

#18 **go!**

OUR DAILY BREAD... OVER THE COALS p. 100

JANUARY 2019 | ISSUE 18

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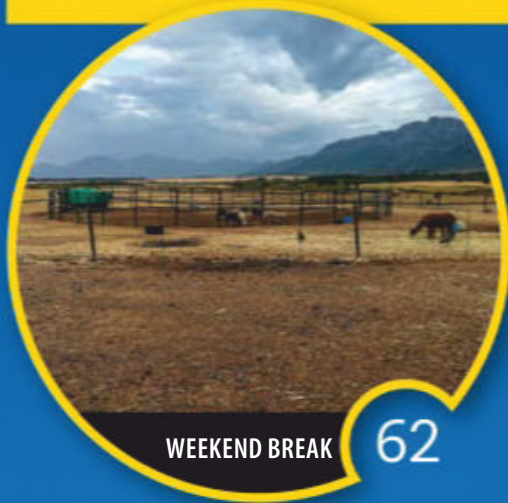
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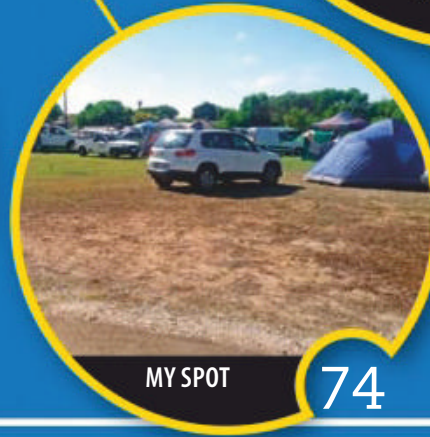
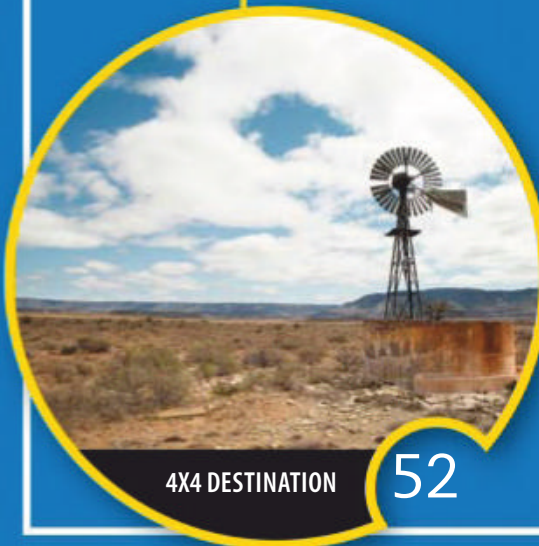
Contents

DESTINATIONS



#18 | January 2019 EVERY MONTH

ED'S LETTER	4
LETTERS	6
DIGITAL	10
MIC'S MEMOS	12
NEELS' RALLY TENT	14
NEWS	16
NEW WHEELS	28
DRIVING IMPRESSION	34
READER STORY	78
CARAVAN TEST	94
CAMP FOOD	100
GEAR	104
CAMP BOFFIN	108
4x4 PROFESSOR	110
MY WHEELS	114
YOUR PHOTO	116
CROSSWORD	119
COLUMN	136
WACKY WHEELS	138



TOW TEST



70

TRAIL GUIDE

The route begins a few hundred steps from the campsite, and you immediately start the climb to the first hurdle: a rock obstacle.

Here's to 2019!



I'm not a huge fan of New Year's resolutions, and my reasons are very simple: I'm not very good at implementing them and nothing usually comes from them anyway.

In 2018 I didn't start exercising, I certainly didn't eat healthier and I also didn't start drinking Coke Zero with my brandy. I also didn't travel to Botswana, I didn't visit the Cederberg once and all my plans to renovate our house didn't really materialise. Had I made all these resolutions at the start of last year, it would now have been a rather disappointing state of affairs. And let's be honest: there's enough in this world that's disappointing. I really don't need to reproach myself as well.

The other day I read a column on the *Chicago Tribune* website where columnist Jackie Pilossoph talks about New Year's resolutions. Jackie figures there's value to setting yourself goals for the new year, because it gives you hope, inspiration and a certain sense of purpose.

She warns, however, that you should have a thorough look at the previous year before you set your goals for the next 365 days. She suggests asking yourself a few key questions about the previous year. And, if you're honest, the answers will help you with your resolutions for the coming year. This way, you probably also won't end up blaming yourself for resolutions that turned to ash.

Did I spend enough time with my loved ones? Did I show my wife how much I love her enough? Was I present, understanding and loving as parent? Did I treat my fellow man with compassion? Did I apologise when I needed to? Did I say thank you when I needed to? Did I treat my colleagues with respect? Did I encourage people? Did I have enough fun? Did I travel enough? Did I experience enough new things?

I like Jackie's approach. And I'm looking forward to 2019. Yes, the next 12 months will undoubtedly be full of challenges, but let's control what we can and resolve – without calling it a resolution – to live every moment to its fullest and to regret nothing by the end of 2019.

Safe travels!

Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com



Later, after the kids were sent to bed, a couple of night owls watched the waning embers and listened to lions roaring in the distance.

p. 53



Main photo **Cyril Kloppe** (Karoo National Park)

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DOUBLE THE HELP IN BARRYDALE

We were on a 16-day dirt-road tour and, after experiencing many dirt roads, lots of dust and two days in Gamkaskloof, we finally reached Barrydale in the Western Cape. Next on our list was the Diesel & Crème restaurant. We turned left to park in front of the restaurant and our friends, who were travelling with us, gestured that we should stop immediately. I could tell from their expressions that something was wrong. My suspicions were confirmed. We were towing a Camp Master trailer with a roof tent, and the tent was hanging skew over the trailer.

The framework that secured the tent to the lid of the trailer had broken, probably as a result of the rough dirt roads and all the juddering. For a moment I thought our tour had come to a halt. There we were on a Saturday morning, tearing our hair out. But my husband Marius and our friend Nandes Erasmus don't give up that easily. Nandes went to the hotel to find out if they knew of anyone in town who could weld, and Marius went to Diesel & Crème on the same mission. And indeed, between the two places, we found two welders. Hennie Witbooi and Dillon Fradie Decided to team up to repair our trailer. After inspecting the damage, they drove off to find the necessary equipment. When they returned and started working, they explained to us what they were doing. Even the deputy mayor's brother Syster Everson came to offer moral support.

With thankful hearts, we left Barrydale to take the pontoon at Malgas to get to



Marius and Ronél.



Hennie, Marius, Dillon and Syster.

Struisbaai. Our sincere thanks also to the owner and manager of Diesel & Crème, and Arthur Pharo and his son Dean, who allowed us to use their electricity. Any readers who

pass through Barrydale should definitely visit this wonderful oasis.

RONÉL MOSTERT
Centurion



Winning letter

Ronél wins a Booxe Original Boot Box, valued at R1 695. This handy storage chest fits in the boot well of a Toyota Fortuner, and sits level with the floor when the lid is closed. It's just the thing for storing your recovery equipment and emergency kit. Made of durable

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THOUSANDS CAMPED WITH US!

My wife, Dina, and I decided to pay another visit to the Cape with our Toyota Hilux KZTE and Sprite Splash. We first visited our children in Pretoria on the Wednesday, and on the Friday my son Hennie posted a message on the Kamp-Mal Facebook page that his parents, now in their eighties, were once again travelling down to the Cape – people should look out for us if they wanted to catch up.

And then it happened: hordes of goodwill messages started streaming in: “Good luck”, “Pleasant trip”, “Enjoy it”, “Come pay us a visit”, “Travel safe”, “Phone this number if you need any help”, “Let us know how it goes”, “Which road are you taking?” and so many more. We even received a message from Thys van Eck who said we could have our bakkie serviced at his Motolek workshop in Stikland. By late that Friday night there were no fewer than 2 200 messages on the website. Many thanks to everyone who sent us on our way with so



many well wishes.

As our itinerary was quite tightly planned, we couldn't accept all the invitations – but nevertheless, our thanks and regards to everyone. As we travelled, we made daily enquiries about the state of the roads and, based on that, decided where we would drive and camp. Our route mostly followed the N1 to Gariep Dam and the Karoo National

Park, and then to Ou Skip caravan park in Melkbosstrand. From there, the plan was to visit our other children in the Cape. We paid Thys a quick visit and had a good chat about camping life while he serviced the bakkie. Thys didn't ask us for a single cent.

On our way home we camped at Vanrhynsdorp, then at Springbok and again at Gariep Dam. Meiringskloof was next, then Golden Gate and Drakensville. At Ermelo we said hello to sister Bets and Andrew Fraser, and then headed home via Badplaas.

Our trip covered 6 200km and we spent 40 days on the road. The odometer of our 3.0 KZTE now stands on 267 000 km and it was plain sailing all the way. As the Splash has a comfortable outside kitchen, Dina and I only put up the tent if we were staying in one place for more than three days.

ROELOF AND DINA PRETORIUS

White River

PUSH THIS BUTTON



I refer to the review of the VW Touareg in the November 2018 issue. The article states that the Touareg's traction control can't be turned off.

The traction control can be switched off. Press “Settings” on the computer's touchscreen. Then click on “Vehicle” and the first option that then appears on the screen is for the traction control. That is where you can then switch off this function.

I agree with you that the Touareg is not an off-road vehicle but occasionally you do

want to take it into the dunes.

Thank you for the trouble you take to offer a balanced review.

HENNING VAN EEDEN
Mossel Bay

Cyril Klopper, who wrote the Touareg article, says it's unfortunately not obvious how to switch off the traction control, or even partly deactivate it. Volkswagen also doesn't market the Touareg as an off-road vehicle but rather as a touring car for tarred roads and only the occasional detour onto a dirt road. - Ed



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The sound of silence



Have you ever had to report fellow campers breaking the no-noise rule to management? How was the situation handled?



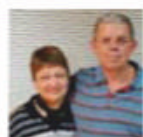
Johan Bornman

Yes, if you want to listen to music, then rather stay home. You are missing the point of camping and being one with nature.



Wilma Du Plessis Pietersen

Places should be specific and clear about what no music and what soft music is. What is soft to one might not be soft for another. Music always causes conflict in a resort.



Gert Munnik

It's happened to us twice before at Matroosberg, but Didi, the manager, and her team don't take any nonsense.



Elize Coetzee

Some people go camping to scream and shout. The younger generations especially want to party during the December holidays. It's their right, but this should be at resorts that cater for it. Some coastal campsites do allow that sort of behaviour, so enjoy it there!



Amanda Brand

Yes, at ATKV-Goudini. We were camping for 12 days and our nightmare began the first weekend. We went to management and told them to either refund us or deal with the noise makers. It wasn't long before the culprits were sent packing.



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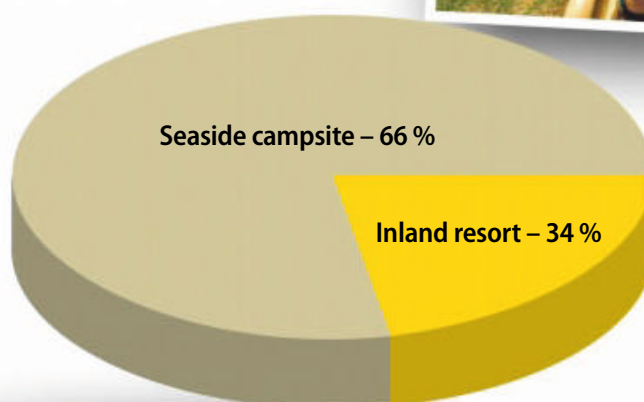
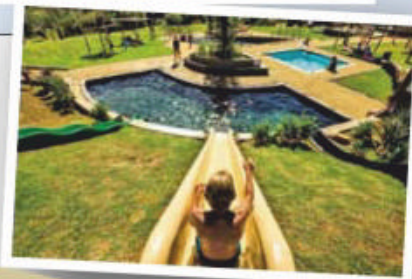


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wegrystsleep Vandag is ons besig om die nuwe Ranger Raptor te bou met @fordsouthafrica #rangerraptor

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Summertime is here and we know you want to be near water. Where do you choose to go on vacation?



COMMENT OF THE MONTH!

"I buy a vehicle to drive it, not to cause an accident with it."

The results of the latest round of NCAP tests for vehicles sold in South African caused quite a debacle online, with plenty of consumers calling for the Nissan NP300 to be axed after it scored a zero for front-passenger safety. Not everyone shares that sentiment though, like **Elbert van den Berg**.



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Let's talk springs and shocks

When it comes to your off-roader's shock absorbers, fancier is not necessarily better, says Mic van Zyl.

Last month I waxed lyrical about the new Ford Ranger Raptor's suspension. While this vehicle's suspension setup is great for bombing across rough terrain at speed, it isn't suited to overlanding as a laden 4x4 tourer.

The two main components to your off-roader that determines its ability to effectively and safely cover rough terrain are your suspension and your tyres. Your suspension is essentially your springs and shock absorbers. Simply put, the springs keep the vehicle at the correct ride height, carry the weight of the vehicle and your overlanding gear, and absorb the undulations and rough terrain while touring off-road.

Your shock absorbers control the movement of the springs and thus the vehicle. The consideration for spring selection is relatively simple and is determined by the desired ride height and the anticipated load or accessories fitted to the vehicle. The more spring you have under your 4x4, the more load you'll be able to carry. Too much spring, though, and the ride will be uncomfortable, plus the ride height may be too high and cause drive line damage. Too little spring, and you'll bottom out the suspension.

WHEN IT COMES to shock absorbers, there are more options available with varying results. Different types of shocks could have similar graphing and thus similar control over wheel and axle movement but deliver

different results in the long run.

One of the biggest factors contributing to this is oil capacity. A small shock absorber with minimal oil could find itself overheating when punished for extended periods of time. Hot oil mixed with gas through aeration is less viscous and flows too easily through the piston valving. This makes the shock absorber less effective with less control.

Putting pressure on the oil through pressurised gas can alleviate this up to a point, but prolonged punishment and overheating will damage the shock absorber permanently.

Larger shock absorbers with more oil do better as they can resist overheating for longer. A better option in extreme conditions are Foam Cell shock absorbers. Foam Cell shocks do not have a gas pressurised volume in the body of the shock. They are top filled with oil and when this oil gets hot, the entire outer body of the shock acts as a radiator to dissipate the heat build-up. With a gas-charged shock, the upper third of the shock body contains gas, which does not transfer any heat. Only the lower two thirds of the shock body are in contact with the hot oil and less heat is radiated to the passing air flow.

SHOCKS ARE EITHER twin tube or mono tube. Popular types of twin tube shocks include plain hydraulic, gas charged and foam cell. Mono tube shocks feature high pressure gas charging and may even feature a remote

reservoir. Gas-charged twin tube shocks are standard issue on most modern vehicles. Up-rated versions of these shocks are most abundantly available as an upgrade for your off-roader. Large oil capacity foam cell shocks are becoming more popular for tough conditions. High pressure gas monotube shocks are great on race cars but less suited to off-road conditions due to their susceptibility to damage.

Remote reservoir shocks are better suited to off-road racing vehicles where the remote reservoir can be mounted close to the shock and the long suspension travel also ensures sufficient pumping of the oil between the shock body and the reservoir to ensure sufficient cooling. They are less suited to overlanding vehicles due to the difficulty in mounting the remote reservoir close to the shock as well as the limited suspension travel on these vehicles.

In my experience, foam cell shocks are the best value for money and deliver the best results for overlanding. Large oil capacity ensures cool running maintaining effectiveness. Twin tube shocks stand up well to stone damage.

Fancier is not necessarily better in this case.

While this vehicle's suspension setup is great for bombing across rough terrain at speed, it isn't suited to overlanding as a laden 4x4 tourer.

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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Know the law

It is in your own best interest to keep abreast of any change in the National Road Traffic Act, says Neels van Heerden.

I recently saw a newspaper poster that read: "You may not drive with flip-flops." I consider myself a law-abiding citizen, but I never realised it's a violation – the previous day, I'd climbed into my bakkie barefoot to buy a bag of wood at the corner café.

Later I read the article, and it tells of a South African who was given a hefty fine for being caught wearing Crocs behind his Jeep's wheel on the road between Komatipoort and Maputo. He was towing an off-road trailer at the time, too.

A South African was given a hefty fine for being caught wearing Crocs behind his Jeep's wheel on the road between Komatipoort and Maputo.

The article quotes Dirk Fourie of the Facebook group DriveMoz who says South Africans need to make sure they know the Mozambican traffic rules before they visit this country as lack of knowledge is the main cause of most of the problems visitors experience there. People get nervous when a policeman or traffic cop pulls them over. Because they're not well informed, they accept anything

the officer tells them. Dirk also mentions that an official who is inclined to bribe tourists will think twice when he realises this tourist knows what's what.

Dirk's advice is to take a list of all the established offenses and their associated penalties to prevent you from being fined unfairly.

IT'S TRUE – it is indeed a violation to drive wearing flip-flops in Mozambique. Heaven knows what the fine would be if you were caught towing something barefoot...

Regular visitors to Mozambique believe you need to have nerves of steel and a lot of patience when travelling there. Small things make a difference: be courteous, respect the local people and remove your sunglasses when talking to an official. The most important thing is to ensure you obey all rules of the road. If you're not sure about the speed limit, slow down to 60 km/h.

The incident with the flip-flops had me wondering whether it's illegal on our roads, too. One of my friends owns a driving school in Pretoria and he confirms that footwear is not prescribed in the K53 guidelines. According to him, many of his young clients have successfully completed their driving tests wearing flip-flops. A few barefoot guys have apparently also passed.

WHILE ON THE topic of knowing the rules of the road: how many of us know exactly what the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (Aarto) entails?

Consider this example: a cop stops you during the December holiday at a roadblock near Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal or Beaufort West in the Western Cape. He asks whether you have an EB license to tow the Exclusive behind your Hilux.

You reply that you don't have an EB, but an EC1, and that's why it's all good. The official then brings you back to earth and tells you that Aarto has declared it illegal to tow a caravan with an EC1 license and that you will have to pay a hefty fine. He also tells you that you will incur several penalty points on your driver's license.

What do you need to know before you take out your wallet and pay the spot fine? Firstly, Aarto only applies in Johannesburg and Tshwane. The Western Cape government rejected Aarto in September. Secondly, the proposed legislation that would make it illegal to drive a lightweight vehicle with a heavy-duty vehicle license was put on ice in back in 2011 and it was never implemented.

So, keep an eye out for chancers and make sure you stay on top of what's happening with the National Road Traffic Act. 📌

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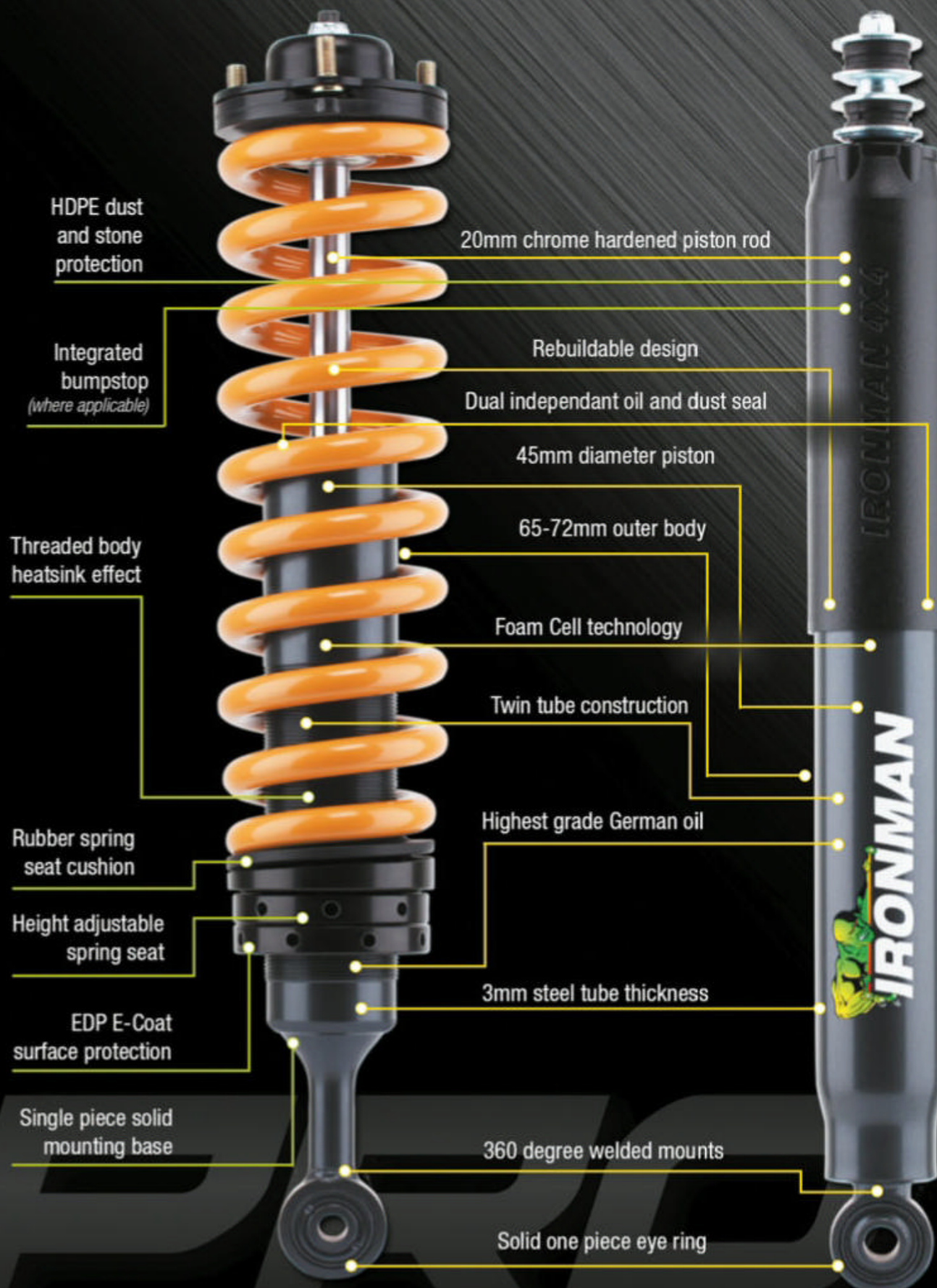
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Landrover	Discovery, Rangerover
Mazda	BT-50 2011+
Nissan	Patrol Y60 GU
Nissan	Patrol Y61 GU
Nissan	Navara D40
Nissan	D23 2017
Nissan	Patrol LDV Y61/GU
Toyota	Hilux Vigo 2005-2016
Toyota	Hilux Revo 2015+
Toyota	Fortuner 2005-2015
Toyota	Fortuner 2016+
Toyota	Landcruiser 76,78,79
Toyota	Landcruiser 80
Toyota	Landcruiser 105
Toyota	Landcruiser 200
Toyota	Prado 120
Toyota	Prado 150
Toyota	FJ Cruiser



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Bundu makes its mark...

The Hartbeespoort off-road trailer manufacturer Bundu Trailers has just launched its first off-road caravan, the Bundu X. The prototype was built a year ago, but in the meantime it's been tested thoroughly, says Arno van Rooyen, Bundu's marketing manager.

After a trip to Mozambique, the final issues were resolved, including replacing the original aluminium water tank with a purpose-built 125 l plastic tank, as the aluminium one cracked.

The chassis is made of galvanised steel, while the hull consists mainly of aluminium. The Bundu X has a door on both sides just in front of the wheel – the right one opens to the pop-up bathroom. A gas geyser is mounted on the inside of the door and you set up the shower cubicle here.

The left door is the main door. When you get in and look towards the back, the double bed is on the left with a large drawer underneath.

The outside kitchen almost takes up the entire left side. Here, two big doors flatten out to serve as a worktop. The doors hang on cables and the two-plate gas stove is mounted on the one on the left. The cupboards at the back have shelves for all your crockery and groceries. The fridge/freezer pulls out between the door and the A-frame – when it's pushed back, you can also

get to the fridge from the inside. In front, above the nose cone, a flat box is fixed on the slope and a foldout table is stored there.

An awning extends from the pop-up roof over the kitchen area, and on the roof is a 160 W solar panel. The Bundu X sleeps two and fits in a standard garage.

The numbers 5 (l) x 1,8 (w) x 2,1 m (h); tare weight 690 kg; carrying capacity 910 kg; GVM 1,8 t with a 1,8 t axle.

Price About R300 000 (not finalised before going to print).

Contact 079 735 4313

bundutrailer@lantic.net

bundutrailers.com



New camping icemaker

For campers, the name National Luna is synonymous with fridge/freezers, but now the company has released a small camping icemaker.

The icemaker consists mainly of stainless steel, uses 220 V power and weighs 8,1 kg. While the machine is working, you can peep through a transparent panel to see how the

ice cubes are made – that can take between 6 and 13 minutes, depending on the outside temperature. The icemaker works with ambient temperatures between 10 °C and 43 °C. It can churn out 12 kg of ice over 24 hours and the tank has room for 2,2 l water.

The icemaker costs R1 999 at Outdoor Warehouse and is guaranteed for three years. >



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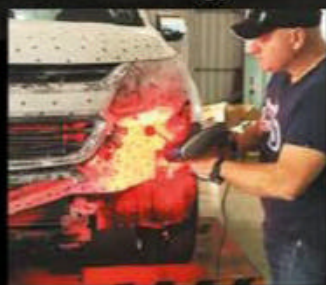
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Hardbody fails the test

The secretary general of the Global New Car Assessment Program (NCAP), David Ward, has accused car manufacturer Nissan of either having poor engineers or telling lies. This was in response to Nissan's statement after the manufacturer's NP300, or "Hardbody" as it was baptised, received 0 out of 5 stars in a crash test conducted by NCAP in October 2018.

Nissan South Africa asserted via an official statement that the safety of its customers is its top priority and all its cars comply with or exceed the safety regulations – in all the countries where they are sold.

"The Nissan NP300 is a tried and trusted partner for businesses and entrepreneurs, providing reliability and affordability. Continuous improvements are being made to the NP300 such as dual airbags and ABS brakes which are fitted as standard equipment. Nissan is studying further enhancements," read the statement.

go! Drive & Camp approached Nissan South Africa and received the same standard statement, plus an assurance that there are substantial differences between



the model used in the crash test and the NP300 test vehicle we recently received to review.

South Africa's Automotive Association (AA) and Global NCAP weren't impressed with Nissan South Africa's response and asked the United Nations Economic Commission, the African Union and the African Development Bank to convince African governments to ban the sales of all unsafe new vehicles.

In the crash test, the NP300 airbags offered no significant protection, the steering wheel pressed into the driver's chest,

the cabin was severely deformed and the lives of even the rear passengers were threatened.

Why the apparent witch hunt on Nissan South Africa? The NCAP organisation, in association with the AA, has established a campaign called Safer Cars for Africa, which aims to force car manufacturers to make new vehicles with zero stars safer. The ultimate goal is to halve the number of deaths and serious injuries on Africa's roads by 2030. Safer Cars for Africa focus only on new mass-produced vehicles and there are no plans to ban the sale

of "unsafe" second-hand vehicles.

This is not the first time that Nissan fails a safety test. The Navara got a single star in a EuroNCAP crash test in 2008 (it was actually a crossed-out star, which is almost as bad as a zero), after which Nissan updated the airbag software and it then got three. The Navara was tested again in 2015 and got four stars.

The recent test by Global NCAP was the first test of its kind on the NP300, which has been around since 1997. In October 2018, 821 NP300 bakkies were sold in South Africa and 366 were exported. >



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Eko Veld Gear has added its fourth off-road caravan, the Armadillo Lite, to its range. If you look quickly, it resembles those old collapsible caravans you used to get, but the Lite's Eko Veld Gear genes show strong.

It's almost as if the owner, Fanie Botha, cut his standard Armadillo horizontally through the middle. Indeed, says Fanie, the Lite is built on the standard Armadillo's chassis.

Eko Veld Gear initially started as a canopy manufacturer, one that also builds bakkie camper shells. For these, they used a clever mechanism to lift the sleep area's roof. This same mechanism is now used in the Lite.

When collapsed, the caravan comes up to chest height and the roof opens in two steps. First, you lift the roof at the back until it is upright. Then you walk around and lift the roof at the front and there you have it, the Lite is pitched. Both sides have gas struts that help make it easier.

The outside kitchen is, as before, on the left-hand side of the caravan. The door is also on the left, but by the rear end.

A drawer on a sliding frame emerges from the left front of the hull – it holds a single-plate gas cooker and the fridge/freezer.



Armadillo has a baby



Just to the right, above the left-hand wheel, a worktop folds out flat with a cupboard behind it in the hull (with two shelves). Inside the cupboard is a 220 V plug.

On the right-hand side, in the

cupboard right across from the kitchen, is a gas geyser fitted to the door.

A double bed is on your left as you get in. Half of the bed lifts up and away from you, which makes room for a seating area in front of the now upright bed.

The tare weight should be around 800 kg and the GVM 1 200 kg. The price has not yet been determined, but Fanie says it will be around R170 000.

Contact 021 981 5999 or 082 898 4339 ekoveldgear.co.za
info@ekoveldgear.co.za

Cara-Camp's swift sales

Cara-Camp Caravan & Outdoor Centre in the Cape has recently sold their first Swift caravan.

Swift caravans are still new to the country and are imported from England by Loftus Caravan City in Randburg. The owner of Cara-Camp, Arnold Prosch, says it's a milestone for the Cape.

The second Swift caravan also has a boss ahead. The two Swift models are the Coastline and Atlantic, and cost R579 000 and R539 000 respectively.

Cara-Camp is also the only Cape caravan dealer to sell Okto caravans of which they recently received stock.

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Enkulu gets a facelift

The owners of Infanta Trailers have revamped their smallest off-road caravan, the Enkulu 1. The outside shower mounted on the back has been moved to the right panel, and some of the equipment stored on the A-frame got a different spot: the spare wheel and gas bottle moved to the back panel. This provides more storage space on the A-frame.

Just as in Enkulu 2, this smaller version also gets a shelf for firewood at the back that extends over the entire width of the hull. The awning has been recessed deeper into the hull so you don't need to duck and dive as much when driving past bushes and branches.

It is also lower in height and easily fits in a standard garage.

The numbers 4,4 (l) x 1,9 (w) x 2,1 m (h); tare weight 610 kg; carrying capacity 990 kg; GVM 1 600 kg

Price R320 000 (fully equipped)

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infantatrailers.co.za infantatrailers.co.za



Superstrong cooler box

Tentco is a big name in the canvas tent industry, but now it's also introduced a series of cooler boxes. And it's not just any old cooler box: it's built to take a beating.

Werner Page, one of Tentco's directors, explains how it came about: "Among other things, we provide products for tour groups, owners of lodge tents and wildlife tours, and they use a lot of cooler boxes. But the quality of your average cooler box is an issue. Tentco spotted

the opportunity to have a sturdy cooler box manufactured in the East."

The series is called the Extreme Ice Box, and you can sit on them without a care, plus they won't break should they fall off a bakkie. The lids are 75 mm thick and the insulation 50 mm. They even have rubber feet to prevent them from slipping. The cooler boxes can also be locked with a set of padlocks and come with a bottle opener.

The best news? These cooler boxes are said to keep ice frozen for up to seven days and are guaranteed for five years.

Price R1 470 (20 l), R2 275 (40 l), R3 075 (60 l), R3 520 (90 l), R4 235 (120 l) and R5 180 (140 l).

Where are they available? At Tentco, but also at branches of Camp & Climb and LeisureWorld.

Contact 011 397 6451 info@tentco.co.za
tentco.co.za



Conqueror off-road campers are – for good reason – still Number 1 in South Africa!

Conqueror boasts a solid 25 years' experience in manufacturing off-road campers. They are the market leader in South Africa, due to their own manufacturing processes, export and good after-sales service.

Conqueror is at the forefront with their innovative designs, relentless field tests and unique manufacturing processes. Africa's roads are definitely not for sissies, so Conqueror campers are built strong enough to withstand not only the African bundu, but any bad road in the world. You can tow a Conqueror with absolute peace of mind; and with all its built-in luxuries, you will camp like a king.

Conqueror initially focused on building military products, and in the early 1990s they applied this know-how to building new campers. The first Conqueror campers went on sale during the Nampo harvest festival, and within six months they became South Africa's top seller. The company's methods have even been incorporated by other manufacturers in the industry. Conqueror stays ahead of the pack by being cognizant of the latest trends.

Four highly specialised engineers and three programmers have now joined the design team, to set the bar even higher.

Conqueror's factories encompass almost a full hectare (10 000 m²), where more than 170 well-trained staff bring these campers to life with streamlined and unique manufacturing processes. These include materials such as galvanised steel, aluminium and stainless steel, hot-dip galvanizing on the chassis and epoxy powder-coating for the panels. These panels are joined, among other methods, with a special polyurethane sealant – the same method used in aviation. The layer is strong enough to absorb all the stress on the bodywork from severe towing conditions.

Conqueror campers, unlike most other campers on the road, do not just have a spare wheel. The wheel includes a complete wheel boss with the bearings. A high-pressure fan ensures that the camper stays dust-free while you're towing, and the harness coupling to the towing vehicle is made of waterproof rubber. The 24

A power pack is custom-made and is able to work with either alternating and direct current (AC/DC), and you are able to see how much power the



system is drawing and supplying. In fact, this system is so sophisticated and modern that it even works with an app from your smartphone for you to control. Conqueror also uses patented, independent suspension that has been tried and tested time and again, and the tent material is of military grade. To emphasize the quality, Conqueror backs their products with a three-year structural guarantee.

Conqueror has built almost 17 000 campers since 1996, some of which have been exported all around the world, including Australia – where it won Camper of the Year – Canada, Europe, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and the USA. Conqueror also took top honours as the *The Great Outdoors Guide's* Caravan of the Year 2017/2018 and they came both first and second in the trailer category!

Conqueror does not let the grass grow under its feet, and is launching an additional luxury off-road caravan range at the Holiday Makers Expo in February 2019.

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Pretoria 012 567 1378 or 082 442 5713

Southern Cape (Mooiwa George) 044 050 0071

Namibia (Off-Road Centre) 00 26 46 123 7532



Son of Amarok

Volkswagen unveiled its new Tarok Concept bakkie at the São Paulo International Motor Show in Brazil. This double cab bakkie is noticeably smaller than the Amarok and has a unique feature: The rear seats fold forward to reveal an opening between the cabin and the load bed for long items like surfboards, and so on.

"With its striking Targa-inspired roof bar, charismatic front end, three-dimensional LED lighting strip in the rear, and powerful yet stylish side panels, the Tarok Concept's expressive design makes it the first pickup to combine the stylistic elements of an urban SUV with an authentic off-road design," says Klaus Bischoff, chief designer at Volkswagen.

The Tarok is powered by a 1.4 l turbocharged four-cylinder engine that generates 110 kW. (This engine meets Brazil's need to burn clean ethanol or an ethanol-petrol mixture.) It also features a six-speed automatic transmission and Volkswagen's 4Motion All-Wheel Drive.

According to a press release, Brazil will soon receive a production version powered by a 2 l turbodiesel.

Is the Tarok headed for South Africa? VW hasn't yet decided which countries will get it, but we hope we won't have to wait as long as we do for the Renault Duster bakkie, which also hails from South America. >



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An end to getting carsick

According to the lab coats at Jaguar Land Rover, cars will soon be able to warn you if motion sickness is about to strike – before you feel it yourself – and could even take steps to make you feel better.

Spencer Salter, a wellness technology researcher at Jaguar Land Rover, says that 70% of people suffer from motion sickness but, until recently, very little information was available about the causes and treatment. However, Jaguar Land Rover made a breakthrough and developed biometric sensors that monitor the behaviour of motorists and then employ an algorithm that predicts whether an occupant will suffer from motion sickness.

It is generally assumed that motion sickness is caused by conflicting information sent to the brain by the inner ear, skin and muscles. This confusion then causes nausea, and it is especially common when passengers read a book in a moving vehicle.

Exactly how this system will work isn't yet clear, but seat positions, cabin vibration and subtle sound adjustments will form part of the solution.

Other car manufacturers, including Ford, have been researching this ailment for ages. The Ford Research and Innovation Center in Germany is working with motion-sickness experts from Norway to find the exact cause of this issue. Most of their findings come as no surprise: Factors including uneven speed, winding roads and where in the vehicle you sit have a significant influence. They also found that babies don't get motion sickness (it only starts when they can walk), and goldfish are especially susceptible... Don't ask.

The likelihood of passengers in the back getting sick is decidedly higher than those in front. They also confirmed that home remedies, such as ginger or sugary drinks work well to combat it.

And then, of course, there is also Prof Jelte Bos' unpopular opinion. He participated in Ford's research and claims many kids get sick because of their parents' bad driving. The Prof reckons you should adopt a smoother driving style so they don't get sick and by doing so you'll improve fuel economy to boot!

EKO's new owner

The Cape canopy manufacturer EKO Aluminium Canopies was bought by Extreme Outdoor Gear in October 2018.

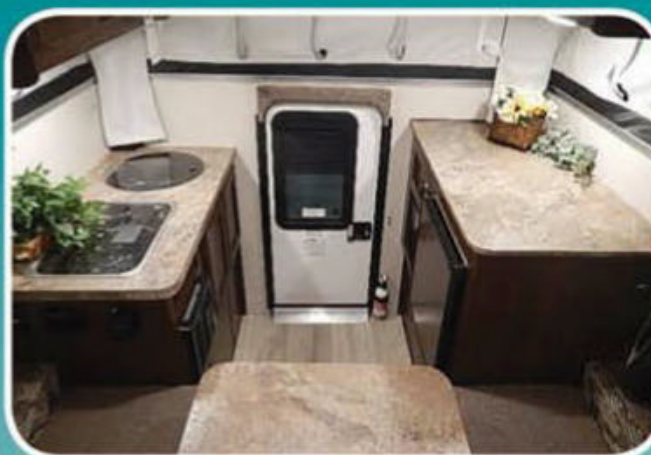
The new managers – Keith Davies, Jason Collie and Nick van der Linde – are all from Extreme Outdoor Gear and they also all cut their teeth in the boat industry. EKO will be teaming up with Namib Outdoor. Namib Outdoor is one of Extreme Outdoor Gear's business interests that focus on fully equipped off-road vehicle and trailer rentals.

EKO has been making canopies for a wide range of vehicles for a number of years.





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The fantastic 4

BMW has long been a pioneer when it comes to creating vehicles in almost every niche. This has paid off for the Bavarian brand, and the new X4 is no exception.

Text Kyle Kock

Although BMW's X range may have started off 20 years ago as one of the first viable luxury SUVs, the initial offerings like the X5, and then the X3, fell into the traditional concept of what an SUV should look like.

But the increasing global popularity of these vehicles over the last few years has caused manufacturers to scramble for expanded ideas of the SUV – forcing them to think outside the box, if you will.

By buying into those groundbreaking ideas early, BMW has almost been unstoppable when it comes to developing fresh concepts for this burgeoning segment of the market – paying dividends both locally and abroad.

The X range accounted for more than 30% of BMW's total sales in 2017, (the X4 alone has managed to sell around 200 000 vehicles worldwide since 2014) but that doesn't mean the company is kicking back

and enjoying its success. It hasn't even been four years since the first generation X4 was unleashed on the local market, but its successor is already available locally.

Here's what you can expect from the latest model, which we drove at the local launch on the highways and byways of KwaZulu-Natal.

Form and function

Depending on your taste, the X4 is either easy on the eyes (read: absolutely gorgeous), or completely repulsive. But whether you like it or not, you just cannot tear your eyes away from it. The BMW styling department went all out on this one. There are more strong horizontal lines, and with a longer wheelbase

to work with, the X4's designers have managed to create a more dynamic-looking vehicle – even when it's standing still.

The glasshouse along the profile is narrower than that of its predecessor, and the overall impression you get is that the new X4 is lower, longer and wider. That's because it is. But the updated exterior has the positive side effect of also lowering the X4's drag coefficient, which is important for increasing performance and fuel efficiency.

Cosy, clever cabin

The cabin is exactly what we've come to expect from BMW: driver-focused and finished with a satisfying quality that makes the occupants feel like they've made it big.



BMW X4



SNUG FIT. The X4 can seat five adults, but best is four in utmost comfort. The X4's design is dynamic, and that ethos carries on through to the cabin.



You can have your X4 specced in one of three levels: standard, M Sport and M Sport X. The M Sport package is the one we experienced at the X4's local introduction, and that sees the addition of a steering wheel in the typical fashion of the company's go-faster division. It's endowed with a rim that's noticeably thicker and chunkier than the standard offering, and also implies that you take your driving a little more seriously than most.

The seats are also special BMW M jobs, with thick bolsters for your back and legs so you can throw the X4 around corners with the confidence that you're not going to end up slamming into your front-seat passenger.

You also get access to a raft of cool technologies from BMW's Connected Drive system. This includes the BMW Connected App that acts as a kind of mobile butler that starts to learn your preferred driving routes, allows you to lock and unlock the

doors remotely, and even gives door-to-door guidance from your parking area right up to the front door of your destination.

Real Time Traffic Information via the navigation system on the infotainment screen is also available. Apple's CarPlay is an option (R4 300), as is the BMW Display Key that will show you how much fuel and range you've got left in your tank (R3 650).

Fast and flowing forte

There are three engine options available in the X4: the 2 ℓ-turbo-petrol four cylinder that comes with the X4 xDrive20i (135 kW and 290 Nm), the 2 ℓ-turbo-diesel four-cylinder from the X4 xDrive20d (140 kW and 400 Nm), and the range-topping 3 ℓ-turbo-petrol straight six in the X4 M40i (265 kW and 500 Nm).

All three models make use of an 8-speed automatic transmission to send torque to all four corners via a new version of BMW's

xDrive all-wheel drive system.

BMW's also gone the extra proverbial mile to make the on-road experience a lot more dynamic. The new X4 is up to 50 kg lighter than the previous generation and that, along with the Variable Sport Steering (standard across the range), as well as options like the Adaptive M suspension system and M Sport Differential, means that BMW is serious about making the X4 as fun as possible, especially if you're into tackling mountain passes at pace.

Briefly

The X4, like the other even-numbered X models, might have been a pioneer in its specific niche, but it's no longer the sole occupant of that segment. Why would you consider an X4? Well, if you're not into following the norm, and have more of a need for speed than the average SUV owner, then the X4 might just be up your alley.



SPECIFICATIONS

Engine.....	1 995 cc four-cylinder, turbo-diesel
Power	140 kW @ 4 000 rpm
Torque	400 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission	8-speed automatic
Ground clearance.....	204 mm
Tank	60 litres
Fuel consumption	5,6 litres/100 km
Top speed.....	213 km/h
Acceleration 0-100 km/h	8,0 secs
Service plan	5 years/100 000 km

PRICES

X4 xDrive20i	R843 000
X4 xDrive20d.....	R843 000
X4 M40i	R1 132 800

The Duster gets a dust off



RENAULT DUSTER

The French are famous – even infamous – for their fashionable clothes and cars, but with the Renault Duster it's as if they realised a good pair of Grasshoppers will get you far in Africa, says Pierre Steyn.

Atendency in today's society is to want to stand out. The uniqueness of the individual must be emphasised. If you don't shine, you'll be overwhelmed, unnoticed, by the masses.

Bull, says Renault with its Duster. Not everyone wants to pay thousands of bucks to be able to boast on Instagram with a pair of Kanye West's Yeezy Boost 350 V2s. (*Not to worry, I've already Googled: They are takkies that some hip hop artist designed for Adidas. And it costs far more than a pair of shoes is supposed to cost. – Ed.*) There are a lot of people who are happy with Grasshoppers and even happier that Instagram will never find them.

These types of people look for value for money when they buy a car, or shoes. They want something that can do a bit of everything quite well, a vehicle that will last. Not too salty. Not too sweet. Just right.

The Renault Duster is the car Goldilocks

would have chosen. Not too swanky. Not too expensive. But just right for our roads here in South Africa. Since the Duster made its appearance here in 2013, 15 000 South Africans have voted with Goldilocks and bought one, making it one of the most popular SUVs in our country. And now there's a new version, and it faithfully follows the recipe of its predecessor.

On the outside

The new Duster retains its stocky shape, reminding you that it is an SUV that's not afraid of dirt roads. Some of its wrinkles have been ironed out, however, and it makes it appear more modern. The completely redesigned LED strips in the front and back play a big role in this, as well as the 17-inch alloy wheels on the more expensive models.

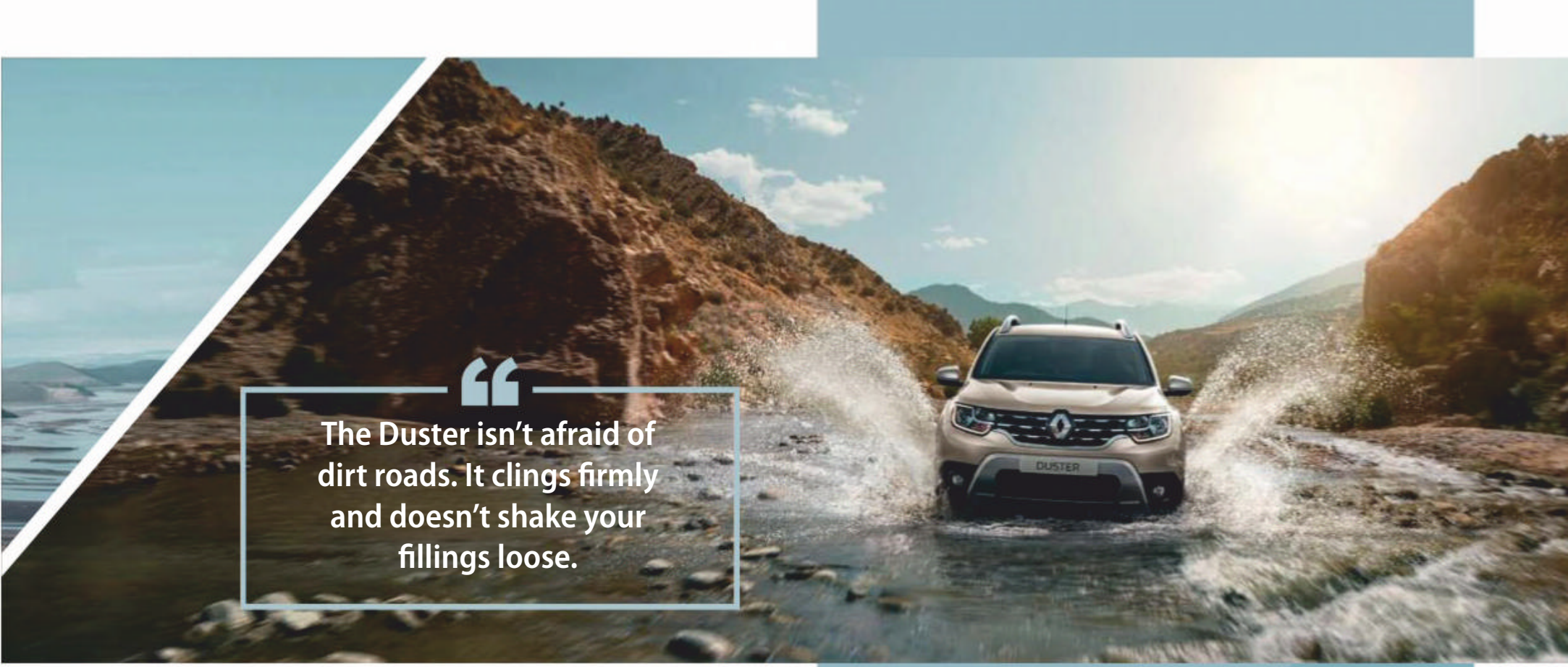
The interior

This is where Renault paid a lot of attention to things including seats, surfaces, the

entertainment system and layout of the instrumentation. The seats are certainly comfortable (we can say that with great confidence, because we've got two old Dusters in the *go! Drive & Camp* garage in which we've travelled thousands of kilometres) with more support for your lower back and sides. You can also opt for leather (at just over R10 000). The interior surfaces no longer feel like Tupperware when you press down on it, and the materials used are consistently of a higher quality.

The Duster has always been a spacious car inside, with good head- and legroom in front and back, and the new one has more luggage space (478 ℓ, even before you fold down the back seats).

The car's infotainment system is now more visible, because it sits above the air conditioner's controls. You can easily connect your phone via Bluetooth or USB, and navigation comes standard on the more expensive Dynamique and Prestige models.



“
The Duster isn't afraid of dirt roads. It clings firmly and doesn't shake your fillings loose.”

Under the hood

The range starts with a 1.6 ℓ petrol engine at R249 900, and all other models have Renault's 1.5 ℓ diesel engine. There is a 4x4 model that will be launched this month, but the Prestige, with a new automatic dual-clutch gearbox, is the most dear in the series at R334 900.

At its launch at Sabie, we only got the chance to drive the flagship model, the 1.5 dCi Prestige 4x2, on gravel road and long drives on tar. The engine, which will also be in the 4x4, supplies 80 kW and 250 Nm of torque. Performance and especially gear changes have improved, but it's still not a car for the fast lane. Its fuel consumption is good, however, with Renault claiming it is less than 5 ℓ/100 km.

How does it ride?

This is probably where the biggest improvement comes in. Despite the fact that the chassis is the same as its predecessor, Renault's think tanks have reduced the noise levels inside the car, thereby making the ride more comfortable.

It's especially noticeable when driving on the highway at a 120 km/h and you can now hear yourself think. The Duster isn't afraid of dirt roads either. It clings firmly and doesn't shake your fillings loose.

Conclusion

This isn't the car for you if you're battling a midlife crisis and want to turn the heads of beautiful young people. If you start going too fast, the car starts to sway when you go around bends.

But you're not Sebastian Vettel. You're here to drive your family safely from home to the shopping centre or school or work or church, and not to race. And this the Duster does very well at an excellent price. 🚗

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	1.5 dCi Prestige 4x2
Engine	1 461 cc, four-cylinder turbodiesel
Power	80 kW @ 4000 rpm
Torque	250 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Top speed	169 km/h
Fuel consumption	4,8 ℓ/100 km
Tank	50 ℓ
Ground clearance	279 mm
Warranty	5 years/150 000 km
Service plan	3 years/45 000 km

Prices

Duster 1.6 Expression 4x2	R249 900
Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4x2	R282 900
Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4x2 (automatic)	R316 900
Duster 1.5 dCi Prestige 4x2 (automatic)	R334 900





TYRE EXPERT:

THE NUMBER ONE TYRE FEATURE NO-ONE TALKS ABOUT

Puncture resistance, payload capacity, heat tolerance, body roll, steering response and pressure performance... are just some of the features directly linked to the construction of a tyre's carcass.

Yet, despite the obvious relevance of these features off-road, you'll seldom hear any mention of carcass construction in a camp-fire debate or off-road tyre test.

So, what gives? Why are so many people (including tyre dealers and 4x4 magazines) ignoring the one thing that accounts for up to 70% of a tyre's strength and performance?

Answer: Because it's a difficult thing to gauge.

The carcass of a tyre is the foundation on which the rest of the tyre's design is built; and much like when buying a house, there's not much you can do visually to determine if the foundation is solid.

Similarly, a tyre's carcass is a difficult thing to gauge without cutting the tyre in half. But before you cast the subject aside as an "unfortunate unknown", the truth is that there is an effective way of gauging a tyre's carcass strength. So effective, in fact, that the numbers literally speak for themselves.

LOAD RATING

A quick glimpse at the sidewall of any all-terrain and mud-terrain will reveal a load-rating figure between 1 100kg and 1 700kg.

Typically, most OE all-terrains and factory-fitted SUV/bakkie tyres will hover around the 1 100kg mark. In contrast, most aftermarket (Light Truck) brands, such as Cooper, will vary between 1 300kg and 1 700kg per tyre. So, if a high Load Rating is so important, why aren't vehicle manufacturers fitting stronger tyres to their 4x4 models?

It's a good question, and the answer is quite simple: economics. Most vehicle manufacturers are doing their utmost to minimise costs while remaining competitive in price, fuel-economy and comfort. That said, vehicle manufacturers generally source a tyre for the following qualities:

- They must be low cost
- They must be lightweight for better fuel economy, and
- They must be relatively "soft" for better on-road comfort.

However, this raises another question: If four OE tyres can handle 4 400 kg in total, isn't that more than enough? The Gross Vehicle



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Mass of a typical double-cab is about 3 000 kg.

That may be true in a numbers game, but do you really want to push your tyres to the limit in a remote, off-road environment that has a high concentration of hazards and obstacles? Tyre-failure is far more likely to happen on a steep, rocky track when the weight of your vehicle is predominately on the front tyres, and you're forced to make static steering inputs over sharp rocks.

Many of us also add heavy accessories to our vehicles with auxiliary fuel tanks, water tanks, aftermarket bumpers, a winch, an extra spare wheel – and of course, we may also attach an off-road trailer or caravan.

The load-capacity of a tyre is directly linked to its air-pressure rating. A tyre with a Load Rating of 1 100kg will most likely have a maximum air pressure rating of 3 bar. By way of contrast, a Cooper S/T MAXX with a Load Rating of 1 400 kg will safely hold 5 bar. That's roughly 30% more strength than an OE tyre.

But the benefits of a high Load Rating don't end there...

DEFLATION, HEAT AND PUNCTURE RESISTANCE

Although many tyre manufacturers object to the practice of tyre deflation, there's no contesting the benefits of deflating one's tyres off-road.

A DEFLATED TYRE WILL:

- Vastly improve off-road traction
- Dramatically increase off-road comfort
- Improve puncture-resistance significantly
- Reduce stresses transferred to your shock absorbers, and
- Greatly reduce cut and chip damage off-road

But how much should one deflate off-road? Sadly, there's no one-size-fits-all answer to that question, but the short answer is: As much as you can without compromising the structural integrity of the tyre.

So, the ability to deflate a tyre off-road is in direct proportion to the risk of deflating in the first place, i.e. heat damage.

The more you deflate a tyre, the greater your chance of generating dangerous heat levels within the sidewall, and thus the greater the risk of causing total tyre failure. This is particularly true in very hot climates where road temperatures can reach 60°C plus. Of course, the amount of weight your vehicle is carrying, and the speed at which you drive, will also determine how much you can deflate before



ABOVE: You can determine your tyre's load capacity by looking for the small print on the sidewall.

RIGHT: Generally speaking, a Light Truck tyre boasts a far stronger construction than a Passenger or SUV alternative. Look for the letters 'LT' when purchasing a tyre for heavy off-road use.

CUTAWAY VIEW: Budget tyres typically use budget steel cords, rather than high-tensile steel. This feature also determines the tyre's carcass strength and load-bearing capacity.



heat becomes a problem.

Needless to say, a tyre with a strong carcass and high Load Rating will radically outperform a weaker tyre in terms of staying cool, and allowing more deflation without generating as much heat. That means more traction, more comfort off-road, more shock-protection, fewer punctures, and less cut- and chip damage from a tyre that's better constructed to endure the stresses of off-road deflation.

Next month, we'll look more closely at cut and chip damage – what causes it, how to prevent it, and why some tyres are more prone to it than others.

Until then, you can send your tyre-related queries to marketing@tyrelife.co.za or for more expert tyre advice visit www.tyrelife.co.za

Regards,

The TyreLife Team



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Name-changer

Now operating under the auspices of Isuzu Japan – and not General Motors – Isuzu South Africa has changed the moniker of the legendary KB bakkie to D-Max, as it's called in the rest of the world.

Text Kyle Kock

So where does the name come from? Well, we can thank the Thai market for that. The 2000 model Isuzu pickup was launched internationally with the D denoting its so-called dragon-eye flush headlamp design, but which also represented the carmaker's prowess in diesel engine building and direct injection. The Max was a nod to the company's maximum approach to design, size, durability, comfort and line-up.

Okay, so it's not the most creative term out there, but it's become synonymous in all markets except ours. Changing the name of a tried, tested and trusted product is a massive gamble, which is why Isuzu decided to up the ante in a few other departments, and they've also launched a few more models – with the overall line-up now boasting a mammoth 30 vehicles.

We drove the most expensive model in the range, the D-Max 300 4x4 double cab LX – with the new six-speed automatic transmission.

It sort of looks the same

The design team has added enough subtle updates for this to be considered a mild facelift – most noticeably so on the range-topping LX.

Up front, the grille has a bit more chrome – the ends of which have been shaped into a sort of fang to add a little more aggression. Instead of being on the inner edges of the fog-lamp housing, the chrome detailing has been moved to the outer side, and the chrome strip on the upper edge of the bi-LED headlamp (with LED daytime running lights) is more prominent thanks to the overall unit being redesigned as well.

But it's nicer inside

It's a fact that if you want to play in the premium section of any segment of the new vehicle market, then you're going to have to include soft-touch surfaces in your model, and that's exactly what Isuzu's done with the fascia of the D-Max. There's no nasty, thin plastic, and even the hard sections feel solid and as if they'll last for plenty of trips on rough gravel roads. The D-Max also proudly displays its name with a contrasting plaque on the upper glove box, and there's a glossy black trim, as well as chromed details throughout.

Another noticeable aspect is the inclusion on an 8 inch touchscreen that replaces the outgoing 6,5 inch version in the D-Max's predecessor, but if you have the means, rather opt for the 9 inch Alpine infotainment system, which comes with satellite navigation on top of the usual AM/FM radio, Bluetooth connectivity, dual USB, auxiliary and HDMI inputs.

On the road

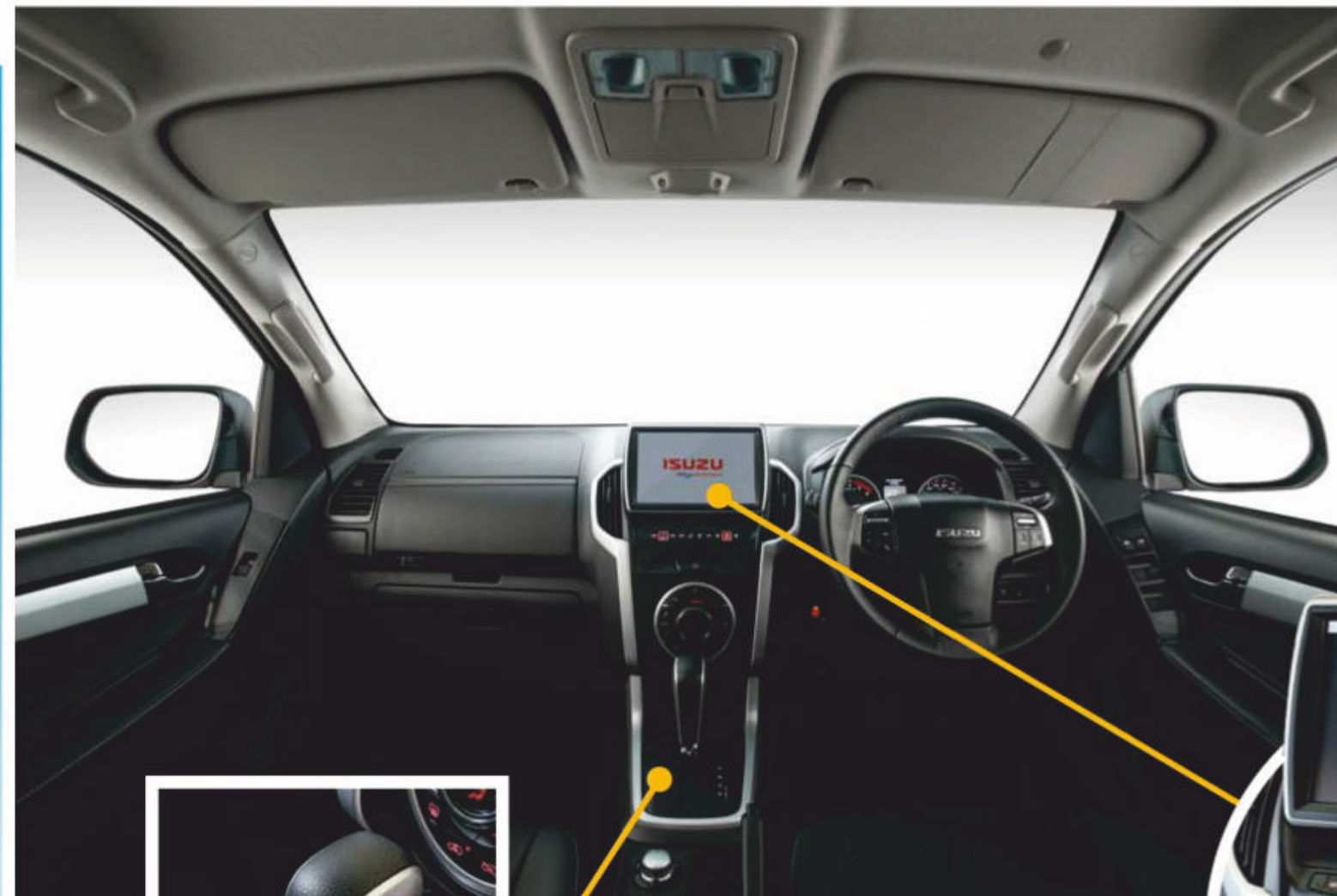
The 3.0 l engine is definitely not lazy, and starts to feel strong at around 1 400 rpm, though a tad noisy. But that's also been an Isuzu thing really, and the diesel clatter is not really too noticeable at freeway speed. The manual gearbox with its long throw and late biting point on the clutch feels a little old school and agricultural when we drove an extended cab model, but the six-speed transmission makes light work of the shifting duties.

If you really need to keep the engine on the boil with the automatic transmission, then you pull the lever towards you and down to drop a cog >



Isuzu DMax

PREMIUM TOUCHES. The D-Max's cabin borrows plenty from the outgoing KB, with a few elements that add perceived quality, including soft-touch panels on the fascia, contrasting silver or chromed plastic trim and, on the range-topping model, a large infotainment screen. Only those who look closely will be able to spot the differences up front, which include the use of way more chrome elements.



DRIVING IMPRESSION

in case you're towing a particularly heavy caravan up a mountain pass.

And off it

We were allowed to access restricted sections of the Kruger National Park for a little off-road driving, but sadly the tracks didn't offer up too much of a challenge for the D-Max, so we'll have to wait it out till we can properly put it through its paces. We did get a chance to shift on the fly, however, and that's easily achieved by rotating the knob next to the gear selector.

In closing

This isn't really a goodbye, because the KB hasn't really left us. Instead, the D-Max is more of an evolution of one of South Africa's favourites. Overlanders will be particularly excited to hear that Isuzu's teamed up with 4x4 Mega World to offer up a range of manufacturer-approved accessories, including Old Man Emu suspension systems, ARB bumpers and Front Runner roof racks and Intensity spotlights – which you can have professionally fitted at any Isuzu dealership and obviously won't void your warranty. And for that we salute the D-Max!



ROOM FOR MORE. The D-Max caters for the whole family, with ISOFIX anchor points on the outer seats of the rear bench. The clever dual glove box is a handy way to keep some of your more precious items safe while granting access to the more expendable stuff. The engine is no ball of fire, but predictable and reliable – exactly what our market values.



The 3.0 litre engine is definitely not lazy and starts to feel strong around 1 400 rpm, though a tad noisy.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested	D-Max 300 LX 4x4 DC AT
Engine.....	3.0 l turbodiesel, four cylinder
Power	130 @ 3 600 rpm
Torque	320 @ 1 800 rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Fuel consumption	7,8 l/100 km
Tank	80 l
Ground clearance.....	220 mm
Approach and departure angle	30 degrees/22,7 degrees
Wading depth	600 mm
Tare weight	2 100 kg
Top speed.....	n/a
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	n/a
Warranty.....	5 years/120 000 km
Service plan	5 years/90 000 km
Price	R606 400



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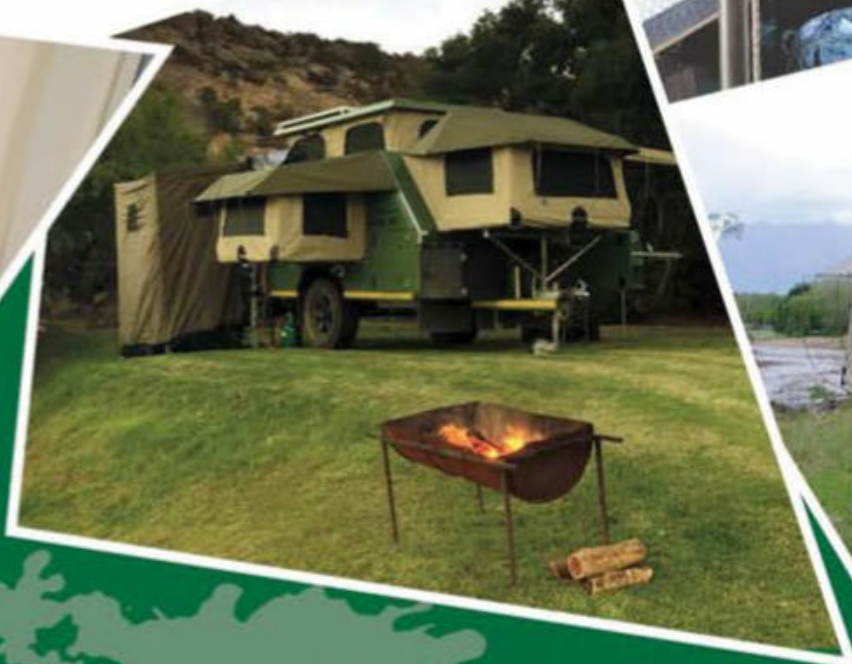
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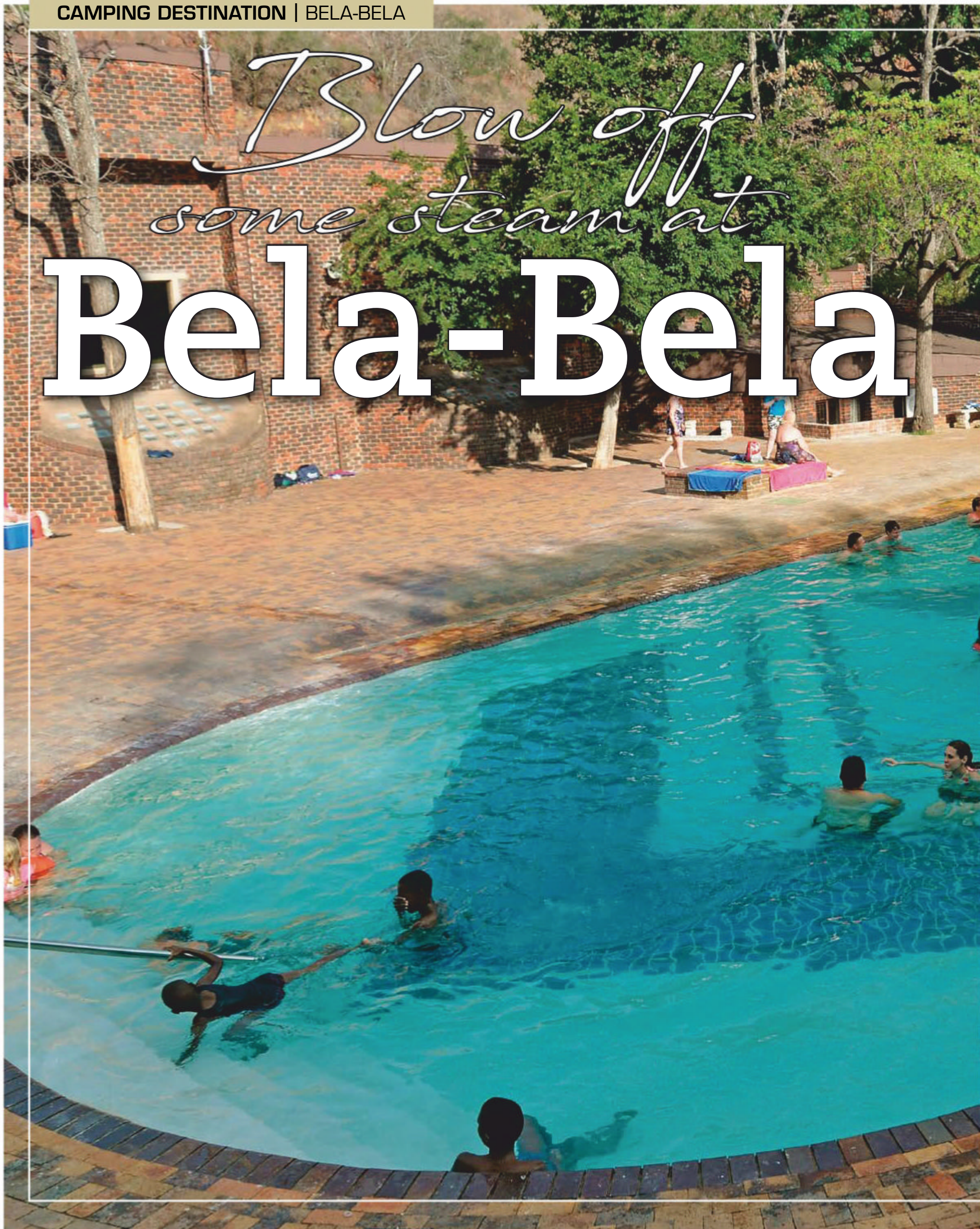


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*Blow off
some steam at*
Bela-Bela





The Bushveld overflows with popular campsites, and nowhere is it more so than at around Bela Bela.

Text and photos **Schalk Jonker**

You don't need much of an invitation to go camping in the Bushveld. Not many things can compare to watching the flames of a camp fire while the sun set behind the mountains. Some people refer to this as a Bosveld TV, it's *that* good.

Ask your children's opinion, however, and you'll find they're significantly less interested in the Bushveld TV, and prefer to play around on super tubes and hot-water pools.

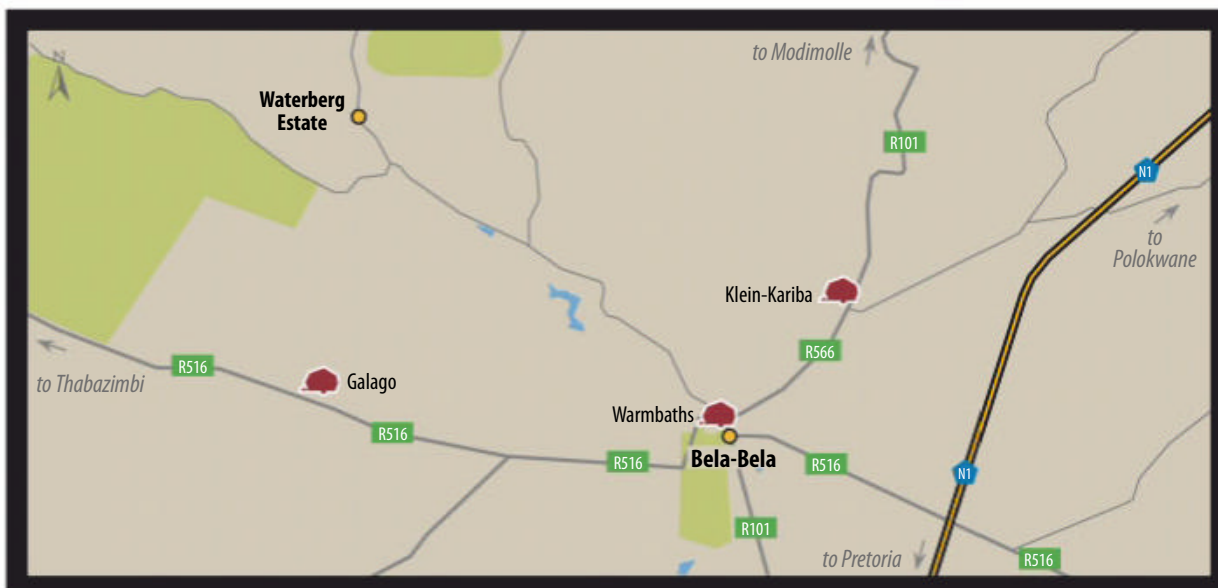
Here at Bela-Bela, all types and tastes are accommodated.

ATKV KLEIN-KARIBA RESORT Pleasant and popular

This well-known ATKV resort is one of the most popular campsites in South Africa, and it's not hard to see why so many people come here. It lies just over an hour's drive from Pretoria and is a perfect example of family entertainment. Here you get activities and choices for everyone, no matter their age.

Between the hot- and cold-water pools, super tube, mini golf, game drives, hiking trails, mashie golf, horse riding, paintball and pedal boats on the dam (where you can go fishing), there is no excuse for anyone in your party to complain that they are bored.

Klein-Kariba sits on a wildlife farm of nearly 600 ha and is less than 10 km from >



Bela-Bela on the Modimolle road. Turn left at the gate and complete the paperwork at reception, where you'll also get your pre-assigned stand number.

The caravan park is laid out in a long strip parallel to a stream that flooded its banks in March 2014 and left large-scale destruction in its wake. The disaster caused more than R50 million in damages and also claimed two lives, but the resort has since been completely restored.

The stands are located on both sides of the road that runs through the resort, with those to the right mostly larger than those on the left. Some of the left-hand sites are also divided into two, but they're mostly given to tents.

There is not much grass to speak of, but every stand has a paved slab where you park your caravan. You can see that the trees – including bushwillow, thorn and karee – weren't planted yesterday; you get shade sometime during the day

JUST LIKE HOME. It's easy to see why ATKV Klein-Kariba is such a popular destination. The campsite is neat and clean, the resort staff are friendly and helpful, and there is plenty for the whole family to see and do.

on most sites. Some stands also have large shade cloths and there are even sewer connections.

You've barely stopped before the resort's workers are there to help you set up camp. The blue electrical socket may be some distance from your stand, so remember to bring an extension cord.

You'll find a steel braai with a grid that you can drag to wherever you want it, and you share a bin with your neighbour. Speaking of neighbours... when it comes to privacy, there's not much space between the sites and you're constantly aware of each other's doings.

If you have pulled the short straw and ended up next to eight guys celebrating Pete's bachelor party for the weekend,





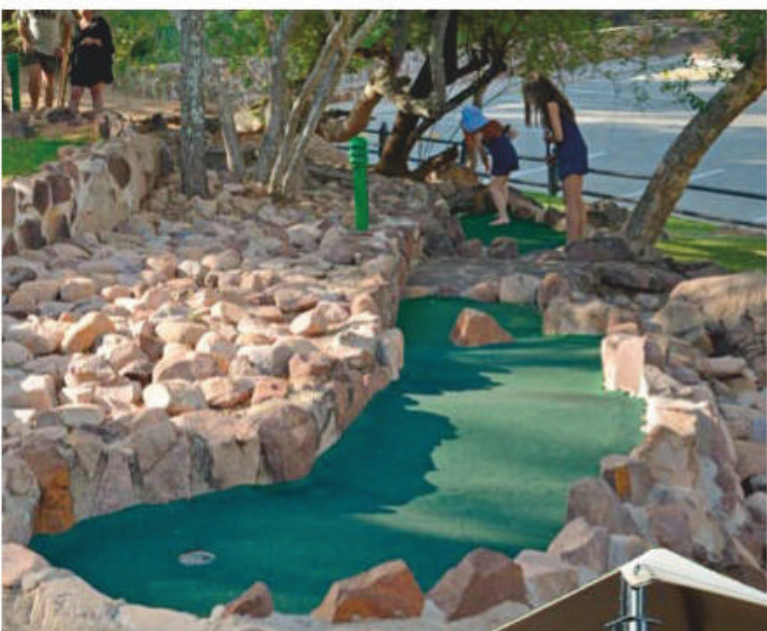
the security staff, who are strict, will soon put an end to any loud noises or music.

Remember to bring the children's bikes. Kids can cycle around freely, but the bikes also come in handy considering the campsite isn't right next to the playground and swimming pools.

Keep your tent closed and store food securely when you're not at your stand. The monkeys can be a real nuisance, and there's a guy walking around with a paintball gun to chase them away. Resist the temptation to tackle the monkeys with a kettie yourself, it's not allowed.

Stuff to do

The swimming pool area is the biggest attraction here and this is where your kids – and you – will spend most of your time. It's a good 500m walk from the campsite to the first heated pool and you walk past it up a hill to the big warm-water pool which is the centre of all the action. Here you'll find a big lawn around the pool with wonderful shady trees where you can settle in while the kids swim.



The swimming pool area is the biggest attraction here and this is where your kids – and you – will spend most of the time.

Next door is the little one's swimming area. This has a shade cloth drawn over it and also has its own slide, and on the other side of the big pool is the indoor pool where the water is even warmer. You're not allowed to play ball here or make big splashes.

The supertube and mini golf course are a little further up the hill.

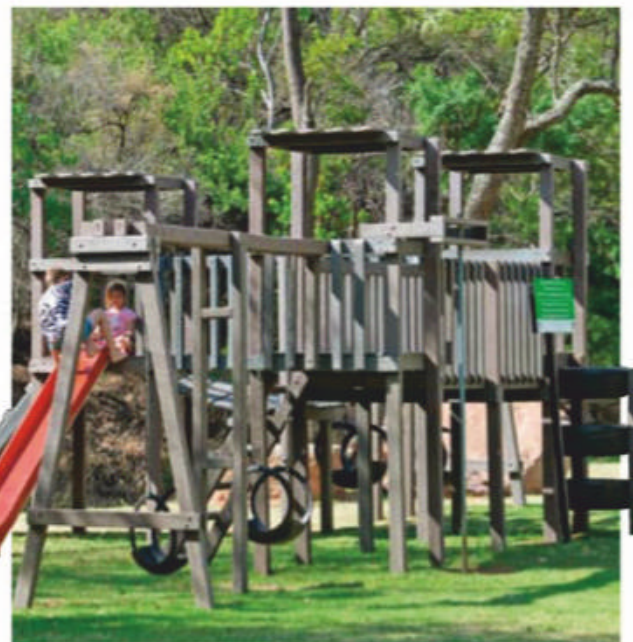
The entrance to the shop is on the other side of the indoor pool. The shop is exactly what you'd expect from an ATKV resort's store and you can buy anything from frozen meat to wood, booze, sunblock and even your favourite magazine (this one, hey?). There's also an ATM and card facilities.

The games room is next to the shop and the children can challenge one another at the pool table or play video games and table football.

The restaurant, Koswerf, is also in this section of the resort and you can come here for breakfast, lunch or dinner. The shop and restaurant were both renovated after the 2014 flood damage.

If you brought your fishing gear, you can cast your line in the dam on the other side of the campsite.

You can catch black bass, but you have to return it to the drink after taking a selfie with it. There are also >



CAMPING DESTINATION | BELA-BELA



KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN AND SWING THROUGH. Bring your clubs with and play a round on the mashie course. If golf isn't your thing then pack in your rods and see if you can hook a black bass at the dam.



pedal boats for hire here.

Avid golfers can bring their clubs and refine their short-game on the mashie course, or you can explore on a quad bike or go on a game drive. Arrange it all at reception.

There are five good hiking trails in and around the resort, ranging from half an hour's quiet walk to one that can take longer than three hours.

Cleaning up

There are two modern ablution blocks in the campsite with more or less the same facilities, and they're kept clean. The first one is in the middle of the lower section of the caravan park and the second one is higher up.

In the men's facilities, there are four sinks as well as a lower one where Junior can brush his teeth and comb his hair. The basins have soap and paper towels. There are five toilets, three urinals plus a lower one so little boys don't have to tippy-toe.

The six shower stalls are all narrow and quite tight, but there's always a guy with a mop to keep the floor dry. A glass door separates the

wet and dry sections and there are three hooks behind the door for your towel and clothes.

For the women, there are seven toilets, four sinks (and one for the kids), four showers, a mirror with a separate sink and two three-point sockets. Plus there's a family bathroom with a bath, shower, toilet and table, and there's also a wheelchair-friendly bathroom.

The two dishwashing sinks are outside the ablution block and each has two double sinks plus a special sink where you clean your potjie and breakfast pan. There's also a laundry sink, automatic washing machine and tumble drier, and a place to discharge your cassette toilet.

Behind each ablution block are four garbage bins in different colours where you can separate your trash for recycling.



Briefly |
ATKV Klein-Kariba



Campsite 73 pitches, all paved, a braai area with a grid, power supply and a nearby tap. Most have shade and some have shade cloth and sewer connections.

Ablution facilities 2 neat and modern ablution blocks.

Price Standard Rates range from R485 to R1 040 per site for 6 people in peak times and weekends, depending on where you camp. On weekdays the price is R120-R265. ATKV members pay R370-R890 per site during peak times and weekends (or R115-R190 a week).

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am.

Contact 014 736 9800 or 011 919 9092 (central reservations) atkvoorde.co.za
kariba@atkv.org.za

Nearest town Bela-Bela, 8 km.

What does the road look like? All tar.

GPS S24.849544 E28.336160

go! Drive & Camp says Friends and family can visit you as day visitors, but not over weekends or between 15 December and 10 January.



WARMBATHS, A FOREVER RESORT

A warm-water park

To really get the scope of the Forever resort at Warmbaths you have to take a drive around it. It is massive.

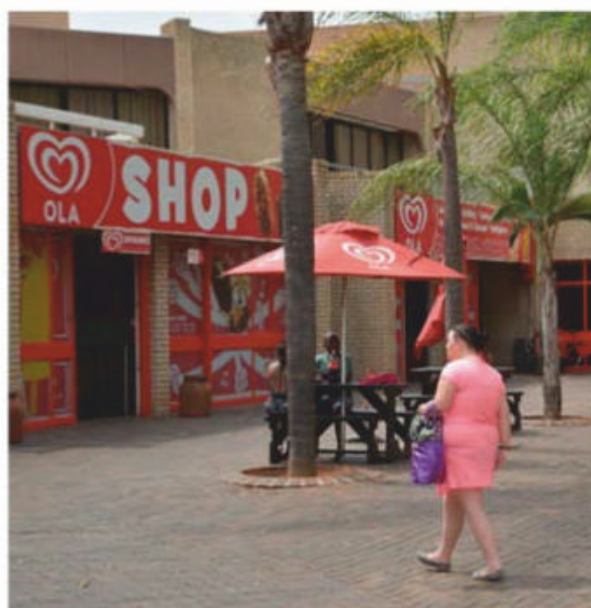
And it's popular. Among campers, chalet and hotel residents – and day visitors. During peak times, the resort is bursting at the seams and it's definitely not the place to come to when looking for peace and quiet.

We realised this on arrival. People come here to enjoy themselves and all three neighbours of ours played music from early morning to late at night. And, as fate would have it, nobody's music was to our taste. Just how many times does that woman need to sing about her “umbrella, ella, ella, ella”?

But, as we've mentioned, you don't come here for silence. No, you bring your kids to come enjoy the many water sports, and spoil yourself by relaxing your tight neck muscles in the hot water of the hydro.

Your kids will be delighted to camp here, because there's no end to the activities. Chances are you'll only see them when they're hungry or need money for an ice cream.

The water park has enough activities to fill three of our pages: two huge supertubes, slides, a swimming pool with waves – like Sun City's Valley of the



BUSHVELD HOSPITALITY. There are more than 200 stands at Warmbaths' campsite, though not separately demarcated. The jungle gym will keep the kids busy, but the main attraction is the water park.

Waves – large swimming pools with their own hot tubs, a pool and playground for the little ones, go-carts, quad bikes, cable skiing and a huge foefie slide.

Just name it, it's here. There's even a Spur where you can eat if you're not boycotting the restaurant chain.

Find your spot

The caravan park with its more than 200 stands is divided into two sections: the right-hand side has six ablution blocks and the left has two. On this side are a handful of private stands where you get paving and a row of knee-high poles between you and your neighbours.

The rest of the sites are numbered, but not exactly demarcated, you'll have to imagine the invisible border where your stand ends and your neighbour's starts. >

The stands are all more or less the same in size and on each one there is enough space for a double-axle caravan, its tent and a rally tent. The resort staff are also willing to help you set up (for small a fee).

There are many trees and the chances are good you'll get a shady spot, but it's not always guaranteed, which means you should bring your reflective sheet. You might camp on grass, or perhaps on soil – so remember your groundsheet as well.

Each stand has a blue plug point (remember your extension cord) and a hip-height concrete braai with a grid. It's lovely, clean and tidy and is cleaned by the staff. You will also find a bin at your stand and there are taps

spread throughout the campsite.

The lower section of the caravan park is closest to the water sports, which is about a 10-minute walk from the entrance to the campsite. If you don't want to walk that far, there's a swimming pool (plus one for the little ones) just outside the entrance with a lawn around it.

The left side of the campsite is further away from the action and predominantly quieter. It also has more sites with grass.

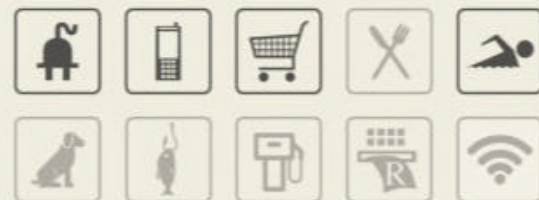
The resort is in the heart of Bela-Bela and you're always aware of the traffic thanks to the lorries' air brakes that go barp-baarp-baaarp at the stop sign in front of the resort's gate on the Thabazimbi road.





PICK YOUR SLIDE. There is no end to the activities at the Warmbaths water park, and your kids will be eternally grateful that you came to camp here. You will also rarely see them, unless they're in need of food or drink.

Briefly | Forever Warmbad



Campsite 225 pitches with electricity and a braai with a grid. You may get grass and shade, and maybe not.

Ablution facilities 8 modern ablution blocks that are kept clean and tidy.

Price R300-R250 per site and R200-R250 pp, depending on when you camp.

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am.

Contact 014 736 8500 or 012 423 5600 (central reservations) warmbaths2@foreversa.co.za foreverwarmbaths.co.za

Nearest town The resort is in Bela-Bela.

What does the road look like? Tar road to your site.

GPS S34.022394 E23.896270

go! Drive & Camp says When checking in, you and everybody in your family get a plastic bracelet you have to wear at all times. Make sure it's properly secured on your children's wrists, because if you lose any, you have to pay R200 for a new one.

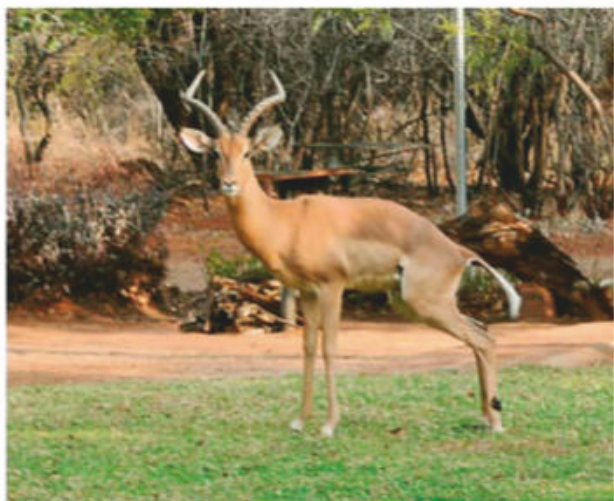
The other hot water

There are eight ablution blocks in the campsite, all of which have basically the same layout and design.

There is one bathroom with two toilets, three urinals and four showers. The wet and dry part of the stalls are separated by a wall that runs along half the length of the room and there are hooks against the wall and behind the door. There is also a bench to sit on when you need to tie your shoelaces. The five basins are on a marble top and above each one is a mirror. There's also hand soap and one of those machines that blow-dry your hands. Behind the sink is a table with power outlets.

Outside, there's a double sink for your dishes and a deep sink where you can wash clothes. There's also a washing machine and tumble drier that operates with R10 tokens – buy these at the caravan office.

>



GALAGO PRIVATE BUSH LODGE

Quiet and peaceful

In contrast to the buzz of the family resorts at Klein-Kariba and Warmbaths, the Galago Private Bush Lodge is a place where you can recharge your batteries in the Bushveld silence.

The reserve is located 16 km outside Bela-Bela on the Thabazimbi road, and they've recently opened a brand-new small campsite. You have two options: the first has four stands with private ablution facilities, and then another six that share an ablution block.

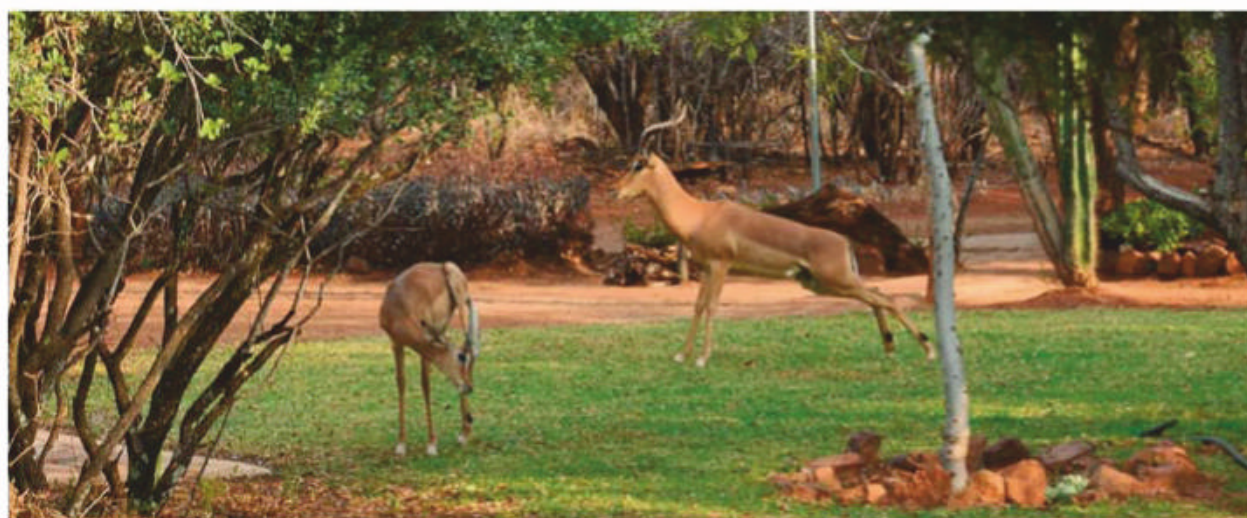
The first four stands are large, spacious and private – surrounded by trees. You get a patch of grass about as big as half a tennis court and a paved area where you can set up camp (with the help of the resort's workers). The slab may not be large enough for a double axle, but smaller caravans fit easily.

The trees provide enough shade, but there may be spots where you can't hide from the heat of the day. If you come





BUSHVELD TV. In stark contrast to the other two resorts, Galago Private Bush Lodge is serene. It's peaceful enough for impala and duiker to come grazing near your stand. There is also a pool and jungle gym for the little ones.



in summer, it's essential that you pack a reflective sheet. Don't camp without it.

You'll get a steel braai with a grid that's height adjustable, and a pile of wood chopped on the farm. It's nice and dry and makes for great coals. You also get a free bag of ice. Your tap has a small concrete concavity below it; so there's no muddy mess. A little further, on the other side of the paved slab, is your power point. It's a twin-socket (for ordinary house plugs), which means you don't have to bring your blue caravan plug. But do bring a 20 m extension cord.

The emphasis here is on privacy. You're

surrounded by trees and aren't aware of your neighbour's every move.

At the other campsite, things are less private, but even so, it doesn't mean you and your neighbours are on top of one another.

You also get one of those beautiful braais and a paved slab at each of these six stands. The only difference is sharing the ablution facilities.

Just for you

Each stand has its own private bathroom and kitchen in a small face-brick building. The kitchen is outside on the veranda

and has a double sink (with plugs). Bring your own drying rack though. There are two power points at the kitchen counter where you can plug in a microwave, kettle or ice machine. A monkey-resistant bin is also found here.

At the door of the bathroom are three light switches – for the kitchen, bathroom and exterior light that illuminates your stand.

You can switch them all off.

The bathroom is simple but neat. It's tiled with slate to hip-height, but the shower has bathroom tiles to head-height. The shower doesn't have a curtain or door, but you stand behind a wall and the water doesn't splash.

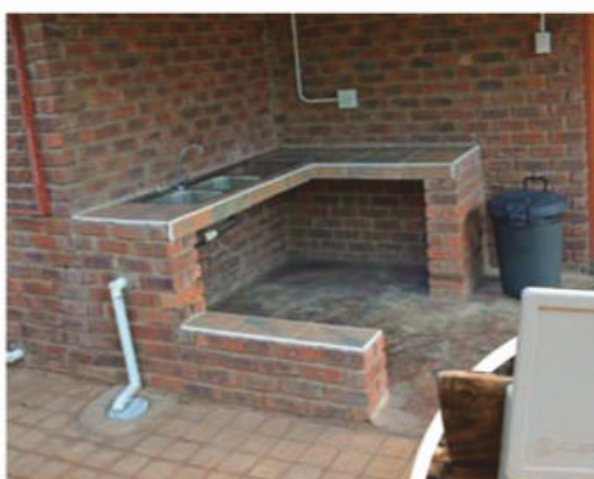
And because it's your own bathroom, you do not need a dressing stall. Just outside the shower is a bench to sit on when you don your socks and shoes. The basin has space around it for vanity cases and toiletry bags. The mirror is above the sink, slightly to the right of the wall and your shoulder touches the wall when combing your hair.

The hot water works with a gas geyser so you don't have to rely on Eskom for a hot shower.

>

The emphasis here is on privacy and it's unlikely that you will be disturbed by your neighbours' comings and goings.



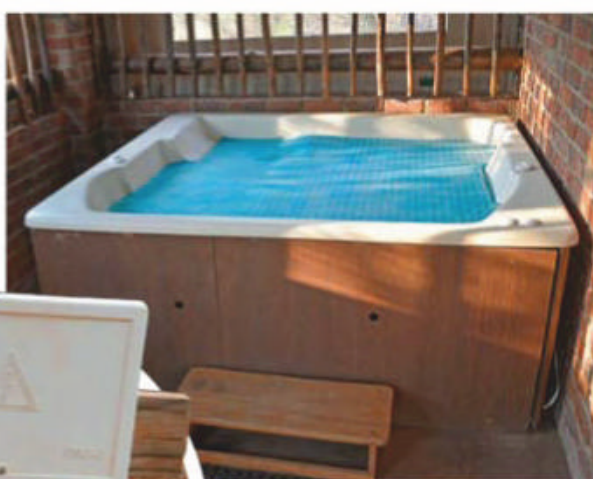


The communal ablution block has separate facilities for men and women. There are two toilets, three sinks, two showers and a urinal for the men. There are also mirrors above each sink and two plugs. There's also a family bathroom with a bath and a washbasin with two double sinks.

For the little ones

At the upper end of the campsite there's a playground with two swings and a jungle gym that should keep the kids occupied. To the right of this is the enclosed swimming pool. It is kidney shaped not unlike those found in suburbia, and there's a lawn with benches where you can relax with a book while the children swim. Or bring a picnic blanket and tan on the grass under the Bushveld sun. Just remember to apply a layer of sunblock.

To the left of the swimming pool is the communal reception room. When the entire family arrives to celebrate Grandma's 80th birthday, you can set up chairs and tables here for an evening of



merriment, fire up the four braais and make a toast to her health. And if the wind blows, simply draw the canvas walls. If it's not grandma's birthday, everyone can use these facilities – if the weather turns foul, you can take shelter here, too.

To the right of the pool is another building with three rooms. It was still under construction when we visited, but one room has a Jacuzzi, a resort shop will be in the middle and on the other side will be a games room with a pool table.

The impala and duiker graze unworried throughout the campsite and you'll also encounter them on the hiking trails when exploring the farm.

BRAAI AND BUBBLES. The communal braai area is ideal for when you get visitors at the lodge and want to celebrate together, but also for when the weather doesn't play along for an outside fire. The Jacuzzi is in the building next door and you can book a time slot to simmer your worries away.

Briefly | Galago Private Bush Lodge



Campsite 4 luxury stands with a steel grill (with adjustable grid), paving, power point and tap. 8 regular stands.

Ablution facilities 4 modern private bathrooms for the luxury sites and one shared ablution block for the rest.

Price R450 per private place for 4 people. R350 p.n. for regular pitches.

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am.

Contact 083 564 3597 or 083 628 9226

galagoprivatebushlodge.co.za

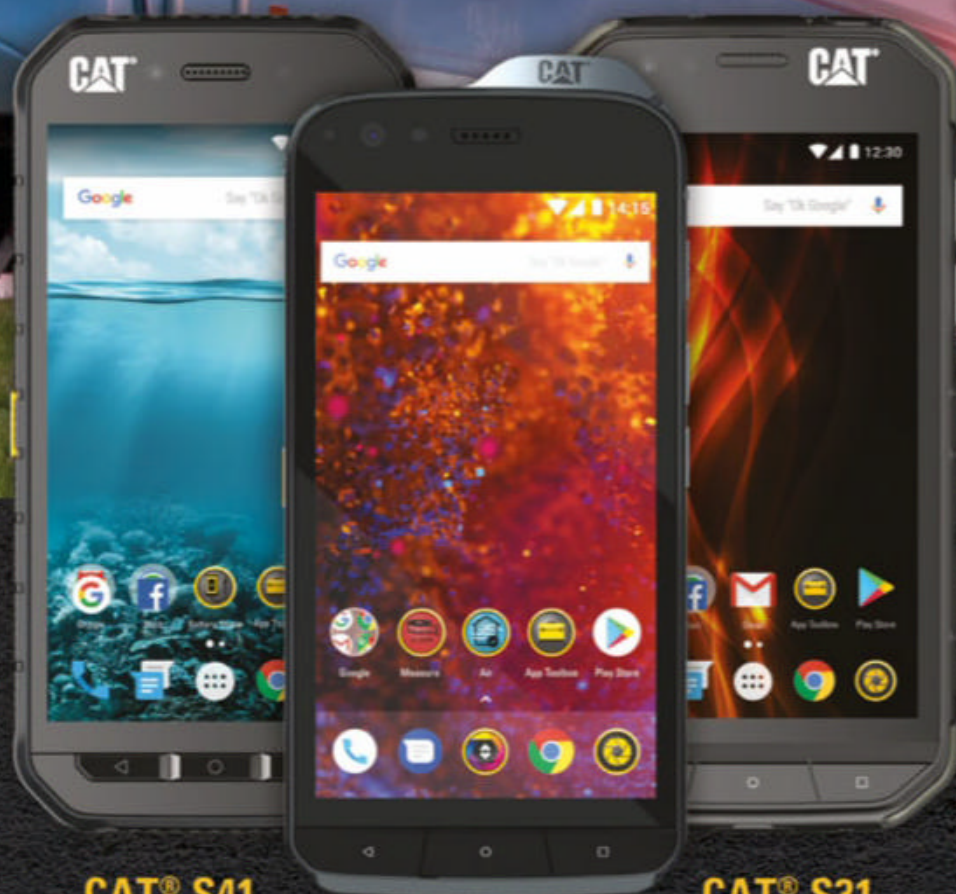
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Nearest town Bela-Bela – 16 km.

What does the road look like? The last 500 m to the gate is a gravel road.

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go! Drive & Camp says Come see turtles, meerkats and loads of birds. And remember your mountain bike.



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DIRECTOR CHAIR



Max weight 180 kg
R656

SPECIFICATIONS
Ripstop canvas
Powder coated
Steel frame

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180cm x 74cm x 74cm (H) **R725**
120cm x 60cm x 74cm (H) **R615**
80cm x 80cm x 74cm (H) **R595**

BUNDU SLEEPING BAG



SPECIFICATIONS
Filling 350 gsm
210 Polyester Nylon outer
Cotton inner
Complete with stuff sack
Size: 2.1m
R535



FISHERMAN-STOOL



Max weight 150kg
R335

SPECIFICATIONS
Ripstop canvas
Powder coated
Steel frame

TENTCO AWNINGS



2,0 x 2,0m **R1945**
2,5 x 2,5m **R2050**
280g ripstop canvas

STRETCHER



BASIC LARGE
Size: 2.1m x 80cm
x 47cm
Max weight: 130kg
R945

DELUXE STANDARD
Size: 1.9m x 60cm
x 40cm
Max weight: 130kg
R705

SELF INFLATING MATTRESS



SIZE: 2m x 67cm x 5cm **R675**
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
R910

Bag, each
R245

COOLER BOXES

20 LT - **R1740**
40 LT - **R2275**
60 LT - **R3075**
90 LT - **R3520**
120LT - **R4235**
140 LT - **R5180**



BUNDU BASIN



R365
HEAVY DUTY
PVC BUCKET
100cm x 35cm x 30cm

BIG BOY CHAIR



SPECIFICATIONS
Nylon Ripstop
Steel frame
Max weight: 150kg
R535

POP-UP GAZEBO



3 m x 3 m **R1450**

CAPRIVI 2



SPECIFICATIONS
2.1m x 2.1m x 1.3m
INNER TENT: 190T
POLYESTER NYLON
FLYSHEET & FLOOR: 210D
OXFORD NYLON
R699

CAPRIVI 3



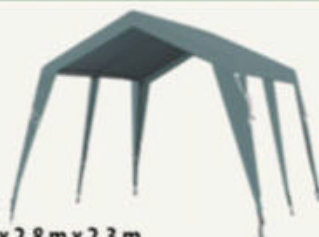
SPECIFICATIONS
3m x 3m x 1.8m
INNER TENT: 190T POLY-
ESTER NYLON
FLYSHEET & FLOOR: 210D
OXFORD NYLON
R1299

DIRECTORS DELUXE CHAIR

SPECIFICATIONS
Heavy duty Oxford Nylon
Black powder-coated steel
frame
Padded armrests
Collapsible side table
Side pockets
Max weight: 180kg
R640



GAZEBOS



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

WANDERER BOW TENTS



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

SAHARA DELUXE



6m x 2.9m x 2.5m
Sidewalls available
R10530

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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
R19425

SNR DOUBLE BOW EXTENSION ONLY



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

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3m x 3m
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2.8m and Verandah 1.8m **R11500**

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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**
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Junior Bow **R4635**
2.5 x 2.5 x 1.8 m
Senior Bow **R5690**
3.0 x 3.0 x 2.0 m



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

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NEW

R1910
To fit Snr Tentco gazebo

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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

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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

These products are available from:
NB: PRICE WILL VARY BETWEEN STORES.



AGENTS: SEE LIST ON WEBSITE

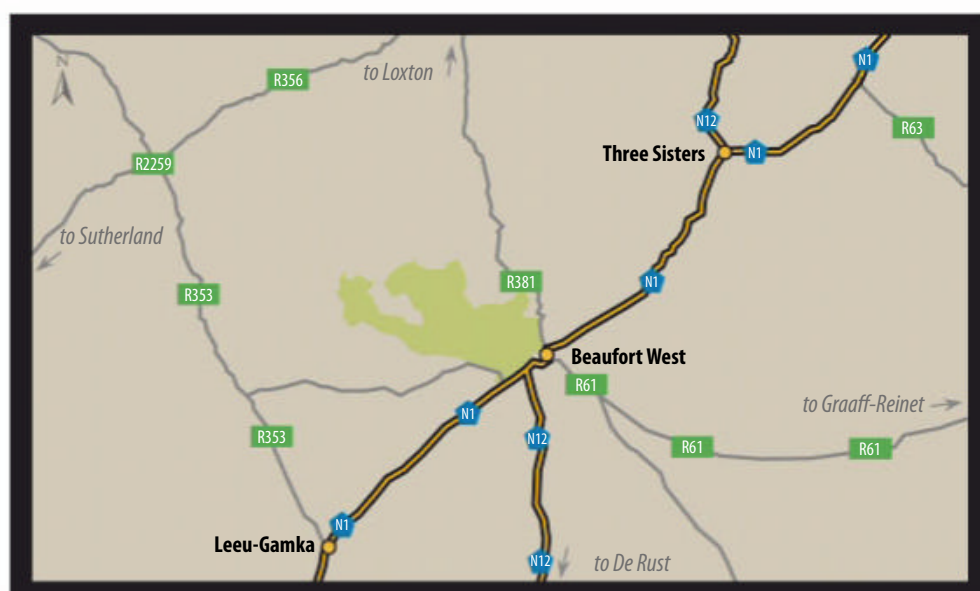
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PRICES ONLY VALID FOR JANUARY 2019

Hullabaloo in the Great

When confronted by armed rangers, you don't know whether to throw your hands in the air or freeze behind the wheel. This was just one of our experiences in the Karoo National Park...

Text and photos Cyril Kloppe



I imagine this: you're enjoying a peaceful drive through a national park looking for game. Then, suddenly, you detect a dust cloud in your rear-view mirror, one that's fast catching up to you. You squint and see a bakkie lurching along the twin track behind you. Its headlights flash urgently.

Then a second bakkie unexpectedly explodes out of the bushes and heads you off. You hit the brakes and armed men jump from the bakkies.

This is when you clench your buttocks while wondering exactly how deep in trouble you are.

Karoo



But then you spot the kudu head logo on the bakkie doors and you sigh in relief. Fortunately, these are SANPark officials and not a gang of hijackers. Eight uniformed rangers, some armed with assault rifles, surround you. What on earth did you do wrong?

“Don’t worry, I recognise that beard,” says one of the men, pointing at me. The rifles are slung and the ranger walks closer. “You had us worried,” he grinned.

They were worried? Goodness, can’t they see how I’m shaking in my boots?

And the reason for the drastic action? I was driving in a prohibited section of

the park and so they suspected me of being a rhino poacher.

The seed of this misunderstanding

A few days earlier, we’d arrived with a group of Junior Rangers at the Karoo National Park. These are kids who do volunteer work in national parks and also attend courses about conservation.

The children – and a few supervising adults – stayed in Grantham House, a restored manor on the edge of the park. Grantham is typically used to house school groups and isn’t marketed as an accommodation option for the public.

Rangers took our group on afternoon hikes, and it’s one of these rangers who fortunately recognised “that beard”. The rangers are armed with R1 assault rifles as there are 26 lions in the park.

You might remember Sylvester, the Houdini of the lion kingdom, that aggravated sheep farmers near the park a few years ago. But the rangers are able to track the lions and conducted the nature walks away from the predators. >



“Look at this spiders nest, see that rhino midden, here are fresh caracal tracks,” they whispered to the wide-eyed youngsters.

The adults who owned four-wheel drive vehicles took the Junior Rangers on game drives along the park’s network of 4x4 eco routes and, in the evenings, the Junior Rangers would braai the meat while the grownups prepared the side dishes. Later, after the kids were sent to bed, a couple of night owls watched the waning embers and listened to lions roaring in the distance.

It’s lovely to spoil the kids, but one morning I decided to take a break from the hubbub. While the group splashed in the Bulkraal pool, I decided to drive the park’s brand new Leeurivierspoort 4x4 trail. The staff at the office confirmed that we may drive any of the 4x4 eco trails in the park, except for Pienaar’s Pass for which you require an additional permit.

And this is where the trouble began. The word “any” led me to deduce the new Leeurivierspoort 4x4 trail was permissible, but in reality that route had not yet been opened to the public.

There are more than 200 km of tourist roads in the park and it will take you a number of days to explore all of them. The degree of difficulty of the routes vary from a straightforward grade 1 which you can master with a Chevy Spark to a more technical grade 3 which requires a pukka off-road vehicle, but serious modifications are unnecessary. Let’s start with the easiest route.

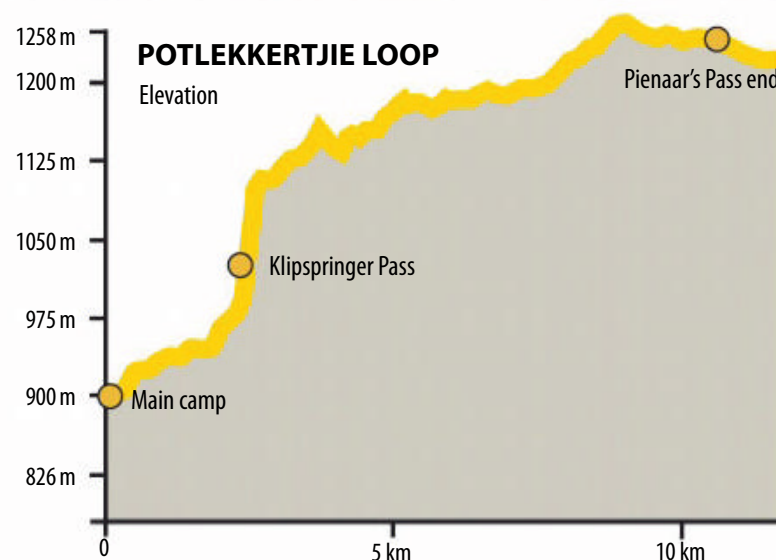


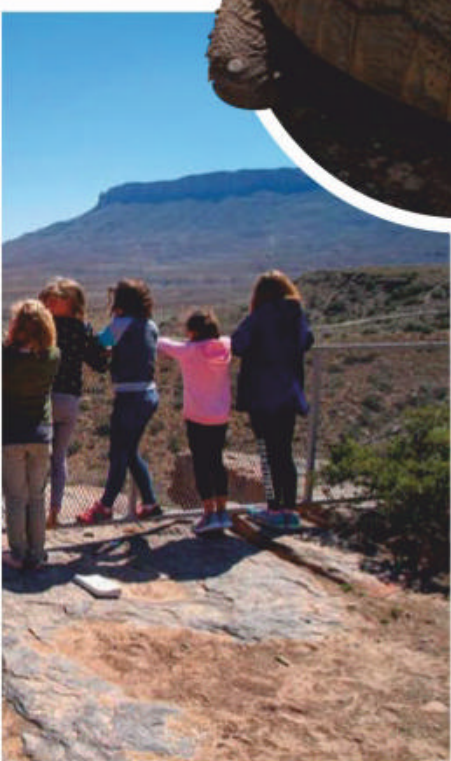
Potlekertjie loop and Klipspringer Pass

This 59-kilometer trail lasts about two hours if you drive slowly and only occasionally stop to watch the animals beside the road – incidentally, the speed limit in the park is 40 km/h. Part of the road surface is tarred – such as the Klipspringer Pass – but the rest is mostly compacted gravel that allows visitors with a regular sedan to see at least something of the park.

The biggest attractions on the route are the various lookout points on the Klipspringer Pass where you may alight from your vehicle and take pictures of the sprawling plains below the escarpment. Do watch out for lions, though, as people have encountered them here before.

Don’t finish your padkos on the go. Stop at the Doornhoek picnic spot where you can braai under shady trees. The picnic area is fenced so Sylvester’s friends can’t get to you and your boerie.





The 4x4 eco trails

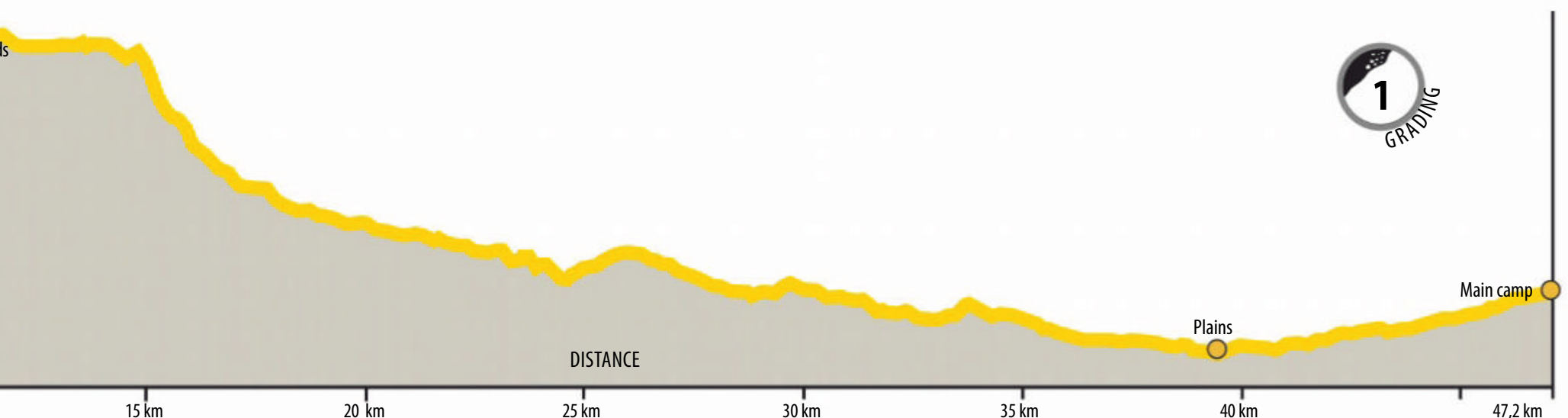
Other than the Potlekkertjie loop, there are another seven moderately challenging 4x4 trails. We don't agree 100% with SANParks' claim that you need a 4x4 to drive these trails, unless it rained recently. You'll generally manage just fine in a two-wheel drive bakkie with good ground clearance. The only challenge is the banks of the dry riverbeds which you have to cross every now and again. A regular sedan will likely struggle and probably get hung up.

To help you get to the routes, ask for a map at the park office or download one off the SANParks website. It's pretty easy to find the routes, though – stick to the Potlekkertjie loop until you reach the signage indicating the 4x4 eco routes.

The first route is called the Afsaal 4x4 loop. It's 13 km long and lasts about an hour if you stop for pictures. Like nearly all of the park's roads, it is a circular route that you may only drive anti-clockwise.

There's a cottage next to the road where you can stay overnight but do stay within the enclosed yard because the lions roam here, too. The Afsaal trail unfortunately runs through the ugliest section of the park. The impoverished earth looks to be overgrazed and there are worrying signs of soil erosion. Even the few red hartebeest jumbling around in the dust seem to be in a foul mood. >

LEKKER LIKE A POTJIE. Ranger Mateo Naga points out a fresh paw print. Don't worry, it belongs to a caracal and not a lion. Four off-road vehicles loaded up with excitable kids explore the park via the Potlekkertjie route. The park's slowest inhabitant is named Speedy by the youngsters. But even boisterous kids calm down when faced with the vastness of the Karoo.



4X4 ROUTE | WESTERN CAPE

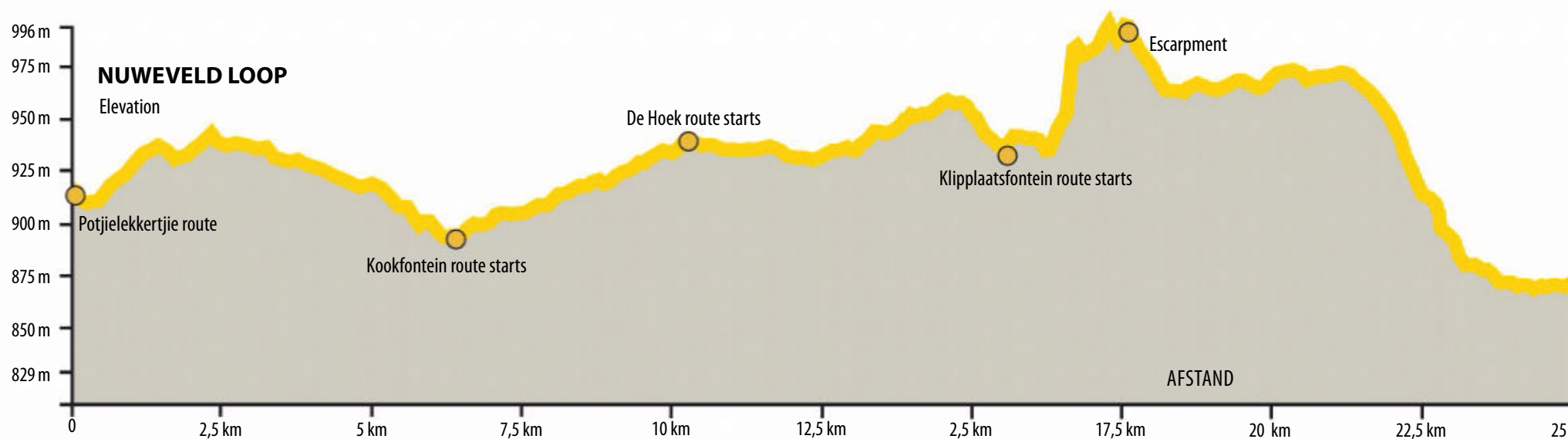
The next route is the 7 km long Sandrivier 4x4 loop, which takes about half an hour. It's definitely a step up from the Afsaal loop, thanks to a waterhole where you'll probably encounter springbok and zebra. Occasionally there are signs of dried mud puddles with tyre tracks running through them – hence SANParks' request that you drive a 4x4.

The Kookfontein 4x4 loop is also 7 km long, but it takes about an hour. This trail passes a deserted kraal and you traverse the dry riverbed of the Sand River a couple of times. Like the other routes, you may only travel in one direction,

always anticlockwise, and so you often retrace the same tracks while repeatedly returning to the Nuweveld loop.

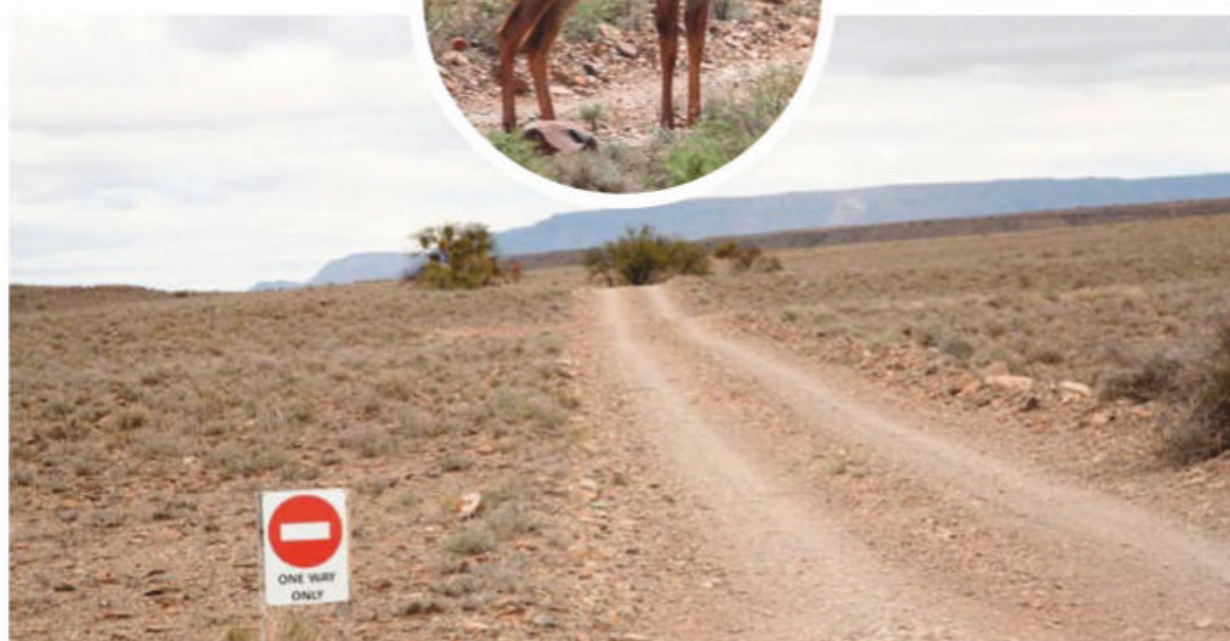
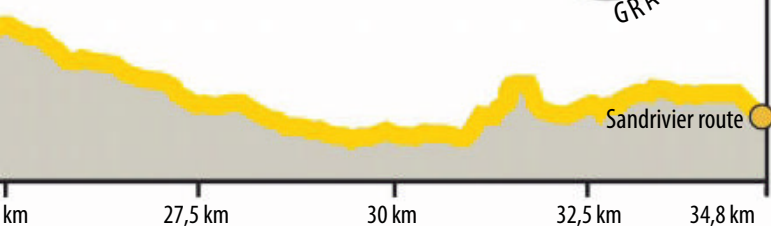
At 51 km, the Nuweveld 4x4 loop is currently the longest of all the 4x4 eco trails in the park. It will take you at least three hours to complete, but the vast Karoo plains and expansive sky will impress you. Delicate flowers break through rocks while puffy clouds pass over the arid landscape without sharing a single drop of water with the needy soil.

The De Hoek 4x4 trail branches off the Nuweveld trail and heads into the





ON PATROL. The Nuweveld route branches off into several shorter loops. Along the way you'll see signs of old farms that were purchased by SANParks – remnants including dams and stone animal enclosures.

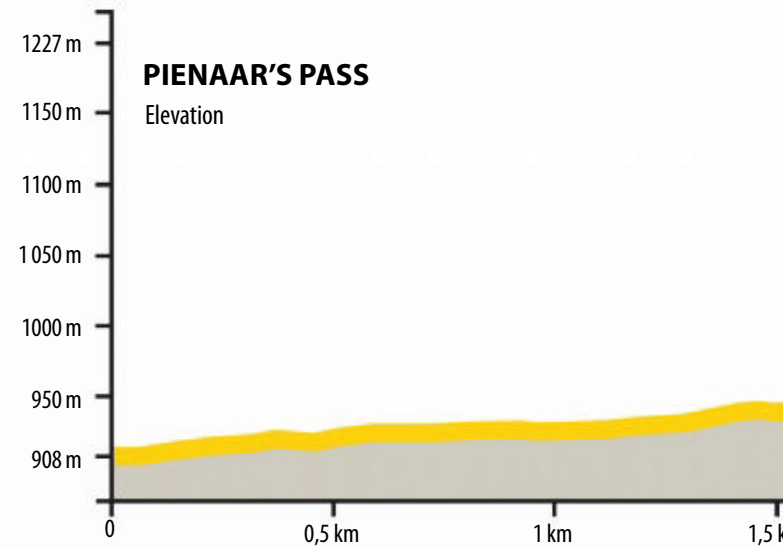


mountains for a short stretch. You don't need a 4x4 here either, but your vehicle absolutely must have good ground clearance. Although the route is only 13 km long, it'll keep you busy for about 45 minutes, even if you don't stop to take a single pic. You'll need to take this route if you've booked an overnight stay at the Embizweni Cottage. The cottage sleeps seven and is out of sight from the main road, so guests aren't bothered by passing vehicles.

Finally, there is the Klipplaatsfontein

4x4 trail. It's 23 km long and first crosses the middle plateau and then follows the Klipplaatsfontein River back down until it rejoins the Nuweveld route.

It's a lovely road to drive and the chance of encountering another vehicle is fairly slim – at least not as regular as on the other routes. As you might guess, there are more animals to see here since it is relatively far away from human activities. The kudu especially are so tame, you may have to hoot to encourage them to get out of the road. >



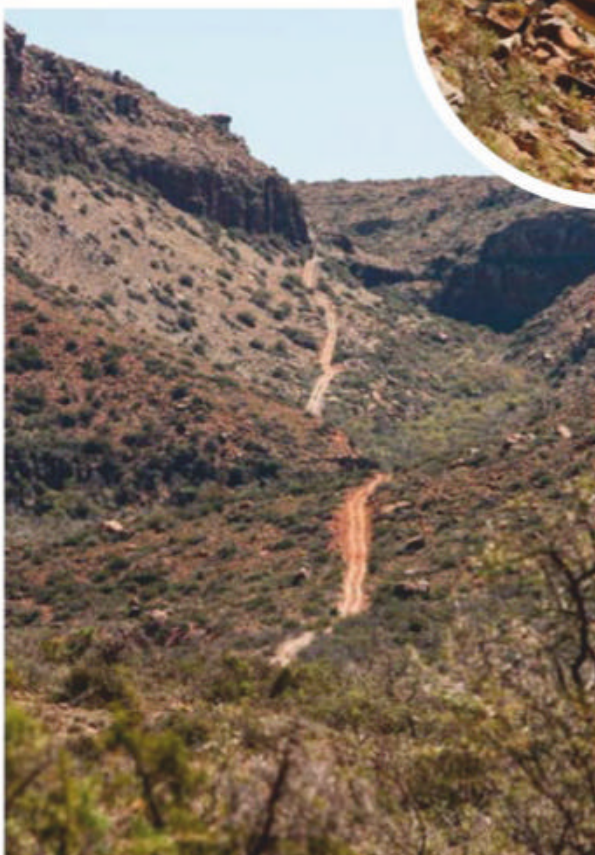
Pienaar's Pass

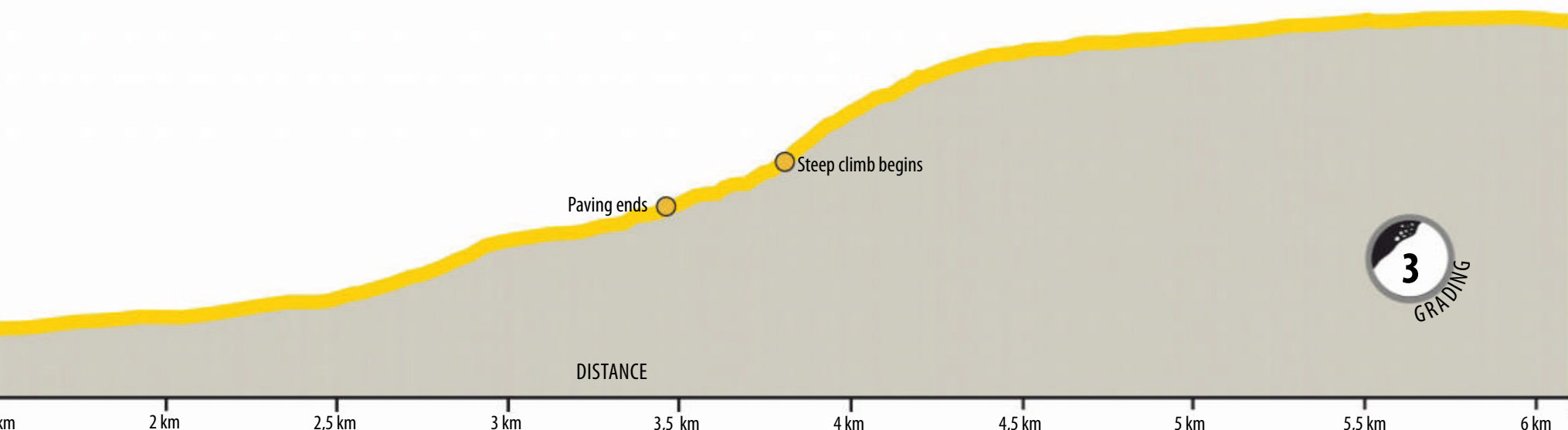
You're only allowed to drive this route after obtaining a permit at reception. The trail starts near the campsite and is at first a gentle twin track, then paved with flat stones, but at a rockpool about 3,5 km after the start it suddenly turns into a nasty affair.

The loose gravel on the steepest part of the pass will have your wheels spinning madly, but if you remembered to engage low range and the diff lock, you'll get up without too much effort.

SANParks don't officially rate their 4x4 trails, but campfire stories before our arrival at the park had us thinking this is a grade 5 monster. However, the route is really a difficult grade 3 (almost makes it to grade 4) that will challenge a standard off-road vehicle.

Novices in soft roaders won't manage, but experienced guys, such as the park's rangers boast that they can drive the





pass in two-wheel drive – “with our Hilux in power mode”.

The worst obstacle on this route is the sheer drop next to a very narrow jeep track. If you’re scared of heights, don’t try this. It’s a long way down...

Another reason to reconsider whether you should drive the pass is the hefty R280 permit cost. The trail lasts at most half an hour, so we’re not sure it’s worth the expense from a 4x4 perspective.

What does count in the route’s favour are the mountain zebra and gemsbok that graze under the sheer cliffs. Because the kloof is so narrow, you’ll get a close-up view of the animals. The route ends at the highest point of the Potlekkertjie loop on the escarpment.



ONWARD AND UPWARD. The Pienaar’s Pass is the toughest trail in the park and certainly not for newbies. We wouldn’t advise taking a soft-roader up here.

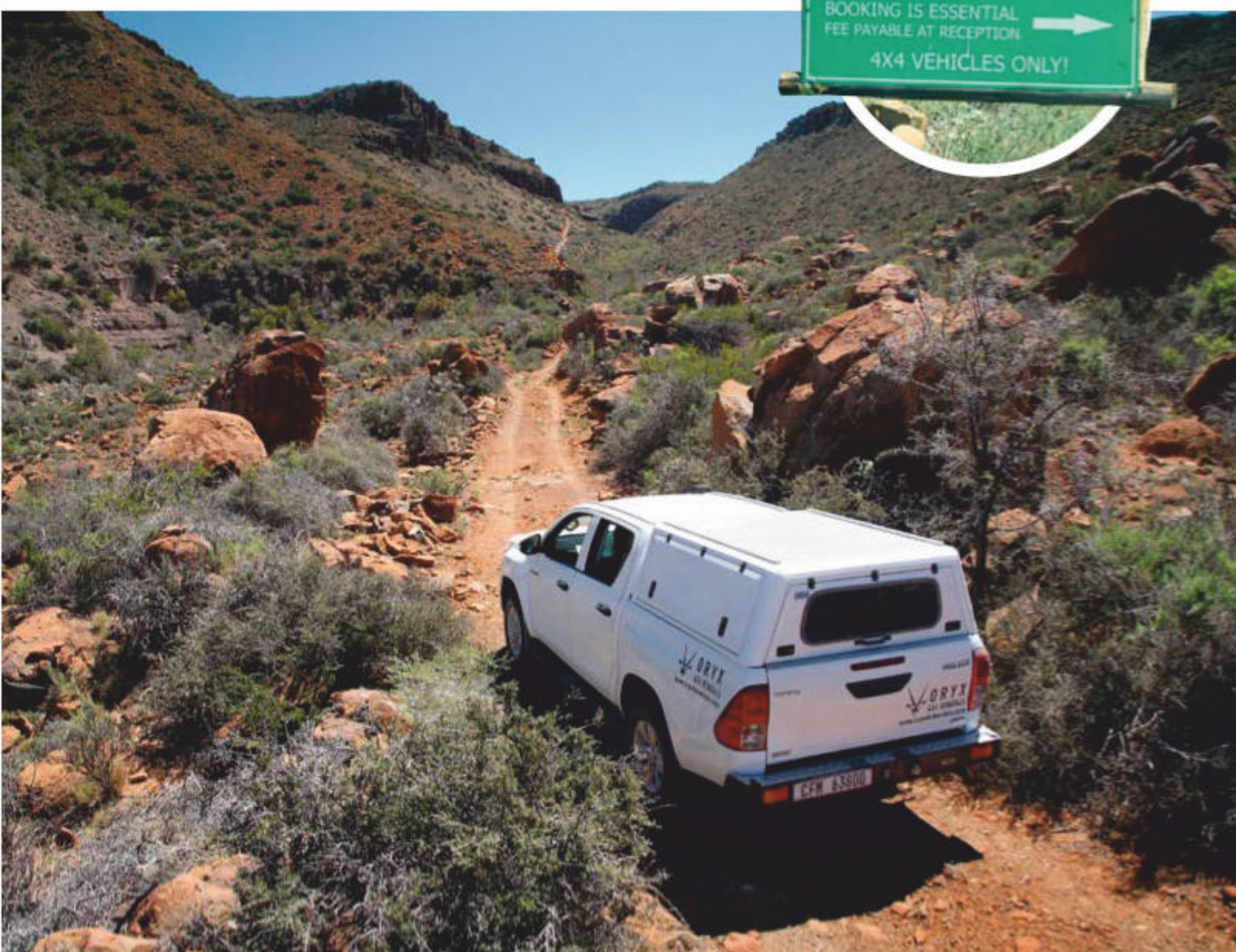
Leeurivierspoort 4x4 trail

Much like the anti-clockwise loops of the Karoo National Park, we’re finally back to where the rangers nabbed me.

At the time of my visit, there were no road signs on the route and also no sign of it on the Tracks4Afrika map on the GPS. In fact, the only visible vehicle tracks was that of the dozer that created this trail.

Thanks to the lack of road signs, as well as the network of ancient farm roads leading in all directions (they still had to be closed and the soil rehabilitated), I soon lost my way and didn’t get to drive the whole route.

The good news is that I saw rhino, as well as large herds of gemsbok (bigger >





than in other parts of the park) and dozens of other species of buck who look to be hiding in this part of the park.

We hope to venture here again one day, this time with the permission of the park's management, of course.

Not so fast, mister

"So, I'm free to go?" I prod, bravely. "No, sir. We have to search your vehicle," he says, this time seriously.

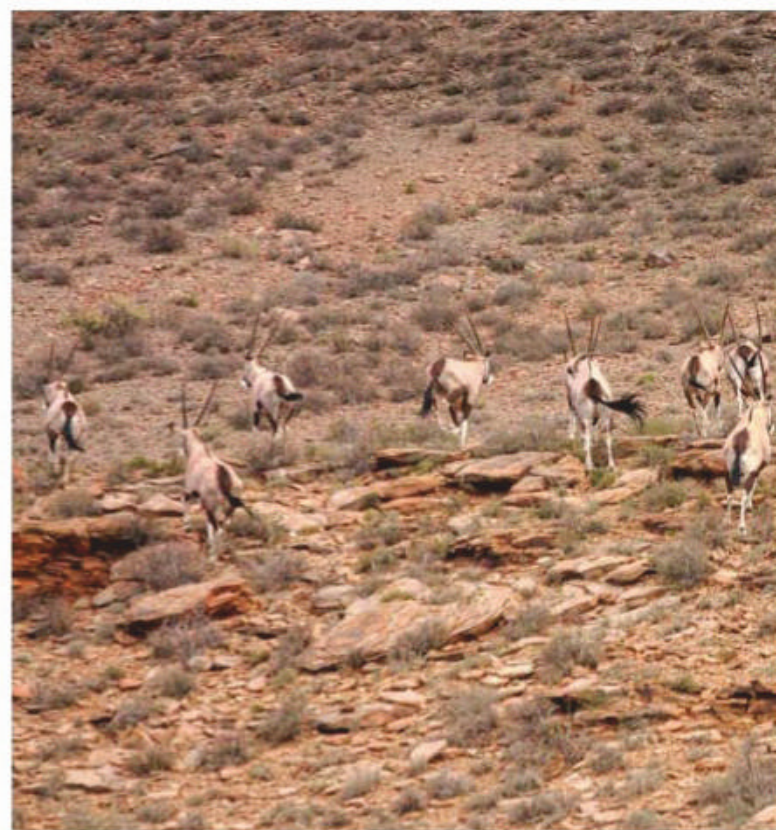
The men open everything that can close – even the floor mats are lifted up. I may not be a rhino poacher, but if they come across a plant, skull or stone that I took as a souvenir, I'm in trouble. Fortunately, there's nothing to find.

A third bakkie stops at the scene.

The driver presents himself as the section ranger. He's not at all impressed, and prepares to throw the book at me. But we eventually part ways with a convivial punch to the shoulder and an embarrassed grin on my part.

In the end we're all deeply grateful for rangers who are this dedicated to protecting our natural heritage.

FAR CORNER. The western edge of the park was hitherto inaccessible for the general public, but the new Leeurivierpoort route fixes that. Just make sure you clear it with the park officials first or you might get mistaken for a baddie.

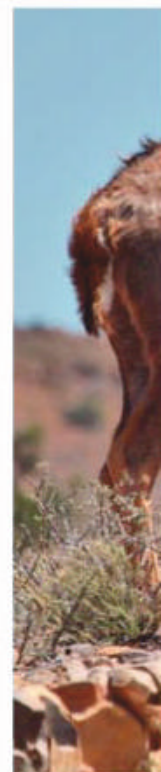


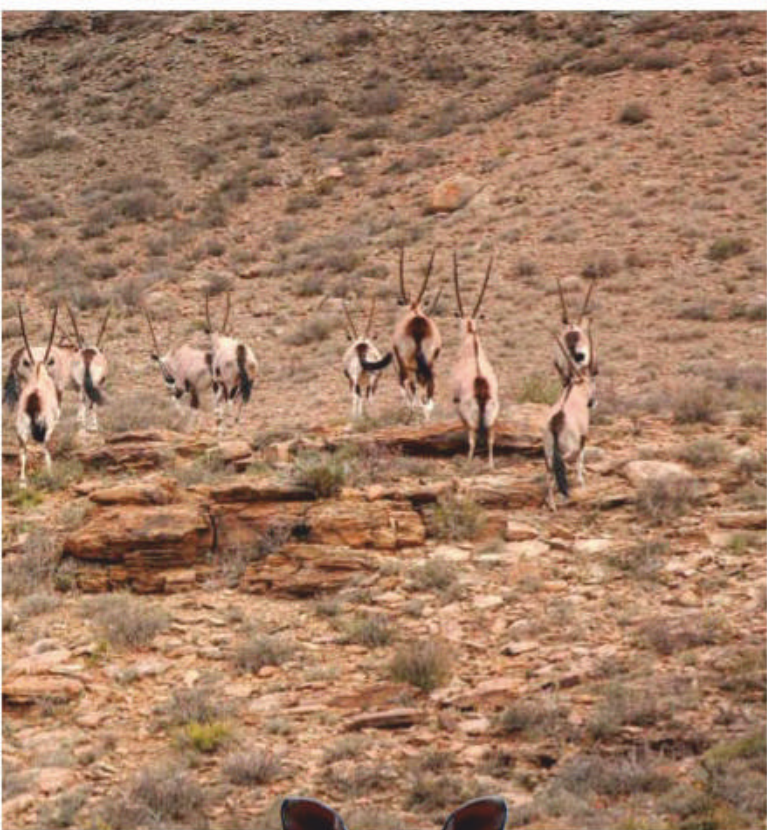
WHAT WE DROVE

Oryx 4x4 Rentals loaned us a Toyota Hilux 2.4 GD-6 4x4 double cab. A few days earlier, this vehicle's rooftop tent was set alight by hapless French tourists, but because we already had accommodation booked in the park, the absent tent wasn't an issue.

The bakkie's suspension is lifted by 50 mm and it is equipped with BF Goodrich All-Terrain tyres as well as a snorkel and a fully equipped canopy. Otherwise, it's fairly standard and we can confirm that it didn't put so much as a foot wrong.

Oryx 4x4 Rentals is in Cape Town and, besides having a fleet of Hilux and Land Cruisers, they also offer short 4x4 courses for novices before they leave on holiday. ☎ 021 412 1542 🌐 oryx4x4rentals.com ✉ info@oryx4x4rentals.com





I WANT TO GO, TOO!

Where? The Karoo National Park lies next to Beaufort West, about halfway between Bloemfontein and Cape Town.

Provisions You can see Beaufort West from certain sections of the park. You therefore don't have to lug around a week's worth of food as there's a shopping centre literally around the corner. The park office also has a small shop (open from 7.30 am to 8 pm) where you can buy things such as souvenirs, milk, wine and firewood. If you decide to go to town every day, do pay attention to your speed. There are quite a few speed cameras and the traffic department aren't shy about issuing fines.

Accommodation The campsite has 24 stands, each with electricity, a bin, a braai and taps. There's not a lot of shade – it is the Karoo – but there are a few thorn trees that are large enough to cast some shade at least part of the day. There's almost no grass. The SANPark website shows lush

green lawns, but when we were here, it was barren. The sites are level, clean and raked when you arrive. The ablution facilities have washing machines and tumble driers.

If you'd rather not camp, they have eight contemporary Cape Dutch family cottages with two bedrooms each. There are also 19 self-catering chalets with two single beds and a sofa that converts into a double bed, and 10 self-catering chalets that sleep two.

The reception has a visitor's centre where you can discover more about the history of the park, and there is also a licensed restaurant (open from 7 am to 10 am and 6 pm to 9 pm) for when the designated chef wants to get spoilt by someone else for a change.



Valley of *plenty*



Nestled in the middle of the Winterhoek basin between Tulbagh, Wolseley and Ceres, Fynbos Guest Farm is just the place to rejuvenate your spirit.

Text and photos **Kyle Kock**



In a country where natural disasters are few and far between, many of us remember how Tulbagh was rocked by a monstrous earthquake in September 1969 that registered 6,3 on the Richter scale. In the 50 years since, there's been a massive restoration effort.

Some 14 km south of Tulbagh, Peter Nel must have had a similar idea in mind with Fynbos Guest Farm. In the 14 years that he's been the owner, he and his staff have extensively rehabilitated the land to be more environmentally friendly, removing more than 80 bluegums (each tree can consume more than 2 000 ℓ of water a day) and other alien vegetation so that the native fynbos can reclaim some of the 67-hectare farm. They've planted more than 300 indigenous trees that are more environmentally friendly to the region as well.

The estate not only serves as a campsite, but also as a kind of sanctuary for abused and neglected animals. There are multiple rescued species that share the space, including dogs, horses, geese, peafowls, chickens, ducks, potbellied pigs, tortoises, rabbits, three different breeds of goat, springbok, zebra and alpacas.

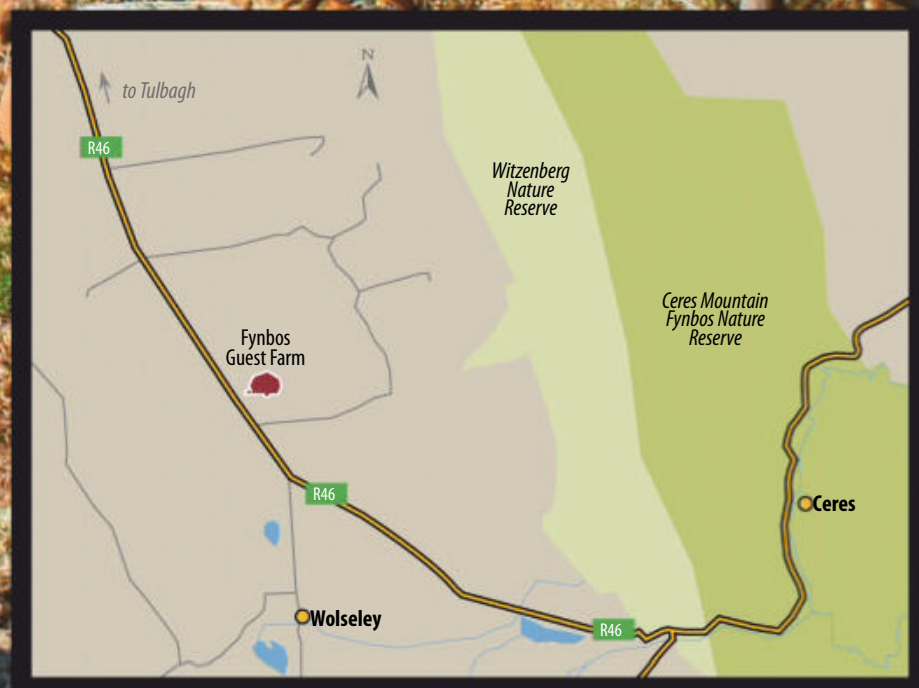
Don't look for grass

There are no soft lawns to camp on at Fynbos Guest Farm. Instead, you pitch your tent or pull your caravan onto crusher chips.

If you're looking to break away from the rowdy resort where you usually camp at, then you'll be happy to hear that Fynbos Guest Farm only has 10 stands. They vary in size, so you're definitely going to find one you like. They also have varying degrees of shade provided by the natural flora.

The larger stands also have a little shade netting, but it's barely big enough to seat a family of four. Most of them are fairly level, though number 10 is slightly terraced.

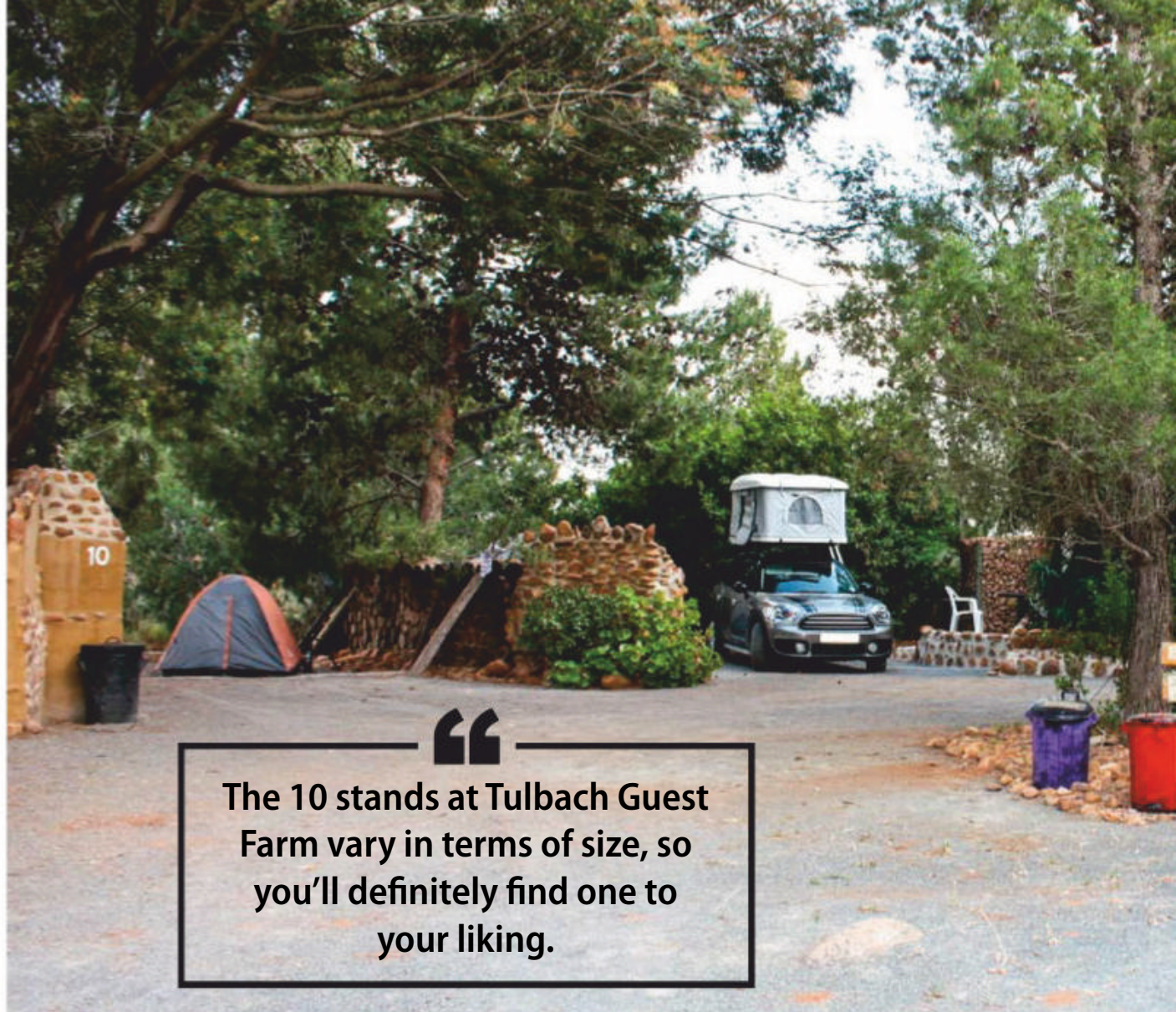
Numbers 9 and 10 are smaller and closest to the ablution facility and they >





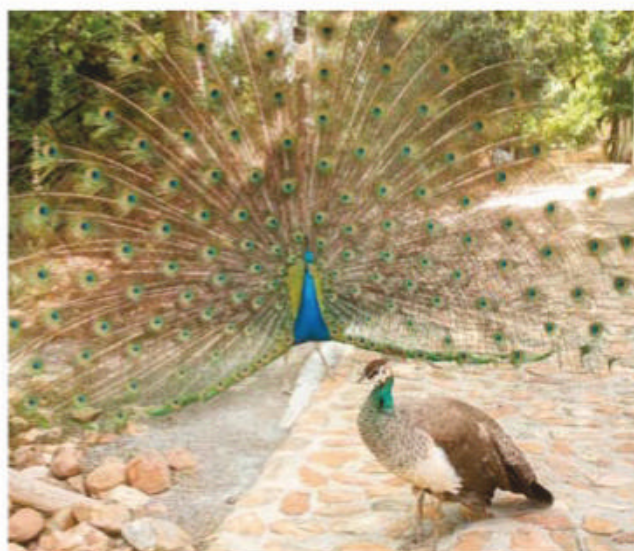
benefit from shade provided by pine trees throughout most of the day whereas, by virtue of their sheer size, the largest ones (1, 5, 7 and 8) have less shade in the middle of the day. The stands are also shielded from the occasional gust of wind thanks to rock and timber walls throughout the campsite. These walls also separate two stands in some instances, which significantly ups your privacy.

All the units have their own bin and built-in braai, though you'll have to bring your own grid. You'll also need to lug a bucket to the ablution block if you need water, because that's where the only tap can be found. Electricity is supplied via



The 10 stands at Tulbach Guest Farm vary in terms of size, so you'll definitely find one to your liking.

CLOSE TO THE COTTAGE. The ablution block looks more like a little house, but that's exactly the idea. You're supposed to feel at home at Fynbos Guest Farm. The showers use curtains to separate wet and dry areas, while the basins have rustic copper taps. You can wash dishes between the male and female sections and also keep your meat cold in the communal refrigerator. A peacock tries to impress the opposite sex. The lapa has a communal braai area right next to the splash pools.



the usual three-point domestic sockets, with the exception of two blue caravan types at 7 and 8. By the way, these two would be best if you want to camp in a group. They also have direct access to the communal lapa.

Clean-up in a cottage

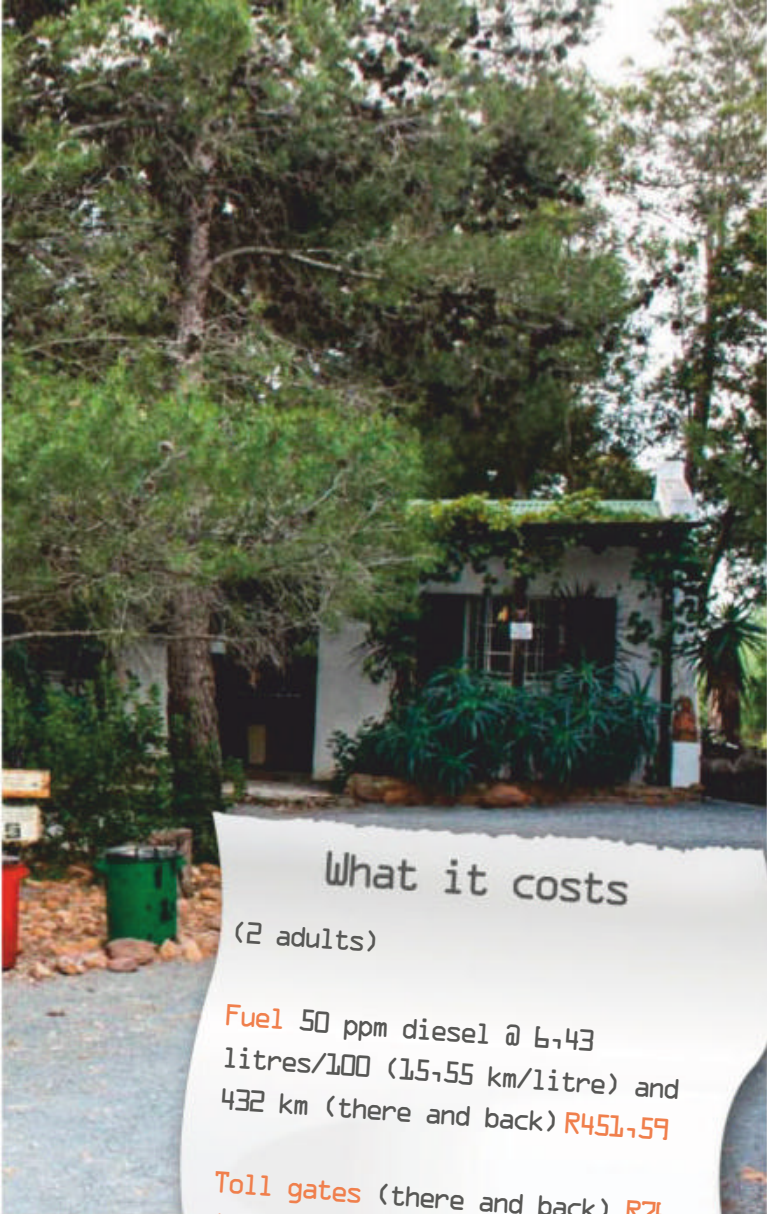
The ablution block is more like a little house in the forest than a clinical, characterless ablution block. It's covered in creepers, but you can see it's been painted white, with some contrasting brown that matches the wooden doors, frames and benches. It's swept regularly and cleaned throughout the day.



The porch between the male and female sections is where you wash your dishes, but there's just one sink and drying rack, so be sure to get there before your neighbours do.

There's also a mini fridge for you to store meat and cheese overnight if need be. There's also a shelf full of books and magazines if you like lazing away your days with some reading material.

On the men's side, there are two basins in a tiled surface under a mirror facing the door, large enough for two people to do their grooming. Hand soap and tissues are also supplied, as well as a towel for drying your hands. There are two showers



What it costs

(2 adults)

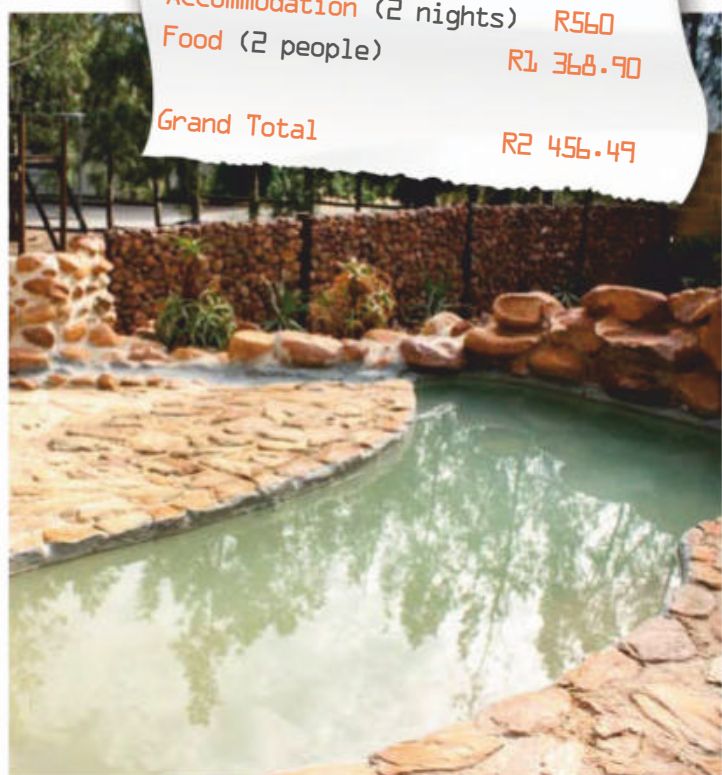
Fuel 50 ppm diesel @ 6.43
litres/100 (15.55 km/litre) and
432 km (there and back) R451.59

Toll gates (there and back) R76

Accommodation (2 nights) R560

Food (2 people) R1 368.90

Grand Total R2 456.49



and two toilets, so your visiting times will need to be carefully planned if this campsite is full.

The showers are large enough so you won't feel the shower curtain clinging to your body as you turn, and there are also recesses in the outer bulkhead with a tiled surface that's big enough to hold your soap and sponge.

The pressure in the plumbing is not that great, and you notice that it starts to dribble when there's someone in the stall next to yours, or when the opposite gender use their showers. The dry section has a narrow bench that you can sit on and there are three hooks for hanging your towels and clothing.

Immerse yourself

Children have free rein of the facilities, though it's best to keep an eye on them if they're very young. If they're a little older, they can buy four cans of animal food or snacks from reception (R20) and go around to the bunnies, goats, pigs or tortoises. You're also welcome to bring your own carrots and cabbage from home. Some of the horses bite because of their history as cart animals, so it's not advisable for kids to be at the stables unsupervised.

They're also allowed to cycle pretty much everywhere, but once they get bored of their bikes then they can go and enjoy the play park next to the pig pen, which has been equipped with swings and a jungle gym.

In the garden behind reception and the main farmhouse, there's also a small meditation room where you can go to practise going Zen within yourself. The wooden structure has stained glass windows and the floor and concrete

benches are covered in mosaic, so you're required to remove your shoes before you enter. It's big enough to seat four people.

If you don't want to be confined to a small space, then you can take your pick of one of 20 benches scattered throughout the farm, in the gardens and next to the animal enclosures, so you can be entertained by their antics.

The more extroverted types can socialise at the lapa next the playground, which has its own dedicated braai area and two splash pools. The water is chemically treated, but don't expect this to be as crystal clear as the pools at big resorts. These ones are more for dipping in on those especially hot days.

There are also plastic patio chairs and tables at the lapa that Peter will let you use at your own stand if you've forgotten yours at home, especially when the campsite is quiet.

There is also a small shop at reception, where you can purchase cooldrinks, sweets, ice (R20 a bag) and wood (R30 a bag). >



Mike and Charmaine Reed and kids Aidan (11) and Donielle (10) from Table View tow an Echo 4x4 Echo 4 with their Toyota Fortuner. Nick and Rose Pienaar from Bothasig joined them, as well as Kobus and Tracy Burger from Kraaifontein.

They say

“ This is the second time we've been here, and we love it. It's safe, and the kids enjoy being able to ride their bikes, and feed and help out with the animals. The size of the campsite is also intimate, so it never gets too rowdy, which is exactly what we prefer.”





Briefly | Fynbos Guest Farm



Campsite 10 stands of varying size, with different amounts of shade throughout the day.

Ablution facilities A small building, considering that it's split between males and females. Very clean and neat throughout the day.

Price R140 per person per night, R70 for children aged 4-13 and free for kids younger than that.

Contact 072 223 4674

fynbosguestfarm.co.za

peter@fynbosguestfarm.co.za

Arrival and departure times Get there as early as you want, and just be out the gate before dark. They're not too fussed.

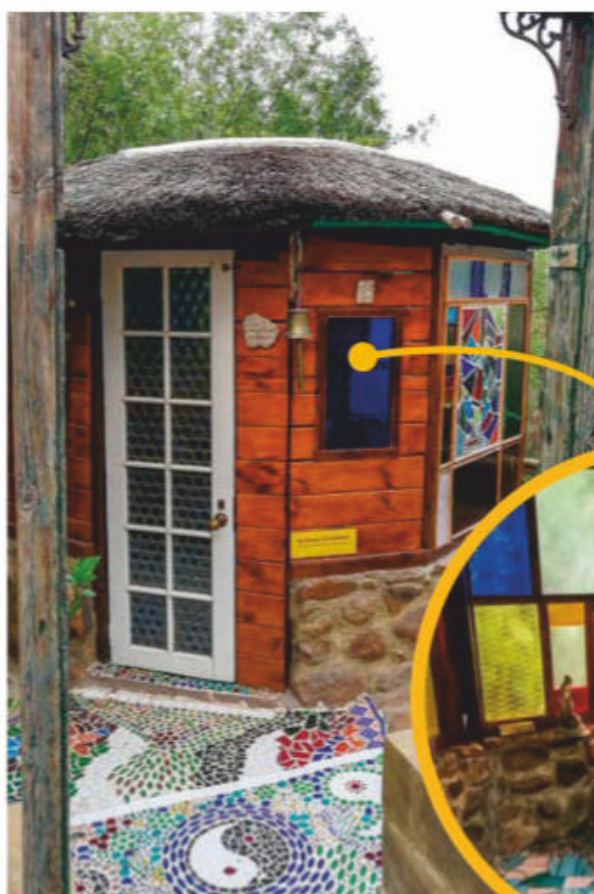
Road condition As you turn off the R46, it's 1 km of decent gravel road to the gate and another 700 metres to reception.

GPS S33.388504, E19.194580

go! Drive & Camp says Remember that these are rescued animals and they've already been chased around and abused. If you have small children, it's best to supervise their interaction with the species on the farm that have free rein, like the dogs and geese.



FOOD FOR MIND, BODY AND SOUL. The farm has a dedicated meditation room for practising Zen, but there are influences from all over the world visible on the property. The breakfast basket costs R85 pp and will definitely fuel your activities till well into the afternoon.

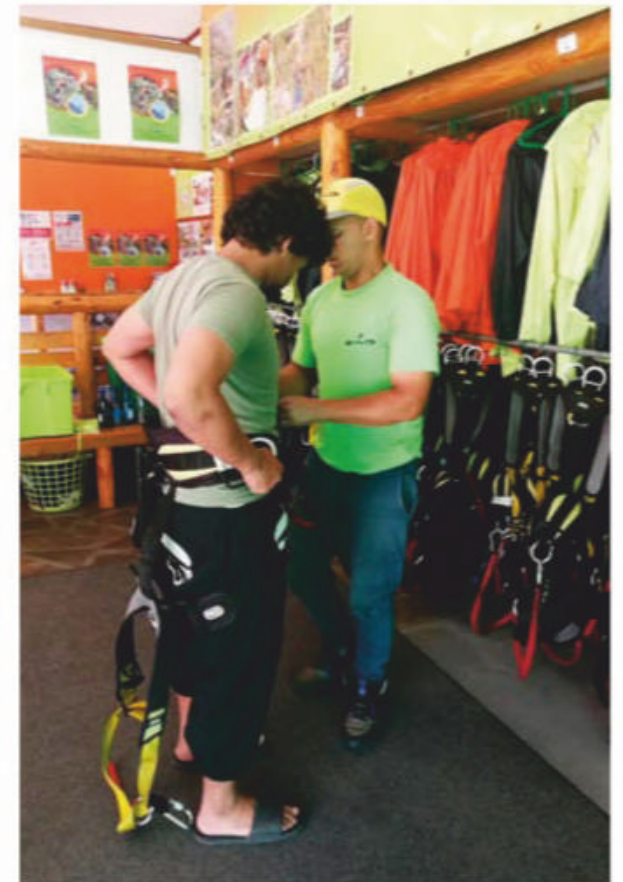


“The kids can buy cans of animal feed and treats at reception and entertain the bunnies, goats, pigs and tortoises.”





PLENTY TO SEE NEARBY. One of the best things about this valley is the abundance of things to see and do within a 30 km radius. Visit the Earthquake museum in Tulbagh or Moniki Chocolate just outside town. You can also go ziplining in Ceres.



Venture elsewhere in the valley

There's plenty to see and do in this part of the world and, because of its location, Fynbos Guest Farm is really central as a base for exploring nearby towns.

Tulbagh is a mere 14 km away. If you haven't been, the Earthquake museum is a definite must-see. The tickets are only R15 per person and there are plenty of interesting photographs and first-hand accounts from the locals who were present or felt the tremors nearby.

Moniki Chocolates is also just down the road and the chocolate tasting is only R50 per person to sample three plus get a drink with the confectionery. The Kitchen Gardens in Church Street are also highly recommended if you have green fingers. This is where the local restaurants and eateries come to get their herbs, vegetables and leafy greens that end up on your plate, and entrance is free.

War aficionados can visit the blockhouses just outside Wolseley that was built by the British during the Anglo-Boer War, and used to guard the nearby bridges from Boer sabotage.

If you're an adrenaline junkie, then the Zipline Tour just outside Ceres is also quite a thrill. There are eight lines of various lengths and angles, but you can adjust your speed with the hand brake if you feel you're going a little too fast. On your own, you'll be up and down the mountain in just over 30 minutes, but it is way more enjoyable in a group, and will, of course, take a lot longer to get everyone down.



WHAT WE CAMPED WITH

Mini Cooper Countryman D

You're either a Mini person or you're not, and the brand can sometimes be a bit hit-and-miss. Take for example the ill-fated Paceman and Roadster models... And, while the Countryman has never really appealed to the masses, it does come equipped with some serious tech. Also, apart from its dimensions, it stays true to the company ethos of being fun to drive.

This one came equipped with the new rooftop tent that was developed in partnership with Italian vehicle tent specialists, Autohome. Unfortunately, it's not available through Mini South Africa, so if you're really wanting one, you'll have to order it from Europe.

It comes with a built-in mattress, mosquito nets, two door flaps, two windows and a battery-operated touch-operated LED light bar. It's 2,1 metres long and 1,3 metres wide, and they're touting

it as a two sleeper, but it might get a bit cramped up there if you're taller than 1,7 m.

This model's hallmark is its flexible and torquey diesel engine, which merely sipped fuel on our weekend trip overall, despite some fairly swift driving and visiting the small towns of the area at low speed and therefore higher consumption.

The quirky instrumentation and facia switchgear will also find a way to win your heart. What was a bit annoying was that the Mini's computer kept forgetting the phone when we were streaming audio via Bluetooth, so we had to manually pair with each trip.

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine 1 995 cc, four-cylinder, turbodiesel
Power 110 kW @ 4 000 rpm
Torque 330 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Price R491 900

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Three cheers for **Boegoeberg**

A little more than a two-hour drive north of Cape Town is a superb weekend destination – perfect for chilling plus you get to play on three 4x4 trails.

Text and photos **Piet van Heerde**



Boegoeberg 4x4 is located on the farm Lambertshoek near Clanwilliam, and the 4x4 trails originated in the tracks used to harvest rooibos tea and buchu in the mountains. Owner, Sybrie de Beer, saw an opportunity to transform these routes into a playground for off-road vehicles and, in addition to maintaining them, he's constantly improving them.

In addition to the 4x4 trails there are also paths for hiking and mountain biking, as well as a host of activities in the area.

The main trail

This is the most popular of the three trails at Boegoeberg 4x4, but Sybrie recommends that you should be a reasonably experienced 4x4 enthusiast to take it on.

The route begins a few hundred steps from the campsite, and you immediately start the climb to the first hurdle: a rocky obstacle. It's not overly difficult, but it's important to pick the correct line. If you want to skip this one, there is an escape route.

From here, the trail rises systematically higher, with obstacles including loose rocks, angled slopes and axle twisters that pop up every so often. Maintain a slow pace and about 2½ hours later you'll reach a lookout point at a small campsite. (There are also ablution facilities here.) If you're not in a hurry, and there's nobody camping here, you can even light a fire and grill some meat on the coals.

Now you can either turn around or carry on following the route. More challenging obstacles await with larger loose rocks and sharper turns, but if you drive carefully, you can cross over without engaging diff lock. Sybrie regularly drives his Hilux along here to do maintenance.

An optional part of the route takes you to the tower. With its winding trail along a river, loose shingle and challenging corners, it's a tough grade 4 rating, but you'll be rewarded with an outstanding view that stretches out all around you.

From here, the trail begins to descend the mountain with enough obstacles, rock stairs, narrow spaces and steep cliffs to keep you on your toes. And then, out of the blue, the road descends and you have to take care driving on the loose stones. Just keep your head. Stay in first gear in low range, with your foot slightly on the brake and let your vehicle go – don't slide, though. Before you know it, it's over.

After this you have to tackle one or two sandstone obstacles and then you're on the way back to the camp.

The main trail is a wonderful half-day trip with incredible views. Plus, you get to see the remarkable and unique vegetation of the West Coast. >



LEG LIFT. If an obstacle proves too tough, you can use one of several chicken routes around it.



The alternative sand route

On the alternative route, you first drive through the farm for a bit – a great opportunity for city slickers to experience the freedom of country life. A little further are sand pits where you can test your sand-driving skills. After that, the route leads you over slightly more challenging terrain, but it is not too serious.

Then you decide whether you want to drive straight to tackle the sand or whether you'd rather drive a long detour before you dive into the sand. The detour makes it easier to get there; otherwise you have to drive a fairly steep dune where some vehicles won't cope. The rest of the route back to the campsite is without drama.

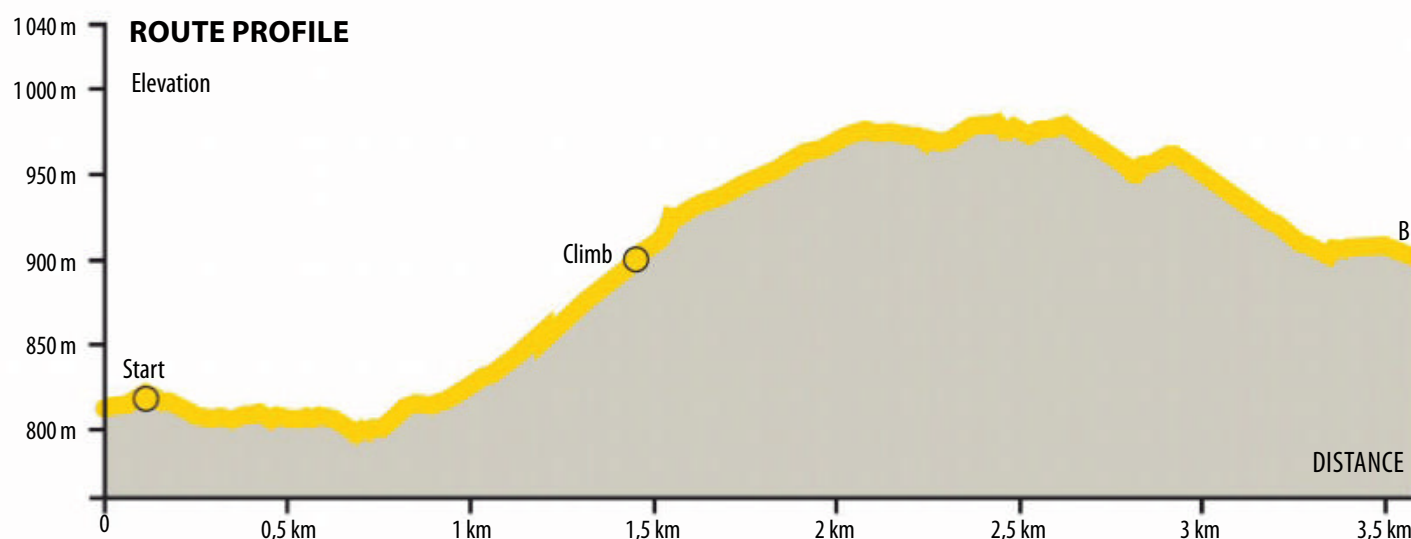
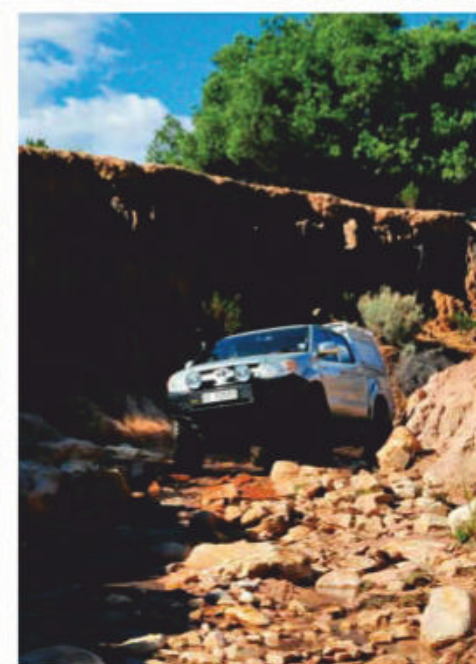
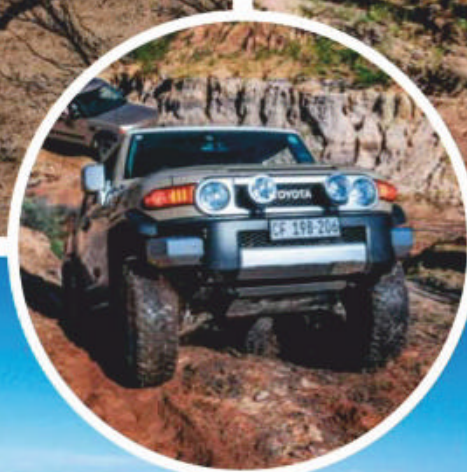
The playground

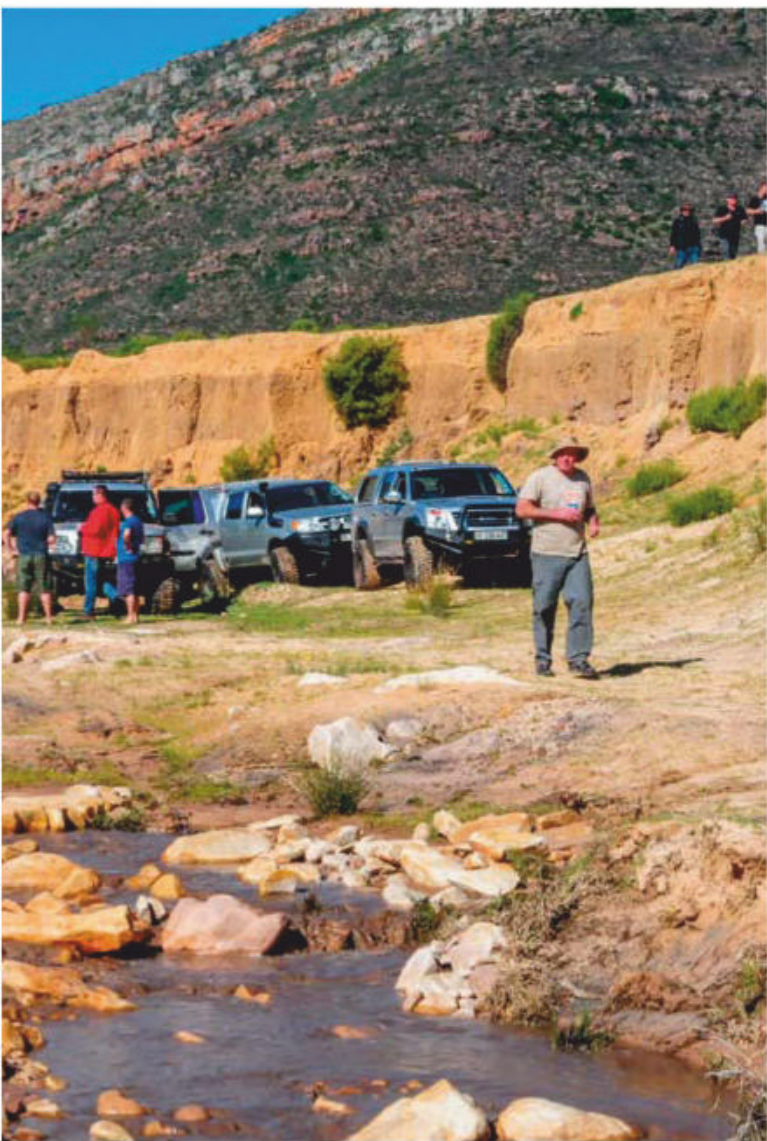
The playground is a donga that gets flushed by the river flowing from the mountain. It's a tough test for 4x4 enthusiasts and especially popular with 4x4 groups who come here to challenge each other. Sybrie usually tags along to offer advice and direction.

The campsite

Boegoeberg 4x4 has many shaded campsites. It's a great place to stay for a weekend or even a whole holiday. If camping doesn't float your boat, book a spot in the old farmhouse or one of the chalets.

The enormous swimming dam is something to behold. It was built with locally quarried stone, and there's a constant flow of water through the dam to the lilly pond below. Kids will spend hours here. There's also a smaller pool for the little ones as well as a reception area where large groups can gather. The ablution facilities are unique: staff start stoking the fire under a boiler from early in





the morning and there is always hot water. The facilities are also serviced regularly.

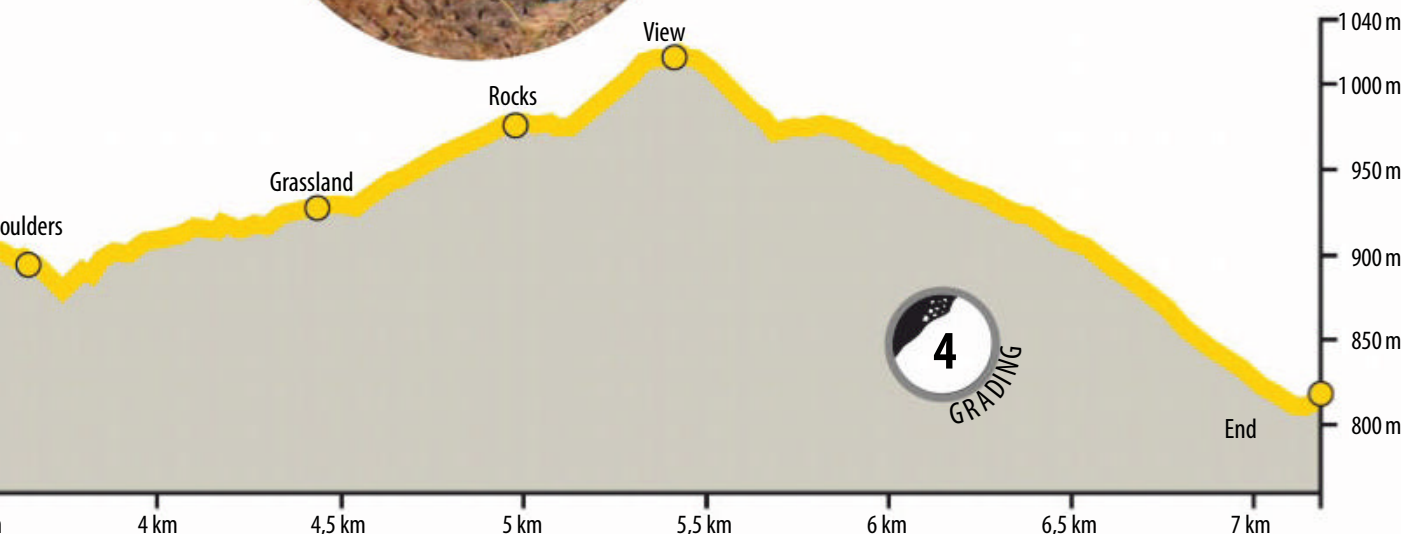
The environment

Boegoeberg 4x4 is centrally located and there are a host of activities in the area. Clanwilliam's only 17km away where you can go boating and water ski and from where you can explore the Cederberg.

In flowering season, you can go for a quick drive through the Biedouw Valley, go shopping for veld shoes in Wupperthal or check out rock art. If you head in the other direction, go on a historic tour and visit the Olof Bergh stone. (Suddenly, I'm feeling thirsty. – Ed) It is a well-known landmark for earlier travellers where this famous adventurer also stayed over a few times. The large stone provides shelter and there's a freshwater fountain.

You're also on the doorstep of Lambert's Bay where you can settle in at one of the restaurants and alternate your usual red-meat diet with seafood.

There are also a variety of other 4x4 trails in the area, including Klein-Tafelberg, Scheppie Sous and Markuskraal.



PLAY DIRTY. The playground will muddy your truck, of that you can be sure, and Sybrie is always on hand to suggest the correct line through an obstacle.

What you should know



Maximum number of vehicles 20

Do I get a map? Yes.

Will my vehicle get scratched? There's regular maintenance of the trail, but you need to be careful to avoid the bushes.

Can we braai on the trail Yes.

Can I turn around halfway? Yes.

Cellphone reception? Yes – not everywhere but there's strong signal on the mountain.

AROUND THE ROUTE

Best time to go? All year round.

Take my family? Yes, definitely.

Just for a day or make a weekend of it? At least the weekend.

Ablution facilities? Yes.

Directions Drive north on the N7 from Cape Town. About 20 km after Citrusdal, turn left at Markuskraal and follow the tar road to the T-junction. Turn right and follow the tar road to another T-junction. Turn right again, follow the road until the tar ends and turn left toward Graafwater. Drive 7 km and turn left.

GPS S32.28719 E18.75543

Cost? The main trail is R200 and the sand trail R100. Camping costs R250 p.n. per family. Contact them to request rates for the farmhouse and chalets.

Contact 083 632 2634 or 027 482 2933 (Sybrie de Beer – best to call between 6pm and 8pm)

boegoeberg4x4@mylan.co.za

boegoeberg4x4.co.za

go Drive & Camp says: It may be a challenging route but it's definitely worth it.



Sleepy hollow

The homely village of Gouritz captured the hearts of Josef and Johanna Tolmay from Three Rivers when they visited the Gouritsmond Caravan Park.



PEACE AND QUIET. Gouritz is a small village, attracting a handful of fishermen and campers. The ablutions are large, befitting this campsite.

“After visiting Point Caravan Park in Mossel Bay, we headed west and ended up roughly halfway between Mossel Bay and Albertinia. At the municipal camping area, you’re only around 500 metres from the water and tidal pools.”

What is it like?

There are 130 demarcated stands and you pitch your tent or pull your caravan onto green grass. Each stand has its own bin that’s emptied three days a week, and there is also a power point (the blue caravan type) and a built-up braai, though you must bring your own grid. Each stand is also never more than 15 metres away from a tap so it’s easy to collect water.

There are trees that line the park and which intermittently provide some shade, though a number of young trees have been planted a few months ago that should be providing plenty of shade throughout the campsite in the next few months. The foliage is also home to plenty of birdlife, and it’s not uncommon to see guineafowl roam between the tents.

What about the ablution facilities?

The large ablution block is cleaned every day of the week and is neat and generally in a good working condition. On the men’s side, there are six washbasins with liquid soap dispensers, paper hand towels and blowers. There are bathtubs, but with no plugs, and fortunately there are five showers with hooks for your dry clothes. Two of the showers have glass doors for extra privacy. You’ll also have to bring your own toilet paper.

If you want to wash your dishes, then you’ll also have to bring a plug from home, because those items are missing from the facilities. There is also a laundry room so you can keep your clothes clean during your stay.

What can you get up to?

The good fishing prospects is the main reason why so many anglers frequent this spot and right next to the caravan park there is also a pins and horseshoes setup should you want to play a game of jukskei.

There are four hiking trails in the area that range from 1,6 km to 8 km – they’re maintained throughout the year and are safe to explore because of the very low crime rate in the area.

Bookworms will be pleased by the well-stocked library in town – well within walking distance of the campsite.

There’s also a bottle store and restaurant right at the entrance of the caravan park should you need to stock up on drinks or grab a convenient bite.

WIN Josef and Johanna wins a **Camp Cover** Bundu Bag worth R500.

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ENQUIRIES: 061 461 8543 / 012 770 3633

Catch trout in the Drakensberg

If you want to work on your fly-fishing technique, it's time to pack your sleeping bag and tent, and head for the pristine waters of Underberg in KwaZulu-Natal.



FISHING RESORT

SILVERSTREAMS CARAVAN PARK No border incident

This campsite in the Drakensberg is tucked away near the Boesmansknek border post to Lesotho. It can't be too hard to manage a first-rate campsite when you have large grass-covered stands beside a crystal-clear river and a picture-perfect background. Add a shop where you can buy meat, fresh fruit, eggs and chocolate every day, and you have a gem like Silverstreams.

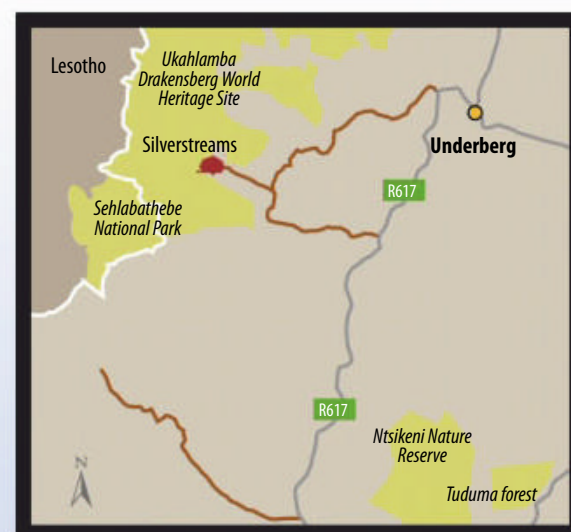
The road to the campsite takes you over a small concrete bridge that crosses the shallow Ngwangwa River.

You can catch two types of trout here: rainbow trout or brown trout. For the latter, however, you will not only need the patience of Job, but also a healthy dose of ingenuity and luck.

There are eight stands (on grass) next to the river and another 24 closer to the ablutions in the middle of



the campsite, each with a three-point socket. Some stands have their own braai (with a grid), but taps are scarce. And, if you want shade, you must bring a gazebo or beach umbrella because there aren't many shady trees. But there is a playroom for the children when it gets too hot for them to kick a ball or play cricket with their friends.





In Brief | Silverstreams caravan park



Fish Rainbow and brown trout

Campsite 32 large grass-covered sites with minimal shade.

Ablution facilities Neat bathrooms, with an undercover washing-up section next door. There is an automatic washing machine that operates with R10 tokens.

Price R220-R600 per night per site for up to 4 people depending on the season and the specific site.

Arrival and departure 2 pm and 10 am

Contact 082 331 6670 or 082 859 8619

info@silverstreams.co.za

silverstreams.co.za

Closest town Underberg, 46 km.

How is the road? The last 25 km is a dirt road and there are two different access roads to the resort.

GPS S29.843911 E29.215664

go! Drive & Camp says The owners prefer a catch-and-release approach but they don't mind if you want to keep the occasional fish for the pan. Permits aren't required and campers may fish free of charge.



SEAFOOD

FISH PARCEL WITH INSTANT NOODLES AND VEGETABLES

Fish for compliments

Even the Heart and Stroke Foundation would be impressed with this one!

You need

- 1 portion instant noodles
- foil
- 1 small onion, sliced into rings
- a fresh fish of your choice (such as hake)
- a handful of vegetables, cut into strips
- black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon soya sauce
- lemon juice to taste

This is how

1 Soak the noodles in warm water until soft.



2 Make a double-layered packet with the foil, large enough for the noodles, fish and vegetables. Arrange the onion on the foil, then the fish, and then arrange the vegetables around the fish.

3 Season with pepper and sprinkle the soya sauce and lemon juice over. Place the noodles on top and fold the packet closed.

4 Braai the packet for 15 minutes over a high heat on the grid.

go! Drive & Camp says Any white fish you choose will work really well in this recipe. There is no need to flip over the parcel while cooking as the fish will steam from below until it has cooked through.

Recipe Tiaan Langenegger Photo Ruwan Boshoff



FISHING TACKLE

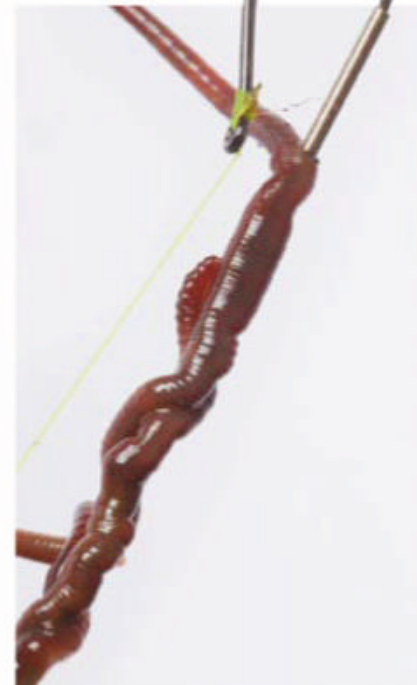
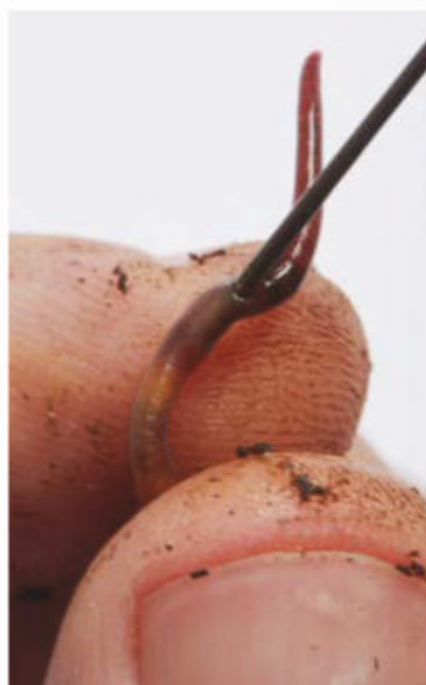
Thread a worm

If you've ever stabbed your finger while threading earthworms, you'll be very pleased with this piece of tackle. Fear None is importing a special stainless-steel needle, which you can use to easily – and painlessly – thread a worm over your hook. The Stonfo needles are imported from Italy. Simply thread the earthworm over the 20 cm-long needle, which is straight and has a T eflon tip, then press the other end against the barbed hook. This end of the needle fits neatly over the sharp end of the hook, and then you very simply feed the worm on to the hook.

The needles are available in two sizes: a thin needle for Kariba worms, and a thicker one for garden and bloodworms. **Price:** Approximately R70 (for 2 needles), and R200 (for 4 needles and the green holder) at all good angling shops

Contact: Fear None Quality Fishing Tackle 011 979 2766

fearnone@mweb.co.za fearnoneqft.co.za



Camping wherever the wind blows us

The time for waiting was over: They were going to tour the routes they'd always wanted to travel. And because their son was being home-schooled, there was nothing to stop Vorster and Madie Senekal of Musina from doing exactly that.

The plan is to first travel through South Africa, says Vorster, because how can you cross the border when you haven't even discovered your own country?

A beginning

“Where to even start? Which route should we travel? It's something that's impossible to plan because there are too many beautiful places to see. That's why we decide to go wherever the wind blows us, with no planning apart from booking only our first destination.

We choose to head for the sea. And because we don't like crowds, our destination must be somewhere quiet. We book at the Mabibi Beach Camp on the Wild Coast, which is where our

adventure begins. There is no house for us to return to. All our possessions are in storage. Nothing lies behind us, there's just the open road ahead, with so many turn-offs that are calling.

We travel in a 1984 Toyota Land Cruiser that we christen “The Bus”, which contains absolutely everything we need for our trip. Not a roof rack in sight on this vehicle. And because The Bus is so old, we have no air-con or any other luxuries either.

Mabibi Beach is wonderful. It's lovely to experience the warm blue ocean, the bluebottles and the crustaceans. The campsite is incredibly beautiful and we make new friends, realising once again that our country is a good place because our people have hearts of gold.

We leave after a week with no idea of where we are going, just a feeling that the mountains are beckoning. The Drakensberg has always

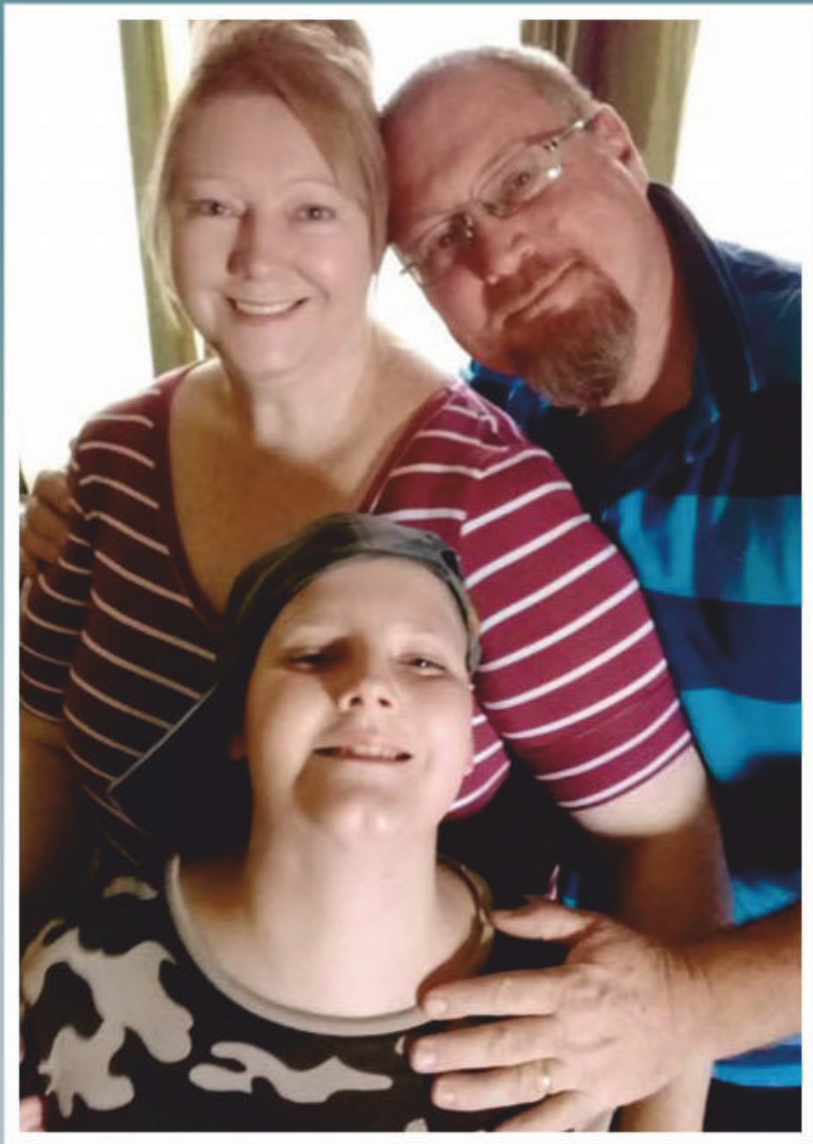
captivated us and we take the highway to Durban, booking ourselves into a campsite at Hermits Wood near Underberg. We gaze at the mountains and stop at our site with elation. The lawns are beautiful and the mountains rise around us. We feel right at home in the cool air. It's early on a Friday afternoon and there is just one other group of people camping nearby.

All is quiet and peaceful, but by five o'clock the stands are all full and the place is a hive of activity. Cars drive back and forth, people laugh and shout, and things are perhaps a bit too busy for our liking. It takes a lot of patience to wait our turn at the ablution block.

By Sunday afternoon everyone has packed up and a deep peacefulness settles over the camp. We are alone again. Things are looking up.

From Hermits Wood, we move on to the Dargle Forest Lodge guest farm for the night. It's in the mountains

NOT A SOUL The Senekals aren't crazy about crowds and they found peace at Mabibi Beach Camp. Pictured in the inset is the family: Madie, Voster and Orrin (10).



between Underberg and Howick, surrounded by incredible natural beauty. The farm belongs to a couple who saw the potential of the place and developed it with a lot of hard work. They built just about everything themselves – with their talent and passion, nothing is lacking.

The hunt for a new tent

Our next stop is Maclear in the Eastern Cape. The

Tortoni campsite is on a beautiful farm just outside the town, en route to Ugie. We meet the friendly owners and enjoy a restful time beside a dam. Here, you feel like a part of farm life, and you couldn't feel more removed from the rush of human existence.

On the last night of our visit, we are woken by a storm raging around us. It rains cats and dogs and the wind tears at our tent – so badly that it's completely >



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done for by the time the storm abates. It's at times like this that you wish you'd heeded the warnings on the internet against buying a cheap supermarket tent.

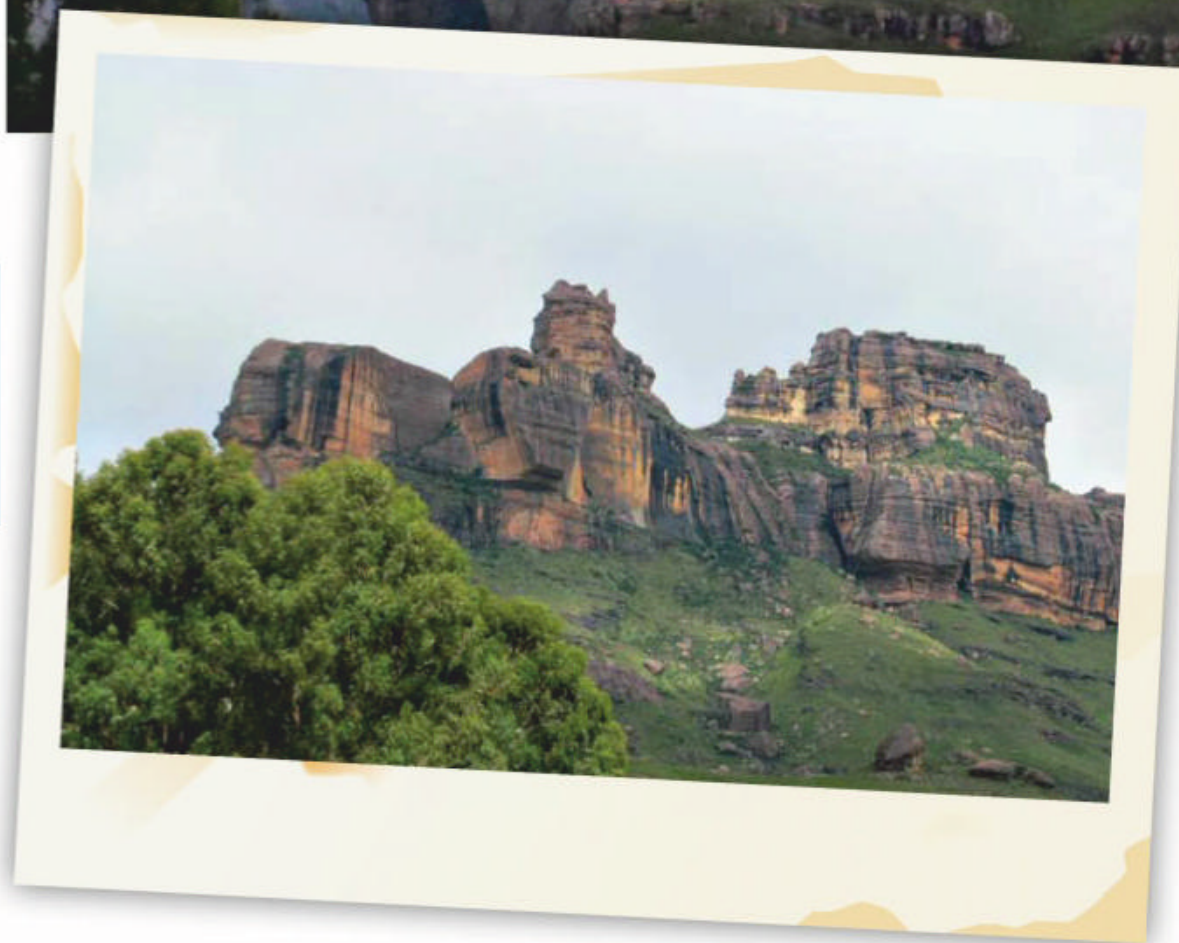
It's a Saturday and we drive through to Aliwal-North in the hopes that we will find a new tent there. But we have no luck, so spend the night in a guesthouse.

The next day we decide to follow Google's advice and go to Bloemfontein, where we eventually find a new tent that we pitch for the night at Tom's Place.

We leave Bloemfontein for Kimberley so that we can show our son, Orrin (10), the Big Hole, but the roads are closed for a protest or political gathering, so we can't get there. We visit the McGregor Museum instead and drive back to the Big Hole later when the roads are open.

We find that the Big Hole has undergone a massive change since our last visit and it's disappointing to see how the place has become a soulless shell. You used to be able to immerse yourself in the way life used to be, but now it just feels like an open gravesite.

The next morning we leave for Douglas to camp at the Broadwater River Estate.



We realise once again that our country is a good place because our people have hearts of gold.

It's a pleasant spot with neat, large ablution facilities and green lawns. There's also a restaurant where you can treat yourself to a hearty meal.

All the river activities mean the place gets really busy over weekends and we are actually relieved when we pack up on Saturday to leave for our next destination. Our plan is to camp at the Boegoeberg Dam. We drive through Douglas to Prieska, where we first pop in to visit family who farm along the Orange River. From Prieska we move on to Marydale, where we turn onto a gravel road towards the dam. Here we discover that they didn't receive our booking and weren't aware we were coming, but luckily there is still space and we are shown where to set up camp.

We make friends with Piet Bezuidenhout and Jandre Smith from Upington. It's as if

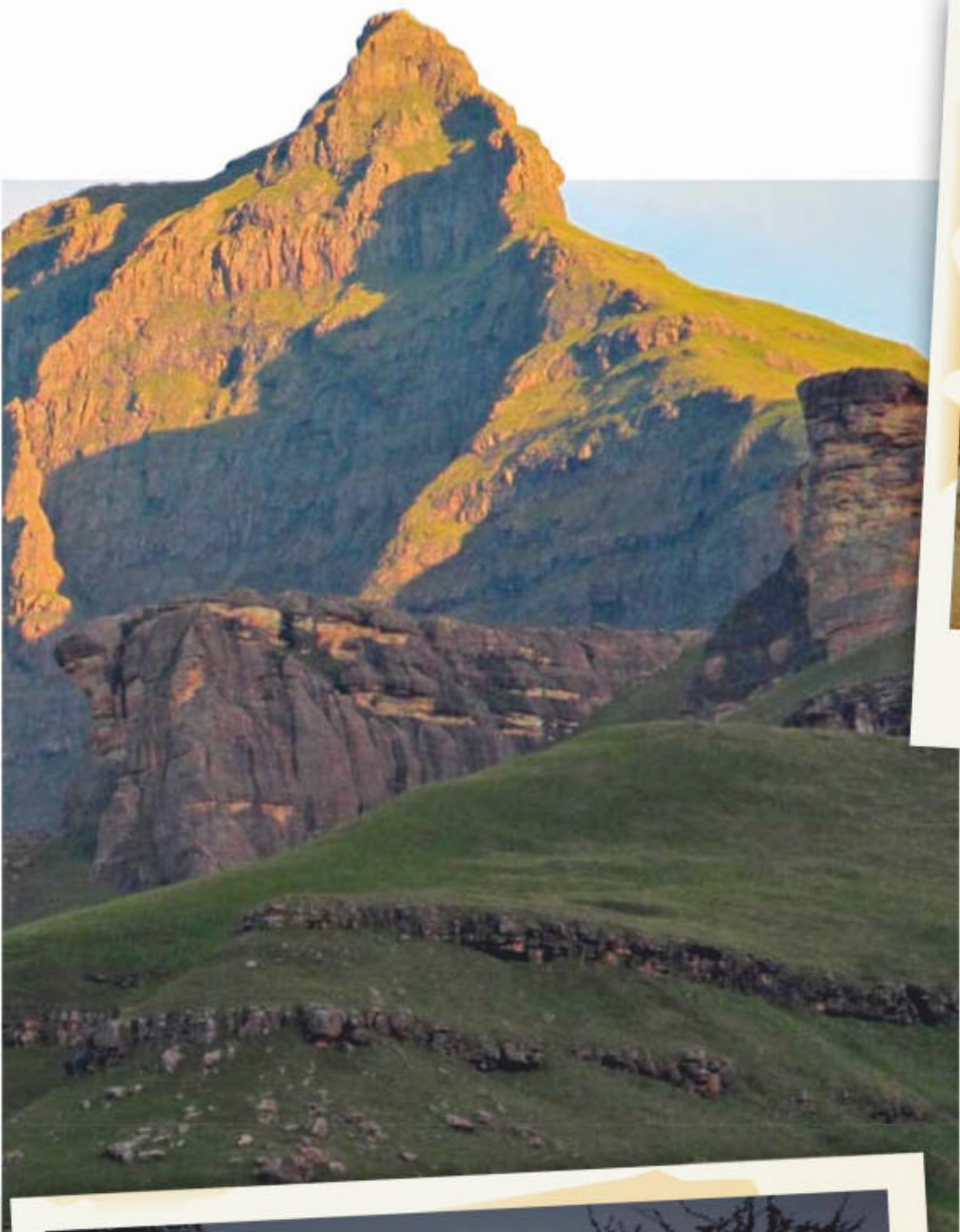
we were destined to meet because, thanks to Piet's knowledge of the Kalahari – which he eagerly shares with us – we anticipate visiting this marvelous part of the country.

From here we aim for Upington, simply because these interesting people recommend it to us. That's probably why it's such a great experience to travel without an itinerary: by opening yourself up to the influences of culture and history, you don't only see the places you want to

tick off on your list, you also see someone else's world as they see it. You hear their stories, you live their experience. And that elevates the journey to something more than just being able to say "Been there".

Augrabies here we come!

We spend one night in Upington and the next day head to the Augrabies Falls to see this wonder of nature. The river isn't flowing very strongly, so the falls



TURNING INLAND. After first visiting the coast, the Senekals headed for the mountains of KwaZulu-Natal and campsites with lush green grass.

We will definitely return here to camp. With more apples!

After our visit, we continue on, always curious to see what awaits around the corner. Oom

Piet recommended the Kalahari Molopo Lodge, so that's where we go. It's a beautiful place near Witdraai, the other side of Askham. On the first night we are spoiled with complimentary homemade bread and I get the chance to surprise my wife with a Greek salad from their kitchen. There's a swimming pool, too.

Three wonderful days later, >



aren't as impressive as they sometimes appear in photos. But we still find it beautiful.

We spend the next two nights camping at the Kalahari Monate Lodge, where we meet Vincent Parker, who is researching birdlife in the Kalahari. The campsite is well equipped with good ablution and laundry facilities. There is also a lovely swimming pool that

offers welcome relief in the afternoon heat.

We're fortunate to have a large tortoise as a neighbour. The veld is so dry that the tortoises leave it to come graze on the lawns here. But our neighbour has caught a whiff of our apples and he refuses to leave until his craving has been satisfied. One whole apple later, I have to carry him back home.



Galago Private Bush Lodge

Cell (office): 081 384 1842

Email: philm@intekom.co.za

Set on 17 hectares of pure bushveld, just 16 km from Bela Bela on the R516, Thabazimbi road, an hour from Pretoria and one-and-a-half hours from Johannesburg.

Ideal for small private group functions and secluded getaways.

The only 'bush' traffic you will have here are our birds and small game and the only lights you will see are stunning sunsets, camp fires and magnificent star-lit nights.

Lodge: Four comfortable self-catering, en suite cottages with braai facilities. Two 2-bed, one 4-bed and one 8-bed cottage to choose from. Each cottage with bathroom, flush toilet, hand basin and shower with hot and cold water. Linen and towels are provided. Heated swimming pool, Jacuzzi and a small tuckshop on the premises.

Camping: Four spacious camping sites with private ablution facilities. Six newly constructed camping sites with communal ablution facility. These sites are paved with grass and are equipped with a 15A power outlet as well as a braai stand. The camping site has its own swimming pool and lapa. The lapa is available for guests who want to host a private function.





FOUR-LEGGED AND FEATHERED FRIENDS. A tortoise ate an apple up close to the Senekals, and they also spotted vulture chicks.



CHASING HORIZONS. The Senekals covered 4 495 km in 43 days, using a little less than 600 litres of fuel .

we pack up to go and camp between Van Zylsrus and Black Rock. Our booking behind us, we leave on the Monday morning and decide to take the gravel road. We first visit the grave of Dawid Kruiper, king of the Khoisan, and then the vulture nests at Bokspits. It's so special to see the vulture chicks in the nests at the tops of the large camelthorn trees.

The gravel roads in this part of the country vary from passable to an obstacle course, and you can't afford to take your eyes off the road. It probably helps that I grew up on dirt roads.

We reach Van Zylsrus without incident, but come to a standstill in front of a locked gate. And there we stand. There's only MTN signal in this area, but we are all on Vodacom so no calls are possible. We turn around and start looking for alternative accommodation. When we reach a T-junction, we decide to turn towards McCarthy's Rest.

In our (uninformed) mind's eye we picture a small town like Van Zylsrus at McCarthy's Rest. There's a vehicle in front of us and it's driving fast. Probably to reach the border post before it closes.

And then we spot it: the sign that tells us the OppiKnoppi guestfarm is nearby. We take a chance and turn in. It's four o'clock

in the afternoon and all we can do is hope for the best.

A welcome Plan B

We see a Land Cruiser at the cattle kraal. The man at the car walks towards us. It's the owner Pieter Grove. And the news is not good: His entire bush camp is fully booked for the night. He probably notices the defeated expression on our faces and proposes a Plan B: we can sleep in his father's house for the night, at a ridiculously cheap rate.

We accept his offer without thinking twice, grateful for his help and hospitable welcome. Pieter later brings us some wood and offers to take us on a free game drive. Again we have the chance to make new friends in a country that has amazed us every single day from the start of our journey and continues to do so right to the end. If one could measure a country's wealth based on the love and hospitality of its people, this would be the most well-off country in the world.

We hit the road again, aiming for McCarthy's Rest. Only once we get there do we understand how much Pieter had helped us: what we had imagined as a small town turns out to be nothing more than a border post.



We decide to continue next to the Molopo River to Vorstershoop, where we fill up with diesel, buy a cooldrink and continue along the Molopo to Bray. Here we enjoy a burger at Tapama Lodge before continuing our journey... destination still unknown. Between Bray and Senlac, we drive the worst dirt roads I have ever experienced. Luckily it's still daylight and when we reach the tarred road at Senlac, the relief is massive. In two days we have driven just under 700 km of dirt roads.

But what really stands out for us is that most of the dirt roads we travelled have not been that bad.

Would we do it again? Yes. Probably not on exactly the same roads though.

We spend the night on a farm at Ascot, just outside Tosca. We braai that night to

say goodbye to the Kalahari... and the area bid us farewell with the most beautiful golden sunset.

Later I do a few calculations. I mark our route on a map and use Google to calculate our distance from town to town.

In 43 days we drove 4 495 km, of which more than 700 km were dirt roads. I spent roughly 53 hours behind the wheel at an average speed of 80 km/h. We used just under 600 ℓ of diesel, which means my Land Cruiser returned 13,3 ℓ/100 km.

The smile on our faces? It's a recent photo and we're packing again. Where to? Wherever the wind blows us... ”



Vorster and Madie wins a **Camp Cover** Bundu-bag worth R500. This multi-fuctional 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



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Navara's 4x2 is a towing tiger!

Nissan's new Navara 4x2 doesn't pull any punches when it comes to towing.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**



NISSAN NAVARA 2.3 D LE (4X2, AUTOMATIC)

Nissan expanded its Navara range with four 4x2 models, and all seven in the line-up, including the three 4x4 models, have the same 2.3 ℓ diesel engine. The seven bakkies therefore all have the same engine output (140 kW and 450 Nm), but the similarities go even further: The gross vehicle mass (GVM) and gross combination mass (GCM) are also the same: 2 910 kg and 5 910 kg respectively.

These numbers mean that all these versions can hypothetically tow a caravan of up to 3 tonnes. There aren't any such heavy caravans on our roads, but Nissan goes even further and says the Navara could actually tow up to 3,5 tonnes. There is, of course, a difference between the Navara's ability and what you may legally tow.

Our legislation allows you to hook up the same weight as your towing vehicle's tare weight; so you're legally restricted to 1 805 kg with the Navara 4x2 models.

A monster of a towbar

You'd expect a sturdy towbar on a bakkie, and the one on the test vehicle certainly didn't disappoint. In fact, because bakkies generally have a ladder-frame chassis, you can bolt a decent piece of steel to it.

The Navara's Oris towbar is rated for 2 910 kg, which is far heavier than what the law allows. The same applies to the permitted nose weight on the towbar. For the towbar's vertical limit, Oris grants 150 kg for the caravan's nose weight, but our authorities limit you to 100 kg. >





Pieter Crous

Pieter Crous is a towing fundi of note. This is what he thinks...

Pieter says

“ I like the high wheel arches with the bonnet sitting slightly lower. It's easier to estimate distance when driving close to something or parking.

It's quiet in the cabin, even with the engine that's slightly noisy. I wanted to complain about not having anywhere to put my cooldrink, but then spotted hidden cup holders on either side of the dashboard near the doors. Even smaller cans fit – this gets a big thumbs up from me. Unfortunately, the pockets in the doors are a bit narrow. It's as if the seat gets in the way between you and the storage space.

The gear lever is rather long, and with the mechanical handbrake next to it, it seems as if the Navara isn't quite as with it as other manufacturers.

But for a bakkie with an automatic gearbox, the Navara is super-alert and, even at a reasonable pace (80 km/h), it reacts smartly when you put pedal to the metal.

I have to say the small screen of the reverse camera in the rearview mirror doesn't work for me. The image is just too small.

Compared to the previous generation – and especially the 2.5 l model that impressed me because it was a luxury bakkie – I think the new generation tends to be more like the NP300 Hardbody. The new Navara's appearance is also not entirely in my taste. However, there is nothing wrong with its towing ability. It drives well and has enough power for towing duty.”



You could say the 100 kg limit our Road Traffic Act demands is unfair for the type of towing vehicles and caravans used by South Africans. Our legislation is similar to that of Europe, while local conditions are more comparable to Australia. The same Navaras that go to Australia, for example, enjoys a nose weight allowance based on a percentage of the total weight of the caravan (less than 10%).

If you look at the Jurgens Xplorer Xcell that we used for this test, its maximum permitted weight according to Jurgens is 1 650 kg. In Australia, therefore, you may go up to just under 165 kg (10% of 1 650 kg) for this nose weight.

So, looking at the numbers from Nissan and the towbar, it can only mean one thing: the Navara is as strong as an ox, and the same goes for the towbar.

This model, like the 4x4 variant, has a light at the trailer socket. The light is activated when you open or lock the Navara with the remote control. The illumination last about a minute – handy if you need to hitch a caravan in the dark.



GADGETS. The starter button is a luxury, as is the rear window which opens with the press of a button. The rear-view camera isn't located in the middle of the tailgate, which means the ball of the towbar isn't in the middle of the rear-view image either.





Mirror, mirror on the wall...

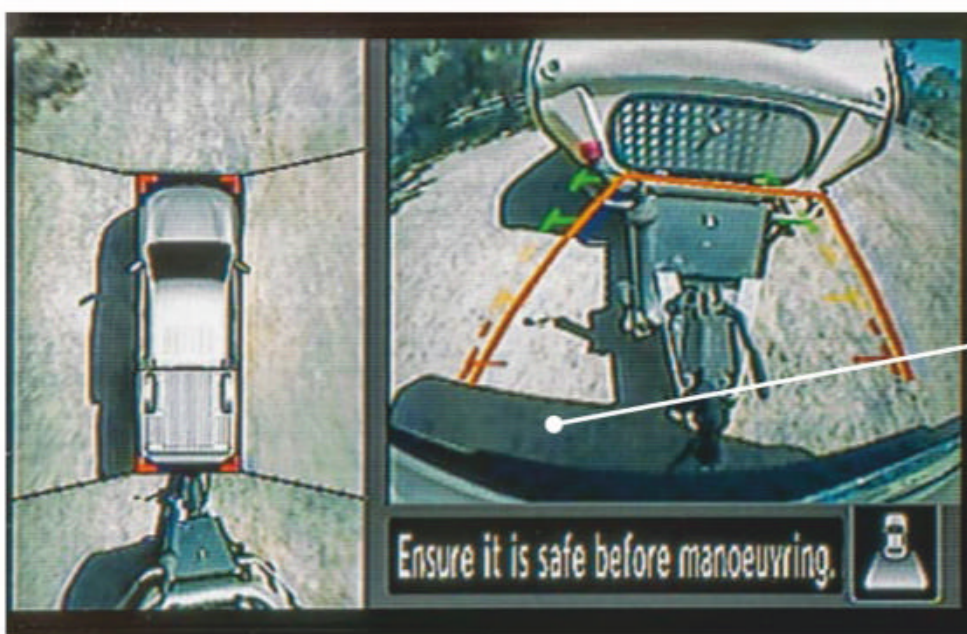
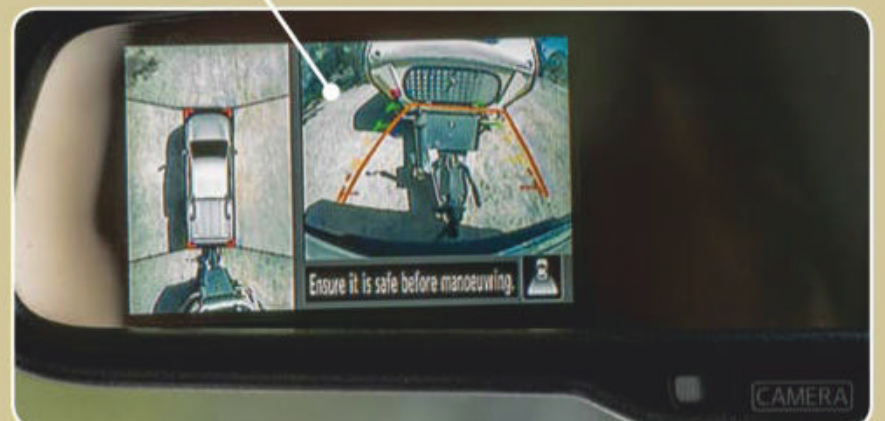
Rear-view cameras are a great help, especially when towing, and most manufacturers have their own version of this technology. Because navigation systems are just about standard in new vehicles, the screen is also used for rear- and surround-view cameras. However, the 4x2 model's reverse view appears in the mirror.

So, when you put the Navara in reverse, the image sits on the left in the rearview mirror and it's just bigger than a matchbox. The image has index lines that allow you to aim as you turn, but Nissan has also built in the latest technology: underneath each wing mirror there is also a camera lens, and there's one in the grille and, of course, one in the tail gate. With these four cameras, you get a bird's eye view of what's happening around the bakkie.

You can also activate the camera image without putting the Navara in reverse. On the bottom edge of the mirror, there is a button >



ON SCREEN. The touchscreen in the middle console isn't connected to the cameras. It's only for the satnav and multimedia system.



TOW TEST



What we towed

Make Jurgens Safari

Model Xplorer Xcell

Year model 2013

GVM 1 650 kg

Loaded weight on the axle during test 1 220 kg (weighed on the Navara)

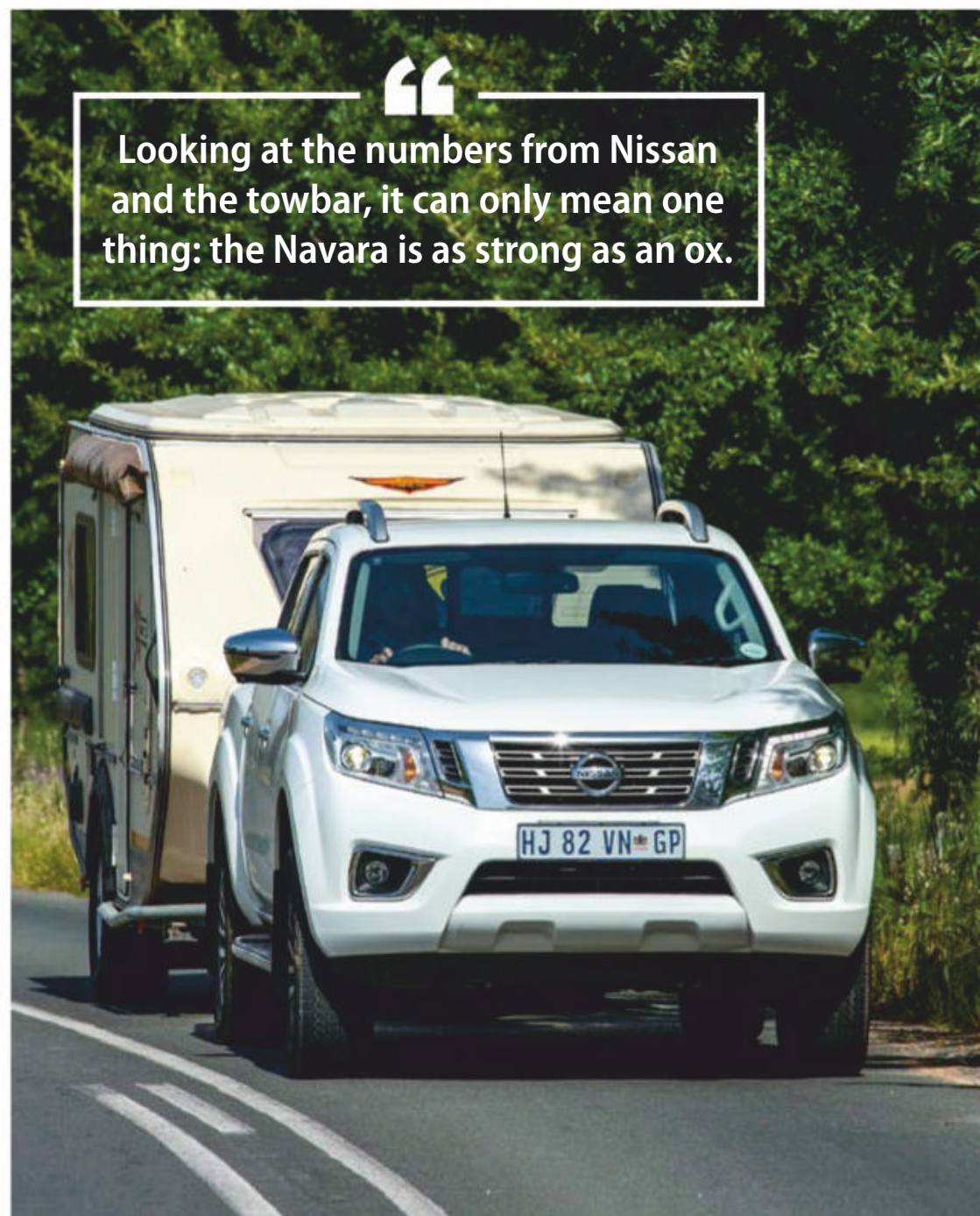
go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Jurgens Xcell from Tygerberg Caravans. Call Wesley Dempster on 021 982 4670 if you want to view the Xcell.

tygerbergcaravans.co.za



labelled "Camera". Pressing the button once gives you a combined image. On the left is a top-down image, and on the right is the view from the grille. Press the button again and the image on the left changes to a view from the left-side wing mirror.

The Navara computer, however, doesn't know when you're towing a caravan. The rear sensors immediately start making a noise when you start reversing as it figures you're backing straight into the caravan. Fortunately, there is a button in front of the gear lever that allows you to silence the alarm. However, once you get started – or even just turn the car on and off – the system resets itself.



Looking at the numbers from Nissan and the towbar, it can only mean one thing: the Navara is as strong as an ox.

BUM LANTERN. It should be added to every towbar. The light illuminates the ground around the towbar so there's no more fumbling in the dark when you have to hitch or unhitch your trailer. Plus, now you can see the protruding towbar in the dark, reducing the chance of whacking your shin against it.

The test

Distance 95,6 km

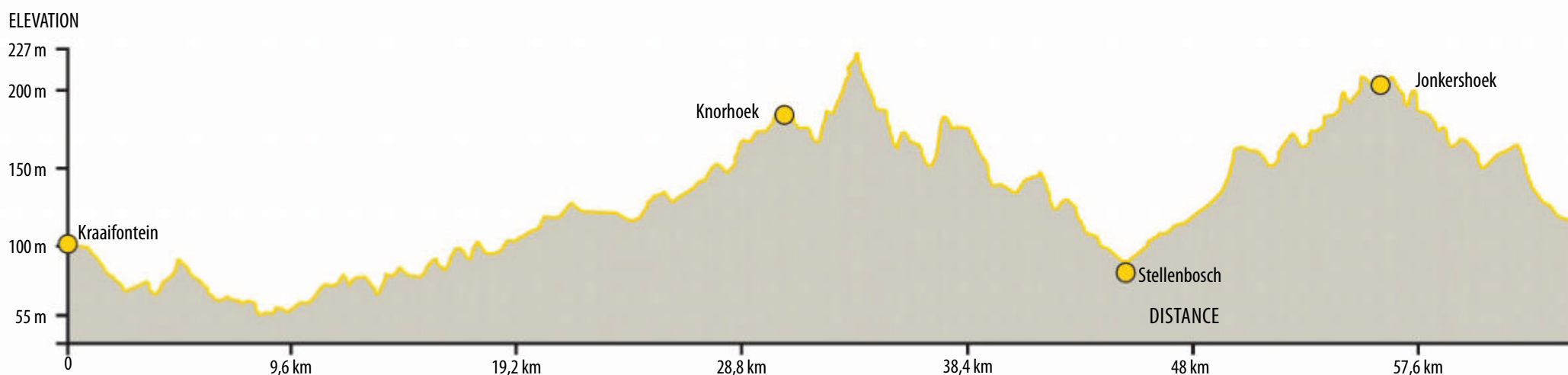
Top speed 98,4 km/h (GPS)

Average speed 43,5 km/h (highways, back roads and an very modest Jonkershoek pass).

Driving time 2 hours and 13 minutes.

Weather 18 °C, sunny, with a southeasterly wind of 16 km/h.

TOW PROFILE



Before you open your wallet

What does the book say?

Fuel Diesel

Engine 2,298 ℓ

Cylinders 4 inline

Power 140 kW @ 3 750 rpm

Torque 450 Nm @ 1 500 to 2 500 rpm

Transmission 7-speed automatic

Driven wheels Rear only

Tare 1 805 kg

GVM 2 910 kg

GCM 5 910 kg

Wading depth Not available.

Towing ability for trailer with overrun brakes Up to 3 500 kg

Dimensions 5 255 mm (l); 1 850 mm (w); 1 865 mm (h)

Axle distance 3 150 mm

Track width 1 570 mm (front and rear)

Ground clearance 229 mm

Fuel capacity 80 ℓ

Price (new) From R551 900 (with leather seats)

Price (second hand)

On autotrader.co.za we saw a 2018 model with 6 000 km on the clock for R509 900.

Fast facts

The hitch The towbar isn't standard. Our test vehicle had a removable Oris towbar with a built-in drop plate where you can bolt the ball at two different heights. The towbar costs R4 860 extra (labour excluded).

Suspension Coil springs front and back. The rear dropped a good 4 cm with a weight of 140 kg on it – 10 kg shy of the limit. It's a lot for a bakkie, but if you take into consideration the bakkie has coil rear spring suspension versus the rear leaf

spring suspension of most other bakkies, it makes sense.

Weight 2 240 kg with a full tank fuel, the driver in the car as well as the nose weight of the Xcell on the two bar.

Interior space If you're six feet tall, you'll have a three-finger space above your head on the back seat and four in front of your knees.

Speed The speedometer and GPS speed differ by 5 km/h – when the bakkie says 100 km/h, the GPS shows 95 km/h.

Fuel consumption The 13,1 ℓ/100 km (7,63 km/ℓ) is nothing to complain about, and compares well with the 4x4 version's 13,44 ℓ/100 km (the 4x4 version is slightly heavier but the caravan is the same).

Finishes Dark and sturdy, but the dashboard still looks a bit plastic. Just like the 4x4 model, the middle rear window opens electrically. The button is on the right of the driver's knee.

Extras You can choose from a list of more than 60 items – including an alloy bumper (R6 803), a Beekman Executive canopy (R17 467), roof rack with rails (R4 471) and rock sliders with side steps (R11 530) from Ironman 4x4.

The other 4x2 models
SE (manual) R457 900
SE (auto) R471 900
LE (manual) R519 900 (+ R13 000 for leather seats)

go! Drive & Camp says Leave the leather. Rather spend the money on a great holiday. 🏖️

From the competitors (4x2, diesel and auto)



R565 500

400 Nm

2%

VW AMAROK BITDI HIGHLINE

11%



R448 600

400 Nm

19%

TOYOTA HILUX 2.4 GD-6 RAIDER

11%



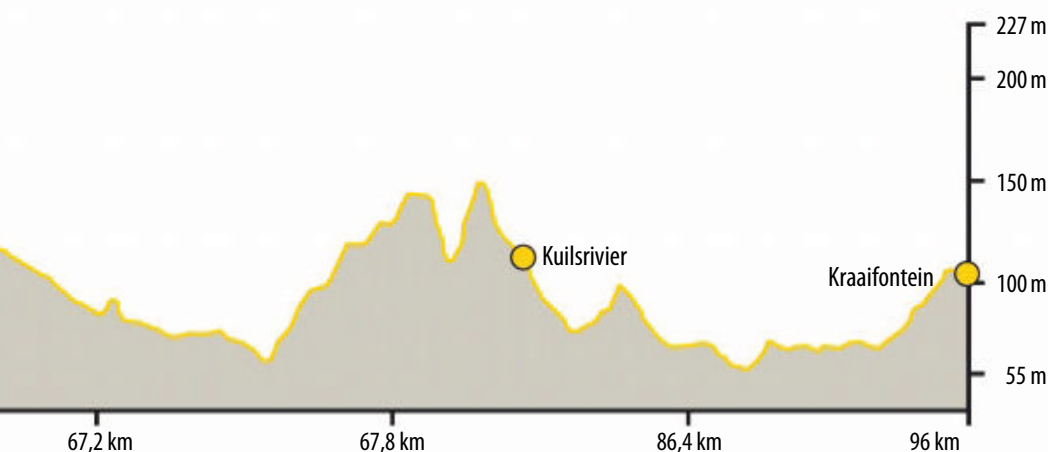
R507 100

385 Nm

8%

FORD RANGER 2.2 TDCI XLT

15%





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Find us on



Cosy for a couple

Sherpa Leisure's Tiny Lite Hi-Rider is small, light and absolutely perfect for couples who want to downscale and camp until they can't any more.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**

Sherpa Leisure is famous for the small fibreglass caravans it builds for couples. Other than the Rambler, Sherpa's largest caravan, all the models have either twin beds or a double bed, which means it's basically a caravan that consists of a bed.

The materials used in building the Sherpa caravans are also a huge plus. The hull is made of fibreglass, and everyone knows that's just about maintenance free, light and incredibly strong. And, should you need to make repairs to an older model, you

won't struggle to repair any of the panels.

Neville de Meillon, the man behind Sherpa's success, has now introduced the very latest model, the Sherpa Tiny Lite Hi-Rider. This caravan is almost a Tiny Lite clone, but it has bigger wheels – 15" instead of 13". Because the spare wheel no longer fits into the nose cone, Neville introduced a swing bracket at the door.

With its larger wheels, the Hi-Rider is therefore more at home on dirt roads, as we recently found out in Clanwilliam at the foot of the Cederberg.



SHERPA TINY LITE HI-RIDER



Front door at the back

The door, which consists of two parts, is positioned so that you can make the most of space inside the caravan. The upper part of the door lifts up, almost like a bakkie's canopy hatch, while the lower part opens to the right (after swinging away the spare wheel).

Sherpa makes its own loose fibreglass step you place at the back door to get in. First, loosen the two clips on the back corners of the roof before lifting it on the inside.

When you swing away the bottom door, you have an opening of a good 82 cm, which is even broader than a standard house door. The top of the door frame is around 1,3 m high, which gives you a comfortable space to climb through. One of the two lights in the Hi-Rider is also here at the doorframe. It's a tubular LED that can swing if you want to change the angle of the beam. The other light sits by the nose above the beds and is similar to the one at the door.

The awning (1,3 x 1,8 m) is also attached to the pop-up roof at the backdoor. It is rolled up in a bag that zips closed. If you want to open the awning, open the bag before lifting up the roof, otherwise you'll battle to get to it. This awning is quite high above the door and doesn't screen much rain. But it will come in handy if you want to leave your camping chairs there for the night, so they don't get dew all over them.

The pop-up roof lifts right at the back where you get in. A loose strut goes in the left-hand corner – especially if you're pitching the awning, so the roof doesn't retract back into the hull.

By the way, the top door has a window with curtains that can be closed, and the door has a lock on the inside for when you go to bed at night. If you close the door, you can lock it from the inside.



Get settled

After unhitching the caravan, first crank down the corner steadies. If you don't – specifically the two scissor steadies on the two back corners – the Hi-Rider's nose will lift when you get in. Unlike most other caravans, the corner steadies are diagonally under the hull, but they work easily with the crank-handle. In addition, four corner steadies are almost superfluous for a caravan this size, but at least it's as sturdy as a house with a proper foundation.

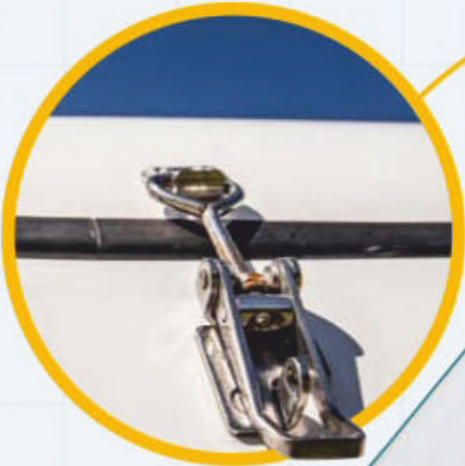
Remember, the Hi-Rider doesn't have brakes, which means if you want to set up on a slope, you'll need to place a brick behind the wheel until you've secured the corner steadies.

>



BUSINESS AT THE BACK.
 The Tiny's rear is where most of the features can be found. It's just the power point on the right and the dual doors of the nosecone that open on either side of the A-frame that suggest otherwise. >





The great device

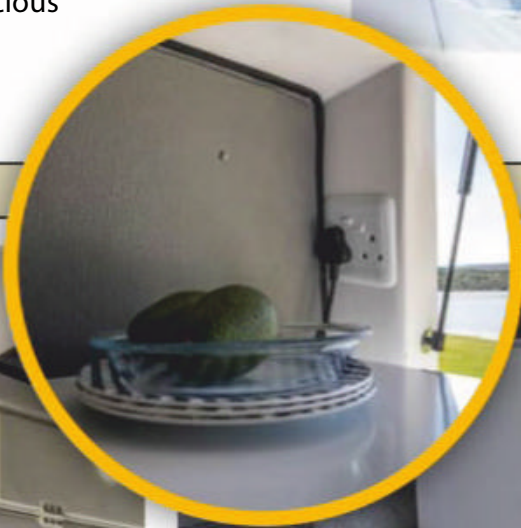
The Hi-Rider has two single beds (193 x 64 cm) along the length of the caravan. Because the roof only lifts at the back, the head height towards the front of the caravan becomes lower. If you're six feet tall, you'll only hit your head when you're about 1,2 m from the door. So, you have enough space to get dressed here.

Between the two beds is a 33 cm wide corridor and, above each bed, is a window with blinds. Above the windows there are also three cupboards where you can hide valuable items.

Between the two beds is a bedside table with a 33 x 35 cm top. There's another 220V double plug at the foot of the table where both of you can plug in your alarm clock or mobile phones.

Your clothes go in the cupboards above the top of the bed. The two top shelves inside are flat and small, but the bottom two are good for packing most of your clothes.

The largest storage spaces are under each mattress. Each has two lids, the ones closest to the nose gives access to the same space as the outside cupboard. The others are spacious enough for your winter duvet with an extra set of pillows.



Here's your fridge

The Hi-Rider, as expected, doesn't boast luxuries like a bathroom or kitchen – there isn't even a gas stove. But other than the bed, the Hi-Rider has a 220-V bar fridge on the right side of the door, the top of which serves as a worktop when standing in the caravan. In addition, the plug where the fridge is plugged in, is a double plug and

therefore a good place to put your kettle, for example.

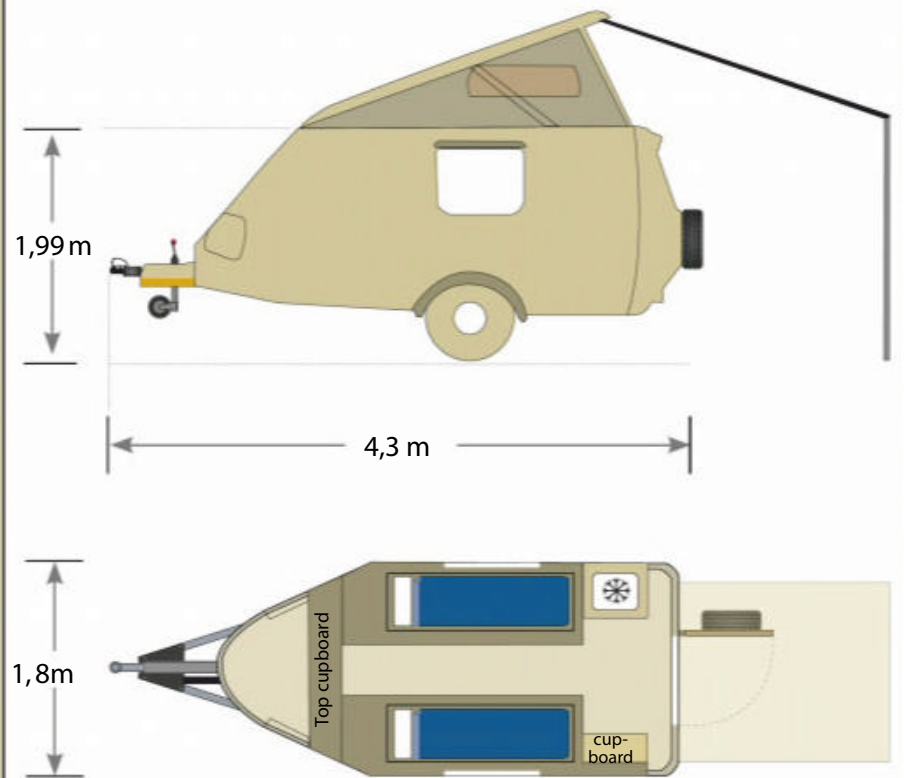
It's also easy to get to the fridge from outside because it is right next door. An elastic with a hook stretches from the doorframe to keep the fridge door closed when towing.

There are three cupboards right across from the fridge with space for your crockery, groceries and a lunch box or two.



Outside cupboard

The Hi-Rider has only one outside cupboard – by the nose – where you can load smaller pieces of luggage. It's a big cupboard when you take into account the size of the caravan: at it's deepest it's 70 cm, and it extends to underneath the beds – a good 1,7 m. Everything you pack, though, must fit through the doorway that's 57 x 35 cm.



The technical stuff

Length 4,3 m

Width 1,8 m

Height 1,99 m

Apex height inside 2,045 m

Net weight 560 kg

Payload 190 kg

GVM 750 kg (850 kg shaft)

Price R149 000



Plus

- The big space in the nose cone is a bonus for a caravan this size.
- The Hi-Rider is light and you can easily handle it alone in the campsite.
- The inside is spacious and you can even load a bicycle or two if you don't have space in your towing vehicle.



Minus

- Because it doesn't have brakes, you have to put a stone behind the wheel when you're on a slope (until you lower the corner steadies).
- The beds may be too narrow for some people.
- It does not have much of a kitchen.

go! Drive & Camp says The Hi-Rider's GVM is 750 kg, but it comes without brakes. This means that the towing vehicle's tare weight has to be at least twice the GVM weight (1 500 kg), but you can tow the Hi-Rider with a code B driver's license.

go! Drive & Camp borrowed the *Sherpa Tiny* from Coast & Country Leisure. Call Mike Schacht on 082 822 5882 if you want to check out the *Sherpa*. candleisure.co.za

Dealer network

Head office Johannesburg, 6 dealers and 2 agents nationwide, including Namibia.

Contact 011 452 8188

sherpa@telkomsa.net

sherpa-leisure.co.za



Breaking bread

Pot bread is synonymous with camping.
Just remember to butter the lid too...
Come on, get cooking with these six recipes!

Recipes and styling **Aletta Lintvelt** Photos **Michelle Parkin**

SWEET POTATO POT BREAD

When you have some time

This exceptionally soft bread requires a bit more effort than the other breads, but it's totally worth it... Besides, there's supposed to be time to spare when camping.

Ingredients

(makes 1 big bread)

FOR MIXTURE 1

- ¾ cup white bread flour
- ½ cup lukewarm water
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ¼ teaspoon instant yeast

FOR MIXTURE 2

- 1¼ cup of white bread flour
- 2 tablespoons dry milk powder
- ¾ teaspoon instant yeast
- 1½ tablespoons butter
- 1-2 cooked sweet potatoes
- Olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt

Here's how

1 Mix together all the ingredients for Mixture 1. Cover the bowl with clingfilm and set it aside in a warm spot for 30 minutes.

2 Mix together the flour, milk powder and instant yeast of Mixture 2. Sprinkle it lightly on top of Mixture 1, but don't stir or mix. Replace the clingfilm and leave it in a warm place for an hour (or even overnight). Turn out the dough, add the butter and knead for 10 minutes.

3 Mash the sweet potatoes and knead ½ cup into the dough until it feels smooth and elastic. Add the salt and knead it for another 5 minutes. Form a ball with the dough.

4 Grease the dough ball with olive oil, place it in a bowl, cover it with clingfilm and let it rise in a warm place to double its volume (about 2 hours). See note below.

5 Turn out the dough on a flour-sprinkled surface. Divide it into about 10 balls. Grease a number 3 pot with butter and pack in the balls. Replace the clingfilm and set aside for 30 minutes. Get the coals ready now.

6 Bake the bread for 20-30 minutes on a tripod stand over moderate coals. Also place some coals on the lid.

go! Drive & Camp says You can do everything up to step 4 and place it in the fridge. Take the dough with you in the cooler box when camping and bake the bread on the first night.



NO-KNEAD BROWN BREAD

Who wants the crust?

This is the best brown bread I have ever made at home. As the name says, you don't knead the dough... and it rises quickly, too. Add the herbs you prefer or sprinkle seeds on top just before baking – it will add extra deliciousness to the top crust!

Ingredients

(makes 1 big bread)

- 1 packet (1 kg) Eureka Mills brown bread flour
- 1 tablespoon rosemary leaves, finely chopped
- 1 cup bran
- 2 teaspoons fine Himalaya salt
- 1 packet (10 g) instant yeast
- 5½ cups lukewarm water
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- butter to grease

Here's how

1 Mix together all the dry ingredients in a plastic bowl. Stir in the water, olive

oil and vinegar until the mixture forms a mushy dough.

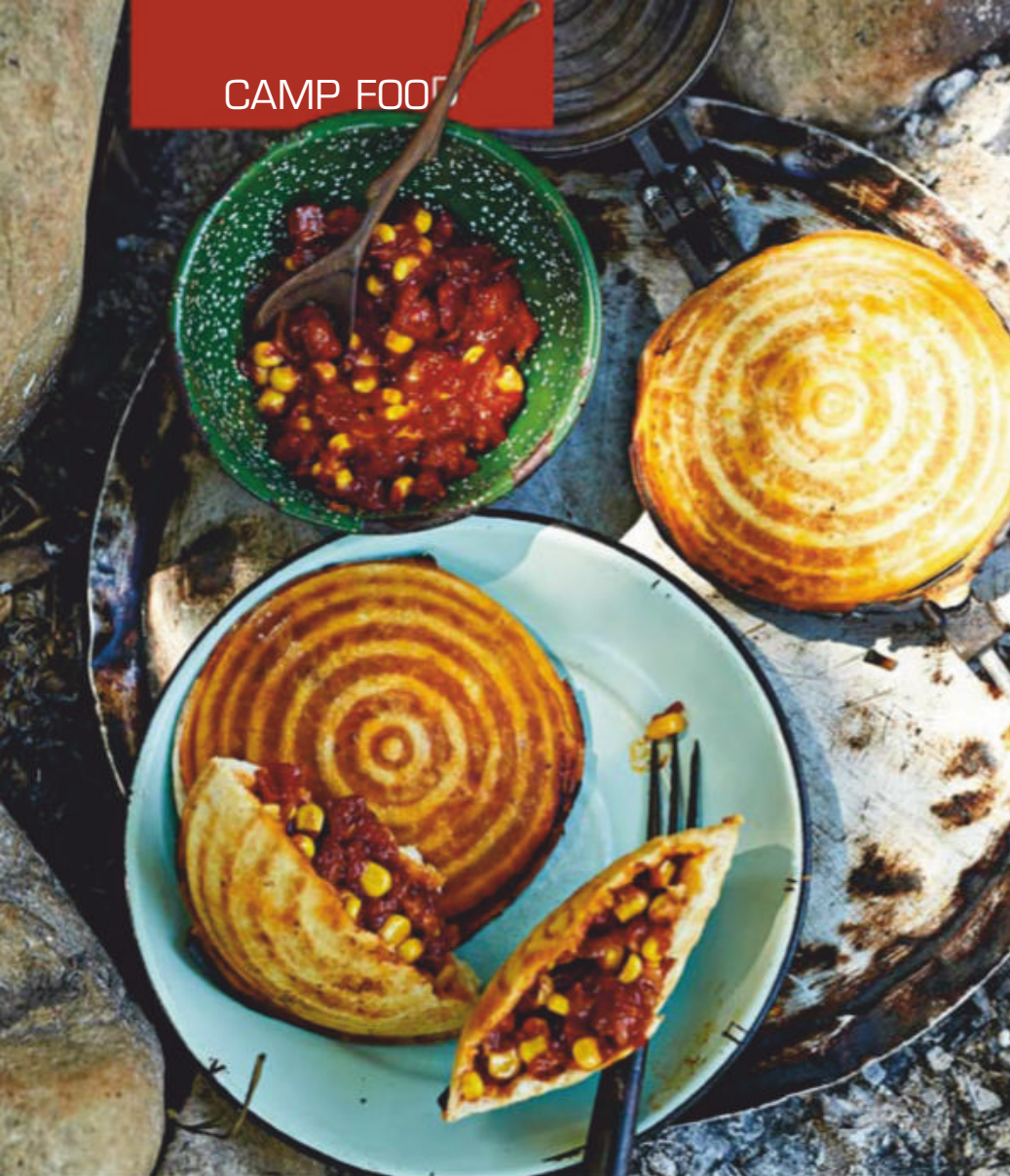
2 Grease a large flat-bottom potjie (number 3) with butter, nice and thick – and don't forget the inside of the lid.

3 Scrape the batter – it will be very pliable – into the pot. Cover it with clingfilm and allow to rest in the sun for exactly 25 minutes. Don't forget about it and leave it out longer! Remove the clingfilm and cover with the lid.

4 Prepare a single layer of moderate coals over which you place a tripod stand. Put the potjie on the stand and place a few coals on top of the lid. Bake the bread for 2 hours (make sure you have a second fire going on the side so you can add coals every now and again to keep the temperature constant).

6 Use a clean kebab stick to test if the bread is done – it's ready when the stick comes out clean. Turn out the bread, allow it to cool slightly and enjoy!

go! Drive & Camp says This bread makes a wonderful crust that's great for a sandwich to take on the road. >



CHORIZO AND CORN JAFFEL SCONES

Mini pizzas

Line a jaffel maker with dough and add a yummy filling before braaiing. It almost tastes like a mini pizza.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 1 piece (15 cm) chorizo or salami, finely chopped
- 1 can (410 g) corn, drained
- 400 ml Ina Paarman's tomato and basil pasta sauce
- 1 small packet (500 g) self-raising flour
- 1 can (330 ml) beer
- a pinch of salt

Here's how

- 1 Mix** the chorizo, corn and pasta sauce in a mixing bowl.
- 2 Add** the beer and salt to

the flour and stir until it forms a dough. Use a rolling pin (or a wine bottle) to roll the dough to a 3 mm thickness on a flour-sprinkled surface. Cut circles in the dough that are just bigger than your jaffel maker.

3 Grease the jaffel maker with butter and line both sides with the dough – it should hang over the sides a little. Dish up chorizo mix in the middle and carefully close the jaffel maker.

4 Braai the jaffels over the coals for 5-10 minutes on each side (or use a gas flame). The jaffels are ready when they're golden brown outside and cooked in the middle.

go! Drive & Camp says Olives, bacon, leftover braai meat, cheese... the possibilities for these mini pizzas are endless.

OLIVE POT BREAD

The easiest (best) bread

You don't have to knead this bread. It's a bread that requires the least amount of effort from you and certainly the tastiest one you've ever had. The dough must be left overnight at room temperature.

Ingredients

(makes 1 medium bread)

- 3 cups of white bread flour
- 1½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon dry instant yeast
- ¼ cup pitted green olives
- 1½ cup lukewarm water

Here's how

1 Mix together the flour, salt, yeast and olives in a large mixing bowl. Add the water and stir with a wooden spoon until just mixed. (If the batter is too stiff to mix with the wood spoon, add 1-2 tablespoons extra water.) Don't knead it. (*Don't listen to granny! – Ed*)

2 Cover the mixing bowl with clingfilm and leave the dough outside for at least 12 hours (but no longer than 24 hours). Don't put it in the sun; it needs to slowly rise at room temperature.

3 Sprinkle flour on a worktop (or board) when you're ready to bake the bread. Carefully turn out the dough. Rub a little flour onto your hands and form a ball with the dough. Cover the dough ball on the worktop with clingfilm and allow it to rise for 30 minutes while you get the potjie ready.

4 Prepare a bed of coals. Put a flat-bottom potjie (number 2 or larger) in the coals with a few coals on the lid. Bake the empty potjie for 30 minutes so it gets nice and hot.

5 Remove the hot potjie from the coals carefully. Lightly place the ball of dough into the middle of the potjie and immediately close with the lid. Place the potjie on a tripod stand over the hot coals and again place some coals on the lid.

6 Bake the bread for 35-45 minutes. Immediately remove it from the hot potjie and let it cool on the side before slicing it. This bread keeps for up to 4 days.

go! Drive & Camp says Don't try to bake the bread in a different pot; the secret lies in the hot cast-iron potjie.





CHERRY AND BACON TIN BREADS Tin soldiers

Keep all your empty cans after eating tomatoes or baked beans or peaches. Kids especially love getting their own bread in a tin.

Ingredients

(makes 4 breads)

- 1 packet (250 g) bacon, chopped
- 150 g glazed cherries, cut in half
- 1 cup braai sauce
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon Tabasco sauce
- 1 small packet (500 g) self-raising flour
- 1 can beer (330 ml)
- a pinch of salt

Here's how

1 Grease four clean tins with

butter. Prepare a bed of coals.

2 Fry the bacon until crispy. Stir in cherries, braai sauce, honey and Tabasco and simmer for 5 minutes. Divide the sauce between the four greased tins.

3 Mix together the flour, beer and salt. Divide the dough into 4 balls and place one bulb in each tin. Place the tins in a large flat-bottom potjie and close with a tight-fitting lid.

4 Put the potjie on a tripod stand over the hot coals and place a few coals on the lid.

5 Bake the breads for about 20 minutes. Test whether they're done and remove them.

go! Drive & Camp says

Try stirring a cup of mielies through the dough before pressing the dough balls into the tins.

BROWN SUGAR BREAD Moist and moreish!

This bread forms its own sauce that runs over the bread when you turn it over!

Ingredients

(makes 1 medium bread)

- 5¼ cups white bread flour
- 1 tablespoon instant yeast
- 1 cup ideal milk
- ½ cup butter, cut into cubes
- ½ cup white sugar
- ¾ cup water
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 4 teaspoons fine cinnamon

FOR THE SYRUP

- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar

Here's how

1 Make the syrup. Melt the butter and sugar over low heat in the flat-bottom pot in which you'll bake the bread. Set aside to cool.

2 Mix together the flour and yeast. Heat the ideal milk slightly and add the butter and ½ cup of white sugar until melted. Remove from heat and stir in the water. Allow the mixture to cool

to lukewarm.

3 Stir the lukewarm milk mixture through the flour mix and knead it for 10 minutes until it forms a smooth dough. Form a ball and grease it with olive oil. Place dough in a mixing bowl and cover it with clingfilm. Set it aside to double in volume.

4 Scrape out the dough onto a flour-sprinkled surface and roll it out to about 2 cm thick. Mix together the remaining brown sugar and cinnamon. Cut the dough into 3 cm pieces. Place a layer of dough on the bottom of the potjie. Sprinkle the cinnamon sugar. Repeat. Leave the dough to rise for 30 minutes.

5 Prepare some moderate coals. Put the potjie on the coals and bake the bread for about 50 minutes – remember to add a few coals on the lid.

6 Turn out the bread onto a serving plate and let everyone break off pieces, dipping it in the sauce. Heavenly.

go! Drive & Camp says

Replace the butter and brown sugar sauce with 1 tin of condensed milk. Yum!



From a distance

Keep your eyes peeled for birdlife and wildlife at the waterholes with these affordable binoculars.

Text and Photos **Kyle Kock**

You've already paid an arm and a leg to book your favourite spot in advance for your holiday. That's not even taking into account the enormous fuel expense just to get you there.

Now you just want to watch the wildlife from the comfort of your camping chair. Luckily, you don't have to sell an organ to be able to watch the elephants drink at the waterhole or see the vultures circling a carcass. These budget binoculars will get the job done without breaking the bank.



BUSHNELL POWER VIEW VALUE BUNDLE (10X25 AND 10X42)

Perfect pair

This roof-prism duo available exclusively from Outdoor Warehouse packs a mighty punch with multi-coated optics. Now you won't have to fight over the binoculars, because your spouse will also be watching in wonder and awe. Both come with a carrying case, lens cloth and neck strap.

Price R2 000 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Weight 255 g (10x25) and 685 g (10x42)

go! Drive & Camp says

It's the ideal combination for when you're travelling with a companion.

TRAILBOSS HAWK EYE (10X25)

Puts up a fight

The entry-level model from Trailboss is one of the cheapest models here if you're constrained by a crippling budget, but that doesn't mean you need to worry about quality. It comes with K9 roof prisms and fully-coated lenses.

Price R360 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Weight 240 g

go! Drive & Camp says The dual-tone finish means you won't lose it in your backpack.



MALKIN (10X50)

Very good vision

Said to be named after a feline with a remarkable sense of vision, you'd expect that the Malkin line of products won't disappoint. The good news is it doesn't. This 10x50 pair is filled with nitrogen to prevent fogging on those particularly hot or cold mornings at the waterhole.

Price R1 200 from Cape Union Mart.

Weight 880 g

go! Drive & Camp says Its weightiness is very reassuring, and the quality of vision quite good as well.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BY BRESSER (8X21)

Pocket pro

The legendary title teamed up with German binoculars specialist Bresser to produce a line of products perfect for bringing birds and wildlife closer. This pair features BAK-4 roof prisms and multicoated lenses and you can focus on subjects as close as 5 m away, while it also gives you a 125 m at 913 m field of view, so you can see a lot of them quite far away.

Price R400 from Camp & Climb.

Weight 170 g

go! Drive & Camp says Look like a professional naturalist with this miniature pair that's super lightweight. >





PRAKTICA FALCON (7X50)

Pound for pound

Here's a pair that punches above its weight in the bang for buck department. The Falcon's large focus knob allows you to adjust with ease and the big 7,5 degree angular field of view, which is what you're able to see at distance without moving your head within that parameter, allows

you to follow a flock of birds easier with minimal effort.

Price R795 from Camp & Climb.

Weight 825 g

go! Drive & Camp says This one comes with a 25-year warranty.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BY BRESSER (10X42)

Performance at a premium

The big brother of the other NatGeo model on the previous page is said to be fully waterproof, as well as fog-proof. It features Bak-4 roof prisms and fully multi-coated lenses to let in the maximum amount of light and colour for your viewing pleasure. You can also mount these on a tripod.

Price R2 500 from Camp & Climb.

Weight 670 g

go! Drive & Camp says The rubberised body is shockproof, so you need not to be afraid of this pair breaking while jostling around in your backpack.



MALKIN (10X25)

Cheap and cheerful

This is the most affordable set here, but it comes with a few impressive features like its big brother also on these pages. It boasts a 96 m field of view at 1 000 m thanks to its Bak-7 roof prisms. Live sports events are your best bet with these.

Price R350 from Cape Union Mart.

Weight 240 g

go! Drive & Camp says What's not to like about that price?

TRAILBOSS HAWK EYE (10X50)

Packs a punch

The Outdoor Warehouse house brand comes through with a product that might not quite have the name of the more established marques, but packs features like fully-coated optics and Bak4 Porro prism and eye-pleasing dual-tone finish so you don't misplace them easily.

Price R600 from Outdoor Warehouse.

Weight 815 g

go! Drive & Camp says It makes a strong case for itself in terms of ability and fitting your budget.



Get the products here

Camp & Climb campandclimb.co.za

Cape Union Mart capeunionmart.co.za

Outdoor Warehouse outdoorwarehouse.co.za



Weg Sleep

"Woonwa
van môre"

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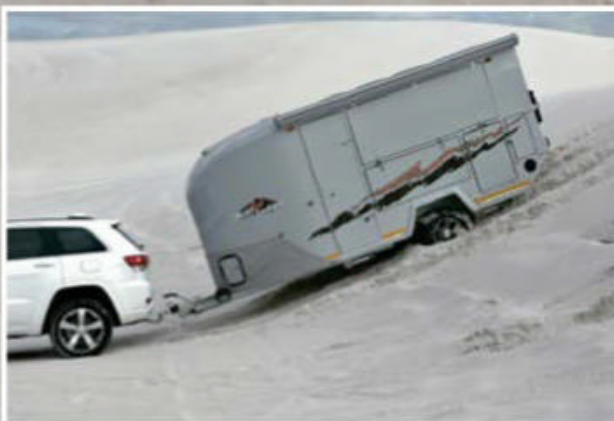
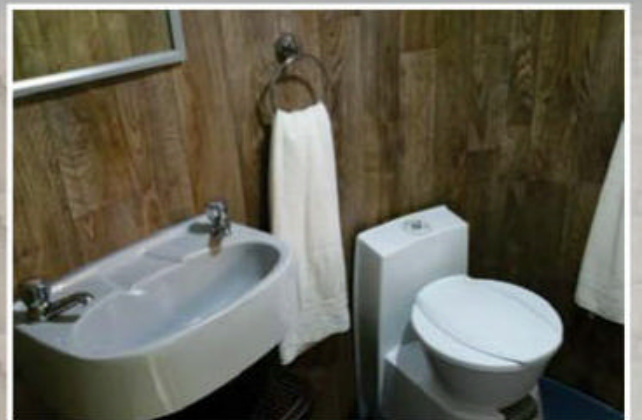
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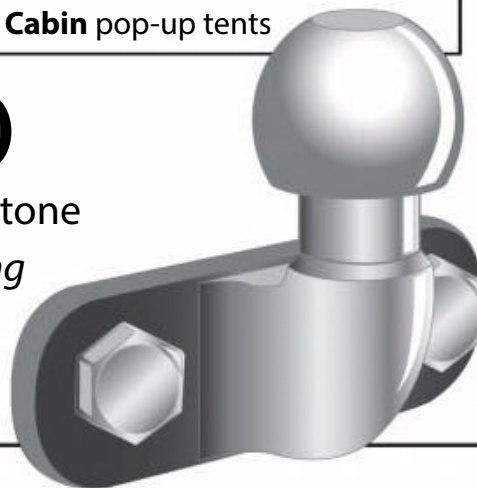
Leon 082 899 9999
Marius 083 230 6131
demonstrations - orders



10 – The number of people who can sleep inside the biggest of
Camp Master's new **Instant Cabin** pop-up tents

350 000

towbars – the milestone
number *Brink Towing
Systems* surpassed
in **2018**



11 WEEKS

The total time it
took to upgrade
the hydros at
**Forever's Badplaas
and Warmbaths**
resorts

By the NUMBERS

Camping and caravanning have never looked better, so we crunched the numbers from the past year. Here are some of the highlights that caught our attention.

It's certainly not all doom and gloom when it comes to the camping community. Despite the economy's fragility, the global flux and all-round tightening of belts, we're still willing to spend some money to hook up a caravan, get into the great outdoors and find ourselves among the wild and untamed, with a chop on the braai and a cold beverage in hand.

2018 may go down as a particularly bad year for South African motorists, with all-time high fuel prices and the Nissan

Hardbody sparking international outrage for its zero-star NCAP rating. But those hiccups aside, something that counts favourably for outdoor enthusiasts has been the trend in the global rise (South Africa included) of SUVs and crossovers over the last 10 years.

The global automotive landscape is mirrored by the demand in the local leisure market, which is actually quite evident in the number of new dealerships opening, existing businesses that have moved to bigger premises, new local caravan builders

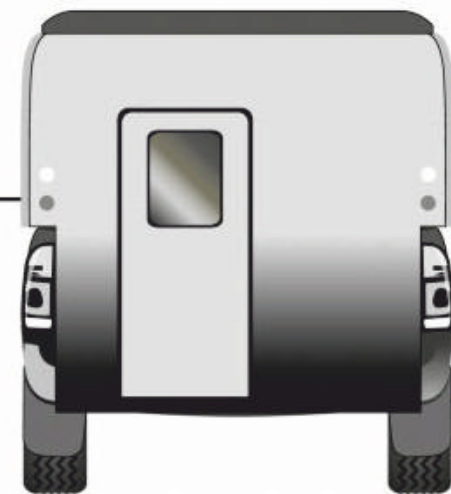
opening shop, campsites or resorts being upgraded or revamped and outdoor innovations coming to market. Never mind the major investment from large role-players in the form of extra machinery or collaborations.

There's nothing to suggest that this is in any way going to slow down.

CANADA In addition to Australia, some countries in Europe, and the USA, where Conqueror also ships caravans to.



The fuel tank
capacity of the
new Nissan
Patrol 5.6 V8 LE
4WD 7AT



1,95 m The width of *Palomino's* new **SS-100 Camper**, specially developed for local bakkies

40

years that *Isuzu*
bakkies have
been available
in South Africa

ISUZU



R2,7 MILLION

The amount **Brink** spent on a new Motoman MA arc welding machine, capable of producing **100 000** tow bars per year.

300 robots



added by BMW at the Rosslyn plant to help build the X3 sold in South Africa and Europe



The size of the **Alubox** kitchen crate, which includes cutlery and crockery for four, frying pan, cutting board, spatula and a one-burner stove

27

The number of dealerships that **4x4 Mega World** now has across South Africa after opening the Edenvale branch, the 9th in Gauteng

14 000m²

The floorspace of **Rhinoman's** new premises in Rosslyn, Pretoria



580 Nm

torque generated by the updated VW Amarok V6 – the most pulling power available in a bakkie

R973 188

The price of South Africa's most expensive bakkie, the **Mercedes-Benz X-Class X350d Power**



R3 billion

Ford's investment into the Silverton, Pretoria assembly plant to build Rangers, Everests and Ranger Raptors for 148 markets.

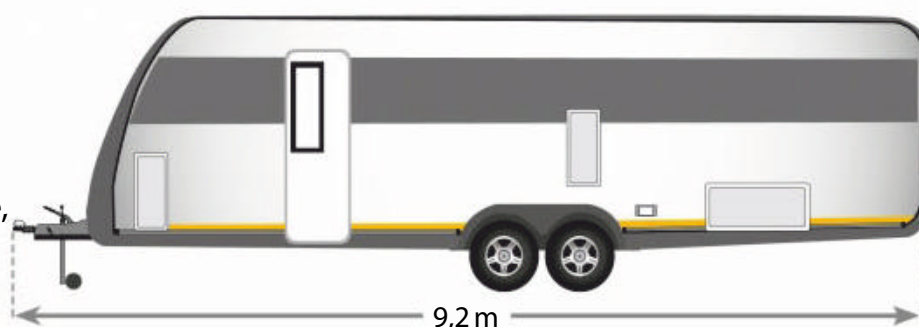


AUSTRALIA The new market Bush Lapa started exporting to in **2018**.

1 new caravan dealership, Bloemwa, in Bloemfontein.



9,2 m The length of the biggest production model caravan locally available, the **Destination Dream**. It's also the most expensive, at **R750 000** and the heaviest (1 950 kg tare)



11 new off-road trailers and campers launched

R2 061 000

The most expensive vehicle we tested in 2018 – **Maserati's Levante S GranSport**



4

The number of brand-new campsites featured: Casa Cara (Parys), Kleine Paradys (Piketberg), Kyleu Bushcamp (Dinokeng) and Vaderland Wilge (Marble Hall).



38 000

deaths around the world related to diesel emissions per year, according to the AA

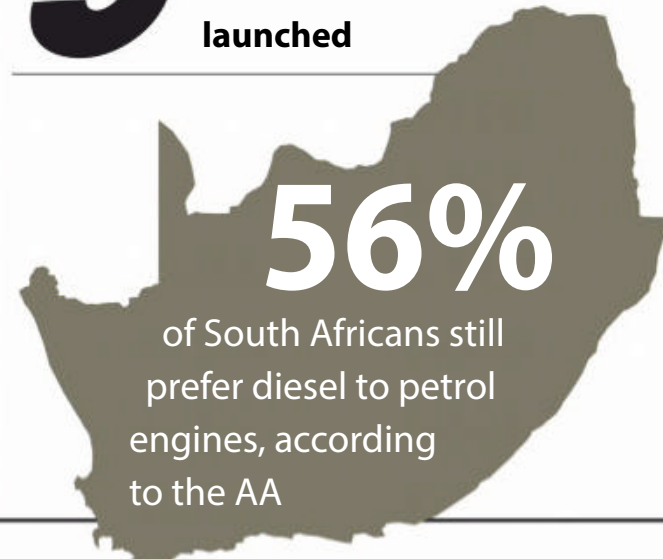
2 689 m

Altitude reached when traversing **Baboons Pass** in Lesotho



3

Number of models with which new motorhome manufacturer **Maxmo** launched



56% of South Africans still prefer diesel to petrol engines, according to the AA

THE BIG COVER-UP



FIBREGLASS

We don't have official statistics, but fibreglass canopies seem to be by far the most popular kind in South Africa. The benefits of these canopies are that they are streamlined to compliment your bakkie's appearance.

We asked Wessel Engela of Beekman Canopies for his opinion about the different types of canopies. Beekman has been trading for 41 years and, according to Wessel, the company has a 54% market share, which makes Beekman the largest canopy manufacturer in South Africa. In addition, Beekman is a distributor of Rhinoman aluminium canopies.

Why fibreglass?

"Fibreglass canopies, are stylish and luxurious," says Wessel. "Why would you want to fit a rectangle to your posh Mercedes-Benz X-class or streamlined Mitsubishi Triton?"

"The relatively low weight is another advantage. Our most popular and luxurious canopy, the Beekman Executive, weighs between 65 kg and 75 kg, depending on whether it is made for a double or single cab. On the other hand, Rinoman's Rhino SuperLite range – the lightest Rinoman – weighs between 85 kg and 90 kg.

Fibreglass thus provides a significant weight saving.

"Fibreglass canopies are also durable and virtually maintenance free. The steel canopies of old were likely to crack on the welding joints. This doesn't happen with fibreglass."

But is it strong enough?

"Certainly. We can also reinforce the Beekman Executive so that it can handle 250 kg reliably,"

says Wessel. "This equals the RhinoLite's carrying capacity and is significantly better than the Rhino SuperLite's maximum load of 120 kg.

"We do advise owners not to load more than 150 kg on the Executive if you're off-roading though, but carrying 150 kg on the roof of a moving vehicle is risky anyway, as it increases the chance that your bakkie could overturn when tackling a steep incline at an angle." >

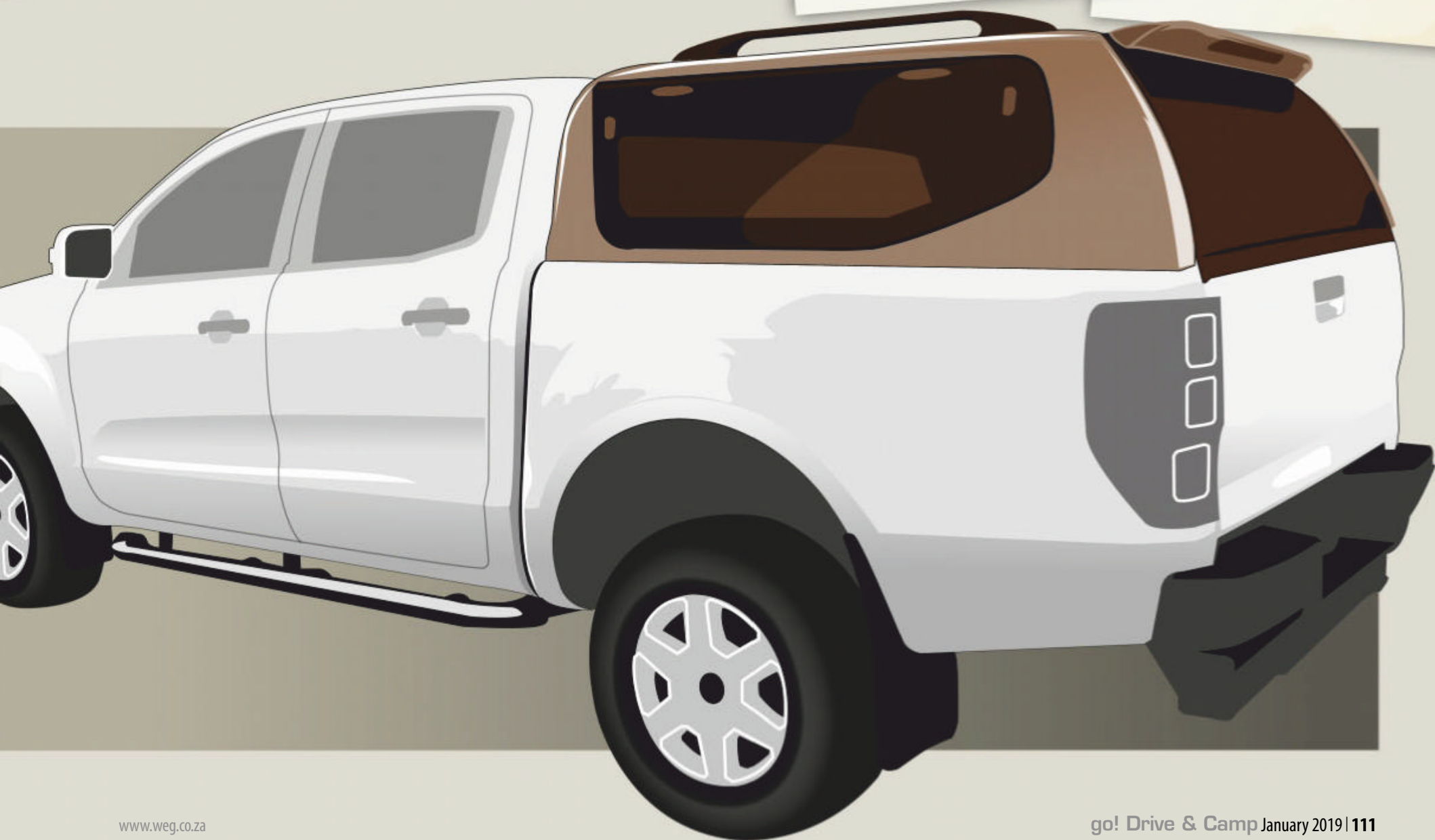
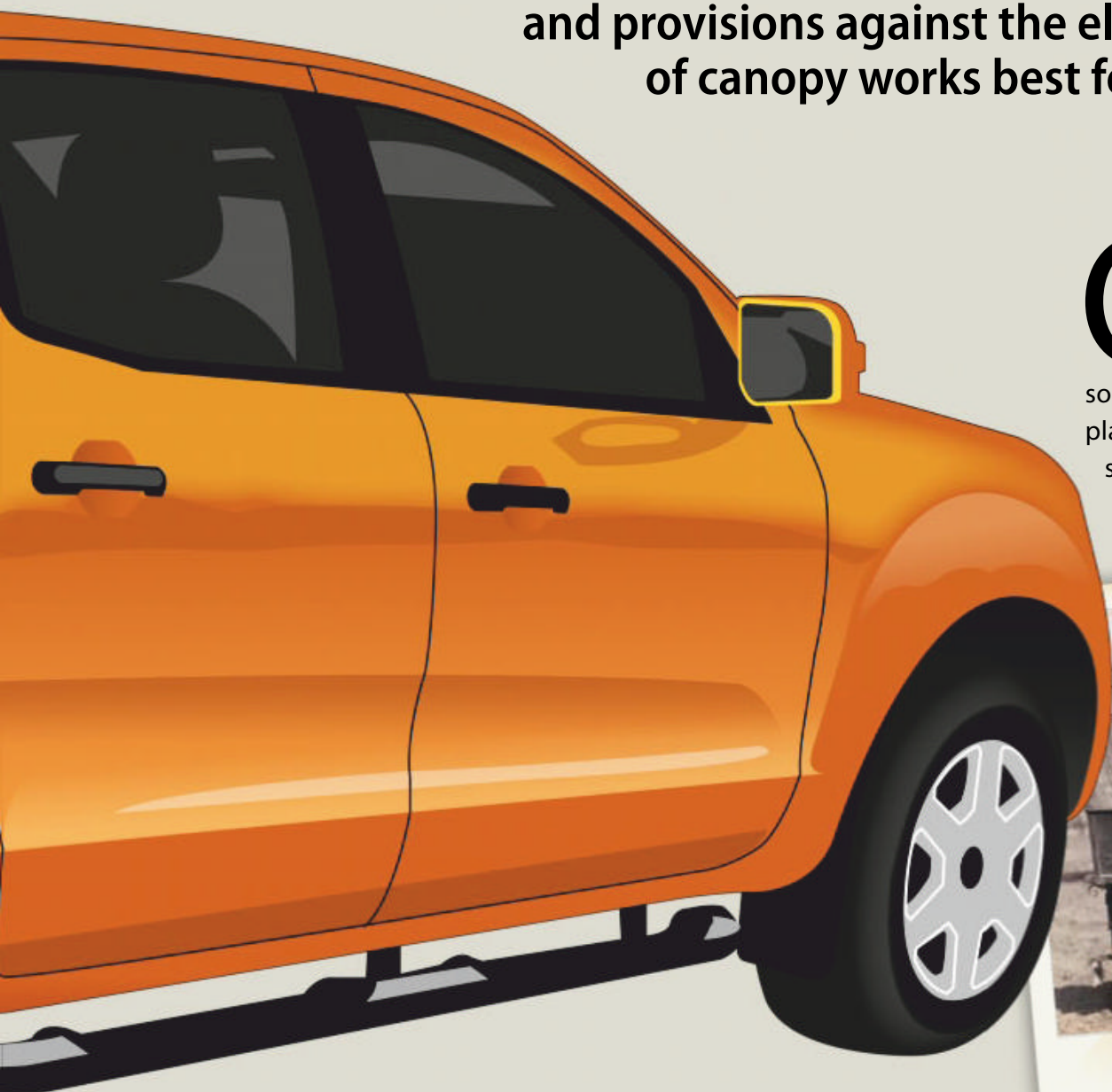
A canopy is a great accessory: it protects your camping gear and provisions against the elements and theft. But which type of canopy works best for overlanding and 4x4 activities?

Text **Cyril Klopper** Illustrations **Dominic Wienand**

Over the years we've seen many types of canopies made of all sorts of materials: canvas, plastic, fibreglass, acrylic, sheet steel, stainless steel,

aluminium, carbon fibre and, yes, even wood.

In South Africa, we mostly rely on fibreglass, metal and canvas to make canopies. Which one's best for your bush bakkie?





METAL

Metal canopies, especially aluminium ones, are becoming increasingly popular in the off-road community. One argument in favour of aluminium is that it weighs very little, but the truth is that they are often heavier than fibreglass – and certainly heavier than canvas.

What are the benefits? We posed a few questions to Neel Britz, manager of 4x4 Mega World in Cape Town. This retailer sells, among others, ARB plastic, AluCab aluminium and RSI stainless steel canopies.

Why metal?

“Streamlined fibreglass canopies are undoubtedly attractive, and there will always be a market for them,” says Neel. “But that streamlined look counts against them when it comes to a roof rack or roof tent. Then you need a square structure with a long, flat roof surface so that the mounting points place the minimum amount of stress on the canopy’s materials.

“RSI canopies are made of 3CR12 steel, and reinforced gusset plates, epoxy and bolts

are used where two metal panels meet. This eliminates the risk of cracks forming here. Because RSI canopies are made of steel, any bush mechanic with a welding machine can perform emergency repairs on it. And you can easily attach accessories such as awnings on the outside and shelves on the inside.”

But what about the extra weight?

“In return for the extra few kilograms you have to carry, you

get unparalleled durability,” says Neel. “I should also mention that the quality of a canopy should not be measured on the weight it can hold up (static weight), but rather on its ability to handle sideways-moving weight (dynamic weight) when an off-road vehicle sways, for example.

“The overall load-bearing capacity of a canopy is a side issue. Besides, you should never load more weight on the roof than recommended by the vehicle manufacturer, no matter how tough your canopy.”

So which one’s best?

If you just want to keep your cargo dry and safe, a fibreglass canopy is an excellent choice. The relatively low weight and streamlined profile will help to keep fuel consumption low. We don’t recommend one for an expedition through Africa though, but it’s perfect for long weekends at a Forever resort.

If you’re looking for a canopy that will keep thieves out and reach retirement age with your

bakkie, we suggest investing in a metal canopy – steel or aluminium.

The versatility of metal canopies is commendable but choose one that strikes the balance between durability and weight. You don’t want your 4x4 to be dragged down by a metal canopy before your gear is even loaded.

If weight is of paramount importance, you should definitely consider a canvas canopy. And it won’t necessarily be a theft risk if you get the right kind of frame. The only concern is that you have secure it



CANVAS

Canvas canopies became popular in the early eighteenth century thanks to European pioneers who trekked across the North American continent with ox-drawn wagons. Are canvas canopies merely traditional, then, or do they offer advantages metal and fibreglass canopies don't? We spoke to Kallie Koekemoer, owner of Canvas Canopies in Centurion.

Why canvas?

"Our canvas canopies weigh between 10 kg and 25 kg

depending on what type of vehicle you own and what kind of canopy you prefer," says Kallie. "This is significantly lighter than fibreglass or metal. The frame under the canvas is made of aluminium and it can carry between 400 kg and 600 kg – it is therefore much stronger than it needs to be. Farmers and hunters prefer our product because you can pull the canvas over existing cattle rails or a hunting frame and convert it into a canopy.

"Bear in mind that some metal

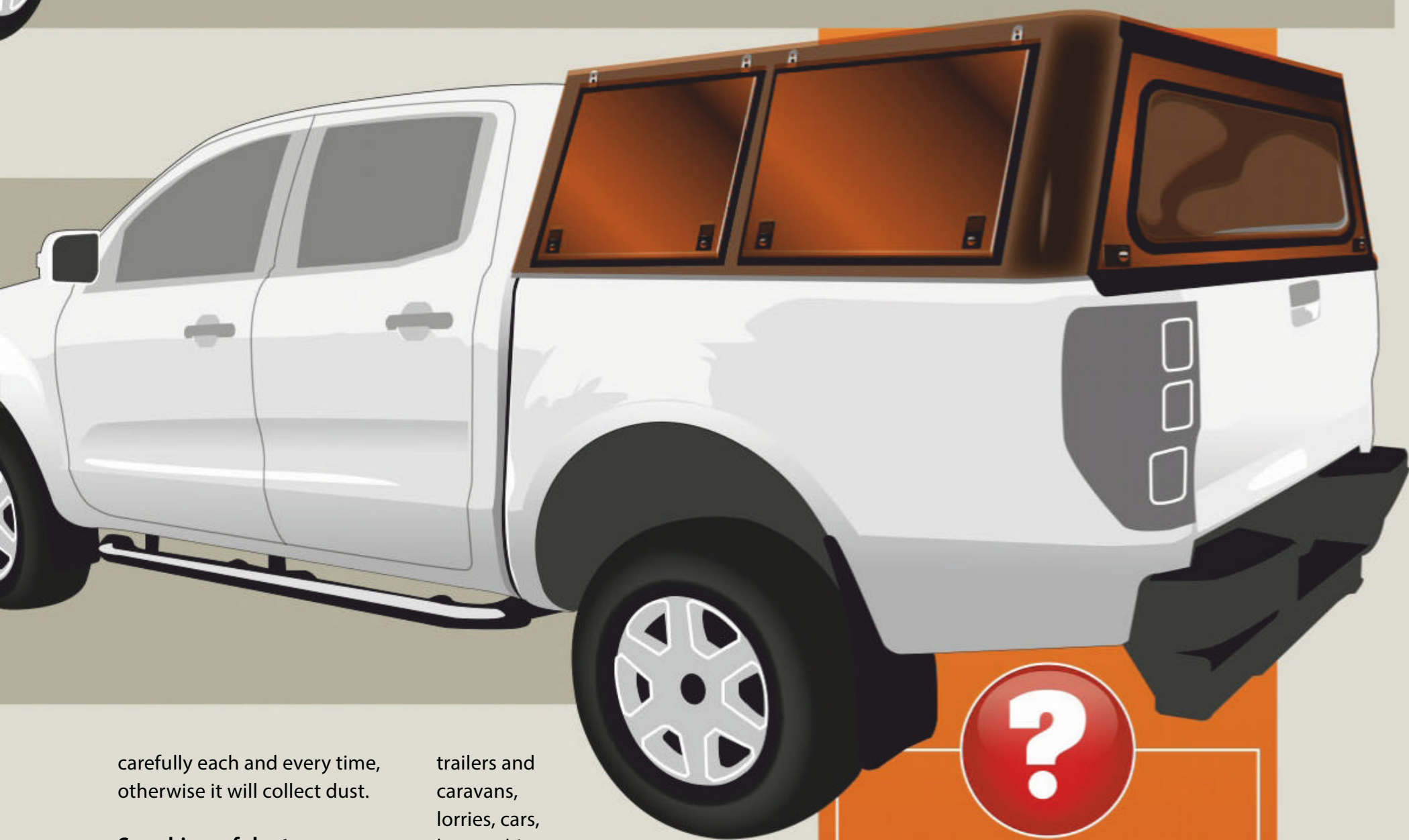
canopies weigh almost as much as your bakkie's allowable load capacity, which does not leave much weight for all your camping gear and supplies. Our canvas last 7 to 10 years if you take care of it. When it comes to replacing it, you simply buy the canvas and not the whole frame. This saves money."

But what about dust and theft?

"If you correctly install, stretch and zip up a canvas, it's not only weathertight, but also dust proof,"

says Kallie. "The dust that collects inside your canopy usually comes through the slits between the lid and the load bed. That's why we also provide rubber seal kits to keep the dust out.

"As far as theft is concerned, we can line the canvas with steel mesh so it can't easily be cut with a knife. The gaps between the bars on our aluminium frame are also narrow – a thief might get his hand through, but he won't be able to steal anything that's bigger than his fist."



carefully each and every time, otherwise it will collect dust.

Speaking of dust...

You can use the sturdiest hinges and locks, but all the good they do is lost when the rubber seals around hatches leak. Hennie Visagie, owner of Pro Auto Rubber, says: "We've developed a special seal kit for the Ford Ranger T6 Series, but we also provide seals for canopies,

trailers and caravans, lorries, cars, buses, ships and buildings. Your canopy probably already contains a set of our seals and, while our synthetic rubber will last for decades, they can accidentally be torn and pinched. Don't worry, we have agents nationwide who can replace it."



ASK THE PROFESSOR

Do you have a question for the 4x4 professor? Like what happens if you engage the diff lock on a highway? Are you allowed to transport children on the back of a bakkie nowadays? Where does the name "bakkie" come from? If the professor doesn't have the answers, we ask an expert. Send an e-mail to

editor@driveout.co.za

Somewhat unusual

These aren't your usual campsite bakkies or SUVs, but Johannes wouldn't trade his Volvo for anything – and Stephanus is just as attached to his Opel.

Stately wagon

2015 VOLVO XC70 D5

Once you've been exposed to and driven a Volvo, you won't easily go back to driving anything else, says **Johannes Roux** from Roodepoort. He even traded in his old **XC70** for a new one.

“Just over four years ago I bought a **2009 Volvo XC70 D5**, but started looking around when my car hit the **180 000 km** mark. The infotainment system was also a bit outdated.

I considered the likes of Subaru's Forester, Land Rover's Discovery 4 and the Mazda CX-5, but there's nothing quite like the perfect blend of power, space, reliability and safety of a Volvo. That means the choice was basically made for me, and I bought a used **2015 model XC70** with the same engine for **R300 000** six months ago.

With these two models, I've been tremendously impressed with the overall ride comfort and quality of Volvos in general and also with the outstanding

service from Volvo dealerships. If I could, then I'd definitely have a new **V90 Cross Country** or the new **XC60** in my garage, though.

My own **XC70** inspires confidence on the road thanks to its power and comfort, and I wouldn't change anything on it except for maybe installing a tow bar. Fully loaded with three passengers and enough camping gear for a weekend, there are few vehicles that could keep up on the open road. What's more, safely overtaking slower vehicles is a breeze.

With my old **XC70** I even drove in soft sand on the **Waenhuiskrans** beach to the cave – much to the amazement of other 4x4 drivers.

The fuel consumption can get up to around **8,2 ℓ/100 km** about town, but on the open road it can dip lower than **6 ℓ/100 km**.

With the previous **XC70** we went as far as **Arniston**. We haven't had much chance to get out with the new **XC70**, but did really enjoy **Tanglewood Nature Estate** on the banks of the **Boskop Dam** outside **Potchefstroom** recently. It's clean, safe and perfect for a peaceful angling weekend away for the family.”





I'm definitely biased, but the Astra's comfort, decent power and excellent fuel consumption are some of its strong points.

Astra-nomical

2015 OPEL ASTRA 1.4T ENJOY

Sometimes you can be blissfully unaware that you're falling foul of the law and, in the case of **Stephanus Du Raan** from Bloemfontein, it was when towing an old **Caravette 6** with a **1989 Opel Kadett 1.6 GSE**. The hunt was on for a replacement.

“According to legislation, my **caravan (957 kg)** weighed too much for the little Kadett (925 kg), even though I could tow quite comfortably in the little hatchback, even in fifth gear. But when I realised this was against the law, I knew it was time for a change.

I really tried to give alternative options, such as Volkswagen's Jetta and Passat, a fair chance, but I must admit I'm a massive **Opel fan** and so I bought a **used Astra** with only **2 021 km** on the odometer for **R210 000** two years ago.

I'm definitely biased, but the Astra's comfort, decent amount of power and



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excellent fuel consumption are some of its strong points. The only downside is that the boot isn't as big as some of its rivals.

Despite its engine capacity, the Astra tows without strain and this is especially the case on the open road. Its **110 kW** and **250 Nm** tows in sixth gear with ease. And I don't need to turn off the air-conditioner or drop a gear to pass slower traffic.

I did consider having the ECU remapped to extract more performance and potentially lower the fuel consumption but, after a few conversations with those in the know, decided that the performance increase would be too minimal to justify.

As it stands right now the Astra sips just **5,5 ℓ/100 km** on average, and that figure rises to around **7,6 ℓ/100 km** while towing.

Tuff Top Estate just outside **Bloemfontein** remains our favourite spot. The rates are quite affordable, all the stands are situated on lush green grass right next to the river and it boasts excellent ablution facilities.”

Beauty all around

There is always an opportunity to take a nice pic... whether you're relaxing by the sea, walking in the forest or even just mowing the lawn...

By Leon Botha

WINNING PHOTO



Step it up!

I usually carry my cellphone with me, but it's not always for making calls, says **Rentia Lombard** from Pretoria.

"We celebrated our fourth wedding anniversary in KwaZulu-Natal as well as my husband Jaco's birthday. Jaco wanted go fishing one day and we were at the beach where he cast his line. I saw his footprints in the sand and realised it would make a great pic."

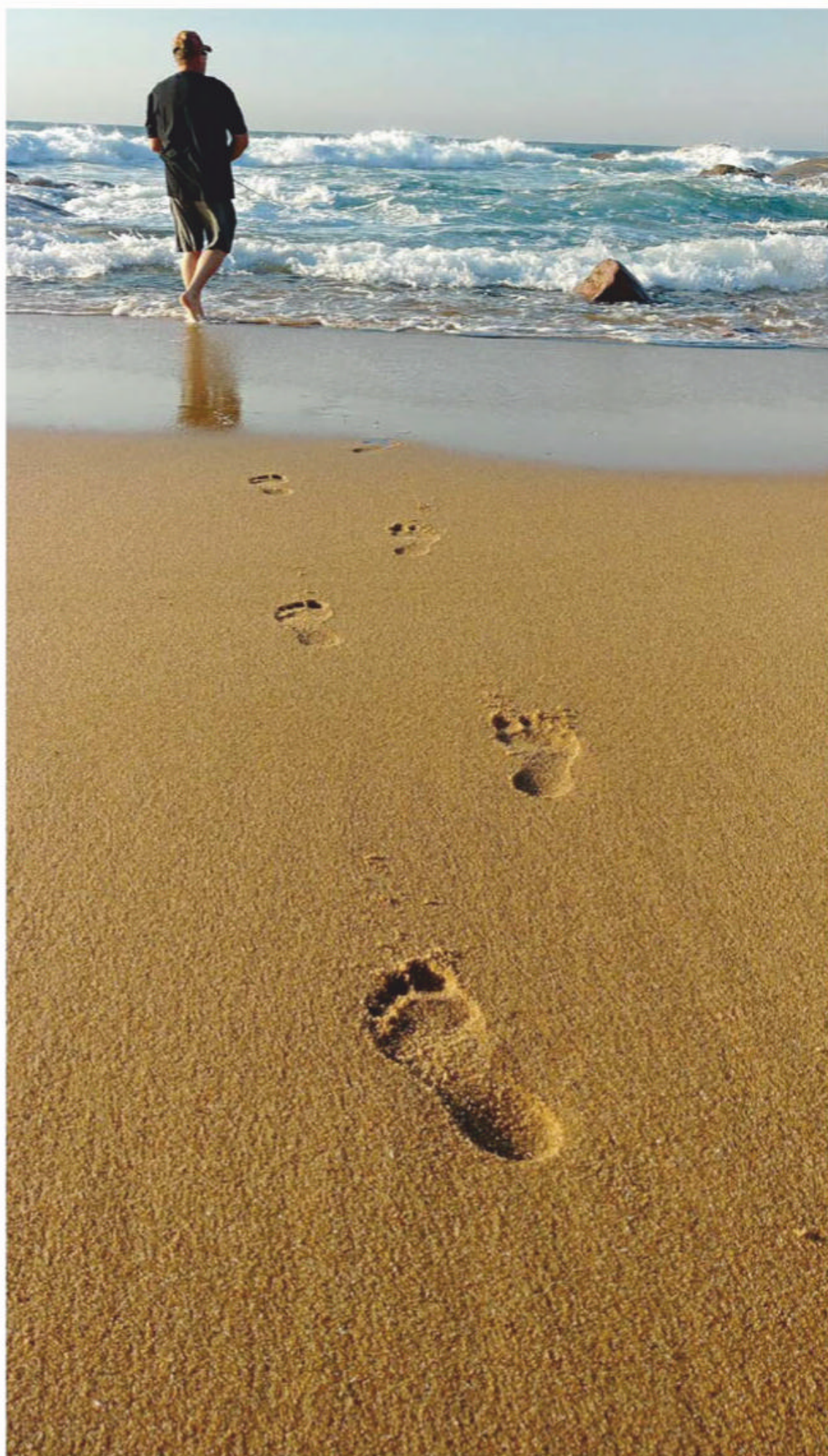
There's nothing new about photographs of footprints on the beach, so the challenge is to take it in such a way that it draws your attention anew. Here, Rentia succeeds with distinction, because her simple and cleverly placed detail results in a winning photo. The single footprint in the front of the frame is considerably larger than the others and, aside from being the first footprint in the picture – and in the middle – this footprint and its direct negative space cover almost half of the entire image.

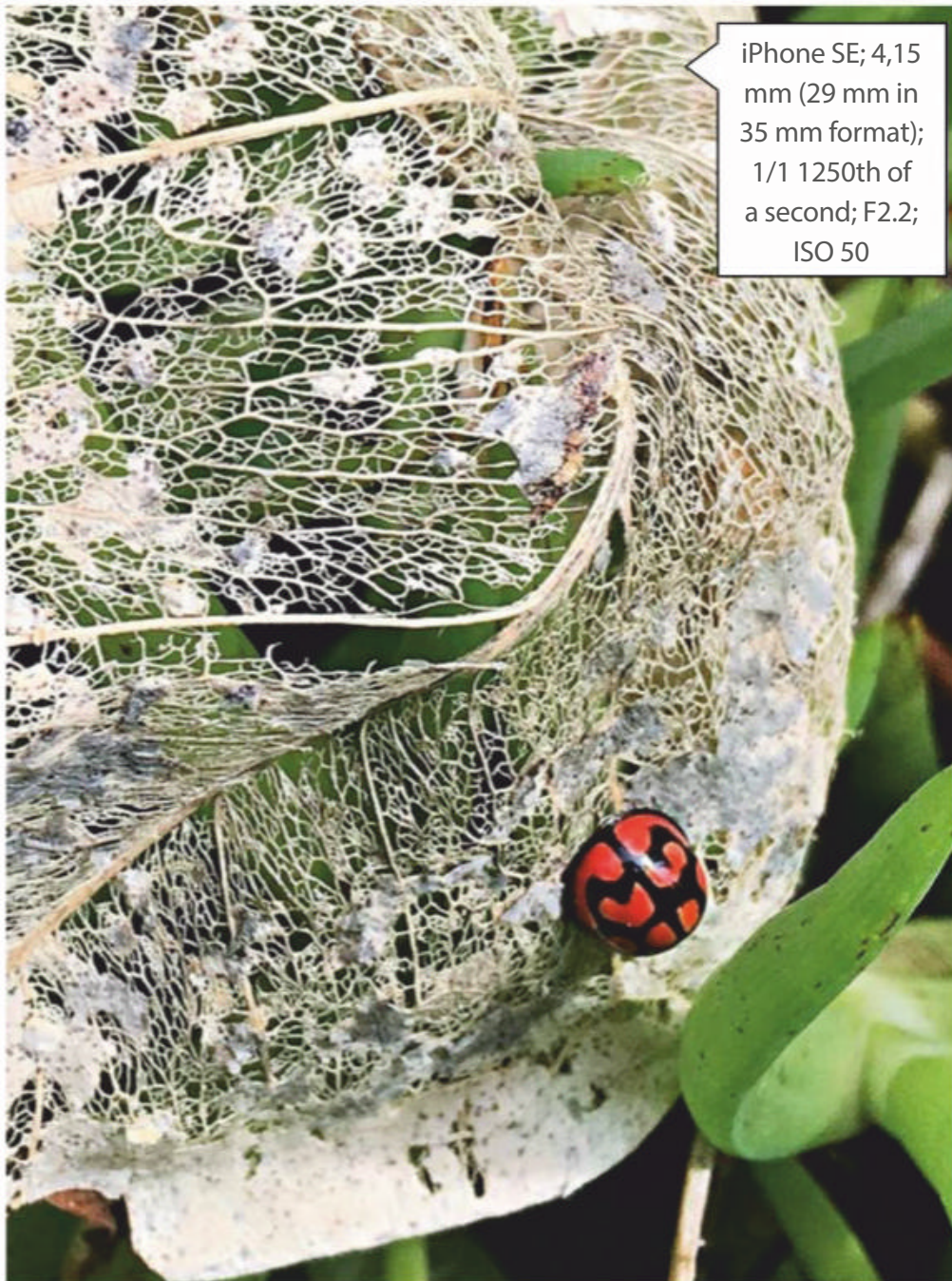
It is therefore the focus of the picture and, when you look closer, it is rich in fine detail. In front of the first footprint, you can see some loose grains of sand, and you know that's the sand Jaco kicked up when he took his next step. It brings the picture to life.

When you stand a bit further away from the image, you first notice Jaco's figure. It's when you get closer that the footprints take over and take you to where he crooks his arm. If you look even closer, you'll see the tip of the fishing rod.

A further plus is that the picture is sharp, from the first grain of sand to the horizon. Normally, the tilted horizon would be disturbing, but all the other elements in the picture are strong enough that you can overlook it.

LG G6 phone; 4,03 mm lens; 1/750th of a second; f1.8; ISO 50





iPhone SE; 4,15 mm (29 mm in 35 mm format); 1/1 1250th of a second; F2.2; ISO 50

One with nature

Mowing the lawn isn't just about keeping the grass under control, says Peter Wille from White River, who quickly grabbed his phone for a great pic.

"I was mowing the lawn when my eye caught a half-rotten leaf. An orange-red ladybird sat on one side and the light on the leaf was of such a nature that you could clearly see it. I only had my old iPhone on me and quickly snapped a picture. I then cropped it on my laptop."

Just like Rentia's photo, this picture has detail that is very engaging. The red bug is the focal point, of course, and together with the green, it anchors the composition. But the picture wouldn't be the same without the rest of the detail. Even though the ladybird is the focal point, your eye doesn't stay fixed on it. The remains of the leaf with its intricate patterns quickly draw your attention and reminds you of a network of roads on a map.

SEND YOUR PICTURES

to us and we might publish it here. All photos are welcome: from mud-covered kids in the campsite or a colour photo of a street vendor's towels to a solitary cactus in the desert.

Whether it was taken with a big DSLR camera or your cellphone, if you can put it in your family photo album it's all good. **RENTIA LOMBARD** wins a Camp Cover camera bag to the value of R520 – congratulations!

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

Bright eyes

One way to get close to wildlife is through a long lens, as Laura Beukes from Thabazimbi can attest.

"We were walking in the forest one day when around dusk two bushbabies started playing in the branches right in front of us. That's when I saw there were two others sitting on a tree stump to our right. I took a photo, but the camera's flash gave them red eyes in on the picture. I turned off the flash and, fortunately, one of them sat still for the pic."

A square image with a focal point in the middle – such as

Laura's – can easily be quite boring. Laura, however, makes things interesting by including the slanting branches towards the back on the left and in front on the right of the image. That's what subtly draws your attention before you spot the two eyes. The right-hand branch is in front of the tree stump and out of focus – it makes it feel as if you're spying on the bushbaby.

The bushbaby looks directly into the lens and you see its one leg holding onto the tree... and then you also see that it's sitting slightly tilted in the fork. This makes the picture a little awkward – and that is exactly what you need to really appreciate this cute scene. 🐼

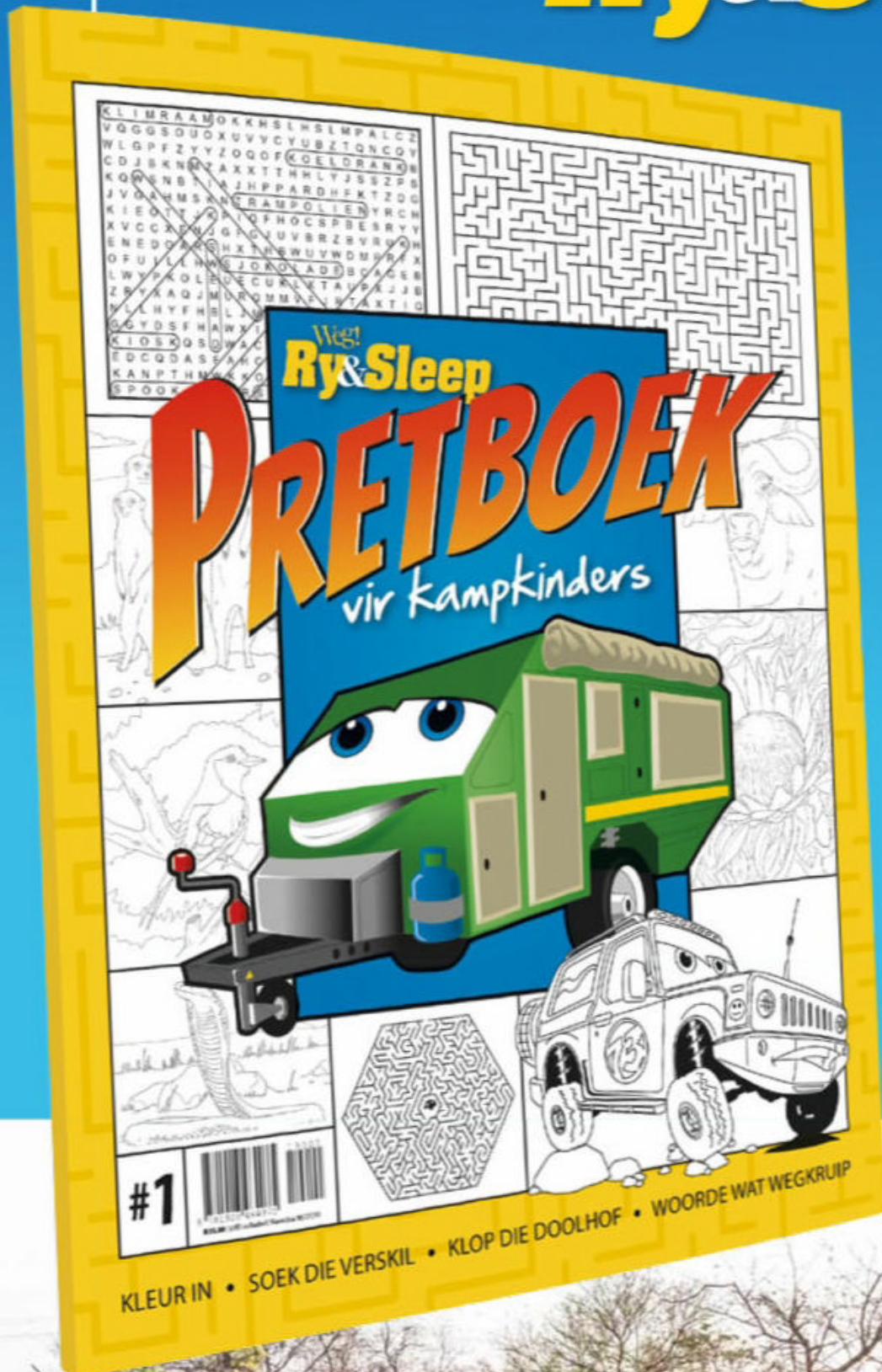


Nikon D3300; 200 mm lens; f5.6; 1/400th of a second; ISO 3 200

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		Town in the Western Cape	Indefinite article	Palm-like tropical plant	Alias (abbr)	Ghost town in Mpumalanga		
		Put down		Purpose				
		Crepe		Skilled				
						Tantalum (symbol)		
Leading	LPs	Dubnium (symbol)	Adjust			Water lily	Entice	
Global	Took off					Inflatable mattress		
					Plenty			
Religious leader			Eastern Europe (abbr)	Tart		Article		
Food list				Stipend		Skyward		
		Not right			Language in SA		Reference	
		Comfort			Faint			
Dwarfed tree	Turmoil			Alluvium				
	Born			Subject				
			Equal			Plain in the Northern Cape (5,3)		
Selenium (symbol)		Drain		Transmit		Morning (abbr)		
Urban dwelling					Modus operandi (abbr)			
		Paddle	Which-ever	Thorium (symbol)		Unit of electrical resistance	En suite (abbr)	Tangle
								Taxing
				Exclusive	The East			
					Fragment			
		Publicity	Parent-less child				Either . . .	
			Beef, eg				Thus	
A Suzuki 4x4	Pacific island	Church song					Go astray	
	Ran into	Total			Little rascal		Pigpen	
				Other-wise		Before		Ruthenium (symbol)
						Osmium (symbol)		
Wrangler, eg			Always		Ice cream holder		Radon (symbol)	
							Embrace	
				In best shape		Positive answer	Germanium (symbol)	

COMPILED BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

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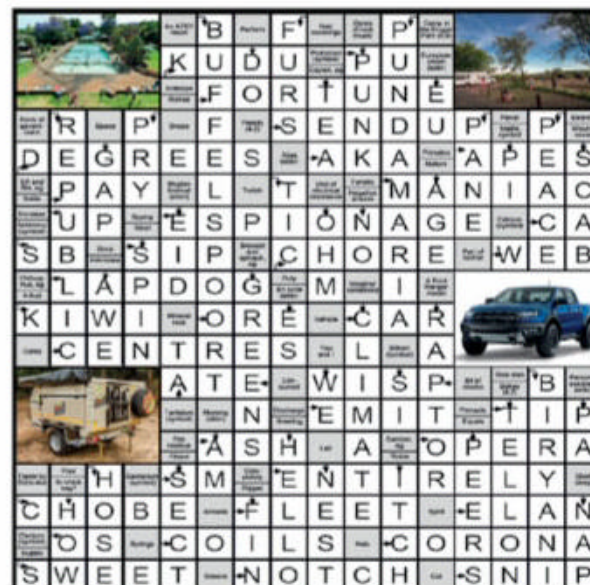
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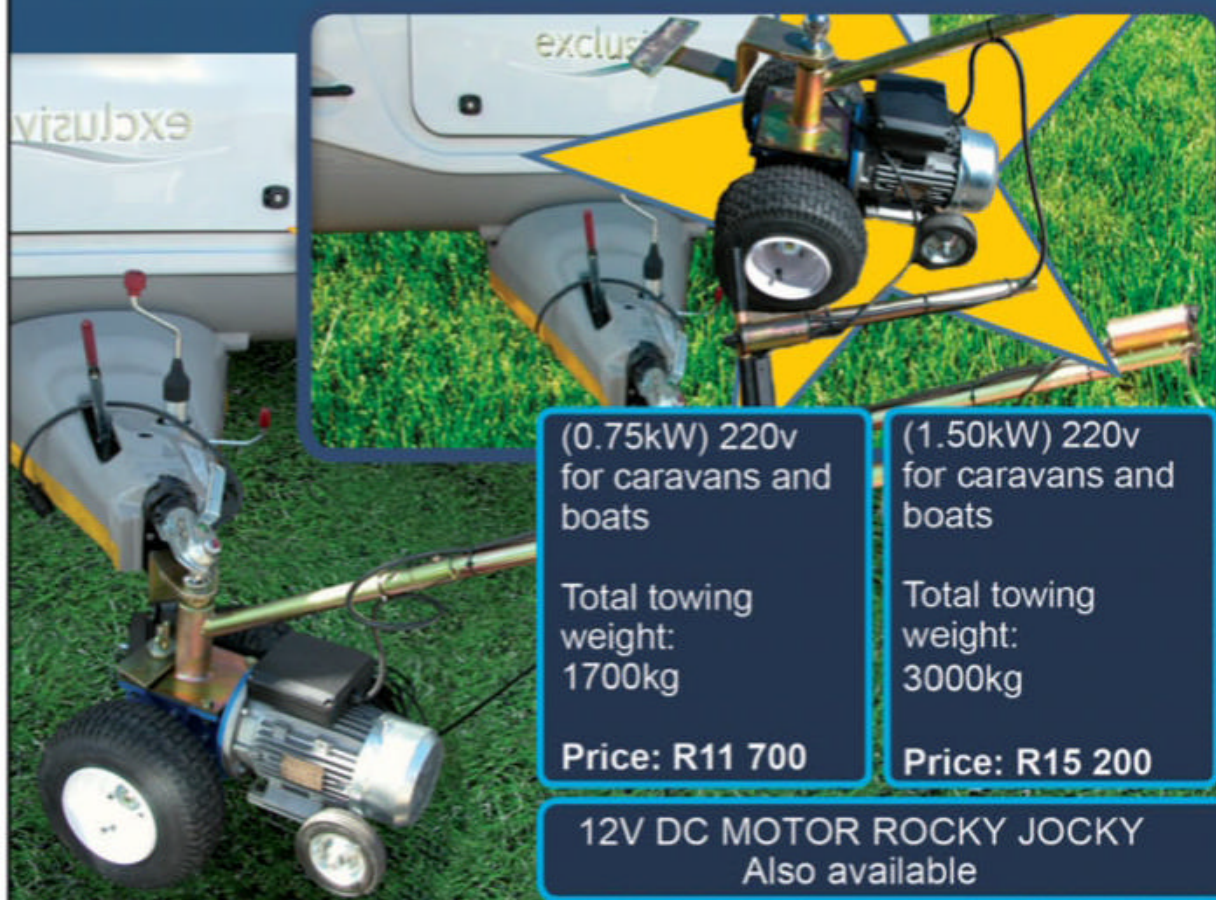


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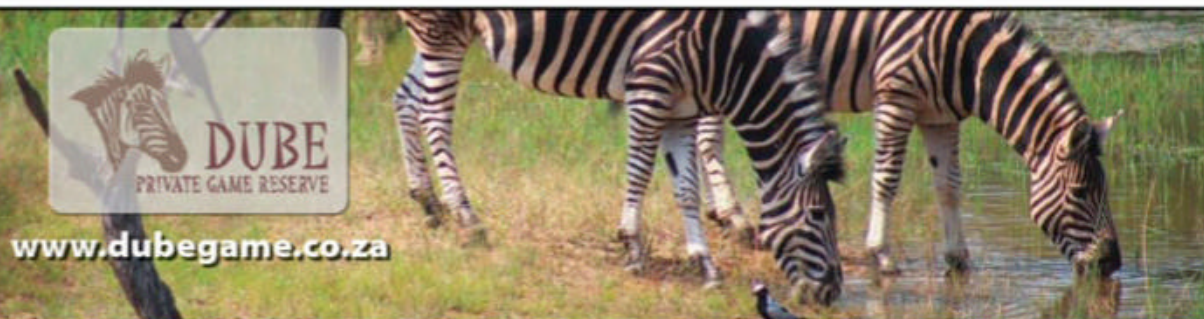


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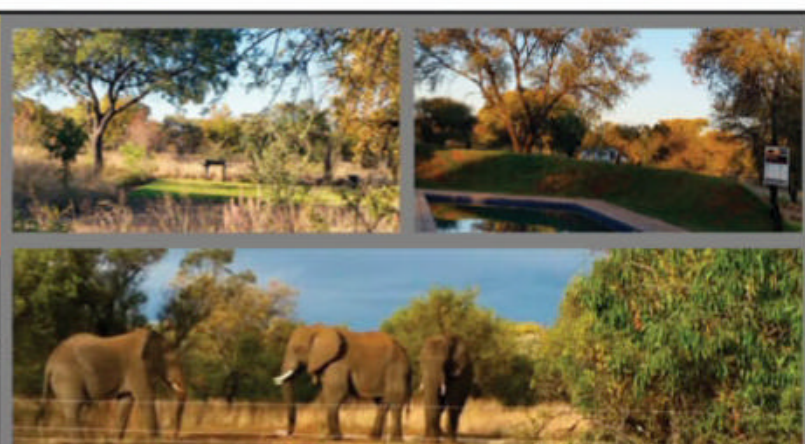
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Thunderbolt and lightning

When you're caught in a storm while camping, it sometimes seems as if something sinister lies behind the surly clouds, says Leon Botha.

Camping is something you tend to associate with good weather, which explains why so many people hit the road during the December holidays.

But this is also the time of the year when the notorious thunderstorms hit the north of the country. It's a rarer event in the Cape where people experience it less often. But comparing the Cape thunder with that of the north is like trying to find similarities between an air rifle and a canon. In the north, it appears as if that purple-white discharge is going to tear open the heavens above... and then you wait for the ear-splitting crack that inevitably follows. And then you anticipate the next drumfire.

As a child, I remember one evening in Rustenburg when I looked out of my bedroom window and saw a streak of lightning cut clean through a branch of the tree next to my room. It scared the life out of me and in my mind's eye I can still see the sparks fly. There is something extraordinary about a thunderstorm, something that's bigger than us. Something you don't mess with. As a press photographer in Pretoria, I once saw how lightning killed 20 head of cattle that had sought refuge under a tree.

accompanying fireworks – it usually lasts an hour and then everything is over.

This was also the case a few years ago at a resort outside of Ventersdorp. We saw the clouds gather towards the west across the Rietspruit Dam and, because we figured it would be an hour or so before the rain starts, we had to decide whether we'd have a quick braai now or whether to wait and see whether there is enough time and light left after the storm.

On that day the clouds packed together so tightly, they seemed black. Every now and again, we saw lightning hitting the earth like the tentacles of an alien beast. A few seconds later, we heard the roar and we knew there's no stopping the approaching storm.

We waited before making the fire, the thunder did its thing and afterwards we did get to eat.

Then, by late dusk, the wind began to pump from the wrong side – those storm clouds that just passed us were on their way back! This time, judging by the high winds, we were headed for trouble. We camped with a off-road trailer, and I hoped the guy ropes with

which I anchored the tent poles would hold their own against the wind. Heaven opened the sluice gates again, and then lightning struck. With the next gust of wind, I saw how our entire tent lifted for a moment. And I realised: if the wind got its way here, it would tear the tent right off the trailer.

I hung onto one of the corner poles and used my whole weight to lie against the one side of the tent. While I hoped the storm would blow over quickly, I indicated to the kids, all wide-eyed, that they should crawl under the blankets. The next second it felt as if a lightning bolt hit the trailer's coupler: A deafening strike. And then something happened that you only see in movies. A current of static electricity shot through my body from the poles with a ripple effect. I can't remember if I thought this was the end, but I remember I was terrified. And it was only the next morning one could see exactly how bad the destruction was. Not a single caravan awning remained standing, and many of them were shredded with bent poles. Gazebos had been blown away; some of them lay far away in the fields.

Outside, campers milled about in their pyjamas with messy hair. Aimless and slightly confused.

A YEAR AGO, we spent the last days of 2017 in the Kruger National Park at our favourite rest camp, Shingwedzi. What could be better than to say farewell to the year than a meal in the restaurant?

“
There is something extraordinary about a thunderstorm, something that's bigger than us. Something you don't mess with.”

It's just a 10-minute walk from the campsite to the open-air restaurant with its thatched roof. Whenever we eat out, the kids get a milkshake, but we always ask the waitress to bring the food first because, once they've had the shake, they're not very interested in their food.

People might consider me a boring diner. Nine times out of 10, regardless of where we eat, I order a chicken burger. But it was the last day of the year and time to try something new. The buffalo pie tasted divine and when I sat back after my first taste to have a sip of beer, a rude gust of wind blasted under the thatched roof.

It had just gotten dark and soon big drops fell on the hot paving and I realised what was about to happen. Our dome tent's canvas windows weren't zipped up and I couldn't remember whether I closed the

canvas windows of our caravan. Probably not – it had been unbelievably hot and we also pulled out the fridge-freezer.

I excused myself in a hurry and ran back to camp. But it rained so hard that I struggled to see – even my torch's powerful beam hardly helped at all.

An unpleasant surprise awaited me: the tent had been blown over and the fan

was still switched on while our clothes lay all over from in the open suitcases. I pulled and hung onto the one side of the tent while the wind howled in the opposite direction. And then it really came down. I heard lighting strikes close by... Because I needed both hands in the fight against the wind, I clamped the torch between my teeth.

The next morning one could see the full extent of the destruction left by the thunderstorm.

Many of the branches of the big mopane trees had been torn loose – one of them just missed our caravan.

I HAD MY closest encounter with thunderstorms by the fishing waters. My brother Hugo and I were fishing for

black bass on a boat at Buffelspoort Dam and, sure enough, a thunderstorm threatened late afternoon. We got off the water and waited for the weather to clear. It was more of an electrical storm and it wasn't long before it ended. We returned to the water immediately to catch another fish in the ebbing light.

But then something happened one only sees in science fiction flicks: As I picked up the end of my fishing rod, I heard an eerie humming sound – just as if I'm tickling a high-voltage transformer with the tip of the rod. The higher the rod's tip went, the worse the buzz got, and I was just waiting for the bolt from the heavens to hit. The problem was that this kind of rod was made of graphite, which is an excellent conductor of electricity.

Hugo and I shot each other concerned looks about the buzzing rods and the hair on the backs of our necks stood on end. That's when we realised there's something far bigger behind that storm, and it's telling us: "Get out of the water, now. Enough is enough."





Couple's Quantum

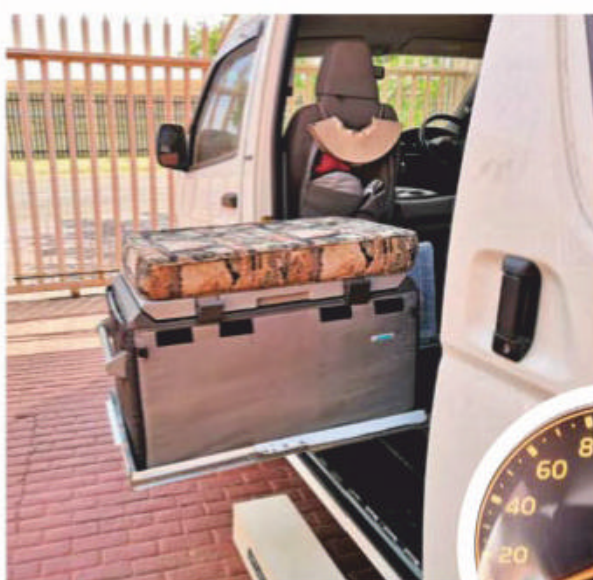
Lifelong campers who enjoyed their luxurious WJ Pacer motorhome, Alta Duvenage from Alberton says they downsized after her husband Gert fell ill.

“Gert and I had been camping for all of our 41 years of marriage, and in the later years we used a large motorhome from WJ Pacer, which used a Bedford van's underpinnings, to spend more time in nature without sacrificing the comforts of home too much.

Gert also used to run the Motorhome Club of South Africa's website, and we would get out with them at least once a month. Unfortunately, Gert's health issues meant that he could no longer handle the size of the vehicle and, because I refused to drive it, we started looking at alternatives. We tried a tent for a bit, but that's not ideal for someone who's ill, so after one trip we decided against that.

We shopped around and eventually settled on a brand-new 2010 Toyota Quantum 2,7 LWB panel van. We decided to do much of the work ourselves, with Gert seeing to the woodwork and me in charge of the interior upholstery. The raw materials didn't set us back much, and I think we barely hit the R1 000 mark.

What we did spend money on was having the 2 000 watt inverter, extra batteries and battery charger installed. To this we connected a fridge-freezer combination and a microwave oven, as well as a TV and satellite dish. When the weather played along, we'd cook outside with an induction plate.



Apart from the appliances, we had an Eezi-Awn awning fitted, for which I made sides myself, and we also had an integrated radio/GPS/Bluetooth unit with reverse camera fitted by Toyota. The Quantum's got WiFi for staying connected where signal allows.

I've heard so many people talk about how horrendously thirsty this engine can be, but we have serviced the Quantum every year that we've owned it and it's rewarded us with a low fuel consumption average of around 8 l/100 km. With just 20 400 km, it's barely even run in properly.

We particularly enjoyed the Satara Rest Camp of the Kruger National Park because it is very central, and you stand a very high chance of seeing a lot of animals.



Unfortunately, Gert eventually died due to the complications with his health and, since I'm 72 and don't really want to visit resorts and destinations alone, I'm selling it. Not that I'll ever give up the idea of camping with friends and family, because I still have my trusty tent. ”



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