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We test 8
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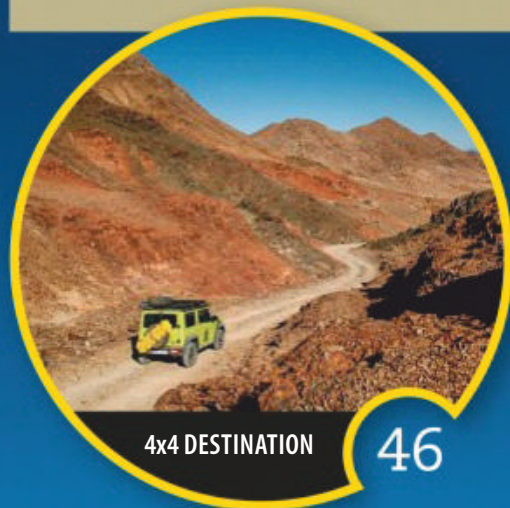
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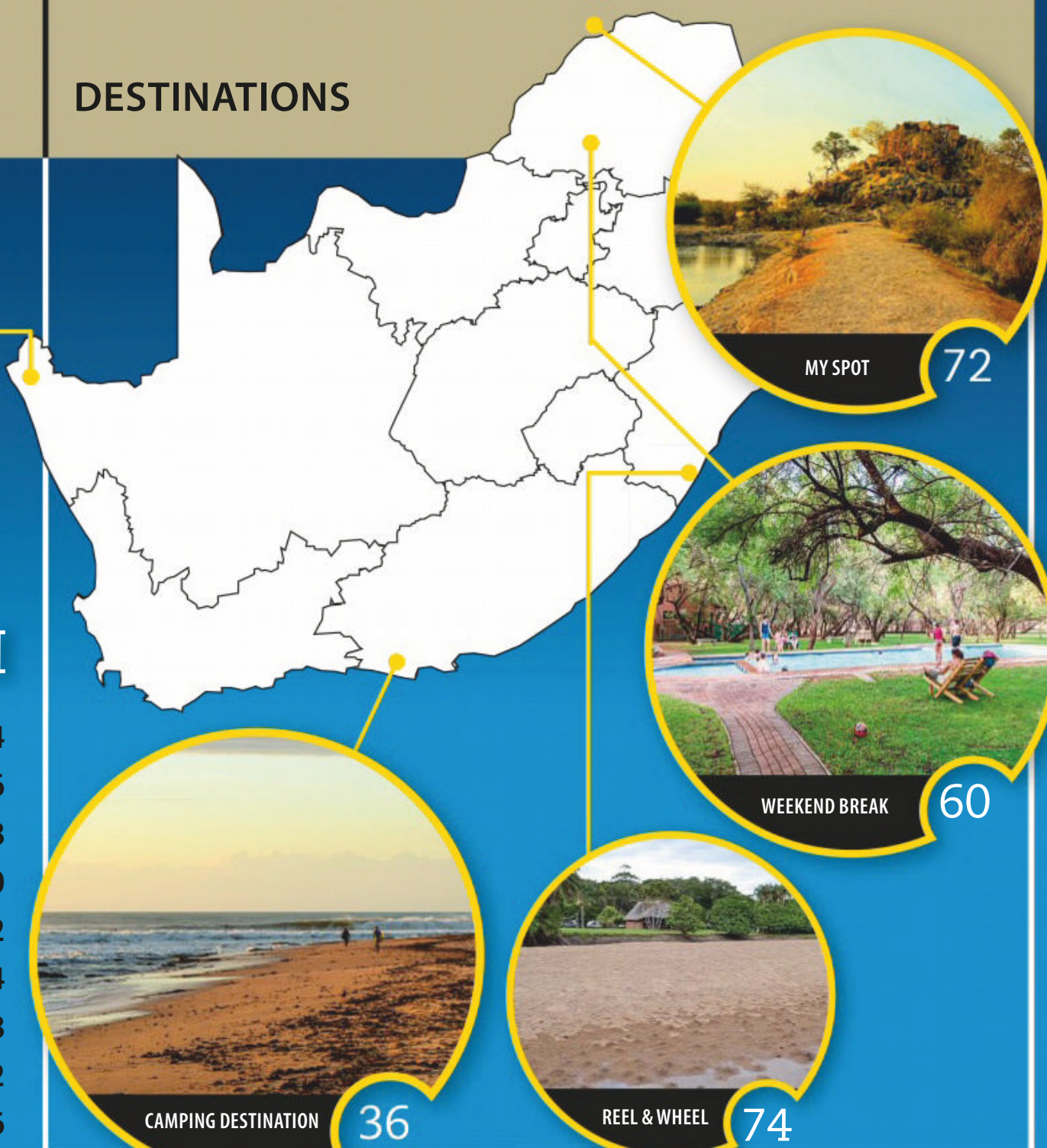
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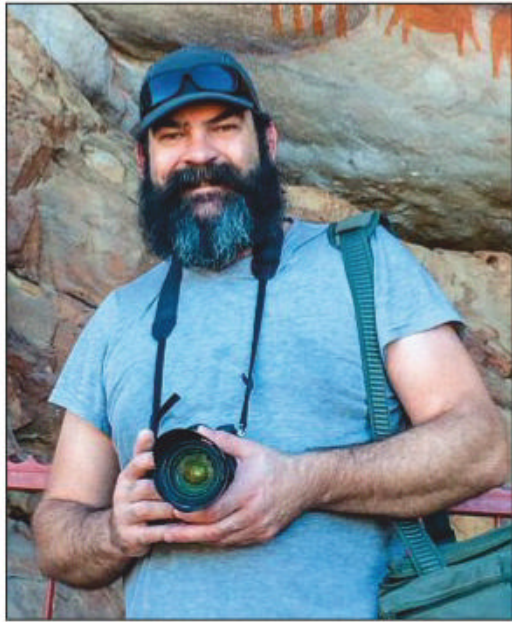


TRAIL GUIDE
Hone your sand-driving skills at Honingklip just outside Hermanus – then reward yourself with a brewski from the on-site microbrewery.

66



Your pictures are worth their weight in salt



I have a friend who has that rare ability of blending idioms and phrases to come up with bizarre, and often hilarious, new ones you wouldn't find in any dictionary. "You can't teach an old leopard new spots," was a recent one when he just couldn't quite get the hang of how to make a new gadget work, and blended teaching an old dog new tricks with leopards who can't change their spots. But put him in an outdoor shop where he's in his element, and he's "like a kid in a china shop".

This phenomenon actually has a name, I found. It's called a malaphor, which is itself a blend of the words 'malapropism' and 'metaphor'.

I'm no language purist, and actually enjoy it when someone says something unintentionally

funny – it's often actually quite clever. In a way, it tells you a lot about that person and, more importantly, it helps you to always remember something about that guy.

To experience things and then remember them long afterwards is why we travel. And the easiest way to keep those memories alive is to take pictures of that sunset in the Richtersveld, the pride of lions tucking into a zebra carcass in the Kruger, the elephant footprints next to your tent in Botswana, your group photo on Dune 7 or your grandchildren's happy faces bathed in the light of a campfire.

That's why we do what we do and we'd like you to share those photos. Please send them to drivecamp@gomag.co.za.

Not all of us are professional photographers and terms such as shutter speeds and apertures are Greek to many of us. But that moment you capture on your phone or point-and-shoot is probably just as valuable to you as the winning picture of the BBC Wildlife Nature Photography Award is to its photographer. And we'd be happy as clams in clover if you chose to share it with us.

In travel, as in life, you've got to take the bull by the tail and look it in the eye!

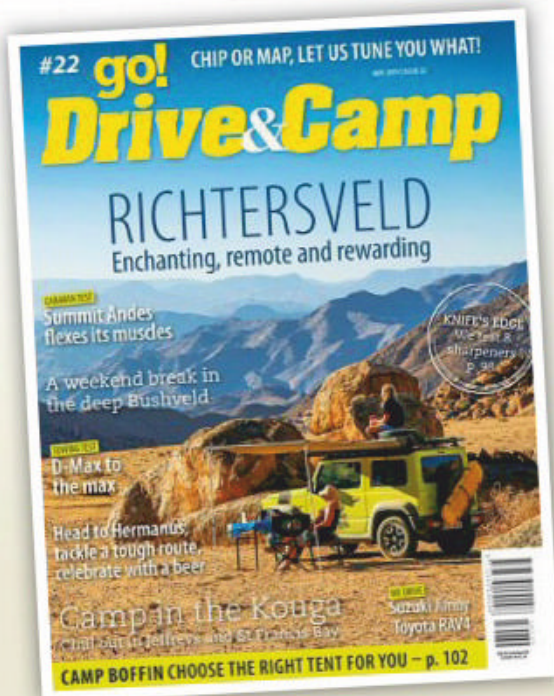
Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com

Tonight you camp under a spectacular sky and the Milky Way burns a clear track above your tent...

p. 49



Cover image Cyril Kloppe (Richtersveld)

go!
Drive & Camp

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HOW I GOT BOWLED OVER BY CARAVANNING

Three years ago, I started playing bowls, and it wasn't long before a friend at the bowling club invited me to a camping weekend at the Lekkerbreek resort near Mookgophong.

I camped with my tent... and in the meantime got totally hooked on the balls. If I don't play matches on weekends, I play every day after work. I also started visiting Lekkerbreek often... and then took a big step: I bought my first caravan, a Sprite Swift dating back to the late nineties. Until then, I drove a Ford Bantam, but it was time for a proper towing vehicle that could hook up the Swift.

I went looking for a bakkie – not using the Internet, but driving from dealer to dealer. And that's how my path crossed with that of an Isuzu KB300 D-TEQ Extended Cab in Pretoria North. It's a 2008 model and I can't complain about its fuel consumption. With the Swift, it gives 11,6 l/100 km (8,6 km/l) and on its own an astonishing 7,1 l/100 km (14 km/l). In both cases, these sums were made after driving at 120 km/h on cruise control.

I still enjoy Lekkerbreek; I like towing with my Isuzu; and I love sleeping in my Sprite when I'm looking for peace away from the rush of the city.

HUGO BOTHA
Pretoria



UNCLE JAN AND HIS VERY BROKEN CAR

In the late 1950s, I experienced an incident with my school friend Jannie Barnard that I remember to this day.

It was a Saturday and Jannie's father, Uncle Jan, went to trade in his car for another. Jannie and I went with him to Motortown in the long, straight Jules Street in Johannesburg. Uncle Jan was a big, strict man with a thick gray moustache and he was going to get rid of his Vanguard, a "rubbish English" car. The truth of the matter was that Uncle Jan had been promoted to superintendent and his wheels no longer fit his reputation.

His blue Vanguard was no longer good enough, but the car also has a problem or two. When you geared down from third to second gear, the gears would grind and the diff would hum as soon as you lost some speed when in third gear. In addition, there was a tear on the back seat. But Uncle Jan had a plan. He folded three thick blankets and covered the seat where Jannie and I had to sit. It covered the tear and would hopefully also dampen

the diff's noise. Uncle Jan told us we couldn't get out of the car at the second-hand car dealership, nor were we allowed to say a word.

Uncle Jan didn't come right at the first two dealerships, because people didn't even want to look at the Vanguard. But at Honest Motors, Johnny with a blue tattoo on his shoulder was desperate to get rid of a yellow Vauxhall Velox. Cigarette in the mouth, Johnny walked around the Vanguard, and muttered as he kicked the tyres. We sat big-eyed on the back seat. Not a peep.

Johnny wanted to drive the Vanguard around the block before deciding, but Uncle Jan made it clear nobody would drive his car but him. Johnny agreed and Uncle Jan took off with Johnny in the passenger seat. And so, with every gear change, Uncle Jan made a kind of snorting noise. It sounded as if he'd been practicing it so that you couldn't hear the grinding of

the gears. Even the radio was on to help. Jannie and I were the silent spectators, peeking at each other trying not to laugh.

Uncle Jan's blankets and snorting clinched the deal, and we drove home in the yellow car with its temporary permit papers on the windows.

CHRIS HEUNES
Vereeniging 🇿🇦



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Too cute for words, however...



Bush Lapa's Geitjie is suited to a single person or a couple wanting to get away from it all with as little extra weight as possible. It comes with a full kitchen and work surface, and you can tow it with a small hatchback. Our Facebook friends have their say...



Kobie Coetzee

We used to own a Bush Lapa Boskriek, and it was an absolute treat. Would buy one again as it's a most fantastic camper trailer.



Annemarie Geldenhuys

When it's loaded to capacity, it'll be a lot heavier. A car with a bigger engine will tow it more comfortably.



Andre Taljaard

Nice, but it's definitely too expensive. I'd like to know what justifies that price.



Juan-Pierre Mouton

Why are these off-road trailers so expensive? Very few people can actually afford this.



Marthie Engelbrecht

Too cute! Maybe I'll order one for myself.

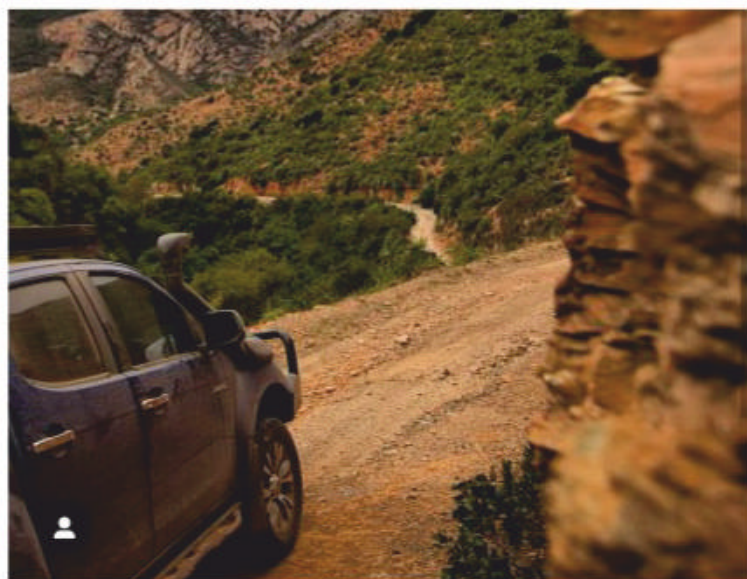


Beatie Bester Swanepoel

Wow! My car is too small. And I almost fainted when I saw the R200 000 price tag. What retiree can afford it?



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Daleen de Beer

It appears to me to be just about as big as the Voortrekker ox wagons from ages ago.



Pieter Kleynhans

Cute little off-road trailer, this one.



**COMMENT
OF THE
MONTH!**

"Jaffles the next day with leftovers from the chicken potjie."

We asked our readers to share some of their favourite meals when camping and Keith Joubert's simple choice would take some doing to match. We don't know anyone who doesn't appreciate a good jaffle...



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AWD vs 4WD

The division between AWD and 4WD have become a little blurred of late, says Mic van Zyl.

Recently, I was involved in a conversation regarding all-wheel drive (AWD) versus four-wheel drive (4WD). The conversation brought home some interesting points and highlighted the fact that the difference between AWD and 4WD is an issue that elicits many divergent opinions.

Mainstream 4WDs are vehicles that are either part-time or full-time 4WD. An example of a part-time 4WD would be the Hilux bakkie. On road, the drive mode is 2WD. Going off-road allows you to shift from 2H (2WD high range) to 4H (4WD high range). When faced with steep climbs or very rough, rocky terrain, you could shift to 4L (4WD low range). Shifting from 2H to 4H or 4L engages the transfer case attached to the gearbox. The transfer case locks 50% of the drive to the front prop shaft and 50% to the rear.

Remember that when a vehicle steers around a bend, the four wheels all turn at different speeds. The outer front wheel turns the fastest and the inner rear wheel turns the slowest. While the front and rear diffs are open, the diff spider gears can accommodate the difference in speed between the left- and right-hand side drive shafts. When the diffs are locked, turning becomes very hard.

When you engage 4H or 4L, the transfer case essentially acts like a diff lock and you cannot drive this vehicle on a hard surface. This is due to the fact that while turning, the front prop shaft turns slightly faster than the

rear and the transfer case cannot accommodate this difference in rotational speeds.

FULL-TIME 4WDs are a little different. Think previous generation Fortuner. The transfer case on these vehicles can accommodate the variation in speed between the front and rear prop shafts when turning while on tar. Your options for 4WD shifting now become 4H (4WD high range), 4HL (4WD high range locked) and 4LL (4WD low range locked).

When the going gets rough and you are no longer on tar, you can manually lock the transfer case by moving to 4HL or 4LL.

SO, WHAT IS the difference between 4WD and AWD?

A very simple way to look at it used to be the fact that a 4WD typically allows you to manually select the mode of drive to the wheels where an AWD is typically a vehicle that automates the proportioning of drive to any of the wheels according to circumstances and demand with little or no choice left to the driver.

Essentially, a good AWD vehicle puts much of the drive to the front wheels (closest to the gearbox) ensuring minimal driveline power loss. When there is a loss of traction, more power is sent to the rear wheels to help. This can also be split between the left- and right-hand wheels. These vehicles typically have a centre diff as opposed to a transfer case. They also therefore do not have low range gears or diff locks. You are almost entirely left to the mercy of the

programmed electronics to keep you on the straight and narrow.

Some AWDs may allow you to engage a "4WD" mode which may tighten the slip in the front, rear and centre diffs but that is not quite the same as locking them up the way a 4WD does.

WHILE THIS MAY seem straightforward, the boundaries between 4WD and AWD has become a little blurred of late. Take the VW Amarok 4Motion Auto for example. Unlike the manual model which has low-range gears and a transfer case, the Auto has neither. It is a constant 4WD with an eight-speed automatic gearbox and some very fancy electronics to control it all.

The first couple of gears are low enough to be similar to some conventional low-range gear ratios on a conventional 4WD with low range. The clever gearbox only uses these gears when going off-road.

From what I've experienced, it is close to a conventional transfer case setup and I for one would not discount the Amarok's off-road ability because of this. It is still a proper 4WD. Unlike typical AWDs, the Amarok drive train is robust enough to handle prolonged 4WD off-road use just like any conventional 4WD. 🚗

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

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Where there's smoke...

It's always fun to listen to people arguing about which wood or briquettes make the best braai coals, says Neels van Heerden.

Camping and braais go hand in hand, and it just seems to be human nature to quarrel over what the best fuel is for making braai coals.

I think there's consensus that gas is best for a breakfast of bacon, eggs, mushrooms, tomatoes and more. The big debate rages over the rest of the day's meals.

Wood, charcoal or briquettes bring to the fore everyone's own preferences and theories. In the Western Cape, decent braai wood is apparently rare, but rooikrans, camel thorn, eucalyptus and grapevines are popular. Those living in the northwest of the country will tell you that corn cobs make the best coals. Everybody probably does his thing in his own way.

Researchers have found that braai fires do not pose any noticeable health risk.

In and around Gauteng, sickle bush is well known, but the big problem is finding a bag with fairly dry wood in a huge pile of bags. In Limpopo, mopane is often used as firewood, but stay

away from tamboti. It's not only a protected tree species, but its smoke is toxic. In KZN, wattle is very popular.

Leadwood is often offered for sale at road stalls, but as far as I know it is also a protected tree species. I believe businessmen who profit from harvesting protected tree species need to be taken to task.

THE STRIFE ABOUT whether it's charcoal or briquettes that produce the best coals won't be settled anytime soon. People even argue over which supermarket's house brand is best. Recently I saw someone announcing on social media that charcoal from Namibia should be boycotted, because South African Rands are being wasted to import thousands of bags. Someone else questioned whether our neighbouring country is actually capable of producing several tonnes of charcoal because there are apparently too few trees there.

Not so. Namibia has a healthy charcoal-manufacturing initiative that is managed by the country's government under the auspices of the Namibian Charcoal Association. Invasive tree species, especially acacia, are eradicated and processed into charcoal.

More than half of Namibia is covered in thornbushes that

use up groundwater, which results in less rainwater being absorbed into the soil to sustain native grasses.

Currently, there are more than 650 Namibian entrepreneurs who manufacture charcoal. An astounding 600 km² of densely wooded and overgrown areas are "grown" annually.

IF YOU'RE WORRIED about any negative effects caused by the smoke from tens of thousands of campers' braai fires – or about the impact of turning wood into charcoal on the environment – I have interesting news. In an article titled *Plume Characterisation of a Typical South African Braai*, researchers from the North West University in South Africa and the University of Helsinki in Finland found that braai fires do not pose any noticeable health risks. So, light your braai without a care. (Do note, however, that amateurs who produce charcoal may suffer health problems if they inhale too much smoke on a daily basis.)

In the meantime, it is still entertaining to listen to people arguing whether rooikrans, grapevines, sickle bush or wattle produce the best braai coals. It is soul-enriching to braai when you're out camping, but it can also be a challenge to keep everyone happy.

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BOTSWANA: Maun : Kavango Engineering – Tel : +(267) 684 0054



Raasblaar makes its appearance

Today, there is a host of small off-road caravans in South Africa to choose from, and now Equipped 4 Africa has added yet another.

The Raasblaar is the company's first small off-road caravan – it reminds one of a teardrop caravan because it's really a double bed on wheels, but that's where the similarity ends. For example, even though the caravan is small, it has a pull-out kitchen and a pantry.

Andries Bruwer, the man behind the Raasblaar, says that after he toured a number of African countries for 10 years with his family, he knew exactly what was needed to build a true African off-road caravan. He designed the Raasblaar with three principles: it had to be affordable; it had to set up and take down in a jiffy; and it had to be light enough so that one person could easily handle it in the campsite.

The nose cone is a square box that sits on the A-frame, but it is not the usual storage space; this is where you pull out the kitchen area. The fridge-freezer sits in a drawer nearest to the hull with a twin-plate gas stove across the tip. A crockery drawer also pulls out from under the stove. The door (with a sliding window) sits directly next to the nose cone. To the right of the door, diagonally above the wheel, is a shallow cupboard with a door that opens towards you and forms a tray (inside the cupboard there's space for a few wine bottles).

The whole tail section is one big cupboard – Andries says it's the Raasblaar's pantry. Two doors open here like vertical barn doors: the one lifts up and the bottom one flattens out to form a worktop. The cupboard area in front of you has open storage space in which three ammo crates fit. To the left and the right of this are even more grocery cupboards.



In addition to the two windows, the oblique section of the hull lifts up above the nose cone like a car's bonnet. In this space is a canvas window with a mesh section – a clever idea you don't find on every off-road caravan.

A small family can happily camp in the caravan, because it has a rooftop tent where two more people can sleep.

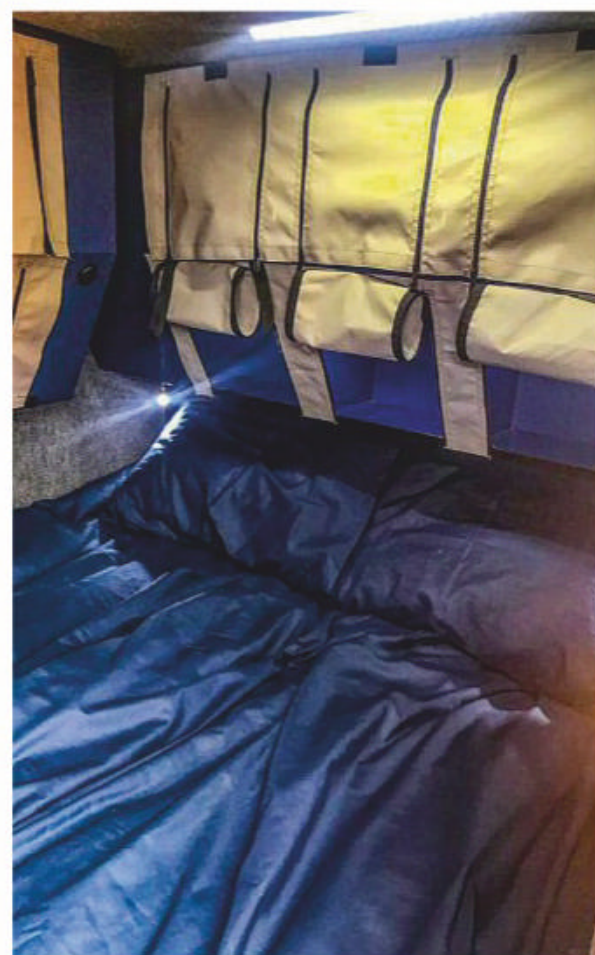
Even though the Raasblaar is small, it is equipped with a braking system for safety reasons. Depending on how you equip your particular caravan, the tare weight can range from 650 kg to 900 kg. The GVM is equal to the axle's carrying capacity of 1,6 t.

The caravan is available in blue, dark grey, khaki and sandstone.

The numbers 3,95 (l) x 2,05 (w) x 2,2 m (h, to the awning)

Price R156 600 – included is the kitchen, power system, a loose shower cubicle, water tank with geyser and a 360 ° rooftop tent.

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UEV caravans show their mettle on a test drive

The dust of the recent Caravan, Camping and Destination Show, where the prototypes of Conqueror's new range of UEV off-road caravans was launched, had hardly settled before these caravans were sent on a tough test run.

According to Philip de Vries, the four caravans were towed for six days, covering 3 500 km along the Molopo River, including some rough dirt roads north of Vryburg in the Northern Cape. The sole purpose of the trip was a shake-down cruise to reveal potential problems.

The biggest difference between the new series and Conqueror's standard caravans is the building material of the hull. And this has passed the test with flying colours, says Philip. "We only got a dust leak at one of the bubble windows – it's now been replaced with a flat pane of glass."

The caravans are equipped with new independent suspension, which, in addition to the shock absorbers, also includes a coil spring on each side. Philip used the test drive to test different types of coil springs on >



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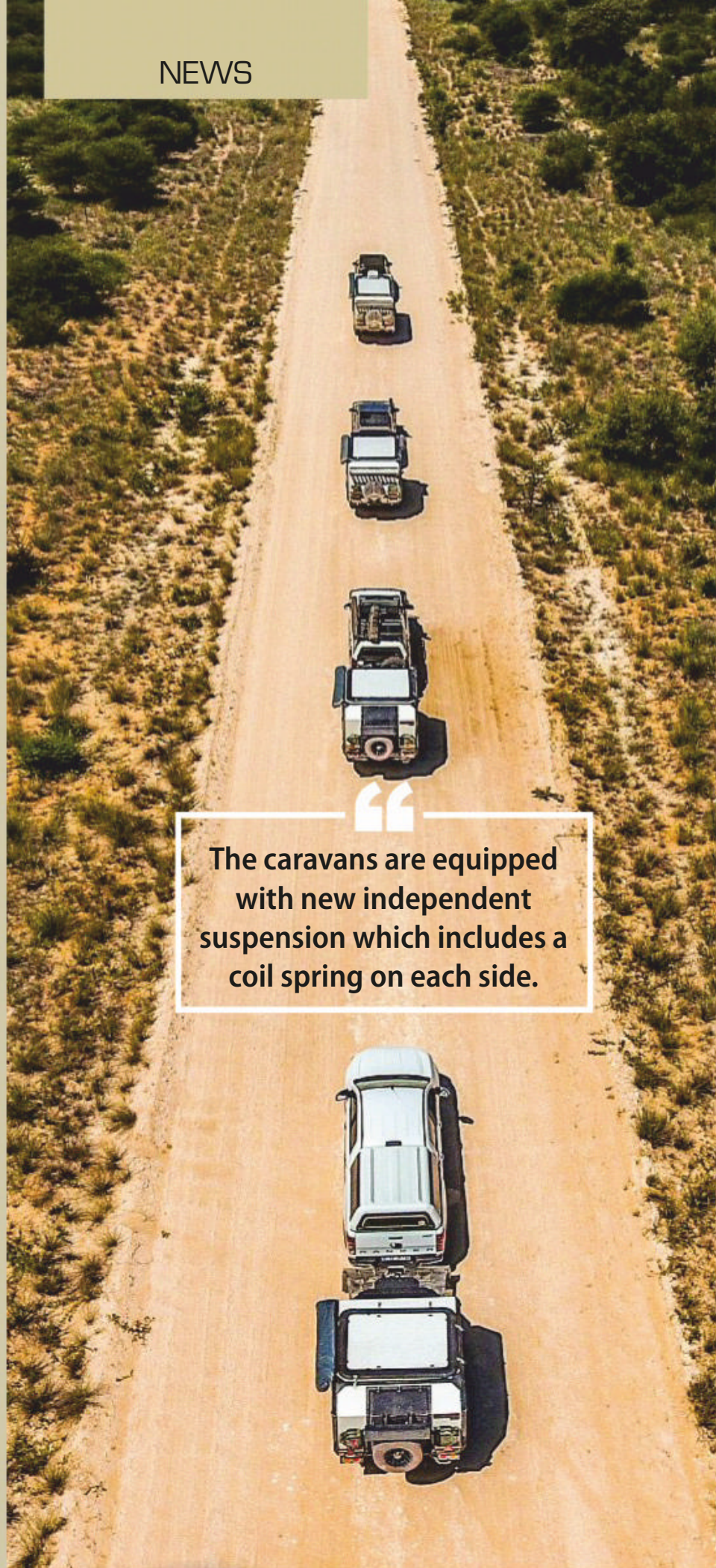
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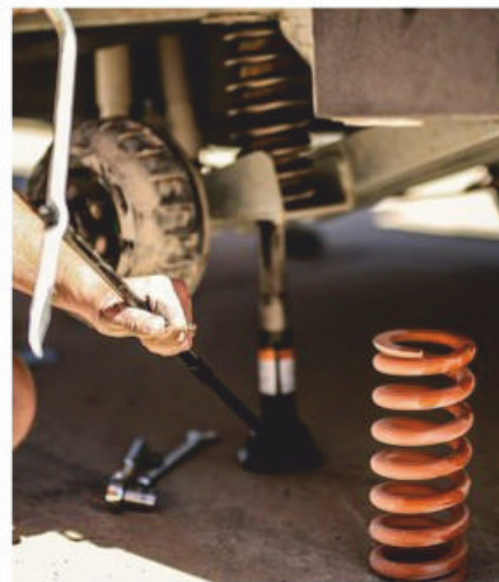
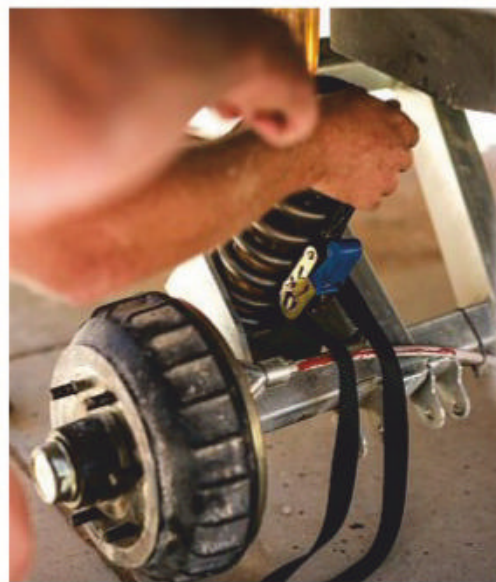
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The caravans are equipped with new independent suspension which includes a coil spring on each side.



the caravans to see which conditions produced the best results.

Another big change in the new range is the addition of solid cupboard doors. As a rule, off-road manufacturers steer clear of this because it doesn't last on bumpy roads. However, Conqueror's cabinet doors are sunk into the frames so they're properly supported. On the test drive they saw that the cupboard doors were indeed strong enough.

The names of three of the four caravans – the UEV13, 15 and 25 – are changing to

the UEV14, 16 and UEV24, while the UEV17 remains unchanged. (The numerical values refer to the length of the caravans, in feet). All four models are 2,042 m wide and all except the UEV14 are 2,385 m high. The latter is 29,5 cm lower.

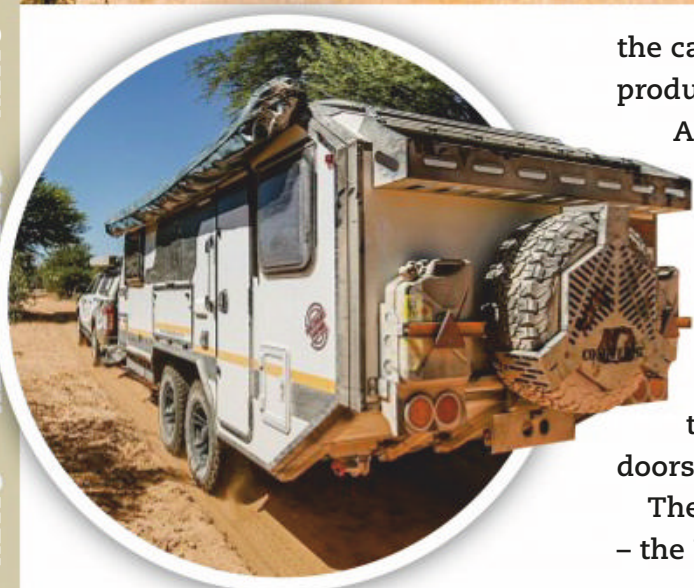
The first production models are expected by the end of September, and judging by the waiting list, there is certainly no shortage of interest.

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Jump on the Merc holiday bus!

The third generation Mercedes-Benz Sprinter has just been launched in South Africa. Three main versions of this bus are available: a panel van, a people carrier and a cargo truck. In addition, the Sprinter is available in three wheelbases, four body lengths and three roof heights.

Thanks to a multitude of optional extras, more than 600 possible variations are officially available from Mercedes-Benz, but Mercedes-approved coachbuilders may, of course, offer countless further variations and create a rig that meets your specific needs.

Mercedes-Benz hopes to build on its success in the long-distance taxi industry, but also wants to make a stronger presence in the motorhome market. The manufacturer believes that the popularity of motorhomes will increase in South Africa and, as in Europe, will ultimately outperform caravan sales.

At the launch, they showcased just such a custom build by Travelstar of Knysna. It's based on a 6 967 m long passenger version of the 319 CDi Sprinter (with a high roof) and is powered by Merc's own V6 diesel engine (petrolheads know this engine as the OM642 and its used in the S320 and GLC 350D, among others).

According to Nadia Trimmel, vice president of Mercedes-Benz Vans South Africa, the new Sprinter is significantly better than its predecessor. "The operating costs are better than those



of its already economical predecessor," says Trimmel, "and its fuel consumption is 5,8 % lower. Moreover, the cent-per-kilometre operating figure is 4,5 % lower at 30,1 c/km." (These figures include the purchase price, fuel consumption, maintenance, insurance and resale value,

but are based on European conditions.)

Service intervals are now every 20 000 km instead of 40 000 km, but the 5 year/100 000 km warranty remains.

All Sprints are electronically limited to a top speed of 100 km/h, and you must have a C1 driver's license, as even

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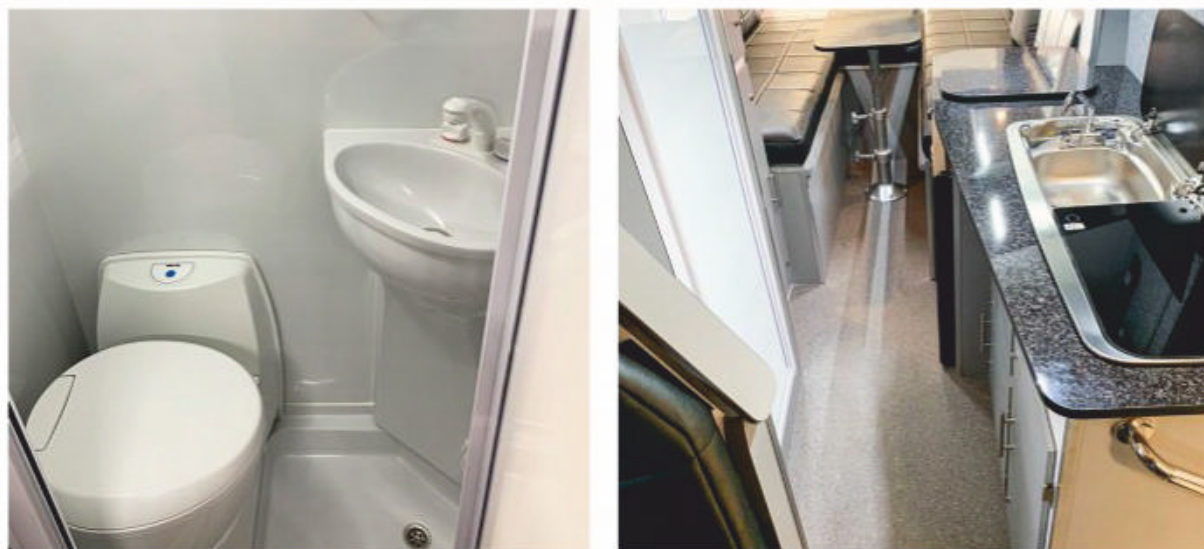


the lightest Sprinter's GVM is 50 kg over the limit for a B license. However, if you turn the Sprinter into a motorhome, South African legislation allows you to drive it with a B license. Once your Sprinter has been converted, you can go to your nearest police station and get an affidavit to state that you will not use your Sprinter as a commercial vehicle. Then a Mercedes-Benz service centre will deactivate the electronic speed limit.

The numbers 6 967 mm (l) x 2 345 mm (w) x 2 633 mm (h); 3 550 kg (GVM) with a maximum payload of 1 225 kg.

Price R769 308 for the 319 CDi all-wheel drive panel van and R815 925 for the 519 CDi with the same body. The price of the motorhome conversion is determined by your own specific needs.

Contact 📞 mercedes-benz.co.za/vans



Leisureland celebrates its birthday

Leisureland Caravans in Bellville, one of the oldest caravan dealerships in the Western Cape, celebrates a double anniversary this month. First, Kerneels Nortjé established Leisureland as a caravan dealership 35 years ago, and five years later his son Johan bought the business. So Johan has been in charge for the past 30 years.

According to Johan, the caravanning in South Africa has changed significantly through the years. They used to have 60-70 caravans in stock and the caravans usually cost around R12 000. A trailer was

only R450. (A Sprite Scout cost R10 995 in 1990, and two years later it jumped to R25 000.)

Leisureland started out as a Wilk agency, with Sprite added later. The early nineties were surely the industry's best years when you look at sales figures – Johan says they sold 200 caravans the one year! The Sprite Super Sport, the first Sprite caravan with an island bed, was the most popular caravan in the nineties and was also one of the easiest caravans

to build, says Johan. Jurgens's Xplorer and Exclusives were equally popular. Today, more and more campers prefer gravel roaders – and Sprite's Tourers are particularly popular.

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Hoefer gets some changes

Hoefer is the only caravan manufacturer to export caravans from another African country to South Africa, and according to Charles Hoefer, they were well received at the recent Caravan, Camping and Destination Show.

Since the show, they've made some last-minute changes to the Azzero All Terrain caravan: to the left of the outside cupboard where the gas stove pulls out of the hull, a cupboard for your pots and pans with its own door has been installed. To the right of the door is an outside fridge in its own cupboard. Previously, the door opened all the way to the ground, but now it flattens out to form a worktop. From here, an aluminium strip runs on which you can hook a loose table.

Two LED lights have been added to the left panel.

Furthermore, the plumbing has been finalised – using high-resistance pipes that are not only freeze resistant, but also work in temperatures up to 95 °C.

Charles says they are now also building a shorter model – 5,5 m versus the current model's 7,5 m. That caravan should weigh less than a tonne and will be without



an outside fridge, though the outside kitchen and island bed remain.

For the smaller caravan there will be two different interior configurations, but from the outside they look the same. The first ones should be ready

by the end of June and they will most likely cost less than R500 000.

GC Caravans in Witbank has the sole right to import Hoefer's caravans, but Charles says they will deliver nationwide – free of charge.

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A canopy for work and play

South African canopy manufacturer RSI adopted a popular concept from Australia. Its Smart Tray Canopy Combo consists of a flatbed that replaces your bakkie's standard load bed.

With this flatbed, you can load commercial ISO pallets with a forklift onto the back (not possible to do with most normal bakkies) and you can also fit dropsides if you want to transport building materials in bulk. When the week's work is done, bolt RSI's Smartcanopy onto the flatbed in 10 to 15 minutes and your work tray turns into a holiday tray.

The flatbed has two built-in tool cavities that can be locked (one on each side of the flatbed), and a 1,6 m long lockable drawer behind the number plate that's also water- and dustproof. The canopy has two large side doors, one on each side, and mounting points for two spare wheels at the back. You can bolt a roof rack to the top of the canopy and there are straps so you can lift and suspend the canopy from your garage roof trusses during the week when you don't need it.

Inside the canopy is a LED with a rechargeable battery. The light clings to the 409 automotive stainless steel shell with a strong magnet and you can detach it and use it on any metal surface of your bakkie (if, for example, you have to work on the engine in the dark or want to illuminate your campsite).

RSI's flatbed is already on sale in Australia and the canopy is in the last stage of development. The Smart Tray Canopy Combo should be available in South Africa before the end of this year.

The numbers 1,8 (l) x 1,8 (w) x 0,8 m (h); weight 360 kg.

Price Unknown when going to print.

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Breaking the mould

The original Toyota Rav4 was undeniably a compact SUV pioneer, but subsequent generations lost favour as competitors gained popularity. The fifth generation will try to make a sales comeback, and the first impressions are very good indeed.

Text Kyle Kock

Born-frees will probably be a bit too young to remember the very first RAV4, which was a teeny tiny little SUV. Picture a Suzuki Jimny with curves and a not-so-serious off-road reputation.

Sure, the RAV4 had four-wheel drive with a centre locking differential, and came with protective cladding below the beltline to keep unsightly paint scratches at bay but the overall image was that of a fun-loving, cheap runabout in an era when SUVs were predominantly uber-luxurious vehicles.

But as the popularity of the RAV4 and other vehicles of its ilk started to soar at the turn of the century, Toyota began taking a conservative stance toward its products. The result was that over the next three generations of RAV4, and a few other vehicles in its line-up really, Toyota got accused of taking the safe and subsequently boring approach.

The lines, they are a-changing

Toyota bigwig Akio Toyoda recently issued a company mandate that prohibited the building of boring cars. It's all well and good to talk about, but the proof is in the sheet metal and the new RAV4 is a looker indeed. Sure, it may divide opinions, but you surely can't not have an opinion about its styling.

Up front, the RAV4 glares at the vehicle ahead through narrow wraparound headlamps, and an enlarged hexagonal grille that vaguely resembles a cheese grater on the range-topping VX spec.

Even the entry level GX variants cast an imposing shadow with their black plastic grilles that feature thick cross beams and a massive company logo – much like the one that adorns the front of the Hilux.

In a nod to its ancestor, the RAV4 still sports black cladding along its sides, but these are now much thinner strips of plastic that only just line the lower edges of the front and rear bumpers, fenders and doors. The hexagon theme is continued in the shape of the wheel arches, which are angular instead of round and the resultant gap diagonally above the tyre front and rear creates the illusion of significant ground clearance.

The D-pillar and tailgate glass is less upright than before and is raked down toward the shoulder line where more hexagonal styling elements in the form of the taillights and chrome trim (black on the entry level GX), registration plate recess and faux metal bumper dominate your vision.

Smooth and soft

The range is limited to two engine options, both normally aspirated four-cylinder motors. With the stricter emissions controls in first-world markets, the trend to slowly cut diesel engines from model line-ups makes sense, but we feel that there's still a few years of relevance in markets like ours where there's no real legislation regarding emissions yet.

Nevertheless, Toyota South Africa says the big SUVs in its range would still get diesel engines for the foreseeable future, including



HIGHER GRADE. You'd be forgiven for thinking that you're looking at a Lexus interior, because the finish and appointments exude an air of luxury. The two-tiered fascia offers contrasting colours, while the metallic trim is tasteful. As can be expected in this modern era, there's a large infotainment screen, and the switchgear looks long-lasting.



the Prado and Land Cruiser.

The 2.0 engine generates an impressive 127 kW and 203 Nm of torque and uses a six-speed manual transmission in the entry level base GX guise, but there's also a CVT so you don't have to think about swapping cogs as you go up the range. The halo model 2.5 VX is the only one that uses an eight-speed automatic transmission.

There's a usable amount of low-down torque on offer from the 2.5 engine, which isn't surprising given that this is a fairly large displacement for just four-cylinders, but what's far more impressive is the motor's eagerness to rev into the upper echelons of the tachometer. This is testament to Toyota's continued development of its VVT-iE variable valve timing system – which has been around for more than 20 years now.

In an age of forced induction, the pursuit of perfecting normally aspirated engines by the Japanese brands is something that's not only admirable, but because it still works, proves that we haven't seen the end of them just yet.

A decade ago, the eight-speed automatic transmission was almost considered overkill and reserved for the most

luxurious models and sportiest models in Toyota subsidiary Lexus' line-up. Nowadays, it's been optimised for use in the more pedestrian models, helping to lower the average fuel consumption, in theory.

In practice, it lives up to the hype, as we managed an indicated 7,7 l/100 km during the local launch in northern KwaZulu-Natal, which included some not-so-conservative driving as the N2 was particularly plagued with trucks heading in both directions on our test route.

Fortunately, the gearbox kickdown is an effortless affair and it's not necessary to shift manually, or even engage the sharper settings of sport mode, as the ECU is smart enough to sense your urgency >



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Toyota RAV4 2.5 VX 8AT AWD
Engine	2 487 cc, four-cylinder, petrol
Power	152 @ 6 600 rpm
Torque	243 Nm @ 4 000 rpm
Transmission	8-speed automatic
Fuel consumption	7,3 l/100 km
Top speed	200 km/h
Tare weight	1 680 kg
Approach and departure angles	n/a
Ground clearance	200 mm
Towing weight (braked)	1 500 kg
Towing weight (unbraked)	750 kg
Safety rating	Not yet tested.
Price	R577 900

just by your throttle input when you leave it to its own devices.

Fit for more than a family

As visually dramatic as the exterior is, and competent as the powertrain (in this particular model) might be, the highlight was stepping up into a cabin that could easily be found in vehicles from a class above this one. The low-slung tiered fascia is reminiscent of the 90s, improving visibility up front and creating an air of increased spaciousness. That's not just a placebo, because despite the Rav4 being shorter overall than its predecessor, the 30 mm longer wheelbase has resulted in more room front and rear.

There's a high-level of perceived quality throughout, with plenty of soft-touch surfaces, stitched leather, brushed metallic trim and chunky switchgear that have a solid and substantial feel to them.

Conclusion

This is a complete turnaround from Toyota, and it deserves to be applauded. Not only has the company made a considerable effort to shake off the stodgy and conservative image it's struggled with recently, but it's succeeded with the Rav4 at least (and judging by its other new introductions, the rest of its model range, too).

The engine outputs are higher and yet they're less thirsty, and the ride is noticeably quieter and more comfortable. All the improvements have come at a cost, however, and the Rav4 is expensive compared with its contemporaries. It does come with a six-year/90 000 km service plan, however, and a three-year/100 000 km warranty. The service intervals are every 12 months or 15 000 km.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY. Toyota has managed to offer up more room from the cabin. The tailgate opens electrically so you don't have to struggle with groceries.





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Happy feet, *lion heart*

The new Suzuki Jimny is praised in motoring magazines, but those driving impressions were obtained on tar roads and safe 4x4 obstacle courses. Cyril Klopper wonders how a heavily laden Jimny would cope in South Africa's most inhospitable region.





Suzuki South Africa's marketing team came up with the tagline "Giant killer". This slogan stems from Jimny owners' claims that the diminutive 4x4 can take on any big off-road vehicle. If you own a big off-road rig, you're sure to scoff. How dare they make such statements? However, it is true that the Jimny has merits over large and expensive 4x4 vehicles.

How does it compare?

The Jimny's turn radius is 4,9 m compared to a Nissan Patrol's 12,6 m, and the Jimny is 3,48 m long and 1,645 m wide compared to a Toyota Land

Cruiser 200's 4,99 m and 1,98 m respectively. This means you can drive a Jimny through a pine plantation rather than around it in a Cruiser. Furthermore: the most expensive Jimny costs R319 900, while the cheapest Mercedes-Benz G-Class will leave you R2 786 653 poorer. You also never see a Jimny on the back of a tow truck like so many Land Rovers... (*Steady on, Cyril! – Ed*)

But with the pluses, there are also a few things that bother. The Jimny's standard Dunlop AT20 Grandtrek 195 / 80R15 tyres are thin, small and ridiculous when compared to the standard tyres on larger vehicles. The Patrol, Cruiser, G-Class and Discovery all have better ground clearance, and when it comes to power-to-weight ratio, the weakest Land Rover Discovery (the 2.0 L

model) delivers 0,06 kW/kg to the strongest Jimny's 0,04 kW/kg (manual). "Giant killer?" Not quite.

Inside

The new Jimny's instrument panel is beautiful. It reminds one a bit of Jeep's instrumentation, but it's on a smaller scale and not as extravagant as the American. We also love the 4x4 shifter and the grab rail for the front passenger.

At the back, things look nice enough, but the lack of cup holders for the rear passengers is a problem. On our journey

through the Richtersveld we often had water bottles rolling around on the floor because there were not enough cup holders for all three occupants.

There's a useful 12 V socket in the luggage space, but the word "space" there is misleading as there's very little room for luggage. We are grateful for the increased legroom, but the bodywork should perhaps have been 3 cm or 4 cm longer so that you could fit a duffel bag or two.

The air-conditioning worked extremely well in the Northern >





“
We couldn't stop anywhere
without people complimenting
us on the Jimny. It will
steal your heart despite
its shortcomings...”

Cape's extreme heat. Cold air was pumped through the cabin from dawn to dusk, and even when the Jimny was parked with the engine idling while the photographer clambered up a hill to take a photo from above, the temperature warning light never blinked on. The large windows and narrow pillars make it easy to observe the world around you and the upright front and side windows keeps the interior under the shade of the roof during the hottest part of the day.

Now for the drive

It is striking how much stronger the new 1,5 ℓ engine pulls than the previous 1,3 ℓ. The former Jimny often ran out of steam in places like Lesotho where the air is thinner, but we suspect the new Jimny will perform far better in altitudes. Our wish, however, was that Suzuki would make our dreams come true and use the 1,6 ℓ engine that was previously in the Swift Sport hatchback and is now in the Vitara.

The Jimny's suspension works well enough when the vehicle is unloaded, but with all our camping gear, extra fuel and spare wheel, the Jimny rocked from side to side through the bends of the Piekensklouf Pass and bounced wildly on the Richtersveld's 4x4 trails.

However, the four-wheel drive remains as good as ever and



could pull the Jimny up any slope in the Richtersveld. The chassis didn't squeak once even on the worst axle twisters. There were places where we feared we'd snap a side shaft or a CV joint, but the Jimny forged ahead without a single mechanical issue.

Conclusion

When it comes to adventure tours, the Jimny's Achilles heel is its small wheels, floppy suspension and lack of luggage space. You can, however, sort those problems out with aftermarket accessories such as beefier off-road tyres, stiffer coils and a roof rack. Its 40 ℓ fuel tank provides a range of about

370 km (when loaded up), which can be increased to 500 km if you carry a 20 ℓ jerry can – and that's enough for most trips in Southern Africa. Bolt on a rear diff lock and you have a capable off-road beastie that doesn't have to back down for many other off-landers.

The Jimny's strengths are its excellent low-range gearbox and reliable mechanical and electrical systems. Then of course there's its appearance. We couldn't stop anywhere without people complimenting us on the Jimny. It will steal your heart and, despite his shortcomings, we can join in singing its praises with a clear conscience. 🚗

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Suzuki Jimny GLX
Engine	1 499 cc, four-cylinder petrol
Power	75 kW @ 6 000 rpm
Torque	130 Nm @ 4 000 rpm
Transmission	5-speed manual
Fuel consumption (as tested)	10,7 ℓ/100 km
Tare weight	1 095 kg
Approach and departure angles	37 ° and 49 °
Wading depth	Unknown
Ground clearance	210 mm
Warranty	5 years/200 000 km
Service plan	4 years/60 000 km
Safety rating	★★★ (EuroNCAP, 2018)

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From bay to bay

Explore the Eastern Cape's Kouga region and set up camp at Jeffrey's Bay and St Francis Bay.

Text and photos (unless stated otherwise) **Schalk Jonker**





Kouga is the Khoi word for “place of abundance”, and it’s indeed difficult to think of a better description for this piece of earth in the Eastern Cape.

The Kouga region lies between the Tsitsikamma River in the west, the Van Stadens River to the east, the enchanting Baviaanskloof wilderness area to the north and the Indian Ocean to the south.

Holidaymakers flock here to enjoy the seemingly endless golden beaches and a range of other attractions – this is a particularly popular destination for water-sport enthusiasts, as Jeffreys Bay’s waves are considered among the best in the world for surfing.

But even though Jeffrey’s Bay is one of the most popular holiday towns in the country, the Kouga region offers so much more than just sun, sea and waves: if you come here in winter or early spring, you’re almost guaranteed to see whales; there are many fishing spots next to the sea and nearby rivers; and hikers, runners and mountain bikers are spoilt for choice with a variety of trails just waiting to be explored.

If Jeffrey’s Bay is not for you, you can always choose to go to St Francis Bay for a quieter getaway that is by no means boring.

This exceptional village (where building regulations require most

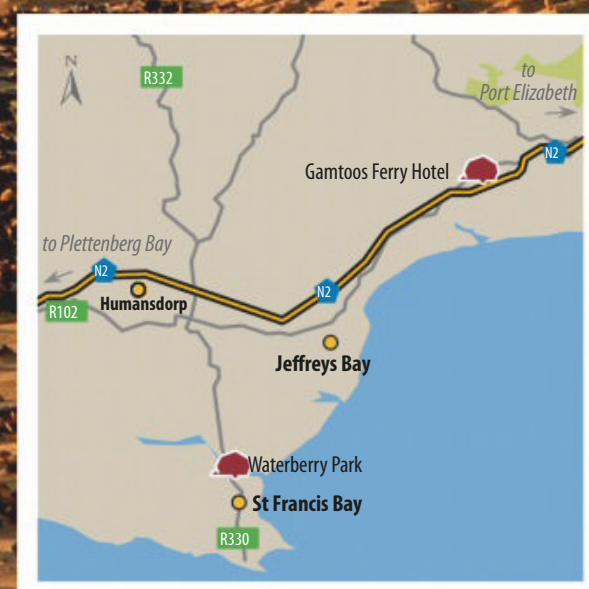
buildings to be white with a thatched roof) has a unique charm and is also just a short distance from Cape St Francis with its vast beach.

When you camp here, you’re within reach of places such as the famous Tsitsikamma, Langkloof, Baviaans, Addo and of course the Sunshine Coast – all worth a lovely day trip.

We heard about a new campsite recently opened in St Francis Bay and also wanted to visit a hideaway along the Gamtoos River.

That’s why we instructed the GPS to take us to the Eastern Cape where we camped at Waterberry Park and the Gamtoos Ferry Hotel.

>



WATERBERRY PARK

Camp in the garden

If you take into consideration the location and exceptional scenery of St Francis Bay, there are disappointingly few campsites in this region. So, when we recently heard that David Glanville and Gary Gilbert had taken the old St Francis Bay caravan park and basically remodelled it from the ground up, we were eager to get in here.

And we are glad we did, because the two gentlemen have established a decent campsite here, on your right just as you enter the town.

The old caravan park was in a pine forest, but the new owners got rid of these invader trees and drew from David's knowledge as a horticulturist for an exceptionally beautiful and painstakingly neat campsite.

David says he wanted to create the feel of an oasis, and that is indeed the impression Waterberry Park evokes.

The campsite is divided into four sections with stands of varying sizes. It's easy to find one that suits your needs

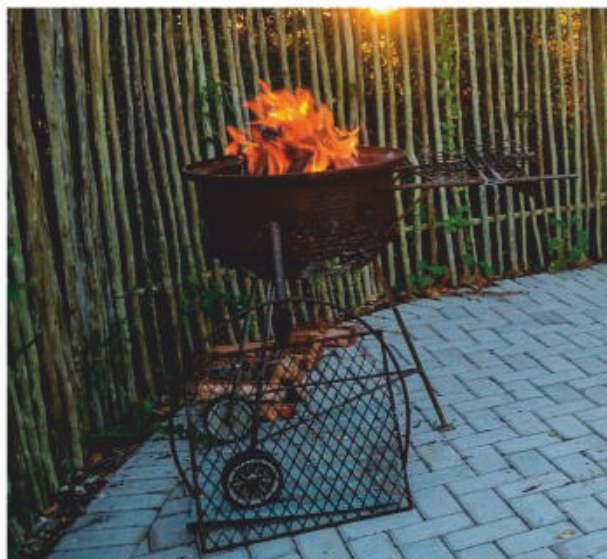
and there are camping spots for tents, motorhomes, caravans and also four luxury stands.

On these four, you get your own paved area to braai on, they're a bit bigger than the others. The resort staff bring you your braai and grid as soon as you set up, but we probably still inherited one from the old caravan park because it was very tired and the bottom was rusted. Bring your own when you camp here, because after supper there were more coals in the plate underneath, than in the braai itself.

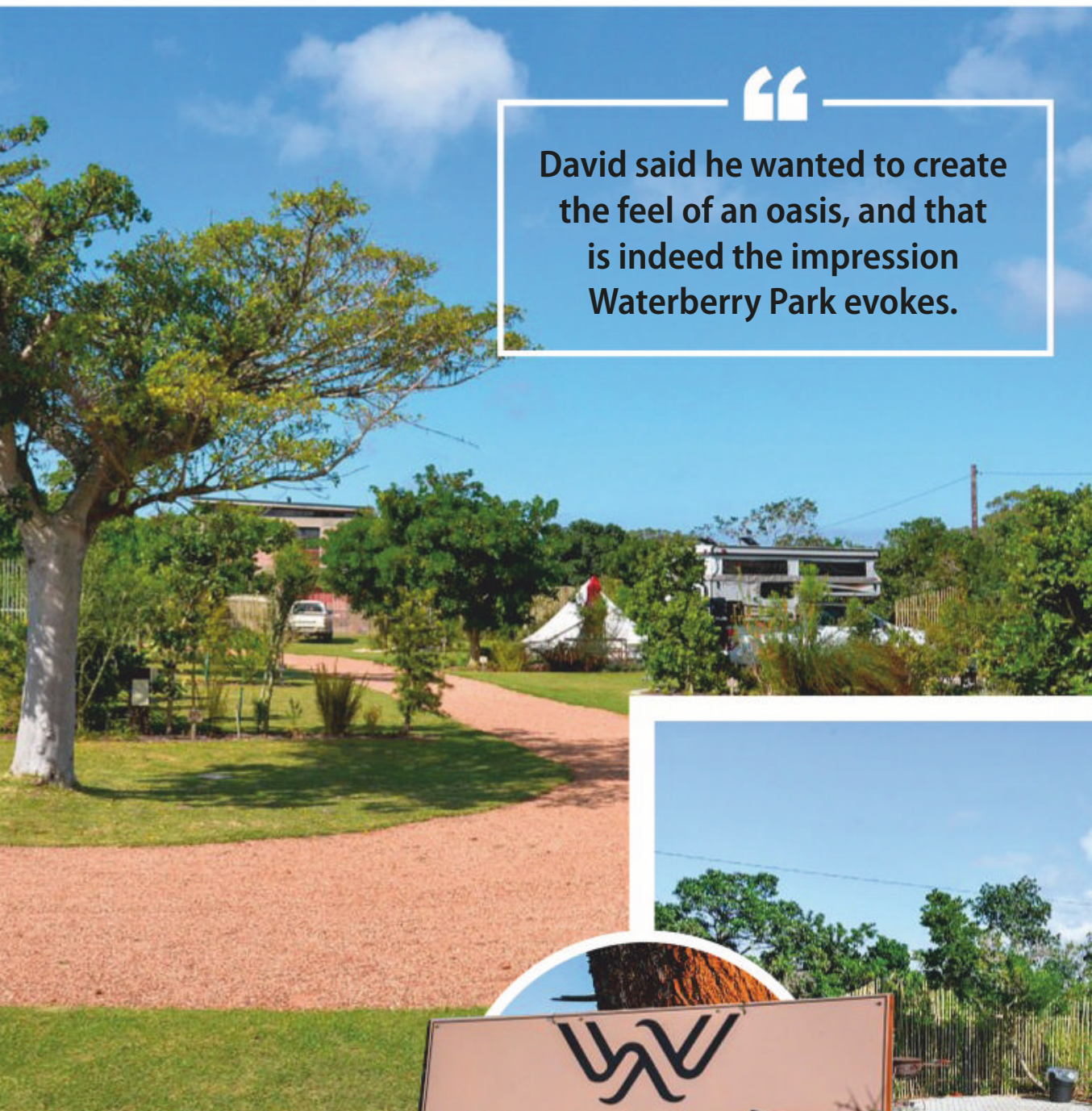
Each stand also has its own blue plug point, rubbish bin and tap. And there's lovely green grass everywhere. The trees are sparse and the ones that are here don't give significant shade – on some stands you spend the whole day in the sun. So, bring your reflective sheet and gazebo along.

There are also two teepees and two safari tents for when you want to invite your friends who don't have their own camping equipment.

The tents are equipped with beds (or mattresses), power



BEAUTIFUL, MAN. BEAUTIFUL. You can see that Waterberry's one owner is a horticulturalist by profession. Many campsites invite you to relax in a garden-like setting, but few get it as right as this one.



David said he wanted to create the feel of an oasis, and that is indeed the impression Waterberry Park evokes.



points and bedside lamps, and the teepee tents each have their own fire pit for those cold winter nights.

The campsite is not the biggest we have ever encountered, but the layout is clever and the place is well maintained. You can see effort being made here, and that is what any camper demands of a caravan park's owner – to keep his place clean and tidy.

Let's go swimming

As far as things for the little ones to do, there isn't much to report here. There are no trampolines, sandpits or a playground with jungle gyms and slides, but between the caravan and tent stands there is

a lovely large swimming pool where you can cool down when it's hot. The pool is fenced, and if the gate is closed, so the very little ones can't get in. There is a canopy to one side so you can catch some shade when the kids play in the shallow end.

The reception, restaurant and bar are in a state-of-the-art building that has clearly only recently been completed. It still smells new, and if you don't feel like cooking, you can come here for dinner. We heard in passing that the restaurant's salmon fishcakes are something one must experience.

You can also get comfy in the bar, get something cold in your hand and then >

sit back and watch the big-screen TV to see if your team is victorious.

Washing up

The ablution facilities are in the same building as the reception office, but set apart from the restaurant and bar. So, you don't have to worry about someone eating their breakfast watching you brush your teeth.

The facilities are modern, clean and neat, and potted plants abound

to highlight the garden theme here at Waterberry Park. On the men's side, there are three washbasins with a large mirror, but the storage space for your toiletry bag is lacking. There are two urinals, two toilets and two showers, each with a bench and hook for your clean clothes and towel. The shower room's dry section is separated from the wet by a narrow glass wall; so take some care to keep the floor in front of the door dry. Gas geysers provide the hot water. The women's

facilities are identical with the exception of the urinals.

Outside the door of the men's facilities is a family bathroom, which is basically a shower and toilet in the same room.

If you want to scrub up slightly closer to nature, then shower in one of the three outdoor showers on the left of the ablution facilities. There is plenty of privacy in these wooden cubicles, but you're still showering outside for all practical purposes. The wheelchair-friendly bathroom is also on this side.

However...

One thing that unfortunately counts against Waterberry Park is the fact that the campsite sits on the road between St Francis Bay and Humansdorp.

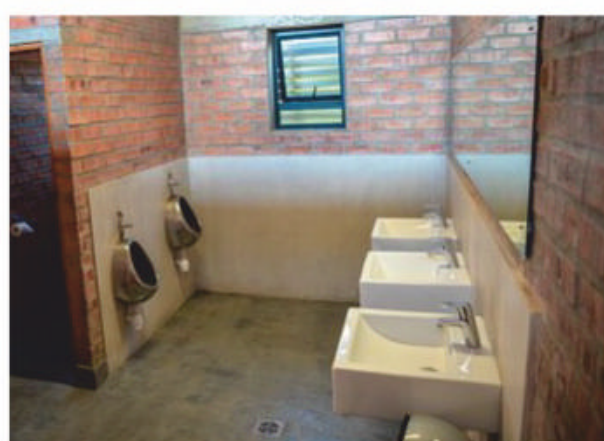
Late night it gets quiet, but for most of the day you hear the constant noise of traffic. The owners are well aware of this and have planted a lane of tall, dense trees in an attempt to mute the sound. You'd shudder to think how it would sound if it wasn't for the trees. It is nevertheless a great place to take your tents if you do not want to camp in a busier campsite in the area, but still want to visit all the attractions.



HAVE A SEAT. The restaurant and bar are in the same building as the reception and you can get something to eat and drink here when you don't want to cook. There's also a TV so you can catch the game.



MODERN, CLEAN AND NEAT. The ablution facilities, like everything else here, is brand new. It is quite modern and adequate even if the resort is full. If you're going to be here for an extended stay, there are even two washing machines you can use to keep your clothes clean, free of charge.



Briefly | Waterberry Park



Campsite 14 caravan stands of which 4 are luxury, 7 stands for motorhomes, and 5 tent stands, all on grass with power, a rubbish bin and tap.

Ablution facilities New, clean, neat and modern.

Price Depending on the season, R500 or R1 000 per site for the luxury caravan stands, R450 or R900 for the usual stands, R400 or R800 for the motorhome stands, and R300 or R600 for tents. Prices apply to the first 2 people; thereafter it is R200 p.p.p.n. extra (R100 for children). A maximum of 4 people per site.

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am.

Contact 082 785 6513

office@waterberrypark.co.za

waterberrypark.co.za

Nearest town In St Francis Bay.

What does the road look like? Tarred.

GPS S34.145298 E24.812355

go! Drive & Camp says It's safe, the campsite is fenced and the gate is locked. By the way, you pay a deposit of R200 for the gate's remote control when you book.



GAMTOOS FERRY HOTEL Next to the water

Drive on the R102 in the direction of Port Elizabeth from Jeffrey's Bay and you will reach the Gamtoos Ferry Hotel after about 15 km. It's a popular event venue for conferences and weddings, and next to the hotel is a lovely and neat campsite.

The great thing is that you can also make use of the hotel's facilities. There's a decent shop where you can buy anything from firelighters to wood and hardwood. Then the hotel's restaurant and bar are also open to you.

Definitely bring your fishing tackle along, because you can stand in front of the campsite on the river bank and see if you can convince a cod to come and taste your bait. They tell us there have been a few big ones caught here. There is also a slipway for your boat.

The campsite is a mere 10-minute drive from Jeffrey's Bay, so you're within easy reach of all the attractions, shops and restaurants. But tonight, when the sun goes down and your campfire burns



GREEN IN ABUNDANCE. The campsite is laid out on a strip of land next to the hotel. Pitch here on green grass next to the Gamtoos River and remember your rod if you're a keen angler.

high, there is no noise from the town to disturb your peace.

Although it was fairly quiet with our visit, it does get very busy over December holidays and you should get going if you want to book your spot here.

The campsite is large and flat, with 39 stands on green grass. There's no partition between you and your neighbour, but the stands are clearly numbered and the resort map you get when you check in clearly indicates where your stand begins and ends.

The resort map even indicates in square meters how big each stand is; so, you can decide which one – big or small – is right for you.

The whole campsite overlooks the dark green, densely wooded mountains of the Gamtoos Valley, as well as the river and the flat farmland in Jeffrey's direction.

There aren't really shade trees, and those randomly dotted around don't provide significant shade. Remember to bring your blue plug and pack an extension cord of at least 20 m as well, >





HOW CAN WE HELP? One big advantage of camping here is that you get to use the hotel's facilities, including the restaurant and bar. The Ferry Hotel's shop compares well with other resort stores, because here you can find anything from the essentials to lollipops for the kids and something stronger for the grownups.



because at some of the stands you are far from the power point.

You also share a tap with your neighbours and you need to bring your own braai and grid as they're not provided here. There are also no garbage bins here, but the resort staff will bring you a refuse bag for your garbage that they collect each morning.

It's good and clean and fresh...

We have no complaints about the ablution facilities. It is in one large block at the top of the campsite and has separate facilities for men and women. It is kept clean and tidy throughout the day, and even when the campsite is full, you shouldn't need to queue when you



want to shower. It is, however, some distance from the furthest stands, so if you're camping with someone who needs the loo often at night, it is advisable to choose a campsite nearer the amenities.

As you enter the main door of the ablution block, there are three double sinks for dishes to your right, and three deep laundry basins on your left. However, this area lacks significant

packing space, and you also need to bring your own plugs.

In the men's facilities, there are eight basins with mirrors, five showers with shower curtains separating the wet and dry sections, five toilets and a bathroom.

The women's facilities mostly look the same. Remember to bring your own toilet paper and plug for the basins or if you want to bath.

BATHTIME. The large ablution block has separate facilities for men and women, and there are more than enough showers, toilets and basins for a full campsite. Remember to bring your own plug for the bath, and toilet paper, too.



Briefly | Gamtoos Ferry Hotel and Caravan Park



Campsite 39 level stands on green grass.

Ablution facilities A neat, modern ablution block with showers and a bath on each side, plus wheelchair-friendly amenities.

Price R275-R345 per site for 2 people, depending on when you camp. Extra campers pay R65-R90 p.p.n.

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am.

Contact 042 287 0758 or 078 437 1868

admin@ferryhotel.co.za

Nearest town Jeffreys Bay, 15 km.

What does the road look like? Tar road to the gate.

GPS S33.916405 E25.027401

go! Drive & Camp says Take a cocktail boat cruise on the Gamtoos – book at the hotel.

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Gear up for the Gariep

The Richtersveld is a desolate landscape where you sometimes fear that loneliness will steal you away. But there's also a profound sincerity to this world full of rocks and quiver trees.

Text and photos Cyril Kloppe



South Africa's longest river has many names because it winds its way through many regions and visits many cultures. At its source in Lesotho, its name is the Senqu, it then becomes the IGqili in the Eastern Cape, after which it is commonly called the Orange. And here in the Richtersveld where its great waters flow into the Atlantic Ocean, the Nama people call it the Gariep. When in Rome and all that, so for this story, we'll stick to the ancient Nama name.

The Gariep River forms the northern boundary

of the Richtersveld, to the west lies the sea, to the east is the N7 highway, and the region's southern border is the R382 regional road between Port Nolloth and Steinkopf. It takes one day to travel here from Cape Town on the N7, and from Gauteng on the N14 highway, it's two full days.

But no matter where you come from, you'll first have to stop at Springbok in northern Namaqualand. Pause here for fresh bread and other supplies – Namaqualand is famous for its mutton – and fill up with fuel before tackling the final stretch to the north. >



Bronze, silver then gold

The closer you get to Steinkopf, the less greenery you see. It's clear that the town's beautifying committee once made an effort to improve the place's appearance, but it seems that they've lost the battle against litterbugs. Plastic bags and empty cooldrink cans threaten to engulf the daisies in the surrounding veld.

Rather keep going and drive west on the R382 towards Port Nolloth. Turn right after the Anenous Pass (S29.26103 E17.43196) and head north toward Eksteenfontein. It is a lovely, broad dirt road where small shrubs flash past. The earth lies flat all around you, mountains shimmer in the distance and downy clouds throw soft shadows over the vast landscape.

Eksteenfontein is smaller than

Steinkopf, but it's a clean and proud settlement. Stop for cooldrinks and sweets. It's also a good opportunity to deflate your tyres to about 1,8 bar, as the dirt road west of the town can get pretty rough. The corrugated surface is graded regularly, but the daily commute between Eksteenfontein and its neighbouring village, Kuboes, as well as the tourist traffic to the Richtersveld National Park, make it an unwinnable battle for graders. Fortunately, you turn off after 19 km at a road sign that reads "Richtersveld Community Conservancy" (S28.72674 E17.12899). This twin-track runs into a wide valley.

If you have Tracks4Africa maps on your GPS, it will send you up the course of the Gaigas and Orab rivers. The local

community, however, made a better road higher up the valley's edge where it cannot be erased by floods. The new route is marked by arrow signs and cairns and will hopefully be worn in by the time baboons destroy the signs. After about 23 km you will find your spot for the night: the Tierhoek campsite (S28.63407 E17.01184).

Tierhoek sits in a narrow gorge at the foot of the Ploegberg. A giant cliff towers above you and if you look closely, you will see eagle nests in the rock face. At the base of the cliff is a shallow cave in which you can camp and it's even got ablution facilities, though they're unfortunately unkempt and broken.

On the way to Tierhoek, we come across Nama livestock farmer Piet Joseph. Piet

“
Sit quietly next to your fire and
listen to the forlorn howl of
a jackal in the distance.”

REDHEAD. Tierhoek (right) is an impressive campsite but the facilities have unfortunately been in a state of disrepair of late. Piet Joseph (insert) says that this is a tough world in which to make a living, and that's why hospitality and helpfulness are so important to survive here.

agrees that Tierhoek is special, but visitors litter the campsite and the community no longer maintains the showers and toilets. He invites us to rather camp next to his shelter. But we don't want to impose and rather accept his next suggestion: camping in a valley next to Tierhoek (S28.63232 E17.02183). According to Piet, it is as beautiful as Tierhoek, but without the leavings of messy visitors.

Tonight you camp under a spectacular sky and the Milky Way burns a clear track above your tent while man-made satellites rush from horizon to horizon. Sit quietly next to your fire and listen to the forlorn howl of a jackal in the distance.

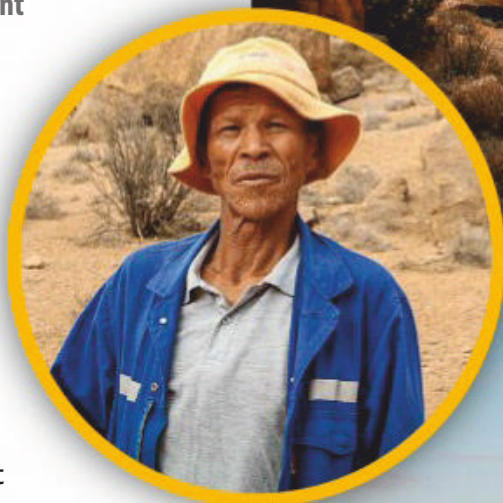
Life next to the Gariep

Piet comes walking across the plain the next morning as we pack up. He's come to fetch his goats in the mountain and demonstrates how loud his whip can snap. If, like us, you share coffee and fruit with Piet, he may tell you about his people at Eksteenfontein and his stubborn goats.

As soon as the morning mist clears, it's time to get going. Today we don't have a lot of driving, but there are plenty of attractions along the way.

Just 5 km after Tierhoek you rejoin the main road and follow it north toward Sendelingsdrift. After 28km, you need to watch out for a road sign inviting you to visit Cornellskop's hole (S28.41966 E16.88842). This sinkhole is 30 m deep and was created by groundwater that carved a shaft out of the dolomite limestone over hundreds of years. According to a Nama legend, the ancestral spirit Heitsi Eibib resides at the bottom of this hole.

The Richtersveld National Park's main gate is 18 km north of the sinkhole. Rangers will check your access permit >





Rangers will examine your car, and
and if you arrived in something
like a VW Beetle they will strongly
discourage you from entering



here or issue one if you didn't buy one beforehand through their website. The rangers will also examine your car, and if you arrived in something like a VW Beetle, they will strongly discourage you from entering the park. We, however, believe that you'll be okay in a rear-wheel drive bakkie or an SUV with regular all-wheel drive – provided you have experience with deep sand and sharp stones.

From here you drive for about 20 minutes to Sendelingsdrift where you'll get your permit stamped at the park office. You can also buy a useful travel guide (R65) with a map of the park's roads and attractions here.

There is a ferry at Sendelingsdrift that takes one over the Gariep to Namibia. There's also a fueling station with petrol

and diesel (which is on average R1/ℓ dearer than in the rest of the country), a shop (open from 9am to 12pm and again from 4pm to 6pm) and a campsite and self-catering cottages. Sendelingsdrift is adjacent to a diamond mine and it's not really the kind of place you want to overnight in. What does count in its favour is that it is the only campsite in the park with electricity, but there are nicer places deeper into the park.

Potjiespram is one such place. It is a campsite next to the river with 18 stands and neat ablution facilities. The ablution facilities have basins and showers with solar-heated water as well as flush toilets. Naughty vervet monkeys check you out from the trees – so keep the lid of your food crate shut tight.

About 16 km east of Potjiespram is The Hand of God (S28.12189 E17.00948). It's a rock that has been weathered over the centuries and now looks as if a giant has left a handprint in it.

The Akkedis and Domorogh passes follow 5 km after this rock. Continue straight ahead with the Akkedis Pass, followed by the Penkop Pass to the Koeroegab plains. Here you'll find a narrow spring where water bubbles from the rock (S28.17472 E17.15919). All six of the park's official mountain passes are rocky, and though you hardly, if ever, need to engage four-wheel drive, your vehicle's ground clearance will be put to the test. You certainly can't tow a caravan through the passes, because the turns are pretty hairy. A shorter off-road trailer might



TOP OF THE MORNING. The lookout point (above) on the way to Kokerboomkloof offers stunning vistas of the Springbokvlakte. At Kokerboomkloof (below) you camp between quiver trees and at Tatasberg (opposite, lower left) you have an unbeatable view of the Gariep river.



make it, but because it is a single-track road, you need to hold thumbs that you don't bump heads with oncoming traffic.

De Hoop is a popular campsite that is packed with visitors in the cooler winter months. Even during summer holidays, the tents are lined up along the banks of the Gariep River. There are basins and showers in the ablution facilities, and an oversupply of toilet cubicles. The Gariep's water is quite deep here and the current flows slowly so Mom can float on a lilo while her daughter swims lengths.

We booked a bed at the Tatasberg Wilderness Camp and had to push on along the river. In the early years, the route next to the river was a challenging sandpit that tore off many vehicles' front bumper. SANParks, however, built a new road higher up on the riverbank where it's rocky and it's no longer necessary to wrestle with the deep sand. It's a good thing too, because the road between the Maerpoort Pass and the Richtersberg campsite, which was previously an alternative route to Tatasberg, is currently closed and it's not clear when it will be open to traffic again.

The Richtersberg campsite is a smaller, quieter version of De Hoop, and there are even patches of lawn on which you can lay down a beach towel. As with all the park's campsites, there are neat ablution facilities with flush toilets.

But now it's time for some pampering. The Tatasberg Wilderness Camp may be the most expensive place to stay in the park, but it is also the most comfortable. Each of the three cottages (there is a fourth one in which a ranger permanently resides) has a full kitchen with a fridge-freezer, gas stove, sink, rubbish bin, crockery, cutlery and cooking utensils. On the wooden deck is a table with chairs and a braai with a height-adjustable open grid. The bedroom has two single beds with clean linnen, bedside tables and a wardrobe. The bathroom has a cabinet with a basin, towels, a mirror and a bin. The toilet borders a shower with hot and cold taps. You can leave all your camping gear in your vehicle and only bring your food and clothes into the cottage. There are also solar-powered lights, but no power sockets to recharge your laptop or camera battery.

Use Tatasberg as a base to explore >

ACCOMMODATION AND PERMITS

There are numerous accommodation options within the park and close to the Vioolsdrift border post. If you book accommodation in the Richtersveld National Park, your permit and conservation fee are included in the price. Extra permits are needed for the Kuboes 4x4 community route between Kuboes and Eksteensfontein and the Namaqua 4x4 Eco Trail, which covers the remainder of the route.

Tierhoek

This campsite has no facilities and you need to dig your own loo. The scenery here is charming, and if you luck out, an eagle will be rearing its chicks in the towering cliff. Look out for the Leaning Toilet of Tierhoek, one of the Richtersveld's quirkiest tourist attractions.

Contact 📧 info@namakwa4by4.co.za ☎ 081 873 9043 (Wilma James)

Price R200 per permit.

Tatasberg Wilderness Camp

This is the Richtersveld National Park's most luxurious accommodation, but sometimes you need a bit of pampering in this harsh area. Each cottage can accommodate only two people and you will need to book an extra cottage when travelling with your family. If there are three of you in the vehicle, SANParks will look the other way if your child is willing to sleep on an inflatable mattress on the floor.

Contact 📧 sanparks.org

Price R924 p.n. per house (community and conservation fee excluded).

Kuboes 4x4 Community Trail

This route has an official campsite outside Kuboes called Glybank, but there are better places and there's no protection against the wind here. You are, however, free to pitch camp anywhere along the route, which is a better plan in any event. Just remember to take everything you brought in back out again. There's no one here to clean up after you.

Contact 📧 kuboestic810@gmail.com ☎ 071 792 2412

📧 eksteenfonteintic@gmail.com ☎ 074 500 4593

Price R30 p.p. over 12 to drive the route and R20 p.p. to camp. The office closes at 2 pm.

The Growcery

This river resort has cottages and stands, and the name comes from the herbs and vegetables they grow six months of the year. You only pay if you want to pitch a tent next to the river or stay in one of the tin cottages. If you're satisfied with a stand away from the river, you may camp for free. There is also a bar, and if you let the management know in advance that you're on your way, they will prepare dinner (usually a braai) and breakfast for you and yours.

Contact 📧 christine@thegrowcery.co.za ☎ 027 761 8007 (Christine Radford)

Price R215 p.p. for the corrugated iron cottages. A riverfront stand costs R125, but further away it is free. Meals cost from R95 p.p. for breakfast up to R140 p.p. for dinner.



“
The nearby Sprinkbokvlakte is
a barren Martian-esque landscape
that makes you feel insignificant
in its vastness.



LAND SPEED RECORD. Just like all the other national parks in South Africa speeding is not tolerated here, but it's still tempting to mash the accelerator pedal on this flat piece of land (above). The Secret Valley (top right) is the ideal spot to enjoy a sundowner.

the rest of the park. Two must-see spots are the Kokerboomkloof and the Springbokvlakte. The former is a beautiful campsite nestled between massive rocks and quiver trees. The nearby Springbokvlakte, on the other hand, is a barren Martian-esque landscape that makes you feel insignificant in its vastness. Directly south of Tatasberg is the so-called Secret Valley where you can enjoy a sundowner or two. The geography here is amazing: some koppies look like heaps of marbles while the mountains are reminiscent of Neapolitan ice cream.

Rocky roads to the south

After spending a few days in the park, you follow the Gannakouriep River on your way out. This route takes you past the Hakkiesdoring hiking hut and the Gannakouriep wilderness camp. Both accommodations have neat buildings with

beds, kitchens and showers.

On the slightly challenging Helskloof Pass you will see Pearson's aloes. This is the only place on earth where they grow so thick and close together.

Back at the park's main gate, you have to decide if you want to briefly return to Sendelingsdrift for some fuel (our Jimny needed some petrol) or whether you want push on to the southeast if your vehicle has a long-range tank.

The town of Kuboes has until recently had self-catering cottages and cute Nama reed huts, but they're no longer operational. The town looks tired, but the shops at least sell sweets and cold drinks. Stop at the tourism office to get a permit for the first real 4x4 challenge: the Kuboes 4x4 community route.

This route is too challenging for an ordinary SUV– it will destroy a Volkswagen Tiguan and a Honda CRV.

Here, you need a genuine four-wheel drive with big tyres (33" and bigger is desirable) and a nice strong engine (a V6, please). Low-range gearing is essential and a diff lock will help. In retrospect, we have to admit that we bit off too much by attempting it in a Jimny. Although our tiny 4x4 was able to conquer the trail, it suffered some damage, even with the help of sand boards used as rock ladders. Fortunately, the damage is cosmetic rather than mechanical – the Jimny is clearly as tough as nails.

Right off the bat, with the first hill, you see rocky terraces with rubber skidmarks left by preceeding travelers. It's up and down the Cornelisberg – in and out of dry river beds – until you reach a narrow rocky path, uphill between boulders (S28.49592 E17.12552). You can tell from a distance that a real challenge awaits. Get out first and walk the track to plan >

your line. You may have to stack rocks and lay down sand boards (if you brought some), because the holes between the rocks are deep. Take it easy, because you do not want to crack an oil pan or snap a side shaft – no towing service can reach you here, nor any ambulance...

Shortly after this hurdle, you'll find a patch of river sand in a gorge where you can pull over and make camp (S28.51356 E17.14141) – it's one of just a few soft spots along the otherwise rocky trail. There's also a fountain 600 m further south where you can get some fresh water at the ruin of the derelict farm Gelykwerf. Defrost your steak and wors on your truck's lukewarm bonnet, pour a celebratory drink and watch how your fire's smoke billow up the cliff face.

All good things...

Shortly after you have loaded all your camping gear back into your car, it's time to head further south to the dry course of the Kook River. You can turn right here and return to the Tierhoek road that you drove a few days prior. It will return you to Eksteenfontein in a jiffy, but rather buck up and carry on off-roading, because there is a special mountain pass ahead.

It would be an understatement to say that Smiths Pass is unknown. It doesn't appear on maps, and Google – who usually knows everything – has never heard of it. It is a narrow slate track that follows the spine of a mountain (S28.71220 E17.19344). It's not particularly challenging, but if you suffer from vertigo, you should steer clear. The abyss to the left and right is steep and you marvel at the ingenuity needed to build this pass. An hour later, the mountain pass spits you out 3 km west of Eksteenfontein.

If you've managed the route this far without too much drama, there's another challenge that awaits. Head north-east from Eksteenfontein, past a large road sign indicating that the route is only suitable for bakkies and SUVs. Pass all the turn-offs, past the Rooiberg, and into the Helskloof-Nababiep Nature Reserve. It's a teasing trail in the dry bed of the Xaminxaip River (*Click your tongue as you pronounce the name.* – Ed). When you're not crawling over rocks, you're ploughing through deep sand, but this is not even the actual challenge.

Where the Xaminxaip joins the Gariep, the twin-track unexpectedly ends. >

I WANT TO GO, TOO!

WHERE? The Richtersveld lies in the northwesternmost tip on our country's profile. The nearest big town is Springbok.

PROVISIONS There aren't many shops in the Richtersveld and you have to plan your menu carefully. Carry as much water as you can, and if you are travelling alone, it's best to have an extra spare wheel and spare vehicle parts with you.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS Springbok police 25 Voortrekker Street ☎ 027 718 9100

SANParks, Sendelingsdrift ☎ 027 831 1506 Kuboes tourism, Main Street

☎ 071 792 2412 Eksteenfontein tourism, Main Street ☎ 074 500 4593



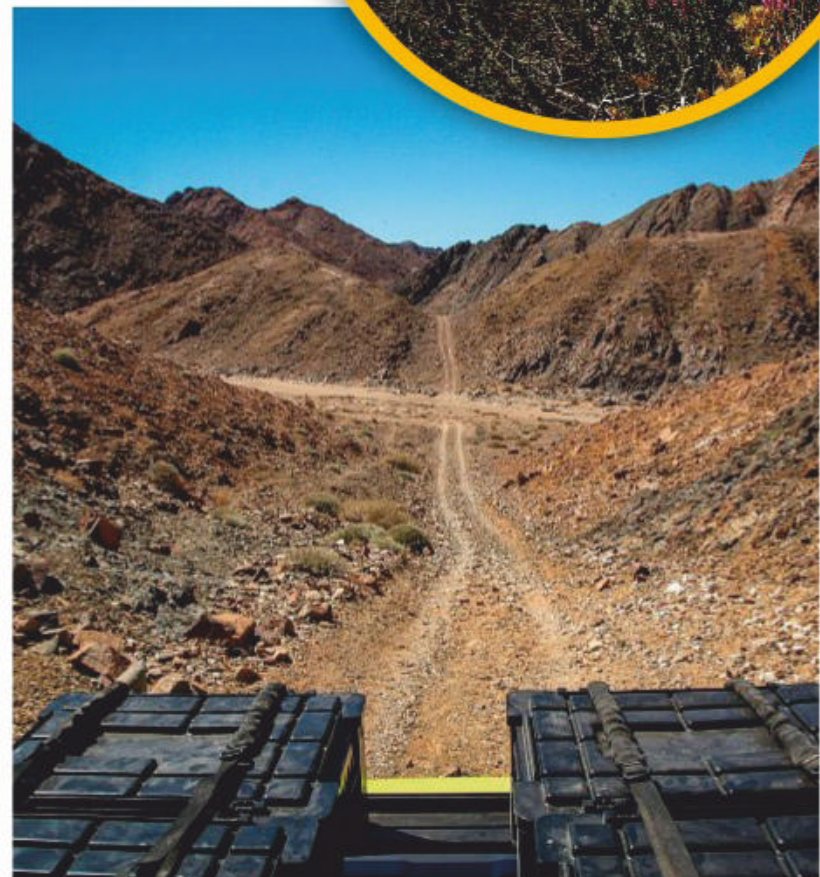
STUBBORN SHRUB. Thousands of photographs exist of this famous tree (above) at the top of the Helskloof Pass, and for good reason because it's literally growing out of a rock. The Kuboes 4x4 community trail (below) offers up a real challenge. Reckless driving here will damage your vehicle.



FOTO: SUZAAN KRITZINGER-KLOPPER



FOTO: SUZAAN KRITZINGER-KLOPPER





We had to sound the retreat and double back on our way past Rooiberg and rather take the more moderate Helskloof Pass.



WHAT WE DROVE

Suzuki South Africa loaned us a new Jimny with standard tyres and suspension. Because there were three of us and we had to be self-sufficient for a week, Front Runner fitted the Jimny with a roof rack and awning, four ammo crates, stratchets, a table with chairs, a 20 l water can, and fuel-, spade- and spare-wheel mounting brackets. At the 11th hour we decided to take along sand boards, and although Front Runner also has a mount for these, we secured them to the spare wheel.

Although the Jimny is a brave little vehicle, it couldn't carry everything we needed if it hadn't been for Front Runner's accessories. Our driving impression of the Jimny appears on p. 32.

Contact frontrunneroutfitters.com suzuki.co.za





TRIBUTE TO THE GROOTSLANG. Stone cairns decorate the foot of the Helskloof Pass (above) and according to local tradition, you had better add your own stone to a pile should you wish to travel safely through the Richtersveld.



There used to be a sandy track eastward between the rocks, but it was swept away by a flood in 2011. Just the rocks remain... and you have to drive over them (S28.72433 E17.41640). We got over the first row of boulders, but quickly saw it would result in a wailing and gnashing of teeth. Here you need a pukka off-roader with big tyres and a strong engine. Also, you shouldn't tackle the obstacle on your own as you need an experienced spotter that can climb ahead and show you where to place your vehicle's wheels. The obstacle is only 400 m long, but it may as well be 4 000 km if your vehicle is not up to rock crawling. Definitely don't tow an off-road trailer here.

We had to sound the retreat and double back on our way past Rooiberg and rather take the more moderate Helskloof Pass. It was a bitter pill to swallow, but rather safe than sorry...

Fortunately, the Helskloof Pass doesn't disappoint (yes, there are two Helskloof passes in the Richtersveld; the other one is in the park). It is

a picturesque trail and at its base are hundreds of stone cairns built by travellers over many years (S28.76264 E17.46904). The Nama's old folk will tell you that it is tradition to pack stones in this way before entering the Richtersveld via Vioolsdrift, supposedly to please the Grootslang. Grootslang was an animal older than the earth, and when the gods saw that Grootslang would one day threaten the Khoekhoen nation's Nama descendants, they broke Grootslang up into pieces and created all the animals on earth from its flesh. However, one of the ancient serpent's children (also Grootslang) escaped, and it is for him that you have to pack the stones. Or else, he'll rise up from the Gariep and devour you!

Tonight, you will sleep on the banks of the Gariep one more time. There are a number of guest farms and river resorts to choose from, including The Growcery, Fiddlers Creek, Oewerbos and the luxury Vioolsdrift Lodge. Wherever you decide to lay your head, the staff and your fellow guests will hang on your every word when you tell them where you've been and what you've experienced.



LEADERS of canvas tents in Africa



DIRECTOR CHAIR



Max weight 180 kg
R656

SPECIFICATIONS
Ripstop canvas
Powder coated
Steel frame

Heavy duty

AFRICA'S
NR.1 BEST
SELLER

FOLDABLE TABLES



180cm x 74cm x 74cm (H) **R725**
120cm x 60cm x 74cm (H) **R599**
80cm x 80cm x 74cm (H) **R630**

BUNDU SLEEPING BAG



SPECIFICATIONS
Filling 350 gsm
210 Polyester Nylon outer
Cotton inner
Complete with stuff sack
Size: 2.1m
R499



FISHERMAN-STOOL



Max weight 150kg
R335

SPECIFICATIONS
Ripstop canvas
Powder coated
Steel frame

TENTCO FOLDING TROLLEY

4X4
R1470
LARGE
R1260



STRETCHER



BASIC LARGE
Size: 2.1m x 80cm
x 47cm
Max weight: 130kg
R850

DELUXE STANDARD
Size: 1.9m x 60cm
x 40cm
Max weight: 130kg
R699

SELF INFLATING MATTRESS



SIZE: 2m x 67cm x 5cm **R599**
SIZE: 2m x 67cm x 10cm
R1035
No pumps needed
Complete with compression stuff sack

CLASSIC CHAIRS



600g Heavy duty material
Sponge padding
Steel frame
Max weight: 130kg

R695

HIGH BACK

PORTA POTTY



SPECIFICATIONS
20Lt
R880

Bag, each
R245
Ripstop canvas

COOLER BOXES

20 LT - **R1426**
40 LT - **R1875**
60 LT - **R2655**
90 LT - **R3115**
120LT - **R3567**
140 LT - **R4265**

Extra heavy duty
Bottle opener
included



EVA MAT



1,22 x 1,22 x 11mm **R200**
1.2 x 2.4m² x 7mm
R265 (Eva Roll up mat)

BIG BOY CHAIR



SPECIFICATIONS
Nylon Ripstop
Steel frame
Max weight: 150kg
R535

POP-UP GAZEBO



3 m x 3 m **R1350**

CAPRIVI 2



SPECIFICATIONS
2.1m x 2.1m x 1.3m
INNER TENT: 190T
POLYESTER NYLON
FLYSHEET & FLOOR: 210D
OXFORD NYLON
R750

CAPRIVI 3



SPECIFICATIONS
3m x 3m x 1.8m
INNER TENT: 190T POLY-
ESTER NYLON
FLYSHEET & FLOOR: 210D
OXFORD NYLON
R1338

DIRECTORS DELUXE CHAIR

SPECIFICATIONS
Heavy duty Oxford Nylon
Black powder-coated steel
frame
Padded armrests
Collapsible side table
Side pockets
Max weight: 160kg
R640



TENTCO AWNINGS



2,0 x 2,0m **R1990**
2,5 x 2,0m **R2150**
280g ripstop canvas

TENTCO 270° AWNINGS



420D Oxford Nylon **R4999**

TENTCO KITCHEN CABINET DELUXE



R1020

We strive to ensure that, at the time of going to print, all information is correct. However, Tentco will not be held liable for any errors that may occur.

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COLOURS, SPECIFICATIONS
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QUALITY TENT MANUFACTURERS

No Boundaries

ROOFTOP TENT RANGE

AFRICA
NO.1 BEST
SELLER



1.2 m x 2.45 m (OPEN) **R8745**
1.4 m x 2.45 m (OPEN) **R9635**
1.6 m x 2.45 m (OPEN) **R11920**
2 m x 2.45 m (OPEN) **R13720**
REPLACEMENT COVER FOR YOUR
ROOFTOP FROM **R480**

HARD SHELL ROOFTOP

NEW!



1.2m x 2.1m Inside size
Telescopic ladder
R19050

SNR DOUBLE BOW EXTENSION ONLY



Extension only to fit any
Tentco 3m x 3m bow tent
R4805
BOWTENT NOT INCLUDED

SNR DELUXE & EXT COMBO



3m x 3m
Dome Tent Extension
2.8m and Verandah 1.8m **R11500**

JNR SAHARA

Side walls & front walls available



4.5m x 2.9m x 2.5m
R7100

SNR SAHARA



5.6m x 2.9m x 2.5m
R8745

SAFARI BOW

Heavy duty canvas traveller
2.1 x 2.1 x 1.5 m **R2855**
Ranger **R3270**
2.1 x 2.1 x 1.8 m
Junior Bow **R4635**
2.5 x 2.5 x 1.8 m
Senior Bow **R5690**
3.0 x 3.0 x 2.0 m



DINING SHELTER



R4655 3 Side with moszi net
+ four solid sides, 3 x 3.33 x 2.2 m

INNER ONLY



NEW

R1910
To fit Snr Tentco gazebo
Shadedoth
Built-in groundsheet

HEXIBOW SAFARI



R6840
4.8 m x 2.7 m x 2.2 m
VERY SPACIOUS

3-IN-1 BUSH SHELTER **R9485**

STANDALONE
4 x 2.8m
Fitted groundsheet
Double roof
Fully enclosed



Fits most bakkies or SUVs

VIEW ON
YOUTUBE



Extend your living space by adding your 2.5 x 2.5,
3 x 3m or Hexibow (upright pole optional)

GAZEBOS



SNR
3 m x 2.8 m x 2.3 m
R2240
Sidewalls with
windows available

WANDERER BOW TENTS



AFRICA
NO.1 BEST
SELLER

JNR: 2.5 x 2.5 x 1.8m **R3445**
SNR: 3 x 3 x 2.1m **R4050**
RIPSTOP MATERIAL

SAHARA DELUXE



AFRICA
NO.1 BEST
SELLER

R10530 6m x 2.9m x 2.5m
Sidewalls available

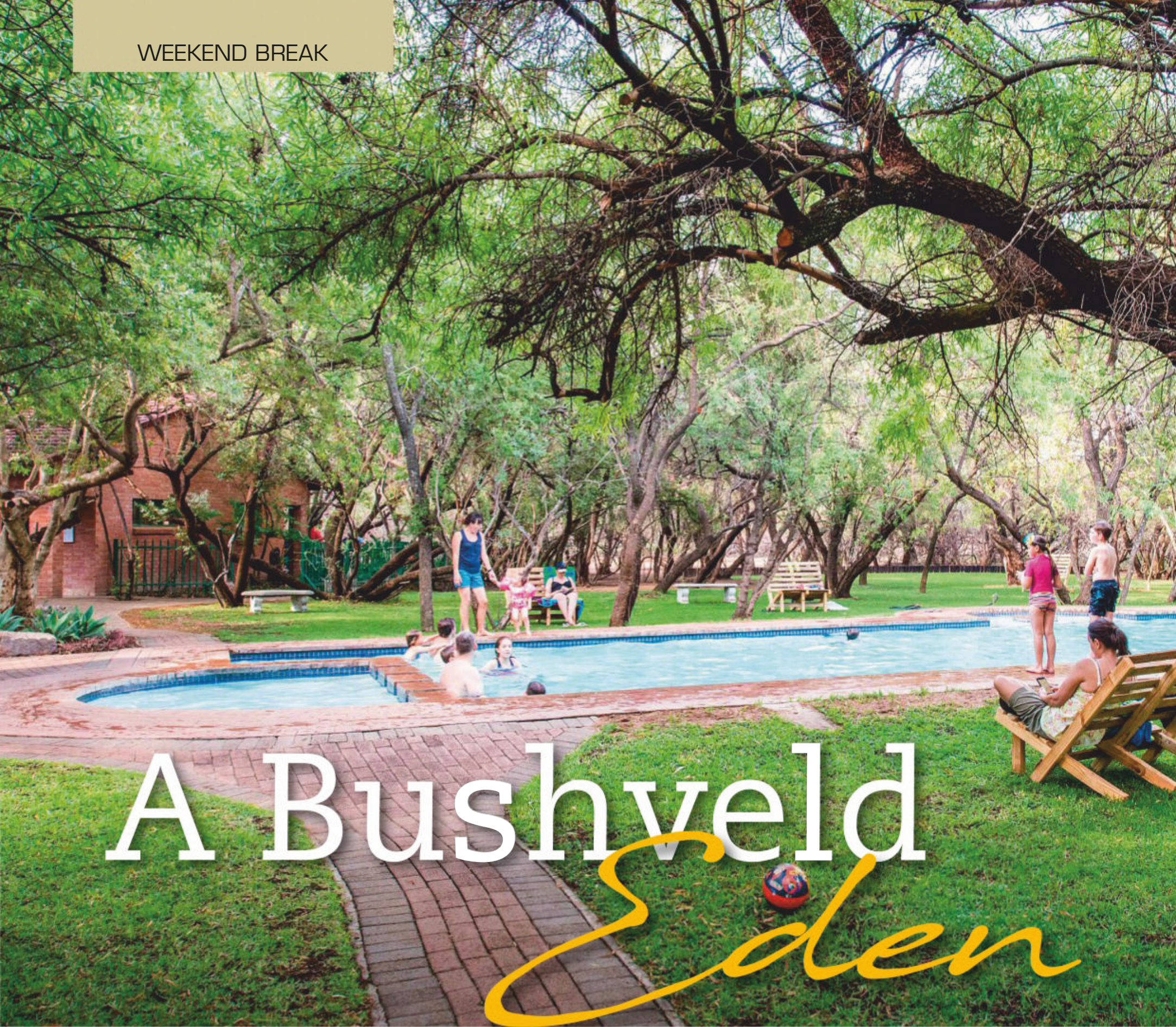
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A Bushveld Eden

Head a little deeper into the Bushveld and set up camp at this neat and peaceful resort.

Text and photos **Helenus Kruger**

The Bushveld doesn't need an introduction – least of all among campers. The south of this region is especially popular with its concentration of camping sites.

Sometimes, however, you need to remind yourself that the Bushveld extends far beyond the Bela-Bela area. Yes, you'll be on the road an hour or so longer, but your reward is a whole bunch of decent campsites where you can relax

in peace and quiet for the weekend. One of them is Eden Park, about 12 km northwest of Mookgopong.

Pleased to meet you

On arrival at Eden Park's reception you meet Hanneltjie Fouché. She is in charge of things and makes sure everything goes swimmingly. Hanneltjie says it's been dry here recently, just as in so many other parts of the country, and with our visit in

December, there has been no significant rainfall for the season. Tobias Spruit, which runs past the campsite and should have water at this time, is still dry. The same goes for the dam into which the stream's water flows.

But, despite the drought, it is still obvious that you'd have to look far and wide to find a neater campsite than Eden Park. The gardens and grass are well cared for and you can see the attention



to detail. In the flower bed at the reception office, you'll spot two tin zebras and a number of tin warthogs among the flowers and at the pool, white-painted wooden hearts hang from the trees.

Early in the morning, while most campers are still asleep, the staff are already busy keeping things tidy. So you quickly realise the five-star tourism sign at reception is actually superfluous, as it is clear that this is a five-star campsite.

Choose your pick

There are three campsites for your weekend nest. The main camp is the largest of the three and has 16 stands, while the Bushveld and river camps (located on either side of the main camp)



have 11 and 4 stands respectively.

The main camp sites are laid out in a crescent on the banks of a stream (a tributary of Tobias Spruit). The stream is just a few metres wide, but don't underestimate it... should there be a heavy rainfall here, it flows big. All

the stands except numbers

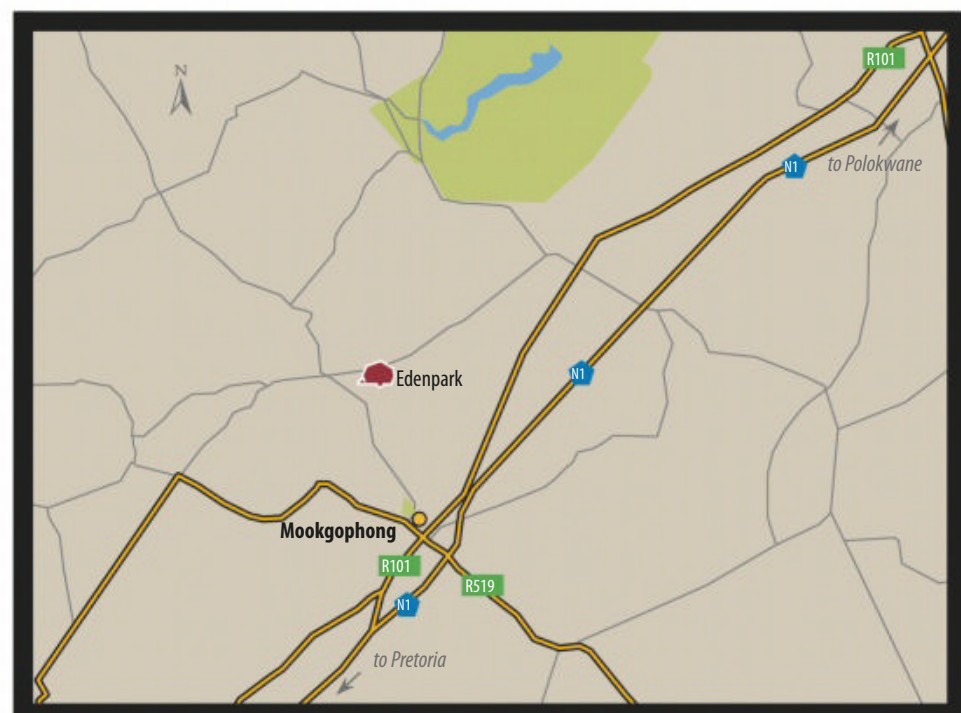
11 and 12 (inside the crescent) and numbers 15 and 16 (at the entrance of the camp) are next to the stream – some closer to the water than others.

Early in the morning, before the sun peaks over the horizon, you can

watch buck grazing in the veld on the opposite side of the stream. Indigenous trees are plentiful in the main camp and in summer you have lovely shade at most stands. The trees, of course, attract a lot of birds, and you'll hear plenty of woodland kingfishers and red-chested cuckoos chirping. At night, the bushbabies start chatting – so keep your torch on hand. (Just remember not to shine the light directly into their eyes, or use the torch's red lens.)

All the stands have a paved area for your caravan. About three quarters of the stands also have a lush lawn next to the paving that varies in size. The size of the paving also varies from stand to stand but your caravan will easily fit. You're >

WELL DESERVED RATING. The Tourism Grading Council rates Eden Park as a five-star camping and caravanning facility. But the sign at the entrance is not necessary, because that's immediately apparent when you enter the campsite and observe the grounds and ablution facilities.



allowed to have your caravan on the grass only on stands 9 and 10.

You'll find a skottel braai with a grid on the side of the paving, but it's not close to your caravan. There are freestanding braais available if you prefer one of them.

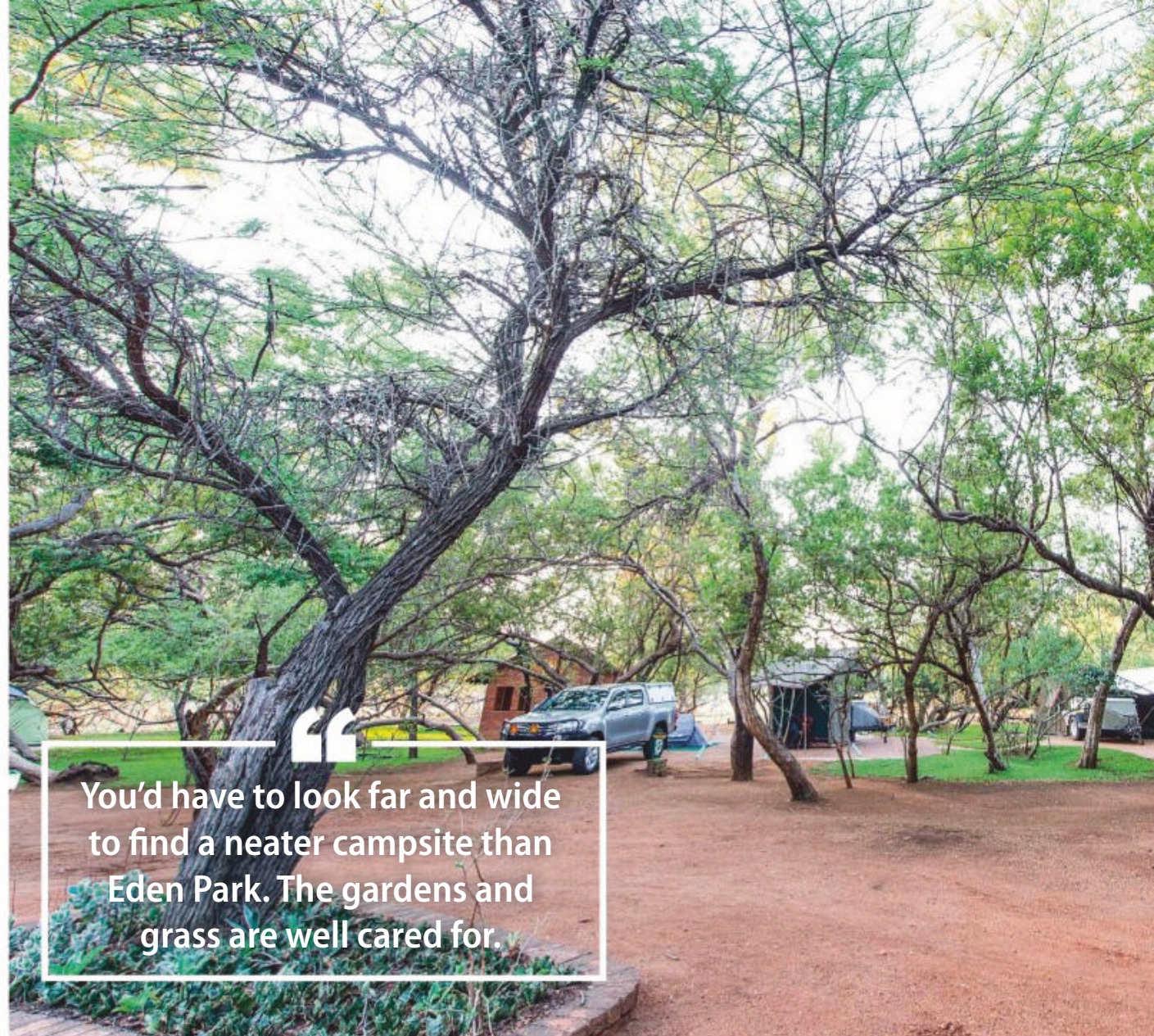
There's no grass at the river and Bushveld camps and there are fewer trees than at the main camp, but you also camp on paving. With its four stands, the river camp is the more intimate one and a good choice if you want to come and visit with some friends or family. The stream also passes here – stands number 18 and 19 are closest to the water.

Due to the Bushveld camp's layout, you will see more of your neighbours' doings. There's a swimming pool (1,4 m deep) and a playground with jungle gyms, swings and a volleyball net. The pool has a lawn and is fenced.

Comfortable and private

At Eden Park, you don't have to hike all the way to the ablution facilities, as each stand boasts its own facilities. Two sites share an ablution block that's divided into two: a kitchenette and bathroom for each stand, each with its own entrance.

The kitchen floor is tiled and has two wooden shelves with enough storage space for your food and cooking utensils. It also has two 220 V power points in the kitchen: one right above the basin and one under the shelf, just above the floor at the kitchen entrance. The bottom one is conveniently placed for your camping fridge, but you'll need a short extension cord if you want to use that one for your kettle and toaster on the shelf. The blue power point is also under the wooden



shelves, next to the regular plug. The wash basin is on the side of the building and you share that with your neighbor.

The door to the bathroom leads from the kitchen. The room has a standard shower cubicle with a glass sliding door. Inside the shower is a soap dish, but shampoos and the like will need to sit on top of the wall. Some of the bathrooms have a free-standing basin while others are on top of a cupboard. There's also a bin and enough hanging and storage space for your clothes and toiletry bag.

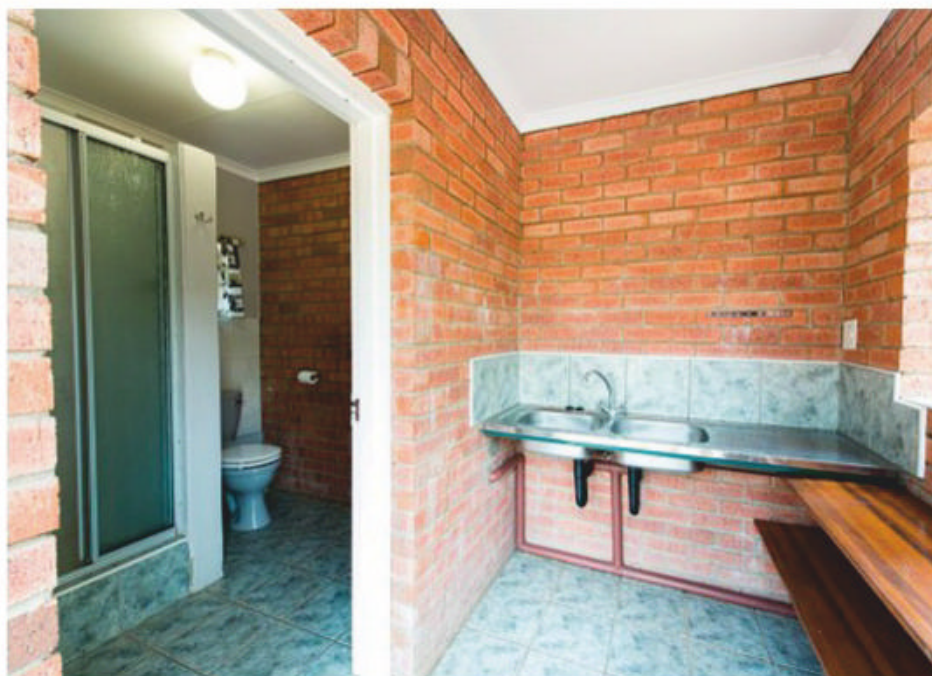
Explore the area

There are more than 10 km of paths for

you to walk, jog and cycle among the Bushveld trees. All the paths have tree names, and with help of the map you get at the front desk, you won't easily get lost – even the distances are indicated. Do some game viewing while exercising – you'll see kudu, nyala, bushbuck and blue wildebeest among others.

Herman's Hut, overlooking the dam, is great for birdwatching, to and relax at Eddie's Waterhole to see who comes to drink.

You can't take your own vehicle, but a game drive on a trailer behind a tractor is offered at R15 p.p. >





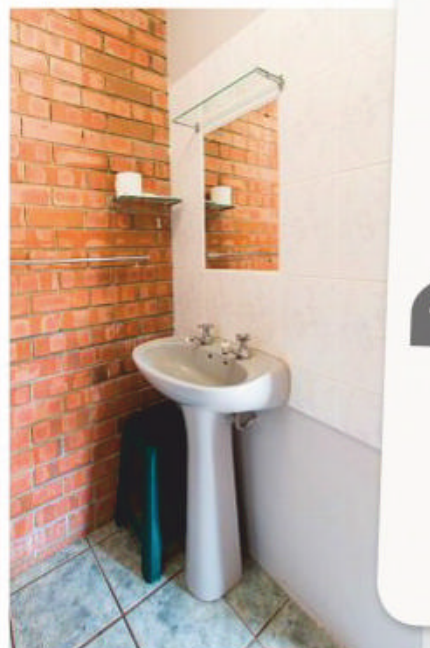
INDOOR ENTERTAINMENT
Table-tennis enthusiasts and pool-hall junkies can get their fair share of thrills in the recreation hall, though you have to secure the bats, balls and cues with a R100 deposit and pay R5 per game. There's a large TV for those who want to catch the final, too.

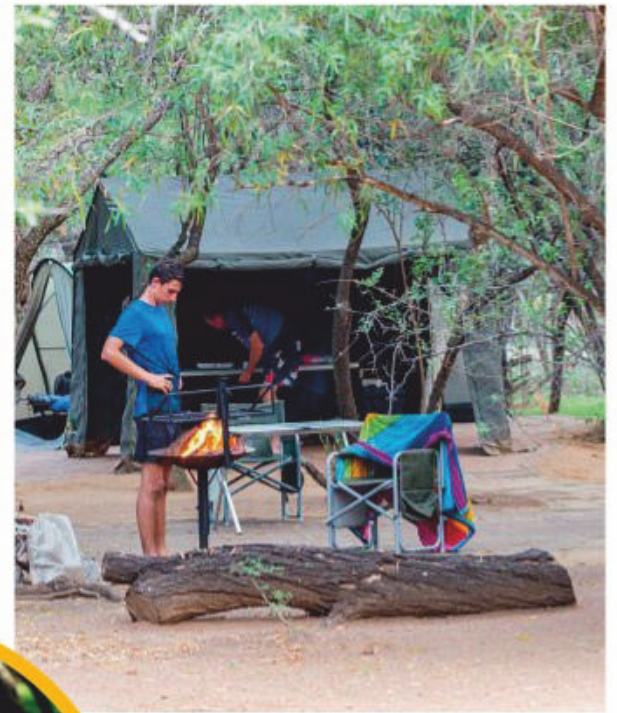


Francois and Marinda Werner are from Germiston and they camp with a 2013 model Gypsy Rascal towed with their Nissan NP300.

They say

“ This is the ninth time we've camped here and we easily stay up to 17 days at a time. We love the tranquility, the tree-lined camp and the natural bush around us. The camp is always neat and the staff friendly. ”

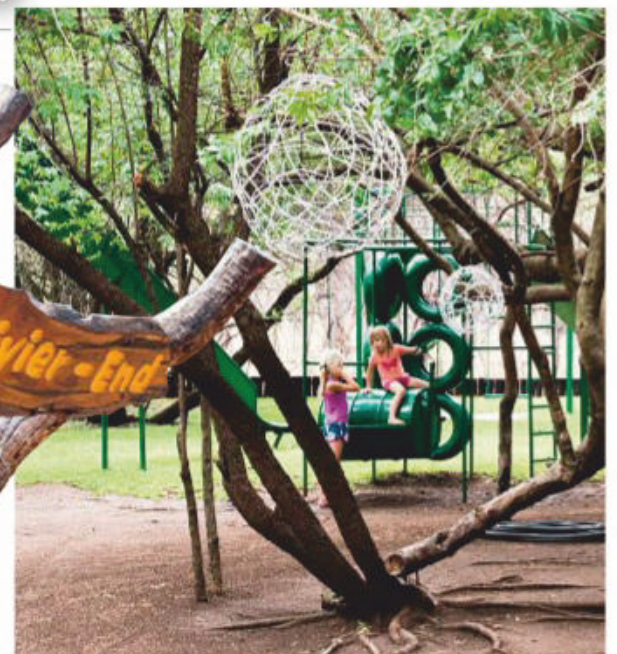




PLAY ALL DAY There's plenty for the little ones to do while dad is braaing and mom relaxes with her book. Naturally, the playground is very busy, with a small pool for toddlers, jungle gym and trampolines available for the kids to exhaust themselves in and on. Don't forget to pack their bikes!



This is what it costs
 (2 adults)
Fuel (50 ppm diesel) @ 8 l/100 km and R14.98/l and 442 km (there and back) **R529.69**
Toll gates (there and back) **R153.00**
Accommodation (2 nights) **R1 240**
Food (2 people) **R1 237.67**
Grand total **R3 160.36**





Early in the morning, before the sun peaks over the horizon, you can watch buck grazing in the veld opposite the stream.



Playground

The playground behind the reception office is the busiest place in the camp. The swimming pools are popular and everyone, including Grandpa and Grandma, can relax here during the day. Next to the large pool is a pool for the little ones that's only 50 cm deep.

Around the swimming pool are some wooden benches on the grass where you can read beneath the trees or keep a watchful eye on the young lot in the water. The backs of the benches are also at just the right angle to lean back and have a nap.

In the recreation hall, play a game of table tennis (you pay R100 deposit for rackets and R5 per game) and pool (R100



Briefly | Edenpark



Campsite A choice of three campsites, all with paving and trees, some with grass next to the paving.

Ablution facilities Each stand has its own bathroom and kitchen.

Price R270-R660 p.n. per site for four people, depending on when you camp.

Contact 087 820 7240 or 079 455 9320

Edenpark@pcwireless.co.za

Edenpark.co.za

Arrival and departure times Noon and 3 pm, but in the peak season 2 pm and 10 am.

What does the road look like? Tar road to the camp gate, then 200 m of gravel road.

GPS S24.440919 E28.682299 (gate)

S24.444271 E28.681363 (reception)

go! Drive & Camp says This is a beautiful and peaceful camp you'll want to visit again and again.

deposit for cues and R5 per game). Dad or Mum will have to come along to rent the equipment and give their signatures if the kids are younger than 12. There is also a large-screen TV with DStv.

The playground is just as neat as the rest of the camp and has a jungle gym, slide, swings and a trampoline. You'll also find frames where you can park your bike.

Eden Park doesn't have a shop, but there is a tuck shop to the rear of the office where you can buy treats including ice cream, soft drinks and chips. There is also wood (R15), fire lighters (R15), charcoal (R30) and ice (R10) for sale.

If you've forgotten your Louis L'Amour book at home, you can borrow a book or two from the library in the tuck shop. Just remember to give it back. Next to the tuck shop is a bathroom with toilets and basins.

If your meat supply runs low, head to the Vleisfabriek store, about 6 km outside Mookgopong on the R520. For anything else, there's a supermarket with basic groceries, a liquor store and filling station another 4 km down the road.

Cheers ***to this daunting route***

About 20 km north of the coastal town of Hermanus, you'll find a lovely 4x4 trail between two nature reserves. To top it all, there's even a microbrewery here.

Text a photos **Cyril Kloppe**



LIFE'S A BEACH. It's not only rocks that you have to contend with, you'll also encounter plenty of sand and even some mud. After you graduate from Honingklip, you're pretty much ready for the world beyond.



The Houwhoek and Mount Hebron nature reserves are situated on the southwestern tip of the Hottentots Holland Mountains and at the top end of the Botriver Lagoon near Hermanus. The posh Arabella golf estate is also nearby, but if you prefer off-roading to golf carting, you'll be stopping on the opposite side of the R43 regional road.

At Honingklip they farm with proteas, pomegranates and olives, but you're here for the 4x4 route through the farm's private nature reserve. Park your vehicle at the brewery shortly after entering the main gate. Across the parking lot is a kiosk where you can write out your own permit, sign an indemnity form and place cash in an envelope. This is where you also need to lower your tyre pressure – 1,8 bar should be enough – because you're heading for deep sand and sharp stones...

Pleasure or pain?

With the farm's packing sheds to your right, drive through pomegranate orchards and a few shallow streams. If your vehicle struggles here, immediately throw in the towel, because things are going to get far tougher up ahead. After about 2 km, the trail starts to slither like a lizard to your left and right. Dotted around the trail are mounds of earth, a tree stump, a mud hole and a slope to challenge your climbing ability. Next to each obstacle is an escape route in case your vehicle fails to make it through.

Shortly after this tortuous section, you come across a sand pit as big as two rugby fields. Here you may hop a few dunes and hone your sand-driving skills. Above this playground is an irrigation dam in which you may cool off. You can also braai here, but it's forbidden to drive on the dam wall.

If you haven't struggled thus far, it's time to head up the mountain. If, however, you found this section challenging, you may want to return to the brewery and soothe your ego with a cold beer.

Ain't no mountain high enough

Honingklip rates its 4x4 trail as a grade 2 to 3 on the difficulty scale. There are, however, some obstacles that qualify as an extreme >



grade 3 or even an easy 4. It is one axle twister after another, uphill and downhill, and at each fork in the road there are two arrows: one green and one red.

If your back and stomach muscles are protesting against all the jiggling, follow the green arrow which indicates an escape route, but even on these you'll need at least all-wheel drive – a Volkswagen Polo will certainly not make it. If you get stuck somewhere and there is no one to help you, call Richard Middelmann to recover your rig. It will cost you R150, though.

If you're brave and follow all the red arrows, it will take you 2-3 hours to traverse the 10 km to the top of the mountain. The green-arrow route takes about half an hour.

Now that you are on the crest (498 m) of the trail, you can finally relax and appreciate the beautiful scenery.

On one side of the mountain lies the Elgin Valley and on the other is the Caledon district. Way up north lies the blue-gray mountains of Worcester and in the south, you see the Atlantic Ocean. Feel free to leave your vehicle and walk through the fynbos – but you may not pick any flowers. And tread carefully, because there are rare plant species underfoot. You may even see a rhebuck skipping through the fynbos.

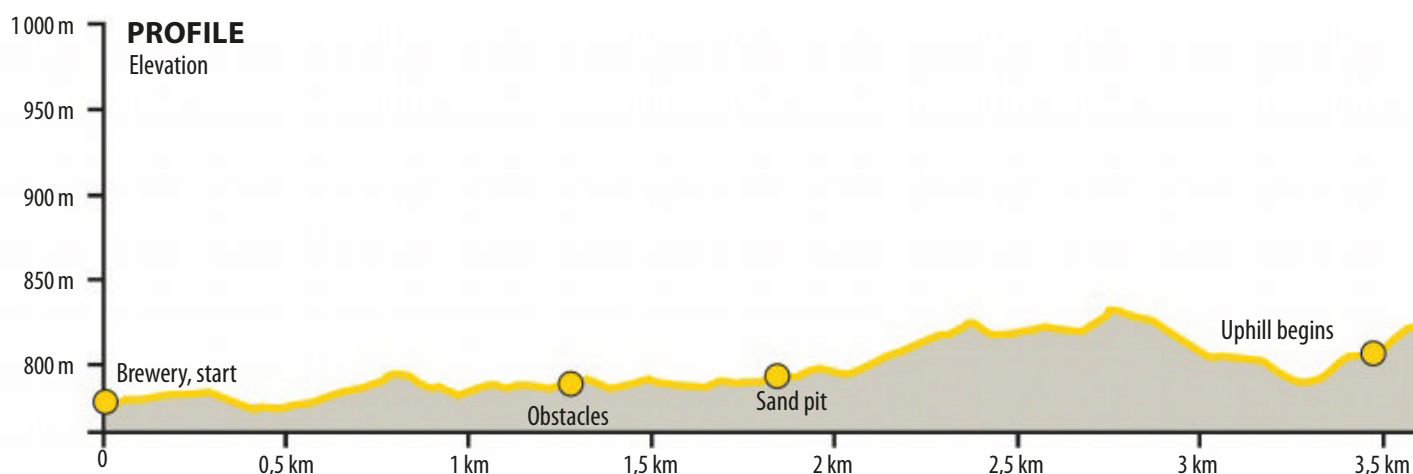
Back in your vehicle, you need to follow the route attentively and obey the "No Access" signs. Stray from the route and you'll end up in one of the two reserves on either side of Honingklip and may be fined for trespassing.

The road down is not challenging, and you can sit back and take in the scenery. About 2,5 km before the end of the route there is one last challenge: a steep descent where you have to engage low range and first gear (or hill descent control if your vehicle has it). But, as with all the other obstacles on Honingklip, you can drive around it if you're not up to it.

Now only one item remains: the brewery. Choose between eight types of beers, each one brewed according to the Belgian method. For R35, you get four brewskies of your choice. We tried the Special, Blonde, Saison and an IPA. The Special (9% alcohol) is challenging, just like the red-arrow routes. If you struggle with it, try the Saison (4%). It's a light escapist ale for someone who doesn't really like beer but needs to slay a frightening thirst. Cheers!



ALL PLAY AND NO WORK. Honingklip is a fun, safe place to hone your off-roading skills. Do however take care because you *can* damage your vehicle if you drive recklessly.



“
Dotted around the trail are
mounds of earth, a tree stump,
a mud hole and a slope to
challenge your climbing ability.



What you need to know



Maximum number of vehicles

Unlimited.

Do I get a map? Yes.

Will I scratch my vehicle? No.

Should I take a compressor? Yes.

Can we braai next to the road? Yes, at the dam.

Can I turn around halfway? No, unless you have absolutely no other choice.

Is there cellphone signal? Yes.

THE TRAIL

Best time to go? All year.

Can I take my family? Yes, definitely.

For the day or the weekend? It's a day trip.

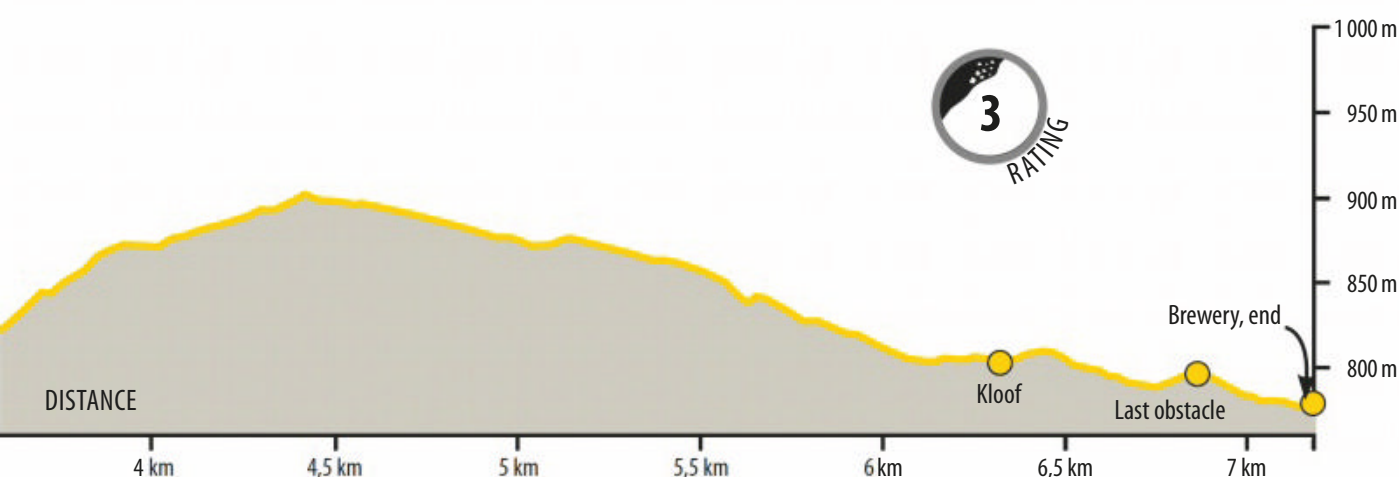
Are there ablution facilities? Not on the route, but at the brewery.

Directions From Cape Town, drive 80 km east with the N2. Shortly after the Houwhoek Pass, turn right onto the R43 regional road, Honingklip is on the right, 8 km later.

GPS S34.28479 E19.14887

Price? R150 per vehicle.

Contact 083 287 5112 (Richard) or 071 136 5307 (Phillippa) phill@honingklip.com honingklip.co.za



Weg!
Ry & Sleep



2019



Bull Run 2019



Four months to go for **Bull Run 2019**! Prepare yourself for screeching tyres, clouds of dust and heaps of excitement. All you need is a vehicle manufactured before 1980 (that costs less than R25 000), a team and lots of spirit. And get ready for some superlative fun!



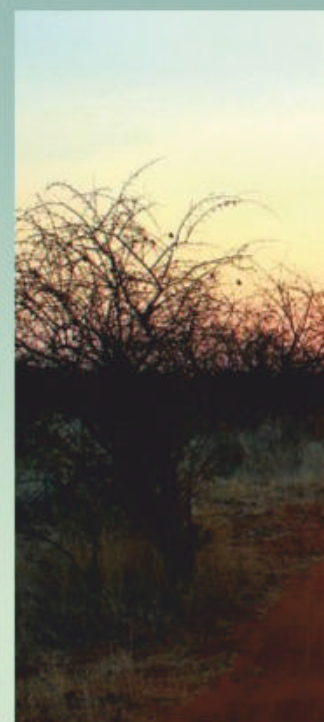
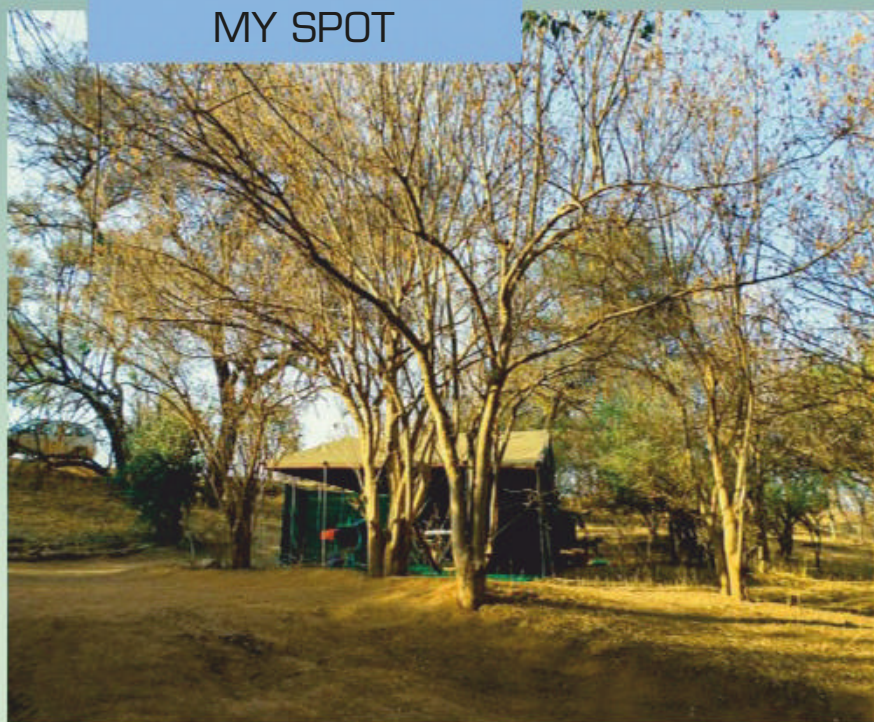
When? 26-29 September 2019

Where? Vanwyksvlei, Northern Cape

Register now – Spaces often fill in a jiffy.
To secure yours go to Quicket.co.za

Let's go!





Heaven near home

It's a campsite just over the border between South Africa and Botswana. **Jaco and Hanna-Let Rautenbach** from Tzaneen tell us why they consider the Limpopo River Lodge to be the perfect getaway.

“ We chose the Platjan border post as our point of entry, and within 20 minutes we had completed the paperwork, got our passports stamped and were back on our way – what a pleasure! From there, you head southwest to get to the Limpopo River Lodge, about 40 km from the border crossing.

What's it like?

The camp is clean and neat, as are the bathroom facilities. Although there is no electricity available, there are paraffin lamps that create plenty of atmosphere when the sun goes down and there are solar geysers or hot-water donkeys that ensure you

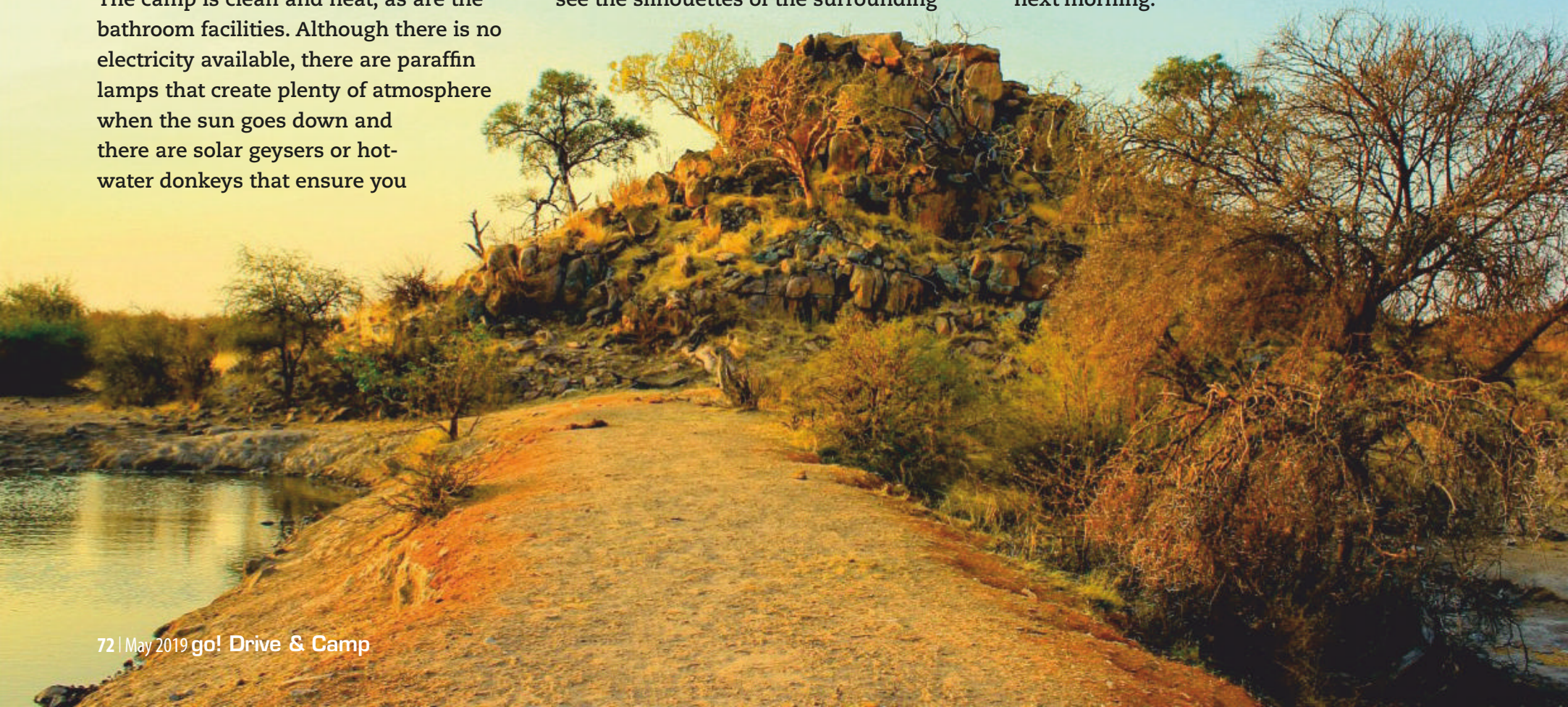
can enjoy a hot shower while watching the Limpopo River flow by and enjoy Botswana's beauty.

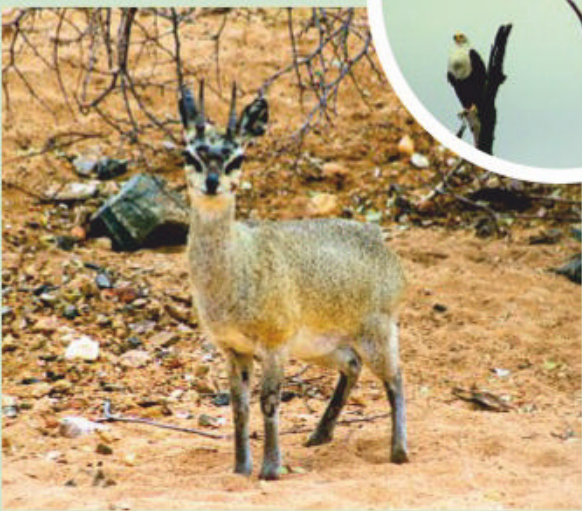
The caretaker, Isaac, stops by often to check that everything is going smoothly and always goes out of his way to make sure you're comfortable. He cleans your stand every day, and your braai as well. (He even washed our dishes.)

It gets so dark here that you don't even see the silhouettes of the surrounding

forest. Luckily, the night sky offers some respite as the stars shine brightly – which is awesome if you're a budding astronomer.

You're so secluded and so close to nature that one night we had a hyena coming up to our tent. Even a leopard, that most elusive of the big cats, casually tiptoed past our vehicle – we found its clear footprints in the sand the next morning.





Anything else?

We highly recommend this piece of splendid reserve in Botswana's Tuli Block for anyone who wants to find themselves in the fine red sand, wildlife and beautiful landscapes. You don't even need a 4x4 – just a vehicle with good ground clearance.

Just remember that this place is spartan, so make sure your second battery system is up to scratch, and that your devices are charged and you have your powerbanks at the ready.



CONTACT

+267 721 13688

<http://limpoporiverlodge.co.za>

lr@wildattuli.com

GPS S22.499383 E28.771035

WIN Jaco and Hanna-Let wins a **Camp Cover Bundu Bag** worth R500.

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

campcover.co.za



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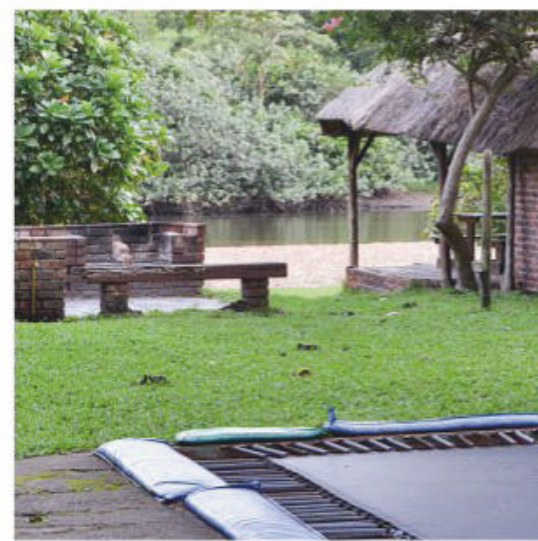
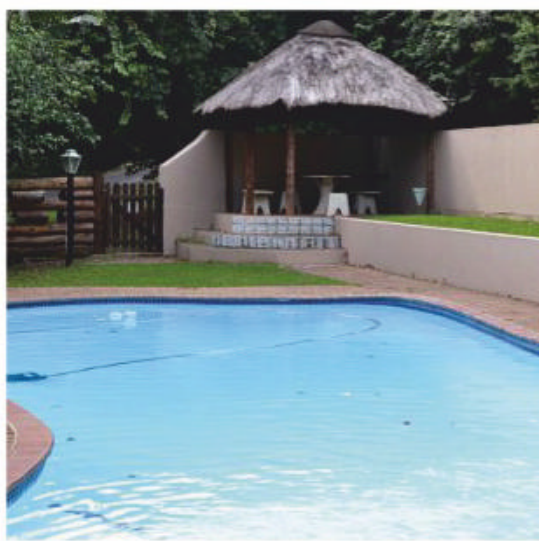
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Lagoonside bliss

You can't easily hook a salt-water fish inland, unless you're casting your line at a spot like Umtentweni.



FISHING RESORT

UMTENTWENI CARAVAN RESORT Nature's "safety net"

Drive north on the old South Coast road (the R102), and the Umtentweni resort lies 6 km north of Port Shepstone and to the left of the road (away from the Indian Ocean). The campsite is almost as big as two rugby fields and is adjacent to the Mtentweni lagoon.

As the crow flies, Umtentweni is about half a kilometre away from the sea – the same place where the Mtentweni River flows into the sea. The mouth is mostly closed up, but it also serves as a "net" for the fish you find in the lagoon before it gets to Umtentweni.

When there's been enough rain inland, the mouth opens. Many of the larger fish

in the river then choose to head out to sea and the smaller ones stay behind – these smaller fish are the ones you can try to catch. They're about 5-15 cm in size, says Tobie Mayer, owner of Umtentweni. The lagoon mouth opens three times a year, but that's mostly obstructed in the winter months. Tobie previously caught a 3 kg bream in this water, but there are also mullets and grunters to hook here.

The campsite is laid out against the lagoon as it flows seawards. To the left-hand side of the resort are a few stands on paving and gravel – here you share a power point with a neighbour. On the rest of the stands, you camp on buffalo grass, where large coral trees, wild fig and mahogany give shade. There's an electricity box with

blue caravan plugs for every four stands in a row.

To reach the ablution block from the furthest stand, you'll take 120 steps, with a separate ablution and scullery another 50 steps away. Gas geysers provide constant hot water.

If KwaZulu-Natal's humid heat gets too much for you, cool down in the pool near the gate.

You need to bring your own braai, but there are communal braai areas right next to the water. This built-in braai area – with a slate floor – has just been renovated and have four grids, each big enough for six people. There's a tiled workplace and a bench made from a railroad sleeper provides seating.



FISHING GEAR

Play-play side

Reels are available in many shapes and sizes, but the so-called coffee grinder is one of the most common: you see them everywhere.

Angling specialist Adrenalin Importers & Distributors has launched its Triple X 6500 spinning reel, and it is a multi-talented coffee grinder.

Gerhard Terblanche, co-owner of Adrenalin, says the secret of the reel lies in the wide variety of fish you can catch with it – you can hook anything from a galjoen to a cob.

The reel is aimed at sea anglers and the aluminium body is specially sealed to keep out the salt water. Salt water in a reel can mean its end, but both sides of the 6500 that fit together are sealed. The same goes for the drag knob in the centre of the reel, which is also sealed with a rubber.

The drag force is adjustable up to 40 pounds (18 kg), that's more than double the weight comfortable for an adult.

The reel also has an extra-large knob on the handle that ensures a firm grip when you start wrestling with the fish.



Gerhard suggests a braided fishing line for a coffee grinder instead of the regular line.

The reel's spool has enough space for a 0,25 mm line of up to 550 m.

Price R1 349 at fishing shops.

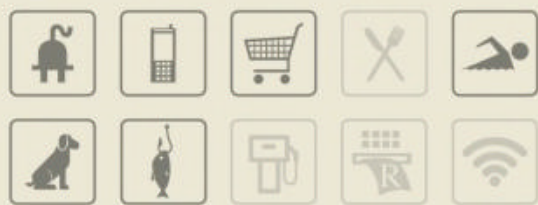
Contact 021 982 1510

catches@4adrenalin.co.za

adrenalinfishing.co.za



Briefly | Umtentweni Caravan Resort



Fish Bream, mullets, grunters.

Campsite 36 stands on grass or gravel, all with power and most with shade.

Ablution facilities Clean and convenient.

Price Depending on the season, R140-R300 p.p.n. (R70-R150 for children). Up to 8 people per site are allowed.

Arrival and departure times 12 pm and 10 am.

Contact 039 695 0531

info@umtentweni.co.za

umtentweni.co.za

What does the road look like? Tarred.

GPS S30.7052 E30.4795

go! Drive & Camp says Because you're fishing in the lagoon, you don't need a fishing permit.



FISH RECIPE

FISH AND CHIPS WITH TARTARE SAUCE Finger food

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- sunflower oil for deep-frying
- 8 potatoes, cut into thin fingers (rinse them and use with the peel)

FOR THE TARTARE SAUCE

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon canned capers
- 2 tablespoons pickled cucumber, finely chopped
- 1 hard-boiled egg, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons chopped onion

FOR THE FISH

- 1¾ cup of flour

- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- a pinch of salt
- 1 can (330 ml) beer
- 4 hake portions of 300 g each, with or without skin and bones

Here's how

1 Cook the chips. Heat the oil in a large pot until it immediately starts bubbling when you immerse a potato chip. Fry the chips in the oil for about 10 minutes until they get a lovely colour. If the oil smokes, it's too hot. Remove the cooked chips with a slotted spoon and drain them on kitchen paper. Keep aside.

2 Make the tartare sauce. Mix

the mayonnaise, capers, pickled cucumber, egg, parsley and onion, and season with salt and pepper.

3 Cook the fish. Mix 1½ cups of flour with the baking powder and a pinch of salt and stir in the beer with a fork. Don't stir out all the beer bubbles – this batter should rather have a few lumps.

4 Season the rest of the flour (¼ cup) with salt and pepper. Roll each fish fillet in the flavoured flour until it's covered and shake off the excess flour.

Dip each piece of fish into the batter and allow the excess batter to drain. Fry the fish for two to five minutes in a

saucepan until golden brown on both sides. Put the cooked fish on kitchen paper to allow the oil to drain.

5 Place the chips back in the oil and fry until golden brown and crisp.

go! Drive & Camp says Cob and hake work well for this recipe.



Botswana by road



A group of Goldfield friends started toying with the idea of exploring Botswana with their caravans. This got the group – Pieter and Annette van der Merwe, Jurie and Adriana Blom, Sarel and Ester Griesel (all from Riebeeckstad) and Callie and Santa de Jager from Hennenman – excited, but because most of them aren’t seasoned travellers to our neighbouring countries, they were reluctant to embark on this particular tour.

Jurie, however, had already undertaken such a journey and offered to set up an

“easier” tour of Botswana that they could handle with road caravans.

The friends decided to go ahead – and their excitement spilled over to Montagu in the Western Cape where Jurie’s sister Maretha de Wet and her husband, Francois, decided to join them.

Jurie and Adriana tow a Sprite Swing with a Nissan Navara; Pieter and Annette also camp with a Swing, which they tow with a Ranger; Sarel and Esther have a Gypsy Raven hitched to their Chevrolet Trailblazer; and Francois and Maretha tow a Sprite Tourer with their Toyota Hilux.

The two from Hennenman had the only off-road caravan in the group: behind their Hilux there’s a Conqueror Companion.

In June last year, the De Wets came to Riebeeckstad from where the group departed on their Botswana adventure. Jurie arranged it so that they would travel mainly on tar roads. The exceptions were here and there where they had to get to their campsite on a dirt road or twin track. However, it was never too much for the road caravans.

From the Northern Free State, the convoy headed to Limpopo where they spent one



Can you travel through Botswana with a regular road caravan? Yes, you can, says Pieter van der Merwe of Riebeeckstad.

night at ATKV Klein-Kariba before the tour started in all earnest. Pieter tells us more...

To the border

“We worked out our travel menus carefully and planned

every meal to the finest detail. This planning would come in handy, especially after those days we had to travel

far and didn't want to wait for a braai fire to make coals. We could quickly put a meal together for those nights.

We made sure everything is packed, saluted Klein-Kariba and hit the road to the Martin's Drift border post. We didn't enter Botswana that day, but camped at the Moriti Bush Camp, less than 10 km from the border. This is the place to stay if you want to be at the border early the next morning. We all agreed Moriti is a gem of a campsite and the perfect place from

which to embark on our bush experience in Botswana.

Between the giants

Our border crossing went smoothly and we arrived at the Woodlands Stop Over just outside Francistown. It is a beautiful campsite with lots of grass and trees, and lots of neat and modern ablution facilities. It's busy here, especially early in the morning, but shortly after sunrise, the camp was almost deserted as people left for their respective destinations.

Our next destination was Elephant Sands near Nata where we spent the night. It's a special experience – there's a huge waterhole in the camp where elephants quietly come to quench their thirst. There are no fences or barriers between you and the elephants, and you quickly realise how trivial you are in the presence of these imposing animals.

Elephant Sands' ablution facilities are basic and the campsite doesn't have electricity. So, if you depend on electricity, >

EVERY LAST DETAIL. The tour group set out from the Free State, and thanks to fastidious planning, were able to ensure that the vast majority of their trip through Botswana took place on smooth tarmac road. But they also warn that where the road is bad, it's very important to keep your speed down to dodge potholes.



you have to hit the road after one night. We were not equipped to be completely independent of electricity and headed for Senyati, about 20 km from Kasane. Here our true adventure began.

In the campsite, we shared two small private ablution blocks and a kitchen. The resort people keep the hot-water donkeys stoked and the facilities are basic but clean – perfect for a real bush experience.

If you're lucky, you'll hear a lion roar or a jackal howl at night. A late-afternoon visit to the waterhole (next to the camp) with a coffee (or something stronger) is an incredible experience. Crowds of elephants – in various herds and some on their own, from babies to the elderly – gather for the day's refreshment. They move about, trumpet, bump and thump – simply wonderful. At the vantage point (about 10 m from the waterhole) you go quiet and are overwhelmed, it's almost as if you are part of the herd. At times, there were 50 elephants gathered in one spot.

Time to explore

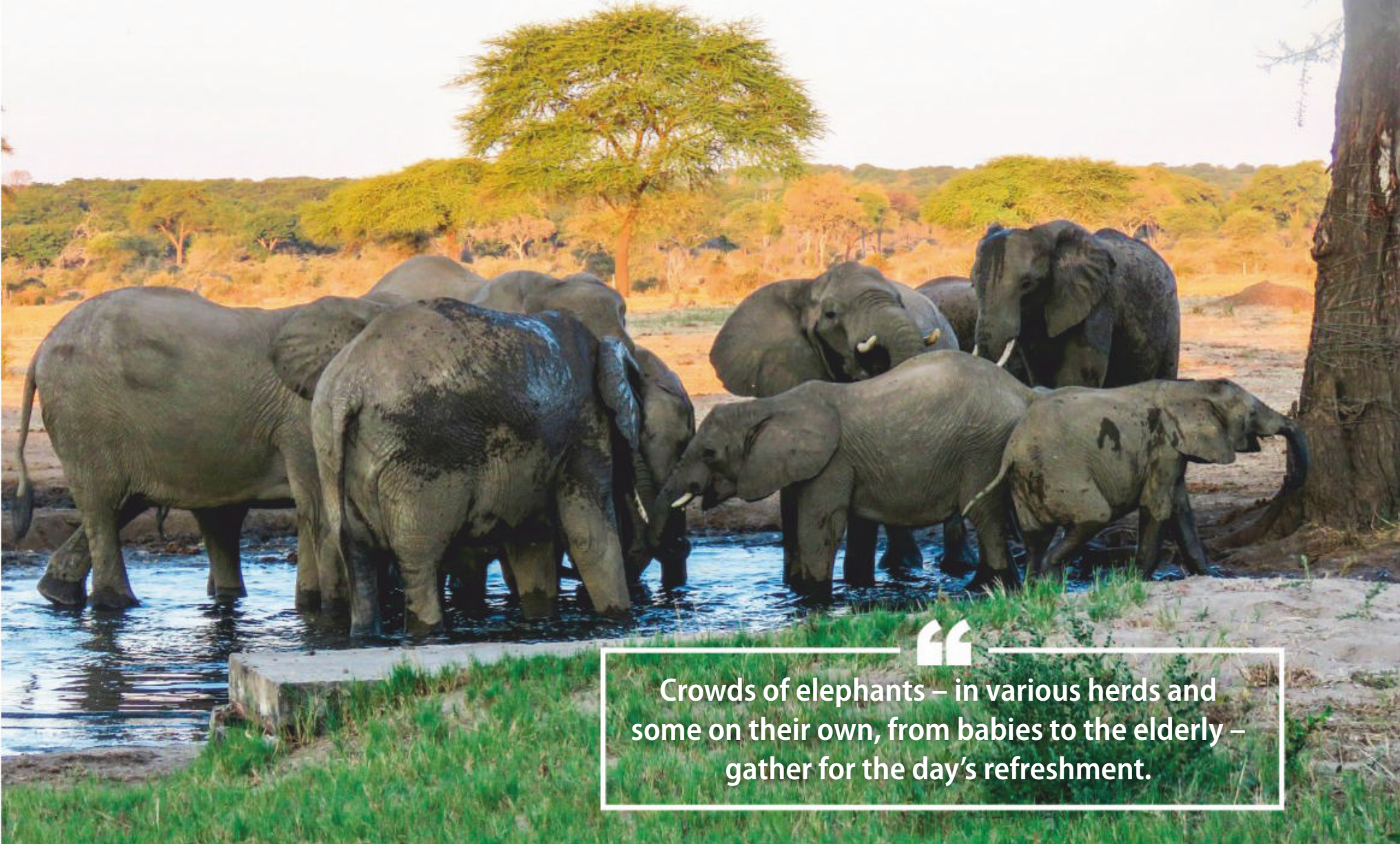
It's easy to go on excursions from Senyati. If you don't have a 4x4, you can make use of operators who transport you at a reasonable rate with their vehicle. We did it and the operators are well trained, very friendly and make sure tourists get value for their money.

The Chobe Nature Reserve, with its thick sandy roads, is just outside Kasane and is a true park experience. Because much of the route runs along the Chobe River, it is also a bird-watching paradise. Fish eagles and lilac-breasted rollers are almost as plentiful as impala are in the Kruger. An incredible experience.

We also did a boat trip on the Chobe and can highly recommend it. The river flows wide and looking at the animals from the water is something we had not experienced before. It teems with water birds, and the bird watchers among us couldn't get enough of this abundance. By late afternoon, everyone was amazed at the stunning sunset.

If you're ever in this area, a day trip to Zimbabwe up to the Victoria Falls is something you might want to include in your tour programme. Bring a raincoat (or rent a poncho at the waterfall). It's about 70km from the Botswana border, but remember, it's a very expensive to take a vehicle from Botswana into Zimbabwe (about R800). So, fit as many





“Crowds of elephants – in various herds and some on their own, from babies to the elderly – gather for the day’s refreshment.”



ALL SMILES. After a flawless experience, this group is planning their next trip to the West Coast already (above). The campsites they visited in Botswana were always well-kept, with simple but neat and clean ablution facilities, and friendly staff.

of you as possible into a van for this trip.

It’s hard to describe the Victoria Falls. Here you are truly impressed by the wonder of nature. To say it’s huge isn’t really good enough. With our visit, the main waterfall flowed almost 1,3 km wide. It is unbelievable.

By the waterfall is a cute restaurant but be warned: you pay in US dollars. So, don’t think that meal for two is a mere R42...

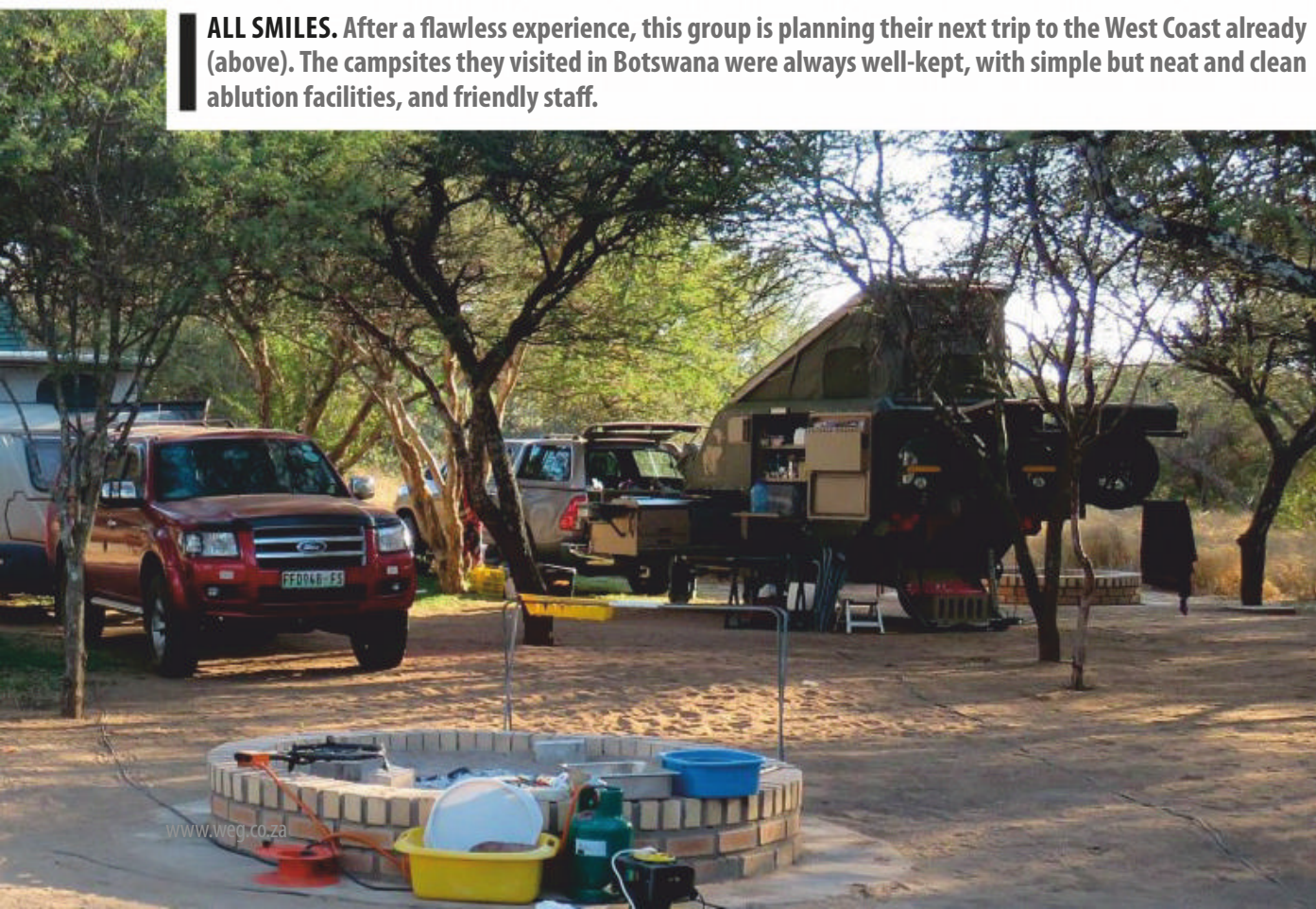
At the market you also need to be strong. A sign outside the market encourages you to be friendly, but to also negotiate prices. If you don’t like haggling and bargaining, it may be best to stay away.

Soul food in the delta

From Kasane we drive to the Okavango Delta. The easiest way is through the Zambezi region, also known as the Caprivi. We camp two nights in the Kwanda Camp next to the eponymous river – another extraordinary experience.

The ablution facilities are basically reed shelters without a roof, but with warm water and flush toilets. The main building is luxurious and boasts a beautiful wooden deck from where you can watch the river while sipping a drink. Someone in our group says this moment is food for the soul... and I couldn’t agree more.

Returning from the Caprivi to Botswana, you have to face a 30 km gravel road – it’s nice and wide but quite rough. We take it >





ROARING RUSH. If you're relatively close by, you simply have to plan to visit the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. But crossing the border from Botswana is an expensive affair at R800 per vehicle, so cram as many people into one as possible.



easy... and then it is great to be back on a tar road with our caravans.

The next gem on our way is Drotsky's Cabin. Here, next to the Okavango, is probably one of the most beautiful places you will ever find. It is also where we booked a boat trip on the Okavango. The greatness of the delta and the incredible scenery is overwhelming. If you're lucky, you'll see a fish eagle... next to the boat!

From another angle

The road between here and Maun becomes a matter of prayer. In places you are next to the road, then you roll around potholes – and sometimes the only way out is to slowly crawl through the holes. After three hours on the road, we had to be satisfied with barely 105 km behind us, but shortly afterwards everything was normal again.

At Maun's Island Safari lodge, we were once again delighted with ample and neat ablution facilities. If you have worked well with your budget, you can spoil yourself here with a plane ride across the Okavango – departing from the Maun International Airport. We did it and I can honestly say until you see the Okavango out of the air, you have no idea how big and wide this natural wonder is. After that, take a short cut to Palapye for an overnight stop in Camp Ithumela before heading home.

The verdict

Can you have a worthwhile Botswana tour and yet mainly drive on tar? Yes, you



can. But you can also almost destroy your off-road trailer. It all depends on how you respect this country's road conditions. The roads range from lovely tarmac with yellow lines to road works and really bad roads with lots of potholes. The secret to surviving is to control your speed. Drive slowly, carefully, and courteous when the road conditions require it, and you will have no problem.



The road caravans in our group came back unharmed after 4 200 km and we are already planning our next trip to the West Coast.

If you want to explore Botswana with your caravan, you can easily follow in our tracks in 19 days. It was the experience of a lifetime.

Would I do it again with my road caravan? Absolutely!



Pieter 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



Zambia Malawi Adventure

Join Bhejane 4x4 Adventures to experience an unforgettable awe-inspiring holiday exploring the warm heart of Africa.

ADVENTURE ITINERARY

DAY 1

We meet at Camp Nkwazi, just outside Livingstone. By the time you arrive, your tents would have been pitched and our bush chef will be preparing the first of the culinary delights you will be enjoying on this safari. The evening will be spent socialising around the fire.

DAY 2

Making an early start after a hearty breakfast, and after you have all been issued with two-way hand-held radios, we take to the road and leave for Lusaka. We will overnight there on our way up to South Luangwa National Park.

DAY 3

We continue our journey northwards, overnighing at a campsite just outside of Chipata.

DAYS 4,5 & 6

This is one of the greatest wildlife sanctuaries in the world. The camp is set along the banks of the Luangwa River. From here we will explore the national park at our own leisure in our own vehicles. Please note that we will not be game viewing in a convoy. It would be advisable to have a GPS with Tracks 4 Africa.

DAY 7

Today we cross over into Malawi and sleep in Lilongwe. A trip to the old-city market is well worth it, with gleaming fruit, stunning wooden carvings and African cloth. We will also use this as a chance to resupply before heading on to the lake.

DAYS 8, 9 & 10

We leave early from our camp for Lake Malawi! Half a day of driving through spectacular scenery takes us to our camp on the shores of this majestic Lake. We have three nights and two days here. Included in the trip is a sunset boat cruise

DAYS 11 & 12

We start our southward journey, making our way to Kafue National Park.

DAYS 13 & 14

This must be one of the most under-rated parks in Africa. Kafue is Zambia's oldest and largest National Park. It is still relatively undeveloped and always gives a feeling of true wilderness. We spend two nights at Kasabushi camp on the banks of the Kafue River. A two-hour boat trip on the Kafue River is included.

DAY 15

Today we travel through the park to Nanzhila Plains; it teems with game. The birding in this area is also exceptional. The campsite is situated at a waterhole, so you can sit and relax, or you can take a drive around the area.

DAY 16

We make our way out of the park and drive on to Livingstone, where we will have our last evening dinner together around the fire.

DAY 17

After a hearty breakfast, we say our goodbyes.

16 NIGHTS / 17 DAYS ADVENTURE (TENTED ACCOMMODATION)

DATES: 1 to 17 June, 3 to 19 August and 7 to 23 September 2019

COST: R22 850 p.p. sharing (ex VAT)

ON THIS SPECIFIC TOUR

This adventure is a partnership between Bhejane and one of our specialist guides, Paul Wigley. We will travel from Livingstone, Zambia and go via Luangwa National Park to Lake Malawi. On the return journey to Livingstone, you will visit Kafue National Park.

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- All camp fees
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D-Max- towing is a breeze

The Isuzu D-Max 300 LX bakkie smiles broadly when it has a caravan in tow... even if it's equipped with everything that can open and shut.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**

According to Japanese automaker Isuzu, it has built around 25 million engines since its inception in 1916 – this amounts to an astonishing 650+ a day, every day for the past 103 years.

Two of these engines today operate in the D-Max double cab 4x4: the 2,5 l and a 3 l. The 2,5 l engine delivers 15% less torque than its big brother

(320 Nm versus 380 Nm) and the 2,5 can tow a weight of just 2 t compared to the larger engine's 2,9 t. The tow bar is also standard only on the big engine, plus you get the added peace of mind with the trailer sway control system on the 3 l model.

One final difference worth mentioning is that the 2,5 l model is only

available with a manual gearbox.

Give me more numbers

Our test vehicle is the flagship model of the D-Max series, but the version *go! Drive & Camp* gets to drive has many extras as it's a long-term test vehicle. Isuzu has equipped

it with the following: an ARB bullbar, a T-Max 12 500 winch, IPF Sport XS spotlights, Desert Armour chassis protection, Old Man Emo suspension, snorkel, Desert Armour rock sliders and a Front Runner

You wouldn't easily find a sturdier tow bar than the one that's part of the Desert Armour bumper.



ISUZU D-MAX 300 LX (4x4, AUTOMATIC)

roof rack with a T-Max 48" jack. On the loading bay is an RSI canopy with an RSI Smartrack system, sand boards, LED roof lights, a Front Runner loading system, ARB compressor, Desert Products dual battery system, an Engel fridge-freezer on a Desert Armour sliding frame, a picnic table, fire extinguisher, burglar bars and kitchen with cutlery and gas stove. At the back is a Desert Armour steel bumper and underneath a 60 ℓ fuel tank that complements the standard 80 tank (and almost doubles our range). As far as tyres are concerned, the D-Max now boasts General Grabber AT 255/60 R18s.

All this extra equipment

adds 650 kg to the tare weight of 2 100 kg. Because the gross vehicle mass (GVM) is a tonne heavier than the tare weight, one has to load 650 kg less in the bakkie. So, you're looking at 450 kg left over for gear and occupants. That means you can't load anything extra once your family of five has been seated. It also affects your towing, because the nose weight of the coupler also means extra weight.

The weights affect the gross combination mass (GCM, 6 000 kg) to a lesser degree. Isuzu allows a tow of up to 2,9 t, but in South Africa you cannot exceed the standard tare weight



and peeks down at an angle to the ball.

The image of the lens is displayed as per usual on the navigation screen, and on here the ball is about a finger width to the right of the centre of the screen. It doesn't bother you too much – and you can't complain about the extra-large screen (19,5 cm wide).

So, when you reverse with the D-Max, you can see what's going on behind the bakkie. (Incidentally, the test vehicle does not have reverse sensors, which means there's no alarm when the computer thinks you might hit something.)

The index lines on the screen are static, but to hook you can turn on the Hitch Guide on the screen by touching it. A dotted line then appears that runs between the index lines and >

with the GVM of the caravan. The caravan's GVM may therefore not be higher than 2 100 kg.

Hook of steel

You won't easily find a sturdier tow bar than the one that's part of the Desert Armour bumper. The ball section (with its neck) is removable and fits into a square tube. A cross pin holds the neck in place and works easily – you don't need tools to get it out.

The rear camera's lens is just to the left of the load bay's door handle. So, it's not in the middle

D-MAX

which you can use as a guide. This dotted line is also static and does not change angle when turning the steering wheel.

The D-Max's headlights don't have automatic height adjustment, but you can set the height with a button that sits to the right of your knee. Depending on how much weight you load in the back – including the caravan's nose weight – you can choose three more settings besides the standard position. At 4 m in front of the bakkie, the light beam drops by up to 14 cm when using the lowest setting.

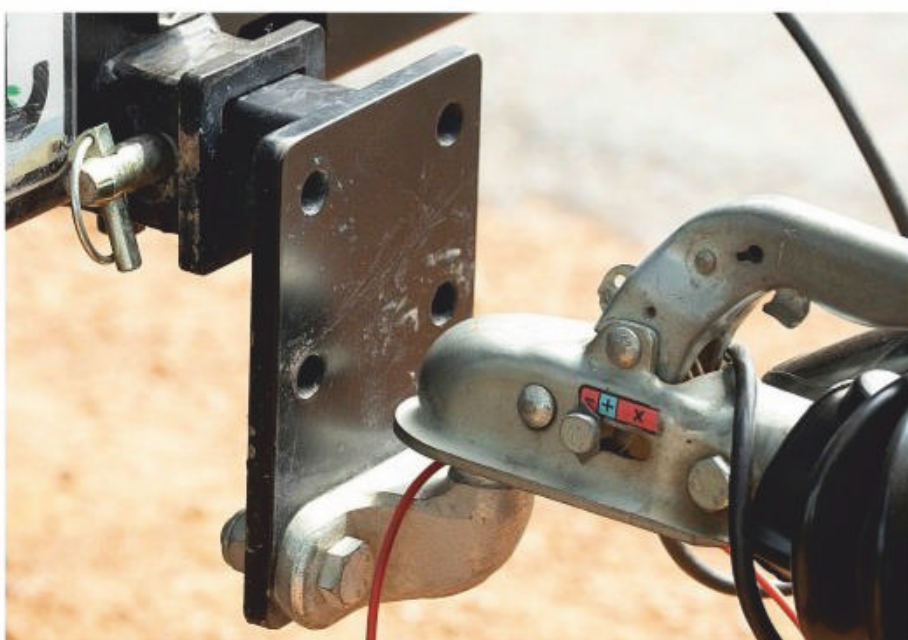
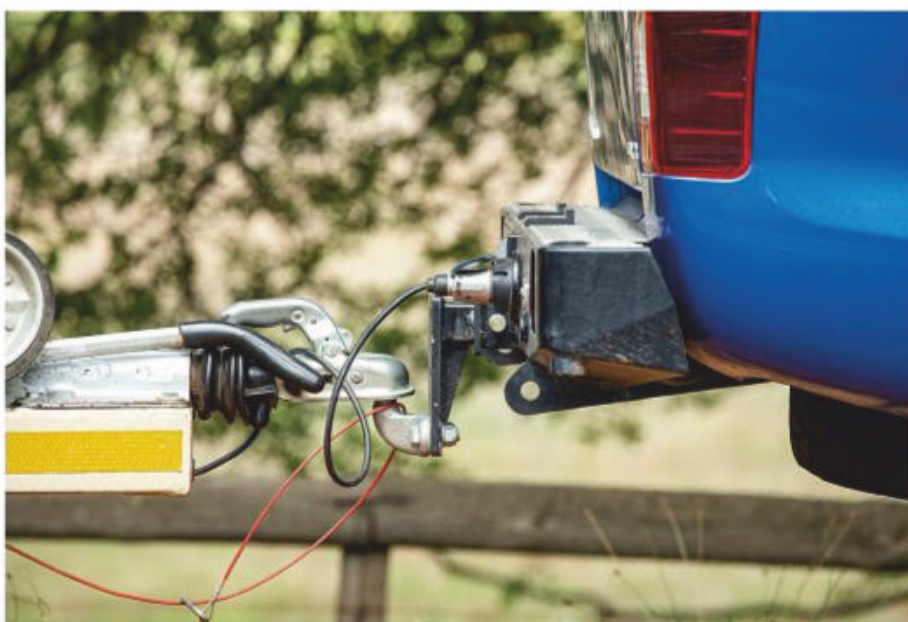
NO PROBLEM. The ball assembly of the hitch is removable. You simply draw a pin and the whole thing pulls out of the rear bumper. The drop-plate has three sets of holes so you can adjust the height to suit almost any trailer or caravan.

Hold no sway over me

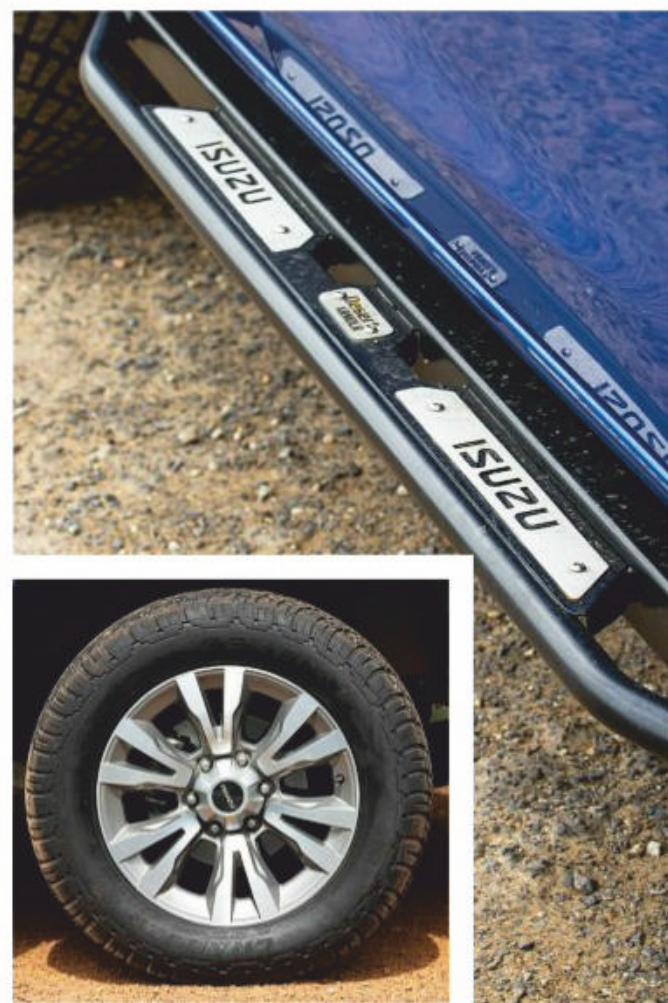
The D-Max's trailer sway control is automatically activated when you switch on the bakkie and works when you tow faster than 50km/h, but this feature is disabled when you turn off the electronic stabiliser control (ESC). In essence, this does not prevent caravan sway, but helps keep things in control as soon as the trailer begins to dance behind the bakkie.

When the D-Max detects sway, the engine will reduce power and also automatically brake to counteract the action. You, in the meantime, gradually lift your foot off the pedal and drive straight ahead. Don't touch the brakes and don't turn the steering wheel to try and counter the swaying.

As soon as the system detects sway, the ESC button flashes. The sway control is deactivated when you engage low range 4WD. >



ROUND. The digital display between the two large analogue gauges is about the same size as a golf ball, but it shows you everything that matters including ambient temperature and which gear you're in.



Pieter Crous is a tow master of note and here's what he thinks of the D-Max...

Pieter says

“For the D-Max's top model, the dashboard

of this bakkie is pretty basic. There is great storage space: you have a double cubbie and even storage space behind the GPS screen.

You sit comfortably high and you can see clearly around you. Sometimes a bakkie's B pillar right next to your right shoulder aggravates the blind spot, but not in the D-Max.

Its power didn't impress me. It's a 3 l engine and you'd expect around 450 Nm, but the engine feels a bit weak. It's true that the bakkie is much heavier thanks to all the extra fittings – and the caravan is also on

the heavy side, but there is too little power.

For example, if you step on the accelerator at 100 km/h on a level road, there is no immediate reaction from the engine's side.

If one accelerates right away from a standstill, the revs go up to just about 4 000 rpm (where the meter is marked in red) before the gearbox changes gears, but the D-Max is not a racing horse. The gearbox itself feels like older technology, but the switch is fast enough and you hardly notice it.

The engine is also noisy, but

when you're not towing, it's a bit quieter, probably because it doesn't have to work as hard.

I like the dotted line that shows on the camera screen when reversing. The line runs along to the bottom at the bumper where it circles the ball. With the dotted line, it's easy to see your line for reversing.

Parked, the steering wheel turns with difficulty, but when you drive it is comfortable. But the ride itself is extremely comfortable and it almost feels as if you're driving a sedan.”

Before reaching for your wallet

What does the book say?

Fuel Diesel

Engine 2 999 ℓ

Cylinders 4 in line

Power 130 kW @ 3 600 rpm

Torque 380 Nm @ 1 800-2 800 rpm

Transmission 6-speed automatic

Drive train Rear or four with high and low range plus rear axle diff lock.

Tare weight 2 100 kg

GVM 3 100 kg

GCM 6 000 kg

Carrying capacity 1 000 kg

Standard wading depth 600 mm

Towing capacity for braked towing Isuzu allows 2,9 t, but on our roads the limit is 2,1 t.

Standard dimensions

5 294 mm (l); 1 860 mm (w); 1 790 mm (h)

Wheel base 3 095 mm

Track width 1 570 mm (front and rear)

Standard ground clearance 220 mm

Fuel tank 80 ℓ + 60 ℓ

Price (new) R615 500

Price (second hand) We saw a 2018 model with 4 000 km on the clock at [autotrader.co.za](https://www.autotrader.co.za) for R529 900.

Fast facts

The hitch Standard and, as on the test vehicle, part of the Desert Armour steel bumper. It's removable so you can remove it by hand.

Suspension Coil springs with shock absorbers in the centre in front, and leaf springs at the back. With the heavy duty suspension, the tail dropped only 25 mm with the Bush Lapa's off-road caravans' nose weight.

Weight? 2 840 kg with an almost full tank of fuel and the driver in the car. It is 740 kg heavier than the tare weight (2

100 kg). If you add 100 kg to the caravan's nose weight on the hitch, you can only load 260 kg. It gives you space for more or less three more people in the car. The combination mass was 4 240 kg.

Interior On the back seat, an adult has two fingers in front of the knees and above the head.

Speed The speedometer shows 5 km/h faster than the GPS's 95 km/h.

Fuel consumption According to the computer 15.6 ℓ/100 km (6.4 km/ℓ) and our calculations

What we towed

Make Bush Lapa

Model Baobab

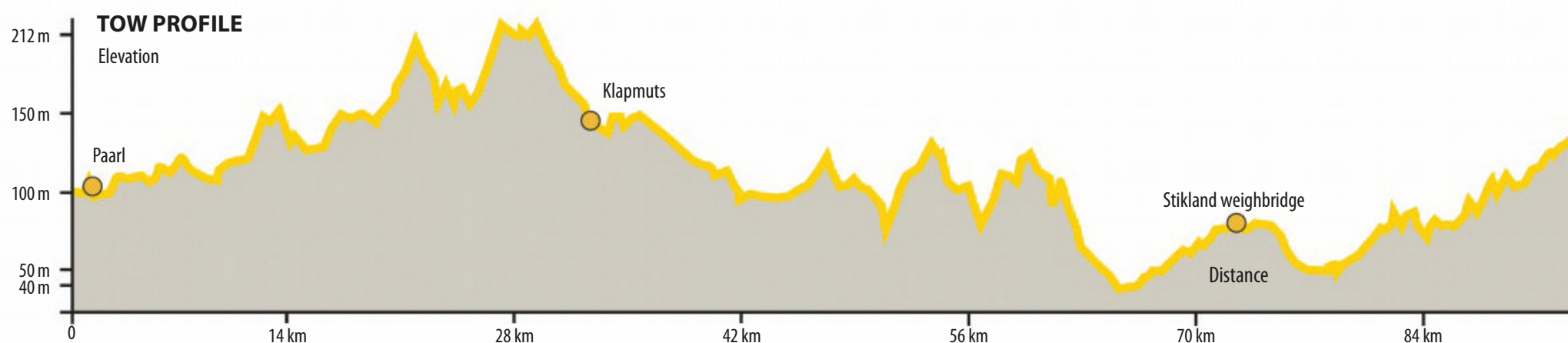
Year model 2017

Tare weight 1 090 kg

Loaded weight on the axle at time of testing 1 400 kg

GVM 1 800 kg

go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Bush Lapa Baobab from Bush Lapa Rentals in Paarl. Contact Adél Brink at adel@bushlapa.com if you want to check out the Baobab. bushlapa.com



almost agree: 15,3 ℓ/100 km (6,5 km/ℓ).

The computer does not know about the extra long-range fuel tank and does its calculations with the remaining fuel as if the bakkie has only the standard tank.

When you fill both tanks, at some point the computer calculates there is no fuel left in the tank (though the fuel needle shows the tank is full). But as you drive further, and the level drops in the standard tank, the reading resets. With both tanks, you can tow just more than 900 km.

 **Finishes** Predominantly black (including the leather upholstery) with matte silver strips here and there.

 **Extras** The bakkie was fitted to the brim.

Other D-Max double cab 4x4 models?

250 Hi-Rider R442 100

250 X-Rider R479 600

300 LX R600 700

(all three models are manual)

go! Drive & Camp

says Inflate the tires to the maximum pressure when towing.



The test

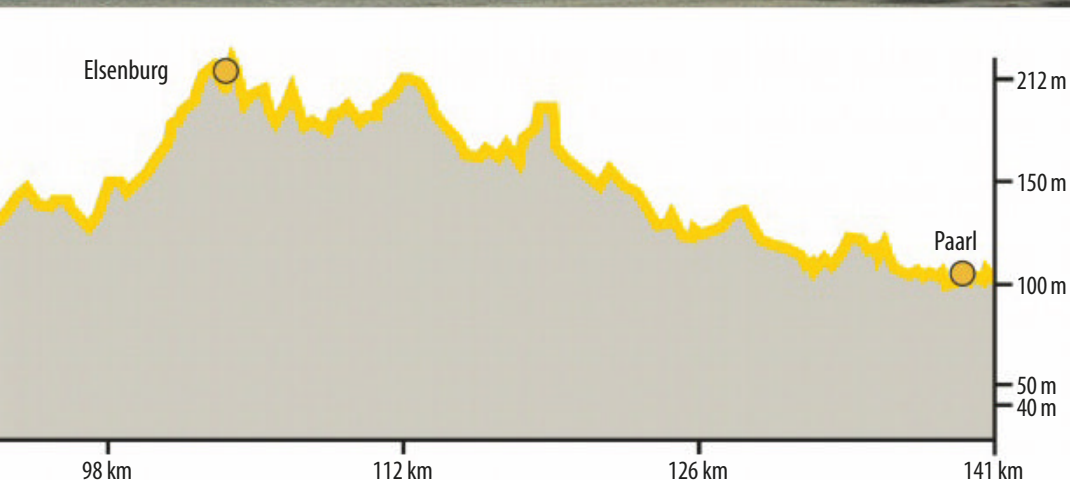
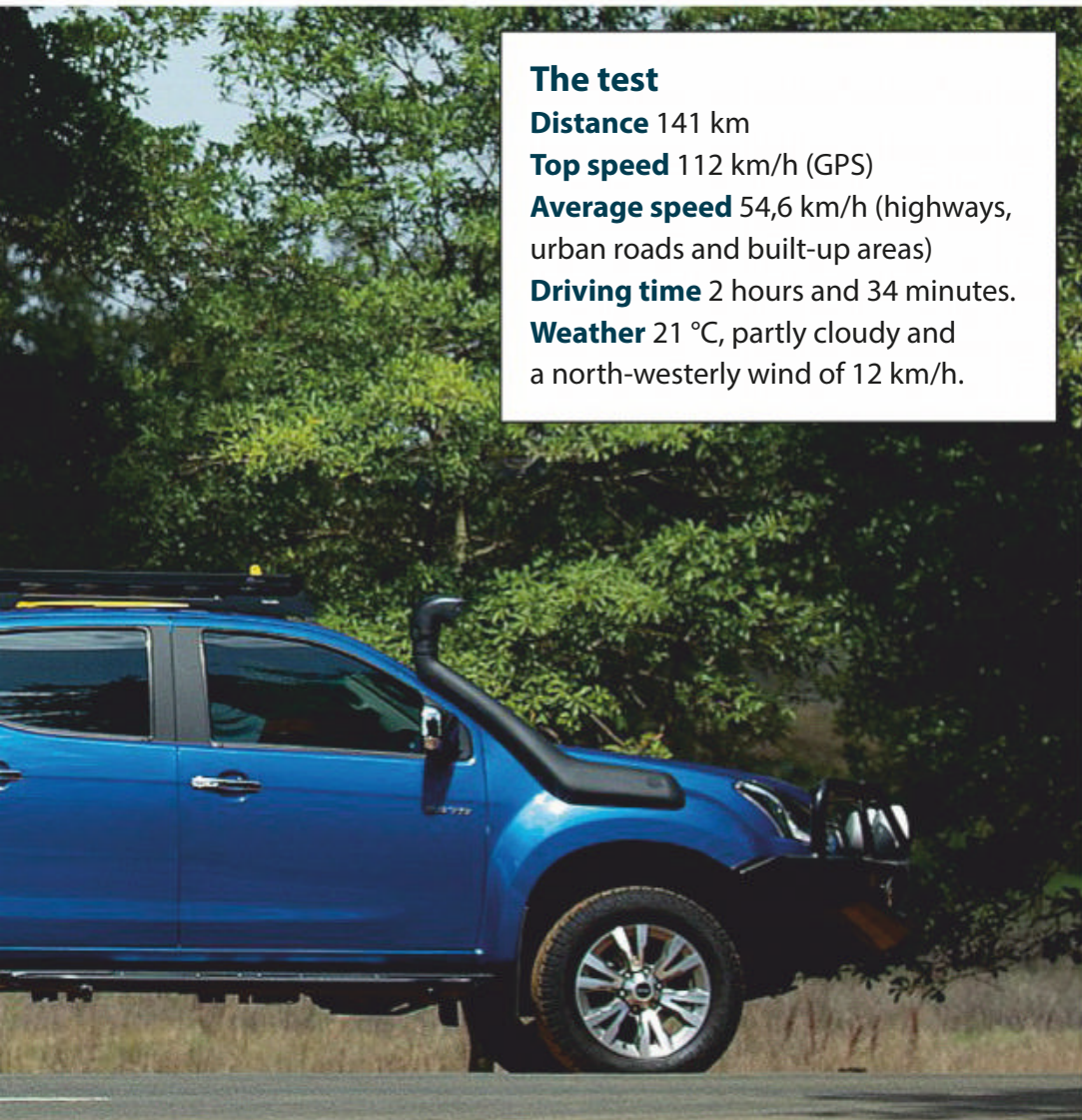
Distance 141 km

Top speed 112 km/h (GPS)

Average speed 54,6 km/h (highways, urban roads and built-up areas)

Driving time 2 hours and 34 minutes.

Weather 21 °C, partly cloudy and a north-westerly wind of 12 km/h.



From the competition (double cab, 4x4, diesel and auto)



R637 500

Toyota Hilux 2.8 GD-6 Raider

450 Nm

+3,5%

+19%



R625 500

Ford Ranger 3.2 TDCi XLT

470 Nm

+1,5%

+24%



R569 700

Mazda BT-50 3.2 DE SLE

470 Nm

-8%

+24%

The Andes buffs up

With Summit's new Andes on the hitch it feels as if you could aim for the tallest mountains.

Text and photos **Helenus Kruger**

Summit's caravans are not an uncommon sight in South African campsites. This series has been built for the past 10 years by Frantel Distribution, a manufacturer that often comes up with new and unconventional ideas.

Consider, for example, the Andes off-road caravan that made its appearance in 2013: with its low profile and a tent that's lower on the bodywork, this caravan set itself apart from its competitors. It was also a little longer and heavier than others but had much more storage space. You could say it was an off-road caravan that regularly went to gym.

Now the Andes have outgrown

their infancy and gained a lot more body – and also quite a few muscles. The genes are still unmistakable, but the design is brand new. The Andes now looks more like a cross between an off-road trailer and an off-road caravan. With its pitched roof design, army-green finishing and the name of the caravan in bright orange and red, it immediately catches your eye. And of course, the pitched roof makes you think of a mountain peak.

Franscois Mulock Houwer, one of the directors of Frantel who manufactures the Andes, says the new Andes design makes things much easier if you just want to stay overnight, because the tent opens easily and quickly. But thanks to the large kitchen, plenty of storage space and spacious sleeping area, the caravan is also comfortable enough for a long holiday in one place.

With a 4 mm stainless steel base (3CR12) and aluminium frame and bodywork, you can also leave the tar road behind with peace of mind.



SUMMIT ANDES



Up in a jiffy

The Andes' tent is quick and easy to pitch. As soon as the corner steadies stand firm, you swing the frame (to which the spare wheel is attached) to the right. Before you lift the lid (also the roof of the tent), you first have to remove the awning from its bag, otherwise you won't be able reach it if the roof is raised.

Release the clips above the jerry cans and lift the roof. You don't have to be a bodybuilder to get the lid up; you just lift it up slightly and the gas struts take over. There is a sling in the middle of the back of the caravan with which you pull the lid down to

close it again.

Pitch the awning by swinging it over the nose cone and attaching it to the front right corner of the caravan. Three poles keep it up. At its widest, the canopy is 1,9 m wide.

When staying for longer than a single night, you can set up the dressing room (1,5 x 1,6 m) that attaches with Velcro to the caravan's tent. A PVC ground sheet zips underneath to form a sealed floor. The tent has openings on all three side with mosquito nets and flaps that can open and roll up completely; so, you can choose on which side your door should be

>



Inside

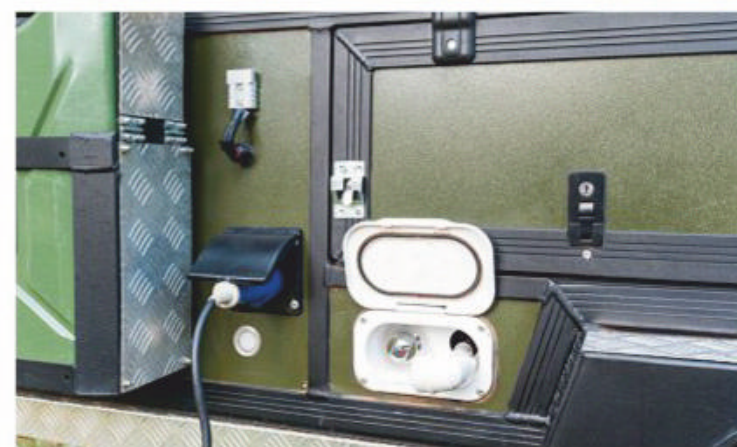
The floor of the caravan is 70 cm above the ground and before you can get in, you must first attach the adjustable concertina stairs to the rear bumper. Inside you have a narrow piece of 32 cm floor to step onto before getting to the bed, which is 60 cm above the floor. The queen-size mattress fills the rest of the tent.

Even though the floor space is very small, it is easier to stand and dress here than to lie on the bed and wrestle into your clothes. With the roof 1,9 m high, the tent is quite spacious. An LED strip is right above your head as you get in and two small night lights just above the floor give you light where you step.

The sides of the tent are divided into two triangles: below is the caravan's body covered

with canvas on the inside, and above it is the tent canvas. The roof is covered with carpet on the inside. The canvas sides have two windows with mosquito nets and flaps on each side.

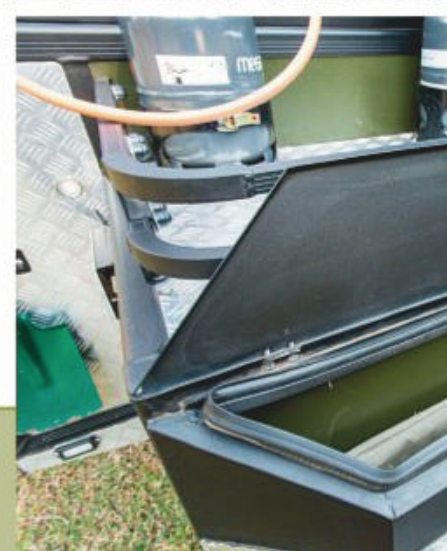
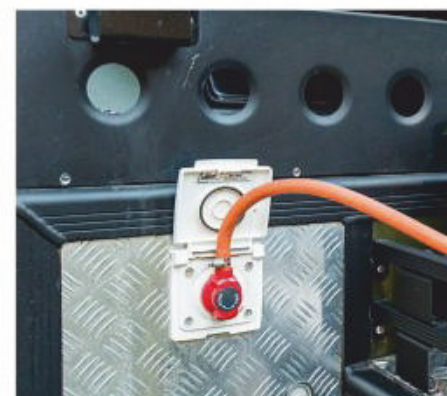
At the bed's head are two reading lights with adjustable arms. The pop-up window (80 x 42 cm) above your head has built-in mesh and a screen to keep out bugs and sun. At the foot of the bed are two pull-out drawers (104 x 46 x 11 cm) and above it a cupboard (140 x 26 x 26 cm) with a zippered door. Two deep-cycle batteries are located in boxes to the left and right of the floor. Above the left-hand battery is the power box with room for two- and three-point plugs (220 V). Next to that is the switch for the geyser (electric and gas). The solar box is on the right above that battery, with a voltmeter and dual USB sockets.



On the nose

The two gas bottles are mounted on top of the nose cone (95 x 72 cm), with a chequered aluminium plate on top that protects the body. The inlet for the two 80 l water tanks is also on top of the nose.

To the left of the front of the caravan is the connector where you connect the gas pipe – when you pack up, you can detach the pipe. To the left of the connector is a mounted spade and the axe is attached to the side of the nose cone. At the front of the nose cone is a narrow box in which you can store a grid and braai tongs. Behind the nose cone, on top of the kitchen's cutlery box, is more storage space. All the front panels are protected by chequered aluminium plate. On the A-frame is also a Brad Harrison plug to charge the battery while you're driving.





Getting clean and packing

A jerrycan holder, one of two on the caravan, is mounted at the rear of the sides. To the right of the can on the right side is the power socket, a round night light and another Brad Harrison plug.

Above the axle is a flat box with a removable drawer that holds three ammo boxes for packing pots, pans and tools. The door is held in place by a clip that locks it in.

The shower head and tap are under this box. The 19 l geyser sits in front of the axle, behind a fixed panel. You therefore need to unload the drawers in the caravan to gain access to the geyser. At the front, between the geyser and nose cone, is a box with one shelf that's 34 cm deep. The water pump is in the lower part and on top of the rack there is more storage space.

>



Kitchen tales

The left side of the Andes is probably any camp chef's dream: this is a large kitchen with pull-out units and drawers. There is no shortage of storage space for your food and you will be able to survive in the bush for weeks if you fill the drawers with food.

The cooking station (118 x 60 cm) is mounted above the axle and has a working surface (66 x 60 cm) on the left and a two-burner gas stove with a glass lid is mounted in the top on the right. The cutlery tray pulls out at the front, below the work surface.

Three 220 V power sockets are to the right of the unit, and when you need 12 V, there's a Brad Harrison socket above it. You don't have to scratch around in the cutlery tray looking for the bottle opener; you just use the one that's attached above the stove.

The aluminium table slides into a frame above the box. In the pull-out drawer (97 x 20 cm) next to the work surface, you can pack the food items you regularly use. The drawer is divided into two – the front section will work well for spices and your coffee and tea containers. The rear box has ten canvas bags in which your wine and sauce bottles can stand upright so they don't tip over while towing. This drawer is carpeted, like all the other storage spaces in the caravan.

To the left of the drawer is another pull-out unit for cutlery and

dishes. The caravan is equipped for six people. The glasses drawer pulls out at the head of the unit and there are wine, whiskey and water glasses that fit into a cut-out sponge. The plates, bowls and mugs are equally secure in cut-out sponge in a drawer on the side of the box.

To the right of this drawer is a rectangular cupboard that is deep enough to hold a frying pan and saucepan, and to the right, a cupboard where the dishwashing sink, drying rack and detergents fit. The sink and drying rack fit into a frame that extends above the glasses drawer. Remember to push the glasses drawer back in before you start washing dishes, otherwise you will drip water onto the glasses. The sink for the basin's water pipe is on the mudguard, left below the work surface.

Above the unit is a pull-out drawer (118 x 44 x 19 cm) divided into three, and large and deep enough for pots, pans and food. Sturdy clips hold all units and drawers in place when open.

The fridge's storage space is on a pull-out drawer in the nose cone.

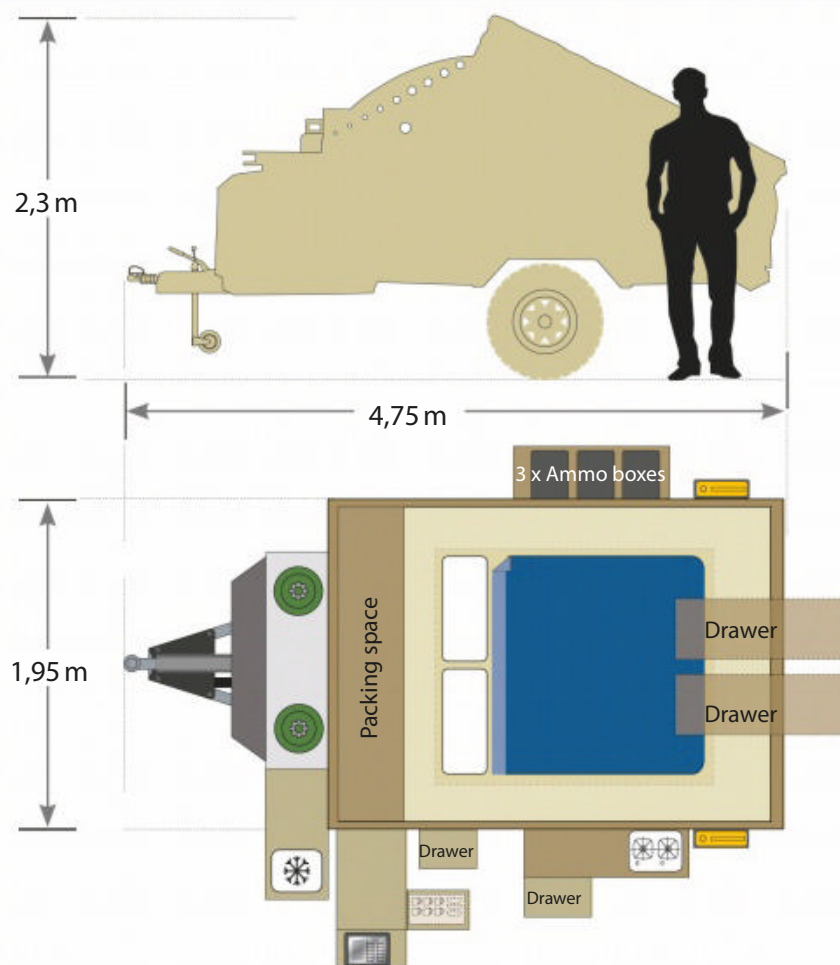
Above the kitchen, at the highest point of the caravan, is a large outdoor LED that can rotate to shine in different places. The light casts a bright ray, and although it illuminates the kitchen properly, the beam may be too bright for some people. The light switch is located inside the tent on the left, just above the power box.



At the back

The poles are stored under the caravan, with the opening in the centre of the rear bumper, behind a swing door on which the number plate is mounted. Be careful, because you can easily think the swing door is a step for getting into the caravan, but it certainly won't carry any weight.

The spare wheel is on a swing arm that you must push away to gain access to the tent and the solar panel is mounted on top of the roof.



The technical stuff

Length	4,75 m
Width	1,95 m
Height	2,3 m
Tare weight	1 100 kg
Payload	700 kg
GVM	1 800 kg
Price	R270 000 (as tested)

- It is difficult to loosen the kitchen table clips.
- The plate drawer cannot be pulled out if the food tray next to the cooking station is also out.

go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Summit Andes from the manufacturer.



Plus

- The caravan feels solid and the finishing is top-class.
- The tent pitches and comes down in a snap.
- The kitchen has a practical layout and there's more than enough storage space.
- The tent with its high roof is spacious.
- The drawers are sturdy and easily used.



Minus

- You must stand outside the tent to get to the clothing drawers if you haven't set up the dressing room.
- It's difficult to reach the storage space above the kitchen unit – you have to stretch over the nose cone.

go! Drive & Camp says The Andes suits short stays but is comfortable enough for two weeks standing in one spot.

Dealer network

Frantel Distributors and Summit's factory is in Pretoria.

Contact 012 803 6535

082 484 9848

info@frantelholdings.com

summittrailers.co.za



A spicy affair

This month's menu is full of warm spices to give a welcome touch of heat to your camping meals.

Recipes and styling **Aletta Lintvelt** Photos **Myburgh du Plessis**



Beef short rib curry

🔥 BEEF SHORT RIB CURRY Slowly, but surely

This curry is mild but rich – a masterful potjie you'll want to make often.

Ingredients

(enough for 4-6)

- 1 kg beef short ribs, cut into portions
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons mild curry powder
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 l beef stock
- 10 dried prunes
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 4 potatoes, cubed
- 4 tablespoons chutney
- salt and black pepper, to taste

Here's how

1 Sear the beef in batches in a potjie. Add 2 tablespoons of oil to get the process started and quickly sear the meat on a high heat so it does not draw water. Set aside.

2 Sauté the onions and curry powder in the same pot until soft. Add the meat to the pot with the thyme, bay leaf, beef stock, prunes, carrots and potatoes. Cover and simmer over moderate heat for 2 hours or until the meat falls off the bone.

3 Season to taste with salt and black pepper, and serve with rice.

go! Drive & Camp says Replace the prunes with whatever dried fruit you prefer.

🔥 BOBOTIE ENCHILADAS All wrapped up

This recipe is super simple: simply fill wraps with bobotie mince and bake in a potjie till hot. Then, sit back and enjoy.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon strong curry powder
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 500 g beef mince
- 2 tablespoons peach chutney, plus extra for serving
- 2 tablespoons dessicated coconut

- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- salt and black pepper, to taste
- 6 wraps
- 1 cup Greek yoghurt
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese

Here's how

1 Fry the onion, garlic and curry powder in the olive oil until soft. Add the mince piecemeal and fry till golden brown.

2 Add the chutney, coconut, turmeric, bay leaf and vinegar and simmer for 20 minutes. Taste and flavour with salt and pepper.

3 Fill each wrap with 1 tablespoon yoghurt and a good few dollops of mince. Roll up the wraps and pack in a flat-bottomed potjie or cast-iron pan. Spoon the rest of the yoghurt over the centre of the wraps and sprinkle the cheese evenly over everything.

4 Cover and place the potjie or pan over moderate coals. Spoon some coals on the lid and bake for 15 minutes. Serve warm with extra chutney.

go! Drive & Camp says Make and freeze the bobotie mixture at home – your meal will be ready in minutes when you get to the campsite. >



Fish curry

FISH CURRY Rich and creamy

Make this curry with frozen hake for when you're far from the shops.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons turmeric
- 3 tablespoons curry powder
- 1 can (410 g) chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup brown vinegar
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup (400 ml) coconut cream
- salt and black pepper, to taste
- 500 g hake fillets, thawed

Here's how

1 Melt the butter and sauté the onion and garlic until soft. Add the turmeric and curry powder and fry until fragrant.

2 Add the tomato, vinegar, sugar and water and simmer for 30 minutes.

3 Stir in the coconut cream and bring to a boil. Taste and flavour with salt and black pepper.

4 Add the fish fillets to the hot potjie, cover and remove the potjie immediately from the heat. Set aside for 15 minutes. The heat of the sauce will be enough to cook the fish perfectly.

5 Serve the curry with bread.

go! Drive & Camp says

This fish is also great to eat cold the next day, just like pickled fish.

RAISIN BREAD Best thing since sliced bread

Oh, the deliciousness of warm raisin bread with butter! It's heavenly and goes really well with fish curry.

Ingredients

(enough for 1 loaf of bread)

- ¼ cup water
- 1½ cup soft butter
- 1½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon instant yeast
- 2 cups cake flour
- 1 cup seedless raisins

Here's how

1 Heat the water and stir in the butter, sugar and salt until

dissolved. Stir in the milk.

2 Sprinkle the yeast over the lukewarm milk mixture and stir.

3 Add the flour to the milk mixture and knead the dough thoroughly. Add the raisins and again knead well until the dough is soft and elastic. Set aside so the dough can rise and double in volume.

4 Place the dough in a small greased potjie and set aside for another 40 minutes to rise again.

5 Cover with a greased lid. Place over moderate coals with a few coals on the lid. Bake for 45 minutes.

go! Drive & Camp says The dough can also be rolled into even buns before being packed into the pot.



Raisin bread



Spicy rice

🍷 SPICY RICE Nice, nicer, rice!

This rice with a bite will warm you up from the inside out.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cups white rice
- 1 garlic clove finely chopped
- ½ green pepper, finely chopped
- 1 can (410 g) chopped tomatoes
- 2-4 tablespoons harissa paste
- ½ cup wine
- 2 cups vegetable or chicken stock, boiling
- 12 black olives
- 50 g almond flakes
- salt and black pepper, to taste

Here's how

1 Sauté the onions in the butter in a small potjie until soft. Stir in the rice and fry for a few minutes.

2 Add the garlic, green pepper, tomatoes, harissa paste and wine, and bring to a boil for 2 minutes. Add the boiling stock and stir occasionally so it doesn't burn.

3 Allow to simmer for 15 minutes, then add the olives. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve with almond flakes.

go! Drive & Camp says

You can replace the harissa with ½-1 teaspoon cayenne pepper.

🍷 CHOCOLATE "NACHOS" A sticky sweet treat

What is a campfire without marshmallows?

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 1 pack Marie biscuits
- 1 pack marshmallows
- 2 slabs (90 g each) chocolate, roughly chopped
- 3 tablespoons cinnamon sugar

Here's how

1 Pack a layer of biscuits on the bottom of a foil tray and also along the sides so they protrude slightly.

2 Sprinkle with chocolate and then pack a layer of marshmallows on top. Repeat the layers of biscuits, chocolate and marshmallows, and finish with marshmallows on top. Sprinkle over the sugar.

3 Cover with foil and place over lukewarm coals for about 15-20 minutes or until the marshmallows puff out and the chocolate is melted. Jump in and work your way in from the outside!

go! Drive & Camp says Coconut marshmallows make for a nice variation.



Chocolate "nachos"

CLEAR CUT

PHOTO GETTY IMAGES

Blunt knives are pretty close to a cardinal sin in our humble opinion, so we went looking for a few devices to keep the edge on your blade.

Text **Kyle Kock** Photos **James Garaghty**

We know the frustration when you want to get stuck into that piece of kudu biltong, only to struggle with a blunt knife. And we don't want it to ever happen to you, or us, ever again.

That's why we went out to find a few knife sharpeners to keep our cutlery in tip-top shape.

To put the sharpeners to the test, we also bought four packs of a paring knife set from our nearest Pick n Pay. (*Coincidentally, each team member also received a paring knife after*

deadline as an early Christmas gift. – Ed) Everyone may have a different taste in the knives they use in the kitchen or go camping with, but we feel that at this price, for R70, it would be a fair addition to any kitchen.

To keep things fair, we only used 12 strokes in total, six on each side, for each particular sharpening element. This means that one of the knives got 60 strokes in total, while the electrically assisted one was limited to 12 in total for its two discs, three on each side per disc.



DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT

If you're ever stranded without a legit sharpener, perhaps there's one of these five items around that might help sharpen your blunt blade.

1. Concrete. You're likely to find a concrete slab almost anywhere there's been some development. Of course, this can also damage your knife, so look for the smoothest possible part and use in conjunction with number 2.

2. Leather belt. Realign the edge of your recently sharpened knife by

stropping it with a leather belt. Just run the blade away from the cutting edge and make sure the belt doesn't have any stitching.

3. Mug. After you've finished your morning cuppa, flip the mug upside down and find the rough and raw ceramic that usually makes up that ridge at the bottom. You'll know that you're getting it right if you start seeing discolouration on the mug.

4. Car window. An open one, please.

The rough, yet rounded, top edge of the window makes it ideal for knife sharpening. You could sharpen serrated blades, too.

5. Smooth stone. Perfect when you're fishing and realise once you're on the river bank or oceanside that you've left your tool at home. The running water weathers the stones found nearby over centuries, and the result is that you would use it the same way as your sharpening stone at home.



MATSUNAGA KING KDS COMBO STONE 1000/6000

Hattori Hanzo

Don't insult the Japanese by talking about metal on metal for sharpening. After

all, they've been sharpening their fine blades using stones for centuries. This top-deck looking combination stone

offers the user two different grits. It requires more time and attention than the other devices here, which is part of the appeal.

Plus, you'll feel like you've gone back in time to feudal Japan.

Method and results You use the dark 1 000 grit side to sharpen up an edge, and the 6 000 grit to really finish it off.

After our self-imposed limit of only 12 strokes per side, the blade wasn't as sharp as some of the others.

You need to spend time with this one to really fine tune your blade.

Price R910 from Just Like Papa

go! Drive & Camp says It's quite important that you keep the stones as wet as possible. As soon as you start hearing the scrape, like metal on rock, it's time to dip the stone again.

CHEF'S CHOICE FLEXHONE/STROP DIAMOND HONE SHARPENER 320

Power Ranger

It's the bulkiest and heaviest model featured here, and that's because it's electric. That's right, before you pack this in along with your other camping gear, make sure that the campsite you intend to visit has electricity.

Method Before you even think of plugging in the device, drop the blade in on the left side of the angle guide and number 1 spring, until you hear it make contact with the diamond-coated disc underneath. Then pull the blade back toward yourself and lift the handle slightly so you get a hang of the spring's tension.

Turn the machine on and then start sharpening on either side of the number 1 spring. Use the second stage spring to finish your straight blade, or just for your serrated knife. The result is an almost jewel-like finish and a very fine edge.

Price: R1 800 from Trappers.

go! Drive & Camp says It's the most expensive sharpener here, but you pay for the convenience. >



LANSKY QUICK FIX SHARPENER Pocket-sized

This one is almost small enough to slide into your wallet. It's also got a tungsten carbide element and ceramic polishing hones like the BladeMedic, but that means it's limited to straight edges only.

Method Grip the rubber holders with your thumb and index finger with an element facing you

and stroke away from your face. Your blade will be pretty sharp in 12 strokes.

Price R125 from Cape Union Mart.

go! Drive & Camp says It's not very secure, depending on how strong your grip is, but if portability is what you're looking for, then this is the tool for you.



SHOGUN BLADE SHARPENER Bang for buck

This brand will be quite familiar to South African consumers old enough to have watched the infomercials that bombarded SABC daytime television. The Shogun products are backed by homeware giant Verimark, and their sharpener is the cheapest one here.

Method You press the tube down onto your work surface and push down the hook to

activate the suction cup, so you don't have to hold the sharpener. The tungsten carbide elements sound quite coarse, but 12 strokes are more than enough to give a very sharp blade.

Price R60 from Verimark.

go! Drive & Camp says This one is well worth the money. You won't cut your fingers and can mount it almost anywhere.

LANSKY STANDARD CONTROLLED ANGLED PRECISION SHARPENING SYSTEM Ultimate control

This one is popular with custom knife makers as you can control the exact degree at which you want your blade's edge and therefore ideal for when you've got different needs. The set includes a clamp that you fix onto the blades of your knife, three different hones and a bottle of honing oil.

Method Clamp down on the blade with the edge facing away from the clamp's screws. Then you assemble the hone by

hooking the rod into the eyelet and screwing it tight. Then you use one of the four angle eyes to slide the guide rod in to sharpen your blade. You can get up to an extremely sharp finish with this one.

Price R750 from Cape Union Mart.

go! Drive & Camp says Unmatched performance, but the clamps can spoil the sides of your blade. Tape the inside of the clamps to protect your blade.



LANSKY BLADEMEDIC Multitool

The Blademedic is one of Lanky's most complete portable sharpeners. The four sharpening elements cover straight edge and serrated blades and the diamond tapered rod that folds out gives it an almost Swiss Army knife kind of versatile feel.

Method and results We used the carbide and ceramic straight-edge elements for the paring knife, by

holding the handle and sliding the Blademedic up and away toward the tip. We also topped it up with the diamond rod. The knife was very sharp and we didn't even use the ceramic element.

Price R290 from Trappers.

go! Drive & Camp says A cool device you can attach to your keyring. The folding rod has a magnet that keeps it closed.



WORK SHARP GUIDED FIELD SHARPENER 2.2.1 Complete solution

This sharpener is the only one with here with a five-step process to making your knives razor-sharp. It has two diamond plates, two ceramic rods (one with three settings) and a leather stop so you can hone your blade to perfection. The plates are held in place by magnets, with a dual arrowhead wrench on one side underneath the removable plate. It's large enough for camping tools such as axes and you can also sharpen your fish hooks.

Method It's a little awkward to hold but drop the sharpener onto a worktop and use the built-in 20-degree guide to get the angle of your sharpening perfect. The blade is not only sharp but also polished thanks to the leather.

Price R645 from Just Like Papa.

go! Drive & Camp says It's a clever little device that has a lanyard hole so you can access it quickly.



LANSKY QUICK EDGE Fishy fingers

The fish-like design of this model means that your four fingers are protected at all times while you maintain a firm grip on the sharpener. The top of the 'tailfin' doubles as a nook for your thumb to rest, while the bottom is where the tungsten carbide elements are housed.

Method You hold the Quick Edge with your thumb facing down,

and stroke away from your body. The knife is sharp, but somehow the edge came out with a pronounced burr.

Price R150 from Cape Union Mart.

go! Drive & Camp says The clever plastic housing is designed in such a way that it's comfortable to hold whether you're left- or right-handed.



GET THEM HERE

Cape Union Mart capeunionmart.co.za

Just Like Papa justlikepapa.com

Trappers trappers.co.za

Verimark verimark.co.za

A tent for every taste

What are the pros and cons of nylon and canvas tents?
What is a water column? We answer your questions.

Text **Cyril Kloppe**

Man has been camping in tents for thousands of years. The Bible, for example, mentions in Genesis that Jabal is the progenitor of herdsmen living in tents. We also know that the Roman army camped in leather tents, and that the first

expedition that reached the South Pole – led by Roald Amundsen – took hemp tents.

But what kind of tent is best for you? A roof tent or one on the ground? Nylon or canvas?

Nylon

Nylon tents can be divided into two categories: lifestyle and expedition. Lifestyle tents will keep you warm and dry in

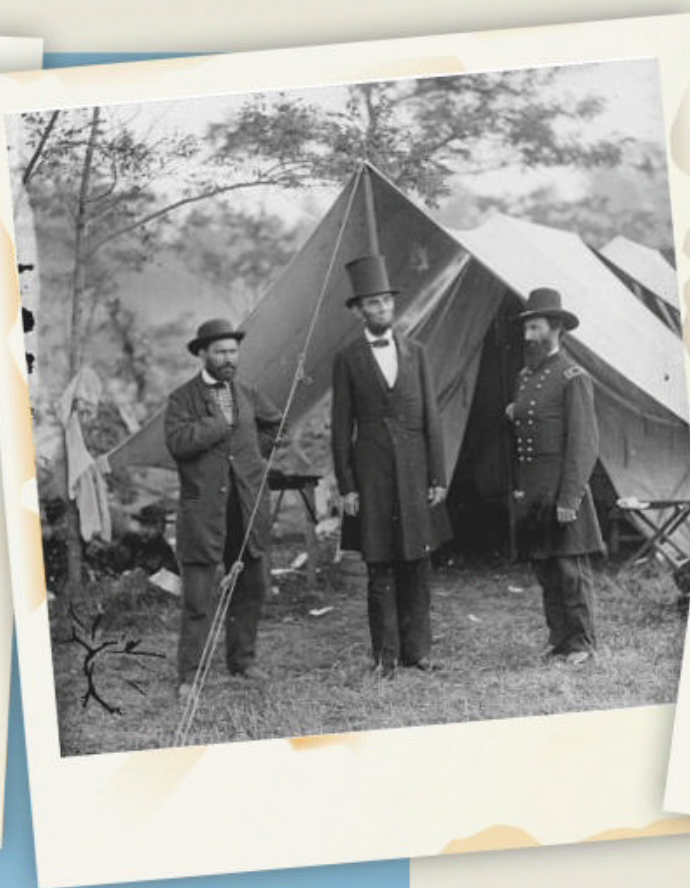
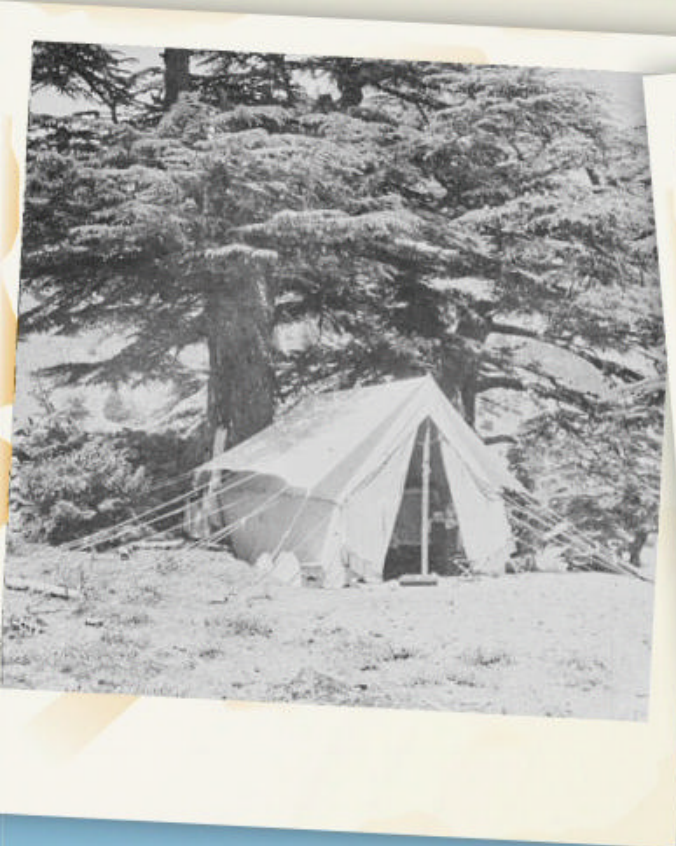
moderate weather conditions, but expedition tents keep you alive in extreme conditions.

Nylon tents poles are usually made of fibreglass. It weighs little and can bend quite a lot before it breaks. But if the wind blows hard, you have to use guy ropes, because otherwise those poles will break as if they were matches. Expedition tent poles are often made of a mixture of aluminium

and carbon fibre – considerably stronger than fibreglass and weighs less - but even they can crack in very strong winds.

A lifestyle tent is usually high enough that you can stand upright while an expedition tent is flatter and often streamlined so storm winds can blow over it. The latter also has more than two poles and an oversupply of guy lines.





You can also spot an expedition tent by its bright colour – usually yellow or orange – so rescue workers spot it easily from a helicopter. Some adventurers tackling the North Pole in the summer, however, complain that the bright glow on the inside makes you feel as though you're sleeping inside a light bulb.

Another type of lifestyle tent

is a pop-up tent. They have two large hoops that fold together when you store it and open up when you take it out of its bag. They usually deploy within seconds, but sometimes require a little head-scratching to get them back in the bag.

Canvas

Canvas tents are made of cotton, polyester or a mixture



of the two. If the canvas has a ripstop crosshatching weave, it is more resistant to tears than nylon with the same weave, but unfortunately canvas is much heavier than nylon. And because of the weight, canvas tent poles are usually made of steel, which makes them even heavier.

Cotton or polyester canvas tents let in less light and you can sleep later on your holiday. Cotton also breathes and doesn't collect moisture on the inside the way a nylon tent does. Canvas tents are warmer in winter and cooler in summer than nylon tents. Apart from the weight, the other major drawback

of canvas is that it gets mouldy if you don't look after it. Wait until it's completely dry before you put it away.

The advantage of polyester is that it is not as susceptible to rot but doesn't breathe as well as cotton. For environmentalists, cotton is also a better choice, as it naturally breaks down after the material reaches the end of its life.

We talk to two experts to hear what they think of nylon versus cotton.

Samantha Piek is a seasoned camper and her knowledge makes her one of outdoor chain Camp & Climb's top salespeople. >

HOUSE BY THE SEA. The delightful thing about a tent is that you can set up camp anywhere and it gives you the psychological reassurance of a roof over your head while you sleep in the great outdoors.



Nylon lifestyle tent

A lightweight tent that can be pitched by two people – or even just one – in almost no time at all. It's relatively waterproof, but not made for storm conditions.

These tents range from one-man size to those big enough for all the Rosenkowitz sextuplets and their families.

Weight 1-20 kg

Waterproofing ★★☆☆

Sweat factor ★

Who buys it? Mike and Erika Frazer, camping enthusiasts.



Nylon expedition tent

This is the kind of tent you can rely on in harsh weather and uncomfortable temperatures. It's usually light enough to carry in a backpack, but strong enough to stand up to Hurricane Katrina. If you camp only once or twice a year, this tent is totally redundant. It's also expensive.

Weight 5-10 kg

Waterproofing ★★★★★

Sweat factor ★

Who buys it? Mike Horn, adventurer.



Polyester lean-to tent

This tent was originally designed to lean against your expedition vehicle, but the latest versions can stand on their own. It takes about a minute to set it up and it's a popular choice for cross-border travellers camping at a different location every night. The elderly also love it as it's so easy to pitch.

Weight ± 25 kg

Waterproofing ★★★★★

Sweat factor ★★★★★

Who buys it? Leon and Donvé Botha, nature lovers.



Nylon pop-up tent

This tent pitches within 3 seconds, but because of the hoops, it cannot be folded up small. It's fine to transport in a car but doesn't work for hikers or bikers. It's also not very waterproof and the wind easily blows it down.

Weight 3-8 kg

Waterproofing ★

Sweat factor ★

Who buys it? Melissa and Kyle, Oppikoppi festivalgoers.





Polyester rooftop tent

Some believe this tent provides protection against lions and other beasts (as if a hungry lion wouldn't climb on top of a bakkie!), but for most people it's about the convenience of folding it in minutes. It is cool and waterproof, but can be a pest if you need a loo break at night...

Weight ± 80 kg

Waterproofing ★★★★★

Sweat factor ★★★★★

Who buys it? Dominic and Roshaan Wienand, holidaymakers.



"I was always in favour of nylon tents, but nowadays I prefer canvas," says Samantha. "Canvas tents have durable steel poles versus easy-to-break fibreglass poles. They usually also have longer pegs that aren't easily dislodged by the wind."

For me, however, the best feature of a canvas tent is that you can sleep and lie in it all day because they are cooler than nylon tents."

But what about the weight? "You drive your car to where you're going to pitch a tent. So, weight doesn't matter. I admit that canvas tents aren't for hikers, but nowadays there are hikers' huts on many routes, and so you wouldn't be needing a tent anyway."

Neel Brits is a manager at 4x4MegaWorld and he sells all the different kinds of tents you're reading about here.

"There's a time and a place for every kind of tent. My customers usually buy a durable canvas tent for Mom and Dad and a nylon tent for the kids. The reason is that parents are looking for a durable tent that will provide years of service."

They then choose a cheaper, compact tent for the kids, as they'll outgrow it and later leave the house. I don't know of any customer who uses a roof tent for the parents and a ground tent for the children. Either everyone sleeps upstairs or everyone on the ground," says Neel.

About durability, he says: "Polyester stays clean longer than cotton. Many of our top sellers are made of a polyester and cotton blend. Nylon will also keep many, many years if you look after it."

For my 4x4 holidays, I use my canvas tent, but when I travel with my motorbike, I pack my nylon tent."



Cotton dome tent

Most 4x4 enthusiasts will have one of these stalwarts under their off-roader's canopy. The smaller versions are pretty easy to pitch, but you need a whole team for the bigger ones. It's dark and cool so you can sleep late.

Weight 20-60 kg

Waterproofing ★★★★★

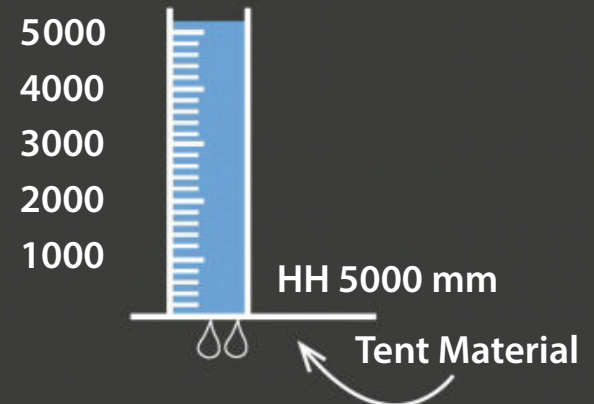
Sweat factor ★★★★★

Who buys it? Johan

Badenhorst, author and traveller.



HH + Hydrostatic Head



What is a water column?

With nylon tents, you usually get a water-column number in the specification list. This "water column" is an imaginary tube filled with water. One open side of the tube rests against the tent's surface. The water-column number is the amount of water you could tap into the imaginary tube before the water is forced through the surface.

Take a 1 500 mm water column as an example: this means that the tube is filled with water up to 1 500 mm before it starts to leak. The higher the figure, the more waterproof the material.

Do note that the water-column rating does not take into account the tent seams. If the seams leak, the rating is useless. Canvas tents do not provide a water column figure, and untreated cotton leaks like a wool sweater.

To tune or not to tune?



There's always one guy whose bakkie appears to be the same as his mates, but somehow is more powerful and uses less fuel. It's probably been tuned and we take a look at the two most common methods used, chipping and remapping.

Text **Kyle Kock** Photos **Tiaan van Wyk** and **Wade Lambert**

Heart vs Head

Tuning vehicles has evolved much like sport. Fifty years ago, an athlete could get by with just an inkling of talent and sheer determination. Think of a boxer who is clearly outmatched but is still in the fight thanks to his sheer determination and grit.

Or the rugby team who seem the least likely to win, eat junk food all the time and don't train as hard, but get along when it matters most, have fun and are

always capable of an upset. That's heart. Your engine is much the same, and likely capable of much more than you think.

But these days sport, particularly in the professional realm, is much more cerebral.

Athletes are mindful about various factors: what they eat, how they train and how they recover. It's all about being as efficient as possible while attaining peak physical performance, so they have less

boozy party nights, wake up early and don't eat junk food to optimise the body. That's like putting the best fuel available, the correct oil and ideal spark plugs in your engine.

But there's another side of modern sport, and that's psychology – where the minds of athletes are trained to hone them for an impending game or fight.

It's the same with a car's electronic control unit (ECU). It's

the brain. If you take two virtually identical cars, but the second one has an optimised brain – essentially making it smarter – then that one will come out on top in terms of higher outputs and increased fuel efficiency. It's a little bit like hypnosis.

You're tricking the car into believing that it can do a lot more, and it works because it does believe that. One of the first ways tuners started tricking ECUs was with a chip.



You mean like a slap chip?

No, it's not the kind that's deep fried in oil and accompanied by fish, or the kind that comes in a foil packet with Francois Pienaar as brand ambassador. What we're talking about is what's known as a piggyback computer chip. The simplest explanation for their name is most likely because of the way they're spliced into a vehicle's existing electronic control unit. The chip is then programmed to manipulate a few parameters as set out by the vehicle's manufacturer in the ECU mapping to not only perform certain tasks but safeguard the engine and related systems from failing prematurely.

Not only that, but the base setup from the factory also has to be suitable for use in a wide variety of markets: the vehicles have to be able to withstand conditions as cold as the Arctic circle and hot as the Sahara, and everything in between.

Okay, but we can't do this ourselves can we?

No, you need specialised equipment, mechanical know-how and then be a bit tech savvy as well. We chatted to Cornel Jonker, general manager and head of operations at Dastek, about the Unichip, which has been a market leader in South Africa since 1993 and is available in 60 countries around the world. It's probably the most famous chip around.



Over the last decade or so, another tuning firm has been making waves in South Africa. They go by the name of Wulfchipteknik, and their method differs from the chip-tuning guys in that they don't actually rewire your ECU, but rather use the vehicle's original ECU and essentially recalibrate it completely. Wulfchip's technical director Neville Le Roux was at hand to explain how they remap your vehicle.

How exactly is this possible?

You first have to understand the local conditions and application for that specific vehicle. Each tuner, or distributor, must take into consideration the altitude, average temperature and what the vehicle is going to be used for as well as the quality of the fuel available.



MILD TO WILD. Both tuning firms featured come from humble beginnings and have grown into successful brands with clientele ranging from SUV owners to sportscar enthusiasts.

"Essentially, we're manipulating the ECU to alter the manufacturer parameters for fuelling, ignition timing and boost (on a turbocharged vehicle) with the goals of making more power at high throttle input, but also have better fuel economy at light throttle loads," explains Neville.

The importance of region-based optimisation is something Cornel can't stress enough. "We don't send a map that we've made for a Toyota Hilux 2.8 GD-6 in South Africa to Australia, because there are variables to consider, so that's why we have distributors and dealers all over the world. Their job is to take the basic map we've given, and to then tune the car optimally," Cornel adds.

What both Cornel and Neville agree on, is that most modern vehicles roll off the line in quite a conservative state of tune even though millions of dollars get spent on research and development. Certain engines are definitely developed to be able to handle more power and stress, not >

only so that that vehicle can run reliably over its lifespan but also, depending on the manufacturer, so that updated versions and facelifted models down the line can offer a bit more power and torque to the consumer – making it more attractive than its predecessor.

In markets where they don't tow heavy caravans and trailers, and where the fuel is of a better quality, they might be able to extract more from the tuning for that specific region.

Is this legal, and are there risks?

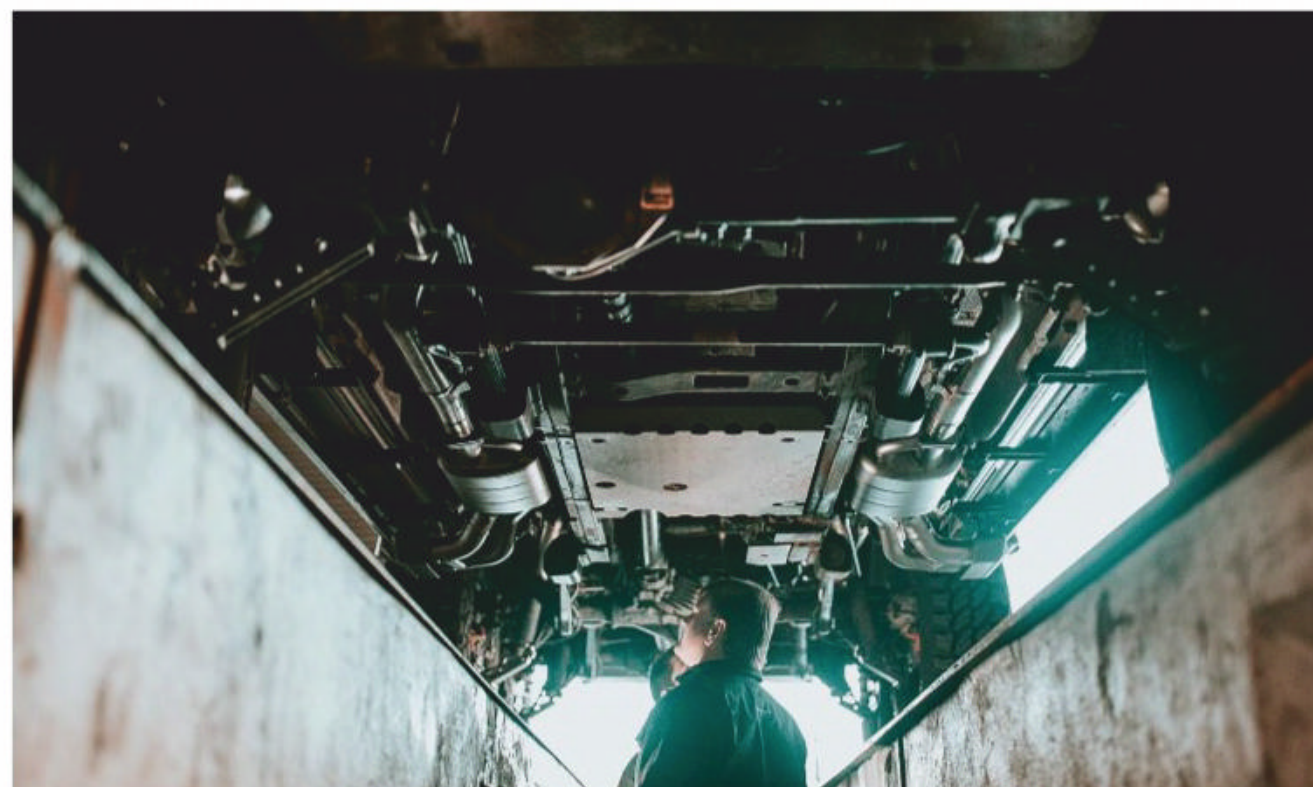
Many people are of the mind that any alterations to your vehicle are to be regarded as modifications, which still has a negative stigma attached to it in this country. Then there are those who only regard hardware changes as modifications – such as a high-lift suspension system and bigger turbochargers.

For these guys, software updates can be changed just in time for your annual service or recall programme and would be virtually undetectable by the manufacturer and therefore your warranty left intact. Remember that if you have changed something on your vehicle, and you experience catastrophic failure, then it's the manufacturer's prerogative to investigate the failure (if your vehicle is still under warranty), and they might decide not to honour your claim.

Both tuning firms we talked to say this is a calculated risk on your part as the consumer, but also mentioned that failures are often the result of other componentry failing, while the chip or remap gets the bad rap.

Something to take into account before you decide to have your vehicle tuned is the quality of life it's had during your ownership, or before if you bought it second-hand.

"Over time and plenty of mileage, there is wear and tear on componentry that will affect



tuning, such as the injectors that could be worn by 15 %, the fuel pump that could down 5 %, the diesel filter clogged by 30 %, so the chances are high that putting a base map on a vehicle like that would result in problems very soon. That's why we believe in having every vehicle on the dyno where we use the tools we have to check that everything is functioning at 100 % before we start changing the performance parameters," says Cornel.

Also, remember that no manufacturer will outright void your warranty claim. It's only when there are issues or when something starts breaking or when you've been involved in an accident that eyebrows are raised and questions asked.

For example

Say you've just chipped your Ford Ranger, but now it's supposed to go for its 60 000 km service and it's still under warranty. According to Cornel, the Ford Ranger is not the best example because it can take between 10 and 15 minutes to remove the chip and its harness from the ECU.

"But with many of the other vehicles, such as Toyota Hilux, we can pop open the glove box after turning off the ignition, unplug the six points from the ECU, unplug our unit, and plug



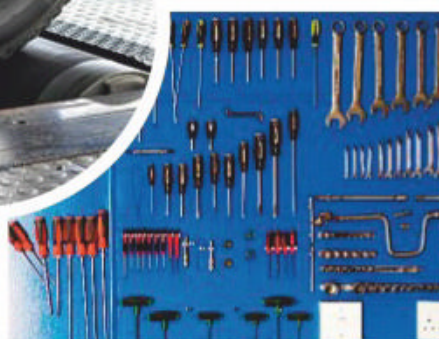
Most modern vehicles roll off the line in a conservative state of tune, even though engines are developed to produce a lot more power and torque.

those points back into the ECU. Some vehicles take five minutes while others, such as the Ranger take longer."

It's a lot more simple when you've had your vehicle remapped by Wulfchiptegnik, as explained by marketing director Charl du Plessis. "It's literally like dragging a file from computer to a hard drive. If you bring your vehicle in, Neville makes a copy of your original settings before adding our file and saves it to

our cloud server so that when you're ready to have your vehicle serviced, you bring it in and it's a simple drag-and-drop process."

But Neville stresses that it's not always so quick and easy. "There are a few vehicles that require ECU removal, where it needs to be opened up so that we can connect to the pads with probes and then close it up and put it back in, but most vehicles these days we do via OBD. Ford's Ranger used to be tuned on a bench like



OPTIMISATION. Tuning can extract peak performance from your engine, even in stock form, and is a must if you've added modifications.

that but even that's now done via flash."

Does one size fit all?

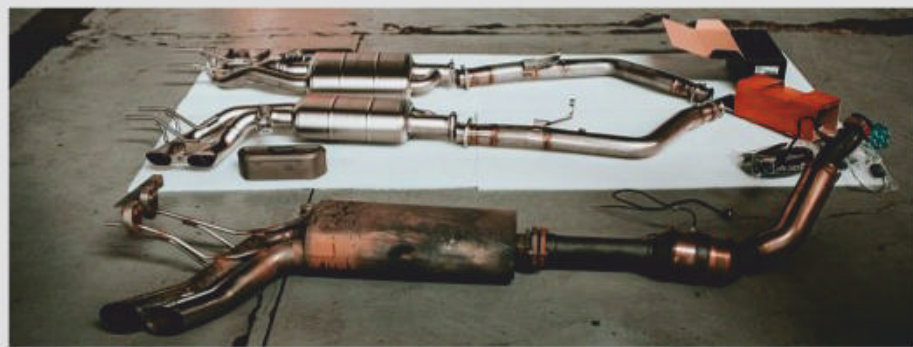
A lot of the smaller chip-tuning companies use simpler systems that don't connect to various functions in a vehicle's ECU, therefore only optimising one aspect and without specific tuning. These are called plug-and-play boxes, which you plug into your car's OBD port. These off-the-shelf items could, for example, be adding more fuel in a turbodiesel engine, but because it's not been optimised properly at different RPMs and under load, taking different parameters and scenarios into account, you can make more power, but you don't know at what cost, because the entire process itself isn't being optimised.

You will probably feel a difference, but you don't get the full tuning experience and possible benefits in performance and efficiency. And you will start experiencing problems sooner or later, because the maps have to be so general that there's no way they could be safe to use for a prolonged period of time.

How much can you push your engine with ECU tuning?

Using an example, Cornel says that on a 110 kW 2,2 l four-cylinder turbodiesel motor, they can take it up to a 130 kW base after finding out where the exhaust gas temperatures starts getting too high by using dynamometer sensors.

Using the built-in timers on the modern iteration of the Unichip, they could offer a total of 160 kW



for 10 or 15 seconds, before the temperatures even remotely get high and the system automatically dials the power down. Just like the sort of overboost function that some manufacturers offer from the factory.

Does each vehicle get specific attention when tuning?

"On Toyota's new GD-6 for example, you might be able to get away with making specific adjustments from the get-go, based on the 20 or 30 vehicles that might have come into the workshop before that specific one. But to use the example of the old 3.0 D-4D engine found in the previous generation of Hilux models and Fortuners, many of those vehicles now have in excess of 200 000 km on the odometer and that's where you really need to start being careful," Cornel states.

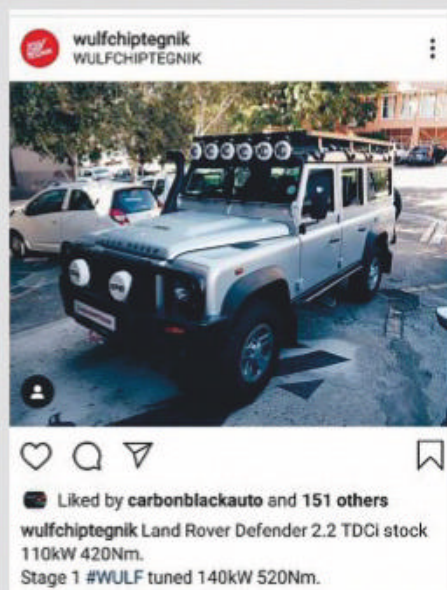
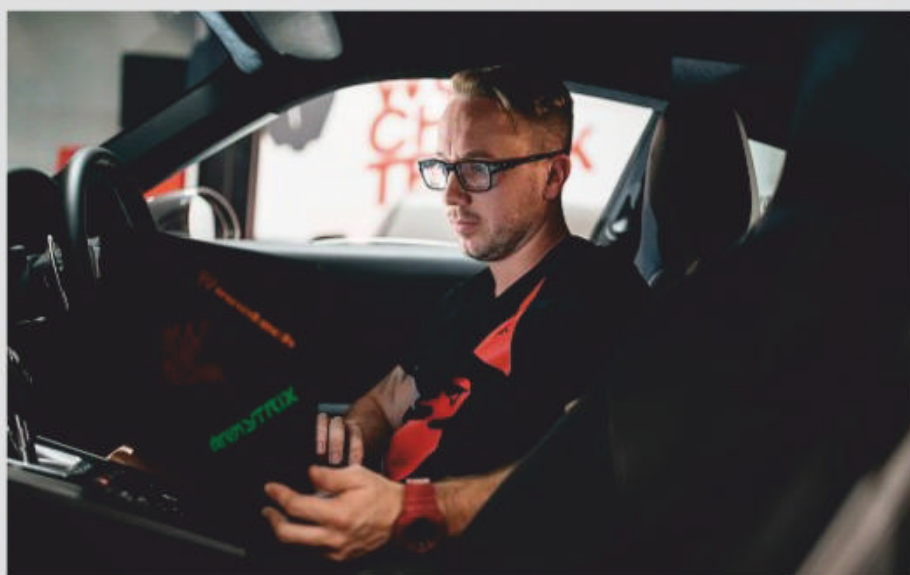
Each motor differs from new, and over 10 years or more and all that mileage, the differences become more pronounced.

What about the normally aspirated stuff?

Older normally aspirated towing vehicles, such as a 3.0 V6 Mitsubishi Colt would be long out of warranty by now anyway, so they're relatively safe to tinker with, and that's where hardware upgrades like a free-flowing exhaust system come highly recommended.

"With an older engine, from say 15 to 20 years ago, we can generally safely take away about 5% of the fuel because quite a lot of the older motors ran rich mixtures. If you're going to add more aggressive camshafts and a bigger exhaust, then it's crucial to have your vehicle tuned to properly take advantage of >





these modifications. But these days, the new normally aspirated engines are quite highly strung as is, and that's why we insist on tuning cars on a dynamometer," says Cornel.

As a rule of thumb, Wulfchiptechnik don't really touch entry-level engines and budget vehicles. "Those cars are already running just about reliably on crappy fuel anyway. Our diesel isn't great compared to what is available overseas, but our unleaded petrol is particularly restrictive. On normally aspirated cars there aren't too many changes you can make, with the exception of timing. Increasing the timing may give you a bit of power, but on a very hot day, your car will struggle and the engine with start detonating. Even then, the gains are miniscule," explains Neville.

He also points out that on the larger normally aspirated engines, removing the restrictive catalytic converter from the exhaust system and a few ECU tweaks could result in a decent gain, depending on the vehicle. Using an example of a 6,2 l normally aspirated V8 engine from Mercedes-Benz, Neville explained that it came from the factory with a map that restricted the throttle opening to just 70 % and that he was able to grant a customer full access to 100 % throttle and therefore a significant increase in power and torque.

Can I lose my tune?

Not exactly, because once your ECU has been mapped, or chipped, then it's set to stay, written to the firmware unless your manufacturer releases an update to the software and recalls your vehicle to a dealership for the installation. Bear in mind that their update could override the tuned map. In the case of the Unichip, the manufacturer might also discover your chip and flag it.

The only other way it could be altered is if another tuner starts playing around with your

settings. A more likely scenario is a mechanical or electronic component that's malfunctioning, and because it's not quite 100 %, there might be issues with how the ECU's enhanced settings interact with a faulty component.

You also will have to go see your tuner if you're planning to move from sea-level Cape Town to Johannesburg, which is little over 1 700 m altitude. "The difference in atmospheric pressure and density of the air dictates that the balance of air and fuel has to be altered in that scenario" says Neville.

Which is the better option for me?

We've presented you with two options that could benefit your vehicle if it's in tip-top shape. If it's not however, or the wrong components are faulty, then you could face major failure and sit with expensive repair or replacement bills.

Remember that no two cars are the same and that there will always be variances. You might enjoy a significant power gain and even improved fuel consumption, or your power might remain the same while your fuel efficiency gets the massive gain.

The biggest difference between the two is how the tuning takes place. On a dynamometer, you have sensors and safety precautions at the ready while attempting to simulating everyday driving conditions. You will also know exactly how much power and torque you're producing and even get a print out to show off at the next braai.

Having your vehicle remapped is another kettle of fish, because your vehicle isn't tuned live on a dynamometer. The new map is loaded and customised as needed, but you will feel the differences on the road and at the pumps. Speak to those who've had tuning done, but if you can find an option that will give you your money back if you're not satisfied, then do it.



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Golden oldies

These owners have lovingly adjusted their older vehicles. They tell us what they've done, and why.

Bushpig

2009 ISUZU KB300 D-TEQ D/C 4X4 AT

Not that there was an issue with his customised old Ford Ranger, but **Louis Ackerman** from Kraaifontein started feeling that there was perhaps something else out there for him.

“ Maybe it was that hard suspension system on the Ford, but just over two years ago, I picked up this used **KB for R167 000** and it certainly helped twist my arm that it was almost as good as new. For me, seeing this was going to be my overlanding vehicle, it needed to be reliable, with freely available parts and not break the bank. All qualities this Isuzu had in spades.

My only gripe with the Isuzu KB is that in standard guise it doesn't come with very good ground clearance, but that's nothing a decent lift-kit can't remedy. Other than that, the Isuzu's suspension makes a rough dirt road feel as comfortable as a newly laid tarmac highway. It's got all the power I need and the automatic transmission makes driving it during peak hour traffic a breeze.

I've fitted a **suspension lift kit** with



airbags on the rear axle, tyres more suited for off-roading excursions, a drawer system, a dual-battery system, an extra diesel tank, a two-way radio and other items too many to mention here.

In terms of performance, I've fitted a **63 mm free-flow exhaust** with the catalytic converter removed and **stage 1 Q-Tec software**. These upgrades resulted in new peak outputs of **151 kW** and **492 Nm** from the standard figures of **115 kW** and **340 Nm**. I'm more than happy with the performance. With an extra R10 000 to spend, I'd probably have a front-mounted intercooler installed because the standard one sits on top of the engine. That way, the engine would run even cooler.

The KB averages a smidgen over **10 ℓ/100 km** when I'm home, but that figure rises to **12,6 ℓ/100 km** when fully loaded with a roof-top tent on a trip.

So far there have been no notable issues. I changed the injectors before and the exhaust gas recirculation system had to be unblocked once – nothing really out of the ordinary.

My favourite roads to hit with Bushpig are the **Swartberg Pass** and **Gamkaskloof**. The former is one of the most beautiful mountain passes in our country and Gamkaskloof is not for sissies. It's so serene in that valley and because I'm a sucker for history, the little town is full of cool and interesting facts. ”

Old faithful

1998 TOYOTA CAMRY 220S

They've been camping for over 30 years, and this is only their second towing combination, with a Toyota providing the pulling power, proving that everything keeps going right for **Nick and Rose Pienaar** from Bothasig.

“Most of the modern towing vehicles you'll see in campsites these days are automatic turbodiesels, with plenty of torque. We camp regularly, and some of the guys in our club have Navaras, Hiluxes and Fortuners, but before these vehicles came to the fore, Camrys were extremely popular towing vehicles in this country.

We bought the **Camry used 10 years ago** for **R139 000** and picked up the **Wilk Topaz** six years ago.

The Camry is not the most powerful workhorse, with a **2,2 l normally aspirated** engine under the bonnet so we have to make clever use of the gearbox while towing uphill. Otherwise it's a lovely cruising



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vehicle with and without the caravan, and economical enough for us to use on a daily basis. It averages around **11 l/100 km** and we usually tow between **80 and 100 km/h**. The fuel consumption penalty for towing at **120 km/h** is drastic and that speed isn't really safe anyway.

The one issue we had with this vehicle is that the independent rear suspension is quite soft and the car would squat down at the back, especially with a load, but we've had a modification done with the springs so that we can hitch a caravan and put two adults in the back seat and not have any issues.

We used to drive a **Cressida 3.0 before** the Camry, which was also a beautiful towing vehicle and had all the power we needed, but that straight-six engine was significantly thirstier than the Camry's four-cylinder motor. The Camry was also a lot more modern, so it was an easy choice.

Our favourite camping destination is by far **Storms River Mouth** in the **Tsitsikamma National Park** because of the natural beauty of the forests and ocean all together in one spot.



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Come again?



WINNING PHOTO

When a photo draws your attention and you look a second time, it becomes more than just a photo. Just look at these four works of art that our readers have taken.

By Leon Botha

Is this a painting?

A photo can get a second meaning if you intentionally shoot it differently, as **John Christie** of Pietermaritzburg did.

"This photo looks like a black-and-white photo but is actually a colour photograph without any edits. I did decide to under expose the image before I took it. The blue sky on the far right and

the coloured sections in the flare which the sun creates show that it is not only black and white. I took the photo on Herm Island in the English Channel – not too far from the French coast."

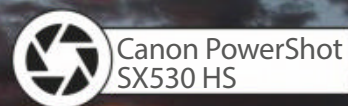
Instead of just a pic with two people on the beach, John turns his photograph into a work of art by under exposing the image even further. Because John is already shooting against the sun (with the sun in the

photo), he forces the camera to compensate for the bright sun by under exposing. By then under exposing more, he gets rid of most of the detail in the shadows – they then become predominantly black. The bright bits therefore stand out even more against the black. And in the right-hand corner you see some normal detail in the blue.

Other than the technical approach, John positioned himself behind the figures in

such a way that they are exactly in the white reflection on the water. So, it's obviously the focal point of the photo, but this is more than just another pic for the family album. It looks like a work of art and reminds one of the iconic British photographer Bill Brandt who took dramatic black-and-white photos on rocky beaches.

The flare would usually bother you, but in this case, they give the photo a mystical feel.



The horizon beckons...

These two photos of Marietjie van der Merwe and Ronel van Wyk, both from Pretoria, may look different, but they actually tell the same story.

Marietjie "My husband, Carel, and I packed our car a couple of years ago and went touring through Namibia with our tent. Between Swakopmund and Henties Bay, we pulled over to admire the spectacular

surroundings. The silence on the photo speaks to me."

Ronel "I recently completed the Sterrewag Enduro hike – where you walk 193 km in 10 days. On our way there, we stayed at a guest farm just outside Carnarvon, and this is where I shot the sunset with the train track. I just completed go! magazine's photo course and experimented a bit."

One could imagine both pictures on

a wall in your home. Each landscape has a unique charm and uses the same compositional principles: the horizon lies on a third line, with the diagonal element that draws one's eye to the horizon: in Marietjie's picture it is the poles, and on Ronel's photo the railway line. But look at the pictures again; neither one really has a focal point. The poles and the tracks draw your attention, but don't lead to a specific point. You must therefore stand back and enjoy the photo as a whole.

Winged flight

When shooting birds, you have to be wide awake. This is exactly what **Charmaine Venter** of Cape Town was when she released the shutter here.

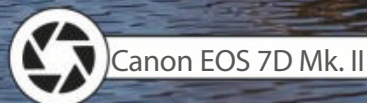
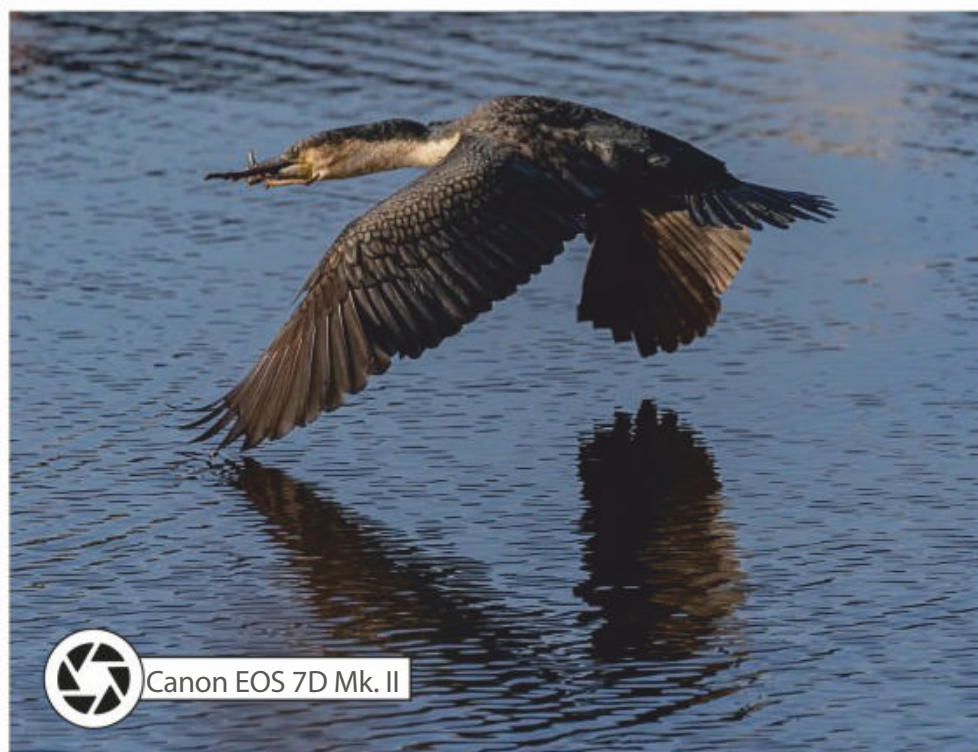
"I took the photo of a cormorant early one morning in Cape Town. It's at the Intaka Island, at a hide I visit regularly over weekends. It's one of those places where I feel happy with my camera."

Shooting birds is an art on its own, and a beautiful photo will always be a beautiful photo.

Charmaine freezes the bird in its

flight here, and that's something one cannot observe with the naked eye. You immediately look at its beak, and you see it has something like a twig in his mouth. Also, it looks as if the bird's left wing just touches the water, and the ripple on the water also causes the bird's reflection to break so that you see only the two wings.

The low light makes for a good photo, but it would have been better if the bird were flying towards you – not that you have any control over it! Furthermore, one can crop the frame closer to the bird and its reflection so there's less negative space.



SEND YOUR PICTURES

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, such as kids warming their hands over a campfire. Whether the pic was taken with an expensive DSLR camera or a run-of-the-mill cellphone, if it's good enough for your family photo album it's good enough for us.

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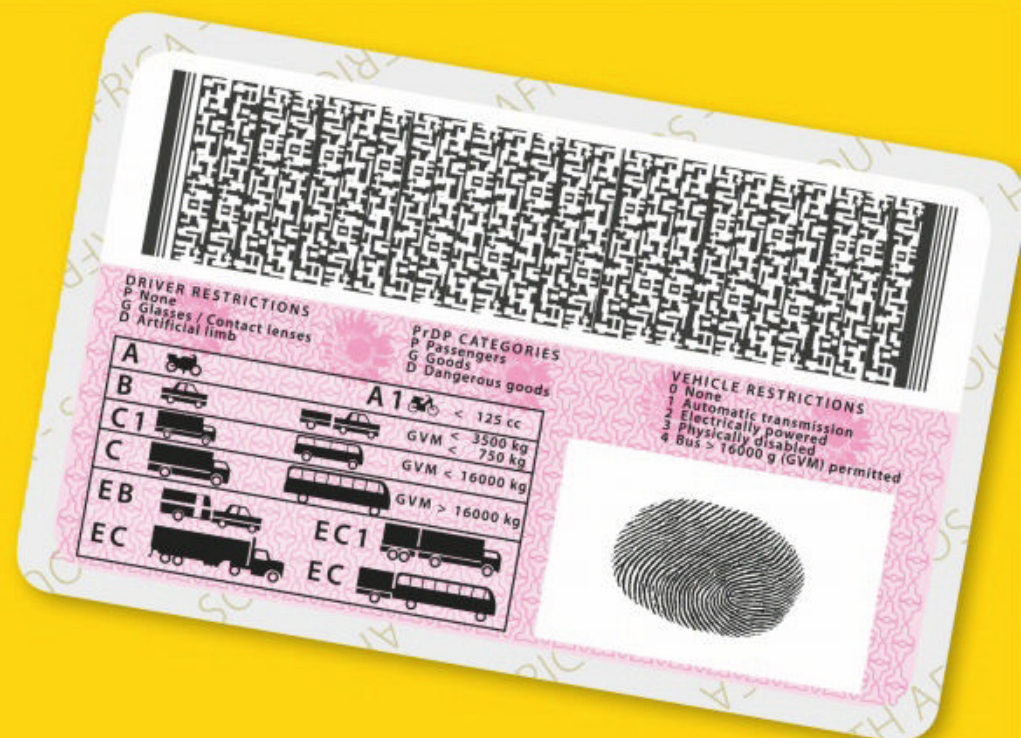
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In this handy guide we'll tell you exactly what you can expect when you apply for your towing licence – from the learner's test to the road test. We did it ourselves and we have loads of tips to share with you.



Weg!
Ry & Sleep

CROSSWORD

Congratulations **Nettie Muller** from George. You have won **Van Loveren's Tangled Tree** wine worth R1 000 for your correct entry in the March 2019 crossword competition. You can also win like Nettie. 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/2FNMBWN>. The solution to last month's crossword is on p.128.

			Town in the Central Karoo	Cots	Tantalum (symbol)	Kelvin (abbr)	Wilderness camp in the Kgalagadi			
				Advice		To be				
			Aspect				Sick			
			So far (2,4)							
Persevere (4,2,2)	Lick	Russian empress	Gravy (French)		"... what?"			Fish's breathing organ	Appears	Fathers
			Not out		Senior (abbr)	Titanium (symbol)	Not bad		Stare at	
							Nickel (symbol)			
A cheese						Mystery				
Coffee variety						Glossy fabric				
Per annum (abbr)		Patron			Adept					
		Thou			Chlorine (symbol)					
			Ruthenium (symbol)		Vehicle		Lower			
					Number present		Radon (symbol)			
Deviate					Fluoride (abbr)					
Secure					Platform					
			Insect			Small hotel				
						While				
Flipper					Cistern					
Mystic card					Thy					
			Ogles			Identity document (abbr)		Inter-weave		Combine
			Big cat					Triplets		Looked slyly
						Impartial				
			Push gently				Penumbra			
			Not slack				Influence			
Falls close to Sabie (3-3)	Irritate	Guy		Egyptian god		Mounted on				
					Indefinite article	Electronic interface (abbr)			Fabric	
									Silicon (symbol)	
Light-heartedness	Gold (symbol)		Expert			Tidy			Selenium (symbol)	
						Land measure				
							Skidded			

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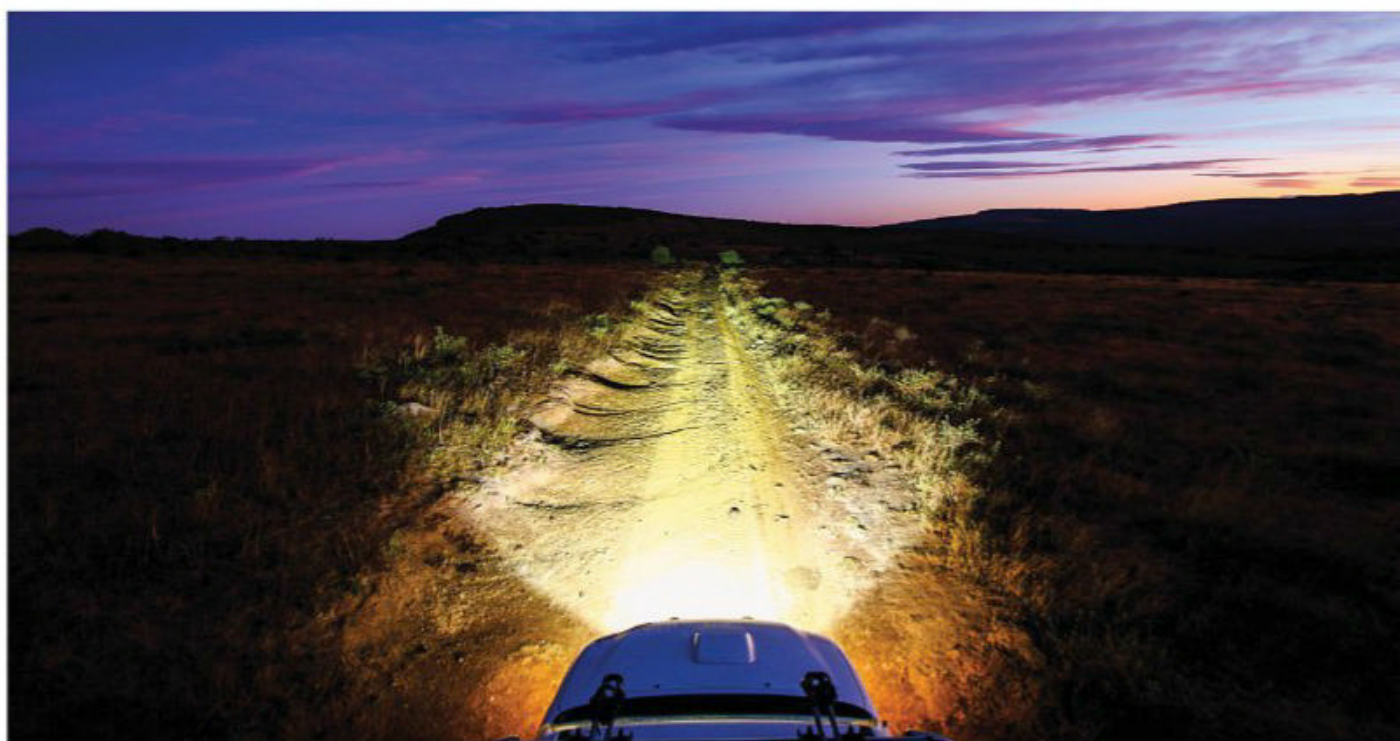
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An adventure of a lifetime

A group from Halfway Toyota recently covered some 6 000 kilometres in 18 days to visit the Liuwa Plains, Kafue, Kasanka and Hwange. Gerald O'Brien tells us more.

We spent our first night at the Kubu Lodge camping site. Here we had our first of many briefings and a rundown on what to expect in the days ahead. We entered Namibia by crossing the Chobe River over the Ngoma Bridge not far from Kasane in northern Botswana. From there it was a scenic drive along the Caprivi Strip (now renamed as Zambezi) to Katima Mulilo and into Zambia. Getting to our first night's stopover was a short dash of 80 km to Kabula Lodge overlooking the Zambezi.

Departure time was set for 07am the following morning, we had a long way to go and we would be camping in central Liuwa Plains that night, a trip of around 375 km straight up the M10 to Mongu and then through the last village of Kalobo before crossing the ferry over the Luanginga River into Liuwa Plains.

After spending three nights in Liuwa, it was an early departure for the return crossing on the ferry before driving a long haul of around 440 km to the Kasabushi camp in Kafue National Park.

The Kafue is wild, untamed and largely unspoilt. The game viewing was pretty good.

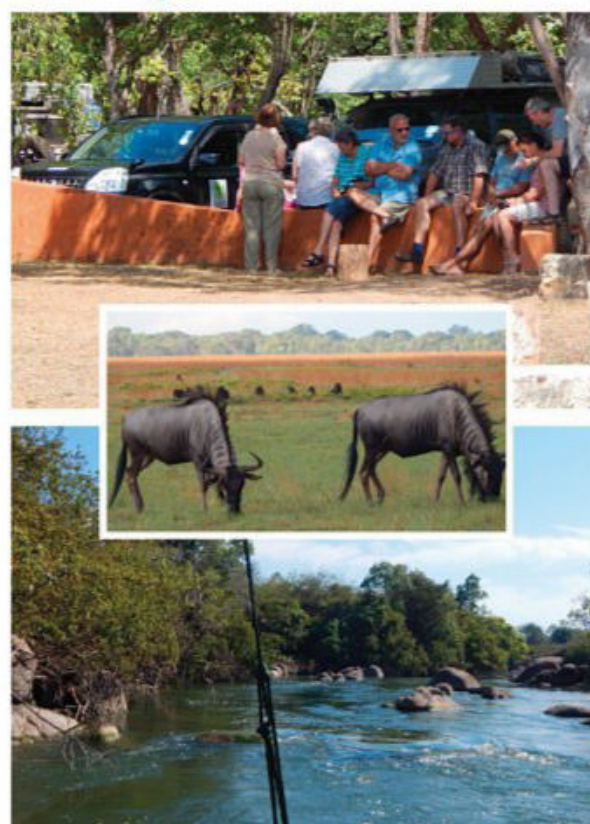
The day we left Kasabushi, we had another long drive, all the way to the Forest Inn, some 530 km. It was an excellent transit camp for where we were headed: the Kasanka National Park.

The road home took us via the Eureka camp outside Lusaka, and then on to Livingstone the following day as we headed for the ferry crossing at Kazungula and then to Kasane for the night. It was a tight squeeze but we did manage a really quick trip to a lookout point of the falls for those who had not seen them before.

The ferry crossing at Kasungula was fairly straightforward. The good news is that the bridge over the Zambezi is well on its way to completion and it will be a pleasure to drive across, at a fee of course.

This was a fantastic trip into Africa to a number of really special places with sightings that will be remembered for many years to come.

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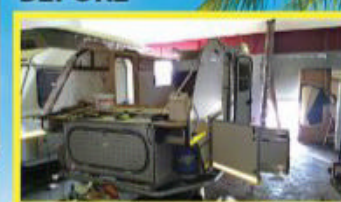
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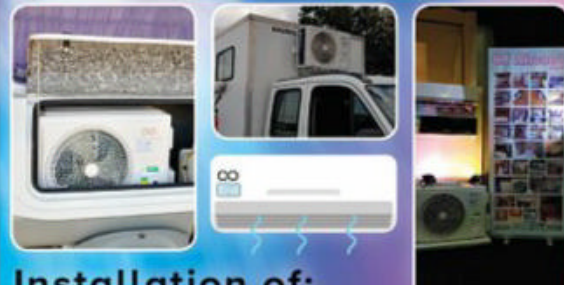
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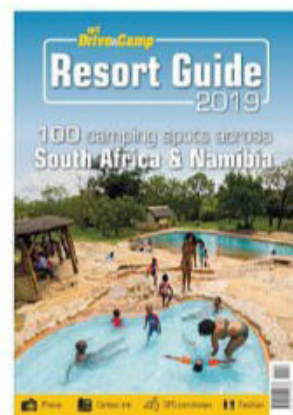
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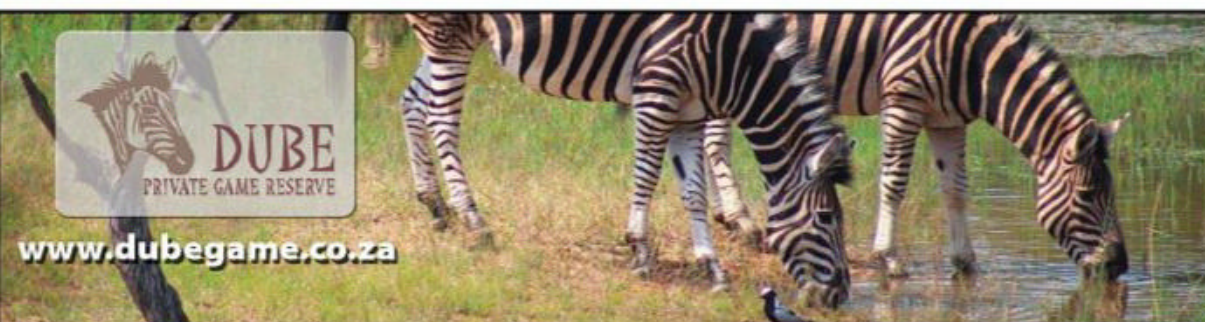
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The battle for Satara's biscuits

The Kruger is the perfect place to recharge your batteries. But watch out for animals intent on stealing your cookies, says **Gustav Putter**.

We're ready for our annual visit to the Kruger National Park. Our spot at Satara is booked and we recheck the packing list to make sure everything's loaded up. Aside from the meat, wood and those sort of things, we make doubly sure the sweets are packed. I have a bit of a sweet tooth... my wife calls me a chocoholic.

We've been trying our hand on baking delicious chocolate biscuits for a couple of years now, and they've become an institution when we go to the park. We buy the chocolate the weekend before we leave, bake the biscuits, then carefully count and divide them up so that there's two biscuits each with every night's coffee. What could be lovelier than throwing another log on the fire and then enjoying a coffee – with a splash of condensed milk and perhaps a little Amarula – and two biscuits around the crackling fire? You can feel the stress of the city disappear as you sit back and stare at the flames of the fire dancing in front of you.

When we arrive at the park, we drive through the Orpen gate and then carry on slowly so that we arrive just in time for the 2pm check in. We relax in our camp chairs and have a small afternoon nap. This is relaxation indeed.

A while later, we grab a few snacks and refreshments and go for a sunset drive. Before we depart, I stack the wood for

tonight's braai. We'll return just as the gate closes, then I can light it. Heaven.

We stop at a waterhole and marvel at how many people just stop and then drive off straight away, supposedly because there is nothing to see. Luckily, we've learned that patience (along with a few other things such as a good book, something to drink and a great piece of fatty biltong) is the answer.

We enjoy a quiet afternoon and drive into Satara's gates two minutes before closing time. I immediately light the fire, while my wife starts making the braaibroodjies and cook some potatoes. Here in the park, banting is for the birds...

Everything goes well, and before long, everything is ready for the braai. Before we sit down to eat, I add a few more logs to kick-start the fire again for those biscuits and coffee just now. After a hearty meal, I boil some water, pour the coffee and get the tin of biscuits. Now it's time to satisfy my sweet tooth.

Just how many biscuits did we plan to have each night?

Two, my wife tells me and I wonder why we didn't think to bring some more. We take our first ones out the tin and place it on the wall behind our chairs, barely two steps away from us.

And how delicious that first biscuit with the coffee tastes! I get up and add some more condensed milk to my coffee... this is, after all, our first night and a little bit of extra sweetness is certainly allowed.

I check to see if my wife is watching me in case I can quickly bag an extra biscuit behind her back, but she's watching me like a hawk. She knows me too well and I realise tonight I'll have to make do with only two.

I'M JUST ABOUT ready for my second biscuit when suddenly there is a noise behind us. I jump up, look around, and see our biscuit tin has disappeared! I get the big light that's also on the wall behind us and scan around in a daze. Then I see the culprit: a honey badger that disappears under our bakkie with the tin of biscuits in his mouth.

Now the daze changes to indignation, because everybody knows you don't mess with my sugar rush. Tonight, it's me and the honey badger and the biscuits. And I'm on the warpath.

I hand the light to my wife, grab my trekking pole and tell her to light under the bakkie because I'm going to get my biscuits back. I'm on my knees and see Mr Honey Badger (maybe it's Mrs, but now is not the time to be politically correct). I push the walking stick under the bakkie and try to push the badger away from the biscuits. I don't quite dare crawl underneath the bakkie, because I know if I'm trapped in this tiny space with the animal, I'm probably going to suffer a few nasty bites.





At exactly the same time my wife switches on the light on the other side of the bakkie. She's also on her knees and shines the light straight into my eyes. In that moment I'm blinded, I bang my head and my hand against the chassis as I jerk in fright. It's a good thing our pastor isn't around to hear me.

Fortunately, I don't drop the trekking pole, because the next moment the badger starts growling, coughing and hissing. I'm still struggling to see as my wife has not yet got the message to not shine the light directly into my eyes.

I smack the pole on the ground, my wife moves to another corner of the bakkie, the stars disappear from my sight... and when I can finally see again, there is no sign of the honey badger under the bakkie.

And then the light falls on something... the biscuit tin! I rake it closer with the pole, while my wife walks around the bakkie to double check that the badger is gone. There's no sign of him. I fully understand because I wouldn't have withstood that encirclement tactic with

the accompanying war cries and attacks of light. Perhaps it was my choice words that scared him off, but I doubt he's that fluent in French.

WITH THE BISCUIT thief now gone, it's time to take stock. We're still here for six nights; so, there should be another twelve biscuits if we each want to enjoy two every night.

I place the tin on the table to start counting with trepidation and, typically South African, already expect the worst – the nightmare of none or too little sweet stuff for the rest of the holiday. Yes, I know

Then I see the culprit:
a honey badger that
disappears under our
bakkie with the tin of
biscuits in his mouth.

I can buy chocolate at the shop, but it wouldn't be the same as our biscuits. And I don't want to pay park prices.

We count – and ultimately there's only one biscuit missing. Can it be? We count again (it feels as if we're in the middle of a vote of no confidence in parliament) and again there is only one not there.

I release a sigh of relief and gratitude and many other things. The tin is closed and put away, and the coffee is boosted with a tot of brandy after all the excitement.

The following night we each take our two biscuits. But tonight the tin is immediately stored away and the biscuits are kept safely on my lap. We're gazing at the fire when we hear another rustle behind us. I grab the light and see the honey badger is back. And he looks at me with questioning eyes, as if he wants to ask "So, where's my biscuit then?"

I put the light down, turn around and settle on my chair. How can I blame him? The poor animal has acquired the taste of a biscuit and I know if I were him, I'd be coming back for more, too.

(Not) child's play

The next time you accidentally step on a Lego brick barefooted, channel the resulting energy into helping your kid build the next great masterpiece that combines art, automobiles and camping.

At this year's f.r.e.e trade show in Munich, Germany (one of the world's largest leisure and travel fairs), Danish toy giant Lego had a display that featured a life-sized replica of Volkswagen's Type 2 Camper Van and *go! Drive & Camp* caught up with the man responsible for the remarkable lookalike, Berlin-based René Hoffmeister. He is one of only 12 Lego-certified modellers in the world and has been building them since 1999.

René and his colleague Pascal Lenhard used computer programs to create a digital model of the vehicle using pictures and info from Volkswagen – which told them exactly how many bricks and assorted pieces they would need to complete the project in time for the show. From the

beginning they established that it was of the utmost importance that a metal frame be used to support the weight of the Camper's walls and roof. "It would normally take three months to build such a model, but because of the timing we had to hurry up and build through a few nights and weekends with 12 of the f.r.e.e staff as assistants because we only had six weeks to complete it.

"We used standard Lego bricks in the build and there were no special elements produced just for us or colours that don't normally exist. In theory, everyone could just walk into a Lego store, buy 400 000 bricks and build a VW camper van on their own.

"The model is supposed to be a copy of an existing vehicle that's on display at

the Volkswagen Museum. We tried to match the original car exactly including interior and all accessories, including the antenna at the correct position, lights and frames in matching colours, correct bumper size, exhaust and door handles.

"The 700 kg bus can roll, as it sits on original wheels provided by Volkswagen, but is not steered. We transported it with a low-loader to the venue and placed it with a forklift."

The Lego Camper is next set to model for a while at the Volkswagen Museum in Wolfsburg, while René is already hard at work on his next project. He didn't want to divulge too much but revealed that it's a famous point of interest in Berlin with a footprint of more than four square metres.



Have you spotted any whacky wheels on your travels? Tell us about it and send a photo to drivecamp@gomag.co.za or *go! Drive & Camp*, PO Box 740, Cape Town 8000. 📷

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