

#7

go!

CAMP FOOD TRY THESE GOURMET TOASTIES

FEBRUARY 2018 | ISSUE 7

# Drive & Camp

## HARDCORE 4X4 THROUGH SWAZILAND

### 4X4 ROUTE

The Malutis  
are calling

Head to two  
family resorts in

# Montagu

### WEEKEND BREAK

A camping oasis in  
Mpumalanga

*Shock absorbers  
Keeping your  
wheels on  
the road*

### CARAVAN TEST

Lion's Cub  
purr-fect for  
partners

## Camp boffin 7 ways to make your tent last longer

### WE DRIVE

Ford Kuga  
BMW X3  
Nissan Patrol



A reader builds  
a teardrop and  
shows you how



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## BRING YOUR OWN SHADE 8 AWNINGS FOR SUMMER DAYS p.94





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## DESTINATIONS



SECUNDA

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## #7 | February 2018 EVERY MONTH

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In terms of size, as a sport utility vehicle, the Kuga is on the smaller side of the spectrum, but things are quite different when it comes to its towing ability.



# ECHO 4 X 4 CENTRE

## CHOBE

- Kitchen**
- Caravan kitchen Mk2
  - Dual plate gas stove
  - Wash basin and drying rack
  - \*Fire Extinguisher
  - Fold down counter
  - 100Kg Fridge slide
  - \*40-90 Litre fridge/freezer
  - \*Cooker wind deflector
  - \*Microwave

- Chassis**
- Vehicle standard with adapter
- Wheels & Suspension**
- Vehicle standard
- Storage**
- 4x Underbody storage boxes

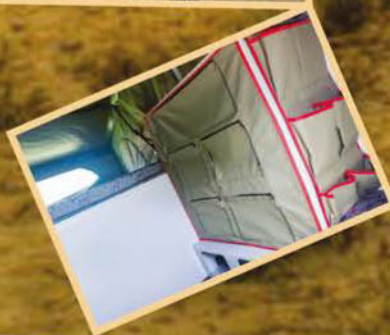
- Specifications**
- Overall Width: 1850mm
  - Overall Length: 2700mm
  - Overall Height: 2160
  - Overall Weight: 590kg

- Electronics**
- EPP3 Mk1 (power panel)
  - 12 Volt system
  - 12 Volt pressure pump
  - 74 Amp Hour
  - \*Solar panel and mounting
  - \*220 Volt extension cable 20m
  - \*220 Volt caravan adaptor

- Body**
- Fibre glass monocoque outer shell
  - Colour impregnated
  - Corrosion free body
  - Stainless steel bolts, nuts & hinges
  - Load area tie down rails
  - Automotive style door rubbers
  - Industrial interior carpeting
  - Rain gutters
  - Manoeuvring handles
  - \*Mud flaps

- Extras**
- Vehicle wiring to charge caravan
  - Height adjustable braai grid (spare wheel mount)
  - On demand gas geyser system
  - Shower cubicle tent and wash basin
  - Fridge
  - 2' Sleeper wardrobe

- Tent**
- Side tent + top tent
  - High density foam mattress
  - 400 Gram military spec two tone
  - Ripstop canvas
  - 270° Awning
  - Mosquito netting for all tent windows
  - Backdoor mosquito net
  - \*Fire extinguisher
  - \*Condensation / roofing sheet
  - \*Side walls



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# The camera doesn't lie



I cut my journalism teeth at a community newspaper in Parys in the Free State years ago.

You'd be surprised by how much news there is in a town like Parys. Sure, there isn't a cash-in-transit heist or a political scandal every week, and when the town's rugby team loses it was always because of "unnecessary handling errors and bad decisions by the ref". But thanks to the locals there was an overabundance of news – from the Rotary Club, bowling results, schools news and giant vegetables grown in backyards to court cases, weddings, Christmas carol services and wedding anniversaries.

I once had to photograph twins who celebrated their 95th birthday. These two had their hair done the day before and slept sitting up in their lounge that night so not to ruin their perms.

The photo was published in the newspaper the next Friday and a short while later my phone rang. It was them. I thought they were phoning to thank me for the picture and write-up, but they were furious. They thought I made them look super-old in the photo.

I felt sorry for the ladies, but the camera doesn't lie. It was their 95th birthday after all and I don't think anyone would have confused them with third-year NWU students.

Just like the photo of the twins, on these pages we tell you exactly what we see when we go on our camping or off-road excursions. Yes, we tell the story and give you more info, but with regards to the facilities we tell you how we experienced it. We never say who we are when we phone to book, because we don't want preferential treatment. We want to see the place exactly like you will see it.

We also don't rate campsites. We simply tell you where it is, what there is, what it looks like, and how much it costs. The rating we'll leave to you.

Safe travels!

*Schalk*

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com

Sometimes the newbies scare you, as my colleague Kyle Kock discovered when a young journalist drove into a river with Kyle in the passenger seat.

p.136



Cover photos **Piet van Heerde** (Swaziland) and **Leon Botha** (Paarl)

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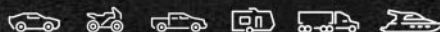
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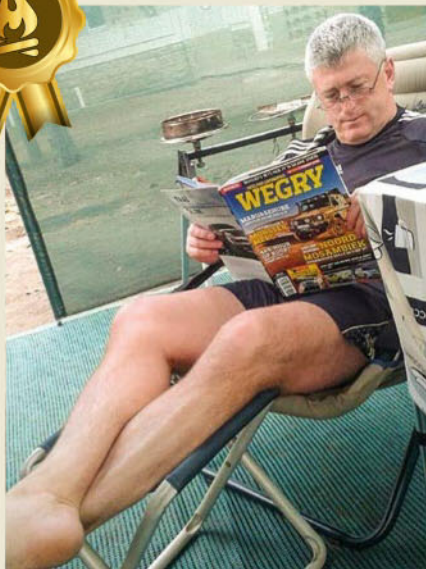
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## FREE OF CHARGE

Our Jeep's water pump started giving us trouble one day so we had it replaced and also put in a new thermostat. After this the Jeep's engine overheated a few more times and so-called Jeep experts told us the fault lay with the radiator cap. So I replaced this with a fancy one with its own valve and all.

It's the end of April and my wife, Ronel and I, were heading to Eiland-spa with the Xcape in tow. I watched the temperature gauge with a hawk's eye and in the Magoebaskloof Pass it overheated again. I left the engine to cool down and crawled to Tzaneen. I saw that one of the tyre valves were almost off and I had it replaced at a tyre place. I headed off and about 20 km from Eiland the radiator burst. There we were, stranded.

I called the Eiland, hoping that someone would come help us get the caravan to the

resort. Within moments the resort manager, Bennie Steenkamp, phoned back and said he was already on his way. Meanwhile, the guy who helped with the tyre's valve came driving past and again offered to help. He said he knew a place that could fix the radiator. I phoned the people and organised for them to tow the Jeep to Eiland, take out the radiator, and take it with them to fix it.

Thankful for all the help that we received in our time of need, we pitched camp that night. As always the camping was great and we enjoyed the hospitality of the resort. Bennie came to check in often to see if everything was still okay and if they could help with transport should we need it. Kindness like this really warms the heart.

The radiator people finished and came to put it back in the Jeep, but not 3 km further the Jeep overheated again. Again

we replaced the thermostat and then discovered that the people who initially replaced the water pump obstructed some of the water supply around the pump and this clogged the radiator.

All that remained was to have the caravan and Jeep towed home. Bennie again saved the day and we left the caravan in his yard until we could fetch it. We headed back to Modimolle with the Jeep on a tow truck.

One of the lessons we learnt was not to blindly trust so-called experts because I initially wanted to replace the radiator. Secondly, there are people who care and who will stop to offer help to strangers.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to everyone who stopped and offered to help.

**LOUIS AND RONEL BOTES**  
**Modimolle**



## Winning letter

**Louis** and **Ronel** win 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.







## A DIFFERENT SIDE TO YELLOW AND GREY

I refer to the article about vehicle colours in the December 2017 issue and would like to add the following:

**Yellow vehicles:** I drove several yellow cars when doing high mileages to many mining operations. I thought it was a safer colour but realised the opposite in Bedfordview. Officials changed their emergency vehicles' colour to yellow but then realised that you can't see them at night under sodium and mercury lighting.

**Silver/Grey vehicles:** When driving in mist, fog, smoke or rain, everything around you goes grey, so silver/grey cars become difficult to see. It helps to switch on your headlights.

**ALEXANDER S. LAMBERT**  
Johannesburg



MIC'S MEMOS

## Handle with care

There are few things in life that compares to taking delivery of a new vehicle. This may not be the case for everyone but for petrolheads like us, it certainly is, says Mic van Zyl.

**M**y trusty El Criterio has served me well for the past four years, but company policy dictates a new vehicle. The anticipation after ordering your new ride leading up to the day of delivery is very similar to the anticipation between getting a "yes" to that first date and the actual event. The new car smell, fuel and ride is simply wonderful. It makes you wish you could keep it like that forever. Sadly, however, is sadly different. That new car smell disappears over time as you become familiar with your vehicle. With the novelty gone, you're left with everyday vehicle ownership that could be a good or a bad experience.

Some of the factors affecting the pleasure of your vehicle to ownership are beyond your control. Vehicle build quality, design integrity, and level of engineering are things that were determined without your input. Your choice of new vehicle may be influenced by feedback from current owners. The internet is full of these comments and opinions. Truth be told, there are very few poorly engineered vehicles available today, as long as you stick to the big, reputable brands.

**THERE ARE, OF COURSE,** a number of factors that affect your new vehicle's reliability that are well within your control. The most important is maintenance at a reputable service centre. Only a bad would neglect to regularly service their vehicle and expect continued reliability. Care of operation is another important aspect. Vehicle abuse is constantly going to break vehicle and component life.

There are two other factors of vehicle care that I have always held in high regard. The first is running in a new vehicle, and the second is letting it warm up in the morning before driving off. The advice I've gotten from a couple of experts that I've dealt with for many years and whom I consider to know what they're talking about, is all the same. The highest rate of engine wear happens during acceleration and also when the engine is not at normal operating temperature.

So, is it still necessary to run in a new vehicle given the existing tolerances in vehicle component manufacturing? I've heard more than once that a vehicle that was "baked" early on will be long. I don't know if I buy that though. No matter how good modern manufacturing tolerances are, pistons, rings, engine bearings, cylinder bores, valves and cam shafts all need to rub each other up and get to know each other better if they're going to get along for a long time. Brake pads and discs have the same issue, as does the transmission.

**ACCORDING TO THE MEN** in white coats and thick gloves, one should take it easy during the first 2 000-3 000 km. During this time, test your acceleration to include the use of full throttle. Do not drive for extended periods at constant speeds on a motorway. Vary your engine speed and your road speed. Maintain a safe following distance from the car in front of you to avoid sudden braking. When braking, attempt to vary the application of the brakes, only when it's safe to do so. This will ensure the proper embedding of certain components, ensuring longer service life.

Should you let your engine warm up to optimal temperature before driving off in the morning? Again, the experts say that this does more harm than good. The general consensus is that after starting your engine, a mere 15 second period should be given to allow the engine revs to settle. Then, drive off steadily without the use of full throttle to allow the engine to reach normal operating temperatures as quickly as possible without overreversing it. I've always followed the above advice and have yet to experience any undue vehicle component wear. Perhaps I've just been very lucky, but I suspect that the above advice certainly has something to do with it.

**12 December 2017 go! Drive & Camp**

## 15 seconds for 30 years

I refer to the December 2017 issue where Mic van Zyl says in his column that you have to idle your vehicle's engine for 15 seconds before driving.

I agree. Switch on, drive out the yard, close the gate, and drive slowly for the first

few kilometres. I've been doing it for the past 30 years. If you do this the gearbox and differential slowly reaches its optimal temperature and the oil isn't cold and thick.

**JOHAN VORSTER**  
via email

## WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

For the past 15 years we've been camping with our off-road trailer and before that with a tent. Something struck me, especially at the SANparks.

We arrive at places like Mapungubwe, Satara and Shingwedzi to spend a few days there. It's time to choose a stand and on one of the nice shady stands there's nothing more than a fold-up table and a camping chair. You assume it's people with a motorhome or a rally tent on the car who's camping on this stand and they obviously went somewhere on a day trip.

If you're camping like this you don't need all that shade during

the day, and chances are good that they are going to stay only a few nights before heading off again.

People who are going to be spending more time on a stand can benefit more from the shade on a stand like that. I suggest people at SANParks build stands specifically for motorhome owners. They can add a few power points and even paved areas to make it more enticing.

I understand that we are all equally entitled to a stand, but maybe we can try to accommodate each other?

**GEORGE MARAIS**  
Polokwane





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# Pet peeves



A neighbour's tent pegs on your stand, a wet floor in the ablution block, a radio or TV at full volume, or a braai drum full of ash. Tell us what you absolutely cannot stand when you're camping.



**Julie Hundermark**

When previous campers leave the place dirty, with rubbish and booze bottles lying everywhere except in the bin.



**Rina Breedt**

Ropes and string that's tied up from tree to tree for washing. It looks very unneat.



**Sandra Wiese**

For me it's the music loud enough for the entire campsite to hear. Take people into consideration! And also, if the rules state that no music is allowed but it doesn't get enforced.



**Hein Goosen**

Naughty children who throw tantrums all day long. And their mom and dad seem oblivious to it all.



**Deon Britz**

Just one thing annoys me: those little black kick bikes with plastic wheels on tarmac. Especially before sunrise. Everything else I can handle.



**Jan van Staden**

Campers who look at me like I'm something the cat dragged in and who don't greet.



**Ernest Horn**

When you spot an open stand and the neighbour comes over to say "Sorry, I'm keeping this spot for my friend".



**Michelle Stoltz**

People who don't clean the ablution facilities after they've used it and expect others to tidy up after them.



**Eben de Swardt**

A neighbour who burns more lights at night than at Ellis Park.



**Norman du Plooy**

Cigarette butts from the previous campers. And people who smoke around and in the ablution facilities.



**Danie Hattingh**

Drunk teenagers that try to create an outdoor night-club on their stand. I hate conflict so I rather just don't return to the same place.



**Tina Germishuys**

My biggest gripe are pool pumps that stay on all night long. Have you ever noticed how peaceful it is when they're switched off?



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# Be a little more responsible

He has noticed a high instance of intimidation towards women drivers in smaller cars, especially by men in big 4x4s, says Mic van Zyl.

**T**here is a certain element of satisfaction driving a big, tall 4x4 in traffic. There is a lot of metal around you for protection. Those big 33" tyres, 2" suspension lift and bullbar certainly lend an air of invincibility. Add to this that 300 W LED light bar to scare off anybody who dares pull into the gap in front of you.

I witnessed some truly shocking behaviour recently from a fellow Ford Ranger driver in traffic.

**After the second altercation, I noticed that this motorist had his wife and children in the vehicle with him.**

Shocking! The male driver used his truck to intimidate a young mom with her kiddies driving a small hatchback on their way to school. Traffic was its usual horrible self and the lady had to get across three lanes to make a turn at a very poorly designed intersection. She was indicating and politely requesting a gap.

The fool in the double cab was being an absolute idiot. He forced his way in front of her to ensure that he could get through first ahead of the mom and her kids in their

little car. He had to go over the pavement with his left-hand wheels and caused quite a commotion. Well done buddy! You won that one! You're a hero to many, I'm sure.

**AS HE WAS** heading in the same direction as me, I had the opportunity to witness his terrible road manners for a while longer. A couple of kilometres up the road at another intersection, this road warrior had another chance to show off his superiority by tangling with a taxi. Again he proceeded to enforce his dominance using the pavement and some wheel spin and ultimately won the battle, although judging by the smile and shaking of the taxi drivers head, I wonder who truly won that one.

After this altercation I noticed that this clown had his wife and kiddies in the bakkie with him. I immediately got quite upset and just as quickly calmed down when I thought of my own wife and son. I cannot fathom why someone would put their own lives at risk, never mind those of their family or of other road users. It is a little-known fact that SA has one of the highest instances of road rage in the world, almost as bad as Russia. Go check it out on YouTube.

I do a lot of mileage and I have seen a lot of road rage. Strangely enough, I have never witnessed female road rage.

**I HAVE NOTICED** a high instance of intimidation towards women drivers in smaller cars, especially by men in big 4x4s. It's unbelievable! It's quite obvious you have the bigger vehicle. Everybody can see this. Surely there's no need to emphasise the point by behaving rudely.

Take it from me: If you want to impress the good-looking girl in the little car, give her a smile and wave her into the gap ahead of you. If it's a mom with her kiddies on the way to school, do you really want the kids to be late because of your ego?

I employ around 400 people who rely on taxis to get to where they're going. Yes, I know taxis drive badly, push in anywhere and drive up the wrong side of the road, and it is infuriating. But spare a thought for the people who have no other choice but to take a taxi to get to work and back home again while you sit in your luxury 4x4 truck sipping on your latté and listening to Apple Music.

You have the ultimate power to be courteous and it doesn't cost a thing.

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

[ironman4x4.co.za](http://ironman4x4.co.za)



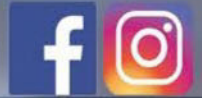


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# With the sea comes the wind

When you go camping next to the sea there are a few items that need to go with. Otherwise you're going to run into trouble, says Neels van Heerden.

**F**or the first time in years I towed to the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal this past December holiday. Friends asked us at the last minute whether we would take over their booking and we had to move fast.

The packing list for a seaside holiday is significantly more complicated than one for a weekend camping trip outside Pretoria. But this goes without saying, and right from the start there were a few items at the top of my list.

**The packing list for a seaside holiday is significantly more complicated than one for a weekend camping trip outside Pretoria.**

A proper flysheet is non-negotiable, even if you have air con in your caravan. By the way, I am yet to invest in the latter. In KwaZulu-Natal some trees bear fruit in December and if those fruit fall on your tent roof, it leaves sticky residue that is difficult to clean. During the day these trees are often swarming with sparrows and at night it's fruit bats – and all of these winged creatures do their business on your roof. Your flysheet, therefore, will come in handy because it's easier to clean

with soap and water than the roof of your tent.

Besides keeping your tent cool and providing protection from messy trees and animals, it also keeps the roof dry. Feel for yourself how damp the underside of an uncovered tent roof is when the rain starts to fall.

**IF YOUR STAND** has an ocean view, chances are that you'll be in the path of the wind and this is why you need sturdy storm straps and a large cargo net.

You pull the flysheet over your tent and anchor the storm straps. Then you cover everything with the cargo net, fasten it and you're ready for any wind.

One of the best new gadgets to hit the market recently is storm pegs that are attached to anchor ropes with a spring. Where I used to use seven anchor straps to firmly hold the front three poles down, one spring peg provides the same peace of mind that your tent won't blow away.

You can even consider using two spring pegs at each pole if you want to make 100% sure your tent isn't going anywhere. The pegs work together in tandem depending on the wind direction. If one of the springs wears out slightly, the other one works harder and prevents the pegs from pulling out of the ground. That's one of the biggest problems with L-shaped pegs. They eventually pull free of the ground.

Take along extra poles that can be used parallel to your caravan to connect the middle poles to the side poles. This prevents water from pooling on your tent's roof. Pools of water tend to bend poles that slide into each other. I even use upright poles to prop up the ones that connect the caravan to the front walls.

It's advisable to add a proper foot piece, as big as a licence disc, to the bottom of the middle upright poles because it prevents the poles from sinking into the ground. If these foot pieces have holes in them, they can be nailed down with straight pegs.

**NEXT ON MY LIST** is a shallow plastic dish or drip tray, similar to what you'll find in your house's roof, underneath the geyser. Put one on the nose and another on the back of your caravan. This is where the water runs down and then flows underneath your ground sheet. These pans are lightweight and have an outlet hole that you can connect a pool pipe to to redirect water even farther away.

If you have something like a Dri-Buddi, pack it in. It's handy, especially if you want to dry towels. We had to pay R100 to wash and dry six damp towels in the caravan park's laundry. The prices in the town's laundry range between R15 and R25 p/kg. So if you buy a Dri-Buddi it'll soon pay for itself.





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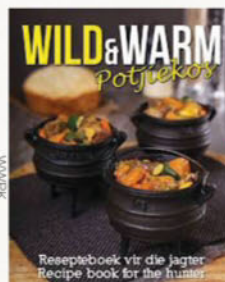
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# New campsites in the Free State

## UNHITCH AT DE ARK

**T**he Eastern Free State is one of the most beautiful areas in the country, but unfortunately there aren't a whole lot of campsites. The De Ark Mountain Lodge is just outside of Clarens and has been operating for 25 years. They have recently expanded their accommodation options to include caravan stands.

De Ark lies on the Rooiberg, with the Caledon River a kilometre away and Lesotho with its Maloti Mountains in the background. Miguel Lage, the owner, says they initially bought the land as a breakaway spot for the family but with time more and more of them wanted to come relax here. They eventually turned it into a lodge. "I found the surge in the caravan industry the past few years interesting, and we decided to add a campsite to our accommodation options," says Miguel.

The campsite is in the middle of the 280 ha land and Miguel and co have four stands ready. They are planning a total of 10, and Miguel says the idea is to not expand it more. They say campers should be able to enjoy their own space in nature. The stands are a good 80 m from each other and are not demarcated. There are quite a few

wild animals on the grounds, including eland, zebra, red wildebeest and black wildebeest, and they come to graze next to your stand.

Each stand has a canopy that's high enough for a caravan to fit under – you can also park your caravan next to it if you want to use the canopy section as a place to relax. The hot water comes from a gas geyser and the shower is a large open area in a room that also has a basin. There's a separate toilet to the side. The stand has a power point which accepts a blue caravan plug.

You're not allowed to drive around the grounds to do game viewing, but Miguel and his team do offer game drives. You may explore the various hiking trails and there is everything from San rock art to mountain streams to enjoy.

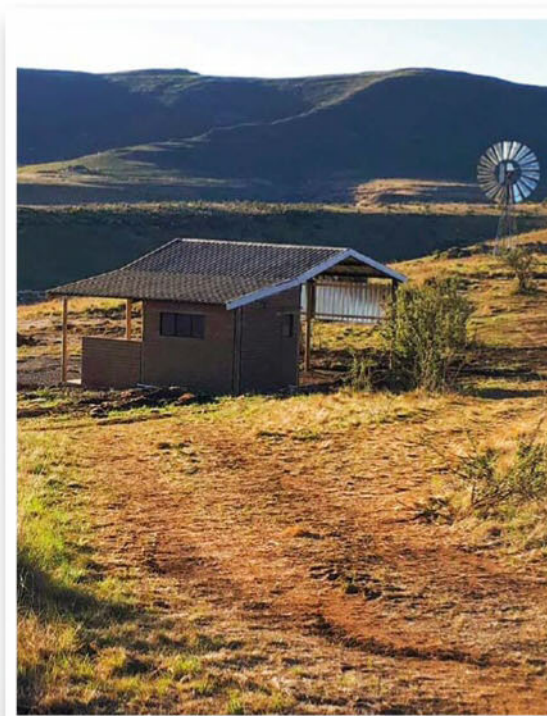
The last stretch of road to De Ark (4,5 km) is a dirt road intended for vehicles with high ground clearance. The campsite is therefore better suited to off-road trailer and off-road caravan owners.

**Price** R850 per stand p.n. for 4 adults, or up to 6 people (including kids).

**Contact** 058 256 1202

reservations@deark-clarens.co.za

deark-clarens.co.za



**Campers should be able to enjoy their own space in nature. The stands are a good 80 m from each other and are not demarcated.**









## THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION

**S**ensation Boats & Living recently launched their latest range of caravans in South Africa. The new Destination caravans are available in three models that range between double and single axle, and another one or two variants are in the pipeline.

The existing Sensation caravans were initially also built by Sensation Boats & Living's owners, but these were sold to the current owners of Jurgens Ci. Meanwhile, quite a few customers of Sensation Boats & Living approached them, and the result was the birth of a new caravan range.

Sensation Boats & Living was established in 2000 by the twin brothers André and Riaan van Helsdingen and was first called Twin Boats & Trailer. It wasn't long before they started exporting luxury boats. Ten years later, Riaan launched the Sensation caravan range and at that time the caravans were the only ones you could compare with the European caravan market in terms of style and quality. In 2015, Riaan took the Sensation caravan range and broke away from Twin Boats. The business was sold a year later.

The Destination caravans are therefore part of a new range of caravans with André at the helm. If you compare the new range with the Sensation caravans it's clear that André has taken the

existing glamour and taken it to the next level. Locally, there isn't much competition in this segment of the caravan market.

The caravans' body is made almost entirely of fibreglass, and the panels, roof and floor are made separately and then attached with fibreglass strips. Due to the nature of this building material the complete body looks like it came out of one mold. The fibreglass panels have an exterior gel coating with a special plastic interior layer as well as a fibreglass layer and coating on the inside. These layers are merged by means of a cold process under a vacuum and it's super hardy. This panel is 20 mm thick.

The cupboards and cupboard doors are made of light wood doors and aluminium.

There are three models: the Dream, Journey and the Magic. The first two are double-axle models, and the Dream has a De Lux variant. The De Lux has two panels that slide out to make the living and sleeping areas even larger. All the caravans sleep four. The Dream costs R485 000 and the De Lux is R200 000 more. (The prices of the other models were not available at time of going to print.)

The Dream has a 30 l geyser, air con (12 000 BTU), king-sized island bed, 28 l microwave oven, and a separate bathroom as well as toilet. The Dream's



tare weight is roughly 1 800 kg and is relatively light compared to the Jurgens Exclusive. The Dream is 1,5 m longer though (9,15 m) and 2,45 m wide. For this kind of

caravan you require a powerful towing vehicle because the GVM is fixed at 2 500 kg and it has run-in brakes.

**Contact** 010 140 1337  
sales@sensationboats.com

### A BABY BROTHER FOR VOLVO

The Swedish vehicle manufacturer has confirmed that its compact SUV, the XC40, will arrive in South Africa in April this year. The XC40 joins its older and bigger brothers the XC60 and XC90. Just like other Volvos, there will be two trim levels to choose from: R-Design and Momentum. There are also two engine options: D4 diesel and T5 petrol. Both will be all-wheel drive. The model range will be extended at the end of 2018 to include a D3 diesel, T3 petrol, T4 petrol and a choice of front-wheel or all-wheel drive.

Volvo South Africa is keeping mum about prices for now, but they have revealed that the entry-level model will come in at under R500 000 and the most expensive XC40 will cost around R650 000.





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# ELRICO AND PIERRE TAKE THE TANKWA

**T**wenty-two 4x4s recently gathered at the Stonehenge farm in the Tankwa Karoo for the final round of the Cooper Dust series. The participants came from four regions to compete on this special spot.

At the end of the two-day competition, Elrico Koen and his brother-in-law Pierre Genis from Bellville were crowned national champions.

Gerrie van Eeden, the organiser of the Dust series (He is also responsible for the Weg Ry & Sleep Bull Run. – Ed), says the competition is aimed at the average 4x4 enthusiast. The idea is that modified 4x4s don't necessarily have a better chance of winning than standard models.

Elrico and Pierre proved this point by taking gold with their standard Land Rover Discovery 3. The only modification was a set of 35" tyres. The father-and-son combo Herman and Henry Neethling from George came in second in their short-axle Mitsubishi Pajero, with the Bloemfontein brothers-in-law Louis Kok en Henri Storm taking third place in a Toyota Hilux.

The final round started with a navigation route through and around the Tankwa Karoo National Park, where the participants had to stop at various control points before the ending at a lookout point on top of Ouberg Pass. You couldn't pretend to be Giniel de Villiers, though, because there was a target time for the 240 km route. Elrico and Pierre took the lead with this from the start.

The second day the participants had the opportunity to prove their mettle over four obstacles, and they didn't disappoint. At each obstacle there was a choice between an easier option and a more difficult one, which was worth more points. No one chose any of the easier options.

The competition ended with a race through an obstacle course, and this tested the vehicles to their limits. Three 4x4s had to be recovered.

Gerrie says they might add three more regions this year, which would undoubtedly mean tougher competition.

Visit [dustmedia.co.za](http://dustmedia.co.za) if you want to enter. >





# UNDERBODY PROTECTION



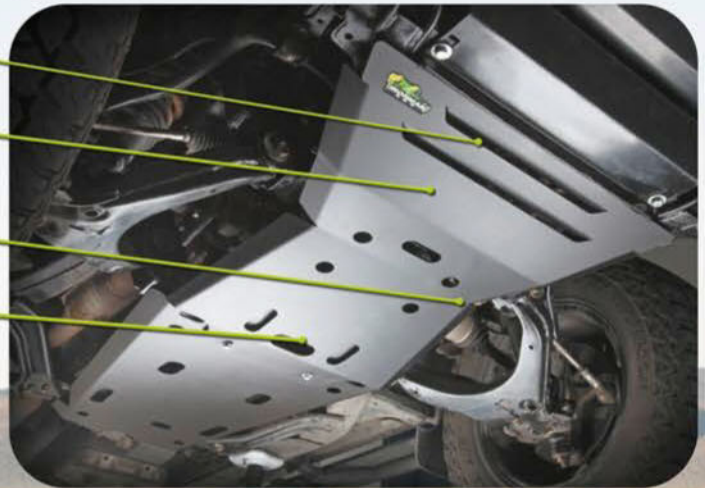
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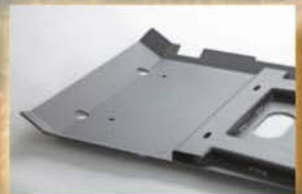


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# TRITON TO THE EXTREME

Hilux Black Edition, Ranger Fx4 and Isuzu X-rider... Several vehicle manufacturers have a bakkie decked out in special stickers with pumped up muscles in their stable. Mitsubishi has also joined the gang, and just like Die Moot area in Pretoria, there are desirable properties and less than great areas. But one thing is certain: It's definitely not boring and the type of person who would buy a Triton Xtreme is no shrinking violet.

The Triton Xtreme was designed by South Africans for South Africans, and it boasts a body kit worth R60 000 that prospective buyers can get for just R20 000 extra on top of the Triton's standard price.

The body kit includes the following: bonnet guard, unique grille and fog light shrouds, wheel arch protectors, door handle cups, running boards, durable floor mats, load bin cover, roll bar, tailgate protector, fuel cap cover, black-and-chrome rims, and Cooper all-terrain tyres.

The body kit is supplied by Mitsubishi South Africa and will obviously not affect any warranties.

A Mitsubishi Triton Xtreme 4x2 automatic will cost you R519 995 versus the standard Triton 2.4 Di 4x2 automatic, which goes for R499 995.



## FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

South Africans have been spoiled for choice with all the different caravan options, especially on the off-road side. Conqueror and Echo4x4 are the heavyweights that specialise in the off-road trailer and off-road caravan segment, but the Cape-based manufacturer Bush Lapa is quickly becoming part of this distinguished group.

Conqueror is known

for their modular plate structures, Echo uses mainly fibreglass for the body, and Bush Lapa focuses on materials like stainless steel and aluminium.

Bush Lapa opened their doors in 2010 in Worcester and eventually started bursting at the seams – they had to move the operation to Paarl. In the meantime they also opened a branch in Centurion as well as a dealership in Pretoria. Loftus Caravan City in Johannesburg now also has a Bush Lapa franchise, and another dealer outside Pinetown opened one in KwaZulu-Natal.

The newest development is Bush Lapa's entry into the international market. Their first consignment has already been shipped to Australia. The owner, Jannie Oeschger, says they've sent their entire range and not only a few models. The caravans do need to be modified to adhere to Australian regulations, but the whole construction is done here.

The range of colours is also slightly different compared to the local range, and the names have been changed. The Gogga range becomes the Hopper, the Ratel is now called the Badger, and the Baobab remains unchanged.

By the time you read this, 1 200 Bush Lapas will have been rolled out of the plant.

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# Ford ahead

Sales of the Ranger 3.2 double cab XLT 4x4 Fx4 has exceeded Ford's wildest expectations, and the company recently decided to roll out this special edition – which was initially only going to be available in limited numbers – to the rest of the XLT double cab model range, including the 2.2 and 3.2 manual and auto.

You can now also get your hands on a 2.2 manual XLT with a pitch black sticker on the bonnet. Also a black grille, fog light covers, 17" rims, roll bar, side mirrors, roof racks, rear bumper and door handles – all black just like a "real" Fx4.

All the different variety Fx4 Rangers also have an optional polyurethane coating – yes, black – in the load bin to protect the metal. This lining was previously seen on the Ford F150 and was developed in 2008 in Kansas City in the States. Ford's general warranty of 120 000 km and four years is also valid for the coating, and if it starts showing scratches you can take your Fx4 to your nearest Ford dealer for repairs.

Another new addition is parking sensors on the front bumper on all XLT models. This is particularly handy in parking areas and campsites where low walls or posts often hide behind the Ranger's huge bonnet.

● In other Ford news: The manufacturer's Struandale plant in Port Elizabeth manufactured their 500 000th Duratorq TDCi engine in December 2017. Since the plant opened its doors in 1964, more than 3,3 million engines have been built here. The plant supplies engines to local vehicles and also exports to China, the USA, Thailand, and Australia. This plant is so important to the Ford group that it received a cash injection of three billion rand to help with further growth. >





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## More new vehicles sold

The November 2017 sales figures for new vehicles show an upwards trend, with 32 821 units finding new homes. That's a 16,4% improvement on November 2016's figure of 28 207. This is largely thanks to rental companies that acquired just about 20% of all new vehicles sold.

Low investor confidence and a struggling economy are responsible for declining sales in the light commercial vehicle market. 1 170 fewer bakkies and minibuses were sold in November 2017 than in the same month in 2016. That's a drop of 7,4%. This sales figure is slightly higher than October 2017, though.

### HERE ARE SOME FIGURES FOR NEW VEHICLE SALES AND EXPORTS FOR NOVEMBER 2017

|                   | LOCAL  | EXPORT |
|-------------------|--------|--------|
| Toyota            | 11 441 | 2 899  |
| Volkswagen Group  | 7 438  | 43     |
| Ford              | 7 260  | 6 286  |
| Nissan            | 4 692  | 384    |
| Hyundai           | 3 265  | 0      |
| GM/Isuzu          | 2 670  | 340    |
| Mercedes-Benz     | 2 004  | 11 426 |
| Kia               | 1 883  | 16     |
| Renault           | 1 825  | 0      |
| Mazda             | 1 162  | 0      |
| BMW               | 1 095  | 5 619  |
| Suzuki            | 1 045  | 0      |
| Honda             | 631    | 24     |
| Jaguar Land Rover | 430    | 0      |
| Mahindra          | 372    | 0      |
| GWM               | 263    | 0      |
| Volvo             | 214    | 8      |
| Tata              | 186    | 0      |
| Fiat              | 174    | 14     |
| Chrysler          | 131    | 11     |

Source NAAMSA



## A NAME CHANGE FOR LEXUS NX

Lexus's NX range recently had a face-lift: There are new headlights, a new front bumper with chrome inlays and changed air ducts.

At the back, the NX has new LED lights. The rear bumper has been spruced up and the badge and model name has been moved.

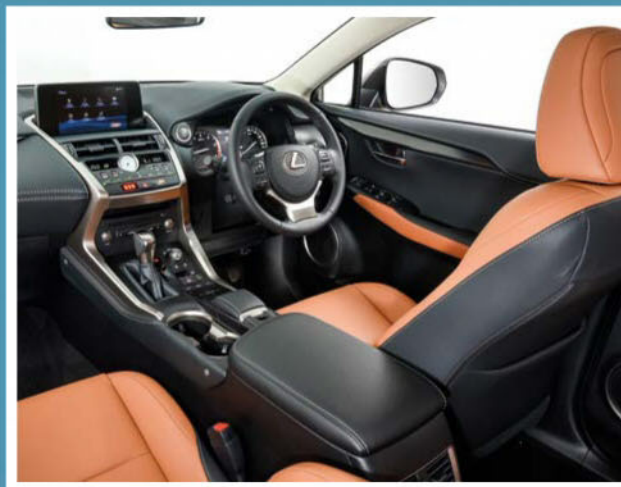
As part of Lexus's global strategy, the "200t" model name (which indicates a 2,0 l turbocharged engine) has been replaced by "300". The 300 in the model name refers to the engine which produces a similar amount of power as a 3.0 l engine. The model names are now NX 300 E, -EX and -F Sport.

The range kicks off with the E. Where all the models previously had all-wheel drive, the E is only front-wheel drive.

The EX and F Sport models still have the old all-wheel-drive system and the six-speed gearbox. The engine remains unchanged in all models.

There are also changes to the interior. The 10.3" touch screen (previously 7") has improved graphics and displays brighter – knobs and buttons have also changed throughout. The odd analogue clock is still there but it is now linked to the satellite navigation so it gets its time from the GPS satellites.

The cheapest NX (NX 300 E) costs R599 900 and the most expensive one (NX 300 F Sport) is R789 700.





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# X (to the power of 3)



With the X Range commanding a third of BMW sales, the Munich manufacturer understandably has a lot riding on the latest generation X3. Kyle Kock got to grips with it on the Garden Route.

**A**lthough the X5 was the vehicle that marked BMW's arrival to the luxury SUV market, the X3 was the one that really started to appeal to a broader market outside of just those looking to make a bold statement in the parking lot. Nobody really expects the X3 to be an off-road bruiser, but BMW remains adamant that those seeking adventure off the beaten track will find the X3 handy.

#### In the metal

The new X3 is definitely grown up – literally. It's wider, taller and longer than its two predecessors. The edgier designs and sharper edges of the previous generations have made way for a more

rounded and bulbous front end. The trademark kidney grille is particularly catching, looking like a pair of ginormous nostrils.

The round fog lamps of the first and second iterations have made way for a narrow hexagonal shape while the famous corona ring headlamps are also no longer round and the park lights feature a distinct hexagonal outline.

There are two character lines in the profile, running from the front fender through the upper and lower sections of the front and rear doors. This helps accentuate the long bonnet appearance that's so familiar with the brand and also adds a degree of dynamism. Just like before, the two middle pillars have been

darkened with gloss black trim. At the rear, the L-shaped tail lights have a pronounced 3D effect, especially when lit up at night.

#### On the road

With the 2.0 diesel having been the most popular model at dealerships, it made sense to focus our attention on this particular model at the new X3's launch on the Garden Route. The volume seller packs 140 kW of power and peak torque of 400 Nm between 1 750 and 2 500 rpm before the torque plateau starts dipping to about 330 at 4 000 rpm. The xDrive20d comes standard with an eight-speed automatic transmission, which is also standard across the X3 range.

The 20d's outputs are more than enough for most driving scenarios, and the automatic transmission shifts seamlessly. On the well-cared for asphalt







**“The trademark kidney grille is particularly catching, looking like a pair of ginormous nostrils.**

of this region, the X3's on-road prowess is exemplary and the xDrive intelligent all-wheel drive has actually been enhanced to provide more bias to the rear wheels than before. Turn-in is crisp, thanks to the X3's lower mass, 50:50 weight distribution, and updated electric power steering system.

BMW claims that the X3's 0.29 drag coefficient is class-leading. The cabin is definitely quiet, even as the wind picks up. The diesel engine registers just under 2 000 rpm on the digital instrument panel at 120 km/h and is barely

audible along with road noise. At 80 km/h there's even less of a din, and at 1 500 rpm in top gear there's pretty good fuel consumption to be had. With 200 km possible using less than a quarter tank of fuel despite liberal throttle application when we drove the X3, you should be able to expect 800 km from pump to pump if you order this model.

#### Gravel road driving

Regardless of which model you choose and how you spec it, the X3 comes standard with run-flat tyres. While the tyre technology does allow for you to be able to

#### SPECIFICATIONS

**Model** xDrive20d

**Engine** 1 995 cc four-cylinder turbodiesel

**Power** 140 kW @ 4 000 rpm

**Torque** 400 Nm @ 1 750 rpm

**Transmission** 8-speed automatic

**Fuel consumption** 5.4 l/100 km

**Fuel tank capacity** 60 l

**Luggage capacity** 550 l

**Towing capacity** 2 400 kg

**Ground clearance** 204 mm

**Wading depth** 500 mm

**Maintenance plan** 5 years/100 000 km



**CLEAN CUT.** The cabin is dominated by a wide infotainment screen (top). The headlamps' daytime running light print has been redesigned (above).

#### PRICES (excluding CO2 emissions tax)

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| xDrive20d ..... | R684 200 |
| xDrive30i ..... | R739 800 |
| xDrive30d ..... | R868 300 |
| M40i .....      | R991 100 |



drive a little further in the event of a puncture, they have particularly stiff sidewalls that don't allow for much absorption.

The unit we drove was equipped with a few options and had also been fitted with 20-inch wheels, which are definitely not ideal in this environment. They certainly look stylish, but low profile rubber off the beaten track is something to be avoided. Not because the X3 has poor noise vibration and harshness performance (there's very few

squeaks and rattles to speak of), but because it's really at home on fast and flowing freeways

#### Conclusion

Right off a showroom floor it might not ride well if you don't live near perfect tarmac and plan on driving dirt roads for extended periods, but that's not the end of the world.

Try to order yours with regular tyres. At the very least the X3 will make a capable towing vehicle.





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# Welcome back, boss man

Fans of the Nissan Patrol had to wait eight years for the sixth-generation model. **Cyril Kloppe** takes a look to see if it was worth it.



## NISSAN PATROL

**T**he sixth-generation Patrol was launched back in 2010 in Dubai, but Nissan South Africa only decided recently to bring it to our shores. If it looks somewhat familiar it's because until recently it was marketed locally as the Infiniti QX80. You might also have seen the Patrol on TV as the UN's favourite runabout and wealthy Middle Eastern oil tycoons' favourite sand buggy. The QX80 had classier finishes and a different grille, but besides that it was almost exactly the same vehicle.

### The exterior

The Patrol looks tamer than its forebears, but looks can be deceiving. The styling might seem flimsy but underneath that bulky body is a tough-as-nails ladder frame chassis and beefy double wishbone suspension on each wheel that allows a surprising amount of articulation and travel. The bodywork might look heavy and low-slung but the 272 mm ground clearance is better than many of its competitors (the Land Cruiser 200s has 230 mm).

At 2 m wide and more than 5 m long, the new Patrol will fill an entire parking space and then some. You are definitely not going to be able to park close to the mall's main entrance. Its 1,9 m high roof towers over your head and the usually large 18" wheels look tiny in the huge wheel arches.

The very small sunroof looks a tad out of place, like it was lifted straight from a Nissan Juke. A large panoramic glass roof would have been so much better.





At 2 m wide and more than 5 m long, the new Patrol will fill up a standard parking spot at the mall.



**COMFY, YET CAPABLE.** At first glance the Patrol's ground clearance doesn't look adequate, but it's actually more than most competitors have. The standard Bridgestone Duelers also do a fine job in the rough stuff.

### The interior

The Patrol's interior is equally huge. It feels more like someone's lounge than the inside of a car. Truth be told, the faux wood inlays in the cabin reminds you a bit of a lounge suite you'd find at Bradlows.

The middle row has enough leg room so you can straighten your legs and the backrest adjusts so that Grandma and Grandpa can nap comfortably. The third row of seats is wide enough for three, but there are only two seat belts.

Between Mom and Dad's seats is a fridge that's large enough for a packet of viennas and four cooldrinks. The lid of the fridge can be opened at the front or at the back.

### Safety issues

There is an oversupply of safety features. The Patrol will alert when you change lanes and there's a vehicle in your blind spot, and the cruise control will maintain the following distance between you and the car in front of you. Sensors in the steering wheel and accelerator can sense when you're getting tired and will then encourage you to rest. The Patrol will brake by itself to avoid an accident if you don't do it yourself and will also tighten the seat belt beforehand. The Patrol also knows if you're driving too close to the white line and will then return to the middle of your lane. The rear-view mirror uses the reverse camera to show an undisturbed view of the back.

But best of all is that you can switch these functions on and off when you want to.

### Under the bonnet

Nissan's big 4.2 and 3.0 diesel engines are gone. There was no way that they could >





## SPECIFICATIONS

**Model tested** 5.6 V8 LE 4WD 7AT**Engine** 5 552 cc, V8 petrol**Power** 298 kW @ 5 800 rpm**Torque** 560 Nm @ 4 000 rpm**Fuel consumption** 18 ℓ per 100 km**Tank** 140 ℓ**Maximum towing weight** 3 500 kg**Approach and departure angles** 34° and 26°**Tare weight** 2 746 kg**Warranty** 6 years/150 000 km**Service plan** 3 years/90 000 km**Service intervals** 15 000 km**Price** R1 299 000

**DIFFERENT STROKES.** As Nissan's flagship off-roader, the Patrol has been kitted out with plenty of bling, like 18" alloys, chrome trim, clear tail lamps and faux wood cabin trim. Add a snorkel, roof racks and a steel bumper like the one below and you'll have a force to be reckoned with.



satisfy current emission laws. The Patrol is now only available with a 5.6 ℓ V8 petrol.

Connected to the engine is a seven-speed automatic transmission with Adaptive Shift Control and Downshift Rev Matching that makes gear changes smoother and also saves on fuel.

It's a monster of an engine that produces 298 kW and 560 Nm. So don't be surprised if the 140 ℓ fuel tank doesn't stay full for long.

**How does it drive?**

The 18" wheels are more practical than the almost unusable 20" wheels found on the Infinity. The extra rubber on the treads allow you to drive through potholes instead of around them. The hydraulic suspension also helps to keep the bodywork upright when you take sharp turns. As soon as there's pressure on one side of the vehicle (like when you swerve) liquid automatically moves to that side to tighten the suspension. It's a simple system but it prevents the bodywork from leaning too much.

A drive mode dial close to the gear lever has four modes for sand, rocks, snow, and a "on road" mode. The same dial switches between high and low range and controls the rear diff lock. Under regular conditions the middle diff lock directs most of the engine power to the rear axle, but power can be distributed equally between the axles.

The V8 engine's roar is impressive, and the acceleration when you put pedal to the metal is not to be sneezed at. The Patrol is by no means a race car, but it's clear that this guy will be able to tow a double-axle caravan or a double-hull fishing boat with ease.

**In a nutshell**

The new Patrol in standard form doesn't have a striking appearance but it comes into its own as soon as you add 33" mud tyres, a bullbar, and a roof rack.

If you compare the Patrol to the Toyota Land Cruiser 200 4.5D V8, you'll save about R50 000 and you'll also get a few gadgets that the Toyota doesn't have. The problem is that the Toyota is ready to drive around the world while the Patrol gives with the impression that it needs a few off-road bits – but that's not necessarily a bad thing because half the fun in owning an off-roader lies in kitting it out.

**PRICE**

5.6 V8 LE 4WD 7AT

**R1 299 000**



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# Swaziland at its ~~worst~~ *best*

The Rocking Crawlers' Ultimate 4x4 Adventure is an annual excursion to an unknown destination where almost unimaginable obstacles await. We went along for the ride.

Text and photos **Piet van Heerde**







**A**fter 12 hours on the road, the convoy finally arrives at the overnight spot. There are 21 vehicles in the group and some of them are still busy climbing the last hill. The participants are hungry and tired, and suddenly a panicked voice calls over the radio: "The Pajero has rolled!"

### Looking for adventure

The Rocking Crawlers is a bunch of hardcore 4x4 enthusiasts, and their

Ultimate 4x4 Adventure is the highlight of their year.

A convoy made up of a select few vehicles leave from Gauteng en route to an unknown destination where 4x4s are tested to the limits. If there's a good line to the right of an obstacle these guys will rather drive over the obstacle. Hardcore is the only way to describe it.

This adventure isn't for everyone. You have to apply and will then be invited if your vehicle adheres to a few

strict minimum requirements: It needs at least 33" tyres, has to have a front and rear diff lock, and you can't partake in the adventure if you don't have a self-recovery winch.

To participate, your vehicle doesn't need thousands of rands' worth of equipment but what you do need to bring is comradeship.

If your answers impress the organisers enough, you get an invitation to this epic adventure. >





## DAY 1

### Here we go!

The gathering point is in Midrand at one of the workshops where some of the Rocking Crawlers do modifications to their vehicles. They are definitely not the kind of guys who would want damage to their cars. No, everything is planned down to the last detail and put together with great care.

All the participants are friendly, but there's a feeling of uncertainty in the air because no one knows exactly what lies ahead. Everyone received a list of things to pack, with your passport at the top of the list.

The participants gather round and the destination is revealed. We're going to Swaziland! Then the convoy rules are explained: You are responsible for the vehicle behind you; switch your headlights on when you're on the highway; and give way to other road users. T-shirts, buffs and

caps are handed out and then we embark on our journey without ceremony.

Corné van der Merwe drives in front with Bronx, the Jeep with the most modifications. It's especially its 39" tyres that draw attention. Behind him is Nicholas Harris, and then us – myself, Shane Klebb and Arné Kotze in Ruby, Corné's wife's Jeep Rubicon. Shane and Arné are also the technical team. The group, however, is not complete because there are a few vehicles coming from Polokwane and will join us later.

Everything is going swimmingly until just outside Bronkhorstpruit when the Rubicon starts acting up. The convoy stops, the bonnet is opened, and we take council. It seems that with the previous service someone messed around with the transmission fluid's thermostat and now the fluid doesn't flow all the way through the radiator. That's why it overheats.



**LET'S BEGIN** (clockwise from left). There's nothing quite like coffee on a CJ's wheel arch. Wakey-wakey in the mist. Big rubber is the key (inset). Final adjustments are made. The correct tyre pressure is one of the most important aspects of off-road driving.





“  
Everything is going smoothly until just beyond Bronkhorstspuit, when the Rubicon starts acting up.



The guys decide to seek help in Middelburg. The rest of the convoy can carry on; we'll catch up later. The problem is solved quickly and we head off to Carolina. The road is

littered with potholes, but with 37" Cooper tyres we hardly notice it.

We meet the rest of the convoy at the Waverley border post, finish the paperwork and drive to the Mhlambanyatsi sports ground where we'll be spending the night. There are decent facilities and hot showers waiting for us.

We are given the assurance that the spectacular views will more than make up for any inconvenience the next day. >







**FLEX FRIDAYS.** The vehicles in the group were very capable, but they sometimes required the human touch to keep the wheels on the ground. The Cruiser's front axle was in bits and pieces, but the right parts and mechanical know-how saved the day (inset).



## DAY 2

### Rocking it

Most of the vehicles in the group are Jeep Rubicons, all with their fair share of modifications. There are also three Pajeros and two Toyotas – a Cruiser and a Hilux.

One of the things you notice immediately is how lightly everyone in the group drives. They hardly leave a track where they've driven and there are no signs of unnecessary funny business.

Shortly after we leave, the Pajero pulls over to the side of the road. Its driveshaft is broken and it looks like its passengers' adventure has come to an untimely end. Someone mumbles something about fitting a spare driveshaft.

The routes we're driving today are old school bus routes that have been so badly damaged by erosion that the buses do not dare to drive on it any longer. It is, however, perfect for 4x4 enthusiasts.

Tyre pressures are dropped and we start driving up the rivercourse. There are many big rocks that we have to drive over with the vehicles. It's tough and within the first kilometre there's already a long list of incidents. The one Pajero's right-hand side hub doesn't want to kick in, but the problem is soon fixed. One of the Jeeps' tyres has come off the rim – another problem that's quickly sorted out. Another Jeep's front diff lock won't disengage, but the mechanics are on it.

The biggest problem is with the Land Cruiser bakkie that's lost its entire right-hand front driveshaft. The owner, Paul Ruschenbaum, is busy on the phone ordering new parts. He needs to stay behind and wait for it and will rejoin the convoy later – if he receives the help he needs, of course.

From here on out it's plain sailing; even as we go over the obstacles that are becoming increasingly more challenging.







vehicles through the hills of Swaziland is a slow process. We drive over a big granite rock and through some more ditches... and the next moment one of the Jeep Rubicons starts driving backwards. It jumps high and comes to a standstill. Everyone gets out to see what's going on.

Apparently the engine cut out just as the vehicle was on top of the rock. When the driver, Len Nel, wanted to pull up the handbrake, his water bottle got in the way and he knocked the car out of gear, causing the car to go backwards. It goes to show how quickly something can go wrong.

About a kilometre further there's another bottleneck. One of the tyres of Nick Erasmus's Jeep came off the rim and now the whole convoy isn't moving. Those who can help, help, and the rest stand around, waiting.

As we look back we see the silver Pajero that lost its driveshaft this morning driving full steam ahead. The Cruiser has also replaced its lost nuts and bolts and has rejoined us. The convoy is complete again.

From here on there are no more obstacles, but it's getting dark quickly and we still have an hour's driving left for the day. The route from here to the campsite isn't difficult or far but it's still deceptive and we need to drive very carefully.

And it's right here where Martin Ferreira's Pajero veers slightly off the line and he loses control.

The first roll apparently happened quite slowly. He landed back on his wheels for a moment and then graciously started rolling. Luckily – three rolls further – it came to a standstill against a tree. And fortunately no one was hurt.

Every person who comes to help is an expert. We decide on one person to drive the recovery, and what's remarkable about this group is that the safety aspects of 4x4 recovery are adhered to at all times. With the help of winches, straps and cables, the Pajero is once again back on its wheels.

After a quick damage assessment the vehicle is towed to where we're camping for the night. We'll have to wait for daylight to see exactly what kind of damage was done.

Then they'll decide if the silver Pajero, which now looks more like a giant baked potato, will be able to drive on or rather head home.

>

The next part of the route is up and down a mountain. The participants test their abilities against huge, deep eroded ditches, and every now and again you see a recovery strap fastened to someone's vehicle to help get him through it. Each obstacle has an easier option, but who wants to drive that?

The convoy moves on, but it's going slowly. Leading such a long line of





### DAY 3

#### Beautiful Swaziland

The morning reveals that the Pajero has sustained damage to its engine and gearbox. The baked potato is going home.

After coffee and breakfast in the glow of the magnificent sunrise, we drive on. Systematically the route becomes easier and more enjoyable. We drive up hills and down through ditches. Suspension systems are tested to their limits and more than one tyre slides off the rim. But that's part of the adventure and these small problems are fixed in no time at all.

But just when things start going too smoothly, one of the Jeeps breaks down. The clutch doesn't want to disengage fully and the gears are lost. The technical team has a look and after a while the gears are back. We drive on through places with interesting names like Snake River and Cross Your Legs.

We eat lunch, but when we want to drive on, the Jeep's clutch decides enough is enough. We tow it to the nearest service station in Mbabane. Unfortunately it means the end of Gerrit Oosthuizen's adventure.

The last part of the route takes us over giant granite rocks with mountains that stretch as far as the eye can see. At Zone Waterfalls, where we're spending the night, we drive halfway along the waterfall on terraces and pitch camp. Some of the guys take the opportunity to wash off the day's sweat in the icy pools.



**BACKGROUND.** Sunrise over Swaziland reveals the extent of the damage to the Pajero. There are unbelievable views and rock-hopping aplenty when you attempt this route.







**ON THE ROCKS** Parking at Zone falls' terraces.

#### DAY 4

##### Stuck in the mud

The first obstacle of the day runs past the waterfall. This one is for those who like steep descents – the slope measures 52° in some places. Three vehicles attempt it, and a few people decide to walk down.

When they return, everyone is packed and ready to go. Before we even really get going, a Jeep's engine cuts out. The

technical team crack a joke as they look under the bonnet, but they can't immediately find the problem.

Soon the Jeep's wheels are rolling again. It was only a fuse and we're happy to be hitting the road again.

But as we pull away the people in the Cruiser announce that they have a flat battery. Luckily the jumper cables are close at hand and we can finally head on.

We drive through beautiful nature, between big hills and huge rocks to the lookout point where it feels like you can see into the future.

From here we drive almost on the ridge of the hills, swerving through the giant granite boulders.

We reach a point where we again drive down a slope and end up in a greenish patch of land. Bronx goes in first and >







it soon becomes clear that it's not just grass down there but rather a mud bath. Only a winch can save Bronx.

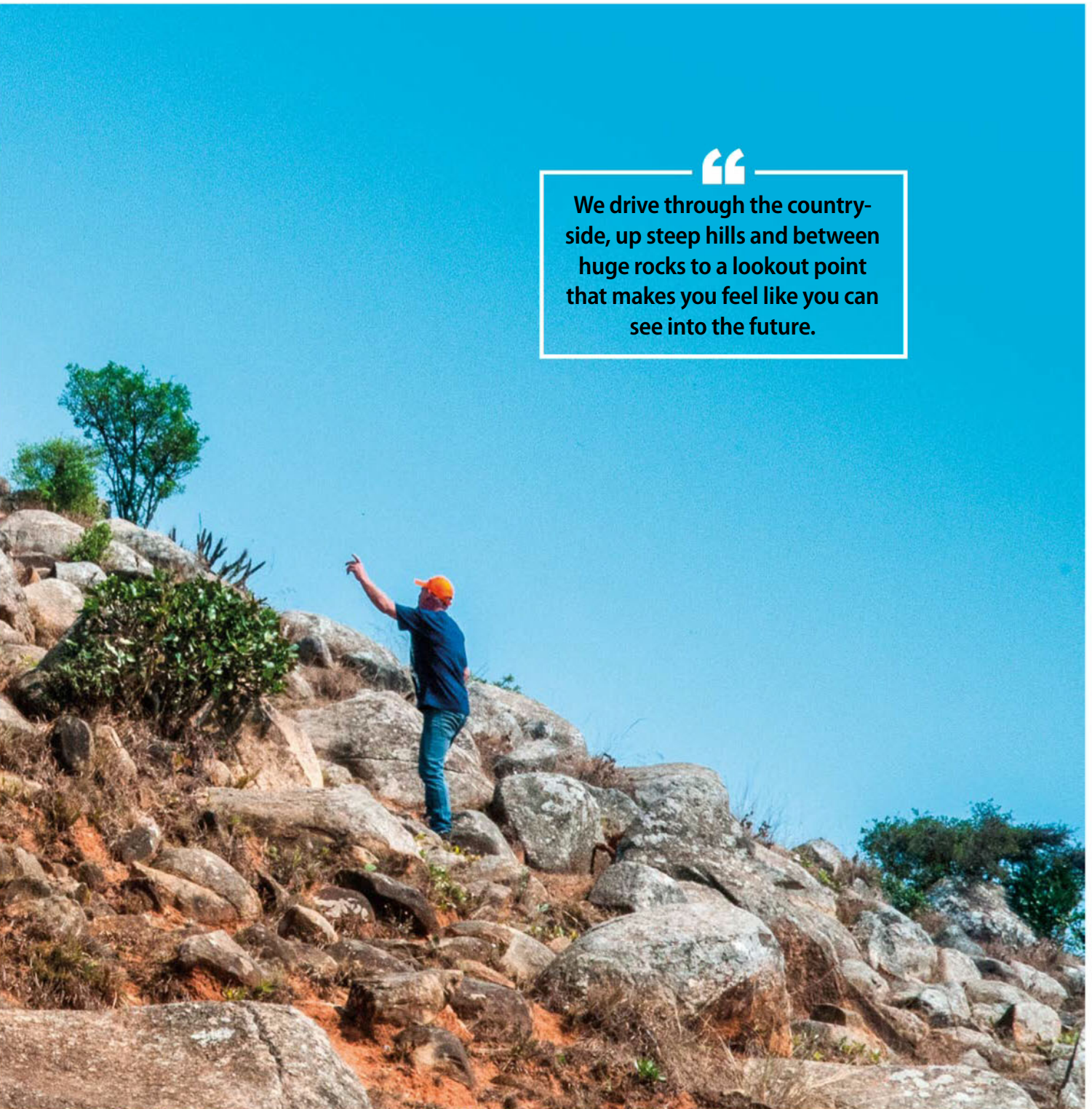
Two more vehicles venture in but the recovery time is too long and the rest of the convoy decides to rather stay on terra firma.

The participants discuss it amongst themselves and then decide that they also want to attempt Handbrake Hill. It's just a short section of the original school bus routes, about a kilometre long, but erosion has taken its toll on the road.

The ditches are so deep you can lose someone inside. So we start driving up and initially it looks manageable.

We make it across the first few ditches and stop often to give each other directions. The next moment it's as if everything suddenly stopped





We drive through the countryside, up steep hills and between huge rocks to a lookout point that makes you feel like you can see into the future.

working. Nick has lost another tyre, the Cruiser in front of us is lying on its stomach, all four wheels spinning in the air, and the radio announces that the red CJ Jeep's axle has broken off. And to add insult to injury, it has just started raining.

The guys with the red Pajero stop to assist with the Jeep and immediately start taking it apart. They reckon they can weld it quick-quick. All they need is a welder... Someone else connects Ruby's winch to the Cruiser in front of us, and later someone runs with a high-lift jack

to go and help Nick. The comradeship is doled out in spades and everyone helps those who need it.

In the meantime the guys found a woman on a farm, borrowed a welder from her, and fixed the broken part on the red CJ.

>



**ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW.** Follow the line. If there aren't any rocks they'll just drive over each other. A bent rim gets hammered into shape. One of the favourite lookout points: A massive granite shelf that allows for majestic views.

The convoy can move on again, but because no one fully trusts the welded part, it's decided that the vehicle should rather be towed on a trailer.

Because of all the drama we arrive in Mbabane after dark. The guys decide not to take the route back to the place where we spent the first night and camp in the rain. We stay in the nearby Hawani Resort.

Tomorrow we head home after a gruelling few days filled with drama. But one guy's drama is another's highlights and adventure.

And the Rocking Crawlers wouldn't exchange these few days of driving for anything in the world. 🚗





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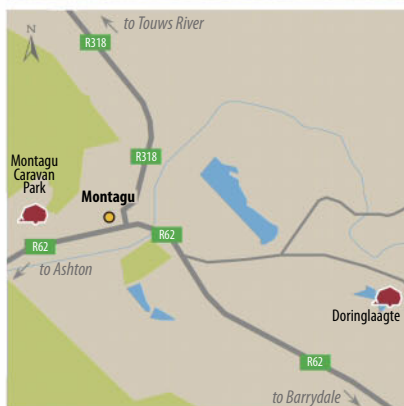
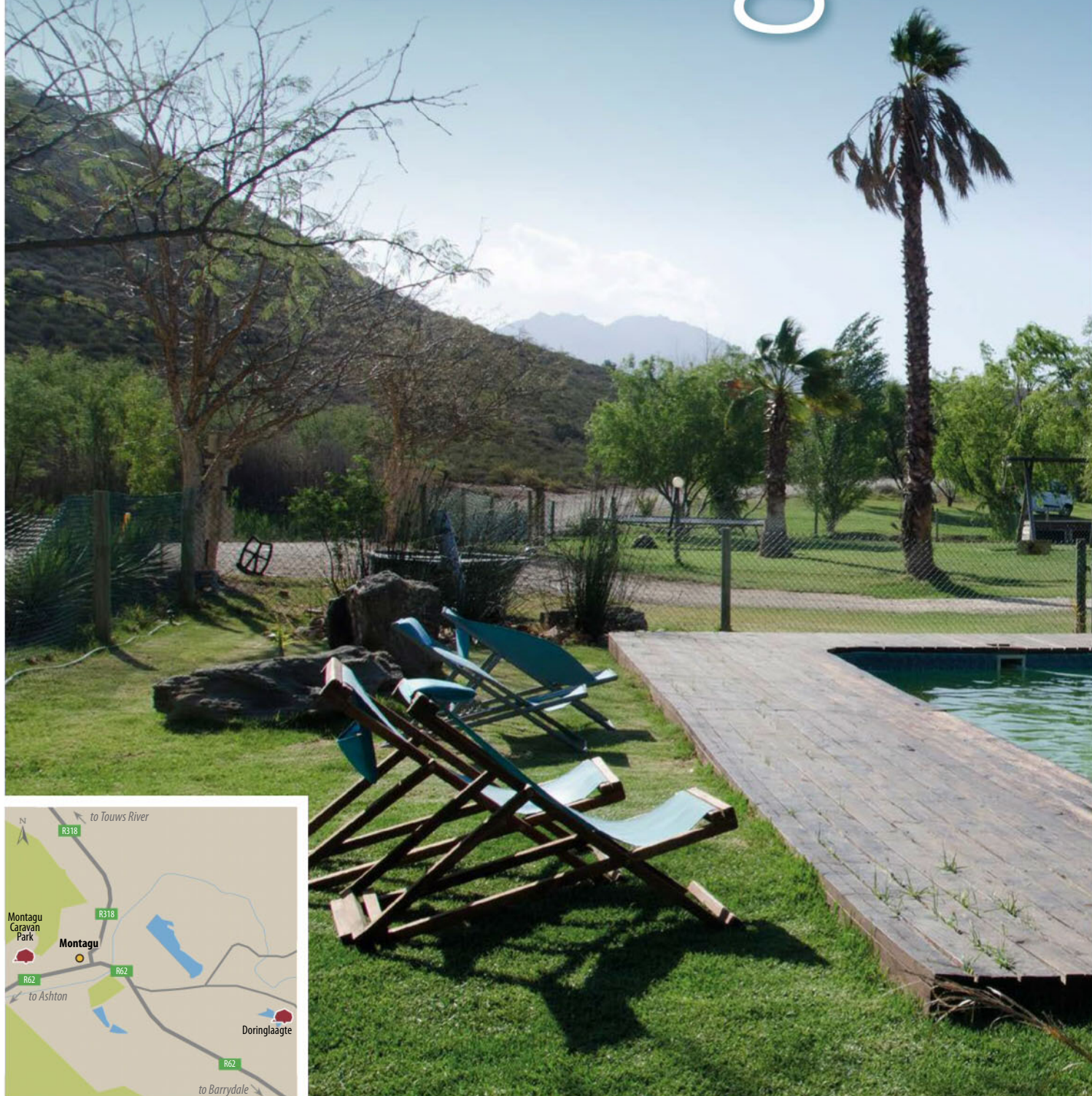
## THESE ARE THE DAYS

2018





# *Make yourself at home in* Montagu







**In his hit song about this town in the Klein Karoo, David Kramer sings about how the sun sets fire to the Langeberg. When you come camp in these parts you'll see exactly what he means.**

Text **Schalk Jonker** Photos **Nellie Brand-Jonker**

**Y**ou know you're close to Montagu when you get to the famous rock tunnel. But how many of us have ever stopped here to find out a bit more about the history of this landmark?

The famous road builder Thomas Charles John Bain was responsible for the construction of this tunnel. Even if you don't know who Bain was, there's about a 100% probability that you've

driven on a road built by either him or his father Andrew Geddes Bain. Thomas Bain was a road builder in the 1800s and he completed the tunnel in 1877 to make life easier for those travelling through the Cogmanskloof.

The tunnel was made bigger in the 1950s to accommodate passing trucks, and this means that you shouldn't have any issues towing your caravan to Montagu.

This town's is the personification of Klein Karoo hospitality, with its quaint shops, excellent restaurants and friendly locals who welcome you with open arms.

We wanted to get away from the busy city life and decided to head to two campsites in the area. And by the way, Kramer was right: it does look like the setting sun has set fire to the Langeberg... >







### MONTAGU CARAVAN PARK Bring the whole family

The Montagu Caravan Park is one of the most popular camping destinations in the Western Cape, and it's easy to see why. It's just a two-hour drive from Cape Town and it's the ideal place for a weekend getaway with the whole family.

Once the kids are occupied with all the different things to do, you quickly realise you should actually come camp here for longer than a weekend. Happy kids mean a good time, and here you'll feel like kicking back and staying for a while.

Be warned, though: You have to book way in advance regardless of what time of the year you're planning on visiting. It's always busy here, especially because it's also a favourite gathering place for caravan clubs.

The resort is neat, the ablution blocks are modern, clean and neat, the staff friendly, the stands green, the shade ample, and the only way to describe the atmosphere is relaxed. You can't really ask for much more, which is why you can't just rock up and expect to find a spot.

We stopped outside the gate one late Friday afternoon on an ordinary weekend in November and requested a stand without a booking. There was one left. It was also not a sales gimmick that places







**I LIKE IT, IT'S NICE.** Everything is as it should be at Montagu Caravan Park. The stands are level, covered with lawn and the trees cast ample shade. Kids will love the pedal boats on the dam, the large jungle gym and the ponies in the pen.



The Rossouws, Groenewalds and Vermeulens from Cape Town brought their kids and camped at Montagu Caravan Park for the first time.

### They say:

“ We are very satisfied with the resort and facilities. There's a lot for the kids to do and you camp on grass under shade trees. The hot-water pool is a hit. We will definitely be back. ”



sometimes use to sell something to you. When we walked through the resort later, it was packed to the brim.

### Find your spot

There are 82 stands on three terraces, all on green grass and most of them under shade trees.

The first row of stands lies on the bottom terrace in a row opposite each other as you turn right after you drive through the resort gate. There's a row of apricot trees

that provide shade, but the stands on the right receive a bit more sun than those on the left, next to the dam.

The price you pay for the shade is that the grass isn't as lush as in the rest of the resort so it's best to bring your own ground cover.

The stands are large enough for even the biggest caravans and there's a brick braai (without grid) and a power outlet with a standard domestic socket. The taps are spread out in the campsite, but

you never have to walk more than 20 steps to get water for your coffee.

Bring along your fishing gear and see if you can hook a carp, Mozambique tilapia or catfish. Just make sure you release them again. There are also pedal boats if you want to take a trip on the water.

The other stands are on the left-hand side of the resort as you drive in, in front and past the cold-water pool on the top two terraces.

There are loads of shade trees, grass and shelter from the wind, and this is the spot to be if you want to keep an eye on the kids while they enjoy the supertube.

Something else to keep an eye on are the geese and ducks that nonchalantly stroll through the campsite. >





They will without a doubt pop in at your stand at some stage. By the way, you are allowed to bring along your pets but chat to the resort personnel beforehand about the dos and don'ts of Spot's comings and goings.

On this side of the campsite is a jungle gym, trampoline, and a pen with a few tame ponies. The little ones will love to see these animals up close.

Besides this pool there are two others. The big heated pool is indoors and is in front of the first row of stands. The pool is divided into two sections, with pillars in the water that separate the shallow end from the deep end. There are loungers in which you can relax with a good book before taking a dip in the pool.

It does get very hot and stuffy underneath the canopy next to the hot water in the summer months, though.

There is also a smaller indoor pool on the upper terrace. This is where you go if you want to have a more relaxing swim because children are not allowed here.

Next to the outdoor pool is the café where you can buy ice cream, cooldrinks, or takeaway meals.

There's also a recreation room with a big-screen TV and benches where you can make yourself comfortable if you want to find out the cricket score.

There's a pool table if you want to challenge your brother-in-law to a friendly wager.

If you run out of wood or ice, you can go to the reception office to rectify the situation. It costs R20 for wood and R15 for ice.



“The resort is neat, the ablution blocks are modern, clean and neat, the staff friendly, the stands green, the shade ample...”

### Water affairs

There are six ablution facilities in total in the campsite and two of them have separate facilities for men and women. The rest are unisex. The buildings are clean and neat and the resort staff come around often to keep it that way.

Each shower has its own gas geyser, which means there's never any danger of showering in cold water if you feel like lying in a bit to avoid the morning rush. The showers are in their own room with a wet and dry area separated by a shower curtain.

It's spacious enough, though, with hooks and packing space, so your things won't get wet. Each ablution block also has a place where you can wash your dishes and there's even a container for your leftover food that is donated to the local SPCA.







**SWIM AND PLAY.** There are three pools at Montagu Caravan Park – one with cold water and a supertube and two indoor, heated pools. The smaller of the two heated pools is for adult use only. Head here if you want a break from noisy kids.



## Briefly | Montagu Caravan Park



**Campsite** 85 stands on grass with a power socket and a braai. Most have shade. Taps are spread out through the resort.

**Ablution facilities** Six modern ablution blocks that are kept clean.

**Price** R90–R130 p.p.p.n. depending on when you camp. (R50–R70 for kids) Four people per stand.

**Arrival and departure times** 1 pm and 11 am.

**Contact** 082 920 7863

montagucaravanpark.co.za

montagucp@gmail.com

**Nearest town** The resort is in Montagu.

**Road condition** Tar to the gate and the tracks in the resort are covered with dry apricot pips.

**GPS** S33.787500 E20.113056

**go! Drive & Camp says** You pay a R200 cash deposit when you book in for your remote control for the gate. You do get it back of course when you give it back when you book out. >



## DORINGLAAGTE

**Fun and games**

Doringlaagte is a family resort 6 km outside of Montagu where you make yourself comfy on one of the 70 large stands next to a dam on a farm on the mountain slopes of the Klein Karoo.

The campsite is divided into two, with 20 stands on your left as you drive in that are laid out in two rows next to the dam. The rest of the stands are farther back and farther away from the water.

On the front stands you camp underneath big shade trees on green grass. At the newer stands at the back the trees are still small and you'll have to bring your gazebo or flysheet.

The one thing we found here that we've never seen at any other campsite is that you can have a Jacuzzi delivered to your stand. It's a loose-standing bath that works with a gas geyser, and at R250 per day (for minimum two days) you can enjoy some hot-water therapy right next

to your caravan. You're not allowed to bring your own inflatable pool, though.

Unfortunately it's unlikely that the Jacuzzi will keep the kids happy for long, but luckily there are pedal boats, row boats and canoes for the kids to use on the water. Best of all is that the use of these is free, but life jackets are not supplied. If your little one is still a bit scared of water it's best to keep them away or keep an eye on them.

You can bring your fishing rod if you want to cast your line in the water. See if you can hook a perch, bream or sunfish. And if you want to catch from a boat, your boat will need a battery engine. Motorboats are not allowed so rather leave your jet skis at home.

But the water sports don't end here. In the right-hand corner of the campsite, right next to the dam, the people of Doringlaagte built a shallow dam for the kids to play in. Here you'll also find canoes and pedal boats and the water



The one thing we found here that we've never seen at any other campsite is that you can have a Jacuzzi delivered to your stand.





**SLIM SHADY.** Doringlaagte's better stands are near the dam. The trees that grow here are well established and cast ample shade. The trees at the newer stands are still young and don't provide much relief against the sun. If you camp on the latter you should bring along a gazebo.



is never deeper than knee length. They can swim here as well and slides on the opposite side are sure to keep them entertained for hours.

While the kids play you can kick back and relax on one of the loungers at the "Karoo beach". It's a man-made beach with white sand and even a palm tree that provides shade.

If that's too strange for you, you can sit on the lawn next to the "beach".

If the hot sun is making you parched, head to the Karoo Beach Bar for some cold refreshment. A G&T on a Karoo beach is probably one of the tastier drinks you'll ever have.

The bar opens at 10 am and there's even a pool inside the building. >





You can also come watch the rugby here on the big-screen TV.

In the heart of the campsite is another bar with a thatch roof that doubles as the resort shop, restaurant and reception. There's also a TV that broadcasts sport.

A few feet from this building is a fenced-in play park with a jungle gym and a trampoline. There are also a few tortoises. The resort's small pool is also located here.

At the campsite's entrance is a 9-hole golf course. You can leave your driver at home, but remember your short irons because it's a par 3 course. The ninth hole is something to behold. It's an elevated tee with the green 50 m below.

There are various mountain and veld trails where you can hike or ride your mountain bike. There is also a 4x4 trail if you want to check out if that suspension upgrade was worth the money.

Pets are not allowed during weekends and school holidays, but if you come camp here during the week you can chat to the resort management and ask if your dog can tag along. But we're talking about something like a Yorkie, not a Rottweiler.

### Stand together

The stands are big and even and each one has a tap. You share your power socket (standard domestic) with your



**BOTTOMS UP.** In the Karoo Beach Bar you can relax in front of a fireplace during cold winter holidays. And in summer you can stretch out next to the pool. Children are not allowed to swim in this particular pool.



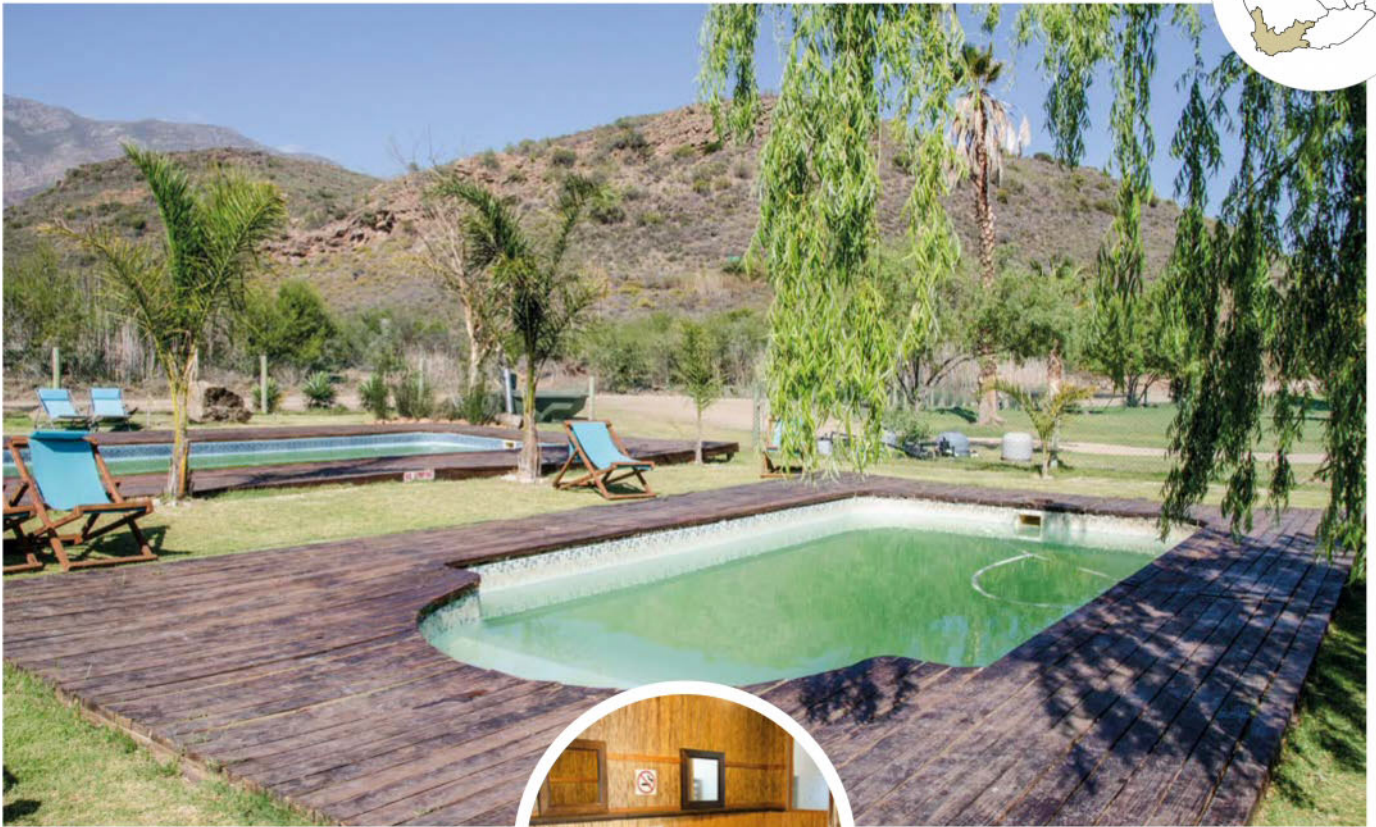
The Newells from Somerset West camp with their Echo B off-road trailer that they tow with a Toyota Fortuner.

### They say:

“ It's our first time here and the kids have already said they want to come here every holiday. It's a neat place, the kids stay busy, and the staff are friendly and organised. You can't ask for more. ”







**KEEPING IT CLEAN.** The ablution block is at the centre of the resort and have separate facilities for men and women. It's modern and clean, but not wheelchair-friendly. It's a good 100 m walk from the farthest stands.

nearest three neighbours and you should bring your 20 m extension cord.

You get a loose-standing drum braai that's knee height off the ground. Just bring your own grid. The resort staff come early every morning to clean all the braais.

The ablution blocks, with separate facilities for men and women, are in the middle of the campsite. It's a good 100 m's walk from the farthest stands. So charge your flashlight's batteries before turning in for the night. There are no complaints

about the bathrooms except that they are not wheelchair-friendly. They are big, neat and modern and there are even hair dryers for the ladies.

The scullery is to the side, a short distance from the ablution blocks and there's also a place where you can clean your porta-potti.

The nice thing about Doringlaagte is that the resort is only open to people staying overnight – day visitors are not allowed which means that the campsite won't feel cramped.



## Briefly | Doringlaagte



**Campsite** 70 stands with electricity and water. The 50 new stands' shade trees are still tiny.

**Ablution facilities** Very neat and modern.

**Price** R150 p.p.p.n. (R100 per high school scholar, R50 per primary school scholar and little ones camp for free).

**Contact** 023 614 2034 or 0823195130

doringlaagte@compuservices.co.za

doringlaagte.co.za

**Nearest town** Montagu (6 km).

**Road condition** 3 km tar road from Montagu and 3 km good dirt road to the campsite.

**GPS** S 33.793511 E 20.168236

**go! Drive & Camp says** If your caravan has air con you pay an additional R50 per day.



# On the waterfront

No, we're not talking about the V&A in Cape Town. Here in the north, in the Highveld, Mpumalanga has its own waterfront.

Text and photos **Helenus Kruger**



**S**ecunda is probably the last place you'd expect to find a waterfront. Highveld plains and coal mines, sure. But a waterfront? Unlikely.

The locals, however, will tell you a different story. Here, on the edge of town, bordering houses, car dealerships and headframes on the horizon, lies the town's most popular hangout for young and old.

The Lake Umuzi development is next to two dams in Trichardtspruit. On the northern side is the Lake Umuzi Waterfront on the banks of what is known as the "top dam" and bordering this is the Lake Umuzi Lodge and Merchant Hotel.

The combination of restaurants, accommodation, function venues and especially family entertainment places is super-popular. Besides the waterfront's full-time entertainment, there are beer, wine and music festivals during the year, as well as a mountain bike race and a sports festival. And from October last year, campers can also come and pitch their tents here.

Lake Umuzi Kamp Oase is brand new and lies on the southern side of the stream, next to the "bottom dam".

This is not the place to come if you're looking for a quiet weekend to get away





you'll get an entrance permit that looks like your vehicle's licence disc and that you have to stick onto your windscreen. They also send an SMS to your phone with a cellphone number that you have to phone when you get to the entrance gate. The gate will then open automatically.

If you're towing, don't drive onto the hotel's premises – rather park outside next to the road. The hotel's entrance gate is too narrow for a caravan and even if you do make it, there's no space to turn around.

The campsite is a five-minute walk from the hotel, opposite the water. There's a footbridge over the stream, so send the kids to the campsite to go find a stand. You'll have to drive around the Lake Umuzi development to get to the campsite, though.

As soon as you've gone through the main gate at the administration building, Lake Umuzi Kamp Oase lies below you. The gate is on higher ground and you look down on the campsite. In the summer >

“  
The campsite was brand new when we visited. Here and there the finishing touches were still being applied.”



**PICTURESQUE.** Luscious green lawns, well-spaced stands, and plenty of activities to keep young and old entertained are all part of the package at Lake Umuzi Kamp Oase.



from the hustle and bustle of the big city; there are simply too many activities in and around the campsite.

The wedding in the reception hall across the water is going to supply background music all night long and the buzzing of the power station's chimneys will eventually lull you to sleep.

### Campsite

Before you park your caravan on the campsite's green lawn, you first have to book in at the Merchant Hotel, which handles the campsite's bookings. Here





it really does look like an oasis with the dam, lush green kikuyu grass and willow trees with their long, loose branches blowing in the breeze.

When we visited, the camp was brand new – they were still busy with the final touches. The building at the gate is going to be used as a reception office and accommodation for management. The cold-water swimming pool will get a hot counterpart, and the bathrooms still need a few hooks and soap trays. Management promised that everything would be finished by the end of February.

The 72 stands are not numbered or demarcated, but the location of the braais and electricity points make it easy to determine your stand's borderlines. Each built-in braai has two braai places, one for you and one for your neighbour. Most of the stands are 10 m x 10 m, with a few on the edges of the campsite that are a bit bigger.

All the stands are even and have a thick mat of kikuyu grass. About half of the stands get shade from the large willows while the rest are in full sun. You can't book a stand so if you want one in the shade, you'll have to get there early.

**GRANDFATHER WILLOW.** You'll have to get there early if you want to set up camp under one of the massive willow trees (main). The campsite also makes provision for the little ones with a huge play area (below).



The braais have grids, a work surface, light, tap and garbage bin. The electricity boxes are never more than 10 feet away (remember to bring your blue caravan plug). Bring your own braai if you rather want to braai in front of your tent.

There are three round boma-type braais with cement benches between the stands on the dam side. It's not so much a communal boma for all campers but rather for two or three friends camping nearby.

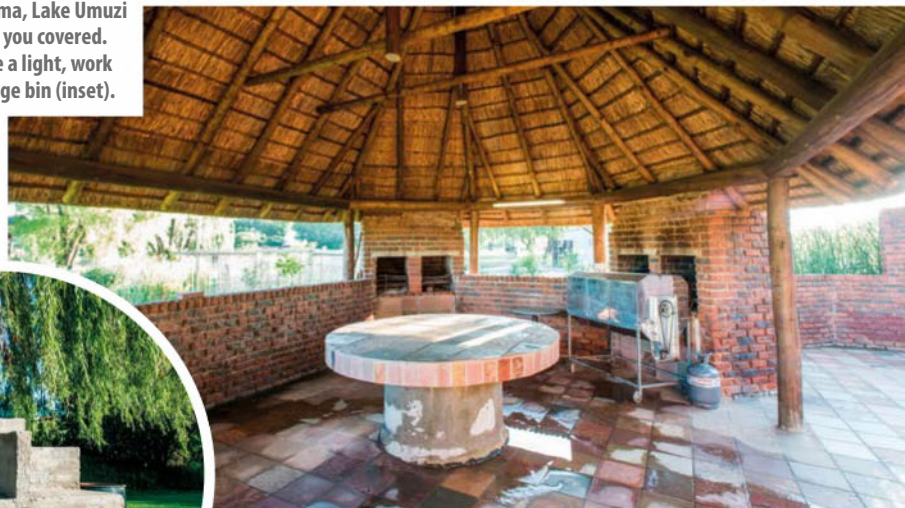
On the western side of the campsite, to the far left as you drive in, is the Wilger lapa on the dam's shores. You can rent the venue for anything from a wedding to an office party.

Next to it is a high concrete slab with a steel-frame structure that's used as a stage during music festivals. Here you





**FUN FOR ALL.** Whether you like to make a splash like boisterous youths or simply prefer to sit quietly around a fire under a boma, Lake Umuzi Kamp Oase has you covered. The braais have a light, work area and garbage bin (inset).



can dance till the early morning hours to music by big names like Francois van Coke, Just Jinger and Watershed.

When the lawn in front of the stage isn't packed to the brim with festivalgoers, it's available to caravan clubs and large groups. The space is a bit bigger than a rugby field and has 18 electricity boxes each with four power points and a light.

### Clean up

If you're in need of water for washing bodies or dishes, you have to walk to the main building at the gate. The men's and ladies' bathrooms are below the building, to the left and right of the scullery.

There are many places that can learn a thing or two from Umuzi in terms of

space and layout. The communal area between the shower cubicles and basins is spacious enough that there's room to move even in peak time.

Another clever plan is the wall that separates the toilet and washing areas from each other. There are basins on each side.

The layout of the men's and ladies' sides differs, but both have the same amenities. The size of the shower cubicles are also the same. On the ladies' side there are four showers and the wet and dry areas are separated by a wall. The shower and dressing area is not cramped. You can put your clothes on the benches and hang your towel on the hook behind the door.

There are also two bathrooms with a bath and basin as well as a bathroom for babies. The six basins are divided between the washing and toilet areas (three on each side) and are fitted in marble slabs with enough space to pack things between the basins. There is a mirror above each one and you don't have to bring your own hand soap because it's provided, along with paper towels.

The men have seven showers. The seven basins are, like on the ladies' side, also in marble slabs. The baths and basins don't have plugs so you will have to bring your own.

The scullery is covered and is at the entrance to the bathrooms. The six double basins are also in marble slabs with loads of packing space. >





**MAIN ATTRACTION.** With a variety of slides, a cold-water pool, and fishing opportunities for the budding angler, it's clear that water is a huge part of the appeal. The ablution blocks are modern and spacious (bottom).



There is a second smaller ablution building on the edge of the campsite near the dam. You can't bath or shower here but there's a toilet and a basin on each side plus two urinals for the guys.

You can take a dip in the cold-water pool at the main building next to the bathrooms' entrance. The round pool is 1,3 m deep. An indoor heated pool next to the cold-water pool is under construction.

### Play time

The waterfront is where everything happens. Once the kids have discovered this area you won't see them for the rest of the weekend. Just make sure they have a few bucks in their pockets.

The way there starts on the northern side of the camp and it will take you a full seven minutes to get there. Just follow the path over the stream and through the hotel's parking lot until you're past the hotel's entrance gate. Right outside







But it's absolutely worth the wait, and once the kids are inside you're going to struggle to get them to leave. The baby slide will keep toddlers occupied while the older kids can attempt the Fast River Tube slide or the Blou Mamba. The large indoor heated pool is very popular.

While the kids are having a blast, the parents can unpack a picnic basket on the lawn and light a fire in the braai. If you don't feel like having a picnic there are numerous restaurants next to the dam where you'll find something to eat and drink while you wait for the kids.

Opening and closing times differ depending on days of the week and seasons. Visit [lakeumuzi.co.za](http://lakeumuzi.co.za) for times and contact numbers.

the gate to the right is a smaller gate that takes you the waterfront.

At Rocky Waters your budding golfer can pretend he's Louis Oosthuizen on the 18-hole putt-putt course. The course is laid out over multiple levels and there are even a few water holes (R35 p.p.). At the Bowling Centre, Mom and Dad can join the youngsters to roll, hit and throw a few balls. The family can play ten-pin bowling (R40 p.p.; R30 for scholars; R20 for toddlers), or, if you can get a group together, you can play action cricket or action netball (from R350 per group).

Carnival Square, apparently the biggest jungle gym in Africa, is heaven on Earth for the little ones (R50 per hour). The play area is similar to those you'll find in family restaurants, only bigger. There are metres and metres of tunnels to crawl through, a big pit with balls, and a windmill. Suddenly the jungle gym in the campsite – which itself is not to be sneezed at – pales in comparison. If you're

in high school (or taller than 1,35 m) you unfortunately can't play here. And Mom and Dad need to keep an eye on little ones younger than two years.

The water play area Aqua Zone is by far the most popular of all the waterfront entertainment. When the doors open at 10 am there's already a long queue of excited kids waiting, and if you get there at lunchtime you should expect a long wait.

### This is what it costs

(2 adults)

**Fuel** (95 octane petrol) @  
10 l/100 km and R13.49/l and  
360 km (there and back) **R485.64**

**Toll gates** (there and back)  
**R87**

**Accommodation** (2 nights) **R400**

**Food** **R785**

**Grand total** **R1 757.64**



### Briefly | Lake Umuzi



**Campsite** 72 stands, all with grass, a braai, and electricity. About half of the stands are in the shade.

**Ablution facilities** Spacious and new.

**Price** R100 p.n. per stand (maximum 6 people). Preschoolers camp for free and it's R50 for an extra vehicle on the stand. Pets are R50 per pet.

**Contact** 017 631 3452 of 2441  
or 087 233 5082 [lakeumuzi.co.za](http://lakeumuzi.co.za)  
[welcome@lakeumuzi.co.za](mailto:welcome@lakeumuzi.co.za)

**Arrival and departure times** 2 pm en  
10 am, unless pre-arranged.

**Road condition** Tar road up to the gate.  
Dirt tracks between the stands.

**GPS** S26.515365 E29.176806°  
(Merchant Hotel's gate)  
S26.518393 E29.174848  
(Lake Umuzi Kamp Oase's gate)

**go! Drive & Camp says** You can fish in both Lake Umuzi's dams and see if you can hook a black bass, carp or catfish. You do have to release the fish once you've taken a photo. 



# A mountain high enough

We last visited the Rebellie Game Farm in 2010, and during this visit we focussed on their tough-as-nails Kloof trail. We went back recently to tackle the family-friendly Mountain trail.

Text and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

**N**ovember is an excellent time to visit the Eastern Free State. There's the Cherry Festival in Ficksburg, Clarens goes into holiday mode, and the Golden Gate National Park is lush green thanks to the recent rains. If you get your timing right you'll even see some snow on the Maloti Mountains. If you want to head into the mountains to build your very own Olaf the snowman, there's a nice, family-friendly 4x4 route close by.

Rebellie has two 4x4 trails, but it's the tamer Mountain trail with its spectacular

view over the Eastern Free State that gets the popular vote.

## Getting there

From Clarens you drive east towards Golden Gate. After about 14 km you'll see the sign for Rebellie Game Farm on your right. The farm is a part of the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Area at the foot of the mountain range. A stretch of dirt road takes you past a few homesteads and eventually to the farm's reception building. Sign in and then head up the mountain.

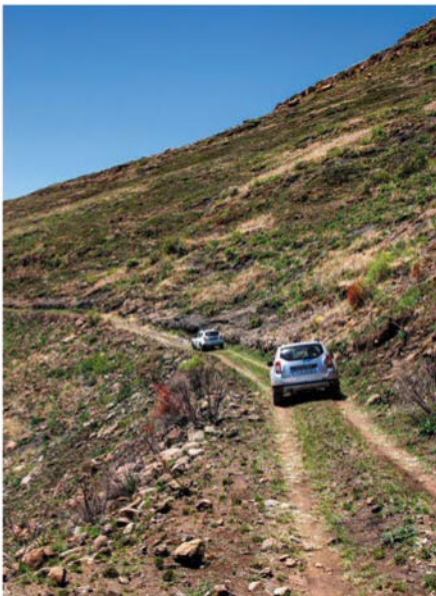
The twin-track trail is occasionally littered with rocks that require at least all-wheel drive and basic off-road knowledge to conquer it. Someone who knows their bakkie well will more than likely be able to master the trail with a two-wheel drive with diff lock only, but it's not that easy throughout the trail.

At 2 200 m above sea level, this trail is one of the highest obstacle courses in the country. Pull over at the lookout point. Turn your head to the right and you'll look straight down into Lesotho: Rows and rows of mountains gradually fade to blue as they disappear over the horizon. Turn your head to the left and you'll see the beautiful Golden Gate Highlands National Park, and on a clear day you might even see as far as Bethlehem. The earth is browner on the Lesotho side, partly because it's colder and also because of grazing.

The South African side is verdant since a veld fire raged along the northern slopes resulting in new growth. The northern slope is also a conservation area where the growth of the veld's natural flora is encouraged.







**WATCH OUT FOR THAT...** It's not an overly challenging route but if you don't pay attention you can seriously damage your vehicle. It's also a lo-ong way down if you leave the road.

The trail ends on a patch of grass against the slope of the mountain where you can park and pitch your tent. There are no facilities and you need be self-sufficient. For day visitors this is the turn-around point and the trail follows the same way back to the farm.

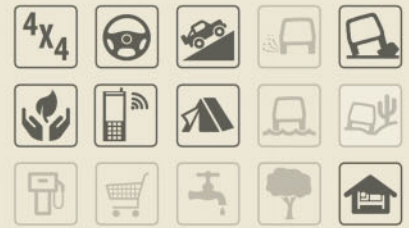
### Can I camp there?

Except for the small campsite in the mountain, Rebellie offers more formal accommodation for 35 people inside chalets and bungalows. There's also

ample space for tents and stands for caravans around a large barn. The barn used to house helicopters, but these days it's where you'll find the ablution facilities, a bar, kitchen, and a reception area. In the winter the fires in the fireplace warm up campers before they turn in for the night.

Day visitors are welcome, but they are only allowed to tackle the trail with a four-wheel-drive vehicle. If you stay the night you can do the trail with your own quad or motorcycle. You can also hike the route or pedal up with your mountain bike.

## Need to know



### Maximum amount of vehicles allowed

Officially 12 per day.

**Do I get a map No.**

**Will my vehicle get scrapes?** It's unlikely.

**Do I need to take a compressor?** No, except to fix flat tyres.

**Can we braai next to the road?** No.

**Can I turn around half way?** No.

**Will I see game?** Yes, eland, zebra, red hartebeest, black wildebeest, blesbuck, springbuck, grey and red rhebok.

### THE ROUTE

**Best time to go** All year.

**Can I take my family?** You can absolutely take your family.

**For the day or for the weekend?** The route takes only a few hours.

**Are there ablution facilities?** No, it'll have to be a spade.

**Directions** The route is on the farm Rebellie.

**GPS coordinates** S28.529102 E28.466924 (entrance), S28.577061 E28.473512 (route begins)

### Costs (4x4 trails)

R200 per vehicle per 4x4 trail.

R300 for both 4x4 trails.

R100 per quad bike or motorbike.

R30 per mountain bike or hiker.

### Costs (accommodation)

R100 per stand

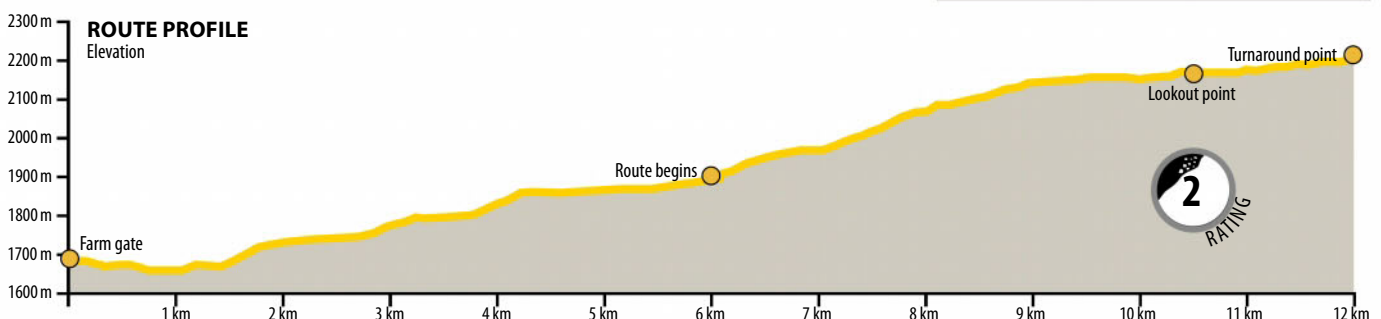
R1 500 to R3 000 per chalet or bungalow

### Contact

Nic Prinsloo 083 627 8391 Braam Greeff

082 452 6131 rebellie@mweb.co.za

rebellie.co.za







# Worth the wait

After finding out about Bendito Ranch on a camping page on Facebook, **Johnny and Judy Rademan** from Sasolburg finally managed to book a spot for a recent long weekend.

“It took us nearly two years to book a spot over a weekend at the evidently very popular Bendito Ranch, which is about 25 km outside Mokopane. So we made the most of it by taking along our cousins Mercia and Pieter Jacobson and their two daughters, aged 16 and 10. We hitched our Jurgens Safari Xplorer to our Ford Ranger 2.2 double cab 4x2 and headed to Limpopo from Sasolburg via the R59, N1, and R101. The journey took us about four and a half hours.

*Describe Bendito Ranch to those who have not had the pleasure.*

This is a proper bush camp so don't expect any running water or electricity supply. There are storage drums at the stands that the staff fills with enough water for your stay. There's also ample wood provided.

*What do the facilities look like?*

Not really grassy, but there's firm soil at the stands and plenty of shade trees. The ablution facilities are rustic but private, with a long-drop toilet setup and the shower water provided by a bucket. You heat your own water. It's all perched on a



**BACK TO BASICS.** The facilities may be bare-bones but they're also neat and tidy. Showering requires a bit of planning but it works well and it does make you appreciate the luxuries of home.







**BOMBS AWAY.** The long-drop is light years removed from those filthy planks of old that covered a smelly hole in the ground. These toilets are neat and hygienic. The shower cubicle has a broad shelf on which to pack your toiletries.



concrete stand with simple shade netting for privacy.

#### *What other kind of accommodation is available?*

We didn't really venture that way, but there are furnished rooms available in the self-catering farmhouse. There are three bush campsites, all located far enough from each other so you feel secluded. Each site is big enough for about three off-road trailers or caravans.

#### *What activities are there?*

There's 24 km of trails on the ranch for hikers and mountain bikers. You can also ride your own horse if you've brought one along – and there are fully equipped stables to house the animal comfortably. Bird-watchers will have fish eagles to look out for. You can also go on a game drive with

your own vehicle. There are 25 species to tick off your list, including Cape buffalo, zebra, kudu, giraffe, leopard, impala and brown hyena. Hunting is also available on request.

#### *Any advice for first-timers?*

Definitely take enough food and drinking water with you and fill up in Mokopane, especially if you're going to do game drives, explore the region, and stay for an extended period. It costs R250 per stand per night and R60 p.p.p.n. Also be sure to book well in advance.



**Contact** 015 004 2585,  
@benditoranch@vodamail.co.za  
www.benditoranch.co.za  
**GPS** S24.052029, E29.097977

## WIN

**Johnny and Judy** each win a pair of **Hi-Tec Strand "shandals"** worth R599 each. It's the perfect choice of protection and has the breathability you're looking for. It's designed to walk on uneven or rocky terrain and will help keep your feet safe while enjoying your summer activities. How? With only the best features, like a synthetic upper for added comfort, durability and breathability. A bungy cord and heel adjustment provides a versatile fit, and an EVA midsole and foot bed adds extra cushioning for you to enjoy those longer walks on the beach.



**HI-TEC®**

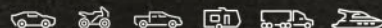
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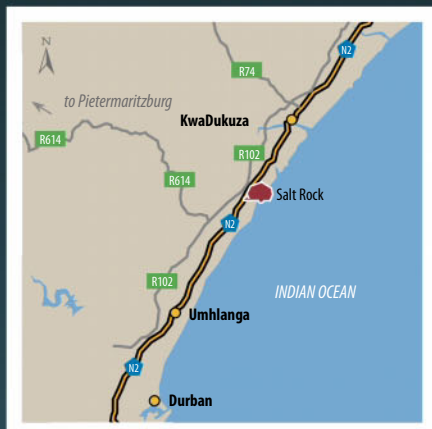
**Carfind.co.za**





# Red alert

At Salt Rock you can try to hook anything from a kingfish to a shad, but rather give a seventy-four a wide berth.



## Salt Rock Caravan Park

### Worth its salt

The resort lies on the KwaZulu-Natal coast, opposite an impressive man-made tidal pool in between the rocks. This pool is also the launching pad for your bait, which will hopefully help get a few fish on the hook.

The campsite has a top section – to the left of the entrance gate – and a bottom section that stretches down a slope to the sea. You'll find the reception office as you drive through the gate – it towers out over the five terraces and its stands.

The bottom stands are clearly marked with newly painted numbers on a side-walk as well as a number on the garbage bin. Some of the numbers even have an arrow next to it pointing in the direction of the stand.

There's not much space between you and your neighbour, and you share a tap with them. Bring your own braai because there aren't any on the stands.

There's fine grass on your stand where you can park your caravan and next to it is a rectangular block that's covered in synthetic grass. This block isn't the only small luxury – on the ground where you park your caravan are three concrete blocks for your caravan's wheels and nose wheel. Thanks to these blocks you don't need a spirit level. Once you've parked your caravan on it, it's level.

The bathrooms for the bottom campers are closer to the office. Here you'll find marble slabs with ceramic basins, and the shower cubicle has a dry and wet side with the shower section behind a glass door.

The top stands are in a bushy garden, but if you want to get your hook in the water you have to walk down the hill past the bottom stands.

Some of the stands have no partition between them and others are separated by shrubs.

There are two ablution blocks in this section of the caravan park.







The tidal pool opposite the bottom stands is 85 m long, making it longer than an Olympic-sized swimming pool. It stretches across the entire width of the resort. It's not square or rectangular like many other tidal pools; it's Y-shaped with a curved bottom part. From the campsite there's a 20 m concrete wall across the

sand to the pool that you walk along to the water.

On the farthest point of the pool is a lookout point that looks like the corner tower of a castle and is about a storey high. Fishermen use this point's height to cast farther. The odds of reeling in a few shads are good, and sardines are popular bait.



## Briefly | Salt Rock Caravan Park



**Fish** Kingfish, snoek, dusky and sand shark, strepie, galjoen, stumpnose, leatherfish and shad.

**Campsite** 101 stands in 2 camps – 34 are close to the beach, 6 next to the beach, and 61 further from the beach and more sheltered.

**Ablution facilities** 3 clean ablution blocks, one of which is in need of some attention.

**Price** From R320 p.n. per stand

for the first 2 people plus R85 for each additional person, to R985 and R120 respectively depending on the season.

**Arrival and departure times** 11 am and 10 am.

**Contact** 032 525 5025

hotel@saltrockbeach.co.za

saltrockbeach.co.za

**Closest town?** Umhlali (4,8 km)

**Road condition** Tar all the way.

**GPS** S29.504569 E31.236788

**go! Drive & Camp says**

If your fishing permit has expired, the nearest post office is in Umhlali (5 km).



## FISH SPECIES

### Seventy-four *Polysteganus undulosus*

Seventy-four are found only in South Africa, but because of over-fishing their range has shrunk to the area between Sodwana Bay in KwaZulu-Natal and the Agulhas banks. This oval-shaped fish has a silver body with blue and yellow strips along its side. Adults have a large black dot on their side, above the pectoral fin.

**Size and biology** Seventy-four live long, reaching a maximum age of 20 years and a maximum length of 1 m. Spawning takes place from late winter to spring near offshore reefs.

**Habitat** Adults are mostly found in large shoals on deep offshore reefs in depths of 40 to 160 m. Juveniles are also found on offshore reefs, but slightly shallower, from depths of 20 m in the Eastern and Western Cape.

**What do they eat?** Adults feed mostly on other fish species such as sardines and mackerel, but they can also eat squid, octopus and crusta-

ceans (crabs). Juveniles mostly eat smaller animals such as shrimps.

Seventy-four were intensively fished by commercial and recreational boat-based fishers until a ban was put in place in 1998. The ban is still in effect today but there seems to be evidence of juveniles in the Eastern Cape.

**That's a record** 14,1 kg, caught in 1973.



**SASSI status** The seventy-four is on the red list and is protected by law. No one in the country is allowed to catch, buy or sell one.

**Text** Dr. Taryn Murray Sketch Elaine Heemstra © South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity

According to Coastal Fishes of Southern African the Seventy-four is named for the spots and lines on its body that resemble the gun ports of a 16<sup>th</sup> century warship. – Ed







# Tear(s) of joy

First he camped with a tent and a small caravan, but after Jurie van Dyk from Jeffreys Bay saw a teardrop trailer, he knew he had to have one. So he decided to build one himself.

**J**urie's earliest memory of camping was his dad coming home from work on a Friday afternoon and loading a two-man tent, two sleeping bags, two bundles of wood, meat, and a two-litre Coke into a beach buggy and the two of them setting off. Once they reached the ocean they would travel kilometres down the sandy beach looking for a spot

to pitch camp. There they would sleep and fish, with no people around for miles. The simplicity of those outings have always stayed with him, says Jurie.

## The problem

I am an outdoor enthusiast who enjoys fly-fishing, trail running, triathlons and surfing. I have tried different

ways of camping over the years, but the problem was always to what an extent a certain aspect of camping got in the way of my outdoor activities.

For many years a tent was my only option, but it's so time-consuming to pitch the tent and set up the rest of the camp that I didn't have enough time to enjoy the outdoors.





was called a teardrop camper and it was a modern revival of the classic 1930–40s DIY caravan.

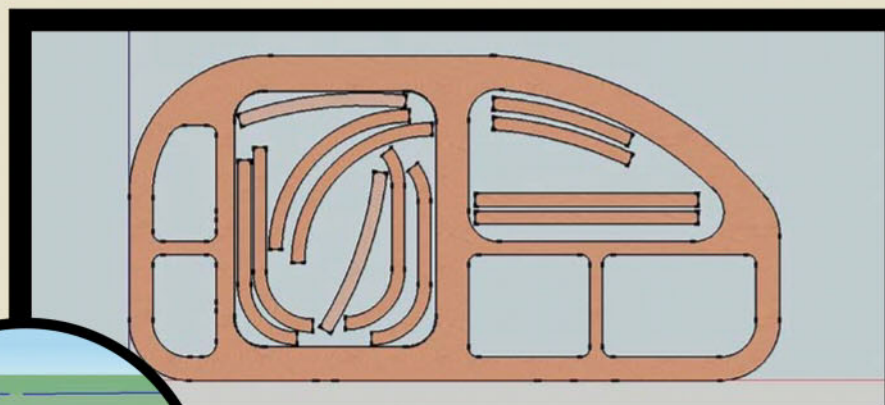
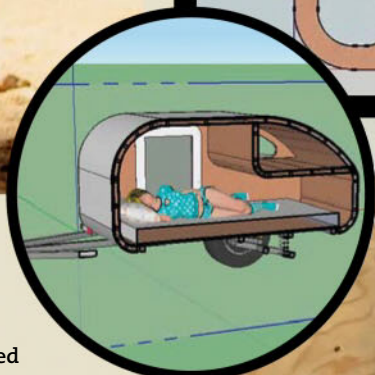
I started doing some research and found that the trend was taking off rapidly in the States. It became clear that this might be the solution to my problems.

The only issue was that if I wanted one I would have to build it myself because the ones I was interested in were not sold or built in South Africa. So I decided “Why not?” I have a strong

architectural background after all. (I completed my studies in 1999 and have been running my own architectural practice ever since.)

Because I had never built anything of this kind before, my idea was to approach it like I would any architectural project: research it, find out exactly which skills and trades were involved, and then plan it down to a T.

Fortunately for me we live in an amazing time where you can visit sites like YouTube, for instance, and >



Another factor that counted heavily against tent camping was how uncomfortably I slept, especially when I was really tired. And then there were the times that I camped in the rain or in strong winds, forcing me to sleep on the back seat of my car more than once.

A few years ago I bought a small 1974 model Gypsy 1, hoping that this would solve my problems. It did to a certain extent, but it came with its own challenges. It was still a mission to set up camp on my own, and the difficulty with a caravan is that you need people to help you manoeuvre it.

Add to that bad fuel economy and the endless struggle to find suitable campsites that could fulfil all my needs, and soon I went camping twice a year and not twice a month.

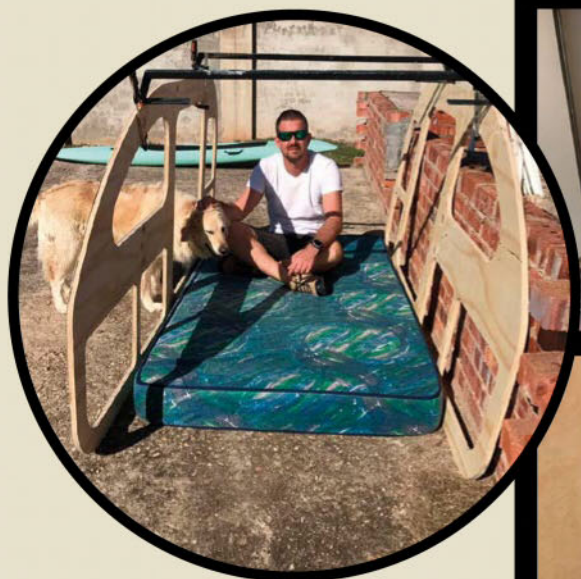
### The solution

A tiny, incredible-looking caravan kept popping up in my social media feeds. It



**PLANNING IS EVERYTHING.** When Jurie decided to build his teardrop caravan, he knew he had to plan it down to the smallest detail. Using 2D and 3D computer design programs, he could calculate and iron out any flaws. Only after all the detailed design and planning work did he begin construction right in his own garage.





find thousands of examples of people showing you how they built something – in this case a teardrop trailer. I used this resource often during construction, and I would definitely recommend this to anyone thinking of taking on any kind of DIY project.

I went about designing my teardrop using a method called “from the skin in”. It’s a design method used in the automotive industry. The main idea is that you start with the shape of the vehicle and work your way back to the structure.

My first task was to find a shape that I really liked, and after recreating the shape in 2D CAD software, I went to my 3D program, Sketchup, and started planning the structure. I built the complete trailer virtually with my 3D software to make sure that all issues were ironed out before I started construction.

I cannot emphasise the importance of this enough if you want a successful project. If you try to do this by eyeballing it while you build, you will run into problems somewhere down the line and you will see that in the finished product. As the saying goes, failing to plan is planning to fail, and when you add up the material costs, that isn’t an option.

### The big build

I have to point out that I am not one of those guys who spends weekends in his garage building things. Don’t get me wrong, I am pretty handy when it comes

to DIY projects, but the last time I worked with wood was 23 years ago when I was in matric. I much prefer spending my time outside in nature.

For that reason I don’t have a lot of tools. The only tools I own are a circular saw (that I turned into a table saw by tying a cable tie to the switch so that it’s permanently on and then you switch it on and off on a multiplug), a jigsaw that I bought from Checkers 10 years ago, a drill, and a router that my dad had since I was in school. That’s it! But in hindsight that’s all you really need.



**LOCAL IS LEKKER.** Jurie decided to build his caravan with materials he could find at the local hardware store. He only struggled with bending the lower ends of the caravan’s plywood sheeting.



The build went pretty smoothly, and I chalk that up to good planning. I managed to build the teardrop by myself, and the only thing I really struggled with was bending the lower ends of the plywood.

From the beginning my idea was to only use material that I could buy from our local hardware store, but what you really need for this project is bendable plywood. I will definitely order that next time.

I designed the trailer base and had it made by a registered professional





**SHINY.** Jurie finished off the caravan's exterior with aluminium panels that he glued to the wooden frame using epoxy glue. The interior finish is plywood that's been treated with a lick of varnish. After the project was finally completed, the only thing it lacked was a name. Jurie decided on Scotti B, an anagram of biscotti.

trailer builder. I designed the doors and had those made by a specialist. I felt those were the items you shouldn't compromise on. The roof vent was an off-the-shelf RV vent.

I finished the exterior off with a layer of aluminium that I glued on with strong epoxy glue. I used treated plywood for the interior walls and floors.

I bought a double foam mattress, but because the trailer is slightly smaller than a double bed, I had to cut about 100 mm off the length of the mattress.

At the top of the trailer I built in two cupboards. The one I turned into a kitchen and the other one is for our clothing.

### The long and short of it

My teardrop weighs 440 kg. The trailer base weighs 140 kg and the body 300 kg. It has a nose weight of 66 kg, but with the next one I'm going to aim to get it close to 40 kg. I have a little bit of room to move the axle forward, but I'll have to carefully look at the positioning of the wheels and the doors. But the trailer tows like a dream.

I paid about R45 000 for the materials, and in terms of size I intentionally kept it to the dimensions of a standard sheet of wood (2 400 mm x 1 200 mm). The body is therefore 2 400 mm long, the height is 1 200 mm, and the internal width is

1 200 wide – which is about as big as a double bed.

I also put 14" tyres on the trailer for easier gravel road towing.

I was sitting in a coffee shop one day and realised the biscotti accompanying my coffee had the same shape as my teardrop. And right there I decided to name my trailer Scotti B.

### Let's go camping

I'm happy to report that the teardrop lived up to every imaginable expectation I had for a "hook-up and go" vehicle. >







The ground clearance height and 14" wheels allow me to access areas that conventional caravans can't.

I can easily hitch and manoeuvre the camper myself, and there is no setup time when you reach your destination. The space inside is more than comfortable, and having a hardcover that protects you from the elements is worth its weight in gold.

### Final thoughts

A friend asked me what the one thing was that I took away from this experience. I had to think about it for a while, but I now know what it is.

We often look at caravan prices and think they are completely over the top. I looked at the costs of teardrops in the States and thought I could build it for a fraction of that. And yes, I could. And maybe you can too.

But then you have to build it for yourself and not expect to be compensated for your labour. As soon as you start building it for others you'll have put a value on your time. And that's when it becomes expensive.

I have to thank my wife, Colette, for her patience with a husband who decided to build a teardrop in their garage. I built this trailer at a time when money was rather tight but she supported me throughout the whole process. I could not have done it without her.



### DONE AND DUSTED.

One can hardly believe that this caravan was built using just four power tools. The secret, says Jurie, lies in his planning process.



Jurie wins 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](http://campcover.co.za)



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# Kuga carries on

In terms of size, as a sport utility vehicle, the Kuga is on the smaller side of the spectrum, but things are quite different when it comes to its towing ability.

Text and photos Leon Botha



FORD KUGA 1.5 ECOBOOST TREND (AUTOMATIC)





Until recently Ford had their hands full with the Kuga debacle. The manufacturer claims it has fixed the problem and has updated the current models. That includes technology like better protection for pedestrians in case of an accident, roll stability control, and a rear-view camera – all standard on new models. The latest version of Ford's MyKey technology also forms part of the upgrade. With this you can, for example, limit your top speed and turn the sound system's volume off until every passenger in the Kuga puts on their seat belts.

### Small engines: The way of the future

You have a choice between two engine sizes: 1,5 l petrol or a 2 l diesel or petrol. The top model diesel kicks out an impressive 400 Nm and you're not going to struggle going uphill with a caravan. For the tow test we sacrificed the torque because we got behind the wheel of the 1,5 l. Besides the 160 Nm less torque, this model also doesn't have all-wheel drive – only front-wheel drive. By the way, all the petrol models' towing capacity is fixed at 1 600 kg and 200 kg more for the diesel models.

The 1,5 l is by no means an inferior towing vehicle. Thirty years ago, towing a medium-sized caravan with a 1,5 l petrol engine was unheard of. But vehicle manufacturers started designing smaller and stronger engines. Take, for example, the erstwhile Toyota Cressida Gli-6: In the mid-Eighties this six-cylinder 2 l engine was a decent machine but it only produced 162 Nm. That's about a third less than the 1,5 l Kuga, whose engine is also a quarter smaller. In those days a V6 3l in front of a caravan was what you wanted. Nobody would have been able to fault a Ford Sierra XR-6 as a towing vehicle. If you compare the XR-6 engine and the Kuga's 1,5 l, it's another prime example of how manufacturers are now building smaller and stronger engines. The XR-6's engine delivered 237 Nm and the Kuga's slightly better with its 240 Nm. The engine is, therefore, half the size with the same torque. The Kuga's turbocharger does lend a hand, though.

### The towing figures

The test vehicle was fitted with a Oris removable tow bar. The 1 600 kg that the Kuga is allowed to tow is in line with its tare weight (1 660 kg). That means you're allowed to legally tow most of the caravans on the market. The weight that the tow bar is allowed to carry on the ball also meets the law's minimum allowed weight of 100 kg.

As a rule it's advisable to try to get a caravan's nose as close to 100 kg as possible, but it's not always possible with smaller caravans. In such a case, pack most of your load in front in the caravan. It helps combat sway should the caravan follow its own head when you're driving faster. Ford recommends a minimum nose weight of 4% of the caravan's weight. During the test the Romany tipped the scale at 1 060 kg. That means a nose weight of 42,4 kg or more.

>



Ford's 1 600 kg towing capacity limit is quite high for a car of this size, but the tow bar tube (50 mm x 70 mm) can handle it. Its D-value – the weight at which the tow bar's towing capacity test was done – is 11 kN (1 122 kg). The ball is 47 cm above the ground and a good coupler height for standard caravans. Because the tow bar's removable part is of the goose neck variety, you won't be able to fit a drop plate.

It's also very important to adjust the tyre pressure when you tow; especially the rear tyres. Ford recommends a 0,2 bar higher pressure versus the prescribed 2,8 bar. The rear tyres should therefore be 3 bar, but it goes without saying that this extra pressure shouldn't exceed the specific tyre's maximum pressure. The test vehicle was fitted with Continental ContiSportContact 235/50 R18 tyres with a maximum pressure of 3,5 bar.

### Pure indulgence

The Kuga's tailgate is similar to most other sport utility vehicles' and opens upwards. That's all fine and dandy but not all of them close that easily. With some you struggle because there isn't anything to grab hold of when you need to pull the door down. In terms of this, the Kuga is ahead of the game because it has a round bar to the right in the door that you can easily grip. The two front doors' inside handles look similar, and it's a clever design.

This model is R70 000 shy of half a million, and you can see the frills when you open the door: From the electrically adjustable driver seat to the beam angle of the lights with no less than nine settings. The steering wheel looks like it would be at home in a Boeing's cabin. You literally can't fit more buttons on it: From the standard radio settings right through to the lane assist and even gear paddles that stick out like ears behind the wheel. The dashboard has four analogue meters. The rev counter is on the left, with the speedometer on the other side and the fuel and temperature gauges smaller and in the middle at the bottom. The computer screen is above the smaller meters and has the same amount of detail as the steering wheel. You can choose between a number of screens depending on what info you want to see. There's also a screen with comprehensive info that shows everything at once: From the odometer, the average and current fuel consumption, and how many kilometres you can still travel before the tank is empty.

Ford takes seat belt safety seriously. The computer knows when someone is sitting on

a seat and is not buckled in and even sounds an alarm when someone unbuckles while the car is moving. A graphics displaying all the seats will show who is and who isn't wearing their seat belt.

Two USB sockets are hidden away in the compartment between the two front seats, and there's a 12 V socket at the gear lever. Behind the compartment – where the rear passengers are – is another 230 V socket. Where the 12 V socket uses a 180 W fuse, the rear socket is restricted to 150 W. That means it's safe to plug in a cellphone or tablet charger but your daughter's hair dryer will mean the end of the socket's fuse. So don't just plug in any equipment here. Ford also warns to not plug in tube TVs, vacuum cleaners, compressor-driven freezers or electric blankets. *(So you can't snuggle under your electric blanket watching TV and vacuuming while you wait for an ice-cold beer. – Ed)*

The reverse screen in the Kuga looks exactly like the one Ford uses in the Ranger bakkie. It has index lines that show the line in which you're reversing. In the middle – between the two outside lines – is a dotted line that indicates the middle of the lane. You can use this to reverse accurately if you aim the dotted line at the caravan's coupler.

Just like the Ranger, the lines disappear once you've hitched a caravan; the Kuga, therefore, knows you're about to tow. When you connect the caravan's light plug a note flashes on the dashboard saying the blind spot sensors will be switched off because of the caravan on the tow bar. When you reverse, the rear sensors still sound, but you can switch it off.

The kids each have a tray table that folds out from the back of the front seats. A cup-sized round hole will prevent spills when dad slams the brakes unexpectedly.



**HEAD TURNER.** The new Kuga's neat lines, stylish alloys, dominant grille up front and jewel-like head- and tail lamps are definitely eye-catching. A towing mirror also fits effortlessly onto the side mirrors if you're going to haul a caravan that's wider than the Kuga.







**Pieter Crous**

has been towing caravans since the previous century.

This is what he thinks...

“I love the grille that Ford puts on their vehicles these days; that counts for the Kuga as well.

The driver seat is electrically adjustable. I like sitting high and you can set this one surprisingly high. Inside, the Kuga is painfully neat and you get a sense of durability that you usually associate with German vehicles.

When the car wants to bring something to your attention, it simply shows a symbol on the dashboard. It also shows a typed out message like “passenger door open”. It makes your life easier because you know exactly what the problem is. The information on the screen is comprehensive, and besides all the standard readings – like the current fuel consumption – the computer also warns you when you’ve been driving for too long and then suggests you take a break.

The Kuga is surprisingly quiet inside; you don’t even hear the engine. The model is basically full-house and you’re spoiled with all the luxuries. Yet you can’t see in which gear the automatic gearbox is. If you use the paddle shifts, though, it does show you what gear you’re changing to.

The reverse screen is a bit deep in the panel, especially at the bottom. And this is the spot where you have to press the screen so it makes it a bit uncomfortable.

The 1,5 l engine is small, but with the 240 Nm the acceleration doesn’t disappoint. The gearbox changes fast, but there’s a slight hesitation when you put your foot down.

Its Lane Keep Assist works well. When you come too close to the white or yellow line, the computer lightly adjusts the steering so you don’t cross the line. You can’t, however, hand over full control to the Kuga, because as soon as you take your hands off the wheel, the computer will give you a warning.

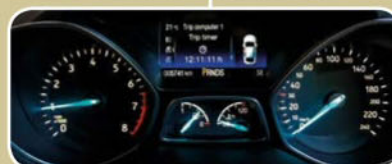
It takes time getting used to the front-wheel drive, and you feel it specifically where you put your foot down in a turn and the engine pulls the steering forward.

The Kuga has disc brakes on all wheels, which means having to stop quickly is not a problem.

I like the Kuga and would buy one.



**CHECK THIS OUT.** The rear door has a practical handle to make it easier to pull it down to the closed position. Behind the front seats a fold-down tray table just like those you would find on an airplane provides a handy space to keep your drink and a book or tablet.



**FINGERTIP FRENZY.** You’ll have to spend some time familiarising yourself with the all the buttons on the multifunction steering wheel.



**TURN LEFT NOW.** The satellite navigation display is large and clear, but sits a little too deep in the fascia recess to make easy adjustments. The digital screen between the analogue dials displays important information regarding your journey, such as the average and current fuel consumption, as well as distance to empty.





### On the tow bar

**Make** Gypsy

**Model** Romany

**Year model** 2012

**Tare weight** 1 060 kg

**GVM** 1 225 kg

**Loaded weight on the axle**

**during testing** 1 140 kg  
(weighed hitched to the Kuga)

**Nose weight** 60 kg

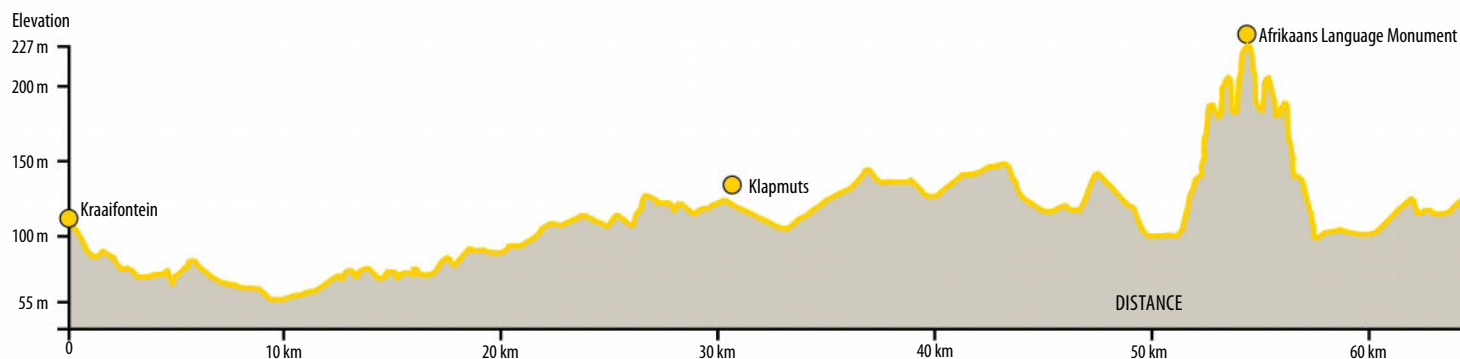
go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Gypsy Romany from Tygerberg Caravans. Phone Wesley Dempster on 021 982 4670 for a closer look. [tygerbergcaravans.co.za](http://tygerbergcaravans.co.za)

### NOW YOU SEE ME...

As soon as you hitch a caravan onto the Kuga's tow bar, the computer will inform you that the blind spot warning system will no longer be active. You'll be able to turn off the reverse parking sensors manually if they start to annoy you.



### TOW PROFILE



## Before you open your wallet

### What does the book say?

**Fuel** Petrol

**Engine** 1,498 ℓ

**Cylinders** Inline-four

**Power** 132 kW @ 6 000 rpm

**Torque** 240 Nm @ 1 600–4 000 rpm

**Transmission** 6-speed (automatic)

**Drive chain** Front wheels

**Tare** 1 660 kg

**GVM** 2 100 kg

**GCM** 4 100 kg

**Wading depth** Not available

**Towing ability for trailer with overrun brakes** Ford allows up to 1 600 kg.

**Measurements** 4 524 mm (l); 1 838 mm (w); 1 703 mm (h)

**Wheel base** 2 690 mm

**Track width** 1 554–1 574 mm (front and rear)

**Ground clearance** 197 mm

**Fuel tank** 60 ℓ

**Price (new)** From R427 900

**Price (second-hand)** Roughly R369 900 for a 2017 model with 10 000 km on the clock.

### Fast facts

**The tow bar** The tow bar does not come standard and costs an additional R6 033

(R14 981 for the retractable tow bar).

**Suspension** Independent front and rear suspension.

Under the 60 kg nose weight the Kuga's tail dropped a mere centimetre.

**What does the scale say?** 1 780 kg with a full

tank of fuel, the driver in the Kuga, as well as the 60 kg nose weight of the Romany on the ball of the tow bar. The total combination weight (GCM) was 2 920 kg, which leaves you with just more than a ton for all the passengers and the luggage in the car and the caravan. The GCM is fixed at 4 100 kg, but that counts to 1 000 m above sea level on a gradient of no more than 12%. For every 1 000 m over, the permitted GCM decreases with 10%. That's relevant in places like Dullstroom where you tow at more than 2 000 m above sea level.

**Interior** If you're six feet,

you have four fingers

above your head

(with the seat

set high), and

at the back





just as much in front of your knees and a finger more above your head.

**Speed** The speedometer's reading was 5 km/h faster when the GPS was on 95 km/h.

**Fuel consumption** A reasonable 15,5 l/100 km (6,6 km/l) for this size turbo-petrol engine and a caravan in tow. The wind also didn't help; it was strong and mostly a crosswind. The Kuga's computer, however, was more pessimistic about the consumption and read 18,6 l/100 km (5,4 km/l).

**Interior finishes** Predominantly black, painfully neat, and durable.

**Extras** Among others, metallic spray paint R1 200, 18" alloy wheels for

Trend models R5 250, Driver Assistance package for Trend and Titanium models R15 450, styling pack for the Titanium model R19 550, and touch screen with navigation R5 044.

**Other models?**  
1.5 EcoBoost Ambiente R368 800; 1.5 EcoBoost Ambiente (auto) R381 900; 1.5 EcoBoost Trend R406 400; 2.0 TDCi Trend (auto) R483 900; 2.0 EcoBoost Titanium (auto) R497 900; 2.0 TDCi Titanium Powershift (auto) R506 900

**go! Drive & Camp says** Ford warns against towing faster than 100 km/h with the Kuga.

### The test

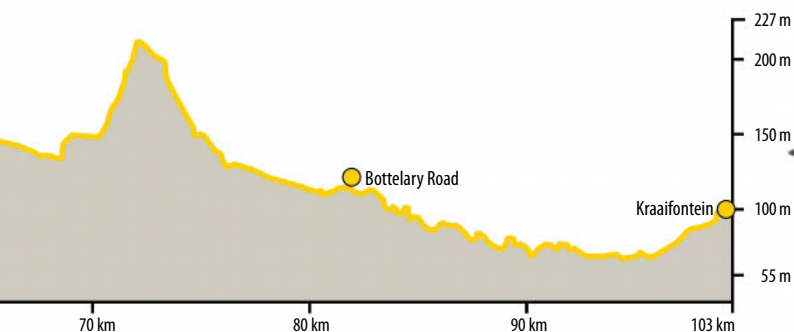
**Distance** 102,5 km

**Top speed** 100 km/h (speedometer reading)

**Average speed** (stop times included) 31,69 km/h (highways, back roads and built-up areas)

**Driving time** 3 hours 15 minutes.

**Weather** 18 °C, partly cloudy with drizzle and a strong 23 km/h crosswind from the south-southwest.



### From the competitors (two-wheel drive and petrol)



250 Nm

Volkswagen Tiguan 1.4 TSI Comfortline  
R479 900



265 Nm

Hyundai Tucson 1.6T GDi Executive  
R449 900



240 Nm

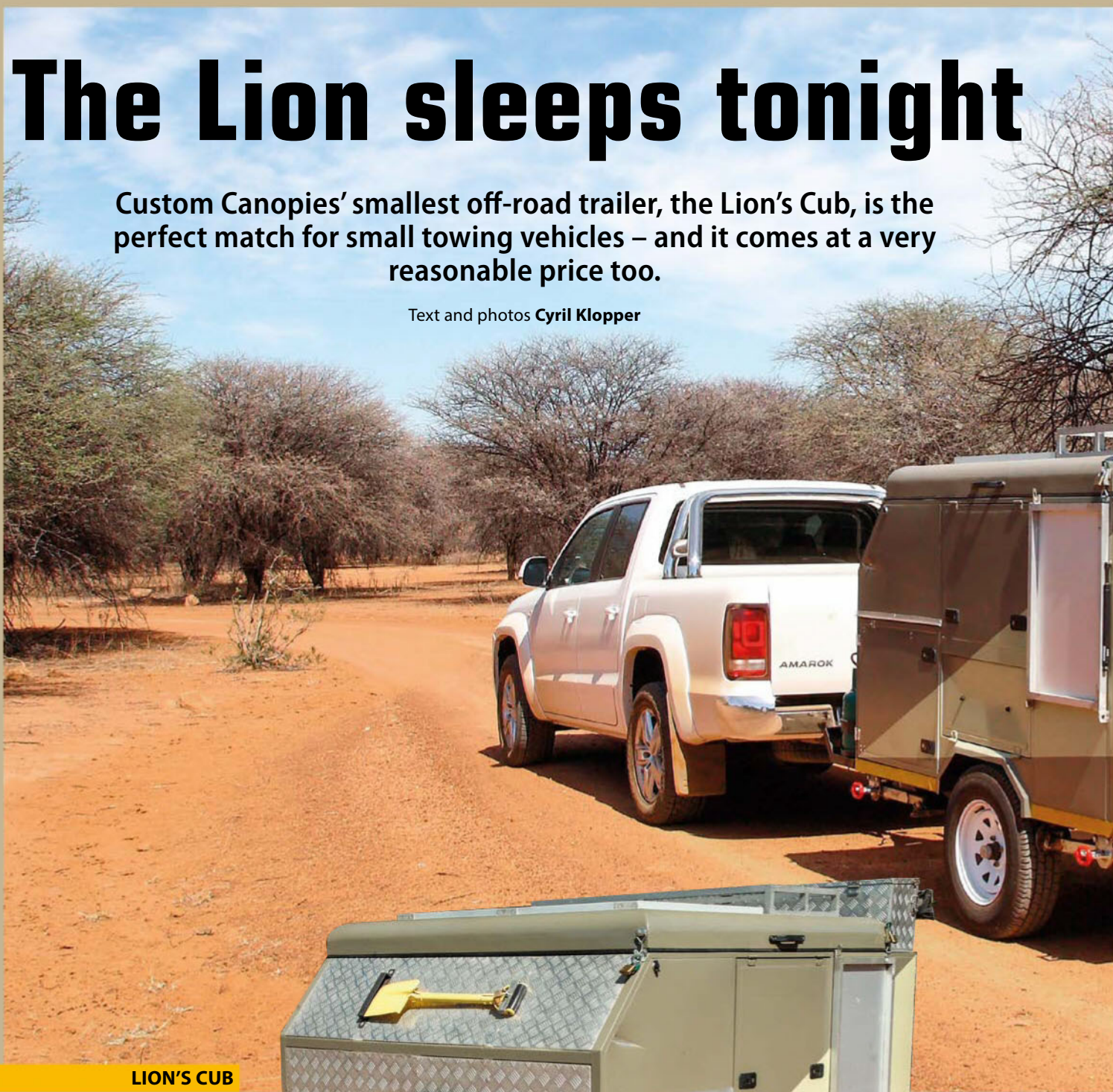
Nissan Qashqai 1.6 Turbo Acenta  
R407 900



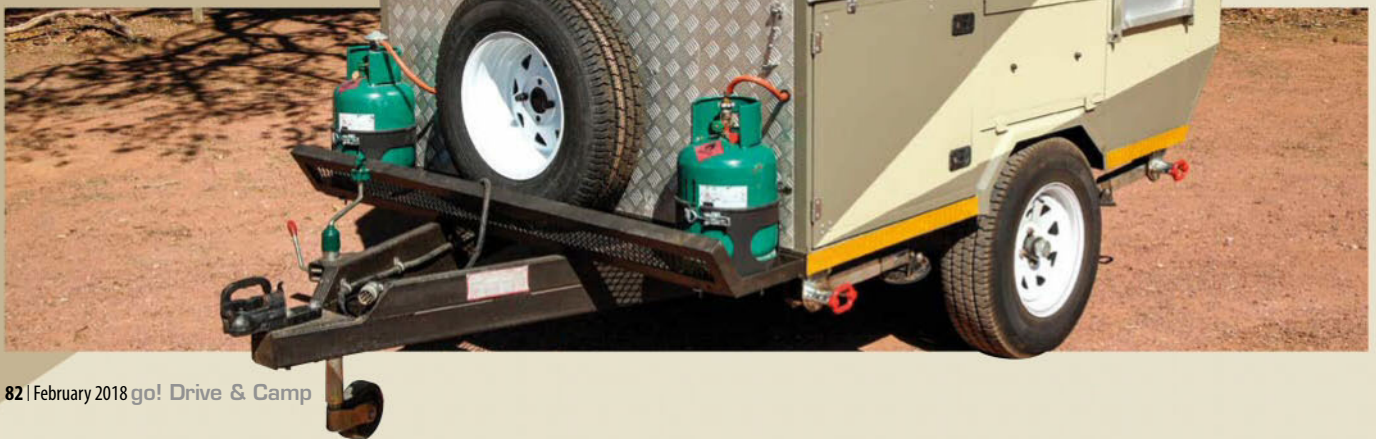
# The Lion sleeps tonight

Custom Canopies' smallest off-road trailer, the Lion's Cub, is the perfect match for small towing vehicles – and it comes at a very reasonable price too.

Text and photos **Cyril Kloppe**



**LION'S CUB**







**S**mall SUVs like the Suzuki Jimny and Ford Ecosport work great in cities with narrow streets and tight parking spaces, but when it comes to towing, these guys drew the short end of the stick.

Jan Venter of Custom Canopies saw the need for an affordable lightweight

off-road trailer and built the Lion's Cub for light towing vehicles. Jan says he fixed the tare at 250 kg.

We unhitched this trailer in Limpopo and for four days sought shelter in it from the Bushveld's heavy thunderstorms and sweltering heat to find out if the confined space would give us cabin fever.



#### **To the right, in front, and on top**

The Lion's Cub doesn't have a nosecone. To save on weight and curb length, there's a small shelf with a full-size 14" spare tyre and two gas cylinders. The cylinder on the left feeds the shower at the back of the Cub, and the bottle on the right is for the gas stove in the fold-out kitchen. The spade above the spare wheel is not for when you get an unexpected urge to do some gardening.

There's an electricity socket on the right-hand side panel, in front of the axle. Behind a panel that stretches across basically the entire length of the right-hand side is a slide-

out bed. By unclipping it and pulling on its handles, the slide-out appears effortlessly from the Cub's body. The slide-out also has a window that slides open as well as a fold-away washing line.

A 120 W solar panel on top of the roof supplies electricity to the battery system. Behind the solar panel is a rack that is large enough for at least four huge bags of firewood or a battery of jerry cans.

The roof pops up easily with the help of gas struts – but closing the roof requires quite a bit more elbow grease. With one hand you need to pull on a strap which lowers the roof half way down and with the other hand you have to push against the window frame so that the entire structure collapses inward and down. It's easy for tall guys, but if you're built like Danny DeVito, you're going to struggle.

Behind the roof is a long toolbox made of aluminium chequer plate – perfect for hammers, extra tent poles, and random spares. >





## At the back, to the left, and below

The Cub's entrance is to the left in the back and access is made easy via a fold-down step. The number plate is mounted below the step and is only visible when the step is folded up. Next to the step is a copper tap that's connected to a built-in 60 l water tank. To the right of the door is a lockable cupboard where you'll find a pump-powered 5,5 l gas shower (also connected to the water tank). Above the entrance and shower is an LED strip that changes colour from white to yellow to red at the press of a button.

On the Cub's left side is an aluminium table that folds flat against the body and clips in place. Next to the table, above the axle, is a split hatch.

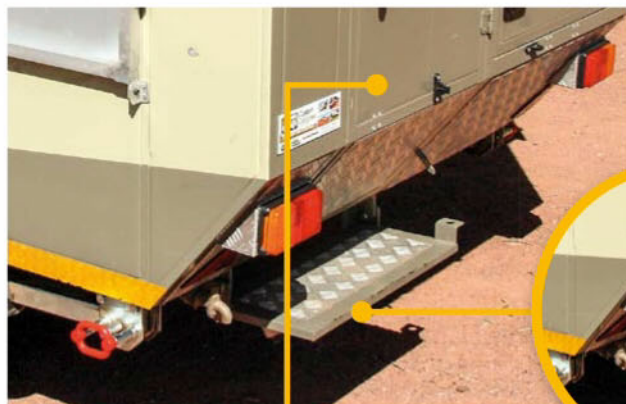
The top half flips open to form a makeshift canopy and the bottom part folds down

horizontally. There is a twin gas cooker on the bottom hatch.

The fold-out kitchen is well equipped – there are plates, glasses, and cutlery for two – but there is no LED roof light. There is a 12 V Hella socket in the panel to the left above the fold-out kitchen.

Next to the kitchen is another door that swings to the left – this is where you'll find the fridge-freezer on a drawer. On the inside of the door is a folding frame that holds a basin and a drying rack. There's a fold-out canvas canopy with side panels so you can cook even if it's raining.

You drop the four corner steadies by pulling on a red tab at each one. With the steadies deployed it's a simple matter to crank them with a standard wheel spanner until the Cub is level.



## How does it tow?

We towed the Lion's Cub with a Volkswagen Amarok V6 (totally OTT, we know). Thanks to the Cub's low mass it doesn't require overrun brakes, and with its low profile it barely feels like it's on the tow bar, even during windy conditions.

You only notice the weight once you brake, but it doesn't feel like a heavy trailer pushing against your

vehicle – it's more like 15 bags of cement on the back of a bakkie.

The trailer performs well on highways, and it's only when you hit a pothole at high speed that the Cub bucks slightly.

You have to take extra care on dirt roads though because the Cub is prone to fishtailing when you go round a bend too fast.







### Come inside

Behind the door is a row of canvas pouches for goggles, flashlights and toilet tissue. Directly behind the door, to your immediate right, are three shelves each big enough for a pair of shoes or a toiletry bag. Behind this are three larger pockets, two of which have a canvas cover with velcro. Next in line is a smallish makeup mirror that is unfortunately too low to be of any real use.

In the middle of the trailer's interior wall is another row of canvas pouches for cellphone chargers, magazines, field guides and other odds and sods. In the farthest corner to the left is a cupboard with two transparent plastic bins.

Behind the cupboard is a space for bedding and table-

cloths (the battery monitor is also mounted here).

At the foot of the cupboard are eight 12 V and eight 220 V sockets. In front of the cupboard there's shelf where you can put a laptop to watch your favourite movie at night. It also acts as a bedside table. Above this space is an LED reading lamp. A slightly weaker LED is right at the top below the apex of the roof.

Sure, the Cub is a lot smaller than a typical off-road caravan, but there is ample space for one person to comfortably holiday for a few weeks. Two people will struggle to stick it out if they take shelter inside for more than a just few days. So rather take turns spending time inside until it's time to go to bed.

>





## Sleep tight

When the slide-out is pulled out, the single bed turns into a double bed. The person lying at the back against the window can't sit upright because of the slide-out's low ceiling, but the person closest to the door has more than enough room to move.

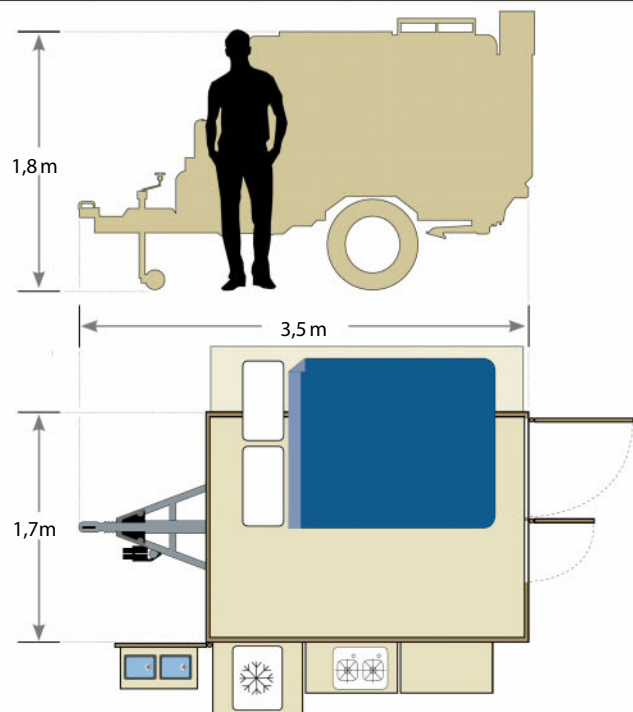
Underneath the mattresses are three hatches that lead to a 60 l water tank,

a 12 V water pump, and the battery system. There is also extra storage space for the wood-carved giraffe and soap-stone hippo you bought at the side of the road on your way back from Sodwana.

The water tank's filler hole is below the bed, which means you have to open the slide-out, lift one of the hatches, and use a hosepipe to fill it up. The fact that the filler is directly under the bed's sliding frame complicates matters slightly. The interior is lined with soft felt carpet.







## The technical stuff

**Length** 3,5 m

**Width** 1,7 m

**Height** 1,8 m

**Height with roof pitched**  
3,3 m

**Floor-to-roof height inside**  
**with roof pitched** 2,4 m

**Tare weight** 250 kg

**Payload** 50 kg

**Price** R125 000

sometimes folds out while driving.

- The water tank beneath the bed is difficult to fill.

go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Lion's Cub from François Meyer, one of Custom Canopies' clients. The trailer is not brand new and François made a few of his own modifications to it.



Plus

- Clever and practical design.
- There is ample storage space.
- It's big enough so you can stand upright inside.
- There's an oversupply of 220 V and 12 V electrical sockets.
- It's light enough so you can push and pull it by hand.



Minus

- The entrance is low and tall people struggle to get out.
- A mesh curtain at the entrance would be handy.
- The fold-out kitchen could do with an LED light.
- The step at the entrance

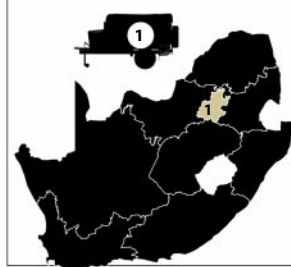
**go! Drive & Camp says** The Lion's Cub is a safe off-road trailer that works well behind a Jimny or a Peugeot 3008.

## Dealer network

Custom Canopies is a one-man operation in Silvertendale, Pretoria.

**Contact** 083 281 7800

[customcanopies.org](http://customcanopies.org)







ATKV-BUFFELSPOORT



# COME CAMP WITH US!

6-8 APRIL 2018





Come spend a fun-filled weekend with the *go! Drive & Camp* and *go!* teams at the ATKV-Buffelspoort Resort near Rustenburg. We'll host workshops on how to tackle your next holiday in Namibia or Botswana, and we'll show you how to improve your photography. You can also go on a nature walk or just relax and listen to stories around the campfire.

## WHERE?

ATKV-Buffelspoort, Rustenburg, North West

## HOW MUCH?

R1 050 per person for the full weekend; R500 per child under 18.

Book your spot and bring your own caravan or tent at no additional accommodation cost.

### Included in the rate

- Snacks and wine (Friday evening)
- Saturday and Sunday breakfast
- Goody bag
- Entertainment
- Workshops and some activities
- Entertainment for the kids

## ITINERARY

### FRIDAY EVENING

- Wine tasting/Sundowners
- Listen to the *go! Drive & Camp* and *go!* teams talk about their many travels.
- Snacks will be served.

### SATURDAY

The following optional activities are on offer

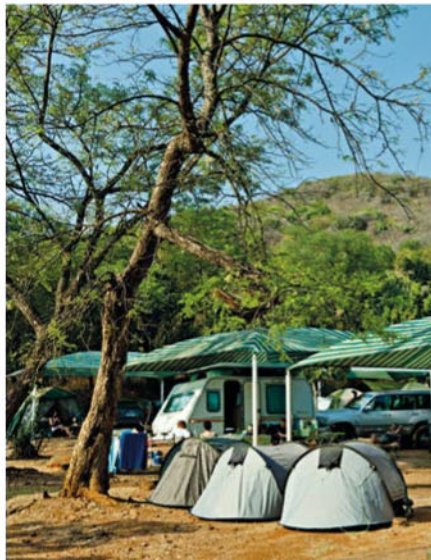
- Walk in the veld with a flora and fauna expert or explore the area on your bicycle. Remember to bring a camera and binoculars.
- A workshop on the best and most challenging 4x4 trails in the country.
- A photography workshop (see sidebar)

### SATURDAY EVENING

- Enter our exciting potjiekos competition. There are great prizes to be won!
- Be entertained by our own singer/songwriter/cartographer François Haasbroek.

### 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.



## OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

### A 90-minute photography workshop

How to take better photos with *go! Drive & Camp's* Leon Botha and *go!* picture editor Shelley Christians. We'll show you how to use your camera and give feedback on your photos.

**BOOK  
NOW!**

Call Donvé Myburgh on ☎ 021 443 9830  
or e-mail ✉ [donve.myburgh@media24.com](mailto:donve.myburgh@media24.com)



# Bread winners

Who has ever said no to a delicious braai broodjie? And with the right filling you can put together a feast anywhere, any time.

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



## BEEFY BREAD

### For meat lovers

Freeze some of the mixture and keep it at hand to use as a pasta sauce or sandwich filling to beat all sandwich fillings.

#### Ingredients

(enough for 10)

- 1 kg beef (brisket)
- 2 red peppers, chopped
- 1 can (410 g) tomato relish
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon fine cumin
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon smoked chilli flakes
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste

#### For the sandwiches

- 2 slices sourdough bread
- butter
- ¼ cup grated cheddar cheese
- 2 gherkins, thinly sliced

#### Here's how

**1 Cook** the meat in a potjie

with the lid on together with all the other ingredients for 1 hour at 150 °C. Then switch off the oven, but don't open the oven door and leave the pot with the meat in the oven overnight.

**2 Flake** the meat in the sauce. If the sauce isn't thick enough, reduce it over medium heat on the stove. Flavour to taste with salt and pepper and put in a Ziploc bag.

**3 Spread** butter on both sides of the bread slices, put filling on one of the slices, add the gherkins and cheese and top with the remaining slices.

**4 Fry** the bread in a pan with butter until golden brown, turn around and fry the other side. You can also use a jaffel pan.

**go! Drive & Camp says** The sauce can be made on the coals in a pot with a lid. Bring to the boil with sauce and all for 10 minutes, then leave in lukewarm ash for a few hours (even overnight) until the meat is tender and easy to flake.

## HAM AND CHEESE SANDWICH

### Croque monsieur!

Take your ham and cheese sandwich to the next level with a strong cheese sauce and mustard.

#### Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 5 tablespoons butter, plus extra
- 2 tablespoons flour
- ¾ cup milk
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 egg yolk
- 8 slices bread
- 4 slices ham
- 1 cup grated Gruyère cheese

#### Here's how

**1 Melt** the butter in a pot and mix in the flour. Stir in the milk bit by bit until well combined and simmer for 3 minutes.

**2 Remove** from the heat and mix in the mustard and the egg yolk.

**3 Divide** the sauce, ham, and cheese between the 4 slices bread and top with the remaining slices.

**4 Melt** the remaining butter in a pan and fry the sandwiches until crisp and golden brown on both sides.

#### go! Drive & Camp says

To save time, you can buy ready-made white sauce and thicken it with an egg. >







## BAZAAR JAFFELS

### Like grandma used to make

What is a bazaar without a mince jaffel? I like mine with some veggies and a strong dose of curry.

#### Ingredients

(enough for 8)

- 250 g beef mince
- 250 g pork sausages
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- ½ teaspoon fine cumin
- ½ cup frozen peas
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- ½ cup water
- salt and pepper, to taste

#### For the jaffels

- 16 slices white bread
- butter

#### Here's how

**1 Put** the mince in a pan, then squeeze pork out of the sausage casings, and add to the mince.

**2 Heat** the olive oil in a pan, add the meat and the curry powder and cumin and cook until light brown and cooked through.

**3 Stir** in the peas, carrots, and water, flavour to taste with salt and pepper, cover with the lid and let it simmer for 10 minutes.

**4 Spread** the bread with butter, fill two slices of bread with a spoonful of the meat mixture, and fry the sandwich until golden brown in the jaffel pan.

#### go! Drive & Camp says

You can freeze this mixture and use it later as a filling in anything from a roti to a braai pie.



## TINY BRAAI PIES

### Nibbles in a jiffy

Use any filling inside these dough half moons – just make sure that cheese is one of the ingredients.

#### Ingredients

(enough for 8)

#### For the dough

- 3–4 cups bread flour
- 1½ cups lukewarm water
- 10 g yeast
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt

#### For the filling

- 1 cup goat's cheese
- 2 cups grated mozzarella
- 125 g salami slices
- 10 peppadews
- 10 sun-dried tomatoes
- 2 bunches rocket

#### Here's how

**1 Mix** the flour, water, yeast, olive oil, sugar and salt together and knead for about 10 minutes. Cover and leave to prove until double the size.

**2 Divide** the dough into 8 balls and leave to rest for 15 minutes.

**3 Roll** each ball out into a circle. Divide the mixture ingredients (except the rocket leaves) between the dough circles and sprinkle it on the one half. Fold the other half on top.

**4 Put** a large cast-iron pan or a flat cast-iron braai skottel over medium coals and put the pies on top. Put the lid on the kettle braai and turn over the pies after 8 minutes. Bake for another 5–10 minutes until golden brown and cooked through.

**5 Cut** open the sides, put the rocket leaves inside and serve warm.

#### go! Drive & Camp says

Serve the pies with sweet chilli sauce.



## HAM, AVO AND EGG SANDWICH

### Breakfast of champs

This all-in-one breakfast sandwich can be made quickly and easily in the campsite.

#### Ingredients

(enough for 1)

- 2 slices bread
- butter
- 2 eggs
- chilli sauce, to taste
- ½ avocado, mashed
- 2 slices ham
- salt and pepper, to taste

#### Here's how

**1 Spread** butter on both sides of the bread slices.

**2 Make** a hole in the middle of each slice – a champagne glass is perfect.

**3 Heat** a pan and put the bread slices in it. Break an egg inside the hole in the bread so that the yolk rests inside the hole and use the back of a spoon to spread the egg white over the bread slice.

**4 Fry** the bread until the bottom is crisp and golden brown, turn around and fry for another few minutes. Remove from the pan.

**5 Spread** chilli sauce and avo on the bread and arrange the ham on top, flavour to taste with salt and black pepper, and end with the second slice of bread. Enjoy!

#### go! Drive & Camp says

You can replace the ham with crispy bacon or even smoked salmon.



## THAI CHICKEN AND PINEAPPLE JAFFEL

### Versatile filling

The chicken is poached in coconut milk and then flavoured with Thai spices. You can make the filling ahead of time and then freeze it.

#### Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 2–3 chicken breasts
- 1 can (410 g) coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon Thai curry paste
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- 1 red chilli of 1 teaspoon chilli sauce
- salt and pepper, to taste
- juice of ½ a lemon or lime
- 2 fresh pineapple rings, cut in blocks
- 1 cup finely chopped coriander leaves

#### For the jaffels

- 8 slices white bread
- butter

#### Here's how

**1 Poach** the chicken breasts by placing it in a pot and covering it with the coconut milk, curry paste, and garlic. Heat up until below boiling point, then leave to simmer for 20 minutes. Remove the chicken from the liquid.

**2 Flake** the meat with 2 forks.

**3 Flavour** to taste with the chilli, salt, pepper and lemon juice and mix in the pineapple and coriander.

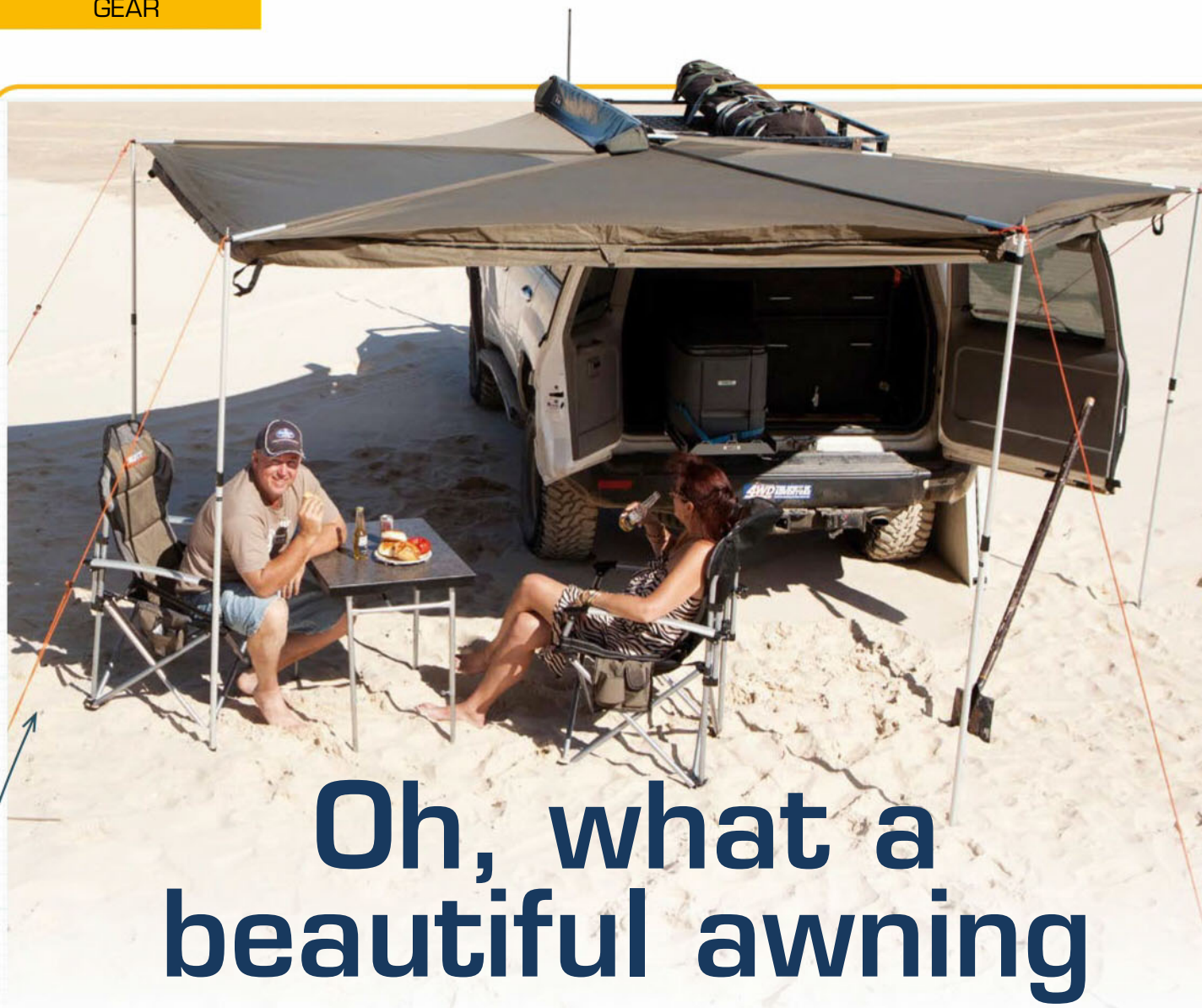
**4 Spread** butter on the bread, fill two slices with a spoonful of the chicken mixture and fry the sandwich until golden brown in the jaffel pan.

#### go! Drive & Camp says

If you feel like something different, this mixture is a perfect pizza topping or a filling for a pie. 🍴







# Oh, what a beautiful awning

Usually “throwing shade” is an unpleasant experience for the recipients, but during these hot summer days, all of us would gladly welcome a bit of it. Check out these awning options.

Text **Kyle Kock**

**C**hances are you're short on packing space when you're out and about with your new 4x4 or motor-home, and a big, bulky gazebo carrying case is the last thing you need if you want to be mobile and fast.

Awnings come in a variety of styles and sizes to suit individual needs, and the added bonus is that you don't ever have to remember to pack it because it's conveniently fitted to your roof.

## **Foxwing awning** THE REAL MAKHOYA

This one-piece kit swings out easily, meaning one person can set up and pack away in seconds. You can have it for the passenger or driver's side. There are zipped edges on all sides for accessories

and there's even a power inlet so you can connect to a source from the inside. The frame and poles are rust-resistant aluminium, and the awning itself is made of rip-stop poly-cotton canvas.

**Price** R10 545 at 4x4 Mega World

**Accessories available** Standard sides (R2 350)

**go! Drive & Camp says** With a dedicated port to run a power cable through, you can turn this into a proper tent.





### Maxi Shade 270 awning KEEP COOL

Thanks to its easy swing-out operation, the Maxi Shade 270 claims to be a one-man operation and strong enough to stand unsupported – though it does come with guy ropes and pegs for the odd occasion of adverse conditions. The aluminium frame is available in 2,1, 2,3 and 2,5 m lengths and is wrapped in waterproof and UV-resistant 300 gsm rip-stop canvas.

**Price** R7 950 from Custom Leisure Tech

**Accessories available** Plain side walls (R950), window and shade net (R1 250)

**go! Drive & Camp says** You have a choice of lengths to cater exactly to your needs.



### Front Runner 4x4 Modular awning BIG EASY

This model is reported to be the biggest and lightest of all mountable awning systems, providing 10,5 sq m of shade and weighing just 6 kg. It's easily secured to a vehicle's roof rack or factory rails by way of simple-to-use and non-permanent mounting straps. It can also be set up in the same

fashion as a gazebo, independent of your vehicle.

**Price** R3 700 from Front Runner 4x4

**Accessories available** None

**go! Drive & Camp says** This one's a lightweight, and because it can even stand on its own, be sure to secure it properly. >





### Big Country Ostrich Wing awning BIG BIRD

As the name suggests, this model from Big Country casts an impressive shadow and provides 11 sq m of shade. It's 2,65 m long, is constructed from rip-stop, waterproof and rot-proof canvas, and supported by a free-standing aluminium frame. It takes between 20 and 30 seconds to set up. You can have it in both

left-hand-side and right-hand-side configurations.

**Price** R12 985 from Big Country

**Accessories available** Side panel kit (R9 900) or individual panels (R2 242), LED light (R750)

**go! Drive & Camp says** There's a lot to be had if you go for the options as well.



### Alu-Cab Shadow awning STORM BREAKER

Constructed in the heart of the stormy Cape, the Shadow awning has been built to withstand windy, inclement weather. The four-arm frame can be set up by one person and also contains tie-down straps in case conditions really deteriorate. The canvas even features an aluminium coating that will keep the harshest UV rays out.

**Price** R12 995 at 4x4 Mega World

**Accessories available** Awning sides (R10 995)

**go! Drive & Camp says** It's definitely made to last and is also quite large.





### Uni Awn awning SIMPLE LIFE

Because it fits on any vehicle, canopy or trailer, with or without a roof rack, the Uni Awn is definitely one of the more versatile units available. It slides into an aluminium storage bin, comes with five telescopic poles, and has built-in Velcro gussets to fit the optional side walls. Fully opened, it is 1,5 m long and 2,4 m wide.

**Price** R3 850 from Custom Leisure Tech

**Accessories available** Plain side walls (R950), window and shade net (R1 250)

**go! Drive & Camp says** A proper metal hard case for storage is difficult to ignore.

### Eezi-Awn Spoyla awning LIGHT BUT RIGHT

The Spoyla only comes in one size and is a low-mass and maintenance-free option from the Eezi-Awn brand. Its retractable fabric top extends to 2,1 m and is housed in a compact anodised aluminium casing. It features an easy-pull, spring-loaded function with simple-to-adjust arms and legs.

**Price** R4 383 from Eezi-Awn

**Accessories available** Side panels (R4 360,60)

**go! Drive & Camp says** Cheap and cheerful but you can spruce it up with side panels if required. >



**GET THE PRODUCTS HERE**

**4x4 Mega World** 4x4megaworldonline.com

**Custom Leisure Tech** customleisuretech.co.za

**Front Runner** frontrunneroutfitters.com

**Big Country** bigcountry.co.za

**Eezi-Awn** eeziawn.co.za



## Eezi-Awn Manta 270 awning

### CREATURE COMFORT

As its name suggests, the Manta boasts quite a large wingspan: more than 270 degrees. It's constructed of anodised aluminium and is therefore lightweight and requires no maintenance. You can choose between beige and green and can also opt for separate panels. It's 2,3 m long at its longest point and weighs just 13 kg.

**Price** R11 052.30 from Eezi-Awn

**Accessories available** Side panels (R6 332,70)

**go! Drive & Camp says** It's strong and sturdy, without sacrificing too much weight.



## Swift Awning



Eezi awns unique Swift-In-A-Bag 180 degree self contained awning. Can be deployed with or without adjustable support legs.

**Colours:** beige or green  
Closed 130h x 130w x 2300l . Only 12 kg



## Lite Bag Awning

EEZI AWN Lite Shade awning is a light-weight, easy to roll up bag awning with a simple adjustable twist locking pole mechanism.

**Sizes available**  
2,0m and 2,5m Both extend 2,1m



35 years



EEZI-AWN



Cussonia Park  
3 Ridge Road, Laser Park  
Honeydew, Roodeport  
**Tel: +27 11 794 6311**  
Fax: +27 11 794 6233  
E-mail: [eeziawn@icon.co.za](mailto:eeziawn@icon.co.za)  
Website: [eeziawn.com](http://eeziawn.com)



# Zululand Conservation Miracle

Join a self-drive tour with *go! Drive and Camp* Tours and  
Bhejane 4x4 Adventures to Zululand



## DAY 1

We meet at 2 pm in the campsite at Ithala Game Reserve, giving us enough time to settle in and do a short 4X4 sundowner route in the game reserve. Ithala is an easy half day's drive from Gauteng, and the reserve is unique in that it has the feeling of the Natal Drakensberg in its high-lying areas and the Zululand bushveld in the valleys.

## DAY 2

After a nice big breakfast we do another 4X4 route in Ithala Game Reserve. This gives us the opportunity to really explore the reserve and be on the lookout for black and white rhino, among other wildlife. We return back to camp in the late afternoon.

## DAYS 3 & 4

Today we head towards the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve which was once the private hunting ground of King Shaka. Due to a pilot project we are involved in with conservation authorities, we get to camp in a private campsite on the banks of the river, in the heart of the reserve. We are also allowed controlled access to a 4x4 route not available to the general public. The reserve has the Big Five and the game viewing is excellent. This experience gives us the opportunity to feel like real game rangers as we trek into the heart of both black and white rhino conservation. The proceeds of this unique off-road and camping experience go directly to rhino protection in the reserve.

## DAY 5

Today it's time to visit the tropical Zululand coastline. We enter the iSimangaliso Wetland Park (Greater St Lucia Wetland Park) and do a sandy 4X4 track around Lake Sibhaya, South Africa's largest freshwater lake, on the constant lookout for hippos and crocs. Our route takes us along the edge of the highest vegetated dunes in Africa and into narrow tunnels of coastal dune forest. Our campsite for the next two nights is on the beach at Mabibi.

## DAY 6

Today we have a well-deserved rest day to enjoy the Zululand coastline. The Mabibi camp site has a pristine beach and you can swim, snorkel, fish and just relax. Weather permitting, there is an opportunity to take a rubber dinghy boat ride out to sea (this activity is not included in the tour cost). Later we go back onto the Lake Sibhaya shoreline for sundowners.

## DAY 7

We head further north up the coast to the Kosi Bay Mouth on the border of Mozambique, where the traditional fish traps are still being used. Our campsite for the next two nights is in Ndumo Game Reserve with its huge natural pans and prolific birdlife.

## DAY 8

Today we visit Tembe Elephant Park, winding our way on the sandy 4x4 tracks in the reserve on the lookout for Africa's biggest tusked. We enjoy our last afternoon together driving along the narrow tracks along the riverine forest and pans of Ndumo Game Reserve.

## DAY 9

After breakfast it's time to say goodbye and head out on the tar road that crosses over the Jozini Dam wall and meet up with the N2 near the town of Mkuze.

## 8-NIGHT/9-DAY ADVENTURE (TENTED ACCOMMODATION)

**DATES** 19 to 27 May 2018

**COST** R 10 950 per person (half price for children under 10)

## ON THIS SPECIFIC TOUR BHEJANE SUPPLIES/PROVIDES

- All camp fees
- All park entrance fees
- All advertised activities
- Tents, cutlery and crockery
- Coffee and tea all day every day while in camp

## WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING/PROVIDE

- Your 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!

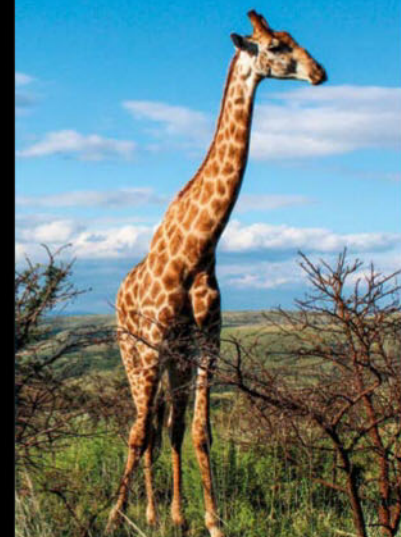
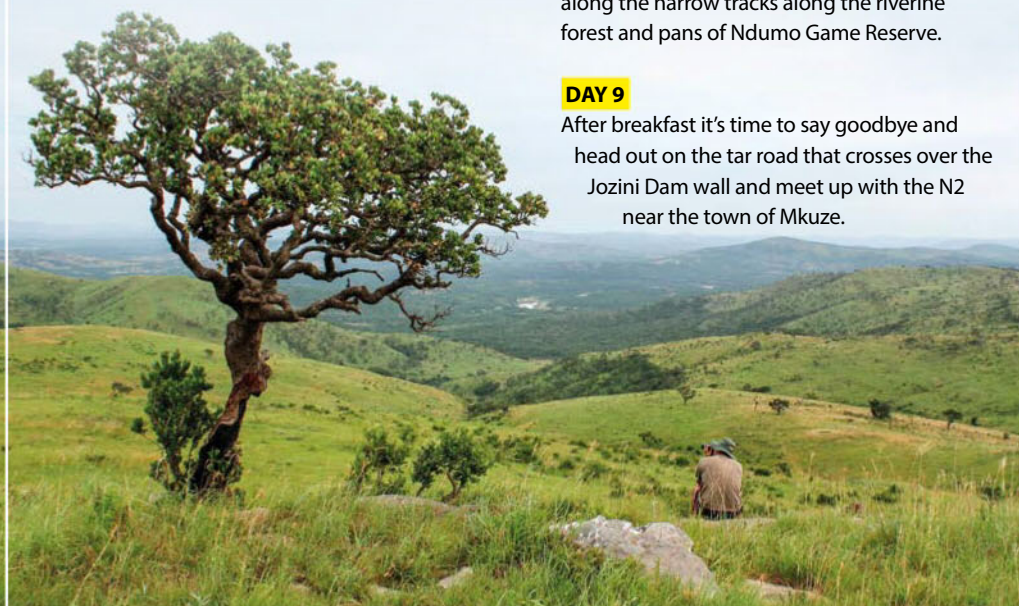
To book, call

☎ 044 535 9033 or e-mail

✉ [bookings@bhejane.com](mailto:bookings@bhejane.com)

Find out more at

🌐 [bhejane.com](http://bhejane.com)







# Long live the tent

Irrespective of the style of your tent, what fabric it's made of, or how long your warranty is valid for, you need to look after your tent properly to make sure it lasts. These seven tips will add years to its lifespan.

Text **Kyle Kock** Photos **Keaton Kock**

**J**ust like you need to do maintenance on your property once in a while, there are definitely best practices when it comes to keeping your tent in tip-top shape, ranging from the best way to store it and how to keep it clean.



## Practice makes perfect

Okay, you've just bought a new tent. Now what? Well, you need to unpack it, of course. And learn how to set it up. While you're pitching you'll need one of those little water spray bottles handy.

Once it's standing, spray some water on all the seams and stitched joints. This allows for the stitching to soak up moisture and swell out and tighten as it dries, allowing your

tent's sewed panels to become even stronger.

This is also a prime opportunity to do a count of all the little parts that make up your complete tent and familiarise yourself with everything.

A wax sealant applied to the inside of the seams is also a sure-fire way of keeping everything inside dry even if there is a tiny leak.



## Keep out!

Take off your new pair of Salomons or Hi-Tecs after that long and muddy run or hike before entering your tent. This will keep stones and thorns out, which, once inside, could be trod on or scraped along the floor – possibly leading to abrasions or punctures.

More things to leave outside your sleeping area are particularly fragrant personal products and edibles. No,

really. Little critters and the larger ones with bigger teeth and claws will find a way in, even if it's through your tent fabric. Also, no matter how domesticated your pet is, don't ever leave your dog or cat inside your tent unsupervised.

If you can't leave your expensive takkies outside, then take along a little mat to step on as you enter the tent.



## Pitch perfect

Once you arrive at your campsite and stand, clear any loose debris from the area that you're going to pitch the tent on. This includes pine cones, small rocks, sharp stones or thorns that could potentially poke a hole in the bottom of your tent.

If you can, put a footprint ground sheet down first. This should be cut exactly to the size of your tent, because then it won't collect any rainwater in the case of an overnight shower. A netted or solid polyethylene sheet will do.

If you intend on using a piece of tarpaulin that you've had lying in the garage for a few years, then fold it so that any excess material is under your tent.

Because you'll likely be entering and exiting your tent often, take extra care with the zips. Hold the zipper track with one hand and glide the slider with the other.

Also be sure to secure your tent with the guy ropes and pegs that come with it.

>



## Don't over expose

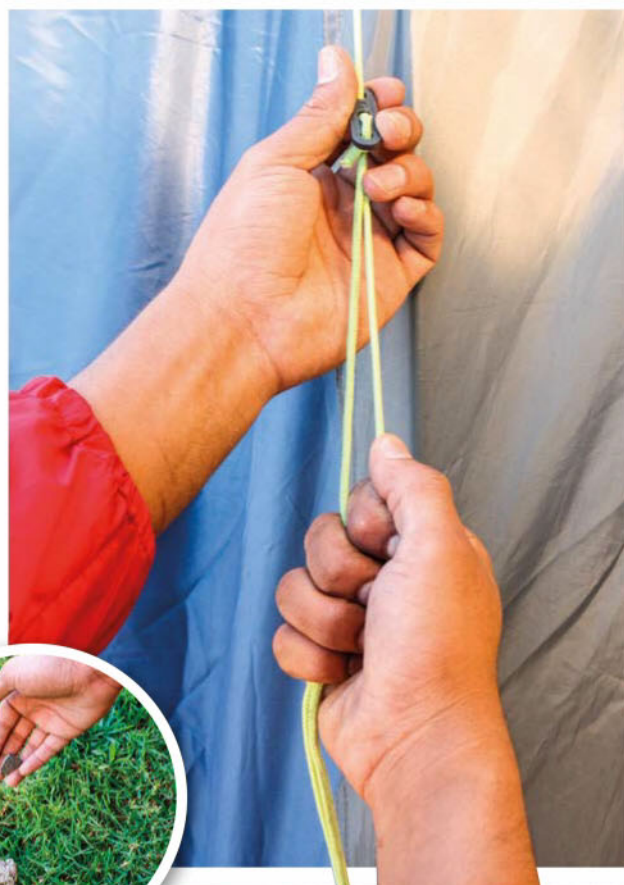
Although a little natural vitamin D does us humans good, all we really need is half an hour in the sun a few times a week. The same goes for your tent. Excessive exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays can cause UV damage.

Most tents are UV resistant, but prolonged periods in direct sunlight, particularly on hot days, can cause nylon and polyester to become brittle.

Once your tent has UV damage, it's pretty much a goner.

There are sprays on the market that you can apply easily to your tent's fabric to prolong its UV resistance and waterproof coating – just like SPF 50 for your skin.

Even when it's not raining, use your flysheet. Think of it as your tent's very own hat. This is also less expensive to replace than the entire tent.







### No stain too tough

The obvious way to avoid spills on your tent is to not pitch under a tree that could possibly drip gum or sap onto the tent or flysheet. Not only will it stain the fabric but it's also possible that a negative chemical reaction could damage the tent's waterproofing.

In the event that you do have some bird droppings or sap on your tent, make sure it dries before packing it away. If you're fussy, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or even wet wipes can also get it off, but make sure you wash the spot with water afterwards.



When you get home, resist the urge to throw it in the washing machine. These can stretch or even tear your fabric, mesh and seams. The extreme heat generated in a tumble dryer can cause the same sort of damage. Rather soak your tent in some lukewarm water in a bath or tub

and use a mild non-detergent soap and a soft sponge.

Sometimes mildew and mould can develop pretty quickly and cause unpleasant lingering odours. You want to stop the growth, but this doesn't mean excessive scrubbing. Depending on which product you use, you might have to submerge the tent in a tub or just treat a specific spot.

Also, when you camp at the coast you'll need to rinse off your poles or any other metal components that could become corroded.

The chemicals found in your everyday household detergents, such as bleach, dishwashing liquid or general household cleaners, can also cause damage to your tent's waterproof coating, so make sure you get the right stuff.

### No frown take down

When packing up, clean out any dirt from the tent floor before you fold everything up. Also check for any moisture under the rainfly and floor. If possible, allow to dry before you fold these away. If you absolutely cannot avoid taking your camp down in inclement weather, then air your tent out immediately the minute you get home.

When folding your poles, start from the middle, and when



removing shock corded poles, use a push action rather than pull. The latter can put undue stress on the elastic cords.

And don't just stuff your tent into the bag. Fold and roll it up to prevent any damage to the coating.

### go! Drive & Camp says

A tent is one of the pricier investments you make when you become a camper so it makes financial sense to look after it.

Buy additional pegs and guy ropes in case you lose a few soldiers along the way. If it does get torn, rather send it to the professionals to get fixed.



### No-flaw store

It can't be stressed enough that all fabrics have to be completely dry before you pack it away – especially if it's going to be a while before you camp again. A prolonged period of storage and moisture exposure will lead to micro-organisms growing, causing foul odours, and damaging the waterproof coating.

Also, be mindful of where

you store your tent. If the room, garage or attic is damp or humid, rather place your tent inside an airtight container. Remove the tent from its bag and cover with a cloth so that the fabric can breathe.

Your tent poles are also vulnerable to wear. If space allows, store these in the fully assembled state to minimise tension on the shock cords. 🏠



# Weg! **Ry & Sleep** **Oordgids** 2018

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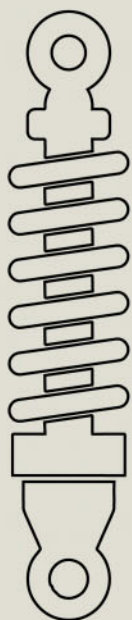
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# SHOCK THERAPY FOR CARS

**Why does your vehicle need shock absorbers, how do they work, and when do they need to be replaced? We went in search of answers.**

Text **Cyril Kloppe** Illustrations **Dominic Wienand**

**L**ong ago, when people still drove around in ox wagons, suspension was not that important. But when the internal combustion engine enabled our ancestors to whizz around at 60 km/h, even decent dirt roads became a bumpy, disagreeable ordeal.

Out of sympathy for teeth and spines, the lab coats designed suspension. But suspension on its own isn't enough to absorb jolts; it can only store the energy

of a jolt by bouncing up and down. The clever guys had to come up with a plan to keep the bucking of an agitated suspension system under control.

C.L. Horock designed the first hydraulic shock absorber in 1901, but it only dampened in one direction. Mechanical shock absorbers like Gabriel Snubber's device that contained some type of belt coiled up inside it was also popular, but it was Maurice Houdaille's 1908 patent on which the majority of modern shock absorbers are based. Houdaille's concept really took off when Henry Ford used a version of it in his 1927 Ford Model A.

## How do shocks work?

As the name implies, a shock absorber absorbs shock. But to put it more precisely, a shock absorber

absorbs the kinetic energy stored in the springs of your vehicle's suspension after its wheels hit unevenness in the road.

Your car's suspension stores kinetic energy by means of movement. When a wheel bounces, the springs of the suspension are compressed, but all of that energy needs to be released somehow. The suspension oscillates until all of the energy is spent – this may take a while. This is all well and good, but if the wheel repeatedly bounces, like on a dirt road, while the spring is still busy oscillating, the vehicle will eventually rebound so erratically that your teeth will chatter and you'll lose control over your vehicle.

This is where the shock absorber comes into play.

A shock absorber dampens the movement of the suspension. This dampens the rebound and shortens the oscillating period by converting a large portion of the kinetic energy into heat. This heat is absorbed through oil inside the shock absorber.

When hot and compressed oil comes in contact with air, it starts to froth and bubble, reducing the shock absorber's effectiveness. Modern shock absorbers therefore contain nitrogen that separates regular air from the oil and also helps to cool down the shock absorber a lot faster.

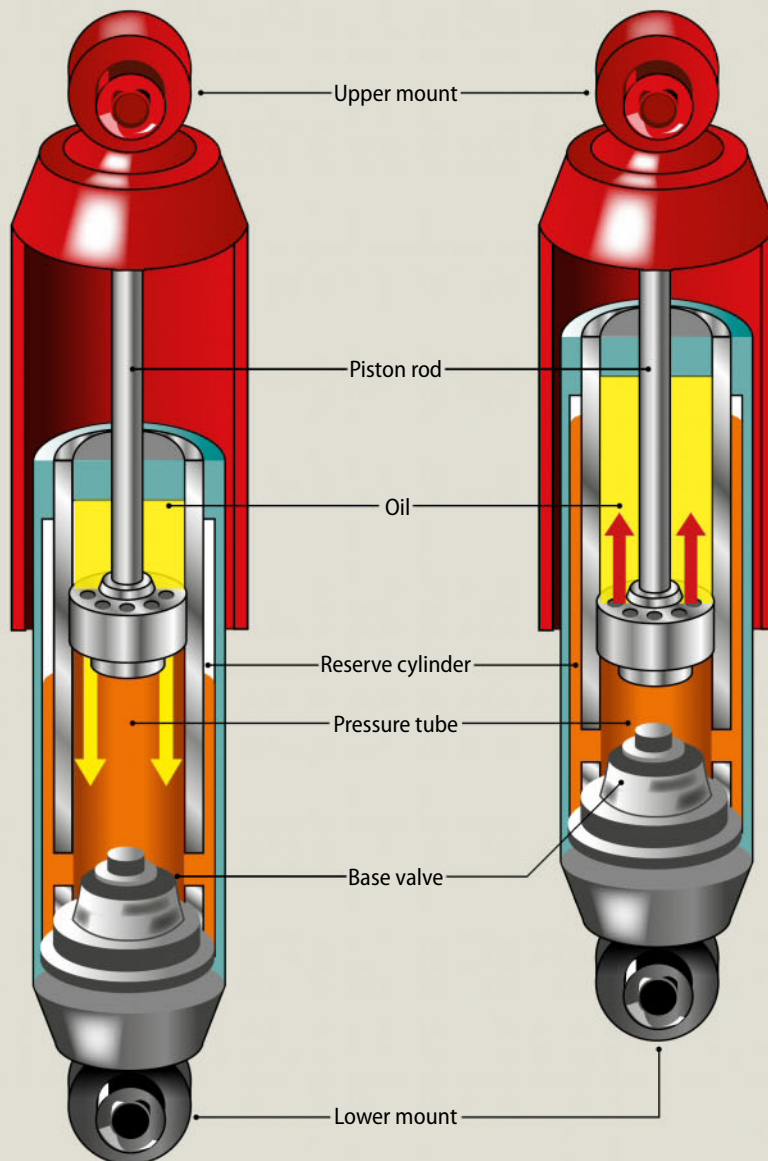








## HOW SHOCKS FUNCTION



EXTENSION CYCLE

COMPRESSION CYCLE

A shock absorber is therefore a kind of gas-cooled oil pump between your vehicle's body and its wheels. The top part of the shock absorber is fastened to the bodywork (the sprung mass) and the bottom part is attached to the axle (the unsprung mass).

The most common shock absorber is the telescopic dampener. The protective tube at the top contains a cylinder arm and head that slides into a narrower tube below it. This tube consists of two parts: an

exterior reserve tube and a pressure tube – filled with oil – within the reserve tube.

Telescopic shock absorbers work in two cycles: The compression cycle and the expansion cycle. In the compression cycle the cylinder head labours to push the oil out of its way while the shock absorber compresses. If you ever attempt to swim through a vat of Illovo syrup (and we would love to see photos if you do) you'll discover that it's no easy feat. The oil is

forced into the reserve tube through small perforations in the pressure tube. It is this oil and perforations that help the shock absorber to dampen the oscillations of the cylinder head. During the extension cycle the cylinder head then struggles to extract itself from the oil bath.

The compression cycle largely controls the unsprung mass (in other words, it keeps the wheels on the road) while the extension cycle keeps the sprung mass (the rest of the car above the wheels)

stable. The suspension of a standard light vehicle will encounter more resistance during the shock absorber's extension cycle. Conversely, the shock absorbers of Ginie de Villiers' Dakar bakkie is more focussed on keeping the wheels on the ground (unsprung mass) than the passengers' comfort (sprung mass).

Modern shock absorbers are speed-sensitive. The faster the oscillation of the suspension, the stiffer the shock absorber becomes. In short, shock absorbers prevent your vehicle from bucking over a bump, swaying in a turn, nosediving when you brake, or squatting when you accelerate.

### Types of shock absorbers

- Twin-tube gas-charged shock absorber** This is the most common type and the odds are that these are fitted to your vehicle. The purpose of the nitrogen gas is to prevent ordinary air from mixing with the oil. Air causes oil to foam, lowering the effectiveness. Nitrogen also keeps the oil cooler for longer.
- Position-sensitive damping** This shock absorber is divided into zones. Each zone has different perforation sizes that allow oil to pass through at different speeds. In the comfort zone, for example, the oil moves freely while the control zone has smaller perforations which slows the oil flow down. It's basically a variation of the telescopic shock absorber.
- Mono tube shock absorber** As the name implies, this shock absorber has only one tube. The cylinder arm extends out at the top and the oil flows past the cylinder head when it flows through the tube. This type of shock absorber stays cooler and can be mounted upright or upside down to give priority to the sprung or unsprung mass.



**“**  
A shock absorber absorbs the kinetic energy stored in the springs of your vehicle's suspension after its wheels hit unevenness in the road.

• **Strut suspension** A strut is a structural element of your chassis that influences the steering mechanism, wheel alignment, camber and caster. It's basically a shock absorber inside a coil spring with a baseplate that's bolted to the bodywork. Some vehicles have strut suspensions in front and regular suspension and shocks at the rear.

#### How about off-road shock absorbers?

A four-wheel-drive vehicle creates unique challenges for shock absorbers. You want the comfort and road-holding ability of a passenger vehicle's shocks, but you also want shocks with more travel for extra articulation. The shock absorbers of raised 4x4s – to fit larger tyres inside the arches – generate more heat than regular shocks. And if you're driving fast on a dirt road these shocks may become boiling hot.

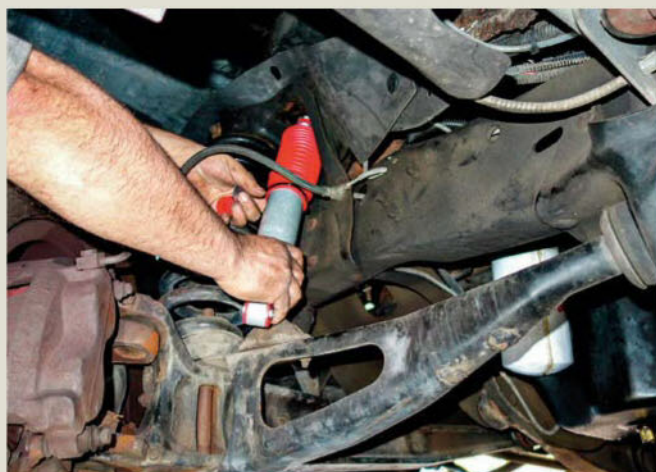
To counter the heat issue, off-road shocks are slightly different to regular shock absorbers.

The biggest difference is that off-road shocks contain more oil. They are also often physically fatter (because that's the easiest way to increase the oil volume) and longer (for more travel).

Another way to cart along more oil is to connect an extra external oil reservoir to the shock absorber. Then you have a shock with more sensible dimensions that will easily fit into your vehicle's wheel arch, but with the added benefit of an extra reservoir of oil that's fed to the shock via a tube. With this kind of shock the heat is distributed over a larger area and the oil cools faster too.

#### Are my shocks worn?

There are a few signs to look out for. Does your vehicle drift to the left or right by itself when the wind blows? We're not talking about a gale force southeaster but a normal breeze. Worn or leaking shocks lead to instability. There should be no reason to correct your direction of travel during regular windy conditions.



## TYPES OF SHOCK ABSORBERS

A



B



C



D



A Twin-tube gas-charged  
B Strut

C Monotube  
D Position-sensitive

Do your tyres wear down unevenly? This is a serious warning sign. When your shocks are worn they typically struggle to keep your tyres on the road. The result is bald spots on the tread surface.

If your vehicle vibrates on a good tar road, chances are it's time for new shocks. Besides keeping your car's suspension

under control, shocks must also lessen vibration. The vibrations caused by worn shocks can also place strain on other vehicle components.

If your vehicle's front wheels swerve or the nose dives when you brake hard, your shocks are probably worn. This is very dangerous since it could lead to >





an accident, especially in wet conditions.

Does your steering wheel shudder? Sorry buddy, it's those shocks again. Obviously a dirt road will cause your steering wheel to shake but it should cease as soon as you hit tar. In extreme cases the steering wheel can shake so badly that you lose control over your vehicle.

Tired shocks lead to a longer braking distance –

research has shown that your braking distance may increase by up to 20% due to worn shocks.

One of the easiest ways to test if your shocks are worn is to push down hard on one of the front corners of your vehicle. If your car bounces more than twice, it's time for a trip to a service centre. But this test won't work on all types of shocks or vehicles, which means it's not a fail-

safe way to determine the condition of your shocks. The surest way to test your shocks is to ask a service technician to check them whenever you have your tyres rotated or balanced. They should test each shock's movement against the manufacturer's specifications.

### Types of suspension

Here are the most common types of suspension – in a future issue we'll talk in greater depth about how the different types function.

- A **torsion bar** is an older type of suspension system that consists of a metal bar that can be bent repeatedly without the metal deforming. Vehicles used this system until the Fifties, before the shock absorber was perfected. (Not to be confused with a torsion beam suspension.)
- **Coil spring suspension** is

basically a torsion bar that's repeatedly coiled around its own axis. It compacts and expands depending on the weight that's placed on it. Coil springs definitely need shocks to keep their oscillation in check.

- **Leaf spring suspension** consists of several layers – or "leaves" – of steel bars that are bound to form a single component. It was first used in horse-drawn carriages and today we still see it in bakkies, trucks, and other heavy vehicles.
- **Air suspension** consists of rubber bladders filled with compressed air. The pressure inside can be increased or lowered to change the vehicle's ride quality or ride height. The technology is older than you think – leather bags filled with air were used a hundred years ago in horse-drawn buggies.



**Sources** [monroe.com](http://monroe.com) [bilstein.com](http://bilstein.com)  
[gorancho.com](http://gorancho.com) [monitor.co.ug](http://monitor.co.ug)





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# Mixed bag

These readers use their recreational vehicles for different purposes, but they all have fun in the process.

## Ranger right up there

### 2015 FORD RANGER 3.2 TDCI 4X4

You won't be left wanting if you opt for the range-topping five-cylinder Ranger, says **AJ Liebenberg** from Durbanville.

“My 2008 model previous-generation Toyota Hilux was a great vehicle, but it was starting to get overtaken by contemporary rivals in terms of technology and look and feel of the cabin. A **Dakar Edition Hilux** was one of the options I considered when it was time to upgrade, but I was eventually bowled over by the **Ranger**.

I bought the top-of-the-line model new in 2015, which set me back almost **R500 000**, nicknamed it ‘**The Beast**’, and I haven’t looked back since. I was particularly looking for something that had decent 4x4 capability and undoubtable reliability, and in the two



years I’ve owned it, it hasn’t once let me down. I have absolutely nothing to complain about because I enjoy it every time I hop aboard.

It’s very powerful and comfortable, especially because I’ve had the ECU remapped and had the suspension lifted with an Ironman 4x4 kit. I also had a set of aftermarket wheels fitted.

It definitely needs a proper off-road bumper fitted up front, and a spare **R10 000** would come in handy for that. As for the fuel consumption, it depends on how much of a hurry I’m in, but the figure typically varies between **9.5 l to 11 l/100 km**.

I’ve enjoyed my trips to the **West Coast**, all along the beach, with the Ranger, as well as the old **Voortrekker Pass** with its rough dirt roads, rich history, and amazing views. ”







## Powerful puller

### 2015 NISSAN PATHFINDER 2.5 DCI

All he ever really needed was enough power to tow comfortably, and **Braam Venter** from Kempton Park seems to have found it.

“I’ve been hitching my **2014 Sprite Tourer SW** to the back of the **Pathfinder** ever since I bought the Nissan new for **R680 000 in 2015**. It’s been fitted

with a Bosal tow bar. I’d gladly have the new Nissan Patrol, but that’s a bit out of my reach at the moment.

The Pathfinder is actually kitted out quite well with creature comforts and as a bonus handles itself quite well on dirt roads. Unfortunately, the fuel consumption is rather high at around **12 ℓ/100 km** without the Sprite hitched. The plus side is that it doesn’t

increase much when I’m towing – around **13 ℓ/100 km**. The Pathfinder tows the Sprite at **110 km/h** without any real effort. My favourite destination with this combination is definitely the **Almega Caravan Park** near **Hammanskraal**. It even has private ablution facilities, large stands, green lawns, and fantastic service from the owners.”



## Beauty and the beast

### 2012 TOYOTA FJ CRUISER

There are many newer caravans out there, but **Louis Pretorius** from Langebaan wouldn’t be towing anything else than his beloved **old Jurgens**.

“Well, who in their right mind wouldn’t want a **Mercedes-Benz G-Class** for an SUV? I definitely did, and still do. In fact, I considered a **G 350d**, but at a starting price of **R1.6 million** it might just remain my dream ride.

But a rather suitable substitute is the **Toyota FJ Cruiser**, which I bought new for **R456 000 in 2012**. It’s more than up to the task of towing my **1974 Jurgens 540** – with plenty of power generated from its 4 ℓ V6.

There wasn’t anything else I was looking for other than real grunt, and the FJ definitely isn’t lacking in that department. Despite the **200 kW engine**, it’s as reliable as any other Toyota, but you pay for the privilege at the pumps. The FJ demands around **18 ℓ/100 km** with regular driving and that figure shoots up to **25 ℓ/100 km** when the Jurgens is hitched to its Maniac 4x4 tow bar. As you can probably imagine, 120 km/h is child’s play with the kind of power of that the FJ makes.

The **Dibiki Holiday Resort** near **Mossel Bay** definitely ranks highly on my list of favourite destinations. It’s neat and clean and very safe.”



### Show us your wheels

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# Rise and shine

The early bird catches the worm... And a beautiful sunrise (or sunset) with a camera.



## WINNING PHOTO

### Morning glory

When she visits the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park she's up at the crack of dawn, says **Elsie van der Walt** from Witbank.

*"We recently visited the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and camped in the Botswana side. One morning we were up early again and drove past a dead tree next to the road. Perched on the tree was a group of vultures. The sun was just rising as we pulled over, and I was ready*

*with my camera. As the sun was edging out further, the vultures were preening quietly on the branches. While they were busy with their feathers, you couldn't clearly distinguish the birds' outlines against the sunrise. I waited for them to lift their heads and took a few photos to make sure I got one where you could see them clearly."*

**go! Drive & Camp** says Sunrise and sunset photos are almost like sweets: There are no bad ones, but just like not everyone likes sour worms, people's taste also differ in terms of these types of landscape photos.

The interpretation of photos like this are quite subjective, but there are a few important factors that will mean the difference between good and great: from the composition right through to the exposure. With photos like these the sun (if it's not behind the horizon) is the focal point, but only having a bright dot on the photo isn't enough. Interesting detail – like the outlines of the birds and the dead tree on Elsie's photo – causes your eye to move from one detail to the next to take in all the information. Elsie's composition is also clever: The tree and sun – which take up about only a quarter of the photo – balances out all the negative space (the empty parts on the left).

Nikon D7000; Nikon 80-400 mm lens on 98 mm; 1/2 000 of a second; f8; ISO 360

### SEND YOUR PHOTO

If you have a photo in your album that you would like to share with others, send it to us and we might publish it here.

Any pic is welcome – from a spoonbill next to the road or the kids on a jungle gym to a campfire photo. And it can be taken with any camera – from professional cameras to mobile phones.

*ELSIE wins a Camp Cover camera bag to the value of R595.*

*Congratulations!*

Send your photos and contact details to [leon.botha@media24.com](mailto:leon.botha@media24.com).





Samsung WB30F; 24 mm-10x-optical zoom lens on 17,9 mm; 1/30 of a second; f5,4; ISO 100; with a flash.

## Buenas noches

It's not often she walks past a pretty plant in Namibia without stopping to take a picture, says **Beverley le Grange** from Kraaifontein.

*"We holidayed in Namibia at the Betta campsite. There are quite a few cacti and at sunrise you'll snap photos with a Mexican feel. The Naukluft Region is known for its beautiful sunsets."*

**go! Drive & Camp** says Beverley's photo is a good example of a pretty sunset without a sun in the photo. The clouds are golden yellow, and just like with Elsie's birds of prey, the sisal in the foreground makes the difference.

Also, the camera's flash went off, which means that instead of seeing only the plant's outlines you can also see some of the detail on the leaves. It would look even better if you balanced the flash's brightness with the light meter reading of the clouds, but that's a bit high grade if you don't want to get stuck in the technical side of things. The plant in the background does divert your gaze, and the photo would look better if you stand to the left and then aim slightly more right to get only the sisal and the clouds in the frame.

## Calm after the storm

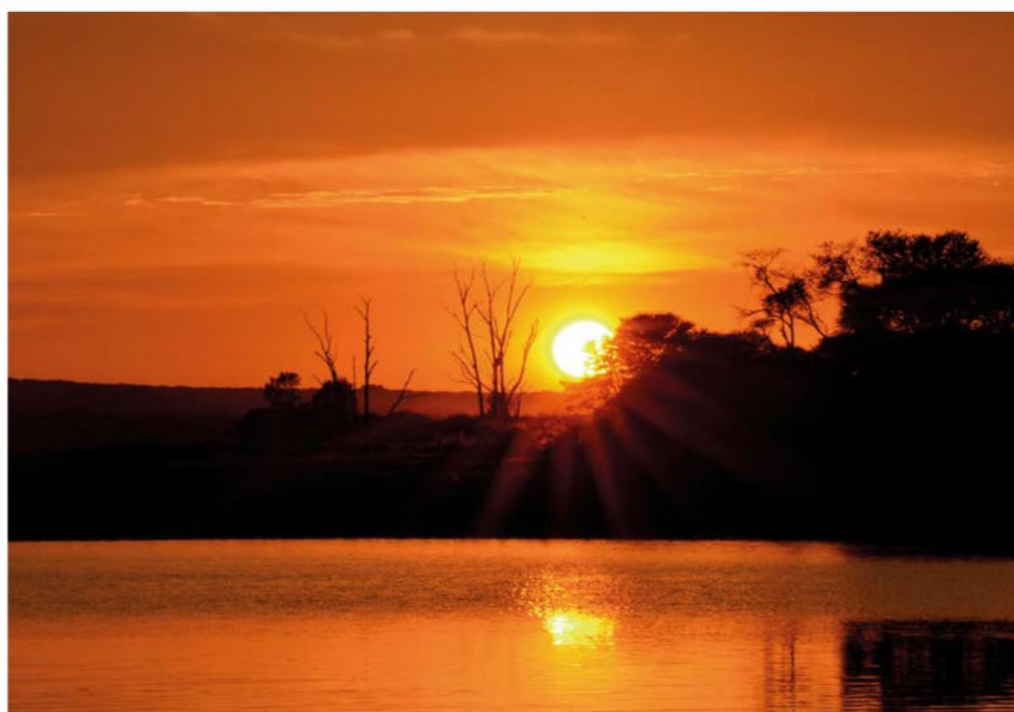
You go camping with your family, friends, fishing rods and camera, says **André Smith** from Krugersdorp.

*"My family and I went camping and fishing with a group of friends at the Roodekoppies Dam outside of Brits. That night a hectic storm hit, but the next morning we were greeted by calmness and silence – and one of the most beautiful sunrises I've ever seen."*

### **go! Drive & Camp** says

Whose family album doesn't have at least one sunrise or sunset photo in it? A beautiful sunrise or sunset is like a rainbow: a head-turner. Many people's natural reaction is to take a photo of it. It's no masterpiece but it's special to you because it brings back happy memories.

If you look at André's photo,



you'll see the serenity, especially after his story of the storm the night before. André could have given the photo a bit more kick,

though, and have used his zoom to crop the frame closer around the trees (left) and the sun (with its reflection).

Nikon D3100, Sigma 70-300 mm lens on 135 mm; 1/200 of a second; f25; ISO 400.





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- Day 3:** Maun (optional flight over the Okavango Delta is available)
- Day 4:** Maun to Tsodilo Hills (rock art)
- Day 5:** Tsodilo Hills to Ngepi Camp (Namibia)
- Day 6:** Ngepi Camp: Visit Mahango Game Reserve
- Day 7:** Ngepi Camp: Relax for the day or visit Bwabwata National Park
- Day 8:** Ngepi Camp to Kasane
- Day 9:** Day trip to Victoria Falls
- Day 10:** Chobe National Park
- Day 11:** Until next time...

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# CROSSWORD

Congratulations **Johan Strydom** from Gansbaai. You have won a Camp Cover Lunch Box Cooler worth R290 for your correct entry in our January 2018 crossword competition. You can also be a winner. Complete the crossword, take a picture of it, and e-mail it to us at [drivecamp@gomag.co.za](mailto:drivecamp@gomag.co.za). Remember to include your contact details. Or simply complete it online at <http://bit.ly/2kiUGss>. The solution to last month's crossword puzzle is on p. 135.

|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|------------------|--|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
|                  |  |             | Resort close to Springbok | ... and behold  | Freight       | Hectare (symbol) | Also known as a silver-fish |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 | Cold meat     |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 | ... and fro   |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             | Building material         |                 |               |                  |                             |                 | Increase       |                  |
| Strong coffee    |  | Mini-planet | Vase                      | Depart          |               | Shebeen          |                             |                 | Not off        | Irritable        |
|                  |  | Cat, eg     | Spookiest                 |                 |               | Regarding        |                             |                 |                | Calf meat        |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 | Scold         |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
| Doctrine         |  |             |                           | Beside          | Males         |                  |                             | Singles         |                |                  |
| Black            |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             | You and I       |                |                  |
|                  |  |             | Flat-screen, eg           |                 |               | Jewish leader    |                             |                 | A pair         |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               | Larder           |                             |                 | @              |                  |
| Decipher         |  | Neat        |                           |                 | With haste    |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  | Garland     |                           |                 | Burn          |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           | Iodine (symbol) | Restrain      |                  |                             | Brink, eg (3,3) |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
| That is (L abbr) |  |             | Rest on a chair           |                 | Yes (archaic) |                  | Indefinite article          |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
| Grime            |  |             |                           | Beneficiary     |               |                  | Fixed                       |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             | Fodder                    |                 |               | Tiers            |                             |                 | Cutting remark | Bound            |
|                  |  |             | Jewel                     |                 |               | Not yours        |                             |                 | Curb           | Cadmium (symbol) |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 | Belongs to me |                  | Elementary                  |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 | Heap          |                  | Perform                     |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             | Group of Zulu soldiers    |                 |               | Ran quickly      |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
| A VW model       |  | Carton      | Instrument                |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                | Definite article |
|                  |  | Hit hard    | Compete                   |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               | Short greeting   | Indium (symbol)             | Morning (abbr)  |                | Strengthened     |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             | Gr letter       |                | While            |
| Storm            |  |             |                           | Indian dresses  |               | Pelves           |                             |                 | "I seel"       |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 |               |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |
|                  |  |             |                           |                 | Curtail       |                  |                             |                 |                |                  |

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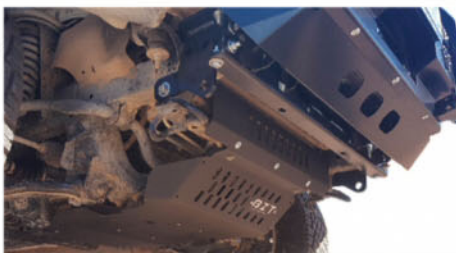
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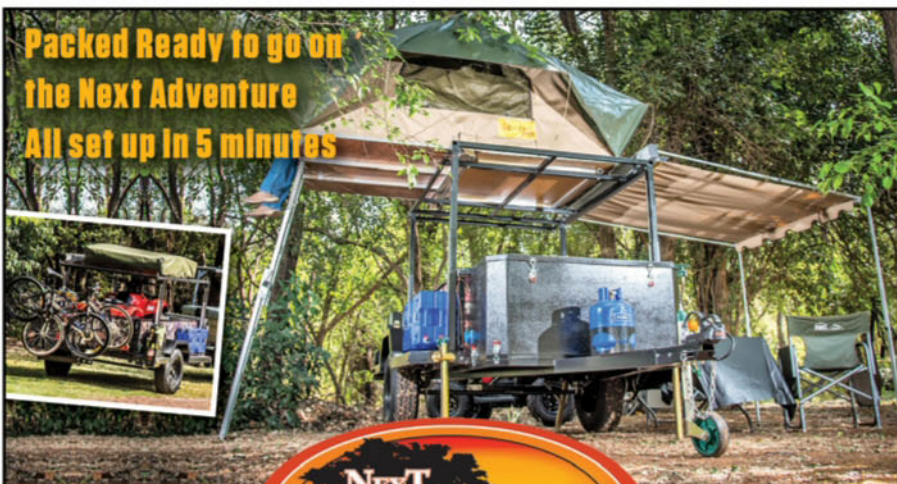
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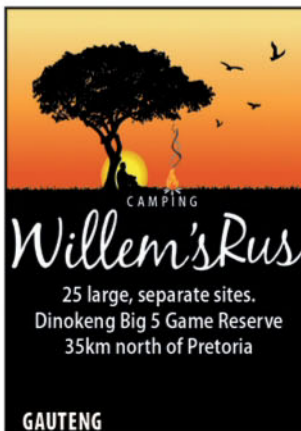
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# A thankless job

Motoring journalists actually lead a lonely and dangerous life, claims Cyril Kloppe.

**I** don't want to boast, but motoring journalism is probably at the apex of the journalistic profession. Even if I have to say so myself. Not everyone can drive a brand new car every week and then write 600 words about it. Each week you also have to re-learn on which side of the steering wheel the indicator stalk is. Does the test vehicle use petrol or diesel? You have to keep your head in the game on a level that smug news journalists never get to experience.

Investigative journalists might contend that motoring writers' contribution to the knowledge of civilization is unimportant, but can Jacques Pauw tell the difference between hydraulic and electric power steering? I don't think so.

War photographers will whine and say that no one ever shoots at motoring journalists, but motoring journalists – or moto journos – have to stay calm and collected during a dinner with Toyota's top dogs where you're confronted by a dozen pieces of cutlery, the purpose of which totally escapes you.

**SURE, WE MIGHT LOOK** like oddballs: Predominantly middle-aged men who can converse about little else than cars and motorsport. You can also spot us from miles away: We usually glob together in an airport's arrivals hall, each of us hauling a clothing bag courtesy of BMW, a golf shirt with a chequered flag and the words Simola Hillclimb printed on the pocket, and a fancy Land Rover jacket – the most expensive item of clothing in our cupboard.

But spare a thought for people like us who despite our best efforts will never win a Pulitzer Prize. The only moto journo to achieve this was Dan Neil of *The Wall Street Journal's* motoring supplement. His name is still whispered in reverend tones over cups of coffee in office kitchens. Few

motoring writers possess the confidence to write a novel, and according to book reviewers we certainly aren't destined for J.M. Coetzee-levels of fame.

To top it all, we're competitive with each other. The person with the most Voyager miles gets to choose what colour car he wants to drive at a vehicle launch.

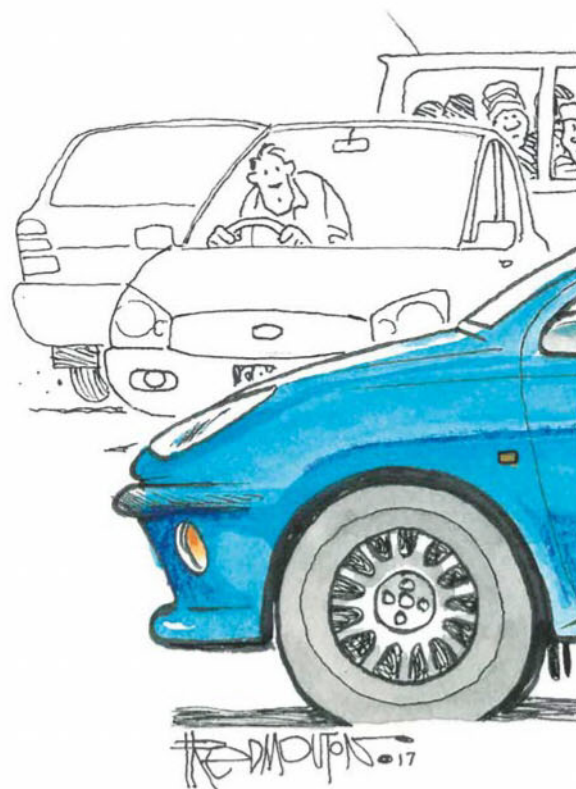
Vehicle launches aren't easy. A year or so ago I attended the launch of a luxury German SUV in Mozambique. I could take along a partner and chose my wife so that I could once and for all prove to her that I actually work hard and that my job isn't a paid holiday. We had to share a vehicle with another couple: the editor of a well-known lifestyle publication and his wife. Somewhere on a sandy trail north of Ponta do Ouro, Mrs Editor suddenly developed an urgent need to go to the loo. The nearest filling station was hours away and she absolutely refused to use a long-drop in a nearby settlement.

We stopped behind a dune next to a lake. It was a sweltering, humid day and we didn't want to switch off the engine since we desperately needed the air con, plus we were slightly concerned about the hippos bobbing in the nearby lake.

She shuffled to the back of the vehicle with her hands clutching at her dress. In her haste for some privacy she brushed past the proximity sensors and activated the rear-view camera. Inside the vehicle a loud "beep" drew our attention to the large touch screen on the dashboard. On the screen were two pale white moons, each pocked with meteorite craters. The motoring journalist in me made a mental note to remember to mention the excellent picture quality. The editor coolly placed his hand over the screen to protect his wife's dignity while the sensors loudly continued to warn us of an impending crash.

Only then did the penny drop. It was deadlier quiet in the car. Not even Mrs Editor's relieved sigh as she climbed back in could cut through the awkwardness.

**MOTO JOURNOS TYPICALLY** attend launches without their spouses (it's at these that we have it tough – or so we tell our significant others). You pick a driving partner from the group of journos who flew in with you. It's usually someone you know well and who you can rely upon to take the wheel if you're feeling poorly after having enjoyed a bit too much of the free booze the night before. But often it's a new face: A young guy or girl who dutifully jots down every word the PR person says.





It's amusing to chat to these newbies and to brag about how many countries, provinces, race tracks and hotels you've visited. You suggest, whether they want your guidance or not, on which aspect of the vehicle they should focus.

Certain seasoned veterans enjoy scaring the newbies. And sometimes the newbies scare you, as my colleague Kyle Kock discovered when a young journalist drove into a river with Kyle in the passenger seat. They had to swim ashore, and the Italian manufacturer's bosses were none too pleased. But I've already said too much. Moto journo's have a saying: "What happens at a launch stays at a launch".

In terms of test vehicles, we have it even tougher. Like the time a French car manufacturer had a convertible dropped off at my office. I immediately took it for a spin through town. When I stopped at a traffic light I noticed a car full of young ladies next to me. They checked my car out from top to bottom and batted their eyes at me. I used the opportunity to impress them even more by lowering the roof. With the push of a button the roof popped up, to the delight of my attractive audience. Halfway through the process, however, the roof got stuck and refused to

budge. I repeatedly pushed the button but the little French car stubbornly refused to obey me. The ladies were howling with laughter as the traffic light turned green. With the roof at half-mast I crept across a busy intersection while fellow motorists hooted at me and flipped the bird.

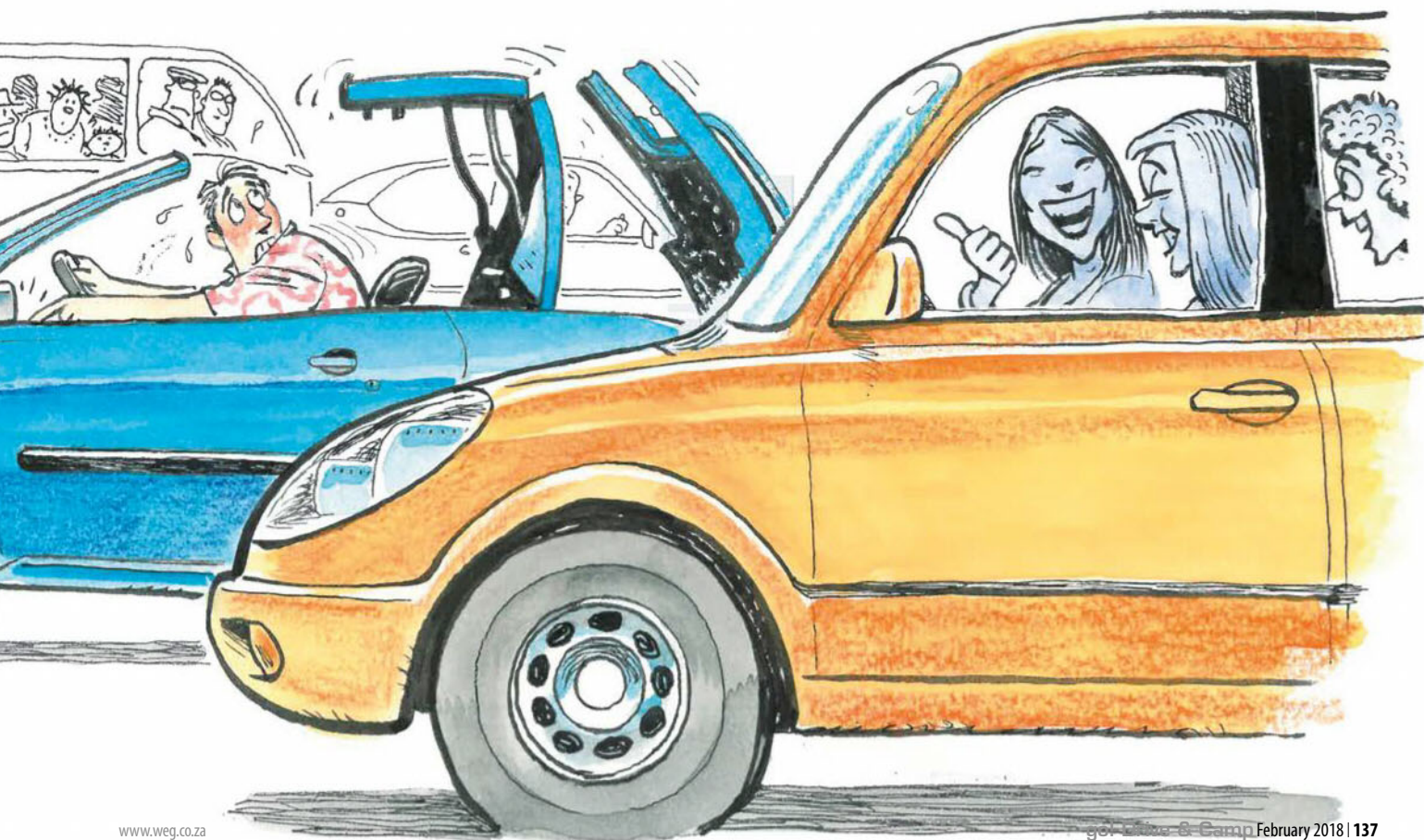
**EVERY TIME I BRING** a test vehicle home, my neighbour peers through the cracks of the curtain of her living room window. If it's a super-expensive Mercedes-Benz GLS she surely asks her husband if the guy who moved in next door is a bank robber or a drug dealer because how else can he afford to drive a different car every week. If there's a Datsun Go in my driveway, they probably whisper: "Ag shame, he probably didn't sell enough tik last week".

“  
With the roof at half-mast  
I crept across a busy  
intersection while fellow  
motorists hooted at me and  
flipped the bird.”

The handful of people who do know that I'm a motoring journalist sometimes ask me what the best vehicle is. My answer always disappoints, because it's never what they want to hear. Now do you see what a lonely and dangerous life a moto journo leads?

We do have a little bit of authority though, especially if you're a member of the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists. A colleague once exceeded the speed limit in an American muscle car. When a traffic cop pulled him over, he flashed his membership card and declared confidently that the guild has special permission to exceed the speed limit. The speed cop actually believed him and my colleague could drive away breathing a sigh of relief.

Why would anyone want to be a motoring journalist if there are easier jobs in journalism – jobs like war correspondent, for example? It's totally for the love of cars. You can take everything before and after this statement with a pinch of salt but never doubt our devotion to our trade. Of course, the free tank of fuel that comes with every test vehicle and the enjoyment derived from driving around in someone else's car aren't bad either. 🚗







# Mending a broken heart

After tragedy struck, Hennie Prinsloo from Pretoria dealt with his trauma by taking on an ambitious project: redesigning the nose of his Mercedes-Benz Gelandewagen.

Edited by Kyle Kock Photos Marius Human

“My 24-year-old daughter had battled cancer for 12 years and passed away in September 2011.

My wife couldn't bear the heartbreak and succumbed almost exactly a year later. I was emotionally shattered, and to keep my mind off everything I decided to tackle a massive automotive project.

One night, looking at my Mercedes-Benz, I decided that I wanted to change the front end – give it a dramatic overhaul. Given my background as an aircraft technician and as an engineer at Safmarine, I was certain I could do almost all of the work myself.

I started pulling the nose apart and shaping it. I would sculpt a new nose and then decide it was not what I had in mind. So I started at the beginning numerous times.

Truth be told, over the course of four years there were stages I thought it wouldn't be possible. And right from the start people warned me that putting a rounded nose on a square body wouldn't

work. But I continued to sit in front of the Merc for hours, moulding a new front end using clay, metal hangers and even wood.

Two years in I really thought I had taken on too much and was ready to give up. After about a three-month break, I gave the project another go with renewed vigour.

While browsing the internet one night I came across an advertisement for Bullet, an Australian aftermarket company that specialises in building bolt-on superchargers specifically for certain engines. I decided then and there that while I was reconstructing the G-Class's nose, I might as well also go full bore and do a supercharged Lexus V8 conversion as well.

The result is 340 kW and 580 Nm. It still has the diff locks and is still a fully functional 4x4 with air con and all the standard luxuries. It's to be expected that a vehicle with this sort of conversion is a bit thirsty, but mine averages about 16 l/100 km, which is

very reasonable when you consider the amount of power available.

In the end, I did need help. The leather straps that keep the bonnet down were created by one of the local leather shops in Pretoria, and the wooden panel trim along the profile was also shaped by one of my friends.

The project took me four years, and as far as I know it's the only one in the world that looks like this. ”

**go! Drive & Camp says** The unique work is evidently quite popular as Hennie gets pulled off the roadside often by inquisitive people wanting to take pictures of it.



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