

CHOCOLATE SPOILS! Six sweet recipes

#189

ORIBI GORGE TO
AMPHITHEATRE

Drive KZN's best back roads

HAENERTSBURG

Feel the heartbeat
of Magoebaskloof

go!

YOUR JOURNEY
STARTS HERE

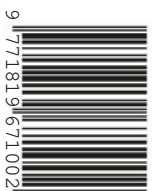
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2023

Lazy daisy!

*Slackpack the spectacular
Schaap River Canyon*

*Escape the world in
Goegap Nature Reserve*

R110 (VAT incl.)
Namibia N\$110



0 91 89

STAY HERE Go wild at Zingela on the Tugela
DAY HIKE Baviaanskloof magic on Gabriel's Loop
ANTARCTICA Penguins, orcas – and a braai in the snow!
POACHERS, PASOP! Jock is on your trail...



EXPERTLY INFORMED CUSTOMISED SOLUTIONS.

For metallurgical engineer turned furniture designer **Mpho Vackier**, the first step in creating a masterpiece is not only selecting the right materials, but the ideal design to bring her vision to life.

Similarly, in order to optimise your investment returns, you need expert advice to select the most appropriate structure to house your assets. At Sanlam Private Wealth, our team of experts will review your personal circumstances and recommend a custom-crafted solution for you. **Your wealth. Our craft.**



PRIVATE **Wealth**



www.sanlamprivatewealth.com

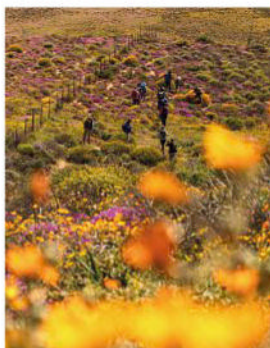
Investment Management | Fiduciary and Tax | Equity-backed Finance | Stockbroking | Derivatives

Sanlam Private Wealth is a licensed FSP (37473), a registered Credit Provider (NCRCP1867) and a member of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

go!
#189

CONTENTS

August/September 2023



COVER PICTURE
EVAN NAUDÉ
Schaap River Canyon hike

FEATURES

34 COLUMN: LIESL DE BEER

"In an effort to keep us kids busy, my mom popped a cassette into the player and gave us ballet classes. Our dance was captured on 8 mm film: Tchaikovsky floating over the desert plains and us copying my mom's every move. I don't remember much else about that day and whether the fish stayed frozen, but our pelican-like Swan Lake performance on that deserted salt road will stay with me forever."

36 SCHAAP RIVER CANYON

"The dirt roads and jeep tracks are gone – we bound over rock slabs like antelope, past pools and butter trees. It's not only your legs that will get a workout; your neck muscles strain as you gaze up at the cliffs. Baboons bark somewhere above us, but they're invisible among the rocks."

44 GOEGAP NATURE RESERVE

"The quiver trees are always present, as are the mountains, the plains and bat-eared foxes. When the wildflowers are scarce, so are the people. The trails are quiet and the views are so vast it feels like you're the very first person to see them."

50 ROUTE: KWAZULU-NATAL

Have you heard of the Kevelaer Mission? And have you been to Kamberg? Follow Toast Coetzer's travel plan from Oribi Gorge to the Amphitheatre.

50

From Oribi to
the Drakensberg

REGULARS

8 ED'S LETTER

12 LETTERS

20 CHECK THIS

22 UPFRONT

Night Watch – 23

View from Here – 26

Books – 32

28 PROFILE

"Anke Kruger de Rosner ducks under the branches of an acacia tree as she approaches. It's been a wet summer and everything is overgrown. It's always hot here in the far north of the country, and not just when it comes to the climate: Hoedspruit and surrounds are also a poaching hot spot. This is exactly where Anke likes to be: in the heat of battle."

58 TAKE YOUR PIC

An abstract harbour, a hoopoe showdown and Compassberg near Nieu-Bethesda – these are some of the scenes our readers photographed.

64 PORTFOLIO

Travel photographer and tour guide Evan Naudé visited the Namib after heavy rains to capture the transformation of the landscapes.

72 FOOD

Satisfy your chocolate craving with these easy but decadent recipes!

78 GEAR

Your guide to more sustainable ways to enjoy your beverages, whether it's in a cup, bottle or flask.

82 WHEELS: JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE

"It's a comfortable highway cruiser with lots of space, but it also stays true to its "General Purpose" DNA when you have to take it through rivers and up mountains."

84 STAY HERE

At Zingela Safari and River Company you can wake up next to the Tugela River.

86 TAKE A HIKE

Fiona McIntosh explores the day hikes in Cedar Falls Private Nature Reserve in the Baviaanskloof.

88 TOWN: HAENERTSBURG

Mia Louw heads to Magoebaskloof to meet an historian, a hiking guide, a bird expert, a cheesemaker, a mushroom farmer and a botanist... they like to keep busy in this Limpopo town!

111 BIRDS

"When I was a fledgling birder in the late 1980s, there was a magical number: 800. If you'd seen 800 different species, you were immortalised in birding lore. Only a handful of folks ever reached that milestone and I knew all their names, because seeing 800 birds south of the Zambezi meant travelling countless kilometres, close calls with dangerous wildlife, a few bouts of malaria and perhaps an arrest or two."

112 KIDS' PAGE

Plant an indigenous tree and stand a chance to win a tree guide.

116 WITH MY OWN EYES

Willem Kruger witnessed an epic leopard battle in the Kruger Park.

118 TRAVEL JOURNAL: ANTARCTICA

"At daybreak we reached tiny Half Moon Island next to Livingston Island. As we went ashore, alongside an unperturbed welcoming committee of fur seals and gentoo penguins, it started to snow!"

128 CROSSWORD

129 LETTER FROM WINDHOEK

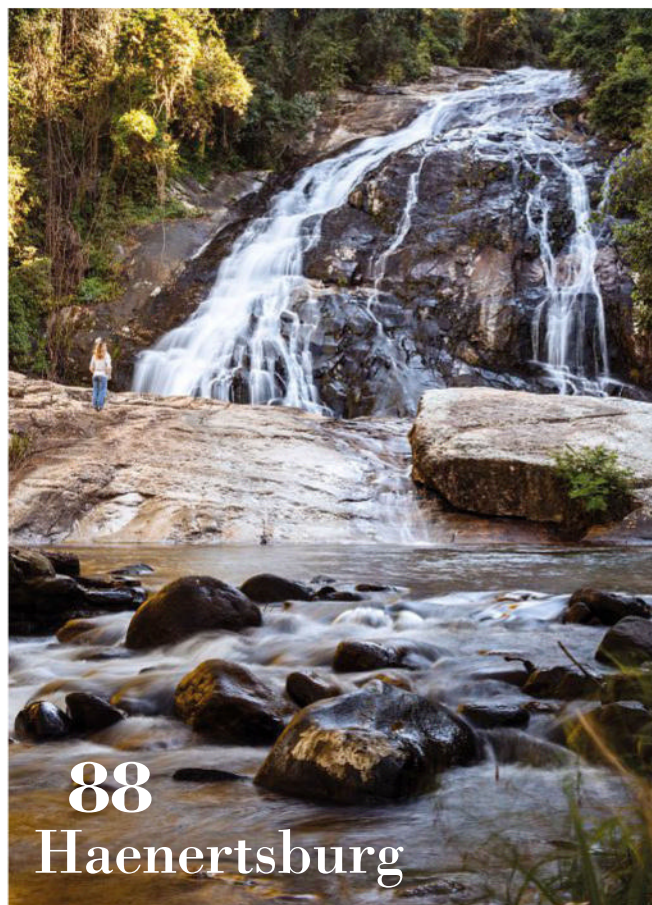
"The bird is doing an early-morning dance: It hops to the side and puffs out its breast, hops the other way and puffs out its breast again. Is that a piece of grass in its beak?"

130 AFRICA AT ITS BEST



72 Chocolate treats

SHELLEY CHRISTIANS



88 Haenertsburg

MIA LOUW

GRAND VITARA LIVE THE LEGACY

1.5 GL MT

FROM **R339 900** *
incl. VAT

Retail price includes 6-year/90 000km promotional service plan
and a 5-year/200 000km promotional warranty.



  Discover more at
  [SuzukiAuto.co.za](https://www.suzuki.co.za)

Suzuki AllGrip and hybrid technology available only in GLX 6AT. Pictures shown are for illustrative purposes only.
*T's and C's apply



RONEL STEYN



The song of the seasons

Looking out of the window of my study this morning, cold hands wrapped around a cup of coffee, I can just make out a thin layer of snow on Simonsberg behind Stellenbosch. In the mountains of the Free State, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, the snow lies much, much thicker. There were even reports of snow just south of Windhoek. Yes, southern Africa is shivering – it's like someone locked us all in the freezer!

And it's not just snow. This winter, the Western Cape and Northern Cape received more rain in a single month than in full years of recent drought.

Even though my roof is leaking in places where it has never leaked before, I'm not complaining – I'm making plans to go to Namaqualand this spring. Because all this rain so early means we're going to have another excellent flower season. If you've never experienced it, you need to join me and plan quickly.

Just ask Evan Naudé, a son of the West Coast who is well acquainted with the springtime bloom. Even he was blown away on the 75 km Namaqua Flower Hike outside Springbok when he did it last spring. (Read the story on page 36.) The chances are excellent that this year's flowers will be even more spectacular.

But if you can't get everything together for a springtime road trip, rest assured that Namaqualand is still worth visiting at any other time of the year, as Willem van der Berg tells us in his story about Goegap Nature Reserve on page 44.

Putting this issue together, I was reminded yet again that South Africa is full of beautiful places, and that every season has its charm. Yes, even the Cape in winter when the rain blows in horizontally under your eaves. One morning the sun will make an appearance, the wind will stop blowing and she'll put on her most beautiful green dress. As if after a big argument, she'll smile at you and say: "I still love you. I'll give you a chance to get on the roof and fix the leak now."

Pierre

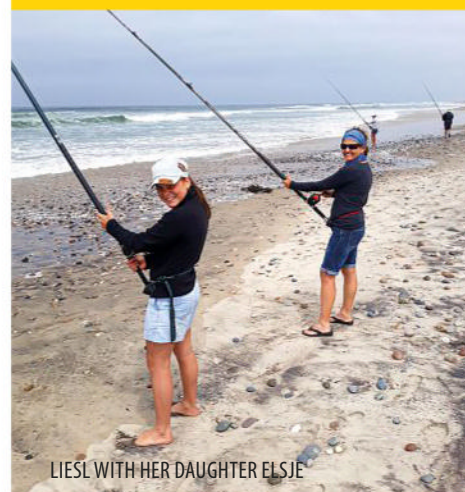
PIERRE STEYN

PSteyn@media24.com

DON'T MISS OUR NEXT ISSUE!

The Oct/Nov issue will be on sale at your retailer from 29 September 2023.

BEHIND THE SCENES



LIESL WITH HER DAUGHTER ELSJE

If you enjoy a road trip, you'll inevitably have to deal with some car trouble. Read **Liesl de Beer's** column on page 34.

Tell us about yourself... I'm an Afrikaans teacher at Afrikaanse Hoër Meisieskool Pretoria. I'm in charge of organising tennis for the school, so I sometimes get to travel to places like Bloemfontein, Bethlehem, Paarl and Mbombela. I'm happiest when I'm on the road.

Where does your love of writing come from? My childhood was filled with wonderful trips on remote roads to far-off places – those memories are often the "driving" force behind my writing. My mom kept a diary of every holiday and as soon as I was able to hold a pen, I did the same. My dad had a knack for describing things. I went to school in Meyerton and I was one of those kids who liked writing essays. I wanted to be a journalist when I grew up!

Your best holiday memories? Travelling to what was then South West Africa. We drove back roads and sometimes slept under the stars. My grandfather was ahead of his time and kitted out our Kombi like a modern-day camper. I remember the night skies and the hiss of the gas stove when my mom made coffee in the mornings. Our destination was always Kroonendal, my uncle Jan and aunt Maryna's farm near Kamanjab. That farm was a child's dream!

Do you still visit Namibia? My husband Arra and I lived in Windhoek for a while – both of our children were born there. We now live in Pretoria, but still travel to Namibia as often as possible. I'm in heaven when the four of us hit the road together. The tradition lives on!

See issue #150 for another one of Liesl's columns.



LEDLENSER.



POWERUP

BE CREATIVE
HAVE FUN
PLAY AROUND

www.ledlenser.co.za

Available at all leading outdoor stores & selected independent stores. **Awesome Tools** are the exclusive distributors of Ledlenser products in South Africa.
Tel +27 21 981 6672   www.awesometools.co.za

SPECIAL OFFER

FREE DELIVERY



**PRINT
40%
OFF**

**ONLY
R66
PER ISSUE
R396 FOR 6 ISSUES**

SAVE R264



**DIGITAL
40%
OFF**

**ONLY
R66
PER ISSUE
R396 FOR 6 ISSUES**

SAVE R264



TO SUBSCRIBE: For the print edition call ☎ 087 353 1300 or SMS "gosubs" to 32361 and we will call you back (R1,50 per SMS); WhatsApp ☎ 087 353 1333; e-mail ✉ subs@media24.com
For digital go to ✉ zinio.com and ✉ magzter.com

Terms and conditions: Print offer valid for subscribers in RSA until 28 September 2023. Your subscription is provided on a prepaid basis. We may amend the fees payable in respect of your subscription from time to time to facilitate cover price increases. We may alter the payment instruction to correspond with any changes in your fees.

go!

CONTACT THE TEAM

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (WEG & GO): PIERRE STEYN ✉ editor@gomag.co.za
DEPUTY EDITOR: ESMA MARNEWICK
TRAVEL EDITOR: TOAST COETZER
FOOD EDITOR: JOHANÉ NEILSON
COPY EDITORS: MARIJCKE DODDS, MARTINETTE LOUW
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: JON MINSTER
JOURNALISTS: SOPHIA VAN TAAK, KYRA TARR
ART DIRECTOR: LYNNE FRASER
CARTOGRAPHER: FRANÇOIS HAASBROEK
WEB EDITOR: DESIREE HARTNEY

MEDIA24

CEO MEDIA24: ISHMET DAVIDSON
GENERAL MANAGER – MEDIA24 LIFESTYLE & NEWS: MINETTE FERREIRA
MEDIA24 LIFESTYLE CFO: JAMEELAH CONWAY
FINANCIAL MANAGER: MELANIE LEEMAN
DIVISIONAL OPERATIONS MANAGER: EDWINA LYNERS
CIRCULATION MANAGER: ARMAND KASSELMAN ✉ armand.kasselman@onthedot.co.za
PRODUCTION MANAGER: WENDY ADAMS

ADVERTISING SALES

HEAD OF ADVERTISING: DANIE NELL ✉ danie.nell@media24.com ☎ 082 859 0542
KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER: SHARLENE SMITH
✉ sharlene.smith@media24.com ☎ 083 583 1604
KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER: SANETHA MEINTJIES
✉ sanetha.meintjies@media24.com ☎ 082 957 9747

MEDIA24 LIFESTYLE CREATE STUDIO

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: MICHAEL DE BEER
COMMERCIAL MANAGING EDITOR: GERDA ENGELBRECHT
MARKETING MANAGER: ANDILE NKOSI ✉ Andile.Nkosi@media24.com

MEDIA24 DIVERSE REVENUE

GROWTH MANAGER: LISE VAN BREDA ✉ lise.coetsee@media24.com
HEAD OF DIVERSE PROJECTS: FRANCOIS MALAN

DESIGNER – ADVERTISING: ELAINE SCHOEMAN
COPY EDITOR – ADVERTISING: BRIGITTE BLANCKENBERG

SHOP QUERIES: YUMNA TOFEY ✉ yumna.tofey@media24.com ☎ 021 406 2205

SUBSCRIPTIONS, RENEWALS AND QUERIES

FOR THE PRINTED MAGAZINE:

☎ 087 353 1300 | ☎ 087 353 1333 (WhatsApp only) | ☎ 086 296 6681
☎ +27 21 065 0033 | ✉ subs@media24.com | ✉ "gosubs" to 32361 (R1,50 per SMS)

FOR THE DIGITAL MAGAZINE: ✉ zinio.com ✉ magzter.com

WHERE TO FIND US

CONTACT: YUMNA TOFEY ✉ yumna.tofey@media24.com ☎ 021 406 2205
CT POSTAL ADDRESS: PO Box 740, Cape Town, 8000
JHB POSTAL ADDRESS: PO Box 785266, Sandton, 2146



Weg/go! is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa



PRINTING
CTP All rights reserved



PUBLISHER
RESEARCH COUNCIL

MEDIA24

Published by Media24, a division of Naspers, 40 Heerengracht, Cape Town, 8001



***THE MOST CAPABLE
RARELY GO IT ALONE.***

@BFGOODRICHAFRICA



BFGoodrich
Tires

WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING FOR?



Where have you been? What have you seen?
Write to 📧 editor@gomag.co.za

COMPILED BY MARTINETTE LOUW

WINNING
LETTER



◀ If looks could kill

My husband Johan and I camped with our kids in the Kruger Park for a week during the school holidays in March. It was my husband's first time staying in the park and we had a spectacular time. One of the highlights was this fork-tailed drongo irritating a brown snake-eagle near Skukuza. We watched the pair for about 20 minutes – the drongo even sat on the eagle's head at one point!

MELISSA WERTH, Johannesburg

WRITE TO US & WIN!



Melissa wins a Zartek
ZA-476 LED spotlight
worth R2 350.

This rechargeable spotlight
delivers an impressive

6 300-lumen beam over a distance of up
to 1 100 m. It has a run time of 2,5 – 40
hours per charge depending on which
of the five lighting modes you use.

The durable rubberised casing has
a heat sink to protect the LED, and the
spotlight has USB-C mains and vehicle
charging adaptors. A detachable red
lens is provided for non-invasive game
viewing at night. 📧 zartek.co.za

Zartek



SPEAK TO US

Send your letters to 📧 editor@gomag.co.za – include your name, surname and where you live. Please also include a photo if you have one (at least 2 MB in size). We reserve the right to edit and shorten letters, and use your photos elsewhere in the magazine, on our digital platforms and in our marketing material.

➤ *Buen camino!*

In May this year, I walked the Camino Francés in Spain from León to Santiago de Compostela – 310 km! A friend once told me this camino is a metaphor for life, which was the idea that inspired me to tackle the pilgrimage.

I completed the whole Camino Francés in three phases. In 2016 I walked from Pamplona to Grañón, and in 2018 I walked from Grañón to León. I was fitter and better prepared for the third leg, but even so, it was still painful to walk up stairs at the end of each day.

I chatted to a man called Olivier one morning near the village of O Cebreiro, as we warmed ourselves next to a fireplace. His theory is that walking not only makes your brain release feel-good hormones, but your bones too – that's why you feel wonderful even though you're tired.

I approached the camino with an open heart and mind. The pilgrimage is a spiritual journey, but the people make the experience so much more meaningful. Every day I hoped for good interactions because it would make the walk feel shorter. The people I met along the way were the highlight of my journey. Here I am in front of the cathedral at the end point with my fellow hikers: Giovanni from Sicily (left) and Anderson from Brazil (middle).

I'm already dreaming of my next camino. I'll probably do one in Spain again – maybe the Camino del Norte or the Camino Ingles.

ARNO REUVERS, Grabouw

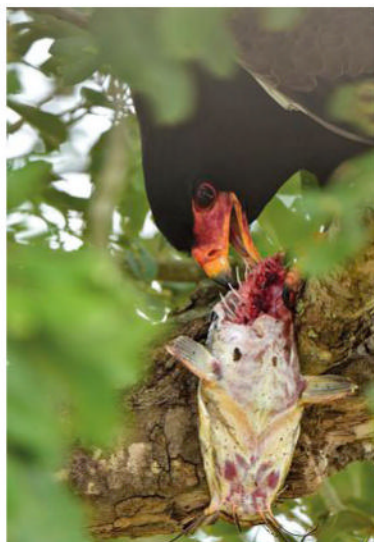


➤ Five second rule?

In May 2023, we were driving from Crocodile Bridge to Lower Sabie to have coffee at the Mugg & Bean there when I saw the head of a barbel lying next to the road near a bridge. We laughed about it because we'd never seen anything like it in the Kruger Park before.

When we returned along the same road later, I photographed this scene: A bateleur had picked up the fish head and was eating it in a tree. What a sight!

ROSE-MARIE MILLER,
Kempton Park

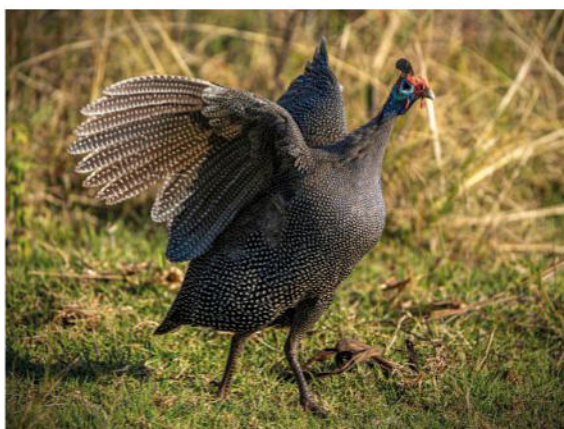


✓ Guineafowl on the go

I live close to Rietvlei Nature Reserve in Pretoria – it's an oasis in the city. I photographed this helmeted guineafowl near the coffee shop in the reserve on one of my many visits. The guineafowl usually move around in groups and call at sunrise and sunset.

The guineafowl in Rietvlei are used to vehicles and you can get relatively close to them. Rietvlei might not have the Big Five, but it doesn't need lions and elephants to shine. The smaller species are just as entertaining to watch.

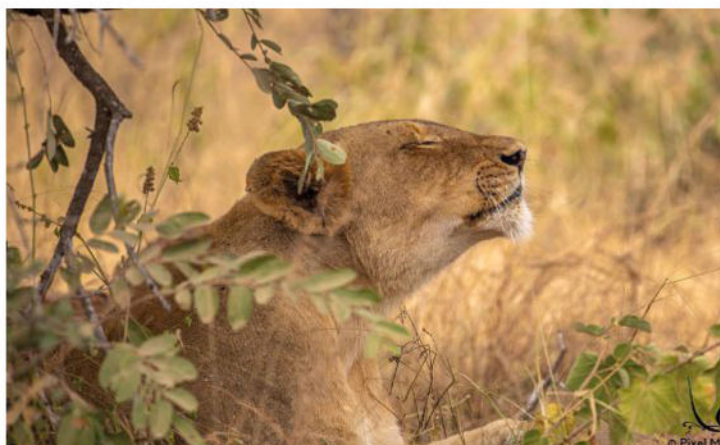
JURIE MAREE, Centurion



◀ Bliss in the bushveld

Happiness is what you feel when you close your eyes and take a deep breath. We saw this lioness on the S114 near Malelane on a visit to the Kruger Park in April. I thought she looked really happy and content.

JACQUELINE JACOBS, Centurion





◀ Caught in the act

I was in Etosha National Park in Namibia in June 2023. From Namutoni rest camp, we drove north to the Tsumcor waterhole where elephants often go to bathe. Although it was fairly late in the morning, we pulled over at the Klein Okevi waterhole en route. There were a few vehicles there and everyone was watching something very keenly. I couldn't see what they were looking at through my binoculars, so we drove closer.

Finally I saw movement next to the water. An African wildcat was hiding behind a rock and launched an attack on some Burchell's sandgrouse in the shallows. The cat made repeated attempts over the next half an hour and eventually was successful. It carried its catch out of the water and disappeared into the grasses.

Etosha always has something to offer – you just have to be patient.

STEPHEN KENNY, Windhoek



▲ The call of Namibia

I was born with the travel gene and I've been a loyal reader of your magazine for years. I look forward to every issue and I share editor Pierre Steyn's love of author Lawrence G Green's work.

In April 2023, I visited Namibia and travelled from the Skeleton Coast to the Kunene River. The landscapes were remote, deserted, challenging and inhospitable, but also beautiful in their own way. I experienced many of the things Green describes in his wonderful book, *Lords of the Last Frontier*.

Here's Green's description of the Skeleton Coast: "This is the loneliest beach in Africa, but I shall sleep well tonight. Only a fortnight ago I was listening to the music on the wine terrace in Windhoek; well-fed but a little wistful at the thought of leaving the soft life. Here is a different music, the orchestra of nature, the earliest symphony of all."

It's so true! I hope to return soon to listen to the orchestra of nature again.

WILLIE NEL, Pretoria



Plan your own adventure with the latest go! Namibia guide (R125) – on shelf now!

You can also order a copy at
media24shop.com or e-mail
yumna.tofey@media24.com



▲ Never too young to explore

My family and I travelled through Namibia in March 2023. At Dead Vlei, I stopped to take a photo of a gemsbok on a dune. While the others waited for me, my husband Brennie took this photo of our son Björn (then 7 months old) under one of the trees.

It was challenging to explore the Namib with a baby. I usually use a baby carrier, but Björn was fussy and didn't want to be in it. I knew that I wasn't going to miss out on the opportunity to see Dead Vlei and headed into the dunes with him on my hip. Some of the other tourists took photos of us – they must have thought we were crazy!

Björn loved the outing and particularly enjoyed playing in the red sand. I'm from Namibia and I'm used to the heat, but I wouldn't recommend people do the same if they're not. To carry an 11 kg baby in that heat wasn't easy...

CARINE WIEHAHN, Kanoneiland



^ Can I join the picnic?

In 2021, we were in the Kruger Park and pulled over at the Tshokwane picnic site for a while. We had our lunch and packed up. As we were leaving, this magnificent elephant bull strolled out of the bush, walked over to the signpost for the picnic site and had a good scratch before carrying on down the road.

DESIREE SCHLOOZ, Edenvale



^ You snooze, you lose!

I spent all day next to a waterhole in Klaserie Private Nature Reserve near Hoedspruit, watching the comings and goings of the birds and animals. I heard a loud splash and saw a lanner falcon fly up from the water. It had attacked a brown-hooded kingfisher drying its feathers on a branch nearby.

The kingfisher was still in the water, trying to escape, when a grey heron dove in and snatched it up. Back on the shore, the heron killed the kingfisher and swallowed it.

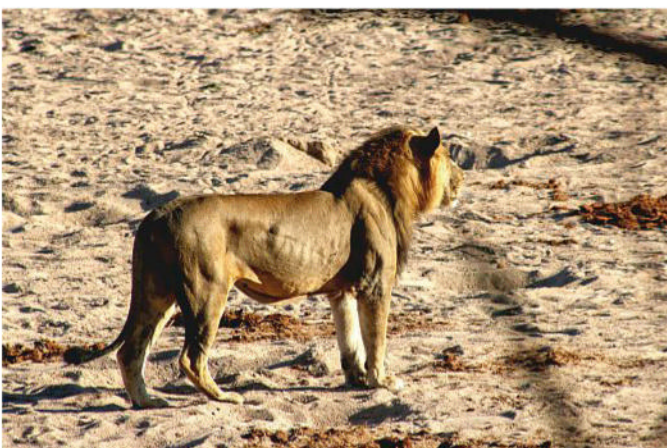
TOETSIE TERBLANCHE, Sannieshof



^ Family portrait

While in the Punda Maria area last year, I came upon a nyala ewe and her lamb lazily strolling towards our car on the Mahonie Loop (S99). It was only when they neared the road that they realised they had company, posed for a photograph and retreated to the safety of the bush.

EDWARD ILLINGWORTH, George



^ That was close...

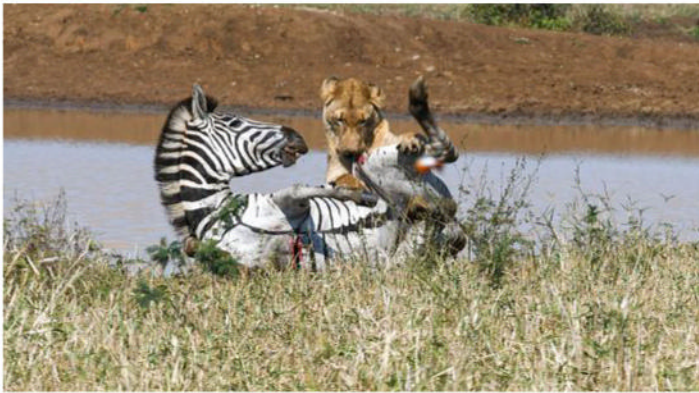
On a trip to Ruaha National Park in Tanzania in October 2022, we had a rather hair-raising experience. After an unsuccessful morning game drive, we stopped for breakfast at a picnic site on the banks of the dry Mwagusi River.

My friends were preparing breakfast while a herd of impala walked up the riverbed. My sister Karenza and I looked for birds. Suddenly I heard one of the impala give a sharp whistle and knew there was trouble. In a low voice, I instructed everyone to gather around our vehicles and climb onto the roof racks.

Two male lions stepped out of the bush and ambled down into the riverbed – they were in exactly the same spot my sister had been standing a few moments before! We watched the lions from the safety of the vehicles – I got this photo as they moved away.

Afterwards, we all had a good laugh.

KALEB RAWLINS, Cedarville



◀ On the hunt

In June 2023, I was at a waterhole about 3 km from the Tshokwane picnic site in the Kruger Park when a herd of zebra showed up to drink. They became restless and after half an hour all hell broke loose. This lioness stormed into the herd and caught one.

I was the only person at the waterhole and took about 200 photos. No action film will ever make your heart beat as fast!

NOLLIES NOLTE, Broederstroom



Every month our experts answer your questions about birds, bugs and beasts. Send your photos and questions to editor@gomag.co.za



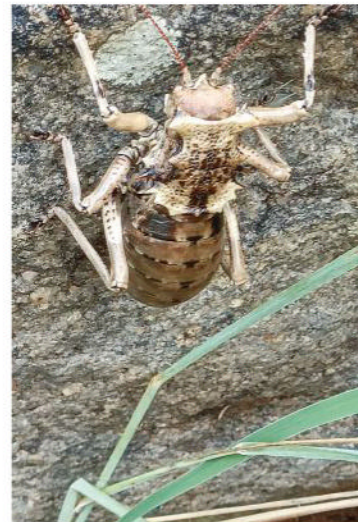
⬆ Something to crow about?

LEON VENTER from Kimberley writes: We saw these Cape crows while on holiday near Clarens in the Free State. One had a longer, sharper bill than the others. Is this a defect of some kind? I've also heard that crows will peck out the eyes of a sheep – is this true?

Bird expert LUKAS NIEMAND says: It's not unusual to see Cape crows with long, slender bills. A quick search on the Internet will show many results of crows with similar bills.

It's important for a bird to regularly use its bill to keep it in a good condition. In general, the bills of Cape crows are slimmer than those of pied crows because they're probers. It's possible that the individual with the longer bill uses it less and doesn't wear it down as much.

There are rumours of crows pecking at the eyes of sheep, but this phenomenon is rare and was mostly recorded in other countries, especially in Europe. Crows are opportunistic and they're often seen around livestock, particularly animals that have recently given birth, where they will feed on the placenta. Sometimes the birth goes awry and leads to miscarriages or dead lambs. In these cases, crows won't pass up the chance to feed on the carcass. The eyes are soft and accessible and usually the first organs eaten.



◀ ID, please

HANS CRONJE from Pretoria writes: I photographed this insect on the Eagle Hiking Trail at Swadini Forever Resort. Can you identify it?

Entomologist DUNCAN MACFADYEN says: This

large, ungainly insect is known as a ground katydid or armoured ground cricket. They're common on low trees and shrubs in semi-arid savannah but may also be seen on the ground. They're endemic to Africa, where about 13 species have been described.

They're approximately 40 mm in length, with a brown body and onward projecting horns. The head, neck shield and legs are pinkish cream to light brown, and the eyes and the long antennae are reddish-brown.

If the shield on the back of a male's thorax is raised, the remnants of its wings become visible. They form a pair of stout, membranous stumps that can be rubbed over one another to produce a loud, rasping noise. The female does not have these stumps and cannot produce any sound. The tympanal organs are found on the front legs just below the knees.

This species is primarily herbivorous but it will scavenge and turn cannibalistic and devour its kin, especially in the case of a road kill. They're only eaten by a few mammals like bat-eared fox and jackal, and by some big birds like the kori bustard.

Their eggs can lie unhatched in shaded soil for a second year if there's no rainfall. This results in significant numbers erupting the following year.

Many people are afraid of ground crickets and they have a reputation for being poisonous, but there's nothing to suggest that they secrete anything other than a repelling fluid. However, they can inflict a sharp bite with their powerful jaws.



INVADER

Off-Road Campers

Camp anywhere,
anytime

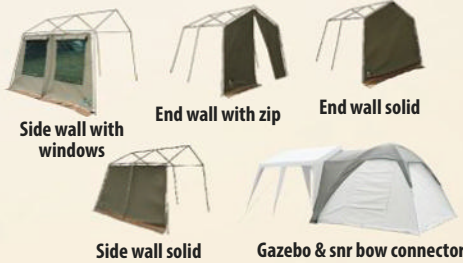


SENIOR GAZEBO



3m x 2.8m x 2.3m
R3 520⁰⁰

SENIOR GAZEBO OPTIONAL EXTRAS



DINING SHELTER



3m x 3.5m x 2.5m
R7 750⁰⁰

SAFARI BOW TENTS



RANGER SAFARI BOW
2.1m x 2.1m x 1.8m
R4 290⁰⁰
JUNIOR WANDERER BOW
2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m
R4 920⁰⁰

SAFARI DELUXE BOW



JUNIOR SAFARI BOW
2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m
R6 220⁰⁰
SENIOR SAFARI DELUXE BOW
3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R7 700⁰⁰

JUNIOR SAHARA



4.5m x 2.9m x 2.5m
R12 000⁰⁰

SAHARA DELUXE



Optional front and side walls available

6m x 2.9m x 2.5m
R16 310⁰⁰

SENIOR WANDERER BOW

- > 3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m
- > 260gsm RIPSTOP SAFARI CANVAS
- > 440gsm HEAVY DUTY GROUND SHEET
- > 8.5mm ELECTROPLATED HIGH TENSILE SPRING STEEL FRAME
- > 2 WINDOWS WITH OUTSIDE WINDOW CLOSURES
- > ELECTRIC CABLE TRAP FOR EXTENSION CORD

R5 710⁰⁰

CAN FIT ALL TENTCO SENIOR EXTENSIONS



SENIOR BAOBAB EXT



R7 400⁰⁰

SENIOR DELUXE EXT



R10 140⁰⁰
EXTENSION SOLD SEPARATELY. BOW TENTS NOT INCLUDED

DOUBLE BOW EXT



R6 470⁰⁰

ROOFTOP PRO TENT



1.4m x 2.4m
R21 460⁰⁰

ROOF TOP TENTS



1.2m x 2.4m **R14 240⁰⁰**
1.4m x 2.4m **R16 140⁰⁰**
1.6m x 2.4m **R16 950⁰⁰**
2m x 2.4m **R21 960⁰⁰**

BUNDU CANOPY



2.7m x 3m
R1 730⁰⁰

Optional side wall

FAMILY TRAILER TENT



*Trailer not included

Board size: 200cm x 140cm
Floor size: 220cm x 400cm
R25 250⁰⁰

ALSO AVAILABLE AT:

NB: PRICES WILL VARY BETWEEN STORES

CAMP CLIMB

Kloppers

OUTDOOR WAREHOUSE

agra

Agri Land

LeisureWorld

AGRI-MARK

Riley's Garage

VIEW OUR LIST OF AGENTS ON OUR WEBSITE

E-MAIL: info@tentco.co.za

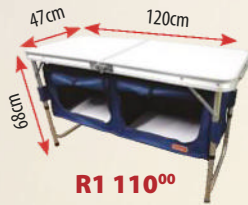
TEL: +27 11 397 6451

PRICES, COLOURS, SPECIFICATIONS & STOCK - E&OE
TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME

Follow us on



2-SHELF DELUXE CUPBOARD



R1 110⁰⁰

3-SHELF DELUXE CUPBOARD



R1 070⁰⁰

4-SHELF DELUXE CUPBOARD



R1 700⁰⁰

KITCHEN CABINET DELUXE



R1 490⁰⁰

SLEEPING BAGS

CLIFF SLEEPING BAG



R580⁰⁰
250gsm HOLLOW
FIBRE FILLING
1.2kg. RATING: 5°C

BUNDU SLEEPING BAG



R880⁰⁰
350gsm HOLLOW
FIBRE FILLING
2.5kg
**ZIP 2 TOGETHER
MAKE A DOUBLE
SLEEPING BAG**

SELF-INFLATING MATTRESSES



200cm x 62cm x 5cm
R970⁰⁰
203cm x 67cm x 10cm
R1 380⁰⁰

STRETCHERS



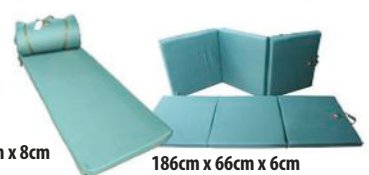
Deluxe Standard:
190cm x 65cm x 40cm
R1 185⁰⁰
Deluxe Large:
210cm x 75cm x 47cm
R1 350⁰⁰

BEDROLL SWAG



SINGLE 214cm x 90cm x 8cm
R1 420⁰⁰
DOUBLE 214cm x 125cm x 8cm
R2 350⁰⁰

FOAM MATTRESS



186cm x 66cm x 6cm
R600⁰⁰ each

POP UP BIN



R170⁰⁰

ALUMINIUM TELESCOPIC POLE



2.3m
R110⁰⁰
2.8m
R190⁰⁰

DEAD BLOW HAMMER



- PVC
- Steel shot-filled head gives extra force to hammer & eliminates rebound
- Diamond texture non-slip handle grip
- 1.3kg

R140⁰⁰

DISH WASH STAND



R1 620⁰⁰

Complete with basins and dry rack

SL-1



Max weight:
100kg
R220⁰⁰

Available in green, grey & blue

DC 3 CHAIR



Max weight:
120kg
R635⁰⁰

DIRECTORS DELUXE CHAIR



Max weight:
180kg
R950⁰⁰

BIG BOY



Max weight:
150kg
R830⁰⁰

ALSO AVAILABLE AT:

NB: PRICES WILL VARY BETWEEN STORES

CAMP CLIMB

Kloppers

OUTDOOR WAREHOUSE

agra

Agri Land

LeisureWorld

AGRI-MARK

Riley's Garage

VIEW OUR LIST OF AGENTS ON OUR WEBSITE

E-MAIL: info@tentco.co.za

TEL: +27 11 397 6451

PRICES, COLOURS, SPECIFICATIONS & STOCK - E&OE
TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME

Follow us on



CHECK THIS

Two white rhinos pose as if mirror images of each other in a very green Madikwe Game Reserve. Madikwe is in the North West, near the border with Botswana.

PICTURE MICHAEL RADDALL

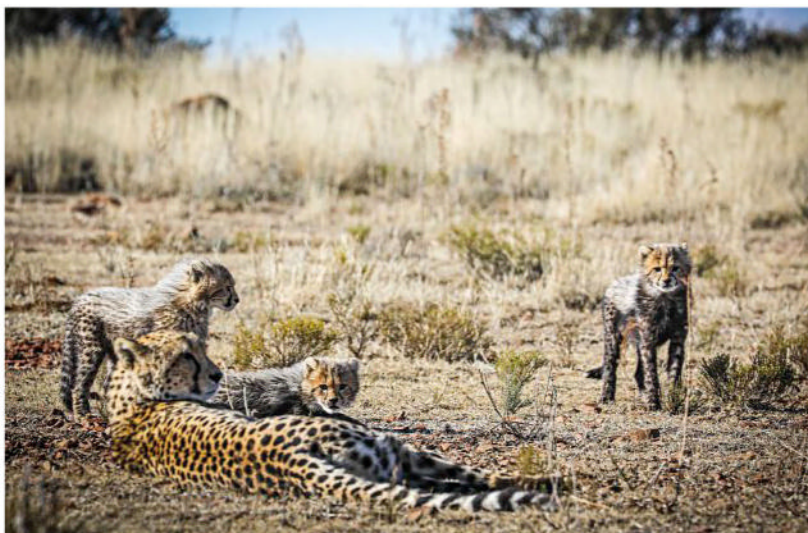


Want to find out more about Madikwe – and the rest of South Africa's best private game reserves, national parks and provincial reserves? Get the 2023 edition of *go! Wild Places*, on sale now! media24shop.com



IN BRIEF

COMPILED BY KYRA TARR



Three times the cuteness!

In June this year, field guide Daniella Kueck was out on a game drive with guests at Tiger Canyon Private Game Reserve in the Free State when she encountered three young cheetah cubs out in the veld with their mother.

"Shashe [the mother] was taking her cubs out for the first time," Daniella says. "It was so special to meet these little guys. I was shaking with excitement."

Shashe is almost 10 years old and has raised three litters. This, her fourth litter, will almost certainly be her last, according to the owner of Tiger Canyon, Rodney Drew.

In 2013, Tiger Canyon became the first reserve to reintroduce wild cheetahs to the Free State after about a century of these cats being absent in the province outside of captivity. The reserve also forms part of the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Cheetah Metapopulation Project, a multi-player initiative that monitors approximately 400 cheetahs across 60 African game reserves.

When Shashe's cubs reach maturity, they'll be eligible for relocation to other reserves where mating opportunities are plentiful, thereby ensuring genetic diversity that will strengthen cheetah populations well into the future.

Day visitors? A game drive costs R1 400 p.p. including snacks and drinks (minimum four people), and lasts 3–4 hours.

Contact: 071 607 9279; tigercanyon.com



DANIELLA KUECK

FAGALA VOET PRESENTS THE 1ST EVER...

HIKING OUTDOOR EXPO

DATE: 28 AND 29 OCTOBER 2023
 VENUE: DE WILDT ADVENTURE TRAILS, R513 YELLOW BOARD NO. 78E FARM SCHIETFOONTEIN
 TIME: 07:00 - 17:00
 TICKETS ARE FOR SALE ON OUR WEBSITE

BUY YOURS AT
www.fagalavoet.co.za

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

FAGALA VOET HIKING OUTDOOR EXPO

Hikers will be thrilled to hear that Fagala Voet, a booking agent for hiking trails, is hosting their first Hiking Outdoor Expo this October. There will be

vendors representing all things hiking and hiking-related: trails, clubs, trail running, mountain biking, camping and travel, as well as outdoor pet products.

Get ideas for your next trip, speak to experts in the field or scope out some awesome outdoor gear. Pets are welcome!

Tickets? tickets.tixsa.co.za or at the door.

When? 28 & 29 October 2023

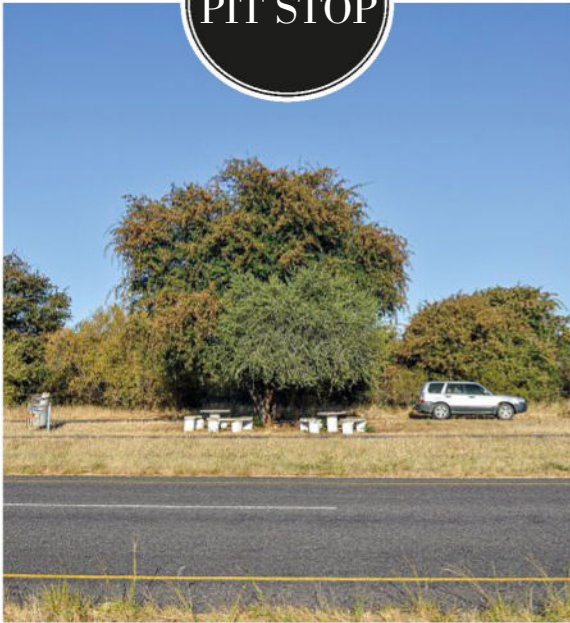
Where? De Wildt Adventure Trails, R513, North West

Cost: Adults R80; pensioners and kids aged 6–12 R50; free for kids under 6.

Contact: 082 776 5540; fagalavoet.co.za/hiking-outdoor-expo

Follow "Hiking Outdoor Expo 2023" on Facebook for more information.

PIT STOP



In the middle of nowhere, Botswana

The central and northern parts of Botswana are flat, and in a flat landscape, trees stand out prominently. It's these trees that make Botswana's picnic sites so attractive. The superstars of the region are the baobabs (sometimes you'll even find a picnic site under one, like east of Gweta next to the A3), but today's superstar might be a shepherd's tree that casts a shadow so dense and dark it feels like you have to cut your way through with a pocketknife.

On an ordinary day in May, I pull over here next to the A3 between Sehithwa and Ghanzi. I've just driven through the foot-and-mouth control point at Kuke and I'll overnight at El-Fari Bush Camp near Ghanzi. But first it's time to park my Subaru next to this tree and observe the afternoon.

It's actually *two* trees: a shepherd's tree and an enormous purple-pod cluster-leaf. How long have these two been entwined, reaching together towards the stars at night; the warm, dusty glow of the sun by day? And which road builder tied a ribbon around these two trunks and decided that they'd be spared the blade of the grader and become a resting place for tired travellers?

There are two picnic tables with benches. Have eight people ever been here at once, drinking eight cooldrinks together? Has a church choir on their way to a competition pulled over here to practise a difficult hymn? I look up at the blue, blue sky and wonder whether an American is looking back at me via a spy satellite.

A sound in the bushes snaps me out of my reverie. Who goes there? I turn around and walk up to the fence. There's a faint jeep track on the other side – it looks like a path sometimes used by a donkey cart. The bird calls again, clear as a bell. The scarlet flash of a crimson-breasted shrike moves among the leaves like mercury.

Ah, so *you're* the one I'm here to meet!

Where? About 100 km north of Ghanzi, next to the A3 to Maun.

– Toast Coetzer

NIGHT WATCH



STELLARIUM.ORG

Once in a (super) blue moon

We normally get one full moon a month, but in August 2023 there will be two: One on the 1st and the second on the 31st. When two full moons occur in the same calendar month, we call the second one a blue moon. This happens once every three years or so (well, every 2,72 years to be exact) and has given rise to the famous saying: "Once in a blue moon."

The definition of "blue moon" as we understand it today comes from a 1946 article in *Sky and Telescope* magazine, which attributed a different hue to the second moon. This was an error, but the name stuck. A blue moon is the same colour as any other full moon.

Another astronomical term that owes its origins to the media is "supermoon". The astronomer Richard Nolle coined the term in a 1970s book, to describe how the moon occasionally moves closer to the earth in its elliptical orbit, making it seem larger and brighter than normal. In the book, Nolle makes claims about certain catastrophic effects of a supermoon on the earth and its inhabitants, but these claims are unfounded.

More than one supermoon can occur in a year: The blue moon of 31 August will technically be the closest full moon for 2023, but the full moons of 3 July, 1 August and 29 September also all qualify as supermoons.

– Willie Koorts



LEOPARD LOUNGE



CAPE LEOPARD TRUST

Time for a snack

Leopards are opportunistic, adaptable hunters. They're not fussy at all when it comes to food. Earlier in this column series, we saw that leopards worldwide consume more than 100 prey species: from rats and mice to something as big as a young eland. When times are tough, they'll even eat insects like beetles and crickets. In general, however, they prefer medium-sized prey of around 10–40 kg.

Research done by the Cape Leopard Trust in the Western Cape shows that leopards will take prey in proportion to what is most available in the habitat. In the Cederberg, 60% of their diet consists of dassie and klipspringer; in the Boland mountains, grysbok, klipspringer, dassie and porcupine make up 80% of their diet; and in the Little Karoo, smaller antelope like duiker and grey rhebok top the list, followed by larger antelope like kudu and eland. In the savannah biome, impala, bushbuck and warthog are popular.

Leopards have several adaptations to give them an advantage over their prey: They have an acute sense of hearing and forward-facing eyes for better depth perception while pouncing. Because they mainly hunt in darkness, their night vision is excellent and they have a white stripe underneath the eye that reflects light and enables them to hunt in the low illumination of the moon. The rosette pattern on a leopard's hide serves as fantastic camouflage – they can blend into their environment and move unseen in order to get close to prey.

When sprinting, leopards can reach speeds of 56–60 km/h – it sounds fast but it's actually slower than some other predators like cheetahs, lions and even hyenas, and also slower than many of their prey species. But pure speed is not the only tool in their hunting arsenal – leopards are masters of stealth. They stalk prey with that well-known "leopard crawl" action and pounce with enormous power.

Leopards also accelerate unbelievably quickly, reaching their top speed in only two or three strides. They are incredibly agile and can leap forward six metres and jump three metres into the air! And once they're within striking distance, they deliver an extremely powerful bite. Leopards have one of the strongest bites in the animal kingdom, which allows them to take down prey much bigger than they are.

Being solitary hunters, leopards can't easily protect their kills from other predators like hyenas, lions and even wild dogs. On the ground, that is. That's why they have thick skull bones, strong jaws and strong musculature around the shoulders and neck, all of which enables them to hoist their meal into a tree where none of their foes (except other leopards) can reach.

Interestingly, leopards in the Cape mountains don't often hoist prey. There aren't many trees large enough in their fynbos habitat, but they also have no need since they're the apex predators in the system and nothing else will dare steal their meals.

– Jeannie Hayward

If you see a leopard or signs of a leopard in the veld, like tracks and droppings, or if you see any threats to leopards like snares and traps, report them on the Leopard Data Portal: app.capeleopard.org.za. Queries can be sent to clt@capeleopard.org.za



**SAFARI
OUTDOOR**

Explore the Great Outdoors with us

Visit any **Safari Outdoor** and see our wide range of camping and outdoor equipment



PC000060
**Swarovski NL Pure
10x42 Binocular**



1440139
**ZEISS Terra ED
10x42 Binocular**



1580032
**Rogue Cooler
22L Canvas**



1590126
**Front Runner
Expander Chair**



GR00000771
**Stanley®
Classic
Trigger
Action
Mug**
470ml, Classic,
Various colors



GK000226
**Stanley® Classic
Vacuum Flask**
1.0L Classic green



1222736
**Victorinox Super
Tinker Multitool**



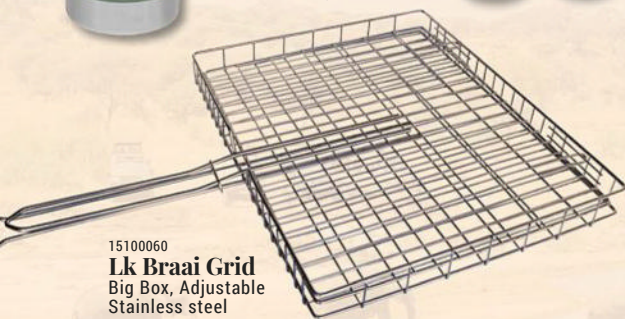
GR00000360
**Leatherman
Wave®+
Multitool**



FEN001
**Fenix Flashlight
C7 3000 Lumen**



620016
**Biltong Cutter
De Lux**
with stainless
steel bowl



15100060
Lk Braai Grid
Big Box, Adjustable
Stainless steel



9781775846
**Sasol Birds
of Southern
Africa**
5th Edition



Tabard products:
Aerosol spray (150g) Lotion (150ml)
Citronella candle (240g)

PRETORIA
086 122 2269

STELLENBOSCH
086 111 4330

JOHANNESBURG
086 114 3545

EAST RAND
086 100 0071

WEST RAND
086 111 4324

NELSPRUIT
013 813 5500

Follow us on social media



website www.so.co.za

VIEW FROM HERE

Ammie and Scott Pringle

In April 2017, **Scott** and **Ammie Pringle** and their kids started an on-and-off walking journey from the Winterberg near their farm in the Eastern Cape to the summit of Table Mountain. We caught up with them halfway.



Whose idea was it to walk from the Winterberg to Table Mountain?

Scott: The catalyst was a two-week motorcycle tour in and around Namibia that I did in 2016 with Ammie's cousin and a friend of his who'd ridden their bikes through Africa from London. I met up with them for the last leg of their journey. Long story short, the whole adventure absolutely rattled me – physically, emotionally and mentally. It affected me so much that I wanted to do something exceptional, or rather, something different, that could include Ammie and the kids.

The idea evolved and here we are. I wouldn't call what we're doing a "camino", but it's similar in spirit.

How does it work?

Scott: We've walked a total of 25 days so far, in which we've covered approximately 400 km.

Ammie: We have to plan our walking trips around the kids' school holidays, which is getting trickier now that they're older. We also can't be away from the farm for too long, so we walk as far as time allows, then make a note of where we stopped so we can pick up from that precise location again in the future.

Scott: We have an idea of where we want to go, but we also change plans along the way. Often, locals will know of great back roads we can walk and places where we can stay over.

Ammie: Because Scott is the one who is determined to walk the entire distance on foot, I normally drive the backup vehicle with the cooler boxes and the first aid kit. I want to know that I can get us to the hospital if there's a medical emergency!

Where do you stay?

Ammie: When we were closer to home, we'd often just make day trips to go and walk, but now that we're further away from our turf, we find farm stays, guesthouses or campsites.

Scott: We have to plan our routes around where

we can sleep. Unfortunately South Africa is not yet geared towards wild camping, but there are plenty of great places to stay that we'd be happy to share with other families looking to do a similar thing.

What have the kids' impressions been?

Scott: Since we started this thing, they've gone from tweens to proper teens.

Ammie: Our daughter Isabella is 18 and our son Bennett is turning 17. By sheer coincidence, the year we started this journey was the same year they started boarding in Gqeberha. It's wonderful because when they come home, this is the thing we do to spend quality time together and catch up on life without all the distractions.

Scott: We've had some special conversations with them on these walks over the years; I think it's something they'll look back on and appreciate more the older they get. They've been keen participants, I mean, we don't have to drag them out of bed or anything...

What has surprised you on the journey so far?

Scott: We started before Covid, but when the pandemic struck and all industry shut down, I was surprised by how nature seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. For the first time in more than a decade, I could see the Cockscomb Mountain from our farm – more than 180 km away as the crow flies.

Ammie: I was surprised by the places we discovered in our own backyard just by walking through the district on foot. I was born and bred in the Eastern Cape, so I didn't think there were many places I didn't know, but I was wrong. You don't need to go to Europe to discover something new, just get out in your own area and you'll be amazed by what you uncover.

Scott: About 90% of South Africa's roads are gravel. We tend to stick to the gravel roads – there's magic to be found along those detours.

Where are you walking next?

Scott: We skipped a portion of the Baviaanskloof because we couldn't find a way to access it from the north. We've since met a farmer who told us about an old ox-wagon road we didn't know about that will lead us to Patensie. It will be a few nights of wild camping, which we're excited for, but we're waiting for a time when the kids can join us.

Ammie: Even if we skip parts, we always connect the dots later.

What advice do you have for families who want to do something similar?

Scott: You don't need a massive budget, you just need a vehicle with decent ground clearance that can handle the gravel, some good takkies and a basic camping kit.

Be quite strict with yourself, otherwise it's easy to bend the rules and drive chunks of the way. We always said that I would be the main "walker", with Ammie and the kids taking turns to drive or walk with me.

Ammie: Have a goal, whether it's a distance or a destination. Our goal is to get to the summit of Table Mountain – hopefully before we become grandparents! But the intervals between the walks don't matter, as long as you pick up where you left off last time.

Scott: Set a comfortable pace, between 12 km and 25 km a day. Your pace is determined by the walker, not the vehicle. We also had a "rule sheet" which everyone in the family contributed to. For example, Ammie doesn't camp in winter! This is to ensure that it remains fun for everyone.

Ammie: Enjoy the small moments. We splurge on quality coffee and really look forward to lunch breaks where we can boil a kettle next to the road and relax with a boerie roll. These moments are always a highlight for me when I look back.

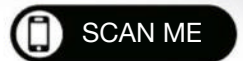
Follow the Pringles' journey on Ammie's Facebook page: "Ammie Vorster Pringle".

CASIO®



Casiotone

Make Music, Anytime, Anywhere



CT-S200 BK/RD/WE

- Rich collection of 400 built-in tones
- 77 built-in rhythms, with auto accompaniment feature
- Song bank including 60 standard songs
- Metronome function to help with lessons
- 61 Keys • Touch response
- 48 polyphony
- Dance music mode and voices
- Dedicated case with stylish rolltop design
- MIDI recorder: Record and playback your performances

RSP: R4,499

CDP-S110BK

- Scaled Hammer Action Keyboard II • 88 Keys
- 10 Tones • Touch Response • Reverb 4
- Chorus 4 • Chordana Play for Piano ver.2.4

Included Accessories:

Free stand worth R2,999 (CS-46P),
Pedal (SP-3), Music Stand,
AC Adaptor (AD-A12150LW)

RSP: R12,999

Chordana Play
App Available at:



New World

takealot.com

fastrak

plugged into technology

MARSHALL MUSIC

SBR

PRO SOUND



BOTHNERS

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS & EQUIPMENT SINCE 1969
www.bothners.co.za



James Ralph (PTY) Ltd +27 11 314 8888

SPECIFICATIONS AND PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. WHILE STOCKS LAST.



On track

What's it like to track armed poachers through the bush in the middle of the night? We spoke to **Anke Kruger de Rosner** of K9 Conservation in Hoedspruit about the important work she and her dogs are doing.

WORDS ANNEMARIE VAN DER WALT

PICTURES MAGDA ELOFF

First you notice her big smile, then the handgun strapped to her hip... You realise that she's already sized you up: She knows how tall you are, the colour of your hair and eyes, what you're wearing, the pattern your shoe soles leave on the ground... If she misses anything, the friendly dog sniffing around your feet will alert her to it with its body language.

Anke Kruger de Rosner ducks under the branches of an acacia tree as she approaches. It's been a wet summer and everything is overgrown. It's always hot here in the far north of the country, and not just when it comes to the climate: Hoedspruit and surrounds are also a poaching hot spot.

This is exactly where Anke likes to be: In the heat of battle. "Maybe I listened to too many of my dad's war stories," she says.

Jock is a dog of indeterminate breed. Anke describes how she and two friends saw a car hit a dog on the N4 near Witbank. The dog died but her pup survived and hid in a culvert next to the road. Anke was the one who eventually coaxed it out, thereby ending the debate about which of the three rescuers would get to keep it. It was July 2017 and little did she know that the six-week-old pup

would steer her in a new direction.

Anke was born and raised in Pretoria and would often spend weekends and holidays on a friend's farm. It was there that she fell in love with the bushveld. She moved to Hoedspruit soon after she finished matric. "I have no idea why I chose Hoedspruit – I think I was acting on instinct," she says.

When she rescued Jock, she had just started her first job as a ranger after completing her training at the Eco Ranger Academy in town. And she'd just had her first taste of an industry where new rangers and guides often have to survive on very little money and endure conditions that border on exploitation. Still, it was the only job she wanted to do.

With Jock under her arm, Anke took the decision she'd been wrestling with for months: She had to find a way to distinguish herself in a work environment that was largely testosterone-driven, and also create a space where she could use a more intuitive approach.

She had already met Conraad "Con" de Rosner by then – he founded K9 Conservation in 2011. His business offers several services in the game industry, including the detection of rhino horn, ammunition, weapons and snares; tracking wounded animals; assisting with game capture; and finding scat for scientific research purposes.

Conraad and his first working dog, Zingela, were the pair responsible for recapturing the escaped tiger Panjo in Mpumalanga in 2010. This feel-good story caught the attention of a conservation organisation in India – they contacted K9 years later for help and Anke took two Weimaraners and two Belgian shepherds over to help fight the poaching of tigers and leopards.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Back in 2017, Anke decided to change course. She joined K9 Conservation as an anti-poaching field ranger and was soon promoted to train dogs and their handlers. She and Conraad got married in December 2022, under an ancient baobab on the slopes of the Drakensberg. Her wedding gift to him was a dog, of course...

K9 Conservation deploys their rangers and trained dogs to several clients, including private game farms and big reserves covering about 200 000 ha in total.

"One of our clients hasn't lost a rhino to poaching in seven years. But we keep quiet about it – let sleeping poachers lie," she says.

Jock is Anke's shadow and is slowly finding his feet as a working dog. "Every dog has its strong points," she says. "You need to get to know the dog – see what it likes and what it doesn't like, and work with the animal not against it."



Family portrait: Conraad and Anke with Nsimbi, Roo and Kalandar.

A group of trackers from the Eco-Training facility in Hoedspruit are here to be coached by Anke. The dogs are playful, but their demeanour changes as soon as their handlers put on their harnesses. They go into work mode, listening intently to the orders given by their handler.

Anke explains there are three areas the dogs can work in and they sometimes overlap. Conservation dogs, mostly Weimaraners and German shorthair pointers, are good at tracking and detecting ivory and rhino horn. Patrol dogs, mostly German and Belgian shepherds, are used to track and apprehend human suspects and find firearms and ammunition. Hounds are used for cold-scent tracking, where the tracks are older than eight hours.

Jock – probably a Staffie mix – was smuggled up to Conraad a moment ago, but now he's pulled on a bite sleeve and it's a whole different story. Conraad is the target and that's all Jock is focused on. Anke has to lean back to control the dog while Conraad takes up his position on the other side of the clearing. She unleashes Jock and he streaks across the field, clamps down on the bite sleeve and refuses to let go until Anke gives the order. Jock only calms down when Conraad puts the bite sleeve away, but he's still zoned in on Anke, waiting for even the faintest order to attack again.

Anke and Conraad sometimes have as many as 12 dogs. They're not kept in kennels except under specific circumstances for short periods of time; mostly they hang out with the couple on their farm near Hoedspruit.

"We farm on a small scale with the aim of being self-sufficient," Anke says. "In addition to the dogs, we also have

two horses and a donkey. Conraad looks away for a second and I try to smuggle another animal or project through the gate! But he's actually just as bad..."

On the face of it, it seems like a tranquil existence, but a call can come in at any moment – sometimes poachers have to be tracked in the middle of the night.

"If you ever want to *really* feel alive, go tracking in the dark in lion country," she says. "Luckily there's no time to be scared – you operate on pure adrenaline."

The anti-poaching effort is a low-level war waged every day. But there are victories: Syndicates are infiltrated; rhino poachers are stopped before they can enter game reserves; and pangolins are saved after they've been captured.

Poachers also use dogs as weapons. "The poacher dogs are mostly Africanis and they have a very tough life," says Anke. "Starvation is part of their training and they can wreak havoc on game because they hunt in packs."

Two of these dogs defected to K9 Conservation. The first was Yule, a young greyhound, but he had an underlying medical condition and now rests in the dog cemetery under the bushwillows. Nsimbi, an emaciated Africanis, was the second and more recent defector and has already made his mark as a conservation dog. His strong point is finding snares and bushmeat poachers.

"It makes sense, doesn't it? He's our little spy," Anke says.

It's getting late and two rangers and their dogs are waiting to report back. Anke says goodbye, her hand resting on Jock's head. Who knows what will happen in the Lowveld tonight?

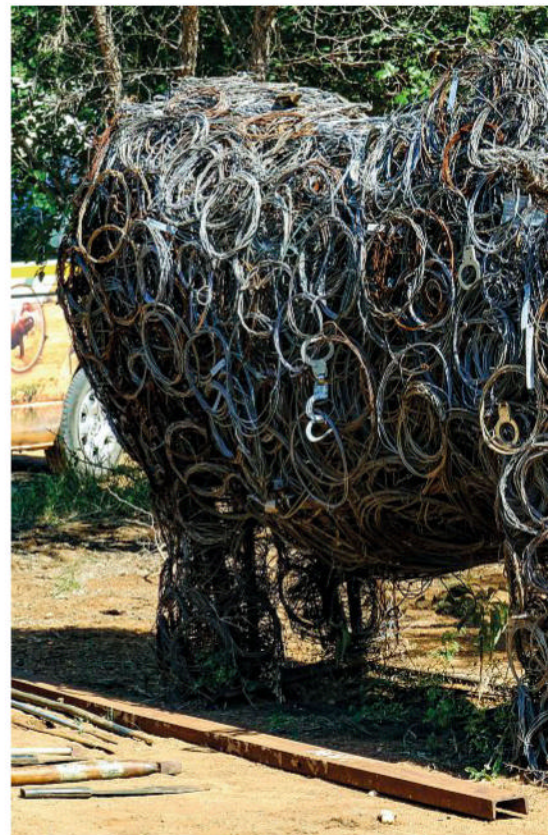
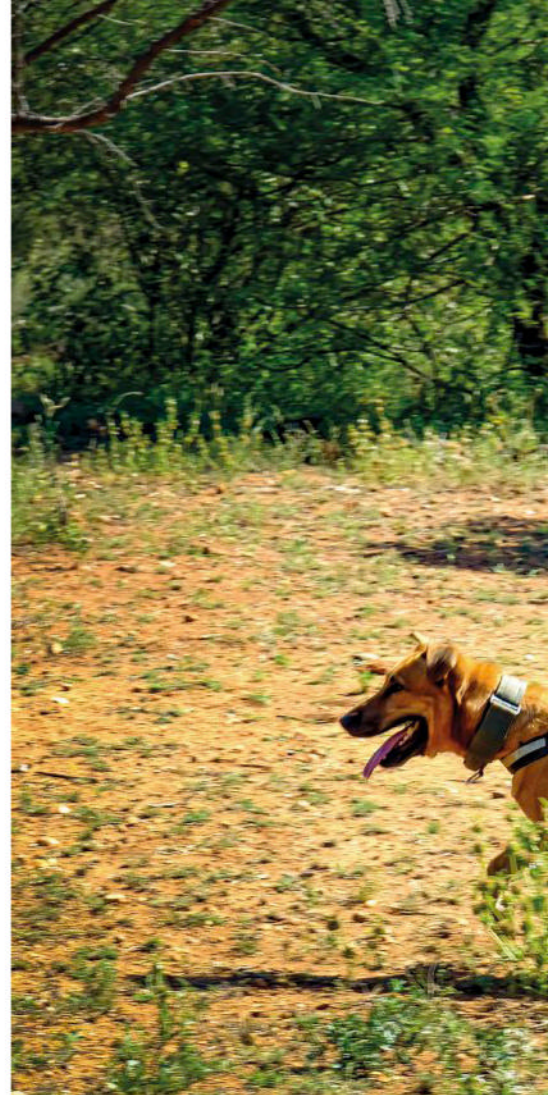
Turning snares into art

Anke and Conraad made this life-sized rhino using snares removed from the veld by K9 Conservation over the last six years. Axes and knobkerries confiscated from poachers have also been incorporated into the artwork. The sculpture is up for sale and the money will be used to train more dogs.

A bakkie-load of snares has also been donated to Down to the Wire (down2thewire.org) – they use the wire to make bracelets and other jewellery as a symbol of the fight against poaching.

Enough snares for another artwork have already been collected!

For more information, visit k9conservation.com





Clockwise from left: Anke takes her dog Jock through an exercise. Part of her job as an anti-poaching ranger is to train dogs and their handlers. Jock practises his attack skills on Conrad's bite sleeve.

ANKE IN SHORT

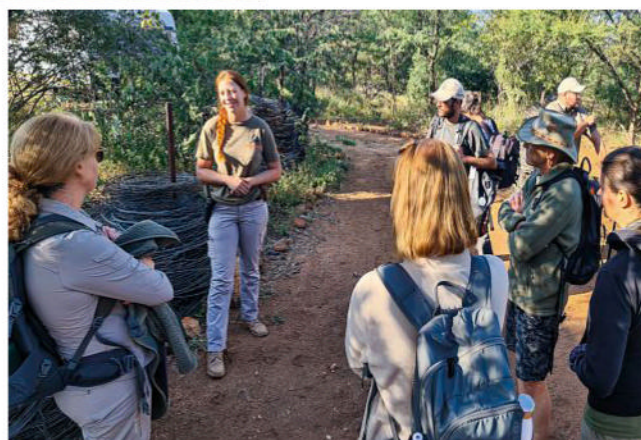
Other hobbies? Cleaning and baking. Not really! I like archery, fishing and working with horses. I'm also a certified snake handler – Jock finds the snakes and I catch and relocate them.

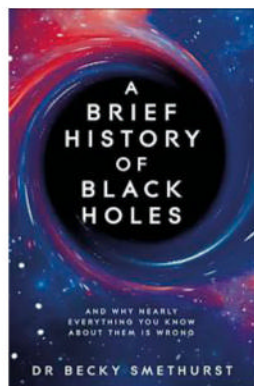
Favourite local place to hang out? Sleepers Restaurant is a Hoedspruit institution – it's always fun to run into other conservationists there.

Favourite holiday destination? The Karoo. The silence and the night sky make me feel human again.

What do you always pack for a trip? I'm a real doomsday prepper – a travel bag is too small for everything I need, so I kitted out my Land Rover! But the short answer is biltong.

Dream destination? Namibia – the landscapes are amazing.





A Brief History of Black Holes

by *Becky Smethurst*, Macmillan
About R350 in bookstores

Sometimes when you look up at the stars, you can't help feeling a bit queasy. What exactly is out there? The idea of black holes is especially terrifying, particularly if you imagine a deep gravitational well that draws

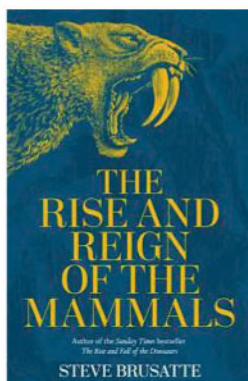
in everything that ventures too close...

No need to panic, says British astrophysicist Becky Smethurst, as she delves into the history of this subject. "... You can sleep soundly knowing that the Milky Way's black hole is merely shepherding the Solar System around the Milky Way [...] there is no doomsday scenario at the end of time where we fall into a black hole," she writes.

Phew!

Smethurst, who also runs a YouTube channel called Dr Becky and presents The Supermassive Podcast, makes space and science and all the accompanying concepts easy to grasp. She clearly had a lot of fun writing this book, which makes it fun to read. It's written in a conversational style, with simple analogies and references to popular culture. (Smethurst appears to be a Swiftie...)

Unlike a black hole, this book will quickly draw you in.



The Rise and Reign of the Mammals

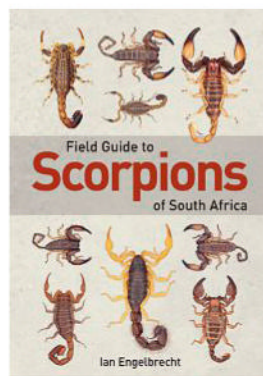
by *Steve Brusatte*, Picador
About R350 in bookstores

In this follow-up to his best-seller *The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs* (2018), Brusatte, who is a Professor of Palaeontology and Evolution at the University of Edinburgh, sets out to show that mammals can be just as interesting as dinosaurs. He goes

back to the origins of mammals some 325 million years ago and chronicles how they adapted over time and survived volcanic eruptions, ice ages, asteroids and mass extinctions.

Brusatte has a knack for bringing fossils, teeth and bones to life; and explaining complex scientific concepts in a way that won't make your brain hurt. He also tells the stories of the scientists whose discoveries are central to our understanding of the world, and there's a selection of black-and-white photos and illustrations so you can put a face to the mammal name.

It's an engrossing read, even if you have no more than a passing interest in sabre-toothed tigers, woolly mammoths and the origins of humankind.



Field Guide to Scorpions of South Africa

by *Ian Engelbrecht*, Struik Nature
R400 in bookstores

Big pincers, small pincers, thick tails, thin tails... If the sight of a scorpion is cause for excitement, this book is for you: It's the first comprehensive guide

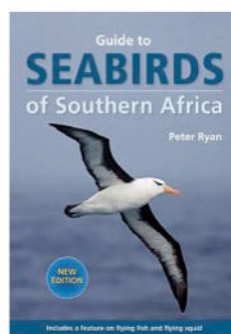
to the 108 scorpion species found in South Africa.

Each species is described thoroughly, with notes on appearance, distribution, habitat and behaviour. The entries cover the male and female of each species, as well as variations in different regions. For example, the brawny burrowing scorpion found in Springbok is a pale yellow, while the same species in Loeriesfontein is a dark brown.

A highlight is definitely the colour photographs: The scorpions were shot against a neutral background and the photos are incredibly detailed – look closely and you can see the fine hairs on some species' pincers!

The user-friendly features are another highlight: There are guides about how to pronounce each scientific name and a sliding scale to show how venomous the species in question is. The size of the species is also depicted relative to a human hand.

Furthermore, there are tips on how to avoid scorpion stings and how to go scorpion hunting. This guide will have you packing your UV torch for your next visit to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.



Guide to Seabirds of Southern Africa

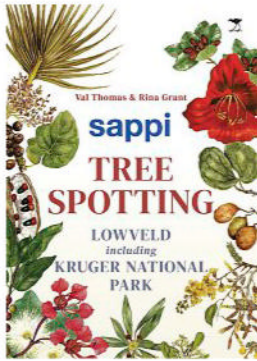
by *Peter Ryan*, Struik Nature
R270 in bookstores

Many birders have a soft spot for seabirds: They live in challenging habitats that aren't easy for humans to access, they have

evocative names (shearwater, storm petrel...), they're great flyers and they make spectacular dives for food. Best of all? To see them at sea you get to go on a pelagic adventure.

The second edition of this guide covers 142 seabird species found in southern Africa and its surrounding oceans and islands. Colour photos, distribution maps and identification pointers will make it easy for you to tell a shag from a tern.

The guide features nine new species and is the only local book to focus exclusively on seabirds. The new section on flying fish and flying squid might seem a little left field, but these species are often seen when birding in warmer waters. In the words of the author, they'll "give birders something to look for in the long lean spells between bird sightings in the tropics".



Sappi Tree Spotting: Lowveld including Kruger National Park

by Val Thomas & Rina Grant,
Jacana Media
R350 in bookstores

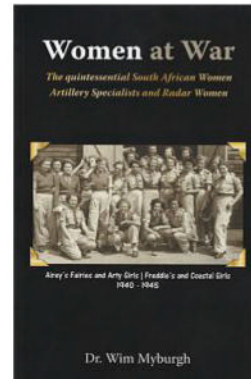
Sappi's beautiful *Tree Spotting* series about the trees of southern Africa is currently being updated. The volume on the Lowveld and Kruger National Park is already available and new editions on the Highveld and Drakensberg; Bushveld, Pilanesberg and Magaliesberg; KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape; and the greater Cape region will be published later this year.

The introduction shows you how to evaluate a tree's defining characteristics: What is the shape of the trunk and the leaves? What does the canopy look like? Does it bear single flowers or clusters? Fruit, pods or winged seeds?

The entry on each species consists of its primary characteristics, colour photos and illustrations, its name in several local languages, and an explanation of the botanical name. This is followed by easy-to-understand tables and line drawings that indicate in which ecozone the tree grows, how tall and dense it becomes, and what its seasonal behaviour is. It also describes where in a landscape the tree is usually found: low-lying brackish soil, riverbeds, rocky outcrops...

It's a concise reference book that will make you look at the veld with new eyes.

– Sophia van Taak



Women at War: The quintessential South African Women Artillery Specialists and Radar Women

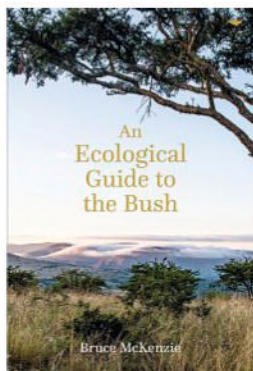
by Wim Myburgh, self-published
R265 (plus R100 postage);
order by sending an e-mail
to doreen@compueasy.net

Women's contributions during conflicts are often overlooked in favour of manly tales of heroics and tragedies at the front. With *Women at War*, industrial psychologist and amateur historian Wim Myburgh shines a light on the ordinary South African women who were called to active service during World War II.

These young women defended the South African coastline by operating gun batteries and radar stations from Saldanha Bay to Durban. Allied ships were threatened by submarines and battleships during the war – 155 ships were sunk in South African waters between 1939 and 1945.

Myburgh discusses the Artillery Specialists of the Women Auxiliary Army Service (ASWAAS) as well as the Special Signal Services (SSS). While he looks at the recruitment and training processes, he mainly focuses on the personal experiences of the women – there are several short profiles about officers commanding and captains, gun layers and radar operators, among others. He also includes funny anecdotes, photographs from the era, newspaper clippings and cartoons.

It's a fascinating read if you're interested in South African history, and a good starting point if you'd like to know more about the subject.



An Ecological Guide to the Bush

by Bruce McKenzie, Jacana Media
R235 in bookstores

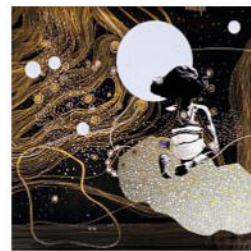
Do you ever wonder how everything in the bushveld fits together? Conservationist and academic Bruce McKenzie will explain. He focuses on how energy flows through the

ecosystem, from the sun to the leaves of trees and grasses, which in turn supplies energy to herbivores, their predators and the rest of the food chain.

The book doesn't offer a species-by-species rundown of what you'll find in a game reserve, it's more of an overview of how mammals, birds, reptiles and insects function in an ecosystem and how they advance the flow of energy. McKenzie explains why animals have certain diets and nutritional requirements, why they're certain shapes and sizes, and why some need more rest than others.

The book is aimed at the layman, but there's an academic slant that makes it more suitable for those interested in bushveld management and conservation.

ROAD MUSIC



Ngiwu Shwabada

by Sibusile Xaba
€8 from bandcamp.com

The jazzy guitar picking on "Intro" lulls you into a false sense of "Oh, it's going to be like this..." That is, until Sibusile Xaba launches into song about a minute into the next track, "Eihle". You'll hope the road has a decent verge because you might inadvertently jerk the steering wheel!

There's something arresting and unsettling about his voice, kind of what it might have sounded like the first time you heard Bob Dylan as a youngster. (Only if Bob was a Zulu and steeped in the traditions of mbaqanga.) Xaba's voice is like smoke from a campfire, searching through the foliage towards the sunlight. And when it hits those sunny shafts, the songs connect the dusty here and now with the spiritual world of the ancestors, to whom Xaba dedicates his record.

They're beautiful, transcendental songs that make me long to hold my ear to the trunk of a baobab.

– Toast Coetzer



Holidays on the road(side)

Car troubles are as much a part of travelling as Ultra Cities, Wimpy coffee and fighting over who chooses the music, says **Liesl de Beer**.

ILLUSTRATION **NICOLENE LOUW**

It's such a familiar scene: a red triangle, a family huddled next to their broken-down vehicle, someone struggling with the jack... The family car, which has been as reliable as a head boy all year long, suddenly acts like that same head boy at Plett rage...

We lived in Rustenburg when I was growing up, and later in Meyerton, and from there we'd do our annual trip to far-off destinations. We had a few

monumental break-downs over the years and the family still talks about them at get-togethers. When did we break down where? Was it in the green Kombi or the blue one?

I'm one of six children. As our family grew, my parents had to swap their Ford Anglia for a green Volkswagen Kombi, with fabric curtains and all. My father encouraged our nomadic inclinations even further by building a trailer on his own. He named it Oskar.

In 1974, we set off on a tour of what was then still South West Africa. Oskar had completed one or two long-distance trips, but the corrugated road from Henties Bay to the interior was his last – he literally stripped his *moere* (his nuts).

There we were, stuck in the middle of the desert with a broken trailer and a freezer full of fish. The Burgers, who'd camped on the coast with us, eventually caught up. Oom Jan and my dad managed to get the freezer and the

remnants of Oskar onto the back of the Burgers' Bedford truck.

In an effort to keep us kids busy, my mom popped a cassette into the player and gave us ballet classes. Our dance was captured on 8mm film: Tchaikovsky floating over the desert plains and us copying my mom's every move. I don't remember much else about that day and whether the fish stayed frozen, but our pelican-like Swan Lake performance on that deserted salt road will stay with me forever.

A year or two later, we were travelling between Askham and Van Zylsrus in the Kalahari. We got a flat tyre and changed the wheel to the Marie biscuit spare, only for that wheel to be chewed up by the Van Zylsrus road, which was infamous at the time. Stuck again.

Kids don't always realise the gravity of a situation – we saw it as an opportunity to play in the sand. We got to work building kraals, using sticks and stones as cattle and sheep, farming our imaginary farms while my dad sat with his head in his hands trying to come up with a plan. In the meantime, my sister Alta, the creative one in the family, quietly built her own uMgungundlovu. Dingane would have been jealous – it looked exactly like the illustration in her history textbook. After a while we all deserted our farms to join her. But you can only whittle assegaais from matchsticks for so long before you get bored.

That particular stretch of Kalahari road is quiet; help came by as rarely as rain. We waited and waited. My mom thought up a name for that place: "Papwiel". In those years, child labour still had educational value: She made us collect stones, which we used to write out "Papwiel" in big letters on the side of the road. (A good thing there were six of us...)

Finally, my dad managed to wave down a vehicle and got a lift to Askham. He bought the necessary things to fix the wheel and got another lift back. uMgungundlovu and Papwiel were left forgotten in a cloud of dust.

That particular stretch
of Kalahari road is
quiet; help came by
as rarely as rain.
We waited and waited.
My mom thought up
a name for that
place: "Papwiel".

Then there was the year of the donkey cart. We were somewhere in northern Namibia and had overestimated the Kombi's abilities. (Still the green one.) While stuck in a dry riverbed, a family on a donkey cart approached from behind. They stopped to help us – even the tannie got off the cart to put her weight behind the Kombi. We dug and pushed, but in the end we had to use the donkeys to pull the vehicle out.

Afterwards, us kids got to take the donkey cart for a spin. We gave potatoes, onions and pumpkin to the family to show our gratitude, then we said goodbye and went our separate ways. I watched the kids on the donkey cart with envy – they seemed to live the ideal life.

A record tyre harvest was recorded in the December holiday of 1995. My brother-in-law Gerhard and the rest of the family drove in convoy from Etosha to Torra Bay on the Skeleton Coast. We were in our blue Kombi now, towing a real, showroom-bought Venter trailer. But before we could taste the sea salt in the air, we had to change five flat tyres! Once on the Venter trailer and the rest on Gerhard's Isuzu bakkie. Both his spares were damaged. The first day was

spent mending them instead of fishing.

It was always reassuring if your car broke down in Gerhard's vicinity, because he could make anything run again. You could drive hundreds of kilometres on his home-made plans. Gerhard was the only person who knew all our vehicles' moods. We would pull up to his house and he would greet by saying something like "What's wrong with your water pump?" or "Lots of dust in the filter, hey?" And before you departed again, he'd have sorted out the problem and given your car a second lease on life.

Even when you plan a holiday down to the last detail, there's still a chance of car trouble. I don't know anyone who *hasn't* got a story. Often you can make a plan, but just as often you have to rely on the kindness of strangers. There's an unspoken brotherhood among long-distance drivers in times of trouble. When you see that red triangle, you slow down on that lonely dust road to check in on the family. They often tell you before you can even ask: The diesel tank has sprung a leak, or it's the clutch plate, or they have a flat tyre and the jack is not working...

You stop and you do what you can to help because tomorrow it might be you who's stuck in the middle of nowhere without a spare fan belt. Sometimes you'll run into your good Samaritan again at the border post and you'll pick up where you left off while waiting to get your passports stamped. Or maybe you'll meet again in a campsite on the coast 500 km further and you'll have a beer together.

You can't always recall these Samaritans' names and they later become the "oom and tannie from Warmbad" or "the hippie with the surfboard on the back of his bakkie" or "the guy with the Jack Russell". But what you do remember is their kindness and the (sometimes literal) extra mile that ordinary people are willing to walk for each other.

Namaqualand's secret canyon

It's flower season in Namaqualand, but instead of heading into the wide-open wilderness, come disappear into the Schaap River Canyon. Don't worry, you'll still see plenty of flowers!

WORDS & PICTURES **EVAN NAUDÉ**





When the hikers arrived at camp in the Schaap River Canyon on the third day, they were greeted by towering cliffs and a carpet of yellow *bobbejaankool* flowers.

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Parts of the Namaqua Flower Hike follow jeep tracks through the veld, but you'll spend plenty of time among the flowers. Take a closer look and you'll be able to identify orange marigolds, fields of purple vygies, delicate blue sporrie and the spiral leaves of *Moraea* bulbs.

Did you know that Namaqualand has its own canyon? The Schaap River Canyon is a distant cousin of the Fish River Canyon further north in Namibia and it's in full bloom in spring. I had no idea, but here I am, walking through it.

The directions to the start of the Namaqua Flower Hike, a five-day slackpacking trail, led me through Springbok to a turn-off 24 km north of town. I drove through the settlement of Bulletrap and followed a dirt road for 30 km to the farm Nigramoep – the canyon is on this farm.

I met the rest of the group around the dinner table. “Do you know Jopie Kotzé, owner of Springbok Lodge? His grandfather built this house many years ago,” said Suzette Louw. She lives on Nigramoep with her brother Marius Dirksen van Schalkwyk and his family.

“The farm dates from 1899 – the first owner was a man called Jac Kotzé, with two ‘e’s. Somewhere along the way, it changed to Kotzé.”

Nigramoep, which means “place of the black water” in Nama, was an important farmstead in the area in the early years. “It had two shops, its own mail bag, a filling station and a school,” said Suzette.

Marius and his wife Johanna bought the farm from the Kotzés about 30 years ago. The plan was always to establish a guest farm – the Nigramoep Slowliving Guest Farm. They don't farm at all and laid out the hiking trails on the property themselves.

The Dirksen van Schalkwyks are born and raised *Namakwalanders*; Suzette grew up in Bushmanland and lived in Stellenbosch before she also sought out this quiet corner of the country.

DAY 1 21 KM

Nigramoep to Bakkranskloof

It's busy at the farmstead. The winter cold still clings to the spring mornings and the hikers are dressed in puffer jackets, beanies, buffs and gloves. The group sets out, led by Suzette, Johanna and hiking guide Santie Gouws.

Almost immediately, we're surrounded by wildflowers of every hue. The warmer it gets, the more the flowers open. I find myself kneeling often to take photos of purple *sambreeltjies* and *viooltjies*, blue sporrie, *bokhorinkies*, *kantblommetjies* and yellow *pietsnot*. Johanna also points out spiny salad bush, *skaapbos*, Namaqua wild cabbage, Namaqua gasteria and common ice plant.

“This is wild rosemary,” she says, rubbing a fluffy white flowerhead between her fingers. “It's edible too – you can add it to your food.”

An hour or so later, a dirt road takes us past a deserted copper mine. Copper has been mined in this part of Namaqualand since the mid-1800s – there are also mines around Springbok, Okiep, Nababeep and Bulletrap. Nigramoep's mine closed down about 20 years ago.

We stop on a hill on the other side of the mine, with the Schaap River Canyon on one side and the Buffelrivier escarpment on the other. There's another viewpoint a little further where you can see Spektakel Pass snaking over the mountains on its way to Kleinsee.

From here, the trail descends to the bottom of Bakkranskloof. *Diklootmelkbos*, a type of euphorbia, fights for space to grow among the granite rocks.

“It's arid here but you'll still see flowers after enough rain,” says Suzette.

We follow the course of a dry riverbed to a cattle post, our campsite for the night. There's coffee in the marquee tent and a fire burns next to it. I pitch my tent and head over to the fire to warm my feet and gaze at the stars.

DAY 2 18 KM

Bakkranskloof to Schaap River Canyon

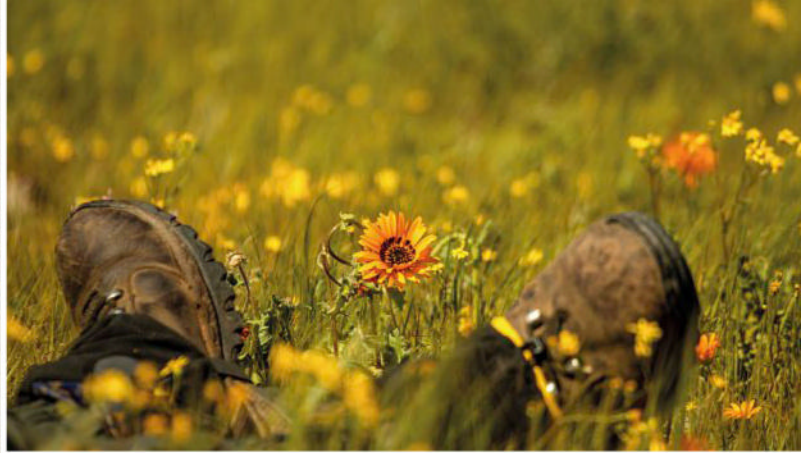
I pack up my camping gear and thaw in the sun with a cup of coffee. The group is keen to get going and soon we're following Suzette and Johanna like a line of toddlers.

The trail heads east along the R355 tar road between Springbok and Kleinsee. We pass another of Namaqualand's oldest copper mines: The Spektakel Mine opened in 1854 and by 1861 it was already producing more copper than the big mine at Okiep. A small town with a school and a missionary station sprung up, but five years later the output of the mine had diminished to such an extent that it basically closed down and the town fell to ruin. Mining operations were sporadic thereafter until the mine was permanently closed in 1901.

Past the mine, there's a general store next to the R355. It's the only place where you can buy a cooldrink and find a shady stoep this side of Springbok.

I suck on my water-bladder tube and look at the landscape around me. This is one of the last chances to take in the plains of Namaqualand before we're swallowed by the canyon.

On the other side of the store, Spektakel Pass slowly climbs the mountain, but we turn off the



Opposite page, clockwise from top left: From the lookout point near Leon se Staning, you can see how the Schaap River carves its way through Namaqualand. However, you'll only be able to fully appreciate the scale of the canyon once you're walking at the bottom. For two days you walk along the canyon floor before you climb out again on the other end.

road into the veld. After about an hour we reach a white farmhouse with a corrugated-iron roof and palm trees in the garden. Johanna Coetzee from Schaaprivier farm welcomes the hikers. "Come in! Would you like some tea?"

It's late afternoon by the time we say goodbye to Johanna – the low sun is orange against the mountain slopes as we walk deeper into the mouth of the canyon. It feels like we're entering the fortress of an unknown but feared king.

DAY 3 14 KM

Schaap River Canyon

Today, we're following the course of the Schaap River. The dirt roads and jeep tracks are gone – we bound over rock slabs like antelope, past pools and butter trees. It's not only your legs that will get a workout; your neck muscles strain as you gaze up at the cliffs. Baboons bark somewhere above us, but they're invisible among the rocks.

Around lunchtime we gather at a bend in the river. Some hikers play in a rock pool like otters; the rest have their lunch in the shade.

In the late afternoon, the group rests beneath a cliff and Suzette reads out a poem, her ode to the canyon: "*In eerbiedige verwondering word ek een met die skoonheid aan my vandag geleen.*" [In humble awe I become one with the beauty, which has been lent to me today.]

DAY 4 13 KM

Schaap River Canyon to T'Kau

It's still cool when I zip open my tent the next morning. The clifftops are ablaze, but the sunlight hasn't reached the canyon floor yet. The silence is broken by clinking pots in the camp kitchen.

After a breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon and fresh bread, we hike about 2 km to a ravine that branches off from the Schaap River Canyon – the much smaller Myn se Kloof.

It's a strenuous climb of about 5 km and you'll be tempted to put your head down and press on as fast as possible. Don't! The landscape is amazing – the cliffs reach to the sky and there are wildflowers and ferns on the ground. At the top, the trail climbs the escarpment to a cattle post called Leon se Staning.

"This plateau is called T'Kau – the Nama word for stone," says Suzette.

We catch our breath and look back into the Schaap River Canyon. No wonder so few people know about it – you can only really see it from up here. From the folds of the mountains to your left, the river you followed emerges and

passes below the tips of your hiking boots to disappear into the mountains on your right. Take a photo to show your loved ones at home – they might not believe you otherwise!

That night, I warm my feet at the campfire one last time. Some of the other hikers join me and we talk about all the wonderful places we've been. I know someday soon I'll share my Schaap River Canyon adventures with another group of people around another campfire somewhere.

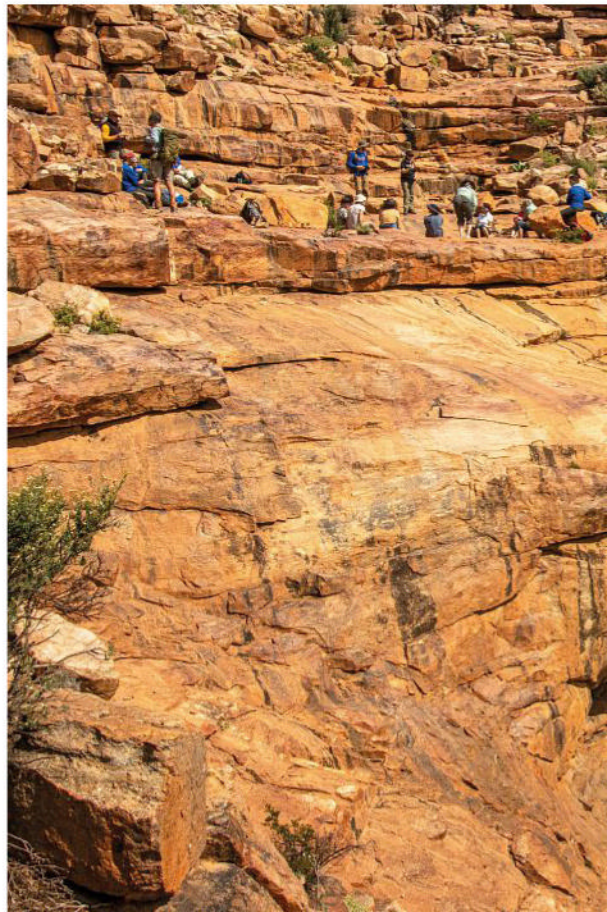
DAY 5 4 KM

T'Kau to Nigramoep

Today, we only have to hike 4 km along a dirt road to the farmstead, where each hiker is presented with a certificate and a glass of sparkling wine. We take photos, swap cellphone numbers and hug each other. It's 11 am and many of the hikers are departing for home. Others want to spend an extra night or two in Namaqualand.

Before I leave, I chat to Suzette. "How can you ever live in a city when you know a place like this exists?" I ask her.

She nods her head. "This place is in my blood," she says. "I love people, but I can't handle the confinement of a city. Here, I'm free."





HIKE



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

How does it work? It's a five-day hike of about 75 km in total. The daily distances vary from 4 km to 21 km. You only carry a daypack with water, snacks and your lunch pack. Your tent and luggage are transported to the next overnight spot. The hike is run by Live the Journey – their team builds a marquee tent at every campsite for breakfast and dinner. There are chemical toilets and hot showers.

How fit do I need to be? Fairly fit. You have to be comfortable with uneven terrain and steep climbs.

What's included? All accommodation (one night in a farmhouse and four nights in a campsite), meals, cutlery, camping chair, guides and the transport of your luggage.

What should I bring? Tent, mattress, bedding, daypack, lunchbox and all personal items like a sunhat, hiking poles, sunscreen, warm clothes, headlamp, medication and blister treatment for your feet. Travel insurance, including medical evacuation, is compulsory.

Dates in 2023: 23 – 28 August; 30 August – 4 September.

Cost: R12 900 per person.

Contact: 📞 021 863 6400; 🌐 livethejourney.co.za



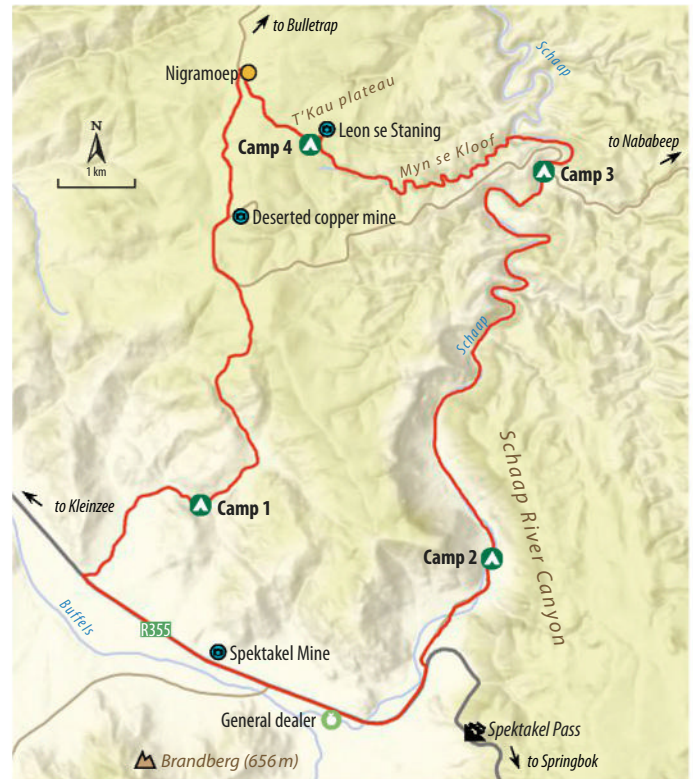
NIGRAMOEP SLOWLIVING GUEST FARM

There are three campsites near the farmstead, each with a private bathroom, and two wild camping sites in the Schaap River Canyon. The wild camping sites have no facilities and you have to bring everything you need and leave nothing behind afterwards (4x4 only).

The farm also has nine self-catering cottages that sleep 2–10 people. If you book beforehand, Johanna will prepare meals for you. Bring your mountain bike and running shoes because there are several routes. They also offer a five-day hiking trail in winter, as well as day hikes throughout the year. Some of these trails are great during the flower season, but you have to stay over to use them. No day visitors allowed.

Rates: Camping from R300 per night for two people (four people per stand). Self-catering cottage from R900 per night for two people.

Contact: 📞 082 687 3852 (WhatsApp); 🌐 nigramoep.co.za



IN OTHER WORDS

Erma Muller, Windhoek

"There's a lot of variety. The Schaap River Canyon is exceptionally beautiful! It's not just about the hike, but also about flowers, nature and people. We had a wonderful group – Live the Journey and Suzette and her team made us feel very special."



Heinie Portwig, Wellington

"The people of Namaqualand and their passion for their region were a highlight. And the scenery, of course."



Santie Gouws

Hiking guide, Live the Journey

"To prepare for this trail, you'll have to do a bit more than walk your dog around the block! Hike a few day trails and get your feet used to rocks and gravel. Your feet are your most important asset so wear quality shoes and look after your toes. Also bring a daypack with a hip belt so the weight won't be on your shoulders all day."

BOX



STACKABLE:
(STACKS ON NEW AND OLD AMMO BOX)



CLIP:
NEW DESIGN
IMPROVED STRONG CLIP
COMES WITH THUMB GRIP
(AVAILABLE SEPARATELY)



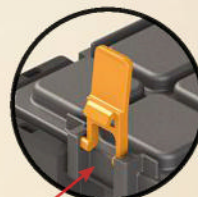
CLIP:
COMFORTABLE LOCK



SIDE:
COMFORTABLE
CARRY HANDLES



INSIDE SIZE:
46cm x 36cm x 21cm
APPROX. 35 LITRES



CLIP:
RECTANGULAR HOLE FOR
CLIP TO SNAP/LOCK INTO



CLIP:
EASY TO REPLACE



TOP:
SLOTS FOR CARGO STRAPS



LID:
COUNTERSUNK
LID DESIGN

WATER CHANNEL:
WATER ESCAPES THROUGH THE
DRAIN CHANNEL



CORNER:
REINFORCED DOUBLE WALL
CORNERS



FRONT:
V-SHAPED REINFORCED
FRONT AND BACK

ALSO AVAILABLE:



**AMMO BOX
DINNER SET:**
6 PERSON



**AMMO BOX
CONTAINER SET:**
8 PIECE



AMMO BOX POUCH:
FULL • $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ • $\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{3}$ • $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$

AMMO BOX BAG:
1 BOX, 2 BOX,
3 BOX, 4 BOX,
6 BOX, 8 BOX



ALSO AVAILABLE AT:
NB: PRICES WILL VARY BETWEEN STORES

CAMP CLIMB

Kloppers

OUTDOOR
WAREHOUSE

agra

Agn Land

LeisureWorld

AGRIMARK

Riley's Garage

VIEW OUR LIST OF AGENTS ON OUR WEBSITE

E-MAIL: info@tentco.co.za
TEL: +27 11 397 6451

PRICES, COLOURS, SPECIFICATIONS & STOCK - E&OE
TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME

Follow us on



Give Goegap a go

You've either never heard of Goegap Nature Reserve, or you know exactly where it is and you hope others will never find out about this accessible spot where it feels like you're the only person in Namaqualand!

WORDS & PICTURES **WILLEM VAN DER BERG**

Maybe people don't take Goegap seriously because it's so close to Springbok: The entrance gate is only 15 km south-east of town. Or maybe people think it's too small (150 km²) to have a real wilderness feel. Plus, it's in Namaqualand, and when people hear *that* name they only think of wildflowers. When it's not flower season, they drive on to better-known destinations like the Richtersveld and southern Namibia.

But Goegap's location is exactly what makes it special. The reserve is on the border of South Africa's winter and summer rainfall regions, with granite mountains and sandy flats in between that will remind you of Bushmanland. You can visit at any time of the year and you won't be bored.

Maxie Jonk has been the reserve manager for 18 years and she still gets excited when she talks about Goegap: "You can't compare it to any other reserve because you won't find this landscape anywhere else. I love all the high-lying areas on the 4x4 and hiking trails, where you can look out over everything."

The reserve was established after the Okiep Copper Mining Company donated 40 km² of land to the Provincial Administration of the Cape of Good Hope in the 1960s. There was a slime dam belonging to the Carolusberg Copper Mine on this land; you can still see it when you drive in.

When the reserve was proclaimed in 1966, it was named the Hester Malan Nature Reserve, after the wife of Nico Malan, then

Administrator of the Province of the Cape of Good Hope.

In 1990, the farm Goegap was added to the reserve and the name was changed: *Gab* is the Nama word for "waterhole", or "well"; *goe* was possibly derived from *tnoe*, a shelter made from rushes, or *khu*, which means thorn tree.

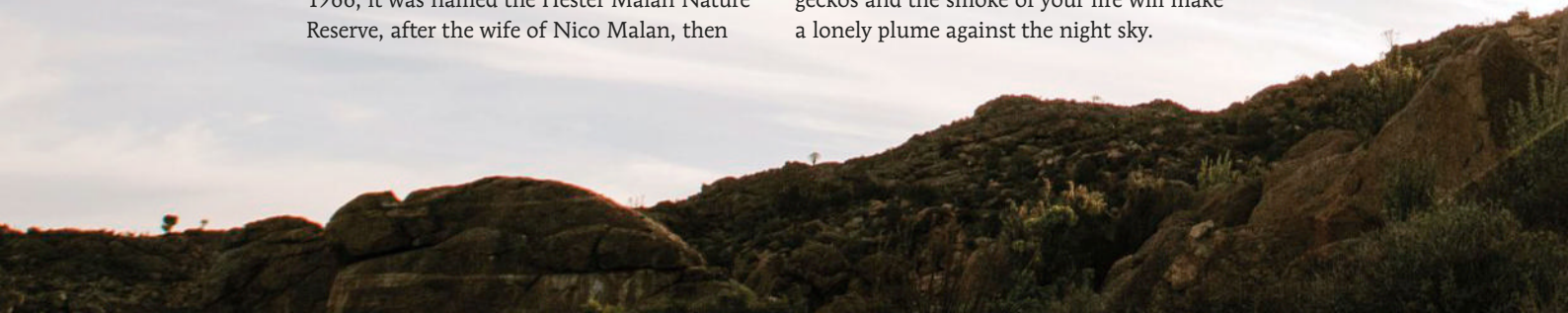
The Nama word for quiver tree is *gara* and many of them grow here, along with about 600 other plant species.

The reserve doesn't have a lot of game, but gemsbok, springbok, klipspringer and Hartmann's mountain zebra will offer some distraction. If you get lucky, you might see an aardvark or a honey badger. Or maybe a caracal. And keep your eyes peeled for birds like grey tit, short-toed rock-thrush, cinnamon-breasted warbler and rufous-eared warbler.

Look, I won't lie: Goegap is a special place during a good flower season. The plains are covered in lakes of daisies, *gansogies* and all kinds of vygies. On the rocky ridges, purple, red and orange wildflowers bloom among the quiver trees.

But in all other seasons and on all other days, Goegap is still a scenic place. The quiver trees are always present, as are the mountains, the plains and bat-eared foxes. When the wildflowers are scarce, so are the people. The trails are quiet and the views are so vast it feels like you're the very first person to see them.

Stay over: At sunset you'll hear barking geckos and the smoke of your fire will make a lonely plume against the night sky.





The chances of people ruining your landscape photos in Goegap are slim. Outside of flower season there aren't many tourists around, but there *are* plenty of quiver trees – the most photogenic trees of all.

3 THINGS TO DO

1 Walk in the veld

There aren't any big predators in Goegap so you can walk in safety. Two marked day hikes wind through the mountains. The Ian Meyer Trail has three options – 5 km, 6 km or 7,5 km. All three start and end at the campsite and take you into the western corner of the reserve. You'll hike over and past impressive granite rocks, and you can rest under quiver trees.

The Agterlos Trail starts at the Hester Malan Succulent Garden: You can hike 4 km or 6 km.

Both trails have fairly steep climbs, so don't let the short distances deceive you. The views over the wide sand flats are worth the slog.

Goegap recently opened a new overnight hike called the Hartmann's T-Kou Trail. You hike about 22 km over two days and overnight in the Witsand bush camp (see p 48) deep in the mountains on the eastern side of the reserve. A minimum of three hikers and a maximum of eight are allowed. If you don't want to carry a heavy pack, you can ask for your luggage to be transported to the bush camp. It costs R430 per night for three hikers, plus R50 per extra person. There are plans to extend the trail to four days.

2 Explore on wheels

Sedans and camper vans are restricted to the 13 km tourist route. It's a scenic drive but it can get busy (especially during flower season) and you only see a small section of the reserve. There are 15 picnic sites en route, each with an awning and braai facilities.

On the three 4x4 circular routes – Witsandpas, Bloumyn and Klippas – you can escape everyone and everything. You'll get the same sense of breathing space that people travel to the Richtersveld to find.

The jeep tracks are not too rugged and should be doable in a vehicle with high ground clearance. A diff lock will be handy in places. You should be able to drive all three routes (20 km each) in a day.

Bicycles welcome! You can ride all the vehicle routes on your mountain bike.

3 Get to know the plants

The Hester Malan Succulent Garden, 5 km from the entrance gate, has an interesting collection of plants. Many are marked and footpaths will take you past names like *dolkvygie*, *dikstingelmalva*, *krapogies* and *krimpsiek*. You can also learn how to tell the difference between a standard quiver tree, a giant quiver tree and a maiden's quiver tree.



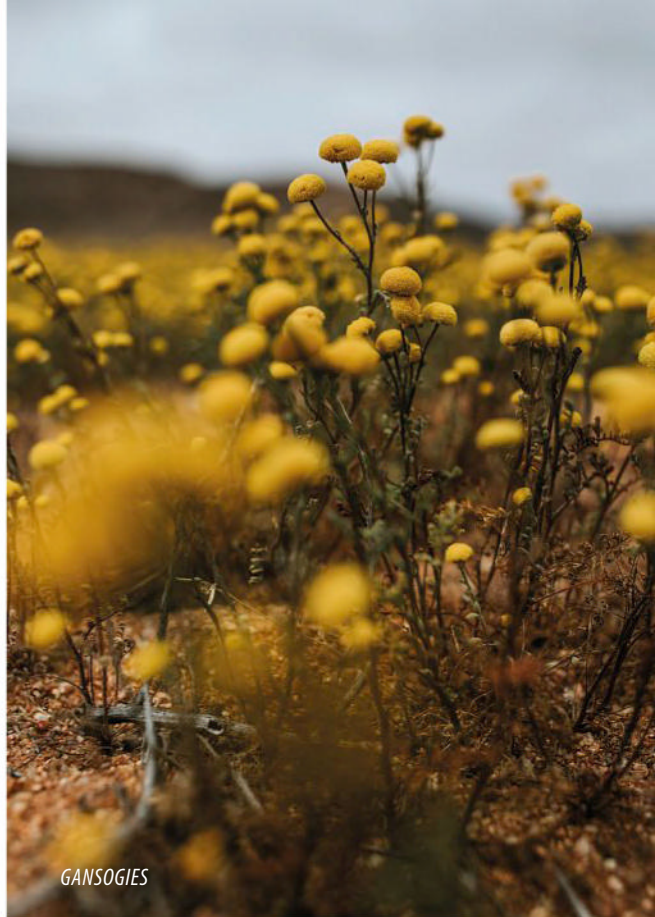
VIEW OF THE GOEGAP PLAINS FROM THE TOURIST ROUTE



HARTMANN'S MOUNTAIN ZEBRA, TOURIST ROUTE



NAMAQUALAND DAISIES



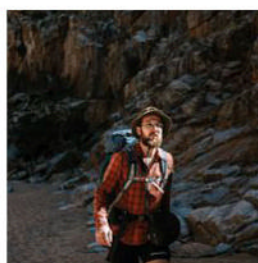
GANSOGIES



VYGIES, KLIPPAS 4X4 ROUTE



SELF-CATERING HOUSE



IN OTHER WORDS

Japie Kruger, Cape Town

"You can visit at any time of the year and Goegap will keep you busy for longer than you think. The day hikes are great but I'd like to come back and do the overnight trail."



Louise Aitken, Springbok

"For most people, Namaqualand only means flowers, but the veld is beautiful and interesting year-round. It's one of the best places to hike, ride your bike or drive your 4x4. We have quality mutton and the friendliest people."

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Gate times: 7.30 am to 4 pm. In August and September (flower season) the park is open until 6 pm. The gate is locked at night – if you're staying in the reserve, you can't quickly pop into town to buy a KFC burger.

Day visitors: R30 per adult; R18 per pensioner.

Flower season treats: A small kiosk is open during August and September, selling roosterkoek and cooldrinks.

Contact: ☎ 027 718 9906; ✉ goegapnr@gmail.com; "Goegap Nature Reserve" on Facebook

STAY HERE

You won't find the isolation you experience in the veld at the accommodation options: The chalets, campsite and bush huts are near the entrance gate. But when the gate closes at night, silence descends and there probably won't be many other guests (if any).

The **campsite** is surrounded by low hills so there's not much of a view – except of the bush huts and reception office. There are nine stands and some of them have awnings. The stands are fairly close together. There's no power, but the well-maintained communal bathroom has hot water.

Rates: R155 per night for two people, plus R50 per extra person (six people per stand).

The four **bush huts** are close to the campsite and share two communal bathrooms with hot water (no power). Each hut has four single beds, a sink and braai

facilities. Bring your own bedding and cutlery.

Rate: R365 per night.

The two **self-catering houses** (each sleeps six people) have the best location of all the accommodation options close to the gate. There's a koppie between them so you won't covet your neighbour's chops on the braai. Both have better views than the campsite.

Rates: R1 000 per night for two people, plus R100 per extra person.

Witsand bush camp (sleeps eight) is about 12 km from the entrance gate along the Klippas Trail – it's only accessible in a 4x4. It has two rondavels: In the one is an equipped kitchen and a bathroom with a gas geyser; the other one has four bedrooms, each with two single beds. Bedding can be supplied, but it's better to bring your own.

Rate: R380 per night for two people, plus R50 per extra person.

MADE IN
SOUTH AFRICA



IT'S YOUR WORLD FEEL AT HOME



CAMPER SERIES



ADVENTURE SERIES



XT SERIES



Shop online - Free delivery country wide

Visit our showroom or discover more online
www.falksontents.co.za
+27 87 265 8114

Falkson
tents & outdoor

Oribi to the Amphitheatre

From deep ravines and roaring rivers to green mountains with misty peaks – you'll see the most scenic parts of KZN on this 440 km route from the Oribi Gorge to the Amphitheatre in the Drakensberg. Drive it in two days or stretch it to four or five if you want to take it slow.

WORDS & PICTURES **TOAST COETZER**

From the rest camp at Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve, a short 1 km trail leads to Baboon viewpoint, where you look down towards the Umzimkulwane River. The ravine cut by the Umzimkulwane is only part of the roughly 30 km-long Oribi Gorge landscape – the Mzimkhulu River forms the rest of it.



Opposite page, clockwise from top left: The spire of the church at Kevelaer Mission just outside Donnybrook. If you require more thrills than a walk across the 80 m-long suspension bridge at Lake Eland Game Reserve can offer, don't worry: Sign up for their Zipline Tour, which takes you on different slides over 4,5 km along the side of the gorge. Once you leave the tar road behind in Bulwer, this glorious dirt road awaits, leading you through valleys, over gentle mountain passes and past forestry plantations and patches of indigenous forest. A bushbuck greets the early risers at Thendele, the main rest camp in the Royal Natal section of uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park.



PICNIC ALONG THE WAY

Although it's a public tar road and you can drive through Oribi Gorge for free, you have to pay a day visitors' fee of R40 per person if you want to braai or picnic here. (Pay at the park office in the rest camp.) The same goes if you want to do one of the day hikes: Hoopoe Falls (7 km), Mziki (9 km) or Nkonka (5 km). There are shorter routes, too, like the 1 km stroll to Baboon viewpoint and back.

DAY 1

Oribi Gorge to Kamberg (266 km)

The mist clears at sunrise and I walk the short distance from my hut in Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve to Baboon viewpoint, which overlooks the deep, vegetated kloof.

Oribi Gorge is a place where you can hike (it has a few short day trails), picnic next to the road, or sit quietly with your binoculars waiting for a Knysna turaco to flash its red wings in the canopy. From here, the Umzimkulwane River cuts east through the landscape for about 20 km before it joins up with the bigger Mzimkhulu River and flows into the Indian Ocean about 9 km further, at Port Shepstone.

Maybe you've spent your holiday on the KZN South Coast and it's now time to head back to Gauteng. There's only one problem – you want to stay longer! Then this route is exactly what you need because it skirts the highways and takes you north to the Drakensberg. Along the way, you'll drive through dramatic landscapes, cross a few rivers and witness how the scenery transforms as you climb higher and higher – from the sugar cane plantations of the South Coast to the misty cliffs of the Amphitheatre.

The route markers here can sometimes be confusing so I'll provide clear directions to make it easier to tour along. The route will follow tar roads for long stretches, but also dirt roads, which would be better to drive in a bakkie or an SUV in the rainy season.

Flask coffee and rusks later, I walk back to my hut and pack my bags in the Mahindra bakkie I'm using for this trip. First, I fill up my tank at the small Engen next to the Paddock co-op. I set my odometer to 0,0 km and start to measure my distances for the day.

I backtrack past the turn-off to the rest camp and follow the narrow tar road down into the gorge. Sometimes, trees arch their canopies right across the road.

Down in the gorge, I take a photo of the road crossing the Umzimkulwane River – it's 214 m above sea level, the lowest point on the route.

There's a picnic site with braai facilities and toilets on the other side of the bridge. (See the sidebar.)

Drive out the other side of the gorge and turn left at the T-junction to Lake Eland Game Reserve. This area is known as Oribi Flats: macadamia nuts and sugar cane are the main crops farmed here. At the 13 km mark, the Mac Valley Farm Stall is on your right. It welcomes you with a sign that says: "Happiness

is homemade." It's my kind of place. (See page 56.)

You're high up now, with views of the hills where corrugated-iron roofs glint in the sun. Sometimes I stop for cattle in the road or slow down for potholes. The game fence of Lake Eland is on the left and the vegetation gets denser as you descend into the valley, where you cross a river. Then the road gradually climbs back to the N2, where you turn right.

After the quiet dirt road, the N2 is suddenly busy. I turn right in Harding towards Umzimkhulu along a tar road that winds through sprawling settlements. The traffic includes everything from an Intercape bus to a man transporting a weed-eater on the back of his bicycle. Goats and potholes are abundant. I drive past the Mahobe mission church on the left. At the T-junction, I turn right onto the R56 to Umzimkhulu.

Villages gradually fade into Umzimkhulu itself, which has a mall, a KFC and a carwash called Chillax. After you've crossed the bridge over the Mzimkhulu River, look for a left turn to Creighton.

It's late summer and the road is muddy – I make slow progress past farms with names like Arcadia, Melrose Farm, Mount Hermon and Goodlands. I see macadamia nut trees, citrus, sometimes mielies.

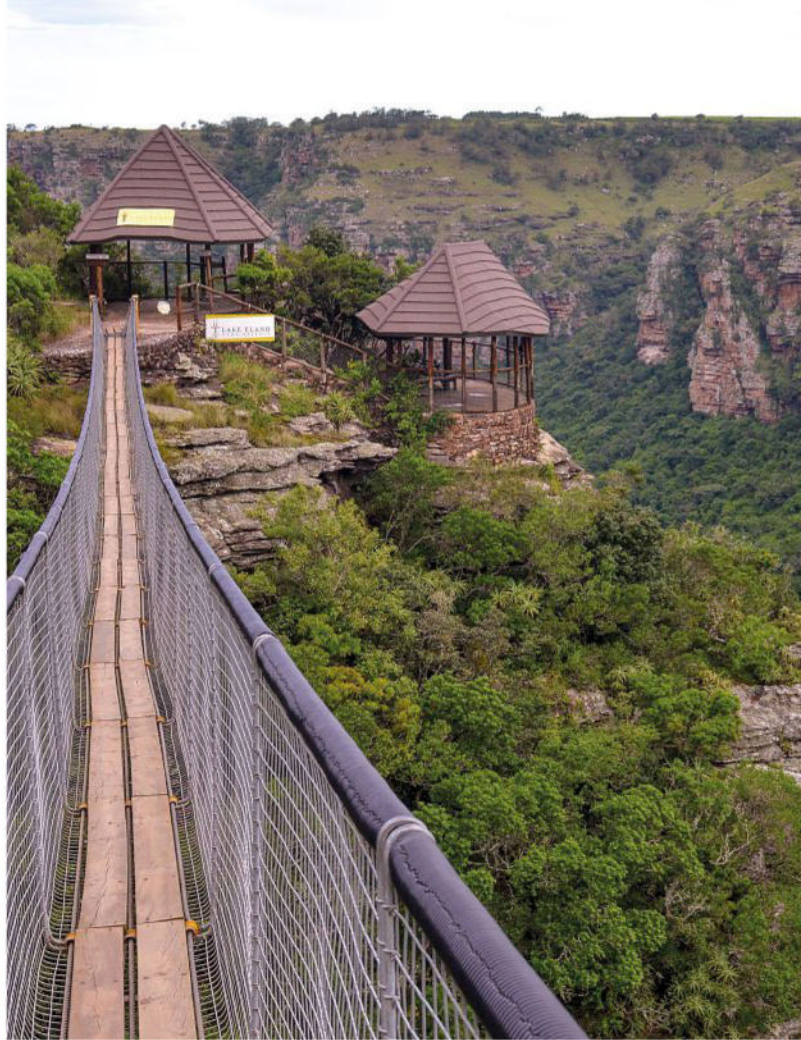
At Mount Hermon, the road leaves the Mzimkhulu Valley and climbs a shallow kloof. At 134 km there's a T-junction where I turn right towards Ixopo; and at 140 km I turn left to Donnybrook/Bulwer on the R612 tar road.

Near Donnybrook, the imposing Kevelaer Mission is on the right. The mission dates from 1888 – it's a Roman Catholic church that falls under the Diocese of Mariannhill, founded by the maverick Trappist missionary Abbot Franz Pfanner.

Follow the R612 to the T-junction and turn right on the R617 towards Bulwer. By now you're hungry and a sign advertising Nip Inn Pub & Grub will appear at just the right time. Order a beef pie with sauce, chips and salad for only R60.

Hunger sated, I drive through Bulwer and turn left at the Impendle sign. It's a dirt road again and a proper back road – I see two secretarybirds, a black-winged kite and a jackal buzzard. Roads like these put a smile on my face – what a privilege to drive!

There's a confusing fork in the road at the 189 km mark – keep right (it seems like you're going straight). The landscape varies



Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Guide Sicelo Mnikathi can accompany you to Game Pass Shelter in Kamberg if you want to see rock art. At Lake Eland Game Reserve you'll easily spot giraffe, blesbok and zebra. Oribi (after which Oribi Gorge is named), however, are rare and you'll be lucky to see one. Be careful when driving this route after heavy rain – some river crossings might be flooded.

A hoopoe, photographed at Mahai campsite in the Royal Natal section of uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park. This incredibly creative home (it looks like a spaceship!) can be seen in the village of Zwelisha near Woodstock Dam (GPS: S28.68224 E29.05681). Aloes grow in the cliffs along the short pass above Draycott.

Women sell beautiful grass-woven items at the turn-off to Thendele in Royal Natal. Large parts of this route are unfenced – take it easy as you'll often encounter domestic animals. Approaching the Lower Lotheni Road, you traverse a twisty pass with plenty of cabbage trees by the roadside.

from plantations to open grassland and indigenous forest. Past the bridge over the Mkhomazana River, you'll reach a tar road (209 km) where you turn right and cross the wide Umkomazi River.

At 215 km, I turn left at the sign for a hospital – it's tar for a kilometre then the road becomes potholed dirt. Concentrate around the 220 km mark – I accidentally turned left here when I shouldn't have. The road to the left is driven more often and that's what misleads you. You should stay on the smaller road that makes a sharp bend to the right over a narrow cement bridge. Basically, keep the Nzinga River on your right until you're through the town.

Soon you'll see a farm security camera next to the road – this is how you'll know you're on the right track. You'll pass farms named Brooklyn and Silverstream. You'll drive through a small pass where there are lots of cabbage trees, then you'll reach another T-junction at 232 km. Turn right.

This is the Lower Lotheni Road. You're in the Drakensberg now and the road follows the 1 600 m contour for a long time. It's a lovely drive. On a rainy day, it feels like you're somewhere in Scotland. The road goes past the entrance gate to the uMkhomazi section (235 km) of the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park.

Near the farm Wuthering Heights, the dirt road suddenly becomes tar again and 500 m further is the turn-off to Kamberg on the left. It's a dirt road to Kamberg to begin with, but when you cross the cattle grid at the park entrance it becomes tar for a single kilometre before you reach a T-junction at a farm called Riverside. Turn left to Kamberg here – there's no sign. This is where you're staying for the night.

DAY 2

Kamberg to the Amphitheatre (172 km)

It rained heavily during the night. When day breaks, I make coffee and sit on the stoep of my chalet. Kamberg is not in the flashy part of the Drakensberg and won't steal the spotlight from places like the Amphitheatre, but this is where you'll find Game Pass Shelter, one of the most famous rock art sites in South Africa. It's a three-hour hike there and back. Researchers consider these rock paintings to be like the Rosetta Stone – important breakthroughs have been made here that unlocked the interpretation of rock art.

It's the middle of the week and there are no other guests, but Sicelo Mnikathi comes to

check on me. I arrived after dark last night and the reception office was closed.

Back in my Mahindra, I reset my odometer to 0,0 km. First I drive back to the farm Riverside and continue straight along the dirt road, over the bridge across the Mooi River. Shortly thereafter, I reach a T-junction (10 km) and turn left towards Hlatikhulu.

Somewhere along the way I see about 10 Cape vultures circling in the sky, and I also have to drive almost 100 m through shallow but strong-flowing water where a river came down in spate after the rain. The road goes through several villages like KwaMankonjane and Ezidongeni. At the latter, I turn right (31 km) towards Draycott/Estcourt.

The settlements peter out on the other side of KwaDlamini and the landscape is open and bare, with the odd indigenous forest. The prominent freestanding mountain you see in front of you is iNtabamhlope (2 009 m).

I reach another drift in spate and have a good look around before I drive through in the 4x4 Mahindra. A few other drivers with smaller and lighter vehicles are parked on both sides of the drift, waiting for the water level to drop. Just past the 42 km mark is a T-junction at White Mountain Resort where you have to turn left towards Draycott.

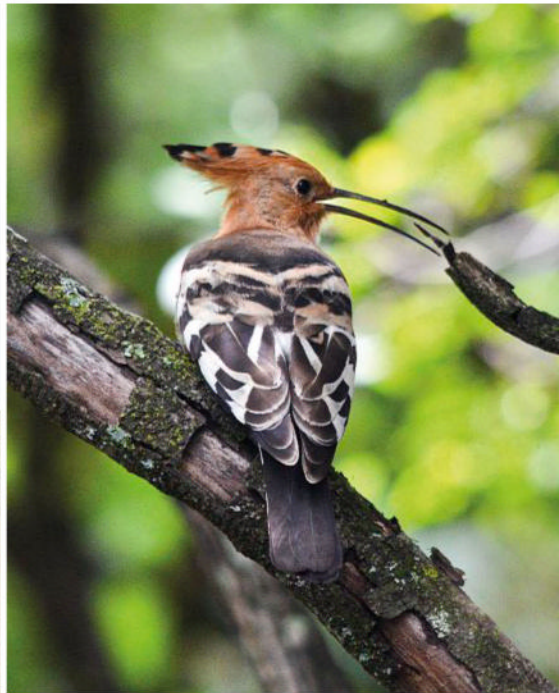
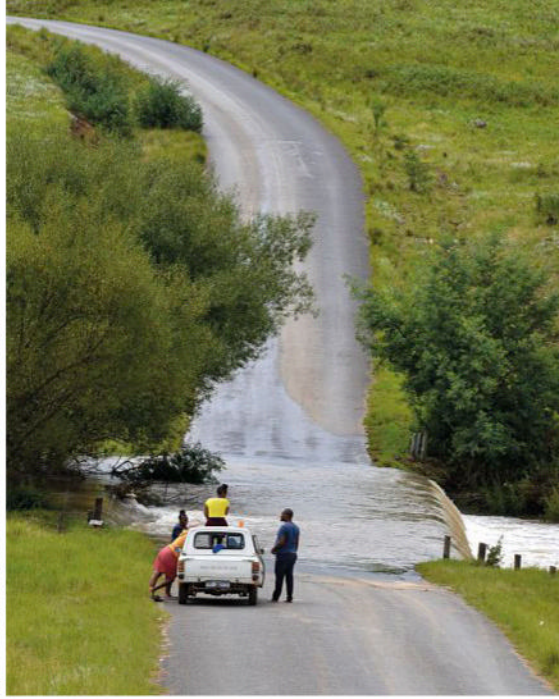
The road changes to dirt again – there were roadworks here during my visit. You drive past the ruins of old farmsteads and later through pine plantations. The area isn't as densely populated so there are more birds: I spot a white stork as still as a cricket umpire, a few southern bald ibis that make me think of bald monks, and a long-crested eagle perched on a telephone pole.

This is one of the most scenic sections of the route. The road follows a ridgeline at about 1 500 m above sea level and you get views to the west of the so-called "Little Berg". The Matterhorn (1 995 m) is one of the most prominent peaks; on a clear day you can also see Cathkin Peak (3 148 m) and Champagne Castle (3 377 m) deeper in the Drakensberg.

After you've driven along the ridge for a while, you descend a short tarred pass to a settlement on a plain around the old railway station of Draycott. When you reach the R74, turn left towards Bergville.

I pass land where people with surnames like Mostert and Muirhead farm with everything from mielies to dairy cows. In Bergville (114 km) I fill up at the Caltex – they also have a Maxi's if you haven't had a *slap tjiip* in a while.

From here, the road is easy to follow and



THE AMPHITHEATRE



all you have to decide is whether you want to travel to the Amphitheatre around the top of Woodstock Dam or around the bottom. I choose the bottom – the turn-off is on the left in Bergville.

This tar road cuts across the southern tip of the dam along the so-called Banana Bridge (it's curved like the fruit) and runs along the western side of the dam until you reach a T-junction – turn left towards the mountains. Soon after you've crossed the bridge over the Tugela River, you'll reach the entrance to Royal Natal National Park. Follow the signs to wherever you're sleeping tonight: Campers will head to Mahai, but I aim for Thendele rest camp (171 km).

You're in the heart of the Amphitheatre. See if you can spot the wispy stream of Tugela Falls pouring down the escarpment. Tomorrow you can drive back to Gauteng (it's about a four-hour drive to Johannesburg), but tonight you can fall asleep to the murmur of the river nearby.

Thanks to Mahindra South Africa for the loan of the Mahindra Pik-Up Karoo Dawn 4x4 for this trip.

mahindra.co.za

PIT STOP

Mac Valley Farm Stall

Beth Louw and Stephanie Dunston's farm stall is the perfect place to buy *padkos* for the day ahead. It's not a restaurant, but you can order tea, coffee and hot chocolate – or ice cream if it's a hot day. Buy a packet of Thornton filter coffee (R115) – it's roasted on a farm in the district – or a pack of Val's Own Nutty Rusks (R100), made from nuts grown in the area. Or buy 1 kg of macadamias (without the rusks) for R225. I gave in to my sweet tooth and bought macadamia brittle (R90).

They also sell second-hand books (*Snakes of Rhodesia*, anyone?), caps with funny slogans ("I'm just here for the sundowners"), fabric bags and odd antiques like a pair of vintage wooden crutches.

Where? Near the turn-off to Lake Eland.

Opening times: Monday to Friday from 9 am to 4.30 pm; Saturday and Sunday from 9 am to 5 pm.

Contact: 066 556 7191 (Thobeka)

Nip Inn Pub & Grub

Stop for lunch at Shane and Kieste Dixon's place. The food is reasonably priced: R65 for a country breakfast, R150 for rump steak with chips and an egg, R100 for beef curry, and R95 for a hamburger (beef or chicken) with chips.

I got the feeling that it's the kind of place where you'll befriend the locals and maybe say yes to a Dom Pedro (R40) or three. If you need a place to sleep, you can camp for R100 per person or stay in a cabin for R300 per person sharing.

Where? South of Bulwer next to the R617.

Opening times: Monday to Saturday from 9 am to 7.45 pm; Sunday from 9 am to 6.15 pm. The kitchen closes at these times, but the bar stays open longer.

Contact: 082 538 3892 (Shane)



NIP INN PUB & GRUB



STAY HERE

Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve

The reserve has six huts that sleep two people each – rates from R500 per night. The bigger unit sleeps six people at R1 150 per night. Camping R100 per person (no power). Conservation fee R40 per adult; R20 per child under 12. ☎ 033 845 1000;

📧 bookings@kznwildlife.com; 🌐 kznwildlife.com

Lake Eland Game Reserve

Lake Eland is a private reserve with several accommodation options including camping – it can also be your start point on this route. You can watch game, hike, cycle, glide on a zipline or walk across the 80 m-long suspension bridge to a viewpoint overlooking the gorge.

Day visitors R75 per adult; R45 per child under 12. Fisherman's Cottage (sleeps five) R400 per night for two people, thereafter R100 per person. Family chalet for five people: R1 800 per night. Camping R320 per night for two people, plus R100 per extra person (max 10 people per stand). Check their website for all the options and activities. They have a great restaurant with a wide selection of meals and a playground for the kids. ☎ 039 001 1010; 🌐 lakeeland.co.za

uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park

Conservation fee R60 per adult; R30 per child under 12. Kamberg: Self-catering chalets from R840 per night for two people. Thendele: Cottages from R3 100 per night for four people (low season). Mahai: Camping R170 per person (with power). ☎ 033 845 1000;

📧 bookings@kznwildlife.com; 🌐 kznwildlife.com





TAKE
YOUR
PIC

Do you have a travel or nature photo as great as the ones featured here? Send your best shots to **Toast Coetzer** at takeyourpic@gomag.co.za



WINNING
PHOTO

▲ **STEPHEN PENSO**

Canon PowerShot G7 X

STEPHEN WRITES: I took this photo from the jetty in Simon's Town at about 10 am. I braced myself firmly on the rail to ensure a better shot.

The interesting reflections were made by the corrugated side structure of a building out of frame. I zoomed to compose the photo and did not manipulate it at a later stage.

TOAST SAYS: Stephen's photo makes you look twice at what

would usually be an ordinary harbour scene. Typically, the boat would be the main subject of the photo, but here it's the reflected stripes and patterns that steal the show.

I suspect many photographers would have walked past this scene. It's important to train your eye to see what is different. Hundreds of people take photos of the Simon's Town harbour every

day, but only Stephen noticed this abstract magic.

I would have strengthened the composition by cropping out the harbour wall at the top of the frame, because it distracts you from the squiggly white lines on the water's surface. But Stephen's photograph is abstract and odd as it is, and a worthy winner of the *go!* camera bag. Congrats!



^ **ALTA LAUBSCHER VAN DER MERWE**

Samsung Galaxy Note 10

TOAST SAYS: Alta took this photo at Swartvlei near Sedgefield. There's a great balance between the foreground (the texture of the rushes and other plants) and the background (the mist above the hill and the clouds in the sky).

If it weren't for the pink shoes on the grass, the three poles in the water would have been the most important part of the photo. But the pink shoes are there and they stand out like a Pumas rugby jersey at Loftus.

Although it does feel a little as if the rapture has just taken place (where did the person go without shoes?), you know implicitly that they belong to Alta. This draws you into the scene because you can daydream about kicking off your own shoes at this scenic spot...



▼ EDWIN PAGEL

Nikon D3300

Nikon 35 mm lens

TOAST SAYS: I travelled through the Kunene Region of Namibia with Edwin and his wife Engela in 2022 – they were part of a *go!* photography tour. I always enjoy it when readers I meet send in photos of their subsequent travels – it's good to know that the wheels are still turning and they're still curious about the places they visit.

Edwin took this photo in the summer of 2023, on the farm Sandhof in the Maltahöhe district of Namibia, where lilies sometimes bloom after a rainy season. It's

▲ WILLEM KRUGER

Sony A1

Sony FE 200 – 600 mm lens

WILLEM WRITES: My wife and I were in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and drove up the course of the Nossob riverbed one morning. We came across a family of four African hoopoes on the ground, looking for food.

A fifth bird tried to join them, but one of the hoopoes didn't like the intruder and a fight broke out. The pair flew up again and again, attacking each other about two to three metres above the ground.

My shutter speed was 1/8 000 second, aperture f6.3 and ISO 2 000.

TOAST SAYS: It's reassuring to see that even something as beautiful as a hoopoe can get grumpy sometimes! Yes, don't let their looks fool you – apparently they don't clean their nests when they have chicks and you can smell it a mile away...

Willem used a very fast shutter speed to freeze the action. You

can see every feather of these two birds – they look like flamboyant swordfighters in a fantasy film. Note how we can see both birds' faces (or at least an eye of each) and that their beaks are crossed like swords, creating a strong focal point.

I like that one hoopoe's wings are up while the other bird's wings are down. Having two different postures makes the photo even more interesting to look at.

Just goes to show that you don't always need a cheetah or a lion for your majestic Kgalagadi moment – the park has so many beautiful birds, from heavyweights like martial eagle and kori bustard to bantamweights like African hoopoe, Namaqua sandgrouse and pygmy falcon. Make sure to get photos of the park's birds on your next visit!

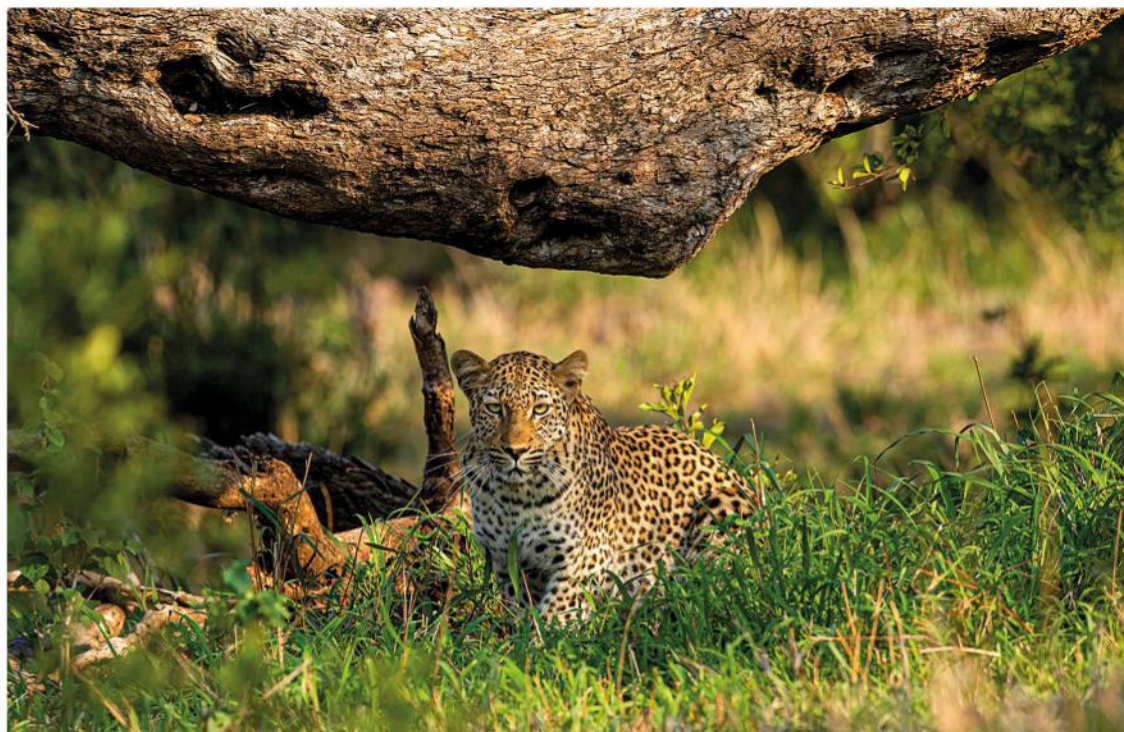
See *"With My Own Eyes"* on page 116 for more of Willem's photos.



one of Namibia's most spectacular sights, and one I've never seen in person because your timing has to be right. The spectacle usually only lasts three or four days.

Edwin's photo gives you a good idea of how many lilies bloom on the Sandhof pan. He was using a wide-ish 35 mm lens and managed to get the whole scene in focus, even though his aperture was only f5.6. That's pretty wide, and usually results in some parts of the frame being out of focus. It would have been safer to go for a narrower aperture like f8 or f11.

Nice one, Edwin!



▲ **BRAEME HOLLAND**

Canon 5D Mk IV

Canon EF 500 mm lens

BRAEME WRITES: I was camping with friends in the Kruger Park in November 2022. We were driving along the S39 early one morning looking for big cats, and we were rewarded with a sighting of this beautiful young female leopard. You can't help but be mesmerized when such a magnificent creature stares directly into your eyes! I like how the branch above frames the image.

My camera settings: shutter speed 1/1 600 second, aperture f7.1, ISO 1 000.

TOAST SAYS: They say you make your own luck. And when you're in a place like the Kruger, there's simply no other way: You have to put in the kilometres. The earlier you're out of the gate, the better – especially if you want to see lions and leopards. If you lie in, you'll get photos of giraffes and impalas, but if you're the first out of the gate you'll be the first to get to the leopard.

Braeme's photo is striking because the green grass makes the yellow-and-black leopard stand out. But funnily enough, it's the branch above the leopard that makes you linger. As Braeme says, it creates a natural frame around the animal and adds a certain visual tension: You hope the heavy branch won't fall!

The coarse bark lends some texture to the scene, which is echoed in the leopard's rosettes. Stunning.



TAKE YOUR PIC

> RENIER LE ROUX

Nikon D750

Nikon 70 – 200 mm lens

RENIER WRITES: I took this photo of Compassberg near Nieu-Bethesda in the Eastern Cape. I had to wait all morning for the low clouds to clear so I could see the peak.

My shutter speed was 1/800 second, aperture f7.1 and ISO 200.

TOAST SAYS: I recently visited the Nieu-Bethesda area and noticed how Compassberg was the visual anchor to all my landscape photos. You see it from kilometres away and it looks different from each angle. It's like our own Matterhorn – and it even sometimes gets a dusting of snow in winter!

This photo looks like it was taken from the east, which is the best angle if you want to capture the sharp peak. (It appears blunter from other angles.)

I like the play of light and shadow on the landscape. Note how the yellow poplars catch the sun – without this pop of colour, the foreground would have been a bit bland. There are lots of natural lines to lead your eye through the scene. For example, your eye goes from the big poplar grove on the right, up the kloof to the smaller lick of yellow, and then from one koppie to the next until it rests on Compassberg itself.

Good job, Renier!





< DELITA STRAUSS

Canon PowerShot SX50 HS

DELITA WRITES: I took this photo on a farm near Aus in southern Namibia. It was sunset and the sheep were being herded back to the kraal.

There was not a lot of grazing on the farm during my visit and the sheep had to walk far every day in search of food. They slept near the farmstead at night for shelter and they got extra feed in the kraals.

TOAST SAYS: I'm a sucker for a beautiful farm scene and Delita's sheep photo pulls at my heart strings. The picture shows the hardships faced by the farmer, the perseverance of the sheep, and the timeless landscape that sets nature's pace.

Would the composition have been better if the sheep were walking towards the camera? Maybe. You normally want to see an animal's face rather than the alternative... But it doesn't bother me too much. It might even add to the sense of desolation because it feels like the sheep will soon disappear on the plain.

Dust and late light work well together. The low angle at which the light hits the scene illuminates every particle and gives your photo a special filter. The scene wouldn't have had the same impact if Delita had taken her shot in the middle of the day.

The mountains in the background also give you something to look at besides the sheep – and the vast plain immediately tells you that this is Namibia. It makes me want to crack open a Tafel Lager...



SEND US YOUR BEST TRAVEL AND NATURE PHOTOS!

WHY? We publish a selection of reader pictures in every issue. Don't be shy, haul out those shots you've been hoarding on your computer and send them to us! We like just about anything: wildlife, landscapes, portraits, holiday snaps or bugs in your garden.

HOW? Send your photos to takeyourpic@gomag.co.za. Submit only your three best shots each month. Don't send files bigger than 4 MB – if we need a bigger version, we'll ask for it. Give the name, surname, home town and contact number of the photographer. Also include info about where and how the shot was taken, and what equipment was used. If you manipulated your photo in any way, tell us what you did.

THE FINE PRINT We reserve the right to use your photos elsewhere in the magazine, on our digital platforms and marketing material.



Want to sign up for our online photography course?

Visit takebetterphotos.gomag.co.za



We're on Instagram! Follow us and our sister mag

Weg for travel and wildlife pics: Search for [@gomagsa](https://www.instagram.com/gomagsa) and [@menseselense](https://www.instagram.com/menseselense)

TAKE THE WINNING PHOTO

You can win this durable
camera bag worth R790!



This canvas bag has sturdy sides and a soft inner to protect your valuable gear. The compartments are adjustable to fit your camera and lenses.

Contact Yumna Tofey if you'd like to buy this bag.

yumna.tofey@media24.com



Desert rain

COMPILED BY **LYNNE FRASER**

Every few years, southern Namibia enjoys above-average rainfall during the summer months. This is usually due to a meteorological phenomenon known as La Niña (“The Girl” in Spanish), which is the colder counterpart of El Niño (“The Boy”). La Niña emerges when ocean surface temperatures in the central Pacific Ocean decrease by a few degrees. The effects of this are complex and often resonate around the world. In some places, La Niña means drought, but if you’re in Sesriem or Betta, chances are you’re in for rain.

This phenomenon is normally a once-off, which occurs every three to seven years, but southern Africa got bumper rains for two years running in the summers of 2021 and 2022. The desert landscapes exploded into colour: green grassland, towering thunderclouds, rivers in spate – even rainbows.

Travel photographer and tour guide Evan Naudé visited the Namib in both years to capture the transformation.

Namib transformed

After a rain shower in NamibRand Nature Reserve, the orange dunes were wet and remarkably vivid, towering over the flat parts of the reserve where green grass swayed in the breeze. The ostriches provided a sense of scale to the scene.

HOW? Canon 80D, 70 – 200 mm lens; shutter speed 1/800 second; aperture f10; ISO 400.



The *go! Namibia* 2023 guide (R125) is now available in stores. You can also order a copy from yumna.tofey@media24.com or [media24shop.com](https://www.media24shop.com)





End of the rainbow

It had rained all day, but the weather finally cleared in the late afternoon. I climbed a koppie behind At Kronenhof Lodge near Betta. The sun bathed the landscape in soft light, and a bright rainbow appeared among the clouds. The sun and rainbow both soon disappeared, but I managed to capture this fleeting moment of majesty.

HOW? Canon 80D; Sigma 18–35 mm lens; shutter speed 1/100 second; aperture f9; ISO 400.

PORTFOLIO





Swim at Sesriem

The Tsauchab River has carved a 30 m-deep canyon into the landscape near Sesriem. The canyon is normally bone dry and you can hike along its floor, but in February 2022 the river flooded the entire thing. You could only walk a few metres from the entrance to this scene.

HOW? Canon 80D; Sigma 18–35 mm lens; shutter speed 1/500 second; aperture f11; ISO 320.



Streaks of shadow

Dead Vlei usually lives up to its name – the dunes are barren, the floor of the vlei is parched and the iconic camel thorn trees are gnarled skeletons. Seems to be the case here, right? Look closer and you'll see shadows caused by newly sprouted grass on the dunes. To my mind, the streaks echoed the rain that had recently fallen here.

HOW? Canon 80D; 70 – 200 mm lens; shutter speed 1/200 second; aperture f14; ISO 200.





For the love of chocolate!

There's a reason chocolate has been
a delicacy for thousands of years.
These six recipes are guaranteed to reaffirm
your love of this decadent ingredient!

RECIPES & STYLING JOHANÉ NEILSON
PICTURES SHELLEY CHRISTIANS



No-bake chocolate cheesecake

No-bake chocolate cheesecake

Makes 1 cheesecake

Preparation time 20 minutes,
plus 3 hours chilling time

Cooking time 5 minutes

You need

- 1 packet (130 g) Oreo biscuits, crushed
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon gelatine powder
- 1 cup cream
- 100 g dark chocolate, melted
- 2 tubs (230 g each) medium-fat cream cheese
- ½ cup icing sugar
- 2 tablespoons cacao powder
- Maldon sea salt flakes

For decoration

- 100 g milk chocolate
- ¼ cup cream
- berries, chocolate balls and a Flake chocolate

Here's how

1 Line the bottom of a 22 cm springform cake tin with baking paper and grease the sides with butter. Combine the biscuit crumbs with the butter and press the mixture down onto the bottom of the tin to form a crust. Keep in the fridge until needed.

2 In a bowl, combine the gelatine with 30 ml of water and set aside until spongy. To melt the gelatine, put the bowl over another bowl filled with boiling water until it's completely dissolved.

3 Use your electric mixer to whisk the cream until stiff peaks form. Add the melted chocolate and beat until combined. Beat the cream cheese, icing sugar and cacao in a separate mixing bowl until just smooth – don't overmix. Add the melted gelatine to the cream cheese mixture and fold in the chocolate cream. Also fold in a big pinch of sea salt flakes – it will complement the chocolate.

4 Pour the mixture over the crust and refrigerate the cheesecake for at least 3 hours.

5 Carefully transfer the cheesecake to a serving plate. Melt the milk

chocolate and cream together and pour it over the cheesecake. Decorate with berries and chocolate. This cheesecake is very rich – serve it in thin slices!

Microwave chocolate cake

Makes 1 ring cake

Preparation time 10 minutes

Cooking time 10 minutes

You need

- 2 tablespoons cacao powder
- 1 cup lukewarm coffee (or warm water)
- ½ cup canola or sunflower oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- pinch of salt
- 1 cup cake flour, sieved
- 20 ml baking powder

For the decoration

- ½ cup cream
- 160 g dark chocolate, finely chopped

Here's how

1 Grease a microwave-proof 25 cm ring pan (like a silicone mould) with cooking spray. Dissolve the cacao in the coffee and add the oil. Beat the eggs, sugar and salt with an electric mixer until a light colour. Add the cake flour, baking powder and the coffee-cacao mixture to the bowl with the eggs. Beat until combined. Pour the batter into the pan.

2 Microwave the mixture for 7–10 minutes until risen and cooked through. Let it rest in the microwave for 10 minutes, then unmould carefully and set aside to cool down.

3 Bring the cream to a boil and pour it over the chocolate in a mixing bowl. Stir until melted. Set aside to cool down before you pour it over the cake.

TIP *You can easily change up this cake: Scatter over berries or chocolates – even caramel popcorn on top is delicious. The recipe is quick and easy to make and it's perfect for a midnight feast!*

Chocolate cornflake biscuits

Makes about 24

Preparation time 30 minutes

Baking time 10–15 minutes

You need

- 180 g butter
- ½ cup castor sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla essence
- 1 extra-large egg
- 1½ cups cake flour
- ½ cup cornflour
- ⅓ cup cacao powder
- pinch of salt
- 2 cups cornflakes
- 80 g milk or dark chocolate, melted

Here's how

1 Cream the butter, castor sugar and vanilla essence together until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg. Sieve the flour, cornflour, cacao and salt together and mix it into the butter by hand. Add the cornflakes last and mix until smooth.

2 Preheat the oven to 180°C. Roll the dough into 24 walnut-sized balls and put them on greased baking sheets (you can also line the sheets with baking paper). Use a fork to flatten each biscuit slightly and bake for 10–15 minutes until lightly browned. (The biscuits will be chewy after 10 minutes and crunchy after 15 minutes.)

3 Let the biscuits cool down and then dip half of each in the melted chocolate. (Alternatively, you can drizzle the chocolate over the biscuits instead of dipping them.) Allow the chocolate to set before storing in an airtight container. The biscuits aren't too sweet and the layer of chocolate balances out the flavours.

Donna Hay's chocolate-nut tarts

Makes about 24

Preparation time 20 minutes

Baking time 20 minutes

You need

- 24 premade pastry shells (10 cm in diameter; see tip)

- 3 large eggs
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup golden syrup
- 40 g butter
- 100 g dark chocolate
- ¼ cup cream
- 100 g pecan nuts or walnuts

Here's how

1 Preheat the oven to 160°C. Put the pastry shells on a baking sheet. Carefully crack the eggs in a big mixing bowl. Dip a brush in the egg whites and paint the inside of each shell.

2 Add the sugar and syrup to the eggs and beat until mixed well. Melt the butter, chocolate and cream together and let it cool down slightly. Beat into the egg mixture until smooth.

3 Divide the filling between the shells, put the nuts on top (you can also chop the nuts if you prefer), and bake for 20 minutes. Let the tarts cool down and store in an airtight container.

TIP *Look for premade pastry shells at your local tuisnywerheid or baking supply shop. Make your own by using store-bought shortcrust pastry – remember to blind bake the shells before you add the filling.*

Chocolate caramel squares

Makes about 16

Preparation time 20 minutes

Baking time 30 minutes

You need

- 250 g butter, at room temperature
- ¾ cup castor sugar
- 2 tablespoons cacao powder
- 2 cups cake flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ tin Caramel Treat

Here's how

1 Preheat the oven to 160°C. Cream the butter, sugar and cacao together until light and fluffy. Sieve the flour and baking powder together and add to the butter mixture by hand until you have a dough.



Microwave chocolate cake



Chocolate cornflake biscuits



Chocolate caramel squares



Donna Hay's chocolate-nut tarts



White chocolate truffles with cherries and coconut

2 Grease and line a 20 cm oven pan with a sheet of baking paper. Take half of the dough and flatten it out in the pan. Using a fork, prick the dough all over. Spread the caramel over in an even layer. Coarsely grate the rest of the dough over the caramel layer. Bake for 30 minutes. Let it cool down and cut into squares.

White chocolate truffles with cherries and coconut

Makes about 36

Preparation time about 40 minutes

Cooking time 5 minutes

You need

- 1 tin (385 g) condensed milk
- 300 g (2 packets) Tennis biscuits, crushed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence
- 1 cup desiccated coconut, toasted
- about 500 g glacé cherries
- about 200 g white chocolate

Here's how

1 Mix the condensed milk with the biscuit crumbs, vanilla essence and coconut.

2 Scoop a teaspoonful of the mixture into the palm of your hand, flatten it, put a cherry in the middle and roll it into a ball. Repeat the process with all the ingredients. If you have time, put the truffles in the fridge to set.

3 Melt the white chocolate. Rest the truffles on the tines of a fork one at a time. Use a spoon to pour the chocolate over each truffle until completely covered. Shake off the excess chocolate and use a knife to transfer the truffle onto a sheet of baking paper. Set the truffles aside until the chocolate has set before you put them in mini cupcake cases.

TIP Drizzle melted milk chocolate over the truffles for decoration.

FLIP
YOUR THIRST



QUICK
FLIP
WATER
BOTTLE

 **STANLEY**
SINCE 1913

Available at all leading outdoor stores & selected independent stores. **Awesome Tools** are the exclusive distributors of Stanley products in South Africa.
Tel +27 21 981 6672   www.awesometools.co.za

A photograph showing the silhouettes of several people standing under a large, open-sided structure, possibly a bar or pavilion, against a vibrant sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a dark purple at the top. The silhouettes of the people and the structure are dark against the bright background.

Built to last

In a world of instant gratification, drowning in plastic water bottles and coffee cups, there's a more sustainable way to enjoy your beverage. Here are some of our favourites.

BY PIERRE STEYN

TOAST COETZER



▲ **STANLEY “THE MILESTONES” 1 l COFFEE BOTTLE**

There are few things that will survive a nuclear war: cockroaches, Toyota's 70-series Land Cruiser and the Stanley flask you inherited from your grandfather. No road trip or camping weekend is complete without this legendary coffee container.

Stanley has been making flasks for 110 years and their Milestones range pays tribute to designs from the 1920s, 1940s and 1960s. Our favourite is the 1940 Garnet Gloss. It looks really old school, but it uses all the latest technology to keep your coffee hot for 35 hours and your Oros cold for 37 hours. Back at home, you can put the flask, cup and stopper in the dishwasher.

R1 999 📞 trappers.co.za

▶ **WILLIAM MORRIS ECO COFFEE CUP 400 ML**

The statistics surrounding disposable coffee cups are frightening. According to the WWF, 300 billion such cups are produced annually, of which only 1% are recycled due to their plastic content. The useful life of a disposable cup is barely 10 minutes.

Made from natural fibre, corn starch and resin, this mug will last you much longer. Your local barista won't think twice about pouring your latte into it. The lid and sleeve are made of food-grade silicone, specifically designed for hot liquids. The mug fits in your car's cup holder and although you can put the whole thing in the dishwasher, it's not suitable for the microwave.

R480 📞 shop.wwfsa.org.za



◀ **STANLEY PERFECT-BREW POUR OVER & CAMP MUG**

If you invest in this all-in-one system from Stanley, coffee grounds will be the only thing ever thrown away. (Use them in your garden – your plants and trees will thank you.) The filter is reusable and easy to remove and clean, and the top filter set is designed to fit most Stanley bottles and mugs. (It can also be purchased separately for R630.) If you don't have a decent camping mug, the complete set is a perfect Christmas or birthday gift. Just add your favourite ground coffee, pour hot water in and wait for everything to drip through.

R1 190 📞 awesometools.co.za



▲ **STEELY SPORTS BOTTLE**

This lightweight stainless-steel bottle, a proudly South African product, is an excellent alternative to the plastic water bottles carried by cyclists. It's designed to fit into any standard bottle holder on a bike, with the advantage that it will keep your water cold for up to 24 hours. This is thanks to a copper lining between two layers of stainless steel, which insulates the contents. It's a lifesaver if you can drink something cold instead of lukewarm plastic water halfway through the Tankwa Trek! It holds 630 ml and is available in four colours.

R329 🐾 faithful-to-nature.co.za



✓ **MANNA SPARKLING WINE CUPS**

When you unpack your picnic basket on the lawn at Kirstenbosch, ready to listen to the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra's summer concert, you don't want to drink your MCC from a plastic glass...

These stylish stainless-steel tumblers have a leak-proof lid that prevents your wine from spilling if an enthusiastic concertgoer accidentally knocks it over, and they keep your drink cold for up to 12 hours. Make sure to wash it by hand afterwards – it's not safe for the dishwasher or the microwave.

R400 for two 🐾 woolworths.co.za





◀ **STANLEY CLASSIC POCKET FLASK**

This hip flask, another classic design by Stanley, is perfect to carry in your backpack for when a shot of whiskey is needed to drive away the sunset chill in the Fish River Canyon. It's made of stainless steel and the wide mouth is easy to fill without mess. (You don't need a funnel to replenish the contents, as with a standard hip flask.) The screw cap is part of the bottle, so it's impossible to lose, and it holds 230 ml of Johnnie Walker's finest.

R499 🛒 takealot.com

▼ **FIELD BAR 10ℓ COOL BOX**

So, you have your Simonsig MCC and your unbreakable Manna tumblers, now you need something to carry them in and keep them cold. The Fieldbar, designed and manufactured in Cape Town, will keep your wine, beer and soft drinks chilled at 10°C for up to 40 hours. It's available in a variety of colours; it's elegant in its simplicity, and the craftsmanship and materials are of outstanding quality. You can also use it to store 10 ℓ of ice for 50 hours, and it comes with a five-year warranty.

R1 899 🛒 fieldbar.co.za





The grandest of Jeeps

In a world of specialist niches, is there still room for a versatile car, a jack-of-all-trades, that can do everything equally well? If you're nodding your head, the new **Jeep Grand Cherokee** might be for you.

BY PIERRE STEYN

There are a couple of stories about how the first Willys MB 4x4 got the name "Jeep" in 1941.

One theory goes that it's based on a character called Eugene the Jeep from the *Popeye* cartoons, which were popular in the years before World War II. Eugene had extraordinary abilities and apparently the clambering of the Willys reminded the American soldiers of his exploits.

The other story is that the words "General Purpose", shortened to "GP", were part of the vehicle's official

designation on military documents. GP was phonetically shortened to "Jeep" by soldiers.

Both stories are still relevant to the new Jeep Grand Cherokee, even though it's a modern behemoth that looks more like a luxury German vehicle than the practical tool of yesteryear.

We recently got the chance to test drive the fifth generation of the Grand Cherokee on long tarmac roads and at Serendipity 4x4 trails near Mookgopong. We drove the five-seat Overland model; there's also a bigger,

seven-seat version available.

The first thing you realise is that there's no longer any comparison between the luxurious interior of the new Jeep and the "Tupperware" interiors of American cars from 20 years ago. The wood-and-leather trim, comfortable seats and all the technological aids your heart could desire are easily on par with the best that luxury manufacturers like Mercedes Benz, Audi and BMW offer these days.

The Grand Cherokee's handling on tarmac is comfortable and somewhat subdued; the occupants

are well insulated from road and wind noise. The 3.6-litre V6 petrol engine offers enough, rather than excessive, power. It's a seasoned unit and the only option in all Grand Cherokee models. If you leave the smooth, eight-speed automatic transmission to do its thing, you should use about 10 litres of petrol for every 100 km.

It's a comfortable highway cruiser with lots of space, but it also stays true to its "General Purpose" DNA when you have to take it through rivers and up mountains. In its price range (R1,5 million for



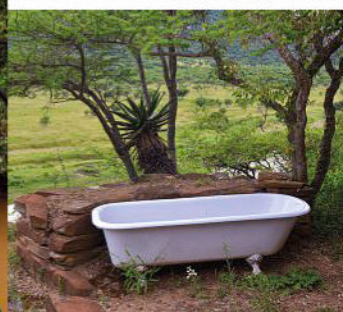
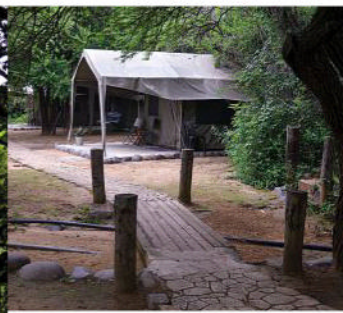
the Overland model), only the new Land Rover Defender 110 and the Toyota Prado can follow in its tread.

Off-road prowess is seriously impressive thanks to the Quadra-Trac 4x4 system, new air suspension that offers up to 287 mm of ground clearance, and the Selec-Terrain traction system with five different modes for, among other things, rocks, sand, mud and snow. However, you might want to trade the 20-inch wheels of the Overland model for 18-inch wheels and higher-profile tyres when off-roading.

Chances are most owners of the new Grand Cherokee will never take their car on such gnarly tracks as those at Serendipity, but who knows? One day you might need the automotive equivalent of Eugene's superpowers, and then this Jeep will come to your rescue.

JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE OVERLAND	
Engine	3604 cc V6 petrol
Power	210 kW @ 6 400 rpm
Torque	344 Nm @ 4 000 rpm
Transmission	eight-speed automatic
Fuel consumption (claimed)	9,9 l/100 km
Ground clearance	287 mm
Maintenance plan	5 years/100 000 km
Service intervals	1 year/12 000 km
Warranty	5 years/100 000 km
Price	R1 540 000





ZINGELA SAFARI AND RIVER COMPANY, WEENEN

This awesome spot is tucked away in the Tugela River valley in KwaZulu-Natal. Mark and Linda Calverley bought land here in 1983 and slowly developed the property to become what it is today. They've since handed over management duties to their son Peter and his wife Jenny.

As the name suggests, you can do a variety of river activities at Zingela. White water rafting on the Tugela starts at R275 p.p. depending on how far you want to paddle. Other adrenaline activities include rock climbing (from R175 p.p.) and abseiling (from R275 p.p.). You can keep the kids busy by taking them on a guided hunt for scorpions using UV lights in the evening (R25 p.p.) or they can while away a morning doing pottery in the Clay Café (R70 p.p.). You can also go on guided hikes in the veld, take a ride on your mountain bike, or fly-fish for yellowfish. The birdlife is excellent and you're likely to see a journey of giraffes before you reach the lodge.

Zingela offers a variety of accommodation options to suit all budgets. If you prefer a wild camping experience, book Warthog Island (it's closed when river levels are too high); if you want electricity and a kitchen, book a site at the main camp.

Each of the formal accommodation units are different and they blend in with the bush and the rugged mountains. Some have outdoor showers; others have baths with a view. The grouping of units closest to the restaurant is jokingly called Larney Lane. Here you'll find Eddies A and B, as well as Hitchens, Dawson's Creek and Shayamoya.

The Eddies are great for families – they sleep four people each, so too the Aloes and Hotel units (there are two of each), which are also close to the restaurant area.

James Camp (two units that can sleep four people each) is just downstream but still within walking distance from the main camp; if you want more privacy, book one of the two twin-sleeper Badlands units, which are on a koppie a little further away. The view over the river is great from up there. House on the Hill is the refurbished old farmhouse that sleeps eight; extra beds can be added for young kids (this applies in most other units).

The rates for Hitchens, Dawson's Creek, Shayamoya and Eddies include three meals per day – excellent value for money. Their restaurant is fantastic. Let someone else do the cooking this holiday!

Where? Zingela is 28 km north of Weenen and 35 km east of Colenso in KZN. There are detailed directions on their website – don't follow Google Maps. The road is mostly gravel all the way, and the last bit definitely requires a 4x4.

Rates: Camping at the main camp, on Warthog Island and at Smell The Roses (new!) R175 per adult; half-price for kids under 12. Rent a tent from Zingela for R300 p.p.

Self-catering units: Safari Tents R385 p.p.; Hotel, Aloes and Badlands units from R525 p.p.; James Camp from R600 p.p.; House on the Hill from R600 p.p.

Fully catered units (breakfast, lunch and dinner): Hitchens, Dawson's Creek, Shayamoya and Eddies – from R1 390 p.p. All rates are per person sharing.

Meals: Breakfast R125 p.p.; lunch R100 p.p.; dinner R180 p.p.

What else? Day visitors are welcome at R70 per adult and R35 per child under 12.

Contact: 076 813 7429 (WhatsApp); zingelasafaris.co.za

– Toast Coetzer

Winter Special

30% OFF ACCOMMODATION

INCLUDING BREAKFAST

Was R3000
now only
R2100
per room
per night

★★★★★
Six Star Hotel
Graded by the owner



St Helena Bay
Paternoster
Langebaan
Yzerfontein

Cape Town

Shelley Point is 150 km (90 Minutes) from Cape Town

Offer Valid until 31 August 2023,
every day of the week including weekends,
school holidays and public holidays

Includes **free** breakfast • Children under 6 stay for **free** when sharing
a Luxury Suite with parents • Subject to Availability • Additional
charges may apply for activities / excursions • Standard T's & C's apply



- Luxury Suites
- VIP-Lounge
- Cocktail Bar
- Cinema
- Tea Garden
- Teen Lounge

- Childcare Facilities
- Weekend Kids Activities
- Uncapped WiFi
- Coastal Safari
- Swimming Pool
- Wellness Centre & Spa

- 2 Restaurants and Lounges
- 9 Hole Golf Course
- Tennis
- Lawn Bowls
- Fitness Centre



THE
SHELLEY POINT
HOTEL & SPA

022 742 1065 • reservations@shelleypointhotel.com • www.shelleypointhotel.com

Cape West Coast Property

FOR SALE

Plots and homes available
directly from the developer

Johan Koen 078 893 6932

johan@wcprop.com
www.wcprop.com



TAKE A HIKE

Gabriel's Loop, Baviaanskloof

BY FIONA MCINTOSH

Climbing up Kickstart Hill.

Cedar Falls Private Nature Reserve is in the mountain wilderness of the Baviaanskloof. It's best known to hikers as the home of the four-day Leopard Trail, but with comfortable accommodation, spectacular day hikes and lovely pools to swim in, the reserve is also perfect for shorter escapes.

There are two full-day hikes at Cedar Falls – the 8 km Cedar Falls Trail and the 12,7 km Gabriel's Loop. The latter follows two of the most spectacular sections of the Leopard Trail and really showcases this diverse and pristine section of the Cape Floral Kingdom.

The loop starts at Cedar Falls reception, initially following the first day of the Leopard Trail. We're soon climbing the ominously named Kickstart Hill. Fortunately, the rocky jeep track is never unduly steep and we top out on a plateau (about 250 m higher) in under half an hour. Familiar chats and bokmakieries keep us company as we take in the views back over the Cedar Falls accommodation.

The path now rises gently to the 2,5 km mark, before we begin a gradual descent on a wide sandy track. Rocky peaks rise on both sides and mauve carpet flowers stud the veld. It's easy going on a

flowing trail and I begin to realise why this is such a popular route with trail runners. The wind blows back my hair and I just want to fly!

We leave the path briefly to inspect a ruin. Nearby is a gravestone to Gabriel Jakobus Petrus van Jaarsveld, a sharecropper of long ago, after whom Gabriel's Loop takes its name.

Approximately 5 km from the start, we follow a sign to Gabriel's Pools. The trail heads into a magical kloof that narrows as it winds through riverine vegetation. A steep wall of red rock distracts us for a while. We're all rock climbers and the face definitely has some potential routes...

One member of our party squats down and points out colourful *Nemesia deflexa* flowers. When he squeezes the flower head, its "mouth" opens like a laughing cow.

We pass a deep overhang in the folded rock bands and carefully edge around a wide pool before scrambling up to a higher, deeper pool. Further progress is blocked by a blank rock wall smoothed by eons of falling water. It's dry now, but in wetter months it must be an impressive waterfall.

After filling our bottles, we backtrack out of the kloof until signs take us around an outcrop and up a slope to the top of a ridge. A short traverse through swaying grasses takes us to another

junction, where we join the route of Day 2 on the Leopard Trail, which comes in from the west. Following yellow boards with leopard prints, we head back towards the kloof containing Gabriel's Pools. The path drops steeply down to a valley then heads downstream, but we detour upriver to Reflection Pools for a swim, and to gaze down at Gabriel's Pools from the top of the dry waterfall that we turned around at earlier in the day.

Once back on the trail, we contour round to Dragons Ridge from where the path drops down steeply. A raptor soars overhead and antelope bound away in the distance – too small to identify.

At the next junction, we have choices: A jeep track offers a shortcut back to base camp, but we've still got time and gas in the tank, so we opt for the footpath that takes us up the flanks of Labyrinth Hill to a nek with great views of the craggy landscape. Summiting the peak is another optional detour from this point – it's about a 10-minute scramble and you'll be rewarded with even more fabulous views. Then it's a steep, loose downhill to the valley floor and an easy flat walk back to base camp. On your way, look out for the labyrinth built 15 years ago when there were several meditation retreats at Cedar Falls.



Clockwise from left: This kloof takes you up to Gabriel's Pools. The Cedar Falls day hike involves some swims, so a dry bag comes in handy. From the top of Reflection Pools, it's a gentle descent along Dragons Ridge. Cedar Falls base camp offers various accommodation options. Negotiating this narrow kloof to get to Cedar Falls is part of the fun.

OTHER DAY HIKES

The Cedar Falls Trail (8 km; 4–6 hours) is an out-and-back walk to Cedar Falls itself, through a dramatic sandstone canyon. The first 3,7 km is an easy hike along the river – you'll pass gnarled cedar trees and numerous inviting swimming holes. It becomes exciting when the kloof narrows – you have to wade, swim and boulder-hop up the watercourse to the big plunge pool at the base of the waterfall. You need to be comfortable with scrambling and a bit of exposure. Take shoes that you don't mind getting wet. Aim to reach the falls around midday when the sun is high in the sky. It gets very cold once the pools are in shade.

There are also a number of short hikes and strolls. Climbing Heroes Hill for sundowners, overlooking base camp, is highly recommended.

The trails are free and for exclusive use of guests staying at Cedar Falls. No advanced booking is required.



Where? Cedar Falls Private Nature Reserve is in the Baviaanskloof about 48 km from Willowmore.

Distance? Gabriel's Loop is a moderately difficult hike of 12,7 km.

Map? Available from reception or download from the website.

What else? Cool off in the big, cement-dam swimming pool outside reception. There are two mountain-bike trails (14 km and 24 km) – bring your own bikes. The hiking trails are popular with trail runners.

Accommodation: Backpacker rooms with shared ablutions: R600 per room for up to four people; Hikers' House R170 per person (minimum four people) on bunk beds with shared ablutions. No bedding or towels provided.

Bedding and towels are provided in the two farmhouses: Cedar, which sleeps eight people; and Red Cliffs, which sleeps 12. Rates: R320 per person (minimum four people).

There are also two cottages (Cob and Just for Two) that are ideal for couples: R980 per cottage.

Contact: ☎ 074 939 4395; 🌐 gobaviaans.co.za



Blooms, blueberries and beer!

In the foothills of the northern Drakensberg is a Limpopo town rich in history and adventure. Hike, eat, and breathe fresh air in Haenertsburg.

WORDS & PICTURES MIA LOUW

It's early morning on Blueberry Heights farm in Magoebaskloof. I'm sitting on the veranda of their cottage. In the distance, the Iron Crown – the highest peak in the province at 2 126 m – is already baking in the sun. A few sips of coffee later, the light paints Ebenezer Dam gold, from the pine trees on its slopes down to the water's edge. Now it's only the hydrangeas and azaleas near the cottage waiting for a touch of sun.

When you drive from Tzaneen in the Lowveld over Magoebaskloof Pass towards Haenertsburg, you climb about 600m up the Wolkberg range, past flowing streams and forest giants. Air rises up the slopes and creates a microclimate with regular mist and rain – ideal conditions for the blueberries and kiwis grown on Blueberry Heights. The balmy, wet summers and cold but sunny winters are good for people, too.

The sun hits the veranda and the two farm dogs, Starbuck and Foster, come over to say hi. Time to explore!

In Haenertsburg, about 7 km south-west of Blueberry Heights, the corrugated-iron roofs and walls of The Pennefather Complex in Rissik Street give away the town's roots.

"After gold was discovered in the 1870s, a German big game hunter and transport rider called Carl Ferdinand Haenert started prospecting in the Wolkberg," says historian Louis Changuion (83) in a bookstore called Memory Hold-the-Door. "Haenert soon found gold, which led to the proclamation of the

Houtboschberg Goudvelden, and the founding of a town in 1887 to house the miners."

Louis fell in love with the history, mountains, forests and hiking trails of Haenertsburg – he moved here from Pretoria in 1971 to work at the University of Limpopo outside Polokwane. He has written 27 books and many focus on the area, like the hiking book *Met Rugsak en Stewels* and *Silence of the Guns: The History of the Long Toms of the Anglo-Boer War*.

We talk about Magoebaskloof, named after King Makgoba, who was the chief of a small Sotho tribe that lived in the area in the late 1800s. In 1895, a war broke out between Makgoba and the ZAR government over land.

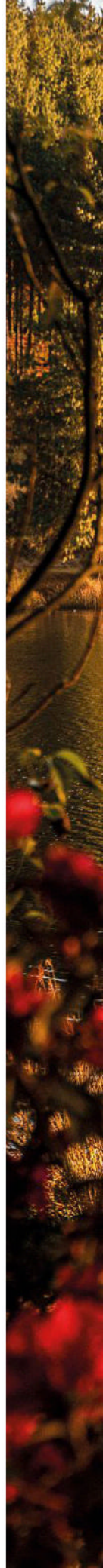
"Makgoba was a very influential man," Louis says. "Swazi soldiers, who fought alongside the Boers as mercenaries, killed and beheaded him. They brought his head to the Boer camp as proof."

The skull has never been retrieved, to the great sorrow of the Makgoba family.

"Do you know where it is?" I ask. Surely someone like Louis would know!

He's quiet for a moment, then explains how he did figure out the location of the Boer camp – the site is close to Haenertsburg in the Houtbosdorp area, which is full of pine plantations today. He also found an old photo of the head, taken by photographer Hugh Exton.

"Hugh was reporting on the war – he was there when the Swazi soldiers arrived at the camp. It's a grim record but it's the only existing photo of Makgoba. It was used to make the bust at the Magoebaskloof Hotel in 1999."





The last rays of sunlight reach from the azaleas at Blueberry Heights farm to Stanford Lake Lodge across the water.

TOWN

Clockwise, from right: Stroll along the leafy streets of Haenertsburg. Every morning, historian Louis Changuion and his labrador, Sophie, walk the trail around town that carries his name. Sandi Leigh Moore on the Louis Changuion Trail. Bird expert and guide, David Letsoalo, will happily take you to look for forest specials in Woodbush Forest Reserve.



LOUIS CHANGUION HIKING TRAIL

There are lots of places where you can get onto the trail in and around town – it's well marked and you can walk it on your own. It's free, but you can donate via SnapScan on the Friends of the Haenertsburg Grasslands website (frohg.org). You can also download a trail map there.



THE MOUNTAIN COMPANY

Sandi Leigh Moore offers two to three hiking tours per month in places like Woodbush Forest Reserve, the Wolkberg Wilderness Area and on private land. The trails vary from 6 km to 22 km. Rates from R250 per person, depending on the distance (minimum six people). A hiking excursion with Sandi also includes a complimentary fridge magnet, a free drink at The Eatery on Rissik, plus photos and a video of the tour. **Contact:** 📞 082 441 8088 or search for "The Mountain Company" on Facebook.



As to where the skull might be, Louis suspects that it might have been smuggled to Germany. "It would be almost impossible to prove, though, even with DNA testing," he says.

He steers the conversation towards hiking – his other passion. In 1993, Louis helped to establish a 10 km trail around the town. The surrounding grassland, scientifically known as Woodbush granite grassland, is an endangered ecosystem. "The state wanted to sell the land and there were applications to build sawmills – they would have planted more pine trees."

There was a plan to create a nature reserve, but it was rejected. The hiking trail was approved, however, which Louis had to lay out.

"I designed it to include all the patches of indigenous forest. I identified interesting trees in the forests, especially aimed at kids so they could see how strangler roots grow down the trunk of a forest fig, for example. I still walk – I went for a walk this morning, in fact. I saw two duikers – there are also lots of bushbuck and bush pigs in the area."

I'm itching to explore the Louis Changuion Trail. The next morning, I meet up with guide Sandi Leigh Moore at the trailhead in Rissik Street. (The trail was named after

Louis against his wishes!)

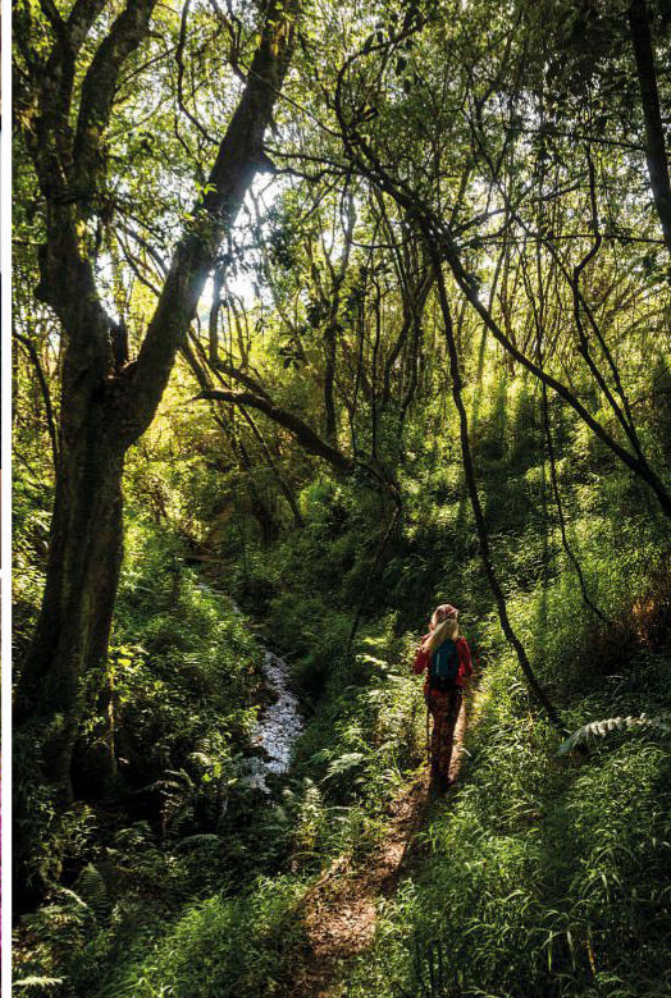
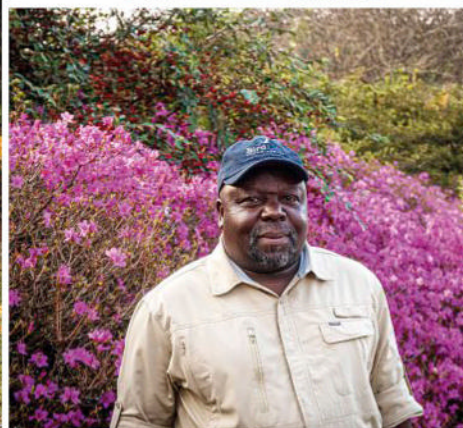
Sandi and I walk the shorter 6 km route. She's lived in town for the last seven years and runs a touring and guiding business called The Mountain Company. She first visited Haenertsburg in 2008 while training for the Absa Cape Epic mountain-bike race.

"At that time, I'd never heard of this place before," she says.

We walk through town and climb up a hill to the cemetery, which must be one of the prettiest cemeteries in the country. We wind through endangered grasses and past a cabbage tree, aloes and the pink-purple flowers of the mountain bitter-tea.

Sandi sidesteps fresh droppings left by a porcupine. She picks a sprig of wild wormwood and puts it in her pocket. "I brew tea with the leaves – it has medicinal qualities," she says.

High on the hill, the grassland meets up with pine trees. We can see the town in the valley below. At the Vodacom tower a few steps further, I encounter a similar view to the one at Blueberry Heights, of Ebenezer Dam and the Iron Crown. In a few days' time, Sandi will guide 20 hikers to the summit of Limpopo's highest peak.



Bird expert and freelance guide David Letsoalo is also used to walking long distances. He has lived in and around Haenertsburg for 40 years and loves it here.

"There's too much to see and do! You can go for long hikes or short strolls. If you want good food, friendly faces and creative people, you'll find it all here, on top of the mountain."

David has just returned from an eight-hour birding tour. "We walked in Woodbush Forest Reserve for five hours to look for forest specials," he says. "Even though it's interspersed with plantations, Woodbush is the second-biggest forest in South Africa after the Knysna Forest."

Not many Afromontane forests are left in South Africa – they only cover about 0,5% of the country's land mass. These water-rich and mountainous forest areas are home to a variety of plants, animals and birds, including the endangered Cape parrot.

"We were just looking for the Cape parrot – and we found it!" David says. "They occur in only three forested places along the Drakensberg escarpment: In parts of KZN, the Eastern Cape and here in Woodbush."

His group also saw Drakensberg prinia, blue-mantled crested-flycatcher, yellow-throated woodland-warbler and olive woodpecker.

"After the forest tour, we drove to Tzaneen to look for blue-spotted wood-dove, but it's shy and it eluded us today," he says.

Sometimes, he gets really lucky. Like the time a European guest came to tick off the rare buff-spotted flufftail.

"It was a typical misty spring day in Woodbush," David remembers. "A light drizzle was falling and we heard lots of birds calling. We followed the sound of a buff-spotted flufftail deeper into the forest. Eventually the bush got so thick that we had to crawl."

Drenched, on their knees and elbows, they finally found the bird after a four-and-a-half-hour search.

"The sun broke through the mist and shone right on the flufftail for a full minute – the guest took a photo and burst into tears!"

I say goodbye to David and walk down the main road of Haenertsburg one last time. After three wonderful days, I feel sad to leave the forest and mountains behind. Or maybe I just have some Wolkberg mist in my eyes...



GO BIRDWATCHING WITH DAVID

David Letsoalo offers guided outings for a maximum of three people. You have to supply your own vehicle. It costs R1 700 for half a day (4 hours) or R2 100 for a full day (8 hours). ☎ 083 568 4678



MAGOEBAKLOOF ADVENTURES



CHEERIO CAFÉ

7 Things to do

1 Visit Cheerio Gardens

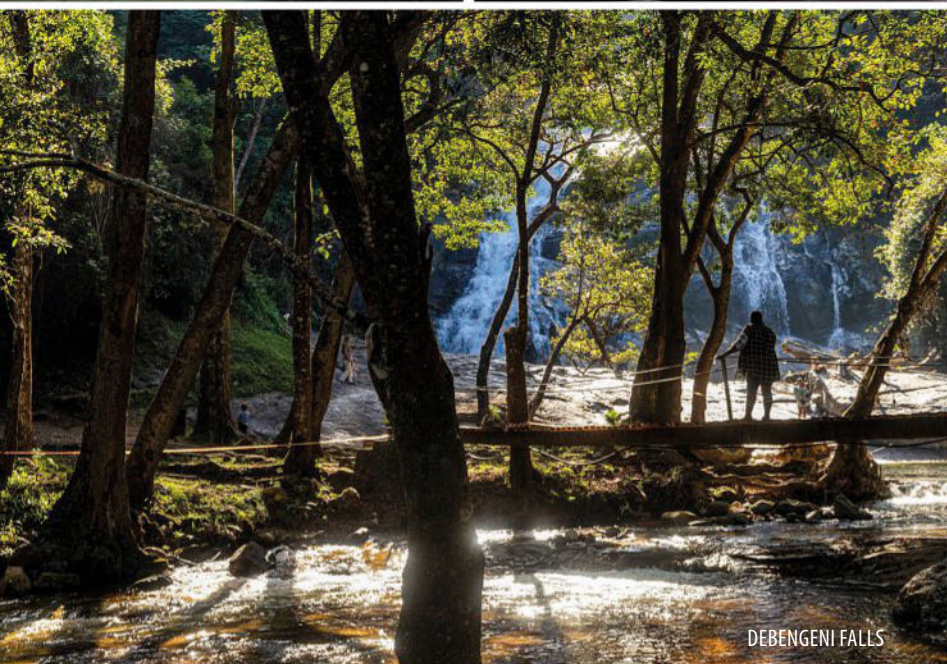
It's not only Namaqualand that's in full bloom in spring. The azaleas and crab apples in Cheerio Gardens start to flower in August and the cherry blossoms steal the show in late September. The gardens are often blanketed in pink, purple, yellow, peach and cream.

The manager of the wedding venue here, Sarah-Leigh Hillary, says her great-aunt Sheila "Box" Thompson, a botanist, started the gardens: "She served in the army and shortly after World War II, she moved here to the mountains. She wrote articles for gardening magazines and newspapers. The physician of the Japanese Emperor read one of her articles and they started corresponding. Eventually they sent each other seeds – that's where our azaleas, cherry trees, maple trees and rhododendrons come from."

The gardens are free to visit. You can't picnic here, but have something to eat at Cheerio Café, which overlooks the dam. There is also accommodation on site – see AfriCamps on page 95.

Opening times: Thursday to Sunday from 9 am to 5 pm. Celebrate! The Spring Festival will be held over the weekend of 23 to 24 September – for more info, contact ☎ 083 326 5836; ✉ Kurtwacker182@gmail.com

Contact: ☎ 083 355 0835 or search for "Cheerio Gardens" on Facebook



DEBENGANI FALLS

2 Hike or cycle at Woodbush

"It's easy to get lost in the forest," says David Letsoalo. "It's best to stick to the main dirt road." This road runs for about 19 km from the Selati De Hoek sawmills on the R71 (Magoebaskloof Pass) past Debengeni Falls and returns to the pass near Samango Lodge. (You can also turn off about halfway and drive to the Dap Naudé Dam.)

Debengeni is a Northern Sotho word that means "place of the big pot". Here, the Politsi River flows over a cliff and into a pool. It costs R45 per person to visit Debengeni and a series of smaller waterfalls. There are braai facilities and picnic tables spread out under tall trees.

You can explore Woodbush on foot on the five-day Magoebaskloof Trail (60 km). There are also shorter routes, like the three-day Dokolewa Waterfall Trail (40 km). It costs R244 per person per night.

Make a booking: ☎ 082 663 61 68; ✉ ecotrail.co.za



TOBAN MCMAHON, THOMAS ESSENTIAL OILS AND OTTERHOLT



GLORIA MASHABA, WEGRAAKBOSCH ORGANIC FARM

3 Taste (or make!) cheese

At Wegraakbosch Organic Farm, owners Nipper and Sylvia Thompson and dairy experts Gloria Mashaba and Francisco Huo make 14 kinds of cheese according to the traditional Swiss method. They also offer cheese-making tours and educational sessions on farm life.

Cost: R100 for a cheese platter – it was enough for three people. R20 for a glass of wine. Cheese-making tour R145 per adult; R85 per child.

Opening times: Daily from 7.30 am to 5 pm. They close at 11.30 am on weekends.

Where? About 2,2 km outside town on the Cheerio dirt road.

Contact: ☎ 072 361 0664;

📍 wegraakbosch.wixsite.com/wegraakbosch

4 Stock up on essential oils and mushrooms

Julie and Mark McMahon and their children Tamla and Toban manage two family businesses on their farm next to the Cheerio road – Thomac Essential Oils and Otterholt. Julie uses the plant *Helichrysum splendendum* to make essential oils (R250 for 11 ml) and a range of skincare products. Tamla and Toban help out at Thomac, but also developed the 3,5 km Otterholt hiking trail (R30 per person) on the farm and they run a farm stall on weekends. Toban takes visitors on mushroom tours in the forest and is knowledgeable about what you can pick and eat. A tour lasts 3–4 hours and costs R200 per person – the best time to pick mushrooms is from November to July.

Where? About 1 km outside town on the Cheerio dirt road.

Contact: Thomac Essential Oils: ☎ 076 418 1238;

📍 thomac-oils.co.za. Otterholt: ☎ 064 733 1889

5 Glide over a waterfall

At Magoebaskloof Adventures you can glide through a forest and over the Groot Letaba River on a series of 11 ziplines. The longest is about 150 m and it's great fun to see the waterfalls from this angle. They also offer paintball, abseiling and tubing.

Cost: R760 per person for the zipline tour.

Opening times: Daily from 8 am to 5 pm.

Where? About 12 km south-east of town in George's Valley.

Contact: ☎ 083 866 1546; 📍 magoebaskloofadventures.co.za

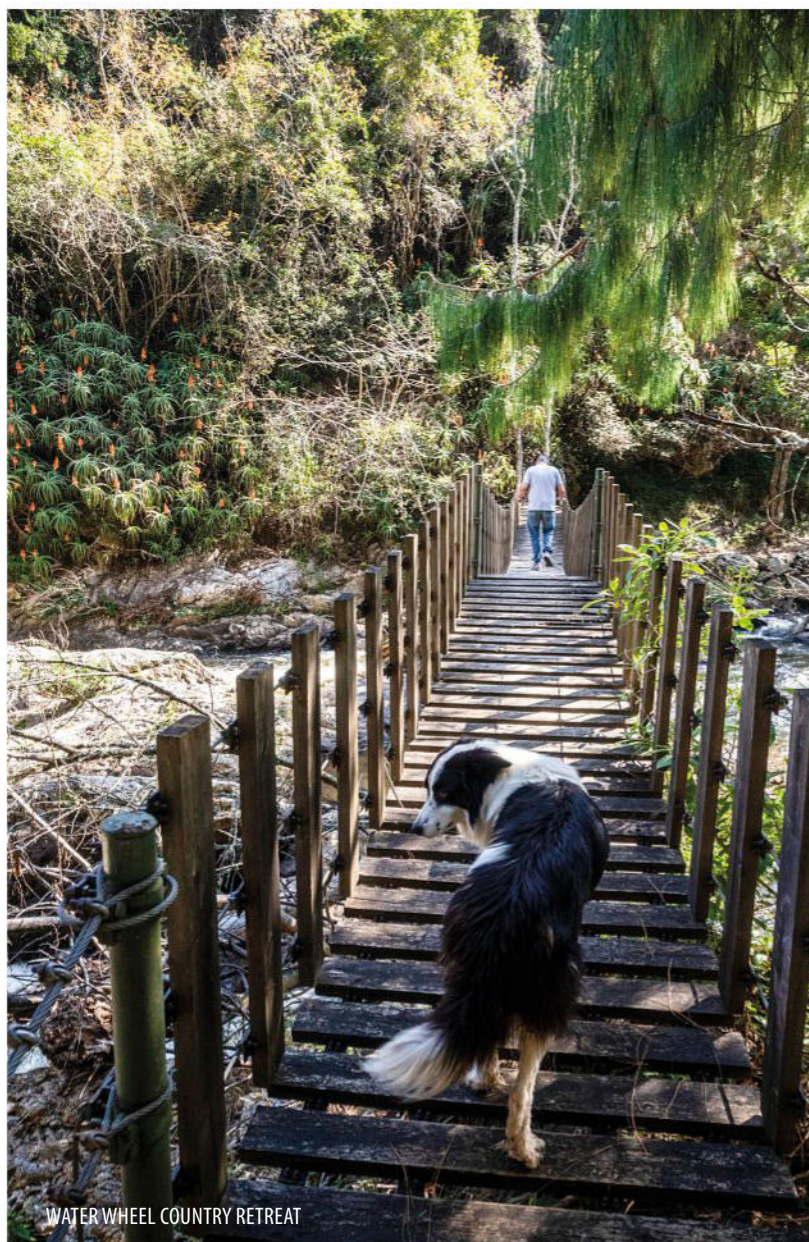
6 Catch (and release) trout

Water Wheel Country Retreat has a cycad nursery and accommodation next to the Groot Letaba River. As the name suggests, power is supplied by a big waterwheel in the river. Day visitors are welcome – catch yellowfish or trout or walk to a waterfall upstream.

Day visitors: R50 per adult; free for children under 12. Only three groups are allowed, so come early or book beforehand.

Where? About 12 km south-east of town in George's Valley.

Contact: ☎ 074 024 6519; 📍 waterwheelretreat.co.za



7 Have a picnic

Come raise a glass to life (and death) at the cemetery.

No, really! The cemetery has beautiful gravestones, big trees and aloes, and a scenic view – it's a popular picnic site. Buy snacks in town and watch the sunset over the pine plantations. It's at the top of Rabe Street.

Pull over at the Long Tom viewpoint and picnic site on the Cheerio dirt road. The last Long Tom cannon used by the Boer forces during the Anglo-Boer War was destroyed here on 30 April 1901. You can still see the hole where the Boers blew up the cannon to prevent it from falling into British hands. There are picnic tables and a viewing platform with an information board showing the important peaks and places in the Wolkberg range.



THE EATERY ON RISSIK



RED PLATE



ZWAKALA

EAT HERE

Blueberry Farm Café is on Blueberry Heights farm, about 7 km outside town. The old tractor shed has been turned into a restaurant with fun decor – it overlooks Stanford Lake. Try the smoked trout sandwich with avocado and capers (R90) or the flapjacks with kiwi and cream (R70).

Opening times: Wednesday to Sunday from 8 am to 4 pm.

Contact: 071 540 3800 or search “Blueberry Heights” on Facebook

Caffé Villa Trattoria in Rissik Street is known for its pizzas. We can recommend the Popeye with spinach, feta and olives (R110) or the Sputnik with bacon, tomato, camembert and rocket (R125).

Opening times: Monday to Thursday from 10 am to 8 pm. Friday, Saturday and public holidays from 9 am to 9 pm. Sunday until 7 pm.

Contact: 063 560 6214;
cafevilla.co.za/ca/home/

Sit on the deck at **Red Plate** and watch the world go by on Rissik Street. Burgers from R85; chicken strips with chips R75.

Opening times: Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 am to 8 pm; Tuesday and Thursday from 9 am until 6 pm; Saturday from 8 am to 8 pm; Sunday from 8 am to 4 pm.

Contact: 083 305 2851

The Eatery on Rissik is a coffee shop, deli and bakery. The home-made pies are delicious! You can also buy a braai pack, wine or locally made Old Packhouse gin (R350 per bottle).

Opening times: Wednesday to Sunday from 8 am to 4 pm.

Contact: 083 326 583

Zwakala means “come closer” and the name rings true on weekends – there’s a jovial atmosphere as people taste beer at the brewery, bar and restaurant. In 2019, their Limpopo Lager won the South African National Beer Trophy for Best Light Beer. The restaurant offers pub grub like burgers, ribs and chips. Mina’s Neighbourhood Market is held here four times a year.

Opening times: Friday to Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm.

Contact: 073 874 8651;
zwakalabrewery.com

IN OTHER WORDS

Sandi Leigh Moore

“You can explore the area on horseback. Manely Equine (064 122 5895) is 2 km outside town and In the Company of Horses (076 577 1936) is 22 km towards Magoebaskloof Pass, turn off at the Pot ‘n Plow Restaurant (082 691 5790) about 9 km from Haenertsburg. It was renovated recently and looks great!”

George Ushamba

“On weekends I sell artwork made from wire and beads on the corner of Rissik and Rush streets. I make animals and birds in many different sizes, including African hoopoes, turacos, sugarbirds and kingfishers.”



THE PENNEFATHER COMPLEX

STAY HERE

Zwakala River Retreat has a campsite and cabins next to the Broederstroom River. Overnight in a cosy cottage (sleeps two) or in an old tobacco barn that's now a self-catering house (sleeps six). You can also get pampered at the spa.

Rates: Camping R250 per person; cabins from R1 100 for two people.

Contact: ☎ 083 980 8433;

📧 zwakalariverretreat.co.za

Blueberry Heights borders Ebenezer Dam and Stanford Lake. Turaco Farm Cottage has a double room and bunk beds in the living area next to the fireplace. (Note there isn't a full wall between the bedroom and the living area.) Hike, cycle, swim or do the 5 km fun run held every Saturday at 8 am.

Rate: R1 050 per night for three people.

Contact: ☎ 071 540 3800; search "Blueberry Heights" on Facebook

AfriCamps Magoebaskloof has 10 tents in Cheerio Gardens. Four of the tents are set on a slope with views of the forest. The tents have fireplaces and sleep five people each.

Rates: From R1 440 per night for two people.

Contact: ☎ 083 355 0835;

📧 africamps.com

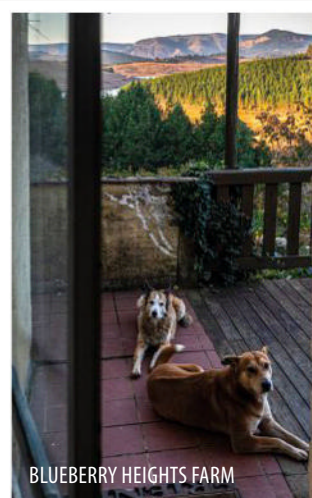
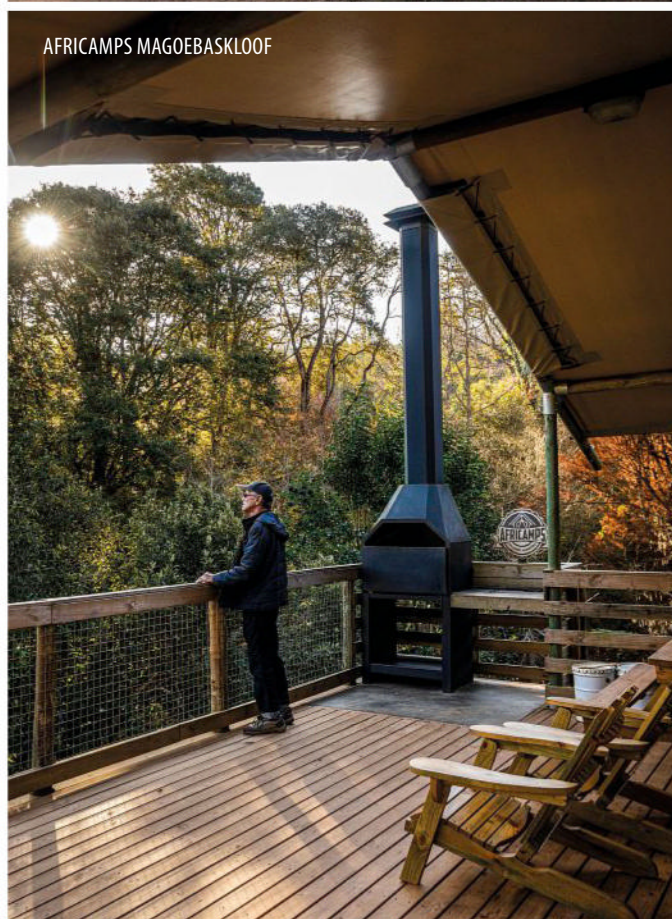
BUY THIS

Get gifts for your loved ones in Rissik Street. **Blackburn Leather** (☎ 079 096 5303) sells leather products like handbags and belts.

Earth by Nature (☎ 082 802 4178) focuses on decor and plants, and at

Tin Roof (☎ 074 083 7008) you can buy clothes, jewellery and skincare products.

The Pennefather Complex (☎ 078 417 9088) consists of the **Memory Hold-the-Door bookstore**, **Golden Nuggets Sweetshop & Collectibles**, a clothing boutique and the **Tea Gallery**.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Where? Haenertsburg is about 35 km south-west of Tzaneen. You can reach it via the Magoebaskloof (R71) or George's Valley (R528) passes. Look out for potholes on George's Valley Pass.

More info? Get a copy of the free *Mountain Getaways* magazine at a shop in Rissik Street or visit 📧 mountaingetaways.co.za

This super-effective
six-week meal plan will put
a stop to your sugar addiction
and help you lose weight.

LOSE THE SUGAR

*From
our meal
plan*



- Are you struggling to beat the sugar habit?
- Do you feel tired and lack energy and focus?
- Do you suffer from acid reflux, digestive problems or even anxiety?
- Do you suffer from joint pain and inflammation?
- Have you been gaining weight?

These could all be symptoms of a diet high in sugars and processed carbohydrates (starches). The good news is that you can change this within six weeks – and benefit from increased energy and improved health.

EACH WEEK YOU'LL GET:

A summary of what you can expect in the week ahead; a meal plan; a shopping list; and a list of foods you may eat and foods you should avoid.

- You will start to feel better after **only one week** on the meal plan.
- You will have **more energy and mental clarity**.
- You're going to feel and look so much better that you will never want to go back to your old diet again!

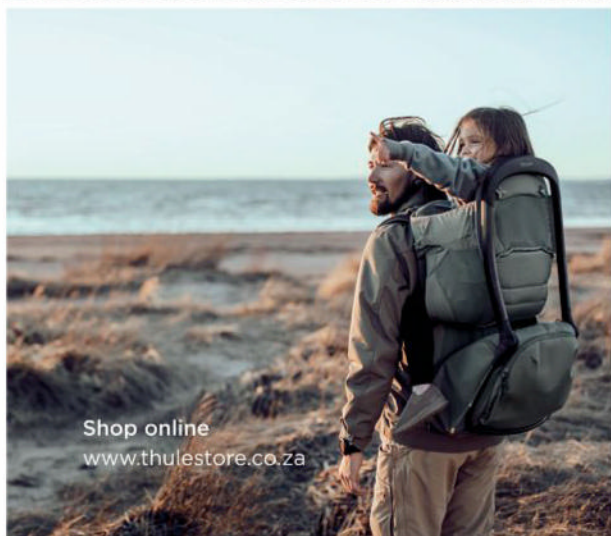
Only
R499

Sign up now!

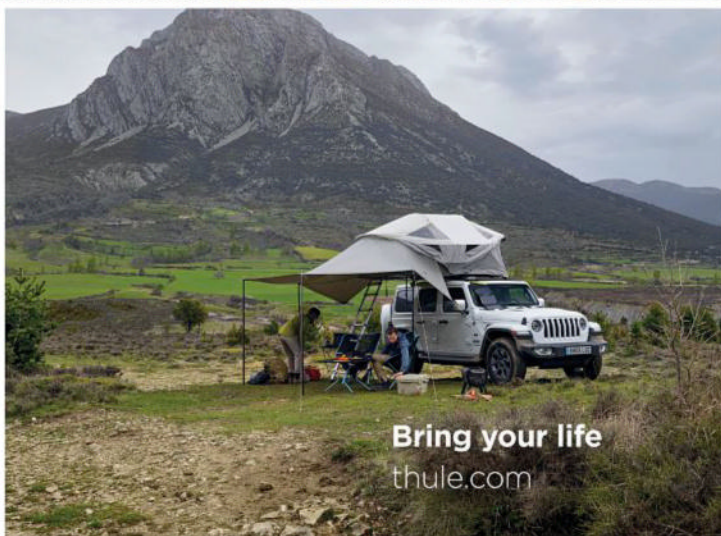
losethesugar.co.za



At Thule, we share your desire to spend more time enjoying our passions - which means less time worrying about how to bring all the stuff we need. For more than 75 years, Thule has been creating solutions to simplify life's adventures. We are committed to developing smart, stylish products that are environmentally sound, high quality, safe and easy to use. All so you can bring the things you care most about.



Shop online
www.thulestore.co.za



Bring your life
thule.com



WHERE TASTE MEETS **ADVENTURE**

Our wide range of braais, potjies, cookware and accessories are sure to help cook up some memories during your next adventure.

See our full range in-store and online as well as some handy expert advice articles and recipes.



LK'S ENAMEL CAST
IRON 3 LEG POT



CADAC PAELLA PAN 40



LK'S ROTISSERIE - LARGE
FLAT BASKET AND SPIT



TECHNIPUNCH STAINLESS STEEL
POP UP 590 BRAAI

**OUTDOOR
WAREHOUSE**
for every adventure

32 Stores Nationwide

For Your Nearest Store Call Toll-Free 0800 007 261

Go to outdoorwarehouse.co.za to learn more and shop online

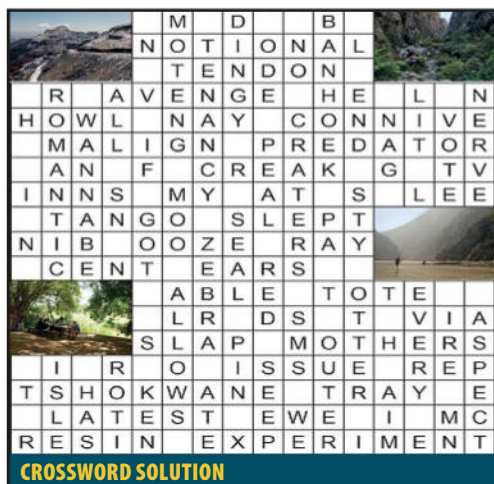


OutdoorW



Outdoorwarehouseza

go! &BUY GUIDE >>>



Keep your COOL this SUMMER!

Cj Aircon's
072 413 3899
Jacques | Cindy
www.cj-aircons.co.za | info@cj-aircons.co.za

- Caravans
- Commercial
- Residential
- Installations
- Repairs
- Service
- Ewiks Movers
- Spare Wheel Bracket
- All Related Services

Movers you can trust!

ewika
caravan mover
www.ewika.co.za

DKTO **Gipsy** **Quantum** **SWIFT** **Bush Lapa** **TUFF** **Spitz**

go! &STAY GUIDE >>>>

ONE OF THE FIRST 'SLACKPACKING' TRAILS ESTABLISHED IN SOUTH AFRICA!

The Oystercatcher Trail is a five-day fully catered, professionally guided slackpacking trail along the coast, starting in Gouritsmond and ending at St. Blaize Cave in Mossel Bay. It is a superb coastal walk, varying from cliff paths to beach and spectacular sand dunes.

Half trail option also available.

Contact: 082 078 1696 | bookings@oystercatchertrail.co.za
www.oystercatchertrail.co.za

ARNISTON

Luxurious self-catering thatched cottages fully equipped and serviced

Arniston Seaside Cottages
Reservations (028) 445 9772 | Email: cottages@arniston-online.co.za
www.arniston-online.co.za

WESTERN CAPE **ARNISTON**

Private Nature Reserve

BUSHMAN VALLEY

5km from Prince Albert for the real Karoo experience

We are just 14km away from the Gamkaskloof ('die hel') turnoff, within the Swartberg pass.





ACCOMMODATION:

- Camping sites (electricity and rustic sites)
- Self-catering chalets

PET FRIENDLY

ACTIVITIES

- In the nature reserve there are several hiking trails and 4x4 routes to enjoy.
- Star gazing
- Bird watching
- Hot tubs

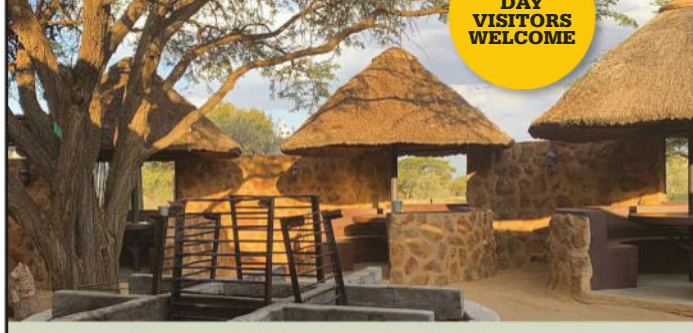



Affordable rates | Long-stay discounts | Pet friendly (no extra cost) | Reception library | Free wifi

Tel: 023 0070288 | Email: info@bushmanvalley.co.za | www.bushmanvalley.co.za | R407, Klaarstroom Road, Prince Albert, Western Cape

VAALBOS-KRAAL

DAY VISITORS WELCOME



For a most enjoyable time!

Fully equipped self-catering chalets, camping terrain with water- and powerpoints and ablution in game camp, swimming pool, plenty of birdlife, hunting, starry nights around a camp fire, African sunsets. Ideal for functions, team-building, small conferences. Landing strip.

Cell: 082 888 9277
E-mail: vaalboskraal@eject.co.za

NORTH WEST **MAREITSANE**

SWARTRIET

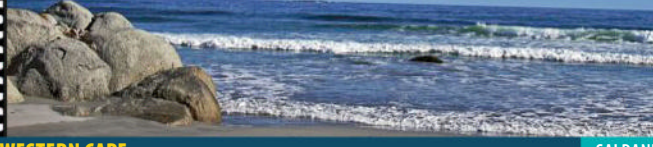


Here you will experience nature in such a unique manner that you will feel like a brand new person after this breakaway!

We offer 29 self-catering chalets on a seaside farm. Only 13 km from Saldanha and Vredenburg, 150 km from Cape Town. No pets.

Tel: 022 715 4044 / 082 402 0120
info@swartriet.com
www.swartriet.com

Conference facility available



WESTERN CAPE **SALDANHA**



DUBE PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

MIDWEEK, SPECIAL OFFER: CAMP FROM SUNDAY TO FRIDAY 2 PERSONS ONLY R800-00

UNITS, SPECIAL OFFER: STAY FROM SUNDAY TO FRIDAY 2 PERSONS ONLY R2 700-00

Nature reserve in malaria-free area. Bushveld atmosphere – less than an hour from Pretoria and Johannesburg – close to Brits. Self-catering houses and caravan park with neat ablutions – wheelchair-friendly bathroom. Hikes – cycle trails – bird-watching – game drives – plenty of game

• Play park • Table tennis • Pool tables • Trampolines • Putt-putt • Indoor heated pools
• Jacuzzi • Cold water pools • Lazyriver • Water slides • Takeaways

Tel: +27 66 298 5379 / +27 66 298 1664 / +27 73 171 8331 / +27 82 375 6179 • E-mail: info@dubegame.co.za • www.dubegame.co.za
Book online: www.alloutbookings.co.za

NORTH WEST **BRITS**



Kameelboomkoelte

★★★★

*Best stopover in Askham
in the Kalahari*

Contact us
Nina 076 991 2561
info@kameelboomkoelte.co.za
www.kameelboomkoelte.co.za

New **self-catering units** with fantastic facilities.

NORTHERN CAPE **ASKHAM**



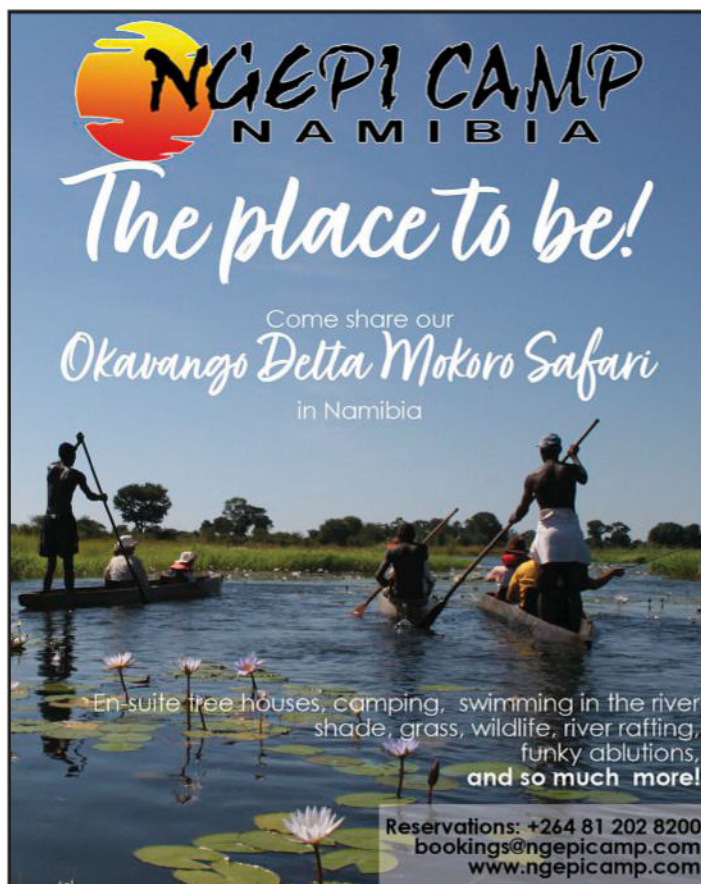
BASS LAKE
COUNTRY LODGE

**A trout fishing weekend
and romantic get-away
near Pretoria!**

We are a favourite for trout fishing this winter and we are also close to Dinokeng. Luxury lodge rooms and a fine-dining restaurant make for a perfect weekend away.

Book today
basslakelodge.co.za
info@basslakelodge.co.za
012 735 1650

Instagram Facebook



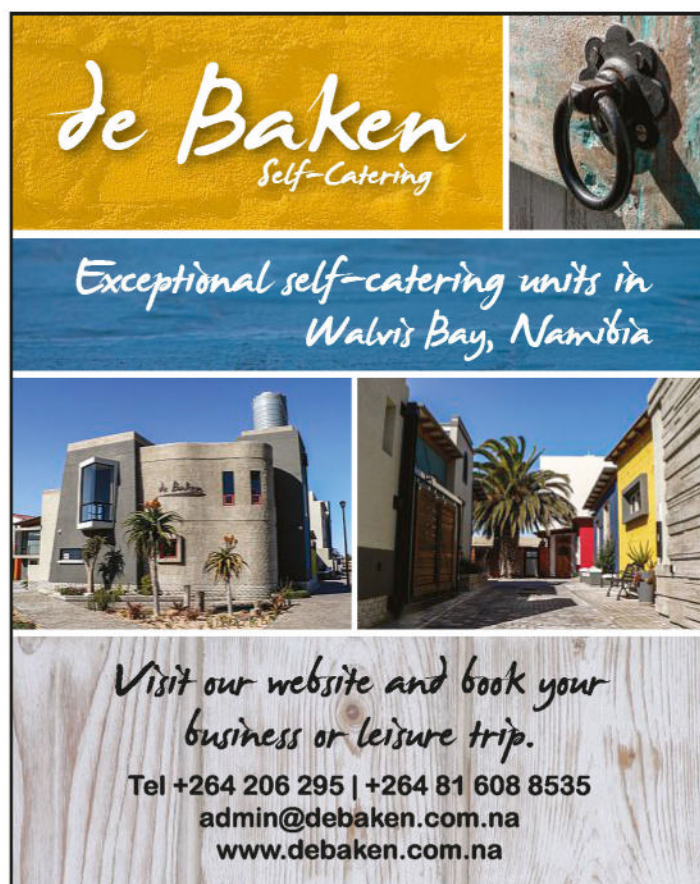
NGEPI CAMP
NAMIBIA

The place to be!

Come share our
Okavango Delta Mokoro Safari
in Namibia

En-suite tree houses, camping, swimming in the river shade, grass, wildlife, river rafting, funky ablutions, and so much more!

Reservations: +264 81 202 8200
bookings@ngepicamp.com
www.ngepicamp.com



de Baken
Self-Catering

*Exceptional self-catering units in
Walvis Bay, Namibia*

*Visit our website and book your
business or leisure trip.*

Tel +264 206 295 | +264 81 608 8535
admin@debaken.com.na
www.debaken.com.na



Green Lantern Inn

EST. 1892

Hotel & Gardens

N3 HALFWAY SLEEPOVER

Top of Van Reenen's Pass



Google 4.4 Very good
★★★★★
1,086 reviews



Travelling to the Coast? Break your journey...
Book direct www.greenlantern.co.za

Durban
Ramsgate



Van Reenen
1/2 way stay over

Jhb
Pretoria



Book online greenlantern.co.za stay@greenlantern.co.za 081 744 0770

COMFORTABLE ACCOMMODATION IN THE BEST POSITIONS



BillsBest Southern Comfort

4.4 Very good
★★★★☆
18 reviews



BillsBest Whaleback Cottage

4.3 Very good
★★★★☆
30 reviews

HOLIDAY IN RAMSGATE, KZN

In 1994 we fell in love with Ramsgate, on the South Coast KZN. Over 30 selected, privately owned holiday places later, we know exactly what makes the best beach holiday! Contact BillsBest for comfortable accommodation in the best beach front positions.

- 🕒 Prime beach front locations
- 🕒 fully equipped with home comforts
- 🕒 assistance during your stay
- 🕒 no hidden costs
- 🕒 great low season specials.

Ramsgate offers a Blue Flag swimming beach, restaurants including the famous Waffle House, pubs, and a beautiful trail along the shoreline.

Choose your views...

- 🕒 Couples cabanas & condos
- 🕒 Family holiday homes
- 🕒 Private lodge for up to 28 guests
- 🕒 Pet friendly options.

See you at the beach.

Bill & Gail

OVER 60?
GET 20% OFF
T'S & C'S APPLY

BillsBest

CHOOSE YOUR VIEWS... 🌐 BILLSBEST.CO.ZA ☎ 082 451 6102 ✉ bbinfo@billsbest.co.za



Stars and railways:

DISCOVER A NATURAL PLAYGROUND IN THE CAPE WINELANDS

ARE YOU LONGING FOR AN ESCAPE INTO NATURE'S EMBRACE?

Look no further than the picturesque towns of De Doorns and Touws River, nestled in the enchanting landscapes of the renowned Hex River Valley and the Karoo Plateau. These hidden gems offer an array of activities that will delight both families and couples, promising an unforgettable experience in the lap of unspoiled beauty.

For **nature enthusiasts**, this little corner of the Cape Winelands, boasts a wealth of outdoor adventures. Lace up your hiking boots and embark on a historical journey along an ancient railway line, winding through rolling hills and vineyards. Feel the rush of adrenaline as you conquer rugged terrains and embark on thrilling 4x4 drives, exploring the hidden corners of this scenic wonderland.

Birdwatchers will find a wide array of birdlife from tiny finch to majestic raptors. And if you plan your visit during the depths of winter, you might be fortunate enough to experience a little bit of snow, a wonderful experience to add to your memory banks!

For **skilled mountaineers** seeking a challenge, there are several climbs that will test abilities and challenge the mind. However, it will be the incredible panoramas that will make the climb so worthwhile.

There are many options for those staying over, whether you camp or cottage, you'll stay close to nature. When night falls, the Karoo unveils one of its most extraordinary wonders, a Milky Way so close, one could almost touch it. And of course, counting stars next to a blazing fire is a sure way to ensure that little ones nod off gently, allowing a little bit of quiet time for the grown-ups.

Whether you
**seek outdoor thrills, a
tranquil retreat close to
nature, or simply a chance
to marvel at the wonders of
the night sky,**

**the Hex River Valley and Touws
River** welcome you with open arms.

Embrace the unspoiled beauty,
create unforgettable memories, and
allow the enchantment of these
hidden gems to leave an indelible
mark on your soul.

WIN!

As an added bonus, prizes await lucky visitors!
Visit www.weg.co.za for more info.

WIN A WEEKEND FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR AT THE SECLUDED ROOILANDE GUEST FARM,

which is home to a variety of animals, such as eland, black wildebeest, zebra, ostriches and alpacas. Activities include 4 X 4, quad-biking and hiking. The prize includes a game drive or quadbike experience, wood for the hot tub and accommodation in one of the self-catering chalets.
www.rooilande.co.za



WIN A HEX VALLEY GOLFING WEEKEND

that includes access to a golf cart and 2 night's accommodation for two at the gorgeous Buffelsberg Cottage.



WIN A STAND FOR FOUR PEOPLE FOR TWO NIGHTS AT RUAH CAMP SITE

and access to any of the incredible hiking trails.



HEX VALLEY TOURISM

Melanie Esterhuizen | 073 238 2026 | info@hexrivalley.co.za

TOUWS RIVER TOURISM

Christelle van der Westhuizen | 076 680 6559
info@touwsriviertoerism.co.za



ZONA BRAZA
BEACH LODGE
PRAIA DE CHIZAVANE - MOZAMBIQUE

Safe, beautiful and easy access to the beach to relax, walk, swim or snorkel. Have a lazy day at our 3 pool decks with spectacular ocean views or have a drink at the beach bar. Looking for relaxation for body and soul, spoil yourself at our spa. A-la-carte restaurant and gym on site.

No 4x4 required, 380km from the Lebombo border, and only 40km further north of Xai-Xai.

info@zonabraza.com | www.zonabraza.com | +258 84 763 3076 | +258 85 048 2455 | CHIZAVANE



Chicuinga
RESORTS
A View of Paradise

Lovely self-catering villa's and chalets ranging between 6-16 sleepers with stunning views of beautiful beaches and reefs that allows for safe swimming. Fishing and boat licences are available with a registered safe launch site for boats and jet ski's. Activities include whale watching & deep sea fishing charters, snorkeling, rock & surf fishing and bird watching. A shop and medical facilities are also on site.

+258 84 30 10 641 | +258 84 76 74 441 | yolanda@chicuinga.co.za | www.chicuinga.co.za | CHIZAVANE



Big Pond Trading t/a
Reef Resort
Praia de Xai-Xai
Mozambique

AIR-CONDITIONED BEDROOMS
SNORKELLING
WI-FI

XAI-XAI www.reefresort.co.za
Bookings@reefresort.co.za

| Accommodation | Fishing Charters | Seafood Restaurant | Conferences |

#WEGREEFRESORT
Book for 5 nights and get **ONE NIGHT FREE!**
T&Cs APPLY



BOOK NOW:
bookings@agamacamp.co.za
 or contact Karien on 072 040 0614

Agama Tented Camp invites you to come experience this drought-ravaged wilderness during the world-renowned flower season. The bushcamp is based 20km north of Garies in the heart of the floral kingdom. Comfortable tented accommodation with spacious decks.

DINNER & BREAKFAST included!

www.agamacamp.co.za

Visitors who come, love Namaqua West Coast for its rocky coastline and hidden bays, unique arid landscapes, wine route and many outdoor experiences. The carpets of flowers that appear after the rain are a particular highlight. *Find Yourself*

namaqua west coast
PROUDLY SPONSORED BY
MATZIKAMA MUNICIPALITY

082 608 7554
info@visitnwc.com
www.visitnwc.com



SPRINGBOK, NAMAQUALAND

IDEAL OVERNIGHT STAY IN THE NORTHERN CAPE!

Liefland

SELF CATERING

Uniquely magnificent and oh so charming

Here nature speaks to mankind.

- Panoramic view across the landscape.
- Cottages are off the grid!
- 5 fully equipped self-catering units, each with carport.
- Freestanding units.
- Dog-friendly

Contact Laetitia 082 806 3252

HonnePondokkies

HONDEKLIP BAY

Situated approximately 300 meters from the beach. Here visitors are free to meander along a picturesque 14 km shoreline.

Accommodation is provided in a choice of **7 self-catering units** with full sea views from the patios or the camping sites. Each unit has its own braai area and there is also a braai room for the rainy days, selected DSTV channels.

The campsites consist of **10 camping sites**, each with their own braai facilities, a tap with running water, electrical points and lights and 2 communal ablution facilities.

We also have a fully **furnished caravan** called "Brakanjan" with its own private ablution.

A beautiful **swimming pool** and **braai area** is available for the enjoyment of the whole family. Kiddies may enjoy the entertainment at the fun park. All 7 units are **pet-friendly** but at the pet owner's own risk.

Contact MD Swanepoel 083 321 1600
Email: swanepoel2@telkomsa.net
www.honnepondokkies.co.za

Daisy Country lodge

027 712 3335
078 328 2471

4-STAR GUESTHOUSE IN SPRINGBOK

Welcome home...

Daisy Country lodge is 4 km outside town. We offer a farm atmosphere and magnificent views overlooking the hills and valleys; a veritable oasis in the semi desert.

- * Buffet breakfast
- * Slippers and gowns in all the rooms
- * Bottle of wine to welcome you
- * Fully stocked mini bar fridge (biscuits/ something sweet)
- * Free bottled water
- * If you wish to order dinner in town and don't want to go back to collect, we will gladly collect on your behalf.

SPRINGBOK LODGE & RESTAURANT

EST 1947

- Accommodation – self-catering units & en-suite rooms
- Licenced à la carte restaurant • Factual books and maps
- Youth and children's books • Gifts and curios
- Art gallery with art of our local artists • Mineralogical display

Telephone: 027 7121321
Cell phone: 0832312359
E-mail: springboklodge1@gmail.com
www.springboklodge.co.za
37 Voortrekker Street, Springbok

PUT YOUR FEET UP & LET YOUR HAIR DOWN

Paternoster

SPRING FLOWERS
WORK AWAY FROM HOME
BEAUTIFUL SUNSETS
COSY FIRESIDE SNUGGLES

www.stayinpaternoster.co.za | reservations@stayinpaternoster.co.za
022 752 2048 | 083 204 1051

KATKOP

CENTRALLY LOCATED ON THE WEST COAST OF NAMAQUALAND

• Chalets • Camping • Venue • Swimming pool • Hiking trails

GRAAFWATER



Email: katkopoord@gmail.com • Whatsapp: 064 524 5529



Piekenierskloof
WINE COMPANY

Perched atop the Piekenierskloof pass overlooking Citrusdal you'll find **PIEKENIERSKLOOF MOUNTAIN RESORT** and a historic piece of land known as 'De Tol', which is home to the **PIEKENIERSKLOOF WINES**. Uninterrupted mountain views and genuine country hospitality will ensure that you find your home-away-from-home here. Visit the **PIEKENIERSKLOOF WINES TASTING ROOM** for honest food, exciting pairing experiences and excellent Piekenierskloof wines.

ACCOMMODATION:
Phone: +27 22 921 3574
Email: pkres@dreamresorts.co.za
www.piekenierskloof.co.za

WINE TASTING & EXPERIENCE:
Phone: +27 22 921 2233
Email: info@pkwc.co.za
www.piekenierskloofwines.co.za



SHOP \ MEDIA 24



COSY AT HOME WITH ALL YOUR FAVOURITE PUBLICATIONS

At the M24 Shop you'll find all our printed publications in one convenient place

media24shop.com

**R60
OFF**

your order
of R150
or more!

SHOP \ MEDIA 24

*Offer valid until 31 December 2023

BESTEL IN 3 MAKLIKE STAPPE:

1.

media24shop.com.
Browse the
collection & make
your selection.

2.

Add to cart and use
code: **#SPRING** upon
checkout for **R60 off**
your order

3.

Your order will
be on the way to
your door!



BIRDS

BY FAANSIE PEACOCK

BIRDING THROUGH THE YEARS

GETTY/GALLOIMAGES.COM



An essential birding skill is the ability to climb a farm fence – with permission of course. Get your friend to pull open two strands, make your back horizontal, watch your clothes on the sharp bits, and you're through.

On a few occasions – where I was being chased or chasing something – I've even leapt straight over with a running start. But this morning I found myself pausing to consider the best strategy. I'll admit it took a bit longer: My knees groaned in agony and something clicked in my spine. . .

Getting older is an unavoidable fact of life. But growing up is optional. As I strolled through the grass, my jeans getting wetter with every step, I reflected on three decades of birding.

When I was a fledgling birder in the late 1980s, there was a magical number: 800. If you'd seen 800 different species, you were immortalised in birding lore. Only a handful of folks ever reached that milestone and I knew all their names, because seeing 800 birds south of the Zambezi meant travelling countless kilometres, close calls with dangerous wildlife, a few bouts of malaria and perhaps an arrest or two.

Now, the number is 900. How did the threshold jump by 100, you ask, especially since birds are generally becoming rarer?

For a start, we've added quite a few new species to the list. Every year, dedicated birders and lucky laymen discover new "firsts" for our region. At the same time, bearded and bespectacled

ornithologists in museum back rooms keep splitting species. There used to be only one black korhaan, now there's a northern and southern black korhaan. And that's just one armchair tick among many.

The other question is: How did you hear about the latest rarity? Through the birding grapevine, of course! Nowadays, your phone will ping to tell you that a lesser yellowlegs was spotted at Geelbek hide at 8.37 am on an incoming tide – here's the pin.

Before the Internet, birders used to phone each other with news. Most times, once you'd heard about it and raced to the site the bird would be gone, but sometimes the rare bird would stick around. You might even read about it in the "newspaper" – remember those? I still have clippings with headlines like "Crazy birdwatchers flock to see rare so-and-so" and "Twitchers a-twitter over tiny bird".

Getting to the right spot was part of the challenge. Before any big trip, you would visit a fellow birder who had recently "been" and soak up as much info as possible: "Look for the rusted car wreck, then take the second footpath to the left until you see a boulder shaped like Madagascar. . ."

I have notebook upon dog-eared notebook filled with hand-drawn maps, scribbled lists of specials, and phone numbers in the margins. Still, getting hopelessly lost was part of the game!

Sea-watching also used to be a big thing. It's exactly what the name suggests. You find a nice blustery cliff, get comfortable, and watch the sea. Once an hour or so, a distant speck will shoot past and you'll almost choke on your sarmie. Unless you were a marine biologist, or willing to stow away on a Japanese fishing trawler, sea-watching was your only real option for ticking albatrosses, petrels and skuas.

Not so today: Multiple dedicated birding trips head out every weekend in search of pelagic birds. You can get right up close to them. Ever been splashed by pintado petrel guano? I have, and it was glorious!

Then there's the way birders identify birds. . .

There are books, websites, apps, courses and even AI available to help, but digital photography has truly revolutionised our hobby. Photography is no longer the domain of a few die-hards; nowadays you're more likely to see camera lenses pointing out of hides and game-drive vehicles than binoculars, giving fundis a forensic-level view of plumage features on their LCD screens.

I hope I don't sound like an old man rambling on about "the good old days". Truly, it has been an absolute wonder to see how popular and accessible birding has become. It's especially heart-warming to see how many young people are getting out in nature. I believe I can still bird alongside the sprightliest of these whippersnappers, because age is all in the mind, you know. Although my knees beg to disagree. . .

Plant a vacuum cleaner!

South Africa celebrates National Arbor Week from 29 August to 4 September. People across the country will plant trees during that week and you can, too!

COMPILED BY SOPHIA VAN TAAK

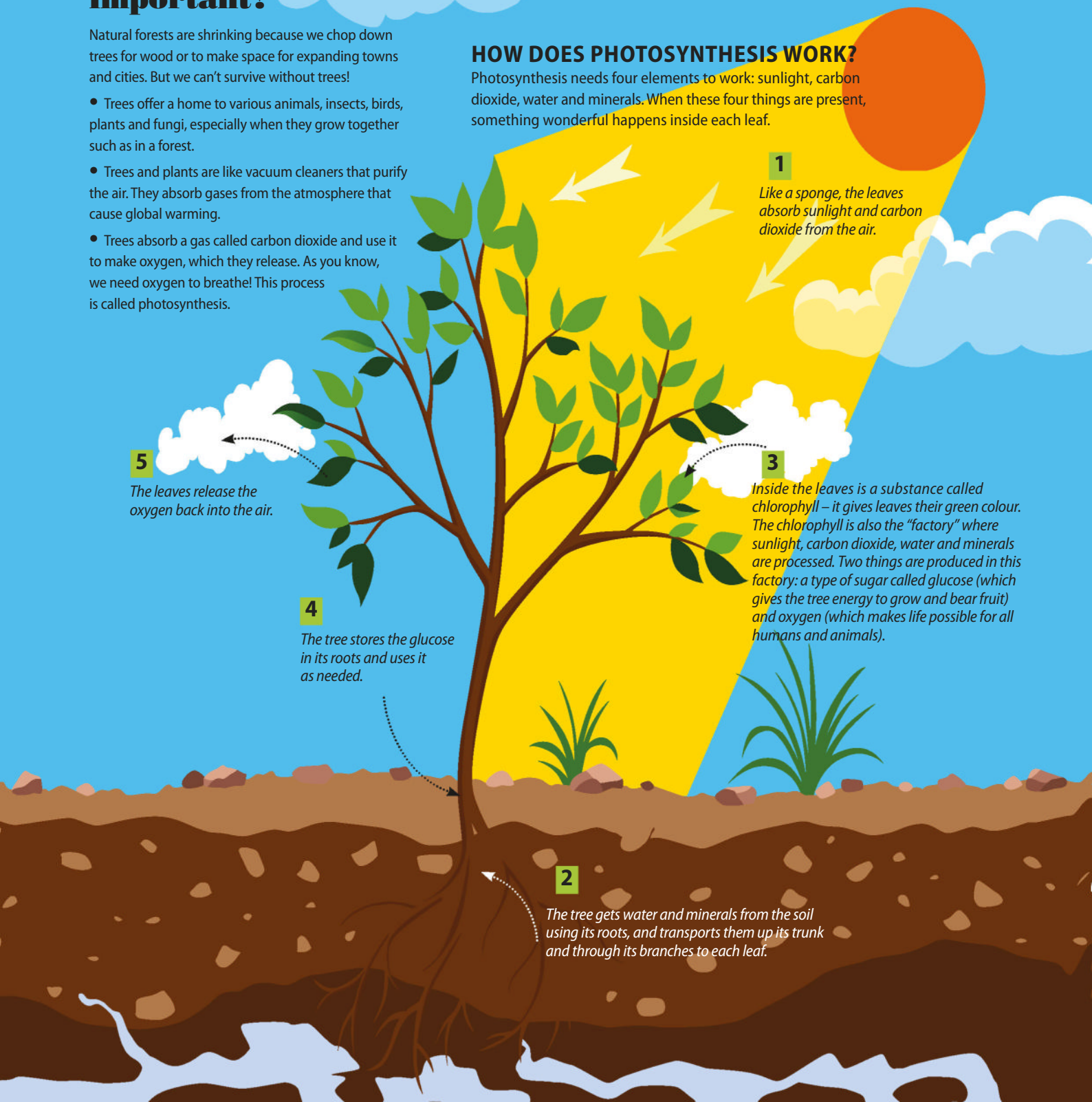
Why are trees important?

Natural forests are shrinking because we chop down trees for wood or to make space for expanding towns and cities. But we can't survive without trees!

- Trees offer a home to various animals, insects, birds, plants and fungi, especially when they grow together such as in a forest.
- Trees and plants are like vacuum cleaners that purify the air. They absorb gases from the atmosphere that cause global warming.
- Trees absorb a gas called carbon dioxide and use it to make oxygen, which they release. As you know, we need oxygen to breathe! This process is called photosynthesis.

HOW DOES PHOTOSYNTHESIS WORK?

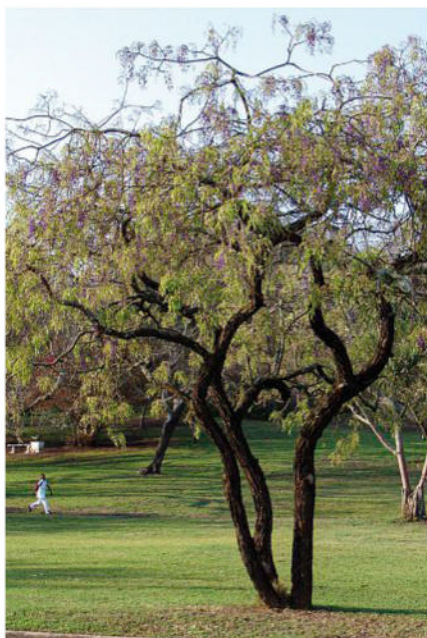
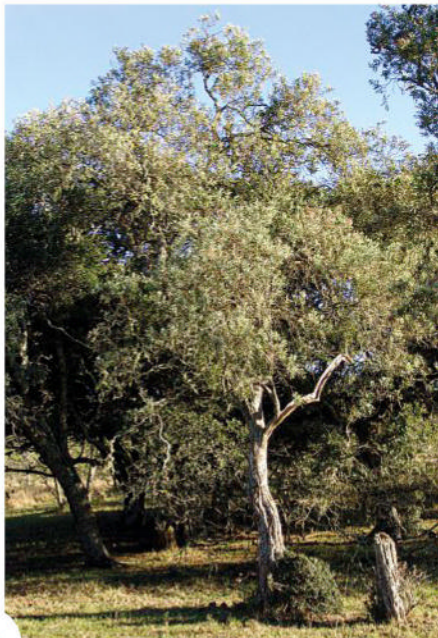
Photosynthesis needs four elements to work: sunlight, carbon dioxide, water and minerals. When these four things are present, something wonderful happens inside each leaf.



2023 Tree of the Year

Every year, two tree species are chosen as Tree of the Year
– a common species and a rare species.

GEOFF NICHOLS



COMMON SPECIES

Olive sagewood

Its leaves are long and thin like an olive tree's and it bears clusters of delicate, white flowers.



RARE SPECIES

Tree wisteria

Its flowers look like purple snapdragons and hang from the branches in bunches.

New words

Photosynthesis: Made up of two Greek words: photo meaning "light", and synthesis meaning "to put together" or "to make".

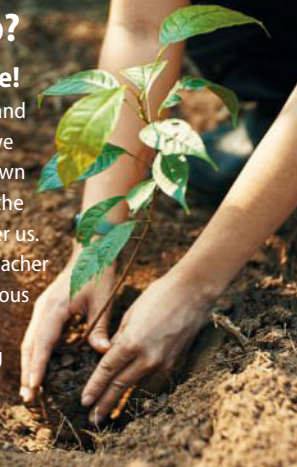
Chlorophyll: Also made up of two Greek words: khloros, which means "pale green" or "fresh"; and phyllon, which means "leaf".

Arboretum: Arbor means "tree" in Latin. An arboretum is a garden with many different types of trees. The trees are usually marked with plates that show the tree's common name, its botanical name and its number on the tree list. Yes, every tree species in South Africa has its own unique number! The olive sagewood is number 636.

How can I help?

You can plant a tree!

The tree may only be big and tall when you're old, but we never plant trees for our own generation but rather for the people who will come after us. Ask your parents or your teacher if you can plant an indigenous tree in your garden or on the school grounds during Arbor Week.



WHICH TREE IS THAT?

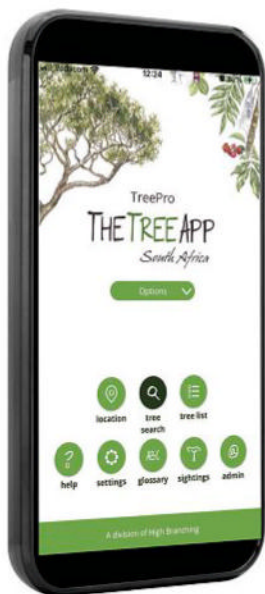
Download TheTreeApp by TreePro and all of South Africa's trees (about 1 100 species) can fit in your pocket! All indigenous trees that grow taller than 3 m are listed on the app. Well-known invasive species like jacaranda are also featured.

You can select a reserve, vegetation zone or even a spot on a map to see which trees are found there. The search function allows you to use tree characteristics like leaves, fruit or thorns to figure out which species you're looking at, and you can type in any tree's name to look it up.

For each tree, there are illustrations of its leaves, pods, flowers and thorns. You also get lots of information about what the tree looks like, how it grows, where it occurs and whether it's an endangered species. You can even compile your own list of trees you've seen.

How do I get it?

If you have an iPhone, look in the Apple App Store. Android users can find it in the Google Play store. A subscription costs R180 per year.



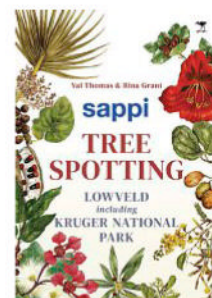
GALLO/GETTYIMAGES.COM

WIN A BOOK!

New editions of the Sappi Tree Spotting series are being published this year. The first book, about the indigenous trees of the Lowveld and the Kruger National Park, is already available. Two readers can win a copy for their family or classroom!

To enter, send a photo of you planting an indigenous tree to sophia@weg.co.za before 11 September 2023.

Turn to page 33 for a review of the new book series.



Sources: www.gov.za; treetags.co.za; treeproapp.com; forestry.co.za

WE'LL TAKE YOU TO THE **MOUNTAINS**

UP THE MIGHTY **SWARTBERG**
THROUGH THE CURIOUS **KLEIN KAROO**
OVER THE MAGICAL **MONTAGU PASS**

14 October 2023

Prince Albert to George | Western Cape

Gravel / Mountain / E-Bikes (only on the 50 Miler)

Choose your bike and distance to conquer a
monumental race over two national monuments
exploring three geographical areas

www.princegeorge.co.za



165km / 2500m

75km / 1000m



PROUDLY ANOTHER DRYLAND EVENT



PRINCE GEORGE

MONUMENTAL 100 MILER

Discover the *beautiful* HESSEQUA

THE GATEWAY TO THE GARDEN ROUTE!



HESSEQUA TOURISM

+27 (0) 28 713 7953

info@explorersgardenroute.co.za

www.explorersgardenroute.co.za



Hessequa is a Khoi-Khoi word referring to a group of indigenous people who lived in the area hundreds of years ago. The word means **people of the trees**. The Hessequa area comprises the popular holiday towns of Witsand, Heidelberg, Slangrivier, Riversdale, Vermaaklikheid, Stilbaai, Jongensfontein, Melkhoutfontein, Albertinia and Gouritsmond.

This holiday region is halfway between Cape Town and Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), with the N2 route meandering through the area in a snakelike way. Riversdale is viewed as the region's administrative capital and connects to the bike-friendly Route 62 which in turn connects to the Klein Karoo, via the beautiful Garcia's mountain pass.

The George regional airport is a mere 60 minutes' drive from Hessequa.

WHALE-WATCHING

Witsand, a coastal town and home to the Breede River Mouth, offers some of South Africa's best whale-watching opportunities, between June and November, where these giants breed in the lukewarm water of the Indian Ocean. In this town, you'll discover a treasure chest of gravel roads, ideal for mountain-biking and some challenges for your new 4x4.

WORLD HERITAGE SITE & INDIGENOUS FOREST

The Grootvadersbosch nature reserve, an indigenous forest outside of Heidelberg, boasts world heritage site status and offers visitors a unique experience with a variety of forest hiking trails and accommodation options. Adjacent to this indigenous forest is the Boosmansbos wilderness area, a veritable playground for bird enthusiasts.

Tel: 087 087 8250
www.capenature.co.za

THE CHAMPION WHISPERING TREE

The champion whispering tree at the Voëlroepersfontein Guest House in Albertinia is estimated to be more than 150 years old and entertains visitors from everywhere.

Tel: 083 228 2779
www.vrfguesthouse.co.za

ARCHEOLOGY

Stilbaai, one of South Africa's most popular holiday towns, has archaeological gems, with the Stilbaai Point in the internationally renowned Blombos Cave, and the historical Fish Traps, which are excellent examples of the evolution of humankind.

Tel: 028 754 2602 | www.hesva.org.za

FISHING MECCA IN SOUTH AFRICA

The beautiful coastal town of Gouritsmond offers unbelievable fishing opportunities in the Indian Ocean and the Gourits River. The Gouritsmond has become known as a fishing mecca in South Africa.



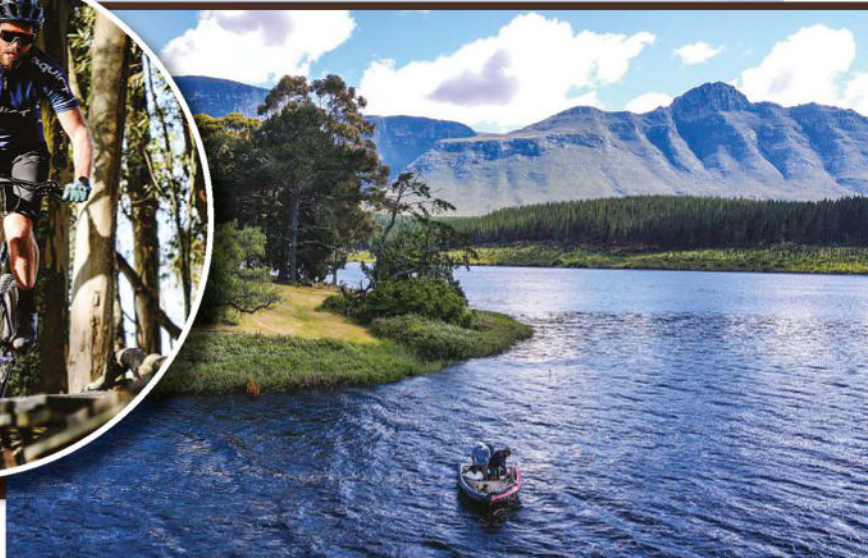
CALENDAR:

- **Hessequa Harmonie** - Heidelberg: 19-23 September
- **Albertinia Aloe Festival**: 6-8 October
- **Stilbaai Funduro**: 11 November
- **Vlakte Marathon** - Heidelberg: 25 November
- **Hessequa Art Exhibition** - Stilbaai: 14-17 December
- **Stilbaai Touchies**: 26 December
- **Riversdale Agriculture Show**: 14-18 February
- **Dibiki Mountain Bike Race** - Riversdal: 22 June

SLEEPING BEAUTY MOUNTAIN PEAK

The Sleeping beauty mountain peak in Riversdale enchants holiday makers. This peak, which stands 1 343 meters tall, forms part of the 12 kilometre long stretch of the Sleeping Beauty hiking trail and is a local natural wonder.

Tel: 087 087 8250 | www.capenature.co.za





Willem Kruger from Bloemfontein is used to seeing leopards in the Kruger Park, but this particular interaction was special.

In September 2020, after the Covid-19 lockdown, my wife Teresa and I decided we had to get away for a bit. We spent two weeks in the Kruger Park, at Lower Sabie, Skukuza, Balule, Olifants and Mopani. We saw 15 different leopards in total, among other places between Skukuza and Lower Sabie, and near Crocodile Bridge and Mopani.

While we were staying at Olifants, we drove out one morning on the H1-4 towards Satara, like we'd done the day before. There wasn't much to see and we turned around when we got to Satara. About halfway between Satara and Olifants, we noticed several vehicles in the road and pulled over, too.

They were watching a young female leopard. She rested for a while then moved

around to mark her territory. She then climbed into a big apple-leaf tree **1** to scan her surroundings. After a few minutes, she made herself comfortable and fell asleep.

Some of the other vehicles drove off because it looked like the action was over – and we did the same. But we'd only driven about 300m when we saw a second, older, female leopard step out of the riverbed. **2** She was heading towards the tree where the younger one was taking a nap...

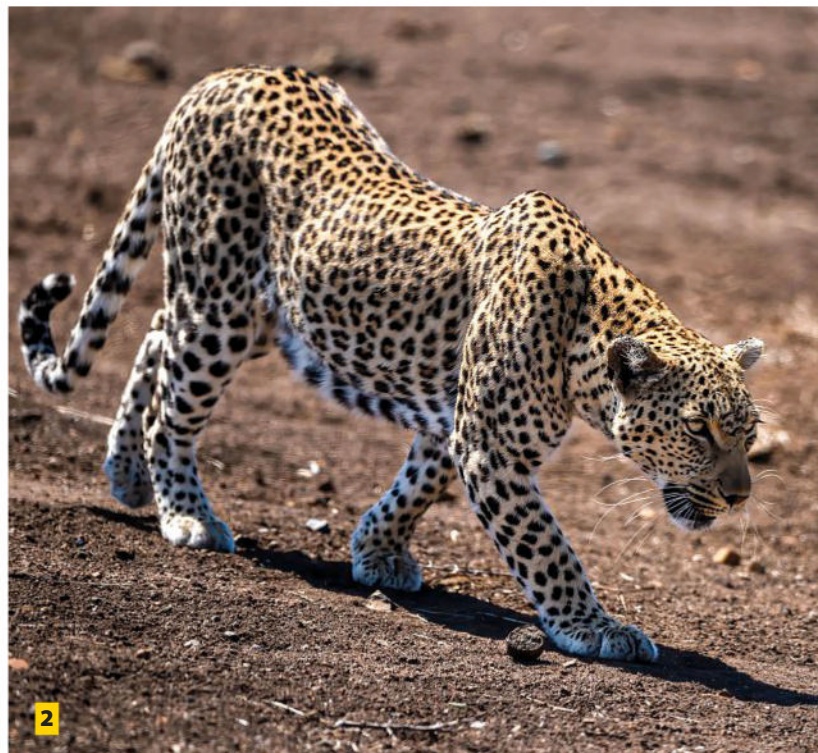
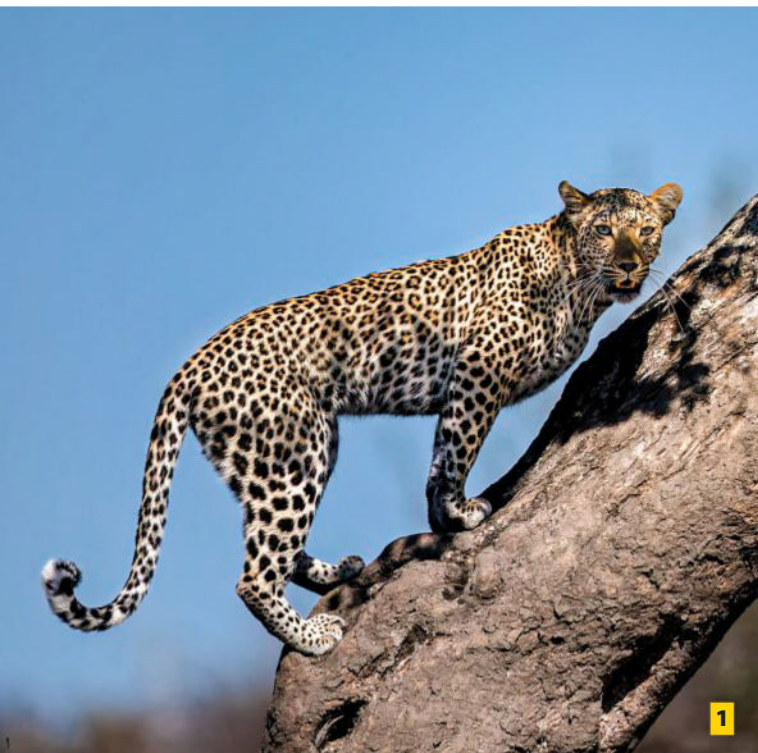
Leopards are territorial and don't tolerate other leopards in their area. We turned around and drove back to the apple-leaf tree. We were in position when the older leopard arrived and sniffed at the markings on the trunk. She looked up, saw

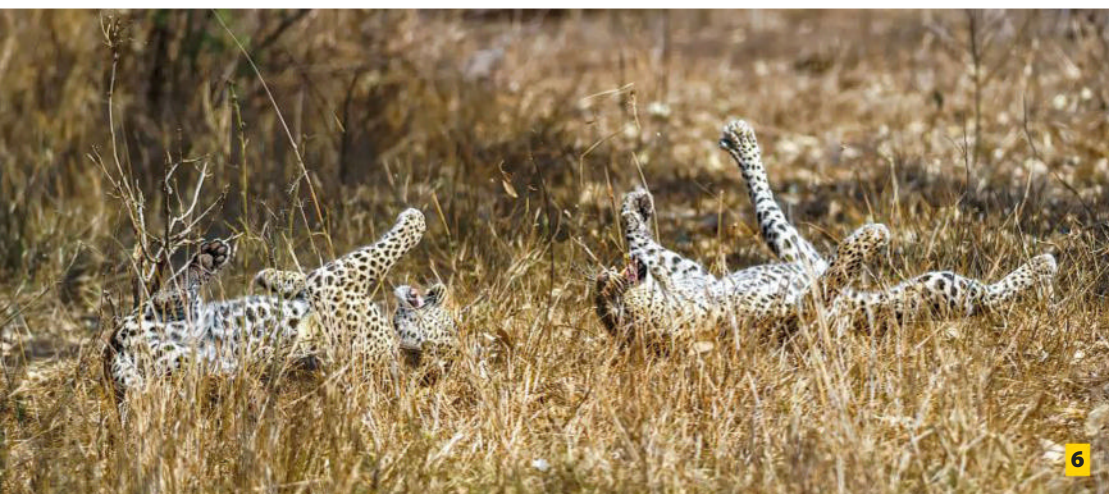
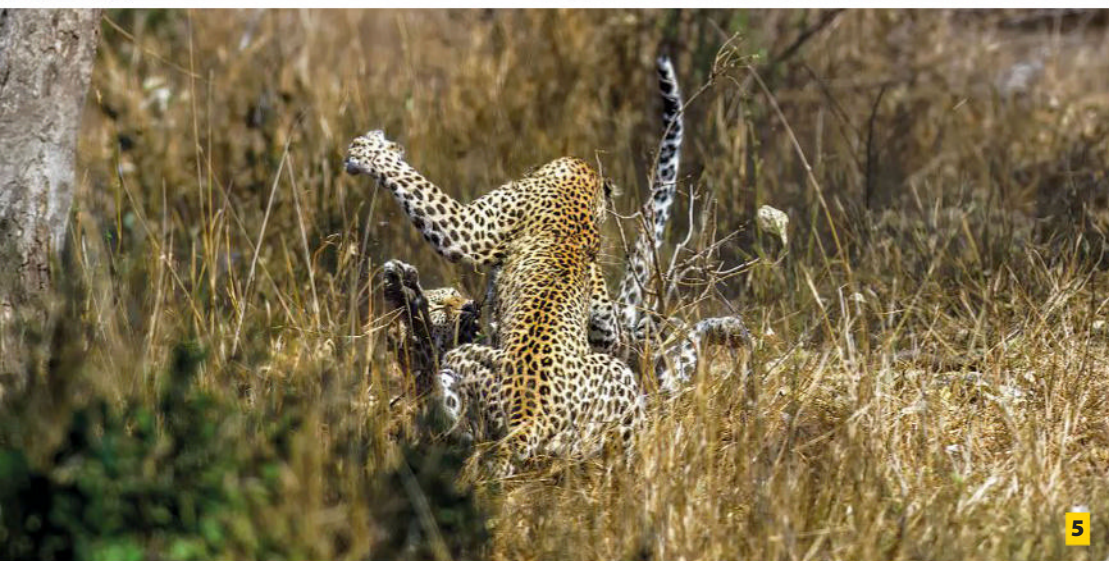
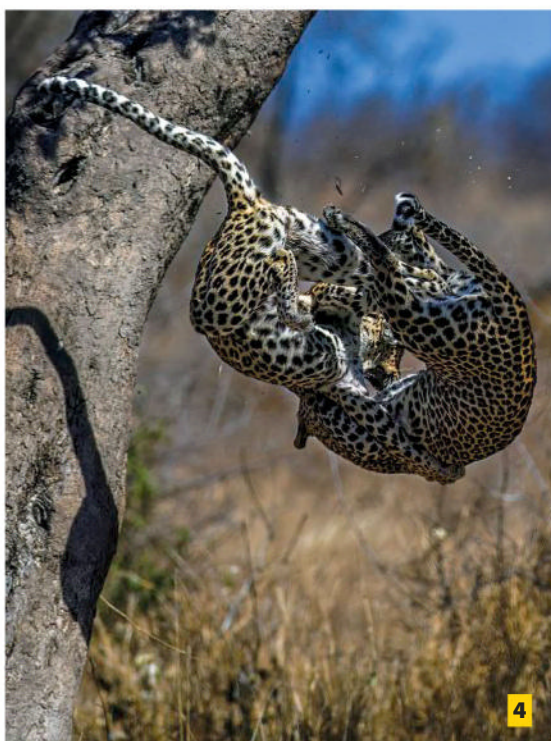
the younger leopard, leapt into the tree and sent fur flying!

The older leopard didn't hold back and almost jumped on top of the younger one. **3** The attack was so aggressive, they both lost their balance and fell almost 5 m to the ground! **4** They landed on top of each other and continued to fight. **5**

Suddenly both leopards rolled onto their backs – a sign of submission. **6** Both got up and the older leopard walked away while the younger one started to mark her territory again.

I'm sure the pair were mother and daughter since mother leopards will often cede part of their territories to female offspring. When they're old enough, male cubs will usually move away and establish a new territory.





WIN!

**R1 000 GIFT FROM
LEATHERPRESS**



We publish eyewitness accounts of incredible animal encounters in the wild. Send your story and photos to toast@gomag.co.za and you could win two large Leatherpress journals worth R1 000 in total!

A Leatherpress journal is your ultimate travel companion. Capture your moments and memories – a glorious sunset or a special bird. This is a proudly South African product, and the attention to detail puts Leatherpress products in a class of their own. The collection boasts 100% full-grain South African leather, with classical stitching and binding methods.

Journals are available at exclusivebooks.co.za/page/leatherpress



The white wilderness

Along the coastline of Antarctica, **Toast Coetzer** saw icebergs and orcas – but first he had to brave stormy seas...



A flurry of snow falls in the early morning on Half Moon Island – part of the South Shetland Islands near Antarctica – as photographers approach a gentoo penguin.

Opposite page, clockwise from the top: These prominent rocks along the rugged coastline of Deception Island are called Sewing Machine Needles. Apparently a rock arch once connected them, but in 1924, an earthquake caused it to collapse into the sea. Toast with Ida Bester, one of the readers on the trip. In the background other guests arrive at Half Moon Island. Orcas are more closely related to dolphins than they are to whales. They can easily weigh six tonnes and have a life expectancy of up to 80 years. During a Zodiac excursion at Spert Island, the photographers navigated narrow waterways between steep rock faces.

It's not easy to shower at sea, especially when it's so choppy that the captain has forbidden passengers from being on deck. When you're in the small stainless-steel cubicle, it feels like you're trapped inside a phone booth while an elephant kicks you down the road...

The sea had been rough ever since we left South Georgia Island in a snowstorm a few days previously. I'd been swallowing seasick tablets like Smarties, but I was still so nauseous that I skipped breakfast. My roommate, Guts Swanepoel from Pangolin Photo Safaris, had no such problems – he was in the communal area above our sleeping quarters giving a photography lecture about how to expose correctly in snowy conditions.

I managed to shower and I got dressed carefully. The ship, the *MV Ushuaia*, wasn't only rocking from side to side – sometimes an unexpected swell rolled in and it felt as if we'd hit a pothole while tumbling down a hill. In my cabin, it was way too easy to fall over, especially while pulling on a sock.

Hernán Escudero, the ship's eccentric Chilean hospitality manager, peeked through the door. He saw I was a little green around the gills and wanted to say something encouraging. He went with: "Have a nice day in paradise!"

What could I do but laugh? I thanked him and lay down again. About an hour later, Hernán's voice came over the intercom: "Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, the restaurant is now open for lunch..."

At 11.30am, lunch was slightly earlier than normal because Elephant Island was close by and everyone wanted to get outside to see it. This inhospitable shard of land is where the explorer Ernest Shackleton and his men sought shelter after their ship, the *Endurance*, sank in the Weddell Sea in 1915.

But the weather bowled another googly and we entered a dense fog bank. Elephant Island was gone. King and gentoo penguins swam around us (they can leap out of the water like dolphins – it's called porpoising) while groups of Cape petrels swept low over the water and landed whenever they saw something to eat. Southern fulmar and southern giant petrels also glided around the ship.

It was the last week of our almost three-week tour. I was travelling with keen wildlife photographers from South Africa, America and other countries. The Falkland Islands (issue #187) and South Georgia (#188) had been amazing, but now we were finally about to see Antarctica. The previous day, we'd got a taste of what was to come when an enormous tabular iceberg drifted past the ship about a kilometre away. It was the size of a few city blocks. The White Continent was waiting...

A world of wonder

The journey from South Georgia Island to the Antarctic Peninsula took about four days due to poor weather. But then the South Shetland Islands (about 115 km off the coast of Antarctica) appeared one morning and made all my Antarctic fantasies come true before lunchtime.

At daybreak we reached tiny Half Moon Island next to Livingston Island. As we went ashore, alongside an unperturbed welcoming committee of fur seals and gentoo penguins, it started to snow! The snow reached up to our hips in places. Half Moon is home to a colony of chinstrap penguins and for the next few hours, our group of photographers – about 80 people in total – moved from one scene to the next in search of the perfect photo. It was mating season and the penguins would throw their heads back and call to attract a mate. Sometimes one would lie on its stomach and slide down a slope like a toboggan.

Then the snow cleared as fast as it had arrived, and the clouds lifted to show more of the landscape. Black rocks poked through the white blanket. Our yellow, blue and red jackets and the orange structure of an Argentinian research base (unmanned during our visit) were the only splashes of colour. But soon we would leave, and only the kelp gulls and snowy sheathbills (white, chicken-like birds) would remain.

Back on the ship, we continued south-west with the glinting mountain peaks and glacial valleys of Livingston Island to the starboard side. (Starboard is on the right when you look at the bow, or the front, of the ship.) The sun was out and the sky was blue – it was the end of October and early summer in Antarctica.

As the weather conditions changed, so did our itinerary. We had originally planned to stop at another Argentinian base on the Antarctic Peninsula, but the wind had been too strong so we headed to Half Moon Island, which was more sheltered.

It took a while to get used to the unexpected changes in our travel plans. Because we'd also had weather delays on the long journey from the Falkland Islands to South Georgia, and again from there to here, our days on the coast of Antarctica had been cut short. Soon we had to turn back to Ushuaia in Argentina, where our tour had started. Thank goodness the weather gods were smiling on us now.

Suddenly the guests stirred – there were whales on both sides of the ship. You could hear them breathing as they surfaced for air. Everyone rushed outside with their cameras. The expedition team identified the whales as either fin whales or sei whales – respectively the second and third biggest species after the blue whale.



GUTS SWANEPOEL



RACHAEL VAN ZYL

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Guts Swanepoel from Pangolin Photo Safaris gets some shots of the chinstrap penguin colony on Half Moon Island. Josie Norfolk (at the back, left) from Melkbosstrand and Kristyn Taylor from Australia play cards on board the ship with two Kiwis, John Perrin (front) and Garry Carter. Josie Norfolk enjoyed taking photographs of rusted metal objects like these on Deception Island. Chinstrap penguins rest on an iceberg floating near the coast of Antarctica. Photographers line up on the pebbly shore of D'Hainaut Island to shoot penguins as they swim to land. The *MV Ushuaia* aims at the narrow gap called Neptune's Bellows at Deception Island. A gentoo penguin makes itself heard.

Luckily there was time for one last braai on deck. Of all the guests, it seemed like the South Africans most enjoyed being outside and talking to the braai masters.

But wait, what was that? Tall black dorsal fins also broke the surface – there were several orcas among the whales! Were they hunting the calves, someone wondered?

Before long, Deception Island appeared – a horseshoe-shaped caldera of an active volcano visible above the water. There's an opening on one side of the caldera and the crater is filled with water – that's where we were headed. It sounds like a dumb idea, but there hasn't been a serious eruption here in decades.

The captain navigated the *MV Ushuaia* through the narrow channel called Neptune's Bellows. The water was calm inside and the ship made a sharp right turn to Whalers Bay. Rubber boats took us to the black, volcanic beach, where steam was rising into the air. Gentoo penguins stood around, waiting for their photo session. I placed my palm against the sand – it felt warm-ish, or at least not freezing cold. Something pink floated on the waves – it seemed to be dead krill, maybe killed by the gases in the water? The rotten-egg smell of hydrogen sulphide and sulphur dioxide hung in the air.

Buildings stood on level ground behind the beach: I could make out the remains of pressure cookers from a whaling station and the fuel tanks of a British military base from World War II. There was also a research station here until the volcano erupted in the late 1960s.

Before we returned to the ship, the more daring among us did a polar plunge. The water was still cold despite the volcano lurking somewhere in the depths, but I've had colder swims at Clifton in Cape Town.

In search of icebergs

Our plan was to get up at 3.30 am to watch the sunrise but when my alarm went off, Guts looked through the portal next to his bed and told me it was overcast.

So, we rolled out of bed at 6.30 am and went up to take photos on deck. I regretted sleeping in because there were icebergs all around! They were small and each one looked different – some were as big as townhouses, others as small as a Citi Golf; some were bulky and cubist, others had spirals and towers like something out of Disneyland.

During the night, we'd travelled closer to the Antarctic Peninsula, going south-west along the Gerlache Strait to Two Hummock Island, where we turned around shortly before breakfast and headed north-east again.

The weather conditions were favourable and the White Continent was now on our starboard side. I took photos and studied details through my Fujinon binoculars. It's a place of rugged beauty – snow on a dome-like peak looked like an iced-over stadium; a mountain rose from the uneven horizon like the claw of a Tyrannosaurus rex. I was acutely aware of how hostile this landscape is if you're not a penguin or a fur seal.

The icebergs grew smaller and smaller and eventually the ship moved through a sheet of loose blocks; each one so small it looked like it could fit into a beer glass. Our destination was Mikkelsen Harbour, where the small D'Hainaut Island rests in a bay next to bigger Trinity Island. We disembarked to spend time with a colony of gentoo penguins. I stood about halfway up a low hill and pointed out photo opportunities to guests.

As I stood there, I tried to take in my surroundings: the gleaming white landscape, thousands of penguins, the ship on the icy blue water... And it hit me: I was in Antarctica!

After lunch on the ship, we travelled north up the coast of Trinity Island to a craggy outcrop called Spert Island. We piled into the rubber boats again: The expedition team had hoped that we'd find icebergs, but the sea had other ideas – there wasn't a single iceberg in sight. The swell grew too big and the message came in over the boat's radio: "Return to the ship." The rest of the afternoon became a somewhat desperate attempt to find icebergs, which we eventually managed to do.

With the sun low on the horizon, we lingered somewhere in the northern section of the Gerlache Strait. A pod of whales swam past and when they came up for air, plumes of spray caught the light.

Guts gathered the guests for a team photo on the top deck. It had now started to sink in that our tour was coming to an end. The ship's bar was busy until late. Around 10 pm, it was still light enough outside to see the snow-capped peaks on the ice continent while stars flickered in the cold night sky.

In the end, we only had two full days on the coast of Antarctica. The captain and our expedition leader studied the weather forecasts and decided to travel to South America through the Drake Passage so we could be back in Ushuaia in time. The ship was scheduled to depart on its next tour the same day that we got back.

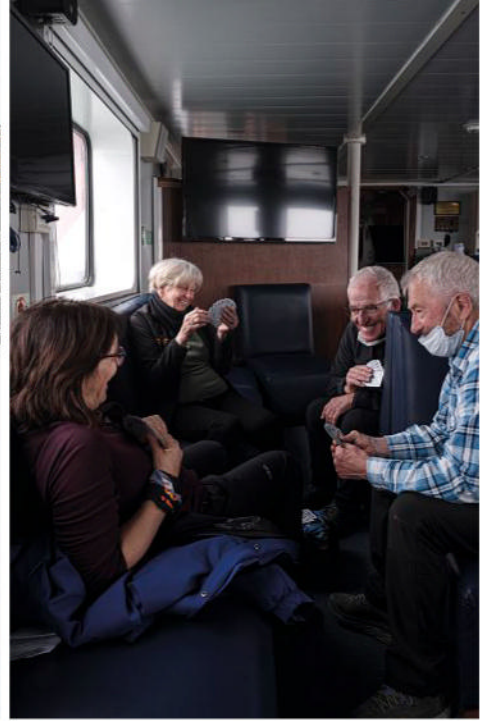
During the night, the captain quietly steered us back to Half Moon Island. A faint pink glow shimmered through the clouds at sunrise, but it was a grey day. Our interlude of perfect weather was over – the next storm was on its way.

Luckily there was time for one last braai on deck. Of all the guests, it seemed like the South Africans most enjoyed being outside and talking to the braai masters. Chefs Fernando Vasquez and Hector Campaña threw big chunks of Argentinian beef on the grid.

Snow started to fall and we laughed and took photos. When would we ever get the chance to braai together in the snow again, only a penguin's swim from Antarctica?



RICHARD VAN ZYL



RICHARD VAN ZYL



IDA BESTER



IDA BESTER



GISELA BIERI

KERTU SAARITS



This group travelled with Pangolin Photo Safaris. Back row, from left: Rachael van Zyl and Richard van Zyl from Gauteng, Gustav Bester (Stellenbosch), Paul Drake, Deena Sveinsson, Robin Drake (all three from the USA), Gareth Midwood (Boksburg), Peter Franklin (Simon's Town) and Toast Coetzer. Middle row: Judy van Zyl (Kempton Park), Ida Bester (Stellenbosch), Josie Norfolk (Melkbosstrand), Renee and Steve McMillan (USA), Di Franklin (Simon's Town), Kristyn Taylor (Australia), Gisela Bieri (Switzerland) and Carrie and Colin Mostert from Cape Town. Kneeling in front are April Vass (USA), Guts Swanepoel and Eiko Hariu (Japan).



IN OTHER WORDS

Gisela Bieri, Switzerland

"Life on the ship was a great adventure for me. The long days we spent at sea were fine, but it would have been more relaxing without the storms!"

"I enjoyed the landscapes of Antarctica very much, especially the icebergs. I wish we'd done more landings there and seen more of the wildlife of Antarctica, but it simply wasn't possible because of the weather."



Gareth Midwood, Boksburg

"Coming from South Africa, where we hardly ever see snow, it was amazing to see so much of the white stuff and the most picturesque scenery you can imagine."

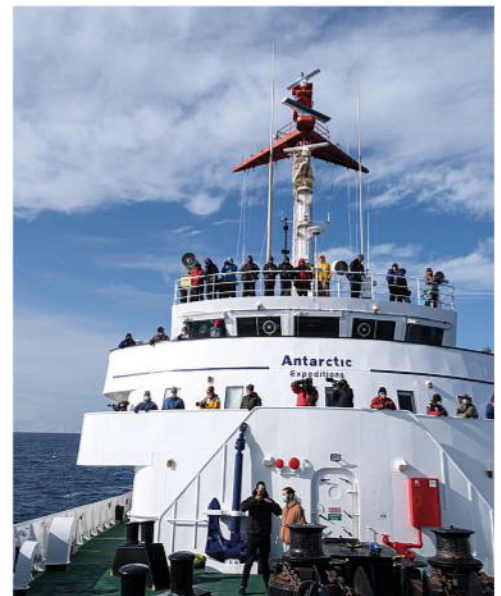
"It was really interesting how different it all was: Ushuaia, the Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica. We went from mountains with a bit of snow on them in Ushuaia, to Antarctica where it was more like a whole lot of snow with some mountain sticking out underneath."



Ida and Gustav Bester, Stellenbosch

"Antarctica and its otherworldly beauty overwhelms your senses. Our planet's freezer is intimidating and vulnerable, beautiful and terrifying at the same time. It's a photographer's paradise, rounded out by the strange animal sounds and smells, the intense cold, the roar of the wind and the ever-changing sea conditions. Wherever you point your camera, you'll find a photo – with the help of Guts from Pangolin Photo Safaris, of course."

"The accommodation on board was comfortable despite the fact that you sometimes had to hold on when the ship entered the open sea!"



APRIL VASS

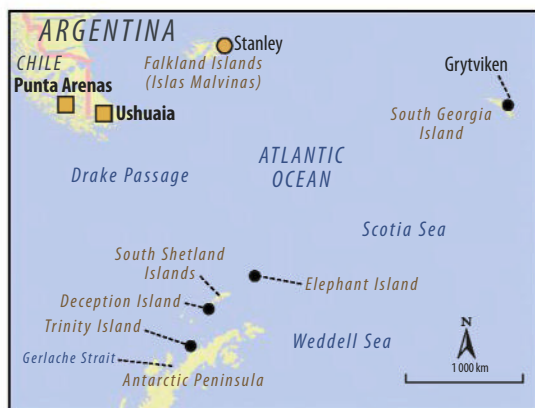
Gentoo penguins in
Mikkelsen Harbour on
D'Hainaut Island look like
ants against the immense
ice slopes of the bigger
Trinity Island.





PETER FRANKLIN

The MV Ushuaia at anchor in Whalers Bay, Deception Island.



Thank you to Pangolin Photo Safaris for the opportunity to join this tour; thanks to Fujifilm for the use of their cameras, lenses and binoculars; and thanks to Leatherpress (leatherpress.com) for the beautiful notebooks!

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

How to get there? Our return flight with Qatar Airways from Johannesburg to Doha and on to Argentina cost about R19 000 per person. Some of the other guests flew to Argentina with Turkish Airlines via Istanbul, and with KLM via Amsterdam.

How does a tour like this work? Almost all tours to Antarctica are done by ship – you always sleep and eat on board. Most tours depart from Argentina (Ushuaia) or Chile (Punta Arenas) and they only visit the Antarctic Peninsula. Our tour was a longer expedition of close to three weeks, which included the Falkland Islands and South Georgia Island.

Cost: Our 20-day tour cost about US\$20 000. This included all meals. Tours that only visit the Antarctic Peninsula are shorter and more affordable (from about US\$6 000), depending on how much luxury you want.

More about Pangolin: Pangolin Photo Safaris offers most of their wildlife photography tours in Botswana. They also have photography tours elsewhere in the world. Visit pangolinphoto.com for more information.



GEAR

Fujinon binoculars

I used the TS12x28 Techno Stabi (with image stabilisation) and the HC8x42 Hyper-Clarity (pictured). The Techno Stabi has electronic image stabilisation so you have a better view of what's happening in the distance, especially if you're on a moving ship and you want to watch a whale in the water or a bird flying through the air. The battery lasts for up to 12 hours and the binoculars switch off automatically if they're put down for 10 minutes to prevent the battery from draining. They weigh a bit more than 500 g and don't feel like a millstone around your neck.

The Hyper-Clarity bins are sturdy but still easy to handle, and the construction is smart: They're waterproof and the lenses won't fog over when you're in a stuffy room. Most important of all: The image is crisp and crystal clear.

Cost: TS12x28 Techno Stabi R10 295; HC8x42 Hyper-Clarity R10 446 – both at orms.co.za. More information fujifilm-x.co.za/binoculars



PREPARED TO DEFEND

NO LICENSE REQUIRED, IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE

The **Byrna SD** is powered by compressed air (CO₂).



The compact design of the **Byrna SD** is ideal for concealed-carry and can be taken virtually anywhere.

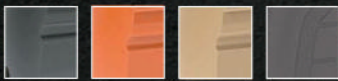
When the trigger is pulled in fire mode, the trigger mechanism simultaneously pierces the **cylinder** and shoots the first projectile.

.68 Caliber round kinetic projectiles & chemical irritant projectiles can disable a threat from up to 60-feet away.

BYRNA SD READY KIT **R5 999**

KIT INCLUDES:

Available in 4 different colours:
Black, Orange, Tan & Tungsten



- 2 x 8 g CO₂ cylinders
- 2 x 5 round magazine
- 1 x 5 round kinetic projectiles
- 1 x 5 round Max Projectiles
- 1 x 5 round ECO-k kinetic projectiles



Available at Participating Outdoor and Firearm retailers.

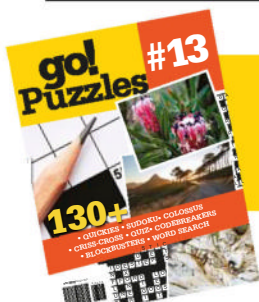
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY GERDA ENGELBRECHT

SOLUTION ON PAGE 99

			Pass in Lesotho	Occupancy	Gloomy Lyrical poem	Nobelium (symbol)	Concervancy outside Stellen- bosch			
			Imaginary					Conclusion		
			Muscle							
Idealist		Retaliate				Helium (symbol)		Ignited		Audacity
Cry		Pretender				Hollows		Complain		Cast a ballot
			No (archaic) Whether		Scheme Chime					
Defame					Hunter					
Indefinite article		Every Tin (symbol)		Squeak Cow sound			Farm structure		Flat- screen, eg	
			Belonging to me Caught		@ Close		Personal assistant (abbr)	Sheltered side (boat)		
Small hotels				Nodded Striped equine						
A dance						Beam of light Scarlet				
		Discharge								
Pointed end				Handles Permits			Carry	Hiking trail along the Garden Route		
SA coin										
			Capable			Text message (abbr)			Each Anger	Feature
			A... on the wrist	Lawren- cium (symbol)		Dal segno (abbr) External	DStv channel 147			
					Parents Run					
Picnic area in the Kruger	Capri, eg Owns	Flatbread Under- stand	Problem Devoured				Republic (abbr) Attempt			
						Platter You and I			Manga- nese (symbol)	
Most recent				Brooch			Wool source	Monaco (internet domain name)		
Pitch										
			Test							

EVAN NAUDÉ; ESMA MARNEWICK; SUZAAN HALL; FRANÇOIS HAASBROEK



go! Puzzles 13 is now available!

Buy a copy at your local shop (R85) or order from our online store media24shop.com



Why on earth would you camp in a big city like Windhoek, when there are so many other places to stay?

Wake up at UrbanCamp, says **Toast Coetzer**, and you'll see why.

I am up before sunrise. It's still dark and quiet in the camp, but half a block away, traffic stirs on Nelson Mandela Avenue. My morning routine kicks in. I take my Cadac gas stove out of the boot of my Subaru Forester and pour water into a pot. Once the water has boiled, I make coffee in a plunger. I take the pot of water off the stove and replace it with a pan so I don't have to light the flame again. I crack two eggs in the pan and minutes later, breakfast is served. Timing is important here because my coffee should still be hot. To go with the eggs, I cut open a few magwinya and slather them with marula achar. Magwinya are small, round vetkoek; I bought them at a street kitchen in Maun in Botswana a few days ago. The marula achar was a gift from Henk Lategan, owner of the Baobab Biltong Farm Stall in Marnitz, Limpopo.

I'd been on the road for two weeks before I arrived in Marnitz. I started my tour in Stanford in the Western Cape, drove through the Little Karoo and Eastern Cape, took the N1 to Johannesburg and travelled on.

My itinerary in Botswana included Palapye, Nata, Maun and Ghanzi, then I crossed into Namibia at Mamuno. Yesterday, I drove to Windhoek via Gobabis. Tomorrow is the start of the next chapter of my journey, when my friend Douwe Vlok and I will travel through Damaraland and the Kaokoveld with a group of *go!* readers.

So, this morning is a good time to rest and get my bearings. The longer you travel, the more you grow accustomed to different kinds of adventures. One day you're three metres from an elephant at Elephant Sands; the next day a meerkat climbs onto your shoulder at Planet Baobab; the day thereafter you're floating down the Okavango Delta in a mokoro, keeping an eye out for hippos.

Sometimes you have to sit still with a cup of coffee to file these memories away before you head out to experience the next highlight reel.

It's 8 am now and a church bell tolls in the nearby suburb. It reminds me that it's Sunday today. The days of the week tend to fade away when you travel. Dates, too.

I'm camped on stand #10 at UrbanCamp, right at the back against the fence of the property. The fence is definitely "urban" because it's as high as a game fence with razor wire spun along the top and the bottom. As I study these security measures, I notice what lies beyond the fence: a patch of veld where smaller thorn trees were chopped down recently. Suddenly two heads peek out of a burrow – yellow mongooses! There are actually several burrows... this must be a colony. These mongooses roam alone by day, but at night they sleep together in groups, like meerkats. There's another one!

The clear call of a crimson-breasted shrike draws my attention to a big thorn tree that's still standing. White-browed sparrow-weavers start to chatter in another tree; I can see their nests made of fine blades of grass.

A small bird hops from branch to branch. It's some kind of chat, but which one? I pull out my cellphone and open Faansie Peacock's new Firefinch app. I type in "chat" and the species found in southern Africa appear on screen. I look up to find the bird again. It has a light orange breast. I look at the app again. Yes, it must be a pririt batis.

In a dead tree about 20m further away, the movement of another small bird catches my eye. What is it? I can't see it clearly because it's etched against the bright morning light.

The bird is doing an early-morning dance: It hops to the side and puffs out its breast, hops the other way and puffs out its breast again. Is that a piece of grass in its beak?

I'll have to take a photo and identify it later. I walk to my car, mount the zoom lens on my camera, and return to the fence. As I lift my camera to my eye, the bird flies off.

Want to join go! and Heuningland on a tour of the Kunene Region in Namibia in 2024? Contact info@heuningland.com for more information.

*Sometimes you have to sit still with
a cup of coffee to file these memories
away before you head out to
experience the next highlight reel.*



Getting an early start in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is never a bad idea. You avoid the midday heat and there are lots of photo opportunities in the soft light.

This juvenile pale chanting goshawk had caught what seems to be a barn owl in the Nossob riverbed just north of Samevloeing. It was 6.26 am and the bird was under a bush with the morning sun shining through open patches in the leaf cover. I exposed for the lighter areas, keeping the background in shadow.

PICTURE PIETMAN MULLER

GET YOUR GROOVE BACK

In life, getting stuck in a rut is easy if you don't keep yourself healthy. Who needs adventure with a complaining body? The first things to fall by the wayside are what we enjoy most. When last have you gone for some boulder hopping with your friends? Is your partner still waiting for that romantic road trip?

At Vascamen, we're all about embracing your natural vitality and living with your groove firmly ON! Vascamen supports your most critical bodily systems to keep you finely tuned and ready to LIVE.

Check out our socials and get to know us on our blog, The Vascamen Cave, at www.vascamen.co.za.

Join the Vascamen movement to
#GetYourGrooveBack



Available from all pharmacies,
Dis-Chem and Clicks

Vascamen tablets S30 Complementary Medicine: Combination product.
Each tablet contains *Crataegus pinnatifida* Bunge (Hawthorn), *Epimedium brevicornu* Maxim (Horny goat weed), *Ginkgo biloba* L. (Maidenhair Tree), *Tribulus terrestris* L. (Devil's thorn), *Serenoa repens* (W.Bartlett) Small (Saw palmetto), Zinc sulphate, Selenium AAC 2%, Lycopene, Lactose, Fructose.
This unregistered medicine has not been evaluated by SAHPRA for its quality, safety or intended use.



Loock Pharmaceuticals



Vascamen



+27(0)66 302-8972



+27(0)11 480-4916



www.vascamen.co.za

CASIO®

G-SHOCK



TOUGH SOLAR
SOLAR POWERED



GWG-2040FR-1A
Limited Edition
R37,999



GWG-2000-1A1
R25,999



GWG-2000-1A5
R25,999

MUDMASTER

- 200m water resistance • Stopwatch
- Shock Resistant • Mud Resistant
- Tough Solar

GWG-2000-1A3
R25,999

TIME
WATCH : SPECIALISTS

Canal Walk 021 552 5876 Cavendish 021 683 5511
Tyger Valley 021 914 2049 Somerset 021 851 3291
www.timewatches.co.za

WATCHES
UNLIMITED

THE PAVILION • LA LUCIA MALL • GATEWAY
• BALLITO JUNCTION
www.watchesunlimited.co.za

expert **Kloppers**

Bloemfontein: 051 400 5500
Port Elizabeth: 041 394 2900
Kloppers Sport Brackenfell: 021 982 1899
Knysna: 044 302 7800 George: 044 802 3900

G-SHOCK
CASIO

New World Menlyn
012 368 1633

GABRIËL
JEWELLERS • WATCHES
A Fountain of Life
048 293 3800 • FOUNTAINS MALL, JEFFREYS BAY

Cajejes

Clearwater • The Glen • Cresta • Northgate
Mall of Africa • Rustenburg • OR Tambo • Fourways

BROADWAY JEWELLERS

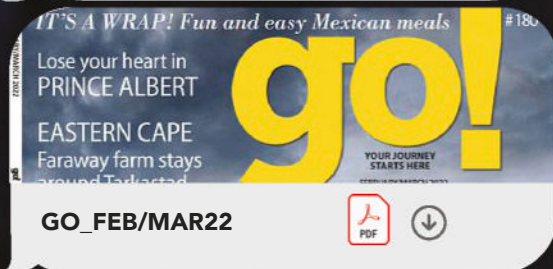


Krugersdorp: 011 660 3047
Table Bay Mall: 082 850 7002
info@broadwayjewellers.co.za
www.broadwayjewellers.co.za

Phone us on 011 314 8888, 0861 CASIO1 or 0861 318 888 for your nearest dealer www.jamesralph.com
SPECIFICATIONS AND PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

Sunel

Look at what I got for free!
Pass it on. 😊



Johan

How did you get the latest issue
for free?? 😊

Sunel

Who cares! Just send it on!

THE SHARING OF PDF PUBLICATIONS IS A **CRIME**
DON'T STEAL!

IF YOU RECEIVE A PDF PUBLICATION VIA EMAIL, WHATSAPP OR ANY OTHER
MESSAGING GROUP PLEASE REPORT IT TO REPORT@MEDIA24.COM

MEDIA24

