

#69

CAMP CUISINE: A-MAIZE-ING CORN RECIPES!

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2025 | ISSUE 69

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2025

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Winter has passed



I've always been a little besotted with this time of year. Spring has had a few weeks to show winter the door, and we're well on our way to year's end.

There's something almost magical in the air that makes you breathe differently. The soft scent of blossoms, the warmth of the sun, the promise of longer days that call for adventure. After a long, quiet winter, it feels as if the world itself comes alive again – and that can only mean one thing: it's time to pack up, hit the road and head into nature.

For people like us, these months are more than just a change of season. They're an invitation – to places we've never been, and to dust off our tents, caravans and gear. Few things compare to the thrill of that first camping weekend after winter: the smell of sizzling meat in the air, the sound of birds in the treetops, the stars glittering above your campfire. These are the little moments that remind us of the simplicity and joy of life beyond the city noise.

Nature is waiting with open arms. Now that the cold months are behind us, there are no more excuses. See you around the campfire!

I'd also like to remind you that the 2025 edition of our **Caravan Buyer's Guide** is now on sale. As always, Leon has taken the reins and compiled the only all-you-need-to-know guide to the local caravan industry in a single magazine.

The Buyer's Guide is a showcase where you can see and compare more than 300 different models – 23 more than last year's line-up, including an astonishing 47 new models launched in the past 12 months. In fact, over the past three years, the variety of models has grown by more than 20%.

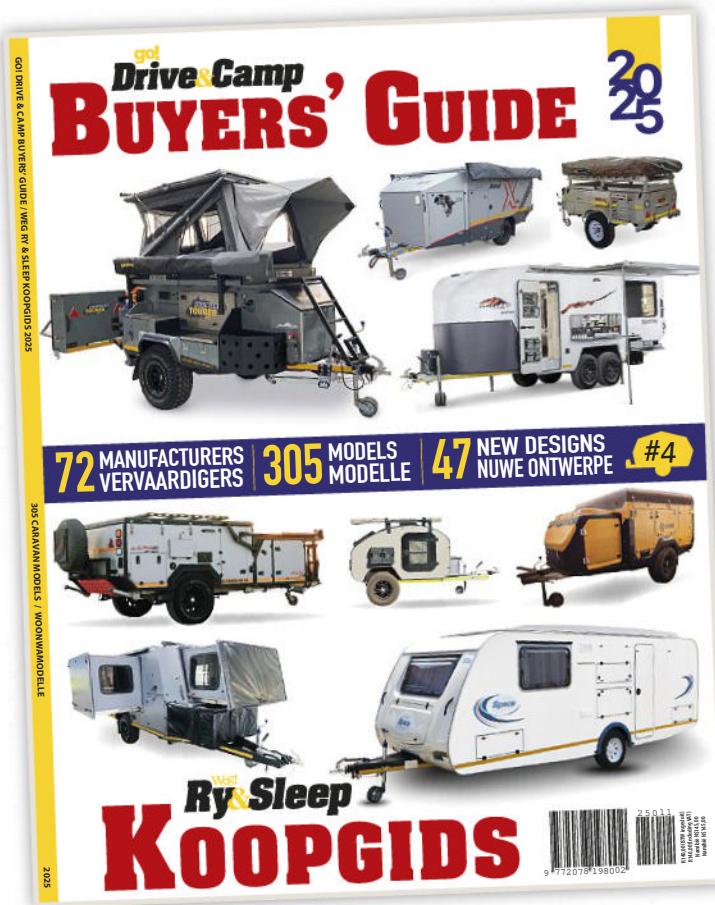
Alongside the latest photos, the guide includes all the essentials: dimensions, weights, materials and prices.

Safe travels,

Schalk

EDITOR

✉ schalk.jonker@media24.com



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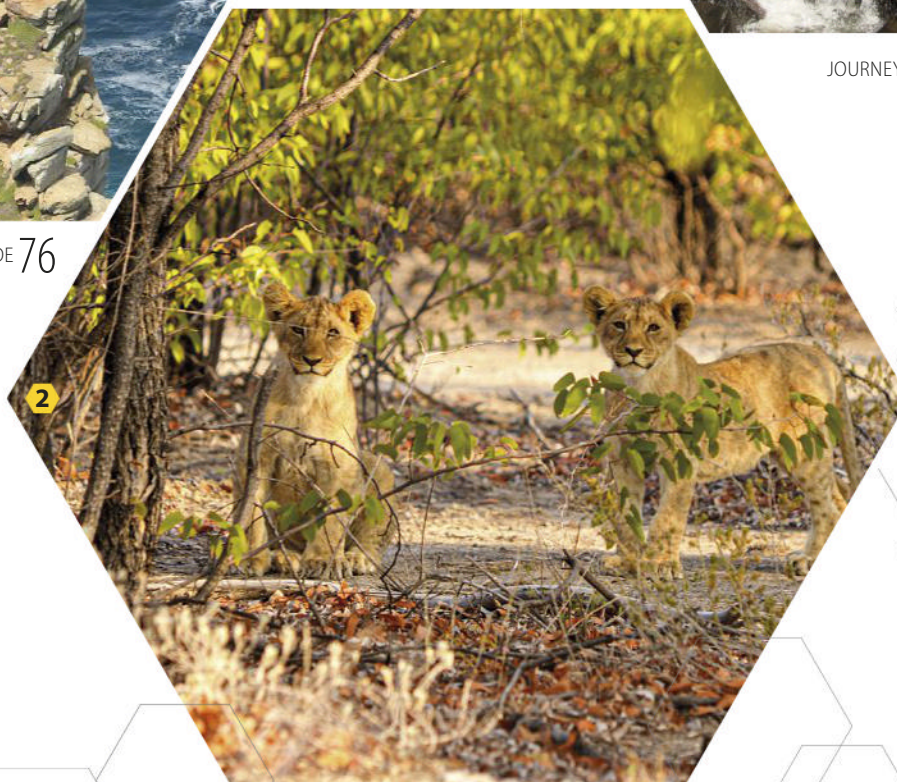
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EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR SCHALK JONKER ✉schalk.jonker@media24.com
JOURNALISTS CYRIL KLOPPER ✉cyril.klopper@media24.com
 LEON BOTHA ✉leon.botha@media24.com
DESIGNER OWEN WILLOUGHBY ✉owen.willoughby@media24.com
COPY EDITOR CARLA REDELINGHUIS
FOOD EDITOR JOHANÉ NIELSON
MULTIMEDIA DESIREE HARTNEY ✉desiree.hartney@media24.com

MEDIA24 CORPORATE

CEO: MEDIA24 RAJ LALBAHADUR
CEO: MEDIA24 MEDIA MINETTE FERREIRA

PUBLISHING TEAM: MEDIA24 LIFESTYLE

MEDIA24 LIFESTYLE CFO LANA GOLIATH
PRODUCTION HEAD EDWINA LYNERS
HEAD OF REPRO JACQUES DU PLOOY

SALES & SPONSORSHIPS

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

HEAD OF INCOME NERISA COETZEE

✉nerisa.coetzee@media24.com
HEAD OF DIVERSE PROJECTS FRANCOIS MALAN
 ✉francois.malan@media24.com

STUDIO

HEAD OF STUDIO LAILA MAJIET
CREATIVE HEAD SANDLASETHU-SIPHE YILANI
EDITOR: SPECIAL PROJECTS GERDA ENGELBRECHT gerda.engelbrecht@media24.com
PRODUCTION MANAGER CHRISTINE SMITH
SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER ANDILE NKOSI andile.nkosi@media24.com

CONTACT US

ANN DU BOIS ☎011 713 9529 ✉ann.dubois@media24.com
CAPE TOWN
POSTAL ADDRESS go! Drive & Camp, PO Box 740, Cape Town 8000
STREET ADDRESS 19th Floor, Media24 Centre,
 40 Heerengracht Street, Cape Town 8001
JOHANNESBURG
POSTAL ADDRESS go! Drive & Camp, PO Box 785266, Sandton 2146
STREET ADDRESS 6 Kikuyu Street, Sunninghill 2191

SUBSCRIPTIONS, RENEWALS & INQUIRIES

☎087 353 1300 | ☎+27 (0)21 065 0033 (international)
 Fax – 086 296 6681 | WhatsApp ☎087 353 1287
 SMS “service” to 31069 | ✉subs@media24.com



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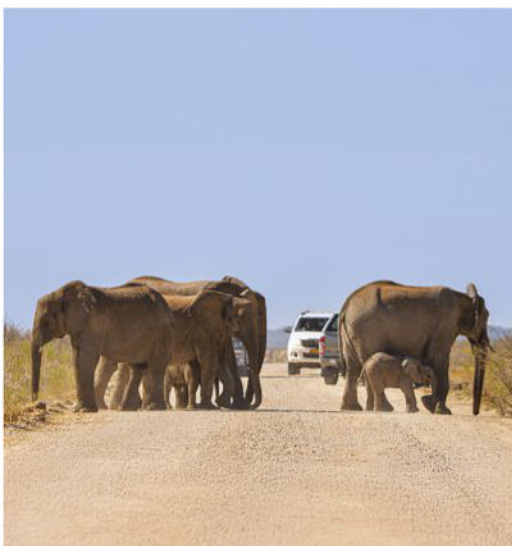
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#69 COVER IMAGE – SOPHIA VAN TAAK

“Do elephants conspire to cause traffic jams? This herd blocked the road connecting the Etosha camps Olifantsrus and Okaukuejo for almost an hour by walking back and forth across the road and never standing aside so that cars could pass. Who knows, maybe they wanted to show off their newborn calves!”



Camera settings Nikon D610, f13, 1/200s,
 380 mm. ISO 100

SAVANNAH 3 BOW TENT



2.1m x 2.1m x 1.5m

SAVANNAH 4 BOW TENT



2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m

SAVANNAH 5 BOW TENT



3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m

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- > HEAT VENT WITH INSIDE CLOSURE



3 WINDOWS
WITH INSIDE & OUTSIDE CLOSURES

SENIOR
3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m

RANGER SAFARI BOW TENT



2.1m x 2.1m x 1.8m

JUNIOR WANDERER BOW TENT



2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m

SENIOR WANDERER BOW TENT



3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m

JUNIOR SAFARI DELUXE BOW TENT



2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m

JUNIOR SAHARA



4.5m x 2.9m x 2.65m

SAHARA DELUXE



6.0m x 2.9m x 2.65m

SAHARA LODGE



8.0m x 2.9m x 2.65m

SAHARA GRAND



8.0m x 2.9m x 2.5m

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EZ-UP STRETCHER



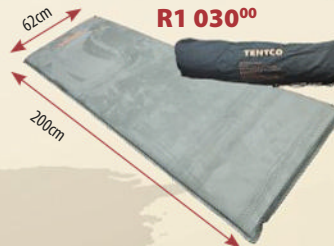
DELUXE SMALL STRETCHER



DELUXE LARGE STRETCHER



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ROLL UP FOAM MATTRESS



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FOLDING BASIN 13L



12 PIECE ENAMEL SET



TENTCO DINNER SET (4 PERSON)



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FOLDING SHOVEL



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4-SHELF DELUXE CUPBOARD



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

'What are the Free Staters doing here?'

After retiring this year, my wife Verna and I decided it was time to put the 2024 *go! Namibia* guide to good use and set off on an adventure through Namibia, Zambia and Botswana. We left at the end of April 2025, planning to camp wherever possible in our trusty three-man tent.

Our Suzuki Vitara leads the way, towing a 5-foot trailer loaded with gear and topped with a mattress. The first stop is Augrabies Falls, via Keimoes and Kakamas. We pop in at the Pink Padstal and take a look at the bridge over the Orange River at Kanoneiland. Seeing the falls in full flood is a spectacular sight, though the campsite bathrooms are a letdown.

The next day, we cross into Namibia at Onseepkans and head for Karasburg, a one-stop town for any supplies. Before two nights at Hobas, we wet our throats at the Grünau Hotel.

Last week's rain bogged us down in the soft sand but dig ourselves out with a shovel. We take in the majesty of the Fish River Canyon and visit the Canyon Roadhouse.

The next day's destination is Naute Dam, where we order two tiny cups of coffee from the gin distillers for R50 each. Luckily, we find far better value 50 km before Aus at Die Biltongplaas – delicious biltong, vetkoek and cheaper coffee. At Aus, it's time for a beer, and we spot the famous wild desert horses, tame as lambs.



WINNING
LETTER

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



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In Lüderitz, the Crayfish Festival is in full swing and we stay in a guesthouse. Though we're heading to Solitaire, we camp overnight in Helmeringhausen after touring Kolmanskop. We've never seen so many bright stars – what an experience. The road to Solitaire is in poor condition.

In Maltahöhe, we stop for coffee, and like all tourists, we try the apple pie at the Moose McGregor Desert Bakery in Solitaire – a bit of a disappointment. That night, the wind hits for the first time.

We stop at Dune 7 on the way to Swakopmund, admiring those who climb it drink in hand, and camp three blissful days at Windpomp 14.

We check out the harbour at Walvis Bay and enjoy a meal at Jetty 1905 back in Swakop. There's even time for a day trip to Henties Bay.

We head to Windhoek, camping at the friendly UrbanCamp and enjoying a great night out at Joe's Beerhouse. Sachsenheim Guest Farm near Etosha is next, but first we make a stop in Tsumeb. Over drinks at the Minen Hotel, a wall of old military insignia from various units sparks a flood of memories.

Ruacana follows, and between Oshivello, Ondangwa and Oshakati, there's an unbroken line of businesses – car washes, bars and more. At the Omuhama Bar, I order an ice-cold Lion after being greeted in perfect Afrikaans. Spotting our number plate, the owner asks, "What are the Free Staters doing here?" That night, we camp at Eha Lodge.

In Rundu, we pitch our tent on grass at Taranga Safari Lodge and sip Tafel Lager at the floating bar. Then, it's on to Ngepi Camp, where we lose a trailer tyre – the only one of the trip – and discover wasp nests in the ladies' bathrooms. Still, the visit is worth it, even if only for Verna's reactions when the hippos bellow at night.

Before entering Zambia, we spend a night at Chobe River Camp, where you have your own kitchen and bathroom inside a permanent tent with a deck. We put the mattress on the deck, but did not pitch our three-man tent. Over drinks, we spot hippos, giraffes, elephants and a crocodile.

The next day, we cross into Botswana via the Ngoma border post, then on to Kazungula to enter Zambia over its famous bridge. A three-hour delay at

the border is soon forgotten when we see buffalo, elephants and the highlight – a pride of lions beside the road to Livingstone.

We spend three nights in a two-bed tent in Livingstone, which feels pricey to us. I fall ill but recover in two days, thanks to the medicine from new friends Christo and Almarie Snyman of Windhoek.

As everyone says, Victoria Falls is an unforgettable experience.

Back in Botswana, we camp at Nata Lodge and the next night at the beautiful Woodlands Stop Over & Lodge near Francistown. In Gaborone, we overnight at a guesthouse at Crocodile Pools.

We re-enter South Africa at Skilpadshek, detour to Groot-Marico for a few bottles of mampoer, and overnight in a rondavel at ATKV Buffelspoort. There's time for a swim in the warm water pool and a visit to Hartbeespoort Dam.

After 22 nights, we're back in Bloemfontein, already planning the next adventure to Kruger National Park. In the meantime, we've bought a caravan.

The total trip covered 7 904 km with fuel consumption of 7,5 l/100 km. The fuel bill came to R12 785, accommodation R17 583, and the entire trip – treats included – around R60 000.

BAREND AND VERNA KOORSEN
Bloemfontein



ALL THE PRETTY HORSES

Tame and free in the desert (above). Something cold for the throat (right). A 7 904 km journey takes its toll on a tyre (inset). What an ending (below).





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In preparation for our first trip to Botswana, we did our homework – everything from YouTube videos to articles and camping stories.

We came across advice from Jacques Greeff in the June-July 2025 issue: pre-order your meat in Palapye. So, we did. The fillet and boerewors were excellent, though the lamb chops didn't quite pass muster. Let's just admit it – we're meat snobs.

We crossed via the Stockpoort border post, which we can highly recommend: quick, easy and not crowded. The gravel road to Mahalapye was perfectly manageable, and the town even has a modern shopping centre and an impressive butcher we spotted from the road.

Kubu Island at Xhumaga was beautiful.

In Maun, it was meat time again. That's when we discovered a real gem: Delta Meat Deli. Their oepsies and meat cuts were superb, exactly as meat should be.

From Moremi through Savuti to Kasane, the hunt for quality meat began again. We explored several well-known shopping centres, but no luck. We searched online, checked Facebook, Googled, even asked people in the street. That's when we heard about Uncle Ron – 80 years old, full of stories, and the supplier of top-quality meat to local lodges. 📧 ron@beefboys.co.bw ☎ 00 267 7744 8178.

From him, we got a perfectly cut ribeye, boerewors and lamb chops as thick as a good novel – clearly cut for ovens, not campfires. But my daughter-in-law, Juleen Putter, sent WhatsApp instructions from South Africa for the evening's braai – pure gold:

1 Braai the fat side first.

2 Let the chop tell its story – slow and gentle.

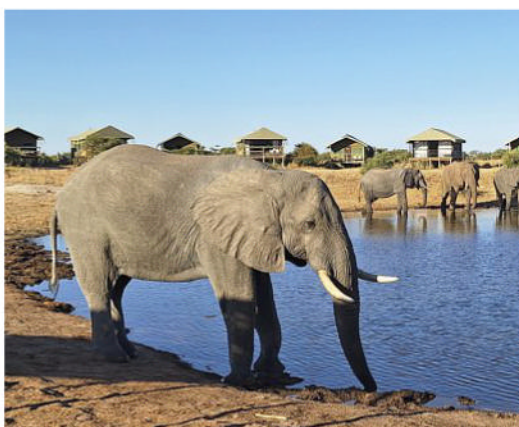
3 Use moderate heat; wake the inside gradually.

4 Turn it, but not every few seconds.

5 Let the meat rest after all that heat.

Never be shy to be a little curious and ask questions. That's how you'll find the Meat King of Kasane.

GERRIT PUTTER
Secunda





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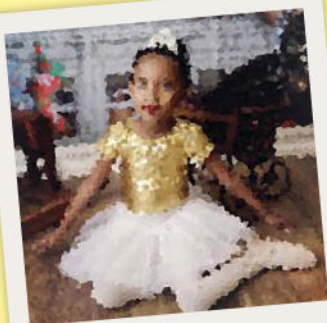


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COMMENT
OF THE MONTH!**A LONG ROAD WITH LONGER STORIES**

The R355 between Calvinia and Ceres is the longest uninterrupted gravel road in South Africa – and a notorious tyre killer. After a photo by @noel_cloete was shared on Instagram and reposted on our Facebook page, some of our readers chimed in with their own experiences.



Heinrich Strauss

Heinrich Strauss

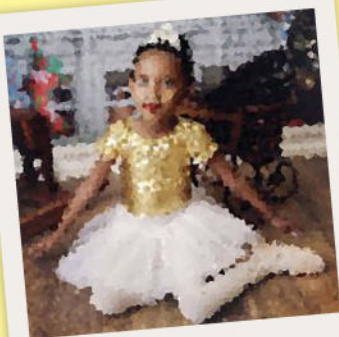
Good childhood memories on this road. When my father was still alive, we drove it two or three times a year to visit family in the Northern Cape. It's also where my brother and I learned to drive. There was never any need for a 4x4 or a special vehicle, just an ordinary car with the right tyres: 13- or 14-inch, with sidewall heights of 60, 65, 70 or 75. No low-profile tyres. Dad taught us how to handle gravel roads in an ordinary car and how to drop tyre pressure to the right level. Afterwards, you could pump them up again with a hand pump or a small compressor plugged into the cigarette lighter socket. I miss my dad; he always had a solution for everything. If there was a will, he made a way.



Koos van Zyl

Koos van Zyl

I know gravel roads, but one day I pushed it a little too far... and one of the Michelin tyres on my Hilux 4x4 burst. While I was changing the wheel, five locals in a Ford Escort came flying past, leaving me in a cloud of dust. That humbles a man quickly.



Heinrich Strauss

Heinrich Strauss

Yes, Koos, those folks know the road and drive it in ordinary little cars. They understand the surface and how the gravel lies. In October last year, my brother drove the road in a Nissan 1400 bakkie without a hitch. Our late father taught him well.



MJ Scholtes

MJ Scholtes

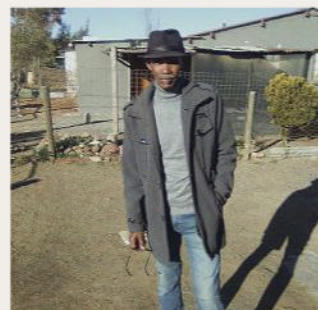
You're supposed to take a dozen tyres with you!



Rynhard Ambross

Rynhard Ambross

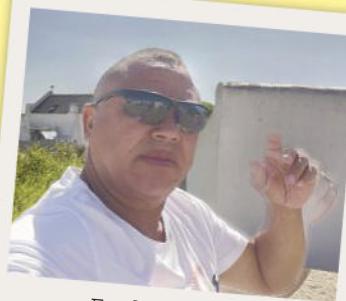
I've driven my Nissan Almera on that road.



Kerneels Jacobus Tieties

Kerneels Jacobus Tieties

No man, I've been driving on one set of tyres for almost a year now – to work on Mondays and back on Fridays. And I worked in the Tankwa Karoo National Park.



Frederick Botes

Frederick Botes

Eish, people, it's not advisable to tackle that road with just a car. Yes, the locals drive it because they know it – mostly with bakkies. When the road's been graded it's fine, but after heavy rain it gets tricky. Then you really need to know what you're doing, otherwise you'll run into serious trouble – you'll have to crawl through. It's also not a road for brand-new tyres; once they're about 40-50% worn, or even bald, the stones won't grip. Still, it's a beautiful part of the world – my family lives out on Elandsvlei. Eish, I really should go visit.

Rhino-man CANOPIES



* Main image features the
Rhinoman Xpedition Canopy.

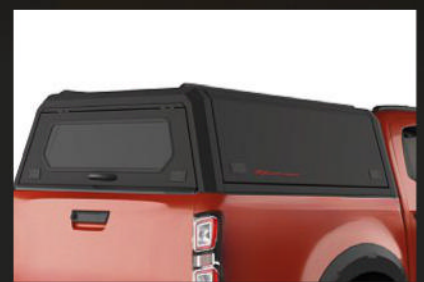
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Where are the numbers?



I read Cyril Klopper's article, "A secret in the Eastern Cape Karoo" – about the ten passes and one neck – in the June/July 2025 issue, and I'd love to drive that route.

There's one snag: I can't plot it on Google Maps or in my Tracks4Africa atlas.

We love tackling gravel passes and going through poorts while visiting small towns and settlements along the way. A few years back, we drove from Klipplaait over Swanepoelspoort, through Willowmore, all the way to the Prince Alfred Pass.

Those ten passes look like a great route on the way to Addo. My question is: which maps does Cyril

use to plan his routes? He refers to the P1852 farm road – which maps actually show these kinds of road numbers? The Tracks4Africa atlas, for example, doesn't.

Cyril's article was very informative, which is exactly why I want to follow in his tyre tracks – we want to experience it for ourselves.

WYNAND DU PLESSIS

Cyril answers I use Tracks4Africa's digital map on my GPS, and unfortunately the smaller farm roads aren't numbered on my device either. You really just have to follow the farm road numbers as you see them along the way. I know that's not much help, but that's the nature of the region.



Follow @wegrysleep on Instagram and tag your photos with #wegrysleep – we might feature them on our profile or in the magazine.



GONAREZHOU NATIONAL PARK, ZIMBABWE
Photo @scenic_africa_



DE HOOP, RICHTERSVELD
Photo @ourlifeinafrica_



KUBU ISLAND, BOTSWANA
Photo @dust_and_diesel_overlanding



WATERBERG, LIMPOPO
Photo @cruiser_chronicles_overlanding

A family of four is camping on a rocky shore. A man in a tan jacket and grey beanie is pouring from a silver thermos. A woman in a tan jacket and blue jeans is holding a silver mug. Two children in green jackets and blue jeans are standing around a small table with food. A small green tent is in the foreground.

WHERE
YOUR
ADVENTURE
BEGINS

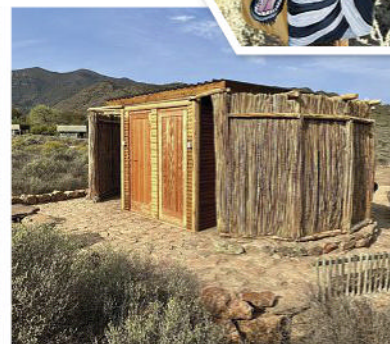
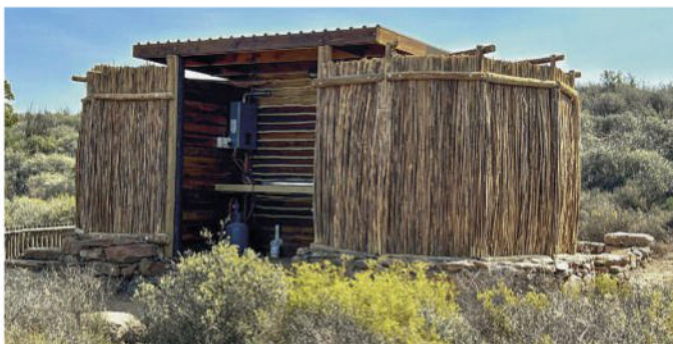
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New campsite for Ouberg



Just 20 km outside Montagu, you can now escape to peace and quiet at the Ouberg Reserve. It's 900 ha of unspoiled Klein Karoo nature, where you can settle in at one of five brand-new campsites.

At Ouberg's new campsite, you'll find a true getaway deep in the mountains, where not even cellphone signal can reach you. But you're not completely cut off: free wifi is available right at your stand.

Each site is cleared in the veld and fitted with a small braai (with a grid) and a tap supplying borehole water. A simple reed shelter on four poles provides shade, with two sides closed for extra protection. And the owners, Richard and Susan Gie, are busy building a plunge pool for campers.

The stands line up along a dry riverbed and carry quirky names – Marty, Sengi, TinTin, Stash and Digby 877. According to Susan, they were inspired by friends' camping gear.

The bathrooms are the newest addition; previously, campers had to share facilities with the permanent



tents a short distance away. Now, there are two outdoor showers on either side of a double dishwashing sink. The sink itself sits under a roof that extends over the shower cubicles, while reed screens around the showers provide privacy. There are two toilets at the back of the wash-up area.

Hot water is supplied by a gas geyser, and this is also the only point in the campsite where electricity is available, but it's limited to low-power devices.

Campers are welcome to explore the reserve on foot or by bike and spot the local wildlife (there are no dangerous animals here). If you'd like to learn

more about the flora and fauna, you can arrange a tour with a local guide for R50 p.p.

You'll need to bring all the provisions you'll require for your stay, though wood (R30), ice (R25) and braai packs (R140-R190, each serving two people) are available on site.

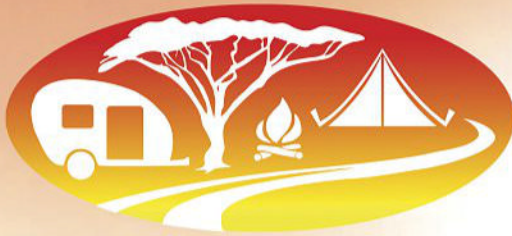
The last 16 km from the nearest tar road to the gate is gravel.

Price R150, R300, R350 or R400 per night per stand for 1, 2, 3 or 4 campers respectively.

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A breath of fresh air

The Jakkals Asem campsite, run by Andrew and Mariska Gray just beyond Dinokeng, flew under the radar until recently, as it was mostly aimed at youth groups.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, however, things have shifted, and campers can now settle in at one of the three bush sites – Duiker, Indaba and Skilpad – all designed by the couple, with Andrew himself handling the craftsmanship.

The latest addition is Maroela, a private site with its own facilities.

The first three sites share ablution facilities and are set up in the same part of the 21-hectare property, each offering plenty of privacy, while Maroela lies on the far side of the grounds and is more secluded.

In addition to the basics like a built-in braai and a tap, Maroela also has its own kitchen and bathroom. The kitchen has an open design under a roof, with views of the surrounding bush. A concrete counter in a large U-shape runs beneath the roof, with a sink set into one end.

The shower is spacious and set on one side of the bathroom block, with the toilet and basin on the other. A donkey boiler, just across from the kitchen, keeps the hot water running under the caretaker's watchful eye.

The campsite itself is a mix of planted and natural veld grass, and – thanks to two big marula trees – there's plenty of shade. Maroela is generous in size, easily accommodating a family or a small group of campers, with space for up to three bush caravans.

Like Indaba, Maroela also has a wood-fired hot tub. There's a Fredlin power point for your caravan, plus a three-pin socket at the bathrooms and in the kitchen.

You might spot porcupines and wild hares here, though there isn't much other small game. The 7 km gravel road to the campsite is well maintained.

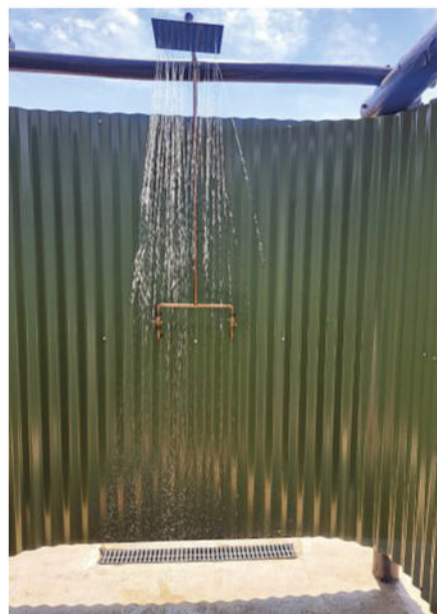
Price R250-R1 050 per night for Maroela (depending on group size, day of the week, season and length of stay). The other three stands cost R100-R500. A maximum of six is allowed per stand.

Contact 066 246 3391

✉ info@jakkalsasem.co.za

🌐 jakkalsasem.co.za

GPS S25.334145 E28.455053



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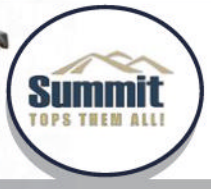
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Tata is back

The Tata Group is back with intent in South Africa, having just launched its passenger-vehicle subsidiary here under the name Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles.

According to Tata, this marks a new chapter for the company following a major restructuring process, which split its passenger and commercial vehicle operations into two separate entities.

With its return to South Africa, Tata is introducing four models: the Harrier, the Curvv (reviewed on p. 82), the Punch and the Tiago.

The Harrier is Tata's full-size SUV, powered by a 2.0-litre Kryotec four-cylinder turbodiesel paired with a six-speed automatic transmission. It earned a five-star rating in the European NCAP crash tests, which also won it the title of the safest car in India.

Next up is the Curvv, a compact SUV fitted with Tata's 1.2-litre Revotron turbocharged petrol engine, available with either a six-speed manual or a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission. In other markets, the Curvv is also offered with a turbodiesel engine and as a fully electric model.

The Punch is a crossover that shares the same 1.2-litre Revotron petrol engine as the Curvv, but without a turbocharger and in a smaller body. Buyers can choose between a standard manual gearbox or an automated manual transmission (AMT) that shifts on your behalf, though it's not as seamless as a full automatic. The Punch comes in five trim levels, aimed squarely at young buyers or anyone young at heart.

Finally, the Tata Tiago is built for city life, with no ambitions of tackling gravel roads. It uses the same 1.2-litre Revotron petrol engine without a turbocharger, again with the choice of either a manual or AMT gearbox.

Contact tatacars.co.za



Harrier 2.0TD Pure (auto)	R549 900
Harrier 2.0TD Adventure (auto)	R649 900
Harrier 2.0TD Fearless (auto)	R699 900
Curvv 1.2T Pute (manual)	R349 900
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Curvv 1.2T Accomplished (auto)	R519 900
Punch 1.2 Adventure (manual)	R244 900
Punch 1.2 Adventure + S (manual)	R269 900
Punch 1.2 Adventure + S (AMT)	R288 900
Punch 1.2 Accomplished + (AMT)	R309 900
Punch 1.2 Creative + (AMT)	R339 900
Tiago 1.2 XM (manual)	R184 900
Tiago 1.2 XT (manual)	R209 900
Tiago 1.2 XT (AMT)	R224 900

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• Each SMS costs R1.50. Free SMSs do not apply. The competition closes on 31 October 2025.

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This trip was done comfortably with 2 Bushlapa's and a rooftop tent and we planned for a healthy mix of camping and self-catering accommodation - excellent accommodation priced for the South African wallet.

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WINNERS. The U12 and U14 winners proudly show off their awards from the Renault Clay Court Challenge.

Renault serves an ace

Renault South Africa, in partnership with Tennis SA and the Potchefstroom campus of North-West University, hosted a tournament where top school players had the chance to compete on the country's only five genuine Italian clay courts.

A total of 200 players in the U12, U14 and U16 age groups took part across four tournaments held in May and August this year.

Top seeds Heinrich Rootman (men's open), Kaylin Kroon (U16 girls), Alexander Bell (U16 boys), Haniela Hans de Andrade (U12 girls) and Takuto Kasahara (U12 boys) all lived up to expectations by taking the titles in their respective divisions.

Haniela Hans de Andrade was the standout performer, dropping only two sets across her three matches.

Ines Foucque (U16 girls), Mila Dannhauser (U14 girls) and Luca Muller (U14 boys) entered the tournament unseeded but nevertheless claimed the titles in their respective categories.

Nosipho Manithshana, vice president of marketing and communications at Renault SA, said she was proud that Renault could contribute to giving young South Africans the opportunity to gain experience on world-class courts.

Isuzu showers schools with shoes

Isuzu Motors South Africa has taken steps to make schools more accessible to underprivileged communities by delivering 820 pairs of school shoes and socks to two primary schools in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape.

The shoes were produced by My Walk, a non-governmental organisation that uses recycled medical waste to manufacture durable, reliable footwear. According to My Walk, this approach is not only environmentally friendly but also creates employment opportunities for the jobless.

Mandla Sibonyoni, principal of Mikateka Primary School in Midrand, said that children who take pride in their appearance also perform better academically. "Some of our learners have never owned a pair of school shoes," he said.

The initiative is one of several run by Isuzu Motors South Africa to uplift disadvantaged communities and help people make a positive contribution to the country. 🇿🇦





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Built for freedom

Liberty Caravans' range of four models runs from a bed-on-wheels to a double-axle hotel room... and everything in between.

Words **Leon Botha**

LIBERTY CARAVANS

The Eastern Cape caravan manufacturer Liberty isn't equally well known everywhere, since most of its models have so far been sold in and around Gqeberha. Now the owner, Dawid Barnard, is ready to spread his wings.

For years, Dawid travelled far and wide across the continent, always camping in a tent. Those experiences now take shape in his Liberty caravans, which offer plenty of luxuries, yet are also geared for the bush.

Bottom to top

The building materials are crucial in any caravan, and from the outset, it's clear that a Liberty is built to last.

An aluminium frame sits atop a galvanised chassis, finished with a fibreglass skin and insulated with a honeycomb composite. The floor uses the same type of material, resulting in a caravan that is, structurally, almost maintenance-free.

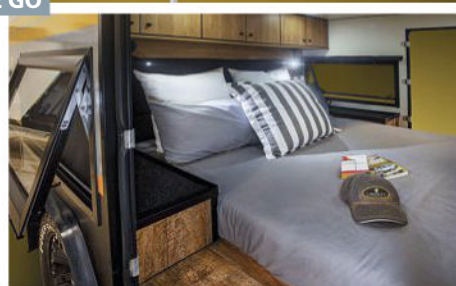
There are four models: the smallest is the LC2 Go, the middle two are the LC2 and LC4, and the flagship is called the Cruiser. Their standard equipment is much the same: a two-burner gas stove, a battery (from standard deep-cycle to lithium), water tanks (100–190 l), a 3 kg gas cylinder and an awning.

The LC2 Go is based on a teardrop caravan – inside, it's little more than a bed, with the outdoor kitchen at the back. With a gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 1 200 kg, you'll be able to tow it with a five-door Jimny.

The LC2 and LC4 tip the scales at 1 650 kg (GVM), putting them in the most popular



LC2 GO



LC2





LC4



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Prices

LC2 G0 R330 000 / LC2 R550 000

LC 4 R530 000 / Cruiser R780 000



CRUISER



weight class. The numbers in the model names refer to sleeping capacity: the LC2 has a queen-size bed plus indoor bathroom facilities, while the LC4 adds a bunk bed, seating and a queen-size bed.

The Cruiser has a GVM of 2 200-2 400 kg, placing it among the heavyweights in the country. It's a double-axle model that can be mentioned in the same breath as Conqueror's UEV-25, the Mobi Lodge Quattro and Nayela's Sahara X. The Cruiser features a full indoor bathroom, both indoor and outdoor kitchens, a seating area and an island bed.

On closer inspection

Two-thirds of the teardrop caravans on the market are narrower than 2 m and have a GVM of 750 kg. At 2,08 m, only the Vagabond and EdgeOut teardrops are wider than the LC2 Go. Dawid says the wider design is to accommodate the open space next to the mattress – a luxury in any similar caravan.

The two most obvious differences between the LC2 Go and teardrop-based caravans are the windows and the kitchen. In teardrops, the side windows are usually built into the two doors, whereas the LC2 Go has solid doors with windows in the side panels. The only other models with panel windows are Buksie's Weekender and Plus.

A fold-down surface alongside the rear kitchen is a welcome extra in the LC2 Go's kitchen. Other models with similar counter space include Red Gecko's TDX and some of the TrailPod models.

Both the LC2 and LC4 have fold-out beds, but here you get to choose the type of enclosure. As a rule, manufacturers stick with canvas around this kind of bed, though some campers see it as a risk. Dawid offers a second option: instead of canvas, the bed has solid sides. Other manufacturers use hard panels that fold out to form a rigid structure, but in this case, it's a single solid piece.

The LC2 has an indoor shower and flush cassette toilet at the rear, while the LC4 features a set of benches that fold flat into a bed, with space for an extra bunk above.

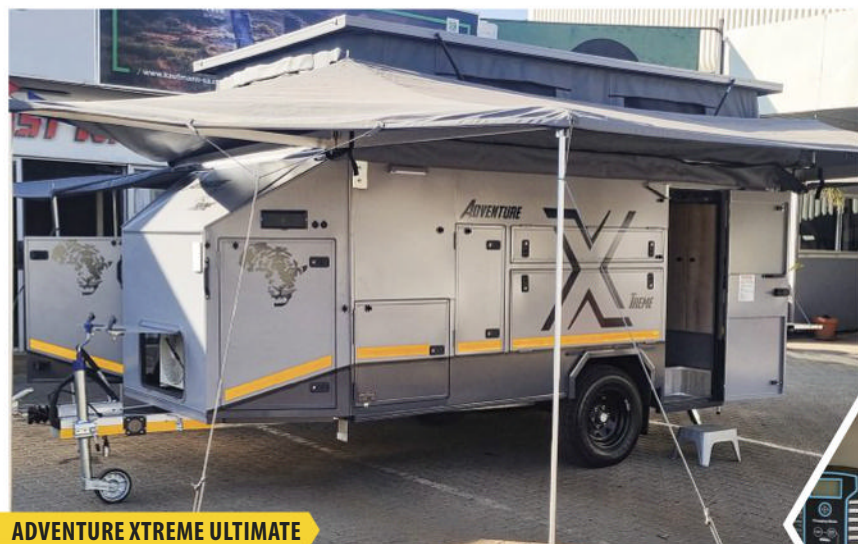
Although the Cruiser still has a neat outside kitchen, most of its luxuries are inside. The 160 ℓ upright fridge stands just to the left of the door, with a counter and recessed basin alongside. Opposite that is a microwave on the cupboard surface, and next to it a bench set that converts into a bunk bed.

The bathroom is separate from the rest of the interior and to the right as you enter the Cruiser. The shower – with its own glass door – is on the right, the basin directly ahead and the cassette toilet on the left.

Hitch and haul

Go ahead and pick your spot in the bush – Adventure Xtreme's new Ultimate model is ready to camp.

Words **Leon Botha** Photos **Theo Wilken, East Rand Caravan World**



ADVENTURE XTREME ULTIMATE

Just like the rest of Adventure Xtreme's caravans, the Ultimate's gross vehicle mass (GVM) is set at 1 600 kg, which means you can hitch it to a mid-range tow vehicle.

The Ultimate is the only model in the range which, in standard form, offers sleeping space for three, says owner Jan-Albert van Niekerk. Buyers can also opt for a bunk bed to accommodate a fourth person.

Three ways

The outdoor kitchen is fitted on the left-hand side, with the washing-up area at the rear. The island bed's headboard slides out of the right panel like a giant drawer and is secured – in the closed position – with a container lock. You could hardly ask for a sturdier door lock on an off-road caravan.

The Ultimate has a door on each side near the rear. The entry door is next to the outdoor kitchen, while the shower tent is pitched alongside the other one. (The shower tent fits neatly beside the extended bed and has its own door if you don't want to climb back through the caravan.)

An awning also extends on this side and serves a dual purpose: it forms the roof of



your outdoor shower and acts as a fly sheet over the extended bed.

One of the optional extras is a laundry rail – its frame is fixed to the head of the bed and folds out like a rack when you need it. It's a practical touch, since the awning stretches out far enough to cover the opened rail.

The washing-up station's frame is the length of the caravan's width and folds flat against the body when not in use. On the far left is a surface for putting things down, while on the right a loose drying rack and two plastic basins slot neatly into place. Above the washing area, in the cupboard to the right, is

the spray nozzle with extension pipe, along with a mixer tap for hot and cold water.

The shower tent's tap is around the corner, with the geyser fitted onto the front cupboard door. This forms part of the nosecone, which also houses the gas cylinder.

The outdoor unit of the air conditioner (9 000 BTU – 220 V) is also mounted in the nosecone, while the charger, solar regulator, circuit breakers and battery are located in the section of the cupboard furthest side, next to the kitchen.

The kitchen worktop folds down above the wheel, while the 90 ℓ fridge-freezer slides



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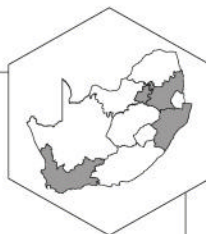


SPECIFICATIONS

Model.....	Ultimate
Sleeps.....	3
Size.....	5,4 x 2,1 x 2,3 m
Tare	1 080 kg
Payload	520 kg
GVM	1 600 kg
Axle	2 t
Wheel size.....	15 inch
Chassis.....	Galvanised
Body	Aluminium
Price	R454 939

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GVM 750 kg

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Sleeps 2-3, 17-inch wheels, body of honeycomb composite panels with aluminium framework.



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Sleeps 2-3**, 15-inch wheels, aluminium body finished with 2K automotive paint.



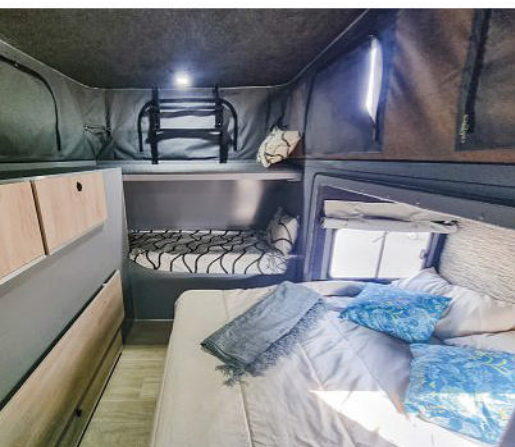
R485 000

TUFF CATS SHUMBA 4 MAX

Sleeps 4, 17-inch wheels, aluminium body.

* As listed in the Buyer's Guide 2025

** Depending on the layout



out on a frame from the cupboard between the kitchen and the nosecone. Incidentally, the compartment the fridge slides from runs right through the body, which means you can opt for a second fridge as an extra – one that slides out to the opposite side.

The worktop has no edges and is completely open, with nothing mounted on it. The two-burner gas stove slides out on its own frame from the cupboard behind, extending over the surface. It's a practical setup – you can stow the stove out of the way when not in use, leaving more space on the worktop.

The cupboard behind the worktop has several shelves and drawers, plus space for a 19 l microwave oven.

Inside

A double hanging cupboard – something you don't often come across – is built into the door on the right. Next to it is a worktop with a recessed washbasin and cupboards

underneath that stretch across to the opposite door. On that door is a mirror. The indoor unit of the air conditioner is mounted above the worktop.

From here, looking towards the nose of the Ultimate, you see the double bed extending out of the body on the right, with more cupboards at the foot end and a fold-up surface you can use if, for example, you turn the bed into a bench to work on a laptop. The single bed is fitted crosswise at the front.

What comes standard?

The Ultimate comes just about fully equipped: from the 270° awning, fridge-freezer and air conditioner to the solar panel, geyser, gas stove, fully kitted kitchen (for six), shower tent, 90 l water tank and 105 Ah battery.

Optional extras include a microwave oven, washing-up station, laundry rail and panels to enclose the canvas awnings.



LEAD THE WAY

Whether you're a weekend camper looking for a quick getaway, a family of outdoor enthusiasts ready for an adventure, or a seasoned off-road traveller eager to explore remote landscapes, National Luna offers a wide range of products designed to meet your cooling needs.

Their selection includes everything from budget-friendly plastic fridges, perfect for spontaneous picnics and weekend trips, to flagship Bluetooth®-controlled stainless steel models that are built to withstand tough terrains and high temperatures.

For over 35 years, National Luna has continually innovated and led the way in portable cooling solutions, catering to casual campers, dedicated overlanders, and everyone in between.





BUDGET BUYS

National Luna offers a range of cost-effective camping fridges that are lightweight, mobile, and budget-friendly.

The series was initially launched in late 2023 with the introduction of the TB20, a low-cost, 20-litre portable fridge designed for everyday campers, outdoor enthusiasts, and small-vehicle owners looking for a space-saving fridge/freezer. However, due to popular demand, the Travel Box concept has expanded to include three more low-cost options: 35 litres, 40 litres, and 60 litres.



The fridges can be powered by AC or DC power supply: 220V in your home or 12V in your car. The two power options open various fridge/freezer applications, including household use, poolside entertaining, camping, fishing, boating, braaing, picnicking, and more.

The four Travel Box models are offered in addition to National Luna's wide range of internationally acclaimed stainless-steel fridges.



Both the 45 and 60-litre models feature a removable divider that quickly transforms the fridge from a dual control to a single compartment.

These fridges are capable of reaching chest-freezer temperatures, making them a much more efficient solution compared to similarly priced rotomoulded ice boxes.

Additionally, all Travel Box fridges come with a free protective jacket valued at up to R1 400.



The new Travel Box range is available at leading outdoor stores nationwide, starting at just R3 999 while stocks last. Find your nearest dealer here: >>



** Prices are subject to change without notice*

FLAGSHIP RANGE

National Luna's Legacy Smart fridges redefine portable refrigeration with their exceptional performance in high ambient temperatures, rapid cooling capabilities, and rugged design.

They're available in a variety of sizes, from a compact 35-litre unit to a spacious 110-litre dual-compartment system, ensuring a perfect fit for every adventure. Made with durable stainless steel, these fridges are built to withstand the most challenging conditions while keeping your food and drinks fresh.

With Bluetooth® connectivity through the NL Connect App, you can monitor and control the temperatures remotely for added precision and convenience.

Additionally, the innovative Quick Change (QC) feature allows you to swap the control panel between front and side-facing positions, easily adapting to your setup. Whether you're overlanding or camping, National Luna Legacy Smart fridges provide superior performance and flexibility.



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

« With 16 models to choose from, you're guaranteed to find the right fridge size for your vehicle.

Introducing the new quick-change range

Priced from: R10 999

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

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



« Heavy-duty handles with integrated tie-down points.

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

« Control panel being swapped



« USB ports



« Lockable latches with built-in bottle openers.



all new DRAWER FRIDGE

Launched in September of this year, the all-new Drawer Fridge range features a remarkably low-profile design due to its unique externally mounted compressor. This design allows the fridge to fit seamlessly into an existing drawer system or be incorporated into a custom setup. It also eliminates the need for a drop-down fridge slide, providing easy access to the unit while preserving valuable packing space above the drawers.

The new Drawer Fridge range starts at just R12 899 and is available in 40-litre and 60-litre sizes, in both single and dual control.



Leading drawer manufacturer Big Country has recently designed a new storage system specifically for the National Luna drawer fridge. For more information, contact them at (011) 795 9700.

Tata ma chance

Tata has been pretty quiet for the past decade, but things are stirring again locally. **Cyril Klopper** takes a closer look at the new Tata Curvv.

The Indian multinational underwent a dramatic restructuring last year, a process expected to continue until the end of this year. The shake-up involves splitting the business so that commercial and passenger vehicles will now be handled by two independent sister companies. The model you see here is one of four new passenger vehicles that have just arrived in South Africa.

What's new?

The Tata Curvv is an SUV that edges close to crossover territory, slotting into the so-called "C-SUV" category. Its sleek lines are meant to echo those of a coupé – though of course it has four doors, not two. That hasn't stopped Tata from marketing the Curvv as an SUV-coupé, though.

All versions coming to South Africa are powered by a turbocharged 1.2 ℓ petrol engine. The entry-level 1.2T Pure has a six-speed manual gearbox (R349 900). Step up to the mid-spec 1.2T Creative and you get a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic

(R419 900). At the top of the local range sits the 1.2T Accomplished, which piles on extra electronic gadgets for R519 900.

Elsewhere, like in India, buyers get more options: a 1.5 ℓ diesel and two electric versions with 45 kWh and 55 kWh batteries. The Curvv was developed to be a fully electric vehicle, but Tata had to acknowledge that much of the world – Africa in particular – simply isn't ready for that yet.

All models are front-wheel drive and share

the same dimensions, though the weight varies depending on the drivetrain.

Tata calls the Curvv its most modern vehicle yet – and the one it believes will turn the most heads among its new passenger offerings.

Who are the competitors?

Tata's Curvv goes up against the Hyundai Creta, Kia Seltos and Mahindra XUV400. Since the XUV400 isn't sold locally, we've substituted with the slightly larger XUV700.



TATA CURVV



“

...the one it believes will turn the most heads among its new passenger offerings

”

FRONT LOADERS

National Luna specialises in fridge conversions from 220VAC to 12VDC, providing camper and caravan manufacturers with enhanced refrigeration options. This unique power-supply conversion allows for the integration of traditional household fridges into various battery- or solar-powered applications.



Hisense H310BIT



Hisense H225TTS1080



Hisense H230BTS-A-2700

IWM Cruise 49 Classic



IWM Drawer 190 Inox



BUILT-IN FRIDGES

Recognising the importance of space efficiency for off-road trailer manufacturers, National Luna also offers a diverse range of front-loading fridges. These fridges are designed to optimise layout, enabling other components or storage to be positioned directly above them without compromising access. This approach allows for better utilisation of available space in campers.

IWM Drawer 130 Inox



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FROM THE COMPETITORS
Compact SUVs with attitude all hovering around the half-million mark.



R519 900 **Hyundai Creta 1.5 Excutive IVT**
The latest Creta landed locally in 2020, and it has already received two facelifts.



R510 995 **Kia Seltos 1.5 EX+**
The Kia Seltos is just as old as the Creta, yet it still appears modern and relevant.



R551 399 **Mahindra XUV700 AX7**
The XUV700 is two years younger than the Kia and Hyundai, and it offers plenty for its price.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Curvv 1,2t Accomplished S DCA
Engine	1 199 cc, turbocharged three-cylinder petrol
Power	88 kW @ 5 500 r.p.m.
Torque	170 Nm @ 1 750 r.p.m.
Transmission	Seven-speed automatic
Fuel consumption	6,1 l/100 km (claimed)
Tank	44 l
Payload (GVM – tare)	410 kg
Boot space	500 l
Towing capacity	Unknown
Dimension	4 308 (l) x 1 810 (w) x 1 640 mm (h)
Ground clearance	208 mm
Wheel size	215/55 R18
Safety rating	Untested
Warranty	5 year/125 000 km
Service plan	3 year/45 000 km
PRICE	R519 900



Hyundai and Kia are sister companies, and the Creta and Seltos are essentially the same car with different badges. Both use a larger 1.5 l petrol engine, but put out 84 kW and 144 Nm compared with the Tata's 88 kW and 170 Nm. The Mahindra XUV700 packs a 2 l petrol engine producing 149 kW and 380 Nm.

It may seem unfair to compare the bigger Mahindra with the smaller contenders, but its price is only R20 000 to R30 000 more, and it sits in the same crossover category.

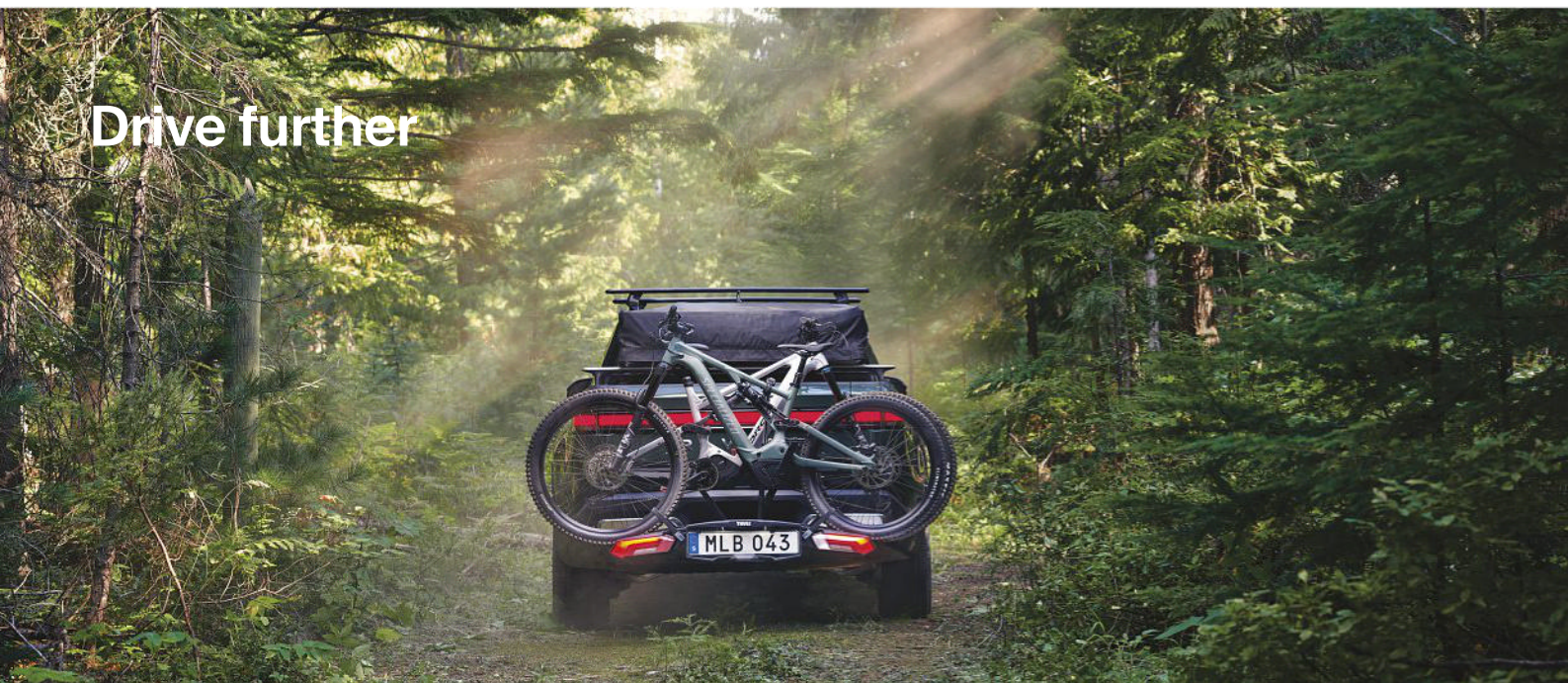
All of the rivals offer the same number of airbags, similar safety systems, identical seating capacity and comparable warranty periods. Where the Tata Curvv pulls ahead is boot space: an impressive 500 l, which is 50 l more than the Mahindra XUV700 and 184 l more than the two Korean models. And as the photos show, the Curvv also stands tallest (208 mm of ground clearance), making it at least appear ready for gravel travel.

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Quiet beauty

Etosha National Park is iconic – rich in history and home to world-class wildlife. But in recent years it hasn't been managed as well as before, and the camps have become overcrowded with visitors. Here's how to sidestep the bustle without missing a single animal.

Word and photos **Sophia van Taak**

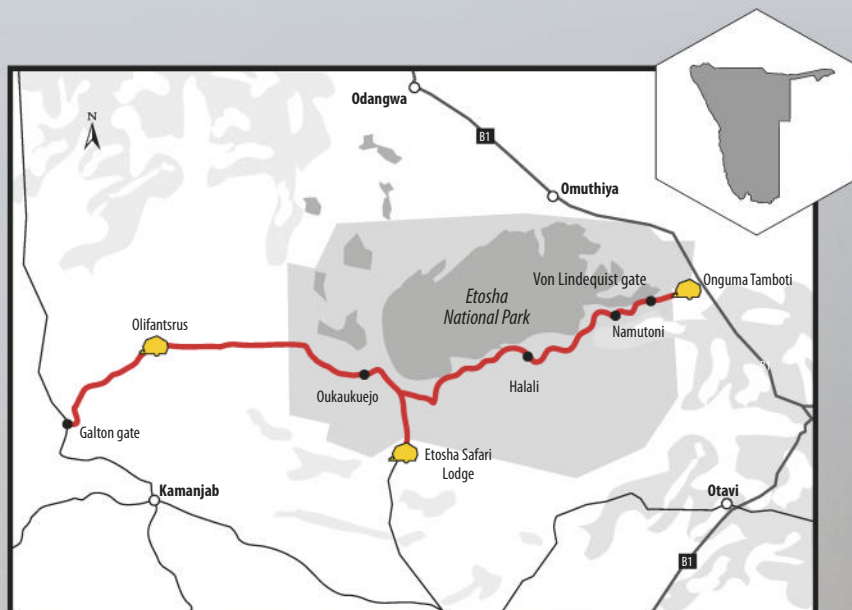


SOURCE OF LIFE. A herd of elephants cools off at the Ombika waterhole near Etosha's Andersson Gate.

The elephant bull is too close – barely 10 m away – and you sit frozen. It's past midnight and, apart from his restless snorts, there isn't a sound. The moonlight is faint, but you could swear he sees you. Or at least smell you. What if he moves closer, straight through the little pan of water between you? Maybe it's time to slip away quietly...

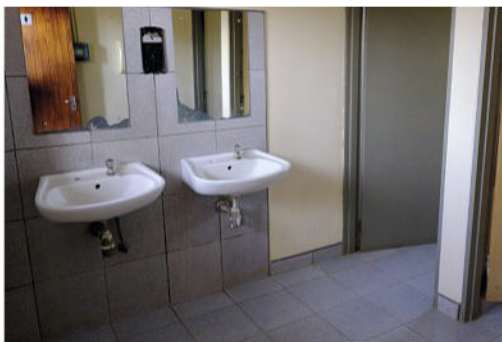
Then, a bothersome lapwing crashes into the glass panel between you and the giant and you realise you'd been so caught up that you forgot about the one-way glass separating the hide from the waterhole. When you walk back to camp later, the handful of tents at Olifantsrus lie dark and silent.

This is how the bush is meant to be.





GET THERE FIRST. Olifantsrus is Etosha's most modest rest camp, with just 10 campsites and basic facilities. The three sites closest to the game fence are, of course, the most popular. Arrive early if you want to snag a spot here.



“

Even in the campsite, people talk in hushed voices and close their bakkie doors gently

”

OLIFANTSRUS The Wild West

People have been camping in Etosha since the 1940s. Back then, it was still truly wild, with no rest camps – only the odd borehole for visitors and a few military outposts, such as Okaukuejo in the south and Namutoni in the northeast. Both would later become rest camps, along with Halali in between.

Olifantsrus is Etosha's “newest” campsite and opened in 2014. Thanks to

this addition, campers can now overnight in the western part of the park. Here, the mopane thickets grow dense – and so do the elephants. In the 1980s, their numbers increased to such an extent that the park board was forced to cull entire herds – a total of 525 animals. The gantry still towering above the old abattoir stands as a silent reminder of those grim events.

Olifantsrus is tiny. There are no chalets, no swimming pool, no restaurant and no fuel station. Just 10 campsites. It's

a pity the communal kitchen has fallen into disuse, and the once-proud elephant museum now has empty display cases. (Signs of Namibia Wildlife Resorts' mismanagement are visible throughout the park.) The kiosk menu still promises plenty, but in reality, they serve only cheese-and-tomato sandwiches and instant coffee. Still, the wifi works! The password – “Dolomite 2010” – is a good indication of when someone with any sense of future vision was last in charge.



The campsites at least each have a small shelter, but they're only lightly separated from one another with slats and shade netting. Your braai spot is either a rusted drum or just a concrete slab on the ground. But you don't come here for the facilities. No, you come for the best waterhole in the entire park.

This is a two-storey structure on the far side of the game fence. You cross a wooden bridge to reach it, and upstairs you can sit and gaze for kilometres

across the veld through open shutters, or downstairs behind glass – eye to eye with the animals as they drink. In contrast to the bigger camps, where waterholes are as much a gathering place for people as for wildlife, here silence is the unspoken rule. Even in the campsite, people talk in hushed voices and close their bakkie doors gently. Out here in the west, humans and animals are equally shy.

The easiest way to reach Olifantsrus is via the park's western Galton Gate,



Briefly | Olifantsrus



Campsite 10 stands (maximum 8 people per stand), 3 against the game fence.

Ablutions One block has separate toilets and basins for men and women, while another has separate shower cubicles and basins. They're not dirty, but a bit neglected. Toilet paper was often in short supply. There's also a dishwashing area under a shelter along the outside wall.

Price R510 p.p.p.n. plus a daily conservation fee of R100 p.p. (R50 for U16s) and R50 per vehicle.

Arrival and departure From sunrise to sunset, adjusted weekly.

Contact nwr.com.na

reservations@nwr.com.na

00 264 61 285 700

Nearest town Kamanjab, 68 km south of the Galton Gate.

Road condition A good gravel road; much better than those in the eastern part of the park.

GPS S18.97238 E14.86100

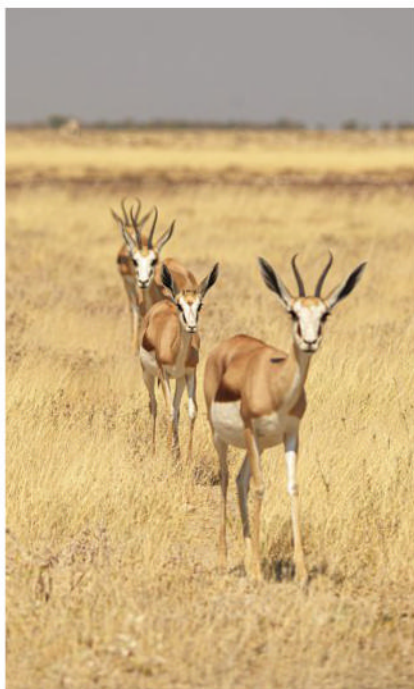
Drive & Camp says Fill up at Kamanjab. The next fuel station is at Okaukuejo Camp (130 km away), but its pumps often run dry, in which case you'll need to make it another 25 km to the Etosha Trading Post.

named after Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin. Galton, a British explorer, was the first European to see the vast pan in May 1851, together with the Swedish explorer Charles John Andersson, after whom the gate near Okaukuejo Camp is named. Half a century later, in 1907, Friedrich von Lindequist declared the area a game reserve – and he, too, had a gate named after him.

From Galton Gate, a good gravel road runs for about 65 km to Olifantsrus.

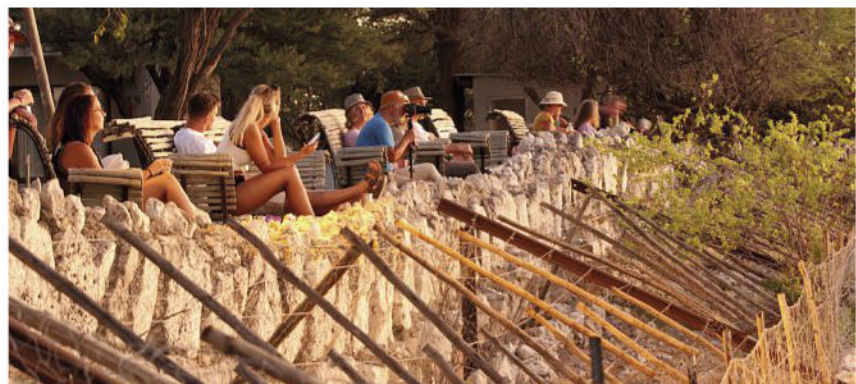
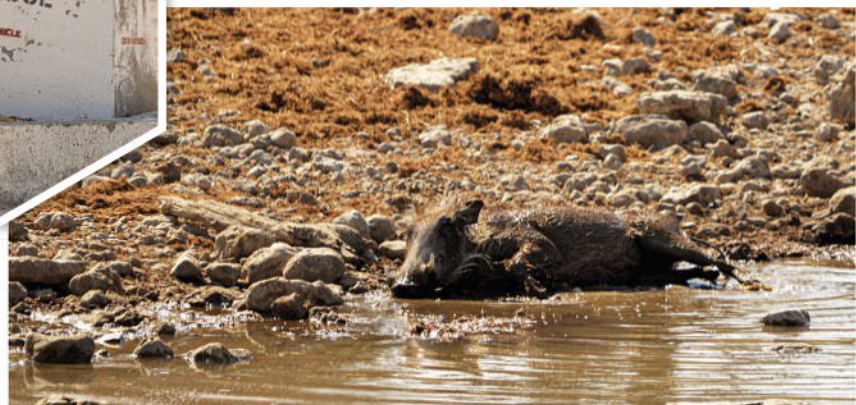


HOT STUFF. In the heat of the day, animals either hide from the sun or gather at the waterholes. But this line-up of springbok looks more like they're waiting for Faf to dig that ball out of the ruck!





LOOK TO THE SKIES. The park's abundance of waterholes makes game viewing easy, but don't forget to scan the treetops and mopane thickets with your binoculars – you never know who might be peeking out.



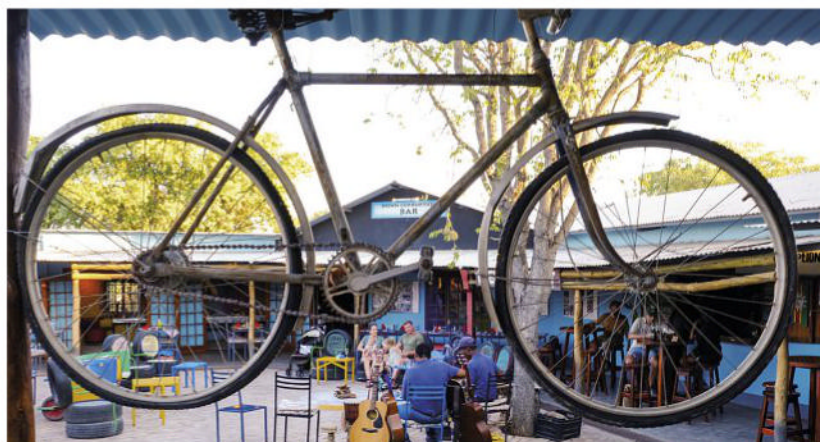
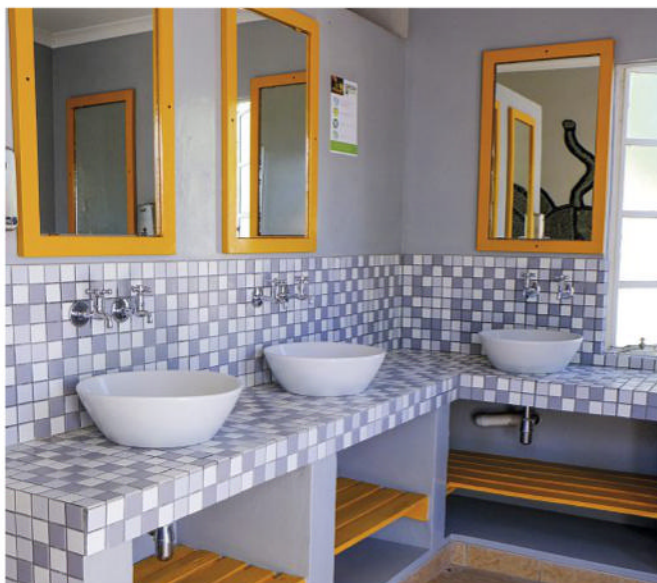
“

The campsite, with its lush grass and resident zebras, lies just behind the swimming pool – close enough for convenience, yet far enough for peace and quiet

”



TO TOP IT ALL, Gondwana lodges are synonymous with quality – and here at their Etosha Safari Camp, not a tree or salad leaf is out of place. The fairly compact campsite has two ablution blocks, so you'll never have to queue for a shower or a quick brush-up.





ETOSHA SAFARI CAMP We've got the spirit!

Some find the 130 km between Olifantsrus and Etosha's main camp, Okaukuejo, monotonous. But there are regular waterholes where you can stop, and even a few picnic sites. (When we visited, the bathrooms at these stops weren't in working order, but at least we could get out and stretch our legs.)

Besides plenty of elephants, large herds of springbok and zebra, we also saw giraffes regularly. And all the while, the traffic stayed light – the real bustle is around Okaukuejo and Halali.

We reached Okaukuejo in the heat of the day, bought an ice cream and climbed the lovely old stone tower (built in 1963) for a bird's-eye view. At the camp's waterhole, we watched a few giraffes awkwardly bend down for a drink. Then, a couple of rhinos clattered over the rocky ground. Wait, let's go take a closer look!

Okaukuejo's waterhole is postcard-pretty. There are always animals here, but also always a busload of foreigners with a forest of tripods and a babel of chatter about Africa's wonders. We can only take it for so long before slipping into reception to check the sightings board for notes on this morning's activity. Aha! Lions at Salvadora. Lions at Charitsaub. Lions at Nebrownii. But we'll save those waterholes to string together on tomorrow's drive. Where else...? Lions at Okondeka – now that could work.

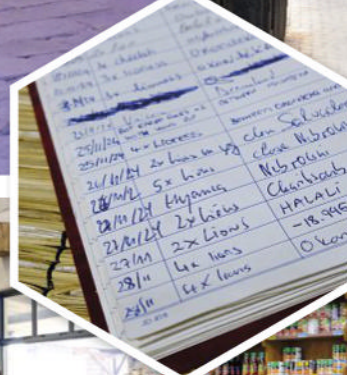
We find the two young male lions even before we get there, between Leeubron and Wolfnes waterholes, but they soon disappear into the meagre shade of the thorn thickets. We turn south, towards Andersson Gate, to find a patch of shade for ourselves.

The Gondwana Etosha Safari Camp lies a little way south of Andersson Gate. With a complimentary cold drink in hand, we wander through the shop, stocked with beautiful souvenirs, clothes, books and toys. It's the kind of place where your wallet opens all on its own! The Oshebeena bar and swimming pool look inviting too, but we first want to settle in and unwind for a while.

The campsite, with its lush grass and resident zebras, lies just behind the swimming pool – close enough for convenience, yet far enough for peace and quiet. The ablution facilities sport a fresh coat of cheerful yellow paint, and everything is spotless.

Tent pitched, we place the camp bed beneath a tree and while away the afternoon with a book until it's time for dinner. You can, of course, cook or braai for yourself, but at a Gondwana lodge the buffet dinner (R545 p.p.) is an experience in itself. As you tuck into one delicious course after another, the staff form a band around the campfire, playing guitars, an accordion and a mouth organ. Before you know it, you're up and dancing with a sunburnt Chinese tourist!





Briefly | Etosha Safari Camp



Campsite 20 stands (maximum 6 per stand) on full grass, each with its own light, braai drum and power point. Stands aren't marked – just aim for a shady tree.

Ablutions Two tidy blocks, one each for men and women, with shower cubicles, toilets and basins. There are also two separate dishwashing areas.

Price R325 p.p.n.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact info@gondwana-collection.com

info@gondwana-collection.com

00 264 61 427 200

Nearest town Outjo, 90 km south via the C38.

Road condition Tarred between Etosha and the turnoff.

GPS S19.41119 E15.92496

Drive & Camp says Gondwana has a range of excellent campsites, safari tents and lodges all across Namibia. With a Gondwana Card membership, South Africans get 40% off camping and 25% off dinners. The card costs R300 per person (R150 for children aged 6-13) and is valid for five years.

gondwana-collection.com/card



Where to buy for the braai

There's a veterinary control fence along Etosha's southern and eastern boundary. That means you can take your chops and boerewors into the park, but you may not take any meat out. And yes, your vehicle and cooler box will be searched at the gate.

Fortunately, the Etosha Trading Post – which also has a fuel station – sits between Andersson Gate and Etosha Safari Camp. Prices are a bit higher than at a supermarket, but you'll find the essentials. For meat, buy from Eldorado Lodge, opposite Etosha Safari: they stock everything from T-bone (R139/kg) and beef sosaties (R123/kg) to kerrie-wors (R112/kg) and skilpadjies (R98/kg). Order ahead at a4eldorado@gmail.com or 00 +264 81 838 9356 (WhatsApp only).

ONGUMA TAMBOTI

Now that's grand

Onguma Safari Camps is Etosha's immediate neighbour on the eastern side. The "camps" are actually luxurious lodges spread across a 35 000 ha private reserve, but there are also two campsites – Tamboti and Leadwood. The latter's six stands lie deeper inside the reserve, near Onguma Bush Camp (also a lodge). Tamboti, however, is just 12.2 km from Etosha's Von Lindequist Gate.

If you've already explored all the side roads around Okaukuejo the previous day, you can now stick to the main road south of the pan towards Halali Camp. Incidentally, the roads in Etosha are finally being upgraded. About 20 km of the C38 between Okaukuejo and Halali – a gravel road inside the park – is closed until November 2025, with visitors diverted via Gemsbokvlakte in the meantime. Roadworks will likely shift towards Halali after that.

There are a few waterholes west of Halali – Salvadora, Charitsaub and Rietfontein – where you can usually expect a good variety of game and bird species. Meander from one to the next at leisure, and consider adding the Rhino Drive loop as well. You can stop at Halali, just 100 km from Etosha Safari as the crow flies, to stretch your legs.

Grab a bite to eat in Halali at the shop or restaurant before heading to the camp's Moringa waterhole (with parking just south of the campsite). Decide how long you want to linger here; without any detours, it's another 80 km to Onguma, and you can only check in there after 14:00.

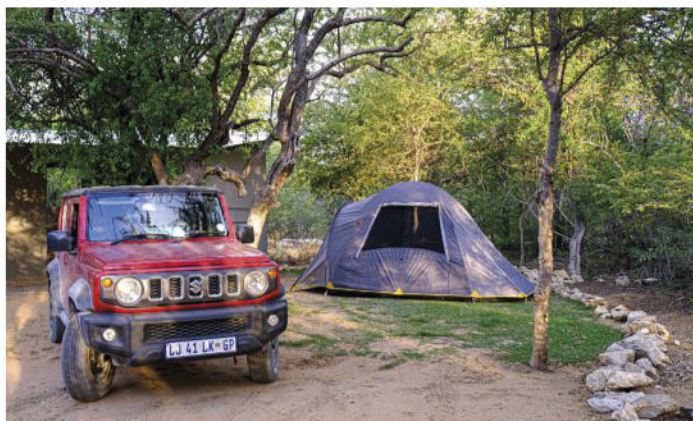
You simply cannot visit this park without seeing the pan after which it was named. By now, you've probably viewed the Etosha Pan from several different angles – and more than once imagined that shimmer on the horizon was a herd of... something!... drawing closer. At the Etosha Lookout, called Pan's Edge, you can actually stop on the pan itself. Drive 8.5 km back from camp to the main road (the C38), then head 11.5 km east to where a track turns north to the lookout. The twin track runs out over the pan until the world around you is so flat and open that all you see is the blinding white salt crust and the blue sky.



“

There are a few waterholes west of Halali – Salvadora, Charitsaub and Rietfontein – where you can usually expect a good variety of game and bird species

”



JUST WHAT YOU NEED. Onguma Safari Camps' Tamboti Camp is spotless and cleverly laid out, with plenty of seating and plug points under a shaded awning, a patch of lawn for your tent and a neat braai area close to the communal kitchen.

DESTINATION

As you head towards Namutoni Camp, the veld becomes more wooded. There are also some lovely loop roads and waterholes worth exploring, but those can wait until tomorrow. Barely out through Etosha's eastern gate, Von Lindequist, you'll find Onguma's entrance on the left. Tamboti Camp is just 3.5 km farther on.

Remember, Von Lindequist Gate also lies on the veterinary control fence, so you still may not leave the park with any meat in your vehicle. But don't worry: at Tamboti reception there's a small shop that stocks all the basics, including braai packs. There's also a bar and

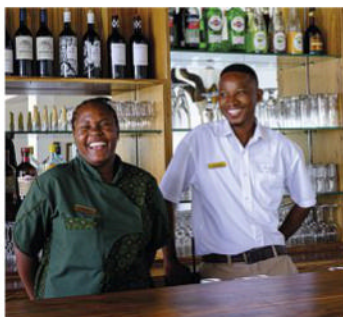
a restaurant (with wifi), plus a veranda overlooking a waterhole.

This campsite feels like a treat! Each stand is neatly raked, with a patch of grass for pitching a tent. At the braai, you'll find a complimentary bundle of firewood and a grid that's been scrubbed clean. (The shop also sells wood and ice.) And around your site, it's dense and bushy – you might hear the neighbours, but you're unlikely to see them. The visitors you will see include clouds of dragonflies, a clatter of red-billed francolins, duikers, a gang of dwarf mongooses stretched out on their bellies

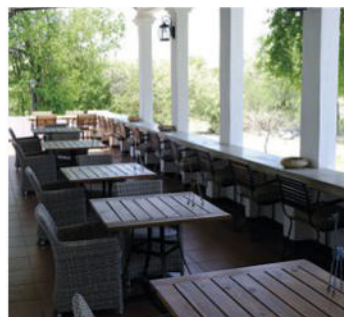
in the grass and... a honey badger! The rascal came out to tip over a dustbin late one night.

Tamboti Camp is a shady, peaceful base from which you can explore Etosha's northern corner over the next day or two. Set out early for the birdlife at Fischer's Pan (named after Etosha's first game ranger, Adolf Fischer) near Namutoni. Elephants love this watering spot too, and giraffes are plentiful.

The waterhole in the camp itself isn't much to speak of, but have breakfast at the restaurant and take a look at the fort.



BEST IN SHOW. Tamboti adds just that touch of luxury which – let's be honest! – even campers can appreciate. Price-wise, it's about the same as camping inside Etosha itself, but the privacy, neatness and little extras put Tamboti in a league of its own.



Namutoni was a German control post aimed at curbing cattle smuggling from Ovamboland into the farms of what was then German South West Africa. The beautiful old fort was built near a spring in 1902. Sadly, this historic monument is no longer being maintained.

North of Namutoni, a single road runs for 43 km past the Tsumcor and Stinkwater waterholes to the King Nehale Gate. These are open plains – cheetah country.

Once all those drives have been driven, you can cool off with a swim at Tamboti and spend a lazy afternoon in

camp. Unfortunately, you're not allowed to explore Onguma's surrounding reserve on your own, and a game drive or guided walk costs a hefty R890 p.p. A three-hour visit to the Onkolo waterhole hide is at least a little cheaper – R650 p.p. A ranger collects you from Tamboti, and on the way there, you're likely to spot plenty of game. The hide is designed with shutters that open right at water level, and you'll be treated to coffee, tea, cooldrinks and tasty snacks while watching red-billed teal, spur-winged geese, crowned lapwings and terrapins. 🐾

Briefly | Onguma Tamboti



Campsite 25 spacious stands among the trees (maximum 4 adults and 3 children per stand). Some are quite private, while others are grouped in clusters of 3 for larger camping parties.

Ablutions Each stand has its own neat bathroom: on one side a washbasin and shower, on the other a toilet. Between the two is a covered area with dishwashing basins, power points and a cement counter for your camping fridge.

Price R500 p.p.p.n. (R250 for children 3-11; free for toddlers) plus a conservation fee of R65 p.p.p.n.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 📞 onguma.com

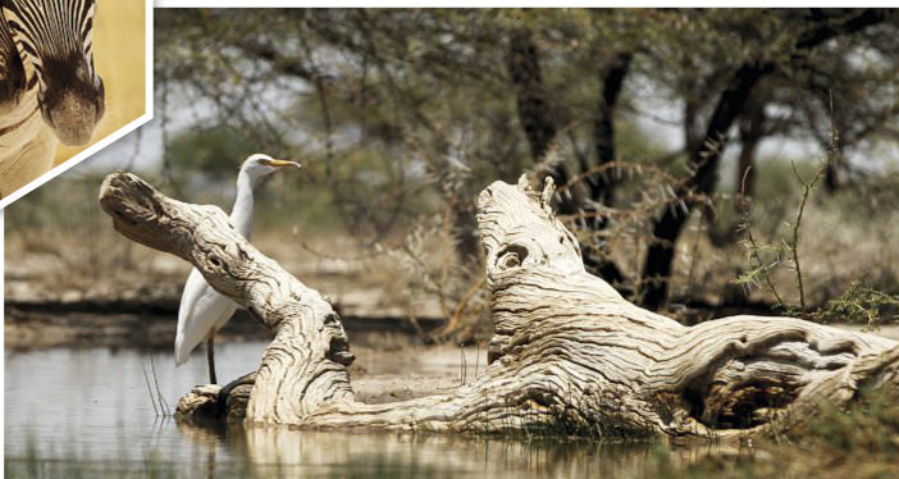
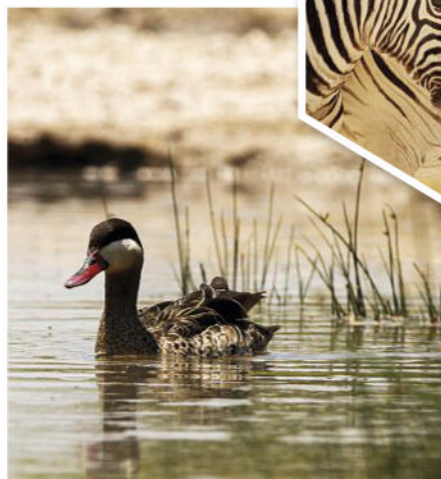
📞 00 264 61 237 055

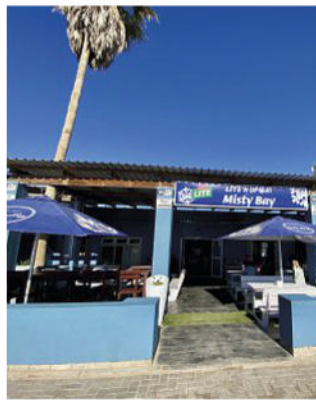
Nearest town Oshivelo, 43 km from the gate via the C38 and B1.

Road condition The 12 km from the gate to Tamboti's reception, restaurant and shop is in good condition. The campsites are just a stone's throw further.

GPS S18.80334 E17.04535

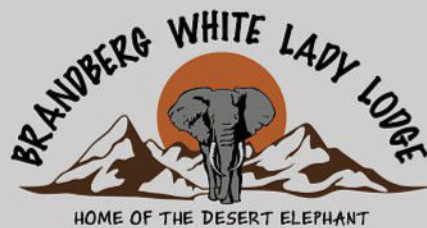
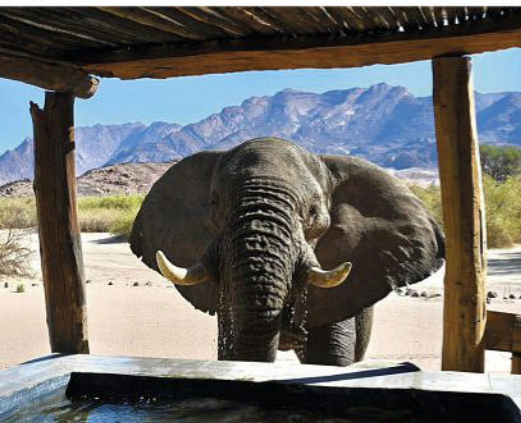
Drive & Camp says Leadwood Camp has the same rates and facilities but only six stands – and it's not as private as Tamboti. For your own slice of bushveld heaven, Tamboti is the better choice.





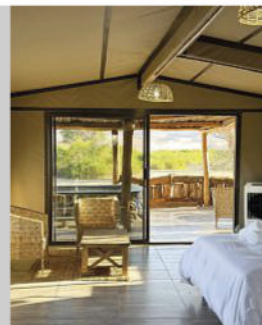
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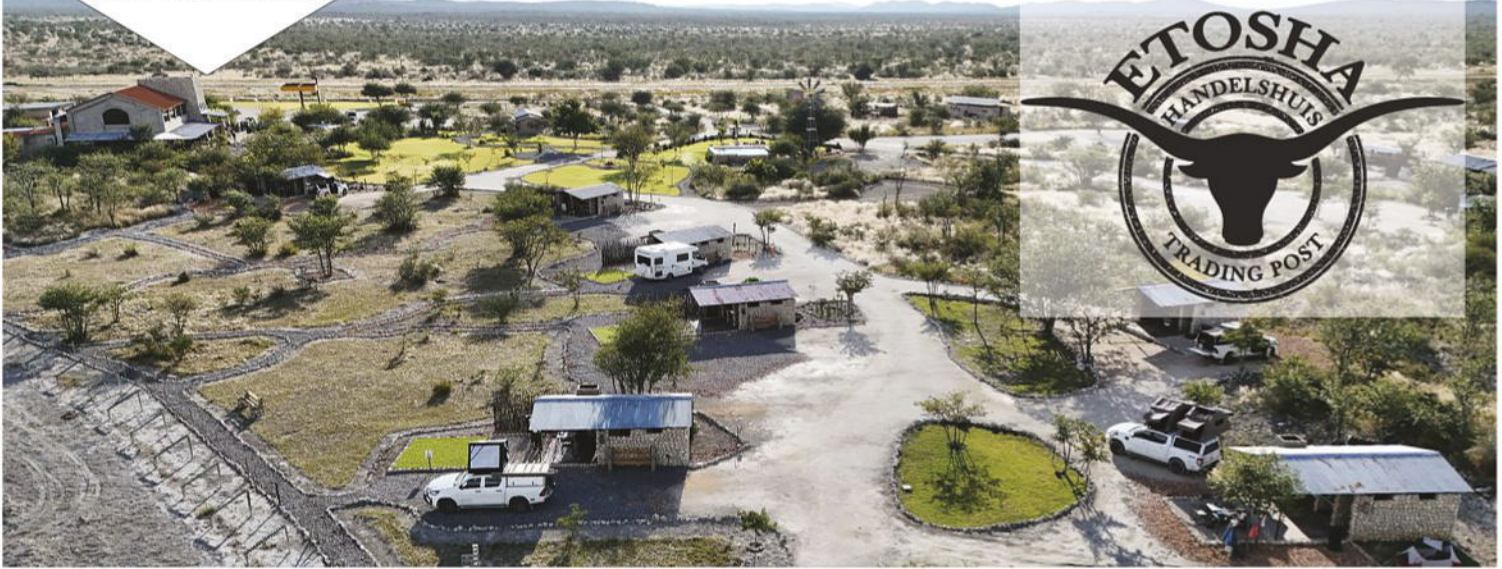
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CAMP DESTINATION



ETOSHA TRADING POST



Etosha Trading Post provides a camping oasis at the ideal location only 6.5 km from the Okaukuejo entrance gate to Etosha National Park!

The individual campsites are equipped with private bathroom facilities including a shower and toilet, a shaded area with wash-up facilities, power outlets, bench for seating and a braai.

Relax on the immaculate lawns, splash in the refreshing pool, soak up the sun on our pool loungers and enjoy views of small game visiting the nearby waterhole.

Spacious group campsites are also available for larger families or groups of friends exploring Etosha together and are equipped with spacious entertaining areas and well-kept shared ablution facilities.

Contact

camping@etosha-tradingpost.com

etosha-tradingpost.com 021 930 4564



Taleni Africa

021 930 4564

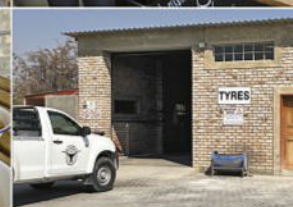
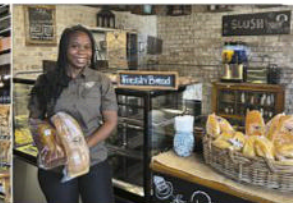
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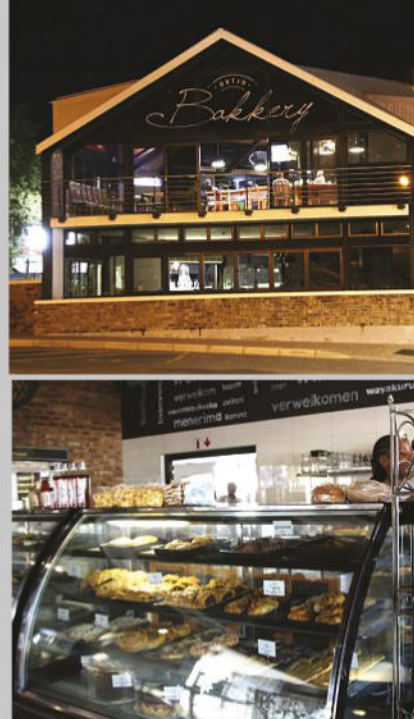


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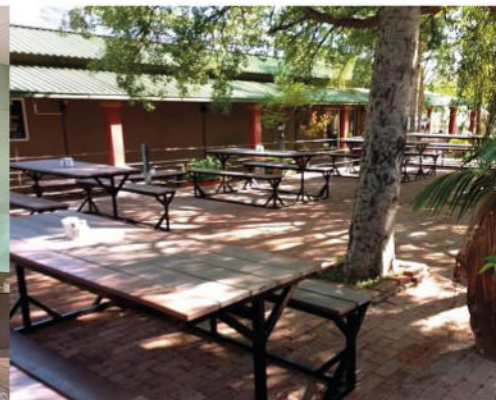
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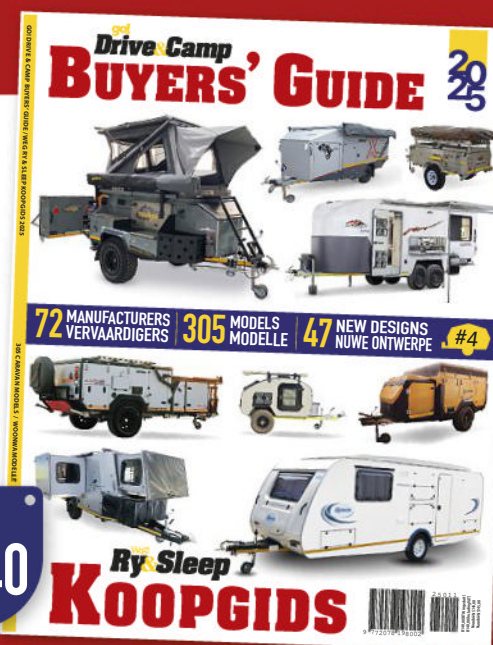
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This is the fourth edition of our annual *Buyers' Guide*, and as with the previous issues, local manufacturers have once again provided a solid selection of new models.

Leon Botha Editor: *Caravan Buyers' Guide*



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History in the hills

Four days, 20 passes, 10 battlefields: a road trip through KwaZulu-Natal's storied Battlefields region

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

Start your journey in Mkhondo (formerly Piet Retief) and head out of town on Kruger Street, which eventually becomes the R543 regional road. The tar is worn, and it's inevitable that you'll hit a pothole or two along the way.

Exactly 8 km outside Mkhondo's centre, turn left at the sign pointing to Lüneburg and the Intombe battlefield along the P45. The tar here is in even worse condition than the R543, but the upside is that traffic is sparse. That gives you plenty of time to weave around the potholes – and the freedom to slow down and soak up this beautiful Mpumalanga landscape.

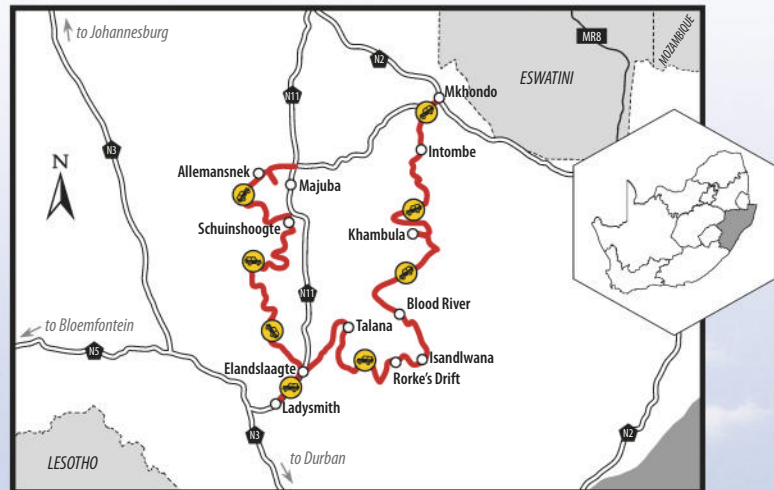
You drive past pine plantations and farms producing vegetables, beef and animal feed, with locals along the way filling potholes with soil. About 36 km after turning onto the P45 you'll see a second sign, pointing you towards your first point of interest: the Intombe battlefield (by now you've crossed into KwaZulu-Natal).

The name appears in several forms – Ntombe in Afrikaans and eNtombe in Zulu – but what matters is that the graves and memorial to the British soldiers who fell here lie about 1.5 km off the road, on the banks of the eNtombe River. For those who like precision, the GPS coordinates are S27.27324 E30.68010.

The Battle of Intombe took place on 12 March 1879, when 104 British soldiers tried to defend a convoy of ox-wagons against roughly 600 Zulu warriors. The Zulus won decisively, losing 30 men to the British toll of 80. The defeat is largely blamed on Lt. Henry Hollingworth Harward, who fled as soon as the Zulus arrived, leaving his troops without a leader. He was later arrested and charged with cowardice.

Adding to the humiliation of the British Empire, the Zulus captured hundreds of Martini-Henry rifles, thousands of rounds of ammunition and 102 kg of gunpowder – spoils that would later be turned against the redcoats in further skirmishes.

FORTRESS. 64
metal wagons form a D-shaped laager at Blood River. The wagons are 1:1 scale and their small size indicate that they are battle wagons.



Back on the tar road, stop at the sign for Braunschweig Church. Here, you'll find a beautiful Lutheran church and a cemetery where tributes on the gravestones are engraved in both German and Afrikaans. They belong to the descendants of German missionaries and craftsmen who arrived in South Africa in 1854.

A little farther on, you'll reach a fork in the road. Left takes you to Paulpietersburg, but your route lies to the right, towards Lüneburg. The tar soon gives way to gravel, and just before you reach the village, you'll come across an information board marking the Filter and Larsen memorial.

You climb a small ladder over a wire fence and walk about 100 m to the monument, set among a stand of pine trees. A plaque explains that it is dedicated to Johann Heinrich Filter and a young Danish lieutenant named Larsen.



In 1897, Larsen and his commanding officer, a Major Schermbrucker, were attacked by Zulus. When the major's horse was shot from under him, Larsen gave up his own mount so that his commander could escape – a selfless act that ultimately cost him his life.

There's more recorded about Heinrich Filter than about Larsen. Filter, only 17 at the time, grew up in Lüneburg and was fatally stabbed by Zulus in 1897, when they drove off a herd of cattle and he tried to stop them. It's unclear whether Filter and Larsen knew each other, though the chances are good.

Barely 9 km from Braunschweig's church, you'll find the Lüneburg congregation. The story of the little town begins on 26 November 1869, when a two-year-old Meyer boy drowned in a ditch. A minister was summoned from a nearby town to conduct the burial, and in time, other German settlers were also laid to rest near little boy's grave.

Lüneburg itself is little more than a church, a cemetery, a preschool and primary school with a hostel, and a scattering of farm buildings. Stop by the

school's front office and you'll be warmly welcomed by the secretary, Heidi Beneke. Her English is halting and peppered with German words, but she speaks fluent Afrikaans, even if it's her second language.

Heidi explains that the roughly 60 pupils from Grade 1 to Grade 3 are taught in their home language, German, while those from Grade 4 to Grade 7 switch to Afrikaans, with German and English becoming their second and third languages respectively. She also mentions – while pouring you a cup of tea in the staff room – that the Ncaga Mountain rising above Lüneburg marks the northernmost point of the Drakensberg.

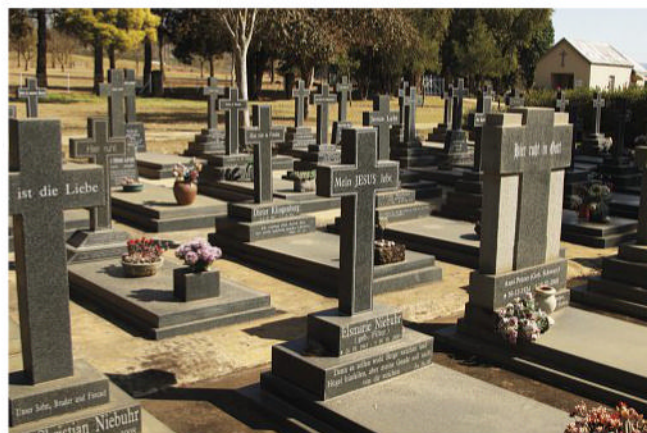
Bid farewell to Lüneburg and follow the Paulpietersburg road until it connects with the tarred R33. Turn right towards Vryheid, where the second battlefield on your route awaits.

Stay on the R33 until you see the turnoff for the D486 gravel road. There's also a badly rusted signpost pointing to the Kambula battlefield, though the lettering is barely legible. (GPS coordinates for the turnoff: S27.69829 E30.73003.)

From here, the road narrows to dirt – at times little more than a twin-track – where, on our visit, muddy hollows forced us to engage four-wheel drive. It's worth the effort, though: the battlefield unfolds across a striking landscape of low, rolling green hills beneath a vast blue sky.

The Battle of Kambula, a brutal clash between Zulu and British forces, took place on 29 March 1879, just two weeks and four days after the Battle of Intombe. By then, the Zulus were brimming with confidence, convinced they could overpower the British, and they sent an impi of 20 000 warriors against 2 000 British soldiers.

This time, however, the British were well prepared with a laager of ox-wagons, many stone walls, six artillery positions and even a field hospital. The Zulu were armed to the teeth with throwing spears, stabbing assegais, knobkerries and Martini-Henry rifles. Zulu marksmen pinned the British down behind their stone fortifications, while thousands of warriors surged forward with traditional weapons to storm the defences.



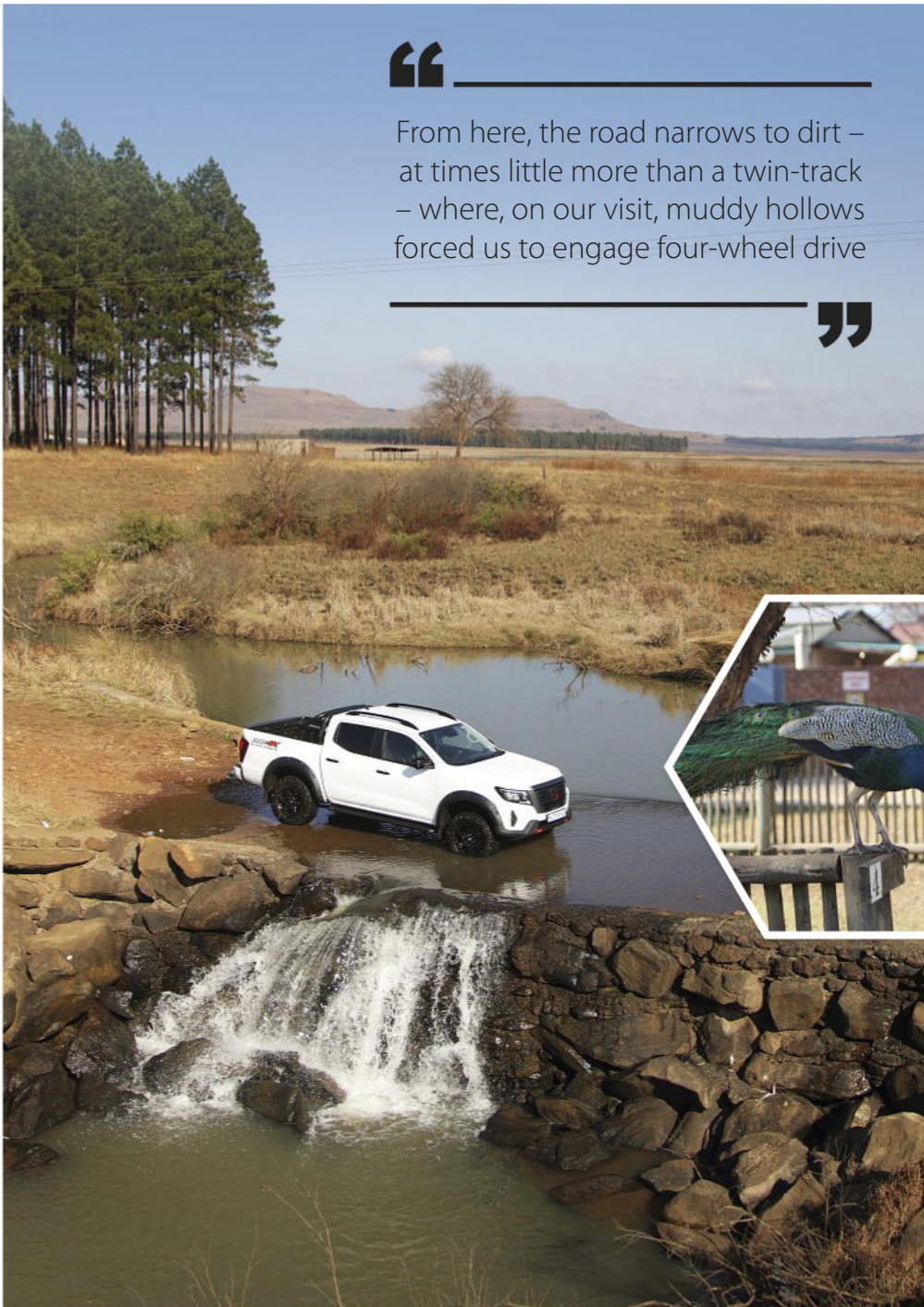


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From here, the road narrows to dirt – at times little more than a twin-track – where, on our visit, muddy hollows forced us to engage four-wheel drive

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WAR AND PEACE. The battlefields of Intombe (opposite page) and Kambula (above) offer scenic views of the KZN landscape. The communities of Braunschweig and Lüneburg (opposite bottom) are strange yet tranquil German enclaves in the land of the Zulu people.



“

...what must have gone through the minds of both the Voortrekkers and the Zulus on the eve of the battle...

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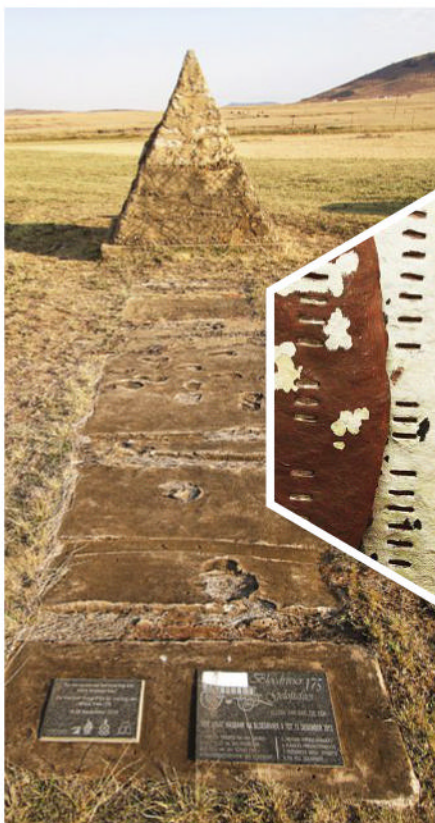


The roaring cannons tore the impi to pieces, and Zulu morale finally collapsed when it became clear that the British had what seemed like an endless supply of ammunition. Over the course of four brutal hours, the British fired 138 000 rifle rounds and unleashed 1 077 shells. Maj. Schermbrucker – the same officer earlier saved by Larsen – later wrote that the Zulus had fought with extraordinary courage and that every fallen warrior was laid to rest with full military honours.

For the Zulu, however, Kambula was a disaster. Doubt crept in about whether they could ever defeat the colonists. The next clash, the Battle of Ulundi in July 1879 – barely three months after Kambula – would indeed mark the end of the Anglo-Zulu War.

You leave Kambula behind and stay on the R33 to Vryheid, where you can stock up on supplies for tonight's braai. Continue south on the R33 over the Scheepersnek Pass towards Dundee. About 48 km outside Vryheid, you'll cross the Buffalo River, then turn left onto a gravel road signposted for De Jagersdrift. This 20 km stretch brings you to your first day's destination: Blood River.

CONTRAST. Judean and Anton had mattresses made that fit neatly inside the small wagons (above) so that visiting school groups can experience life on the frontier. Ncome's huts (opposite middle) are far more comfortable than an iron wagon, though. Isandlwana (opposite bottom) is a sprawling settlement surrounding the infamous battlefield.





A GREAT DIVIDE. The Ncome River is spanned by a foot bridge (above) to connect two museums with somewhat different takes on a certain battle. The bridge is currently broken and locked, but it's only a welding torch away from being returned to service...



At the entrance to the Blood River Heritage Site, you'll be heartily welcomed by Judean Jansen van Vuuren and her husband, Anton. Judean not only handles bookings for the campsite and guest rooms but also runs the shop and restaurant at the visitor centre. Anton is in charge of staff and the upkeep of the site.

At the Smouswa gift shop you can browse reference and devotional books – we strongly recommend picking up the coffee-table book *Battles of KwaZulu-Natal* (R200) by Ken Gillings. It proved

invaluable in confirming dates and numbers for this article.

For the night, choose from one of five guest rooms or pitch your tent in the spacious campsite, which comfortably accommodates around 2 000 people (or up to 4 000 if packed in like sardines). Anton mentions that every year on Reconciliation Day a large gathering of Afrikaners arrives to keep a vow made on 16 December 1838 by Sarel Cilliers – more than 40 years before the Battle of Kambula.

Tonight, as the flames of your campfire crackle under a wide starry sky, you may find yourself wondering what must have gone through the minds of both the Voortrekkers and the Zulus on the eve of the Battle of Blood River.

Let Anton take you on a tour of the laager – he has fascinating snippets to share. For instance, there were no women or children present at the battle, and the wagons that formed the defences were battle wagons – much smaller than the trek wagons families travelled in.

JOURNEY

Across the Ncome River (the original name of Blood River before the battle, and the one now in use again) stands a large building. Anton explains that this is the Ncome Museum – the Zulu counterpart to the Blood River Heritage Site. It's well worth a visit, as the truth so often lies somewhere between the two sides of a story.

The two heritage sites on opposite banks of the river indeed take very different approaches to the famous battle between Voortrekker and Zulu. The Blood River site emphasises history and religion, while the Ncome Museum highlights culture and tradition.

At Ncome, our guide is Mandla Nkosi, who recounts the stories of all the Zulu kings since Shaka. His favourite is King Mpande, remembered for bringing an end to the frequent wars against Boer, Brit, Swazi and Sotho. Mandla also explains that ncome is the Zulu word for "praise." Since the Ncome River has long provided water for washing and cooking, as well as clay for huts and pots, it remains deeply significant to the local Zulu people.

Between the two sites stands a footbridge across the Ncome River, intended as a symbol of reconciliation. Today, however, the bridge is damaged and declared unsafe – and neither the Ncome Museum (funded by government) nor the Blood River Heritage Site (funded by the Solidarity union) is willing to pay for its repair. The irony could not be more obvious.

A day visit to the Blood River site costs R50 per person, while at Ncome you'll pay R15 – or nothing at either if you're an overnight guest. At Blood River, rooms are R500 p.p.n. (without aircon or TV) and campsites R200 per stand, with electricity and running water. Ncome has no campsite, but you can stay in a small hut for R420 per night for two people, with a shared bathroom. A larger family hut with four beds, a private bathroom and DSTV costs R1 056 per night. If camping is your preference, Blood River is your only option, but if you'd rather sleep under a roof with fresh linen, we'd recommend Ncome over Blood River.

Anton at Blood River and Mandla at Ncome are both warm and welcoming, yet they embody two stubborn cultures still struggling to work together – despite their obvious similarities.





MONUMENTAL. Both Isandlwana (opposite page) and Rorke's Drift (this page) are kept in good nick and are frequented by tourists. A guide told us that the visitors are mostly from the UK but also the Netherlands and Germany. South Africans, apparently, don't visit as often as you'd think.



When you leave here, take the P54 gravel back road to the settlement of Nquto, then continue on the tarred R68 regional road for 13 km until a road sign points you towards the third battlefield on your route: Isandlwana. These days, it's grown into a small town with general dealers selling the basics – and a luxury lodge clearly aimed at overseas visitors, with rooms going for around R5 000 p.p.n.

To visit the battlefield itself, you first need to stop at the visitor centre and buy an entry ticket. It costs R70 p.p. – best to bring cash, since the card machine doesn't always get a signal.

The Battle of Isandlwana took place on 22 January 1879 and was the second major clash of the Anglo-Zulu War – exactly 40 years, 1 month and 6 days after the Battle of Blood River. An impi of about 20 000 warriors attacked 1 837 British troops. Although Zulu losses were severe – around 1 000 dead and 2 000 wounded – the British fared worse, with more than 1 300 killed. The gravel road through the Isandlwana battlefield is well maintained; during our visit, workers were busy repairing the entrance gate and clearing brush around the graves and memorials.

Isandlwana is one of two famous battlefields in the immediate area; next, you'll head to the other. Follow the D30 gravel road out of Isandlwana towards Rorke's Drift. The road number isn't marked on maps, but it's the shortest route connecting the two sites. The gravel surface is excellent – certainly better than some of the tar roads in the region.

Rorke's Drift is a charming little village with homes dating back to the British colonial era. The battlefield gained worldwide fame thanks to the 1964



film *Zulu*, in which Michael Caine starred in his first leading role.

The battle itself took place on the same day as Isandlwana, when 3 000 Zulu warriors broke away from the main attack and ran the 10 km to Rorke's Drift to surprise the 141 British soldiers stationed there. If you remember the movie, you'll know the story: the British held their ground with extraordinary bravery and even drove the Zulus back – a victory still proudly retold in the British Isles today.

That old saying about time healing all wounds is plain to see in Rorke's Drift. Zulus tend the British barracks, church and cemeteries with care, while British goodwill organisations provide the funding to keep the battlefields preserved. You can hire a private guide (fees vary), or search the phrase "Electronic information leaflet – Amafa Institute" to download a digital pamphlet to your phone with the essentials of the battle. Entry to the Rorke's Drift museum site is R40 p.p.

Leave Rorke's Drift and follow the Dundee gravel road for 5 km until you reach the turnoff to Helpmekaar, where you turn left. This unnamed gravel road takes you over the Noustrop Pass, crosses the R33, and runs into the tiny hamlet of Helpmekaar.

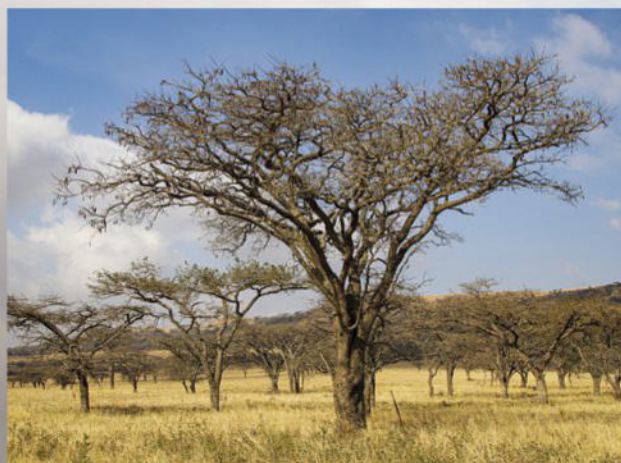
Helpmekaar earned its name because transport riders once had to literally "help each other" across the nearby Noustrop and Elandskraal passes. Local lore also holds that cannibals, led by Chief Ulupalule, lived in the surrounding hills between 1820 and 1830, before Dingane captured and executed them.

Your next stop is the twin towns of Dundee and Glencoe, both named after Scottish coastal towns, though the resemblance to Scotland's seaside ends with the names.

From Glencoe, follow the R602 over the Glenluce Pass to Elandslaagte. It was here, on 21 October 1899, that Boer and Brit clashed – 20 years and 7 months after the Battle of Rorke's Drift. The British dominated this battle with 3 500 troops and 18 cannons against the 1 000 Boers with only three. This was also the first – and last – engagement of the Hollander Corps, a group of 150 Dutch volunteers who had sailed all the way to Africa to support the Boers.



GREEN AND GOLD. It's free to visit Elandslaagte (above) and the grounds are maintained by the local community. Normandien Pass (opposite page) rises up dramatically from the otherwise flat surrounds and tops out at the Ark, where you can see until forever on a clear day.

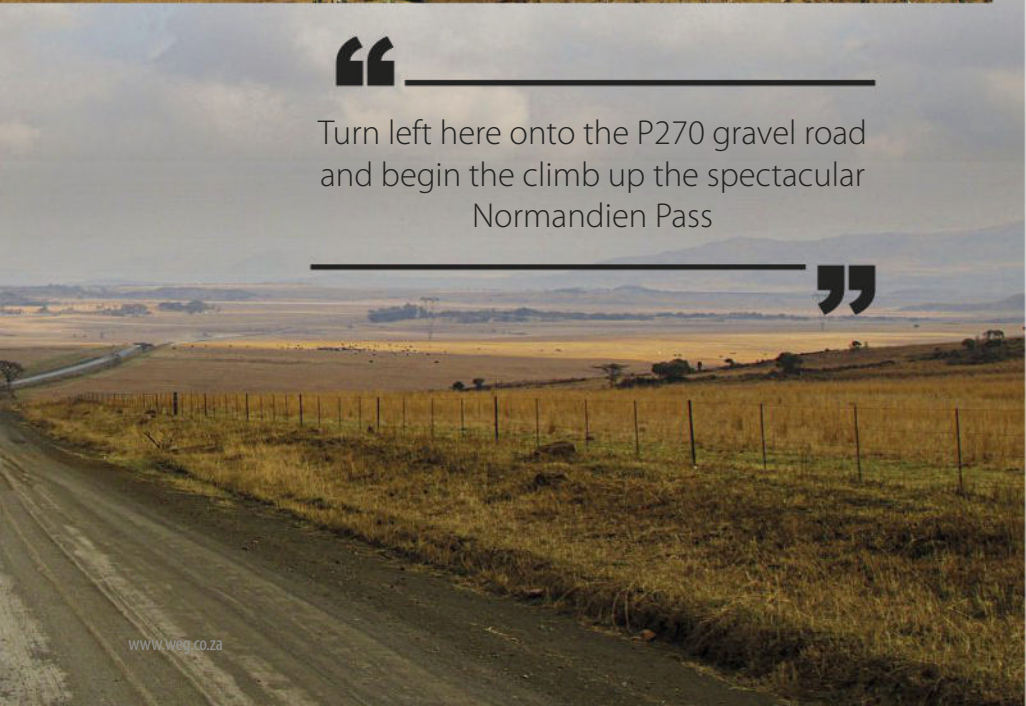




“

Turn left here onto the P270 gravel road and begin the climb up the spectacular Normandien Pass

”



Among them were Frederik Mondrian, brother of painter Piet Mondrian, known for his red, yellow and blue square art (which even inspired VW South Africa in the 1980s to paint Citi Golfs in those three colours – perhaps you remember the TV jingle: “Red, yellow, blue, not green...”), and Cor van Gogh, brother of Vincent van Gogh.

Frederik survived the battle but was sent to the prison island of St Helena. Cor, however, was fatally wounded at Elandslaagte.

The British memorial for Elandslaagte lies right next to a railway line at GPS coordinates S28.41346 E29.94784. Be warned: there is no turning space at the war graves. If you’re towing an off-road trailer, you’ll need skills to reverse 200 m uphill – on a twin-track road.

It’s the end of day two and your next stop is Ladysmith. The town is full of Anglo-Boer War sites – make sure you read up on the Siege of Ladysmith, a saga far too complex to cover on these pages.

We had planned to camp at Ladysmith’s caravan park, but the municipal site is no more. Today, the stands where holidaymakers once pitched their tents are occupied by sewage trucks and water tanks. The only option now is to knock on the door of a guesthouse – we recommend Farquhar Lodge, as its parking area is big enough for an overland bakkie with a trailer hitched on.

Rest well tonight, because tomorrow is a day of mountain passes – 12 in total, with two of them being fairly challenging.

You leave Ladysmith on the N11 highway toward Newcastle, but about 25 km out of town, you turn left onto the Matiwane–Collings Pass road. You won’t be tackling Collings Pass itself, though – instead, at Slangdraai Dam you turn right onto the Lusitania road.

After passing through the Lusitania farming community, you cross the short but scenic Sondagsrivier Pass and continue north until you reach a sign for Normandien Pass. Turn left here onto the P270 gravel road and begin the climb up the spectacular Normandien Pass – at 1 995 m above sea level, it’s the highest in KwaZulu-Natal after Sani Pass. The drop-offs are sheer and nerve-racking, and when it rains, the drive can be downright dangerous, even in a 4x4 vehicle. If there’s snow, we strongly advise against attempting it.

At the summit of Normandien Pass there’s a viewpoint known as the Ark. Two

JOURNEY

pull-offs are available: the lower one is accessible to vehicles with high ground clearance, but the upper – offering the best views – can only be reached with a 4x4 or a vehicle equipped with a rear diff-lock.

Look closely at the sandstone surface around the Ark and you might spot the tracks left by ox-wagons that crossed here nearly 200 years ago. It's hard to imagine how wagons could ever have made it over this mountain.

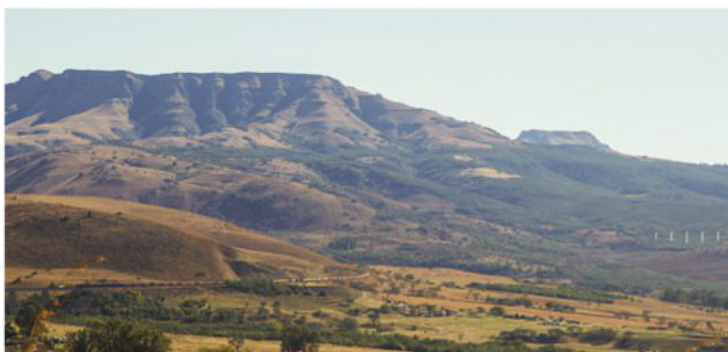
From here, the road winds downhill and then over the gentler Grootpoort Pass before the P270 eventually ends at the obscure S19 (also called the Mullers Pass road). The turn-off is at GPS S27.82331 E29.65017.

After Mullers Pass, the road ends at the D96, where you turn left towards Waterfall Hill. There really is a waterfall on the Ncandu River, but it lies on private land and is not accessible by road or on foot. Better to carry on, following the road across the Visierkerfnek Pass until you reach the town of Newcastle. From Newcastle, take the Memel Road (R34) over Brinkshoogte Pass and then across Schuinshoogte Pass to the site of the Battle of Schuinshoogte (S27.61581 E29.87966). The battlefield is not marked by a tourism signpost, so without the GPS coordinates, you'll likely drive past without noticing.

The farmer on whose land the war graves lie allows visitors to cross his fence

– there's a ladder to help you over – but this courtesy is reserved for serious visitors only. So, don't haul out a braai drum and set up a picnic on his land.

The Battle of Schuinshoogte, also known as the Battle of Ingogo, was fought between the South African Republic and British forces. The first shots rang out at noon on 8 February 1881 – 18 years before the Battle of Elandslaagte. Of the roughly 400 Boer fighters, only eight were killed, while the British lost 66 of their 278 troops. The Boers allowed the surviving soldiers to retreat – a mistake, perhaps, as the Brits took two cannons with them, guns that would be used against the Boers just 19 days later at the Battle of Majuba.





Shortly after Schuinshoogte, you turn onto a tar road called Main Road 186. Follow it until you reach the eighth battlefield on your route.

Between May and June 1900, there were three engagements between Boer and Empire. The first was at Helpmekaar on 13 May, where British forces under General Redvers Buller claimed victory. The second was fought on 8 June here at Bothas Pass, where Buller threw 22 000 British troops against 2 500 Boer fighters – again with a British win.

From Bothas Pass, you carry on along the Seekoeivlei Poort road to the site of the third clash, the beginning of the end for the Boer republics. Unlike most of

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Prices From R800 p.p.p.n. up to R1 250 for two in the presidential suite.

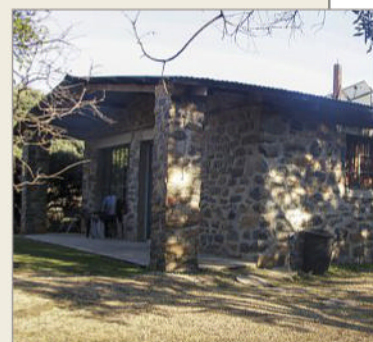


3 PROVINCES 4X4, VOLKSRUST

Two campsites: the Bush Camp and Rooibektiptol Camp. A 4x4 is required to reach them, and bush trailers aren't allowed at the Bush Camp as the route is too tough. Several self-catering houses are available if you prefer not to camp.

Contact 📞 082 785 8002 (Ronel) 📧 3provinces4x4@gmail.com 🌐 3Provincies4x4.co.za

Prices R280 p.n. for two camping; from R790 p.n. for two in a mountain hut. Each 4x4 route costs extra – between R130 and R390 per vehicle.



the battlefields you've visited so far, the monument at Allemansnek is dedicated to Boer fighters. Here, you'll read names like Jordaan and Kruger on the stone. You're now in the home stretch of the tour. Just 7 km from Allemansnek, you turn in at the 3 Provinces 4x4 holiday farm (S27.40856 E29.75270). Tomorrow, you'll visit one last battlefield before heading home.

Follow the R543 to Volksrust, where the British set up a concentration camp for Boer women and children two years after the Battle of Allemansnek. Your destination, however, is Majuba Mountain, where on 27 February 1881,

Boer forces defeated the British army – 21 years and three months before the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed, bringing hostilities between the Boer republics and the British empire to an end.

Settle yourself down on the grassy plain at the foot of the majestic rock and chew on a stem of grass. Our history holds so much violence, but also courage and respect for one's opponent, whether Zulu, Boer or Brit.

Cherish your country, for every piece of land was fought for. Cherish other cultures, for we all bled together. This has been a weighty experience; for our next road trip, we'll head to the coast, to a place untouched by war. 📍

On Cape Town's *front porch*

Sometimes you just want to unwind right on your own doorstep. Miller's Point is wide open, welcoming and ready for everyone.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

Simon's Town is one of the brightest gems in the Cape's tourism crown, a place that's welcomed some remarkable visitors and witnessed major moments in world history.

Charles Darwin, the father of evolution, dropped anchor here a couple of centuries ago to study the region's geology, and today you can snap a photo of his bronze statue on the quay. Also in these waters lies the wreck of HMS *Pelorus*,

a Second World War warship that went down just off Miller's Point campsite.

That's exactly where you're headed for the weekend: Miller's Point, where it feels like you're perched on a stage above the sea with sweeping views across False Bay.

Slow but steady

Miller's Point lies barely 45 km from Cape Town's city centre, along a route known to cyclists as part of the annual Cape Town Cycle Tour, formerly the Argus.

It's less than 30 km before you reach Muizenberg, and the 5 km stretch from there to Fish Hoek feels thoroughly suburban – though what really strikes you is the sudden presence of so many other travellers. You'll notice it first-hand when you stop to stretch your legs at the Seaside Coffee & Snack Bar.

As you drive into Simon's Town, watch for the Long Beach sign at the Drie Gebroeders road. It may look like a narrow alley, but don't hesitate to turn

in with your caravan hitched – just 50 m further on is a wide parking area. Many fishermen also launch their boats here, which means there's plenty of room to turn your rig around before you continue your journey.

On the corner of the parking lot you'll spot a crowd gathered around an old 1990-model Gypsy 3 caravan, ordering coffee and a bite to eat. Joan Atkins and Vionna Solomons run the service hatch, and they say their bacon-and-egg roll (R37) is the runaway favourite. Also on the menu: toasted sandwiches (R32–R42), boerie rolls (R35) and hamburgers (R65). Order an Americano or a flat white (R25 and R30) if you need a caffeine boost for the final stretch of the drive.

Joan and Vionna are here every single day of the year, serving from 7 am to 5 pm. It's not just tourists you'll meet here, either: a local woman helping her dog out of the car before heading down to the beach; a couple rinsing the salt off at the ablution block with its bright mural; or maybe someone easing his Land Rover Discovery backwards to launch a boat.

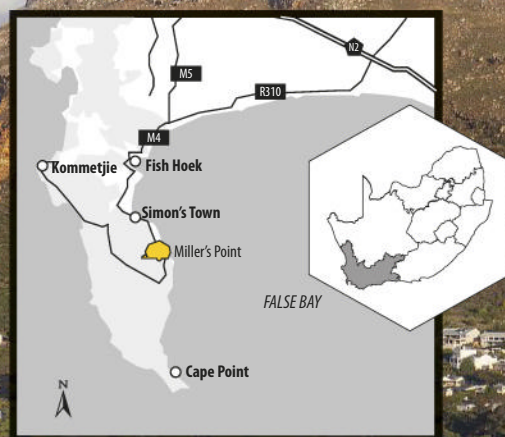
As you look out over the sea, South Africa's largest naval base lies just 700 m away. The street you turned into takes its name from the Drie Gebroeders, a Dutch East India Company ship that ran aground here in the late 18th century. From here, it's only 7 km to Miller's Point, but first you pass through Simon's Town's main street, lined with all the usual tourist haunts. Parking with a caravan hitched on is virtually impossible, though, so it's wiser to unhitch at the campsite first and come back later for a leisurely stroll.

Earlier this year, a bust of Charles Darwin was unveiled at the tip of the quay to commemorate his historic visit to Simon's Town. The plaque also honours the role the area played in shaping Darwin's theory of evolution.

His visit came just a year after the Great Trek began in 1835, when the 27-year-old Darwin hired a horse-

drawn cart and set off on a wide circuit from Simon's Town to Cape Town, looping through Paarl and Franschhoek. His ship, the *HMS Beagle*, lay at anchor in Simon's Town for 19 days. Darwin described Cape Town as a beautiful place at the foot of a massive wall rising into the clouds.

He collected rock samples along the road between Simon's Town and Cape Town, the road to Paarl, and the sandy flats between the Peninsula and the city – samples that, remarkably, can still be seen today in the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences in Cambridge, England.



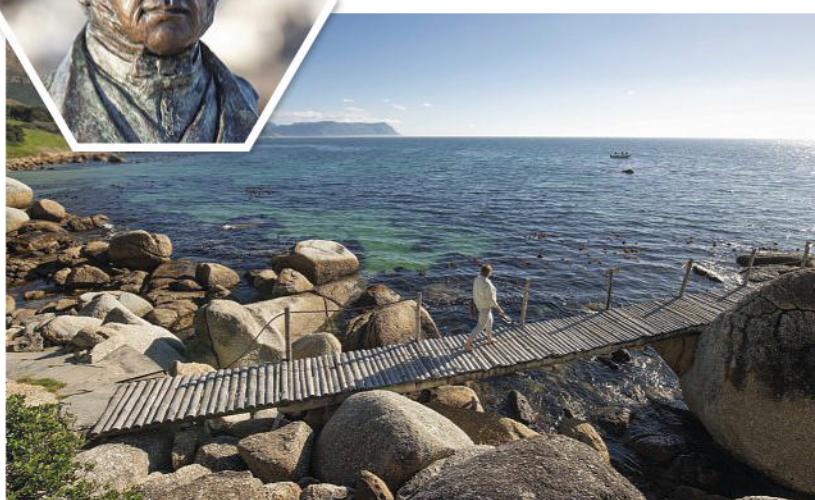
“

The first cluster on the right-hand side are the prime spots – they’re on the lower terrace and offer the best sea views

”



MANY FACES. Miller's Point is almost like a collective noun: here, you'll find a slipway for launching your boat, one of the Cape's prettiest tidal pools and a lovely campsite. It's a raised perch with the blue waters stretching right across the horizon.



The turn-off to the campsite is clearly marked from the main road. Barely 60 m after you've turned, the road forks: keep left towards a gate where an attendant quickly comes to open it for you. (The road to the right leads to the original farm buildings of Edmund Miller – more on him later.)

It's a municipal resort and the booking over the phone runs without a hitch. You're given a map of the resort that clearly shows each of the 26 stands, along with the location of the large shade trees. The office people will point out which stands are still available.

After the gate, keep left again, but drive carefully and swing wide around the sharp bend that follows – especially if you're towing a long combination. The sea is now just 100 m ahead, and the

road curves back so that you enter the campsite running parallel to the beach.

The road runs as a single loop through the campsite, with stands on either side. The first cluster on the right-hand side are the prime spots – they're on the lower terrace and offer the best sea views. There's plenty of shade here and the grass grows thick, though on our visit it looked as if no lawnmower had passed by in quite some time.

Every two stands share a power point (with both blue plug and three-pin options), and as a unit including the breakers look fairly new. There isn't, however, a rubbish bin close at hand. Bring your own braai, as there are only communal facilities at the far ends of the campsite – nothing at the stands themselves. The lights switch on

automatically in the evenings and are scattered randomly around the grounds.

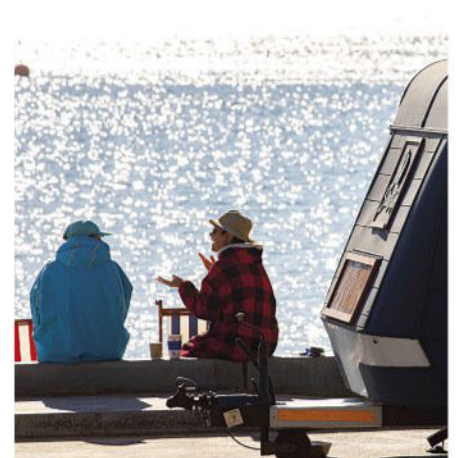
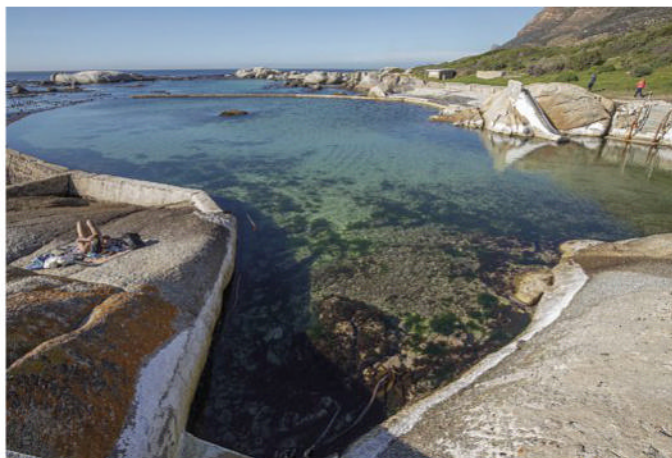
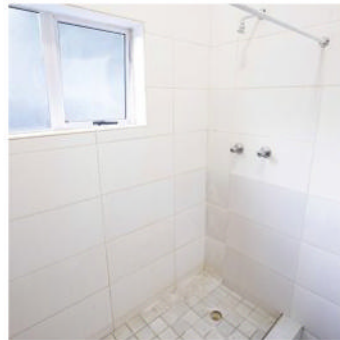
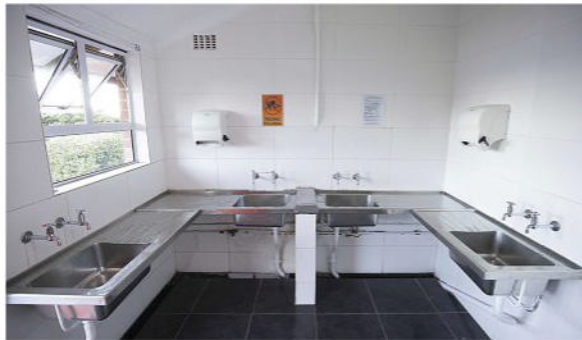
The ablution blocks bring to mind an old government building. Men and women have separate facilities, with the dishwashing area in between. The amenities are as old as the building looks, and some of the tiles need replacement, but everything is spotless. Each side has two shower cubicles with a dry section, plus a row of stainless-steel basins along the wall. The women's block has an extra cubicle at the end of the passage – pleasantly spacious. There's also a toilet behind the building for wheelchair users.

A notice on the bathroom wall warns visitors about baboons and advises keeping at least 20 m away.

The main road runs just behind the campsite, and you can hear the traffic,



COME ONE, COME ALL! Capetonians have the advantage of Miller's Point being just around the corner. Visitors from further afield are equally welcome – just be sure to book ahead, as the site is always popular.



WEEKEND BREAK

though it quiets down at night. In the evenings, the security guards change shifts, and before long the one taking over will come and introduce himself.

You can't actually see the play park from the campsite, as it sits below the front row of stands on the next terrace. The steps down are near the entrance bend, and the jungle gym has plenty of levels to keep the kids busy.

Next to it is a small beach, though it's not really suited to swimming as it's fairly rocky. About 100 m further along, however, there's a sandy stretch where you can lay down your towel.

On your way in that direction, detour to the tidal pool. Follow the slightly crumbling concrete path just past the beach, cross two little wooden bridges, and carry on until you reach a slipway – the tidal pool lies about 200 m beyond.

There are roughly a hundred tidal pools along South Africa's coast, most of them on the Cape Peninsula and the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast. Miller's Point's pool is one of 22 in the area and easily among the most beautiful. It even has a slide on one side and a little bridge on the other.

Back at your stand, if you may be wondering where exactly the



Briefly | Miller's Point



Campsite 23 numbered stands on grass with plenty of shade. The front stands offer the best sea views, but you'll be most exposed if the wind picks up. Cellphone signal is patchy.

Ablutions Old but neat, with a dishwashing area.

Price Depending on the season, R204-R358 per night for a stand that accommodates up to six people.

Arrival and departure Not specified and 12:00.

Contact ☎ 021 444 6770 🌐 capetown.gov.za
✉ MillersPoint.Bookings@capetown.gov.za

Nearest town? Miller's Point lies on the outskirts of Cape Town.

Road condition Tar all the way to the campsite.

GPS S34.228959 E18.470326

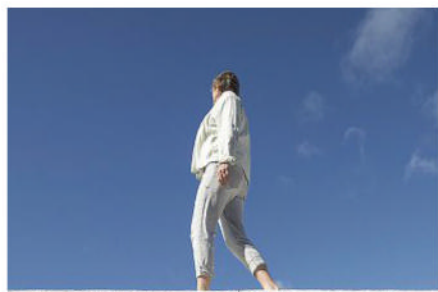
Drive & Camp says While you're in the area, pop in at Cape Point – the entrance is just 6 km from here. (Cyril tells you on p. 74 how to get the most out of this amazing destination.)

HMS *Pelorus* lies beneath the water, face the shoreline at a right angle. The wreck rests slightly to the left – at about 11 o'clock on an imaginary clock face – roughly 800 m out to sea and 22 m below the surface.

The *Pelorus* was built in Scotland in 1942 and sold to the South African Navy five years later, when it was renamed HMSAS *Pietermaritzburg*. It was a minesweeper and led the fleet during the D-Day landings in Normandy in 1944. In 1994, it was deliberately sunk here to form an artificial reef, and in 2013, the surrounding 300 m zone was declared a national heritage site.

The area takes its name from Edmund Miller, who bought the land in 1825 and started a whaling station. In the early 1900s, the Molteno family took over, shifting the focus to dairy farming. The old farmhouse still stands today – now transformed into the Black Marlin seafood restaurant, just 200 m from the campsite.

This spot is a hit with tourists, so booking is essential. The front section is a veranda with a gorgeous view over False Bay. All that's left is to decide how to balance out last night's braai: springbok carpaccio (R145), tuna steak (R319), ostrich fillet (R299) – or maybe something sweet. How about malva pudding (R69)? 🍮



THREE STARS. Tick off three must-dos on your weekend menu: grab a coffee at the Seaside Coffee & Snack Bar, fire up your own braai at your campsite, and round things off at the Black Marlin seafood restaurant.



Thoughtfully designed. Effortlessly booked.

Cross-border travel has never been this easy!



ULTIMATE
Routes

This is the Zambezi Region (previously known as the Caprivi Strip), a completely different side of the country – and it's made for self-drivers who crave freedom, variety and adventure. The Ultimate Routes team recently visited the area and returned with only one complaint... they should have stayed longer.

What's the allure of the Zambezi Region for a self-driver?

To diversify a Namibian experience which would likely entail desert, dunes and desolate destinations, the Caprivi adds a greener, bushveld experience that includes rivers, tree islands and a delta-like experience. Driving distances between destinations is not too long, allowing maximum time for excursions to national parks or relaxation in camp. The rivers are a source of life for epic wildlife and birdlife viewing, as well as to enjoy activities from the water – a sunset boat cruise or fishing excursion is tops.

You'll be relieved to know the Zambezi's main stretches are tarred, smooth and easy-going, but the real magic happens when you turn off onto sandy 4x4 tracks that lead into national parks like Bwabwata, Nkasa Rupara or Mudumu. These uncrowded reserves boast herds of elephants, buffalo and zebra, with a good chance of spotting wild dogs and a growing lion population. Rare sightings like red lechwe add to the thrill, keeping wildlife enthusiasts fully engaged.

With its abundance of rivers, floodplains and woodlands, the region offers excellent birding – from African skimmers and carmine bee-eaters to countless raptors and waterbirds – keeping twitchers busy from dawn to dusk.

Would you recommend it for those looking for a less crowded safari experience?

Compared to Etosha or Chobe Riverfront, the national parks in the Zambezi Region offer wild, more secluded game viewing with less tourist traffic. The diversity of nature is also incredible, allowing a self-driver

Namibia's Eden

Imagine easing off the tar road that carried you through Namibia's dry heartlands, to find yourself surrounded by rivers, floodplains and dense green woodlands.



Photo Willem van der Merwe

to move from riverine forests to floodplains to woodlands, each with unique wildlife encounters, within a few hours. In general, conservation fees are still relatively low in comparison to surrounding countries, fondly giving the region its nickname of "Poor man's Delta".

Tell us more about the accommodation options

An epic campsite is practically guaranteed when you're here. Whether it's on the riverbanks of the Kavango or in the heart of the national park, most campsites come with private ablutions, shady pitches and

Photo Ben Krog



Photo Ultimate Routes

Photo Lea Erasmus

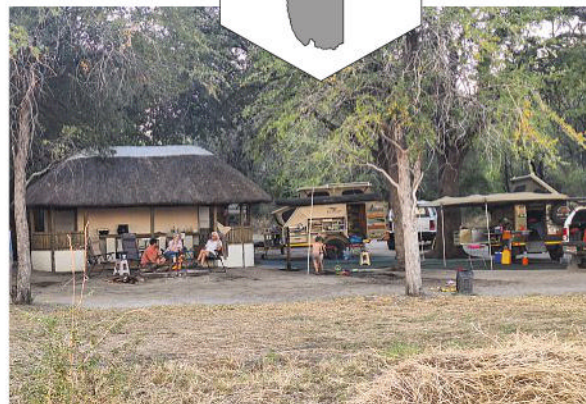


Photo Ultimate Routes

Photo Ultimate Routes



Photo Ultimate Routes



Photo Lea Erasmus

“ The region offers excellent birding, keeping twitchers busy from dawn to dusk ”

the soundtrack of hippos grunting at night. Camps and lodges are almost all accessible by 4x2 vehicles with high ground clearance, apart from a few prime sites requiring a 4x4 to reach. Caravans are welcome and many camps are well equipped for longer stays too. There are also options if you want to select a good mix of accommodation for your trip. If you prefer more comfort, there are lovely lodges with decks where you can sip a sundowner while elephants wade across the floodplains in front of you – also not charged at the rates tourists pay across the way in Botswana.

Can travellers easily stock up on food, drinks and fuel?

We were surprised by the availability of shops in the main villages in the Zambezi Region. Retailers like Shoprite and Metro are well stocked on both fresh and non-perishables items, while the stores all had separate liquor outlets too. Fuel was not an issue, and the fact that the rand is interchangeable with the Namibian dollar makes the process so much simpler. Towns like Kongola, Divundu and Katima Mulilo have reliable fuel stations, but distances can be deceptive, so filling up whenever you can is still golden advice.

When is the best time to visit?

Every time of year has its own allure. For best game viewing, the dryer months of May to October are best, but the greenery and dramatic skies of summer storms will add their own magic to your days. For those tickled by catching a tigerfish, the festive season would be a good time to visit. Don't overlook this jewel of a place. The Zambezi Region is not just a shortcut between Namibia and Botswana or Zambia. It's a destination, and for those behind the wheel, it feels like stumbling upon Namibia's secret garden – lush, alive and waiting to be explored at your own pace. 📍

CONTACT

📞 071 471 4900 🌐 ultimateroutes.co.za
✉️ hello@ultimateroutes.co.za

Photo Ultimate Routes



Make a point of it

When visiting Cape Town, there are three things you simply shouldn't miss: taking the cable car up Table Mountain, enjoying seafood along a harbour, and exploring Cape Point National Park in your rig.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

Cape Town enjoys an average of 3 094 hours of sunshine a year – the closest a European city comes to that is Athens in Greece with 2 769 hours. So, chances are the weather will be on your side when you visit the Mother City.

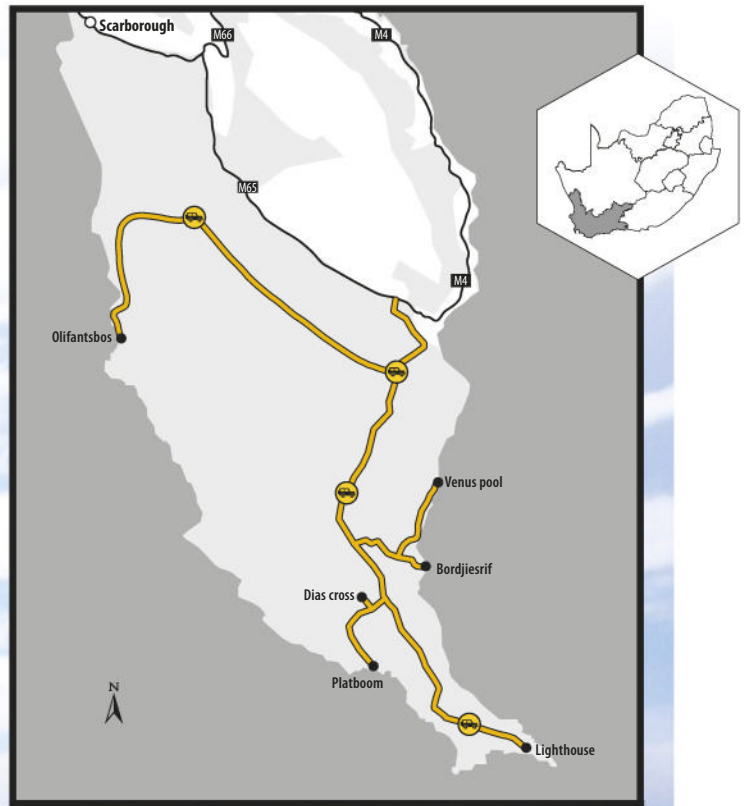
Have your ID or driver's licence ready at the Cape Point National Park entrance to show you're a local. The entry fee is R455 p.p., but visitors with a South African ID pay only R105 p.p. (R55 for children).

Follow Smitswinkel Road for 2,5 km until a roadside sign points you right, towards Olifantsbos. The 11 km tar road winds past rocky outcrops and fynbos to a beach where the rusted shipwrecks of the *Thomas T. Tucker* and *Nolloth* can still be seen. Here, you'll find a grassy area for picnics and ablution facilities, though braais are not allowed.

Head back to Smitswinkel Road and turn right towards Cape Point. The first pull-off is the Smitswinkelvlakte hiking

trail. Parking is at the GPS coordinates S34.28981 E18.44888, where you'll also find a bench with a view over the plain. The trail itself is only 200 m long – the perfect chance to stretch your legs.

About 2,5 km further along Smitswinkel Road, there's a turnoff to the left that leads to the Bordjiesrif picnic site on the False Bay coast. On the way, you'll pass a replica of Vasco da Gama's stone cross, first planted here in 1497, before parking next to a large tidal



CROSS. A replica of Da Gama's padirão (below) marks the spot where the Portuguese navigator rounded the Cape. It's often bustling with tourists at the lighthouses, but the beaches are usually secluded.



“

The beach is idyllic and reminiscent of the Mediterranean coast

”



pool. There are ablution facilities and braai spots, and on holidays the picnic site is packed with day visitors.

Our next stop is the Buffelsfontein Visitor Centre, where you can learn more about the park and its attractions. Across the road is a small building that houses the Skaife Museum – named after Sydney Skaife, a botanist and entomologist whose contributions to natural science are invaluable.

Barely 800 m further along Smitswinkel Road, we turn left and head downhill to Buffels Bay, a picnic site much like Bordjiesrif but smaller and usually quieter. Buffels Bay also has a long beach for walking, something Bordjiesrif doesn't offer.

The next turnoff from Smitswinkel Road heads right, towards the Atlantic Ocean. The road passes another Da Gama cross – this one even larger than the one at Bordjiesrif – before ending at Platboom Beach, a favourite gathering spot for surfers.

Another turnoff takes us to Kleinbaai and Maclear's Beach, where the road runs into a massive sandstone cliff right below the tip of Cape Point. It's a striking attraction, though it can get



very busy when busloads of overseas tourists arrive.

However, the parking area at the sandstone cliff is a great place to leave your vehicle and walk to the park's best-kept secret: follow the Cape of Good Hope trail to the hidden Dias Beach. The beach is idyllic and reminiscent of the Mediterranean coast, but there are no facilities here – it's just you and nature.

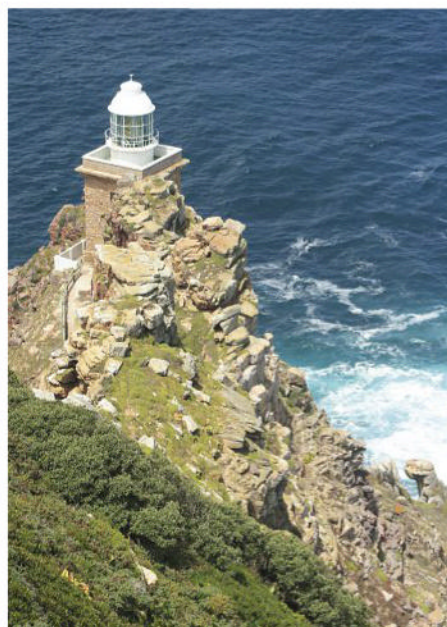
Our final stop is at the main parking area at the tip of Cape Point

National Park. Parking is free, and you'll find a restaurant and public ablution facilities here. Higher up on the mountain stands Cape Point's old lighthouse. There's a road leading up to it, but it's used only by Transnet and park staff.

You have two options to reach the old lighthouse: you can either walk the steep 600 m footpath, or take the Flying Dutchman – a funicular that whisks you to the top. A return trip costs R105 p.p.



LIGHT WORK. The lighthouses are the main attraction, but do keep an eye on the rocks for interesting finds such as this black girdled lizard (right) and Chinaflower (opposite insert).



(R60 for pensioners; free for children under six). You can also pay R90 for a one-way ticket up and then walk back down to your bakkie.

The view from the old lighthouse is breathtaking, and we recommend continuing along the footpath to the new lighthouse at the very tip of Cape Point.

So yes, gravel roads may lead you to the most interesting places, but sometimes it's the tar roads that call out to be driven.

Need to know



Maximum number of vehicles?

SANParks determines how many vehicles are allowed in the park.

Do I get a map? You don't need one.

You simply follow Smitswinkel Road and explore all the turn-offs.

Will my vehicle get scratched? No, the road is wide and the fynbos is low.

Do I need to take a compressor? It's a tar road, so no.

Can I braai halfway? There are braai spots at several picnic sites. Signs will indicate where braais are not permitted.

Is there cellphone reception? Yes, almost everywhere.

Best time of year? All year round, though of course summer is best. If the wind is blowing on the Atlantic side, the False Bay side is usually calm and vice versa.

Can I take my family along? Absolutely! The kids will love the tidal pools and the funicular.

Day trip or weekend? There are self-catering cottages in the park, otherwise it's a day visit. Cape Point National Park does not have campsites.

How long does it take? You can drive through the park in two hours, but rather take your time and spend the whole day in this beautiful environment.

Are there ablution facilities? Yes, at all the picnic sites.

Directions? Follow the M3 out of the city towards Muizenberg, then the M4 through Fish Hoek and Simon's Town to Cape Point. Our favourite route, however, is the M6 (Victoria Road) through Clifton and Hout Bay, over Chapman's Peak to Kommetjie, and from there the M65 (Misty Cliffs Road) to the park entrance. 🚗

Pitches for pooches

Time to let sleeping dogs lie? Not here. These eight pet-friendly campsites are scattered across the country.

Compiled by **Leon Botha**

UMZIKI CHALETS



Pet terms Small to medium dogs – preferably on a lead. Wild animals such as warthogs and buffalo roam freely.
Have we visited? No.

Campsite Two adjacent stands, each paved and shaded with a roof structure. There are also shady trees, plus your own boma and plunge pool. Wifi available at the main building.

Ablutions Private facilities at each stand, including indoor and outdoor showers and a washing-up area.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00–11:00.

Contact 083 857 8297

umzikilodge@gmail.com

umzikichalets.co.za

Nearest town eMkhuze, 13 km.

Road condition The last 2 km is a good gravel road.

GPS S27.543858 E31.953730

VROLIKHEID



Pet terms Dogs only. They must be on a leash when you leave the camp area.
Have we visited? No.

Campsite Single booking for up to 10 people, with a minimum rate. Space for up to six campers (two caravans or three tents) plus two A-frame cottages (sleeps 4). The pool is heated by a donkey boiler.

Ablutions One shared bathroom with a shower, basin and toilet. The kitchen has a fridge, two-burner gas stove, washing-up area and crockery and cutlery for four.

Arrival and departure 15:00 and 10:00, unless otherwise arranged.

Contact 082 595 4888

vrolikheidlandgoed@gmail.com

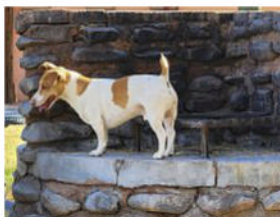
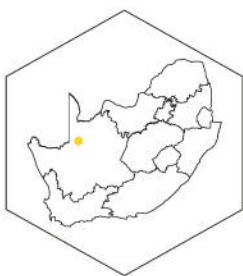
vrolikheidlandgoed.co.za

Nearest town Tulbagh 7 km.

Road condition 1,5 km good gravel road.

GPS S33.223829 E19.148201

KALAHARI MONATE LODGE



Pet terms Animals must get along with others, as there are resident dogs and springbok on the property.

Have we visited? Yes, May 2016 (WegSleep #88).

Campsite 31 stands with plenty of shade trees – some on grass, others on ground. Each stand has a tap, power point and built braai.

Ablutions One ablution block with separate facilities for men and women, plus a small kitchen for washing up.

Arrival and departure 14:00-19:00 and 10:00.

Contact 082 445 8324

kalahari.monate@gmail.com

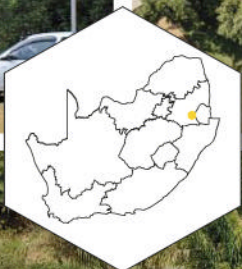
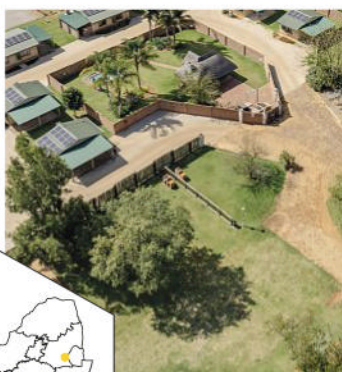
upingtonmonatelodge.co.za

Nearest town Upington, 13 km.

Road condition Directly alongside the tar road between Upington and Askham.

GPS S28.378067 E21.158658

SUNDOWNER LODGE



Pet terms Small dogs on a lead.

Peacocks and other animals roam the grounds.

Have we visited? Yes, p 56.

Campsite Six grassy stands, each with a built braai and power point. Two of the stands have shade trees.

Ablutions Close to the stands, with separate facilities for men and women, plus a washing-up area.

Arrival and departure Arrival time is flexible, but you must leave by 10:00.

Contact 071 612 5094

reservation@sundownerpietretief.co.za

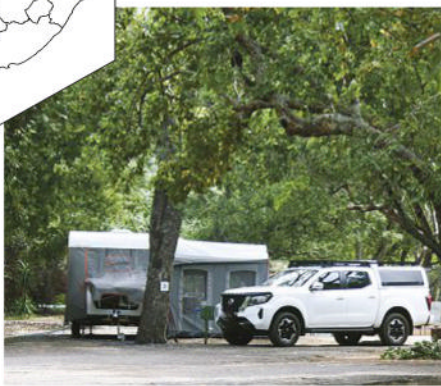
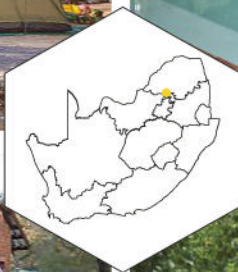
sundownerpietretief.co.za

Nearest town On the outskirts of Mkhondo (Piet Retief).

Road condition Tar all the way.

GPS S26.989767 E30.797557

SAN CHA LEN



Pet terms Small-breed dogs are welcome, but they must be on a lead when walking around and not be a nuisance.

Have we visited? Yes, February 2011 (WegSleep #30).

Campsite 31 paved stands with varying shade and loose-standing braais. Two stands have private bathrooms. The newest addition is a bush camp for long-stay campers with nine paved stands and three family bathrooms.

Ablutions Two blocks with washing-up areas, two separate washing-up stations and two family bathrooms. Plus the facilities in the bush camp.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 11:00, but during quieter times this is not strictly enforced.

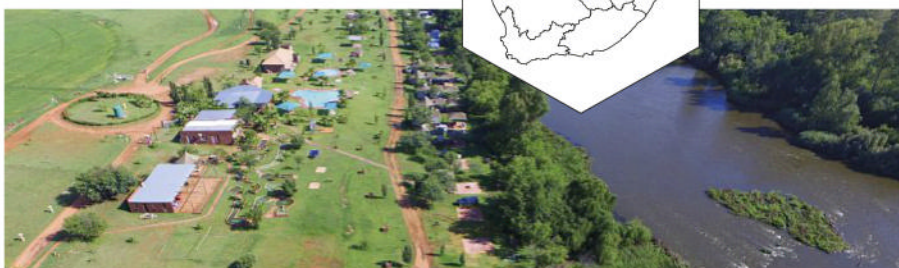
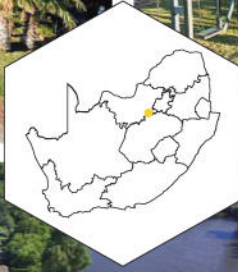
Contact ☎ 072 215 6882 or 072 478 5181
✉ info@sanchalen.co.za 🌐 sanchalen.co.za

Nearest town Bela-Bela, 11 km.

Road condition The last 2,5 km is a gravel road currently under maintenance.

GPS S24.891502 E28.374174

RIVER RUN RESORT



Pet terms Large dogs that are not socialised must be kept on a lead.

Have we visited? No.

Campsite Three camp sections (A, B and C) along the Vaal River with 16, 23 and 16 stands respectively. Each stand has a 6 x 6 m paved area with its own tap, power point and braai.

Ablutions Blocks A and C share an ablution block with separate facilities for men and women, a washing-up area and a family bathroom. Block B has shared facilities (also with washing-up).

Arrival and departure In busy times: check-in 14:00, check-out 09:00. More flexible during quieter periods.

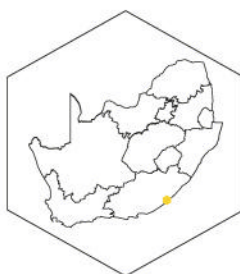
Contact ☎ 071 584 2160
✉ bookings@riverrunresort.co.za
🌐 riverrunresort.co.za

Nearest town Vredefort, 34 km.

Road condition 17,5 km gravel road. Condition depends on the weather, but it is maintained throughout the year.

GPS S26.949474 E27.181851

NAHOON CARAVAN PARK



Pet terms Pets must be kept on a lead.
Have we visited? No.

Campsite A municipal campsite with 53 grassy stands – some shaded, others open. Each has a braai (freestanding or built-in) and shares a power point.

Ablutions Two ablution blocks, each with separate facilities for men and women, plus a separate washing-up area.

Arrival and departure 12:00 and 10:00.

Contact ☎ 043 740 0571 or 078 236 5004

✉ cynthiany@buffalocity.gov.za

🌐 nahooncaravanpark.co.za

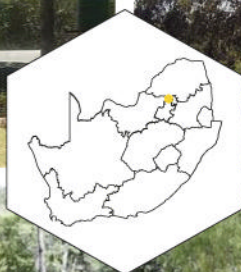
Nearest town In East London.

Road condition Tar all the way.

GPS S32.985650 E27.947828



SMUTS CARAVAN PARK



Pet terms Dogs must be on a lead or in a small enclosure on your stand.

Have we visited? Yes, January-February 2013 (*WegSleep* #52).

Campsite 32 stands on paving or grass. Most have shade, and the braais form part of a communal picnic area. (The resort is busy developing a separate area for tent groups.)

Ablutions One ablution block with separate facilities for men and women, plus a washing-up area and a dump point for cassette toilets. (The bathrooms were renovated two years ago.)

Arrival and departure 13:00 and 11:00.

Contact ☎ 082 383 6024

✉ david@smutshouse.com

🌐 smutshouse.co.za

Nearest town Irene 3 km.

Road condition Tar all the way.

GPS S25.888528 E28.232762



Big on comfort, easy on the pocket

You're seeing more and more GWMs on South African roads these days, and the new P300 seems to be finding its way into local hearts.

Words and photos **Cyril Klopper**

GWM P300



“

...the newcomer now sports a more aggressive front end that gives it an almost menacing look

”

Chinese manufacturer GWM's P300 is an updated version of the P-Series, first launched in South Africa at the end of 2020. (The bakkie was originally named Poer, but for obvious reasons it was rebranded on our shores.)

The P300 is the smaller sibling of the P500, but "small" is hardly the word for it – it's 10 cm longer than a Toyota Hilux and tips the scales 20 kg heavier than the hefty new Ford Ranger.

We took the P300 into the Green Kalahari in the Northern Cape to see what it could do on the gravel roads and mountain passes along the Orange River.

Exterior and interior

The GWM P300 bears a strong resemblance to the existing P-Series, but the newcomer now sports a more aggressive front end that gives it an almost menacing look. The bumper and grille are larger and more angular, with none of the softer curves of its predecessor in sight. It now looks far more like a bakkie than a car – and we have no issue with that.

Still, there are friendlier touches, like the tailgate that folds down gently on gas struts rather than crashing open with a bang like most bakkies. As with the previous model, the tailgate also has a built-in step ladder to make climbing into the load bin easier.

The cabin delivers a sense of luxury, with soft-touch materials on the dashboard and doors, and firm, comfortable seats that bring to mind a Mercedes-Benz from the 1980s.



YANK. The P-range of GWM bakkies are some of the largest in South Africa and rivals Dodge (which you can import) for "Americanness".





CAR OR TRUCK? The outer appearance is decidedly bakkie, but the interior has all the comforts of a family sedan. It echoes the Gen-X credo: "Work hard, play hard".



Buttons and switches are kept to a minimum, largely replaced by a 12.3-inch touchscreen in the centre console. The physical controls that remain are reserved for essentials such as the rear diff lock, low range, hazard lights and climate control.

The sunroof is a welcome addition and deserves a nod of approval. It's not something you often find in a bakkie, but the P300's opens nice and wide, making the cabin feel even more spacious.

That doesn't mean there aren't a few irritations. We struggled to access the trip computer between the speedometer and rev counter. Normally, you'd use the arrow buttons on the steering wheel to scroll through the info, but we discovered you first have to switch off the traction control before the trip computer works. We suspect (and hope) this was an isolated glitch with our test unit, because surely that can't be normal – can it?

How does it drive?

Our test unit came fitted with a 2.4 l turbodiesel that left us thoroughly impressed. It's not only strong on pull, but also runs quietly compared to the clatter of older diesel models. On top of that, it proved to be fairly economical, returning an average fuel

consumption of just 9 l/100 km over a mix of gravel roads, some 4x4 driving and highway cruising. A colleague at another publication managed even better, averaging 8 l/100 km. For Chinese vehicles, that's something virtually unheard of until very recently.

Ride quality in suburban areas is decent, but there's no mistaking that you're driving a bakkie. Unlike the new Volkswagen Amarok, which rides more like a sedan, the P300 makes you feel every bump and ripple on the tarmac.

Its large body and wide bonnet can also make you a little uneasy when squeezing into a tight parking bay or threading through a narrow backstreet lined with parked cars. (*Stop cruising the backstreets, Cyril. – Ed.*)

Where the GWM P300 really shines is on gravel roads and highways, where you have more breathing space and get to enjoy the commanding high seating position with clear views all around.

The competition

At R649,900, our test model – the P300 2.4 LT 4x4 – offers significantly more value for money than almost any European or Japanese bakkie. You'd have to be a die-hard Ford fan to convince yourself that the most basic Ranger XL 4x4, priced at R888,000, is a better buy than the GWM P300.

We'd rather compare the GWM P300 with other Chinese offerings, because we know all too well how touchy the Mitsubishi and Toyota guys can get when you line their vehicles up against Chinese contenders. The JAC T8 is a simpler bakkie than the P300 – smaller engine, manual gearbox instead of automatic, and just two airbags compared to the P300's six – but it costs just over R500 000, which is dirt cheap for a brand-new double-cab.

We could almost say the same about the LDV T60, though it does at least come with six airbags and a few more luxuries than the JAC. Its 2.0 l engine delivers 120 kW and 375 Nm, compared with the JAC's 104 kW and 320 Nm. Then there's the BYD Shark 6, which – at R960 000 – is priced more in line with Japanese and European bakkies. The BYD, however, is a technological marvel next to the JAC and LDV, boasting hybrid drive and all sorts of electronic gadgets.

Final verdict

We'd take the GWM over the JAC T8 and LDV T60, despite its slightly higher price. The BYD Shark 6 may look like the best bakkie on paper, but at the end of the day, it comes down to rands and cents – and that's where the P300 makes more sense.



SPECIFICATIONS

Model tested.....	P300 2.4 LT 4x4
Engine.....	2,4 l, four-cylinder turbodiesel
Power.....	135 kW @ 3 600 r.p.m.
Torque.....	480 Nm @ 1 500 r.p.m.
Gearbox.....	Nine-speed automatic
Fuel consumption.....	9 l/100 km (tested)
Tank.....	78 l
Payload (GVM – Tare).....	925 kg
Towing capacity.....	3 500 kg (braked)
Dimensions.....	5 416 (l) x 1 947 (w) 1 884 mm (h)
Ground clearance.....	228 mm
Wheel size.....	265/60 R18
Safety rating.....	Untested
Service plan.....	7 year/75 000 km
Warranty.....	7 year/200 000 km
PRICE.....	R649 900



FROM THE COMPETITORS
Chinese double-cabs
that can 4x4



R514 900 JAC T8 4x4 Super Lux

Excellent price, but to us it feels more like a workhorse than a leisure bakkie.



R640 000 LDV T60 Pro 4x4

Priced about the same as the GWM, but the P300 offers more value in the form of comfort and features.



R959 900 BYD Shark 6 Premium

It's a good-looking ride, but would you want complicated hybrid tech in a bakkie?



MEERKAT premium camping gear -
for those who don't compromise
on quality, wherever they go.



More than just muscle

While the Bruiser 4x4 Expander can stand its ground when things get rough, this strongman isn't brawn only – there's plenty of brain too.

Words and photos **Helenus Kruger**

BRUISER 4x4 EXPANDER



The Bruiser 4x4 might be a formidable name in the off-road caravan industry, but the man behind the wheel, Brandon Hardie, is hardly. In fact, Brandon is known for his UniPod off-road caravans.

According to Brandon, the Bruiser 4x4 is the luxury division in the range that boasts serious off-road capabilities.

You don't often see caravans in dark colours, and black especially is unusual. With

its contrasting red badges, the Bruiser 4x4 definitely catches the eye. The exterior has a tough, scratch-resistant Raptor-finish, but should you get a few scratches or stone chips, it can be easily repaired.

Moreover, the Expander is custom-made for each client's needs and tastes. The outside kitchen's layout can be changed, and inside there are multiple finishing choices, from wall colours to flooring.



Pitching perfect

Once the corner steadies are secured on the ground, you have to set up the bed before you can climb in to lift the roof. The bed slides out as a single unit – almost like a capsule – on the right, creating space inside so you can reach the struts that lift the roof. Remember to first unclip the four clips outside.

Now, it's time for the awning: this one is 270° and has six arms.

It swings out over the kitchen and bed unit, after which it's tightened with straps, secured to the outer arms and tightened through the metal eyelets at the front and back of the caravan.

A pole at each arm supports the roof, and when it's time to pack up, simply store it inside the arms. At its widest, the awning is a decent 2,5 m.



Kitchen essentials

The kitchen is on the left, with a fridge/freezer on a slide-out drawer in the cupboard closest to the A-frame.

The cupboards for glasses and drinks are near the fridge/freezer – if you're facing the fridge, the cupboard with two sparkling wine glasses and four highball, cooldrink and liqueur glasses are above it to the right. The drinks cupboard fits five wine bottles and is to the side of the fridge (farthest from the body). If you lift up the door of the drinks cupboard, it becomes a 52 x 40 cm worktop, which comes in handy when you're pouring

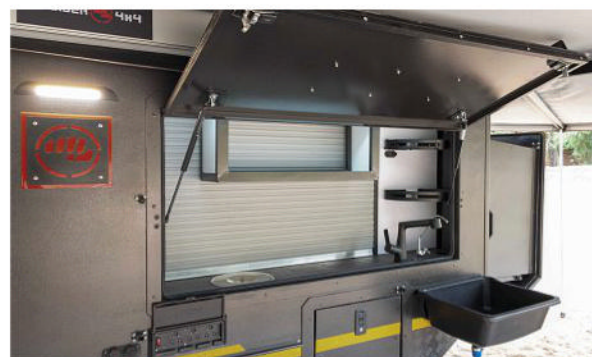


a drink and getting ice from the freezer. The glasses cupboard has an LED inside, and there's an adjustable LED at the top of the hull that casts light onto the fridge and worktop.

The caravan's door (143 x 55 cm) is to the right of the fridge. A freestanding step gives you access and an LED above the door to the right helps you see where you're going. In the doorway is a mosquito net.

The kitchen cupboard stretches from the axle to almost the back of the caravan.

Something you don't see every day is the shuttered door on the back of the cupboard,



which opens up the kitchen to the inside of the caravan – so you have access to the cupboard whether you're inside or out. The cupboard has enough space for a small induction plate, kettle and a capsule coffee maker.

There's enough space for mugs, tea, coffee and rusks on the hanging rack (66 x 22 x 16 cm). To the left is space for groceries, hooks for keys and a USB port for charging your cellphone.

The kitchen has two taps in the cupboard on the right: one with cold and hot water for the dishes and one for drinking (this is purified through a three-phase filtering system). The water comes

from the 75 l tank underneath the caravan.

There are two shelves with hooks above the taps on the right for dishwashing liquid, sponges and drying cloths. You can wash your dishes in a plastic basin under the taps on the wall of the caravan. The narrow worktop (30 x 106 cm) that hooks on to the left of the basin is a handy spot to put dirty dishes. The kitchen's plug points (three domestic, a cigarette and Hella) are in a dustproof box to the left of the worktop.

The bin lid is sunken flush into the bottom of the cupboard, and you hang a plastic shopping bag inside it for your trash.

CARAVAN TEST

The stove's gas cylinder and the water filtration system are in a cupboard underneath the worktop. Above the gas cylinder, still inside the cupboard, are two domestic sockets, which you can also access from above via the bin's opening. An LED strip lights up the kitchen cupboard.

A two-burner stove and cutlery are in a 2,3 m long unit that slides out from underneath the bed and rests on a pole on the furthest end from the caravan.

The unit consists of two pull-out sections, with a cutlery drawer fitting neatly inside the stove's compartment. This means you can pull out just the stove, just the cutlery, or both. Next to the stove is a 47 x 49 cm work surface.

The kitchen is equipped for four people, with cutlery, ceramic crockery and stainless-steel mugs and glasses.

The layout can be customised.



Drive & Camp says We tested the Expander's prototype. Brandon and his team are still making a few tweaks, and there are three additional models in the pipeline.

Power to our peeps

At the front, near the A-frame, you'll find the geyser's gas cylinder and a spare wheel.

In the compartment on the right-hand side, behind the wheel, there's storage space for a 100Ah lithium battery, a 12/800 Victron inverter and a Victron MPPT 100/20 solar charge controller, which regulates the power from a 220W solar panel.

To the left of this compartment is the 220V power inlet for

plugging into campsite power and above it is a 12V cigarette-lighter socket.

The toilet's cassette is in the compartment at the front of the wheel, with the gas geyser's exhaust located just above it on the right-hand side. Remember to open the door when the geyser is switched on.

The cupboard in front is a mirror image of the kitchen side. In the lower compartment,

which houses the fridge, there's storage space alongside the slide-out drawer that fits the Bruiser stainless steel braai (optional). On one side, you'll also find a water pump and its switch, the geyser switch, two domestic sockets and a fire extinguisher.

The compartment above this has cut-out foam inserts to store a jack, compressor and electric wheel nut wrench (all optional extras). Above it is another LED.



What comes as standard?

A wet room with shower, flushing cassette toilet, basin and Dewhot gas geyser. The kitchen has crockery (a set of 6), a two-burner gas stove, fridge/freezer slide, sink, hot- and cold-water taps, and tap for filtered water.

There is a Victron power system with a 12/800 W inverter and 100/20 MPPT controller, 220 W solar panel on the roof and a 100 Ah lithium battery. There are several USB, cigarette lighter and domestic sockets in and outside the caravan as well as LEDs,

a 180° Howling Moon awning with side panels and a groundsheet, 3 kg gas cylinder, 75 l water tank and 75 l grey water tank, and a water pump and three-stage filtration system.

Extras include a ladder at the door, remote-controlled 5t jack, compressor, electric lug wrench, Victron charger (12/12/18), battery management system, 90l National Luna or 82l SnoMaster fridge/freezer, a 10,000 BTU portable air conditioner, a 6l SnoMaster ice maker and an extra 75l water tank.

In not out

The caravan's vestibule (60 x 65 cm) is at the door where you climb in. In front of you is the wet room, with the bedroom to the right and a cupboard for clothes to the left.

The dressing area (80 x 127 cm) in the bedroom is big enough for two people to move next to each other, and in the left corner is a fold-out table with a mirror, towel rail and a variety of electricity sockets. If you sit at the foot of the bed, you're about the same height as the mirror.

Between the table and the bed is a cupboard with three shelves for clothes and space at the bottom for shoes.

The other clothes cupboard at the caravan's door is divided in two and has three shelves with two baskets at the top for socks and underwear. Both cupboards have wide flat elastic bands you can use to secure the clothes on the shelves.

The extra-length double mattress (137 x 195 cm) covers the entire width of the caravan. From the foot of the bed, 110 cm of the mattress lies in the body and 85 cm in the capsule. The slide-out pod is about 67 cm high, so if you're claustrophobic, best turn around and face inside.

The caravan has two windows that open upwards: one at the head of the bed and one on the left-hand side when facing the bed. The windows have an aluminium roll-up door (the same as in the kitchen) that completely blocks out light, as well as a mesh blind that lets in both light and air while preventing anyone outside from seeing in.

Below the window on the left of the bed is a small surface (27 x 150 cm) with an LED above the window.

There's another light in the middle of the pop-up roof to illuminate the interior.

When you slide the pod back into the main hull, the bed moves over the dressing area, transforming it into storage space for gear such as boxes, a folding table and camp chairs. These are secured with straps to four anchor points.

For single nights when you're only stopping over and moving on, there's no need to pull out the slide-out pod. Simply lift the roof to create more space and use the front vestibule as a dressing area. The toilet is positioned so that you can use it at night (or along the roadside).

The wet room features a flush toilet, shower and washbasin cabinet, with no partitions. The floor measures 100 x 105 cm. On top of the cabinet, next to the basin, is a 30 x 58 cm surface, and above the basin are a mirror, hooks and a soap rack.

The compartment beneath the basin is divided into two sections: the gas geyser on the right and storage space on the left. The basin and shower water drains into a 75 l grey water tank.

Storage for ground sheets, tent pegs and the washing-up basin is located at the front of the caravan, above the fridge cabinet. The cabinet (55 x 95 cm) slopes down towards the A-frame, with a depth ranging from 21 cm to 50 cm.

The sand ladders mounted on the cabinet door match the caravan's colour scheme.



R500 000-R600 000 **BRUISER 4x4 EXPANDER** GVM 1 800 kg

FROM THE COMPETITORS**
Off-road caravans for 2, GVM 1 800 kg and R500 000-R600 000



R519 000 **TUFF CATS MBADA 2** Tare 1 010 kg

2,5 t axle, 17-inch wheels, aluminium body.



R520 000 **BUN DU X** Tare 1 100 kg

2,5 t axle, 15-inch wheels, steel, aluminium and honeycomb panel body.



R540 500 **BUSH LAPA BAOBAB 3is** Tare 1 190 kg

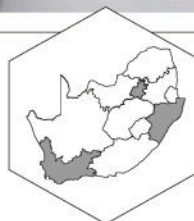
2,5 t axle, 15-inch wheels, stainless steel and aluminium body.

**** As listed in the 2025 Buyers' Guide.**

Drive & Camp tested the Bruiser 4x4 Expander courtesy of the manufacturer.

SPECIFICATIONS*

Manufacturer	UniPod
Model	Bruiser 4x4 Expander
Sleeps	Two
Size	4,98 x 2 x 2,1 m
Tare	1 300 kg
Payload	500 kg
GVM	1 800 kg
Axle	2 t
Wheels	16 inch
Chassis	Galvanised
Body	Stainless steel, aluminium and fibreglass
Price	R500 000-R600 000



Dealer network Head office, plant and dealer in Pretoria, plus a dealer in the Western Cape.

📧 gary@campwildafrica.co.za. **Contact** 📧 sales@unipod.co.za 📞 unipod.co.za



Tyre tutorial

What do all those numbers and letters on your tyres actually mean?

Words and photos
Cyril Klopfer

It's hard to miss just how much writing there is on, for example, the sidewall of a Maxxis Razr AT tyre. In this article, we'll break down exactly what it all means – starting at the 12 o'clock position on the photo below, then working our way clockwise to decode the markings.



01 The first “code” is an easy one: it’s simply the brand emblem with the words **“Made in Taiwan”** underneath. Maxxis is, indeed, a Taiwanese product, and a common belief posits that a tyre made in its country of origin is usually superior to those produced elsewhere. Next to the emblem, you’ll notice a mountain peak icon with a snowflake – this indicates the tyre meets or exceeds the minimum industry standard for winter performance.



02 This panel on the sidewall reads **LT275/65 R17** – the first real string of complicated letters and numbers to decipher. **LT** is the tyre type and stands for Light Truck (in other words, a bakkie or pickup). You'll also encounter other designations: **P** for Passenger, **C** for Commercial, **T** for Temporary (a skinny spare), **ST** for Special Trailer, and **XL** or **HL** for Extra Load and Heavy Load tyres that can carry more weight.

The numbers **275** is the tyre's width in millimetres, measured from the widest point of the outer sidewall to the corresponding point on the inner sidewall.

/65 is the aspect ratio, the sidewall height as a percentage of the tyre's width. In this case, the sidewall height equals 65% of the 275 mm width. The smaller the number, the lower the tyre profile – and the lower the profile, the worse it generally performs for 4x4 use and potholes.



R means Radial, indicating the steel belts inside the tyre run directly across from one side to the other. Most modern 4x4 tyres are of the radial type. You might also encounter a **D** designation for Diagonal, where the belts run diagonally through the rubber. A **B** stands for Biased, meaning the tyre is built from a single material (usually only rubber) and is much lighter than steel-belted tyres. Your weekend dirt bike on a motocross track probably has B-tyres, but you're unlikely to fit them to an overlanding bakkie, unless you enjoy patching punctures.

The last number, **17**, tells you the tyre fits a **17-inch** rim. Common rim sizes range from 14 to 19 inches, though these days many manufacturers fit 18-inch rims as standard on their bakkies and SUVs.

03 **121/118R 10PR** is the second complicated set of letters and numbers on this tyre sidewall. **121** is the load index – a code indicating that this tyre can carry 1 450 kg. For comparison, a code-70 tyre can handle only 335 kg, while code 126 means you can load 1 700 kg per axle (provided the axle is rated for it).

/118 is the load index if four tyres are used per axle, as you'd find on a motorhome with dual wheels on the rear axle.

The **R** here refers to the speed rating – in this tyre's case, you shouldn't drive faster than 170 km/h. **A1** is the lowest rating, with a maximum permissible speed of 5 km/h, while **Y** allows for up to 300 km/h. You'll also find special **ZR** and **(Y)** tyres (with the **Y** always



in brackets) designed for speeds above 300 km/h.

10PR is the ply rating – unusual to see on a modern tyre. A ply rating of 10 doesn't mean the tyre literally has 10 layers of steel belt, but rather that it's as strong as an older tyre that did. It's an outdated measure, much like the old horsepower figure, but in practice it tells you this tyre is built to carry heavy loads. Increasingly, this somewhat confusing code is being replaced with the more precise load index rating.



04 The next panel shows the code **DOT 1UY L2A001**. **DOT** stands for Department of Transport and indicates that the tyre has been tested for sale in the United States.

1UY is the code for the factory where the tyre was manufactured – in this case, the Cheng Shin rubber plant in the Taiwanese city of Changhua. For example, a **1E9** code would reveal that it's a Bridgestone tyre produced at their plant in Brits, North West.

L2A001 is an additional manufacturing code that helps tyre makers track a batch in case they need to recall a shipment due to a production issue.



05 The next set of numbers is **4524**, which refers to the date the tyre was manufactured. In this case, it's the **45th** week of **2024** – meaning this tyre rolled off the line sometime between Monday 4 November and Sunday 10 November 2024, as fresh as a newly glazed Krispy Kreme doughnut.

06 The **SNI** emblem certifies that this tyre is approved for sale in Indonesia. **SNI** stands for **Standar Nasional Indonesia** (National Standard of Indonesia).

The words "**Load Range E**" next to the emblem are the same as a **10PR** ply rating, but they also specify that the tyre's maximum pressure is 80 psi (5.5 bar). At that pressure, a single tyre may carry no more than 1 520 pounds (690 kg).



07 The warning on this panel confirms the load index rating. It clearly states that an axle with two tyres may not carry more than **1 450 kg** at a cold tyre pressure of **550 kPa**. For an axle with dual tyres, the maximum is **1 320 kg** at the same pressure.



08 The **E4** symbol is used by the **European Union** to certify that the tyre complies with standards valid across all EU member states. In this case, the “4” tells us the tyre was approved in the Netherlands, since each country has its own unique EU code. If it had been approved in Germany, for example, the symbol would have read E1.

The numbers next to the E symbol identify the specific certificate issued to the manufacturer.

09 This panel on the tyre lists the primary materials it's made from. We say “primary” because the exact recipe is kept under wraps – as closely guarded a secret as Colonel Sanders’ 11 herbs and spices for KFC chicken.



10 This panel further confirms that the steel cords inside the tyre run radially from one side to the other, and that the tyre doesn't require an inner tube.

The other symbols are additional international certifications; for example, the **CCC** in an oval shows the tyre is approved for sale in China.

11 The final panel on this tyre sidewall, at the five-to-twelve position, is a safety warning. It protects the manufacturer from liability should you suffer damage for ignoring the instructions on the sidewall. In other words, you can't sue Maxxis if your tyre bursts after you've loaded more weight than it was designed to carry.



Other letters you'll spot on a tyre are M+S, which indicates it's designed to handle mud and snow – up to a point. The AT after the tyre's name stands for All Terrain. If you see MT, that means Mud Terrain, which makes it even better suited for mud and snow than an AT. But it's not necessarily ideal for sand, and it's often far too noisy for tar roads.

So there you have it – and now you probably know more about 4x4 tyres than a rookie salesman at Tiger Wheel & Tyre!

The professor's kit

Here are four products that support your tyres and make life that much easier.

HOLTS TYREWELD EMERGENCY REPAIR

Tyre repair service in a can

When a sharp object punctures your tyre, the safest option is always to have it fixed professionally. But sometimes you're in a hurry and a temporary solution will do. This can is filled with a water-based foam and compressed air. It's by no means a permanent fix, but it will inflate your tyre in an instant and hopefully seal the hole just long enough to get you to camp, where you can carry out proper repairs.

Price R279 at Outdoor Warehouse.



AIR BULLET COMPRESSOR

Second wind

This portable compressor delivers an impressive 180 litres per minute, thanks to its 62 mm piston. It can inflate tyres up to 150 psi (10.3 bar), with built-in sensors to prevent overheating. The unit comes housed in a durable, lockable metal case measuring 33 x 25 x 22 cm and weighing 11 kg. Powered by 12 V, it draws 540 W and 45 A. Included in the kit are a 6 m air hose with pressure gauge and a 2.5 m power cable with crocodile clamps.

Price R2 350 at 4x4 Direct.



STEEL MATE DIY TP-V3 TYRE PRESSURE MONITOR

Policeman for your tyres

It's all too easy for a tyre to lose pressure without you noticing – especially on gravel – and by the time you do, the damage is often irreversible. A tyre pressure monitor alerts you the moment a wheel starts deflating so you can stop and save it.

This unit comes with six pre-programmed sensors for your vehicle and off-road trailer. Simply screw them onto the valve stems and the monitor takes care of the rest.

Price R3 000 at Outdoor Warehouse.

TENTCO 4X4 UTILITY BAG

Pack it in

Tentco's smart utility bag is just the thing for stashing a tyre repair kit, pressure gauge and other essentials. Made from tough Oxford nylon, it has a wide opening so you won't battle to find what you need. A removable shoulder strap adds to the convenience, and at 31 x 20 x 23 cm, it's compact but roomy enough for all the right gear.

Price R549 at Camp & Climb



BUY YOURS HERE

4x4direct.co.za | outdoorwarehouse.co.za | campandclimb.co.za

Off the cob

The best way to
cook corn? Over the
coals, of course!

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

CREAMY CHICKEN POTJIE WITH CORN AND MUSHROOM

How corny

My family (to my great regret) don't like meat on the bone. For them, I make this potjie with boneless chicken thigh fillets, sliced and fried with the onions instead of grilling it over the coals like the real deal.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 8 chicken thighs
- 3 leeks, white parts sliced, or 1 onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp oil
- 200 g mushrooms
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 3 corn cobs, each cut into 3 wheels
- ½ cup dry white wine or cider
- ½ cup chicken stock
- ½ cup grated Parmesan
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cup cream

Here's how

1 Season the chicken thighs with salt and pepper and braai them in a hinged grid over medium coals until golden brown and half cooked.

2 At the same time, fry the leeks in oil in a flat-bottomed potjie until fragrant. Add the mushrooms and garlic and continue frying until everything has good colour.

3 Stir in the corn and mix through. Splash in the wine and let everything bubble together for a few minutes.

4 Add the braaied chicken, stock, half the cheese, plus the bay leaves and cream. Scrape the coals aside so the potjie simmers gently and let it cook uncovered for about 20 minutes. Serve the chicken over rice or soft pap, sprinkled with the rest of the cheese.

Drive & Camp says If you like a thicker sauce, stir a tablespoon of flour into the sautéed vegetables before adding the liquids (just as you would when making white sauce).

STUFFED MEAT PIE

Say 'cheese'!

This meat feast with its cheesy heart is a luxurious treat alongside bread rolls and a fresh salad.

Ingredients

(serves 8)

- 900 g minced beef
- 1 egg
- ½ cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp dried Italian herbs
- ½ tsp each ground cumin and coriander
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp chutney

FOR THE FILLING

- ½ cup cooked corn kernels (canned corn works well)
- 1–2 pickled jalapeños, finely chopped
- 1 cup grated mozzarella

Here's how

1 Grease a cast-iron pan or flat-bottomed potjie (ours was 24 cm) with a little oil

and line the base with the bacon so it's completely covered. Leave the bacon hanging over the sides so you can fold it over the filling later.

2 Mix the mince with the egg, crumbs, herbs, spices, onion and chutney. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon two-thirds of the mixture onto the bacon and shape it to cover the base and sides, leaving a hollow in the centre.

3 Combine the corn, jalapeños and cheese, then spoon the mixture onto the mince.

4 Cover with the remaining mince mixture and carefully fold the overhanging bacon over the top so the pie is sealed all round.

5 Cover with a lid or second pan so it rests like a weight on top, and cook slowly over the coals until the meat is cooked through. Place a few coals on the lid as well so the bacon colours evenly all over. Slice to serve.

Drive & Camp says Glaze the cooked bacon with a little honey, sweet chilli sauce or your favourite braai sauce for a touch of sweetness.





CORN RIBS WITH FLAVOURED BUTTER Sharpen your knives

A boiled mielie, grilled and then bathed in butter, is a masterclass in simplicity. But these corn ribs are a fun twist on this old classic. Just take care when slicing through the cobs – it's an acquired talent.

Ingredients

(serves 4 as side dish)

- 4 corn cobs, boiled and cut into ribs

FOR THE FLAVOURED BUTTER

- ½ cup butter
- a few curry leaves, bruised
- a small bunch fresh coriander or parsley, chopped
- zest of 1 lemon
- 1 tsp mild curry powder
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped

Here's how

1 Mix all the ingredients together. Roll into a log – the easiest is to wrap it in baking paper – and refrigerate until

needed. It also freezes well in an airtight container.

2 Boil the corn cobs whole in salted water for 8 minutes. Remove and allow to cool until you can handle them.

3 Slice each cob carefully into 4 ribs. Hold the cob upright on a sturdy chopping board (place a damp cloth underneath so it doesn't slip) and cut down firmly towards the board.

4 Season the ribs with salt. Braai salt works nicely, though you can keep it plain if you prefer.

5 Grill the ribs over the coals until they curl slightly and the kernels are charred here and there.

6 Cut a few slices of curry butter and toss with the ribs so it melts right into the kernels. Remember, the butter contains raw garlic, so you want it to bubble and sizzle a little. Serve hot!

Drive & Camp says Leftover curry butter is delicious stirred through roasted vegetables – or melted into a sweet potato on the coals.

CHICKEN IN PLUM SAUCE WITH CORN SALAD

Keep the serviettes handy

You can make the salad with canned corn kernels if you don't have leftover braai mielies.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- 8 chicken thigh fillets
- 2 tbsp plum sauce (available from Asian supermarkets)
- 2 cooked mielies, kernels cut off
- 1 large avocado, diced and sprinkled with lime or lemon juice
- 100 g feta, crumbled
- 80 g fresh coriander (you can also add diced cucumber for colour and flavour)
- 2 tbsp crispy onion sprinkle
- ½ cup sour cream
- 4 large or 8 small tortillas, warmed

Here's how

1 Season the chicken with salt and pepper, or your favourite braai spice mix, and fry in a heavy-based pan until golden brown and nearly cooked through. I prefer a griddle pan for those lovely char lines.

2 Brush the chicken with the plum sauce and give it a final few minutes in the pan until sticky, but take it off before it burns.

3 Mix the corn kernels, avo, feta, coriander and onion sprinkle together.

4 Spread a spoonful of sour cream onto each warm tortilla. Top with one or two pieces of chicken and a generous spoonful of corn salad, fold up and enjoy hot.

Drive & Camp says You can replace the plum sauce with your favourite braai sauce.



TEX-MEX RICE

On the road with rice

This versatile side dish goes beautifully with anything from boerewors to grilled pork strips. For a vegetarian main, add crumbled feta and serve each portion with a spoonful of guacamole in a warm tortilla. A baked egg is another great addition if you're extra hungry.

Ingredients

(serves 6 as side dish)

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup jasmine rice
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes with Mexican spices (I use Rhodes)
- ½ cup frozen corn kernels (or canned, or cut fresh from the cob)
- 2 bay leaves, fresh or dried (optional)
- 1 tin red kidney beans, drained
- lime juice, to taste

Here's how

1 Fry the onion in the oil until golden and fragrant. Add the rice and garlic and stir-fry until the grains are coated in the aromatic oil and lightly toasted.

2 Stir in the tomatoes and season with salt. Rinse the tin with a little water – not too much, you don't want soggy rice – and add it to the pot as well. Mix in the bay leaves, corn and beans, and bring to the boil. Then scrape the coals aside and let the rice simmer over fairly low heat until cooked. This takes about 15–20 minutes for jasmine rice – check your packet and taste! Top up with liquid if needed.

3 Season with lime juice and, if necessary, another pinch of salt. Don't forget to remove the bay leaves.

Drive & Camp says Add extra chilli and herbs to taste.



EASY CORN BREAD

Ready in no time

In her new book, *Cooking with Kim Bagley: A South African Fusion of Flavours*, Kim bakes corn bread with just three ingredients. This is my campfire version – a winner every time.

Ingredients

(makes 1 loaf)

- 500 g self-raising flour
- 1 tin (410 g) creamed corn
- 1 tin (380 g) evaporated milk
- 3 sprigs thyme (optional)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup grated Parmesan

Here's how

1 Preheat your no. 3 flat-bottomed potjie with its lid over the coals while you make the batter.

2 Mix the flour, creamed corn,

evaporated milk and thyme into a sticky batter. I like to bring it together by hand and grease it lightly with a little olive oil.

3 Remove the lid from the hot potjie and carefully spoon in the batter – remember, the pot is hot. Work quickly and press it down slightly. Sprinkle over the cheese and replace the lid.

4 Scrape the coals aside and place the pot in the middle, without direct contact with the coals. Bake for 30 minutes, then add a few coals on top of the lid and bake for another 15 minutes.

5 Allow the bread to cool before slicing.

Drive & Camp says The texture of the warm loaf is still a bit dense, but the crust is irresistible with butter – and I can never stop myself from tasting before it's cooled. 🍴

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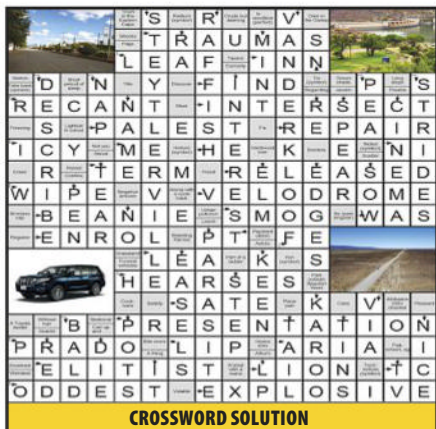
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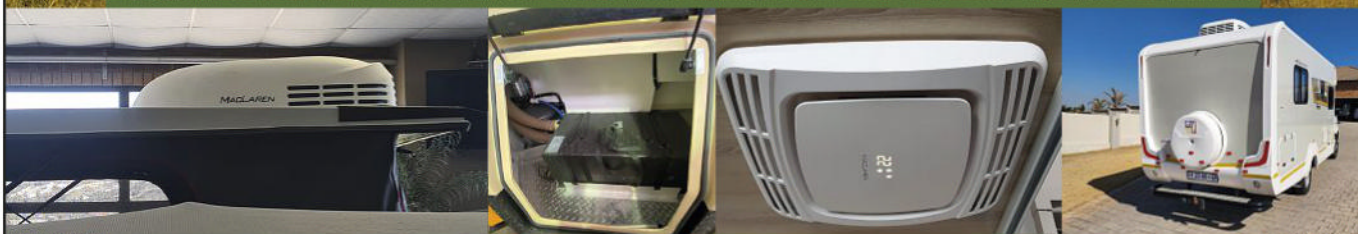
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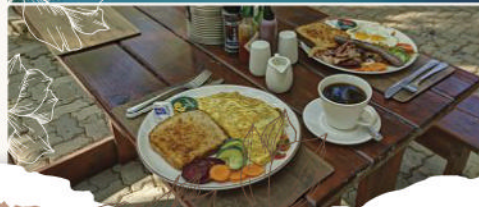
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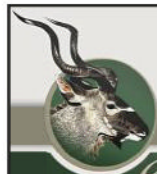
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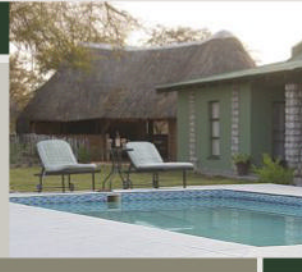


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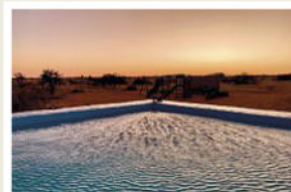


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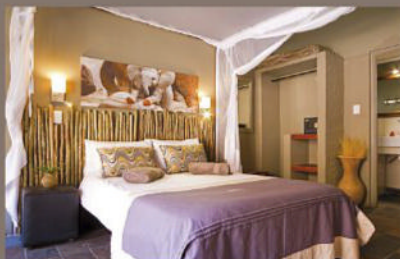
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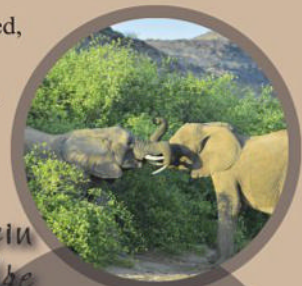


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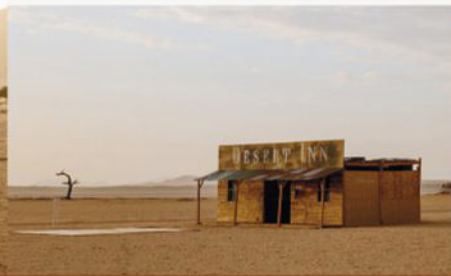
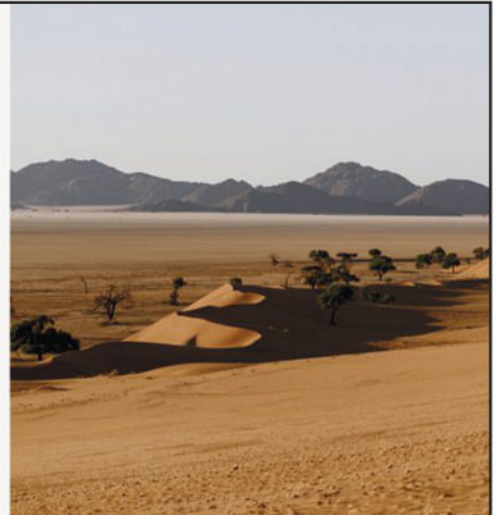
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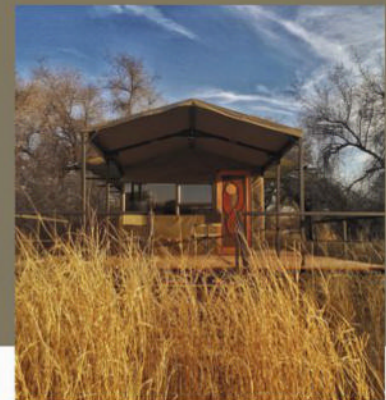
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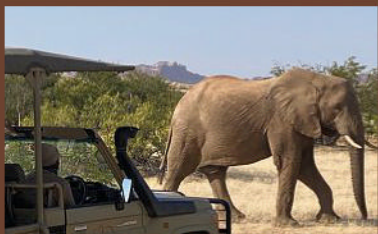
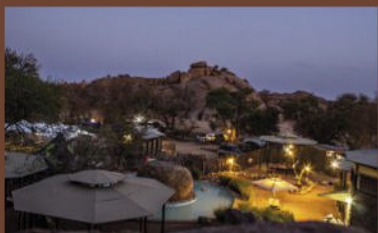
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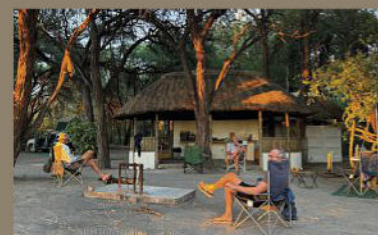
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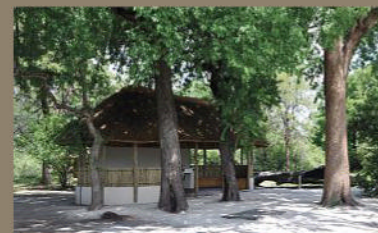
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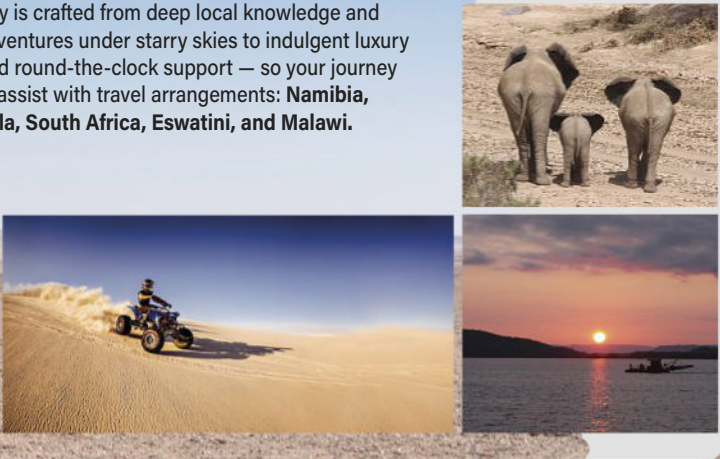
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It is an exclusive 14,000-hectare sheep and free-roaming Kalahari game farm. The self-catering lodge is perfect for small groups of up to 20 people. There are seven chalets, and the main building has two bedrooms and a bathroom.

Tel: 054 511 0008 | Email: info@molopolodge.co.za



ASKHAM

★★★★★ Molopo KALAHARI LODGE

Campsites with private bathrooms and electricity to choose from. Various self-catering accommodation. Located only 60 km from the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, 70 km from the Namibian border and 4 km from the Botswana border.

Tel: 054 511 0008 | Email: info@molopolodge.co.za



ASKHAM

★★★★★ KALAHARI LIFESTYLE LODGE

Luxury 5-star campsites on a beautiful lawn. Each site has a private bathroom, veranda with braai and a kitchenette. Each of the sixteen luxurious self-catering villas has a private bathroom, kitchenette and veranda with or without a braai.

Tel: 054 333 1126 | Email: info@klodge.co.za



UPINGTON

★★★★★ Tshahitsi LODGE

Our 18 self-catering chalets (one unit is wheelchair friendly) are fully furnished, with air conditioning and kitchen facilities. Each chalet has a built-in braai on the veranda overlooking the garden.

Tel: 054 333 1126 | Email: info@tshahitsilodge.co.za



UPINGTON

ORANJERUS RIVER RESORT

Camping as well as self-catering accommodation options on the banks of the Orange River at Kanoneiland. Red Ox Pantry will be open to guests on-site.

Tel: 082 772 5896 | Email: info@oranjerus.com



UPINGTON

★★★★★ Letsatsi LIFESTYLE LODGE VANRHYNSDORP

The 5-star campsite offers 12 sites on grass, each with a private kitchenette, bathroom and a covered braai area. A wide range of luxury self-catering units to choose from.

Tel: 027 219 2828 | Email: info@letsatsilodge.co.za



VANRHYNSDORP

ASKHAM

- 1 Molopo Kalahari Lodge ★★
- 2 Elandsvoor Bush Camp
- 3 Vischgat Game Lodge ★★

UPINGTON

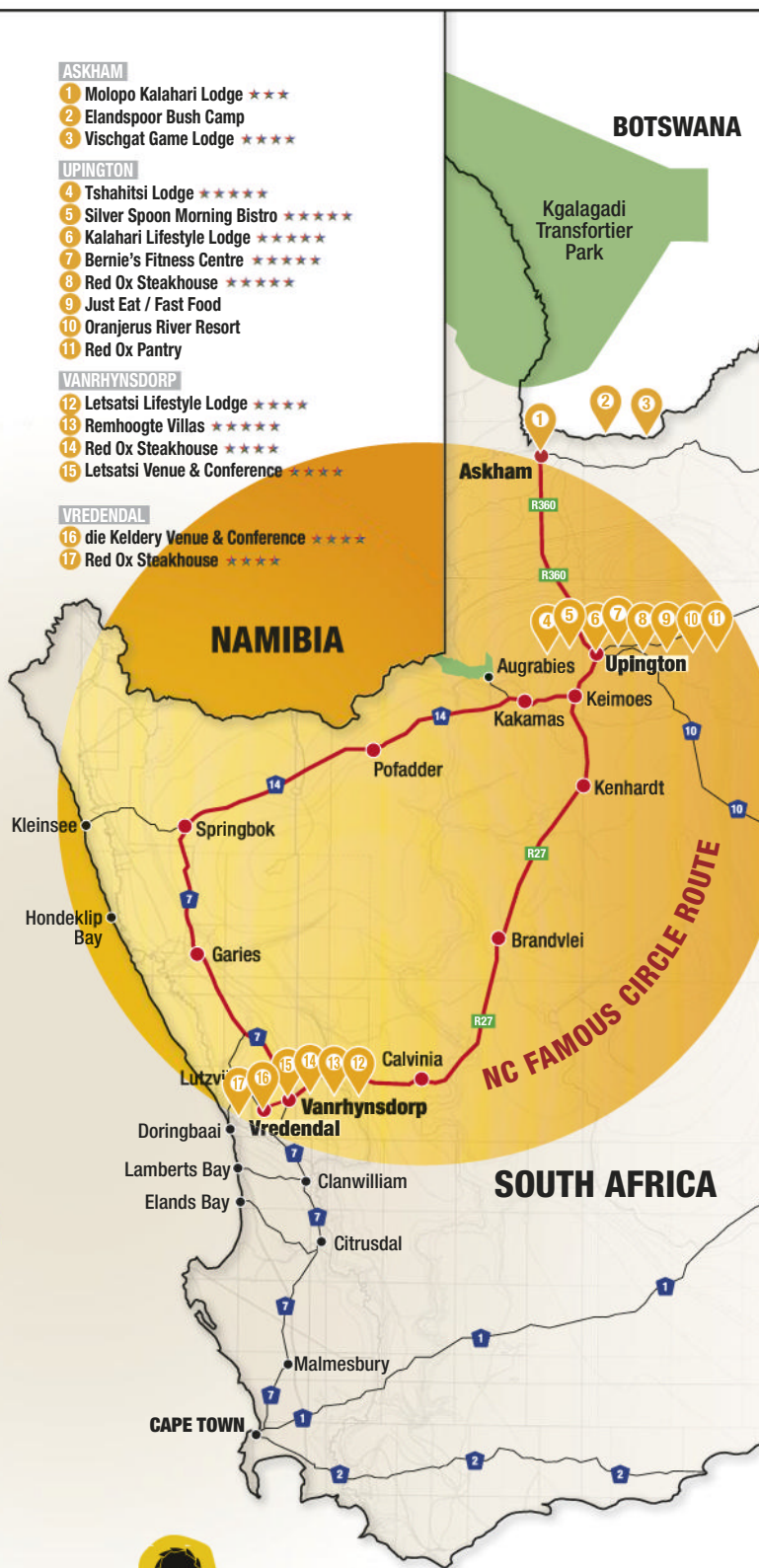
- 4 Tshahitsi Lodge ★★
- 5 Silver Spoon Morning Bistro ★★
- 6 Kalahari Lifestyle Lodge ★★
- 7 Bernie's Fitness Centre ★★
- 8 Red Ox Steakhouse ★★
- 9 Just Eat / Fast Food
- 10 Oranjerus River Resort
- 11 Red Ox Pantry

VANRHYNSDORP

- 12 Letsatsi Lifestyle Lodge ★★
- 13 Remhoogte Villas ★★
- 14 Red Ox Steakhouse ★★
- 15 Letsatsi Venue & Conference ★★

VREDENDAL

- 16 die Keldery Venue & Conference ★★
- 17 Red Ox Steakhouse ★★

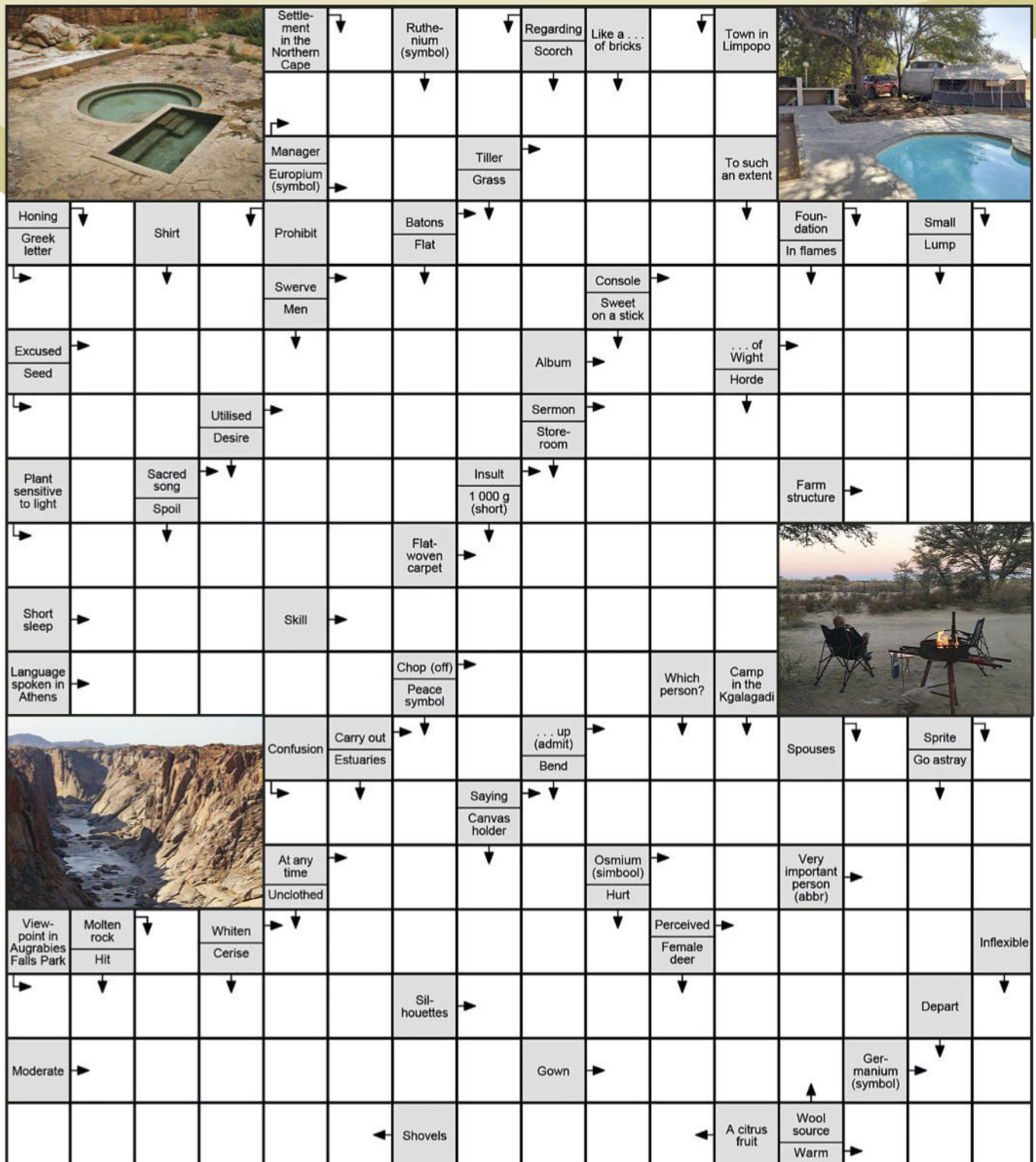


N.C. FAMOUS

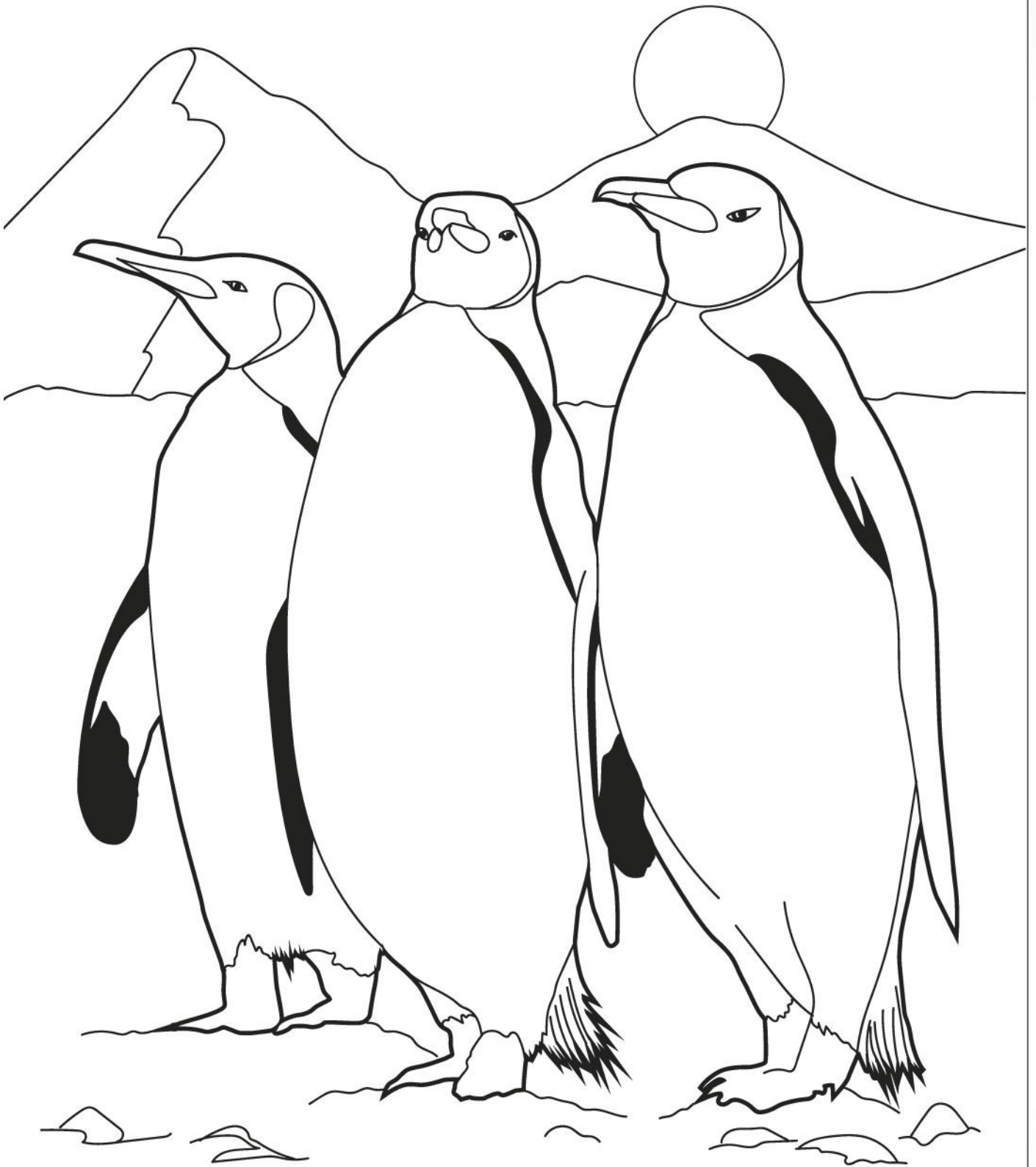
LIFESTYLE LODGES

HEAD OFFICE 054 333 1126
Email: info@tshahitsilodge.co.za

This crossword puzzle is just the ticket to give your brain a bit of a workout while you kick back and relax in your camping chair. Research has shown that crosswords have several benefits, and they're great for memory and concentration. So, keep your mind sharp – just like your pencil – and tackle this one! At the very least, it'll keep you busy until your eyes get heavy. The solution to the previous issue's crossword appears on page 101.



Colour in

**COLOUR IN**

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

WORD SEARCH

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

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

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

MAZE

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

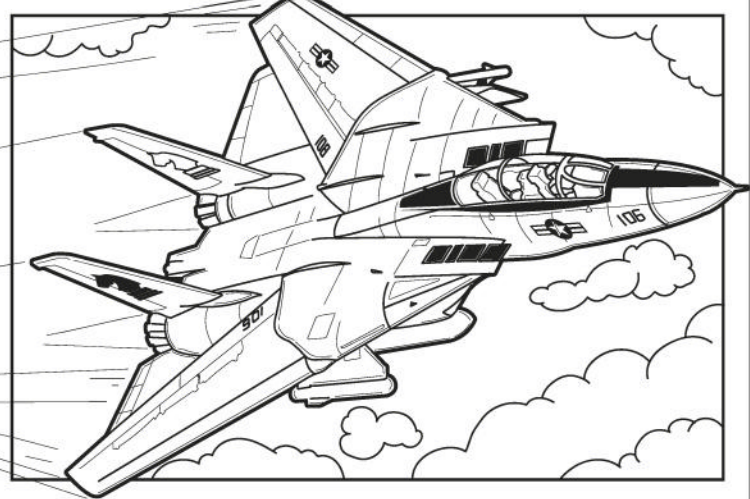
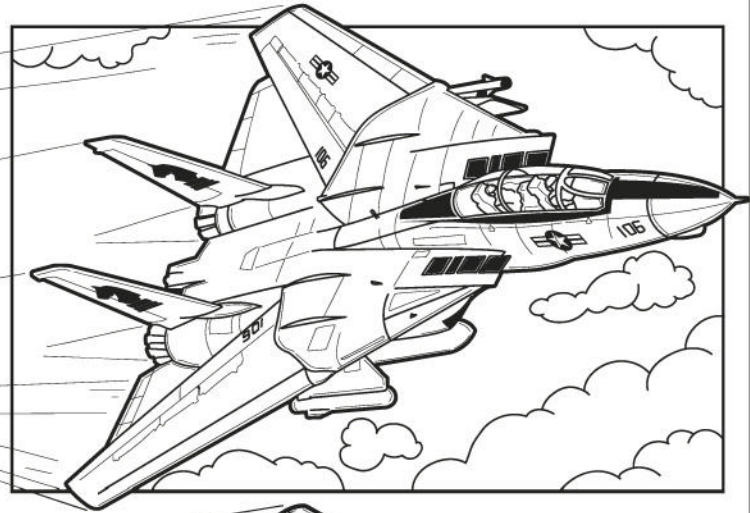
Word search

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

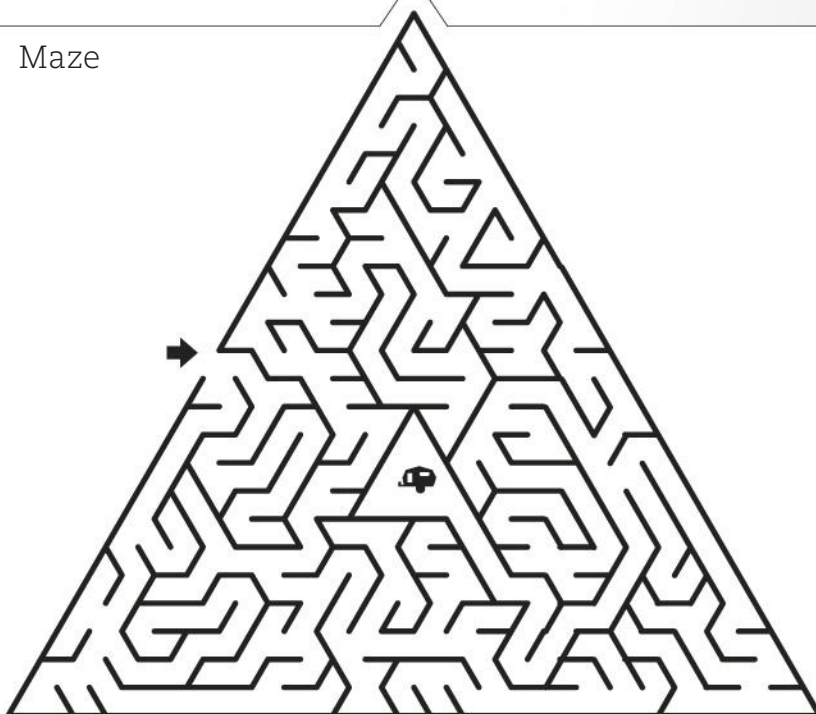
LOCAL BRANDS

Ackermans	Nando's	Telkom
Aspen Pharmacare	Naspers	Steers
Boschendal	Pick n Pay Stores	Truworths
Clover	Sappi	Vodacom
Defy Appliances	Sasol	Mr. Price
Gautrain	South African Airways	Shoprite Holdings Ltd
Kulula.com	Transnet	

Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts



PENGUINS (SPHENISCIDAE)

- All 18 penguin species reside in the southern hemisphere, except the Galapagos penguin.
- Emperor penguins are the largest and heaviest, standing 1.1-1.3 m tall and weighing up to 40 kg.
- Their thick layers of feathers and extra reserves of body fat provide excellent insulation.
- These incredible swimmers can move through the water at speeds of around 35 km/h.
- Unlike most bird species, penguins have solid bones to help them sink in the water and dive fast.
- A group of penguins on land is called a "waddle". Other collective nouns for penguins include colony, huddle and rookery.

To hybrid, or not to hybrid...

Even though he is not a fan of electric vehicles, Toyota's hybrid engines are phenomenally efficient, says **Mic van Zyl**.

I may have said this before on these pages and I'll say it again: there are not many things in life as exciting as taking delivery of a brand-new vehicle. The anticipation, the delivery, the first drive as the new owner, the first evening at home in the driveway opening and closing everything that can open and close.

I want to say it's the second most exciting thing after receiving the keys for your new house, but I will end up in a lot of trouble if I do not mention getting married first.

I have been most fortunate over the past 30 plus years in that I have never owned my own vehicle. I have always had company vehicles, getting a new one every four years or so. Also, I have not paid my own vehicle running costs or fuel bills for that same period.

At the end of July of this year, I retired from my position as MD of Ironman 4x4, after having been with the Autoquip Group for 31 years. This, of course, has brought a significant change to my vehicle-ownership dynamic.

As I ponder my next career move, weighing up the pros and cons of a couple of options, I have also taken a serious look at my vehicle ownership and the cost of running such a vehicle. If all goes to plan, I will end up running my own business and have a company vehicle with all the running costs borne by that business. Being my own business, though, this will remain a cost to me, albeit indirectly.

The above has made me develop a new perspective on a few things automotive. In our family of two

vehicles, my wife drives a Corolla Cross – arguably one of Toyota's best products. Easy to drive, comfortable, frugal, affordable servicing and insurance, reliable... all very important attributes.

Being an overlanding family with an offroad caravan, we also must have a 4x4 vehicle. Upon my exit from my previous job, I arranged to purchase my then current company bakkie – a 2023 Hilux GR-S double cab 4x4.

Of course, the Hilux is quite the opposite to the Cross. While it is easy enough to drive around town and reliable, the fuel bill is significant. The deal breaker, however, is the insurance premium, which is downright eye-watering. My insurance company, that insures everything including myself, would not touch it. I have had to look elsewhere for cover. The Hilux will likely have to go.



Now that the Land Cruiser 76 wagon is available in an automatic with a 4-cylinder engine (nowhere near as thirsty as my V8 was), it is looking like a viable option. Or am I missing something?

If you regularly read this column, you would know that I am no fan of electric vehicles. Toyota's hybrid vehicles, on the other hand, are phenomenally efficient – and they still have an engine vibrating and making a noise.

I have driven several hybrid rentals recently and I am always amazed at how the hybrid system all works in the background without interfering with your trip or your enjoyment of the vehicle. With a less dismissive attitude, I have done some soul-searching and some extensive reading on hybrid tech.

It has become, in my opinion, a viable option for vehicle ownership and for the future of the automobile. Elma's non-hybrid Cross uses 8,5 l /100 km around town day in and out. On the highway at 110 km/h, it drops to 6,9 l/100 km.

On the last two occasions that I have rented hybrid Crosses in Cape Town; I have managed 4,5 l/100 km rushing around the Western Cape from meeting to meeting. That is astounding.

There is talk that the imminent new Hilux will feature a fully-fledged hybrid version. If that is the case, there is no reason why it then should not find its way into the Land Cruiser 70 series.

This bodes well for the future of the 70 series, as well as for my wallet. I may have to hang on a while and see what transpires. Looks to me like excitement on the horizon!



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We can almost hear the engines roar, that's how excited we are for this year's **Weg Ry & Sleep Bull Run in collaboration with Stanley!** From 9 to 12 October 2025, the annual Bull Run returns to Vanwyksvlei in the Northern Cape and we transform this rural town into a paradise for petrol heads for a few days.

There are car shows, and then there is the Bull Run.

Nothing here is ordinary. The rev counter stays in the red and the dust spins constantly when the participants come to play. And we party like there's no tomorrow. Come hang out with us... you don't have to be in an old rattletrap to join. In fact, it's just as much fun to watch the Bull Runners race from the sidelines, because while they're wrestling with the steering wheel, you can light your own fire.

The Bull Run is essentially about roaring engines, lovely "kuiers" and making memories that will stay with you for years to come.

Spectator tickets are now on sale for R1 800, giving you full access to the weekend's festivities that make the event so unforgettable. There is more than enough space to camp so pitch your tent for the whole weekend.

What's more, this year's sponsors are top-class

brands – the indestructible **Stanley**, the knife that everyone wants – **Leatherman** – and the brand that can tell you everything about buying and selling cars, **WeBuyCars**. Come support your mates, see how old engines get new life, and enjoy the benefits of the fantastic sponsors present. Plus, you'll probably meet a bunch of great new people too! Book your ticket today. We can't wait!



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They don't know what we know

Despite technological advances, and the unrealistic notion held by some that camping is merely a way to show off, the heart of the lifestyle should remain unchanged, says **Neels van Heerden**.

A few years ago, I was involved in attempts by three different organisations to improve the camping industry. The campaign, run by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA), was the most comprehensive, though not without its shortcomings. The main problem lay in the use of so-called master assessors, who had a significant say in grading but, in many cases, fell woefully short when it came to real, hands-on camping experience.

These assessors had to sign off on all grading reports, which inevitably led to conflict. In one case, they insisted that the bathrooms at the opulent Mount Nelson Hotel and those at Mbizi – South Africa's first five-star caravan park – should meet exactly the same standards. It was unrealistic, and when the TGCSA's master assessor withheld Mbizi's grading, the owner made his dissatisfaction very clear. The TGCSA's response was swift: the grading officer was summarily dismissed.

The Automobile Association's attempt to classify campsites into categories (such as bush camps, ATKV resorts and sites aimed at specific market segments) was pragmatic and commendable. Unfortunately, the initiative lost momentum when the project manager left the organisation and the new leadership decided to scale down the quality system.

The South African Bureau of Standards also attempted to establish national standards for the camping industry, and my late friend Willie Bromehead and I volunteered to take part in the process. Our primary aim was to protect the

interests of campers, and although we weren't paid for our time and effort, we contributed our knowledge and experience. This initiative, too, eventually failed – to the point where, since 2014, only the TGCSA grading system has really been in use.

One of the strangest episodes I experienced during that time was with the SABS process. One of the self-professed "experts" who had a say in the grading system was a luxury-obsessed socialite from Sandton, and her ideas were the very definition of impractical wishful thinking.

She was determined to transform South African campsites into showcases of luxury and glamour, which, according to her, was precisely what they lacked. In her view, the ablution facilities at ATKV and Forever Resorts were no better than those of mining hostels.



Her list of proposals was not only unworkable but downright laughable. Toilet paper, she insisted, had to be scented, and ice cubes were to be placed in urinals every half hour. Mirrors, she decreed, should never make a camper look overweight, because in her words, "negative energy" would discourage people from visiting a campsite.

According to her, tents should no longer be khaki canvas but instead in blush pink and other pastel shades – to brighten up the dull scenery of traditional camps.

Caravan parks, she said, should also supply pastel-coloured pepper spray and glow-in-the-dark wristbands to ward off monkeys, spiders and night adders, while caravans themselves ought to come standard with a cappuccino machine and an alarm system.

Willie, an experienced camper with deep roots in simple, down-to-earth outdoor living, tried to persuade her that camping is about simplicity and adapting to nature – not about overblown luxuries.

He told how his great-grandmother once travelled from Cradock to Natal by ox-wagon and somehow managed it without scented toilet paper.

Despite all the technological advances and the unrealistic ideas of those who see camping only as a way to show off, the essence of the lifestyle remains the same. It's about experiencing nature as it is – even if your tent leaks, monkeys steal your rusks, or the gas cylinder runs dry halfway through a shower. Camping is, and will always be, a simple yet precious way of life that sparks adventure and a love of the outdoors.

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Whatever makes you happy

The art of camping isn't about expensive gear or perfect sites but about enjoying every moment together, writes **Linda Brink**.

Not too long ago, I was sitting around a small campfire with friends when the conversation turned to a rather philosophical question: "What's the best way to camp?" As with any of life's big questions, there's no easy answer. What did become clear, though, is that the camping species – (*campus generalis*), if you will – is made up of several tribes, each with its own customs and rituals.

Let's start with the long-stay camper, the type who has mastered this lifestyle

over dozens of seasons. This easy-going tribe quite literally builds a micro-village where you can experience their natural hospitality firsthand. Just ask any long-stayer – camping (or is it staying? ... perhaps even living?) is about far more than a little tent and two picnic chairs.

No. These folks bring along everything that isn't nailed down: a caravan, add-on tents for the kids, and then they'll even mark out a little garden on their stand — sometimes complete with a gnome peeking over the hedge. And the patio tent? It's never just a tent. It's strung with

colourful fairy lights that twinkle in the trees, has a canvas floor that's swept clean every day, and a fully kitted kitchen where you can prepare anything from rusks to a proper Sunday roast just like your gran's. Watching this camping species so happy and content in their natural habitat, I sometimes think I should put my house up for rent and move in with them.

Long-stayers also tend to live in perfect harmony with one another. Yes, there are rules, but they're of the unwritten, informal kind: drop in if the lights are on,

bring your own meat for the braai, your own chair to sit on, your own glasses, plates and cutlery... and never forget to compliment someone's potted plants.



In this community, camping isn't just a lifestyle, it's an artform. Picture them in their matching team shirts during organised activities – red for jukskei, blue for horseshoes, and perhaps yellow for the rugby supporters. And then there are those floating about on pool noodles... you could call them the board of directors, or no, better yet, parliament. Here, weighty issues are debated – from the weather forecast for the next few days to whose braai wood

makes the best coals.

Now we turn our attention to the occasional campers, whose natural habitat is the wilderness. You'll always find them in places like the Kruger National Park, where the view over the bushveld is the ultimate luxury, and where the smell of morning coffee and the call of a kingfisher are enough to bring a smile at first light.

Their stands aren't as uniform as those of the long-stayers. They range from tiny two-man tents where young couples snuggle up like warthogs in a burrow, to high-tech twin-axle caravans with aircon.

In the Kruger, a stand along the fence is right at the top of the wish list. And no wonder – your chances of spotting an elephant or some other creature while you're innocently lighting the evening's braai fire are so much better there. Naturally, those stands are the first to be taken, and to be perfectly honest, you're very lucky if you manage to get one.

If that row is already taken, you'll have to find a spot elsewhere. But it's never just a matter of finding one; every square metre of a potential stand is studied, analysed and weighed up. Which way does the wind blow? Are we close to the ablutions? Will the children's noise scare off the birds? From which direction will the rain come? It can be

quite entertaining to watch, because that element of surprise can cause plenty of excitement and anticipation.

The fishing camper is a very special species; one of a kind. His campsite is simple – usually no more than a basic tent that offers just enough shade from the blazing midday sun.

Here, comfort isn't the focus. Only one thing matters: fishing. And where they fall short on camping gear, they more than make up for with the shiniest, newest, most advanced angling equipment. The word "impressive" hardly does justice to the sight of fishing rods lined up in precise formation, lures glittering like a trophy collection, and, of course, the magical *mieliebom* – apparently a perfectly legitimate, aggressively persuasive bait.

If there were ever to be a hostile attack from the depths of Loskop Dam, these are the men you'd want on your side. They are utterly prepared and a dazzling first line of defence.

On the more adventurous side, we find the 4x4 camper. This crew takes joy in the worst possible roads – and sometimes in the complete absence of roads altogether.

Few things get their hearts racing like a rocky track, a dry riverbed or a looming sand dune – the kind of obstacles most people would never dare tackle. The 4x4 camper's gear is minimalist yet impressive: rooftop tents that unfold as if by magic, off-road trailers that look ready for a NASA mission, and an engine that growls like a predator.

They can literally feel the blood pumping harder through their veins when they're peering across a precipice or perched on a rocky outcrop.

Lastly, we turn to the simplicity and beauty of the backpack camper. These are the people whose approach to life is defined by the ability to pack their entire world into a single rucksack. And yet, the rewards are boundless.

In the stillness of the bush, far from any cell signal, they unroll their sleeping bags

at night and stretch out their legs by the crackle of a small fire. Beneath the luxury of a sky full of stars, they ask for nothing more – the world may be vast, but here, in this place, they are exactly where they're meant to be.

One of the greatest joys of camping is the people you meet and the stories they share. Like the long-stayer across from you who lights his fire at exactly the same time every evening, and then invites you over for dinner – and before the night is through, you're firm friends. Or the occasional camper who nods when you ask if you can take a look through his telescope. He ends up telling you a dozen things you never knew, and you walk back to your stand a little wiser, a little more informed.

It's people like these who remind us that camping is the lifestyle where you learn to value both your fellow human beings and the natural world most of all.

You might be a little sceptical about the anglers' so-called secrets, but in every one of their stories a spark of camping spirit shines through. Patience and perseverance are what really count. And then, when the fish finally bites, everyone shares in that moment of collective joy.

The 4x4 camper brings a very different kind of charisma. They always have the best gadgets to show off how forward-thinking they are – from portable solar panels to water filtration systems that look straight out of a science-fiction movie. But that's how they ensure that even the most basic campsite feels like a luxury lodge.

So how do we answer the question of the best way to camp? It seems there's only one answer: whatever makes you happy. For some, the dream may be a double-axle caravan with a patio tent and a garden gnome, while others want nothing more than a rucksack and a starry sky.

Whatever your preference, remember that the true wealth of camping doesn't lie in the way you do it, but in the memories you take home with you. 🐾



So how do we answer the question of the best way to camp? It seems there's only one answer: whatever makes you happy



AND FINALLY...

You look mighty familiar...



Isuzu Trooper

These days, it's common for competing manufacturers to take the same vehicle and slap their own badge on it. But one model went through far more indignities than most.



Have you come across a rare trailer or vehicle? Tell us about it and send a photo to drivecamp@gomag.co.za



Acura SLX



Honda Horizon



Opel Monterey

The American motoring giant General Motors was notorious for rebadging affiliated brands' vehicles with little rhyme or reason – think of the Isuzu mu-X, which was originally sold in South Africa as the Chevrolet Trailblazer.

The second-generation Isuzu Trooper, however, bore the brunt of GM's badge-engineering antics. In some South American markets it was sold as the Chevrolet Trooper. In Britain, it became the Vauxhall Monterey, Europeans knew it as the Opel Monterey.

Australians got the Holden Jackaroo – and even an HSV Jackaroo fitted with

a V8 (HSV standing for "Holden Special Vehicles"). Later, there was also the Holden Monterey, with a V6 under the bonnet.

Back in Japan, Isuzu's home turf, the Trooper was rebadged as both the Subaru Bighorn and the Honda Horizon.

America got the Acura SLX. Acura is Honda's luxury arm – just as Lexus is Toyota's luxury brand – but the American Acura SLX was identical to the Japanese Honda Horizon. The irony, of course, was that the Isuzu Trooper was being sold in the US at the very same time at a far lower price – for exactly the same vehicle!

Motoring journalists were quick to call out Honda (and GM) for the sleight of hand, and sales of the Acura SLX were soon discontinued.

A Chinese company named Sanji (with no ties to General Motors) sold the Sanji Trooper in China, while in Malaysia the Trooper was marketed as the Isuzu Citation.

The Trooper was produced from 1991 to 2002, and in those 11 years, it wore nine different badges on its grille and 12 different names on its doors.

In South Africa, however, it was always called the Isuzu Trooper – exactly as it should be.



Holden Jackaroo



HSV Jackaroo



Vauxhall Monterey

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