

#9

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APRIL 2018 | ISSUE 9

Drive & Camp

TRAIL GUIDE

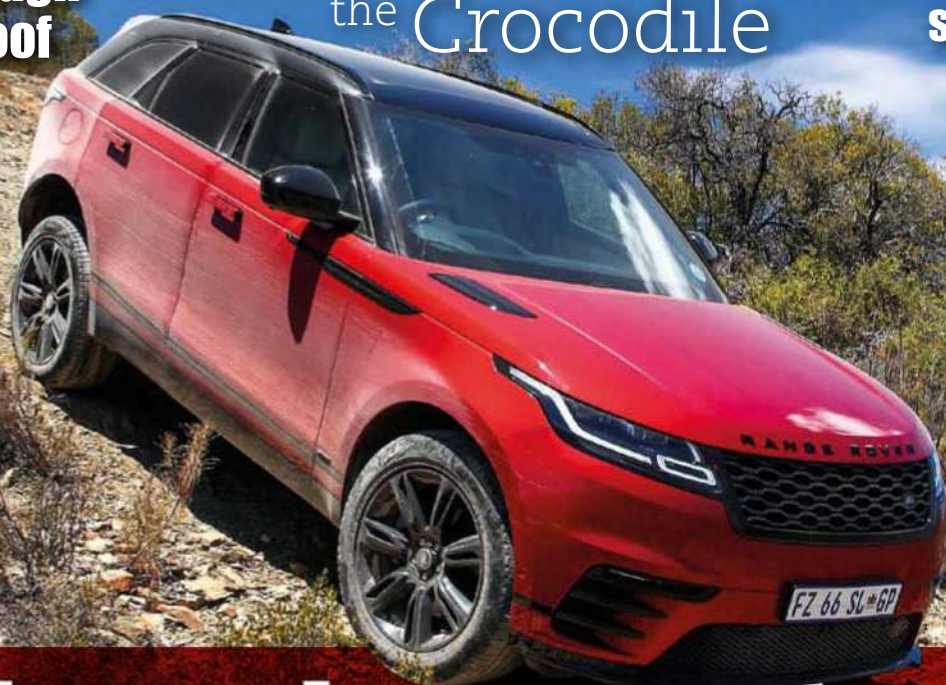
Follow ox wagon tracks through the Langkloof

Camp between three mountains and next to the **Crocodile**

CARAVAN TEST

Next Adventure: something unique

Two-way radios: The final word



The Langeberg awaits

TACKLING THE WABOOMSBERG ROUTE... IN A VELAR

NEWS

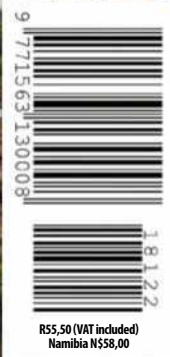
20+ new caravans, motorhomes and camping trailers on show p.16

CAMPING DESTINATION

Northern Kruger National Park
Satara, Shingwedzi and
Punda Maria

GEAR

Pack it all in boxes, crates, bags and chests



CAMP BOFFIN GET RID OF THOSE PESKY MOSQUITOES p. 112



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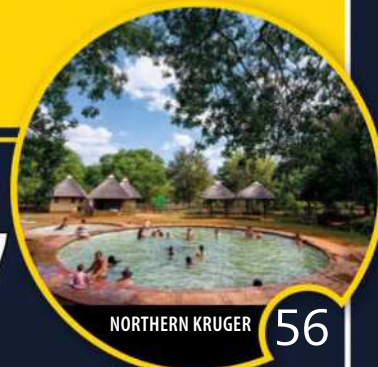
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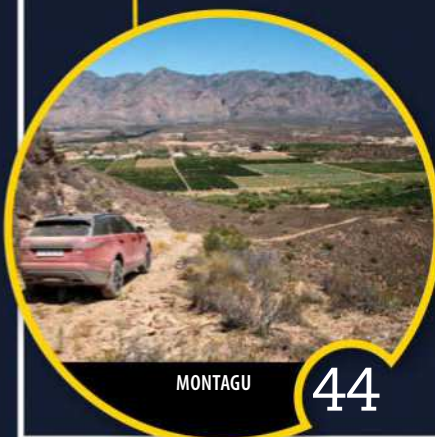
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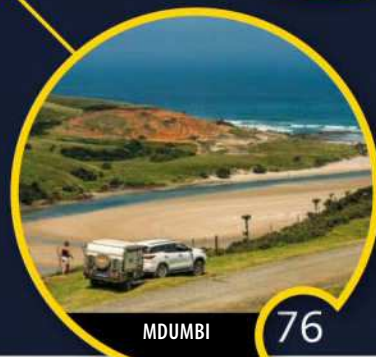
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BEELD HOLIDAY SHOW IMPRESSIVE SELECTION



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Two hundred years ago it took the farmers in the Langkloof days to cross the Outeniqua Mountains with their ox wagons. Today, you can do the same route in your 4x4 in half a day.

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Thanks for dropping by



After eight months of *go! Drive & Camp* being on the shelf, the recent Beeld Holiday Show was my first opportunity to meet some of our readers. Thank you to each and every one who came over to say hello and have a chat. The feedback that we received from you regarding the magazine is invaluable to us.

go! Drive & Camp exists for one reason only: to better prepare you, our reader, for your next outdoor adventure. This is why we find it extremely useful when you chat to us and tell us more about what you want.

I said this to everyone I met at the show and I'll say it again: My contact details are on this page. Write to me.

A triumph for the little guys

Something that really drew my attention at the Beeld Holiday Show was the manufacturers' focus on a new generation of campers – younger people who don't have a full towing licence (Code EB).

As you know you may not tow anything heavier than 750 kg with an ordinary driver's licence, and three trailers in this weight category caught my eye: the Gypsy Lite Impi, Aloe's Peri Peri and Venter's Mini Camper. Leon tells us more about these three and a host of other caravans and motorhomes in this month's News section. And if you've ever wondered what a motorhome worth R2,5 million looks like, go have a look on page 24.

Good news

When General Motors (the former owners of Isuzu in South Africa) withdrew from South Africa last year, there were thousands of worried South Africans who were facing unemployment. Isuzu Motors in Japan, however, intervened and bought the Struandale plant in Port Elizabeth from GM. Cyril was at the opening of the plant and he says there is a new-found optimism amongst the workers.

Isuzu also launched their newest vehicle, the MU-X, at this event. Read about it on p.28 and let us know what you think.

Safe travels!

Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com



We see elephants and hyenas passing every day, and before sunrise leopards too. We've even spotted wild dogs.

p.60

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DRIVEN
By you





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

THAT TIME OUR CARAVAN WENT UP IN FLAMES...

A few years ago our Jurgens caravan caught fire and I learnt a good many lessons from the incident.

In 1983 we did a tour with two other couples – each also with a caravan – through Namibia. We also had the same type of towing vehicle: a Toyota Land Cruiser 4.1. Our average fuel consumption was an “amazing” 4,1 l/km!

At the Hardap Dam the ground was rock hard and we couldn't drive in our tent pegs, so we renamed the place “Hardekap Dam” (hit it hard dam). We drove to Sesriem via Maltahöhe where the road deteriorated significantly. The contents of our caravans got strewn all over the place as they shook about. At the Sossusvlei camp the incredulous receptionist even checked out of her window to see if we really arrived with caravans. Here we all played in the sand, climbed the dunes and got the Cruisers stuck, but we enjoyed every minute of it.



We headed back in the direction of Maltahöhe and the mercury hit the 41 °C mark. Just past Zarieshoogte I saw flames in the rear-view mirror and it looked like it came from inside the caravan! At that stage I was driving in the middle of the convoy, with Corrie Prinsloo in front and his brother Nico behind. We stopped immediately, unhitched the burning caravan and got the rest of the party a safe distance away. The flames were so high that no fire extinguisher would have made a difference – some of the flames were “blowing” as if someone was busy with a cutting torch.

Aside from the caravan's standard gas bottles I also packed an extra two underneath the bed. I realised one of the gas bottles' keys was still attached and during the bouncing the bottle must have fallen over. This could have opened the valve. Inside the caravan it was a good 50 °C and the bottles were on a plastic mat. I realised the bumping against each other must have

caused a spark and that is what got us in this situation.

The fire tore through the caravan. A box of ammo was also inside so for safety sake we retreated from the inferno. And it's just as well because suddenly we were rocked as the caravan exploded. After the black cloud cleared, the caravan was gone – only ash remained.

And there we were with just the clothes on our backs; everything else was gone. Everything, from the cash my wife Petro kept in the tea pot to my camera bag with the camera and lenses – plus Petro's jewellery – all gone.

The police on Maltahöhe was helpful and removed the wreck for us. We wanted to go home but our friends persuaded us to finish the tour – without further incident.

We learnt three lessons: gas bottles must be fastened; don't leave the key in the bottle; and use a screw-in plug to seal the bottles when they're not in use.

JAN EBERSOHN
Stellenbosch



Winning letter

Jan Ebersohn wins a *go! Drive & Camp* lunch bag cooler and a handy saddle bag worth R410. The cooler can comfortably hold a packed lunch and a 1,5-litre bottle in the main compartment, with extra space in the lid for a coffee flask.

The saddle bag fits over a gear lever (like a saddle) and is made from durable ripstop material. Keep your passports and important documents in a large pocket and store charger cables, keys or wet wipes in the smaller pockets.





The air out there

Stuck with a flat in the middle of nowhere with no compressed air? These portable jobbies will save the day when you have a puncture.

Text: Kyle Kock Photos: James Garaghty

You've been tackling another tough mountain pass and have the upper hand close to the end when the rocky terrain slides back and claims a few points by puncturing a tyre. Fortunately, the spare wheel is on the back of the bakkie. But, unfortunately, someone forgot to check that it's inflated. Don't get caught out in the bush with a compressor or the really experienced 4x4 guys know that this is definitely a must-have if you're going to be overlanding on your own. And even if you're in a group, you'll be the boss of tonight's bakkie if it's your compressor that helped your buddy in the hour of need.

In the interest of fairness we tested the following compressors in the same conditions and on the same tyre: a BF Goodrich All Terrain T/A K022. Starting at a bar, we then put each compressor up against a stopwatch on the way to 2 bar.

1000 PSI 10 LPM
Tough enough

The biggest compressor available at Outdoor Warehouse packs a mighty 300 lpm per minute punch, and didn't break a sweat in our benchmark test. It comes standard with an 8 m hose and handle that folds down conveniently for easier storage.

Price R2 499 at Outdoor Warehouse
Time 31 seconds

gol Drive & Camp says its chrome finish and twin piston design helps to make this good performer look rugged.

1000 PSI 10 LPM
Up to the task

The little Trailboss 25 managed quite a tall order with our chunky off-road tyre. It took its time, and there is a warning to not exceed 20 minutes of usage – which would probably lead to premature failure. It emitted minimal noise during our test.

Price R1 165 at Outdoor Warehouse
Time 1 minute 10 seconds

gol Drive & Camp says if you stick within the guidelines this guy will see definitely you through.

1000 PSI 10 LPM
For enthusiasts

This one features an extra-long hose and battery cable, and pumps more than double the litres per minute capacity of the other two compressors in this review. It's not twice as fast though, but it should prove reliable in the long run.

Price R3 150 at 1st Outdoor & Co
Time 50 seconds

gol Drive & Camp says: And as the name suggests, this one is perfect for epic adventures.

1000 PSI 10 LPM
In contention

This is a solid middle-of-the-field compressor that punches way above its own weight. The battery clamps are a little on the small side but overall it can talk the talk and walk the walk.

Price R2 099 at 1st Outdoor & Co
Time 1 minute 10 seconds

gol Drive & Camp says it's a worthy entry that's above average in performance.



gol Drive & Camp says 2018: W

ARE THE FIGURES INFLATED?

I refer to the article "The air out there" in your January issue. The article is technically correct as can be expected, but I would like to highlight a few concerns.

With all the 10 compressors you tested the manufacturers all give the volume of air that the specific compressor can displace, for example 75 l/min. I would like to point out that this is only a theoretical figure and not the compressor's real air supply ability. These figures are calculated by the amount of air that the compressor's piston can displace in

one minute. The air losses must also be subtracted from this number. The higher a compressor's revolutions, the lower the percentage delivery. The reason is technical – where exactly the cylinder is in the cylinder tube and how much air enters and exits the cylinder chamber. The little bit of air that escapes past the rings is negligible though.

It's more important to know what the true delivery is. Like in your case you inflated a tyre from 1 bar to 2 bar and that takes a specific amount of time. I looked at the same tyre that

you used and this 1 bar is equal to 72 l.

When I compare your results with the 72 l air and what the manufacturers say the delivery of these compressors is, nine out of 10 of the manufacturers inflate the abilities of their compressors. Nine of the compressors delivered between 7,6 and 59% less air than they claim on the packaging. Only one device actually performed 37% better than their own figures claim.

WILLEM CILLIE'
Bellville

Did you make it to the Katse Dam?

My husband and I recently did a short trip through Lesotho, and because we have a 4x4 we decided to do the route between Taung and Mokhotlong and then on to Sani Pass. On our map it showed that only 4x4s can do the short stretch from Taung to Linakeng, but to our surprise there was a far worse road waiting for us between Molumong and Mokhotlong with no mention of it being a 4x4 route. We crawled up the mountain at snail's pace, bouncing from side to side in our seats and eventually we had to release our seatbelts, which were cutting into our shoulders.

Before we came to the intersection of the A31 we came across three vehicles (one towing a trailer) that were on their way to Katse Dam for the night. They were relaxed, eating last

night's leftover braaivleis and swilling down a few beers. We told them of the nightmare journey they were about to embark on, but they probably thought these two grey-haired pensioners in the white Jeep were grossly exaggerating.

They told us that the South African border post at Sani closed at 4 pm so we had no time to delay and left them around 2 pm. (We made it to the Lesotho border by 4 pm and went straight down the pass after being told the SA border only closed at 6 pm.)

We would love to get hold of the people in those vehicles to find out if they actually made it to Katse that evening.

WILLIE AND MARILYN SCHOLTZ
Modimolle >

SNAKE TROUBLE

Two years ago we decided to go camping at Weesgerus for a weekend. The Saturday, shortly after dark, I was still deciding what to braai when chaos erupted opposite our stand.

The shrill cries of women rang through the night sky and I realised something was very wrong. One of them even had curlers in her hair, slippers on her feet and a long feather duster in the one hand. Another one with her Blue Bull apron stood armed with a braai tong and a broom. Their neighbour realised that he had to lend a hand and stormed over with a spade.

Shouting and screaming, the three were busy chasing away a cobra, and not a small one at that – it appeared to be about 1,7 to 1,8 m in length. The women were getting in shots with the broom and feather duster while the guy aimed but didn't get a turn. The worst part was that the snake made a beeline straight toward us.



It saw a possible escape in the tree next to my Isuzu, but unfortunately for him it was a small tree. Meanwhile, more hitters joined the man and women.

The snake realised that the tree wasn't going to supply enough cover and it sailed past the bakkie's front wheel underneath the bonnet. Besides that the snake was now "hiding" somewhere in my bakkie, I decided that the snake should be rescued

rather than killed. I opened the bonnet but saw only a small part of its body, that's how deep inside it was. I realised that if I switched on the engine the heat would force it out. It worked but then it sailed underneath our caravan. I was on my stomach, trying to see where it was now while the other people shone their LED flashlights. If the snake decided to head my way, I knew it could spell the end for me. The snake appeared again and headed back to the Isuzu – again sailing into the engine.

I switched it on, but this time the engine didn't bother him. One bystander suggested I drive a short distance with someone behind me to see when the snake decided to come out. It worked, but the guy behind me drove over the poor snake. All in all, it wasn't the right decision because we lost a beautiful creature of nature.

**PIETER OLIVIER
Polokwane**

A MUDDY AFFAIR

I was reflecting on our 4x4 days and found pictures that we once took at Swartruggens Dam. This was back in 1988 and I still have fond memories of camping and waterskiing on the dam.

I remember one camping weekend there. The guys wanted to see how far

we could drive with a Toyota bakkie in the mud before it got stuck. It wasn't long before the mud won... and the Toyota with its Chev 327 V8 engine lost speed. The next moment the engine started to roar but the wheels didn't move. The bakkie's chassis dropped straight into the mud and it wouldn't budge. Even a Samaritan with a tractor couldn't help us. Later a few soldiers in a Buffel (*An armoured 4x4 troop carrier of yesteryear. – Ed*) arrived to come stretch their legs at the water's edge. We bribed the lieutenant with a promise of six beers to see if they could help us tow the bakkie out of the mud. It was a struggle, but the bakkie came out! But then the Buffel got stuck. Another Buffel came to help, but to no avail.

So we left on the Sunday afternoon and decided to go back the next day to see if they managed to get out. They didn't. A grader came to the rescue, but by this time the soldiers were already knee-deep in trouble with their commander for "their" thoughtless behaviour!

**WILLIE VAN NIEKERK
Bronkhorstspuit**



A real rooftop tent

Look at this interesting rooftop tent that I saw in Aarburg, Switzerland, at the Riverside open air arena. This kind of tent was apparently designed by one Gerhard Müller and he made the first version in 1979. By 1990 he'd made 1 800 of these rooftop tents. It's known as the Trabant rooftop tent – the floor measures 1,45 x 2 m and it's big enough for two adults.

**PAUL BOTHA
Tegerfelden, Switzerland**

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Food for the open road



How do you take care of hunger pangs on the road? Do you pack sandwiches and a flask of coffee in a picnic basket, stop at a garage for a quick pie and a cola, or will you take a longer break and order burgers and a milkshake at a fast-food joint?



Roland Straub

We normally stop at a Wimpy or something along the way, but this year we're doing proper padkos: frikkadelle, eggs and chicken with fresh rolls. We're showing the kids how we used to do it.



Ludwig Schnettler

We stop and enjoy a hearty Wimpy breakfast.



Cathrine Dixon

We pack sliced leg of lamb, frikkadelle, eggs, pieces of sausage and buttered rolls. And don't forget the coffee and cooldrinks.



Melanie Vorster

We like buns with cold meat and cheese, juice and water. Perhaps some droëwors and Jungle bars. We even eat in the car.



Johan Terblanche

To stop on the side of the road is a huge risk these days. We usually eat in the car and stretch our legs at a filling station.



Lettie van Aarde

We stop for breakfast at Wimpy or another familiar spot like Maxi's. After stretching our legs we're ready for the road again.



Kobus Horn

I pack my own padkos. I learned my lesson buying pies on the road. Also, it's been my experience that the service at Wimpy after 8 pm is poor. Padkos gets my vote every time.



Madelein Coetzee Lundie

A flask of coffee, a flask of tea, cheese and smoked ham sandwiches, boiled eggs, and homemade KFC-style chicken drumsticks. Yummy!



Duane Van Wyk

Wimpy all the way.



Instagram



Liked by menseselense, toastcards and 51 others
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**COMMENT
OF THE
MONTH!**

Jan Ebersohn's 1962 PV544 had many people writing in to confirm just how hardy these old Volvos were.

Miemie Van Zijl Greyling

My first car was a Volvo like this – a left-hand drive with sports engine. It was the oldest car on campus.



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To Raptor or not to Raptor

He wonders if the Ford Ranger Raptor will be relevant in the South African market, says Mic van Zyl.

There's been a fair amount of excitement and anticipation around the launch of Ford's new Ranger Raptor. This is the official Ford Performance production version. With the official launch in Thailand now over, the facts and figures are out and there is quite a bit of backlash from many corners regarding the perceived lack of horses under the bonnet.

I think I can safely say that most of us were expecting the big twin-turbo petrol V6 engine from the F-150 Raptor or something similar. This 336 kW and 691 Nm powerhouse would have gone down a treat in a light and agile Ford Ranger. Then there were rumours that it would get the 2.3 l Ecoboost turbopetrol engine from the Mustang with 231 kW and 475 Nm. These are respectable figures, especially for a bakkie.

The idea behind the Raptor is that it's a factory-built, off-road performance truck. There are significant under-the-skin changes compared to the regular Rangers.

The engine that Ford Performance has opted for in Raptor's outside of the USA is a twin turbo 2.0 l diesel powerplant. The outputs are quoted at 157 kW and 500 Nm. Compared to the 3.2 l five-cylinder currently found in our local Ranger, this is only a 10 kW and 30 Nm increase,

which is hardly worth the effort according to some. I too am guilty of being blinded by the figures only and therefore tend to disregard the bigger picture.

MY OWN RANGER is a Ford Performance Centre fettled 3.2l WildTrak with 200 kW and 650 Nm. I can tell you that it is astonishingly quick in a straight line. After fitting all of our 4x4 accessories and 33" off-road tyres, however, there are many 2.2 Rangers that are chipped with performance exhausts that I cannot outrun. The 3.2 does not like to rev and the gearbox and torque convertor combination is pretty lazy. It's great for off-roading but no good for racing. My point is that figures alone do not tell the whole story.

The idea behind the Raptor version of the Ford F-150 truck is a factory-built, off-road performance truck. The Ranger Raptor is no different. Compared to a standard Ranger there are significant under-the-skin differences. These include a strengthened chassis, lightweight off-road racing suspension, and off-road tyres. Those are but a few of the important engineering upgrades. Most importantly, the "small" diesel engine has been mated to a 10-speed transmission. This multiple-ratio auto box is better suited to keep a smaller-capacity diesel engine on the boil for optimum responsiveness.

We've been experiencing this downsizing trend in SA for a while now – the first of which

was the eight-speed 2.0 l Amarok. You only need to visit YouTube to find bakkie drag race videos that show the Amarok often handing out a spanking. More recently we had the Hilux with its six-speed auto 2.4 l turbodiesel motor, which puts out almost as much power as the previous D-4D 3.0 l (110 kW vs 120 kW) and a lot more torque (400 Nm vs 343 Nm). Nissan have also come to the "small capacity, high revving, lots of gear ratios" party with the new Navara, which sports seven speeds in auto form.

NONE OF THE above-mentioned bakkies are slouches and perform very well both on and off-road. I think we're going to see much less of the big-engined diesels in future.

The idea of an off-road performance truck is an old one in the USA but still new to us here in SA. Many people commenting on the new Raptor have levelled criticism at the load-carrying and towing ability. I'm afraid they are missing the point of the Raptor. It is essentially a sports car in the shape of a bakkie. Is it going to be relevant in our market? Only time will tell, but I suspect not so much. That said, I can't wait to try it out.

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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How do you level your caravan?

Every guy kisses his wife in his own way and it would seem the same goes for levelling a caravan, says Neels van Heerden.

The smartest people in South Africa don't work for the WNNR or at UCT or Maties. No, they gather around the fire somewhere at a campsite where they spew words of wisdom about subjects like who should coach the Boks, how a caravan should be packed, which vehicle tows the best, and whether a stabiliser is really necessary.

Remember, the corner steadies are only meant to support the caravan and not to level it. That's why side panels crack above the door on bigger caravans.

What often happens when you ask advice from these guys is that a simple question, like how to level your caravan, is met with snide remarks like "you park it on level ground" or "use the eyes in your head". And if these guys are already three sheets to the wind they'll tell you to put your camp chair underneath a tree and sit with drink in hand while you first check out the lay of the land.

But even if you're not stuck with a couple of jokers you'll still get quite a few opinions, like putting a spirit level on top of each corner

steady and turn each one until the caravan is level.

You also get people who believe a spirit level must be at least 12 inches long otherwise the reading is incorrect. That's why a long spirit level between the rear lights and the one above the left wheel works best. That's how you get the vehicle level in length with the help of the jockey wheel and then you turn the corner steadies until the caravan is level in width.

Someone else uses an electronic spirit level on his smartphone as part of a three-point strategy. First he lowers the jockey wheel with three turns and then puts the rear corner steadies on blocks and levels it from right to left. It's important to first lower the jockey wheel otherwise the corner steadies at the back won't lift high enough.

Then you get people who use a wheel step. They pull the caravan more or less where they want it and then see which wheel is too high or too low. You then pull the caravan a bit forward or a bit back until it's on the wheel step and then use the jockey wheel to level it. Put a wheel stop in front or behind the lifted wheel and lower the corner steadies.

Remember, the corner steadies are only meant to support the caravan and not to level it. That's

why bigger caravans' side panels crack above the door, especially double-axle models. Too much pressure is put on the corners of the caravan when you want to level it width-wise.

The three-point strategy might work with smaller and lighter caravans but you can't drive a giant caravan up a steep hill and then try to level it down the width.

Technology is of course also used to make the levelling process easier. Someone told me of a system that he ordered from England for his Elegance. He says it's not a good idea for this caravan to be 100% level because then you struggle with the shower's drainage and water leaks in at the ventilation holes in the roof. The back of the caravan should therefore be slightly lower than the front.

He uses his caravan mover to get his Elegance in the right spot: He puts the hydraulic system behind the wheel and then pulls the caravan onto it. Then you pump it to the desired height – not more than 3–6 inches (7,5–15 cm) because otherwise the front will be skew.

You may think this system is a gimmick but then you realise the British Caravan and Camping Club has almost a million members. Maybe it's worth investigating. 

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Impressive selection

Judging by all the new caravans on display at this year's Beeld Holiday Show, this market is alive and kicking. Here is everything you need to know.



Gypsy Lite



Predator



Developments at Jurgens Ci

Jurgens Ci, the biggest caravan manufacturer in the country, really shook things up with a handful of new models.

Gypsy Lite Impi's pop-up roof

The Gypsy Lite, with its gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 750 kg, is Jurgens Ci's lightest caravan and is targeted at caravanners with an ordinary driver's licence (Code B). The Lite Impi has a pop-up roof, compared to the solid roof on the standard model, and will fit in a regular garage.

The pop-up roof has a hinge above the A-frame and lifts

only at the back, where the door is. The canvas between the roof and the body has extra-large mesh windows and an elastic stretches in the middle around the mesh to prevent it from getting stuck between the roof and the body when you lower it.

The layout inside looks exactly like the solid roof model's and includes, amongst other things, an island bed and two benches at the back that folds down to make a second bed. (The Lite is white and available with green, blue and grey panel finishing.)

The numbers Gypsy Lite Impi R175 900, GVM 750 kg.

Tomcat and Predator for dirt roads

Jurgens Ci's off-road trailer range has some new faces. The new range consists of two models: a smaller Tomcat and a larger Predator.

The Tomcat is similar to the old XT75 model, but the nose-cone and gas bottles now come standard. The Tomcat Deluxe has extra loading bins on both sides of the caravan.

The Predator is Jurgens Ci's largest off-roader (like the previous XT160) and is a smaller version of a mix between the XT160 and the XT140. The Predator has a mounted rooftop tent with

a canvas awning that provides 270° shade around the trailer. It has space for a 60 l fridge. An anchor point is welded onto the chassis in case you get stuck and need to be recovered. **The numbers** XT Tomcat R52 900, GVM 1 200 kg; XT Tomcat Deluxe R62 900, GVM 1 400 kg; Predator R169 900, GVM 1 600 kg.

Small Bonzai

A concept of Jurgens Ci's upcoming teardrop trailer was also on show. The Bonzai is a typical teardrop design with the kitchen at the back and the door in front. It's fully equipped with gear like a microwave,



Summit's Andes aims higher

Summit Trailers has reviewed its Andes model and transformed it into a new off-road trailer. The hinges are at the A-frame and the top lifts at the back. An enormous bed takes up most of the interior.

The lid lifts high enough for a person to climb in without crouching. Canvas panels with mesh windows stretch between the body and the lid and you can marvel at nature from the comfort of your bed.

The new Andes is lighter than its predecessor because the panels are now made of

aluminium. The chassis is of stainless steel.

You have way more packing and work space in the kitchen, and even a slide-out shelf.

The open shelf is built in above the nose. It's as wide as the trailer and has high edges on the side. A bike rack and a solar panel also fits on top of the lid.

The numbers From R216 600, GVM not available at the time of going to print

Contact 012 803 6535

info@frantelholdings.com

summittrailers.co.za



Three-in-one motorhome

Maxmo is the newest brand name in South Africa's motorhome industry and transforms vehicles like Volkswagen Caddys and Kombis into motorhomes. Its flagship is the Tourer, which is made out of a Fiat Ducato.

You can choose from three interior layouts. There is the UK design (two single beds that change into a double bed, a living area and a bathroom) and the Rear Lounge (which is similar to the former but the bed is at the back where the door is). Both the models have only one side door. Then there's the Flexi layout model,

which has a sliding door on both sides and the interior is designed to change into three different configurations: from a proper bedroom to a giant kitchen or a bathroom with no equal.

The idea is that you can tour self-sufficiently with the Tourer for at least two days.

It has a 250 l water tank as well as a 460 A 3000 W inverter.

The numbers Depending on the model R860 000–R1,4 million, GVM 3 500–4 200 kg

Contact 082 899 9999

leon@maxmo.life

maxmo.life



A spruced-up Rooimier

Bush Lapa has made some changes to its smallest model, the Rooimier.



packing space at a comfortable height.

The Rooimier sleeps two people and has a conventional pop-up roof, like Bush Lapa's bigger caravans.

**The numbers R215 460,
GVM 1 500 kg**

Contact 021 870 1277

 martin@bushlapa.com

CONQUEROR EXPANDS ITS PLATINUM RANGE

Conqueror's Platinum range is now also available for its off-road trailers and not just the off-road caravans anymore.

Conqueror will first launch the package on its biggest off-road trailer, the Comfort. It's automated and is also higher off the ground. The standard sliding leaf springs have been replaced with eye-to-eye leaf springs. Aluminium has replaced the steel used for anything that wasn't part of the trailer construction, like the drawers.

The A-frame has increased by 30 cm and the gas bottles have been moved from the back to the front. Another change is the drawer with a Weber Q1000

braai that slides out of the
nosecone.

The rooftop tent opens with the push of a button and operates with a 12 V electrical pulley system. Conqueror uses this in the kitchen too. You simply press the button and the kitchen with its drawers slides out at the back of the trailer.

Although a Platinum upgrade will cost you in the region of R60 000, the Comfort Platinum costs only R6 000 more than the standard model.

The numbers R177 726,
GVM 1 500 kg

Contact 016 349 6533

info@conqueror.co.za

conqueror.co.za >



Smaller and bigger for Aloe

Hot wheels

Aloe also has its eye on caravaners without a Code EB licence and launched its Peri Peri model at the show.

Even though it's a smaller caravan compared to the rest of Aloe's range, the manufacturer still uses the same materials. That includes an aluminium framework and the aluminium finishes. The modular chassis is made of galvanised steel.

The door is at the back and the work surface folds out to the left of the door. The 220 V fridge is inside to the left of the

door and the kitchen cupboards are opposite this. The rest of the interior consists of three configurations for the bed, the benches and loading space. Either you use the area for a large bed or it can fold up with benches down the side and a folding table in the middle. The benches on the right can also fold away to create more space if you want to pack something like a mountain bike or two.

It's available in white or grey. **The numbers** R159 900, GVM 750 kg



Aloe Peri Peri



Aloe Excelsa

Excelsa makes its debut

Besides the Peri Peri, Aloe has added another caravan to its range (Camperi, Ferox, Striata and Lebombo). The Excelsa is an extension of the Striata, and though it doesn't have a

separate bathroom inside, it does have an island bed. The Excelsa is now Aloe's biggest single-axle caravan.

Aloe's caravans are now available at three dealers (pre-

viously all sales were done by the factory in Johannesburg). You can find them in the Western Cape (Tygerberg Caravans), KwaZulu-Natal (Natal Caravans & Marine)

and Gauteng (Camp Guru).

The numbers R385 662, GVM 1 800 kg

Contact 011 892 1100

allan@aloeacaravans.co.za

aloeacaravans.co.za



MORE SPACE IN THE ARMADILLO

Armadillo's 270° awning is something of the past and it now uses a more conventional rally tent. Two arms on the corners of the trailer swing open to form the sides of the roof, with poles that fit into place for the apex. You also use adjustable poles for the foot pieces. If the 3 m space next

to the Armadillo isn't enough, you can order a second roof. It gives you an extra 2,5 m worth of covered space.

The numbers Extra awning R4 800

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MOBI LODGE BUILDS A SMALLER BROTHER

Mobi Lodge is known for its unique design where the bedroom slides out of the right-hand-side panel to create a giant living area in the trailer.

The manufacturer has followed the same approach with its Mobi X and built a trailer in the same form but almost half the size. It's also built out of fibreglass and is basically just a double bed on wheels. Instead of the bedroom that slides out the whole rear panel slides out as one big shelf. On this is the gas bottle, ammo box and fridge. The in-line geyser is in the door and on the shelf is storage space for your porta-potti when you're towing.

The door is to your left in front and you sit down on the outside part of the mattress and swing your legs in. The kitchen is to the left of the trailer with open shelves in the opposite panel. You can reach the shelves from inside and outside the trailer. There is a mesh section on the inside in front of the shelves.



A rooftop tent fits on top of the trailer if you want to make space for two additional people.

It has a similar 12/220 V system as its big brother and the same



counts for the 2,5 t axle and the 150 l water tank. The Mobi X comes fully equipped with camp chairs, bedding and a braai. Only the rooftop tent is optional.

The numbers From R198 000, GVM 1 500 kg

Contact 082 8999 999

leon@mobilodge.com

mobilodge.com

Overlander's kitchen gets a revamp

The kitchen in the Overlander off-road trailer, a product of LeBusha, was redesigned and now includes a work surface of 85 x 53 cm. Four drawers pull out from underneath the work surface, two of which are big enough for the contents of an ammo box.

There are more drawers built in underneath the bed and the water tank has been moved inside.

The numbers R136 800, GVM 1 500 kg

Contact 083 416 7157

sales@lebushatrailers.com

lebushatrailers.com



Kiddie bed in the Shumba Cub

Tuff Cats' Shumba Cub off-road caravan doesn't have a bed over the A-frame like the bigger model, the Shumba. The Cub's bed folds out of the right-hand-side panel and sleeps two.

The manufacturer has now built in a door across the nose

cone that opens like the bonnet of a car. It creates extra space in the caravan for a kiddie bed.

The numbers R241 195, GVM 1 600 kg

Contact 083 609 6947

jaco@tuffcats.co.za

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Bed on a tray

All Afrispoor's beds in their off-road caravans fold down over the A-frame. The owners now also give an option for a pull-out bed. The base of the bed pulls out of the caravan – like a sliding frame (still over the A-frame). The nose of the body that in standard

caravans would fold flat to make the bed, pulls out along with the bed base and forms the bed's top end.

The numbers Pull-out bed option R15 000

Contact 031 569 4323

afrispoor@absamail.co.za

afrispoortrailers.co.za

(*Prices were valid during the show and before the 15% VAT adjustment.)

IN OTHER NEWS

Ford Ranger Raptor

Ranger owners who want their bakkies to look like the American F-150 Raptor and who import their Raptor body kits from the States risk that these kits may negate their vehicles' warranty and influence the reliability.

Ford recently launched an official Ranger Raptor that is

fully supported and approved by the manufacturer. The Raptor is built in Thailand and will be imported to South Africa.

The Raptor will be available in four colours: Lightning Blue, Race Red, Shadow Black, Frozen White, and Conquer Grey.

The Raptor's dimensions also differ from the standard

Ranger's. It's 1 873 mm high, 2 180 mm wide, and 5 398 long, and at 1 710 mm the axle track is also quite a bit wider.

The ground clearance has been increased to 283 mm while the approach and departure angles are now 32.5° and 24°.

The suspension will also receive a substantial upgrade.



HIGH PRAISE FOR METALIAN

Local manufacturer Metalian's Maxi trailer made its mark in an Australian off-road trailer competition. The Maxi was voted the best value-for-money trailer and came in third place in the category for trailers between Aus\$30 000–Aus\$45 000.

The Maxi is the largest of the three trailers built by Metalian. For the past two and a half years Metalian has been exporting to Australia, and the owner, Heinz Modricky, says he does it because the off-road trailer market Down Under is still growing.

"South Africans prefer long holidays of at least a week, where Australians like to go away for weekends. They also like extras such as sound systems and Bluetooth connectivity.

"Our trailers are lightweight, compact and the layout is well organised, and it's built well. That's what caught the judges' eyes."

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FROM TRAILER TO CAMPING TRAILER

Michael Paine from Brakpan has just the answer for people with small trailers who want to camp. Michael modified the Venter Super 6 trailer so that you can sleep inside.

If you stand behind the Ezi Camp trailer, the lid opens up 90° while the canvas sections that are fastened to it fold open into a room above the

trailer's body. Poles fit into the corners to stretch the canvas over the Venter. Two pipe corner steadies lower at the back to keep the trailer sturdy while you climb in at the back by means of a loose step.

The bed, which takes up the entire floor surface inside, is not directly on the ground but lifts to create packing

space underneath. The closest section of the bed lifts up so that you can access the packing space. This is also where you get dressed inside.

A rectangular 3,6 x 3 m roof stretches over the trailer and is kept in place with poles and anchor ropes. Three panels also fit onto the roof around the sides of the trailer for more privacy. The nosecone remains and a cooler box fits in easily.

"I'm 70 years old and I've been camping with caravans

my whole life, but it has become a bit too much for me," explains Michael. "All you need is a small, cheap and light trailer to camp."

Michael also does the modifications for people who supply their own trailers. **Price R29 990** (with a new Venter Super 6 trailer), **R16 500** (if you supply the trailer), and **R4 000** for the three tent side panels.

Contact ☎ 011 915 8193
✉ irene.pain@telkomsa.net

Isuzu stays

Isuzu Motors Japan purchased the Struandale plant in PE from General Motors. This follows GM's (the former owner's of Isuzu in South Africa) withdrawal from the country in May 2017.

It takes the plant two working days to assemble a bakkie from start to finish. Currently a new bakkie rolls off the factory floor every three minutes.

Masanori Katayama, president and director of Isuzu Motors Japan, says Isuzu remains dedicated to South Africa.

Isuzu has also launched its latest vehicle, the MU-X. The MU-X has been available in Australia and New Zealand for some time, but General Motors decided years ago to rather sell it in South Africa under the Chevrolet banner as the Trailblazer. It was a decision that was questioned by those in the know in the motoring industry and confirmed by relatively poor sales figures.

It's hoped that the MU-X will fare better on local soil than

the Trailblazer did and that it will successfully compete with the Toyota Fortuner, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport and Ford Everest. The MU-X is based on the KB bakkie and will use the same 3.0 diesel engine.

The managing director of Isuzu Motors South Africa

(IMSA), Michael Sacke, says although the MU-X is currently manufactured in Thailand they hope to eventually assemble it in South Africa - depending on sales.

Isuzu dealers should receive the first shipment at around June of this year. >



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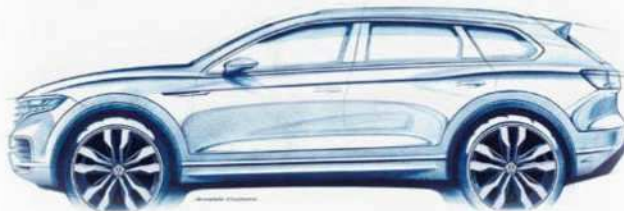
Volkswagen recently released its official design sketch of the 2019 model Touareg, but photos of this model were already floating around on the internet in December last year. The big unveiling will take place at the Beijing Motor Show, where VW will share its worst-kept secret with the world.

Rumours has it that the new Touareg will be 25 mm wider and 60 mm longer. For the first time it will also boast seven seats.

It will share a chassis with the Audi Q7, Cayenne and the Lamborghini Urus, and one of the models will probably have a V8 turbo-diesel.

It's a welcome yet strange decision given that Porsche has stopped using diesels and that many European cities have banned them.

The new Touareg will probably be put together in Bratislava in Slovakia while the parts will be manufactured in China.



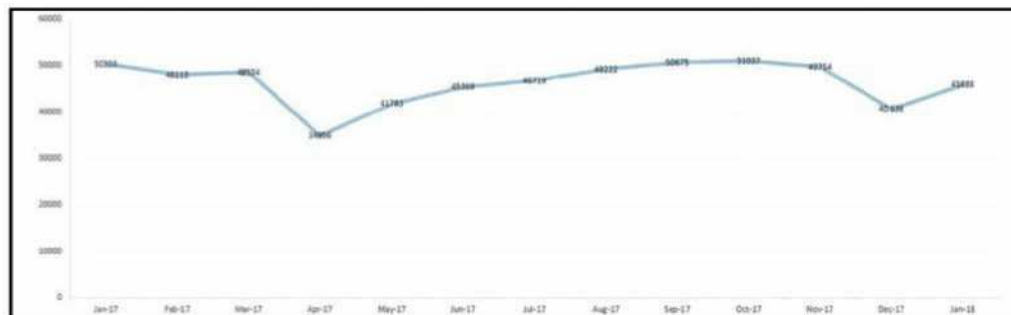
Slow start

The sales of new vehicles kicked off slowly in January 2018. Just 45 888 vehicles were sold versus the 50 386 in January 2017, a drop of 4 498 units or 8,9%.

It's expected though that South Africa's economic status won't be downgraded again and that the economy might even grow thanks to the drastic political changes that occurred in February.

NAAMSA predicts a 2% to 4% economic upswing followed by increased vehicle sales later this year.

In terms of vehicle manufacturers, Toyota is the top seller in South Africa. With 2 695 units, the Toyota Hilux is the best seller, followed by the VW Polo Vivo (2 862 sold).



The Toyota that sells the worst is their Prius, but with regards to towing vehicles and off-roaders the Land Cruiser Troopy is the worst seller (12 units).

1 218 Fortuners were sold, 2 269 Ford Rangers found a home, and with 336 units the Everest is still struggling to win over Fortuner fans. 203 Volkswagen Amaroks were sold, 438 Tiguan, and only 8 Touaregs.

The most unpopular so-called lifestyle vehicles in South Africa are the Volvo V90 CC and the Mitsubishi Outlander, which each sold just two units, according to NAAMSA.

To the right are the top 10 car manufacturers in terms of local new vehicle sales for January 2018 in the passenger and light commercial vehicle market.

NEW VEHICLE SALES	
Manufacturer	Sales
1 Toyota	11 763
2 Volkswagen Group	7 040
3 Ford	4 861
4 Nissan	4 400
5 Hyundai	2 897
6 Renault	1 929
7 BMW	1 856
8 Mercedes-Benz	1 416
9 Mazda	1 323
10 Isuzu	1 200

Figures provided by NAAMSA

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Blurring the lines

With a few minor enhancements and revised engine line-up, the facelifted second generation Nissan Qashqai is ready to take on the rest of the segment.

Text Kyle Kock



The Qashqai is definitely one of the pioneers of the crossover craze that seems to have gripped South Africa and the rest of the world. At the local launch of the refreshed Qashqai, Nissan was proud to point out that more than 30 000 units have been

sold since its introduction here 10 years ago (to date more than 3.3 m million have been sold worldwide).

It was also interesting to see that the Qashqai outsold its bigger sibling, the X-Trail, by more than 3-1 in Europe in January of this year.

While the motoring industry is so that constant updates are required to keep your products relevant, there's a fine line between messing up a winning formula and getting the small changes just right.

Exterior differences

Thankfully very little has been tweaked on the Qashqai's sheet metal. The second generation model brought in significantly more angular design language that was far more striking than the rounded lines of its predecessor.

Nissan has slightly tweaked the Qashqai's nose with the latest iteration of the V-grill – which is now larger and is almost seamlessly integrated with the revised front bumper. The LED daytime running light signature is also a new feature, styled to look like boomerangs.

Along the profile not much has been altered, save for the alloy wheel designs, which have been optimised to decrease aerodynamic drag. The larger front and rear bumpers also contribute to a 17 mm increase in length for a total of 4 394 mm.

Getting in

The first thing you notice about the cabin revisions is the Qashqai's new flat-bottomed leather-wrapped steering wheel and that the seat design has been altered.

First impressions count, and this is definitely an area in which the Qashqai scores highly. Nissan says it's used more premium materials putting together the Qashqai's cabin.

Everything, from the leather to the plastic panels and even the faux metallic trim, feels

substantial and is also pleasant to touch.

The range-topping 1.5 dCi Tekna model we drove at the launch was equipped with a touch-screen satnav infotainment unit paired to a new shark-fin aerial mounted just above the tailgate and plays through a seven-speaker sound system optimised by audio specialists Bose. At this price point, a sound system with no distortion and high-quality vocals is definitely a plus, if that's important to you.

Another notable nice-to-have is that one-touch electric windows are standard across the Qashqai range, and the key fob allows the holder to open and close the windows remotely.

What it's like to drive

The 1.5 ℓ turbodiesel has taken over the reins from the outgoing 1.6 turbopetrol and turbodiesel units as the Qashqai's range-topping engine and is only available with a manual gearbox.

On start-up there's very little diesel clatter to speak of, and pedal modulation is as straightforward as it gets. Stirring the six-speed gearbox's ratios is also an effortless affair, making the Qashqai quite an easy vehicle to

drive. The 260 Nm torque peak is on tap below 2 000 rpm, allowing for quick bursts when navigating city traffic.

After the launch convoy left the confines of the urban jungle that is Johannesburg and headed north toward Pretoria, we stretched the little diesel's legs a bit and it didn't disappoint on the highway either.

The 81 kW isn't much on paper, but the power band has been optimised so the Qashqai never labours. Most overtaking will only require dropping a single cog.

Nissan claims an average fuel consumption figure of 4.2 ℓ/100 km for this model, and after our stint behind the wheel, including open freeway driving and bumper-to-bumper stop-go scenarios in the afternoon peak, the Qashqai consumed just 4.7 ℓ/100 km.

Conclusion

Nissan's focus on occupant comfort and safety is arguably the finest point of its newer vehicles. The noise insulation is superb, the ride is pliant, and the company's raft of safety features (including a blind spot warning, forward collision warning, and around-view monitor) improves an already great mid-sized crossover.



Nissan's focus on occupant comfort and safety is arguably the finest point of its newer vehicles, and that most definitely includes the Qashqai.



SPECIFICATIONS

Model Qashqai 1.5 dCi Tekna
Engine 1 461 cc four-cylinder turbopetrol
Power 81 kW @ 4 000 rpm
Torque 260 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission 6-speed manual
Fuel consumption 4.2 ℓ/100 km
CO2 emissions 109 g/km
Fuel tank capacity 65 ℓ
Luggage capacity 430 ℓ
Maximum towing weight 1 350 kg
Ground clearance 180 mm
Warranty 6 years/150 000 km
Service plan 3 years/90 000 km
Price R434 000

PREMIUM APPEAL. Nissan has definitely upped the ante with the refreshed Qashqai – it looks and feels more expensive than it actually is. The range-topping Tekna comes with all the bells and whistles, including 19" alloys and touch-screen infotainment.



A brawler dressed in tails

There aren't many Range Rover owners who would ever consider doing what we did with a Velar, but someone had to do it. Blame Cyril Klopper.

During the launch of the Velar, Land Rover's marketing people claimed that it was just as capable as any other Range Rover. The motoring journos present on that day politely nodded their heads but they sniggered sceptically amongst one another.

We recently tackled three 4x4 routes near Montagu, in the Cape (read all about it on p.44), to see if there was any merit to this assertion. Our test vehicle boasted a red metallic paint job and was kitted out with 20" Pirelli Scorpion Verde all-season tyres – not exactly perfect for off-roading.

Fortunately the Velar's air suspension afforded good ground clearance because we would need every millimetre of it... >

Range Rover Velar



“
Fortunately the air
suspension afforded
good ground
clearance because
we would need every
millimetre of it.



You can turn the traction control off if you want, but we highly recommend that you leave the Velar to its own devices.

Appearances count

If you like the look of the Range Rover Velar, you're in good company because the judges at the Festival Automobile International in Paris, France, awarded the Velar's designer, Gerry McGowan, its highest honour: the Grand Prix du Design trophy. We've already praised the Velar's appearance, both inside and out, in *go! Drive & Camp* #6, so we're shifting our focus elsewhere.

Under the bonnet

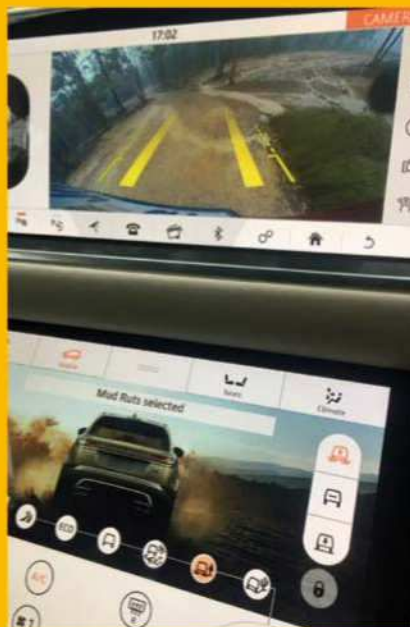
Our test vehicle was powered by a 3 l 90° V6 petrol engine with variable valve timing and twin superchargers. When you put pedal to the metal the exhaust roars like a Kgalagadi lion and the Velar takes off with a helluva speed. According to our own stopwatch it goes from 0 to 100 km/h in 5.5 seconds (0.2 seconds faster than the official figure. You're welcome, Land Rover) and the G-force display on the info screen shows that your body weighs twice as much under fast acceleration.

The brochure claimed that our Velar topped out at 250 km/h, but we didn't try it. *(Just as well. You wouldn't have been able to claim back your fine as a business expense. – Ed)*

This V6, the same engine found in a Jaguar F-Type, sends power to all four wheels via an eight-speed automatic transmission. The all-wheel drive employs software called Intelligent Driveline Dynamics (IDD) that can send 100% of the engine power to the front or rear axle or divide it into any percentage between the two axles.

How it drives

The Velar's standard ride height of 213 mm is okay, but thanks to the air suspension you can hoist it up to 251 mm. It's not as tall as a Patrol or a Cruiser, but it is sufficient for most 4x4 trails.



SPECIFICATIONS

Engine 2 995 cc, twin-supercharged V6 petrol
Power 280 kW @ 6 500 rpm
Torque 450 Nm @ 3 500 rpm
Fuel consumption 12 l/100 km
Boot space 558 l
Maximum towing capacity 2 500 kg

Fording depth 650 mm
Approach/departure angle 29° and 29°
Break-over angle 29°
Ground clearance 251 mm
Tare weight 1 884 kg
Top speed 250 km/h





PRICE

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THE LAY OF THE LAND. The Velar's touchscreens aren't just there for your amusement. The information displayed on them is actually of value. The difference between the six driving modes is noticeable and you can feel it in the Velar's performance and driving height. The display on the windscreen is also a handy feature because it helps to plan the best line through an obstacle. What bothered us a bit was the front spoiler, which threatens to scoop up gravel not unlike a bulldozer does.



Range Rover's Terrain Response 2 is an improvement on the previous system and there are now sensors that monitor road conditions and automatically adjusts traction control, suspension, and power distribution. You can switch the traction control off if you like, but we highly recommend that you leave the Velar to its own devices. The software is truly excellent, and on the Tafelkop 4x4 trail (one of the routes where we tested the Velar) we could easily have lost one or more tyres if it wasn't for the level-headed traction control that stubbornly refused to allow a single wheel to spin, even when we paused on a steep incline with jagged shale and then pulled off again.

Our Velar also came equipped with sensors in the wing mirrors that can apparently measure the depth of a river (there were no serious river crossings on our trip in which to test it). If the water ahead is deeper than the Velar's fording depth of 650 mm, an alarm in the cabin will sound to warn you.

Another cool gadget is the heads-up display (HUD) projected on the inside of the windshield which shows the steering angle of the Velar's front wheels. A video camera in the nose is angled downwards and reveals hidden obstacles on a touch screen display that you may not otherwise be able to see from behind the steering wheel. With the combined assistance of the HUD and the video camera you won't require a buddy to stand in front of you and holler: "A little bit to the left, more to the left. Whoa, too far".

Conclusion

We're impressed. The Velar conquered every obstacle we attempted on the first try. Unfortunately the Velar didn't return unscathed from the battlefield. As you may have guessed, the 20" all-season tyres bore the brunt of the damage. Sharp rocks rendered ugly gashes on the sidewalls, but thanks to the traction control they survived and it wasn't necessary to haul the full-size spare wheel from the boot. The alloy rims of the Velar on test were not sunken below the sidewalls as you'd get on proper off-road wheels. They actually extend slightly beyond the rubber, which is why the spokes were also marred. We won't even mention the formerly splendid paintwork...

To be fair: The Velar is not to blame for the hiccups. Gerry McGowan probably never imagined that anyone would use a Velar as a pukka off-roader. The Velar is mechanically capable of taking on rough conditions – it *can* go where you want it to, but should it? 

With so many different styles of bull bars on the market, choosing the right bar for your vehicle is no easy feat. Pay attention to the following to ensure you make the right decision the first time.

COMPATIBILITY WITH ACCESSORIES

No matter what material your bull bar is made from, it's important that it's compatible with the other accessories fitted to your vehicle. If you want a winch, then you'll need a winch compatible bull bar or at least a bar that can be fitted with a cradle to accept a winch.

STAYING COOL

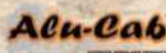
One very important aspect of a well-engineered bull bar is that it will not hinder airflow to a vehicle's cooling system. ARB conducts real-world testing to ensure cooling systems still operate as the vehicle manufacturer intended.

AIR BAG COMPATIBILITY

When you buy a bull bar you want to be sure that it doesn't have an adverse effect on your vehicle's safety systems. Many bull bar manufacturers claim their bull bars to be airbag compatible, ARB has physically crash tested vehicles to ensure correct deployment of SRS airbags.



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High and mighty

Our bakkie project concludes this month, and the last off-road modification to the BT-50 is a proper suspension system. Of course.

Text **Schalk Jonker** Photos **Lourens Pieterse** and **Evan Naudé**

Every month over the past year we've added something new to our long-term test vehicle, a brand new Mazda BT-50 3.2 4x4 SLE bakkie (double cab, automatic) to ultimately transform it into a hardcore off-road vehicle. We started with a set of BF Goodrich T/A tyres and followed with a steel rear bumper, bullbar, winch, bash plate, running boards, aluminium canopy and spotlights. But the time has come to return the bakkie to the manufacturer, and as a swan song, this month we focus our attention on the suspension.

Pick-me-up

The BT-50's original suspension system, however well it might have been designed by Mazda's

lab coats, was ultimately not able to handle the weight of all the off-road gear we added.

Things like the canopy and especially the steel bumper in front and at the back made the bakkie a lot heavier and the suspension suffered under the weight of these additions. It was visible to the naked eye, with especially the front that sagged heavily.

Mic van Zyl of Ironman 4x4 gave the bakkie one look and had the answer for us... the new Add-a-Leaf system.

When you go off-roading with such a heavily loaded vehicle the ground clearance is usually a problem and it becomes necessary to lift it. But it's about more than that. The suspension must still ensure a safe and comfortable ride, regardless of whether you use it to drive



to work or whether you're travelling with your entire family and all your camping gear to the bundus.

Mic says the Add-a-Leaf suspension is a good compromise regarding ride quality... and it's also a more cost-effective way to lift your bakkie. >

WE HAVE LIFT-OFF. The BT-50 rides noticeably higher now than it did in its standard guise.



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HIGH AND DRY. As you'd expect, changing a vehicle's suspension is no easy feat. It took an entire day to do the modifications but it was worth the wait.



Basically it's a system that gives your existing leaf springs a noteworthy boost. Not only does it support the additional weight but it also prevents the springs from getting worn. It also improves handling and ensures a more comfortable ride. And it increases the vehicle's ground clearance.

To the shop

Johann "Tyres" Viljoen and his skilled team at 1st Alignment Centre in Stikland, Cape Town, did the modification.

The Ironman 4x4 Add-a-Leaf system consists of two tapered leaf springs with anti-friction inserts and new centre bolts.

Johann and his team added the new leaf springs to the BT-50's existing ones and fastened it with new bolts. Together with the new leaf springs, 1st Alignment Centre also replaced the front coil springs and front and rear shock absorbers with new ones and balanced the wheels again.

We waited a day, but we're happy to report there is a marked improvement in ride quality.

Modifications

JULY 2017

BFG tyres

R16 780

AUGUST 2017

Ironman steel rear bumper

R10 885

(+ R1 083 for installation)

SEPTEMBER 2017

Ironman bullbar

R14 470

(+ R1 500 for installation)

and Ironman winch

R12 277

(+ R650 for installation)

OCTOBER 2017

Ironman bash plate

R6 755

(+ R395 for installation)

NOVEMBER 2017

Ironman running boards

R5 785

(+ R950 for installation)

DECEMBER 2017

Eko Aluminium canopy

R24 090

JANUARY 2018

Extreme Lights Vega XL spotlights

R3 290

(+ R1 615 for installation)

APRIL 2018

Ironman suspension system

R16 842

(+ R1 500 for installation and R307 for wheel balancing)

FINAL TALLY

R119 174

This installation was done by 1st Alignment Centre at 78 Willow Street, Bellville, Cape Town. Phone them on 021 949 5041 or send an email to johann@1stcca.co.za.

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From Koo to Klein Karoo

Between the Langeberg in the south and Anysberg to the north lies the obscure Waboomsberg. Get in your off-roader and drive through fructiferous vineyards before hitting the arid plains.

Text and photos **Cyril Kloppe**





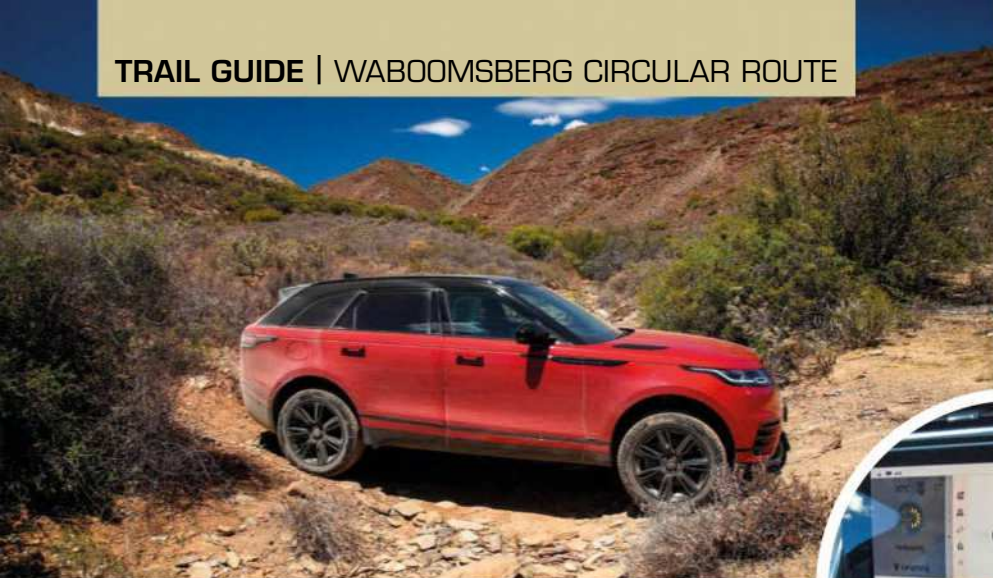
The words “Sunshine in a packet” probably springs to mind when the town of Montagu is mentioned. It’s the slogan of the Montagu Dried Fruit & Nuts company. Or perhaps you are reminded of muscadel thanks to a song David Kramer made popular back in the Eighties. But the Langeberg region offers far more than fortified wine and

wrinkly prunes. We visited three guest farms, each with their own 4x4 trails that differ quite a bit from each other.

Our route began in Montagu and we travelled anti-clockwise around Waboomsberg. Before you set off, buy a bottle of red muscadel at the Montagu wine cellar on the corner of Chinsaut and Main roads (S33.77678 E20.13281) and save it for later. Drive south to

where Main Road ends in Long Street and follow the R62 (the bottom of Long Street) for 1 km out of town to the Talana road sign. Turn left and drive 1,6 km to the Ouberg-Touws River-Ladismith road sign. Follow the Ouberg Pass for 2,8 km until you see a lane of trees on your right. Keep your eyes peeled for the Tafelkop 4x4 sign that’s fixed to a telephone pole. >





TAFELKOP 4x4 TRAIL

The tyre grater

Welcome to Scheepersdraai. This farm is named after Gideon Scheepers, a 22-year-old Boer commander who rode past here in December 1900 to attack the British Cape Colony with 150 rebels – a brave but ultimately suicidal endeavour.

Cobus Uys, the owner of Scheepersdraai and the Tafelkop 4x4 trail, jumps off his tractor to shake hands. Behind him lie fields of pared fruit drying out in the sun.

“Yes,” says Cobus, “there was a Range Rover Evoque on my 4x4 trail the other day. It couldn’t even climb the hill. It’s tyres were in tatters. I had to go fetch it.”

The hill that Cobus is referring to – a section of that very Tafelkop – towers

CHOOSE WISELY. The temperature in the arid mountains around Montagu is on average 5°C warmer than the floor of the valley underneath. This isn’t the ideal place to puncture a tyre; rather take it easy on the rocky route. The climate in the valley is far more pleasant and here you can buy packets of dried fruit.

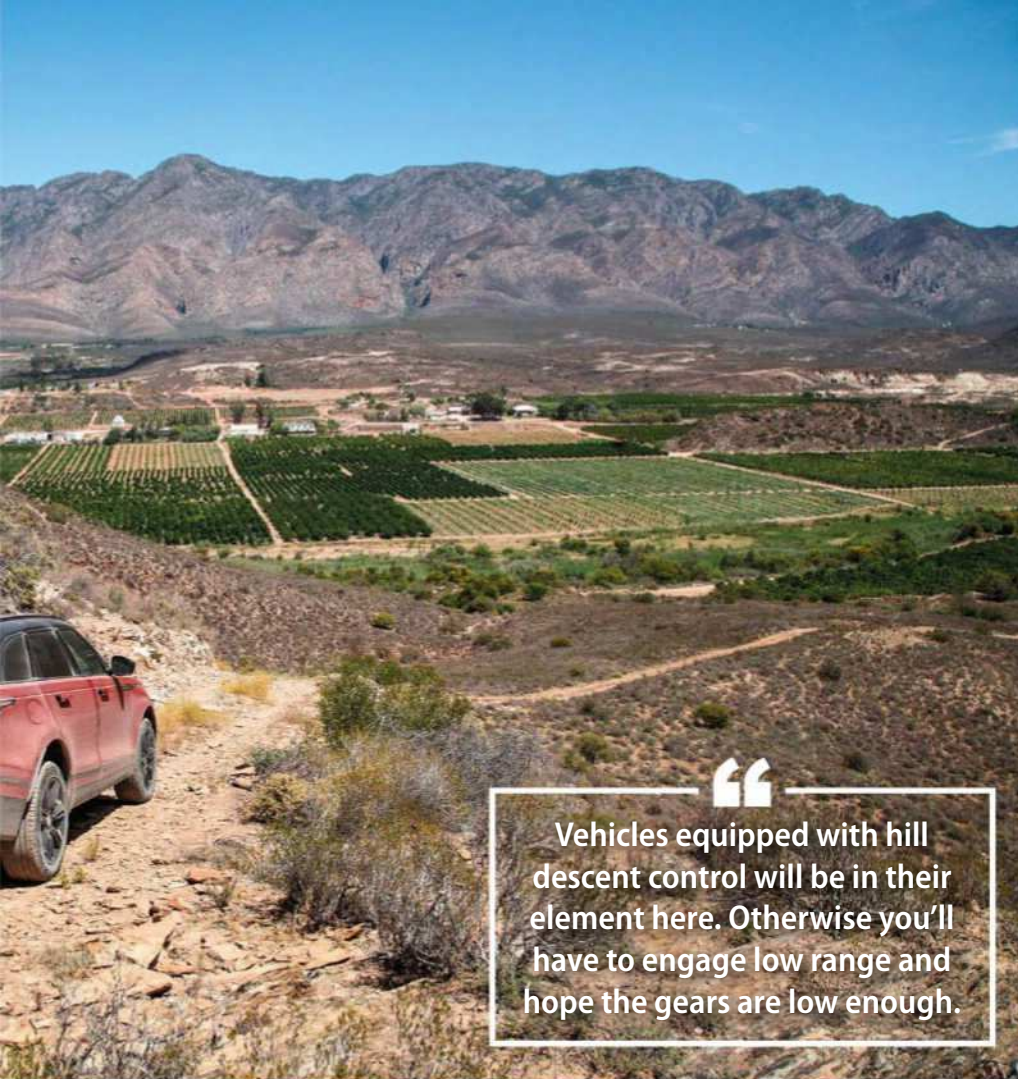
out over the farm, and the twin-track that snakes along it is clearly visible. It doesn’t look that steep but it’s a completely different story once you start driving it.

The trail

It starts next to Cobus’s orchard (\$33.78680 E20.18545). But first you have to drag an electrical fence out of the way. During fruit season it’s switched on because Cobus has problems with baboons stealing his peaches. So be careful with the fence or ask Cobus to open it for you if you’re afraid of getting electrocuted. From here the road winds up the hill at an 18° angle.

The road surface consists of loose gravel and razor-sharp rocks. Maintain momentum and avoid wheelspin otherwise your vehicle’s tyres’ will pay the price. After the first hill the road dips slightly... and then the real climb begins.

If you reach the top of Tafelkop (543 m above sea level) after 2,5 km – and without incident – you’re rewarded with a truly spectacular view over the fertile Koo Valley. Opposite the peach, pear and other fruit orchards lies Montagu in the shadow of



Vehicles equipped with hill descent control will be in their element here. Otherwise you'll have to engage low range and hope the gears are low enough.

Bloupunt, a peak on the western tip of the Langeberg.

The road down is even steeper than the one going up. It dives with a 30° angle over rock steps and broken shale down to the valley floor.

Vehicles equipped with hill descent control will perform well. Otherwise you'll have to switch over to low range and hope the gear ratios are low enough. If you brake you're looking for trouble, because as soon as your vehicle starts slipping there's no stopping it. If you drive in a hardcore off-roader you can do the trail in the opposite direction, tackling the 30° slope head on, but you'll have to bring your A-game.

At the bottom of the slope there is a campsite with a braai and ablution facilities. Unfortunately the toilets are vandalised and inoperative. Cobus explains that the neighbouring farm over which the Tafelkop 4x4 trail winds is no longer owned by his family. The ablution facilities are on the new owner's farm and he apparently is not interested in maintaining it.

From here it's 500 m downhill to the Kingna River, where the trail ends. Head over to Cobus's house one last time to tell him you arrived safely otherwise he's going to have to get into his bakkie and go look for you.

Accommodation

There are three refurbished houses on Scheepersdraai that used to be rented out to visitors, but these days they're occupied by permanent tenants. Cobus has plans for new accommodation next to his farm dam, though, but for now you can stay at Cobus's other neighbour: Doringlaagte (see *go! Drive & Camp #7* for our review of Doringlaagte). There are 10 neat chalets next to the dam, in which you can fish, swim and canoe. There is also a campsite and even a par-three course where you can practice your puts.

Visit doringlaagte.com for more info.



What you need to know



Maximum amount of vehicles allowed

No limit.

Do I get a map? Available on the website.

Will I scratch my vehicle? It's unlikely.

Should I pack a compressor? No.

Can I braai next to the road? Yes.

Can I turn around halfway? Yes.

How long is the trail? 7 km.

How long does it take? About an hour.

Will I see game? Perhaps. Cobus says there are a few klipspringers that graze near the trail.

Best time to go? Year-round.

Can I bring my family? Definitely.

For the day or for the weekend? Day.

Are there ablution facilities? No.

GPS coordinates S33.78435 E20.17843

Price R250 per vehicle.

Contact 082 789 5079 (Cobus)

[tafelkop.co.za](mailto:info@tafelkop.co.za) info@tafelkop.co.za



After you've played around on Tafelkop you can buy a bag of mixed dried fruit (R35) from Cobus and move on to your accommodation for the night. From Tafelkop it's 26 km north over Langkloof Pass, Ouberg Pass and Koppie se Nek Pass to the Leeuwenboschfontein turn-off.

The hill on your left is called Klipspringerberg – at 1 427 m above sea level it's one of the highest in the area. From here it's another 12 km in a north-westerly direction. Be on the lookout for a big gate and the Desert Wind sign post on the left-hand side of the road. The gate is

secured with a chain and padlock. You may want to phone someone to come and open it, but there is no cellphone signal. Don't worry though: The locks hide a grey carabiner in the chain. Unclip it, open the gate, and drive in.

DESERT WIND

The paint stripper

When Renier Swart, sales director of the posh Val de Vie estate outside Paarl, isn't relaxing here in his private nature reserve, you are more than welcome to.

April Plaaitjies welcomes you at the entrance and shows you where to park.

"You can park here at the front door. Can I help you carry your bags?"

The farmstead consists of three houses and a barn. A fourth house – the Kliphuis – is a kilometre further on. The grass is emerald green and forms a stark contrast to the arid earth around the buildings. When you ask April about the condition of the trail, he puts your mind at rest: "No, it's easy with a 4x4." What he neglects to mention is that in places the trail is overgrown with burnt protea bushes. And these bushes' hard branches reach out like witches claws towards your car's mint bodywork...

The trails

There are actually two trails that you can drive, both without a guide. The 6 km long main trail – the only one mentioned on Desert Wind's website – lies to the south of the farmstead. The other trail lies in the north and follows a dry rivercourse along a ridge. Trail 1 starts at a gate to the left of Renier Swart's private home – "the director's house" – and immediately heads upwards in the direction of Waboomsberg.

It starts off as a mild twin-track, but the trail increasingly becomes tougher and the protea bushes ever closer.

The toughest obstacles are rock steps which require your vehicle to have good ground clearance. Low-range gears and diff locks aren't necessary, but you should be on the lookout for loose rocks that could carve huge gashes in your rims.

There's not much you can do about the bushes though. Close your eyes and turn up the music if you don't want to listen to the horrible sound of branches scratching against bodywork. If you're willing to leave your air-conditioned car in the heat to snap





off every single offending branch next to the road, it will take you all day to do it. And then you also have to hope that the owner doesn't mind you violating his flora.

On the ledge high above the farm the trees are more sparse. From here you have a view of the valley below and Anysberg on the horizon to the north. With a trained eye you might be able to spot eland, zebra, gemsbok, grey rhebok and springbok in the blanched landscape. Unfortunately the road ends at the neighbouring farm's fence and you have to turn around and follow

the same track back to the farmstead where you started. The sun should be setting by this time. After an evening braai on the open plains of the Klein Karoo it's time to fetch that bottle of red muscadel from your car's cubbyhole. Turn out the lights and raise a glass underneath the magical, clear night sky.

You can tackle the second trail the next day. It starts at a different gate to the right of Renier's house and runs westwards to the farm's border fence and then back, eastwards, in the dried-up course of an

ephemeral stream. The 10 km long trail has no real obstacles to speak of, but it's nevertheless too rough for an ordinary sedan. Unlike the main trail you don't have to turn around and an hour after leaving the farmstead you'll arrive back at Desert Wind's main gate.

Accommodation

There are four options: The Large Guesthouse sleeps 10, and prices range from R3 675 to R3 885 (December) for the whole house. >





The Small Guesthouse is connected to the Large Guesthouse and sleeps four: Mom and Dad in the double bed and two kiddies in the single beds. Prices range from R893 to R1 257. The two guesthouses are connected to each other via a door inside. If you want to rent both you will receive the key for this otherwise locked door.

The Stable Suites is a semi-detached unit with two rooms with private bathrooms and kitchen facilities and each house two people. Prices range from R1 575 to R1 732 per room.

Lastly, there's the Kliphuis. This building is quite a distance from the farmstead, next to a dry rivercourse and built out of the river rocks. It sleeps four. Prices range from R1 365 to R1 575. Next to the Kliphuis are stands for tents or trailers. An ablution block with separate facilities and basins overlook a boma.

It's not a cheap place to stay but all the units are clean and neat, and at night when you're staring at the clear Karoo sky you are not going to feel cheated. (Keep in mind, though, that VAT is not included in the prices quoted on the website and

therefore not here either. You'll first see the damage on your final invoice.)

None of the units have Eskom electricity and there is also no cellphone reception. You cook on gas stoves (provided) or fire.

There is a farm shop that's run by April's wife, Maudie, where you can buy anything from Val de Vie wines (R150 per bottle) and wood (R100 for 50 pieces) to freshly baked bread (R35), vetkoek (R60 for 18 – bargain) and toilet paper (no price is too high).



What you need to know



Maximum amount of vehicles allowed

Guests only.

Do I get a map? No.

Will I scratch my vehicle? Yes.

Should I pack a compressor? No.

Can I braai next to the road? No.

Can I turn around halfway? Yes.

How long is the trail? 16 km (both trails together).

How long does it take? About three hours in total.

Will I see game? Probably. There is eland, zebra, gemsbok, grey rhebok and of course springbok.

Best time to go? Year-round.

Can I bring my family? Definitely.

For the day or for the weekend? Weekend.

Are there ablution facilities? No.

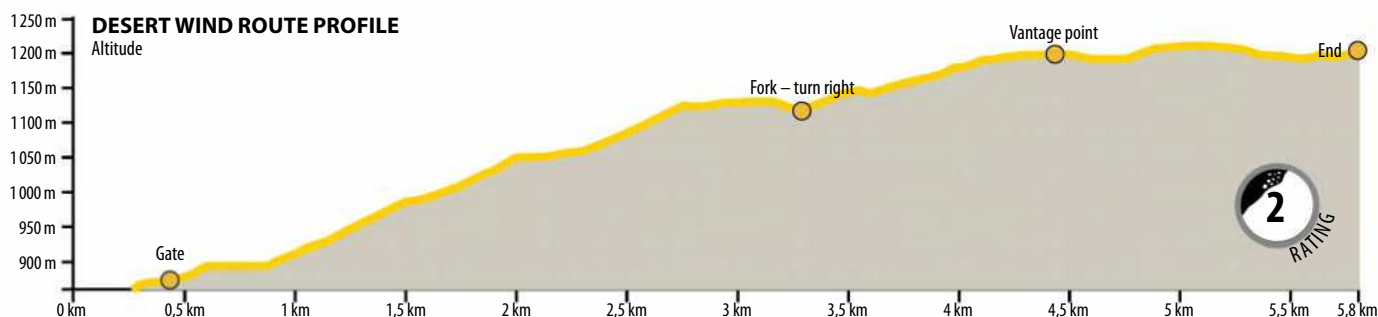
GPS coordinates S33.56941 E20.25999

Price Free if you're a guest.

Contact 082 619 8139 (Christine)

desertwind.co.za

info@desertwind.co.za





From Desert Wind's main entrance you drive 39 km west to where you connect with a tar road (the R318). From here it's 22 km south, over the Rooihooft Pass, to Protea Farm at the top of Burgers Pass and Keisie Valley. The Keisie gets its name from the Khoisan word for sweet water. The water in this area's mountain streams does indeed taste sweet. The good water, loamy soil and dry climate is excellent for farming, and soft fruit in particular flourish here. The area is also known for its proteas that bloom in the mountains.

PROTEA FARM

The alpanist

"Follow me," Niël Burger calls through an open window of his bakkie. The Nissan 1400 slaloms swiftly between pine trees and past farm dams upward against the slope of the mountain. Niël hits the brakes, jumps out of his bakkie, grabs a lo-o-ong piece of irrigation pipe, climbs back in and shoots off with the pipe hanging out of the window and trailing 30 m behind his bakkie. You'll battle to keep up with the tiny Nissan – no matter how fast your vehicle is and even if you're

HOW DIFFICULT IS IT?

0 – Baby cheeks. The N3 between Johannesburg and Heidelberg.

1 – Cleanly shaven. Easy and suited for a 4x2 by diff lock. Shaleen Surtie-Richards can do it on a fat-tyre bike.

2 – Soft fuzz. It's a trail for Bobby van Jaarsveld and Steve Hofmeyr in his heydays. Easy to mild but you do need some 4x4 experience – and 4x4 is a must.

3 – Five o'clock shadow. A Schalk Burger-type trail where experience and low range will pull you through.

4 – Brillo pad. Even Dirty Harry will be sweating. This is only for experienced drivers. Recovery equipment is a must.

5 – Caveman. Rather fetch your pipe car because a standard off-roader won't cut it here, unless you're Chuck Norris.

not encumbered with a pipe. "Follow that road," Niël indicates with his free hand before chasing down the mountain to his fruit orchard. With the pipe still in tow.

The trail

Protea Farm doesn't claim to be an off-roading destination. In fact, the 4x4 trail is hardly a footnote on their website. The mountain track is paved in concrete to prevent erosion, and it's all good and well to protect the road but the track up the mountain is so easy that you can't help but be disappointed.

The track winds upwards with sharp turns. Then, suddenly, you're at the top

of the mountain, 1 500 m above sea level. From here a network of twin-track dirt roads fork out in all directions.

An enormous granite promontory called Arangieskop immediately catches the eye. There is a track that runs to the mount but only mountain climbers can make it to the top. After you've admired the view over the Robertson and Koo valleys, it's time to take a twin-track to the right further up the mountain. At the highest point (1 525 m), about a kilometre from Arangieskop down to where the route ends, you can see rain coming from two days away. It's a fantastic experience to be this close to the clouds. It almost feels >



as if you can stretch out your arm and touch the silver lining.

Spend as much time here as you can, but don't get caught out by the dark because the narrow track down the mountain after sunset is not a joke.

ABUNDANT. The campsite is pleasant thanks to the many shade trees and a mountain stream. The best place to rest your head is at the cabin with only three walls. A recent veld fire took down many of the pine trees, but the forest is building itself up again.



Accommodation

There are five options: Waterblommetjie is a double-storey timber cottage next to a dam. It sleeps four to eight people and costs R1 400 and R1 880 per night depending on how many people stay over.

Pinetree is a smaller timber cottage, also next to a dam, with space for two adults and two children. Here you'll pay R700 for a couple or R940 for a couple with two kids.

As the name suggests, Ou Opstal is an old refurbished farmhouse. It's also next to a dam (no, we don't know how many dams there are but there's a lot) and you can light a fire in the fireplace inside in the cozy lounge. There's a double bed in the main bedroom and two single beds in the loft. Prices range from R800 for two to R1 120 for four people.

Panorama is a large stone cottage (not next to a dam) with an impressive view over the Keisie. There's space for 13 people, but a booking for five will be accepted. It costs R1 200 per night for five people and R2 160 if all the beds are taken.

Lastly, there's the Populierbos campsite. It's underneath large poplar trees right next to a waterfall. There's enough space on the grass underneath the trees to pitch eight two-man tents. But the trump card is one small mountain lodge with only



three walls. Yes, the fourth side is open and there is nothing between you and the night sky. If it's icy cold you can light a fire in the fireplace – despite the missing wall the cottage gets nice and hot. You can also fetch boiling water from the boiler and take a hot bath in full view of hundreds of frogs and dragonflies. It's R500 for two to four people and R75 per additional person.

Chat to Niël again the next morning and you'll hear that his kids actually manage the farm these days. He sees himself merely as an assistant, but his eagerness reveals his true commitment. He is, after all, the sixth generation Burger on the farm.

All Protea Farm's accommodation options carry a R100 additional fee if you only spend one night. It's an extremely popular destination and accommodation is often booked out months in advance, especially over weekends.

Wednesdays and Saturdays you can eat potjiekos. Adults pay R130 per person, high school teens R85 (don't they know how much food a Grade 10 boy can eat?) and primary school kids R55. There are also tractor rides from the farmstead up to Arangieskop. The same group of people pay R130, R70 and R55 respectively for the trip up the mountain. Kids under three eat and ride for free. Lucky buggers.



All that remains is to return to Montagu and fill up your car's fuel tank for the long drive home. If you do want to stay longer, however, we have good news: The Langeberg has many 4x4 trails.

Check out these destinations:

37 km from Montagu MontEco Nature Reserver ☎ 028 572 1922

44 km from Montagu Wagon Wheel 4x4 ☎ karoadventures.co.za

50 km from Montagu Klipbok 4x4 ☎ klipbok4x4adventures.co.za

64 km from Montagu Leeuwenboschfontein 4x4 ☎ leeuwenboschfontein.co.za

66 km from Montagu Hexrivier 4x4 ☎ impangelemountainlodge.co.za

75 km from Montagu Gecko Rock 4x4 ☎ geckorock.co.za

What you need to know



Maximum amount of vehicles allowed

Guests only.

Do I get a map? No.

Will I scrape my vehicle? No.

Should I pack a compressor? No.

Can I braai next to the road? No.

Can I turn around halfway? No.

How long is the trail? 6 km.

How long does it take? About an hour.

Will I see game? Perhaps, but it's unlikely.

Best time to go? In the winter months when thunder roars and the snow falls.

Can I bring my family? Yes, definitely!

For the day or for the weekend?

Weekend.

Are there ablution facilities? No.

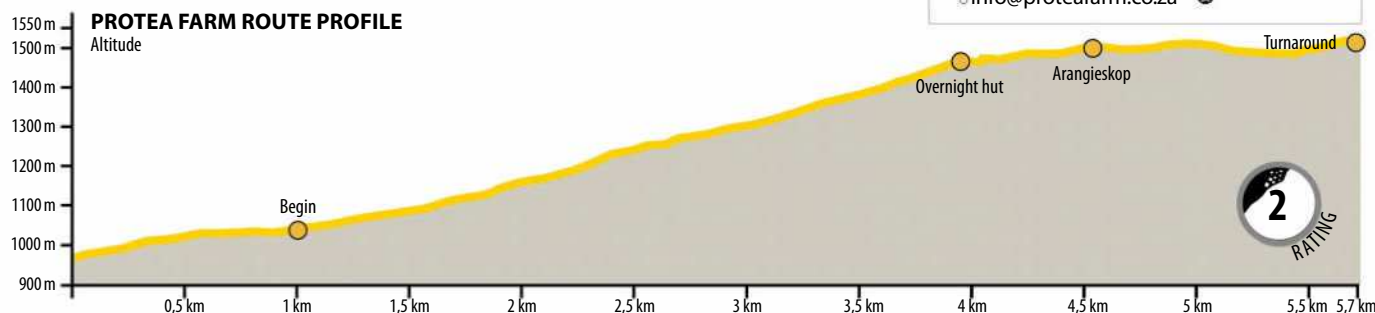
GPS coordinates S33.69288 E19.89534

Price Free for guests.

Contact ☎ 023 614 3012 (Dia)

proteafarm.co.za

info@proteafarm.co.za





Head office - Echo 4x4 Centre Tel: 012 345 3333

E-mail: echoacc@echo4x4.co.za

Western Cape - Echo 4x4 Cape Town Tel: 021 910 3737 / 4025

E-mail: echocapetown@echo4x4.co.za

Zambesi - Echo 4x4 Zambesi Pretoria Tel: 087 654 4960

E-mail: echozambesi@echo4x4.co.za



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E-mail: echozambesi@echo4x4.co.za

In the front row

There are two types of stands in the Kruger: those along the fence and the rest. We unhitched at three camps in the north of the Kruger to see what the difference is.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**



The north of the Kruger National Park is quieter than the south and also farther away from big cities like Pretoria and Johannesburg. It's elephant and buffalo country, and the lush Bushveld that you find in the south makes way for fields of mopane trees.

When you camp here the stands next to the fence are first prize – just like in the rest of the Kruger. At Satara you can be one of the lucky 20 or so who pitch camp right next to the 300 m fence, but at Shingwedzi things are a bit different: The 26 stands next to the fence are allocated beforehand and you pay extra for the privilege to camp closer to the animals. Far north in Punda Maria there's a bird hide right against the fence and you're not allowed to pitch in certain parts next to the structure.

Anyway, you can count yourself lucky if you manage to bag one of the crowning jewels next to the fence because they are extremely popular. But if you don't it doesn't mean your holiday in the Kruger needs to be any less enjoyable. >

They say



Pam and Steve Natali and their son Matthew (left) are from Johannesburg. In previous years they used to send their children ahead to go save a stand next to the fence.

“ We've been at Satara before and know how sought-after the fence stands are. The perfect time to get one of those stands is between 8 am and 11 am. When we drive into the camp we first drive past those stands to see what's still available. This time we could choose between two, but until you arrive you simply don't know.

We also didn't pitch our caravan right against the fence. We want to give the campers behind us a better view of the fence. In our case the electricity point is far from our stand and it's not always guaranteed that you'll find an open socket.

You sometimes see campers with two separate cords running to their caravans. Some of the animals we've spotted from our stand include elephant, wildebeest, a leguaan, and a marabou. **”**

SATARA

In the open

Satara is synonymous with big cats such as lions, leopards and cheetahs, and as you approach the camp colossal yellow-green fever trees stand out from the rest of the veld. The office, restaurant and shop are next to the trees and they are Satara's hub of activity. Don't drive with your caravan in tow to the office's parking area because no provision has been made for it. Where you would turn left to the parking area, turn right to the larger open parking area where the tour busses park.

The campsite is half a kilometre further on, past the pool, filling station, and chalets. You can divide the camp into three parts: There are two sections to the left and right of you (each with an ablution block) and then there is the strip a bit further on that lies next to the fence, also with an ablution block.

If you're considering one of the fence stands, first drive along the fence to see if you can find a spot. When we were there all 21 were taken, with the exception of one. The last two stands are reserved for people with medical needs (it's one of those that was open). Judging by who camps with what next to the fence, your chances of getting one of the stands are better if you have a caravan because we spotted only three dome tents.

Of the 100-plus stands, those with electricity are to the right and left of you as you drive into the campsite, and

the trees in the camp are fairly sparse if you're looking for a shady spot. Try getting a spot close to the bathrooms near the fence if you prefer newer facilities.

There's neat slate around the sunken basins and behind those are mirrors against the wall. The shower cubicles are unfortunately very small and you can only close the door once you're in the middle of the shower. It's nice to have a wet and dry section in a shower but the curtain can be bothersome and blow towards you when you open the taps.

Even if the campsite is fully occupied, the layout is so that you won't fall over anyone's feet. There's a feeling of spaciousness and you don't have to try squeeze your towing vehicle in somewhere. That's not the case in the front row however; here you're right on top of your neighbour.

The fixed steel braais are spread out randomly, as are the electricity sockets. The shiny copper taps at the kitchens are a perfect example of how clean SANParks' people keep the facilities.

A paved road runs around the camp and looks a bit like a running track. And it's just as big – one morning a couple actually did a few laps around the camp in their jogging clothes.

Considering SANParks' standards, the pool is modest – about as big as a round farm dam. There's a smaller pool for kids and as well as a jungle gym.

“ If you're considering one of the fence stands, first drive along the fence to see if you can find a spot. **”**



LIONS IN ABUNDANCE, TREES LESS SO. Satara is well known for all the lions in the area, but there are precious few shade trees that dot the campsite. If you value space then look for a stand away from the fence. If you don't mind being on top of your neighbours, the fence is the answer (if you can find a stand there).



Briefly | Satara



Campsite 103 level stands (15 without electricity), little shade, and a power socket that's not close by.

Ablution facilities 2 older blocks as well as one with modern facilities.

Price Depending on the season, and availability of electricity, R240–R330 for the first 2 people. Then it's R80 p.p. (R44 for kids). There is an additional conservation fee of R82 p.p.p.d. (R42 for kids) if you don't have a Wild Card.

Arrival and departure times 7 am and 10 am.

Contact 013 735 6306/7 or 082 802 1209 sanparks.org

Road condition Tar to the camp with a paved road around the stands.

GPS S24.392644 E31.779756

go! Drive & Camp says There is an FNB ATM in the shop.



They say



Bill and Monica Pirrie from Rosetta in KwaZulu-Natal have camped at Satara before and believes that getting a stand next to fence has a lot to do with timing.

“We've booked at Satara in the winter months – about seven months before the December holiday. If you're eyeing a fence stand you have to arrive at the best possible time. By 11 am most campers have usually packed up to drive to the next camp and that's when you need to be there. That was the case with this stand of ours.

Of course, you see a lot of game from your stand. The elephants walk right past us, but we also do our own game drives to see the other animals of the Kruger. When our children were still young we knew the fence stands were first prize. >

They say



Members of the Behrens family come from across the country and every year choose a new campsite in the Kruger where they unhitch.

“ We always head for the fence stands and nine times out of 10 we get one. We were here at Satara just after 8 am and there were three open. We see elephants and hyenas passing every day, and before sunrise leopards too. We’ve even spotted wild dogs. ”



Neels and Trudie Visser from Sasolburg camp with their two kids, CJ (5) and Muller (2), on one of the two special stands against the fence that are reserved for people with medical needs.

“ We booked for our December holiday in the Kruger in the middle of the year already. We enjoy the space in Satara, and even though there aren’t a lot of shade trees we’re lucky to have one on our stand. We’ve seen plenty of animals next to the fence – from hyenas to elephants and even a leguaan at sunset. Trudie [in her wheelchair] uses the bathrooms but the kerb on the paved road is quite angled and it’s difficult for her to move over it. But other than that the bathrooms are great and totally sufficient. ”

SHINGWEDZI

Mopane farm

Judging by the giant mopane trees littered about, Shingwedzi stands out head and shoulders above the rest. And there are neat stands to boot.

It’s not, however, the mopanes that draw the attention. Shingwedzi is the first of the Kruger’s camps that allocates fence stands beforehand – and you pay more for these stands.

The 26 stands are numbered with a few fixed bricks with a number painted on it. Because you stand against the fence in a row, you’re right on your neighbours doorstep, but it’s a small price to pay for your uninterrupted view through the fence.

The other half of the stands – 32 of them – lie behind the fence stands and it’s noticeable how much space you have around you when you camp, even when the campsite is full.

The electricity points are scattered all over, and at first it doesn’t bother you because you can find a spot close to one. But on some of the stands you have to use your extra long extension cord. Cars driving over it can mean the end of your cord, and of course there’s the added danger of a short circuit. But the power boxes and circuit breakers look new.

Some of the fixed steel braais have a swinging grid, but there are also loose-standing units that you can move closer to your stand.

The location of the bathrooms is slightly weird. One of the buildings is in an area as you drive into the camp and the other one near the middle but outside the borders of the campsite. It’s opposite the road between the chalets, but at least you have a choice and there are facilities for the disabled. The showers are similar to those at Satara and equally cramped. The laundry is at the other bathroom – be patient because campers sometimes forget their clothes in the machines and you have to come check when you can have a turn.

One of the Kruger’s typical square kitchens is on the pool side of the campsite and the other one closer to the middle.

Unlike Satara’s small pool, Shingwedzi’s one could hardly be bigger. The gate of the fenced-in pool is between the top stands, on the opposite side of the bottom bathrooms. When the sun starts setting the kids can continue playing because there’s a big spotlight next to the pool that turns on automatically as soon as it’s dark. You’re allowed to swim until 9 pm.



There's a big spotlight next to the pool that turns on automatically as soon as it's dark.



WATCH OUT, CROCK! The swimming pool offers welcome respite during unbearably hot weather. The power points for some of the stands are located so far away that you'll need to bring quite a long extension cord if you're going to need electricity and you're camping on one of those stands.



Briefly | Shingwedzi



Stands 60 stands with ample shade. About half of them are along the fence.

Ablution facilities 2 blocks closer to the one side and 2 kitchens closer to the other.

Price Depending on the season R285–R330 for the first 2 people, and R310–R380 for fence stands. Then it's R80 p.p. (R44 for kids). There is an additional conservation fee of R82 p.p.d. (R42 for kids) if you don't have a Wild Card.

Arrival and departure times 7 am and 10 am.

Contact 013 735 6806/7 or 082 889 4376 sanparks.org

Road condition Tar to the camp.

GPS S23.108398 E31.435208

go! Drive & Camp says Definitely order a buffalo pie (R110) at the restaurant behind the reception office – it's delicious. >

They say



Kayleigh (9), Mari and Jaco van der Westhuizen from Nelspruit are happy with their spot in front.

“ We booked all the way back in March and when we arrived this stand next to the fence was allocated to us. We really like Satara, but it's our first time in Shingwedzi – and we're going to stay for 12 days. Our parents were here last year when the camp managers started adding numbers to the stands. From our stand we've seen a buffalo and by sunset hyenas too. A large herd of impala also passes every day. You don't have to get into your car to see game – there's enough happening right here in front of our stand. ”



Marthonet and Paul Stangroom from Middelburg were lucky enough to snag the last fence stand.

“ We booked an ordinary stand at Shingwedzi, but the lady at reception said we could choose any stand. This was the only open stand next to the fence. Luckily it's big enough and our Classique fits in easily lengthwise – which also makes it nice and private. We have mixed feelings about paying more for these stands. ”



NIGHT VISITOR. Before you turn in for the night at Punda Maria first go and check if any of the resident leopards have dropped by for a visit – they're notoriously elusive and particularly difficult to spot during the day.





KEEP 'EM PEELED. Make sure you try to see as many different animals as possible on the way to Punda Maria. When you get there it will be difficult to peel your eyes away from the waterhole next to the fence. Here the animals come and go as they please all day, every day.

PUNDA MARIA

King of the north

Punda Maria is the northernmost campsite in the Kruger, and here you camp just a few kilometres from the Zimbabwean and Mozambican borders. It's laid out on the foot of a hill, and as you pass the filling station after the gate you climb a steep road to the office. But unhitch first before you drive to the office. The stands are down to the left and there's a sign next to the road that says caravans are not allowed to go up. If you happen to miss the sign you will be able to turn at the top in the parking area, but you'll probably have to unhitch, turn around, and then hitch again.

The stands are just as spacious and spaced out as those at Shingwedzi, but against the fence some of the stands are on top of each other and others are more private.

If you don't arrive in time to get a fence stand, there's a consolation prize: There are sections against the fence where you're not allowed to pitch, which means that those standing further back will also get >



There's a storey-high bird hide with a thatch roof next to the fence with a great view of the waterhole next to it.



They say



The Manns and Brinks from Dullstroom and Johannesburg had to wait their turn before they could move to a fence stand.

“ We booked in August and when we arrived there were four rows of caravans between us and the fence. We walked to some of the people in front to hear if they were leaving soon but most of them said they were staying at least a week. But one of the campers said they were leaving in two days. So we moved in when they left. The neighbour wasn't very happy because he wanted that stand. With its big shade tree and the activity of the waterhole opposite us, this is definitely the best stand in Punda Maria. We did consider the people behind us, though, and pitched a short distance from the fence so they could also see the waterhole. The nearest electricity point only has three sockets but with the use of double sockets there are seven plugs plugged in. In the week that we've been standing here we've only gone on game drives three times. Last night lions almost killed a buffalo at the waterhole, and there are also elephants, kudus and njalas – and that's not even mentioning the leopards. We've camped at all the camps, but Punda is definitely the best one and we're already thinking about booking again. **”**

WITH THE NAKED EYE. At Punda Maria the animals come so close to the fence that you won't even need binoculars to get an eyeful.

Briefly | Punda Maria



Campsite 61 stands on the foot of a hill with enough shade trees, but some of the stands are uneven. Top picks are the three stands on both sides of the bird hide where it's only the fence between you and the waterhole.

Ablution facilities 2 similar ablution blocks roughly in the middle of all the stands.

Price Depending on the season, and whether it's with or without electricity, R240–R330 for the first 2 people. Then it's R88 p.p. (R44 for kids). There is an additional conservation fee of R82 p.p.p.d. (R42 for kids) if you don't have a Wild Card.

Arrival and departure times 7 am and 10 am.

Contact ☎ 013 735 6873 or 082 802 0066
📧 sanparks.org

Road condition Tar to the office and decent dirt roads between the stands.

GPS S22.692133 E31.018252

go! Drive & Camp says Punda Maria has one of the busiest waterholes right next to the fence. Spotlights light it up at night and you can see the animals come and go the entire time.



a chance to see animals next to the camp. There's a storey-high bird hide with a thatch roof next to the fence with a great view of the waterhole next to it. On both sides of the hide, a good 20 m on each side, you're not allowed to pitch. In our case people camped about 10 m in front of us, and the fence was about 30 m further but we could easily see the elephants cooling down in the muddy water.

As with the previous campsites, the braais and the electricity points are scattered about and there are quite a few shade trees. But, again: If you're dependent on electricity the length of your extension cord will mean the difference between shade and sun.

One of the bathrooms is diagonally across from the hide and the other one between the campsite and the footpath where you walk up to the office. In stark contrast to the slate stone at the other bathrooms in the Kruger, these ones still have white tiles, which reminds you a bit of an old government building. It's clean though and there are also mirrors against the wall. The tilework is repeated in the shower cubicle, and it's also cramped with a curtain that can be bothersome.

The pool is opposite this and the laundry facility is just above the bathrooms, but some of the machines have seen better days and don't work anymore. Remember your R5 coins.



What we towed with Toyota Fortuner 2.4 GD-6 (4x4, automatic)

For a family of five – with a caravan in tow – the open road can be filled with challenges. The Fortuner has seven seats, which means the younger boys don't have to encroach on the moody teenager's space. Even though the engine is the smaller sibling of the Fortuner 2.8, you don't struggle with the weight of Conqueror's biggest off-road caravan, the Commander, on the tow bar. We started in Johannesburg, drove through the Kruger and out at

the top, and then all the way back to Cape Town – a whopping 3 500 km. The fuel consumption on the open road was 14,3 l/100 km (7 km/l) and 8,3 l/100 km (12 km/l) without the caravan.

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine 2,393 cc (diesel)
Power 110kW @ 3 400 rpm
Torque 400 Nm @ 1 600-2 000 rpm
Price R511 100

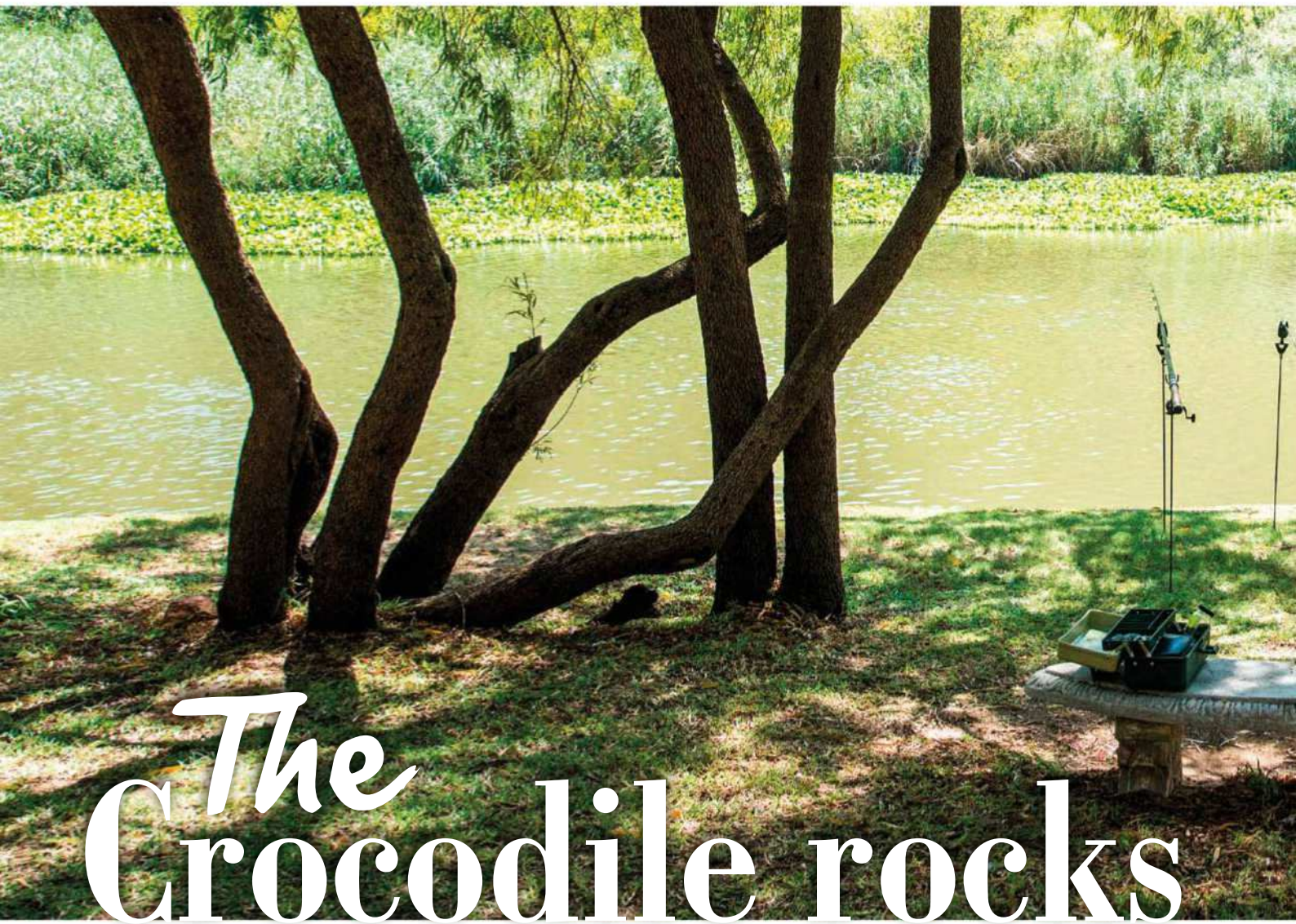
They say



Willem, Agnes and Ruben (6) Engelbrecht from Pretoria love the Kruger but it was their friends Belinda and Christo Vickers' very first time in South Africa's most famous park.

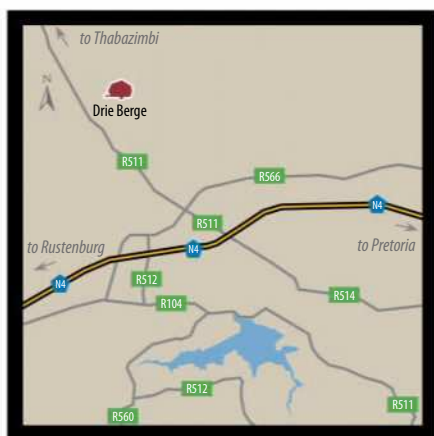
“We visit the Kruger often and we always begin or end at Punda. We also managed to find a fence stand at Satara earlier. This time we may not be right next to the fence, but we can still see the game that frequent the waterhole. At Satara we saw an iguana and hyenas that patrolled the fence. 🐾





Come pitch your tent, cast your line in the water, but watch out for the crocodiles.

Text and photos **Helenus Kruger**



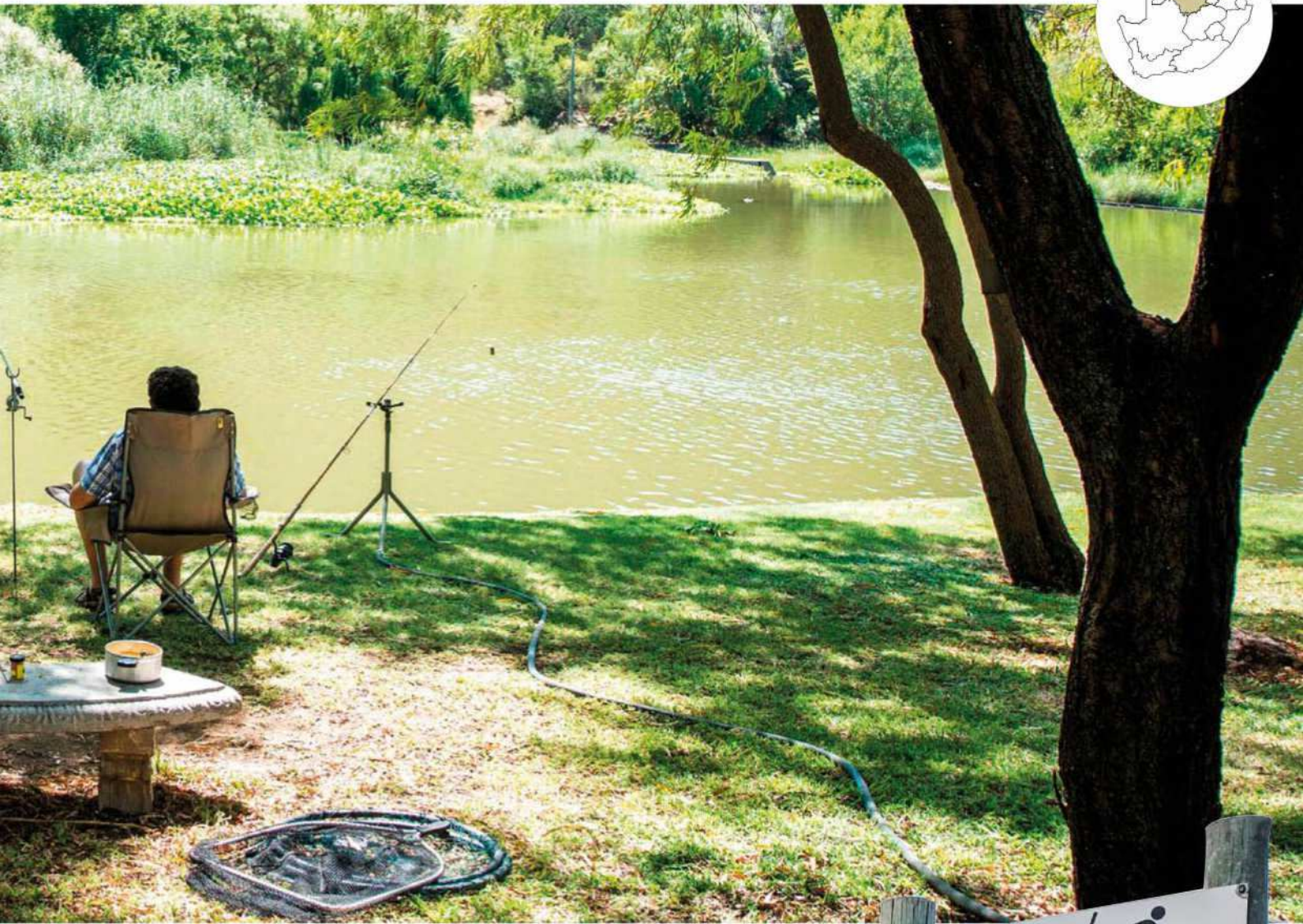
Just north of Brits in the North West the Crocodile River cuts through a ravine that's surrounded by three mountains: On the southern side, where the river flows into the ravine, Wagpos Mountain stands guard; a little bit further, on the western side of the river, lies the Langberg; and opposite this, on the eastern side of the ravine, lies Ouberg. It's here, at the foot of Ouberg, between indigenous trees, that you'll find the Drie Berge Caravan Park next to the river.

The turn-off from the D1195 tar road to Drie Berge is 7 km outside of Brits, and you can be caught off-guard if you don't keep your eyes peeled for the sign. The turn-off lies hidden behind bushes next

to the road and you only see it once you're on the bridge over Rosespruit. Look out for Wagpos High School and from there it's 1 km to the turn-off on your left.

Before you reach the gate you first drive past a sign that warns you that cellphone reception will be bad from here on – if you don't have the code for the gate (it's sent to you via SMS) you won't be able to phone the reception office. After this it's about 300 m to the office where you have to pass through a gate before you stop.

The check-in process is easy, and after you've signed the camp rules and indemnity form you can go pitch your tent. If you thought you could swim in the river it's probably a good idea to read the form



first, because yes, there are crocodiles here. They're spotted often in the water, especially in their favourite hiding spot between the reeds on the opposite side of the river.

Relax underneath the trees

With some help from the map of the campsite you'll find your numbered stand very quickly. The campsite, about half a kilometre from the reception office, lies parallel with the river. From the campsite's entrance the camp lies on a slope right down to the river.

The stands, however, are on terraces and are level, so you don't have to get help from the entire camp to push your caravan around on the incline.

The first thing you'll notice about the camp is how plentiful the trees are. There are indigenous trees everywhere and each stand has shade. The grass doesn't

grow everywhere, though, and some of the stands with loads of shade only have a patch of soil. Here and there is some gravel, which will definitely help when it's rainy and muddy.

A weir across the river breaks its speed before the camp and ensures there's a wide dam for you. You can understand why the campsite is so popular, especially amongst anglers.

Your stand is allocated beforehand, but if you want a specific one you can request it when booking. The 35 stands next to the river are of course the most popular and you'll have to move quickly if you want to beat the anglers to it.

You won't camp right on the banks of the river and fish from your camping chair. Most of the front stands are on a terrace, about a metre or two above the riverbank. It's only on numbers 34–37 where the terrace slightly slopes down to the water. >



To cast your line you have to walk down a few wooden steps to the riverbank. In places it becomes wider and there's some grass and quite a few trees – just right for an afternoon nap in the shade while you're sitting in your camp chair waiting for the fish to bite. And in case you might have forgotten about the crocodiles, there are signs to remind you...

If you want to braai at your stand you can do it on one of the camp's braai drums or skottel braais. Bring your own braai just in case the camp is full and the braais are all taken. Each stand has a power socket (standard domestic) and bin, but you have to share a tap.

Clean ablutions

You'll have to search far and wide to find cleaner ablution facilities at a campsite. Cleaners are on duty all day, and despite an almost full camp at the time of our visit the facilities were constantly kept clean.

Both face-brick buildings have places to wash clothes and dishes in front and on both sides. There is also a map with hiking trails and loads of ads for frozen yoghurt that you can buy at the shop.

The first ablution block is located in the second half of the camp, farthest from the gate, and is only slightly bigger than the second block. There is one main entrance, and as soon as you're inside the passage splits into the men's, ladies' and family bathrooms. On the men's side the floors and showers are tiled while the walls in the dressing and communal areas are partly exposed brick.

The shower cubicles have doors and the dressing area stays dry thanks to the narrow wall that separates it from the shower. The dressing area isn't very big but it's also not uncomfortable. You can hang your clothes and towel on the hooks and sit on the tiled bench when you want to put on your shoes. Unfortunately there isn't a place in the shower where you can put your soap and shampoo.

The two basins in the communal area are in a tiled slab and there are mirrors and shelves with hooks against the wall as well as handwash.

The ladies' facilities are similar to the men's but there's an additional tiled slab opposite the basins. The wall above the basins has a mirror the entire length of the slab.

The family bathroom has a bath, toilet, basin with a mirror, hooks against the



TURQUOISE BLUE. The swimming pool is right in the middle of the playground, and you and the kids can also swing, jump, climb, kick a ball or simply just picnic on the green grass under large shade trees. .

If the pool beckons, you have to walk back to the reception office. All the activities in the resort are on the river side of the reception office.

wall, and a narrow slab for changing nappies and babygrows.

There is a wheelchair ramp outside the bathrooms, but inside it's not wheelchair- or disabled-friendly.

The porta-potti's emptying point is on the side of the building.

The second ablution block is closer to the entrance and the layout inside and outside is similar to the first block, but the men's and ladies' sides each have

their own entrance. There are also curtains in front of the shower cubicles and there are two family bathrooms. There is no ramp for wheelchairs.

Hike or bike

Drie Berge has trails for adventure lovers – one for hikers and one that's shared between hikers and cyclists. The trails are clearly marked so don't worry, you won't have to miss out on sundowners because



FEEL THE BURN. Although the hiking and cycling route is a mere 5 km long, you'll get a thorough workout. All you have to do is follow the signs and you'll definitely not get lost. It helps if you're fit too.



you accidentally took a wrong turn somewhere.

The hiking trail – or rather climbing trail – to the top of Ouberg is definitely not for the unfit. You climb a good 200 m within a matter of 1,2 km. The winding path through indigenous trees will give your calves a proper workout. Coming down isn't exactly easier and your knees will be tested to the limit against the incline.

The skew marula tree at the top is a sign that you've made it... but it's all worth it because you have a 360° view over the landscape around you.

The shortest route to the top starts at the end of the camp, just past stand number 1, but you have to wait until 6 am for the gates to open. It's best to attempt this trail, on the western slope of the mountain, early in the morning otherwise the afternoon sun will grill you.

You can also start on the 5 km hiking or cycling trail at the camp and do it >

clockwise or anti-clockwise. If you do the latter, follow the trail along the river, past the reception office, to the main entrance, where you'll start climbing Ouberg. Up to here it's even ground and it's an easy stroll for young and old. From the main entrance you start ascending Ouberg to 86 m above the starting point. From here the path runs along the western slope of the mountain and then past the campsite it starts going down towards the river and ends at the campsite. The slope isn't as steep as the summit route, but the rocky path makes the climb difficult in some places.

Hikers as well as cyclists will have to watch out for each other. There are quite a few blind turns, especially against the mountainside, and the path is mostly narrow and there's a chance that cyclists can bump into each other or run over a hiker. Or roll down the slope.

It would have been safer if the trail ran only in one direction.

Play time

If the pool beckons, you have to walk back to the reception office. All the activities in the resort are on the river side of the reception office, on a patch of land as big as two rugby fields. Here you can kick balls, splash in the pool, swing in a tyre, climb on the jungle gym, and even hit



It's Marius and Drika de Beer from Swartklip in Limpopo's first time camping at Drie Berge.

They say

We are really enjoying it here – it's always nice in the Bushveld.

“ We enjoy the tranquillity of the camp and the sociability. And the fishing in the river. We'll definitely be back. ”

some balls on the tennis court. You can hire rugby balls (R20) and tennis rackets (R10).

Next to the building is a large porch with benches and tables facing the river. This is where you play pool, darts or table tennis (R10), and when it's rugby season there's a big-screen TV.

Day visitors are welcome (but only if they book) and can braai or have a picnic between the trees and enjoy free use of all the facilities.

If you left your groceries at home, the shop will only be able to help so much. There are basic goodies such as 500 g salt (R11), Aromat (R25), tin foil (R20) and washing powder (R15). You'll be able to light a fire, though (wood costs R20 and firelighters R25) but if you want meat and

EVERYTHING IN ORDER. You'll have to search far and wide to find cleaner bathroom facilities than these. The campsite is tree-lined and the fishing prospects are good. For your own safety, do not forget about the threat of crocodiles lurking in the water. And it's highly recommended to avoid the riverbank after 6 pm.

something stronger than cooldrink you'll have to drive the 7 km to Brits.

The laundry, with two top-loaders and one tumble dryer, is next to the reception office's entrance. There is also a clothes basin and an ironing board. It's R10 a bundle and you can pay at the office. Just remember to bring your own washing powder.



Briefly | Drie Berge Caravan Park



Campsite 48 stands in shade – most have grass, portable braais and electricity.

Ablution facilities Clean, thanks to the cleaners who are on duty all day.

Price Mondays–Thursdays (off-season) R200 p.p.n.; ordinary weekends R430 p.p.n. and long weekends R550 p.p.n. Maximum 4 people per stand.

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 1 pm, unless by prior arrangement.

Contact 083 608 3409

driebergekaravaanpark.co.za

drieberge@lantic.co.za

Road condition Tar road to the camp's turn-off, with the D1195 full of potholes. The last kilometre to the main gate is a good dirt road.

GPS S25.569798 E27.771836 (turn-off)
S25.577753 E27.757623 (reception office)

go! Drive & Camp says Spoil yourself and your loved ones with a delicious homemade frozen yoghurt that you can buy at the shop. It's only R20 and you will definitely be back for seconds. 🍦

What it costs

(2 adults)

Fuel (95 octane petrol) @
8 l/100 km and R14,11/l and
130 km (there and back) **R146,74**
Toll gates (there and back) **R26**
Accommodation (2 nights) **R860**
Food (2 people) **R1 067**

Grand total **R2 099,74**

Pull in the wagons

Two hundred years ago it took farmers in the Langkloof days to cross the Outeniqua Mountains with their ox wagons. Today, you can do the same route in your 4x4 in half a day.

Text and photos **Evan Naudé**



The Langkloof lies between the towns of Herold and Humansdorp, with the Kamanassie and Kouga mountains in the north and the Outeniqua mountain range in the south.

If you were farming here in the 18th century you would have been able to smell the sea from across the mountains, that's how close you were. But to reach it was another story all together. In 1776, two farmers, Jacobus van Beelen and Stephanus Terblanche, built an ox wagon track over Duiwelskop to connect the Langkloof with the coast. When the Montagu Pass and Seven Passes Route

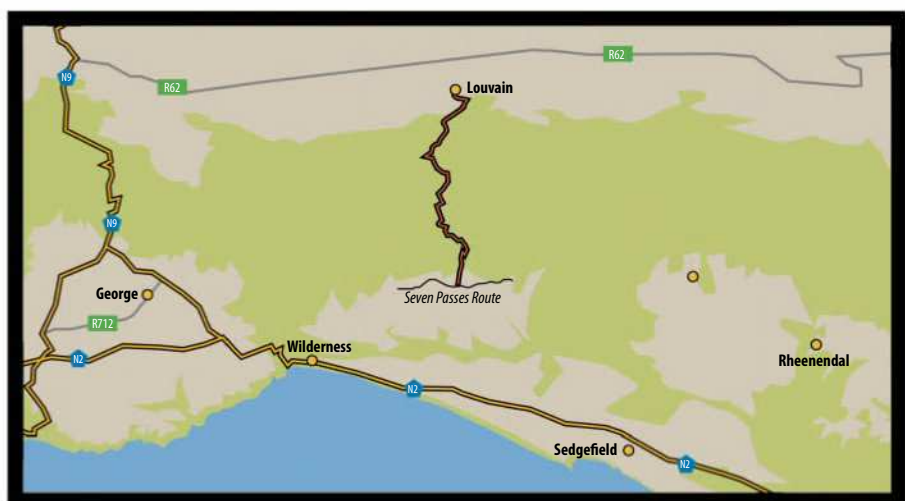


were completed in 1847 and 1869 respectively, the Duiwelskop Pass (also called the Old Voortrekker Pass) fell into disuse.

Fortunately, Thomas Bain extended the pass with a full 11 km in 1864, and it's this section that today exists as a 4x4 trail.

The drive

The trail starts at Louvain Guesthouse and runs past the dam and then it starts going up the mountain. Here the road becomes rocky and you have to switch to 4x4 to conquer a few sharp turns and dongas. When you get to the green "Ou Voortrekker Pas" sign, keep right. And spare a thought for the farmers of yore >

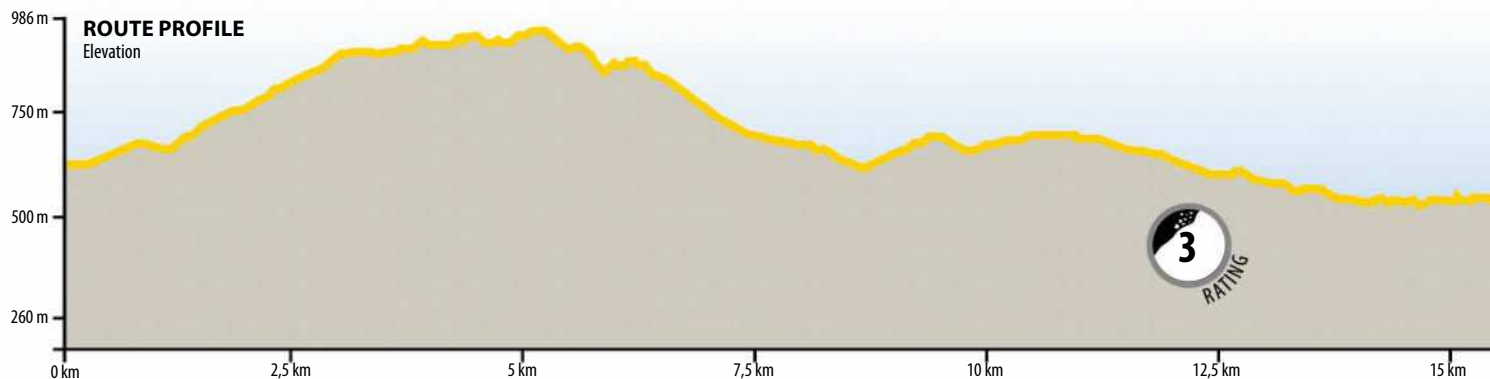




Louvain's Ox Wagon Trail is one of three ox wagon trails that you can drive as a four-day trail. (The other two are the Attekwaskloof Ox Wagon Trail and Burchell's Ox Wagon Trail. Together they're about 450 km long and stretch from Heidelberg to Knysna. For more info phone Katot Meyer on 044 272 0014.



SUMMIT TO SEA. When conditions are favourable you'll be able to spot the Knysna Lagoon on the horizon from the top of the pass.



Fortunately, Thomas Bain extended the pass with a full 11 km in 1864, and it's this section that today exists as a 4x4 trail.

who had to battle this track on their ox wagons. About 2 km from the turn-off, after a rocky climb, you'll reach the top of the mountain.

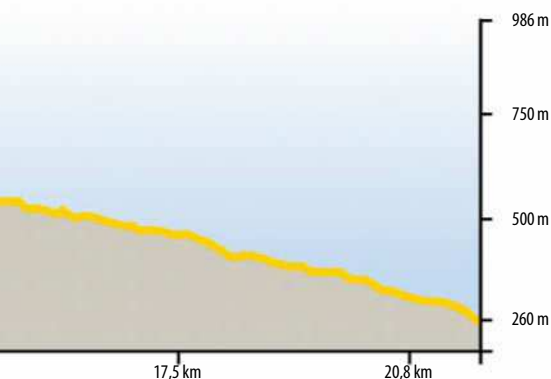
On a clear day you can see the Knysna Lagoon in the distance on your left. On your right there's a deep valley with the impressive sharp Cradock Peak on the horizon.

While you descend towards the sea you have to choose your lines well over the rocky terrain so you don't scratch your bakkie's underside. When you finally get to the T-junction, keep left and immediately the road changes into a decent dirt road. You're now in the forestry section of MTO Forestry, and from here you continue straight on this dirt highway because for the rest of the trail there are countless

tracks that run off the main road into the plantations. It's estimated that this networks covers 800 km; so it's best not to get lost.

The road runs past the Bergplaas Forestry Station and ultimately ends at the junction with the Seven Passes Route. From here it's 20 km east to Karatara and 9 km west to Hoekwil.

There is also a 4x4 obstacle course on Louvain – the Forest Drive. It's a circular route that only goes one way because of how the obstacles are laid out. The course is used for training and 4x4 competitions, which makes it a good place to test your abilities and that of your 4x4. Don't try it alone without some experience, low range, and good ground clearance.



What you need to know



4x4/Low range/Diff lock? Your vehicle should be a full-on 4x4 with low range, although a diff is not necessary.

Maximum amount of vehicles allowed? 20 per group.

Do I get a map? Yes.

Will I scratch my vehicle? It's unlikely but in places the trail does run through thick fynbos and baboons do break branches next to the road. Gardening sheers will come in handy.

Should I take a compressor? It's not necessary.

Can I braai next to the road? No.

Can I turn around halfway? No, the trail can only be driven one way.

Will I see game? There are baboons, bushbuck, duikers, bushpigs, eagles and falcons to see on the trail.

Is there cellphone reception? In some places, yes.

THE ROUTE

Best time to go? March to May. During the summer, late morning, fog from the sea rolls over the trail and during winter the road on the northern slope is full of wet clay and you won't manage with road tyres.

Can I take my family? Yes.

For the day or for the weekend? The Old Voortrekker Pass will take you 2–3 hours to complete. So put at least a day aside if you live near the Garden Route, or make a weekend of it if you're coming from far.

Are there ablution facilities? Not on the route itself, only at Louvain.

Directions Louvain is 50 km west of Uniondale on the R62.

GPS S33.811671 E22.649402

What does it cost? R200 per vehicle.

Contact 083 287 6927 (Nico Bester) 📞

FULL BLOOM. Depending on when you go there'll be plenty of flora and fauna to spot alongside the trail. Try to drive it between March and May.

Wild Coast breakaway

When it's time to recharge the batteries, Mdumbi is where he does it. There's so much to do on the Wild Coast, but you can also just kick back and relax, says the popular actor Paul du Toit.

Text Schalk Jonker

“ He is one of the most famous faces on television and local stage, but he is also an adrenaline junkie who is always looking for his next adventure. Paul du Toit is also a camper to the core.

There is, therefore, no better presenter for the Afrikaans camping programme, *Kom ons Kamp*, which launches on Via (channel 147 on DSTV) this month. In this reality show three teams per episode take part in a range of challenges and battle it out to ultimately be crowned camping champions.

We were on set during filming and asked Paul about his favourite camping destination. Without hesitation he said Mdumbi is top of his list.

Tell us more about Mdumbi.

It's just one of those places that takes your breath away every time you go there. It's in the heart of the Transkei, with one of the most beautiful beaches in one of the most beautiful areas on our continent and you are surrounded by nature. They operate things in an eco-friendly way and are very involved with the development and upliftment

of the local community. It's something that appeals to me. The staff is friendly and helpful and there is generally a relaxed, calm atmosphere.

What does the campsite look like?

We camp with a tent and there's nothing wanting in the campsite. The stands have a good amount of privacy, you camp on grass, and there's a fully equipped communal kitchen and a recreation room available.

Are the ablution facilities sufficient?

The facilities are basic and Spartan, but you don't really need more than a shower, toilet and basin. The solar panels ensure hot water and the bathrooms are clean and neat.

What can you do here?

There is so much to do here. I love action and adventure, and I particularly enjoy surfing. It's one of my favourite surfing destinations. But you can also swim, snorkel or fish here. Or just relax on the beach. In the resort's rec room you can shoot some pool, watch TV, or take a book

from the library and read underneath the trees. There is also a play park for the kids and even a spa if you're in need of a massage.

Is there accommodation for non-campers?

Yes, there are bungalows, permanent tents and communal rooms, or dorms as the backpackers call it.

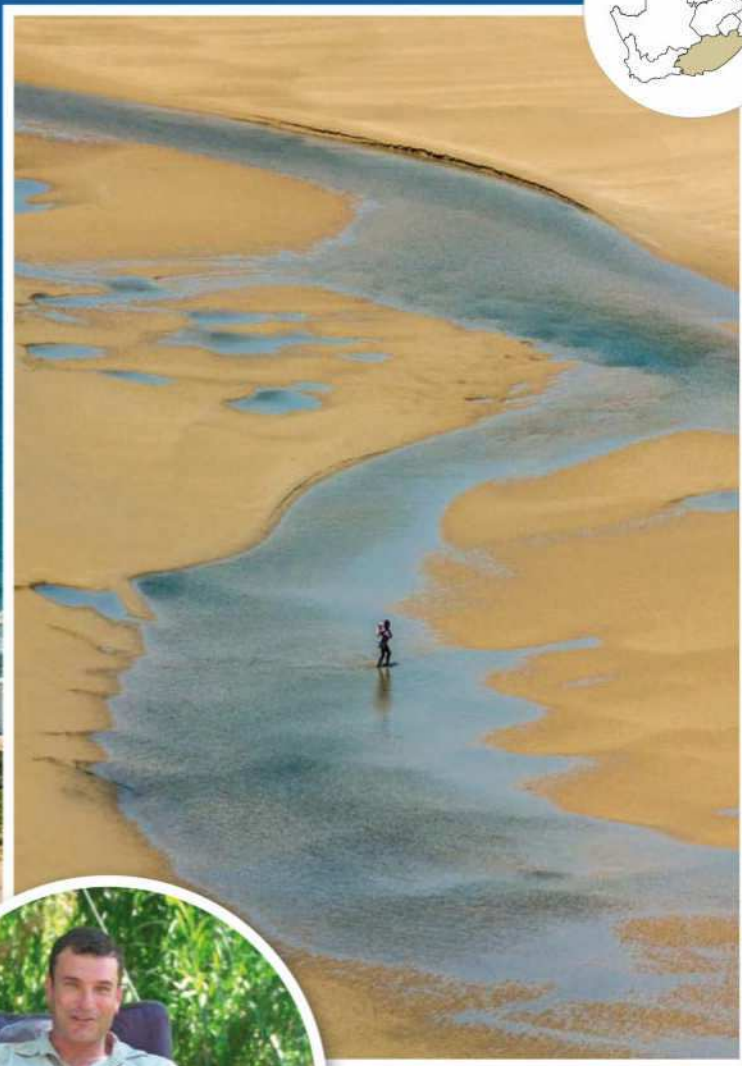
Is there a shop?

Yes, you can buy basic provisions and if you don't feel like braaiing in the shared braai area I can highly recommend the resort's restaurant. They serve delicious home-style meals. You order breakfast and lunch off the menu, but their dinners are set and you can expect anything from braai meat to prawns. When we visited they served vegetable stew and pot bread one night.

What is the road like?

Since it's in the Transkei the roads can be challenging, but we managed just fine in a 4x2 bakkie. I'd say you at least need a sturdy car. ”





Contact 083 461 2801

mdumbi@mdumbi.co.za

mdumbi.co.za

GPS S31.940301 E29.214367

**KOM
ONS KAMP**

Kom ons kamp, Via's brand new camping programme of which Paul is the presenter, will be broadcast from 13 April at 5:30 pm on DSTv channel 147, with repeats on Sundays at 8 pm.

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Cast your line in the Orange

When you drive past the Gariep Dam, why not pull off the N1 and stretch your legs at River Destiny Lodge for a spot of fishing.



FISHING RESORT

RIVER DESTINY LODGE From the banks

River Destiny Lodge is on the banks of the Orange River where the N1 runs over the water between the Free State and the Northern Cape.

The resort is on the Cape side and the Gariep Dam is upstream with the Vanderkloof Dam further down in the direction of Hopetown.

The stands start as you drive into the campground, about 100 m before the river, and are to the left of the road opposite a hall. The lawn has big shade trees and there are 16 standard three-prong sockets spread out around the hall. On the other side of the building are four more stands all along a fence, also on grass and with electricity. The bathrooms with laundry

facilities are at the bottom end of the hall.

Here you're spared the trouble of driving tent pegs into hard ground: you can almost push them into the soil. And yet, the soft earth offers adequate purchase during a strong wind.

A steel braai is available, but you can also make a fire in the boma next to the laundry. The boma has benches around it

so everyone gets to share in the warm glow of the fire.

Reception is between you and the river and the pool is on the other side of the office. If you don't feel like cooking, there's a restaurant opposite the office. From here a wooden deck runs down to the river to another deck that stretches over the water. You can cast from the riverbank and try to hook yellowfish and carp.





Briefly | River Destiny Lodge



Fish Carp, yellowfish and catfish.

Campsite Stands on grass with shade and electricity.

Ablution facilities Neat and clean.

Price R200 per stand plus R20 p.p.p.n. (maximum 6 people).

Contact 051 753 0203 or 082 882 4833

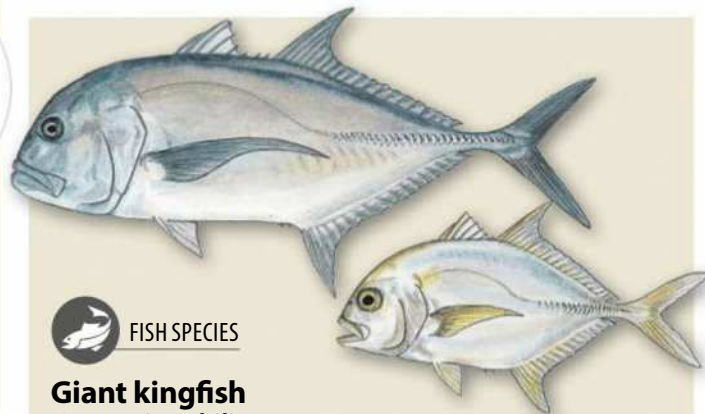
info@riverdestiny.co.za

riverdestiny.co.za

Nearest towns 41,6 km from Colesberg along the N1 and 7,2 km from Norvalspont along the R58.

GPS S30.588553
E25.419622

go! Drive & Camp says It's an ideal overnight spot if you need a breather between Gauteng and Cape Town.



FISH SPECIES

Giant kingfish *Caranx ignobilis*

Giant kingfish, commonly referred to as GTs, are found throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans, from South Africa to Fiji to Japan to the Red Sea. They are voracious predators.

Though primarily a sport-fish in South Africa, Australia, and the US, GTs are harvested for commercial and small-scale fisheries throughout much of their range.

Giant kingfish range from a silver colour to dark black, often with subtle dark spots on their dorsal region. Adults have a distinctly blunt head. **Size and biology** Giant kingfish mature at approximately 60 cm, equating to 3–4 years of age. On average they reach up to 70 kg and 170 cm, with an estimated lifespan of over 10 years.

Adults are very territorial and are usually solitary, although they aggregate in groups of various sizes during the summer months to spawn and have been known to form hunting packs.

Habitat Giant kingfish prefer temperate and tropical marine

waters, but juveniles are often found in estuaries that are borderline freshwater.

Their marine habitat consists of mostly shallow waters encompassing coral and rocky reefs, isolated atolls, and both coralline and granitic islands.

Diet Giant kingfish are known to eat a mixture of fish, cephalopods, crustaceans and other benthic invertebrates. Their diet appears to be variable from place to place.

That's a record The world's biggest giant kingfish was 72 kg and caught in Japan in 2006. The South African record is 56 kg.

SASSI status None. Anglers may only target kingfish recreationally in South Africa. Reports of high levels of the ciguatera toxin make GTs potentially dangerous to eat. To ensure we keep our kingfish stocks healthy, always practice catch-and-release!

Text Jessica Glass **Sketch** Elaine Heemstra © South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB)



FISHING EQUIPMENT

For better or worse

One of the deciding factors of a successful fishing day is the weather. Not only does it influence the fishes' eating pattern, but wind and bad weather can also spoil your whole experience.

The Sunroad SR204 fishing barometer is an electronic

device that fits into the palm of your hand. It looks like those stop watches that officials use on the athletic field.

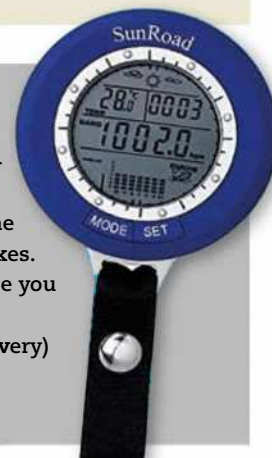
This instrument keeps an eye on the air pressure, the temperature and even the depth of the water. It has a built-in barometer, altigraph and thermometer.

It also makes 12- or 24-hour weather predictions so you can pack up in time before nasty weather strikes. And it's waterproof in case you get stuck in the rain.

Price R233 (including delivery)

Contact 082 587 6214

techoutlet.co.za



DUAL BATTERY FACTS & FABLES

If your auxiliary battery isn't plugged in to a National Luna Intelligent Maintenance Charger, it might let you down when you're far from home...



National Luna is a 30-year-old South African company that produces the world's largest selection of commercially available 12V fridges/freezers. They're the preferred supplier to most major off-road trailer and caravan manufacturers, and a global distributor of more than 200 outdoor products and accessories.

A recent survey revealed that most people with a dual-battery system in their vehicle believe that driving for a few hours will restore power to their auxiliary battery. It seems many people think that the long drive home will be more than enough to top up power.

False! This is a common misconception and one that raises several other questions regarding dual-battery systems...

HERE ARE THE FACTS

- All batteries need time to recharge. There are no short cuts or special systems that can make the recharge process any faster than the battery can handle.
- In most cases, a DC-DC dual-battery system can even *slow down* the recharge rate within the first few hours of driving.
- If left unattended, a partially discharged battery will start to degrade, thereby reducing its lifespan.
- Similarly, a fully recharged battery cannot store energy indefinitely. It will discharge slowly over time.
- All batteries require a maintenance charge to ensure maximum performance and life. This can be achieved using an intelligent maintenance charger.

You might be wondering if the term "maintenance charger" somehow relates to a "trickle charger". This is a bit of a grey area because most conventional trickle chargers cause more damage to a battery than good.

Many of us are familiar with – and perhaps even own – a low-cost 220V battery charger, commonly sold by automotive stores. What you might not know is that these chargers are not self-regulating and don't have the required charge stages.

The trouble isn't necessarily with the charger itself, but rather with the AC supply – be it from the mains or from a generator. A non-regulated charger typically features a fixed step-down ratio that can't make allowances for fluctuations in the supply voltage. As a result, the voltage applied to the battery could be higher than what the battery can handle. Over time, constant high voltage can damage the battery or even cause it to overheat and leak.

It's difficult to know which chargers are regulated and which are not, which is why National Luna recently launched a self-regulating intelligent charger that will automatically diagnose, recover and charge all lead-acid battery types, including flooded (wet cell), MF, VRLA, AGM, GEL and calcium batteries.

Best of all, the charger can be permanently connected to your battery and you never need to worry about it!

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The National Luna Intelligent Maintenance Charger features an eight-step charging cycle that works as follows:

1 Diagnosis. The unique diagnostic function checks the status of the battery and determines if it can accept a charge.

2 Recovery. This soft-start stage pulses the output energy, making sure the battery is in a state to accept the full-charge current.

3 Bulk. 80% of the battery's energy is returned in this phase, using maximum current output.

4 Absorption. The charging current drops off slowly as the battery reaches full capacity. Voltage is carefully regulated at this stage. This highlights a major difference between regulated and non-regulated chargers.

5 Analysis. The charger once again checks the status of the battery and determines whether or not it's retaining energy.

6 Boost. This feature is used to recover some battery types – like a deep-cycle calcium battery – in order to restore maximum capacity.

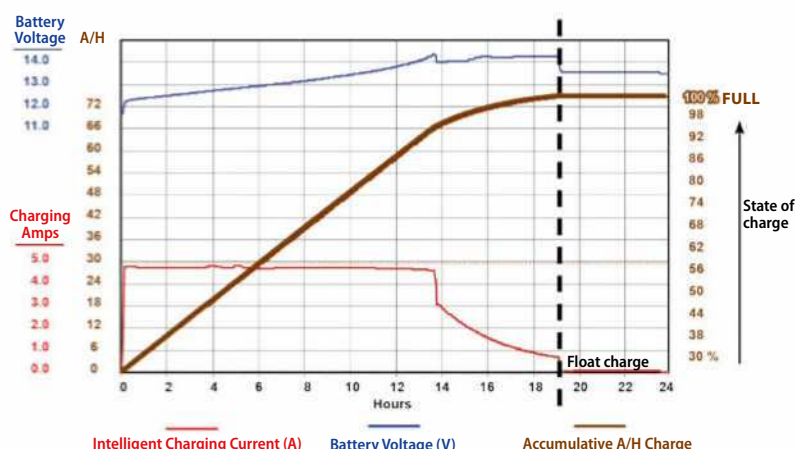
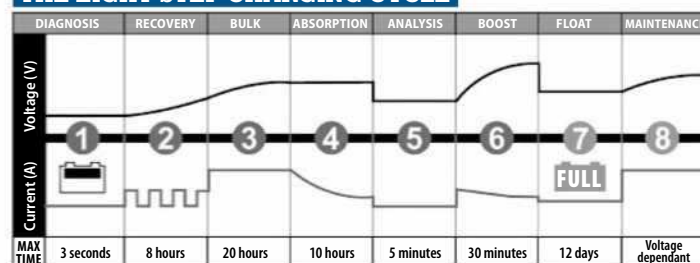
7 Float. Once the battery is fully charged, the charge voltage is reduced to prevent overcharging.

8 Maintenance charge. The charger continuously monitors the terminal voltage in order to determine if a maintenance charge should be initiated. If the voltage drops due to self-discharging (or a load), the charger re-applies current to keep the battery full.



MORE INFO The charger features a five-year guarantee and retails for R1 595 at all leading outdoor and 4x4 stores. The kit includes battery clamps, a quick-connect coupler and a fused cable for more permanent installation.

THE EIGHT-STEP CHARGING CYCLE



Data log graph illustrating the recharge characteristics of the National Luna 5Amp Intelligent Charger applied to a 105 A/H deep-cycle battery after it was subjected to a 70% depth of discharge; i.e. 73.5 A/H was removed from the battery and then recharged over a 24-hour period.

Visit nationalluna.com or call

011 452 5438 to find your local retailer.



Over the Old Postal Route

You'd expect a 42-year wedding anniversary to include a candlelit dinner at a fancy restaurant, but **Johan and Elmare van Staden** from Parow do things a bit differently. They'd rather tackle a 4x4 trail together.



LET'S GO TOO! Johan and Elmare read the original article in edition #77 of *Drive Out* and developed the urge to tackle the Old Postal Route in their own Isuzu KB. On their 42nd wedding anniversary, they packed up, climbed in and hit the road. The plan was to camp at the Enjo Guest Farm in the Biedouw Valley and drive the Old Postal Route into the Tankwa Karoo.



It's 27 September and the anniversary of the Van Staden's wedding day. After 42 years and many ups and downs together, they think about things differently by this time. That's why they decided against dining out and to celebrate the milestone in their off-roader. Armed with the old *Drive Out* #77 from their collection, they pointed their Isuzu's nose in the direction of the open road.

Seed of doubt planted

“We read about the Old Postal Route in *Drive Out* and decided it was something we wanted to experience. In celebration of our special day we decided to camp at the Enjo Guest Farm in the Biedouw Valley and to then take the Old Postal Route to the Tankwa Karoo.

Our first stop is at the Florida farm-stall just outside Wellington and we eat a delicious breakfast. The wide variety of freshly baked bread and pies look very tempting but we packed padkos for the next two days. We drive to the towel factory in town where Elmare first does some shopping and then we take it slow on our favourite road, the beautiful Bain's Kloof Pass. We stop in Ceres to fill the Isuzu's tank.

We make good time through Prins Alfred Hamlet and over the Gydo Pass, and as we drive to Op-die-Berg we turn left in the direction of the Katbakkies Pass.

Despite the severe drought the area is surprisingly green and the fruit trees' blossoms are striking. At the turn-off to Katbakkies, however, we don't turn right again and instead follow the decent dirt road past Mount Ceder and over Groot-rivierhoogte. At Cederberg Oasis we chat to Gerrit, the friendly owner, and he strongly advises against tackling the Old Postal Route on our own.

We drive on and at Matjies River we turn right to Wupperthal. We drive through sandstone formations, but large parts of the beautiful vegetation were destroyed by fires. The last stretch from Eselbank the road is badly neglected and the Isuzu drives slowly down the steep descents to Wupperthal.

In town we buy some rooibos products and then climb the slopes of and over the last mountainside before the Biedouw Valley. Immediately after we turned right in the valley on the road to Enjo we see the gate and turn-off to the Old Postal Route as well as the steep road down that the route starts with. According to the article in *Drive Out* this would be the Kraaiberg Pass.

After about 11 kilometres we reach our destination. The friendly people at Enjo welcome us and take us to our campsite. They're not familiar with the Old Postal Route but vow to make some enquiries. We pitch our tent underneath beautiful >

thorn trees, with a power socket, tap and laundry facilities close by. The ablution facilities are very basic but clean and completely sufficient for our needs.

Despite the drought a stream still flows in the Biedouw River near the campsite. Frogs sing cheerily. We don't need candles or a night light because the stars shine brightly enough.

No pain, no gain

The next morning we're still unsure about whether we're going to drive the Old Postal Route. We decide to head back in the direction of the Wupperthal Road and to then ask advice from the farm owners.

The friendly Van der Merwe farmers near the T-junction assure us that the road is entirely driveable. They say they use it often to get to their tea plantations on the plateau. They also refer us to their neighbours on the plateau, the Bakkers, and say we should ask them about the accessibility of the route.

We decide to drive as far as the road will allow us and to then turn around if necessary. We quickly climb the steep road up to the plateau while marvelling at the views.

The road runs past well-kept tea plantations and through several gates to the Bakkers' neat farmstead. Despite the terrible drought they are still cultivating the new plantations and making plans to extend the irrigation system.

The Bakkers also assure us that the road is accessible and invite us in, but we decide to rather continue on this obscure road toward our adventure.

It's disheartening to see how many of the big wagon trees and other plants are withering away because of the drought but nevertheless we again stop at a survey marker and enjoy the panoramic view over the beautiful landscape.



ADVENTURERS. You'll have a hard time explaining to someone the beauty of this part of the world, even with photos. It's one of those places you should experience in person, says Johan and Elmari. After they were initially told to not attempt the Old Postal Route on their own, they bravely soldiered on. After a nerve-racking river crossing their trip was concluded without any further hiccups.



We drive on and it's not long before we see the deep ravines of the Doring River approaching. The Karretjies Pass is something to behold and is not as rough as we expected. We stop on the pass to take a photo at the same spot as the one featured in *Drive Out*.

The ravines and scenery is beyond description. Even the best photo can't do justice to this piece of natural splendour. At times the road is rocky and it almost sounds like porcelain plates cracking underneath the wheels, but I have complete faith in the old Wrangler RT/SA tyres. They have, after all, done more than one tour through the Richtersveld, the Baviaans, Lesotho, Namibia and, above all, have survived several trips in the Tankwa. Our bakkie doesn't have a load though and the tyres are slightly deflated so at a few places where we have to climb very steep slopes we activate the diff lock to avoid wheel spin.

Hold your breath, we're going in

Despite our concerns about strong rivers, we cross the Tra-Tra and Doring without hassle. Because of the drought there are only small streams over the rocks, but it's still a good place to stop to enjoy lunch at a stream in the Karoo.

We wonder at the many lucerne crops and beautiful old buildings at Elandsvlei and then we drive on to the long R355 dirt road. For about 40 km we drive in the direction of Calvinia and enjoy the ease with which our old Samurai conquers the dirt road. We turn left, back to the Biedouw Valley and shortly after this road crosses the border between the Northern and Western Cape, we drop sharply down towards the Doring River.

This road is a completely different ball game. The river isn't strong but it's wide. There isn't a concrete slab and where the road goes through the water it's deeper than expected. I walk through first to establish how deep it is and at times I

have to roll up my shorts to keep it dry. I also stack a cairn to avoid driving over a dangerous rock underneath the surface.

Back at the bakkie I see that the wheels will be completely submerged for a large portion of the crossing. The bottom of the doors will be about 300 mm under the water surface. But the water flows slowly and we manage to pass through with a slow, stable pace.

There probably isn't any real danger but I don't like to submerge the car and I am fairly worried when I hear the fan's blades go underwater. The motor is soaked but luckily no water seeps into the vehicle or the load bin.

Back at our campsite we light a fire, braai some meat, and end a blessed day in peace.

Time to head home

Friday morning we pack up. The road back is over the steep Hoek-se-Berg and through the Pakhuis Pass via Clanwilliam. The new N7 road is great, but after we stop to buy oranges and naartjies at a farmstall we again turn off onto the Algeria dirt road.

We cross the Olifants River where only a small stream flows and we choose the old dirt road back to Citrusdal. At Piketberg we round off our trip with a meal at the Spur and then we head back home.

We used 74 l diesel for our trip of 793 km. Even with an adjustment of 10% for the inaccurate odometer we achieved an acceptable 10,3 l/100 km consumption figure. Not bad given the comfortable drive over rough terrain and numerous mountains in a comfortable double cab bakkie with four-wheel drive and automatic transmission. As per usual there were also no unexpected repairs. At R140 per night the camping fees were also very reasonable.

We are once again thankful for another enjoyable excursion in our beautiful South Africa.



Johan and Elmarie van Staden win a **Camp Cover** Bundu-bag worth R500. The multifunction bag has been designed so that you can use it as a first-aid kit or simply as a suitcase. Have a look at Camp Cover's range of excellent protective covers on their website. campcover.co.za



TOW TEST

MAKE TOWING A BREEZE



JMC LANDWIND 5 FLAGSHIP (AUTOMATIC)



The Landwind is one of the new faces amongst the country's SUV crowd. We hitched it to see how it fared.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**



The Chinese vehicle manufacturer JMC is relatively new in South Africa. Last year we tested their all new Landwind SUV, and its turbocharged engine with its manual gearbox really shined. Meanwhile, JMC launched an automatic model with the same engine. Its top model is called the Flagship and it comes equipped with luxuries such as electrically adjustable seats and cruise control.

Even if you don't know much about the Landwind, the engine may be familiar to you: It's the Mitsubishi 4G63S4T engine, which the Chinese firm has borrowed from the Japanese.

All numbers

JMC uses a Rhino tow bar on the Landwind, which is more than strong enough for this size SUV. A sturdy steel tube is bolted onto the chassis and it's neatly concealed behind the bumper. You can only see the arm that the ball section is fastened to. (But someone obviously didn't think things through because the tow bar arm that curves around the body is right in front of the rear fog light.)

The tow bar's flange plate has two sets of holes, which means you can lift the ball

by 5,5 cm if the 46 cm off the ground (the bottom holes) isn't high enough. The ball can't lift any further than that with a drop plate fitted to it because it will press against the body.

The certified allowed weight for the Rhino tow bar aligns with what JMC prescribes: 1 500 kg. It's inconsequential, though, because if you subtract the gross vehicle mass (GVM 1 955 kg) from the gross combined mass (GCM 3 040 kg), the caravan's weight can't exceed 1 085 kg.

Your caravan's GVM can also not exceed the Landwind's tare weight (1 620 kg). With regards to the size of the caravan, the tare weight is safe because you're not going to tow a huge caravan – rather a smaller model. It would typically be a caravan with a GVM of 1 500 kg or less and there are quite a few of them available on the market.

The Gypsey Romany, which we hitched, weighs just a fraction more (35 kg) than the 1 085 kg if the Landwind is loaded up, but in terms of the combination >



But for the price the Landwind is excellent value for money. For the same luxuries you'll probably pay double as much at other manufacturers.

weight we were 100 kg short of the GCM. We therefore pushed the Landwind nearly into the red when it came to weight – which also includes the strain on the ball. The tow bar is rated for 80 kg on the ball while the Romany weighs 100 kg.

Slow express

Compared to the get-up-and-go manual model its automatic sibling is a lot more reserved: With one ton on the tow bar the transmission is slow (by the way, from the driver's side you can't see the P, R, N and D letters next

to the gear lever because it's to the left of the lever – so you basically have to guess where the gear you're looking for is.)

People who tow don't have to hurry though, and as the wheels start turning calmly the auto transmission quickly jogs through the first six gears. In city traffic the engine runs at 1 500 rpm when you reach 60 km/h, but if you exceed this speed it switches to seventh (with the revs at 1 250 rpm). If you reach 85 km/h it switches over to the highest gear (eighth, 1 300 rpm).

The engine's 250 Nm is more than enough for the ton on the tow bar, but if you want to overtake you will have to get your timing right – it takes a good 31,6 seconds to accelerate from 80 km/h to 120 km/h on an even stretch of road. The manual model, however, fared a lot better.

While the caravan that we hitched then was 200 kg lighter (and smaller), it was on the Highveld with its thin air, while the automatic model could run at sea level. The manual still took half the time – 14,4 seconds. It therefore looks as if the automatic transmission absorbs a lot of the engine's quickness. One of the frustrations of most automatic vehicles is that you don't know which gear you're in, and that's even the case in cars that cost twice as much. But here the Landwind scores points because it always shows you in which gear you're driving.

Penny wise, pound foolish

Something that the Landwind doesn't skip on is luxuries. Other than the electrically adjustable seats and cruise control it also has a USB socket in the centre console, a sunroof, the beam height of the lights are adjustable, you can move the steering wheel closer to your chest, and it even has ABS right round. And unlike the manual model, the Flagship has buttons for the radio on the steering.

It also has a computer; the screen is in the centre of the gauge cluster and you use a selector pin to change between screens – from the odometer and fuel consumption to how many kilometres you can drive till empty.

The doors all lock as you pull away and unlock when you switch off the car. If someone opens the door the hazards will automatically switch on. So if one of the kids didn't close a door properly the hazards will let you know. The same goes for the boot when you open it.

Even when the Landwind idles it displays the fuel usage, but in l/h and not l/km like when you're driving. In P the computer shows the car is using 0,8 l/h. (If you put the gears in D and you keep your foot on the brake it goes up to 1,2 l/h. >





Pieter Crous has towed with more cars than he has years behind him. This is what he thinks.

Pieter says

“It’s the first time I’ve seen a Landwind, and I have to say that from the outside you can see it’s from the East. Still,

the interior finishes are better than what you usually see on many Eastern vehicles.

There are a few novelties like a slot between the two front seats where you can fit three bank cards. It’s quite neat and comes in handy when you need to reach for your card quickly, like at a toll gate.

The leather seats feel hard, but they’re not uncomfortable. It’s cool that they can be electrically adjusted, even if it’s just forwards, backwards and changing the backrest angle. The height can’t be adjusted.

The ride is a bit bumpy for an SUV, but it’s to be expected if you see how little the tail dropped when we hitched the caravan.

I like to rest my hand on the gear lever, but the gear changes

are so light that when I do it in D it switches over to manual too easily.

The air con can also be a bit cooler and the volume knob on the radio is too flat and not easy to grip.

Unfortunately I expected more from a 2 l turbo engine. Still, it comfortably maintains its towing speed at 110 km/h, but it’s notable how much the gearbox plays between gears to keep the Landwind’s momentum. That’s partly because there are so many gears.

Also, you can hear that the engine works hard to keep things moving, which means you really have to put your foot down. And that means only one thing: it’s heavy on fuel.

Yes, it’s not a greyhound but it doesn’t shirk from pushing the

revs over 5 000 rpm when you pull away.

The Landwind also has a sport mode, but when you’re on speed it doesn’t really matter how the engine reacts – it is quicker between gears though at slower speeds.

When we did the test there was quite a strong crosswind – and you could feel it. But you probably shouldn’t expect too much of the vehicle because the Landwind isn’t equipped with sway control. Which means you have to really keep your focus when you drive and that makes a long trip a bit of a challenge.

For the price the Landwind is excellent value for money. For the same luxuries you’ll probably pay double as much at other manufacturers. ”



CHEAP AND CHEERFUL.

The automatic model will appeal to those who can’t be bothered with shifting a manual gearbox. The only caveat is that the lazy transmission saps the turbopetrol engine of power and the fuel consumption while towing is on the thirsty side.

TOW TEST



The computer doesn't register if you have a caravan on the tow bar and you have to live with the alarm if you reverse with anything on the ball because you can't switch it off. In the manual model there's an extra-

loud alarm that sounds when you're in reverse. In the automatic model it's softer though. Like with some other manufacturers the computer switches the radio's sound off as soon as you're in reverse.



On the tow bar

Make Gypsey

Model Romany

Year model 2012

Tare weight 1 060 kg

GVM 1 225 kg

Loaded weight on the axle

during testing 1 120 kg

(hitched to the Landwind)

Nose weight 100 kg

go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Gypsey Romany from Tygerberg Caravans.

Phone Wesley Dempster on

021 982 4670 for a closer look.

tygerbergcaravans.co.za

The test

Distance 118,1 km

Top speed 120 km/h (speedometer)

Average speed (stop times included) 36,1 km/h (highways, back roads and built-up areas)

Driving time 3 hours and 16 minutes.

Weather 24 °C – sunny with an easterly wind of 21 km/h.

Before you open your wallet

What does the book say?

Fuel Petrol

Engine 1,997 ℓ

Cylinders Inline-4

Power 140 kW @ 5 500 rpm

Torque 250 Nm @ 2 800–4 400 rpm

Transmission 8-speed automatic

Drive chain Front wheels

Tare 1 620 kg

GVM 1 955 kg

GCM 3 040 kg

Fording depth 450 mm

Towing ability for trailer with overrun brakes Up to 1 500 kg

Dimensions 4 568 mm (l);

1 855 mm (w); 1 710 mm (h)

Wheel base 2 660 mm

Track width 1 560 mm (front and rear)

Ground clearance 146 mm (fully loaded)

Fuel tank 60 ℓ

Price (new) R289 880

Price (second-hand) We couldn't find a second-hand model on the internet.

Fast facts

The tow bar It doesn't come standard and costs an additional R4 100 (labour included).

Suspension Independent McPhersons in front and independent wishbones with torsion bar at the back. The Landwind's rear suspensions is relatively stiff because under the Romany's 100 kg nose weight the tail dropped only 1,5 cm.

What does the scale say? 1 820 kg with the Romany's nose weight on the

TOW PROFILE

Elevation

279 m

250 m

200 m

150 m

100 m

53 m

Kraaifontein

Klapmuts

Bergrivier Dam

DISTANCE

0

10 km

20 km

30 km

40 km

50 km

60 km

70 km



tow bar, a full tank of fuel as well as the driver inside.

Interior For this size SUV the Landwind is exceptionally spacious. The driver has three fingers above his head (if you're six feet tall). At the back you have the same space above your head and then a full four fingers in front of your knees.

Speed The speedometer differs just 4 km/h from the GPS reading: The meter shows 100 km/h versus the GPS's 96 km/h.

Fuel consumption It's thirsty! Our trip of 118 km cost us R391. It only gave 24,4 l/100 km (4,1 km/l) while the computer was slightly more optimistic with its 18 l/100 km (5,6 km/l).

That means with the caravan in tow you can drive only 246 km. The manual's consumption was a bit better: 15,6 l/100 km (6,4 km/l).

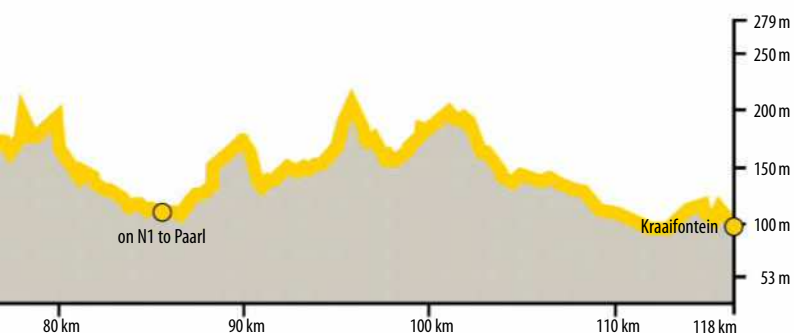
Finishes Simple yet stylish. Mainly matte black plastic panels plus one or two shiny black plastic parts (like the area around the gear lever and the armrests in the doors).

Extras Only the tow bar.

Other models? Only two: the Landwind 5 LUX (manual) R239 880 and LUX (automatic) R269 880.

go! Drive & Camp says

The Landwind is available in black, white, red, brown and silver.



JMC Landwind 5 Flagship
R289 880

250 Nm

A FEW COMPETITORS (AUTOMATIC, 2 l PETROL)



Mazda CX-3 2.0 Active
R302 100

204 Nm

4%

18%



Hyundai Tucson Premium
R399 900

196 Nm

38%

21%



Haval City
R359 900

310 Nm

24%

24%

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BLOEMFONTEIN 051 447 7042 WELKOM 057 050 0050 BETHLEHEM 058 303 5661 LIMPOPO: MOKOPANE 015 491 2855 LOUIS TRICHARDT 017 638 0725/6
TZANEEN 015 306 0136 EASTERN CAPE: HUMANSDORP 042 291 0086 PORT ELIZABETH 041 484 1905 NORTHERN CAPE: UPINGTON 054 338 8833
WESTERN CAPE: PAROW 021 930 4613 PAARL 021 871 1317 SWAZILAND: 00268 2518 7867

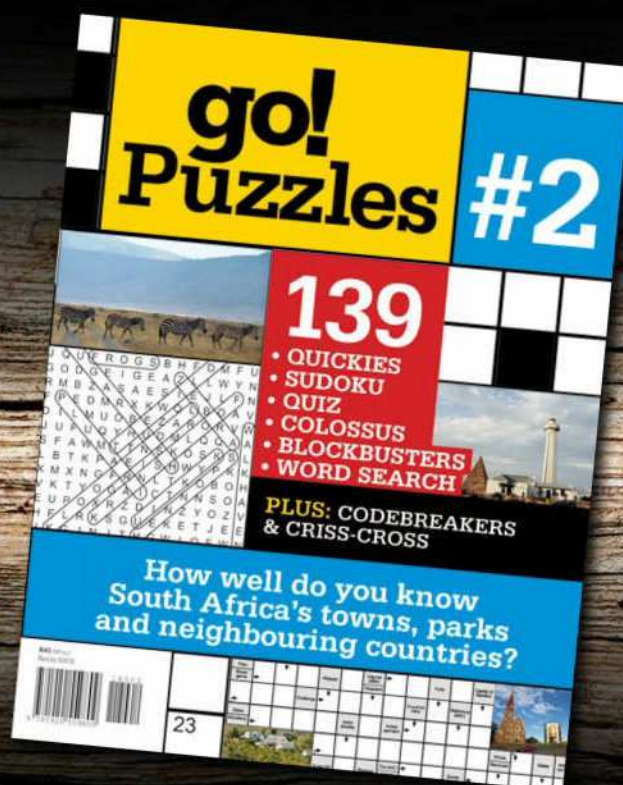
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ONE OF A KIND

This trailer might not win first prize in a beauty contest but because it's so multipurposed it will have more than enough fans.

Text and photos **Helenus Kruger**



NEXT ADVENTURE AU 1

Over the past few years the off-road trailer and caravan market has grown in leaps and bounds, and it can take up quite a bit of your time if you start researching which model will fit your needs.

When you start comparing models it becomes obvious that they are all more or less the same. With regards to off-road trailers, all of them have a big, closed body

and doors that open to the top or bottom, somewhere inside is a kitchen, and on top of the body is the rooftop tent. Actually, they all look the same and all serve the same purpose: You camp with it and when you're at home the trailer waits patiently underneath a canopy until the next camping weekend.

Still, there are few, if any trailers on the market with which you can camp, transport your garbage, and help your

first-year move into res. Battista Errera, owner of Next Adventure Lifestyle Campers, saw a gap in the market and came up with the AU 1 trailer.

In its most basic form the AU 1 is essentially a box on a chassis, with wheels and a spare wheel. From here you can add extras to suit your wallet and your needs without giving up the multipurpose functionality. You can, for example, add a tent, a nosecone, water tanks and a kitchen unit.

You will also definitely turn heads when you travel, because the AU 1 doesn't look like any other trailer on the market. >





Pitch your tent

The trailer is equipped with a standard rooftop tent that's mounted onto a steel frame. This frame is as big as the load bin and stands on four hydraulic jacks. The jacks operate under 12 V power and you can lift the tent up to 190 cm. You can also stop it at any height between the lowest (140 cm) and highest adjustment.

Before you start pitching, make sure the tent is on the lowest adjustment, otherwise you're going to struggle to reach everything that needs to be loosened. To remove the cover over the tent you have to start at the trailer's stern. The cover is kept in place by a rope that's stitched to the side of the cover and that folds in under the base of the bed. Lift the flap on the side off the tent and loosen the ratchet to give the rope slack. Now walk around the trailer, from corner to corner, and lift the cover out from underneath the bed base so you can completely remove it.

To open the tent you first have to unclip the ladder that lies over it on the left side of the trailer. Two U-shaped clips with springs keep the ladder in place on the bed base. Pull the clip away from the ladder and it will swing out towards you.

To reach the ladder you have to stand on top of the trailer's fender and stretch



over the Eezi-Awn canopy, which is rolled up inside its case. Now walk to the right side of the trailer and swing the ladder out towards you. On this side the ladder is fastened to the base of the bed with hinges. The ladder has two sections that slide over each other to make it shorter or longer. The same kind of clips used to keep the ladder in place on the bed base on the other side prevents the one side shifting away from the other. There are three holes on the one side of the ladder where the clips can lock it into your preferred height.

To unfold the tent you have to pull the ladder towards you so that one half of the bed base folds open, also towards you. The ladder now swings down and rests on the ground. Now stretch the canvas tight over the tent with eight spring-loaded steel struts. Simply push the straight side of the strut into the tube that's fastened to the base of the tent and bend it until the other side hooks through the eyelets on the flap.

If you're afraid of heights and you don't want to climb too high up the ladder, you can keep the tent on the lowest adjustment. If, however, you don't want to struggle to reach the trailer's packing space, you will have to lift the tent to the maximum height. Now you can adjust

the ladder to a height and angle that's comfortable for you.

The tent is 230 cm (l) x 134 cm (w), and a sponge mattress (6 cm thick) covers the floor area. There is a window on each side and a door on the side where the ladder is. The back of the tent can open completely but you can't climb in or out here. The doors and windows have mesh to keep bugs out.

The frame of the load bin (240 x 136 x 50 cm) as well as the chassis is made of angle iron and treated with a powder coating. The sides and rear flap are made of fibreglass and finished off in a camo motif. It really makes you want to drive into the bush.

The load bin is big enough for 24 ammo boxes. If you don't need that many, you can easily fit three bikes next to each other, or a quad bike or even a smallish dirt bike. The height of the tent from the floor is 90 cm.



You can fasten everything using the eight eyelets (four on each side) that's bolted onto the floor. But you'll have to lift the tent platform a bit higher to fit in underneath. The tent will then stick out over your car's roof and give some wind resistance when you drive.

Inside the bin, up front, is a fibreglass cupboard of 125 x 34 x 50 cm. Just like the nosecone, the inside of the cupboard is divided into two. It's a great place for camping stuff like a gas stove, tarps and awning. Towards the rear, on the right, is a fire extinguisher.

The rear flap is as wide as the entire trailer and rests on two U-shaped steel support brackets that are welded onto the chassis. At the top it's kept in place by steel brackets on both sides of the flap. The flap opens up completely to the bottom where it rests on the ground and you have easy access to the load bin.

The rear flap is also removable simply by lifting it off the brackets. There are two extra brackets on both sides of those that the flap rests on. This is where you fasten the ramp for you to push your quad bike into the load bin.

In the middle, underneath the flap, is a steel plate with holes that's bolted onto the chassis – just the place for a bike rack. You can also add a tow bar and tow up to 500 kg. Next to the tent, at the rear, is more packing space (75 x 156 cm).

The load bin has a tonneau cover like a bakkie.



An A for effort

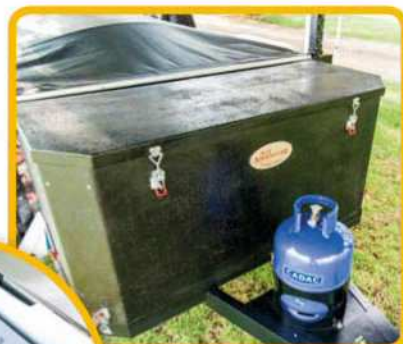
The Adventure's A-frame is just shy of 2 m long. The nosecone is right at the back on the frame, against the body of the trailer. In front of the nose cone sits a 5 kg gas bottle in a lockable container. The A-frame has a steel plate over it stretching from the gas bottle to the coupler. This extra packing space is ideal for a bag of wood or two. *(Just keep in mind the nose weight before you load too much wood on here. – Ed)* In front of the gas bottle is a spirit level. The sturdy jockey wheel makes it easier to push the trailer around on the grass, and in front at the coupler is a Brad Harrison plug with wiring if you want to charge the battery while driving.

The trailer is unbraked, but you can order one with an optional braked axle with a capacity of 2 t.

>



The load bin is big enough for 24 ammo boxes. If you don't need that many, you can easily fit three bikes next to each other.



Pack it in

The large nose cone (130 x 50 x 59 cm) is made of fibreglass and is split into two sections on the inside. The lid is kept in place by two lockable clips. Be careful not to knock yourself on the chin when you open it; the two gas struts that open it are fairly stiff and the lid jumps up quickly. You can remove the nosecone from the A-frame but you'll first have to remove the fridge and disconnect the electrical box's wiring.

This box is in the smaller left-hand-side cupboard in the nosecone. There is a deep-cycle battery in a National Luna power box, a smart battery charger, a solar panel's load control, and a Brad

Harrison plug for the solar panel. The 220 V electrical box next to the battery has three sockets: one for the fridge, one for the battery charger, and an extra one.

The small black electrical board hosts three circuit breakers (lifting of tent, lights and power sockets, and two USB sockets – 5V 1 A and 5V 2.1 A).

On the test model the electrical connection was on the left outside the nose cone. The space between this and the front corner steady is too narrow for the coupler's lid to open up completely – so it's quite a struggle to get the plug in.

In the cupboard on the right-hand side is a 55 l ice chest. There is no wasted space

here: the National Luna fits in snugly but there is enough space on the side to grip the handles if you want to lift it out. To the right on the outside of the nosecone is another waterproof 220 V domestic socket and a Hella plug. The licence disc holder and air inlet for the fridge is also located here.

A canvas awning stretches over the A-frame. Unfortunately it doesn't help to keep rainwater off the nose cone.



Where will we find water?

On the right in front of the axle are two 20 l water tanks side to side fastened to the body. The tanks are not connected to each other. Each tank has its own tap and you can remove the one tank. The filling hole is at the back of the tank, right in front of the fender.

Behind the axle is a jerry can in a lockable container, and the stainless steel table is stored in the middle underneath the tent platform.



Camp kitchen

The kitchen is in front of the axle on the left side. The kitchen cupboard is aluminium and is split in two. The left-hand side cupboard has a door that pulls down and that hangs on two chains. This surface is 73 cm above the ground and it's not a convenient place to cook food. Rather put your cooking equipment and utensils on top of it and cut your veggies on the table. Inside the cupboard, right above the bottom, is a small shelf that hangs on chains and that can fold up if you want to put something like a bottle upright. Above the shelf is a spice rack with space for nine round spice bottles.

The upright cupboard on the right has a swing door that opens to the right. There is one shelf inside where you can put a smallish pot or some of your groceries.

The two-burner gas stove that's stored inside the cupboard in the load bin fits neatly on top of the kitchen cupboard. You'll have to fetch the gas bottle in front at the A-frame and position it next to the trailer when it's time to connect it to the stove.

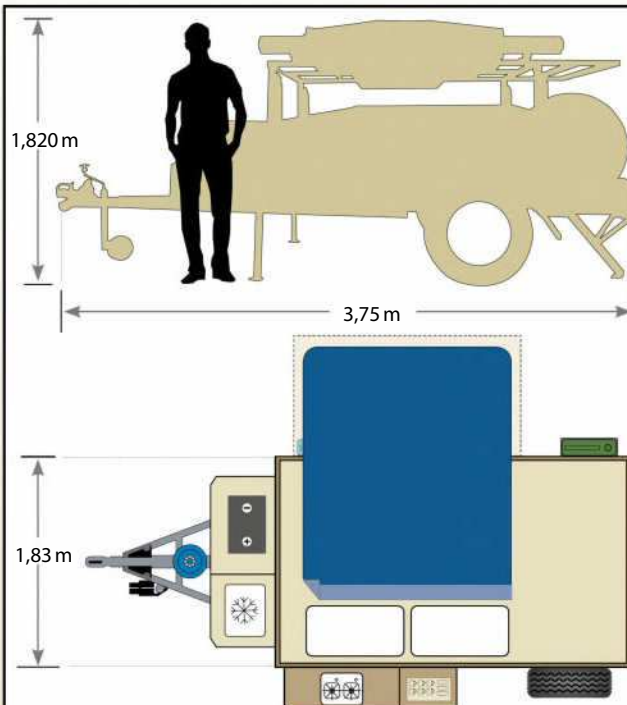
Above the kitchen, at the bottom of the tent platform, is an LED light that you can change to white, red or yellow.

On the side of the trailer, about the whole length of the side panel, is an Eezi-Awn canopy that you have to remove from the aluminium cover. The canopy is positioned away from the tent so the section above the kitchen is open and everything gets wet when it rains.



In case of emergency

The Adventure's spare wheel is on the left-hand side of the trailer, right behind the axle. The trailer has 215 x 15" tyres and the spare wheel is full size.



The technical stuff

Nose weight 78 kg

Length (A-frame included)
3,75 m

Width 1,83 m

Height (including the rooftop tent)
1,820 m

Tare weight (basic trailer)
380 kg

Payload 370 kg

GVM 750 kg

Price R101 000 as tested;
basic trailer R35 000;
optional T-top tent R22 914

between the tent and awning doesn't keep the rain out.

- The rooftop tent without the additional side tent is cramped, and getting dressed and moving inside is uncomfortable, especially if there are two of you. If it rains the mattress gets wet as soon as someone opens the door.
- The front canvas holder blocks the LED light that should shine onto the fridge.



Plus

- The design is unique and very multipurpose.
- The load bin has ample packing space; adventure seekers can take all their toys.
- The rooftop tent that you can lift up and down is a good idea and makes packing and unpacking a lot easier.
- With the long A-frame sharp turns are not a problem.



Minus

- You can't cook or take something out of the fridge when it rains; the gap

go! Drive & Camp says

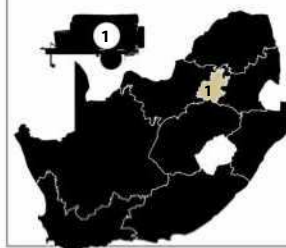
Spend the money and buy the T-top tent.

Dealer network

Contact 079 501 4787 or
082 055 6240

battista@nextadventure.co.za

nextadventure.co.za





Get a new angle on adventure

If you're a thrill seeker who loves the outdoors, add a Cape Canopy Tour to your 2018 bucket list. And if you're a *go!* reader, you'll get a special discount!

What does the tour entail? You'll explore the Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve on a series of 11 ziplines, some of which are longer than 300 m. Each zipline ends at a platform overlooking the mountains and fynbos of the Riviersonderend Kloof. One of the highlights is a suspension bridge over a waterfall in a narrow sandstone gorge. The tour is a fully guided nature experience that takes about 4–5 hours.

Where? Hottentots Holland is a CapeNature reserve near Elgin and Villiersdorp, about 90 km from Cape Town.

Is there an age limit? Anyone between 5 and 75 can join in the fun.

How much? The tour costs R895, but *go!* readers get a special discount. When you make your booking, use the code WEG18743. Using this code, the tour will cost R805 (with a Wild card) or R845 (no Wild card).

Included in the cost? Entry to the reserve, transport to the first platform in a 4x4, a fully guided tour, snacks along the way, a light lunch afterwards and rain gear (if necessary).

What should I bring? Warm clothes (the weather can be unpredictable), sunscreen, a hat and comfortable shoes.

**SPECIAL
READER
DISCOUNT!**
*When you make your
booking, use this code:*
WEG18743



Bookings: 📞 capecanopytour.co.za

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Meaty treat

Lamb on the coals is really delicious. Make your camping neighbours green with envy with these six delicious dishes.

Recipes and styling **Aletta Lintvelt** Photos **Myburgh Du Plessis** Food assistant **Merrill Buckley**

POT-ROASTED LAMB **Time is on your side**

A whole piece of lamb that is slowly cooked over the coals until the meat separates from the bone is rich in flavour. Place the pot in the embers of the evening's campfire and when you rise tomorrow morning the meal will be ready. Just heat it up when it's time to eat.

Ingredients

(enough for 8)

- 2–3 kg lamb shoulder or leg (bone inside)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cup lamb stock
- 3 sprigs rosemary
- 5 cloves garlic
- 1 tin chickpeas
- 2 fresh tomatoes, cubed
- salt and pepper, to taste

Here's how

1 Place the lamb with the fat facing up in a flat-bottom pot. Drizzle olive oil over the meat. Add the white

wine, lamb stock, rosemary and garlic, cover the pot with foil and put the lid on (give it a tight fit).

2 Bake the lamb over lukewarm coals. The temperature must be low – between 110–120 °C. It will take about 7 or 8 hours for the meat to fall off the bone.

3 Open the pot and stir in the chickpeas and fresh tomato.

4 Pull the meat off the bone into chunks with a fork and serve with rice or pap. Flavour to taste with salt and pepper.

go! Drive & Camp says You can also make this potjie in a kettle braai. Just make sure that the temperature stays low. Remove the lid and foil towards the end and bake with the pot open but the braai's lid on. The fat will crisp and the sauce will thicken in the last hour.

LAMB RIB WITH A CRUST **Bring the napkins**

This dish should preferably be made in a kettle braai.

Ingredients

(enough for 8)

- 1 whole lamb rib of approximately 1.2 kg
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- 1 cup fresh mixed herbs (mix of rosemary, parsley and thyme or sage)
- 4 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

Here's how

1 Flavour the lamb with salt and pepper and drench in olive oil.

2 Braai the lamb over reasonably hot coals until golden brown and put to the side.

3 Spread the mustard on the meat and roll in a mixture of breadcrumbs, parmesan cheese and herbs.

4 Move the coals to the side of the kettle braai and make sure the kettle braai is medium hot – about 170 °C. Put the lamb on a cast iron plate or oven tray on a grid with the crust side facing up.

5 Cook the meat with the kettle braai's lid on for 30 minutes. Remove and leave to stand for 10 minutes before you carve it.

go! Drive & Camp says

The cooking time of the lamb in the kettle braai depends on how hot your coals are. Make sure the coals are at medium heat otherwise you're going to burn the meat and crust. You can always cook it for longer if it's too pink for your liking. >



HOMEMADE WRAP WITH LAMB AND TZATZIKI

A taste of Greece

This homemade flatbread tastes delicious wrapped around a juicy piece of meat. It's a good way to breathe new life into leftovers.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

For the flatbread

- 1 cup bread flour
- ½ cup Greek yoghurt
- pinch of salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil plus extra for braaiing

For the filling

- 1 cup Greek yoghurt
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ cucumber, finely chopped
- pinch of salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 500 g cooked lamb, in strips
- lettuce, to taste
- fresh tomato slices, to taste
- ½ red onion, in thin slices

Here's how

1 Mix the flour, yoghurt, salt and olive oil together and knead well. Add another 2 tablespoons yoghurt if the mixture is too dry. Cover with cling film and leave to stand for 20 minutes

2 Divide the dough into 4 balls and roll out into ½ cm thick circles (you can use a wine bottle).

3 Heat a cast-iron pan and pour in ½ teaspoon olive oil. Fry the flatbreads one by one for a few minutes on both sides until golden brown and bubbles appear. Keep warm in a clean dishcloth.

4 Mix the yoghurt, cucumber, garlic and olive oil and flavour to taste with salt and pepper.

5 Fill the bread with meat, lettuce, tomato and onion and a spoonful of the yoghurt sauce.

go! Drive & Camp says The flatbreads are best served fresh, so if you want to eat it the next day heat it up in a clean, dry pan.



LAMB-AND-FETA MEATBALLS IN SAUCE

Fire balls

These meatballs come in a delicious sauce and taste great with Putu pap.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 500 g lamb mince
- 2 wheels feta cheese
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon fine cumin
- ½ teaspoon smoked chilli
- ½ teaspoon oreganum
- 1 can chopped tomato
- 1 tablespoon tomato sauce
- ½ cup water

Here's how

1 Mix the mince, feta and herbs together and flavour to taste with salt and pepper. Shape the meatballs with your hands.

2 Cook the onion in the olive oil until soft in a flat-bottom potjie or cast-iron pan with a lid. Add the garlic, cayenne pepper, cumin, chilli, oreganum, canned tomato and tomato sauce and simmer for about 10 minutes. Add the water to dilute the sauce slightly.

3 Put the meatballs in the sauce and bake over the coals for 10 minutes with the lid on. Carefully turn the meatballs and bake for another 5 minutes until cooked through.

go! Drive & Camp says Prepare both the meatballs and the sauce at home. Freeze it separately in Ziploc bags.



LAMB BURGER With a twist

Plan ahead and make these patties at home before you leave for the weekend. Then you don't have to take along bottles and packets and you know you're going to eat like a royal.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 500 g lamb mince
- 20 pistachios, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons capers, finely chopped
- 8 large green olives, finely chopped
- 3 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tablespoons barbecue sauce
- blue cheese slices, to taste
- lettuce
- rolls, buttered

Here's how

1 Mix the lamb, pistachios, capers, olives and anchovies together in a bowl. Flavour to taste with salt and pepper, but remember that anchovy is very salty. Shape the burger patties with your hands.

2 Heat a cast-iron pan over the coals till very hot. Rub olive oil on the patties and fry for 3 minutes on the one side, flip over, and braai for 2 minutes on the other side. Put barbecue sauce on the patties and scorch quickly so that the sauce caramelises.

3 Serve the patties with the blue cheese and lettuce on the rolls. Garnish with extra capers and olives to taste.

go! Drive & Camp says

Lamb is expensive so you can use half lamb, half beef mince. Just make sure the meat is fatty because that's what makes the burger juicy and tasty.



LAMB SOSATIES WITH SALAD FROM A CAN Stick to it

These easy sosaties are served with a "can salad" – perfect for a quick and easy campfire meal.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 1 red pepper
- 1 onion
- 500 g lamb, cut into 2x2 cm pieces (shoulder or leg)
- 1 cup barbecue sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 chilli, finely chopped
- 1 can black beans, drained
- 1 can whole corn kernels, drained
- 4 spring onions, finely chopped
- 1 lemon
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste

Here's how

1 Cut the red pepper and onion into quarters and then into halves. Thread the pepper, meat and onion onto sosatie sticks in that order.

2 Mix the barbecue sauce with the garlic and chilli and baste the sosaties with the mixture.

3 Mix the beans, corn and spring onions with each other and squeeze the juice from the lemon over the mixture. Sprinkle with the olive oil and flavour to taste with salt and pepper.

4 Braai the sosaties over medium coals until the meat is cooked but still juicy. Serve with the salad.

go! Drive & Camp says

Leave the chilli if your BBQ sauce has enough bite to it. If you don't like the burning taste, replace the chilli with half a teaspoon paprika. 🍴

Boxing clever

Whether you need to stow all your toys in one container or simply like to keep your goods secure during transit, you may want to have a look at these storage options.

Text **Kyle Kock**

So you're about to leave on holiday but the little ones are dawdling while looking for their favourite toys to take along. Or you've just realised that there's a whole bunch of recovery equipment that you need to lug along before you head out on that 4x4 weekend. Instead of having everything lying around, we're sure you'd prefer to keep things

in one place. Apart from keeping your home, campsite or the inside of your caravan neat, you'll also score points for looking like an absolute pro.

Booxe Bootbox

NINJA STORAGE

This is an innovative lightweight unit that's custom-designed to fit into the recess behind the second row of seats in a previous or current generation Toyota Fortuner. It lies flush with the boot floor so it won't stand out untowardly. It can also be accessed from the rear doors so you won't have to lock your valuables away conspicuously by opening your tailgate.

Price R1 495 from Booxe

go! Drive & Camp says Get the custom-made matching Booxe anti-slip floor mat that will completely conceal your Bootbox for R995. Or pay R2 395 for both.



Ironman 4x4 Maxi Case 48 l

SMALL WONDER

At this size the smallest Maxi Case in the Ironman 4x4 range is ideal for storing your smaller camping gear and tools. It's constructed out of tough linear low-density polyethylene (a 3,6 mm wall thickness average) that's UV-stabilised – so the contents are undeniably safe from the elements. There's large and lockable heavy-duty latches with moulded hinges for security.

Price R1 800 from Ironman 4x4

go! Drive & Camp says This unit is the only Maxi Case range that doesn't come with an internal tray.



Thule Motion XT Medium

AERODYNAMIC ARK

Not only is the Thule Motion XT sleek and stylish but it has plenty of space as well because it's designed to carry not just luggage but outdoor gear and bulkier cargo too. The PowerClick quick-mounting system has a torque indicator that makes a clicking sound when it's properly tightened to your roof bars. The Slide Lock system automatically locks the unit when the lid has been shut.

Price R14 000 from Thule

go! Drive & Camp says The Motion XT is available in sizes that range up to XXL.



Tentco Large Folding Trolley

ROLL OUT

When you've arrived at your destination and just want sit and take it all in, let the kids push your ammo boxes around in this big-wheel trolley. It folds completely flat for maximum portability and easy storage and can carry a maximum load of 68 kg.

Price R1 200 from Outdoor Warehouse

go! Drive & Camp says The large wheels will roll easily over sand and gravel.



Ford Ranger Lockable Under Seat Safe

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

Now you don't have to worry about where you leave your wallet, house keys, mobile devices and important information when you're on the go. These safe-type units mount underneath the rear seat cushion on a current generation (T6) Ford Ranger and is made

from black powder-coated 14-gauge steel. There are two lockable boxes in the set – one for each side.

Price R1 325 from Front Runner

go! Drive & Camp says Would-be criminals will be none the wiser.

Camp Cover Ammo Pouch 1/4s

ALWAYS ORGANISED

If you're the type who's really sticky about keeping everything in order, then look no further than this ammo box pouch pack from Camp Cover. It's ideal for organising your smaller items and features a PVC lid so you can see what's inside. They're made of ripstop

material and use heavy-duty zips and sliders.

Price R515 (set of 4) from Camp Cover

go! Drive & Camp says You can also use these as stand-alone bags when on overnight trips.

>





Outdoor Warehouse Ammo Box (low lid) THE STANDARD

This is very much a traditionally styled ammo box, ideal for storing your outdoor equipment and camping gear. The dimensions are similarly standard, at 511 mm long, 400 mm wide and 251 mm tall.

Price R159 from Outdoor Warehouse

go! Drive & Camp says There's also a version with a dome lid available for extra room.

Camp Cover Ammo Box Cover ALL ABOARD

When you're really sentimental about the condition of your ammo box and don't want to scuff it up, the ammo bag options from Camp Cover should be on your shopping list. This also ideal for when you have multiple ammo boxes on your roof rack and you want to protect them from the elements, because there are heavy-duty fastener loops on the lid for easy strapping. There's a range of covers in different sizes.

Price From R717 (2 boxes) to R1 287 (6 boxes) from Camp Cover



go! Drive & Camp says The bags are lined with PVC on the inside to provide extra protection and so you can clean it easier.



Ironman 4x4 Roof-Top 500 l Cargo Bag STAY PUFFED

For a soft bag this is one of the largest models we've seen on the market, capable of swallowing up to 500 l. It's made from super-durable 500 D weatherproof PVC with tear-resistant fibres and can mount to your roof rack or luggage basket. It uses heavy-duty tie-down straps and buckles and a quick-mounting system to hold everything in place and has water-resistant zips with Velcro overlap to keep the contents dry.

Price R2 495 from Ironman 4x4

go! Drive & Camp says You can opt for smaller bags or an even bigger 600 l version.

Ironman 4x4 Maxi Case 216 ℓ BIG BAD BOX

This is the one you want when you need to lug everything along including the kitchen sink. It's made of the same tough LLDPE as its smaller sibling also featured on these pages, with the same locking system and wall thickness.

Price R4 500 from Ironman 4x4

go! Drive & Camp says This one comes with a useful tray inside for tools or general storage.



Thule Ranger 90 SOFT SOLUTION

It's rather odd to see that this company makes rooftop boxes that aren't hard to the touch, but given their wide range of luggage options the foldable Range 90 isn't really a surprise. It doesn't take up much space on your rack and is made of waterproof material with welded seams and a sealed zipper that keeps the load protected.

Price R6 000 from Thule

go! Drive & Camp says It comes with a special bag for storing the rolled-up Ranger 90.

Front Runner Toyota Land Cruiser 70-series Under Console Safe OUT OF SIGHT

This box installs underneath the standard centre console in the Land Cruiser 76 SUV and 79 double-cab pick-up, where it's bolted directly onto the body. The unit's mild steel is 2 mm thick and is hidden underneath the console once installed. The lock is tamper-proof and the inside is carpet-lined.

Price R1 625 from Front Runner

go! Drive & Camp says The driver and front passenger have easy access to money and travel docs.



GET THE PRODUCTS HERE

Booxe  www.booxe.co.za

Camp Cover  www.campcover.co.za

Front Runner  www.frontrunneroutfitters.com/en/za

Ironman 4x4  www.ironman4x4.co.za

Outdoor Warehouse  www.outdoorwarehouse.co.za

Thule  www.thule.com/en/za

Etosha - Damaraland and Skeleton Coast

Experience Brandberg in Namibia, the Skeleton Coast, the rock desert of Damaraland and Etosha with us!



ADVENTURE ITINERARY

DAY 1

The group meets at the Alte Brücke campsite in Swakopmund. We spend the evening around the fire and your guide will brief you about the next 12 days.

DAY 2

We spend today exploring Swakopmund. There are a number of activities to choose from, including skydiving and sand-boarding, dolphin and whale watching, and quad biking in the desert. (The activities are for your own costs.)

DAY 3

After a leisurely breakfast, we head for the Brandberg region via Seal Point. Entering the Dorob National Park area, we travel on roads constructed from gypsum and brine before arriving at camp, where the crew will be ready for us and the pots will be on the fire.

DAY 4

After an early breakfast we take a guided walk up into the Brandberg Mountain to visit the famous "White Lady". We spend the afternoon relaxing around the pool. Late afternoon we travel in our vehicles to the foothills of a giant koppie where we enjoy a spectacular desert sunset while sipping sundowners.

DAY 5

We visit Burnt Mountain and the bizarre volcanic rock formation known as the Organ Pipes. We see Welwitchia plants and we visit Twyfelfontein as well as the petrified forest with its 30 m long petrified tree trunks deposited by prehistoric glacial flooding.

DAY 6

It's a busy day in Damaraland. Driving through the Toro Conservancy we follow the course of the dry riverbeds of the Huab and Uniab rivers. We have the opportunity to refuel our vehicles.

DAY 7

We drive into the Skeleton Coast National Park where we visit Tora Bay and walk towards the Uniab Waterfall before heading back east to Palmwag

DAY 8

We drive via the Grootberg Pass and on to Kamanjap and Outjo, where we refuel and shop. And then on to Etosha! In the late afternoon we view game at a waterhole or on a drive around the edge of the pan. We spend the remainder of the evening observing the nocturnal activities at the floodlit waterhole in the camp.

DAY 9

We can spend the morning in the shade at the Ombika waterhole or driving around. We spend the early afternoon around the pool. In the evening we visit the fabled Sprokieswoud.

DAYS 10 AND 11

These are our last two full days of the trip and, with Etosha being so vast, everybody has the chance to go off on their own on some game-viewing experience. The Bhejane guide will always be on hand with advice and you will get a packed picnic lunch.

DAY 12

After a lavish breakfast, we must sadly say goodbye to our new friends.

11-NIGHT/12-DAY ADVENTURE (TENTED ACCOMMODATION)

DATES 1 to 12 September 2018

14 to 25 September 2018

TOUR PRICE R12 250 (ex VAT) per person (half price for children under 10)

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- An experienced nature conservationist and adventure guide
- Tents and tables (the Bhejane team will pitch the tents and take it down the next day)
- All camp and park entrance fees
- All advertised activities
- Tents, cutlery and crockery
- Coffee and tea all day every day while in camp
- Help with recovery of your 4x4 (if needed)

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING/PROVIDE

- Vehicle and fuel
- Mattresses and/or stretcher and sleeping bags and pillows
- Fold-up chairs
- Drinks and in-between snacks
- Out-of-country/medical emergency and evacuation insurance cover
- Border-crossing fees and road taxes



Yes, I want to go!

To book, call

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Find out more at bhejane.com

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Battle the bugs

We share the great outdoors with all sorts of creatures, but the unwanted attention of insects – especially the pesky mosquito – can ruin an otherwise perfect holiday.

Text Kyle Kock



You get people who go camping looking like a full-on Rambo. But not with ammo belts, rifles and grenades. No, they're armed to the teeth with a few cans of bug spray, at least two different kinds of mosquito-repelling lotion, candles and oil, and a buff. All in an effort to ensure a mosquito doesn't land on their head, neck or shoulders – especially while sleeping.

There are few things more annoying than the high-pitched buzz of a mosquito waking you from a pleasant dream in the graveyard hours. Anyone who says it doesn't bother them is either a liar, a snorer, or they finished that bottle before heading to bed.

It's bad enough having to contend with that kind of nuisance at home, but when we immerse ourselves in nature it's best to do everything possible to avoid it.

Know the dangers

If you venture out anywhere near water there's the possibility of becoming the meal of the day for the local mosquito population. There's also a certain time of year that the risk increases – after the rainy season. This is when pools of stagnant water provide a calm-enough surface for females to lay their eggs.

Both male and female mosquitoes feed on plant matter, but females require blood to nurture their eggs, so the one that just landed on your forearm is likely to be a female.

Not only are they a nuisance to light sleepers, but they also pose a health risk because they carry and transmit diseases. According to the World Health Organization about 445 000 people died from

malaria in 2016 – with an estimated 90% of those cases being reported from Africa and 91% of the deaths coming from the same region. The *Anopheles* genus of mosquito is commonly responsible for carrying the five species of *Plasmodium* parasites that causes malaria in humans. When an infected mosquito bites, the parasites are transferred from the insect's mouth into a person's bloodstream and thereafter they travel to the liver, where they mature and reproduce. Symptoms include nausea and headaches while more serious cases involve jaundice and seizures and later, death.

go! Drive & Camp says Don't pitch your tent near dubious bodies of water, and keep your water containers sealed.

Why always me?

There are many factors that result in mosquitoes being more attracted to certain people than others. While some people may be as camouflaged as a chameleon, others will stand out like a bright neon sign. For example, studies have shown that persons with the O blood type could be bitten as much as double that of type A – with B types more or less in the middle.

Some people also secrete a chemical through the skin that indicates which type they are, which is something that the mosquito's highly tuned-in antennae can easily pick up and attract them to you.

Those receptors also make mosquitoes able to detect the carbon dioxide from our exhalation from more than 60 m away – and in certain cases more than 100 m.

Body odour is a pretty attractive fragrance for mosquitoes and is caused by sweat that's mixed with bacteria on the skin. The reason

bites are commonly found on hands, wrists, feet and ankles are because that's where sweat lingers and these areas of the body are more likely to be exposed.

Lactic acid released by people who are very active (like mountain bikers and hikers), and certain foods that contain high amounts of potassium and salt (bananas and avocados) that cause people to sweat more, are open invitations for mosquitoes. If you're fond of Limburger cheese (which has a very distinct smell thanks to the bacteria in it) you're likely to get bitten too because the bacteria used to ferment it is virtually the same as the bacteria colonies found on your feet – which emit another irresistible pong for mosquitoes. *(Try not to think about this particular fact too much when you order that cheese platter again. – Ed.)*

Certain scents from lotions or perfumes, particularly the floral ones, also attract mosquitoes because they feed on similar-

smelling plants – so if your partner gets into bed smelling like a bouquet and you get bitten during the night, she should share the blame.

go! Drive & Camp says Since pregnant women perspire more than the average person, emit more carbon dioxide, and have higher temperatures than average, they're more at risk of being bitten.



PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Protect yourself

If you're a frequent traveller you'll know that you're often required to get an anti-malaria shot to be allowed into certain countries.

Because mosquitoes mostly feed between sunset and sunrise, there's a good chance that you'll have females in the air around your campsite or in your tent during and between these hours – though they are day biters as well.

It's a good idea to wear trousers and long-sleeve shirts when you're in the great outdoors and are unsure of the malaria risk. Or if you just don't like the annoying buzz of a mosquito. But avoid colours that are going to stand out, like red and blue and even black – rather go with white or neutral colours. Along with their sense of smell and chemical receptors, mosquitoes also use vision to figure out where to bite.

Another solid option is a good old mosquito net. Obviously you'll have to be certain that the area you're covering, be that a bed or your evening chill spot under the gazebo, hasn't already been contaminated.

Of course, there are also a number of mosquito repellents and bite balms available on the market, like citronella oil and candles,

lemon eucalyptus leaf extracts, lotions, sprays and wristbands that thankfully can also fit around ankles. You even get mosquito-repelling soap. Some of these contain diethyltoluamide and icaridin, which interferes with the mosquito's ability to detect your chemical emissions.

If your campsite has electricity, consider a plug-in device that uses a pyrethroid as a key ingredient – the ones with the screw-in refills. Or your regular sprays such as Doom or Raid from the supermarket. Mosquito coils also contain a pyrethroid and don't require electricity. They come with handy metal support stands used to keep the coil off any surface that can ignite and can burn for a few hours.

It's important to note that pyrethroids are toxic to not only mosquitoes but also ants, cockroaches and spiders. That may sound attractive to the petrified campers, but pyrethroids also kill beneficial insects such as honeybees (which are highly endangered).

According to Dr Pia Addison, a researcher and senior lecturer at the Stellenbosch University's Conservation Ecology and Entomology department who works in the field of pest management, there's no

definitive proof that pyrethroids are dangerous when humans are exposed to it over a long period.

"There's a reason that pyrethroids are in the majority of household bug killers and that's because they do have a rather low level of mammalian toxicity. The long-term effects in a human being would be very difficult to measure.

"I find the safest solution to be mechanical exclusion – covering up any exposed skin. And if you're going to be in a malaria-risk area to take prophylactics (anti-malaria medication)."

You can find recipes for creating your own repellent at home – using nothing but stuff from your pantry and garden, like apple cider vinegar, sage, lavender and rosemary.

Mosquitoes are also not fond of the scent marigolds give off. The flowers range in colour and the plant is able to grow in fairly difficult conditions, including poor soil and prolonged periods of direct sunlight.

go! Drive & Camp says There's no proof that quinine-containing tonic water (the T in G&T) helps to repel mosquitoes. Munching on a clove of garlic may help, however.



SOURCES

Faithful to Nature faithful-to-nature.co.za
Food Republic foodrepublic.com

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Osana <https://osanabar.com>
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Stodels stodels.com
Travelsafe Clinic travelsafeclinic.co.za
World Health Organisation who.int/en/

A BIG TEN-FOUR

Should your two-way radio be mounted on the inside of your vehicle or hung from your belt? And why should you spend thousands of rands if there are cheaper versions available? Cyril Klopper finds out.



When you're in the market for a pair of two-way radios the big question is obviously which type of radio works best in off-road conditions. You also can't help but wonder if pricy radios are really that much better than their cheaper counterparts. We chatted to Haroon Isaacs, sales manager at Lazer Communications in Cape Town.

Portable vs mounted

You'd expect portable two-way radios, or walkie-talkies, to be more expensive than the mounted versions, but the reverse is true, despite the fact that portable radios use batteries and micro-circuitry.

According to Haroon, portable radios often have a relatively low charge of 0,4 W or 0,5 W, which is too little to power a powerful transceiver. That's why their broadcast and reception areas are quite weak – usually no more than a few hundred metres and at most a kilometre or two. Moreover, they have a small antenna that can never be higher than your ear, and your vehicle's bodywork acts like a Faraday cage and may disrupt a portable radio's signal.

A mounted two-way radio's antenna, on the other hand, is usually bolted onto your vehicle's roof rack

where it has an undisturbed broadcast and reception signal of many kilometres. This kind of radio receives electricity from your vehicle and the higher wattage provided can power stronger electronics.

Analogue vs digital

Think of an LP versus a CD. If a turntable's stylus is dirty, the music will sound scratchy. If a CD player's laser lens is dirty, the music won't play at all. It's the same with analogue and digital radios. The signal of an analogue radio weakens gradually over distance, and on the farthest point of the reception area you will struggle to communicate. A digital signal stays clear right up to its maximum range – a few steps further and the conversation ceases completely.

Licensing

The mandate for the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, or ICASA, is to regulate all electronic broadcasts. While the body mostly focusses on the policing of communication giants like the SABC and Multichoice, they do also keep an eye on what best friends John and Steve get up to with their walkie-talkies. >





There is no such thing as an unlicensed two-way radio. However, there is a distinction between whether only the radio requires a licence and whether an operator also needs one to be allowed to use the radio. ICASA decides which licence goes where. They also test radios for things like channel spacing (if channel one broadcasts on 500 MHz and channel two on 501 MHz, then the spacing is 1 MHz), frequency drift (whether your broadcast is “leaking” into conversations on other radios) and power output (how far your broadcast can travel).

A 5 W radio such as the Bosvark PMR446 is licensed through ICASA, but you don't have to apply for a personal licence. Its use, however, is limited to 13 pre-programmed, licence-free UHF channels broadcasting on 446 MHz, meaning you can't communicate very far. But you can increase the Bosvark's power output to 5 W and plug in an external antenna that will allow you to talk up to 30 km. Unfortunately almost every building contractor and farm worker in the area will be able to listen in on your conversation.

With a mounted radio such as the Icom IC-F5062, the captain of your 4WD club can apply for a specific licensed channel that no one else has access to. Your personal radio is then programmed to broadcast on this channel and you may chat to your mates without having a personal licence.

Other factors

Haroon explains that weather conditions and geography play a huge role in signal quality. On a cool, partly cloudy day your

radio will perform best. On a scorching hot day in the iron-rich sand dunes of the Kgalagadi your radio will perform poorest.

Haroon suggests you connect your radio directly to the vehicle battery so that it can receive power directly and can remain switched on even when your vehicle is turned off. If your radio is plugged into the cigarette lighter you must set it to low power usage mode, otherwise it's not going to perform well or you might even blow a fuse.

Radio procedures

If you were or still are in the army, you would definitely have learned radio procedures. The basic principle is that everyone gets a turn to speak – not simultaneously like on a phone. A two-way radio conversation goes something like this:

“Bill, Bill, Steve here, over,” Steve calls Bill. Bill's name is repeated so that Will, who is in the car next to Bill, doesn't think it's him being called. Steve ends with “over” so that Bill knows it's his turn to speak.

“Bill here, send, over” let's Steve know Bill is ready. He also ends with “over” so that Steve knows it's his turn to talk.

“We're turning left at the big baobab. Look out for our track, out,” Steve says, short and to the point. This time Steve ends his message with “out” to let John know he has nothing left to say.

“Left at the baobab. Follow your track, out.” Bill confirms. He repeats the key concept to indicate that he understood the message. He also ends with “out” and thus the conversation ends.

STATIONARY OR MOBILE? Hand-helds are great if you need to exit your vehicle but remain in communication, but they are handicapped when it comes to range. A mounted radio is often far more powerful and it can't get lost or fall down a mountain.



UHF OR VHF?

In South Africa a VHF radio (which stands for Very High Frequency) sends and receives between 136 MHz and 174 Mhz (megahertz). With an average wave length of 155 MHz, the sine wave is elongated and flat, which keeps the signal cohesive over large distances, making it ideal for off-roaders who want to communicate over several kilometres. UHF radio (Ultra High Frequency) works between 430 MHz and 470 MHz in South Africa. This wave length has a more compact sine wave, which more easily penetrates obstacles like buildings, but at the cost of a reduced broadcast range. It therefore works better in a construction site than on the plains of the Marienfluss, unless you're driving in convoy.

No one plays AC/DC's "Highway to Hell" for 10 minutes over the two-way radio. No "Um" or "Aah"; Steven and Bill both know what they want to say and get it over and done with.

This conversation is very formal and you can obviously chat with mates any way you want to. And feel free to play "Highway to Hell", unless your friends have other tastes. But spare a thought for others in the group as not everyone might be in the mood for your jokes or playlist.

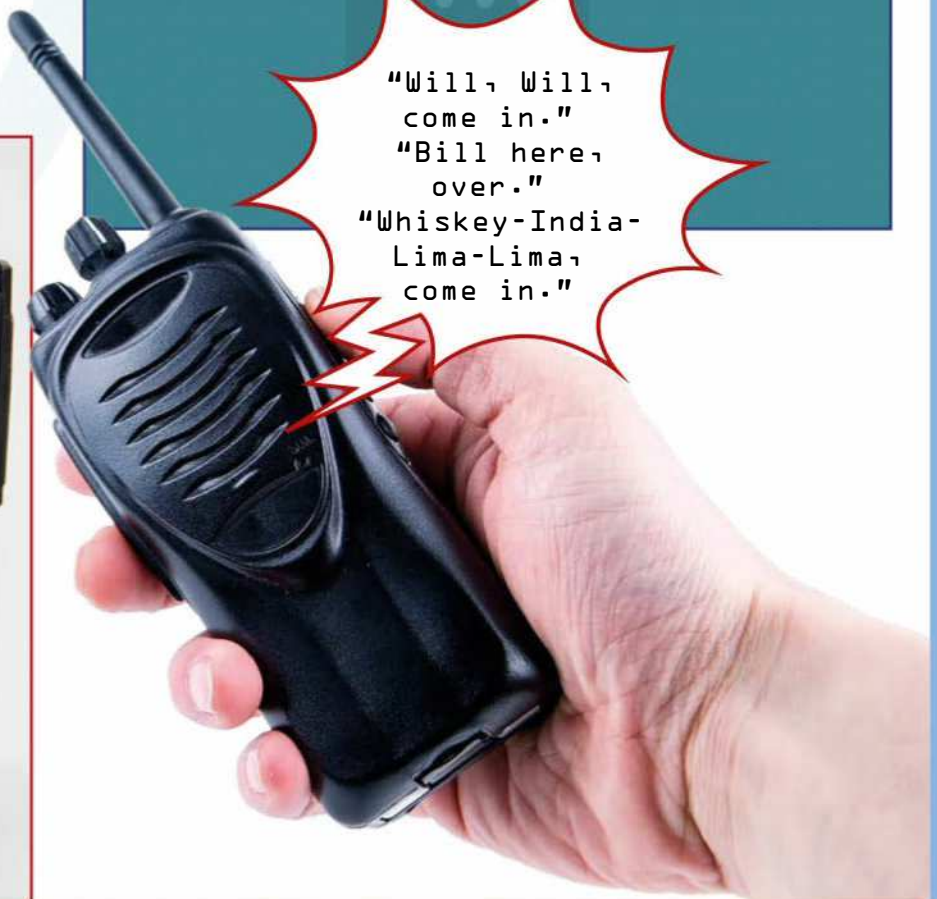
PREVENT CONFUSION

If you want to talk to Will but Bill annoyingly keeps on answering, you can use Navo's International Phonetic Alphabet.

A – Alpha
B – Bravo
C – Charlie
D – Delta
E – Echo
F – Foxtrot
G – Golf
H – Hotel
I – India
J – Juliet
K – Kilo
L – Lima
M – Mike

N – November
O – Oscar
P – Papa
Q – Quebec
R – Romeo
S – Sierra
T – Tango
U – Uniform
W – Whiskey
X – X-ray
Y – Yankee
Z – Zulu

"Will, Will,
come in."
"Bill here,
over."
"Whiskey-India-
Lima-Lima,
come in."



The right stuff

Three people, three different ways to go on holiday. But as far as their wheels go, the results seem to be the same for these readers.

Power Ranger

FORD RANGER 3.2 XLS 4X4

After only a minor software remap that gave his **Ranger** a total of **165 kW** and a massive **581 Nm**, it's now a force to be reckoned with, says **Andre van Heerden** from Cape Town.

“For two years I drove a 2012 Mazda BT-50 with the same 3.2 ℓ engine as my Ranger, but I just wasn't fond of its manual gearbox. So I started looking around for a suitable automatic bakkie. I needed something that could tow easily and offer a comfortable ride. After looking

at options like the **Toyota Hilux** and **Mitsubishi Triton**, I settled on a brand new Ranger in 2015.

I can't find any fault with the Ranger – everything about it is fantastic. To make it unstoppable off-road I've added **rock sliders**, an **EFS Nitro suspension system**, a **front bash plate** and **two-way radio**. Adding to our comfort off the beaten track is a **RSI canopy**, **roof rack**, **fridge**, **dual battery system**, and a **water tank**.

If I had a spare R10 000 right now I'd change the rear bumper. Other than that, it bothers me that the Ranger is white,

because orange really is the colour for it.

Despite the considerable bump in power and torque from the slight modification, the Ranger's fuel consumption isn't that bad and hovers at around **11,2 ℓ/100 km**.

My favourite trip with the Ranger was right up the coast into **Namibia** and through the **Caprivi** and **Botswana** – three weeks and around **7 000 km** of driving. The trip was special because I did it with my wife and three members of our family who made the experience unforgettable.”



Show us your wheels

Send an email to

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

Jetta all the way

2015 VOLKSWAGEN JETTA 1.4 TSI DSG

Don't underestimate the size of his **Jetta's** engine, because it has no hassles pulling his **2006 Sprite Scout**, says **Herman Verwey** from Leeudoringstad.

“After considering a diesel version, I finally settled on this **1.4**

turbopetrol Jetta, which I bought used for **R280 000**. I've been towing my **Sprite** with it for about a year now.

I'm genuinely amazed on a daily basis by how effortless and seamless its **seven-speed dual clutch transmission** is. I've also been impressed by just how strong the engine is considering its size. Speaking of which, the motor can be quite economical, dipping down to about **6,2** **ℓ/100 km** on the open road. But that figure doubles to **12,5** **ℓ/100 km** when I'm towing the caravan.

I hitch the **Sprite** to a fixed tow bar on the **Jetta** and tow at the very reasonable speed of **100 km/h**. And so far the little VW has served us without any issues.

Without a doubt our favourite spot has to be the **Pilanesberg**, just because we're so fond of seeing the animals.



V8 or bust

1978 CHRYSLER SE AND 1994 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE

It doesn't matter which vehicle he chooses to hitch his **1996 Sprite Sunway** to, because they're both up to the task, says **Fanie Gerber** from Pretoria.

“Although I **inherited** the **Chrysler** in 1998 and have been towing with it ever since, I decided last year to supplement my towing combination with another vehicle. So I bought a used **Jeep Grand Cherokee** with a **5.2 V8** engine for **R40 000**.

My requirements for a towing vehicle are that it has to have enough mass to not be moved around by the caravan, have a short distance from the rear axle to tow bar, and plenty of torque for pulling. They are both also easy to work on because I do most of the maintenance myself and also know where to find spare parts quickly.

They're both very well put together, with sufficient luxury and everyday comfort. I also haven't encountered a problem too large for me to fix, as I know both vehicles like the back of my hand.

People make a fuss about my vehicles being V8s, but I really enjoy the **220 kW** and **490 Nm** from both engines. With the **Sprite** on the bar the Jeep averages just over **13** **ℓ/100 km** in terms of fuel



consumption, while the old **Chrysler** guzzles more than **16** **ℓ/100 km**. They're both quite easy to tow with at speeds of around **110 km/h**.

My recommendation to other people who tow is that they pay careful attention to their vehicle's cooling systems. Both the **Chrysler** and **Jeep** have heavy-duty cooling for when the going gets tough.

We enjoy going down to the **Swartvlei Lake** outside **Sedgefield** because the area hasn't yet been commercialised.





YOUR PHOTO



WINNING PHOTO

See the shot before you shoot

If you miss that one moment, you've lost the photo. Here are three reader pics that captured a moment perfectly.

By Leon Botha

The water beckons

Ten years ago he captured this special moment of his daughter at a campsite, says **Ryno Taljaard** from Uitenhage.

"The photo was taken at the start of a camping long weekend at Forever Plettenberg Bay. Our daughter, Tegan, was six years old and we arrived a day early to secure a good stand. But that meant the campsite was quiet and there weren't any friends for her to play with. We were busy pitching camp and we couldn't go play with her on the sandbank near our stand. As she walked away on her own, I took a photo. I changed it to black and white on my computer and used it as my Facebook profile pic."

The success of some photos is measured by the exact moment it was taken. Ryno could, maybe by accident, not have gotten the timing for the photo any better. Every step Tegan takes is a step away from the camera and the chances of getting a good shot rapidly decreases. Still, Tegan is a small object in the wide open space around her. This is why you immediately spot her.

You can see she is about to take another step. You can feel her walking on while the bucket in her hand discloses a lot about her childish innocence. But the photo's strength is much more than that. Without first noticing it, the sand next to her is littered

with other people's footprints. It gives the photo an even more isolated feel – the child on her own while before her hordes of others walked the same beach. The black-and-white treatment gives the photo that final push. Well done; it really is an excellent photo.

Kodak Easyshare Z8612 IS;
Schneider-Kreuznach f/2.8-4.8
lens with 12x optical zoom om
9,36 mm (equivalent to 55 mm
on a 35 mm camera); 1/1 000 of
a second; f3,2; ISO 64.

SEND YOUR PHOTO!

If you have a nice photo send it to us and we might publish it here. All photos are welcome: from one where you're stuck in the dunes with your new 4x4, or one of a cheeky vervet monkey or a solitary windmill next to the road. You can use any type of camera – from professional cameras to mobile phones. **Ryno wins a Camp Cover camera bag to the value of R595 – congratulations!**

Send your photos and contact details to leon.botha@media24.com

The hand of the king

She enjoys focussing on objects farther away rather than those close to her, says Hermien Grobler from Centurion.

"I was in the Kruger National Park and encountered this baboon on a quiet dirt road. It was sitting on a dead trunk watching its young. The posture of its hand immediately caught my attention. The baboon is the proverbial "old hand" and you can see he swings the sceptre in this troop."

You can tell that this is not Hermien's first photo. Focussing on the isolated detail means you see the potential photo moment before you pick up the camera. It's a foolproof way to take better photos, and when you lift the camera you know exactly what you want to see in the frame.

If Hermien zoomed in she would merely have captured the hand of the baboon and the striking image would have

been lost. Hermien uses only two elements together with smart and simple composition: the hand and the trunk form a dynamic circle in the photo. Because the hand is hanging your eye spontaneously follows the path from the arm to the hand.

Then comes the clincher: the trunk opposite the gap is the same width and colour as the baboon's arm and looks almost like an extension of his arm. Your eye automatically jumps to the trunk and then up where the arm rests on the trunk. Very clever.

The photo also has much more detail than you initially see. The photo is focussed so sharply on the fingers of the baboon that you can see every line of its fingerprint.

Canon EOS 7D Mk. II;
Sigma 150-600 mm f5-6,3
lens; 1/400 of a second; f8;
ISO 1 250.



Canon EOS 1200D; Canon EF-S55-250 mm-f/4-5,6 lens on 250 mm;
1/400 of a second; f7,1; ISO 200.

Harvesting day

She had her first camera for only three days when she took this beautiful photo, says Fredalaine Harmse from Hopefield.

"I took this photo at the Arnelia flower farm on Hopefield where they plant the Geraldton Wax, an Australian flowering plant, for the overseas market. The seasonal workers in their red and green clothes were picking the flowers for packaging and were not shy for the camera. I literally hid between the flowers for an unposed shot of the workers. I take my hat off to them. It's really hard to work under the hot West Coast sun."

The woman in red immediately draws the eye and stands out against all the green around her. While your eye enjoys the colour, it's not long before you see the strain on her face.

Because the sun is shining from behind her from the side, it contrasts her facial features even more and you can see the effort required to carry the flowers.

Because Fredalaine took the photo with a high focal length you lose some perspective of the environment.

It causes the fore- and background to be layered rather than in focus. It simplifies the photo and you get rid of superfluous detail.



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ITINERARY

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- A workshop on the best and most challenging 4x4 trails in the country.
- A photography workshop (see sidebar)

SATURDAY EVENING

- Enter our exciting potjiekos competition. There are great prizes to be won!

SUNDAY

- Our travel writers will host a breakfast workshop on all you need to know to plan a trip to Botswana or Namibia.
- We finish the weekend with a last cup of coffee and rusks together before we all head home.



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CROSSWORD

High five, **Carina Daubern** from Jeffreys Bay. You are the proud new owner of a Camp Cover Lunch Box Cooler worth R290 for your correct entry in the crossword competition for March 2018. You can also be a winner like Carina. Complete the crossword, take a picture of it, and send it to us at drivecamp@gomag.co.za. Remember your contact details. Or complete it online at <http://bit.ly/2oxtdWc>. The solution to last month's crossword is on p. 143.

				High road in Lesotho (7,4)	Timid	Samarium (symbol)	Applaud	The Kruger's main camp				
Hanging chairs					Exist			Explode				
Catch					Winter ailment							
Think of the past (4,4)		Apprentice	From head to ...		False				Thee		Money owed	
									Appeal			
			Warm			Vapour (archaic)						
						Blurred						
Harmonium					Morning (abbr)	Blurred	Goal SA language				Negative word	
			Alias (abbr)				Hymn				Small coin in the US	
			Drill				Primate					
Baby garment				Prime minister (abbr)		Increase		Type of cards				
					Compact disc (abbr)		Piercing tool					
					Relaxed			A Ford model				
Type of oil						Gape						
Dark pink												
Souvenir							Lutetium (symbol)					
							"I see!"					
				Edge	Devour	Perform		Depart		Lyrical poem	Container	
				They open locks		Sweden (abbr)					Thou	
						Progress						
						Stain						
				Matures			Formerly	Nail	Relieve			
								Perch				
Casa Cara is close to this town		Title		Sort	... and fro				Regarding		Bed	
				Unhappy	Rock plant				Little			
				Recognise						Album		
Stitched		Small chess piece				Severe			Prudent			
									... and behold			
					Stabbed			Cried				

COMPILED BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

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lets it stand out on the road. A double cab canopy weighs only 55–60 kg and the canopies have a carrying capacity of 450 kg on the frame.

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This three-hole console gives you the option to add a variety of sockets to your vehicle, camper, trailer, caravan, or battery box.

The console and accessories are available separately with options, from USB chargers, female lighter and hella plugs to dual volt meter, volt/amp and volt meters. It is the perfect add-on to any custom-built battery box, giving the user the option of powering 12 V devices and monitoring battery levels and current draw. All accessories are multi-volt, to be used 12 to 24 V, and are easy to install. One- and two-hole consoles are also available when space is limited.



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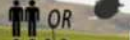
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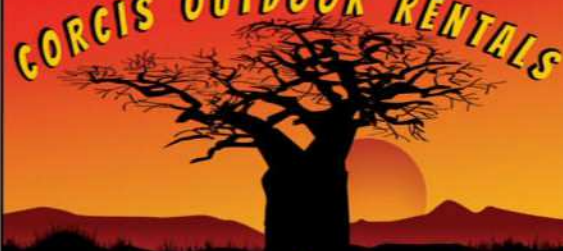
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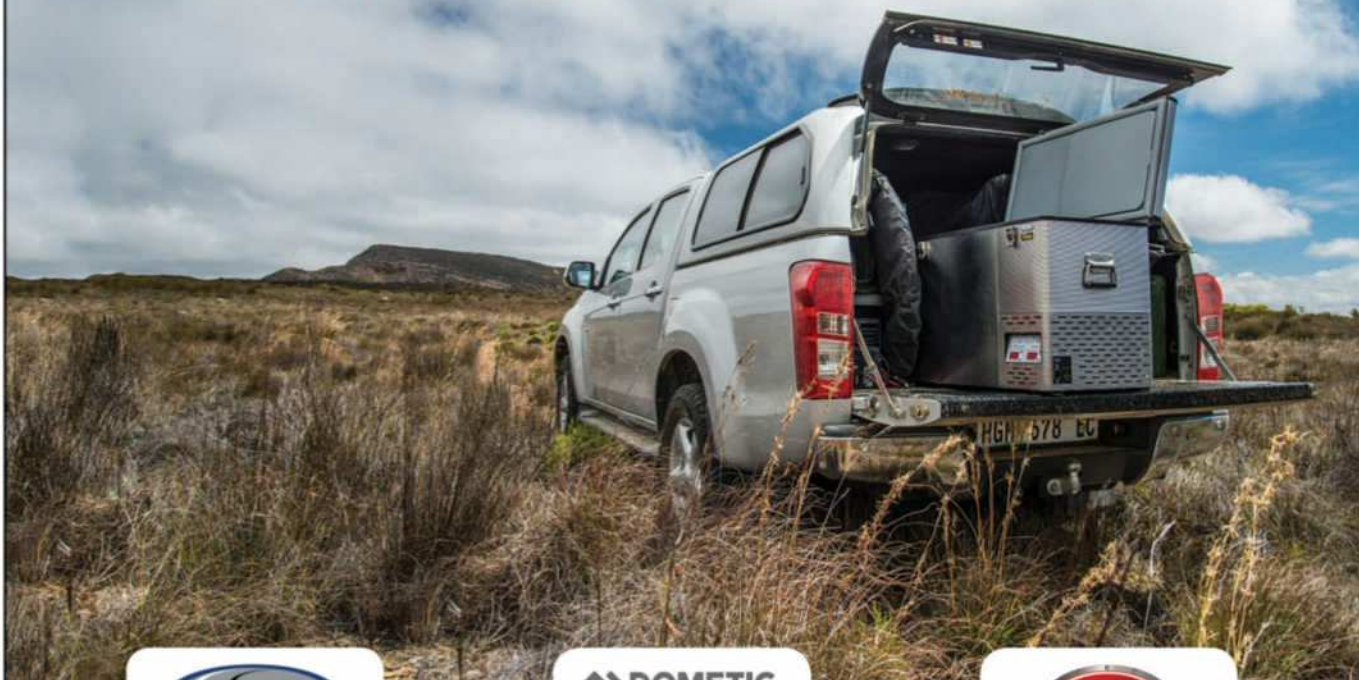
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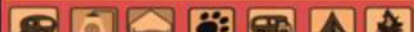
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PRETORIA



I ain't afraid of no ghost...

Ghosts don't exist, but sometimes things happen that are difficult to explain, says Cyril Kloppe.

I don't believe in zombies, werewolves or ghosts. For me, those things equal little green men in flying saucers.

But still, I've had a few frightening encounters that I still can't explain.

The first one happened when I went to seek my fortune in London, England, in my twenties. I worked for a few weeks as a travelling security guard until I could find a more lucrative job. One of my shifts was in a children's hospital built during the Victorian era. The hospital closed a few years before and my job was basically to keep vandals from trashing the government building at night.

I patrolled the dark wards late at night. My weak flashlight lit up old children's drawings – crayon on yellow-stained

paper – against the walls. Empty beds stood untouched in neat rows beneath secured windows.

Somewhere in front of me in the dark I heard the patter of tiny feet. I swung my flashlight in the direction of the sound, but there was nothing. Behind me I heard a child giggling. Damn pranksters!

I marched through the ward, ready to grab a teen by his ear and confiscate his spray paint, but there was nothing. The giggling followed me through the hospital. Every time I stopped, the sounds also stopped. When I resumed my patrol, so did the giggling, and rather worryingly the number of voices also increased.

My marching changed to a jog – and this very quickly changed into a full-on

sprint. The giggling and pattering were close on my heels while I raced past cribs in a maternity ward to the front door on the ground floor, where the sounds suddenly stopped. I completed the remainder of my shift outside in the parking lot.

Was it the restless souls of the dead children? No, I realise today that it was only my imagination that got the better of me.

THERE WAS, HOWEVER, TWO INCIDENTS RECENTLY, a couple of days apart, that I can't attribute to my imagination.

In 2016 I rode from Cape Town to Lesotho on a motorcycle. On the first night I decided to overnight close to the border and the hotel in Lady Grey seemed

like as good a place as any to sleep. It was already dark when I rode into town and the hotel's receptionist welcomed me warmly with an offer of coffee and rusks. I also got to choose which room I wanted to stay in because I was the only guest. By 9 pm the receptionist knocked on my door.

"I'm going home now, sir. I'm locking the door but I'll be here early to let you out."

"What? I spluttered. "Are you locking me in?"

"Yes, but don't worry. You're the only guest here and you're welcome to explore the hotel as you please," she added.

I was dead tired – it was a long day on my motorcycle and I basically passed out as opposed to falling asleep. Shortly after midnight I awoke... and I immediately felt uneasy. In the distance I heard footsteps approaching – not the sound of a sly thief sneaking around but also not the carefree

The footsteps came closer and closer and stopped outside my door. I lay frozen. Soft moonlight shone through the lace curtain...

march of someone who belonged in the building. They were heavy footsteps, like a man's, with a rhythmic footfall. Doof, doof, doof...

The footsteps came closer and closer and stopped outside my door. I lay frozen. Soft moonlight shone through the lace curtain, just enough for me to see the room door heaving. Someone on the other side was repeatedly pushing and releasing it, push and release. The movement reminded me of the upper body of a sleeping dog. The person on the other side didn't turn the handle.

"Hello, is someone there? I asked in a husky voice, but it came out a few octaves higher than I had planned. The door stopped moving. I lay and waited for what felt like an eternity for a response, but none came. After a while I decided that my imagination was yet again running away with me. I turned on my side to sleep.

But sleep evaded me and every now and again I checked the time on my cell-phone. About half an hour later I heard soft breathing outside the door. This time my nerves were completely shot and I was ready to jump out of bed, storm to the door and confront whoever was on the other side of it. Suddenly the floorboards in the hallway creaked and the footsteps moved away and faded in the distance. I carefully opened the door and peeked out into the dark passageway, but there was nothing. The next morning I asked my hostess about my visitor.

Her answer? "Now you know why I don't sleep here..."

THE NEXT NIGHT in the Sehlabathebe National Park in Lesotho I looked forward to overnighting in their new lodge. But when I arrived there was not a soul in sight. I parked my bike and walked to the lodge's main building.

All the doors were locked. I peered through the windows into the empty dining room: There were tables and chairs, but no guests. All the bungalows were furnished but they were otherwise empty.

"Can I help you, sir?" a voice mumbled behind me. Only after I got my voice back and unclenched my

jaw could I turn around to see what gave me such a start. A Sotho man dressed in a red T-shirt and brown slacks stood not a metre from me. How did he manage to get so close without me hearing him?

His expression was dull, his back slightly crooked, and his arms hung limp at his sides like a marionette between shows. I asked if I could pitch my tent in the campsite but he insisted that it was too cold at night to camp and that I should rather sleep in a bungalow. Just as in Lady Grey I was the only guest, but because of my apparent inability to learn my lesson, I agreed. While I carried my bags to the bungalow the man with the crooked back and limp arms stood to the side gawking at me.

I later took my camera and went for a walk in the mountains to photograph the beautiful park. From afar I could see the man standing there looking at me. When I looked

back, he had shifted position. First he was at the main building, then at the bungalows, and then somewhere on the grounds near the lodge. When the sun started setting I ambled back to the lodge. The man was gone.

In my bungalow I fried some baked beans and soya mince in a pan on my gas stove. As I looked up, I saw the man right up against the window, looking at me. "Flip!" I shouted (okay, I used a different exclamation). The limp man simply turned and walked away.

After dinner I locked the door and got into bed. At about three in the morning I awoke with a start, remembering that my GPS was still mounted on my bike's handlebar. I couldn't afford to lose it since there were countless mountain trails that I had to navigate. In my long johns and riding boots I walked out the door. It was freezing outside and frost crunched underfoot. I was glad not to be camping.

There stood the limp man...

Through the dark and icy cold we stared at each other for what felt like an eternity. I carefully removed the GPS from my motorcycle and slowly backed away. I bolted the door to my room and started packing. As soon as the sun reared its head, I'd be out of here.

Three hours later, as dawn broke, I heard the droning of an engine. A bakkie with two occupants stopped outside the main building. The limp man was nowhere to be seen. The driver introduced himself as the lodge's caretaker. With him was the chef. They were away all of yesterday to buy provisions. I explained that the night-watchman gave me permission to sleep in the bungalow.

Their response gave me the chills: "What nightwatchman?" 🕵️





Never far from home

To be able to travel and enjoy nature makes Frikkie and Marthie Blom from Germiston feel very grateful. And they express their gratitude with, and in, a 1993 Mitsubishi L300 Express.

Edited by **Kyle Kock** Photos **Marthie Blom**

“When we initially purchased ‘Skilpad’ it was still finished in its original white, but that was looking a little tired so we asked Marthie’s brother Johan ‘Johnny’ Nortje to paint something special for us. We enjoy being away in the great outdoors and visiting the seaside and getting close to wildlife.

We believe that we are watched over and kept safe wherever we go, so we had Johnny reflect that in the designs on Skilpad’s exterior panels. There are some animals, angels, and other aspects of nature featured.

We have owned Skilpad for four years already and have covered a collective 48 000 km worth of travel mileage, with no major issues – something that’s

very impressive for a vehicle this old. It consumes around 11,7 l/100 km when fully loaded.

On one trip to Namibia we decided that an extra spare wheel mounted up front would come in handy considering the state of the road in some areas. We have also altered the interior slightly to suit our own individual tastes and to give us a space to work while we’re away, whether we’re inside or outside. But that’s the extent of the modifications.

Every single experience with Skilpad has been special and we have enjoyed our time in Namibia, to places like Brandberg, Etosha, Spitzkoppe, Twyfelfontein, as well as to Ghanzi and the Okavango Delta in Botswana. Back home our favourites

include Klein Kariba, Oribi Gorge in KwaZulu-Natal, and the Augrabies Falls and the Kruger.

Skilpad has made our camping life so much easier. It feels like home. When we’re on the road we just pull into a garage and take a short break when we’re tired. At a campsite we park, hook up to a power source and enjoy our surroundings after a long drive. ”



Have you spotted any wacky wheels on your travels? Tell us about it and send a photo to

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