

#4

go!

NISSAN NAVARA A TRUE TOWING TITAN

NOVEMBER 2017 | ISSUE 4

Drive & Camp

DOWN SOUTH IN KZN SUN, SEA AND SERENITY

River runners

High and dry in Limpopo
Worcester for the weekend
Catching bass in Bonnievale

CARAVAN TEST

We get the scoop on the
new JURGENS PENTA



DRIVING IMPRESSION

NEW DISCOVERY

WHAT'S THE FUSS ABOUT?



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NEWS 3 NEW CARAVANS + THE DEMERIT SYSTEM + CAMELS IN THE KALAHARI

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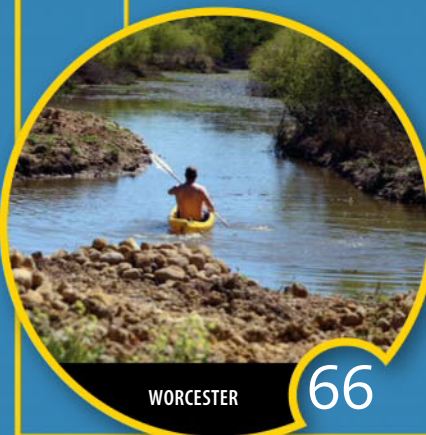
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Nissan's new Navara has only just arrived on our shores and it has already bagged two international awards. We hitched a caravan and set off to see what the excitement is about.





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Join our community

There's one comment we invariably get when we introduce ourselves to people in a campsite or on a 4x4 route: "Wow, but you have a great job!"

And you can't argue with this – there are definitely people who are much worse off than us when it comes to working conditions. We get the opportunity to explore new places, test drive the latest vehicles, and basically take caravans off the showroom floor and go camping with them (like this month with the new Jurgens Penta – go have a look on p. 86).

The biggest perk, however, is that you trust us to tell you about the things we see, hear and experience, and that we can help you to plan your next trip, vehicle, or caravan. So yes, in that sense we do have a great job and it's fantastic to be part of this community.

But the magazine is only one aspect of who and what

we are, and once you've finished reading it you won't have to wait a whole month to reconnect with us. We are also on your computer, tablet, and smartphone. We have more than 57 000 Facebook friends and we share news, tips, articles, recipes and competitions daily on this platform. And sometimes we just chatter like monkeys in a campsite about this and that or ask advice about where to go for the weekend.

So, come join us. Type "go! Drive & Camp" in the search bar and click "Like". This is also where you can show us pics of your last holiday. You might just see your photo in next month's magazine.

Safe travels.

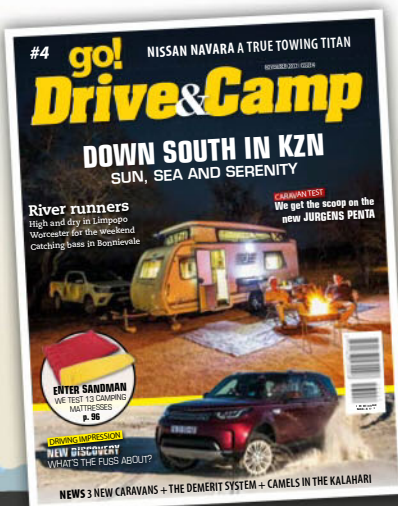
Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com

While you're inside taking care of the paperwork, the kids can venture to the sty next to the office and entertain themselves by watching the farm's pigs. When we visited there was a fresh farrow of piglets sleeping peacefully under an infrared lamp.

p.66



Cover photos Helenus Kruger (Dinokeng) and Cyril Kloppe (Atlantis)

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Drive & Camp

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30 years young

10 out of 10 for Johan Hattingh's letter in the June issue of *WegSleep* where he asks where all the old caravans are.

We camp with a 1987 Wilk Topaz that we tow with a 1999 Mercedes-Benz. Both have many miles on them, but we have no cause for complaint. We did, however, modify the caravan a bit to make it more modern. The

two single beds and hammock-type beds made way for a comfortable island bed. The sitting area was sufficient, but we got rid of all the gas in the kitchen. We also made room for a bigger fridge, a microwave, and an electric stove. We said goodbye to the bathroom and in its place we now have a proper cupboard with loads of space to

pack and hang our clothes.

On the outside we replaced the rear window with a solid panel and mounted caravan movers. I also added a rear-view camera at the back. With these improvements our old caravan stays new.

**PEDRO AND
MAGDALEEN NIEMAND
Pretoria**



Winning letter

Pedro and Magdaleen win a Coleman® Cooler Combo and a Divide +700 LED flashlight worth R2 498! The Cooler Combo consists of three cooler boxes that hold 51,1 l, 4,7 l and 1,3 l respectively. You can pack 85 cooldrink cans in the larger box and six in the smaller one. The boxes are made

of polyurethane, which improves insulation by up to 30%. The Divide +700 flashlight beam shines 110–330 m far depending on the brightness level. The torch has a Battery-Lock system that ensures batteries don't run down when not in use. It weighs 433 g and is made of anodised aluminium.





Do you know a boer diff lock?

Some years ago I drove up a mountain with an elderly Afrikaans gent in his Toyota 1600 bakkie. It was in the Eastern Cape and we were on our way to go kudu-hunting. The road was wet and steep, and the bakkie didn't have four-wheel drive, not to mention a diff lock.

We crawled up the mountain. The man kept his right hand on the steering wheel with his other tightly gripping the handbrake. Every now and again he yanked on the handbrake and then accelerated, and soon I noticed a pattern in these

actions. As soon as the bakkie started to struggle, he pulled on the handbrake, but it didn't make any sense to me.

When we got to the top, I was dying to know why he did it. So I asked and he calmly responded: "Have you never heard of a boer diff lock?"

And suddenly the penny dropped...

Today I drive an old 1998 Toyota Prado 90, also without a diff lock, but it has a boer diff lock that's gotten me out of trouble many, many times.

GERHARD ROOS

Worcester



One piece of wood, one disastrous day

For my 50th birthday we planned a three-and-a-half week tour through Botswana. Everything went smoothly until we got to Chobe, when a simple piece of firewood nearly ruined our trip.

My 1999 Toyota Prado has 315 000 km on the clock.

Someone before us must have used the piece of wood when they got stuck. It stuck through a hole in the bash plate and managed to puncture the radiator. Luckily we weren't completely stranded because I had a satellite phone with me



TWO CLEVER PLANS

I designed a bracket that locks my caravan to my vehicle as soon as I hitch it. It fits right below the top part of the tow bar and I also have a chain that fits over the coupler's handle. You can also just use the lock and lock it to the coupler so that no one can try to unhitch your caravan.

It didn't cost much because I already had all the materials. This included a small nut and bolt as well as the lock. The two washers and chain were R20 at a hardware store.

I cut a section – about a quarter – out of each washer, turned this piece around, and drilled in a small hole. These loose parts I welded back on to the washers but so that the hole faces away from the washer. I put the two washers on top of each other and on the part on the other side of the hole I drilled in a bigger



hole through both washers. You can fit a bolt through this as well as one part of the chain. These two washers look like a bracket where the two parts separate so that it fits over a tow bar. The lock fits into the two holes that are now on top of each other as well as the other side of the chain – everything nice and safe.

I also made a plan so that it's easier to extend the corner steadies to the ground. I bought a secondhand 19 mm socket for R10 and welded it onto the top of a 10 mm steel bar. This fits into my cordless drill and the hassle with the handle is in the past.

WIHAN VIVIERS

Knysna

and I phoned the people at the Muchenje campsite where we were staying. They were very nice and organised help for us.

With the help of the Danmar towing service we got the Prado to Mario's garage in Kasane. In the meantime we rented a 4x4 from GKT Tours and Rental – this all after 6:30 pm on the same day.

We can't praise the people who helped us enough. After some advice from GKT, we organised a special permit to drive through Chobe that night to our campsite.

The Prado got a new radiator, but then it seemed as if one of the

engine gaskets was leaking. Our tour wasn't even over yet and the next 3 000 km we were crawling along like a tortoise. I kept the revs low at 1 800 rpm and pulled over every 50 km to fill up the engine with half a litre of water.

So far the damage to the engine has cost me R65 000, and that excludes the R15 000 that all the help we received on the fateful day cost. Luckily my insurance covers half of the engine damage as well as a section of the towing service's fee.

DANNY ELDRIDGE

Port Elizabeth

Painful paperwork



We asked our Facebook friends who struggled to obtain their kids' unabridged birth certificate and also heard from those who didn't.



Linda Jager

We applied for the certificates in Sasolburg and got them within two weeks. It was quick and painless. The same thing happened with our passports. My experience is that the smaller offices can respond quicker to applications than the larger centres – probably because there's less information to process.



Marius Kritzinger

My wife got hers in five minutes while my sister-in-law had to wait for eight months.



Johan du Toit

We waited about a year for our child's unabridged certificate.



Rina Bothma Pieters

The process for my youngest's went very quickly and we got in within two weeks. For my eldest it was a much slower process and eventually we had to obtain a special letter to say that we applied for it in time. The day we arrived at the border we got an SMS to say that we could collect the certificate.



Vicky Nel-Van Zyl

We waited for six months. Three days before we were supposed to leave, I burst into tears in a bigwig's office. My performance was fantastic – I was able to pick up the certificate the next day.



Jana van Huyssteen

We had no problems. One of the kids' certificate wasn't ready, but Home Affairs supplied us with a letter to get us through the border post.



Jacques and Gerranda Möller

We applied in March this year and we still haven't received it. Apparently the Pretoria office is way behind with applications.



Madeleine Erasmus

We got our son's with his passport. No problems whatsoever. It must be said though that we had it done in July because we wanted to cross the border in December and didn't want to take any chances.



Hanlie Williams

It went very quickly. I applied immediately when the new law was passed. It took about two weeks.



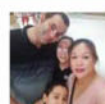
Sunette Davel

We used an agent and got it within three days. Sure, it cost a bit extra, but it was totally worth it.



Riki Mellet

I waited for two years and eight months. Every time we wanted to leave for Mozambique, I had to sit and wait for hours at Home Affairs and explain why I wanted a letter to be able to cross the border. Once I was even told I should come on the day we were going to leave and maybe then they'd be able to help me. After a huge battle, I had to re-register my 16-year-old and hand in a statement saying that he is indeed my son and that he wasn't registered at birth. After that we still had to wait for another three months.



Freddy Whitehead

I have been waiting for three years. I'm abroad and can't come back home.



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A conversation about conservation

Perhaps it's time for the private sector and 4x4 enthusiasts to take direct control over conservation, says Mic van Zyl.

I have always liked Namibia. I've been going there on business several times a year for the last 25 years and the place never fails to lift my spirits. Sadly, I've only recently started experiencing Namibia from a leisure aspect. It was thus with great excitement and anticipation that I received an invitation recently from a mate to accompany some of the senior people from Toyota South Africa on the Faces of Namibia Desert Tour.

This trip had a bittersweet twist to it though. This would be my last

passed through. His passion for the conservation of the area is evident, and I felt very motivated by him to do something towards conservation. Sadly though, it's not as easy as it sounds.

One evening around the campfire in Namibia, the conversation turned to conservation and specifically what the average Joe could do to contribute to conservation in our region. It was quite evident that there was no clear-cut answer to the question. Some interesting suggestions were put forward though. By including the topic of conservation in conversations about holidays, planned trips, wish lists for trips, etc., it's possible to increase one's chances of coming across something that could be of personal interest and easy enough to get involved in. Merely getting out and visiting places where conservation is practiced as an eco-tourist already helps with the conservation efforts. Your entrance and camping fees would be put to good use. As an amateur hobbyist photographer, I have come across a couple of photography social media groups that practice conservation or have links with such organisations.

There is of course, as always, an ugly side to the story, as is the case with just about everything involving humans. It has become quite evident while travelling through Namibia and Botswana that there exists a section of 4WD eco-tourists that behave quite badly, in some instances painting us all in

a bad light. Loud music, littering, pirate camping, and drunken misbehaviour have no place in wildlife areas. It has always been my opinion that such people are best confined to the local municipal campsite.

I can for the life of me not understand how we do not yet have a lifetime ban in place for such behaviour. If Spur can do it, surely the Parks Board can too!

I've seen a couple of Facebook groups that name and shame offenders, but I often wonder what the authorities do with this information and if the perpetrators are ever fined or refused future entrance. Perhaps it's time to be looking at a system of registry to enable only licenced eco-tourists to visit wilderness areas. Nobody liked this idea though as it would be subject to the same challenges and failures of just about every government-run system in Southern Africa.

Perhaps it's time for the private sector and private enthusiasts to take more control over conservation and the use of wilderness areas to ensure that we are able to enjoy them for generations to come. Perhaps indeed. 

I often wonder what the authorities do about offenders, and if the perpetrators are ever fined or refused future entrance.

road trip in the FJ Cruiser as it's due for imminent replacement. The Faces of Namibia Desert Tour was a fitting swansong for the FJ because dune driving is one area where the FJ arguably has few equals. The tour certainly did not disappoint, and I highly recommend taking a closer look at what Uri Adventures has to offer.

Our guide on this trip, Danie van Ellewee (better known as "Jakkals"), is an absolute master at regaling you with the history, geology and geography of the area that we

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

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Learn from those who know

You can clearly see which campsites took their visitors' opinions to heart and which did not, says Neels van Heerden.

I think it's safe to say that those of us who are aware of our own mortality have what you call a bucket list. You know, a list of things you never got round to doing while you were young and able that you'd love to tick off before embarking on your final journey.

I also have an almost endless camping bucket list. I'd love to travel in a motorhome with my partner all along the coast of South Africa from lighthouse to lighthouse, starting at St. Lucia and ending at Port Nolloth. Another wish is to explore Namibia from the Orange River to the Kunene, then back home

pop the top off the bottle I'm going to buy at a wine cellar outside of Calvinia when we go to enjoy the wildflowers in Namaqualand. Then it's a visit to all the campsites with spectacular sea views (like Scottburgh, Victoria Bay, Strandfontein, and Hartenbos) and all those hidden gems in the countryside.

It's going to take us a lifetime to do everything!

I'VE BEEN FORTUNATE enough to have hammered in my tent pegs in the Kruger National Park. It was a good few years ago when I was still involved at the Tourism Grading Council.

My visits to the campsites were a trial run: We had an understanding with SANParks that they would be given the opportunity to iron out serious issues before we graded them.

Tsendze was built a year or so after that, and that trial run enabled them to establish that campsite to the best of their budgetary abilities. But Mazhou in Mapungubwe is a good example of a space with incredible potential but that could have benefitted from some guidance when it came to their ablution facilities.

And let's not mention Lower Sabie – I can only describe the layout as a total fiasco. Because the day-visitor section was made bigger at the expense of the

campsite, some of the stands are so cramped that you can hardly fit a motorhome or a large-ish caravan.

The fence on the western side of Satara's campsite is one of the most popular campsites in the Kruger. Years ago, when they started installing electricity, no one thought that the stands located right next to the fence would be the most sought-after. The result is that you have extension cords lying around all over the place.

CAMPERS ARE starting to complain more and more about how difficult it is to book a spot in one of the Kruger's campsites. The blame for this can be placed squarely on tour operators who snatch up all the available spaces as soon as bookings for the next season open.

Perhaps I should dig out the camp layouts I drew up years ago and go to every campsite in the Kruger to analyse the accuracy of their booking system.

Our national parks are a national treasure, and profit-chasing and problematic booking systems are not in the interest of the general camping public who really want to pitch their tents in the Kruger. Just remember to pack a proper hammer if you are heading that way, because the ground is rock hard.

Profit-chasing and problematic booking systems are not in the interest of the general camping public.

to see our grandkids, and then we hit the road again to the western part of Botswana, through the Okavango to the Vic Falls. From there we want to travel through eastern Botswana to Mapungubwe.

At the confluence of the Limpopo and Sashe rivers there is a lookout point reachable via a tree-top trail. This is where I'll



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E & OE

Guess who's back?



After the Gypsy caravan range was discontinued five years ago, Jurgens Ci decided to breathe new life into the brand name.

The Gypsy Lite is a shining example of the groundbreaking work the company is doing. It's the lightest caravan they've ever built – its gross vehicle mass is 750 kg. That's a strategic approach because it means anyone with a light motor vehicle licence (code B) can tow the Lite.

Jurgens Ci further deviated from its usual design with its fixed-roof caravan. Traditionally only the company's top-of-the range vehicles had a fixed roof while the rest – even the Safari off-road caravan – were equipped with a pop-up roof.

This fresh influence is thanks to Jurgen Adler, who is now

Jurgens Ci's head of design and development. Clive Gray managed the design team while Clive Cox, Jurgens Ci's senior designer, contributed his wealth of knowledge.

The Lite is the smallest caravan on the market in which you can stand upright. Struggling with a pop-up roof is now a thing of the past. Clive says this roof design makes the caravan lighter, compared to the pop-up roof models. A fixed roof also has much better insulation, while it's difficult to regulate temperatures under a pop-up roof.

To keep the weight down, the Lite doesn't have a built-in kitchen. It's actually a bit odd, since you'll find this convenience in most caravans, big or small.

You only fully realise how light the caravan is when you look at



the standard model's nose weight: a meagre 38 kg – certainly one of the lightest on the market. Not only does the fibreglass body make a strong and durable caravan, it also contributes to the low weight. The fibreglass panels contain minimum timber, although the cupboards are still made of wood.

Because of its size, the Lite is perfect for couples but it can also sleep a family of four.

A fold-out table with two benches are to the right in the back of the caravan and these can be converted into a single bed. A fourth bed is optional and fits onto this one like a bunk bed.

The large fridge for this size caravan (173 ℓ) is on the opposite wall with an island bed to the left, towards the nose.

The GVM of 750 kg is all good and well but our legislation doesn't allow for unbraked

vehicles over this weight. Its towing vehicle has to weigh at least 1,5 t. The Lite has overrun brakes though, which means the towing vehicle only needs to have a tare weight of 750 kg. You can, therefore, tow the Lite with most vehicles on the market and a regular code B license.

Jurgens says this is the first of a few new Gypsy models in the pipeline. The Lite is available in green, blue, and grey.

What is optional? A 19 ℓ microwave, spare wheel, a rally tent, and the fourth bed. (The weight of these extras is not included in the standard tare weight.)

The numbers Tare weight 590 kg; GVM 750 kg (braked); 4,78 (l) x 2,09 (w) x 2,47 m (h).

Price R169 900.

Contact 012 797 7300

info@jurgens-co.co.za

campworld.com

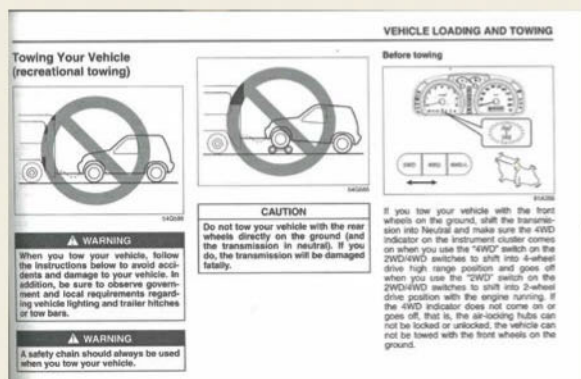
How not to tow a Jimny

In go! Drive & Camp #2 (August 2017) Linda du Plessies from Bultfontein in the Free State writes that they tow their Suzuki Jimny with their 2006 Motorhome-World Discoverer 4.

Megan McDonald, marketing manager and public relations officer at Suzuki South Africa, responds to Linda's letter:

"I've just seen this letter and must strongly advise readers against towing a Jimny in this way. Please read page 6 of your user manual (section 7) to see how to tow a Jimny. We suggest you rather tow it with an A-frame.

We contacted Linda for comment and she also suggested rather using an A-frame.



ANOTHER CAMPING SHOP IN THE CAPE

The outdoor shop Camp&Climb has opened its third branch. The first shop opened in Paarden Eiland, Cape Town, about 10 years ago. A branch in Centurion followed, and now the owners have opened a third store – in Bellville, also in Cape Town.

It's basically an everything-under-one-roof outdoor shop: There's gear for cyclists, mountain climbers, caravan owners,

campers, and 4x4 enthusiasts – there's even reading material for anglers.

There's a wide variety of gear: from camping chairs and first-aid kits to sleeping bags, tents and a water level for the caravan's drawbar.

Contact 021 949 0039 (Bellville), 012 665 2079 (Centurion) or 021 510 8112 (Paarden Eiland)
campandclimb.co.za

A world first for the new Roadster

Conqueror builds some of the sturdiest off-road leisure vehicles in the country, but the company has now shifted focus to its road caravan, the Roadster 450.

This is a whole lot more than a caravan that isn't afraid to tackle 4x4 conditions. The owners of Conqueror have kitted out the Roadster with a host of innovations to give it an edge over its competitors. The biggest changes are the roof and the interior. From the outside it looks almost the same as the previous model, and Conqueror also stuck to its original undercarriage.

Conqueror takes the lead with the plastic panels. All the cupboards inside as well as the nosecone, rear bumper, and the wheel arches are

made of super-light yet tough plastic – the kind you'll find in aircraft. Conqueror invested millions in the molds for these plastic parts. Philip de Vries, co-owner of Conqueror, says as far as they know this way of doing things is not only a first in South Africa, but also the world. No wood is used, which means there's no chance of wood rot.

What makes the Roadster more durable is the fact that the framework is made of aluminium and is also covered with aluminium sheeting.

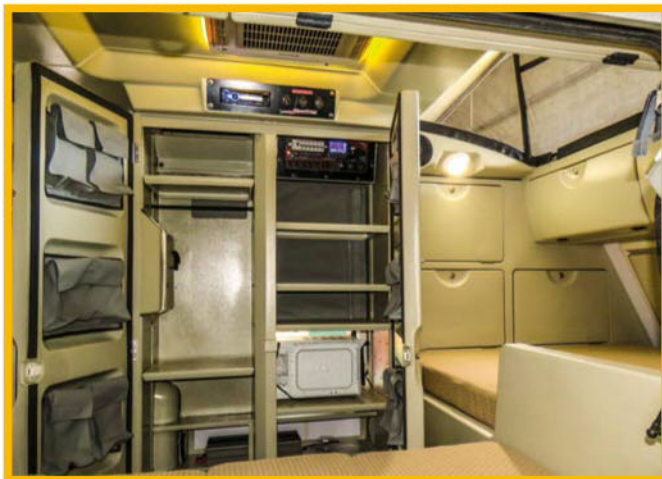
Conqueror gives new meaning to the term pop-up roof. As a rule, manufacturers use a pop-up roof to lower the height of the vehicle when the roof is closed, and you have to open it up if you want to stand upright



in the caravan. The Roadster's roof isn't only high enough so that you can stand upright, but it also has two separate pop-up panels. The roof is made up of three parts, of which the middle part is solid – this is where the air con is. The parts on both sides of the middle lift up individually, with the brackets

fastened to the middle part – almost like a car's bonnet. Gas struts keep the two pop-up roofs in place, and the mesh between the body of the caravan and the part that pops up can also zip open completely.

The Roadster has two double beds inside plus a bathroom. The standard caravan is almost





fully equipped and includes items like a 100 l water tank, an electrical system (which includes a 1 500 W converter and 20 m extension cord), a geyser, 102 Ah battery, and stove. The windows have double insulation and are made by Dometic – these are imported and it's some of the best on the market. The windows have screens that you can pull down if you want some privacy, and there's a mesh screen to keep bugs out.

The Roadster has independent suspension, but of the

rubber axle variety.

Extras include a galvanised braai grid (R939) and there are three freezer options: 72-90 l National Luna ice freezers that cost between R13 815 and R16 859.

The numbers The weight hasn't been finalised yet. The estimated tare is 1 400 kg and the GVM should be 1 600 kg. The axle is 1,8 t; 6,1 (l) x 2,315 (w) x 2,5 m (h).

Price From R365 883.

Contact 016 349 6531/2/3/6

🖱️ info@conqueror.co.za



THE POINTS SYSTEM IS COMING

Are you ready for the points system or what's known in official circles as the road regulations of the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (or AARTO)? These regulations were suggested in 1998 already, but it's been a huge struggle to implement it. Now it's in the home stretch, and will probably come into effect in 2018.

How does it work? Motorists start with 0 points on their record. If you're caught for a traffic violation, points are awarded. When you have 13 points, your licence is suspended for three months. For every month that you get less than three points, one point will be deducted from your record. If your licence is suspended a third time, you'll lose it.



Examples of the points you can "earn"

Speed violation (120 km/h
in a 60 km/h zone)

6 points

Disregarding a road sign
2 points

Driving without a licence or an expired licence

4 points

Driving under the influence 6 points

For more information go to

aarto.gov.za.



Armadillo finds its footing

Eko Veld Gear is one of the newest off-road caravan manufacturers in the country, and since their 25th vehicle saw the light of day last year, they now have three models available on the market.

This Cape Town manufacturer calls its vehicles the Armadillo, and the first model is a typical family caravan perfect for the African bush. Fanie Botha and his son Riaan head up operations, and have now built a simpler caravan aimed at couples.

Off-road trailers and good-quality off-road caravans are slowly but surely becoming more popular than road caravans, but these vehicles cost a lot of money. That's why these days you'll see more smaller off-road caravans on

the road as these vehicles are a lot easier on the pocket.

Eko Veld Gear's 25th off-road caravan fits into this category. Fanie calls it the Armadillo Shack. The body is similar to the original Armadillo and that includes the aluminium frame and finishes.

To make camping easier, the Shack does not have a bed that folds out over the A-frame. Rather, the entire back section of the caravan is one big bed. Not only is it less of a hassle to unfold, you can get the bed ready before you leave home and immediately hit the hay when you arrive at the campsite. If it rains and you need to stay indoors, the bed folds up to make a table with benches.

The door is in front to the left, and



the kitchen is in the left panel. The fridge is to the left of the door inside – there's a big enough space for one of up to 90 l. The fridge is not on a sliding frame, but it is mounted. There's also enough space for a microwave.

The pop-up roof lifts over the entrance and is secured with brackets to the body. The roof is easy to lift – gas struts do most of the work for you.

The original Armadillo has an outside shower that folds out near the rear right-hand side corner, but this now moves to the back.

Besides the new Shack, they've also built a second version of the original Armadillo. The Armadillo Plus is 28 cm longer, and thanks to the back door that has moved to the side there's more room in the caravan. There's more space

around the table and benches and the wardrobe is bigger. The team didn't mess with the winning recipe of the fold-out bed. The bed is cleverly designed – when folded up it helps to keep the pop-up roof closed and prevents it from opening when you're towing.

The numbers None of the two's weight has been estimated. The Armadillo Plus's estimated tare weight is 1 100 kg, and the GVM is 1 800 kg; 4,86 (l) x 1,8 (w) x 2,06 m (h). The Armadillo Shack's tare weight is not yet available but the GVM and measurements are the same as the Plus.

Price Armadillo Plus R256 500; Armadillo Shack R221 500.

Contact 021 981 5999 or 082 898 4339

ekoveldgear.co.za >

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BUSH LAPA TARGETS THE RENTAL MARKET

Bush Lapa has expanded its business and has now made vehicles available to rent.

Because they received numerous enquiries about rental vehicles, owner Jannie Oeschger decided to make three models available: the Boabab, Miskruier, and Boskriek. The first two sleeps four and the Boskriek two.

It costs R1 450 per day to rent the Boskriek for less than 10 days (for a longer period it's R1 350 per day). The other two models both

cost R1 100 (R1 000 for longer than 10 days). A compulsory insurance premium of R130 per day for the Boabab and R100 for the other two models are excluded.

The vehicles' paperwork is in order if you want to cross a border into a neighbouring country. For the Boabab your towing vehicle's tare weight has to be at least 1,8 t and for the other two 1,5 t.

Contact 021 870 1277/38

adel@bushlapa.com

bushlapa.com



Frankfurt puts on a show

At the 2017 Frankfurt motor show, the **Mercedes-Benz X-Class** was showcased yet again. This is probably the most drawn-out launch we've ever encountered.

It goes without saying that we can't wait to test drive it, and by the time you're reading this we'll be somewhere in the Andes in South America doing exactly that. The question on everyone's lips though, is how much is this vehicle going to cost.

There was also a new **Renault Duster** on display. Besides the new bodywork, there are also a few other changes to look forward to – things like a totally redesigned grille, LED lights, and a bigger bash plate underneath the front bumper and engine. The interior also looks wildly different with brand new gadgets.



The **Jaguar E-Pace** will be more affordable than its big brother the F-Pace, and will compete with Volkswagen's Tiguan and the Audi A3.

Electric and hybrid vehicles were also big news at the show. Honda showcased a hybrid **CR-V**, and Toyota a hybrid **C-HR**, which it calls the Hy-Power.

There was also an electric **Mini Cooper** and a hydrogen-fuelled **Mercedes-Benz GLC**. And of course there were more facelifts than you'll find in a Hollywood plastic surgery clinic: South Africans may soon see revamped versions of the Toyota Land Cruiser Prado, Lexus NX, Kia Sorento, and Ford EcoSport on our roads. >

The camels of Kgalagadi

If you've ever wanted to experience a camel trip on the red dunes of the Kgalagadi, head to the Kgalagadi Lodge.

The owners joined forces with camel owners Landa and Tinus Conradie, and besides experiencing the lodge's luxury campsite, campers can now also explore the area on the back of a camel.

Kleinkoos Schneider looks after the camels and is also the guide. There are enough camels for five people at a

time (kids under six need to ride with an adult). The rides are 15 minutes and take place late afternoon from 4–6 pm. It costs R150 per person.

The Kgalagadi Lodge is known for its 19 stands in the red dunes, and each stand has its own bathroom. There's also a neat restaurant, a shop, and a swimming pool if the heat becomes unbearable.

Contact 082 303 8768 or 083 225 0331

info@kgalagadi-lodge.co.za

kgalagadi-lodge.co.za



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And the award goes to...



The 10 finalists for the 2018 South African Car of the Year were recently announced by the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists.

The 10 finalists are, in alphabetical order: Alfa Romeo Giulia, Audi Q5, Land Rover Discovery, Volvo S90, BMW 5-Series, Porsche Panamera, Peugeot 3008, Kia Picanto, Suzuki Ignis, and the Toyota C-HR.

Four of these cars don't really apply to us. The **ALFA ROMEO GIULIA** and **PORSCHE PANAMERA** are great sports cars but they are going to struggle on a 4x4 route, and they won't have a clue when it comes to towing a caravan.

The Alfa has a good chance of winning, but if Porsche wins for the fourth time in six years, the people will likely rebel and burn down the Guild's offices.

The **KIA PICANTO** and **TOYOTA C-HR** are fine for a first-year student, but like the Alfa and the Porsche they are not made for towing or off-road driving. The chances of one of them winning are also slim.



The **AUDI Q5**, especially with air suspension, is a great gravel road vehicle and it's perfect for towing a Jurgens Safari. We think it stands an excellent chance to walk away with honours because the Q5 appeals to so many different types of people – and motoring journalists are unanimous in their praise.

The **LAND ROVER DISCOVERY** is the only off-roader on this list, but during our off-road test we became concerned that Land Rover was deviating from their off-road heritage – read the report on p. 32. While it's an excellent towing vehicle, few people have R1,5 million just lying around to spend on a car.

In terms of towing, the **VOLVO S90** is apparently excellent. We say "apparently" because we haven't been able to get our hands on a test vehicle with a tow bar. But if international reports are to be believed, Europeans especially are crazy about the S90's towing ability. We did drive the AWD model on a gravel road and it clings like a limpet.

BMW'S 5-SERIES (especially the 520d) is a lovely towing vehicle. Naturally it wouldn't impress us on a gravel road, but it's a great company car while your off-roader waits patiently for the long weekend.



HARTENBOS SPRUCES UP ITS SWIMMING POOLS

Hartenbos and swimming go hand in hand like camping and braaiing, and to that end this ATKV resort has fixed up its pools.

The past year or two the resort has really undergone a metamorphosis with all the construction work. Together with the development of the seafront business centre, the heated pools – which were built in 1989 – are also getting some attention. Not only have the pools been revamped and made deeper, there are now also two new pools for kids. And the gym's pool next door has two new lanes.

And no more heating the pools with heat pumps and

geysers – it's now all about green energy where solar panels and gas burners do all the work. With the old system it was a mission to keep water temperatures around the 30 °C mark, but now it averages about 34 °C and can even go higher. (The heated pools hold 450 000 l of water and the lanes in the gym pool 150 000 l.)

If you prefer splashing around in colder water, head to the large cold-water pool in the play park where you can show off your moves on the new slides.

Contact 044 601 7200
hartenbos@atkv.org.za
atkvoorde.co.za/Oorde/Hartenbos

Will it be chosen as Car of the Year though? It's unlikely.

The **PEUGEOT 3008** is not a true sport utility vehicle and can't tow a caravan, but the air con has a built-in fragrance diffuser. With the push of a button you can select one of three fragrances that all smell like your grandmother's bathroom.

Lastly, it's the **SUZUKI IGNIS**. Like the Peugeot 3008, it's also not a towing vehicle or off-roader, but it did actually end up impressing us a little bit. If the new Suzuki Jimny (which we've been waiting ages for) uses some ideas from the Ignis, it wouldn't bother us at all. 



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Ready to pounce once more



FORD KUGA

With the second-generation Kuga being on the market for three years now and that nasty pyrotechnics business last year, the revamped Ford Kuga couldn't have arrived at a better time. **Kyle Kock** takes it for a spin.

Jokes and inappropriate comments aside, Ford had a public relations nightmare when almost 50 previous-generation Kugas caught fire on local soil. But some time and three phases of recall actions seems to have doused the flames of most of the public outcry.

On the outside

Those who were fans of the previous model's looks needn't fret too much, because this mid-lifecycle facelift has only

incrementally altered the Kuga's exterior. The trapezoidal grille that's become a signature trait across the Blue Oval model range has been slightly enlarged at the upper end, while the lower section has been downsized. The headlamps have also been elongated, while the tail lamps have been redesigned. The profile differs notably from its predecessors in that there are new choices of alloy wheel design, varying in size from 17" to 19", depending on which model you want.

In the cabin

Ford's interior design has been getting smarter with every new model that they launch, and perceived quality is at an all-time high. There's plenty of room too, something that's highlighted by a neatened fascia, thanks to minimal aircon switches, an electronic parking brake that frees up storage room in the centre console (only on the Trend and Titanium models), and with fewer satellite controls on the steering wheel. Speaking of the tiller, both

automated transmissions use paddle shifters located behind the two upper spokes so the driver doesn't have to take a hand off the steering to manually override the proceedings.

Standard across the range are tinted windows, electrically adjustable and heated side mirrors, while on the safety front you can expect electronic stability control ABS with EBD and hill-launch assist and seven airbags to protect the occupants in case of a prang. >

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Under the bonnet

Because like many of its rivals Ford is being encouraged to emit less emissions and lower fuel consumption – all without sacrificing power and torque – the company has decided to only use Ecoboost engines. To this end, the Kuga line-up features a single turbodiesel and two turbopetrol motors.

The entry-level 1.5 l Ecoboost boasts outputs of 110 kW and 240 Nm, and if you spec yours with the six-speed automatic transmission, then Ford bumps the power up to

132 kW. Interestingly, you can opt for Ford's Intelligent All Wheel Drive all the way down the range. Then there's the 2 l turbodiesel Ecoboost, which delivers 132 kW and 400 Nm of torque, and like the 1.5 models comes equipped with automatic stop/start for improved fuel consumption and lower emissions. The diesel model also exclusively makes use of the company's six-speed PowerShift dual-clutch transmission, while the petrol engines use either a six-speed manual or regular torque converter automatic.

Behind the wheel

We drove a 1.5 Ecoboost Trend Auto FWD and 2.0 TDCi Titanium AWD Powershift. The latter is the range-topper, costing R9 000 more than the ST-lite (see prices), but for the standard spec and towing ability this is the model we would recommend. The dual-clutch transmission is unfortunately only available in the diesel, but for lovers of oil-burners who might be hitching a caravan, that can only be a good thing.

Shifts are seamless and engaged in the blink of an eye, and there's oodles of overtaking acceleration on tap. The

former is a lot cheaper, but you'll lose some off-road ability, and the automatic model robs you somewhat when it comes to shifting ability and having to make do with a lot less power. You should rather opt for the base model and stir the manual yourself.

Conclusion

We're usually loathe to point out the most expensive model in a range as the pick of the bunch, but the diesel really is a good choice. The fact that the Kuga range overall beats most of its immediate rivals on price is also a massive plus.



LUXURIOUSLY APPOINTED. The optional SYNC 3 infotainment system with sat nav brightens up the cabin, which, apart from some metallic accents, features very little contrast. The 8-inch touch screen mirrors that of your Apple mobile phone (Android functionality is on its way). On the Trend and Titanium models, the front seatbacks feature airline-style folding tray tables.



Prices

1.5 Ecoboost Ambiente 6MT FWD	R368 800
1.5 Ecoboost Ambiente 6AT FWD	R381 900
1.5 Ecoboost Trend 6MT FWD	R406 400
1.5 Ecoboost Trend 6AT FWD	R427 900
2.0 TDCi Trend Powershift 6AT AWD.....	R483 900
2.0 Ecoboost Titanium 6AT AWD	R497 900
2.0 TDCi Titanium Powershift 6AT AWD.....	R506 900

“The diesel engine is the only one in the range to use the company's Powershift dual-clutch transmission.”





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info@oppositelock.co.za

TAKE A LOAD OFF

Spending time in the wilderness need not be intimidating. Here are six overlanding solutions to make camping easier and to help you explore further for longer.



National Luna is the preferred supplier to Avis Safari Rentals and their extensive fleet of fully equipped 4x4s. These vehicles tour some of the most remote places in Africa and demand the best in equipment, reliability and backup service.



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Embrace the ice age

Nothing has revolutionised an outdoor way of life quite like the 12V camping fridge. Gone are the days of melted ice and floating lamb chops – now you can run a powerful fridge at ice-cream-freezing temperatures for more than 24 hours on a single battery charge.

But efficiency isn't the only thing that matters. Backup service and reliability are also key features to consider when purchasing a fridge/freezer, along with the fridge's ability to perform in extreme heat and when exposed to excessive vehicle vibration.

National Luna's fridges tick all these boxes. They're designed and manufactured in Africa, for Africa.

Take power with you

Dual-battery power is great, but "power on the move" is even better! Our portable power packs have travelled the globe, from the toughest overland routes in Africa to the furthest reaches of the Australian Outback. It's drop-proof, shock-proof and bang-proof, and it will keep your campsite running smoothly no matter where you are.

The National Luna Portable Power Pack is easy to install and features a built-in dual-battery system, an accurate battery monitor and multiple outlet plugs.

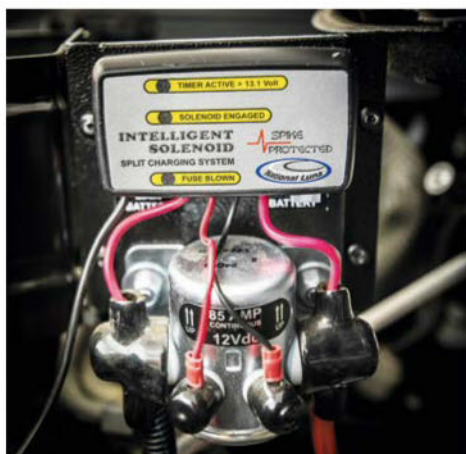
Box clever

For a number of years, National Luna had repeated requests to manufacture a no-frills auxiliary battery box that would make it easier to connect electronic devices to a 12V battery. Instead of just slapping together a plain old plastic box with limited features, the new Auxiliary Battery Box can be fully customised. Yes! Save money by choosing which connection types you require: a DIN/Hella connection, a cigar socket, countless USB ports? The choice is yours!



For more information and other overland solutions,
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Get your backup system sorted

As 12V refrigeration becomes more powerful and efficient, so too does the need for bullet-proof backup power. And what could be more reliable than a mechanically proven solenoid system, trusted for 20 years? Indeed, National Luna's onboard dual-battery system has been serving the worldwide 4x4, boating and caravan markets since 1997. It's the dual-battery setup of choice for Avis Safari Rentals and their fleet of hard-working Ford Rangers and Toyota Land Cruisers.



Charge it right

Batteries are expensive. If you don't look after yours, it won't last. To make matters worse, and contrary to popular belief, most vehicle journeys are not long enough to fully recharge a deep-cycle battery, which is why you should connect your auxiliary battery to an Intelligent Maintenance Charger when it's not in use. If not, you'll do permanent damage to the battery.

After extensive research into battery technology and recharge/discharge curves, it became clear that battery maintenance is a critically ignored subject. That's why National Luna invested more than three years into developing this charger. It boasts an eight-step charging program that allows the charger to optimally analyse and restore your battery. Best of all, you can leave it connected for an indefinite period, without the risk of damaging or over-charging the battery.

DID YOU KNOW?

- National Luna is the only camping fridge manufacturer in South Africa.
- National Luna was the first company in the world to design and manufacture a dual-compartment fridge/freezer that used a single compressor. This product was released in 2002 and it took 10 years before the first Chinese copy appeared on the market.
- All National Luna fridges are manufactured and tested to tropical spec (43°C), the highest international fridge/freezer test specification.
- National Luna boasts the world's widest range of 12V camping fridges.



Let there be light

Here's the thing about outdoor lighting: Sometimes you need a lot; other times you want less. The only thing worse than a harsh camping light that ruins the ambience is a dinky light that doesn't let you see anything.

National Luna has an extensive range of LED camping lights, which are all fitted with multiple brightness modes, from easy-on-the-eye to blindingly brilliant. Each also has a dual-colour mode (red or yellow), which doesn't attract insects. There's even a helpful blue light on the back to make your light easy to find in the dark. (Great for caravan and trailer owners.)

Each light is water-resistant and fitted with a polycarbonate lens/diffuser that's almost unbreakable, and each has a built-in battery protection feature that automatically shuts down the light to prevent it from draining your vehicle's battery.

Established in 1987, National Luna is a leading specialist in 12V outdoor products, and the preferred supplier to all major off-road trailer and caravan manufacturers in South Africa. National Luna products are available at all leading outdoor and 4x4 stores.



Visit nationalluna.com or
call ☎ 011 452 5438 to find a dealer near you.

Well-heeled wheels

With the stalwart Defender temporarily discontinued, there remains only one true off-roader in Land Rover's arsenal: The Discovery. Cyril Kloppe drives the fifth-generation Disco to see how it measures up.



LAND ROVER DISCOVERY Si 6

Do you remember the confusion when singer Prince dropped his stage name and adopted that weird symbol as his moniker? No one knew what to call him – was it Mr. Symbol or Tefkay (The Artist Formerly Known as Prince)?

The all-new Discovery is the fifth of its kind, but please don't call it a Disco 5 – the people at Land Rover won't approve. Instead they want you to drop the numeral and simply call it Discovery from now on – or

"new" Discovery if you must. Physically the new Discovery is a clear departure from previous models. It now bears a strong resemblance to its little brother the Discovery Sport and the faddish Evoque.

At a glance

Gone are the assertive angles and squared panels. The new Disco has a fluid silhouette and softer curves. Beauty is subjective but we feel that the general shape is less distinctive than before. This is fine if you want

to appeal to a wider audience and thereby increase sales – something that all manufacturers want – but unfortunately the new Discovery is arguably less iconic.

Another controversial change is the redesigned rear end. The Discovery 3 and 4 both had a split rear hatch: After the top half flipped up, the lower part dropped down to convert into a bench. The new Discovery has a single hatch that flips upward, and the bench is now replaced by a wafer-thin flap suspended

from cables – copied from Range Rover.

Another rather interesting change is the offset number plate, which serves little purpose other than to pay homage to former Discoverys that had offset number plates to accommodate a spare wheel on the rear door.

Gerry McGovern, Land Rover's chief designer, acknowledges the controversy but insists that the jarring asymmetry will be lessened by replacing the standard number plate with a slimmer one. >

Inside

The sixth and seventh seats offer more room than that of its rivals the Audi Q7, Volvo XC90, and the BMW X5, but it doesn't quite match a Mercedes-Benz GLS. It's not easy to get into these seats either, only kids and contortionists need attempt.

The wide middle bench offers comfortable seating for two adults, and climate controls in the rear centre stack allow 50/50 dual temperature selection if your passengers can't agree on whether it should be cool or warm. A third adult can be accommodated in a middle seat but he or she will presumably have to deal with both climates at the same time.

True happiness is found in the front row. The seats here are

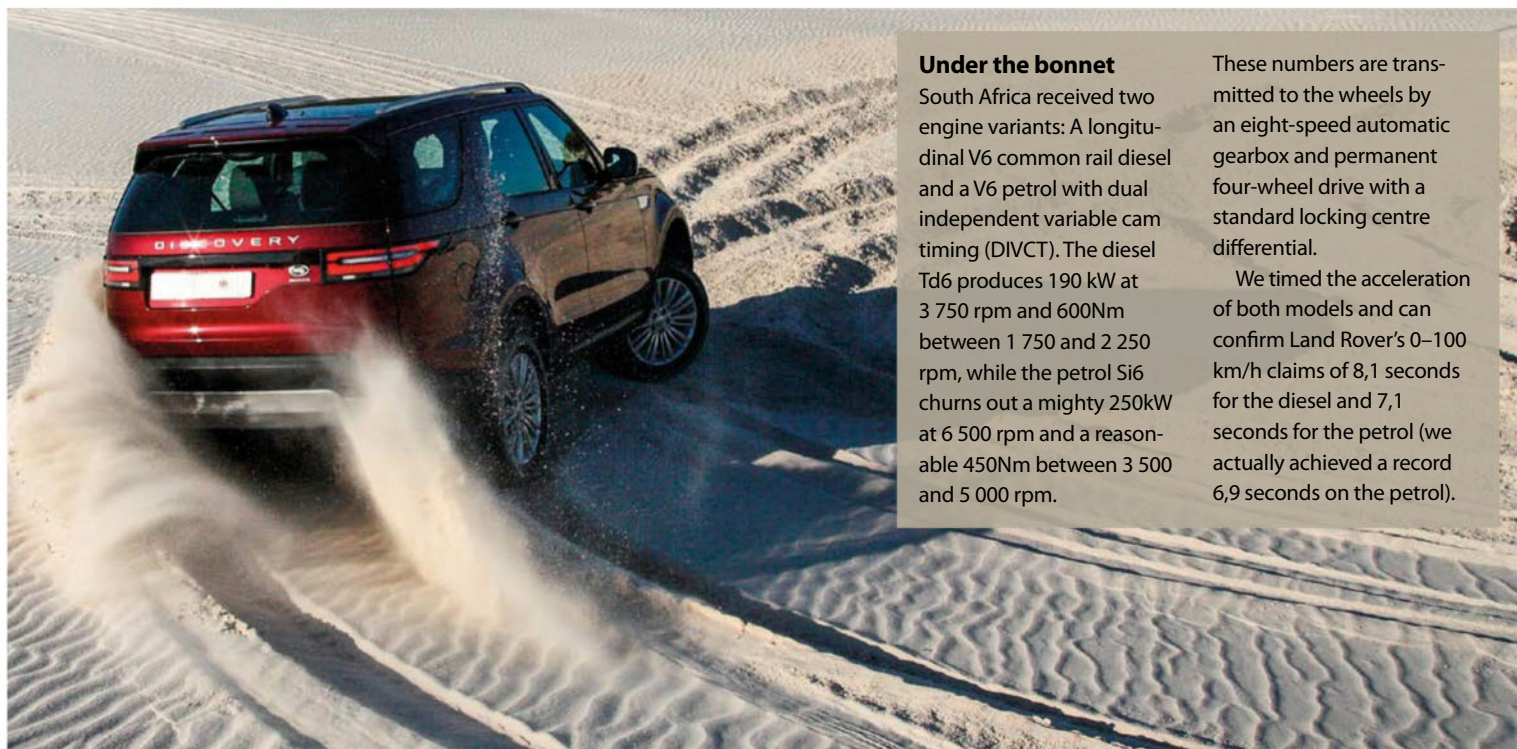
neither too plush nor too firm – just as it should be. The controls on the dashboard are laid out harmoniously, although the large touch screen is certainly the more noticeable feature. The user-intuitive interface of the touch screen looks good but response time is not impressive. We get that a car's multimedia processor has to be robust and reliable but we also want it to react immediately when you tap on an icon. Nobody likes to hit a button repeatedly to get it to do something, and this occasionally happens in the Disco. By comparison, Volvo's interface responds far quicker.

The trim levels are excellent and well thought out, although if we had to nit-pick we could criticise little things such as the

metal trim around the gear and terrain response dials that sometimes reflect sunlight like a mirror, momentarily blinding the driver. The front seats have fold-down armrests that are more trouble than they're worth. It's easier to simply rest your elbows on the

padded central cubby between the front seats. We'll finally stop complaining about the bonnet release lever in the passenger footwell and the electric window toggles on the window sills. It's a signature Land Rover thing that we'll abide by.

The all-new Discovery is the fifth of its kind, but please don't call it a Disco 5 – the people at Land Rover won't approve.



Under the bonnet

South Africa received two engine variants: A longitudinal V6 common rail diesel and a V6 petrol with dual independent variable cam timing (DIVCT). The diesel Td6 produces 190 kW at 3 750 rpm and 600Nm between 1 750 and 2 250 rpm, while the petrol Si6 churns out a mighty 250kW at 6 500 rpm and a reasonable 450Nm between 3 500 and 5 000 rpm.

These numbers are transmitted to the wheels by an eight-speed automatic gearbox and permanent four-wheel drive with a standard locking centre differential.

We timed the acceleration of both models and can confirm Land Rover's 0–100 km/h claims of 8,1 seconds for the diesel and 7,1 seconds for the petrol (we actually achieved a record 6,9 seconds on the petrol).

Behind the wheel

The new Discovery offers a silky-smooth drive with relatively little body lean through tight bends. This is partly thanks to an extraordinary overall weight reduction of 430 kg and Land Rover's integral link rear suspension. The steering does feel a little numb though

with a similar sense of dispassion experienced in a Volvo XC90. If you want tactile feedback from the road we suggest you consider an Audi Q7 or BMW X5 instead, or better yet, a Jaguar F-Pace.

We drove the new Discovery over terrain where most Discovery owners wouldn't dream of going.

Although it performed admirably, we were under no illusions that it was an unstoppable machine. It cleared all the obstacles we threw at it but only after careful planning and suffering the occasional blow to the undercarriage.

We also tested the Discovery on the sand dunes outside Atlantis in the Cape where it excelled. The air suspension has two off-road heights: At speeds below 50 km/h it will maintain a maximum ground clearance of 283 mm. Drive beyond 50 and it will automatically lower by 35 mm, which is still adequate for sand riding. At speeds beyond 80 km/h the suspension will return to the regular ride height, which may not be suitable for soft, thick sand but you probably shouldn't drive at that speed in sand anyway. While the maximum 34° approach and 30° departure angles sound like a lot, we did manage to accidentally bend the front bumper out of shape when we descended

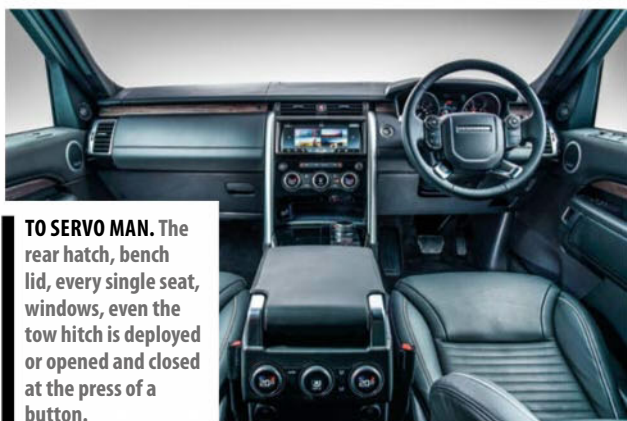
a steep dune. Although this was totally our fault, it also suggests that the Disco is prone to damage.

Conclusion

The new Discovery is a capable vehicle that'll get you through all but the roughest terrain. But frankly it borders on sacrilege to abuse such a pretty car. The mere thought of a branch scratching the paintwork or the chassis being dragged over rocks makes us quiver involuntarily.

Renowned adventurer Kingsley Holgate will depart on an expedition soon using the new Discovery. It'll be interesting to see if this sleek vehicle can pull off a tough-as-nails look after it's fitted with a roof rack, jerry cans, a second spare wheel, steel bumpers, and a winch.

We'll put the new Discovery through a towing test – a test in which we suspect it'll perform better than in our off-road review. Read about it soon.



TO SERVO MAN. The rear hatch, bench lid, every single seat, windows, even the tow hitch is deployed or opened and closed at the press of a button.



Models and prices

S 3.0 Td6 diesel auto	R980 000
S 3.0 Si6 petrol auto	R1 018 500
SE 3.0 Td6 diesel auto	R1 109 250
SE 3.0 Si6 petrol auto	R1 126 750
HSE 3.0 Td6 diesel auto	R1 223 000
HSE 3.0 Si6 petrol auto	R1 240 500
HSE Luxury 3.0 Td6 diesel auto	R1 314 000
HSE Luxury 3.0 Si6 petrol auto	R1 331 500
First Edition 3.0 Td6 diesel auto	R1 440 000
First Edition 3.0 Si6 petrol auto	R1 457 500





VOLVO V90 CROSS COUNTRY

A sweet, Swede ride

Is Volvo's S90 sedan too suburban and their XC90 too bulky? Cyril Klopper drives the Volvo V90 Cross Country to see if it can find middle ground.



A station wagon isn't to everyone's taste, but the sleek Volvo V90 Cross Country is undeniably cool. Aluminium plates shield the front and rear bumpers while plastic trim on the wheel arches guard against pebbles and other debris from ruining the paint job. Two large exhaust pipes hint at unbridled power while a wide grille at the front threatens to Hoover up every stray dog in the neighbourhood.

On the inside, the V90 Cross Country is as elegant and roomy as any of the other 90-series models in Volvo's catalogue. It's a marvellous place to spend time in and you won't even mind being trapped inside it during rush hour.

While German manufacturers obsess over performance and technology, the Swedes quietly busied themselves with refining driving pleasure and good taste.

We have a question regarding their sense of good taste though: There is a discrete Swedish flag stitched to the driver seat. Many Swedes follow a philosophy suggesting that discretion is a form of superiority. Is this discrete flag a veiled boast? Perhaps we're reading too much into it.

How does it drive?

In a word: Fantastic. We put foot on a narrow gravel road between the Sanbona Nature Reserve and the town of Montagu in the Cape. It's a corrugated mess that hasn't seen a grader in ages. Behind >



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nearly every rise the road unexpectedly veers off as if its engineer had a dark sense of humour. The Volvo V90 Cross Country nevertheless clung to the road as if the tyres were covered in Pritt. Shudders and shakes were totally absent.

The 2.0 turbodiesel reacts immediately when you step on the pedal, and 0–100 km/h happens in just 7.5 seconds. It doesn't sound particularly fast when you compare it to a performance car, but for a diesel-powered station wagon it's pretty impressive.

On the highway you're free to activate the IntelliSafe system. The artificial intelligence will keep a watchful eye on pedestrians, cyclists and wayward animals,

and warn you of likely danger. The V90 will also automatically keep a safe following distance between you and the car in front and even safely steer around bends if you feel an overwhelming urge to immediately pour yourself a cup of coffee from a thermos. Cheers!

SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested D5 AWD

Inscription

Engine 2 400 cc, four cylinder, turbodiesel

Gearbox Eight-speed Geartronic automatic

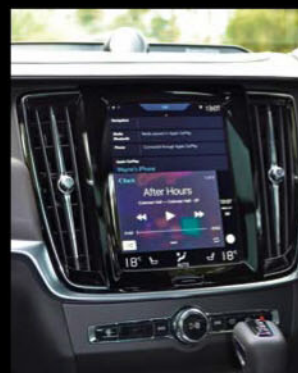
Power 173 kW @ 4 000 rpm

Torque 350 Nm @ 1 500 rpm

Towing capacity 1 900 kg

Luggage space 430 l

Top speed 230 km/h (electronically limited) Ⓜ

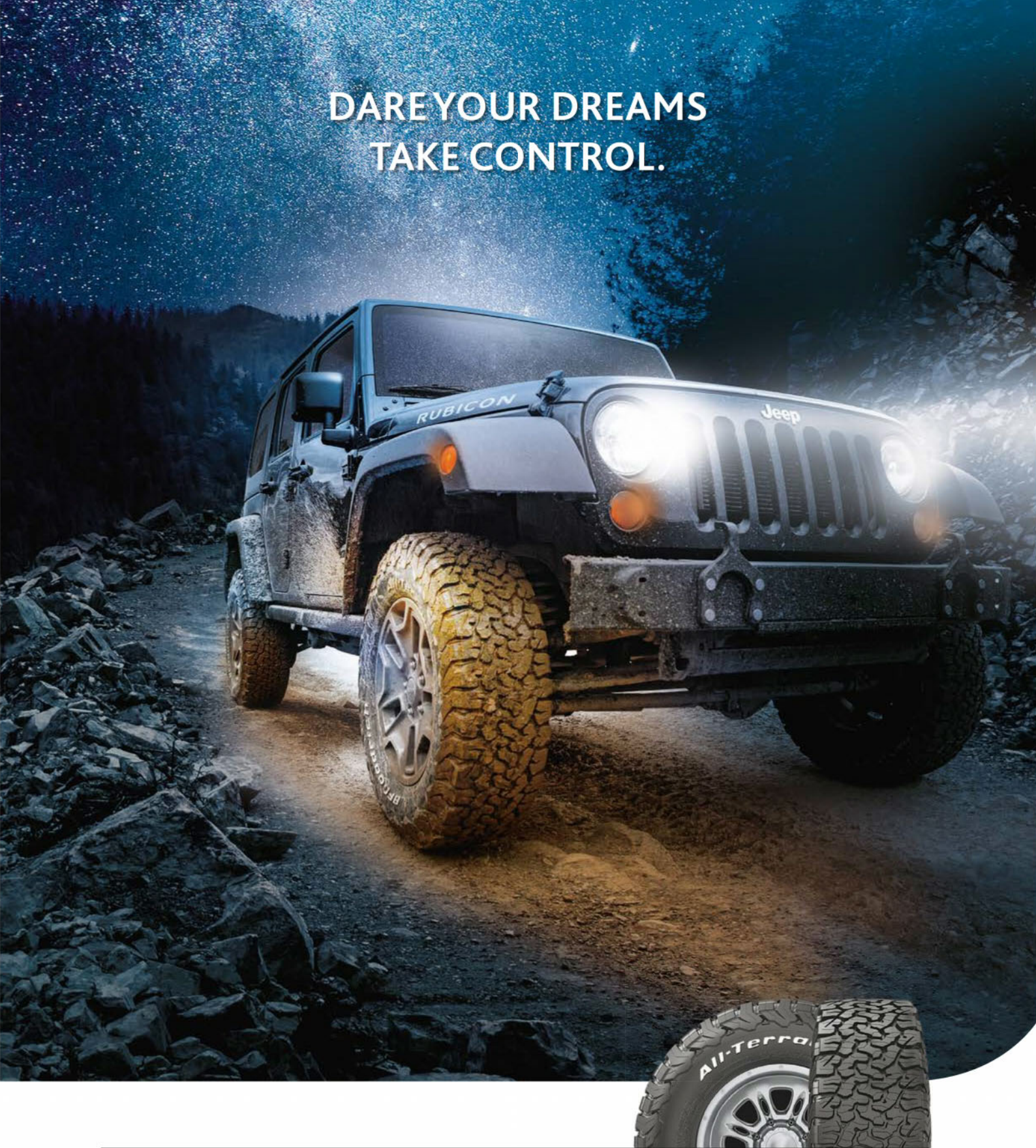


NORDIC STYLE. The interior is at once understated yet smart, something only a Swede could pull off. The nordic cross on a field of blue humbly reminds you that you're driving a very special car.

PRICES

V90 Cross Country D4 Momentum	R804 800
V90 Cross Country D4 Inscription	R839 050
V90 Cross Country D5 Momentum	R850 100
V90 Cross Country D5 Inscription	R884 350
V90 Cross Country T5 Momentum	R784 200
V90 Cross Country T5 Inscription	R818 450
V90 Cross Country T6 Momentum	R906 200
V90 Cross Country T6 Inscription	R940 450

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Watch your step

We remain focused on the underside of the BT-50 after fitting underbody armour last month. This month we install two side steps.

Text **Schalk Jonker** Photos **Lorraine Flack** and **Lourens Pieterse**

Every month we upgrade our long-term test vehicle, a brand new Mazda BT-50 3.2 4x4 SLE (double cab, automatic), with another off-road accessory. We've already fitted a set of BF Goodrich T/A tyres, a steel rear bumper, bullbar, winch and underbody armour. This month it gets a set of side steps, or running boards in the old tongue.

Why side steps?

Last month we installed a bash plate to protect the vital bits underneath your 4x4 – things like the radiator, differentials, sump and transfer case. Your vehicle's bodywork remains vulnerable against debris that gets kicked up by tyres and that is why you need side steps.

The BT-50 does have standard side steps but these are made from soft aluminium which are bolted directly to the body. It's a feature common to many bakkies and SUVs.

The set of Ironman side steps we're installing this month is, however, made from steel and powder

coated, which means that they are tougher and more durable. The side step – which extends from the front wheel to the rear wheel – is bolted to the chassis, not the body, allowing it to carry more weight and be less prone to damage.

Although the side steps are considerably stronger than the standard-issue items, it should not be confused with rock sliders. You can't use these to seesaw over a huge boulder and not expect some damage.

Combined with the underbody protection we've already fitted, the BT-50's belly should still look great decades from now. And obviously the side steps will help shorter people get in and out of the bakkie – plus you can use them to wipe mud off your shoes.

Zero effort

Johann "Tyres" Viljoen and his capable team at 1st Alignment Centre in Stikland, Cape Town, once again did the work for us.

These side steps are custom-made for the BT-50, and the holes in the chassis were pre-drilled by Mazda so you don't have to. It is, therefore, a simple installation according to Johann. They remove the standard side steps and bolt on the new ones – easy as pie. If you drop your bakkie off in the morning, you should have it back before lunchtime. Nice.



FIRM FOOTING. Along with the side steps, the set includes stainless steel bolts, washers and nuts. The chassis has holes that were drilled on the production line to fit side steps. Now people with short legs can also climb into the BT-50 without hanging onto the doors like acrobats.



Modifications so far

JULY 2017
BFG tyres

R16 780

AUGUST 2017
Ironman steel rear bumper

R10 885
(+ R1 083 for installation)

SEPTEMBER 2017
Ironman bullbar

R14 470
(+ R1 500 for installation)

+ Ironman winch

R12 277
(+ R650 for installation)

OCTOBER 2017
Ironman underbody protection plate

R6 755
(+ R395 for installation)

NOVEMBER 2017
Ironman side steps

R5 785
(+ R950 for installation)

Total

R71 530

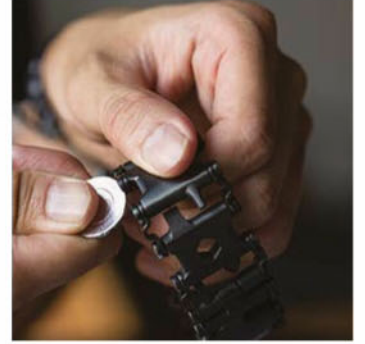
This installation was done by 1st Alignment Centre in 78 Willow Road, Stikland, Cape Town. Contact them on 021 949 5041 or send an email to johann@1stcca.co.za



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Down by the river

South Africa is a water-poor country and dry river courses are an unfortunate yet common sight. For 4x4 enthusiasts, however, these long stretches of sand are a playground where their tracks get washed away every summer during the rainy season.

Text and photos **Cyril Kloppe**





In a dry river course in the Mopani District, deep in the north of the Limpopo province, 14 Nissan Patrols are idling quietly. The men eagerly shake hands while the women greet each other with hugs.

"Jeez my friend, long time no see! How are you doing?" the amiability echoes against the banks of the river.

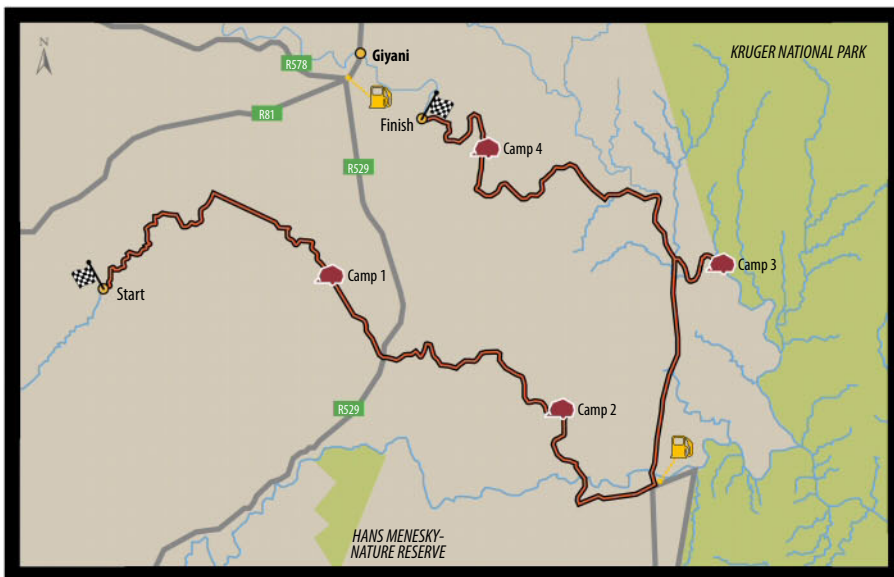
While the grown-ups are reminiscing, a few young boys appear from various vehicles with spades and begin constructing castles and paths in the river sand.

Does 14 vehicles sound like a lot? It's not even half of the group of adventurers that turned up for this year's Nissan Patrol Forum River Trip.

The others are already playing around in their vehicles somewhere along the river course. This is an annual event, and the excitement has been building up for weeks.

Soon all the vehicles' tyre pressure have been lowered to 1 bar and the last of the convoy members are ready to roll down the river. >





DAY 1

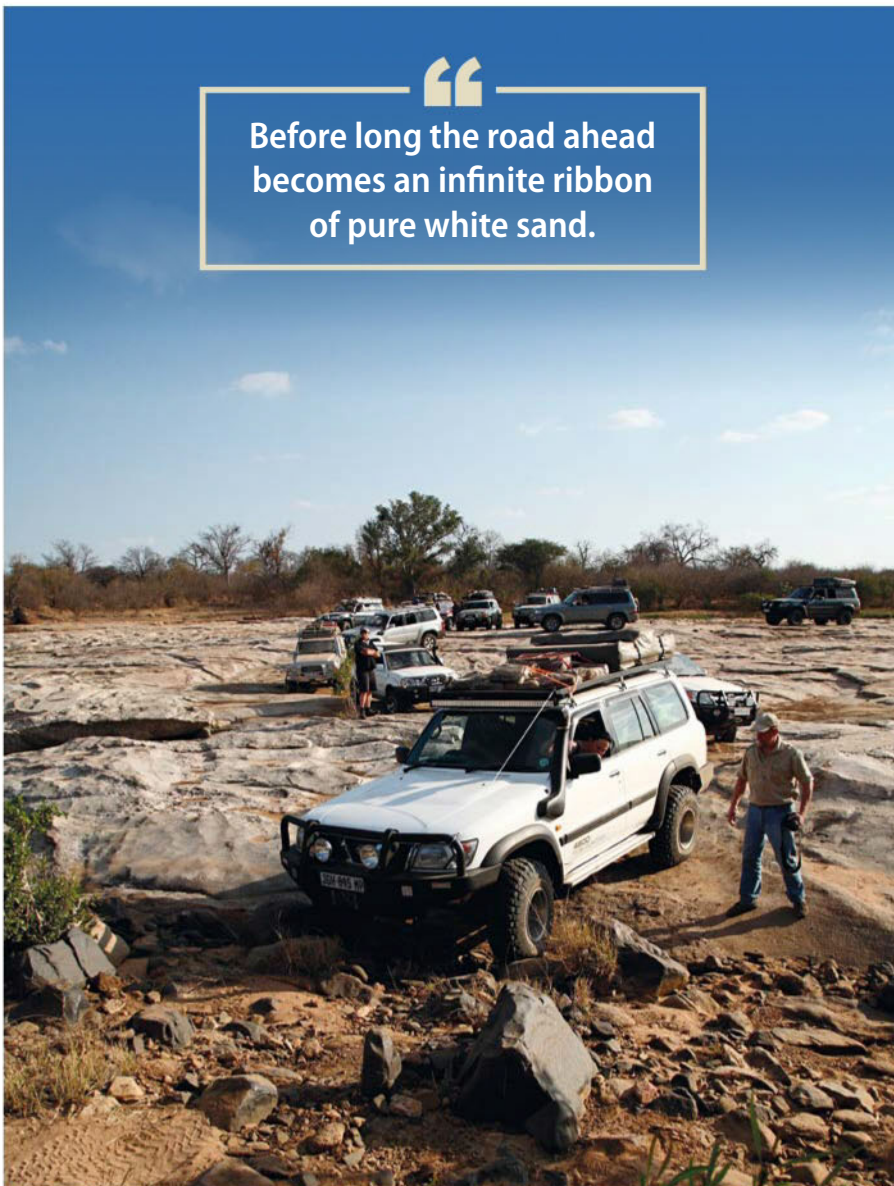
Hello, Molototsi

The source of the Molototsi River is 25 km away, westwards to the mountains above Modjadjiskloof. Where you drive into the river course, the floodplain is roughly 50 m wide. The convoy drives down stream, but even in low range you can feel the thick sand putting up a fight.

Here and there are groups of local women washing clothes in shallow pools. When the Molototsi is not in flood, the water runs about a metre below the sand and it's fairly easy to get to it. Kids skip merrily between colourful plastic baskets filled with laundry and wave excitedly to the passing cars.

As you leave the settlement behind, signs of civilisation begin to dwindle.

“
Before long the road ahead
becomes an infinite ribbon
of pure white sand.”



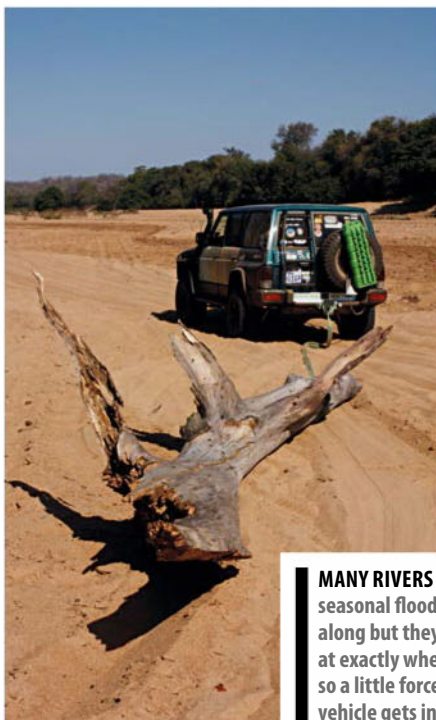
Before long the road ahead becomes an infinite ribbon of pure white sand. On both sides are tall sand banks, the occasional rocky cliff, and an impenetrable wall of thorn trees. The world behind this never-ending wall might as well not exist. You feel separated from whatever lies beyond it.

It's late afternoon when the convoy pulls over to set up camp. Johannesburg is about 500 km from here, but it may as well be on another planet.

Thinus Lotz breaks out his chainsaw. During the course of the day a few vehicles stopped next to uprooted trees that were swept away by a recent flood and loaded branches onto their roof racks. Thinus' "tree scooter" shrieks loudly as he cuts the wood into more manageable pieces. Tonight the flames will touch the stars. >



PLAYTIME. When you're not battling the sand monster you'll be dealing with rocks, some the size of small cars. At the end of each day the kids are let loose to play in the biggest sand pit this side of the Sahara while the grown-ups pitch tents and start a huge bonfire.



MANY RIVERS TO CROSS. The seasonal floods sweep dead trees along but they rarely get deposited at exactly where you plan to braai, so a little force is needed. When a vehicle gets into trouble, there is never a shortage of helping hands. As a reward for your help you can always count on a “thank you” beer at the next stop.



DAY 2

I'm feeling like the cold, cold wind

It's late morning and the river course is littered with vehicles and tents. The party animals randomly pitched their tents around the smouldering remains of last night's bonfire, the snorers' tents are located far enough from everyone else, and the responsible families' neat compounds have a strong focus on facilities such as showers, toilets and kitchens. There's no pressure to do everything together as a collective. You camp how you like and everyone is considerate of each other.

Two boys are busy digging a deep hole in the riverbed. A dad sternly warns them that someone might fall into it and break

his or her neck. “But that's why we're digging the hole,” one rascal quips. “So that we can bury them!”

The convoy continues the trek. There are no real obstacles to speak of, just the occasional rock field that needs to be traversed. Helpful volunteers gesticulate how to safely navigate the rocky maze.

“Can I give you a lift?” one driver asks a volunteer as he's walking back to his own vehicle. “No thanks,” he answers. “I already have a 20 mm lift.” Off-roaders with a raised chassis and bodywork fare better in the rock field than standard

vehicles. This modification is a popular topic of conversation amongst the Patrol guys and you often see them flat on their backs underneath another guy's car checking out parts.

Today there's not a lot of driftwood to collect and tonight the fire is noticeably smaller while an icy breeze blows through the camp.

When you're lying in your tent at night you can feel the ground water rob you of your body heat. Every now and again you hear a soft moan followed by: “Baby, you're hogging the blanket”.



DAY 3

Swimming lessons

It's still early and already things are not going well for Jean-Jacques Jaume. Here, where the Molototsi flows into the Letaba River, the convoy has to drive through deep water. The first vehicle crosses safely, then the next one and the next, but Jean-Jacques' Patrol suddenly stops dead in the middle of the Letaba.

The stricken vehicle is towed to dry land. Graham Cumming takes a look under the bonnet. Graham is a mechanic of note and knows a thing or two about Patrols as he's been working on them for years. Jean-Jacques looks slightly worried but Graham reassures him: "Don't worry, these big 4.8s can take it".

One of the bystanders mutters under his breath (quite correctly) that it's >



TAKE IT EASY. Tread carefully around the campsite. There are many tiny creatures that want to share in the warmth of your fire. A comedian erected two traffic signs in the river. Actually, those signs are vaild warnings...



These are the kinds of people you'll meet



Tijmen van der Steenhoven
1997 4.2 DIESEL ST

Tijmen is a 19-year-old from Pretoria and an avid 4x4 enthusiast. His first vehicle was a Chev Cruze, which he immediately traded for a Nissan Patrol named "Tractor". He clearly has his priorities straight.



Fanus and Zander Coetzee
2000 4.5 PETROL GRX

Fanus and Zander are a father-and-son team from Sabie, and they left Mom and Sis at home for these five days. This is their third River Trip, and they've also joined the Patrol Forum on their Mogatle and Rust de Winter excursions.



Jean-Jacques and Hanelie Jaume
1998 4.5 PETROL GL

Jean-Jacques and Hanelie bought their Patrol, Jollie-Patrollie, from an estate. The previous owner and a friend of the Jaumes died in a light aircraft crash. The Patrol's key still bears scorch marks from this tragic accident.



The first vehicle crosses safely, then the next one and the next, but Jean-Jacques' Patrol stops dead in the middle of the Letaba.





COLLISION COURSE. The first rule of river crossings is to never crash headlong into them – which is exactly what this guy did. Truth be told, it does look impressive and he received a lot of cheering. Jean-Jacques Jaume, however, was not as fortunate. Luckily the river wasn't so deep that he had to swim ashore.



actually a 4,5 ℓ engine, but he won't dare to say it loud enough for Graham to hear... With the spark plugs and air filter removed, Graham turns the engine and jets of water arc out of the plug holes.

Jean-Jacques has the dubious honour of sucking the rancid petrol-and-water mixture out of the vehicle's carburettor with a straw. Everyone howls with laughter at his facial expression.

Graham returns the spark plugs and the engine splutters to life. Luckily there's a filling station 20 km from here where the milky white oil can be exchanged for golden Castrol syrup.

Tonight, camp is pitched in the Klein Letaba River next to the fence of the Kruger National Park. Precious bags of store-bought wood ensure there are numerous fires and everyone is listening intently for the roar of a lion. >



Important GPS coordinates

- S23.45098 E30.35870 Turn right, off the R81 in the direction of Muhlabaaneng.
- S23.51489 E30.41926 Drive over the bridge and turn left, down to the Molototsi River.
- S23.47455 E30.63568 Danger: rocks.
- S23.50150 E30.65262 Camp 1 – the nearest settlement is 4 km west.
- S23.61720 E30.89299 Camp 2 – the nearest settlement is 2 km north.
- S23.67768 E30.92235 Danger: deep river.
- S23.69857 E30.91527 Turn left to the main road.
- S23.69083 E30.96312 Shop and fuel.
- S23.68273 E30.99327 Turn left, up to the tar road.
- S23.48843 E31.01496 Turn left before the bridge and continue to Klein Letaba River.
- S23.49131 E31.05900 Camp 3 – borders the fence of the Kruger.
- S23.41933 E30.91066 Hot springs.
- S23.42819 E30.87634 Danger: rocks.
- S23.39139 E30.81660 Camp 4 – the nearest settlement is 4 km north.
- S23.36620 E30.75381 Exit to the Klein Letaba River.
- S23.32605 E30.68026 Turn left onto the R81, in the direction of Pretoria.

DAY 4

Bolder boulder

Those who have driven this river route before relish in informing the others that today is going to be a lo-o-o-ong day. The road ahead is littered with massive boulders and rocks as big as houses. They don't call it the Rock Garden for nothing.

When we stop there, the group's tracker, Chris Boegman's eyes start glistening like a naughty child's: "This is why we came here!" Alex Botha, Chris's future son-in-law, helps to guide the vehicles over the rocks. Not everyone wants to attempt this high-grade route and some take the easier "highway" or the much easier "chicken route". There's only one reward for the brave guys who tackle the Rock Garden and that's the pride they feel once they've conquered the obstacles. The extra scrapes and dents on the vehicles obviously do not bother them much.

Tonight there's a roaring fire. Someone found an enormous dead tree and dragged it to camp. Alex unearths a bottle of tequila from his bag and the guys who tackled the Rock Garden each get a proper dose of Mexican medicine. The festivities carry on well into the night, and those who went to bed early giggle quietly in their tents at the jokes shared around the campfire.

ROCK ON. Chris Boegman acts as a spotter in the Rock Garden. Aside from having a spotter, the surest way to conquer the rocks is having 33" or even 35" tyres fitted. A lockable differential is also a helpful addition.

What to take

You need to be self-sufficient for five days. Halfway through the tour you have the opportunity to buy basic provisions, but besides food and drink, you need to bring the following:

- **A GPS.** You are going to need it to find the entrance and exit points in the rivers. The river has a few branches and if you take the wrong one you will get lost.
- **Water,** because the rivers are not perennial. There's underground water
- **Recovery gear** is essential because you can easily get stuck in the sand. A winch is a bonus, but bring at least a spade and a tow rope.
- **Spare parts** like extra spark plugs, air filters and oil are highly recommended in case your vehicle swallows water. A tyre-repair kit is also a good idea.

but you'll have to dig about a metre into the sand to get to it. You are also not going to find bottled Perrier in the shebeens in the area.





PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW. After the final night's camp it's time to pack it in and head for home. But not before inflating tyres to highway pressures and saying goodbye to old and newfound friends.

DAY 5

Goodbye, Klein Letaba

Nobody really feels like heading back home. The 500 km to Johannesburg sounds like hell on Earth, but unfortunately you can't stay in the river forever. The last 13 km in the Klein Letaba River to the exit is driven in silence. On hard ground everyone stops to inflate their tyres.

"Goodbye, my friend. Keep well and drive safe," rings out over the drone of portable compressors. Cellphones ping insistently. There's a strong signal here and days-old messages finally find their intended readers.

"Bye, guys," everyone shouts for the last time. The convoy disperses and the vehicles all head off in different directions.

Tonight you'll kick off your shoes in front of the TV while the Patrol Forum's Whatsapp group buzzes with: "Safely home. When are we doing this again?"



I also want to go!

How long is the trip?

We suggest you put at least four days aside. Although it's probably possible to complete the entire route in one day, you're going to have to race like a Dakar Rally driver from sunrise to sunset. We drove the route over five days and it was nice and relaxed.

Best time

The north of South Africa is a summer-rainfall region, and because you'll be spending about four days in a riverbed, it's best to come when the river is dry – so between June and October.

Do you need a 4x4?

You need at least a bakkie with a diff lock and good ground clearance. If you're looking for obstacles like the Rock Garden, you will definitely need four-wheel drive – and

a friend to tow you out when you get stuck.

What are the road conditions like?

There are no roads in the river course, but if you drive the route at the end of winter there should be clear tracks that you can follow.

Paperwork?

It seems to be an impossible task to obtain a permit for this route. The river snakes through farms and communal land.

Behave yourself in the river course (don't litter) and the Department of Water Affairs and the local government will leave you alone.

Cellphone reception?

There's no reception in the riverbed but if you stop and climb the high walls you should be able to pick up a signal. 📶

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South Coast satisfaction

The KwaZulu-Natal South Coast is an all-year-round destination where you can basically play in the ocean for 365 days straight. Here are a few campsites where you can go relax.

Text and photos **Schalk Jonker**





No one needs a lot of convincing to travel to the South Coast. It has a wonderful climate, the warm Mozambique current, and the multitude of things to do make this a superb holiday destination – for anyone from families looking for fun in the sun to pensioners in search of some peace and quiet.

The area around Winklespruit is excellently situated. Not only is it central – Durban is only 40 km away – but the South Coast is also not too far for holiday makers travelling from the interior of South Africa. And of course there are also a few proper caravan parks that will definitely satisfy even the most hard-to-please campers.

If you leave Gauteng early, your camp can be ready by sundown, and you can relax next to the campfire listening to the soothing sounds of the Indian Ocean's waves crashing next to you.

ATKV NATALIA

The big kahuna

You get family resorts and then you get super family resorts. Natalia falls firmly

in the latter category. Sometimes you drive into a campsite and right off the bat everything just feels right.

This is certainly the case here. The place is neat, there's loads of space, you'll be hard pressed to find a safer spot, and there are more than enough activities to keep you and yours happy during your well-deserved holiday. There's even wi-fi at the stands and you get 30 minutes free internet access per day. If your teenage son used up his share, he'll have to choose between buying an ice cream or more data with his pocket money.

Natalia lies next to Illovo Beach, and in these warm waters you can play to your heart's content and then soak up some rays on the beautiful, clean stretch of sand. Most days of the year there are lifeguards on duty.

And if the weather doesn't want to play ball, you can take a dip in the large heated pool or lounge on the pool chairs next to it.

Natalia's recreation area is as complete as they come, and besides the pool (there's one for small kids too), there's putt-putt, volleyball, trampolines, a big jungle >



gym, and one of those giant chess boards. In the games room there are video games and a pool table.

The resort shop will put a few small town supermarkets to shame. Here you can find anything from bread, magazines, and toy fishing nets to braai grids, T-shirts, wood, cooldrinks, ice cream, and ice. Next to the shop is the Koswerf Restaurant where you can sit down for breakfast, a light lunch, or just tea and scones. A “Koswerf” breakfast costs R39 and you get bacon, eggs, tomato, toast, jam and cheese. A pizza will set you back between R80 and R96, and a home-made quiche is R48.

Like at all ATKV resorts there’s entertainment at the pool area during holidays, and that includes food stalls where you can buy treats like a potato on a stick.

The gate to the railway bridge that runs over the track towards the beach is manned by security guard Robert Wenya. He’ll give you a rubber band with a disc on it that you need to put around your arm. The day of the week is written on it and that’s how they control who comes and goes to the beach. Next to Robert’s security hut is an outside shower where you can wash sand and salt from your feet.





Even if you're camping on the front stands it's quite a walk to the beach. But some exercise is probably not a bad thing, especially if you consider those lamb chops you're planning on braaiing tonight.

Choose your spot

The caravan park is divided into two. The first section is close to the gate on the bottom terrace and has about 80 stands. There's no view overlooking the ocean from here but you receive more shelter from the wind. The second part has 28 stands, and these are a few metres higher on the top terrace. From here you have an unbroken view over the ocean, especially if you're right in front. You are, however, directly in the path of the wind.

If the top terrace is where you want to be, find out from the person handling your booking if stands number 114 or 117 are still available. These are the two best

stands in this section of the caravan park, because you're camping beneath huge trees that supply shade all day long – and especially during the humid heat in the summer months this is a welcome relief. You're also basically right in front of the campsite, which means no one can set up camp in front of you and spoil your view.

There are more big trees on the top terrace, but they're spread out over the campsite and you're not guaranteed shade. So pack in your reflective sheet and gazebo, just to be on the safe side. And remember your storm straps and pegs.

If you're planning on camping on the lower stands, try to get your name next to numbers 31–41. They are in the middle island on the farthest point of this section of the campsite, and also completely in the shade. If the whole family comes to camp for the Christmas holidays, stands number 47–51 are perfect for a group booking.



Wilna and Cloete Odendaal from Vrede in the Free State camp with their kids Reyne (8 months), Willem (5) and Jana (2) in their Jurgens Penta towed by their Toyota Hilux.

They say:

“ Natalia is a wonderful holiday destination, especially for people with kids. They swim and play in a safe, peaceful and quiet environment until they're completely pooped. We have no complaints, except the walk to the beach is a bit far. But that's probably not a bad thing, because at least you get a bit of exercise. ”

These five stands are in the corner, on the farthest point of the bottom campsite, and you're away from the other campers. It's nice and private, and best of all, you have a tree canopy over your head. You're also next to the steps leading to the top terrace and therefore closer to the beach.

Ten of the bottom stands have shade cloth over it. Phone beforehand to find out if you can book one of these. If luck isn't on your side, your reflective sheet should be at the top your list of things to pack.

Pitching time

The stands are all about as big as a >



ENDLESS SUMMER. Between the ocean, the beach, heated swimming pool, jungle gym and trampolines, there's more than enough to keep the kids occupied when you visit Natalia.



squash court, and most of them have a rectangular piece of paving with grass around it. The plug points have blue sockets, so bring your caravan plug. The plug points are close enough to your stand so it's not necessary to bring an extension cord. Next to the plug point is a socket for your caravan's satellite dish.

Each stand also has its own tap and rubbish bin, which gets emptied daily. But at Natalia there's a big focus on recycling and you're asked to separate your glass, cans, plastic and paper and throw it away in colour-coded bins next to the two ablution blocks.

Remember to bring your own braai, because there isn't one at your stand. If you didn't bring your own, you can go tan your chops at the communal braais next to the pool.

Whether you camp at the top or bottom stands, you are always within 100 m of the

ablution facilities. The block at the stands closest to the sea is a modern building with separate facilities for men and women – and at the time of our visit it was being spruced up.

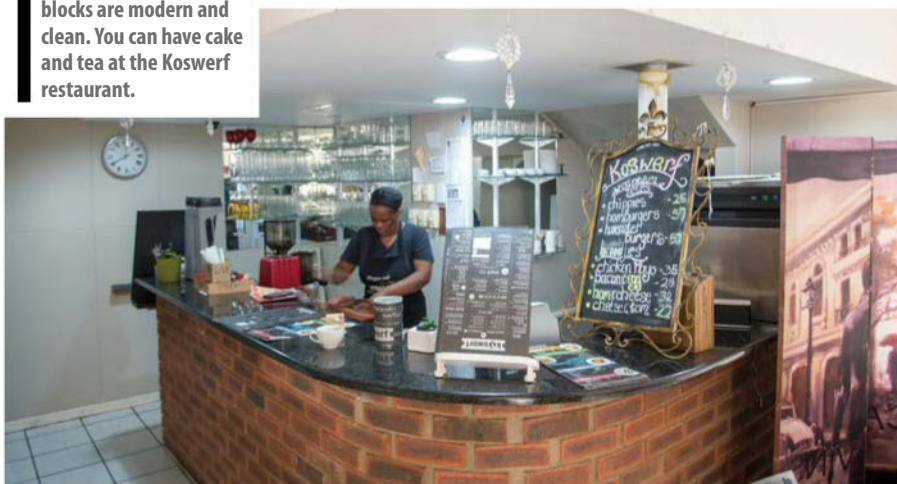
On the guys' side there are four showers, four basins with mirrors, and three urinals. There are also two family bathrooms with a double shower and basin. The bottom block is equally modern, neat and clean, but there are eight urinals, three toilets, four showers, a bath, and eight basins with mirrors. One of them is kiddie height for when little ones come to brush their teeth.

The showers have glass doors and are spacious enough for your brother-in-law who played Craven Week front row back in the day. The dry area is slightly cramped though and the fold-down bench's weight limit is 100 kg, which means your brother-in-law should rather find another spot to sit down to tie his shoelaces.

There's a washing machine and tumble dryer at both ablution blocks that work with tokens. It costs R12 to wash or dry a load and you can buy the tokens at the shop. There's also a scullery where you can wash your dishes (with deep basins for your clothes).



PEACE OF MIND. Robert Wenya mans the gate between the beach and campsite. The ablution blocks are modern and clean. You can have cake and tea at the Koswerf restaurant.



Briefly | ATKV Natalia



Campsite 108 stands, 2 terraces, most with paving slabs and grass and some with shade trees or shade cloth.

Ablution facilities 2 modern ablution facilities that are kept clean and neat.

Price R190–R1 075 per stand for 6 people, depending on when and where you camp.

Arrival and departure times 2 pm and 10 am.

Contact 031 916 4545

natalia@atkv.org.za

atkvoorde.co.za/oord/natalia

Nearest town Winklespruit, 3 km.

Road condition Tar road all the way.

GPS S30.121831 E30.845729

go! Drive & Camp says If you forgot your blue plug you can buy one at the resort shop for R130.



QUIET TIME. Villa Spa's atmosphere is one of tranquility. Just because you enjoy peace and quiet here under huge shade trees doesn't mean that the kids will be bored – there's plenty for them to do.

VILLA SPA

Take it easy

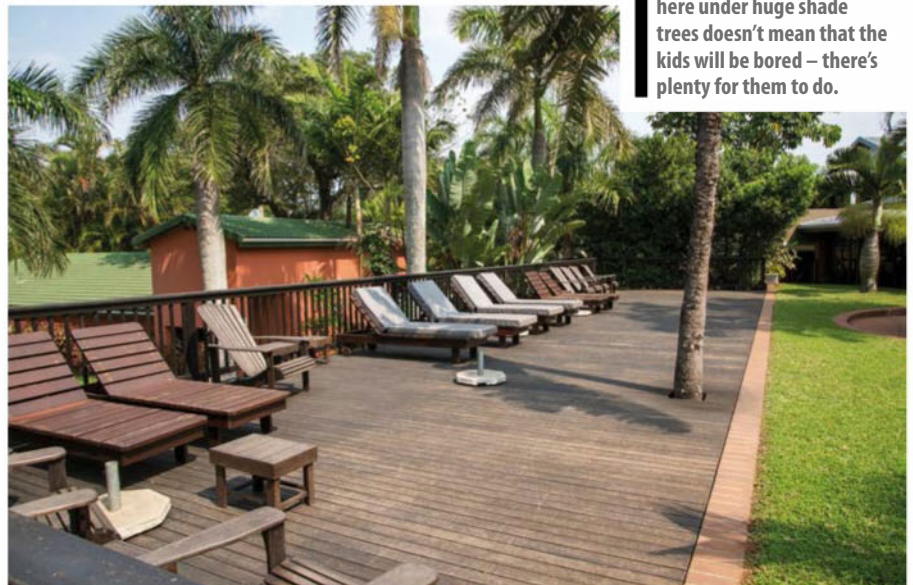
A few months ago a reader wrote to us and said that at Villa Spa on the South Coast you arrive as a stranger but you leave as a friend. We decided to go check it out for ourselves.

This resort is in the same street – Elizabeth Avenue – as Natalia, and the entrance is about 400 m further on. The two couldn't be more different in terms of ambiance. Where at Natalia you rush from the one thing to do to the next, you come to this campsite with its garden feel for peace and quiet.

That's not to say there isn't entertainment for the kids. You are just as close to the beach and there is also a large heated pool, trampolines, volleyball, and jungle gym. There's even a sauna if the KZN humidity doesn't faze you.

There are close to 40 numbered and demarcated stands, all with lawn and most of them with shade. The big trees and shrubs block most of the wind so you're not completely at the mercy of the elements like you are at many other campsites next to the sea.

The stands are big enough for large vehicles, and when you arrive the resort staff are ready and willing to help you pitch your tent.



You camp on grass, but during the rainy season you have to be prepared for your corner steadies and nose wheel to sink away in the ground. The resort staff are aware of this issue and they have a brick or piece of wood ready that you can put underneath your corner steadies.

The staff's friendliness is really worth mentioning: From the first hello you get the impression that they are really happy to have you here.

There's a power socket (standard domestic) and a satellite dish connection on your stand, but you should bring an extension cord of at least 20 m. Taps and rubbish bins are spread out over the campsite, but it's never more than 30 m from your stand.

You also have to bring your own braai and you're only allowed to make fire with charcoal. If you left your braai at home, you can rent one. The braais and rubbish bins are emptied daily.

>



ALL AFFAIRS IN ORDER. Villa Spa is an intimate place with neat and well-kept facilities. Everything from the jungle gym and the trampolines to the ablution blocks and the heated swimming pool are well up to the standard of the finest camping resorts.



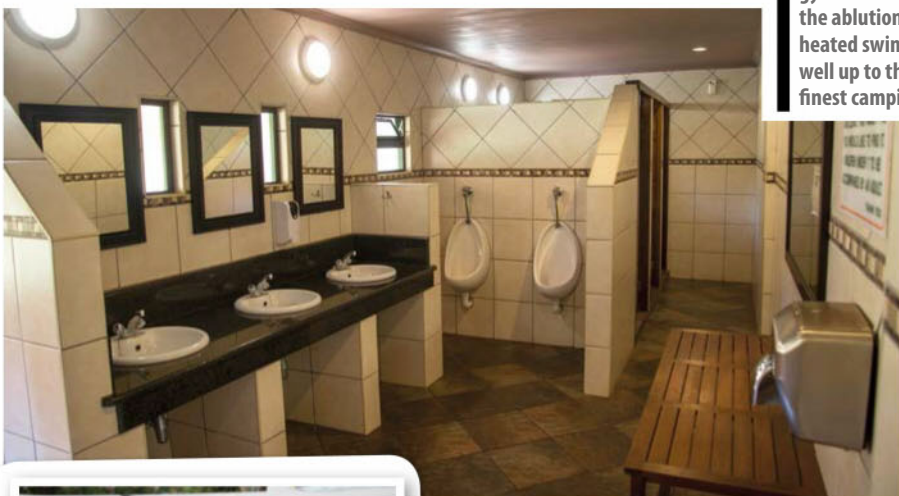
you can also catch fish like garlick, snapper salmon, and grey reef shark.

Convenience is everything

There are two ablution blocks in the campsite, but one was locked when we visited. The one that was open is at the top of the campsite behind reception. The building is tiled from floor to ceiling, and has separate facilities for women and men. There are three toilets, on the guys' side three urinals, and three basins with mirrors and hand soap. Behind the basins is a table with a mirror where you can put your toiletries and towels. Next to it is a blower to dry your hands.

Down the passage are four showers where you can wash up. The shower cubicles are roomy and the curtains don't get in the way. The showerhead is in the corner of the cubicle, so you have ample space to lather up. The dry section has a bench to sit on with three hooks above it and one next to the shower for your towel.

Outside the ablution block is space to flush out your porta potti, and around the corner is a family bathroom with shower, bath and basin. The scullery, with three double sinks – and sockets and even a drying rack – is behind the ablution block.



Joan and Dave West from Vanderbijlpark tow their Sprite Sprint with a Ford Ranger 2.2.

They say:

“ We always camp here when we're in the area. You feel at home and the friendly staff make you feel like nothing is too much of a hassle. We also appreciate their help with the pitching of tents. The ablution facilities are clean and neat, just like at home. ”

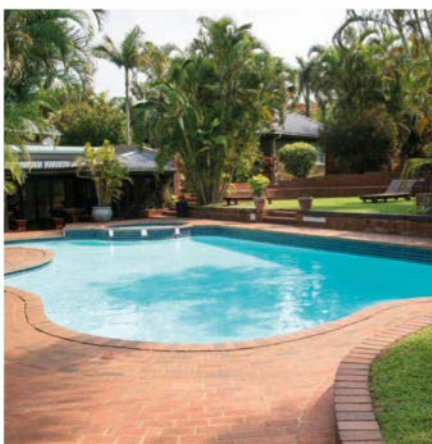
Relax, man!

The heated swimming pool is the big attraction at Villa Spa. It is surrounded by lounge chairs where you can kick back and catch up on some reading. Next to the pool is the games room, shop, and a TV room where you can stay abreast of what's happening in your favourite soapie.

The play park is to the right of the campsite, and there is also a communal braai area here if you want to light a fire while the kids are bouncing on the trampoline. You can also braai next to the pool.

You don't have a view of the sea, even though you can hear it, and the walk to the beach is slightly longer than at Natalia. The railway bridge runs past a dilapidated train station and when we visited there was a lot of litter on the bridge. You get a code for the security gate on the beach side when you book in.

Take your fishing gear and try to hook an elf or steenbras. Those in the know say



Briefly | Villa Spa



Campsite 40 stands, all with grass and most with shade.

Ablution facilities Modern, clean and neat.

Price R160–R320 p.p.n. depending on the season (R85–R200 p.p.n for kids 2–18). Minimum tariffs of R320–R960 apply.

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

Contact 031 916 4939 villaspa.co.za

Nearest town Winklespruit, 3 km.

Road condition Tar road to the resort.

GPS S30.117947 E30.848121

go! Drive & Camp says You get a disc to open the security gate after hours – you pay a R100 deposit for this. >

Eezi-Awn Rooftop Tents are manufactured of ripstop canvas, double stitched throughout and stretched onto aluminium bows, which are fixed to top quality polyurethane coated plyboards, supported with anodised aluminium hardware and stainless steel hinges, mattress which is fabric covered SABS approved 65mm laminated hi-density foam. Board locking mechanism - anodised custom designed aluminium extrusions - the only rooftop in the industry that has this system. Mosquito mesh both entry doors and side windows. Zip-up privacy panels both sides to cover windows internally. Patented anodized aluminium retractable extension ladder.

The Fun is available complete with or without Add-a-room.
Entrance to the tent is covered, giving better protection against the elements.



Sizes Open:
1200 (w) x 2440 (L) x 1300 (H)
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The Fun With Add-A-Room

Jazz Rooftop Tent



Size available:
Top: 2440 (L) x 1400 (W) x 1300 (H)
Add-A-Room: 2000 (L) x 1400 (W)
Height: 2000mm - 2200mm

35
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Towing vehicle Nissan Navara 2.3D LE 4x4 double cab (automatic)

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Engine and transmission 2,3 l diesel engine with a seven-speed automatic transmission

Maximum horsepower 140 kW @ 3 750 rpm

Maximum torque 450 Nm @ 1 500–2 500 rpm

Fuel tank 80 l

Net weight 1 881 kg

GVM 2 910 kg

What did we tow? Sprite Tourer SP

Tare weight 1 081 kg

GVM 1 370 kg

Towing speed 105 km/h

Fuel consumption 12,5 l/100 km



Plus

- The synchronised turbochargers under the bonnet ensures that the Navara doesn't shy away from towing. You can feel their effect as you pull away.
- The automatic transmission is silky smooth, and when the cruise control is set you don't even know it's shifting gears.
- With rear coil springs it drives – even with a caravan in tow – softer than expected.



- The coupler has its own light.



Minus

- Towers will always welcome a rear-view camera but the image on this one is not the clearest we've encountered.
- If you're spending more than half a million

rand on a vehicle, it's probably not too much to ask to include parking sensors on the front.

* Read our complete tow test with the Nissan Navara 2.3D 4x4 LE (manual) on p. 80. go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Navara from Nissan South Africa.



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MALAMOO MEGA



RV-2



MALAMOO XTRA



RV-3



MALAMOO JOURNEY



RV-4



FOXWING



RV-5



SCREENHOUSE HEX



SCREENHOUSE



WHY OZTENT?

IT'S THE EXPERIENCE. SECONDS TO PITCH. SECOND TO NONE.

Around the world the Oztent range has earned a reputation for speed, innovation and durability with campers who won't settle for second best.

Oztent inspires passion. Of all the gear that experienced campers carry, some would sooner part with their 4WD than they would their trusty Oztent.

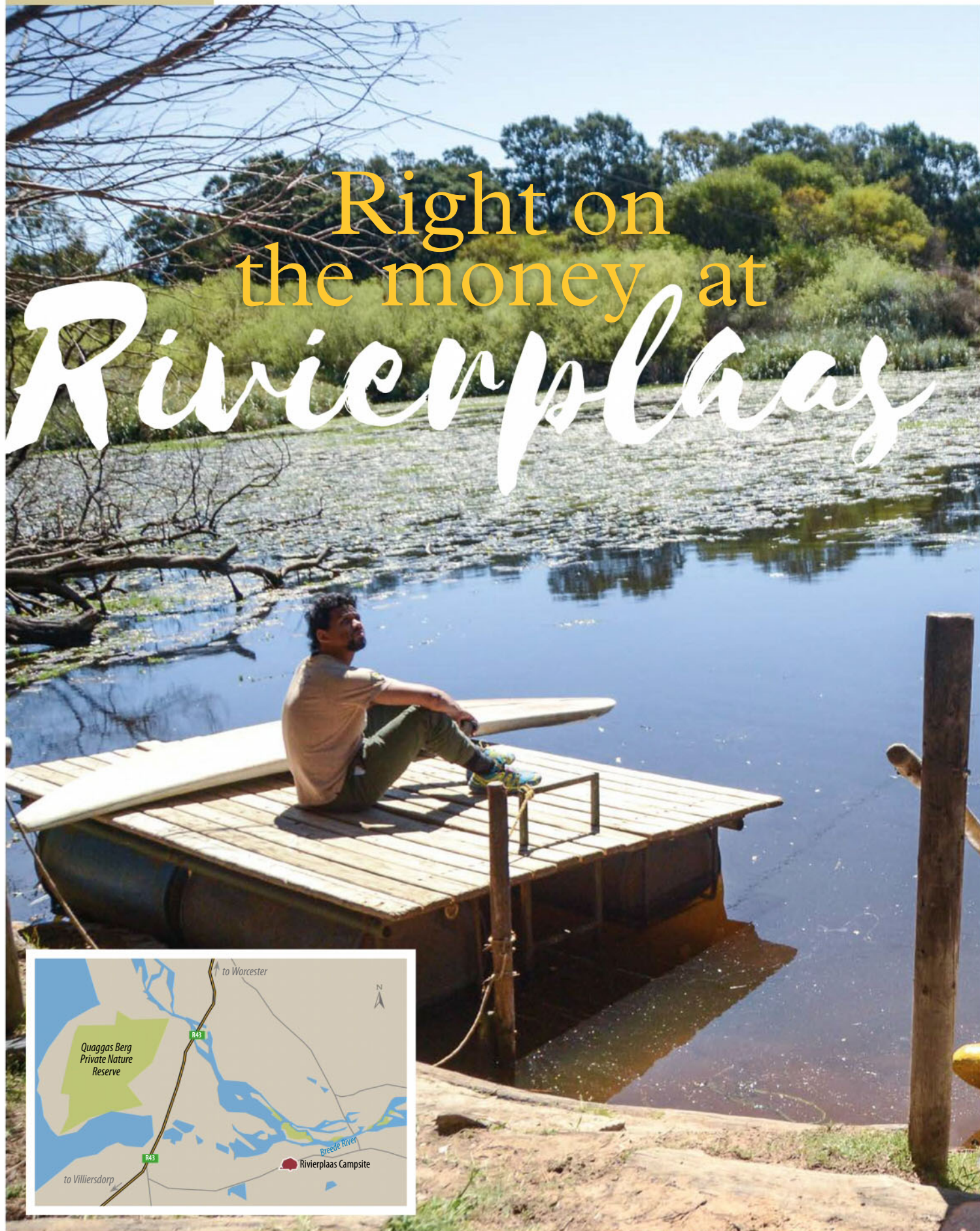
Like all great innovations, the Oztent just works and keeps working. Rugged, spacious and straightforward, there's an Oztent design for every touring application.



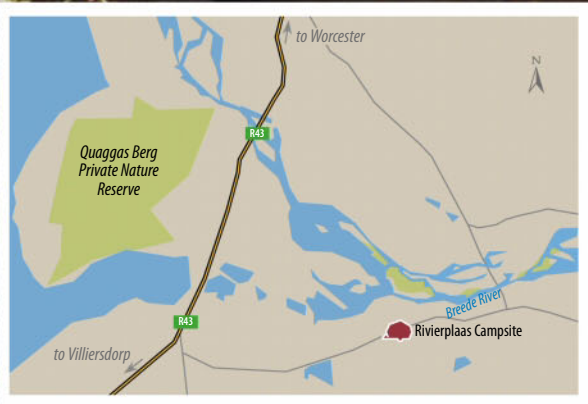
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Your Complete Outdoor World



Right on the money at *Rivierplaas*





About two hours out of Cape Town, nestled against the banks of the Breede River and camouflaged by a working farm, lies a hidden gem of a campsite.

Text and photos **Kyle Kock**

It's probably safe to say many of us have a soundtrack of our lives. You know, there are just those certain songs that rile up the emotions – whether that's boosting the morale of the rugby first team that's slightly behind at half-time, a perfect send-off at a memorial service that sums up an individual's life, or even just the trusty old party-starter that's guaranteed to get everyone off their seats at a family gathering. That's why we see so many people sporting headphones on their daily commute, or even at the office.

Music has become such a big part of our lives that you almost do a double take when you see the strict "no music" policy when you scroll through the booking confirmation letter for Rivierplaas – an intimate, family-owned campsite about 20 km south-east of Worcester.

Rivierplaas is actually, first and foremost, a working farm. But about 40 years ago its owners, the Hugo family, decided that the natural forest next to the river would be an excellent spot to pitch a tent. They kept it to themselves mostly, but in recent years it's been opened to the public.

As you turn off onto the farm, the reception area is to the left and doubles as a shop and office. You'll find manager JB van Eeden there most times. If the doors happen to be closed, you can send him an SMS and he'll open the shop up for you in a jiffy. While you're inside taking care of the paperwork, the kids can venture to the sty next to the office and entertain themselves by watching the farm's pigs. When we visited there was a fresh farrow of piglets sleeping peacefully under an infrared lamp despite the grunting and squealing of the mature sows, boars and adolescent pigs close by.

The latter group is very confident and even stand up against the boards to take a closer look at their visitors and revel in the attention... almost like teenagers on social media these days.

JB explains the office hours and lays down the law. During low season, you can SMS him and he'll open up if you need to stock up on wood, ice or firelighters. There are a few other small items in stock like sachets of sugar and coffee. Otherwise he opens up twice a day for 30 minutes. If you didn't bring a table, you can book one for your stand. Ours cost R50 for the weekend. >



This is a working farm, with pigs, horses, cows and dogs – and it is therefore a pet-friendly campsite. You can book each pet in at R50. But if Sparky isn't particularly sociable or pleasant around unfamiliar people or animals, or gets overly excited and voices his opinion too much, you'll be asked to escort him home. Especially because JB is fond of visiting the site with Lucy, the brown-haired Border collie, or Jack, the Staffordshire terrier in tow. They're both very friendly and will gladly accept a belly rub.

Rough house

There's ample signage to lead the way from the farmyard to the campsite, which is almost a kilometre away, lying parallel with the riverbank.

The stands are split into alphabetical sections from A to J, all with varying degrees of privacy, size, and proximity to play areas and ablution facilities. There's no electricity available anywhere, so you'll be roughing it, but each stand does have its own garbage can and tap, which you can use to clean up and rinse items in general. We recommend bringing your own water or buying some from JB, because pipes supply unfiltered river water to each stand.

Most of the stands are large enough for at least one caravan or two medium-sized tents, and then there are also some, like B1 and some of the C stands, that have natural barriers like hedges and trees



NOT A LEAF OUT OF PLACE. The turn-off is well marked, so you can't miss it. The barn in the background in the farmyard also doubles as a reception for guests, an office for management, and shop. The stands in the C section enjoy all-day shade. The manager, JB, is fond of visiting guests accompanied by one of the resident dogs.

between them and are able to accommodate more vehicles and tents. Towards the newer section of the campsite the barriers are represented by recently planted saplings and/or painted logs dug into the ground.

Email JB ahead of time to ask which stand he recommends for your particular towing combination and party size and to suit your camping-style preferences. There is cellphone reception, but don't





WELL EQUIPPED. The little ones can play to their heart's content with a choice of three playgrounds. The ablution blocks all have the same simple look, with basic wooden and metal sheet construction. They're neat and cleaned on a daily basis. There's a ramp for physically impaired campers as well as a dedicated spacious toilet. They're lit at night by LED lamps powered by solar panels.



expect to be able to watch YouTube tutorials on how to pitch your new tent. There's decent-enough signal for calls or a Whatsapp picture to show off your weekend digs to family and friends.

The stands also have their own braai drum, with the exception of A1 and B1, which have their own concrete braai pit. Most come equipped with a tripod for your potjie as well, but bring your own braai grid. With all the shade trees and dried pine needles in the campsite there's more than enough kindling around to get your blaze going, and JB stocks wood that has dried out enough to not require a ridiculous amount of nursing for your campfire to get going (the regular black wattle is R25 a bag, and the kameeldoring is R40).

Rustic restrooms

When we visited, the campsite had one fully operational ablution facility, with another being spruced up nearing completion. JB said a third one is likely to be finished this month and will service the newer stands (E to J).

The ablution blocks are old-school, by design and by choice – in the theme of Rivierplaas in general. They're all raised on a concrete platform and constructed with simple wooden framework and corrugated metal sheeting. Each block is paved throughout and is unisex.

Management has also made provision for physically impaired campers by way of a larger toilet cubicle, complete with its own basin, at each ablution block and ramp at the entrance. The showers are similarly simple, with hooks on the inside of the doors to hang clothing or towels and equipped with a narrow shelf for your valuables or toiletries. There are ceramic basins with mirrors for daily grooming, and the toilets run into a septic tank.

The scullery at the older block is located on the outside, with at least two zincs for laundry or dishwashing. But the newer facility has the scullery under roof in case of inclement weather at the expense of an extra set of basins. For the record, there's nothing that visually distinguishes the older and newer ablution blocks because the materials used are the same and they've been painted uniformly.

If you want to have a hot shower or use heated water for any cleaning, then you'll have to stoke the donkey yourself. There's a wood-fire stove behind each ablution >

block that heats a water cylinder. And while Rivierplaas provides the water and wood (on an honour system, because they assume you won't just use that wood for your campfire), you'll have to make the fire and manage it yourself.

After about 45 minutes there's enough hot water for a family of four, if not more. Remember to throw in another piece of wood or two once you've had a shower so that the next person is allowed the same privilege.

Do a bit of everything

The no music policy lends itself well to the tranquillity of the area, and when you're not taking in the birdsong, you can venture out onto the 2,5 km long hiking trail that takes you across the river – it's circular so you can't get lost and it's not challenging so people who are not fit can go enjoy some of the scenery too.

Hikers are also warned that snakes might want to share in the sunshine on the trail, but birdwatchers are particularly advised to venture to the other side of the water because the area plays host to quite a few species.

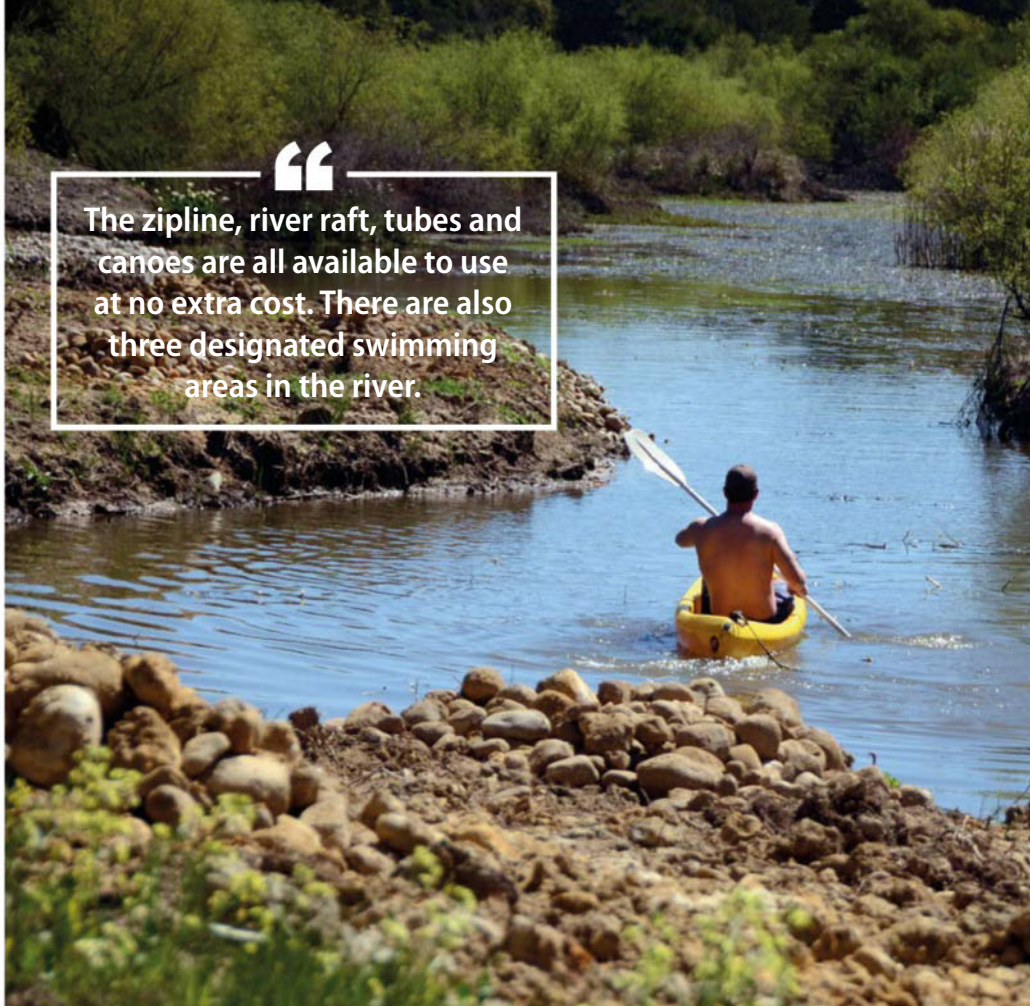
Located between B1 and A1 are the zipline, canoes and river raft – which are all available to use at no extra cost. This is one of three designated swimming areas at Rivierplaas. The other water-related activity on offer is fishing, and certain stands are situated specifically for that purpose.

Kiddies are also well catered for, with three play areas spread throughout the campsite. They vary from a simple jungle gym and slide between E and J camp areas to the swing sets and roundabout at the C sites, and a natural playscape at the A stands that makes use of fallen trees, logs and the uneven ground to create a play haven that's complete with seesaw, spring rider, swing, slide, and other unique playground equipment that should keep the little ones entertained for hours.

Also remember your bicycles, because you and the kids can go for long rides, exploring every nook and cranny of the campsite and even down the dirt road to the farmhouses and shop.

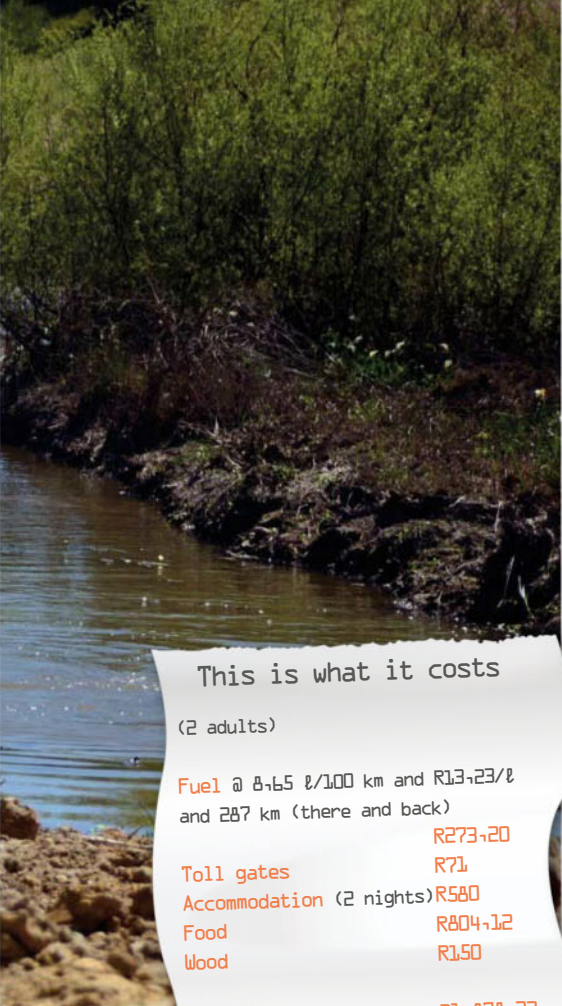
Oh, and don't forget a toy for the four-legged member of your family. They're likely to make a friend or two if Rivierplaas is busy, and if it's quiet they'll get to explore to their hearts' content but

“
The zipline, river raft, tubes and canoes are all available to use at no extra cost. There are also three designated swimming areas in the river.”



AT YOUR OWN RISK. If you're feeling adventurous, or want to get away from your mother-in-law for a bit, then feel free to commandeer one of the canoes for a trip down the Breede River. Just take care not to annoy anyone who may be fishing along the banks. A zipline is always an irresistible attraction for young and old alike. This one comes with a clear set of instructions on what to do, when to do it, and how to look good while taking the express lane into the water.





This is what it costs

(2 adults)

Fuel @ 8,65 l/100 km and R13,23/l
and 287 km (there and back)

R273,20

Toll gates

R71

Accommodation (2 nights)

R580

Food

R804,12

Wood

R1,50

Grand total

R1 878,32

ALL IN ORDER. You can ask for a table for your stand for an additional R50. The pigs are quick to welcome visitors to their sty. There's plenty of grass for people to laze on, with some stands located right next to the river at a prime.



it'll be good to have something for them to exercise their jaws on other than your neighbour's pork chops or guy ropes. And pack your pooper scooper to clean up after your own animal.

If you value peace and quiet

In the odd event that you arrive sans sufficient supplies, you'll have to drive to Worcester, which is a good 20 km away, to stock up on stuff like meat and beer. If you do venture out of the gates, be sure to be back by 9 pm because that's the time they're locked and because there are no

guards, you can't just hoot and expect to get back in without annoying your hosts.

The no music policy also relates to any sort of disturbance, and after 11 pm you'll be expected to lower the volume of your voices and stop closing your doors loudly or discarding bottles in bins.

Actually, the very best thing about this place is that you'll end up not missing the Bluetooth speaker at all during the stay – and you'll find that for once you might just prefer the ambient sounds of the environment instead of the tunes you'd usually play on a weekend away. 🎧



Briefly | Rivierplaas



Campsite 36 demarcated and numbered stands. Most of them have grass and are level. The stands that have all-day shade are minimally covered with grass.

Abution facilities Rustic, but very neat and clean. You heat your own water.

Price R200–R1 850 per stand, depending on the stand and the season. Pets are an additional R50 each.

Contact 084 710 0139 • rivierplaas.co.za

• info@rivierplaas.co.za

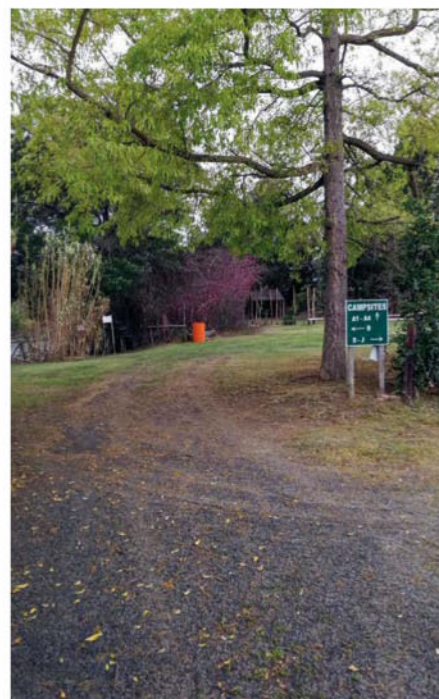
Arrival and departure times You can show up at 11 am and you only have to leave before it gets dark.

Nearest town Worcester 20 km

Road condition Mostly tar to the campsite from Worcester, with a 600 m graded gravel road that leads to a river crossing. It's all dirt on the farm.

GPS S33.773813 E19.52121

go! Drive & Camp says If tranquillity is your thing, then this spot is a good option. Bring your fishing rod, bathing costume, and bicycles. Bring toys for your dog as well.



View from the top

One way to pay half price for your rooftop tent is to build it yourself. **Adam Stander** from Pretoria tells a story of the effort that went into building his and how his efforts are paying off.



“I’m a very impatient person when it comes to camping. It’s almost always a time-consuming business and it takes way too long for my liking. I prefer an instant affair... Something you can set up quickly, easily and painlessly.

I used to camp with my Oztent RV3 and always received a lot of compliments, but the tent came with its fair share of hassles. Sure, pitching it took three minutes, but then you still had to pitch the awning with its poles and you

had to drive in the tent pegs – and the bedding and mattress also needed to go in...

A friend of mine has a hard-shell rooftop tent, and I liked the idea of it. But the thought of coughing up R30 000 for something that might not work for me was too much. We were about to leave on a 10-day trip through Botswana, and I borrowed the tent from my friend to test it out.

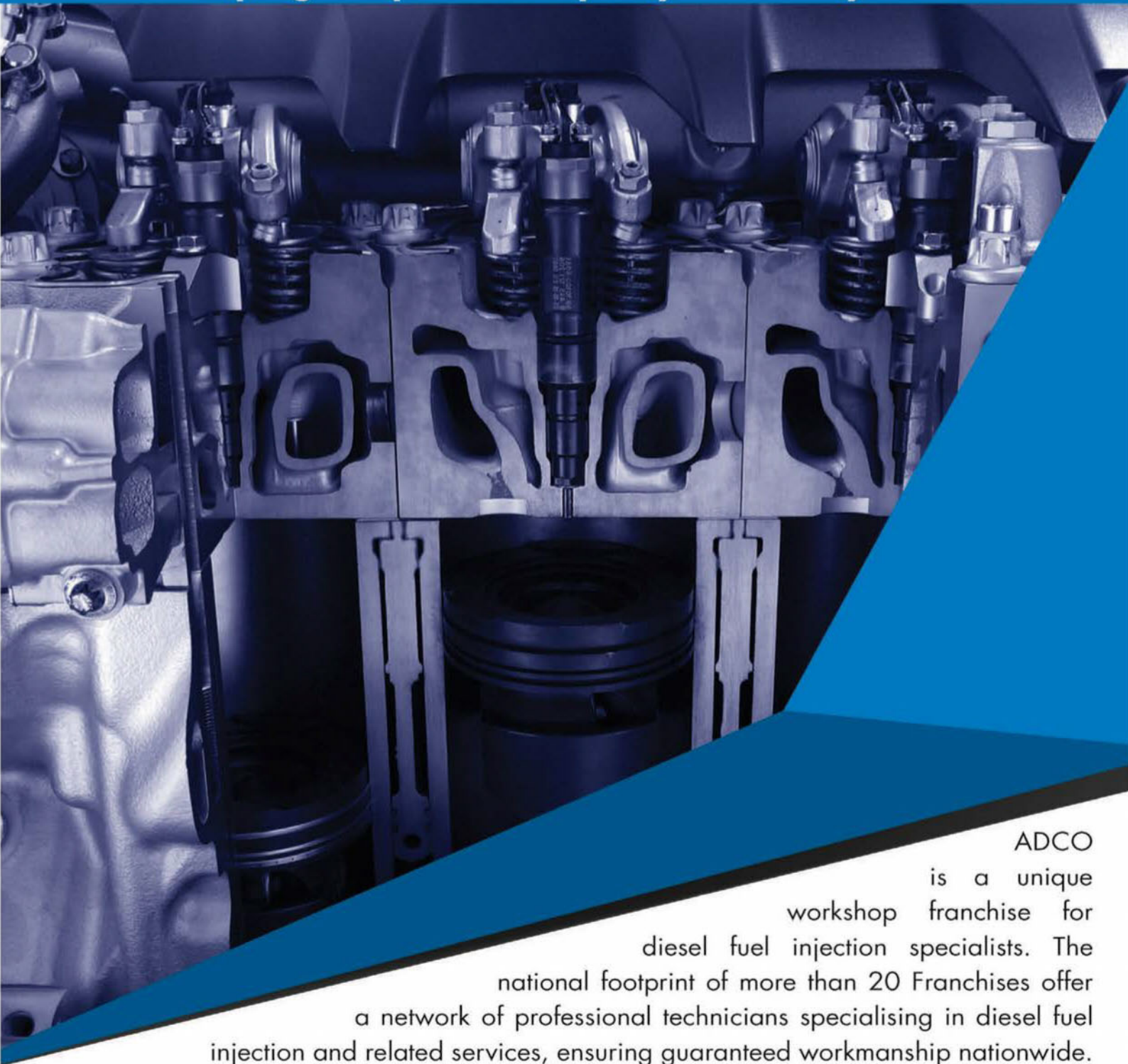
We previously had a standard rooftop tent – the kind where the top lid opens >





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LET'S START AT THE VERY BEGINNING. First build a cardboard mock-up if possible. Then you'll be able to see if everything works as planned. You'll also be able to limit wastage. This type of rooftop tent is simple, but you can't afford to cut corners. Measure accurately because starting over will cost you dearly.



up completely so the tent stands upright. That was also too much effort for me and I decided that the hard-shell model looked like a better option.

No sooner said than done. And I couldn't have been more impressed with that tent. Even climbing up and down the ladder next to the vehicle wasn't an issue, and setting it up and breakdown was easy as pie. I knew that a rooftop tent project lay ahead for me back home.

I decided that mine had to be finished in two and a half months, before we left on a trip to the north to go camping next to the Giyani River.

Get to work

MEASUREMENTS More than 10 different versions of this type of hard-shell rooftop tent are available on the market. The inside floor space of one of the models is 2,1 x 1,3 m, and the outside profile is 2,3 x 1,4 m. I do think that some of the outside space is a waste, so I've made mine slightly shorter inside with the same width (2,05 x 1,3 m). With the hard shell closed, the height is 21 cm at the front and 25 cm at the back.

My limit was 20 cm all over, which leaves more than enough space for all our bedding, clothes, and the ladder when the lid is closed. Only 13 cm of my front profile hits the wind at a 90-degree angle while the other 7 cm is angled at 45 degrees over and under. I do think their wedge shape looks better than my square box though.

REMEMBER THE MATTRESS I used my Carma Quip self-inflating mattresses (1,95 x 0,65 x 0,06 m) as the basis for my design and added 10 cm to the length. The length of the tent was actually determined by the length of the aluminium sheet I wanted to use.

I wanted to use standard lengths so that there would be as little cutting and welding as possible.

TOP, BOTTOM, AND THE SIDES For the top and bottom parts as well as the sides of the tent I used three standard aluminium sheets. One sheet fits on the top and one on the bottom, while the third one is used for the sides. This sheet is cut into four strips (25 cm wide) and folded over the corners so it only has to be welded on the 45-degree line.

>

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Escape into the Knysna Forest to clear your head and unknot your muscles. Join us on this four-day camping trip for scenic walks and epic views.

WHEN? 6–9 January 2018;
9–12 January 2018

HOW MUCH? R5 550 per adult. Kids under 12 get 30% discount. The rate includes all meals, activities, tented accommodation, transfers and park fees.

WHERE? Diepwalle Forest, Knysna

DAY 1 Arrive at the SANParks campsite in the afternoon, where you're free to explore the nearby museum, do one of the many hiking trails in the forest or ride your mountain bike.

DAY 2 After breakfast we drive an exclusive guided route through the Knysna Forest (in your own vehicle or in our shuttle). After a picnic lunch we go on a boat ride on the Knysna Lagoon, with scenic views

of The Heads. Afterwards, we return to camp for another delicious dinner.

DAY 3 After breakfast we shuttle to Plettenberg Bay for a guided beach and forest walk, suitable for all ages. After another picnic lunch, we return to our campsite in the forest.

DAY 4 The adventure comes to an end after breakfast.



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ADVENTURES
in Africa

MAKE A FRAME The sheet fits around an aluminium framework of the tent that I constructed out of square tubing (25 x 25 x 2 mm) and angled aluminium (25 x 25 x 3 mm). Most of the sheet is sealed together with a super-strong industrial-strength glue (Sikaflex) and the seams are sealed. There are a few hidden pop rivets to make things even more secure.

HELPFUL HINGES This kind of rooftop tent reminds me of a clam shell where the top lifts off the bottom like a jaw. The hinge is on the “closed side” and I used a strip of conveyer belt for this. Where the conveyer belt is stuck to the top and bottom parts, I used a piece of flat-bar aluminium: I drilled holes and fastened it to the belt with stainless steel and nuts and bolts.

PUSH AND SHOVE Two gas struts push the roof up and keep it there. The handle is on the top bit (on the opposite side of the hinge) and helps if you want to close the tent. On this there’s also a strap that you can reach from the ground.

SOFT WALLS The canvas sections that fit between the two sides have three openings: one left, one right, and one in front. Both of the doors have a mesh section on the outside with a canvas flap on the inside. Both sides can unzip completely from the top, but it’s not always practical. If you want to get out at night, you have to unzip the entire door. That means insects get in and all your heat escapes. I stitched in three zips in the middle of each flap to fix this problem.



The sides that unzip are great when you want to pack your sleeping gear.

Where the three zips come together at the bottom it looks like an inverted T. So you can slip in and out without the bug and heat issues. (If I had to do it again I would put the zips in an inverted Y-shape, because when you close the tent, the zip sliders can get in the way. The sides that can unzip completely are of course great when you want to pack in your sleeping

gear. And it’s perfect for those balmy evenings when you want to sleep with the door open.

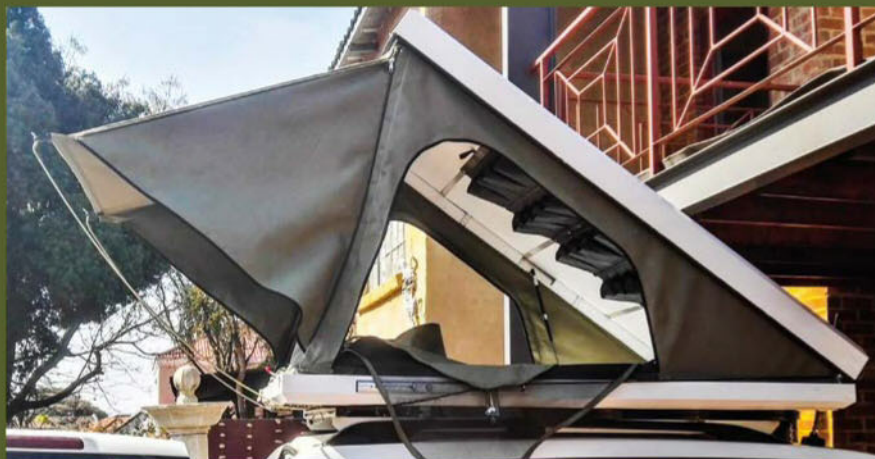
SHELTER FROM THE SUN A small canopy folds out over the front door below the handle. This provides shade underneath the door and also acts as a shield against the rain when the door is open. But this kind of roof does have a weak spot: As soon as the wind picks up, this section starts flapping around, which could end up tearing the tent. You see other manufacturers’ canvas roofs fold flat but it still flaps around in the wind. I stitched in two zips on the side that keeps it in place, no matter how strong the wind. Now it’s not only safe, it

also serves as protection against inclement weather.

IT’S ELECTRIC The power supply is a Hella plug in the bottom right rear corner. The electricity runs to a distribution box that has two switches for the inside and outside lights. There is also a double USB socket and a Volt meter reader for the battery.

Like for most people these days, LED lights are also my first choice. It’s bright enough to be able to read in bed and it creates enough light outside if you need to climb down the ladder at night.

INSULATION I lined the roof and floor with 25 mm Isoboard. It’s sufficient to keep out the cold.



JUST TRY IT. Like the little engine that could, you shouldn't give up as soon as you hit a snag. It's not that difficult to build your own rooftop tent. Have a peek at commercial offerings and adapt their design to meet your own requirements.

FILE UNDER LESSONS LEARNT

- 1 Measure twice and cut once. If you can, build a cardboard model. That way you can see what works and what doesn't, and you don't waste materials if you mess up.
- 2 I'd leave the bottom box with a 90-degree corner and give the top box a bigger 45-degree angle. It not only looks better, it also makes the building process easier.
- 3 The frame could have been simpler, with less cutting and welding.
- 4 The upside-down T zips work as intended, but an upside-down Y would work better.
- 5 At the moment you can only enter on the one side, but I'm planning to put a ladder on the other side too. Then no one has to climb over the other person when they want to get in and out.
- 6 I fitted a shoe holder to the ceiling, but it's more than just space for shoes. Here you can store all your loose items – from cell-phones and a torch to socks and tissues.

- 7 Instead of a double mattress I prefer two singles next to each other. We use two single duvets so no one can steal the other person's.
- 8 Setting up is quick – under two minutes – but taking it down takes slightly longer. You first have to make your bed before you can close the tent (but no more three minutes and it's done).
- 9 The canvas doors' three layers (inside door, outside mesh, and outside rain cover) make the tent heavier, but you couldn't ask for better ventilation and insulation.

go! Drive & Camp says If you want to build a rooftop tent like Adam's, you don't need a lot of equipment but you might need a friend or two. Make sure you know someone who has a plate bender, someone who can help with aluminium welding, and a friend with an industrial sewing machine.

WHAT DOES IT WEIGH?

You don't want to bolt something that weighs a ton to your car's roof. My aim was to get away with under 100 kg, and the weight ended up being 99 kg.

Square tubing (22,7 m)	11,8 kg
Angle (13,8 m).....	5,3 kg
3 sheets aluminium (1,25 x 2,5 x 2 mm)	46,1 kg
25 mm Isoboard for insulation (6 m ²).....	4,8 kg
400 g/m ² canvas.....	15 kg
2 medium Carma Quip single mattresses	7 kg
Telescopic leather (2,6 m).....	9 kg

You can't lift the tent onto the car's roof by yourself; you'll need a helping hand. If you want to make the tent even lighter you can use 1,5 mm sheeting instead of 2 mm. That way you score 11 kg, but I prefer the rigid feel of the 2 mm. The total cost (wastage and two ladders included) came to just under **R16 000** – easily half the price of a new one.

Zofa™

Adam wins a Zofa inflatable sofa from Zartek. The Zofa – worth R700 – is self-inflatable, is durable and waterproof, and is the just the thing for a relaxing recline in camp or next to the pool. Be sure to visit zartek.co.za/Zofa.htm for more.





Holy 'molle!

An hour and a half from Pretoria, on a guest farm near Modimolle in the Limpopo province, you can revel in your own little piece of paradise, says Deon Gerber from Pretoria.

“Friends of mine told me about Klein Paradys near Modimolle and I also checked it out on Facebook. So a couple of years ago I decided to take my wife Hester and 14-year-old triplet sons Deon, Ruben and JD there for a getaway. We've become regulars.

Tell us more about Klein Paradys.

It's a great campsite with well-maintained lawns and plenty of shade trees. The ablution blocks are also very clean, and there's a pub as well.

What can you do to keep yourself busy?

There are plenty of things to keep everyone in the family entertained. There are two swimming pools: A heated indoor pool and regular outdoor pool located close to the camping stands. There's also a play park, pool tables, darts, and table tennis, as well as a putt-putt course and volleyball. The other activities include bird watching, paintball, game drives in the afternoon, and two hiking trails of 5 km and 14 km respectively.

What about food and fuel?

There's fuel available in town, which is only 13 km away, as well as options for shopping in case you run short of supplies. We always buy the meat for our



camping trip in town. Otherwise, there's a restaurant on site that caters for guests with a farm-style breakfast or light lunch.

Other than camping, what other types of accommodation is available?

There's a basic wooden camping chalet that sleeps two people, three wooden chalets that can sleep two adults and two children, two bush chalets for up to three people, a wooden bush chalet that sleeps five, two four-sleeper luxury thatch-roof units, two six-sleeper luxury thatch roof units, a six-sleeper stone house, and a four-bedroom farmhouse that sleeps up to 13 people.

What does it cost to camp here?

The stands are limited to four people, with one vehicle and one caravan or tent



and an additional two-man tent. From Sunday to Thursday a stand will cost you R100, weekends will set you back R250, and holidays and long weekends (high season) R450. Extra people cost R50 per person.

How difficult is it to get there?

You'll be able to get to Klein Paradys with any car and caravan combination – as long as it's legal of course. We take the N1 north out of Pretoria, keeping left as you get to the toll gate at Kranskop to take the off-ramp immediately thereafter.

At the T-junction you turn left toward Modimolle. After about 5 km a sign indicates a left turn and then it's another 6 km before another right turn to the farm. Keep your eyes peeled for the sign because it is very small. ”



Contact 087 808 5464

kleinparadys.co.za

GPS S24.785000 E28.402233

WIN

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CAMP GUIDE 2017

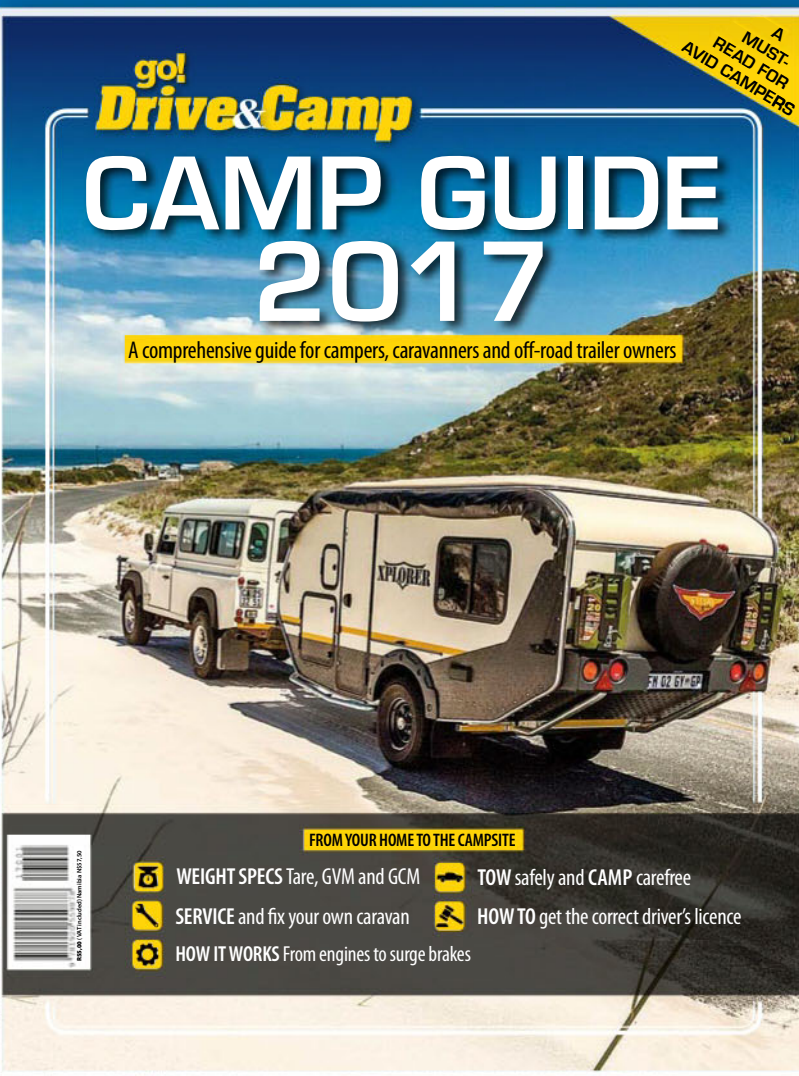
A comprehensive guide for campers, caravanners and off-road trailer owners

A
MUST-
READ FOR
AVID CAMPERS



FROM YOUR HOME TO THE CAMPSITE

- WEIGHT SPECS** Tare, GVM and GCM
- TOW** safely and **CAMP** carefree
- SERVICE** and fix your own caravan
- HOW TO** get the correct driver's licence
- HOW IT WORKS** From engines to surge brakes



Smaller and lighter and packs a punch

Nissan's new Navara has only just arrived on our shores and it has already bagged two international awards. We hitched a caravan and set off to see what the excitement is about.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**

In the highly competitive double cab bakkie market, manufacturers have to sleep with one eye open to make sure they offer customers a wide variety. That includes a wide range of engines – from powerful 2 l diesel engines to thirstier and equally powerful 4 l V6 petrol engines. Unlike a

decade or so ago, these days diesel engines are all the rage. And that's perfect for towers, because these engines not only have more towing power, they're also more economical.

The new Navara has three engine choices, with only one of these available in South Africa: the 2,3 l diesel, which

lies between the 2,5 l petrol and the 2,5 l diesel engines.

What really matters

Because there's only one engine choice available, you won't have sleepless nights worrying about choosing the right one. That also applies to the final drive: All three of the new models

are 4x4. The 4x2 models will be available locally by the end of the year.

Two of the models have manual transmissions and the top model an automatic transmission. You'll have to cough up more than half a million for any of the three, but none of them are afraid to tow. In fact, the



NISSAN NAVARA 2.3D 4X4 LE (MANUAL)

towing capacity for all three is fixed at 3,5 t. This means you can hitch some of the heaviest caravans on the market. You should, however, look at the tare weight to see exactly how much you're allowed to tow.

All three weigh pretty much the same (1 866–1881 kg), which means you can tow most caravans or trailers. Nissan even managed to tap more torque out of the 2,3 ℓ engine – better than other manufacturers' slightly bigger engines. The Navara boasts an impressive

450 Nm, trumping the Hilux's 2.4 GD engine with 50 Nm, and is a full 130 Nm stronger than the Isuzu KB250 D-TEQ.

One of the reasons for this remarkable amount of power is two separate yet synchronised turbochargers. Even before the engine starts gaining momentum you have 450 Nm at 1 500 rpm.

That means you won't struggle to pull away – not even with a caravan on the tow bar. The smaller turbo does its job with high pressure and

“
If I was in the market for a double cab bakkie, I'd definitely consider the new Navara.



EASY ON THE EYE. Compare the new Navara to its predecessor and it might appear as if Nissan has scaled down somewhat. But don't believe it – it's actually bigger.

the bigger one works with low pressure. Depending on the engine speed, one works harder than the other, but there's never a situation where a single turbo does all the work on its own.

The smaller turbo kicks in at low revs and the bigger one takes over when the engine runs faster. This not only ensures better fuel consumption but the engine labours less when you're towing in too low a gear.

Hitched

The new Navara is 176 kg lighter than its predecessor, and that's partly thanks to the independent rear suspension. Leaf springs on a bakkie's rear axle is usually the norm, but the new Navara has rear coil springs.

A Bosal tow bar, as fitted to the test vehicle, is removable. The fixed part is bolted onto

both sides of the ladder frame chassis. The towbar is certified for a tow load 590 kg lighter than the Navara's maximum towing ability (2 910 kg), but it's not that important if you look at locally made leisure caravans with overrun brakes.

The tow bar can also handle 150 kg on the ball, but our legislation allows only 100 kg. The tow bar has two sets of holes that you can use to lift or lower the ball by 6 cm – when using the bottom holes the ball is 53 cm above the ground. You can also fit a drop plate if you prefer the coupler to be higher or lower than 6 cm.

You have to give full marks to the light at the caravan socket's plug point. It's not a new idea, however; we saw something similar on Hyundai's Santa Fe a year or two ago. >

Regardless though, this kind of light socket – in this case Truck-Lamp – should be standard on all tow bars. A row of LED lights sits at the bottom of the socket; as soon as you unlock the Navara, the lights switch on for a minute. It doesn't shine in your eyes or directly onto the tow bar, but towards the ground. It creates enough light around the tow bar when you're hitching in the dark.

A rear-view camera and navigation system are standard on all three models. The camera's lens is located 9 cm left of the middle of the tailgate, and you also notice this on the screen inside the cab. On the screen the ball is just right of the middle, but it isn't really a bother. The screen shows three separate index lines when you're reversing.

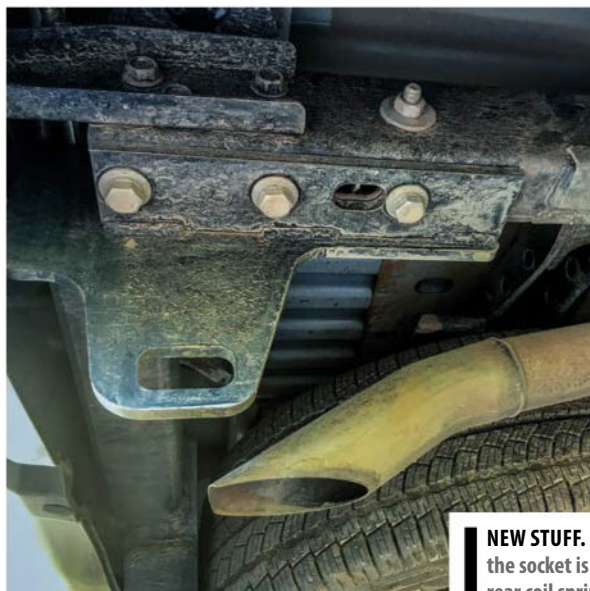
The lines run parallel with the back of the bakkie so you can see how far you are from an object behind you. That's all great, but you can't see the line that you're reversing in if you turn the steering wheel – it's only three static lines, as if you're reversing in a straight line.

The interior

When you're behind the wheel, an image on the dashboard shows you have to step on the clutch and then press the starter button. Even though the engine is very modern, it sounds a bit gruff, and if you haven't yet felt that you're in a bakkie, you will as soon as it starts up.

A rear window that opens up above the load bin is also not new, but in this case opens electrically. You don't often see this, although the window is smaller than usual – about as big as a tablet computer.

The button to open and close the window is on the right of the driver on the dashboard. It's a bit of a gimmick, because these types of windows are not always practical. For instance, a lot of the exhaust fumes can blow in while you're driving.



NEW STUFF. An LED strip on the socket is new as are the rear coil springs. The tow hitch is detachable although the main part of the tow bar is permanently attached to the frame.

It's nice to see that the three rear passenger seatbelts also show up on the dashboard. If, for instance, there's only one person in the back, that light won't shine, but the other two will. If the passenger unbuckles while the car is still in motion, an alarm sounds once but won't show who the "guilty party" is. If the driver should dare to do the same, however, everyone will know.





Up one mountain pass and down another, **Pieter Crous** understands towing. This is what he thought of the new Navara.

Pieter says

“When you’re sitting behind the wheel, the two wheel arches stand out high above the bonnet. I like it a lot, because it looks like a sports car.

The interior is neat and doesn’t feel plasticky. The computer’s buttons on the steering wheel are practical and within easy reach of your thumbs. The same applies to the dash in front of you: It’s simple and the info is easy to interpret.

The cup holders on the edge of the dashboard are clever. It’s directly in front of the air con and you can keep your drink cold.

This specific Navara is new, with only 3 500 km on the clock, but the transmission is already silky smooth.

I think really staunch Navara enthusiasts might not initially like the 2,3 ℓ engine after having driven the big and strong 3 ℓ engines, but the engine doesn’t lack power at all. Even at a lower speed the engine performs well. It is, however, a bit noisy but when you’re inside the car it’s quiet – even wind noise is at a minimum.

In sixth gear it accelerates quickly from 100 km/h to 120 km/h, even on an incline, and then maintains 2 500 rpm.

I never tow in sixth, not even in fifth, but with the Navara you can with any of these gears because at 100 km/h it tows comfortably in both.

Fifth is also fine if you want to drive slower than 100 km/h. If you floor it uphill in sixth, you can easily reach 135 km/h, but that’s where it stays.

The rear-view camera’s screen is not the best. If the sun shines on it you struggle to see what’s going on.

If I was in the market for a double cab bakkie, I’d definitely consider the new Navara. >



WELL READ. The controls on the multifunction steering wheel are all located close by the driver’s thumbs, and are easy to use.

WATCHMAN. The rear-view camera’s lens is located left of the tailgate handle. That means that the tow hitch appears to the right on the screen. It’s a small detail that might not annoy more experienced drivers who are used to lining up vehicles to caravans without the use of one.



What's on the tow bar

Make Echo4x4

Model Kavango Tec

Year model 2017

GVM 1 500 kg

Loaded weight on the axle during testing 1 120 kg

(weighed hitched to the Navara).

Nose weight 160 kg (That's

the weight before packing a load to reach the legal 100 kg.)

go! Drive & Camp borrowed the Echo Kavango Tec from Tygerberg Caravans & Campworld.

Contact Wesley Dempster on 021 982 4670 if you want to have a look at the Kavango.

tygerbergcaravans.co.za

Before you open your wallet

What does the book say?

Fuel Diesel

Engine 2,298 ℓ

Cylinders Inline 4

Power 140 kW @ 3 750 rpm

Torque 450 Nm @

1 500-2 500 rpm

Transmission Six-speed (manual)

Drive chain Rear-wheel or four-wheel drive with high and low range plus an electronic rear diff lock.

Tare 1 875 kg

GVM 2 910 kg

GCM 5 910 kg

Load capacity 967 kg

Wading depth Not available.

Towing ability for trailer with overrun brakes Up to 3 500 kg according to Nissan, but 3 000 kg if you subtract the GVM from the GCM.

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

Wheelbase 3 150 mm

Track width 1 570 mm

(front and rear)

Ground clearance 229 mm

Fuel tank 80 ℓ

Price (new) from R567 900

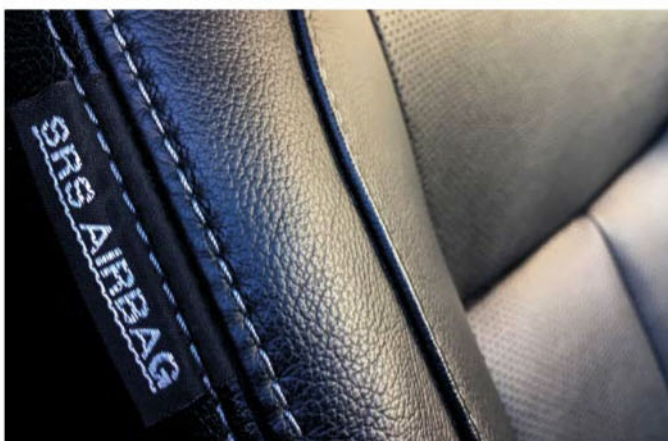
Price (secondhand) Not available.

Fast facts

The tow bar The tow bar is optional and costs an additional R3 800.

Suspension Front and rear coil springs; the tail drops with a load more than what you're used to with bakkies with leaf springs. Under the 160 kg nose weight of the Kavango it dropped with 4,5 cm, but the ride feels more like that of a sedan.

What do the scales say? 2 340 kg with a full tank of fuel in the car and the Kavango's nose weight on the tow bar. The towing combination is 3 460 kg, meaning you can load another

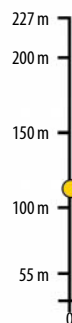


NOVELTY APPEAL The rear window features an electrically adjustable section that's not controlled by anyone sitting in the rear but by the driver. You'll have to check that there are no limbs protruding into the load bay if you're closing it from the front.



TOW PROFILE

Elevation



DISTANCE

2 450 kg (in both vehicles combined) before you exceed the GCM.

Interior Even though the new Navara is 2 cm lower than its predecessor, a six-foot driver still has an upright palm-sized space above his or her head. There are also no complaints about the space in the back – three fingers in front of your knees and above your head.

Speed At 100 km/h the speedometer reads 6 km/h faster than indicated on the GPS.

Fuel consumption Our calculations differed from the computer's, which calculated 10,5 l/100 km (9,5 km/l) while our figures showed 13,44 l/100 km (7,5 km/l) – a difference of 20%. Even the higher figure is acceptable because we have no guarantee that the petrol

attendant put the same amount of petrol in both times.

Finishes Mainly dark inside with matte silver finishes. Simple yet solid.

Extras Besides the tow bar, there are heated black leather seats (R13 000) and metallic paint (R1 350).

Other models?
2.3 D 4x4 SE (manual)

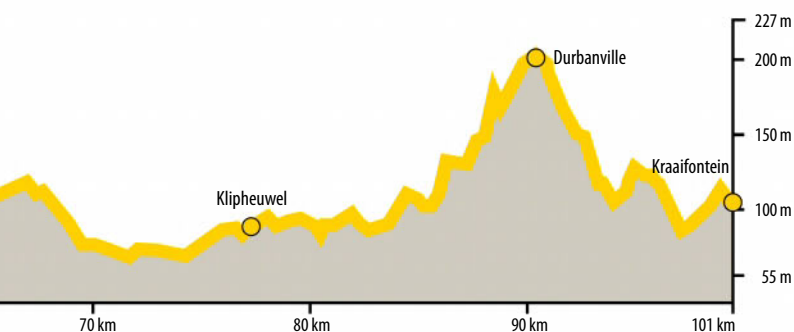
R518 900

2.3 D 4x4 LE (automatic)

R587 900

go! Drive & Camp says

Inflate the tyres to the maximum cold inflation temperature when you're towing. Check on the sticker on the inside of the door what the tyre pressure should be if you're carrying a full load: 2,4 bar in front and 2,8 bar at the back.



From the competitors
(double cab, 4x4, diesel and manual)



Toyota Hilux 2.4 GD-6 SRX
R442 700

400 Nm



Isuzu KB250 D-TEQ LE
R462 000

320 Nm



JMC Vigus 2.4 SLX
R375 990

290 Nm

Proud Penta

Jurgens' new Penta is here – we hitched it first and went camping.

Text and photos **Helenus Kruger**

Just over a year ago the new Jurgens range was the talk of the (caravaning) town, but then came a minor spanner in the works: Jurgens Ci was under new ownership and the new range was put on the back burner.

The wait, however, was worth it. Because the new owners were initially not satisfied with the range, they sent the designers

back to the drawing board. And here it is today, finished and klaar, with a few small modifications.

Jurgens is Jurgens Ci's top brand, with leisure vehicles like the Sprite and Gypsy in its portfolio. The Penta model is popular amongst Jurgens owners, and judging from the caravan we camped with, this won't change in the foreseeable future.



JURGENS PENTA





Front, rear and bottom door

The nosecone is still above the A-frame and has a door that lifts up in front. This works with a metal mechanism that also keeps it open. The spare wheel is to the left in the box, but is smaller (14") than the 15" wheels on the caravan. There's also enough space (37 x 150 cm) to pack essential items like your braai grid and wood.

The water tank is underneath the caravan, behind the axle, and can take 60 l. A 12 V pump sends water to the taps.

The Penta's corner steadies work



with a lever, which is an improvement on the scissor-type on the previous models. This sturdy strut has an arm on the bottom with a large foot piece. The foot piece swivels and can adjust to the angle of the ground it's on. >

On the right wing and left side

The water and electrical connection points are in the right side panel of the Penta. The hose's coupler is far left, almost right at the back of the caravan, and connects with a standard Gardena socket. The plug for the tank is underneath it – it locks so that no one can sabotage your water source.

The socket for the electrical cord is on the right-hand side between the axle and the front of the caravan. Underneath this is one of the new gadgets on the vehicle: a socket for a TV aerial plus a two-prong and one Hella plug.

The cavity for the poles is on the left-hand side and runs underneath the bench on the left. The pegs, tarp, emergency triangle, and corner steadies' crank handle are stowed here.

The fold-out kitchen is to the left and right in front of the axle. It's made of steel plate and finished off with a layer of powder coating. Jurgens did away with gas and replaced it with an induction plate that you can use to cook your food. You won't need to buy a special set of pots and pans for this, because a cooking set is included with the caravan.



The kitchen counter has a large round sink with hot- and cold-water taps. The work surface is small though – you'll need to put a table next to it if you want to cut veggies and have space for your cutlery and crockery. (You can choose a smaller sink if you want a bit more space.)

The sliding frame that the stove fits into is kept in place with two clips when pulled out. To push it back you have to hold in both clips at the same time and then push the shelf. Just be careful because you can easily pinch a finger if you're not keeping an eye on what you're doing.

Above the kitchen is a bright LED light and to the right of the door is another one. The 220 V multiplug with its water- and dustproof lid is to the right of the kitchen, at the back of the caravan.

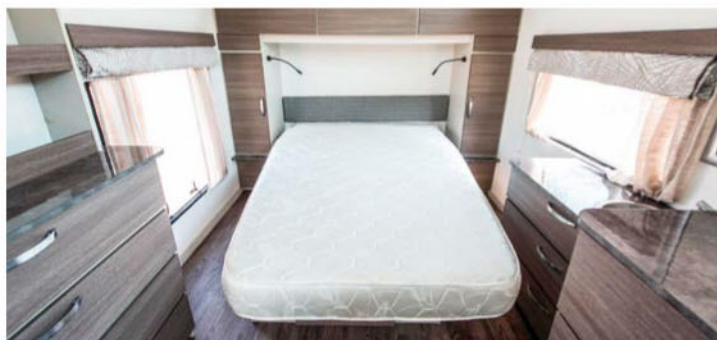


Close up and switch on

All the windows can open up, but the door obstructs the window next to it when it's open. All the windows also have mesh curtains in front that can draw open. The shutters in front of the windows have a leaf pattern with cream background, which fits in well with the rest of the caravan's colour scheme. The pelmet rounds the look off nicely.

Above the table are three LED lights, of which the middle one has a touch screen that you basically only have to tap to switch it on or off. This light shines blue or white and the two on the side only white. The switch is to the right by the door. The main light, that also shines blue or white, is in the middle of the roof, and its switch in the middle of the light.





Bed and cupboard

The sleeping section takes up almost half of the interior. The island bed has bedside tables (78 cm high) on both sides, and above your head is another three small cupboards. Above you, just like with the table, there are three lights as well as LED reading lamps with adjustable arms.

Below every cupboard are smaller cabinets near the floor, but the one on the left offers less space than the others because the sink's pipes run through it. Each has a 220 V socket, and all the sockets in the caravan look the same. There are two two-prong, one three-prong, and one USB socket.

There's not a lot of space to pack things above the bed - there's just enough space for a cellphone and wristwatch. The mattress (20 cm thick)

is made of high-density foam that's covered with a soft fabric. It is 197 cm long and measures 140 cm across at the top and 100 cm at the bottom.

The wardrobe is left of the foot-end, and there's a small work surface on top of the chest of drawers and above that there's a small cupboard and two open shelves. The chest has three drawers and right at the bottom is another small cupboard with a swing-down door. (The wheel arch's inside is in this cupboard, meaning you can't really use it for anything.) Only the two top drawers can slide out all the way. To open the middle drawer completely you have to move the mattress, and the base of the bed hinders access to the bottommost drawer.

Climb aboard

On the inside of the door is a small liquor cabinet that fits three 750 ml bottles, and above that is a shelf for six glasses. The door's built-in step is low enough to allow easy entrance without having to cart along a portable step.

The breakfast nook is to the left of the door as you climb in and can seat four people. You can also use the loose-standing table outside. It has a long, flat drawer that's slightly hidden below the table top - perfect to store your wallet, cellphone, and keys. Below the seats to the left and right is more storage space. The cupboard above the window has three swing-down doors, and



when these doors are open they hang too low for adults to sit comfortably around the table.

The table folds flat to make a double bed (117 x 225 cm).

To do this you press a button on the bottom of the table and then pull the handle towards you.

There's also a power socket at the bench on the right, but

it's a bit impractical because someone's feet are bound to get entangled in the electrical cord if you plug something in here. The water tank's level monitor is also located here. >



Inside basin

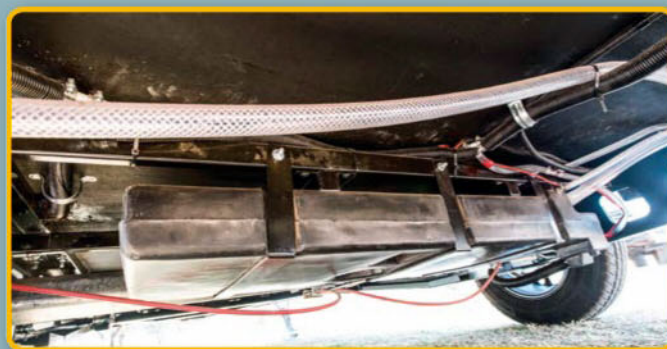
The basin is to the right of the bed and has cold and hot water. There's enough room to put your makeup and toothbrush, but the mirror above the basin is fixed and cannot adjust like the ones in previous Pentas.

To the right of the mirror is another small cupboard plus the antenna socket with a power point. The cupboard is too small for a DStv decoder; you'll have to put this either next to the basin or on the kitchen's work surface.

Below the basin is a bigger cupboard with three sections (each with swing-down doors).

The top section's space is also taken up by the basin's pipes and the mattress obstructs the cupboard doors. The space between the mattress, chest of drawers and basin is also very tight and it's uncomfortable to try and squeeze past.

The geyser is concealed underneath the bed where you would usually have been able to stow a tent. This means space is limited and if you need to remove something from under the bed you'll need both your hands because there's nothing to prop up the base of the bed.



Indoor cooking

The inside kitchen section is in the middle of the caravan, on both sides of the passage. There's ample space to pack provisions, pots and pans and cutlery and crockery. The microwave and fridge are to the left of the passage (the fridge's cool section is 184 ℓ and the freezer 44 ℓ). Plastic clips secure the fridge door so it doesn't swing open mid-journey. Above the fridge is another low cabinet with a swing-down door, and to the left is a cupboard with four drawers, a work surface and a 19 ℓ microwave above that.

(There's also an electricity socket.)

Opposite the fridge is another kitchen section with a large work surface. Below that are two drawers big enough for pots, pans, and cutlery. There's a sponge with cutouts where you should be able to put a pot and pan and cutlery, but the cutlery doesn't fit. (The six-piece melamine tableware is standard, but not the cutlery.)

The middle section between the two drawers has a false lid because this is where the pull-out kitchen is stored.



The angled roof

The pop-up roof is fastened with four straps to keep it in place when it's closed. To lift the roof, you have to loosen the straps, then you lift the back and then the front. A clever lever mechanism props up

the roof at the back, with gas struts in the middle and front. The roof runs at an angle to the back – a drop of about 20 cm.

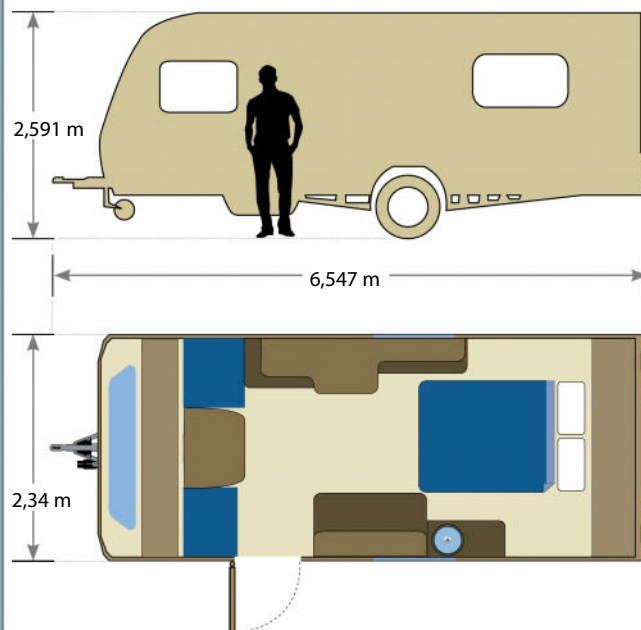
The canvas between the roof and body can unzip on each side.



Pretty colours

The interior is modern and has a spacious feel. The cupboards' finishes are excellent – it might as well have been in your kitchen at home. The doors and drawers have a light grey-brown finish with the grain

running in horizontal stripes. The work surface is greyish with a faux granite finish. The sides of the cupboard and walls are off-white and adds to the spacious feel of the caravan.



The technical stuff

Length 6,547 m

Width 2,34 m

Height 2,591 m

Height with roof open

2,92 m (maximum) and 2,71 m (minimum).

Floor-to-roof height inside with the roof open 2,215 m (maximum) and 2,015 m (minimum)

Tare weight 1 530 kg

Load capacity 70 kg

GVM 1 800 kg

Price R380 500



Plus

- The Penta is spacious with loads of cupboards and storage space – there are even two small wardrobes.
- The caravan has no less than seven electrical sockets
- The geyser is a huge improvement.
- There is a wide passageway.
- The mattress is comfortable and most people should fit onto it.



Minus

- The LED lights can be difficult to switch on and off.

- The fold-out kitchen doesn't have a work surface.
- There's not a lot of space between the mattress and the cupboards next to it.
- The clips that keep the pull-out kitchen closed can pinch your fingers.
- There's not enough space for cutlery in the foam container.
- The location of the power socket in the breakfast nook is not ideal.

go! Drive & Camp says

The Penta is heavy yet light enough that you'll be able to tow it with most bigger SUVs or double cab bakkies.

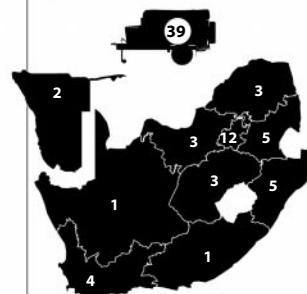
Dealer network

Head office in Ga-Rankuwa, 39 dealers nationwide, (including Namibia)

Contact 012 797 7300

info@jurgens-ci.co.za

campworld.co.za



Side steps

These tasty side dishes are simple enough to prepare in a campsite – just be sure to make enough for the following day too.

POTATO AND AVO SALAD

Where's the mayonnaise?

Potato salad without mayonnaise? Yes, you heard right. You can make the sauce in the campsite and mash and mix it with a fork, but it will be creamier if you use a food processor – so make it the night before you leave and add it to the salad when you arrive at your destination.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 4 mielies
- 2 red bell peppers
- 1 kg potatoes
- 1 avocado
- ½ cup Bulgarian yoghurt or buttermilk
- 1 cup finely chopped coriander leaves
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped (or 1 teaspoon chilli sauce)
- juice of ½ a lemon or lime
- salt and pepper to taste

Here's how

1 Cook the mielies and peppers over the coals until charred. Place the peppers in a plastic container or bag, leave it to cool and sweat, and then pull off the skin. Remove the seeds and cut the flesh into blocks. Cut the corn kernels from the cob.

2 Cook the potatoes until tender, drain, cut into pieces, and leave to cool.

3 Mash the avo with a fork and mix in the yoghurt, coriander leaves and garlic (or pulse everything together in a food processor). Season to taste with chilli, lemon juice, and black pepper.

4 Mix the peppers, corn kernels and potato, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Mix in the sauce and put the salad in the fridge to cool down completely.

go! Drive & Camp says A clever shortcut if you don't have a food processor is to replace the avo with ready-made guacamole, which you can get at most supermarkets' vegetable or deli sections.



GARLIC AND PESTO BREAD

Bread winner

This is garlic bread on steroids. You can replace the pesto with any other spread like chimichurri sauce, chermoula, onion marmalade or olive tapenade.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 1 large ciabatta or round flat white bread
- ½ sachet pesto (or any other spread or sauce)
- 5 tablespoons soft butter

- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

- 125 g camembert or brie, cut into slices

Here's how

1 Slice the bread into even slices, but don't cut through the bottom crust. Put pesto, butter and garlic in between the slices together with the cheese.

2 Wrap the bread in foil and braai over medium coals for 10 minutes until hot.

go! Drive & Camp says You can use a mixture of different cheeses – feta, blue cheese and brie are delicious. >



CHEESY CREAMY CORN Masterful mielies

This corn dish transforms an ordinary can of corn into a cheesy side dish that works wonderfully with chicken. And it's just as tasty as a dipping sauce for nachos.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- ½ a red pepper
- 4–6 pickled jalapeño chillies
- 3 cups corn kernels (tinned, frozen or fresh)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup (125 g) cream cheese
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- salt and pepper to taste

Here's how

1 Chop the veggies and defrost the corn, if necessary.

2 Heat the butter and cream cheese in a pan and mix until melted and hot. Add the red pepper, jalapeños, corn kernels, paprika and ¾ of the cheddar to the cream cheese mixture. Flavour to taste with salt and pepper and more chilli and keep stirring until the cheese has melted.

3 Sprinkle the rest of the cheese over, put on the lid, and bake for 20 minutes over the coals.

go! Drive & Camp says

You don't have to use pickled jalapeños – you can replace it with fresh chillies or chilli sauce.



CRISPY CHICKPEA SALAD A new spin on an old classic

This is a Greek salad with a twist. It's not the end of the world if you don't have any herbs – the salad still tastes great without it.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 can (410 g) chickpeas, drained
- 1 tablespoon fine cumin or coriander
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cucumber, cut into blocks
- 1 cup ripe cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ cup feta cheese
- 1 cup finely chopped parsley or coriander leaves

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice (or red wine vinegar)

Here's how

1 Heat the olive oil in a pan and sauté the chickpeas for about 5 minutes until they start to crisp. Season with cumin or coriander, salt and black pepper, and cook further until they get a slightly crispy layer and the pan is dry. Leave to cool.

2 Make a salad by combining the cucumber, tomato, feta, and herbs. Put the chickpeas on top and season to taste with salt, pepper and lemon juice.

go! Drive & Camp says

Leave the plastic and rather put your cucumber in a brown paper bag to keep it fresh for longer.



BROCCOLI AND BACON SALAD Veggie goodness

This salad stays fresh for long when you're camping and provides a welcome dose of greens amidst all the braai meat.

Ingredients

(enough for 4)

- 250 g bacon
- 500 g broccoli
- 1 red pepper
- ¼ cup red onion
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup Greek yoghurt
- 1–2 tablespoons chilli sauce
- salt and pepper to taste
- ½ cup cheddar cheese, cut into blocks
- 8 dates, finely chopped
- 10 pecan nuts, finely chopped

- fresh lemon juice to taste

Here's how

1 Cook the bacon until crispy, chop finely, and put aside. Chop the broccoli, red pepper and onion in small chunks.

2 Mix together the mayonnaise, yoghurt and chilli sauce in a bowl. Flavour to taste with salt and pepper.

3 Mix the bacon, broccoli, red pepper and onion together and then mix in the sauce. Finally, mix in the cheese, dates and nuts. Flavour to taste with lemon juice and leave for an hour before dishing up.

go! Drive & Camp says

Finely chopped and lightly toasted almonds work just as well as pecans.



MIELIE PAP AND ONION BREAD Your potjie's best friend

Bake this bread in a flat-bottom potjie or cast iron pan with a lid – it's delicious with any potjie dish.

Ingredients

(enough for 6)

- ½ cup butter
- 2–3 onions, cut into 2 cm rings
- 4 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 cup mielie meal or polenta
- ¾ cup cake flour
- ¼ teaspoon coarse salt
- 1½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1½ cup Bulgarian yoghurt or buttermilk
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme (optional)

pan over medium coals. Place the onion in a single layer in the pot or pan and sprinkle half of the sugar over it. Cook for about 5 minutes until the onions are soft and slightly caramelised.

2 Mix together the mielie meal, flour, salt and the rest of the sugar as well as the baking powder and baking soda.

3 Mix the yoghurt and olive oil and thyme with the flour mixture to form a runny dough. Pour the dough over the onions in the pan or pot and put the lid on.

4 Bake over medium coals (with a few embers on the lid) for 30–35 minutes or until a knife comes out clean. Turn the bread out and scrape the onions from the pot onto the bread. Cut in slices and serve.

go! Drive & Camp says

Try this recipe with sautéed mushrooms instead of onions.

Here's how

1 Melt the butter in a pot or

Out for the night

We all know it's best to get your bed ready before you relax next to the campfire with something cold in your hand. And with a proper camping mattress you can set up your bed in a jiffy.

Text **Kyle Kock** Photos **James Garaghty**

There are four basic requirements for a successful camping experience. Apart from location, facilities, and things to do, that is. Four things that you simply have to have in order to guarantee a good time.

You need somewhere comfortable to sit, you need some place to put

stuff, you need to be able to see what you're doing after dark, and you need to have a good night's rest. Everything else you can wing as you go, but if you fall short in any of these four requirements, your mood might sour before the first day of your camping trip is over.

The place where you lie your head is arguably the most important of

these. If you wake up grumpy after an uncomfortable night, it's usually a struggle to regain your sunny disposition for the rest of the trip. Holidays are so much more pleasant when you have a proper camping mattress at hand.

We took a lie-down on 13 of them to help you decide which one is best for you.

DOUBLE MATTRESSES DOUBLE THE FUN



Checkpoint air mattress

An air mattress can be very comfortable, and the Checkpoint falls in that category. It's of acceptable standard in its dimensions and is the thickest of those tested. At 80 mm thick, that's a lot of padding. But, your bicycle pump won't cut it for inflation and it's a mission to pack away.

Dimensions 2 000 x 1 300 x 80 mm

Price R995 at Tygerberg Caravans.

go! Drive & Camp says Pack in a small compressor to pump it up otherwise you're going to struggle.



Campmor Outdoor Sleepeasy 3 division

Using the same outer fabric and foam that's used with the single mattress, the double is quite comfortable and wide enough for you and the missus – beating the Checkpoint air mattress on width. Inexplicably it's a bit short on length. If you have plenty of space to pack gear for the two of you, then this one's quite convenient.

Dimensions 1 950 x 1 300 x 65 mm

Price R1 025 at Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says It's hard to beat the convenience of this one. When you're packing up, simply fold and stow away.

SELF-INFLATING MATTRESSES FOR THE MINIMALIST



Oztrail Camper Deluxe self-inflating bonded mat

By way of being the biggest out of this lot, the Oztrail is also the heaviest by far. But it features a micro-suede sleeping surface that won't make a racket as you move around trying to get comfortable. The open-foam cell construction is easy to inflate, and it comes in a handy elongated carry bag so you don't have to be the neatest

packer to get it right. It also carries a 24-month warranty.

Dimensions 1 830 x 630 mm x 30 mm

Price R689 from Takealot.com

go! Drive & Camp says

This one is very comfy but quite heavy and big. Good quality all-round.



Sea to Summit self-inflating camp mat

This one is up there with the Oztrail in terms of comfort, but the mummy-shaped design may not appeal to all. The shape means it saves weight when you need to pack it, and a high-flow valve makes it very easy to inflate without any real effort. The 75 D fabric is thick and seems durable.

Dimensions 1 830 x 510 x 30 mm

Price R1 200 from Takealot.com.

go! Drive & Camp says

It's quick and easy to set up and pack away and of a high quality too.



K-Way Shield self-inflating mattress

This one is particularly light, and like the Oztrail is very quick to inflate. It's wide and long, appealing to taller campers, and is quite light. If you do mess on it, this is the kind of fabric that's easy to clean.

It matches its more expensive rivals for foam thickness, but its cells retain quite a lot of air when you try

to pack it away – leading to frustration with the bag.

Dimensions 1 850 x 510 x 30 mm

Price R650 at Cape Union Mart.

go! Drive & Camp says

This was another difficult one to pack away. Make sure those cells are emptied first.



K-Way Compact self-inflating mattress

Only shorties and kids need apply, because this one is seriously on the small side. Like the other K-Way here, this is actually fairly comfortable. Its design also makes it super lightweight – matching the air-sprung K-Way at 550 g.

Dimensions: 1 680 X 510 x 30 mm

Price R600 at Cape Union Mart.

go! Drive & Camp says

It's tiny when packed away, but the diamond design and length suits smaller campers.

SINGLE ROLL-UP MATTRESSES IF YOU PREFER ROLLIES



Checkpoint roll-up

This one uses a very robust material that's quite firm to the touch, but hopefully that's a sign of it being hard-wearing. The foam seems to memorise the rolled up position, though, but that won't be an issue once you are laying on it.

The clips are a little flimsy, but it's the smaller of the two we tested, so packing away shouldn't be much trouble.

Dimensions 1 900 x 600 mm x 60 mm

Price R775 at Tygerberg Caravans.

go! Drive & Camp says Size-wise this mattress makes a very strong case for itself. It's also comfortable and seems built to last.



Campmor Outdoor Sleepeasy roll-up

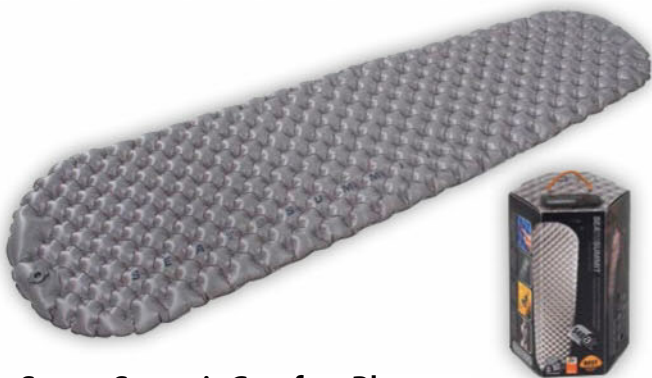
This one is as comfortable as other mattresses from this brand, and it has the advantage of rolling out relatively flat. On the flip side, it can be a handful to roll up again. It's wider than the Checkpoint and longer, so this might suit a camper with a bigger build. It's also 300 g lighter than the Checkpoint.

Dimensions 1 950 x 700 x 65 mm

Price R670 at Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says All the Campmor mattresses are quite comfortable, but this one rolls up if that's your thing.

BUBBLE MATTRESSES TINY BUBBLES



Sea to Summit Comfort Plus mat

This one has a very appealing appearance, with 548 independent air-sprung cells. It lives up to that by being very comfortable. But its shape means that there can't be any rolling around. It's easy to inflate and was also the easiest of the lot to deflate (ready to fold in five seconds) and comes in the smallest package. It's great if you're short on space,

but not so great when you're short on cash.

Dimensions 1 830 x 550 x 65 mm

Price R3 200 at Takealot.com.

go! Drive & Camp says The manufacturer knows what they're doing, but that price is steep.



K-Way Air Lite

The K-Way has a simple design with rectangular shape. It's narrow, but it makes up for that by being quite comfortable. It doesn't have the smallest packaging, but it's lightweight – at just 580 g when folded. Its diamond ripstop construction should prevent tiny holes gaping, and it helps that it's quite affordable too.

Dimensions 1 830 x 510 x 60 mm.

Price R1 000 at Cape Union Mart

go! Drive & Camp says This one is a viable alternative to the other air-pocket mattress and it's also a third of the price.

SINGLE MATTRESSES SINGLE AND READY TO MINGLE

Checkpoint 4 division fold-up

Despite being as long as the three-division mattresses in the rest of this test, it's the smallest to pack away, and because it's about 15 mm thinner, it's also very light – weighing in at just 1,1 kg. The foam doesn't offer much resistance and the polyester outer is quite thin, leaving

the impression that it won't last.

Dimensions 1 800 x 600 x 50 mm

Price R395 at Tygerberg Caravans.

go! Drive & Camp says Perhaps this is one for the kids.



Camp Master 3 division fold-up

This is the strongest canvas fabric (600D polyester) to the touch and the foam padding is the firmest and most resistant of this bunch. It's also wide enough for you to not have to worry about rolling off. It is, however, a little heavy at 3,3 kg.

Dimensions 1 950 x 700 x 65 mm

Price R700 at Game.

go! Drive & Camp says This is a very solid option in a popular colour.

Campmor Outdoor Sleepeasy 3 division single

This one is slightly wider than the Camp Master by way of its rounded edges, but not as long. It's also softer to the touch, using a fairly thin but durable polyester outer layer. It's not the firmest, but it is actually quite comfortable. The mattress is also fairly heavy at 3 kg.

Dimensions 1 950 x 700 x 65 mm

Price R700 at Outdoor Warehouse.

go! Drive & Camp says This is one that you can lie down on for an extended period.



GET THE PRODUCTS HERE

Cape Union Mart capeunionmart.co.za

Outdoor Warehouse outdoorwarehouse.co.za

Takealot takealot.com

Tygerberg Caravans tygerbergcaravans.co.za

Game game.co.za

Perfect hitch

A tow bar is much more than the silver ball you use to hitch a caravan. We visited Brink Towing Systems to see what exactly goes into the making of a tow bar.

Text and photos **Leon Botha**

A crucial part on your vehicle when you're towing a caravan is of course the tow bar. It might look like a simple affair – it's the ball that you use to hitch the caravan – but there's a lot more than meets the eye. The biggest part of the tow bar is hidden behind the bumper.

Vehicle manufacturers spend a lot of money on the development of their products' road-holding ability, reliability, and things like fuel consumption and more horsepower. As soon as you bolt a tow bar onto a vehicle, however, it directly impacts these important components. That's why tow bars are designed in conjunction with vehicle manufacturers so that they don't negatively impact your vehicle's driveability.

Brink Towing Systems is an international company – the parent company is in the Netherlands and there's also a manufacturing plant in France. In South Africa it has a plant in Pietermaritzburg that produces 100 000 of the company's one million tow bars every year. These are exported to countries like Europe, Thailand and Australia.

Brink is an approved supplier to no less than 90% of the country's vehicle brands, amongst them Ford, Toyota, BMW, Volvo, Jaguar, and Jeep.

Brian St. John Ward, Commercial Manager for Brink in South Africa, and the Head of Engineering Brett Zietsman, take us through the design process of a Brink tow bar.

4-in-1

You can divide the design of a conventional tow bar into four sections. Firstly there's the ball part with its flange plate over which you hook the caravan's coupler; then there's the arm that joins the ball section to the third part, the steel tube. Plates are fixed to this tube which are also the plates that get bolted to the chassis. (In the case of a gooseneck tow bar the ball section and the arm are one.)

The secret lies in the design

A tow bar is a complex story; it's definitely not just a few steel tubes that are welded to each other and then bolted onto a vehicle's chassis.

Just like you have to draw up plans before you start building a house, a tow bar is first designed on a computer before construction begins. And it's not just done in a day; the design phase of the tow bar can take a year, even three. The new Toyota Fortuner's tow bar is an excellent example of this. Of course you can take shortcuts and spend only a month on the computer design phase, but then you're almost guaranteed mistakes.

The software can also identify flaws in the design. You can simulate the different types of impact that the tow bar will withstand on a computer to see where the shortcomings are. Because the engineers know the different characteristics of steel, they can predict the effects of the impact on it.

Take the steel tube of the tow bar as an example (it's generally the biggest part of the tow bar): It looks like a sturdy piece of steel that's incapable of bending, but it does "bend". The tube is positioned diagonally and the ball is in the middle of this. So if you apply a push-and-pull force on the middle point, it gives way slightly. The different impact of pulling away and braking causes the tube to bend like spring-loaded steel. It's not unusual for the tube to bend up to 5 mm, explains Brett, but they make sure it doesn't exceed 10 mm, because then the tow bar can end up damaging the vehicle's bodywork.

This flexible nature of the tow bar also has an incidental advantage: It absorbs some of the impact that's transferred from the caravan to the towing vehicle; a rigid structure can negatively affect the road-holding ability of the car.

Man of steel

You can't just use any material to put together a tow bar. The law dictates that it must be steel. And not any steel – you want to use the kind where the quality and characteristics remain consistent.

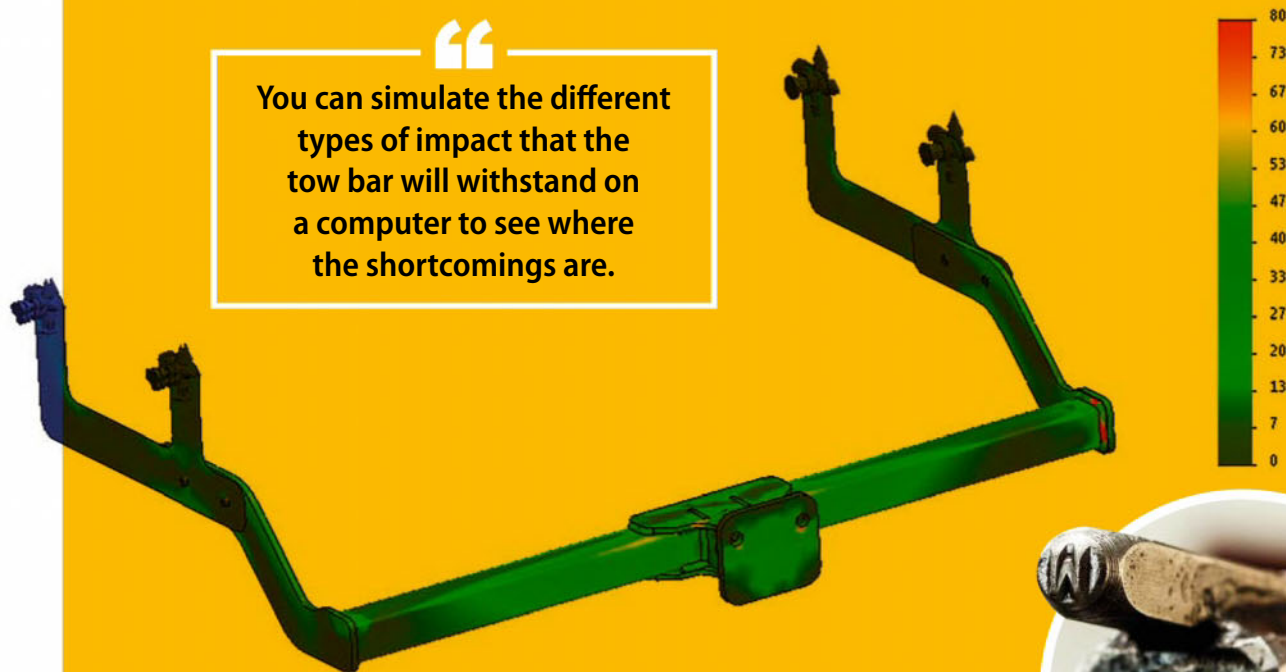
A complete tow bar weighs anything from 15 to 55 kg. A Ford Ranger's tow bar, for example, weighs 40 kg.

You also have to be careful of a poor-quality ball. Both balls with a flange plate and the gooseneck types are made out of one solid piece of steel. The two-hole flange ball is formed with a hot forging process and the gooseneck with a cold forging process. >



PLATES, LENGTHS AND BENDS. A tow bar is made from several pieces of steel that needs to be assembled and welded together. These pieces include solid steel mounting plates and square tubing. The plates are cut to form while the square tubing is cut to the correct lengths before being bent to shape.

You can simulate the different types of impact that the tow bar will withstand on a computer to see where the shortcomings are.



COLOUR CODES AND INITIALS. Computers are used to visualise where stresses will occur when the tow bar is under load. The colours will change from dull grey to hues of blue and green all the way to the warm colours, which represent severe stress. When a tradesman completes a tow bar, he stamps his initials into it.



Brian warns against cheap flange balls that you see sold commercially in shops. This type of towing ball could have been cast and is less dependable than a forged towing ball.

Five guinea pigs

Brink doesn't immediately start with full-scale production volume. They initially build five prototype tow bars to see if it's the same as the one designed on the computer. Each of the five also have a specific purpose:

- **The first tow bar** must pass a cycle test. The engineers bolt the tow bar to a machine that simulates towing conditions. The tow bar must face a two-million cycle, and depending on the push-and-pull frequency, it takes

between three and five days to complete. The frequency mustn't exceed 25 Hz – therefore not more than 25 movements per second. The test norm is 6–7 Hz. The test simulates towing in a straight line – as if you're driving forward and braking. According to Brett that's the legal requirement, but they also test other angles on the computer. That's how they see how the tow bar performs under sideward forces.

- **The second tow bar** must be physically fitted to a vehicle. That's to see if it fits properly and the holes and joints are where they should be.

- **The third tow bar's** welding is scrutinised. The tow bar is cut open to look for welding

defects. The manufacturing of the tow bar requires a lot of welding so that all the loose steel parts eventually form one solid piece.

- **The fourth tow bar's** paint job must pass the test. It has to be even and the tow bar must be well covered to withstand any kinds of weather conditions.

- **The fifth tow bar** is an extra in case any other tow bars are needed in the previous steps.

Buying in bulk

Although the manufacturing of a tow bar is part of a mass production line, it takes about a week to complete one. It takes two to three days to get all the loose parts



TOW RATED. After your specified paint finish has been applied, the nuts and bolts packaged, and the specification sticker added, the tow bar is then ready to be shipped off to the customer – and plenty of towing services.

together, one day for the welding, two to three days for the paint job, and one day to assemble it.

Depending on the specific type of tow bar, Brink uses pre-cut steel tubes or they cut the lengths themselves if necessary. The pre-cut tube is a straight length of steel, but it's also bent to get the right shape. The tube stretches the more you bend it (because the wall becomes thinner the more you bend it). But if you're clever you can still bend the tube without affecting the thickness of the wall. A press punches in a small section on the one side between the edges. Now the tube folds over the pressed-in section and the tube bends, almost like a person's knee.

A few joining plates, which are used to bolt the completed tow bar onto the chassis, are now welded onto the tube. These plates have various forms cut out of a steel plate with a laser. Some of these plates also still need to be bent but because they're solid they're not weakened in the process.

Depending on the size of the order, the welding is either done by hand or computer-controlled welding machines. Never underestimate the amount of welding that needs to be done. If you look at, for example, a Ford

Ranger's tow bar, you're talking about at least 4 metres of welding work.

Now the tow bar begins to take shape, and this is also the point where it gets "personal" attention. Like early Rolls-Royce models where the grilles were made by hand, the initials of the workman involved is punched onto the tow bar.

Up until this point the tow bar is merely a naked piece of steel, but before the painting job commences, it has quite a few chemical baths. This removes all the dirt so that the paint can properly adhere to the surface.

Just like with Henry Ford's Model T, you can order a Brink tow bar in any colour, as long as it's black. They are, however, available in three different finishes: the basic E-coat, a powder coating, or a combination of the two. All have a base zinc coating.

E-coat is the cheapest. It protects the tow bar against scrapes and general wear and tear but it's not enough to prevent UV damage. This type is dipped in a chemical mixture while a high voltage electrical charge is run through the bath. Then it is baked in an oven and left to cool. Tow bars with this type of finish typically sit hidden away behind the bumper, away from direct sunlight.

For the powder coating method electric polarisation is used, similar to the E-coat method. But instead of dipping it in a liquid, a layer of powder paint is sprayed onto the tow bar and it's baked in an oven until it merges with the tow bar.

Now the tow bars are sorted so that it can be packaged and sent to the clients. All the bolt holes in the tow bars are checked and the problematic ones are marked and fixed.

Brink sticks a specification sticker on the tow bar which is made of a special material so that no one can tamper with it without being noticed.

If someone should try, the sticker will simply tear.

Lastly, all the nuts and bolts that are sold with the tow bar are packaged. And they're not your average nuts and bolts either – these are made of high tensile steel.

Contact 033 401 0120 justin.burns@brink.eu brinktowingsystems.co.za

go! Drive & Camp says Brink doesn't sell tow bars directly to the public. Contact them to find out where your nearest Brink distributor is.

Bundu basics

On an obstacle course you can play with your 4x4 to your heart's content, but on expeditions you almost have to be overly careful. Here are 10 tips for a safe trip.

Text and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

We all complain about the lawlessness in South Africa, but the benefit of limited interference from our government is that we enjoy a lot of freedom.

In Europe it's becoming impossible to take your vehicle for a spin in the dunes without a permit or even to find a dirt track where you can splash

around in the mud like a child. Even in New Zealand and Australia you find health and safety inspectors sticking their noses in 4x4 enthusiasts' business... Apparently because they're concerned about their citizens' wellbeing. Ha!

But while we might have a certain amount of freedom it doesn't mean we should be reckless with it. That's why we put heads together with

Arrive Alive (arrivealive.co.za) and the MasterDrive advanced driving school. MasterDrive offers 4x4 and defensive driving courses, and the Arrive Alive campaign is well known for its efforts to promote road safety in South Africa.

Here are 10 tips you need to learn to protect your vehicle and yourself while still having fun.





Cold as ice

On ice and snow you always have to be overly careful with the accelerator pedal and brakes.

Quick acceleration and braking will cause your vehicle to slide. If this happens, take your foot off the petrol immediately and avoid the brakes.

If you brake, your vehicle will probably slide more – yes, even with ABS. Rather turn the steering wheel in the same direction that you're sliding so you can come to a standstill quicker. If you're driving in a convoy, everyone should increase their following distance.

Avoid technology like cruise control and the electronic sport mode. Also never stop halfway on an incline. There are many stories about tourists

who stopped halfway up the Sani Pass to take snow photos only to look on helplessly as their rented 4x4 slid down the mountain.

Be on the lookout for so-called black ice. It looks like wet patches on a road (while there's no sign of rain). Drive around it if you see it. Luckily this isn't a problem on gravel roads.

“
While we might have a certain amount of freedom it doesn't mean we should be reckless with it.



Don't be a stick in the mud

Before tackling a mud bath, take a long stick and push it into the mud to see how soft it is. The softer the mud, the easier you'll be able to drive through it. Also feel if there are any rocks left by a previous guy who got stuck. Switch over to low range and choose first or second gear, depending on how thick the mud is. Make sure your vehicle's electronic traction control is switched off.

Then, drive in slowly. As soon as your front wheels touch the mud, you can step on the petrol – not too much, just enough to ensure you get out on the other side. If you lose speed and feel you're starting to get stuck, take your foot off the petrol immediately. Rather reverse and try again, but this time with a bit more speed. If you're still struggling, turn the steering wheel left and right – it gives your tyres more grip.

Wash your vehicle's underbody as soon as you get home – or even before that if you can. >



I baptise thee...

Preparation is key when it comes to water. First walk into the river (Rather not do this if you're crossing the Crocodile River. – Ed) If you're struggling to keep your footing, your vehicle will also wash away. You need to know exactly where your vehicle's

air intake is and don't drive through water that's deeper than the height of the intake.

If your vehicle has electric windows, you have to leave at least one window open in case there's a short circuit. Water crossings are also the only place where it's advisable to drive without a safety belt.

Don't stop in the middle of the river so your mates can take photos of you – that's when the engine will swallow water through the exhaust pipe. Also, don't charge into the water and create a mini-tsunami. Sure, it looks like fun but the water is forced into places it rather shouldn't be.





Roads less travelled

While four-wheel-drive vehicles work well in the bush, the majority of them aren't exactly excellent road vehicles. You might feel safe up high in your truck, but the inconvenient truth is that you can't stop as fast as you would in a sedan. Your vehicle also can't swerve as quick to avoid a crash. Keep that in mind when you're loading camping gear. Heavy items like water tanks need to be as low as possible, while you can transport lighter items in crates on your roof rack.

Increase the normal tyre pressure by 10% if you're going to be driving long distances on a tar road – it increases your tyre's life span. If your vehicle has part-time four-wheel drive, don't ever switch it on on tar – you can seriously damage the transfer case or differentials.

A speed limit of 120 km/h doesn't mean you have to travel that speed. The driver of a loaded off-roader always needs to keep in mind that he has to drive more carefully than other road users.



Sand hassles

In South Africa we're not allowed to drive on the beach without a permit, but there are still ample dunes where you can go get stuck for free. The first step is to lower the pressure in your vehicle's tyres to 1,1 bar – even as low as 0,8 bar if it's very soft sand. But remember: The lower your tyre

pressure, the bigger the chance that the tyre can run off the rim when you turn sharply.

There's a misconception that fat tyres drive better on sand. They have higher rolling resistance – a deflated, narrower tyre with a high sidewall performs better. When you lower the tyre pressure in a wheel with a high sidewall,

you enlarge the "footprint" without increasing the rolling resistance.

If you're planning on towing an off-road trailer through sand, it'll help a lot if the wheel track width, and tyre size and pressure are the same as that of the towing vehicle. If not, your trailer is going to hold you back like an anchor.



Dust in the wind

Approach a dust storm like you would thick mist: Switch on your headlights and don't pull over, because the vehicle behind you can crash into you. And if you push through

you'll get out on the other side faster. Reduce your speed so that you have more time to spot any potential dangers in front of you and be able to react quickly.

If the storm becomes too hectic and you have to pull over,

try to do it as far left on the road as possible. Switch off the vehicle's lights because it's going to confuse passing motorists. If you do decide to drive on, dim your headlights – headlights that are on bright reflect against the sand

and hinders your sight further.

Don't drive with your vehicle's hazards on, because it will confuse other motorists. Increase the following distance between you and the guy in front of you and don't try to overtake anyone.



Stay grounded

We're not going to tell you how to drive on a gravel road; you already know how to do that. Let's rather focus on what you should do if you lose control of your vehicle.

Stay calm, keep both hands on the steering wheel, and don't struggle with it too much. If your vehicle veers off to the side, leave the brake pedal and take your foot off the accelerator gradually.

Look in the direction of where you want to go and turn

the wheel gradually in that direction. If you're going to pull at the wheel, you will land in a ditch next to the road. Or worse...

As soon as your vehicle's nose is facing the right direction, you can step on the brake lightly. No sudden movements.

If there's nothing to be done and you're sliding fast, try to drive into an open veld, and if trees or rocks are unavoidable, try to hit it nose first. The front of your car is the most shock-resistant.



Long-winded

A strong wind can be a nuisance when you're driving slowly on a dirt road, but on the open road it can feel like Hurricane Irma has hit – especially if you have a roof tent. Be extra careful when you're driving over a bridge or overtaking a heavy vehicle. A sudden gust of wind can easily blow over a heavily loaded Land Rover. On the Miaspoort arch bridge right before the Huguenot Tunnel outside Paarl you often see caravans and

delivery vehicles lying on their side, and the same goes for the B4 outside Lüderitz.

If for some reason you have to pull over, avoid trees and pylons. Rather stop in a clearing where branches can't fall on you or your vehicle. If the road is obstructed by an overturned pylon, do not drive over it. There might still be electricity flowing through it and the few centimetres of rubber on your vehicle's tyres will not be enough to protect you from 150 kV.



Night owl

The golden rule is that you should never 4x4 at night.

Okay, so you've broken the rule and now you're stuck in the pitch dark in the middle of Van Zyl's Pass. How now, brown cow?

Switch on all your vehicle's lights. The more light you have to see the road in front of you and the rocks next to you the better.

Take it slowly. Look at how far ahead your headlights illuminate the road and then

adjust your speed accordingly. Remember, your braking distance is longer on a gravel road.

Keep your eyes peeled for animals. Kudus and hippos like to roam at night and they're practically invisible until it's too late – and if you hit one of them you're going to need more than just a new headlight. Don't swerve for an animal. Keep the front wheels straight and floor the brake pedal. A bent bullbar is better than a vehicle lying on its roof in the middle of the road.



Easy does it

When you're driving over rocks, there's one mantra you need to repeat to yourself: Drive as slow as possible and as fast as is necessary.

Unlike with mud and sand, rocks offer good grip and there's no reason to hurry.

Find out where the differentials, leaf spring hinges, transfer case, and sump are underneath your vehicle. In my own vehicle, for example, I know the front diff pumpkin is located in front of my left foot. The rear differential is 2 m behind that, and the transfer

case is underneath the gear lever.

If you have a choice between driving over a rock or through a ditch, the rock would be the better choice. It also helps if your passenger can get out and check that you don't accidentally smash the

sump or a differential against a rock.

Buy a bash plate that protects the length of your undercarriage, but bear in mind that dry grass can collect between the bash plate and the chassis and can be set alight by a searing-hot exhaust pipe. 🚫



Sources

- arrivealive.co.za
- bridgestone.co.za
- masterdrive.co.za

Rough and ready



Our readers – from Goodwood to Welkom to Dubai – tell us more about the cars that they use to tow to the Richtersveld or play in the desert dunes in the Middle East.

Always ready for adventure

1995 NISSAN PATROL 4.2

Even though it does much more than just getting them from point A to B, that's all they ever really needed from their Patrol, says **Chrissie and Emile le Roux** from Goodwood.

“We really do enjoy our **2004 Peugeot GTi** for daily use, but when the weekend comes around or the open road beckons, our '95 Patrol comes out to play. We bought it secondhand for **R63 000** in 2015, and have overhauled pretty much everything on it.

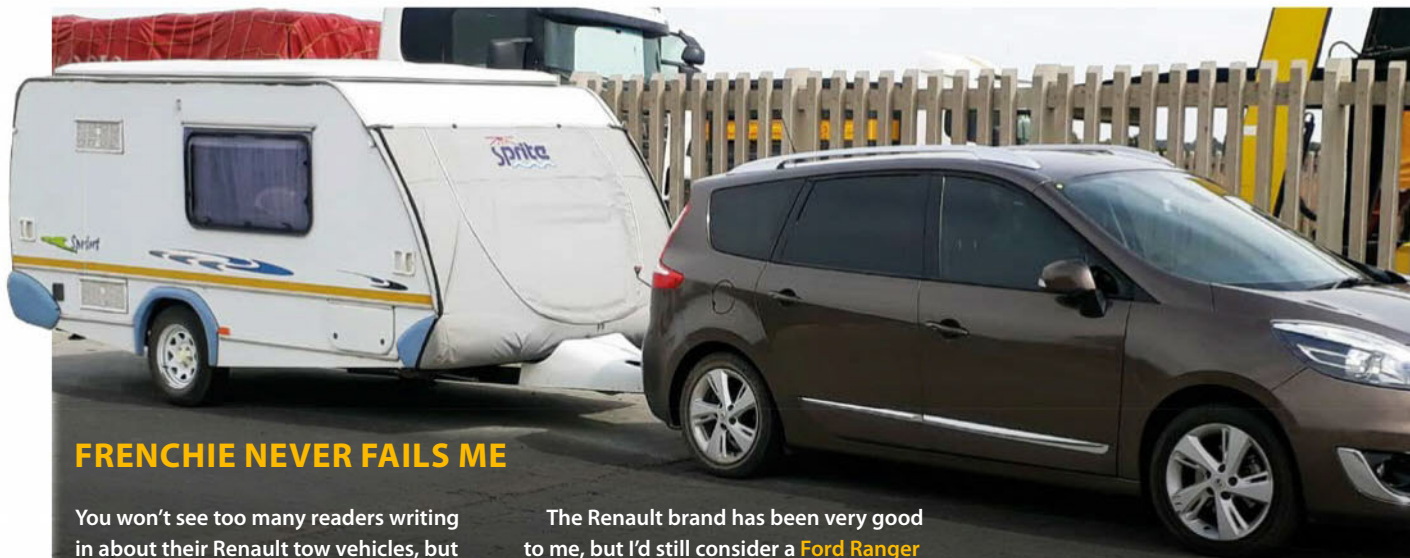
The additions include a new spray job, new tyres, roof rack, and spotlights – but if we had an additional R10 000 right now we'd

go for a new suspension system and add some money to go from 33” tyres to 35”. It goes almost everywhere, and is extremely capable, big, and brings us much joy, but one downside is its fuel consumption, which is in excess of **15 l/100 km**.

We're very fond of the Patrol; it's an older vehicle, which makes it stand out, but it also looks unique, making it stand out even more. So far we've been able to visit the **Richtersveld** with it, which is so unbelievably beautiful we're convinced it's become entrenched in our DNA.

Next year we're hoping to drive through Namibia all the way to the Angolan border.





FRENCHIE NEVER FAILS ME

You won't see too many readers writing in about their Renault tow vehicles, but that doesn't mean you need to shy away from the brand, says **Piet Botha** from Welkom.

“All the vehicles I've ever owned have been Renaults. I've owned four to be exact. I previously drove a **Koleos 2.5**, which was a wonderful little SUV, but it was very thirsty at the pumps, which is one of the reasons I've returned to diesel engines.

The Renault brand has been very good to me, but I'd still consider a **Ford Ranger 2.2 double cab**.

I bought my 2013 Grand Scenic 1.6 dCi in 2015 for **R268 000**. It's got 320 Nm, enough to tow the Sprite Sprint comfortably – sometimes even in sixth gear.

We've been camping since 1992 with different caravans, and even spent two years in tents, but it's much better in a caravan. Ours is furnished so well that all we really have to do is pack the necessary clothing and off we go.

My maximum towing speed is around **110/115 km/h**, and I haven't yet needed to use a stabiliser because I pack the caravan evenly and experience very little to no sway. Without the caravan hitched, the Renault Grand Scenic has returned as little as **6,25 ¢/100 km**, and when we're towing that figure hikes to around **10 ¢/100 km**.

We like to visit Aldam near Welkom in summer and **Buffelspoort** in Magaliesberg during winter.



Don of the dunes



2012 JEEP WRANGLER UNLIMITED SAHARA 3.6 V6

Although it got its name from an African desert, “White Rhino” is equally at home in the vast sands of the Middle East, says **Benjamin Heydenrych**, who is originally from Parys and now lives in Dubai.

“I didn't consider anything else when I was in the market for a new

vehicle, and despite a brief hiatus from the brand to buy a 1989 Range Rover, this is my fourth vehicle from the American brand – which I purchased brand new for AED 135 000 (**R475 982**). My dream vehicle is actually a step-up from this one – the Wrangler Unlimited Recon Rubicon.

For me, this kind of vehicle not only has to be comfortable off the beaten track but also on the open road. I've also fitted

plenty of extras to make my Wrangler more adventure-friendly, such as a Front Runner Slimline roof rack, rooftop tent, narrow awning, touring awning, 2,5” lift, dual-battery system, 1 500 W inverter, and DIY tailgate table and storage system. With an extra R10 000 in my pocket I'd have an Old Man Emu suspension fitted.

In the outdoors, the Wrangler doesn't put a foot wrong, but the transmission can be a bit annoying when it hunts gears to maintain speed when the cruise control is active. Unfortunately parts aren't readily available in the Middle East, even though the Wrangler's predecessor has a huge market presence here.

My favourite destination with White Rhino was the **Jebel Shams resort** in Oman. It's located on top of the highest mountain in the country, and in summer the temperatures can exceed **50 °C**.



Show us your wheels

Send an email to

drivecamp@gomag.co.za and tell us about what's in your garage.

Stunning silhouettes

Snap sunsets like a pro.

Text and photos Villiers Steyn

Five years ago, in my first Photo Mechanic column that appeared in *DriveOut*, we featured a stunning sunset photo taken by reader Chris van der Merwe of a herd of ellies and buffalo quenching their thirst along the Chobe riverfront late one afternoon.

This kind of photo is not only beautiful, it's also difficult to get right. That's why I'm revisiting different challenging outdoor photos to take by sharing with you these three essential tips that will help to capture the perfect image.



1 Make the blacks blacker
Sunset scenes are high in contrast. There are usually dark subjects in the foreground and a bright ball in the background, and in any mode where the camera has to choose some of the settings for you, like Automatic-, Program- or Aperture Priority Mode, it tends to try and capture some detail in the dark areas.

This means the elephant or marula tree you've carefully framed in the foreground looks grey instead of black.



To ensure your silhouettes are pitch black, first check that you are in either Program Mode (P) or Aperture Priority (A/Av), then press the Exposure Compensation button (usually labelled with a small plus and minus in a square block) and underexpose the image by turning the dial to the minus side (for example: -1/3, -2/3, -1, etc.). As you underexpose, the image will gradually become darker, which will also result in a more saturated sun and sky.



2 Capture the detail
If you're not trying to capture silhouettes and purposely want to show the detail in the foreground, like in this photo of Bitterpan Camp in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, you simply do the opposite. Instead of underexposing the photo, check the result with Exposure Compensation set to zero and then overexpose it (to the plus side) if necessary. Just remember – the more you overexpose the image, the brighter and less colourful the sun and sky will become.



3 Best of both worlds
There is one way to capture both the beautiful colours in the sky and detail in your subject(s) around sunset and that's by using a flash. Before activating it, first expose for the background colours by underexposing the photograph. Then turn on the flash, which will illuminate your subject.

Remember, most built-in camera flashes are not very powerful, so your subject(s) would have to be near to you in order for them to come out nicely. You can, however, brighten the beam of the flash by increasing the Flash Exposure Compensation, which is located in your camera menu.



After almost six years of photography tips, we're saying goodbye to Villiers. But that doesn't mean that we're parting ways forever. As he explores Africa with his camera, he'll share his adventures here on the pages of *go! Drive & Camp*. And while we'll miss him and his great advice, you now

have the opportunity to show us what you've learnt.

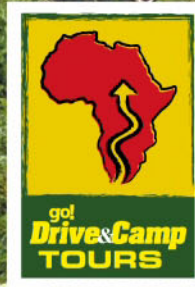
From next month onward, this page belongs to you, our reader. Have you captured a special moment with your camera or cellphone in a campsite or while on a 4x4 trip? Share it with us and tell us why this

photo is so special to you. All photos are welcome – from pros with long lenses to a teen taking a selfie in the Fish River Canyon.

Send images to drivecamp@gomag.co.za. Besides having your photo published in the magazine, there's a prize for the winning pic. 📷

Drive through the Knysna Forest

If you're going to relax somewhere along the Cape South Coast, explore the Knysna Forest for a day with *go! Drive & Camp* and Bhejane 4x4 Adventures.



HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT

If you've ever wondered what it would feel like to be inside the world of Dalene Matthee's stories, populated with phantom elephants, giant yellowwoods and lush ferns, here's your chance. SANParks has awarded Bhejane 4x4 Adventures the exclusive rights to do day trips into the inner sanctum of the Knysna Forest.

On this trip you'll experience the indigenous yellowwoods, stinkwoods, ferns, bushbuck, blue duikers and Knysna turacos. You might even see an elephant.

This isn't merely a drive-and-sightseeing trip. You will also learn more about the forest's fauna and flora, Italian settlers who hoped to make their fortune in the silk trade, woodcutters and lost travellers.

We meet at Harkerville, about halfway between Plettenberg Bay and Knysna, just off the N2. Here, the Bhejane crew members explain the day's events and hand out two-way radios before we take to the tracks through the Diepwalle Forestry Station area.

The first stretch is a gravel road through the forest and our first encounter with real yellowwood,

Outeniqua yellowwood, stinkwood, wild elder, ironwood, Cape beech, Cape ash, candlewood...

Then the forest becomes denser and the track narrower. It takes us through tree tunnels so dense they even shut out daylight. The lushest ferns grow among Cape blackwood, rock elder, wild peach and white stinkwood.

When we stop to stretch our legs, we'll hear the sounds of the 40 resident bird species, including the red-chested cuckoo's distinctive "Piet-my-vrou" call as well as the Knysna turaco's "kok-kok-kok-kok".

We stop in a clearing in the fynbos. It is on islands such as this that the woodcutters lived in the 1700s and 1800s, from where they penetrated the forest to fell one giant tree after the other. From here, the track becomes even narrower, more winding, and overgrown with ferns.

We end with a lunch prepared by women of the local community at the Diepwalle Forestry Station, before everyone drives back to the N2 in their own time.

You will leave the forest but you will carry the experience with you forever.

COSTS AND DATES

HOW LONG IS THE TOUR? It's a day outing that starts at 8:30 am and ends just after lunchtime.

WHEN? Every day of the year (except Christmas Day). You must book at least one day in advance.

DO I NEED A 4X4? No, you can also drive it in a 4 x 2 or you can drive with us in our vehicle.

WHERE DOES THE TOUR START FROM? From the Sasol service station in Harkerville on the N2 (halfway between Knysna and Plettenberg Bay).

WHAT MUST I BRING?

- Yourself and your family
- Your own vehicle and fuel
- Your own drinks and snacks

AND FOOD? Lunch at the Diepwalle Forestry Station is included and we stop at one of the river crossings for tea and coffee.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST? R400 per person. Students pay R200 and children under 10 years pay R100. R500 per person if you drive with us.

THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- Park entrance fees
- Two-way radios
- Lunch
- A professional tour leader and an experienced guide.
- Remember, only five vehicles can be accommodated per tour.

WHAT ELSE?

This is not a technical 4x4 route and no previous 4x4 experience is required. In case there are bad patches on the road, the Bhejane team is on hand to help out with their experience and recovery gear, to ensure that everyone gets safely to the other side. The tour leader from Bhejane 4x4 Adventures and an experienced field guide are in contact with each vehicle at all times via two-way radios and will gladly share their knowledge of nature, veld driving and the history of the area with you.

YES, I WANT TO GO!

To book, call Bhejane on ☎ 044 535 9257 or email bookings@bhejane.com. Find out more at www.bhejane.com

The fish are jumping at Bonnievale

Pitch camp next to the Breede River, meet a carpenter, and learn more about the history of flyfishing in South Africa.



NEW RELEASE

South African Fishing Flies

The art of fishing is as old as man itself, and there are so many different ways to catch the big one. A corn kernel on a hook could mean catching a carp in a river, while brightly coloured bait and lures could be the ultimate trap for a wily largemouth bass. But fish like trout and yellowfish require a finer art: flyfishing.

Flyfishing in South Africa has a rich history, and in the recently published *South African Fishing Flies*, the reader is transported back to when it first began. It's a method

of fishing that's more than a century old, and currently there's an estimated 100 000 flyfishermen in the country who use a wide variety of bait. The book focusses specifically on the artificial fly, and you feel like applauding those who came up with some of the original names: from the Dog's Breakfast and Fred's Wolf Spider to the Millionaire's Taddy and the DDD (which stands for Duckworth Dargle Delight).

The Mooi Moth seems to be the forefather of all the flies. It

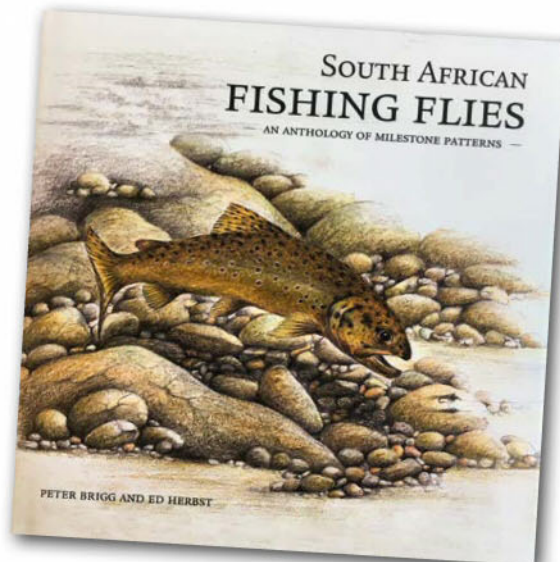
dates from 1900 and is a "dry" fly based on the mayfly. The "Mooi" in the name presumably comes from the environment in which it's used: the Mooi River in KwaZulu-Natal. This fly has a 14–16 size hook and consists amongst other things of a peacock feather.

The book has photos of the different kinds of bait and there are also pictures of fishermen and what they caught as well as landscape pictures of the area.

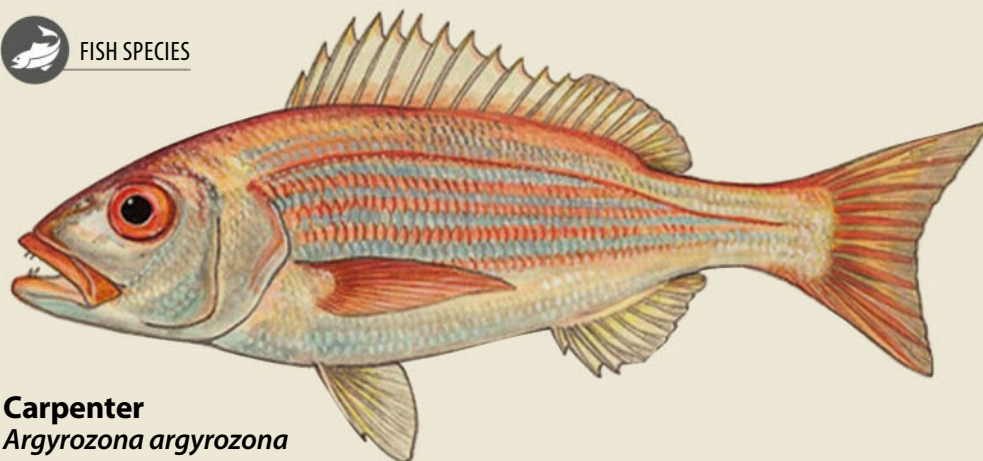
Price R300 (hard cover; 176 pages)

Contact 011 327 3550

penguinrandomhouse.co.za



FISH SPECIES



Carpenter *Argyrozona argyrozona*

The carpenter is endemic to South African waters and can be found from Table Bay to the northern Eastern Cape. This medium, oval-shaped seabream is silvery pink in colour, with seven horizontal blue bands (made up of blue dots) along the length of its body.

Size and biology The carpenter

can grow up to 80 cm, although this doesn't happen often, with most only reaching 50 cm in length. They grow slowly, but can reach a maximum age of 30 years. They reach maturity between two and five years.

Habitat Adults can be found on high, rocky reefs in depths of 50 to 200 m. Adults feed mainly

on squid, anchovy and sardine. Juveniles are found closer inshore on reefs from 10 to 40 m and move offshore as they reach maturity.

Where to find them Because the carpenter lives long, grows slowly, and can be found in rocky reefs, this species is susceptible to overfishing. It's a commer-

cially important species in South Africa and is caught by commercial linefishers as well as making up a large proportion of the demersal trawl bycatch. Stock assessments based on data from 1986 to 2001 indicated that this species was overfished. Reductions in commercial fishing effort in South Africa allowed for some recovery of the species but it is still listed as near-threatened by the IUCN.

That's a record 4,1 kg.

SASSI status You are not

allowed to catch more than four per day to take home, and they need to be at least 35 cm long.



Text Dr. Nikki James

Sketch Elaine Heemstra

© Southern African Institute of Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB)



FISHING RESORT



Bring your rods to the farm

Rignton River Farm

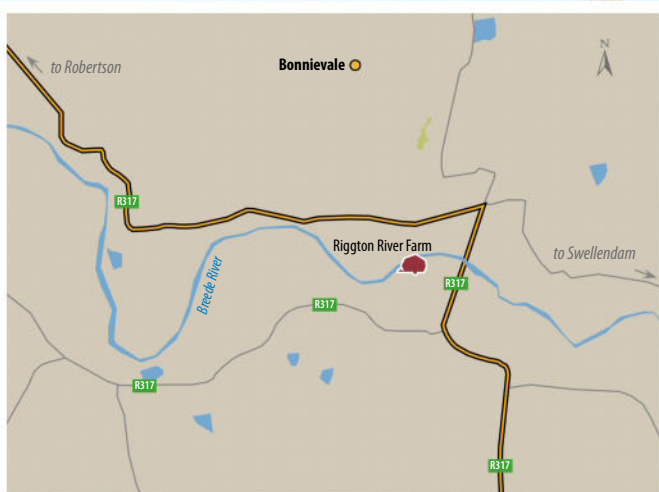
The Rignton River Farm is located outside Bonnievale on the banks of the Breede River. The campsite is divided into two sections, with the older stands at the bottom next to the river and the newer section on a terrace overlooking the river. It's almost impossible to camp closer to the water.

Sometimes in the winter months the bottom stands flood, but then just camp at the top section. This is why the power sockets for the bottom stands are located high up next to one of the ablution blocks, so that the whole of Bonnievale's lights don't trip when the river is in full flood. The abundance of water also explains the thick green grass on the stands.

The bottom stands are not marked and you can camp wherever you find a spot. Bring an extension cord of at least 20 m so you can reach the plugs.

The top stands are numbered and are better suited for caravans. There's a plug, light, and a brick braai at each stand. A downside is the 100 m walk to the bathrooms. The stands on the terrace are laid out in two rows opposite each other. Book one of the stands in the row next to the river for a beautiful view and some shade – and it's of course the perfect spot to keep an eye on your rod.

This river system has quite a few endemic fish species, like the Cape galaxias, bronze bream, and redfin, but the invasive species have also made themselves at home here – fish like bass, trout, bream and carp.



Briefly | Rignton River Farm



Fish Bass, bluegill sunfish, trout, mosquitofish, bream, carp, Cape galaxias, largemouth bass and redfin.

Campsite All the stands are neat and covered with grass. The bottom stands are not numbered, but there is enough space for 10 vehicles. The top section has 30 stands, each with a plug and braai.

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Contact 082 782 2697 or 023 616 3091 ilene@riggton.co.za
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go! Drive & Camp says

There are braais but bring your own wood and grid. 🍖

CROSSWORD

Congratulations **Claire Bester** from Moreleta Park: a R500 Trappers gift voucher is on its way to you for your correct entry in the crossword competition in our October 2017 edition. You can also win a R500 Trappers voucher. Complete the crossword, take a picture of it, and mail it to us at drivecamp@gomag.co.za. Remember to include your contact details. You can also complete it online at <http://bit.ly/2yX1amF>.

			A knife, screw-driver and pliers in one	Unlocked	Yes (archaic)	Shape	A Motor-home World model			
					Conifer					
					Cold sea fog					
				Album						
				Gardening tool						
Husband and ...		Thesplan	Consumed		Curve			Regarding Pleasant	Chess pieces	Void
					Beak					Tardy
			Spice sprinkled on pan-cakes						Vest-ment	
Healthy					Either ...		Six (Rom)		Road	
Apple, eg					Venture		Secret agent		While	
			Executes				Trig ratios			
			Sandal, eg							
Sign of the zodiac	You and I			Single unit			Urges			
Road tar	Drain			Pismire			Edges			
					"Ciao!"					
					Morning (abbr)			Camping site close to Hart-beespoort		
Long period of time				Handle			Sun god			
							In the direction			
Leave undone								Put to good purpose		
			Indian dresses	Nimble	Lament					
					Indium (symbol)				Happy	Bovine
							As well		... and behold	
							Street		Dovetail	
			... and tonic			Help		"Forget it!"		
								Toll		
White clay pan in Namibia	Scream		... and ends		To be					Wager
					So-called					
						Bed cover				Thus
						Thou				
Laid-back	Fade away			Followed	Affirmative answer			Give up		
				Accepted orders				Solidify		
								Word of denial		

COMPILED BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

You can win too

If you correctly complete the crossword and send it to us before 26 October, you could win a Trappers gift voucher to the value of R500. Visit trappers.co.za for all your outdoor gear.



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– C. Louis Leipoldt



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Have you ever lost your caravan or camping trailer somewhere outside Augrabies, or had a flat tyre on the way to Badplaas? Take out Sleepseker insurance and get peace of mind.

We have introduced several innovations in the caravan and camping world over the past few years, and now, together with CaraSure, *go! Drive & Camp* has another product that can be useful to our readers: towing insurance!

With *go! Drive & Camp's* insurance product Sleepseker, we've negotiated a special tariff for our readers. The insurance covers caravans, camping trailers and motorhomes. There are two packages available:

Sleepseker Prestige

Sleepseker coverage
Sleepseker contents (of R30 000)
SleepWeg roadside assistance

Sleepseker Econo

Sleepseker coverage
SleepWeg roadside assistance

The benefits include

- **Towing coverage:** The towing vehicle has comprehensive insurance that covers accidents, malicious damage, storm damage, theft, hijacking and fire.

- **Sleepseker coverage:** Coverage for contents worth a total of R30 000 is included in the Prestige package. You have the option of insuring your contents for up to R45 000 or R60 000. That includes: bedding, kitchenware, clothes, electrical appliances, caravan and tent accessories and gear, as well as tents (dome tents, ordinary tents, and canopies).
- **SleepWeg roadside assistance:** This includes the towing of the leisure and the towing vehicles in an emergency. Plus:
 - **Assistance next to the road:** Help with flat tyres, keys locked in the leisure vehicle, running out of petrol, accidents and more.
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 - **Medical evacuations:** General advice and a helpline plus medical emergency services.

Why insure with us?

- *go! Drive & Camp* has partnered with

CaraSure, a company that specialises in the insurance of leisure vehicles in South Africa.

- The Sleepseker Prestige as well as the Econo packages include credit shortage options. This coverage makes provision for the outstanding amount plus interest when there's an overall loss of the vehicle.
- Because we partnered with CaraSure, we know that we're working with specialists in the insurance industry – a company that also understands the needs of its campers.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Go to wega.co.za for all the information and application forms, or phone **0860 107 772** for quotes and inquiries. Fax the application forms to **086 607 0494** or email it to wegsleep@carasure.com.

Claim forms can be sent to wegsleep@carasure.com. For SleepWeg roadside assistance, phone the call centre at **0861 111 215**.



The policy is underwritten by Natsure (Pty) Ltd. (FDV 4578) and the Guardrisk Insurance Company Limited (FDV 75), both authorised financial services providers.

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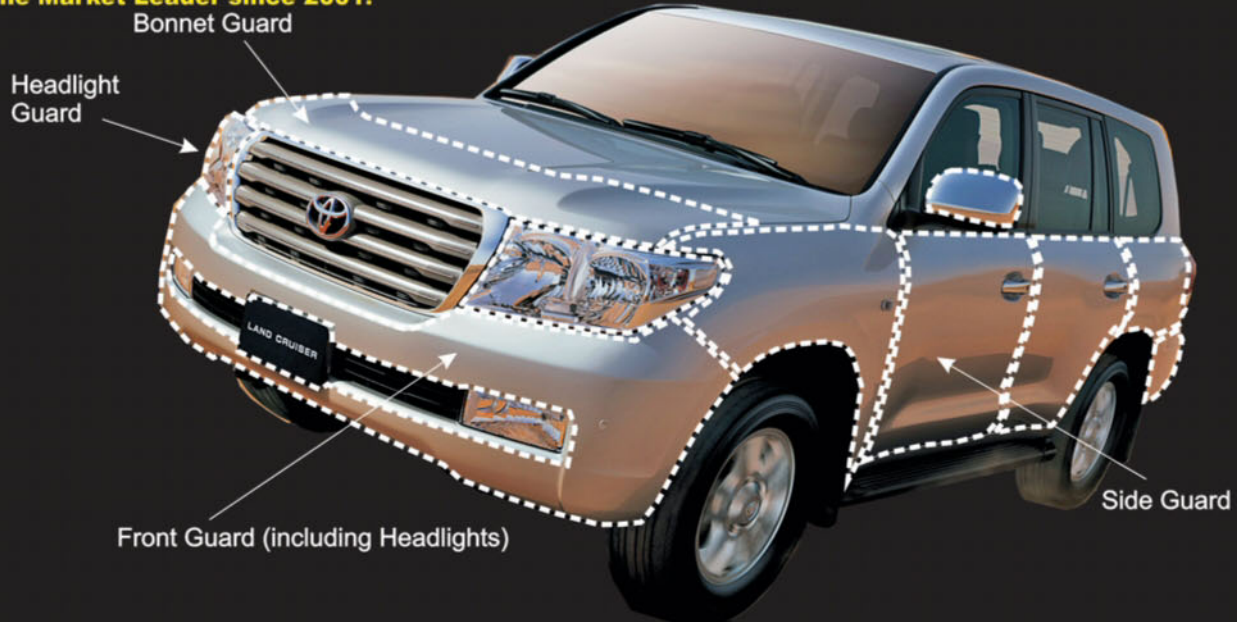
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Fuel for thought

Ever heard the one about the Reluctant Samaritan, tired toddler, moody mom, and the lo-o-o-ng 13,9 km on the R44 to Gordon's Bay? Pieter Redelinghuys has...

Our idyllic long weekend in the seaside town of Franskraal ended on Monday morning.

Like any diligent planner, I obviously put in leave for the first work day of the week. Meaning, no need to rush home.

Sunday night we enjoy a final braai on the stoep overlooking the ocean while we marvel at the night sky. City slickers like us are not used to this kind of display.

Shortly after 10 the next morning we hit the road. Our journey back is planned out meticulously because timing is everything if you're travelling with an almost three-year-old toddler who becomes extremely unpleasant if he doesn't nap.

"So," says my wife as we leave, "if everything goes according to plan, we'll be in Hermanus by 10:45 and by that time he should be fast asleep. Then just drive slowly back to town and he'll get in at least 90 minutes before we get home."

In theory, yes. In practice? Outside Hawston it's one long babbling monologue coming from the back seat. Wide, wide awake. "We have to get him to sleep..." my wife says with a slight hint of reproach in her voice. And just to emphasise her point, in case I wasn't aware of the severity of the issue: "You know how he gets if he doesn't sleep."

So, to stretch the journey a bit, we decide to take the scenic route, and after Hawston we turn left onto the R44, towards Kleinmond. We are, after all, technically still on holiday, so why not. "Don't worry," I say soothingly. I'll take it easy through Betty's Bay and Rooi-Els. That beautiful stretch of road... He'll be out before we reach Gordon's Bay.

By now I also become a little bit more aware of the fuel gauge. But with a grumpy, fidgety toddler – and a wife

whose mood is becoming fouler with every passing kilometre – my focus wasn't really on practical matters.

I remember looking at the petrol gauge as we left Franskraal. The car's computer told me I could drive 198 km before needing to fill up. Cape Town is about 170 km away – so within easy reaching distance.

What I didn't take into account though was the impact of the howling southeaster. It was almost like an invisible hand that kept pushing the Nissan back.

As we enter Kleinmond the dashboard shows we can drive 139 km. It's 111 km to Cape Town.

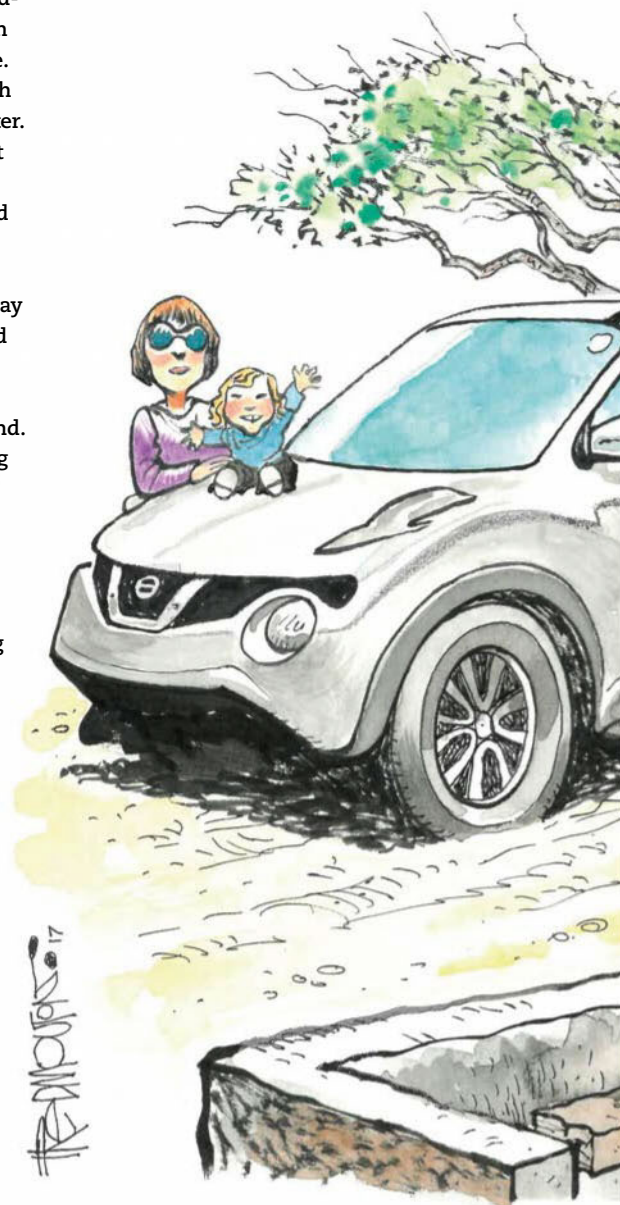
"I think we should stop for petrol," I say to my now slightly exasperated wife and still-awake child.

AT ABOUT 11:19 we drive into Kleinmond. At the first four-way stop I see something is amiss: The streets are completely empty. No people, no cars, nothing. All the shops – the supermarkets, corner cafés, estate agent, pharmacy, even the liquor store – are closed. And of course there's no sign of life at any of the filling stations either.

"What is going on?" I ask no one in particular.

Further down the main road we see flashing blue lights and a well-represented team of traffic and police officials. The road has been cordoned off. Behind them smoke is billowing from a building that looks like a factory or community hall.

"I'm sorry sir, the road is closed. You have to turn left here and then drive through the neighbourhood to Palmiet, where you'll connect with the R44," the speed cop explains. "The roads are closed because of the riot."



With no idea where I'm going, but driving in the general direction of the main road, I snake through the neighbourhoods and finally get to where I want to be, Kleinmond and its crisis behind us.

At this exact moment I notice the head of the small passenger in the back seat starting to loll forward. A minute later he's fast asleep.

"We can stop in Hangklip or Pringle Bay for petrol," I whisper when I notice the dash flashing 65 km to empty.

"Not a chance," is the reply. "If we stop now, he'll wake up." I realise from her tone of voice that it's probably best for me to just shut up. So I drive on.

Over the bridge outside Rooi-Els the fuel gauge shows 45 km. Then 39 km, 30 km, 22 km... With the wind and the sharp twists and turns this heavily loaded SUV didn't stand a chance.

"Um, I think we have a problem," I say quietly as we hit the straight stretch of road next to the Kogelberg campsite. And right there my co-pilot takes control of

the situation. "Pull over," she barks. "Now. Turn off at this campsite because we don't want to get stuck without petrol somewhere down the road."

On a Monday morning out of season there's very little going on at a resort like this. The woman who comes to the security boom eyes us suspiciously. I explain our situation and ask if we could possibly park the car here while we weigh up our options. "We do actually charge a rate for day visitors, but because this is an emergency I guess it's okay. You can park there under the trees," she gestures with her hand.

And as soon as the wheels stop turning, the sleeping angel in the back wakes up to voice his unhappiness.

"What are we going to do now? Why didn't you say something before it was too late?" comes the sting from the passenger seat. The irony is not lost on me.

"I'll hitchhike to Gordon's Bay, get some petrol... Enough to get us to the nearest filling station," I try to explain as calmly as possible over the sounds of a deafening tantrum in the backseat.

"Hitchhike? Honestly?! You're going to walk more than 10 km on that dangerous road with no shoulder? And where are you going to find a container big enough to get enough petrol to actually get us to Gordon's Bay? And are you planning to walk back with the petrol?"

All valid points.

The friendly receptionist, who couldn't help but overhear our conversation, walks over. "Those big wheelie bins are full of 5 l water bottles left by the people who camp here. You can use that."

First problem solved. But how exactly was I going to get to Gordon's Bay. It's 13,9 km away. And there's no one in sight and the resort's bakkie left for town earlier that morning.

"And that old Toyota Corolla over there? Who's is that," I ask hopefully.

"No, that's Abie's. He works here. But I'm pretty sure he feels as crap as his car looks."

I find Abie in a Wendy house a short distance from the reception office. He looks like he's been hit by a train. "What's wrong?" I ask. "Flu?" "Yeah, flu of a different kind," comes the curt answer.

After some serious pleading, Abie agrees: He'll take me to Gordon's Bay and bring me back.

"I'll pay you," I promise.

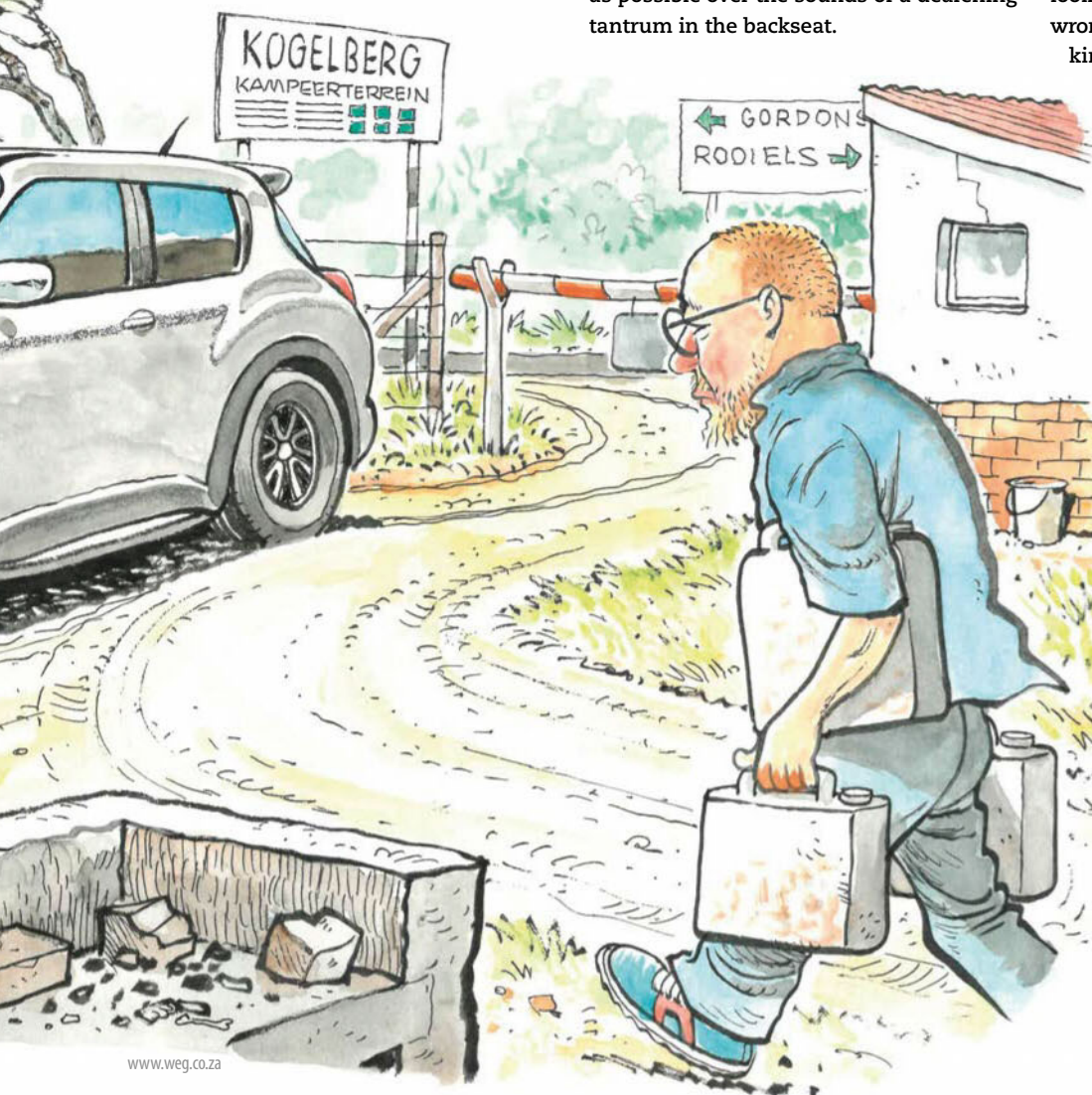
"It's cool. You can buy me a packet of cigarettes. And a Kentucky Rounder. And a two-litre Fanta Grape. And a packet of Grandpa's would be great."

The Corolla crawls over the hills and through the sharp bends. Not once do we go faster than 40 km/h. But I manage to fill up three water bottles with petrol, and the Reluctant Samaritan gets his Stuyvesants, headache powder, chicken burger, and cooldrink. And a little something extra because I'm so thankful that he helped us. An hour later we're back at the campsite, and the Nissan's tank is half full.

"You're good to go for another 350 km," the car's computer tells me.

"Pappa very stupid, hey pappa?" my son says as we head off.

"Ask your mom, my boy, she can answer that."



Built in '81, still going strong

They were very skeptical when they saw the ad for a 1981-model Fleetline 1. But today Alex and Isabel Clark from Pretoria are grateful they decided to go and have a look at it anyway.

Edited by **Kyle Kock** Photos **Alex Clark**



“We are a retired couple and we are well acquainted with caravans and camping, but we had to give it up for a while because of health issues. But when things improved, we decided that we hadn't had our fill of the great outdoors just yet. It was time to start looking for a used caravan.

Around October last year we saw an advertisement for a 1981-model Jurgens Fleetline 1. A dealership in Boksburg was selling it for R25 000. We were hesitant to make the trip from Pretoria just to go have a look at the Fleetline. I mean, how good could the condition of 36-year-old caravan actually be?

We phoned the salesman and he convinced us to go have a look. And what a pleasant surprise it turned out to be! The caravan was beautiful, well looked after and maintained, and still in its original condition – just like when it came out in 1981. Its equipment was basically complete and the tent – still the original – also in a decent condition.

It did need a few fittings, some touch-ups here and there, and some adjustments to make it fit our personal tastes and preferences, but it was all part of the fun of breathing new life into our “new” Fleetline. All it needed was a new set of tyres, new curtains (ones we liked), a thorough service (that included a full valet), and brand new decals that were made to order from Jurgens.

Now we could camp amongst the best of them, Isabel said. I was also



lucky enough to find a set of the original stabilisers. The caravan now has a full electrical system and the original fridge works with gas and electricity. Even the gas stove is in decent nick and is our go-to for boiling water when there's not enough power at the campsite.

We tow the Fleetline with a 2 litre Chery Tiggo. The caravan is still fitted with leaf

springs and is really steady, with a low profile. Also, it's light enough for two retirees to handle – weight becomes very important at this stage of one's life.

On a recent visit to the Kruger National Park we overheard an elderly couple talking about the Fleetline. We heard the guy telling his wife: “They don't make them like that anymore”. We appreciated him saying that because it's true – they just don't build caravans like this anymore. For example, we have yet to see a single sign of water leaks or dry rot. After so many years, those are really big plus points.



Have you spotted any wacky wheels on your travels? Tell us about it and send a photo to

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