

#23 **go!**

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JUNE 2019 | ISSUE 23

Drive & Camp

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beat the winter chill

WEEKEND AWAY

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Bonnievale

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Mitsubishi Triton
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CARAVAN TEST

ARMADILLO LITE

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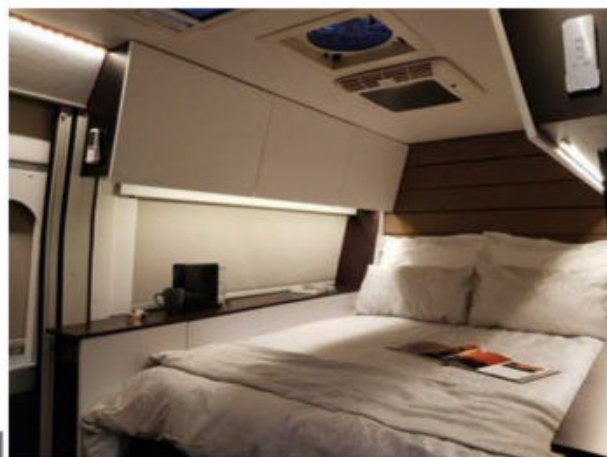
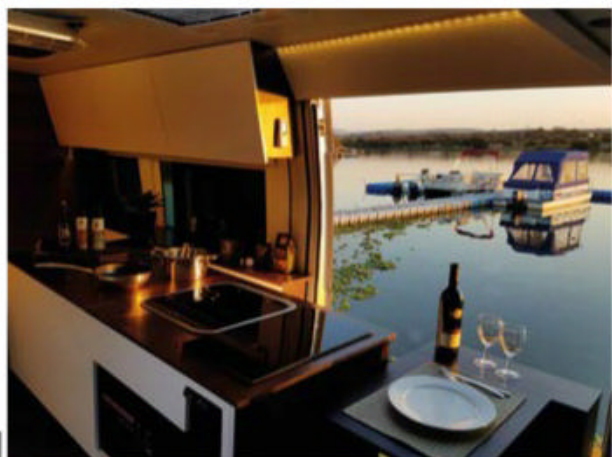
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RAV4

Contents

DESTINATIONS

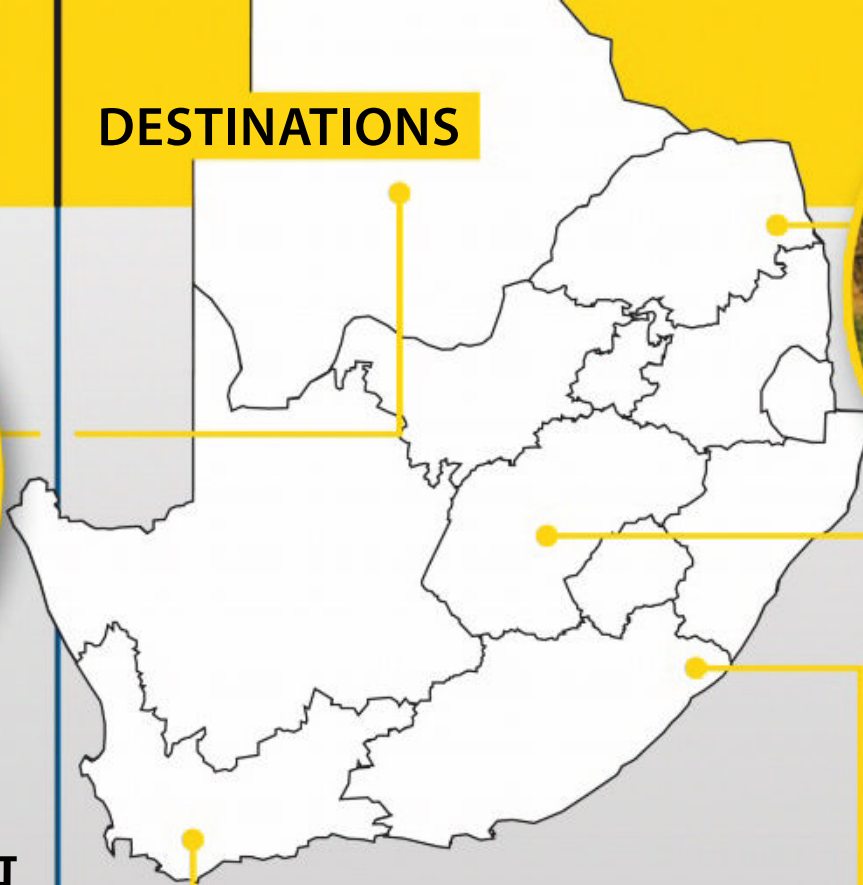


4x4 DESTINATION

36

#23 | June 2019
EVERY MONTH

ED'S LETTER	4
LETTERS	6
DIGITAL	8
MIC'S MEMOS	10
NEELS' RALLY TENT	11
NEWS	16
NEW WHEELS	26
DRIVING IMPRESSION	30
READER STORY – TRAVEL	78
READER STORY – DIY CARAVAN	84
CAMP FOOD	98
GEAR	102
CAMP BOFFIN	108
4x4 PROFESSOR	110
MY WHEELS	114
YOUR PHOTO	116
CROSSWORD	119
COLUMN	136
WACKY WHEELS	138



MY SPOT

74



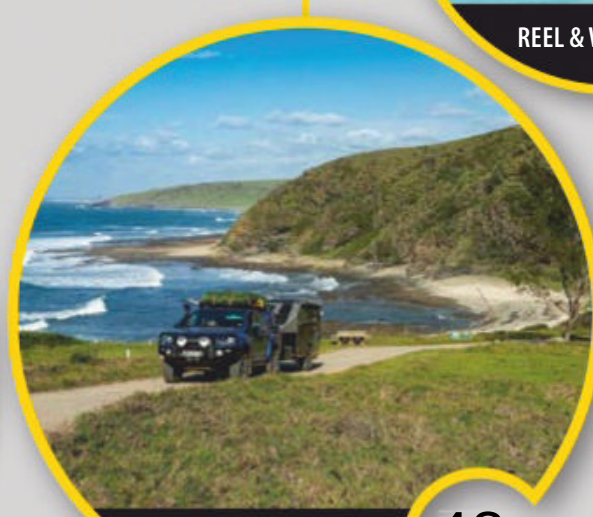
REEL & WHEEL

76



WEEKEND BREAK

58



CAMPING DESTINATION

48

Caravan test



A POP-UP OF NOTE

90

TRAIL GUIDE

The Valley of Desolation is the main attraction of the Camdeboo National Park, but did you know there are also two great 4x4 trails in the park?

68

“Where are we?”

When I still lived with my parents, we'd usually leave for our annual camping holiday in the winter. Every June, the Jonkers of Hennenman loaded their Gypsy 5, hitched it to the Kombi and hit the road to usually (and mercifully) one of the country's warmer regions.

My parents folded down the Kombi's back seats and fashioned a bed for us kids – four brothers and one baby sister – so we could sleep as we left the icy Free State in the early hours of the morning.

I will always remember how the noise of the Kombi's V6 engine and the sun shining through the window would wake me up somewhere along the way. “Where are we?” I would ask with a yawn, and the answer would almost always be: “We've just driven through Harrismith”. Then I was at my happiest, because it meant two things: we'd soon stop for breakfast and the ocean wasn't too far away.

When people ask me about my earliest travel memory, this is always the story I recount, because that moment perfectly captures what those holidays meant to me. The excitement and the closeness of people who love me and whom I love the most.

That's why my own family and I travel and camp. And I hope my daughter will have a similar story to tell someday.

This makes me wonder: why do you travel? What is your first travel memory? Please send your tale to schalk.jonker@media24.com.

I ALSO WANT TO TELL YOU about an exciting project. We are asked about towing licenses almost weekly. So many young families want to buy their first caravan, but lots of them don't have the right driver's license. This is something we are also concerned about – and so are caravan manufacturers.

Over the years, we've written a wide variety of articles on this subject, and now we have compiled all that information into a special guide to help you get your towing license with a minimum of fuss. The Afrikaans edition is on shelf right now and the guide will be available in English soon.



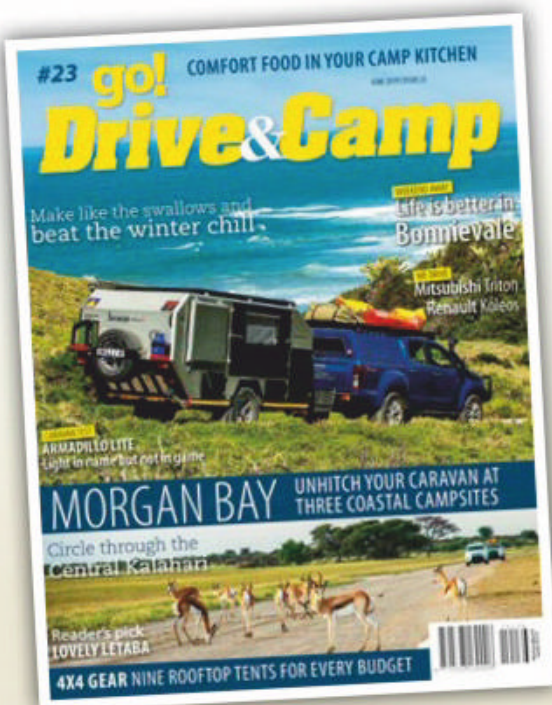
Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com

“The lion disappears in the blink of an eye with its prey... And we're once again reminded of the circle of life in the Kalahari.”

p 45



Main cover image **Leon Botha** (Double Mouth)

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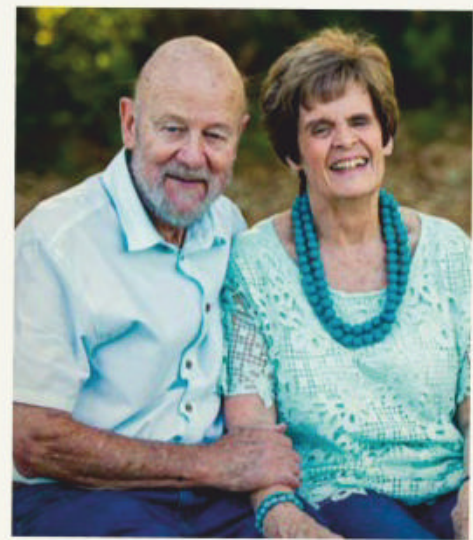
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HELLO, NEIGHBOUR!

We are pensioners who, together with our friends Danie and Lenore Joubert, undertook a three-week tour of the Karoo and Cederberg. The small towns of the Northern Cape – including Williston, Carnarvon, Calvinia and many others – are beautifully clean with friendly people who make tourists feel welcome. Loxton with its Rooi Granaat coffee shop as well as the tiny Middelpoos with its old-fashioned charm are some of the hidden gems. Sutherland and the Tankwa Karoo

National Park were a once-in-a-lifetime experience that should be on everyone's bucket list. The stargazing evening with Jurg Wagener at the Sterland campsite once again made us realise the grandeur of the immeasurable universe. And if only to eat Karoo lamb chops at the Whitehouse Inn in town again, we'll have no qualms about revisiting this trip again some day.

Another highlight was our three-night stay among the giant bluegums in the Algeria campsite. Here we experienced the wonderful scenery and also ventured on

some hiking trails, including the waterfall and the Maltese Cross trails.

And then, the surprise: we opened the April issue of *go! Drive & Camp*, expecting to read about the Cederberg. In the "Weekend break" article is a beautiful picture of Algeria and, in the background under the bluegums are our two familiar caravans. It's our two Gypsies! One is a 1984 Caravette and the other a 1999 Rapier. You visited the spot while we were there too.

MORKEL AND ELFRIEDE TERBLANCHE
Pretoria



Winning letter

Morkel and Elfriede win a cooler bag worth R220. Whether you're a camper, fisherman or sports fan next to a cricket pitch, this cooler bag has room for lunch box and a 1,5 l cooldrink bottle. The lid also has space for a coffee flask. The interior is lined with PVC which makes it easy to keep this bag clean

and hygienic. The bag has a short strap that reaches over the top and attaches with a Velcro strip, and also a longer shoulder strap if you're going to carry it over longer distances. It's an ideal picnic accessory or a padkos bag for a road trip.



INTO THE DEEP SAND

On our previous trip to the Kruger National Park we stayed overnight at Forever Tshipise. On our way there, we explored the area and turned off at a bridge over the Sand River. We saw tracks in the riverbed and decided to take on the loose sand ourselves.

It was an unforgettable experience with our good friends Johan and Lynnette Morkel from Groblersdal.

Here's a "selfie" we took with the help of a tripod.

JOOP AND SULITA DE KOCK
Middelburg, Mpumalanga



ROUND PEGS IN SQUARE HOLES

I have had it with all the round items, especially when touring and camping. I wonder if it's just me or whether there are others who agree.

We deal with round, circular objects every day. Just think: pots, pans, plates, bottles, gas cylinders and stove plates. The list of examples is endless. On the other hand, you have to pack a lot of round stuff in square or rectangular "containers" – from our vehicles and caravans to fridges and coolers.

At the cashiers, they pack your bottles in a bag, but the bag doesn't stand upright on its own in the car. If you don't get it right, it'll fall over, which could mean damage. Why don't manufacturers use square liquid containers? Then they can also shorten them so they don't fall over so easily – the bottoms will be wider. These square containers would also be easier to pack. Just think of our square fridges and cooler boxes. And because you can then pack the containers against one another, you save space and there's space for more. How much more space will there be on a cooldrink delivery truck transporting square bottles in square crates?

I think you could win up to 25% more space if you make round containers square. But I suspect round containers are cheaper to manufacture than squares...

Every now and again at least you see a square sauce bottle or even a jaffle maker.

CHRIS HEUNES
Vereeniging

THE WORLD'S FASTEST BEETLE

When I saw the letter about Uncle Cowboy and his VW Beetle in the February issue, I got such a warm feeling inside. I also have a story of a Beetle and caravan from past days I'd like to share. From 1979 to 1985 I was a student and very involved in student tours. But in July, I allowed myself the peace of the Kruger National Park. I packed my 1600 Beetle – a 1976 model – and my caravan, Kriekie, and left on a solo journey. With this towing combination, I became quite an institution in the park for a few years and sometimes enjoyed more attention than the lions did.

One time I left for the Lowveld with the Beetle and Kriekie, and near Waterval-Boven the current bridge was still under construction. I got stopped at roadworks with a proper uphill ahead. I was behind a caravan from the then Rhodesia, towed by a V8. I now had to start going again on the steep slope. The V8 got going and I could hear the automatic gearbox struggling to get a grip as the big engine battled to tow the caravan. Then it was my turn. I revved the Beetle and dropped the clutch. I kept going in first gear, and when I switched to second, the revs were right up against the red. I reached the Rhodesians and had so much momentum that I took the opportunity to overtake. I sat on the edge of my seat and my nose almost touched the flat windscreen... and we passed them!

At Nelspruit, the Rhodesians pulled in next to me at the petrol station, and I saw the V8 was a Cadillac. The guy behind the wheel peeked through his side window and asked, "Boy, what have you got under that bonnet?"

"Sasol, oom, Sasol..."

Thank you for a lovely magazine. I am almost sixty and enjoy all the photos of cars and caravans from my childhood.

HENNIE NEL
Mokopane



Safety checks and balances



Although modern vehicles come equipped with features such as anti-sway control, stabilisers are clearly not a thing of the past as far as our Facebook friends are concerned. But not everyone seems to agree.



Morne Eloff

I tow a Jurgens Fleetline with a Ford Ranger 3.0 TDCI 4x4 auto. I use a stabiliser for long trips, but seldom for short distances. Not that there's going to be a difference, but it's the right thing to do. Even if you don't feel that it's necessary.



Jaco Nortje

I hitch a Jurgens Penta to my Toyota Fortuner. I was very glad that I still use a Tando after we lost a wheel on the Penta and it handled the combination with 100 % stability.



Follow @wegrystsleep on Instagram and mark your photos with #wegrystsleep, and we might repost them on our stream or feature them here.



48 likes

wegrystsleep Kyk hierdie warm Navara wat met Ironman 4x4-speelgoed opgedollie is. Hy staan vandag hier by die Nissan-aanleg in Rosslyn, Pretoria waar Nissan SA 'n belegging van R3 miljard aangekondig het om die Navara voortaan hier te bou. #nissan #navara



Frikkie and Marisa Potgieter

We've been towing for 35 years with a Tando. Even if we know that we've packed the caravan 100% correctly, you can never be too careful.



Pieter Rossouw

I drive a Ford Ranger Wildtrack and tow a Jurgens Exclusive. I have a Red Blade Straightliner. I'm not sure if it actually has any effect on such a large caravan, because the bakkie has anti-sway as well.



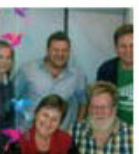
Andre Vorster

I have a Ford Ranger 3.2 XLT and tow a 17,6 ft sailfish boat and I don't use a stabiliser. For camping, I tow a Gypsy Regal with a Nissan X-trail (diesel, 4x4) and then I use a Tando stabiliser. When I tow the Gypsy with the Ford, I use the Tando and a drop plate.



Johan Conradie

I tow my Jurgens Fleetline with a Mitsubishi Pajero Sport or a Mercedes-Benz C320, and always with a Tando.



Leon Crous

We hitch our Gypsy Romany to a 2.8 Trailblazer and I use a Tando, even if it's not necessary – just for the added peace of mind.



**COMMENT
OF THE
MONTH!**

"Many years ago it was one of the most beautiful campsites in the country!"

We visited the Cederberg recently for a Weekend Break feature and the comments on an image we took at the Algeria campsite suggested that it was not only us who found the spot breathtaking, but Coenie Delpont, among others, as well.



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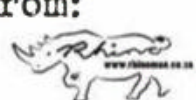
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Engine size vs performance

There are a number of reasons why many vehicle manufacturers are shrinking engine capacities on new vehicles, says Mic van Zyl.

Whenever I travel to Cape Town for business, I get an opportunity to drive something other than a 4x4 vehicle for a couple of days.

On my last trip, having collected the keys for a brand-new VW Polo TSI from the rental company, I was immediately struck by its abundant performance and the pleasing gruff engine note when accelerating away from the traffic lights.

The acceleration was so quick, I had to take care not to spin the front wheels. I did a little reading up and the Internet revealed to me that this fine little car only has a 1,0 l three-cylinder turbo-charged petrol engine. It performed more like a hot 2,0 l. Even more surprising was the fact that after three days of scurrying around the peninsula, the fuel gauge had hardly moved from full.

THERE ARE a number of reasons why many vehicle manufacturers are shrinking engine capacities on new vehicles. Smaller engines weigh less and are generally cheaper to manufacture from a material cost point of view. Vehicle tax in some countries is determined by engine size. A smaller engine equals less tax. In most cases they also use less fuel, resulting in lower emissions.

They are also physically smaller and that can help with

better weight distribution.

Advances in design and material specifications as well as turbo and super charging have allowed engineers to take things much further than a few years ago.

When it comes to 4x4 vehicles and bakkies, Volkswagen took a massive leap of faith almost a decade ago when they introduced a 2,0 l turbo-diesel engine in their Amarok range. At the time I thought that this was going to end in tears and there have been many detractors of the small engine. But, on reflection, it has been very successful.

Ford followed recently, launching the PXIII Ranger facelift with a small-capacity engine in the range-topping Wildtrack model. Like the Amarok, this is also available in single and twin turbo models in a 2,0 l size.

With the Ranger in particular, it is interesting to note the differences between the current 3,2 l five-cylinder single-turbo and the new 2,0 l four-cylinder twin-turbo engines. The former delivers 147 kW @ 3 000 rpm and 470 Nm @ 1 750-2 500 rpm, while the new 2.0 twin turbo delivers 157 kW @ 3 750 rpm and 500 Nm @ 1 750 to 2 000 rpm

The smaller engine delivers more power, but higher up the rev range, and more torque, albeit over a narrower band. I own the 3.2 and, in my opinion, the gearbox is not great. It also

seems to use up much of that power and let much less through to the wheels. The engine is not smooth, and you can forget about revving it higher than 3 000 rpm. Having driven the 2.0 Raptor in Australia last year, I can vouch that it is much better.

THESE SMALLER capacity engines deliver very decent power and torque output figures. They do, however, tend to have a narrower optimum torque band than larger capacity engines and their maximum power deliver happens higher up the rev range.

To better manage this situation, these vehicles feature multi-ratio gearboxes featuring no less than eight forward gears in the Volkswagen auto and 10 in the Ford, which is auto only, thankfully. The choice of these many ratios allows the ECU software to keep the engine in that peak torque band by selecting the appropriate gear.

In most cases it works and the rewards are lower fuel consumption and emissions while delivering performance.

It remains to be seen whether one can get used to all that gear changing, though.

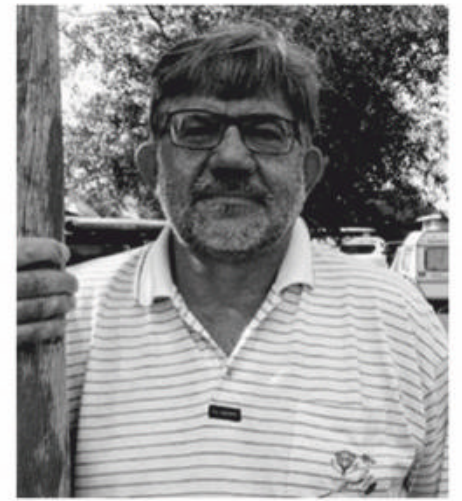
Volkswagen took a massive leap of faith almost a decade ago when they introduced a 2,0 l turbo-diesel engine in their Amarok range.

Mic van Zyl is the director of Ironman 4x4 Africa, the sole importer and distributor of the full range of Ironman 4x4 products.

ironman4x4.co.za

Do it for the kids!

Research in Britain show parents believe camping has a positive effect on their children's school performance, says Neels van Heerden.



One of my friends who is also a camping enthusiast told me about an interesting research project conducted in the UK. The researchers interviewed parents and children about their camping experiences and found that British kids who camp at least once a year apparently do better at school.

In the test sample of members belonging to the British Camp and Living Club (BCCC), respondents had to answer questions about the educational, psychological and social benefits of camping for children of all ages. Unfortunately, there is no mention of exactly how many parents and their offspring participated in the study.

Diligent academic researchers may well be sceptical about whether these findings can be generalised, but I believe it can serve as a guideline for further research on the subject – also here in South Africa.

In the research, it was found that almost 98% of parents believe that regular camp excursions bring children closer to nature, and this increases their appreciation thereof. Nearly 95% of respondents indicated their kids are significantly happier, while 93% believe children learn useful life skills that will come in handy as they get older. More than two-thirds believe camping allows their

children to have a more positive classroom experience, too, as they share camp adventures and experiences with their classmates and teachers.

A fifth of parents said camping gave their children individual freedom, independence and confidence, while 15% reported kids temporarily abandoning their attachment to technology – such as laptops, tablets and smartphones – when camping.

I FIND IT informative that 80% of the parents participating in the research believe camping has a positive impact on their children's school performance, especially in subjects including geography, science, biology, history, English and maths.

Children better understand how ecosystems interact; they see, hear, feel and experience a variety of life forms; and they cultivate respect for nature and the environment.

Observing natural phenomena first-hand and gaining practical knowledge about fauna and flora create a continuous learning experience that then spills over into the classroom.

The children's general knowledge is expanded – evident in school projects and orals. The research does not specifically mention what steps, if any, parents and/or campsites took to create these learning experiences.

What is mentioned is that families who cook together, are able to freely play in the campsite and those who hike in nature, make a greater contribution to children's subject-oriented learning experiences.

WHY WOULD a camp club be involved in such a research project? I suspect their focus is on the future. Today's kids are tomorrow's parents, who in turn will need to introduce their children to camping as a lifestyle.

The BCCC has hundreds of thousands of members and offers, among other benefits, access to more than 100 campsites owned and maintained by the club. Many of them are pet friendly and more than 1 500 are remote and exclusive – there is never more than a handful of caravans, tents or motorhomes to see.

The more members, the more benefits can be negotiated with service providers and the more money they have to maintain their own campsites, develop new ones and even take over ones that are in trouble.

Google the club's name and see how dynamic it is. Clubs in South Africa that are more focused on everyone's ability to 'kuier', stagnate one after the other. Perhaps we can learn from the British how to ensure the future of our own camping industry. 🏕️

“
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LeisureWorld takes hold

LeisureWorld has been doing business for almost a year, and judging by the number of dealerships, business is booming.

They came about as a direct result of Jurgens Ci's problems of maintaining stock and repairs at their Campworld branches nationwide. A total of 17 of these dealers established a new venture – LeisureWorld – thus enabling them, among other things, to keep the camping equipment sections of their businesses going. Arnold Prosch, one of LeisureWorld's directors, says things are going so well that even non-caravan dealers

have joined the group in the meantime. Currently, they have a network of 22 dealerships across the country.

LeisureWorld also managed to arrange that Jurgens Ci caravans – such as Gypsey, Sprite and Jurgens – can be serviced by their dealers; and they have spare parts available. Alize de Goede – who is in charge of LeisureWorld's imports – says they now also have a warehouse for their stock in Kempton Park and their first shipment from England has arrived (pictured).

LeisureWorld has also acquired

the sole agency in Africa of Kampa, a British camping equipment manufacturer. Kampa has all kinds of equipment that includes items from caravan steps and sleeping bags to camping chairs, crockery and inflatable tents. All their products have a three-year guarantee.

LeisureWorld has built up a good supply of stock in the meantime – items including brake lights, door locks and panels. If they don't have something in stock, it'll take 2-6 weeks to import it.

Contact leisureworld.com



Stealth appoints more dealers



After its inception, Stealth Caravans appointed four dealers nationwide to sell its caravans. Garry Coady, owner of Stealth, says they have now selected another three traders to serve an even wider area.

They are Cara-Camp Caravan & Outdoor Center in Somerset West, Silver Lakes Caravans in Pretoria and Middelburg Caravans & LeisureWorld in Mpumalanga. The existing ones are Loftus Caravan City in Randburg, Kempton Caravans in Johannesburg, Natal Caravans & Marine in Pinetown and Tygerberg Caravans in Cape Town.

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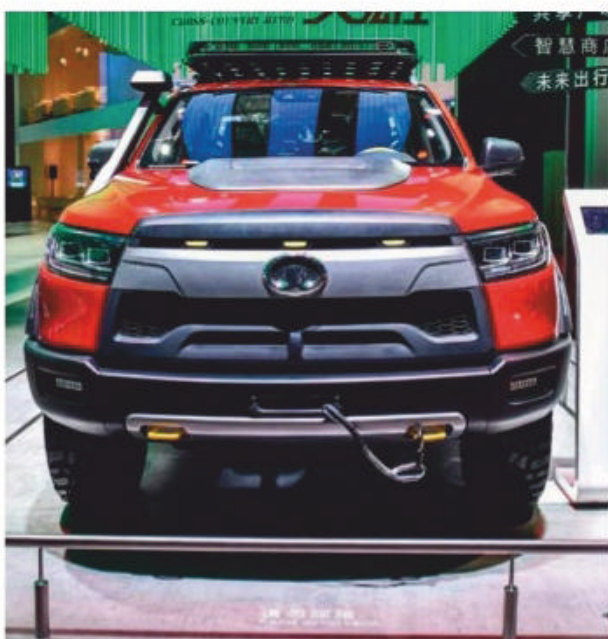
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New GWM bakkie heading to SA in 2021



Great Wall Pickup, a division of GWM and the market leader among Chinese bakkies, launched a new bakkie at the Shanghai Motor Show in April this year. It doesn't have a name yet, but according to GWM it will arrive in South Africa in 2021.



There will be three versions: a LWB single-cab for the commercial market, a double cab for the lifestyle market and a double cab off-roader (pictured) for the adventurous.

No dimensions or power figures have yet been released, but Jiaming Zhang, GWM's

pickup platform director, confirmed that the new bakkie would initially be powered by a 2.0 four-cylinder turbo petrol engine. The engine will have various power and torque outputs depending on the version in which it is used. A larger capacity turbo diesel is also in development, says Zhang.

The turbo petrol engine is linked to an eight-speed automatic dual-clutch transmission by German gearbox manufacturer ZF, and the flagship double cab model and the off-road version get four-wheel drive with three diff lockers (front, centre and rear). The bakkie can carry a full one tonne and has a maximum towing weight of 3 500 kg.

The newcomer won't use the existing chassis from the current GWM Steed or any other Haval product, but rather gets a versatile new chassis (the P71) that will be shared with other GWM vehicles, including the second-generation Haval H9 that's still being designed.

The bakkie receives independent front suspension and multi-link coil rear springs, just like the Nissan Navara (and the Mercedes-Benz X class). The commercial version gets rear leaf springs. The styling is reminiscent of Navara, Hilux and Ranger – and that's deliberate, because GWM is targeting those vehicles.

In terms of technology, GWM intends to equip its bakkie with modern gadgets, such as artificial intelligence connected to the Internet, automatic parking and adaptive cruise control.

The newcomer will be built in the brand-new Chongqing plant in the Yongchuan district of China, and the first shipment will be sent to Russia, Chile, Australia and South Africa.

Prices are not yet known.

Swifts are arriving

Loftus Caravan City has been importing Swift caravans from England since September, and many campers are loving its British luxury.

Woody Loftus says Swift has 40 different layouts for its caravans, four of which are imported. (For example, all four have an island bed because it's so popular locally.)

In the past few months, they have already imported 29 units and the next eight are on their way.

Something you don't see on an imported caravan is an outdoor kitchen. For R20 000 extra, Woody and his team can equip your Swift with one, but only on the Coastline Delux and Atlantic models. In both, the kitchen pulls out from the space under the double bed. The kitchen is similar to those seen on the Okto caravans, just slightly wider, says Woody.

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6 Jeep prototypes at Moab

Six Jeep concept vehicles were launched at the 53rd annual Moab Easter Jeep Safari.

The Jeeps are equipped by the Fiat-Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) subsidiary, Mopar (MOTOR and PARTS). Mopar has existed since 1937 and originally made antifreeze liquid before focusing on Jeep performance parts.

The Moab Easter Jeep Safari is an annual rally where Jeep owners depart from

Moab in the US state of Utah on a nine-day 4x4 trail. The rally began in 1967 and originally only lasted one day, the so-called "Big Saturday". It remains the highlight of the Moab rally and always falls on the Saturday of an Easter weekend.

The Jeep prototype exhibition has become a popular attraction at the rally over the past few years.



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Small Hyundai teems with gadgets

South Korean car manufacturer Hyundai has just unveiled its latest and smallest SUV at the New York Motor Show. Hyundai's vehicles are traditionally named after exotic destinations (such as Tucson, Creta, Santa Fe), but the Hyundai Venue is so named because a "Venue" is supposedly a place you want to be seen in.

"We plan to introduce the Venue in our local model line-up, pending the completion of a business case study," said Stanley Anderson, sales and operations director at Hyundai Automotive South Africa. "The initial impression of the Venue is that of a seamless combination of style and versatility. It is small in size, but big on practicality and personality, and it has lovely bold character."

Despite its modest dimensions, the Venue will be stuffed with all sorts of electronic gadgets, such as blind-spot sensors, a sensor that measures the driver's level of fatigue, sensors that help you stay in your lane, sensors scanning backward

and sideways when backing out of a parking lot, and sensors that can see through thick fog and automatically brake before you hit another car. (Why didn't they just call it the Hyundai Sensor? – Ed) The Venue will also be equipped with different drive modes that give this front-wheel drive the ability to perform well in inclement weather.

Exactly how many of these gadgets will be available in the South African model – if it comes to our shores – is not yet known.

The Venue will be assembled in South Korea and India.



Nissan to build Navara locally

Nissan SA says it will invest R3bn in its plant in Rosslyn, Pretoria, so it can produce the next generation of Navara in South Africa for the first time.

Production of the Navara is expected to start next year and the bakkies are destined for the local and export market. The Navara will be built next to the popular NP200 and NP300 that are exported to more than 40 African countries. Nissan says the investment will create 1 200 jobs and increase the plant's production by 30 000 vehicles per year.

President Cyril Ramaphosa attended the announcement. Before getting behind the wheel of a Navara for a photo, he praised Nissan for its contribution to the South African economy.

"The automotive industry is already the largest part of South Africa's manufacturing sector, which provides around 7% of the country's gross domestic product. I am delighted that Nissan will be manufacturing the Navara locally," said President Ramaphosa.





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Second chances

MITSUBISHI TRITON

Mitsubishi is trying to recapture South African hearts after the first Triton left us cold. Cyril Kloppe investigates whether the relationship can be salvaged.

If you like numbers, you should definitely follow the monthly new vehicle sales figures by the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa). We've been studying their records for the past 10 years, and it's interesting to chart the downfall of once popular brands and follow the rise of other makes over the past decade.

From 2009 to 2011, Isuzu dominated Ford with double the monthly sales. Land Rover's Defender bakkie was neck and neck with the Mahindra Scorpio bakkie, and with the launch of the then-new Ranger in 2012, Ford grew from selling roughly 600 bakkies a month to more than 2 000 units within a year.

Mazda sold 400 bakkies a month 10 years ago, but that number is decreasing year on year. Today, Mazda can't sell enough bakkies a month to fill a tennis court.

However, the trophy for the biggest loss

goes to Mitsubishi. Their Colt gave the Hilux a run for its money, and Mitsubishi's beloved bakkie was often a best seller. But then the Triton was born...

Even with the support of the Mercedes-Benz dealer network, Triton's sales weakened daily. When Mercedes and Mitsubishi parted ways in 2011, sales dropped from around 200 Tritons a month to an average of 50. Triton's darkest period was in the second half of 2016 when they could barely sell one Triton a month.

It seemed as if it was over for Triton, but after the second generation of Triton was launched in 2017 (2015 in other countries), it slowly started to recover. In March 2019, Mitsubishi managed to sell 51 Tritons. That may not sound like a lot, but it's a start.

To speed up Triton's return, Mitsubishi recently refreshed its appearance. Let's see what it looks like now.

The exterior

At the launch of the latest Triton, we heard a guy joke: "It's a tonne of try" – a pun, of course, on the name "Triton".

The abundance of chrome may indeed seem like Mitsubishi is trying hard to get your attention, but perhaps that's exactly what it needs to do.

Mitsubishi has a name for the Triton's square face: Dynamic Shield. It looks like something from a *Transformers* movie and we're not sure if everyone will like it. However, the overall picture is striking, and it looks sportier than the Fiat Fullback which shares the same basic bodywork. The bonnet line and narrow headlights are higher up and provide a powerful and impressive look.

The tailgate now has a gas strut that prevents it from slamming down. The latch has lots of chrome around it, which apparently suits the taste of the Eastern



SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	2,4 ℓ four-cylinder turbodiesel
Power	133 kW @ 3 500 rpm
Torque	430 Nm @ 2 500 rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Fuel consumption	7,6/100 km
Tank	75 ℓ
Ground clearance	220 mm
Approach and departure angles	28 ° and 23 °
Turning circle	5,9 m
Tare weight	1 635 kg
Maximum towing weight	3 100 kg
Service plan	5 years/90 000 km
Guarantee	3 years /100 000 km
Safety rating	★★★★★ (EuroNCAP 2015)

Prices

2.4 DI-DC 4x2 manual	R509 995
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2.4 DI-DC 4x4 automatic	R589 995

POWER RANGER. The interior is a bit glum compared to the exterior, but it feels solid and it's logically laid out. The fold-down arm rest in the back bench is a novel, but welcome, feature for a bakkie. The ceiling in the back is a little on the low side and tall passengers may feel claustrophobic.



market, but may divide South Africans. The tail lights were redesigned to echo the angular lines of the Dynamic Shield, and the rear bumper is bulkier than before. We think it's a gorgeous bakkie, although the oversupply of chrome may be a bit much.

The interior

The dashboard is redesigned, but a layman won't be able to spot the changes. Most buttons are indeed the same, and apart from the brand-new leather steering wheel, it's just the air-conditioning's outlets and chrome strips here and there that look vastly different.

The steering column can still be adjusted for height and reach. The steering wheel has buttons for speed control and the audio system, and the infotainment system has new versions of Apple CarPlay and Android Auto software that communicate with your smartphone.

That four-wheel drive

The latest Triton boasts Mitsubishi's new Super Select II four-wheel drive system that includes ground, mud/snow, rock (only in 4LLc) and sand mode. The driving modes control engine power, transmission and braking to regulate the amount of wheel slip, thereby maximising all-terrain and self-extraction performance in mud or snow..

"The new model brings enhancements to the durability, reliability and comfort developed over the 40 years since the introduction of the series. I am fully confident the new Triton will meet the diverse needs and wishes of our customers around the world," said Nic Campbell, general manager of Mitsubishi Motors South Africa.

We hope Nic is right because the Triton has a reputation of being a tough bakkie. Its part-time four-wheel drive system is also the best we've encountered in a bakkie. For example, what bakkie manufacturer can claim to be able to engage four-wheel drive on a tar road?

The Triton uses a six-speed automatic transmission rather than the Pajero Sport's eight-speed. Mitsubishi claims an automatic gearbox with fewer gears is less likely to hunt around for the appropriate gear when carrying or towing a heavy load.

Conclusion

The new Triton won't steal the spotlight from Toyota's Hilux. As far as gadgets go, the Triton is also years behind the Ford Ranger. But it's tough, has a smart four-wheel drive system and a unique look. So, consider it if you want to stand out from the masses.

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Chic Dynamique!

French car manufacturer Renault has been hard at work restyling and simplifying its model line-up. The recently revived Koleos is a case in point, says **Kyle Kock**.

The first-generation Koleos died a quiet death, and to be honest, it wasn't really missed.

Renault also didn't have the best reputation in this country, especially when it came to costly repairs or customers often having to wait several months for replacement parts.

However, that all seems to be in the past, especially with Renault's renewed commitment to the

South African market and the investment of a new local parts distribution centre a few years ago. The brand's fortunes have also been on the rise thanks to the runaway popularity of its Sandero Stepway crossover and the tough little Duster SUV.

Buoyed by the recent sales success, and armed with a sexy new design language ushered in with the current Megane, can you blame the Renault bigwigs

for trying again with their range-topping Koleos? They've even borrowed a few items from the Nissan parts bin to make sure that the Koleos has a more successful second venture into our market.

Head-turner

Whereas the previous Scenic appeared like a sort of hatchback on stilts, this new model looks like it was designed from the ground up to be an SUV, with an

elongated bonnet, long roofline and impressive ground clearance of 210 mm. What also helps the Koleos appear more athletic than its Japanese cousin, the X-Trail, is that it's wider and noticeably more squat, at 1,84 m and 1,68 m tall respectively.

Up front, the LED headlamps throw a distinctive pattern into the rear-view mirrors of any rivals on or off the road, with a distinct C-shape daytime running light on either side. The highlighted outline of the lights is carried on at the rear end, and the profile is finished off with large alloy wheels.



RENAULT KOLEOS DYNAMIQUE 2.5

There's plenty of strong horizontal design lines that create the impression that the Koleos is more imposing than it actually is. The chrome accents also bounced beautifully off the Cosmos Blue painted bodywork of our test unit.

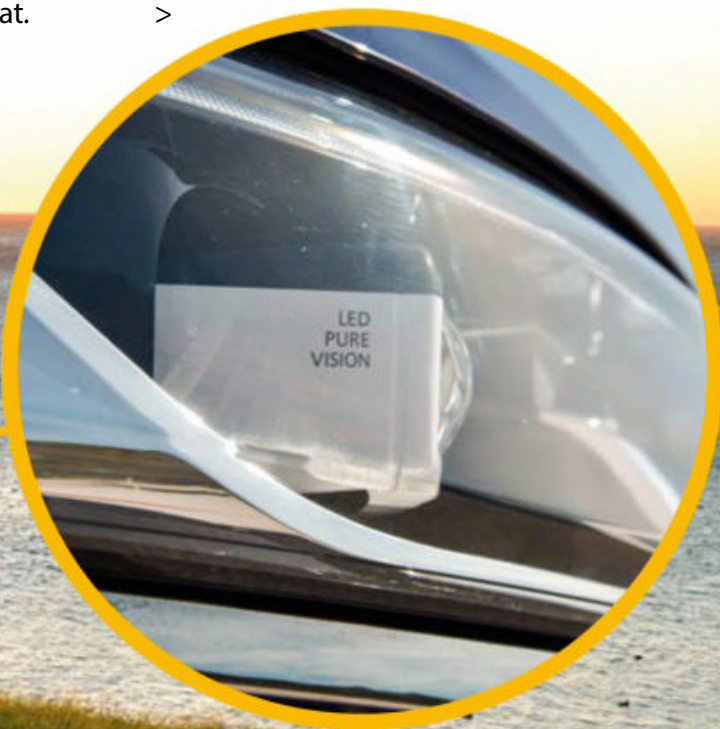
No frills powertrain

We only get one engine in the South African Koleos range; a 2,4 l normally-aspirated four-cylinder petrol motor, which is basic by modern motoring standards. The plus side for Renault is that this engine has paid its dues in the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance and, with no problematic turbo plumbing and associated issues with forced induction engines after high mileages, should prove quite reliable over its lifespan.

All three models, share a continuously variable transmission, that allows the driver the sensation of shifting up all the way to an indicated seventh 'gear' after moving the gear selector left and into manual mode. Most of the torque is sent to the front axle, just as in most vehicles with a transversely mounted motor, but there's a switch just above the driver's right knee that allows changes on the fly from the default auto setting to either 2WD or 4WD lock – the latter of which sends exactly 25% of drive to each corner.

On and off the road

Of course, you can't expect ground-breaking performance figures, and the Koleos' outputs reflect that. >



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But what the numbers don't tell you is that the engineers have managed to make the overall driving experience quite an economical one, because at an indicated 8,3 l/100 km, the Koleos matched the average fuel consumption figure that Renault claims its big SUV is capable of. And that after using just under half a tank of fuel to cover 430 km – much of it on asphalt at typical freeway speeds and suburban runs. There were some rough gravel roads thrown in, too, somewhere in the middle.

The consumption dipped to 7,4 on the freeway, but that was after we made a conscious effort to keep our global emissions score as low as possible after filling up and initially registering returns in the mid 9s. (Whenever you complete a journey and turn the engine off, the central infotainment display flashes a few statistics about your driving style, namely the ferocity or ease of your acceleration and how you anticipate traffic to keep up your momentum.)

For this size of engine, the fuel consumption is quite impressive, but the CVT does seem to blunt outright thrust when you step on it and the revs climb beyond



the mid-range, the acceleration doesn't seem to match the noise of the transmission. The Koleos tips the scales at 1 565 kg, though, so the muted performance doesn't really come as a surprise.

One area that particularly puzzled us was its harsh ride, despite the standard fitment of 225/60 R18 inch tyres. There's just one recommended setting of tyre pressure, and that's 2,4 bar all round. That's not exactly super hard and the tyre walls are far from what you would describe as low profile, but somehow the suspension system couldn't absorb minor road



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imperfections without sounding and feeling crashy. The firm settings translate to decent on-road handling, but going faster than 60 km/h on certain dirt roads is not ideal for the Koleos.

The 50:50 lock between front and rear axles means that the Koleos was able to handle roads that would see 2WD crossovers and rear-wheel drive bakkies struggle and run for cover, but the system can only operate like that at speeds under 40 km/h, which can be frustrating when you want to push on a bit and maintain an even spread of torque.

A test of patience

Luddites be warned, this is not the kind of vehicle that you want to get if you're loathe to electronic everything. Sure, the electric seat adjustment and mirrors and automatic headlamps are nice-to-haves that nobody complains about, but what's really going to test your patience is the massive infotainment screen that, refreshingly, is mounted vertically.

This is probably the space you'll want to spend the most time at, getting to know the settings and navigation of the vehicle status, dual-zone air-conditioning, and multimedia and

navigation systems, because it's not as straightforward as you may think. The piano-black finish can also be infuriating if you're OCD about fingerprint marks all over a shiny surface.

There are four USB ports so that all the passengers can remain connected, though the front two are more invitations to initiate Apple CarPlay or Android Auto if you want to mirror your smartphone on the 8,7" display, while the two under the central rear vents provide the real charging point if your teenagers' devices need a quick boost.

Befitting of the Dynamique's range-topping status, its specification levels are comprehensive, complete with interior mood lighting (you can alter the hue), leather upholstery, park sensors and reverse camera, blind-spot warning in the side mirrors, tyre pressure monitoring system, and keyless entry and start. Most impressive, and equally annoying, about that keycard is that when you step away from the Koleos after you've switched off the ignition and closed the driver's door, it locks the vehicle automatically, regardless of your passengers who might still be stuck inside.

The 50:50 lock between front and rear means the Koleos manages roads that crossovers and RWD bakkies can't.

Conclusion

By using successful elements from within its industry alliance, the Koleos has finally come into its own. The styling is nothing like that of its Japanese counterpart, the dimensions are different, and while the powertrain is exactly the same, the Koleos is slightly more road-biased in terms of the way it's sprung.

Renault hasn't taken chances with its latest model and that's also reflected by its five-star

performance in the Euro NCAP safety programme test. It also comes with a 5 year/150 000 km warranty and 5 year/90 000 km service plan.



PACK AWAY. Despite the range-topping status of this model, and electric everything-else, the tailgate requires elbow grease to open. At least the boot is cavernous and there's a full-sized spare under the board.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Renault Koleos Dynamique 2.5 CVT 4x4
Engine	2 488 cc
Power	126 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	233 Nm @ 4 000 rpm
0-100 km/h	9,8 seconds*
Top speed	200 km/h*
Fuel consumption	8,3 l/100 km*
Fuel tank	60 l
Ground clearance	210 mm
Towing capacity	750 kg (unbraked)
CO2 emissions	188 g/km
Boot space	450 l
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
* manufacturer claims	
Price	R479 900





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The deep *Kalahari calls*



On the wide plains of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana you will encounter proud lions, graceful cheetahs and broiling thunderstorms.

Text and photos Evan Naudé



The clouds above the Shell filling station in Ghanzi form white spots in the pale blue sky. Through the frame of the bakkie's windscreen, it looks like a Windows screensaver on a home computer. It's late afternoon and the mercury is still touching 40 °C. But in these regions, such scorching heat is nothing unusual, because you are on the edge of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. You're expecting it.

As is quite often the case, today's rallying point for a drive through one of Africa's most

secluded regions is a petrol station's parking lot. We meet Phil van Wyk and Moagi Rain Robson, our tour guides from Bhejane 4x4 Adventures. First, they offer handshakes and then distribute radios to the eight-vehicle tour group. Having stocked up on fuel and snacks, the convoy hits the road. After all, we didn't come to waste time in a parking lot, because the entire 52 800 km² of the world's second largest nature reserve (a territory larger than the Netherlands) is waiting for us to explore it. >





“ Although the 260 km to Deception Valley does not sound a lot, the sandy roads prevent you driving much faster than 40 km/h.

Deeper and deeper into the Kalahari

We leave and take the A3 tar road north from Ghanzi. In the late afternoon, the road is covered in white and orange flutterings of a multitude of butterflies, a phenomenon that we encounter many times, wherever the Kalahari plains show recent signs of rain. At D'Kar, about 37 km from Ghanzi, we turn east onto a dirt road that takes us to our first overnight stop, Grasslands Safaris.

The next morning, we head out early as there's a full day's driving ahead. Our aim is the campsite in Deception Valley, and though the 260 km does not sound like a lot, the sandy roads prevent you from driving much faster than 40 km/h.

From Grasslands, we head northeast until we reach the western boundary fence of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Here we turn north and drive about 60 km along a wide, clear-cut borderline that connects the horizon ahead with the one behind us with a long grassy ribbon.

We reach the Tsau gate in the northwestern corner of the reserve just before lunch. It looks as if a wildfire, stormy winds or Father Time – or perhaps all three – have ravaged the reception building. The windows are gone, the toilets are barely left standing and the roof trusses are exposed to the afternoon sun like the ribcage of a behemoth long gnawed clean. After signing in at an official's desk inside an army tent





SETTING OFF. The adventure begins in a parking lot in Ghanzi (middle left) and the convoy sets off immediately on soft sandy paths (top left) in the direction of Grasslands Safaris (above and below), where camp is set up for the first night (bottom left). On the way to the reserve, the remnants of a bushman's settlement (bottom right).



behind the building, we enter the reserve. Immediately, a couple of gemsbok run across the road in front of us and within 10 minutes we see an elephant. Shortly after, we head south on a twin track that takes us past Matopi Pan and later Passarge Pan.

From Passarge, it's 55 km to the Deception campsite. We camp on numbers 5 and 6 where there are plenty of large trees to keep all the tents in the shade. The stands are surrounded by dense bush, and when it gets dark, we gather together around the campfire.

This is where lions roam, and even though we want to see them, we'd prefer it in the daylight.

Where the wild dogs hunt

Just after six the next morning, as the sun rises, we drive down to Deception. Right away we see a pack of eight wild dogs tearing apart a carcass. "I guess if we were here just half an hour earlier, we'd have seen them hunting," says Phil over the radio. We stop and watch the dogs for a while. Eventually they come to drink water at a puddle next to the road, after which they retire to sleep in the grass, tummies full. A few white-backed vultures come to check out the leftovers.

As we drive south into the valley, we encounter large herds of springbok and gemsbok, plus plenty of kori bustards and black-backed jackals jogging through the grass. "Check the cheetah," says Phil >



suddenly, but before we get the chance to take pictures, the big cat disappears into the bushes with a strip of breakfast hanging from his mouth. The Kalahari is busy this morning.

As the day reaches its peak temperature, there's not much to see as everything has gone looking for shade or shelter. We follow their example and that becomes the routine for the next three days: game viewing early morning and late afternoons, with a nap in-between.

That afternoon we find the wild dogs still lying in the same spot. Some gemsbok wander over, aiming for the puddle of water next to the dogs, but they just simply can't muster enough courage to chase the dogs away. A group of blue wildebeest then arrives on the scene with four little ones in tow – they simply lower

their heads, charge toward the dogs and chase them off.

Everything happens at once

The next morning, we're back in our vehicles after our ritual helping of coffee and rusks. This time we turn northwest to the Sunday and Leopard pans. On the way, we again see large herds of gemsbok, cheetah tracks and fresh elephant dung in the road. The bushveld is so dense between the pans that the ellies evade us, despite our best efforts to get a photo.

When we reach the Sunday Pan, the front vehicles of our convoy see three cheetahs under a tree, but they run over the road and disappear into the bush in the blink of an eye. On our way back to the camp, we stop at the waterhole on the Sunday Pan, but by now it's so hot

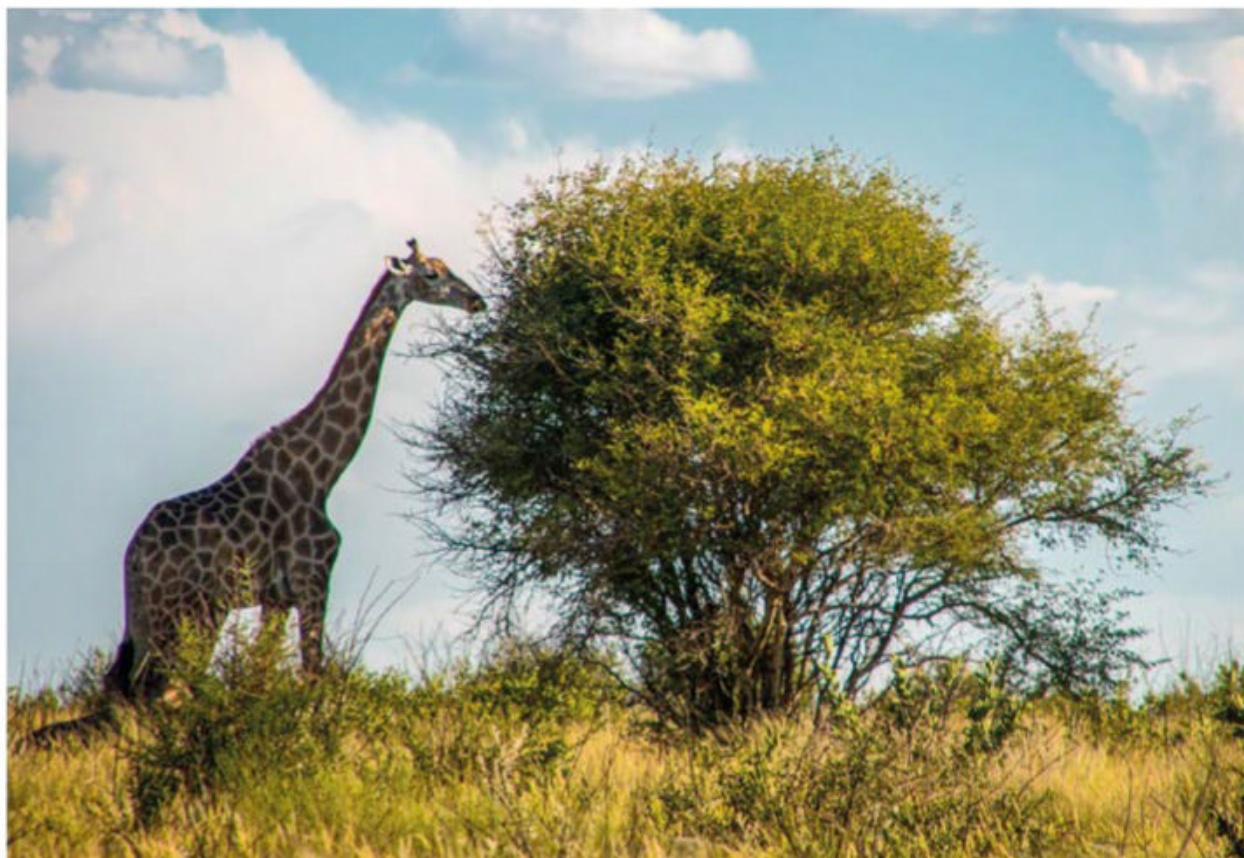
that we find only a herd of gemsbok here.

On our afternoon drive, we again stop at the waterhole, and just like the day before, heavy thunder clouds gather. This time they're closer to us, darker and more menacing, but the wind pushes them off.

The next day is our last at Deception, so we decide to spend the afternoon on the plains of the valley rather than driving far. While watching a huge herd of springbok, the thunder clouds amass again, and this time they let loose. Just like a slow-growing applause at the end of a play, it starts off with a few rhythmic drops but quickly builds into a crescendo of white noise clattering down on our vehicle.

The springboks stop moving and stand back with their heads low. They know the drill: wait a little while; the rain will stop soon. And just a few minutes later, >





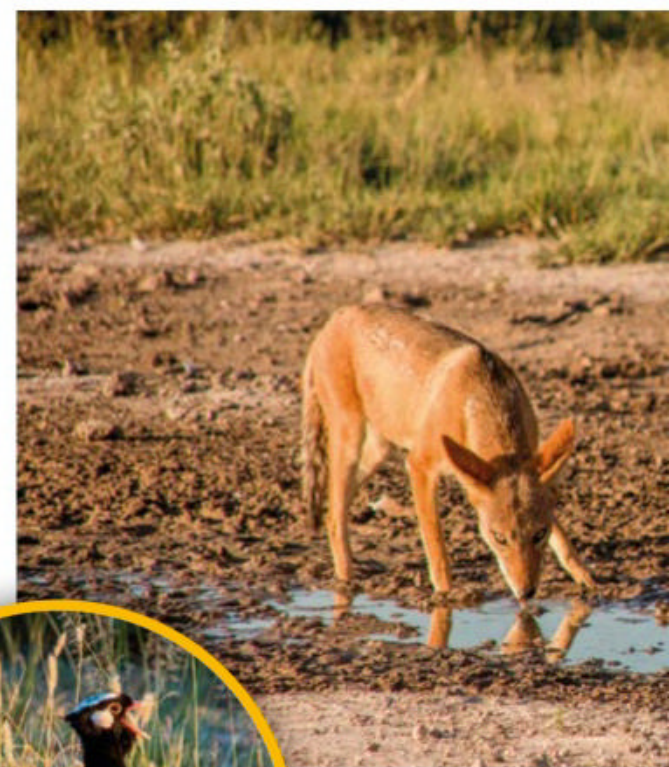
HOT OUT HERE. Although the Tsau gate has definitely seen better days (left), there's still an office run from a tent, and within the park the roads are clearly marked. Water holes and pans such as Matopi (main pic) offer the best chances of seeing animals (top), but in the midday heat it's best to seek out some shade (right).



“

On our way back, we stop at the waterhole on the Sunday Pan, but by now it's so hot that we find only a herd of gemsbok here.

“ Suddenly, the springboks come back to life and start jumping. It looks as though the rain has filled them with joy.



the worst is over and the entire plain's grasses shimmer. New pools of water lie around us. Suddenly, the springboks come back to life and start jumping, it looks as though the rain has filled them with joy. In the background, young blue wildebeest chase one another in circles, swaying their heads. The animals come to drink at the pools along the road, kissing their mirror image in the reflection. In the sky, a rainbow appears... and then another. There is a moment of silence as we watch

in awe. Then, in that sacred moment, while the herd is distracted, three jackals take down a springbok lamb. A reminder that nature gives and takes, sometimes at the same time.

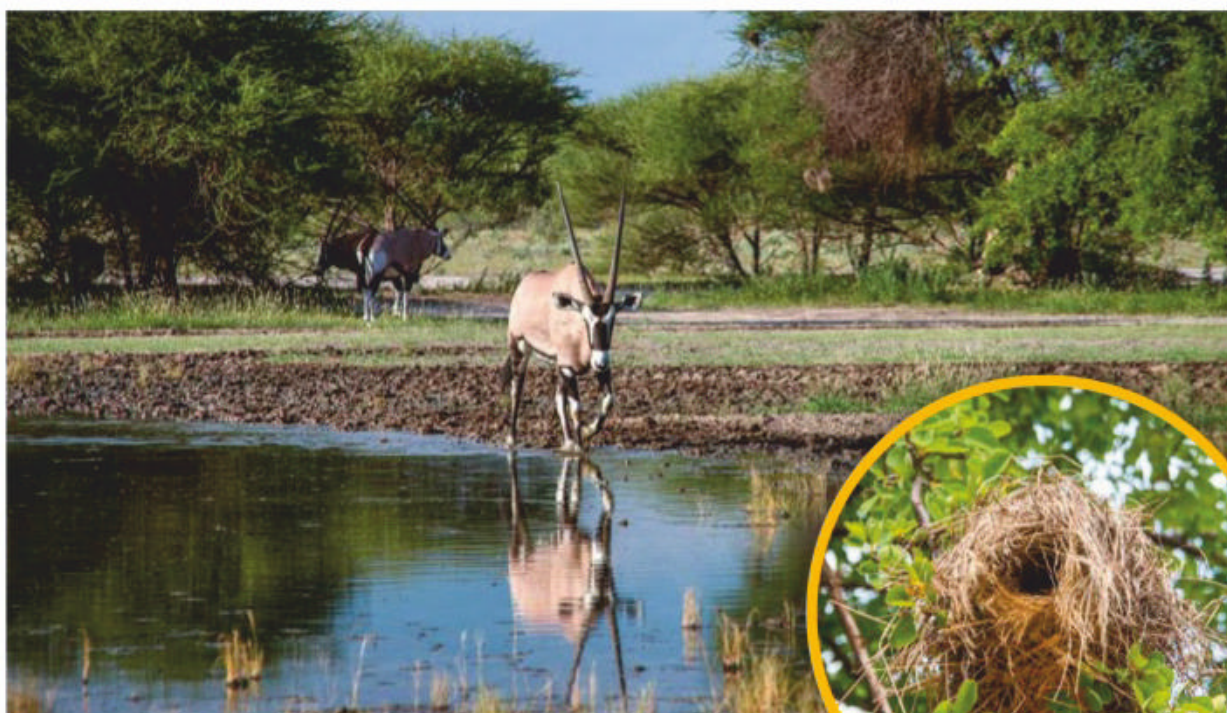
“That was a great drive with lots of stuff happening at the same time,” says Phil as we gather our thoughts. The thunderclouds move on and they leave behind a glowing orange sky while the setting sun turns the last few streaky clouds into splashes of gold and red. We

couldn't have asked for a better farewell to the Deception Valley.

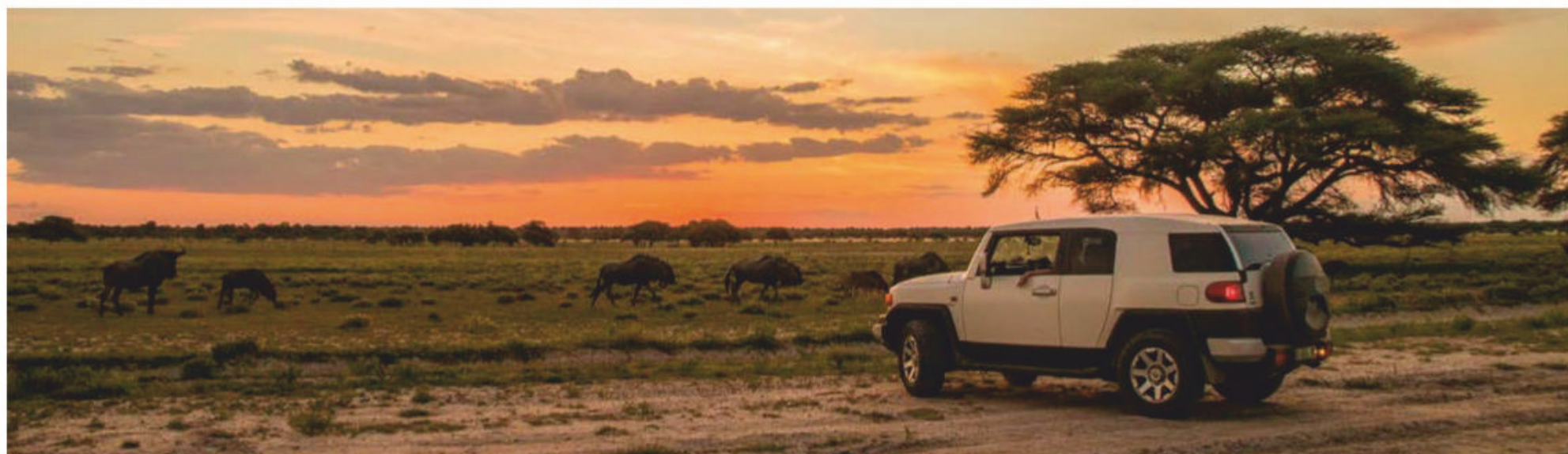
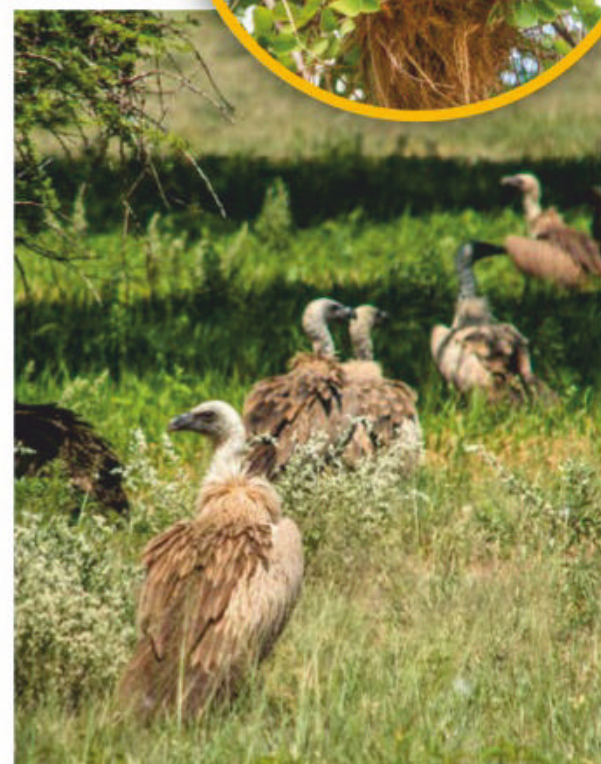
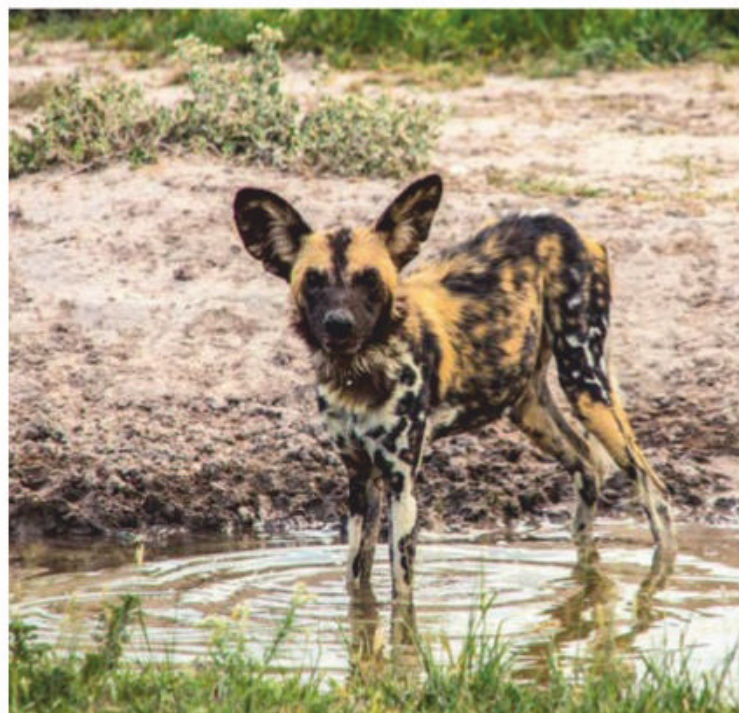
An icon by lunchtime

The next morning, we decamp and head through Deception Valley in the direction of Xade. Yesterday's brief cloudburst has turned the road to mud and one can only imagine what a few days of heavy rain would do.

The 80 km road between Deception and Piper Pan is sandy and winding in places.



OPEN SPACES. A grassy corridor (left) on the western boundary of the reserve brings you into the central Kalahari where animals are abundant at the waterholes (above), and on the wide pans (bottom). In the afternoon, thunderstorms and sunsets make for stunning photos.



And next to the twin track, the bushes grow tall. We push for the pan and give our kidneys a shake-up in the last 10 km before Piper, but it's already lunchtime by the time we reach the pan.

Piper Pan is actually three continuous pans stretching over 10 km in a massive C-shape. Your first impression is that it is postcard pretty. A mirage on the horizon gives the impression that the whole pan is full of water, and white termite mounds reach up like crooked fingers to a pale

Bhejane 4x4 Adventures Central Kalahari Tour is a self-catering safari that lasts seven days and six nights. Included in the tour price are all camp and park fees, guides and a support team, two-way radios, the camp kitchen and cutlery, tents for everyone and all meals. You drive with your own vehicle and bring your own bedding, camp chairs and drinks and snacks.

Contact 044 535 9033

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blue sky full of stacked clouds. Under each tree, the silhouette of a gemsbok or blue wildebeest is framed against the green, gold and orange pastel colours of the bushveld.

Just beyond the Piper Pan 1 campsite, we finally see the Kalahari's most iconic resident: a large lion with a pitch-black mane. We watch him for a while as he lies under a tree. He gets up two or three times, walks in the open and comes back. Then, just as half of our vehicles start >

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

WHERE? The Central Kalahari Game Reserve has four gates: Tsau to the north, Matswere to the east, Khutse to the south and Xade to the west. Take the A3 toward Ghanzi for the turnoffs to Xade and Tsau, south and north of the town respectively. Matswere is located near the town of Rakops on the B300 and Khutse is accessible from Lethlakeng on the B120.

WHEN? Plan your visit for the months just after the summer's heaviest rain, from January to April, when the landscape is green and wet.

YOUR VEHICLE You need a full 4x4 with good ground clearance. In the dry winter season, low range and diff lock should not be necessary. However, be prepared for wet and muddy roads during the summer rainy season.

EQUIPMENT Bring everything needed for camping, including drinking, shower and dish water, a decent cooler box or fridge, braai wood and something to give shade. Pack a tyre pressure

gauge, compressor and recovery equipment as well.

FUEL For such a long tour, a fuel range of at least 1 000 km is recommended. Bring an extra fuel tank or jerry cans to fill up in Ghanzi, Lethlakeng or Rakops, as fuel is not available in the park. Sometimes these petrol stations are dry too – ask the locals where the next working filling station is while travelling, and fill up wherever you can.

BORDER POST Bring your passport and your vehicle's registration and insurance documents. If you're driving with someone else's car or a rental, you will need a letter of consent from them to say you may take the vehicle across the border. You pay P50 road tax and third-party insurance of P80 per vehicle. Bring a pen and enough cash.

WHAT ELSE? You need a ZA sticker on the back of your vehicle, plus a fire extinguisher, two triangles and a reflective jacket inside. Bring an emergency kit, basic parts (fuses, bulbs, fan strap, and so on) and a grass net to keep your radiator clean.



“The sky is already a dark orange when we arrive at Xade, and by the time we light a fire, the Kalahari gives us one of its distinctive sunsets.”

JUST LIKE HOME. The camp life quickly becomes a part of your daily routine and when you come on a Bhejane trip, guys like Hansie Ruben and Tiaan van Wyk (right) are always making sure that there's something tasty to sink your teeth into. One of the camp favourites is their distinctive pot bread (insert).



WHAT THE GUIDES HAVE TO SAY

The Kalahari means 'thirsty land' and one can see why. It's the largest park in our country and it's not about seeing something extraordinary every day, but about the whole experience. Take your time and you will observe different things at different times of the day. Be patient and enjoy every moment here.

– Moagi Rain Robson



It's the unexpected that makes the Kalahari unique. Put it this way: you have not yet experienced the Kalahari properly if you don't hear a lion roaring at night, a thunderstorm catches you unexpectedly, you suffer in the heat or a badger has come to visit in the campsite.

– Phil van Wyk



moving to a waterhole, he suddenly heads straight to a herd of gemsbok and grabs a little one. The lion disappears in the blink of an eye with its prey to the far side of the pan. And we're once again reminded of the circle of life in the Kalahari, because at the same time, the waterhole teems with large herds of gemsbok, springbok, blue wildebeest, Cape ground squirrels, secretary birds, lappet-faced vultures and crows – passively accepting of the bloodshed behind them.

Goodbye, for now

The sky is already a dark orange when we arrive at Xade's campsite late afternoon. By the time we set up camp and light a fire, the Kalahari again gives us one of its distinctive sunsets. Even if you see it every night, you still take photos as you'll never get tired of it.

Around the campfire we talk about the past week, exchange photos and make plans for another tour. Tomorrow morning, everyone heads back in their own time to Ghanzi on a terrible gravel road across New Xade. All told, we drove a circle of roughly 900 km, including game drives, over five days.

On paper, this doesn't sound like a lot, but what you'll get from these 900 km in the Central Kalahari are memories that will stay with you for life. Despite the cheetahs not posing for a photo. 📸

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The shores of silence

Morgan Bay is a proper holiday town – far and away from crowded highways – and there are three campsites where you can find peace and quiet.

Text and photos Leon Botha



Morgan Bay is a tiny hamlet. According to the latest census, only 321 people live here in 105 households. This much is clear when you arrive here: the entire residential area is barely larger than a square kilometre and will easily fit on top of Table Mountain.

There are no traffic lights here, not even a fuel pump. And no main street with fast food franchises. There is, however, the Top Shop where you can get wood, liquor, and a variety of groceries.

You come here to truly relax surrounded by nature's best. If you want to swim, head down to the sea or the lagoon as none of the campsites have a swimming pool. At Yellowwood Forest, you camp next to a forest, at the Morgan Bay Caravan Park you're on the banks of the lagoon, and at the Double Mouth campsite, the Indian Ocean gets all the attention. >



YELLOWWOOD FOREST CAMPSITE

Snuggle up to silence

As you enter Morgan Bay via the tar road from the N2, Yellowwood Forest lies to your left, a short distance from the sea. The last 400 m is a rocky dirt road, but that's quickly forgotten when you stop at the gate. Watch out for "free range" kids and animals, as a sign nailed to a nearby tree cautions. Behind it is another tree with seven coloured arrows. Keep left for the restaurant and bush camp, and right for the walkway. None of them, however, will help you find the office (which is on the far left of the gate).

The section after the gate is paved, and the thatched building is also much more than just a reception. All the doors are open. To the left just after the front door, there's a clothing shop with a flea-market vibe, and to the right is a counter where there's not a soul in sight. A door next to the counter takes you to a library of sorts

with some couches. A number of LPs are stuck to the ceiling and the walls are just as busy. A small blackboard instructs you to pay R10 at the office if you want to recharge camera batteries, cellphones and laptops here.

This is also where you'll find an ATM. And at the door to the outside is a handwritten list of 35 birds a visitor saw here in just one day.

There's an outdoor bar with a few beers on tap and a waitress is serving people sitting under a canvas roof. Even though it feels as though you could hide here from technology, you're still able to pay using a bank card if you don't carry cash with you.

Let's go bush

The stands are right in front of you and to the right of the road, which curves to the left behind the office building.

You could easily believe you're in the tropics when you look at the lush vegetation around you – including palm trees and wild bananas. And every now and again, a loerie clears its throat in the forest. The green of the lawn where you

camp looks almost artificial.

Some of the first stands on the right are adjacent to the forest, and you're camping in your own enclosure. A few of the stands in front are more in the open and it's not quite clear where the one ends and the next one starts. Each stand boasts a small fire pit and you can decide how you want to set up camp around it.

As you go further along the road, the camping enclosures line up next to the forest, each with its own fire pit. The next five or six stands have no power point, but the last few along the road as it turns back to the office, do have electricity (ordinary domestic power points).

Reuse and recycle

Recycling is the key word here. Right at the entrance, hundreds of stuffed plastic bottles lie in a neat pile. The owners told us they plan to build a small chapel with them. So, you don't have a rubbish bin at your stand, but lots of plastic bottles hang in the trees – so stuff your plastic in those.

The ablution block with its thatched roof is across from the middle stands. To the left of this building are a few blue >



Watch out for "free range" kids and animals, as a sign nailed to a nearby tree cautions.





SPIRITED Yellowwood Forest Campsite is an eco-minded forest retreat with self catering accommodation, camping and backpacker dorms, 1.5 km from the Morgan Bay beach. It is owner run since 1999 and known for its hospitality and environmentally conscious heart.

Briefly | Yellowwood Forest Campsite



Campsite About 25 stands of varying size and shade. About half don't have power points. Bring your own braai if you don't want to cook in a fire pit.

Ablution facilities Men and women share the rustic facilities.

Price Depending on the season and the specific stand, from R150 p.n. per stand plus R15 p.p.p.d. (for up to 2 people with a tent), up to R650 for the deluxe stands plus R25 p.p.p.n. (for up to 6 people).

Arrival and departure times 14:00.

Notify the resort if you wish to arrive before 11:00 or after 18:00.

Contact 043 841 1598 or 084 582 2601

info@yellowwoodforest.co.za

yellowwoodforest.co.za

What does the road look like? The last 400m is a rocky dirt road, but it's not too much for a caravan.

GPS S32.697294 E28.333798

go! Drive & Camp says An art market is held every weekend, and then a huge market once a month. Spoil the kids with a pancake, get some fresh eggs or buy a handmade soap as a gift for the people who are looking after the koi fish back home.



drums for your recyclable garbage.

Not everyone will feel equally comfortable in the toilet and shower cubicles. The building is made of stone, and someone who imagines spiders and bugs in every dark corner will definitely shower really quickly. Not all the cubicles have a mirror. There's also a room with a bath for bathing the youngsters.

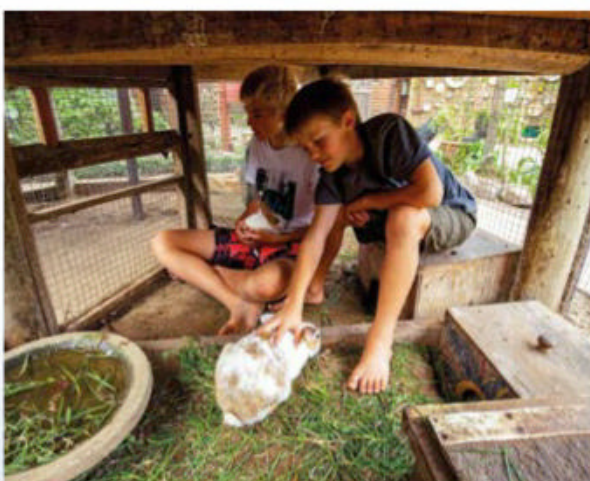
The scullery is behind the building and there's a sign informing you that you could have your laundry washed at R60 per load.

Where are the yellowwoods?

Despite the lack of waterslides, swimming pools, game arcades or a putt-putt course, kids still get to be kids here. Just outside the office is an enclosure with guinea pigs and rabbits. They're so used to toddler hands that they don't run away when children want to hold them.

Across from the bar is an enormous coral tree, with a pretty dollhouse and some slides that look as if they're straight off the pages in a children's story book.

Also, get some flip-flops on their feet



ACTIVATE YOUR CALM Aside from the petting zoo there are several activities such as hiking, cycling, canoeing and birding. But don't overdo it, you're here to relax after all.

and take them on the Bushbuck hiking trail. It is only 700 m long and will keep them busy for about 20 minutes if you're having a leisurely stroll. The footpath winds through the forest and is clearly marked. You will see yellowwoods, our national tree, among many others. Pithy sayings are nailed to a tree, and the path takes you past vegetation where you can't tell what's a root and what's a branch. The sign next to it says "monkey swings". Further along, you can walk under a wild fig that looks as if it straddles the path.

And, just like that, the path goes back to the start of the trail and you feel years younger after all that fresh air.



MORGAN BAY CARAVAN PARK

Hotel stay

The Morgan Bay Caravan Park is a mere 1,5 km from Yellowwood and belongs to the Morgan Bay Hotel. The campsite and hotel are not next to each other, but you still check in at the hotel. Get your specific stand number when you book, because you won't want to drive to the hotel with the caravan. It seems as if the entire town's residents park here and there's hardly any room for a mouse, never mind your towing combination. So, leave the caravan at your stand before heading to the hotel.

The hotel is right on the seafront, and everything looks lovely. There's even a notice board with the day's wind speed and load-shedding schedule.

The campsite itself is on the Inchara lagoon, and a security guard manages the boom at the entrance. (Incidentally, "Inchara" apparently refers to all the crabs in the lake.) When you drive in, it almost feels like you're in the wrong place, because on either side of the road are small buildings that appear to be cottages for rent. The George Brown bowling green lies in front of you and it looks as if everyone who's not at the hotel is assembled here on the rectangular lawn eager to block a kitty with a bowl.

The stands start from here toward the right.

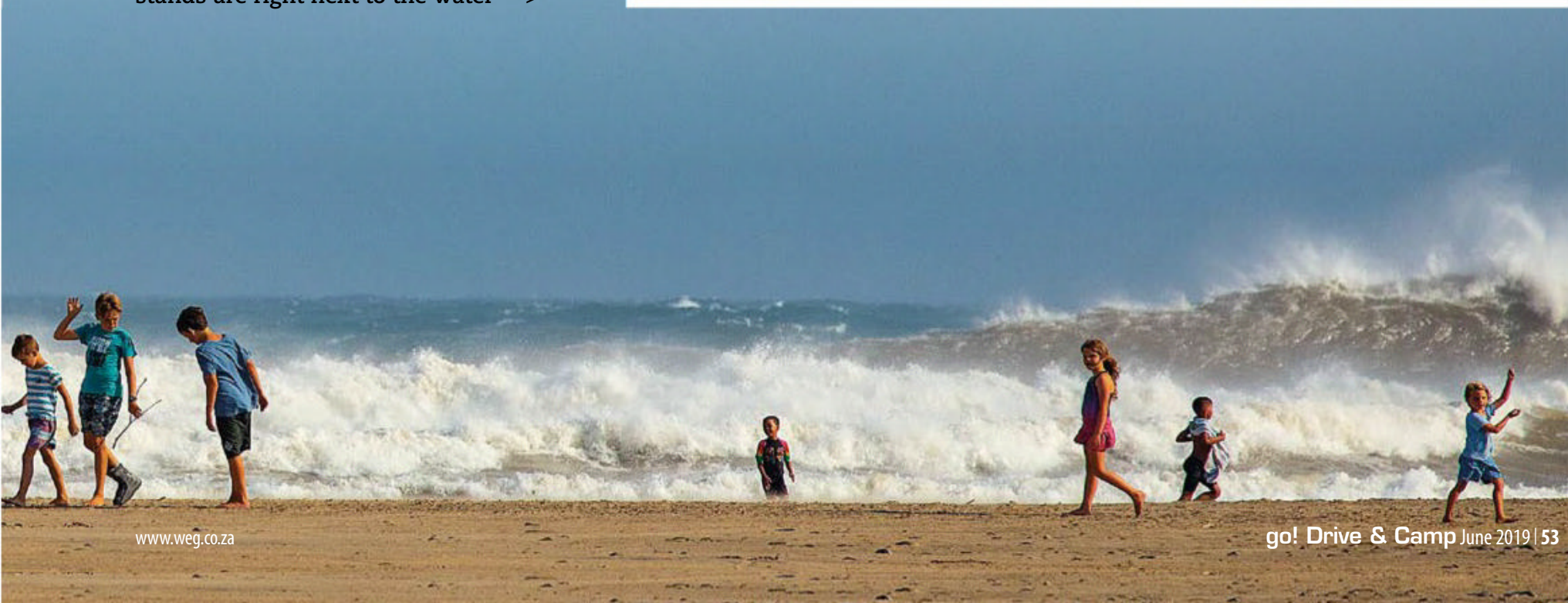
Location, location!

The campsite is only slightly smaller than a rugby field, and 30 families camp on it.

The campsite is level and approximately square, and one corner is right next to the lagoon. There's a tarred circular path that runs in the middle of the square, which means if you drive clockwise, the first stands are right next to the water >



GREEN AND BLUE You can set up camp under a shady tree with the beautiful beaches of the Inchara Lagoon's edge just a short walk away. All sites have electricity, picnic benches and braai facilities, and they are in close proximity to the separate ladies and men's ablutions, which are serviced daily.



until you are halfway, with the rest inside. Some stands are in the centre of the circle.

As with Yellowwood, your braai is the cornerstone of your stand, but unfortunately it has no grid. The most sought-after stands are the ones by the water, but there is a further distinction: the sites to the right are better, because from here you can see the sea and the water in the lagoon in front of you is a bit shallower. The view from the stands on the left is of a hill on the opposite shore. And they don't have trees.

There are quite a few trees dotted around the rest of the campsite. They look like pine trees, but they don't give as much shade, nor do they protect against the wind. Anchor everything properly, as the coast and the wind are good friends. Remember your extension cord, because at some of the stands you're far from the power box with its blue caravan plugs.

Cleaning up

The ablution facilities are toward the bowling green, and you feel a little short-



ROW, ROW, ROW

The calm water of the Inchara river estuary is ideal for small children. Boats powered by an engine are not permitted, which makes it the perfect playground for canoeing, wind surfing and dinghy sailing.



Briefly | Morgan Bay Campsite



Campsite 31 even pitches on grass, each with a brick braai area. About half are on the shore.

Ablution facilities Basic with a narrow passage in front of the toilets.

Price Depending on the season and specific stand, R290-R725 p.n. per site (for up to 4 people); then R65-R100 p.p.p.d for the next 2 people.

Arrival and departure times 10:00.

Contact 043 841 1062 or 083 455 8022

info@morganbayhotel.co.za

morganbayhotel.co.za

What does the road look like? Tar right up to your stand.

GPS S32.706669 E28.343451

go! Drive & Camp says Every stand has a wooden table and bench set that you can move to where it's most convenient for you.

changed when you compare them to the hotel's amenities. The women's entrance is on the road, and the men's on the right, farther away from the road and more hidden. A whole bunch of cubicles, each with a door, are arranged in a row next to one another. The middle ones are showers and the rest are toilets. The corridor is awkwardly narrow and two people would need to squeeze past each other.

At the far end of the corridor is a room to your left with more shower cubicles. It's more spacious here. The basins are far apart and a tiled surface runs throughout. This leaves more than enough room to unpack your shower bag when digging for your toothbrush.

The shower cubicle is spacious and has a narrow bench that keeps everything dry.

The village pool

On the sea side, the lagoon is ankle deep,

and it's as popular among kids as your town's municipal pool.

If you are on this side of the camp, you can watch the kids. The stands are lined up like sardines, which means the rest of the camp kids don't really have direct access to the water. It doesn't bother anyone, because at the point beyond the last stand it's not just shallower, but you can also walk to the beach from here.

There is, however, a faded warning sign from the Amathole regional municipality just outside the campsite that warns visitors not to swim in the water due to sewage pollution. But when you see the kids playing in the water, you realise it's ancient history.

The waves crash about 150 m beyond the lagoon on a broad sand bank, and you can see sunbathers, cyclists, anglers, hikers and people walking their dogs all day long.



DOUBLE MOUTH CAMPSITE

Over the rise

Double Mouth lies 3,2 km from Morgan Bay along the coast and is located in the East London Coast Nature Reserve.

Close to the last houses in the south of Morgan Bay, a single road starts with a concrete bridge over a stream. From here it is a rough, rocky dirt road and the first 250 m is a fairly steep uphill. From here, the road improves, and just before Double Mouth's gate, you reach a concrete road that lets you crawl down the steep slope to reception. The sea curves to the left in front of you with a bay full of rocks and stones, and to the right is a small pine forest where you set up camp.

When you book, a stand is allocated to you, but you may choose another more to your liking if it's available. A map is posted in the window of the reception displaying each of the 30 sites. You'll

see how the stands are laid out like an amphitheatre with two rows. The rows are on terraces – each forming a half circle. The bathrooms is found in the middle of these half circles, and all stands look out toward the ocean.

Pick your spot

Each stand is neatly numbered, and unlike the previous two campsites, the stands at Double Mouth have braais with grids. The braai is built to fit your rubbish bin below it. A Fredlin plug is also at your stand.

A single row of trees are planted in front of the two terraces – it looks to be the same species of pine trees as at the hotel's campsite. As you look down at the sea in front of you, the small hill behind you shields you from the wind that comes from the land. So, you're less exposed, but you'll still hear the wind rushing through

the tree tops. The stands are level, but there isn't much grass here.

In contrast, the kids have a huge green lawn in the half circle in front of the lower terrace. It's the perfect place to fly a kite.

You almost forget you're camping in a nature reserve, but then you see a bushbuck and it begins to make sense why the authorities don't allow pets.

The old and the new

If you camp in the middle of the campsites, you are closest to the bathrooms. Each terrace has its own facilities.

From the outside, the upper building looks newer. According to the resort map, the laundry room is on the upper terrace, but they are busy converting it into a bathroom. The stalls in the lower facilities have >

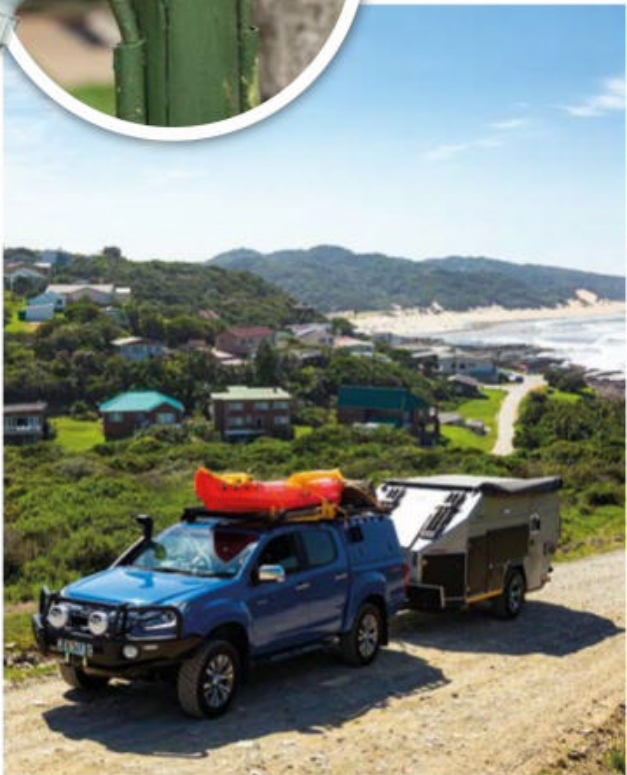


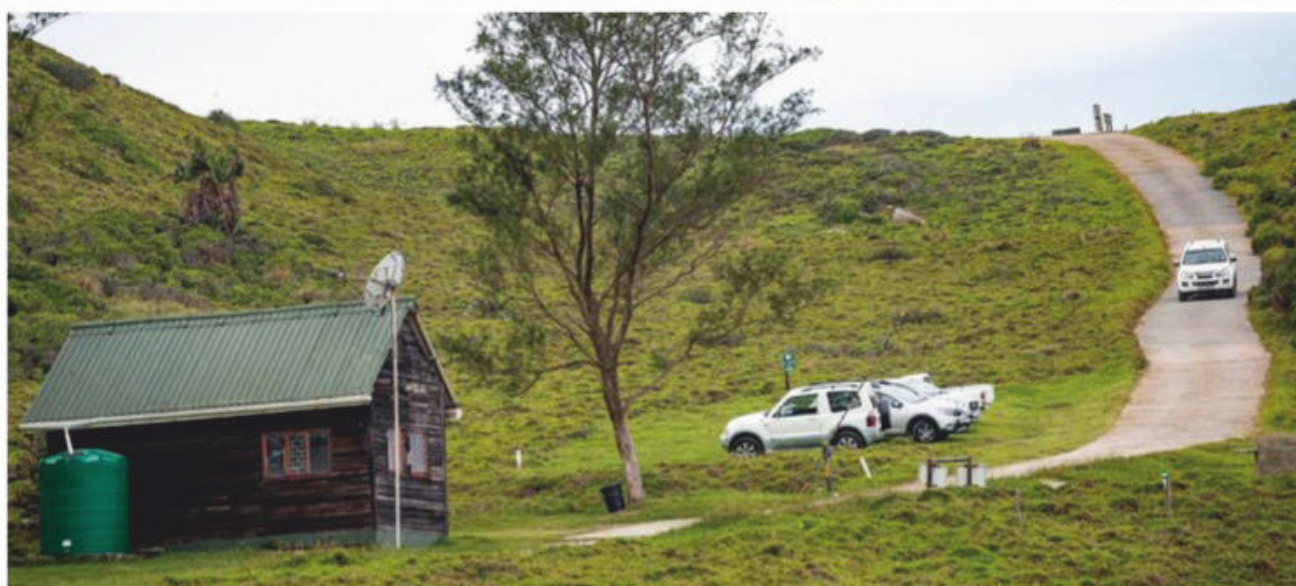
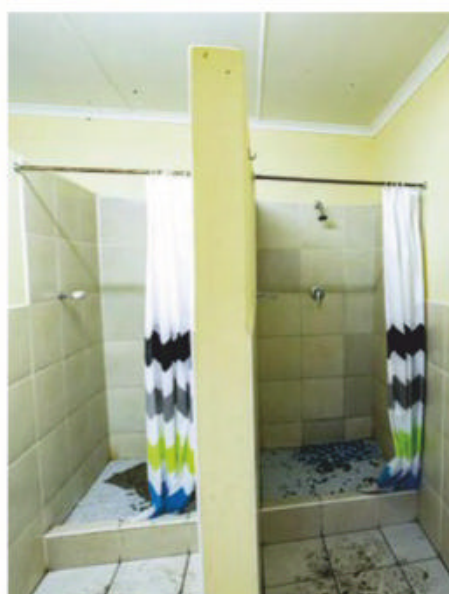
“
You almost forget you're camping
in a nature reserve, but then you
see a bushbuck...”

“
It seems as if fishing
is a national sport here,
because fishermen litter
the rocks, staring
out to sea.



SHIP TO SHORE Bead Beach (Treasure Beach) is the site of a 16th-century Portuguese shipwreck, where carnelian beads, money cowries and shards of broken Ming porcelain can be found. It's also a favourite spot for anglers hoping to catch a musselcracker or two.





Briefly | Double Mouth Campsite



Campsite 30 level stands in 2 rows on 2 terraces with plenty of shade.

Ablution facilities One with older facilities, and a new building that's just about finished.

Price Depending on the season, R238-R318 per site for up to 6 people, plus a daily R10 p.p. (R5 for children aged 2-11; free for under-2s).

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

Contact 043 492 0881/3/4

reservation4@ecpta.co.za

visiteasterncape.co.za

What does the road look like? The last 3,2 km is a gravel road of which the first 250 m is rocky.

GPS S32.723948 E28.315120

go! Drive & Camp says If you use Vodacom's network, the signal leaves you at the gate. Some of the other networks do reach here, though.

doors, while the upper ones have only shower curtains.

What's in a name?

The name comes from the two rivers behind the hill – it's a lovely walk along the beach to get to them.

The beach area in front of the campsite is hard on bare feet, and it's better to tackle the rocks wearing flip-flops. It seems as if fishing is a national sport here, because fishermen litter the rocks, staring out to sea.

To get to the river, you have to walk around the hill. There's a sandy beach, but don't think you're going to pick up shells – the rocks crush them.

The estuary is to the right, but then you realise it's not a double mouth as the name suggests. Approximately half a kilometre inland, the Kumqotwane and Quko rivers merge, and that's where the name comes from.

Bonnievale breakaway

There's a hidden gem of a campsite not far from the heart of Bonnievale.

Text and photos **Kyle Kock**

The Breede River Valley is renowned for being a fruit and wine region, with many small towns and villages playing host to a handful of vineyards and orchards that stretch as far as the eye can see. With so much wine and fruit tourism, it's easy to forget that there are also outstanding pockets of land that make for first-rate campsites. One such spot is the Bonnievale River Lodge, not even 1km from the namesake town's main road.

Welcome, welcome

When you arrive, you're greeted at the gate by Stephen Oelofse, who, along with his partner Lynnette van Wyk at reception, manages the campsite on

behalf of Corplodge. The couple quickly run through the ground rules, explain the campsite layout and show you to your camping stand. If it's not too busy, they might even let you choose where you want to pitch your tent regardless of where you booked.

The reception also doubles as a little shop, and they stock a few items, including wood (R25 per bag), cooldrinks and some other essentials. Of the more special items on sale include locally made olive oil and marmalade. This is also where you pay for the use of a canoe, but you're only allowed to rent it between 9 am and 11 am, which in this case means waiting till the next morning because you're only allowed to check in

from 12:30 pm to 8 pm (1:30 pm during school holidays).

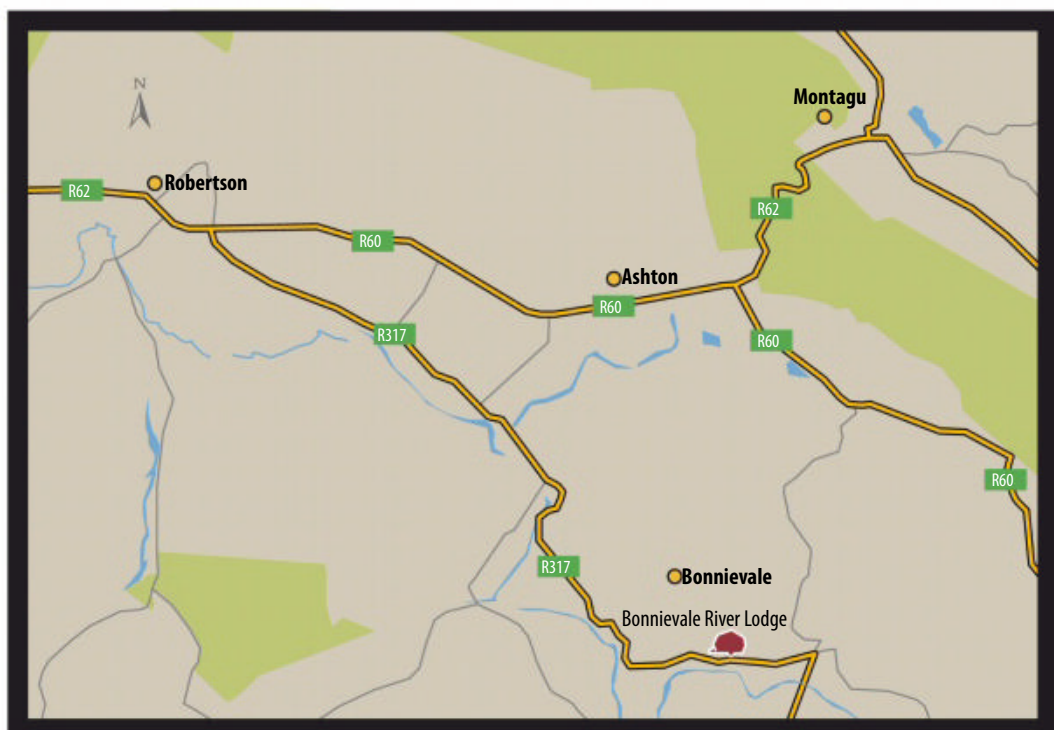
Come back to reception the following morning with R300 and secure a canoe for the day. Stephen will unlock your vessel of choice and provide a paddle, which you return the next day to get your R150 deposit back.

Plenty of space to pitch

There are three types of camping stands at Bonnievale River Lodge, which start immediately to the right of the boom next to reception. These are the upper level stands and there are 11 of them. They are wide enough for your double-cab bakkie to stand lengthways across the entrance of the stand to block some wind from the



EVERYTHING'S CALM. The Breede river sometimes breaches the lower tiers (main), which guarantees a big catch. You'll get a code for the electric gate and can lift the boom by yourself when going in and out of the campsite (above).



rear, and you walk more than 20 steps to the rear of the stand – the highlight of which is the wooden deck that, depending on the particular stand you chose, may or may not be slightly elevated. A few of them have the deck almost level with the rest of the stand, and one in particular (11), has grass almost all the way to the end of the deck and even has a little built-in gazebo on it.

Regardless of which one you choose up here, all of them have a commanding view of the Breede River. Each one is separated by a lattice fence that starts pretty much where the grass ends on most of them. It's as if these stands are split into three surfaces; grass, dirt, and wood (on the deck).

If you follow the road, which makes a horse-shoe right turn toward the river and right again, you'll have the park stands on your right and the river stands on your left. The former are the largest in the campsite, and you almost feel that a maximum of six people >

per stand is too few to fill the space. You could park four Jurgens Pentas in here and still have space for awnings and rally tents and gazebos. These stands are demarcated by saplings.

The river stands are obviously located right on the banks of the Breede, and these are the smallest of the campsite stands, though still big enough for two large tents and a gazebo. You can also cast your line right from your camping chair up here. Only vehicles with a rooftop tent are allowed to park at the lower stands, and you're required to park your towing vehicle or car up on the higher tier once you're done setting up camp.

Each stand has its own tap, bin and braai drum (bring your own grid), and you'll have to have share a power point with your neighbour, which has more than enough domestic sockets. Just bring fairly long extension leads, because the park stands in particular are large and if you have more than one tent or caravan, and have pitched them apart, they'll come in handy.

Bonnievale River Lodge is also dog friendly, so if you want to bring Spot along you're most welcome to, but you'll have to call ahead to make prior



Jean and Richard Clarkson are from Table View and camped at an upper level stand with their Chevrolet Captiva, tent and gazebo.

They say

“ It's our first time here, on the recommendation of our kids who are regular caravan campers here. This is such a lovely breakaway from the city, and its so peaceful. It's so lovely that we've decided to add a few more days to our week. The dogs are friendly and say hello regularly, and we like that. ”

arrangement. Just as long as he's social, because he'll have to get along with the resident dogs and not fluster the rest of the animals. The caveat is that you can only bring one furry family member along per stand.

Play all day

Obviously, the main attraction here is the river, which flows slowly and is safe enough to swim in, but children are to be supervised at all times while they splash around. The canoes can be found next to the massive lapa on the far left of the campsite, and you can also hire tubes for the day (R60). The lapa can host about 50 people under the large thatch roof. There's also a communal braai area just behind it.

Stephen will have laid out the canoe booked out to you on the lowest tier that acts like a launch and from here you can push out onto the water. Remember that you're only allowed to paddle northwest of the campsite, about a kilometre according to Stephen, as there's a low-water bridge that you'll have to cross toward the southeast. You're also to remember to not get off your canoe on the other side of the river as you'll be trespassing on private property.



“ You are free to enjoy a picnic here on the grass or the lone bench big enough to accommodate a family of four. ”



If you're a keen angler, don't forget your rod and tackle, because here you can pull bass, barbel and carp from the water. Just remember to release them after taking a selfie.

Those who aren't too keen on swimming among flora and fauna in the river can cool off in the pool, which is about a 100 m from the upper camping stands. You walk on a pathway of thick grass that gets watered every day, and the kids don't need to worry about wearing sandals because there are no thorns here.

On the way to the pool, stop and admire the flowers growing in the gardens around the chalet accommodation, among them strelitzias



PLAIN AND SIMPLE. The ablution facilities mix rustic architecture with a few modernities such as varnished wood and glossy tiles, simple copper taps and automatic hand dryers (left). If you opt for one of the river stands, then be prepared to pay slightly more, for a slightly smaller stand. It's still big enough for more than one tent and a gazebo, though.



This is what it costs

(3 Adults)	
Fuel - 50 ppm diesel @ 9.1 l/100 km and R15.99 and 325 km (there and back)	R473
Toll gate (there and back)	R78
Accommodation (2 nights)	R900
Food (3 people)	R1 628
Grand total	R3 079



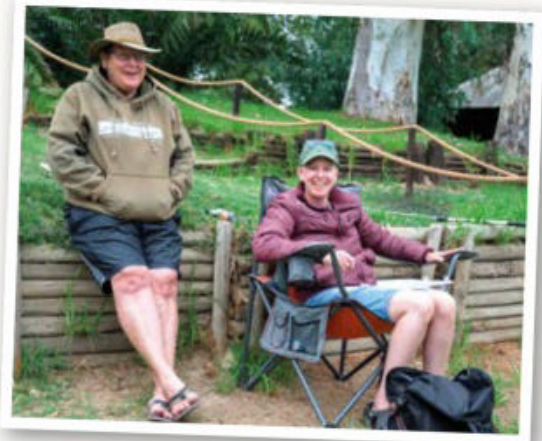
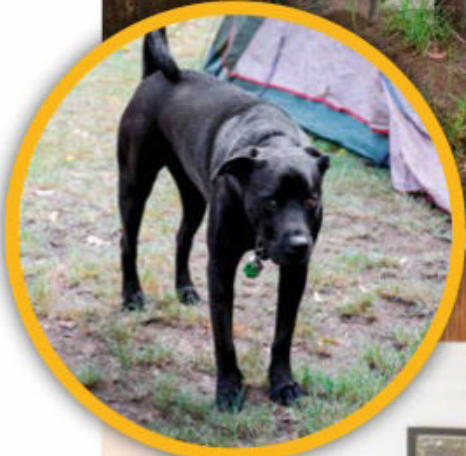
and roses. A sign on the gate of the fenced-off pool area reminds parents to keep an eye on their children and warns that no glasses or bottles are allowed in this area, nor the consumption of alcohol. though you are free to enjoy a picnic here on the grass or the lone bench big enough to accommodate a family of four. There are also four loungers here for you to catch up on the antics of your hero or heroine in a Tom Clancy or Danielle Steel novel.

On the right-hand side of the campsite, just next to the park stands, is a kids' playground, complete with swing, jungle gym and trampoline.

Those seeking entertainment outside the resort's borders will be able to choose from a host of 4x4 and hiking trails in the region, and foodies will find visiting at least one winery in the area irresistible. The area is also known for its cheese-making prowess, so drop by local factory Mooivallei on the outskirts of town to sample some of their products.

Cook and clean

The ablution facilities are on either side of the road as you come in through the boom. The men turn to the right and the women to the left, in the same building as the communal kitchen. The building is a simple affair, with rough plastering painted in white and with wooden frames and doors, but the effect suits the holiday feel. Inside, the buildings are similarly rustic, with the red tiles matching the varnished doors and frames. The four >



Yvette Korff and Malene Korff-Jacobs from Goodwood camped at a river stand with a Campmaster Roadster Trailer, which they tow with a Ford Ecosport.

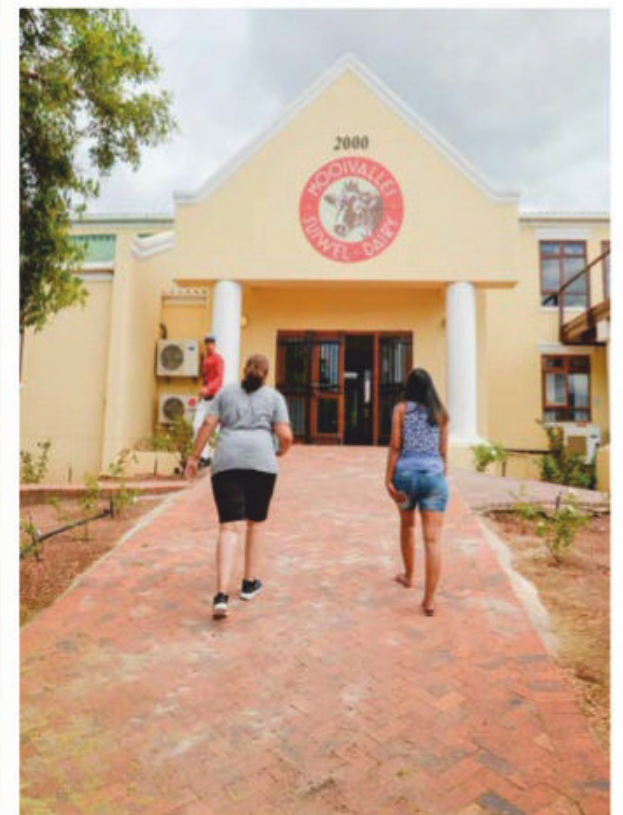
They say

“ We’ve been camping here since 2011, and it’s such a quiet place where people respect the no-noise policy and allow the other campers to enjoy the peaceful nature of the area. We like to pitch on grass, and that’s in abundance here. And we also want to be near water. ”



IMMACULATE. Clockwise from top: the park stands, as their name suggests, are very large. You can drop a load off at the laundry where it will be washed and dried for you. Even when there hasn’t been much rain, the Breede river is full of fish so you can practise your angling. The kitchen is well kept, and kitted with a microwave, fridge and chest freezer. Tessa, one of the resident dogs frequently makes her rounds.





ENJOY YOUR STAY. Clockwise, from top: the kids can enjoy the playground apparatus available to them without encroaching on the space of others. Be sure to grab a slab of locally made cheddar or Gouda from Mooivallei. Remember to return to the office in the morning to book your canoe for the next 24 hours.



showers are tiled in white up to chest height with basic taps and shower heads that protrude from a lattice ceiling.

The first shower on the left is the most modern, almost a separate room from the others, it has a large dry area for you to change in and the wet section is behind a sliding glass door. The rest are also behind their own wooden doors, but the middle two are the smallest and you'll have to hang your clothing and towels on one of the four hooks to keep them from getting soaked. There's a stool to sit and change on afterward, provided you don't get it too wet during your rinse. There's also a rack for your soap dish and loofah. The last shower is similar in terms of size to the first one but finished in much the same way as the other two.

Briefly | Bonnievale River Lodge



Campsite 30 stands, most of which are shaded by trees, except for those on the riverbank.

Ablutions facilities Separate facilities for men and women that are rustic, with modern basins and fittings that include liquid soap dispensers and automatic hand dryers.

Price R150 p.p.p.n. out of season and R600 for up to 4 people during the peak season, R750 for 5 and R900 for 6.

Contact 081 799 2152 (bookings)

081 230 1089 (lodge)

bonnievaleriverlodge@gmail.com

bonnievaleriverlodge.co.za

Arrival and departure times From 12:30 pm and by 12 pm, depending on when you camp.

Road conditions The R317 runs right through town. The last 100 m is a dirt road your road caravan should be able to handle.

GPS S33.944110 E20.077305

go! Drive & Camp says If you don't remember your braai grid, don't worry about it too much, because you'll be able to buy one from the Spar in town.

There are three basins on a tiled concrete shelf against the opposite wall. There's more than enough space for your toiletry bag and your hairbrush, and because there's a window on either side of the mirror above the central basin, users of the outer basins can use the mirrors on the adjacent walls. There's also a liquid soap dispenser and automatic hand dryers.

There are three toilets, and you don't have to bring your own loo paper. The ablutions are cleaned daily. There's also a single toilet and shower for ladies located in separate room with the entrance facing the stands.

The communal kitchen is located diagonally across from the men's ablution block and you're free to use the large fridge and chest freezer for keeping your meat and drinks cool or a few items frozen.

There's also a microwave oven for heating up last night's leftovers. There are two double sinks for washing the dishes and drying racks as well.

Right next door to the kitchen are the women's ablutions, with similar white walls, red tiles and varnished wood. There are four showers and five toilets. The basins look more like fancy china bowls and are perched on a wooden table, with additional shelves underneath.

If you're staying particularly long, you might want to make use of the laundry service. Drop your fineries off at the laundry room, which is adjacent to the kitchen, where you can also choose to have them dried in the tumble dryer or hung outside. It costs R70 for a load of 5 kg.

Discover majestic *Mongolia*



Looking for a unique and relatively unexplored travel destination that offers vast emptiness that links land and sky? An amazing experience awaits you in Mongolia. And you can experience this extraordinary country in a 4x4 self-drive tour.

Mongolia is one of the last places on the planet where nomadic life is still a living tradition. It is a land of contrasts with scenes of desert, the wide-open steppe and beautiful fresh water lakes. It is also the country with the lowest population density in the world.

The majestic and vast emptiness has an appeal that lures travellers to explore

and discover this destination, which is also referred to as the “Land of Blue Skies”. It is said to have 250 sunny days each year. The winters are very cold with temperatures dropping to -40 °C.

One of the world’s greatest deserts is the Gobi. It covers large parts of southern Mongolia. Compared to the Sahara and the Namib, the Gobi has lesser sand dunes, but rather large desolated areas

“

Thanks to everyone for a trip that was amazing in all aspects. From the company, to the camps, the adventures to the cooking. I think this is something all of us will remember for a long time.

– Roger White



with gravel plains and rocky ridges.

Mongolia is also a country with an old and rich history. During the 1200s their most famous leader Genghis Khan had a great influence on world history and the Mongol Empire. His grandson was the founder of modern China.

You can explore this magical destination from behind the wheel of a 100 Series Land Cruiser on a self-drive

4x4 tour. Join Live the Journey as you follow off-the-beaten tracks and visit the most beautiful places.

You will get to explore and experience, among others, the mysterious Gobi Desert with its mountains, lakes, canyons and sand dunes, Lake Khuvsgul (known as the “Pearl of Mongolia”), a number of beautiful and well-preserved active Buddhist monasteries, the Yolyn Am >



“

Thanks all for a unique experience – we’re looking forward to reliving it through all the photos, yours and ours.

– Hanna Boeke



MARKETING FEATURE

Canyon in the Gurvan Saikan Mountains, and the Orkhon Valley, recognized by UNESCO World Heritage as a cultural landscape in 2004.

You'll also get to visit the Genghis Khan Statue Complex, which is home to the largest equestrian statue in the world and covered in 250 tons of steel. Learn about Mongolian history. Discover the remains of Genghis Khan's capital, Karakorum, then visit the nearby ruins of the Erdene Zuu Monastery.



This trip is forever burnt in my memories and one of the most fulfilling experiences ever. Thank you to all of you who have been part of this amazing journey.

– Laetitia de Lange

The tour duration is 17 nights and 18 days and the fuel for your Cruiser is included, so you don't have to worry about that. The vehicles are equipped with a rooftop tent for two people and ground tents for extra passengers. You will spend six nights in these tents, 3 nights in a hotel and 8 nights in traditional Mongolian ger camps on a full board basis.

The convoy has a support vehicle with a mechanic and a field chef as well as an English speaking guide for entire trip.

All your toll fees, entrance fees for national parks and return airport transfers are included, as is your camping equipment (folding chair, camp mattress, sleeping bag and pillow).



go! Drive&Camp



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The other side of the Camdeboo

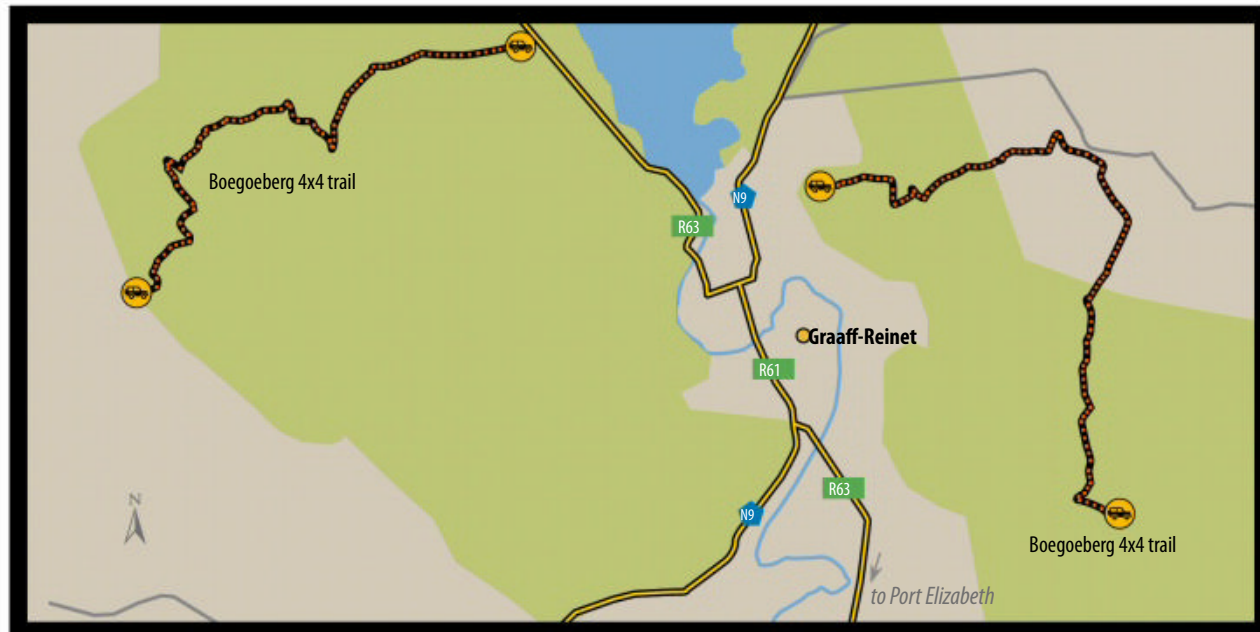


The Valley of Desolation is the main attraction of the Camdeboo National Park, but did you know there are also two great 4x4 trails in the park?

Text and photos **Evan Naudé**



The Camdeboo National Park folds itself around Graaff-Reinet as if it were a massive horse shoe. In the northern part is the Nqweba Dam, a great tented camp and the main game viewing area, and in the west the famous Valley of Desolation, a lookout point with panoramic views of the plains of the Karoo. These are the parts of the park that attract your average tourist... and during holidays there are hordes of them. But for those fortunate enough to be seated behind the wheel of a 4x4 vehicle, there are also two easy, picturesque off-road trails in the park. >



The trails

The Koedoeskloof Trail lies in the western part of the park, so you have to drive to the Valley of Desolation's gate after paying the entrance fee at the main gate. When passing through the gate, follow the dirt road for 4,6 km until you reach the Winterhoek Lodge. The 4x4 trail starts here. At a mere 7 km, Koedoeskloof is a short route and more of a game drive than a technical challenge.

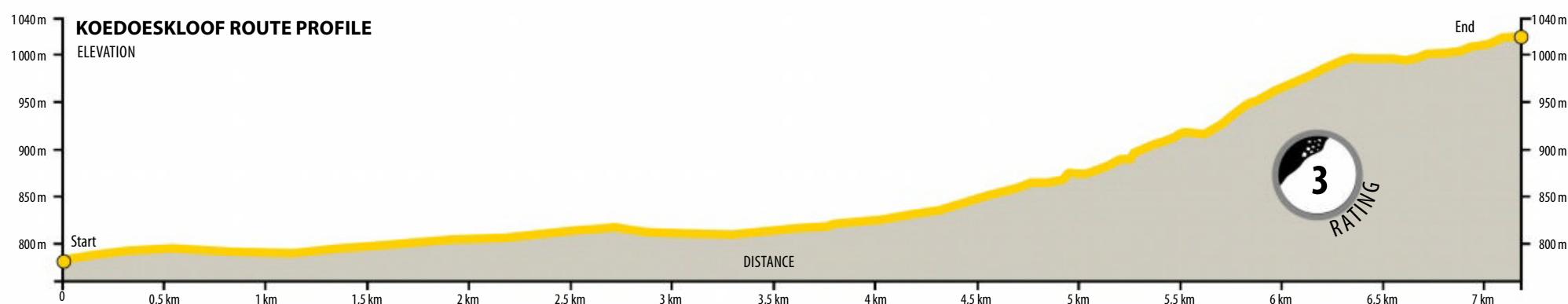
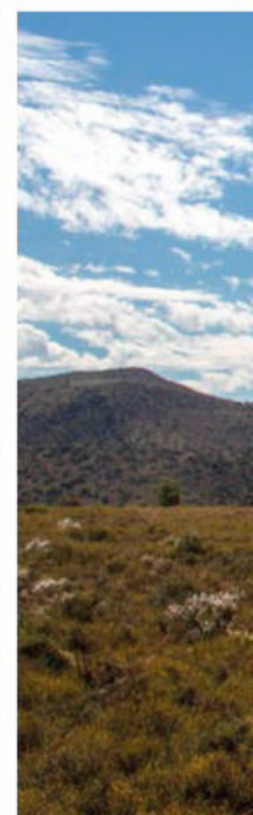
Nevertheless, you still need to apply good 4x4 principles, such as driving carefully, deflating your tyres (2 bar or lower) and engaging four-wheel drive so that you don't damage the trail.

Shortly after the turnoff to the Blesbok loop, as the route ascends the mountain, the twin track gets quite rocky. Here you'll also find a series of drainage ditches which you'll cross. Some of them are quite deep, but when driving here in wet conditions, you'll understand the need for them.

Fortunately, these bumps flatten out as you approach the top of the mountain, but the rocks in the trail will jiggle your kidneys. When you finally summit, your reward is a splendid view over the back of the Valley of Desolation, one that most tourists never get to see. There's also a picnic spot – make sure you pack food and drinks.

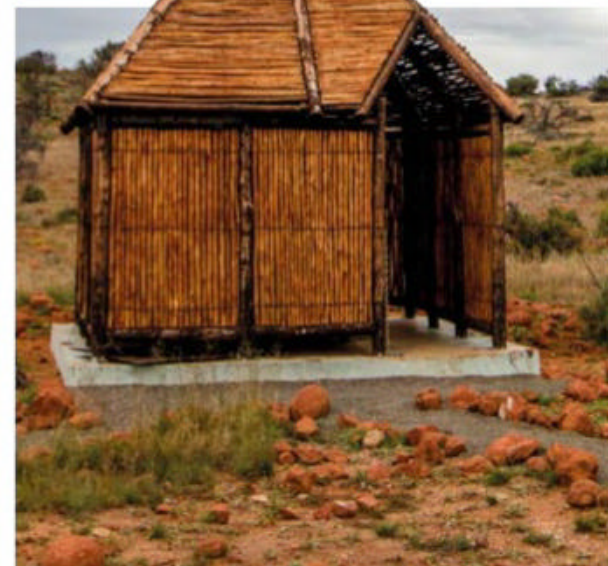
This is where you turn around and drive back along the same track. The "regular" view of the Valley of Desolation is definitely worth a visit, too – so make a turn there before you leave.

The Driekoppe Trail is in the eastern section of the park. It starts at the Kroonvale gate (get a key in advance at the main gate's reception) and follows a south-eastern arc through the Camdeboo's most secluded parts. The Rangers say you can manage this route in a 4x2 with good ground clearance, but then you have to leave from the Kroonvale gate again, because to finish at the Lootsfontein gate you have to tackle the Diepkloof. And on this steep, narrow descent you will need an off-road vehicle. >

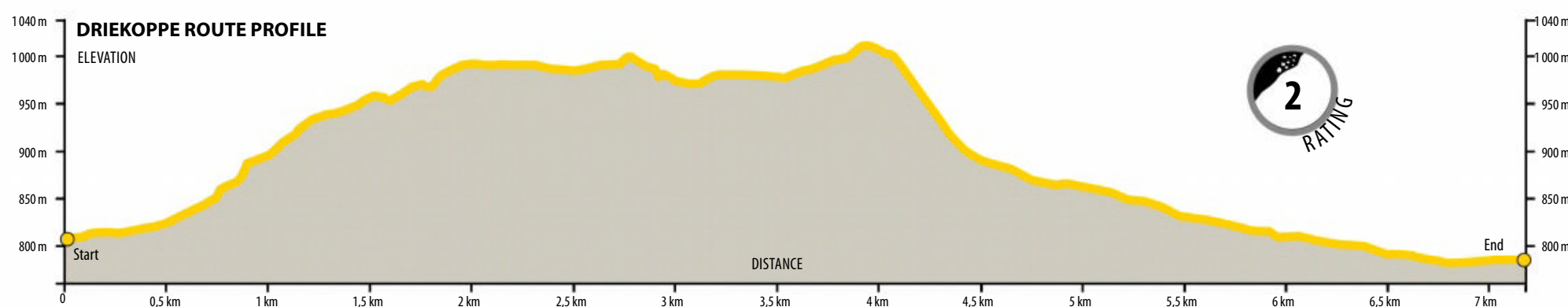




“
When you finally summit, the reward is
a splendid view over the back of the valley,
one that most tourists won't ever see.

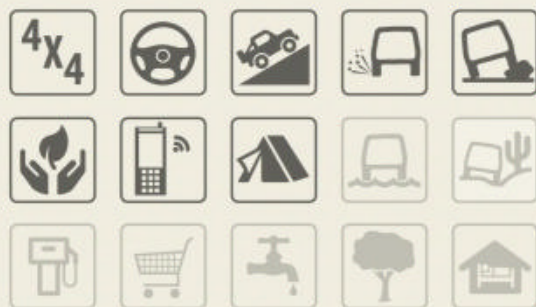


SIGHTS. Camdeboo National Park has six picnic spots with braai and ablution facilities. The 19 km of gravel roads provide visitors the opportunity to see the entire range of indigenous species in their habitats. For birding enthusiasts, nearly 250 bird species have been recorded in the park.





What you need to know



4x4 / Low range / diff? You'll manage in 4x4.

Maximum number of vehicles None.

Do I get a map? Yes.

Will I scratch my vehicle? No.

Should I take a compressor? It is not necessary.

Can we braai next to the road? No, fire isn't allowed anywhere in the park.

Can I turn around halfway? Yes.

Is there cellphone signal? Yes.

THE TRAIL

Best time to go? In autumn and spring when temperatures are moderate and it's not that wet.

Can I take my family along? Yes, it's a great family destination.

Just for the day or the weekend?

You can complete each of the routes comfortably in 2-3 hours.

Are there ablution facilities on the routes? Yes, at the top of the Koedoeskloof trail.

Directions The main gate is just outside the northern boundary of the town on the N9.

GPS S32.220246 E24.540620 (main gate)

Price The trail is free, you just need to pay the park's R43 p.p. conservation fee (R22 for children).

Contact 049 892 3453

go! Drive & Camp says It's a perfect 4x4 getaway for nature lovers.



Shortly after the start at Kroonvale, you get to a signpost for Waaihoek. The trail starts climbing and you have a wide view of Graaff-Reinet on your right. Once you're over the mountain, the wide Karoo plains are on your left, and on the horizon ahead, you see the three peaks that gave the route its name.

After about 7 km on the trail, you reach a fork in the road. Keep left here to drive to Waaihoek where you get the panoramic view from the top of Hangklip, the highest mountain peak in the park (1 482 m). Remember, you need four-wheel drive

– you descend slowly in the Diepkloof on a steep, rocky downhill. A sign at the top warns you (rightfully so) that you shouldn't drive down here if it has rained. However, this section offers one of the best views in the Camdeboo as you descend to the plain below you.

At the bottom of the gorge you follow the route for about 3,5 km to the Lootsfontein gate. Turn right outside the gate and drive to the R75 regional road which takes you back to town. Remember to return the key at the main gate.





ULTIMATE 4WD ADVENTURE

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WHAT WE DO

Ultimate 4wd Adventure (U4A) has proven itself over the past 4 years to be South Africa's flagship 4wd event hosted by the team of Ultimate Adventure Media. The only event in SA where drivers get hand picked based on driver experience and their 4x4 's built.

Photo taken by Liane



Lose yourself at Letaba

What better place to break away from the doldrums of the daily grind than the Kruger National Park? asks Jaco Stegmann from Randburg.



“My fiancée Eriq Jordaan and I recently camped at Letaba Rest Camp. We managed to secure a stand right next to the campsite’s fence and spent our time exploring the vast unspoilt nature of the park, sunrises over waterholes, the night sounds, and would often stop next to a waterhole to grow quiet and take it all in. Here, humans are kept in caged enclosures, while the wildlife is free to roam around as they please.

Tell us what Letaba looks like

The camp is beautiful. Letaba is in the central part of the park right on the Letaba River’s banks, with beautiful views of the river. The camp is fenced and the vegetation around it is typical bushveld. The stands were all neat and clean when we arrived, with thin trees everywhere in the campsite that adds to the natural feel. Each stand also has a power point, and though the stands are not all exactly the same size, they are all at least big enough for a tent or caravan and a vehicle.

What do you drive and what was your route?

I drive an automatic Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D4-D and camp with a tent. We left



Gauteng early, at around 7 am and took the N1 north to Polokwane, then turned off to follow the R71 all the way to the Phalaborwa Gate. We only stopped for a quick breakfast.

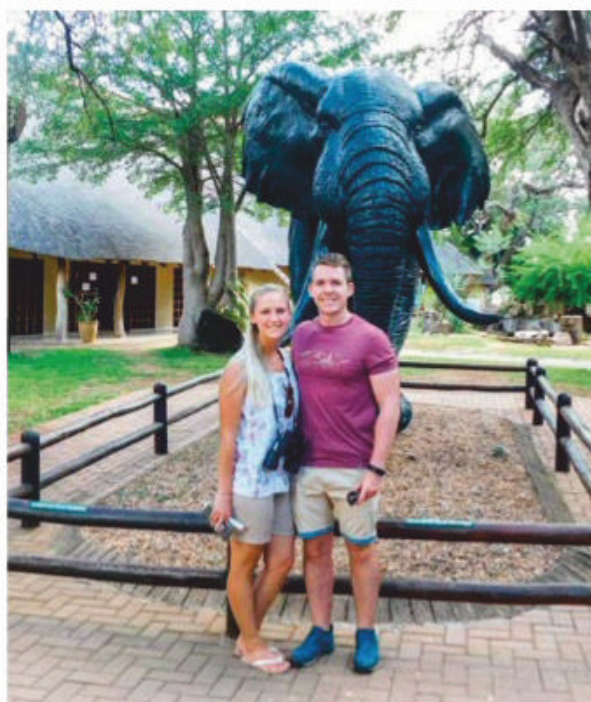
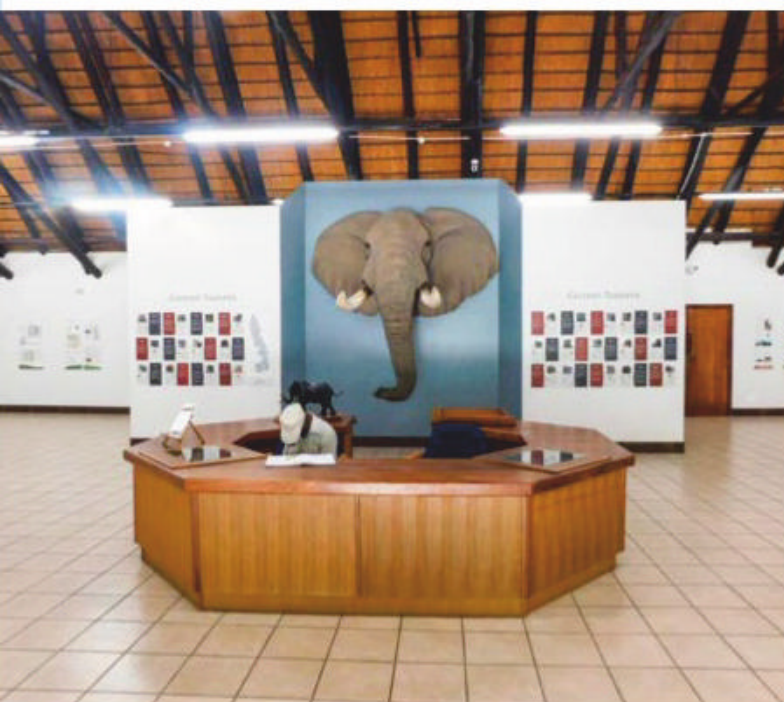
What about the ablution facilities?

The ablutions at Letaba are mediocre, but I never expect much in the Kruger anyway. There are showers with a dry section to get dressed in, one bath (in the men’s

section), and basins with mirrors. The block is cleaned every morning, but when showering late at night, it was slightly untidy and a bit dirty.

What kind of activities keep you busy here?

There’s a swimming pool for when the climate gets unbearably hot and a restaurant for when you don’t feel like tending a braai. You can also book night rides and other game drives at the camp’s



reception. The best part about Letaba is that it is home to the famous Elephant Hall, which has many interesting facts, depictions and photographs of these majestic creatures in the museum. After we drove through the gate, even before we got to the campsite for our stay, we had already spotted lions on the prowl, and there were at least two hyenas that would patrol up and down the fence every night to pick up scraps of leftover meat from campers' braais. Needless to say, feeding wild animals in the park is forbidden.

Is there a shop?

Although we bought all our food ahead of the time and made sure all our camping essentials were packed, the shop at Letaba has everything from wood and ice to vegetables, packs of braai meat, clothing, medicines and sunscreen. There's also a Total garage that sells petrol and diesel and even has a car wash. ”



CONTACT

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sanparks.org

GPS S23.854360 E31.574464

WIN Jaco wins a **Camp Cover** Camera bag worth R520.

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

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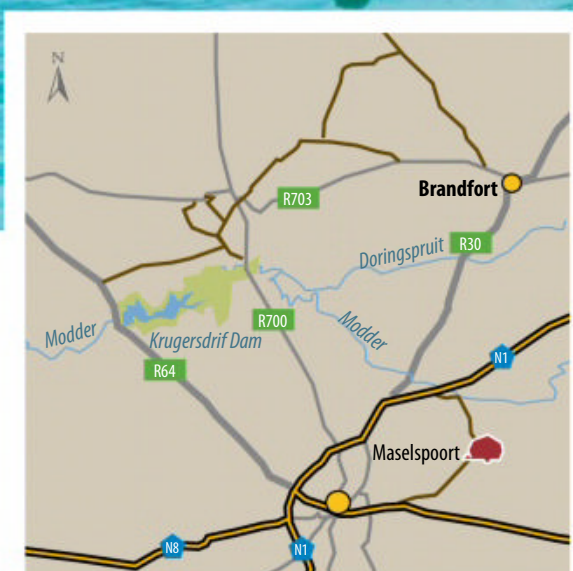
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Fun for the whole family

You'll find Maselspoort Resort next to the Modder River near Bloemfontein. Here you can indulge two favourite pursuits: camping and fishing.



FISHING RESORT

MASELSPOORT RESORT

Kids play while you fish

The land on which Maselspoort Resort lies is barely 30 km outside Bloemfontein. A large waterworks plant was built here in 1904, and in 1933 it became a resort first owned by the municipality and the province before private owners took over its management.

About 15 years ago, two Bloemfontein brothers, Reg and Fritz Krohn, who grew up on a farm just across the river, bought the resort and developed it to what it is today. The Modder River covers one of the fringes – its waters teeming with various species of fish.

Maselspoort is a quiet resort. No motor boats and water skis are allowed near the resort. Notice boards prohibit this and warn of fines.

Over weekends, families and friends scatter around the green grass under shade trees to picnic, braai, play cricket and slide down the super tube – you don't have to fork out cash to use the tube. For the very little ones, there is a large splash pool with a blue-and-green dinosaur slide.

The caravan park and campsite are within walking distance from the fun, but far away enough from the noisy excitement on the water slides. Next to the river are two rows of 44 grassy stands, each with its own spacious and neat kitchen, scullery and bathroom

with a bathtub and a basin each. The bath also has a shower head and the toilet is separate. At your kitchen door, underneath an outdoor light, there's a skottel braai. There's another playground here with swings, a seesaw and a splash pool for the little ones.

Behind the river stands are a further 108 stands, each with a power point, tap and a built-in braai area with a large grid. In the middle of these stands are two neat large ablution blocks with baths (wheelchair friendly) and showers, as well as a laundry and dishwashing room.





FISHING GEAR

Hooking the tiger

The tiger fish is the king of freshwater game fish, but it is a species that you wouldn't tackle with your bare hands. Its sharp teeth has many people comparing this native of Africa with the dreaded piranhas of South America.

So, it's the fish for you if you like a challenge, and you often see their jaws adorning the walls of club houses.

Adrenalin Importers has now launched seven unique colour lures to catch the eye of a tiger fish. It is called Zambo, a portmanteau of "Zambesi" and "Rambo".

The dark and the clear baits work well in cloudy water or on cloudy days, while the more natural colours are meant for clean water. The golden one is for sunshine days and then there is even a silly colour or two if nothing else seems to work that day.

The lure is 10 cm long, weighs 19,5 g and has a pair of treble hooks. You can cast the bait into the water and slowly reel



it in or trailing in the water from a boat.

The bait is also suitable for salt water if you want to see which marine fish would like what a tiger fish likes.

Price R109 at fishing shops.

Contact Adrenalin Importers & Distributors 021 982 1510

catches@4adrenalin.co.za

adrenalinfishing.co.za



Briefly | Maselspoort



Fish Carp, catfish, yellowfish and mudfish.

Campsite 44 river stands (with grass) with private ablution facilities and kitchenette, and 108 stands on grass with electricity and water just off the river.

Ablution facilities 2 communal ablution blocks for the 108 stands, neat and modern, with showers, baths (wheelchair friendly), laundry and a wash room.

Price R250 p.n. per site with electricity and R300 for private stands, plus R50 p.p. (will be R60 p.p. from 1 September 2019).

Contact 051 441 7848

reservations@maselspoort.co.za

maselspoort.co.za

GPS S29.031581 E26.408409

go! Drive & Camp says There's is no official catch-and-release rule, but most anglers return the fish to the water.



FISH DISH

BOKKOM BUTTER Rich and tasty!

This butter adds bursts of flavour to your braai meat and potatoes.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 3 tablespoons finely ground bikkoms
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped capers
- 1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard
- 5 anchovy fillets, finely chopped

- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 cup soft butter
- Salt and pepper to taste

Here's how

Mix together all the ingredients and serve with lamb chops, steak or baked potatoes.

go! Drive & Camp says This bikkom butter makes delicious garlic bread, too. 🍞

One trip @ parks

They're not fans of being in one place for too long, so they visited six national parks in one trip, says Theo Kleinhans of Pretoria.

It was almost the end of winter and therefore time for the Kleinhans's caravan to get back on the road. Although they had previously stayed at ATKV Klein-Kariba for five days, Theo and Esther are not what they call "staying tourists". No, they prefer to travel and get itchy feet when in one place for too long.

They've already hitched their caravan and hit the road more than 60 times over the past years.

Currently, they're towing a Sprite Sprint with a Nissan X-Trail. Theo says it's a comfortable combination with which they've been all over South Africa and Namibia.

Head to Mokala

“For our next adventure, we decide on a circular route in the middle of South Africa where we intend to visit six national parks. We would like to spend three nights each in the Mokala, Karoo, Camdeboo, Addo, Mountain Zebra and Golden Gate national parks.

Due to the long distances and our camping preferences, we decide to stay over in Bloemfontein on the first night, and to visit Mokala from outside the park. We also look for a halfway point between Mountain Zebra and Golden Gate parks.

We book three nights per park, but Addo only has two for us. In Bloemfontein we bag a spot at River of Joy, and for our nights outside Mokala, we book the Riverside Lodge at Ritchie. We also reserve a night at The Nest outside Aliwal North to break the long drive between Mountain Zebra and Golden Gate.

River of Joy is just outside Glen, 25 km before we get to Bloemfontein. It's close to the N1, but the traffic doesn't bother us. The ablution facilities are old but clean. They're a bit limited with only two showers and two toilets in each of the separate facilities, and one wonders how all the campers will cope when the place is fully booked.

There are eight stands with electricity and plenty of stands without. The campsite is probably more suited to people who camp in tents. There's also no significant security fence or other

security measures, something that will always be a problem for us Gautengers.

Where possible, we leave the main roads, and the next day we aim for Mokala via Petrusburg and Jacobsdal. I feel bad for saying this, but Petrusburg is a symbol of rural decline. Luckily, Jacobsdal seems to be a busy and prosperous community. The energy of the town probably has to do with the Riet River irrigation scheme and the presence of the agricultural school.

The Riverside Lodge is neat and well managed. It is a great campsite when

visiting Mokala, especially if you're towing a regular road caravan. Mokala's two gates are Mosu and Lilydale. The Lilydale entrance is after a 15 km dirt road from Ritchie, whereas you reach Mosu by travelling on the N12 (tar road) for 22 km south of Ritchie. From here you follow a 22 km gravel road between the N12 and the Mosu entrance.

Neither of these access roads is suitable for road caravans and the internal roads in the park are also rough and sandy here and there. An off-road caravan or trailer won't struggle here and we encounter >



PATIENCE. Take it easy, take it slow, you've still got a long way to go. The roadworks may be inconvenient, but think of the good that will come of it.

a few at the Motswedi campsite.

We drive most of the park's roads in one day and see a variety of plains wildlife. It is a delightful retreat for a few days of rest and silence away from the bustling tourist routes. It's our first visit to this park and we are happy to tick it off our list.

The next day we drive the 34 km to Kimberley for the day – we want to visit a few museums and other attractions. We compliment the management of The Big Hole's 'Old Town'. It is well maintained.

We're also take a quick look at the Big Hole Caravan Park, but unfortunately it is deserted and dilapidated.

To the Karoo we go!

From Richie, our next destination is the Karoo National Park. Unfortunately, there is only one road we can take to get there, and we progress slowly to Hopetown because of roadworks. This can be quite frustrating, but at least we can see our tax money being used for road maintenance. Thanks for that.

The Karoo National Park is, as always, a pleasure. The air is beautifully clean, there is a wonderful silence and the facilities are excellent. It's also a great place for people who want to play with their off-road vehicles, as eight of the 10 trails in the park are for 4x4 vehicles.

We don't see much game, but the veld looks good. You should stay here for at least three nights to enjoy it to its fullest. I believe too many people spend only one night here on the way to somewhere else. They do themselves a disservice.



The Camdeboo awaits

After going through the Free State from Gauteng to the Northern Cape, we point the X-Trail in the direction of the Eastern Cape.

From Beaufort West, we take the R61 to Aberdeen and Graaf-Reinet. Here, the GPS messes up badly in our search for the Camdeboo campsite.

It leads us to the Kroonvale Gate to the east of the town, but there are only 4x4 trails. Not somewhere where we can drive with our tow combination. Eventually, we locate the reception. It is on the N9 outside the town. We camp at Nqweba, where there are 15 neat stands with power.

The park consists of three sections – on the east side of the town by the Lakeview entrance you'll find only 4x4 trails. The section where our camp is located is at the Nqweba Dam (formerly the Van Reyneveld Pass Dam) and the third section is south of the R63 where you'll find Spandau Kop. There are other hiking



and 4x4 trails in the park, too.

You won't find any predators in this park and buffalo is the only member of the Big Five here.

We drive about 20 km around the Nqweba Dam and see most of the wildlife in the brochure – red hartebeest, eland, steenbok, ostrich, black wildebeest and springbok. The topography is typical of the Karoo – rolling plains with hills here and there.

The next day we visit Spandau Kop and experience the beautiful view over the Valley of Desolation. The lookout point is also the start of a comfortable hiking trail





NELLIE AND CO. It's always a delight to see the elephants, and the Addo National Park has plenty of them.

– the 1,5 km Crag Lizard Trail. All along the route are information signs telling you about the surrounding vegetation, but unfortunately many of these plants had been destroyed in a recent wildfire before our visit.

We also check out a number of attractions in the town. With more than 200 monuments and national monuments in and around the town, there is plenty to see and do. We can wholeheartedly recommend the Reinet House Museum.



BUFFALO SOLDIER. The Cape buffalo is a dangerous animal, which is why you should remain in your car when visiting these parks.



Addo, here we come...

The next day we leave for the Addo National Park and drive along the R75 to Kirkwood and the main camp of Addo. As we're staying only two nights, we have just a day and a half to explore the area.

That afternoon we take the tourist route to Domkrag, Hapoor and Rooidam. We see a large lioness and kudu, warthogs and other animals. But no elephants! There are no indications that elephants have been in this part of the park lately – the dung at the dams are old and dry.

The next day we tour the south side of the park. In the Colchester section we see many elephants, with herds of up to sixty at a time – from the very large to the very small. The elephants seem to have migrated south.

Hello, Kwagga!

We aim for Mountain Zebra, the fifth park on our tour. Near Cradock, we turn

onto the R63 to make a stop at Somerset East. It is a busy, beautiful town with a large hospital and the well-known Gill College. The lively economy can probably be attributed, just like Jacobsdal and Cradock, to the large irrigation scheme from the Fish River.

From Cradock, we take the R61 – with more stop-and-go roadworks – to the Mountain Zebra National Park outside the town. Most of the stands are paved and marked “T” for tents and “C” for caravans. We don't quite understand this arrangement as all the sites look to be the same size.

The people at reception also don't ask us what we are camping with and we're told we can choose any stand. We drive around in this beautiful mountainous park for two days. Everything is captured on our dashboard camera and transferred to a separate hard drive – for our old age.

According to the map, there are more than 70 km of roads in the park. >

We see mountain zebras, buffalo, red jackals, springbok, red hartebeest and many more. The roads are in good shape and where the mountain slopes get too steep, the road is tarred.

As good as gold

On our way to our sixth and last park – Golden Gate – we stop for lunch with family in Burgersdorp. Then we overnight at The Nest near Aliwal North. This farm stay is right next to the N9, about 5 km north of town. It has power points for three caravans or tents, but other stands for campers who don't need electricity.

However, there is only a single bathroom for men and one for women, and if the campsite gets full, I predict a problem. It is, however, the only campsite in a very large area of the Eastern Cape ever since the hot springs at Aliwal have become obsolete.

We have a quick look there and are disappointed to see how everything – from the swimming pools and campsite to the restaurants – has deteriorated and shut down.

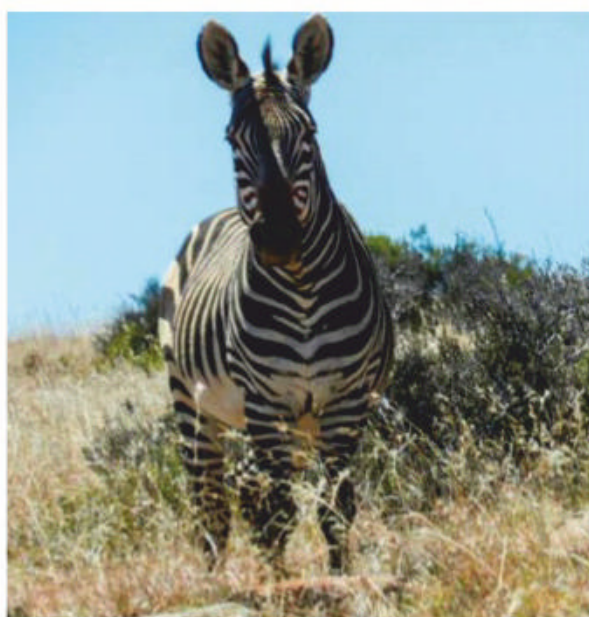
From here we drive along the Free State-Lesotho border to Golden Gate. Border villages Ladybrand, Ficksburg and Fouriesburg are mainly dependent on the purchasing power of visitors from Lesotho and local unemployed people's government state grants.

The streets of the villages are generally in a critical condition. We didn't come across any roadworks on the almost 400 km between Aliwal North and Golden Gate, but it will soon be needed, as the road is covered with tar "rags" patching the potholes.

At Golden Gate we get a good stand on one of a number of concrete slabs in the campsite. The Free State had good rain and everything is clean and cool. In the park are two short trails to drive, but the major attraction is the incredible mountains and scenery.

Unfortunately, a herd of baboons here has learnt how to tear open tents – and the side canvasses of the pop-up roofs in caravans – when they smell food.

We use Golden Gate as a base to visit the Witsieshoek Mountain Inn beyond Phutaditjaba. This is probably the highest hotel in South Africa. From here you can look down into the Tugela Valley and the



Royal National Park in KwaZulu-Natal.

We also stop at the Sterkfontein Dam and visit the arty town Clarens's galleries and eateries. After three nights at Golden Gate, we take the N3 back home. The Johannesburg traffic on a Friday afternoon is more than enough motivation to plan another getaway soon.

Our takeaways from the trip...

- The GPS is not always right.
- The stands and ablution facilities run by SANParks are always of a good standard.
- Although we often encountered roadworks that caused much frustration, we choose to see it in a positive light. Something is being done about the condition of our roads.
- In most of the small villages where we stopped, there were persistent beggars – some even got quite aggressive. Our advice is to not stop unnecessarily and rather enjoy your own tea and sandwiches somewhere along the road in-between towns.
- We travelled for 20 days and 3 860 km, used 392 ℓ fuel (costing R5 338) and paid R3 664 in camp fees.



Theo wins a **Camp Cover Bundu bag** to the value of R500. It's so versatile that you can use it to store First Aid supplies or to organise your clothing. Check out Camp Cover's range of protective covers on their website campcover.co.za.



WIN

MOUNTAIN ZEBRA NP. Lions in the Eastern Cape? We thought they were based in Johannesburg...



Skeleton Coast Dune Adventure

With the Bhejane 4x4 Adventure Team, you will experience the Skeleton Coast and its unexpected beauty like never before.



DAY 1

Our group assembles in Swakopmund during the afternoon and we have the opportunity to sort out all the final logistical details such as fueling our vehicles, jerry cans and water containers.

DAY 2

We head north on the salt road to Cape Cross via Henties Bay. From Cape Cross we enter the actual Skeleton Coast National Park at the Ugab River. We venture past Toscanini and then arrive at Terrace Bay where we camp.

DAY 3

Today we proceed to Möwe Bay where we have a chance to view their little museum and finally enter 4x4 country. We stop at the Ventura bomber crash site and cross the great Hoarusib River towards Rocky Point. From there we travel inland and stay in the hills for the remainder of the day. Once we pass Sarusas crystal mine, we set up camp for the night.

DAY 4

After breakfast we venture towards the Kunene mouth. This involves pure beach driving past Angra Fria and the famous 'Dunedin Star' wreck site and huge salt pans.

DAY 5

Today will be spent dune-driving in an easterly direction all the way to Hartmann's Valley.

We will be staying as close to the thundering Kunene River as possible, with beautiful, scenic spots along the way.

DAY 6

We're spending another day and night at our Kunene river bush campsite to enjoy the beautiful scenery where the Skeleton Coast dunes meet the Kunene River and the wondrous Hartmann's Valley.

DAY 7

We make an early start and leaving our lovely campsite in the Hartman Valley and head south, we will drive on the border of the Skeleton Coast National Park today and make our way down the Hartmann's Valley toward our campsite for the night at Puros.

DAY 8

After a long day on the road the previous day we indulge in a slow day around camp, those of you who want to, will be welcome to go for a drive with the guide to search for the elusive desert elephants in the Hoarusib River.

DAY 9

After one last breakfast together our guide and crew bid the clients a fond farewell to take the road back to Sesfontein. You can refuel at Sesfontein and travel to your next destination – Etosha Pan is nearby, or you can continue via Caprivi to Botswana or merely travel via Kamanjab to Windhoek.

8 NIGHT / 9 DAY (TENTED)

DATES 1-9 October 2019

COST R 14 250,00 per person sharing

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

- Your own four-wheel drive vehicle and fuel
- Stretchers/mattresses, bedding and camping chairs
- Drinks and snacks
- One bag of wood per vehicle
- Water for own consumption (minimum 20 ℓ) and for showering/washing
- Strong garbage bags – clients will have to carry their own garbage.
- Medical insurance and evacuation insurance cover

WHAT BHEJANE PROVIDES

- Two-way radios to all vehicles
- Guide and guide vehicle
- Wind shelter, shower & toilet facilities
- Additional vehicle to carry logistics
- Three meals per day
- Water (for kitchen only)

Yes, I want to go!

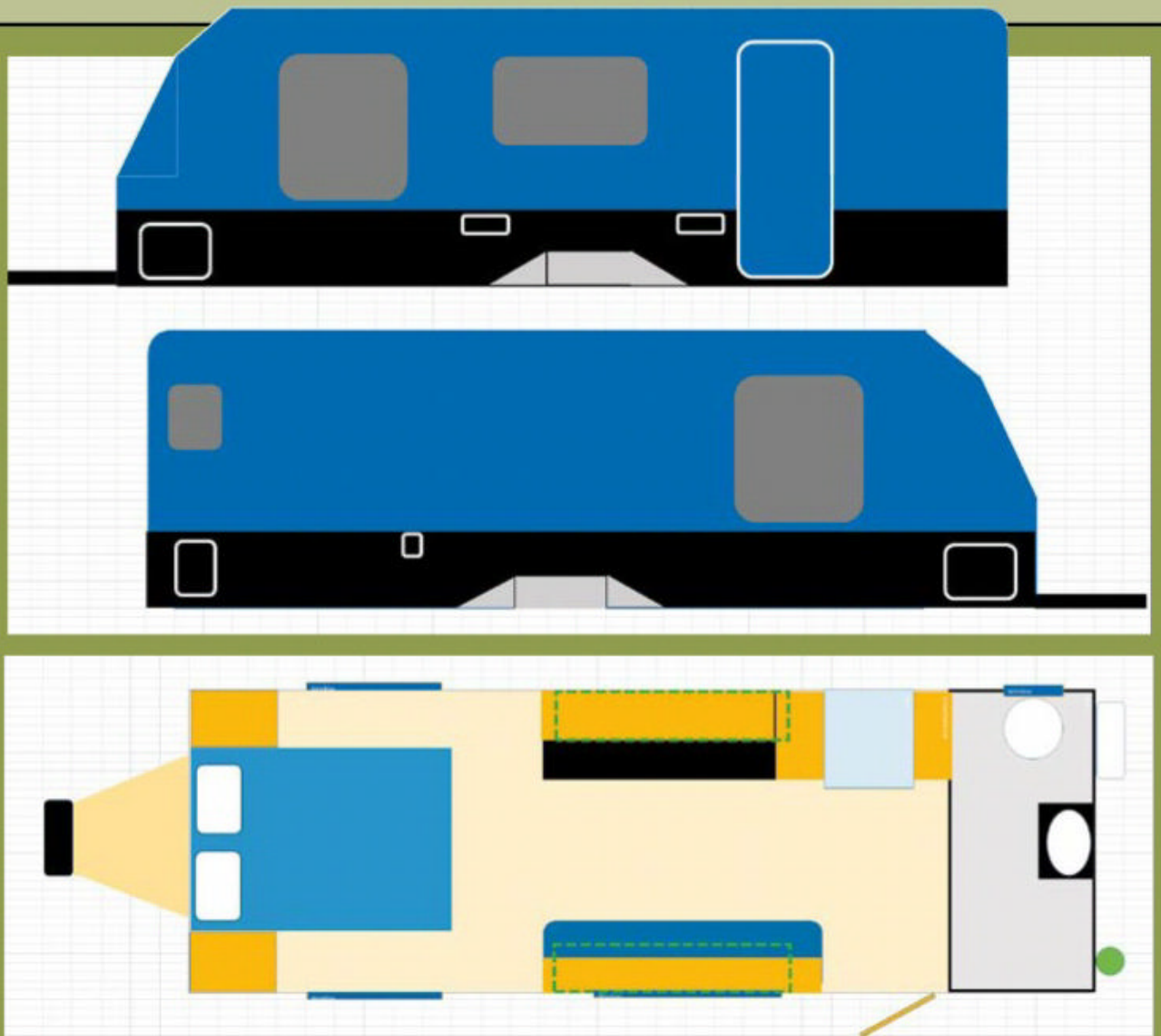
To book, call ☎ 044 535 9033 or email ✉ bookings@bhejane.com
Find out more at ✉ bhejane.com

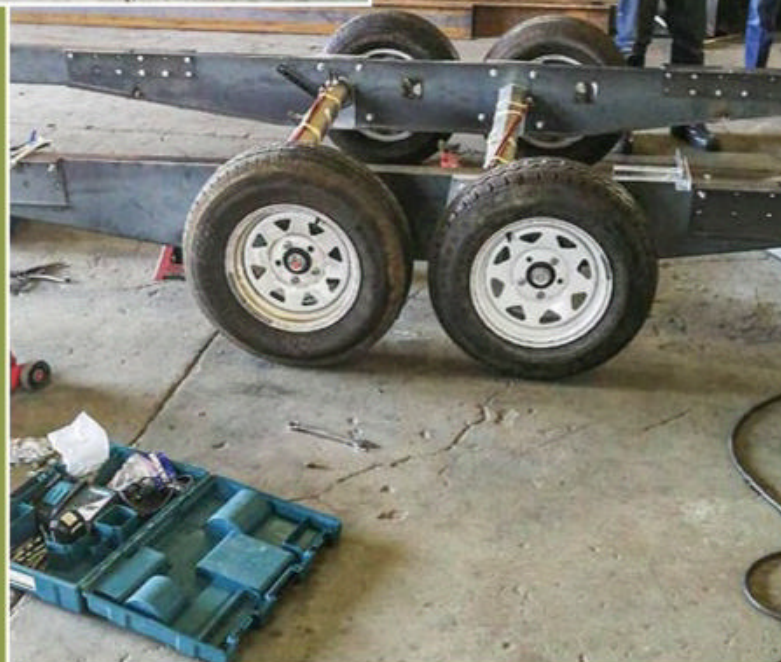
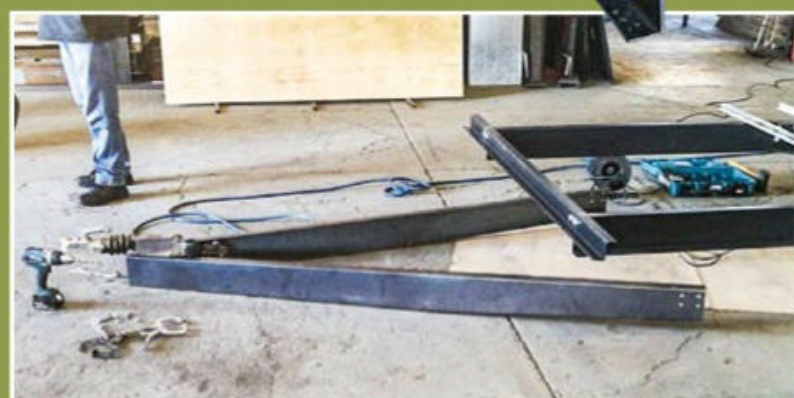
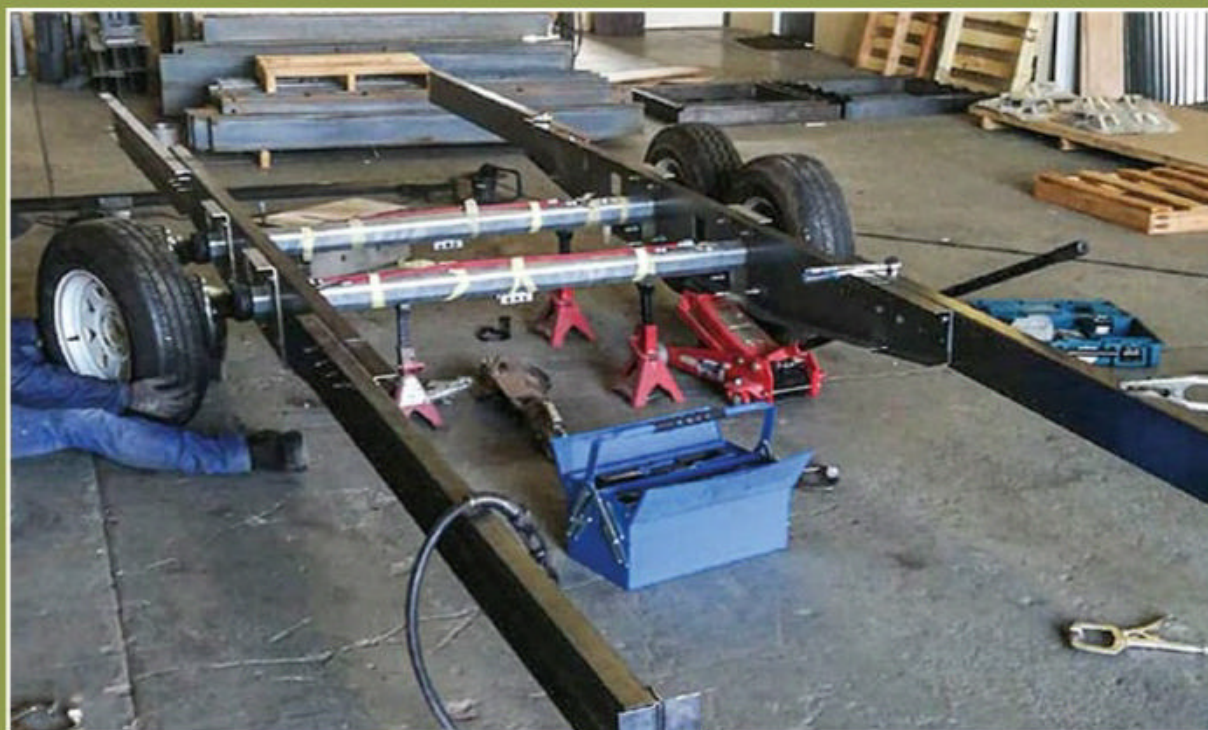




Double the trouble...
double the fun!

If your dad used to build caravans, it's almost inevitable that you'd be gathering your tools to build your own home on wheels. **Nico Prinsloo** of **Alberton** can attest to this.





BARE BONES. The dual axles are each rated for 1 400 kg. Nico decided to step away from the traditional use of rectangular or square tubing and opt instead for 3mm plate that was bolted together to make up the chassis. The benefit of this modular construction, is that if the chassis is damaged in any way then you could essentially just remove the section that needed to be repaired – as opposed to having to fix the entire unit.

Nico's dad, also named Nico, used to make steel window frames for a living, but his hands were always itching to build his own caravan. This planted the caravan seed early within a young Nico.

With the exception of the Exclusive, Nico has owned every single Jurgens caravan model at some point. That was before he decided to build his own. Last year, the idea of building his own caravan reached a tipping point. A few interesting months lay ahead and midnight hours would gain new meaning. Nico's build would also provide a dose of drama after his near-complete caravan fell apart after four months.

Instead of giving up, though, it was actually the beginning of Nico's next challenge. A victory was in sight and two months later he was able to camp with his new and self-built caravan for the very first time.

Open spaces, please

“We tackled the entire caravan project together. My wife, Mandy, not only helped with the physical construction work, but we designed the caravan together.

There were a few prerequisites: Mandy has claustrophobia and insisted on enough open space inside the caravan. Looking at today's caravans, there is always a narrow aisle somewhere. We could avoid that with our own design.

When you get rid of the aisles, you suddenly have an open-plan layout that doesn't feel cramped at all.

Mandy is also not a fan of an outdoor kitchen – if you want to braai the bacon under the blue sky, you can always carry your gas stove and chair outside. That's why the kitchen had to be inside.

A decent standing fridge – like the one we use at home – was another prerequisite, plus an open-plan bathroom with a toilet and shower.

Start with a double

From the outset, I decided on a double axle because it has more benefits than a single axle. For example, you don't think of all the extra weight that single wheel carries when a cross wind blows. It pushes the hull and places extra load on the wheel. With a double axle, this load is shared.

A double axle also has other benefits. Just think about all the potholes on our roads – a double-axle caravan drives over >

a hole, while the wheel of a single axle drives right through it. The plan is to one day drive to the Victoria Falls with the new caravan in tow, so it had to be ready for Africa's roads. I decided on two 1,4 t axles made by Al-Ko.

When you think of the steelwork for a chassis, you may assume you have to use square or rectangular tubing. I decided on a plate that you bend yourself. The plate itself is 3 mm thick – much better than the 2 mm curved steel of other chassis. You bend all the plates until they form a tube, then assemble them to eventually form the chassis. I don't have a bending machine to shape the plates but I have a friend who does. The chassis is modular, meaning you bolt different sections together until it forms a unit. (The chassis is therefore held together by bolts and not by welding.) The advantage of this is, of course, if you have to repair anywhere on the chassis, you only need to unbolt a particular section.

To finish off the chassis, I did not galvanise it, but treated it with a red oxide primer and then painted the top layer.

Next was the floor. For this I used 12 mm marine ply – it's not only strong but also water resistant. Then we rounded off the floor with Novilon (one with a wood-plank motif).

From here on out, I learnt an expensive lesson. I built the panels similar to those seen on older road caravans. The panel is reinforced with wooden frames and the polystyrene layer is for insulation. The outer layer is naturally made of fibreglass. I had almost finished building the caravan when I realised the glue I used wasn't working and the whole thing fell apart because the adhesive failed. It was a total disaster and I couldn't finish the caravan... after four months of blood, sweat and a whole lot of money.

When something like this happens, it's easy to decide the project was a bad idea and then get on with your life. But Mandy and I spent four months investing in the caravan and giving up was not an option. I broke the caravan down to the floor – and in the process I couldn't even get the inside cupboards out in one piece. So, I had to start over from the floor upward.

Round 2

I had to make a plan with another type of panel and called on a local caravan manufacturer for help. They were willing to help with the panels; I just had to do



SMOOTHING THINGS. Jaco initially made an error with the caravan's panels that proved to be a costly mistake. After contacted a local caravan builder, the solution came up in the form of new panels made of a synthetic inner layer capped with fibreglass on either side. Removing wood from the equation ensures that maintenance is virtually non-existent, without sacrificing any strength.





JIGSAW. Before the walls could go up, the furniture first needed to be built and installed. One of the benefits for Nico was that putting his own caravan together allowed for the optimal use of space inside. The large windows are made of glass, unlike most caravans.

the cutting myself. They use a state-of-the-art material with a synthetic inner layer with a skin of fibreglass on either side. It is therefore woodless, and ultimately very strong and maintenance free.

Each of the uncut panels was 6,1 x 2,5 m in size. From this I had to cut the openings for the door and the windows.

For the roof I used two layers of fibreglass with a 20 mm layer of polystyrene between the two. The roof starts at the tail against the chassis and runs over to the front against the A-frame.

I decided against a nose cone and gained this valuable space inside – a good 60 cm.

Before attaching the two panels and roof, you first need to install the interior furniture. The cupboard frames are meranti, and the doors are bolted to it. The edges are made of 4 mm smooth wood – of which I used 12 sheets of 2,4 x 1,2 m.

The bed is an island on the floor and is a standard double-bed size. Usually, the bottom corners of an island bed in a caravan are cut diagonally so that it's easy to walk past. Because I have so much open

space, it is not necessary and the entire standard bed fits fine. The bonus of this is that ordinary bedding from your home fits your bed and you don't struggle to make it.

The panels and roof now fits around the furniture in their spots on the floor. I used a special stainless-steel extrusion with a lip where the roof and panels were joined, and used Sikaflex as adhesive.

The basic structure of the caravan was now complete. Before I built any further, it was time to camp with it to see what needed to change before starting the >

finishing work. It took four weeks to complete the caravan.

The finish line...

The wiring – which includes 12 V and 220 V – came next, and other finishing touches included the curtains. Finishing off doesn't sound like a lot of work, but it actually requires a lot of time.

For example, the open cupboards had to get doors – which I had specially made. By the way, I decided not to use any caravan-specific accessories, because I don't want to struggle one day if I have to replace something because of a special plug or fitting or whatever. I must say, though, that the door was the only exception: that is a second-hand Jurgens door.

The plumbing also had to be finished. The pump I use produces a good 4,5 bar water pressure. It's similar to what you get in your home taps, and that's why I could choose good quality taps that you'd use in your house. An inline gas geyser was the next necessity. So you're not dependent on 220 V electricity. Now we have hot water as and when we need it.

The windows are made of glass, and I had them made in Boksburg. They're decent sized windows; the one by our bed is 90 x 100 cm.

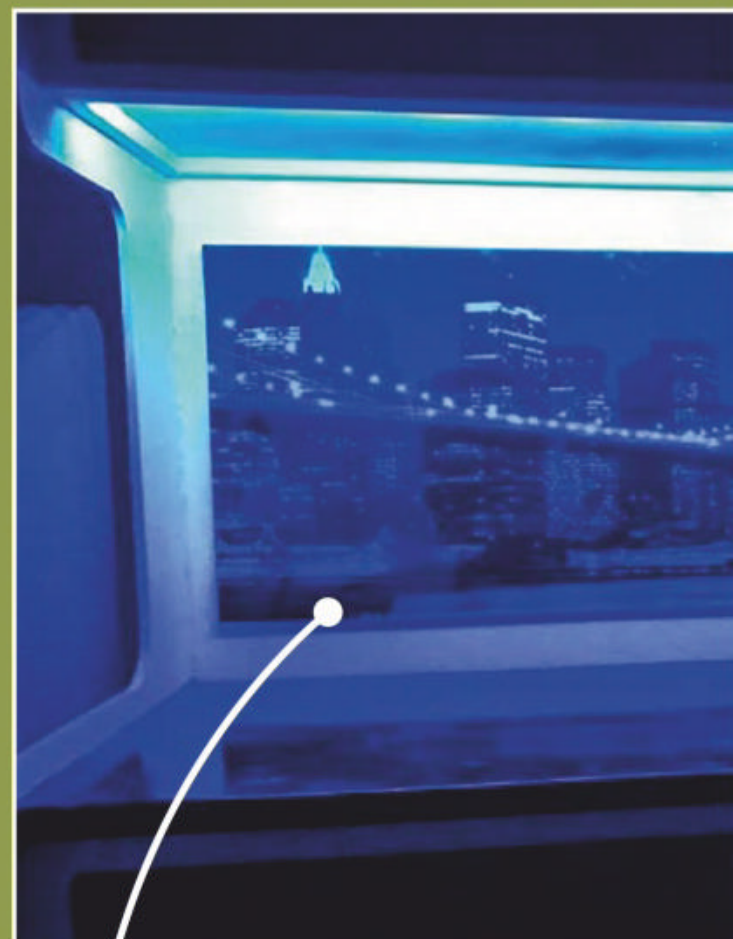
I also installed a special glass painting at the kitchen counter. It's a scene of the Brooklyn Bridge in New York which I then illuminated with blue lights from behind. When you turn it on, it gives the caravan a lovely atmosphere inside.

I estimated the total weight of the caravan to be 1 400 kg, and I was surprised to see how close I was. It's 1 460 kg and I registered the GVM as 1 900 kg.

Looking back, I'm very happy. It's just the water tank that still bothers me, it sits between the two axles but only has a capacity of 55 l, which is not enough for our needs.

The whole project cost me R170 000, but that includes my error. That alone was a good R50 000 gone. But at an actual R120 000, it's a real bargain.

The caravan's name is Double Trouble and the name is now on the inside of the door. That also has a dual origin: first, it comes from the two axles, and then from all the grey hair I acquired! I won't trade this caravan for anything. I'm going to change the colour and get away from this light ordinary caravan colour. I'm going to paint it blue.”





FINISHING TOUCHES. According to Nico, the final trimmings took a significant portion of time and detail. Such as the wiring system, which includes 12 V and 220 V power and plumbing, which uses a water pump that produces 4,5 bar of water pressure. Unlike the usual island beds that have the bottom corners cut off to allow for aisles and easier movement, the main double bed retains its full size because of the amount of space that Nico freed up inside.



A few numbers

Length	7,5 m
Hull length	6,15 m
Width	2,1 m
Height	2,52 m
Inside height	1,95 m
Axles	1 400 kg x 2
Tyres	195/14
Tare weight	1 460 kg
GVM	1 900 kg



Nico wins a **Camp Cover** Bundu-bag worth R500. This multifunctional bag is designed to be used as an emergency medical supplies bag or simply a suitcase. Go check Camp Cover's full range of protective covers on their website.

campcover.co.za



WIN

Grown-up pop up



One of the biggest advantages of a pop-up caravan such as Armadillo's Lite model is its height when towing it: there is virtually no wind resistance. And once you get to your campsite, it's super quick to set it up to the size of a regular caravan.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**

ARMADILLO LITE

Pop-up caravans, especially new ones, are as scarce as hen's teeth on our roads, mainly because virtually none of the mainstream caravan builders have a version of their own.

Eko Veld Gear, known for its Armadillo off-road caravans, has introduced the prototype of its Lite model. It's a pop-up caravan, but because the base is pretty much a copy of its existing caravans, you can also tow this pop-up caravan into the bush.

The top half of the caravan consists of canvas panels with

a solid roof on top. The mechanism Eko Field Gear uses on the Lite for the setting up and taking down is Z-shaped which you flatten from above when closing.

Not only is the Lite much lower than its bush-caravan brothers – which of course means you're going to get it into your garage without any hassle – it's also lighter thanks to all the solid panels that have been replaced with canvas.

The Lite sleeps two people and it's the perfect caravan for couples – young and old.

Think of a pair of bellows

The Lite has two scissor corner steadies – one on each rear corner – and rests on the jockey wheel in the front. If you want the Lite to stand even more firmly, you can use the extra steady next to the jockey wheel. (This can be removed and fits on the right arm of the A-frame.)

The roof doesn't lift parallel to the hull when you raise it, and it happens in two stages: first, you lift the roof at the back. All it takes is a push; the two gas struts do the rest of the work. It'll remind you of a pair of bellows as the two sides move apart. The same happens in the front.

Walk around and lift the roof in the front, also with the help of two gas struts, and there you have it: the roof with its neat canvas sections sits 115 cm above the hull.

There's a large mesh window front and rear, and a narrow roof extends overhead to keep out the sun and rain. For this, you use two sprung steel rods. If you want to erect the awning over the left side of the Lite (that's also the side where the door is), get it in place on the edge of the roof before lifting the roof. Otherwise you will have to do your best from a ladder when the roof is already up. The poles fit as soon as the roof is up.

This awning has three transverse poles (two on the sides and one for the peak) and then three vertical legs. At the end, another two poles go from the peak to the corner posts, which means the roof is stretched properly. The poles fit through hems in the canvas roof and are adjustable. This means you can stretch the canvas until it's tight. The advantage



is that you can erect it on uneven terrain, something that's not always possible with rigid poles.

At 2,5 m the canvas roof is higher than usual.

Inside the Lite and at every corner of the roof, a leg swings down to keep the roof in position. They support the roof so it doesn't accidentally collapse while you're inside.

>

Inner room

You climb a small (portable) step to get inside the Lite, and a strut fits behind the door to keep it open.

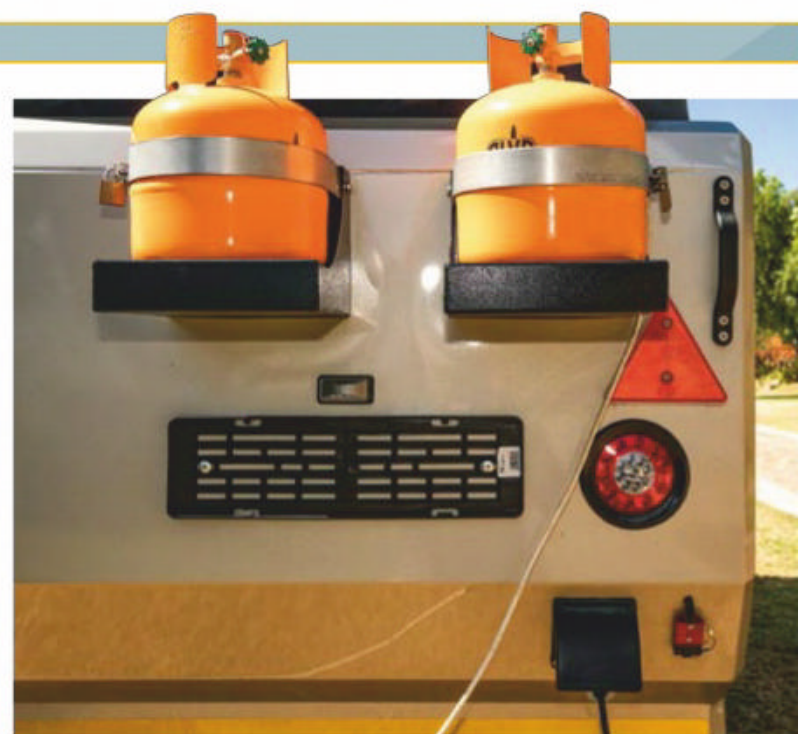
There's an aisle from the door to the other side of the hull, with the bed to your left. It's the only place where you can stand inside the Lite, and there's enough space for two people – without poking each other in the ribs.

At the back of the Lite, two large canvas flaps zip open to reveal a cupboard with three shelves. It has plenty of room for two people's clothes and toiletries.

At the end of the aisle, to the left of the foot of the bed is a 220 V power point plus a USB and Hella socket. Here you'll also find a small screen showing the battery's remaining charge.

Next to the aisle, the bed pretty much takes up all the space inside the Lite. To its left is a sunken storage section and a bedside table for your glasses, book and lip balm. An LED lamp is mounted on the ceiling.

The footrest side of the bed folds away for the breakfast nook. There are two benches facing each other. In future Lite models, there will be a table top folding down from the bed. You can remove the bench cushions to access the storage space below, but the water tank takes up some packing space in the one on the left.





Head and tail

The nose cone has a door on either side and is therefore a great space for bulky camping equipment, such as your toolbox and ground sheet, but also for the extra steady and washbasin frame. On top is an open shelf perfect for one or two bags of braai wood and a smelly pair of boots that need to air out.

Two gas cylinder holders are at the tail, each in its own clamp. One is for the gas stove and the other for the geyser. The 220 V electrical inlet for the campsite power supply is below the gas cylinders, to the right.

The spare wheel sits on its own lockable carrier under the hull at the back where it rests on a fold-down shelf. A clip holds the spare in place – pull on the clip, and the shelf swings to the ground so you can pull out the wheel.

The Lite has only one cupboard in the right panel, and the power box with its circuit breakers and fuses is attached to its left side. The water pump is mounted in front of you. The gas geyser is attached to the inside of the cupboard door where you can connect it to the water supply if, for example, you need hot water to do the dishes or want to attach a shower cubicle (optional extra).



Bake and freeze

The door sits at the tail on the left side of the Lite, with the outside kitchen taking up the rest of this side.

To the left of the door (above the wheel) a worktop flattens out with a cupboard section inside the hull. This cupboard has two shelves with several partitions in which you can pack anything from groceries to plastic containers. To the far left of the cupboard, near the top, is a 220 V power socket for when you want to plug in a kettle. The worktop doesn't have a brim and therefore cleans easily.

The sliding frame on which the fridge-freezer and gas stove sit pulls out of the left-hand cupboard. With the drawer pulled out, the opened door of this cupboard stands against the drawer. The top clip of the door hooks into a ring in the drawer and stops it from retracting should the Lite not be 100 % level. It also keeps the door in place when it is open. It's a great idea.

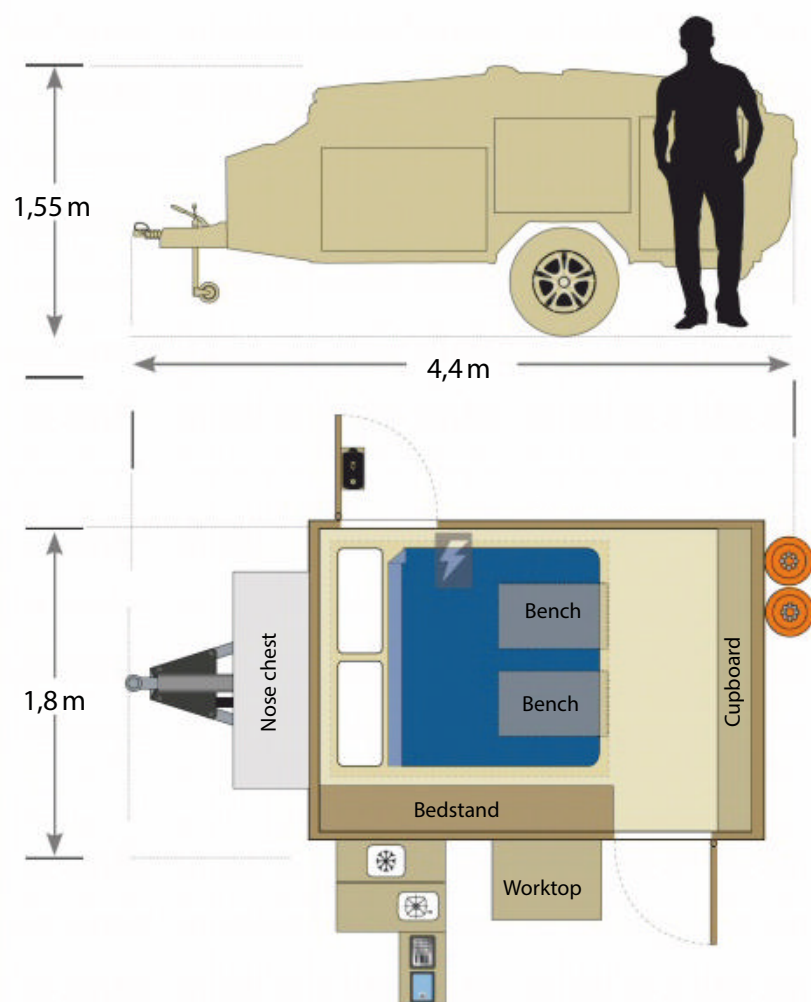
With the drawer pulled out, the fridge-freezer is close to the hull

with the gas stove at the other end. It's a single-plate stove and is closest to you at the corner when standing at the worktop. It's not connected to the gas cylinder, which means you have to bring one of the cylinders closer. The stove is about the size of a laptop computer and is slightly sunken in on its shelf. This forms a buffer around the stove, which means the wind has to blow pretty fierce before it'll extinguish the flame. Behind the stove – at the other corner – is a worktop that is about the size of the stove itself. It is useful for spoons or spices, or even a plate, while you're cooking.

Below the stove is a shelf with a zippered canvas door. This is for your pots, and underneath the corner worktop are another two separate and similar shelves for more groceries.

A detachable frame hooks onto the end of the sliding frame into which a plastic dishwashing basin and drying rack fits. A fitting on a plastic hose plugs in near the nose cone so that you can fill the basin with water drawn from the on-board tank.





The technical stuff

Length	4,4 m
Width	1,8 m
Height	1,55 m
Ceiling height	2,03 m
Tyres	195/14
Net weight	860 kg
Carrying capacity	740 kg
Axle	1,6 t
braked axle from Burquip.	
GVM	1 600 kg
Price	± R180 000

- It fits at most three people (provided the third is a baby).

go! Camp & Drive borrowed the Armadillo Lite from the manufacturer.

go! Camp & Drive says The caravan is light, small, bush ready and perfect for two.



Plus

- Sets up easily and quickly, and the awning is high enough and out of the way.
- The kitchen worktop doesn't have a brim and cleans easily.
- The bracket that holds the fridge-freezer slide frame in place is a great idea.
- More than enough storage space for two people.
- The spare tyre on a carrier under the hull is practical.



Minus

- A single-plate gas stove is not enough when you want to use more than one pot.

Dealer network

Armadillo does business from its Cape Town factory. Eko Veld Gear was recently purchased by Xtreme Outdoor Gear, which also owns Eko Aluminum Canopies and Namib Outdoor.

Contact 0021 981 2992

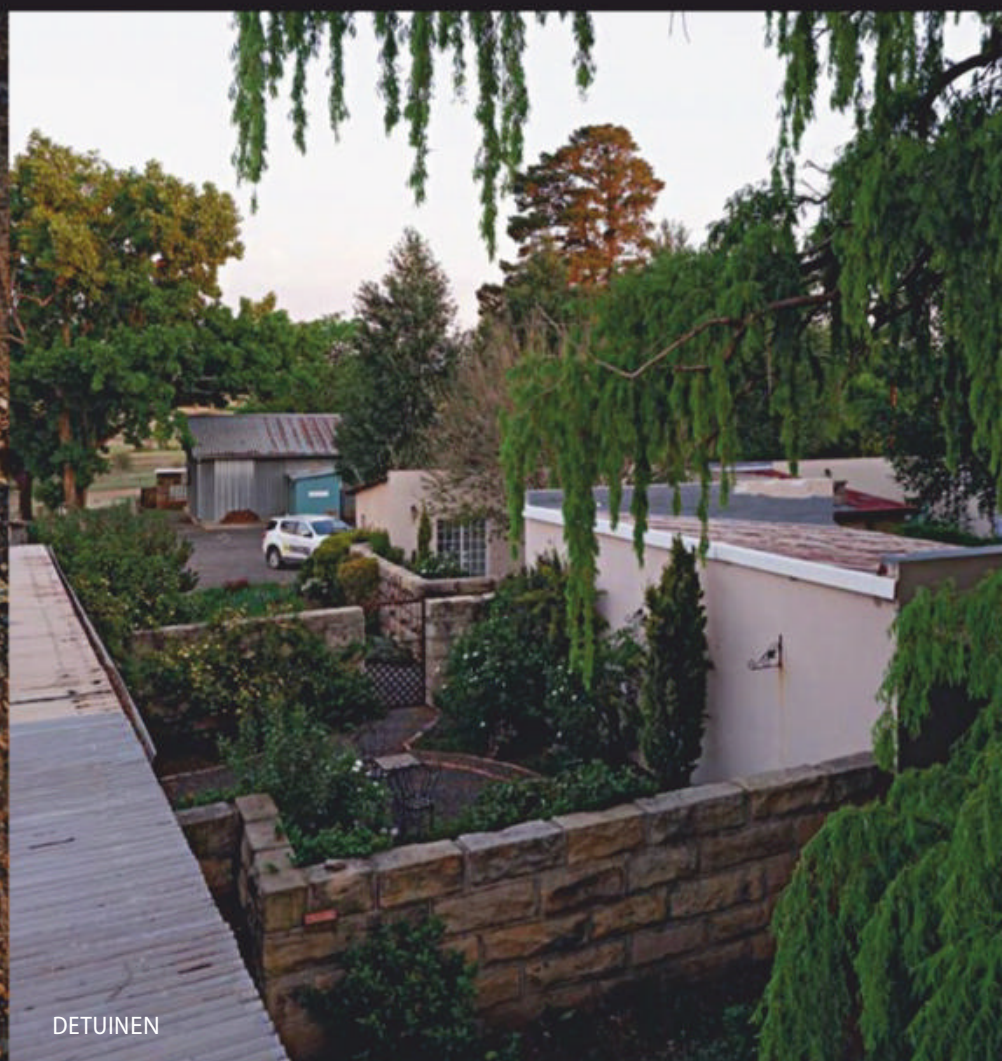
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**WEEKEND
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with our hands-on workshop in
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Do you have a new camera, but you haven't figured out the settings yet? Come to our workshop in Rosendal – we can help! Or maybe you know your camera inside out, but you could use some inspiration? Come to Rosendal – we'll show you new tricks! Whether you want to take photos of your grandkids with your cellphone, or dust off your D-SLR, our workshop has something for everyone.

Professional photographer Sam Reinders and journalist Sophia van Taak will present the course. You'll get extensive course notes and hands-on training. The best way to learn is with your camera in hand and an expert next to you, giving you pointers. You'll learn about the basic principles of photography – composition, framing and exposure – and other things like creative angles, clever short cuts, and the functions of all those buttons on your camera.

There will be plenty of down time to hang out and make new friends in one of the most scenic towns in South Africa. Rosendal isn't in the sticks – it's only a three-hour drive from Joburg and barely two from Bloemfontein. Book your spot – we look forward to meeting you!



**BOOK
NOW!**

WHEN?

19 – 21 July 2019

WHERE?

DeTuinen, Rosendal

HOW MUCH?

The weekend workshop costs R3 250 per person, including all meals, hands-on tuition and course notes. Non-participating partners are more than welcome and can join for the meals – R1 200 per person.

WHERE TO STAY?

Accommodation is not included in the price. Contact Frik de Jager on 084 666 6616 or e-mail detuinenrosendal@gmail.com to book a place to stay at the workshop venue, or elsewhere in town.

I WANT TO SIGN UP!

To book, call Donvé Myburgh on 021 406 2387 or e-mail donve.myburgh@media24.com – be quick, because the last one sold out in the blink of an eye...



INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION • MEALS INCLUDED • COMPREHENSIVE COURSE NOTES

Comfort zone

When it's chilly outside, few things compare to a plate of comfort food to warm you up from the inside. Here are six traditional recipes with a twist.

Recipes and styling Aletta Lintvelt Photo's Myburgh du Plessis

🔥 BEEF POTJIE WITH MAIZE SCONE DUMPLINGS Under the blanket...

The beer and prunes reduce into a thick, rich sauce... Yum.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 4 strips bacon, finely chopped
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 1,2 kg beef, cubed
- ¼ cup flour
- olive oil
- 4 carrots, cubed
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 anchovy fillets
- 1 tin (410 g) chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup beef stock
- ½ cup dry prunes
- 330 ml stout (like Guinness)
- Salt and black pepper to taste

FOR THE SCONE TOPPING

- ½ cup self-raising flour
- ½ cup polenta or maize meal
- a pinch of salt
- 50 g butter, cubed
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup maize kernels (fresh or tinned)
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon Marmite
- 2 tablespoons boiling water

Here's how

1 Fry the bacon, onion and celery until the vegetables are fragrant and soft. Spoon into a dish and set aside.

2 Place the beef and flour in a plastic bag, knot it closed and shake the bag until the meat is entirely covered in flour. Heat the olive oil and brown the meat in batches in the oil.

3 Add the carrot, bay leaf, anchovies, tomato, stock, prunes and stout into the pot, heat to boiling point and then reduce the heat until it's just simmering. Add the bacon and onion mixture and the beef. Close with a tight-fitting lid and simmer over low heat for 2 hours or until the meat is tender. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

4 The scone topping Mix together the flour, maize meal and salt and rub in the butter. Stir in the egg, corn kernels and 2 tablespoons of water until just mixed.

5 Spoon scoops of the dough on top of the hot meat. Replace the lid and simmer for 20 minutes until the dough has risen and is cooked through. Mix together the Marmite and boiling water and paint over the cooked scones.

go! Drive & Camp says For variation, add a handful of grated cheese to the scone dough.



🔥 CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM POTJIE Pie in a pot!

This pot has all the familiar flavours of a homemade chicken pie.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 1 whole chicken
- 1 onion
- 1 large carrot
- 2-3 cups chicken stock
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 peppers, cubed
- 300 g mushrooms, chopped
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/3 cup white wine
- 1 cup cream
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Here's how

1 Put the chicken, the whole onion and whole carrot in a potjie and add the stock. Cover and heat to boiling point. Then lower the heat and simmer gently for 1 hour.

2 Heat a second, medium-sized potjie and fry the onions, peppers and mushrooms in the butter until tender and cooked. Stir in the paprika and wine and simmer for a few minutes. Then stir in the cream and remove from the heat.

3 Take the chicken out, remove the skin and bones, and shred the meat with a fork. Stir the chicken into the mushroom sauce with a cup of the chicken's cooking liquid until warmed through. Season the potjie with salt and pepper, and serve immediately with rice.

go! Drive & Camp says If you prefer a fuller sauce, thicken the chicken's cooking liquid with cornflour. >



🔥 BILTONG SOUP Dunk and be happy

Oh yes! All that cheese and biltong turn this soup into an almost-fondue. You'll want seconds!

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup butter
- 2 garlic cloves, finely crushed
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 2 large carrots, finely grated
- ¼ cup flour
- 2 ℓ beef stock
- 300 g biltong powder
- 3 cups cream (fresh or long life)
- ¾ cup milk
- 2 cups grated cheddar cheese
- 100 g crumbled blue cheese
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Here's how

1 Sauté the onions in the butter until soft and glossy. Add the garlic, cumin, coriander and carrot and sweat the mixture over a very low heat until tender and fragrant. Mix in the flour and simmer the mixture for 2 minutes.

2 Add the stock little by little and stir well. Add the biltong, stir again and allow to boil. Simmer the mixture for 20 minutes until it thickens.

3 Stir in the cream, milk and cheeses. Remove immediately from the heat and season the soup with salt and black pepper.

go! Drive & Camp says

Replace the carrots with grated potato or sweet potato.



🔥 STUFFED ONIONS Tears of joy

These are delicious with pap or mashed potato.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 500 g mince
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ cup grated cheddar cheese
- 4 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 3 medium onions
- 250 g smoked bacon
- braai sauce of your choice

Here's how

1 Mix together the mince, paprika, cheese and parsley and

season to taste with salt and black pepper.

2 Cut off the top and bottom of each onion and peel off the outer skin. Cut the onion in half and remove the middle bits. Use 1 or 2 onion layers to form a ball of mince – the meat should have an onion jacket around it. Then wrap it in bacon.

3 Pack the onions in a flat-bottomed potjie or pan so they fit snugly, pour over the braai sauce. Cook the potjie over moderate coals for 40 minutes.

go! Drive & Camp says

Instead of the mince, you can use boerewors without its casing.



🔥 HOT POTATO SALAD WITH BACON Ich liebe dich

This potato salad is made the German way. These days, I prefer it to the mayonnaise version.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 3 kg potatoes
- sea salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 300 g smoked bacon, finely chopped
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, finely crushed
- 4 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¼ cup of red wine vinegar
- 4 large gherkins, finely chopped
- 4 tablespoons finely chopped parsley

Here's how

1 Cook the potatoes until they are just cooked. Wait until they're manageable and then cut into 1 cm thick slices. Layer the slices in a salad tray dish with salt and black pepper between each layer.

2 Meanwhile, fry the onion and bacon until cooked and fragrant, and dish onto the potatoes.

3 Beat together the olive oil, garlic, mustard, sugar, vinegar, gherkins and parsley and pour over the potatoes while they're still hot. Serve warm or at room temperature.

go! Drive & Camp says

Don't eat everything on day one, because it's definitely even better the next day when the potatoes have absorbed the sauce.



🔥 CITRUS MALVA PUDDING Mmmalva!

I love this pudding – it's not too sweet, thanks to the lemon juice, but still rich and tasty the way a malva pudding should be.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 4 eggs
- 2½ cups light brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- 2½ cups milk
- 3 tablespoons honey
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 3 teaspoons of lemon juice
- 2½ cups cake flour
- 1½ teaspoon baking powder
- 3 teaspoons baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt

FOR THE SAUCE

- 2 cups orange juice (fresh or store bought)
- 1/3 cup light brown sugar
- 1 cup room (fresh or long life)

Here's how

1 Make fire and get a pile of coals ready. Place a braai triangle over the coals.

2 Meanwhile, butter a flat-bottomed potjie of about 25 cm. Whisk together the eggs and sugar until the mixture is thick and creamy. Add the butter, milk, honey, and the lemon zest and juice. **3 Mix** together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt and fold into the egg mixture. Now pour the batter into the greased potjie. Place the potjie over a single layer of moderate coals, close with a tight-fitting lid, and put three smallish coals on top of the lid. Bake the pudding for about 45 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean.

4 Make the sauce simmer the orange juice and sugar until it is reduced by half and start to thicken. Then stir in the cream. Prick the pudding full of holes with a fork and pour over the sauce while it is still warm.

go! Drive & Camp says You can use any fresh citrus such as tangerines or oranges – and add as much of zest as you like. When you're camping, bottled juice works equally well.

Up, up and away

When you sleep on top of your vehicle, you don't have to worry about soggy terrain, or whether the big cats will come looking for a nibble under the cover of darkness.

Text **Kyle Kock**

Perhaps the size of a large caravan is getting a little too difficult for you to manoeuvre and maintain. Maybe the kids have moved out and it's time to downsize, or perhaps you've had one too many close encounters with creepy crawlies on the

ground and could do with some elevation when you're out camping in the wild.

Maybe you've also had to endure the indignity of packing up your gear after a particularly ferocious downpour turned the campsite into a slippery slide.

The answer is a rooftop

tent. They're easier to erect than a safari or dome tent, and because you don't need a degree in physics to fold it away as you do with a pop-up tent, a rooftop tent is probably the easiest and most convenient option out there for a breakaway without straining your grey matter.

You'll have a commanding view of any campsite and your Bushveld TV will automatically be upgraded to high definition. Some places (such as Bonnievale River Lodge on page 62) even gives preferential treatment to vehicles with a roof tent. So, what are you waiting for?

EEZI-AWN T-TOP XCLUSIV Tiny house

This is the big dog from Eezi-Awn that shares the same DNA as the original Series I model dating way back to 1988. This model shares many of the modern Series III's features, which includes double-stitched 360 GSM ripstop canvas, mosquito nets under the pop-up windows with heavy duty YKK zippers, and also large pockets on the inside of each panel. The retractable ladder is 2 300 mm long. There are aluminium poles that slide out to create an extra room that's 2 000 mm long and as wide as the rest of the tent.

Price R34 495 from Eezi-Awn.

Dimensions 2 440 mm (l)
x 2 200 mm (w) x 1 300 mm (h)

Weight 120 kg

go! Drive & Camp says There are four widths and we've gone for the most expensive option.





TENTCO SAFARI ROOFTOP TENT 1,4

Cost effective

A tried-and-trusted name in the canvas tent scene, Tentco also offers its own rooftop tent. When closed in its PVC cover, it measures only 1 250 mm long and 200 mm high with the same width as when it's up. Its 260 GCM ripstop canvas is mildew rot and UV resistant. The galvanised high-tensile steel rods should be able to hold your flysheet in place during a rough storm. You sleep on a 60 mm thick high-density foam mattress for comfort.

Price R10 000 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Dimensions 2 450 mm (l) x 1 400 mm (w) x 1 300 mm (h)

Weight 70 kg

go! Drive & Camp says Its super affordable, so try and get the optional changing cubicle at the bottom with yours as well. >





EEZI-AWN STEALTH Cutting edge

As its name suggests, the Stealth not only cuts a low profile so you can retain maximum aerodynamics (closed, it's only 320 mm high) when rushing across the savannah before the sun sets, but also offers a cool trick by using a scissor mechanism at the front that raises the nose by 300 mm for much more leg room in a tent of its type.

Gas struts do all the heavy lifting for you and after you've unlocked all four sides, the Stealth is up in seconds. Interior features include a 12 V socket and power cable that connects to the vehicle's lighter socket. The top is made of aluminium and the side from 280 GSM ripstop canvas, and there's also an integrated awning at the entrance.

Price R37 202 from Eezi-Awn.

Dimensions 2 200 mm (l)
1 450 mm (w) x 1 300 mm (h)

Weight 105 kg

go! Drive & Camp says USB power inside the tent is a smart idea for those who live a digital life.



BUNDUTEC BUNDUTOP Power House

For a rooftop tent with the added benefit of being push-button operated, the BunduTop weighs in at a lightweight 80 kg. You can lift or lower its roof electrically in 30 seconds, and the BunduTop is accessible from any of its four sides. BunduTec says that you can carry up to

25 kg on the aluminium roof, but because they offer solar wiring, you may as well use the space above to install a solar panel. It can withstand winds up to 80 km/h and folds down to 300 mm when closed. The foam-back roof lining combats condensation in extreme cold.

Price R32 300 from BunduTec.

Dimensions 2 100 mm (l)
x 1 350 mm (w) x 1 030 mm (h)

Weight 80 kg

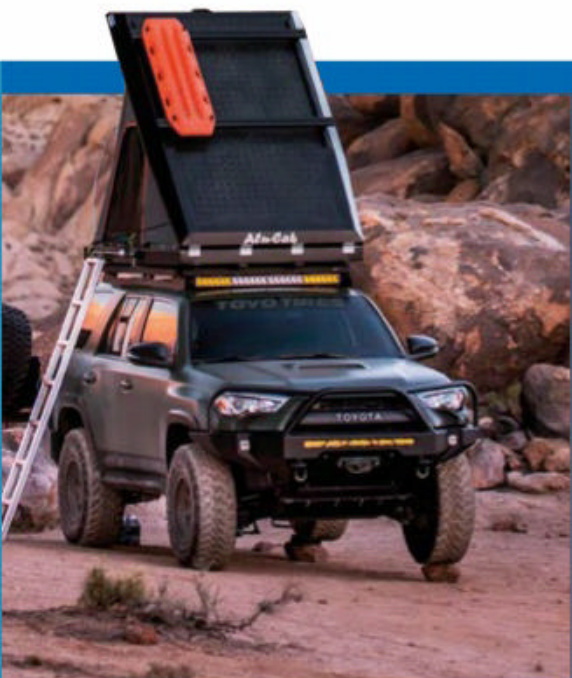
go! Drive & Camp says You can also have a BunduTop custom made up to 3 m in length and 1,6 m wide.

ALU-CAB GENERATION 3 EXPEDITION TENT The looker

The Gen 3 is a no-compromise unit from Alu-Cab, who rightly believes that just because you have to be efficient with space you shouldn't have to compromise on comfort. The best thing about the Gen 3 is that you can close it with your bedding inside, and it is insulated with a closed-cell foam lining that provides protection from the blazing African sun and sub-zero Arctic temperatures. The canvas is dual-layer to keep the heat and cold out as well. The inside shaves 100 mm off the overall length and width, and that's your bed space. If the kids are shorter than 1,6 m, they'll be able to stand upright at the tail-end entrance. You get multiple charging points, a reading light, and four deep pockets for storage, too.

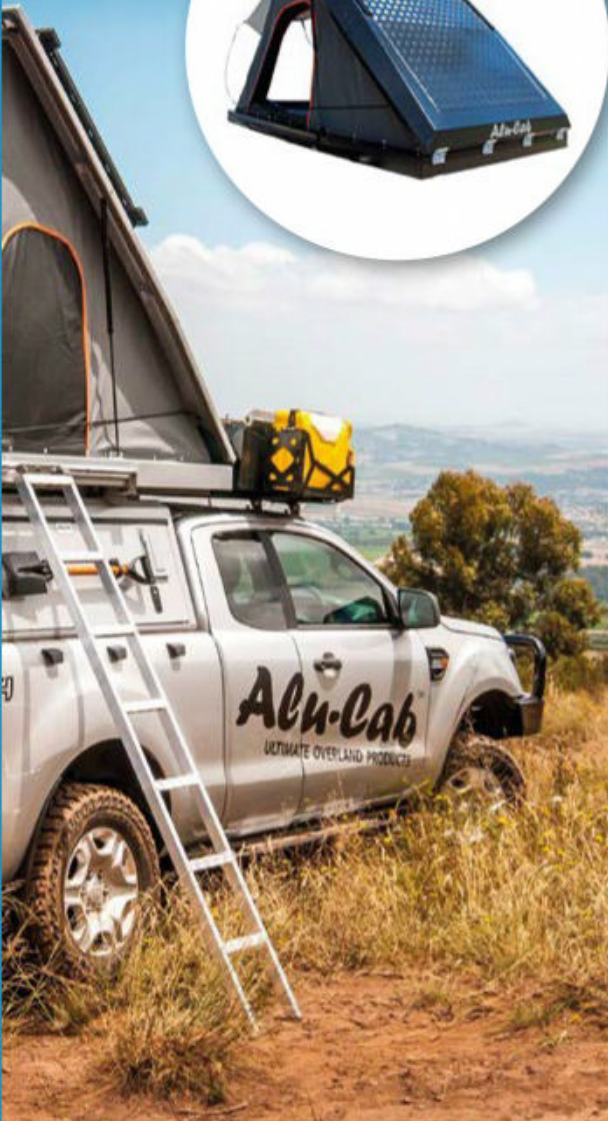
Price R39 950 from 4x4 MegaWorld.





Dimensions 2 300 mm (l) x 1 400 mm (w) x 2 000 mm (h)
Weight 88 kg

go! Drive & Camp says If you order yours with the optional Alu-Cab load bars, you can load bulky items such as kayaks and mountain bikes up top.



IKAMPER SKYCAMP 4X **Family lodge**

Most of the single roof tents here are just about big enough for two people, but this Skycamp model will fit two kids in as well thanks to it pitching wide over the right-hand side of the vehicle and containing a king-sized mattress that folds out. With the thick aluminium top closed, the

Skycamp 4x measures a mere 2 180 mm, 1 380 mm wide, and 320 mm high. It weighs just 75 kg, but amazingly, can withstand a load of up to 408 kg (depending on your roof rack of course).

Price R39 900 from iKamper.
Dimensions 2 180 mm (l) x

2 100 mm (w) x 1 100 mm (h)
Weight 75 kg

go! Drive & Camp says you can have your aluminium roof in three colours: white, black and matte black.



ECHO 4X4 T-TOP 1,6 M TENT AND ADD-A-ROOM **Military grade**

Technically, this is one tent with an optional extra that you can order to fit an extra three people up front, and how cool would it be to have a little hotel on wheels like this that can sleep six people off the ground? Echo4x4 says that the tent can withstand winds of up to 120 km/h.

The steel and aluminium

bases, stainless steel cables and U frames forms a Faraday cage, so should the tent be struck by lightning, there's a very strong likelihood that the campers will emerge unscathed. The upper section of the tent is easy-to-clean PVC, with D450 ripstop canvas used on the sides. The tent also comes with a

removable condensation sheet on the inside.

Price R17 800 from Echo 4x4.
Dimensions 2 400 mm (l) x 1 600 mm (w)
Weight 78 kg each

go! Drive & Camp says This is the one for stormchasers. >

AUTOHOME ROOF TENT FOR MINI COUNTRYMAN

The hipster's choice

This distinctly British brand teamed up with Italian vehicle tent specialists Autohome to make a custom model especially for the biggest Mini. With the tent's shell constructed of fibreglass, it's quite lightweight and it's not recommended you try to store anything on top of it.

Autohome used light, but tear-resistant and weatherproof Airtex fabric for the sides, and the entire inside is covered by a mattress big enough for two people. There's an Osram touch-sensitive LED bulb that provides light inside.

Price Approximately R50 000 from Autohome.

Dimensions 2 100 mm (l) x 1 300 mm (w) x 940 mm (h)

Weight 58 kg

go! Drive & Camp says When you've gotta look ab fab, darling.



TENTCO ROOFTOP HARD SHELL

Great pretender

If the Autohome's price shocked you, just remember that's before you pay for shipping. Here, local heroes Tentco have produced

something similar for a fraction of the price. The outer shell is moulded from plastic, the canvas is of ripstop quality and Tentco says the design is quite wind resistant. Unlike the Autohome model, this one universally fits almost any vehicle with an integrated mounting frame and brackets.

Price R19 050 from Camp & Climb.

Dimensions 2 100 mm (l) x 1 200 mm (w) x 1 300 mm (h)

Weight 64 kg

go! Drive & Camp says Look the part, but don't pay nearly as much.



GET THE PRODUCTS HERE

4x4 Mega World 4x4megaworld.co.za

Autohome autohome-official.com/en/

BunduTec bundutec.co.za

Camp & Climb campandclimb.co.za

Echo 4x4 echo4x4.co.za

Eezi-Awn eezi-awn.com

iKamper ikamper.co.za

Outdoor Warehouse

outdoorwarehouse.co.za



The best of northern Botswana – and neighbours

On this classic tour with Bhejane 4x4 Adventures, you'll experience the wonders of northern Botswana. You'll also explore the Caprivi in Namibia, and Vic Falls in Zimbabwe.

TRANS-BOTSWANA

11 days/10 nights
(tented accommodation)

Start point:

Letlhakane, Botswana

End point:

Kasane, Botswana

DATES & RATES

8 – 18 October 2019

R14 938,50 per adult sharing;
half-price for children under 10

21 – 30 March 2020

R15 950 per adult sharing; half-
price for children under 10

THE RATES INCLUDE

- The services of an experienced field guide
- 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
- Sleeping mattress, sleeping bag, camping chairs and a camping table
- Drinks and padkos
- 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

✉ bookings@bhejane.com;

✉ bhejane.com



Explore the Okavango Delta, the great rivers of the Caprivi region, 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 – a world-renowned rock art site. You'll travel east through the Caprivi in Namibia, and back to 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.

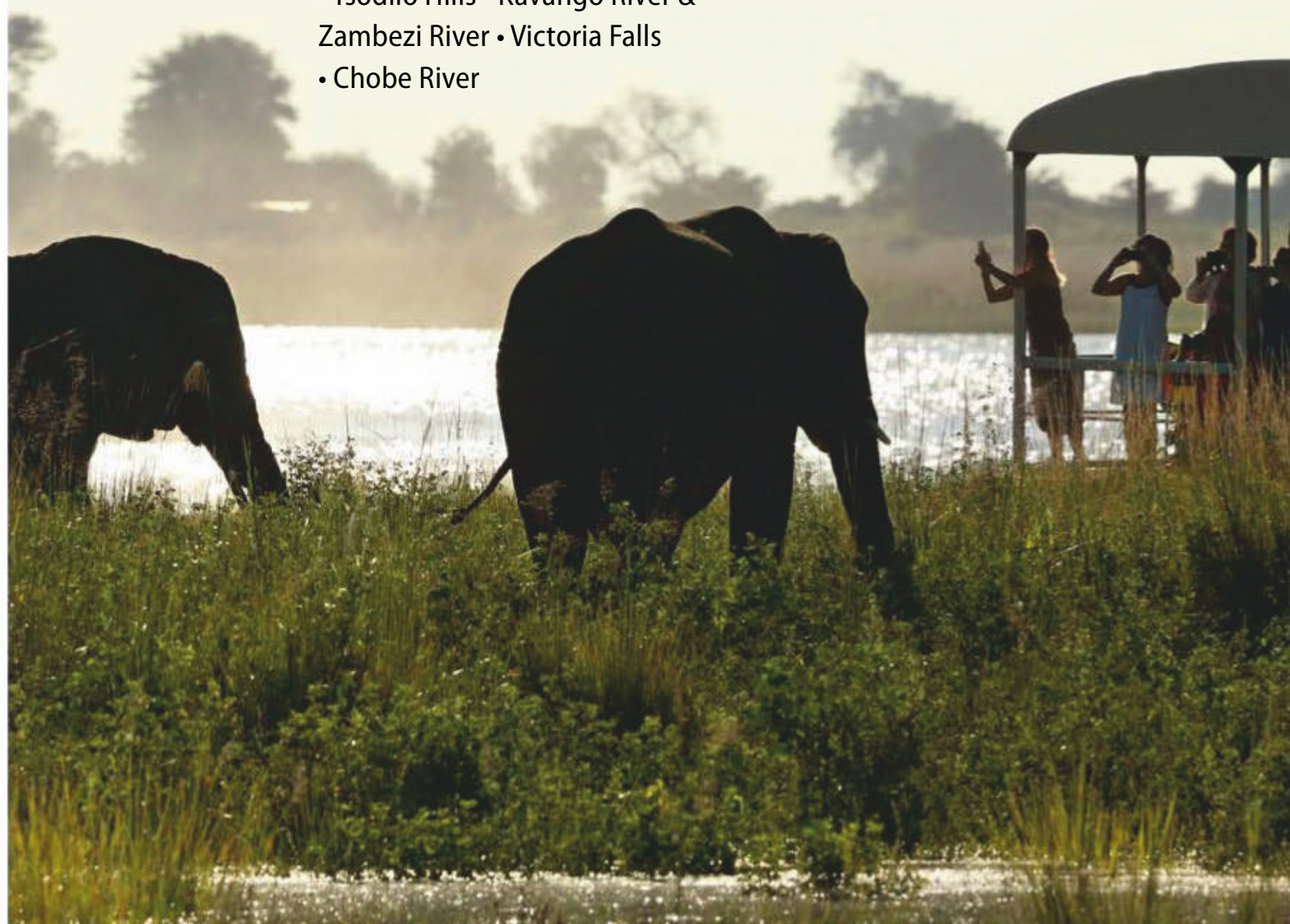
Bhejane will provide all tents and camping equipment, and their staff members will set up and strike camp. Experts will be on hand to guide you through sections of technical driving, and they'll be carrying all the necessary recovery gear should you get stuck.

A highlight of any Bhejane trip is the food, and this one is no exception: Our experienced bush chef will prepare three meals a day in his mobile kitchen, with fresh salads, potjiekos, braais and many other treats on the menu. The coffee pot will be on the fire until late.

All the campsites visited, other than the wild camp on spectacular Kubu Island, will have hot showers and flush toilets.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Kubu Island • Okavango Delta
- Tsodilo Hills • Kavango River & Zambezi River • Victoria Falls
- Chobe River



Escape from the cold

Does the cold weather give you the blues? Arm yourself with the knowledge of the next best spot to go camping during the cold season.

Text **Kyle Kock**



Here's what a few fellow campers had to say on Facebook about beating the winter chill:

Antoinette Schoeman We fly like swallows out of the freezing Free State toward Eiland Spa for three months, and afterward we also head for the Kruger National Park. We camp quite comfortably in winter, and it's only ever cold when it rains. But there's nothing as enjoyable as camping.

Johan Nieman As long as the campsite has electricity, we won't ever back down from camping during winter. That's what the heater is there for. In summer, we manage without electricity.

Juandre Wallace It's a bit more difficult with kids during winter as far as colds and viruses are concerned. Before we became parents, we camped regardless. They just have to be a little older before we could enjoy that again.

Felicity Beukes I agree with Juandre Wallace. It's definitely tricky with small children, but

it's quite easy to bath them in a small tub inside the caravan. Controlling when they may go swimming is the real issue of camping in winter.

Eunice Momberg Dry That's why we head for Richards Bay in the winter. It's gorgeous there.

Ronel Coetzer Blanche We enjoy any weather. And we're not afraid of a little cold.

Willie Brand We camp comfortably during winter, by sitting in front of the camp fire and using a little heater in the caravan that gets turned on to heat the caravan for a while and is switched off before we head to bed.

Nadine Henning My mother's birthday is during the winter months, and that's when we go camping. But there at least has to be heated swimming pools and a good campfire.

Many of us associate camping only with certain months of the year, because trying to pitch a tent near the Cape between November and January with the Southeaster turning your canvas into make-shift sails can be downright unpleasant. Similarly, if you're in the Highveld between June and August and happen to be trying to be enjoy the great outdoors, you might very well get turned into an icicle.

It doesn't have to be that way if you have the luxury of camping away from home for prolonged periods of time. Even if all you can manage is a weekend away, simply take your cue from the great migrations of nature, including the monarch butterfly migration in North America and the great wildebeest migration

across Tanzania and Kenya.

Many people, such as the Swaeltjies club of pensioner campers (you have to be at least 50 to be a member) adopt the behaviour of their namesake bird, which seeks out warmer climates when insect populations thin during the colder winter months. The Swaeltjies, from all corners of South Africa, mainly visit two resorts: Forever's Tshipise and the ATKV Eiland Spa.

Two further popular options for club members is to head to the coast of KwaZulu-Natal or right down to Mossel Bay in the Western Cape.

We spoke to Jan van Zyl, chairman of the Swaeltjies chapter in Tshipise. Jan says that where he's from, Reitz in the Free State, it gets way too cold to remain there in winter, often dipping below zero.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN WINTER

Bloemfontein During the day, the sun may be out, but that doesn't mean the temperatures get really high. At night, the temperature can easily drop below zero, just so you know.

Cape Town Although recently affected by drought, Cape Town still gets relatively high amounts of winter rainfall compared to

the rest of the country. The wind can be a bit bothersome if you're not used to it and the cold ocean current can cause plenty of fog.

Durban There's a reason so many people flock to the north and south coasts of KwaZulu-Natal. You can easily get away with shorts and T-shirts in the heart of winter as the days are warm.

Johannesburg The Gauteng winters are generally dry and sunny, but it can get quite nippy at night. The advantage of being here in the colder months is that you have next to no chance of encountering rainfall.

Mbombela This region boasts arguably the most pleasant weather all year round, with

agreeable temperatures in summer, and mild winters. You're less likely to encounter mosquitoes in the cooler months.

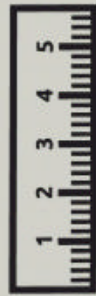
Polokwane The Limpopo province has warm days during winter, but the sun is milder than summer. There's the odd rainfall, but it never lasts long.

The numbers



46 mm – the annual average rainfall in Alexander Bay, the driest town in SA.

South Africa is slightly dry for a subtropical region, with average annual rainfall of about **464 mm**.



2 004 mm – the annual average rainfall in Mafikeng, Limpopo, the wettest region in SA.



On the interior plateau (Johannesburg is 1 694 m above sea level), altitude ensures maximum temperatures seldom reach 30 °C, though they can drop to zero in some places.

1 500 m to 3 482 m above sea level – the varying altitudes of the Great Escarpment, South Africa's most prominent relief feature.

The **Western Cape** is generally a winter rainfall region, the rest of the country gets its rains in the summer.

AVERAGE WINTER TEMPERATURES IN SOUTH AFRICA

	Minimum °C	Maximum °C
Bloemfontein	-2	17
Cape Town	7	18
Durban	11	23
Johannesburg	4	17
Port Elizabeth	9	20
Tshwane	5	20



175 hours – the amount of time in a year of 8 760 hours when conditions at SA's windiest location, Cape Point, is deemed to be calm.



6,9 m/s – the average wind speed at Cape Point.

2,8 °C – the minimum average in Buffelsfontein, Eastern Cape, SA's coldest district.



Desert and subtropical – the climate at our borders with Namibia and Mozambique respectively. They're affected by the cold Benguela ocean current along the Atlantic and the warm Agulhas current of the Indian Ocean on the southeastern coast. 🌊

3 000 km of coastline from our border with Namibia to the border with Mozambique.

Diff lock vs 4WD – much of a muchness?

It's time to replace your faithful 2006 Ford Ranger 2500TD 4x4, but new 4x4 bakkies are eye-wateringly expensive. Would you be okay with a regular two-wheel drive and a diff lock?

Text and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

You've probably heard the stories about a mythical farmer who can drive his rear-wheel drive KB250 in places where even the Cruiser guys wouldn't dare. How? By simply pumping the handbrake or engaging the diff lock. We won't question the ability of that legendary farmer, but we used our own long-term test vehicle, the Isuzu D-Max, to see how a diff lock weighs up against four-wheel drive.

There are four graduated levels in 4x4 language: four-wheel drive, four-wheel drive with diff lock, four-wheel drive with low range, and four-wheel drive with low range and diff lock. Our D-Max falls into the

latter category, and because you can also drive it in rear-wheel drive only – with the diff locked or open – it was a suitable candidate for our test.

Hard surfaces

We tackled a number of axle twisters and steep inclines where a regular two-wheel drive vehicle can't make it. With two-wheel drive and an open diff, our D-Max was often driven by just one wheel (the wheel with the least resistance) and so, with most of the obstacles, it couldn't make the grade.

It fared slightly better with the differential locked (power was now evenly distributed between the rear wheels), but there was





considerable wheel spin on steep inclines and the bakkie felt weak since the rear axle had to do all the work.

With four-wheel drive engaged (open differential), there was no spinning, but the bakkie still struggled up the slope. In low range (open differential) it was ridiculously easy – and locking the rear diff wasn't necessary.

A diff locker is useful when it comes to axle twisters, though. With low range engaged and an open diff, we couldn't master an axle twister, with two wheels spinning uselessly in the air. Then we locked the diff and the D-Max could overcome the obstacle. The diff lock therefore plays an

important role on rocks and axle twisters.

Mud pits

We next faced a mud pit and a smallish, but slippery slope using two-wheel drive and a locked diff. The D-Max didn't struggle in the mud, but this was largely due to the momentum we could maintain and because the mud wasn't very thick (really just a hole with dirty water). However, the slope was a different matter – the diff lock meant nothing. Our D-Max just slid around and couldn't get up it in rear-wheel drive with the diff locked.

After engaging four-wheel drive with low range, we could >



BOGGY BROTHER. A diff locker is of limited use on slippery terrain such as mud or clay, but it's a marvel on harder terrain – rock, shale and gravel – that offer grip.

“
Four-wheel drive with a diff locker is, of course, better than four-wheel drive without it, but you only benefit if you encounter axle twisters.”



THE TEST. In two-wheel drive, diff locked and deflated tyres we could only move a few metres (1). In 4x4 high range, diff open and low tyre pressure we were A for away - you can barely see our tracks (2). In 4x4 low range and low tyre pressure it was also easy, but the D-Max tended to dig in (3). In 4x4 high range, diff locked and hard tyres it was difficult (4). In low range and diff locked we could manage to plough through the soft sand on hard tyres (main image, previous page).

power up the slippery slope without the diff locked. It would seem that a diff locker works well on hard surfaces, but if the tyres don't have enough traction, a diff locker is of little value.

Sand monster

The last type of terrain we took to was sand. Here, two-wheel drive with a locked differential only worked when we could maintain momentum. We got stuck once or twice, but it mostly went

swimmingly due to the low tyre pressure (more on this later) and we couldn't see any significant benefits to the diff locker. In fact, the locker was more of a hindrance in sand than an asset since it increases your bakkie's turning circle.

In four-wheel drive and high-range gears, sand driving was the easiest, and it was seldom necessary to shift to low range. We only engaged low range when we got stuck in two-wheel





4

drive, and the D-Max had to recover itself.

Our findings in sand were that two-wheel drive with locked diff only works if you can maintain momentum – and that low tyre pressure was more important than a locker. Four-wheel drive in high-range was best, and low range is essential if you get stuck or your bakkie is on the verge of being stuck – when you're tackling the Acre of Death in Angola, for example.

Tyre pressure

While we were in the sand, we also looked at the difference tyre pressure makes. With hard tyres (3 bar) and two-wheel drive (diff open or locked) we didn't get anywhere – we couldn't even cover a distance of 30 cm in the soft sand.

With deflated tires (1,8 bar) and two-wheel drive (diff open or locked) we were able to drive reasonably far, provided we started out on a hard surface and maintained momentum. With hard tyres (3 bar) and four-wheel drive, we could get surprisingly far, provided the sand was level and we didn't try to drive up dunes. We could also get along with hard tyres and low range, but our D-Max ploughed deep furrows in the sand.

The best results, of course, came with four-wheel drive and deflated tires – with this combination we could roar the D-Max up any dune. Low range also works, but because you move so slowly, it is often difficult to scale tall dunes.

Conclusion

A diff locker is better than a limited slip differential, but

DO THE TWIST. The Landie (left) didn't have lockers engaged and struggled in the axle twister. We struggled too, until we engaged the rear locker and breezed through like a boss.



IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Tragedy in the Outback

On 7 December 1998, two Austrian tourists, Karl Goeschka and Caroline Grossmueller were travelling through Australia's Outback in a rented Toyota Land Cruiser camper. The couple left William Creek (population 10) in South Australia and drove 65 km to the remote Lake Eyre camp where their Cruiser got stuck in sand, in the campsite.

Although they had 65 l water and enough food to last a week, Karl and Caroline decided to return to William Creek after two days of waiting. Caroline was a seasoned hiker and she calculated that if they could walk during the

night, they would reach the settlement early the following afternoon.

Caroline and Karl left their vehicle with only 17 l of water, despite the fact that the mercury hit 35 °C that night. Karl gave up after five hours and returned to their vehicle. Caroline persevered, but she died of exhaustion 35 km outside William Creek.

Her body was discovered five days later next to the road and Karl was found alive by the vehicle that same day. A policeman on the scene recounted how he simply deflated the Land Cruiser's tyres and drove it out of the sand.

four-wheel drive (with or without a diff locker) is crucial for good results. Four-wheel drive with a diff locker is, of course, better than four-wheel drive without it, but you only benefit if you encounter axle twisters. Tyre pressure is of great importance. Your bakkie can be equipped with all kinds of 4x4 gadgets, but if you use the wrong tyre pressure or tyres, you'll battle.

Front or back?

Two diff lockers are always better than one, but if you have to choose between front or rear, a rear locker is best. The reason for this is that your front wheels have to point straight ahead

when the front differential is locked. If you turn the steering wheel with the front diff locked up, there is a chance that the diff will snap. You'll know right away when that happens, because the audible clang is unmistakable and the grating of pieces of metal inside the diff pumpkin is painful to listen to.

Your bakkie's rear wheels don't steer left or right, so the chance of a rear locker breaking is relatively small, provided you don't drive too far with a locked differential.

Send your thoughts to gocamp@gomag.co.za if you disagree.

Petrol all the way

The debate raging around diesel vs petrol might be an ongoing one for some, but for Leon Treurnich from Stellenberg, the answer is plain and simple... his petrol Audi.

“My requirements of a vehicle are that I want to be comfortable behind the steering wheel, I don't want it to sound like a tractor and I want to have confidence in the vehicle's reliability. It should also be a family car, and the final need is that when we go camping – about five or six times a year – I don't want to struggle to tow. I drive on tar roads 99 % of the time, and on the odd occasion when I have to tackle a bad gravel road, I simply slow down and drive really carefully.

My towing vehicle is a **2010 Audi A6 3.0T Quattro**. I bought it used in **2015 for R250 000** and have recently found out that its trade-in value is a mere **R120 000**. This means that I'll now be driving this vehicle for another few years to get my full money's worth, because to me it's worth much more than the current market value.

The six-cylinder engine produces **213 kW** and **420 Nm** of torque at just **2 500 rpm**. I enjoy a quiet chuckle when I hear guys talk about 'it's the torque that matters' – not realising that power, engine speed and torque have a fixed relationship with one

another (power = torque x engine speed).

The best indication of a vehicle's performance lies in its acceleration figures, think **0-100 km/h, 80 – 120 km/h** and so on, because that is the result of engine plus gearbox plus the mass of the vehicle and, in some cases, a caravan added to all of that as well.

I tow a **Gypsey Regal**, and therefore we can only really visit resorts and campsites that are accessible to your average road-going sedan and road caravan. Fortunately, there are many such places.

On the open road, the Audi's fuel consumption is just under **9 ℓ/100 km**, which in my opinion is good for an automatic petrol engine vehicle with permanent all-wheel drive. In and about town, that figure quickly rises to around **13 ℓ/100 km**, and while I'm

towing it can get as high as **16 ℓ/100 km** – depending on speed and so forth. The engine has more than enough grunt, and I actually have to hold back on the throttle and remind myself that I'm towing.

On our first trip with this combination, I passed an articulated truck on a long stretch of straight open road between Ladismith and Calitzdorp. It was an effortless enough manoeuvre but rejoining the lane in front of the truck at 130 km/h resulted in the caravan starting to sway. But before I started to really worry, the **Audi's stability programme** kicked in and, using intermittent bursts of brake force between the left and right side of the car, got the caravan steady within seconds.

That incident got me thinking about three things. Firstly, the caravan is simply a wooden box on wheels with no road holding or stability to speak of. Secondly, the **factory-fitted tow bar** and **electronic systems** are ridiculously expensive but I wouldn't want to be caught dead without them (I'll never use an after-market tow bar for as long as I'm towing a caravan). And thirdly, I should



Show us your wheels

Send an email to

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



never drive to the point where the stability control system has to step in to handle the matter.

From that day on, I started doing what people would do before the days of powerful towing vehicles and stabilisers – simply towing slowly between **100 and 110 km/h**.

I now save my overtaking only for the steep uphill, when the big slow vehicles start to lose momentum, and when my caravan is least likely to sway. On the level open road, I'll only really overtake if the guy in front of me is driving at around 90 km/h.

Another way I have adjusted my driving is to allow for greater following distances. When people tuck tightly behind one another, and the guy right up front simply cannot or won't overtake the truck in front of him, the problem is multiplied the further toward the rear you're positioned. I just hang back until the situation rectifies itself.

Diesel engines might trump their petrol counterparts in terms of fuel consumption, but at greater cost in building higher levels of vibration, and that **pesky injector problem** that some people will claim isn't an issue anymore (but they all know someone who's had to replace a set). Because I don't drive long distances, the fuel consumption benefit alone is not enough of a reason for me to drive a diesel car. I stand by my petrol choice.



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A tale of two roads (and a tree)



WINNING PHOTO

Whether you're at the campsite or on the way back home, there is always a chance of a nice photo. Three readers share such a moment.

By **Leon Botha**

Road to somewhere

Even though he's driving back from home after the holidays, he stops when he sees a pretty scene along the way, says **Danie Snyman** of Pretoria.

"I took the photo on my way between Venterstad and Bethulie. We drove through some rain on the way back to Gauteng from Bushman's River Mouth. The weather cleared and it was then that I saw the lovely straight road stretching in front of us. I found

the different colours incredibly beautiful and I simply had to shoot the scene."

Danie is spot on about the colours, but the picture has many other components that make it even more outstanding.

When you first see the photo, you know exactly where to look, because the dotted line compels your eye to look at it. And then your eye follows the road to the horizon where you see a white speck – probably a car. That bit doesn't have enough detail to

keep your attention, but then you pull back a bit and look at the rest of the photo. That's when you notice other details.

The vast flat hill on the horizon is shaded by the cloud above it – while the field in the foreground is brightly lit. In addition, the clouds in the distance look like a scene in a painting and you can still see remnants of the thunderclouds to the left.

The actual impact of the photo lies in its clever composition. You could consider it a formal composition because it is

predominantly symmetrical. The fields on either side of the road are mirror images of one another, and the same applies to the tar on either sides of the lines.

Without you realising it, the anchor of the composition lies where you see the least detail: in the lower third of the photo. It just looks like a dark piece of tar, but the whole picture rests on it and it creates the important negative space on the photo. You could cut that third and still have a gripping photo. But it's excellent as is.



iPhone 7S Plus



A hole in the road

Every cloud has a silver lining, and Roan Botha of Meyerton found his at his feet.

"We camped at the ATKV Drakensville in the Drakensberg over Easter and enjoyed the lovely landscapes around us. It was a cool, wet day and I wanted to capture the lovely view along with the pothole. Placed together, the "beautiful" and "ugly" make for a unique photo. I also wanted to emphasise the horizon, and that's why I prefer the

photo in black and white. It better highlights the contrasts."

The black-and-white treatment definitely makes for a more dramatic picture, and because you then "discard" colour, you rely on other elements in the photo.

The pothole is, of course, the focal point, but lies in the middle of the photo and is isolated from the environment. Your eye doesn't quite know where to go next.

With all the dark bits, the photo also tends to be more abstract and you don't

immediately recognise what you're looking at. But looking at it after hearing Roan's explanation, it makes sense.

While editing the photo, you may want to lighten some of the detail in the dark sections. Then you will see more around the pothole and you can highlight the "hidden" detail in the clouds (see photo, right). If you darken the brightly lit areas, you suddenly see the special shapes of the clouds – something that is otherwise lost.

Either way, it remains a photo that draws your attention when you first see it.



Canon Powershot SX60 HD

Foxtrot in the grass

Two years ago, they camped for the first time – in a tent in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, says Hansie Bekker from Parys. He and his wife, Elize, returned with more than just beautiful memories.

"The Kgalagadi was an extraordinary experience: from beautiful days to nights where the temperature dropped below freezing. We enjoyed it so much that we are now campers. My camera worked just as hard during our visit and I found this photo of the blue wildebeest particularly striking. The colours are rich and tell you it's winter. An enlargement of this pic hangs in our study. People who see it think it's a painting."

It's indeed a pleasant scene and, as Hansie explains, you can see from the grass it's winter. It is, of course, late afternoon (looking at where the tree's shadow falls), which is partly the reason for the strong colour on the photo. [According to the metadata, Hansie took it at 17:30. – Ed]

A herd of wildebeest is a common sight. But count how many of the 10 animals' heads you can see... only one and a half! Because most of us are so used to sighting of blue wildebeest, you don't notice it at first, but very subtly that detail makes it a more interesting picture than if they'd stood staring at the camera.

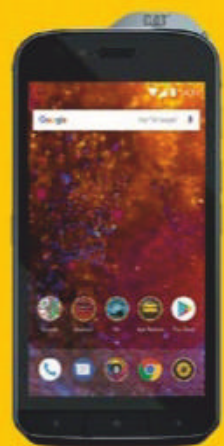
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to us and we might publish them here. We're not looking for traditional "prize winners", just regular pics that you love. Think of the type of pic you'd use as your Facebook cover photo; or something charming, like kids warming their hands over a campfire. 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. **DANIE SNYMAN** wins a go! Drive & Camp camera bag to the value of R520 with his photo – congratulations!

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CROSSWORD

Congratulations **Gerrit van Aswegen** from Bloemfontein. You have won **Van Loveren's Tangled Tree** wine worth R1 000 for your correct entry in the April 2019 crossword competition. You can also win like Gerrit. Complete the crossword, take a picture, and e-mail it to drivecamp@gomag.co.za. Please include your contact details. Or complete it online at <https://bit.ly/2PEPn53>. The solution to last month's crossword is on p 125.

			Holiday town in the Eastern Cape (8,3)		Male British title		Different ... for different folks		Shrek, eg		4x4 route outside Hermanus								
			Public bathroom				Wilde-beest												
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to it to prove this. The two trees have since intertwined, which has come to symbolise 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. Find out more at tangledtree.com.



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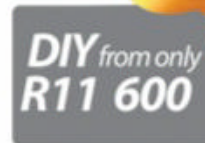
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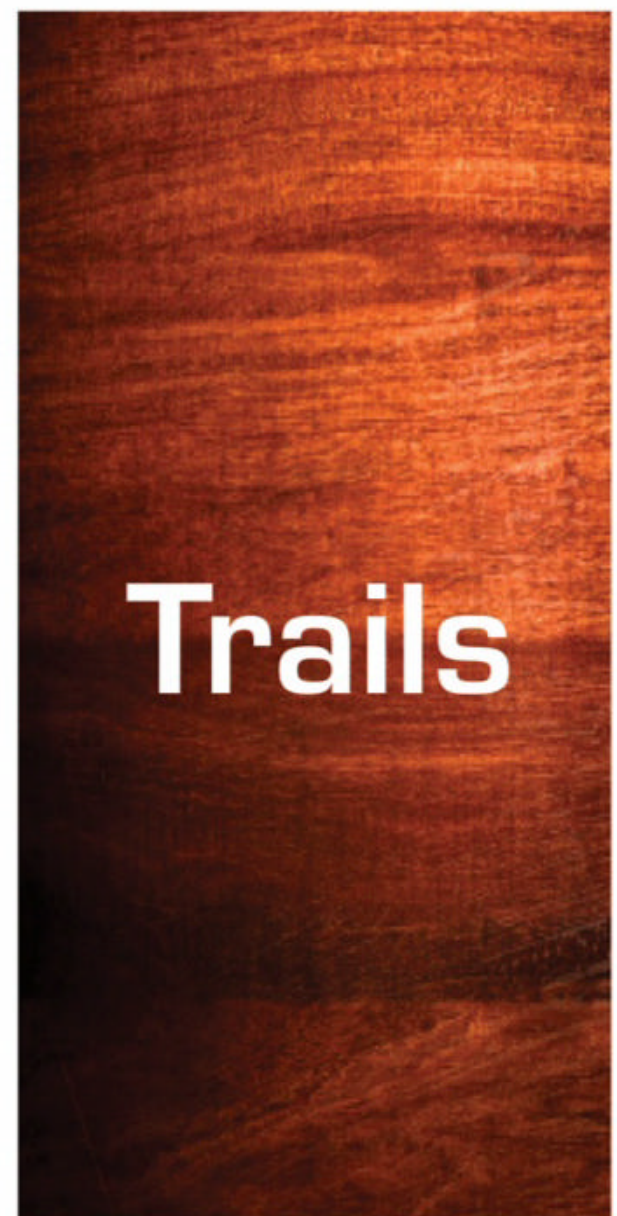
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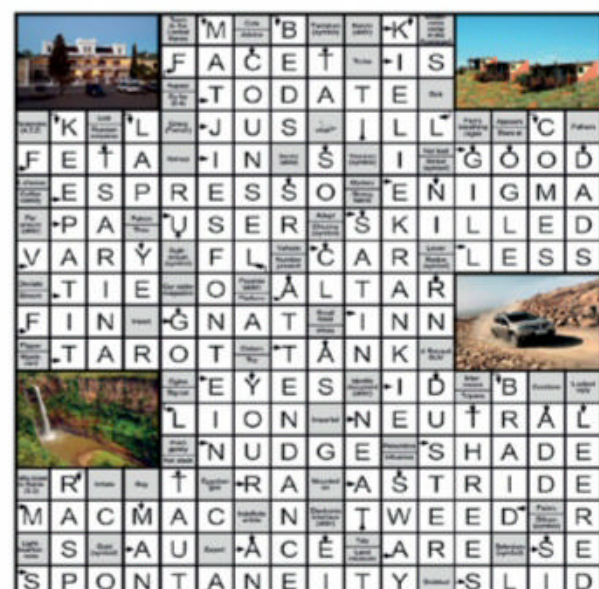
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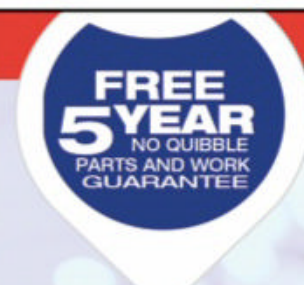
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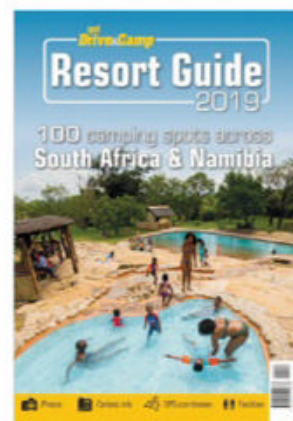
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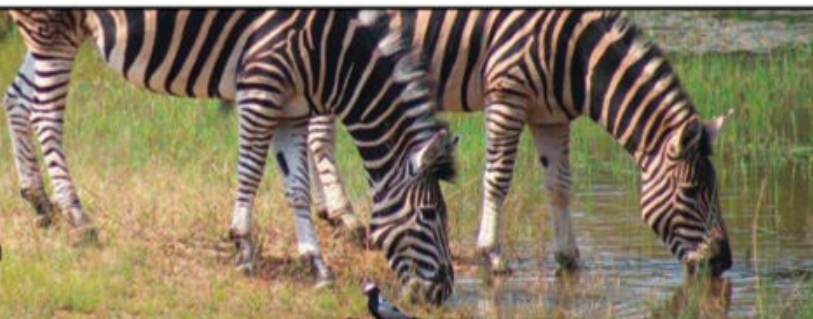
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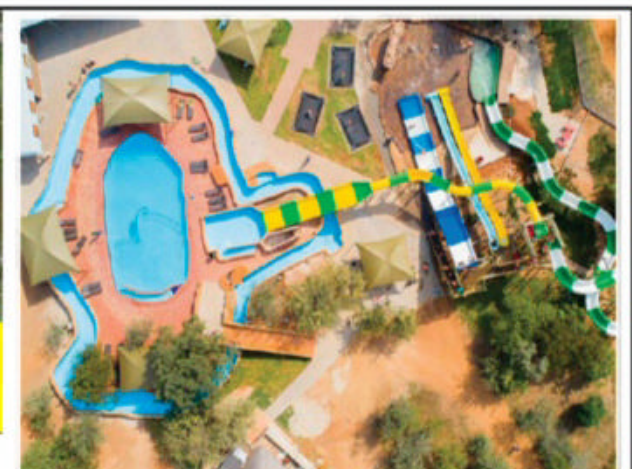
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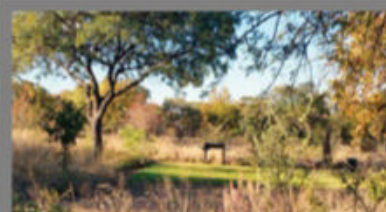
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Limpopo

A whale of a tale

Want to turn your hatchback into an off-roader? Simply tackle the Overberg's dirt roads during a flood, says Erika Bornman.

It's a windy, stormy day in Cape Town in November 2008 when two girlfriends and I set off for a much-anticipated hike on the Whale Trail. It has been raining for a few days and I'm a fair-weather driver in a small Renault Clio (named after my favourite Roald Dahl character – Matilda) so I find the muddy dirt road after Bredasdorp challenging. Fifty kilometres later, we make it to the parking lot at De Hoop Nature Reserve.

The next morning, when we're supposed to start our hike, it's still raining. So my friends and I walk over to the camp manager's house. Not even two minutes outside and we're soaked through. We find the office staff trying to decide whether to evacuate everyone or not. But it's the cellphone video one of the guys took of the flooded section of road where their bakkie just lost its number plate that clinches the deal. We're leaving.

They tell us to head to Bredasdorp, not Swellendam, as that road is more likely to still be passable. Back at the hut, it's clear the rest of the group think we're being silly, but they didn't see the controlled panic back at the office. They decide to wait on the evacuation order, while the three of us put on some dry clothes and pack Matilda.

Off we go. We are all soaked through – again – and the windows mist up



ILLUSTRATION FRED MOUTON

instantly. Now, Matilda has a tiny 1,2 ℓ engine. Turn on the air-con and you lose a bit of power. Just a bit. I love her, but my love is not blind. I need all the power I can get, therefore no air-con. So, if I want to see out the windscreen, I have to open my side window. Did I mention it's still pouring with rain? Ja well no fine.

The okes at the office have given me a quick crash course in driving through water. Steady speed, don't choke, don't swerve, just go. I do. Later reports will have us know that these are the worst winds in 30 years and the worst floods in living history. And I'm driving a little Clio whose tyres never looked so flimsy.

It's hectic already, but I'm steeling myself for that flooded part of the road I saw on the video. We eventually slide up to it and it's not just the road that's flooded. To the right and to the left of it, all you see is just one big deluge of water. I come to a stop on a relatively okay piece of road and take a deep breath... and go. The water reaches engine height, for sure. I get splashed through my open window. And Matilda? Bless her French socks, she keeps going despite quite a few sputters of her engine. I turn the air blue with my French. And then we're through. Oh, the euphoria. I didn't feel us crunching over any number plates either. Only 40 km or so more to go to Bredasdorp, breakfast and tar. Things can't get any worse...

Just over the next rise, we come to another lake at a T-junction. I stop. Coming towards us is a big yellow 4x4. It flashes its lights, stops next to me and the guy rolls down his window.

"WHERE ARE you guys going?" he asks. Pleasant, friendly tanned face, curly hair, burly biceps.

"Cape Town?" The question mark because I'm no longer sure of anything. "You're not going to get through to Bredasdorp. At 11 km before the town, there is just too much water," he advises.

"What are our options?" I ask.

"Well, this road to Swellendam is closed, so you'll have to go back and take the other turn-off."

"GO BACK? We've just come from De Hoop."

"Okay, if you made it through that, then maybe you'll make it to Bredasdorp. Look at the white markers on the side of the road, when you get to 18, hug the left-hand side. There's a lot of water, but it's not too bad. Then, when you get to 11,

“**Now, Matilda has a tiny 1,2 ℓ engine. Turn on the air-con and you lose a bit of power. Just a bit. I love her, but my love is not blind. I need all the power I can get...**”

good luck. Keep to the left again, but be sure to stay at least a metre from the side of the road otherwise you'll hit a ditch. And don't swerve, just stay steady."

The thought crosses my mind that last time I couldn't see the side of the road, but hey. With a final 'Good luck,' he roars off in his yellow truck.

I'm getting into the swing of things. Starting to even enjoy myself a little, despite the spectre of 18 and 11 lurking up ahead. Near the turn-off to Proteem, we pass a dirty yellow bakkie filled with guys going the other way. I wave cheerfully.

We drive past the Proteem turn-off and a short while later I see in Matilda's rearview mirror aforementioned bakkie coming up behind me, lights flashing. I stop. They pull up.

"You can't go further, the road is completely flooded!"

"Yes, we heard, but we think we can make it!"

"No, seriously, you can't cross the road, the river's flowing too strongly."

"What must we do?" I wail. "We want to go home!"

"Take the turn-off to Proteem," he says. "You'll eventually hit a tar road."

They turn around, we turn around. And on we drive, merrily along, slip sliding here and there a little. Actually a lot. There's one slope that looks like the Mississippi River Delta there are that many streams flowing down it. Red streams, I might add. That make pretty curtains of red on either side of Matilda as we drive through. And then, suddenly, there's a fork in the road. Damnation. The dude in dirty yellow bakkie didn't say anything about a fork.

To the right we go to Proteem. To the left there are some farmhouses. Both roads look equal in size and floodedness. What to do? Ah, Matilda's rearview mirror strikes again. A red double cab is trundling up. I jump out and run to them.

A dad is driving, his son in camo jacket in the front seat. Mum's in the back.

"Excuse me, but we're trying to get to Cape Town. Which road do we take?"

A short consultation inside the double cab. "Follow us to the turn-off."

And off they go, haring up the left-hand side. A short while later our red hero stops at another T-junction. With no signpost, I might add, so it would have been tough deciding where to go. After much thanks, and them telling us we'll hit tar in 10 km, they turn back the way we just came and we head off to the right. They really went out of their way to help us – as did the dirty-yellow-bakkie guys.

TEN KILOMETRES? Not so much. After about 15 km, I turn to my friend Deidre, "He did say 10, right?"

"Hmph. Probably because he thought we'd have hysterics if he said 30," comes the response.

And then. A T-junction. Tar. We turn toward Bredasdorp. It's closer than Swellendam and the breakfast I'm imagining has taken on gigantic proportions of bacon, eggs, mushrooms, tomatoes, toast, coffee... But then we slow down as there's loads of cars parked on the tar. Why? There's a river running over the tar road.

"You can't cross," says a man, walking up to us.

"Oh, but you have no idea what this little car can do!"

"Well, you'll be fetching your car down the river," he says. "Best you go to Swellendam."

Sigh. Breakfast is but a distant dream by now.

The rest of the drive is on tar and therefore not nearly as much fun, but a lot safer. The Breede, seen from the bridge on the N2, looks more like a dirty ocean, waves and all.

We didn't pass many cars on the dirt road – five or six at the most. And three of them stopped to help us. The kindness of strangers – what an awesome country we live in.

As for Matilda, well, like her namesake, she discovered all sorts of powers. The only lasting effect seems to be that she capriciously turns the fan on and off. Not when I want it, but when she wants it. Clearly showing me that, after 26 000 km on the clock, she's come into her own and is firmly in control. I bet she was made in August. She's such a Leo.



Electric boogaloo

The Jolt bakkie, manufactured right here in South Africa by Jaco Pieters from Worcester, might just change your mind if you think electric vehicles are far ahead in the future.

With most of the first world having adopted electric vehicles (EV), it's no surprise that automotive giants the likes of Nissan, Toyota and Volvo are at the forefront of the technological advances that will be gracing the majority of the US and Europe's roads soon.

Here in sunny Mzansi, things take a little bit more time to come to fruition. But one local firm is taking the fight to the EV know-it-alls including Tesla, who has yet to make inroads in Africa. The Jolt is not the first electric vehicle to come from South Africa, because that honour kind of belongs to the ill-fated Joule. This vehicle was the talk of town about 10 years ago when Cape Town-based Optimal Energy ambitiously designed and built an oddly-shaped hatchback that never quite made it out of its prototype phase when the company ran out of money.

The Jolt's builders never intended for the little bakkie to make homologation and be required to go through licensing and roadworthy procedures, because it's strictly for use on private land.

"I first had the idea of building an electric vehicle many moons ago when I was just a teenager attending school, but the flame was rekindled on my trips to China over recent years through my business of manufacturing agricultural machines and equipment," says Jaco.

"I saw all these electric vehicles driving around and just knew we had to have something like that back home in SA.

"Because I was already involved in manufacturing farm vehicles, it was relatively easy to get the Jolt project up and running, and it was pretty much fully built here.

"I built the first one (pictured), with all-wheel drive and there are five models being built right now that have already been sold.

"With regard to performance, the initial four engine model we built is very powerful, with a massive 600 Nm of torque.

Bear in mind that the Jolt weighs in at just under a tonne (the prototype is constructed from fibreglass, but the upcoming models will have steel bodies), and you can imagine the amount of fun

when you're in the mood for shenanigans, but we quickly realised that it's overkill.

"What we're ultimately aiming for is a workhorse, with a single engine that will power the rear axle – this will also ultimately give us more range because it will drain the batteries at a much lower rate. Those who opt for four-wheel drive will get another engine to power the front wheels.

"The current Jolt models should be able to do 100 km/h for 300 km from a full charge, which takes around eight hours.

"The bakkies are in the process of being redesigned, because with that classic Jeep design, there's a lot of wasted room up front in the 'bonnet'. We're adapting the nose for a flatter design and more efficient use of space."



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