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OCTOBER 2018 | ISSUE 15

Drive & Camp

Jurgens Ci
Dealers step in,
owner keeps mum

Heed the call of the
Richtersveld
Camp where giants cavorted

Sundowners in Sabie
Relax by the river

STOP, STOP!
I'M A SPEED COP!
Back to school for
EB and EC1 licences

CAMPER TEST

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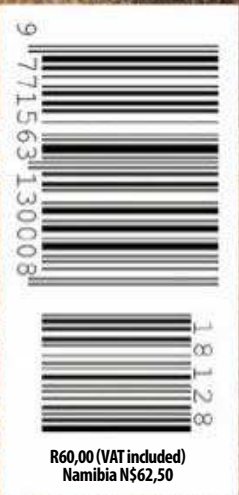
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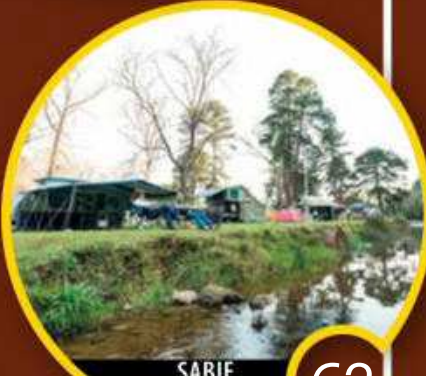
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NEW WHEELS



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Don't let the news from Zimbabwe deter you, because this country is rich in history, scenery and wildlife. And it's all just a little north of our country.

Licence, please



Mirror, blind spot, indicator. Mirror, brake, hands remain on the steering wheel, stop. Handbrake, clutch, second gear, balance the clutch, full observation, handbrake down, drive. Blind spot, turn – push and pull! Don't cross your hands, check the trailer in the mirror while turning, third gear. And off you go...

This inner monologue has been playing in my head for the past few weeks every time I approach a four-way stop. That's not quite true; it's less of a monologue and more as if I have a built-in checklist of Retha giving instructions in my ear. Retha being my driving-school instructor.

I'm on the other side of 40 and have had my licence for more than 20 years, after completing my license test by driving around the streets of Parys in the Free State for around 20 minutes with Baber Botha, the local traffic officer. Before that, I passed the yard test effortlessly in my silver Mazda 323. Honestly, it wasn't hard to parallel park in the Silver Flame. And from that day on, I was legally on the road with my Code 8. It allowed me to tow, too.

With the switch to the credit-card format and new codes just before the turn of the new century, I automatically received a code EB driver's licence, which means I can still tow. That comes in very handy now that I'm working on this magazine.

Kyle, however, is different story. He's a lot younger and looks at you with question marks in his eyes when you start talking about a Code 8, 10 or 14. He obtained his code B driver's licence after 1998, but we wanted him to be able to tow caravans heavier than 750 kg and instructed him to get his towing licence.

It would also make an insightful story about a hot topic. But then some clever Dick got the idea that we should compare two types of driver's licence tests. "So our readers can be better informed about their options." And that's how I was delegated to turn myself over to the Code EC1 world. And what an interesting world that is.

The result of Kyle and my adventure begins on page 102 where we tell you about our learner's licence tests and our experiences at two different driving schools. Because it is such a comprehensive article, we'll be publishing part two next month. And that's when I invade Parow's streets in a Nissan UD truck with a trailer in tow and a traffic officer sitting on my left.

Safe travels!

Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com



The scale of everything is humbling; the area is a playground for giants, huge boulders flung about like marbles

p. 58

Cover photo **Evan Naude** (Mana Pools, Zimbabwe)

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We want to hear what you have to say. Write to us at drivecamp@gomag.co.za. Remember to include your full address and contact details. *go! Drive & Camp* reserves the right to edit and shorten letters – and to use it in the magazine, the website or elsewhere.

A DASSIE BY ANY OTHER NAME...

I love going fishing at Henties Bay and have often visited this Namibian coastal town. A while back, I decided to take my wife, Lany, and two daughters, Inge and Mecé, to show them this beautiful part of the world.

On the way there, we stopped to witness the feeding of cheetahs. Lany wasn't overly impressed as dassies were on the big cats' menu.

We carried on to our guesthouse in Langstrand. Our hosts claimed that they serve the very best galjoen braai, but you needed to book ahead. We booked, but they told us they didn't have galjoen – they did have dassie, though, and would serve that. I thought this sounded great and ordered two for dinner. Lany looked at me in disbelief and asked if she heard correctly. I reminded her that she had already eaten a dassie I brought home from Henties Bay.

The guesthouse manager smiled at my reply, while Lany wanted to know when exactly she had dassie. "The other day, when we had the fish braai with friends," I replied. "You even told me how much you enjoyed it." Lany was adamant; she wouldn't join us for a dassie meal and neither would our daughters as "they're not carnivores".

And that's when I realised it was the term "dassie" that confused her. So I explained that dassie is also a fish species – blacktail – one often caught when fishing for galjoen. It's also known as kolstert and that's what they'd be serving us.

A relieved Lany joined us for dinner after all. She gets teased about dassies to this day.

ANDRÉ OLIVIER
Klerksdorp



Winning letter

André wins a pair of Hi-Tec Crevise shoes worth R699. These are the "shandals" you want this summer with its high performance upper, is the perfect 'shandal' for your summer. Comfort is guaranteed with a neoprene lining as well as a compression-moulded EVA foot

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WONDERFUL PEOPLE

I would like to share my story about a visit to Kaokoland. We drove in two vehicles, but between Opuwo and the Marble Camp we hit a snag. The one vehicle's steering arm had broken – the bolt that held it all together had fallen out. We were lucky and found it about 10 yards back in the road, but the thread was stripped and couldn't be tightened. Fortunately, we were able to make a plan and tied the two pieces together where the bolt had been with a ski rope. We carried on, but pulled over every now and again to make sure the rope stayed put.

This debacle delayed our journey and we arrived late at our overnight stop, Marble Camp. The campsite was full, but someone was willing to share their stand with us. They were so friendly, they even offered to share their braai fire with us.

Initially, we had planned to drive over Van Zyl's Pass, but luckily decided against that endeavour. We wouldn't have made it with a broken steering arm.

The steering arm had to be fixed, but our only option was to drive on cautiously. We checked the rope regularly while heading to Swakopmund where

we hoped to find help. Meanwhile, we reached the little town of Uis and called a car dealer in Swakopmund in advance to find out whether they had the part in stock. Unfortunately, they didn't and a new one from South Africa would take 4-5 days to be delivered. That didn't work for us and we continued to Walvis Bay. The dealer there also couldn't help, but referred us to Greg's Motor Spares, who in turn sent us to Cymot Midas. Would you believe it, they also couldn't help but called around for someone who could. And that's how we got to Autozone. There we finally got the part but, I wondered out loud, who could help us fit it? The manager came to our rescue and reached out to one of their customers, a guy called Frank. The rope held the mechanism together for a good 1 000 km, and Frank replaced it in 17 minutes.

I would like to say thank you to everyone in Walvis Bay who assisted us. You are helpful and kind and went out of your way. Thank you very much, you are such wonderful people.

GUSTAV BESTER
Kokanje, Modimolle

SMALLER, BUT ALSO TOUGH

My wife, Sophia, and I have our own small tour group we call The Lookarounds. It comprises six couples and we travel as often as possible – also crossing the border to visit Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola. Ever since 2014, we've crisscrossed Southern Africa in our Land Cruiser 4.5 EFI. I've had more than one model and not a single problem in 420 000 km. During a visit to the Kruger National Park in 2014, Sophia contracted malaria and that was the end of the touring.

Since then, we've downsized our vehicles. Two years ago, I bought a new Chevrolet Utility 1.8 Sport pickup for R168 000. We also acquired a used 2014 Bushy Executive off-road trailer

in excellent condition. Since then, we've stayed inside our borders, but try to drive as many dirt roads as possible. It stands to reason that the little bakkie's fuel consumption is better than the Cruiser: we get 9,1 km/ℓ with the trailer 11,9 km/ℓ without it. Compare that to the Cruiser's 5,4 km/ℓ...

The pickup is strong enough to tow with its well-matched gear ratio. The trailer is fitted with overrun brakes, and we're thoroughly enjoying its use.

PIET AND SOPHIA MARAIS
Pretoria 🇿🇦





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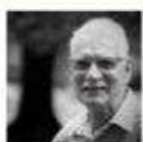


What's your preferred method of cooking when you're camping? Do you prefer the smoky taste that wood gives or do you simply require your meat to be grilled on charcoal? How about the efficiency of a gas cooker?



Andre Kulu Cruywagen

Gas for coffee. Wood for the braai. Charcoal for baking.



Rodger Peel

There is nothing like a good old wood fire.



Ursula Mostert

Definitely wood. I can stare at the flames for hours.



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Ernie Fourie

It's not always possible to take wood (my favourite) along because of the sheer volume and weight it adds. Then charcoal has to do.



JAK's Tracks

Wood all the way. I can't imagine cooking a lovely piece of meat on gas.



Willna Stander

We prefer wood. Gas is just for side dishes.



Wihan Schoombie

We usually use charcoal (because it is convenient in Australia), with a little bit of hickory chips for extra flavour.



Kevin Wright

Wood. I didn't know there was any other way of treating a piece of meat.

COMMENT OF THE MONTH!

"This is what camping is all about. It's an equaliser because everyone camps differently and sets up in a way that they're comfortable with. If you want to drive to your destination slowly, feel free to do that. I hope the uncle still camps for many years."

Ben Visagie wholeheartedly agreed with **Schalk Kruger's** sentiment that you don't need to spend a fortune on camping gear.



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EUROPEAN APPROVED SUSPENSION KITS



Ironman 4x4 recently gained formal approval for its range of suspension kits by German TÜV Nord and the German Federal Motor Transport Authority (KBA).

Ironman 4x4 is the first company to successfully receive this approval for the most popular 4x4 pickups sold worldwide.

The approval took more 18 months to achieve the requirements of the most stringent testing and standards.

The approvals cover 10 different vehicles as listed.

For German customers this means that their 4x4's can legally install the KBA/ABE certified suspension kit upgrade without requiring annual re-certification.

For other European 4x4 owners the TÜV Nord approval also allows for legal installation and conformity with all national and international road laws.

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Side steps vs rock crawlers

Almost every modification to make our 4x4 vehicles more bush friendly involves some type of compromise, says Mic van Zyl.

An interesting aspect of representing a major 4x4 brand is how, quite often, there seems to be a wave of interest in a certain product and then it quietens down and another product suddenly enjoys the limelight. I'm convinced this is partly driven by social media and the keen interest many off-road enthusiasts take in their choice of hobby.

Recently, we've had a spate of enquiries about side steps and rock sliders. After speaking to many of these enthusiasts, I can see there's a misconception around side steps and rock sliders. More importantly, there's an alarming lack of knowledge and understanding about side curtain airbags and how the fitting of aftermarket side steps or rock sliders can affect the correct operation of this critical safety device.

FIRSTLY, THERE is a fundamental difference between the original aluminium and plastic side steps on a new vehicle and the sturdy aftermarket steel replacement ones. Typically, the original side steps are lightweight and look great – they're designed to integrate with the design of the vehicle as a whole. They are also attached to the body of the vehicle as opposed to the chassis.

Their primary function is to assist with the ingress and egress of the vehicle. Secondary to this, they offer a small amount

of protection to the side of the vehicle, particularly from road debris that gets flicked up by the front tyres. They do not, however, offer any significant protection from a ground strike when traversing rough terrain. They bend and buckle at the first sight of a proper rock.

Enter the aftermarket steel side steps and rock sliders. The fundamental differences are very heavy-duty design, construction and material compared to the original steps, as well as the fact that they are bolted onto the vehicle chassis with some heavy-duty brackets.

In the case of a properly designed and manufactured rock slider, you can indeed slide over rocks with the weight of the vehicle without any damage to the vehicle sill. They don't look anywhere near as good as the original steps but, for the serious off-roader, they are almost mandatory due to the protection they offer.

SO HOW DOES THIS affect your side curtain airbags? The sensors that control the activation of these airbags are similar to the sensors that control the activation of the frontal impact airbags. They measure G-force and activate accordingly. The original side steps are designed to not affect the correct operation of these airbags. Fitting a set of strong, solid rock sliders to the vehicle chassis will naturally change the

dynamics of a side impact. In testing, we found that, with the aftermarket rock sliders, the side airbags deploy in any event.

So, no problem there. What does become a problem is that one can possibly have premature or unnecessary deployment of your side curtain airbags while clambering over rocks should you come down hard on the solid rock slider. I have personally experienced this in a Pajero that was fitted with rock sliders.

A good compromise are side-curtain-airbag-compatible steel side steps. These can withstand rock impacts better than the original aluminium product but not to the extent of proper rock sliders. They are also attached to the vehicle chassis, but by means of engineered brackets that do not alter the correct working parameters of the side-curtain-airbag system.

As always, almost all modifications we make to our 4x4 vehicles to get them more bush friendly involve some type of compromise. This compromise should, however, never put at risk the safety of you, your family, your vehicle or other road users. 🚗

Fitting a set of strong, solid rock sliders to the vehicle chassis will naturally change the dynamics of a side impact.

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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Look before you buy

It is advisable to always determine what exactly is covered in the warranty before buying a new caravan, says Neels van Heerden.

The Australian Facebook group "Lemon Caravans & RVs" has more than 36 000 members, and all of them are strictly selected on the basis of their experiences with factory failures (so-called lemons) on campers, caravans and motorhomes.

Daily, unsatisfied consumers swarm to this group to pick up new stories about the "lemons" fellow Aussies have bought.

The camping industry Down Under is much bigger than in South Africa and the Aussies are somewhat infamous for their spicy vocabulary. As a result, manufacturers have to be able to stand the heat when people in the group go after them.

Bear in mind that your camper, caravan or motorhome has to be serviced regularly and failure to do so can void your warranty.

I like to refer to a camper or caravan with a large number of factory errors as a "gooi-naartjie". That's an Afrikaans term that describes a fruit you bought from the vendor, believing the promise that it's sweet and seedless. But, when you get home, it's either sour or tasteless and full of pips. Then I always think back to those years when you'd buy a bag of naartjies outside Loftus Versfeld or Ellis Park and, if they were inedible – and your team was

losing on top of that – you'd look for the closest supporter of your team's rivals and pelt him with a "gooi-naartjie".

It is, after all, part of our nature to look for a target when wanting to get rid of our frustrations. The same is clearly true on social media.

SHOULD IT HAPPEN that you do purchase a new camper with hidden defects in South Africa, you're protected by the Consumer Protection Act, which states that, in certain circumstances, the consumer has the right to have a vehicle repaired or replaced, or that the seller has to refund the money. It is, therefore, essential that you read the fine print before signing a contract.

Also, be sure you understand exactly what is covered under the manufacturers' warranty, and bear in mind that your camper, caravan or motorhome must be serviced regularly. Failure to do so could render your warranty invalid.

Remember wood rot, which often occurs in older caravans that haven't been sealed regularly.

I snuffled around the websites of a number of international manufacturers to see how they handle their warranties. One example is British manufacturer Bailey Alu-Tech, whose caravans are being sold with a six-year guarantee against any water leaks. That's because the hull's panels are assembled with a permanent-seal technique.

Local caravans manufactured from fiberglass also can't get wood rot and, theoretically,

permanent seals and fiberglass panels increase the second-hand value of such vehicles.

A FEW YEARS ago, I bought a brand-new caravan and, while inspecting it at the dealership, the salesperson and I found 27 faults. A factory delegation was sent to see for themselves and they found another five mistakes.

The caravan was taken back to the factory right away and I waited a month for its delivery as they applied stricter quality control this time around.

One of the men from the factory whispered in my ear that the caravans rolling off the production line on a Friday at the end of a month are likely to be full of faults. That is, apparently, because monthly targets have to be met, leading to sped-up manufacturing and reduced quality control.

A family member recently drives through Botswana with his super-expensive new camper. After a few days, he notices that the camper looks more and more lopsided. Eventually, the camper breaks and he limps back home.

The manufacturer, dealer and insurer proceed to throw naartjies back and forth. The latter claims it's due to poor workmanship, while the dealer accuses my family member of towing the camper in a reckless manner. And the manufacturer? They're not answering calls.

That kind of thing leaves a bitter taste that not even the sweetest naartjie will get out of your mouth.

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Jurgens Ci at a standstill, boss silent

The production line of the Jurgens Ci plant in Ga-Rankuwa has been mute since July and, according to a highly placed source at the manufacturer, there are currently no people building caravans there.

go! Drive & Camp approached Jurgens Ci's owner, Paul Kyriacou, for comment but he wouldn't discuss the state of affairs at the factory. "My response can only follow once I've concluded what I'm busy with right now."

He denied rumours that his staff hadn't been paid in months and said all salaries were up to date.

Jurgens is the largest caravan manufacturer in South Africa and supplies around 30 Campworld dealers throughout the country. These dealers, however, have been struggling for a long time to add to their new caravan stocks.

Arnold Prosch, a Campworld dealer and

owner of Cara-Camp Caravan & Outdoor Centre in Somerset West, told go! Drive & Camp that things started to go wrong shortly after Kyriacou bought Jurgens Ci from Imperial Holdings last year. Business has worsened to such an extent that some Campworld traders – including Tygerberg Caravans and Northern Natal 4x4 & Caravans – have left the Campworld group and joined forces with other manufacturers.

Meanwhile, 17 dealers have worked together to establish a new network to source Jurgens Ci spare parts for their customers. The newly established company is known as LeisureWorld. If everything goes according to plan, they'll officially operate under this new name from 1 October. Prosch and Jan Serfontein of Northern Natal 4x4 & Caravans are LeisureWorld's two directors and most of the 17 dealers have shares in the company.

Prosch says that though Jurgens Ci still exists as a business, Campworld dealers face the problem that they no longer receive the products and service they expect from the manufacturer.

LeisureWorld merchants are free to carry any brand names. These include brands like Echo4x4, Invader, Okto, Quantum Leisure and Bush Lapa. "The gap Jurgens Ci has left in the market is huge. In many respects, they previously dominated the market," says Prosch. "We had to transform and I see a bright future. From now on, we will be able to offer a larger range of caravans to customers, while still assisting Jurgens Ci caravans – Gypsy, Sprite and Jurgens – with spare parts."

LeisureWorld has created a temporary website for customers where they can register their details: leisure-world.co.za

Dustproof your load bin

The company Pro Auto Rubber now offers a rubber sealing kit for your Ford Ranger T6 Series load bin. The seal is part of a DIY kit consisting of the following items: a rubber seal, screws, adhesive tape and 3M alcohol cloths.

Together with a bin lid or tonneau cover, you can seal the bin so your camping equipment is dust free. Pro Auto Rubber also sells load-bin and

floor mats for your Ranger's interior.

A rubber sealing kit costs R1 150 and is available at your nearest Pro Auto Rubber branch in Boksburg, Cape Town, Durban, George and Pinetown.

Contact 011 823 5541 stephan@proautorubber.co.za (tell them go! Drive & Camp sent you.)

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Moved to "tears"...

DOWNSIZE.
If you're in the market for a small caravan, or have been specifically wanting a teardrop type, check with Chris. There are four standard models.



What initially was just a visit to Namibia in 2016 led Chris Erasmus from Kempton Park to start an enterprise that manufactures teardrop trailers.

Chris built three camper trailers for their small tour group to visit the south of Namibia. Four weeks and 7 000 km later, Chris, an aeronautical designer, decided to tackle a new challenge. Road-Tripper Adventure Trailers saw the light and, today, the manufacturer is building four different versions of the ever-popular teardrop design.

The four models range from a typical teardrop camper trailer to one that you can tow into the bundus with your 4x4. Prices range from R57 000 to R75 000 and, except

for the biggest model, the XL Limited Edition that's 60 cm longer than the rest, Chris uses the same chassis.

The S model is 2,4 m long, has a door on both sides and the typical teardrop kitchen at the back. The body of all models is made of plywood and finished with Chromadek, a kind of sheet metal that is specially galvanised and painted. The X model's body is 8 cm higher than that of the S-model and gets 14" tyres instead of the 13" of the S.

The X doesn't have a kitchen, which means there's a lot more space in the camper. It also has only one door, on the right. The XL has a kitchen and two doors and, with the longer XL Limited Edition, you gain more space inside the camper and in the kitchen. Inside, you have

a 2,2 m long bed and the kitchen has space for a very large fridge-freezer combo (90 l).

All trailers have a tare weight of 400 kg with a gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 750 kg. The campers are not braked and come standard with a 220V power system (including USB sockets on the inside). Accessories include a spare wheel (R2 500), roof rack (R2 200), corner steadies (R828), side table (R925) and wash rack (R850).

Although Chris offers a standard range of four campers, he specialises in custom-made campers.

Contact 083 564 2150
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JUMP ON THE BLOEM-WAGON!

Here's a piece of good news for readers in Bloemfontein: Jacky Smith, who has more than 30 years of experience in the caravan trade, has now opened her own dealership, Bloemwa, in the Free State capital.

At Bloemwa, the off-road caravan manufacturer Echo4x4 gets its second space on a Free State display floor. These campers were previously available only at Outdoor Junction in Bothaville.

Jacky has also teamed up with Sherpa Leisure and obtained the rights to sell these popular caravans in the Free State.

Apart from all the new caravans, Bloemwa also has a camp shop with basic caravan spare parts and camping gear. a service centre is also set up to work on all the makes.

To complete the picture, Bloemwa sells second-hand caravans, too.

Address 24B Faan Ferreira Ave, Langenhoven Park.

Contact 083 702 8970 info@bloemwa.co.za

bloemwa.co.za



Caravan Fitment Centre moves

Caravan Fitment Centre's workshop in Mayville, Pretoria, has changed address. They are now sharing premises with the caravan dealership Pretoria Caravans & Campworld in Gezina.

Caravan Fitment Center has entered into an agreement with this dealer to take over repairs and caravan services among others. Pretoria Caravans & Campworld keeps its own workshop where they provide pre-delivery services and maintain warranty guarantees.

Caravan Fitment Centre has been doing business for 20 years and, in addition to specialist repair work on caravans and trailers, they also import Enduro caravan movers.

Contact 082 575 1924 or 087 160 0374 info@caravanfitmentcentre.co.za caravanfitmentcentre.co.za

CO-OWNERS OF PRETORIA CARAVANS & CAMPWORLD Adri Conradie (left) and Glenda Colley (right), and director of Caravan Fitment Centre, Michael Barwise (middle).

>



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SHERPA'S LUGGAGE TRAILER HAS ARRIVED

Sherpa Leisure has added a luggage trailer to its range. One of Sherpa's major features is the full fiberglass body, which is also a hallmark of the new Fibertrail trailer.

The trailer has a loading bin with a lid typical of a luggage trailer, and a separate nose cone. The spare wheel fits into its own hatch under the floor of the trailer. This hatch has a plug in case there is water in the trailer you need to get rid of – when you wash the inside, for example.

Sherpa's owner, Neville de Meillon, says he adapted the FiberTrail's design to fit the size of a Hyundai i20. "There's a big demand for this type of trailer, especially because it is constructed of fiberglass. This is especially true for buyers who stay near the coast where damp is an issue."

Buyers can choose between a galvanised steel or aluminium chassis and there is no price difference.

Extras Roof rack R650 and carpet R850.

The numbers 3,6 (l) x 1,45 (w) x 1,1 m (h); tare weight 220 kg; load capacity 530 kg; GVM 750 kg; 155/80R13 tyres.

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Contact 011 452 8188 or 082 554 8335

neville@sherpaleisure.co.za sherpaleisure.co.za



SLIMLINE. For the first time, a luggage trailer joins the Sherpa line, which has primarily focused on small caravans. Just like its bigger brothers, the FibreTrail boasts a fiberglass body, but the buyer can choose between an aluminium or galvanised steel frame. It was developed especially for small hatchbacks.



Driving license tests now easier

The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) is launching an electronic service that will allow you to make appointments for learner-license and driving-license tests.

With this system, applicants will be able to choose which date and time they want. The hope is that it will not only eliminate queues at the testing centres, but also corruption. The system can also be used to renew existing licenses.

"We found that some corrupt traffic authorities interfere with appointment dates for their own profit. We're going to tackle this corruption and improve service to the public," says Simon Zwane, spokesman for the RTMC.

The corporation survived its own corruption scandal in 2012 after the agency's liabilities exceeded its assets because R200 million e-Natis money belonging to the national revenue fund was used illegally by the previous board.





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Ironman's twin-filtered one keeps the water out of the differential while you can happily lead your vehicle into the water.

The kit comes with an oil-resistant pipe (10 m) with a manifold for two couplings. At the manifold, each of the two pipes has its own filter to keep dust out of the system. Apart from the differential, the kit also fits onto gearboxes (that includes a transfer gearbox) and winches.

Price R995.

Contact 011 634 7770 sales@ironman4x4.co.za

ironman4x4.co.za



Conqueror hooks the Canadians

Conqueror, one of the largest off-road caravan manufacturers in the country, has exported its first UEV-490 caravan to Canada after a year of negotiations. The caravan manufacturer has already been exporting to countries such as Australia and the USA (Conqueror's largest export markets) as well as Saudi Arabia and parts of Europe for a long time.

Because every country has its own towing regulations, caravans cannot be exported from here without being amended. America and Canada, for example, require specific electrical brakes. These brakes are installed, mounted at the Heidelberg factory on the Conqueror caravans and then the caravan is exported.

The UEV-490 is known locally as the Commander and is the largest production off-road camper built by Conqueror. If things go to plan, the rest of Conqueror's model range will be exported to Canada in the future.

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LA SPORT TIPS FOR AFRICA TRIPS

We love traveling through Africa and now with the little one with us in the vehicle we make sure that we have all the necessities for traveling to a neighbouring country. For us, safety always comes first and that is why our tip/advice will be to equip your vehicle with a LAS Bull Bar that is air bag compatible, improves off-road capabilities and is also equipped with recovery points to help you get out of a sticky situation. The most important thing is to appreciate the environment around you and enjoy every moment of your adventure with your loved ones.

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NEW BUMPER AND A NAKED HILUX

As we mentioned in go! Drive & Camp # 13, the Hilux Dakar version gave us a taster for how the rest of the Hilux range will be looking. Toyota's bakkie has a new bumper, headlights and grille. It also inherits the Dakar version's pitch-black interior finish.

Fourteen single-cabin models are available with prices ranging from R253 200 (2.0 VVTi 5MT) to R525 800 (2.8 GD-6 4x4 RAIDER 6AT). There are also six Xtra-cab models (R386 700-R555 300) and 13 double cabs starting at R385 100 and ending at R663 800 for the V6 RAIDER 4x4 flagship model.

In an interesting twist, Toyota decided to bring back the so-called "chassis cab". You can now buy a Hilux without its load bin. This is especially good news for towing services, furniture movers and wildlife

tour operators who have no use for the standard load bin. Of course, it's also ideal for those who want to convert a Hilux into a camper. The chassis cab is only available in single-cab versions.



Hilux SC 2.0 chassis cab	
VVTi 5MT A/C	R 250 500
Hilux SC 2.4 chassis cab	
GD-6 5MT A/C	R 284 700
Hilux SC 2.4 chassis cab	
GD-6 4x4 SRX 6MT	R 407 100



Cruisers in record numbers



The Sondela Reserve near Bela-Bela recently teemed with Land Cruisers. Just like last year, Marius Opperman of Trio Events invited Toyota Land Cruiser owners to see if they could beat 2017's convoy record of 415. They unfortunately missed the record by two vehicles, but improved the African record for most static Land Cruisers on one site. This year's 491 is 57 vehicles more than last year.

Overall, the FJ attracted the most attention. The owners of N1 4x4 Pretoria arrived with the oldest model, a FJ25 from 1959. Filly Prinsloo of Agulhas drove the furthest distance in his FJ: 1 801 km. Nobody could beat Pieter Banninga's kilometres in his FJ45. With 2 600 000 km on the clock, Pieter has travelled around the world more than 64 times, a distance that will take you three years if you drive at 100 km/h all day and night.



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TOUAREG TDI V6 (EXECUTIVE)

A Va-va-voom Volksie

The new Volkswagen Touareg might just chuck a grenade into a chicken coup full of dandy roosters, says Pierre Steyn.

There was a time where the Volkswagen Touareg prided itself on its off-road capabilities, and a souped-up version won three consecutive Dakar Rally-titles from 2009 to 2011. But, in the parking lots at malls, the less glamorous Touareg was the ugly duckling among expensive SUVs, including BMW's X5, the Audi Q7 and Mercedes-Benz's GLE.

This year, the situation changed radically. The third-generation Touareg sacrificed some off-road prowess for certain comforts – think ride quality, comfort and luxurious fittings. Not only is it now the most advanced (and most expensive!) Volkswagen ever, but it doesn't have to take

a single step back when facing off against other expensive SUVs.

The exterior

The new Touareg looks a lot more aggressive than its predecessor, a bit like a bodybuilder who's squeezed himself into a collared shirt. It's slightly longer and wider but also lower, which helps to make it look fast even when it's standing still. Things look very different in the front. The big chrome grille, combined with a multitude of LED light clusters, will make you look twice when you see it thundering up in your rear-view mirror. From the rear, the completely redesigned LED lights contribute to the car's very modern appearance.

The wheel size now starts at 18" instead of 17" and, if you don't mind losing your fillings on our South African roads, you can even opt for 20" wheels. We wouldn't though. The standard 19" wheels offer the best combination of looks and comfort.

The more dynamic design, hypermodern lights and big wheels help turn the Touareg into a most attractive vehicle.

The interior

This is where the new Volkswagen really shows the other roosters what it has to crow about. The interior has been completely redesigned and modernised. The completely digital "Innovision cockpit" (you'll have to pay

an extra R75 000 to have this installed) offers a 15" touchscreen that seamlessly combines with the "digital cockpit" behind the steering wheel. It feels like you've been teleported to Times Square, surrounded by massive TVs screens, when you turn the key for the first time.

You use the system to manage a multitude of entertainment, information and navigation systems. It looks somewhat intimidating at first, but you'll get used to it. If you can operate an iPhone, you'll be fine with this, but call a teenager to explain it to you if you're struggling..

There are two trim lines, the Luxury (R1 million) and the even more luxurious Executive (R1.1



The more dynamic design, hypermodern lights and big wheels help turn the Touareg into a most attractive vehicle.

million) that add bigger wheels and the more sporty R-line trim. In both cases, the equipment, the touch surfaces and materials are of a superior quality.

Under the bonnet

The 3.0 l V6 TDI is a jewel of an engine, delivering 190 kW and a massive 600 Nm of torque. It's mated to an eight-speed automatic transmission that does the thinking for you. The addition of trailer assist means that you can now trust Dicky, who doesn't know how to reverse and pranged your caravan the last time he tried, with the keys again. Push the right button, sit back and watch how the Touareg uses sensors and cameras to reverse in

a straight line and park itself.

The Touareg can tow a maximum of 3.5 tonnes (braked) thanks to all that torque and four-wheel drive. You can hide the tow bar underneath the rear bumper and out of sight with the push of a button.

How does it drive?

Like a dream. It may not be a rock bunny anymore, but the 4x4 system linked to a beast of an engine, a good automatic gearbox and a decent suspension offers you a luxury car that will gobble kilometres like a barfly munching complimentary cocktail peanuts.

If you're driving slower than 27 km/h, you don't only steer with

your front wheels but also with your rear wheels, which point in the opposite direction once you turn the steering wheel. This ensures a tighter turning circle and makes parking this big car a lot easier.

Once you exceed 120 km/h, the air suspension automatically lowers the ride height by 15 mm so that your road holding improves. You can also raise your ride height by 25 mm once you hit the gravel roads.

Conclusion

Volkswagen has moved their own goal posts to line up with the luxury suites next to the field. Gone are their hopes of luring the 4x4 crowd out of their beige ladder-frame Kalahari Ferraris and their Masai Mara Maseratis. They're now targeting the crowd that needs a luxury SUV to park on the pavement opposite a private school.

Even though the Touareg is slightly cheaper than its rivals, it feels like a more expensive car. And this is why Volkswagen thinks

it can lure not only Tiguan drivers looking for something bigger, but steal buyers from a market that would normally only look at an X5, a Q7 or a GLE.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model Touareg TDI V6 (Executive)

Engine 2967 cc, V6-turbodiesel

Power 190 kW @ 3 250 rpm

Torque 600 Nm @ 2 250 rpm

Transmission 8 speed-automatic

Top speed 218 km/h

Fuel consumption 8.8 l/100 km

Tank 100 l

Wading depth 500 mm

Ground clearance 220 mm

Warranty 3 years/120 000 km

Service plan 5 years/90 000 km

PRICE

Touareg TDI V6 (Luxury)
R999 800

Touareg TDI V6 (Executive)
R1 088 200

4X4-RANGE

Accessories



Winch shown is for illustration purposes



Contact your nearest Isuzu dealer

Some accessories shown may have limited warranties. Model/s shown may differ. E&OE.

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FORD ECOSPORT 1.0 ECOBOOST TITANIUM AT

Do you like the commanding seating configuration of an SUV, but you're not looking for a large one for serious 4x4ing? Then consider the new Ford EcoSport.

Text and images **Kyle Kock**

Let's just say upfront that the EcoSport does not have all-wheel drive, so if that's what you're looking for, this simply isn't the vehicle for you. What Ford's baby SUV does have in its favour is a very good traction-control system and favourable ground clearance for when the going gets rough.

We were surprised by how well it fared in a remote reserve, hopping over rocks that would have lesser vehicles balancing between their axles.

They couldn't plan this though

It's long past dark when the convoy ambles along on the very rough gravel road as we penetrate deeper into KwaZulu-Natal's Midlands and closer to our lodging for the night at Zingela

Safari and River Company. Truth be told, none of us, bar the Ford staffers guiding us and bringing up the rear, actually know where we are.

It's been some time since we've left the bustling N3 and relatively busy R74. One thing is for sure, we had lost signal quite some time before that. It's that time of year

when the Midlands gets awfully misty and, coupled with the dust from the convoy's 60 km/h drive, it makes conditions a bit unfavourable.

We're just about to mention over the two-way radios that we should probably slow down to save the low-profile rubber on the range-topping EcoSport models,

when a sickening thud resounds through the cabin and the tyre-pressure monitoring system shows a rapid decrease in the front left. All of 2,3 bars out within seconds due to a nasty snakebite.

We stop on the roadside in near pitch-black darkness, but we're grateful the EcoSport packs a full-sized spare. As is the case with the previous generation's model, the spare is situated on the tailgate and you access it by unclipping the cover and then unscrewing the tyre. The 205/60 R16 spare tyre perfectly complements the remaining three 207/50 R17s, being the same width and overall diameter. Unlike the many space savers that require you to adhere to a lower speed, it allows us to continue our journey without giving the replacement any further thoughts. >





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It's nice inside

On setting out from King Shaka International airport in the direction of Johannesburg, the EcoSport creates a largely positive impression. The boot swallowed two backpacks, a large duffle bag and a single piece of carry-on luggage with room to spare for perhaps one more.

Your eyes are immediately drawn to the large tablet-style infotainment screen that takes pride of place on the centre of the fascia. This 8" touchscreen unit (the lesser Trend models get a 6,5" version) makes use of Ford's SYNC 3 system that includes voice control and built-in navigation. Hooking up your mobile phone via Bluetooth is a simple affair and you can also choose to switch the screen off while your favourite tunes are playing and still be guided by the GPS system.

Spritely about town and the open road

The turbopetrol three-cylinder thrums along happily as we make our way toward Pietermaritzburg on the N3 and, because the ECU is automatically programmed for economy, the six-speed automatic in this particular EcoSport wants to shift to the highest ratio as fast as possible. This isn't always ideal – especially in the hills of this particular region.

The gearbox isn't a fast responder but, for quicker overtaking manoeuvres, you can pull the transmission lever down one position into Sport so as to keep the engine on the boil longer via the paddle shifters. Also, don't try to override the transmission with the up and down paddles when it's in Drive, because it simply won't respond.

Overall, though, the motor is quite lively, with a pleasing



The boot swallowed two backpacks, a large duffle bag and a single piece of carry-on luggage with room to spare.

exhaust note. If you're not in a rush, it will reward you with the positive side effect of having to visit the pumps a bit less. We got instantaneous readouts in the region of 7 l/100 km on the second day of our trip when we have a more relaxed pace as we near our second destination.

On the third day, however, the fear of missing our flights from OR Tambo back home took has us forego an economy run. With throttles pinned for plenty of overtaking on the N3, the EcoSport consumed well over 9 l/100 km.

Conclusion

The EcoSport has always carried favour with those who sought out a more modern and comfortable-to-drive-everyday alternative.

With new looks thanks to LED daytime running lights, sharper design details and family-friendly features on both the technology and safety fronts, the new EcoSport will simply soldier on and continue to impress.



SPECIFICATIONS

Model EcoSport 1.0 EcoBoost Titanium AT

Engine 999 cc, 3 cylinder, turbo petrol

Power 92 kW @ 6 000 rpm

Torque 170 Nm @ 1 400 rpm

Transmission: 6-speed automatic

Ground clearance 206 mm

Tank 52 l

Fuel consumption 6,3 l/100 km

Top speed 180 km/h

Acceleration 0-100km/h 11,6 seconds

Warranty 4 year/120 000 km

Service plan 4 year/60 000 km

PRICE

Ford EcoSport 1.0 EcoBoost Titanium AT R339 900

Get 25% off on labour charges at Auto Care & Diagnostics

While human error is the biggest cause of car accidents, badly maintained vehicles also make a large contribution to the national road toll every year. Keep your vehicle in peak condition – it saves lives. Auto Care & Diagnostics offers a wide variety of services, and until the end of October you can get a 25% discount on labour charges.

A car that doesn't want to start on a cold morning or a faulty aircon are minor irritations. But a vehicle that is not properly maintained is more than a frustration – it is a danger on the road. Auto Care & Diagnostics (or ACD for short), can help you with the following:

AIR CONDITIONING

Air conditioning systems in vehicles run out of gas or stop working as a result of broken components. At selected ACD workshops, our trained technicians offer air conditioning repair services as well as re-gassing of air conditioning units, for a wide variety of automotive air conditioning systems.

AUTO ELECTRICAL

ACD offers auto electrical repair and maintenance at selected workshops around the country. A dead battery, starter or alternator could all be symptoms that your vehicle's electrical system is problematic.

ACD uses advanced electrical diagnostic equipment to locate and fix your problem and get your car back on the road. This service is available at selected workshops.

BRAKES

Your vehicle's brakes are a critical safety item and the regular maintenance thereof is non-negotiable. The increase in braking distance and possible failure due to worn components is dangerous and the consequences can be dire. ACD offers: replacement of disc pads, replacement of brake discs, replacement of brake shoes, replacement of cables and sensors, repairs to hydraulic systems, replacement of hydraulic components, skimming of brake discs repairs, replacement of calliper components.

VEHICLE DIAGNOSTICS

The increased use of electronic components, sensors and ECU's ("Computers" as they are com-

monly called) within vehicle electrical systems, has prompted the computer aided diagnosis of faults and errors. Most modern vehicles are equipped with OBD II diagnostic adapters and warning indicators on the dashboard, to indicate when a component is defective. ACD use state of the art diagnostic equipment and experience to assess what has gone wrong.

DRIVELINE AND TRANSMISSION

The drive train connects your vehicle's engine to the wheels and supplies the power to move forward. These components are subject to excessive forces as modern cars have increased power and torque which causes component failures due to wear & tear. ACD offers: clutch unit replacement, CV joints/prop shaft repairs and wheel bearing replacement.

ENGINE OVERHAUL

Your vehicle's engine is a critical area but sometimes due to component failure and wear & tear, it

will require maintenance & related repairs. ACD offers: timing belt/chain replacement ("cambelt"), and engine overhauls and rebuilds.

REGULAR & MAJOR CAR SERVICE

Regular maintenance ensures longevity of major components of your vehicle. Mandatory maintenance items include filters and lubricants that have a limited lifespan and therefore need to be replaced every 10,000 km on a diesel and 15,000km on a petrol vehicle OR 12 months to limit costly repairs caused by excessive wear and tear.

SUSPENSION

Suspension components are there to keep you firmly on the road. Damage from potholes and poor road surfaces as well as normal wear and tear may cause suspension failure due to the weight of the vehicle and the constant state of motion. ACD offers: suspension rack replacement and component replacement.

Terms and Conditions: 1. Promotion runs until 31 October 2018 at any Auto Care & Diagnostics workshop. 2. Your 25% discount will only affect your labour charges and excludes parts and accessories. 3. Customers may not supply their own parts or accessories. 4. 25% discount applicable per invoice. 5. Cash payments only.

To find your nearest branch of ACD visit www.acdworkshop.co.za or call 011-879-6000.

Panda-monium!

You see it in the city and in the platteland, but have you ever encountered a Fiat Panda on a 4x4 trail? **Cyril Klopper** takes one through its paces.



GUTSY. The Panda fares well on gravel roads and in muddy situations. Articulation is also not too bad, but the Panda struggles with loose uphill surfaces.

It's great when a tiny SUV impresses by performing almost as well as a full-fledged off-road vehicle. Isn't that why we cheer for the underdog at World Cups?

Like the Suzuki Jimny, Fiat Panda owners also have tales of how theirs outperformed a Jeep, but are these David-and-Goliath stories credible or just big talk?

We took the Fiat Panda Cross to the Honingklip 4x4 Trail (a proper grade 3 to 5) outside Hermanus in the Cape to see how it would fare in the mountains.

Inside and out

Like some mongrels, the Panda's exterior is so ugly it's cute, and the inside beautiful. The instrument panel glows cheerfully with blinking orange-red lights and smooth buttons just looking for a hug. Even the grumpiest curmudgeon won't be able to repress a smile when getting behind

the Panda's steering wheel.

Sure, everything is hard plastic, but it doesn't annoy because the rounded shapes and lovely details are engaging and expressive.

The ride

With two adults in front and two kids plus a packet of NikNaks on the backseat, we leave for the Overberg with its smooth gravel roads. But first we have to endure a busy N1 highway before leaving the city behind us. The first gear of the Panda Cross is too short for heavy traffic and the second gear often feels too fast. You have to change gears all the time – and this can get frustrating.

When the traffic thins, the Panda can stretch its legs. The new 875 cc two-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine is more impressive than the previous 1,2 l and 1,4 l engines, but the 66 kW maximum power output won't blow you away, and

you have to be patient as the needle takes its time to get to the 120 km/h mark.

The Panda does, however, perform well on the Franschhoek Pass. Its torque of 145 Nm may sound meagre, but it's more than enough for the sweeping turns. Body roll is noticeable, but it never feels dangerous.

The Van Der Stel gravel-road pass between Theewaterskloof Dam and Bot River is muddy after a recent rainfall, but the Panda is obviously designed for such conditions. The suspension gives a good

ride and the all-wheel drive faithfully clings to the wet ground. The standard Goodyear Vector 4Season tyres also perform well here.

Although the Panda Cross stands slightly higher in its socks than a regular Panda 4x4 (161 mm vs 150 mm), its tummy is still low – a Suzuki Jimny, for example, has a ground clearance of 225 mm. At Honingklip, we had to be very careful going over medians and bumps. Though the Panda is small and agile enough that you can drive around most obstacles rather than over them. >

The Panda is small and agile enough that you can drive around most obstacles rather than over them.





Articulation is not bad, given the type of vehicle, and the all-wheel drive's automatic torque distribution produces fair results. What the Panda struggles with most are loose stones on steep slopes.

Then you stand still while the wheels spin. If the incline is too steep, the 0.9 l engine also easily chokes. Fiat claims the Panda can go up a 70° slope, but we weren't able to get anywhere near.

Honingklip's grade 3 obstacles aren't child's play and we often have to sound the retreat. We don't even get to the grade 4s, never mind grade 5. Through it all, the Panda Cross does kick up stones, but the metal and plastic panels on the body protect it well. So, they're there for a reason – well done, Fiat!

According to its specification list, the Panda Cross has an impressive wading depth of

711 mm, but we really don't think you should put that to the test. At 1 090 kg this SUV weighs little enough to end up going with the flow...

Conclusion

You'll be correct in thinking the Fiat Panda Cross is anything but a hardcore off-roader. The purpose of this test wasn't to prove the opposite; we simply wanted to establish how far we could push the Panda and the answer is: not very far – at least not on a veritable 4x4 route.

Do consider a Panda Cross if you live in the platteland and have to drive a gravel road from your town to the next. But first ask the question: how many Fiat service centres are in the platteland? Between Vereeniging and Bloemfontein, the answer would be exactly zero. Sorry for you if you live in Hennenman...



SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested	Panda Cross 4x4 Series 2
Engine	875 cc, two-cylinder petrol
Power	66 kW @ 5 500 rpm
Torque	145 Nm @ 1 900 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed manual
Fuel consumption (claimed)	5 l/100 km
Baggage capacity	225 l (870 l with the backseats down)
Tank	37 l
Ground clearance	161 mm
Approach and departure angle	24° and 34°
Wading depth	711 mm
Tare	1 090 kg
Top speed	167 km/h
Acceleration 0-100 km/h	12 s
Warranty	3 years/100 000 km
Service plan	3 years/60 000 km

PRICE

0.9 Fiat Panda TwinAir Cross	R277 700 🇿🇦
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SPECIFICATIONS

CAMERA – Front
– Rear

MEMORY

DISPLAY

BATTERY

SIM

OPERATING SYSTEM

GLASS

FINGERPRINT ID

WATERPROOF RATING

BV4000 PRO

5MP

8MP

2GB RAM/16GB ROM

4.7 inches

3 500mAh (built-in)

Dual sim

Android 7.0

Gorilla Glass

NO

IP68

BV9000 PRO

8 MP

5MP/13MP dual camera

6GB RAM/128GB ROM

5.7 inches

4 180mAh (built-in)

Hybrid dual sim

Android 7.1 Nougat

Gorilla Glass

YES

IP68

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Africa's *rough diamond*

Don't allow the news from Zimbabwe to deter you – this country is rich in history, scenery and wildlife. And it's also just over there...

Text and photos **Evan Naudé**





Zimbabwe is often in the news for the wrong reason, but this country has recently had a major political upheaval and, slowly but surely, there's more light at the end of the tunnel. Regardless of politics, it remains a unique country that's incredibly rich in natural beauty, with residents still welcoming visitors with open arms.

Just think: this is a country that lies between two of southern Africa's largest rivers: the Limpopo to the south and the Zambesi to the north. You'll certainly know of the Victoria Falls.

And then there are 10 more national parks as well as at least 10 other smaller national conservation areas that include spectacular caves, awesome lakes and beautiful botanical gardens. And, if you're an animal lover, pack your bags as Zimbabwe's game reserves are world-renowned for their wildlife.

Mpafa Travel offers a 13-day self-drive safari tour through

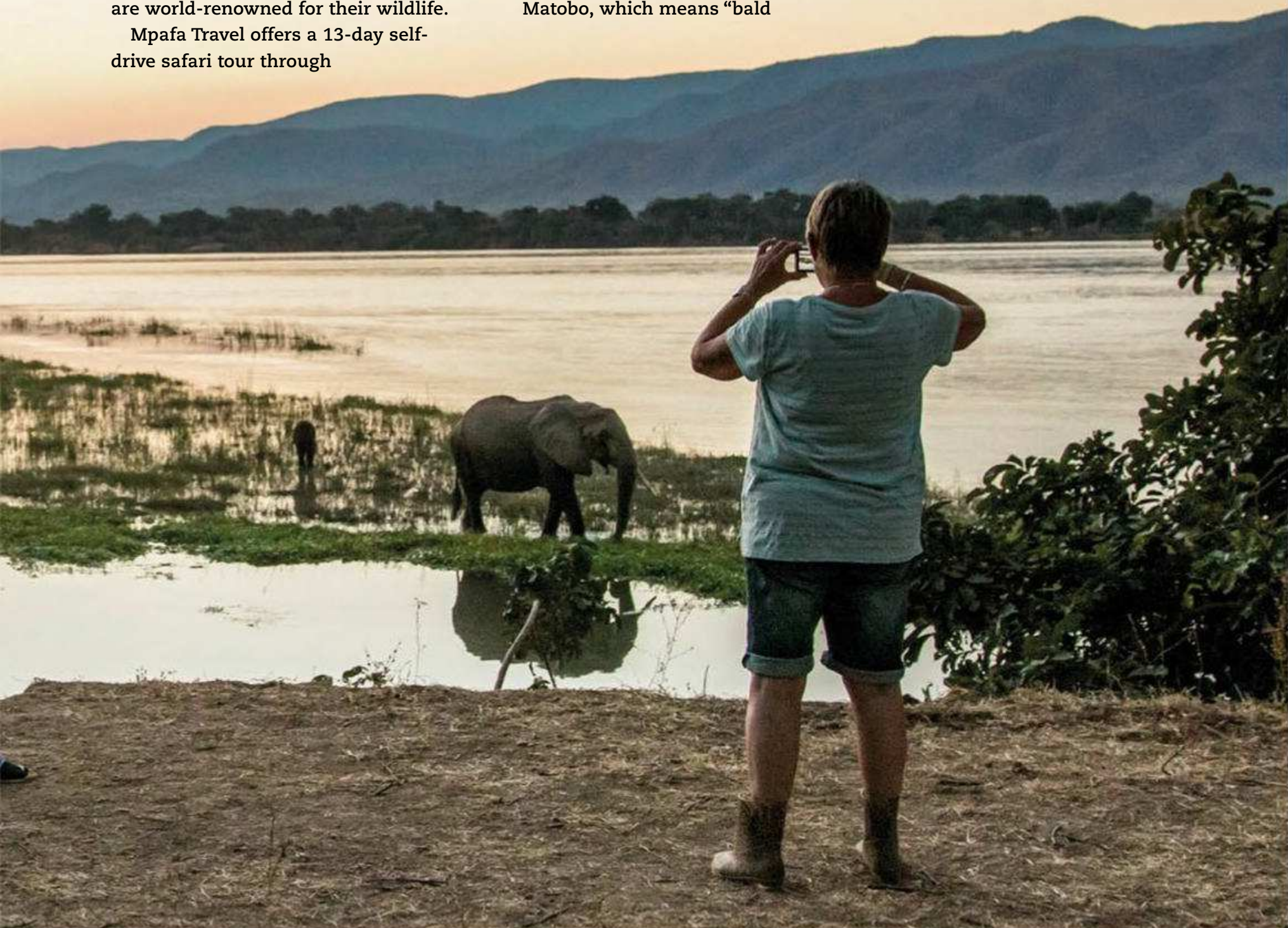
Zimbabwe, stopping at as many of its highlights as possible. When we heard there was a spot available, we didn't think twice. We were out the front door... heading straight for our neighbour!

Rhodes' final resting place

The tour group consists of 12 vehicles plus two Mpafa supporting vehicles. We meet at the Big Cave Camp just outside the Matobo National Park, about 35 km outside Bulawayo. It's a long way from home, and we spend two evenings here so we can thoroughly explore the park the following day.

Matobo, which means "bald

heads", gets its name from the characteristic granite hills in the area that were formed more than two-billion years ago. The park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, covers 424 km² and is the largest in the country. It was originally >



founded in 1926 as the Rhodes Matopos National Park. It's between these hills where the Second Matabele War raged and eventually ended when Cecil John Rhodes personally met with the Ndebele.

The area so charmed Rhodes, that he requested in his will to be buried here – an event that happened in 1902. Today, you can visit his grave on top of a hill called “View of the World”. The view is indeed impressive and beautiful in the last light before sunset.

It's no surprise that the San lived in the area centuries before the British and the Ndebeles. In the park, there are more than 3 000 registered spots with rock art, and the best examples are in caves in the park. Unfortunately, the drawings in the Pomongwe Cave near the Maleme Dam were badly damaged in 1965 when an attempt was made to try and preserve the artworks with linseed oil.

Rather aim for the Nswatugi Cave to the west of the park – you'll find a whole wall of drawings in great condition. But

be warned: it's a short but steep climb uphill to get to the cave.

Where it all began

From Matobo, drive back to Bulawayo (35 km) before turning east on the A9 in the direction of Masvingo (280 km). This town isn't special in itself, but only 28 km south of there is surely the most important historical site in the country: The Great Zimbabwe Ruins.

If you set off from Matobo early enough you can have lunch at Great Zimbabwe, and use the afternoon to explore the ruins. Like countless other ruins, the finer details of this ancient city remain a mystery.

But what archeologists do believe is that it was built by the Shonas between the 11th and 15th centuries as an apparent royal palace. The country eventually gained its name from this palace after independence in 1980, as Zimbabwe literally means “House of Stone”.

The golden bird on the country flag is a picture of one of the eight soapstone statues, the Zimbabwe birds, found on the premises. These statues, probably representing fish eagles, are in the small museum near the entrance.

Take your time here and don't forget your camera. And it's a good idea to hire a guide to walk you through the different parts of the city and bring its history to life. Don't miss the Great Enclosure, a spectacular circular fort with stone walls up to 11m high.

And, even if you're not in top-notch shape, do yourself a favour and walk up to the Hill Complex for a great view of the entire ruined city. It's especially beautiful just before sunset when the last rays of sunshine bathe the stone walls and narrow corridors in soft golden light.

We stay till after sunset because our overnight stop isn't far away. The campfire has been lit when we arrive at Norma Jeane's Lakeview Resort on the banks of the Mutirikwi lake.



ANCIENT WORKMANSHIP. The bricks (above right) on the wall of the “Great Enclosure” were packed by hand and without cement to form a circular fortress (insert). Inside, a maze of corridors (right and middle above), lead you to the inner rooms.



Raptors and caves

The following morning, we hit the road early and drive back to Masvingo. From here, our route turns north to the peak of the tour: the Mana Pools. The total distance is 680 km and we plan to do the trip over two days. This way, we have enough time to stop at two interesting places along the way: the Kuimba Shiri Bird Park and the Chinhoyi Caves.

The A4 main road is another reason why you should rather take your time as this is the road hordes of big trucks from Harare use to drive to the Beitbridge border post. The distance between Masvingo and Kuimba Shiri on the Chivero Lake outside Harare is around 320 km, but it takes six hours to drive there in convoy. Fortunately, there's a restaurant with cold beer to cool that heat under the collar caused by the truck drivers.

Kuimba Shiri was established 20 years ago as a rehabilitation centre for raptors. Today, you can sleep over, camp, go horse riding or fishing and even take a boat out on the lake. The owner, Gary Stopforth, is an exuberant man whose love for birds of prey is clear when he welcomes you. He



has had a fascination with birds of prey all his life and knows everything there is to know about these species. In the past, he was even involved in the training of eagles for BBC documentaries. Every afternoon at 4 pm, Gary presents a show where he teaches you about owls, falcons and eagles. One of the highlights is when a fish eagle catches its prey in the lake a mere five metres from us. >

ORPHANAGE FOR FEATHERED FRIENDS. During Gary Stopforth's raptor show at Kuimba Shiri Bird Park, he introduces visitors – Elmarie van Wyk is pictured here – to rehabilitated birds including the cute barn owl (top), demonstrates how a fish eagle hunts (middle), and even how a lanner falcon makes a meal of a young chicken.

PARK TARIFFS

Park tariffs at Zimbabwe's national parks and other conservation areas are all payable in US dollars. Bring the right amount of cash, as there aren't always card facilities or change available.

- **Matobo** South Africans (and other countries of the Southern African Development Community or SADC) pay \$12 p.p.p.n.
- **Great Zimbabwe** \$15 p.p.p.n. for South Africans (and other SADC countries).
- **Mana Pools** South Africans (and other SADC countries) pay \$15 p.p.p.n.
- **Hwange** South Africans (and other SADC countries) pay \$15 p.p.p.n.
- **Chinhoyi Caves** To visit the caves cost \$8 p.p. (SADC countries) plus another \$2 for photographers.

The next morning, we're on our way again, bright and early, first in the direction of Harare and then with a shortcut on the edge of the city to the A1 where our convoy turns northwards. Our goal for tonight is the Mana Pools but, late morning, we first visit the Chinhoyi Caves.

The caves are like a miniature version of the Congo Caves, but holds a trump card you don't see every day: a cobalt-blue pool with water that's so bright your friends will think you have been doctoring

your photos. This pool is called the Sleeping Pool and, although it's beautiful, it has a somewhat ominous reputation. Legend has it that a killer threw his victims into the pool before a Shona chief, one Chinhoyi, got rid of him – hence the cave's name.

A second story claims that the traditional name of the caves is Chirorodiziva, which means "Pool of the Fallen" because the Angoni tribe drowned people here in the 1830s, too.



EERY WATERS. The bright blue and deep pool of water at the Chinhoyi caves remains a mild 22°C year-round. You can view it from a vantage point outside as well as underground.

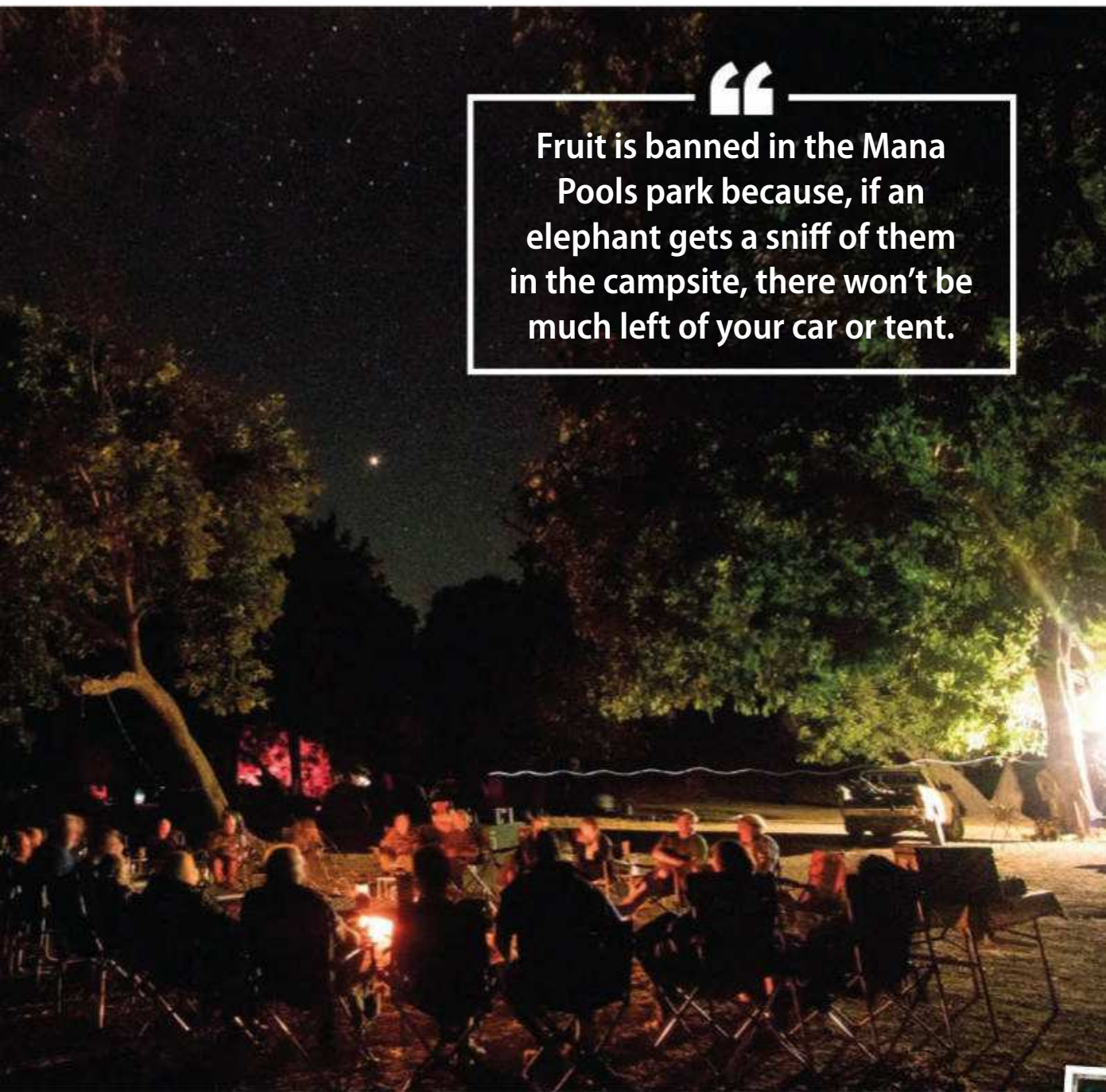


Lazing about at the Zambesi

On the A1, it takes about 185 km to get from the caves to reach Marongora on your left. The park's office is here and you have to pay your Mana Pools permit here. When you're done, drive 5 km further on a winding mountain pass (watch out for trucks again) down to the park's entrance gate. Here you have to stop at a boom to write your details in a book – it also gives you the chance to let some air out of your tyres for the dirt road ahead.

It's not a 4x4 track, but the road is corrugated in place and softer tires will save your kidneys. Also, get rid of any fruit in your car and donate it to the guards as they're banned in the park. The reason? Well, if an elephant's gets a sniff of them in the campsite, there won't be much left of your car or tent.

Just over 30 km further, you will get another boom and another sagging book to fill in. Stretch your legs as the dirt road isn't quite done with you yet – the Nyamepi Camp lies another 45 km



“
Fruit is banned in the Mana Pools park because, if an elephant gets a sniff of them in the campsite, there won't be much left of your car or tent.



further. Head pretty much straight north to the mighty Zambezi River and one of the most beautiful campsites in all of Africa.

It's just before dusk and the Mana Pools welcome us with their distinctive late-afternoon light rays shining through the branches of massive trees, immersing the world around us in a golden glow.

Just as every other evening, our tents are already set up thanks to the Mpafa team who sets up camp in advance; so, the main thing is now to place a camping chair on the banks of the Zambezi and relax with a cocktail. Besides, there's more than enough time to make a nest – we're here for the next three nights.

Three days are only just enough to explore the Mana Pools. From the Nyamepi Camp, you don't have to drive far to see many animals. The pools or water holes that gave the park its name are close to the camp.

The Chisasiko Pool, Long Pool and Chine Pool are especially great places >

AMONG THE ANIMALS. You're never too far from wildlife at Nyamepi Camp (main pic), because elephants come visit often (top right), while impala and hippos seek the refreshment of the nearby waterholes (middle and below).



to sit and wait in the early morning with a cup of coffee for the animals to come drink water. The park doesn't have rhinos, but the rest of the Big Five are all present and you may also see a cheetah or leopard.

The elephants here are known to get onto their hind legs to reach the high tree branches – see if you can get a picture of this. And, if you don't get to see them in

the park, chances are good they'll come to the campsite.

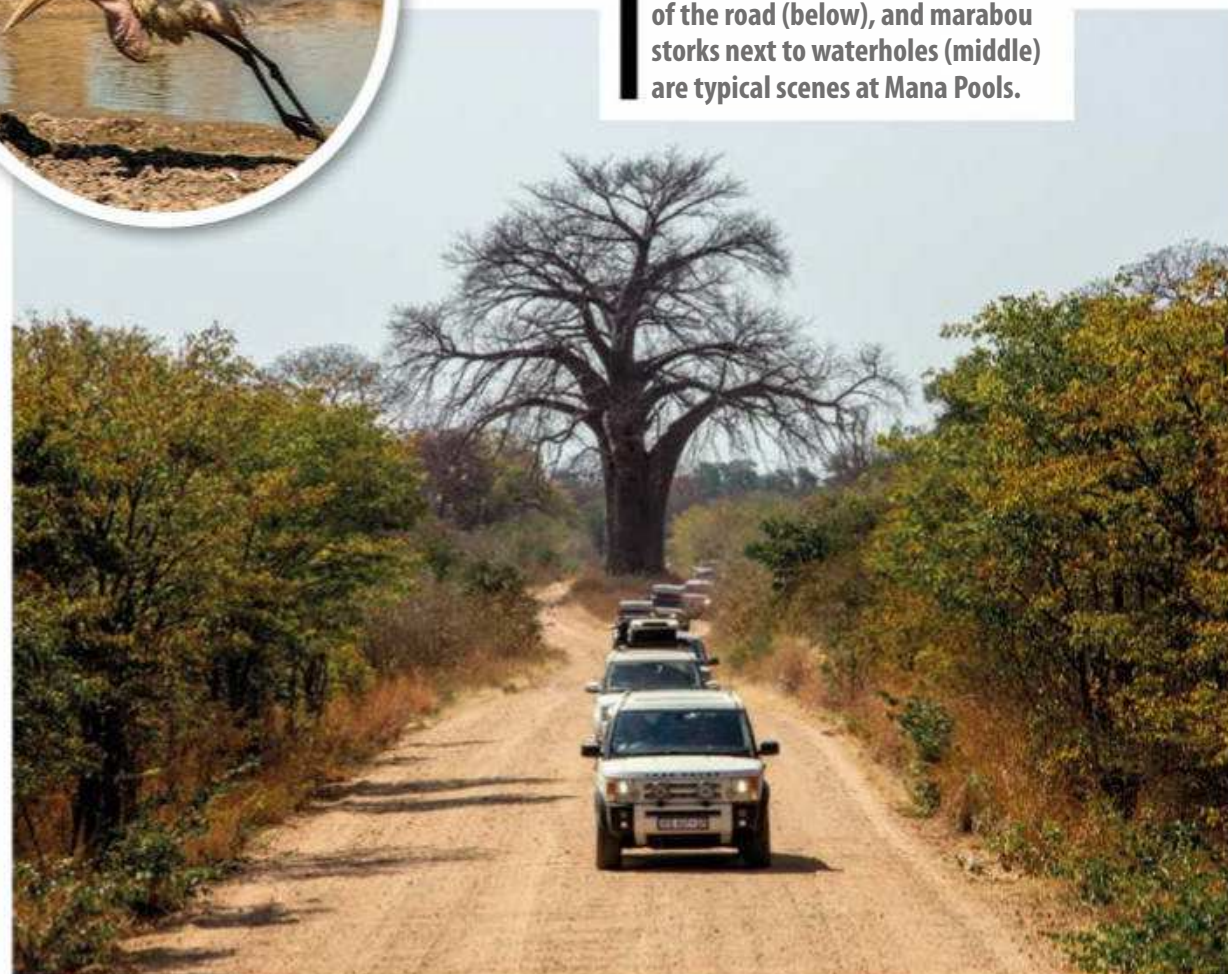
Talking of the campsite, ensure your vehicle and tents are closed properly, even when you are in the camp. The blue monkeys and baboons are terribly irritating and the camp rangers warn us the baboons have even learnt how to open tents. Mana Pools is one of the most spectacular conservation areas on the

continent and there are few other places where you can relax as completely as this in nature.

When you sit next to the mighty Zambezi at sunset and watch elephants and hippos standing halfway in the water while munching away, as a huge crocodile lies on the shore and a fish eagle flies by with its distinctive call, a deep peace engulfs your heart.



THE USUAL SUSPECTS. Peaceful elephants between dense trees (top), giant baobabs in the middle of the road (below), and marabou storks next to waterholes (middle) are typical scenes at Mana Pools.



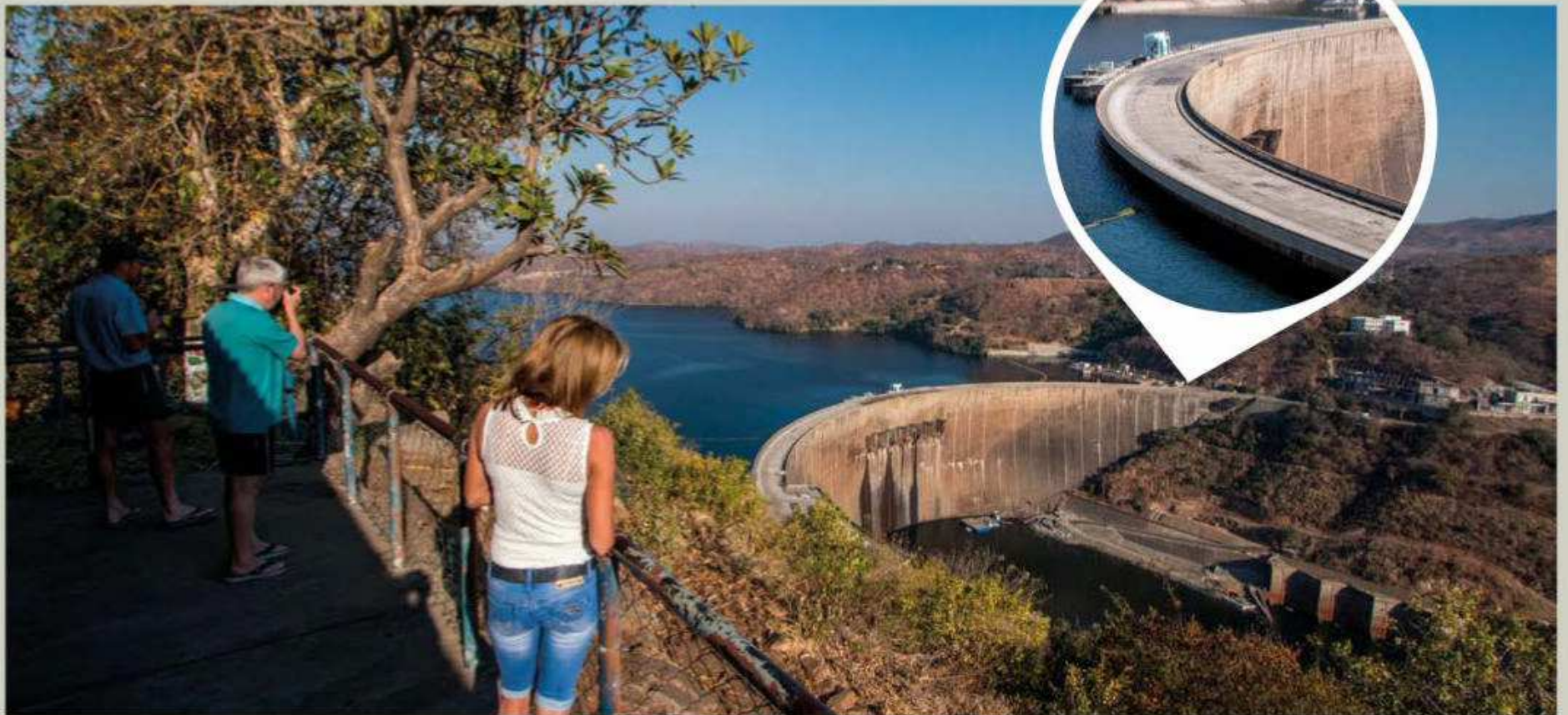
I ALSO WANT TO GO!

How long is the trip? This route, with its starting point at Matobo and the end point in Hwange, is just under 2 000 km. This doesn't include travelling distances from South Africa or to and from the nearest border posts (Plumtree, Victoria Falls or Padamatenga) in Zimbabwe.

Do I need a 4x4? Not necessarily, but you definitely want to drive a vehicle with good ground clearance.

What are the road conditions? The tarred roads are generally good, but the main routes between cities and borders teem with trucks and what appears to be insane drivers. The dirt roads are also not too bad except for the bit between Kariba and Hwange that is truly awful.

Is fuel easily obtainable? Filling stations are abundant in the larger towns and cities, but diesel isn't always available. Bring a jerry can or two for peace of mind, ask the petrol attendants about the next garage and fill up where you can rather than wait until your tank is low.



Where Nyami Nyami keeps watch

Nobody is really eager to leave the Mana Pools, but there are still a few lovely destinations ahead. Our next one, the Kariba Dam, is fortunately not too far and we have some time for breakfast after a last early morning wildlife trip.

It's back to the same park gate where we came in and we pass Marongora before turning west at the town of Makuti. It's about 70 km to Kariba from here. The Kariba Dam is a great piece of engineering. The 280 km length of water is held by a dam wall of less than 600 m. It's impressive and definitely worth a visit. Visitors may walk on the bridge, but you must report at the immigration office for a permit because the wall forms the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia. Pop in at the visitor centre (GPS S16.522972 E28.766878) for a view over the dam wall.

Here you'll see a statue of the Zambesi River god, Nyami Nyami, watching over the water mass. >



WHERE DID YOU CAMP?

Big Cave Camp (Matobo) 087 073 5605

reservations@bigcavematopos.com

GPS S20.500984 E28.445646

Norma Jeane's Lakeview Resort

021 855 0395 normajeanslakeview.com

GPS S20.251428 E31.002544

Kuimba Shiri Bird Park 00 263 4292 6136

birdpark@mweb.co.zw GPS S17.868974

E30.801772

Mana Pools (Nyamepi Camp) bookings@

zimparks.org.zw GPS S15.722353

E29.372542

Lomagundi Lakeside (Kariba)

00 263 77 496 2790 lomagundioffice@

gmail.com GPS S16.526833 E28.836166

Kulizwe Lodge (Binga) 021 855 0395

kulizwelodge.com GPS S17.586037

E27.359129

Tuskers Camp (Hwange)

00 263 29 224 3954 of 6430 resman@

amalindacollection.co.zw GPS S18.605723

E27.057344

Tour with the experts

To do this tour with Mpafa Travel, send an email to mpafa.com or call

044 535 0065. info@mpafa.com

WHERE THE ZAMBESI PAUSES. After the construction of the 128 m high Kariba dam wall (top and middle) in the 1950s, kapenta was introduced in the dam. At sundown, the fishing boats head out for the night.





Till the next time

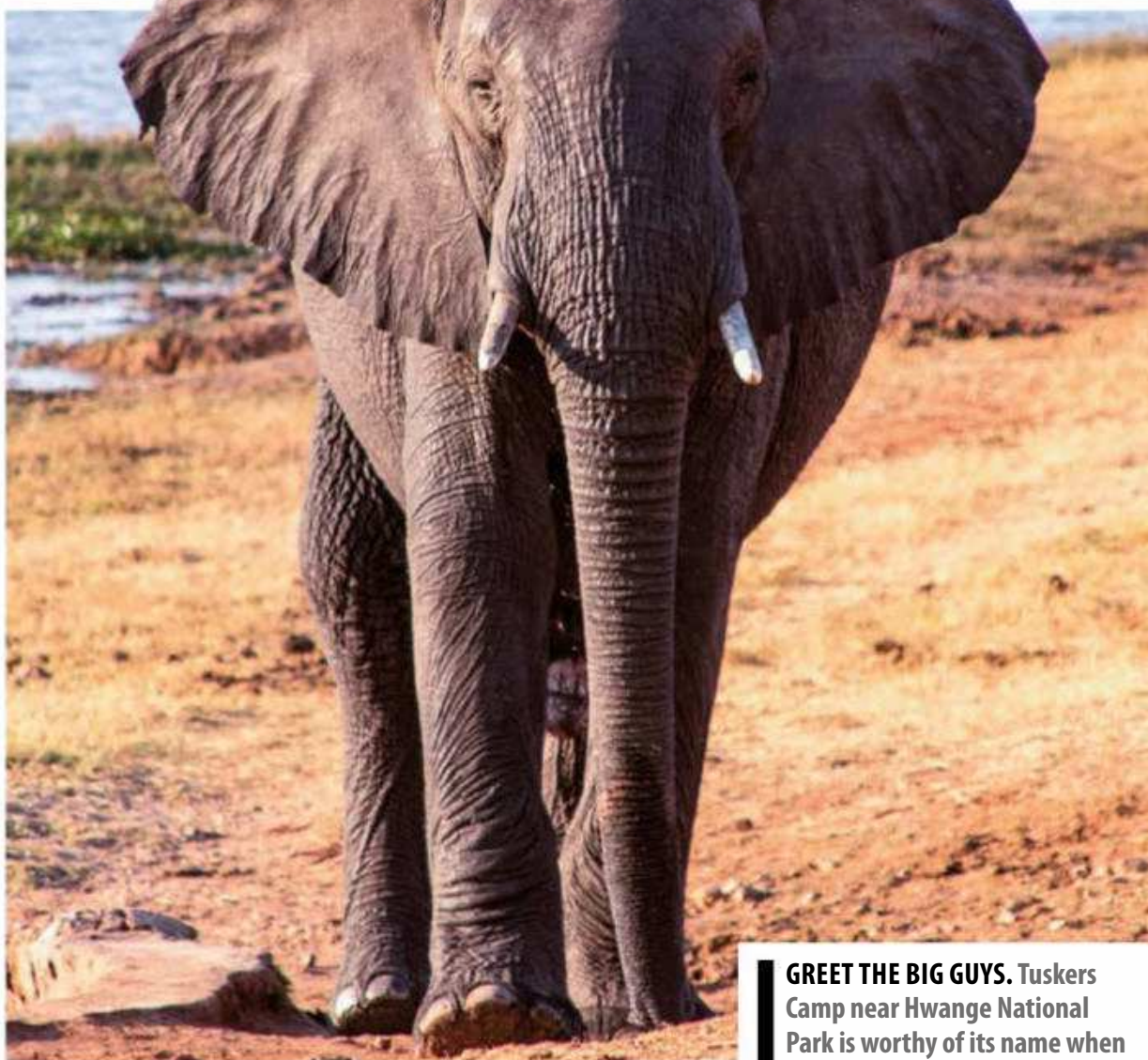
The final destination of the tour is the Hwange National Park, about 260 km north of Bulawayo on the A8. The dirt road between Kariba and the A8 is in very bad condition and you'll struggle to go faster than 60 km/h. So, make sure you leave early to tackle this 480 km as it will definitely take you all day. On this tour with the convoy, we decided to do it in two days, and so we spend a night in Binga before leaving for Hwange.

Hwange is the largest national park in Zimbabwe – look at a map and you'll soon realise there's no way you could properly explore the whole park on a single visit. Nevertheless, it's packed with wildlife and the many water holes almost guarantee you'll see a good number of animals.

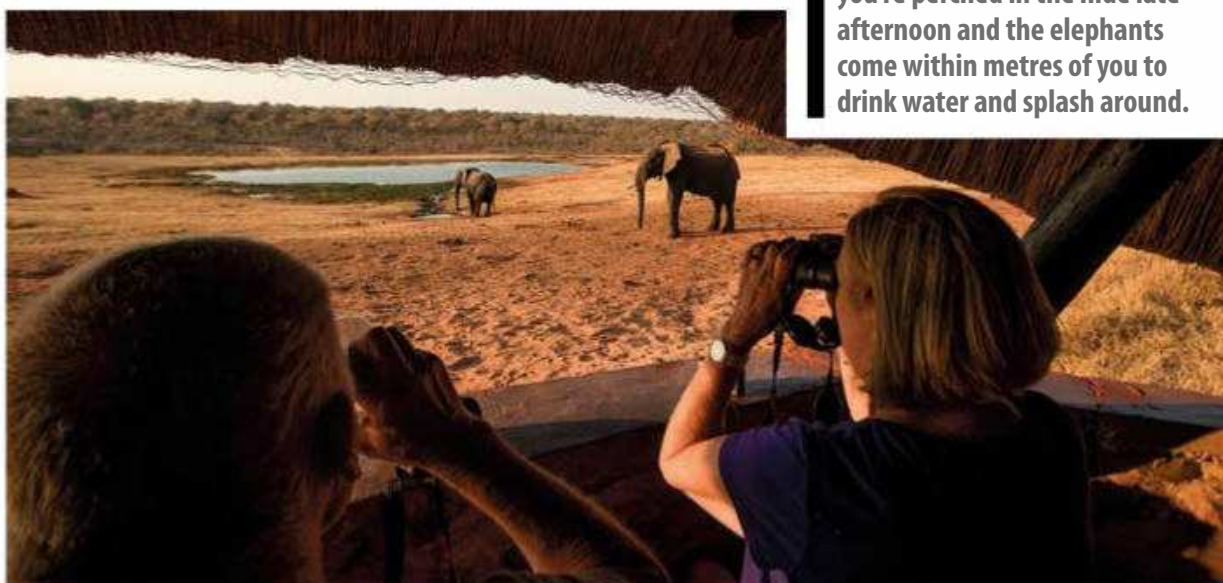
If you stay close to the main camp, head to the Makwa Pan early in the morning and do the circular route past the Kennedy picnic site, the Manga and Dopu waterholes, and end at Nyamandhlovu. Pack some food and charge your camera's batteries – you're going to be busy all day. During our visit, we encountered a pride of lions, gigantic elephants and beautiful giraffes in short intervals and even saw two crocodiles devouring an impala in the water.

We say our goodbyes the next morning with heavy hearts. Not only because this group of strangers now parts as friends, but also because, despite its reputation, Zimbabwe has stolen everyone's hearts.

Next time we read the horrid headlines, we'll know at least that there is a different Zimbabwe. And that's a place we'll soon visit again.



GREET THE BIG GUYS. Tuskers Camp near Hwange National Park is worthy of its name when you're perched in the hide late afternoon and the elephants come within metres of you to drink water and splash around.





Beautiful Botswana

Experience an 11-day adventure from the Botswana town of Lethlekane and end up at Kasane in the north, witnessing the magnificent Victoria Falls and the Chobe National Park along the way.



DAY 1

We meet in the town of Lethlekane where we refuel and supply everyone with two-way radios. Then it's off into the bush and onto the vast, flat expanse of the Makgadikgadi Pans for our first night on Kudu Island.

DAY 2

After breakfast and an informative meander around the island, we head north on a two-spool track along the edge of the empty salt pans, having a picnic lunch along the way. Our destination: a campsite outside Maun.

DAY 3

While restocking and refueling in Maun, there will be an opportunity, for those who choose to do so, to take a one-hour scenic flight over the Okavango Delta. This flight, however, is not an included activity. We then head west and north to our next campsite.

DAY 4

After a few long days of travelling, we take a well-deserved rest on the banks of the Okavango Delta. In the late afternoon, we take a guided boat cruise on the tranquil waterways.

DAY 5

We head north out of Botswana and into Namibia via the mystical Tsodilo Hills with their magnificent Bushman paintings.

DAY 6

Everyone has the opportunity to have a lie-in as you choose your own morning activities. The Bhejane activity for the day is a late-afternoon sundowner cruise on the mighty Okavango River.

DAY 7

We spend the day testing our game-viewing skills in the Mohango Game Reserve where a picnic lunch will be served at one of the many scenic stops. This section of Caprivi National Park has more than 300 bird species and boasts four of the Big Five.

DAY 8

We pack up and head back into Botswana via the Caprivi Strip to our next camp outside Kasane in Botswana, for our last three nights.

DAY 9

After breakfast, we head out on a bus trip, our destination the magnificent Victoria Falls.

DAY 10

Chobe National Park day – we enjoy a three-hour game drive on open safari vehicles in the morning and a three-hour boat cruise on the Chobe River into the park in the afternoon.

DAY 11

Sadly, after breakfast, we say goodbye and leave for home.

10-NIGHT / 11-DAY ADVENTURE (TENTED ACCOMMODATION)

DATES 13 – 23 April 2019 (WR&S)

18 – 28 June 2019 (WR&S)

9 – 19 August 2019 (WR&S)

9 – 19 September 2019 (WR&S)

TOUR PRICE: R 12 990.00 (ex vat) per person (children under 10 @ 50%)

THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- All camp fees, park entrance fees
- All advertised activities
- Bhejane Adventures provides all the tents, cutlery and crockery

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

- Your vehicle & fuel
- Your own mattresses and/or stretchers and sleeping bags and pillows
- Your own fold-up chairs
- Your own out-of-country / medical-emergency and evacuation insurance cover
- Your own border-crossing fees and road taxes

Yes, I want to go!

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

Soul searching

You may not find the meaning of life when you visit the Richtersveld.
But it's the kind of place that makes you want to try.

Text and photos **Dave Buchanan**





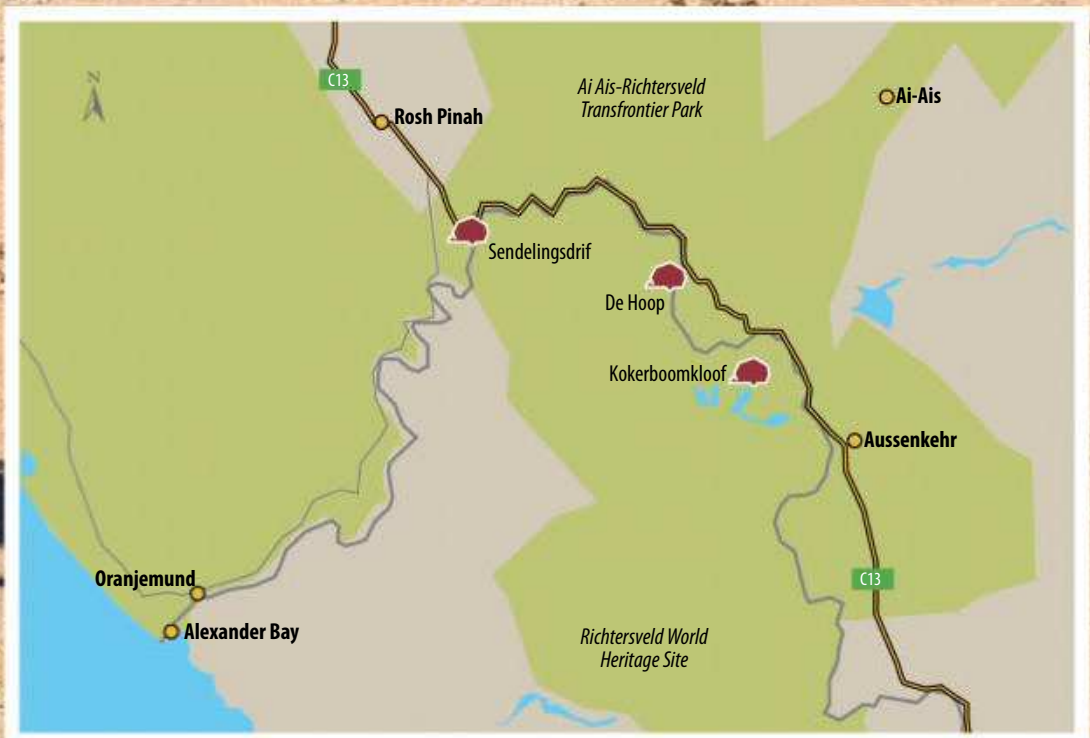
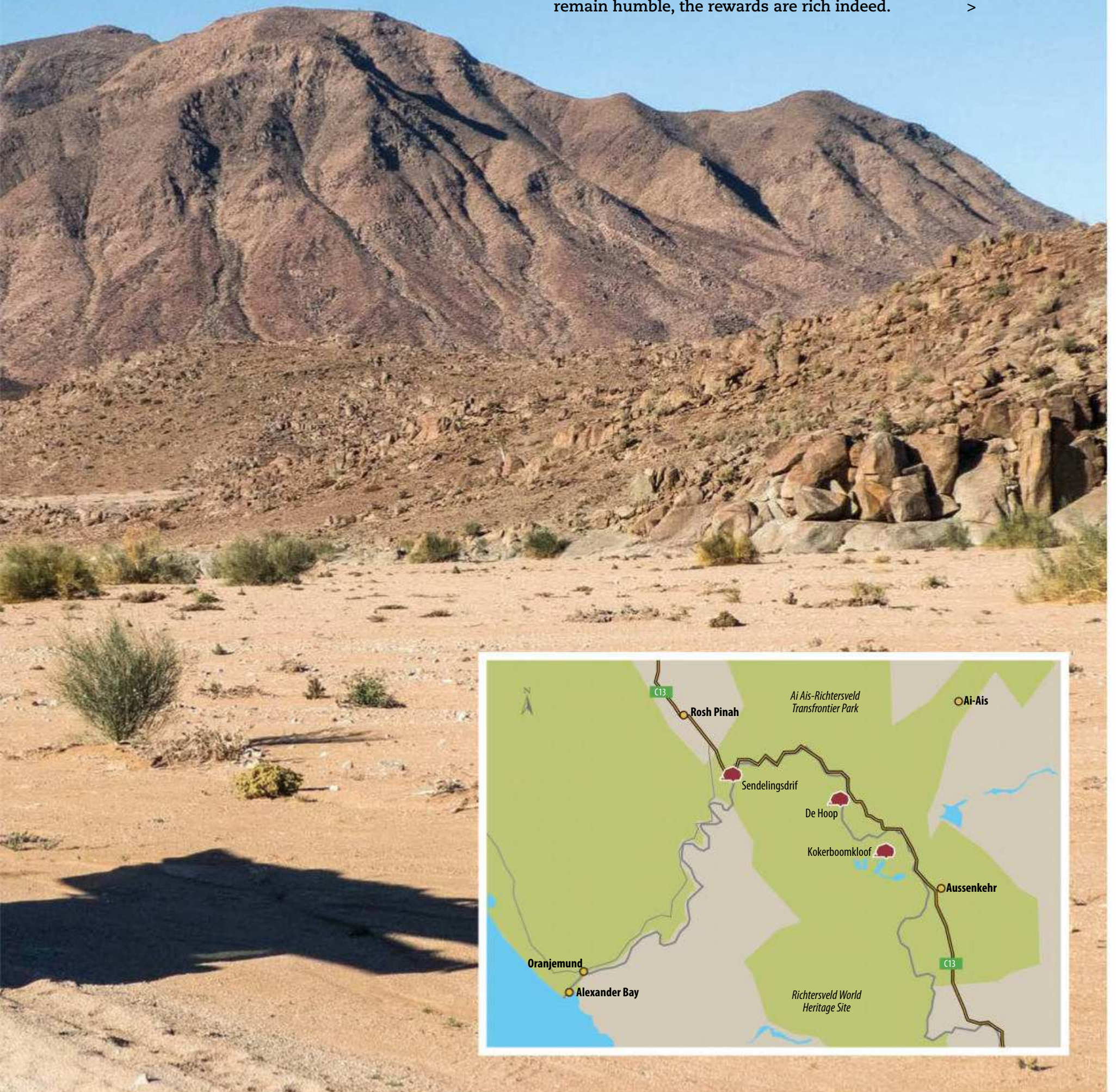
No hot water. No shops or electricity or ice or cell-phone reception. This place... it's not for everyone. The Richtersveld is far from anywhere – hundreds of kilometres by road from Springbok, the nearest significant town (and the Coke Float capital of South Africa). Which is itself in the middle of nowhere.

It's also difficult to access; once you've made it here,

you need a 4x4 and plenty of supplies to go any further – and, at times, steady nerves and a little faith.

And even when you've penetrated the heart of this ancient area, you may not be comfortable with its harsh, austere beauty: the gigantic rock formations, the blazing night sky... it's just so *big*. The weight of the place on the minds of its insignificant human visitors is immense.

No, the Richtersveld isn't for everyone. And that's how it should be. Because, for those who make the effort and remain humble, the rewards are rich indeed. >





QUIET LIFE. De Hoop offers peaceful camping by the winding Orange River, with only occasional visits from Genet Jackson and other neighbours.



DE HOOP Oasis in the desert

The 90 km road (mostly dirt) from Alexander Bay to the entrance of the Ai-Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park at Sendelingsdrif is wide, but badly corrugated in places. The 50-odd kilometres of dirt and double track from there to De Hoop campsite may actually be in better condition, overall; but take it slowly and enjoy the remarkable scenery unfolding before you.

Even the Akkedis Pass looks worse than it really is. You could do it in a Terios. We did. (To be fair, we had a Land Cruiser hovering in support, in case of disaster.



Just a 20-minute walk will take you to the top of the most prominent of the smaller hills, with staggering views of the river basin.



In remote areas – whatever your vehicle – company is no bad thing.)

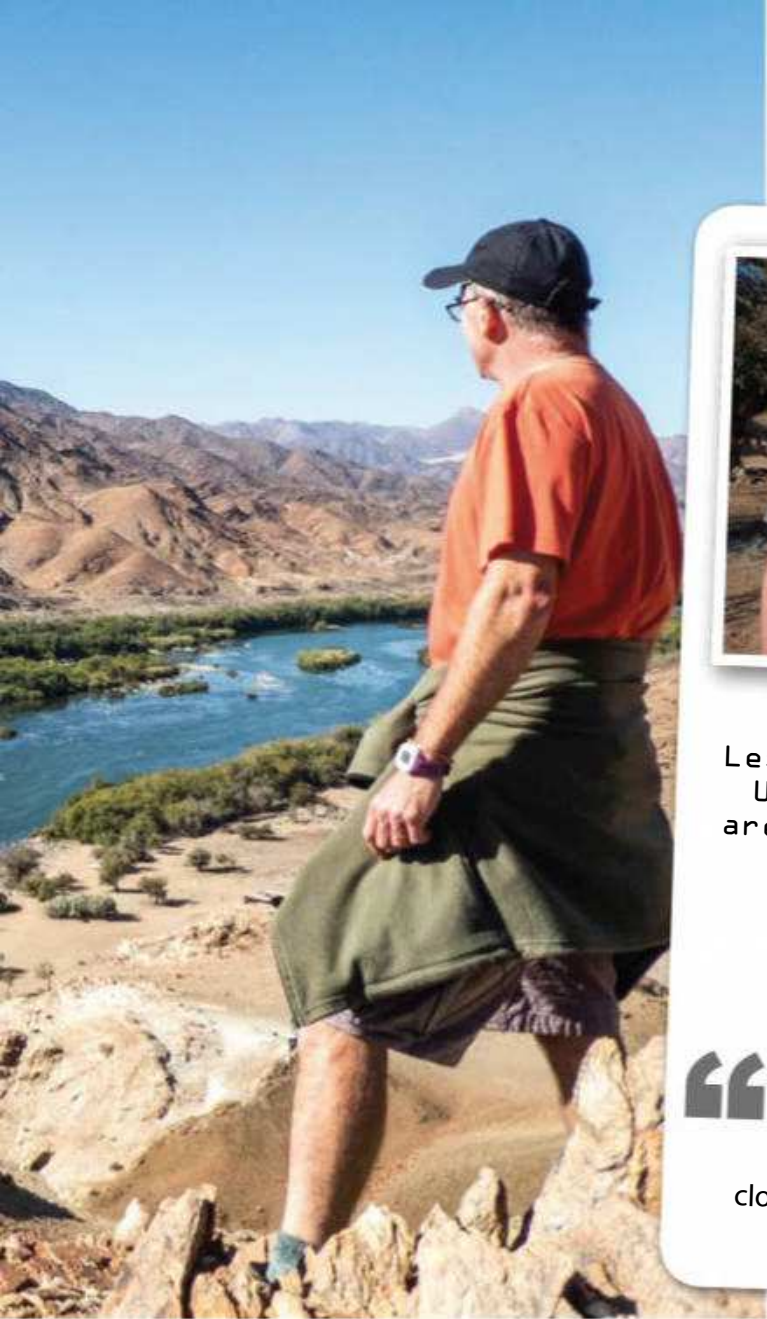
You can also get to De Hoop from the Richtersberg campsite to the south; though the road is not as good, with some touch-and-go sand patches.

But from Sendelingsdrif, you'll become accustomed to dusty kilometres of sand and huge boulders – until, like some sort of geological magic trick, the blue water and green trees of the Orange River appear – a shimmering oasis in a rocky desert. It's a welcome paradise.

As you enter, the campsite stretches out to the south. There are 12 stands over about a kilometre; or rather, SANParks accepts 12 bookings – they are not

demarcated, so you can settle down wherever you want. But most will try to find a spot with some trees for shade, even in winter, so your neighbours may end up closer than you might expect. It's not crowded, though. The warmer months are busier.

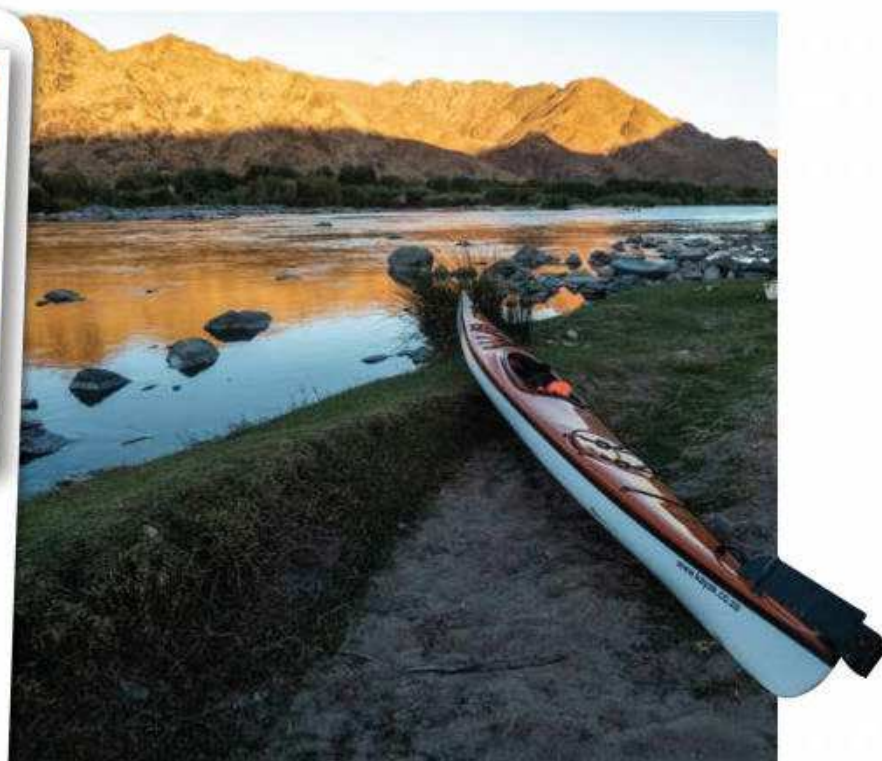
To get your choice of stand, get here around lunchtime, before the rush but after those leaving have left. There are a few purpose-built concrete fireplaces in various states of repair, but also plenty of less formal braai pits made from the abundant white river rocks – pick the most convenient one. In terms of sound, a set of rapids towards the southern end of the camp produces a constant but



Geoff Otterson and Lesley Underwood (of the Umhlanga Underwoods!) are on a meandering tour of southern Africa.

They say

“It’s beautiful here. There’s just no downside, unless it’s that your neighbours can be too close. But De Hoop has it all.”



SHOWER HOUR. After working up a sweat with a sunset paddle, you deserve a shower – but don’t expect your shower water to be much warmer than the river. The ablution facilities are in working order, but a little dilapidated.



muted white noise that effectively drowns out your neighbours. If you prefer silence, set up camp further north, though De Hoop is sufficiently popular that it won’t ever be completely quiet.

The night before our visit (in August) we camped near Springbok, in temperatures below zero and a howling gale that bent our tent over our icy faces; but De Hoop was mostly shorts-and-T-shirt weather, with another layer only necessary in the evenings and early mornings.

There are three wooden ablution blocks (and a new row of stonewalled showers and toilets that looks unfinished), each with a very basic men’s and ladies’ toilet, shower, washbasin and outside sink. Cold

water only, so we suggest showering in the afternoon, when the black pipes have been warmed a few degrees by the sun. In summer, a dip in the river will do.

The ablution blocks are fed by a tank on the hill above, which itself is filled by a pump that runs every afternoon when the sun hits the solar panel that drives it. In our block, the men’s toilet had a leak, resulting in a permanent puddle of water (we hoped) on the floor; the ladies’ toilet had to have the cistern lid removed to be flushed.

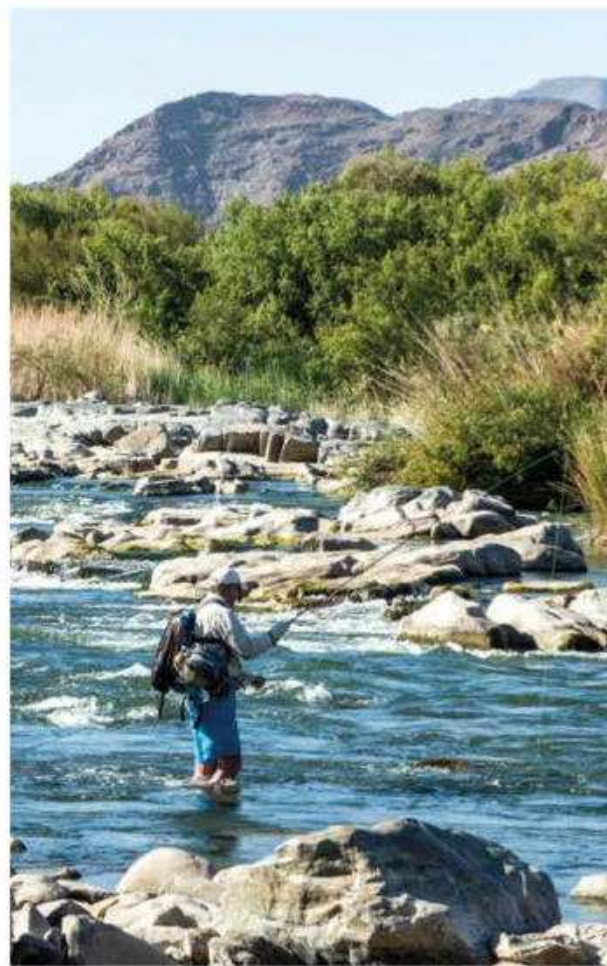
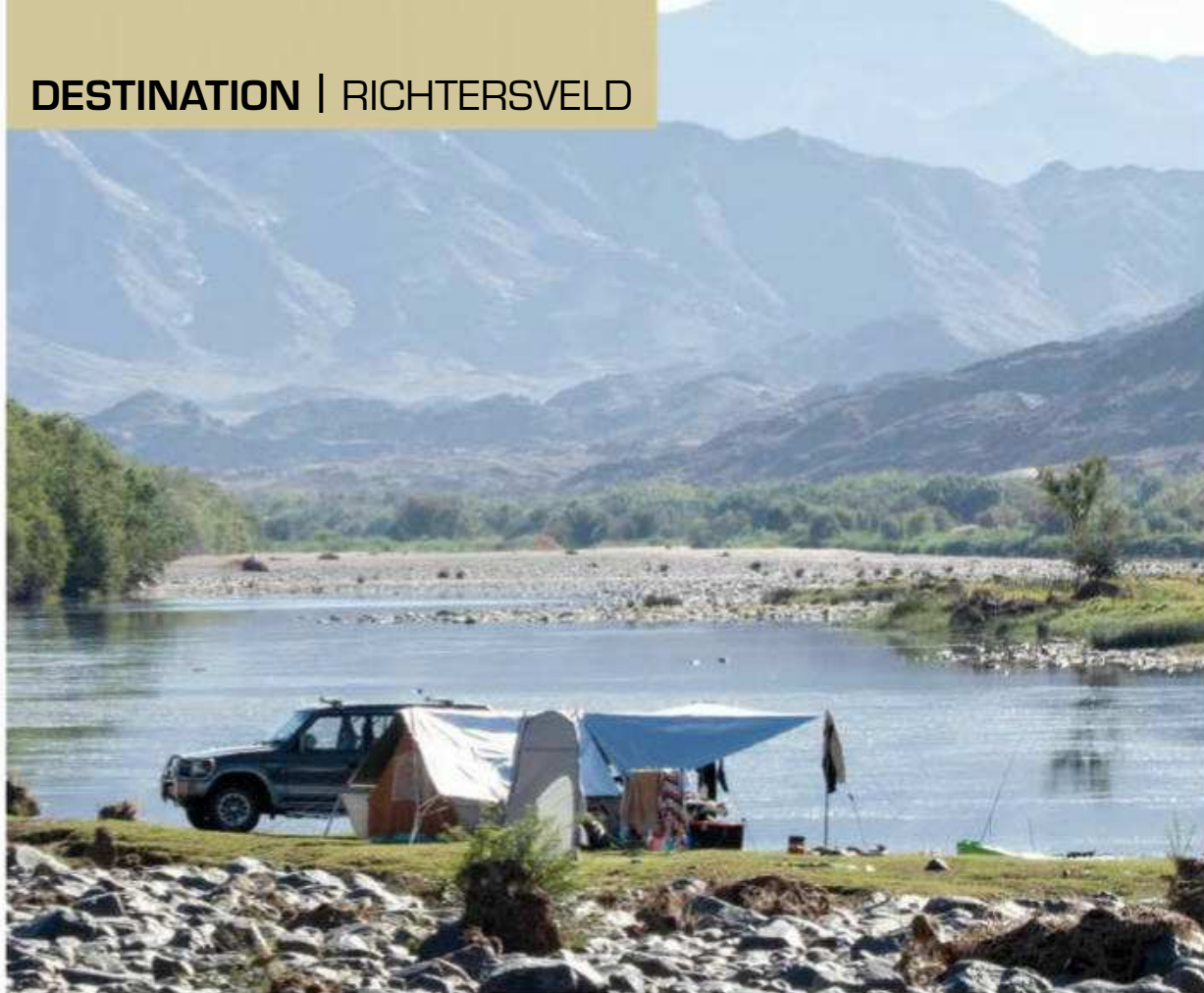
Get in the water

Running south to north, the mighty Orange River is calm and sluggish here,

making it ideal for water sports. Tubing is fun for children and adults alike, and the rapids provide a gentle thrill. Check the river level carefully though; if the rocks of the rapids are clearly visible, give it a miss – one of our party suffered a severe bruise.

There are two more sets of rapids further down river from the campsite, only to be attempted if the river is high enough.

Swimming is safe in front of the campsite, though you may need a wetsuit in winter. To feel like Ryk Neethling, jump in just after the rapids and swim with the flow about 700 m to the north end of the camp, where the river turns to the east. Then get out and walk back. >



FEAST OR FAMINE. Besides being a playground for watersport enthusiasts, the sparkling river is the lifeblood of the Richtersveld. Just a short walk away from its banks, the dry climate is obvious.

(To feel like Ryk Neethling in training, swim back against the flow.)

Canoeing or kayaking is ideal towards the southern end – launch from above the rapids and paddle upstream. Within minutes the noise of the rapids fades and you enter an eerie, almost silent world of islands and water fowl. A few strokes will take you to the other side of the river; to be an international traveller for a moment, step out of your canoe onto Namibian soil. Look out for rocks just under the surface, and masses of water weeds: digging your paddle into a clump of weeds can tip you off balance if you're a beginner.

And if the water's too cold for you, it's at least cold enough to chill your drinks.

Walk the berg

There are few paths, but the area is very walkable, whether along the river or on to higher ground. Just a 20-minute walk (steep but short) will take you to the top of the most prominent of the smaller hills behind the campsite, with staggering views of the river basin, from the mountains of Namibia to the north all the way to the sands of the

Springbokvlakte in the south. Tread carefully, as there's lots of loose shale and many scrabbly sections.

Keep your eyes open for birdlife (black eagles, herons, kingfishers, darters and weavers, to name a few) as well as klipspringer and other smaller mammals – possibly even a Cape otter, if you're lucky. We saw a troop of 41 baboons swimming across the Orange, an unusual sight, with the alpha male sitting on a rock in the middle of the river directing operations.

The baboons didn't bother us, but be sure to put away food and leftovers; a band of light-fingered vervets made several attempts to get between us and the remains of the previous night's braai.

For the same reason, we were visited two nights in a row by a genet, nicknamed 'Genet Jackson'. Possibly for its startled-looking eyes and slinky moves.

De Hoop is arguably the jewel in the crown of the park's campsites. Others, such as Kokerboomkloof, may be more dramatic, but De Hoop scores high on all counts: accessibility, variety, natural beauty and general awesomeness.

Briefly | De Hoop



Campsite 12 stands, unmarked, some with grass/shade. Plenty of braai spots.

Ablution facilities Basic. Some maintenance required. SANParks cleans up every few days.

Price R243–R624 per stand per night, depending on season and number of adults/children (6 max).

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am

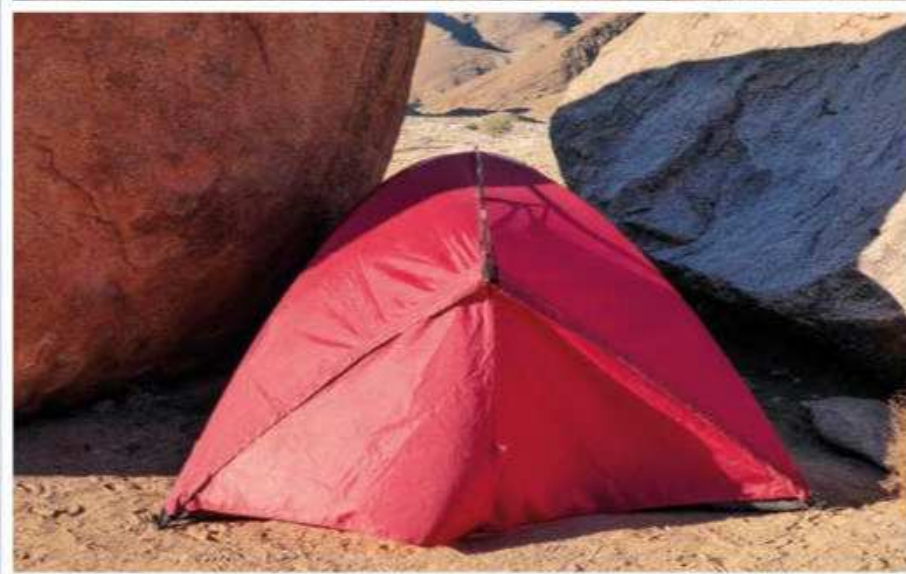
Contact 027 831 1506
RNPreservations@sanparks.org
sanparks.org/parks/richtersveld

Nearest town Alexander Bay 115 km (Sendelingsdrif 52km)

Road condition Corrugated dirt road, doubletrack, 4x4 only

GPS S28.183166 E17.178135

go! Drive & Camp says The noise of the rapids can be soothing or irritating – decide, and choose your site accordingly.



HARD ROCK. Don't bother looking for a patch of grass to pitch your tent – you won't find one. But your surroundings more than make up for the lack of camping comfort.

KOKERBOOMKLOOF Alien nation

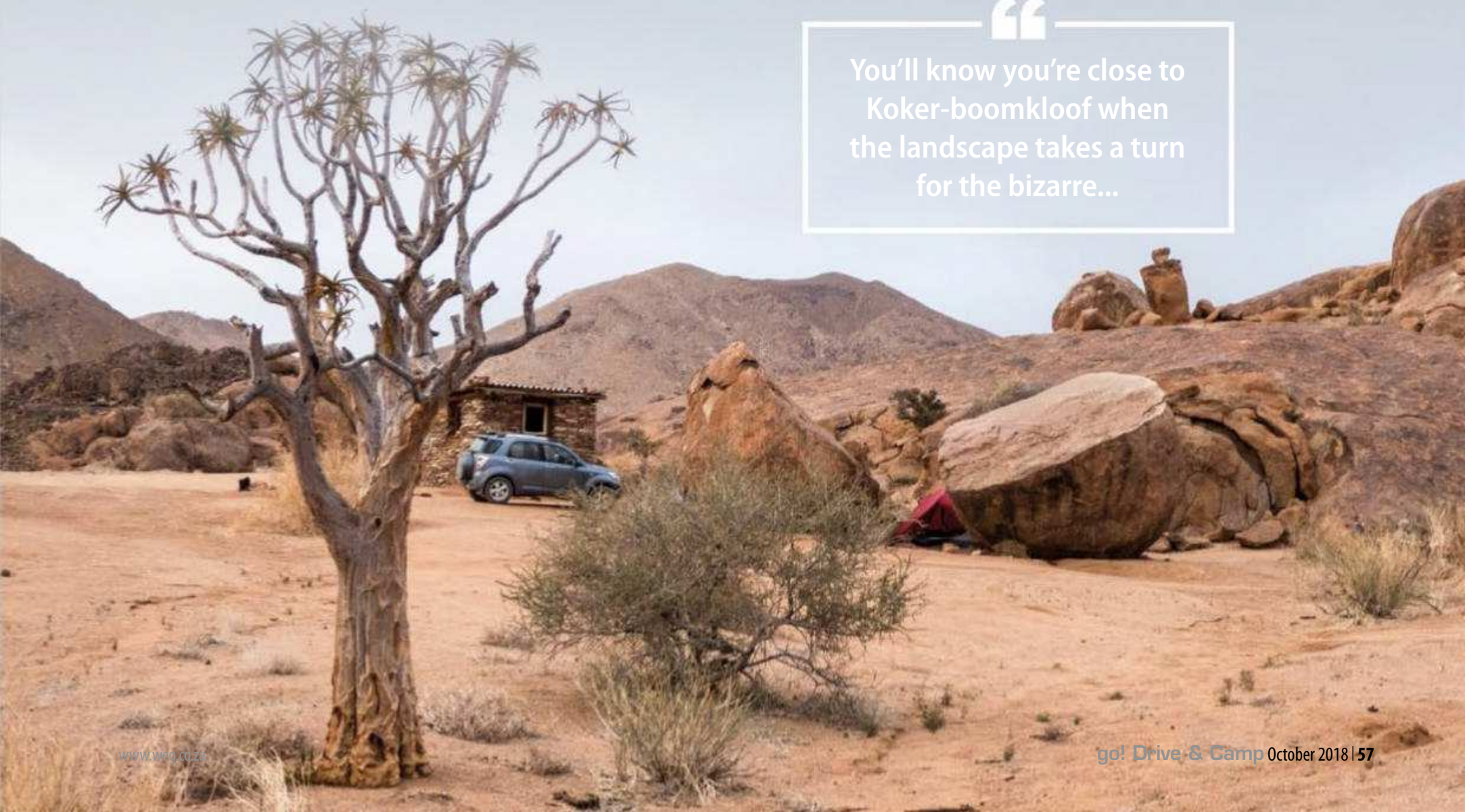
Leaving De Hoop on the south side takes you 8 km to Richtersberg campsite (a smaller version of De Hoop) and Tatasberg Wilderness Camp. Watch the road; it splits occasionally to avoid patches of sand. And if you choose incorrectly, keep the revs up.

A worthwhile detour is to follow the road past Tatasberg about 8 km to a dramatic amphitheatre of hills – photo opportunities abound. Don't make the mistake (as we did) of thinking the two viewpoints shown right next to each other on the SANParks map are connected; a millimetre of space on the map turns out to be a mountain range in real life.

Back at Richtersberg, check the signage properly (as we hadn't) and resign yourself to the long way around (34 km) to Kokerboomkloof. The road is in reasonable condition, besides a few nerve-wracking rock scrambles that will test your approach and departure angles, and widens at some points to become almost a gravel highway – with the inevitable corrugations every now and then.

You'll know you're close to Kokerboomkloof when the landscape takes a turn >

You'll know you're close to Koker-boomkloof when the landscape takes a turn for the bizarre...

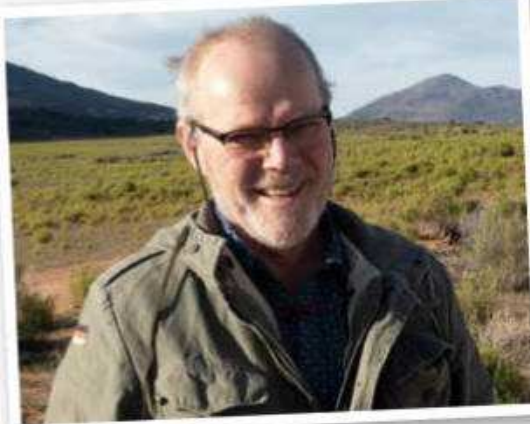


for the bizarre. About 15 km before the camp the road gets wider... and wider... and wider still, until you're driving on a vast, flat plain, expecting to see the ghost of Malcolm Campbell attempting the land-speed record in his Bluebird.

Once your vision clears and the road is back to normal, a single quiver tree signals that you're almost there. You'll veer right, past the Big Toe (a large rock outcrop – it makes sense when you see it) and down a winding valley about 3 km.

Giants' playground

Officially there are eight stands, but they're not demarcated. The four ablution blocks are signposted Site 4, then 3, 2 and 1 as you follow the road. Presumably the idea is for each to be used by two groups, but basically you pitch where you like. On our visit, there was only one other group there, so we had a choice of stands. Which was lucky, as two of the four ablutions had blocked toilets. Surprisingly, they also have a sink, washbasin and shower. You used to have to bring your own water; and clearly someone thinks you still



Richard Hyams from Riebeeck West was taking a slow drive back to the Western Cape – via Kamieskroon and Leliefontein as it was flower season.

They say

“ We've been coming to the Richtersveld since before it was a national park. Kokerboomkloof is a really interesting section to camp in for a couple of days – the scenery is amazing. ”

should, as none of the washbasins and showers had taps attached...

(Eventually, we found the source of the water: four giant 10 000-litre tanks, skilfully disguised by the equally giant rocks around them. Who knows how they're filled – a borehole somewhere?)

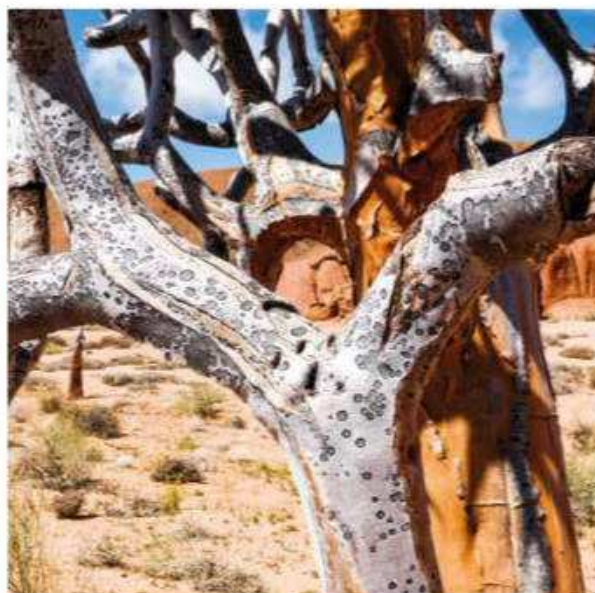
But each stand has its own attraction and, when you see the extraordinary scenery around you, the choice really doesn't matter. Pick the one with a working toilet; that's as good a reason as any. And those of a nervous disposition should avoid Site 3 – an enormous oblong boulder stands precariously on end, above the braai pit. Not to worry; it will probably be a thousand years before it topples. Then again, it might happen tomorrow.

Back to those sights. The scale of everything is humbling; the area is a playground for giants, huge boulders flung about like marbles. Everywhere you look, you're dwarfed – by colossal, deformed rock outcrops, by vast open plains. And at night, by the shimmering majesty of the Milky Way, that dense profusion of stars we don't even notice in



HOME COMFORTS. The reason behind the selection of braai areas becomes clear when the breeze changes direction – you may want to move around to take advantage of the sheltering rocks. Whichever stand you've chosen, a stroll in any direction gives you vistas worth seeing.





HOT WATER ALL DAY. Gas cylinder empty? No problem. Basically a kettle built around a chimney, the Sirram Volcano has been around for decades, has no moving parts, and runs on anything – twigs, leaves, dry grass (baked-bean-tin extension: model's own).



the city. Here, where the air is clear and people are few, it's a billowing cloud of light spilling over the night sky.

Not that you can always see it. The weather confused us – clear one minute, cloudy the next, a chilly breeze for 20 minutes from the north-west, then from the south, then perfect stillness for the rest of the evening. In this arid, desiccated semi-desert, one morning we had half an hour of light rain.

But for refugees from winter in the Western Cape, the daytime temperature was pleasantly warm; evenings and breezes required another layer.

And, when the wind is still and conversation slows... silence. Absolute cold yawning silence. It takes some getting used to.

Briefly | Kokerboomkloof



Campsite 8 stands, unmarked, sand and rock; shade from boulders. Rudimentary braai areas.

Ablution facilities 4 blocks, with cold water to a dish-washing sink and flush toilet.

Price R243–R624 per stand per night, depending on season and number of adults/children (6 max).

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am

Contact 027 831 1506
RNPreservations@sanparks.org
sanparks.org/parks/richtersveld

Nearest town Alexander Bay 131 km (Sendelingsdrif 80 km)

Road condition Corrugated dirt road, double track, 4x4 only

GPS S28.306342 E17.291425

go! Drive & Camp says Take your camera (with a wide-angle lens!); watch how the shadows change during the day for some special shots.

Sandblasted

Previous visitors have warned of plagues of gnats and sand fleas, but perhaps that's a summer phenomenon as we weren't particularly troubled.

Understandably, animal and bird life is sparse here, or appears to be; each ablution block sports the usual "Beware of baboons and monkeys" notice, but surely no baboon with half a brain would leave the overflowing plenty of the river for the monastic solitude of Kokerboomkloof.

Though, on the morning we left – a sparkling clear day, with views all the way to the mountains around Rosh Pinah, in Namibia – we spotted a trio of kudu near the Big Toe, who watched us cautiously as we drove slowly away from this strange and profound place.

Another note on the weather: prepare for anything. When we left Kokerboomkloof, it was a perfect winter's day, warm but not oppressive, not a breath of wind. By the time we'd done the 70-odd km (in two-and-a-half hours) back to Sendelingsdrif, we were lost in a howling sandstorm, gravel lashing onto our skin if we got out of our vehicles, visibility practically zero. If this happens to you and you have the choice, get off the road and sit it out. The Alexander Bay road is used by tankers and other large vehicles – you don't want one of those to have to stop in a hurry if the driver sees you too late.



MOD CONS. Among Sendelingsdrif's attractions are the pont, a unique way to cross SA's border with Namibia; and the indigenous nursery, which gives a taste of the area's diverse flora. Clean, tidy ablutions are not to be sneezed at either.



SENDELINGSDRIF

Jump start

On the face of it, Sendelingsdrif isn't particularly attractive. Thanks to the large SANParks building (on your left as you arrive) and other structures, it doesn't feel like wilderness at all despite its remote location.

But there are reasons to stay here. It's a starting point, a jumping-off place. It's the entrance to the park, and many choose to spend a night or so here before venturing into the wilder areas, to get an early start in the morning; and also, to consolidate their supplies and perhaps pick up odds and ends that have been forgotten – there is a small shop here that stocks very basic provisions.

There's also a filling station, so you can top up your tank or fill an emergency jerry can before setting off.

The campsite (down the road to your right as you arrive) is small but neat, and has probably the best ablution blocks we encountered on this trip – two of them, clean and functional, and attractively walled with latte.

Inexplicably, there's no view of the Orange River, which is only a two-minute walk away.

Briefly | Sendelingsdrif



Campsite 6 stands, sand, some shade.

Ablution facilities Neat, clean and working – it helps that the SANParks staff are based here.

Price R243–R624 per stand per night, depending on number of people (6 max).

Chalets R863–R1 024

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am

Contact 027 831 1506 RNPreservations@sanparks.org sanparks.org/parks/richtersveld

Nearest town Alexander Bay 92 km

Road condition 10 km tar, otherwise corrugated dirt road

GPS S28.123818 E16.890800

go! Drive & Camp says Remember that your Polo will get you to Sendelingsdrif but, to go any further, you need at least high clearance, and probably 4-wheel drive.



Johan and Desire Jordaan, from Paarl, had been travelling extensively in the park and were on their way north.

They say

“ We're on our way to Namibia tomorrow. This is a good place to stay overnight so we can get an early start. Our chalet has everything we need, and it's very peaceful by the river. ”

What does have frontage onto the river is a row of chalets (to your left, before the SANParks admin building) – drab but well-appointed corrugated iron cottages (with air-con, if the thought of summer sun on corrugated iron worries you). Not exactly camping; but if you're only staying for one night, a little luxury doesn't go amiss when the alternative is setting up camp in the evening and repacking the whole lot early next morning.

No borders

Sendelingsdrif is also a border post: a two-vehicle pont operates from 8 am to 4.15 pm daily (though it's best to phone ahead and check if you're in a hurry), ferrying travellers across the river to and from Namibia. Another reason to get an early start.

For those staying a while, watching the pont operate is an entertaining way to spend some time, and there's also a nursery run by SANParks to educate you on some of the unusual flora you'll probably come across in the Richtersveld.

Remember to take along your Wild card if you want to avoid the daily conservation fee (SA citizens R71 adults, R36 children), which adds up if you're in the park for more than a few days. If you don't have one, it may be worthwhile applying for one just for this trip; go to wildcard.co.za and do the maths. It takes months to arrive, so bring your proof of application with you – you may be asked for it in the park. 📄

OPENS
DECEMBER 2018

CAMP



Bitou Valley Bush Camp

designed by people, inspired by nature

Set in the heart of the Bitou Valley, near Plettenberg Bay, this biomimicry designed mobile camp offers a uniquely natural experience.



At this family getaway, all you need to do is relax and immerse yourself in the natural environment. This experience is enhanced by your accommodation in a luxury tent, sheltered amid an ancient forest.

Our locally sourced food is prepared and served alongside a meandering river. Enjoy a guided walk, paddle, cycle or birding adventure, or simply relax and recharge your soul in this beautiful corner of South Africa.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE RATE*

- Two healthy home-cooked meals per day
- A guided canoe trip on the river
- A guided coastal nature walk
- A guided experience in the indigenous Knysna Forest in our concession area of the Garden Route National Park
- The camp has its own mountain bikes and kayaks for your use
- A bird hide is situated near the

camp, perfect for sundowners and photography

The following optional extras are not included in the price, but a low-cost shuttle service is available.

- Outing to Plettenberg Bay and its beaches
- Keurbooms River ferry
- Surf and SUP lessons
- Bungee jumping off the Bloukrans Bridge

RATES

R1 980 per person per night sharing, including dinner and breakfast.

Kids under 10 pay half-price; single supplement costs 30% extra.

Early booking is recommended as this is an intimate camp.

**A minimum three-night stay is required.*

In association with



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NOW!**

YES, I WANT TO GO CAMPING!

To book call ☎ 044 535 9033; e-mail ✉ bookings@undercanvasevents.co.za



Passes, forests, mist....

Extend your booking ahead of time by a day or two, Merry Pebbles and the Sabie area have so much to offer, a weekend is hopelessly too short to do it all.

Text and photos **Helenus Kruger**

The Sabie area is synonymous with mountain passes, natural forests, fog and plantations. The village is nestled in a valley in the hills of Mpumalanga's Drakensberg. It doesn't matter from which direction you approach the town, you have to drive over some kind of pass to get there. And you are likely to get some mist, sometimes so thick that you can hardly see a few steps ahead and will have to progress at a snail's pace.

The Merry Pebbles caravan park is located next to the Sabie River at the end of the town (as you travel towards

Graskop). When you enter the resort, it's immediately clear that kids rule the roost here. Everywhere you look it's just bikes, trikes and push bikes.

But it also gets calm. In the middle of the day, the camp is empty as everyone decamps to explore the area with its many tourist attractions.

If you're lucky enough to camp along the river, you can sit next to the water with a book all day long, while the trout drift around just as quietly in the water.

Late afternoon things start stirring again... and you see smoke rising above the caravans as campfires are lit.

Choose your spot

Merry Pebble's 200 numbered stands are grouped into four blocks (A to D), with paved paths running between the blocks. The sites are, on average, 12 x 12 steps.

Block A is the furthest from the river and block D is the closest. The 20 riverside sites of block D are the most sought after in the camp and you'll need to arrive early to pitch your tent here – spots aren't pre-booked. The last five places in this row (the furthest from reception) are the largest and offer the most privacy. But you're a walk away from the bathrooms and, because the electric boxes are far



away, you'll need to remember an extra extension cord. In the rest of the camp, a 15 m cord will do.

The whole camp is covered in kikuyu grass, which is green even in winter. The camp is also tree-lined – in summer, the deciduous trees provide great shade, while the winter sun warms up your caravan when the trees have thrown off their leaves.

Stands share rubbish bins and the taps are along the three main roads that run through the camp parallel to the river. So, if you camp in the middle of the blocks, you'll be some distance from the nearest faucet.

Concrete storm-water pipes are planted in the soil and filled with sand to serve as braais, but there are no grids. Bring your own braai if you want to make a fire closer to your tent.

The camp lights are just off the streets; so, bring your headlamp if you're likely to take a shortcut to the bathroom after the sun goes down.

EARLY BIRDS GET THE WATER. Specific stands aren't booked in advance, and the ones along the river bank are arguably the pick of the bunch. To ensure you set up on one of these you'll have to arrive at the campsite nice and early.



Cleaning up

If there were a competition for the cleanest camping ablution facilities, Merry Pebbles would be able to lay claim on the trophy. The cleaning staff are on duty throughout the day until late at night, and the facilities shine from top to bottom.

The resort's three ablution blocks, one in block B and two in block C, are placed in the middle of the sites. Inside, all three are pretty much the same and equally clean. Water is heated with solar energy.

There are tiled floors and walls, mirrors above the sinks, coat hooks, hand soap, air dryers, power points and rubbish bins, and soap holders, benches and coat hooks in the showers.

The men and women's facilities are more or less mirror images of each other, with small differences such as an extra table top for the women.

Block B's ablution facilities look to be the newest of the three. This block has the largest common area with plenty of space. The four marble washbasins are part >





CLINICALLY CLEAN. The ablution facilities are neat and clean, and people in wheelchairs have also been accommodated. An early morning camp fire not only adds atmosphere to the stand, but also serves to chase away the last traces of winter chill.

of the countertop and you can easily imagine that you're in a luxury hotel. These are also the only facilities in the resort that are wheelchair friendly.

The other two ablution blocks are in block C, a few metres from each other. The larger one of the two is the oldest, but old doesn't mean cold, because it's just as neat as the others. There's only a small amount of space for movement and you take up one third of the width of the hallway when you wash your face at the sink. It's got 11 showers and eight toilets, but only four ordinary sinks.

Outside, on either side of the building are two spots where you can wash dishes, each with four sinks. The cassette toilets' emptying point is behind this building.

Next to the big ablution block, there's a separate building with open sides – here you'll find laundry sinks, washing lines, ironing boards and three more dish-washing sinks. There's a laundry room with automatic washing machines and tumble dryers in the main building next to the liquor store.

The third ablution block, which is also the closest to the river, looks like the one in block B but without the wheelchair-friendly bathroom.

Stuff to do

Merry Pebbles has an impressive list of activities that will have the kids almost as excited as when Santa Claus hands out presents. All activities start or happen in the vicinity of the main building at the entrance gate.

The cold-water pools are behind the main building, next to the playground. The two rectangular pools have a slide each, but don't expect too much. They're not very high or steep and the children slide slowly to the bottom. Very good for the little ones.

Next to the pool are the tennis courts

This is what it cost

(2 adults)

Fuel	50 ppm diesel @ 2.8 l/100 km and R15.50/l and 720 km (there and back)	R1 428.48
Toll gates	(there and back)	R366
Accommodation	(2 nights)	R600
Food	(2 people)	R1 436.76
Grand total		R3 831.24

(R100 deposit for a racket plus R20 per hour – and bring your own tennis balls) and a playground with a trampoline, two jungle gyms and a swing.

Not too far from here are the two warm-water pools where the water is heated to a comfortable 30 °C. These swimming pools are only open from 1 May to 31 August, between 9 am and 4.30 pm.

Next to the swimming pools is the outdoor chess and mini-golf courses (R50 deposit for the stick and ball plus R10 per hour).

At reception, there are four-wheeled bikes for making your way through the camp to rent (R100 deposit plus R50 for 30 minutes) and to the left of the office is the relaxation room where you can watch DStv, play pool (R50 deposit plus R5 per game) or see if you can master the video games on machines from the eighties (R2 per game). Inner tubes to float in on the river are available for purchase from reception.

You could also try to catch dinner. Fishing is free and, while you can keep the rainbow trout, you have to throw back the brown trout.

For those fit enough, there are a number of mountain bike trails that all start at the



Johan and Salóme Scheepers of Pretoria and their children, Mia (12) and Justin (14), brought along grandmother Ria Beukes for a camping weekend. They camp with a 2013 Gypsy Regal that gets towed with a 2017 Ford Ranger 3.2.

They say

“ The kids enjoyed the tennis court and heated pool. Mia was especially pleased when she saw the store selling ice cream! We like to camp on the grass and the view over the river towards the mountain is very beautiful. The ablution facilities are very tidy and always clean. ”



PEDAL, DIVE, CLIMB AND KICK. With the wide variety of activities here for children and adults, it's hard to imagine that anyone would easily get bored at Merry Pebbles.



camp gate. Remember to get your permit (R30 for 2 days) at the office, because you can't cycle on the trails in the forestry areas without it. You can also arrange at reception for an experienced bike guide that will show you the area.

The Loerie hiking trail (14 km) that starts at the gate, takes six hours to complete and you must also have a permit (R20 p.p.).

And, if all that isn't enough to keep the kids busy, they can pick up their phones and tablets: the resort has free Wi-Fi.

How can we help?

Merry Pebbles' camp shop, liquor store and restaurant are all in the main building at the entrance.

The camp shop is big and boasts a wide variety of groceries – those with a sweet tooth will be happy with all the different treats. You'll also find the three items that always tend to run out on a camping weekend: wood, firelighters and ice cream. Inside the store is an ATM where you can use most types of bank cards.

The restaurant has an à la carte menu with a variety of dishes. Confirm their open times at reception.

Explore the Sabie area

If you don't want to hang out in camp all day, you can explore the town and surroundings.

The Sabie Brewing Company in Main Street brews beer on the premises and you can try ones with interesting >





names, including Glynn's Gold, Cockney Liz and Wheelbarrow Weiss at R70 for seven beers (100ml each). Hungry? Then order something to eat here.

In the area around Sabie, less than an hour's drive from the town, you can pan for gold in the historic village of Pilgrim's Rest (36 km), explore caves at the Sudwala Caves (49 km), stand amazed at the view from God's Window (39 km) or descend 51 m with the Graskop Gorge Lift Co. and wander over suspended bridges and wooden paths to discover the forest below you.

For more information on these and all the other attractions and activities on offer in this beautiful part of South Africa, visit the Sabie Information Office where Heather Berry will send you in the right direction.

☎ 013 590 5452

✉ tourism@sabie-info.com



Briefly | Merry Pebbles caravan park



Campsite 200 stands with grass, trees and electricity.

Ablution facilities You'll battle to find anywhere cleaner.

Price Depending on the season, the tariffs differ between R140 p.p.n. (R70 for kids under 18; free for under-tuos) to R240 p.p.n. (R120 for under-18s; free for under-tuos).

Contact ☎ 013 764 2266, 013 764 1502 or 073 236 2088 ✉ merrypebbles.co.za
✉ info@merrypebbles.co.za

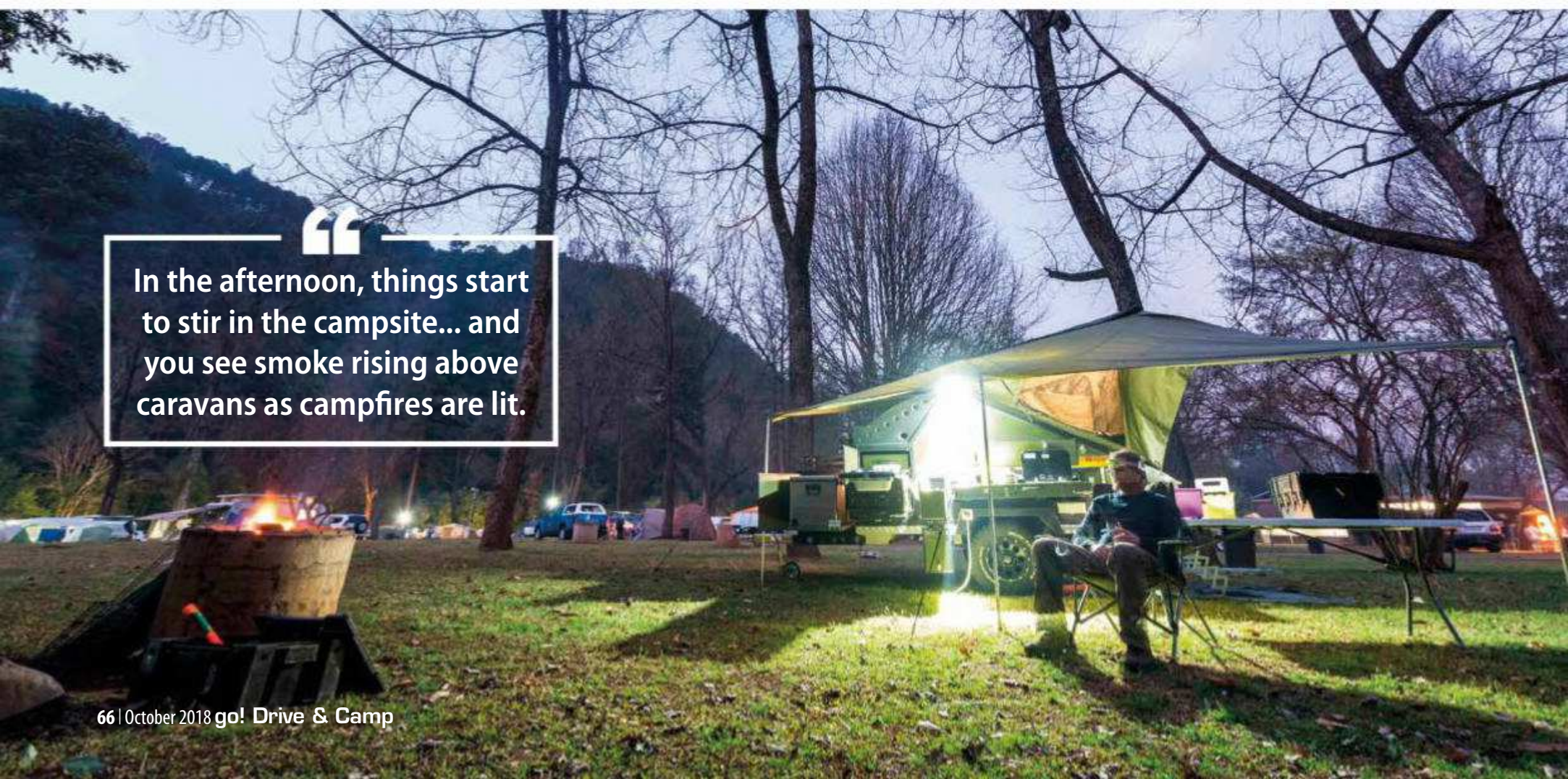
Arrival and departure times 8 am and 6.30 pm.

Road condition? The better road is from Pretoria on the N4 over Schoemans-kloof and the R539 to Sabie. This route is 10 km further and costs R176 more in toll fees than with the R540 and R37 over Dullstroom and Lydenburg. The road between those two villages is full of potholes – some are deep enough to cause major damage to your vehicle.

GPS S25.508568 E27.734466

go! Drive & Camp says Motorbikes and quad bikes aren't allowed. 🚫

“
In the afternoon, things start to stir in the campsite... and you see smoke rising above caravans as campfires are lit.



Weg!
Ry & Sleep

Cook like a Master Chef

Weg!
Ry & Sleep

Gooi kole
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Available on shelf now

On *Big Foot's* trail

The Knysna Forest is largely a protected area that can only be explored on foot. But if you don't feel like spending days concocting meals out of two-minute noodles and cans of bully beef, why not give one of three exclusive 4x4 routes in the area a try?

Text and photos: **Evan Naudé**

The forests of the Garden Route National Park are some of the oldest and most beautiful in the country, and they are rich in legends, myths, and stories about the forestry workers and miners who once competed with elephants in their struggle to survive.

Today, the forests are a protected area and they form one of the most popular holiday destinations in the country, but precious little of their terrain can be explored by 4x4. Fortunately the Honorary Rangers Wilderness Region opens three exclusive 4x4 routes

to the public once a year – in October – for a 4x4 family day. This gathering runs over two days, over the weekend of 6 and 7 October this year, and you can complete one route per day. The routes will all start at the Wilderness Common, Waterside Road, where a 4x4 expo will also run over the same weekend.

This is where you will meet your guide and, when your drive is over, there will be a lucky draw offering the chance to win prizes including gift vouchers, camping and 4x4 equipment, and accommodation in SANParks resorts. >





The Windmeulnek route takes you past Hoekwil, the Woodville Big Tree, and over three of the passes on the Seven Passes Road – Hoogtekraal, Karatara and Homtini. This was the main route between George and Knysna for more than 70 years, until the N2 was built in 1952.

From here, the route climbs the mountain, passing the Karatara forestry station to Corneliuskop, a high viewing point offering beautiful views.

From Corneliuskop, head further north to Windmeulnek, one of the hikers' huts on the Outeniqua hiking trail. Take the chance to stretch your legs here before the route takes you on a southeastern turn past the Platbos hut and eventually connects with the Seven Passes Road once more to take you back to Wilderness.

The Goldfields route also starts by taking the Seven Passes Road past Hoekwil and the Woodville Big Tree to Karatara, but bears east past the forestry station and over the Homtini River to Rheenendal. Here you will turn north to Diepwalle, one of the oldest and most beautiful parts of the Knysna Forest.

The route passes the Dalene Matthee memorial stone and it's worth your while to stop here to admire the surroundings that form the backdrop to her famous books.

In your mind's eye you will make out the shape of Oupoot the elephant among the majestic trees, and from somewhere deep in the forest, you might even imagine hearing the sound of Saul Barnard's axe.





“
In your mind's eye you will make out
the shape of Oupoot the elephant
among the majestic trees, and from
somewhere deep in the forest, you
might even imagine hearing the
sound of Saul Barnard's axe.



STUFF OF LEGEND. If you run into Fielia Komoeti, offer her a lift into town, because here in the forest it feels as if you're light years away from city life.

The route eventually reaches Millwood, where most of the gold-mining activity took place in the late nineteenth century.

The Voortrekker route runs northwards past the Bergplaas forestry station, over the Outeniqua mountains to the R62 between Uniondale and Oudtshoorn.

This historical ox-wagon route dates back to 1770 and can usually only be driven from north to south (you then begin at the Louvain guest farm – see go! Drive & Camp #9).

From the R62, you will follow the old Montagu Pass (first opened in 1848) back to Wilderness.



What you should know



4x4, low range, diff lock? You'll be okay in any 4x4 or soft roader with high clearance. Low range and diff lock won't be necessary.

Maximum number of vehicles 6 for Windmeulnek, 15 for the Voortrekker route and 20 for Jubilee Creek.

Do I get a map? Yes.

Will my vehicle get scratched? No, the route is nice and open.

Do I need a compressor? Not necessary.

Can we braai on the trail? Definitely not. This is a protected area and you are also not allowed to smoke on the trail.

Can I turn around halfway? Yes.

Will I see game? Look out for bushbuck, vervet monkeys, porcupines and leopards. This is the area where evidence of the Knysna elephants have been found – you might even see one!

Cellphone signal? Intermittent on the trail.

AROUND THE ROUTE

Best time to go? These routes are only open once a year – this year's dates are 6 and 7 October.

Take my family? Yes, but dogs aren't allowed.

Just for a day or make a weekend of it? Each route takes between 4½ and 6 hours, so set aside a weekend if you have to travel far to get to Wilderness.

Ablution facilities? Toilets are available at some of the rest stops on the trail.

Directions Everyone participating in the 4x4 day meets at the Wilderness Common and leaves in convoy between 8.30 and 9.30 am.

GPS S33.993109 E22.578004

Cost? R500 per vehicle per route.

This does not include the SANParks conservation fee or the cost of accommodation.

Contact 082 550 2075 (Derek Oldfield)

oldfield@mighty.co.za





Karoo calling

Always on the lookout to explore a new part of the country, **Peter Field** from Saldanha Bay is no stranger to camping. He recently explored the Klein Karoo with friends.

“ We set out in my trusty 2013 Land Rover Defender towing a Bush Lapa Boskriek, and met our friends at De Vlei Farmstall on the R46 near Hermon, where we had a wonderful breakfast before setting out for the Ceres valley. Coming down from Mitchell’s Pass at the western entrance to the town, we passed through the town and continued toward the N1 and then off it in the direction of Touws River.

We camped at Gecko Rock, Anysberg Nature Reserve, Mavuradonha, Die Hel, Ebb & Flow, Eagle Falls and Kleinplaas on the outskirts of Oudtshoorn.

Tell us more about Kleinplaas

The staff here are very friendly. The resort is well kept and is neat at all times. There are plenty of shade trees and electricity points, and each stand has its own tap and bin.

The stands are generously sized. They are, in fact, more than big enough.

Where did you hear about it?

As moderator on both the My Camping



Sites and Off the Beaten Track Facebook pages, which collectively have more than 30 000 members, there are always interesting places suggested and recommended on those groups.

Most of my camping ideas come from Facebook, but I also use Tracks4Africa to find new places to drive to and camp as well.

What does it cost to camp there?

It's R360 per campsite for up to four people.

What other sort of accommodation is available there?

There are different-sized chalets that sleep four, five or six people, as well as two-bedroom chalets available with en-suite



bathrooms. The chalets also have their own carports and braai areas.

Are the ablution facilities in the campsite up to scratch?

The ablutions were revamped in February this year and are therefore quite modern. When we visited, they were sparkling clean, and there was never any shortage of hot water. There's also an on-site laundry with tumble dryers and lines for hanging your clothes if you prefer that method. There's also a designated point to empty your porta-potti.

What about supplies?

Because Kleinplaas is basically within the town's borders, everything from shops, restaurants, ATMs and fuel is a stone's throw away.

I can particularly recommend the potato and sweet-potato cakes from the Swartberg Country Manor, which is only about 30 minutes down the road.

How do you keep yourself entertained?

The Cango Caves are a mere 25-minutes drive away and are definitely a must-see for the uninitiated. There's also the Cango Wildlife Ranch two minutes down the road where you can get up close and personal with some of iconic wildlife – imagine stroking a cheetah or even cage diving with crocodiles.



WIN

Peter wins a **Camp Cover Bundu Bag** worth R500.

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

campcover.co.za.



Contact 044 272 5811

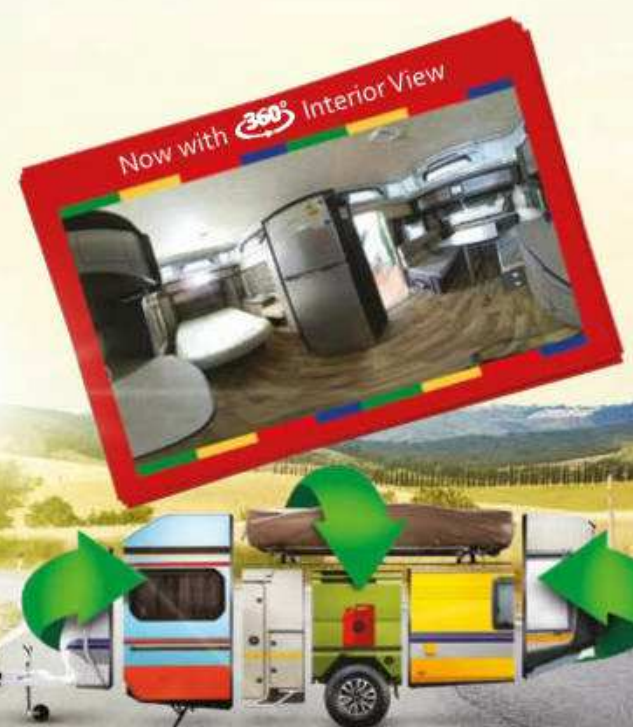
kleinpls@mweb.co.za

kleinplaas.co.za

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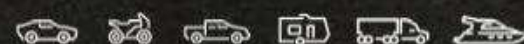
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Fishing on the Vaal

Loch Ness may have its monster, but in the Vaal Dam you could snare a different kind of beast on your hook: a 20 kg barbel!



FISHING RESORT

BOSCHKOP RESORT

Camping carp side

With its shoreline of more than 800 km, the Vaal Dam is one of the largest dams in the country. About 4 km belong to the Boschkop Uys farm where they've set up a spot for you to park your caravan next to the fishing waters.

The campsite on the farm is known as Boschkop Resort and is situated on the north side of the dam. The owners don't take bookings and you can't book a specific stand as they're are not demarcated.

Because the water level changes throughout the year, there are no power points or permanent braai areas. You may, however, bring your own generator if you need 220 V power on your stand. There are gumtrees on about half of the

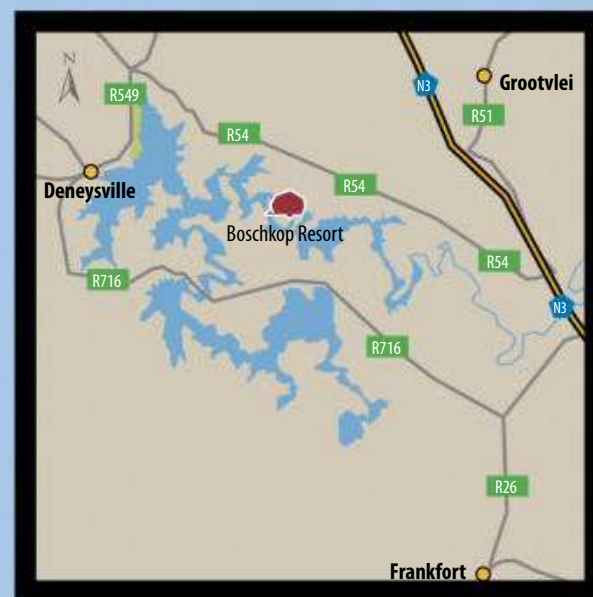
site along the shore, but even they may be in the water depending on the dam level. The surface of the stands varies between grass and gravel.

The bathrooms have hot water and Boschkop's shop sells basic groceries – everything from ice cream and wood to braai packs. The shopkeepers also sell fishing gear and there's a liquor store next door.

Carp is right at the top of the species list, but you could also find large- and smallmouth yellowfish and mudfish on your hook.

There are also black bass and kurpers but, if you know anything about the Vaal Dam, you'll know a stroke of luck is required to catch these rare guys.

The largest barbel caught in Boschkop's water weighed 23 kg and



the official record for a carp is 7,6 kg.

Boats and jet skis are forbidden, but you may use your canoe, bait boat or a small boat with an engine of no more than 15 hp.



Briefly | Boschkop Resort



Fish Carp, large- and smallmouth yellowfish, mudfish, barbel, black bass, kurper.

Camp site An open piece of land on the shore of the Vaal Dam where you camp on grass or gravel.

Ablution facilities The bathrooms have baths, showers, toilets and hot water. Prices R50 p.n. plus R20 p.p.p.n. (R30 and R20 for pensioners and kids 6-18 years; under six stay free). You also pay a once-off R20 per vehicle.

Gate times Sundays-Thursdays 6 am-5 pm. Fridays, public holidays and the day before public holidays 6 am-7 pm.

Contact 076 959 1242 info@

boschkopoord.co.za boschkopoord.co.za

What's the road like? The last 2 km is a neat gravel road that's regularly scraped.

GPS S26.925400 E28.310051

go! Drive & Camp says Bring your garlic and white-claw flavours – a carp won't easily swim past those.





FISHING GEAR

Catching fish with straws

The Japanese are famous for their origami, but who would ever have thought you could “fold” a drinking straw to make a fishing lure?

Discarded drinking straws are some of the great culprits responsible for water pollution, and catching a fish with one sounds almost too good to be true.

On many YouTube videos, experts show how they shred, bend, knot and paste a simple straw until it looks like a real shrimp. Judging by the more than a million views, enthusiasm for this trick keeps growing.

The only prerequisite for making your own straw shrimp is that you use one of those flexible models with the bellows section near the top.

Then it's a snip with a pair of scissors, some squeezing, bending and some more squeezing... the straw even gets two pins for eyes, and then the “body” is stuffed with white and orange wool to make it look like the real deal.

Thread the hook through the body and your lure is ready.

* **Check out the video** at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7ID-J7Y5T4>.



FISH DISH

Recipe Mariëtte Crafford Photo Ruvan Boshoff

MUSSELS IN HERBS AND WINE Shell out some mussels

You could use tinned or frozen mussels, but fresh mussels are by far the best.

You need

- 1.5 kg fresh black mussels, cleaned, but still in the shell
- 1 cup white wine
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- ½ cup good white or balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon paprika or some chilli sauce
- zest of 1 lemon

Here's how

1 Cook the mussels for 5 minutes in the wine. Then

discard those that haven't opened.

2 Add the garlic and parsley, and boil for a further 3-5 minutes until the flavours have mingled.

3 Remove the pot from the heat, remove the mussels (in their shells) with a slotted spoon and set aside.

4 Add the vinegar, paprika and zest to the sauce, stir well, add in the mussels and allow to marinate for 2 hours.

5 Serve it cold or hot with crackers or a light salad.

go! Drive & Camp says Give the dish even more body and serve it with pasta or with slices of freshly baked bread.

Stranded in Kaokoland

Tackling the infamous Van Zyl's Pass for the first time creates more than its fair share of stress, but that was only the start of a disastrous trip to Kaokoland for Gallie and Liz van Rensburg from Vaaloewer.

When the Van Rensburgs, part of a convoy of three cars, reached the foot of the renowned Van Zyl's Pass, their levels of excitement and tension were sky high.

They had decided to take on that part of Namibia in Little Suzie, their 15-year-old Isuzu KB280 and a trailer. With them were their friends Hennie and Brenda Beukes from Vaaloewer in a Toyota Hilux 3.0 (double cab) and Johan and Janet Borman from Rustenburg in their 3.0 D-4D Fortuner.

Little did they know they were about to encounter major drama.

Gallie tells us what happened on that fateful trip...

Conquering Van Zyl's

“ We finally reach the beginning of Van Zyl's Pass where Hennie and Brenda offer to take the lead. Johan and I walk ahead to determine the safest line between the stones and rocks, and the Hilux gets through without any difficulty.

Johan and Janet are next and, because their Fortuner is the newest model of the three and therefore equipped with state-of-the-art technology, they get down pretty effortlessly and without any real difficulty.

Then it's our turn. There are four of us in Little Suzie. My wife, Liz, my daughter, Lindie, Oscar the dog and me. With that trailer on the back of

the Isuzu, which has itself seen better days, I almost feel as if I'm driving a tank. In places, I only have three wheels touching the earth and I can easily imagine overturning the vehicle if I make even the smallest movement in my seat. But we finally make it, and an hour or two later, we all successfully make it down the pass.

We enter Kaokoland with relief and camp in the dunes in the Hartmann's Valley where foxes roam. From here, we travel through the Marienfluss and visit the green drum, the orange drum and the blue drum.

On the way to the red drum, we pass an old green hand water pump and I contemplate stopping to see if it

actually pumps water, but decide against it as I don't want to hold everyone up.

Oh no!

At one stage, we drive through a dry riverbed. As we exit the riverbed, our bakkie slumps to the right... and the next moment we come to a standstill.

We investigate and see one of the U-bolts holding the rear axle to the coil spring on the right-hand side has fallen off, while the other one is clinging onto the spring, but very distorted.

The situation is very clear at a glance: we're stranded as we don't have two U-bolts or the tools to fix it. We also don't have a satellite phone and therefore there's no way to call for help. We decide to send Hennie and Johan ahead to ask for help at the nearest town.

They get to a petrol station and towing service at Kamanjab, but these guys want R40 000 in cash before they lift a finger. At Opuwu, they find an alternative, but they want R15 000 to come to us to fix the bakkie. Johan decides to accept this quote, but as he only has R4 000 cash with him, he puts it down as a deposit.

The owner confirms they have a 4x4 vehicle, a GPS device and a satellite phone, and that they'll find us with our GPS coordinates. Our friends leave, believing we'll join them again within the next day or two.

Shortly before we left South Africa, I had an awning fitted to Little Suzie and now, stranded in Kaokoland, I am so grateful for that. Our food supply is

sufficient, but I'm a little worried about our water situation. In this oppressive heat, we only have enough for three, maybe four days. Fortunately, the solar panels provide electricity to keep the freezer and lights running.

I go for a walk in the surrounding mountains and dry riverbeds and come to the conclusion that lions and leopards roam the area. So, we need to be careful. Especially Lindie and Oscar, who go for a run every morning.

Finding the culprit

It was evening and it was morning. The second day.

I wake up with new resolve. I want to look at the problem, but I also want to convince Lindie not to go for a run. She does, however, and heads to the dry riverbed with Oscar. At least she's carrying a stun gun for protection.

About half an hour later, she's back, her eyes as big as saucers. She goes to show me to me the tracks a leopard and her cub left as they walked past – it's barely 100 m from our campsite.

In the meantime, I get under Little Suzie to investigate. And then I see what's wrong: the previous owner added two extra leaf springs, but the installer didn't use longer U-bolts to hold it together. This means that he has only secured 60% of the nut's length and it makes me mad. Especially as I had the bakkie checked at a well-known national service centre before setting off, and they assured me they had checked every single screw and nut. >



TILL HERE AND NO FURTHER. The previous owner had two additional leaf springs fitted to the KB, but whoever installed it had failed to properly secure it with longer U-bolts.



I go for a walk in the surrounding mountains and dry riverbeds and come to the conclusion that lions and leopards roam the area.



Time to make a plan

It was evening and it was morning. The third day.

Lindie went running again. I decide to concentrate today on finding something I can do with my 10 thumbs to save us from this dilemma. I walk back the way we came to the water hand pump. I can see there are two U-bolts holding the steel pipe to the pump. I take them off to see if I can devise a plan to use them.

I use Little Suzie's tow bar to bend the U-bolts so that they fit on the axle, but then a big problem halts my progress.

The shaft has turned sideways and the coil spring looks about ready to jump out. If I fiddle with it and try fixing it with some wire and something goes wrong, somebody could get badly hurt. Because I have to crawl under the vehicle to get close enough, it means I could lose a finger or even a hand should the coil fly out. And then I'm not even talking about the possible damage to my face. I would still take the chance, but there's no way I'd take a gamble with my wife and daughter's safety.

We will just have to endure the heat and stress for a bit longer. But we keep believing our rescue is imminent.

"They're here!"

It was evening and it was morning. The fourth day.

I get up early and look at the problem again and climb the mountain to look for a piece of wire that might inspire me to have another go at the problem (without alerting the women). But I don't find anything.

I also see a plane flying high above us and suspect they might have launched a rescue effort to search for us. I wave at the plane, but I don't get any response.

Our water supply is getting very low, and the ants and insects do everything in their power to steal Oscar's drinking water and food. We sit on the wheel and spare wheel of the bakkie to steer clear of scorpions and insects.

I think of an article I read about someone who was in the same situation in the desert. Fortunately, he had a satellite phone and could arrange for someone to drop the spare part from a plane. That could have worked for us, but hey.

Lindie climbs back up the mountain in the afternoon and suddenly her screams



STRANDED. After getting stuck with their Isuzu KB, the Van Rensburgs waited for help for more than four days in Kaokoland. Out of desperation, Gallie removed the U-bolts from a nearby water pump with the hope that he could use them for the repair, but his plan was unsuccessful. Eventually, their friends showed up with spare parts and the right tools.



echo: "They're here! They're here! "

We all run up the mountain and, a short while later, a Land Rover stops with two Dutch teachers asking if they can help. We tell them about our dilemma and they decide to set up camp about 50 m from us until help arrives. We give them true South African food and wine, and their presence allows us to relax for a little while before we turn in for the night.

To our rescue

At 1 am, sudden light blinds us as we lie in Little Suzie. Lindie's jubilant voice wakes up the entire Kaokoland. "They're here!"

We welcome Johan and Janet in our

pyjamas. They're exhausted and don't even want coffee. They just recline their seats and say they'll see us at six o'clock.

Early morning, we wake them up with coffee and rusks. The Dutch also join us to share in our happiness.

Johan brought spare parts and tools, and we get to work. Two hours later, Little Suzie is ready for the road.

Johan and Janet tell us that when they still hadn't heard from the towing service's owner after four days, they drove back to hear what was happening. The owner told them he couldn't locate us and that we were no longer in the same place. What a bunch of rubbish!



Gallie and Liz wins a **Camp Cover** Bundubag worth R500. This multifunctional bag is designed to be used as an emergency medical supplies bag or simply a suitcase. Go check Camp Cover's full range of protective covers on their website. campcover.co.za



WIN



I bend the water-pump's U-bolts back into shape and put them back. So, if you drive past there, think of us. I was also afraid the Namibian police would come looking for me if I didn't return them.

We go to confront the towing service's owner. I was pretty hot under the collar as this man put my family's life at risk. He did not want to admit to anything however and, as all his staff were present, we were in the minority and I have to give up the deposit and leave. He doesn't have a 4x4 vehicle, satellite phone or a GPS. He simply stole our money.

Nevertheless, we learnt an important lesson with this experience. Even if you have more than two vehicles on such a remote trip, it's still important to take a satellite phone so you can communicate with the outside world.

We are so grateful for friends like Johan and Janet. They didn't let anything stop them from coming to our rescue – and travelled alone through those mountain passes at night. Nobody could ask for better friends.



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(3m x 3m x
2.25m high,
3 windows)

R5,550.00



Safari Hennie
(2.4m x 2.4m x 1.85m high,
2 windows)

R4,260.00



Pop Up Gazebo
3m x 3m – R1995.00
(see picture attached)

R1995.00

A boxer with a

The types of station wagons for sale in South Africa can be counted on one hand. And this is where Subaru's Outback occupies a solid place in front of a caravan.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**



SUBARU OUTBACK 3.6 R-S

knockout punch

Subaru became a household name in the 1990s as a result of its success in rallies back then. The manufacturer is equally famous for its iconic boxer engines, although they don't own this technology that dates back to the 19th century. a boxer engine is the so-called "flat engine" with the pistons moving in a horizontal line as well as in opposite directions.

Equally iconic vehicles, such as the Volkswagen Beetle, Ferrari Testarossa and Porsche 911 came out with a boxer engine. One of the major advantages of this type of engine is the low gravitational point compared to conventional engines, which improves road handling.

That's all good and well, but you don't want to drive at 140 km/h on a narrow dirt road through a pine plantation, while the family and the caravan hold on for dear life.

The Outback also has a much softer side to get you and your caravan to your destination without much effort.

An arm wrestle between the two brothers

You can choose between two Outback models and they are identical except for their engine choices. Subaru doesn't hold back with the latest technology, and the default options make the Outback a car where everything can open and close. From the boot's door that electrically opens and closes to the lane assist, blind-spot sensors, up to three lenses watching what's happening in the front, back and left of the Outback.

The 2,5 l engine has four cylinders and the 3,6 l has six, and we hitched a caravan to the latter for the test. The tow-load limitation Subaru places on the two models also matches the different engine sizes. The 2,5 l can tow a load of up to 1,5 t and the larger one 1,8 t. The permitted nose weights are 10% of the tow-load limit – 150 kg and 180 kg respectively.

If you only look at the numbers, the engine sizes differ just over a third but, for a mere 10% more in price, it's definitely worthwhile considering the larger model. This means a further R67 000 >





Pieter Crous
admits, when it comes
to towing, he has a high
opinion of Subaru.

Pieter says

“As you pull away, you can feel all the power, but it's as if the CVT gearbox keeps control and doesn't give it all at once. It pulls off well, but it's definitely not that pressed-back-into-the-seat feeling.

Even though the gearbox works sparingly with the power, it's still alert and reacts immediately as you step on the accelerator. The gear change is just as smooth as the double-clutch gearboxes you get in a Volkswagen, for example. On the contrary, it feels more awake and I suspect smart software plays a major role behind the scenes. Even if the CVT gearbox is in its automatic mode, you can still control the gears. If you leave it for a while, it switches back to automatic mode.

When you switch to manual mode, you can, of course, choose the gears yourself, but the computer won't allow you to use too high a gear if you're driving too slowly.

The engine is more than strong enough to tow even the biggest caravan on our roads, and this correlates with its ample 1 700 kg tare weight. You don't even feel the Surfer caravan behind you.

The six-cylinder is silent, and in a way Subaru is in a class of its own. See, for example, all the information you see on the instrument panel. On the navigation screen, you can even see, with the aid of a graph, how far down you press the accelerator. It reads in percentage intervals and it's the first time I see such a reading in a vehicle. Between the two analogue meters right in front

added to the smaller model's R550 000, but you get it back with interest if you look at the huge difference in the power of the two engines. With the 2,5 l's 235 Nm, you might struggle here and there towing bigger caravans, whereas the bigger engine's 350 Nm is up for the challenge posed by most caravans. You'd think the 3,6 l engine has a large appetite but, with its 6 km/l while towing a caravan weighing a tonne, you can't really complain, especially if you consider it's a petrol engine.

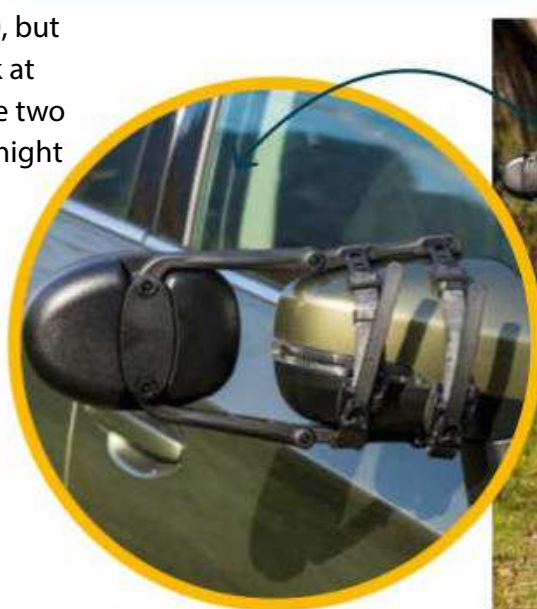
Hooking up

The test vehicle features a removable Kilber Startrek tow bar. Even though the bigger model can tow a heavier caravan, it limits you to 1,5 tonnes. That is still a very acceptable weight as many caravans weigh less than 1,5 t (although the GVM may be higher). Similarly, a large variety of off-road trailers and off-road caravans also fall into this weight class. The nose weight is also limited to 75 kg, while Subaru allows a weight far above double this figure. Our legislation limits you to 100 kg.

The tow bar has a flange plate with two sets of holes above each other with which you can adjust the ball 6 cm vertically and, if that isn't enough, a drop plate will also fit. The far side of the ball is 15,5 cm from the body and the light plug sits to the left behind the bumper. The lower part of the bumper has been cut to make way for the light plug. This sock can also swing away to the top when not in use.

Eyes everywhere

Rear-view screens are increasingly becoming standard equipment, where manufacturers



FAMILY FIRST. A station wagon is the classic example of a perfect family car, and Subaru's Outback comes very close to the mark. In addition to all the extra room for the kids and plenty of luggage, the Outback also doubles as an excellent towing vehicle.



of you on the instrument panel, is an electronic screen where you can also choose to view the digital speed reading. What makes it even more practical is that the speed limit of whichever road you're driving on shows up next to it.

I must admit the digital clock sits in a strange place. It is in the middle of the middle panel and looks as if it is part of the air-conditioning system.

The handbrake is the electric type, but it doesn't automatically give way when you want to pull off, at least not until you have secured your seatbelt. This is a first for me and a smart security feature.

The Outback has a long body, and as the caravan's nose presses down on the tow bar, you can feel it. That, in turn, makes the ride bumpier.

The Outback is the perfect towing vehicle, especially with this lovely gearbox. The longer I sit behind the wheel, the more I fall in love..."



FOR YOUR EYES ONLY. The analogue speedometer and tachometer are recessed in two tubes that make it difficult for the front passenger to read.



PLENTY OF METERS. With all the other information displayed, the infotainment screen also shows you the speed limit, so you know how far to step on the throttle. >



NO PLACE TO HIDE. The Outback is equipped with three cameras that allow you to see in front, behind and to the left of the vehicle on the infotainment screen. The system is extremely handy, especially because the screen splits to show you two separate views of the Outback's exterior.

TOW TEST

display an image on the infotainment screen of what's happening behind the vehicle. Other than helping to not bump anything that's lower than the body, it's even more helpful when you want to hook up a caravan. You can see exactly where the ball of the tow bar and the coupling of the caravan are, and you can hook it up without any help.

Although the Outback's computer doesn't register the caravan when you hitch as you slot the light plug into the harness, the parking sensors

don't kick up a fuss while you're reversing. As you turn the steering wheel, index lines appear on the screen in the direction you're reversing, and the curvature of the lines adjust further as you keep turning.

You don't have to rely on the one lens that sees behind you. The Outback also has a lens in the front grille, so you don't misjudge your angles when trying to get out of a parallel-parking bay. But wait, there's more. The third lens is hidden underneath the left mirror to keep an eye on the pavement so you can avoid curbing a rim.

LOCKED, BUT NOT LOADED. The Outback's ECU doesn't register a caravan after it's been plugged into the power harness.



The test

Distance 106,3 km

Top speed 114 km/h (GPS)

Average speed 48 km/h (highways, back roads and built-up areas)

Total driving time 2 hours 14 minutes.

Weather 17 °C, cloudy to sunny and a 21 km/h north-north-west-erly wind.

Before you open your wallet

What does the book say?

Fuel 95-octane Petrol

Engine 3,63 l

Cylinders 6 (boxer engine)

Power 191 kW @ 6 000 rpm

Torque 350 Nm @ 4 400 rpm

Transmission Six-speed (CVT)

Drive chain All wheel

Tare 1 698 kg

GVM 2 130 kg

GCM 3 930 kg

Wading depth Not available

Towing ability for trailer with overrun brakes Up to 1 800 kg

Measurements 4 815 mm (l); 1 840 mm (w); 1 675 mm (h)

Wheelbase 2 745 mm

Track width 1 570 mm (front); 1 580 mm (rear)

Ground clearance 213 mm

Fuel tank 60 l

Price (new) R617 000

Price (second hand) We found a 2018 model with 5 000 km for R519 900 on [autotrader.co.za](https://www.autotrader.co.za).

Fast facts

The tow bar The tow bar is not standard and costs a further R5 573 (labour excluded).

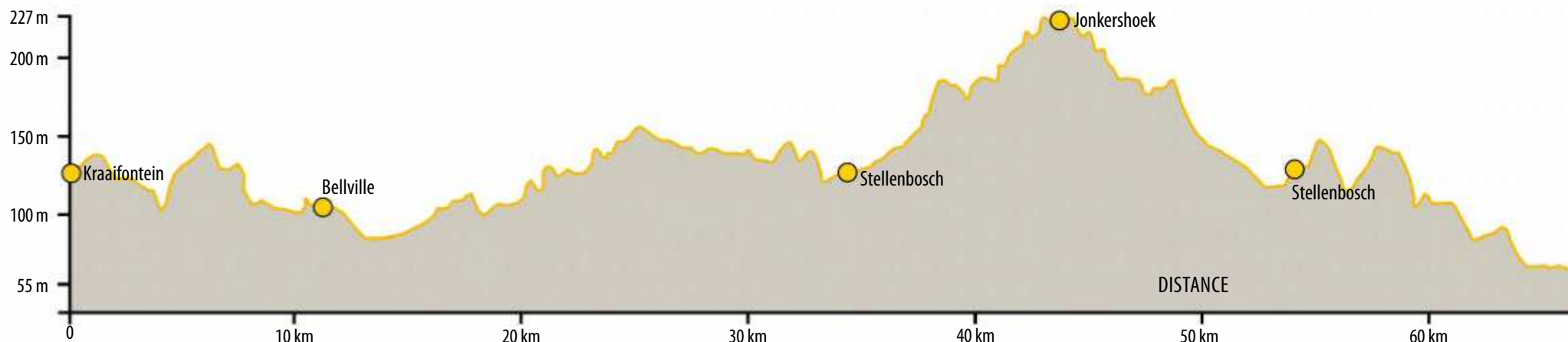
Suspension McPherson independent suspension in front and double wish bone suspension with coil springs in the rear. Under the 80 kg nose weight of the Sprite Surfer, it dropped a fair 2,5 cm.

What do the scales say? 1 920 kg with a full tank of fuel, the driver in the car as well as the nose weight of the Surfer on the tow bar. Measured against the tare



TOW PROFILE

ELEVATION



weight, it's a load of 222 kg.

Interior There can't be many vehicles on the market that beat the Outback's leg room for the rear passengers. There's a good hand and a half (held sideways) in front of the knees of a six-foot tall person, making it one of the most spacious we've ever seen. On top of that, you also have a hand's space above your head, but only three open fingers above your head when in the front seat.

Speed The speedometer's 100 km/h is 5 km/h faster than the GPS speed.

Fuel consumption The 16,54 l/100 km

(6,05 km/l) is great for a six cylinder, and the Outback's computer gives the same reading.

Finish Mostly black, stylish and solid. On the doors and across the cubby hole there is also a dark strip of imitation wood.

Extras None.

Other models? Just one, the 2.5 i-S R550 000

go! Drive & Camp says

You can choose between 10 colours, ranging from black and white to red and blue. The green, as seen on the test vehicle, fits the Outback like a glove.



What's on the tow bar

Make Sprite

Model Surfer

Year model 2004

GVM 1 150 kg

Loaded weight on the axle during testing 960 kg

Nose weight 80 kg

go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Sprite Surfer from Tygerberg Caravans. Call Wesley Dempster on 021 982 4670 if you want to take a closer look at the Surfer.

tygerbergcaravans.co.za



From the competitors (all-wheel drive, petrol, automatic)



700 Nm

160%

Audi RS6 Avant
R1 619 348

100%



350 Nm

0,5%

Volvo V60 T5 Cross Country Momentum
R619 672

=%

Reach for the stars



GT CAMPER LIBRA

GT Campers' biggest model, the Libra, finds the perfect balance between being practical and unique.

Text and photos **Helenus Kruger**

When off-road trailers arrived years ago, they all looked roughly the same: a trailer with a roof tent on top. But, as demand for them grows, more and more manufacturers and brand-new designs have been making their appearance.

MJ and Elmien Fitchet, owners of GT Campers, aren't newcomers to the camper market. They have six years of experience in the industry and their trailers – the Libra and its little brother,

the Spider – are two of the newer designs.

These trailers have a unique feature, a first for the local market: the lid transforms into the tent floor. MJ says they've been using different kinds of camping equipment for many years on their travels. But they dreamt of towing a camper that's simple, convenient and strong. So they built it themselves, exactly according to their own needs. And that's how the Libra and Spider saw the light of day.





Pitching up

The tent is folded inside the trailer under the lid. The inside of the lid becomes the floor of the tent when it swings open.

Firstly, lower the trailer's nose so that it leans forward at an angle – this prevents

the floor's adjustable feet from hitting the ground when opening the camper.

Now walk around to the back and undo the latches on the spare-wheel swing arm. Swing it to the right side of the trailer, taking care not to have it touching the trailer. That could damage the gas struts that lift the lid when you are opening it.

Now you can loosen the four latches – one in the front and the back on each side – that hold the lid in place and lift the lid from the front corners of the trailer.

Although the lid can be lifted by one person thanks to the two struts at the back, it's much easier when you have help on the other side of the trailer.

Now walk along the trailer to the back and swing the lid open until it lies on the ground. The back of the lid will be higher than the side

where the hinges connect with the trailer – you'll need to step on it in the middle to get it horizontal.

Now lift the nose with the jockey wheel until the trailer is level and the floor's four corner struts touch the ground – adjust them if needed.

To pitch the tent, get on to the bed inside the tent and push the square-iron frame in front upwards until it clicks into position. Do the same with the frame at the back of the tent (the middle frame is already in place).

Now pitch the tent's side, front and rear sails, and walk around the trailer, pulling the sides of the tent over the hull and tent floor and hooking up the Velcro patches.

When taking it down, you'll need someone else to help pull the lid shut while making sure the tent doesn't get pinched between the lid and the hull. >





Stepping inside

The spaciousness of the tent is immediately noticeable as you step inside. The solid floor makes it feel as if you're in a caravan rather than a tent.

Inside, the tent is divided into two equal parts: the dressing area where you enter and the sleeping area left, to the front of the trailer. With a floor size of 2,1 x 1,7 m, there's plenty of storage and even enough space for a small cupboard or shelves for more storage. The tent at the back is 1.9 m high at its lowest point and, from there, it slopes up to the nook above the bed. Even the tallest bloke's head won't scrape against this roof.

There are doors on either side of the dressing room at the back that can be completely zipped open. All doors and windows have flaps and mosquito nets that zip open.

To get into the bed, use the steps on the inside of the furthest cupboard to the back. The lid of the box that houses the poles has a rubber cover like the stairs so you don't slip, and is strong enough to serve as a second stair. The two deep-cycle batteries are on

either side of the pole box with the power pack to the right of the drawers.

The two pull-out drawers under the bed have enough space for a few weeks' worth of clothing. You can either pull out the drawers or lift the bottom of the bed and work from the top if you want to get something from the drawers. On either side of and underneath the drawers there's more storage space, but they're uncomfortable to get to, so only pack stuff here that you won't be using a lot.

The bed is slightly smaller than a king size and has two sturdy sponge mattresses that take up the full width of the trailer.

The two reading lights on arms at the head of the bed can be adjusted and the LED roof light also has a magnetic strip on its back – so you can place it anywhere on the tent frame.

On both sides and at the head of the bed, there are windows with mosquito nets, which, as in the dressing area, can be zipped open completely. The roof window helps with fresh airflow.





Up front

At the front, the Libra has something else that's also unique: the stone guard isn't the usual plate in front of the nose cone, but rather a separate frame with shade netting stretched across it.

On the sides, the frame is bent back slightly towards the trailer, so that the stones shoot away from your vehicle. The two gas cylinders, connected full-time, sit between the frame and the nose cone and are therefore also protected against stones.

On the A-frame is the jockey wheel, handbrake, power connection for the light and a Brad Harrison plug to charge the battery while driving.

On top of the nose cone is a container in which you can fit two ammunition crates next to each other and attach with straps.

At the back

At the rear of the trailer, there's a door flap that's almost as wide as the trailer. You first need to swing open the spare-tyre arm before you can open the door.

This gives you access to the clothes drawers as well as a box with a lid where you can store stuff including tent pegs, poles and extension cords.

Pack your camping chairs on top of the box's lid.

On the inside of the fold-out door is the step that swings down for climbing into bed when the tent is pitched.

You can move the LED light around (fitted with a magnet), or use the flashlight that comes equipped in the left of the box. >



CAMPER TEST



Water works

On the far left is the water tank's inlet pipe, water gauge and power socket. To the right of these are two boxes with doors that flap out. The smaller box is above the wheel and the bigger one to its right. The water pump sits in the box and above it is an LED light. This is also the box where the optional

geyser can be installed.

The pull-out drawer for your fridge is in the nose cone and has room for a National Luna fridge up to 90 l. Inside the box there are two 220 V power points and two Hella points. Both doors and the front of the nose cone have air openings with dust filters.



Keep left!

The whole left side consists of the kitchen area that has a very practical layout, clearly with the camp cook in mind. To the right, there are two latches to which you can attach a 112 x 44 cm table and, above that, three 220 V electric plugs within reach of your kettle and toaster.

To the left of the plugs are two Hella points where you can plug in one of the 12 V LED lights and stick it to the hull

above the table.

The tea station is in a box to the left of the table, above the wheel. Inside, there are four cups and four containers for coffee, tea, creamer and sugar that fit neatly into cut-out rubber moulds. You can also fit two boxes of long-life milk and a packet of rusks.

The pull-out kitchen unit is to the left, just before the wheel. The unit's lid becomes



the working surface as soon as you slide it out. The framework where the sink fits is right underneath it and has to be moved to the right before you can get to the storage space.

Right at the bottom of the unit is a cut-out rubber mould that fits your plates and, above it, a wire rack for cutlery. Above it is enough space to pack the single gas burner, pots, pans, kettle, cutlery and the sink made of canvas.

The gas burner fits on the left side of the work surface. You don't need to get the gas bottle out from its storage space to cook: the coupling point for the gas pipe is right in the kitchen underneath the trailer. Simply connect the burner's gas pipe to it and you're ready to get cooking.

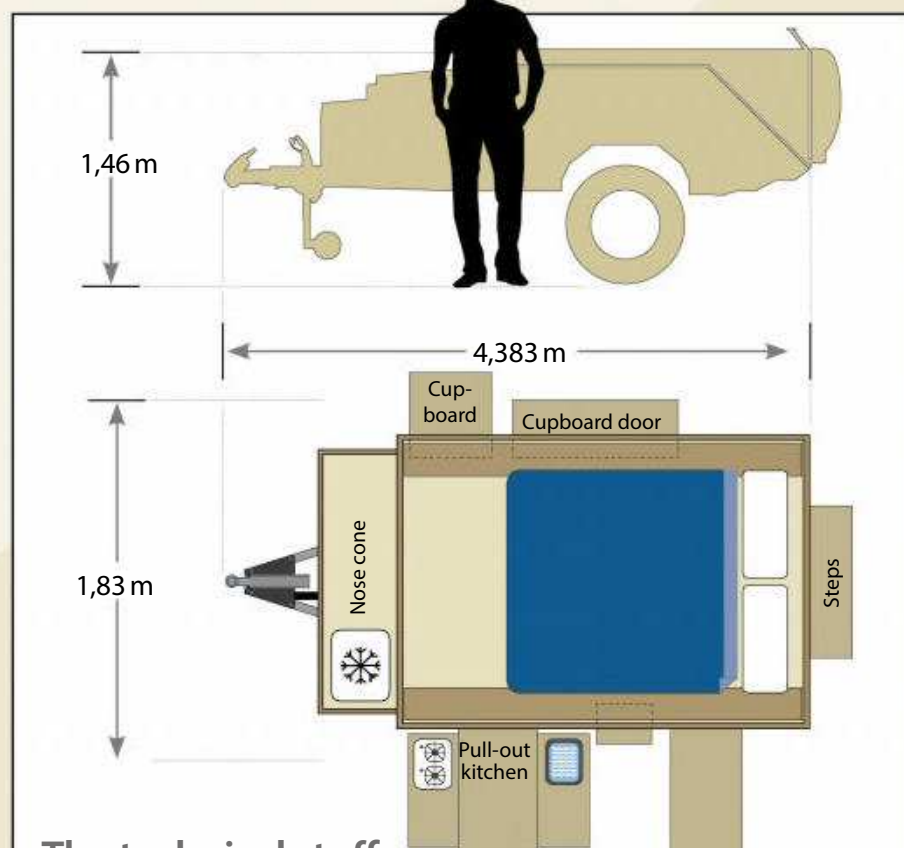
The framework where you wash dishes has a cut-out bit that fits the square sink made

of canvas. To the right of the sink is a surface on which you can pack dishes and, on the left, a spot for wet dishes. The water runs through the slits in its surface.

The hot and cold taps have a spray head – similar to the one you use in the garden – close to the trailer. The box has space for your detergents, a round LED light above the kitchen unit gives light.

Under the trailer, in front of the wheel, is a traditional copper tap that works with gravity just in case the camper's battery dies and the water pump doesn't work.

Left of the pull-out unit inside the nose cone are two drawers. The top one contains four wine and four water glasses, a corkscrew and four bowls that fit neatly into a cut-out rubber mould, while the lower drawer is for your food.



The technical stuff

Nose weight 54 kg

Length 4 383 mm

Width 1 830 mm

Height 1 460 mm

Axle width 1 580 mm

Tare weight (basic camper) 630 kg

Load capacity 870 kg

GVM 1 500 kg

Price R203 534 as tested. The basic camper costs R135 016. Various options for equipment are available.



Plus

- You do not need a ladder to get into bed.
- The solid floor gives the spacious tent a luxurious feel.
- There's lots of storage space.
- The kitchen has a very practical layout.
- Having LED lights that attach with magnetic strips and can be moved around is a great idea.



Minus

- You should preferably be two people to pitch and take down the tent.
- In the open position, the storage door of the cupboard pushes against one of the tent floor struts and could

damage the door.

- The clip that holds the refrigerator's pull-out drawer is in the way when you push the drawer back and it could damage the door's rubber.
- Dust and bugs could enter in spots where the tent canvas isn't stuck to the side of the trailer.
- The table by the kitchen is tricky to hook up.

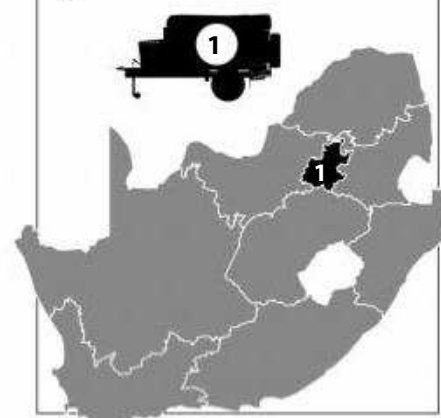
go! Drive & Camp says

The Libra's 90 l stainless-steel water tank sits under the trailer, right behind the axle.

Dealer network

GT Campers is a one-man business in Pretoria.

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On fire

This month we start a new set of food articles, all of which will be an outdoor menu for four hungry people: there is a snack, meat, veggies, salad, bread and pudding. Go on, light that fire!



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

Food assistant **Tani Kirsten**

STICKY PORK RIBS

It's that sticky layer...

Tender, sticky ribs that will blow everyone away calls for a patient eye and some time, but it'll be worth it!

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon fine ginger
- ½ cup apricot jam
- ½ cup pineapple juice
- 4 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 pork rib – about 1½-2 kg
- 1 pineapple, cut into wedges, to serve

Here's how

1 Prepare the marinade by mixing the oil, garlic, ginger, apricot jam, pineapple juice, sweet chilli sauce and chilli, if using.

2 Place the rib in a flat-bottom pot, cover with water and simmer over moderate coals for 2 hours. Remove the rib from the water and press it to slightly dry it.

3 Brush a generous portion of the marinade onto the rib and braai over moderate coals for 30-45 minutes. Keep brushing it with the

marinade and rotate the rib so that the sauce forms a deliciously brittle, sticky layer.

4 Sear the pineapple for about 5 minutes over the coals and serve with the rib.

go! Drive & Camp says If you don't have enough time to cook the rib for 2 hours, buy the ready-cooked type. Look for "spareribs" in the shop and simply leave out the second step above. If you do cook it at home, freeze it and take it along when you go camping.

CHICKEN SOSATIES WITH A WHISKY BRAAI SAUCE

Chicken with a kick

The whisky sauce makes for a sticky treat that will have everyone licking their fingers. Eat the sosaties straight off the braai.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ⅓ cup whiskey
- 4 tablespoons soy sauce
- 4 tablespoons tomato sauce
- 2 tablespoons brown vinegar
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 16 deboned chicken thighs
- 2 sweet peppers, cubed
- 2 red onions, cubed

Here's how

1 Melt the butter in a saucepan and sauté the finely chopped onion until soft and shiny.

2 Stir in the sugar, whisky, soy sauce, tomato sauce, vinegar and paprika over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved.

3 Simmer the sauce for 15 minutes over low heat until it thickens slightly – stirring constantly to prevent it from catching. Remove the sauce from the heat, let it cool completely, cover it and refrigerate.

4 Alternate skewering the chicken, onion and sweet pepper onto 4 large or 8 smaller kebab sticks and place in a flat glass dish.

5 Pour over half the chilled sauce, cover the bowl with cling wrap and leave it overnight in

the fridge (or for at least 1 hour).

6 Braai the sosaties slowly over medium coals until the chicken is juicy and cooked – about 10-15 minutes.

7 Heat the rest of the sauce and serve it with the cooked sosaties.

go! Drive & Camp says Deboned chicken thighs are tasty and juicy done this way, but if you can't get hold of them, cut 4 big chicken breasts into 3 x 3 cm cubes. >



Chicken sosaties with a whisky braai sauce

CURRY NOODLE SALAD

Salad days

Good old dried-fruit roll creates a different dimension in this pasta salad. Snack on leftovers the next day.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 250 g of pasta of your choice
- salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 packet (100 g) almond flakes
- 1 green apple
- 2 celery sticks
- 1 green pepper
- 40 g mango or peach dried-fruit roll

FOR THE CURRY SAUCE

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1½ tablespoons curry powder
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 2 tablespoons peach chutney
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Here's how

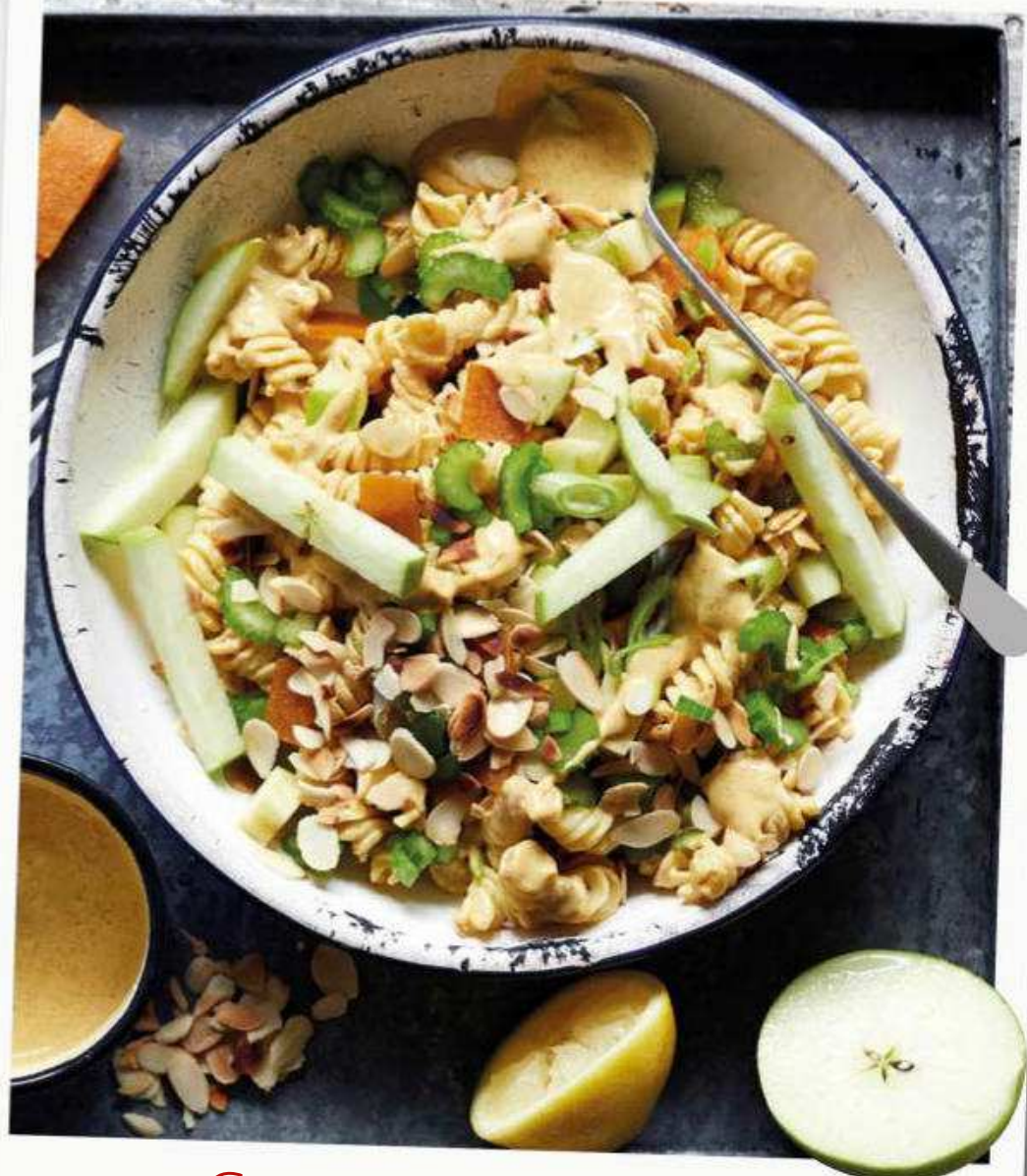
1 Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet. Drain and set aside.

2 Mix together all the ingredients for the sauce and stir it through pasta while still warm. Taste and flavour with salt and black pepper to your liking. Set it aside to cool.

3 Dry fry the almonds till slightly coloured – keep an eye on them as nuts burn very quickly and become bitter. Set aside the roasted almonds.

4 Slice the apple, celery, pepper and fruit roll into 5 mm squares and stir them through the cooled pasta. Sprinkle the roasted almonds on top.

go! Drive & Camp says To prevent the apple cubes from colouring, squeeze the juice of a lemon over them before mixing through the salad.



Curry noodle salad

BRAAI MIELIES WITH BILTONG BUTTER

Tease the mielies with biltong

If you've ever wondered what that fine biltong powder is for... well, now you know: mix it with butter on braai mielies and you'll keep coming back for more.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- ½ teaspoon coriander seeds
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons fine biltong powder
- 4 whole sweetcorn

Here's how

1 Dry fry the coriander seeds until light brown and fragrant.

2 Mix together the butter, biltong and coriander seeds and use the back of a spoon to crush the coriander seeds.

3 Fold over the leaves of the mealies – they're great for holding on to when eating the mealie. Braai them over medium coals until golden brown and cooked.

4 Spread a thick layer of the biltong butter onto the mielies as they come off the coals and eat immediately.

go! Drive & Camp says Make double the biltong butter before you go on holiday. You can also spread it on hot roosterkoek. And use it to melt over veggies done on the coals when you camp.



Braai mielies with biltong butter

PULL-APART BREAD

Breaking bread

This bread has a cheesy filling and is made so you don't have to cut it when done. You simply pull it apart.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 2½ cups cake flour
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ tablespoon instant yeast
- ⅓ cup milk
- ½ cup butter
- 3-4 tablespoons water
- 2 large eggs
- ⅓ cup red-pepper pesto
- ½ cup cream cheese
- 1 packet (200 g) bacon, fried and finely chopped
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese

Here's how

1 Mix together the flour, sugar, salt and yeast in a large mixing bowl.

2 Heat the milk and butter until the butter has melted. Stir in the water and allow to cool slightly so it's lukewarm before pouring it into the flour mixture. Stir thoroughly together to form a dough. Add the eggs one by one and knead the dough well after each one.

3 Turn out the dough onto a flour-sprinkled surface and knead for about 10 minutes until the dough is soft and slightly sticky. Add 1-2 tablespoons of flour if it is too sticky to knead, but no more than that. Place the dough back in the bowl, cover with cling film and allow to rise in a warm place to double its volume.

4 Remove the risen dough carefully from the bowl and put it back on the flour-sprinkled surface. Loosely knock and pull the dough until it forms a rough rectangle, then roll it out to a large rectangle of 30 x 50 cm.

5 Mix together the pesto and cream cheese, and spread the mixture evenly over the dough. Sprinkle over the bacon and cheese – press them slightly into the dough. Cut the rectangle into 4 equal strips along its width and then 4 strips lengthwise. You'll now have 16 portions. Divide them into 4 stacks of 4 portions each.

6 Smear a cast iron bread pan with butter or line with baking paper. Pack the stacks of dough into the pan so it looks like slices of bread in the pan. Make sure the first and last portion's unfilled side faces the bread pan's edge. Cover the pan loosely and set it aside for 30 minutes in a warm spot to rise again.

7 Cover the pan with a piece of baking paper smeared with butter loosely over the bread and then put on the lid. Spoon 4 small coals on

the lid and then bake the bread on a rack or grid over medium coals for 30-40 minutes.

8 Turn out the bread, and have every guest break off a piece.

Pull-apart bread



the lid and then bake the bread on a rack or grid over medium coals for 30-40 minutes.

go! Drive & Camp says You can use any pesto – rocket pesto and brie make a delicious flavour combination to use instead of the cheddar and sweet-pepper pesto we used here.

INSTANT YOGURT TART

Oh, that butterscotch!

This is a fridge tart that doesn't need a fridge! It's therefore a wonderful camping mainstay and much more delicious than you think – don't turn up your nose at it.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 8-12 digestive biscuits, coarsely crumbled
- 1 large container (1 kg) ice-cold Greek yogurt
- 1 box Moir's instant pudding (butterscotch flavour)
- 12 fresh strawberries, sliced

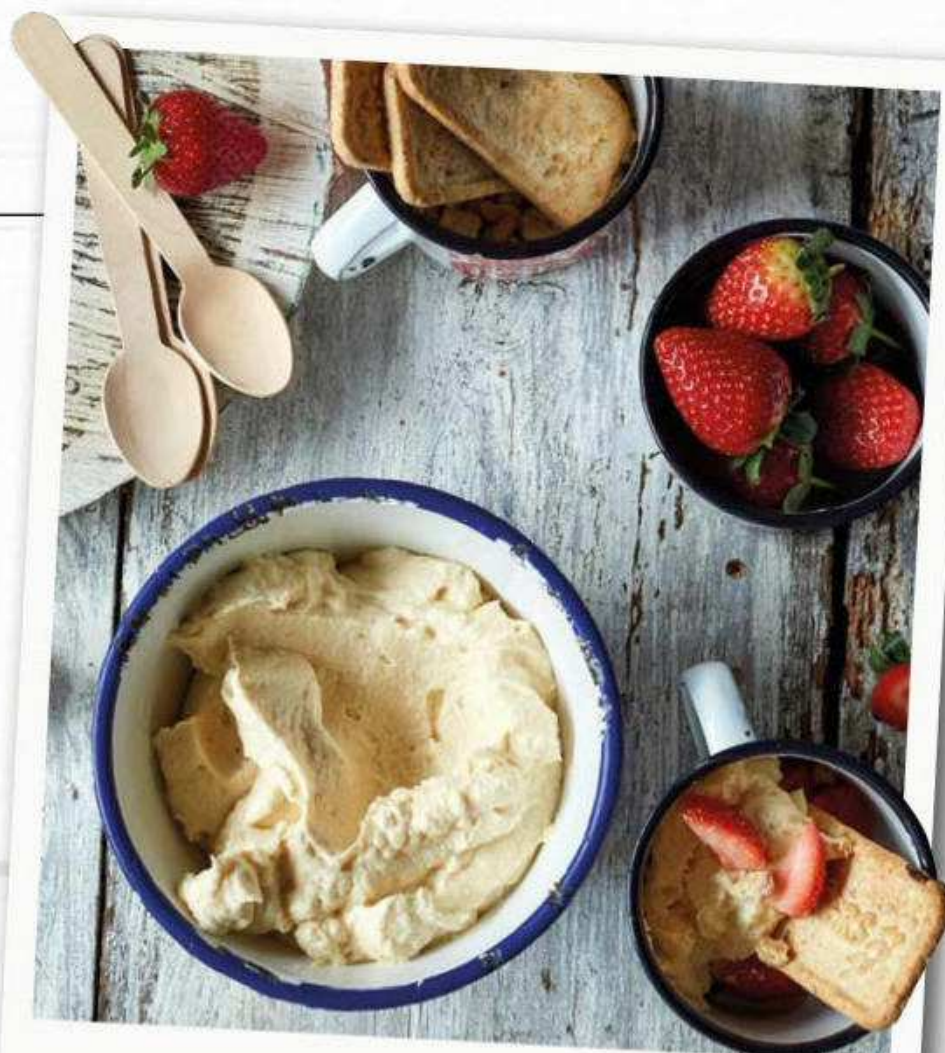
Here's how

1 Sprinkle the biscuit crumbs into a flat bowl or use individual tin cups to make one for everyone.

2 Dish the yogurt into a medium mixing bowl and sprinkle the pudding mixture over it. Stir quickly and thoroughly until completely mixed.

3 Pour the yogurt mixture over the crumb layer (in the flat bowl or tin cups) and even it out slightly. Decorate with strawberries and serve immediately.

go! Drive & Camp says Instead of the fresh strawberries you can also use drained canned fruit.



Instant yogurt tart

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

From as small as your little finger to ruler-length units, here's a range of torches that will meet your needs – and budget.

Text Kyle Kock Photos James Garaghty

It helps to be prepared in the event of a power outage at home. Whether load-shedding has cut off the electricity supply

to your home and you don't have matches and candles handy, or if you've just lost your car keys in a 10-man tent, or even if you just want to find out what

just brushed up against the side of your caravan.

Having a torch at the ready definitely comes in handy.



750



ZARTEK RECHARGEABLE LED SPOTLIGHT Game time

More of a spotlight than an actual torch, the Zartek rechargeable LED unit features a pistol-grip style so you can easily point it in the direction you want. It also has a detachable red lens for viewing animals, and two brightness settings with a strobe function. There are two separate chargers for a domestic 220V

AC or the 12V DC point in your vehicle. With 750 lumens, the Zartek can shine up to 500 metres.

Length 145mm

Weight 410 g

Price R900 from Cape Union Mart.

go! Drive & Camp says There's also a lock function for the on/off switch so it doesn't blind anyone by mistake.



1 400



NEBO REDLINE BLAST Built tough

This is a slightly more heavy-duty model than the other Nebo featured here. There are three beam modes, plus a strobe and SOS function as well. It's also waterproof down to one metre for up to 30 minutes, just in case

it gets dropped into water. There's a soft-touch function on the on/off switch that allows you to cycle through modes quickly and easily.

Length 174 mm

Weight 425 g

Price R700 from Camp & Climb.

go! Drive & Camp says The on/off switch is positioned in the base at the rear and it glows in the dark.

KLARUS AR10

Pretend periscope

The slender model from Klarus has a unique swivelling head that allows it to be used for a wide variety of applications. You can stand it upright, attach it to a suitable metal surface thanks to a magnetic base or simply use the attached clip. It has a maximum of 1

080 lumens, four beam modes and two strobe functions.

Length 149 mm

Weight 145 g

Price R1 730 from Just Like Papa.

go! Drive & Camp says Ideal for when you need to get into nooks and crannies or need to mount a flashlight.



NEBO SLYDE PLUS

Jack of all trades

The Slyde Plus has plenty of functions considering how compact it is. It extends to open up a lamp-style work light. The lamp also has a red-light function for animal viewing, which then also has a strobe function to act as a warning. Each beam function

is also dimmable from 100 % down to 10 %.

Length 184 mm

Weight 315 g

Price R700 from Cape Union Mart.

go! Drive & Camp says The COB LED cluster allows for a really clear beam of light.



LITEOPTEC BOBCAT

Pound for pound

Another one that punches way above its weight. With just 300 lumens, the Bobcat features high, low and strobe functions. You can focus on something small or flood a slightly larger area. It also has a built-in clip

so you can carry it attached to your pocket or belt.

Length 113 mm

Weight 75 g

Price R190 from Camp & Climb.

go! Drive & Camp says Pocket-sized and easy on the pocket, too.



LED LENSER MT18

Big bruiser

One of the larger torches featured here, the MT18 comes with a heavy-duty wall charger and removable lithium ion battery. It has a 540 m beam distance from its 3 000 lumens, and the 10 200 mAh battery capacity allows for a maximum run time of 96 hours.

Length 172 mm

Weight 630 g

Price R3 200 from Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says You get a massive seven-year warranty if you register your buy with LED Lenser. >



1000



NITECORE MH40GT

Long range

This NiteCore packs an impressive 803 m maximum beam range when used in the brightest of its five settings (a full 1 000 lumens). There are also strobe and SOS functions. Despite the round head, it features a corrugated finish so the torch doesn't roll around unnecessarily. There's

also a detachable clip if you want to carry it on your belt.

Length 253 mm**Weight** 395 g**Price** R2 675 from Just Like Papa.

go! Drive & Camp says After five minutes, it automatically lowers brightness to prevent LED overheating.

80



HYBRIDLIGHT ENTRADA

Nature proof

Not only can this torch be recharged by leaving it in the sun, but it also sources energy from other light forms – which you can monitor via a flashing red light whenever it's charging. It's waterproof up to three metres, fall resistant up to

five metres, and also comes with micro USB for rapid charging.

Length 185 mm**Weight** 125 g**Price** R300 from Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says The Entrada can also float.

800



LITEOPTEC STRIX 3

Boxing clever

This was the only torch to arrive in its own little pelican-style waterproof plastic box with foam inserts for crash protection. It has three brightness levels, as well as strobe and SOS functions. The 800 lumens allow

for a beam distance of 350 m.

Length 148 mm**Weight** 165 g**Price** R550 from Cape Union Mart.

go! Drive & Camp says You can use the supplied rechargeable battery, or three AAA batteries.

900



ZARTEK LED USB RECHARGEABLE

Trickle-charged

This model includes a high-capacity 3 200 mAH lithium-ion battery that gives it a four-hour battery life on its highest setting, but it also has a lower setting and strobe function. Because of its length, it doesn't come with a pouch

but with a holster instead. Its 900 lumens give it a 350 m beam distance.

Length 265 mm**Weight** 370 g**Price** R570 from Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says Despite its size, this is rechargeable via USB cable.

2000



ACEBEAM L16

Military grade

This is the brightest tactical flashlight in Acebeam's range, with a maximum output of 2 000 lumens and beam distance of 603 m. It comes in a carry pouch, and you recharge its lithium-ion battery remotely or plugged into a USB power source. It's impact resistant up to

1,2 m and waterproof up to 2 m.

Length 156 mm**Weight** 205 g**Price** R2 195 from Extreme Lights.

go! Drive & Camp says There are a number of accessories available.

NITECORE TUBE

Key camouflage

This USB-sized flashlight can blend in with your keychain accessories. A high-performance LED boasts 45 lumens on maximum brightness and can reach up to 24 m. It is also impact resistant up to 1,5 m.

Length 111 mm

Weight 140 g

Price R265 from Just Like Papa.

go! Drive & Camp says Simply recharge it with a micro USB cable from your computer.



ZARTEK EXTREME BRIGHT FLASHLIGHT

Charge options

This Zartek features five beam modes: high, low, medium, strobe and SOS. It comes with a traditional 220v AC mains charger and 12V DC car charger for maximum versatility. Its 900 lumens are

good for a 480 m beam distance.

Length 165 mm

Weight 205 g

Price R845 from Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says It packs a lot of punch for its size.



KLARUS MI7

Featherweight champ

Depending on which kind of AA battery you use, the tiny Klarus can generate 330 lumens (standard AA) or up to 700 lumens if you use a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, thanks to its CREE LED. The beam can reach 110 m, which is impressive for its size. It's submersible up

to 2 m, and has three brightness settings as well as strobe and SOS functions.

Length 87 mm

Weight 55 g

Price R855 from Just Like Papa.

go! Drive & Camp says This little guy is backed by a five-year warranty.



TRAIL BOSS ZOOM 3D

Large and in charge

This big boy has two modes. a 50% function and 100% function. There's also a strobe feature should the need arise to signal anyone. Using all 1 000 lumens on the high mode, it can shine up to 126 m and can run for up to

five hours on that mode as well.

Length 250 mm

Weight 625 g

Price R700 from Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says If all else fails, you could also use this one as a baton.



LITEOPTEC GAMEPRO NINOX

All-in

The only other spotlight unit in this group, the GamePro also comes with a detachable red lens for viewing animals. There just one beam setting, but the 2 000 lumens from the CREE LED allows for a beam distance of 750 m. It also comes with a drawstring bag for storage.

Length 185 mm

Weight 455 g

Price R1 700

from Cape Union Mart.

go! Drive & Camp says It's constructed out of durable, but lightweight, aluminium. >



6200



ACEBEAM K65 Simply the best

The K65 boasts the furthest beam distance in the Acebeam model range, able to reach just over a kilometre using 6 200 lumens. It's powered by four 3 100 mAh rechargeable batteries, and comes in its own pouch. In its Eco mode, which uses just five lumens, battery life can last

for up to 60 hours. It's also waterproof up to 2 m and impact resistant to 1,2 m.

Length 185 mm

Weight 840 g

Price R4 195 from Extreme Lights.

go! Drive & Camp says Ideal for when you're after a serious torch.

960



FENIX UC30 Accessorise!

The UC30 comes with a micro USB charging cable, pouch and lanyard and features five functions, a low, medium and high modes, strobe and turbo. On turbo mode, the beam reaches 204 m from the UC30's 960 lumens.

Length 129 mm

Weight 125 g

Price R1 195 from Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says At full blast on turbo mode, the Fenix can manage an impressive 70-minute run time.

16



LED LENSER P2 Cool clarity

The Blue Moon lighting technology adds a unique blue tinge on the edge of the beam, which is especially visible when focused. The clarity of the light within its maximum beam distance of 25 metres is also impressive as this model makes use of just 16 lumens.

Length 111 mm

Weight 40 g

Price R225 from Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says Because it's no thicker than your average khoki pen, the P2 comes with a pouch so you don't lose it.

110



TRAIL BOSS EXTENDABLE LED CAMPING LANTERN & TORCH

Dual tool

This little guy extends to 163 mm to form a lantern. It has a built-in hanging loop and, thanks to its light weight, can easily be supported. Its 110 lumens is

good for a beam distance of 40 m.

Length 112 mm

Weight 140 g

Price R100 from Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says It's both multipurpose and affordable.



GET THE PRODUCTS HERE

Camp & Climb campandclimb.co.za

Cape Union Mart capeunionmart.co.za

Outdoor Warehouse outdoorwarehouse.co.za

Just Like Papa justlikepapa.com

Extreme Lights extremelights.co.za

ADVERTISING ANNOUNCEMENT

Media24 is offering a 25% bonus advertising space for every rand of advertising space spent and paid for by qualifying small agencies (qualifying agencies) who advertise with Media24 on our print and digital platforms.



The bonus advertising space will be placed by Media24 in its available inventory at its discretion and in consultation with the qualifying agencies.

Media24 will offer the bonus advertising space for a period of three years starting from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021. There is an annual cap of R35 million (thirty five million rand) for this bonus advertising space which will be administered accordingly.

In order to qualify for this offer, agencies must:

- Have a turnover in billings not exceeding R50 million (fifty million rand) per annum;
- Be majority black-owned as defined in the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003 and the relevant BBBEE Codes and must provide adequate proof of its BBBEE ownership status.
- The turnover and ownership status must be certified and attested to by means of a sworn affidavit.

Media24 strictly reserves the right to request any further information in order to confirm that agencies meet the above

qualifying criteria.

Advertising space booked through this initiative will carry the normal trading terms and conditions for Media24 advertising space as stated in our terms and conditions.

A copy of the terms and conditions applicable to this offer will be made available on request.

This offer is part of the settlement reached between Media24 and the Competition Commission on 18 June 2018 and aims to assist qualifying agencies in improving access to and transforming our industry.

If you would like to register as a qualifying agency to access this facility, please contact Mr Johan Botha via email at johan.botha@media24.com

MEDIA24



BACK TO SCHOOL



When revisions were made to the road traffic act in 1998, the old numerical licence codes were switched to the letters that are in use today. But there are some among us who want to legally tow our caravans to holiday destinations in and around the country. Here's how to do it the proper, legal way.

Text **Kyle Kock** Photos **Kyle Kock** and **Leon Botha**

First of all, you're going to have to check your existing driver's licence code. If you don't know where this is, it's right in the middle of your card alongside the word "code".

If you're under the age of 40, the chances are high that when you passed it was for a Code B licence, which enables you to drive a light motor vehicle legally and tow a trailer with a Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) not exceeding 750 kg.

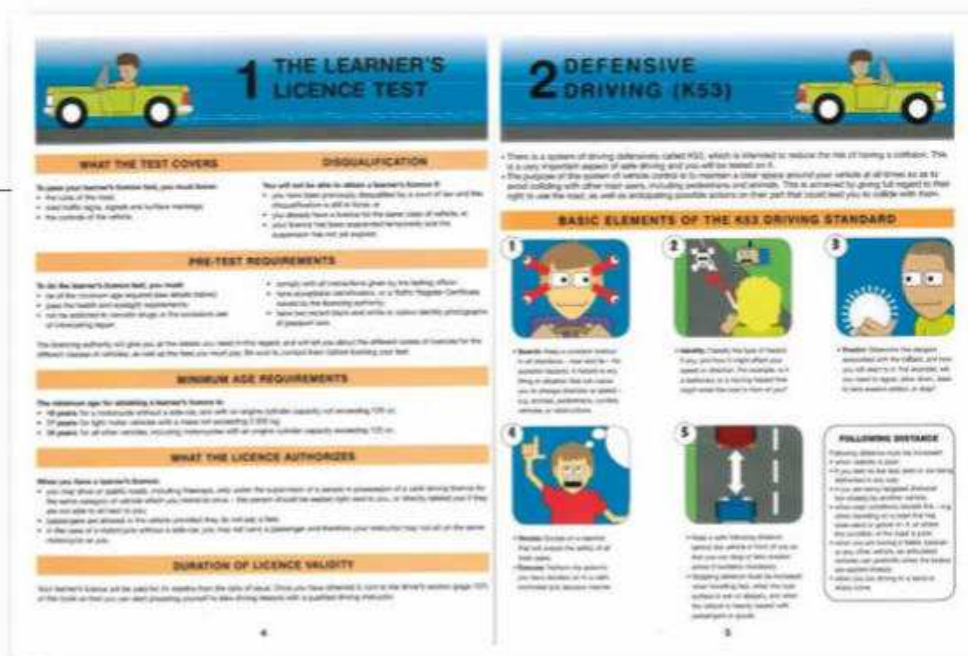
But most caravans have a GVM higher than that, and an EB licence means that you are legally allowed to tow an articulated vehicle or a rigid vehicle and trailer up to a Gross Combination Mass (GCM) of 3 500 kg,

which would be the added-up maximum of most SUVs and bakkies available in our market with a fairly big caravan, too.

If your licence says EB, then you don't have to read any further, unless you want to send your spouse or child for the EB to help with towing duty in future. In that case, you've come to the right place.

If you're 30, like me, and have been casually towing your dad's old Penta with your KB down to the coast for Christmas, you're probably on the wrong side of the law, because your driving test did not include a trailer hitched to the rear of the vehicle you were driving.





HIT THE BOOKS

The bad news is that if you're already a B licence holder, you're going to have to check in at your nearest Traffic Department or Driving Test Centre and book a learner's licence test date. That means you're going to have to do the written test again. You'll need to take your identity document along, two ID photos (35 mm x 45 mm) and the application fee of R68.

You'll also need a proof of address, such as a utility bill or a letter from your bank confirming your residential address. Some of the better equipped government houses use a new numbered queuing system that speeds up the application processes. You will also do an eye test with your application.

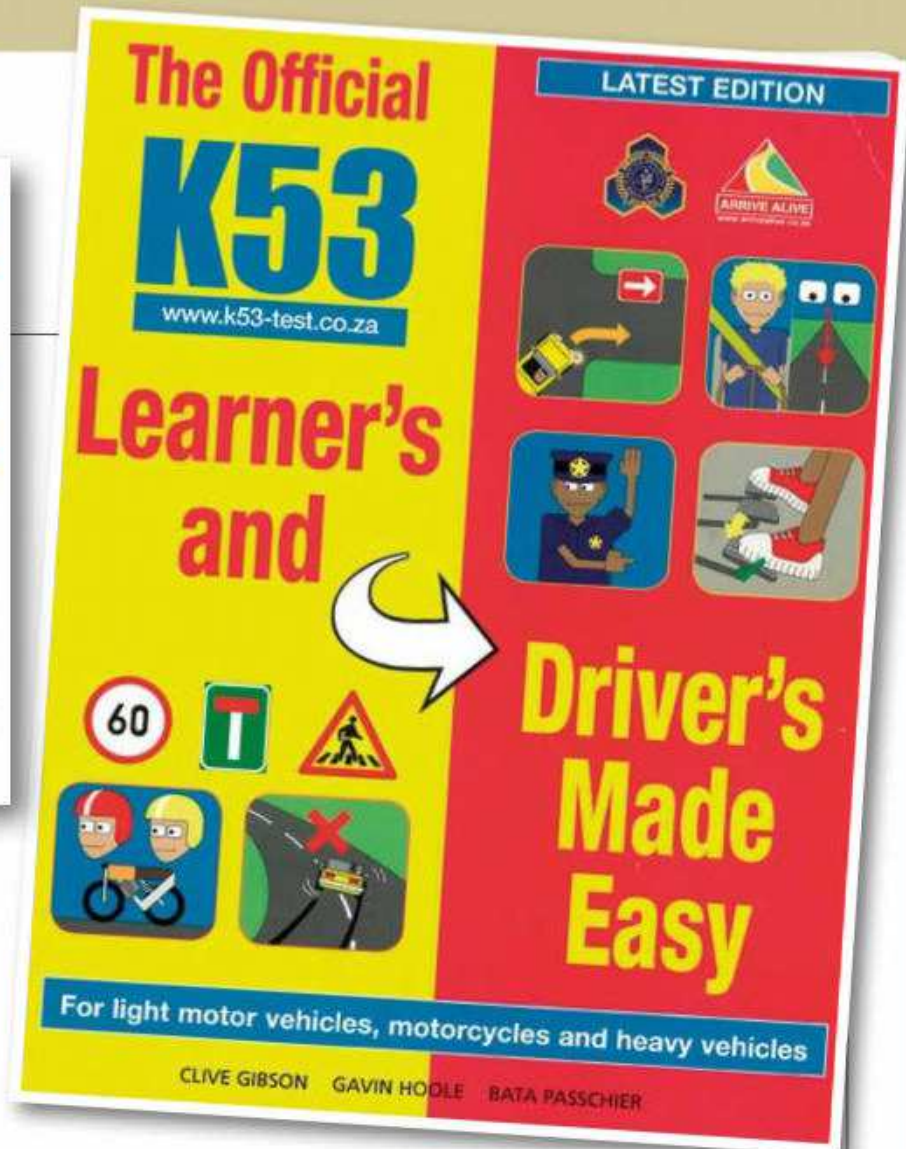
Once you've made the appointment, it's time to start studying. There is the official *K53 Learners and Drivers Made Easy* book, which you can find in a bookshop or at a newsstand. I borrowed a copy from a colleague, who also shared a few old exam papers and answer sheets with me so I could "practise" writing the test.

But by far the easiest method is digital, because there are a number of apps you can download that will help you prepare for writing your test. I purchased one called K53 Questions & Answers. The version you can download for free is just 25 MB. It will have a trial list of 25 multiple choice questions you can answer. The aim is obviously to answer all the questions correctly.

You will get bombarded with notifications thereafter warning you that you might fail if you don't buy the other seven sets of question papers. It's just R30 and, once you pay, you get a password that you insert once you reopen the app. Then, all the questions and answers are there forever until you delete the app.

The required pass mark is high, and rightly so. We wouldn't want to risk having new drivers on our roads who aren't familiar with basic road signs. The K53 app will definitely enable you to pass your learners but, to truly gain plenty of insight, perhaps invest in the official *K53 Learners and Drivers Made Easy* books. Or buy the official K53 app (R40 on Google Play).

If you've been driving for a while, you'll be very familiar with the usual signs you come across on your daily routine, and probably surprise yourself at what you've forgotten over the years. For example, you're supposed to stop at least a car's length between you and the vehicle in front of you. For the purposes of passing your test, you have to be able to stop safely and demonstrate that you are able to do so while in full control of your vehicle. This means that you cannot coast in neutral before stopping. Either gearing down or come to a complete stop in your current gear and then pull up the parking brake before selecting first gear and doing your observations and setting off again. >



TRAINING WHEELS. The first step is obtaining a learner's licence, which includes a lot of theory. You don't need to memorise the entire book though (above). It's far simpler to rather purchase an app with a few question papers that will prepare you for the test within hours of downloading it.



THE PRACTICAL STUFF

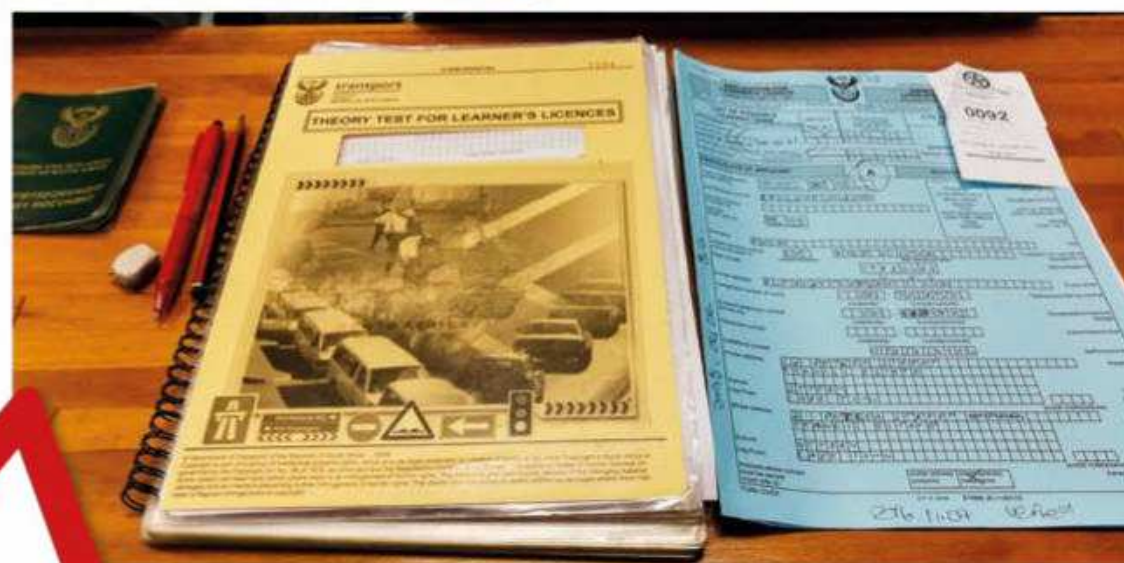
Honestly, the learner's licence test is really not a difficult one to pass and, once you've mastered the questions on the app or in the book, you're ready to write. It can take a few days or even hours, depending on how much time you spend looking down at your phone.

Then, depending on how confident you are with your driving ability, it's time to book your driving test. You need to make sure that you've circled the correct section on the form that states your appointment is for an EB test. You will be required to perform another eye test, make sure to remind the cashier when you pay (R140 this time, and another set of ID photos) that your appointment is for an EB test.

Then it's off to find a reputable driving school. Look into the driving school you're about to invest in. Check their success rate. If they have a page on social media, that's even better. Maybe you can check with past students what the experience is like and if they would recommend the same school. Don't just go with a fly-by-night operator because it's R50 cheaper per hour, as there are unscrupulous schools out there who set people up for failure, so you have to come back and spend more money.

Furthermore, they also require you to bring your own towing vehicle and trailer. And if you don't already have a trailer or an uncle who can loan you one, that can cost anywhere between R150 and R250 per day.

Service	Fee (R)
Application for Learners License	R 68.00
Issue of Learners License	R 33.00
Application for L/M/V Driving Licence: - B	R 135.00
Application for M/Cycle: - A; A1	R 135.00
Application for Driving Licence: - C; C1; EC1; EC	R 200.00
Issue of Driving Licence Card	R 140.00
Conversion of Foreign Driving Licence	R 140.00
Conversion of ID Book Licence	R 140.00
Renewal of Driving Licence card	R 140.00
Application and examination of Instructors certificate	R 165.00
Issue of Instructors Certificate	R 33.00
Application for Professional Driving Permit	R 80.00
Issue of Professional Driving Permit on Driving Card	R 140.00

EB VS EC1

For the sake of thoroughness, we wanted to compare two types of towing licences, EB and EC1, with me attempting the EB, because I only had the B, and editor Schalk Jonker applying for the EC1, as he got the old Code 8 back in the day that was automatically converted to EB.

Wanting to do it the right way from the get-go, we decided to sign up for some driving lessons. Two academies came highly recommended: Alpha Driving School and He & She Driving School. For the purposes of this feature, Schalk chose He & She as they offer EC1, which left me with Alpha, who are primarily based in the northern suburbs of Cape Town. The school is run by Henri Swift, a former traffic official with the City of Cape Town who has been helping Capetonians ace their driving tests since 2012.

At Henri's school, there's also no physical exchange of cash. Your lessons are paid via EFT upfront. At the time of going to print, it costs R240 per lesson. Each lesson lasts an hour. And, on the day of your test, booking the car and trailer (R960) comes with a refresher before your test time so



The instructor will first assess your driving competence by asking you to perform one of the typical test exercises.



you're warmed up for the driving exam.

Check that your instructor has a valid instructor's certificate from the South African Institute of Driving Instructors. The instructor should legally be fit to take you for lessons, so he/she should have a licence equal to or higher than yours. Your instructor also has to be sitting next to you.

The instructor will first assess your driving competence by asking you to perform one of the typical exercises you would have to perform when you go for your test. In my case, it was the 40 m reverse test. And this is arguably the hardest exercise of the lot, because to keep a trailer or caravan straight behind the towing vehicle requires some deft handling of the

steering wheel and a near-perfect balance of the tow bar and the third axle.

For an EB licence, it's a good idea to practise the manoeuvres that will be required of you to pass the exam, including the 40 metre reverse, left turn, alley docking, unhitching and parallel parking, and pulling off on an incline. Make sure you go over these thoroughly with your school.

Over at He & She, Schalk signed up for 10 lessons at R240 per lesson. The use of the truck and trailer for his final test costs an additional R710. These prices exclude VAT.

Schalk was assigned Retha Crous as instructor, who first took him to He & She's practice ground next to the Parow Traffic Department to get a sense of his abilities >



THE BASIC MANOEUVRES. Before you can take the show on the road, you'll have to demonstrate some sort of prowess in the yard. Here you perform rudimentary parking exercises, exterior and interior inspections and your instructor will drill the correct procedure into you before you start your road driving.





Things you are allowed to do in the testing centre yard or practice yard that aren't allowed when you're out on public roads.

- You don't have to wear your seatbelt for parking manoeuvres. Or anywhere else in the yard.
- You are allowed to cross your hands while steering.
- You are allowed to look out of the window to help you position the trailer while reversing/alley docking
- You are allowed to rest your foot on the clutch pedal for all manoeuvres in the yard except one: the 40 m reverse.



“
The 40 metre straight reverse is arguably the hardest yard test, as you're not allowed to use the clutch once moving.”

with the Nissan UD 35 truck and trailer. First up was the alley-dock manoeuvre and, to be totally honest, Schalk didn't exactly nail it first time.

But, with a lot of patience and guidance, he could alley dock like a supremo by the third lesson. Next up was the straight-line reverse, which is tricky but manageable when you have your confidence levels up. Throughout, Retha kept reminding him about the correct observation sequence, drilling it into him. It's funny, but something that feels so completely unnatural during your first lesson starts to feel totally standard by your fifth. Nothing illustrated this better than having to engage the handbrake every time you stop.

Once Schalk was more at ease with the yard manoeuvres (these included the left and right turn and incline start) it was time to hit the streets of Parow to prepare him for the road part of the test.

Retha, a wealth of information, kept reminding him about the stop sequence, observation requirements and the rules of the road.

After 10 hours of intense training on everything EC1, Schalk was ready to take the plunge.

In next month's Camp Boffin, we tell you everything about how Kyle and Schalk's driver's licence tests went.





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Between the tyre and the tube

The wheel was a ground-breaking invention for early civilisations. It is, in fact, a cornerstone of our society to this day. But what do you actually know about wheels other than that they go round and round?

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

You may as well stick your head in a beehive rather than talk about which manufacturer's tyres are the best. Never mind what kind of tyre is the best.

Let's avoid all that tricky stuff and focus on some interesting facts: from the kind of tyres your vehicle needs to what the 10-year-old Johnny Dunlop once got for Christmas...

Which wheels?

Road tyres can be divided into four subcategories: summer tyres (1) are what you typically get in South Africa because of our moderate climate.

Winter tyres (2) are popular in the northern hemisphere including Canada and the countries in northern Europe where it snows even in their low-lying regions.

All-season tyres (3) look similar to winter tyres, but they make less noise on tar and often have a longer lifespan.

You'll find high-performance tyres (4) on sports cars – they're not suitable for gravel roads, at all.

With the exception of all-season tyres, such as Goodyear's Vector 4Season tyres, a road tyre really shouldn't be fitted on a serious off-road vehicle.



All-terrain tyres are suitable for almost all surfaces. If you buy a new SUV or bakkie, it will probably be shod with all-terrain tyres.

Some of them are more suited to gravel roads than tar, while others pretty much prefer tar. The spaces between the rubber knobs usually determine how “aggressive” the tyre is.

The more aggressive the tread, the better it performs off road, but aggressive tyres are often noisy on a tarred road, have a longer braking distance and a shorter life span.

All-terrain tyres are a compromise between road and

mud tyres. They’re the logical choice if you spend as much time in the city as you do in the bush.



Mud-terrain tyres have four subcategories: Regular ones (5) are not limited to mud pits, and they work well on boulders, gravel and sand – and tar if you have to.

Sand tyres (6) are intended for dunes. You can identify them by the ribs or paddles across the width of the tread that “rows” through the sand.

Swamp tyres (7) are another extreme form of mud-terrain tyres – as their name implies, they are suitable for more than just a simple mud puddle.

Radical tyres (8) are intended for extreme obstacles where

even baboons need a walking stick. None of the latter three mud tyres have any place on a tarred road. A highway will tear them to shreds. >



What’s in a number?

Let’s take a popular tyre among off-road enthusiasts: The BF Goodrich 265/65 R17 All Terrain T/A KO2 120S. The first figure and letter group on the sidewall is its size. The 265 means the tyre is 265 mm wide; 65 is the thickness of the wall as a percentage of the width, in other words the thickness is 65% of 265 mm (265 mm x 65% = 172 mm). The R17 refers to the inside radius of the tyre (in inches), in other words, this tyre fits a 17” wheel rim.

So why do manufacturers use millimetres and inches? It’s a long story but, in short, American legislation is more concerned with the inside radius (in inches), while European tyre

manufacturers also focus on the tyre’s width (in mm). As America is an important market for tyre manufacturers – and being one of only two countries that still uses inches (the other is Liberia) – manufacturers are forced to keep the inches measurement.

All Terrain T/A KO2 is simply the name and model version of the tyre.

The final numbers and letter on a tyre wall are the load and speed indexes. In this case, the 120 load index determines that this tyre can carry a weight of 1 400 kg per wheel and the S means that the tyres are limited to a safe top speed of 180 km/h. Below is a chart to explain the ratings:

CODE	LOAD	CODE	SPEED
107	975 kg	K	110 km/h
108	1 000 kg	L	120 km/h
109	1 030 kg	M	130 km/h
110	1 060 kg	N	140 km/h
111	1 090 kg	P	150 km/h
112	1 120 kg	Q	160 km/h
113	1 150 kg	R	170 km/h
114	1 180 kg	S	180 km/h
115	1 215 kg	T	190 km/h
116	1 250 kg	U	200 km/h
117	1 285 kg	H	210 km/h
118	1 320 kg	V	240 km/h
119	1 360 kg	W	270 km/h
120	1 400 kg	Y	300 km/h

How do I rotate tyres?

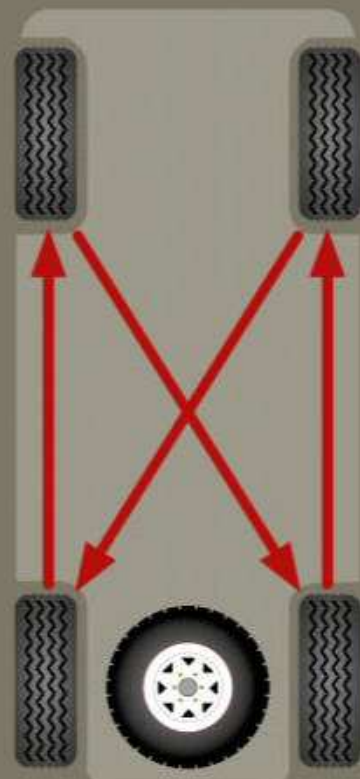
If you want to get the maximum lifespan from tyres, swap them out regularly.

Don't, and they'll wear unevenly and then you'll have to replace one of them well before the rest.

Financially speaking, it may sound like a fine idea to replace them one by one, but the circumference of a new tyre is slightly larger than that of an old one and can put unnecessary strain on your vehicle's differentials.

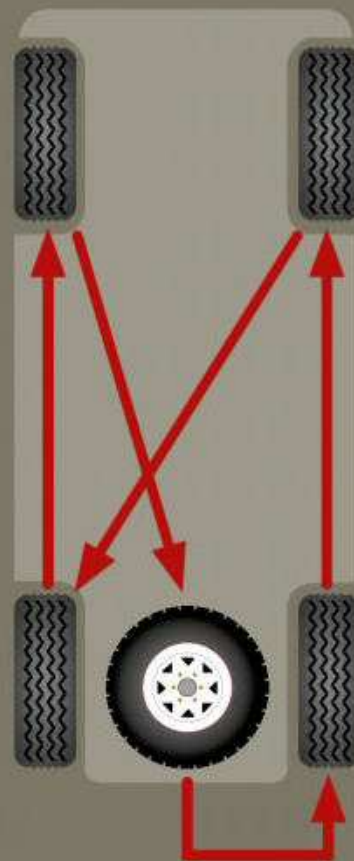
If your tyres have unidirectional tread, rotate them crossways. Left front to right back, right front to left back, left back to right front and right back to left front.

It's also a good idea to include your spare wheel in the rotation, because it won't last forever, even if you never use it. Lift a spare wheel from its bay after 10 years, and you'll discover that the rubber is brittle and full of cracks.

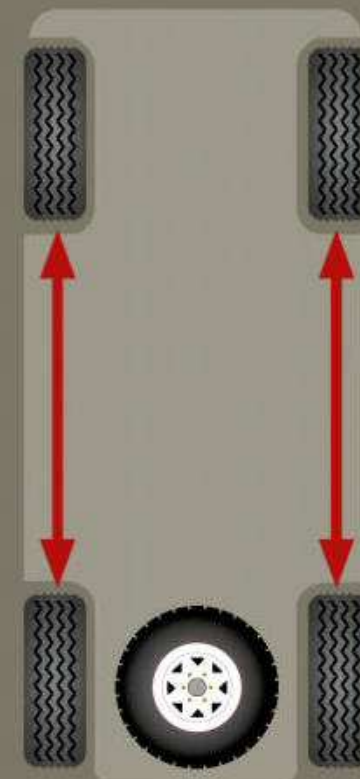


Oxygen is rubber's biggest enemy.

Even if it's covered by a lid or canvas, the air inside the tyre will gradually corrode it from the inside.



If your tyres have directional tread, you can't rotate them crosswise (unless you remove them from their rims), and you can only do left front to left back and right front to right back.



front to right back.

If your spare wheel is a space saver, however, it obviously can't – and shouldn't – be included in the rotation.

TYRE WEAR



LOW TYRE PRESSURE



HIGH TYRE PRESSURE



BAD WHEEL ALIGNMENT



BAD WHEEL ALIGNMENT

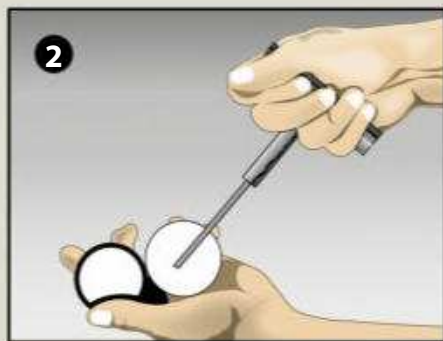
What's up with my tread?

This tyre (A) has more wear at the sides than in the middle. It's a sign that your tyre pressure was too low for long periods of time. Pump them up!

In this illustration, the middle of the tyre (B) has more wear than the sides. This is because the tyre was too pumped up. Reduce the tyre pressure.

If the tread has more wear on the one side than the other (C and D), it means the wheel alignment is out, and you will have to take your bakkie

to a service centre to get it right, pronto.



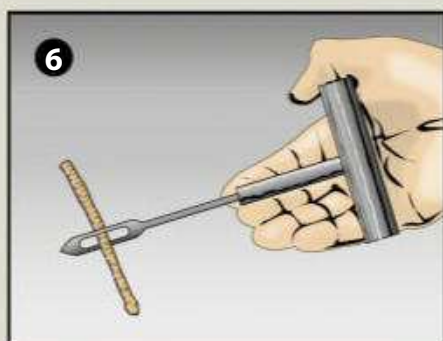
The fix

1. If a nail or some other sharp object is embedded in the tyre, it's surprisingly easy to remove. Simply extract it using a pair of pliers.

2. Certain tyre-repair kits include a tin of lubricant which helps to ease the reamer into the rubber. But you'll find it's not really necessary.

3. Hold the reamer at the same angle that you extracted the nail. You don't need to remove the wheel if you have easy access to the hole.

4. Ream the hole slightly wider and rounder. Don't go crazy and rub the heck out of it lest you fray the steel belt which can cause all sorts of problems.



5. Remove a sticky ribbon from the wrapping. The reason why there are five or six ribbons in a set is because you may need to force several of them into the puncture.

6. Hook the ribbon through the eye of the probe and apply a liberal amount of rubber cement from the tube provided. Don't be economical because once you've opened the tube the contents will set anyway.

7. Press the tip of the probe against the puncture. In one assertive move, jab it deeply into the tyre and pull it out again. The ribbon should remain halfway in the hole. Use more ribbons if it's a loose fit.

8. You can cut the protruding ribbon if it bothers you, or not. By the time you've re-inflated the tyre the glue will have set and you're good to go. A well-practiced guy can perform this repair in 10 minutes or less.



Some history

It's not clear exactly who built the first wheeled carts. Archaeologists believe it happened simultaneously around 3 300 BC in Mesopotamia (Middle East) and The Caucasus (Eastern Europe).

The first wheels were made of wood and were based on the flat potter wheels and millstones that have been in use since the Neolithic era (10 000 to 4 000 BC).

Today, you can still go and view the oldest physical example of an antique wooden wheel in

the Ljubljana City Museum, Slovenia. Laboratory tests place the origin of the "Ljubljana marshes wheel" in the year 3 030 BC.

The first rubber tyre was developed by Scottish vet John Boyd Dunlop in 1887.

Dunlop made the rubber tyre for his 10-year-old Johnny's tricycle (see photo) to soften the bumpy ride.

The rubber tyre, however, had already been patented by Robert William Thomson in 1847, even though Thomson never actually made a physical example himself. 

Far East movement

You can't go wrong when you buy a Japanese towing vehicle, say readers Ben and Nick. This is their second Mitsubishi and Toyota, respectively.

The bigger the better

TOYOTA HILUX 2.8 GD6 DC 4X4 AT

After about two months using its predecessor to tow his Jurgens Elegance, **Ben Ras** from Rustenburg decided to upgrade to a brand-new Toyota Hilux.

“There was very little wrong with my previous **2010 Hilux 3.0 D-4D**, except that the **Elegance** felt a little too heavy for it on the tow bar, and the Toyota felt like it needed a little more power to tow a caravan of that size with ease.

For me, there's no alternative to Toyota so I replaced the D-4D with a **2016 Hilux 2.8 GD6**, brand new for **R550 00** two years ago – though, had my pockets been deep enough then, I would definitely have opted for a Land Cruiser. Otherwise, the problem was solved immediately with my newer

Hilux. The **450 Nm** of torque makes towing a breeze and overtaking is simply done by flexing your right foot. The **automatic transmission** is also very smooth.

I tow between **90 km/h and 110 km/h** and, depending on the conditions and terrain, the Hilux uses between **13 and 17 litres every 100 km**. Without the Elegance hitched, the Toyota averages around **10 litres/100 km**. So far, I've enjoyed every aspect of the ownership



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experience, so can't really complain about anything with regard to the Toyota. Maybe they could offer a wider range of manufacturer-approved accessories though.

I think it all comes down to personal preference when choosing a modern towing vehicle, as so many of them are so far above average. Nothing is bad anymore. For me, if a vehicle is powerful and stable, then that's the two most important boxes ticked already.

I am particularly fond of visiting the **Garden Route** and, when you make a proper road trip of it and drive the length of the **Eastern and Western Cape** provinces, then you get plenty of glimpses of the ocean and lots of mountain passes to climb.



Twice bitten

MITSUBISHI PAJERO 3.2 DI-D SWB

He's towed with his family sedan, a BMW 545i but, for **Nick Lubbe** from Hartenbos, a Mitsubishi Pajero is all he'll ever need for 4x4 adventures and towing excursions. He loves them so much, he's even had two.

“I've owned a **Pajero** before and you really have to nit-pick to find any issues with one. I've owned this one for three years now and the previous one for seven years. I bought this **3.2 Di-D SWB** second-hand for **R350 000**. The Pajero ticks plenty of boxes because, for me, a towing vehicle must not only be trustworthy and powerful, but also easy on the eye. I looked at the BMW X3 and X5, but the Pajero won my heart once again.

Although the Pajero is a short-wheelbase model, it weighs in at more than **2 000 kg** and has a fantastic engine and chassis, so it tows my **2013 Jurgens Fleetline** without any problems. The **441 Nm** torque peak makes light work of the Jurgens and, with **140 kW** on tap, you can easily maintain **120 km/h**.

You pay for all that grunt at the pumps though, because the Pajero averages around



14,7 ℓ/100 km with the Fleetline hitched. But that number comes down to **9 ℓ/100 km** without a caravan on the tow bar.

The Pajero's suspension is slightly harsh when driving on dirt roads, but it does feel indestructible. I can see why it's won the Dakar Rally so many times.

We've camped all over South Africa, but our favourites include **Mabalingwe Nature Reserve, Storms River Mouth Rest Camp, Buffalo Bay Caravan Park, Ebb-and-Flow, Jongensfontein Caravan Park and Silwerstrand Caravan Park**. They all have beautiful scenery, decent ablution facilities and five-star campsites. ”



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WINNING PHOTO

Fair-weather friends

Landscape pics are one of the more difficult photography genres as you have no control over the elements of nature. When the weather plays along though, striking images can be the result. Three readers took advantage of ideal conditions by the water.

By Leon Botha

Still waters run deep

As a microbiologist, he usually keeps track of the world through his microscope but, the day the wind stopped on the slopes of the Limietberg, Ivan Harris of Wellington was ready.

"I took this photo two years ago at the Bobby Harris Dam on our farm, Palmiet Valley, outside Wellington. When I saw the still waters and reflection, I stopped immediately to capture the moment. You seldom see such a wind still day against the Limietberg. I could not fit the whole scene into one frame and used my phone's panoramic setting to get the whole mountain and dam in one image."

A number of photo formats, including the 35mm camera format, have been established over the years.

The "35mm" comes from the days of film, when the negative was 36 x 24 mm. These dimensions give an aspect ratio between the long and short sides of 3: 2. The long side of the image is thus one third longer than the width. For photos, you're therefore used to this format today so, when an image deviates from this, it immediately catches your attention.

Ivan's image is a good example – this long format is known as panoramic. If the lens with which you want to capture the scene isn't wide enough, there are other techniques to get it right. You could, for example, break up the scene into sections and take different pictures that you then add to one another with software on your computer to make a single pic. Today's smartphones, however, have a built-in

panoramic feature, and this is the mode Ivan has used. You move the phone lens slowly from one side to the other while the phone stores the info as one picture.

This format is therefore a good starting point for an interesting photo but the subject should be something worthy of attention, of course. When looking at Ivan's photo, he uses the format to full advantage. The long format underlines the stretched out mountains. Furthermore, the mountains' reflection emphasises the mountains themselves and looks almost like two wrinkled hands and outstretched arms pushing together.

The shore portion to the left breaks the reflection, but it doesn't disturb – rather it balances the dry river bed to the far right of the photo.



On reflection...

While camping, Flooris and Esther Visagie of Kimberley gather beautiful scenes for the family album.

"We're pensioners and avid campers. We've just returned from two months of camping – we spent a month at Forever Swadini and the Henk van Rooyen resort in Marloth Park. At Swadini, we were lucky enough to go on a boat trip on the Blyderivierpoort Dam. The nature around us was truly beautiful. It was autumn and the leaves of the trees had already started to change colour."

This is quite a double image – without the reflection, the picture loses its artistic appeal. But Flooris balances the top and reflecting area almost 100% and



Samsung Galaxy A5;
3,69 mm lens (28 mm
in 35 mm format); f2.



Fujifilm FinePix SL 1000;
4,3 mm (24 mm in 35 mm
format); 1/550 of a second;
f2,9; ISO 100.

ensures balance in the photo. As a rule, be careful about placing a composite element right in the middle of an image, as it can render a picture less dynamic and even boring. In this case, it enhances the picture and both "sides" of the image are of equal size. You actually get a second chance (and another angle) to look at all the details of nature.

If you want to play with it on the computer, you could make the reflection section lighter so that it balances with the top. You can also get rid of the slightly blue tint by increasing the colour temperature. But, there is nothing wrong with Flooris's photo. Well done!

A busy silence

There's no way Merandi Millard of Port Owen could let the early morning pastel colours pass without capturing it.

"I took this photo at Saldanha Bay early one morning. We slept that night on a boat that was moored in the harbour. The morning when I got up, I saw the reflection of the boats in the water, and the extraordinary colours were so beautiful I just had to capture it."

As with Ivan and Flooris's photographs, the reflections in Merandi's photo also emphasise what's important. It looks almost as if the masts stitch together the reflection and the upper part. Even though you see a lot

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to us and we might publish it here. We're not looking for those traditional "competition winners", simply ordinary images you find beautiful. From the one you immediately post as your new Facebook cover pic to kids playing in the pool. Whether it was taken with a big DSLR camera or your cellphone, it doesn't matter. **IVAN HARRIS wins a Camp Cover camera bag to the value of R520 – congratulations!**

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of boats, your eye knows where to look: it goes up and down from the side, mast to mast. You could compare it to the seismic lines on the Richter scale – an element that gives the "quiet" picture life.

You'd think the land behind the masts would be disturbing as it draws a wide stripe through them, but it is a lighter shade than the masts that actually

adds depth to the image.

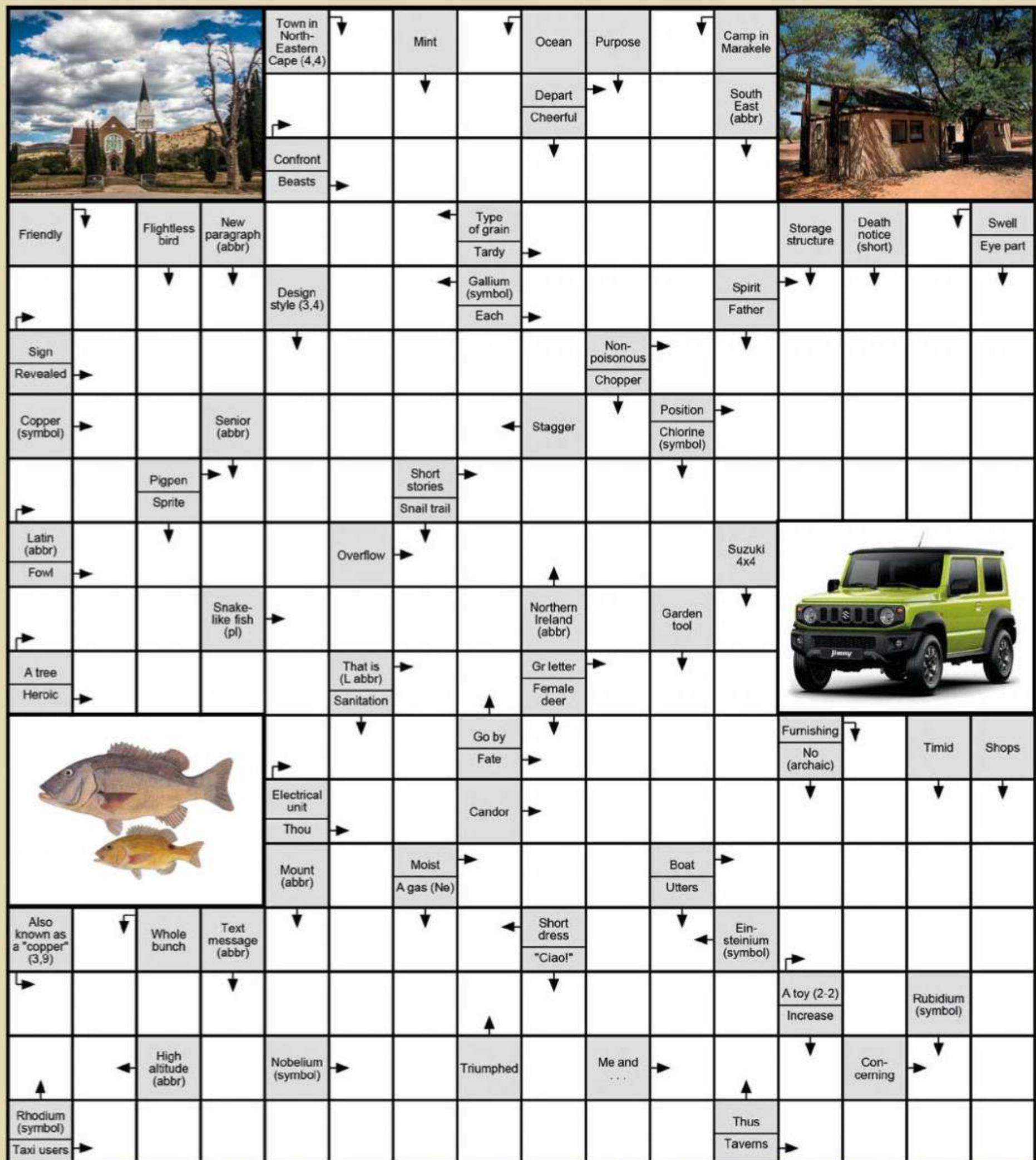
You could make the shadow sections even darker if you wanted to kick things up a notch, which, in turn, would brighten the colours. 📸

Samsung S9 Plus; 4,2 mm
(26 mm in 35 mm format); 1/25
of a second; f1,7; ISO 250.



CROSSWORD

Well done, **Martie Jacobs** from Klein Brak River. You have won **Van Loveren's Tangled Tree** wine for your correct entry in the crossword competition in our September 2018 edition. If you want to win like Martie, simply complete the crossword, take a picture of it, and e-mail it to us at  **drivecamp@gomag.co.za**. Remember to include your contact details. Or simply complete it online at **<https://bit.ly/2NwLZaL>**. The solution to last month's crossword puzzle is on p.121.



COMPILED BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

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Lionel Lewis saw how many people are going bigger than ever with their 4x4 builds. And we all know that your tyres and rims are the features on your vehicle that gives it a certain look and presence. Lionel's history and 10 years of experience at Smith Wheels in his younger days, combined with his passion for the off-road industry, influenced his decision to set up a specialised off-road tyre-fitment and wheel-alignment bay at LA Sport Pretoria. LA Sport Pretoria is situated in Steve Biko Street Pretoria and is the original LA Sport 4WD Megastore that opened in 1991. This new venture will enable LA Sport Pretoria to offer its clients a one-stop off-road experience in Pretoria.

To enhance your experience even more, we're excited to share the news that Gas Monkey Pub and Grill will be opening at LA Sport Pretoria in October 2018. Now, all petrolheads can have a meal or a cold one while waiting for your fitment to be done.



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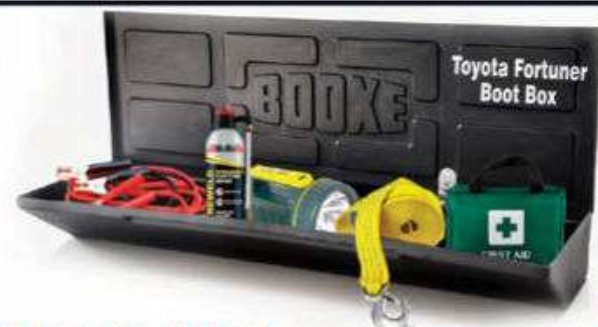


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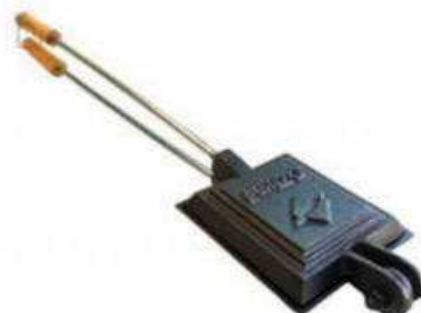
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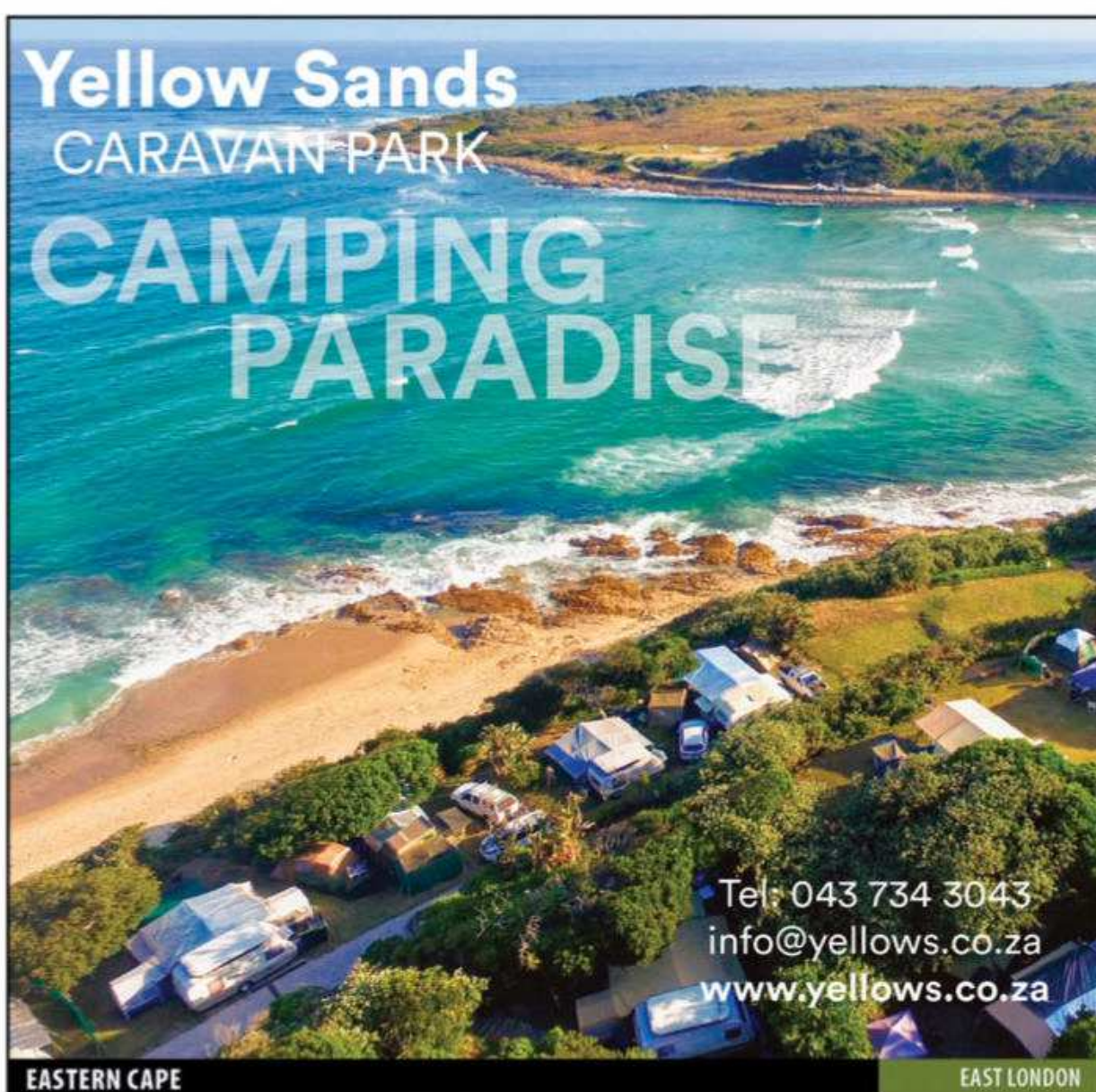



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Stay in your lane

A bad day at the office can be very expensive, or even life-threatening, when you don't know what you're doing as a motoring journalist, says Kyle Kock.

Although most of the scribes of the automotive industry would like to think of themselves as somewhere between Joe Public's ability behind the wheel and the upper echelons of motorsport such as World Rally Cross, Formula 1 or Dakar, I'm going to throw a spanner in the works by saying that the vast majority of us are certainly not God's gift to driving – especially when surfaces other than tar come into play.

Yes, many motoring journalists model themselves after a hero of theirs. You know, Michael Schumacher or Sarel van der Merwe. But that only serves us so far, because most motoring journalists are limited to the blacktop – that's tarmac to the layman.

Of course, 10 years ago I didn't know this. For me, this was the industry of my dreams. After all, what teenage male with 98 high-octane unleaded in his veins wouldn't want to play with all the latest cars on the markets, and get paid, *nogal*?

Sure, exposure to 700 horsepower hyper cars, and hot hatchbacks on a regular basis means that one's tolerance for G-force is higher than most. And, in the pursuit of exploring each vehicle's different tolerances, boundaries get pushed. But those who push the limits soon discover that the limits push back...

I QUICKLY DISCOVERED that when I accompanied some of my colleagues on a photo shoot in the Atlantis Dunes. Four motor journalists and two photographers set out from Cape Town and headed for the picturesque white sands of the West Coast in a navy-blue Audi Q5 and champagne-hued Jeep Patriot.

We weren't too sure how the city-slicker SUVs would fare on the soft surface, but

we were positive the images would look absolutely fantastic.

Before we passed through the gate, we lowered the tyre pressures to about 1,4 bar, certain that those figures were low enough for what we were planning to do that day. I mean, it's not like we came to do a proper 4x4 excursion around here. The plan was to just go in, get the shots and get out.

So, we're driving around looking for the ideal backdrop for an opening spread (this was a comparative test featuring these two vehicles), when suddenly the Jeep starts to lose momentum. The driver naively floors it, thinking the Jeep's 50:50 split all-wheel drive will do the trick of pulling us out, but to no avail. The Patriot looks a lot less proud lying on its belly in the sand.

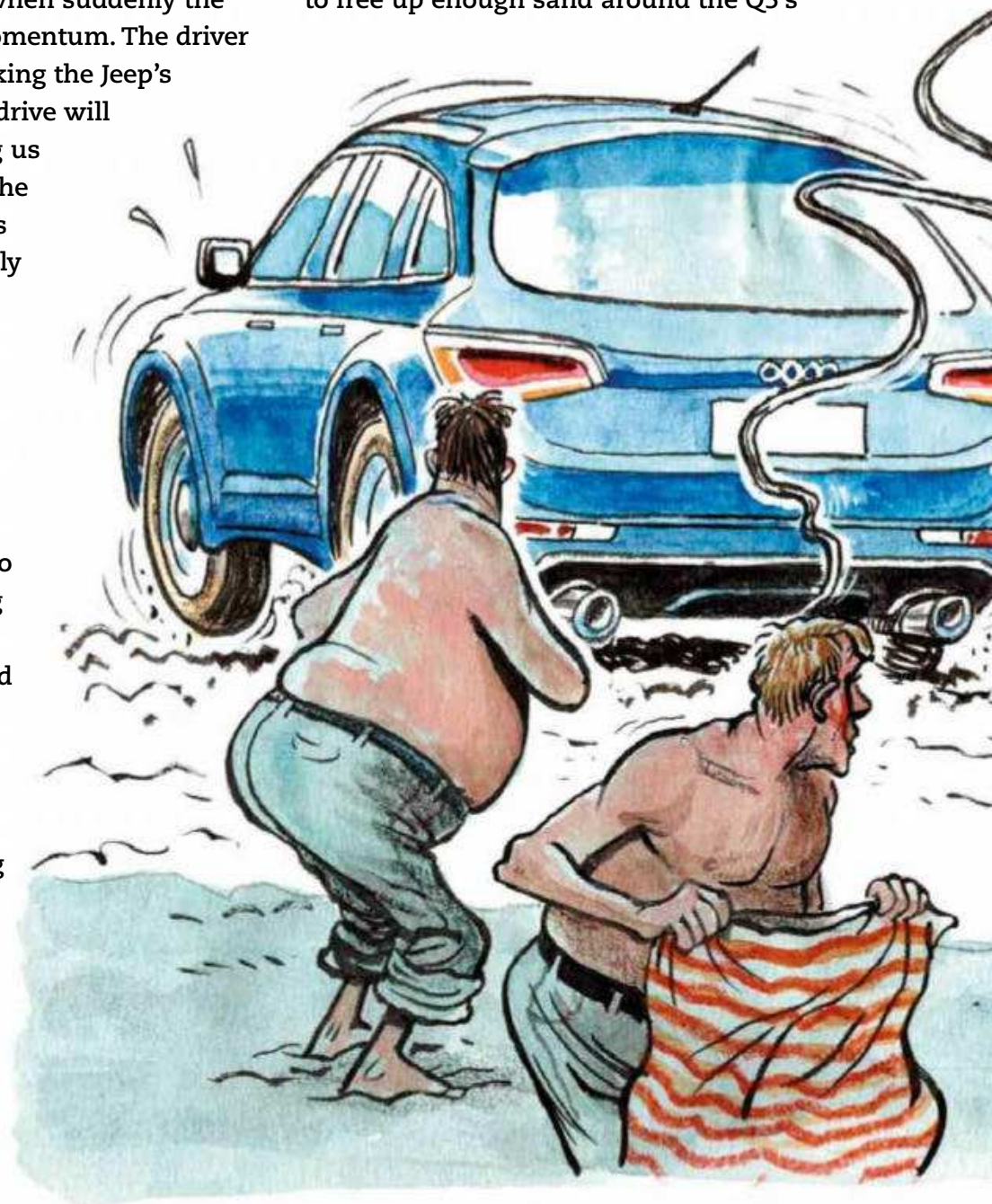
Some bright spark remembers a towing cable and hook in the Q5, and suggests that perhaps Audi's legendary Quattro all-wheel drive will do a better job of pulling the Yank out. But the weight of the Jeep and the powdery surface only meant that the Q5 started digging itself in deeper. Eventually, a warning that the automatic gearbox was overheating popped up on the Audi's TFT instrument display.

"We in a real mess now guys," pipes

up the team leader. "Perhaps we should call someone back at the office to ask for the Isuzu KB long-term to be brought through..."

Deciding to spare the older guys back in Cape Town the schlep of getting all the way to Atlantis for a recovery, we strip our T-shirts from our backs and shoes off our feet so we can start using hands and feet to dig the vehicles out (of course, we hadn't arrived with recovery equipment).

A good 20 minutes of sweating and plenty of expletives later, we manage to free up enough sand around the Q5's



wheels to allow it enough momentum to roll along, but the guy behind the wheel decides to give pulling the Jeep out another shot. Now, in hindsight, doing that kind of run-up with a steel cable was a pretty stupid thing to do. As you would expect, the cable snaps, with the guys ducking, jumping and diving out of the way. The Jeep is undamaged, but we scarred the Audi's rear bumper. And we all get out of it with our limbs still attached to our bodies.

At least we get back to the office with really cool images, seeing as we used the Audi's other side in all the photographs, but the editor is none too impressed, as he has to be the one to call Audi and explain the bumper damage.

I learnt an important lesson that day: not all SUVs are created equal.

THAT WAS THE start of my 4x4 education. A hard-earned what-not-to-do. But, as my career progressed, I started having fun off the beaten track. I jumped at the opportunities to learn more about off-road driving, including doing a leg of the Spirit of Africa in a Mitsubishi Triton, driving the then-new Amarok

automatic in the Namibian dunes, and rock-hopping with Jeep's Wrangler in the proving grounds of Moab, Utah – aptly named Hell's Revenge.

But some of my colleagues weren't so keen to do the boring stuff. Everyone wanted to go fast. And jumped at the chance to drive a fast car on flowing B-roads in the country-side or special sections of highway where the authorities turn a blind eye.

On another outing to the Atlantis dunes, I made sure I was behind the wheel of a really capable little climber – Suzuki's Jimny. We were running up the side of a particularly steep dune and someone dug in halfway up with a Toyota FJ Cruiser, which wasn't an issue. One more attempt would prove successful, but some other bright spark chose a different line, not wanting to tread the soft sand churned up by the Toyota.

But he didn't take into account that this fresh section required a bit more of an approach angle than what was offered by his Subaru Forester and proceeded to smash the Forester's nose into the sand, completely destroying the front bumper and damaging the grille.

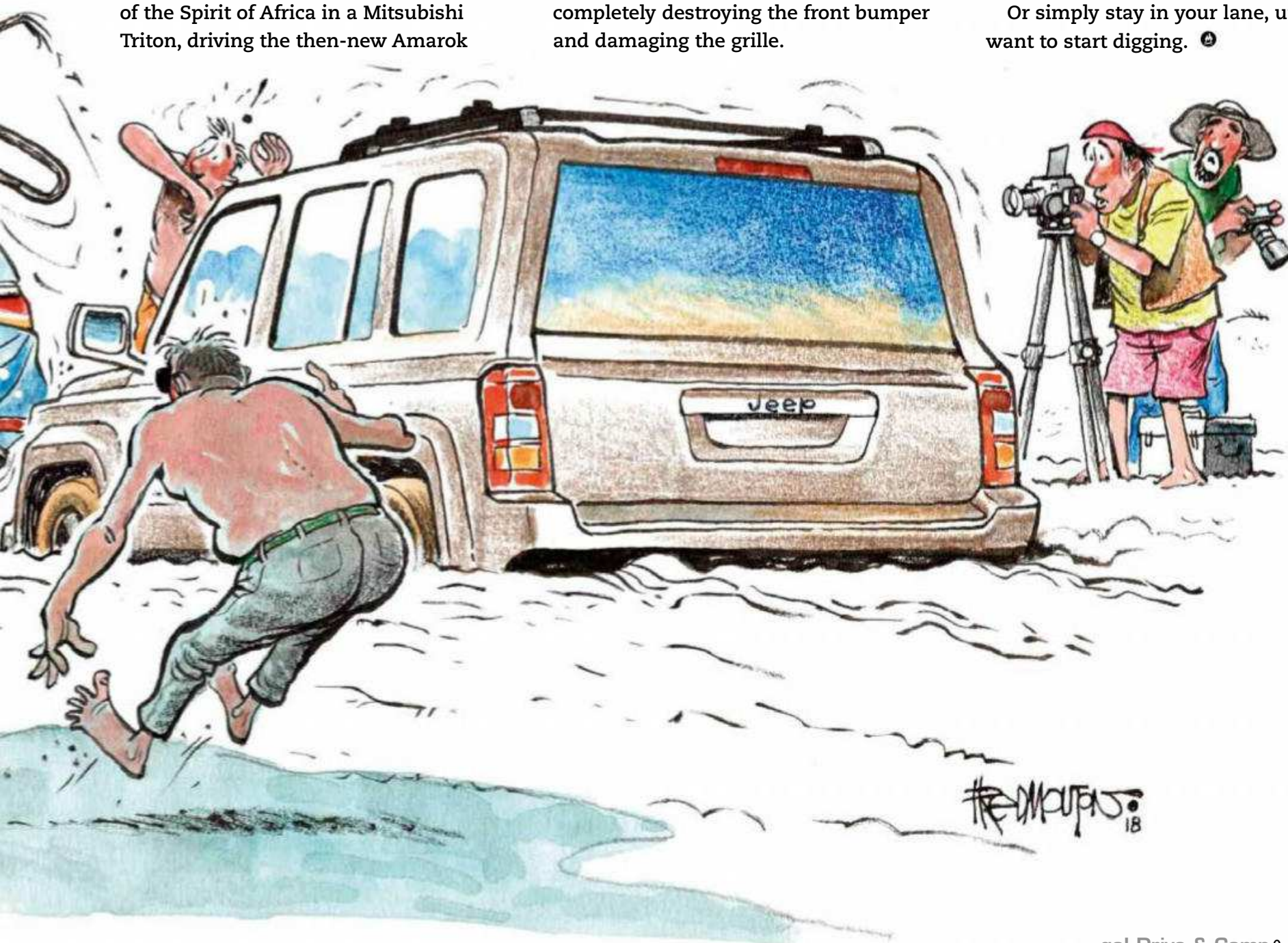
Don't get me wrong, I'm still comfortable flinging a sports car around Killarney, but I have a healthy respect for 4x4 driving. I joined a local bunch of 4x4 instructors on a trip to Baboon's Pass, fully expecting to build the road up the rocky inclines for hours on end, but we were lucky – the conditions were favourable and nobody did anything stupid.

To this day, the one surface I am most cautious on is sand – just because of what I've seen happen. These days, when the going gets tough, I stick to what I know, or hand over the reins to someone with more experience. I stay in my lane. I know I'm no Dakar winner like Giniel de Villiers, and I'm not trying to prove it either!

BUT AS YOU know, because you're in possession of a copy of this magazine, there are some places that you just have to see with your own eyes because someone else's pic doesn't do it justice.

For some, a front-wheel-drive-favouring city SUV with decent ground clearance will do, but otherwise go equipped with at least a lockable rear diff and low-range.

Or simply stay in your lane, unless you want to start digging. 🚗





Already well known in local customising circles for his massively modified Ford F-250 and hot-rodded Honda S2000, Fred Hardy from Benoni wanted to indulge his motorcycling passion with something really special.



“I’ve been riding motorcycles for more than 30 years – specifically, Honda’s luxurious Gold Wing models for 25 of those. I also design and build trikes that use the Gold Wing as a base. With other custom builds already under my belt, my creative side started itching to do something really challenging.

An Internet image of an Australian-built custom trike really caught my eye, and I decided then and there to try and replicate it as much as possible. I started the process in January 2017, using the resources of my company in Kempton Park, EM Truck Bodies.

Knowing that I would be towing a caravan, in this case a 2017 Sherpa Rambler that weighs about 900 kg, I used mostly steel in the trike’s construction so that it would meet the legal requirements. It weighs in at 1 285 kg.

The 4,0 litre V8 engine and five-speed automatic transmission was sourced from an E34 series BMW 540i. I wanted a bit more oomph, so I had the motor fitted with

twin custom-made turbochargers that take the peak outputs up to around 320 kW and 508 Nm on 0,5 bar boost. It took just over a year and two months to build the trike from the ground up, and to also develop and tune the power train. I dubbed it the Viper Trike.

You really need a combination of intestinal fortitude and calm nerves to be able to stay safe behind the handlebars. Just to keep the experience sane, I ride around on the low-boost setting of 0,2 bar boost, which produces 180 kW and 310 Nm because, on high boost, the front wheel can easily be lifted when you use too much throttle. From the 60 l fuel tank in the boot I get about 400 km.

Because of its size and the plush BMW suspension system, it’s actually quite comfortable to ride on the freeway. Cruising at 120 km/h is a breeze and, because of the power-to-weight ratio, you hardly feel the Sherpa, which is hitched to a standard BMW tow bar.

Part of the fun is being able to ride this

trike with passengers. Three people can be seated behind the rider up front. I had the racing seats recovered in genuine leather and the three passengers in the back are kept entertained by a six-speaker sound system – or simply the mind-blowing acceleration.

In the past few months the Trike’s won two trophies, even though this vehicle wasn’t built just for shows. I’ve also camped with this combination in Hammanskraal. This particular Sherpa is very manoeuvrable even for one person, but comes fitted with a double bed, fridge, outside kitchen, plenty of storage space and a fully equipped bathroom.



Have you spotted any wacky wheels on your travels? Tell us about it and send a photo to drivecamp@gomag.co.za or go! Drive & Camp, PO Box 740, Cape Town 8000



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