

#35

go!

HIGH 5! GET TO KNOW HOW TO TOW — P 84

JUNE 2020 | ISSUE 35

# Drive & Camp

## ATLANTIC AVENUE

### WEST COAST

Unwind at four seaside  
caravan parks

### SKELETON COAST

Drive dunes and fish  
among shipwrecks

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# COROLLA



# I miss everyone



“

My daughter says the first thing she wants to do after lockdown ends is to go camping at that place with the heated pool

”



**I**t's easy to start imagining things when you're trapped at home for weeks while the government tries to slow the COVID-19 pandemic.

When we were first instructed to work from home, my wife (also a journalist) and I settled in at the dining room table. For the next day or two, we would tell each other every now and again how lovely it was to work together like this. That harmony was to be short-lived.

I started noticing how she responds out loud to anyone who sends her an email. "Yes, I've known about this since yesterday. I just haven't had time to follow up on it yet." Or, "Oh, you can't be serious. Surely this is not important to work on right now?"

I also realised that I would get death stares whenever I really hit my stride while writing. The reason? Apparently I tap the keys too loudly.

We both understood that we were playing a dangerous game called "Why do you do it like that?" in which there would be no winners. She now works from the kitchen table and equilibrium has returned to our home.

This lasted until we had to start schooling our daughter in between our day jobs. The school calls it home or distance learning, and I really appreciate all the effort the teachers make every day uploading the children's tasks.

But it's quite something to have to attend to junior school maths while doing my own job. I had to turn to Google the other day to check up on how to do long division.

So, I don't know if it's just my imagination, but it feels as though the four walls of our house inch a little closer to one another every day. As a family, we've never been home this long.

All the while, I'm making all kinds of plans for when life returns to normal one day. Two trips I'd really been looking forward to were cancelled because of the lockdown – one to Meob Bay in Namibia and the other a tour through Botswana. Somehow I have to try and make up for the disappointment and I do this by compiling a list of where we will go when we can move around again.

My daughter says the first thing she wants to do after lockdown ends is to go camping at that place with the heated pool. She says she'll enjoy that the most, because we always go camping with friends or family, and she misses them all.

I miss them too.

Stay safe!

*Schalk*

EDITOR

[schalk.jonker@media24.com](mailto:schalk.jonker@media24.com)



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**MEDIA24**



## #35 COVER IMAGE – EVAN NAUDÉ

“ We drove into the dunes just before sunset, which is the best time to do it because the light turns beautiful as the day winds down. Our convoy returned to camp 15 km south of the Kunene Estuary shortly before dusk. That night we fished for cod, blacktail, gurnard or catfish while foxes yipped excitedly nearby. ”

**Camera settings** Canon EOS 80D; F11; ISO 100;  
 1/500 sec; 70 mm



## The good and bad about Namibia

**A**t the beginning of October 2019, my wife, Marianne, and I passed through the Alexander Bay/Oranjemund border post for an extended Namibian tour. We drive a Ford Ranger and tow a Skipper Oyster caravan. The border crossing was effortless and we were through within 15 minutes.

Our first overnight stop was Shark Island and we travelled via Rosh Pinah to Lüderitz. The road is now tarred all the way and you don't need a permit like in the old days. The scenery is still spectacular but different due to mining activities in some sections of this area that has removed the topsoil to find diamonds.

We took a beating with the wind on Shark Island, but we accepted it as part of the experience. It was the second most expensive campsite with worn and neglected ablutions, but we enjoyed it all the same as the setting is spectacular.

We visited Dias Point and Grosse Bught and found a very rustic campsite at the first with no electricity and a donkey for hot water. (This is the kind of campsite we like and will definitely return.)

We then took the road east up to Aus where we turned north on the D707 to Betta. This road has absolutely spectacular scenery and is in reasonable condition.

At Betta, we took the road to Walvis Bay via Sesriem, Solitaire and the Gaub Pass. From the pass, the road deteriorated badly – at times it was so corrugated that I could not get out of second gear for long stretches. In some places we were forced to drive on the verge. A bakkie came past with its canopy door rattled open and the luggage falling out. As I was towing the



We love hearing what's on your mind! Write to us at [drivecamp@gomag.co.za](mailto: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.



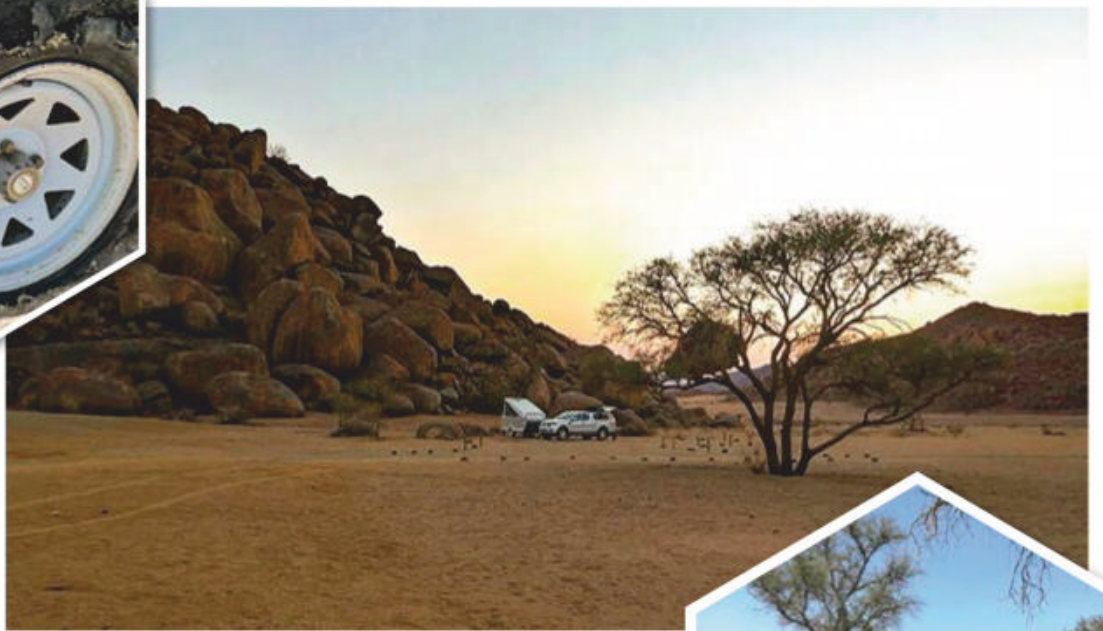
WINNING  
LETTER



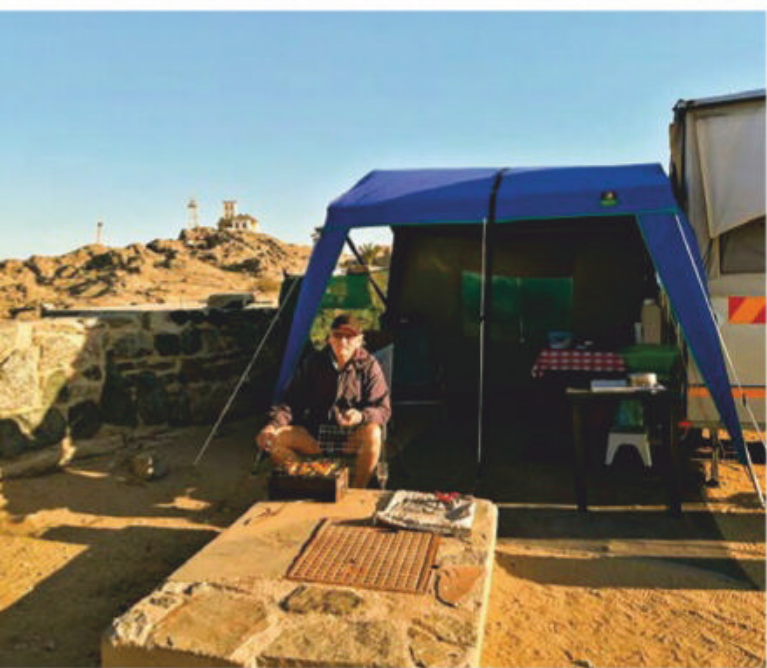
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**HARD KNOCK LIFE.** Namibia isn't a gentle country and if you're not careful, its roads can wreak havoc with your gear. Some roads will shake your rig to pieces and shred your tyres.



Skipper, I couldn't catch up with it. And so we picked up the luggage, hoping to catch up in Solitaire. Arriving at Solitaire, the pump attendant informed me we just missed them as they'd gone back in search of their luggage. So I left the luggage with the pump attendant, hoping they'd get it.

From the Kuseb Pass, the road got really bad and I lost a tyre on the Skipper. I had two spare wheels but realised too late that one didn't fit. Some of the Skipper's doors rattled loose and hinges broke. The corrugations were so bad that my Leatherman wore right through its pouch as it was in the door cubby.

After Betta, I saw only one grader operating, while another was parked next to the road at Solitaire.

At the Alte Brücke campsite I heard from fellow campers of broken cupboards and even a microwave falling from its shelf. I'm an experienced dirt-road driver and at times found it hard to maintain

concentration after doing 480 kilometers in 10 hours to reach Walvis Bay.

Namibia used to be famous for well-maintained dirt roads. But roads like these takes away the pleasure of travelling through the spectacular scenery of this country. I'll return when roads are back up to standard.

I've had the Skipper for the last six years and Marianne and I have toured South Africa, Botswana and Namibia extensively with it. To date, I've done more than 3 000 kilometres on dirt roads (varying from reasonable to good) without any significant wear or damage. It was not designed for the beating it took on this last trip but fortunately I could fix the damage myself. Hats off to Robbie Kerkhof and his team for building such a quality product that can go places normally only off-road trailers go.

**HENRY TERBLANCHE**  
Assagay, Durban







■ LEFT: Roelof and Alta Loots, and Estha and Derick Huysamen

## Crime scene in the campsite

We are pensioners and fortunate enough to be able to camp in the middle of the week when it is quiet and peaceful.

We recently returned to a wonderful farm campsite where we've camped before. It's safe as each site has a large and private section. The stands are also about 400 m apart and the nearest town is 8 km away.

On the first day – after pitching camp and showering – we relaxed under the shade trees. Our friends Roelof and Alta Loots had joined us and our two caravans could fit side by side on the stand.

We're avid card players and played bridge later that afternoon. We were sitting behind our friends' caravan so we couldn't see our own. I had to fetch something in ours, and saw my camera wasn't where I left it. Then I also noticed that two lenses, a watch and my wife Estha's cellphone had also been taken.

It's almost inconceivable that someone would take something from our caravan while we're not that far away. But it happened and our loss after the insurance paid out was a hefty R15 000.

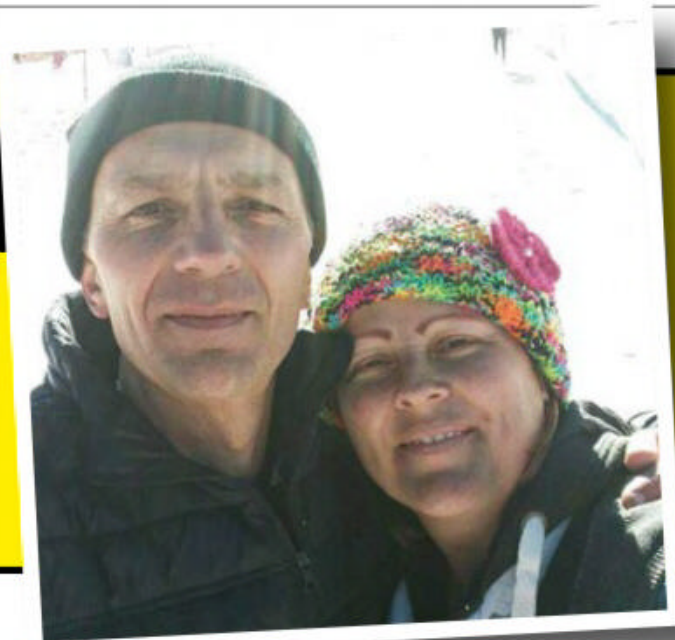
So, based on our experience, I want to say the following to fellow campers: campsites aren't necessarily safe, and campers can be a soft target. Plus, make sure your camping gear and caravan content is sufficiently insured.

**DERICK HUYSAMEN**  
Durbanville

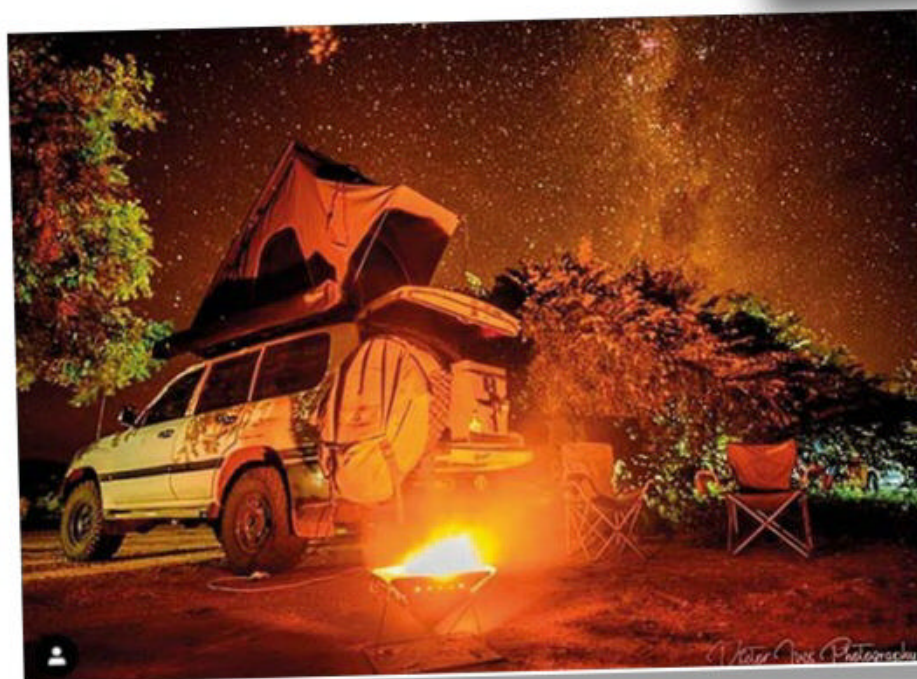
## COMMENT OF THE MONTH!

When we posed a question on Facebook about what kind of wood you use to braai, **Anton van Rensburg** didn't have anything in mind that comes from a tree.

*"I've previously braaied on a farm near Petrus Steyn. The guy used corn cobs. I must say, it surprised me: a soft and calm fire that didn't scorch the meat."*



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ON A RECENT TRIP up the Skeleton Coast we were driving along the beach when I spotted a black backed jackal up ahead. It was chewing on something, possibly the carcass of a seal pup, and wouldn't abandon its prize even when we stopped right next to it. This was the expression on its face when the jackal finally decided to run off with its meal.

PHOTO EVAN NAUDÉ





# Panoramic memories

Three of our readers brought home something special from their travels, be it the Namibian desert or Bronkhorstspuit's morning sun.



Samsung A3

## Echoes of above

When the opportunity presents itself, she seeks out the peacefulness of the Eastern Free State, says **Jolanda Grobler** from Kriel.

*"My mother, Stienie Grobler, and I went on a three-day trip in March and popped in at the Kiara Lodge*

*between Clarens and Golden Gate. We decided to explore the place and walked to their dam. It was late afternoon and I captured this beautiful scene in front of us."*

It is certainly a beautiful scene, and the water is like a mirror on such a wind-free day. The photo doesn't have a specific focal point, but all the finer detail is captured

on the centre horizontal line. The blue-grey clouds don't make the picture any more interesting, and the same goes for a third of the lawn in the foreground. In addition, the highlight detail to right on the photo against the cliff is somewhat washed out. It is bright and draws your attention away from all the other details.

The picture comes into its own when you crop out these bits. Suddenly, you have a panoramic photo and you see in your mind's eye how you'd walk from one end to the other – and enjoy it just as much as Jolanda did. With the help of the poles on either side of the path, the deck itself becomes the focal point. Once you know where to look, you start taking

in the detail. The four birds at the end of the deck catch your attention for a moment, and as you look closer, you see the three people on the opposite bank. It's on the left and you look that way instinctively as we read from that side as well.

A quick glance suffices for the right-hand side of the photo, and because there is less detail here, you quickly look back again to the left to see if you have missed any of the fine details.

If Jolanda had been standing closer to the water, the photo might be even better because the water would occupy more of the photo.

But it remains a beautiful scene that makes you long for nature.

## SEND YOUR PICTURES

and we might publish them here. We're not looking for traditional "prize winners", just regular pics that you love. Think of the type of pic you'd use as your Facebook cover photo; or something charming, such as kids warming their hands over a campfire. Whether the pic was taken with an expensive DSLR camera or a run-of-the-mill cellphone, if it's good enough for your family photo album it's good enough for us. **Jolanda Grobler** wins a *Drive & Camp* camera bag worth R520 with her photo – congratulations, Jolanda!

Send your photos and contact details to [leon.botha@media24.com](mailto:leon.botha@media24.com)





## On track

**While he lives on the coast, Hennie Struwig of Walvis Bay sometimes hits the sandy roads inland.**

*"I took this photo in the Omaruru River in Namibia where I camped peacefully. It's about two and a half hours from the Omdel Dam on the other side of Henties Bay. It's a beautiful nature photo where the trees in the foreground draw a frame around the vehicle track left by my Suzuki Jimny."*

Hennie is spot on when he says the tree branches form the photo frame. If he hadn't mentioned that he drove here and took the photo, you'd probably interpret the photo differently. You'd assume

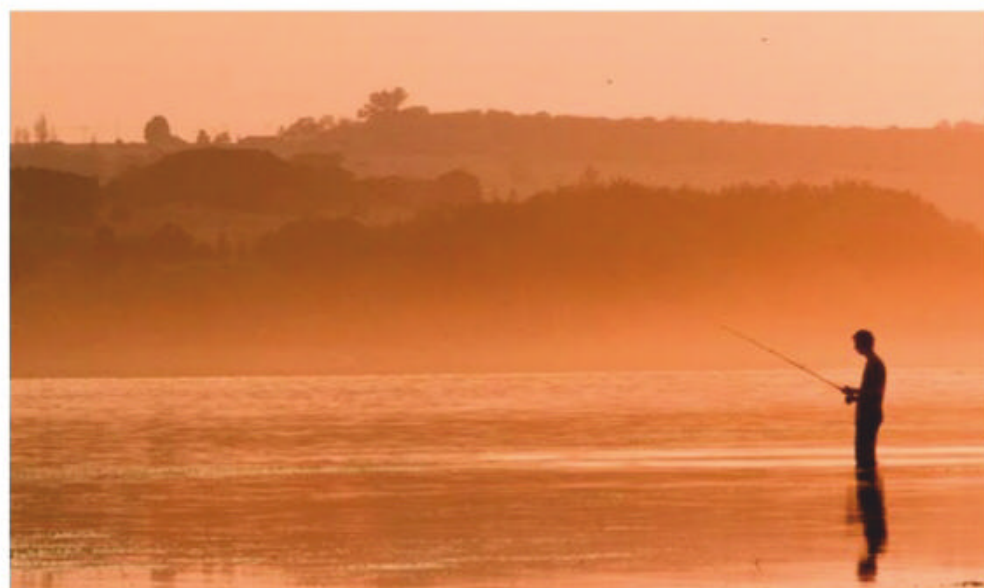


a vehicle had driven past here and your eyes follow the tracks to where they disappear.

The tracks run up against a bushy thorn tree, but in the photo you can't see much detail here. Yet your subconscious mind completes the picture as it takes into account the tree detail right in front of you.

Due to the sun already quite high – say in the 11:00 position – the track creates a slight line of shade. But that also helps trick you a bit.

In the bottom left corner, the tracks don't cast a shadow, and if you look quickly, the road in the middle appears to run into the tree branch before it disappears.



## Open water

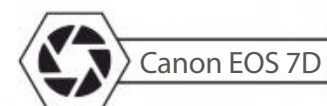
**Esther Louw from Lyttelton in Centurion, marked a peaceful moment right next to her.**

*"The Voortrekkers have an annual raft building event, and last year it was held at the Bronkhorstspuit Dam. Here, one helper is angling the morning after and I decided to take a picture."*

You can sense the early morning tranquillity here. Even the reflection of the angler in the water is hardly disturbed because it's probably almost windless.

The human figure clearly stands out against the blurry background and the orange that dominates the photo.

The composition of the original photo works well. The angler stands on the third line, and the dam's shoreline that runs diagonally to the right below carries the rest of the scene.



But as much as it supports the photo, it can also detract from it.

When you crop closer to the angler so the shore is no longer visible, the pic gains new impact.

Now only the figure is dark and your eye keeps coming back there as you look for other details in the photo. With the original photo, your eye constantly jumps between the two black sections, which is rather disturbing.

Now, with the angler's back near the side of the frame, it makes for an interesting composition, and because he's looking into the scene, you also automatically look at the open water in front of him.

The figure is not a full-fledged silhouette, as there is still detail to be seen. This is unnecessary detail and you could convert the dark parts to black to give it even greater impact.



# DUELLING THE DUALS

If you're in the market for a dual-battery system, and have your heart set on a DC-DC charger, you may be wondering when bigger is better. The experts at National Luna weigh in...

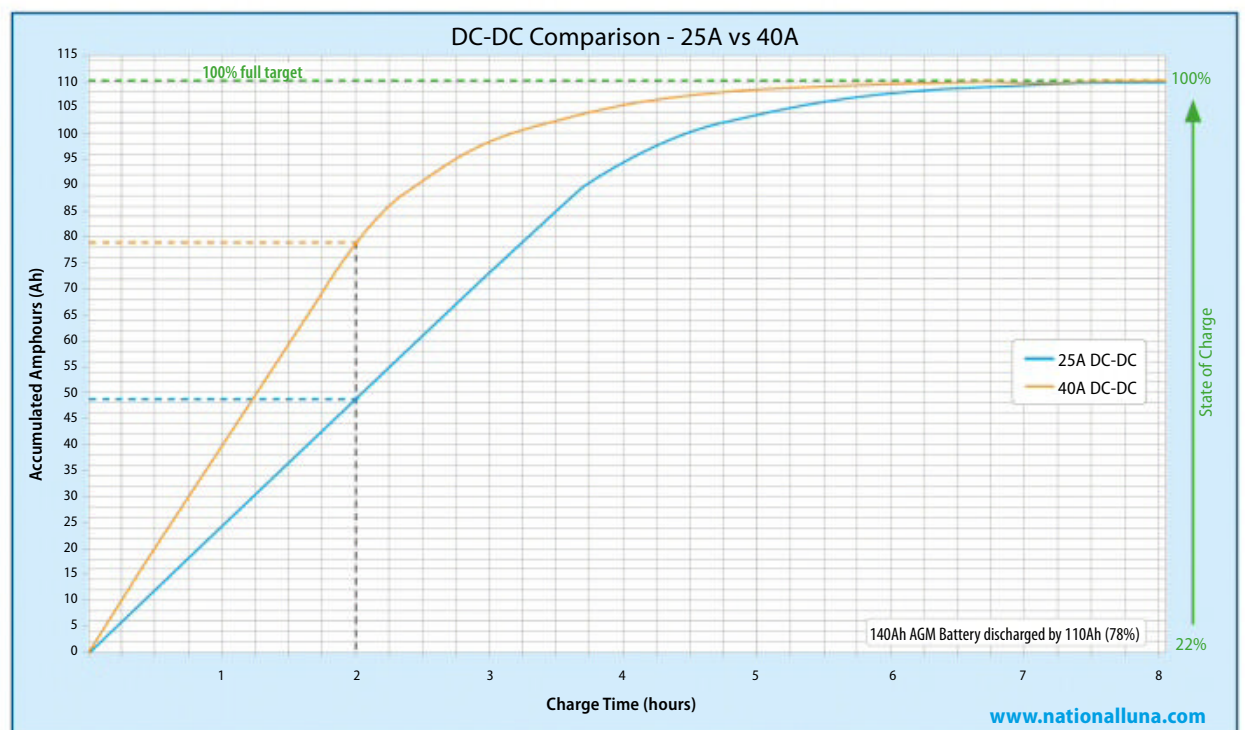
## QUESTION

I read your previous column that compared the recharge performance of an intelligent solenoid system against your very own 25A DC-DC charger. In the same editorial, you mentioned that the results would differ if a 40A charger were used. Well, I've got my heart set on a DC-DC setup, purely because I like the ease with which solar power can be added to the system. My question is: Should I be considering the NLDC-40 instead of the NLDC-25? I know there's a price difference, but is bigger better in this regard?

## ANSWER

As mentioned in our previous editorial, the limitation of any 20A or 25A DC-DC system is the fact that the battery's recharge rate is restricted to just 25 amps or less. This is particularly important during the 'bulk stage' of the recharge process.

On that note, the following graph depicts the recharge curves of a 25A versus a 40A DC-DC charger.



Recharge rates of a 25A and 40A DC-to-DC system. Note the dotted lines at the two-hour mark and how the benefits of the 40A charger start to taper off at this point.

This test was conducted using a 140Ah AGM battery that was discharged by 110Ah (78%).

In this particular test, you'll see from the graph above that the NLDC-40 restores up to 30Ah more than the NLDC-25 after just two hours of driving.

Following that, the NLDC-40's charging curve starts to taper off.

That said, although the 40A DC-DC system appears to be the 'silver bullet' of vehicle-based, auxiliary-battery power, the benefit of using a 40A charger is only noticeable during the 'bulk' stage



of recharging. Once you include the 'absorption' stage in the overall process, the total recharge time is similar for both products.

This is because the total charge time is determined by the battery's technology, and not the charger itself. Simply put:

**The battery is the limiting factor.**

Unfortunately, there's no way around this, as most lead-acid batteries require considerable time to reach full charge. In contrast, a lithium battery will accept far more energy during its 'bulk charge stage' than a lead-acid battery, and ultimately, reach full charge quicker.

However, the economics of using a lithium battery (within a vehicle-based application) should be strongly considered. Thankfully, the NLDC-40 and NLDC-25 both support Lithium-ion and LiFePO4

batteries, as well as regular flooded, gel, AGM and calcium batteries.

So, from that perspective, using a 40A charger is noticeably beneficial if your driving habits are typically around the three-hour mark or less. Beyond that, the two products start to offer similar results. However, there are other considerations, too...

**SOLAR CAPABILITIES AND MORE**

As you've mentioned, solar power plays a big role in the decision to install a DC-DC system, where most top-tier products include a built-in MPPT solar regulator.

Having a solar panel connected to your auxiliary battery negates the need to drive your vehicle on a daily basis. In many cases, solar power will be responsible for keeping the battery full, and may even be

Both the NLDC-25 and the NLDC-40 come with the option of a Remote Monitor. Aside from displaying the battery's state of charge, the Remote Monitor also shows DC input voltage, Solar input voltage, alternator input voltage (whichever is active at the time), auxiliary battery voltage, charge current, temperature, battery type, and a host of error warnings in case something goes wrong



Because lead-acid batteries require time to recharge, no matter what dual-battery system you install, it's advisable that an Intelligent Maintenance Charger be used to service the auxiliary battery and restore it to full capacity after each trip.

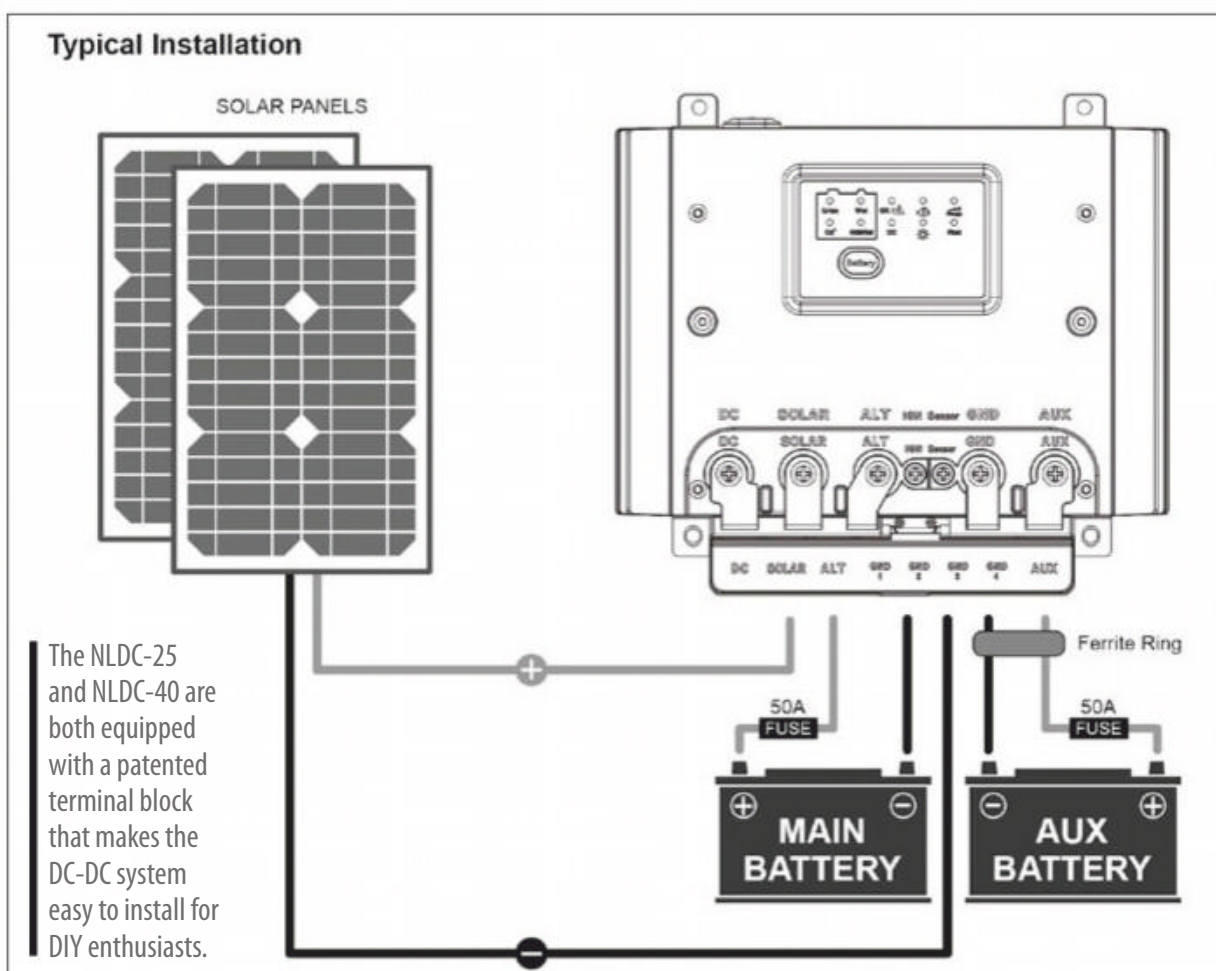
enough to supply your total power needs.

This feature is particularly important for motorhomes, caravans and off-road campers, where you're more likely to camp for a prolonged period, rather than drive your vehicle every day.

With this in mind, the NLDC-40 features a 600W MPPT solar regulator, as opposed to the NLDC-25's 375W MPPT. This means your panel array can be much larger when using the NLDC-40; and, because its solar input is rated to 42V, the unit supports newer, more efficient solar panels that generally produce higher voltages.

What's more, the NLDC-40 boasts a second DC input that can be connected to an external power supply. This is common in mobile homes where mains power (220V AC) is converted into DC current, and then subsequently connected to the NLDC-40's separate auxiliary DC port. This utilises the NLDC-40's powerful 5-stage smart-charge algorithm that effectively creates a 220V Maintenance Charger.

Finally, thanks to the NLDC-40's auto-select function, the unit will automatically switch to the preferred energy source. That means, you can have your vehicle's



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# ADVERTORIAL



National Luna is a 33-year-old South African company that produces the world's largest selection of commercially available 12V fridges/freezers, and a global distributor of more than 200 outdoor products and accessories.

alternator, solar panels, wind generator, and/or auxiliary DC input all connected at the same time, and the NLDC-40 will switch between the energy sources automatically.

Both the NLDC-25 and the NLDC-40 come with the option of a Remote Monitor. Aside from displaying the battery's state of charge, the Remote Monitor also shows DC input voltage, Solar input voltage, alternator input voltage (whichever is active at the time), auxiliary battery voltage, charge current, temperature, battery type, and a host of error warnings in case something goes wrong.

## CONCLUSION

To summarise, although a 40A DC-DC charger will reduce the bulk-charging time, the real benefits are realised in applications with larger battery banks or installations with large solar arrays.

On that note, here's a short list of when a 40A DC-DC system should be the preferred choice (and when it shouldn't)...

### A larger 40A current is better when:

- You need the extra charge quickly during the 'bulk stage' of the charge, despite the battery not reaching full capacity.
- You have a large battery bank where the 'absorption stage' is comparatively short to the 'bulk stage' of the recharge process.
- You are powering a load (a fridge or another appliance) at the same time as charging the battery.
- You want the extra solar capabilities.

### A larger 40A current is NOT better when:

- The battery is not capable of receiving high currents, which is often the case with smaller gel and lithium batteries.
- Your application is mostly stationary, where you rely predominantly on AC power.
- Your solar array is relatively small (150W to 350W).

### NLDC-40 SPECIFICATIONS

- True 40A output current
- Five-stage intelligent charge algorithm
- AGM, gel, wet, calcium, lithium-Ion batteries supported

- Alternator input up to 32V
- 40A, 600W MPPT solar regulator
- Supports solar panels up to 42V
- Separate auxiliary DC input up to 32V
- Smart-alternator compatible
- Battery temperature compensation for safe charging
- Sealed to IP67 rating (waterproof)
- Patented terminal block
- Short-circuit protected
- Reverse-polarity protected
- Over-voltage protected
- Over-temperature protected

The NLDC-25 is also available as a portable power pack, where the DC-DC charger is built into the box, and offers a quick plug-and-play feature that includes a dedicated solar-panel port.



Visit [nationalluna.com](http://nationalluna.com) for more information or call 011 452 5438 to find a distributor near you.



# Manufacturers put their shoulders to the wheel

Despite enormous financial losses due to the national lockdown, vehicle manufacturers in South Africa voluntarily joined the fight to help get us through the COVID-19 pandemic.

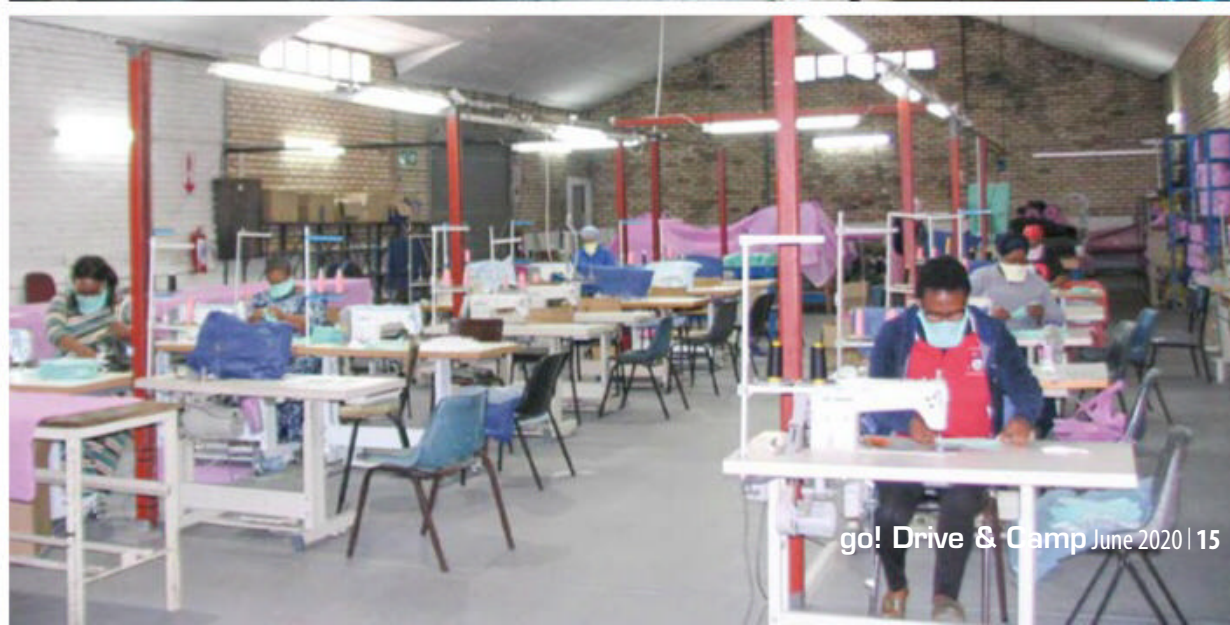
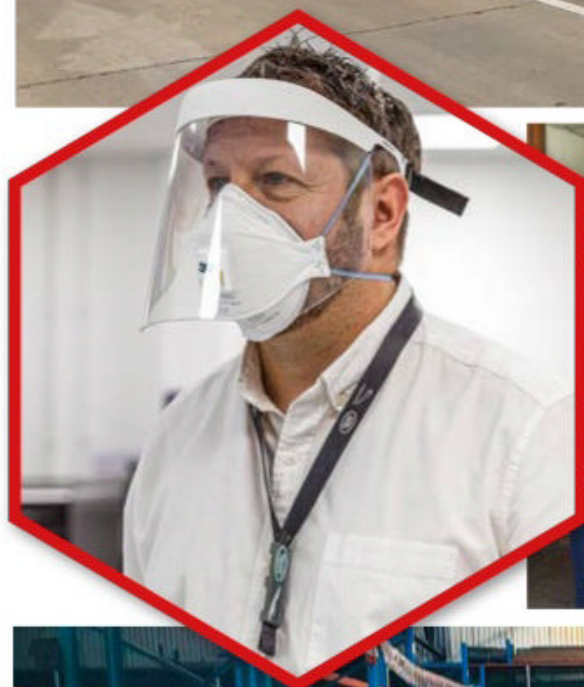
Nissan South Africa provided 12 vehicles to the University of the Witwatersrand so that health workers could visit the communities of Soshanguve, Ga-Rankuwa, Winterveldt, Hammanskraal and a number of others north of Gauteng to test for the virus.

Ford gave a monetary contribution to the Gift of the Givers Foundation and produced 57 000 plastic face shields in its Silverton plant, all donated to essential service providers. Ford and its subcontractors hope to provide half-a-million face shields in an effort to slow the spread of the virus until an effective vaccine is found. Peugeot-Citroën South Africa, as well as Ford, made several vehicles available so that health workers can reach communities.

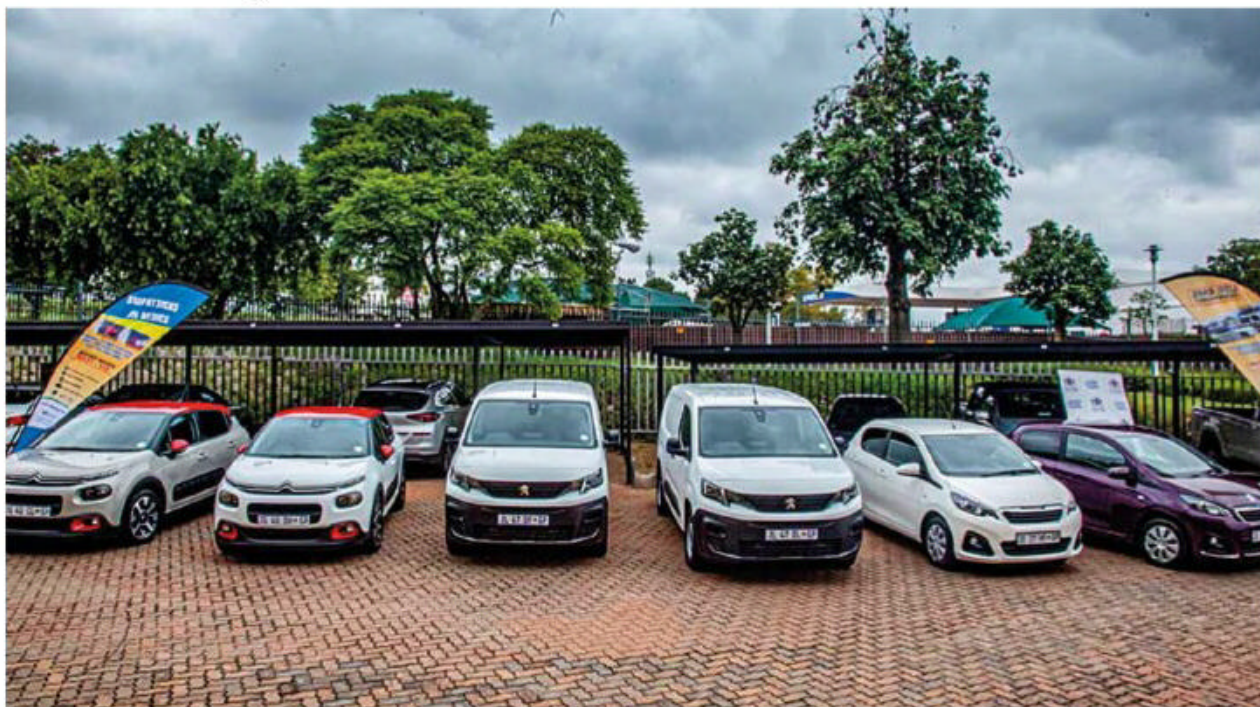
Hyundai South Africa donated eight vehicles – including H100 lorries and H-1 busses – to the Gift of the Givers and FoofForward foundations to deliver food parcels to the needy.

BMW South Africa donated 40 000 masks to the Department of Health and made its BMW On Call emergency roadside assistance service available to police, medical personnel and essential service providers. According to BMW, this service was used more than 900 times since the beginning of the lockdown.

Isuzu South Africa's contribution to averting a humanitarian crisis on its own doorstep was to renovate Livingstone Hospital and other provincial hospitals in Port Elizabeth (within eight days) so that a further 135 beds would be available for patients exposed to the virus. Isuzu and other members of the Nelson Mandela Bay Chamber of Commerce paid for the labour and medical equipment. Isuzu further withdrew its fleet of media vehicles in Gauteng and made it available to the non-governmental organisation







Gift of the Givers. Trucks and bakkies from this fleet are being used to deliver medical supplies, water and food parcels. Isuzu also loaned 15 D-max bakkies – normally used for promotional and marketing purposes – to the University of Pretoria's Department of Health Sciences to provide logistical support to medical services.

In the midst of the pandemic, Volkswagen turned its Uitenhage plant to manufacturing ventilators. At the time of going to press, they still had to be approved by the South African Regulatory Authority for Health Products (SAHPRA). In collaboration with the Greater Uitenhage Sewing Co-operative, Volkswagen also distributed thousands of facemasks in the Nelson Mandela Bay district and donated 150 beds to the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality. The municipality recently announced it would use the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium as an isolation zone for those identified through contact tracing so as to delay the spread of the virus.

Jaguar Land Rover South Africa and the Minnie Dlamini Foundation partnered with the Red Cross of South Africa and other non-governmental organisations to deliver food parcels to schools, orphanages and retirement homes in Knysna, Soweto, Daveyton, Germiston, Brakpan and Benoni. Jaguar Land Rover also made 11 vehicles available to the Red Cross in an effort to slow down the spread of the coronavirus.

Toyota South Africa has made 40 minibus taxis available to be used in the distribution of hand sanitiser. They also donated 900 face shields to Prince Mshiyeni Hospital in Umlazi, Durban. Another 2 300 face shields were sent to Toyota's Prospection plant (also in Durban) and Toyota car dealers nationwide.

Volvo offered its media vehicles to the non-governmental organisation Save Our Schools. This group is committed to providing water and hand sanitiser to 110 000 people from Wallacedene, Bloekombos and Scottsdene in the Western Cape. In addition, Volvo donated 100 ℓ sanitiser while Save Our Schools delivered 14 water tanks of 5 000 ℓ each. These emergency hand-washing stations will allow kids and their parents to wash their hands outside schools and churches.

Mitsubishi, VW, Isuzu, Hyundai and Kia South Africa have extended their warranty and service plan by one month and Ford by two months – to mitigate the effect of lockdown on customers.





## Bobo helps to stall the virus

Bobo Campers, one of the largest local motorhome rental agencies, had to suspend business because of the COVID-19 restrictions. But Tim Bouwers, who runs the company, has turned that challenge into a helping hand.

Camper Rescue, a new division of Bobo, is registered as an essential service. The company can now use its fleet to help slow down the pandemic.

Tim explains that their motorhomes can be used as transport vehicles and serve as temporary accommodation for healthcare workers: they have bathrooms, kitchens and sleeping spaces, after all. Bobo has already

made available 12 of their units in Namibia to the health authority free of charge, so that staff do not have to commute daily.

Bobo has three models available to rent (with space for two to six people to sleep): the Discoverer 4 and 6, and the 4x4 Discoverer Fun.

**Price** Depending on the model, R700-R800 pd (or R4 500-R5 500 pw). Prices apply until 15 August 2020. The vehicles are 2016 models or newer.

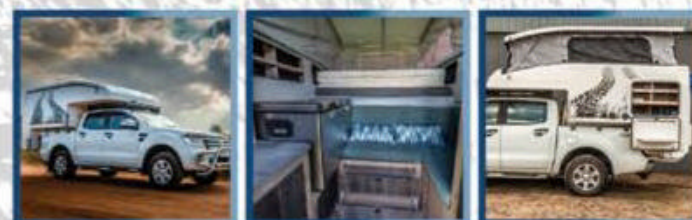
**Contact** Benoni ☎ 011 395 1020 or 083 542 4400; Cape Town ☎ 021 577 3863 or 083 603 3211 📧 [camperrescue.co.za](mailto:camperrescue.co.za) 📧 [info@bobocampers.com](mailto:info@bobocampers.com)



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- **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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- Heavy duty steel construction with black powdercoated finish
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## Complete Suspension Kits

Ironman 4x4 offers a complete integrated range of suspension kits, designs which have evolved over 50 years of suspension experience. Ironman 4x4 recognises that there is no single solution practical for the varying needs of 4x4 owners and different driving conditions, therefore Ironman 4x4 offers a wide selection of matched components, once fitted will transform the vehicle around the driver's needs.

Ironman 4x4 also offers various optional components further enhancing suspension performance or geometry correction purposes. Such components include Greasable Shackles & Pins, Steering Dampers, Caster Correction kits, Trim Packers, Upper Control Arms.





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## Mobi Lodge gets a new flagship

Mobi Lodge launched its new flagship model, the Continental. The Continental was born after a two-year development period, which included input from Mobi Lodge owners around the world.

The current Mobi Lodge models, the Custom, Expedition, Deluxe and Ultimate, differ simply in their levels of luxury. But the Continental boasts a whole new floor plan and various improvements specifically aimed at the export market.

But, says Leon Ras, the Continental will, of course, also be available locally. The model has already exceeded all expectations after its local launch in April. Many existing Mobi Lodge owners have placed orders to upgrade to the Continental.

One of the biggest changes is a new 133 l 12 V eye-level fridge/freezer that now stands in a cabinet across the entrance door (where the safe and closet used to be). It replaces the sliding fridge/freezer that used to be mounted on the floor – and this change now allows for a queen-size bed. Then, the bed section that slides out from of the hull also gets a new outside window. The inside table has been redesigned and the height of the shower head in the bathroom can now be adjusted.

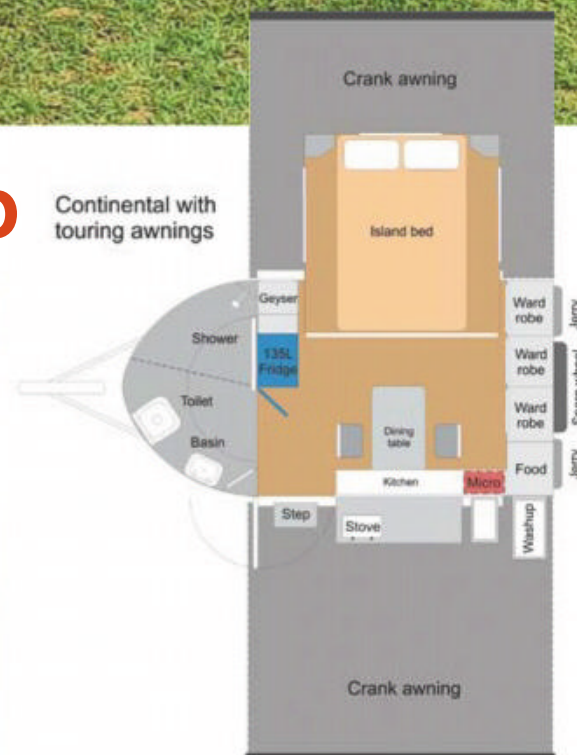
The new kitchen has been improved and now extends right up to the back cupboard. The microwave is where the



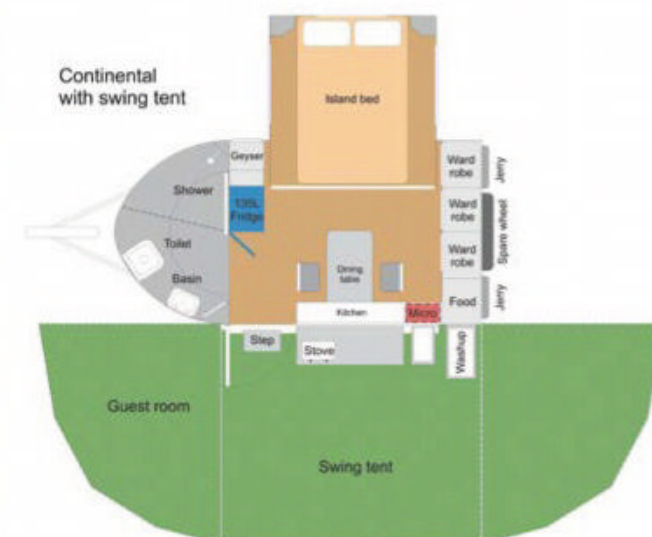
fridge/freezer used to be, and customers can choose whether it faces inside or out. The back cupboard houses a new washing-up area with two sinks on a glass top. This unit folds up against the hull.

The Continental gets a panoramic glass pane above the outdoor kitchen and, besides the two canopies on either side,

Continental with touring awnings



Continental with swing tent



buyers have the option of a swing awning. It's a welcome addition for families, as the Mobi Lodge can accommodate only two people inside. The swing awning creates an extra room, next to the trailer's nose.

**Price** From R478 000

**Contact** 082 899 9999 or 013 246 1080

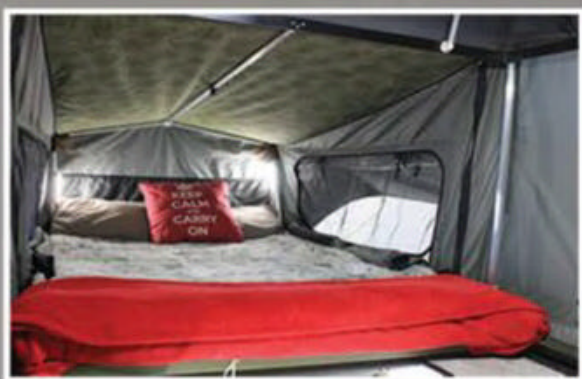
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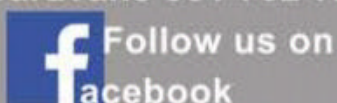
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# Jump on the virtual bandwagon!

If you're interested in an Armadillo caravan these days, you no longer have to drive all the way to a dealer. Simply visit their website and explore all four of their models by taking a virtual tour.

Jason Collie of Xtreme Outdoor, the Armadillo manufacturer, says customers have such a huge choice of off-road caravans and trailers that it can get slightly overwhelming. Many off-road trailers – from different manufacturers – have basic similarities and therefore buyers need time to decide what they like. That's where Armadillo's 3D tour comes in: customers can view each model in their own time – and over and over again – from corner to corner.

On the website, visitors see the four Armadillo models parked in a row. You can then zoom in and 'get' into each one so you can see exactly how the trailers are laid out and equipped.

Xtreme Outdoor's plant is in Cape Town, but according to Jason, they are investigating the possibility of a dealer in Johannesburg and in KwaZulu-Natal.

**Contact** 021 981 2992 [xog.co.za](mailto:info@xog.co.za)

[info@xog.co.za](mailto:info@xog.co.za)



## AA says we've got too much fuel



There is currently an oversupply of fuel as a result of last year's oil-production race between Russia and Saudi Arabia (to raise the largest reserve so as to outbid the other's oil prices), along with the unexpected outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The feud between the two oil-producing nations, meanwhile, is something of the past, and Russia and Saudi Arabia have agreed to scale down production.

"The irony is that this has come at a time where motorists and businesses are severely limited as to how they can use their vehicles," said a statement by the South Africa's Automobile Association (AA). The AA foresees that fuel prices are likely to fall further over the next few months, but that it will rise again over time as the world economy recovers – something that could take several months (and even years).

Oil storage tanks in many harbours around the world have been crowded to overflowing, and news agencies such as Bloomberg and Fortune report that hundreds of heavily laden oil tankers are anchored outside places such as California, Texas and Scotland, waiting for the day their cargo can be piped out.





## Vehicle sales nosedive

The National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (NAAMSA) reports that new vehicle sales began to decline in March this year. As an example BMW's sales for March 2020 fell by a third compared to March 2019.

Manufacturers including Hyundai, Mercedes-Benz and Suzuki had relatively steady sales, but Honda took a hard hit, with only 267 vehicles sold compared to 1 150 in March 2019. It was also the worst month for Volkswagen since December 2017, with sales of only 2 775.

But far worse was to come in April, as you could well imagine. Registration of new passenger vehicles in April 2020 fell by a staggering 99,6 % compared to April 2019. Ford managed to sell 304 vehicles – mostly Ranger bakkies – and Toyota was runner-up with just 93 vehicles.

NAAMSA didn't reveal how these vehicles were sold during lockdown, but what we do know is that out of 574 total vehicles sold (compared to 36 787 in April 2019), 275 went to private owners. The remaining 52% of vehicles were purchased by government, car rental companies and corporate fleet managers.



## Whatever floats Elon's boat



Ex-South African Elon Musk recently received a \$600 million stock jackpot (approximately R11,2 billion). Financial news site *Forbes* reports that the shares were awarded to Musk by Tesla's board for having facilitated a 100% stock rebound since a low-point in March 2020.

The investment bank Morgan Stanley asked 25 leading clients whether to invest in Toyota, General Motors or Tesla and found that 56% of these investors would rather support 'innovative' companies such as Tesla, compared to only 20% of those top investors who were willing to invest their money into Toyota, while 24% choose General Motors. The majority of investors said it was 'extremely unlikely' that traditional vehicle manufacturers could 'recoup their capital input costs' by continuing to develop internal combustion engines.

So, Elon was able to achieve the unthinkable and strengthen his company's position while other vehicle manufacturers were suffering due to a worldwide decline in car sales, fluctuating oil prices, climate change and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In other news, the Tesla boss tweeted his upcoming Cybertruck could 'float for a while'. Elon's tweet was in response to a question on Twitter regarding Cybertruck's wading depth. Although we still don't know what the Cybertruck's wading depth is, it is encouraging to know that you can use Elon's bakkie as a boat 'for a while'. The internet's response was the usual photoshopped images of a Cybertruck floating. Not to be left out of the fun, here's *Drive & Camp's* contribution.





# Find freedom in the Free State

The Sungazer Pilgrimage offers various walking routes in the Eastern Free State where you breathe fresh air and clear your head. Add it to your post-lockdown bucket list!

**WORDS & PHOTOS  
GERDA ENGELBRECHT**

*In early autumn, you'll walk through fields of cosmos. This photo was taken just outside Slabberts.*

**T**he Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain is an experience that will change your life. The good news is that you can have a similar experience right here in South Africa – in one of the most scenic parts of the country.

The Sungazer Pilgrimage in the Eastern Free State is the brainchild of Renee Wolfaardt from the town of Paul Roux. Renee, also a Camino veteran, read several books about pilgrimage routes and felt inspired to create something local so people could enjoy the area in which she lives.

After she had laid out the routes with a friend, she contacted the owners of the guest farms along the way and each one shared her vision and passion.

If you want to experience rural hospitality, this is the place to do it. On most routes you'll explore the area between Paul Roux, Slabberts and Fouriesburg, but you almost never stay in a town – you sleep on guest farms.

Renee named her pilgrimage after the endemic sungazer, a rare, shy lizard as long as your forearm. Also known as the giant girdled lizard, it has large spiny scales on the back of its head and on its tail. It lives in self-excavated

burrows in its highveld grassland habitat, and it's ovoviviparous, which means that eggs hatch inside the female and she appears to give birth to live young. Sungazer numbers are dwindling due to habitat loss and the exotic reptile trade – you're lucky if you see one in the wild.

The Sungazer Pilgrimage has five routes for hikers and cyclists and there is also a trail for horse riders. (See sidebar.) The routes are clearly marked and easy to follow. Groups of up to 12 people can be accommodated. Renee has also added a slackpacking option so you can have your luggage transported between overnight spots.

**I was in the Mengelmoes restaurant** in Paul Roux with my hiking buddy Leone Fouché, when we found out that the first person in South Africa had tested positive for the coronavirus. Little did we know how different life would be after our pilgrimage.

At home during the lockdown, Leone and I often talked about how wonderful it was to slow down and experience the goodness of the people we met along the way.

You don't have to travel far to do a pilgrimage. The Free State is just down the road!



## Vinnige Willemien – the highlights

Leone and I chose a route called Vinnige Willemien – an 85 km, four-day trail. You walk about 20 km a day. It's challenging enough that you'll work up a good sweat, but it's not difficult. Beginners are welcome.

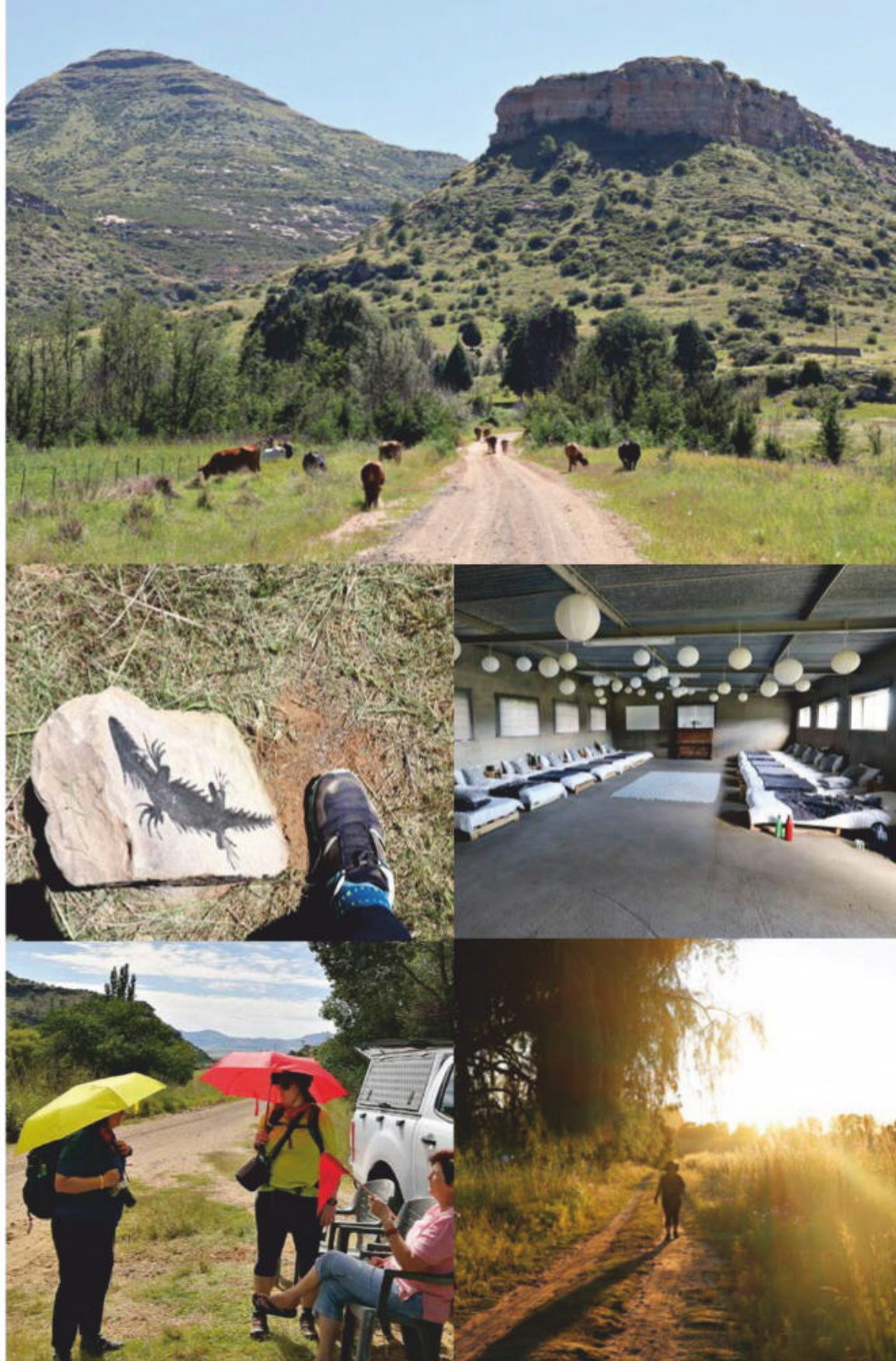
On the evening before the hike, we met the friendly people of Paul Roux and had a delicious dinner in the Pink Tricycle coffee shop. We stayed at the charming Dunlin B&B for the night. Renee Wolfaardt dropped in and presented an information session on what to expect over the next few days.

**It was autumn** and Day 1 (20 km) started in Slabberts, where we walked among fields of cosmos in bloom, along a gravel road that wiggled towards Tepelkop. We stayed over in the most scenic 'hiking hut' you'll ever see – a Free State sandstone house on the farm Willowdene. The lasagne waiting on the kitchen counter made it feel like home.

On Day 2 (24 km), Castle Rock starts off in front of you, then it's next to you, then behind you. The landscape is incredibly scenic. After about 17 km, there's a small shop next to the railway station in Sheridan, where we bought some snacks. It's one of those rural gems where you can get anything from colourful shweshwe fabric to soccer boots and tin mugs. The final 3 km section of the day was quite steep, but the reward was fantastic. We slept on Uitzicht farm, which is almost encircled by the Maluti Mountains. Uitzicht has a lovely swimming pool and a friendly barman.

You'll feel the previous day's hills in your legs on Day 3 (20 km) – and today they'll be working just as hard. First, you have to walk down that same hill again. Then, at around the 10 km mark, there are three more hills in quick succession. The rest of the way is on level terrain. We slept at Emden guest farm – in the beautifully decorated Melkstal units. There's a pool for hot, tired hikers.

The route on Day 4 (21 km) mostly follows farm roads – the farmers have all given permission for pilgrims to walk across their land. The last 3 km section to Malutizicht is through the veld – you might have to ask a cow to move out of the way. Malutizicht is a self-catering resort with an indoor pool. We stayed in a unit with a fireplace in the living area, and for dinner we found a braai pack in the kitchen. The sunrise was spectacular.



Top: 'Peak hour' traffic on the road to the farm Willowdene. You'll see more cows than traffic on this route.

Middle: The routemarkers are painted with the eponymous sungazer. At Emden guest farm you'll sleep in this neat unit called Melkstal.

Above: The days were still hot in early March when Gerda did the pilgrimage so Renee surprised the pilgrims with umbrellas when they arrived at a water point. Leone gets an early start from Emden on Day 4.

### PICK YOUR SUNGAZER ROUTE

- **NEWBERY PASSION:** 211 km circular route; 11 walking days; 12 nights; from R8 220 per person
- **SANDY'S SHOES:** 94 km; 6 walking days; 7 nights; from R5 720 per person
- **VINNIGE WILLEMEN:** 85 km; 4 walking days; 5 nights; from R4 625 per person
- **HISTORIC ROUTE:** 28 km; 2 walking days – suitable for a weekend; from R3 350 per person
- **TEPEL ROUTE:** 45 km; 2 walking days – suitable for a (tougher) weekend; from R3 350 per person

All rates include accommodation, breakfast and dinner. The breakfast is generous enough that you can keep some for lunch – you don't need to bring extra food. If you choose the slackpacking option, it costs more.

There's also a 200 km, four-day, five-night route designed for cyclists, plus some horse-riding trails. Enquire for more details.

**More info:** 📧 [sungazerpilgrimage.co.za](mailto:sungazerpilgrimage.co.za); 📧 [admin@sungazerpilgrimage.com](mailto:admin@sungazerpilgrimage.com)



# Fortuner gets epic

South Africa's favourite SUV just got even more attractive, reports Cyril Kloppe.

## TOYOTA FORTUNER EPIC

The Toyota Fortuner has been a top seller among South Africans since 2004 and therefore needs no introduction. Originally developed in Taiwan, Toyota Australia took over with the second-generation Fortuner in 2015.

Toyota South Africa has recently updated the Fortuner's exterior to create this latest version, the Toyota Fortuner Epic.



### What do we have here?

The Epic is available in two finishes: Epic and Epic Black. Both versions use Toyota's trusty 2.8 GD-6 engine, which has been on our roads for a number of years. As you can probably guess, the Black suffix indicates a higher spec level, while the regular Epic doesn't differ that much from the standard Fortuner.

The Fortuner Epic range can be further divided into four models: two rear-wheel drive 2.8s (Epic and Epic Black) and two part-time 4x4 models (Epic 4x4 and Epic Black 4x4). The prices for the four models are as follows: R660 000 for the base model Epic, R670 100 for the Epic Black, R729 000 for the Epic 4x4, and the flagship Epic Black 4x4 will cost you R739 100.

Toyota's 2.4 GD-6 and 2.7 VVTi models remain unchanged and there are currently no plans to make Epic versions of them. Production of the 4.0 V6 model has been discontinued and all manual gearboxes have been abandoned, so nowadays you can only get a new Fortuner in automatic.



It doesn't seem as though Toyota's two biggest rivals in South Africa, Isuzu and Ford, are that interested in making special versions of their SUVs. There is no such thing as a mu-X-Rider or an Everest Raptor, for example. Mitsubishi does offer a Pajero Sport Shogun that has more gadgets than its standard Pajero Sport, but we don't think Toyota are all that concerned about the Shogun as a serious competition.

### On the outside

The Toyota Fortuner Epic gets a black nudge



bar over the front bumper with a metal Epic name plate. There's a tow bar at the back, also in black, with a hitch and a tail light socket. An Epic emblem is affixed to the left below the model name.

The Epic Black model has a two-tone design with a black roof, black roof rails, black side-view mirrors and black 18" alloy wheel rims. The Epic Black's body paint is limited to one colour, Glacier White, which contrasts well with the black elements. With the standard Epic, you get a choice between the same glacial white or chrome silver, graphite





## SPECIFICATIONS

|                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Model tested</b>                  | 2.8 Epic Black 4x4                  |
| <b>Engine</b>                        | 2 755 cc four-cylinder turbo diesel |
| <b>Power</b>                         | 130 kW @ 3 400 rpm                  |
| <b>Torque</b>                        | 450 Nm @ 1 600 rpm                  |
| <b>Transmission</b>                  | 6-speed automatic                   |
| <b>Tank</b>                          | 80 ℓ                                |
| <b>Fuel consumption</b>              | 8,5 ℓ/100 km                        |
| <b>Tow weight</b>                    | 3 000 kg                            |
| <b>Approach and departure angles</b> | 29° and 25°                         |
| <b>Ground clearance</b>              | 279 mm                              |
| <b>GVM</b>                           | 2 750 kg                            |
| <b>Tyres</b>                         | 265 / 60R18                         |
| <b>Safety rating</b>                 | ★★★★★ (ANCAP, 2019)                 |
| <b>Service plan</b>                  | 9 services/90 000 km                |
| <b>Warranty</b>                      | 3 years/100 000 km                  |
| <b>Service intervals</b>             | 10 000 km/12 months                 |
| <b>Price</b>                         | R739 100                            |

gray or bronze – but then you lose the stylish black roof and mirrors.

### On the inside

The name Fortuner is etched on the scuff plates and the word Epic is embroidered in silver on the carpets. Other than that, the interior of the Epic doesn't differ from the standard Fortuner. You still get the dual-zone climate control, keyless entry, starter button, touch screen with satellite navigation,

camera, cruise control, steering switches, electrically adjustable seats and a myriad of buttons on the steering wheel.

The electronic aids also remain unchanged with ABS brakes, traction and stability control, brake traction, brake-force distribution and hill-start assist. The 4x4 models get extra aids including Toyota's A-Trac off-road system and downhill control. The rotary knob that switches between rear wheel, four-wheel drive and low range also remains unchanged.

## TAKING THEIR WORD FOR IT

*Drive & Camp's* policy is to have first-hand experience about everything we write about, whether it's a holiday resort or a pocket knife. However, due to the lockdown to slow the spread of the coronavirus, the Fortuner Epic was introduced to us digitally rather than physically and therefore we can only report on Toyota's media release.



## COMPETITORS Bakkie-based SUVs



### R659 995 Mitsubishi Pajero Sport 2.4 4X4 Shogun

A great vehicle (a favourite of ours) that seems to be hampered by a limited marketing budget.



### R684 500 Isuzu mu-X 3.0 4X4 AT6

It embodies the saying 'old but not yet cold'!



### R689 400 Ford Everest 3.2 TDCi XLT 6AT 4WD

The Fortuner's natural rival attracts a different kind of customer: one who's not that into off-roading.

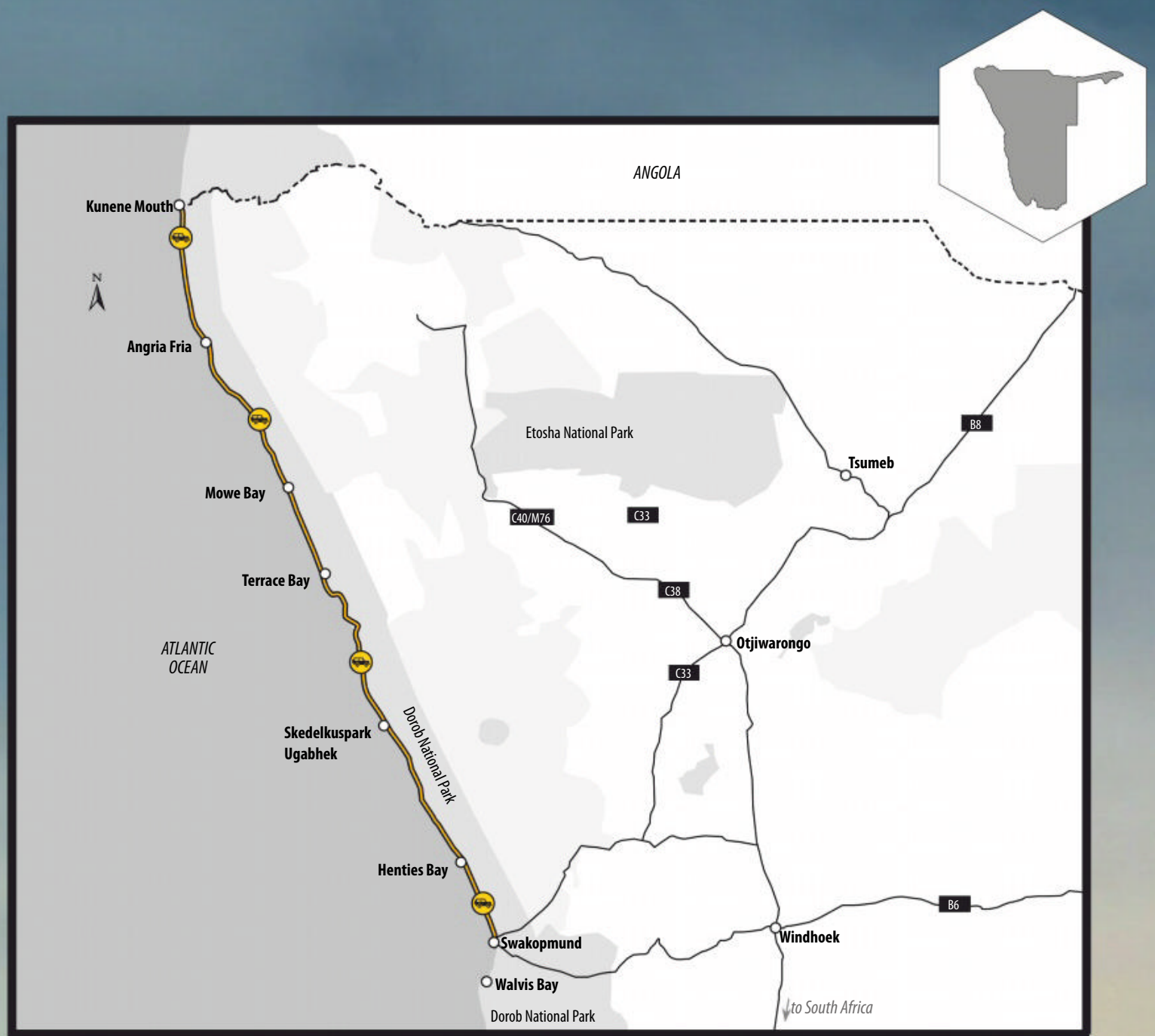


# Shipwrecks, slipfaces and tight lines

The Kunene mouth is a treasure trove for bird-watching, dune riding, photography, observing timid wildlife and even fishing. The adventure, however, begins even earlier because you have to get there first...

Words and photos **Evan Naudé**







**T**he Kunene estuary, at the very top of Namibia's infamous Skeleton Coast, is a destination that usually appears somewhere on every off-roader's top 10 list. It has all the hallmarks of a proper 4x4 destination: it's extremely far from society; the road there is challenging; and the scenery is something you can't really even describe.

The Kunene forms the northern border of Namibia and the Skeleton Coast National Park, and although you can visit the southern part of the park any day, the northern stretch of coastline to the estuary is closed to the public. You do still have the opportunity to tick this destination on your list, however, as a handful of people are allowed here with an

approved tour operator in this 350 km concession area every year. We went to have a look at how this works.

**THE SKELETON COAST** National Park's southern entrance gate near the Ugab River estuary (the other is the Springbokwasser gate on the C39) is about 190 km north of Swakopmund. So you can do this stretch of road, partly tar and partly salt road, pretty quickly and make your way to Terrace Bay in a day. Though there are some attractions along this section of the coastline that are worth visiting if you haven't been here before.

Take a stroll past the colourful houses of Wlotzkasbaken, a holiday town about 30 km north of Swakopmund that sprung up around a popular fishing spot. Shortly beyond

the town, pull over for a photo of the Zeila shipwreck before you check out what Henties Bay, Namibia's favourite fishing village, looks like. If the fishing bug bites you suddenly – or if you forgot something at home – Henties Bay is the best place to buy supplies before heading farther north.

On the other side of Henties Bay, you'll find several signs with interesting names: Trappies, Sarah se Gat, Tolla se Gat, Predikantsgat, Bakleigat... These places are popular fishing spots that might make you want to wet your line for a cob. And once the fish starts to bite, you may be stuck for a day or two – so keep that in mind while planning your trip.

Cape Cross, 60 km from Henties Bay, is the spot where Portuguese sailor Diogo Cão planted a cross in



“

Once the fish starts to bite, you may be stuck for a day or two – so keep that in mind while planning your trip

”





1485 while on an exploratory voyage along Africa's coastline. Today, the area is a conservation area for Cape fur seals where they can sit and bake in the sun in their thousands. Bring a laundry peg for your nose as these seals haven't yet heard of deodorant...

**FROM CAPE CROSS**, it's a quick 75 km to the Ugab River where you find the gates of the Skeleton Coast National Park. You can't miss them: each boasts a big skull. After paying your park fees (R60 pp and R10 per vehicle), you drive through the gates. You are now entering an area that the ancient Portuguese mariners called the "Gates to Hell".

You've got about 160 km from the gate to Terrace Bay. It is a fairly well-maintained gravel road, but you will feel some bumps here and there, especially near Torra Bay.

Stop at the Huab Lagoon to see if there are flamingos around before crossing the river where gemsbok and ostriches come to drink. Just beyond Huab lies the rusted skeleton of an oil drill, the remains of a failed attempt to locate the so-called black gold here.

Shortly before Torra Bay (10 km) is a turn-off to the interior. This is the C39 that leads to the park's eastern gate, Springbokwasser – if you continue along this road you come to the Palmwag-Khorixas road. Just past this road, you will see dunes to your right. The farther north you go, the bigger those sand dunes become. They eventually extend to the Kunene River, almost 350 km along. Don't stress now that you're missing out on the fun. There will be lots of opportunities for you to take on the dunes.

Terrace Bay is 50 km past Torra Bay. It's a basic holiday resort with a restaurant, kiosk and petrol station. The latter is the most important, as it's the last place you can fill up for the rest of the journey up to the Kunene and back again.

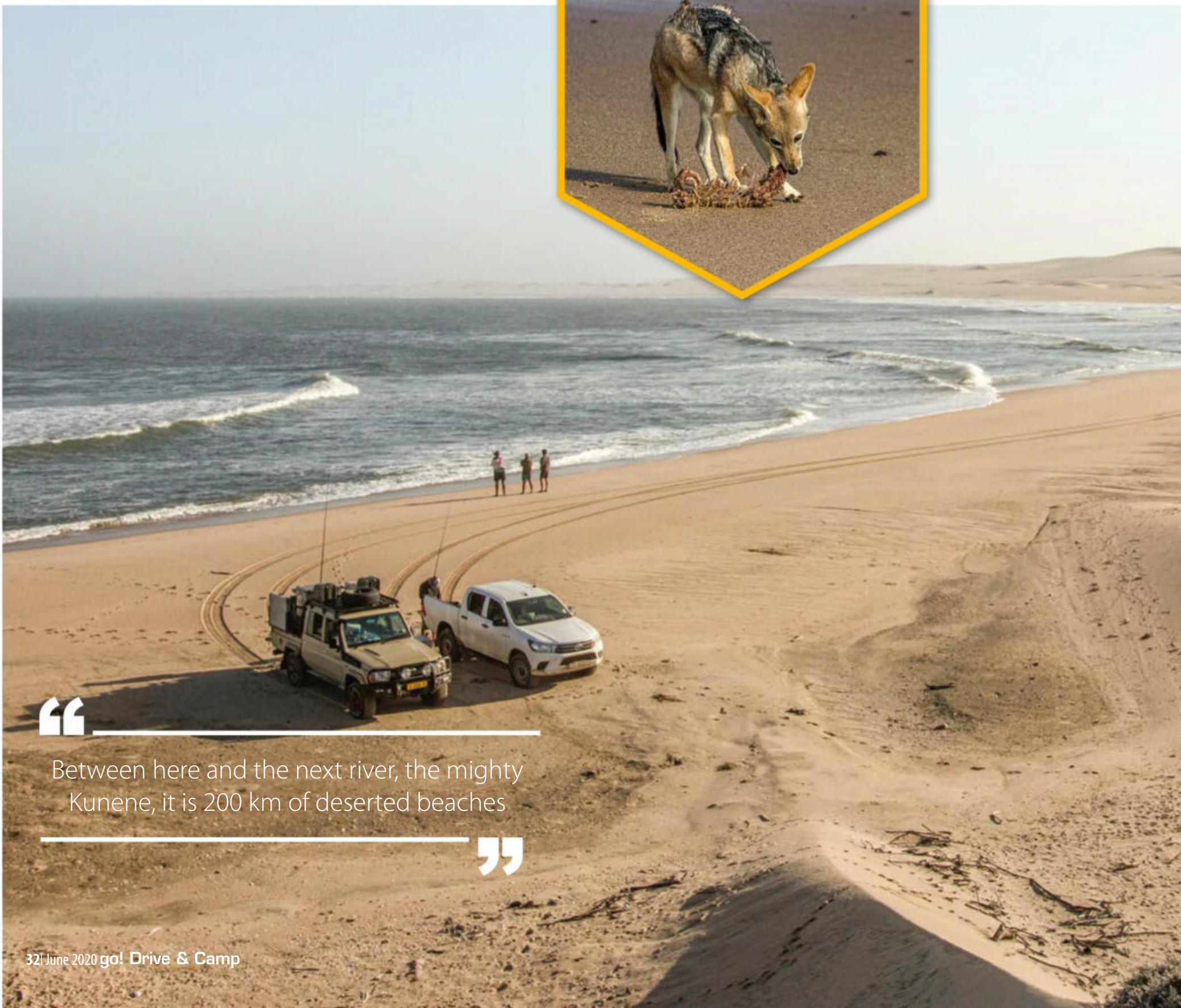
**THE LAST OUTPOST** of the park is at Möwe Bay, a ranger station and research post 80 km north of Terrace Bay. Möwe Bay isn't open to the public (ordinary visitors may only drive to Terrace Bay). To travel here and beyond, you must be part



**HIT THE ROAD, JACK.** (clockwise from the top) Make sure all your gear is packed and secured, because once you leave the last campsite in the Skeleton Coast National Park, you're on your own and need to be self-sufficient.







“

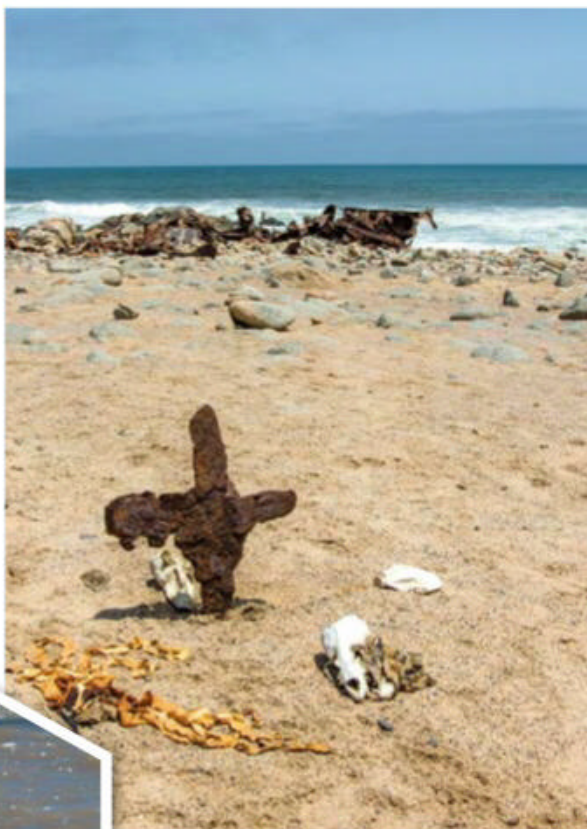
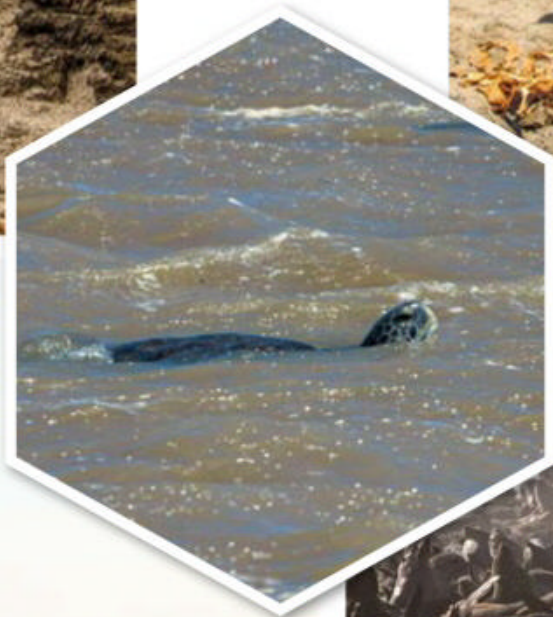
Between here and the next river, the mighty Kunene, it is 200 km of deserted beaches

”





**LOCALS ONLY.** Judging by the old mine (far left), the wreck of the Suiderkruis (left and right) and a crashed aircraft (far right), it becomes clear that humans aren't made to thrive on the Skeleton Coast. Only seals (below), turtles and jackals (insert) make a successful living here.



of an approved tour group. As your guide finishes the paperwork, you can reduce your tyre pressure and engage 4x4, because there are no more gravel roads past Möwebaai.

Only 2 km away lies the wreck of the Suiderkruis, today just a pile of crumpled rusty steel on a beach. This fishing boat was forced onto the rocks by the rough surf in 1976 on its maiden voyage.

Your guide will lead the convoy as far as possible along the beach, but the tide may force you to follow a twin-track above the high-water mark or even cut a trail through the dunes.

There are hundreds of shipwrecks on the Skeleton Coast, but the most famous one is the Dunedin Star. On 29 November 1942, this cargo ship was wrecked some 80 km south of the Kunene River mouth, and the rescue effort to save the 106 passengers eventually took almost a month. Several lifeboats were used, a convoy of 4x4s tried to reach the shipwreck from the interior, and

they even employed Lockheed Ventura Bomber from Cape Town to parachute provisions down to the survivors. This plane landed near the shipwreck at one point and then promptly got stuck in the desert sand.

Later, after the successful rescue effort of the Dunedin Star's passengers as well as the aircraft crew, a convoy was sent to retrieve the aircraft. The plane was finally able to take off again, but barely 45 minutes later the left engine gave up the ghost and the plane crashed into the sea near Rocky Point, about 50 km north of Möwe Bay.

Today you can still see some sharp metal from the plane where it washed out 10 km from the Hoarus estuary. You reach Rocky Point on the other side of the river, and from there it is 15 km to the Khumib, the last of the great Kaokoland rivers that flow into the sea. Between here and the next river, the mighty Kunene, it is 200 km of deserted beaches.



**THE FOLLOWING TARGET** is Angra Fria, 90 km north of the Khumib. Just beyond Angra Fria is the place where the Dunedin Star passengers and crew were stranded. By now, you should have a good idea of the absolute unforgiving nature of this coastline, especially when the weather is bad.

And when you stand where these people had to survive – one of them a baby – you can only wonder how they managed it. Next to the rotten planks of the former shelter is a plaque: “In memory of Mathias Koraseb and Angus McIntyre”, two crew members of the rescue team who lost their lives. It was erected in 2017 by Sidney Palmer, 75 years after surviving as a tiny baby on this beach.

You’ve still got 110 km to go – north all the way. Along the beach, wherever the cold waves allow you a piece of solid sand, or back and forth between the skeletons of seals, whales and jackals above the high-water mark.

Cormorants, seabirds and groups of flamingos patrol the waves, while stretches of smelly seals lie on the sand, baking in the sun. On their outskirts, cunning red jackals wander around, looking to poach a pup or two. Occasionally you’ll see the traces of a brown hyena, also known as the ‘strandwolf’ or ‘jut’, but sighting a live one is quite rare.

Then, suddenly, you reach the end of the beach. A broad strip of water flows from the interior, pushing a brown stain deep into the sea. Use the panoramic feature on your smartphone and capture the Kunene on the right and the Atlantic on the left in the same photo to show your family back home: this is where Namibia ends!

**ABOUT 15 KM SOUTH** of the estuary is a neat camp set up by the concessionaires for tour groups visiting the area. Depending on the tour, you could spend up to three nights here. So there’s plenty of time to visit the estuary at different times of the day and see how many of the 72 different bird species you can see here.

Often you see large flocks of pelicans and flamingos, but don’t walk too close to the water, as the crocodiles also like





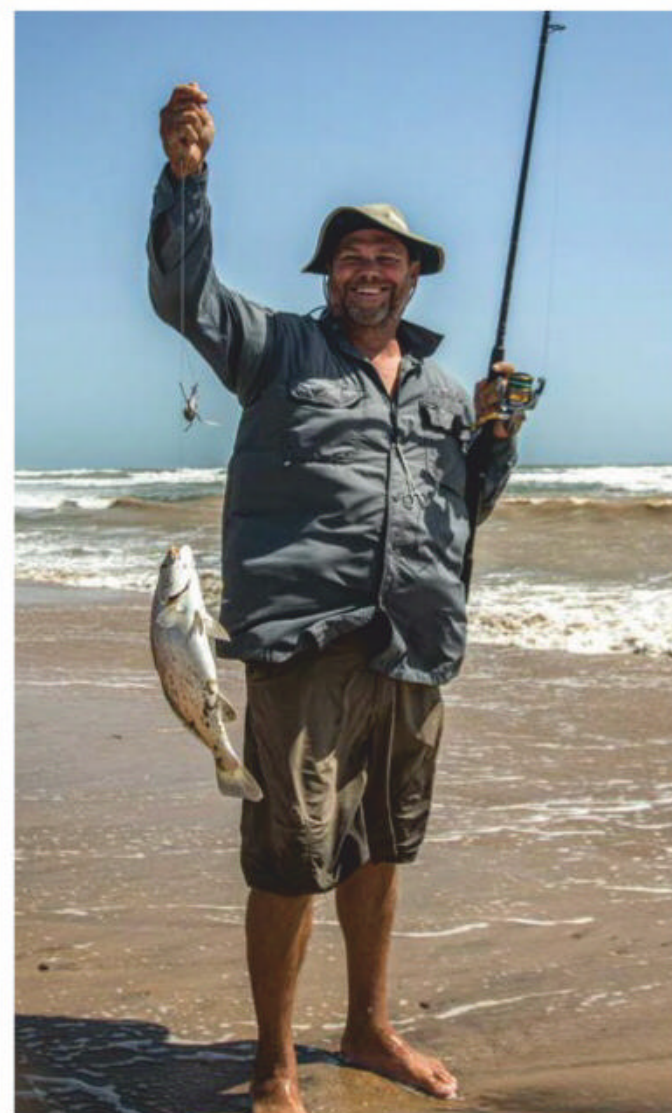


I'VE GOT A BITE.  
A commemorative plaque shows where the Dunedin Star ran aground (far left) while flamingoes fly over the coast (left). On your way north you'll have to sleep among the dunes (middle left), before you reach the Kunene Mouth (below) where you can catch fish.



## FISHING LAWS

If you want to fish, you must get a permit from the Namibian Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. It costs R14 pp (bring an ID or passport for each person) and is valid for a month – you can get one at Swakopmund (Strand Street) or Henties Bay (Hanganeni Fishing Center). You need this permit to fish at any legitimate location along the coast, including the Skeleton Coast National Park, and if you visit the Kunene mouth with a tour group. The concessionaires for this section of the park, Skeleton Coast Adventure Tours/OIG, have special permission to allow tour groups to fish at the Kunene. There are strict measures on fishing zones, and a catch-and-release policy applies here.







“

Your route depends on the type of tour or tour operator you're travelling with. Some cut a winding trail through the dune field

”





**TO THE DUNES.** Your campsite near the Kunene Mouth (above) is surrounded by giant dunes (middle) where sky jackals roam (insert). The dunes are prettiest during sunset (main image).

## I WANT TO GO TOO!

**Can I drive here on my own?** An ordinary visitor can only travel up to Terrace Bay in the Skeleton Coast National Park. If you want to drive up to the Kunene mouth (a concession area), you must travel with a tour operator who has a valid permit.

**Who did you go with?** We toured with Bhejane 4x4 Adventures, in collaboration with the concessionaires Skeleton Coast Adventure Tours/OIG. Bhejane offers three different Skeleton Coast tours: a nine-day one starting at Swakopmund and ending at Purros; a 12-day tour with extra days in the Kaokoveld; and a six-day fishing trip, three of which are at the Kunene mouth. The latter tour starts and ends at the Skeleton Coast National Park's Ugab Gate and excludes the Kaokoveld.

**What is included?** Bhejane brings tents for each vehicle and set up and take down the camps. They also prepare

three meals a day and provide cutlery. Park, guide and concession fees, two-way radios, a communal camp kitchen, shower and toilet are also included.

**What should I bring?** Your own bedding (mattress or camp bed), snacks, beverages, binoculars, camera, fishing tackle and bait. If you have a camping freezer, bring along a good supply of ice.

**What should I be driving?** A full-fledged 4x4 with good ground clearance, low range and at least a rear diff lock.

**Can I tow my caravan or off-road trailer?** No, only 4x4 vehicles are allowed.

**How much fuel will I need?** Petrol vehicles need at least 260 ℓ and diesel vehicles, 220 ℓ.

**Can I bring my family along?** Yes, definitely.

**Contact** ☎ 044 535 9033 🌐 bhejane.com

to lie on the shore. If you're lucky, you might even see turtles in the estuary. Speaking of animals: make sure you don't leave any food in the camp, as a jackal will definitely come around once you leave the camp.

You will have noticed the dune field around the camp already... and now is your chance to get acquainted with a slipface. These sharp slopes of more than 30° are sometimes as low as hip height, but can also be as enormous as a five-storey building. Your guide will show you a few and teach you how to get used to that hollow spot in your stomach as you drive down a slipface.

A relatively new allowance for tour groups in these regions is that you may cast a line at the estuary and a limited stretch of coastline. The cod bite nicely but you might catch a blacktail, gurnard, or catfish.

**AFTER YOUR TIME** at the Kunene mouth, you hit the road south again. Your route depends on the type of tour or tour operator you're travelling with. Some cut a winding trail through the dune field for a day or so until the convoy arrives in the Hartmanns Valley. From there, it goes to Purros where you explore the dry rivers of the Kaokoland before finishing at Sesriem.

Other tours aim south to Angra Fria, then turn inland and swing south to Purros just before Orupembe. And if your main aim is angling, your convoy will head south again to the Skeleton Coast National Park's Ugab gate, but that doesn't necessarily mean you're just driving back in the other day's tracks.

Even though you have to take into account tides and weather conditions, the Skeleton Coast still holds many attractions to take you south via an alternate route. There are the rock circles of the Strandlopers near Angra Fria; slightly further south, you get vast gravel plains; the oases of the Monutum and Nadas rivers; the abandoned Sarusas crystal mine; and then there are the Hoarusib and Khumib rivers, which get more spectacular higher up their courses.

Two things are guaranteed on the Skeleton Coast: you won't get bored and you won't be able to see everything during one visit. You will have to come again and again. 🌟



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# The west is the

There's nothing extravagant nor lavish about South Africa's western coastline. Expect to find humble accommodation like these four understated but welcoming seaside caravan parks from Lamberts Bay to Port Nolloth.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

**W**here does the West Coast begin and end? It's impossible to find a conclusive answer to this question, but we propose that a distinction can be made between the entire western coast – with a lower-case w – starting at the Orange River Mouth and reaching all the way to the Cape, and the smaller geographic region between Yzerfontein and Doring Bay called the West Coast (capitalised).

But is this the final word on the subject? A fisherman from Velddrif will be in hysterics if a hipster from Cape Town claimed to be a native of the west coast. Most people

from Elands Bay won't even acknowledge Saldanha as part of the West Coast, while Port Nolloth's lighthouse keeper says unequivocally that he is a born-and-bred west coast local, even though this town is the seat of the Richtersveld Municipality in the Northern Cape.

Either way, the western coastline is a predominantly harsh, unforgiving region, and seaside holidays on this coast certainly isn't to everyone's taste. The water is freezing, you won't find lawns aplenty, and the various municipalities aren't exactly rolling around in cash. Why then would you come here and camp





# best

in a municipal caravan park of all places?

The answer lies in the warm reception you'll receive from the average west coast local. It more than makes up for the icy sea. Yes, it's not nearly as green as that other coast that gets heated by the Benguela current, but when the barren plains of the upper west coast erupts into wildflowers once a year, you'll feel the ground's sincere gratitude.

Here you dine on snoek and sweet potatoes, or creamy mussel potjie – and once you are properly settled in your caravan park, you may even hang a brace of bokkoms outside your tent.



- 1 Lamberts Bay Caravan Park
- 2 Strandfontein Caravan Park
- 3 Hondeklip Bay Caravan Park
- 4 McDougalls Bay Caravan Park







### LAMBERTS BAY CARAVAN PARK

#### Where the tradewinds blow

Lamberts Bay's caravan park lies at the top of Voortrekker Street right on the beach and is managed by the Cederberg Municipality. During peak season, there is often a queue of cars and caravans that patiently idle until they are signed in. Out of season you stop in front of a gate and a staff member jogs out of the reception building to open up for you.

Inside the reception building, Juliet Phillips turns down her TV's sound and greets you with a captivating smile. Juliet has held this job for 26 years and she reminisces on the town's halcyon days when events such as the local crayfish festival attracted thousands of visitors.

Back then the caravan park was filled to the brim four to five times in a year. But over time, the west coast became quieter and the crayfish have been running scared since they were given red status on the SASSI list in 2016 because of overfishing.

However, the park is still a relatively popular destination, and according to Juliet, Lamberts Bay's caravan park has never been completely empty until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

You are generously invited to drive



through the campsite first and then return to the reception office with the number of your preferred stand.

In peak season, you'll need to request your favourite stand in advance, otherwise Juliet or one of her colleagues will assign a stand to you.

Here are 268 stands, almost all on compacted sand. A total of 40 stands have private ablution facilities and 55 have sea views. The campsite is fenced with a sturdy head-height steel pallisade

fence and the entrance gate is staffed day and night, all year round.

**FOR THE SAKE OF CLARITY**, we divide the caravan park into three: the front, back and bottom sections. The front has the fewest shade trees, but it is here where you get an ocean view, and just behind them are the stands with their own private ablution facilities.

If you are dead set on a sea view, you'll need to share an ablution block with





**BACK TO BASICS.** Lawns are not a common thing on the west coast and you should consider yourself lucky if you can camp on one. Lamberts Bay is a fishing town and as such you'll get to eat good seafood at some of its restaurants.



your neighbours and abandon all hope of camping in the shade.

There are one or two small manatoka trees, but rather bring shade cloth to build a windbreak, and a reflective cover to keep your caravan cool. The stands are roughly 5 m above sea level, and the odds of a freak wave crashing against

your caravan is highly unlikely.

The communal ablution block has a men's and women's side; each with four tiled showers with benches and doors, and four toilets. The men's side has two basins with mirrors and two urinals while the women have four basins and two bath tubs. If you are willing to camp a little farther away from the sea, you'll have a private bathroom. Each of these bathrooms has a shower, and basin with a mirror and a toilet, but toilet paper is not provided.

The manatoka trees around here are slightly taller and better able to protect you from the wind and sun. There are even some wild fig trees that cast big pools of shade.

**THE BACK OF THE CARAVAN PARK** has rooikrans and manatoka windbreaks, but there are no sea views. As with all



## *They say*

**Pieter and Nellie Eybers from Klerksdorp camp with a Toyota Hilux 2.8 and a Jurgens Classique.**

**“** We first bought a home in a security complex for retirement, but the rules made it feel like a nursery school. And so we bought a caravan instead and took to the road for a year. We've been here for a month and it is a pleasant campsite. The only weird thing is the complete lack of built-up braais. **”**





**SORTED.** The ablution facilities are old but everything works and it's clean. Because this is a municipal resort it gets daily visits from municipal workers who swarm through it with rakes and brooms.

the stands here, you camp on hard sand, and you have access to two communal ablution facilities.

The two ablution blocks are roughly 150 m apart and each has six showers with dressing cubicles, and six basins in the centre of the room – all with mirrors. During the daytime, the ablution blocks are lit by a eerie green glow thanks to green fibreglass in front of the windows rather than actual glass. Behind the ablution blocks are sinks and a clothes line behind a shoulder-high wall.

Between the back and front sections of the caravan park is a playground on a neat lawn. Here children can swing and climb all year round, and during school holidays the minigolf's carpets are laid down and the trampolines tightened.

The bottom of the caravan park lies near the beach, about 3 m below the

main campsite. Here are 17 stands at the mouth of the Jakkals River and each one is separated from each other by a salt bush hedge.

The stands are laid out in a U shape: numbers 1-8 border on the beach and numbers 9-17 lie with their backs to a mound overgrown with aloes and stone plants. In the middle of the camp is a communal fireplace and a street light that illuminates the braai at night.

The lower terrace is popular with locals and their friends who come to Lamberts Bay every year. Of course you are free to join them here, but keep in mind that the nearest ablution block is 120 m away.

Directly next to the lower terrace is a waterslide that runs during the December holidays. Bear in mind that it can get a little noisy here.



## Briefly | Lamberts Bay



**Campsite** 268 stands – few on grass, but most have shade trees. You never camp farther than 120 m from the nearest ablution block.

**Ablution facilities** 3 communal ablution blocks and 40 private ablution facilities. Old but clean and neat.

**Price** From R182 pn per stand out of season up to R235 per stand with a private bathroom during peak season. The monthly rate (January to November) is R1 950.

**Arrival and departure** 10am and 10am.

**Contact** 027 432 2238

lamwwp@cederbergraad.co.za

cederbergmun.gov.za

**Nearest town** In Lamberts Bay.

**Road condition** Tarred all the way, even within the resort.

**GPS** S32.08673 E18.31294

**Drive & Camp says** The sites do not have their own built-up braai areas, but staff will deliver half a barrel to your tent, free of charge, to braai in.



## STRANDFONTEIN CARAVAN PARK

### **Emerald in the crown**

Unlike most west coast towns, Strandfontein has no industry or even a working harbour. According to the 2011 census, this holiday village has a population of 431 permanent residents, but on weekends and school holidays, this sleepy town bursts out of its seams as excited holidaymakers stream through the gates.

Strandfontein's beach shop is open daily from 09:00 to 17:00 (Saturdays until 18:00) and here you can buy bread, milk and canned food as well as the usual bucket and spade to build a sand castle. If the shop doesn't have what you need, you can visit Lutzville, 28 km away.

Strandfontein's caravan park is run by the Matzikama Municipality and is undoubtedly the greenest in the region. Lawns cover the stands and if coastal fynbos grew here, it would have resembled the Garden Route.

The caravan park is unfenced, but since everyone within a 7 km radius are retirees or holidaymakers, just like you, you can rest assured that no one is going to steal your camping gear.

Strandfontein's caravan park is divided into three zones: The A and T blocks, and then the horseshoe.

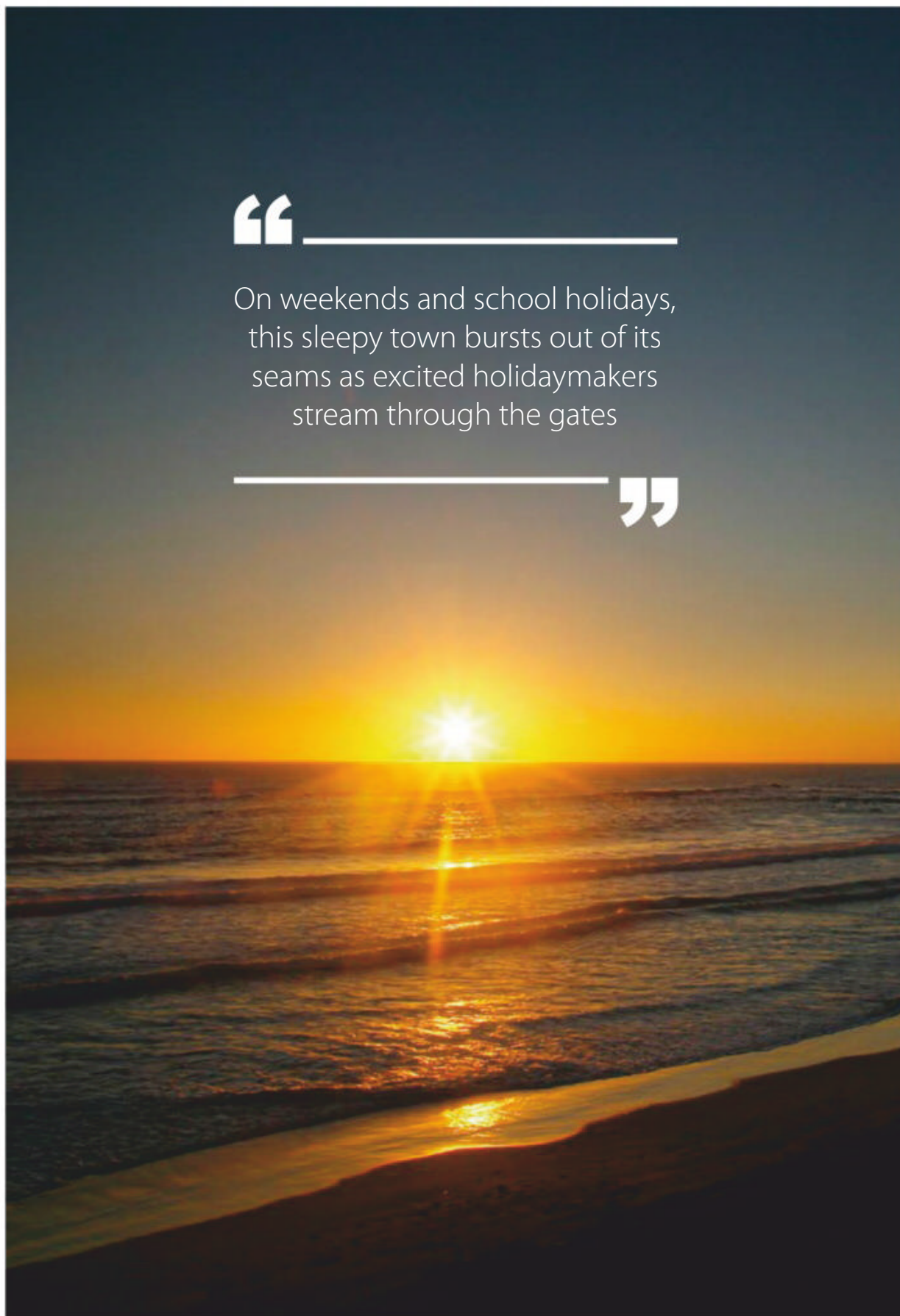
**THE A-BLOCK** is a narrow terrace about 15 m above sea level – there is scant chance of even a tsunami sweeping you away. The 52 stands in this area are laid out in two rows: numbers 1-27 are up against a high embankment and a neighbourhood, while numbers 28-52 are at the front with unobstructed views of the Atlantic Ocean.

Each of the rear stands has its own

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On weekends and school holidays, this sleepy town bursts out of its seams as excited holidaymakers stream through the gates

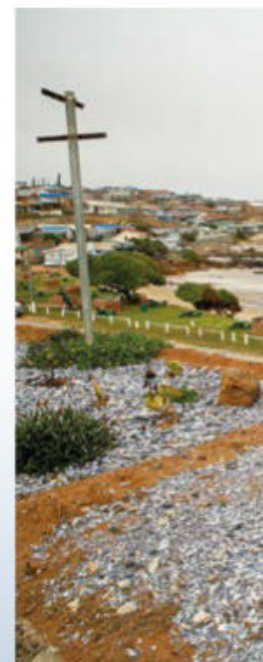
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private ablution facilities that consist of two narrow rooms. The outside room has a sink for the dishes and the inside room a toilet, shower with a shower curtain and soap dish, and a basin with a shelf and mirror. The amenities are old, but it's clean, private and it works.

Campers on the front stands must share two ablution facilities. These are temporary structures erected after the original ablution block lower down the terrace was destroyed by a storm a few years prior. The temporary structures have a men's and women's side and it is modern and impeccably neat. Each





building has three toilets, three basins and two showers.

The shower cubicles, however, require getting used to: the glass doors of each cubicle are completely transparent and passers-by will get to appreciate your nude body – if you prefer privacy we recommend you drape a towel over the door. The temporary structures have no sinks – bring your own bowls. Each of the A-block stands has its own braai area and each of the two stands shares a power point – the back row uses the blue caravan-type sockets and the front row has regular domestic sockets.

Every two stands in the front row share one tap, while the rear stands with the

private bathrooms naturally have their own water supply.

The T-block is an outflow of the A-block and lies in a narrow strip between a few private residences above the A-block. There are 20 stands here, and one communal ablution block. Stands 5-8 have an unobstructed sea view while the rest have their backs to the vibracrete walls of private homes.

The ablution block here has four showers (with proper doors), four toilets and three basins with mirrors. In terms of cleanliness, the amenities are fine, but they look well-used. However, everything is in working order without fail. There are sinks behind the T-block's ablution

facilities. However, it is not clear whether they are intended for dishes or clothes, so we suggest you bring your own plastic basins if you want to rinse your socks.

**THE HORSESHOE IS SQUARELY** in the middle of Strandfontein and its 66 stands are laid out on five grassy terraces. Four paved paths lead through the horseshoe and take you to your stand. Although you can see the sea from most sites, you camp here to be sheltered from the coast's damp morning fog and the west coast's freezing wind that comes in from across the sea during some late afternoons – something the folks in the A block often have to contend with.





**POLAR EXPRESS.** Don a wetsuit if you're going to be swimming because the water is cold. The waterslide is a popular attraction during summer months



## Briefly | Strandfontein



**Campsite** 138 stands, all on grass.

**Ablution facilities** Various types of ablution facilities ranging from private to communal, and old to brand new. Everything is clean and tidy.

**Price** Depending on stand, R190-R320 p/n out of season. In-season prices not available at time of going to print.

**Arrival and departure** 10 am and 10 am.

**Contact** 027 201 3437 027 201 3401

westerncape.gov.za

ivanwyk@matzikamamun.co.za

**Nearest town** Doringbaai, 7 km.

**Road condition** The R362 regional road from Lutzville is tarred all the way, as are the roads within the caravan park. However, the route from Lamberts Bay is a nasty dirt road that is definitely not suitable for an ordinary caravan.

**GPS** S31.75489 E18.22883

**Drive & Camp says** An evergreen caravan park any municipality can be proud of.

About half of the stands have manatoka trees that cast shade, and each has its own built-up braai with the number of the stand painted on it. Every two sites share a garbage bin, tap and power socket (blue caravan plug), but there are exceptions as some sites have domestic power sockets.

The private ablution facilities are similar to the A-block facilities and the single communal ablution block is maintained throughout.

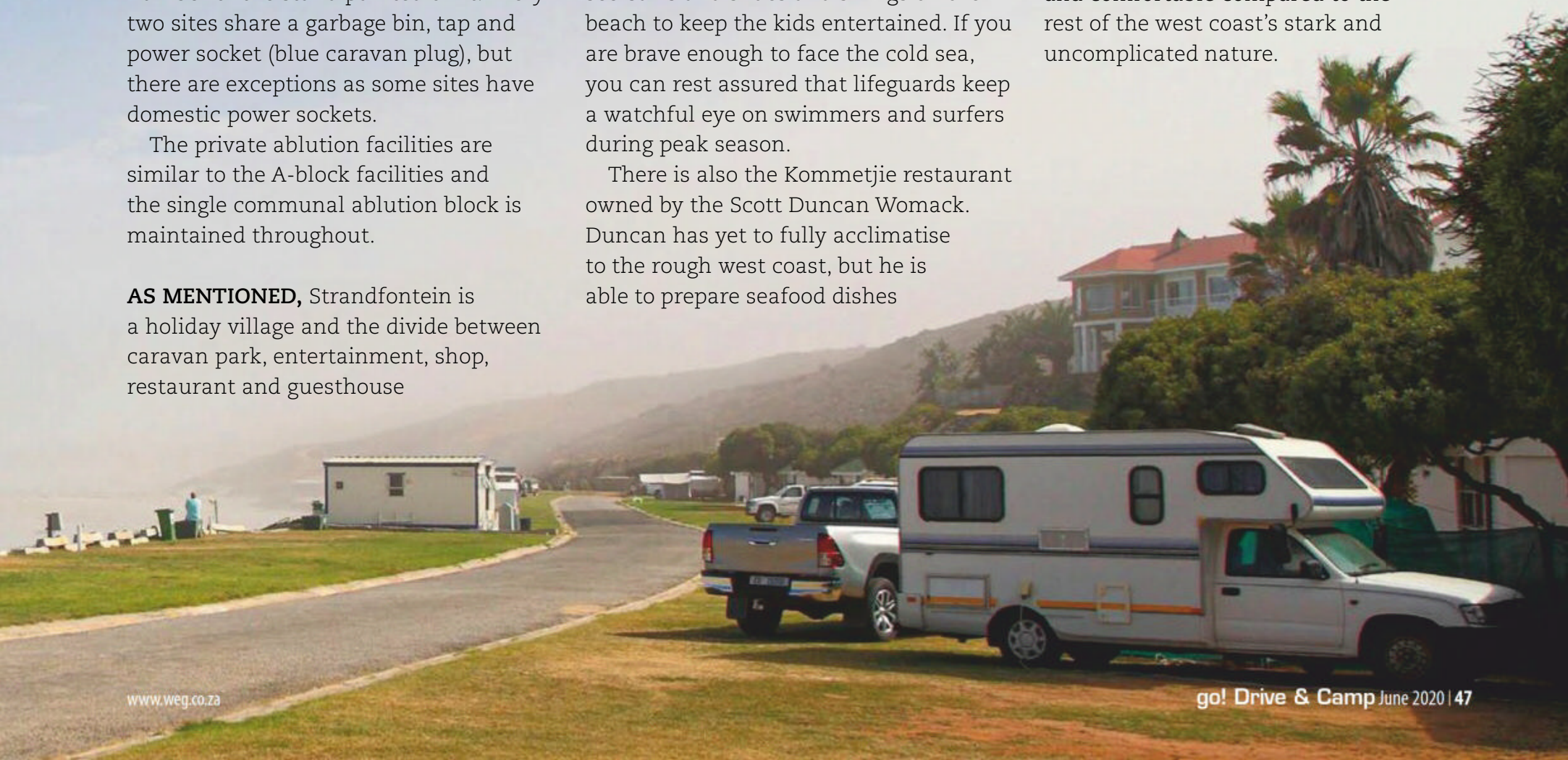
**AS MENTIONED,** Strandfontein is a holiday village and the divide between caravan park, entertainment, shop, restaurant and guesthouse

is blurred. Adjacent to the A block is a waterslide that runs during the summer months and there are also jungle gyms, see-saws and slides and swings on the beach to keep the kids entertained. If you are brave enough to face the cold sea, you can rest assured that lifeguards keep a watchful eye on swimmers and surfers during peak season.

There is also the Kommetjie restaurant owned by the Scott Duncan Womack. Duncan has yet to fully acclimatise to the rough west coast, but he is able to prepare seafood dishes

that impresses even the locals.

Strandfontein is a great campsite, even if it feels a little too cultured and comfortable compared to the rest of the west coast's stark and uncomplicated nature.





## HONDEKLIP BAY CARAVAN PARK

### Calling off the dogs

Some people say Hondeklip Bay is not a part of the West Coast, but rather part of the Namaqualand coast. This may be true geographically, but culturally it has more in common with distant Doring Bay than nearby Kamieskroon.

Hondeklip Bay's caravan park is officially called the Kamiesberg Municipal Campground, but nobody uses the full title. It is certainly not a popular campsite and in eight visits to the town over a period of 19 years we have only seen people other than ourselves camp here on one occasion.

If you ask the internet about Hondeklip Bay's campsite, you will probably be discouraged to camp here, not necessarily because of bad experiences, but simply because the place creates a poor first impression. The typical response from prospective campers is to give the place just one glance and then go elsewhere. However, we discovered this is an overreaction.

Admittedly, as you drive through the gate – which hangs skew because one of its hinges is gone – you may cringe at what lies before you. An uneven and barren square of gravel awaits, and around this scorched earth is a hip-height, unplastered concrete brick wall. It hardly conjures up a sense of security, but during our visit we experienced no crime. A late afternoon visitor – who had been crooking his elbow a few times too often – did try to strike up a slurred conversation but he later left when it

finally dawned on him that he wasn't going to be invited to tonight's braai.

In the middle of the campsite is a solitary ablution block that seems as if it has known better days. One shudders at the thought of what it looks like on the inside, but you will be pleasantly surprised at the conditions.

**THE FLOOR OF THE ABLUTION BLOCK** has neat gray tiles and everything is spotless. The shower room is spacious – there's plenty of room to get undressed without your elbows smacking against a wall – and most importantly; hot water shoots out of the shower head. The toilet cubicle has a basin, and the toilet flushes





without fuss when you pull the lever. There are three more basins, but none of them have mirrors and so you will need to bring your own to brush your hair or shave. It's not equal to your own bathroom at home, but it's good enough that you won't have second thoughts about using it.

Not a single tree grows outside on the campgrounds. The only lifeform is a tuft of grass near an outside sink that relies on the generosity of infrequent strangers to splash a little water on it.

Against the wall, about 15 m apart, are 12 stands, all with garbage bins and a braai. Every two stands share a power point with domestic sockets. However, a few sockets have been corroded by the

salty sea air and those that still work will determine where your tent goes.

It's a barren landscape, and no lawn, palm tree or garden tries to hide this fact. You can see the wreck of the Jaheel from your stand, a fishing boat that ran aground in the cove in 2003. Hondeklip Bay's lighthouse flashes its warning signal at night, but every seaman knows that the west coast's hunger for ships is not even close to being satiated.

There are few activities within the town itself. You can jog or pedal your bike to a boulder that resembles a dog, hence the name of the place. And 3 km south of town there is the wreck of the Aristeia. Not much remains of this ship; only the boiler and bits of the hull, a sad

## Briefly | Hondeklip Bay



**Campsite** 12 stands on hard ground.

**Ablution facilities** 1 ablution block that is neat and clean.

**Price** On request.

**Arrival and departure** 10:00 and 10:00.

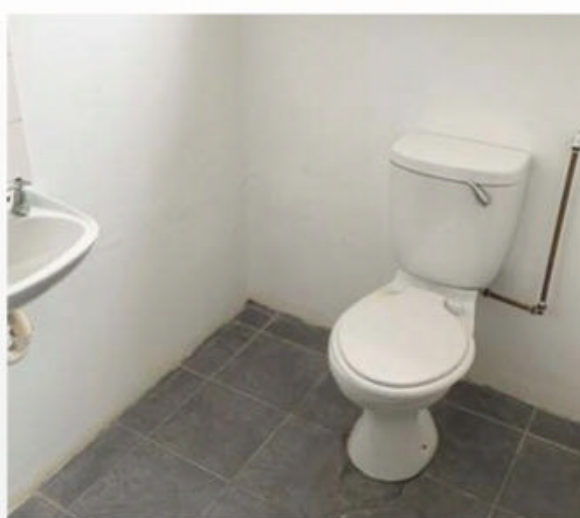
**Contact** 027 692 3066 064 311 5389 (Coreté Peterson) [kamiesberg.gov.za](mailto:kamiesberg.gov.za)

**Nearest town** Hondeklipbaai.

**Road condition** From any direction it goes to dirt road Hondeklipbaai. The best road comes from Garies, but even those are not suitable for a caravan.

**GPS** S30.31510 E17.27647

**Drive & Camp says** We can't imagine anyone camping here for weeks, but one night is totally fine.



UNPRETENTIOUS. Hondeklip Bay's campgrounds may not look like much, but the ablution block is a pleasant surprise. The town is known for a true west coast experience.

end to a brave vessel that served as a mine sweeper during World War II.

You can snorkel here, but do introduce yourself to the diamond boat crews first, lest they mistake you for a smuggler going after 'their' diamonds.

The main attraction near Hondeklip Bay is the Namaqua National Park. Hondeklip Bay's caravan park may be bone-dry, but only a short drive away is the wonder of the Namaqua wildflower season.





## CAMPING DESTINATION

### MCDUGALLS BAY CARAVAN PARK

#### Tide is high but I'm holdin' on

This caravan park lies along a narrow strip against a beach and it is the northernmost campsite on the west coast. The campsite is managed by the Richtersveld Municipality, based in Port Nolloth. After driving through an arch of the main entrance, you follow a lane of palm trees to a security booth. The guard directs you to an office where you sign in. Adjacent to the office is a row of holiday flats with views of the caravan park and the sea beyond.

The stands are laid out in two rows with one row on the beach and the other a little farther away with their back to the flats. Every two stands share a garbage bin and are divided by a manatoka hedge for privacy and protection against the wind. Each stand has its own built-up braai and power point with domestic sockets. Water taps are spaced randomly

throughout the campsite, but you are always within a stone's throw from the nearest one.

The caravan park is fenced with chicken wire to keep out bad guys, but during our visit it hung slack with occasional breaks in it. There have been incidents of theft in the past and management assured us that by the time you read this article, the fence will have been replaced with a proper pallisade fence similar to the one in Lamberts Bay. There's a night watch who patrols the campsite frequently.

We've divided into three sections: the left, middle and right.

**AS YOU ENTER** the caravan park, you will encounter the left section first. Stands 1-5 lie to the left of the entrance gate against the road that brought you here. Number 1 is closest to the main entrance while number 5 is located next to a kitchen,



laundry room and a public toilet.

Stands 6-22 lie on the beach with a clear view of the ocean. However, the resort management warns that the high tide often floods these stands. This was true during our visit and we could see kelp lying on some of these stands.

Stands 23-38 lie farther back from the sea, with their backs toward the flats and the access road in the caravan park. These are the better stands in our opinion, unless you are dead set on camping next to the beach. If so, keep an eye on the tide and be prepared to wash your caravan's axle and wheels with fresh water after the sea retreats.

The left section has two ablution facilities; block A and B. We were the only guests and the staff gave us a key for block A. There is a men's and women's

**SANDY BAY.** Bring a ground sheet or you will walk sand into your tent. The ablution blocks are clean, but they are by no means perfect. You'll barely notice the shortcomings when the place is packed, though.



“

The resort management warns that the high tide often floods these stands. This was true during our visit

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side of which the men have one bathroom and three showers, a urinal, and washbasins with mirrors and toilets.

The women's side is similar except that there are five toilets. It's clean but well used, and some of the basins were damaged at the time of our visit. The showers also need a good scrubbing, because the grout between the tiles looked a bit suspect. Block B has laundry facilities consisting of eight cement sinks and four metal sinks. The color scheme of brick red and baby blue dates back to the seventies, and although the facilities were probably also built in that century, it is clean, functional, but certainly old-fashioned. (Should you visit McDougalls Bay out of season, management will ask you to pitch your tent on stands 1-38 and use ablution block A.)

The middle section is where you'll find stands 39-60. These are laid out between two roads, and 39-49 – which are closest to the sea – are therefore sheltered from high tide by one of these roads. Stands 50-60 lie back to back with the front row and every four stands are separated by a manatoka hedge.

We would suggest that larger groups of friends camp here so that they can take up four stands, and thanks to the roads on either side of the stands, it is easy to get your car out from the cluster of tents and caravans. The middle section is served by ablution block C which is also closed out of season.

The farthest corner of the caravan park, the right-hand section, is the best. Here stands 61-78 face the sea, but they are elevated high enough above the beach so

that the tide never floods your camp.

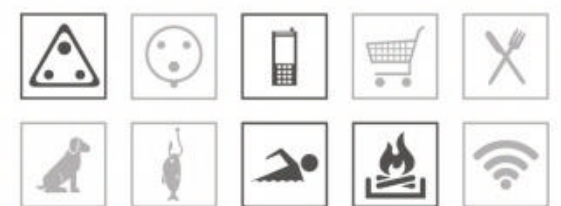
Stands 79-94 have their backs against – but lower than – the road that brought you here. The right-hand section has access to two ablution facilities, blocks D and E.

**THERE'S A LOT TO DO** in and around nearby Port Nolloth. The town has fuel stations and a supermarket and therefore it's an excellent starting point if you are heading to the Richtersveld National Park and the Namaqua 4x4 Eco Trail that winds through the Richtersveld all the way to Pella in the Bushmanland. You'll find workshops here that will service your car as well as tyre dealers, panel beaters and metal shops that can fix nearly any problem with your vehicle.

The lighthouse at Port Nolloth is the most northwesternly in South Africa – and so is the harbour. Visit Anita's tavern in town for delicious seafood.

Now you can honestly say you know the entire western coast, and not just the West Coast.

## Briefly | McDougalls Bay



**Campsite** 100 stands, all on hard sand and no shade.

**Ablution facilities** 5 clean ablution blocks ranging from old to quite nice.

**Price** R180 pd out of season and R247 in peak season. Pensioners receive a 30% discount.

**Arrival and departure** 10am and 10am.

**Contact** 027 851 1110

caravanpark@richtersveld.gov.za

**Nearest town** Port Nolloth, 4 km.

**Road condition** Tarred up to the gate and hard sand inside the caravan park.

**GPS** S29.28281 E16.88039

**Drive & Camp says** It is quintessentially west coast. It may feel lonely here out of season, but it's obvious that this place rocks during the peak season. 🏕️



# The Bushveld

The Abba Game Lodge in the Bushveld is a campsite with a special kind of charm. It definitely belongs on your list of places to visit.

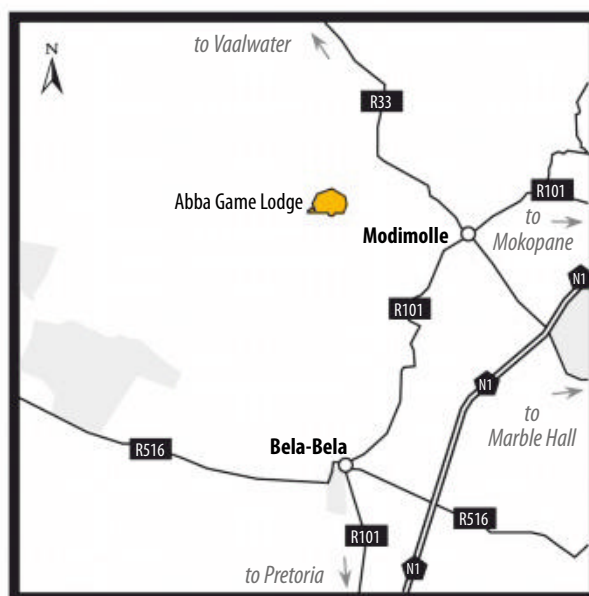
Words and photos **Leon Botha**

**N**ext time the Bushveld bug bites, you have a wide variety of choices of where to go: from lion country to busy resorts with hot springs. There's something for everyone.

The Abba Game Lodge is located just past Modimolle, in a part of the world you could surely call the nerve centre of game farms. Here you don't only get to breathe in that absolute bliss of silence, but you will also see a number of wild animals – even herds of impala and springbok who wander through the stands. In addition, there is a warm-water pool and a putt-putt course, and some stands have their own bathrooms.

If you leave home shortly after lunch on a Friday afternoon, your braai fire will be lit before dusk falls, and you and your family can prepare yourselves for a peaceful Bushveld weekend.

**THERE ARE** a number of campsites around Modimolle. With most of them, you have to drive a section of dirt road. That's true of Abba as well, though you won't easily find a better one. It is not difficult to get find the turn-off to

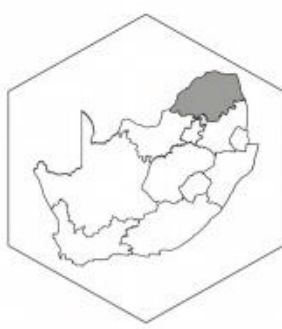


this dirt road. If you're on the R33 to Vaalwater, be on the lookout just outside the town for the famous Weesgerus resort next to the road. The first turn-off to the left after Weesgerus is the gravel road to Donkerpoort and the Abba Game Lodge.

The gravel road is an 11 km stretch, but it is properly maintained and is mostly solid red sand that looks like the Kalahari's sand. Even if you have a caravan that's actually not built for gravel roads, you can tow it on that road. Just take it easy.







# is beckoning







As you walk into reception to complete your paperwork, Carlo, the lodge's yellow and blue macaw, greets you with a friendly "Hello!" But watch out, he doesn't like having his head scratched by just anyone.

Carlo may have found a home here but, unfortunately, visitors are not allowed to bring pets because of the wild animals.

There's an administration fee of R50 payable on top of your camping fees, and while you're here, book a game drive as you're not allowed to drive around on your own in the game camp.

That lies on the other side of the ridge behind the stands, and here you

can see a whole host of wild animals: kudu, nyala, blue wildebeest, giraffe, waterbuck, blesbok, gemsbok, eland, zebra, red hartebeest and even ostrich, klipspringer and duiker.

But that's not the only place where you'll see wildlife. The impala are tame and walk around the stands – they seem not to be afraid of campers at all. Springbok also regularly walk along the path in front of the campsite, as if they're on patrol. The blesbok are more timid, but you still get close enough to them for a good photo.

**HERE AT ABBA**, you're far away from the usual hustle and bustle, and you can







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The roof is high enough for you to pull a medium-sized caravan in on one side and use the rest of the space to relax under

”



**BEAUTY OF THE BUSHVELD.** Over the last 10 km or so, you gradually say goodbye to tar roads as the bush beckons. The stands have lovely green grass that the resident springbok and impala also find irresistible, so don't be surprised when they come visit. If you want to see more wildlife, than you'll have to book a game drive.



also forget about cellphone signal. But you're not completely cut off from the world, because there's WiFi available at the office, restaurant, bar and the adjacent cold-water pool so you can contact family back home.

Across from reception, there's also a heated covered swimming pool in a thatched building with translucent plastic screens for walls.

The stands are 200 to 300 m past reception, and on the section in front of the campsite is a putt-putt course, trampoline and a concrete slab for washing caravans.

You can choose whether you want a stand with or without a thatched roof.

The ones with a roof (and paving underneath) cost around R100 per day more, but it's well worth the money: the roof is high enough for you to pull a medium-sized caravan in on one side and then use the rest of the space to relax under.

However, you can't pitch your caravan's rally tent under the roof. If you want to pitch that, have your caravan stand next to the the canopy – there is enough space. Your power point (three-point socket) is also under the roof.

There's also a light and a bin. Some also boast a concrete bench and table. Some distance from the thatched roof you have a fixed steel braai in the open





with a grid. There's also a tap where you can rinse your hands and get water for coffee.

The stands without cover are on grass, but shade trees are scarce. At these stands you also have a power point and a fixed steel braai.

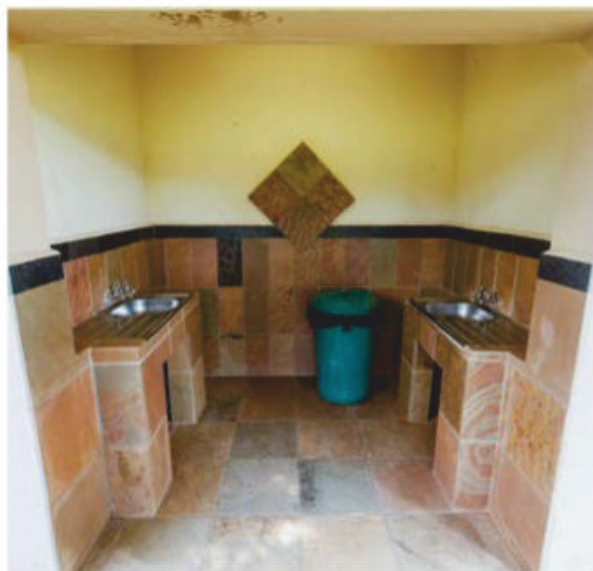
The six stands with their own bathroom facilities are the latest additions to Abba and are located at the farthest end. Your bathroom has a shower, toilet and basin, with another sink on the outside. There are no canopies, but you do have paving, regular power points and a built-in braai without a grid.

**THE THATCHED BATHROOMS** at the regular stands are roughly situated in the middle of that section.

As you walk into the bathroom, there are three sinks with mirrors on the right wall. The neatly tiled showers are

**PUTTERING ABOUT.** Apart from the swimming pool, you can also challenge family and friends to a round or two on the putt-putt course.





in a row next to each other, each with a curtain. Each shower also has two side panels with another curtain in the front so you can dress in privacy when you get out of the shower.

Inside the shower is a wire tray for your soap, but that's it in terms of space for toiletries. In-between the men's and

women's sides are private showers and bathrooms that everyone can use.

The dishwashing sinks are located at the corner of the bathroom building closest to the office.

Next to the bathrooms is an elongated thatched roof with some sinks and deep sinks for laundry.

**DOUBLE DOOR.** The shower stalls each have two doors, so that you have enough privacy. There are also family bathrooms ideal for parents to use with their children.

## Briefly | Abba Game Lodge



**Campsite** 15 stands with thatched roofs, and 12 without. The shade trees are scarce, but you have a braai and power point. The six private stands are on the one side with similar amenities.

**Ablution facilities** Neat bathrooms – for men and women, but also private bathrooms for everyone. Then there are private facilities at six sites.

**Price** Depending on the day, R250 or R350 pn for a stand without a lapa. The rate for one with a lapa (also the stands with private bathrooms) is R350 or R500 pn. Maximum six people per site.

**Arrival and departure** 14:00 and 11:00.

**Contact** 087 820 5298/9

reception@abbagame.co.za

abbagamelodge.co.za

**Nearest town** Modimolle, 16 km.

**Road condition** The last 11 km is a good dirt road.

**GPS** S24.68001 E28.27398

**Drive & Camp says** Bring all your groceries, as the shop only sells basic items such as bottled water, long-life milk, batteries and wood.



# Sand-driving for rookies

A mere 20 minutes outside of Cape Town there's a 4x4 trail that is perfect for off-road rookies and colleagues who want to host a team-building weekend.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

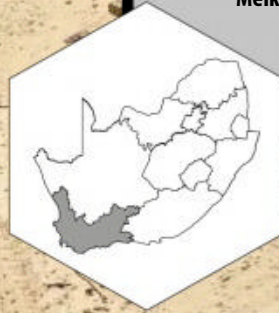
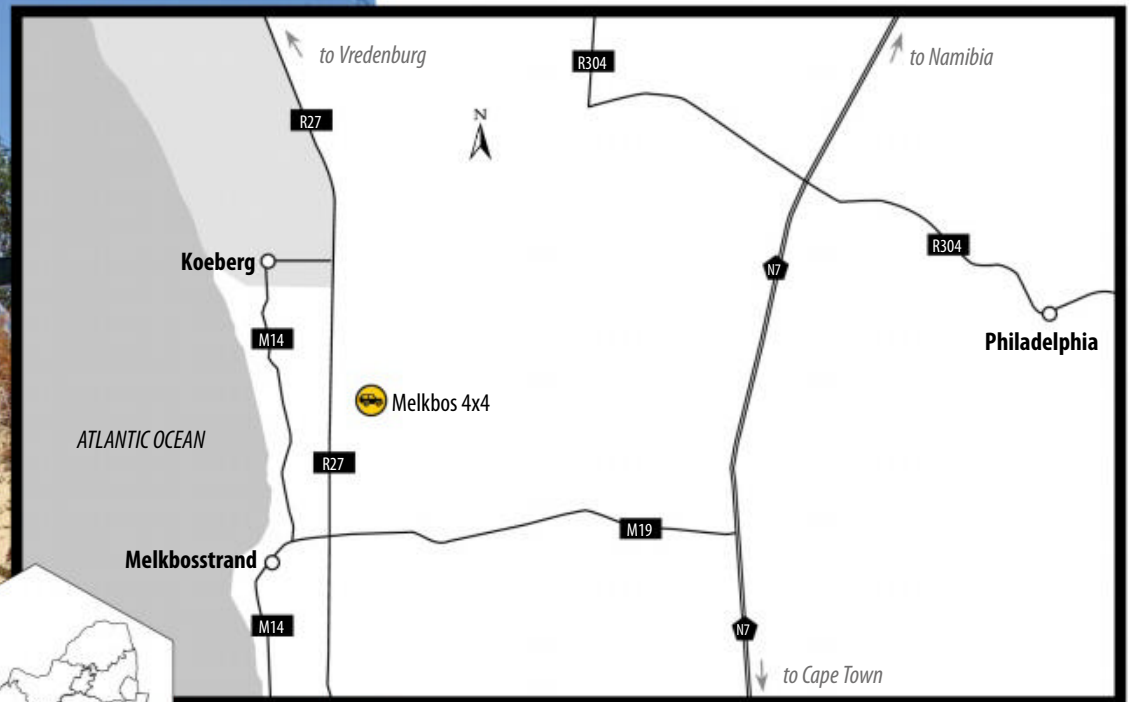
**T**he Melkbos 4x4 off-road trail is located on the farm Ogieskraal between the town Melkbosstrand and the Koeberg nuclear power station outside Cape Town. It is important to call the owners, Hendrik and Maretha van Helsdingen, before heading there, as corporate team building activities are sometimes underway and you won't be able to drive the trail. Car dealers also love to bring their customers here so that Joe Bloggs can see what his newly purchased SUV is capable of.

When you arrive, Hendrik or Maretha will

meet you at a lapa and ask whether you've done their 4x4 route before. If it's your first time, they'll sketch a rough map on a piece of paper to help you get orientated. They may also inspect your vehicle and make a recommendation on the correct tyre pressure.

The white beach sand that awaits you isn't deep, but it gets very loose on hot days. If you're part of a large group of vehicles, the sand is likely to be looser and the slow speed at which a convoy drives can cause someone to get stuck. Smaller groups – or if you're alone – shouldn't





struggle too much unless you have limited experience with driving in sand.

You start the route to the left of the lapa's parking lot. Look out for a sign with the name Bakgat on it – this is your starting point. Follow a narrow, sandy trail for the first kilometre, it winds through a Port Jackson thicket. If you drive a proper off-roader with the right tyres and air pressure, you won't need to engage low-range gears, but do stay in 4x4 mode, even if it's just to stop your wheels from damaging the trail. Some bends are particularly sharp and low range and diff locks will hinder steering.

After the first kilometre, the road forks repeatedly – keep aiming forward until the paths merge again. Eventually, after 1,5 km, you'll reach Melkbos 4x4's most challenging obstacle: the Helgat.

It consists of a series of mounds and dunes around a mud hole. During our visit, the mud





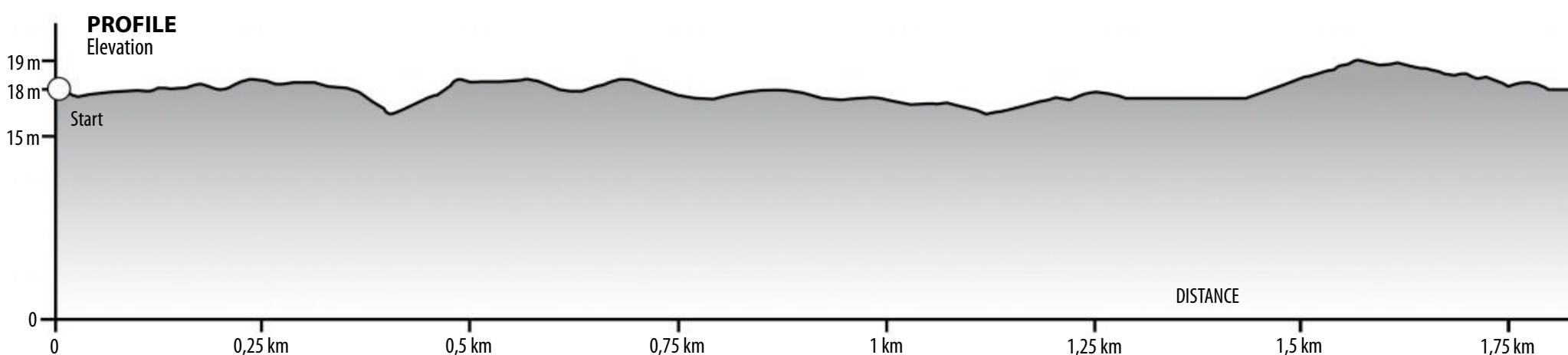
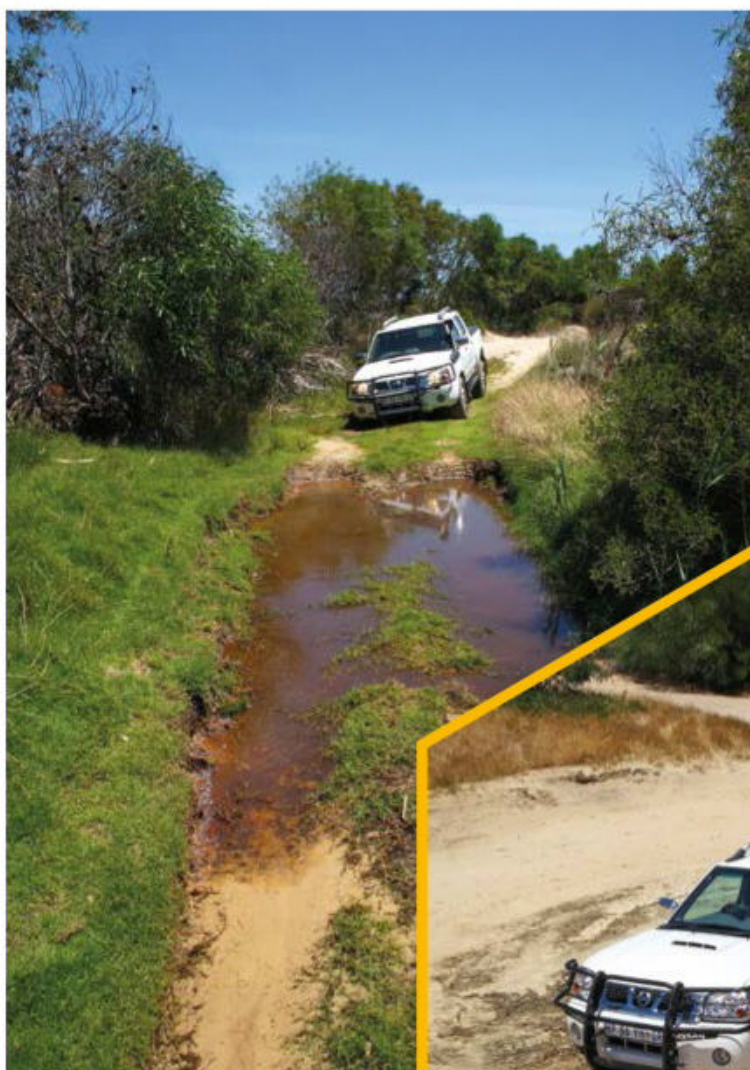
## TRAIL GUIDE

hole was dry and the mounds were the only challenge. But if it has rained recently, you should beware of the mud. If you do get stuck, someone will have to jerk you out, because a winch won't cut it here. The Port Jacksons are too flimsy to use as anchor points and your winch will pull a tree out by its roots. If this happens, throw the plant under your wheels for traction because they're alien invasives that deserve to be exterminated.

After playing in Helgat, it's time to return to the lapa. The route back isn't clearly marked, so follow the fence around the trail area until you come across the Soutrivier. The track runs through a number of waterholes – we strongly advise you not to drive through the water but rather around it. The water here is extremely brackish and will certainly lead to rust if you don't wash down your vehicle's chassis with tap water as soon as possible. Also, first walk through the pools – if you must drive through – because some may be deeper than the wading depth of your vehicle.

We assign a difficulty rating of 2 out of 5 to Melkbos 4x4, because you can manage with a soft-roader such as a Subaru Forester, but not with a two-wheel drive car. However, it is possible to make this more difficult for yourself by tackling the Helgat's obstacles from the 'wrong' side or by deliberately driving into the deeper bits of the mud hole. In that case, Melkbos 4x4 could get a possible rating of 4 on *Drive & Camp's* scale of difficulty.

Back at the lapa, you and your 4x4-club mates can light a fire and braai before returning home.





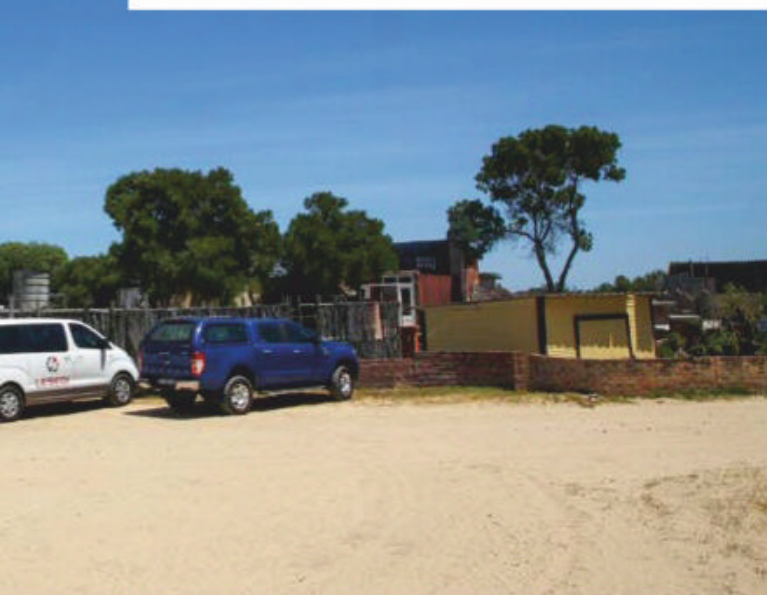


“

The water here is extremely brackish and will certainly lead to rust if you don't wash down your vehicle's chassis with tap water as soon as possible

”

**AFTER ACTION.** After playing on the trail you can head on over to the lapa (below) for a braai. Your mates might tease you for following the chicken signs, but this is a trail for learning and not really for competing against one another.



## What you need to know



### Maximum number of vehicles?

At the discretion of the owners.

**Do I get a map?** No.

**Will I scratch my vehicle?** Unlikely.

**Should I take a compressor?** Yes.

**Can I braai along the route?** No, but there are braai facilities at the lapa.

**Can I turn around halfway?** No, but there are escape routes.

**Is there a cellphone signal?** Yes.

**Best time to go?** All year round.

**Can I take my family along?** Sure.

**Just for the day or the weekend?** Just for a day.

**How long does it take?** At least an hour, but don't rush.

**Are there ablution facilities?** Yes, at the lapa.

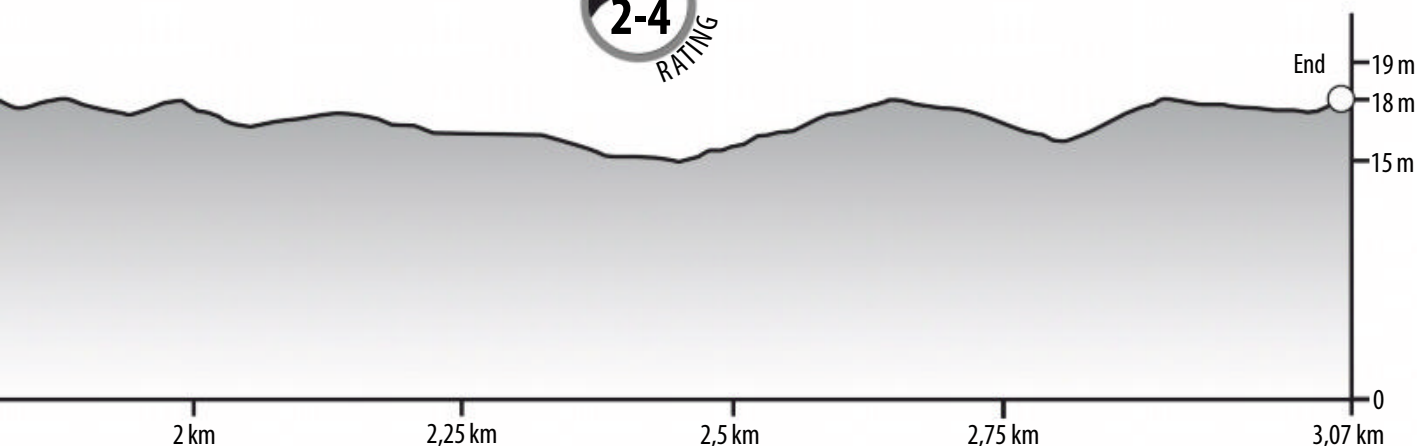
**Directions** From Cape Town, follow the West Coast Road (the R27) to the traffic lights of the Melkbosstrand turnoff. The entrance to Melkbos 4x4 is 3 km after the Melkbosstrand turn-off on the right-hand side of the R27.

**Price** R150 per vehicle. Discount can be arranged if you plan to bring your entire club here and make a day of it at the lapa.

**Contact** 083 489 1204

facebook/melkbos4x4

**GPS** S33.70121 E18.46600







# Cool off at Weesgerus

This camping spot just outside Modimolle sees them at least once a year, says **Geert de Jong** of Pretoria.

“Back when I bought our very first caravan, we immediately went camping at Weesgerus. Since then, we’ve camped there every year over the Easter weekend. I always book our spot for the next year before we leave, in fact.

## WHAT’S THE CAMPSITE ALL ABOUT?

There are more than 100 stands laid out in groups of 16 in circles with ablution facilities in the middle. You get a concrete braai and a grid, a power point, a tap and plenty of shade trees on your stand.

There’s not much grass around and the resort is busy paving a section of each stand. You’re in the Bushveld and you feel really close to Mother Nature, because the impala and guinea fowl walk unhurriedly among the stands and you also see loads of meerkats.

## ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE ABLUTION FACILITIES?

Weesgerus recently renovated all the ablution blocks and gave them new tiles, basins and urinals. The facilities are adequate

and are kept clean and tidy by contracted cleaners. Also, I’ve never had to queue for a shower.

Each ablution block has one family bathroom plus a washing machine. The dishwashing facilities are also there.

## WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES ARE ON OFFER?

This is a family resort in the true sense of the word. In the hotter months, the supertube is the biggest attraction, and then there are three outdoor pools (one for the little ones, a big cold-water one and another that’s heated) and a heated indoor pool.

There are also pedal cars and a mini golf course, plus a host of regular activities at the pool, including face painting for the kids or a competition for the adults to find the most impressive potbelly. It’s the kind of place where you can spend the whole day chilling at the pool, laughing and socialising.

## DOES THE RESORT HAVE A SHOP?

Yes, you can buy the basics here: wood, ice cream, bread, milk and sweets, for example.

There’s also a restaurant where we often have breakfast. It’s about R60 for a meal I don’t always manage to finish. You can also order a beer or other drinks at the restaurant and there’s is a kiosk with take-away meals, including hot chips.

## ANY OTHER ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS?

There are self-catering chalets that are also laid out in a circle formation – they sleep from two and six people each. ”



**Contact** 014 718 7100  
reservations@weesgerusoord.  
co.za weesgerus.co.za  
**GPS** S24.68001 E28.38571

**WIN**

**Geert wins a Camp Cover Bundu bag worth R400.**

Check out the superb range of protective covers on their website  
campcover.co.za

**CAMP COVER**





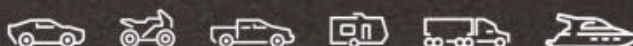
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# Peace of mind



He doesn't care that much about brand loyalty, says **Johan Buys** from Randburg. All he wants is his current ride to give him years of problem-free motoring.



**“** I drove a **2013 Mazda BT-50 3,2 4x4** for three years before trading it in with **105 000 km** on the clock. Where the economy allows, I try to drive a vehicle that still has an **active warranty and service plan**.

I knew that I'd get another double cab, because these vehicles are **great for towing** and have **lots of space** to pack extra camping gear. That being said, it would also have to have a **powerful engine** to lug that extra

load around. After shopping around and considering the likes of a brand-new Nissan Navara 2.3 (it seems not to be an attractive option for thieves), I eventually settled on a used **2015 Ford Ranger 3,2 TDCI 4x4 double cab** for **R385 000**.

This was three years ago and if my budget was unlimited at the moment, I'd get a **BMW X5 xDrive 40d**.

But I'm still quite happy with my Ranger though, as it has **loads of torque** at **470 Nm**,

and a peach of a **six-speed manual gearbox** with a direct ratio on the fifth gear. It also feels **solid on the road**, with or without a caravan hitched. It's an absolute pleasure to drive when it is loaded, and towing a caravan is never tiring. Some extra funds in my pocket would go toward a drawer system.

The only aspect that's somewhat irritating is that the standard factory warranty of four years is **too short for me**. I've only done **73 000 km** in three years of driving and





the vehicle is only five years old anyway.

Driving a double cab such as this can be cumbersome on a daily **basis because of its size**, so you need to **approach parking spaces with care**. The **large tyres and heavy-duty suspension** system also make for a hard ride, but that's a bakkie for you.

The Ranger's fuel consumption really depends on my speed. Without the caravan, at **100 km/h** it can dip as low as **8,5 ℓ/100 km**, but at the national speed limit it can get up to **between 10-11 ℓ/100 km**. While towing, I prefer to stick to a 100 km/h maximum and only when conditions are almost perfect or during overtaking manoeuvres will I exceed that. At the pumps this can result in anything between **13,5 ℓ/100 km and 15 ℓ/100 km**.

We used to tow a **1984 Jurgens Avion**, but replaced that just before the national lockdown with a **2015 Jurgens Penta in February**. Our favourite destinations are **Bosfontein Caravan Park** outside Bela-Bela and **Klein Paradys** in the Brits area. The **owners there are hands on**, and both resorts have **well-kept facilities and clean ablutions**. ”



**Show us your wheels**

Send an email to [drivecamp@gomag.co.za](mailto:drivecamp@gomag.co.za) and tell us about what's in your garage.

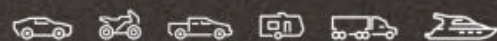
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# Easy does it

The wilderness area in the Baviaanskloof isn't for sissies. So it helps if you tackle it with the right team by your side, says Barry van der Berg from Bellville.

**W**hen you take into account its bad roads, steep passes, shallow bridges and deep water crossings, you'll understand why you're not allowed in the wilderness area of the Baviaanskloof in a regular sedan.

A recent visit from a group of Cape Town friends, however, posed no such problems. Two of them, Christo Muller and Pierre Wepener, each drove a Fortuner; Jan van der Westhuizen had his Subaru Forester; and Barry van der Berg did the trip in a Kia Sorento. Barry was the only one who was somewhat concerned about the trip, mainly because his Kia isn't exactly famous for its ground clearance. Plus, he'd heard that a recent flood in the area had caused great damage to the Baviaans.

The guys driving Fortuners simply smiled and reassured Barry that he had no cause for concern. Toyotas, apparently, are quite accustomed to rescuing Sorentos (and Land Rovers) from predicaments.





**ALWAYS TIME FOR A PHOTO.** When driving through the Baviaans it's highly recommended that you take the time to appreciate the surroundings. It's easier said than done when you're the one doing the driving, according to Barry, which is why he recommends that you stop occasionally to have a look around.



On this trip, Barry and his wife Georgene, would tow their Sherpa Tiny Rough Roader, which they christened Tenzing after the sherpa Tenzing Norgay who was the first to reach the summit of Mount Everest with Sir Edmund Hillary. Christo, his wife Nolan, and their son Chris would tow their Conqueror Supra off-road trailer, while Pierre and his wife Antjie, as well as Jan and his wife Mariette, planned to be camping in tents.

Pierre, however, decided to also acquire a Sherpa Tiny Rough Roader after an incident where he forgot the tent pegs at home. And so, the group of friends got ready for the exodus to the Eastern Cape. Barry tells us more...

**“** We left the Cape one winter's morning and, after a good breakfast at the Veldskoen road stall at De Doorns, drove over the impressive Seweweekspoort Pass to Oudtshoorn.

The Greater Swartberg ranks as one of my favourite mountain ranges in South Africa as it offers so much:

Seweweekspoort, Meiringspoort, the Swartberg Pass, Cango Caves, and Die Hell, or Gamkaskloof.

Our first night was spent camping at Oppidam. It is a fantastic resort in a beautiful valley halfway between Oudtshoorn and the Cango Caves. The stands are neat and each has its own private ablution facilities. Georgene was so impressed she insisted that we overnight here again on our way back to Cape Town. I didn't argue.

The next morning, we were off to the Baviaanskloof. On the N9 between Uniondale and Willowmore, we found a family stranded next to the road. The father asked if we could give him some cash, but I cut him short.

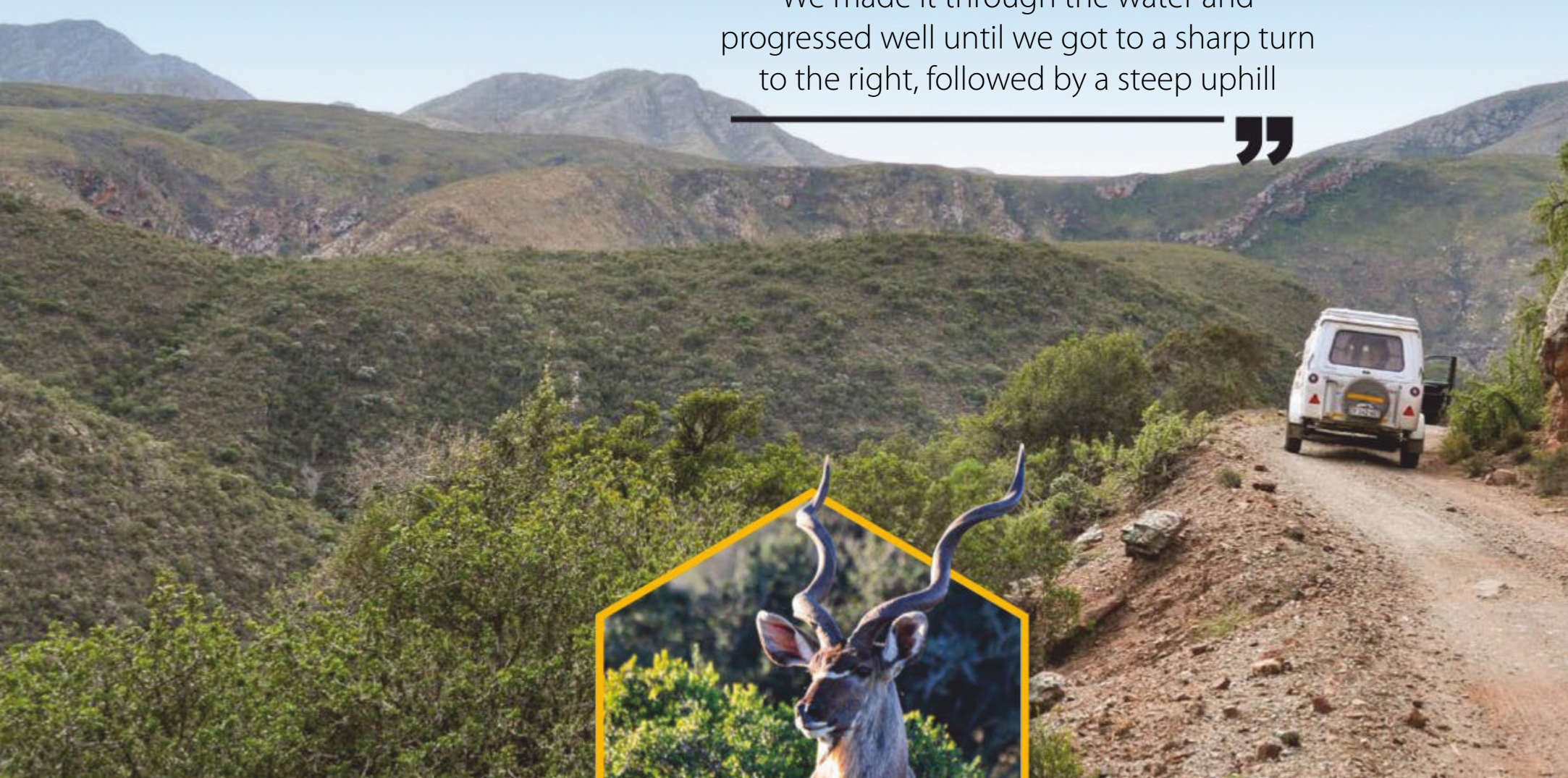
As we drove away, Georgene scolded me for not helping them – there were kids in the car after all. I reassured her that this family gets stranded a lot and all over: I've seen these same guys in Clanwilliam, Bellville and now here. Georgene remained sceptical... until we spotted them again 10 days later. And



“

We made it through the water and progressed well until we got to a sharp turn to the right, followed by a steep uphill

”



a week after that we spotted them in Durbanville... stranded again!

We approached the Baviaanskloof from the west and camped at Uitspan, a few kilometres from the Nuwekloof Pass. We may have been there for only one night, but the place would leave a lasting impression.

Much hilarity ensued while setting up camp. Our stand had a lapa with a built-in braai, dishwashing sink, power points and four plastic chairs. The chairs were stacked two by two, and I saw Christo, Chris, Pierre and Jan wrestling with the chairs to separate them. A few minutes (and some choice words) later,

Jan exclaimed: “Guys, check out the screws. My goodness, they’re screwed together!”

Uitspan is secluded with beautiful scenery and lovely stands. I really regretted that we could only spend one night here – and that the campsite isn’t closer to Cape Town.

**FINALLY THE DAY** dawned that I’d been so nervous about: we’d be travelling through the wilderness area. We left Uitspan and first stopped for a lovely cup of coffee at Vero’s coffee shop.

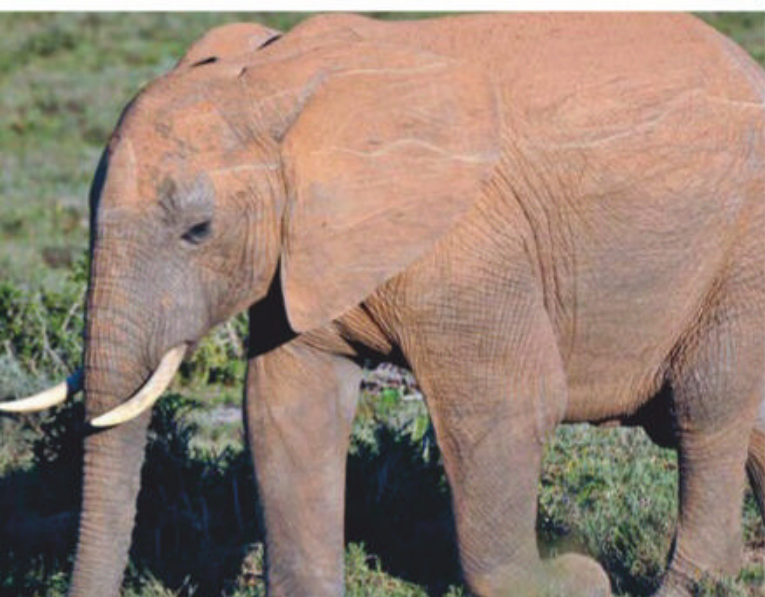
We only got to the wilderness area at 12:00. The gatekeeper warned us that the

road was bad and advised we shouldn’t tarry as the gate on the other side closed at 16:00.

We drove for quite a while before encountering our first water crossing. Pierre and Antjie headed up the convoy, followed by Christo, Nolan and Chris, then us, with Jan and Marriette bringing up the rear. I could see Pierre hesitating and then driving in a bit... and then he almost disappeared! He reversed and decided to approach the water on the right-hand side.

We followed him – the water was so deep, you couldn’t tell where the edge of the cement bridge stopped. I dared not





**ANIMALS EVERYWHERE.** After conquering the Baviaanskloof, the group of friends from the Cape travelled to Addo and the Mountain Zebra Park where they camped and saw even more game.



venture any farther to the right. The next moment we heard a bang: the Sorento's nose had fallen into a hole, and shortly thereafter we heard the sound of metal scraping on something solid. I pushed on through and wondered what the damage would be.

We made it through the water and progressed well until we got to a sharp turn to the right, followed by a steep uphill. The problem was a large ditch that ran across the road a few metres after the turn.

I took the turn wide enough so that Tenzing wouldn't topple over into the abyss, but the ditch caused the Sorento's





## READER STORY

one front wheel to lift up high in the air. That got the other three wheels spinning and we started sliding backwards. I tried again, but it didn't work and we slid back again.

Jan got out of his car to come and offer advice. He thought I should approach the ditch a little faster. I wasn't so sure about this, but did drive a little faster and hit the ditch at a wider angle, dangerously close to the rocks on the left. The plan worked, though, and we made it.

It felt as though the bad road would never end. When we got to Smitskraal, Pierre stopped and suggested we have a little picnic, as there were only 35 km left to get to the gate. But the others were reluctant. It was already 15:00 and we'd been driving at an average speed of about 15 km/h at that point. Pierre was sure the road would surely get better from there, but the majority ruled. Pierre's shoulders slumped as we pushed on.

He was indeed wrong... the road didn't improve. Some of the steep passes have twin cement tracks that certainly helped to get better traction, but the strips are narrow and in places dangerously high as the soil next to the cement had eroded.

In places it was difficult to keep all six wheels of our tow combination on these strips and I was constantly aware of the very real risk that one of us might crack an axle if we slid off the tracks.

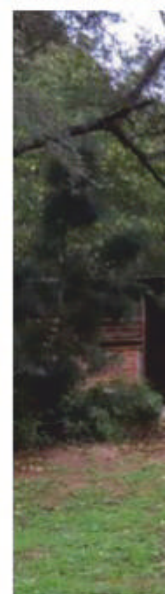
**WE ARRIVED** at the gate at 18:00. Two hours overdue, but the friendly woman at the gate opened it for us and I overheard her telling someone on the phone that the group with the caravans were safe and sound.

The wilderness area is stunning indeed, but even though we spent six hours there, I was concentrating so hard on the road that I couldn't really enjoy the scenery. I know Mariette, driving behind us with Jan, also didn't enjoy it much as she was intent on watching Tenzing and fearing that we would spill into the abyss.

Nolan was terrified and kept her head hidden in a pillow all the way. Jan asked her later what she would do if the Baviaanskloof was the only way back to Cape Town. "Then I'll fly back!"



**FRIENDS FOREVER.** The group of Capetonians travelled to the Eastern Cape to experience the best parts the province has to offer. Their biggest piece of advice is to take your time and not to rush through a landscape, especially not the Baviaanskloof Wilderness Area which deserves your special attention.







Christo thoroughly enjoyed the Baviaans again. He said it was beautiful, plus he enjoys driving where the conditions are those for which his Fortuner and off-road trailer were made. As for Chris, the Baviaans wasn't that bad either. He found it so tame that he could take pictures all the time and invent recipes for dinner. Chris was the unofficial photographer and chef on the trip, and it was a pleasure to tuck into his potjie or braai every night.

Afterwards, we all agreed our Baviaanskloof adventure was a highlight.



Although I wouldn't tell anyone to not do it, I do want to offer some advice: in my opinion, you

shouldn't be towing anything in the wilderness area. I also think it's a mistake to drive it in one day. It makes more sense to camp at least one night. Also, I would not recommend doing it with a soft-roader.

After a long day, we arrived at our campsite, Bruintjieskraal, in the dark. It was

only the next morning that we saw how beautiful the surroundings were. And then we had to hit the road early to reach Addo.



**WE SAW MANY** elephants and other animals in the two days we spent at Addo. The campsite was wonderful, although some complained about the trains running right past the campsite.

At the Domkrag lookout point we met a friendly couple from Port Alfred who were clearly big fans of SANParks. They just came here for the day and told us that they've done the Kruger National Park 36 times. Their best experience, however, was in the Kgalagadi, where a cheetah wandered around their vehicle for hours.



On our way from Addo to Hogsback, our next destination, we made a quick stop at Alicedale. Pierre and Antjie lived here as newlyweds and they wanted to take a look at their first home. This was a nostalgic visit for the couple, and Antjie was reduced to tears.

At Hogsback we spent two days at the Swallowtail Country Estate. Swallowtail has a decent campsite, good ablution facilities and a fantastic community hall named 'Trekkeers Lounge' by the owners, Fritz and Ansie Klaassen. There's an indoor braai and bar, and is the perfect place for campers to escape the cold.

As a kid, I lived in King Williams Town and came to Hogsback a few times. Hogsback is no longer the same, but I'm still hopeful – with a little effort, it can be revitalised. I enjoyed the visit and we met many colourful characters.

We also enjoyed the Hogsback Ale. It was at the Hogsback Inn, Hogsback Ale in hand, that Pierre and I discussed our Sherpas. Pierre was impressed with its maiden voyage. He thought it unlikely that he would ever venture on a worse road while towing, and the Sherpa passed the test with flying colours. It is lightweight, tows easily and the set up is effortless.

**NEXT UP WAS** the Mountain Zebra National Park – what a pleasant surprise! This was my first visit to the park, and after only two days it made my list of favourites. We enjoyed the campsite, ate delicious meals in the restaurant and drove around the park. And saw a huge amount of animals. The highlight was the night drive with the park's game-viewer, when I had my first ever aardwolf sighting.

How would I summarise this trip? The Eastern Cape is a wonderful holiday destination. It offers everything – from a handmade globe of rusty wire to an aardwolf on a night trip. What more could anyone ask for?



**Barry** wins a **Camp Cover Bundu Bag** worth R400. This multipurpose bag is so versatile that it could house lots of nifty first-aid items or double as a weekend case. Check out Camp Cover's range on their website [campcover.co.za](http://campcover.co.za).





# Between the bush and deep blue sea

At Dwesa on the Wild Coast, you camp in the green bush without modern amenities, while feasting every day – that's if you bring your fishing rod.



## DWESA NATURE RESERVE

### A FISH A DAY

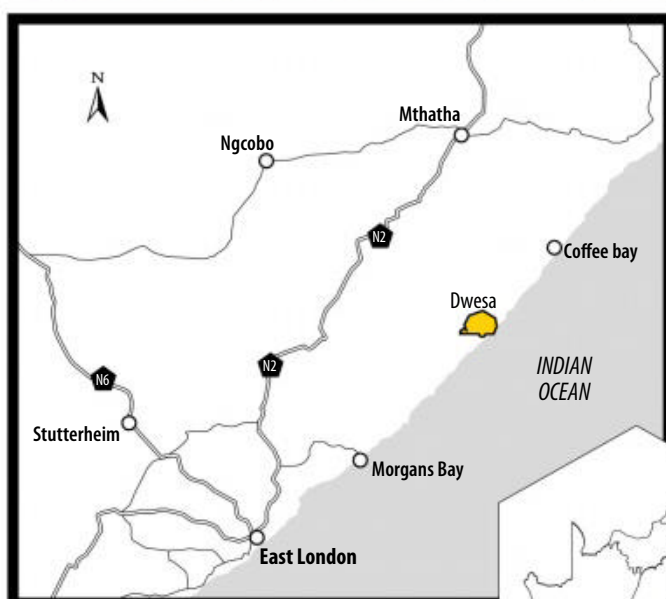
The campsite is laid out in the shape of a clover leaf in the thick bush near the sea. The stands also have a lovely lawn.

The group of campsites on the left of the campsite, laid out in a row next to each other, gives you the most privacy. Towards the middle, stands are in a circle (next to an open patch of grass). From these stands, a suspension bridge runs across a stream to the other camping section on a grassy plain with trees all around. Some of these stands are in the open and the rest all under the trees.

The bathrooms are next to the middle stands and a short walk from the other stands. So, if you camp in the middle, you have to make peace with the bathroom traffic. On the right-hand side of the campsite is a wooden building with eco-friendly toilets – they're for when you don't want to walk all the way over the suspension bridge across the stream to the bathroom.

You get a newly built brick braai, but you need to bring your own grid. The braai has a side for you and one for your neighbour. The taps are hidden in the bushes and officials say it is safe to drink the water. Bring your own basin to wash your dishes, there's no dishwashing spot here.

The beach access is just before you enter the campsite – about 500 m after the office. Because Dwesa is part of a marine protected area, you aren't allowed to fish just anywhere. Three zones are specifically earmarked for this: one is off the beach in the southern part, and then two zones in the northern part.



You obviously need to have a fishing permit. In each of the zones, up to six anglers are allowed per day, but not more than 12 in total.

Fishing is also allowed only from 7:00 to 16:00 and you may not fish for more than four hours at a time. You could hook a cob, bronze bream, elf, mullet, strepie, grunter, galjoen, Cape stumpnose, blue stingray or Scotsman, but always keep your eye on the time.





## Briefly | Dwesa Nature Reserve



**Fish** Cob, bronze bream, elf, mullet, strepie, grunter, galjoen, Cape stumpnose, blue stingray, Scotsman.

**Campsite** 40 numbered stands on grass and with shade. Most of them have a braai, but no electricity.

**Ablution facilities** Basic and old.

**Price** Depending on the season, R244 or R265 p/n per site (maximum 6 people per site).

**Arrival and departure** 14:00 and 10:00.

**Gate hours** 06:00 to 22:00.

**Contact** 043 492 0881

visiteasterncape.co.za/parks/dwesa/

info@ecpta.co.za

**Nearest large town** Idutywa, 78 km.

**Road condition** The last 47 km is a rocky dirt road with bad and steep sections. You can't tow with a front-wheel drive vehicle here.

**GPS** S32.310088 E28.827139

**Drive & Camp says** The catch-and-release rule applies. You may keep one fish per day, but don't try and leave the reserve with the fish. This also applies to your quota for a total of four days per month.



## WHOLE TROUT BRAAIED IN NEWSPAPER Fish parcel

Fresh trout has an unbelievable aroma and taste. This recipe is ideal for those lucky enough to catch their own. Braai the fish on a campfire right then and there.

### Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 1 whole rainbow trout, about 1,2-1,5 kg
- olive oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 250 ml fresh mixed herbs (such as fennel, parsley, chives and sweet basil), chopped
- 2 lemons, sliced thinly
- 1 bunch spring onions, chopped
- 30 ml fennel seeds, bruised
- 60 ml butter, cubed

### Here's how

**1 Gut** the fish but don't remove the head, tail or skin. Scrape out all the innards, rinse well and pat dry with paper towels.

**2 Place** the trout in the centre of two large sheets of baking paper. Rub the trout with olive oil, inside and out, season with salt and pepper and then fill the stomach cavity with half the chopped herbs. Fold the fish closed and place the lemon slices on top, followed by the spring onions, fennel seeds and remaining herbs. Then dot the fish with butter and wrap it in the baking paper.

**3 Soak** newspaper thoroughly under a tap

and then wrap the fish in three layers of it. The newspaper must be completely wet or it will catch alight over the fire.

**4 Bind** the parcel with twine to hold it together. Then make a bed of moderate coals, place the parcel on top and completely cover with another layer of coals. Keep a separate fire going to add more coals if necessary. The trout will take about 35 minutes to cook, depending on the heat of the coals and the size of the fish. The fish is done once the newspaper starts to brown.

**5 Cut** the twine, open the newspaper and serve immediately.

**Drive & Camp says** Trout should never be overcooked – the flesh must be moist, firm and easy to flake. Remember, trout is at its best cooked as soon as possible after being caught.



### FISH DISH



## FISHING GEAR

### Three for one

Surf angling is synonymous with resorts on the coast, but because these rods are usually so long, they're not that easy to transport. Some of them, however, consist of three sections that fit together to form a rod. This makes for easy packing for your sea vacation.

Adrenaline's ADR-X Samaki surf rod is one such example, and it is available in two lengths: 12'8" and 13'8". Because the rods each consist of three sections, the loose pieces are 1,29 m and 1,39 m long respectively. These rods work well for cob and gully sharks, among others – and you won't struggle to pull a giant of between 40 and 50 kg from the water.

The rod itself has an HMG rating of 36 t – HMG stands for 'high modulus graphite' and refers to the density of the rod's graphite content, says Gerhard Terblanche of Adrenalin. Usually a rod's rating is around 24 t, but it can also be 30 t, 36 t or 40 t. The higher the number, the lighter the rod, but it becomes more brittle.

The rod also comes with high-quality SeaGuide K guides and an EVA non-slip grip.

The rod is made for coffee grinder reels.

**Price** From R2 350 at fishing shops in South Africa and Namibia, this includes a bag.

**Contact** Adrenalin Importers & Distributors (importers)

021 982 1510

catches@4adrenalin.co.za

adrenalinfishing.co.za

**ADR-X Samaki**





# French flair

The always quirky Citroën has returned to South Africa after going quiet on us three years ago. Here's its refreshing take on a compact SUV, the C5 Aircross.

Words and photos **Kyle Kock**



When Citroën announced its return to South Africa late last year, it did so with a revised line-up that they hoped would appeal to trends followed by the buying public in recent times, with a B-segment hatchback and two small SUVs.

The range-topping C5 Aircross, based on Peugeot's 5008, carries much of the company's hopes in a segment that's still growing in popularity and commands a healthy section of the market. The badge is derived from the C5 sedan that we last saw doing battle against other large family sedans –

a vehicle that came with all the bells and whistles. This is a good omen because the compact SUV market is also hotly contested right now, and this model represents the best the brand has to offer.

## Left-field looks

The C5 Aircross continues the rounded rectangle looks that we first saw ushered in by the Cactus models a few years ago. Viewed from along its profile, the C5 Aircross doesn't clearly follow the conventional two-box styling cue that's normally associated with vehicles in this category. Sure,





**CITROËN C5 AIRCROSS**

it's not as bulbous as the C3 Picasso MPV from a decade ago, but it does manage to mould its nose softly with the passenger compartment, without looking like a blob on stilts.

Other radical elements in the design include split headlamps on either side of the dual-layer grille. The upper section consists of LED daytime running slits that are outlined by the chromed trim that forms an extension of the brand's double chevron logo. The lower tier houses the larger low and high beams, on either side of the

gloss black section of the grille.

On the range-topping Shine test model, the lower far corners of the front bumper feature the first of the soft rectangle cues, with faux brake vents outlined in contrasting paint – in this case bright red against the charcoal exterior hue. This element can also be found on the front of the side sills, with a red strip peeking out underneath the roof rails. At the rear, the theme is continued in the four rectangular LEDs clustered inside a larger rectangle on either side of the tailgate.

The look is completed with thin tailpipes in satin silver finish.

#### **What's underneath it all**

Like many other manufacturers, Citroën's gone the route of downsizing, but not as small as some of its rivals. The company makes use of a 1,6 l four-cylinder turbopetrol motor that puts out a respectable 121 kW and 240 Nm – figures that place it slap bang in the middle of the rivals listed here. The maximum power output is up on some, but then the torque figure is lagging by some 25 Nm.

And while some of its contemporaries have opted to go the route of fancy dual clutch transmissions, the C5 Aircross makes use of a simple six-speed automatic to send drive to the front wheels. The combination is a seamless affair, and the ECU has been tweaked to provide for a surprisingly responsive throttle when you flex your right foot.

There's an option to swap cogs manually too, by pressing the M button on the shift knob and then up or down via the paddles mounted on the steering wheel.



### Driving dynamics

Overall, the acceleration is impressively urgent, especially when you're in a hurry, but you'll pay a penalty at the pumps if you're an impatient driver. We couldn't match the manufacturer's fuel consumption claim, getting to the office and back home just before the national lockdown and registering low nines on the trip computer.

Leave the auto box to make up its tin mind mid-nines is achievable when you feather the throttle. Despite being a little slow to shift when you pull on one of the paddles, the transmission is silky smooth.

Citroëns have always been revered for their ride quality and the C5 Aircross is no different. It uses what the company calls progressive hydraulic cushions on the shock absorbers in all four corners that help keep the suspension supple when you're on the rough stuff. That, combined with the chunky 55 profile 18" tyres, means you

won't put out your back on the bumpiest of gravel roads.

But the suspension system does its best work on tarmac, where it smoothens road imperfections and dips with aplomb. The soft setup does mean that there's considerable amount of body roll, when braking and cornering a little harder than usual, which doesn't help when the steering is light enough to take a turn using just your fingers. Drive sensibly, though, and the C5 Aircross cossets you and your loved ones.

### Innovative interior

Inside, the C5 Aircross feels roomier than its contemporaries thanks to a massive panoramic roof, split into two sections, with the front being a tilt-and-slide sunroof. If the African sun gets too much for you, then you can always slide the electric sunshade forward, which dims the interior somewhat.

There's a mix of soft touch surfaces and harder panels but overall the tactile quality is



impressive. The brushed metallic and gloss black trim contrast the cabin's two-tone grey finish and even the seats are two tone in colour and fabric – they're comfy and offer good support.

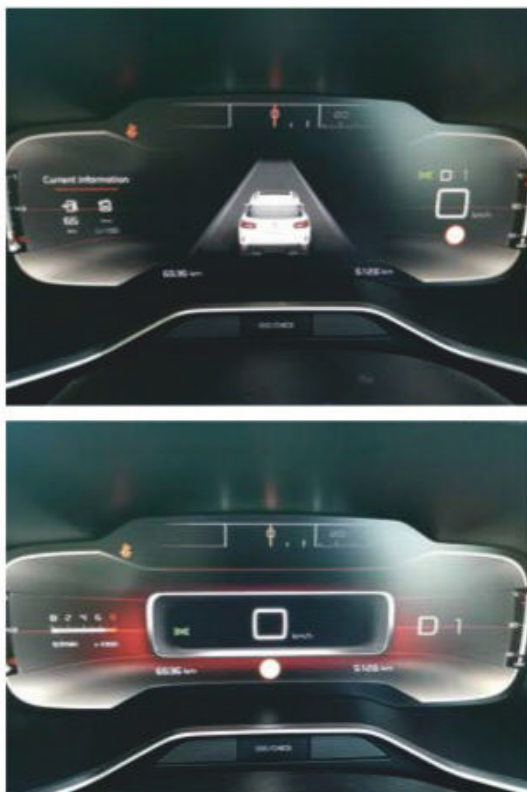
Of course, it's not as straightforward as that, and you'll notice the lack of button clutter. This is because you control the

ventilation, audio and vehicle information systems from the 8" touch screen that takes pride of place centre fascia, save for the audio volume, windscreen demister, air recirculation, rear demister, ventilation off and vehicle door lock switches.

Sliding into the driver's seat, you'll also notice that there's 12







**SPACE AGE.** The C5 Aircross boasts plenty of room inside, perceived and actual – thanks to the massive panoramic glass roof and a rear row of seats that can slide and recline individually. You're greeted by blank screens when you get in, because along with the 8" infotainment screen, the instrument cluster is also digital and can be customised to your liking.

inches of non-existent instrumentation behind the wheel. That's because you need to press the start button to activate the ignition and turn on the digital instrument screen. Even this can be configured to suit your taste, showing just the essentials like speed and fuel level, or giving you all the vehicle information if you so choose.

There's a massive storage compartment with a light between the front passengers, which means that you will no longer misplace your wallet or phone, plus a wireless charging panel large enough for a small tablet just ahead of the shift lever, as well as rear seats that slide and recline individually to allow maximum leg room and comfort for the rear occupants. The boot is also quite spacious, with more than enough room for five people's luggage.

### Conclusion

Like most of the models in the marque's history, the Citroën C5 Aircross is somewhat divisive. Judging by the lack of second glances and long stares that Citroëns used to command, it seems that the revised model line-up (in South Africa at least), blends in with the majority of vehicles already on our roads, while offering just a little bit of individuality so that its occupants stand out from the crowd.

We don't think Citroën ever expected to sell massive volumes upon its return to this country, but it has offered prospective buyers a solid, well-specified, non-conforming alternative to the segment best-sellers, backed up by an earnest and impressive after-sales support promise (well, on paper, at least).

### SPECIFICATIONS

|                                        |                                      |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Engine</b> .....                    | 1 598 cc, four-cylinder, turbopetrol |
| <b>Power</b> .....                     | 121 kW @ 6 000 rpm                   |
| <b>Torque</b> .....                    | 240 Nm @ 1 400 rpm                   |
| <b>Transmission</b> .....              | 6-speed automatic                    |
| <b>Top speed</b> .....                 | 189 km/h                             |
| <b>Acceleration (0-100 km/h)</b> ..... | 10,5 s                               |
| <b>Fuel consumption</b> .....          | 7,9 l/100 km                         |
| <b>Tank</b> .....                      | 53 l                                 |
| <b>Luggage capacity</b> .....          | 520 l                                |
| <b>Tyres</b> .....                     | 235/55 R18                           |
| <b>Ground clearance</b> .....          | 230 mm                               |
| <b>Safety rating</b> .....             | ★★★★ (EuroNCAP, 2019)                |
| <b>Service plan</b> .....              | 5 years/100 000 km                   |
| <b>Warranty</b> .....                  | 5 years/100 000 km                   |
| <b>PRICE</b> .....                     | R514 900                             |



### Competitors Compact SUVs with style



**R 449 800** **Volkswagen Tiguan** **250 Nm**  
**Trendline 1.4 TSI DSG**

One of the more popular compact SUVs currently for sale in SA, but with a similar powertrain to the Citroën only comes in this entry level spec. You'll have to spec it up considerably to match its rivals, for a price of course.



**R560 642** **Volvo XC40 T3** **265 Nm**  
**Geartronic Momentum**

Unmistakably cool, the XC40 is also the most expensive model featured here, but you'll not have to spend a cent more. It's the least offensive in the looks department and the cabin is a study in minimalism.



**R517 800** **Mazda CX-5 2.0** **213 Nm**  
**Individual 6AT FWD**

Instead of downsizing with forced induction, Mazda's opted to continue developing normally aspirated petrol engines. In this trim package, you'll want for nothing, and dynamically the CX-5 is quite a rewarding drive as well.

“ Citroëns have always been revered for their ride quality and the C5 Aircross is no different ”





# Snug in a Spider

It's designed for two people, but the GT Camper Spider is not at all cramped – there's plenty of room to camp comfortably.

Words and photos **Helenus Kruger**

**Y**ou can't miss a GT Camper off-road trailer: that lid on the hull that flips open and turns into the tent's floor is truly unique – and because the tent folds back up inside the trailer, the trailer has a low profile that is about the same as the height of your bakkie's load bin. They suffer virtually no wind resistance and are not only easier to tow, but are also lighter on fuel. And, what's more, there's plenty of room

on top of the trailer's lid for camping gear or the kids' bikes without it sticking out too far above your vehicle's roof.

The first model this Pretoria manufacturer made was the Libra, and the Spider is the smaller version. At first glance, the two look identical, and they are the same width and length. But look closely and you'll see the Spider's hull is lower than that of the Libra. The side with the

kitchen also looks somewhat different.

Elmien Fitchet, co-owner of the business with her husband, JM, says the Spider is aimed at couples who don't want to lug unnecessary camping gear around.

So they put the Libra on a diet: the two drawers under the Libra's bed were removed and the kitchen was scaled down. All this amounts to the Spider weighing 27 kg less than the Libra.





GT CAMPER SPIDER

### Set it up

The Spider's tent opens in exactly the same way as that of the Libra.

If you packed stuff on top of the trailer's lid, you'll need to unpack first before you can start setting up. Next, lower the trailer's nose so that it slopes forward: this ensures that the floor's adjustable footrests don't push into the ground until it is horizontal.

Now, walk to the back and release the clips that attach the spare wheel to the frame.

Now swing the frame over to the right-hand side of the trailer, but don't attach it yet as that could damage the gas struts that help lift the lid.

Next you loosen the four clips that hold the lid in place – one at the front and at the back by each corner

and start lifting the lid from the front of the trailer. Although the two gas struts at the back make it so it can be lifted by one person, it is so much better if you have help.

Walk all the way to the back of the trailer and swing the lid open until it is on the ground. Now lift the nose until the trailer is level and adjust the corner steadies, if necessary, so the tent floor is also level.

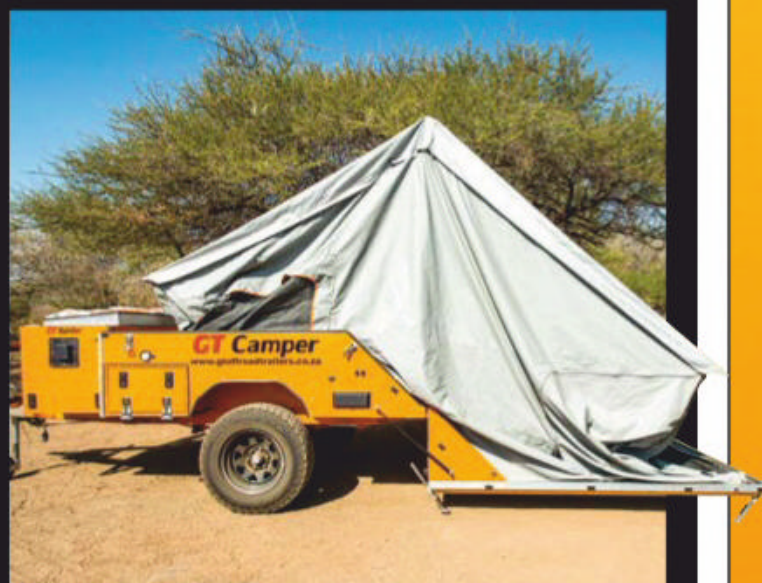
To pitch the tent, you must climb onto the bed inside and push the frame – one of three – to the front until it clicks into place.

Now do the same with the frame at the back of the tent (the middle frame is already in place). You can now pitch the tent's side, front and back, and then walk right around the

trailer and attach the Velcro on the sides of the tent to the hull and the tent floor.

When it's time to pack up, a second person is needed to help fold over the lid and to make sure the tent isn't caught somewhere between the lid and the hull.

To make things easier both ways, install a pulley system on the A-frame that will help pull up or lower the lid.







### Step inside

The inside of the tent with its high roof (2,5 m) and large floor (1,7 x 2,1 m) feels roomy. The solid floor, reinforced at the bottom with aluminium square tubing, has a heavy-duty covering that feels more like a caravan than a tent.

Inside, the tent is divided into two sections of equal size: the dressing area as you enter, and the bedroom to the left towards the front of the trailer. The dressing area has plenty of room to move around in and there is even room for a small chest or table to use as storage space. The doors on either side and to the back of the dressing room has flaps that can zip open fully – this is true of the mosquito net, too.

Use the fold-out step at the foot to climb into bed. The lid of the cupboard in which the poles are stored sits just above the step and is strong enough to serve as a second step – it even has a rubber cover so you don't slip.

You'll find the storage space in the cupboard under the bed, and you need to lift the bed base when you want to get to something in there. On either side of this space, just behind the wheel arches, there are two small holes for storing cables, extension cords and tent pegs.

The two deep-cycle batteries also sit here. The power box with a three- and a two-point plug, battery meter and switches for the lights, water pump and solar

panels is on the right-hand side of the foot of the bed – easy to reach if you want to charge your phone or check to see how much is left in the battery.

The bed (2 x 1,52 m) boasts a king-sized high-density foam mattress and covers the entire width of the trailer. On both sides of the bed and at the head are windows with mosquito nets – these can also zip open. The skylight allows airflow, but the roof will banish any thoughts of stargazing from the bed.

Between the mattress and the wall is a narrow space where you can place a book and cellphone. You can decide whether the LED at the top of the middle frame should be yellow or red.







### Along the front

The jockey wheel, handbrake, power plug for the lights and a Brad Harrison connector for recharging the battery are all on the A-frame.

A shade net inside an aluminium frame keeps the stones away from the trailer's body. The two gas cylinders (permanently connected) sit between the frame and the nose cone, and are therefore also protected.

The trailer's nose chest (61 x 140 cm) is mounted in front of the hull on the A-frame. On the right-hand side of the trailer, the nose chest has

a pull-out drawer with space for two ammo crates for your food supplies. The fridge's pull-out drawer is to the left of the nose chest, next to the kitchen.

The drawer is large enough to fit a 90 l fridge, and you can plug the fridge into a Hella or a Brad Harrison connector.

On top of the nose chest is a shallow aluminium bowl in which you can pack two ammo crates or items such as wood and groundsheets. Six eyes thread the straps with which you tie everything.







## At home in the kitchen

The kitchen is on the left-hand side of the trailer and the pull-out kitchen unit (42 x 112 cm) sits just to the right of the nose chest.

Your cutlery fits neatly into a canvas bag that's attached to the inside of the unit's lid. There's also cut-out that fits the plates, mugs, glasses and pans, and there's room for a braai tong, spatula and serving spoons.

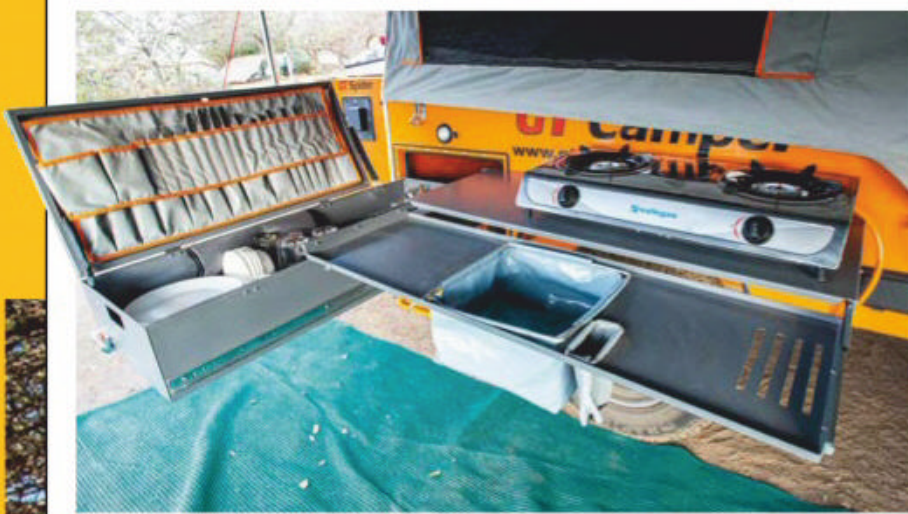
The hot and cold tap is on the side of this unit closest to the trailer and has a connector similar to that of a garden tap. The 90 l water tank is made of stainless steel and mounted under the trailer.

The tank has an ordinary gravity-operated copper tap in case the trailer's battery is flat and the pump doesn't work.

A round LED directly above the kitchen unit provides light and to the right of the kitchen unit are two clips on the side of the trailer where a narrow tabletop (42 x 111 cm) hooks in. The test model's two-plate gas stove took up almost all the space on here; so you'll need to use the kitchen unit as an extra work surface.

A frame with space for a dishwashing basin pulls out from under the table top. On either side of the sink, there's space for dirty and clean dishes.

The kitchen has no storage space, which means you have to store your tabletop, the stove and extra pots and pans in the cupboard under the bed. To the right of the table are two Hella and three 220 V power points.



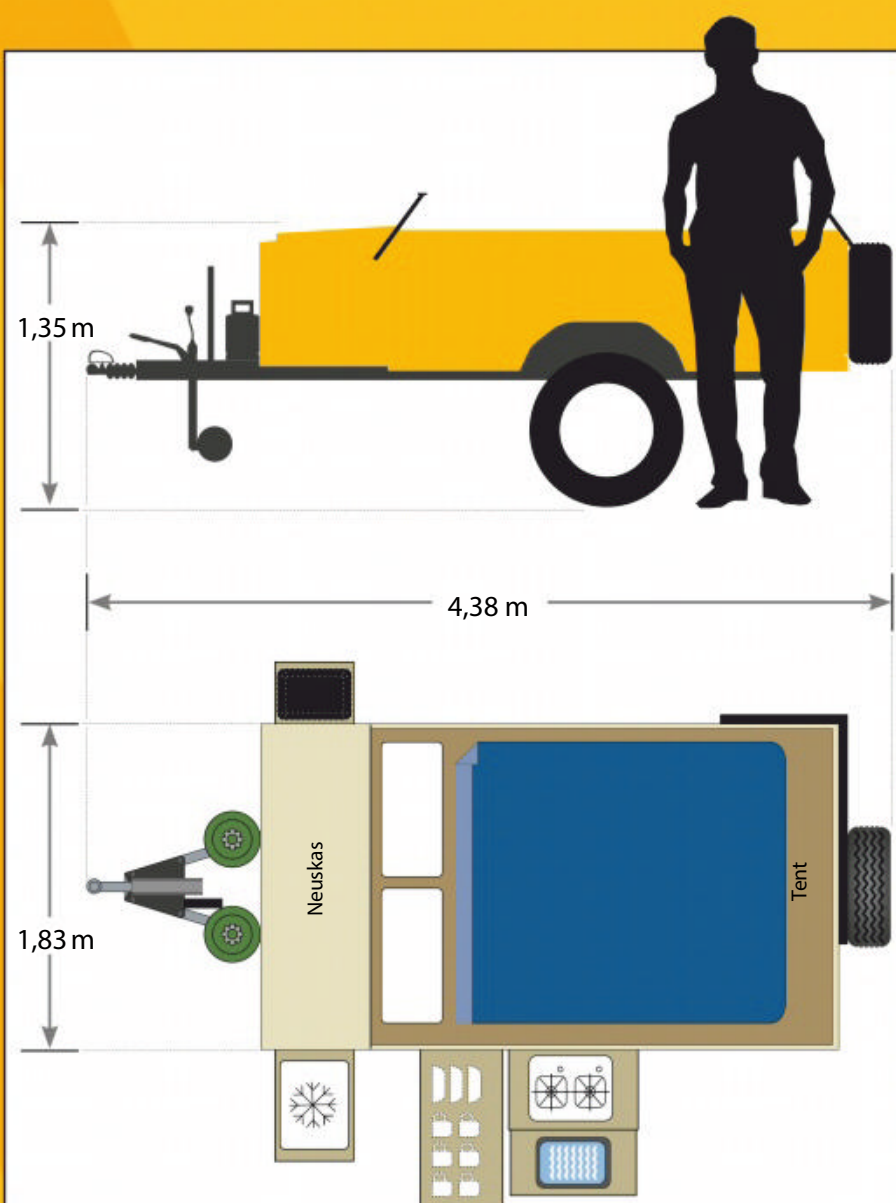




### On the other side

The geyser sits to the left of the nose and its switch is just behind a small hatch. On the far left, behind the axle, you'll find the water tank's inlet, a water-level gauge and

a power point where you can connect a 220 V three-point plug and Brad Harrison connector. The spare wheel's frame is also clipped here when it's swung open.



### The technical stuff

**Nose weight** 58 kg  
**Length** 4,38 m  
**Width** 1,83 m  
**Height** 1,35 m  
**Track width** 1,58 m  
**Net weight** (basic caravan) 603 kg  
**Loading capacity** 897 kg  
**GVM** 1 500 kg  
**Price** R244 727 as tested (several optional extras available)

- The LED in the kitchen doesn't shine directly on the worktops.

**Drive & Camp says** You don't need to take the gas cylinder out to cook as the connector to the gas line is under the trailer next to the kitchen. Simply connect the stove's gas line and it's ready, steady, cook!



Plus

- It's easy to get onto the bed.
- The solid floor gives the spacious tent a luxurious feel.
- With its low profile, it tows easily.



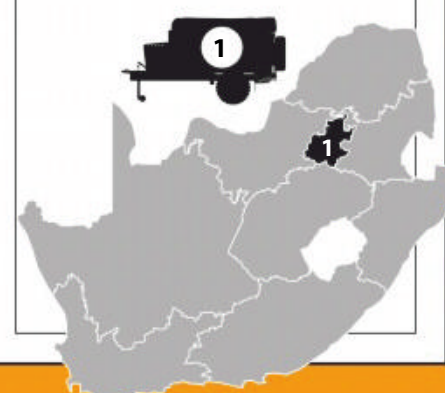
Minus

- There's not much storage space.
- The kitchen table is quite small.

### Dealer network

GT Camper is based in Pretoria.

**Contact** 012 770 3633  
 061 461 8543 sales@gtoffroadtrailers.co.za  
 gtoffroadtrailers.co.za





# Towing tips

We asked some seasoned caravanners what their top five tips would be for nervous newbies before they start towing.



**Y**ou've just bought your first caravan and you're ready to hitch it to your vehicle and hit the road. Your first towing experience can be intimidating, especially as you don't know exactly what to expect.

The good news is that the more you tow and the

more confidence you gain, the better you get at it. It is simply one of those things in life you just have to do for the first time.

We asked our Facebook friends to share the wisdom they've gained after years of towing, and everyone seems to agree that rookies will cope a lot better if they apply these five tips.

“

Remember you're on holiday. Take it easy and you'll get there safely. – **Leroy Venter**

”



## 1 Get your papers in order

First off, ensure you have the correct driver's license to tow a caravan. For anything heavier than 750 kg you need an extra E, an EB or EC1, for example. This is needed for most road and off-road caravans, though manufacturers are starting to make their products lighter

and there are a number of models you can tow with a regular Code B license. Also, remember that your caravan's gross vehicle mass (GVM) may not exceed the towing vehicle's tare weight.

*“Make sure your driver's license is valid and that it allows you to tow.” – Douw Bodenstein*





## 2 Check your tyres

Your caravan doesn't cover as much distance as your car, which is why it's easy to forget about the tyres. Remember, however, that tyres do expire and can become unsafe (it can also give your insurance an excuse not to pay should you be involved in an accident). If your tyres have expired, no matter how good the tread looks, it's time to replace them. Rotate your caravan's wheels at least once a month and pay attention to

tyre pressures when towing – use the recommendation noted on the sidewall. The heavier your caravan, the closer to the allowed maximum tyre pressure you should be. Check your vehicle's tyre pressure too. The rear tyre pressure, in particular, should be the same as – or higher than – your caravan's tyres.

*"Remember to check the brakes and make sure they're working 100% before you leave home."*  
– Ernie Deyzel



## 3 Control the sway

The best way to stop your caravan from swaying, or snaking, when towing is to pack it correctly and make sure you've got the weight distribution right. The secret of packing a caravan is to remember that weight in the nose is stability weight and weight in the tail is swaying weight. Pack too much into the back and you're going to get a pendulum effect. Load heavier items from the axle forward, keeping your nose weight to around 70 kg.

The closer you get to the 100 kg limit, the better.

Modern vehicles are equipped with anti-sway technology, but if you're using an older vehicle, you can buy a stabiliser.

And if your caravan starts to sway badly, pulling your car around? Reduce speed and try to get it under control. What you shouldn't do is to gear down, step on the accelerator or brake hard, as this exacerbates the matter.

*"Pay attention to weight distribution – not only in your caravan, but also your towing vehicle. Make sure everything is secure so it can't shift around in transit."* – Johan Nel



## 4 What's the hurry?

Common sense is hopefully already telling you not to speed when towing a caravan. All that extra weight behind you significantly increases your stopping distance, which increases the chance of an accident happening. Some manufacturers even limit the

towing speed of new vehicles to 80-100 km/h, regardless of whether you're allowed to drive faster. Just because the sign shows 120 km/h, it's not necessarily a good idea to do it with a caravan.

*"Don't rush. Tow at speeds you're comfortable with."*  
– Leon Vermeulen



## 5 Remember to remember

The most important element to remember is that you have to always be aware of your caravan when towing. Check your mirrors constantly – by the way, you only need towing mirrors if you can't see past the caravan using your car's mirrors. In most cases, this only applies to road caravans, as most off-road trailers are narrower than your car.

Furthermore, you simply must stay in your lane. Yes,

take the turns a little wider, but there is no need to turn so widely that you end up in the other lane. Also, bear in mind the length of your tow combination when overtaking another vehicle.

*"Pay attention to your caravan while driving. Note how your towing vehicle behaves around bends, when braking and going up- and downhill. First drive on tar, and be even more alert when towing on a dirt road."*

– Fanie Gerber



# In a manner of camping

What tent peg is used for which job? How do you secure your tent properly? What should you consider when choosing your wild camp? Here are the answers.

Words **Cyril Kloppe**

If you think you can simply jog into a wholesaler, grab the first tent you fancy and join experienced campers on equal footing, you may be in for a rude awakening.

We've bent our fair share of tent pegs over the years and so we emptied out

our tent peg bag to see if we had the correct equipment.

We reflect on the hard lessons we've learnt about where not to pitch a tent, and we share wisdom acquired from seasoned campers on how best to pitch your home away from home.







## TYPES OF PEGS

A brand-new tent usually comes with just one type of tent peg, two at the most, but did you know there are multiple types for different camping situations? Here are the 12 most common pegs – taken from a surprisingly long list.

### Straight peg

The disadvantage of a straight wire peg is that it bends easily when the ground is rock hard. You need to hammer it down at an angle of between 30° and 45° with the hooked bit pointing away from your tent; otherwise the wind will pull it out. It's advisable to use two pegs at each rope-end and hammer them into the ground at divergent angles.

### Aluminium peg

An aluminium peg is, in terms of weight, superior to a wire peg. For this reason, it is popular among hikers who carry all their gear in a backpack, with every gram adding to the load. Some aluminium pegs bend easily while others shatter upon meeting bedrock. Steer clear unless you're a hiker.

### Plastic peg

This type of peg also weighs less than a wire peg, but their main reason for being is to save money. Plastic pegs don't last long when camping in truly inhospitable terrain. They are, however, perfectly acceptable when camping in your back yard on a manicured lawn.

### Spring-loaded peg

Also called a Max-Peg, it's the creation of industrious South African Connie Kruger of Maxcons. It's basically a steel pin with a coiled spring between the peg's hook and the tent's guy rope. The spring acts as a shock absorber that prevents the wind from extracting a peg or ripping the tent's canvas.

### Anchor peg

Also known as an L, elbow or a 7 peg, and as the name suggests, it is suitable for anchoring the corner posts of your tent. Hammer it at a 30° angle into the ground so that its upper section lies level to the ground and won't trip you up. After the spring-loaded peg, this is probably the best way to secure a tent.

### Nail peg

Sometimes the ground is simply too hard for a regular peg, and then a nail peg of high tensile steel, tungsten or titanium is the only way to go. Unlike the previous pegs, you should drive the peg straight down – the ground is hard enough to hold onto it, after all. Best of luck pulling it out again...

### Expanding peg

An expanding peg works like two straight pegs driven into the ground at divergent angles to each other. Squeeze the two shafts closer together with your hand (don't let them touch, though) so that the tips move farther apart as you hammer it into the ground at an angle.

### Spiral peg

None of the above pegs work particularly well in sand. For this, you need something like a corkscrew with a broad spiral. Screw this peg straight down, as deep as you can, and hopefully it will find wet sand to cling to. It certainly works better than a rope wrapped around a round river stone.





## Screw-in peg

This is a popular tent peg among campers who love gadgets – the Aussies, for example. The peg is made of hard polypropylene and you use a cordless drill to screw it into the ground. If the ground is rock solid, and your drill is powerful, you may end up shearing off the peg's head, but it works well in soft ground.



## Groundsheet peg

A groundsheet peg prevents your groundsheet from being flipped up by the wind, and keeps it down when teenagers drag their feet. Just like a nail peg, you hammer a groundsheet peg straight down so its head won't trip you. You can also use ordinary roofing screws, which are cheaper.



## Pole steady pins

Strong winds will often lift the roof of your tent, causing its poles to shift sideways and eventually drop out, causing your tent to collapse and you having to jump out of bed to salvage the situation. A pole steady needs to extend a few centimetres above the ground to hold a tent pole in place.



## Snow pegs

The average South African won't need this peg, but perhaps you know of a campsite where the snow is more than a metre deep. A snow peg is a flattened paddle with a loop close to its lower end so that a guy rope doesn't exert torque on the top of the peg, but rather the tip buried deepest in the snow.



## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SPOT

So, now you know which tent pegs you'll need, but do you know what campsites to avoid? Caravan parks have already done most of the thinking and marked out suitable stands, but if you're wild camping, there are a few considerations to bear in mind.

**Barking up the wrong tree** Many African trees have thorns, and you need to thoroughly inspect the ground under your chosen tree before you pitch a tent – this is why we don't like inflatable mattresses. Make sure no tree sap is going to drip onto your tent, as it's often difficult to remove, and also look out for bird nests as they could attract snakes.

Many years ago in Chobe, we camped under a marula

tree but had to evacuate when an elephant got upset because our tent was pitched below its favourite fruit. Lastly, you also need to think twice if you want to camp under a eucalyptus tree, because they're not called windowmakers in Australia for nothing. We nearly soiled our pants when a heavy eucalyptus branch unexpectedly crashed down next to our campsite in the Karoo one night.

**Big fun on the bayou** It's great that you can camp right next to a river – recently, we camped on a sandbank in the course of the Orange River and it was fantastic! (Cyril will tell us more about this in the next issue. – Ed) But first, find out about the weather conditions in the river's upper reaches. If,

for example, the Free State gets proper rain, the floodwaters will only reach the Richtersveld the following night – while you're sleeping under a cloudless starry sky, not suspecting a thing. Rivers that flow south and west are usually devoid of dangerous

creatures, while eastward rivers, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, are often home to crocodiles and hippos. Have you ever seen how quickly people evacuate a river when a 'tree stump' suddenly changes direction and swims closer? We have...





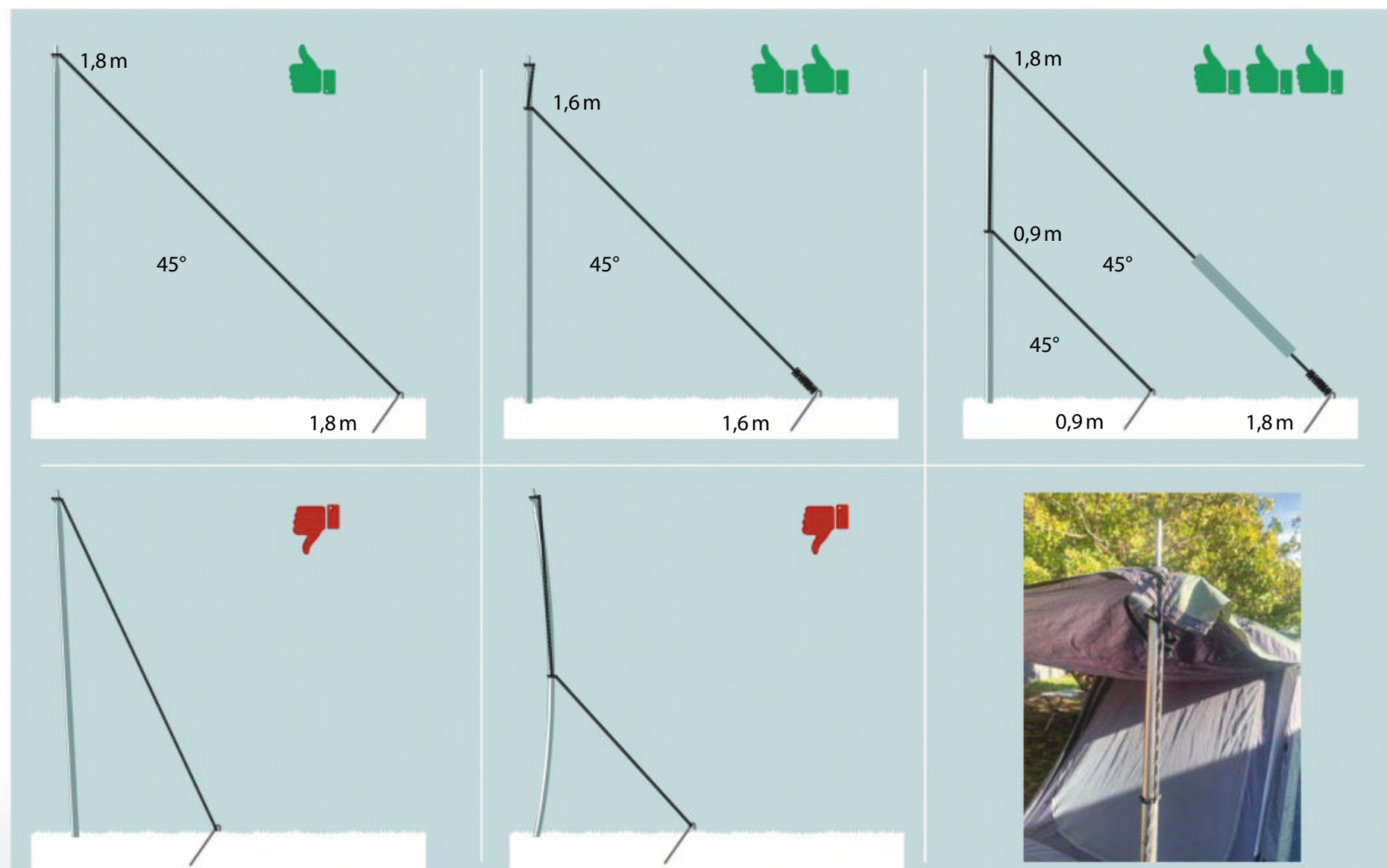
**How low can you go?** This seems obvious, but sloped ground can disturb your sleep. In addition to feeling like you're going to roll out of bed, you could wake up with a headache if your body had been lying higher than your head. If you have no choice but to camp on sloped ground, sleep with your head at the elevated end.

There are exceptions: we once slept on thin foam mattresses on Verneukpan in the Northern Cape, without a tent, sleeping bag or pillow, and it was really weird to lie that level – like sleeping on a billiard table.

**Social distancing** Don't be a chump and pitch your tent

right next to other campers if you are able to set up camp some distance away. They may snore terribly – or *you* could be the guilty one! Either way, you're probably going to annoy each other. Give your neighbour his space, unless the campsite is full of holidaymakers and there is no alternative.

We camped in the Kalahari and were the only visitors to a game reserve – or so we thought at first. Around dusk, a group of raucous campers moved in right next to us while dozens of empty stands were available farther away. What happened next is not worth repeating and we'd rather forget about the whole episode.



### PITCH LIKE A PRO

One of the strongest shapes in engineering is the equilateral triangle. A runner-up in terms of rigidity is the right-angled triangle. Think back to school maths and you'll remember Pythagoras. "In any right-angled triangle, the square of the length of the hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares of the lengths of the other two sides."

What Pythagoras says in terms of camping is that if a tent pole is 1,8 m long, you need to plant the tent peg 1,8 m from the base of the pole to create the strongest anchor point. You never expected to use the

Pythagorean theorem to pitch a tent, did you?

This, however, solves only one problem of pitching a tent, as a tent consists not only of rigid metal poles but also stretchy canvas and ropes that can confound the geometry.

In a strong wind, a tent will often lift and the poles will drop out. By first turning a guy rope around a pole before attaching it to an anchor peg, you're essentially attaching the pole to the tent so that it cannot fall out. Tie the rope near the top of the pole so you still have a large right-angled triangle for best support. If you tie it down near

the middle the pole might bend.

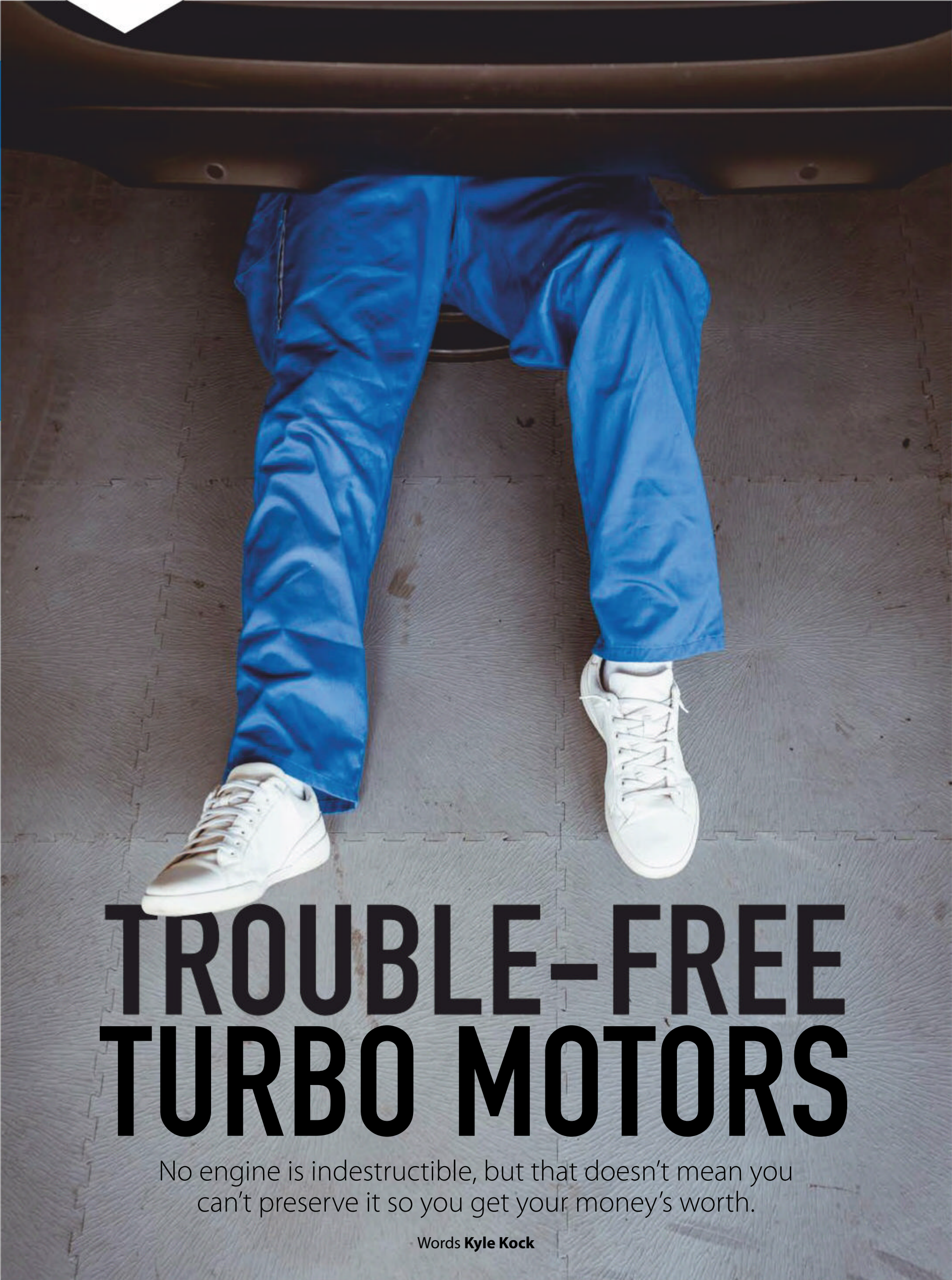
You receive full marks when you pitch your tent as follows: push the pole's tip through the tent roof's eyelet and use a pole steady pin to keep the pole's foot from sliding sideways. Tie the guy rope above the roof canvas to the tip of the pole, guide the rope down for about a hand-length and wrap it around this same pole. Estimate the distance from here to the ground and plant a spring-loaded peg about the same distance from the pole in the ground. Slip a pool noodle over the rope (so you don't get decapitated at night) and tighten the rope

at a 45° angle to the peg.

Another, even sturdier, technique is to use two ropes. Tie one rope to the pole's tip, guide it halfway down the pole and wrap it around the pole before running it at a 45° angle to a peg. Now take the second rope, also fasten it to the pole's tip, but run it directly at a 45° angle to its own anchor. This technique is used to anchor radio masts, so it's good enough for camping.

Yet another solution is to drape a cargo net over your tent and anchor it to the ground independently. Even Hurricane Edna won't be able to move your tent now. Happy camping!





# TROUBLE-FREE TURBO MOTORS

No engine is indestructible, but that doesn't mean you can't preserve it so you get your money's worth.

Words **Kyle Kock**

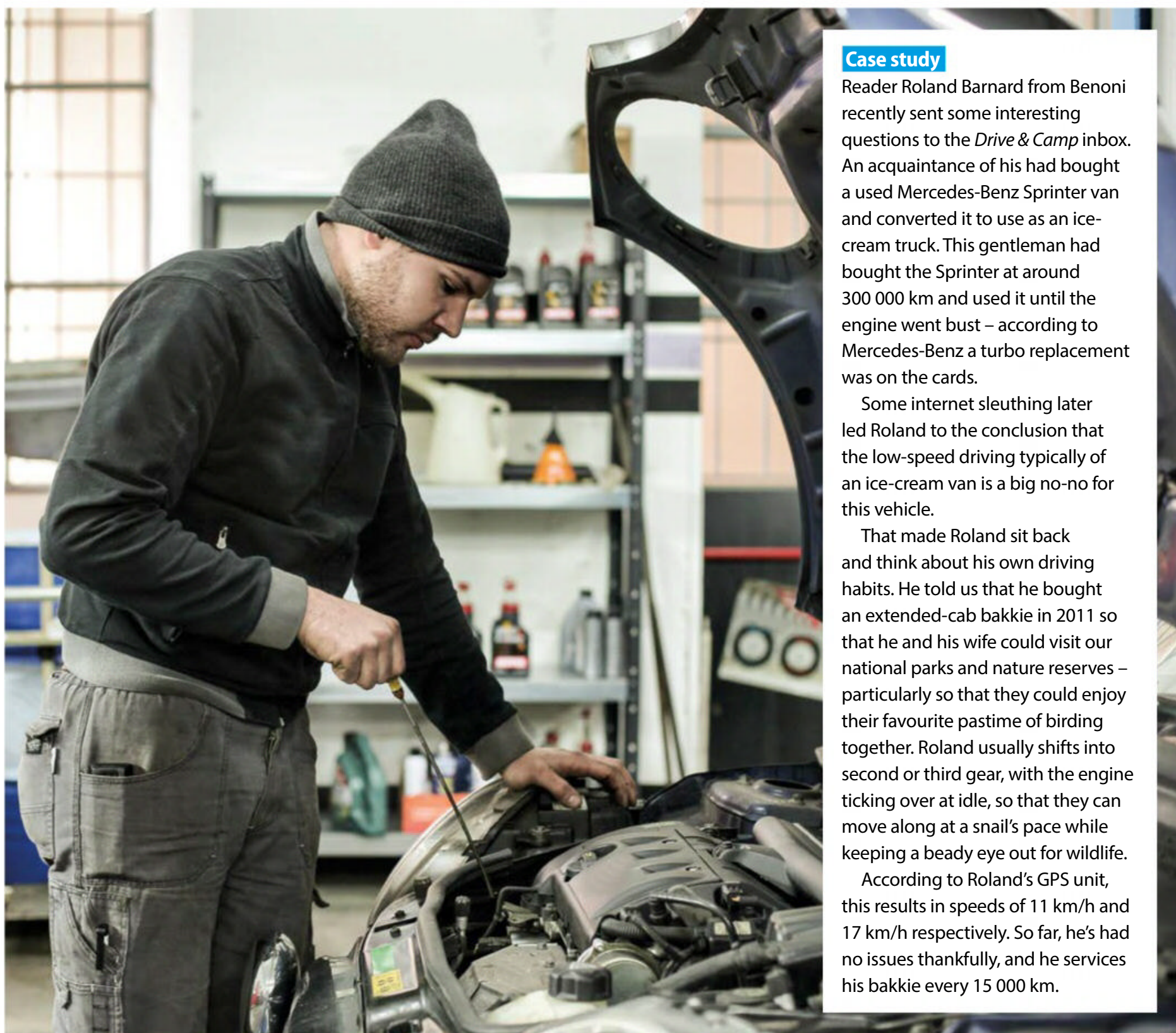


There's a saying among motorcyclists that goes along the lines of there being only two kinds of bikers – those who have fallen and those who have yet to fall. But there are also two kinds of motorists – those with mechanical sympathy and those without.

Now, you could argue that there's no such thing as being sympathetic towards a machine made of metal, motor oil, gears and glass – though you are certainly able to abuse it. There's the obvious kind of abuse, including redlining the

4.0 petrol V6 engine of your FJ Cruiser up and down dunes three times a week ever since you bought it three years ago, or not adhering to the service intervals that'll keep your Navara 2,5 dCi ticking over.

But the subtleties of driving styles also affect the wear and tear on an engine over time. Person A, living next to person B and driving the same BMW X5 over the same distance and parking right next to each other at work, might experience completely different issues with the same model vehicle.



#### Case study

Reader Roland Barnard from Benoni recently sent some interesting questions to the *Drive & Camp* inbox. An acquaintance of his had bought a used Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van and converted it to use as an ice-cream truck. This gentleman had bought the Sprinter at around 300 000 km and used it until the engine went bust – according to Mercedes-Benz a turbo replacement was on the cards.

Some internet sleuthing later led Roland to the conclusion that the low-speed driving typically of an ice-cream van is a big no-no for this vehicle.

That made Roland sit back and think about his own driving habits. He told us that he bought an extended-cab bakkie in 2011 so that he and his wife could visit our national parks and nature reserves – particularly so that they could enjoy their favourite pastime of birding together. Roland usually shifts into second or third gear, with the engine ticking over at idle, so that they can move along at a snail's pace while keeping a beady eye out for wildlife.

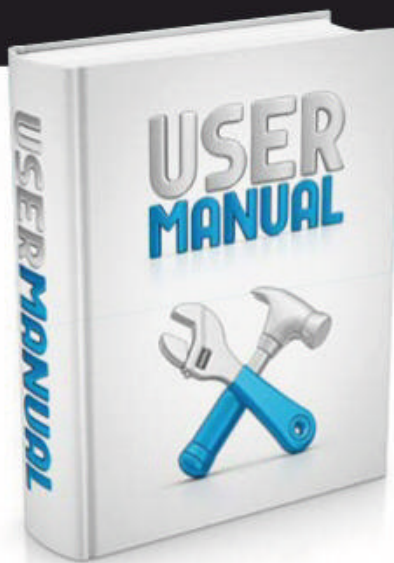
According to Roland's GPS unit, this results in speeds of 11 km/h and 17 km/h respectively. So far, he's had no issues thankfully, and he services his bakkie every 15 000 km.



“

BMW's also not too keen on idling for extended period of time, because of the richer mixture than is ideal, which causes a build-up of soot

”



### What the experts say

According to Danie Josling, senior manager at Nissan South Africa's dealer training and technical centre, it isn't advisable to have an engine running at idle speed for extended periods of time.

"One of the major concerns could be engine oil dilution with fuel, resulting in compromised lubricity accelerating engine component wear. Another concern is carbon which is a by-product of combustion which causes build up on internal engine components effecting their durability," says Danie.

Over at Toyota South Africa's technical services division, they don't say that it's harmful for an engine to run at idle rpm, but do mention that if a vehicle is going to be used like this for the majority of the time (think

game-viewing vehicles that don't leave a reserve), that the engine oil be replaced every 5 000 km as stipulated in the Toyota owner's manual.

BMW's also not too keen on idling for extended period of time, because of the richer mixture than is ideal, which causes a build-up of soot. "A sporty drive or episodes of rapid acceleration after a day of game driving should clean out any residual soot," says Sibusiso Mkwana, manager of group product communications at BMW South Africa.

Roland also wanted to know if the oil flow is impeded in any way if the engine speed isn't sufficient to build up higher boost, but Danie assured us that oil pressure for engine speeds are predetermined and will be maintained at the designed pressure for idle speed.

Sibusiso confirmed that the oil-flow requirement to the turbo is low compared with other components and that oil flow and pressure under all conditions is ensured by the oil pump and engine mapping.

"The oil acts to dissipate heat, which is negligible during idle," adds Sibusiso.

In Roland's case, Danie says that if you follow the Maintenance Under Severe Conditions recommendations in the Nissan owner's manual, which requires the oil and filters be replaced more frequently than usual, then technically you should be okay. And because he services the vehicle every 15 000 km, this is likely why Roland hasn't suffered any long-term damage so far given that his trips only result in around 600 km worth of this kind of low-speed driving annually.

### Myth-busting?

When stop/start systems came to the industry during the last decade, their ability to lower emissions and fuel consumption were praised, but some motorists were sceptical about their inclusion in hot-running turbo engines. Do they negatively influence an engine's longevity?

The official answer from the manufacturers we've spoken to is that the modern engines where stop/start systems have been included have been designed to accommodate this technology in terms of the componentry affected, such as lighter parts and starters optimised for the task. And so far, it doesn't look like any major failures can be attributed to the use of this technology.

Older turbocharged vehicles required that drivers allow the car idle for a couple of minutes or so after driving, but this practice is long since outdated. With the improvements in modern engine design and better quality and stronger materials used, you no longer need to idle your turbodiesel bakkie or SUV after driving home in peak hour traffic.

It's still considered best practice to let it continue to run for a minute just in case, given the high temperatures of the fluids and high speeds of turbo componentry. Toyota's owner's





manual makes specific mention of idling the engine for at least a minute after incline driving as you would on a 4x4 trail or when you're towing. While the BMW boffins do mention that modern turbo motors don't require an idle, they do say that certain conditions aren't ideal.

"In cases of towing or ascending mountain passes, where load is high but cooling is reduced due to a lower speed, it is not recommended to cut an engine at the top of the mountain but, typically, if you were to leave a highway and continue to your destination with a light load for the last few kilometres, this would allow for sufficient heat dissipation," says Sibusiso.



#### Dos and don'ts

Many motorists could be guilty of the following and don't even know it, given that we want to save as much fuel as possible. We shift to the highest ratio as early as possible (called lugging), but that's not in the best interest of your wallet long term.

What you're asking the engine to do is pump in more fuel and air, but because the engine speed is low, it's not really ingesting more air, sending a rich mixture through the motor.

This could potentially be harmful to the catalytic converter, and you could see some black smoke emitted from the exhausts when you're driving a turbodiesel vehicle. That vibration you feel when in a high gear and under high load is also being felt by your drivetrain componentry, and over time will affect their longevity.

You can also seriously damage your engine in these high-load, low-rpm conditions – resulting in pre-ignition. Which means that the air/fuel mix ignites sooner than the spark plug ignites. This could damage your plugs, or even crack your pistons – damage that



seems to be prevalent in smaller turbopetrol motors. Don't run your turbocharged vehicle into high-boost, low-rpm scenarios.

As a rule of thumb, high rpm for extended periods of time also has a detrimental effect on your engine, so what you want to aim for is somewhere in the middle. Generally, most of the motoring public's driving is going to be of the low rpm type.

This is why Danie recommends that every now and then you open her up to stretch the legs for a bit on the open road so that you get the efficiency back

up to intended levels clearing out all the carbon, particle and foreign object build-up. A vehicle that has done plenty of distance driving over five years might well be 'healthier' than another that's similar but has never left the confines of the concrete jungle.

If you're driving an average of 20 000 km per year, and like Roland, only 600 km of these are under the conditions he experiences, but you get opportunities to open it up on the open road between those places you visit and home, then you should be okay.



# Lay it out

It's an often-overlooked piece of essential gear, but a table can make or break your overlanding or camping trip.

**Y**ou would be surprised at just how much you'll miss a table if you don't have one while exploring the great outdoors. We've put together a list of some of the various types of tables that'll make your next trip a little more special.



## TRIPLE THREAT Oztent Bi-Fold Aluminium Table

Aussie brand Oztent's entry here is quite an innovative one, folding not in half like some of the competition, but into three sections that you can carry like a briefcase when you're setting up or taking down. And that despite being a full-size table of 1 200 mm long and

600 mm wide. The dark grey and black finish is also easy on the eye.

**Price** R1 398.75 from 4x4 Mega World.

**Drive & Camp says** Despite a sturdy stainless-steel frame, the triple section aluminium top keeps the weight down to just 9,5 kg, and it packs away to 650 mm long, 460 mm wide and 140 mm high.





#### TINY TOT Leisure Quip Foldaway HDPE Adjustable Picnic Table

The name of this product is a straight-forward giveaway that the table's top is made of high-density polyethylene so that its longer lasting and easy to clean. Underneath you have multiple options as to where to slot the stainless-steel legs into to give you height adjustments

between 560 mm and 730 mm tall.

**Price** R300 from Outdoor Warehouse.

**Drive & Camp says** The 750 mm and 500 mm length and width make this ideal for resting the chessboard on while you decide on your moves.

1 175 mm long and 750 mm wide. The aluminium top is also scratch resistant.

**Price** R3 028 from 4x4 Mega World

**Drive & Camp says** The Alu-Table's party trick is that its legs shoot out into standing position using gas struts, so set-up requires minimal effort.



#### FEATHERWEIGHT Alu-Cab Alu-Table

Known for their range of roof-top tents, campers and canopies, Alu-Cab's table is, fittingly, made almost entirely of aluminium. This helps to keep its weight down to just 7,5 kg despite being



#### ROYAL BLUE AfriTrail Square Aluminium Table

Here's one that's styled somewhat differently. It's coated in an attractive navy hue, with the table-top's edge a raw brushed aluminium for contrast. It's a square affair, at 700 m x 700 mm, and only slightly taller at 710 mm.

It's rated to hold up to 25 kg.

**Price** R595 from Camp & Climb.

**Drive & Camp says** The powder-coated steel frame should last for a long time, but we wouldn't place heavy items on this table.

#### CLOTH TOP Oztrail Leisure Table

Here's an interesting take on a table: it uses 600-denier reinforced polyester as a table top, and has four legs that pivot out underneath and above a plastic knuckle. It's also got integrated drinkholders, but at

just 480 mm high, it's more like a pedestal between you and your significant other.

**Price** R430 from Mega Warehouse.

**Drive & Camp says** It's the only table in this group that comes in its own little bag.



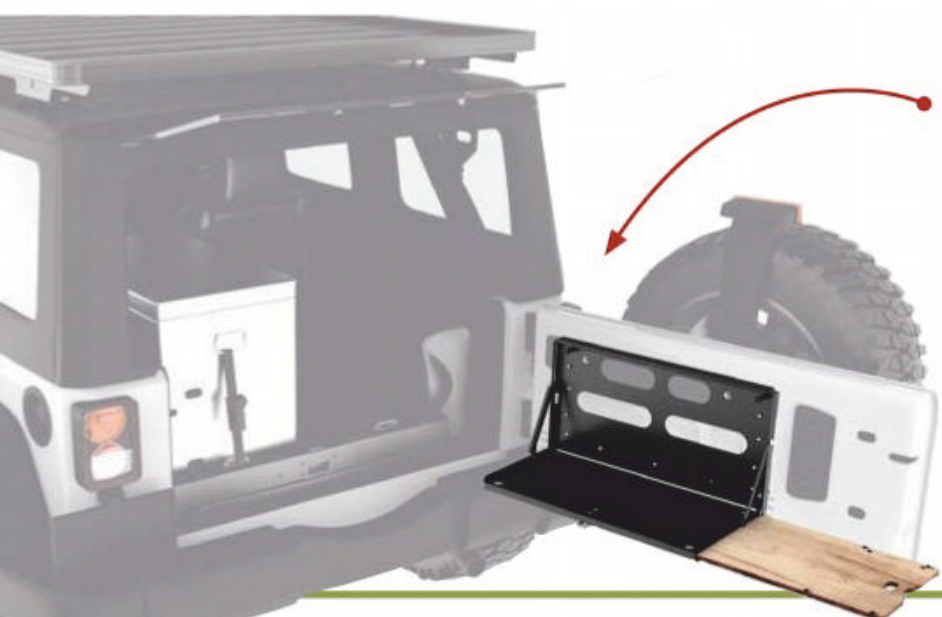
#### MORE THAN A DOOR Front Runner Drop Down Tailgate Table

Although tail gate features in its name, this unit from Front Runner is most ideal for the inside of the tailgate on Jeep's Wrangler. The primary worktop is 648 mm long and 331 mm wide, but you can extend the table by 445 mm when you slide out the wooden tray extension to the left or right. Rubber

stops prevent it from rattling when it's folded on the inside of your vehicle.

**Price** R1 574 from Front Runner.

**Drive & Camp says** You can also fit it to other SUVs or bakkies, provided you can drill into a panel or steel of 685 mm long and 376 mm wide.





## GEAR



### QUADRANGLE Oztrail Picnic Table

Family of four? Here's the one you've been waiting for. The little stools on each side are each rated for up to 100 kg each, so it's not like this table only seats smaller families. Each side of two stools folds up into their own half of the table so when you've packed up,

you can carry the set like a bag. The melamine top has an aluminium edge, and the 25 mm steel tube frame is powder coated.

**Price** R2 454 from Campcraft.

**Drive & Camp says** Although robust, this entire set-up weighs just 11 kg.

### EASY PACK Leisure Quip Foldable Picnic Table

This table's unique feature is its space-saving legs that not only scissor open, but also has second tube on one side of the table that allows the legs to fold into each other – minimising the amount of room that you need to stow this one.

**Price** R450 from Takealot.

**Drive & Camp says** When you're fishing by your lonesome, this is an excellent little porch to support the afternoon's beverages.



### SIMPLE STUFF AfriTrail Anywhere Bi-Fold Table

A no-frills design that simply folds in half, with a sturdy steel tube frame and rubberised boots on the table's feet so you don't scuff or cut up your drop sheet or lapa floor. It's 1 800

mm long and 720 mm wide, so it'll seat family and friends.

**Price** R580 from Takealot.

**Drive & Camp says** The table is rated to hold up to 120 kg.

### CLEAN GREEN Tentco Picnic Table & Benches

Here's another one suited for a family of four, but in this case the Tentco table and benches are loose items that come as a set. The top and benches are made of high-density polyethylene, and the

steel frames are power coated.

**Price** R1 250 from Camp & Climb.

**Drive & Camp says** The set doesn't come with a bag, but you can order one from Tentco for another R330.



### CHEF'S CHOICE Front Runner Pro Stainless-Steel Camp Table

If you've already had a Front Runner roof rack installed on your vehicle, then it goes without saying that you'll have add this to your rig, because the Pro Series Table slides in snugly under the rack so it doesn't take up space inside your bakkie or SUV.

**Price** R3 838 from Front Runner.

**Drive & Camp says** It's an expensive table but is designed to last with powder-coated aluminium legs and stainless-steel work top.







### ALL-IN-ONE Tentco Aluminium Double Dishwash Stand

Who wants to carry dirty dishes to the scullery between the ablution blocks anyway? This nifty stand from Tentco comes with twin bases for washing and rinsing, as well as a drying rack and a side table for

the mountain of plates. It weighs just 5,2 kg.

**Price** R895 from Camp & Climb.

**Drive & Camp says** The lower shelf can replace the top set-up, and the dishwashing stand can convert back to a regular table again

### EXTENDED FAMILY

### Lifetime 1,8m Fold-in-Half Table

Another straightforward entry, that's the longest here at 1 830 mm long, and 760 mm wide. The tabletop is a thick 42 mm of high-density polyethylene and leg tubing is 25 mm power coated steel. There's a nifty two-year limited warranty with this product as well.

**Price** R 1000 from Outdoor Warehouse.

**Drive & Camp says** This table doesn't come with benches, but Outdoor Warehouse also stocks the matching folding bench for R1 000.



### OUMA'S OPTION Oztrail Folding Table with Storage

Here's a table just like the one your grandmother had in the kitchen, with a mini pantry under the table-top, except that in this case, it's 300-denier polyester fabric that hangs off the melamine top. Plus, there are pockets on the

sides of the fabric and the head and foot of the table, which measures 1 200 mm long, 820 mm wide and 600 mm tall.

**Price** R1 495 from Camp & Climb.

**Drive & Camp says** Its aluminium frame keeps the weight down to just 7,5 kg.

### FLAP THAT

### Front Runner Stainless Steel Vehicle Side Mount Table

If you're not loathe to drill holes into the sides of your vehicle (we're looking at you, Land Rover Defender owners), then this table will be right up your alley. Next to the outside kitchen on a caravan, this is your next best bet and uses key-hole brackets to mount against the side of your

rig, and it stands on a single aluminium locking leg.

**Price** R2 495 from Front Runner.

**Drive & Camp says** It's bigger than you think, at 1 150 mm long and 550 mm wide.



**GET THE PRODUCTS HERE**

**4x4 Mega World** 4x4megaworldonline.com

**Campcraft** campcraft.co.za

**Camp & Climb** campandclimb.co.za

**Front Runner** frontrunneroutfitters.com

**Mega Warehouse** megawarehouse.co.za

**Outdoor Warehouse** outdoorwarehouse.co.za

**Takealot** takealot.com



# Mex appeal

Add a little oomph to your next camp menu with creamy avocados. They're in season, after all.

Recipes and styling

**Johané Neilson**

Photos **Ed O'Riley**



## GUACAMOLE

### Holey moley, gaucamole!

Guacamole, tomato salsa and sour cream are the three amigos that turn campfire food into a Mexican fiesta. Guacamole on its own, served with chips or julienned vegetables to dip into it is, of course, also a delicious snack while you wait for the coals to be ready for braaiing.

#### Ingredients

(makes 1½ cups)

- 1 large ripe avocado
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (or to taste)
- ¼ cup creamy mayonnaise
- ¼ cup Greek yoghurt
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped red onion
- a generous pinch of dry mixed herbs
- 1 teaspoon Tabasco sauce (or to taste)
- ½ tomato, finely chopped

#### Here's how

**1 Cut** the avocado in half and remove the pit before carefully pulling off the peel. Cube the avo and place in a bowl with the lemon juice – this prevents the avocado from turning brown.

**2 Stir** in the mayonnaise yoghurt and onion, and season to taste with salt, pepper, dry mixed herbs and Tabasco.

**3 Mash** everything with a fork to a coarse guacamole and then stir in the tomato. Spoon the guacamole into a bowl and eat it within an hour.

**Drive & Camp says** You can replace the Tabasco sauce with finely chopped fresh chilli, and the dry herbs with some fresh coriander leaves.



## QUESADILLAS WITH CHICKEN, CORN AND AVOCADO

### Over the half moon

Turn tortillas and leftover chicken into a fantastic lunch.

#### Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 2 cups diced cooked chicken
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped pickled jalapeños
- 1 teaspoon each coriander, cumin and paprika
- ½ cup cooked corn kernels
- ½ cup tinned red kidney beans, rinsed
- 2 large ripe avocados
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 6 medium flour tortillas
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 3 cups of grated cheese – we used a mixture of mozzarella and white cheddar
- 4 teaspoons olive oil for shallow frying
- tomato salsa to serve

#### Here's how

**1 Mix** the chicken, jalapeño, spices, corn kernels and kidney beans together to create a fragrant filling.

**2 Peel** the avocados, remove the pits and slice thinly. Squeeze the lemon juice over the avocado to keep it from turning brown.

**3 Spread** each tortilla with a thin layer of mayonnaise and divide the chicken filling between the six. Spread the filling only over half of each. Now top the chicken with a few slices of avocado, season with salt and pepper to taste, and sprinkle lots of cheese over each. Fold the tortillas over the filling to form half moons. Press the sides together to secure the parcel.

**4 Heat** a little oil in a thick-bottomed pan and fry the folded tortilla parcels one by one until they're a lovely golden brown and the cheese is melted inside. Keep the heat moderate so the tortillas don't brown too quickly before the filling has warmed up. Serve the quesadillas with the tomato salsa.

**Drive & Camp says** Replace the chicken with cooked mince or ham for variety.







## AVO AND BILTONG POTATO SNACKS

### Fancy bites

Who says you can't make bite-sized canapés in the bush?

#### Ingredients

(makes 24 snacks)

- 24 baby potatoes, scrubbed
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sea salt flakes
- 1 ripe avocado
- 1 tablespoon sour cream
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice (or to taste)
- 6 fresh chives (or use a teaspoon dry onion flakes)
- 200 g thin biltong slices

#### Here's how

**1 Prick** each potato twice with a fork and place in a bowl with the olive oil and salt – mix everything well. Halve the quantity of potatoes and cover each half in a double layer of foil with the shiny side facing inward.

**2 Braai** the foil packets on a grid

over medium coals until the potatoes are cooked and tender with a nice crispy skin (about 40 minutes). Add more coals as needed and turn the potatoes every now and then.

**3 Cut** the avocado in half, remove the pit and carefully peel it. Mash the avocado with the sour cream and season to taste with lemon juice. Use a fork to mash the mixture as smoothly as possible or use a stick blender. Season the mixture to taste with salt and pepper.

**4 Cut** a cross into each hot potato and press the bottom so that the tender meat puffs out slightly. Add a dollop of smooth avocado on each, round it off with a slice of biltong and then sprinkle over the chives.

**Drive & Camp says** Boil the potatoes in salted water and fry them in a little oil in a frying pan if you don't want to go the foil route on the braai.

## GARLIC BREAD PANZANELLA

### Keep the vampires at bay

Garlic bread and avocado give this Italian bread and tomato salad a delicious twist.

#### Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 garlic bread of 20 cm, cubed
- 200 g cherry tomatoes
- 1 small red onion, sliced into thin rings
- 1/3 cup peppadews, chopped
- 1 small yellow pepper, diced
- 3 large plum tomatoes, sliced into wedges
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 2 avocados, peeled, pitted and sliced into thin wedges

#### Here's how

**1 Heat** 1 tablespoon olive oil

in a thick-bottomed saucepan and fry the bread cubes until they're golden brown and crispy, almost like croutons. Spoon out the bread and drain the oil on kitchen paper.

**2 Pour** more oil into the frying pan and fry the cherry tomatoes until the skins burst open. Stir in the onion, peppadews and yellow pepper with the hot tomato and remove the pan from the heat.

**3 Mix** the fresh tomato wedges and bread cubes and the vinegar through the warm tomato mixture. Spoon the salad into a pretty plate and arrange the avocado slices on top.

**Drive & Camp says** Add a handful of fresh basil or rocket leaves to the salad if you have herbs available.







## **PRAWN AND WASABI** **PEANUT TACOS** **Nuts about this snack!**

Wasabi and avocados are not a winning combination only in sushi.

### **Ingredients**

(makes 12 tacos)

- 500 g uncooked and peeled large prawns
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- a pinch each of dry garlic, chilli flakes and ginger
- juice of ½ lemon
- 1 small cabbage head, shredded
- 1 small cucumber, thinly sliced
- a handful of fresh coriander leaves, chopped
- 2 spring onions, chopped
- 2 ripe avocados, peeled, pitted and diced
- ½ cup wasabi peanuts, roughly chopped
- 12 small flour or corn tacos
- ½ cup sour cream

### **Here's how**

**1 Fry** the prawns in the oil until just cooked and light pink. Season them with the spices, salt and pepper, and sprinkle over the lemon juice.

**2 Mix** the cabbage, cucumber, coriander, spring onions, avocado and peanuts for a lovely coleslaw.

**3 Braai** the tacos directly over the coals or fry them in a dry pan for a few minutes – they need to be properly heated to taste fresh.

**4 Add** a spoonful of sour cream in each taco, followed by the coleslaw and round it off with 3 to 4 prawns. Time to tuck in!

**Drive & Camp says** If you don't have fresh spring onions and coriander for your coleslaw, use grated carrot to add some colour to the salad. When you don't have sour cream, creamy mayonnaise is a winner, too. 🍴

## **BREAKFAST SARMIES WITH** **A BITE** **Fry, fry, all on one side**

Not everyone likes warm avocado – so if you really don't want to try something new, fry the bacon on its own and place the uncooked avocado on the rolls.

### **Ingredients**

(serves 4)

- 2 ripe avocados
- 4-8 streaky bacon strips
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 teaspoons sriracha sauce (or use Lawmans Mexican Hot Sauce)
- 4 large soft-boiled eggs, shelled
- 4 bread rolls or toast
- real butter for smearing

### **Here's how**

**1 Peel** the avocados and cut them in half. Remove the pits and season the halves to taste with salt and pepper. Now wrap a strip or two of bacon around

each one and secure them with a toothpick to hold it all together.

**2 Pan-fry** the bacon-wrapped avocados in the olive oil until the bacon is golden brown. Paint the hot sauce over the bacon and fry for another minute over the heat until glossy – just make sure the sauce doesn't burn. Remove the toothpicks.

**3 Cut** the rolls in half and grill the sliced sides over medium coals (or in a dry pan) until they turn a lovely colour. Spread a thick layer of real butter to each.

**4 Now** arrange a fried bacon-wrapped avocado and soft-boiled egg on top of each sandwich and cover with the other half. Eat it right away!

**Drive & Sleep says** We recently got acquainted with Lawmans Mexican Original Hot Sauce, a product from Durban. If you like chilli sauces, this one is delicious on just about everything.







## TOURS

# *Botswana, Okavango Delta, Caprivi, Chobe and Vic Falls*

### TENTED ACCOMMODATION

Never been to Botswana? This camping trip makes things easy for you. Upon arrival at your camp, your tent is already pitched. Hungry? A bush chef prepares your meals!

**E**xplore Botswana's Okavango Delta, the great rivers of the Zambezi Region (the old Caprivi Strip), and mighty Victoria Falls, while our experts make sure you're safe, well fed and comfortable at all times.

This self-drive tour is one of the most popular on the Bhejane itinerary, for good reason: It allows you to have a true African adventure at a reasonable price, and you don't need any technical off-road driving skills.

Travel from the vast Makgadikgadi Pans around the Okavango Delta and up the Panhandle, pausing at the mysterious Tsodilo Hills, which is a world-renowned rock art site. You'll travel east through the Caprivi in Namibia, and back to Kasane in Botswana via the ever-impressive Victoria Falls

in Zimbabwe. The tour ends with a cruise on the Chobe River, where you can toast the sunset while elephants splash in the shallows.

Bhejane will provide all tents and camping equipment, and their staff members will set up and strike camp. Experts will be on hand to guide you through sections of technical driving, and they'll be carrying all the necessary recovery gear should you get stuck.

A highlight of any Bhejane trip is the food, and this one is no exception: Our experienced bush chef will prepare three delicious meals a day in his camp kitchen. The coffee pot will be on the fire until late.

All the campsites visited, other than the wild camp on Kubu Island, will have hot showers and flush toilets.

### TRANS-BOTSWANA SELF-DRIVE

11 days, 10 nights

Start point:

Letlhakane, Botswana

End point:

Kasane, Botswana

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2 – 12 October 2020

R15 950 per adult sharing;

half-price for kids under 10.

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- Two-way radios in all vehicles
- All camp fees, park entrance fees and advertised activities
- All tents and associated camping gear, including cutlery and crockery
- Three meals a day, plus coffee and tea all day in camp

### WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

- Your own vehicle, and fuel
- Mattress, sleeping bag, camping chairs and a camping table
- Drinks and snacks
- Travel insurance and medical evacuation insurance (compulsory)
- You're responsible for border-crossing fees and road taxes

### I want to go!

Call 044 535 9033

or e-mail

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[bhejane.com](http://bhejane.com)

BHEJANE



ADVENTURES

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Kubu Island • Okavango Delta
- Tsodilo Hills • Kavango River & Zambezi River • Victoria Falls
- Chobe River



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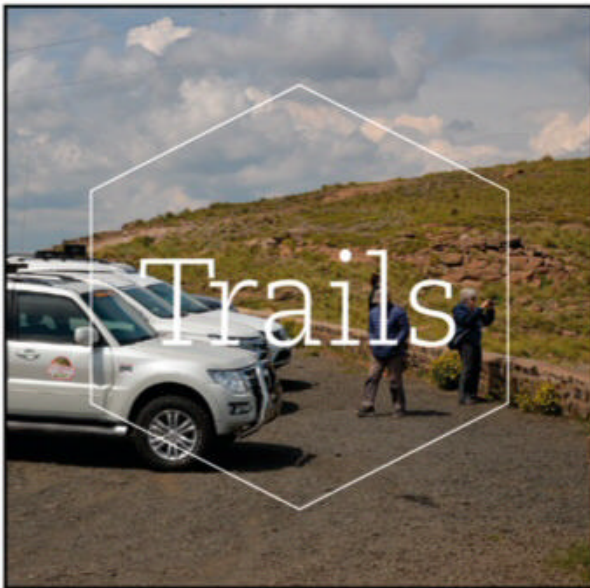


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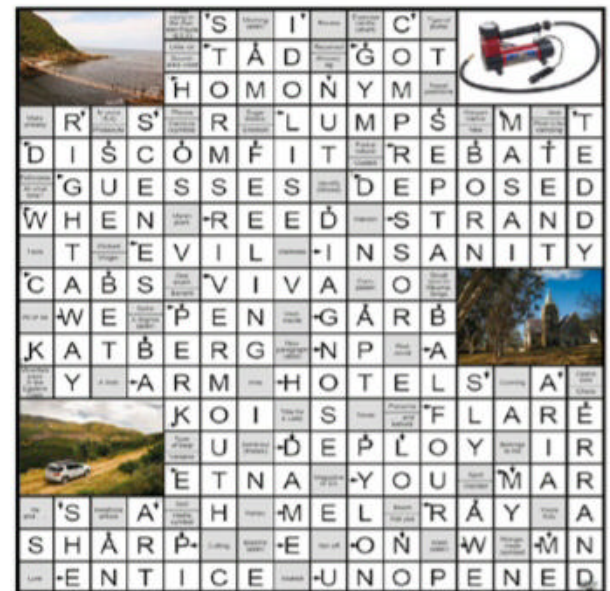
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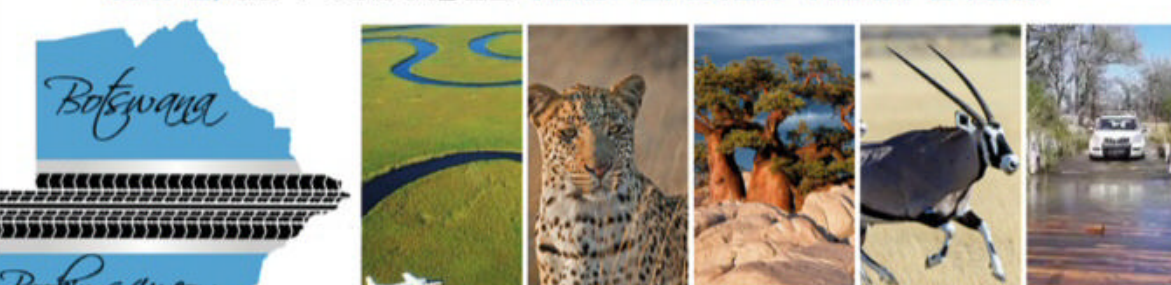
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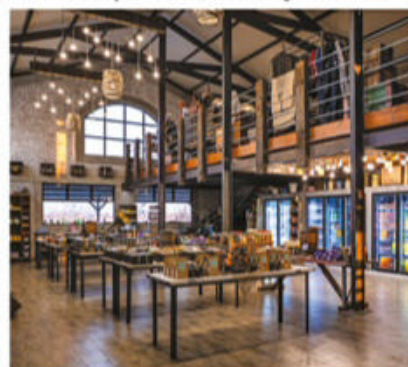
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# CROSSWORD

**Kobus Schonken** from Scottburgh has won **Van Loveren** wine worth R1 000 for his entry in the March 2020 crossword competition. Complete this one and e-mail a picture to [drivecamp@gomag.co.za](mailto:drivecamp@gomag.co.za). Please include your contact details. Or do it at <https://bit.ly/3frmoy5>. Last month's solution is on p 108.

|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
|  |                |        | Camping site in St Lucia (4,5) | Milligram (abbr) | Aga, eg             | Honey             | Landmark in Lesotho (5,3) |  |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                | Sister           |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        | Plutonium (symbol)             |                  | Close by (poetic)   |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
| Reasons                                                                           |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           | Traditional healer                                                                  |                    |                       |
| Grass stem                                                                        |                | Meadow | Dog shelters                   |                  |                     |                   |                           | Animal doctor                                                                       |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        | Engine                         |                  |                     |                   |                           | Interlaced                                                                          | Nobelium (symbol)  | Legends               |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    | Net                   |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                | Sweet-heart      | Not out             |                   | Word derived from a name  |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
| Enjoying a book                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     | Fuss              | Dedicate                  |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   | Call                      |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
| Walked                                                                            |                |        |                                |                  | Capital of Zimbabwe |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
| Depart                                                                            |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     | High school (abbr) |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        | Cold sea fog                   |                  |                     | Reduce            |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        | Intellect                      |                  |                     | Turf              |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
| Spiral pattern                                                                    |                |        |                                |                  | Male offspring      |                   |                           | Primates                                                                            | Sprite             |                       |
| Restrict                                                                          |                |        |                                |                  | Deadly              |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                | While            | In the direction    |                   | Cavity                    |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
| Fumed                                                                             |                |        |                                |                  |                     | Titanium (symbol) | Neighbour of Pakistan     | Private reserve close to Brits                                                      |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  | Cup and ...         | Bound             |                           |                                                                                     | Had been           | In the ablution block |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     | Work together      | Comes in              |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  | Samarium (symbol)   | Guy               |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  | Goal                |                   | Protect against cold      | Buffalo                                                                             |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  | Sort                |                   |                           | Song for two                                                                        |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
| 4x4 equipment (5,3)                                                               | Stuff          |        | Type of fish                   |                  |                     | Notion            |                           |                                                                                     | A thing            |                       |
|                                                                                   | Period of time |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     | Trans-gress        |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     | Silicon (symbol)  |                           | Skye, eg                                                                            |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           | Morning (abbr)                                                                      |                    |                       |
| Spoil                                                                             |                |        | Radon (symbol)                 |                  | Throw stones at     | Gold (symbol)     |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     | Lighter           |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  |                     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |
|                                                                                   |                |        |                                |                  | Soothing creams     |                   |                           |                                                                                     |                    |                       |

## Raise your glass!

### Win with Van Loveren's Tangled Tree range

This mouth-watering eco-friendly range was inspired by a tree on the Van Loveren farm. In 1941, Jean Retief ordered a *Rhus lancea* tree from the then Natal province. Her husband Hennie believed that it was the same as the Karee tree that grew along the river and planted a shoot next to it to prove this.

The two trees have since intertwined into one tree, which has come to symbolize their love. And the best part of the range? It has a 60% lower carbon footprint compared to wine in glass bottles.

Try the Tangled Tree Chocolate Cabernet Sauvignon, Butterscotch Chardonnay, Moscato Rosé, Tropical Sauvignon Blanc and Spicy Shiraz today. Find out more at [tangledtree.com](http://tangledtree.com).





Colour in

**COLOUR IN**

Get your crayons and colouring pencils out and bring life to this black-and-white drawing.

**WORD SEARCH**

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

**SPOT THE DIFFERENCE**

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

**MAZE**

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



## Word search

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

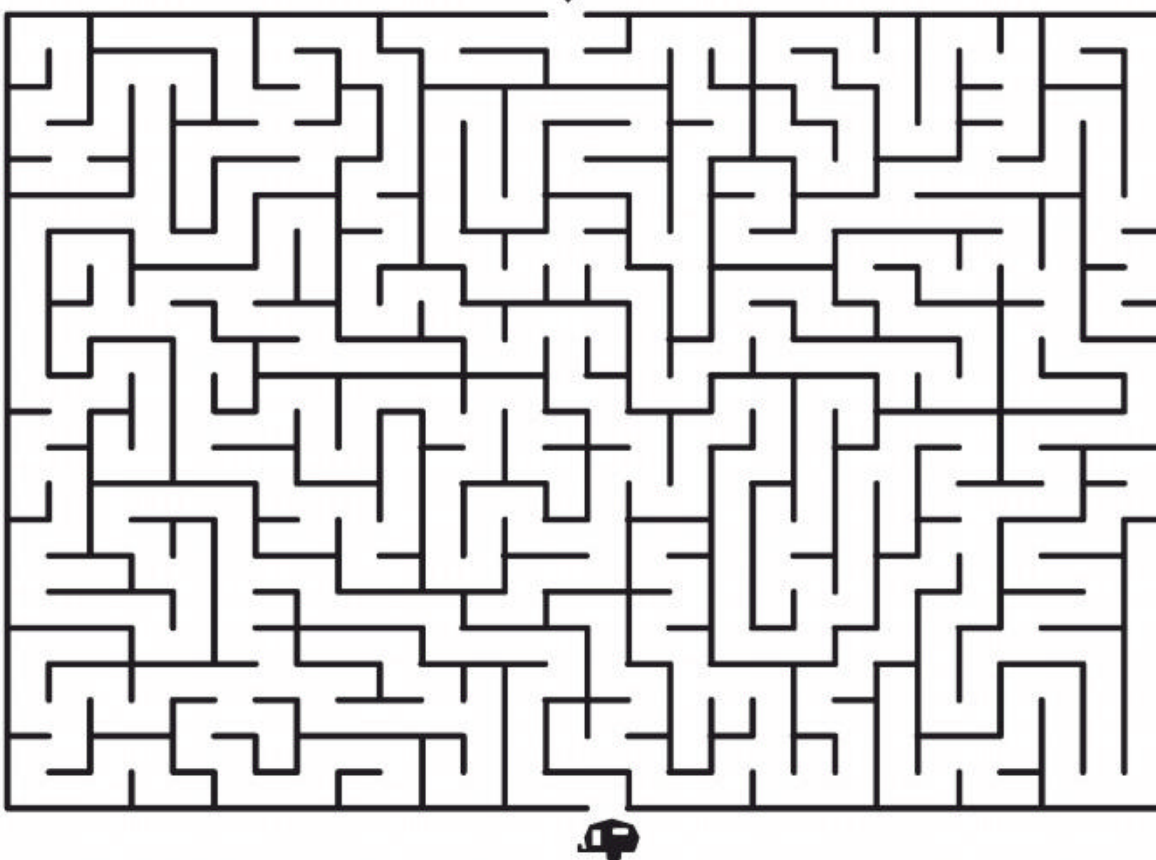
### ANTELOPE

|                  |                |              |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Blesbok          | Cape grysbok   | Impala       |
| Black wildebeest | Common duiker  | Klipspringer |
| Blue wildebeest  | Damara dik-dik | Kudu         |
| Blue duiker      | Eland          | Nyala        |
| Bontebok         | Gemsbok        | Oribi        |
| Bushbuck         | Hartebeest     | Springbok    |

## Spot the differences



## Maze



## Animal facts



- All piranhas live in South America in rivers and lakes, with 20 species found in the Amazon River.
- Most piranhas don't get any bigger than 60 centimetres long.
- When threatened, the shoal will group together with other shoals to take down the predator.
- Red-bellied piranhas bark to warn predators to leave them alone.
- The piranha's teeth work together like scissors to cut up food, regrowing them when they fall out.



# For the times they are a-changin'

Many things will be different after COVID-19, but our love for travel, camping, exploration and the enjoyment of the outdoors will be stronger than ever, says **Mic van Zyl**.

I am not a big Bob Dylan fan, but I must hand it to the guy. He was quite the poet. Poets, like most artists, are often inspired to do their best work during trying times or monumental happenings. I heard *The times they are a-changin'* song recently on the radio at home which, in itself, is a very rare occurrence. I found it profoundly ironic as it resonated with

the current state of affairs.

While this is a time of great fear and uncertainty and even hunger and hardship for many, it is also an opportunity for quiet introspection. Parents have become teachers of their children while at home and spouses have arguably spent some of the longest single, uninterrupted stretches of time in each other's company.

Many of us have also come to the realisation that our jobs and careers are not quite as high on the list of life's priorities as we are constantly led to believe. Sure, a steady and sufficient income is important, but I think that many have been surprised by how quickly one's tower of cards can come tumbling down due to something way beyond our direct control.

**'WORK TO LIVE'** as opposed to 'Live to Work' is something I have been practicing for a long time. The idea that one's career is merely part of the journey of life and that it is not the most important aspect of your life is a difficult concept for most to grasp.

I am by no means advocating that your job is merely a means to live. I have always found it most important that you enjoy what you do. People who enjoy their jobs most often deliver better results. The point is that for many, it is the most important thing. When it is taken away or put on hold, many struggle with the size of the void.

The thing I miss most about being locked down is the ability to load up the Cruiser and head to the bush. My truck has been quietly standing in the driveway with battery charger connected waiting for the opportunity to hit the

road. It almost looks sad. Nobody knows quite when we will be able to get out and about again, but it will come. This too shall pass, and I know that I for one am going to make a very serious effort to appreciate life's freedoms that we take for granted much more than before.

Make no mistake, many things will be different for a long time or even permanently, but our love for travel, bush camping, exploration and the enjoyment of the outdoors will be stronger than ever.

**I AM HEARTENED** by the interesting occurrences of nature encroaching back into the environments annexed by

“ This too shall pass, and I know that I for one am going to make a very serious effort to appreciate life's freedoms ”

humans. Mindful of the plethora of fake news out there, I am seeing more and more stories and pictures of animals moving back into 'human' areas while the humans are locked up at home.

It's a small indicator of how truly fantastic nature is. Drinking in the smell, sounds and sights of nature has surely got to be some of the very best medicine out there. We humans should really take better care of it.

I wish you all safety and peace during these times and hope to see you all out there somewhere real soon. 🍷





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# Are we underestimating the camping industry?

The economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic will paralyse the camping industry for a number of years, predicts **Neels van Heerden**.

**T**he tourism sector contributes almost R140 billion directly to the South African economy. That's according to a 2018 estimate by the World Travel and Tourism Council. Indirect income – through related activities – amounts to a further estimated R280 billion. Domestic tourism's share in all of this is 55% of total tourism revenue (about R231 billion). It's also worth noting that this sector provides 1,5 million jobs.

The announcement of a tourism relief fund at the start of the lockdown period, however, clearly shows that the camping industry is not on the

government's radar. Only permanent residences with an annual turnover of less than R2,5 million will be able to receive assistance – and campsites aren't even mentioned. A once-off grant of R50 000 will be awarded to small and medium-sized businesses (those with a turnover of less than R2,5 million) in the tourism industry to be used to cover certain fixed costs. That's not much to fill all the gaps.

All tourism businesses will only be allowed to resume business when level 1 lockdown kicks in, and that is only likely to happen much later this year.

**TOWARDS THE END** of April this year, civil rights groups filed court papers in an attempt to stop the minister when it comes to one of the most contentious potential conditions of the relief fund: the question of ownership.

The focus seems to be (and perhaps this isn't a conscious decision) on supporting businesses that serve primarily foreign or affluent urban tourists. The pandemic will cause a massive decline in incoming tourism.

The short-term focus should rather be on helping tourism businesses in the rural communities to survive. I believe eligibility for state relief should be based on the potential contribution to domestic tourism and not foreign tourism.

Priority must be given to maintaining jobs and contributing to the rural economy. The camping industry provides thousands of direct and indirect job opportunities – and an income to tens of thousands of dependents. The situation around rural poverty and unemployment is already bleak.

Proving that the camping industry makes a significant contribution to the total tourism revenue is a big headache, though. Statistics SA estimates that the camping industry's direct share is 1,2% (R2,7 billion of R231 billion) of total

“

The pandemic will cause a massive decline in incoming tourism

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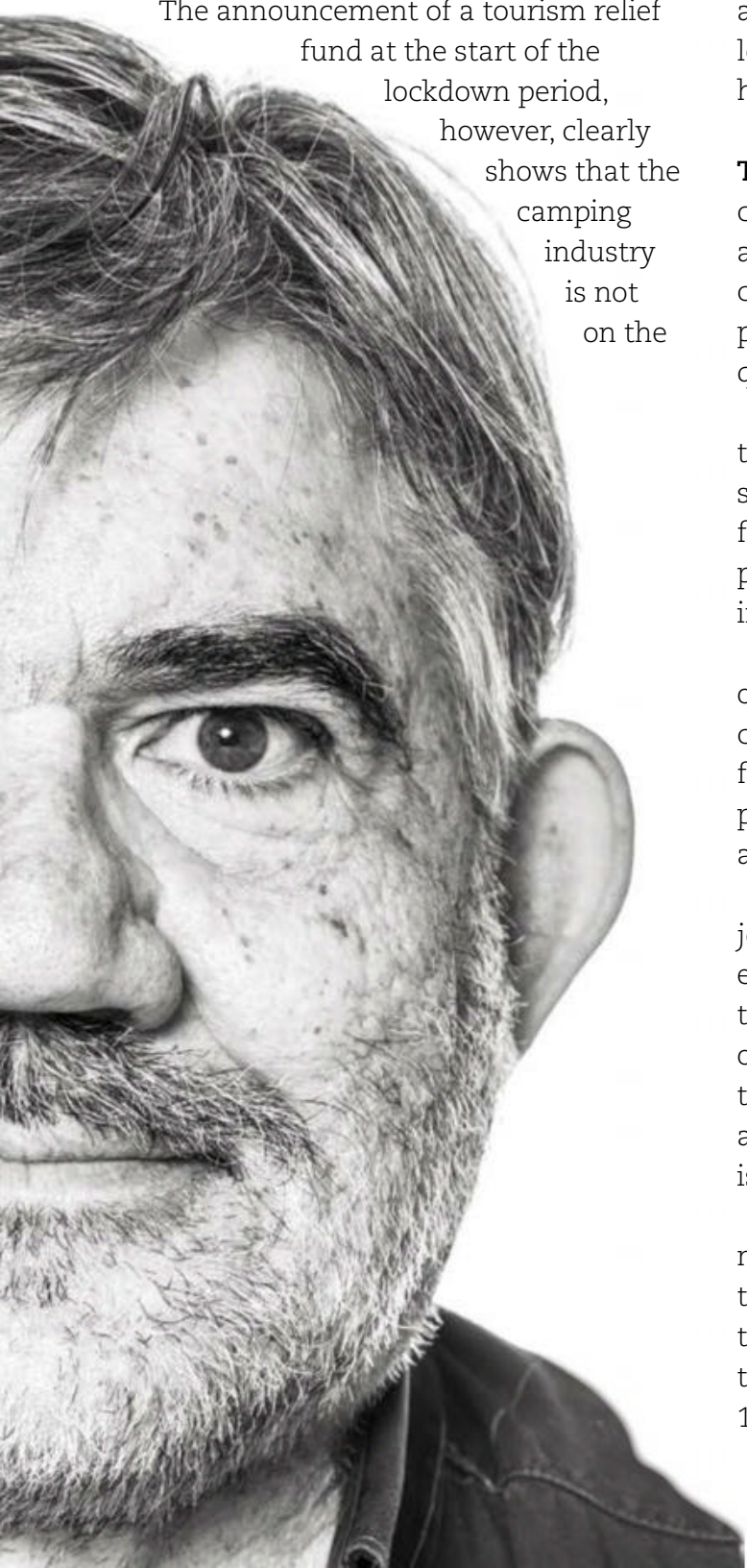
domestic tourism revenue. I, however, believe their calculation is skewed. For example, they have a very small database that includes just a few hundred campsites, while there are definitely more than a thousand in operation. Including only graded caravan parks also gives a skewed picture, as less than 100 of them have an official rating.

**YEARS AGO, I TRIED** to get Statistics SA to amend their database so that they would make more accurate calculations about the industry's contribution to tourism revenue and try to determine the number of jobs the industry creates.

They had little appetite for this proposal because they want to collaborate with an entity that represents the entire camping industry. So, what currently is not in the camping industry's favour is the fact that the authorities have a very distorted idea of how many campsites there are, how many jobs exist or what camping's contribution is to the economy in towns such as Bela-Bela – or in regions of KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape, for example.

The camping industry needs an entity to promote its interests and wellbeing. It is, however, an open question as to where such an entity would get funding.

Meanwhile, there are plans behind the scenes to at least include the camping industry in the types of accommodation that could qualify for further support. Fingers crossed the plans are successful. 🍀







# Bakkie Run postponed

**A**s we experience the impact of **COVID-19** spreading across the world, we want to take this opportunity to reassure you that *Drive & Camp* and *Media24LIVE* are taking the situation seriously and

have contingency plans in place.

As a precautionary measure to mitigate the impact of the spread of the virus on our business and ensure the safety of our sponsors, readers and staff we are in the process of finding new dates for all events

scheduled up until 30 September 2020. All events scheduled after this date will continue as is.

*The Bakkie Run* is postponed until further notice and we will be in contact shortly to finalise the necessary arrangements.





# When the wheels stopped turning

You soon find out what it is you have when you no longer have it...  
We realised this during the lockdown, says **Leon Botha**.

**M**ore than once during our commute, my wife used to say that she would so love to stay home for only one day so she can get on top of things. Most of us could identify – we are all familiar with this hamster wheel of life that seems to be turning faster and faster.

And then the COVID-19 pandemic brought the wheel to a sudden stop. After weeks at home, my wife's day off turned into a prison sentence. It's at times like these that you realise what a large part of your life is dedicated to driving.

Our family uses an average of four tanks of fuel per month. The Honda has, however, been patiently waiting in the driveway for almost four weeks now. The first tank for last month is still there, just about as full as when we filled it.

I also discovered a connection with my vehicle. When I occasionally get the chance to slip away to the shops (with my mask on), I feel like driving the long way around. I just want to see the temperature gauge move before the car gets parked for another week.

Of course, our holiday plans for the foreseeable future are on hold, and the prospect of the long road with my Landie now feels like a fantasy. You miss your vehicle, you spent so much time in it every day. Vehicles have been in our lives since childhood... and now they're just standing there.

**CARS WERE ALWAYS** part of my dad's life and therefore ours, too. Dad was very proud of his first new car purchased

when he was a young man in the early 1970s: ironically enough, a Toyota Corona. Yes, the Corona was new, but not for long: on my mother's first day at her new job, she crashed it. A photo of our blue bakkie with its crumpled mudguard is still on display in our family album. I'm the three-year-old pointing out the damage.

Dad also loved fast cars. He built and raced cars competitively in his free time – Mom even got one of her own. Weekend after weekend, we went from one cinder track to the next – and Dad's trophy collection kept growing. The races lasted into the cold of the late evenings and clouds of methanol hung under the floodlights. Us little tykes watched them zooming round and round in our pyjamas.

Dad also loved his two wheels – also to get to work and back. His black BMW motorcycle could tell so many tales, especially about the test grounds in Sasolburg. Around many braai fires, Dad couldn't resist expressing his displeasure at the authorities and what it took to get a motorcycle license.

The examiner on his first try to get licensed was a large lady. Dad had to complete a figure-eight on the test track. He was doing well, but at one point he dropped a foot to stay upright as he neatly completed the manoeuvre. The foot fault resulted in an immediate fail and he left without his driver's license.

He returned and, as luck would have it, the same lady was on duty. The figure-eight was completed without incident, but shortly before the end of the test, she jumped in front of him for some

inexplicable reason. Dad lost control of the bike and went home with his tail tucked between his legs yet again.

**FOR MY MATRIC** farewell, Dad kindly loaned me his red Nissan Skyline. I don't know how my friends got to the dance, but they relied on me for the after party. Not to drive them there, mind you, but to start a fire with petrol. I still wonder why a group of matric boys wanted to light a midnight fire at Abrahamsrust on the Vaal River, since nobody brought any meat to braai.

Thanks to Dad's racing-car days, I understood how carburettors, pistons and spark plugs work, but the Skyline let me down. In the dark, I couldn't manage to get hold of the fuel hose to the carburettor. Today I am so grateful for that compact engine that made it hard to unplug the hose.

Dad's other new cars also went through tribulations. The first BMW 3 Series made its appearance in the eighties, and Dad parked a bright new red one in front of the garage. After he'd gone into the house with his lunchbox in hand, it used to be my job to park the BMW in the garage – something that was a great source of pride for me. Who knew that 10 m of driving forward could be so rewarding.

But the fun quickly turned into tragedy. Dad (or maybe I) had left one of the back doors open. I didn't see it and as I pulled the car into the garage, I heard the most horrific blow as the door hit the wall. I have a calm nature and, even today, have only a limited expletive vocabulary,



but that day I wished I was able to express myself with greater eloquence.

The BMW saga would continue. Dad was still employed at the same place and it started going even better: some time later, there was a dark blue BMW in the driveway. One weekend while attending a church camp, the BMW had to be reversed, and Dad directed me where to go. With full confidence behind the wheel, I didn't look in the rearview mirror and drove into a tree stump. The beautiful blue vehicle got an ugly dent just above the one rear wheel. I could hear Dad dying a little inside...

**EVEN THOUGH DAD AND I** both felt terrible about the damage, the blame fell not on me alone. But that all changed when I acquired my first car: a VW Beetle that had been converted into a so-called Baja Bug. Thanks to Dad, its 1 600 cc engine got replaced by a 1 700 cc Kombi engine, and I even took the Baja to Botswana to visit family.

It wasn't the most beautiful or the best wheels, but it was mine. That Baja took me everywhere: through Lesotho, the then Transkei, Swaziland and through the Kruger (while towing a 5" Venter

carrying all my camping gear).

But it's when I remember a day under an avocado tree in Pretoria that I recall how deep my feelings ran for my former wheels. The Baja's parking spot was under this avo tree, but we were new homeowners and didn't understand an imminent natural disaster. The tree was probably about three stories high and it could hardly have borne more avocados. Then came a storm and what was probably the biggest and hardest avocado on the whole the tree dropped down onto the Baja's roof. Nothing and nobody was allowed to damage my pride and joy, and so the tree had to go...

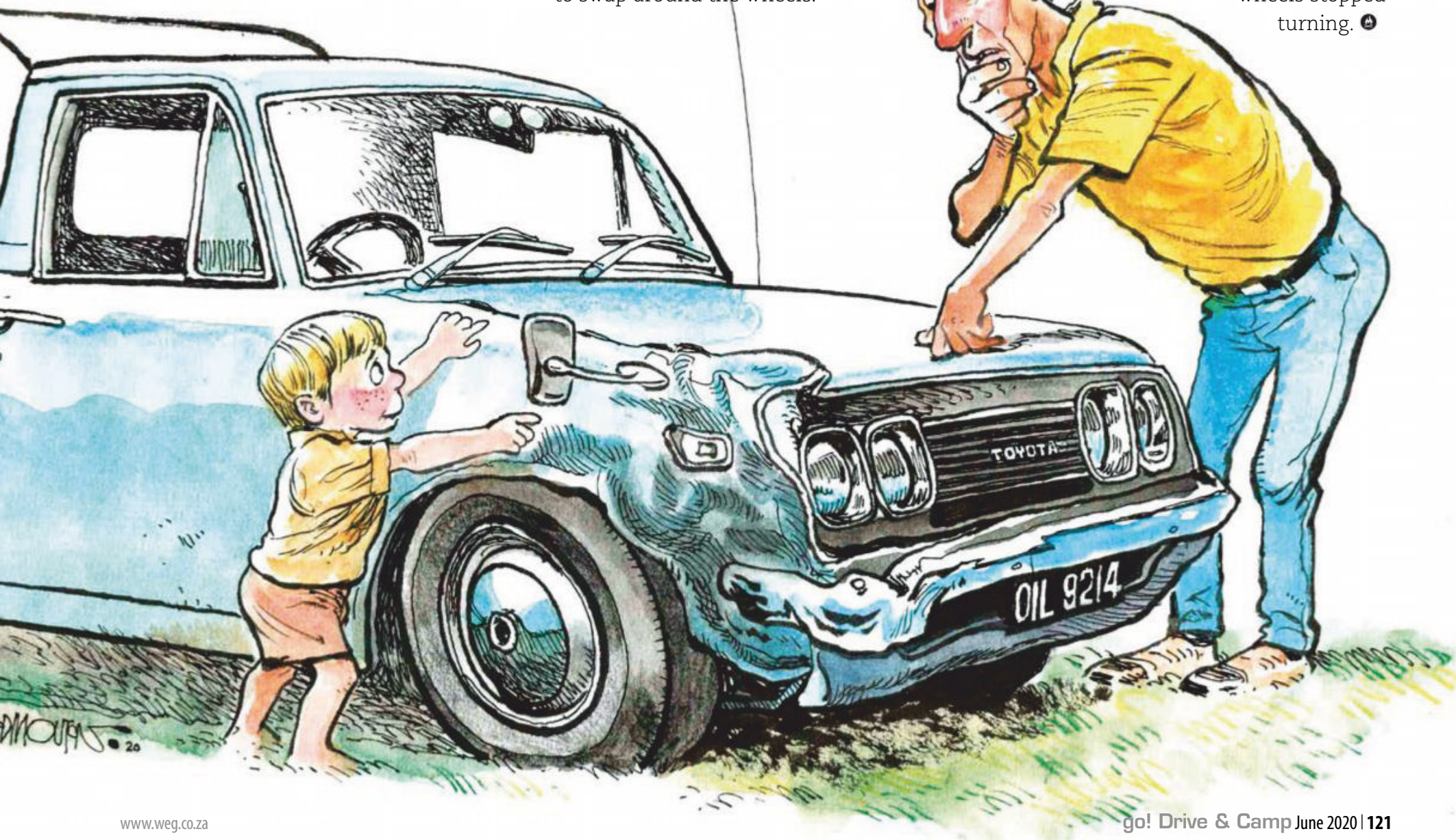
**AFTER THAN INCIDENT,** there were a few more mishaps with various vehicles. I got a R100 fine – my first – with the church's minibus while picking up kids for Sunday school. In Botswana, I bumped into a donkey with my niece's Hilux 4x4 – it got up and was so disoriented, it headed in the opposite direction. But it was Rascal, my rottweiler, who had me realising how vulnerable your beloved vehicle could be.

I was servicing my mother-in-law's Datsun 120Y and needed to swap around the wheels.

Everything went well until I replaced the last one and found a wheel nut was missing... As mentioned, I'm a chilled guy, but my blood pressure shot up. I looked about and realised Rascal was the culprit, but it would take a day to prove it. Indeed, the next day one of Rascal's landmines contained the evidence.

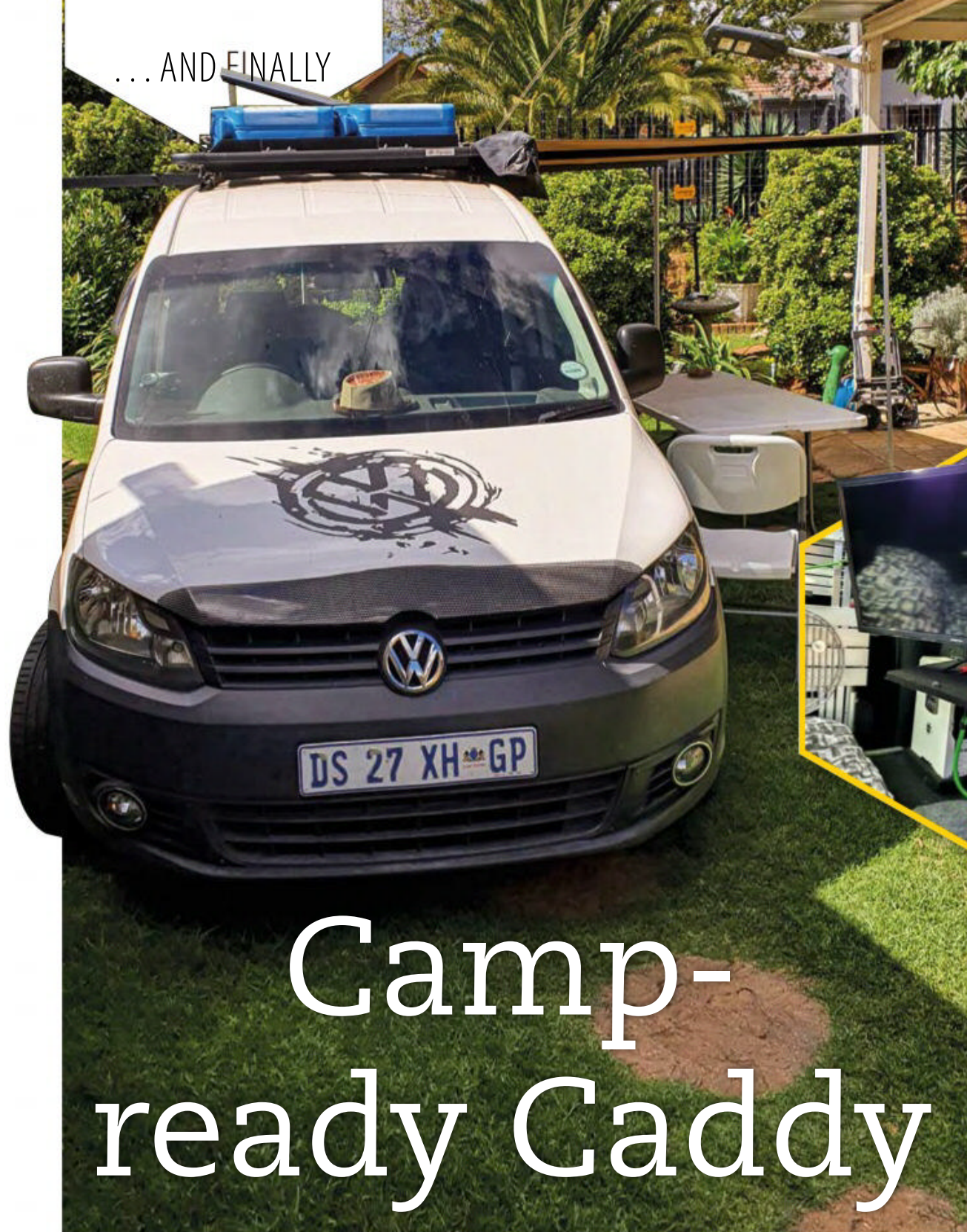
Rascal was also our own 'armed response unit' at home, but when we bought our Isuzu 4x4 bakkie, matters got out of hand. Kosi Bay and Sodwana beckoned, but Rascal was to scuttle those plans on his own. I came home one day and saw a bunch of pipes hanging from the chassis of the bakkie. I didn't want to believe it, but quickly understood this meant trouble. The right-hand brake pipe was chewed right off, the diff lock's pipe too. Rascal, you little...! It felt as though I'd been done a personal injury, and it hurt to look at my bakkie.

**FORTY YEARS AGO,** our parents didn't bother with seat belts or baby seats, because there weren't any. But we would always be on the road – until recently... when the president decreed that everyone should stay at home. And all the wheels stopped turning. 🚗





... AND FINALLY



# Camp-ready Caddy

With his wife's needs in mind, **Johnny Peters** from Randfontein made sure they could hit the road in their Caddy with maximum comfort.

“While my wife Ria and I both enjoy being out and about, she requires round-the-clock oxygen, so I had to make a plan that would satisfy our thirst for adventure.

I drive a E46 BMW 3 Series with a Lexus V8 conversion, which is quite the crowd-puller, but it's not really ideal for our touring ambitions. We're both in our sixties, but decided that we're very far from calling it quits on the outdoors so we had to look for something suitable for exploring South Africa.

I found a year-old Volkswagen Caddy Maxi 2,0 l TDI in 2016 for R180 000 with 116 000 km on the odometer, which is pretty much your standard panel-van type of vehicle. I then spent the next few months making it comfortable for Ria.

It's equipped with everything we need to make our trips comfortable including a wheelchair carrier at the rear for when we're about town or visiting family nearby. On top, there's an Eezi-Awn Bat awning and a roof rack that holds a folding table and chairs, and a 100-watt solar panel that feeds a 1kW pure sine inverter and dual batteries.

Inside, I've had a bed fitted that falls just short of double, so Ria can lie down

when she's not feeling well. There's also a rear-view camera so it helps me reverse. Then I've also got a flip-down screen as well as a flat-screen TV so both of us are kept entertained on a rainy day. I've got an Xbox in there, too.

I'm very happy with the thrifty turbodiesel engine, which gives me around 700 km from a tank, or just over 7 l/100 km. Of all the vehicles I've owned, this is one that I'm not allowed to sell, because Ria threatened divorce if I did.

We were due to go down to Cape Town, but due to the lockdown we haven't been able to go anywhere. We will most likely visit the Western Cape soon, as we're particularly fond of Mossel Bay on the Garden Route and Langebaan on the West Coast.



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](mailto:drivecamp@gomag.co.za)



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