

#66

CAMP CUISINE BRINGING HOME THE BACON

APRIL-MAY 2025 | ISSUE 66

go! Drive & Camp

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in this arid land

PETS

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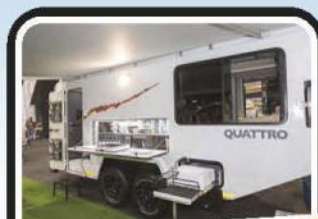
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Straight from the horse's mouth



Regular readers of our magazine will notice that Mic van Zyl's column isn't in its usual place in this issue. Mic has been part of our editorial family for a very long time, having written over a hundred 4x4 and off-road columns for *Drive & Camp* and its predecessor, *DriveOut*. He's a great person with a deep passion for the outdoors and his profession – two elements that, coincidentally, go hand in hand, as he is a director at Ironman 4x4, one of the biggest and most well-known brands in the industry.

It's an absolute pleasure to work with Mic. I have great respect for his ethics, his honest and decent way of doing things, and his infectious enthusiasm for everything related to 4x4 adventures, off-road gear, technological advancements and overlanding.

He often amazes me with his extensive knowledge of the history of every relevant vehicle manufacturer – how things worked in the past, how they have changed over time and, of course, his well-balanced and thoughtful opinion on whether those changes were for the better or worse.

This insight shines through in every

column he has written over the years.

What truly sets him apart from so many so-called experts is that he isn't afraid to challenge the status quo. Many influencers tread carefully when a popular manufacturer misses the mark with a product, fearing the backlash from the brand (and, of course, the loss of their hefty marketing budget). Not Mic.

If he notices something that could make life harder rather than easier for a fellow enthusiast or potential buyer heading into the wilderness, he calls it out – plainly, honestly and with clear reasoning. It doesn't matter what badge is on the grille.

Mic is the embodiment of the 4x4 and off-road lifestyle. He lives for what he does and his profession is woven into his DNA.

He prefers dirt roads, has explored this continent from corner to corner, and his enthusiasm is contagious – especially when he shares, down to the finest detail, his experience of something, whether for the first or the twentieth time.

That's why it was tough news for all of us in the editorial team when we heard that Mic, who has been part of our family

for so many years, was diagnosed with throat cancer.

As we were finalising this issue, he let us know that he was in hospital for treatment after struggling to swallow. But you'd never

guess it from the way he sounded when I called him.

"Mate," he said, "I'm going to be just fine. I just convinced the specialist – who arrived here with my brand-new compression socks – to swing by so we can kit out his Hilux properly."

That way, he and his family can finally get off the tar and experience the magic of the bush. Hang on, I'm sending you a picture of my new socks – tell me when last you saw legs looking this good..."

On a serious note, he explained, in the way that only he can, that he's been reading up and researching this thing that has now come his way. It's not my place to share everything here, but he did insist that I mention one thing:

"Mate, tell our readers that there are many reasons why I'm in hospital with cancer right now. But all of those reasons boil down to one thing: stress! For far too long, and for far too many reasons, I was completely overstressed – and that was the fuel for what I'm going through now."

"As we all know, nature is the best place to shed your worries and stress, so as soon as they discharge me from here, I'm heading for the wilderness. That's where I'll truly heal."

We wish you a speedy recovery, Mic. And we look forward to seeing you back on the road soon!

Safe travels,

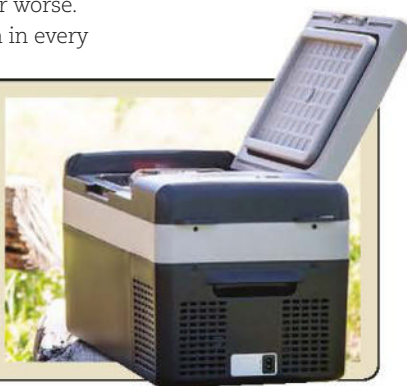
Schalk

EDITOR

✉ schalk.jonker@media24.com

WINNER!

Congratulations to Janica Smit of Pretoria, the lucky winner of the National Luna TB20 fridge-freezer, which we gave away with compliments of this iconic brand in *Drive & Camp* #64.



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MEDIA24

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READER'S STORY 78

#66 COVER IMAGE – JEANNIE VENTER

“On the penultimate day of our tour through Angola, we wild camped at a breathtaking spot halfway between Lobito and Moçâmedes (Namibe). We took a stroll on the beach and noticed a whale and her calf near the shoreline.”



Camera settings Canon EOS 77D; f22; 1/15 sec;
18 mm; ISO 1 600



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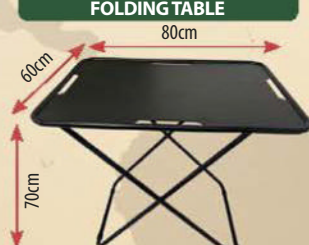
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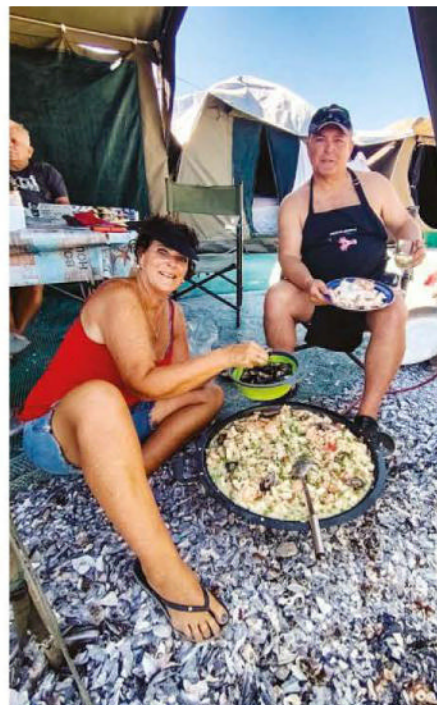
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We love hearing what's on your mind! Write to us at drivecamp@gomag.co.za and please remember to include your full address and contact details. *Drive & Camp* reserves the right to edit and shorten letters – and publish them in the magazine, on the website and elsewhere.



Love at the train station

A year ago, I shared how a group of us have been camping together at Tietiesbaai every December holiday for the past 15 years or so. We set up camp, and our camping friends come and go as their schedules allow.

On our return from the West Coast in 2023, I met Willie Dreyer. He's also a camper but hadn't yet joined our traditional camping holiday. I told him about our annual getaway and asked, "Are you coming, or are you staying behind?"

The short version of the story is that Willie managed to last all 28 days with us... and we've now been in a relationship for a year.

As always, we kept to all our usual doings – including the seafood we braai with enthusiasm – but this past holiday, I also put together a menu. I named our camp D' Treinstasie (The Train Station), of course, because of all the friends coming



and going. The day starts with Coffee over the Coals, followed by A Day of Love, Laughter and Sunshine, then A Day of Seafood and Big Fires. Next is Plans, Wine, Pudding, Shooters, Friends, and Sugar, and finally, we end the day with Simmering Pots in the fire.

On New Year's Eve, we braaiied while the clock ticked towards midnight and



WINNING LETTER

Gretha wins a cooler bag worth R220. Whether you're a camper, fisherman, or sports fan next to a cricket pitch, this cooler bag has room for a lunch box and a 1,5 l cooldrink bottle. The lid also has space for a coffee flask. The interior is lined with PVC, which makes it easy to keep the bag clean and hygienic. The bag has a short strap that reaches over the top and attaches with a Velcro strip, as well as a longer shoulder strap if you're going to carry it over longer distances. It's an ideal picnic accessory or a padkos bag for a road trip. winkel.weg.co.za



Open Weekend!

12th and 13th of April 2025

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Also on display is be the New Okto Cabana II BaseLine, and the New Freeline Maverick off-road caravan!, the range of Okto caravans, Afrispoor off-road caravans, etalian "B" licence ready, off-road camping trailer and the very popular Edge-Out and Vagabond Rogue teardrop trailers.

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the time for bubbly arrived.

Willie says next year, he'll be packing less – he brought so many solar panels and inverters, he could have powered all of Tietiesbaai!

He also invited his friends Diffie and Anneke Lötter, as well as his brother and sister-in-law, Arno and Suzette. They camped with a Jurgens Xplorer and said it was quite the experience to camp "this rough."

Our friend Minnaar Carinus even brought a bench or two from Stellenbosch for our "cigar lounge," which we set up inside one of the tents.

For now, the train station is empty again – until we do it all over again in December.

GRETHA LAURENCE
Brackenfell

Kosi also has giants

I was thrilled about the article "Kosi's David and Goliath" in the October-November 2024 issue.

The Kosi Bay estuary's northern tip is just a few kilometres from the Mozambique border, and it is possible to walk from the estuary to Ponta do Ouro in only an hour or three. This is a town in the extreme south of Mozambique, and the name is Portuguese for "tip of gold."

The bay is noted for its aggressive bull shark population, and it is these sharks that are locally known as the Zambezi shark. These bull sharks, *Carcharhinus leucas*, are also informally known in Africa as the "zambi shark."

As for their preferred habitat, they are commonly found worldwide in warm, shallow waters along coasts and in rivers. While as for the dangers to man, it is known for its aggressive nature.

In fact, it is the sharks' aggressive nature that has led to ongoing culling efforts near beaches to protect beachgoers. This is one of the causes of bull shark population decline, and, as a result, these bull sharks are listed as vulnerable on the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Whale sharks and manta rays also visit the region of Kosi Bay, while whale watching to view mainly humpback whales and dolphins is a growing industry in the region.

As for the Kosi palm, botanists touring



here will be interested to know that it has the largest leaf of any plant, and other endemic species include the Kosi cycad and Kosi fern. This region of the KwaZulu-Natal coast is also one of very few places on earth where five different species of mangrove trees are found.

While studying at the Onderstepoort Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University

of Pretoria from 1974 until 1976, my fellow veterinary students and I would regularly drive down to camp on the beaches just north of the capital of Mozambique. We would sunbathe, swim, scuba dive and snorkel to our hearts' content.

DR MARTIN BRIGGS
Gqeberha



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Rolling in style

As always, this year's Caravan Show featured plenty of eye-catching innovations.

Local caravan and 4x4 accessory manufacturers were in top form at the annual Caravan Show at Gallagher Estate in Midrand. Most manufacturers use the show as

a platform to unveil their latest models and it was great to see some new faces in the mix.

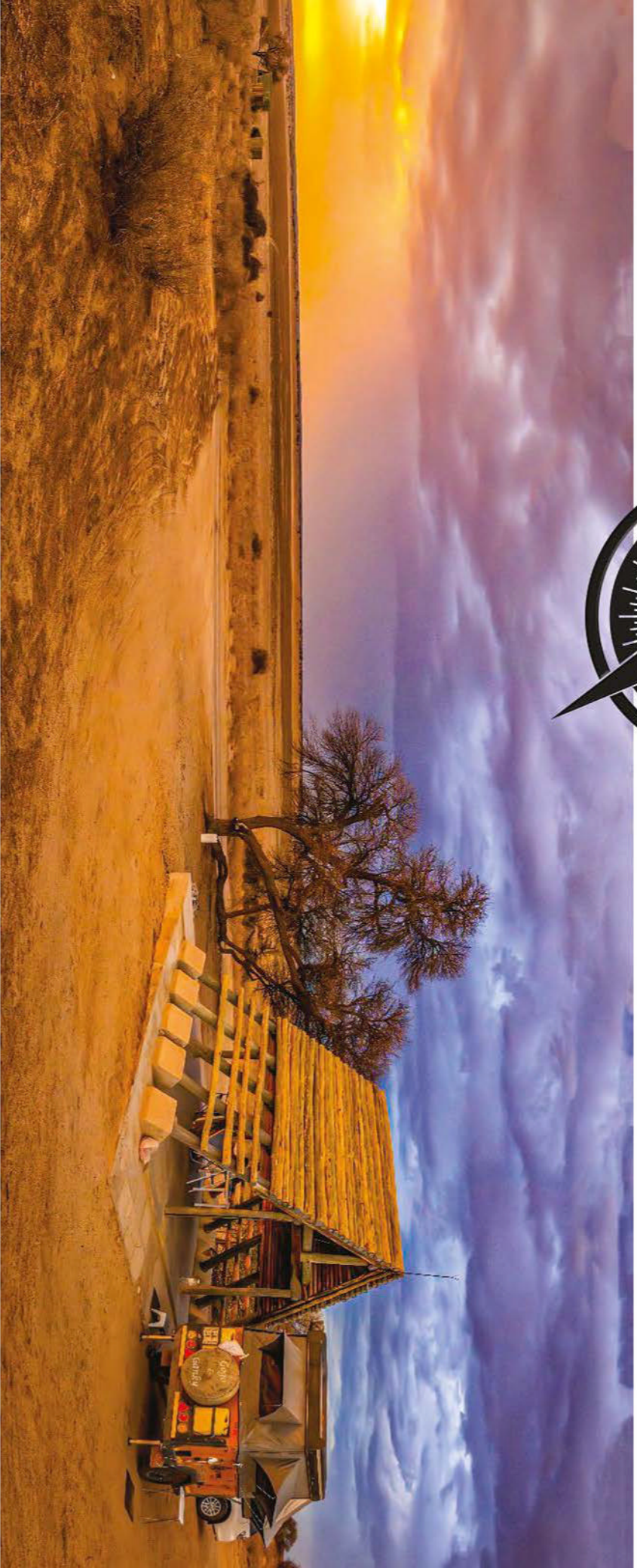
This year, more than 30 caravan manufacturers showcased their products and we feature 29 of them

on the following pages. This time, we're casting the net wider than just caravans, including all sorts of equipment and 4x4 accessories – a fitting way to celebrate the show's coming of age.





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OKTO WASP



OKTO

Okto is well known for its road caravans as well as its ever-popular Gravelor dirt-road caravans. The manufacturer, which has been building caravans for just over six years, has now expanded its range and showcased the Wasp – a lightweight off-road caravan for two, offering ample packing space.

The cupboards are extra deep, with space for a microwave. By the door, there's a shoe cupboard with a tilting door and next to it, a standard 7 000 BTU air conditioner. On the opposite side, a second door leads to the outdoor shower. The queen-size bed is built across the nose of the caravan.

The Wasp comes with a 75 l water tank, a gas-electric geyser and a DC-DC charger. It's solar-ready, with the power panel located on the left-hand door. This panel features buttons for the lights, USB sockets, the water pump

and the fridge-freezer. Below that, there's a screen displaying voltage readings, current, power and energy consumption (in Wh). Further down, you'll find the water level meter. A groundsheet, awning and travel blanket are also included as standard.

The body consists of an inner and outer aluminium layer with a polystyrene core that is vacuum bonded. The panels are 32 mm thick, while the floor is 40 mm.

Its estimated GVM is 1 600 kg, with a tare weight of 1 200 kg and it is fitted with 15-inch alloy wheels.

Okto has also introduced a basic version of its Cabana II road caravan. At first glance, the Cabana II Baseline looks identical to the standard model, but the equipment differs.

The Baseline is R52 000 cheaper and also lighter. Its GVM is 1 271 kg compared to the standard model's 1 500 kg and its tare



weight is 1 080 kg versus 1 140 kg.

The Baseline does not come with a slide-out kitchen, battery, gas, or water system. Instead of a 12 V fridge, it has a 220 V upright fridge.

Prices Okto Wasp R499 900; Okto Cabana II Baseline R359 900

Contact 011 792 1456

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OKTO CABANA II BASELINE

Rhino-man CANOPIES



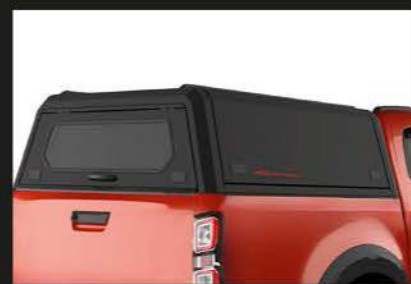
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BRUISER 4x4

Bruiser 4x4 may be a new manufacturer, but the people behind it are industry veterans. Owner Brandon Hardie also heads UniPod, which has five models on the market.

Brandon explains that Bruiser 4x4 is the luxury division of UniPod – much like Lexus is to Toyota in the motor industry. The inspiration for the first Bruiser model's taillights comes from the classic Chevrolet Corvette, he says.

The idea was to create an off-road caravan with a heavy-duty chassis and a 2,5-ton axle, designed for self-sufficient bush travel. It includes luxuries such as solar power, an inverter and a water system with both fresh and grey water storage.

The outdoor kitchen is located on the left side, while the bed slides out like a capsule from the rear. A work surface, gas stove and all your crockery and cutlery slide out from under the bed capsule and sit perpendicular to the kitchen.

The kitchen is cleverly designed: a large door swings open, revealing the interior space, giving it a roadhouse feel and creating extra space inside. What makes this setup a winner is the interior shutter door that can be lowered to provide instant privacy.

You don't often see an interior bathroom in a caravan of this size. It features a wet room with a toilet and basin, positioned opposite the entrance.

The body is constructed from a combination of stainless steel, fibreglass and aluminium.

Price Between R500 000 and R600 000

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PEDDERS

Pedders is a suspension and brake specialist from Australia with a store in Paulshof, near Sandton. At their stand, two products caught our attention: LED spotlights and their latest shock absorbers.

The spotlight is from the brand Lazer and the Air-55 light bar has a lumen rating of 6 800. To put that into perspective, the headlights of an average car shine at around 3 000 lumens. The light bar has a lifespan of 50 000 hours

and draws a modest 5 A at 55 W from the battery.

Pedders' adjustable shock absorbers can be dampened in nine stages by turning a knob on the shock itself. Each clockwise click stiffens the shock's damping.

Pedders states that their shocks are filled with oil instead of gas, as this makes them more reliable.

Contact [facebook.com/Pedders4wd](https://www.facebook.com/Pedders4wd)
 011 803 33673

iKAMPER

iKamper has upgraded its DLX range of rooftop tents, introducing better mattresses and an extra light.

The tents now have a cork layer on the floor, which traps condensation, reduces noise and insulates the tent against icy cold conditions. On top of the cork floor is a self-inflating 10 cm thick mattress, which is also filled with foam for extra comfort. When setting up camp, remove the plug and as you fold the tent, the air is pushed out.

In addition to the roof light inside the tent, there is now also a light near the top steps of the ladder. This light illuminates the ladder rungs for safer climbing and also lights up the ground beneath the tent, creating a well-lit space next to your vehicle where you can sit at a camping table.

Prices for DLX tents range from R78 000 to R89 000.

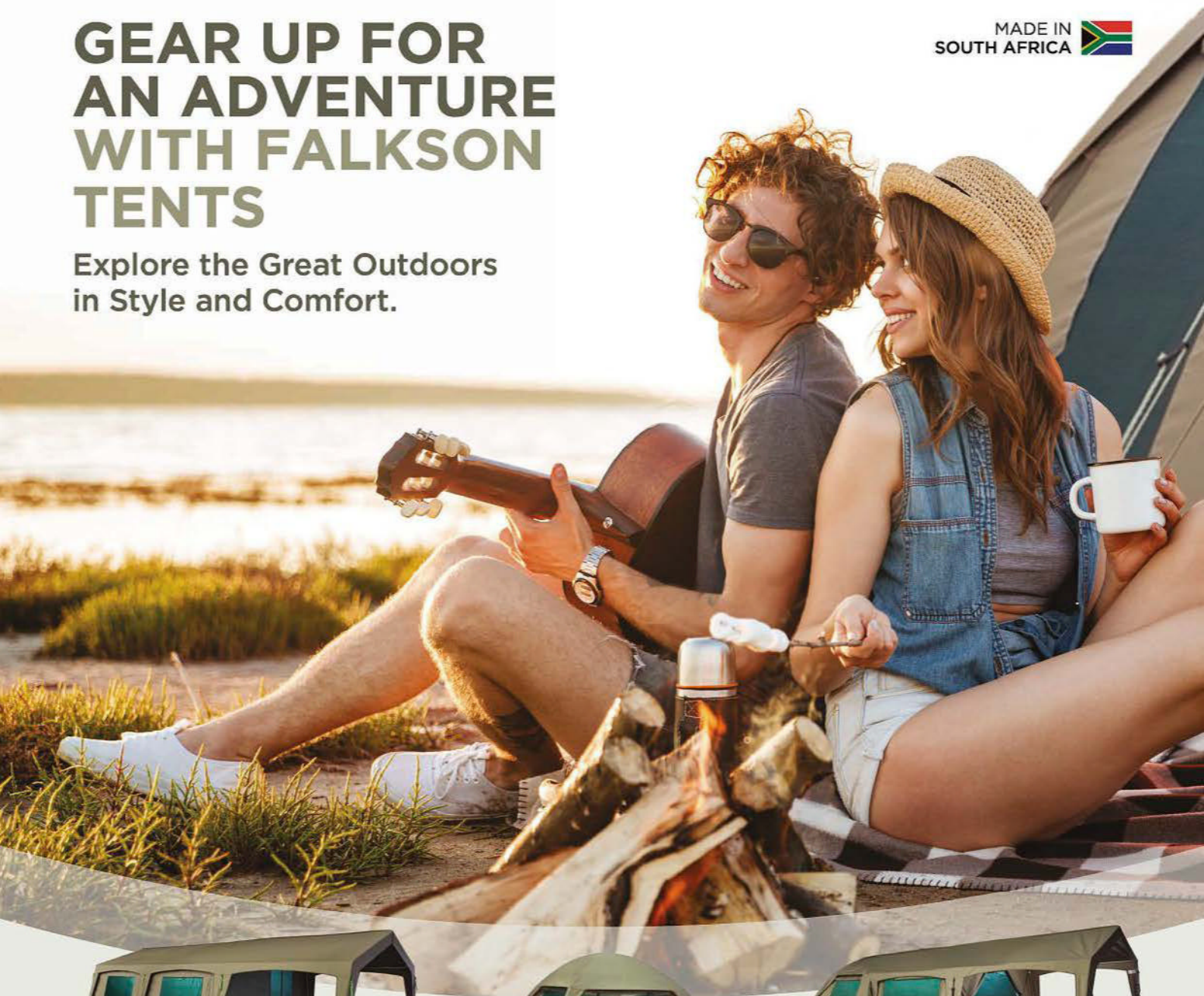
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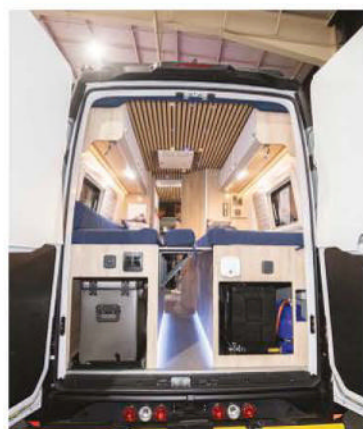
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MOTORHOME-WORLD

Motorhome-World offers a wide range of motorhomes and now its Journey models are getting a fully off-road-ready version.

These models are built on various panel vans with chassis from manufacturers like Mercedes-Benz, Iveco and Fiat.

They are mostly designed for regular roads, although the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter does come with all-wheel drive. According to

the manufacturer, the new Journey Offroad is a true off-roader built on an Iveco chassis. It fits neatly below the Xtreme model, which is designed to tackle any terrain.

The Journey Offroad features permanent four-wheel drive with front, centre and rear differential locks.

It has a 7-tonne chassis; thus, you'll need a Code C driver's licence.

The Offroad's wading depth (700 mm) is

200 mm better and it's also physically larger.

The Sprinter is 5,93 m long, while the Offroad is 1,25 m longer (7,18 m). The two also differ in height by 25 cm, with the Offroad reaching 3,18 m at its highest point.

Optional extras include a Victron solar charge controller (100/50 A) and 100 W solar panel, Fiamma Deep Black F45s awning, National Luna 52 l freezer, swivel seats, a reverse camera, winch and snorkel.

Price R3 295 000

Contact ☎ 021 577 3863 or 087 985 0630

✉ info@motorhome-world.com

🌐 motorhome-world.com

VAGABOND

The Vagabond Rogue is a teardrop trailer that has made a name for itself in South Africa. Now, its kitchen has had a slight redesign. Instead of a narrow and deep fridge-freezer recessed into the countertop, the fridge is now wider and shallower.

The standard purchase is camp-ready and includes equipment such as a 270° awning, Victron smart charger, 50 l fridge-freezer, 60 l water tank, queen-size bed, stove and crockery.

Price R275 000

Contact ☎ 087 150 2176 ✉ explore@vagabondsa.co.za 🌐 vagabondsa.co.za





OVERLANDER

The Overlander off-road camper has been built specifically as a luxury, comfortable and quick setup camper. It has independent suspension, which enables it to travel over any terrain.



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Contact details: 021 552 7752 | info@overlander.life | www.overlander.life

12 Fourth Street, Montague Gardens, 7441

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GECKO OFFROAD

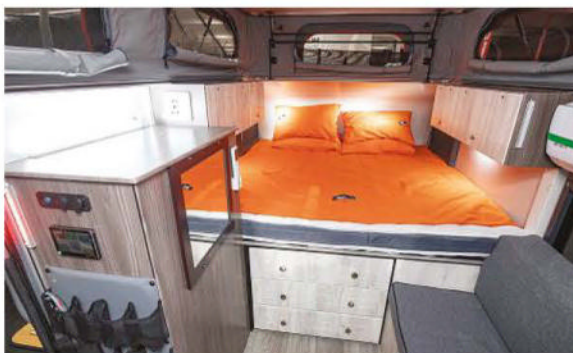
Gecko off-road caravans has moved its factory from Haenertsburg in Limpopo to Krugersdorp in Gauteng after the father-and-son team, Johan and Jakes Taljaard, took over as the new owners. They are no strangers to the caravan industry, as they also own CMC Caravans.

At the show, the Taljaards showcased the latest Gecko, which now also comes in an additional variant. Instead of the shower in the En Suite model, you can opt for cupboards and an outdoor shower tent. The basin and toilet remain the same and the price is unchanged.

All models now also offer the option of



GECKO



a Victron power system, which includes solar power, lithium batteries and an inverter.

An additional nose cone that fits onto the A-frame and an L-shaped awning extending over the front and outdoor

kitchen are in the pipeline and discussions are underway with potential dealers.

Price R593 500

Contact 082 416 1991 or 063 599 5338

johan@gecko-offroad.co.za

gecko-offroad.co.za



NALEDI

NALEDI

Both awnings (2 x 2 m) on the Naledi come standard and the ground clearance has been increased from 350 mm to 420 mm.

As small as the Naledi is, the standard version is ready to hitch and camp. It comes equipped with a 100 mm high-density foam mattress, a roof fan that can rotate in both directions, multiple 220 V and USB sockets, a 100 Ah lithium battery, a 100 W solar panel with a regulator, a Victron charger, a microwave, crockery for four people, two pots and other kitchenware, an induction plate, a single-burner gas stove, an electric kettle, a solid wood kitchen counter with a sink and tap, a 50 l National Luna fridge-freezer and a 50 l water tank.

The body is made of aluminium and an aluminium composite.

Price R289 000

Contact 083 778 5555 andre@

naledicampers.com naledicampers.com



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MBADA 2 SLEEPER



MBADA 4 SLEEPER



MBADA NOVA 2D

TUFF CATS

Tuff Cats has expanded its Mbada range. The existing two models, the Nova and 2-Sleeper, have now been joined by a 4-Sleeper and a Nova 2D model.

In the Nova, the basin is positioned in front of you against the opposite panel as you enter. In the Nova 2D, the basin moves to the left, next to the bed, making space for a second door where the basin used to be. This door provides access to the outdoor bathroom, which is set up on the right side of the caravan.

The Mbada 4 has a permanent bed in

the front, while the second bed slides out from the right panel.

Although the Mbada 2 is an existing model, it has been slightly updated. Its slide-out bed has been replaced with an interior bed and a dinette has been added. The shower cubicle is also significantly larger.

Prices Mbada 2 R519 000; Mbada 4 R539 500; Mbada Nova R499 800; Mbada Nova 2D R509 000

Contact 082 301 2393

sales@tuffcats.co.za tuffcats.co.za

CAMP MASTER

This camping equipment manufacturer showcased several brand-new camping chairs at the Caravan Show. Three models, in particular, caught our attention: the GCI Outdoor XL Freestyle rocking chair (R1 800), GCI Outdoor Legz Up recliner (R2 000) and Camp Master relaxation chair (R1 200).

The rocking chair has two shock absorbers on the back legs and hinges at the base, allowing for a smooth rocking motion without the risk of tipping over. It also features a small pouch at the front for a water bottle or your phone.

The recliner has a mesh panel in the backrest to allow airflow and with a pull of a lever, the backrest reclines while a footrest lifts up. Cushions for both your head and feet make it the perfect chair for a nap in comfort.

Camp Master's relaxation chair also reclines, but instead of a footrest, it comes with a fold-out side table and a cup holder – just what you need to make your beach holiday even better.

Contact makro.co.za



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Make your next overland holiday a better, tougher, and smarter adventure with National Luna's 500+ camping solutions, including 12V refrigeration, solar chargers, battery-management systems, and more.

What started as a local 12V lighting business in 1987 has evolved into one of the world's most recognisable camping brands. Today, National Luna boasts the world's most comprehensive 12V fridge/freezer range, the broadest offering of dual-battery systems and portable power packs, and the widest variety of 12V lighting solutions.

Here's just a glimpse of National Luna extensive product offering, but you can view more at www.nationalluna.com.



National Luna is the sole distributor of **Indel B** fridges in South Africa. The imported Italian brand features a wide range of front-loading fridges ideally suited to the caravan and camper markets.



« National Luna's entire fridge range is now equipped with Bluetooth™ control. The Bluetooth™ connectivity allows you to remotely control the fridge's temperature – and other settings and functions – via the NL CONNECT app (available for iOS and Android devices).



With 14 models to choose from, you're guaranteed to find the right fridge size for your vehicle.

Introducing the new quick-change range



Priced from: R7 949

For years, campers have called for a side-mount fridge option where the control panel can be easily moved to the side of the unit instead of the front. This setup allows quick access to the fridge's controls without sliding the unit out or shifting items around.

Well, you asked and National Luna listened with the recent launch of their new QC RANGE, the latest design that allows you to DIY swap the control panel from the front of the unit to the side – without requiring any special tools or know-how to do the job. In addition, all QC models (across the range) boast two new Fast Charge USB ports for rapid device charging.



Heavy-duty handles with integrated tie-down points.



Choose between a single-compartment fridge/freezer, or a dual-control where you can independently adjust temperatures for both compartments – an industry-leading feature invented by National Luna in 2002.

» Control panel being swapped



USB ports



« Lockable latches with built-in bottle openers.



Camping Lights



Priced from: R185

National Luna is the only manufacturer worldwide that still produces 12V fluorescent bulbs and lamp fittings for older caravan and camper models.

However, due to legislation changes around the sale of fluorescent bulbs, they'll soon be replacing these fittings with LED-compatible versions that are a direct match to the previous models and easy to swap out with no additional drilling or mounting.

National Luna's wide range of **LED camping lights** are available in various sizes and colours.

Choose between a touchpad on/off button with three brightness settings or a toggle switch with two brightness modes.



12VDC fluorescent lamps are still produced by National Luna as a backup service for older caravan and camper models.



Battery Management



Priced from: R1 300

What started as a bare-bones solenoid pack 25 years ago has since morphed into various battery-management options, including portable power packs, distribution boxes, and advanced DC-DC chargers with built-in solar regulators.



If you don't have enough load-bay space for a portable system – or your auxiliary battery is mounted in a unique location – you can still enjoy the features of the battery box's control panel by installing a National Luna **Distribution Box**. The unit is sold as a standalone product with three model options available.



National Luna produces several **battery box** options and **portable power packs**, all of which include a patented step-face design.



The all-new National Luna **Portable Power Pack** now features Bluetooth™ control allowing you to monitor both batteries' input charge, power draw and voltage levels.



DC to DC chargers are available in both 25A and 40A configurations. Both units feature a plug-n-play MPPT solar regulator and lithium-battery compatibility.

Cost cutter

Look out for National Luna's all-new cost-cutting camping fridges, which are lightweight, mobile, and easy on the pocket. Capable of reaching chest-freezer temperatures (-20°C), these budget buys offer a far more effective solution than rotary moulded, similarly priced ice boxes.

Priced from R3 999





WILDCAT 4 SLEEPER

AFRISPOOR

Afrispoor has added an extra fold-out bed to its Wild Cat 2 Sleeper and this new model is called the Wild Cat 4 Sleeper, which is R10 000 extra.

The original beds remain unchanged (2,1 x 1,68 m), while the fold-out bed in the 4 Sleeper measures 1,76 x 1,3 m.

The Wild Cat 4 Sleeper is camp-ready and comes equipped with a 105 Ah battery and 15 A charger, 105 l water tank with water pump, 90 l National Luna fridge-freezer, stainless steel stove, cutlery and knives, outdoor shower and geyser.

Price R599 000

Contact 031 569 4323 admin@afrispoor.co.za afrispoor.co.za

ADVENTURE XTREME

Adventure Xtreme has raised the body of its new model, the Ultimate, by 100 mm compared to its six existing models.

The Ultimate now has a tall door and the island bed extends from the caravan's body.

You enter from the back and just past the bed at the far end of the body, there is a bench-like area that spans the entire width of the caravan. This type of storage space is useful in any caravan, but in the Ultimate, it is also multi-purpose. A single mattress can fit here if you need sleeping space for more than two people. If a fourth sleeper is needed, there is the option of a bunk bed above the single bed.

Opposite the foot of the main bed, a fold-up surface extends as wide as the bed itself, allowing you to use the bed as a couch while working on a laptop.

The Ultimate has a hand basin inside, but directly across from the entrance door, there is a second door that opens into an outdoor shower tent.

The manufacturer has also modified the bed



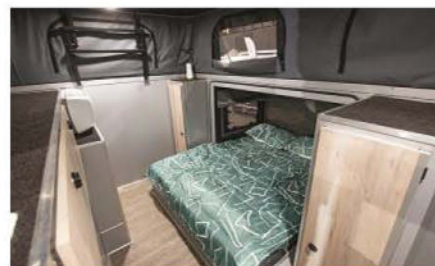
SAMURAI

in its Samurai model. It remains a slide-out bed but now extends further away from the nose. It is also wider – upgraded from a double bed to a queen-size – and, as in the Ultimate, it is now an island bed.

Prices Ultimate R451 500; Samurai R559 400

Contact 082 775 5346

adventurextreme.co.za



ULTIMATE



DEDICATED CAMPER & CARAVAN SOLUTIONS

Front-loaders

One of National Luna's key specialisations is 220VAC to 12VDC fridge conversions. This unique power-supply conversion gives camper and caravan manufacturers significantly more refrigeration options and the opportunity to design their kitchen units around traditional household fridges in any existing battery- or solar-powered application. >>



Hisense H230BTSA-2700



Hisense H310BIT



Hisense H225TTS1080



LOW PROFILE MODELS >

As the camping market evolves, so does the need for new applications, and among those is a growing call for a low-profile camping fridge that can fit under a tonneau cover or slot under a bed in an off-road trailer or caravan.

Hence, National Luna's three new low-profile fridges launched earlier this year, including a 35-, 45- and 70-litre model.

Priced from R8 999

IWM Cruise
49 Classic



IWM Drawer 190 Inox



IWM Drawer 130 Inox

<< Super space saver

Saving space is vitally important to all off-road trailer manufacturers, which is why National Luna offers a wide range of space-saving drawer fridges.

These fridges allow manufacturers to design their campers with maximum space efficiency in mind. They also enable other components or storage space to be built directly above the fridge without affecting its access.

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BORDEAUX XL

CASCADE LEISURE

Cascade is one of a handful of ultra luxury caravan manufacturers and you're almost guaranteed to turn heads when arriving at a caravan park with one of these models. These caravans are mostly suited to tar and dirt roads, but Cascade has now introduced its Action Offroad. Owner Riaan van Helsdingen says it was developed in response to customer demand.

The Action has a 2,5-tonne axle, but the GVM is set at 1 800 kg. It is thus over designed, about 200 mm narrower than the standard models, with 100 mm more ground clearance, longer leaf springs and shock absorbers as standard. The cupboards are double-anchored and the locks and sliding frames are designed for heavy-duty use.

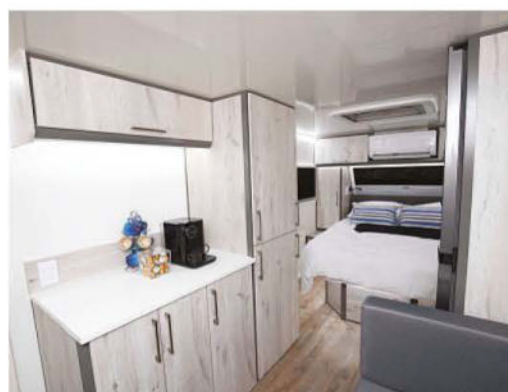
The king-size bed is multi-purpose: at night, it provides a wide sleeping space from wall to wall, but during the day, the middle section folds up to create a dining area.



The separate bathroom is built into the rear and when you close the door behind you, it feels like stepping into a hotel suite. The shower is fully enclosed with its own door.

Standard features include a 220 V fridge-freezer, air conditioner, gas geyser, 110 ℓ water tank, outdoor kitchen with gas stove, 4,2 kW inverter with a 200 Ah battery and two solar panels.

Cascade also unveiled a larger version of its Bordeaux model. The Bordeaux XL



is 780 mm longer than the existing model and, instead of the bench in front of you upon entry, it has a dinette that folds down into a wide single bed. Unlike the standard model's single axle, the XL has a double axle, increasing the GVM from 1 800 kg to 2 200 kg.

Prices Action R570 000; Bordeaux XL R645 000

Contact 082 926 0377/8 info@cascadeleisure.co.za cascadeleisure.co.za



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BUSHWAKKA

South Africans are well acquainted with Bushwakka's models, which include various Sundowner models. However, the manufacturer also imports models such as the WeGo and Drover from its Australian sister company. One example is the Fakawi Tribe 2, which was on display at the show.

The caravan is fully imported, explains owner Jasper Hewitt and is the only model in the range with a slide-out bed. All models, however, come with an indoor bathroom and an outdoor shower.

The name Fakawi is an Australian expression used when someone wonders where they are. The caravan offers a balance between indoor and outdoor living, while providing amenities such as air conditioning, solar power, an inverter



and 200 Ah lithium batteries.

To the left as you enter, there is an L-shaped bench with a bunk bed above it. The bathroom is straight ahead, with the sleeping area at the back left. The entire rear section has built-in cupboards, along with additional storage at the back

of the outdoor kitchen. In addition to the sink in the outdoor kitchen, there is also one inside near the door.

The delivery time is six months.

Price R948 750

Contact 087 250 2766

📍 bushwakka.africa

BUSHTECH

Bushtech has introduced a new shower box mounted on the back of its canopy. Where there were previously two spare wheels, there is now one spare wheel on the right, with the optional shower cubicle next to it. Inside, there is space for a gas cylinder, a water heater with all the necessary piping and a shower head.

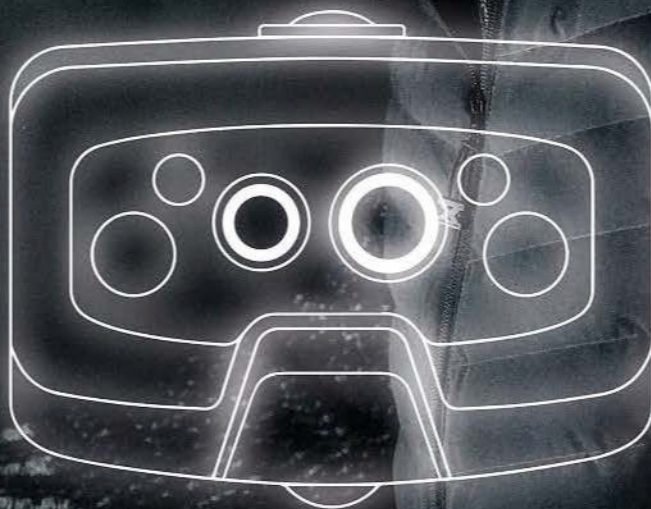
Bushtech has also redesigned the camping kitchen inside its canopy. The induction plate, which was previously a standalone unit, is now built into the drawer on the left side of the canopy. Bushtech says this setup makes much more sense, as all cooking equipment is now on the same side of the canopy and there's no more hassle with loose power cables.

Contact 📍 bushtech.co.za





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MOBI LODGE QUATTRO



MOBI LODGE

Mobi Lodge is a popular choice when it comes to luxury off-road caravans. Part of its success lies in its limited model range: the compact XL or the flagship Continental.

When a manufacturer like Mobi Lodge introduces a new model, you expect something special – and the Quattro certainly makes a statement on the showroom floor.

At first glance, it looks like another Continental, but the name Quattro reveals a lot. The Continental, designed for couples, is unmatched in interior space thanks to its large slide-out bed. The Quattro, however, sleeps four, meaning the interior has been expanded even further. Additionally, the Quattro has an extra axle.

Instead of the 100 x 50 mm chassis construction, the Quattro has a double-frame design with an extra axle. This means it has two 2,5-tonne axles compared to the Continental's single axle.



The Continental has a double bed, while the Quattro boasts a king-size bed. The slide-out bed is significantly larger and 700 mm wider. The passageway is also 100 mm wider (now 400 mm).

The Quattro adds a lounge area at the rear, with a U-shaped bench along the side panels and a tabletop in the centre. This can also be converted into a double bed.

One of the more subtle changes is in the bathroom. It remains built into the nose,

but the outer shape is less pointed, creating additional interior space. The shower itself is now enclosed, with 2 m between the base and the ceiling.

The upright fridge, which is 157 l in the Continental, is no longer positioned in front of you upon entry. Instead, it is built into the door and is significantly larger at 245 l.

If you can't quite pinpoint the more refined interior finish, take a look at the ceiling. Unlike the Continental, which has carpet, the Quattro



has a glossy fibreglass ceiling.

The Quattro is also longer than the Continental, measuring 7 m compared to 5,6 m. Like the Continental, it has a fully fibreglass body, but the walls now feature a 25 mm honeycomb layer between two outer layers. The tare weight is 1 940 kg and the GVM is either 2 250 kg or 2 500 kg.

Price R985 000

Contact 013 246 1327 • sales@mobilodge.com • mobilodge.com



CONQUEROR

Conqueror, which expanded its standard range with the UEV series six years ago, showcased a new variant of its UEV-17 at this year's show.

The most noticeable difference between the UEV-17 and the new 17X is the absence of the fold-out bed over the A-frame. This means the 17X has one less bed, but buyers gain additional interior storage space where the bed would have folded out, as well as an extra hanging cupboard.

The bed that folds out from the right panel remains, but its size has been adjusted. At 1,93 x 1,29 m, it is 49 mm shorter but 100 mm wider.

The interior bathroom with its built-in basin further distinguishes the X from the standard UEV-17. The rear section has been transformed into a spacious and luxurious bathroom, comparable to that of the flagship UEV-25.

The shower cubicle is positioned separately on the left with its own door, while the basin and toilet are on the right in an open walk-in area.

Due to the bathroom layout, the 17X has gained an extra window above the outdoor kitchen and an additional cupboard to the right of it at the rear. (The interior section of this cupboard is above the toilet, making smart use of space inside the caravan.)

The new model is 345 mm longer than the UEV-17 and 40 mm lower. Instead of four shock absorbers, which are part of the independent suspension on the UEV-17, the X has two shock absorbers. In both cases, air suspension is optional.

The X comes standard with two water tanks (140 l and 80 l) and its weight remains the same as that of the UEV-17 (GVM 1 800 kg, tare weight 1 450 kg).

Standard equipment includes the interior bathroom, a 270° swing-out awning, Victron 30 A charger and two 102 Ah batteries, a gas-electric geyser with plumbing and two adjustable interior fans.

Price R764 750

Contact 016 349 6533 • info@conqueror.co.za • conqueror.co.za



STEALTH

Stealth is one of the few manufacturers that builds caravans for all road conditions – from road caravans and gravelroaders to fully off-road models. Its Overlander range is designed for the latter, and a fourth model has now been added: the Kudu.

The design now matches the rest of Stealth's caravans. The Overlanders have a more angular shape compared to the Sprinters, X-Country and Bush Lodge models, and the Kudu follows this same styling. Both the front and rear now fit in with the rest of the family.

Compared to the two existing Overlander variants (574 and 634), which have storage boxes on the A-frame, the Kudu features

a rounded front section over the tow hitch, creating space for a nose cone similar to that of a traditional road caravan. This allows the queen-size bed, positioned in the front of the caravan, to shift about 400 mm forward over the nose cone.

Because of the nose cone's interior height, the bed is slightly raised from the floor. This means a standard fridge-freezer can now fit on a sliding frame that moves in and out from underneath the bed. A step in front of the bed has been added, which also serves as a handy shoe storage compartment.

There are three interior layout options in the space between the door and the bed: a bench, a cupboard, or a countertop with a sink and induction plate.

The cupboards in the outdoor kitchen are larger (taller and deeper) and include a shelf for a microwave. The 270° awning provides cover over the dishwashing area, which is set up at the rear of the Kudu.

With the front redesign, the rear has also been given a new look. Part of the updated design includes two vertical pillars on either side, giving it a more modern finish. These also neatly conceal the roof gutters.

The Kudu is 100 mm lower because the axle mounting points on the leaf springs have been adjusted. The axle is now mounted above the leaf springs. The tyres have also been upgraded from 15 inch to 17 inch.

The Bush Lodge has also been refreshed, and its colour scheme has changed. Instead of a light upper section and a darker lower section, the entire caravan is now beige and is called the Renoster.

Prices Kudu R625 000; Renoster 548 500

Contact stealthcaravans.co.za





RENOSTER



CHEETAH 7X SUPER CAMPER



SPORTER

MAXMO

Maxmo's new Sporter model is an all-in-one vehicle. Owner Leon Ras describes it as a combination of an SUV, a trailer on tow, and a guesthouse.

The Sporter features the same bathroom layout as Maxmo's Cheetah 7X model, but the rear section has been converted into a cargo space, allowing you to transport "toys" like bicycles.

The Sporter is 6 m long, has 4x4 capability and seats two passengers. It can be driven with a standard driver's licence and comes equipped with a 3 000 W inverter, 400 Ah lithium

battery, 360 W solar power, 100 A DC-to-DC charger, a 150 l fresh water tank, 50 l grey water tank, 14 l black water tank and a 14 l geyser as standard.

Maxmo has also introduced a fully equipped version of its Cheetah 7X, called the Cheetah 7X Super Camper. The latter features a hydraulic levelling system with a built-in gyroscope. However, you don't have to rely entirely on the automated system – manual adjustments can be made if one side needs to be raised higher than the other. The system, which can be compared to

corner steadies on a caravan, also has other useful functions. It can assist if you get stuck in sand or need to change a tyre without using a jack. Combined with the active air suspension, it also counteracts body roll.

Leon refers to the "Super Single Super Set" spare wheels, with one for the front and one for the rear. The rear tyres have a deeper rim, but both are 17 inch.

Prices Sporter R2,4 million; Super Camper R3,2 million

Contact 082 899 9999

leon@maxmo.life maxmo.life



BERG CX3

BERG OFF-ROAD

Berg Off-Road was one of the new names at last year's show and stood out to us for several reasons. Wasting no time, the company showcased its second model, the CX3, this year.

At first glance, the CX3 and CX6 look identical, but the CX3 is designed for two to three people, while the CX6 accommodates up to six.

While the CX6 features an extra-length king-size bed that slides out at the rear, the CX3 offers the option of a single bed (1,7 x 0,86 m). This space can either serve as a third sleeping area or utilised outside.

Without the bed, the space still includes a fold-down stainless-steel worktop.

The long countertop opposite the foot of the queen-size main bed can be extended for use as a table.

Buyers can choose between two types of enclosures for the slide-out section: canvas sides, like those found in most off-road caravans, or solid aluminium panels with a fibreglass roof.

Berg continues to use LED strip lights mounted on the underside of the awning arms, a much better option than a light mounted on the caravan body that shines directly into your eyes. However, with its swing-out awning, Berg has come up with another clever idea. The awning has been



BERG CX3

extended by about half a metre, allowing the two central arms to extend independently. Instead of being attached to the canvas as usual, the arm tips slide into sleeves. This allows for another great feature: when folding the awning, the two arms can be retracted and swung out of the sleeves, lowering the canvas roof significantly for easy cleaning.

Both models share the same outdoor kitchen and bathroom, with a price

difference of R30 000.

Standard equipment includes a two-burner gas stove and two 3 kg cylinders, crockery and cutlery for four people, a 14 l gas-electric geyser, a 150 l water tank with a pump and level meter, a Victron 1 200 W inverter and a solar charge controller.

Price R549 950

Contact 081 432 2897

info@bergoffroad.com bergoffroad.com



NAYELA

Nayela, known for its fibreglass off-road caravans that look as though they belong on the set of a futuristic movie, ventured into more traditional designs late last year. In the October-November 2024 issue, we reported on the prototype of the Mahem and since then, the manufacturer has made a few changes.

The most noticeable update is the replacement of the single axle with a double axle, increasing the GVM from 2 100 kg to 2 300 kg.

The head of the bed, which is built into the front section, is no longer positioned against the left panel. Instead, the bed now runs lengthwise, with the head positioned towards the A-frame. This adjustment has created space for an additional window on the left panel.

The dinette is positioned near the

middle of the Mahem, against the right panel. Instead of two benches facing each other with a table in between, there is now an L-shaped bench, providing more interior space. The table has an adjustable and swivelling base, allowing it to fit into the open section of the L-bench to create an extra sleeping area.

The separate bathroom is directly ahead as you enter and it now includes an enclosed shower cubicle with its own door for privacy.

At 7,3 m, the Mahem is 900 mm longer than Nayela's longest existing model, the 6,4 m Sahara X. However, what truly sets it apart from the rest of the range is the roof. While Nayela's other models have pop-up roofs, the Mahem features a solid roof.

Price R625 000

Contact 📞 058 863 1027

✉️ sales@nayela.co.za 🌐 nayela.co.za



DESTINATION

The Destiny is based on Destination's existing Kubu caravan, but its interior layout and standard equipment differ.

The Kubu comes with a chest-type fridge-freezer (12 V, 90 ℓ), while the Destiny is fitted with an upright fridge (220 V, 154 ℓ). Additionally, the Destiny includes extra interior cupboards, making it lean more towards a conventional caravan compared to the Kubu.

The Destiny features a standard air conditioner, whereas the Kubu has an inverter-type unit. It also has a 120 ℓ water tank instead of 240 ℓ, an electric geyser instead of a gas one, a single-plate induction stove instead of a two-burner gas stove and a 100 Ah battery with a charger instead of the Kubu's solar system with two 200 Ah lithium batteries.

Both models have a GVM of 2 000 kg, but the Destiny's tare weight is 200 kg lighter at 1 440 kg.

Price R550 000

Contact 016 366 1630/1

sales@destinationcaravans.co.za

destinationcaravans.co.za



DESTINY



4x4 MEGA WORLD

The stand of this store, which specialises in 4x4 vehicles and camping products, was bursting at the seams this year. The proudly South African brands Desert Products and Alu-Cab took the lead with new product releases.

Desert Products' new ceiling rack provides extra storage space for loose items and mounts to the ceiling of your bakkie. The ceiling rack is available for a double-cab Land Cruiser 70 series (R2 995) and a Gen4 Suzuki Jimny (R1 299).

Other new Desert Products gear on display included a battery tray for a second battery designed to fit a Land Cruiser 70 series (R1 695) and a compact fold-up braai (R395) made from 2 mm mild steel. One half of the braai is designed for cooking bacon and eggs, while the other half has slots cut into it, allowing chops and wors to receive direct heat from the coals.

There were also various storage bags designed to hang from frames or over spare wheels, as well as demonstrations showing how to wire a canopy interior for Redarc inverters and chargers.

As expected, 4x4MegaWorld also showcased Alu-Cab rooftop tents, which we are already familiar with. Prices for these can be found on the 4x4 Mega World website.

Contact 4x4megaworldonline.com



AUTOTECHSHOP

AutoTechShop, headquartered in North Park, Cape Town, is relatively new to South Africa and sells three brands: AutoTech, AutoVision and AutoCast.

AutoTech includes remote-controlled tailgate locks for bakkies and aftermarket steering wheels for Toyota vehicles. At first glance, the steering wheels look identical to Toyota's, but they feel significantly more comfortable in hand. For example, Land Cruiser 70 series owners can replace their standard steering wheel with AutoTech's luxury and ergonomic LC300 GR steering wheel (R18 900) – and yes, all the buttons and the airbag on the wheel are fully functional.

One product that particularly impressed us was the AutoVision DVR (R5 950). This is a camera system consisting of a 7-inch monitor and a high-definition camera. The camera is mounted on the back of your caravan or bakkie canopy and wired to a power source, such as the rear lights. The monitor plugs into a 12 V socket and the signal between the camera and the monitor is impressively strong. The AutoTechShop team set up a camera on the far side of Hall 2 at the Caravan Show – a distance of roughly 200 m – and the image on the monitor remained clear and delay-free.

Visit autotechshop.co.za



OPPOSITE LOCK

Opposite Lock's stand was packed with products ranging from spotlights to winches. One product that particularly impressed us was something we weren't familiar with.

The Cold Fire fire extinguisher is a logical innovation in an industry increasingly reliant on lithium batteries. This extinguisher

doesn't just put out lithium fires – something that was previously difficult to do – but also Class A fires (wood, paper, fabric and plastic), Class B (petrol, oil, alcohol and propane gas), Class D and Class K, covering everything from cooking oil to magnesium.

This fire extinguisher can cool a fire burning at 800 °C down to room temperature

within a minute. You might assume that the liquid foam inside is toxic because of its effectiveness, but Opposite Lock states that it is safe for indoor use and environmentally friendly.

Contact oppositelock.co.za



ALPHAGO

AlphaGo, one of only two manufacturers using air columns to pitch a caravan's tent, showcased its second model at the show.

Unlike the existing S6 Air V4, which sleeps six, the Delta Air accommodates up to four people. The two models are identical except that the Delta Air has only one fold-out bed – positioned over the A-frame.

The body is also slightly shorter and while the S6's beds fold out with the help of gas struts, the Delta uses two actuators for this function.

Although the Delta is designed for a smaller family, it features a king-size bed instead of the S6's queen-size and double beds. The interior space in front of the main bed can be converted into additional sleeping space for two. During the day, the interior serves as a spacious lounge with U-shaped seating and a swivel table in the centre.

In addition to the overhead LED strip light for general lighting, there are also mood lights between the floor and the base of the benches, providing soft ambient lighting.

The Delta has the same bathroom tent as the S6, which sets up alongside the caravan, but the stove has two burners instead of four.

Price R430 000

Contact 072 362 3175

sales@alphago.co.za alphago.co.za

Don't miss our caravan test of the S6 in the next issue of Drive & Camp (June-July 2025). – Ed



IRONMAN

Ironman 4x4's stand was one of the most impressive at the Caravan Show. The brand recently refreshed its look with new badges, a redesigned website and a fresh approach to the 4x4 market.

When we asked whether there was anything new this year that we hadn't seen last year, the answer was "no." But the person handling media queries at the show glanced around slyly, winked and mentioned that quite a few brand-new products were planned for 2025. However, he wouldn't reveal any details and even when we dropped Mic van Zyl's name, he remained tight-lipped.

Contact ironman4x4.co.za



BUNDU

Take note of the two side windows at the back of the Bundu X. Inside the windows, there's what looks like a hexagonal-patterned grille. This is actually a fold-away screen on the inside. The exterior window can be opened, with a mesh layer between the window and the grille. This means you can sleep with the windows open and use the grille as security bars, or you can leave the windows open while you're out, keeping the interior fresh without worrying about

unwanted hands reaching in. Smart!

The Bundu X is now built with fibreglass honeycomb panels instead of aluminium, as it was previously. The roof mechanism has also changed. It used to be lifted with the help of gas struts, but now actuators assist with the process.

The Bundu X features two doors opposite each other. The one on the kitchen side serves as the entrance, while the other opens to the outdoor shower.

The cupboard on the right front side of

TENTCO

At the Camp & Climb stand, something bright immediately caught our eye: a stack of neon pink ammo boxes. According to the exhibitors, Tentco produced a limited run of these crates to draw attention to the product... and they were more than successful. The first batch of pink crates reportedly sold out within a day or two and Camp & Climb quickly placed another order for more.

It's simply a colour variation of Tentco's standard crate, but it might indicate that South Africans are getting tired of black or beige camping gear and are keen on something more cheerful. The crate costs R299 and is available from Tentco and Camp & Climb.

Contact 📞 campandclimb.co.za



the body was previously used for storage, but it now houses an air conditioner and cassette toilet. There is also a laundry rack at the back and the open drawer for firewood is practical since it's close to the ground.

Standard equipment includes a 150 l water tank, a 5,5 l gas geyser and a 550 W solar panel with a regulator.

Price R483 366

Contact 📞 078 862 9962

✉ bundutrailers@gmail.com

🌐 bundutrailers.com

OUTBOUND

OutBound's FB model is getting a sibling: the FB En-Suite, now with a private bathroom.

The additional compartment folds out at the right-hand door, directly opposite the entrance on the left. Next to the entrance is an extra drinks cabinet and on the other side, a similar cupboard for the shower.

The FB En-Suite has a GVM of 1 250 kg and a tare weight of 840 kg. The body is made of aluminium.

Standard equipment includes crockery and cutlery along with a two-burner gas stove, while the power system consists of a 105 Ah battery, a 15 A charger and LED lights.

All OutBound models now come with eight leaf springs instead of six and Victron power systems.

Price R366 900

Contact 011 974 5595

enquiries@outboundcampers.co.za

outboundcampers.co.za



OUTBOUND FB EN-SUITE



OUTBOUND FB EN-SUITE



TAKLA

Takla, based in Kyalami, Gauteng, manufactures boot liners, floor mats, gear tunnel covers, dashboard protectors and its top-selling product: seat covers.

The Platinum range consists of six types of covers that incorporate Alcantara, a synthetic suede also used by Ferrari. Then there's the River Rock range, which features 5 mm foam panels inside waterproof covers; the Signature range, which uses the same foam as the River Rock but with Cantech fabric, a cotton-like material; the Black Edition range, made from ultra-tough Durotech with built-in foam padding; the Cantech range, which uses the same fabric but has no extra padding; and finally, the Durotech range, which has a texture similar to neoprene, the material used for wetsuits.

You can customise your seat covers by choosing stitching patterns, material colours, embroidered vehicle names or logos on headrests and backrests and even built-in organisers on the seatbacks – and they do this for any vehicle on earth. When we asked if they make covers for a Lada Niva, they simply repeated: "For any vehicle on earth."

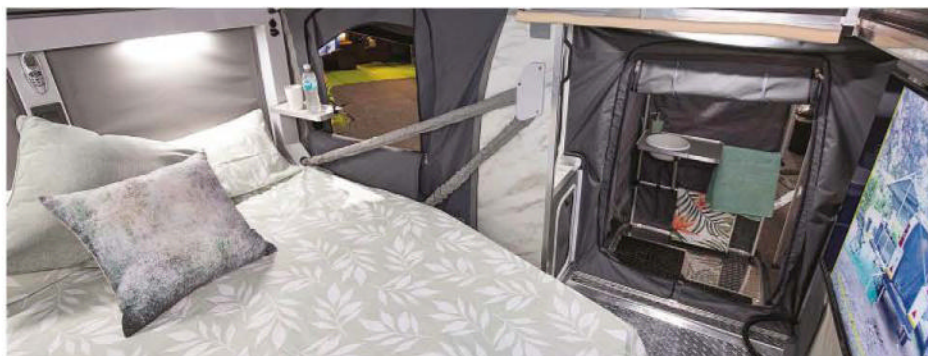
Because there are too many factors influencing the price, they ask that customers contact them with their vehicle details and specific needs. However, we confirmed that a full set for a Suzuki Jimny costs around R6 500, depending on the material and extras.

Contact takla.co.za





BADGER X-OVER



BADGER

Badger has three models: the Lite, X-Over and Extreme. Now, the middle sibling has inherited some luxury features from the flagship model and the X-Over boasts an outdoor bathroom similar to that of the Extreme.

The shower folds out from the rear door and is mostly made of aluminium. It has a solid roof, a tent enclosure around it and the floor rests on the spare wheel (which means the X-Over's spare wheel has moved from the A-frame to the back). However, the opening and closing mechanisms of the two models differ: the Extreme's setup is mainly steel and operates with an electric winch, while the X-Over uses three gas struts.

Like the Lite, the X-Over now also comes with an aluminium chassis, a feature seen in only a few other manufacturers. The lighter chassis allows for weight to be allocated elsewhere – such as the addition of the shower. Prospective owners also have the option of installing an air conditioner in the nose cone.

Lithium batteries now come standard at 100 Ah, with a 200 Ah option available.

Price R495 000

Contact 082 490 1117

katie@badgercaravans.co.za

badgercaravans.co.za

METALIAN

Metalian has revamped the prototype of its M42 off-road caravan, including a redesign of the chassis. It is now lighter but is still galvanised.

The suspension works on a double-eye linkage and parts of the exterior kitchen have been changed. The countertop is slightly lower and narrower, allowing for easier access to items on the shelf behind it – making it more convenient for shorter people. The kitchen also gets an additional cupboard above the countertop.

The latches used to keep the countertop in place when packing away have been removed, providing two benefits: firstly, there are no more obstacles sunk into the countertop and secondly, the new cargo container locks are the best way to keep everything dust- and water-tight.

The built-in shower head box by the door has been removed and the shower head now has its own storage.

Price R343 850

Contact 021 903 9623

sales@metalian.co.za metalian.co.za



METALIAN M42

ELXV

The smallest of ELXV's Ghari series was on display at the show. The Ghari 3.2 may be the smallest in the series, but it doesn't hold back when it comes to luxury.

All of ELXV's caravans come with a queen-size bed, but in the 3.2, it's positioned sideways to the left at the front as you climb in.

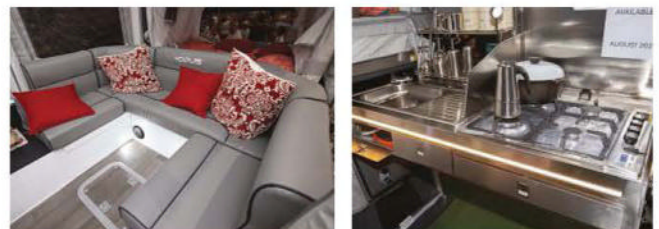
One would expect a smaller slide-out in the exterior kitchen compared to its bigger sibling, the Ghari 3.7, but the opposite is true. The 3.2 has a wider slide-out and there's an elevated countertop.

The 3.2 does have a lower GVM (1 650 kg versus 1 750 kg) and is R40 000 cheaper.

Standard equipment include a shower, a cassette toilet, a 14 l geyser, a two-burner gas stove, a 9 kg gas cylinder, a 200 Ah lithium battery with a 30 A Victron charger and a 180 l water tank.

Price Ghari 3.2 R620 000

Contact 082 444 2850 • sales@elxv.co.za • elxv.co.za



OPUS

Opus has moved the lithium battery, which was previously installed in a compartment in its caravans, to an underfloor compartment. This is a steel box with space for up to 600 Ah of batteries.

Instead of wooden cupboards in the caravan, you can now consider an aluminium finish. The cupboard on the left front is also larger, providing space for two queen-size beds in total.

The side of the slide-out stove-sink combination features a new integrated LED strip light, providing a sleek finish.

Opus uses air columns to pitch its tents and now a separate shower tent – using the same technology – is available. It's essentially two cubicles side by side: the shower on one side and a changing area next to it. It costs around R19 000 extra.

All three models have a GVM of 1 600 kg and depending on the version, the tare weight is either 1 130 kg or 1 150 kg.

Standard equipment across all models includes a 105 Ah lithium battery, a lockable coupler, a four-burner gas stove, two 80 l stainless steel water tanks (only one on the Lite model), a 75 l fridge-freezer and a 5 l/min gas geyser.

Prices Opus Lite R495 000; OP2 or 4 R545 000

Contact 012 813 8528 • enquiries@opuscamper.co.za • opuscamper.co.za

INFANTA 4X4

Double-axle caravans have a few advantages over single-axle ones and Infanta offers you now a choice between the two on its flagship model.

The Enkulu 4 is essentially just an Enkulu 3 with a double axle. It has the same dimensions – 6,1 m long and 2,36 m high – but the weights differ. The Enkulu 3 has a tare weight of 1 100 kg, with a delivery weight of 1 580 kg, while the Enkulu 4's figures are 1 700 kg and 1 950 kg, respectively.

For now, the exterior kitchen is the same, but changes are on the way and you can expect more drawers and shelves. The Enkulu 4 also gets a fifth bed that fits above the slide-out bed (for a child).

Aside from the difference in the standard price – R649 934 versus R609 684 – both models have the same standard equipment. This includes the slide-out bed (queen-size), two leather-covered benches that can convert into a double bed, a built-in 110 ℓ water tank, a 14 ℓ geyser and a two-burner gas stove.

Price R649 934

Contact 028 512 3663 info@infanta4x4.co.za info@infanta4x4.co.za



STEDILENS

Photographers looking for a quick way to keep their camera steady for a winning pic can head to StediLens.

The set, as shown in the photo, costs R2 275 and includes a ball with a tripod screw, a bean bag, a base plate, a window grip and a long lens support.

You screw the ball onto the bottom of your camera and then place it into the cavity of the window grip, which, as the name suggests, attaches to your vehicle's half-open window.

The base plate and bean bag are designed for bird hides where there is often a frame on the opposite side of the board and you would prefer not to rest the lens on it. The long lens support screws into your 200-500 mm lens's mount and acts as a support to prevent the lens's weight from throwing off the camera's balance.

You can purchase the individual items separately – for example, the bean bag and ball cost R1 155 – but you save a few rand if you buy all five pieces together.

Contact stedilens.co.za





BUSH LAPA RTEL 2I

BUSH LAPA

As Bush Lapa's fifth Ratel model, the new 2i is the flagship model for indoor sleeping for two people, says Martin Bezuidenhout. The rest of the Ratels all have a pull-out bed, but the 2i features a permanent queen-size inside bed.

What makes the 2i even more special is that the toilet is separate from the indoor bathroom, which has a shower and basin. The bed also has a low bench alongside it, providing a comfortable spot to put on shoes.

This model now has the largest exterior kitchen, which is about the length of

a ruler longer than the others – partly thanks to the door being shifted from the left to the back. The indoor bed also provides a lot of storage space from the outside (under the bed).

The Ratel 2i comes almost fully equipped: the standard package includes a 270° swing-out awning, an indoor bathroom, a two-burner gas stove, a Victron power system with a 200 W solar panel and two 105 Ah batteries, a 150 l stainless steel water tank with a water pump and meter and a 14 l geyser.

Price R585 000

Contact 021 870 1277 • bushlapa.com



SUMMIT

The awning for Summit's Karenga model is now standard and it also comes with an add-a-room.

The cover extends over the nose, exterior kitchen and rear, with the door also located at the back. The rear-end is shaped like a triangle and becomes a room with side panels and a groundsheet. It can be used as a living space – offering shelter in bad weather without being stuck inside your caravan, while also expanding your private space beyond the caravan.

The Karenga is designed for a couple (queen-size bed), has a stainless-steel chassis and the body is made of aluminium.

Standard equipment includes a two-burner gas stove and two 3 kg gas cylinders, crockery for four people, two 60 l water tanks with a water pump and 14 l geyser (gas and 220 V) and a 100 Ah deep-cycle battery.

Price R427 455

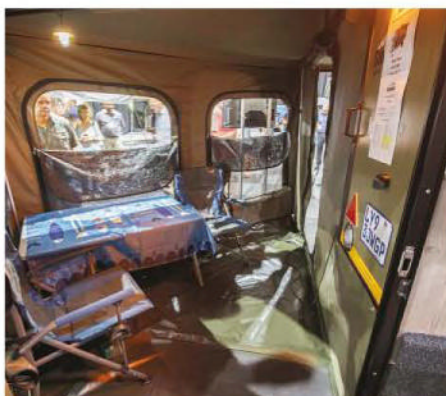
Contact 012 803 6535

• info@frantelholdings.com

• summitoffroad.co.za



SUMMIT KARENGA



QUANTUM CARAVAN WORLD

Quantum has given its models a facelift and they now feature a larger exterior kitchen.

The induction plate, which previously stood on the countertop, is now part of a drawer that pulls out from beneath the counter. The microwave, which was previously installed inside, has been moved to the exterior. (In the Pinnacle model, there is still space for a microwave inside.) The Pinnacle's door, which was previously on the left side of the body, now moves to the back for more privacy at the bed.

Quantum's body is made of fibreglass with a glossy finish, but from now on, it will have an embossed finish.

Because the exterior kitchen has changed, the interior cupboards also had to be adjusted. Now, you get access from the inside and there is space for an air conditioner. The air conditioning unit has been moved from near the bed to the back of the exterior kitchen.

Mood lighting has also been added.

Price Pinnacle R575 000

Contact ☎ 011 914 1106

✉ info@quantum.co.za

🌐 quantumleisure.co.za



QUANTUM COUNTRY



QUANTUM PINNACLE



Gobi-X

Gobi-X has unveiled its latest front and rear bumpers for the Land Cruiser 79. The front bumper is just deep enough to house a winch and will not extend beyond what is necessary at the front of your LC79. The front bumper features built-in LED spotlights, but there are mounting points in case you want to add additional lights.

The rear bumper is wide enough to carry a tow bar and two swing arms for two spare wheels (or one spare wheel and one fuel can). The rear bumper has built-in LED lights instead of the standard Toyota lights that were previously used.

Both the front and rear bumpers have recovery points for a high-lift jack and hooks for tow ropes. You can complete the Gobi-X bumpers with a tidy skid plate to protect the front chassis (R4 495).

The bumpers for a Land Cruiser 79 cost R28 995 (front) and R13 895 (rear). Gobi-X also makes bumpers for other brands like Ford, Volkswagen, Suzuki and Jeep.

Contact For a list of dealers and authorised installers, visit

🌐 gobi-x.co.za.

WILD WIPE

Most toilet paper holders are simply bags in which you store a roll of toilet paper and pull it out when needed, but sometimes the roll ends up in the sand or on the dirty floor of an ablution block.

Wild Wipe is a cartridge consisting of two tubes that fit into each other, plus a string. You hang the string on a branch, twist the lid – and thus the inner tube – until a broad slot opens. Then you pull the toilet paper out just like you would at home.

Twist the tube closed and your toilet paper stays clean and dry until the next use. To replace the paper, simply pull the tubes apart and refill with a new roll. Yours for only R495 and available in six different colours. Judging by the number of visitors who stood at this stall, there is definitely a demand for this product.

Contact 📞 wildwipe.co.za



Prices were valid for the duration of the show and may differ from the prevailing retail prices.

Through the Tankwa, one stop at a time

The Tankwa Karoo is a harsh world that punishes foolishness, but spend a few days in this arid landscape and you'll meet the best people.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**



It's scorching outside – 44°C, according to the bakkie's gauge – and mirages shimmer restlessly on the horizon while cicadas buzz in nervous unison. What are we doing here, on gravel roads that devour tyres for breakfast and in a place where water is more precious than gold?

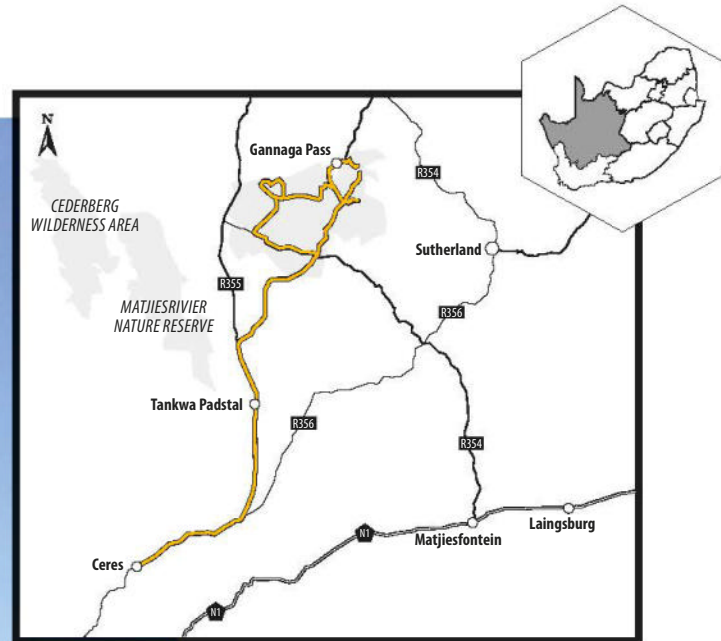
Join us on a journey to discover how the Visagie, Pieterse, and Shephard families – along with a dozen others – made a living on 55 farms before the land was consolidated into a national park.

We depart from Ceres, just under two hours' drive from Cape Town. Fill up your tank and follow the tarred R46 regional road over Theron's Pass, then Hottentotskloof Pass. Eventually, the R46 veers sharply to the right, but we continue straight on the R355 dirt road, which cuts a crooked line through the Tankwa Karoo.

The landscape around you is unforgiving and intimidating. That's why our first stop, the Tankwa Padstal, is a welcome oasis in this dusty world.

The Tankwa Padstal was established in 2011 by Hein and Susan Lange. While they weren't the first city dwellers to move here, their artistic approach to the farm stall is unique and inspiring. Today, the place is synonymous with Karoo hospitality, and the Lange couple's role in making the region popular cannot be underestimated.

Sit down for breakfast (R120-R140) or a burger and chips (R140-R160). There's also free WiFi, so you can catch up on your WhatsApp messages. The farm stall



cold drinks (R20/ℓ), Boxer tobacco (R20 per packet), and keyrings for R20 – there seems to be a R20 theme here – but they also sell toothpaste for R29 and a pack of 10 Lil-Lets tampons for just R4!

“We already supply eggs to the local community, but soon we’ll also be selling pork, and goat’s milk and cheese. I’m also busy building a stall where passing motorists can stop for a quick meal,” Anton explains, gesturing left and right with his sunburnt hands and fingers as thick as sausages.

Like the Tankwa Padstal, Jakkalsgat also offers free WiFi. The connection to the outside world is made possible by a radio mast on the 1 235 m-high Skoorsteenberg, one of the highest peaks in the area.

We’re now in the final stretch of the first leg of our journey to the national park, and minutes after leaving Jakkalsgat, we pass through the park gate. There’s no guard or pay station here because it’s a public road, and you don’t need to pay to drive through the park.

Soon, we cross a bridge over the Tankwa River, and not much later, a small whitewashed building appears to the right of the road – it’s called the Skooltjie.

In a letter to researcher Beverley Moll, Maria Hanekom of the farm Platfontein once wrote that finding a teacher who could teach all subjects from Grade 1 to Grade 10 was a near-impossible task – and convincing someone to move to the middle of nowhere was even harder.

Tannie Maria – who was once a teacher at the Skooltjie before marrying farmer Wessel Hanekom – recalls how the teachers came and went. Some were

is open daily except Wednesdays from 09:00 to 17:00, while the bar is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

It’s time to hit the road again, and we continue north on the R355. About 22 km later, we reach the entrance sign for the Tankwa Karoo National Park. We count 12 bullet holes in the sign – each randomly placed around SANParks’ kudu emblem, but not a single shot hit the head. We turn right, reassured that there are no effective snipers lurking nearby.

Exactly 21 km after turning right at

the park’s entrance sign, we stop one last time at the Jakkalsgat farm stall before entering the Tankwa Karoo National Park. The park doesn’t have a shop for provisions – that’s where Jakkalsgat comes in.

Anton and Melanie, who prefer to keep their surname private, left Cape Town in 2024 and bought Jakkalsgat from the previous owner, James Steenkamp. Anton and Mel farm with pigs, Boer goats, and chickens, and their farm stall sells basic supplies like bags of potatoes (R20/kg),

strict men who relished giving six of the best with a cane, while others were young, unmarried women, just like Tannie Maria once was, in their first teaching posts. In the latter case, the community often held dances where young farmers competed for a teacher's hand – just as Wessel had done for Maria.

It's unclear when the Skooltjie was built, but it's believed to be the handiwork of Frederik Petoors. His father, Albert – a man of mixed Khoi and European heritage – was an apprentice of English engineer Richard Shephard, who came to South Africa in the 19th century to build roads. Albert passed his knowledge of stonework to his sons, and the Petoors brothers are responsible for many of the stone walls in the Tankwa Karoo.

The Skooltjie closed in 1991, and in 2014, park management announced plans to preserve the old farm school by turning it into an interpretation centre. But 11 years later, nothing has come of those plans.

We make a stop at the park office at Roodewerf to check in and collect keys and a permit. The keys are for accommodation – whether a self-catering house or a campsite with private ablutions – and the permit allows you to explore the park's many game-viewing routes. By the way, the park's roads are well signposted, and you'll receive a map to ensure you don't get lost.

We recommend buying *The Heart and Soul of the Tankwa Karoo National Park* by Beverly Moll, Michiel Moll and Rita Steyn at reception. It costs R300 and is an excellent guide to the park.

With the keys and permit safely in the cubby hole, we head to our accommodation for the night: Perdekloof. This campsite has six stands, each with private ablution facilities that include a kitchen, shower and flush toilet.

The water has a strong sulphur smell, like rotten eggs, but it's safe for washing and showering (though it tastes terrible). According to the guidebook, the old folks used to collect water from certain springs and let it stand in buckets until most of the sulphur evaporated. Best to bring bottled water for cooking and mixing with your whiskey.

Apart from solar-powered lights, there's no electricity here. Notices on the walls also warn you to keep the doors locked –





NEW HORIZONS. You absolutely have to stop at the Tankwa Padstal (left) where you'll probably spot a car with a flat tyre. The Jakkalsgat farm stall (below left) is another place you should consider stopping because it's your last chance to buy a cooldrink or a pack of disposable razors before entering the park (above).



baboons are a nuisance, and they know how door handles work.

Tonight, you light a fire, and if you're as lucky as we were, an African wildcat (*Felis lybica*) might peer at you from the bushes. Blissfully off the grid, with no cellphone signal!

The next morning, we're up early – this is a huge park with many trails waiting to be explored. The first of these follows the Renoster River and takes us to Langkloof. It's a rocky twin-track, and while you should manage just fine without engaging four-wheel drive, your vehicle must have high ground clearance – a regular sedan won't make it.

We pass three campsites, the first of which is called Pyper se Boom. There are no ablution facilities here, so you need to be entirely self-sufficient. If you're looking for shade, pitch your tent under four eucalyptus trees, but if the wind is pumping, you can set up camp inside the ruins of the old house of the farm Boezak. This house was built by Matewis Geldenhuys, but little remains of what was once a spacious home.

We move on and cross the Renoster

River to reach the next campsite, Oom Rickert se Huis. This ruin was once home to Richard Joseph Shephard, son of Boer woman Hendrina Janetta Lombard and Richard Shephard – the same English engineer who taught masonry to the Petoors family.

The third campsite, and in our opinion the best in the park, is Langkloof. Here, you camp next to Richard Senior's stone house, which has remained relatively intact. There are two camping spots and an ablution block with hot water and flush toilets, but no electricity (though there are solar-powered lights).

The twin-track continues deeper into the kloof. Originally, ox wagons followed this route up the Roggeveld Mountains to the Middelpoos trading post – we'll get to that later – but the upper section of the mountain pass washed away long ago and is no longer accessible.

There is, however, another way to reach the top of the Roggeveld Mountains: by heading towards Gannaga Pass. The condition of this mountain pass changes frequently. It's usually passable with a regular sedan, but sometimes – especially after heavy rain – you'll struggle even in a 4x4.

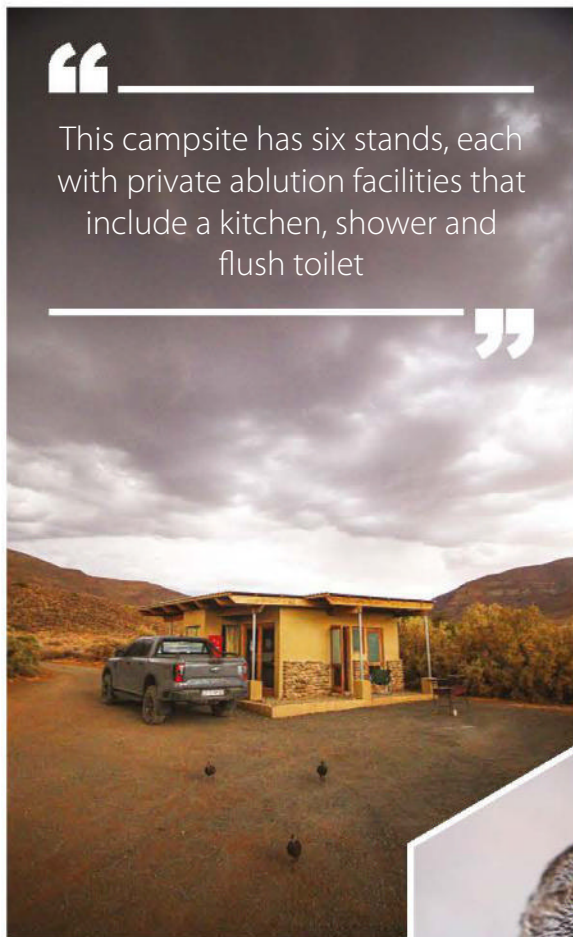




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This campsite has six stands, each with private ablution facilities that include a kitchen, shower and flush toilet

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Technically, you could tow an off-road trailer up the pass, but it's a single-track road with few places to pull over. In some spots, the road is so narrow that a passenger with a fear of heights should probably just close their eyes.

At the top of the pass, we pull over for lunch at Gannaga Lodge on the Agterkop farm. The Visagie family has farmed here for generations, with Izak Visagie being the latest to run the lodge.

The restaurant serves breakfast from 07:30 to 10:00, lunch from 12:30 to 14:00, and dinner from 18:00 to 21:00. Curried tripe costs R180 per plate, bobotie R150, and a burger with chips R120. There's



OLD WORLD. Ask a random person in the city to describe the Karoo and they'll probably say it's flat and boring. Nothing could be further from the truth since there are tall mountains here and friendships between its people run deeper than city dwellers are used to.

also a swimming pool if you want to cool off, free WiFi, cellphone reception (Vodacom 3G), a bar, and accommodation at an average of R1 300 per night for two.

Near Gannaga Lodge, the park has the Watervlei 4x4 route, but when we visited in February, it was closed, and no one could tell us when it would be reopened. The lodge does, however, have a private road leading to the edge of the cliff above Langkloof, offering a breathtaking view over the entire Tankwa Karoo.

We head back down Gannaga Pass to Maansedam at the foot of the Elandsberg. Here, the ruins of an old mill and shop – once the workplace of a man named

Maans Louw (presumably the inspiration for the nearby dam's name) – stand near a campsite with a single site and no facilities.

We drive south to the Abrahamsknieë 4x4 route. If the terrain is dry, this route poses no significant challenges, and you'll manage with a 4x2 bakkie with standard ground clearance. However, conditions change dramatically after rain.

At first, the road surface is scattered with beautiful white quartz pebbles, but later, it becomes the characteristic grey gravel of the Karoo. Thanks to a few springs, there's plenty of wildlife

here – we encountered a herd of around 40 gemsbok.

The Abrahamsknieë route scores a low 2 out of 5 on our difficulty scale because you rarely, if ever, need to engage four-wheel drive, though some sections do require decent ground clearance. The 8 km route takes no more than half an hour and brings us back to the park office, where we buy a bag of firewood for tonight's braai and use the free WiFi to upload the day's photos to Instagram.

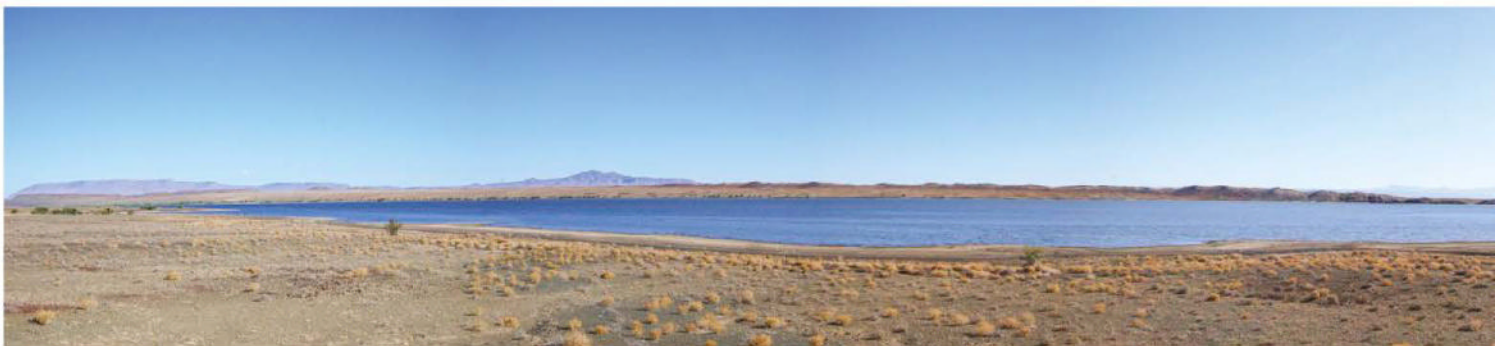
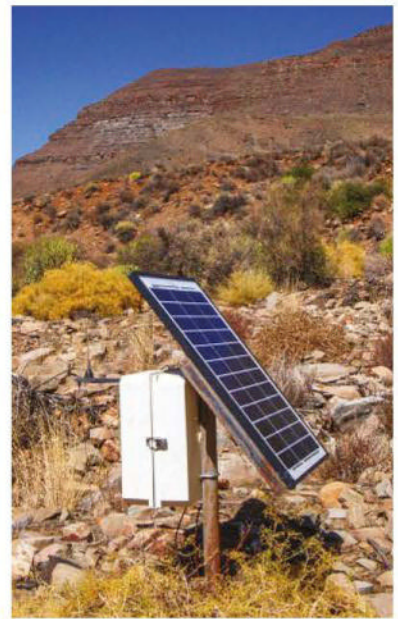
The following morning, we retrace our route along the main road that brought us into the park two days earlier. Just past the Skooltjie, you'll see a sign pointing right to the Oudebaaskraal Dam. Engage four-wheel drive in advance, because as soon as you leave the main road, you descend a steep slope into the soft sand of the Renoster River. Once across the river, the road becomes a standard twin-track, and you can switch back to two-wheel drive.

Oudebaaskraal Dam was built in 1964 when Judge Alwyn Burger bought the farms Doornlaagte, Ymasqua and Oudebaaskraal. It took a team of Rollison scrapers four years to excavate what was then South Africa's largest privately owned dam (now owned by SANParks). The dam has a capacity of 31 million cubic litres of water, though it rarely fills to the brim. Waterbirds are abundant here, so keep an eye out for double-banded coursers (*Rhinoptilus africanus*) dashing after insects and frogs on their long, thin legs.

From the dam, we head to the Tankwa Lodge, where you can see an old steam tractor and a few wagons. The wagons were once used by trekboers and travelling merchants. The trekboers were mostly Basters or European settlers, while many of the merchants were Jews who had fled persecution in Lithuania – back then, they were known as Litvaks.

Few of the Litvaks spoke English, but they soon discovered that Afrikaans farmers could somewhat understand their Yiddish (a Germanic language more in common with Afrikaans than English). As a result, many Litvaks aligned themselves with the Boers of the Karoo.

The life of a Karoo merchant was tough! A career typically began with a backpack and two pairs of veldskoene. Merchants sold needles, thread, buttons, rolls of fabric and ribbons to the farmer's wives, and tobacco, pipes and pocketknives to the men. Once they had



saved up enough money, they could buy a donkey – and later, a wagon like the ones at the lodge.

The Sher family patriarch was one such Jewish merchant, and his descendants later established the Middelpas trading post.

From Tankwa Lodge, we drive north to the former farm Biesiesfontein before tackling a 4x4 route. The first owner of Biesiesfontein was Josef de Beer, who bought the farm in 1895. The original farmhouse – now over 100 years old – was restored in 1950 when Willem “Puts” Visagie took ownership. He was a distant relative of Izak “Agterkop” Visagie from Gannaga Lodge.

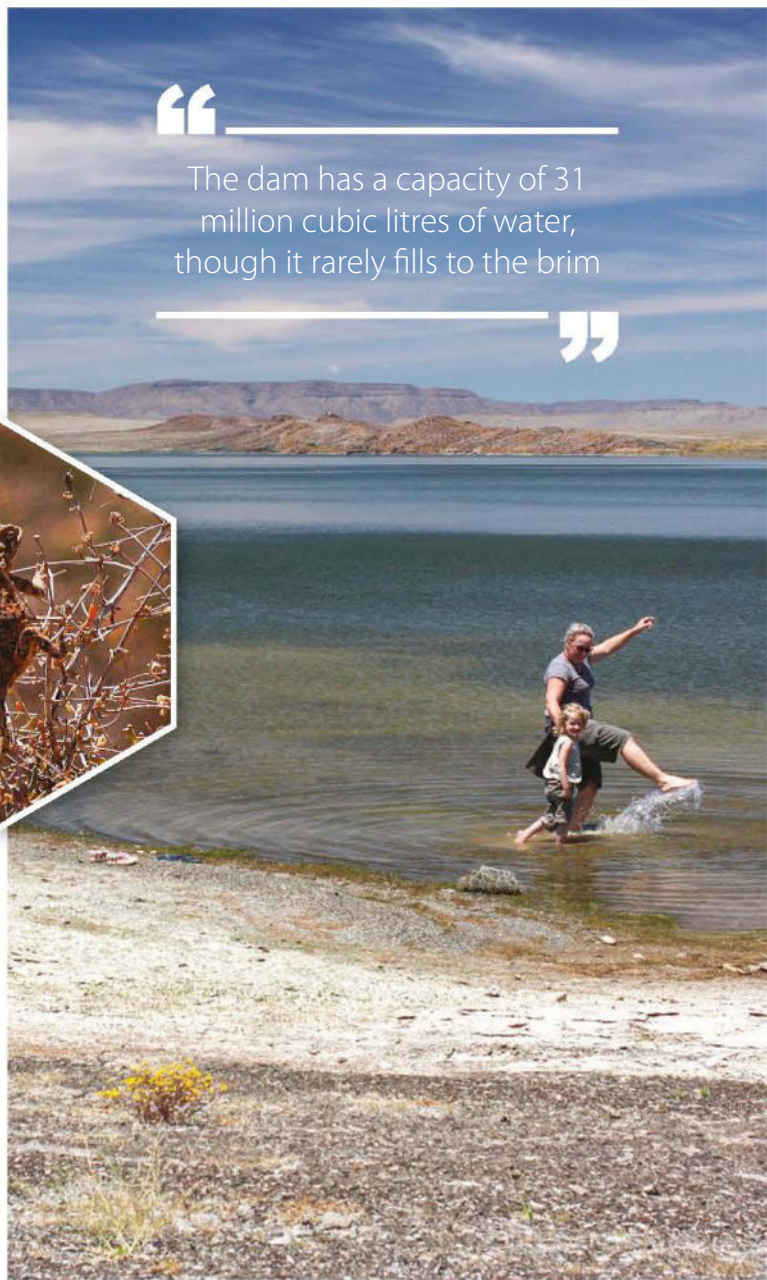
As we’ve already mentioned, the roads in the Tankwa Karoo National Park are well marked with signposts, and we follow them to the Leeuberg 4x4 Route. The trail turns right (S32.19904 E19.79256) off the main road near Varsfontein – home to a restored farmhouse that, in our opinion, is one of the best self-catering stays in the park. Right from the start, you’ll be climbing over some sizeable rocks. To tackle this route, you’ll need four-wheel drive and low-range gears, but only basic off-roading skills are required.

The route follows a ridge for 4 km before leading into a series of small hills. For the next 5 km, you’ll be driving

up and down across the koppies of the Leeuberg. The twin-track’s surface is compacted, but in some places, you’ll reach a crest that lifts your bakkie’s nose skyward – making it impossible to see whether the road turns left or right. Modern bakkies and SUVs with terrain cameras that monitor the ground around you definitely come in handy here.

At the end of the route, you take a sharp left and descend onto the Rooivlei plain, which was once part of the farm Blinkvleivlakte.

If it’s rained, this plain turns into a quagmire – so much so that even tractors can get stuck. You’ll probably spot gemsbok and eland here, but the



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The dam has a capacity of 31 million cubic litres of water, though it rarely fills to the brim
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PRECIOUS COMMODITY. Both the veld and animals looked healthy during our visit in February 2025, and there were signs of recent rain. Don't waste water, though, because when drought hits the Karoo, it hits it hard!

moment you stop for a photo, they bolt. We rate the Leeuberg 4x4 Route an average 3 on our difficulty scale – it's more fun than challenging.

Our final stop is Prambergfontein, named after a nearby koppie (which resembles a woman's breast) where a spring trickles out its precious water at a glacial pace. A nearby cemetery reveals that the Pieterse family farmed here for generations. In the park's guidebook, Adriaan Jordaan – a grandson of a Pieterse daughter – writes that his grandparents had to share bathwater, and firewood was so scarce that they couldn't afford to waste it for boiling water. They also had to leave buckets of

spring water out on the plains for days so that the worst of the sulphur could evaporate before they could drink it.

Prambergfontein's final blow, however, came during the great drought of the 1930s. Poet Boerneef captured its fate in a moving poem where he lamented the desperation of the time – sheep crying out from hunger and thirst, farmers forced to slaughter what little livestock remained, and the once-lively land falling silent, save for the call of jackals that now ruled over the barren plains.

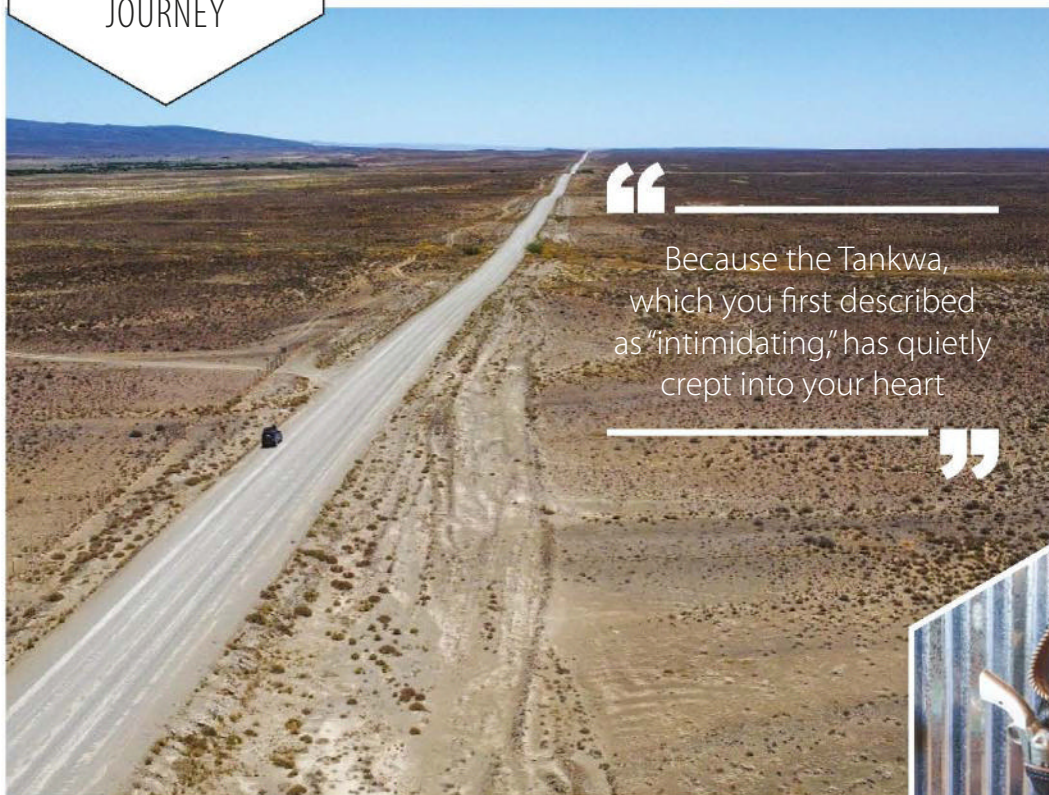
If you're fit enough, you can climb Pramberg. From the top, you'll have a full 360° view of the Elandsberg, Leeuberg and even Oudebaaskraal Dam. To the

southeast, Skoorsteenberg stands with its WiFi tower; in the west, you'll see Vensterklip in the Cederberg; and to the east, the Roggeveld Mountains stretch into the distance.

All that remains now is to return to the Abrahamsknieë road and head back to our overnight stay at Perdekloof.

We pack up and drive back to the park office to return our keys. From there, we follow the same road back to Ceres – but first, we make one last stop at the Da' Doer Padstal & Bar, a stone's throw from Jakkalsgat.

Ronel and Roelf Haasbroek from Somerset West moved to the Tankwa in



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Because the Tankwa, which you first described as “intimidating,” has quietly crept into your heart

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2023 and established the farm stall. Their daughter, Danielle, and her husband, Marco Combrinck, joined soon after and today, the two of them run this popular gathering spot.

Thanks to the Skoorsteenberg radio mast, there's WiFi, along with a swimming pool, a cowboy-themed bar and a small restaurant. The menu is simple, with just eight dishes, priced between R50 for a plate of chips and R100 for a “hangover breakfast.”

If you're not ready to leave the Karoo just yet, you can stay over. Camping costs

R150 per person, while a night in one of Da' Doer's dome tents (set under shade netting, with beds and bedding included) costs R350 per person. There's also a single cottage that sleeps four, available for R2 000 per night.

Even though Marco and Danielle don't come from families who have lived in Karoo for generations, they seem to know just about everyone in the area. Like Hein and Susan from the Tankwa Padstal, and Anton and Mel from Jakkalsgat, they've become as much a part of the Tankwa Karoo's culture as the Visagie, Pieterse, Shephard and 13 other original farming

families.

Danielle and

Marco make it difficult

to leave because they want

to hear all your stories and find out what you've seen in your few days here. By the time you manage to tear yourself free, you might have asked them to let you know if a farm in the area ever comes up for sale. Because the Tankwa, which you first described as “intimidating,” has quietly crept into your heart. And, to your own surprise, you're considering becoming a Tankwa person too... and you'd be more than welcome!

Emergency contacts

If things go wrong, you can call the following Level 3 first responders. (Level 3 is a significantly higher qualification than Belinda, the receptionist at your office, has. It means they can assist with emergency childbirth, severe spinal injuries, airway obstructions, chronic bleeding, and diabetic, epileptic or asthma-related seizures.)

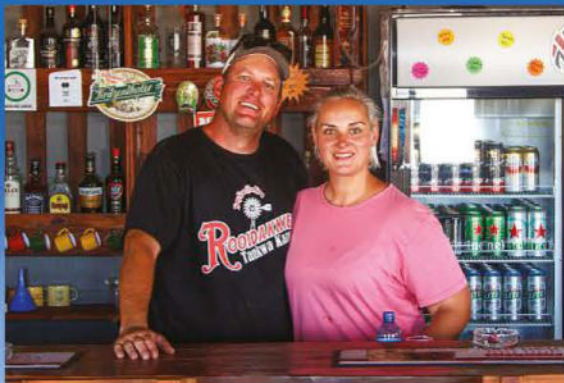
Tankwa Tented Camp ☎ 071 078 4400 (Grey)

Da' Doer Padstal ☎ 083 420 7221 (Marco) or 072 515 4118 (Danielle)

Gannaga Lodge ☎ 079 922 1688 (office) or 071 216 4161 (Makyla)

Bike X Cape ☎ 076 656 7853 (Michelle) or 073 910 5808 (Lemson)





Where we stayed

Perdekloof Camp

This campsite has six stands, arranged in three groups of two. Each boasts private ablution facilities, including a kitchen, shower and toilet. The lights are solar-powered, but there are no electrical outlets to charge your phone. You'll have hot water thanks to gas, and the bins are emptied every few days.

Price R484 per night for two (max six), plus a conservation fee of R58 (waived if you have a Wild Card).

Contact 012 428 9111 (reservations) 📧 reservations@sanparks.org 🌐 sanparks.org



ONE STEP AT A TIME. The abandoned houses are a sign of how unforgiving the Karoo can be. It is possible to flourish here if you adopt the attitude of Danielle and Marco (left) who chose hospitality rather than actual farming. Some people even retire in the Karoo, seeking the solitude and safety only available here.



Respite on the N7

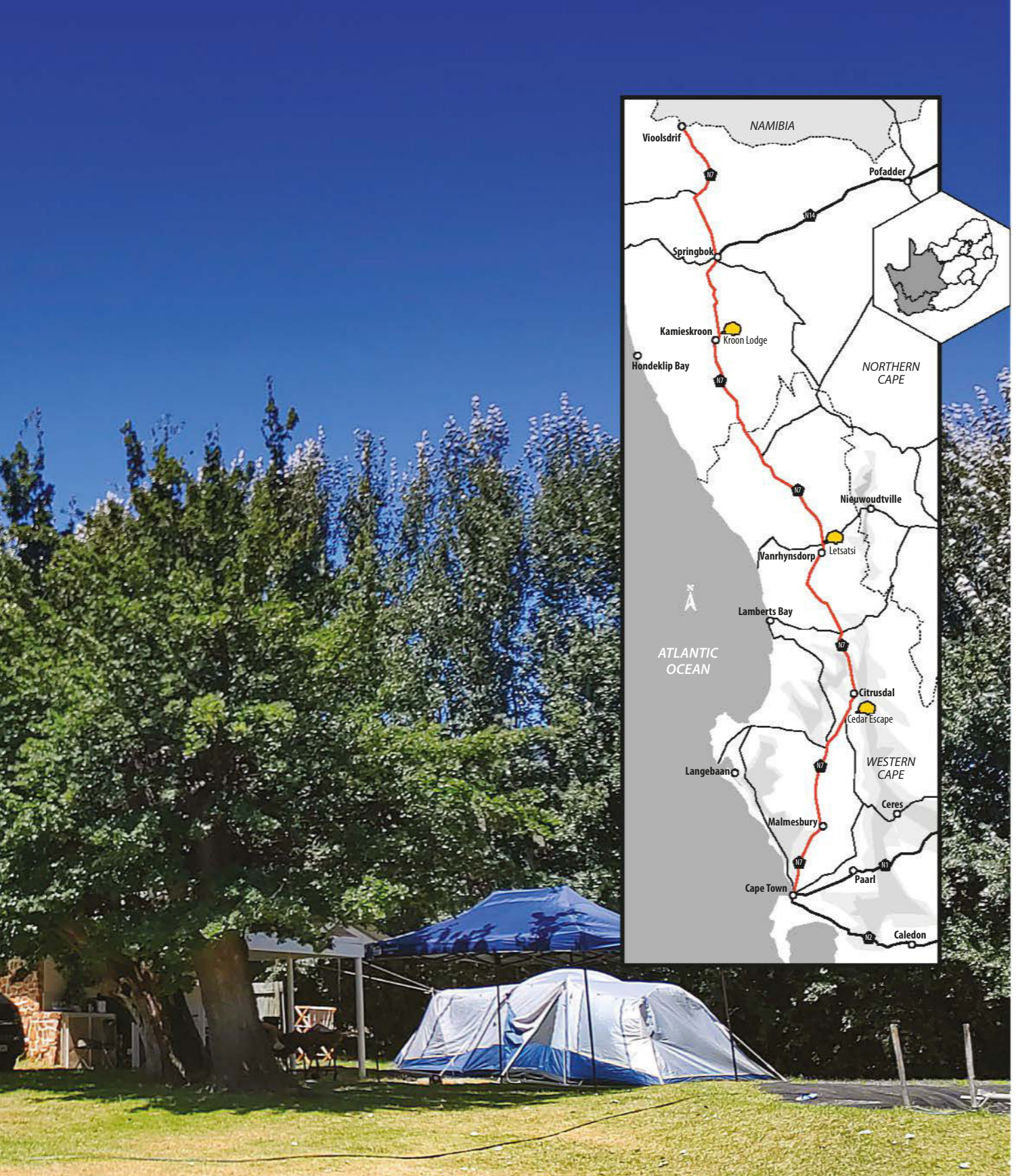
Turn the N7 into an adventure, one campsite at a time.

Words **Eloïse Botha** Photos **Eloïse Botha** and **Sean Sivertsen**



It's a highway with many faces: the 666 km-long N7 between Cape Town and Vioolsdrif doesn't just take you to the heartland of the country's most beautiful flowers, but also gives you access to the entire West Coast. It's an alternative route between the Cape and the north of the country and pulses like a lifeline it is between

local campers and Namibia. We're about to head off for a holiday of camping under the stars along the Orange River – a planned trip that couldn't come soon enough. But we don't want to rush from the Mother City to Vioolsdrif in a single day. The rubber boats can wait a day or two because we're going to camp our way there.



Citrusdal is barely 200 km from Cape Town, making it an easy first stretch to ease into the Cedar Escape campsite just outside the town. There's no need to fill up the tank yet, as Vanrhynsdorp – the next stop – is only 130 km along.

There, you can settle in at one of the country's most

impressive (and newest) campsites. Letsatsi is just off the N7, across from the town.

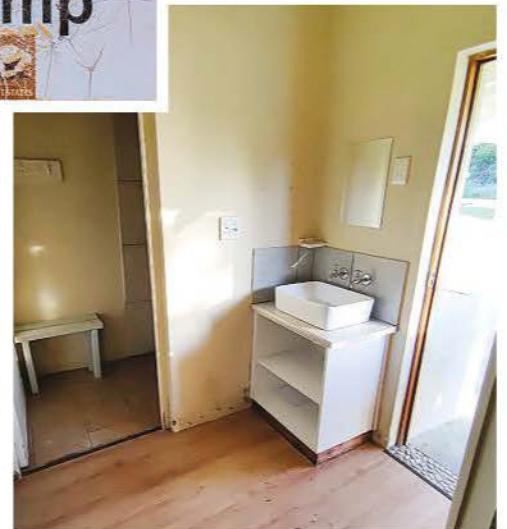
Nothing stops you from sleeping in a bit the next morning, as Kroon Lodge in Kamieskroon is just two hours further north. After your stay there, you won't even need to set an alarm – Violsdrif is now a mere two hours away.

CEDAR ESCAPE (BOSRIVIER) Boontjies River retreat

There's no office at Cedar Escape, but two days before your arrival, you'll receive a WhatsApp message with your site number and check-in and check-out times. The turn-off is 8 km outside Citrusdal on the R303 towards Ceres. A narrow dirt road takes you the last few hundred metres through fynbos to the camp. While the road is suitable for a regular sedan and trailer, there's a steep downhill section just before the campsite.

As you enter the campsite, a row of trees lines the left-hand side, next to a well-maintained lawn. At the far end of the lawn, five campsites sit right on the banks of the Boontjies River. Depending on the time of day, your site may have shade – sites 1 and 4 offer the most cover.

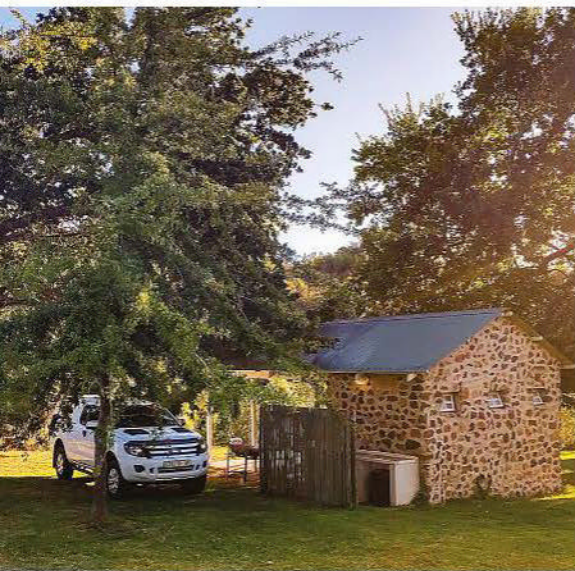
Behind the campsites, there's a communal braai area with a firepit where groups can socialise. Each site has its own lockable bathroom building with a covered veranda, a concrete floor and plenty of two- and three-point power outlets. Your freestanding braai (without





Between the first campsite and the river, there's a small man-made dam, about 25 m long and unfenced

OCCUPY A STOEP. If you managed to book a Bosrivier camp at Cedar Escape, you and your people will be one of only five groups camping along a stream. Every group has its own facilities including a private braai.



a grid) is also here.

There are two dishwashing areas – one under cover with a concrete counter to place your items on and another next to the bathroom block. Both have cold and hot water (heated by a gas geyser).

Inside the bathroom, the toilet is to the left and the shower to the right, each with its own door. Power outlets are near the hand basin.

At night, the campsite is well-lit, so there's no need to fumble for a torch if you need to step out. Your site also has ample lighting, meaning you won't need a headlamp while braaing at sunset.

While the lights are helpful, they do attract bugs. But then again, you're in their habitat – any seasoned camper knows a few bugs are just part of the experience.

Between the first campsite and the river, there's a small man-made dam, about 25 m long and unfenced – this is the campsite's swimming pool. If you prefer, you can also swim in the river, which has small pools and is shallow enough for young children.

The water adds to the natural beauty of the surroundings and you'll spot plenty of birdlife. We saw several flycatchers and Cape robin-chats during our stay.



Briefly | Cedar Escape (Bosrivier)



Campsite Five sites along a stream, set on a large, triangular lawn.

Ablutions Private facilities at each site, including a separate toilet and shower.

Price At the time of writing, new rates were not yet available. However, until the end of February this year, the cost was R615 per night per site for up to six people (R665 during school holidays, long weekends and public holidays). A minimum stay of two nights is required.

Arrival and departure From 14:00 and before 10:30. Earlier check-ins or later check-outs may be arranged at an additional fee.

Contact ☎ 071 681 3871 📧 bookings@algestates.com 🌐 cedarescape.co.za

Nearest town Citrusdal, 8,5 km away.

Road conditions The last 570 m is a dirt road.

GPS S32.633710 E19.080090

Drive & Camp says The Rivercamp is a second campsite at Cedar Escape, located about 11 km from Bosrivier as the crow flies. Situated on the banks of the Olifants River, it offers a private experience, as only one booking for up to 16 people is accepted at a time. It includes a kitchen and communal ablution facilities.

LETSATSI LODGE

Luxury along the N7

Only the N7 and a 500 m open stretch separate Letsatsi from Vanrhynsdorp. You'll drive on tar all the way to the gate, where you need to press a button for the lodge staff to let you in. The reception is a short distance ahead, along a dirt road, with a remarkable old Roman Catholic stone church on the left. The nearly century-old church contrasts sharply with the brand-new campsite.

There's plenty of space for your towing setup in the parking area in front of the office, where friendly staff will be waiting with the keys to your kitchen and bathroom, as well as directions to your site. You'll also receive a slip for a freshly baked bread, which will be delivered to your site in the evening, plus complimentary rusks and coffee at

the restaurant the next morning. (We've experienced this same thoughtful gesture at Molopo Kalahari Lodge in Askham – Letsatsi and Molopo Kalahari both belong to the same owner, NC Famous Lodges. – Ed)

In the small shop to the left of the office, you can buy drinks, meat and a variety of sweets. Speaking of food and drinks: the Red Ox steakhouse is located right by reception.

To reach your campsite, follow the road past the church. You'll pass an outdoor chessboard on your right and a swimming pool on your left. Continue behind a row of chalets – all of which overlook a dam.

Just beyond the chalets, you'll find a sign indicating the location of each site. There's only one access road, so you'll exit the same way you came in.

All the sites are identical, offering lush green grass for your tent or caravan. Site 12, however, has a slightly different bathroom, as it also includes a laundry room.

The sites are set alongside six buildings arranged in two rows of three, separated from one another by a low white pole fence. There are no shade trees at the sites, but the section of the building facing your site isn't just your private kitchen and bathroom – it also includes a covered, tiled veranda.

Next to the covered area, in the open, is a raised steel firepit, with a sturdy log cut flat on one side to serve as seating. Your veranda also has a built-in braai, a table with four chairs and a countertop next to the braai where your braai accessories are neatly wrapped in plastic. This includes a folding grid, a stand for the

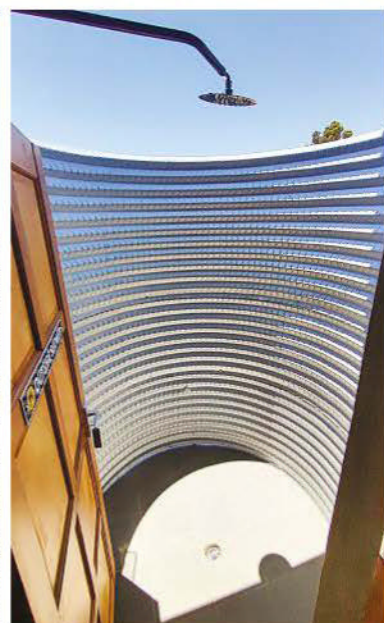
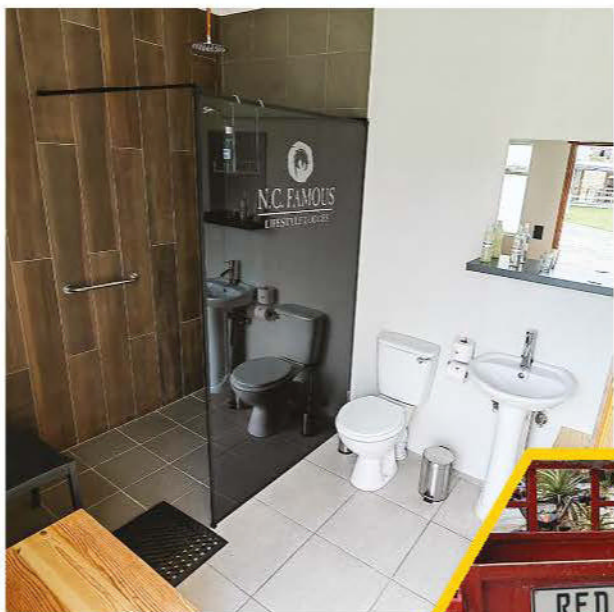


All the sites are identical, offering lush green grass for your tent or caravan. Site 12, however, has a slightly different bathroom, as it also includes a laundry room





THE BEST. People who camp may have different requirements: Some are happy with simply a clearing in a bush while others prefer a well appointed stand. Letsatsi caters to the latter and you won't even need to bring crockery or soap.





The kitchen is so well-equipped that you won't need to unpack any of your own gear



Briefly | Letsatsi Lodge



Campsite 12 luxury campsites with some of the best facilities in the country.

Ablutions Private facilities – each site has a fully equipped kitchen and bathroom.

Price R800 per site for the first four, thereafter R250 per person. *(Since our visit, the first two guests now receive a complimentary breakfast. – Ed)*

Arrival and departure Between 13:00 and 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 027 219 2828

info@letsatsilodge.co.za

ncfamouslodges.com/letsatsi-lodge/

Nearest town Right at Vanrhynsdorp.

Road conditions Tarred road to the gate, dirt after entry.

GPS S31.607173 E18.727242

Drive & Camp says While you're camping in luxury, why not spoil yourself even more with a visit to the restaurant? The menu offers a variety of options, from Norwegian salmon and lamb tails to oxtail and pizzas where you choose your own toppings. A sign on the wall reminds guests that they must be fully dressed at all times – bare feet are not allowed and after 18:00, no flip-flops are permitted.





KEEP LEFT. Notice the signs above the fireplace. Make your fire on the left and rake the coals to the right.



grid, firelighters and even matches.

Standing in front of the braai, you'll notice two stickers above it – one with a tick on the left and a cross on the right. You're instructed to build your fire on the left, as there's a light at the back right of the chimney that shines down on the grid. You can switch this light on and off as needed. (An extra pack of firelighters and matches can be found under the kitchen sink.)

When it comes to electricity, you have several options on your veranda: two standard plug sockets and one for a Fredlin plug. The veranda light switches on automatically at night.

The two doors on your veranda lead to your private kitchen and bathroom. It's easy to see why Letsatsi is considered one of the most luxurious campsites in the country. In addition to a fridge, the kitchen is equipped with a microwave, induction stove, electric kettle and slow cooker. There's also a saucepan, frying pan and braai dish, along with plates, cutlery, salt, pepper and spices. At site 7, we even spotted a four-plate stove with an oven. Other than the sink, the kitchen also features multiple wall sockets, including two- and three-prong outlets as well as two USB ports.

The kitchen is so well-equipped that you won't need to unpack any of your own gear.

The bathroom is spacious, with a walk-in shower, toilet, basin and plenty of storage space. The rounded feature you see on the outside of the building isn't a corrugated water tank – it's your outdoor shower.

During our visit, the owners were still in the process of setting up a laundry and a freezer room. These facilities are part of the building near sites 7 and 12.

The campsite boasts its own swimming pool, located near the chalets. It features a long bench and a screen on one side to block out the harshest sun.

Just before nightfall, a security guard makes his rounds to greet guests. He patrols throughout the night, either on foot or in a red golf-like cart.

One thing you'll need to make peace with is the nearby highway. About 230 m from the campsite, traffic noise occasionally interrupts the tranquillity of the natural surroundings.

“

...there's a campsite, motorhomes are welcome, there's a restaurant, WiFi and it's pet-friendly

”



KROON LODGE

Welcome to flower country

Today, we cross the provincial border into the Northern Cape, right into the heart of Namaqualand. Kamieskroon isn't a place you'd immediately associate with camping, but a sign just 100 m from Kroon Lodge will change your mind: there's a campsite, motorhomes are welcome, there's a restaurant, WiFi and it's pet-friendly. Once you turn off the N7, let the signposts guide you – it's one of the first properties on the left as you enter the town, about 500 m from the main road.

At the gate, press the button for the lodge staff to open it. The reception is

on the right and the campsite is in the far corner, also to the right, behind the building. There's plenty of parking and as you step into the office, you'll be greeted by Ounooi, the resident Jack Russell.

The shop to the right of the office sells everything from cooldrinks and sweets to wooden crafts, books and paintings. It also doubles as a small restaurant. The restaurant isn't open all the time – you'll need to pre-order from a limited selection of breakfast and light meals.

Two of the 14 campsites are set apart from the rest, to the left of the office, but wherever you set up, the sites are level with a dirt and/or stone surface. The remaining sites are laid out in a U-shape

about 30 m to the right of the first two. They all look the same: upright wooden slats separate you from your neighbours, each has a modest covered veranda with a built-in braai, a worktop and a sink with a cold tap. The power outlet is a double socket for a standard plug.

The veranda light is bright enough if you want to sit outside at night. Need a grid and stand for your braai? Just ask – Kroon Lodge happily loans them out at no charge.

Kroon Lodge has communal bathrooms for men and women, plus an additional wheelchair-friendly unit in between. These are located in the same building

Briefly | Kroon-Lodge



Campsite 14 level sites on dirt, each with a covered veranda and built-in braai.

Ablutions Communal bathrooms for men and women, plus wheelchair-friendly facilities.

Price R170 or R190 per person per night, depending on the season.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00, but flexible during quieter times.

Contact 083 878 8320

kroonlodge@yahoo.com

kroonlodge.co.za

Nearest town In Kamieskroon.

Road conditions 100 m of well-maintained gravel road.

GPS S30.206775 E17.935256

Drive & Camp says Keep in mind that Kamieskroon is small and has limited shops. Don't wait until you get here to stock up – rather do so in Vanrhynsdorp or farther north in Springbok.

as the reception, but on the side facing the campsites. The two farthest sites are 50 m away, but across from the others.

Both the men's and women's sections have shower cubicles and toilets and the women's side also has a bathtub. Each shower cubicle has its own door and a bench inside for your toiletries.

Forgot the Wi-Fi password? There's a sign displaying the code and the staff will also remind you that ice and firewood are available at the office.

A washing machine sits on the bathroom veranda and operates with R5 coins – you'll need five coins per load. Outside the bathrooms, you'll find a dishwashing station with two sinks and hot water.

Keep in mind there's no lawn here, so you won't be dashing barefoot to the bathrooms. If you're heading out late at night, slip on your sandals or slippers.

If you've brought a friend for Ounooi to play with, there's no need for a leash – unless your pup has a habit of stirring up trouble with fellow campers.



ARMS WIDE OPEN. Kroon Lodge makes it clear that all are welcome, no matter what you drive nor how you camp. You may even bring your furry friend along.

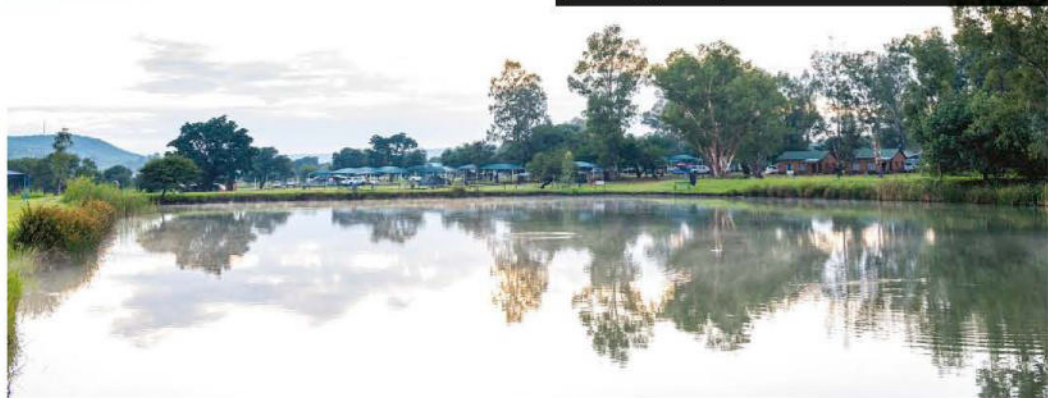
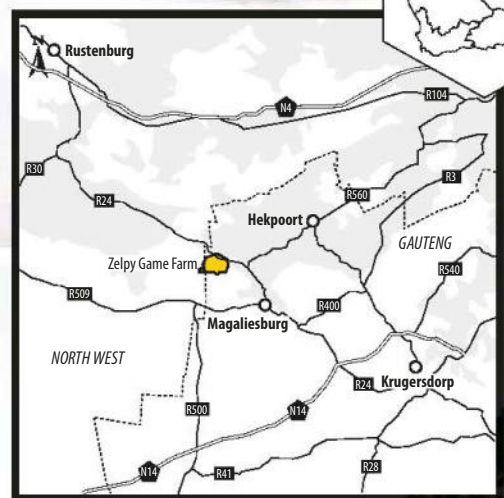
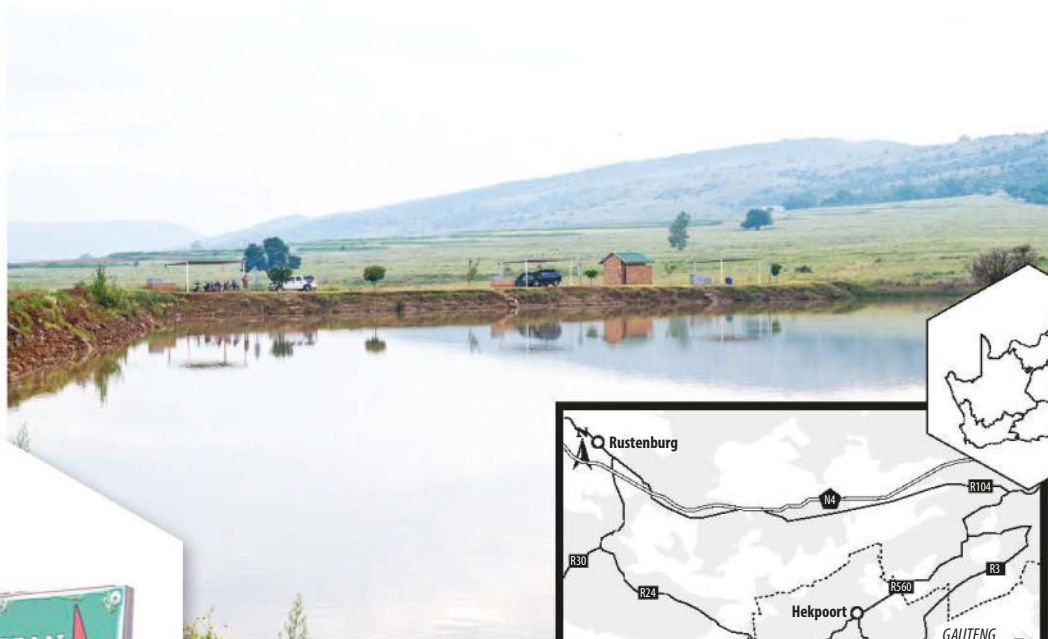




Tight lines in the Magaliesberg

The Zelpy Fishing and Game Reserve is perfect for campers who love to cast a line.

Words and photos **Helenus Kruger**



With a whopping seven campsites, four dams teeming with fish and plenty of activities to keep the whole family entertained, Zelpy is a top-notch camping destination.

On arrival just 8 km outside Magaliesburg, you'll be welcomed by the friendly Tricia Swanepoel at reception, where she'll help you with the formalities. Regulars (*The resort was known as Eastco Magalies until a few years ago. – Ed*) usually request their preferred spot when booking. If it's your first visit, Tricia will first ascertain whether you're here with a tent or caravan, and how close you want to be to the water before assigning you a stand.

Once you've set up camp and taken a stroll around the resort, it quickly becomes clear that this is an angler's paradise. Three of the four dams are near the main camp and packed with fish. Fishing rods are lined up along the banks, their taut lines a sure sign of action, while bite alarms beep one after another.

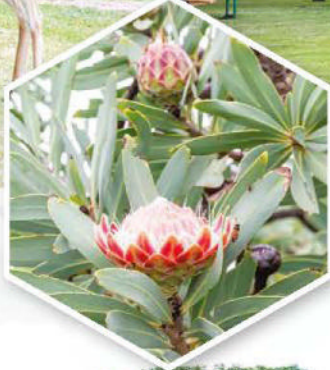
You'll also spot plenty of furry companions, as small dogs are welcome to camp here. Just check with the resort beforehand, as only knee-high or smaller dogs are allowed. Some campers even fence off their site to keep their pups from wandering off on solo adventures.

But it's not just anglers who will feel at home here – there's more than enough to do for everyone. The resort is split

into two sections: the main camp, which houses reception, and the game reserve. The main camp is where you'll find all the usual amenities – swimming pools, a slide, kids' play areas, a camp shop and a restaurant.

If fishing is your priority, ask for a stand in the main camp, as that's where the three dams are. The biggest dam is closest to reception, with two smaller ones just below it, each featuring five permanent shelters on their banks. Be sure to bring your gazebo, as these shelters get snapped up quickly. The catch-and-release rule applies, so after taking the obligatory photo, the fish must be returned to the water.

Zelpy's main camp has 52 stands



WATER WORKS. At Zelpy it's all about the water. If you're not fishing, you'll be swimming or watching the wildlife drinking at the borehole.





spread across four camping areas. The most popular spots are the 39 caravan stands just past reception on the right, each with a shade net and concrete slab. Plus, they're close to the water. The campsite is dotted with shade trees, but for the most shade, aim for sites 3, 4, 10, 14, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24 or 36.

Each stand has its own braai and grid, and fires may only be made in these. Bringing your own braai or firepit is not allowed. Every stand also has a power point (standard household socket), a bin and a tap.

Tent campers can choose from three camping areas: Die Kraal, Bloekoms and Bietjiebos – though caravans are also welcome here.

Die Kraal has four camping spots below the bank of the upper dam, enclosed by wooden poles, hence the name. These stands are unmarked and not numbered, with grass underfoot, power points, taps and bins. Bring your longest extension cord, as the power points are centrally located and may be a bit of a stretch from your stand.

The main camp has two ablution blocks with separate facilities for men and women. The larger one is behind reception, with the smaller one is near

Die Kraal. One side of the building has a scullery with dishwashing sinks, a washing machine, tumble dryer and fridge. The cassette toilet disposal area is also here.

The ablution facilities have tiled walls and shower cubicles, mirrors, power points and hand soap at the basins. The shower cubicles have wooden doors, a small bench, hooks on the wall, a curtain and soap racks.

For a quieter camping experience away from the hustle and bustle, opt for a site in Bloekoms or Bietjiebos. A pool and play area separate these camps from the rest of the resort, offering more seclusion.

Bloekoms has eight stands near the pool and play area, but there's not much shade. Only four of the eight (A, B, G and H) have power, so if you need electricity, bring solar panels. Each stand has a braai and grid, while bins and taps are shared with neighbours.

Bietjiebos offers a near-forest experience among black wattle and karee trees that provide all-day shade. It feels completely removed from the rest of the resort, like a true bush camp. While two off-road trailers or dome tents will fit comfortably, caravans might struggle



“

If fishing is your priority, ask for a stand in the main camp, as that's where the three dams are. The biggest dam is closest to reception, with two smaller ones just below it, each featuring five permanent shelters on their banks

”



due to the closely spaced trees and low-hanging branches.

There's no power or grass here, and the nearest tap is 20 m away. Each stand does, however, have a braai, grid and bin. Bloekoms and Bietjiebos share ablution facilities with the caravan stands.

The area around the pool has a pool with a slide, eight shelters with tables and benches, and a grassy play area with trampolines, climbing frames and swings for the kids. The indoor heated pool is in a separate room next to the restaurant.

The camp shop sells firewood, ice, sweets, cooldrinks, ice cream and basic groceries. The restaurant serves a range of meals, including breakfast, burgers and chips, toasted sandwiches and pizza.

A unique offering here is the takeaway side dishes you can order to complement

your evening braai. Just place your order before 12:00 and choose from options like pot bread, papert, potato bake and salads.

The restaurant is licensed, so you can enjoy a drink here, but bringing your own alcohol into the restaurant or pool area is not allowed.

Zelpy's Game Camp is about 2 km from the reserve gate. Here, you can set up a tent at the specimen fishing dam or the 4x4 camp, go on a game drive (self-drive or guided), tackle the 4x4, hiking or cycling trails, take a quad bike ride, test out your new golf clubs at the driving range, or even fire a few shots at the shooting range. Contact the resort for shoes and bookings.

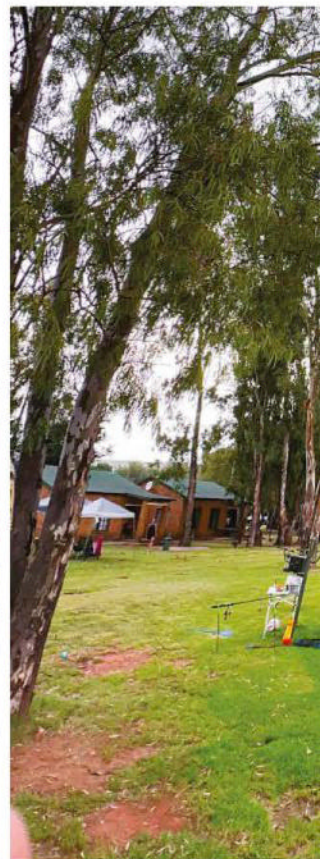
The fourth dam is the specimen fishing dam, with seven stands along its banks. This is the spot for experienced anglers who respect and follow the specimen

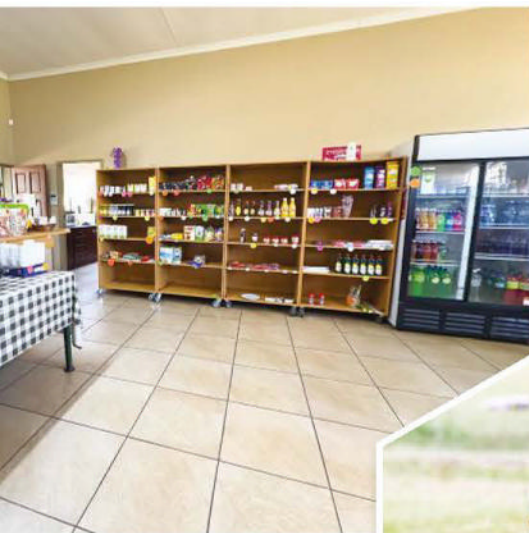
fishing rules. Swimming is not allowed here, but there's a concrete dam nearby for cooling off.

There are no trees near these stands, but each has a corrugated iron shelter and concrete slab, as well as a built-in braai and tap. Only sites 1 to 4 have power points. A small bathroom with a toilet and basin is next to site 7. The main ablution block, with separate facilities for men and women, is a short walk away.

The 4x4 camp (GPS S25.969278 E27.504140) is perched on a mountain in the reserve, overlooking the valley and the Magaliesberg to the north. The view is even better from the cool waters of the concrete dam at the edge of the camp.

You'll need to navigate a section of the 4x4 trail to get here. The route





GREENERY, SCENERY. If you prefer solitude, you should head up to the 4x4 camp. But if you want to be part of the fun you'll love the main camp with its slides, pools, restaurant and bar.



Briefly | Zelpy Fishing and Game Reserve



Campsite 52 campsites in the main camp and 17 in the reserve.

Ablution facilities Two ablution blocks in the main camp and one each at the specimen dam campsite and 4x4 camp.

Price R220-R750 depending on the season, which campsite you choose, what you're camping with, how many people are in your group, and whether you're a pensioner.

Contact 📞 082 885 1994 📞 072 382 2112

✉️ bookings@fishinggamereresort.co.za

🌐 fishinggamereresort.co.za

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Nearest town Pretoria, 110 km.

Road condition The last kilometre to the gate is a decent dirt road.

GPS S25.955010 E27.512987

Drive & Camp says Mark GPS S25.957692 E27.484492 on your GPS when tackling the 4x4 trails. There's a great rest stop where you can braai while the kids swim and play on the jungle gyms.

has escape paths, making it suitable for both novice and experienced off-roaders. Thanks to these escape routes, even a 4x2 vehicle can handle it – you can even tow a trailer up to the camp.

This is a true bush camp: remote, peaceful and especially quiet at night. The 10 stands are arranged in a semi-circle around the picnic area. Most have trees, and each has a built-in braai, a small ground-level firepit and a tap (borehole water). You'll need to provide your own power.

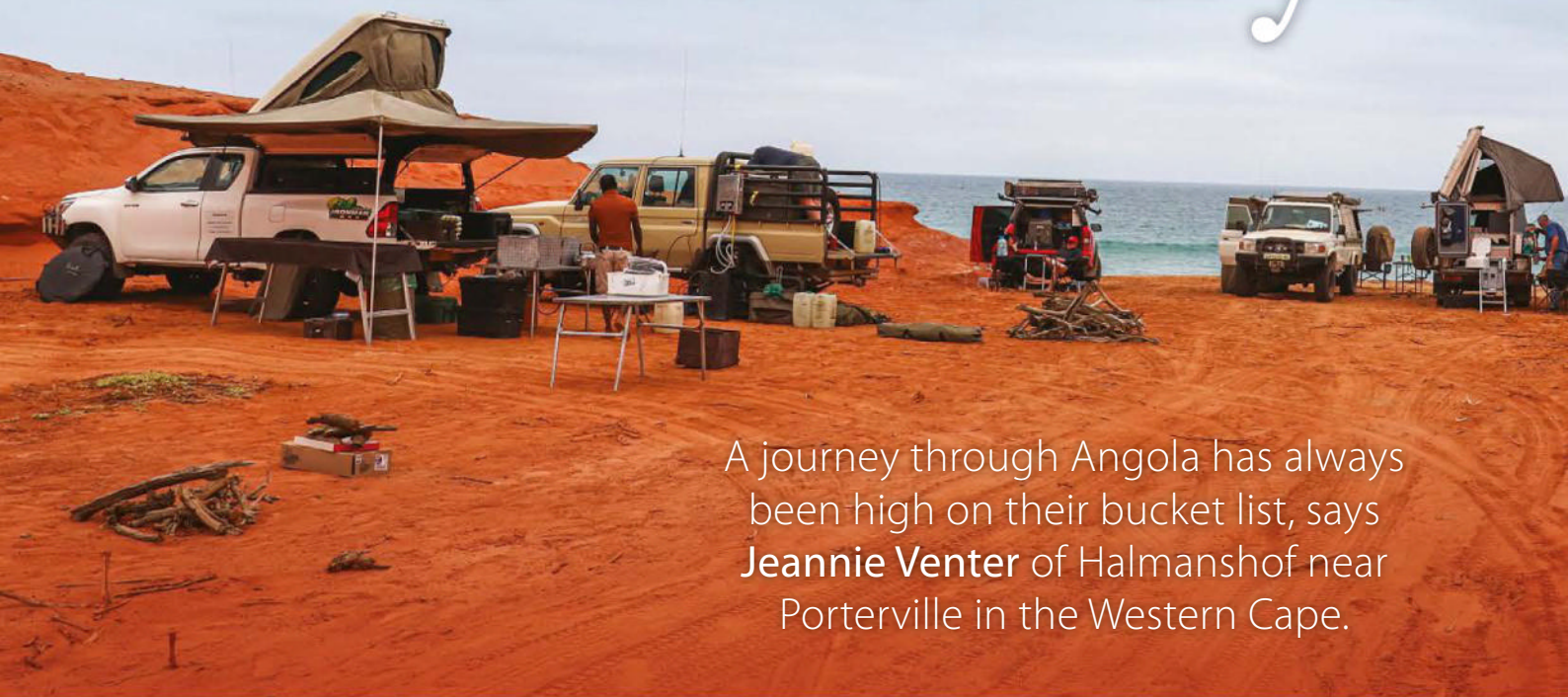
The ablution block is built from natural stone and has two of everything:

basins, showers and toilets. There are no power points, and gas geysers heat the water. The scullery is behind the building.

The picnic area is a great base for visitors staying in the main camp who want to explore the 4x4 trails. There are braais, benches and a firepit. Just bring a camping table, chairs, meat and braaibroodjies.

Keep an eye out for fynbos in the ravines and kudu on the ridges. On the plains, you'll spot eland, blue wildebeest, impala, blesbok, white blesbok, zebra and reedbuck.

Angola is A-okay!



A journey through Angola has always been high on their bucket list, says **Jeannie Venter** of Halmanshof near Porterville in the Western Cape.

As someone who loves camping and enjoys long road trips, Jeannie and her husband, Henri, had always been drawn to the allure of Angola – a country where you can travel 4 500 km with your off-road trailer in tow.

So, when they discovered that their favourite tour operator was offering a trip through Angola, they didn't hesitate to book. Not only would they not have to worry about breakfast and dinner, but all their overnight stays would be in wild camps rather than traditional campsites – exactly their kind of adventure.

On the day schools shut for the holidays, they left Porterville and spent three days on the road to Rundu. Along the way, they camped at Violsdrift, just

before the border post at the Orange River Rafting Lodge, before continuing to Windhoek the next day, where they spent the night at the Urban campsite – and, of course, visited the ever-popular Joe's Beerhouse for dinner.

From there, they set their sights on Rundu but made a stop in Grootfontein to see the Hoba meteorite. This massive iron rock from outer space was discovered in 1920, weighs nearly 60 tonnes, and is the largest meteorite in the world.

Afterwards, they drove to the Kaisosi River Lodge in Rundu, where they met the other travellers on the tour the next day. Jeannie tells us all about it...

“ We met the people who would be our companions and campfire

friends for the next two weeks... and, by the end of it, also good friends.

Our tour leader, Danie van Ellewee – better known as Jakkals – fitted each vehicle with a two-way radio. He gave us a quick rundown of what to expect over the next few days, how the border crossing would work, and the arrangements for exchanging money and refuelling.

'You'll see,' Jakkals said. 'Angola is not Namibia. Angola is not Botswana. Angola is not the Zambezi region. Angola is different... it's an experience.'

Our tour group was small, and with a Bush Lapa Vlooi hitched to our Toyota Fortuner, we were the only ones towing a trailer. Everyone was eager for the adventure in this country to begin.



HERE WE GO! Henri and Jeannie Venter and their sons, Hanri (17, left) and Johan (15) were the only family in the group that towed through Angola with their Toyota Fortuner and Bush Lapa Vlooi. They experienced one highlight after the other.

We left Rundu on a cool Tuesday morning. Everything went smoothly at the Katwitwi border post, and we set off with wallets full of kwanzas.

The first day was tough going – more a rough track than an actual road – but the scenery more than made up for it. We explored Angola's so-called forgotten province, Cuando Cubango. The locals were friendly and excited to see visitors.

This road clearly doesn't see much traffic, but since driving is on the right-hand side in Angola, the quiet was actually a blessing – it gave us time to adjust before tackling the big cities. We followed the Cubango River all day and camped on its banks that night, where the grunts of hippos kept light sleepers awake.

The next morning, we passed the construction camp of the former Springbok captain Gary Teichmann. Later, we hit tar and crossed the Cubango. By late afternoon, we reached Manongue and took some time to explore. We filled up for the first time and were stunned to find diesel cost only R3,80 per litre.

You quickly realise that Angola's roads are full of potholes... 'and the green grass grows around them,' as the song goes. But it's alongside the roads where life happens – where people trade everything from food, palm wine, honey and charcoal to meat and cassava. It was fascinating to watch women drying cassava roots on the yellow line of the tar road.

That night, we camped in the Manongue area.

On the third day of our tour, we drove through the Huambo province – the most fertile agricultural region in Angola. Across the country, charcoal is a major



READER STORY

source of income. Men chop down trees, and smoke drifts up from countless fires in the fields. The charcoal is packed into sacks and stacked beside the road, where trucks collect it for transport to the cities. We passed Mount Luvili, which looks like a shark's tooth, and camped that night in the Waku Kungo area on the banks of the Cuvo River, where we listened to the sound of rushing water all night.

After breakfast, we headed to the coffee plantations in the forests. At one point, Angola was the world's fourth-largest coffee producer, so it was a privilege to camp on a working coffee farm. We watched farm workers harvesting and drying the coffee beans and even got the chance to taste and buy some.

We weren't done with the forest just yet. The next morning, we followed a twin-track through the lush greenery, passing a group of truly impressive baobab trees.

Today, we were heading to Pungo Andongo, and along the way, we saw bananas, sugarcane, avocados, mangoes and papayas growing wild beside the road. Progress was slow but steady, and we stopped for lunch just before the bridge over the Kwanza River, which was built in 1932. The Kwanza is one of Angola's largest rivers, and the country's currency is named after it.

We passed the Capanda Dam with its hydroelectric power station. As we got closer to the Malanje province, the landscape gradually changed into savanna. Then, suddenly, massive black rock formations with unusual shapes appeared before us. Known as the Pedras Negras, these formations stretch over 12 x 6 km and rise up to 200 m high. We visited the viewpoint and climbed the steps to the top for some breathtaking photos.

That evening, we camped at the foot of the Pedras Negras, watching the sun set over these incredible formations.

By now, we were on our sixth day. In the morning, we helped the local women pump water at the community borehole before continuing our journey through Malanje to the Calandula Falls. We also visited a Portuguese church in the town of Calandula. The waterfall, which shares the town's name, is one of the largest in Africa – it cascades down the Lucala River in a spectacular curtain of water, 400 m wide and 105 m high. That night, we camped opposite the waterfall, and the boys and I climbed all the way down to the base. It was an experience I'll

“

At one point, Angola was the world's fourth-largest coffee producer, so it was a privilege to camp on a working coffee farm

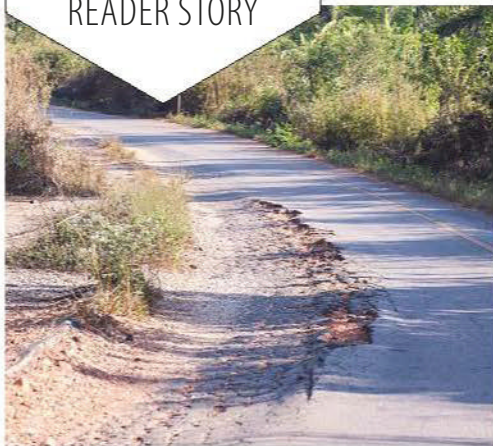
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LAND OF CONTRAST.
It's remarkable how the scenery changes as you travel through Angola, but what is even more remarkable are the bags of charcoal left on the side of the road, ready for collection and transportation to the cities.







GREEN, GREEN GRASS OF HOME. Make peace with the fact that Angolan roads are in a bad way. It's just one pothole after another and, judging by the grass growing out of them, repairs are few and far between. They do slow you down, so plan your trip accordingly.

“

That night, we camped opposite the waterfall, and the boys and I climbed all the way down to the base

”



never forget – one of the most beautiful places on our trip. Down there, it felt like a natural rainforest!

The next morning, we tackled the 377 km drive to Luanda. The day was filled with giant potholes and heavy traffic, requiring intense concentration from the drivers. We stopped for lunch in a botanical garden in N'Dalantango, where we took a circular drive through the gardens to admire the towering bamboo plants and massive trees.

On the road to Luanda, we marvelled at the countless baobabs and watched the locals hammering iron pegs into the trees so they could climb up to harvest the fruit.

We drove through the bustling outskirts of Luanda on our way to Barro do Dande. Along the way, we saw the remains of the ship graveyard – ships that ran aground here in 1975. The wrecks are quickly being cut up for scrap, and we were fortunate to have seen what's left of them.

That night, we camped by the sea, with

an unforgettable sunset casting a glow over the surrounding hills, dotted with candelabra trees.

A new day dawned – and a special one for the Venters. Our eldest, Hanri, was celebrating his 17th birthday in this incredible country. We'd reached the halfway mark of our journey and were now turning south.

We drove into Luanda to restock our supplies. The city's traffic was a chaotic swarm of motorbikes, heavy vehicles, taxis and pedestrians, yet despite the apparent disorder, we didn't see a single accident. By early afternoon, we arrived at Kwanza Lodge, excited at the prospect of leaving the off-road trailer untouched for the night and sinking into crisp white sheets. It's exactly what we needed to recharge for the final stretch of our trip.

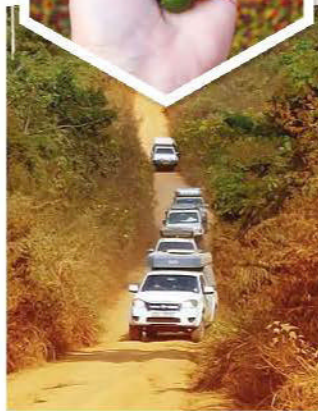
We booked one of the lodge's fishing boats, determined to catch some threadfin, a species known to thrive in the Kwanza River. And, as luck would have

it, the birthday boy was rewarded with a monster catch – 31 kg after a gruelling 45-minute battle! As the sun set over one of Africa's great rivers, we took in the view, knowing that no amount of money could ever buy an experience like this.

After two indulgent days on the Kwanza River, we set off on the tenth day of our journey towards the forests of Kumbira. We passed the Cuvo River again, where we had camped a week earlier. Along the way, we visited the Binda Falls before continuing to the town of Seles, where we would be camping tonight on the crest of a nearby mountain.

This stretch of road passes through an area where authorities are still actively searching for and clearing landmines. Red warning signs line the roadside, reminding me of those iconic images of Princess Diana's visit to Angola's mine-ridden regions. That was 30 years ago, yet the mines are still here. You could only shake your head.

We drove through the Kumbira Forest,



where terracotta-coloured clay-brick houses create a striking contrast against the lush green vegetation – a picture-perfect scene. Just outside Seles, we came across the remains of old war tanks, which fascinated many in our group. Some even climbed inside to explore.

The next morning, after breakfast, we set off for Lobito, an important port city and industrial hub. The scenery is stunning, and we were especially captivated by the city's peninsula. The residential areas clinging to the mountain slopes also left a lasting impression.

That evening, we camped on the beach and enjoyed dinner at the Alfa beach bar and restaurant.

From Lobito, we headed south along the coast, passing through the town of Benguela. Gradually, the landscape shifted into an arid desert, and suddenly, the tar road came to an end – we were now at the mercy of a corrugated dirt road. Strangely enough, there are bridges along this route, but no tar. From what I understand, the Angolan government is working on extending the road from the south.

That night, we camped in one of the most breathtaking spots yet – a natural red gorge overlooking the sea. We took a walk on the beach and were treated to a spectacular sight: a whale and her calf gliding through the water. Later, we gathered around a roaring campfire to keep the cold at bay – the perfect way to spend our last evening along Angola's coastline.

Our second-last day in Angola was a busy one. We left our seaside campsite and headed towards Namibe. It was a quiet Sunday in the city, giving us time to explore at our own pace and stock up on some of those delicious fresh bread rolls – known here as pão.

We were heading to the Serra da Leba Pass, where temperatures at the base soared to 35 °C. However, as we wound our way up, hairpin turn after hairpin turn, the temperature dropped by a full 10 °C. We stopped at a lookout point for lunch, taking in the view of the waterfall at the top of the pass.

Our next stop was Humpata, where we visited a cemetery of the Dorsland Trekkers. The farm owner maintains the site well – the grass is neatly trimmed, and the fences and graves are in good condition. We recognised familiar surnames like Du Plessis, Van der Merwe, Opperman, De Jager and even a Venter buried here.

Good to know

ROAD RULES In Angola, you drive on the right-hand side of the road.

LANGUAGE Angolans speak Portuguese – we came across very few people who understood English. It can get quite frustrating if you don't know at least a little Portuguese.

FUEL Always make sure you have enough cash, as petrol stations don't have card facilities. You also need to pay the exact amount, as no change is given. It's common practice to round your total up to the nearest 100 kwanza. Ensure you always have enough fuel to cover at least 800 km, as fuel shortages are common in the south of the country.

MONEY In cities, you can pay with your bank card at large supermarkets, but for smaller shops and roadside vendors, you'll need cash.

POLICE AND GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS You are not allowed to take photos of police stations, police officers or government buildings. Authorities are very strict about this – so keep your camera well hidden when passing through roadblocks.

ROADBLOCKS There is at least one roadblock between most towns. While law enforcement officers never asked us to unpack our vehicle, there is always a chance they might. We also encountered no incidents of bribery during our trip.

ROAD SIGNS They are very basic and only in Portuguese.

ROAD CONDITIONS Potholes, potholes and more potholes. Don't plan to cover too much distance in a single day.

FIREWOOD You won't be able to enjoy a campfire everywhere in Angola, as firewood is practically unavailable. The only place we saw wood for sale was in the south, near the Santa Clara border post, and that was it. Be prepared to braai with charcoal instead – it's widely available.

TOURISM Angola's tourism industry is still in its infancy, so don't expect to return home with fridge magnets, T-shirts or souvenirs. At the foot of the Leba Pass, there are a few stalls catering to tourists, but the farther north you go, the fewer you'll find.

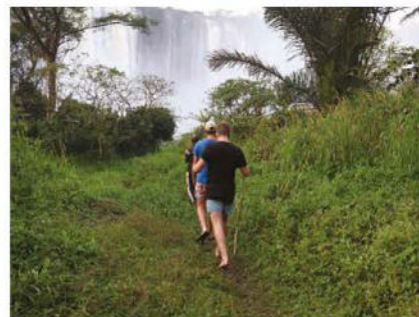
TOLL ROADS AND ATTRACTIONS We didn't come across any toll roads in Angola, and most of the attractions we visited had no entrance fees.

SUPERMARKETS The larger cities have plenty of supermarkets where you can buy almost anything – from drinking water to motorbikes.

MONEY During our visit, the exchange rate was 35 kwanza to R1. Diesel cost R3,80 per litre.

ANGOLANS The people of Angola are friendly and honest. One of our fellow travellers forgot a camera at a lookout point, and the locals stopped the last car in our convoy to return it.

SAFETY At no point did we feel unsafe in Angola, and we experienced no unwanted incidents.



EVEN FLOW. The Venters join the locals by pumping water out of a borehole (above left), walk to the Calandula Falls (above right) and celebrate the 17th birthday of Hanri, their eldest son, on board a fishing boat (below) on the Kwanza River.





Next on the itinerary was Lubango's Christ statue, known locally as Monumento do Cristo Rei. This white marble statue is one of only four of its kind in the world, standing 30 m tall on a hill overlooking the city.

In the late afternoon, we visited Tundavala, a place where, according to legend, tribes once threw criminals, including thieves and those accused of witchcraft, off the mountain's edge as punishment. Many still believe that the spirits of these unfortunate souls linger in the darkness of the abyss. At 1 200 m high, looking down is enough to make your head spin. Definitely not a place for those afraid of heights!

We camped near Tundavala and enjoyed our last evening in Angola with a dinner of beef fillet and chips.

The final day of our journey had arrived, and we hit the road to the border between Angola and Namibia. Before crossing, we made one last fuel stop in Lubango, spending the rest of our kwanzas before finally bidding farewell to Angola at the Santa Clara border post – our hearts full and content.



www.campcover.co.za

Jeannie wins a Camp Cover Bundo Bag worth R400. This bag is so versatile that it could house lots of nifty first-aid items or double as a weekend case. Check out Camp Cover's range on their website. www.campcover.co.za



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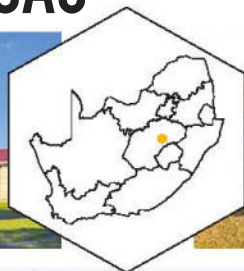
R2 495
VAT INCL

Camping with your furry friend

Pack the leash and the tent – these campsites welcome dogs.

Compiled by **Leon Botha**

OBERAMMERGAU



Pet terms All pets welcome, but be aware there are free-roaming chickens and ducks on the property.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite Eight grassy, level sites with electricity and water. Loose-standing braais on wheels are available. There are shade trees, though they are still young.

Ablutions Shared facilities near the sites, including a communal dishwashing area.

Arrival and departure No set times.

Contact 083 462 7019

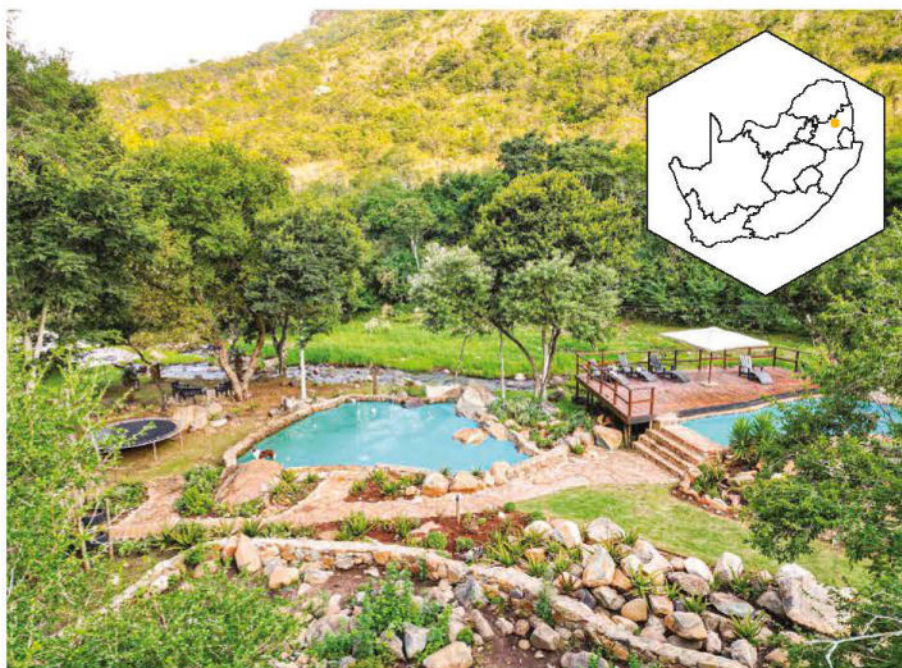
malutimountains@gmail.com

Nearest town In Senekal.

Road conditions? Tarred road.

GPS S28.321889 E27.613560

ROCKY DRIFT



Pet terms All pets are welcome. They must be socialised and preferably not kept on a leash at all times.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite 13 grassy sites, each with a built-in braai, water and electricity (blue plug). Shade varies. Mobile signal and WiFi are available near the restaurant.

Ablutions Six buildings, each with a shower, basin and toilet, plus a communal dishwashing area.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 072 245 4961 bookings@

rockydrift.co.za rockydrift.co.za

Nearest town Emgwenya, 11 km.

Road conditions? A 1,4 km gravel road, which can be rocky but is manageable with a regular road caravan.

GPS S25.654992 E30.374876

NONYANA RIVIER LODGE



Pet terms Small dogs are welcome and must be leashed when around other people.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite 23 riverside sites in a row along the Vaal River. Grassy stands with power, water and braai facilities. The resort has a heated indoor swimming pool, and WiFi is available near the office.

Ablutions Separate men's and women's facilities with a communal dishwashing area.

Arrival and departure Between 08:00 and 17:00.

Contact 016 987 7105 or 076 507 7638

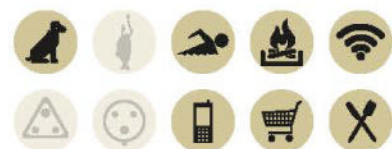
info@nonyana.co.za nonyana.co.za

Nearest town Vanderbijlpark, 33 km.

Road conditions? Tarred to the gate, paved for the final stretch.

GPS S26.731956 E27.616321

NTHAKENI BUSH & RIVER CAMP



Pet terms Pets are welcome, but arrangements must be made in advance.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite Choose from two comfortable sites (each with a private kitchen and bathroom), three riverfront sites (private bathroom at the central ablutions), two bush camps (each with a private bathroom), and a basic campsite with a bucket shower (hot water included) and toilet. There are also walking trails, but no electricity.

Ablutions Private. You heat water in a donkey boiler using wood supplied.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 09:00, unless otherwise arranged.

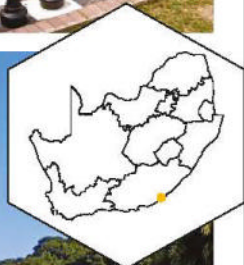
Contact 078 854 9218 info@nthakeni.com nthakeni.com

Nearest town Musina, 140 km and 5,5 km from Kruger's Pafuri Gate.

Road conditions? A 3,9 km gravel road, suitable for a sedan and regular caravan.

GPS S22.427257 E31.035310

PALM SPRINGS



Pet terms Campers must make prior arrangements. Some campsites are fenced.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite 64 grassy sites with shade scattered throughout the resort. Sites are available on terraces, by the river or with ocean views. Cellphone signal strength varies, but WiFi is available at the office.

Ablutions Three communal ablution blocks, each with a family bathroom and dishwashing area. One is wheelchair friendly. Laundry service available.

Arrival and departure No set times.

Contact 043 781 1901 or 061 247 4804 (WhatsApp)

reception@palmsspringsresort.co.za

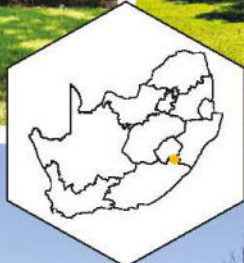
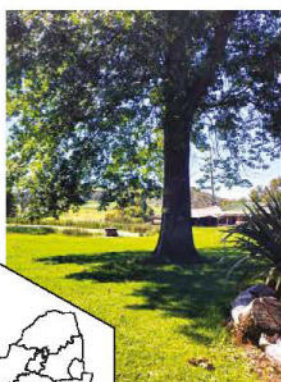
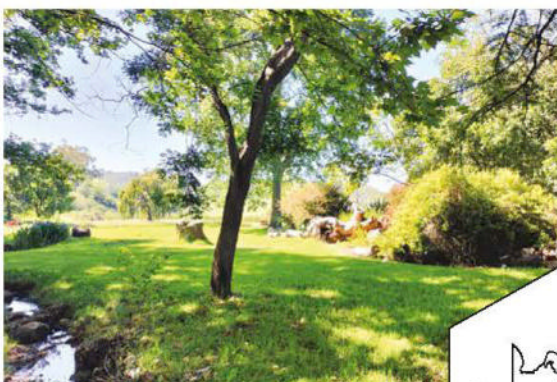
Palm Springs Holiday Resort

Nearest town Kidd's Beach, 2 km.

Road conditions? A 2 km dirt road, well maintained by the owners.

GPS S33.157279 E27.676275

CEDARBERG GUEST FARM



Pet terms No specific conditions. Keep in mind this is a farm and sites are unfenced. There are farm animals, including dogs, cats and chickens.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite Various sites on grass – some under large shade trees, others near the stream and ablutions. Braais are on wheels for easy repositioning, and free firewood is available.

Ablutions Separate men's and women's bathrooms with showers, basins and toilets. The communal dishwashing area is in the hall by the kitchen, and the washing machine is free to use.

Arrival and departure No fixed arrangements.

Contact 083 262 5464

info@cedarbergguestfarm.co.za

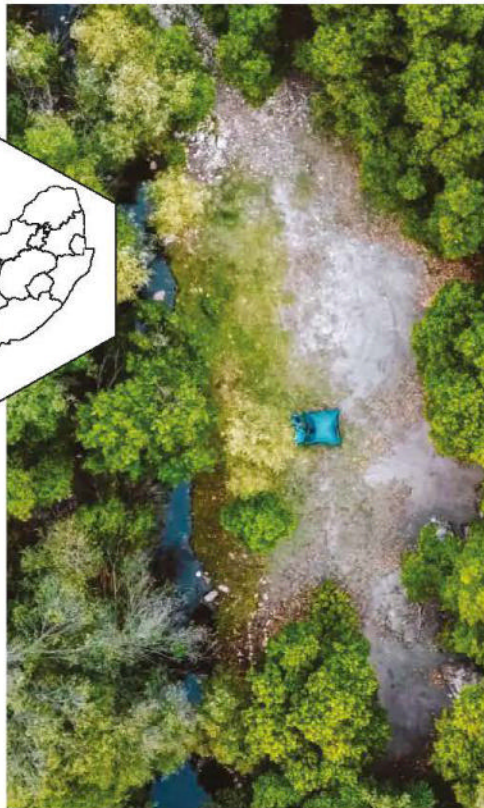
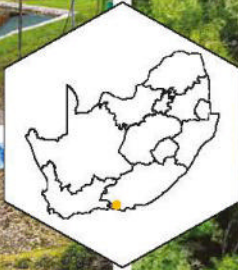
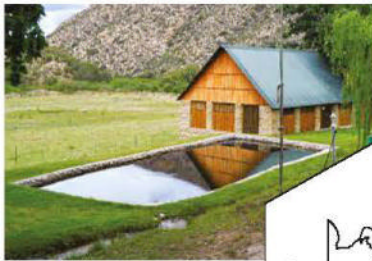
cedarbergguestfarm.co.za

Nearest town Cedarville, 8 km.

Road conditions? The last 7 km is a dirt road, more rocky than muddy in rainy weather, but accessible for a road caravan.

GPS S30.425981 E29.0277669

KOUGA WILDERNESS



Pet terms Arrange in advance, as an extra fee applies for pets.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite A choice between two camps: the main camp has 12 grassy stands with old oak trees and freestanding braais. Some perimeter sites offer more privacy and space for three to four tents or caravans. The swimming pool is filled with river water. The bush camp, suitable for up to three campers, is set against a cliff and stream and is intended for one group (no electricity, but a braai is available).

Ablutions Shared men's and women's facilities in the main camp, including a lapa with a fridge-freezer, table, benches and braai. The bush camp has a toilet and shower.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00, unless otherwise arranged.

Contact ☎ 042 011 0203 or 079 590 7066

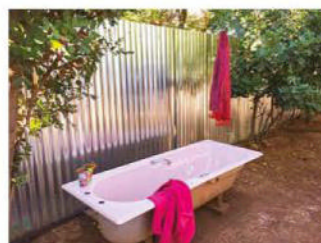
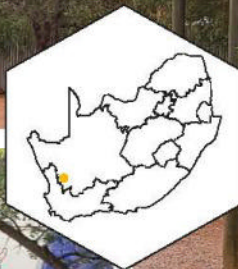
✉ info@kouga.org 🌐 kougawildernis.co.za

Nearest town Joubertina, 28 km.

Road conditions? A 28 km gravel road.

GPS S33.715671 E23.842553

KLIPWERF



Pet terms Pets welcome but they may not bother fellow campers. There even have been campers with a parrot.

Have we visited? Yes, July 2011 (*WegSleep* #35).

Campsite Three sites on gravel with shade, each with its own bathroom and power points. Freestanding braai facilities are available. The coffee shop at Klipwerf Padstal is 400 m down the road and serves light meals and breakfast and is also pet friendly.

Ablutions Your own shower, basin and toilet, plus shared dishwashing area.

Arrival and departure Until 20:00 and 10:00.

Contact ☎ 027 341 1126 or 078 800 5943

✉ klipwerfgastehuis@gmail.com

📌 Klipwerf Self-Catering Units & Camping

Nearest town In Calvinia.

Road conditions? Tar.

GPS S31.465977 E19.780328 📶

Bushveld lad

Ford must have had *Drive & Camp* readers in mind when they built the Ranger Tremor because it has everything we want – without the unnecessary gadgets that push up the price.

Words **Cyril Klopper** Photos supplied



FORD RANGER TREMOR

“

...the Tremor has all the enhanced off-road capabilities of the Wildtrak X but is based on the XLT range

”



OUTSIDE. We love the wheels on this bakkie and the Bilstein suspension (below) delivers a comfortable ride. Even with no load on the back, the Tremor felt solid on gravel roads – no doubt helped along by the automatic all-wheel drive system. The scuff plate (bottom) is made from actual metal, and not plastic painted to look like metal as some soft-roaders are prone to have.

Fast-food chain Steers experimented a few years ago with an extensive burger menu. There were more than 30 burgers to choose from, the strangest of which was the Aussie burger with pickled beetroot.

Ford South Africa is doing the same with an impressive 15 Ranger models on display. The most basic model is the Ranger 2.0 XL 4x2 single cab (R648 000), and at the far end of the scale is the 3.0 V6 Raptor (R1 270 000) – double the price of the entry model!

At first glance, the Ranger Tremor seems to fit somewhere in the middle of the Ranger lineup, but like Steers' Aussie burger, it's designed for a different palate.

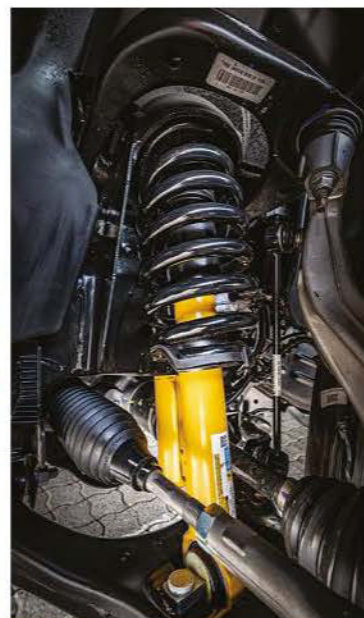
To put that palate to the test, we took it on an 800 km journey through the Karoo – hoping all the while that pickled beetroot wasn't part of the recipe.

What do we have here?

Ford groups the Ranger Tremor with its XLT models, but with Bilstein suspension and General Grabber AT3 all-terrain tyres, it definitely stands out above the XLT range's more generic equipment.

The black honeycomb pattern in the grille is different from the XLT's standard grille, and the same goes for the black 17-inch alloy wheels (unique to the Tremor) and the signage with the model name on the bakkie's hind quarters and tailgate.

According to Ford's marketing team, the Tremor has all the enhanced off-road capabilities of the Wildtrak X but is based on the XLT range, making it a more affordable





INSIDE. The seats are comfortable enough and the digital displays are easy to understand. They show most of the functions needed like tyre pressure and engine temperature. We don't like the low towbar (opposite page) which reduces the departure angle, but fortunately it is removable. The side steps are made from cast aluminium – it'll be a shame if they get bent out of shape.



choice. The Tremor is therefore aimed at people who want to tackle challenging roads, but especially those who want to install their own accessories.

Interior

One of the first elements you notice is that the Tremor doesn't have floor mats. Ford says they were deliberately left out to make the rubberized floor easier to clean. That makes some sense, but you can't help wondering whether rubber mats could have been a better solution. After a few months of use without mats, your feet will inevitably dull the floor.

The same applies to the seats: they are made of synthetic material that is easy to wipe clean. The seats are certainly not unattractive, but they do seem to be asking for seat covers, especially the rear bench.

When it comes to charging phones, there is a standard USB and USB-C socket in the centre console as well as an induction panel that wirelessly charges your phone. There is also a 12V socket in the compartment under your left elbow, but unfortunately, no 240V

AC socket like the more expensive Ranger models have.

Like other new Ranger models, there is a row of toggle switches in the roof panel that you can wire to control additional spotlights and so on. Take note that the switches hang quite low, and trust us, it hurts like hell if you knock your head against them on a 4x4 obstacle course...

The large 12-inch touchscreen in the centre console responds fairly quickly to input, and the software that connects with your phone works well, regardless of whether you use an Android device or an iPhone. In short, the interior is a pleasant space, and it's by no means a torture chamber to spend several hours in the Tremor.

How does it drive?

The Tankwa Karoo's dirt roads are notorious for shredding tyres, but the General Grabber AT3s handled the challenge with ease. Some roads were also still damaged after last year's heavy rains, but the Bilstein shock absorbers took the potholes in their stride.

We had a chuckle at the name "Tremor"

because the Karoo regularly experiences light earthquakes – thankfully, it has been a long time since a big one like the one that reduced the towns of Tulbagh and Ceres to rubble in 1969 (6,3 on the Richter scale).

The Ford Ranger Tremor has part-time and full-time four-wheel drive (4A), which automatically engages when needed. We found that 4A worked brilliantly on dirt roads, and didn't significantly increase fuel consumption.

High-range (4H) and especially low-range (4L) did have an impact – we averaged 11 l/100 km in the Karoo compared to 8,5 l/100 km at the coast.

We already praised the 2 l biturbo engine and 10-speed automatic gearbox when we wrote about the Ford Ranger Wildtrak in the April-May 2024 issue, but we want to repeat it here: few other bakkies have an engine-gearbox combination that works as well as Ford's design.

The four-wheel-drive system got us effortlessly through the Tankwa Karoo National Park's 4x4 trails, but as it's a long bakkie, the 360° cameras helped

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Ranger 2.0 BiTurbo Tremor
Engine	1 996 cc four-cylinder twin-turbodiesel
Power	154 kW @ 3 750 rpm
Torque	405 Nm @ 1 750 rpm
Transmission	10-speed automatic
Drivetrain	Part-time four-wheel drive
Ground clearance	261 mm
Approach and departure angles	32° and 37°
Wading depth	800 mm
Tank	80 ℓ
Fuel consumption	11 ℓ/100 km (tested)
Standard tyres	265/65R17
Weight	2 384 kg
Payload	966 kg
Dimensions	5 350 (l) x 2 015 (w) x 1 914 mm (h)
Towing capacity	3 500 kg (braked)
Tyres	265/70R17
Safety rating	★★★★★ (NCAP)
Warranty	Four years/120 000 km
Service plan	Optional
Price	R1 008 000



us avoid large and sharp rocks.

We cruised home on the N1 highway, and the tyres and suspension that had impressed us so much on dirt were just as comfortable on tar. No humming or bouncing. Ford made the right choice when they went with Bilstein and General Grabber.

The competitors

In our opinion, the Ford Ranger Tremor competes with the Isuzu D-Max V-Cross, Toyota's Hilux GR-S and the Volkswagen Amarok PanAmericana – we won't list the Amarok's specifications here because it's practically the same vehicle as the Ranger.

The Hilux's 2,8 ℓ engine produces the most power and torque – 165 kW and 550 Nm, respectively – while the Isuzu, which has the largest engine (3 ℓ), produces the least (140 kW and 450 Nm).

The Tremor has the best approach and departure angles thanks to its higher ground clearance (261 mm) due to the larger tyres and off-road suspension. We do, however,

have to mention that the FoMoCo tow bar on the Tremor hangs particularly low. It's suitable for a small trailer, sure, but too low for an off-road trailer and definitely too low for 4x4 use. Ford's own tow bar is not height-adjustable, but it is removable.

Final verdict

The Tremor is our favourite Ranger, and we rank it above its competitors when it comes to dirt road enjoyment. The Isuzu will probably offer better fuel consumption if you drive nicely, and its engine is tough as nails. The Amarok is a touch more luxurious, but the Ranger Tremor shouts, "Take me to the bush!" while the Volkswagen looks like it would rather stay in the city.

It'll be a struggle to convince a Hilux fan to buy a Ford, and we don't aim to. But if you handed us a million rand right now and sent us to buy a bakkie, we'd take the Ranger Tremor. Whether we'd later wonder if we should have gone with the Isuzu or Toyota instead, we'll leave for another day.



FROM THE COMPETITORS
4x4 bakkies for around R1 million



R925 600

Isuzu D-Max 3.0 Ddi V-Cross

Isuzu has long had its eye on the lifestyle market, especially overlanders, but struggles to get a foothold.



R999 000

Toyota Hilux 2.8 GD-6 GR-S

The GR-S is great – and since it's a Toyota, you can get it serviced almost anywhere in the world.



R1 078 300

Volkswagen Amarok PanAmericana

We wouldn't take 2024's Bakkie of the Year into the same tough terrain the Tremor is already geared up for.

Two by two!

You don't buy an Invader because you want a camper.
You buy one because you want an Invader.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

Invader's campers are unique: when you're towing one, it's the size of an off-road trailer, but once set up, it offers the space of a caravan.

What's more, there are only three models to choose from – the Duo X or Duo Xs, which sleeps two, and the Quattro X, our test model, which sleeps

four. Invader's focus isn't on adding more models but rather on getting things right. Their success speaks for itself.

Both models have a fibreglass body. The Duo's roof lifts pneumatically, and the bed slides out over the nose cone. The Quattro's front bed also folds out over the nose, but its second bed

folds open over the rear.

The Quattro X is light enough for most towing vehicles and built to handle even the toughest road conditions.

The new Quattro X differs noticeably from its predecessor. One of the smartest upgrades is how the beds now unfold at the press of a button.

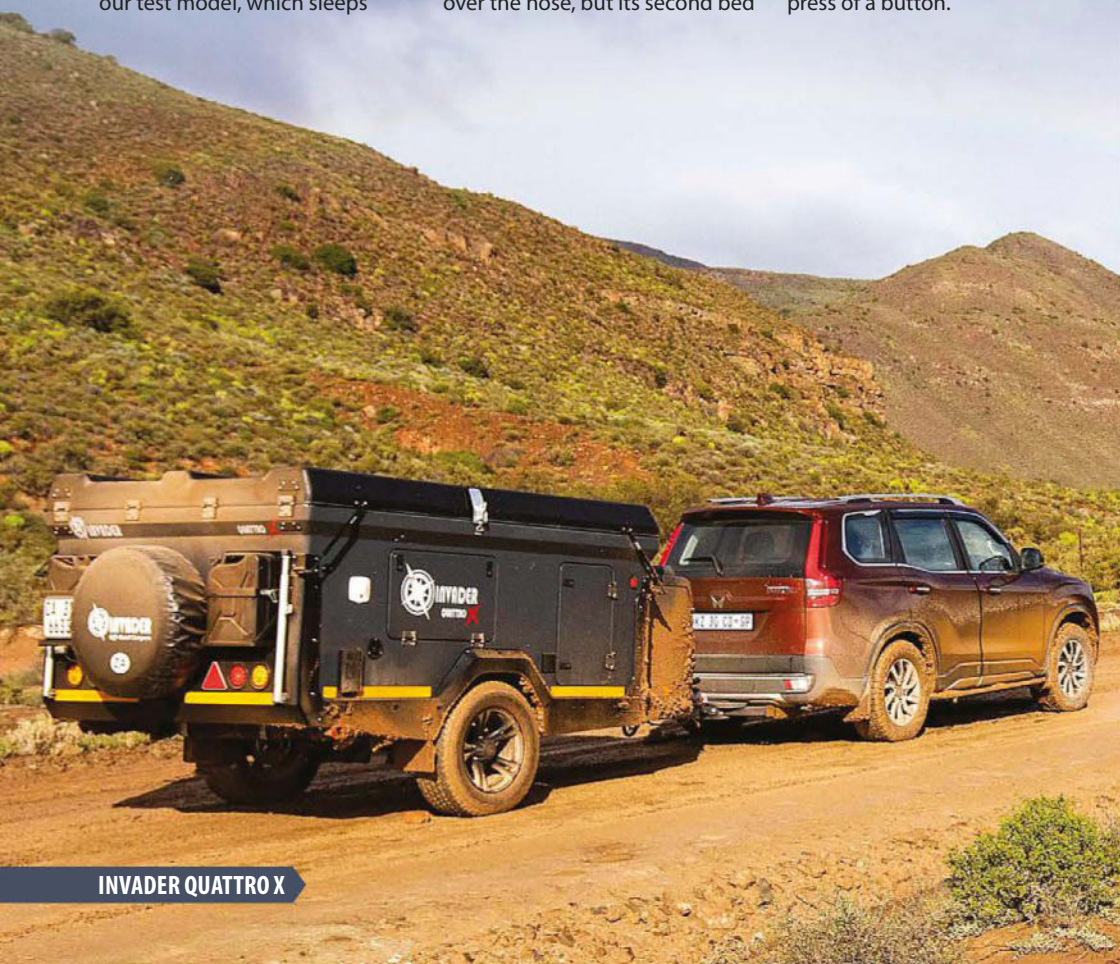
1, 2, 3... all set up

As with the previous Quattro we tested in 2020, the manufacturer sticks with the same corner steady configuration. There are two drop-down supports at the rear, plus a loose one that fits onto the A-frame opposite the jockey wheel. It works brilliantly because the front of the Quattro doesn't rest on the jockey wheel – the extra stabiliser foot does the job of two standard front steadies.

This foot has an unexpected benefit: sometimes, a jockey wheel is wound out too far, and you find yourself stuck if you need to extend it further. In that case, you can use the stabiliser as an extra hand to support the nose weight while adjusting the jockey wheel shaft to extend it.

The control panel with switches for the lights, water pump and geyser is still in the doorframe on the left, but it now has additional functions. The X model we tested includes an inverter, with its switch positioned alongside the others. Future models will come with a 30 A DC-DC charger and inverter as an optional extra.

The Victron power system looks the same as before, but next to it, there's a new addition: a digital water level gauge. Below on the right, two



INVADER QUATTRO X



new buttons with arrow symbols allow you to extend and retract the beds.

Before lifting the beds, you first need to unclasp the two latches where they meet in the middle, allowing them to swing away from the body. The front bed lifts first, followed by the rear one. Both beds rest on support poles that you need to swing into place. The front two are folded away along the arms of the A-frame, while the rear ones extend telescopically near the tail lights.

Inside, at the foot of each bed, actuators with a unique hinge system make unfolding the beds effortless. The actuators are installed flush against the

body and is out of the way. If, for some reason, you're without battery power, you can simply disconnect the motors and set up the beds manually with your camping partner's help.

The tent over the sleeping area is attached to the body and unfolds along with the beds. Five U-frames inside the tent, resembling ribs, keep the canvas taut. A set of adjustable loose poles now fits horizontally between the ribs in the centre to neatly tension the tent.

The awning zips onto the front edge of the tent, creating a large covered space for your outdoor kitchen. It is supported by loose, adjustable poles, making it easy to tension properly for water

runoff. It doesn't take much effort to set up, and you can manage it solo. This type of awning has a clear advantage over ones that swing out – if a strong wind lifts such an awning, the arms can bend or break. But as this one consists only of loose poles, nothing can snap.

The storage tubes for the poles are positioned at the lower right-hand corners of the Quattro. Also on this side, next to the nose cone door, is the gas cylinder (3 kg) with a flat drawer above it that slides out. A similar drawer on the other side of the nose box extends over the fridge-freezer.

To the left of this in the body, there are two doors: the first reveals a shelf above, while at

the back of the compartment, a cupboard door provides access from inside. The batteries (two 100 Ah lead-acid batteries) are housed in the lower cupboard but positioned near the centre of the body, so they don't take up storage space. *(Future models will come with a 100 Ah or 108 Ah lithium battery. – Ed)*

The cupboard door above the wheel folds down to form a work surface – it's actually the back panel of the wardrobe. This gives you access to your clothes from both inside and outside, making space for an optional shower tent to be set up here. The showerhead and extension are stored in a dedicated compartment just to the left.



All in one

For any camper, a comfortable sleeping space and a practical kitchen are strong selling points. These days, an outdoor kitchen – usually on the left-hand side – is synonymous with off-roaders and many road caravans. These kitchens generally consist of three sections: the fridge-freezer, the work surface and the washing-up area. This is where manufacturers offer unique layouts to buyers.

In the Quattro, everything is neatly arranged under one roof and within easy reach. The fridge-freezer is positioned on the far left, sliding out from the nose cone. On the far right, the two-burner stove and dishwashing area fold out from a cupboard. The stove is mounted on the inside of the cupboard door and folds down like a work surface when opened. A sliding frame beneath the stove holds two loose plastic basins.

The stove and basin combination is practical because it allows access from multiple sides. A swivel mixer tap is mounted on the edge of the stove, making it easy to direct water into the nearest basin. There are also a few small shelves inside the body where the stove door opens.

The work surface folds down above the wheel. Notably, it is held horizontally by a single cable – just like the stove and the wardrobe surface. This is a clever way to eliminate unnecessary obstructions around the cupboards. Additionally, Invader sets a strong example of how a kitchen worktop should be designed: you can use almost the entire surface as a workspace, as nothing is mounted on it, and it has no raised edges. This makes it easy to clean.

The microwave is housed in the cupboard to the left, behind the worktop, with a shelf above it for kitchen essentials. To the right, two drawers extend over the work surface, both fitted with custom-cut foam inserts for plates, cups and glasses. There is still enough space between the lower drawer and the worktop, meaning you can pull it out even while a plate is resting on the counter – very practical.



Drive & Camp says The Quattro X is available in red, grey or green.



Step inside!

The door is positioned between the fridge-freezer and the worktop, and you use a loose step to climb in. You can step inside upright without needing to duck, as there is no frame in the way.

Inside the door, two zip-up canvas pouches and a few open storage pockets provide space for small items you want to keep handy. The fire extinguisher is also housed here, secured beneath the control panel.

The door is near the foot of the front bed (queen size), with open space extending to the right towards the second

sleeping area (a three-quarter bed). Each bed has a built-in single bench in front of it, which doubles as a step for easy access. A cassette toilet is positioned beneath the farthest bench, with a washbasin and mixer tap next to it.

The batteries are housed beneath this side's bench, where you'll also find the socket for the inverter power supply.

Aside from the welcome open space between the two beds, each side panel features a countertop surface. This provides ample storage for items like a fan, books, camping lanterns, or a convenient place to rest bedding while making up the beds.

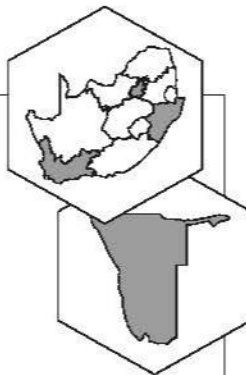


SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer	Invader Off-Road Campers
Model	Quattro X
Sleeps	Four
Dimensions	4,8 x 1,82 x 1,86 m
Wheels	15-inch
Axle rating	2,5 t
Tare weight	930 kg
Load capacity	720 kg
GVM	1 650 kg
Chassis	Galvanised
Body	Fibreglass
Price	R462 000

Dealer network Head office in Cape Town with six dealers nationwide, including Namibia.

Contact ☎ 021 948 2754 🌐 invader.co.za

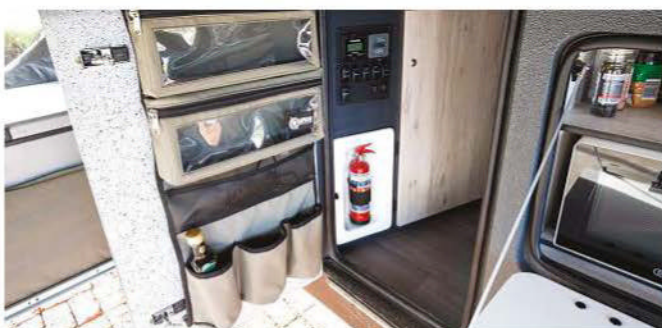


R462 000 INVADER QUATTRO X GVM 1 650 kg

FROM THE COMPETITORS

The Quattro X is unique, with no direct competitors in the market.

Drive & Camp borrowed the Invader Quattro X from the manufacturer.



What comes standard?

The Quattro X comes almost fully equipped, with the following standard features: spare wheel, 120 l water tank, microwave, crockery set for six, two-burner gas stove, two loose dishwashing basins, 3 kg gas cylinder, two jerrycan holders, various LEDs, indoor basin, two interior benches with cushions, cassette toilet, loose entry step and an awning.

The extensive Victron electrical system includes: 30 A charger, smart battery monitor and alarm, 20 A solar charge controller, tow vehicle charging harness, 100 Ah or 108 Ah lithium battery, various sockets (cigarette lighter, USB, and household plug points), actuators for the beds, water tank gauge, water pump, outdoor shower (without cubicle) and Hansen gas-electric geyser.

4X4 PROF'S GEAR

Strap in!

For this issue, we're combining the usual 4x4 professor and gear articles, and discuss different ways to keep your load secure, look at suppliers and prices, and share bits of trivia

Words **Cyril Kloppe** Photos **Cyril Kloppe** and supplied



Photo Getty Images

GET YOURS HERE

rammountaineering.co.za outdoorwarehouse.co.za campandclimb.co.za adendorff.co.za builders.co.za checkers.co.za

Get the hang of ropes

The simplest way to secure something is to use a rope. However, there are many types of rope, and it's important to use the right one for a specific task. But first, we need to grasp a few key concepts:

- **Abrasion resistance** The extent to which a rope can withstand surface wear and friction
- **Breaking strength (BS)** The force needed to break a rope. The value is expressed in daN (deca-Newton), but in metric-using countries like ours, daN can be read as /kg

- **Working load** The maximum recommended load weight for safe working conditions
- **Dynamic load** A sudden or rapid force applied to a rope, caused by sudden stops, jerking or swinging
- **Linear density** Weight per unit length; for example, kilograms per 100 m
- **Torque** The tendency of a rope to rotate spontaneously under load

POLYESTER

The workhorse

A polyester rope has multiple uses and advantages, such as securing tents to the ground, quickly tying something to a roof rack and setting up a static washing line. This material is UV-resistant, does not stretch when wet (but unfortunately sinks in water), is easy to cut to your preferred length, and holds knots securely.

The example shown here is 6 mm thick with a breaking strength of 680 daN (kg).

Price R25 p/m at Builders.



POLYETHYLENE

The water lover

Ski ropes are made from a semi-crystalline material called polyethylene. It has low linear density, which allows polyethylene rope to float on water. Ski ropes are usually cheap and extremely strong but not UV-resistant. It's difficult to tie a reliable knot with this type of rope, and those who only know basic knots will struggle to untie it once tightened.

The rope in the photo here is a 7 mm x 30 m Alnet ski rope (breaking strength unknown).

Price R100 at Outdoor Warehouse.



NYLON

The acrobat

Nylon ropes are used by rock climbers because they are stretchable and shock-absorbent. However, the rope can weaken when wet, and if you use it to secure a load on your roof rack, keep in mind that it can stretch up to 35% under tension when driving fast. It's a tough rope you can rely on.

The example here is the 10,5 mm Beal Industrie static rope with a breaking strength of 3 000 daN, suitable for skyscraper window washers but perhaps overkill for camping.

Price R54 p/m at Ram Mountaineering.



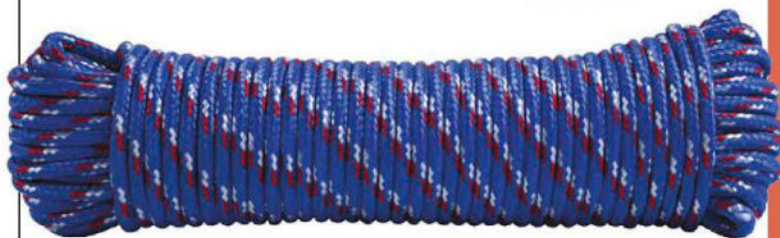
POLYPROPYLENE

The lifesaver

A rope made from this material is used for everyday conditions. It's one of the lightest and more affordable synthetic ropes. It is durable in all weather conditions, resistant to chemicals, can float, won't rot or mildew if stored wet, and won't shrink when dried.

The rope we use here as an example is a 6,4 mm x 30 m Trailboss rope with a breaking weight of 180 daN – enough to secure crates but nowhere near strong enough to tow another vehicle out of the mud.

Price R200 at Outdoor Warehouse.



Get in gear

The ratchet strap was patented in the early 20th century by French engineer Gustave A Audiffren. Audiffren's ratchet mechanism was ingenious and quickly became popular among soldiers in the French military.

Synthetic materials became available just before World War II, and the ratchet strap, which had previously used cotton straps, was now even better with nylon straps.

A ratchet strap is an essential piece of equipment. If you use it to secure a load on your roof rack, you know it won't come loose, especially if you follow the method shown here. But first, we need to highlight four parts of the mechanism: the ratchet gear, pawl, handle and automatic pawl.

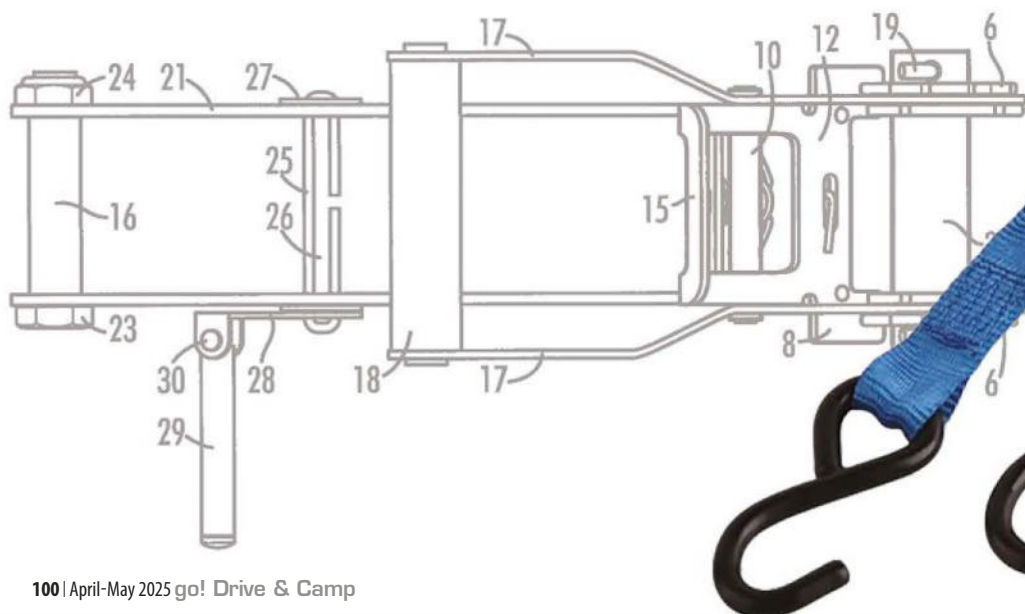


Auto collection ratchet straps

You also get a self-retracting ratchet strap. It works just like an automatic tape measure in that you simply press a button and a spring-loaded spool reels in the strap. Super useful!

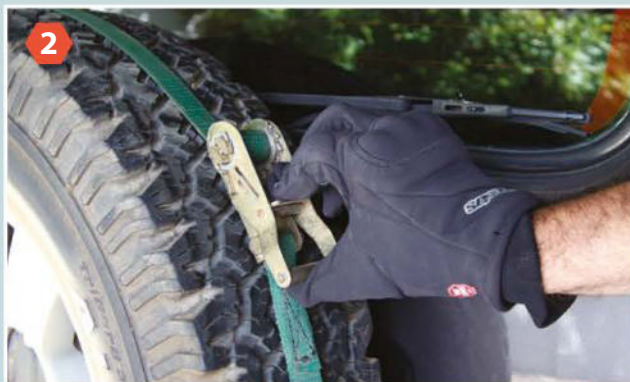
The product shown on the right is a 25 mm x 3,5 m auto collecting Mac Afric ratchet strap with a breaking strength of 640 kg.

Price R175 at Adendorff Machinery Mart.

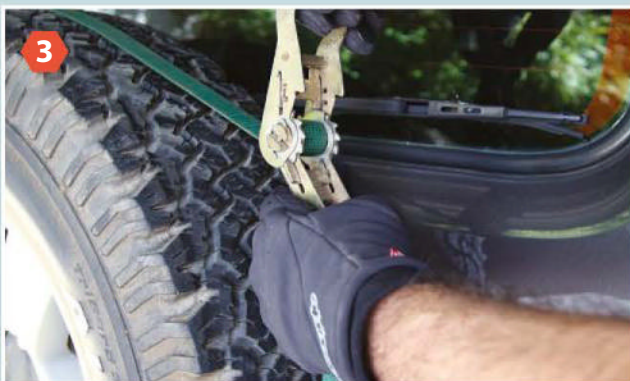




1 Pull on the strap so there's no slack.



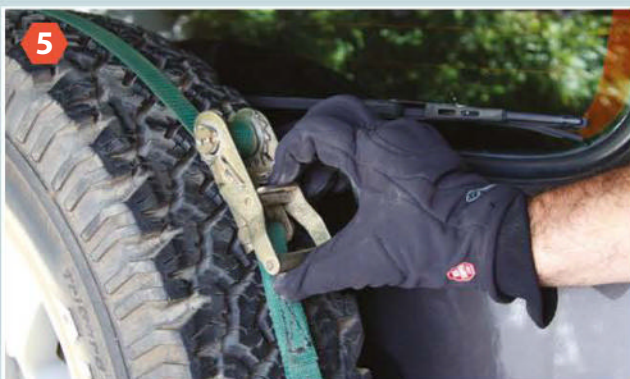
2 Release the pawl from the ratchet – it works almost like a car's clutch.



3 Lift the handle to an angle of about 100°, but don't open it fully (180°).



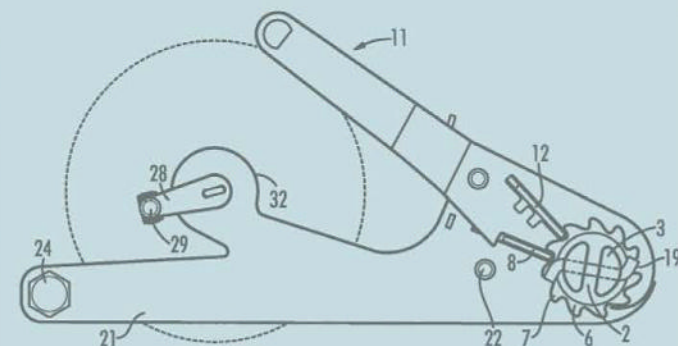
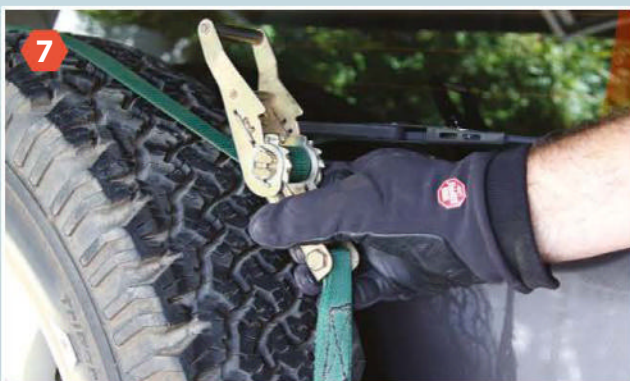
4 Pump the handle up and down repeatedly until the strap is tight. Then press the handle flat so that the pawl and automatic pawl lock into the ratchet.



5 To release the ratchet strap, first pull the pawl out of the ratchet.



6 Keep the pawl out of the ratchet and open the handle fully to a 180° angle.



7 Pull the strap, and there you go – the ratchet strap is loose.

More ways to keep your gear in place

Apart from the simplicity of ordinary rope and the mechanical brilliance of the ratchet strap, here are four other products for securing your load.

BUNGEE CORDS

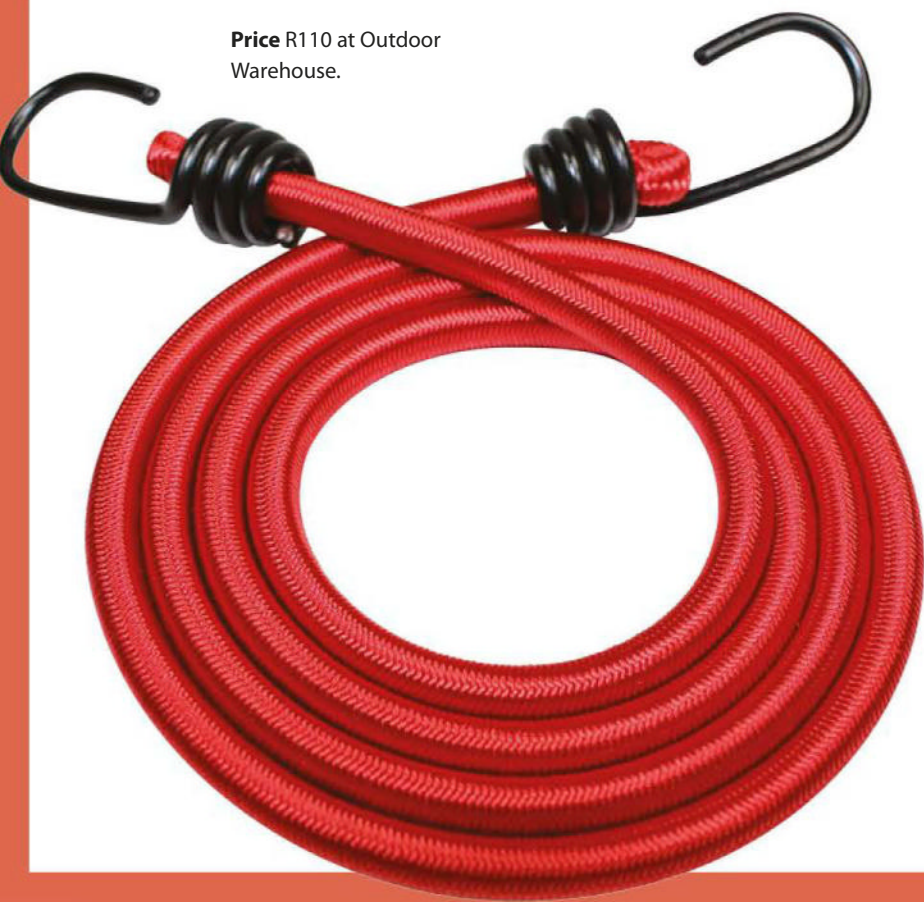
The old-school struggle

Back when bicycles had a carrier above the rear wheel, your mom would send you to the shop for milk and bread. You'd strap the groceries onto the carrier with a bungee cord – only to find out back home that the milk bottle had fallen out along the way.

There are still a few tasks where these cords excel. You can use them to keep your caravan door open or to secure an empty plastic fuel can in your bakkie so it doesn't roll around.

TrailBoss makes a pack of two (not shown here), each 80 cm long when stretched.

Price R110 at Outdoor Warehouse.



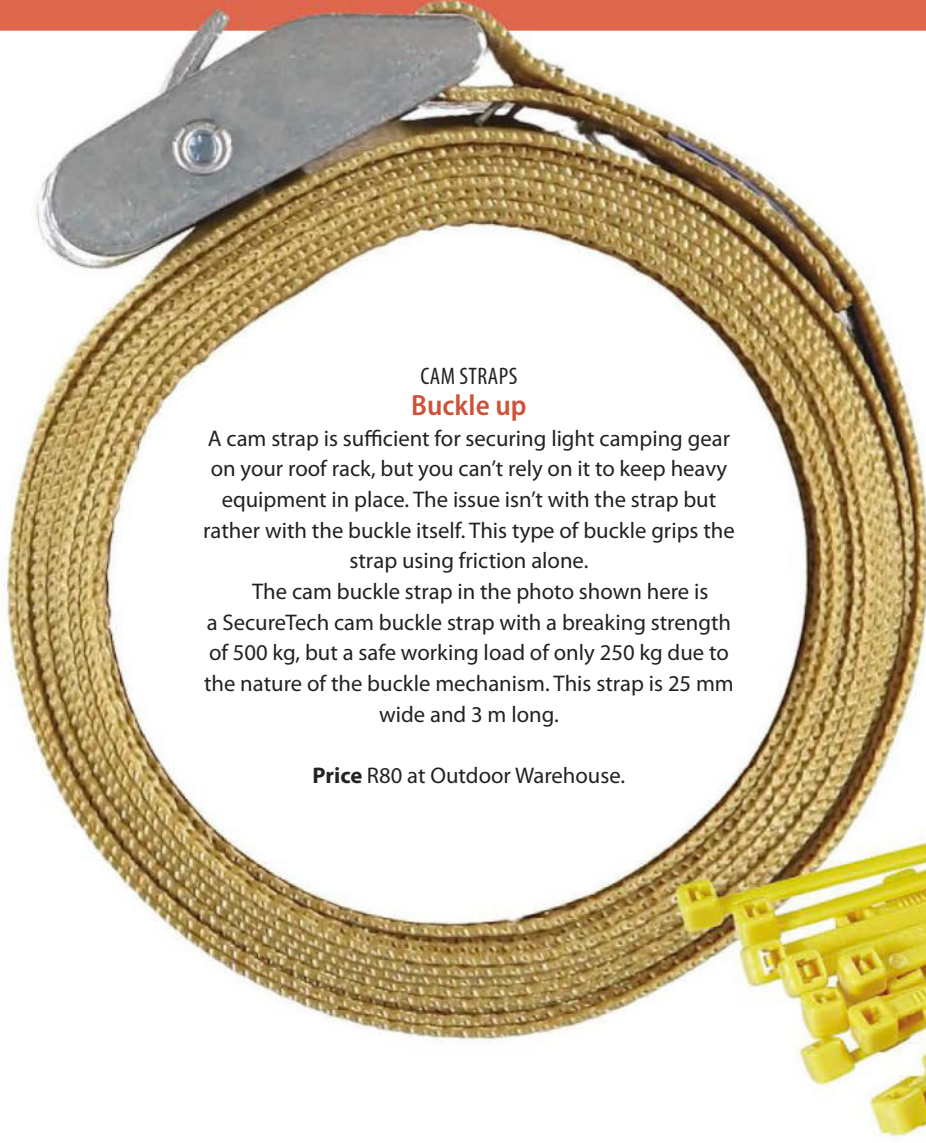
CAM STRAPS

Buckle up

A cam strap is sufficient for securing light camping gear on your roof rack, but you can't rely on it to keep heavy equipment in place. The issue isn't with the strap but rather with the buckle itself. This type of buckle grips the strap using friction alone.

The cam buckle strap in the photo shown here is a SecureTech cam buckle strap with a breaking strength of 500 kg, but a safe working load of only 250 kg due to the nature of the buckle mechanism. This strap is 25 mm wide and 3 m long.

Price R80 at Outdoor Warehouse.



CABLE TIES

The new bailing wire

It used to be wise to always have a piece of wire in your vehicle to fix something that came loose. Nowadays, it's unthinkable to go on a trip without a pack of cable ties in various lengths and thicknesses.

A driver can use them to stitch a torn bumper or fibreglass canopy together, and we've even seen someone use cable ties to repair a broken gear linkage.

A camper can thread a cable tie through a zipper pull to make it easier to grip, use it as a keyring, or replace a ripped tent loop with it.

Price R40 for 75 ties of various lengths at Checkers.



CARGO NETS

Keep it together

This net is significantly better than a bungee cord, but like all nets, it can turn into a proper headache when tangled. Some nets are made from stretchable cords to fit the shape of any load, but we prefer the kind that doesn't stretch at all but instead has adjustable straps to tighten the net.

SecureTech's cargo net is specifically designed for a roof rack. The net measures 1 100 x 900 mm, with 100 x 100 mm openings between the 25 mm straps. There are 14 anchor points with duckbill tension locks, each capable of holding 200 kg on their own.

Price R900 at Outdoor Warehouse.

Who invented the cable tie?

Google claims it was the American Maurus C Logan, who worked for the electrical firm Thomas & Betts (now ABB) in the 1950s. Logan supposedly visited a Boeing aircraft plant in 1956, noticed their wiring was inefficient, and immediately began thinking of a way to sort out the tangled mess of electrical cables – the result was ABB's innovative Ty-Rap, patented in 1958. Or so the story goes...

However, if you dig deeper into patent office records (It's published online), you will uncover a more complex history of the cable tie.

The first strap resembling a cable tie was invented in 1907 by WF Schacht. This strap was made of rubber and was designed to curl women's hair into a specific style.

Another predecessor of the modern cable tie – this time made of plastic – was patented in 1944 by RA Smith, but his strap was meant for fastening bandages to human limbs.

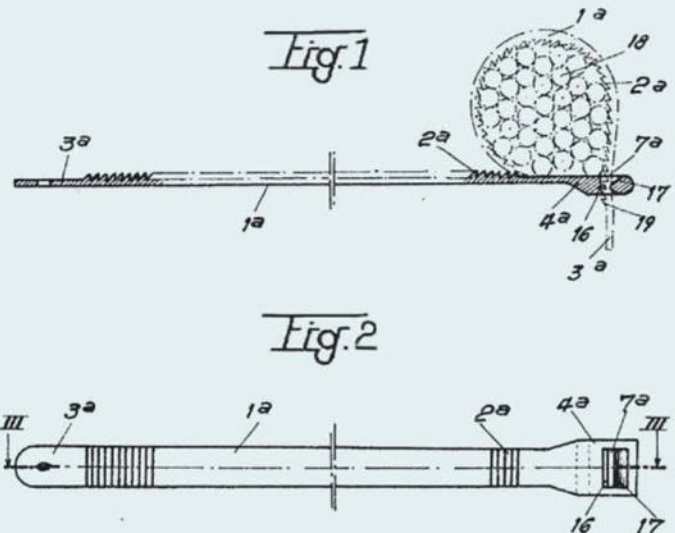
The first strap specifically designed to secure cables – and made from a single piece of plastic – was invented in 1956 by the Frenchman Kurt Wrobel. Wrobel's initial patent application was a bulky affair, but a few months later, he refined it into a design that is undeniably the first modern cable tie: a toothed plastic strip, with one end fed through an eye at the other end to form a loop, and the teeth preventing the loop from coming undone (Wrobel's illustration is shown below).

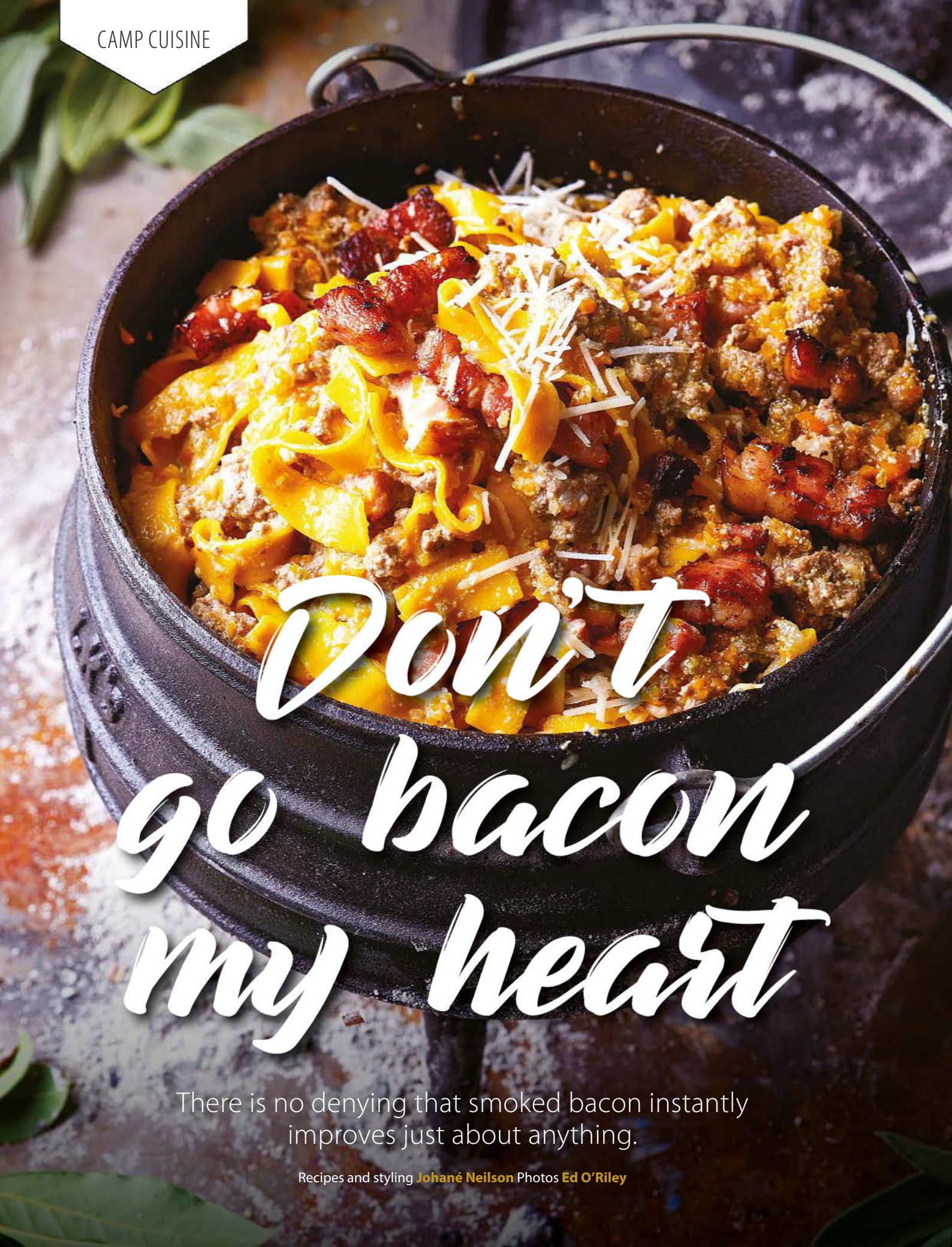
So where did the claim that Logan invented the cable tie come from? We don't question that he was looking for a solution to Boeing's wiring problem, but the design he submitted to the patent office in 1958 looked nothing like the modern cable tie. Logan's version had multiple components, and the strip had no teeth. On top of that, you needed a special tool to lock Logan's cable tie.

Logan's patent was abandoned, and in 1962, Thomas & Betts (ABB) instead patented a modified version of Wrobel's cable tie. To bypass patent restrictions, ABB's version has a smooth strip without teeth, with a metal barb inside the eye that bites into the plastic strip instead.

ABB's website proudly states that in 65 years, they have sold nearly 30 billion cable ties. That sounds like a lot, but Wrobel's cable tie is fastened an astonishing 100 billion times – per year! – worldwide.

Wrobel never made a cent from his cable tie, partly because his patent was only temporarily registered in France, Britain and Canada. Let that be a lesson for you if you ever have a brilliant idea but don't patent it properly.





CAMP CUISINE

Don't go bacon my heart

There is no denying that smoked bacon instantly improves just about anything.

Recipes and styling **Johané Neilson** Photos **Ed O'Riley**

WHITE BOLOGNESE

Ragu blanco bellissima!

If you're not in the mood for a tomato-based pasta, this meaty delight is still packed with flavour, even though it's a little paler than what you're used to.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 1 large onion
- 2 carrots
- 2 celery stalks
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 200 g thick smoked bacon rashers, chopped
- 600 g mince (half beef, half pork)
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- A sprig each of rosemary and sage (or a pinch of dried herbs)
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup cream (optional)
- 500 g pasta ribbons
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- Plenty of grated Parmesan to serve

Here's how

Finely grate the vegetables (or use a food processor).

Heat the oil and fry the bacon until crispy. Remove half and set aside for later.

Stir the mince into the potjie and fry, breaking it up with a spatula.

Add all the grated vegetables, garlic, fennel and wine. Once the potjie is bubbling away, add all the stock and milk.

Scrape out the coals from under the potjie so it can simmer gently – this is when the magic happens. The sauce is technically ready after an hour, but 2–3 hours is ideal for deeper flavour. Check regularly and top up the liquid with water to prevent it from drying out. Just before serving, stir in ½ cup of cream for extra flavour.

Cook the pasta in salted water until al dente and mix it into the sauce. Season with lemon juice, zest, salt and freshly ground black pepper. Serve with Parmesan and the crispy bacon bits. Or serve the sauce and pasta separately – just stir a dash of olive oil through the pasta to stop it from sticking together. This way, any leftover sauce can be used in jaffles!

Drive & Camp says If you're super organised, make and freeze the finely chopped vegetable base at home. This will halve your prep time!



BREAKFAST SKILLET

Start the day right!

This one-pan meal is a heavenly campfire breakfast (or quick dinner).

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 2 tablespoons good olive oil
- 200 g streaky bacon, chopped
- 6 brown mushrooms, halved
- 2 large potatoes, cut into 1 cm cubes
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 6 eggs
- 1 tablespoon butter

Here's how

Heat the oil in a large fireproof pan or skillet and fry the bacon and mushrooms until crispy and golden brown.

Stir in the potatoes and fry for a minute or

two. Pour in the stock and cook until the potatoes are soft and the pan is dry. This will go faster if you cover the pan with a lid to trap some steam. Add water if it looks like it's drying out before the potatoes are cooked.

Move the pan contents to the side to create six hollows for the eggs, placing a small knob of butter in each. Crack an egg into each opening and season with salt and pepper. Remember, the stock and bacon are already salty. Continue cooking until the eggs are cooked to your preference. If needed, use a lid again to trap the heat and help cook the eggs.

And serve! Toast or tortillas are always a good idea, as is a delicious tomato relish.

Drive & Camp says Nothing stops you from adding bits of leftover braai boerewors if you're extra hungry.

**BACON & CHICKEN POTJIE****Holy smoke!**

Braaiing the chicken over the coals before adding it to the pot gives this dish that signature campfire flavour only outdoor cooking can deliver.

Ingredients

(serves 8)

- 4 chicken thighs
- 4 chicken drumsticks
- 1 teaspoon each paprika and ground coriander
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 thick rashers of smoked bacon, halved
- 2 medium onions, halved and thinly sliced
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 1 tin (400 g) chopped tomatoes (with chilli if you like)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon apricot jam
- Pap or rice to serve

Here's how

Score 2–3 deep cuts into each chicken piece (down to the bone)

and rub in the spices.

Braai the chicken in a clamp grid over the coals until nicely coloured but not necessarily cooked through.

Heat the olive oil in a large potjie over the coals and fry the bacon until caramelised. Remove the bacon but keep the flavoured oil in the potjie. Fry the onion and red pepper until soft.

Stir in the tomato paste, curry powder and apricot jam, letting it cook for a few minutes.

Add the chicken, bacon, tomatoes, and a tinf of water, and simmer everything together until the sauce thickens and the meat is fully cooked. Serve with pap or rice.

Drive & Camp says The bacon and red pepper sauce from this potjie can also be served as a relish with campfire foil-baked potatoes or on gourmet boerewors rolls. Just chop the bacon finely and follow the steps, leaving out the chicken.

CAMPFIRE 'CRUMPETS' WITH OOPSIES
Oopsie-daisy!

The yeast gives these flapjacks great texture and loads of flavour.

Ingredients

(makes about 12)

- 1 teaspoon instant yeast
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 cup lukewarm water
- 1¼ cups self-raising flour
- 12 oopsies (cherries wrapped in bacon)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- Honey or syrup to serve

Here's how

Stir the yeast and honey into the water in a large mixing bowl and let it stand for a few minutes until frothy.

Whisk the yeast mixture vigorously with the flour and

a pinch of salt until smooth.

Cover with a cloth and let it stand for 30 minutes to rise slightly and form bubbles.

Stir the batter to remove large bubbles.

Fry the oopsies in a little oil in a heavy-bottomed pan until crispy and sticky. Set aside and keep warm.

Melt a knob of butter in the same pan and drop spoonfuls of batter in. Once bubbles form on the surface, flip and fry until golden and cooked through. Repeat with the remaining batter, adding more butter as needed. Serve warm with oopsies and extra honey or syrup.

Drive & Camp says Traditional crumpets are cooked in metal rings for a perfect shape and thicker consistency. My campfire version is smaller and flatter for quicker cooking.





'SMASH' BURGERS WITH CRISPY BACON

Hulk smash!

If you've ever lost a thick, juicy burger patty through the gaps of your braai grid, you'll love this alternative way of grilling burgers. It's lightning-fast!

Ingredients

(makes 4 double burgers)

- 1 kg mince
- 1 teaspoon taco seasoning (or your favourite braai spice)
- ½ white onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup finely grated mature cheddar
- 8 rashers bacon
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons creamy mayonnaise
- 4 brioche rolls, sliced in half horizontally and toasted
- Cucumber and tomato slices
- 2 tablespoons chutney
- 8 gherkin slices
- 4 tablespoons avocado guacamole

Here's how

Mix the mince, seasoning, onion and cheese together and divide the mixture into eight equal-sized

patties.

Heat a flat cast-iron plate or braai pan over the coals and fry the bacon in the oil until crispy and cooked. Remove and set aside for building the burgers.

Work in batches, depending on the size of your plate. Place two patties on the greased plate over the coals and press them down immediately with a spatula.

Fry the patties, pressing them down occasionally, for a few minutes until a nice crust forms on the first side. Flip them over and give the other side another minute. Remember, you don't want to overcook the meat – use your judgment.

Repeat with the rest of the patties.

Build the burgers Start with mayonnaise on the bottom half of each roll, followed by cucumber and tomato slices, a patty, then crispy bacon, another patty, and the chutney, followed by the gherkins and guacamole. Place the tops of the rolls back on and dig in.

Drive & Camp says Even if you only add the meat, bacon and chutney to your rolls, you (and your fellow diners) will eat like kings!

BACON AND DATE BUTTER SWEET POTATO

Date night

This flavour combo feels exotic, but it's really just your mom's devils on horseback (dates wrapped in bacon) reinvented as a side dish.

Ingredients

(serves 6 as a side)

- 2 large orange sweet potatoes, cut into 1 cm rounds
- 200 g streaky bacon, finely chopped
- 6 dates, pitted and finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ½ cup butter
- 1 bay leaf (fresh or dried)

Here's how

Boil the sweet potato rounds in water until tender but not mushy. Drain and set aside.

Fry the bacon in a large fireproof pan until crispy. Stir in the dates and honey, cooking everything together until caramelised. Keep a close eye on it, as the sugar burns easily.

Melt the butter into the pan.

Arrange the sweet potato slices in a single layer, add the bay leaf, and fry turning as needed until sticky and caramelised. Serve warm. (A dollop of crème fraîche on the hot slices is divine!)

Drive & Camp says This bacon sauce is also delicious in baked sweet potatoes with a scoop of soft cheese. 🍴



go! Drive & Camp

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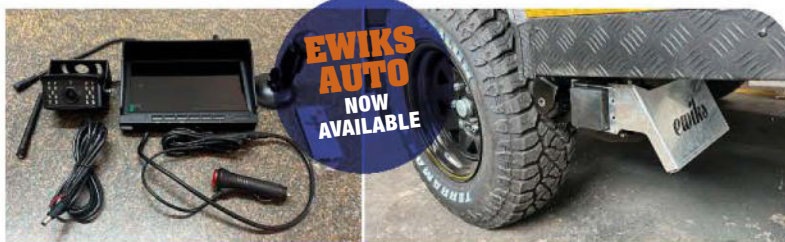
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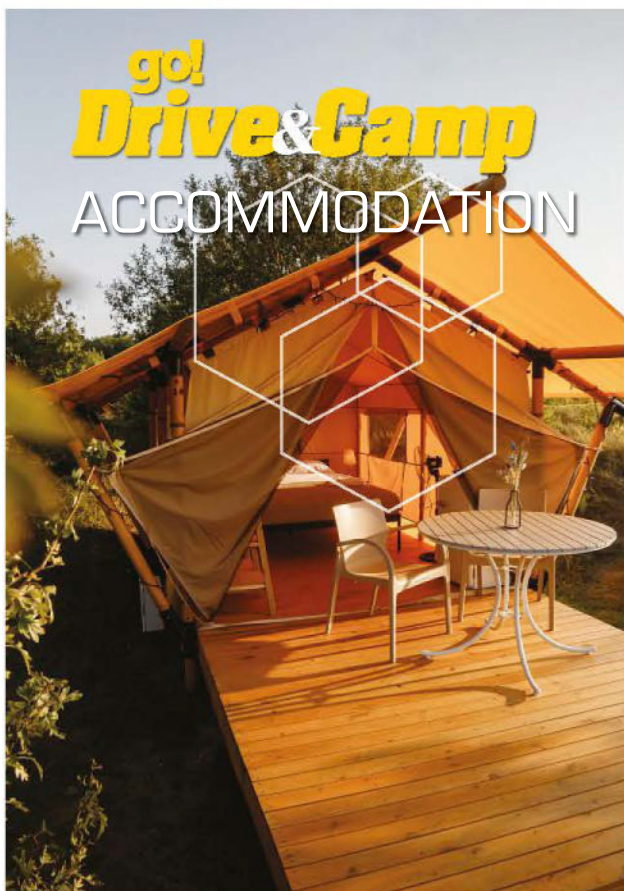
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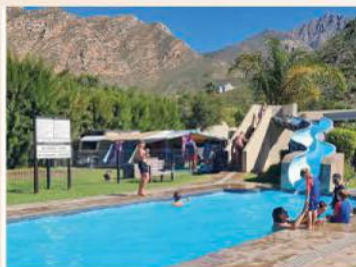
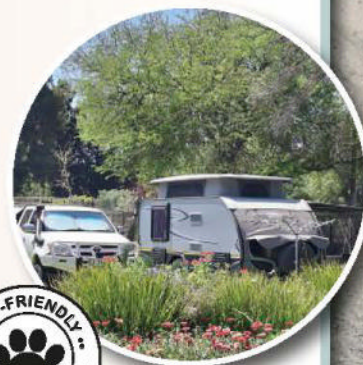


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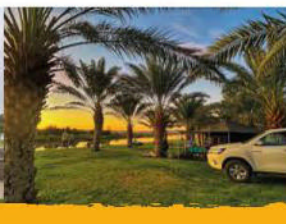
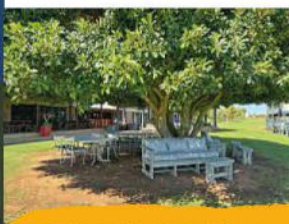
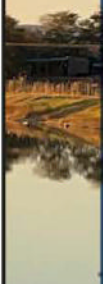


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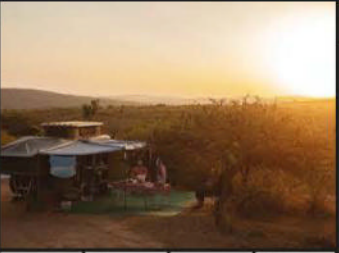
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CROSSWORD

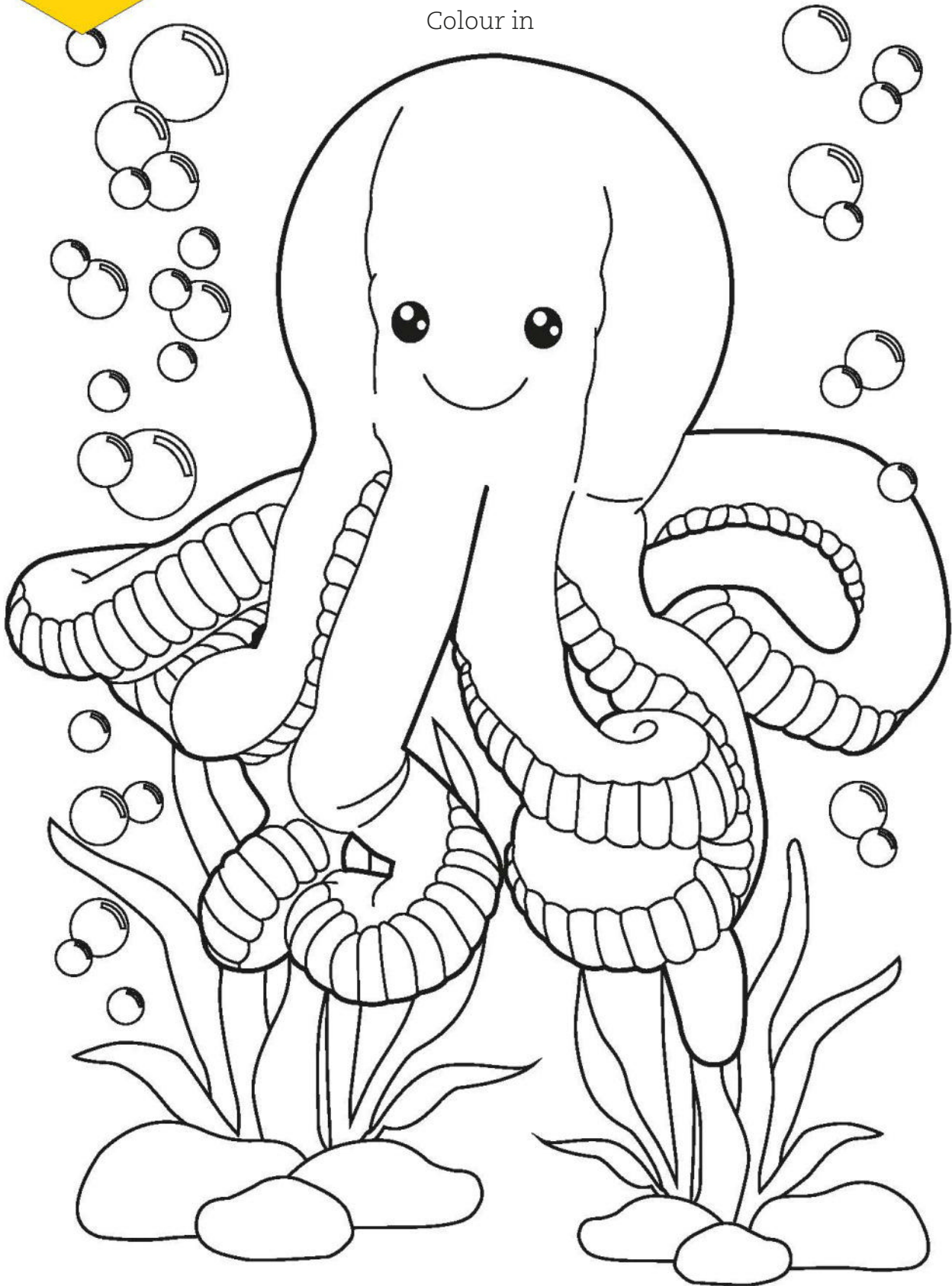
This issue's crossword puzzle is not only an excellent way to flex your mental muscles; it could also win you a prize worth R2 800. Up for grabs is a camping weekend for eight (breakfast included) at the Hornbill Lodge in Magaliesburg. To enter, complete the crossword and send us a photo of your attempt along with your name, address and phone number to drivecamp@gomag.co.za.

The solution to the previous puzzle is on page 110.

			Canyon in Namibia (4,5)	Low dam	Took a nap	Drudgery	Flavouring in Earl Grey			
				Gallium (symbol)						
			Took in Seafarer					Camp site outside Hluhluwe		
Traditional healers (SA)	Scanty	Einsteinium (symbol)	Govern					Perch	Dovetail	
	Misery				School recess			Easy gait	Japanese soup	
					Fit					
Sidewalk sellers						Small swallow				
Loudest						Steals				
Precious stone			Loose garments	Southeast (abbr)	Game on horseback			To such an extent		
Leave										
	Rain or hail									
	Suitable									
Head of a town				Can			Belonging to him			
				Food list						
		Braai side dish	Do, re . . .		Math symbol					
					Greek X					
Drenched					Hello (inf)		Mitsubishi bakkie			
					Prohibit					
				Less cordial	Sleeveless shirts			In . . . heaven	Woman	
					Infant			Bundle	The (archaic)	
			Blocks				Settle			
			Bait				Bewildered			
				. . . and fro		Split				
				Totals		Strong string				
Dune in Sossus Vlei (3,5)	Swamp	With detail								Small social insect
	Deity	Excavated								
						A gas				
						Antimony (symbol)				Other-wise
Excited					Finished				Not off	
Files										
					Camp cot		Injured			

COMPILED BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

Colour in



COLOUR IN

Get your crayons and colouring pencils out and bring life to this line drawing.

WORD SEARCH

Search for the hidden words in the list and tick them off as you find them.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

There are at least 10 differences between the two illustrations. See if you can find them all!

MAZE

Show the maze who's boss. Remember to first do it in pencil, just in case you make a mistake.

Word search

D	A	N	H	Q	C	P	M	F	K	N	U	I	N	F	U	B	F	Y	L	U	Y
R	M	H	U	B	R	A	G	I	L	D	O	D	F	J	I	O	V	R	N	Y	J
Y	G	G	D	R	A	S	I	L	O	O	J	W	T	E	N	O	H	Z	I	Z	F
I	E	B	W	S	G	V	G	W	U	F	A	E	C	O	N	L	U	M	B	G	S
J	T	B	A	L	D	R	E	E	I	T	O	E	U	F	T	R	W	U	E	S	G
T	A	P	X	H	H	T	M	N	W	Q	Z	A	S	S	R	H	I	Y	M	C	U
I	H	M	V	A	X	E	D	Z	A	N	I	Z	T	I	D	U	L	R	R	G	W
T	V	O	O	T	N	U	S	I	F	J	Z	G	P	G	R	A	M	H	R	A	E
I	B	Y	R	B	Z	S	I	R	B	O	N	D	U	M	I	B	Z	O	J	W	P
Y	N	T	E	E	H	J	N	T	S	X	S	Z	E	U	D	S	S	U	B	K	W
I	S	D	O	K	U	T	A	N	N	G	R	I	S	N	I	R	P	M	T	B	V
L	T	I	P	O	K	W	A	P	C	Y	W	X	R	D	P	N	X	F	U	Q	G
T	S	I	H	W	Q	V	Y	Q	T	Y	I	A	D	A	A	O	O	V	J	X	B
Y	I	X	E	E	C	O	A	F	T	S	L	L	H	N	W	J	R	K	F	O	B
B	E	S	F	T	V	T	H	S	T	I	O	C	O	G	S	A	Q	V	D	P	W
L	S	K	W	N	E	A	S	W	I	Y	P	L	W	E	I	S	C	P	W	L	Q
U	I	T	G	B	O	S	L	R	S	R	F	V	T	X	O	C	W	T	A	O	D
P	H	E	L	A	O	B	I	K	H	O	Y	I	W	C	U	T	N	F	K	K	I
S	A	C	D	Q	K	P	V	R	Y	S	O	A	H	T	E	J	D	R	M	I	G
M	F	Z	T	I	S	B	Z	Q	I	R	V	E	G	N	W	G	Z	E	W	J	T
H	S	L	E	I	P	N	I	R	Z	E	I	O	L	I	U	D	V	Y	B	T	E
O	F	X	K	W	I	V	M	T	O	M	O	E	O	C	W	N	D	R	T	T	Q
F	S	R	B	M	Y	E	T	A	D	E	L	W	S	Z	J	M	G	J	S	C	N
N	G	F	U	Q	D	L	E	A	C	C	C	L	E	D	J	S	A	W	O	E	T
M	U	W	B	Y	N	W	L	S	P	N	H	X	S	S	G	U	T	G	D	P	J
O	E	E	T	J	K	L	A	G	U	Z	E	E	D	U	Q	J	N	C	V	K	H
M	D	Y	G	W	M	I	U	J	O	H	L	J	W	H	Z	F	S	A	I	U	S
Q	Y	I	V	E	Z	F	Z	C	M	Z	A	O	Q	G	P	A	N	Y	E	P	E
L	C	S	N	H	J	U	S	O	I	L	O	E	C	U	D	I	N	X	V	I	X
B	Z	P	C	Y	W	S	H	Y	D	O	L	Y	J	T	R	H	O	G	T	A	M

CHARACTERS FROM NORSE MYTHOLOGY

Aesir	Baldr	Hela
Vanir	Heimdall	Fenrir
Odin	Freyr	Sleipnir
Frigg	Forseti	Bragi
Thor	Sif	Tanngrisnir
Loki	The Valkyries	Sigm

A photograph showing two rhinoceroses in the foreground, facing right, in a dry, grassy savanna. In the background, a deer is running towards the left. The scene is captured in a warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

- There are five species of rhinoceroses – the black rhino, white rhino, the Sumatran, Javan and Indian rhino.
- Javan and Indian rhinos have one horn, whereas the white, black and Sumatran rhinos have two.
- The largest species is the white rhino, which can grow to 1,8 m tall and weigh a massive 2 500 kg.
- They are the second largest land animal and they like to munch on grass at night, dawn and dusk.
- Because of their huge bodies, strong horns and thick, armour-like skin, rhinos have no natural predators.
- Sadly, due to illegal hunting, it's estimated that there are only around 29 000 wild rhinos left, compared to 500 000 at the beginning of the 20th century.

Maze

A circular maze with a central circle and a small black dot in the middle. The maze is composed of concentric rings of paths and walls. An arrow points to the entrance on the left side.

Do your homework

It baffles him every time he sees how often campers ignore information that is literally at their fingertips, says **Neels van Heerden**.

People often say there's no such thing as a stupid question. Yes, that may be true – but it's not always that simple. It largely depends on where and in what context the question is being asked.

In fact, I'd hope that a group of soldiers or police officers learning how to defuse a bomb would have the confidence to ask their instructor to point out exactly which red wire should be cut first – just in case one of them has never

realised he's colour-blind. It's also understandable if someone with little financial knowledge holds up the queue at the bank because the consultant has to explain for the third or fourth time that, in the early months of a home loan, most of the monthly payment goes toward interest.

But take a look at the kinds of questions that pop up on campsite websites, social media pages and outdoor forums.

That's where you'll find the truly silly questions – people asking fellow campers about a campsite's rates, pet policy or check-in and check-out times. It amazes me how often this happens.

What's stopping you from looking up that information yourself? As I mentioned earlier, any campsite or holiday resort worth its salt has some kind of online presence. Some are on every imaginable platform, from Facebook to Instagram and TikTok. These platforms are a fantastic way for campgrounds to market themselves, but at the same time, there's a responsibility on potential visitors to at least make the effort to type the name into the search bar.

Questions about safety, the state of the ablution facilities, and general maintenance are a different matter, of course. It's never a bad idea to ask past visitors about those things – especially if the place is far from home and you're considering camping there for the entire holiday.

But lazy questions about matters like prices really get to me. Because honestly, would Dibiki ever get to see Gerrie from Germiston if no one in the FB camping group replies to his question about the cost? No way,

Gerrie – you'll have to figure that out for yourself. That way, you'll get first-hand information and know exactly what to expect for yourself and your wallet.

When it comes to pet-friendly places, I do think many resort owners could communicate better about whether your furry family members are welcome. But I'll save that topic for another day.

It's usually this kind of camper who is also the biggest rule-breaker when it comes to ignoring resort regulations.

And if you dare to remind them that the campsite doesn't allow any music after 22:00, or that their in-laws – who arrived as day visitors this morning – should have left hours ago, suddenly you become the bad guy.

And once again, I'm baffled, because the rules are available everywhere – not just on the campsite's website, but also sent to you via email or WhatsApp, or even handed to you upon arrival.

Yet plenty of people completely ignore them, acting as if the rules only apply to other campers. It's a real shame because it's always a small minority that ends up ruining the camping experience for the rest.

“

As I mentioned earlier, any campsite or holiday resort worth its salt has some kind of online presence

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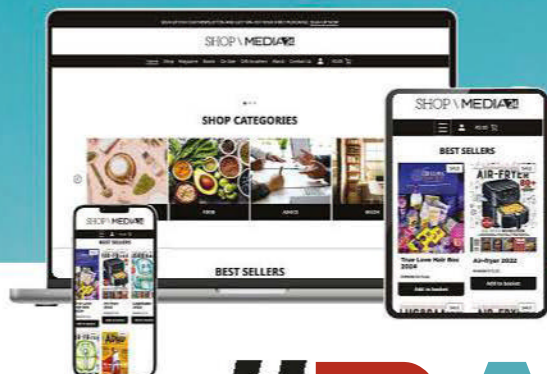


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A bird photographer's bane

Ask any serious birdwatcher how many species they've seen, and almost every one of them will ask you what you mean by "seen", says **Eben Swart**.

When it comes to "seeing", birdwatchers have different standards. Some will tick a bird off their list if they hear its call – even if they don't actually see it. Others will mark it as "seen" if they get a good enough glimpse to identify it, maybe even hear it too. And then there are those who believe you can only count a bird if you've managed to take a photo of it for proper identification.

For various reasons, I fall into the last category. At 61, my hearing isn't what it used to be. I struggle to hear the high-pitched calls of the sunbird and the chinspot, let alone tell the two apart. So, no – I don't count a bird if I hear it, because I simply don't hear them.

People say seeing is believing, but after decades of birdwatching, I no longer subscribe to that idea. Not even when I have a witness – usually my wife – with me. Too often, we've agreed on a bird's identity, only to later see on my computer screen that we were completely wrong.

That's why I prefer a good photo before adding a species to my list. But even this method isn't foolproof, because birds aren't the kind of creatures that sit still, waiting for a camera to click. No, most of them – especially the small ones – are in a constant state of motion, never sitting still for a second and twisting their all-important little heads, with their all-important little eyes, in every possible direction. That's why you need a trigger finger as quick as Dirty Harry's, ready for that magic moment when the sun's sparkle catches the bird's eye.

On a recent visit to the Ndumo Game Reserve, I learned an important life lesson. If you've ever wondered which side of a bush birds prefer, the answer is: the other side. And they never sit still in one spot – they have their own agenda, scratching through dry leaves and hopping around in search of food before suddenly, for no apparent reason, flying off.

I remember one scorching afternoon in Skukuza, sweating buckets as I spent nearly two hours chasing a grey-backed camaroptera with my camera, trying to get a decent shot. One moment it was in the sun, then in the shade. Or it hopped this way, then that way. Or it turned its head this way, then that way again. Or it was behind a blade of grass, then behind a twig. A never-ending frustration.

Eventually, you forget about camera settings and just shoot in automatic mode, no longer worried about background, depth of field or composition. All you want is a close-up of the blasted bird that's at least in focus. Ideally, you want to capture it in profile – because from behind, it's a total flop, and from the front, even the most beautiful bird can look downright odd. Then, to make matters worse, they blink constantly, and with that nictitating membrane over their eyes, they start resembling the wicked witch in a fairy tale.

Bird hides come with their own challenges. These places are meant to be sanctuaries of silence for obvious reasons. But that's rarely the case. The biggest culprits usually aren't the birds, but your fellow birdwatchers – from the woman with the crinkly chip packet to the toddler

who loudly asks his mom why the uncle is looking through that thing so much.

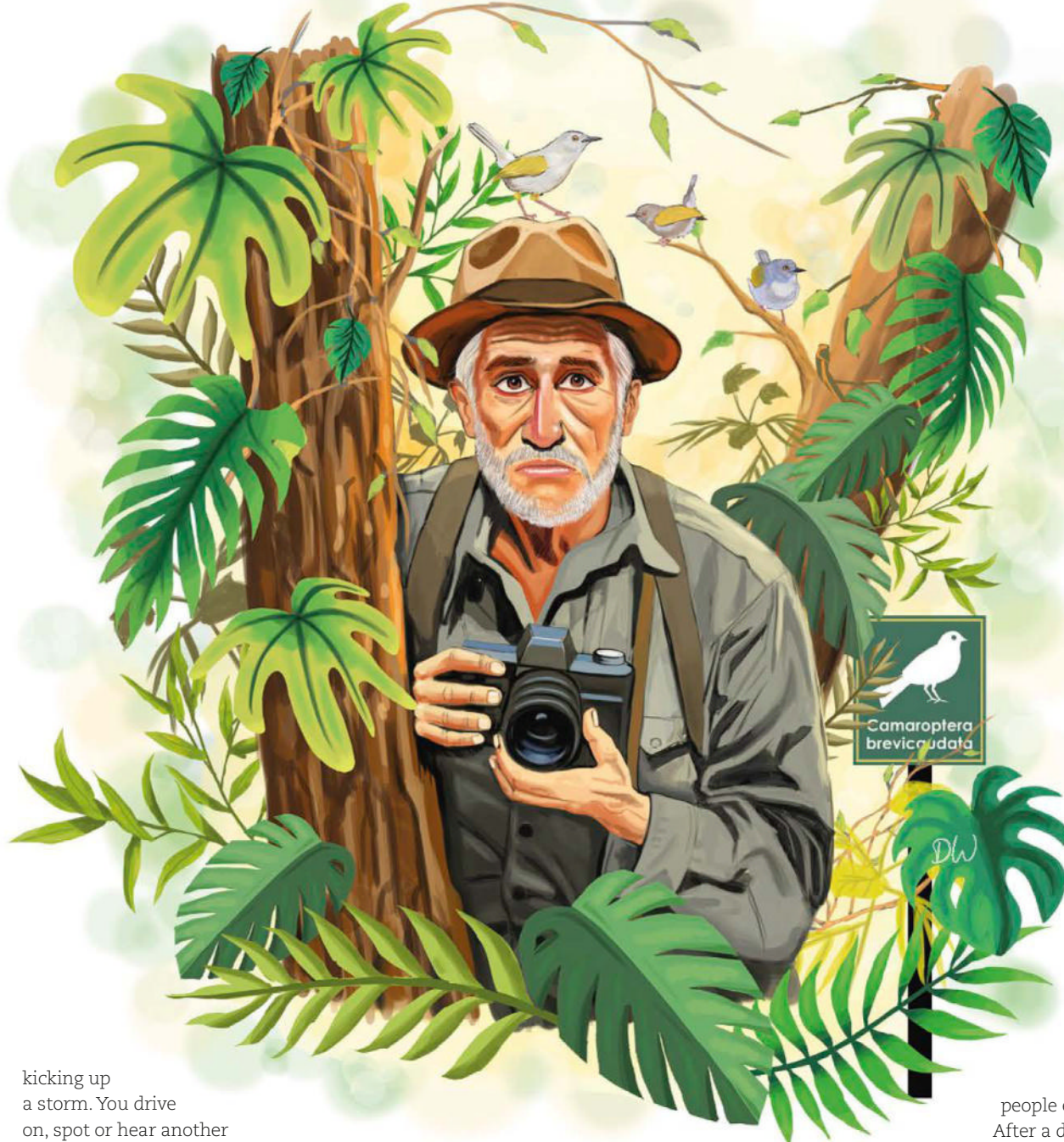
The worst offender, though, is the chairman of a local bird club. His telescope is always set up on a tripod, and he has no qualms about educating everyone around him on his extensive bird knowledge.

The biggest frustration, however, is trying to photograph birds from your car. In most vehicles, there simply isn't enough space to manoeuvre a long camera lens without a struggle.

So when you see or hear a bird while driving, you slam on the brakes – but you've already passed it. Reverse. Where's the bird? Oh, there it is! Now you carefully position the car and stalk the bird so you can get the shot through your side window. You take the car out of gear, pull up the handbrake and roll down the window before grabbing your camera. You turn it on and zoom in furiously, but everything looks different through the lens. Where's the bird now? Ah, there it is again! But it's behind a twig, so you adjust the camera settings to manual focus. You do this carefully, keeping composition in mind at all times.

Remember the rule of thirds... You wait for the bird to turn its head so the sun glints in its eye. There! Click, click, click! Too late! It flicked its head back in an instant and looked away. Damn! And there it goes, flying off for no reason...

You roll up your window again because, otherwise, your camera and car interior will soon be coated in dust thanks to the approaching Dirt Devil Dave's Fortuner,



kicking up a storm. You drive on, spot or hear another bird, and slam on the brakes again – just a fraction too late. And so it continues.

This time, it's George and his English rose, Heather, who stop behind you in their rental car. Tourists from London, only here to see rhinos. So you know the moment George opens his mouth to ask – far too loudly – whether you've seen any rhinos, the bird you were trying to photograph is going to make a swift exit.

Or Big City Steve pulls up alongside your passenger window in his bakkie. He's looking for lions and has no time for people watching birds. His monster bakkie's engine and air conditioning sound like a Boeing preparing for takeoff. Every bird in sight takes flight.

"See any lions?" No, Steve. That was a yellow-throated longclaw. You

can see in Steve's eyes that he doesn't understand a word of what you just said. The bakkie roars away in a cloud of dust, taking every feathered creature with it.

Taking photos of birds is not easy. Landscapes, trees, plants and flowers are all significantly simpler. So are animals, because even though they move, they do so at a much slower, more predictable pace. So why go to all the trouble for birds?

I have several reasons. Birds are beautiful. There are more than 900 species in our stunning country. Birds sing beautifully. Birds can fly and lay the most exquisite eggs. And when you capture a close-up of a bird, you get a glimpse of the intricate details of creation that few

people ever see. After a day out in the veld, when you upload

your photos to your computer, you're amazed at what you've managed to capture. Yes, there are plenty of junk shots that you delete immediately. But then, there are the masterpieces – the Mona Lisas of the photography and birding world. And for a bird photographer, there is no greater reward than a Mona Lisa.

No, wait – there is one greater reward. And that's when you get to add another species to your life list or insert its stunning photo and name into your PowerPoint presentation. That moment feels like getting a call from your bank manager, telling you that the board of directors has decided to add two extra zeroes to your account balance as a thank you for being such a loyal client.

Rich beyond words!

...AND FINALLY



From donkey to dune bug

The beloved old beach buggy turned 60 last year. We take a look at its history... and its possible future.

Each vehicles first emerged in the 1950s as part of the Post-World War II economic expansion. The first of these was the Fiat Jolly in 1957, but it was aimed at the upper class – people like Grace Kelly, Aristotle Onassis, and US President Lyndon B Johnson all owned one.

A second example was BMC's Mini Moke ("moke" is slang for a donkey), originally designed for the British army but later marketed as an affordable runabout for the average Joe.

The real deal, however, was the Meyers Manx, built in 1964 by American Bruce Meyers. The Manx was based on a Volkswagen Beetle, known as the "VW Bug" in the US. Bruce Meyers crafted it with a fibreglass body to compete in the Baja 1 000 desert rally – and on his very first attempt, he set a new speed record.

Capitalising on his success, Bruce started selling blueprints and fiberglass body kits for his "Dune Buggy" in 1967. Within a year, these plans had spread

worldwide, and here in South Africa, fibreglass moulders could barely keep up with demand for local orders.

The "Beach Buggy," as it was called in the 1970s, sported metallic paint that sparkled on the sunny beaches of then-Natal and the Cape – all to the soundtrack of surf and disco music.

Bruce Meyers passed away in 2021 at the grand age of 94, but shortly before his death, he sold the brand and plans for other dune buggies he never got to develop to businessman Phillip Sarofim.

Sarofim and designer Freeman Thomas immediately got to work on a modern version of the Manx, now with electric power instead of a VW engine. Sales were set to start in 2024, but unexpected delays have pushed back the delivery date. Enthusiasts are hoping to get their Manx 2.0 EVs this year, but the price



might make you gag: \$75 000 – that's R1,4 million – for a beach buggy! And there's no DIY kit available for the Manx 2.0.

You can, however, still buy an original Manx DIY kit (which includes the fibreglass body, mounting brackets, instrument panels and more) from the factory for \$6 850 (R125 000). But at that price, you'll still have to collect it yourself – and supply your own donor Beetle.

Visit meyersmanx.com for more information.



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