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JULY 2018 | ISSUE 12

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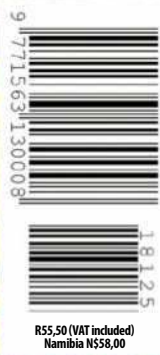
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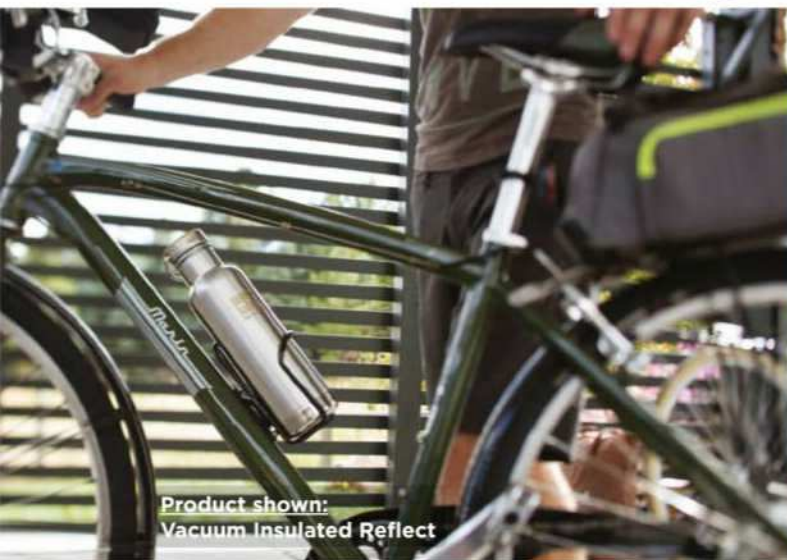
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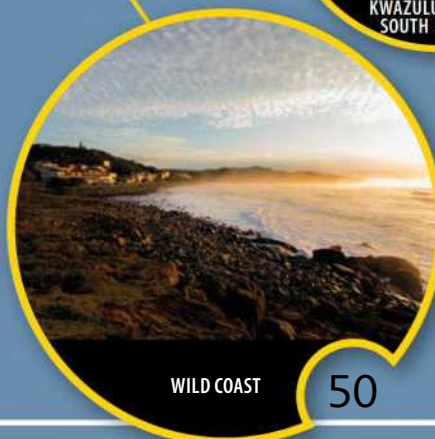
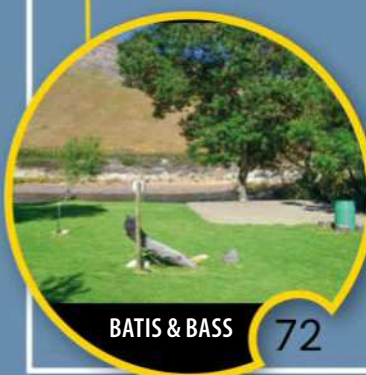


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DRIVING IMPRESSIONS



50

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Winter is coming



It's July, and this deep winter we find ourselves in is unpleasant, to say the least. Yes, I know there are people who find the cold enchanting and wax lyrical about cosy campfires, a hot stew and a glass of decent red wine or glühwein, but I'm definitely not one of them.

To me it verges on a human rights violation when the alarm sounds when it's still pitch-black outside. And after hitting the snooze button twice, finally dragging myself out of bed and getting showered and dressed, I have the unenviable business of getting my seven-year-old daughter out of bed. It's a thankless task, because how do you convince her that she's going to be late for school if it's

obviously still dark outside?

And then by the time you get home from work, it's dark again. So no thanks, you can keep your fireplace, stew and glühwein. That game is not worth the candle.

But, unfortunately, that's how it is for most of us. There is some relief, though, in the almost month-long school holiday during which you can escape to parts of the country where the weather gods are a bit more compassionate.

The KwaZulu-Natal coast is one such place, and we gave Zigi the task of visiting three campsites in the Margate area. Here you can relax in your swimming costume, T-shirt and flip-flops and your kids can splash around in the waves, even in July and August. In a place like this the bitter cold Gauteng winter really feels like a lifetime away.

The Wild Coast is another good winter destination to tackle with your off-roader, and we sent Evan north on the Wild Coast 4x4 Eco Trail to explore the area from Kei Mouth to Port St. Johns. He came back with loads of info on hidden beaches, back roads, nature reserves and coastal towns.

So, don't let the cold get you down. Hitch your caravan, pack your off-roader, and programme your GPS to take you in an easterly direction to the coast.

Safe travels!

Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com

“

You see, a donkey doesn't give a damn about a vehicle. He won't even lift his eyebrows, let alone a leg to get out of your way.

p.54



Cover photo (Wild Coast) Evan Naudé

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GOLDEN MEMORIES

I refer to the article about Tweede Tol in the May issue. It made me reflect on our carefree camping days more than 50 years ago, also at Tweede Tol.

Our family – my parents, Dave and Jo, my brother, Wynand, and I, along with the family of my mother's sister, Suzie van Staden, husband Van and their daughters, Celia and Juliet – regularly camped at Tweede Tol during December holidays. That was between 1953 and 1966.

The stands were not cordoned off, and those who arrived early had first pick. Uncle Van went early in December to pitch our two tents. He drove all the way from Paarl in his Morris Minor 1000. The tents were made of white canvas with heavy wooden poles to keep it upright, with four anchor ropes and another eight ropes for the sides. We slept on old army cots or thin sponge mattresses on the ground.

Aunt Suzie would preserve all the meat products with curry powder so it would last



the whole holiday. The meat was kept in a safe in the campsite – which was basically a canvas bag that hung from a tree with water seeping through to keep the inside cold.

Of course, we braaied every day. We put the other perishable foods in citrus bags that we collected during the year and then put in the stream at the campsite. The water was easily just as cold as a fridge.

Everyone lived in their swimming costumes. There were no ablution facilities and the regular dips in the pools across the road were our baths.

Celia and Juliet once brought their boyfriends, guys they eventually married: Dougie Turley and Fanie Geldenhuys. They taught Wynand and myself to play poker.

On New Year's Eve, right through to the next day, we danced in the hall. The camp official in those days was a guy named Bresler, who later became the Tafelberg Nature Reserve's caretaker.

JOHAN BAUER
Centurion



SHE GOES THE EXTRA MILE

I'd like to write a few words about Everness Mthalaza who helped us in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. On our tour we visited the isolated Mabuasehube, Sizatswe, Swartpan, Thupapedi, and the Kaa Gate. At the Kaa Gate my eldest son, Xavier, was worried about how much fuel he had left in his 1996-model Toyota 2.4 bakkie. We asked for help and Everness saved us. This place is between nothing and nowhere, and the Kaa Gate is only an

office as control point where you enter Botswana through the park. We left two of our jerry cans with Everness (with money for fuel) which we would come to pick up later.

After two days we were back and the jerry cans were filled to the brim. She even had a receipt and change. Now that's service. Thanks, Everness.

NIC DU TOIT
Veldrif



Winning letter

Johan wins Jaguar outdoor shoes worth R699. It's time to get outside and live an adventure every day. The HI-TEC Jaguar's design include a durable synthetic and mesh upper for maximum durability. These shoes were made to last, with a

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ESELBANK? BRING MY OLD CHICO...

I refer to *go! Drive & Camp's* ratings of 4x4 trails where I manage just as well with my 4x2 bakkie.

We tackled the long dirt road from the Free State to the Cape. We drove in my Isuzu KB250 4x2 bakkie and the first section went through Kimberley, Prieska and Copperton, where the dirt road begins, through Brandvlei, Van Wyksvlei and Loeriesfontein. The road was so good I easily reached nearly 120 km/h.

We slept over at the foot of the Pakhuis Pass outside Clanwilliam in the Cederberg. The next day we made it to Wupperthal and considered tackling the Eselbank Pass next. We read that you need a 4x4, or at least a diff lock. If we get to a place where we can't go on, we'll turn around, we decided. My wife, Tertia, had a big rock on her lap so she could jump out quickly and put it behind the wheel should we start to slide. I kept my finger near the diff lock button while the Isuzu easily crawled up the hill in second gear. I remembered that with the diff lock engaged the tail can swing towards the slope if the wheels should spin. You should rather stop if things get dangerous. The bakkie's tail was light without a load or canopy, which meant the wheels had less grip.

Suddenly it looked like we'd reached the summit, but no, could it be? Yes, we had reached the top. Next to the road were foreign tourists in a Toyota Prado, with one of the axles broken. They drove the whole way with an engaged diff lock.

I will easily tackle Eselbank in my old Chico. You just need to keep your eyes open for rocks that can scratch the underside of the vehicle. I think people are put off by prescribed "ground clearance, diff locks, and 4x4 requirements".

NAAS VENTER
Steynsrus

Naas, we hear you what you're saying, but because there is no official standard rating system for 4x4 trails, we use our own five-star rating system for our readers. We've learnt by now that it's better to have a conservative approach to ratings because not everyone will think using a Chico is a good idea. Other publications' rating of the same trail might differ from ours, but we try to judge it as fairly as possible, with the emphasis on safety. – Ed



ONE PROBLEM, MANY HANDS



Our long-awaited April holiday finally arrived and as per usual we hit the road to the ATKV resort Natalia.

Just outside Pietermaritzburg, the Penta gave a sudden jolt. I looked in the rear-view mirror and saw smoke coming from behind the right wheel. I immediately pulled over and saw the caravan's wheel had come off and lay 100 m down in the road. A friendly courier driving past brought me the wheel. A guy called Frans lent a hand so I could lift the caravan and remove the remaining brake section from the axle. Frans was pressed for time and headed off.

Meanwhile, two friendly traffic officials stopped to regulate the traffic, making things safer at the caravan. We googled and saw that the nearby Midlands Caravans & Campworld would be able to help with parts. The one official was nice enough to drop me off at Midlands. Mandy, Leon and Mitch Assy joined forces and with all the necessary parts I could fix the Penta. Mitch suggested we bring the caravan to Midlands so they could check it properly. Here the friendly staff went over and above to help, and after a cup of coffee and a chat we were back on the road. Thanks to everyone at Natalia for the warm welcome, the leftover braai meat was most welcome.

JAN BENDER
Johannesburg

Light 'em up

f LED light bars have come under fire again recently. Do you have any fitted or do you know of someone who lights up the streets of suburbia when the sun hasn't even set yet? Have you been pulled over by the authorities?



Brandon Danks

I have one fitted. It sits below my headlights and works with a separate switch. I'm saddened by the negative attention they're getting as it is an absolute asset on South African roads at night. Negotiating potholes, livestock and rock throwers with factory-fitted lights is not pleasant. Until there's more clarity about the use of auxiliary lights, my LED bar will stay put. It's unfortunate that laws can't keep up with technology.



Gerhard du Toit

People who are visually impaired should not be allowed to be behind the wheel in the first place.



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Dawie van der Merwe

Well, there are people who abuse the stuff on public road and even in town. Some truck owners also have them installed on their vehicles and the drivers keep them switched on and don't seem to care what happens to you if you get blinded. So I'll be glad if those are banned. If you're going to drive in the veld and use them, then by all means go ahead.



Barry van der Linde

I think some people are one-track minded. You should have enough common sense to realise that if the things are used responsibly they do have a place. For security reasons it's quite helpful, or if you've ever had to drive through Botswana at night. Some people from our country just can't handle it if someone else's light is sharper and brighter than theirs.



Nico Landman

This is fantastic news. Armed response and security personnel also drive around with the brightest LEDs these days. Some of them even have them pointed backward in the evening. Unbelievable!



Ben Moll

And the point is?

COMMENT OF THE MONTH!

Chinese vehicle manufacturer BAIC announced that it's going to start building cars in Port Elizabeth. Also in the pipeline are self-driving vehicles for our local market.

Johan du Toit They'd better be bloody good if they're going to be dodging minibus taxis.



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Shedding light on the matter

Light bars and the legality of lights fitted to vehicles have recently shot into the legal spotlight and it's time to engage with the authorities, says Mic van Zyl.

We sold around R100 000 worth of lights and light bars at last year's Nampo Harvest Day. At this year's show, we sold all of four lights. So, what's changed?

Just about everybody who visited the Ironman 4x4 stand wanted to know what was happening with the legislation around lights and light bars. Some visitors accused us of selling illegal lights. They even insisted that we should be held responsible for the fines they received from having our light bars fitted to their vehicles.

Light bars and the legality of lights fitted to vehicles have recently shot into the legal spotlight (pun intended) for some reason. I'm guessing it's because these lights have become increasingly popular.

The biggest issue with all of this, however, is the fact that the traffic police who are enforcing these laws are for the most part in the dark when it comes to the technicalities.

Trouble first started brewing in Namibia and then in Botswana and even Zimbabwe. Then local authorities started to pull people over in SA demanding the removal of light bars and spotlights. In some cases, licence

discs were removed from cars and vehicles removed from public roads. It has all become a bit of a mess and it begs the question as to why such police focus is not applied to other more important facets of road safety like unlicensed drivers and unroadworthy vehicles.

THERE ARE A number of fundamental laws pertaining to white lights on the front of your vehicle if you use it on a public road. You may not have more than six, they may not be installed higher than the leading edge of the bonnet, they may not break the vertical centre line of the vehicle, they must be installed in pairs (two, four or six lights), and they may not be rated higher than 55 watts, depending on which book you read.

So, no bar lights across the middle of the vehicle, no lights on top of the bull bar centre hoop, and definitely no lights on your roof or roof rack.

We are an importer and distributor of spotlights that use halogen, HID and LED light sources covering traditional round spotlights as well as the newer style of light bars. We are naturally concerned about the current legal situation and the effects on our customers. We sell light bars to boat owners, plane owners, farmers, hunters, nature conservationists, police, rescue, mining – a plethora of people and organisations that use our

lights in applications that are not affected by or covered by the road law.

IT'S THEREFORE incorrect to refer to our lights as being illegal due to the fact that it is illegal to use them in certain applications on a road vehicle. While we are within our right to import and sell these lights, we are under no obligation to regulate the use of the light. It is up to you as the purchaser of the light to ensure that you use it legally.

There is also some contention as to the legality of using lights that use LEDs, whether they are round spotlights or not. The big issue with all of this, however, is the fact that the traffic police who are enforcing these laws are for the most part in the dark (*the puns write themselves – Ed*) when it comes to the technicalities of the laws surrounding spotlights.

The good news is in the USA and Australia the road laws have been amended to accommodate this technology. Ironman 4x4 Africa has undertaken to engage with authorities to attempt to do the same here in Southern Africa. This is going to be an interesting process. Hold thumbs. 🍀

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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That's a cool whatchamacalit!

There's nothing wrong with more technologically driven ways of camping, but it shouldn't dominate our camping experiences, says Neels van Heerden.

In the Eighties and Nineties the late Afrikaans celebrity Pieter Pieterse introduced the word “meghêtertjie” (which is diminutive slang for a mechanism) into the Afrikaans vernacular with his TV shows and books about cooking and travel. These shows and books served as snippets of his life story and his caravan, recipes and funny stories were the main characters.

He was blessed with the ability to create wonderful dishes with only a few ingredients and spices. His books had colourful stories about chefs, campers and fishermen. And there was always a healthy

his Ingilsman camped self-sufficiently out in the sticks. In his stories he often referred to various thingamabobs. But who knows what this concept actually means?

THESE DAYS PEOPLE use “thingamabobs” to describe any new device, and I believe our current way of camping is dominated by these thingamajigs. The smartphone – something that didn't exist in Pieter's time – is a good example. No one goes camping without one because it's a phone, torch and field guide in one.

With regards to modern caravan design, there are very few gizmos that really improve the camping experience. LED technology and a bigger dependence on electrical appliances have become common practice, but luckily modern fridges are more environmentally friendly and use less electricity. Fairly recently induction plates hit the market and the newest Jurgens caravans have done away with gas stoves entirely. Why did it take such a long time to realise that people want to cook inside their caravans?

When the outside kitchen was added to the bigger models in the Sprite range seven years ago it initially didn't receive much traction. But there has since been a complete 180 and these days there are a handful

of workshops that will build an outside kitchen for just about any caravan.

JUST BE CAREFUL when you consider it. When you cut a hole in a caravan panel it can weaken the structure. I warned one of my friends against this the other day when he wanted to put a sliding bed in his Sunway.

Early in May I saw a tri-axle Pzazz with two double-door fridges on the outside at the Bosveld Oase. Occasionally I've seen a few micro-fridges and freezers sold at eccentric dealers which according to me would work better in smaller caravans.

Air con is definitely a gimmick; I believe it's a status symbol and a waste of electricity.

If you're interested, see if you can find some of Pieter's books and DVDs of his TV shows at a thrift shop or flea market – they have great advice for wannabe divers, fishermen and seafood chefs and it's relevant reading and watching material when you're camping. He also loved to talk about his interactions with nature. What will always stay with me is how he managed to lead a life fit for a king with very few gadgets (a tub of Maggi Fondor and a wonky portable braai was all he needed).

There's nothing wrong with high-tech ways of camping, but it should never dominate our camping experience. 📱

The smartphone – something that didn't exist in Pieter's time – is a good example. No one goes camping without one because it's a phone, torch and field guide in one.

dose of tips on what to do in the town or region he wrote about. In short, he was a national treasure.

Later, the “Ingilsman”, as Pieter called his English-speaking wife, joined him and in subsequent books he shared numerous anecdotes in which he and

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Camp in the bush at Dinokeng

Dinokeng, the only Big Five reserve in Gauteng, has added another privately owned campsite.

Devon and Sherri Symons have laid out five stands on their 42 ha property in the bush and named it after their sons, Kyran and Leuan. What makes the Kyleu Bush Camp special is that neither the stands nor the campsite is fenced in. You can easily imagine you're sitting in the Okavango where wild animals – like lions – can walk past your stand at any time. And, you're a good 40 m away from your neighbours, which means you're never really aware of other campers.

Each stand has its own bathroom with shower, toilet and basin, but there isn't 220 V electricity. LED lights at the ablutions that work with solar panels ensure you can see where you're going at night.

About 100 m from the stands – at the stream – are another two stands without any facilities; these are intended for self-sustaining campers.

Campers on the bush stands get one free bag of wood per day – if you need more you can buy at R15 per bag. Devon also offers game drives where they show you the rest of Dinokeng and its animals. It's R150 per person and lasts two hours.



The Symonses have already allocated a 6 ha fenced-off area where they want to create "ordinary" stands next year with facilities like electricity, a swimming pool and a shop.

Prices Bush stands R110–R190 p.p.p.n. depending on the season and specific day of the year (free for kids under 6) – 8 people per stand. During school holidays and over weekends you have to book for a minimum of 2 days. River stands R100 p.p.p.n. (year-round). Because the campsite is in a reserve, no pets are allowed.

Contact 060 458 4478

info@kyleu.co.za kyleu.co.za



NEW TOP MODEL FOR THE HARDBODY

Nissan launched its new NP300 Hardbody 2.5 TDi 4x4 double cab bakkie at this year's Nampo Harvest Day. This bakkie will replace the double cab with the 2.4 l petrol engine and the 2.5 l 4x4 single cab as the top model in the Hardbody range.

This new Hardbody will have standard equipment such as over fenders, 16" alloy wheels, and hardened steel hooks in a 1 425 mm long loading bin. The Hardbody also has

air con, electric windows, central locking, and two air bags. Underneath it gets a limited slip differential that works with the standard four-wheel-drive system.

The model on the photo is further equipped with Nissan's Rogue accessories package that includes a range of extras like decals, blacked-out alloy wheels, leather seats with Rogue logos, plush carpets, and a sound system with Bluetooth connection and sat-nav. >



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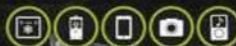


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From hobby to business



When Brandon Conradie from Somerset West built his own bush trailer four years ago, he didn't ever think that this hobby would become a full-fledged business.

Today, Brandon is the owner of Kamma Trailer and they build three different models: the 900s (the most popular according to Brandon); the 700s, a tad smaller and unbraked; and the Terra Maximus, a bigger version of the 900s. Brandon says the idea is not to take on the bigger manufacturers; he rather wants to focus on campers buying their first or second camping trailer. Prices range from R80 000 to R103 000.

All three trailers' body consists of aluminium or stainless steel and you have a choice of five colours – from beige to dark brown and even baby blue. All the hinges are also made of stainless steel.

Brandon uses a modular design for all his caravans. There are two upright doors in front as well as two horizontal doors and a standard one at the back. You can choose between four different interior designs – and if you have something else in mind, Brandon can adjust the style to suit your needs.

In standard guise the caravans are quite basic – the 900s, for example, has the following: a sliding frame with a fridge/freezer (up to 60 l), 220 V and 12 V power socket, adjustable roof rack, a nose cone with one door, cylindrical corner steadies at the back with another at the jockey wheel, and rubber mats for the inside. Brandon explains that most of his customers have owned camping trailers before and most of them already have camping gear like a fridge, stove and rooftop tent. You can therefore equip the standard trailer with only what you need.

The figures 3,4 (l) x 1,8 (w) x 1,6 m (h); tare weight $\pm$ 400 kg (without rooftop tent); GVM 1 500 kg and 1 600 kg axle.

Contact 082 773 6044 brandon@kammatech.co.za
kammatrailer.co.za

NUMBER 27 FOR 4X4 MEGA WORLD

4x4 Mega World has opened its ninth Gauteng-based shop in Edenvale. They now have 27 shops nationwide, half of which belongs to 4x4 Mega World and the other half are privately owned franchises.

Address Shop 25, Meadowdale Mall, Edenvaleweg, Sunny Rock, Edenvale.

Contact 011 454 2875

>



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

is made of rubber and is water-proof. The 24 A-power pack is custom-made and is able to work with alternating and direct current (AC/DC) and you are able to see how much power the

system is drawing and supplying. Actually, this system is so sophisticated and modern that it even works with an app from your smartphone for you to control. Conqueror also uses patented, independent suspension that has been tried and tested time and again, and the tent material is of military grade. To emphasize the quality, Conqueror backs their products with a 3-year structural guarantee. Conqueror has built almost 17 000 campers since 1996, some of which have been exported all around the world, including Australia – where it won Camper of the Year – Canada, Europe,



Conqueror is at the forefront with their innovative designs, relentless field tests and unique manufacturing processes.

Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and the USA. In the meantime Conqueror also took top honours as the *The Great Outdoors Guide's Caravan of the Year 2017!*

Conqueror does not let the grass grow under its feet, and is launching a road-caravan project mid-year. In so doing Conqueror is getting a firm foot in the door enabling it to take over the reins in the road camper market.

📞 conqueror.co.za ☎ 016 349 6533.



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Limpopo 015 293 0431 or 071 771 0347

Midrand 082 651 9471 or 010 010 7969

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

Nelspruit 061 4826681

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Pretoria 012 567 1378 or 082 442 5713

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PITCHING A TENT, THE EASY WAY

Instant tents make your life so much easier – if you've ever had to pitch a conventional 3 x 3 m dome tent on your own you'll know what kind of frustration goes along with it.

Camp Master has introduced two new instant tents where the poles are part of the tent. The idea is that you can pitch it yourself. You simply unfold the Instant Cabin on the ground, lift the panels, and as you lift the poles will click in place. The fly sheet is still separate and you pull it over last.

The Instant Cabin is available in two sizes: There's one for six people (**Instant Cabin 600** R1 999) and one for 10 (**Instant Cabin 1000** R2 599).

The tents are available at **Makro**.



IMPROVED FORD RANGERS

Ford South Africa will launch an upgraded Ranger next year, thanks to a R3 billion investment in its Silverton assembly plant in Pretoria and Struandale engine plant in Port Elizabeth.

The improved Ford Rangers will be exported from South Africa to 148 markets in Europe, the Middle East and the rest of Africa. The focus will be on improved off-road ability, lower fuel consumption, and advanced safety features.

New powertrains will be launched with the models, including a brand-new 2.0 Bi-Turbo diesel engine that will be bolted into the Ranger Raptor. This engine develops 500 Nm at 1 750 rpm and powers a 10-speed automatic transmission with torque converter.

Other innovations are autonomous emergency braking with a vehicle and pedestrian detection system and semi-autonomous parallel parking.



ROLLS'S FIRST SUV



The world's most luxurious SUV – named after the largest gem-quality diamond ever found (in 1905 in Cullinan near Pretoria) – is on its way to South Africa. Who knows how many of these Rolls-Royce Cullinans you'll see on our roads, but there certainly seem to be quite a few Patrice Motsepes who can afford one.

The average Joe, on the other hand, won't even be able to find out how much it costs; if you could afford one, chances are Rolls would have already called you. If you're new money and not yet on Rolls-Royce's VIP list you can visit their online configurator and put together your own, unique Cullinan.

When you're done you can request a call-back from an agent and together you'll take it from there.

We built our dream Cullinan on their website, and although our editorial team couldn't agree whether we wanted the Spirit of Ecstasy mascot in illuminated glass or gold plate, everyone agreed that the picnic table should be made of calamander wood. By the time of writing we had yet to be contacted by Rolls-Royce but we reckon if we pool our money we might be able to afford that picnic table (without the car).

Contact rolls-roycemotorcars.com >





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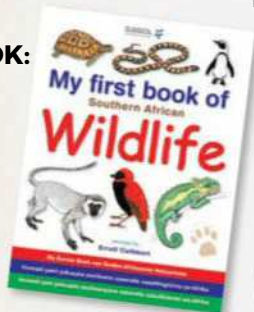
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PALOMINO LOSES CENTIMETRES

Palomino has introduced a range of campers aimed specifically at South African bakkies. Because Palomino is American, the existing models are 254 mm wider than our bakkies. The new SS-500 is 1,95 m wide and is therefore a better fit.

The distinctive electric pop-up roof remains, and when it's lifted there's enough space for someone to sit on the bed. The door is at the back (where the bakkie's tailgate would have been) with a 57 ℓ fridge to the left inside against the panel and a two-burner gas stove and basin directly opposite it. A 60 ℓ

water tank provides water for the basin. The bed area – queen-sized – stretches across the roof and you sleep down the length, meaning you don't have to climb over your partner to get in and out. There are a couple of benches where you climb up in front of the bed if you first want to enjoy a cup of coffee before getting going in the morning.

The SS-500 fits onto single cab, extended cab and double cab bakkies.

Weight 557 kg

Price ± R250 000

Contact ☎ 072 227 9752

✉ palominorv.co.za



BRINK GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Brink Towing Systems, one of the biggest tow bar manufacturers in the country with its plant in Pietermaritzburg, recently built its 350 000st tow bar. This hitch was, very appropriately, fitted to a Ford Ranger (you'll find more than 80% of all Brink's tow bars on Rangers).

This hitch weighs a whopping 40 kg and includes 4 m

of welding. The steel used for all the tow bars together weigh over 10 000 t. And in a weird coincidence, the Ranger's towing capacity is fixed at 3 500 kg.

Brink is the approved supplier to 90% of the vehicle brands in the country.

Contact

☎ 033 401 0120

✉ angelique.pienaar@brink.eu

✉ brinktowing systems.co.za



SPECIAL HILUX

By the time you read this, *go! Drive & Camp* will be at the official launch of the Hilux Dakar Limited Edition. This Hilux will have a new face that is strongly reminiscent of the popular Toyota Tacoma available in the Americas. At the time of going to print it wasn't clear whether all of Toyota's Hilux bakkies would eventually be kitted out with the new grilles and bumpers, but the possibility exists, especially when it comes to the double cab versions. The prices are as follows:

2,8 GD-6 RB Dakar	R535 000
2,8 GD-6 RB Dakar AT	R553 400
2,8 GD-6 4x4 Dakar	R601 100
2,8 GD-6 4x4 Dakar AT	R621 000
4,0 V6 4x4 Dakar AT	R662 700

Read our review of the Dakar version in the next issue. 📖





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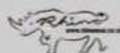
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You see, many of our competitors feature the same drawer slide mechanisms that you'll find in your kitchen cabinets. It's our experience that these light duty items are simply not strong enough to endure the rigours of overland travel and they don't like dust.

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Medium (25kg)	1297x500x281	1230x431x228
Long (27kg)	1505x500x281	1450x431x228

DOUBLE DRAWERS - 1230MM

LXWXH	EXTERIOR	USABLE
Short (34kg)	817x1000x281	750x431x228
Medium (50kg)	1297x1000x281	1230x431x228
Long (55kg)	1505x1000x281	1450x431x228

Works well with Alu-Cab tilting fridge slide





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Blazing a new trail with the mu-X

Is the Isuzu mu-X merely the old Chevrolet Trailblazer with a new badge or are there enough new elements to grab your attention?

Text Cyril Kloppe

Isuzu Motors South Africa (IMSA) is re-entering the SUV market after a long absence (remember the Trooper and Frontier?). Dominic Rimmer, IMSA's executive for technical services, says the launch of the mu-X is an important milestone for the company. "It expands our current product portfolio into the sport utility vehicle category, which is one of the fastest growing sectors in the automotive industry, both globally and in the domestic market. Building on Isuzu's long-standing heritage, along with the proven reliability and trusted capabilities of the KB, the mu-X introduces an entirely new level of practicality, comfort and convenience that is ideally suited to the adventurous and lifestyle-oriented nature of South African customers."

Although the mu-X is new in South Africa, it's been sold in Thailand since 2013 and more recently in Australia and the Philippines. And it's had a positive reception overseas.

What's different?

The differences between the old Trailblazer and the new mu-X are quite extensive. The Chev's standard lights have been replaced with LED daytime running lights and double



DEJA VU. Naturally it looks familiar on the outside since Isuzu didn't want to reinvent the wheel. Our test vehicle was equipped with side steps that were bent out of shape by the obstacles of an off-road track. We recommend that you remove them if you plan on using your mu-X for adventuring.

LED projector lamps that automatically adjust higher or lower when you hitch a caravan. The mu-X uses the same aluminium side steps and 18" alloy wheels but boasts new LED rear lights. From the side you'll notice only minor changes because the bodywork hasn't changed by much.

The mu-X retains the Trailblazer's sixth and seventh seats that fold out of the floor. The rear passengers have their own controls for the air con so the kids can choose the climate at the back. In front, the centre console and dashboard are new. There's a nice big 9" touch screen with satellite navigation, a radio, Bluetooth and a CD-MP3-DVD player. There's also Apple CarPlay and Android Auto for your smartphone with USB sockets in front and at the back where passengers can charge their electronic devices.

Leather upholstery comes standard and the driver's seat is electrically adjustable. The steering wheel – straight from the KB bakkie – is also covered in leather, with buttons for the sound system, your cell-phone and the cruise control.

Safety first

The mu-X is equipped with ABS, electronic brakeforce distribution, emergency brake assist, electronic stability control, traction control, downhill assist (only in low range) and hill start assist.

Other safety systems include airbags for the driver and front passenger, curtain airbags that covers the length of the interior, and anti-intrusion bars in the doors and side panels that protect your passengers against impact from the side. A rear-view camera helps with parking while the immobiliser and alarm protect your luggage while you peruse the market stalls for curios.

And the drive?

There are two models available: a 4x2 and 4x4. Both use the same 3 l turbodiesel as the KB300 bakkie that produces 130 kw and 380 Nm. The power delivery is detuned, making the engine dependable rather than rowdy. We know it can deliver more torque because in Australia the same engine is tuned to deliver 430 Nm in the D-MAX (their version of our KB bakkie).

The part-time four-wheel drive is switched on turning a knob next to the gear lever, but low range can only be activated if you're standing still and you're in Neutral. Unfortunately, there isn't a rear diff lock like in the KB bakkie because the mu-X's rear axle is manufactured in Thailand along with the rest



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	mu-X 3.0 4x4
Engine	2 999 cc, four-cylinder turbodiesel
Power	130 kW @ 3 600 rpm
Torque	380 Nm @ 1 800 rpm
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Fuel consumption	7,9 l/100 km
Fuel tank	65 l
Towing capacity	3 000 kg
Wading depth	600 mm
Ground clearance	230 mm
Warranty and road-side assistance	5 years/120 000 km
Service plan	5 years/90 000 km
Prices	
Isuzu mu-X 3.0 4x2 AT6	R568 000
Isuzu mu-X 3.0 4x4 AT6	R629 100

OUT WITH OLD. It may look the same on the outside but the interior has been completely revamped. All the buttons and finishes are brand new and the layout is logical. That steering wheel looks vaguely familiar though...



of the vehicle. And no, there are no plans to manufacture the mu-X in South Africa, unless it can equal the Toyota Fortuner's sales.

The ride definitely feels softer than the Chevrolet Trailblazer's, but there is also slightly more body roll. Rimmer explains that the suspension is softer to provide a more comfortable ride than the old Trailblazer, but the ladder frame chassis has been enforced with wider cross members.

Conclusion

We think the Trailblazer should have been an Isuzu right from the start, then it wouldn't have fallen so far behind its competitors. It's going to struggle to reach the Toyota Fortuner's sales figures – especially in South Africa – but the mu-X's price compares favourably and Toyota (Fortuner 2.8 GD-6 4x4 6AT, R646 800) and Ford (Everest XLT 3.2 6AT 4WD, R654 900) will have to watch their wickets. It's only the Mitsubishi Pajero Sport 2.4 D4 MIVEC 4x4 A/T at R599 995 that offers a more affordable package.

Three-pointed triumph

We've been waiting with bated breath since Mercedes-Benz revealed in 2015 that it was going to produce a bakkie, and after being launched a year ago, the X-Class has finally made it to South Africa.

Text Kyle Kock



We've previously spoken about the German firm's technical cooperation with Nissan and the platform the X-Class shares with the Nissan Navara in *go! Drive & Camp* #5 when we attended the international launch of the X-Class, but we will point out that though Stuttgart's engineers received a blueprint, they've added their own touch here and there, specifically with a lengthened and widened chassis.

What you see

Looks are subjective, but it's safe to say that

the Mercedes-Benz X-Class is certainly not ugly. There are definitely similarities with the Navara when viewed from the side and rear, but that's about where it ends, because the nose differs noticeably from its Japanese counterpart, using the latest design language from the company's SUV range.

What you get

For the South African market the X-Class comes standard with a 20 mm increase in ride height, which takes the clearance up to 240 mm. The good news for campers is that the X-Class also comes standard with a tow

bar, trailer sway assist and a rear parking camera so that lugging your caravan to your next destination is a breeze.

Well appointed

When you open the driver's side door it's no surprise to find that the seats are comfortable, offering up a good compromise between suppleness and support. It was quite refreshing to drive a bakkie with a quality cloth upholstery again instead of cowhide. But being a Mercedes-Benz, the quality is high and gives off the impression that it will last for many years.

MERCEDES-BENZ X-CLASS

Speaking of good quality, hard plastics normally get a bad rap in the local motoring fraternity, but the X-Class's fascia and doors are capped by solid black panels that don't rattle or feel flimsy. I'm personally not a fan of the gloss black trim that houses the vents and the centrally mounted infotainment screen atop, and if you're going to drive plenty of dirt roads you might find yourself wiping down the surfaces quite often.

People shorter than six foot will also have to position themselves quite close to the multi-function steering wheel, as it's not reach-adjustable. The six-speed gearbox features a stubby little shifter that looks the part in such a smartly appointed cabin but feels a bit out of place in a vehicle that's not a sports car.

The higher specification packages also offer a front camera to assist with your 4x4 excursions, which will probably help point your wheels in the right direction or give you a better view of what's in front of the bakkie when you have the nose pointed up towards the sky. It's definitely a nice-to-have, but otherwise the X-Class is already bestowed with the sort of kit that could make light work of some rough mountain roads.

From behind the wheel

The 2,3 ℓ turbodiesel motor isn't as noisy as some of the Merc's contemporaries, which is quite welcome. The full fat of the maximum torque output is on tap at only 1 500 rpm, which means that there's very little stirring of the six-speed manual needed, where most of the time a simple flex of the right foot will do for overtaking manoeuvres. The clutch bites a bit high for my liking, however; nearly halfway up the pedal action.

The event organisers threw the assembled motoring media right into the deep end, with the bakkies being driven from a field at the launch venue to the start of a 4x4 obstacle not even five minutes away – a steep descent that served to demonstrate the effectiveness of the low-range gearing and DSR (downhill speed regulator), which means that while you're resting both feet in the footwell, you can leave the X-Class's systems up to their own devices and hold on to the multifunction steering wheel while the bakkie does the rest. The multi-link rear suspension even allowed some impressive articulation too.

For the next demonstration, the hill start assist on a loose surface, the drivetrain was left in 4WD high. After you've come to a stop with the footbrake, the electronics will keep the anchors engaged for approximately >



UPMARKET. The Merc badge looks impressive on the X-Class. Stylish alloy wheels that range in size from 17 to 19", shiny badges, load bay liner, and folding mirrors are part and parcel of various packages offered by the German company so you can customise your bakkie to your liking.



DRIVING IMPRESSION

three seconds so you have sufficient time to climb back on the power and ensure you don't roll backwards.

Once the party tricks were out of the way, we headed for the old Duiwelskop Pass – a pretty much unused old stretch that includes some climbing, low-range engaging and choosing the right lines. The X-Class didn't miss a beat, despite the tyre pressure being a little high for off-road use, but overall quite impressive for something that can just jump off the freeway right onto an abandoned old pass and traverse it without sweat.

The suspension system's light work of the rocky terrain and how well insulated the cabin was against the outside world stood out for me as strong points. Of course, given that our country benefits from a raised ride height and that the vehicle I drove wasn't equipped with side steps, the X-Class was favourably kitted out for the excursion.

Given the X-Class's sorted suspension set-up and comfortable off-road ride, I was expecting it to be a little more compliant on the tarmac of the N9 and later, the Outeniqua Pass, with some of the asphalt imperfections feeling slightly harsh under my backside. But that could just have been due to tyre pressure, because this particular bakkie had the entry level 17" wheels fitted wrapped in chunky sidewall rubber. As for the rest of the dynamics, the bakkie can't really be faulted, on or off the beaten track. Body roll is minimal and there's very little pitch under braking and acceleration too.

More coming soon

Cabin refinement is definitely up there among the best of this class of vehicle, possibly even knocking on the door of the luxury SUV segment. There's hardly any diesel clatter and not much outside noise that permeates the X-Class's interior.

If you think the four-cylinder line-up currently on offer in the X-Class range doesn't have enough meat on the bone you can always stick it out till sometime in the first quarter of 2019, which is when Mercedes-Benz says the V6 version of this bakkie will make it to SA.

We can't wait to hitch a caravan to this thing for a comprehensive tow test and do a little more off-roading with some of the creature comforts on the options list ticked off. Yes, The X-Class is more expensive right now than anything else out there, but that price premium matches the package. It's going to be a hit.



SPECIFICATIONS

Model X250d 4x4 Progressive

Engine 2 298cc, four-cylinder, turbodiesel

Power 140 kW

Torque 450 Nm

Fuel tank 80 l

Towing capacity 3 500 kg

Payload 1 100 kg

Transmission six speed manual

Ground clearance 241 mm

Wading depth 600 mm

Lean over angle 49 °

Approach/departure angle 30.1°/25.9°

Breakover angle 22°

Maintenance plan 6 years/100 000 km

Price R668 726



SIGNATURE LOOK. There's no mistaking those vents because it's a classic Merc hallmark. The switchgear, though gem-like in finish, feels durable and appropriate for use in a bakkie. You'll pay R15 000 should you prefer leather upholstery. Thanks in part to a raised ride height for our market and the short front overhang, the approach angle is impressive.





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Setting the pace

Incremental improvements to BMW's mid-size SUV over the past 15 years have made the X3 a target for many of the players in this segment. **Kyle Kock** sampled the third iteration.



BMW X3 xDrive30d

Soft-roaders might not be everyone's cup of tea, especially those who are used to roughing it on farm roads or those seeking to conquer Africa's roughest passes, but like it or not, there is a market for these vehicles. And that share is growing to include smaller and more affordable mini SUVs as well as luxury car brands who are starting to release SUVs of their own.

While some manufacturers are only just getting into the swing of things, BMW has gained plenty of experience in this field over the past two decades, having sold a little over 1.5 million units worldwide. The X3 is now into its third generation, which means that this version should be better than its two predecessors.

Chip off the old design block?

There are definitely elements that are unmistakably synonymous with the Munich-based brand, such as the signature Hofmeister kink (elongated) in the C-pillar and kidney grilles (much larger than before) on the front end. But this X3 is the first from Aussie design supremo Calvin Luk, who flexed his creativity on the current 1 Series and X1. His bold views have been carried over to the X Range, which makes the X3 look decidedly less conservative and a lot more striking.

The wheelbase has been stretched by 50 mm, but it seems longer than that thanks to clever folds in the body panels when viewed from the side, along with a narrower glasshouse. The shape of the wheel arches has also been formed to give the X3 a more forward-charging stance. The overall impression is quite sporty, especially because the X3 we tested was fitted with optional 21" wheels.

Sumptuous interior appointments

Many manufacturers claim to have a panoramic roof, but BMW's is the real deal. There's glass from front to rear, and with the blind rolled up all the way back, the extra light lifts the cabin ambience substantially because the black leather interior is quite a sombre affair. In fact, even with the blind pushed all the way back there's not much heat intrusion thanks to the way the glass has been treated. An uncharacteristic warm week in the Cape winter made this quite clear.

The touches are quality, from the brushed alloy-look switchgear to the gloss finish on certain items and even the instrument panel, which is actually just one large TFT monitor. Speaking of which, as you switch between driving modes the screen's display changes gauges and colour to suit your needs.



THE BUSINESS. When you climb into a BMW cabin, you are guaranteed that the fascia will be angled slightly toward the driver. Fitted with a panoramic roof, our test unit had plenty of ambient light. Underneath the boot's floor, you'll find a space-saving spare wheel. The 21" optional alloys do a great job of filling those mammoth wheel arches. The latest X3 is now pretty much as big as the first generation X5.



There's also wireless charging for mobile phones. Just let your iPhone X rest on the pad in front of the gear lever and it charges sans a cable. Another item to tick off on the options list is the Harman Kardon sound system to brighten your mood in peak traffic.

Dynamically not to be dissed

The legacy of BMW's six-cylinder motors is the stuff of legend and even in turbodiesel guise is nothing to scoff at. Actually, with the xDrive all-wheel-drive system active all the

time you'll surely be able to show a clean pair of heels to many a boy racer about town.

But the X3 only really comes into its own on the open road, and on smooth asphalt this xDrive30d is almost in a class of its own despite it not being the range-topper. The amount of low-down torque is breathtaking, and the eight-speed automatic transmission is well-paired to make full use of the power on tap.

Despite fairly spirited driving in the Overberg region of the Western Cape, >

the X3 managed a very impressive average of just 7.5 l/100 km. Turning it down a notch and driving on the Dwarskloof Pass, we left the driving mode in the default comfort mode setting and settled on an unhurried 60 km/h towards the town of Greyton.

While comfortably soaking up bumps, cat's eyes and other imperfections on the blacktop, the X3 was less than soothing on even a decent gravel road. We also left the tyres at the recommended pressure of 2.4 bar all round, but 40 and 35 profiles (front and rear) really have very little place off the beaten track.

You could get up to adequate speed on this surface, but don't get it twisted because while the on-road noise vibration and harshness levels are probably class-leading, it's not admirable on gravel.

Techno-laden

After filling the tank with 50 ppm and driving in ECO PRO mode for 60 km, the tank's range increased from 900 km to 1 017 km – another 117 km that could come in handy when it's necessary to stretch the last few litres of fuel. In Sport mode, however, the steering weights up and the throttle becomes more sensitive to minor flexes in your right foot. Even when you're cruising in ECO or COMFORT modes, with the throttle pedal held at the same angle, the X3 will start accelerating when switched to Sport mode.

On the safety front, those who spend hours on the motorway will be pleased by the Driving Assist Plus package, which includes adaptive cruise control that automatically brakes the X3 when someone cuts in front of you and picks up speed once that individual has switched lanes again. Easily distracted drivers will also be saved by the steering and lane keep assists, which brakes the left or right side depending on which side of the lane you're drifting out of. We used both of these extensively on the N2 and we're glad to report that the systems are quite gentle but firm. Actually, there might just be very little actual driving needed as you guide the X3 towards your next holiday destination.

Summary

At R868 000 for this model in basic guise, a purchase like this with all the nice stuff ticked off the options list (including an electric folding tow hitch at R11 500) will easily set you back a cool million. If you're not planning on bundu-bashing then who are we to argue, especially because the X3 does everything else well.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested	BMW X3 xDrive30d
Engine	2 993 cc, straight-six, turbodiesel
Power	195 kW @ 4 000 rpm
Torque	620 Nm @ 2 000 rpm
Transmission	8-speed automatic
Tank	68 l
Fuel consumption	8.1 l/100 km
Luggage capacity	550 l
Towing capacity	2 400 kg
Ground clearance	204 mm
Kerb weight	1 820
Top speed	240 km/h
Acceleration (0–100 km/h)	5.8
Price	R868 900

BAVARIAN BRUISER. This is by no means the range-topping "racy" model, but you'd be hard pressed to outrun the X3 with most other SUVs. It's not your regular rockhopper, but the X3 does boast a hill hold function that allows you to get back on the power after you've come to a stop without rolling back. There's also hill descent control that you can manipulate with your left thumb on the multi-function steering wheel. Plenty of brushed metal-look trim adds some contrast to the sombre cabin.



The instrument screen's display changes colours and gauges to suit your needs.

MEET THE PACK

The Tough Dog shock absorber range...



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- Hydraulic rebound stop
- Available in Completed Assembly Struts for some applications



45mm 9 Stage Adjustable Foam Cell

- 45mm internal bore
- 70mm external casing
- 22mm chrome plated rod
- High temperature, all weather oil
- Foam cell technology inside
- 9 Stage external adjustment
- Additional welding on all studs and eyerings
- Available in Completed Assembly



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- Twin tube design
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- 22mm double chrome-plated rod
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- Rod wiper seal and multi lip seal
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Subaru XV

Decent dirt road driver

Subaru is known for its excellent all-wheel-drive systems, and the latest XV is smarter and safer than ever before, says Cyril Kloppe.

The 1990s and early 2000s were a golden age for the World Rally Championships (WRC).

It was a time when mighty machines like the Mitsubishi Lancer Evo and Toyota Celica Turbo competed with Subaru's Impreza. Names such as Colin McRae and Tommi Mäkinen were on every rally fan's lips and it was nearly impossible to predict who would win a season.

But then the rules changed to benefit hatchbacks and Frenchmen named Sébastien.

Ten years ago many a school boy begged his dad to buy a blue Impreza WRX STI – one with gold wheels, a gaping air intake in the bonnet and a hilariously huge spoiler on the bootlid. But those days are gone. The renowned Subaru World Rally Team disbanded and teenagers find a 2018 Impreza about as thrilling as a Toyota Etios.

But what about the Subaru XV? It's a hatchback, it's an SUV, and it's an Impreza on stilts that begs to be muddied up on logging trails in a pine plantation. Sounds awesome, doesn't it?

Inside and out

The XV is indeed based on the Impreza, but thanks to black plastic fender liners and a roof rack for mountain bikes and kayaks – and of course because it's higher off the ground – it has an attitude that screams "adventurous".

Its long nose is reminiscent of the Mazda CX-3's and the all-wheel drive puts it in the same company as the Volvo XC40 and Mini Countryman rather than the front-wheel-drive Toyota C-HR – all of which are the Subaru XV's competitors.

The Subaru XV shines because of its safety features. The XV received five stars in the Japanese and even stricter European NCAP crash tests, and its EyeSight camera-and-sensor system keeps a watchful eye on fellow motorists and pedestrians. When the system detects that you might be involved in a collision, the vehicle will brake automatically.

It also warns you if you're drifting over a line or if there's a car hidden in your blind spot. In this class only the Volvo XC40 offers this level of safety.



What the XV is sadly lacking though is boot space. At 310 ℓ its boot is substantially smaller than, for example, the Volvo XC40 (460 ℓ) and BMW X1 (505 ℓ). It's bigger than a VW Polo, but not by much.

How it drives

The drive in an XV is pleasant – it feels almost like a Sunday outing to a botanical garden. We definitely wouldn't describe it as boring, but it's certainly not exciting. The suspension is stiff enough to keep body roll to a minimum, but it's also not so hard as to crush your spine. Subaru is known for its acceptable continuously variable transmission, or Lineartronic CVT. In fact, the CVT in a Subaru Outback is almost better than an ordinary automatic transmission, although not entirely.

The Outback, however, does come with a strong



DOWN TO THE BONE. The XV shares a chassis called the Global Subaru Platform (highlighted in gold) with the Impreza.

The Subaru XV shines because of its safety features. The XV received five stars in the Japanese and even stricter European NCAP crash tests.

3,6 ℓ six-cylinder engine that allows its transmission to perform well, but the XV is handicapped by a gloomy

2 ℓ four-cylinder engine – no turbocharger – which isn't powerful enough to make the CVT excel.

The average motorist won't complain about this though, and if the wretched powertrain bothers you, switch over to Sport mode and use the paddle shifters behind the steering wheel to simulate seven "gear changes".

The transmission in the XV delivers acceptable service if you're driving at a leisurely pace and you're not planning to channel Sébastien Loeb or Sébastien Ogier. >



The XV's traction control works brilliantly on a dirt road, as you'd expect from a Subaru, and the steering feels perfect: neither too sensitive nor too slow. The 18" tyres roll forgivingly over corrugated roads and potholes, and because the engine-and-transmission combo is so timid it never feels like you're going to lose control and end up in the rough.

Like the Outback, the XV also has an X mode. It's basically electronically simulated diff lockers that also regulate the hill descent control that's activated by the push of a button as soon as the road surface becomes slightly challenging.

To find out if the XV had off-road clout, we tackled our local obstacle course and immediately got stuck in inch-deep mud. The XV didn't want to budge and simply made weird grinding noises. A few onlookers pushed

the XV out of the mud – after cracking a few jokes, of course – but when we remembered to disengage the traction control the XV performed considerably better – a rookie mistake, we know. The only handicap after that was the XV's poor approach angle.

Conclusion

In terms of workmanship and appearance we can't fault the Subaru XV. Its engine-and-transmission combination does disappoint if you're a petrolhead, but the average Joe will think you're nit-picking if you criticise it.

The Subaru XV's ultimate problem is that the Renault Duster (R312 900) and Hyundai Creta (R349 900) are more practical – for considerably less money. 

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine 1 995 cc, four-cylinder boxer, petrol

Power 115 kW @ 6 000 rpm

Torque 196 Nm @ 4 200 rpm

Transmission CVT

Fuel consumption

7,3 ℓ/100 km

Luggage capacity 310 ℓ

Tank 50 ℓ

Ground clearance 220 mm

Tare weight 1 407 kg

Top speed 194 km/h

Acceleration 0–100 km/h 9,8 s

Warranty 5 years/150 000 km

Service plan 3 years/75 000 km



HEAVENLY BODY. The finishes are excellent and all the panels align perfectly.



PRICE

Subaru XV 2.0i-S ES CVT R439 000

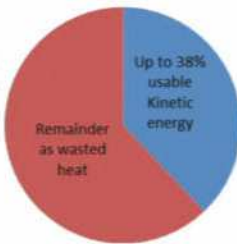


This is what happens if you do not check your radiator...

You may be checking your tyres, oil and brakes regularly. But what about your radiator? It can become very costly if you neglect your radiator, according to Silverton Radiators. We brag about our expensive cars and trailers. But what about our radiators? Who will know if you are using a cheap radiator? Well, not all radiators are the same, and cheap products can become expensive in the long run.

Interesting facts about engine cooling systems

The engine's waste heat is essentially dissipated via two routes: via the exhaust gas and the coolant. About one third of the fuel energy is lost via the exhaust gas as heat. A quarter of the energy is used mainly to heat the engine block, whilst only a third of the energy actually goes into the drive. The coolant protects the engine and its metal parts against overheating. The engine cooling control system helps to quickly heat up the engine, e.g. after a cold start in winter, as well as the vehicle interior. Three circuits perform all these functions: Coolant, air and exhaust gas.



Coolant

The engine and its components heat up considerably during use, as fuel is burnt with air in the cylinder. The engine is cooled by the engine oil and the coolant.

A coolant pump pumps the coolant through the cooling circuit, which cools the engine block and the cylinder heads. In high-performance engines, heat dissipation via the oil pan is not enough. In this case, the coolant also dissipates heat from the engine oil via an engine oil cooler. The coolant is re-cooled by the ambient air in the radiator. Extremely thin corrugated fins between the pipes increase the surface area around which the ambient air flows for the air to absorb as much heat as possible from the coolant. The corrugated fins have slits to increase this effect even further. These "gills" ensure that the air is constantly moving for it to dissipate more heat. The coolant flow is controlled by thermostats which react to the temperature.

Why does the cooling system need antifreeze and additives in the summer too?

- Antifreeze not only protects against freezing but also against overheating.

- Additives protect against the build-up of limescale deposits and corrosion.

A coolant is a mixture of water, antifreeze (glycol) and additives. It does more than just protect the engine against freezing. It also absorbs the engine heat and redirects it back into the ambient air via the cooler. As the boiling point of glycol is much higher than water, the boiling point can be raised to up to 135°C by using the right mixing ratio for the coolant and a system pressure of 1 to 2 bar. This contributes significantly towards high performance reserves for the coolant, as the average coolant temperature for modern engines is approximately 95°C, which is below the boiling point of pure water (100°C). Additives in the coolant form a protective layer on the metal surfaces and prevent limescale deposits and corrosion. The cooling system therefore requires a sufficient amount of antifreeze and additives — even in summer.

Why does the coolant need to be replaced?

The additives contained in the coolant are subject to a certain amount of wear. If these do not work properly anymore, it needs to be replaced.

Can antifreeze agents be mixed together?

No. Antifreeze agents and their additives are adapted to the respective materials of the engine and cooling system. E.g., a cast-iron motor requires different additives to an aluminium motor.

Does the cooling system need to be serviced?

Yes. The visible cooling system components (radiator, hoses, reserve tank and coolant pump belt) must all be inspected visually, as well as the level of the coolant and the colour of the antifreeze. Also make sure the thermostat is still working.

Radiator Core Types

Mechanically bonded radiator with round tubes

Cons:

- Small heat-reflecting area
- Rigidity, which creates a risk of leaking

due to engine vibration

- No bonding between tubes and fins
- Lower cooling performance

Pros:

- Low production cost



Mechanically bonded radiator

Brazed radiators

Cons:

- More expensive

Pros:

- Strong and durable
- Larger heat-reflecting area
- Higher cooling performance



Brazed radiator

Remember!

If your vehicle was originally equipped with a brazed radiator, you should remember that the cooling engineers for sure had some reasons for that. Do not use a mechanically bonded radiator in that case.

Cutting the costs

Many cost efficient radiators have some dangerous radiator core reduction that may be overlooked by a consumer due to them looking similar. The strong market competition makes many manufacturers cut costs to be able to offer lower prices. The above reductions can greatly affect the cooling potential of the radiator and although the radiators may look same their cooling potential will differ greatly.

As a customer you should be very careful when pricing radiators and compromising on efficiency and effectiveness of the radiator to save on price. This kind of saving might result in buying additional radiators instead of one and this may not be the worst result of such saving. Overheating and failure of the engine could cause even more serious problems and costs for a car owner.

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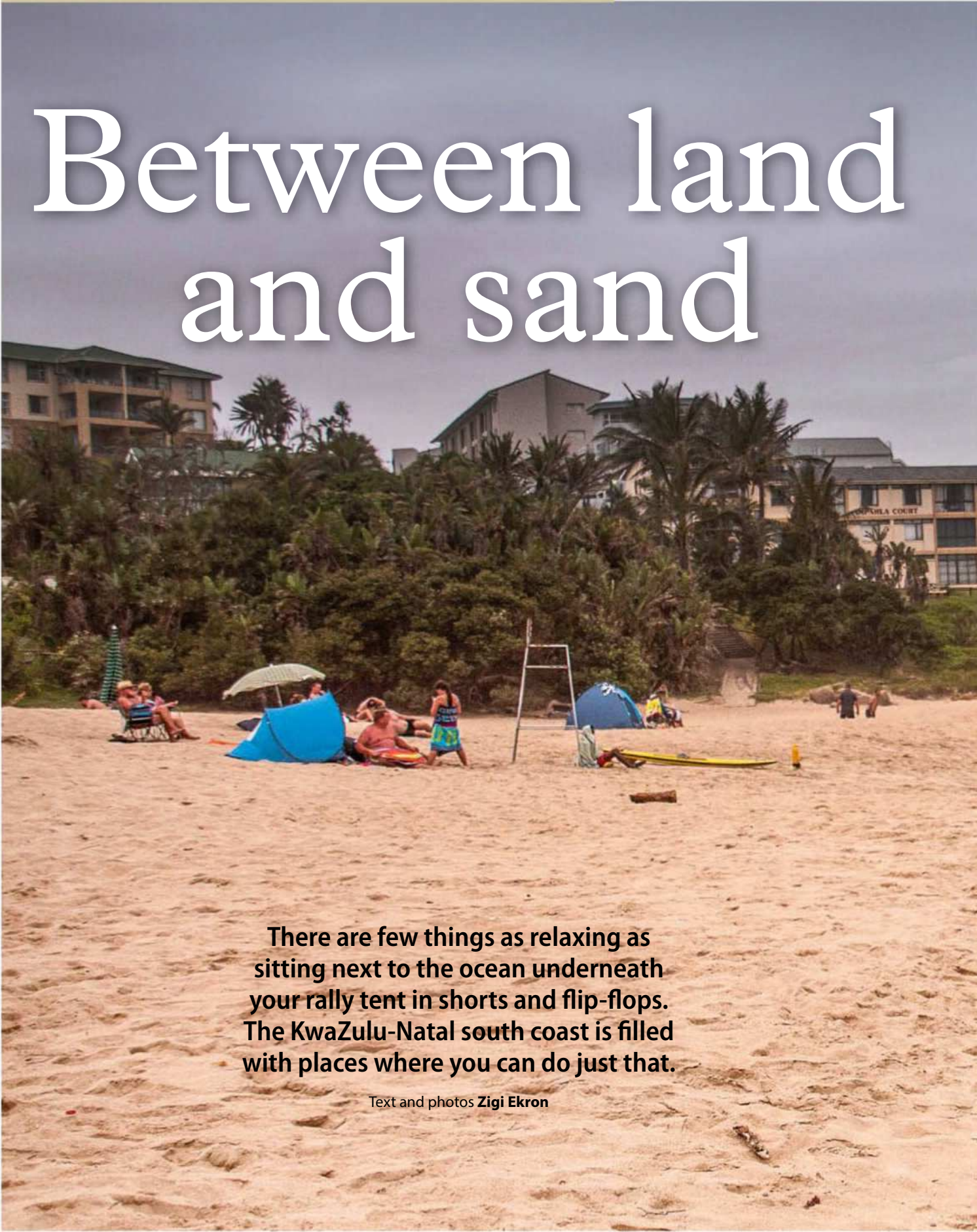
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Between land and sand



There are few things as relaxing as sitting next to the ocean underneath your rally tent in shorts and flip-flops. The KwaZulu-Natal south coast is filled with places where you can do just that.

Text and photos **Zigi Ekron**



South Africa is not a country lacking in campsites, but sometimes, when you want to pitch your tent between nothing and nowhere, you have to search far and wide for a patch of grass with an ablution block. In other places, like the Bushveld (mostly in the Bela-Bela area), the Garden Route, or the banks of the Vaal River, campsites are so numerous that it's difficult to choose one. The south coast of KwaZulu-Natal is one such place, especially in and around Margate. >



SHELLY CARAVAN PARK

First in line

If you're following your GPS when you head out from the interior in the direction of Port Shepstone on the N2, the GPS lady will instruct you to turn right at the big crossing with the traffic lights on the Izotsha Road – before you're even properly in town. The road runs through an industrial area and then past a quarry and rows of bushes. You might start worrying that the GPS lady has gotten you lost because it certainly doesn't look like a road that's going to deliver you to the beautiful campsite with the dam pictured on caravan park's website.

After 5 km you'll see a broken road sign at another crossing with traffic lights. Only the "ach" of "Shelly Beach" remains on the frame that keeps the sign upright. The rest of the sign is on the ground and indicates you have to turn left. Half a kilometre farther a bright red Coca-Cola sign reassures you that you are indeed on the right track.

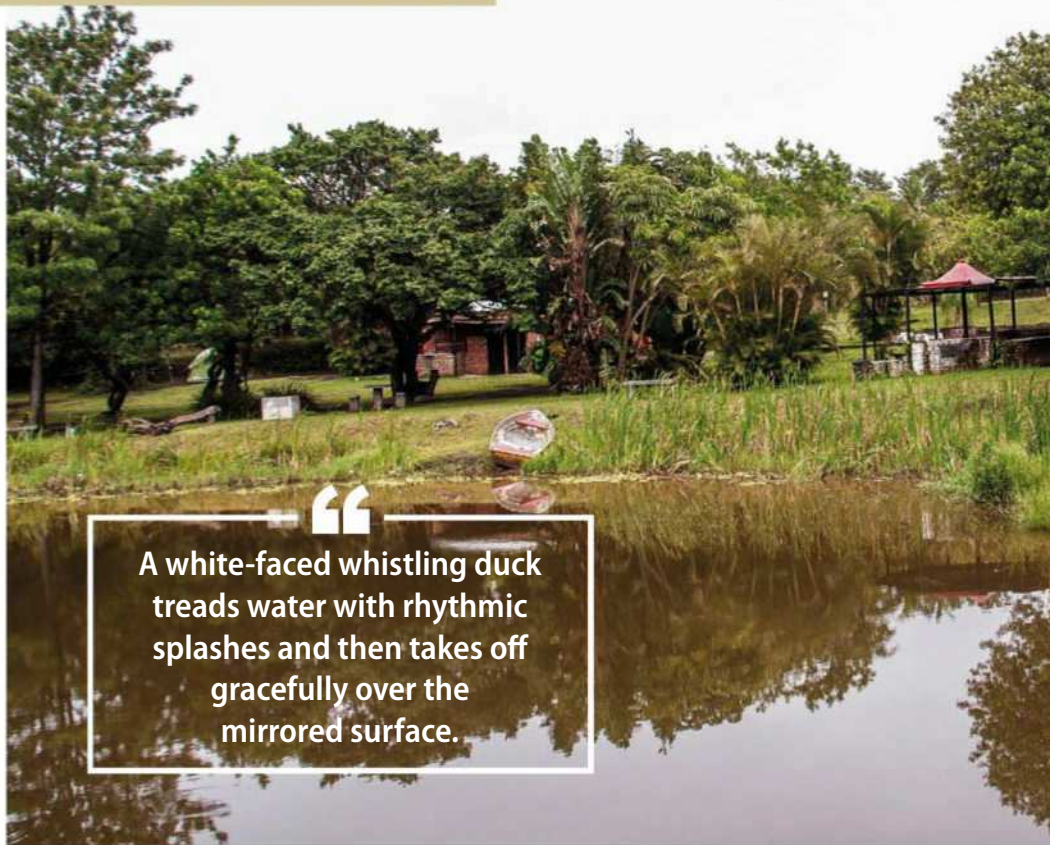
Make yourself at home

The turn-off first takes you over a train track and then past the campsite's entrance to the reception office. Here, Kate Roberts takes care of paperwork and gives you a remote for the gate. The office is on a terrace above the campsite, but you have to take the road back to go through the gate that you passed earlier.

As the gate closes behind you, you see a lush green campsite with 36 stands in front of you. The entrance road follows a loop around the camp, with most stands laid out on both sides of the road. Most of them have shade and they are also closest to the ablution block. The latter won't win any prizes for its interior design, but it's neat and clean and you don't have to worry about hot water for your shower.

If you're looking for a stand with more privacy or shelter, aim for stands number 15–18 or 34–36. The former ones are on a terrace at the top of the pool and the other three in a cul de sac on the other side of the pool and the campsite's only self-catering cottage. These stands are the farthest away from the through-road and the train track.

There's a power socket for every stand even though some of them are grouped together in one box. Each stand also has



A white-faced whistling duck treads water with rhythmic splashes and then takes off gracefully over the mirrored surface.



WATER SPORTS. The dam is the main attraction of Shelly Caravan Park. You can row and fish, but if you want to cool down you should head over to the swimming pool behind the ablution facilities.





its own garbage can as well as built-up brick braai.

To the dam

At the edge of the campsite is a dam about half the size of a rugby field. It might be right up against the boundary fence but it's without a doubt this place's main attraction.

A lizard drifts silently between the water lilies, with only its head poking out above the water surface. A white-faced whistling duck treads water with rhythmic splashes and then takes off gracefully over the mirrored surface. On the shore there's a row boat with a handful of canoes that you may use to take to the water. You can try to hook perch and bream, but you have to bring your own gear. And remember: Whatever you catch needs to be released.

By sunset the frog choir at the dam starts warming up, like in Paul McCartney's music video for "We All Stand Together". There are many different kinds of frogs, among them the micro frog, which is smaller than an adult's pinky nail. It almost looks like crickets hopping around in the grass. And don't have a fright if you find a reed or water lily frog sleeping off the previous night's festivities underneath your tent flap.



Alan Bergen from Jeffreys Bay and his dog, Luna, camp with a Gypsy 4B that he tows with a Ford Ranger 2500 TD Hi Trail (double cab).

They say

“It's a beautiful campsite with a clean pool and all the facilities are neat. If you pitch camp near the gate you sometimes hear some road noise, but that doesn't both me too much.”



Briefly | Shelly Caravan Park



Campsite 36 stands, each with electricity, a brick braai and garbage can.

Ablution facilities An oldish facebrick building with clean showers and toilets. There are also 2 family bathrooms, each with a toilet, basin and bath.

Price R100–R150 p.p.p.n. depending on the season. Over the December holidays there's a minimum price of R450 per stand.

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am

Contact 039 685 0764

shellycaravanpark.com

shellypark@mweb.co.za

Nearest beach Shelly Beach, 3 km

Road condition Tar up to the turn-off.

GPS S30.788980 E30.392529 (turn-off)
S30.786144 E30.393356 (campsite)

go! Drive & Camp says Arrange beforehand if you want to bring Fido or Spot along out of season.

When the frogs start quieting down at dawn, the yellow finches carry on with the second verse while they cling to their nests upside down between the reeds.

Put down the iPad

You might be close to the sea, but the nearest beach and Margate's attractions are 3 km away. But there is more than enough to keep the youngsters happy at the resort itself. If your kids are impatient to take a dip, they can make use of the resort's pool. There is a small lapa next to it with a braai and picnic tables where you can relax while they splash around. There are concrete benches on the shore of the dam if you prefer to rather do a spot of bird-watching. When the kids are done playing in the pool, they can head over to the swings and jungle gym, or they can take some coins to the games room where they can shoot pool or battle it out on the ping-pong table. There's also a dartboard, but you have to bring your own darts.

OASIS CARAVAN PARK

Garden party

Despite the colourful sign at Oasis Caravan Park's entrance, you still feel like you've unwittingly turned off onto private property. In fact, the whole Falcon Road in Uvongo has the ambiance of a suburban neighbourhood where the people at number 4 happen to have a huge front garden. The wild fig trees, bush lilies, agapanthus and hibiscus bushes are only a few of the trees and shrubs that help give the resort its shady garden feel.

Oasis, which is as big as four rugby fields, belongs to Eddie Noyons and his

wife, Naomi, and it's their home you see when you turn onto the property. A section of the house doubles as the reception office where Eddie welcomes you warmly. The 33 stands are laid out from in front of the house against a slight slope to the bottom border. Each stand is on a level terrace and a gardener walks around, quietly raking up the dead leaves.

Easy does it

Most of the stands have their own brick braai and power socket, but in places you'll need a 15 m extension cord to get electricity to your stand.



Briefly | Oasis Caravan Park



Campsite 33 stands of varying sizes on grass terraces.

Ablution facilities The ablution block is not new or modern but it's neatly tiled with big showers.

Price R335–R715 p.n. per stand (for 4 people) depending on the season. Extra guests pay R130 p.p.

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am

Contact 039 315 0778

oasis.caravanparks.co.za

Nearest beach Uvongo, 1,5 km

Road condition Tar all the way.

GPS S30.830278 E30.394444

go! Drive & Camp says It's a great campsite and the kind of place where you come back to the same stand every year and you know your camping neighbours by name.

You won't be able to fit a long, double-axle caravan on every stand, but they are all roomy enough for a mid-size caravan with a rally tent.

The stands are clearly demarcated and the paths in between are concreted. You therefore don't run the risk of driving over someone's tent pegs but you'll have to go slowly with your caravan around a few sharp turns. You might not be able to tow your caravan to exactly where you want it – if that's the case you'll have to unhitch and push it to the right spot. When the resort is full during season things can get a bit cramped and someone will have to play traffic cop.

Something to eat

If you urgently need to do a load of washing you can do it at the washing machines in the ablution block next to the house or you can walk about 600 m down the road towards the Wishy Washy laundromat. This laundromat is in a smallish mall on the corner where Falcon Road, Crescent Road and the main road connect. Besides



The wild fig trees, bush lilies, agapanthus and hibiscus bushes are only a few of the trees and shrubs that help give the resort its shady garden feel.

the laundromat the mall is actually only a collection of restaurants, of which Breakers is clearly the local favourite. So, if you don't have the time or inclination to light a fire and braai something for lunch or dinner, you can head here and order anything from pasta alfredo (R70) to lamb curry (R95) off an extensive menu. The seafood dishes take up three pages in the menu and the chicken schnitzel (R79) is listed underneath the restaurant's specialities for good reason. It's a winner.

After your meal you can walk back to the caravan park to work off that Dom Pedro you had for dessert.

Off to bed

The campsite lies at the top of a triangular street block, which means the biggest section borders onto the street; Falcon Road on the one side and Ostend Road on the other. You can therefore hear traffic at night, but it's not a noisy neighbourhood and there are no heavy trucks driving past.

Besides, early morning you're more aware of the bird noises in the treetops above your stand than the sounds of traffic. The birds get so rowdy it almost feels like they're yelling at you for lying in.

If the birds didn't wake you up, the showers definitely will. The ablution block is neatly tiled with spacious showers, and when you open the tap the water is so hot it almost takes your breath away.

STAND ASIDE. Stands 34–36 are the most private in the resort and also have built-up brick braais like the others.



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MARGATE CARAVAN PARK

The big kahuna

If there is something like a “traditional holiday resort” then Margate Caravan Park would be it. The name itself says it all. What could be more indicative of a fun camping holiday than these three words put together?

It's a relatively big resort, with 50 stands and eight self-catering chalets. The chalets and houses are laid out almost like street blocks – each block has two rows back to back with thick shrubs in between for privacy. It gives the resort the feeling of a small neighbourhood. Each “property” has its own power socket and brick braai and you share a tap with two or three neighbours.

This sense of resort as neighbourhood could also be because a section of the campsite – to the far left of the entrance – is reserved for full-time residents. It's mostly pensioners who stay here, and while you pitch camp between the three hedges surrounding your stand, people drive past slowly, waving and greeting. Kids also ride back and forth on their bikes without a care in the world.

All the roads in the campsite are tarred, and to make sure there's no traffic pile-up, bright yellow arrows have been painted onto the tar to indicate one-way traffic. At the entrance there's a traffic circle and an island right on top of each other. It can be confusing, because the yellow arrows direct you to the right – anticlockwise, unlike normal traffic flow. To the right of the traffic island is another street block perpendicular to the others. That's more or less the middle of the campsite and also where you'll find the pool and nine-hole putt-putt course. It costs R5 to hire a club and ball from the office.

Despite the top border of the campsite running along the main road that stretches from Port Shepstone to Southbroom (the R620), the resort is relatively quiet. Besides, there are only a few stands, the ablution blocks, the laundry and the games room along this border.

Quick in and out

The ablution block has two long rooms, one for the guys, one for the ladies, with tiles on the floor and against the walls. On the one side of the room you'll find the shower cubicles in a row with half



Sean Graham and Kayla Dunkerley from Pretoria stayed in a self-catering cottage.

They say

“It's a comfortable resort with good facilities. It's quite central and also close to the shops. It's a great base from which to explore Margate and its beaches.”



BEACHCOMBERS. Ramsgate's beautiful beaches, numerous restaurants and colourful street vendors are roughly 6.5 km from the Margate Caravan Park.

doors. On the opposite wall is a row of basins with one long shelf above it where you can put your toiletry bag while you brush your teeth and hair.

If you're heading to the loo late at night, take a torch because the lights in the ablution block are connected to a motion sensor with a timer. If you dilly-dally in the shower it will suddenly go pitch dark and then you have to get out for the sensor to “see” you.

Next to the bathrooms is a communal kitchen and even space where you can clean that fish you caught.

You can buy tokens for the laundry's machines at reception at R30 a piece, and if you want paddles for the games room's ping-pong table or you want to buy darts, you can do that at the office too. It's R100 for the paddles or darts, and the ping-pong ball costs R10. The shop also sells wood, ice and firelighters.

If you need anything else you can head to the Hibiscus Mall, which is within walking distance and has well-known chain stores that will sort you out with everything from chops and boerewors to a new swimming costume.



“
It's mostly pensioners who stay here, and while you pitch camp between the three hedges surrounding your stand, people drive past slowly, waving.”



YOUR PLACE OR MINE?

The lights in the ablution facilities are connected to a motion sensor and timer. If you spend too much time in the shower the light may turn off and leave you in the dark.



Briefly | Margate Caravan Park



Campsite 50 grass-covered stands cordoned off on three sides by rows of shrubs. Each stand has a power socket and a brick braai.

Ablution facilities The ablution block is neatly tiled with big showers and half doors. There is also a bath or two. Remember to bring your torch if you plan on showering at night.

Price R90–R220 p.p.n. depending on the season.

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am

Contact 039 312 0852 060 401 2839 or 079 971 3480 (after hours)

margatecaravanpark.co.za

Nearest beach Margate's North Beach, 1,5 km.

Road condition Tar all the way.

GPS S30 49.488 E27 16.931

go! Drive & Camp says There is a friendly guard at the gate and entry is strictly regulated.



The land of woods, waterfalls and wild beaches



The Wild Coast is called that for good reason. There are no supermarkets, the roads are almost all dirt tracks, and the landscape is still as untouched as the day it was created.

Text and photos **Evan Naudé**



The Wild Coast is traditionally the home of the Xhosas and stretches from East London to the border of KwaZulu-Natal.

On a map you can see how the N2 curls from East London to the interior and then runs systematically back to the coast to Port Shepstone. If you want to drive closer to the sea you won't be able to do it in your sedan.

The Wild Coast 4x4 Eco Trail runs from the Kei River Mouth in the south to Port St. Johns in the north. The trail runs mostly along the coast, but in this area there are so many mountains, ravines and rivers that you often quickly have to swerve inland to cross a river or avoid a

mountain gorge. And, these back roads are not clearly marked with signposts; in fact, they're not even on Google. So make sure you have a GPS with the latest Tracks4Africa maps. These show the trails the best and are marked in places with warnings like "Steep gorge", "Rocky and dangerous", and "Large boulders, watch your diff". These are the kinds of descriptions that make a hardened 4x4 enthusiast's heart skip a beat. But do your homework before heading off. Even with all the detail on Tracks4Africa and a good printed map like Slingby's, there are sections that don't look the way it appears on the map. And that you'll only find out once you actually get there. >



It's also best to not go it alone, especially if you plan on doing some of the river crossings in the southern part of the trail. Find out from the locals what the road ahead looks like because yesterday's rain could possibly have made it inaccessible. Or otherwise you might drive in one direction on a twin-track for three hours just to find out that the road ends between bushes in a deep ravine that hasn't seen a vehicle in ages. Then you have to turn around and half a day is lost.

But, of course, that's also part of the adventure. This place isn't called the Wild Coast for nothing.

Into the wild

We decided to do the route northwards because we've done it southwards before. (Who's this "we"? Evan did the trail on his own since not one of his friends with "real jobs" could take leave to travel along. – Ed)

The departure point in the south is the Kei River Mouth; it's a good idea to arrive a day early and overnight in Morgan Bay or Kei Mouth. If you want to pitch your tent immediately, head to Double Mouth Nature Reserve 5 km west of Morgan Bay. The campsite is right next to the beach and it's also an excellent fishing spot. Or, if you want to sleep in a proper bed one last time, you can take the ferry across the Kei River (R80 per vehicle) and stay over in



a chalet at Trennery's Hotel, about 17 km on the other side of the river. You'll also be able to watch a last rugby game in the bar before bidding modern civilisation adieu.

Not even a kilometre before Trennery's the eco trail swerves northeast to the Qolora River and indicates a river crossing near the Gates Waterfall. On the other side of the river the trail winds further north over the Ixaxo, Sebe and Gqunge rivers, all with a warning of "Difficult Crossing",

before you get to Mazeppa Bay. There was some rain recently and it doesn't look like a good idea to attempt it man-alone. A detour through Ketani to Mazeppa Bay is the better option and luckily it's only a 67 km trip – about an hour's drive.

Suspension bridges, Ngunis and stubborn mules

During the week out of season there isn't much happening in Mazeppa Bay.





There are a few holiday homes and hotels, but the town's main tourist attraction is the suspension bridge to a small island off the eastern side of the island. It's definitely worth a visit, even if it is just to stretch your legs and to take a photo or two. On the beach are two Nguni cows baking in the sun. Later on the tour you realise that sunbathing cows are nothing strange in this part of the world. From Mazeppa it's 114 km to the Dwesa Nature Reserve, the destination for

the evening, but it takes a good four hours to travel that distance – not because the road is bad (to the contrary; it's in surprisingly good condition) but because the winding track over the hilly landscape doesn't allow you to exceed 50 km/h. The traffic you encounter are old jalopies, small cars or taxis all crawling along, and opportunities to overtake are few.

But there is another reason to drive slow in these parts: On the Wild Coast there are numerous obstacles in the road that you need to look out for. The farther you drive, the more accurately you start to classify them and start predicting their reaction to an oncoming bakkie. Sometimes they frustrate you and other times you can simply laugh, but in the end you have to make peace with it.

First are the people. They obviously know vehicles and stay out of the road, greeting you warmly. The exception is young children who come running towards you with tiny outstretched hands, chanting in unison: "Sweeeets! Sweeeets! Sweeeets!"

Then there's the cattle. They usually loiter in the road as you come around a bend and are too lazy to budge. It's only when your bakkie's nose almost touches their backsides that the cow will get a fright and move indignantly. Oh yes, make peace from the beginning that the underside of your bakkie will be covered in manure and that the stench will travel with you, because the roads here are filled with "landmines".

The goats are surprisingly courteous. They like lying in the road, but they know their story when they see you >

THE DOUBLE MOUTH CAMPSITE (top left) is 4 km west of Morgan Bay (above). The rocks in front of the campsite (bottom left) are a nice fishing spot and a footpath leads to a view of the impressive coastline (bottom). In Mazeppa Bay there is a suspension bridge (below) to a rocky island and Ngunis on the beach (insert).



Joel Enrico Gloor and Mirjam Haller are a Swiss couple at the end of a six-month tour of South Africa. The Wild Coast was their final destination before heading home from Durban.

They say

“ The landscape reminds us a bit of Zambia, but it's richer. The houses are bigger and the people have better clothes. It's much more 'Africa' than the rest of South Africa. We would love to come back and see more. ”





approaching. They get up beforehand without hesitation and walk to the side. Once you've gone past, they resume their positions. You hardly ever have to break.

The reaction of geese, ducks, pigs and chickens is slightly panicky and chaotic, but they quickly get out of the way. The emaciated Africanis dogs scurry away, tails between their legs, but one or two of them who are not entirely compos mentis try to bite your hand as you pass.

And then, lastly, but by far the most stubborn obstacle: the donkey. You see, a donkey doesn't give a damn about a vehicle. He won't even lift his eyebrows let alone a leg to get out of your way.

First class

Dwesa is without a doubt one of the Wild Coast's best campsites. It's in the southern part of the Dwesa-Cwebe Nature Reserve that's divided in two by the Mbashe River. You can't drive from the one side to the other – the nearest bridge is via a 60 km detour inland. Cwebe is smaller and less wild, and the only accommodation option is a hotel called The Haven. Dwesa used to be neglected in favour of Cwebe, but in recent years the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency have maintained this section of the park and also upgraded the accommodation.

In Dwesa you can pitch your tent, park your caravan, or stay in a log cabin with an equipped kitchen and solar power. And if you come out of season, chances are good you'll share the reserve with only a few, if any, other people. Put aside an extra day to spend here. The forests around the campsite are excellent for birdwatching, there are a few bush tracks that you can explore with your bakkie, and the highlight is a beautiful, untouched beach.



THE ROAD BETWEEN MAZEPPA BAY AND DWESA (top) is a good gravel road through the Wild Coast's heartland. Dwesa has neat chalets (above) in the woods and a large campsite with clean facilities (right), but the reserve's trump card is its untouched, pristine beach (bottom and opposite).



While Dwesa is one of the lesser-known places on the Wild Coast, the following destination on the trip, Coffee Bay, is one of the most popular. This part of the eco trail is the most beautiful on the route and also in good condition, meaning you can leave a bit later in the day and drive without feeling rushed. The mountain passes on both sides of the Mbashe River are especially spectacular and there's a nice spot to pull over next to the bridge for a coffee break.

You can leave Dwesa just before 10 am and reach the Wild Coast's most iconic spot – Hole in the Wall – just after lunch. You can drive to the lookout point (S32.038347 E29.107062) to marvel at the imposing rock in the sea with its perfect

circle in the middle. Or can you park at the hotel and in doing so avoid the pesky “tour guides” and “car guards” who will descend on any vehicle with foreign number plates. You can walk from the hotel's parking lot to the Hole in the Wall (it's about 1 km) and on a nice day it's an excellent place for a picnic.

Private beaches and river crossings

Coffee Bay is known as the place for backpackers and surfers. If you want to learn how to surf or to bang a traditional drum, this is the place for you. But be warned: During holidays Coffee Bay is bursting at the seams.

About 50 km from Coffee Bay is another nature reserve that the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency can be proud of: Hluleka is small (770 ha), but it simply means you can imagine that you're a millionaire in an exclusive resort with a private beach. There are only six modern chalets (each with space for four people) in the reserve, so you, your family and friends can book the entire place for only R250 per person. It's not every day that >



This part of the eco trail is the most beautiful on the route and also in good condition, meaning you can leave a bit later in the day.





THE HOLE IN THE WALL. Just outside Coffee Bay (top and opposite) is the Wild Coast's best-known rock formation and it's definitely worth a visit. At the Hluleka Nature Reserve (top and right) you're not allowed to camp, but you can stay in a luxury chalet for next to nothing and can go for relaxing walks in the forest.





you can book a piece of paradise for next to nothing.

There are two short 4x4 tracks that you can drive in the park – one to a view over the coastline on the eastern border of the park and the other through the forest to the northern border. The latter is overgrown in places but eventually leads to the gate where you can exit the park and rejoin the eco route about 3 km to the west of the Mnenu River. An alert on Tracks4Africa indicates that the bridge over the river washed away in 2008 – it still hasn't been repaired but you can make it through if the river isn't in flood.

Where the waterfalls are

On the other side of the Mnenu it's about 40 km to the R61 where your wheels will touch down on tar towards Port St. Johns. This junction is the official end of the eco trail, but it's definitely not the end of the Wild Coast's attractions. There are a few nice campsites on both sides of the Umzimvubu River on the northern border of Port St. Johns that are great if you want to recharge your batteries for a day or two or see if you can catch a leatherfish or spotted grunter from the river. Head to the runway at Mount Thesiger (follow the road to the army base up the mountain) for a panoramic view over the town, the river and the sea.

A short distance away on the coast is Drifters Camp, which is only accessible by 4x4. It's a place you should put on your bucket list. This is the closest you'll get >



I want to go too!

Best time

You can drive the trail year-round but remember, it rains in summer and then the roads can become muddy and low-water crossings are impassable. Just after the rainy season the landscape is verdant and at its most beautiful.

Permits

You need a permit to drive on any dirt road within 2 km of the coastline (you're not allowed to drive on the beaches at all). Only a few sections of the eco trail are this close to the shore, but if you want to fish and drive down to the sea it's essential that you have a permit (it's free). If you're caught without a permit you could get a fine of at least R2 500 per vehicle.

Send an email to edwina.oates@dedea.gov.za (Kei Mouth to Hole in the Wall) or bongeka.mvakade@dedea.gov.za (north of Hole in the Wall). You can also get a permit at the Department of Environmental Affairs' office in the Palm Square Business Park in Beacon Bay, East London.

Your vehicle

You need a proper off-roader with good ground clearance. Low range and diff locks are not essential in dryer weather but they'll come in handy when it's wet.

Navigation

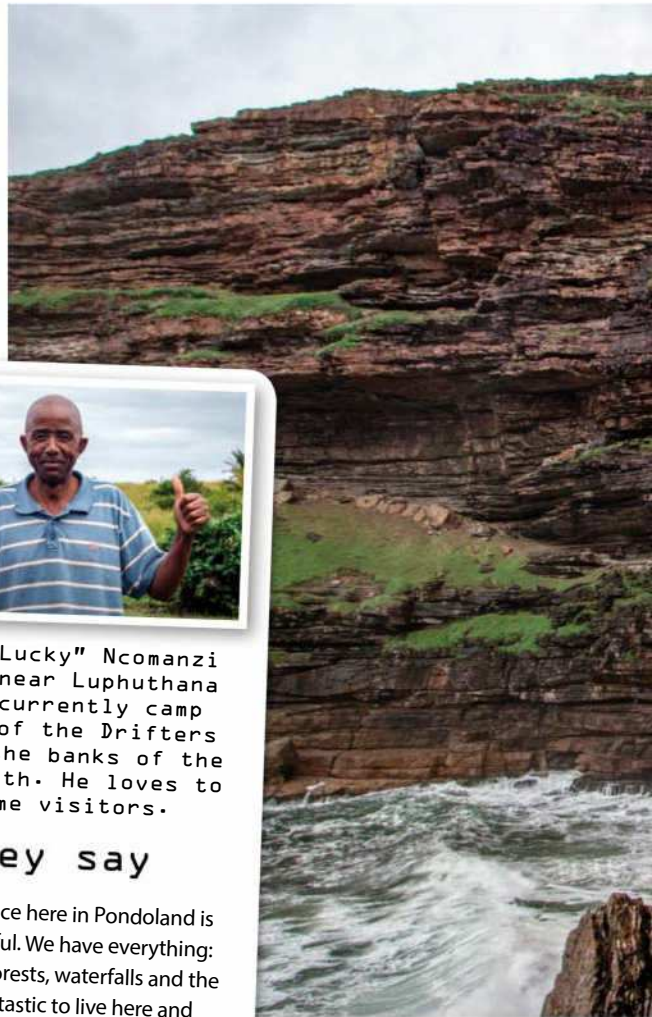
Your best friend is a good GPS with the latest Tracks4Africa maps on it, but bear in mind that the condition of some sections of the trail can change. The Slingsby printed map of the Wild Coast will stand you in good stead.

Fuel and provisions

You can be self-sufficient between Kei Mouth and Port St. Johns if you load up on provisions. You can refuel in Kei Mouth or Port St. Johns, but take note: There is no filling station in Coffee Bay as indicated on certain GPS maps. The nearest station is in Ncwanguba, 20 km inland from Coffee Bay.

Distance and time

450–500 km if you don't deviate too much from the trail. You can easily do the trail in four to five days but give yourself at least a week to properly explore the area.



Luvuyo "Lucky" Ncomanzi grew up near Luphuthana and is currently camp manager of the Drifters Camp on the banks of the river mouth. He loves to welcome visitors.

They say

“ Our place here in Pondoland is beautiful. We have everything: rivers, forests, waterfalls and the sea. It's fantastic to live here and I wouldn't easily leave. ”



AT DRIFTERS CAMP at Luphuthana (above and left) you sleep in bedded tents and take a hot shower in your en-suite bathroom, and you make your food in a large communal lapa (top). The road to Luphuthana (middle) is by itself unique, but the real reason to visit this area is actually to visit the unique Waterfall Bluff (main photo and right).





Here, at one of the Wild Coast's most popular places, you can relax a bit, alone.

to Waterfall Bluff, which gushes over a cliff directly into the sea.

Point your vehicle's nose in the direction of Lusikisiki. Outside of town you can first take a detour and follow the Mbotyi Road to the Magwa Waterfall (S31.447097 E29.639226). Don't miss the opportunity of visiting this 144 m high waterfall because it's not only the Wild Coast's biggest and most spectacular, it's also easy to reach. You park at the top of the valley and walk through shallow water to a lookout point over the deep ravine that reminds you a bit of the Victoria Falls.

When you book at Drifters they'll send you directions to Luphuthana, but the camp is also indicated on Tracks4Africa (S31.421291 E29.851733). The last 11 km is a twin-track over wide grass fields that's a protected grazing area for the local cattle farmers. It's a beautiful piece of road, especially because you don't see this kind of grass fields else-

where on the Wild Coast without signs of human life. And it looks like you can do some proper mud driving when there are heavy rains.

Once you get to Luphuthana you have to park on the eastern bank of the river and carry your luggage over to the camp. There are 12 two-bed tented huts with en-suite bathrooms and a lapa with a fully equipped kitchen, but you have to bring the rest, including your bedding.

It's about a 4 km walk from the coast to Waterfall Bluff. You walk around a corner and then the gushing waterfall surprises you. Here, at one of the Wild Coast's most popular places, you can relax a bit, alone. Then you start understanding the Wild Coast: Yes, your bakkie can take you to places where few others get to go, but this stretch of coastline hides its real gems and only shows it to people who are willing to put in a small amount of effort.



Where to stay

DOUBLE MOUTH NATURE RESERVE

The campsite in this nature reserve 5 km west of Morgan Bay has 30 stands basically right on the beach. Each stand has enough shade trees, a tap, power socket, and braai.

Contact 043 701 9600

info@ecpta.co.za

GPS S32.723899, E28.315172

TRENNERY'S HOTEL

Stay in one of 36 self-catering rooms or pitch a tent in the campsite. There's a restaurant, bar, tennis court, pool, and a play area for the kids – and the beach is a stone's throw from the hotel.

Contact 047 498 0025

reservations@trennergys.co.za

GPS S32.634736, E28.426795

DWESA NATURE RESERVE

There are seven self-catering chalets with solar power, hot water, and a fully equipped kitchen. There are 40 stands in the campsite. The stands have a braai but no electricity or tap. Bring your own firewood.

Contact 043 492 0881

info@ecpta.co.za

GPS S32.303472, E28.827792

HLULEKA NATURE RESERVE

You can't camp here, but the seven self-catering cottages are excellent, sleeps four, and are dirt cheap. Bedding is provided and there is a fully equipped kitchen, electricity and a braai.

Contact 043 492 0881

info@ecpta.co.za

GPS S31.820109, E29.298887

CREMORNE ESTATE

The resort is on the banks of the Umzimvubu River. You can camp or stay in either a simple fisherman's cottage, a self-catering chalet, or bed-and-breakfast room. There is also a bar, pool and restaurant.

Contact 047 564 1110

info@cremorne.co.za

GPS S31.597919, E29.531624

DRIFTERS LUPUTANA CAMP

This camp can only be reached by 4x4. You sleep in tented huts (two beds each) with en-suite bathrooms. There's a communal lapa with kitchen and fridges. Bring your own bedding.

Contact 011 888 1160

drifters@drifters.co.za

GPS S31.420561, E29.851716



Quiet time at Raasblaar



If you drive north from Loskop Dam in the direction of Bushveld towns such as Groblersdal and Marble Hall, you probably wouldn't say this area is the Northern Province's second biggest irrigation scheme (the Vaalharts Scheme being the biggest). You'll see the farmlands next to the road but it's only once you look at Google Earth that you really see the extent of the scheme. The circular farmlands with their centre pivots lie side by side for kilometres.

The biggest concentration of farmlands is at Marble Hall, stretching south in three legs all along the Olifants, Moses and Elands rivers. There are, amongst other things, tobacco, cotton and various vegetable crops. Between the three rivers, on both

sides of the farmlands, lies the Bushveld, which is in stark contrast to the cultivated earth.

From here, as the crow flies, it's about 40 km north of Loskop Dam and approximately halfway between Groblersdal and Marble Hall that you'll find Raasblaar Lodge. (Not to be confused with Raasblaar Country Lodge in Rustenburg. – Ed)

The 500 ha farm is still unspoilt Bushveld – there is no crop farming and no game for hunting. Although the lodge has been in operation for quite some time, the campsite was only added fairly recently.

From the gate, a road winds between Bushveld trees and grass, until you get to the reception office 1,5 km farther. Right before



You drive through endless rows of plantations to get there, but as soon as you've pitched camp at Raasblaar you can kick off your shoes and experience a piece of pure Bushveld.

Text en photos **Helenus Kruger**

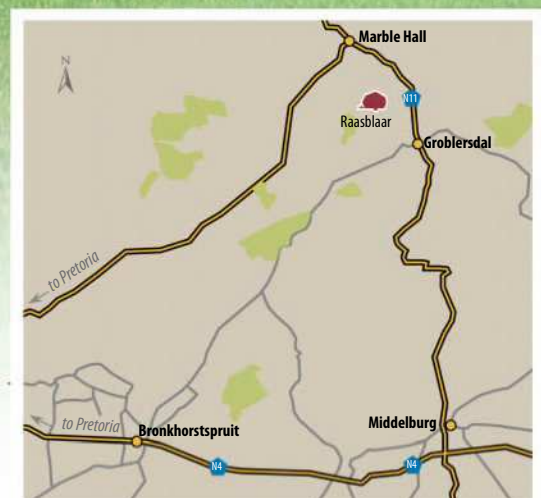


you reach the office you drive over an airstrip. But don't worry, the likelihood of a plane landing right then is remote.

The reception office is in the lodge's main building, next to the restaurant and bar. It's a popular place to hang out and it can get rowdy here. But again: Don't worry, the campsite is 1,5 km away and you won't be kept up by the latest dance tunes.

The campsite

Raasblaar's 26 numbered spots are laid out in a square with a large patch of lawn in the middle. You can kick off your flip-flops and walk barefoot – there's thick kikuyu throughout the camp, from the stands to the pool and dam shoreline. You're allocated a stand >



when you book, but you can also request a specific one.

There are quite a few trees on the stands, but only a handful are tall enough for your caravan to fit underneath. The rest of the trees are still small and there are also a few stands with no trees, so remember your gazebo and flysheet.

Your stand's four borders are a row of rocks packed out on the grass. The stands range in size (the smaller ones are about 9 x 10 paces and the larger ones 14 x 14 paces). All of them have grass and a paved slab (6 x 6 paces) where you can park your caravan. With about 3 m between the stands, you're not right on top of your neighbour, and even though the campsite is on a slight slope in the direction of the dam, the stands are level.

Stands number 1-7 and 8-14 are in two rows next to each other, on the right as you drive into the camp. These stands are farthest from the dam but are the best if you prefer privacy. You can park your caravan with its back to the camp and have the bush as your front porch. If you're camping on numbers 8-14, you can face a sprawling lawn next to the water.

There's no road leading to these two rows of stands – you drive over grass – and to get to numbers 2-6 you have to drive over some of the stands. This can become a bit of a problem if you're the last to arrive at a full campsite and one of the furthestmost stands is yours. The good news though is that an access road is in the works.

Stands number 15-26 complete the remaining three legs of the square. Numbers 19-23 are closest to the dam, and although it's separated from the shoreline by a road, you're still close enough to the water to keep an eye on the kids if they want to play there.

All the stands have braais with a grid and there's a work surface next to it where you can place your tongs and meat. Depending on which way your caravan is facing, the braai might be behind you, so bring your own just in case.

You don't have to braai in the dark – the stand's light is next to the braai and the tap is also located here. Each stand has electricity (standard and blue socket) as well as a garbage can.

The dam (at the bottom of the campsite) is quite clearly the most popular place in the camp. Young and old flock here during the day, either to fish, swim or bake in

If you think this is a paradise for anglers, wait until you see the kids enjoying themselves in the black mud next to the water.



RAMS AND EWES. The facilities are not only clean and neat but you couldn't ask for more space – this applies to both the showers and the open area.





Johan and Retha Degenaar from eMalahleni (Witbank) camp with their friends Jaco and Hannelie Burger from Benoni. Jaco and his wife camp in a Sprite Tourer that they tow with a 2017 Isuzu 2.5 D, while Johan and his wife pitch a tent.

They say

“ We like the peaceful atmosphere, the nice, neat campsite, and the wildlife and birdlife. The restaurant is also very good. ”

the sun. The anglers are especially well catered for because there's carp, bream and catfish aplenty and you often hear the sounds of fish alarms pinging. Just remember to return the fish to the water after removing the hook.

From the wooden benches on the shore you can check out tame nyalas grazing on the grass between the dam and the campsite. If the sun becomes too much there are three gazebos that provide shelter.

If you think that this is a paradise for anglers, wait until you see the kids enjoying themselves in the black mud in the grass next to the water. There are also paddle boats but rather leave your motorboat and jet ski at home – motorised vessels are not allowed here.

Late afternoon you can walk around to the opposite shore from where you have a view over the water to the campsite. Pack a picnic basket with something to eat and drink and enjoy a Bushveld sunset. You can even put something on the braai here.

Bath time

The camp has only one ablution block, which is between the stands and the kiosk. Ask for stands number 14, 15 or 16 if you don't want to mission too far to the toilets; only a road separates these stands from the ablution block. Just to be sure you don't walk into the wrong side there are signs on the wall: bulls and rams at the men's side and cows and ewes at the ladies' side.

The designers of the ablution block clearly knew what they were doing: Each side's washing and toilet areas are separate – something more campsites can implement. The facilities are tiled from floor to ceiling and there are five shower cubicles and one bathroom in the washing area, each with a matte glass door. The passageway between the cubicles is nice and wide (1,5 m), which means there's enough space when it gets crowded. The inside of the cubicles is just as spacious. The wet and dry sections (1,3 x 1,6 m and 1,6 x 1,6 m respectively)

are much bigger than those at most other campsites.

There are no shelves inside the cubicle to put your soap and shampoo, but you can put those on the built-in bench in the corner or on the windowsill. The opening between the dry and wet sections doesn't have a door or curtain, only a glass wall where the basin borders on the shower. But the shower is so big that you'll really have to splash to get the floor in the dry section wet. The gas geyser does its job admirably and the water is never cold.

In the dry section there's an oval basin with a tiled slab on both sides that's >



When the youngsters have tired of playing in the mud next to the dam, they can head to the jungle gym.



large enough for your toiletry bag and clothes. Above the basin is a mirror and there are also two hooks against the wall where you can hang your clothes, as well as a wastepaper basket.

The bathroom with its corner bath is just as big as the shower room and has the same finishes and accessories as the shower rooms.

The ablution block has a spacious communal section with a long surface against one wall (directly opposite the toilets). The three basins have mirrors with lights above them and enough packing space next to it to fit both your and your neighbour's toiletries. You don't have to bring your own soap because there is hand soap next to the basins and you can dry your hands either with paper towels or a blower. You can also plug in electric shavers, hairdryers and curling irons at the double plug next to the surface.

NO EXCUSES. If you get bored it's your own fault because there is lots to do. See if you can spot the nyalas and zebras and let the kids play on the jungle gym and burn off excess energy in the pool before the late afternoon roll call.

What it costs

((2 adults))

Fuel (95-octane petrol) @ 10 l/100 km and R13.84/l and 570 km (from Pretoria and back, via Middelburg)	R788.88
Toll gates (there and back)	R190
Accommodation (2 nights)	R800
Food (for 2)	R980.65
Grand total	R2 759.53

Briefly | Raasblaar



Campsite 26 stands with paved slabs, grass, electricity and part shade with some stands with trees.

Ablution facilities Spacious and clean with separate areas for the toilets and showers.

Price R300–R500 per stand (for 4 people and one vehicle) depending on when you camp.

Contact 082 944 0694

raasblaar.com info@raasblaar.co.za

Arrival and departure times 11 am and 10 am, unless previously arranged.

Road condition Tar to the gate and then 2,5 km of good dirt road to the campsite. The R25 between Bronkhorstspuit and Groblersdal is in a really bad state in places with parts of the road disappearing.

Nearest town Marble Hall, 15 km.

GPS S25.087358 E29.292711 (main entrance) S25.083570 E29.302859 (reception office)

go! Drive and Camp says Remember to pack your fishing rods, binoculars, bird guide, and the kids' bikes.



WITH AND WITHOUT. Some stands offer more shade than others, but none prevent a great evening in the Bushveld.



On the men's side there are three toilet cubicles with doors (four on the ladies' side), four urinals, and a garbage can. The scullery is behind the ablution building and are divided into four cubicles. The kids can't use the rain as an excuse not to do the dishes because though the building has open sides, there is a roof, meaning everything stays dry. Each cubicle has a double sink with plugs, a work surface and a wall socket.

What to do, what to do?

If a day spent fishing next on the dam doesn't float your boat, you can go explore the rest of the farm in search of wildlife.

Put on your hiking shoes or get onto your mountain bike because there are ample trails to keep you occupied. The animals are quite tame, which means it's

almost guaranteed you'll see something. Giraffes, nyalas, waterbuck, impalas and zebras are easy to find but it'll take patience to spot a shy sable. Remember to bring binoculars and a bird guide because you'll find more than 180 species here.

For a game-viewing experience without the hard work you can make use of a game-viewing vehicle. The ride is between 90 minutes and two hours and costs R60 per person (there's a minimum fee of R300). The vehicles can only fit 10 people, so book early. You can also use your own vehicle but stay on the main dirt roads because access to the smaller twin-tracks is not allowed.

When the youngsters have tired of playing in the mud next to the dam, they can head to the jungle gym. The pool is next to it.

From time to time Raasblaar also hosts outdoor music festivals, weddings and birthday parties in the campsite. There's even a concrete slab with floodlights where the bride and groom can open the dance floor.

Your cousin John and his family can also tag along, even if he hasn't gotten round to buying a tent yet. There is a variety of accommodation options to choose from.

Meet you at the kiosk

Raasblaar doesn't have a shop, but there is a kiosk. If you forgot your tackle box at home, you'll find the basics here. If, however, you forgot the grocery box, you're in trouble. The kiosk stocks only basic provisions like wood (R25), firelighters (R25) and ice (R12), plus the usual suspects like ice cream and cooldrinks. For anything else you'll have to drive the 15 km to Marble Hall. In quieter times the kiosk is open between 9 am and 10 am, but when it's busy, like on weekends and during school holidays, it's open in the afternoon too.

At the restaurant you can sit down for a meal or get a takeaway. The restaurant is open from Tuesdays to Saturdays from 7 am to 9 am. But be warned: The chef's meals are in high demand and you have to book beforehand. The bar also has DSTV so you can stay abreast of what your team is doing.

What's in a name?

Most 4x4 trails near holiday destinations have an admission fee, but there are still a few challenging ones near coastal and mountain towns where you can play for free.

Text and photos Cyril Kloppe

Gansbaai, on the Cape south coast, about two hours' drive from Cape Town – three hours during holidays – has a free trail along the sea. Four kilometres south of the town, in Van Dyksbaai, also known as Kleinbaai (apparently there's a story behind this confusion), you'll see dozens of diving cages hanging behind massive motorboats. Shark cage-diving tour

operators use Van Dyksbaai as a base for this adrenaline-charged activity.

But you're not here for a meeting with the guys with the grey coats and big teeth. Rather drive on, westwards down Kabeljou Street to where the road ends in a parking lot next to the cold Atlantic.

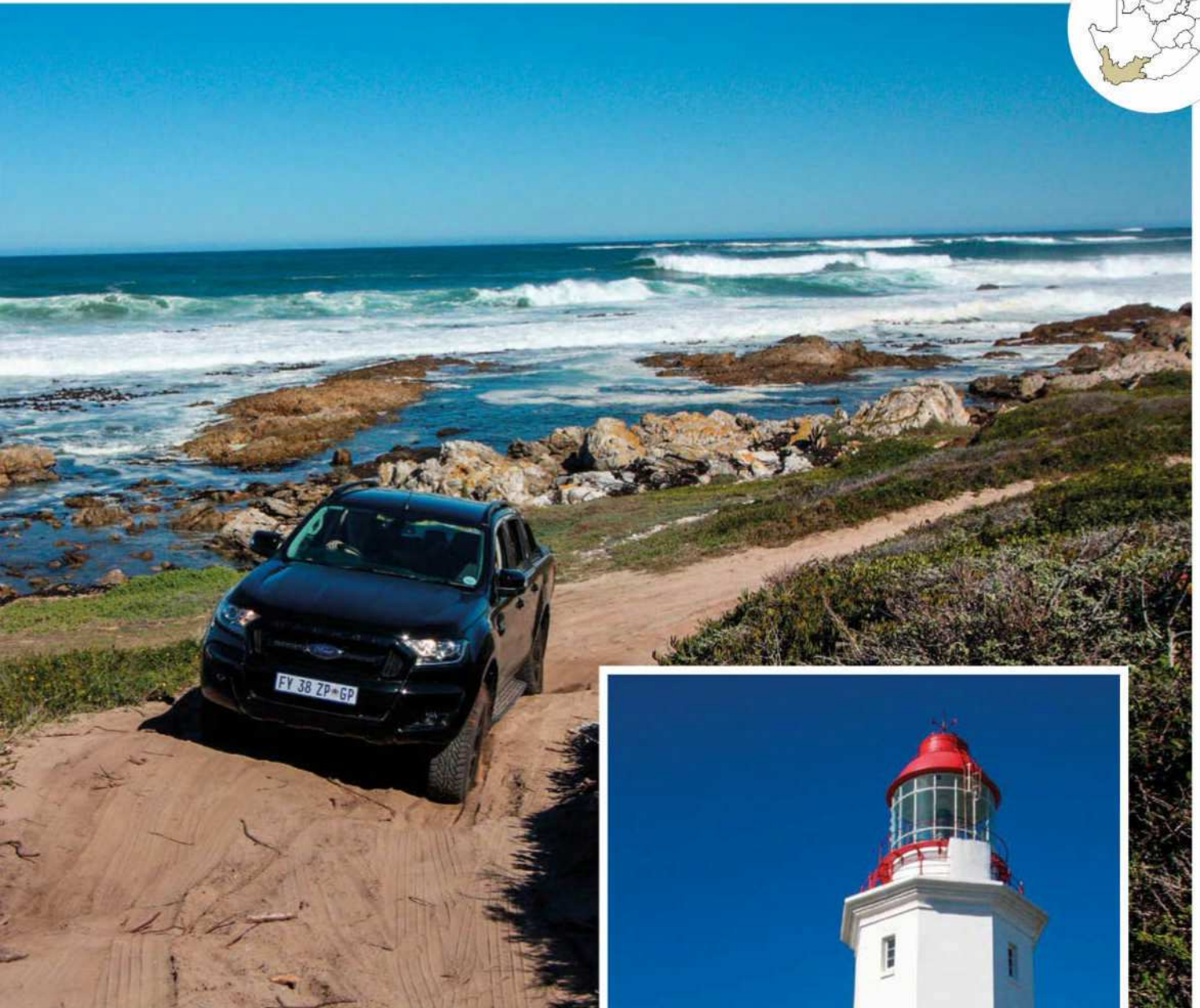
Here is a stubby post with a tiny sign (it's actually just a laminated card) with the words "Gansbaai Trail" printed on it.



The first kilometre is pretty tame and occasionally you'll find pensioners in small, sheltered coves having a picnic next to their Honda CRV. While it might be considered easy though, you won't be able to complete the trail in an ordinary sedan.

Then, suddenly, the trail becomes more challenging. In places you can clearly see how guys in soft off-roaders struggled in the loose sand. There are deep ruts where tyres spun furiously, and the scrape marks on the rocks bear testament to the numerous chassis that paid the price of human error.

The sand trail makes a few sharp turns; drivers of double cab bakkies need



to choose their line well otherwise you'll have to perform three-point turns in the deep, loose sand.

At one of the sheltered coves there is enough space to pull over and plant a fishing rod next to a cooler box. The mild, dry climate at Kleinbaai (or is it Van Dyksbaai?) is almost Mediterranean. You can catch geelbek or cod or simply stare at the whales frolicking in the water a few hundred metres away.

There are seven shipwrecks in the immediate vicinity, amongst them the HMS Birkenhead that ran aground here in 1852. Apparently, it was the first shipwreck where women and children were put into lifeboats before men. >

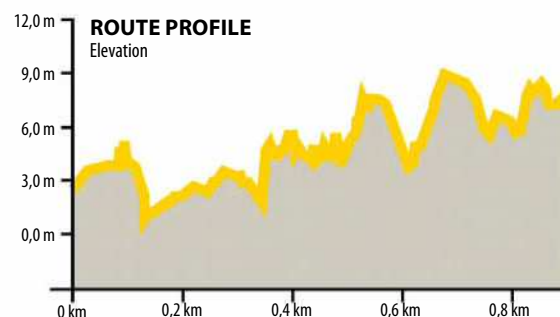


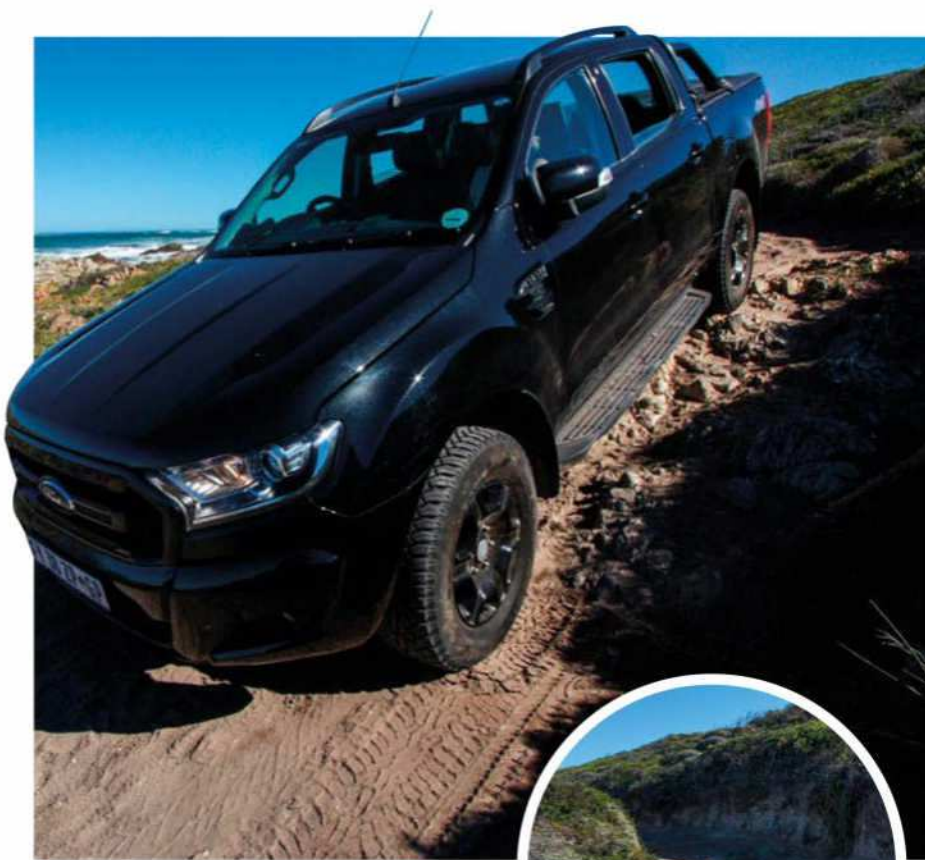
“
The unwritten rule is that you should drive the trail from east to west, but feel free to do it in the opposite direction – it’s slightly more challenging.

But if the lure of off-road action is stronger, continue with this coastal trail. The last 1,5 km is tougher than the first section – it might qualify as a 3 on our difficulty scale, but it’s a low 3 bordering on a 2. Locals will say that it sometimes turns into a nightmare, especially during December when holidaymakers in their bakkies wreck the trail. It’s therefore better to attempt this trail in April or May when the weather in the Cape is at its best and no one except locals drive here.

The unwritten rule is that you should drive the trail from east to west; in other words, from Van Dyksbaai to Danger Point, but feel free to do it in the opposite direction. It is slightly more challenging because in this direction it’s not always possible to choose a good line through the rocks and the dunes are steeper.

And because you’re going against the stream you’ll have to make way or reverse when there’s a vehicle approaching from the front.





What you need to know



Maximum number of vehicles allowed

Unknown.

Do I get a map? No.

Will I scratch my vehicle? Light scratches, but nothing serious.

Must I bring a compressor? No, you're close enough to the town's filling station.

Can I braai next to the road?

Rather not.

Can I turn around halfway? Yes.

Is there cellphone reception? Yes, a strong signal.

THE TRAIL

Best time to go November to May.

Can I take my family? Yes, definitely.

For the day or for the weekend? It's a short trail, but spend at least a weekend in Gansbaai.

Are there ablution facilities? No.

Directions From Van Dyksbaai drive west. The trail starts at the end of Kabeljou Street.

GPS S34.62013 E19.35252

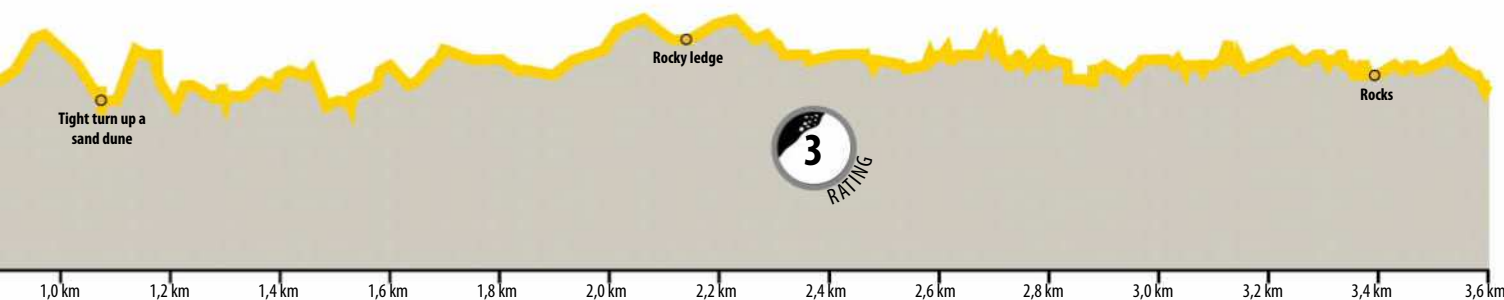
What does it cost? Free.

Contact 028 384 1439 (tourism office)

info@gansbaaitourism.co.za



BY THE SEASHORE. It's a picturesque trail with plenty opportunity to stop for a picnic and allow the kids to build sand castles and catch fish in the rock pools.





Raring to go

There's nothing like breaking out of the retirement village with a couple of pals and seeking adventure across the border. Just ask Chris van der Merwe from Centurion.

“My wide, Ida, and I are seasoned campers, having toured extensively through Botswana, Namibia and the Richtersveld. We'd already visited Swaziland, but the itch came to explore once more and we convinced another retired couple, Johan and Ina Nel, living in the same village, to join us. My brother-in-law Zaaïman Stander joined in on the fun as well. All of us are well into our seventies.

We hit the road in our 2016 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D and Canopy Caravan while our

friends towed their Jurgens off-road trailer with a 2015 Prado. We'd never seen Lesotho so this time we headed south for the Mountain Kingdom first, with the intention of being away for a whole month.

Which route did you take?

Our trip started in Himeville, up Sani Pass to Afriski where we stayed in chalets. Next stop was two days at Bokong in a chalet, then Makarabei Lodge near Mohale Dam. Then to Semonkong where Ida and I

camped and the others stayed in chalets at the Semonkong Lodge. Then back to Himeville via Quatchas Neck border post. We spent four days camping in Balito and the three days in Mkuze Game Reserve before entering Swaziland through the Golela border post.

Where did you end up?

We spent three days camping at Hlane Royal National Park before moving on to Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary. Before going



home, however, we also spent three days camping at Lower Sabie in the Kruger National Park. We drove a total of 3 350 km.

Describe Mlilwane and Hlane.

The two parks in Swaziland are in excellent condition. Hlane is old, but everything is in its place, the ablution blocks are clean and overall the facilities are kept in tidy and working order. The level stands at the campsite are not demarcated, but there's plenty of space and short natural grass.

Mlilwane has 17 demarcated stands, situated in an old blue gum plantation. The stands are large, level and sandy. The ablution facilities at Mlilwane are probably the best I've seen in Southern Africa. The male and female sections each have eight showers and five toilets. They are large and there's enough space to hang your clothes.

How did you keep yourselves occupied?

There's lots of wildlife to watch. Hlane is flat bushveld with plenty of game and lions kept in a special camp. The birding is

good there too. Mlilwane is mountainous with a great view. There are no predators but a fair number of zebra, blesbuck, wildebeest and eland. It's next to the Valley of Kings, with hotels, casinos and a golf course, and just 20 km from the Swazi capital, Mbabane – just in case you need something in the big city. Mountain bike enthusiasts are also well catered for, with guided tours on offer, but there are also game drives, guided bush walks and other interesting activities to engage yourselves in.

Do you have any advice for first-timers?

Both camps offer quite a variety. The authentic Swazi huts in Mlilwane are in high demand. Both also have a restaurant on site for those tired of making their own supper, and the Hippo Haunt eatery in Mlilwane seems to be quite popular with visitors from Europe. There are no shops or fuel available in the camps, but you can

stock up on almost anything you need just 20 km away.

How much does it cost to camp there?

The camping cost at both reserves is R125 per person per night. They're both part of Big Game Parks. 



Contact  biggameparks.org
 reservations@biggameparks.org
 +268 2528 3943/4

GPS S26.479882 E31.196027 (Mlilwane)
S26.260586 E31.876052 (Hlane) 

WIN

Chris wins a Camp Cover
Bundu Bag worth R500.

Check out their range of protective covers on their website

 campcover.co.za

CAMP COVER 

For friend and fish

The brand-new Batis & Bass River Camp is a great place for camping and fishing.



FISHING RESORT

BATIS & BASS RIVER CAMP Shore stands for all

It's not every day that you get to book an entire campsite just for yourself. Okay, not entirely for yourself: When you book at Batis & Bass River Camp, the place is reserved for you and your friends.

The campsite is halfway between Ceres and Worcester on Plum Lategan's property. Plum farms with wine grapes and pears, and initially the campsite was for personal use only. But since December last year he's been sharing this exclusive campsite with other campers. Besides the fact that you have the opportunity to camp on a working farm, avid fishermen will love this place because there



are quite a few species to be found in the water.

The campsite is on the banks of the Breede River – a few metres downstream from where the Wit River (from Bainskloof) joins the Breede River. Even though the latter is often dry, Plum says that's not the case here. You'll find both types of bass (black and small-mouth) and there are also other types of fish like brown trout and the cheeky banded tilapia. Plum has even had members of the national angling team here. Just remember though: Whatever you catch needs to be returned to the water.

The stands are on a lawn large enough for up to three caravans, with a paved slab for one vehicle. You can move the braai

closer to where you want it and *kuier* until dawn. Plum supplies the firewood, free of charge. The power socket is in the middle of the campsite with the bathrooms a short distance away. There are two toilets, a shower, basin and washing-up area, and the hot water comes from a gas geyser.

The "Batis" in the name refers to the Cape batis; there's actually a breeding pair of this exceptional bird near the campsite. In the morning you can hear the familiar sound of the fish eagle, and don't be surprised if you encounter a romp of otters on the farm.

You're allowed to swim in the river, but if you prefer to stay dry, there are two kayaks that you can use, also free of charge.



Briefly | Batis & Bass River Camp



Fish Black and small-mouth bass, carp, brown trout, catfish and banded tilapia.

Campsite 1 large stand on the banks of the Breede River on grass big enough for 3 caravans.

Ablution facilities 1 building with a shower, 2 toilets, basin and washing-up area.

Price Minimum daily fee of R1 200 for the first 8 people. Additional people are R150 p.p.p.n. Up to 15 people can camp here.

Arrival and departure times

2 pm and 10 am (On Sunday the departure time is 5 pm).

Contact 083 229 9002

info@batisandbass.co.za

batisandbass.co.za

Road condition The last kilometre of dirt road is almost like tar.

GPS S33.536360 E19.200756

go! Drive & Camp says

The Vet Spens farmstall belongs to the owners of the campsite and is on the tar road. You can buy things like vegetables and frozen meat.



FISHCAKES

Can-do!

This recipe is so easy and can be made with any canned fish. Drain the fish well beforehand, otherwise the fishcakes won't bind properly and will break when you cook them.

Ingredients

(makes about 10)

- half a stale white bread, grated
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- one large handful parsley, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon masala chilli powder
- 2 eggs
- 3 cans (410 g each) fish – use tuna, sardines, salmon or a mix
- salt, pepper and lemon juice, to taste
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 2 cups mashed potatoes
- 2 cups cooking oil

Here's how

1 Mix the breadcrumbs, butter,

onion, parsley, masala and eggs together in a bowl – using your hands will work best.

2 Drain the fish well so it's dry – discard the salt water or oil. Crumble with your fingers and mix with the remaining ingredients (except the oil) along with the bread-and-onion mixture.

3 Make balls with the mixture and then flatten slightly to form cakes of about 6 cm in diameter. They need to be firm – use more breadcrumbs if necessary.

4 Heat the oil in a deep pan and fry the cakes for at least 20 minutes until they're golden brown and crisp. Turn regularly.

5 Drain the fishcakes on kitchen towel and serve either hot or cold with a three-bean salad (homemade or store-bought).

go! Drive & Camp says

Use dry hot English mustard powder to remove the fish smell from your hands. Rub it on and wash off with clean water.

Recipe Nettle Pikeur Photo Ruwan Boshoff



ANGLING NEWS

The world's best are on their way

World Cup tournaments on home soil are nothing new – local rugby and soccer enthusiasts have been spoilt in this regard in the past. And now the fishing community can look forward to a historic angling event.

The Sport Fishing World Games 2019 will be held in South Africa early next year. It's the fourth time it's been held since its inception in 2000, with Italy and Portugal as previous hosts. What makes the tournament so unique is that it includes all five angling disciplines: fresh-water angling, fly-fishing, sea angling, underwater spearfishing, and spot casting.

An estimated 1 634 anglers – 111 of them local – from 42 countries will be gunning for the top spots, and the competition is held across South Africa in towns like Vereeniging, Dullstroom, Groblersdal, Durban and Richards Bay. The carp fishermen will gather at Bloemhof Dam and it's more than fishing: You pitch camp on the shore, right next to your rods. As soon as the starting pistol fires, you have 72 hours to catch the right fish to bag a spot on the winners' podium.





Deep down in Lesotho

Things don't always work out according to plan, but if the opportunity for adventure rears its head you shouldn't think twice, says Clive George from Durban.



Their plan to tackle the Senquyane Valley in Lesotho with their 4x4s in August 2016 was put on hold by the heaviest snowfall in this area in 50 years.

Clive George and his son, Craig, were planning on camping on the riverbank en route to the Sani Pass, but the weather gods had other plans.

This setback, however, only made them more determined to traverse the valley and experience the extreme 4x4 challenges and remoteness.

When they departed in a group of nine people in five 4x4s from the Ongeluk Nek Pass in the south of Lesotho last year in September, Clive and his friends were amped for the adventure that evaded them the year before.

Men on a mission

Our team from Natal planned on staying at different destinations over four nights and then to leave Lesotho on the fifth day by way of the Sani Pass.

We wanted to spend the first night at Semonkong Lodge, the second night next to the Senquyane River, the third at Katse Dam in Central Lesotho, and then the last night at the Linakeng River, southeast of the Katse Dam.

Craig is the team leader and tackles the trip in his Mitsubishi Colt 2.8 with Trevor Pitt. David Southwick drives his Ford Ranger 3.2, and Leon Erwee and his 16-year-old son, Kavan, travel in a Land Rover Discovery V8. A three-man team consisting of André Greeff, Ralph Koen and Dino Koulountis are in a Toyota Hilux 3.0, and I'm in my Mitsubishi Triton 3.2.

Our trip gets off to a shaky start after we refuel at Matatiele en route to Ongeluk Nek Pass. Leon's Discovery starts losing power (we suspect dirt in the fuel) and the problem is so serious that Leon, Kavan and David decide to rather return home to Durban – much to our disappointment.

But half an hour later David phones Craig to say they're on their way back as the fuel problem had improved considerably. After waiting for Leon and company for a short while, we proceed up Ongeluk Nek Pass to the border post. We leave the border post at about 1 pm and travel up the pass. It's not the toughest challenge but we



KEEP CLIMBING.
The Ongeluk Nek Pass doesn't offer the toughest challenge for hardened off-roaders but here and there the group have to engage low-range gearing and differential locks to reach the summit.

have to engage low range and diff lock occasionally to ultimately reach the pinnacle of the pass (approximately 2 400 m).

The drive through the plateau reveals spectacular views and it's especially a view over a lake that emphasises that feeling of isolation and vastness.

After skirting down the mountain pass on our way to Semonkong Lodge, we come across a small village with friendly locals who happily point out a shack to us where we buy a case of Lesotho's Maluti beers at a reasonable price. It ensures a good vibe in the group and at 6 pm we arrive at the lodge, enjoying a hearty meal and a good night's rest in the backpackers.

Rocks and ditches

The next morning we fill our tanks from the jerry cans we've been carrying. This

The plateau spoils us with beautiful scenery and it's especially the view of a lake that adds to the feeling of remoteness.

will take some weight off the roof of our vehicles so they're more stable when we're descending the steep passes ahead.

Craig leads the way again and our convoy leaves at 9 am on the so-called Bus Route southeast in the direction of the Senqu River. For the first hour or so the road is relatively easy. Then Craig signals a turn-off (according to his GPS) to the right. It's a bridle path running along the grassy plateau of the escarpment and winding its way down the >



Senqu Valley. Although this path isn't difficult to drive, it's not without its fair share of obstacles. It's easy to lose the track, but luckily we have satellite navigation to help us when we (literally) go off the route.

But it's not long before our adventure starts in full force. We reach a point where it suddenly becomes more challenging: In front of us the path is littered with rocks that look like they've been strategically placed there to test our 4x4 skills. Progress is slow.

Hordes of curious locals gather round to see how our vehicles will fare down this challenging stretch of road. Although Craig, Andre, Ralph, David and I had been

down this pass two years ago, the condition of it has since deteriorated considerably. And, Dino, Trevor, Leon and Kavan have never been to the Senqu before and there is some doubt in their minds, and ours, as to our vehicles' abilities to make it down to the river.

We knew it would be difficult and that's exactly why we came here. So with Trevor as guide, Craig leads the way around and over the first steep hairpin bend down to the escarpment, only to find that there's a succession of other steep gullies, rocks, boulders and drop-offs ahead of us. With diff lock and low range permanently engaged, the rest of the team (guided by Dino, Kavan, Ralph



Before us, the path is strewn with rocks and ditches that seem to be strategically placed there to test our 4x4 skills.



WELL DONE, MEN. There are few things as satisfying as meat on the coals and a cold beverage in hand when you've passed a true 4x4 test without incident. At some places in Lesotho you need to have nerves of steel.

and Trevor) follows Craig after he successfully manages to get around the first hairpin bend.

After negotiating several similar steep gullies down the escarpment, the Lesotho locals who followed us on foot stares at our convoy with looks of disbelief and try to warn us about what lies ahead. I must admit, the warnings of "This road is no" and "You must go back" does little for our self-confidence.

But we'd already reached the point of no return. Our vehicles would never make it back up the steep pass even with low range and diff lock. So we have no option but to press on regardless of the condition of the road.

We're determined to persevere, and with the help of our guides who remove boulders and help with hand signals when we can't see over the bonnets of our cars, our vehicles slowly crawl down the rocky terrain to the river, where we arrive at approximately 2 pm. It had taken us five hours to do about 30 km.

After setting up camp on the banks of the river, and to celebrate the successful completion of the first leg of our trip down the rugged escarpment, we drink several Maluti beers and braai some meat while we discuss the hectic day's events and what lies ahead of us the next day.

We all agree that the most extreme part of our trip is over and that our ascent up the Senqu Valley to Katse Dam will be plain sailing. But we have no idea how wrong we are...

Stress levels climb the higher we go

It's the third day of our trip. We pack up camp and leave in convoy at 8 am. We cross the river with ease, up the steep escarpment of the Sequ Valley in a northeasterly direction to Katse Dam via Thaba-Tseka.

The higher we climb the more we realise this rough and steep mountain road is more difficult than we anticipated. Luckily we're rewarded with magnificent views. We can understand why some people refer to this section as the "stairway to hell".

The biggest challenge is if you try to tackle an obstacle without a guide. I find that out the hard way when I attempt to negotiate a gully and almost roll my bakkie in the process. The team members behind me see my left front wheel lifting half a metre. Luckily I realise it immediately and reverse, preventing the Triton from ending up on its roof.

It's a slow, tricky and tedious ascent up Lesotho's dry, rocky terrain and ultimately it takes us four hours to complete 20 km. By the time we reach St Martins Mission at the end of the pass on the way to Katse Dam, we'd covered 42 km in six hours. Credit goes to Ralph, Kavan, Trevor and Dino for guiding us through this tricky terrain. We fill up at Thaba-Tseka and eventually arrive at 6 pm in pouring rain at the Katse Dam, where we overnigh.

So far the weather had been fine and a little while later it stops raining. We pitch camp on the banks of the river >



near the Katse Dam. Craig decides to inspect his Colt's engine and discovers that three bolts are missing on the exhaust manifold.

We celebrate another successful day in the Senqu Valley with several Maluti beers and a braai, but it's clear the events of the past two days have taken their toll on the team. The stress is visible.

Andre has to return home to Durban earlier than expected for business reasons so we decide to abandon the last leg of our trip to the Linakeng River. The next morning we're driving straight to the Sani Pass.

Heading home

After packing up camp, we drive to Katse Village where Craig finds a mechanic to fit the three missing bolts to his exhaust manifold. It's worth the time and money because it gives Craig peace of mind for the journey ahead.

We head for the Sani Pass, travelling mainly on good dirt and tar roads in a southeasterly direction back through Thaba-Tseka and Mokhotlong. This part of our journey is in stark contrast to the previous two days, but it's a welcome change because we're able to relax and take advantage of the magnificent mountainous scenery of Lesotho instead of focussing on the hazardous road ahead of us. It's the best of both worlds: hardcore 4x4 challenges and the opportunity to drive slowly and marvel at your surroundings.

We spend our last night on the Sani Pass and as per usual we light a fire and



AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE.

This group of KwaZulu-Natal adventurers came to Lesotho in search of a hardcore 4x4 experience and they got it twofold.



cook some meat on the coals – it's one thing we never tire of. We hang out on the backpackers' patio while it's pouring down and we chat about the wonderful challenges and the experience we'll never forget.

Sure, Craig and I would have loved to complete the course to the Linakeng River like we had planned, but we're satisfied that we achieved the main objective of the trip. We went looking for a taxing 4x4 adventure through the Senquyane Valley and we found it. And we couldn't have asked for a better

sense of camaraderie amongst the team members.

During the three and a half days of travelling through the vast and magic mountain ranges of Lesotho – and under Craig's sound leadership and navigation – we covered approximately 600 km, from Ongeluk Nek in the south to Thabana-Ntlenyana and Sani Pass in the east.

This trip was a memorable adventure and one of the best experiences of my life. I will never forget it.



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



WIN



Just right!

We Sleep

"Woonwa
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Caravan
& OUTDOOR LIFE

"Jaw-dropping
experience"

**4x4
& Outdoor
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**CAPE
Getaway
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www.mobilodge.com
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Leon 082 899 9999
Marius 083 230 6131
demonstrations - orders

A good Sport

The Mitsubishi Pajero Sport really flexes its muscles when you hitch a caravan.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**



MITSUBISHI PAJERO SPORT 2.4 D4 MIVEC 4X4

The Mitsubishi Pajero has garnered a reputation for its 4x4 abilities, and the new Pajero Sport does not disappoint in that regard. Even though this SUV pushes the scale to past the 2-ton mark, with 430 Nm between the front wheels it certainly doesn't bend the knee in front of a caravan.

The first Sport variant of the Pajero hit the scene a decade ago, and since then half a million of them have found owners across the globe. The latest generation is available in two models. It reminds you of identical twins where the one fares better on the athletics track while the other does better in field events. The two are virtually identical, with a choice between 4x2 or 4x4. You'll fork out R30 000 more for the 4x4 and its gross vehicle mass (GVM) is also 110 kg higher.

The light and heavy side

If you look at the tare weight of the Pajero Sport you'll notice that Mitsubishi lowered the towing capacity by about 200 kg. Both models are allowed to tow a weight of 1 800 kg, but the tare weight of our test vehicle, a 4x4 model, is 2 035 kg. That doesn't mean the caravan's GVM must be less than 1 800 kg. The caravan on the road just can't exceed 1 800 kg while the caravan's GVM can't be heavier than the Pajero's tare weight of 2 035 kg.

If the official at the weigh bridge wants to split hairs, he can give you a hard time if you loaded the Pajero to its maximum GVM of 2 710 kg and the caravan exceeds 1 725 kg. Because if you subtract the GVM from the GCM (4 435 kg), it gives you 1 725 kg.

What a hitch

The Pajero Sport's tow bar is so sturdy it looks like it was taken off a bulldozer. The beefiest part of the tow bar sticks out next to the body. The tow bar is manufactured by Bosal and is certified for a towing weight of 3 t, with a nose weight of 140 kg. It's nice and solid and there's a built-in drop plate – you seldom see three sets of holes above each other. In the bottom set of holes the top of the ball is 50 cm above the road and in the top holes it's 57 cm. Moreover, the middle of the ball is 17 cm away from the body. This means you won't easily dent your car if you accidentally reverse past the coupler.

The tow bar makes matters even easier: The electrical connector has a LED halo underneath on the side that shines onto the hitch and the road directly beneath it. That helps a lot when you're trying to hitch in the dark. When you lock or unlock the car with the immobiliser, the light will switch off automatically after one minute.

Slightly different

The Pajero Sport comes with everything that opens and closes as well as specific luxuries aimed at caravanners. The automatically adjustable headlights are a good example and come standard in both models.

When you pull away the doors lock automatically and when you stop they stay locked, but as soon as you put the Pajero in Park the doors unlock. The handbrake works electrically as you push and release a button. The handbrake is in the centre console >





between the front seats, just like in some other manufacturers' vehicles. The one difference is when and how it engages and releases. Usually the handbrake will release automatically after the driver starts to accelerate. You even see vehicles where the handbrake engages automatically when you stop. The Pajero's one works only when you push or release the button. If it's engaged and you try to pull away, it won't release. It's the same when you stop. You have to pull the button for it to engage.

Even though the Pajero has a rear-view camera with sensors it doesn't register when you plug in a caravan's light plug at the harness. If you engage reverse it will detect the caravan and sound the alarm as if you're going to reverse into it. It's not a problem though, because the button to turn it off is at your right knee. But what does bother you is where the ball of the hitch is on the screen. The camera's lens is 25 cm left of the middle of the tailgate – and on the screen the ball is off-centre. It's a bit confusing if you're reversing and checking the screen when you aim. Nevertheless, you can see what's going on behind the car.

The oversized paddle shifters are a luxury. They are fixed on both sides of the steering column. These paddles are not dainty affairs like you might see on other cars but rather as wide as your hand. Even if you turn sharply you can still easily tap a paddle without letting go of the steering wheel.

It's odd that the Pajero Sport doesn't have a seatbelt buzzer. It doesn't complain when occupants – you or any of your passengers – are not strapped in.



Pieter Crous
has been towing for donkey years. This is what he thought of the new Pajero Sport.

Pieter says

“These seats are incredible... so nice and deep. The seat and backrest are also not equally firm. It's harder underneath your behind while the backrest folds around you like an embrace. It's very comfortable – I wish my couch was this nice. For me, sitting comfortably in a towing vehicle is one of the most important things. It can be a deal breaker.

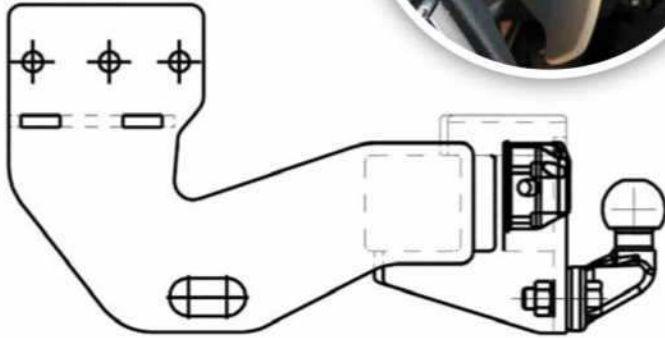
The cupholders in the centre console are large, meaning a smaller can (like Red Bull) fits loosely.

The transmission is anything but a slumbering set of gears and it switches fast. When the Pajero is moving at a steady towing speed, it changes gear without you feeling it.

The wind was howling and I could feel it, but the Pajero feels sturdy on the road. The engine didn't really impress me, but it has enough power to tow a caravan of 1½ t easily. If you touch the paddle shift it switches over immediately – up or down – and shows you on



LET'S HOOK UP. The hitch is one of the beefiest ones you'll encounter. And with a drop plate with three sets of holes you're not left wanting.



the dashboard which gear you are in. If you hold down the '+' paddle for two seconds, the transmission will switch back to ordinary automatic mode without you having to touch the gear lever.

Even with the heavy caravan on the hitch the vehicle has a relatively soft suspension. Even if one side's wheels are not on tar you almost don't know about it – that's how well the suspension ensures ride comfort. As you would expect, a corrugated road feels silky smooth. Still, the suspension does feel as though it rocks, but not seriously so.

The view to the back in both mirrors are clear enough. And for a 4x4 it turns incredibly sharp. (According to Mitsubishi, the Pajero Sport's turning circle of 11,2 m is the best in its market segment. – Ed)

In a 'Sport' model like this I would have liked to see extras like blind spot sensors and lane change assist. But I have to say, the price surprised me – I expected it to be much more expensive. The Pajero Sport is excellent value for money. If I had to choose in this segment, the Pajero Sport would definitely be first in line.



LITTLE BIG EARS. The paddle shifters appear to be hidden behind the steering wheel, but once you turn it you'll see how large they actually are.



BE A TUGBOAT CAPTAIN. The screen that displays the image of the reverse camera is logically placed high up on the centre console. You have a clear view of whatever is happening behind the Pajero Sport. The electronic handbrake is located between the seats next to the off-road dial.





What we towed

Make Jurgens Safari
Model Xplorer
Year model 2012
GVM 1 650 kg
Caravan weight on the scale
 1 480 kg
Nose weight 140 kg

go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Jurgens Xplorer from Tygerberg Caravans. Phone Wesley Dempster on 021 982 4670 for a closer look at the Xplorer. tygerbergcaravans.co.za

The test

Distance 133,6 km
Top speed 117 km/h (GPS)
Average speed 56,4 km/h (highways, back roads, built-up areas and a stretch of dirt road)
Driving time 2 hours and 24 minutes.
Weather 18 °C, mostly cloudy with some rain and a strong northerly wind of 31 km/h.



Before you open your wallet

What does the book say?

Fuel Diesel
Engine 2,442 ℓ
Cylinders 4
Power 133 kW @ 3 500 rpm
Torque 430 Nm @ 2 500 rpm
Transmission 8-speed automatic (with tap function and high and low range).
Drivetrain Rear wheel or four wheel with high and low range and rear diff lock.
Tare 2 035 kg
GVM 2 710 kg
GCM 4 435 kg
Wading depth 700 mm
Towing ability for trailer with overrun brakes Up to 1 800 kg.
Dimensions 4 785 mm (l); 1 815 mm (w); 1 805 mm (h)
Wheelbase 2 800 mm
Track width 1 520 mm (in front); 1 515 mm (rear)
Ground clearance 215 mm
Fuel tank 68 ℓ
Price (new) From R599 995
Price (second-hand) We saw a 4x2 model (2017 with 22 500 km on the clock) on autotrader.co.za for R489 900.

Fast facts

The tow bar The hitch doesn't come standard. The test vehicle's one is from Bosal and is certified for a towing weight of 3 t and a nose weight of 140 kg. The hitch costs R4 241 extra and the installation takes 2 hours.



Suspension Double wishbones and coil springs with roll bar in front and multi-link with roll bar at the rear. The tail dropped 44 mm under the nose weight of the Xplorer.



What does the scale say? 2 360 kg with the driver in the Pajero and a full tank of fuel. The gross combination mass of 3 680 kg on the scale is about 700 kg short of the allowed GCM. That leaves space for passengers in the car as well as 100–200 kg cargo in the caravan.



Interior A hand-width space above your head as well as in front of your knees, and two fingers above the your head when seated at the back.



Speed The speedometer is out by 5 km/h – the GPS speed is 95 km/h when the speedometer shows you're driving 100 km/h.

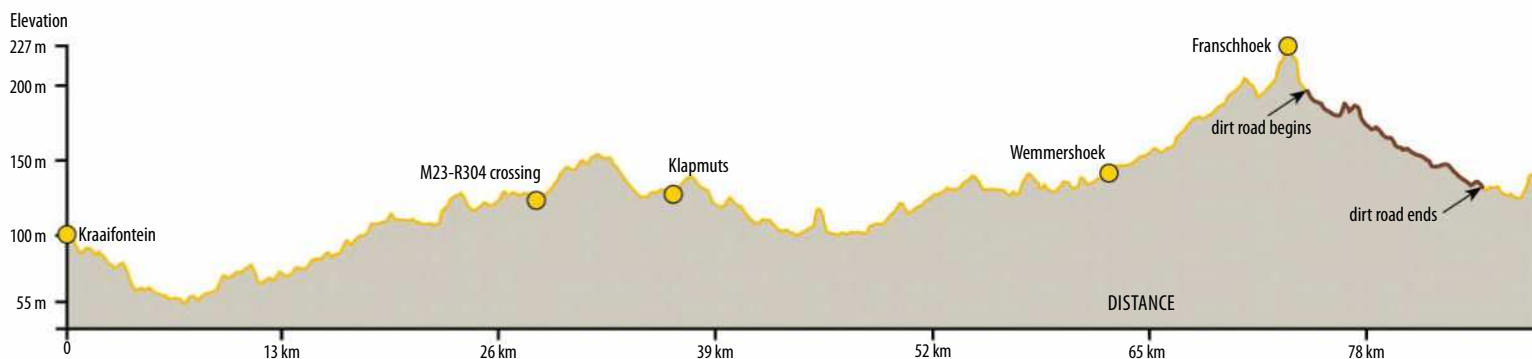


Fuel consumption According to the computer and our calculations a decent 13,8 ℓ/100 km (7,2 km/ℓ). For this size car you'd expect a slightly bigger fuel tank, especially considering you'll be doing 4x4 driving in isolated areas or towing a caravan. With a full tank you can drive 490 km.



Interior finishes Dark, solid and stylish. There

TOW PROFILE



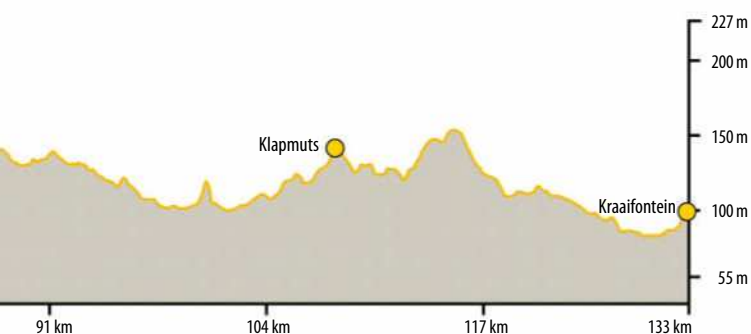


are a few matte grey panels here and there, like the centre console and the door handle. There's shiny black plastic around the radio.

+ Extras A roof rack R9 565, rock sliders R8 972, bash plate R3 585, nudge bar R5 130 and navigation system R14 535.

Other models?
Only a 4x2-model
R569 995

go! Drive & Camp says
Part of the tow bar warranty conditions is obviously that you shouldn't overload it. The same applies if you mount a bike rack onto the hitch. You're not allowed to transport more than two bikes on a hanging bike rack (for an upright bike rack the limit is three).



www.weg.co.za

Some competitors (automatic, 4x4 and diesel)



Toyota Fortuner 2.4 GD-6
R516 900

400 Nm

-14%

-7%



Ford Everest XLT 3.2
R654 900

470 Nm

9%

9%



Land Rover Discovery Sport Pure
R686 000

430 Nm

14%

=%



Mobi X

Dude with attitude

The Mobi X offers the best of both worlds: light and compact like an off-road trailer but inside it's pure bush caravan.

Text and photos **Helenus Kruger**

With the introduction of the Mobi Lodge in 2015, Marius Ras of Mobi Lodge Manufacturing brought a unique concept to the South African caravan market. At that stage a bedroom sliding out of the body was a novelty on this side of the pond. This design made the floor surface 40% larger and it was built to handle even the roughest terrain. This smart combination

of an off-road trailer and off-road caravan had never been seen before on our roads.

Now a smaller version – the Mobi X – has seen the light of day, and according to Marius this little guy, just like its older brother, has a one-piece seamless fibreglass body that's mounted onto a galvanised steel chassis. The caravan is aimed at campers looking for the mobility and off-road abilities of an off-road camper but also the luxuries

you usually find only in off-road caravans.

With a dry weight of 760 kg, the Mobi X is easy to tow and the downwards curve of the nose ensures little wind resistance. The caravan doesn't have a fold-out tent and you sleep inside.

On the inside you have luxuries like lights, magazine and cupholders, while the drawer you pull out of the body has enough space for all your camping gear.



Come on in

The Mobi X is more spacious than you'd expect. You can't stand upright, but the 100 cm roof height is high enough so you can move around comfortably, even if it is with your knees on the mattress.

You first have to pull out the cargo drawer at the back before climbing in because the drawer is in the bed's space when it's not pulled out.

The firm sponge mattress with three panels is stored upright in the front of the caravan, between the nose and cargo drawer. Between the folded-up mattress and the drawer (closed) there is 43 cm of space that can be used as additional packing space. The mattress basically covers the

entire floor when unfolded and there is only 48 cm between the foot of the bed and the drawer. The mattress is longer and slightly wider than a three-quarter bed and is pointy at the top so that it fits into the nose.

The easiest way to get into the caravan is to sit in the highest side of the door opening and to swing your legs to the right. In the opening there's a mosquito net that fastens with Velcro and you lock the door on the inside with a clip. Inside on the right (as you climb in) there's a stretch-elastic magazine holder above the mattress and a fold-out cupholder for a water glass or cooldrink can.

At the top, almost against the roof, are two small flat

cupboards for books, glasses, keys and cellphones, and next to the cupboard is an adjustable LED reading light. At the foot of the bed there are two more small cupboards; the top one has storage space and the bottom one houses the battery charger.

On the left is the clothing cupboard's interior. You can access the cupboard from the inside, meaning you don't have to walk to the shower tent to get to your clothes. In front of the cupboard is a mosquito net that will keep the pests outside while the door is open.

There is also a light and a cupholder similar to the ones on the right as well as a three-prong socket. At the top, to the right of the light, is a round hole at the

bottom of the pole cupboard. Your hand fits perfectly inside the hole so you can push poles that are too deep to the outside.

There are two more cupboards at the bottom of the bed, but the plumbing for the water and gas runs through it, which means packing space is limited. Underneath the cupboard is a three-point socket for the fridge. There is a roof light in the middle of the roof. The electricity box is to the right at the top, at the door, and the circuit breakers and switches for the roof light, water tank and fridge are also located here.

There is also a USB socket, 12 V cigarette lighter, Volt meter, as well as a level monitor for the water tank.

>



Everything on the A-frame

On the A-frame you'll find a jockey wheel, handbrake, plug for the lights, as well as a Brad Harrison plug to charge the batteries while driving.

The sturdy nose wheel can, after the caravan has been hitched, swing upwards to

fit horizontally next to the A-frame. To do this you pull the U-shaped spring clip towards you (after the wheel has been turned up) and swing the wheel upwards. Make sure the clips hooks properly into the holes.



To the point

The nose of the caravan is pointed at an angle of 35°, which means your caravan and vehicle's bumper won't connect when you make a sharp turn. Thanks to the angle you also won't get any stones flying back towards your caravan but rather to the sides. The entire nose is covered with a protector.



Get behind it

To get to the storage space in the Mobi X you have to open the back door and pull out the cargo drawer (85 x 150 cm).

Before you open the back door you first have to position the two swing-down corner steadies on the ground. If you pull out the cargo drawer before you position the corner steadies, chances are good the weight of your gear will lift the caravan's nose.

To make sure you don't forget to do this there is a flat piece of metal bolted onto the left corner steady that prevents the door from opening if the corner steady hasn't been lowered.

The drawer is kept in place on both sides by clips. There's a rope at the back that you pull

to open the clips and a handle you use to pull out the drawer.

The drawer has a fibreglass cover that's just as big as the drawer. On the three sides of the cover are flaps that you roll down and fasten to the corners and at the bottom to keep rain out.

The flaps also roll up easily; there are aluminium tubes in the seam at the bottom to help when you roll it up.

The two flaps on the side fasten with press studs against the body to close the gap between the drawer and the body. The left flap has a mesh window that helps with air flow in the caravan.

The porta-potti is on the farthest side away from the





body, and the gas bottle is also mounted here. Then there's a frame that fits six ammo boxes – three on each side – that pulls out with rollers. There's a stainless steel portable braai in a canvas bag on the ammo boxes' frame.

Closest to the body is space for the fridge. On the inside of the door is a 6 l gas geyser, fire extinguisher and toolbag.

The spare wheel is on the door on a tubular frame and to the left of the door are the hot- and cold-water taps. >





In the kitchen

The canopy (1,8 x 3,5 m) that stretches over the kitchen is rolled up in a bag that fits into a sliding frame at the top on the side of the caravan. It's slightly wider than the kitchen and a V-shaped angle iron against the body underneath the canopy diverts any water away from the kitchen.

The canopy has a silver liner to keep things cool and there's a separate canopy (1,3 m wide) that stretches over the caravan's door and fastens to the main canopy with Velcro. It keeps the caravan dry inside when the door is open.

The door, 61 cm above the ground, is in front at the nose of the caravan. The opening is 81 cm wide. The top follows the profile of the caravan's nose and runs down from the highest point (87 cm) to the lowest point left (60 cm).

The kitchen is to the right of the door, and the kitchen door, like in so many other caravans, swings down to create a work surface (58 x 137 cm). To the right is a two-burner gas stove that's

permanently connected to a gas bottle. The large work surface (48 x 83 cm) to the left of the stove has ample space for you to play Masterchef.

The right side of the cupboard, above the stove, is where the cutlery and cups are kept, and to the far right there's space for two wine bottles.

The kitchen is geared for four people. In the left of the cupboard are 10 shelves for plates, pots, pans and plastic containers and far left at the bottom is a shelf with space for five spice bottles. Above this shelf is a braai tong and a three-point socket.

Above the kitchen is a LED light that illuminates the work surface. You can adjust the brightness level and you can choose between yellow or white light.

To the right of the surface are two hooks against the body for the dish rack with a washbasin and drying rack.

An iron pole with a rubber foot pushes against the body to prop up the rack.



More storage space

You can put your additional camping gear on top of the conduit roof rack. This is also where the optional rooftop tent is mounted.





Time to wash

To reach the clothing cupboard from the outside you have to open a door, just like with the kitchen. This door also hangs on two steel cables to create a work surface. The clothing cupboard has nine shelves, six of which are open at the back so you can take out your clothes from inside the caravan.

You pitch the shower tent (2,2 x 2 m) on to the side of the caravan. At its highest the roof is 2,1 m and at its lowest 1,7 m. The tent has sides with windows and there is a door on the side farthest away

from the caravan. There's a windbreaker at the bottom of the caravan to keep the wind out.

Unlike other tents, the plastic at the bottom folds out and the tent peg loops are on the inside. The retractable showerhead, the same model as on the Mobi Lodge, is to the left at the bottom. Underneath the showerhead is a hole to fill up the water tank. The shower tent also doubles as a dressing room, but then you have to get out in your pajamas in the morning and walk around to the tent.

The technical stuff

Nose weight 65 kg (supplied)

Length (A-frame included)

3,7 m

Width 1,65 m

Height 1,9 m

Net weight (basic caravan)

760 kg

Payload 740 kg

GVM 1 500 kg

Price R198 000 as tested, fully kitted out. The basic caravan with the pull-out drawer costs R148 000. There are several tent options.



Plus

- The build quality and interior and exterior finishes are excellent.
- The kitchen is big and well equipped.
- The jockey wheel that moves out of the way to next to the A-frame is a good idea, especially if you're tackling rough terrain.
- The caravan is light and you can easily tow it with a vehicle with a smaller engine capacity.
- The side flaps have loops at the bottom that fit a pole to make rolling up easier.

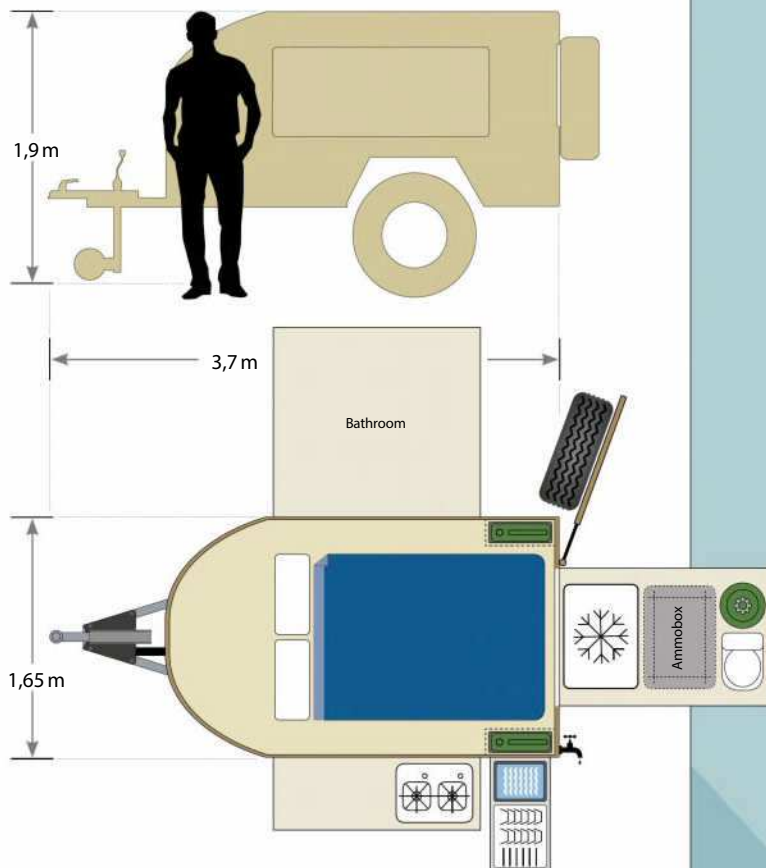


Minus

- It's uncomfortable getting dressed inside the caravan.
- The fridge drawer doesn't pull out and narrow space makes it difficult to take anything out.
- The clothing cupboard's shelves are narrow and there isn't a lot of packing space.
- There isn't a canvas cover over the rear cargo drawer; you get wet when you take something out of the ammo boxes or fridge.
- The lights above the kitchen and clothing cupboard shines only on the work surfaces and not inside the cupboards.

go! Drive & Camp says The caravan has black 16" alloy wheels with 265 x 70 x 16" tyres.

go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Mobi X from the manufacturer.



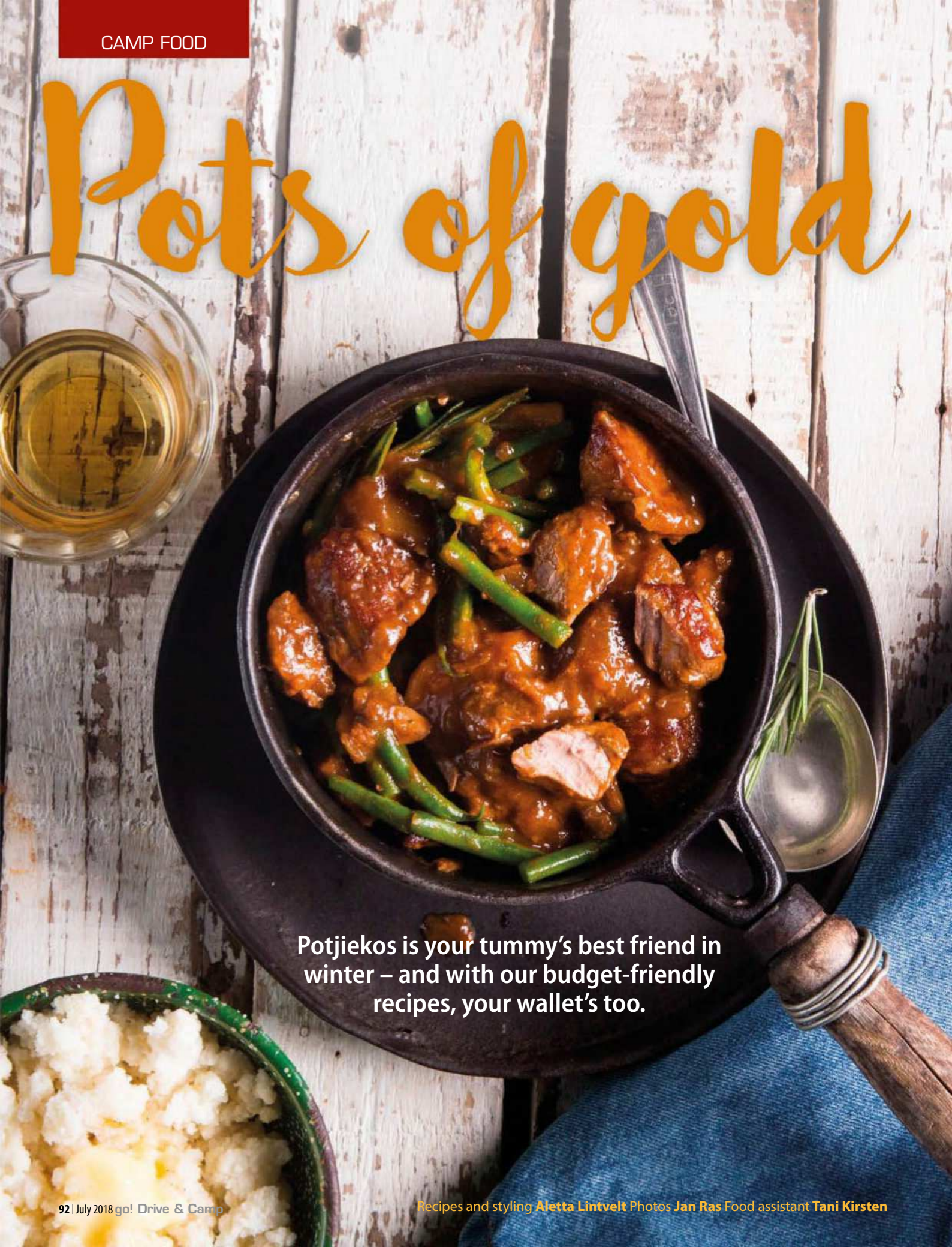
Dealer network

Mobi Lodge is a one-man operation with a factory in Middelburg and marketing offices in Pretoria. There will be a branch in Cape Town shortly.

Contact 013 246 1080, 083 230 6131 or 082 899 9999
 marius@mobilodge.com or leon@mobilodge.com
 mobilodge.com



Pots of gold



Potjiekos is your tummy's best friend in winter – and with our budget-friendly recipes, your wallet's too.

🔗 BEEF AND GREEN BEAN POTJIE IN A SHERRY SAUCE **Bean me up, Scotty!**

If you can't find fresh green beans you can use frozen.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 750 g stewing beef, cubed
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 cup medium cream sherry
- 1 sprig rosemary (or use 1 teaspoon dried rosemary)
- 1–2 cups beef stock
- 4–6 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered.
- 300 g green beans

Here's how

1 Heat the oil in a potjie and brown the meat bit by bit, seasoning with salt and pepper each time and removing the meat as you finish.

2 Sauté the onion in the same pot until soft and fragrant, but not brown, then add the garlic and tomato paste. Cook the mixture for one minute.

3 Add the sherry, rosemary and meat. Add enough stock to just cover the meat. Put the lid on and leave to simmer for about 45 minutes. Add the potatoes and simmer for another 30 minutes or until the potatoes are almost soft.

4 Stir in the green beans as soon as the meat and potatoes are soft and simmer for 10–15 minutes. Remove the lid if it's very saucy or add more stock if it gets too dry.

go! Drive & Camp says

The trick is to cook the meat quickly over high heat so it seals it and the juices stay inside. So don't make the pot too full otherwise it will steam instead of fry, draw water and become tough.

🔗 SWEET-AND-SOUR CHICKEN WITH APRICOTS **Best of both**

Kids love this sweet potjie – but adults will definitely also go for seconds.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 50 ml oil
- 8 chicken pieces (we used thighs and drumsticks)
- 1 large onion, sliced lengthwise
- 2 red peppers, cut into strips
- 1 packet (415 ml) sweet-and-sour sauce (we used Royco Sweet and Sour Cook-in Sauce)
- 150–250 ml chicken stock
- 10 dried apricots
- salt and pepper, to taste

Here's how

1 Heat the oil in a potjie and brown

the chicken quickly. Remove and put to the side.

2 Sauté the onion until soft. Add the peppers and cook for another 2 minutes. Add the sweet-and-sour sauce and then put the chicken back in the pot. Pour in just enough stock to cover the meat. Put the lid on and simmer for 30–45 minutes over medium heat until the chicken is almost cooked. By cooking the potjie slowly you ensure the meat will fall off the bone instead of becoming tough and dry.

3 Stir in the dried apricots and simmer for another 15 minutes until the chicken is soft and cooked through. Serve with rice.

go! Drive & Camp says Chicken with the skin on and bone in is always more tasty than the skinless, boneless variety. For this recipe thighs and drumsticks work best. >

◉ LAMB AND LEMON POTJIE

Lemony fresh

Lemon and lamb are a delicious combination. If you ensure the heat stays moderate while the meat simmers it will be falling off the bone.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 kg lamb knuckles
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 25 ml tomato paste
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme (or use 1 teaspoon dried thyme)
- 1 can (410 g) tomato-and-onion relish
- juice and zest of 2 lemons
- 1 cup lamb stock
- 12 baby carrots
- 2 tablespoons cake flour

Here's how

1 Heat the oil in a potjie and brown the meat. Season to taste with salt and pepper as you cook.

2 Add the garlic, tomato paste, thyme and relish to the meat. Add the lemon juice and leave to simmer for 1 hour over low heat with the lid on. It's important that it's a light simmer and not a full-on boil because it will make the meat tough. Add some stock if the potjie becomes dry.

3 Add the carrots and simmer for another 30 minutes (or until the carrots are tender) with the lid on. Keep an eye on the potjie and add more stock if necessary.

4 Mix the flour with 4 tablespoons stock to create a paste. Mix some of the hot potjie sauce with the paste and then add to the pot. (This will prevent it from making lumps.) Stir everything well and simmer for another 5 minutes until the sauce thickens. Lastly, add the lemon zest. Flavour to taste with salt and pepper.

go! Drive & Camp says Any stewing lamb will work in this recipe – just ensure there isn't too much fat on the meat.



◉ SAUSAGE AND MUSHROOM POTJIE WITH PAP

Sneaky sausage

This easy recipe can be made with leftover boerewors.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 700 g boerewors
- 1 large onion, diced
- 250 g mushrooms, chopped
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 10 baby potatoes
- 1 packet (26g) instant gravy (we used Knorr Instant Gravy)
- half a head broccoli, broken into florets
- salt and pepper, to taste

Here's how

1 Heat the oil in a potjie and fry the sausage until golden brown and cooked. Remove the sausage from the pot, cut into bite-sized pieces and put to the side.

2 Sauté the onion and mushrooms in the same pot until soft. Add the wine and potatoes.

3 Make the gravy according to the instructions on the packet and stir into the pot.

4 Simmer for 20 minutes and stir often. Add the broccoli and salt and pepper to taste, and simmer for another 10 minutes.

5 Add the sausage back into the pot and reheat. Serve with pap.

go! Drive & Camp says You can replace the broccoli with spinach or green beans.





PORK NECK POTJIE **This little piggy...**

This deliciously tasty potjie is similar to a Hungarian stew. If you don't like pork you can use stewing beef.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 750 g pork neck, cut in blocks
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- ½ teaspoon chilli flakes
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon fine cumin
- 1 can (410 g) tomato relish with green pepper
- 6–8 small sweet potatoes, whole or halved

- salt and pepper, to taste

Here's how

1 Heat the oil in a potjie and brown the meat. Add the garlic, spices and relish and simmer for 30 minutes over low heat. Add water if necessary.

2 Pack the sweet potatoes on top of the meat and simmer for 30 minutes or until the meat and sweet potatoes are soft. Serve with fresh crusty bread.

go! Drive & Camp says

Don't worry about the chilli in this recipe – it's very subtle and the dish doesn't have a bite to it.

CHOCOLATE CROISSANT PUDDING **French connection**

This is the one thing that a cheap packet of croissants in the supermarket is good for.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 6 croissants, halved
- 1 slab (80 g) dark chocolate, roughly chopped
- 3 eggs plus 3 yolks
- 1 cup sugar
- 1½ cup milk
- ½ cup cream

Here's how

1 Grease a flat-bottom potjie with butter and loosely pack the croissants in the pot. Sprinkle half of the chocolate on top.

2 Mix the eggs, yolks, sugar, milk and cream together and pour over the croissants. Leave for 10 minutes so the mixture absorbs into the pastry – the longer the better. Put the lid on and bake the pudding over medium coals (remember some embers for the lid) for 30–45 minutes or until the egg mixture has set.

3 Sprinkle over the remaining chocolate and serve with custard or ice cream.

go! Drive & Camp says If you want to be decadent cut open the croissants first and spread with some chocolate spread (like Nutella) before continuing with the steps.





Kit out your kitchen

Whether you're a fine-dining connoisseur or an amateur camp chef, you'll feel a lot better having the proper kitchen tools at your disposal. We've picked out a few that'll improve your camping experience.

Text **Kyle Kok** Images **James Garaghty**

There are a lot of products out there that cater to hardcore adventurers who want to carry as little as possible, but we're not going to focus on that here. Instead, we're talking to those who have the space for a few items in the back of a bakkie or want to pack a caravan cupboard optimally.



GSI OUTDOORS HALULITE TEA KETTLE 1.25 L
Small wonder

Constructed out of hardy yet lightweight anodized aluminium, the Halulite is ideal for backpackers because it's compact. The handles are wrapped in rubber, so you don't burn your fingers when pouring a cuppa.

Price R545 from Just Like Papa

go! Drive & Camp says

The anodised finish means that unsightly scratches and scuffing are a thing of the past.



LEISUREQUIP FOLDAWAY KETTLE 1.25 L
Boil with bounce

Heating up water for your morning coffee in a silicon tube might seem like an odd sort of exercise, but this unit's party trick is that it folds down into its stainless steel base for efficient stowage. Ideally, you can use this on an induction stove.

Price R320 from Moto-Quip

go! Drive & Camp says

It shouldn't be exposed to temperatures higher than 220°C. And if you're going to use it on a gas stove, don't let the flames creep up the sides of the base.



JUST PACKWARE DISH SET

Plastic party

Those who dislike plastics can rest assured knowing that this set, comprising a cup, bowl, plate, knife, fork, spoon, and a handy keyring to keep all the cutlery together, is BPA-free. The set also includes a mesh bag to put everything in.

Price R200 from Cape Union Mart

go! Drive & Camp says The lightweight and flexible polypropylene is almost impossible to break and easy to clean.



LEISURE-QUIP SILICON GLASSES

Shatterproof

These come in a set of two, and with a 350 ml capacity they're ideal for colder beverages. The silicone retains its whiskey tumbler shape even if you bend it, fold it or squeeze it between larger items.

Price R56 from Moto-Quip

go! Drive & Camp says This is what you offer to that one buddy who's always breaking your glasses.



ECOSOULIFE CAMPER SET

Green supreme

This set will please the environmentally conscious among us. It's made from vegetable waste matter like corn, starch, bamboo and rice husks, which means that it's essentially biodegradable. There's a plate, bowl, cup, and three-piece cutlery set.

Price R250 from Cape Union Mart

go! Drive & Camp says Despite being biodegradable, the items are dishwasher- and microwave-safe.



JUST FLEXWARE MUG

Crinkle cup

This collapsible coffee mug is made out of food-grade silicon and folds up to mere centimetres. Of course, you don't have to drink only hot beverages out of it, but it's good to know it can withstand temperatures of up to 149° C.

Price R75 from Cape Union Mart

go! Drive & Camp says Even the handle, which is made out of a harder plastic, folds down and out, so this is a great item for those always on the go. >



GSI OUTDOORS ULTRALIGHT TABLE

On a pedestal

Given its smaller dimensions, at 406 mm long and 305 mm wide, this folding table is ideal for solo campers wanting to keep foodstuffs off the ground. Made of anodised aluminium and stainless steel, it weighs just 630 g but can hold around 9 kg of table-top weight.

Price R910 from Just Like Papa

go! Drive & Camp says The table's edges are raised so that your freshly brewed coffee doesn't slip off.



LEISURE-QUIP FOLDAWAY DISH DRYING RACK

Drip dry

Most campsites have a sink and worktop near the ablution facilities so you can wash your cutlery and crockery, but where do you put everything after you've washed up? The answer is this foldaway rack, which holds up to 16 plates.

Price R300 from Moto-Quip

go! Drive & Camp says There's a handy drip tray included for underneath the rack so you don't have to wipe a wet surface afterwards.

LAPLAYA ONE HANDED MUG

Easy sip

The odd Coke bottle-shaped one-handed mug from LaPlaya holds 380 ml of liquid, keeping beverages warm for up to three hours and cold for around six hours. It looks like it should hold more, but that's because it's double-walled.

Price R400 from Cape Union Mart

go! Drive & Camp says

The mouthpiece is integrated with the lid, which means you use your index or middle finger to open the flow.



STANLEY MOUNTAIN COFFEE SYSTEM 1 L

All in one

This is the ultimate solution for campers who don't want to compromise on their coffee habits. This flask unpacks like a Russian doll and comprises a stainless steel pot to boil your water in, with an integrated press to brew in. Then you pour it into the vacuum-insulated

thermos to keep your drink warm for up to 20 hours.

Price R1 250 from Trappers

go! Drive & Camp says The lid separates into two cups and the thermos top has dry storage for your ground coffee.

MSR ALPINE SALT & PEPPER SHAKER

Lighter-sized storage

Nobody wants to eat meat without the right amount of seasoning, but you also don't want to carry around large containers of salt and pepper. Now you can keep the bare necessities in one two-compartment container, with a cap on each end.

Price R100 from Just Like Papa

go! Drive & Camp says

This container is barely bigger than a Clipper lighter, so be careful not to lose it.



LANSKY BLADEMEDIC SHARPENER

To the point

A blunt knife is nobody's friend, and with this sharpener you have a swift solution at hand. The Blademedic boasts four sharpeners in one compact device so you can make repairs to your blade on the go. These include tungsten carbide, ceramic sharpening rods and,

a diamond-tapered rod.

Price R290 from Trappers

go! Drive & Camp says

The white strip is designed to get inside the smallest serrations for blades with that type of edge.



GSI OUTDOORS BUGABOO WAFFLE IRON

Dessert on the go

Who doesn't enjoy a light and delicious waffle? Especially when cooked to a crispy finish. This waffle iron boasts an even heating surface and a non-stick coating so you don't struggle to clean between the squares.

Price R550 from Just Like Papa

go! Drive & Camp says

The handles screw in and out so you can fold the iron up and pack it away.



GSI OUTDOORS BUGABOO CAMPER

Complete kitchen

This brilliant unit doesn't look like much, but if you're short on space the Bugaboo Camper from GSI Outdoors is a near-perfect solution. Included in the set are 2 l and 3 l pots with strainer lids, four plates and four mugs with sip lids as well as four bowls that the mugs fit into. Everything fits inside the pots.

Price R2 275 from Just Like Papa

go! Drive & Camp says

There is a separate handle that attaches to either pot as and when you need it.



GET THE PRODUCTS HERE

Cape Union Mart

capeunionmart.co.za

Just Like Papa

justlikepapa.com

Moto-Quip

motoquip.co.za

Trappers

trappers.co.za



The kids are alright

It's the end of the first semester and the children are on winter break. We asked how some of you handle the holiday rush with the kids in tow.

The days of you booking yourself and your partner in for a romantic weekend surrounded by nothing but nature in the bushveld are long gone.

Chances are your focus has shifted to more family-friendly options at specific times of the year because you need to take your brood into account.

We asked our Facebook friends how they go about negotiating the winter holidays with their kids.

How do you keep the children occupied in the car on the way to your camping destination? Do you go armed with games, cards or toys?

We only have one child (6), so we pack colouring books, toys and her portable DVD player. Without it the road would be hopelessly too long. – **Leandri Hamman**

I prepare an activity book in advance. For example, road bingo – a route map with a cut-out car that I move along as we drive. It helps with the questions about how far we are.

– **Marina de Kock Basson**

When our kids were young we used to drive through the

night while they slept. Now that they're a little older we can leave during the day.

– **Engela Mostert Kruger**

Drive in the evening. The children sleep and the roads aren't so busy. Sometimes it can get dodgy as some taxis don't have working headlights.

– **Marius Kritzing**

I leave at 11 pm and drive through the night.

– **Gerhard Ebersohn**

Drive at night, when the kids are fast asleep.

– **Renee Marais**

A tablet, loaded with movies and games. Colouring books, snacks and juice. – **Jonathan Bydendy**



We decided from the beginning that DVDs aren't allowed, so we sing and play I Spy. We also talk and teach the kids about places we drive through and past. They also have a few toys and colouring books. – **Ross Andrew**



Are there specific medical supplies you take when the kids go camping with you?

Yes. Just the usual stuff for fever, Paw Patrol plasters, anti-fungal creams, and an anti-histamine in case an allergy pops up.
– **Cornell Mans**

I take a complete first-aid kit with medicine for everything, including dressings and patches, even though my children are already adults. You never know when you're going to need something. – **Madelein Roets**

The mom will have to pack these herself. There are always pills for if my husband gets stung by bees. The usual things for stomach and ointment for cuts and patches and pain also go along. – **Marietjie Miles**

Bee sting medication because both my kids are allergic. Also, fever, stomach and fire treatment. – **Irene du Plessis**



We live in a digital era, so how do you pry the little ones away from electronic devices when camping? Do they play traditional games or sports?

We usually go to Montagu Caravan Park and there's a lot for the boys to do like swimming in the heated pool. They are too busy to think of video games, but we do allow them that when it gets dark and we want them in the tent. – **Rene Snyman**

It's simple. You have the gadget in the car. When the battery loses power, it isn't charged again until we arrive back home. No problem.
– **Craig Humphreys**

No signal, no problem.
– **Roland Rau**

Just camp at a place where there's no cellphone signal.
– **Johan du Toit**

Keep all the phones in a central place. The first one to grab a phone is then responsible for washing the dishes or collecting firewood. – **Kobus van Niekerk**

It's never been an issue for us. I guess it's the way they've grown up. I know adults who are much worse. So go where there's no signal. – **Gavin Pike**



Which camping resorts are the best equipped for large groups of children?

ATKV Eiland Spa.
– **Andrew van Staden**

ATKV Buffelspoort, Forever Badplaas, ATKV Natalia, ATKV Hartenbos. – **Jan van Rooyen**

Aldam Holiday Resort near Winburg. – **Daleen Bornman**

Do you allow the children to have free reign when you're camping or do they have some responsibilities like washing the dishes, pitching tents or helping to prepare the food?

My granddaughters always help with chores. – **Sue Williams**

Chores first, play second. Discipline builds character. – **Brandon Danks**

No, they have duties. Otherwise the holidays are just for them and mom doesn't get a break. They can be free after they've helped out in the camp, provided they don't bother fellow campers. – **Catherina Wait**

Yip, my kids always help. The dishwasher doesn't go along on camping trips, so they help. Otherwise I don't get a chance to rest. Many hands make light work.
– **Melissa Demaio**

They must help. – **Andre Steyn**





Roll with it

A winch is a useful tool to get you out of a tight spot, but do you know how to use it safely and how to maintain it?

Text **Cyril Kloppe**

If you've ever seen the movie *The Gods Must be Crazy*, you'll remember the hilarious scene where Marius Weyers hoists his Land Rover up a tree. This scene impressed many a young viewer and probably created dreams about one day also owning a 4x4 vehicle with a winch. Add to that the SABC's broadcast of the Camel Trophy, which undoubtedly etched the coolness of this device further into young psyches. Those hardcore guys who struggle through knee-deep mud with winch cables over their shoulders were the stuff of legend.

If, however, you mounted a winch onto your first off-roader without so much as a second thought, you might have come to realise that it is, in fact, a mostly

useless gadget but one you're grateful to have that one time you actually need it.

BEFORE YOU BUY **How strong?**

The basic rule of thumb is that an electric winch must be able to pull at least 1½ times the gross vehicle mass (GVM) of your vehicle. A Jeep Wrangler has a GVM of approximately 2 500 kg. Times that by 1½ and you get 3 750 kg. Because a winch's pulling capacity is given in pounds, you have to convert metric to imperial – in this case 8 267 lb. A T-MAX 8500LBS XPOWER that can pull 8 500 lb will therefore be adequate.

If you want to tow an off-road caravan to the Epupa Falls – with provisions and camping gear –

your winch needs to be strong enough to tow 1½ times your vehicle's gross combination mass (GCM). A new Nissan Patrol has a GCM of 7 000 kg, which means you'll need a monster of a winch, like the Warn Series 15-S Spydura ProMax, if you want to recover the Patrol with a heavily packed Aloe Lebombo on the hitch. So best to do your calculations in advance.

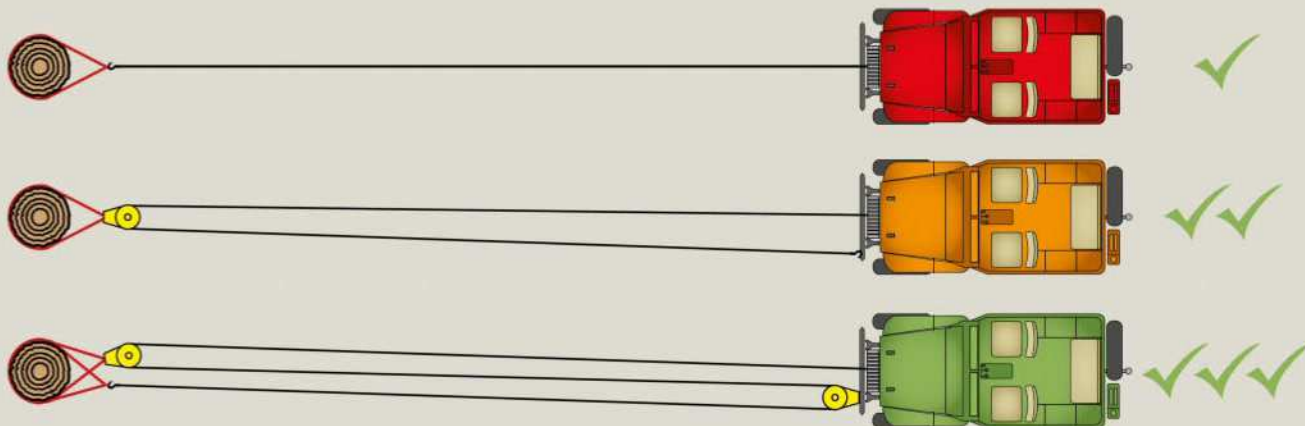
Steel or synthetic?

A winch is traditionally equipped with a steel cable, but these days it's increasingly being replaced with synthetic rope (or plasma rope). It's lighter, it doesn't rust, it's more flexible, floats on water, and is stronger than steel. And if it breaks, it's fairly easy to repair. The most important of all is that

rope doesn't store kinetic energy. That means a synthetic rope won't snap towards you through the air like a whip when it breaks – something that can happen with steel cables. Instead it'll just fall limply to the ground.

So why choose a steel cable if synthetic rope is so great? Synthetic rope is sensitive to sunlight and will weaken over time, especially if your vehicle spends a lot of time outside. It's also sensitive to chemicals and heat and it will start fraying if bushes constantly scrape against it. Manufacturers have found a solution for these shortcomings by covering the rope in a protective sleeve. Synthetic rope is generally better than steel, but it's far from a foregone conclusion.





TOWING TACTICS

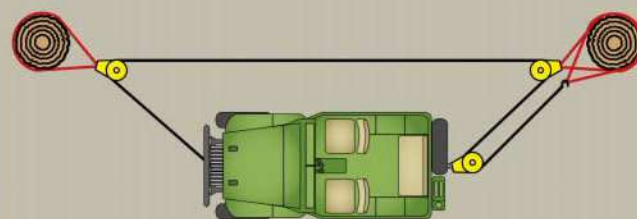
Here are a few tricks you can learn to get the most out of your winch during an epic trans-continental trip.

Strong, stronger, strongest

Mechanical advantage is an Archimedes principle which states that you can increase power by using levers, gears or pulleys to lessen the workload. Mechanical advantage is the cornerstone of off-roading and we apply it every time when we put on larger tyres to crawl over rocks, decrease tyre pressure to better drive on sand, and engage low-range gears to conquer mountains.

If you can't afford a Warn Series 15-S Spydura ProMax and your cheap Chinese 1-ton winch can't

pull you out of a bind, you can use Archimedes's wisdom to double your winch's pulling power by fastening a snatch block to an anchor point, coiling the cable through it and relaying it back to your vehicle. Although it doubles the pulling power, it halves the speed with which your vehicle is towed out. If you want to triple the pulling power, you can use two snatch blocks – one at the anchor point and the other one at your vehicle – but then you're really going to move at a snail's pace. Oh well.



Backwards

There is a joke that says you should rather attach a winch to the rear bumper because why would you want to pull yourself towards trouble?

To pull a vehicle that can't move forwards backwards with a winch that's mounted in front is relatively simple. All you need are two anchor points (preferably three) and three snatch blocks.

Firstly, the anchor points need to be in the right place in relation to the vehicle. One needs to be in front of the vehicle (a bit to the side will help) and the other two

should be behind the vehicle.

The cable leads from the winch, through the first snatch block, towards the next anchor point behind the vehicle. It then leads from this anchor point through the second snatch block to the rear of the vehicle.

And here it's relayed through the third and last snatch block that's attached to the vehicle back to the rear anchor point.

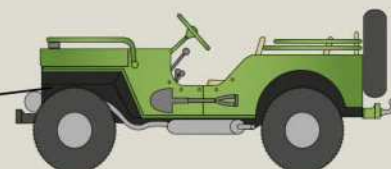
The vehicle won't be recovered at the speed of light, but if you're patient you'll get the desired result.

DOS AND DON'TS

A winch is not a toy. Familiarise yourself with the following safety measures if you don't want someone to get hurt.

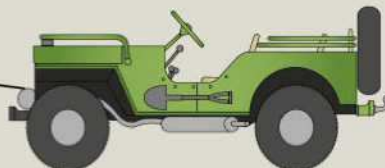
Wrong

Don't stand with your legs apart over the cable or climb over it while its under tension. If a cable snaps you'll be seriously injured. In fact, as soon as the cable tightens, you and your friends should back away.



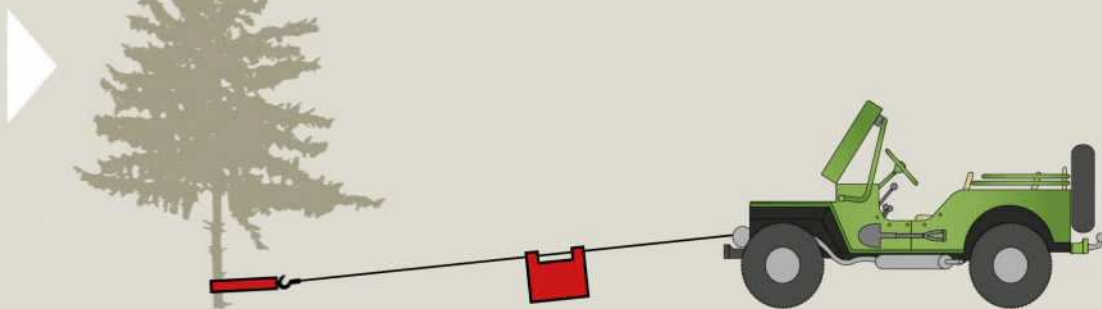
Right

Loosen the winch's clutch and pull out the cable by hand instead of using the winch motor. You'll save battery power as well as the winch motor. Unspool as much of the cable as you can but don't let it detach. >



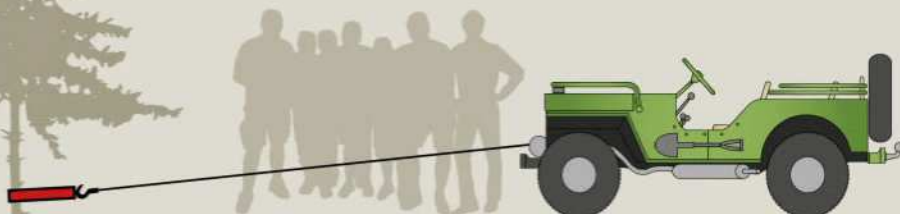
Right

Open your vehicle's bonnet – it will shield you from a cable that snaps. Your winch's remote control has a long lead that will allow you to sit safely behind the wheel with your feet on the pedals. Keep the revs high and be ready to apply brakes.



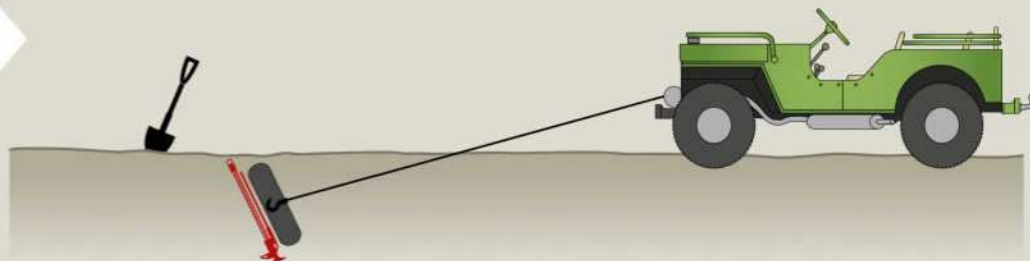
Wrong

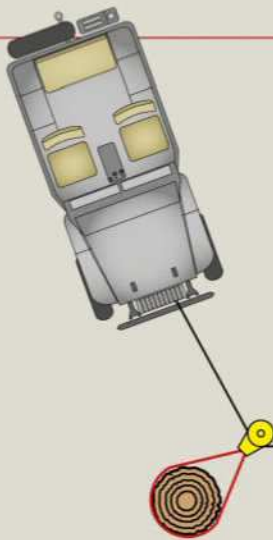
Yes, it's super interesting to watch a vehicle being recovered, but don't allow a crowd to assemble around to the cable. There are many horrific stories about on-lookers who were injured during a recovery process gone wrong.



Right

If there isn't a vehicle, rock or tree near to use as an anchor, you can dig a hole, put the spare wheel in it, and pull the cable through the hub and fasten it to a high-lift jack on the other side. The looser the sand, the deeper the hole.





Right

A snatch block allows you to change the direction of the cable so that you can recover around a corner. It's especially useful if you need to winch a friend at an awkward angle because there isn't enough run-up space to use kinetic rope.

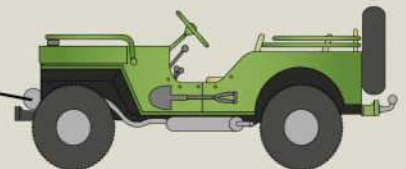
Wrong

A tow bar is not a recovery point. Never ever fasten your winch's cable to it – and definitely not a kinetic rope. If the ball breaks off, it will shoot through the air like a cannon ball. And if that thing hits someone...



Wrong

Never run a steel cable over a rock. The rock will cause it to fray and then the cable becomes dangerous. Synthetic ropes with plastic sleeves fare a bit better, but rather avoid a cable or rope chafing against something abrasive altogether. >





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pulling power

The efficient power with which the winch pulls is influenced by the number of layers of the cable on the winch's drum. Less cable means a stronger pull. That's why it's better to have the cable pulled out as far as possible before you begin with the recovery process. Ensure the cable is coiled five times around the drum – you don't want it to detach.

Heavy load

A winch with a steel cable typically weighs about 40 kg (a bit less if the cable is replaced with synthetic rope). If you mount it to the front of your vehicle you need to bear in mind that your suspension will probably need to be upgraded to handle the extra weight. You will unfortunately also need to take your vehicle to a weigh station and register the new tare with the authorities.

Hold on

Because the winch exerts a lot of pull on the vehicle, it's important to mount it onto a sturdy steel plate that's welded to the chassis. Most bull bars have a winch mounting and these bull bars are bolted to the chassis. If you don't want to change the appearance of your luxury SUV, you can mount

the winch behind the standard plastic bumper on a plate and cut a hole in the bumper for the cable to run through.

Use some elbow grease

Don't be lazy and place all the responsibility on the winch. You can increase its dependability and extend its lifespan if you assist where you can. Dig around the wheels before starting the recovery process, and if your vehicle is filled with bored family members, ask them to get out and put the kettle on. You deserve a reward for your heroic rescue attempt after all. And don't forget to unhitch your trailer or bush caravan – you can winch it out later.

Maintenance is key

You have to use your winch at least every second month – even if it is only in your yard. Unroll the cable and fasten it to a tree. Pull your off-roader closer with the winch. Your winch's motor should warm up so the oil can circulate. A bit of WD40 every now and again will keep the steel cable lubricated. Always inspect your winch for kinks and frays. Don't let the cable bunch around the drum. And remember, if you draw the cable in too tightly it can damage the clevis hook.

IMPORTANT GEAR

Tree protector

A naked steel cable wound around an unprotected tree will cause girdling, or ring-barking, and may cause the tree to die. Wrap a tree protector around the trunk close to the ground. Never forget, we're out here to appreciate nature, not destroy it.



Recovery blanket

To reduce the terrifying effects of a cable that suddenly snaps, you can drape a recovery bag, rope or blanket over the cable. The extra weight should absorb much of the kinetic energy, making winching safer. You won't need one if you use a synthetic rope.



Bow shackles

Don't use bow shackles sideways because they are not designed to handle sideways pressure. Hook the bow through the recovery point and attach the clevis hook to the pin, otherwise the shackle might bend and then it won't open again.



Gloves

Wear gloves, even if they're simple braai gloves, especially if you're using a steel cable. Steel cables can fray and if your hand slides over a damaged cable you'll hurt yourself and the wound may get infected if you don't get a tetanus shot in time. 🦠



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Battle of the bulk



Whether it's an older BMW X5 or a brand-new Ford every few years, these two readers have sworn by their choice of vehicle.

Brand loyal

2017 FORD RANGER 3.2 XLT AUTO

He's already had his previous towing combination featured on these pages, but **Wouter Botes** from Pretoria replaced his **pre-facelifted Ranger** with the updated version last year and he's still smitten with his Ford and its abilities.

“ I used to tow my **2016 Jurgens Xcape** with a **2016 Ford Ranger 3.2 automatic XLT**, but then Ford updated the model, which has been around since 2012, with some new details on the exterior and interior. I knew that I had to have the new one, so that's exactly what I bought last year: another **white 3.2 XLT double cab automatic** for a little more than **R550 000**.

Needless to say, I am chuffed with the way my combination makes light work of bad roads. The XLT equipped with automatic transmission hardly feels the caravan, and the Xcape is perfect for the kind of roads where road caravans would shake apart. The fuel consumption



is about the same as before, obviously, except for the actual price of 50 ppm diesel that has now gone up. The Ranger manages an average of about **9,5 ℓ/100 km** without the **Xcape hitched** and increases to just under **11 ℓ/100 km** when I'm towing my caravan.

I visit the sunny Karoo often and have added solar panels to the Xcape so I can escape from civilisation for longer periods. I climb mountains and visit historic battle sites, so I need to be able to rely on my combination, which hasn't let me down yet.

The Ranger provides a comfortable ride on smooth tarmac and on bumpy gravel roads and has plenty of power in reserve even when I'm towing at **110 km/h**. And it's luxurious enough inside for a vehicle of this type and considering its capabilities.

I'm still very fond of visiting **Eden Park** because it's pure bushveld and quite serene. Moreover, it's a Ford Ranger or nothing for me.





Mighty hauler

2005 BMW X5 3.0 D

There are more conventional towing vehicle choices out there, but **Andy Visagie** from Alberton reckons his combination can compete with the best of them.

“About six years ago I was in the market for a decent towing vehicle. My requirements were quite simple: It had to be fairly powerful and hefty enough to tow my **1997 Jurgens Penta**. After considering the **Toyota Prado**, I settled on a used **BMW X5** that I bought for **R235 000**.



What I really like about the X5 is that it is an effortless cruise and towing machine. With the amount of torque on tap I just have to keep the X5 in fifth gear using the manual override on the automatic transmission and leave it there

until we reach our destination. There's no need to shift up or down unnecessarily.

The X5 barely feels the Penta on its standard tow hitch, and I tow at a very reasonable **110 km/h**. Without the caravan the X5 averages under **7 ℓ/100 km**, but when I tow that figure increases to around **10 ℓ/100 km** – which is actually not that bad, all things considered. And so far the BMW has given me no problems.

I used to tow the Penta with a **2000 Isuzu KB320 V6 4x2** for seven years, but the towing fuel consumption of that bakkie was horrendous at **25 ℓ/100 km**, and I firmly believe that a towing vehicle should be a pleasure, not a pain. My dream purchase would be a brand-new **X5 50D**.

I like visiting **Ballito Bay** on the **KwaZulu-Natal coastline** because you're sheltered against the wind, the camping facilities are always neat and clean, and the stands are generously large.



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1 KALAHARI/KGALAGADI TRANSFRONTIER PARK

WHEN? 31 January – 7 February 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tents

COST R11 000 (excluding VAT) p.p.

Visit the 4 million hectare Mabenyanani a Kalahari in Botswana and Mabuasehube in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. Track lions with a Bushman tracker and search for the Kgalagadi's resident birds of prey, like the martial, tawny and bateleur eagles.

2 LESOTHO LANDMARKS

WHEN? 11–16 March 2019

ACCOMMODATION Lodge and
guesthouse

COST R8 950 p.p. sharing (no VAT charged)

This mountain adventure traverses Lesotho from east to west. You'll drive on the highest gravel roads (including the incredible Sani Pass), see the biggest dam and highest single-drop waterfall in Southern Africa, and visit the birthplace of the Basotho nation.

3 THREE COUNTRIES: KRUGER, SWAZI KINGDOM & MOZAMBIQUE COAST

WHEN? 26 May – 6 June 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tents and beach lodge

COST R12 350 (no VAT charged)

Our adventure starts with three nights' camping in the central and southern Kruger Park, including a night on the park's private self-drive 4x4 routes. Then we head into Swaziland where we spend two nights camping in the western highlands, exploring the Malolotja Nature Reserve and some historic and cultural sites. Next we head to Ponta Malongane, Mozambique. We stay in a beach lodge for three nights, enjoying boating, snorkelling and East African seafood.

4 TRANS-BOTSWANA: CAPRIVI, CHOBE, VICTORIA FALLS

WHEN? 13–23 April 2019,

18–28 June 2019, 9–19 August 2019,
9–19 September 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tents

COST R12 990 (excluding VAT) p.p.

We start in Lethlakane in southern Botswana and end at Kasane in the north. It's a journey of geological intrigue, from what was once the deepest part of a great lake at the Makgadikgadi Pan around the south of the Okavango Delta and Okavango River into the Zambezi Strip (Caprivi) via the Tsodilo Hills. From here we visit the Chobe River and Victoria Falls.

5 NAMIBIA'S DESERT RIVERS

WHEN? 1–12 August 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tents

COST R15 750

The desert rivers of Kaokoland are a unique part of northwest Namibia and home to the elusive desert elephants and many other animals, large and small. Kaokoland is a treasure trove of unique beauty and wildlife.

6 PONDOLAND PARADISE

WHEN? 6–10 May 2019

ACCOMMODATION Beach Lodges
COST R7 850 (no VAT charged) p.p. sharing

A trip down the rugged and untamed coastline of the Transkei. The area is very rural and traditional. We use the basic road network and legal Jeep tracks to explore the coastline, shipwrecks, estuaries and waterfalls. We also visit the Hole in the Wall and Coffee Bay.

7 ZULULAND CONSERVATION MIRACLE

WHEN? 18–26 May 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tents
COST R11 350 (no VAT charged) p.p.

This epic tour follows in the footsteps of King Shaka Zulu. We travel from Umfolozi Game Reserve, the oldest protected area in Africa, to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, the largest estuary system in Africa and a Natural World Heritage Site.

8 LESOTHO SNOW

WHEN? 2–4 August 2019

ACCOMMODATION Lodge
COST R3 950 p.p. sharing

In late winter, Lesotho is blanketed in snow and the highlands are full of frozen waterfalls. Bring your family in your 4x4 or SUV for a fun-filled weekend of snow and all the adventure that goes with it. We spend the Friday and Saturday nights in guesthouse accommodation in Ficksburg and the whole of Saturday in the Mountain Kingdom, playing in the snow.

9 TRANS-CAPRIVI GEMS: KHAUDUM, MAMILI, LINYANTI

WHEN? 15–25 August 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tents
COST R15 750

We'll travel through Bushmanland to the Okavango Delta and Linyanti Swamps. En route we walk in the footsteps of Bushmen guides and visit the Khaudum, Bwabwata and Mamili national parks. We also drive through the Zambezi Region (Caprivi) with its awesome game viewing.

10 MOZAMBIQUE

WHEN? 8–17 September 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tent and chalet
COST R13 500 (excluding VAT) p.p. sharing

This round trip takes us from Punda Maria in the Kruger via Inhassoro on the tropical Mozambique coast, then to the Giryondo border post back into the Kruger after visiting the coast at Xai-Xai. We will do a one-day boat trip to Paradise Island near Bazaruto as one of the highlights of this tour and enjoy ample delicious seafood.

11 ETOSHA: DAMARALAND AND THE SKELETON COAST

WHEN? 14–25 September 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tents
COST R12 900 (excluding VAT) p.p.

Our adventure starts in the historic town of Swakopmund where we enjoy some adventure activities. Then we head north to the spectacular Brandberg, drive through the Skeleton Coast National Park, spend time in the rock desert of Damaraland, and do some game viewing in Etosha National Park.

12 SWAZILAND

WHEN? 3–9 November 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tents
COST R8 850 (excluding VAT) p.p.

Experience the heartbeat, culture and rhythm of the Kingdom of Swaziland, from the Ezulwini Valley ("place of heaven") through the Lowveld region of Hlane to the mountains

surrounding Phophonyane. This Swaziland tour offers rapid scenery changes, breathtaking views, and heartwarming culture.

13 ZAMBIA: LIUWA PLAINS WILDBEEST MIGRATION AND KAFUE NATIONAL PARK

WHEN? 1–12 November 2019

ACCOMMODATION Tents
COST R17 300 (excluding VAT) p.p.

Our adventure begins in Katima Mulilo in Namibia and ends in Livingstone. Following the course of the Zambezi past Sioma Falls (Ngonye), we cross the Barotse Floodplains and go through the town of Kalabo in western Zambia. From Kalabo we enter the Liuwa Plains National Park and experience the second biggest wildebeest migration in Africa. When we leave Liuwa we head for Kafue National Park and end our tour in Livingstone.

14 SECRETS OF THE KNYSNA FOREST

WHEN? Every day of the year, except

Christmas Day (booking essential)
COST R400 per person (students and scholars R200, under-10s R100) or hop on and ride with us at R500 p.p.

This protected ecosystem has been off-limits to anybody other than those prepared to hike or mountain bike the area. But Bhejane 4x4 Adventures recently obtained permission to explore this forest world. Join us on a professionally guided 4x4 self-drive exploration and unlock some of the forest's best-kept secrets.

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YOUR PHOTO



WINNING PHOTO

Nikon Coolpix B700;
38,8 mm (200 mm on a
35 mm camera); 1/320 of
a second; f5,3; ISO 100

in such a way that it almost looks like a modern painting. You can still see detail of the bird in the reflection without the image becoming too distorted. Hennie says he only saw the crocodile in the photo afterwards, and the poor bird is standing with its back to the guy with the big teeth...

The crocodile, along with the branch in the foreground that's out of focus, balances the photo in an odd way. The frame cuts through both – generally it's not ideal because you rather want to see more in a photo, not less. And yet, these two elements lend valuable context about the environment. Without them you're simply looking at a bird standing in water.

For an even more striking image you can zoom in to just above the legs of the stork to get in the full reflection of the bird. It immediately gives the photo an artistic feel where you still see enough detail to know it's a yellow-billed stork. Because you don't immediately know what you're looking at you look at the photo for longer while your brain figures out what's going on.

MIRROR IMAGES

A reflection in your photo can help to create a perfect picture. Like these three readers managed to achieve.

By **Leon Botha**

Knee deep...

When he gets the opportunity to take a picture in nature, he grabs it with both hands, says 15-year-old **Hennie Steyn** from Rayton in Gauteng.

"We visited the Kruger National Park and one morning we took a drive to see if we could spot some game. At one stage we

drove past a dam and saw a yellow-billed stork. It's a beautiful bird to take a picture of, but the smooth water and the reflection of the bird immediately caught my eye. I don't have my own camera, but I was in the car with Ben Arnoldi, also from Rayton. I borrowed his camera to take the picture."

The bird with its yellow beak really does catch the eye – and you don't often see water this silky smooth. It was a windless day and there were only a few soft ripples on the surface. (It looks like the ripples are coming from the crocodile on the left in the background.) These ripples change the reflection of the bird

There's one... and another one!

A photo with the arch of a bridge is something that evaded Niek Coetzee from Alberton for a long time... until this day at Die Oog holiday resort.

"My wife, Bessie, and I visited Die Oog outside Mookgophong for a few days, which is where we saw this scene. The bridge with its reflection on the water caught my eye. For years I've been looking for a photo where the arch of a bridge reflects in the water below it, creating a circle. I took quite a few pictures to get the exposure and positioning of all the components just right."

The "circles" that Niek refers to are easy to spot – it almost resembles three large eggs. The three arches of the bridge and their reflection create a pattern. For a more striking picture you can get rid of what's outside the pattern. You can crop the photo at the top to get in only the bridge, and the same at the bottom. That will emphasise the pattern even more.

Canon 650D; Sigma 18-250 mm lens on 31 mm; 1/60 of a second; f5; ISO 100

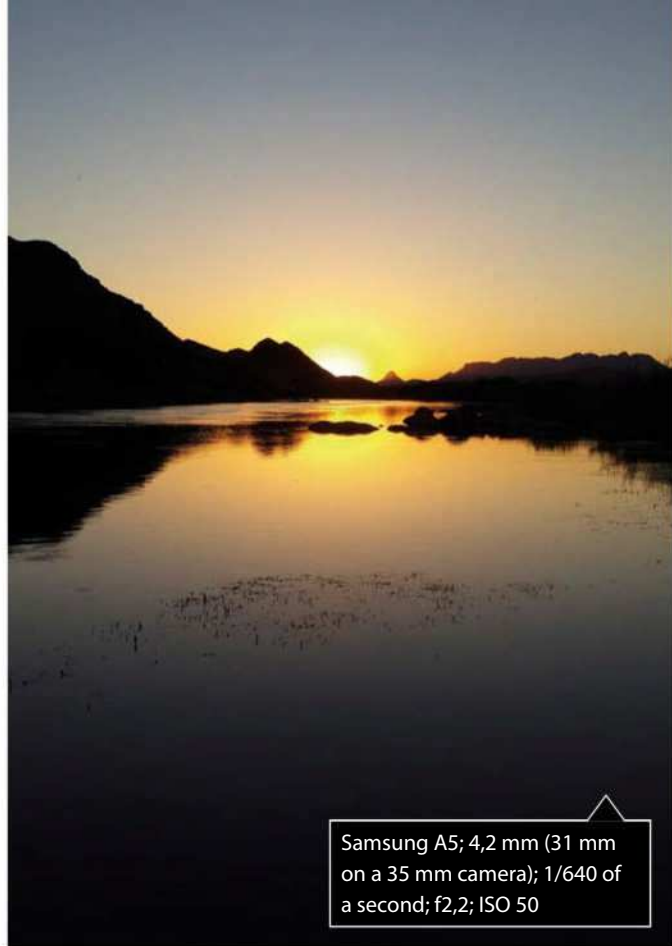


SEND YOUR PICTURES...

to us and we might publish it here. All photos are welcome: from mud-covered kids in the campsite or a colour photo of a street vendor's towels to a solitary cactus in the desert.

Whether it was taken with a big camera or your cellphone, if you can put it your family photo album it's all good. *Hennie wins a Camp Cover camera bag to the value of R595 – congratulations!*

Send your photos and contact details to leon.botha@media24.com



Samsung A5; 4,2 mm (31 mm on a 35 mm camera); 1/640 of a second; f2,2; ISO 50

Man with a plan

When Gert Greeff from Melkbosstrand saw the beautiful morning unfolding in front of him he didn't have his camera with him and he had to think on his feet.

"We decided to tour along the West Coast, leaving from Pella in the Northern Cape. We camped next to the Orange River. As is my wont, I got up early and saw that the sun was rising. I didn't have my camera with me – and there also wasn't time to go fetch it because that golden moment before it's light passes quickly. That's why I decided to use my smartphone to capture the moment."

This is typical Northern Cape: A landscape littered with wide, open plains. Gert's photo with the reflection on the water is the embodiment of those open spaces.

The photo has very little detail, but it still draws your attention. That's mostly to do with the composition, but without you

realising it the portrait orientation plays a significant role. This orientation is less common because you're more inclined to take photos in landscape and we're also used to the flatness of TV and computer screens. You're basically looking through a landscape "lens" at the world and it's because of this that a portrait image draws your eye, especially if you use the mode cleverly. Also, the content of the photo feels timeless.

The detail doesn't even take up a quarter of the photo but what there is – the hills, the ripples on the water, and, if you look closely, the grass that sticks out of the water, is enough to make you feel like you're there in the moment.

Even though you instinctively look at the lightest part of the photo first it's not long before you look down and absorb the photo from the bottom of the dark water to the top over the horizon – and end at the dark sky. Total tranquility. 📱

Come slackpacking in Plett

HIKING TOURS



How does it work?

This is slackpacking at its best over four days and four nights in the company of Venture Beyond's expert guides. Group sizes are restricted to a maximum of 14 people – just bring your hiking gear, a walking stick, your camera, binoculars and a daypack. Everything else is covered: accommodation, three meals a day, entrance fees to the various parks and reserves as well as transport from one trail to the next. We also offer a shuttle to and from Plett and George airports to make your whole experience hassle-free!

Where do I stay?

There are two accommodation options: Stay in three- and four-star-graded lodges in Plett or camp in style. We provide fully kitted-out dome tents with stretchers, mattresses, bed linen and bath towels.

Our campsites are in the Diepwalle section of the Knysna Forest and in Nature's Valley. Both campsites have excellent ablution facilities with hot showers.

How much?

Glamping costs R9850 per person sharing.

The lodge option costs R11 750 per person sharing, plus 30% per single supplement.

Come glamping with us

Day 1: We meet up at the Diepwalle campsite late in the afternoon. Later we enjoy a leisurely dinner around the campfire with our tour guide.

Day 2: After breakfast, our guide will take us on the Circles in the Forest Trail through indigenous forest and fynbos. We'll have a picnic lunch at Jubilee Creek or Diepwalle before we hike through the Diepwalle section of the Knysna Forest.

Day 3: Today we'll tackle the 12 km Keurboomstrand to Nature's Valley stretch, which begins at the picnic site at Keurbooms beach. We'll walk along the beautiful coastline until we stop for lunch at Forest Hall. We end the day with dinner around the campfire in Nature's Valley.

Day 4: Today's 8 km Kalandepad Trail again winds through beautiful indigenous forest and fynbos with magnificent views across the valley, the Tsitsikamma Mountains and the ocean. The trail transects the deep forest in the valley, where you'll walk among giant Outeniqua yellowwood trees, strelitzias and lush ferns.

Day 5: Robberg Peninsula is on the menu today. Set in a marine protected area, we might see dolphins, humpback whales, seals or even a great white shark. Pelagic bird species are also plentiful.*

2018 DATES 9 – 13 August; 20 – 24 September; 11 – 15 October; 29 November – 3 December

... Or stay in a lodge

Day 1: Check into the Whalesong Hotel in the late afternoon, where we will meet the tour leader and enjoy a delicious dinner afterwards.

Day 2: See Day 3 on the glamping hike (Keurboomstrand to Nature's Valley). We overnight at the Whalesong Hotel (or alternative).

Day 3: See Day 2 on the glamping hike (Circles in the Forest Trail). We stay at the Bitou River Lodge (or alternative) tonight, renowned for its spectacular birding on the Bitou wetland. Dinner is a braai on the banks of the river.

Day 4: See Day 4 on the glamping hike (Kalandepad Trail). Lunch is at Bramon Wine Estate and we end the day with a sundowner cruise on the Keurbooms River.

Day 5: It's your last day of hiking and what better way to round off the experience than on a morning hike around Robberg Peninsula ending with a gourmet picnic lunch.*

2018 DATES 1 – 5 November; 15 – 19 November

**The programme can be adapted on the final day if you'd rather go riding or canoeing, but these activities are not included in the cost.*

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CROSSWORD

Congratulations **Diane Stack** from Boksburg. You have won **Van Loveren's Unplugged62** wine for your correct entry in the crossword competition in our June 2018 edition. You can also be a winner like Diane. 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/2snFZaM>.

			A region in Namibia (8,5)	To be	Burglars, e.g.	Charged atom	A Cape Nature reserve at Touwsriver			
			Family		Small hotel					
			Wipe out		Shred					
							Otherwise			
At once		Samovar	Accident	Patient (abbr)	Wash			Swiftly	Lane	Slaves
					Lair				Sneak	
							Explodes			
Baseless (7,2)						Breathe				
Ground						Terrain				
Ensign (abbr)				Singles			Peruser			
Not out							Nullify			
		Female chicken			Wedding band, e.g.			Musical symbol		
					Similar					
Ceylon, eg				Social group			Red veggies			
Aluminium (symbol)				Eggs			Either ...			
		Table game				The self		A Maxmo motor-home		
Thou			Conceited			Curve				
						Primate				
					Astatine (symbol)		Either ...			
				Request		Rutherfordium (symbol)		Hair style	Apple beer	Take a breath
				Tellurium (symbol)				Choose		While
				Hidden	Regarding		Range	A nut		
				Article	Type of cheese			Piquant		
A Maserati SUV	Shade tree	Identical				Smell				
						Elegant				
					Goudini, e.g.			Editor (abbr)		Lutetium (symbol)
Transitory		Encounter				Handle		Battery part		
								Genuine		

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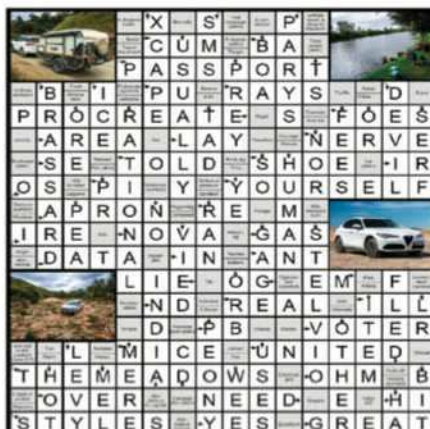
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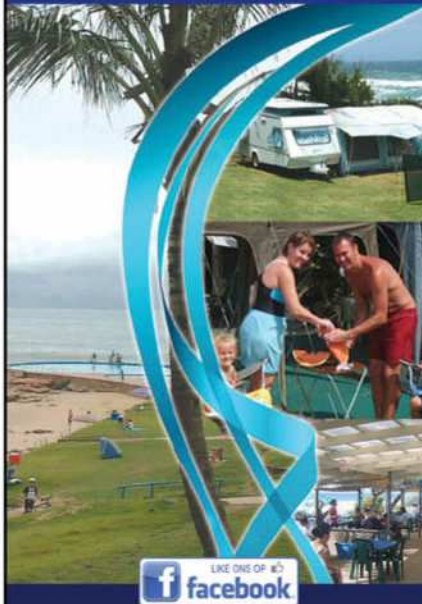
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From low-class schlub to honorary citizen

We all know you shouldn't judge someone by their appearance. But, warns Etienne Erasmus, the same goes for someone's caravan or vehicle.

We enjoy camping on the KwaZulu-Natal coast during the winter months and have discovered a cosy campsite in Stanger where camping neighbours soon become good friends. During our last visit we had a stand with more privacy and the best view over the ocean as well as the goings-on in the rest of the campsite.

I had hardly pitched my camp when the influx of new arrivals began. Old friends see each other for the first time since last year and chat while struggling to get everything upright and level. As per usual towing vehicles' and caravans' specs are compared and the conversations flow over to exaggerated teasing and playful arguments.

"I see you're still towing with that old jalopy of yours. I'm now officially a member of the Mercedes-Benz ML Club," says someone, to which the other replies: "Ag shame, are you still camping in your dog kennel? When are you buying a caravan?"

The next night a mysterious camper arrives and soon becomes the main topic of conversation. He drives into the camp with an old, crummy-looking Land Rover Defender towing a Sprite Musketeer from the Sixties with heavily faded paintwork. Not exactly the image of prosperity.

He takes the stand next to mine and I see my holiday neighbours are a youngish couple with two toddler girls. The woman has a cast around her left ankle and can barely walk – the man pitches camp with the help of two resort employees.

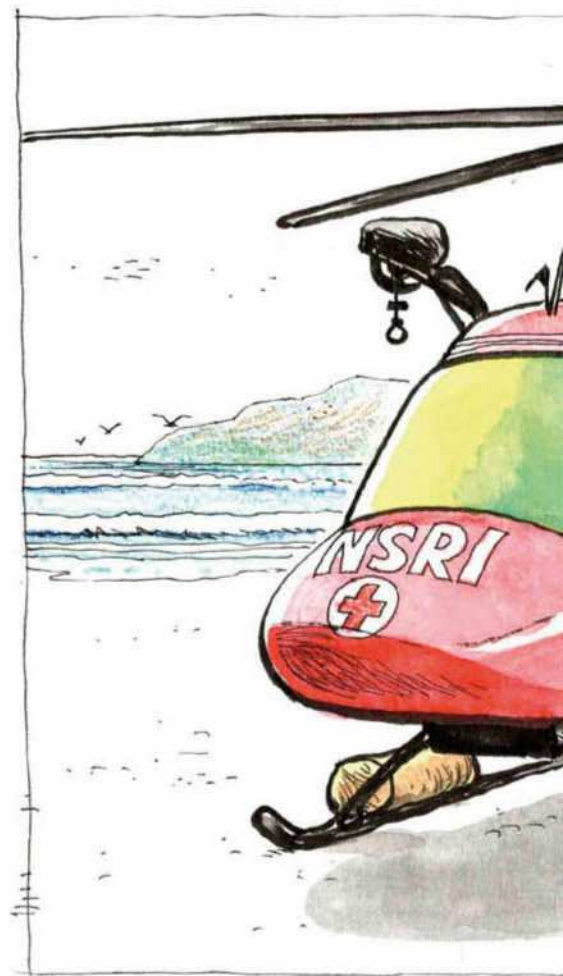
It's early evening and I start a fire to braai. My new neighbour comes over, introduces himself as Anton, and asks rather shyly whether he can have my coals when I'm done so that he can cook his meat. I say "of course" and we start chatting. He explains that they were camping at Richards Bay, but his wife fell on some rocks and broke her ankle. They're camping here because the ablution facilities are close enough for her.

The newcomer's arrival the previous night didn't go unnoticed and soon fingers start pointing in the direction of the Musketeer and Defender. Then a nasty nickname rears its head: "Low-class". It's not long before pairs start walking past, whispering, and eventually groups openly gossiping.

"I wouldn't be caught dead in an old crock of a caravan like that," jibes one. "Where are the chickens sleeping while he's holidaying inside?" someone else teases. Anton and his wife must have heard all these snide comments and I'm utterly ashamed on behalf of my fellow campers.

Between his wife and his kids, Anton has his hands full and I offer to braai for him that night. He gladly accepts.

THE SOUND OF a helicopter of the National Sea Rescue Institute patrolling the coast is nothing strange in these parts, but the next morning it's clear something is wrong. The engines stutters and it sounds like it's running on two cylinders.



The helicopter comes flying over and lands on the beach. The camp is a hub-bub of activity and most of us run down to the beach.

There we find the pilot outside the helicopter. He's standing, with his helmet still on, in serious conversation with someone on his radio. We ask him what's going on. The pilot confirms the engines lost power and he had to choose the shortest route to the beach.

Then we see "Low-class" speeding along the beach in his Defender. He parks next to the helicopter, gets out, and to everyone's great surprise is also wearing a pilot uniform. He greets the pilot and it's clear they know each other well. He takes the radio and assures the control room that he will find the cause of the problem and fix it.

Everyone's standing mouths agape while Anton takes his gear from the Land Rover to look inside the helicopter in search of the problem. The guy clearly knows what he's doing and a few minutes later he tells the control room what the



problem is. The good news is he has the right parts for the repairs.

About 45 minutes later the repairs are done and he walks to the cabin. He asks the pilot to get out. "Low-class" gets in, switches the helicopter on, plays around with the engines' revs and takes off. He hangs above the waves for a bit and suddenly the helicopter shoots straight into the air. I could hear the collective intake of breath from the crowd.

The pilot sees our surprise and tells us Anton is one of the best pilots in the world. He's a fighter pilot, test pilot, aeroplane designer and an aviation engineer. He also tests different aeroplanes before companies and governments buy it. He tells us about all the different types of aircraft Anton is licensed to fly. Quite clearly we misjudged this guy completely, based on his vehicles.

ANTON RETURNS to land and makes a few more adjustments before taking off again. He makes a few dips and dives and fancy manoeuvres in the air like a real

stunt pilot. He lands, says goodbye to the other pilot, and locks his toolboxes. But before he can pick it up to carry it back to the Land Rover, a handful of guys rush over to offer their help. Everyone wants to talk to the world-class pilot and the "Low-class" is long forgotten.

Anton chats to everyone in his quiet, shy way. "Wow, this Defender of yours is one of those diehard models. I wish I had one," says one bystander. "Ja," says the next guy, "it was built when Land Rover still used steel and not the tin cans that mine is made of." And so the flirting continues, but to no avail. Anton is packed, he greets politely, and drives back along the beach to the campsite.

We're not even back in the camp when a relay of sorts starts. The winner is obviously the one who can convince Anton to braai with him that night. Any mention of chicken coops or jalopies are long gone. But one after the other the guys hit and miss. Anton's wife is in serious pain and she can hardly walk.

The "courtiers" won't be put off though, and each plan is more elaborate than the previous one. One guy even offers to come pick her up in a borrowed wheelchair. But Anton remains firm: No thanks.

When plan B doesn't work, the campers start bringing food and drinks and Anton and his family are well catered for with meat, braaibroodjies, salad, pudding, beer and even a cooldrink or two for the kids.

LATER THAT NIGHT I sit silently wondering how a man's status is measured. Is it the car he drives, the caravan he tows, or maybe his ability to buy a new vehicle every year? Or does it have to do with yourself – your humility and competence and ability to be yourself?

The latter was proved that day on the beach at Stanger. Because in the blink of an eye a "low-class" person's social status jumped from the wrong side of the tracks straight through the upper-class neighbourhood to the level of elite citizen.

What touched me most, though, was that it didn't matter to him at all. 4



Meals on wheels

If you're on the Garden Route at a certain time and day, you might just be lucky enough to grab a bite from restaurateur **Martin Vogelmann's** mobile eatery in Knysna.

“I wanted to open a restaurant in town but couldn't find a spot that met my requirements so I started thinking outside the box and decided to convert an old caravan into a mobile kitchen and tow it to the best spot in town.

Just over a year ago I purchased an old 1983 Gypsy Caravette for R20 000, designed the mobile kitchen myself, and then commissioned Eden caravans in George to fit it out.

It needed plenty of work so almost everything inside is new, as well as a new exterior colour.

I decided against buying a newer model because my understanding is that nobody who designs these mobile kitchens has actually worked in a kitchen, so anything I buy would have had to be

ripped apart and redone again to my liking.

I tow the caravan up to the popular Margaret's Viewpoint with my Nissan X-Trail three days a week. My food is prepared from scratch, right there in front of you. As you order, I do the prep and make the meal. I know where all the meats come from – sourced locally – and my bread is specially baked by the famous île de pain bakery in town.

The cinnamon buns on the menu are made fresh, right there in the kitchen. I'm a firm believer of quality more than anything, and I want my customers to have a fine experience.

As for the name on my caravan: MR REE is pronounced as 'mystery'. And the CX in CX-Presso is the registration prefix for Knysna.



Have you spotted any wacky wheels on your travels? Tell us about it and send a photo to

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