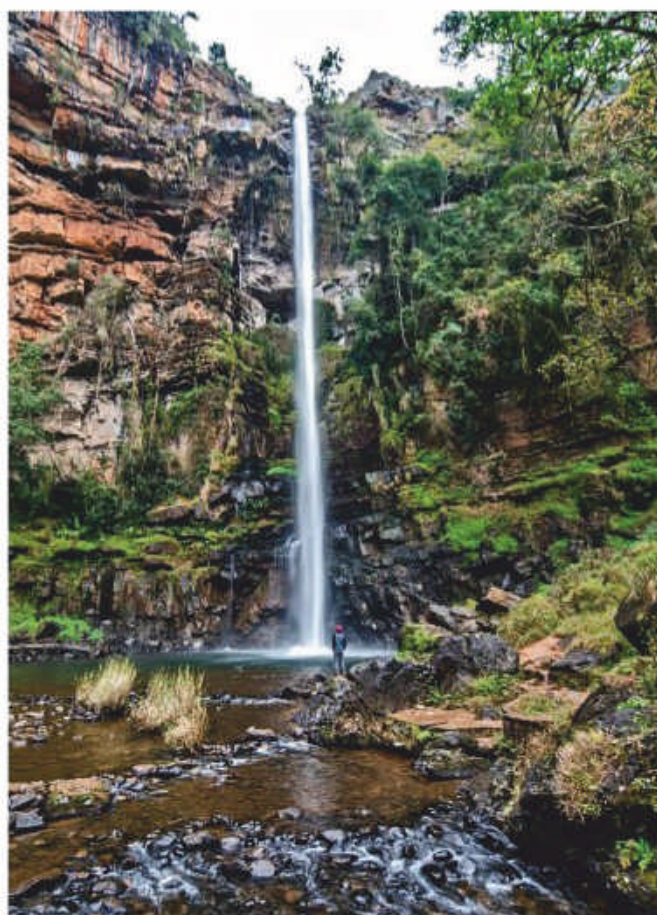
1 The Lowveld route

EXPLORE THE BLYDE RIVER VALLEY

This route starts in Barberton and takes you north to the Blyde River valley. This area is all about forestry and mining, and the former, of course, means there are a multitude of forestry roads winding their way through plantations.

First, take the R40 regional road through De Kaapvallei to Kaapsche Hoop. From there, take the pass of the same name to Nelspruit. From Nelspruit, follow the N4 highway for 25 km and turn off onto the R539 to the Sudwala Caves. After visiting the caves, head north on the R539, over the Sudwala Pass, to Sabie for an early lunch. There are many beautiful attractions here, including the impressive Lone Creek, Bridal Veil and Sabie waterfalls.

You can tackle the Mac Mac 4x4 trail if your vehicle is equipped for it, otherwise keep north of Sabie for 8 km on the R532, then turn right onto the Klipkraal Pass that meanders through the Blyde River valley. Cross the R535 regional road and follow the Lowveld route through the Blydepoort ravine to its top near Green Valley. From here, it is only a short hop to Hoedspruit and Phalaborwa where you can spend the night before entering the Kruger National Park early the next morning.



What you need to know

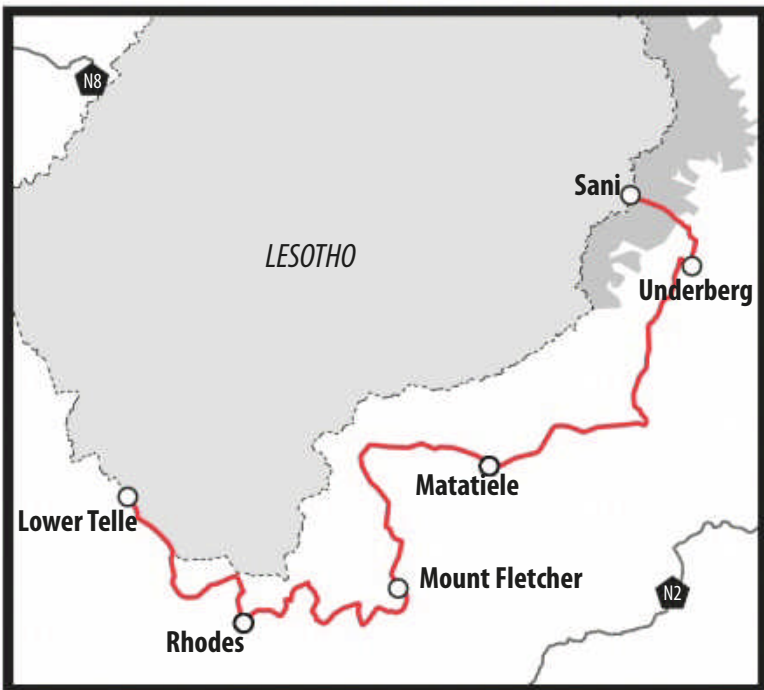


High 5 list

- GPS
- Birdwatching guidebook

- Binoculars
- Hiking boots
- Tyre-repair kit





What you need to know



High 5 list

- Extra blankets
- Rain jacket
- Tyre-repair kit
- Towing rope
- Recovery gear



2 The mountain route

SOUTH OF THE DRakensBERG

You will find South Africa's highest peaks along the ridge of the Drakensberg, and in the southern foothills there is an abundance of mountain passes that would keep you busy for weeks if you were to drive them all.

Start in Lower Telle and drive the R393 along the Lesotho border to Upper Telle. Cross the Lundean's Neck Pass and drive up to Wartrail. Turn east here and drive over Volunteershoek Pass to the turn-off to the Tiffindell ski resort. Now drive south over the Carlisleshoekspruit Pass to Rhodes – this town has a great campsite if you want to spend the night.

Drive north over Naude's Nek Pass – if you're really brave, take the Lehanas Pass north of Naude's Nek, but be warned: it will



be tough. Then turn left onto the D8018. This road takes you across the Pitseng Pass to Mount Fletcher. From here, follow the R56 to the Ongeluksnek turn-off and follow the mountain road along the Lesotho border to Matatiele. From Matat, as the locals call it, it's a tar road to Underberg and Himeville,

and after this, you're headed uphill, because the route concludes with the world-famous Sani Pass.

Hopefully the Lesotho border will be open by the time you read this article, otherwise there are dozens of other mountain passes in the area that you can explore.

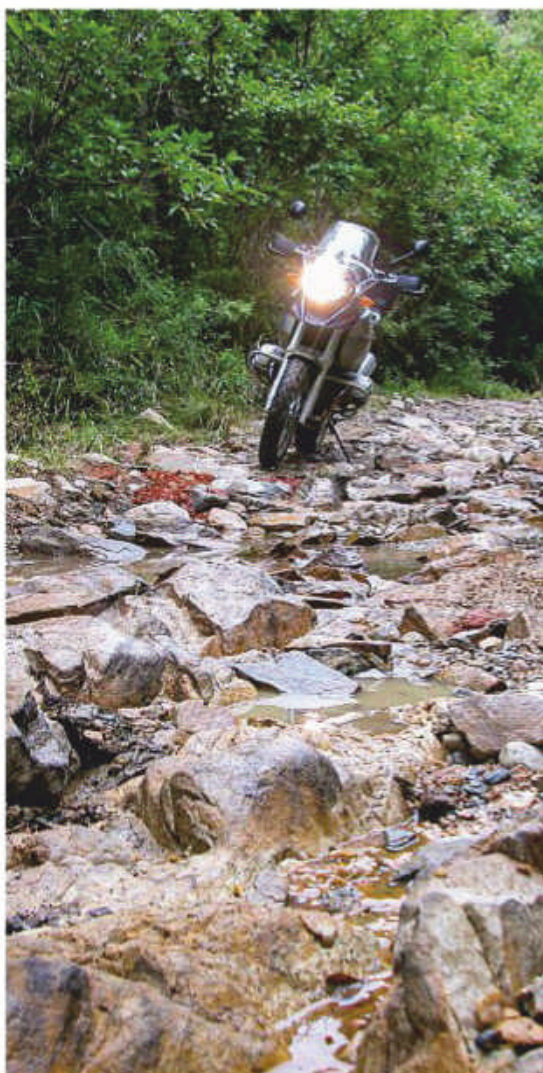
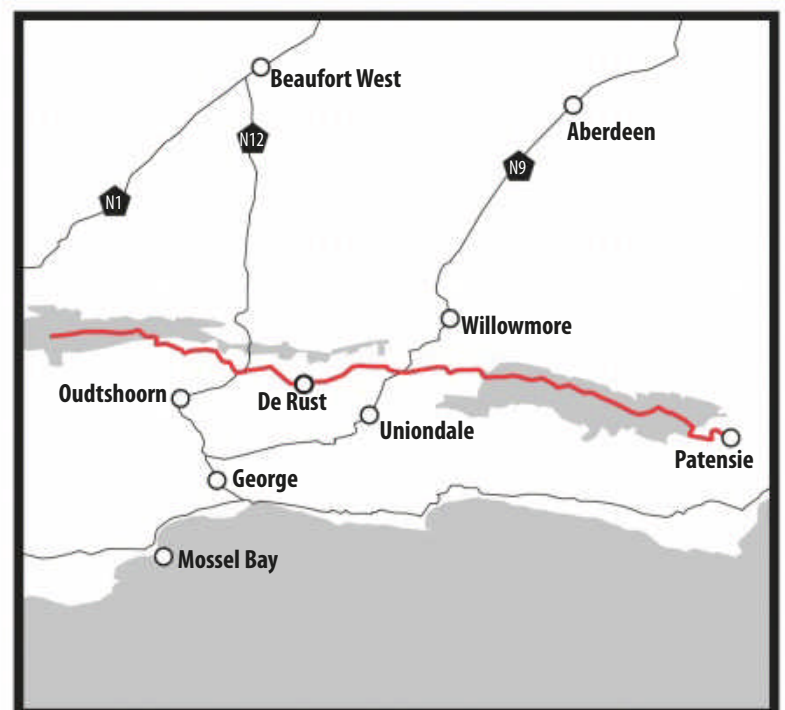


3 The kloof route

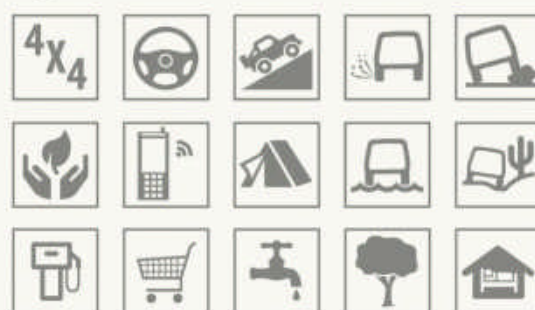
FROM BAVIAANS TO THE GAMKAS

Two of South Africa's most beautiful kloofs lie close to each other, and you can explore both within two days. Depart from Patensie: a narrow dirt road first takes you over the Grootrivier Poort Pass and through the Groot River to Bruintjieskraal. Next up is the Combrink's Pass with its sharp turns, then the Holgat Pass's deep ravine and several river crossings – Smitskraal's water is especially deep if there's been rain.

The Grasnek Pass is next, but after this the kloof starts to widen and flatten. You leave the Baviaanskloof over the Nuwekloof Pass, join the R332 and follow this road for 30 km to the N9. After a mere 6 km, turn right onto the R341 and follow this road to De Rust. Take the back roads at the foot of the Swartberg to the Cango Caves. The caves are definitely worth a visit and there are a number of campsites in the area for overnighting. The next morning, tackle the Swartberg Pass, and at its summit, turn left onto the Otto du Plessis road to the Gamkaskloof, better known as Die Hel. About 30 km after turning off to Die Hel, you will find the Elands Pass that descends against the steep slopes of the Gamkaskloof.

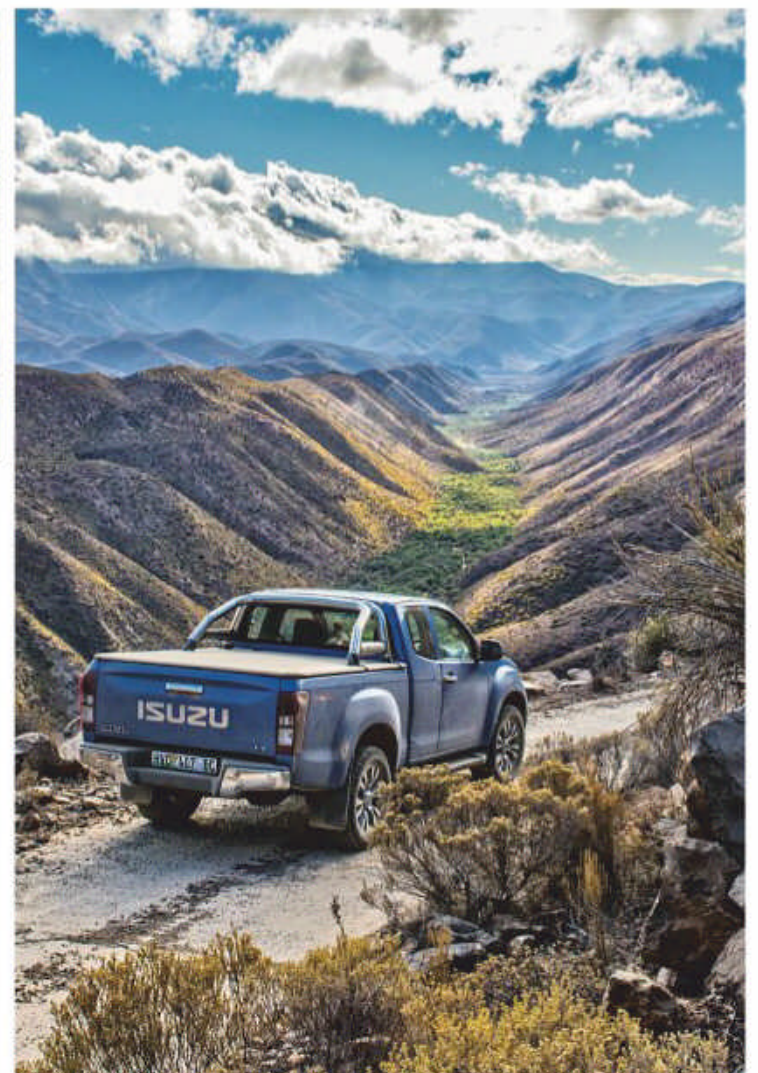


What you need to know



High 5 list

- Tyre-repair kit
- Towing rope
- Hiking boots
- Braai wood
- Cozzies



4 The coastal route

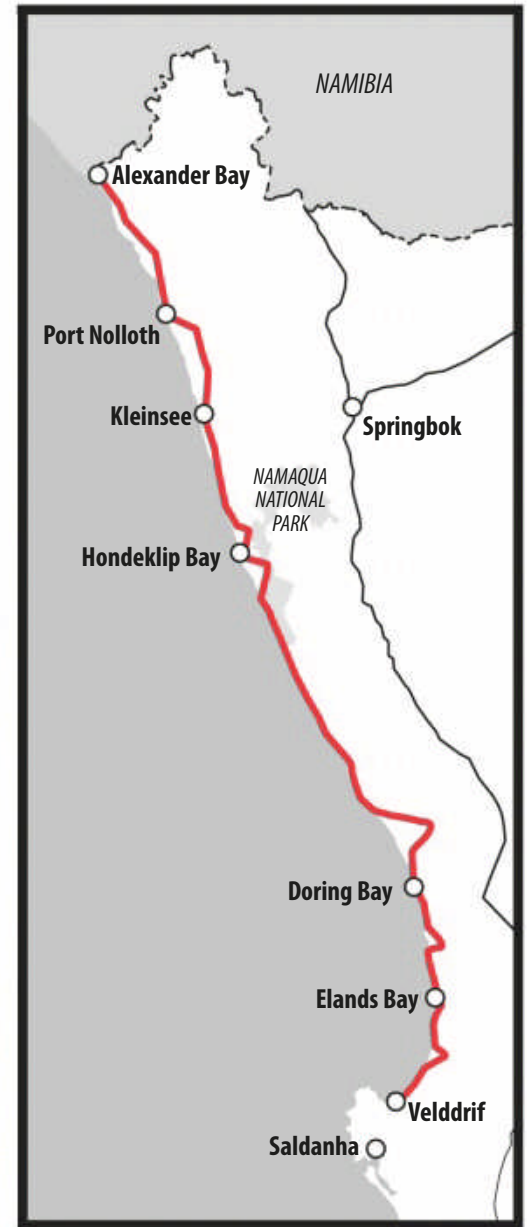
WEST COAST, BEST COAST

This route has no official name – although a section between the Groen and Spoeg rivers is jokingly called the green phlegm section. It stretches from Velddrif in the south to Alexander Bay in the north, is 600 km long and will take you at least three days.

The first section takes you through Laaiplek, Dwarskersbos, Elands Bay, Lambert's Bay and Doring Bay. It is a good tar road, with sections of dirt, to Koekenaap, from where you turn back toward the ocean and follow a twin-track to Brand-se-Baai and the Namaqua National

Park. From here, the road alternates between dirt and tar to Alexander Bay.

Quite a number of the towns along this route have fuel and food plus some restaurants and bars – so there's no need to pack water and food for more than a few days. Most roads are public ones, although some require a farmer's permission. To drive through the national park, however, you have to pay a day rate (not if you have a Wild Card, though). You can tow an off-road trailer here, but not a road caravan. There are campsites at Velddrif, Dwarskersbos, Elands Bay, Doring Bay, Strandfontein, the national park, Hondeklip Bay, Kleinsee and Port Nolloth.

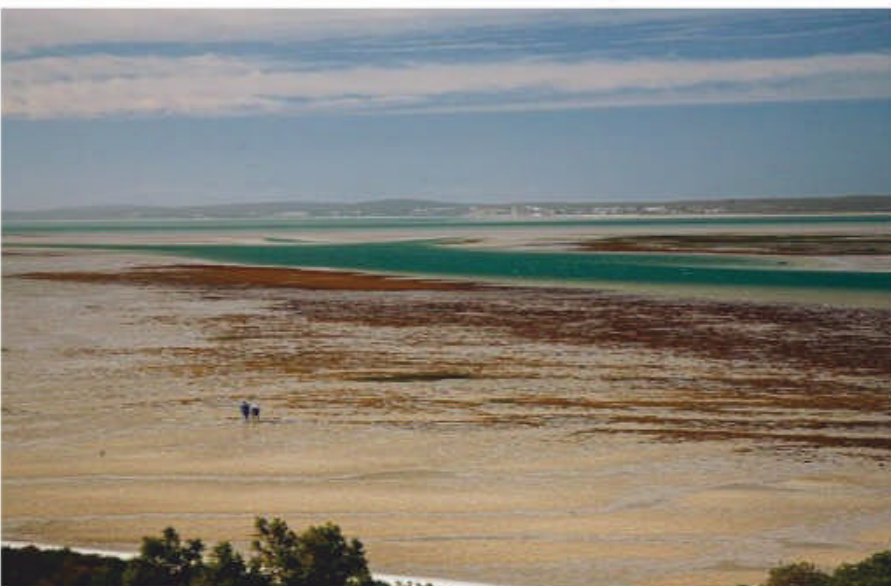


What you need to know



Vat 5-paklys

- Compressor
- Sand tracks
- Braai wood
- Shade net
- Fishing gear



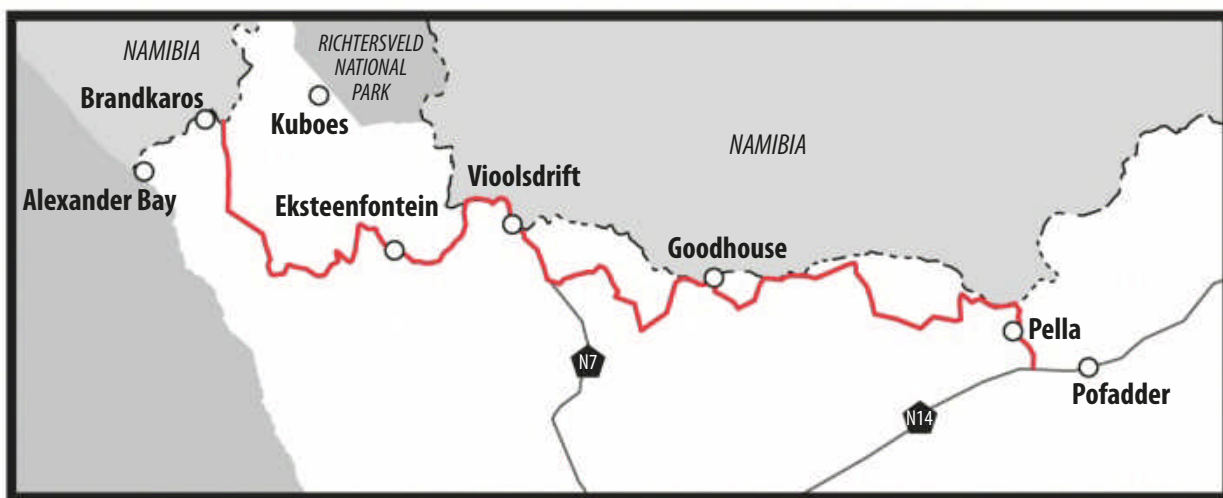


What you need to know

High 5 list

- Compressor
- Sand tracks

- Tyre-repair kit
- Extra water
- Extra fuel



The river route

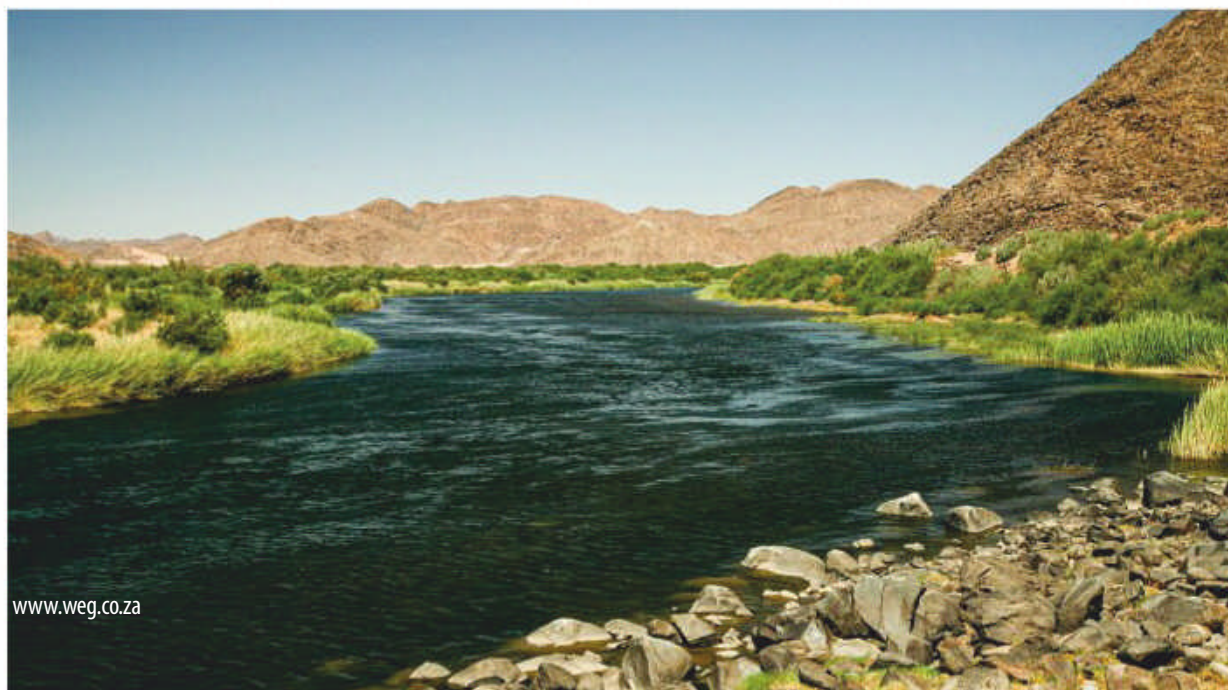
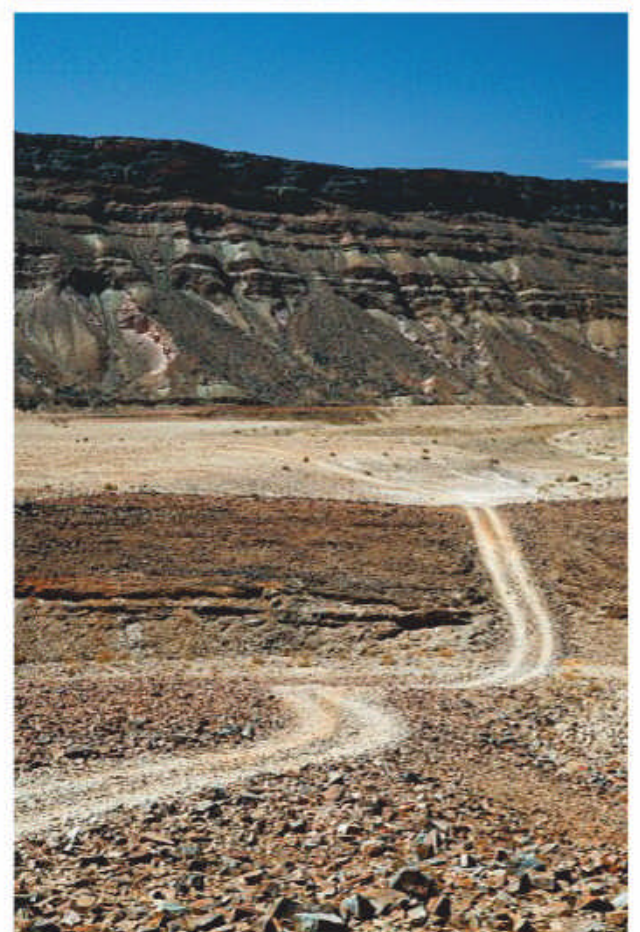
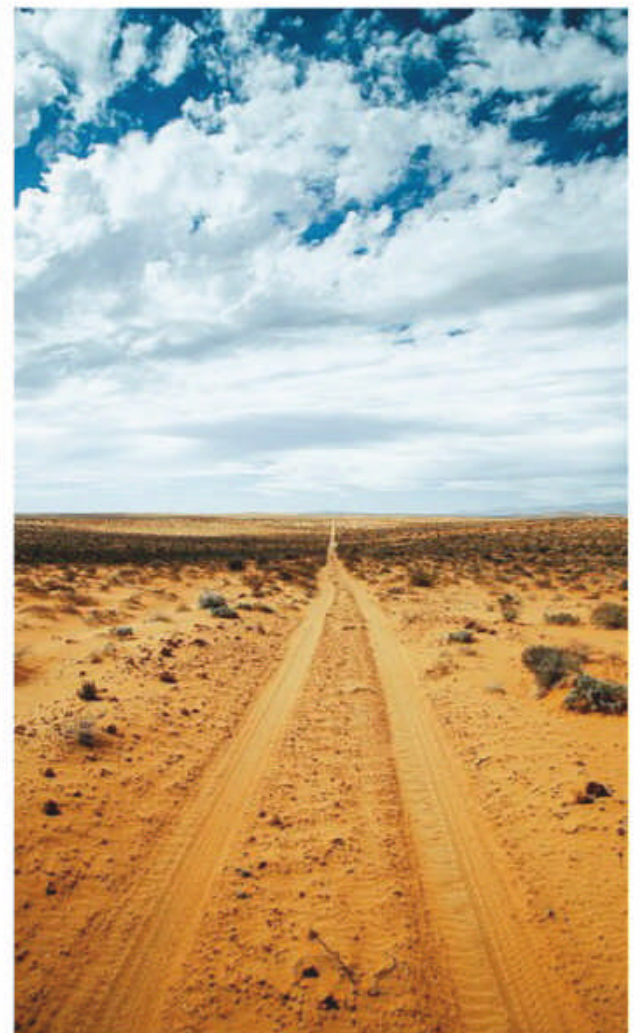
FOLLOW THE GARIEP

The Namakwa 4x4 eco trail starts at Pofadder and ends at Brandkaros. Depending on how many detours you take, it's between 400 km and 600 km long and takes three to six days. The first section of the route (between Pofadder and Vioolsdrift) is passable for ordinary SUVs, although all-wheel drive is essential. But the second section between Vioolsdrift and Brandkaros through the dunes is more challenging, especially when it comes to the multitude of dry riverbeds you have to cross.

The main challenges are rocks and sand,

but what you need to watch out for most is that your vehicle breaks down on a remote section of the route. You would most likely have to wait a couple of days until someone passes by or you'd have to walk out to get help. Speaking of danger: if you're brave and experienced, we suggest you explore the nearby Road to Hell. It's best to tackle it when you have companions who know what they're doing.

You must get a permit to drive the route, but it's a fairly quick process and only takes a day or three. Contact Wilma James at 081 873 9043 or info@namakwa4by4.co.za for reservations.



Looking for a lightweight



SHERPA TINY HI-RIDER

Climb credentials

The Sherpa range has cultivated quite a strong local following, and the model line-up is suitable for people who just want a place to rest their heads at the campsite. The Hi-Rider is a modified version of the Tiny, with 15" wheels that replaces the 13" units on the standard Tiny. There's also a swing bracket on the lower section of the door that carries the full-sized spare wheel.

The Tiny Hi-Rider is made of fibreglass, down to the step on which you stand to access the interior. The A-frame, where the

spare wheel used to be situated, has dual openings on either side for more storage. This model features two single beds on either side of a centre aisle, while there's a 220 V bar fridge that doubles as a worktop when you're inside, and the model includes a small (1,3m x 1,8m) awning that covers the rear door.

Drive & Camp says The base model is cheaper, but then you have to make do without the 15" wheels on this model, and its spare wheel swing bracket.



In most cases you need at least a code EB license to tow, but it comes with a bit of extra homework. There are, however, caravans you're allowed to hitch with only your regular code B license. Here are some of them.

Words **Kyle Kock**

Not everyone aspires to one day have a Jurgens Penta or Conqueror Commander in their towing combination. Or perhaps their families just aren't that big yet.

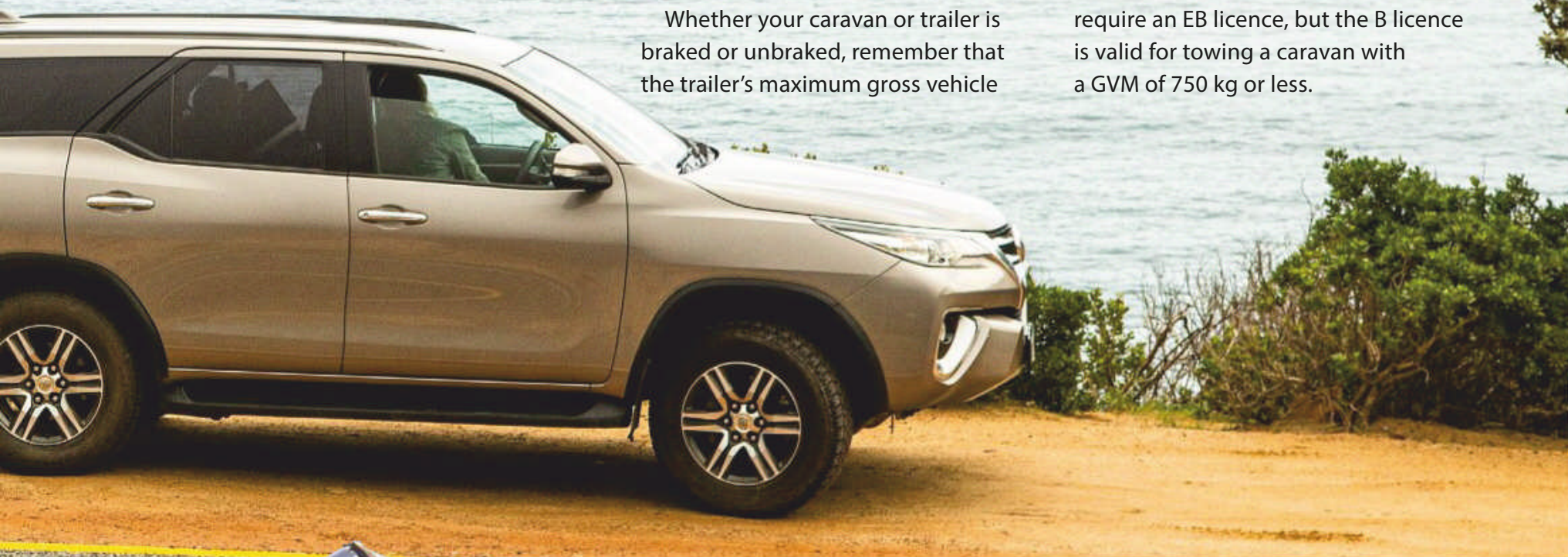
Even recent retirees, who may have automatically been granted an EB

when the legislation changed at the start of the new millennium, might not necessarily want a full-sized caravan as they can be cumbersome to manoeuvre at the campsite in your golden years. And then there's the issue of space. For many folks, the prospect of a smaller caravan is mightily attractive.

Whether your caravan or trailer is braked or unbraked, remember that the trailer's maximum gross vehicle

mass (GVM) is not allowed to exceed the towing vehicle's tare weight. But also, for any unbraked caravan (or trailer) with a GVM of 750 kg or less, the towing vehicle's tare must be at least double the caravan's GVM.

By law any caravan or trailer which exceeds a GVM of 750 kg, must be fitted with brakes. This is also when you require an EB licence, but the B licence is valid for towing a caravan with a GVM of 750 kg or less.



Price R160 000
Length 4,3 m
Width 1,8 m
Height 1,99m
Tare 560 kg



BADGER LITE

Tough tyke

Usually a two-sleeper, the Badger Lite comes with the option of having a small bunk up front at the nose for a child, or additional storage space. You can access the pantry from both inside the Lite's cabin or from the outside when required. There's also a two-plate gas stove that slides out for al-fresco dinners and complements the slide-out kitchenette.

The Badger's unique selling point is the entire right panel that slides out to form a double bed, along with a section of the roof

that covers it. This results in extra room in the cabin, since only half the bed's length is on the inside.

There's also a 105 Ah battery, an 80-100 l water tank and pump, and twin-plate gas stove with a 3 kg gas cylinder.

Drive & Camp says You can get an even tinier option from Badger called the Mini, which will suit really small city cars, and has a tare weight of just 425 kg. Because of the lockdown, Badger hadn't yet started actual production of the Mini.



TONGA II

Black is back

This chic black number is the brainchild of Cape Town-based Tonga, and is essentially an empty trailer styled like one of those cool vans from the 70s and 80s. But there's also a folding mattress, a slide-out kitchen up front over the A-frame, a built-in cooler box that slides out of the nose cone and a built-in 40 l water tank.

The door at the rear forms the

roof of the tent that you need to pitch behind the Tonga. This acts as a sort of foyer, as the panels provide some privacy. The box on the roof houses an awning that covers the entire caravan.

Drive & Camp says The storage space available is a major plus for those looking to bring along a few more luxuries from home.



CUSTOM CANOPIES LION'S CUB

Cub scout

The Lion's Cub follows in the pawprints of its larger siblings, and is one of the smaller models featured here, but makes up for its tiny stature by being chock-full of items that slide, or fold out, including a fridge/freezer, a dishwashing station, a worktop and gas cooker (all on the left), a panel that you pull out on the right-hand side that turns the single bed to a double, and numerous pouches for odds and ends, inside and out.

The pop-up roof is hinged on the right side, which is logical as

you stand in the aisle on the left of the bed, but that means the person lying against the window will have to climb over the one on the aisle side in the middle of the night.

There's an oversupply of 220 V and 12 V sockets so all your devices can be kept fully charged and there's even a gas-heated shower.

Drive & Camp says This is a tough-looking little camper that will do well behind a smaller off-road vehicle.





Price R195 000
Length 4,8 m
Width 1,7 m
Height 2 m
Tare 500 kg



Price R165 000
Length 4,2 m
Width 1,92 m
Height 1,85 m
Tare 380 kg



Price R225 000
Length 3,5 m
Width 1,70
Height 1,8 m
Tare 250 kg



ALOE PERI-PERI Hot dang

The simple shape would remind most of a commercial trailer, but then you notice the fold-down table at the rear next to the regular shaped door that you clearly don't mistake for a luggage trailer, windows on either side, and a pop-up roof. There's also checker plate up front that protects the bodywork behind the A-frame.

You can make the Peri-Peri especially homely if you order the optional awnings, which you

pitch over its rear, and that covers the kitchen and door. You can also opt for metallic silver rather than the standard white paint.

The bed, which forms from a dinette big enough for four people is large enough to accommodate three.

Drive & Camp says There are nifty nooks and crannies at the bed's head and under the bench boards in which you can store valuables.



JAGUAR ZAZU 2 Camo cat

Jaguar Caravans' Zazu 2 is aimed at couples, even though it all folds out large enough to be able to cover a wide area. The awning covers the rear, left side and a bit of the A frame as well.

Up front on the left side, the kitchen unit slides out like a big drawer, with drawers facing the outside for cutlery and crockery as well as a two-burner gas stove on top. The fridge/freezer is in a recess in the unit closest to the Zazu's body.

There's enough space in the nose cone box for four ammo boxes, and on top of this there's also some space for firewood.

Drive & Camp says The options include a fridge/freezer (up to 85 l), battery charging system with LED lights for the cabin, 150 W solar panel for the roof, and even run-in brakes. Be selective though, because they all contribute to a raised GVM.



GYPSEY LITE Entry-level nomad

There's a version of the Lite called the Impi, that features a pop-up roof, but that's a little extra, and if you're of average height then you should have no problem standing up straight inside of the base model with the fixed roof.

The only odd thing about the Lite is that it doesn't have a kitchen, and yet there's a 173 l fridge with freezer, a dinette for two that doubles as a second bed and lots of cupboard space.

There's even walking space on either side of the double bed. The Lite also has run-in brakes so the towing vehicle only needs a GVM of 750 kg.

Drive & Camp says There's an option for another bed that you'll be able to slot in above the dinette as a bunk, but you can also add a microwave oven and an awning.





Price R171 302
Length 4,25 m
Width 1,8 m
Height 2,03 m
Net weight 580 kg



Price R150 000
 from Jaguar
Length 2,5 m
Width 1,5 m
Height 2,05 m
Tare 500 kg



Price R154 000
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Width 2,09 m
Height 2,47 m
Tare 590 kg



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Where there's smoke...

This month we're giving our camp menu an extra bit of oomph with bacon, sausages, smoked paprika... and whiskey!

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

COWBOY BEANS

Full of beans

Smoked pork and beans get a BBQ flavour in this potjie. It sounds like a lot of work, but believe me, it's all worth it.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 500 g speckled beans, soaked in water overnight
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 small smoked gammon (800 g to 1 kg)
- 12 pickled onions, peeled and halved
- 1 ℓ stock

FOR THE GLAZE

- ½ cup of your favorite ready-made BBQ braai sauce
- 1 tablespoon strong mustard (Dijon or English)
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

Here's how

1 Drain the beans and place them in the potjie with the garlic and bay leaves. Cover the beans in water and cook for 1 hour.

2 Use a colander or sieve to drain the beans and return them to the potjie. Add the meat, onions and stock, and cook for another hour.

3 Carefully remove the skin from the gammon. Whisk together the ingredients for the glaze and slowly pour it over the meat lying on top of the beans. Carry on cooking – with a few coals on the potjie lid – for another 15-20 minutes until the sauce has reduced enough to your taste and the meat is glossy. Cut the meat into thin slices and serve with the beans.

Drive & Camp says Leftover potjie is always delicious for breakfast – mix the beans and meat with a tin of tomatoes. Heat the mixture in your skottel braai, make holes in the sauce and then break an egg in each hole. Bake until cooked and you have a breakfast of champions!

BLT PASTA SALAD

Screwed up

The British are known for their 'bacon, lettuce and tomato'. If that combination forms the three musketeers of salad, this chipotle mayonnaise is Dogtanian!

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 300 g pasta screws
- 200 g bacon strips, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2/3 cup chipotle mayonnaise
- 200 g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- a large handful (80 g) spinach, shredded

Here's how

1 Boil the pasta in salted water until al dente. Drain, but retain some of the pasta water.

2 Fry the bacon in the olive oil until crispy and mix it through the hot pasta. The bacon fat will prevent the pasta from sticking as it cools.

3 Dilute the mayonnaise with enough of the pasta water to make it runny – but don't make it too watery.

4 Mix the mayonnaise, tomato, onion and spinach into the bacon pasta and serve at room temperature.

Drive & Camp says Chipotle is a type of smoked jalapeño that's primarily used in Mexican cuisine. If you don't have ready-made chipotle mayonnaise, simply mix a spoonful of sriracha sauce, chopped preserved jalapeño peppers or a pinch of smoked paprika into a good creamy mayonnaise.



DRUNK CHICKEN WITH SOYA SAUCE AND HONEY

Pecking order

This marinade is also delicious with smaller pieces of chicken, such as drumsticks or wings.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 4 chicken quarters (drumstick and thigh)
- ½ cup soya sauce
- ½ cup of whiskey
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 cm fresh ginger, finely grated
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Here's how

1 Score a few deep cuts in each piece of chicken. Mix the rest of the ingredients together and pour it over the chicken. Mix everything and marinate the chicken for two hours. Remember to bring the meat back to room temperature before you braai.

2 Braai the chicken over medium coals for about 20 minutes or until it is almost cooked. As always, the cooking time is determined by the heat of your coals and the size of the meat – so use your judgement.

3 Meanwhile, cook the marinade in a saucepan for a few minutes until it thickens slightly. Generously baste the chicken while you braai it for a final 10-15 minutes until golden brown and cooked through. It's delicious with steamed rice.

Drive & Camp says Use the lid of a large braai pan to cover the chicken slightly for the last couple of minutes if you want an extra smokey flavor.

DOUBLE HOT DOGS WITH TOMATO CHUTNEY

Two-in-one

These hot dogs are perfect for a skottel braai when you want to prepare your padkos on the go.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 8 smoked viennas
- 16 bacon strips
- 4 hot dog rolls
- butter for greasing
- olive oil for frying
- 1 tablespoon tomato jam (optional)

FOR THE CHUTNEY

- 1 large onion, sliced thinly
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- a shot of sriracha (or your favourite braai sauce)
- a pinch of sugar
- a shot of water (or beer)

Here's how

1 Wrap two viennas at a time in two strips of bacon and fasten them with toothpicks.

2 Slice open the rolls, butter them and fry the cut sides first in the pan (or in your skottel braai) until lightly toasted. Set aside.

3 Pour a dash of oil into the pan and fry the bacon-wrapped viennas gently until they're golden brown all over. Stir in the jam (if using) at the end as a glaze and place the sausages on the toasted rolls – remember to remove the toothpicks.

4 Make the chutney. Fry the onion in the oil until it starts colour. Stir in the tomato, sriracha and sugar and fry until the chutney is thick enough for you. Dilute the sauce with a splash of water (or beer). Taste and season with salt and pepper before dishing the condiment onto the rolls.

Drive & Camp says Turn this into breakfast fare by adding a fried egg or two – why not? The skottel braai is hot and ready for them!



POTATOES IN CHEESE SAUCE

Don't go bacon my heart

A mere pinch of smoked paprika gives more than enough colour and flavour to this delicious potjie that makes an excellent side dish.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 1 kg baby potatoes
- 200 g bacon bits
- 1 heaped tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- a pinch smoked paprika
- 1 ℓ milk
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- crispy onion sprinkles (optional)

Here's how

1 Boil the potatoes in brine until soft. Drain and set aside. You can keep the potatoes whole or cut in half so that a larger surface can come into contact with the sauce.

2 Fry the bacon in the butter until crisp. Spoon it out, but retain the fat and whisk in the flour and paprika. Gradually beat in the milk with a balloon whisk – this way you get rid of any lumps – and cook the sauce for about 5 minutes until it starts to thicken.

3 Taste the sauce, make sure you don't taste any more flour, and season it to taste with salt and pepper.

4 Stir all the cheese into the sauce until it melts and the sauce is nicely smooth. Pour it over the potatoes, sprinkle the bacon over and finish with onion flakes for a crunch.

Drive & Camp says this side dish is at its best when it is served hot.



LUXURY SWEET POTATO PURSES

Short and sweet

Whiskey that's been aged in wooden barrels has a subtle smokey profile that perfectly complements this sage-and-bacon butter.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 1 kg small sweet potatoes (at least 12), washed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- a solid pinch Maldon sea salt
- 100 g bacon bits
- 2 heaped tablespoons butter
- 6 fresh sage leaves (or use a pinch of dry sage)
- ¼ cup pecan nuts, coarsely chopped
- a tot (25 ml) whiskey

Here's how

1 Prick the sweet potatoes a few times and rub in the olive oil and salt in all over. Wrap them tightly in foil with the shiny side in.

2 Braai the foil packets on the grid over the coals or carefully directly on the coals. Make sure they bake slowly and get just the right amount of heat. Their skin should be crispy without being burnt.

3 Fry the bacon in the butter until crisp. Stir in the sage leaves, pecans and whiskey, and mix everything through.

4 Cut a cross in each potato and press them slightly up from below so the tender flesh is exposed. Now spoon some of the decadent butter into and over each potato and serve immediately.

Drive & Camp says With this dish you can decide for yourself how luxurious you want to make the butter sauce by adjusting the amount of bacon and nuts. Even just with the whiskey butter, these crispy baked sweet potatoes are the bomb. 



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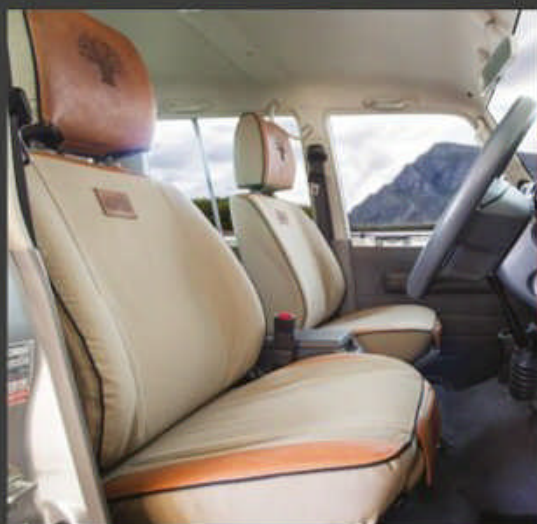


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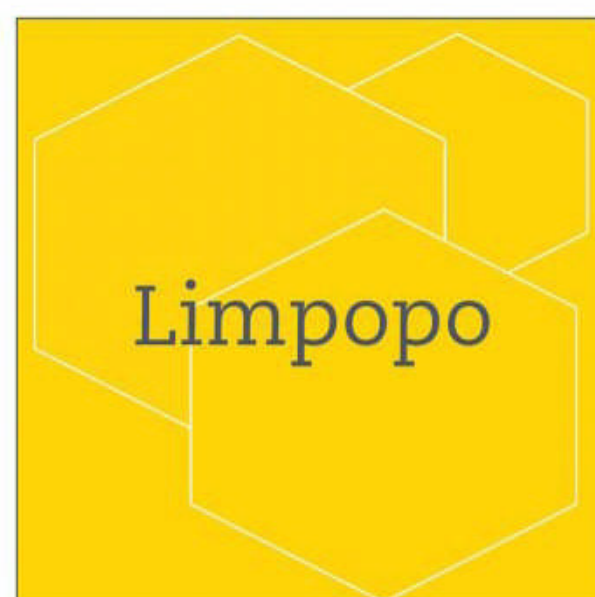
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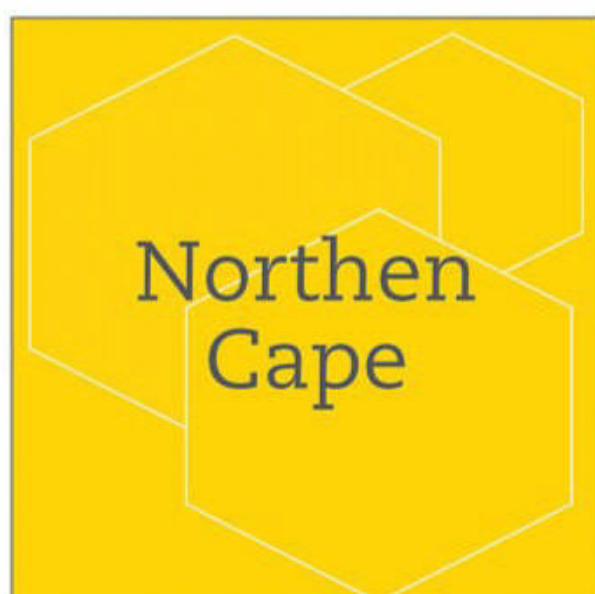
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CROSSWORD

Sharon MacKelina from Kimberley has won a **cooler bag worth R220** for her crossword entry in our August 2020 issue. You can win a cooler bag too. Complete this crossword puzzle and e-mail a picture to drivecamp@gomag.co.za. Or do it at <https://bit.ly/32c4hHP>. Last month's solution is on p 107.

				Coastal town close to Stilbaai	Fly	Regarding	Small amount	Town in the Eastern Cape (6-6)					
						Sauté							
						Pit							
				Got up					Baltic				
				Nobelium (symbol)		Small							
Down payments		Succulent		Portal						Zero		Golf club	
Zoo		Tidy		Gallium (symbol)						Deceived		Shelter	
							Cat						
A nut					No date (abbr)		Didn't pass						
Trench					Sort								
				Pigpen			Iridium (symbol)		Indeed		Seaborgium (symbol)		
				Utter failure			Cunning						
Airless													
Nickel (symbol)						Short narrative							
		Inclines											
		Chlorine (symbol)						Not out		Venomous arachnid			
Technetium (symbol)			Single unit			Lots							
						Circle ratio							
Rested					Plutonium (symbol)		Eastern Cape (abbr)						
					More arid								
				Change (copy)			In the direction		Travels		Helium (symbol)	Niobium (symbol)	
				Conifer			Increase						
						Europium (symbol)		Rule					
						Legumes		Metallic mixture					
				Pinch			Braai side dish			Smear			
										Chaos			
Manufacturer of the Pik Up		Stable		Metric unit	Conger		Citrus fruits					Stroke	
		Female chicken		Negative answer	Colour		Everything						
							Medicinal plants				Thus		
							While						
Pass on						Beauty parlours					Selenium (symbol)		
Irritated													
						Cunning			Location				

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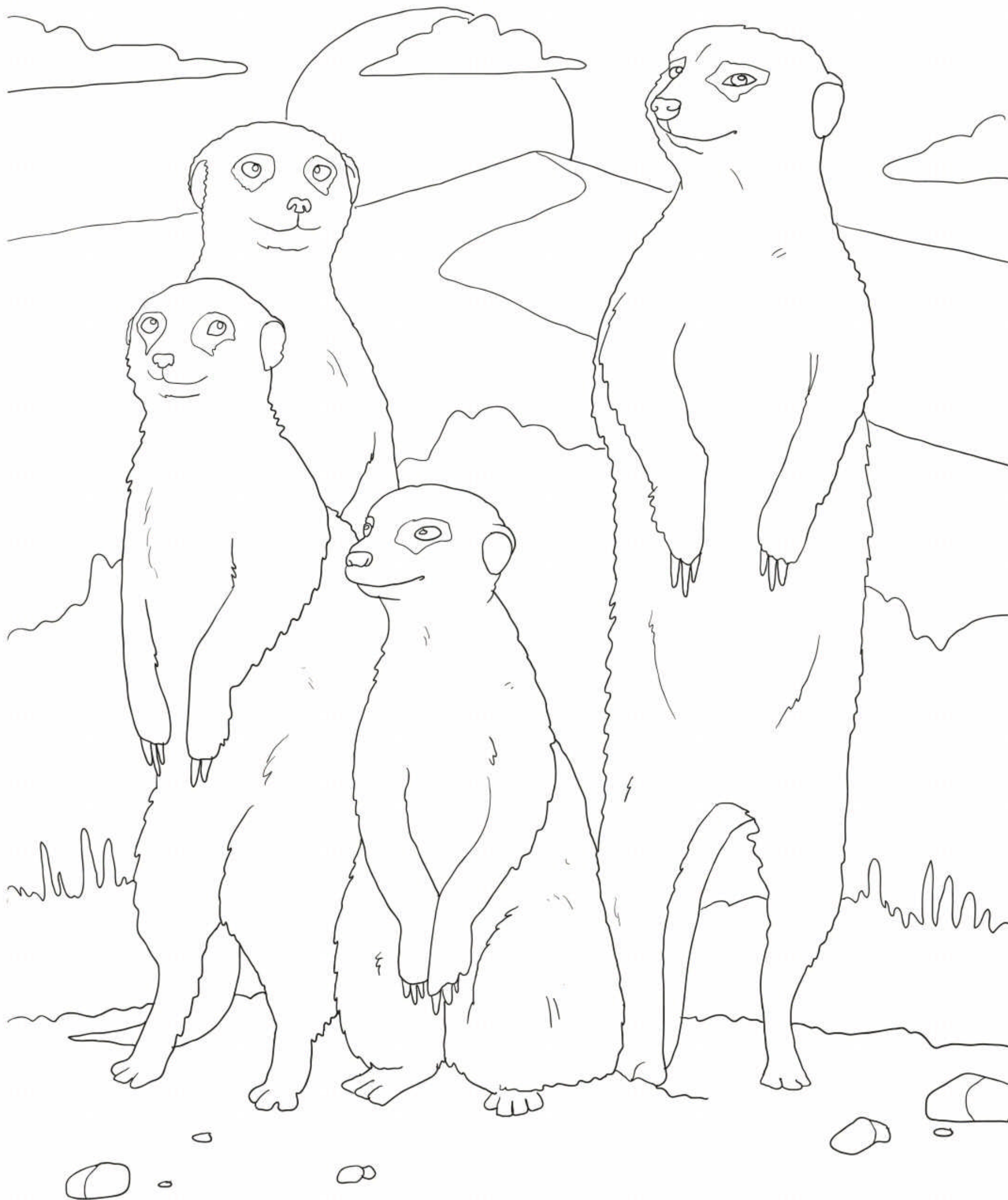
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Word search

F C H T K X M I F M B G L C L Z V I L V X N
B Q S C N I H H C T D X A A C E I K J D G U
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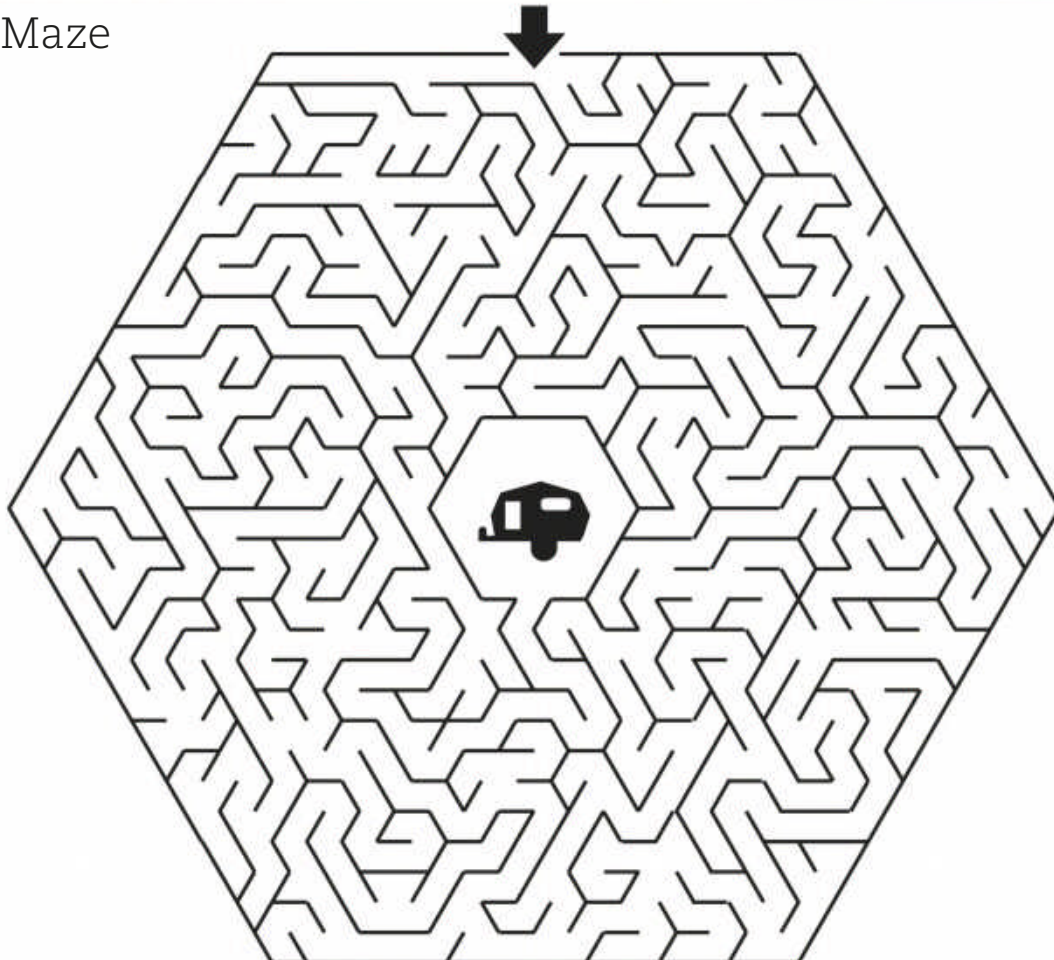
SOUTH AFRICAN FLOWERS

Barberton daisy	Ground morning glory	Seeplakkie
Blood lily	Sour fig	Southbossie
Cape eelgrass	Impala lily	Sweet prickly pear
Devil's thorn	Lebombo aloe	Tassel pondweed
Gazania	Pineapple flower	Water hyacinth
Goat's foot	River crinum	Wild dagga

Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts



CROCODILES

- The saltwater crocodile is the largest species of crocodile and can weigh over 1 200 kg.
- They have the strongest bite of any animal but can't chew; tearing and swallowing their food.
- Their teeth are replaced when they fall out and they can go through over 3 000 teeth in a lifetime.
- They often sleep with their mouths open to release heat as they have no sweat glands.
- Being cold blooded, they have a slow metabolism and can survive long periods without food.

No replacement for displacement

New materials and technology have ensured that modern, smaller capacity diesel engines can deliver more work using less fuel overall, says **Mic van Zyl**.

Rumours abound that the Toyota Land Cruiser 200 Series replacement (let's call it the 300 Series) will no longer feature the 4.5 V8 twin turbodiesel engine found in the current vehicle. Rumour also has it that the new vehicle will feature a smaller capacity turbodiesel engine with either a four- or six-cylinder configuration with capacity around 3 to 3,5 l. There is also talk of the vehicle featuring petrol engines with hybrid technology. The reaction on forums and the like has been mixed.

My initial reaction was one of trepidation. I have driven many 200 Land Cruisers and they are a pleasure to drive. My own 76 Land Cruiser has the same engine albeit with a single turbo delivering less power and torque than the 200.

I have, however, always thought that neither vehicle performs as though it's powered by a large capacity V8 turbodiesel.

WHEN WE LOOK at the current crop of modern diesel-powered 4x4 vehicles, just about every manufacturer has at some point downscaled the engine capacity on offer while increasing power and torque performance at the same time.

In general, smaller capacity engines have a number of advantages over larger engines with more cylinders. There are fewer moving parts in the smaller engine with less cylinders. With fewer moving parts there is also less overall friction in the engine resulting in less fuel spent to overcome this friction.

A side effect of some modern engines is the increase in oil consumption experienced by many owners. This is a result of the decrease in engine friction around the moving parts. It appears that engineers are happy to decrease the piston liner friction in the interests of fuel economy with a slight increase in engine oil consumption as a trade-off.

Depending on the engine design, smaller pistons in a smaller engine can also produce a wider band of usable engine revs. An example of this can be found in the current range of Ford Ranger turbodiesel engines on offer.

The older 3.2 l five-cylinder engine produces 140 kW of power at 3 000 rpm and 470 Nm of torque between 1 500 and 2 750 rpm. The newer generation 2.0 l four-cylinder engine produces 157 kW at 3 750 rpm and 500 Nm of

torque between 1 500 and 2 000 rpm.

The 3.2 engine has a specific engine power output of 45,9 kW per litre of displacement compared to 78,5 kW for the 2.0 engine. That is an increase in specific power output of more than 70%. The argument is that while the smaller engine is more efficient than the older engine, it also works significantly harder. It is this perception that drives much of the scepticism around smaller engine capacity in these types of vehicles.

I HAVE SEEN NUMEROUS YouTube videos on this very argument with the Ford Ranger models pitching the 3.2 against the new 2.0. A couple of the videos are quite technical and as accurate as possible. The outcome is never that conclusive.

What is clear, however, is the old adage that there is no 'replacement for displacement' is very much a thing of the past. Especially when it comes to modern diesel-powered 4x4 vehicles.

What is also very clear is that modern engine technology has accelerated vastly in recent times. New materials and technology have ensured that the modern, smaller capacity diesel engines can deliver more work using less fuel overall.

The fact here is that we have not suddenly had an increase in the amount of failing, new generation, smaller capacity diesel engines. It just hasn't happened. On the contrary, these new generation engines are arguably more reliable than their older generation predecessors while actively contributing to the ever-increasing drive for better fuel economy and decreased exhaust emissions. There is no word yet on what will happen to the V8 engine in the 70 series Land Cruiser.

However, if it is more powerful and uses less fuel, that would be good as well. I can always turn up the radio.





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A new way of camping

There are a number of important elements to remember when camping during the COVID-19 pandemic, says **Neels van Heerden**.

Life will probably never be the same again after the COVID-19 pandemic. The other day, I compiled a list of the items we will need to get when going camping.

It includes enough masks for everyone who's camping, a mop, a bag for my own roll of white gold, a compact hot-water appliance and a spray bottle with hand sanitiser for each person.

Camping shops stock some great bags made with ripstop canvas for carrying loo paper. Get one, as you won't have to touch the resort's own rolls then.

Everyone needs to wear

a clean mask every day. This could turn out to be a lot of fun and you can buy masks that match each of your camping outfits – while starting a new camping-oriented fashion trend.

John Junior can wear masks that celebrate his loyalty to the Bulls, Stormers or Barcelona while a camouflage one will remind Grandpa of his military days. Or how about a couple of superhero masks for your grandkids?

After each getaway, the masks get washed and ironed, and immediately returned to the caravan, ready for the next trip.

Also, get yourself a camping backpack in which you can carry your toilet-roll bag, hand sanitiser and disinfectant wipes as you walk around.

If you don't want to use the resort's ablution facilities, buy yourself an ablution tent and place a cassette toilet in it – especially during busy times. If you do use the resort's facilities, take precautions by using your own mop to clean it before and after each visit.

EVERYONE IN YOUR PARTY should have their own bottle of hand sanitiser on them and disinfect door handles and seats as they go. Make sure the content is environmentally friendly and effective in fighting the virus and bacteria.

Mark each bottle with the particular family member's name, because then Mom can keep track of those who persistently 'misplace' their bottles. Researchers are still debating which material – glass or plastic – is most suitable for disinfection and already increased COVID-19-related pollution is visible in our oceans. I believe fabric masks and an environmentally friendly plastic bottle are the answers to combating this pollution.

Also, remember to wipe your phone regularly with disinfectant wipes. After

the bowls of mints at restaurants and escalators, cellphones are the largest carrier of microscopic undesirables. By the way – immediately unlearn that habit of taking your cellphone along when you go to the bathroom.

TO AVOID VISITS to the campsite's washing-up facilities, connect a heating appliance to a water bottle so you can wash your dishes at your stand. Please remember to use environmentally friendly dishwashing liquid. The dirty water can then be flushed down the drain or used to water trees or shrubs.

Paper plates may be popular in the short term, but they go in the bin and simply add to the resort's burden of rubbish removal.

It may be a good idea to take your own rubbish home. Even better – always separate glass bottles, plastic, cardboard and paper from leftover food as you camp and bring it to the resort's attention that they could turn recycled items into a source of income rather than burying them somewhere on site.

Camping is one of the safest getaways there is. Maintain social distancing, wear your mask when visiting the resort's shop and disinfect your hands after every single contact with doors and public surfaces.

That will greatly reduce your risk of catching COVID-19.

“

After each getaway, the masks get washed and ironed, and immediately returned to the caravan, ready for the next trip

”



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Attack of the killer mosquitoes

After the wind, lightning and rain has died down – that's when little hell-raisers emerge to continue your torture, recounts **Cyril Kloppe**.

Rivers and I are not friends. I have dozens of stories about close encounters with them – the first from my toddler days, when a crocodile nearly got me in the Umlalazi River outside Mtunzini. My parents were so traumatised by the event that they never taught me how to swim.

In my clumsy early teens, I once fell out of a canoe, while wearing a life jacket, in the Keurbooms River near Plettenberg Bay, and because I was a poor swimmer, it took me an eternity to doggie paddle to shore where I was picked up by jeering friends.

Over the years, I would continue to brave some or other river, only to repeatedly retreat, drenched and with my tail tucked between my legs. But yes, I did eventually learn how to swim.

Despite these misfortunes, I find the life-giving veins that course through our barren land fascinating, which is why I pitched an idea at a *Drive & Camp* editorial meeting. I wanted to write about a route that follows the Molopo River from its eye near Lichtenburg to its mouth near Riemvasmaak. The riverbed is, after all, as dry as a cork, so the odds of something going awry was remote...

WITH SCHALK'S APPROVAL, I put the wheels in motion. I contacted a vehicle manufacturer in Johannesburg and arranged to test drive a new SUV. Then I had a rooftop tent fitted to it in order to test both while also exploring the route.

I was really looking forward to the trip and I was also well pleased with my ability to multi-task, but in the back of my mind there remained a small voice that reminded me that rivers and I are

not friends – it whispered that something would inevitably go wrong.

The journey along the Molopo River, however, proceeded smoothly, although I got relatively little sleep. When it wasn't fellow campers partying until late at night, I was kept awake by a hyena loudly sniffing below my rooftop tent in search of leftover braai bones.

On the penultimate day of my trip, I made camp at Riemvasmaak, right in the dry course of the Molopo. The river had behaved itself thus far, and I had not gotten stuck once, or had a flat tyre or encountered any other sort of mishap. Maybe my luck was finally turning? I solemnly promised to thank the Molopo for its excellent collaboration when I reached its mouth the following morning.

Early that evening, a breeze rose up from the gorge which eventually became a raging mountain wind that jerked and tugged at the rooftop tent on the borrowed car. The tent's ladder would lift off the ground every now and again and it seemed that the tent was about to fold in on itself. As I secured it with guy lines, my camping table and chair blew away, and I made the decision to rather pack them away and eat my dinner inside the rooftop tent.

My chops were barely on the coals when the loud crack of a lightning bolt announced that rain was imminent. Minutes later, with my chops not even halfway done, a rainstorm began to bucket down over the gorge and it promptly extinguished my coals. I grabbed what I needed and retreated up the ladder.

It was unpleasant up there to say the least. The whole affair swayed backward and forward like a boat on a stormy

ocean. My meat was raw and Werda's pickled beetroot crunched between my molars after a liberal dusting of sand. Luckily, my laptop was already up there as well as my last three lukewarm beers. I got comfortable, watched a previously downloaded Netflix series and had a beer – the storm wouldn't ruin my night. No sir!

My eyelids grew heavy by the time the last beer was done, but the forceful wind had yet to abate. But I was dry and cosy, and looking forward to a good night's rest despite all the shaking going on.

SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE of the dark night I woke up drenched in sweat. I had dreamt of an actual incident that occurred many years ago. My girlfriend and I – today she's my wife – were scrambling through a narrow gorge of a tributary of the Kouga River when a flash flood roared down upon us. We had to cling to the cliffs for dear life while debris rushed past below us. I remember the thunder of the flash flood well and could swear I was hearing it in the Molopo right then.

The river was coming for me!

I grabbed my laptop and sleeping bag and scrambled out of the tent. I untied the ropes before I collapsed the tent and jumped in behind the steering wheel. The SUV's headlights lit the gorge. The cliffs were pitch black and ominous. Raindrops struck the windshield, but the dry course of the Molopo still seemed curiously dry. I bravely fled by driving up the steep slopes of the gorge to a terrace where no flood could reach me.

The situation reminded me of the time my family and I got stuck on the banks of the Orange River one night in our Suzuki

Jimny. Much like the Kouga, the Orange came down that night with lightning speed and threatened to wash away the Jimny. Yes, rivers and I aren't friends.

The storm wind blew nonstop and the rain showed no sign of subsiding. Rooftop tent be damned: tonight I would be sleeping inside the car. I lowered the front seats as far as I could and tried to get comfortable. Despite the inclement weather, it was quite hot inside, so I cracked open a window for some fresh air. Rain splattered my face, but rather than suffocating.

I dug my phone out of the cubby hole to see what time it was: one o'clock. The excitement of fleeing the tidal wave disrupted my sleep and I peeked out the side window every now and then to see whether the Molopo was flowing... but nothing. It had been a flight of fancy, I realised, caused by those raw lamb chops, lukewarm beer and crunchy beetroot all fermenting in my stomach. I did my best to try and fall asleep, but you know how it is: the harder you try the less it works. The random flashes followed moments later by distant thunder claps certainly didn't help. It eventually stopped raining, but the wind stubbornly blew on.

The flashes and thunder faded away, and by three o'clock, the witching hour, darkness reigned

uninterrupted. The wind had also died down and it seemed I would finally doze off. That's when I heard the first buzzing sound of a flying terror that would come to cause me no small amount of grief.

THE SOUND CAME CLOSER, and before long there was a crescendo not unlike the string section of a youth orchestra warming up before first rehearsal. A scout landed lightly on my ankle and I kicked irritably at it. The horde must have taken it as a declaration of war and swiftly fell upon me. I fought hard to hide every bit of my body under the opened sleeping bag, but they kept finding gaps through which they could get to me.

I zipped up the sleeping bag and cocooned it around me until only my mouth showed, and that was only so I could breathe. I have a bushy beard, and I have been told that my mouth resembles a hairy sea anemone when I pout my lips. I find the comparison rather unkind and perhaps my attackers agreed with me because they eagerly entered my mouth like enthusiastic spelunkers.

Every time I inhaled, I'd swallow some, then I'd spit or cough them out again. Repeat. The sleeping bag soon turned into

a sauna, and sweat was pouring off me.

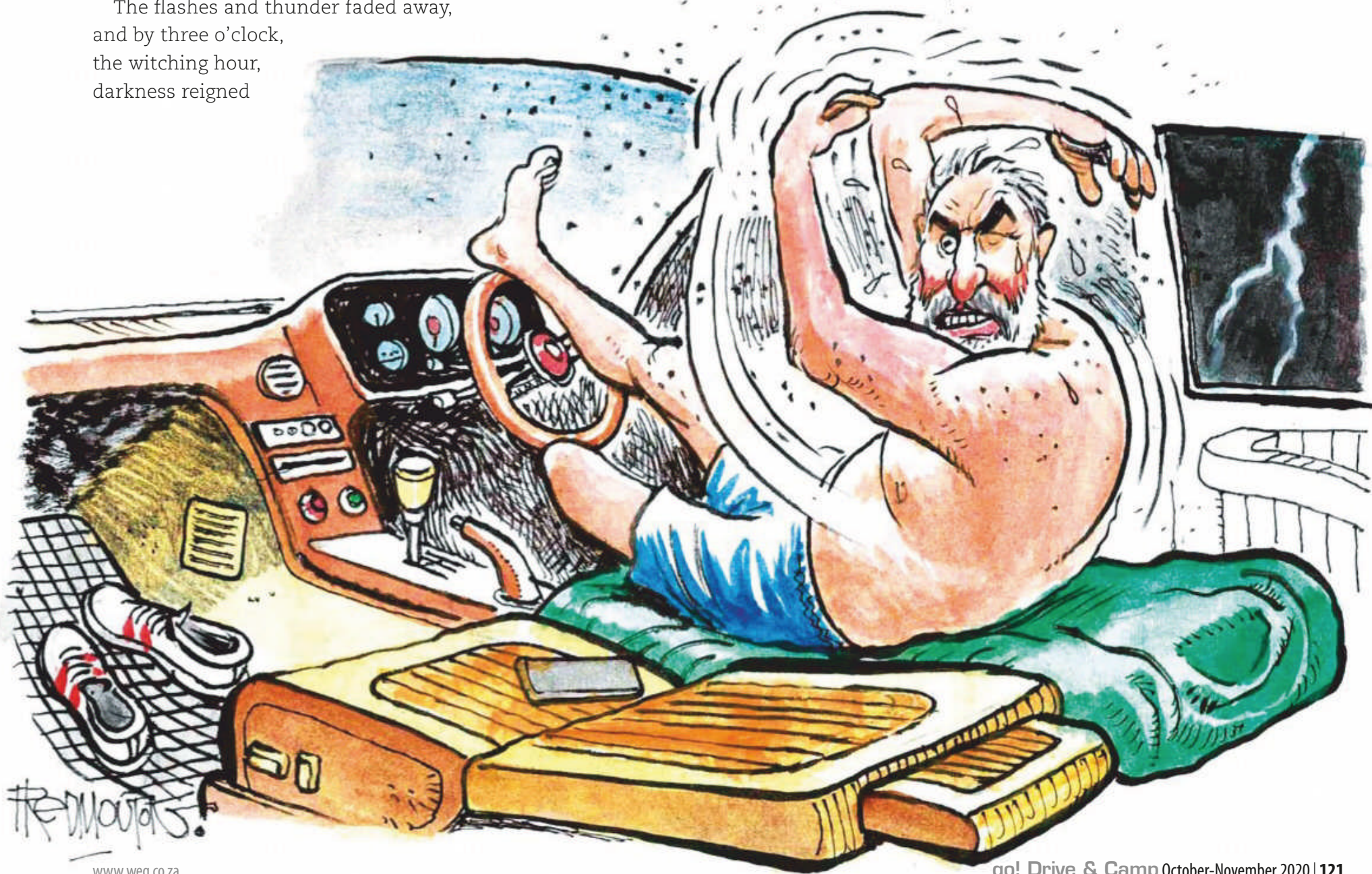
When it got unbearable, I'd unzip, throw the bag open, and swat furiously to send my tormentors off to eternity. Respite was always brief, my blotchy red skin had barely returned to its natural pasty white complexion before the next squadron of vampiric reinforcements arrived.

The process repeated itself endlessly. Inhale, spit out, pop out of my ineffective cocoon, kill the enemy, cool off, kill some more, cower in fear, inhale, spit out. All the while obsessing with the time, hoping that sunrise would end this war of attrition.

By six o'clock there was still no sign of the sun, although there were promising signs that the onslaught had abated somewhat. By seven the sky started to turn blue and the end was finally in sight.

Around me lay the remains of my adversaries. I knew my victory deserved a celebration, a statue even, but I was exhausted. After a cup of coffee, I washed my face, brushed my teeth and combed out the remains of the massacre that had become entangled in my beard. Down in the gorge, the Molopo silently taunted me – it was still as dry as a bone.

Lo, if a river doesn't have water to threaten me with, it'll find another way. 🐉



...AND FINALLY

Defender Deluxe

Land Rover's new Defender has barely made its mark on the world and already German conversion experts GehoCab has a camper planned.

This isn't the German firm's first rodeo as it has already established itself as a go-to name for converting luxurious off-roaders into vehicles that can accommodate the whole family in Europe.

GehoCab's range includes the Findus, Kora and Hekla models that are made to fit all sorts of modern SUVs and bakkies. The one that would be most likely to have appeared locally would be the midsize Kora, which is suited to the likes of Ford's Ranger, Nissan's Navara and the VW Amarok.

The new entry-level Fiete model has now been announced and will fit the Defender. All the campers in the line-up feature similar retro-inspired styling, with a wide window at the head of the bed in the alcove above the vehicle's cabin, and a short rear overhang.

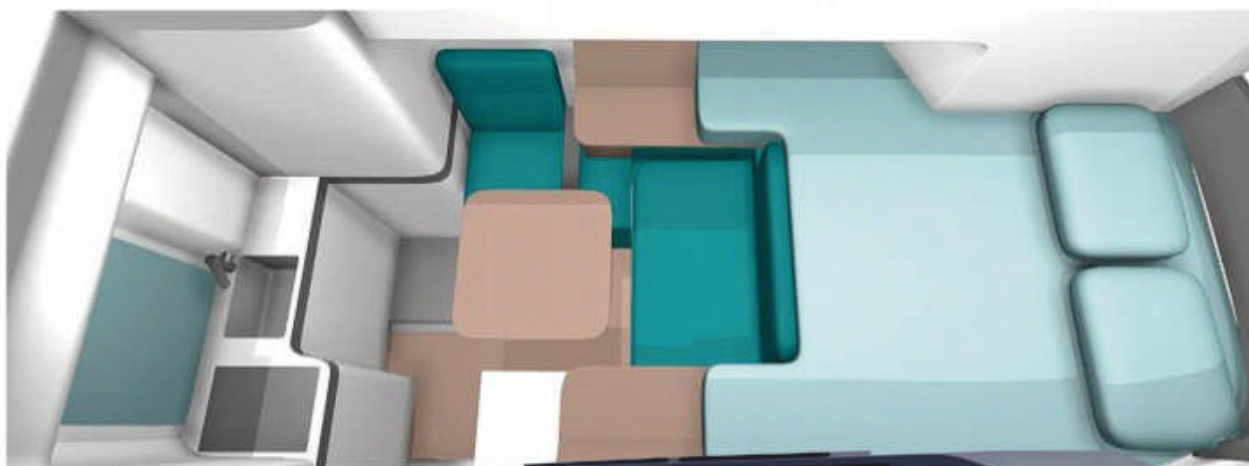
The entire dry weight of the Fiete model is just 460 kg, made possible thanks to what the company calls aerospace carbon. It's 1,8 m wide and 3,9 m long and is aimed at couples, complete with a gas cooker, worktop, sink, cassette toilet, outdoor shower and dining section for two. If you're under 1,95 m tall, then you'll be able to stand upright in the Fiete's kitchen.

Storage is handled by a 29 l bar fridge, a 90 l water tank, while the luggage all goes through the same wide flap between the

tail-lights – a feature prominent on all the GehoCab models. The lights are powered by a 100 Ah battery and 100 Wp solar panel.

The options list still hasn't been finalised, but on the cards are a toilet separate to the cabin, an electric induction hob, a larger solar panel and a battery system, plus

a second bed that would fit across the dining area. Anyone worried about loading capacity or height limitations can opt to have the Fiete weigh even less thanks to a carbon interior option and having the roof altered so that the total height is less than 2,75 metres.



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

Spectacular Lesotho

See Sani Pass, Katse Dam, Maletsunyane Falls and Thaba Bosiu on a six-day, guided self-drive tour with *go!*, in conjunction with Bhejane 4x4 Adventures.

ADVENTURE ITINERARY

DAY 1

Our adventure starts in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands town of Himeville, where we meet at the Stone House Café.

For the rest of the day we do the awe-inspiring drive up Sani Pass. After clearing customs on the South African side, we have a picnic lunch and then make our way up the pass, with more than enough time to enjoy the scenery and take pictures.

Our accommodation for the night is the cosy Sani Mountain Lodge. It feels like you're literally on top of the world at this lodge, which is built on the edge of the Drakensberg and affords breathtaking views into KwaZulu-Natal.

DAY 2

Our route to Katse Dam takes us along the highest roads in southern Africa. We cross the Senqu River, which becomes the Orange River when it enters South Africa. The houses that we stay in at Katse overlook the dam. We relax tonight with dinner in the restaurant.

DAY 3

After a big breakfast, we do a guided tour of the Katse Dam wall and learn more about the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. We spend the rest of the day driving a circular route around the dam, with a picnic lunch on

the way, and return to our accommodation in the late afternoon.

DAY 4

Today we traverse mountain passes with names like God Help Me and Blue Mountain. We get a glimpse of the Mohale Dam, which is also part of the Highlands Water Project.

In the late afternoon we arrive in the small town of Ramabanta, where we stay over at the Trading Post Lodge for two nights and are spoilt with home-made food.

DAY 5

We take it easy today. We'll visit Maletsunyane Falls at Semonkong, where the water drops 192 m down a cliff. After a picnic lunch, we return to the lodge to relax for the afternoon. There are some lovely walks in the area, and you can go horse riding.

DAY 6

After our last big breakfast together, we make our way towards Maseru. We drive around Thaba Bosiu before we say our goodbyes at the visitor centre near Maseru Bridge border post, and then everyone goes their own way.



TOURS

HOW LONG IS THE TOUR?

Six-day/five-night adventure (lodge and guesthouse accommodation)

DATES

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5 – 10 March 2021

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