

#71

CAMP CUISINE SIX FILLING STUFFINGS

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2026 | ISSUE 71

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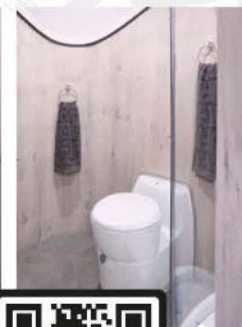
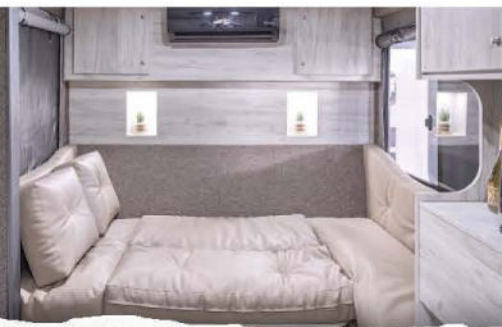
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Don't wait

we assume that everything – and everyone – will still be there when we finally get around to them.

I think we're all guilty of taking the people who matter for granted. We convince ourselves there'll always be another weekend, another chance to travel together, another night around the fire. We postpone things for good, logical reasons, sometimes even with the very best of intentions – but time has a way of quietly making plans of its own.

Maybe that's why those holiday moments on the open road, or those nights under canvas, stay with me more and more. Not so much because of where we're going, but because we're going together. It's the conversations that flow without effort, the silences that somehow feel full and the simple awareness that the people sitting beside you are exactly where they're meant to be. That feeds my soul.

There's a certain honesty in the time you spend with someone on a camping trip or out in the bush. You start seeing each other again – and hearing each other again – without the thousand other things pulling at your attention. It's the little details that stand out: one person's unmistakable laugh, the favourite saying someone always repeats, or the familiar way another greets a waiter in a restaurant. Those tiny things remind you why these relationships matter. Not

because they're grand or dramatic, but precisely because they're ordinary.

I've realised how easily we plan big adventures yet postpone the small, important things. We talk about that next long road trip and make sure everyone's schedules align, but meanwhile the days quietly slip by, and the things that truly matter end up waiting patiently in the wings.

Our shared love of the outdoors reminds me often: don't wait. Don't assume there'll be time later. You don't need to go far or stay away long. Sometimes all it takes is simply deciding: Let's go. Let's make time. Let's put the phones down and really look at each other again.

It's in that simplicity that life becomes meaningful. Moments that weren't planned but are remembered. One day, when we look back, we'll realise it wasn't the places that mattered – it was the people who were with us.

It's still early enough in the year. Don't wait. Don't take people, time or moments for granted. Make time, make plans – and show up. You'll be grateful you did.

Travel safely.

Schalk

EDITOR

✉ schalk.jonker@media24.com

There's something about the first few months of a new year that tricks you into believing you still have time. Time to catch up later, to phone later, to plan later. It feels normal; the calendar still looks wide open, the holiday memories are fresh and the inevitable rush of the year seems far off on the horizon.

Or so we think. Because before you know it, life picks up speed again. The schools reopen, you're back at work and by the time you finally look up, you realise you're already living from one deadline to the next.

That's usually when you have to force yourself to sit down for a moment and breathe. And in that stillness, the truth hits you: how easily

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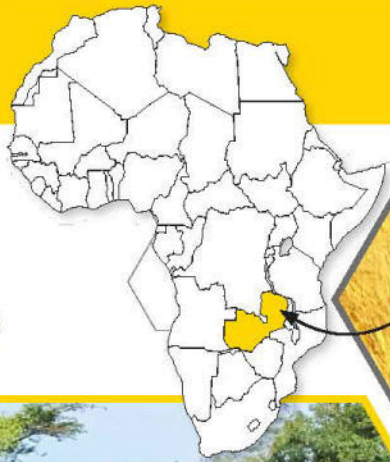
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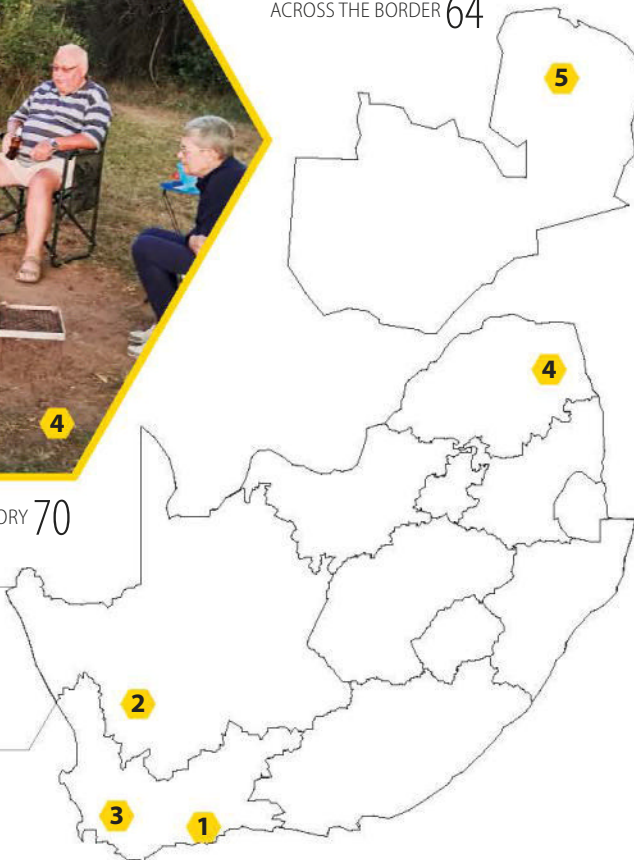
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ACROSS THE BORDER 64



READER STORY 70



#71 COVER SHOT – LEON BOTHA

“The gravel road between Albertinia and Gouritsrivier Holiday Farm is a prime example of how such a road should be maintained. The surface is excellent, and the number of aloes increase the farther along the road you drive until they resemble a crowd of red heads welcoming you to your farmstay.”



Camera & settings Canon EOS 6D Mark II, f18, 200/s, 34 mm, ISO 640

SAVANNAH 3 BOW TENT



2.1m x 2.1m x 1.5m
R3 790⁰⁰

SAVANNAH 4 BOW TENT



2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m
R4 900⁰⁰

SAVANNAH 5 BOW TENT



3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R5 790⁰⁰

SENIOR SAFARI DELUXE BOW TENT

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- > 540GSM HEAVY DUTY PVC GROUND SHEET
- > 8.5MM ELECTROPLATED HIGH TENSILE SPRING-STEEL FRAME
- > INSIDE & OUTSIDE WINDOW CLOSURES
- > HEAT VENT WITH INSIDE CLOSURE



3 WINDOWS
WITH INSIDE & OUTSIDE CLOSURES
SENIOR 3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R8 150⁰⁰

RANGER SAFARI BOW TENT



2.1m x 2.1m x 1.8m
R4 510⁰⁰

JUNIOR WANDERER BOW TENT



2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m
R5 200⁰⁰

SENIOR WANDERER BOW TENT



3.0m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R6 000⁰⁰

JUNIOR SAFARI DELUXE BOW TENT



2.5m x 2.5m x 1.9m
R6 510⁰⁰

SENIOR DELUXE EXTENSION



SPACIOUS
4.5m x 2.9m x 2.65m
R10 590⁰⁰
FITS ALL TENTCO'S 3.0M X 3.0M BOW TENTS

SENIOR BAOBAB EXTENSION



3.6m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R7 700⁰⁰
FITS ALL TENTCO'S 3.0M X 3.0M BOW TENTS

DOUBLE BOW EXTENSION



2.1m x 3.0m x 2.2m
R6 670⁰⁰
FITS ALL TENTCO'S 3.0M X 3.0M BOW TENTS

JUNIOR SAHARA



4.5m x 2.9m x 2.65m
R12 510⁰⁰

SAHARA DELUXE



6.0m x 2.9m x 2.65m
R17 340⁰⁰

SAHARA LODGE



8.0m x 2.9m x 2.65m
R23 300⁰⁰

SAHARA GRAND



8.0m x 2.9m x 2.5m
R24 620⁰⁰

SAHARA OPTIONAL ADD-ON'S

SAHARA SIDE WALL SET



R1 680⁰⁰

SAHARA FRONT WALL



R1 050⁰⁰

SAHARA & SENIOR BOW CONNECTOR



R1 600⁰⁰

BOW TENT NOT INCLUDED

SAHARA REAR BATHROOM

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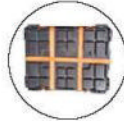
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R215⁰⁰



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R1 999⁰⁰

EXTREME ICE BOX 40L

61cm x 43cm x 43cm



R2 999⁰⁰

EXTREME ICE BOX 90L

89cm x 49cm x 49cm



R5 500⁰⁰

EXTREME ICE BOX 60L

80cm x 43cm x 43cm



R3 999⁰⁰

EXTREME ICE BOX 120L

101cm x 53cm x 48cm



R6 200⁰⁰

EXTREME ICE BOX 140L

90cm x 58cm x 57cm



R6 999⁰⁰

BIG BOY



Max carry weight: 150kg
R865⁰⁰

SL-2



Max carry weight: 150kg
R850⁰⁰

SLX-2



Max carry weight: 150kg
R1 100⁰⁰

SLX-2



Max carry weight: 120kg
R720⁰⁰

DIRECTORS DELUXE



Max carry weight: 180kg
R950⁰⁰

DIRECTORS DELUXE



Max carry weight: 200kg
R1 599⁰⁰

CLASSIC



Max carry weight: 120kg
R1 499⁰⁰

LOUNGER



Max carry weight: 120kg
R1 250⁰⁰

COOLER BAG 12L



R450⁰⁰

COOLER BAG 28L



R499⁰⁰

COOLER BAG 55L



R650⁰⁰

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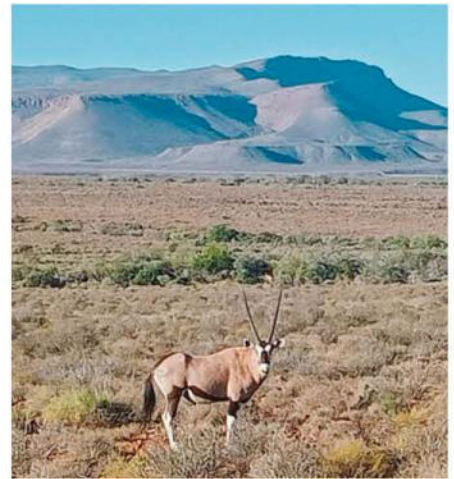
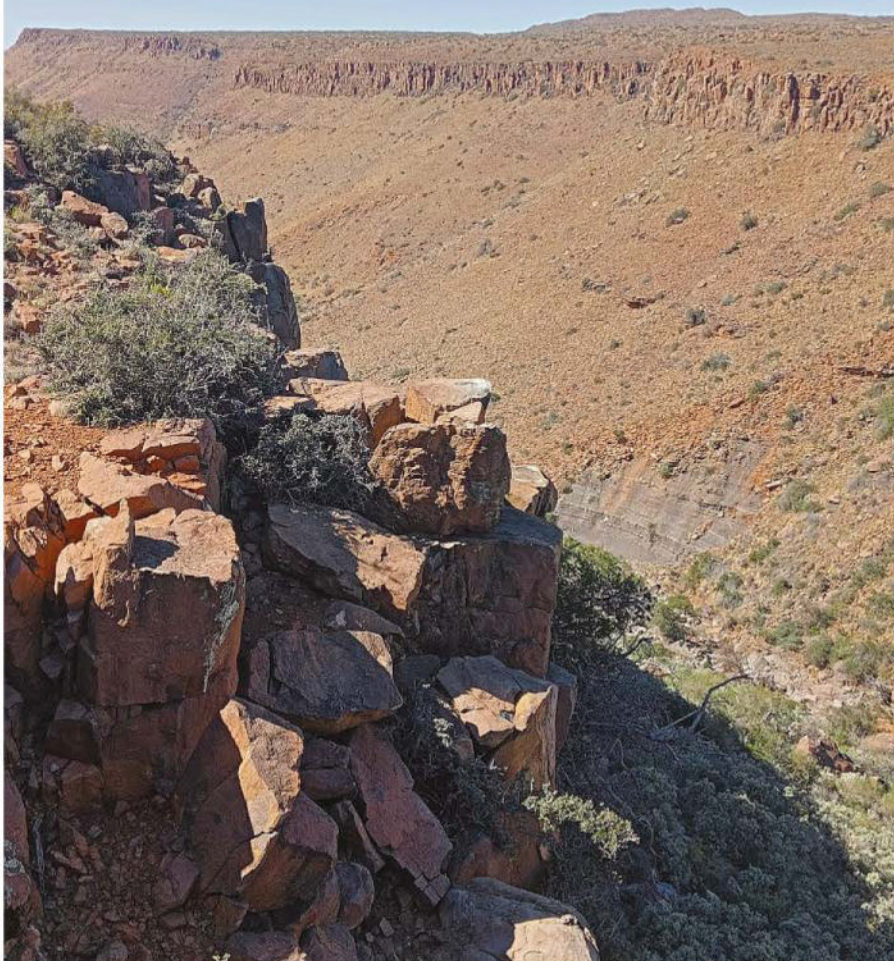
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Keep it up, Karoo!



We've driven past the Karoo National Park many times over the years, but only camped there for the first time late last year. What an experience!

At the entrance gate, we were greeted by Dylan de Bruin, whose infectious enthusiasm immediately set the tone, especially when he heard it was our first visit. He does far more than simply man the gate. From the get-go, he shared helpful tips for our stay in the park. I reckon there's a future SANParks spokesperson in him – and if it were up to me, I'd promote him straight to Minister of Tourism.

The caravan park lies in a beautiful basin between the mountains, and the surroundings are nothing like the harsh, unforgiving Karoo plains I had imagined.

What struck us immediately in the campsite was just how clean and well-maintained everything is. The wind was biting and icy cold, but a friendly fellow camper pointed us towards stand number two, where you camp on a neat concrete slab in welcome shade. The site is well protected, with bushes providing shelter from the wind.

WINNING
LETTER

Linda wins an EvoCharge LED Powerbank Torch valued at R999. This versatile torch features a 7 800 mAh lithium battery and can provide up to 30 hours of light. It also doubles as a power bank, allowing you to recharge your cellphone when needed. The magnetic base lets you attach it to any steel surface, keeping both hands free, and it's water-resistant too – ideal if you're caught out in the rain. sustainable.co.za



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Visitors are warned to keep an eye out for tortoises; and sure enough, we found one wandering into our campsite not long after we arrived. A rather cheeky kudu also stopped by, but we chased him off when he started eyeing our dinner a little too closely.

The ablutions are close by and spotless, with a practical layout. There's also a picture-perfect communal kitchen in classic Karoo-style, complete with washing-up facilities, hotplates, a fridge, freezer, microwave and toaster.

The next day, we tackled Klipspringer Pass and the Potlekkertjie route. The road winds its way through the mountains, offering lovely views of rocky cliffs along the way. The drive was effortless, as the pass is tarred and the steeper gravel sections have concrete strips. Do bear in mind, though, that large parts of the park are accessible only to proper off-road vehicles.

On an afternoon outing to Lammertjiesleegte, we were rewarded with sightings of springbok, red hartebeest, ostriches, mountain zebra, gemsbok, kudu and steenbok. We didn't spot any lions, unfortunately, but friends who camped here recently told us they saw a large pride, right near the campsite.

The shop is well-stocked and there's also a restaurant, although we didn't eat there during our stay.

I now understand why some people spend weeks soaking up the quiet magic of this place. Camping here is absolutely worth the effort.

LINDA BRINK
Senekal

A thorn among the roses

I was paging through the Your Photo section in the March 2019 issue and felt inspired to share a photograph I took in our own garden.

The image shows two duikers that regularly wander through our retirement village. I find it a joy to watch them helping themselves to our flowers, even though their visits sometimes cause no small amount of distress among certain residents.

I took the photo late one afternoon in May last year using a Canon EOS 7D, with a shutter speed of 1/640 s, an aperture of f/8 and an ISO setting of 1 600.

RICHARD CALDWELL
Parys



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594 X-COUNTRY

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With Stealth, comfort that follows you isn’t just a slogan, It’s the promise behind every kilometre.

Questions about the Battlefields



Many thanks for Cyril Klopper's excellent article on the KwaZulu-Natal Battlefields in the October-November 2025 issue. We'd love to follow in his tracks and have a few questions before setting off.

I tow a Nayela Mahem caravan, while my brother-in-law, Jakes van Zyl, drives a double-cab bakkie with a rooftop tent. Is the route suitable for towing a caravan, or for travelling in a double-cab? And are there caravan-friendly campsites at all the destinations where Cyril overnights?

CHRIS LEESON
Midvaal

Yes, towing is possible throughout the route. There are no low structures, trees or overhead power lines to contend with. The only potential difficulty is at the war graves at Elandslaagte



near Ladysmith, where there's no space to turn around. That said, the graves are only about 100 m from the main road, so you can simply park and walk in if needed.

The only other real challenge is Normandien Pass near Newcastle. The road there is narrow and steep, but we believe it should still be manageable with care.

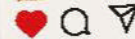
There are indeed suitable caravan stands at all the overnight stops mentioned in the article: Piet Retief (Sundowner Lodge), Blood River, Dundee (Kwa-Rie Caravan Park), Ladysmith (Spioenkop Dam) and Volksrust's municipal caravan park next to the town dam.



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‘Discover’ the Cruisers



“Maandag kan maar kom, ons is reg!”
Foto @lr4adventure



“Where is your next big tour?”
Foto @gunnland79



“Botswana”
Foto @lr4rsa



“Gonjah Farm, near Patensie, Eastern Cape”
Foto @get.out.go

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Splashing around in the Klein Karoo

The Klein Karoo is probably the last place you'd expect to find a campsite with a water park – but that was before Absolutely Wild opened its gates.

Owners PJ and Alice Verster built the water park on their farm between Barrydale and Ladismith, laying out 40 campsites around it. The roughly 1 400 ha property lies alongside the R62 and also offers glamping and self-catering accommodation.

A keen rugby enthusiast, PJ designed the campsite layout in the shape of a rugby ball. Each luxury stand measures 15 x 10 m, and 10 of them come

fully equipped with a private kitchen (including a fridge and microwave) as well as a private bathroom. (Just remember to pack your blue caravan plug.)

The standard stands don't have power points and are slightly smaller at 8 x 7 m. For now, these campers share a communal ablution block with separate facilities for men, women and wheelchair users, although plans are in place to add private bathrooms to each of these sites in future.

All campsites are fitted with loose-standing braais with grids, and there's even a lid to cover the fire once the evening winds down.

Kids certainly won't be bored. There's a shallow splash area for toddlers that gradually deepens, while the other pools measure 6 x 5 m and a generous 25 x 8 m.

Older children can take on four water slides; one rising 4 m above the pool, with the other three climbing to almost 10 m.

The heated indoor pool maintains a water temperature of 34-35 °C. There's also an indoor play area with climbing frames – similar to those found at suburban family restaurants – as well as a mini-golf course.

Game drives can be arranged in advance, with buffalo, sable antelope, springbok, gemsbok, kudu, eland and



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rhebok roaming the property. Younger visitors should also make a point of meeting Shrek and Fiona, the farm's resident donkeys.

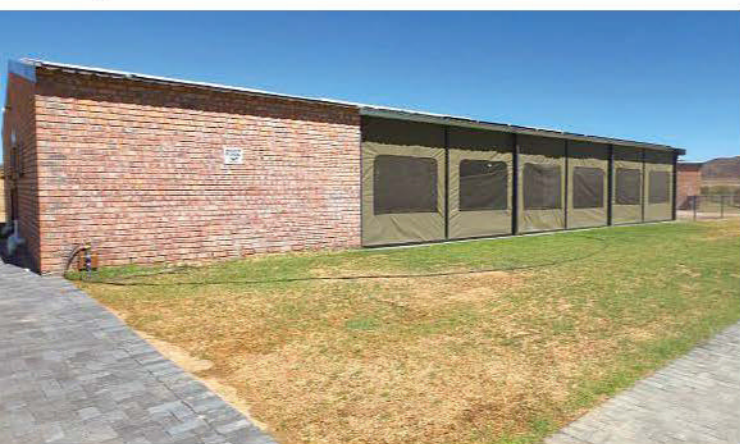
A shop and restaurant are available on site and, given the patchy cellphone reception, there's also wifi. All the farm's electricity is generated by solar power.

From the R62, it's a 2 km drive on good gravel to reach the farm, which lies 35 km from Barrydale.

Contact Depending on the season, standard stands cost R250 or R500 for up to five people, while luxury stands range from R550 to R850. An additional camper is charged R150.

Price ☎ 067 040 8107 ✉ info@absolutelywild.co.za

🌐 absolutelywild.co.za



ELXV arrives in the Cape

After four years in the off-road caravan industry, ELXV has opened a showroom in Paarl.

Short for Elite Luxury Offroad Vehicles, ELXV has made a strong impression since its launch, with high-end off-road caravans and an unconventional approach to construction. Notably, the caravans are built on aluminium chassis at the company's manufacturing facility in the south of Johannesburg.

Cape-based buyers can now view models such as the Diep Spoor, the Ng'ombe (which sleeps four) and the two Ghari variants (4.2 and 4.7) without travelling up-country.

Appointments to visit the Paarl showroom can be arranged with Celeste Botha, with viewings available from Tuesday to Thursday.

Address Trianglestraat 7, Paarl.

Contact ☎ 071 682 0924, 082 444 2850 or 084 550 2820 ✉ celeste@elxv.co.za

📘 ELXV Showroom 🌐 elxv.co.za



Celeste Botha



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 grey scarf is holding a silver mug. Two children in green jackets and grey beanie are standing near a small table with food. A green canvas dome tent is in the foreground.

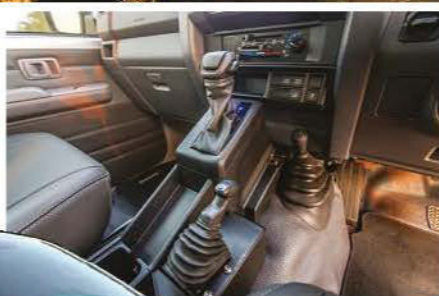
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ADVENTURE
BEGINS

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Six is better than four



South African vehicle conversion specialist Ulterio Motiv recently showcased two of its latest demonstrator builds to *Drive & Camp*: a Ford Ranger 6x4 and a Toyota Land Cruiser 6x6.

According to the company, the aim was to create a platform for customers who need a highly capable workhorse, including campers, overlanders and emergency services. Adding a third axle effectively doubles the payload capacity of a standard vehicle, making it possible to bolt on larger and heavier habitation modules for overland travel, or to fit bigger water tanks on firefighting vehicles.

Unsurprisingly, the conversion that attracted the most attention was the Land Cruiser 6x6. By adding an extra axle, Ulterio Motiv was able to increase the gross vehicle mass (GVM) of the

Land Cruiser 70 Series to 6 050 kg – a substantial jump of 2 850 kg over the standard vehicle.

It's worth noting that this higher GVM means a Code C driving licence (previously Code 10) is required to legally drive the converted vehicle on public roads.

In addition to the third axle, the conversion can be specified with an upgraded hydraulic brake booster, which reduces strain on the standard braking system. While this upgrade is optional, Ulterio Motiv strongly recommends it if you plan to make full use of the vehicle's maximum payload.

A slightly more affordable 6x4 conversion for the Land Cruiser is also available. In this configuration, Toyota's standard four-wheel-drive system is retained, while the third axle serves purely to raise the GVM to 5 500 kg. As a Code B

licence is limited to vehicles up to 3 500 kg, a Code C licence is still required.

Ulterio Motiv also points out that the standard Land Cruiser 70 Series has different front and rear track widths. As part of the conversion, this is corrected so that the front and rear wheels now run in the same tracks.

The Ford Ranger demonstrator retains four-wheel drive, with the third axle acting as a non-driven "dead" axle. Even so, the additional fifth and sixth wheels improve stability, particularly in soft sand, and significantly boost load-carrying capacity.

Ulterio Motiv replaces the Ranger's load bin with either a flat "Aussie Tray" or a flatbed with drop-sides, as shown in the lower left photo.

The specifications for the Land Cruiser and Ranger are as follows:

Toyota Land Cruiser 79 6x6

Tare	3 100 kg
GVM	6 050 kg
Payload	2 980 kg

Toyota Land Cruiser 79 6x4

Tare	2 910 kg
GVM	5 500 kg
Payload	2 590 kg

Ford Ranger 6x4

Tare	2 500 kg
GVM	4 500 kg
Payload	2 000 kg
(depending on the model)	

Ulterio Motiv confirms that it handles the full registration and homologation process for its conversions through NaTIS.

However, if the upgraded vehicle requires a higher-class driving licence, obtaining that licence remains the owner's responsibility.

Price R389 950 for a 6x4 conversion of the Toyota Land Cruiser 79, R895 000 to convert a Land Cruiser 79 to full 6x6 drive, and R265 000 for a 6x4 conversion of a Ford Ranger.

Optional extras for the Land Cruiser 79 include an upgraded brake booster (R18 950), reinforced brake lines (R10 950) and a GVM upgrade (R32 950). All prices exclude VAT.

The turnaround time for a conversion depends on the workload at Ulterio Motiv's factory in Lyttelton, Pretoria.

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Mahindra has the drip

Thousands of students attended Mahindra's Fusion Fest in December 2025 at the University of Cape

Town and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Students were entertained with a live music performance by Zee Nxumalo, alongside appearances by popular personalities Kyeezi, Ryle Rene De Morny, Neevan Ferris, Kelly Kikx and Missy Roberts.

Beyond the music, both campuses hosted fashion shows, art exhibitions and live graffiti demonstrations. Students were also invited to enter a lucky draw, with one fortunate winner set to drive away in a brand-new Mahindra XUV 3XO.

Fusion Fest will conclude on 7 March this year with a gala event at the SunBet Arena in Pretoria.

Price Tickets cost R300-R950 depending on seating.

Contact 📞 ticketmaster.co.za

🌐 mahindra.co.za



More Chinese mobility on the way

Lepas, a subsidiary of Chery Motors, announced in November 2025 that it will be entering the South African market, and the names of its first three models have now been revealed. They are the L4, L6 and L8, all of which are built on the same LEX platform, meaning they share a range of technologies and components. The LEX platform is compatible with both internal-combustion engines and battery-electric drivetrains.

The main differences between the three models lie in their wheelbase lengths and the resulting interior space. The L4, for example,



has a wheelbase of 2 700 mm and an overall length of 4 400 mm, while the L8 stretches to a 2 800 mm wheelbase and an overall length of 4 688 mm.

According to the manufacturer, all three models will be powered by the same 1,5 ℓ turbocharged petrol engine producing 115 kW and 235 Nm. Further details remain scarce at this stage and pricing has not yet been announced. The L4, L6 and L8 are expected to go on sale from February, and prospective buyers can visit the brand's website to add their names to the waiting list.

Contact 📞 lepas-sa.co.za



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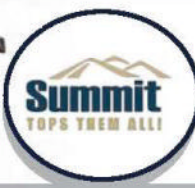
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Leader of the pack

BorderX's new flagship model is the embodiment of luxury in an off-road caravan.

Words **Leon Botha**

BorderX's new Arte Edition rubs shoulders with the very best caravans in its class, thanks largely to the manufacturer's decision to draw on the expertise of several industry specialists.

The Arte is the fifth caravan in the BorderX line-up and has been developed over the past 18 months. It's a double-axle model loosely based on the Expedition off-road caravan*.

Why all the experts?

According to BorderX owner Werner Pretorius, the Arte was never meant to be a solo effort. For this flagship caravan, he drew on the expertise of architects, suspension specialists, power-system engineers, established names in the fridge-freezer industry, awning designers and even wifi and internet networking boffins – all brought together and guided by his own hands-on experience.

The goal was clear: to match the Arte's formidable off-road capability with meticulous attention to detail. Interior design was handled by Wouter Erasmus and Johann le Roux of Arte Architects, resulting in a refined living space fitted with Hansgrohe taps, De-Niche kitchen and bathroom fittings, Mathéo windows and blinds, and Max on Top panel finishes.

The Arte rides on independent suspension with a newly developed trailing-arm system manufactured in-house by BorderX. Werner explains that the setup includes Fox shock absorbers with remote reservoirs for improved heat regulation and consistent damping on

demanding gravel roads. "The Firestone air bags used in the suspension system improve stability, wheel control and ride comfort, regardless of terrain," he says.

Power comes courtesy of a Victron energy system comprising a 3 000 W inverter, 600 Ah of lithium battery capacity and 1 200 W of solar input. In practical terms, that means you can run the 9 000 BTU, 220 V air conditioner without worrying about where the nearest power point might be.

The Arte is supplied standard with two fridges: an 81,5 l SnoMaster fridge/freezer in

the outdoor kitchen and a 65 l freezer inside the caravan, opposite the door. A SnoMaster ice maker capable of producing up to 20 kg of ice is also included.

The caravan's distinctive patio swing-awning was custom-built by Quick Pitch in Pretoria, but the real showstopper is the Arte's Teltonika internet system. It can connect to cellular (GSM) networks as well as satellite-based services such as Starlink, effectively eliminating the need to worry about SIM cards or airtime when travelling beyond South Africa's borders.



BORDERX ARTE EDITION



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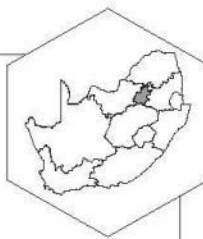


Outdoorwarehouseza



SPECIFICATIONS**

Model.....	Arte Edition
Sleeps.....	2-4
Size.....	6,85 x 1,92 x 2,45 m
Tare.....	1 800 kg
Payload.....	400 kg
GVM.....	2 200 kg
Axles.....	Independent
Wheel size.....	17-inch
Chassis.....	Stainless steel
Body.....	Honeycomb composite construction
Price.....	R1 500 000 (fully equipped)



DEALER NETWORK Head office and manufacturing facility in Centurion.

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R1 500 000 **BORDERX ARTE EDITION** **GVM 2 200 kg**

FROM THE COMPETITORS***

Flagship double-axle off-road caravans from other manufacturers



R917 447 **CONQUEROR UEV-25**

Sleeps 4, galvanised chassis, GVM 2 200 kg.



R1 058 000 **MOBI LODGE QUATTRO**

Sleeps 4, galvanised chassis, GVM 2 250 kg.



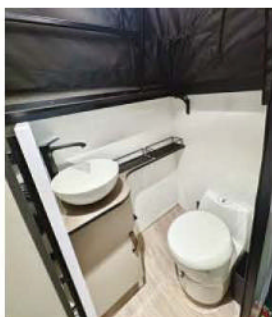
R1 084 110 **OVERLANDER 590 CUSTOM**

Sleeps 2, galvanised chassis, GVM 3 000 kg.

* From R695 000 and sleeps 2-6 people.

** Specifications shown apply to the prototype model.

*** As listed in the 2025 Buyer's Guide. Prices reflect standard models; final specification and fitment vary by manufacturer.



What goes where?

The outdoor kitchen, with all its cupboards and slide-out systems, is located on the left-hand side of the caravan, while the air conditioner sits just behind the coupler in the nose. The main door is also on the left, close to the rear, with the separate bathroom positioned on the right as you enter. Inside the bathroom, the shower cubicle is on the far left, the basin straight ahead and the toilet to the right.

Turn around to face the nose and you'll find the interior freezer low down on the right, with the dinette alongside it. The dinette converts into a single bed; if more sleeping space is needed, a bunk can be fitted above it. The upper bunk is enclosed

with mesh, making it safe for children.

Between the dinette and the main bed in the nose, several drawers have been neatly built in.

Inside, the Arte benefits from plenty of direct lighting, and the softer ambient lighting – concealed behind a strip running along the centre of the pop-up roof – works beautifully with the cabinetry, the canvas sections between the body and the roof, and the darker roof finish.

What's next?

The BorderX Arte Edition will be officially unveiled at the Caravan Show, taking place from 27 February to 1 March at the Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand.



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Main image featuring the LX27 rooftop tent



RUGGED

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Hero in a half shell

Krafted Kampers is a new name in caravan-building, and its Canyon 01 model is the culmination of a long-held vision.

Words **Leon Botha**

KRAFTED KAMPERS CANYON 01

For 30 years, Stephan Theron earned his living as an industrial designer in the manufacturing sector. For the last five of those, however, he found himself dreaming of building a caravan of his own – a dream that ultimately gave rise to the Canyon 01.

The appeal of compact caravans like this one is immediately obvious. Setup is quick and uncomplicated, no special towing licence is required if the GVM stays at 750 kg or below and as long as the caravan is fitted with overrun brakes, it can be towed by even very small vehicles.

The Canyon ticks all three of those boxes. According to Anna Jacobs of Krafted Kampers, the Suzuki Jimny was very much front of mind when the team settled on the caravan's target weight.

What sets it apart

If you're shopping for a locally built teardrop caravan, you're spoilt for choice – there are more than 20 models on the market. A basic bed-on-wheels with a door on either side and a rear kitchen simply isn't enough to make one stand out anymore. What separates the memorable from the forgettable are the details; the distinctive features that catch your eye.

The Canyon's windows do exactly that. There's one in each door, another alongside each door and an additional window right at the front of the body above the A-frame. The design itself is striking: the door windows are pentagonal, while the others are trapezoidal in shape. Better still, every single one opens.

Take a closer look

Two different materials are used for the floor and the body panels.

The floor is made from honeycomb polypropylene, a lightweight yet durable plastic that's resistant to water and chemicals. The side panels and roof measure 20 mm



thick and consist of two 1,6 mm fibreglass skins with a polyethylene terephthalate (PET) foam core. Inside, all the cabinetry is built from imported birch plywood.

The double bed is longer than standard, and at the head end you'll find USB charging ports, light switches and a slim shelf.

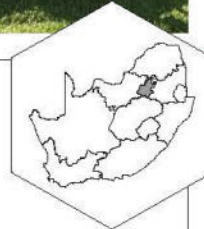
The kitchen is surprisingly generous, comparable in size to that of a conventional caravan. A two-burner gas stove is housed in the cupboard and slides out on runners beneath the left-hand side of the worktop. Cutlery fits neatly into the drawer below the stove, with space beneath that for a portable inverter.

A stainless-steel sink is positioned on the right-hand side of the counter, with a pot drawer underneath. The remaining central space accommodates a 50 l fridge/freezer.

Power provision includes both two- and three-pin sockets, along with two USB ports, while grocery cupboards are positioned right at the top.

Make it your own

You get to decide what your Canyon looks like. Choose from a range of colours, or opt for a custom wrap of your own design. The examples shown here are named Jimny Girl (green) and Buffeltjie (white). Anna explains



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Canyon 01
Sleeps	2 or 4 (incl. rooftop tent)
Dimensions	3,98 x 2,1 x 2,1 m (excl. rooftop tent)
Tare	550 kg
Payload	200 kg
GVM	750 kg
Axle	1,6 t
Wheel size	14-16 inch
Chassis	Galvanised steel
Body	Honeycomb polypropylene floor with PET foam panels and fibreglass outer skin
Price	Basecamp R225 000; Summit R325 000

DEALER NETWORK Factory and offices in Muldersdrift.

Contact 068 625 9671 admin@kraftedkampers.co.za kraftedkampers.co.za



that your concept is first mocked up digitally until it looks exactly the way you want it – only then is your caravan finished in that design. This customisation service is included in the price.

The Canyon is available in two versions: Basecamp and Summit. The Basecamp is more straightforward and essentials-focused, while the Summit is an upgrade that comes fully equipped for self-sufficient camping.

The Basecamp kitchen includes a sink, gas stove and gas cylinder, while the interior is fitted with a bed, cupboards as well as lighting.

In the Summit, you get the fully loaded package: a 50 l water tank, gas geyser, 50 l fridge/freezer, 1 800 W lithium battery and inverter, 100 W solar panel, a 180° to 270° awning with cutrains, a shower cubicle and a hardshell rooftop tent.



R225 000 /
R325 000

KRAFTED KAMPERS
CANYON 01

GVM 750 kg

FROM THE COMPETITORS*

Teardrop caravan manufacturers with at least two models, standard brakes and a GVM of 750 kg



R165 000-R195 000 (5 models)

ROAD-TRIPPER

Steel chassis with marine plywood sandwich panels and steel outer skin.



R242 500-R275 000 (3 models)

JETSTREAM

Galvanised chassis with fibreglass body.

* As listed in the 2025 Buyer's Guide. Prices reflect standard models; final specification and fitment vary by manufacturer.

Power ranger

BAIC has confirmed that it will build its new B30 SUV in South Africa. Cyril Klopper looks at the numbers.

Chinese manufacturer BAIC launched its B30 model locally in November last year and simultaneously announced an R11 billion investment in its Coega plant in Gqeberha. The announcement aligns with the company's stated philosophy of manufacturing vehicles in the countries where they are sold.

What do we have here?

The B30 pictured here is the range-topping Premium Adventure HEV AWD 1.5T Hybrid DHT AWD – quite a mouthful – but the line-up also includes three front-wheel-drive derivatives, two of which do without hybrid technology altogether.

The three additional models and their pricing are the entry-level Elite Adventure (R519 000), Premium Adventure (R549 900) and Elite Adventure HEV at R639 900. The first two are equipped with a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission (DCT), while the two hybrid models feature a two-speed dedicated hybrid transmission (DHT) as well as two electric motors – one at the front and one at the rear.

According to BAIC, its self-charging hybrid technology – branded the Magic Core Hybrid System – delivers fuel consumption figures as low as 5,85 ℓ/100 km, while a range of up

to 1 000 km is possible from the relatively modest 51 ℓ fuel tank. Acceleration from 0-100 km/h is claimed at 6,95 seconds in Sport mode, where fuel consumption is higher.

Other drive modes include Standard, Eco, Snow and Terrain. The latter automatically reads the surface beneath the vehicle and adjusts the all-wheel-drive system accordingly to tackle off-road obstacles.

As with other premium SUVs, the B30 comes equipped with adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assist, blind-spot monitoring

and autonomous emergency braking that can detect pedestrians and animals. The seats are also programmable, allowing three drivers to store their preferred seating positions.

The competition

In the self-charging hybrid SUV space, the B30 HEV goes up against the Toyota Corolla Cross 1.8 HEV, Chery Tiggo Cross 1.5 HEV and Haval Jolion Pro 1.5 HEV. All three undercut the B30 on price, but they're also smaller and can be regarded as crossovers rather than SUVs.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	B30 Premium Adventure HEV
Engine	1 498 cc hybrid four-cylinder turbo-petrol
Power	116 kW (engine) + 130 kW front / 55 kW rear (electric) = 301 kW
Torque	235 Nm (engine) + 315 Nm front / 135 Nm rear (electric) = 685 Nm
Transmission	Two-speed dedicated hybrid transmission (DHT)
Fuel consumption	5,85 ℓ/100 km (manufacturer claim)
Tank	51 ℓ
Weight	1 770 kg
Wheelbase	2 820 mm
Dimensions	4 730 (l) x 1 910 (w) x 1 790 mm (h)
Ground clearance	215 mm
Approach/departure angles	24,5° and 30°
Tyres	235/60 R19
Warranty	7 years/200 000 km (general)
.....	8 years/150 000 km (electric components)
Service plan	7 years/90 000 km
PRICE	R689 900

BAIC B30



The Toyota is the most fuel-efficient of the group, with a claimed consumption figure of 4,3 ℓ/100 km and a range of 837 km. It's also backed by Toyota's extensive dealer network. The Chery Tiggo Cross is said to return 5,4 ℓ/100 km and matches the B30's claimed range of 1 000 km. It offers good value for money, although it doesn't enjoy the same level of support as Toyota. According to Haval, the Jolion Pro can cover up to 1 078 km on a single tank, with a claimed fuel consumption of 5 ℓ/100 km. The Jolion comes closest to the B30 in terms of luxury and interior space, but it compares more directly with the entry-level Elite Adventure rather than the B30 discussed here. 🚗



FROM THE COMPETITORS

Self-charging hybrids for gravel roads



R439 900

Chery Tiggo Cross 1.5 HEV

Excellent value for money, considering the level of technology on offer.



R494 400

Toyota Corolla Cross 1.8 HEV

Offers peace of mind, knowing there's likely to be a Toyota dealership in the next big town.



R519 950

Haval Jolion Pro 1.5 HEV

Comparable levels of luxury to the BAIC B30, backed by Haval's solid reputation.

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The boss bus

The GAC M8 Master bills itself as South Africa's first plug-in hybrid MPV. Cyril Klopper takes a closer look.

You may never have heard of Salvador Caetano, but this Portuguese automotive group builds tour buses and also acts as the international distributor for several overseas vehicle brands. It's also responsible for importing Chinese GAC vehicles into South Africa.

The first GAC model, the Emzoom crossover, arrived on local soil in August 2024. A month later, the larger Emkoo SUV followed, and in November 2025, this plug-in hybrid multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) was introduced to the South African market.

What have we got here?

Salvador Caetano claims the GAC M8 Master is South Africa's very first plug-in hybrid MPV (or PHEV MPV). It's also GAC's most luxurious offering in the local line-up – and, unsurprisingly, its most expensive – with a price tag of R1,5 million.

For that money, you get an MPV with electrically operated doors, sound-insulated glass, near-silent climate control and seven adjustable leather seats, all with heating, ventilation and 10-point massage for every occupant.

The M8 Master looks set to be the most comfortable touring MPV in the country, although it's hard to imagine it tackling the corrugated gravel roads of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.



What it will do exceptionally well, however, is transport you in supreme comfort from your Sandhurst home to your Umhlanga holiday house – helped along by Yamaha's eight-speaker sound system with ADiGO technology.

The hybrid system is claimed to deliver a driving range of more than 1 000 km, and GAC says you can travel up to 106 km on pure electric power without engaging the internal combustion engine. Acceleration from 0-100 km/h is claimed at 8,8 s, with fuel consumption listed at 8,8 l/100 km.

Safety systems include airbags throughout the cabin – even for rear-most passengers – adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assist, autonomous emergency braking, blind-spot monitoring, traffic-sign recognition cameras and an artificial intelligence that assists with parking. In fact, the Level 2 AI doesn't just help with driving tasks but can reportedly anticipate potential hazards ahead.

The most striking feature, and we're confident you'll agree, is the enormous grille. It looks bigger than that of a lorry, and pedestrians may well scatter in fear of being sucked in as your M8 Master approaches.



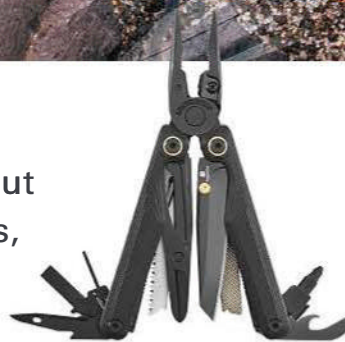
GAC M8

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Colour: Obsidian



Colour: Canyonland



The competition

There's no rival that's quite as posh as the M8 Master, but it's worth considering the Kia Carnival 2.2 CRDi SXL, Mercedes-Benz V-Class V250d AMG and Volkswagen Caravelle T6 Highline.

All four offer seven seats, yet none of the competitors can hold a candle to the M8 Master's opulent seating. Incidentally, the GAC M8 is marketed as the Trumpchi M8 in China. We wouldn't be surprised if President Xi Jinping were to dispatch a Trumpchi M8 to the airport to fetch Donald Trump.

The AMG version of Mercedes-Benz's V-Class comes closest to the M8 Master in terms of luxury, but it's thirstier, with a claimed fuel consumption of 9,6 l/100 km. With a top speed of 206 km/h, however, it is faster.

Kia's most expensive Carnival is R200 000 cheaper than the M8 Master and also the most fuel-efficient here, at 6,8 l/100 km. While the Carnival doesn't make quite the same visual statement as the M8 Master, it's a better option if you plan to venture onto gravel roads from time to time.

The good old Kombi remains the benchmark against which all MPVs are measured – and for good reason. It's the most expensive vehicle in this group, but buyers are so loyal that the premium price clearly isn't a deterrent.

We reckon the GAC M8 Master is an impressive machine, and there's undoubtedly a place for it in South Africa. That said, the hybrid technology in this MPV feels more like a gimmick than something that delivers meaningful real-world benefits.



FROM THE COMPETITORS
Luxury seven-seat MPVs for
long-distance touring



R1 299 995 **Kia Carnival 2.2 CRDi SXL**

One of the most enjoyable family vehicles on the market – and a dream to drive.



R1 496 235 **Mercedes-Benz V-klas V250d AMG**

We raced one of these bad boys around Kyalami once, and it left us seriously impressed.



R1 643 300 **Volkswagen Caravelle T6 Highline**

Arguably the best vehicle for exploring the Kruger National Park with your family.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	M8 Master PHEV
Engine	1 991 cc hybrid four-cylinder turbo-petrol
Power	274 kW (140 kW engine + 134 kW electric)
Torque	330 Nm
Transmission	Eight-speed automatic
Fuel consumption	8,8 l/100 km (claimed)
Tank	56 l
Weight	2 060 kg
Wheelbase	3 070 mm
Dimensions	4 793 (l) x 1 893 (w) x 1 730 mm (h)
Tyres	225/60 R18
Warranty	5 years/150 000 km (general)
	8 years/150 000 km (electric components)
Service plan	5 years/100 000 km
PRICE	R1 499 900

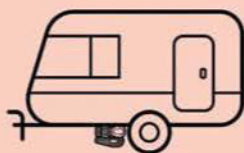
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CARAVAN MOVERS

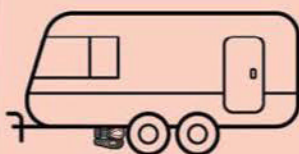
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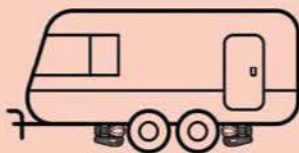
SINCE 1990



Evolution (Single Axle)



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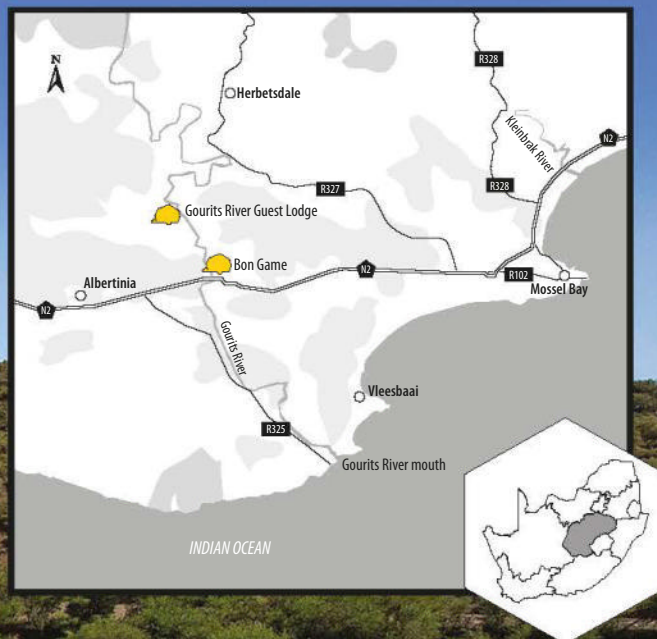
A-okay in Albertinia



Albertinia has a cute shop called the Aloe Deli where you can buy anything from biltong to home-made preserves.

Albertinia is far more than just a quick fuel stop along the N2 on the way to the Garden Route. There are two solid camping options, so pull in for a day or three.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**





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Beyond the gate, the road drops again... and then the campsites come into view

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If you've ever driven the N2 between Cape Town and Hartenbos, Mossel Bay or Knysna, chances are you know about Albertinia. The town is famous for its aloe products and sits snugly alongside the N2, making it an easy place to pull in at either the Shell or Engen garages to refuel and stretch your legs. Both stations also have shops where you can pop in and get a feel for the town's friendly hospitality.

The Aloe Deli is any carnivore's dream. A large sign above the door proudly announces the house speciality: yellow-fat biltong. In addition to biltong and droëwors, you'll find a wide selection of other meats and sausages to stock up for that evening's braai.

Next door, the Roosterkoekhoe serves up hearty roadside fare, perfect for the final stretch of the drive to camp. Choose from fillings such as cheese and jam, boerewors, or a rib patty with tomato relish. Whatever you do, grab a few plain roosterkoeke (R13 each) for the holiday – you'll be glad you did.

With your supplies on board, turn your back on the N2 and head down Station Street until it ends. Turn right into the main road, then left into Malan Street

until the gravel road begins outside town. It's barely 2 km from the fuel stations.

From here, it's only about 15 km to the first campsite, Gourits River Guest Farm. After that, you'll pass through a series of farm gates before eventually arriving at the campsite at Bon Game.

GOURITS RIVER GUEST FARM Farm life

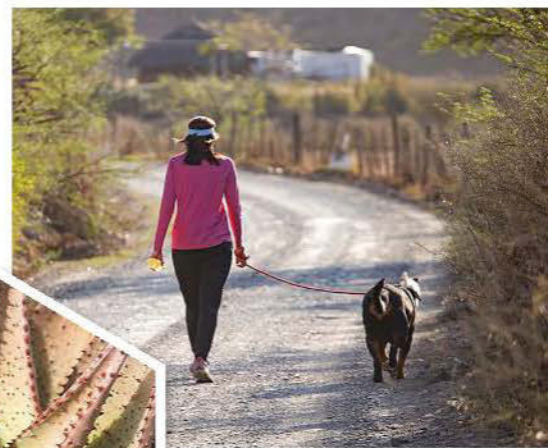
As you leave Albertinia behind on the well-maintained gravel road, the landscape opens up into wide plains with distant mountains on the horizon. Before long, aloe plants start lining the road, a lifeline for many people in this part of the world.

Then the road dips... and suddenly you're in a different place altogether. From here on, the track narrows and the aloes close in, almost standing guard as you approach the guest farm.

The farmhouse appears ahead of you. A wooden sign points left towards the campsite; keep your eyes open, though, because you might have to pull over at the farm gate, just as we did, to let Wells Nkubira herd the goats through. Wells will show you where to set up camp.

To the right of the gate, a flock of sheep is penned in, while to the left, a larger





CHOOSE YOUR COLOUR. Brightly painted doors give the bathrooms a cheerful lift. There's a family bathroom, separate toilets and shower cubicles. The wash-up area sits off to the side.



enclosure is home to a formidable-looking bull who keeps a close eye on proceedings as farmyard chickens scuttle about, doing their best to get out of your way.

Beyond the gate, the road drops again... and then the campsites come into view. At the fork, keep left towards the camping area (the road to the right leads down to the river). Tonight, you'll be sleeping on the banks of the 416 km-long Gourits River, with its only island lying directly opposite your campsite – a detail pointed out by Kosie Sauermaun of the guest farm. (Kosie is the seventh generation of his family on the farm.)

The first sites are levelled patches you can pull into shortly after entering, with more options farther along on a large grassy lawn beyond the ablution block.

The edge of the lawn overlooks the river. Several sites are set up alongside one another beneath thorn trees. Apart from the occasional reed screen, the stands aren't demarcated, but brightly painted name boards identify them: Eenkant, Bandtrek, Vinknes, Lê Boom, Vaalmuishond and Fish Eagle. We spotted three power points: a pole on the far left with three household sockets, and two more near the entrance sites, so bring

DESTINATION

an extension lead. Water taps are dotted around, but the water isn't potable.

At the sites on the right-hand side, there are three built stone fire pits. Loose braai drums are available, although the rules posted in the ablution block state that a R100 deposit is required for a braai grid. The drum at our site was fitted with wheels and could be moved around easily. Firewood is available at R100 per bag, and basic supplies such as water, cold drinks and ice (1 kg) can also be purchased on site at R15 per item.

The ablution facilities are housed in a building with doors painted in bright, cheerful colours. It's positioned along the far edge of the lawn, with a reed fence running along the front. The first room, marked by a yellow door, is a spacious family bathroom. Behind the red and blue doors you'll find the showers for men and women respectively. The toilets are tucked away at the far end, behind the last two doors (orange and green).

Each of the first three bathrooms has an opening next to the door that looks out over the campsite. The walls rise to shoulder height, with the opening extending all the way up to the roof, so you're never completely closed off from what's happening outside. The shower cubicles are open-plan, hot water is supplied by a gas geyser, and there are even fresh flowers on the basins.

The double wash-up sink for dishes is located about 20 m from the ablution block, under its own corrugated roof. A little farther on, behind a bamboo fence, you'll find another toilet with a yellow door. It's open at the front, offering a view over the ridge and the Vals River, which joins the Gourits River just a few metres away.

There's alternative accommodation on the farm for friends who don't yet own a caravan. Just beyond the farmhouse stands a wooden cabin – a cleverly enclosed old Jurgens Champion from the 1980s – with a truly magnificent view over the river.

On Google Maps it appears there's only a single access route to the farm, but according to Kosie, there's a public shortcut that leads straight back to the tar road. Simply continue past the farmhouse and follow the gravel track as it climbs the aloe-covered hill ahead.



COME ONE, COME ALL. Your vehicle is no excuse not to visit – even the smallest city runabout will get here. And bring the dogs along too!



“ Just beyond the farmhouse stands a wooden cabin – a cleverly enclosed old Jurgens ”



Briefly | Gourits River Guest Farm



Campsite 13 level grassed sites with reasonable shade. Loose-standing braais are provided, and the electrical points use standard household plug sockets.

Ablutions A long, rectangular building with a family bathroom, one shower each for men and women, and one toilet each for men and women. The dishwashing area is located separately from the ablation block.

Price R300-R660 p.n. per site for the first two people (children under three stay free) depending on the season (a maximum of six people per site is permitted). R1 350-R1 800 p.n. for the wooden cabin (sleeps two).

Arrival and departure 12:00 and 11:00

Contact 076 398 0892

gouritsriverguestfarm@gmail.com

grguestfarm.com

Nearest town Albertinia, 15 km.

Road condition 15 km of good gravel road from Albertinia, with a shorter 7,6 km shortcut to the N2 also available.

GPS S34.135844 E21.717892

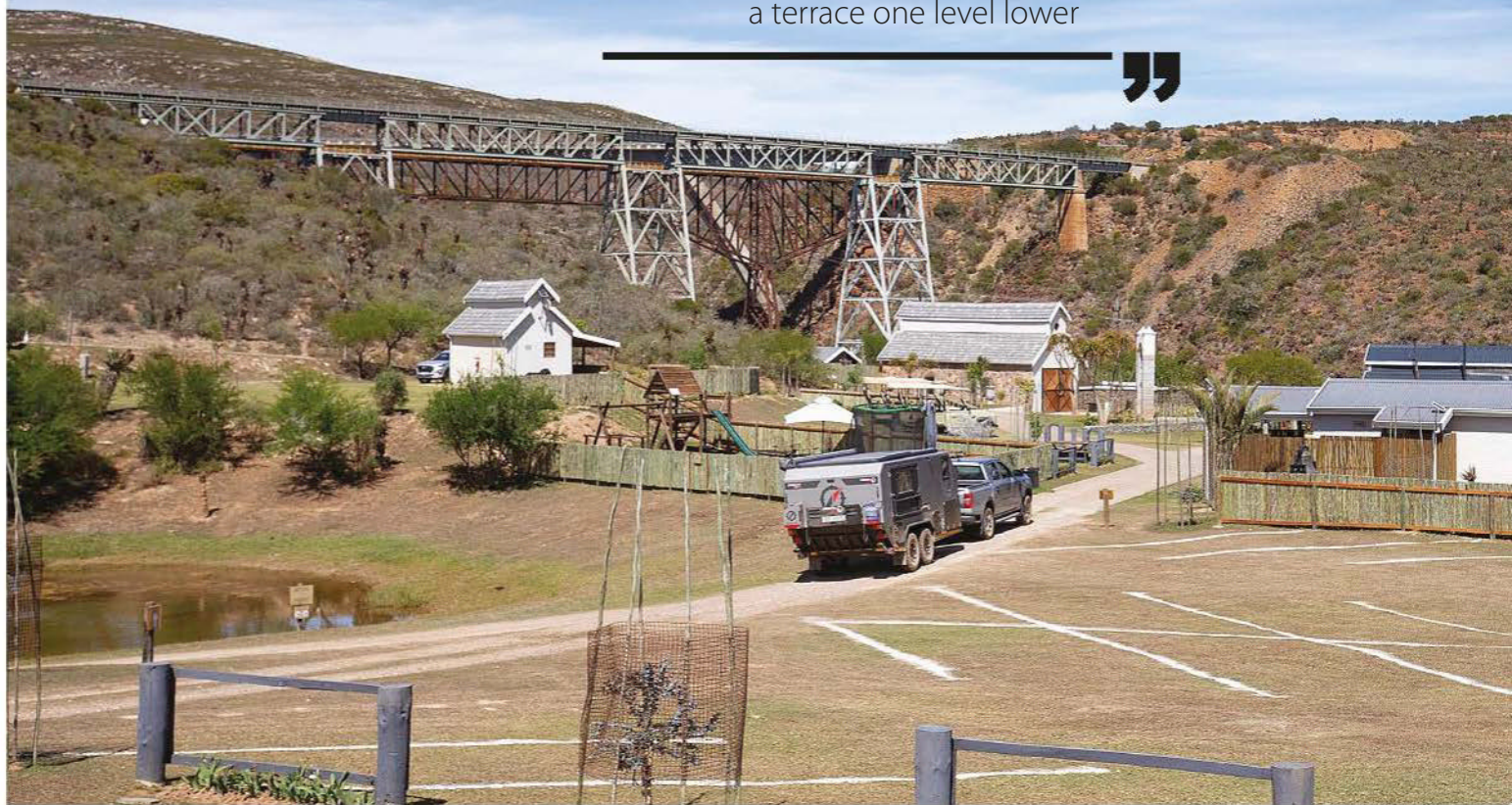
Drive & Camp says Bring your own drinking water and toilet paper.

(Incidentally, if you feel like stretching your legs, you can climb up this koppie to a lookout point for an even better view over the farm.) From here, the Gourits River winds its way along to your left. Shortly after setting off, you'll encounter the first of four farm gates. The first is a tall gate with a warning sign about free-roaming wildlife; make sure it's properly closed behind you.

It's just 7 km to the tar road, and you rejoin the N2 less than 2 km from the well-known Gourits River bridge. This road sees very little traffic and offers some truly beautiful scenery along the way. Kosie explains that sections of it once formed part of the historic transport route between the Eastern and Western Cape, and it's also where the old folk used to cross the river in years gone by. We even spotted a springbok standing alongside the road.



Park about 100 m beyond the office and walk back. The lawn in front of the office sits on a terrace one level lower



BON GAME Great heights

The three bridges that run side by side over the Gourits River have a remarkable history. The newest was completed in 1978 and now carries the N2. Approaching from Cape Town, it lies to the right, with the original bridge in the middle and the railway bridge farthest to the left.

The buildings tucked in below the riverbank, on the far side of the railway bridge, belong to Bon Game – your next destination. The turn-off lies about 200 m after the bridge, opening onto a large parking area just beyond. This empty expanse was once the site of a rather daring attraction: South Africa's first commercial bungee-jumping operation. It ran here until 2008, when safety concerns about the old bridge brought it to an end.

When the original bridge was inaugurated in 1892, the local governor was so impressed that he formally declared the day a public holiday, allowing residents of Mossel Bay and Riversdale to attend the event. At the time, the bridge was the second-largest structure of its kind in the world, and the largest truss bridge in Africa.

You drive past the parking area and cross the railway line, and about 250 m after Bon Game's entrance, you reach an electrically operated sliding gate. From here, it's less than 600 m to the office, but a fairly steep gravel descent lies ahead. (You only really appreciate how steep it is when you leave again; we suspect a front-wheel-drive tow vehicle may struggle.)

Park about 100 m beyond the office and walk back. The lawn in front of the office sits on a terrace one level lower, following the curve of the road. Two of the eight campsites are located here, with their power point positioned in the corner opposite the office door. The remaining six sites are on the other side of the office. Campers have access to free wifi.

The ablution facilities are housed in the building next to the parking area, with separate amenities for men and women. Between them is a covered dishwashing area. We had a look at the men's facilities, which include a separate shower as well as a bath with a built-in seat.

The children's play area lies opposite the ablutions and is neatly enclosed with a low post-and-rail fence. It features a life-size chess set, a trampoline with

a safety net, a jungle gym with a swing and slide, a wooden rocking horse and a boat-shaped sandpit complete with buckets and shovels.

Bon Game is spotless, and it almost feels as though you should be paying in dollars here. There's clearly been careful thought put into what goes where, and the neat, contemporary finishes of the buildings and gardens stand out immediately. Even the two game-viewing vehicles are parked at perfect right angles next to the children's play area. An almost abstract steel sculpture of a lion stands beside the office, catching the afternoon sun and looking every bit the real deal.

A large bell hangs between two pillars opposite the office. Dating back to the 19th century, it once formed part of the Bethany mission station near Edenburg in the Free State.

Also located here is the Barney Barnato Bar & Café, its exterior clad in corrugated iron sheets that echoes the historic look of Pilgrim's Rest.

There's a second option worth considering: Wild Camping, Bon Game's bush camp, which is less than a year



TWO FACES. The bush camp's facilities (left) feature a natural, earthy finish, while the bathrooms at the standard sites are fully tiled.



“

Dating back to the 19th century, it once formed part of the Bethany mission station near Edenburg in the Free State

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old. This is the one to aim for if you're planning a longer stay and really want to stretch your legs.

The bush camp lies along the banks of the Gourits River, and although the access road winds a little, it largely runs parallel to the river until you reach an electric sliding gate.

Beyond the gate, the gravel road makes a sharp right-hand turn before dropping steeply down to an equally sharp left-hand bend. We negotiated this section with a double-cab bakkie towing a double-axle caravan without issue.

From here, the bush camp unfolds lengthwise along the riverbed, with several grassy camping spots arranged on either side of the road. Access to each stand is easy, and there's ample space at the far end to turn around if you'd like to drive through before choosing your site. The trees grow thickly here, so you don't have uninterrupted river views, but if you look along the length of the campsite

towards the bridges, all three are clearly visible and make for a striking backdrop.

Although this is a bush camp, it's by no means stripped of basic comforts. Campsites are set on neat grassy lawns, and there's a small play area with two swings and a climbing net to keep younger campers entertained.

Roughly every third campsite has a light mounted on a wooden pole, which switches on automatically at night. The lighting is deliberately subtle, ensuring the natural atmosphere remains undisturbed. Water taps are neatly concealed in small stone pillars and positioned alongside the refuse bins near some of the light poles.

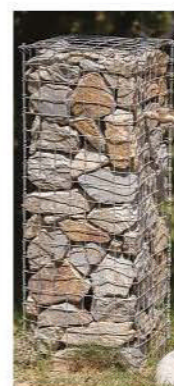
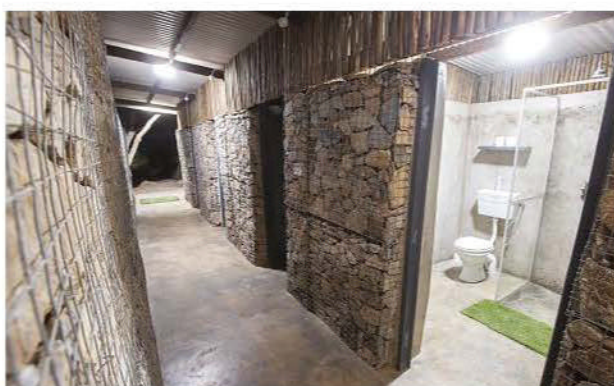
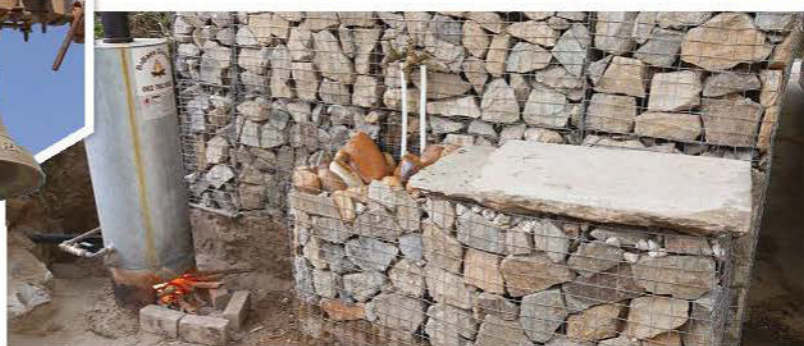
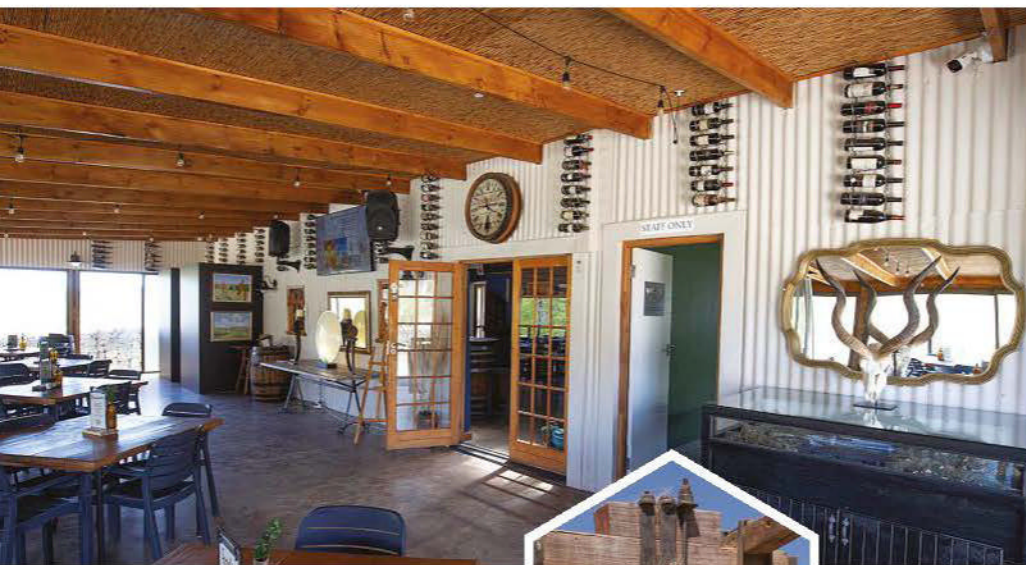
The ablution block blends seamlessly into its surroundings, with attractive stonework that deserves a special mention. Four family bathrooms are arranged side by side, each opening onto a covered stoep.

The interior walls are left unpainted, with raw plaster that complements the earthy aesthetic. Wooden poles extend up to the roof, completing the rustic look.

Each unit is divided by a glass panel, with the toilet on one side and an open shower on the other. The vanity area is spacious, and the showerhead is mounted directly overhead. Hot water is supplied by a donkey boiler, and the staff keep the fire going to ensure guests can enjoy a comfortable shower.

The washing-up area is located next to the donkey and has its own distinct character. The trough is constructed from loosely packed stones with a concrete work surface alongside. You can't fill a basin with standing water here – a clever way to encourage water-wise habits. The water is drawn from the river and is not suitable for drinking.

Opposite the ablution block stands a life-sized sculpture of an otter, crafted



"TAME"GAME. Bon Game is home to 11 antelope species, and none of them will mistake you for dinner. The closest you'll get is the lion at reception – a striking artwork crafted from steel.





Briefly | Bon Game



Campsite Eight open grassed stands without shade near the office (with power and wifi), plus a bush camp with 15 shaded grass stands along the river, without power.

Ablutions One ablution block with separate facilities for men and women at the main campsite (with a dishwashing area), and four neat family bathrooms in the bush camp, where hot water is supplied by a donkey boiler.

Price R564 or R660 for four people depending on the season. The bush camp is R100 p.p.n. and the main campsite R120 p.p.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 076 980 6841

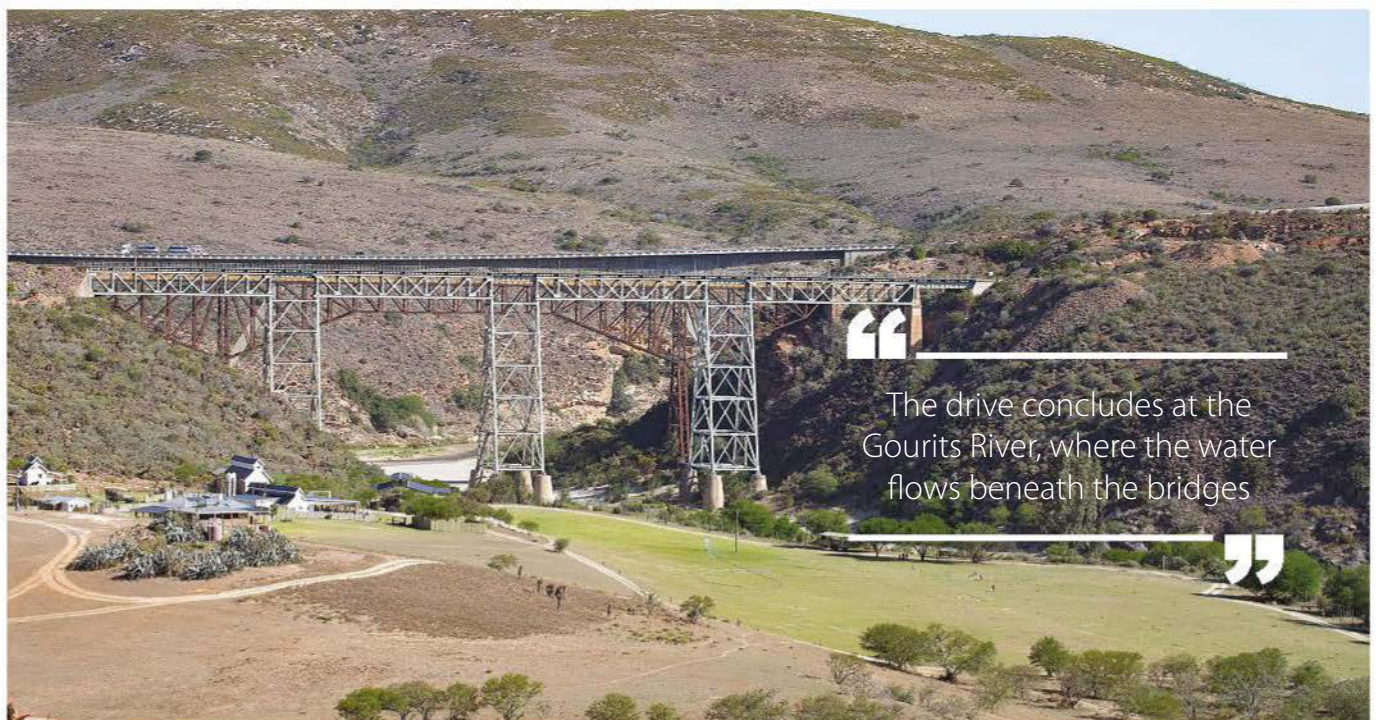
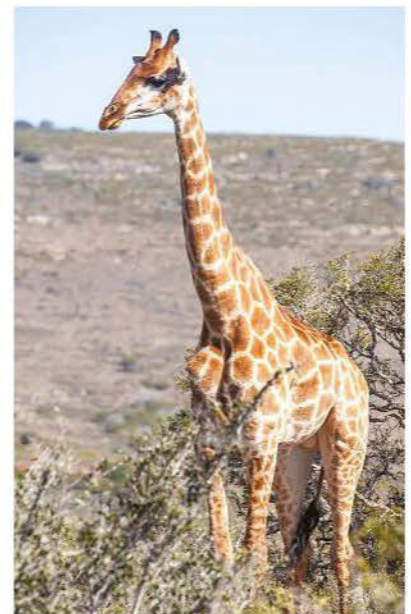
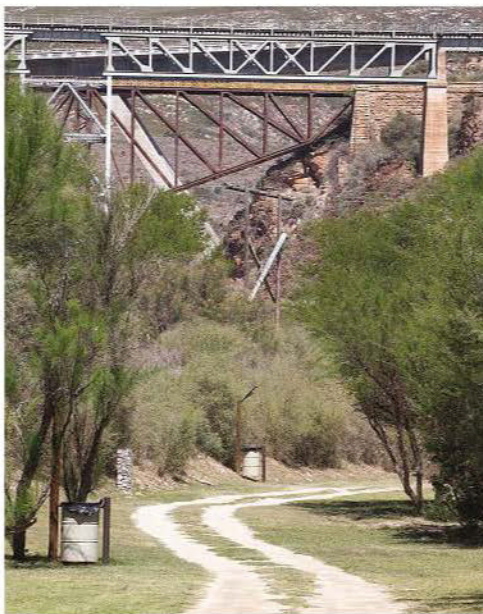
info@bongame.co.za bongame.co.za

Nearest town Albertinia, 16 km.

Road condition 880 m of good gravel with a steep section to the office, plus 700 m of farm road to the bush camp.

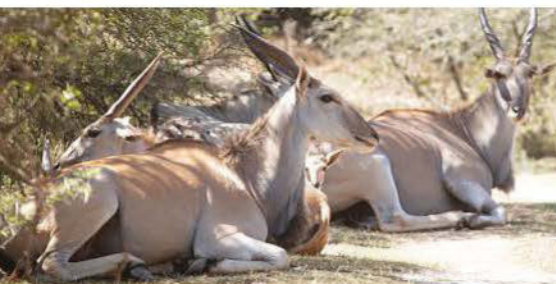
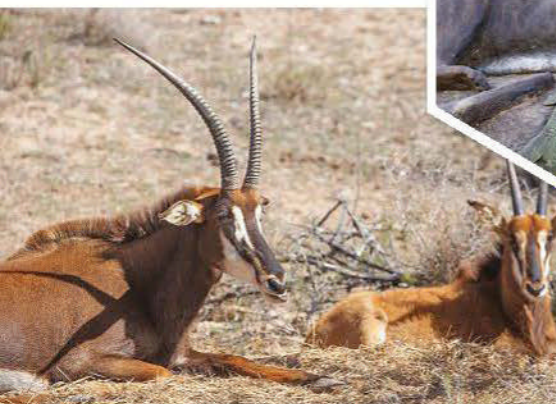
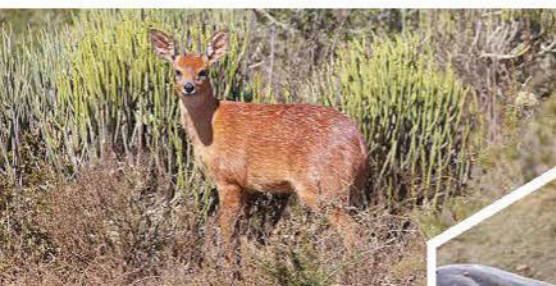
GPS S34.182653 E21.753646

Drive & Camp says The game drive costs R550 per person, but it's free if you stay for three nights.

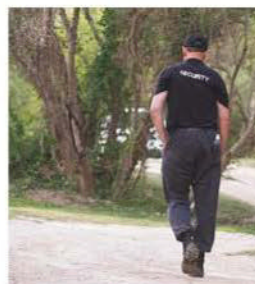


The drive concludes at the Gourits River, where the water flows beneath the bridges





SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. From standard to bush stands, a variety of antelope species, a neat restaurant and a great play area for the kids, it's all here.



by Ulrich Uys, the very man who'll be accompanying you on your game drive. You're not permitted to explore the 110 ha reserve on your own, but if you're keen to see more of the property and its wildlife, it really is well worth spending a little extra.

Bon Game is home to 11 antelope species, and chances are good that Ulrich will introduce you to almost all of them during the two-hour drive. The route passes the main buildings before climbing into the surrounding hills. Along the way, you cross the dry course of the Stink River; Ulrich explains that it only flows once every eight years. Its name, he says, comes from the smell released by all the fermented organic matter when the river finally runs.

You encounter eland, which Ulrich says can survive up to four days without water and are able to regulate their body temperature. Nyala, or "ixala" as they're known in isiZulu, may also make an appearance. More antelope follow, each with a new story or fact attached. The sable antelope belongs to the subspecies commonly known as horse antelope. A springbok lamb, barely two weeks old, hides close to its mother, while a small herd of black wildebeest looks entirely at home, as if transported straight from the Free State plains. After spotting 10 of the 11 antelope species, Ulrich stops near a karoo bush bean, offering a sweeping view back over Bon Game, with its buildings in the distance and the bridges rising beyond them.

The drive concludes at the Gourits River, where the water flows beneath the bridges. This time, an Egyptian goose makes an appearance. Ulrich smiles and says he calls them the seagulls of the Gourits.

You sleep beyond Bon Game's

perimeter fence in the bush camp, so it's understandable if you get a fright when a stranger materialises out of the dusk. Relax; it's the security guard, who introduces himself as Ivan. He parks his vehicle near the jungle gym, and you'll spot him regularly walking his rounds until you turn in for the night.

You're faintly aware of traffic crossing the bridge in the distance, but it's never intrusive and settles completely once night falls.

JOURNEY

A hand



full of dust

Renault's latest Duster has some big shoes to fill; the previous generation was the go-to car for the cost-conscious, recently retired, last-car tribe. How does the new one stack up, hanging with the tractors at the Vleisfees?

Words and photos **Peter Frost**





“

To test its mettle, we lined up
a compound route of fast tar,
not so fast tar, gravel and
don't-go-down-there

”



You won't easily forget your outing in the original Duster. Back then, we were all laughing at it, this interloper trying to steal a slice of the dirt-road pie from the likes of Subaru. It was ridiculously cheap – a packet of chips and a burger cheap – but surely it would break as soon as it looked at a Karoo landscape.

Well, no. At the top of Bainskloof Pass there used to be a hectic track down to the left (they've closed it now), leading to an incredible viewpoint, perfect for a picture of the Romanian disruptor. Without too much thought, we disappeared down, took the shot (epic), turned, and realised the incline was serious, serious stuff. Loose gravel. No signal either. Eish.

Anyway, Red Bull, big boy pants, AWD engaged, decent pace, scramble, and in seconds back on the R301, with a startled "what the..." tourist wondering where the hell we'd come from. It was the start of a beautiful friendship that took us across the country many times, every adventure trying that much harder to find Dusty's limits. We never did.

You'd often spot us in the most unforgiving environments, carrying on, tent atop, dogs along, kettles and deck chairs at the ready for a view and a pitstop.

Fast forward 12 years and the world – and Renault – has moved on. Diesel is a dirty word, most cars are made for influencers, simple is a swear word and nobody can afford a new car. Renault's Duster has grown up, ditched its spectacular 1.5-litre turbo-diesel engine in favour of a couple of small, turbocharged petrol units, sprouted digital infotainment and been in for cosmetic surgery.

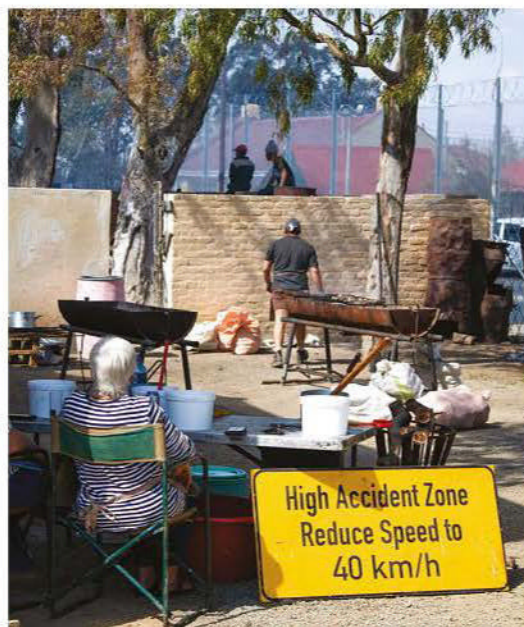
It now looks like it could win on a Paris catwalk, but can it still handle Calvinia?

To test its mettle, we lined up a compound route of fast tar, not so fast tar, gravel and don't-go-down-there. Up to Calvinia via Piketberg, right at Vanrhysdorp past Bagdad Cafe, up the pass, through Nieuwoudtville, then meat and old friends at the Hantam Vleisfees in Calvinia, before looping across to Williston, down to Fraserburg, Merweville, Laingsburg, the Koo Valley and home via Worcester.

“

It's magical to be in the Hantam Karoo.
The people. The space. The sound,
which carries

”



CARNIVAL FOR CARNIVORES. Everyone should experience the Calvinia Vleisfees at least once in their lifetime. This remarkable little town rolls out a warm welcome and practically bursts at the seams for the weekend as visitors arrive to mingle, meet the locals, explore the sights and indulge in every meat dish imaginable. And the journey to get there is one for the bucket list all on its own.



Just short of 1 000 km, enough to assess character and tease out the gremlins.

First impressions were good, which was a relief. The test unit was the 1.2 l mild hybrid turbocharged flagship, the Zen. It's the only way you can have the all-wheel-drive system (operated from a dial on the centre console), and it comes with a manual gearbox (the other two iterations are automatic and use the three-cylinder 1.2 turbo engine that sees service in the Clio and Captur).

It's a splendid tourer on both tar and dirt. It has to do with that long travel

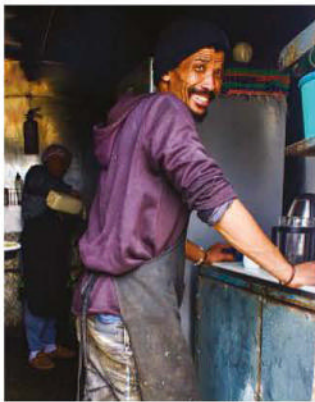
suspension, the 217 mm of ground clearance and the whisper-quiet 1.2 l three-cylinder petrol engine. It's also good to drive. Very good in fact, entertaining, sharp steering which works well with that sorted suspension. It has an easy, long-legged gate, like a giraffe at full tilt, and it's commendably responsive. Any qualms about being underpowered disappeared as the kilometres racked up.

Interestingly, the hybrid petrol, because of the relatively large turbocharger and the way the electric motor adds effort at certain times, has many of the same characteristics as the much-loved

turbodiesel. That means it's quiet at speed, has waves of power when you spin the turbo, which all add up to excellent long-distance manners.

Half expecting to miss the diesel, by the time Calvinia came into view, the thought had long been forgotten. This petrol Duster behaves almost the same as the diesel. Equally so the manual box, which is easy, light and sports a clean snick-snick action.

Vleisfees then, Calvinia's annual cardiac arrest carnival, farmers and locals coming from far and wide to eat meat,



drink beer and watch antique tractors parade down Hoop Street.

It doesn't change year to year, which is part of its charm, the same church bazaar, same crew selling pancakes and crocheted socks, same MC over at the showgrounds retelling the same jokes.

The hordes were arriving and it was a treat to watch them offload, reload, get lost, be amazed and, best of all, the look of delight when the first timers realise they're in the post box dorp.

We headed out of town to catch the arrival of the antique tractor peloton from Ceres, trundling patiently down

the Tankwa R355 in a haze of diesel paraffin and Old Spice, headed for glory and a Brandy and Coke. It was a special moment to see them as they gathered outside town, dusting off their best khakis, prepping for the final stretch into the dorp.

It's magical to be in the Hantam Karoo. The people. The space. The sound, which carries. And step off the dirt road, there's that pungent crushed wildflower perfume.

Truth be told though, the Vleisfees isn't a whole weekend kind of event, unless you're set on that heart attack and

a serial hangover. Good then to know about that other jewel, the Akkerendam Nature Reserve under the Hantam range, northwest through town.

Up there, time stands still, the western margin of the Great Escarpment, where the high Roggeveld Plateau falls toward the plains of the Hantam, is as eternal as it gets in South Africa.

The Duster took us through the flowers, all the way to the dam itself in the horseshoe, just as the weird grey light improved to dirty pink and bled away. There wasn't a soul. And not a ripple. Hantam really is therapy, medicine.



“

...someone laid a ribbon of tar over the landscape rather than engineer a route through it and then went home

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THE OPEN ROAD CALLS. There's a special charm to the vast, wide-open spaces of the Hantam Karoo. It's only when you pull over on a gravel road and breathe in the scent of wildflowers that you realise just how magical this place really is.



The Renault had to dig deep, scrabbling up hill and down dale, AWD working overtime. It was the tyres that ultimately did for us; the Cross Contact Continentals were simply not made for the really heavy stuff. Replace them with better dirt boots and there's no doubt the Duster would have climbed Everest – or at least the foothills of Toringkop.

It's a compromise of course – those Contis are a solid choice for dual work; quiet on the tar, grippy and tough on the dirt. It was something of a relief to leave the crowds of Vleisfees and welcome back the emptiness of the Karoo Highlands. Turn off from the R63 just before Williston, and a surprise – they've tarred the R353 to Fraserburg.

Sort of; someone laid a ribbon of tar over the landscape rather than engineer a route through it and then went home, meaning anything over 60 km/h leads to a light pant moment and a few terrifying rally stages over the suddenly undulating terrain. Much fun in the sprightly, very capable Duster.

Fraserburg itself was entirely closed and, in any case, the focus was on two things: Theekloof Pass off the escarpment, a long-standing favourite, and a most excellent lunch and coffee at Die Boekklub in Merweville, due to shut at 14:00. Lunch was almost missed, thanks to an encounter on the pass with a young Pygmy Thicktail and a neurotoxic Giant African centipede – a sight that delivered its usual dose of awe and admiration.

All three were a reminder that the Karoo, for all its seeming emptiness, is chock full of intriguing things: passes, wildlife, moments. And shales. You have to love the shales of Theekloof almost as much as the critters.

Merweville, hours from anyone and anything, has an air of Nieu-Bethesda about it: a dorp insiders call special and visitors can't help falling for. The aforementioned Boekklub, far smarter than a town this size should be able to support, is at its centre, a few minutes from the other treasure, Cindy's Cottage, once home to Cindy Spencer, originator of the Bryanston Organic Market, now one of the country's best-value stays.

After the helter-skelter 110 km 4WD section from Fraserburg to catch lunch, the rest was very welcome. Not that the Duster was hard work.

On the dirt it feels solid and supremely confident, less an influencer's plaything, more the Duster of old. And economy is decent to boot. On the fast section, 7.5 ℓ/100 km, not bad given the heavy right foot and headwind. On the tar, easily 6.5 ℓ/100km, not quite as good as the miserly diesel of old, but not bad either. You'll get 750 km on the 50 ℓ tank, more or less, which is an acceptable touring range.

Merweville's Gothic Revival church in the rear-view mirror, the clock was ticking for a late homecoming. The general rule of touring, they say, is to ignore the opportunities of the last day in favour of your bed, but if the routing takes you down the Engelsmans Road out of Merweville towards the N1, stop a while.

It's one of the most beautiful stretches of Karoo dirt around, snaking through

the Koup towards Laingsburg along the foothills of the Komsberg. Out there, only honey buzzards for company, the Duster's ability is very welcome. Ability and affability. There's a sense of friendliness and can-do, both longtime Duster traits.

After the rarity of the Koup road, there aren't words to describe the offence of the N1; metallic centipedes, crabbing taxis, tailbacks. Left after Touws Rivier, down the R318 to Montagu for the vistas of Burger's Pass, we kept going through Cogmanskloof.

As the traffic thickened, the Duster's manual gearbox made less and less sense. The automatic variants, linked to the 1.3-litre four-cylinder turbo-petrol engine, are hands down the better choice in town. It's a good little automated dual-clutch too; changes are smooth and authoritative, unlike so many CVT boxes today.

Safely home and time overnight to digest the experience. Renault has succeeded in continuing the Duster party, notably in the crucial areas of ability, economy and drivability.

Inside, the digital landscape is quickly and easily mastered and proved to be intuitive and ergonomically sound (unlike the previous model). Materials are hardy yet comfortable, and there were few rattles. It is as spacious as the old car and best of all, it doesn't try and nanny you to death because this Zen specification AWD variant loses some of the aids that could drive you to distraction.

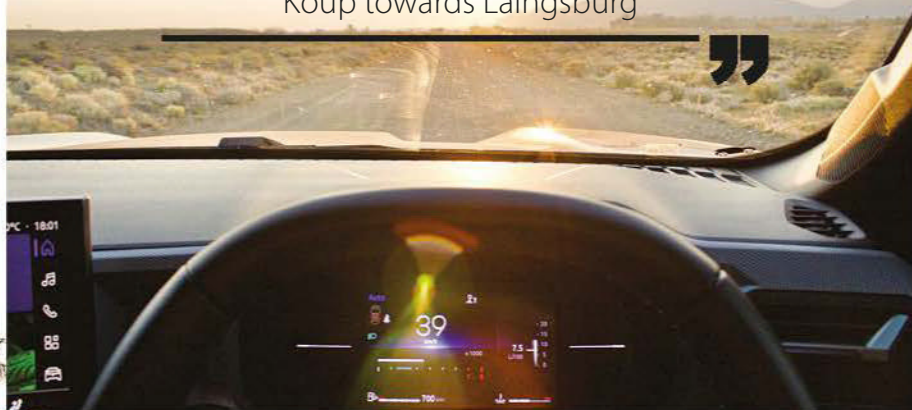
As a touring car that's personally important – it doesn't get hysterical when you open a door, doesn't lock every time you stop (you can turn off the auto lock, hurrah), doesn't refuse to move if you drive off without having fastened your seat belt. These all sound like minor irritations, but they add up on tour.

Most of all though, the new Duster is a car you can become firm friends with, just like its predecessor. You'll soon be planning your next trip.

“

It's one of the most beautiful stretches of Karoo dirt around, snaking through the Koup towards Laingsburg

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SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Duster 1.2T hybrid Zen 4WD
Engine	1 199 cc three-cylinder turbocharged mild hybrid
Power	96 kW @ 4 500 r.p.m.
Torque	230 Nm @ 2 000 r.p.m.
Transmission	Six-speed dual-clutch manual
Drivetrain	Part-time AWD
Ground clearance	217 mm
Approach/departure angles	31° and 36°
Tank	50 l
Fuel consumption	7.1l/100 km (tested)
Tyre size	215/60R18
Weight	1 495 kg
Load volume	444 litres
Dimensions	4 343 x 1 921 x 1 661
Towing capacity	719 kg
Safety rating	3-star (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	5 years/150 000km
Service plan	3 years/45 000km
PRICE	R 549 999

STILL A STANDOUT. The Renault Duster has exceeded expectations since the day it launched, and its latest version is no exception. It's affordable, easy on the eye and a remarkably capable holiday cruiser and gravel-travel companion. It's reassuring to see Renault hasn't meddled with a winning recipe.



Luxury hideouts

Sometimes you just need a break from it all, and the only sensible advice is to go camping somewhere that feels wonderfully remote. Here are five intimate campsites where every stand comes with its own kitchen and/or bathroom facilities.

Compiled by **Schalk Jonker**



Briefly | Letsatsi Lodge



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

Ablutions Private – each stand has its own kitchen and bathroom.

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

Contact 027 219 2828

info@letsatsilodge.co.za

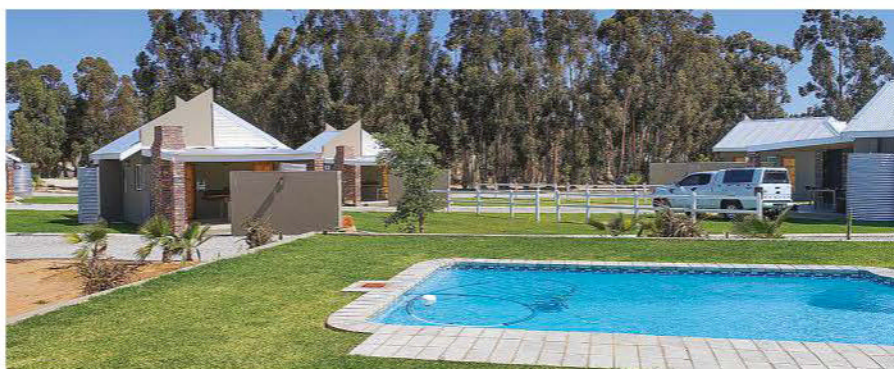
ncfamouslodges.com/letsatsi-lodge/

Nearest town Vanrhynsdorp.

Road condition Tarred to the gate, gravel inside the property.

GPS S31.607173 E18.727242

Drive & Camp says On check-in you'll also receive a voucher for a freshly baked bread roll delivered to your campsite that evening – plus complimentary rusks and coffee at the restaurant the following morning.



LETSATSI LODGE, VANRHYNSDORP

On arrival at Letsatsi Lodge, friendly staff meet you with the keys to your private kitchen and bathroom, along with directions to your campsite.

If you realise on the drive in that you've forgotten something essential for tonight's braai, chances are the small shop near reception will come to the rescue. It stocks meat, drinks and a tempting selection of treats. The lodge also has its own restaurant on site, the Red Ox Steakhouse.

All 12 campsites are laid out identically, each with a neat patch of green grass for your tent or caravan. Stand number 12 is slightly different, as its ablution block also includes a laundry.

The stands are arranged alongside six buildings set in rows of three, with low white post fencing separating you from your neighbours. There are no trees providing shade at the stands, but the building on your side houses not only your private kitchen and bathroom, but also a tiled, covered patio.

Just off the patio, in the open, you'll find a raised steel fire pit and a sturdy tree stump with a flattened side that doubles as a seat. There's also a built-in braai on the patio, along with a table and four chairs. On the counter next to the braai, you'll find your braai equipment neatly wrapped in plastic: a folding grid, a grid stand, firelighters and even matches.

Step into the kitchen and it becomes immediately clear why Letsatsi is often compared to some of the most luxurious campsites in the country. In addition to a fridge, there's a microwave, induction plate, electric kettle and slow cooker. You'll also find a pot, pan, braai tray and crockery and cutlery – even salt, pepper and spices. Multiple wall sockets are provided, including two- and three-pin sockets, as well as two USB ports.

The bathroom is spacious, with a walk-in shower, toilet, basin and ample storage. That curved structure you notice from outside isn't a corrugated water tank, it's your outdoor shower. Hot water is supplied by a gas geyser.

JACKALBERRY RIDGE, MARLOTH PARK

If you're planning a visit to Marloth Park, set your dates around availability at Jackalberry Ridge. There are only two campsites here, but once you've seen them, you wouldn't miss out for anything.

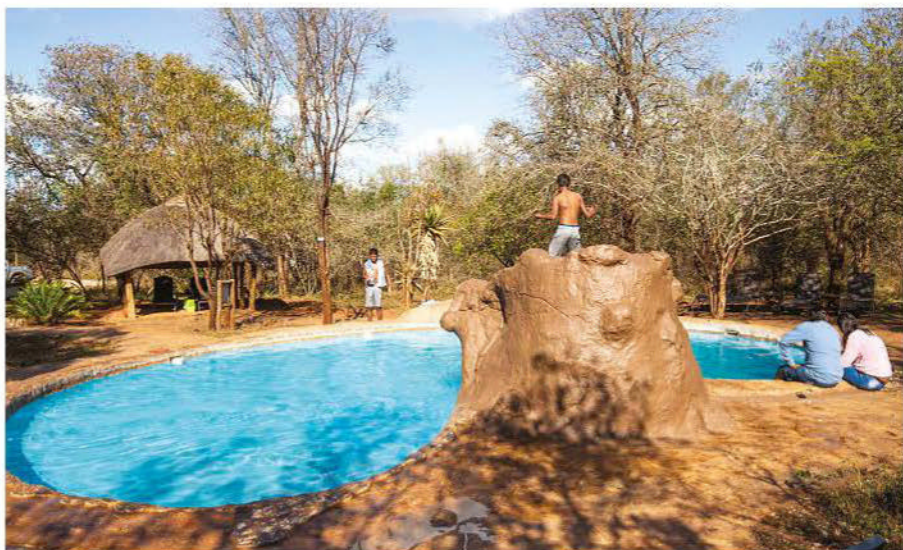
What you get is privacy, space, a highly practical braai setup, your own plunge pool and a private bathroom you'd normally expect only at a five-star campsite.

Our stand – the section where you pull in with your caravan – measures a generous 10 x 15 m, with welcome shade closer to the fence. As you look from the entrance track towards the campsite, there's a cleared area on the far left where you can park your tow vehicle. The plunge pool at the back left of the stand is fitted with a safety net.

The braai area sits centrally at the rear and is more braai station than fire pit. It's a circular concrete structure with a diameter of around 1,5 m. A ploughshare is set into one side of the concrete so that its edge sits flush with the surface. Mounted next to it is a steel arm with an adjustable round braai grid that swings over the fire. There's also a loose ploughshare with a handle on the blunt end; this acts as a lid you place over the embedded ploughshare to smother the coals overnight. A separate rectangular braai grid with its own legs can be positioned alongside the recessed ploughshare, allowing you to rake coals aside as needed.

The bathroom building is divided into three sections: a covered patio with open sides, the bathroom itself and an open-air shower at the far end. The patio is large enough to host a family gathering and is fitted with several three-pin power points and even a ceiling fan.

On the side where you enter the bathroom area, three doors sit next to one another. The two outer doors lead to small walk-in storage cupboards, while the centre door opens into the bathroom. The space is vast and finished in black slate tiles. A ceramic basin sits on a marble countertop, and the open shower next to it – partially enclosed by a glass panel – is large enough to wash the whole family at once. At the far end, a frosted glass door opens onto the outdoor shower. The surrounding walls are also clad in slate, with nothing but blue sky overhead.



Briefly | Jackalberry Ridge



Campsite Two spacious, private bush stands, each with a plunge pool, private bathroom, wash-up area and an innovative braai setup.

Ablutions Private – and among the best in the country.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00 (flexible during quiet periods).

Contact ☎ 072 057 3447 📧 dreamresorts.co.za 📧 jackalberry@dreamresorts.co.za

Nearest town Marloth Park.

Road condition Tarred to the gate, gravel inside the property.

GPS S25.348096 E31.783740

Drive & Camp says On arrival, resort staff issue you with a remote control for the boom gate. The grey button opens the gate; the red button alerts security and emergency services.

NYANI LODGE, DINOKENG

Nyani Lodge lies along the De Wagendrift Road (D1333) within the greater Dinokeng Game Reserve, but outside the section where the Big Five and other large game roam freely.

The campsite itself is situated within the lodge's game camp, but safety isn't a concern: only small game moves through the area, and the lions you hear calling at night belong to the Kevin Richardson Wildlife Sanctuary some distance away.

The camp is intimate, with just six stands. Camping here is decidedly upmarket, as each stand comes with its own building housing a private bathroom and kitchen.

Nyani's appeal lies in its tranquillity. There's no swimming pool, children's play area, camp shop or DSTV on site. It's simply you, the bush, the wildlife and five

other campers.

The stands are spaced well apart and there's no planted lawn; you camp on natural ground. The bush camp is rich in trees and offers ample shade during the summer months.

Stands 1 to 3 overlook the open veld, while stands 4 to 6 are positioned just behind them. The layout ensures the camp never feels cramped. Each stand measures roughly 20 x 20 paces, with a gravelled section of about 8 x 10 paces where you can comfortably lay down your groundsheet.

The bathroom isn't large, but it's perfectly adequate. The shower has no door or curtain, which means water does splash into the changing area. A gas geyser provides hot water.

There's a mirror above the basin, hooks for hanging clothes, and a ledge in the

shower for soap and shampoo. The toilet sits on the opposite side of the shower. Outside, a small LED light above the door runs on solar power and stays on throughout the night.

The kitchen is covered and noticeably larger than most campsite kitchens. Your camping table and four chairs fit comfortably inside, and there's plenty of room to move around. There's also a built-in braai.

Next to the dishwashing basin is a concrete work surface with storage space underneath for ammo boxes. One three-pin socket and three two-pin sockets are positioned above the counter, while the blue caravan plug is mounted on the outside wall next to your stand. A refuse bin is also provided.



Briefly | Nyani



Campsite Six luxury bush stands on natural ground with ample shade.

Ablutions Private bathroom and kitchen with built-in braai; laundry service available.

Arrival and departure 12:00 and 10:00.

Contact 071 842 3448

info@nyanilodge.co.za

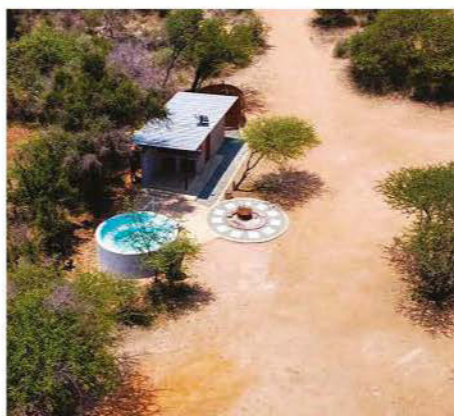
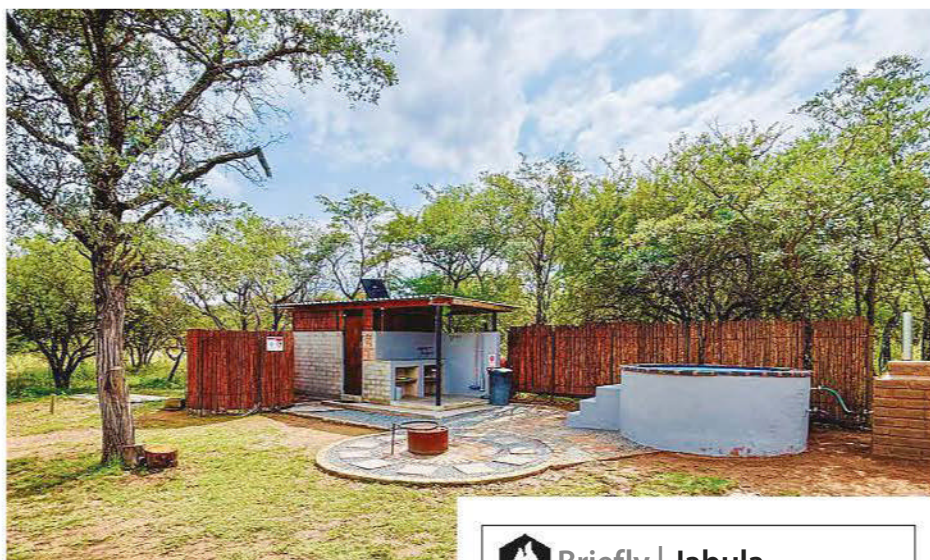
nyanilodge.co.za

Nearest town Hammanskraal, 30 km.

Road condition The last 11 km to the gate is gravel.

GPS S25.434555 E28.47893

Drive & Camp says Guests are welcome to cool off at the lodge, enjoy something from the bar or make use of the wifi. Meals at the restaurant must be booked in advance.



Briefly | Jabula



Campsite Five large, mostly natural-ground stands with space for more than one caravan. Each has a plunge pool and one or two trees. No mains electricity.

Ablutions Private bathroom per stand, plus outdoor shower with solar lighting, gas geyser and kitchen (with cellphone charging points).

Arrival and departure 10:00 and 12:00 (flexible during quiet periods).

Contact 078 948 6781

info@jabulabushcamp.co.za

jabulabushcamp.co.za

Nearest town Hammanskraal, 11 km.

Road condition Tarred all the way, with the last 400 m on good gravel.

GPS S25.358943 E28.353857

Drive & Camp says A motion-activated LED light mounted on the side of the kitchen roof throws plenty of light over the braai area. You can switch it off if it becomes a nuisance.

JABULA, DINOKENG

There's something undeniably thrilling about setting up camp in the bush with no fences in sight and the Big Five roaming freely – and that's exactly what you get at Jabula Bush Camp.

With just five stands and roughly 120 m of bushveld separating you from your neighbours, it genuinely feels as if you're camping on your own. Each stand has one or two trees, offering a welcome patch of shade during the summer months.

The camp's solar power system supplies electricity only to the lights in the kitchen and bathroom, so remember to bring your own solar panels and battery if you want to keep your fridge running.

As in any proper bush camp, the braai happens at ground level. The neatly built circular fire pit, fitted with an adjustable grid, is large enough to keep a small campfire going on one side while your chops sizzle on the other. Come bedtime, simply smother the coals using the cut-off drum provided.

Camping in the bush doesn't mean sacrificing comforts like hot water or a flush toilet. Each stand has its own private ablution block with a shower, basin, mirror and toilet, along with ample hooks and shelving for toiletries, towels and clothes. Two LED strip lights – one at the shower and one at the basin – provide illumination, while a gas geyser ensures hot water.

If you enjoy showering under the stars, the outdoor shower with its reed screen is the perfect option, especially during summer.

The kitchen is positioned alongside the bathroom block, with two sides open towards the campsite. It's spacious enough to accommodate two camp chairs, making it a comfortable refuge from the midday sun or a passing bushveld rain shower. Next to the stainless-steel sink is a concrete work surface with storage space underneath. Thoughtful extras include a brush for cleaning your braai grid, a broom and dustpan, a mop and even a small bucket of sand for smokers' cigarette butts.

An LED strip light illuminates the work area, and the nearby solar regulator includes two USB ports where you can charge your cellphone.

TUPELO HONEY EXPERIENCE, MAGOEBAKLOOF

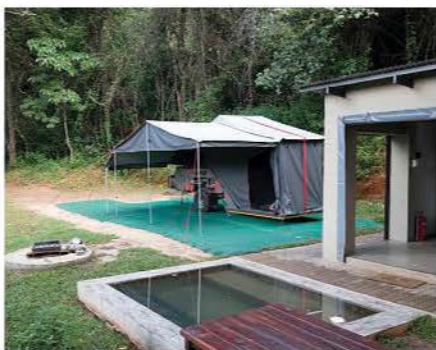
In our view, this is a serious contender for one of the finest campsites in the country, but you'll need a proper 4x4 to reach Tupelo Honey Experience's Forest Camp.

This is an exclusive hideaway that few other camps can rival. The camping area is covered with a woven ground mat, which means you simply park your caravan along one side and pitch your awning over the rest.

The adjacent kitchen and bathroom facilities deserve special mention. The kitchen has a wide entrance from the campsite side as well as another at the front of the building (both can be zipped closed with canvas panels if you want to keep bad weather out). A double power point is conveniently positioned near the closest door, should you wish to plug in your caravan. A row of cupboards lines the left-hand wall, offering generous workspace, while the sink is positioned opposite. In the centre of the room is an indoor braai, complete with a complimentary bag of firewood, a rare and welcome touch at any campsite.

Also in the middle of the room is a long table with two bench seats, comfortably accommodating up to six people. Opposite the kitchen's front door, a deck opens out to a private table-and-bench set, with a plunge pool alongside it. The outdoor braai area consists of a circular concrete base fitted with a loose grid on legs.

The toilet is in its own separate room around the corner, while at the far end, still under cover, is an open shower with no curtain or glass door.



Briefly | Tupelo Honey Experience



Campsite Three private forest camps, accessible only by 4x4 and off-road caravan.

Ablutions Luxurious and private, set in the open. Each camp has its own plunge pool, kitchen and seating area.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 082 335 6803

bookings@theherbcottage.co.za

tupelohoneyexperience.co.za

Nearest town Haenertsburg, 18 km.

Road condition The final 2,5 km is a steep mountain gravel road; the last 500 m is strictly for 4x4 vehicles.

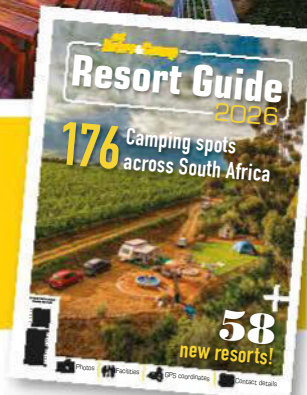
GPS S23.878988 E30.007519

Drive & Camp says If you really want to soak in nature, follow the paved path a few metres into the forest to reach a secluded bathtub.

Resort Guide 2026

All five of these exceptional campsites feature in *Drive & Camp's Resort Guide 2026*, currently on sale. In this 15th edition of the popular annual, we shine the spotlight on lesser-known camping destinations, with the 176 featured resorts evenly spread across South Africa's nine provinces.

As with every *Resort Guide* to date, this year's edition introduces a host of new campsites worth discovering. Each resort included has been carefully reviewed, and we provide comprehensive, up-to-date information to help you plan your next adventure with confidence.





ULTIMATE *Routes*

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Migration magic

You don't need to spend your life savings on the Great East Africa Migration. As these impressions and images from fellow travelers show, there are three mightily impressive migrations not too far away.

Photo Chanté Degrez

What brings on these migrations?

Migrations boost genetic success, open access to rich food sources and support seed dispersal and biomass transfer. Protecting these movements is vital to the circle of life. Across Southern Africa, these secretive animal movements unfold each year, creating unforgettable photographic moments and a sense of place for those observing. Witnessing these instinct-driven events is truly awe-inspiring – a must for any self-drive bucket list.

What significant migrations are there to see in southern Africa?

Wildebeest and Zebra migrations unfold in places like Zambia's Liuwa Plains, Botswana's Nxai Pan and Makgadikgadi National Parks. While the small pockets of woodlands in Kasanka National Park reveal a different phenomenon – a migration of fruit bats.

Tell us more about the bats?

The Fruit Bat migration in Kasanka National Park is the world's largest mammal migration. By late October to December the destination

PREDATORS AND BIRDLIFE

Migratory movements inevitably bring a peak in the number of predators to a region.

Which means an increase in your chances of predator and scavenger sightings in the green season.

This is yet another reason to include the hotter summer months in your cross-border travel planning.



Photo Gail Williams Kasanka

Photo Cindy Purchase





Photo Francois Erasmus

SAFETY TIP

Travel in a convoy of at least two vehicles in the green season. The rainy months might bring a delightful green landscape, but also some boggy spots and it's advisable to have help at hand.



Photo Chani Degrez



Photo Geir Rosseth

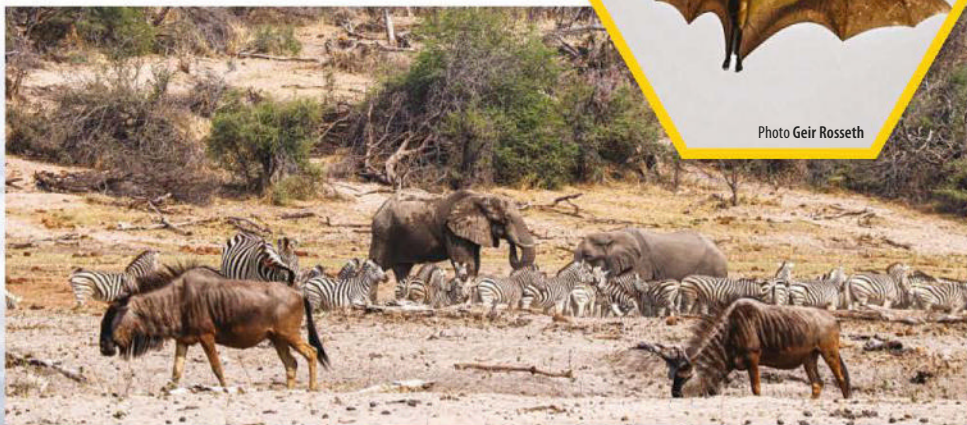


Photo Chani Degrez

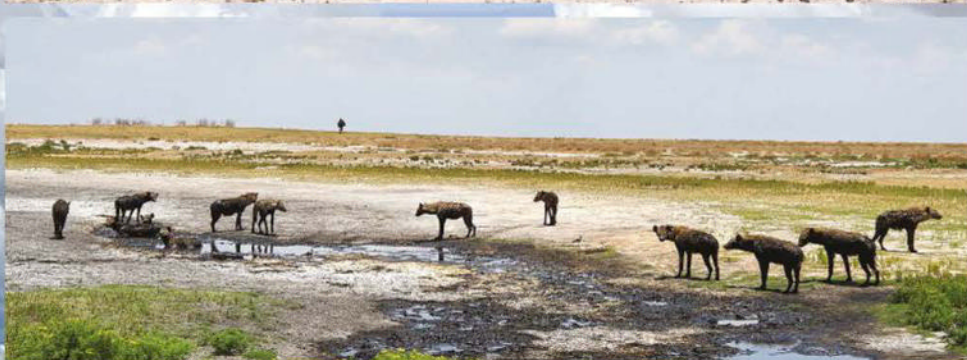


Photo Francois Erasmus

comes with its wet season challenges, but the rewards are great. "The opportunity is what you make of it," says Nick Mason-Gordon, who recently visited. Over 10 million bats roost, feed and swirl around a small patch of swamp forest at dawn and dusk. "In the evenings they all leave at once and the spectacle is more dramatic," says Nick. Fellow traveler Chani Degrez adds that a single bat can fly more than 50 km per night, spreading thousands of seeds, which help regenerate forests across central Africa.

When is a good time to see zebra migrate in Botswana?

For travelers in search of nearby, spectacular display of stripes, plan to visit Botswana's Makgadikgadi and Nxai Pan National Parks. While the Boteti River attracts large numbers of Zebra throughout the year; Nxai Pan just north of it claims its fame during the hotter summer months from December to March, where over 20 000 zebras migrate from the Chobe area seeking fresh, nutritious grass. Makgadikgadi National Park receives an additional influx of zebras in the rainy season, as herds move down from Moremi Game Reserve.

What about wildebeest?

Liuwa Plains National Park was one of Francois' favourite destinations on his recce trip of Zambia in 2024. Not only for its vivid landscapes and feeling of isolation, but also for the incredible sense of ancient partnership between community and conservation. Chani, who travel in November last year, adds that plains of dry bush grass and green meadows peppered with pink, purple or yellow wildflowers showcased a contrast between dark grey punk-rocking wildebeest stallions and their nude colored newborns. Drawn by seasonal rains, the blue wildebeest herds arrive around November, followed closely by predators and flocks of migratory birds.

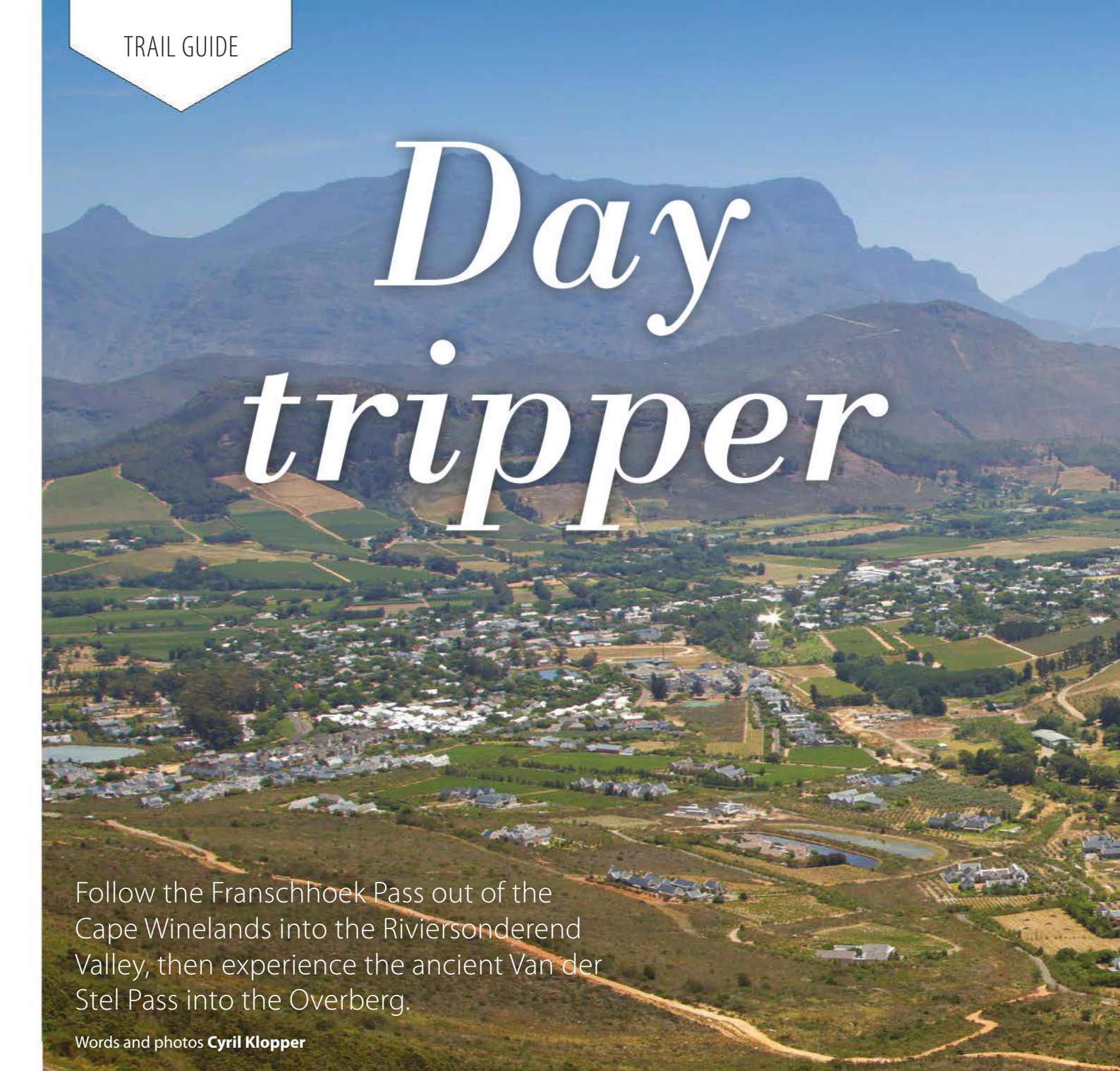
CONTACT

071 471 4900

ultimateroutes.co.za

hello@ultimateroutes.co.za





Day tripper

Follow the Franschhoek Pass out of the Cape Winelands into the Riviersonderend Valley, then experience the ancient Van der Stel Pass into the Overberg.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**r

Franschhoek, the picturesque Winelands town named after the 176 French Huguenots who settled here in 1688, is the starting point for this route. Your first stop should be the Huguenot Monument at the top of Huguenot Street. It's well worth a visit: entrance costs R100 per adult (R50 for children) and grants access to the monument, museum and a perfumery.

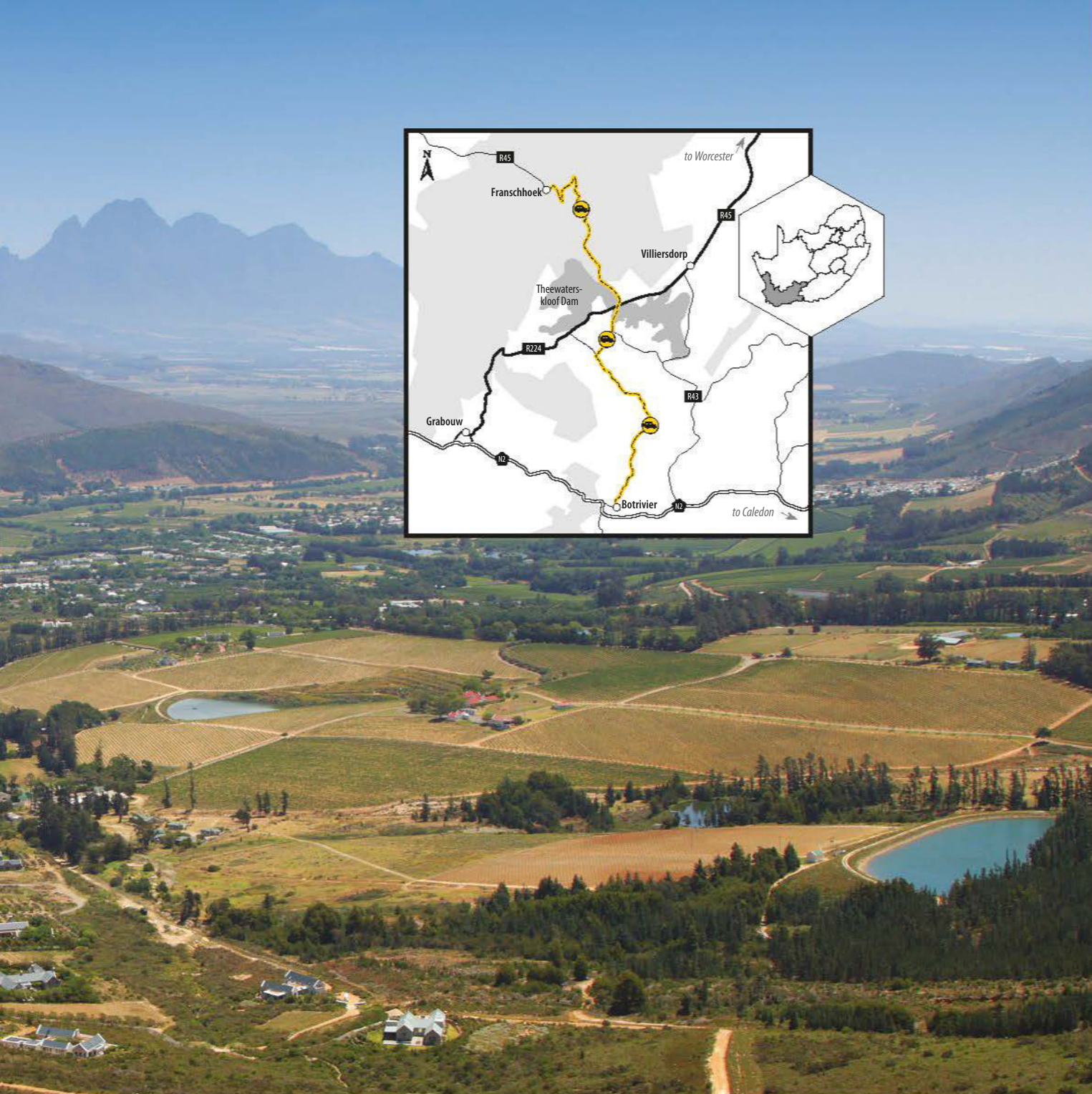
Leave the village via Lambrechts Road (the regional R45) and begin the

climb into the Hottentots Holland Mountains. Franschhoek Pass was built between 1823 and 1825 by 150 soldiers of the Royal African Corps under the command of Major William Cuthbert Holloway. It was originally a gravel road and only tarred in 1963.

Today, the road surface is in excellent condition following extensive upgrades conducted between 2023 and 2025. Be sure to stop at one of the many viewpoints along the way; the best view

back over the Franschhoek Valley can be found at GPS coordinates S33.90517 E19.15638.

From here, the route crests the pass and leaves the Winelands behind. Pull over at a parking area alongside the Du Toits River at S33.93788 E19.16140. The bridge here is South Africa's very first stone arch bridge, known as the Jan Joubertsgat Bridge. It's also the oldest bridge in the country still in regular use, and was declared a national monument in 1979.



At the foot of Franschhoek Pass

lies the Theewaterskloof Dam in the Rivieronderend Valley. This major reservoir is a critical water source for Cape Town and made headline news in 2017 when its level dropped to just 12% (the last 10% is unusable, consisting mainly of silt and mud). The so-called Day Zero had Capetonians on edge, with strict restrictions limiting residents to just 50 ℓ of water per person per day, while washing cars, watering lawns and filling swimming

pools or fish ponds were prohibited. A good spot to pull over and take in the dam – which, thankfully, holds far more water these days – is at GPS coordinates S34.00711 E19.19379.

Lambrechts Road ends at the R321, where you turn right to cross a long bridge over the Theewaterskloof Dam. Immediately after the dam, turn left onto the R43 towards Caledon. This stretch has recently been tarred and is in excellent condition. About 2,5 km after the turn-

off, you'll see a signpost for Van der Stel Pass and Botrivier. Turn right here onto a gravel road.

The mountain pass rises to just 148 m above sea level, but the views are superb. This route is ancient and was originally trod out by elephants. The Khoisan later used it as a stock route, and sometime in the 18th century, an unknown farmer improved it by digging a more navigable track. The Van der Stel Pass as we know it today was built in 1963 and named after

TRAIL GUIDE

Simon van der Stel, the first governor of the Cape Colony.

There are several worthwhile stopovers along Van der Stel Pass, starting with the wine farm Eerste Hoop, where Belgian-born Lode Lemahieu and his team produce excellent wines. Prices range from R120 for a 2024 rosé to export wines carrying euro price tags – such as €22 for a pinot noir (around R436).

Then there's Underhill Guest Farm, where you can spend the night in a Hobbit-style house straight out of *The Lord of the Rings* films (R1 600 p.n.), or Southern Yurts, which offers overnight stays in traditional Mongolian tents (R1 800 p.n.).

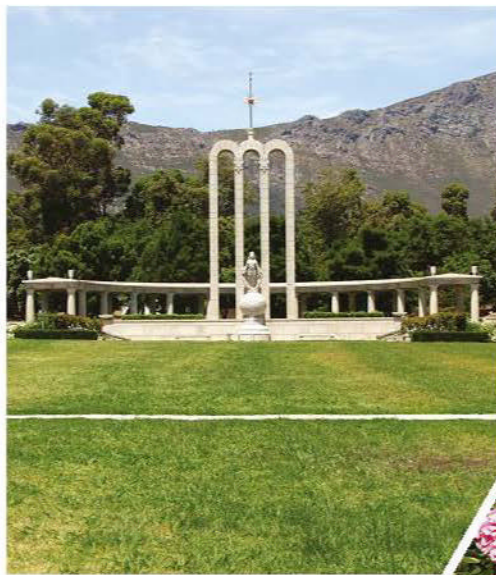
As you follow the Bot River, keep an eye out for wildlife in the Eagle Rock and Cornellskop reserves. The latter even boasts lions, cheetahs and zebras. Guides at Cornellskop allow visitors to touch the zebras and cheetahs, but it's probably best to admire the lions from the outside of their enclosure. Prices are available on request only and depend on the size of your tour group and whether or not you'll be staying overnight in the chalets.

A worthwhile stop is the farm Waterleliefontein, where owners Jo and Tessa Naser farm with bees and olives. A bottle of raw honey (500 g) sells for R95, while 250 ml of single-varietal olive oil costs R125. The Nesers planted 2 ha of vineyards in 2017, harvested their first crop in 2020, and a bottle of Waterleliefontein 2021 syrah grenache noir sells for R260.

The route now draws to a close as you cross the Houhoek River and enter the small Overberg town of Botrivier. If it's lunchtime, pull in at The Shuntin' Shed restaurant, located on the platform of the old railway station.

The restaurant is well known for its excellent pizzas, with the wood-fired oven kept going throughout the day. All the pizzas are named after famous train services, and we can recommend the Glacier Express and the Shosholoza. The former comes topped with bacon, blue cheese, avocado and garlic (baked in, not served separately), while the latter features mushrooms, garlic, olives, artichokes and feta. Both are priced at R140.

Inside the restaurant, you'll find a collection of photographs of trains



IN PASSING. Our route starts at the Huguenot Monument in Franschhoek (left) and takes us along the Van der Stel Pass (middle) to the hamlet of Botrivier, where we tuck into delicious pizzas at The Shuntin' Shed (bottom).



that have stopped in Botrivier since 1912. Although regular services no longer run to the town, the Ceres Rail Company is still active here, offering steam-train trips from Cape Town. A return ticket costs R850 and includes a hearty lunch in Botrivier. Visit ceresrail.co.za if you're interested.

And so, an outing comes to an end. Those with the surnames Du Toit or Joubert now know where their family trees took root; motorcyclists will have revelled in the bends of Franschhoek Pass; and if gravel roads tug at your heartstrings, then Van der Stel Pass was surely a highlight.





“

...if gravel roads tug at your heartstrings,
then Van der Stel Pass was surely
a highlight

”



Need to know



Maximum number of vehicles? It's a public road with no restrictions on the number of vehicles.

Do I get a map? No, but all turn-offs are clearly signposted.

Will my vehicle get scratched? No, the road is wide throughout.

Should I bring a compressor? No. The route consists of excellent tar and a good gravel road.

Can I braai along the way? Only at guest farms, if you're planning to stay overnight along the route.

Is there cellphone signal? Mostly, yes. Reception in the Botrivier Valley is poor and the locals rely on wifi for WhatsApp messages.

Best time of year? Year-round, but aim for July, when the Bastille Festival is celebrated in Franschhoek. Visit franschhoekbastille.co.za for exact dates.

Can I take my family? Absolutely – there are leopards and pizza after all!

Day trip or weekend? A day trip.

How long does it take? The 55 km route takes at least an hour if you don't stop, but it's far better to set aside a full day for the drive.

Are there ablutions? Yes, in all the towns and at guest farms along the way.

Directions The route starts in Franschhoek, about 70 km from Cape Town, and ends in Botrivier next to the N2 highway.

Depositing into our memory bank



For their latest camping adventure, **Johan and Elmare van Staden** of Parow squeezed four of South Africa's most iconic destinations into a single circular route.



AUGRABIES AND ADDO. The Van Stadens don't shy away from the open road, and when they plan a trip, the distance rarely factors into the decision. This time, their camping adventure included stops at Augrabies Falls (left) and Addo Elephant National Park (above).



Readers of this magazine, and of our predecessor titles, will know we've shared many of the Van Stadens' camping escapades over the years, all enjoyed in their faithful 1981 Sprite Sport.

Last year was no different. This time, they tackled a circular journey from Cape Town through the Kgalagadi, on to Punda Maria, and back again via the Drakensberg and Addo. As has often happened before, Elmare (better known as Bossie) was joined by her sister Annette Muller and Annette's husband, David (or Orrie, as everyone calls him). Johan takes up the story.

“We hitched the Sprite to our Isuzu KB300 on Sunday, 21 May, and drove as far as Worcester, where we left the bakkie behind; Orrie and Annette's Hilux would be doing the towing for the rest of the journey. Once everything was organised and packed, we were ready for an early start the next morning.

On a clear winter's morning we set off, heading over Wolseley and Porterville to join the N7, stopping at Die Kleine Schuur outside Clanwilliam to stock up on oranges and naartjies for the road. At Klawer, we filled the tank, planning to push straight through to Calvinia.

Roadworks on the Vanrhyns Pass slowed us down as we crawled behind an old Mercedes truck hauling a heavy trailer in first gear. It felt like ages before we could finally get past, but even so, we reached Calvinia with time to spare.

We settled in at the Kleinplasie Caravan Park and took a stroll through town, including a visit to the local museum. Back at camp, we enjoyed our first braai of the holiday. We were the only campers there and grateful for the spotless, comfortable ablutions.

There's nothing quite like the crisp Karoo air first thing in the morning. After savouring our coffee, we packed up at an easy pace and set off via Brandvlei and Kenhardt to Augrabies Falls National Park. Damage from the recent floods was still visible, but the sheer scale of the waterfall remains awe-inspiring. We also squeezed in a drive to some of the park's other viewpoints. As we turned back from one of them, the sun dipped below the horizon and a large, round moon rose over the cliffs – a magical sight. Returning to the neat campsite, we lit another evening fire.

Tuesday's drive to Oranjerus was a short one. We stopped first at the Pienk Padstal in Kakamas for a hearty breakfast and to buy dates from Pella. We also visited one of the big waterwheels to look at the bucket pumps that lift water from the canal.

At Oranjerus, we once again found a lovely grassy stand close to the well-kept ablutions. With enough daylight left, we drove a scenic loop through Upington and Kanoneiland, and popped into the Kanonik farm stall – Ouma Bossie wanted to pick up a few gifts for those back home. Then it was back to camp for a relaxed evening and supper.



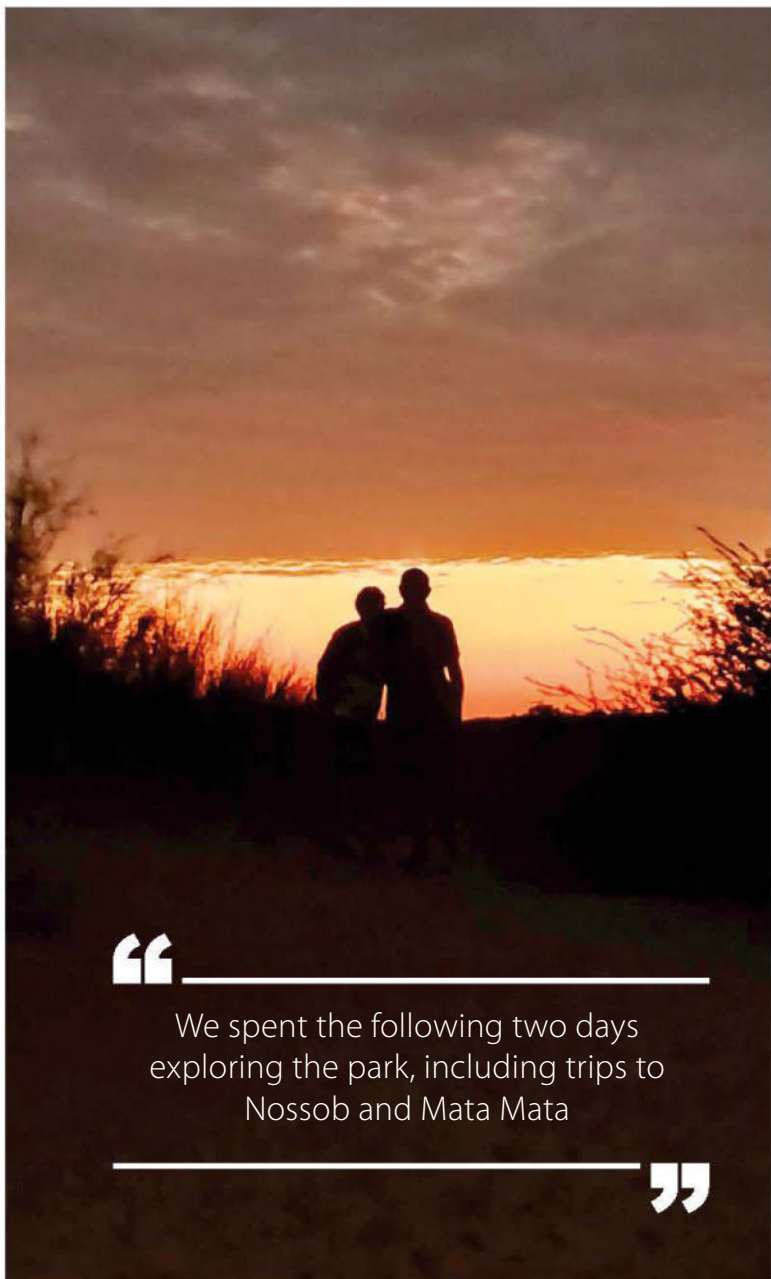
The next morning, we stocked up in Upington before heading through Askham towards Kgalagadi Lodge. The lodge is barely 5 km from the Twee Rivieren gate, and each campsite comes with its own private ablutions, wash-up area, braai and even covered parking.

Fortunately, someone had warned us ahead of time that the water is undrinkably bad, so we arrived with our own supply.

It was still early, and because we'd arranged our day permits with SANParks in advance, we had more than enough time to enter the park for our first drive. As always, the Kgalagadi didn't disappoint; the gemsbok were out in full force.

We spent the following two days exploring the park,





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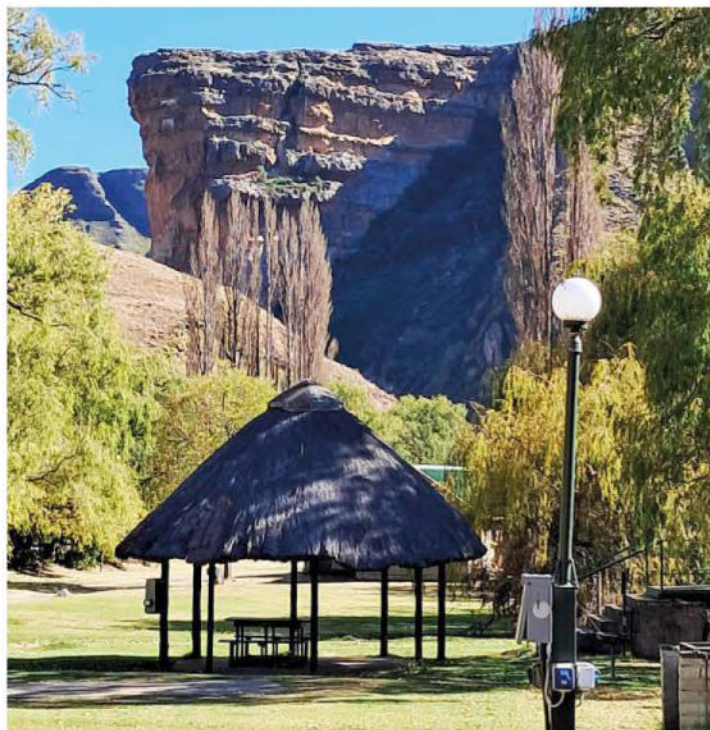
”

including trips to Nossob and Mata Mata. The larger animals were impressive, but what struck me most was the abundance of secretary birds. We saw several pairs lazing around waterholes in the afternoons, lying like overfed pets with their legs tucked up. There were also plenty of ostriches with chicks in tow.

On Saturday, we said goodbye to the Kgalagadi. Bossie and Annette were buzzing with excitement – their brother, Carel van der

Merwe, and his wife, Marie, had sent word that they'd overnighted in Askham, where we would meet them. They'd come down from Windhoek with their Hilux and fully equipped Metalian trailer to join us for the next two weeks.

We made a quick stop at the shops in Upington and grabbed something to eat before heading to our next campsite at Red Sands near Kuruman. We had a lovely evening around the potjie, bubbling away with Namibian



GROOT MARICO'S WAY. After leaving the Kgalagadi, the route pointed towards the Kruger National Park and a stay at Punda Maria, but first they spent two nights at Kareespruit campsite near Zeerust (below). Braai supplies came from the local butchery, and they made the most of the opportunity to explore Groot Marico and Riekkertsdam.



oxtail, and even stayed an extra day while Carel wandered around with his camera, hoping to spot some new birds.

The following day, we travelled the stretch of the N14 to Vryburg for the first time and were surprised by the extensive wetlands in the area. From there, we continued via Mahikeng to Zeerust, where we spent two nights at the charming Kareespruit campsite. There's a butchery on site, so we stocked up on wors and burger

patties, and also took a drive out to Groot Marico and Riekkertsdam.

Serious farming happens in this part of the country – we even saw tobacco and green beans under centre pivots. We stopped to buy butternuts from a roadside stall, but they cost almost twice as much as in town.

After Zeerust, we then spent one night at Klein-Kariba. We've always enjoyed camping there, and in Bela-Bela, we topped up supplies once again.

READER STORY

Louis Trichardt was our destination the following day. We spent two nights at Zvakana, a lovely, secluded campsite tucked among bushveld trees. Each stand comes with a sink, gas stove, braai, shade cover and private ablutions.

Carel had arranged ahead of time to go birding with a local guide, so while he and Marie were out on their excursion the next day, the rest of us took the R523 and R522 over Vivo for a scenic loop around the Soutpansberg. The area is blanketed with vast tomato fields and beautiful orchards of avocados, mangos, bananas and nuts. To me, it truly is one of the most beautiful parts of the country, thanks to its incredible diversity.

On Sunday, 5 May, we stocked up on fresh fruit at a roadside market in Thohoyandou, before continuing to Punda Maria. Once again, we arrived nice and early, set up camp and headed out for our first game drive of the day, eager to make the most of our time in the Kruger.

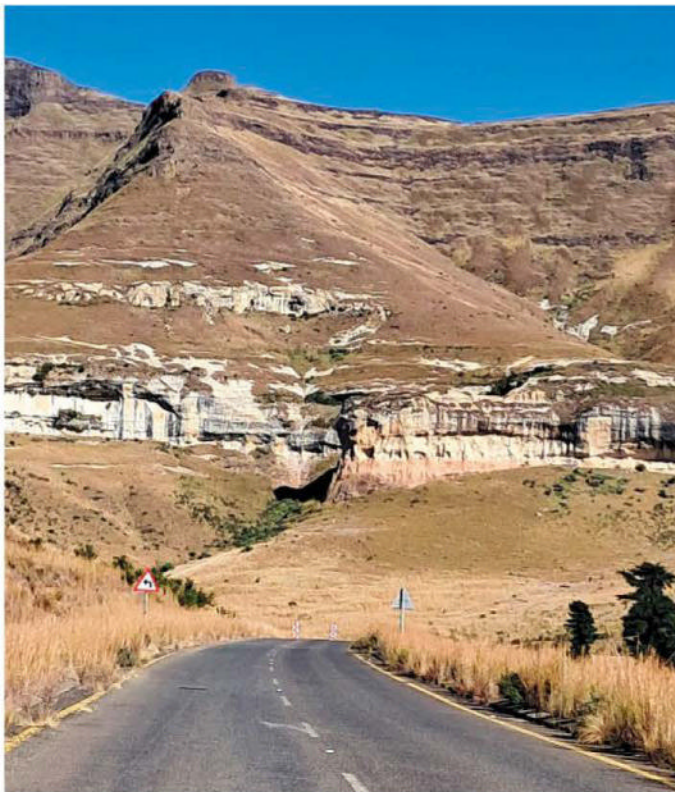
The next morning, we ventured out to the breathtaking scenery around Crook's Corner and then took a slow, leisurely drive to the picnic site along the Luvuvhu River, where we prepared a hearty meal on the gas braai. Back at camp, we enjoyed a quiet afternoon before making supper and watching elephants and other animals gather at the waterhole.

Shingwedzi is one of our favourite camps in the Kruger. The landscape is beautiful and, as always, the wildlife didn't disappoint. There were animals everywhere, including plenty of youngsters of all kinds. What surprised us most, though, was the number of elephants we encountered.



ROADSIDE COFFEE. There's something special about travelling without the pressure of time. And few things say you're in no rush quite like pulling over on the side of the road to stop and enjoy a cup of coffee.





THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY. Breakfast, whether enjoyed at Afsaal in the Kruger National Park (above) or at your campsite at Kareespruit (left), is serious business when you're covering big distances and camping at so many different stops.



Shingwedzi is one of our favourite camps in the Kruger. The landscape is beautiful and, as always, the wildlife didn't disappoint

Another unexpected delight was finding another 1981 Sprite Sport in the camp. Its owner, from Middelburg, was just as fond of his caravan as we are of ours. He told us he's the original owner, and remarkably, he still tows his Sprite on its original wheel bearings.

We were also pleasantly surprised to secure a stand for the coming weekend, although Satara, unfortunately, was fully booked. On Sunday, we moved on to Skukuza, but not before being treated to the sight of a hornbill snacking on a chameleon near the Satara entrance.

We spent three nights at Skukuza, out in the bush from morning to evening each day. We visited Lower Sabie, enjoyed picnic stops, and sometimes treated ourselves at one of the roadside shops. Not even untimely rain dampened our spirits. Our perseverance paid off when we spotted a tiny honey badger seeking shelter under a tourist's car on the tar road. Later, we saw what we thought was a jackal crossing in the distance – only to discover a young hyena with its mother and a sibling relaxing quietly beside the road.

On 16 May, we moved from Skukuza to Berg-en-Dal, but it was also time for Carel and Marie to start their journey home. We stopped for a delicious roosterkoek breakfast at Afsaal, said our goodbyes, and they set off via Klerksdorp on their way back to Namibia.

We stayed just one night at Berg-en-Dal, but made sure to squeeze in one more drive, rewarded with sightings of both a leopard and a rhino.

Outside of SANParks, we didn't make many fixed bookings. We considered staying at Elangeni near

Waterval Onder, but since it was still fairly early in the day, we decided to push on to Badplaas instead.

It was our first time driving the road from Machadodorp over the Skurweberg Pass, and it demanded our full attention. The contours and surface of the road are actually decent, without severe potholes, but it's clear that maintenance has long since stopped; the road seems to have been abandoned to its fate.

Alien wattles grow right up to the edge of the tar, the surface has subsided badly in places, and the warning

signs and road markers are completely inadequate. At one point, I even stopped, got out and checked whether there was a safer angle to tackle a deep dip without risking the caravan bottoming out. The shoulder was littered with pieces of car bumpers and other parts – clear evidence that many drivers had misjudged the depth. It's a real pity to see a route this scenic in such poor shape.

Forever Badplaas is always a pleasant overnight stop for us, and the next morning, we continued via Ermelo and then along the N11, past Bergville, to our destination: Drakensville. It was wonderful

to be back in the lush, green landscapes of KwaZulu-Natal and the Drakensberg, and we spent three nights there.

Addo was next on our route. Our original plan was to break the long distance with an overnight stop near the Gariep Dam, but we eventually chose to divide it into three shorter stretches. Our first night was at Oberammerau in Senekal, a comfortable stopover that also gave us a chance to drive through the town. One can see that it was once beautiful, but it's sadly very run-down these days.

From there, we headed for Middelburg in the Eastern Cape, where we set up the

Sprite on the immaculate lawns of Welvanpas Guest Farm. Even without prior notice, Rita Mocke welcomed us. The ablutions were spotless, the water piping hot and, to top it off, we could sit down that evening to the best mutton pie I've had in ages.

From Welvanpas, we travelled through Cradock and later stopped at the Daggaboer Padstal for something to eat. Not long after, we crossed the beautiful Olifantskop Pass for the first time, and from there the road to Addo via Paterson was in good condition.

We'd camped at Addo before with our tent, but this time it was a treat to spend

two nights in our faithful old Sprite. The lions had brought down a kudu, and the next day, we watched several hyenas splashing in a dam and feasting on what remained. They were even teaching a youngster how to guard his share.

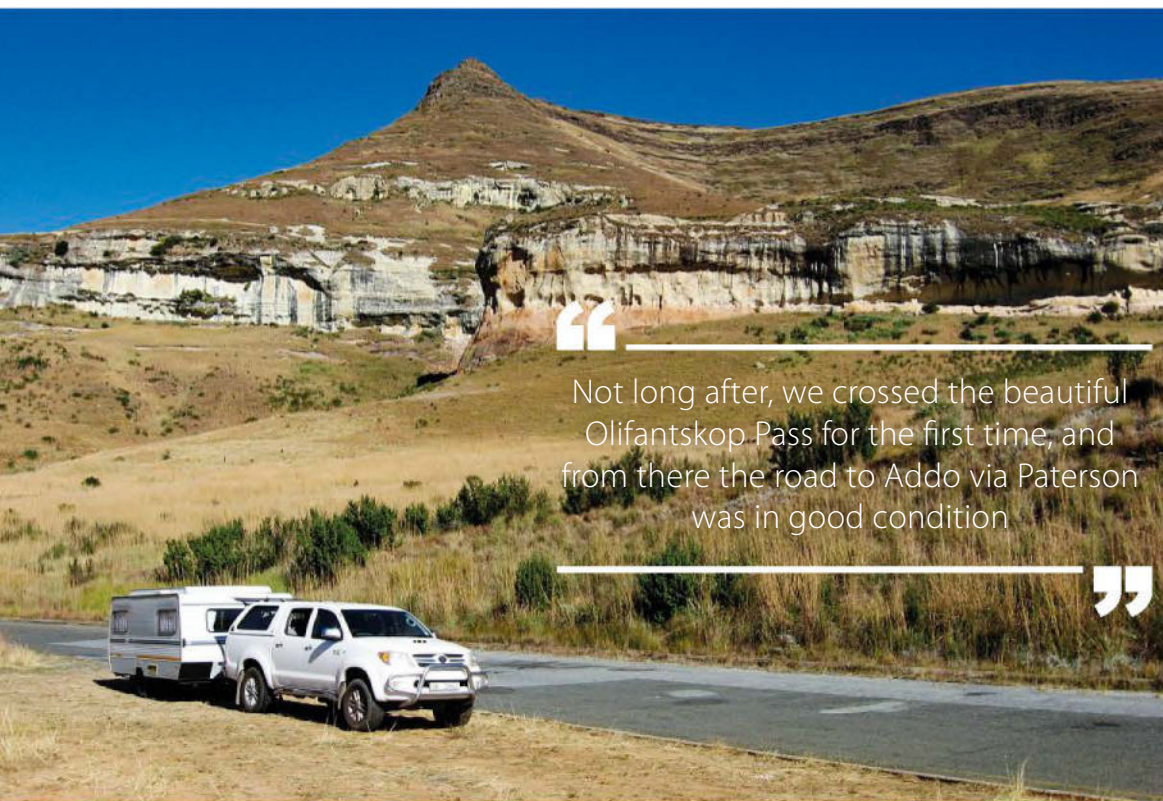
Leaving Addo, we again opted for the better road via Paterson. Just a short distance outside the park, we were spoiled with the sight of two lions strolling along a game farm's fence. Our final overnight stop was Die Punt in Mossel Bay; our first visit, and we were thoroughly impressed with both the accommodation and facilities.

On the last stretch home, we stopped at Buffeljags for their famous roosterkoek. In Worcester, we transferred our luggage, hitched the Sprite back onto the Isuzu, and bid the Mullers farewell. That evening, both we and the Sprite slept safely at home.

Once again, it was a privilege to complete this journey – 8 499 km in total (5 622 km with the Sport on tow). And again, the Hilux D4D made us proud with an average fuel use of 9,83 l/100 km. ”



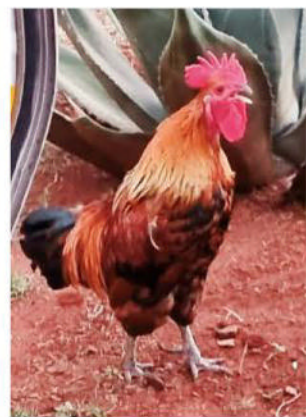
AT HOME IN NATURE. South Africa's incredible variety of landscapes and outdoor experiences truly comes to life when a single journey takes you to places as diverse as Punda Maria in the Kruger National Park (top left) and Red Sands campsite near Kuruman (above).



“

Not long after, we crossed the beautiful Olifantskop Pass for the first time, and from there the road to Addo via Paterson was in good condition

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A DIGNIFIED COMBINATION. The Toyota Hilux and Sprite Sport covered more than 5 000 km together, carrying the Van Stadens of Parow and their family to some of the most beautiful corners of the country – and creating a collection of special moments along the way.



Johan wins a Jackery Evo Charge LED power bank flashlight. This versatile little device features adjustable light modes, including emergency lighting of up to 320 lumens. It's water-resistant, equipped with built-in magnets and powered by a 7 800 mAh battery that can also charge your smartphone. sustainable.co.za

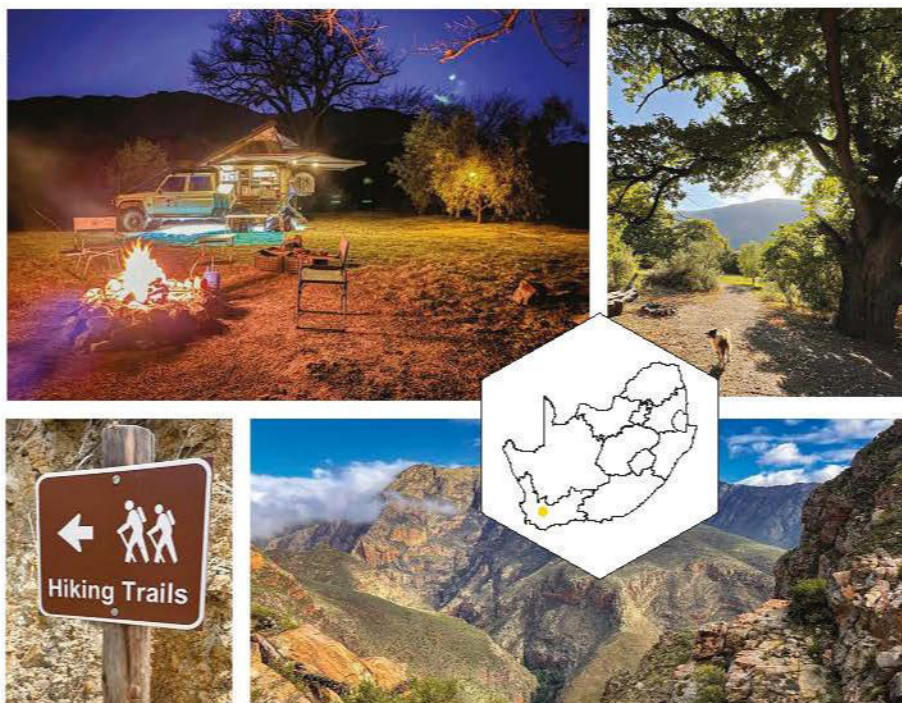


Let every dog have its day

Give man's best friend a holiday of its own at one of these pet-friendly campsites.

Compiled by **Leon Botha**

SIMONSKLOOF



Pet terms An additional fee applies per dog, and pets must be kept under control at all times.

Have we visited before? No.

Campsite Eight demarcated bush campsites (with spring water), laid out on soil or grass around a 300-year-old oak tree.

Ablutions Three shared showers with gas geysers, as well as composting toilets.

Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00, although times are not strictly enforced.

Contact ☎ 023 614 1895 or 📧 info@simonskloof.com
🌐 simonskloof.com

Nearest town Montagu, 50 km.

Road condition 10 km of good gravel road; road caravans are not permitted.

GPS S33.616713 E19.728351

LAKE PLEASANT



Pet terms Your small dog is welcome to camp, except during the December holidays.

Have we visited before? Yes, March 2014 (WegSleep #64).

Campsite A shady campsite with 55 stands. Loose-standing braais have built-in grids, and facilities include a gym, tennis and squash courts, as well as rowing boats.

Ablutions Two blocks with separate facilities for men and women, plus a dishwashing area and washing machines.

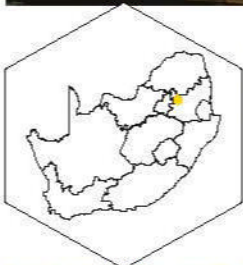
Arrival and departure 14:00 and 10:00. Strictly enforced during December, more flexibly during the rest of the year.

Contact ☎ 044 343 2661 or 082 802 1160 📧 info@lakepleasantresort.co.za
🌐 lakepleasantresort.co.za

Nearest town Sedgefield.

Road condition Tarred all the way.

GPS S34.025755 E22.833673



Have we visited before? No.

Ablutions One ablution block with separate toilets for men and women, four communal showers, and two spacious family bathrooms, each fitted with a shower, bath, toilet and basin. The scullery is next to the building.

Contact 083 271 3974

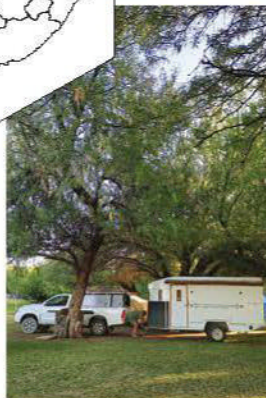
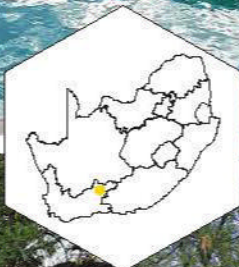
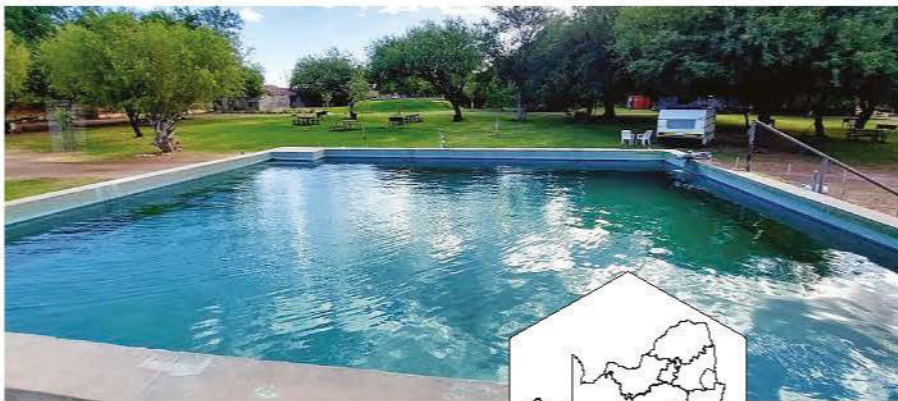
✉ tdjbadenhorst.db@gmail.com

Stay at Dirk's Place

Nearest town eMalahleni, 42 km.

Road condition The final 100 m is a neat gravel road.

GPS S25.583802 E29.101076



Have we visited before? Yes, January-February 2012 (*WegSleep* #41).

Ablutions One ablution block with separate facilities for men and women. There's also a kitchen with a dishwashing area, stove and table, and a laundry service is available.

Arrival and departure No set times.

Contact 083 540 4573

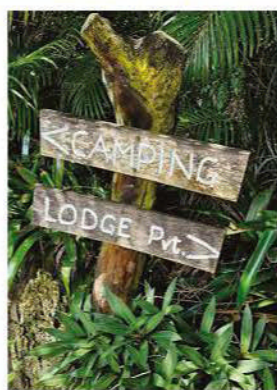
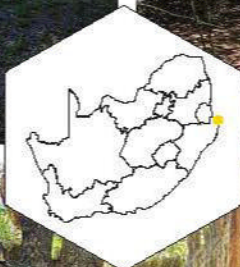
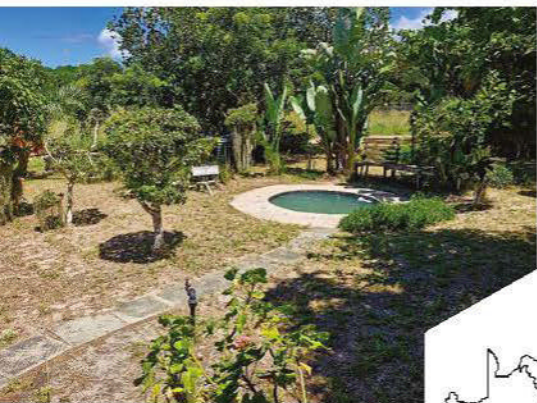
steenbokkie@beaufortwest.net

steenbokkie.co.za

Nearest town Beaufort West, 7 km.

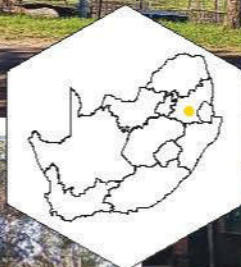
Road condition The final kilometre is a good gravel road.

GPS S32.340058 E22.657823



GPS S27.025482 E32.786048

HEIN'S FARM RESORT



GPS S26.423974 E29.941132

LEEUWSPOOR



Pet terms Because nyala roam the property, your dog must not be the type that chases other animals.

Have we visited before? No.

Campsite 22 grassed campsites with shade and shade-net screening between neighbouring sites. Free-standing braais with grids are provided.

Ablutions One ablution building with 10 private bathrooms, plus two communal kitchens with dishwashing facilities.

Arrival and departure No set times.

Contact 084 240 4640

info@leeuwspoor.co.za

leeuwspoor.co.za

Nearest town Rustenburg and Magaliesburg, both 40 km.

Road condition Either 7 km or 11 km of gravel road, depending on your approach. The longer route is in reasonable condition; the shorter route is rougher.

GPS S25.915211 E27.275742

UTOPIA



Pet terms Dogs are welcome (an additional fee applies), but must be supervised at all times and preferably kept on a leash, as there are farm animals such as sheep, cattle and pigs on the property.

Have we visited before? No.

Campsite 22 sites laid out between neat rows of trees, on either grass or hard ground depending on available shade. Power points are shared, and there are free-standing braai drums without grids. Cellphone reception is intermittent.

Ablutions One block at the campsites with separate facilities for men and women (gas geysers), plus a second block a short distance away with similar facilities and a donkey water boiler.

Arrival and departure 10:00 and 14:00.

Contact 082 774 8543

wilna@swdconnect.co.za

Utopia Wedding and Events Venue

Nearest town Swellendam, 10 km.

Road condition 10 km of gravel road.

GPS S34.041809 E20.325475

Bomber crew or fighter jock?

In this issue, as always, we put something with four wheels to the test. Except that this time, it comes in the form of two GS motorcycles. One relies on an arsenal of technological wizardry to make overland travel effortless, while the other harks back to a time when motorcycles were simpler machines.

Words **Cyril Kloppe** Photos **Cyril Kloppe** and **Supplied**

There are competing philosophies when it comes to motorcycling, and the two camps that differ most sharply are the technophiles and the purists. The former revel in modern technology and electronic assistance, while the latter believe a motorcycle should be a simple, mechanical machine with as little electronic gadgetry as possible. BMW happens to build a GS for both of them.

What have we got here?

The first GS BMW handed over to us was the R1300GS Adventure. We had to fetch the colossal machine ourselves from BMW's media fleet, because apparently there was no one big and strong enough to deliver it to us. *(Full marks for subtle bragging, Cyril. – Ed.)*

It's an intimidating motorcycle, with a broad fuel tank wedged firmly between your knees and a wide handlebar that had us wrestling the heavy machine through suburban traffic choke points. After a few close calls, we made it back to the office, where we could finally take a proper look at the R1300GS Adventure.

Its most striking features are the massive 30 l fuel tank and the X-shaped LED headlight, but a closer inspection reveals plenty of delightful details – like the neatly executed welds on the fuel tank, deliberately left exposed. The sheer number of tie-down points and mounting locations scattered across the bike also deserves praise.

Our test unit was fitted with crash bars, a bash plate, hand guards and auxiliary

BMW GS

spotlights. The only thing missing was luggage; add that, and we could have set off on a round-the-world trip.

The second GS BMW sent our way was the R12 g/s. This one was delivered straight to our offices, as the fleet manager quite happily rode it over himself.

We took to this bike immediately. The retro styling is spot-on, without tipping over into full-blown nostalgia bait. The seat looks uncomfortable (it isn't), the headlight is a simple round unit housed in a small fairing, the frame is proudly exposed and painted a vivid red, and the instrumentation is refreshingly minimal – just a speedometer

and basic information. Instead of a sprawling digital display with GPS maps, BMW provides a mounting bracket for your smartphone. There's even a proper, old-school ignition key.

How do they ride?

The larger BMW R1300GS Adventure is built for long-distance travel through the empty vastness of the Karoo or along Namibia's dramatic gravel roads. We absolutely hated riding the R1300GS Adventure into town, and it proved to be a handful even in quiet residential areas. You do grow accustomed to its bulky presence over time, but if we're being honest, we found ourselves dreading every

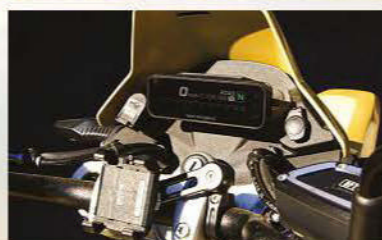
ride unless we could escape built-up areas and point it towards the open road.

The smaller BMW R12 g/s delivered a completely different experience. We looked forward to every ride on it, whether that meant tackling sand dunes, navigating city traffic, exploring bush tracks or cruising along fast gravel roads. The R12 g/s feels playful and engaging, and although it has a slightly smaller engine with lower power outputs than the R1300GS Adventure, it felt quicker and noticeably more agile.

The R1300GS Adventure offers an abundance of electronic riding modes, tailored to just about every imaginable



YESTERYEAR.
Our test bike had simple digital clocks (middle below), but you can opt for a single analogue speedometer if you really want to embrace the retro feel of the R12 g/s.



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	BMW R12 g/s
Engine	1 170 cc twin-cylinder boxer
Power	80 kW @ 7 000 r.p.m.
Torque	115 Nm @ 6 500 r.p.m.
Transmission	Six-speed
Drivetrain	Shaft drive
Seat height	860 mm
Tank	15,5 l
Fuel consumption	5,6 l/100 km (tested)
Tyres	90/90 R21 (front), 150/70 R17 (rear)
Weight	229 kg
Payload	201 kg
Dimensions	2 200 mm (l) x 830 mm (w)
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	4,1 s
Top speed	210 km/h
Warranty	5 years
Service plan	3 years
PRICE	R309 200

surface. By contrast, the R12 g/s keeps things refreshingly simple with just two modes: road and off-road. It also does without a fuel gauge altogether, leaving you to do the mental arithmetic yourself to work out how much fuel remains in the tank...

The competition

The R1300GS Adventure's most obvious rival is the KTM 1390 Super Adventure R. It's a wild machine that outguns the BMW when it comes to outright off-road performance. That said, the KTM doesn't enjoy the same broad appeal, and the manufacturer's weak sales figures – which nearly pushed the company into bankruptcy last year – speak volumes. Had it not been for a bailout from Indian automotive giant Bajaj, KTM might well have been heading for the history books.

The R12 g/s, on the other hand, doesn't really have a direct rival in the current market. The closest alternative is probably the Suzuki V-Strom 1050 DE, which also leans on retro-inspired styling to tug at riders' heartstrings.

Conclusion

If you cornered us and forced a choice between the R1300GS Adventure and the R12 g/s, we'd pick the latter. We fully understand why so many riders gravitate towards the R1300GS, but in our view the R12 g/s offers something few modern motorcycles can: it takes us back to the 1980s, when we were learning to ride, getting into mischief and discovering the simple joy of two wheels. In uncertain times, there's something deeply comforting about escaping, even briefly, into the past.



“

We fully understand why so many riders gravitate towards the R1300GS...

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SPECIFICATIONS

Model	BMW R1300GS Adventure
Engine	1 298 cc twin-cylinder boxer
Power	108 kW @ 7 750 r.p.m.
Torque	149 Nm @ 6 500 r.p.m.
Transmission	Six-speed
Drivetrain	Shaft drive
Seat height	870 mm
Tank	30 ℓ
Fuel consumption	5,7 ℓ/100 km (tested)
Tyres	120/70 R19 (front), 170/60 R17 (rear)
Weight	269 kg
Payload	216 kg
Dimensions	2 280 (l) x 1 011 mm (w)
Acceleration (0-100 km/h)	3,7 s
Top speed	240 km/h
Warranty	5 years
Service plan	3 years
PRICE	R404 500



FROM THE COMPETITORS

One adventure bike that harks back to the good old days – and one aimed squarely at the future



R259 950

Suzuki V-Strom 1050 DE

The V-Strom's styling evokes memories of the DR Big from the 1990s.



R419 999

KTM 1390 Super Adventure R

Few riders are able to exploit the full potential of KTM's powerhouse.



BOMBER. The R1300GS Adventure is a big machine and, while perfectly capable on gravel, it demands considerably more rider skill on off-road trails than the far nimbler R12 g/s..

Tow the line

The modern Land Rover Defender may be easier on the eye than its boxy predecessor, but hitch a caravan and it quickly proves that it's lost none of its edge.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**



LAND ROVER DEFENDER 110

In the truest sense of the word, the Defender is a holiday vehicle. It offers cavernous packing space and enough mass to tow just about any caravan with confidence.

It's immediately clear that Land Rover designed the Defender with caravanners in mind: beyond the clever software running in its electronic brain, there's a long list of practical features that make life with a trailer noticeably easier. These include a digital rear-view mirror that can "see" straight through your luggage even when the load bay is packed to the roof, a side-hinged rear door rather than a top-hinged one, a removable towbar and a dedicated reverse camera.

Time to hitch up

Like many modern vehicles, the Defender requires a 13-pin adapter to be plugged into the vehicle's wiring harness before you can connect a caravan's light plug; without it, things simply won't fit.

Once that's done, the Defender's air suspension makes hitching up remarkably easier. Using the suspension height control, you can adjust the distance between the tow ball and the ground, allowing you to fine-tune the coupling height for a precise and stress-free connection. The difference between the highest and lowest settings is 15 cm, and the control switch is located on the left-hand side of the load bay.

We measured the setup on the campsite lawn and found that the tow ball sits 36 cm above the ground at its lowest setting and 51 cm at its highest. That's impressively close to the legal specification, which requires a caravan's coupling height to be between 35 cm and 46,5 cm above ground when fully loaded and standing level.

When reversing towards the caravan, the parking sensors begin to sound an alert at a distance of 74 cm from the coupler. On the reversing screen, two camera views work together to make the process almost foolproof. The image on the left shows what's happening directly behind the Defender via the camera positioned between the number

plate and the tailgate. The tow ball is neatly centred in the display, flanked by two yellow guidelines indicating your trajectory. The image on the right provides a bird's-eye view of the entire vehicle, showing projected paths at both the front and rear. Crucially, it doesn't only track movement behind the vehicle but also shows what's happening ahead.

A helping hand

The Defender's onboard computer includes Hitch Assist software, which – as the name suggests – is specifically designed to help when you're hitching a caravan. Its purpose is to guide you until the tow ball is positioned exactly beneath the caravan's coupler head.

Activate the Hitch Assist function and select "Towing". The image on the right-hand side of the screen continues to show your projected path, but the left-hand display now adds a yellow guideline running from the tow ball to the caravan's coupler. A red dot marks the position of the tow ball on the screen, allowing for very precise alignment.

At roughly 76 cm from the coupler, the reversing sensors start to issue warnings. If the beeping becomes distracting, it can be muted by tapping the speaker icon below the display. As you turn the steering wheel, the guideline curves accordingly. Keep it lined up with the coupler and reverse until the red dot sits neatly in the centre of the coupler head.

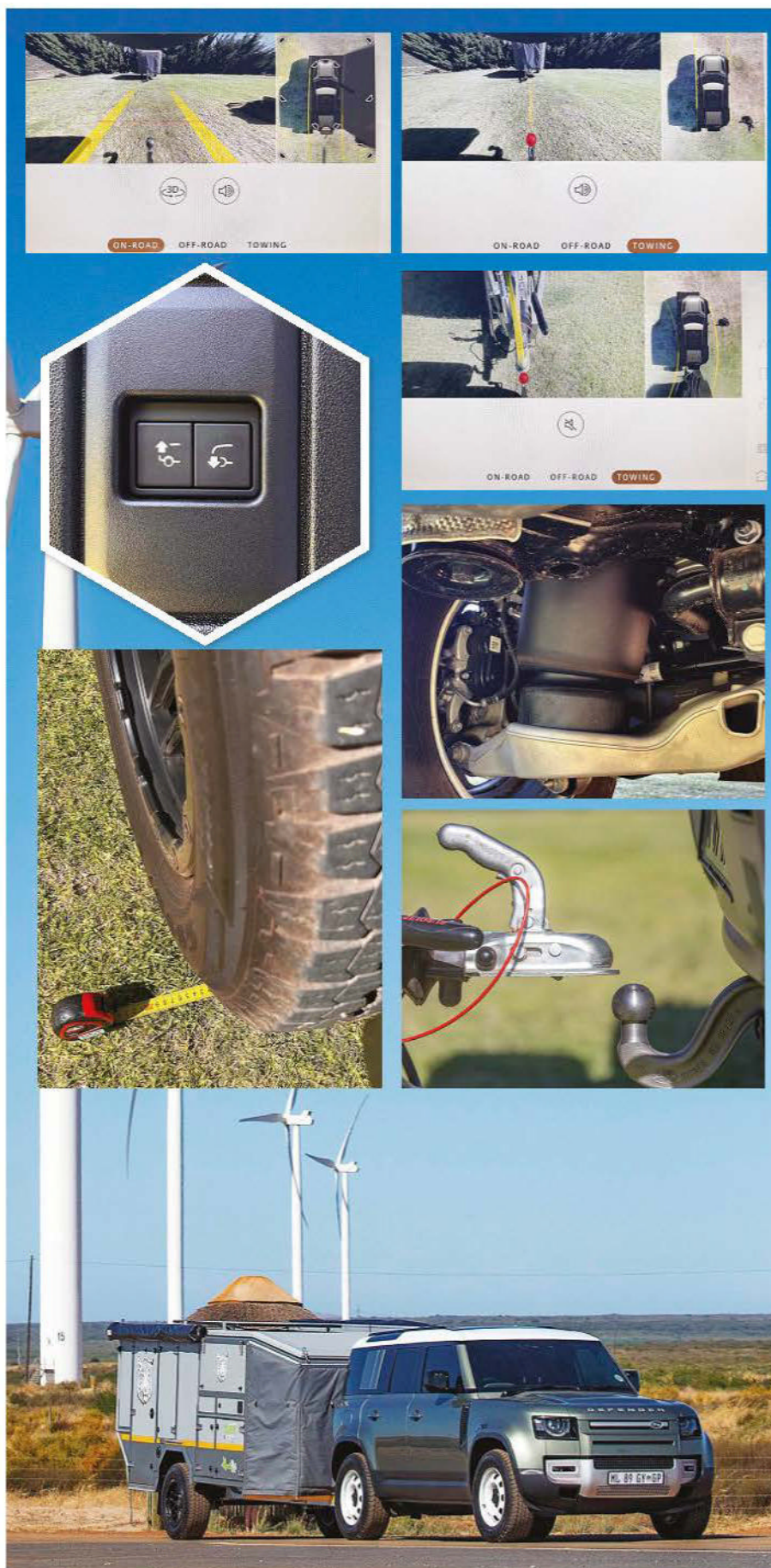
According to the owner's manual, the accuracy of the Hitch Assist system depends on the height difference between the tow ball and the coupler, which should not exceed 3 cm. In our case, the Defender's air suspension settled by about 1 cm under the nose weight of the Mbada caravan.

Eyes on the road

Once you've settled into the driver's seat, you'll notice that the Defender's systems make a few subtle adjustments after the caravan is hitched. The blind-spot monitoring, which normally lights up warnings in the side mirrors, now displays only a small indicator light. It's essentially a reminder that, when towing, you should rely on your own checks to confirm what's happening alongside you before changing lanes.

Secondly, a trailer icon flashes in sync with the green indicator arrows on the instrument panel whenever you use the turn signals. It's a reassuring detail, letting you know the Defender is actively monitoring the trailer while you're towing.

Ideally, you want an unobstructed view through the centre rear-view mirror all the way to the back window so you can keep an eye



TOW TEST



on the caravan. In reality, that's not always possible. There's often simply too much gear to pack, and the load bay ends up stacked to roof height, rendering a conventional mirror more or less useless.

Fortunately, you can load the Defender to the hilt without sacrificing rearward visibility. A camera mounted high on the roof looks rearwards, with its image displayed in the centre mirror – or rather, a screen disguised as a mirror. If you prefer a traditional reflective view, the display can be switched off.

Stopping at the roadside doesn't turn into a wrestling match either, provided your towing combination is standing straight. The rear door swings open sideways and all the way, making it easy to access the load bay. The only potential obstacle is the caravan's jockey wheel if it's wound up, although in our case it was removable. And if your caravan's handbrake lever prevents the door from opening fully, you've got bigger problems: that lever should be lowered when towing and shouldn't be in the way at all.

What are you towing?

With the Defender's Trailer Calibration function, you can feed your caravan's details into the onboard computer, making reversing even easier and more precise.

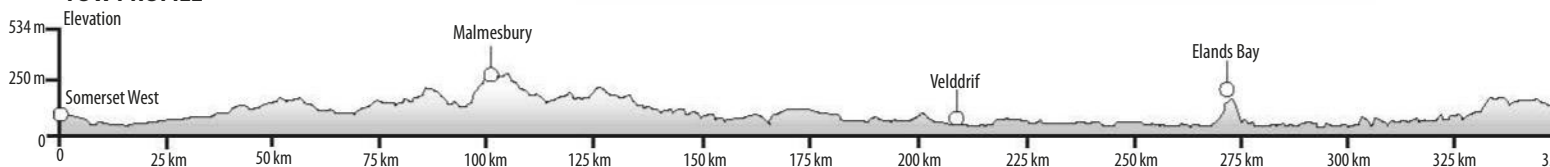
From the home screen, select "Towing & Trailers", then choose the option that best matches what you're pulling. There are six

Drive & Camp says We first encountered the new Defender exactly three years ago, when we tested the short-wheelbase 90 model while towing a similar off-road caravan. Fuel consumption at the time was slightly heavier at 14,7 l/100 km. It's worth noting, though, that the engine in that test vehicle delivered 80 Nm more torque.



Total distance 553 km Road Highways, back roads, built-up areas and gravel roads.

TOW PROFILE



The trailer

Manufacturer Tuff Cats

Model Mbada 2D Max

Model year 2025

GVM 1 800 kg

Drive & Camp borrowed the Mbada 2D from All Out Caravan & Leisure Caravan, a Tuff Cats dealer. ☎ 083 290 3389
✉ info@cara-camp.co.za
🌐 cara-camp.co.za



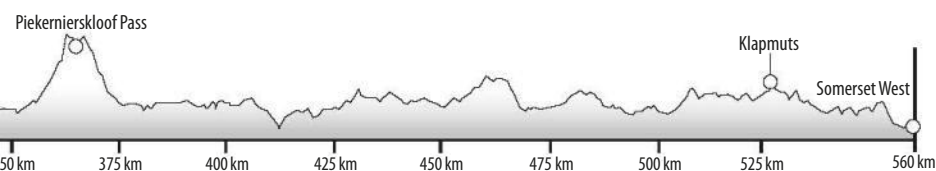
SPECIFICATIONS

Model	3.0 D D250 S
Engine	Six-cylinder turbodiesel
Power	183 kW
Torque	570 Nm
Transmission	Eight-speed automatic
Drivetrain	All-wheel drive
Tank	89 l
Fuel consumption (towing)	12,5 l/100 km (8 km/l)
Range (towing)	712 km
Tare	2 300 kg
GVM	(licence disc) 3 280 kg
GCM	6 700 kg
Towing capacity	3 420 kg (GCM-GVM)
Maximum vertical towbar load	200 kg
Removable towbar?	Yes.
PRICE	R1 790 461 (as tested)

presets to choose from: a standard trailer, vehicle recovery trailer, goods trailer, boat trailer, caravan or horse trailer. You then specify whether the trailer has a single, double or triple axle. Next, the system asks for a few measurements: the distance from the trailer's coupler to its axle, followed by the overall width between the outer edges of the wheels.

Once this information is entered, the left-hand reverse camera view gains two additional upright panels alongside

it, allowing you to see the caravan's wheels just within frame. A message at the bottom of the screen instructs you to drive straight ahead until the calibration process is complete (in our case, this took about 38 m). When you then reverse at an angle, two purple guide lines appear on the display, clearly indicating the direction of your steering input. Meanwhile, the right-hand image continues to show a bird's-eye view of the vehicle, with a projected path illustrating the arc you're following. ●



From the competitors

Seasoned and upmarket off-roaders



R1 319 900

Jeep Wrangler Rubicon

400 Nm

2 l four-cylinder turbo-petrol engine, 200 kW.



R1 550 000

Toyota Land Cruiser 300 GX-R

700 Nm

3.3 l V6 turbodiesel engine, 225 kW.



R1 928 600

Ineos Grenadier 1924

550 Nm

3 l inline-six twin-turbodiesel engine, 183 kW.

Double the fun

The Infanta Enkulu 4's extra axle delivers far more than just two additional wheels

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

INFANTA ENKULU 4

The Enkulu 4 is Infanta 4x4's latest model and closely resembles the Enkulu 3, with the key difference being its dual-axle configuration. The two caravans share the same dimensions; it's on the scales where they start to differ. The Enkulu 4's gross vehicle mass is 200 kg higher, which means your tow vehicle needs a corresponding increase in tare weight – at least 2 100 kg. For our test, we towed the Enkulu 4 with the entry-level Ford Ranger, which has a tare weight of 2 220 kg.

Yes, the caravan does make the scales groan slightly, but compared to the other 12 locally built models from eight manufacturers, the Enkulu 4 is actually one of the lighter new dual-axle caravans currently on the market.



Upfront

A spare wheel is mounted on the A-frame, with two canvas bags positioned on either side against the caravan body. These are ideal for loose items such as tent pegs and storm ropes. Above each bag is a motion-sensor light; walk past the caravan at night and they switch on automatically. So if you still manage to whack your shin on the coupler, that one's on you.

The jockey wheel is removable, with its temporary mounting position to the right of the spare wheel.

The bed capsule slides out 96 cm from the right-hand panel and is secured with shipping-container-style locks while towing. This remains one of the most effective ways to keep dust and water out when the caravan is on the move.

Once the capsule is extended, a support arm drops into place beneath the bed base to prevent it from rolling back once setup is complete.

The exterior storage compartment between the bed capsule and the A-frame is generously sized and well suited to items such as camping chairs. The compartment is 66 cm deep, with an opening measuring 96 cm wide and 56 cm high. This is also where the fold-out camping table (92 x 53 cm) is stored, fitting neatly into the top of the compartment.

The toilet cassette is accessed via the small door to the left of the large storage hatch.



Kitchen space

The exterior kitchen cabinetry is naturally configured around the wheels, and because there's an additional axle, the cabinet layout is the most obvious difference between the Enkulu 3 and 4.

There are four cupboards in total, with the largest above the wheels, offering ample space. The gas stove is mounted on the worktop to the left. The cupboard on the far left is roughly half the size of the main unit. There's no left-to-right opening door here; instead, this panel folds down to form a worktop.

Each worktop cupboard door has a ± 2 cm fiddle that seals over a rubber strip when closed. All the worktops are 55 cm deep; the main cupboard's worktop measures 156 cm in length, while the two side sections are 51,5 cm long. They're set at a comfortable working height of 93 cm above ground level.

Each of the two cupboards on the left is fitted with a 220 V power point.

On the Enkulu 3, a microwave can be accommodated in the far-left cupboard, whereas on the test model, the microwave is positioned in the right-hand cupboard.

The right-hand cupboard has also been reworked. The frame that previously slid out to house the sinks on the Enkulu 3 now folds around the rear corner. This setup is still part of a prototype, and the final design hasn't yet been confirmed. A fold-down frame holds two loose basins side by side, with a drying rack alongside them. The spray nozzle is mounted around the corner beneath the microwave. For now, the layout is practical, as it frees up more usable kitchen space.

Beneath this unit, another fold-down shelf sits between the two corner steadies (each corner of the caravan is fitted with one). It's ideal for carrying a bag or two of firewood from the office after checking in at the campsite.

Running along the length above the kitchen cupboards is an extrusion designed to fit removable kitchen racks, providing more storage. Each rack has its own light to illuminate the kitchen, in addition to the lights inside the cupboards.

The fridge/freezer slides out from the cupboard to the left of the entry door and sits parallel to the caravan body.



Drive & Camp says There's a slim fold-down washing line mounted at the end of the bed capsule, neatly tucked away beneath the window.





Come inside

A loose step is positioned outside the door, allowing you to climb straight into the caravan. Inside, there's a recessed step, and the door opening measures 166 × 56 cm.

The roof is raised by four actuators, with the control switch conveniently located inside next to the bed.

To the left of the door is the dinette, which converts into a sleeping area for two

additional occupants. Four adults can sit comfortably on the benches around the solid table. The tabletop measures 82 cm wide and 90 cm long. The floor beneath the table forms a flat storage compartment, as this space sits between the fridge/freezer and the exterior storage compartment opposite it. You can access this storage even with the table set up, thanks to the double table leg that slots into round sockets and pivots like

an elbow when the lid is lifted. The table is also hinged to the caravan body.

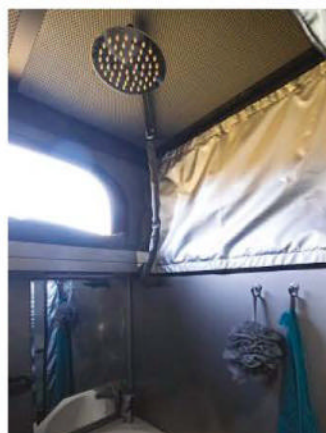
Above the table is a transverse door spanning the full width of the caravan. It opens upwards like a bonnet and provides additional light and ventilation inside, with a mesh screen keeping insects out.

When it's time to make up the bed, simply slide the two pins that secure the tabletop to the body out of the way, allowing

the table to fold flat between the two benches.

The wet room is located opposite the dinette, roughly in the centre of the caravan. A full-length mirror is mounted on the outside of the bathroom wall. The shower itself measures 93 × 110 cm, with the toilet on the left and the basin on the right. The door closes with a zip-up canvas flap.

Opposite the shower cubicle, to the right of the door, is



a narrow counter. From here, a run of cupboards with canvas doors extends all the way to the rear of the caravan. The lower cupboard opens into part of the exterior kitchen, while the upper cupboards house shelves of varying sizes for clothing and personal items.

At the very rear is a flat storage compartment that doubles as a seat when putting on your shoes. The lid lifts to reveal a storage space that spans the full width of the caravan, with access doors on the outside.

A thin cable runs across near the roof at the rear panel, providing a handy spot to hang items such as towels to dry.

The bed measures 194 x 149 cm, slightly narrower than a queen size. The window at the head of the bed opens, while the two side windows are fixed.



FOUR WHEELS VERSUS TWO



Aside from the price difference, the main distinctions between a single-axle and a double-axle caravan are as follows:

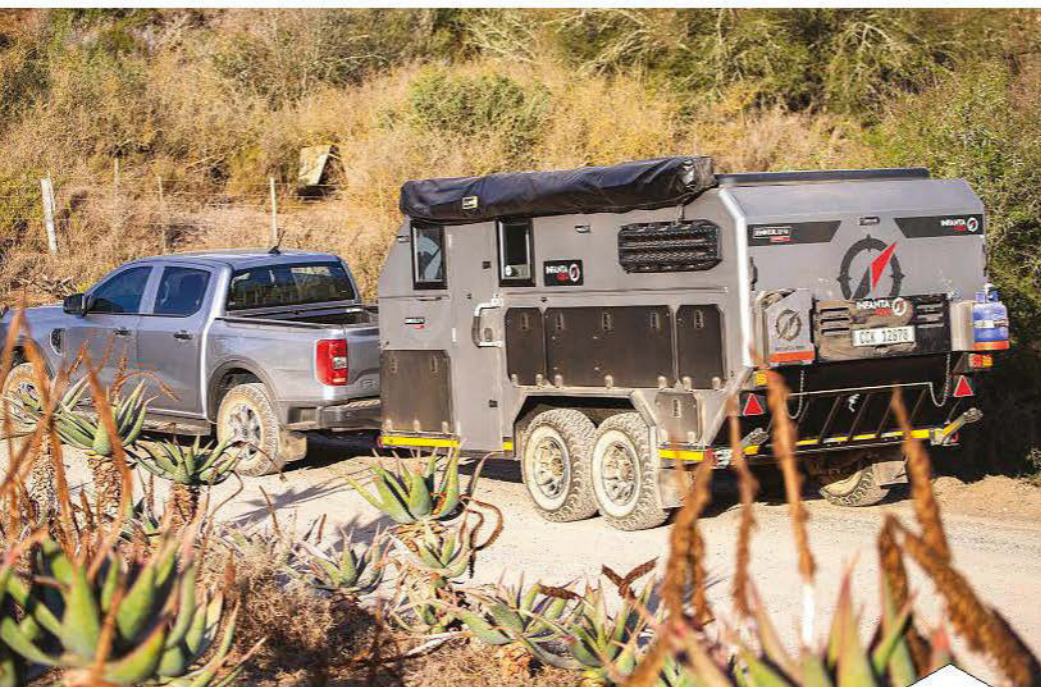
- A double-axle caravan offers better road-holding, as the weight load is distributed more evenly across the wheels. A single-axle caravan essentially pivots on either side of its axle.
- While your chances of a puncture on a double-axle caravan are theoretically doubled, you still have an extra wheel supporting the load if one tyre fails. This allows you to limp along if you can't change the wheel immediately. With a single axle, a puncture can leave you stranded if the wheel can't be replaced straight away.
- A double-axle caravan tows more smoothly over poor roads. With a single axle, the counterweight rests largely on the towbar, whereas on a double-axle the load is shared between the two axles, resulting in a more moderate nose weight on the hitch.
- A double-axle has more components to maintain, and because it's heavier, you'll feel it at the fuel pumps.
- The biggest frustration with a double-axle comes when you unhitch and need to manoeuvre the caravan by hand. Caravan movers are therefore a good idea. The counter-argument is that the typical campsites frequented by this type of off-road caravan are spacious enough to allow you to position the caravan precisely using the tow vehicle.
- On paper, a double-axle can carry more weight. The Enkulu 3's axle is rated at 2,5 t, while the Enkulu 4 is fitted with two of these axles. The Enkulu 3 has a tare weight of 1 100 kg and a GVM of 1 900 kg, while the Enkulu 4's figures are 1 700 kg and 2 100 kg respectively. Because the tare weights differ by 600 kg but the GVM by only 200 kg, the Enkulu 4 has a lower available payload. In practice, this isn't an issue: fully equipped, the Enkulu 4 tips the scales at 1 950 kg (delivery weight), leaving 150 kg for food and clothing.

What comes standard?

Included in the standard purchase are the slide-out bed, a dinette with double benches (leather upholstery) that converts into a second bed, an electrically operated pop-up roof, a built-in 110 l water tank, a 12 V water pump, a Hansen 14 l 220 V/gas geyser with full plumbing, a two-burner gas stove, a washing-up area with two basins, a drying rack and frame, and wiring to charge the battery while towing.

Among the nearly 40 optional extras on offer are the following: a fully equipped wet room (R28 175); a power system including

lights, USB ports, a 12 V Victron charging system, battery monitor and solar charge controller; a choice between a 105 Ah deep-cycle battery (R3 680) or a 108 Ah lithium battery (R7 475); a 120 W solar panel (R3 594); a 430 W solar panel (R7 820); a 2 000 W inverter (R16 099); a 220 V air conditioner (R17 135); a 90 l National Luna fridge/freezer (R17 825); a 360° Howling Moon swing awning (R25 300); an aluminium camping table (R5 175); a firewood rack (R5 290); two side windows at the bed (R11 270); and a fold-down washing line (R4 370).



SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer	Infanta 4x4
Model	Enkulu 4
Sleeps	4
Dimensions	6,1 x 2,3 x 2,36 m
Tare	1 700 kg
Payload	400 kg
GVM	2 100 kg
Axles	2 x 2,5 t
Wheel size	16-inch
Chassis	Galvanised
Body	Aluminium
Price	R664 309



DEALER NETWORK Head office and showroom in Buffeljagsrivier, with four dealers in the Western Cape and Gauteng.

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



R664 309 **INFANTA 4X4 ENKULU 4** GVM 2 100 kg

FROM THE COMPETITORS*
Double-axle off-road caravans with similar GVM



R695 000 **BORDERX EXPEDITION** GVM 2 000-2 200 kg

Sleeps 2-6; features independent suspension and a honeycomb-composite body with an aluminium



R830 000 **LIBERTY CRUISER** GVM 2 200-2 400 kg

Sleeps 3-4; fitted with two 2,5 t axles and an aluminium and fibreglass body.



R917 447 **CONQUEROR UEV-25** GVM 2 200 kg

Sleeps 4; features independent suspension and an aluminium and synthetic composite body.

** As listed in the 2025 Buyer's Guide. Prices indicate a standard specification; final pricing varies depending on how each model is equipped.*

Drive & Camp borrowed the Enkulu 4 prototype directly from the manufacturer for this test.

True or false?

The world of 4x4 is packed with hard-earned wisdom, valuable lessons and tried-and-tested practices, but it's also riddled with bad habits and questionable advice.

Words and photos **Cyril Klopfer**



// You must always deflate your tyres on gravel roads"; "you can't get by without a diff lock"; "a short wheelbase is better than a long one" ... chances are you've heard these statements before, and maybe even joined the debate yourself. The reality, however, is that most of these views live in the grey areas – because very little in off-roading is ever purely black or white. We unpack five common beliefs that are partly – or completely – false.

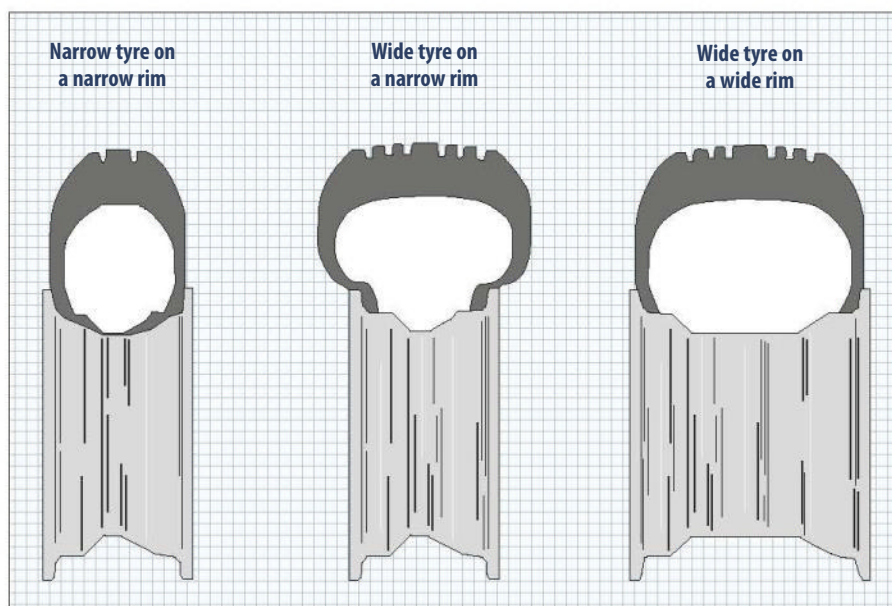
Narrow tyres for the win!

Before we address this claim, it's important to understand that only a small portion of your tyre actually makes contact with the ground. This is known as the contact patch, or footprint. Narrow tyres generally have a longer, slimmer footprint, while wider tyres have a shorter but broader one.

It's often argued that narrower tyres suffer less sidewall damage because their sidewalls don't bulge out as much as those of wider tyres. This is generally true, but the issue can be fixed by fitting wider tyres to wider rims, as illustrated on the right.

Let's take a closer look at the pros and cons of narrow tyres on narrow rims versus wide tyres on wide rims.

Narrow tyres perform better on wet roads because they have to displace less water and are therefore less prone to aquaplaning.



Wider tyres need to move more water and can lose traction more easily. The first point to the narrow tyre.

Narrow tyres can more easily cut through shallow snow and mud to reach firm ground underneath, resulting in better traction. Wider tyres, on the other hand, are more likely to lose grip and slide, sending you into the ditch alongside the road. Another point to the narrow tyre.

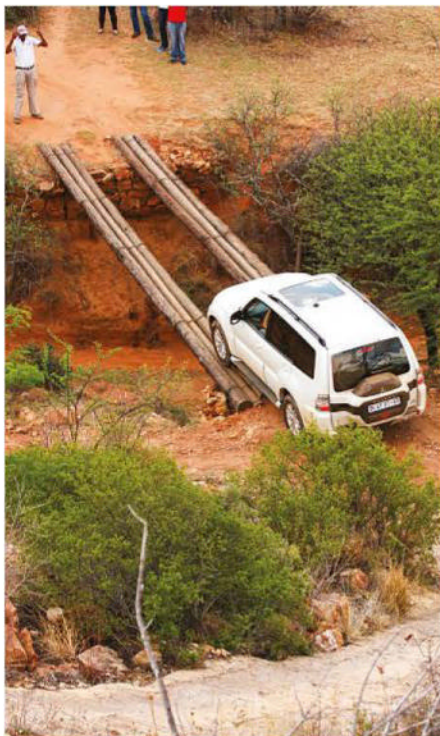
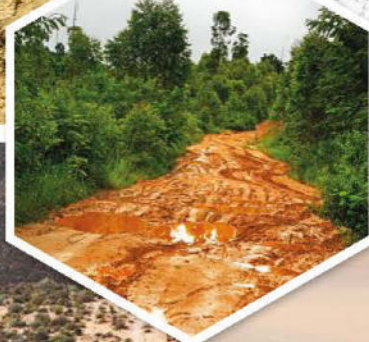
Narrow tyres also weigh less and suffer less aerodynamic drag, which translates into better fuel consumption. They're generally cheaper than wider tyres too – a third point to a narrow tyre.

Wider tyres perform better on dry roads, offering significantly more grip than narrow wheels. The wide tyre scores its first point.

In deep snow and mud, wide tyres have an advantage because unlike narrow tyres, they are less likely to dig in and cause your vehicle to belly out if the snow or mud is too deep. Two points to the wide tyre.

Wide tyres also perform better on sand and rocks, thanks to their already broad footprint – and you can increase the footprint length even further by lowering tyre pressures. You can't meaningfully widen the footprint of a narrow tyre.

With both narrow and wide tyres scoring three points each, neither can be crowned the outright winner. Ultimately, the best choice depends on what you plan to do with your vehicle.



4x4 lessons are unnecessary

It's often said that farm boys who've been driving from a young age, long before they ever had a licence, are natural-born 4x4 drivers. We'll admit that farm kids do enjoy an advantage over city slickers when it comes to gravel roads and off-road obstacles, but there are still things they don't always learn along the way.

Professional 4x4 instructors teach far more than just vehicle control. Topics like environmental impact and proper recovery techniques are all part of the curriculum. On the farm, you fetch your dad's tractor when you get stuck; an instructor teaches you how to recover yourself, or better yet, how to avoid getting into trouble in the first place.

You might believe you can teach yourself – and that's certainly possible – but you're also likely to pick up bad habits that end up costing you dearly, enriching panel beaters and tyre shops along the way.

Most paid 4x4 trails also offer controlled conditions and escape routes, allowing you to build your skills gradually. That way, when you finally head off into the great wide open in your adventure rig, you do so knowing you can handle yourself when things get tough.



The expert must drive

The person guiding you through an obstacle – the so-called spotter – plays a crucial role on any 4x4 trail. This is usually the most experienced off-roader in the group, and the only one who can see exactly what's happening under, alongside and in front of your vehicle.

That's why it often makes sense for the driver and

passenger to swap roles. After all, why would you ask your travel companion, who has little or no 4x4 experience, to hop out and guide you through a technical obstacle? Be honest with yourself: are you really going to trust those inexperienced hand signals completely, or will you glance down now and then and follow your own instincts? And then, to make matters worse, you

end up blaming your companion when your bakkie's sump kisses a rock.

If it's just the two of you in one vehicle, we believe it's far better to agree on a clear set of hand signals (feel free to invent your own sign language) and have the most experienced person get out and pick the best line through the obstacle. The driver should then lock eyes on the spotter's

hands and follow every instruction without question.

Things work a little differently when you're travelling in a convoy. The tour leader goes first – tackling something like Van Zyl's Pass – and then guides the rest of the vehicles through safely. In this scenario, "Pops" is more than welcome to stay behind the wheel whilst "Mama" snaps the pics.



“

The person guiding you through an obstacle – the so-called spotter – plays a crucial role on any 4x4 trail

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Stay out of the ruts

Twin-track roads that run uphill or downhill are often badly eroded where the wheels normally travel. Novice drivers will instinctively drive with their wheels in these ruts, only to panic when the vehicle bellies out.

Seasoned 4x4 drivers know that the general rule is to stay out of the ruts and rather keep one wheel on the centre ridge and the other on the shoulder of the track. There is, however, an important exception to this golden rule.

When a wet, slippery twin-track road climbs or descends around a bend on a side slope – or off-camber as it's known – it's often safer to drive inside the ruts, provided they're shallow enough. On a wet surface, the ruts can help keep you on line, much like a train on its tracks. We've seen drivers follow the first piece of advice by staying on the centre ridge and shoulder, only for the wheels to slide on clay, hit the rut at speed, and roll the vehicle onto its side.

After all, it's better for your vehicle's underbody and tow hitch to scrape along the centre ridge than for it to end up lying on its side, wouldn't you agree?



Do you even lift, bro?

There are 4x4 enthusiasts who insist that lifting your vehicle's body is a must. While there is a valid reason behind this thinking, there are also some serious downsides to this kind of modification.

Lifting your vehicle allows you to fit larger tyres – but that's where the advantage largely ends. You've now raised the vehicle's centre of gravity, increasing the risk of a rollover. One way to counter this is by fitting wheel spacers between the hubs and the wheels, but that introduces another problem: your track becomes so wide that the vehicle no longer rides comfortably in twin-track roads, and the wheels tend to climb out of the tracks unpredictably.

And no, lifting your vehicle doesn't actually improve ground clearance either, because the chassis, differentials and axles remain at the same height.

Rather think carefully about whether it's worth sacrificing stability and handling for bigger tyres and a more aggressive stance.

Look tough, be tough

Shorts and T-shirts are great for holidays, but when you're heading into the bush, you need clothing that's built to take a knock or two.

Words **Cyril Klopper** Photos **Cyril Klopper** and **Supplied**



FIND THE PRODUCTS HERE

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100% COGNITO SMART SHOCK GLOVES

Knuckle down

If your vehicle is fitted with a winch, a decent pair of gloves is one of the most important accessories you can pack. They're also invaluable when pitching camp or slinging tools around your vehicle. Yes, you could make do with ordinary garden gloves, but we've found that rally motorcycle gloves work far better.

These gloves are sold as a pair and are exceptionally comfortable, allowing you to handle tools and tackle more delicate tasks without sacrificing dexterity. The integrated D30 knuckle protection really comes into its own when you're wrestling a spare wheel out from under a bakkie or manoeuvring a jack into tight spaces.

They also offer welcome warmth in cold conditions, and the stretch-fabric cuff slips easily over your wrist, making the gloves quick and effortless to put on or take off.

PRICE R730 at Biker's Warehouse.

LK'S BRAAI GLOVES

Hot potato

South African braai gear brand LK's is synonymous with time spent around the fire, and its braai gloves are built for exactly that. Made from heat-resistant wool, these gloves allow you to briefly handle metal heated to temperatures of up to 500 °C – provided you don't hold on for too long! The extended cuff helps prevent slowly roasting your forearms while tending the fire.

Silicone strips on the palms and fingers improve grip, giving you better control of the grid and ensuring your chops don't end up on the ground. Thanks to LK's strong local presence, you'll find these gloves at most camping and outdoor retailers, from Outdoor Warehouse to Checkers.

PRICE R250 at Die Braai Gat.



DROMEX MULTI-PURPOSE WORK PANTS

Made to last

We can thank British adventurer Bear Grylls for popularising multi-purpose work pants in the adventure world. Week after week on television, we watched him leap over dongas and wrestle reptiles while wearing trousers built for harsh conditions.

Dromex is a proudly South African company specialising in workplace safety, and its multi-purpose work pants are made from 300D water-resistant Oxford polyester. One of their biggest advantages is that they stay cleaner for longer than jeans – once the mud dries, you can simply brush it off.

The trousers feature multiple pockets for essentials such as your phone, pens and notebooks, as well as reinforced loops for hanging tools while working on your vehicle – or a hammer and tent pegs when setting up camp.

Despite the robust construction, the fabric is lightweight (the long pants weigh just 1 kg) and exceptionally durable. Reflective strips are built in too, ensuring passing motorists can spot you at night while you're changing a wheel on the roadside.

PRICE R850 at Agrimark.

DUNLOP ON SITE WORK PANTS

True grit

Dunlop's On Site work pants were originally designed for tradesmen who spend long shifts on the job, but they're just as well suited to overlanders clocking endless hours behind the wheel and campers pitching tents on dusty ground.

The pants are made from a blend of 64% cotton, 33% polyester and 3% spandex, with Cordura reinforcement panels on the knees and other high-wear areas. Like the Dromex work pants, they feature an integrated tool belt that allows you to hang camp gear or spanners while working.

Optional rubber knee protectors are available at R220 for a set of two. These slot into internal pockets, making it far more

comfortable to work on your knees. They're especially handy when you're changing a wheel on the side of a tar road or kneeling down to coax a stubborn campfire into life.

PRICE R750 at Outdoor Warehouse.



JIM GREEN 4X4 BOOTS

Four-wheel drive for your feet

Renowned South African bootmaker Jim Green set out to create something truly distinctive with its 4x4 boot range. The result is a rugged, go-anywhere boot built around a 4x4-inspired tread sole, stitched directly to the upper and finished off with an EVA midsole for added comfort.

The upper is crafted from 2,2 mm thick brown leather, embossed with an "Africa" pattern said to echo the hide of a buffalo or elephant. Padding around the collar helps prevent chafing at the ankles, even during long days on your feet.

The outsole is stitched to the midsole using 2 mm nylon stitching, making it tough enough for serious abuse, yet still replaceable when the time eventually comes – though you're unlikely to wear it out anytime soon. Additional plastic reinforcement panels over the toe and around the heel provide extra support and protection where it's needed most.

These boots are guaranteed to turn heads, but more importantly, they'll take you places even a 4x4 can't reach.

PRICE R2 200 at Jim Green.



NATUREHIKE WADING SHOES

Treading water

Boots are great for a proper 4x4 trail, but at a holiday resort or on a long road trip, you'll often want something cooler and more comfortable. As the name suggests, NatureHike's wading shoe is designed for walking through rivers. The sole protects your feet from sharp rocks, while the mesh upper allows water to drain freely.

The real reason we recommend this shoe, however, is for general campsite wear. It's more comfortable and far neater than a pair of flip-flops – it won't fly off your foot when you jog down to the beach, and it conveniently hides ugly toenails and cracked heels. It's also a better option than a sneaker, as there are no laces to fuss with: simply loosen the elastic cord and slip your foot in.

Of course, it's also perfectly at home in places like Chobe in Botswana, where you may need to wade through rivers on foot before tackling the crossing with your rig.

PRICE R800 at NatureHike.



DUNLOP HYBRID FLEECE JACKET

Warm in winter

If you're buying Dunlop's matching work trousers (see opposite page), you may as well add the brand's hybrid fleece jacket to your kit. Dunlop says the jacket was developed for people who spend long days working in cold-storage facilities or outdoors on construction sites, which explains why it's so well suited to winter camping and overlanding too.

The jacket features a hood that can be drawn tight with a cord when temperatures really drop. Inside, it's lined with warm fleece, while the outer layer is made from a blend of 78% polyester, 14% viscose and 8% elastane (a stretchy fabric similar to spandex).

High-visibility zip pullers glow bright yellow in low light, helping motorists spot you if you're working alongside the road after dark. There's also an abundance of pockets, both inside and out, providing handy storage for essentials such as your cellphone, a tyre repair kit or a roll of "white gold".

PRICE R900 at Outdoor Warehouse.



JONSSON LEGENDARY TWO-TONE SHIRT

Cool in summer

Jonsson may not claim to have invented the iconic two-tone shirt, but the association is undeniable. For decades, the South African clothing manufacturer has supplied this style to agricultural co-ops, where the tried-and-tested design earned its reputation among farmers. From there, it naturally found favour with 4x4 enthusiasts and outdoor-minded South Africans looking for clothing that can take real abuse.

Jonsson's shirt is made from 100% cotton, woven in a twill pattern for added comfort and breathability. The seams are reinforced with triple-row stitching for extra strength, and the two generous chest pockets feature slots for pens and pencils. There's even a concealed inner pocket, originally intended for workers' wage envelopes but just as useful for keeping a passport or other valuables safe while travelling.

PRICE R600 at Jonssons Workwear.

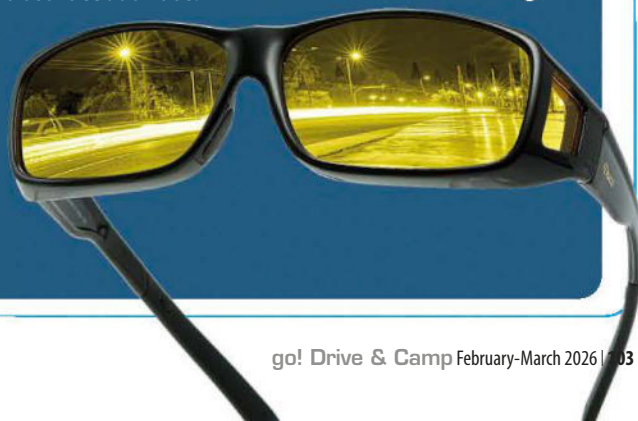
WHAT ABOUT NIGHT-DRIVING GLASSES?

While we're on the topic of long-distance travel, what's the real story behind those yellow-tinted glasses that claim to improve night vision? The common belief is that yellow lenses reduce glare from oncoming traffic and enhance contrast in low-light conditions. To get clarity on the matter, we spoke to the owner of a Spec-Savers branch in Cape Town.

According to the optometrist, yellow lenses tend to have more drawbacks than benefits. People over the age of 50, for example, can require up to twice as much light to see at night as someone in their early thirties – and any blue light filtered out by yellow lenses is light you simply don't get to see. He also pointed us to research published in 2019 by Alex D. Hwang, which shows that removing certain wavelengths can create the impression of improved night vision, while

actually reducing visual detail. In reality, you may be seeing less, not more.

There is, apparently, a chemical coating known as Drivelite that an optician can apply to prescription lenses, but our expert cautions that your eyes need to be properly tested first to determine whether this treatment would be beneficial. In short: rather follow your optometrist's advice than trust Facebook ads.



Mind the gap

Everyone's mad about a flavour-packed filling, whether it's in a sandwich, wrapped in a tortilla or tucked into something warm and crispy.

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

PORK STEAKS WITH SPINACH, FETA AND HAM

Green energy

I prefer stuffing two generous pork steaks to feed four people rather than serving one whole steak per person, but go with whatever suits your crowd.

Ingredients

(serves 4 generously)

- 4 pork rump steaks (250 g each)
- 1 can (400 g) tomato relish or crushed tomatoes

FOR THE FILLING

- 400 g baby spinach leaves, blanched
- 200 g creamy feta (Danish feta) or medium-fat cream cheese
- ½ cup soft herbs, finely chopped
- finely grated zest of 1 lemon
- 12 thin slices of ham (ham shavings, or shaved ham, work particularly well)

Here's how

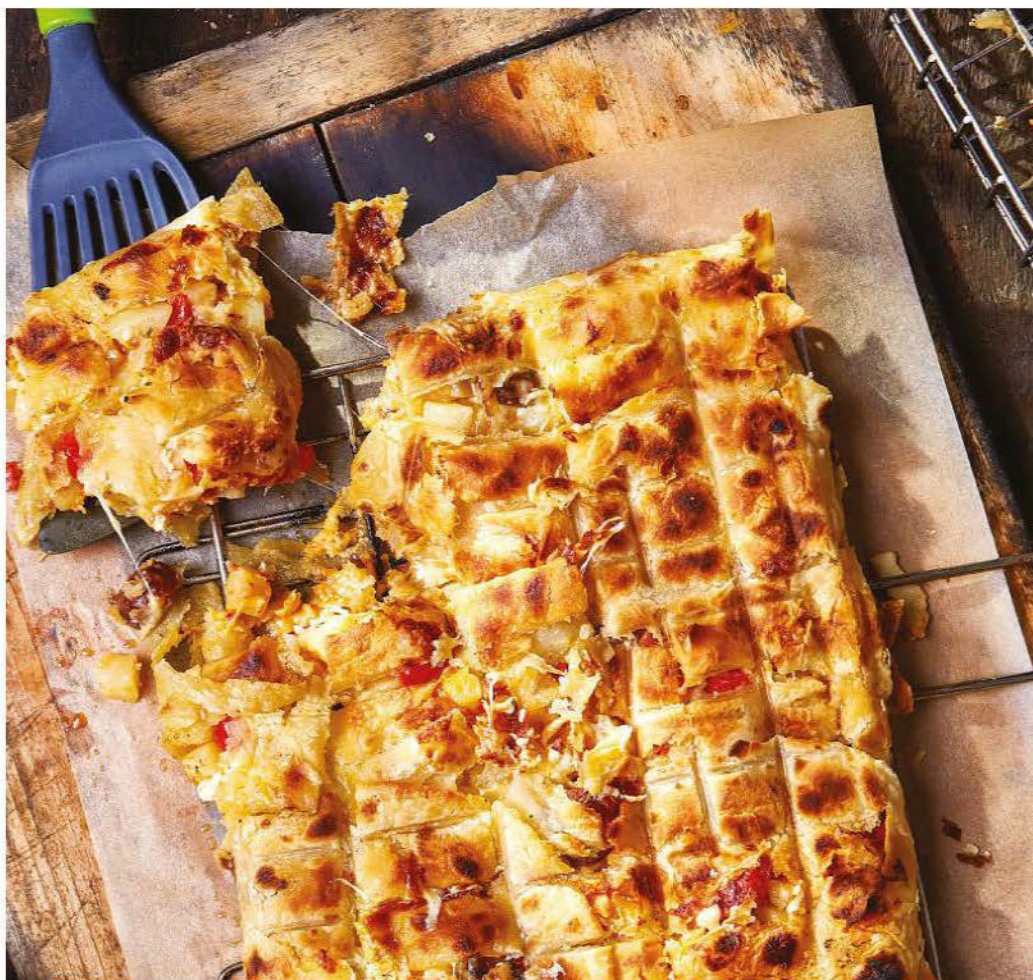
1 Prepare the filling. Squeeze the cooked spinach dry and chop it finely. Mix it with the creamy feta, soft herbs and lemon zest to form a thick filling. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

2 Cut a pocket into each steak on the side without the fat edge. Season the steaks well, inside and out, with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

3 Divide the spinach mixture into four portions. Wrap each portion in three slices of ham, then gently stuff the parcel into the pocket of each steak. Secure the opening with one or two toothpicks if needed. (The filling can be made at home, frozen, and packed frozen, ready to use at camp.)

4 Grill the steaks over hot coals in a ridged pan or in a hinged braai grid until nicely browned and just cooked through. Allow the meat to rest for a few minutes while heating the tomato relish in a separate pan. Serve the steaks with the sauce and your favourite starch – pasta, rice, fresh bread or a baked potato in the coals all work beautifully.

Drive & Camp says Feel free to make your own relish or homemade tomato sauce if you prefer.



CHUNKY QUESADILLA Multicultural braai pie

The aromatic chorizo gives the potato filling a deliciously smoky bite.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 200 g chorizo, thinly sliced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 4 potatoes, peeled and diced
- 6 medium flour tortillas
- 2 cups grated cheddar cheese
- 100 g feta cheese

Here's how

1 Heat the olive oil in a pan and fry the chorizo until nicely crispy. Add the red pepper and diced potatoes and cook until the vegetables are well coated in the fragrant oil. Season with salt to taste.

2 Add 1 cup of water, cover with a lid and allow the mixture to steam-fry until the water has evaporated and the potatoes are tender. Use your judgement as to whether

a second splash of water is needed.

3 Arrange four tortillas in the corners of a small hinged braai grid so that they overlap and hang over the edges slightly. Place the fifth tortilla in the centre; the layout should resemble a flower.

4 Sprinkle a layer of cheddar over the base tortillas and spoon the potato filling on top. Crumble over the feta, place the final tortilla on top of the filling on the centre tortilla, then carefully fold the overhanging sections inward over the filling.

5 Close the grid gently to hold the quesadilla in place. A light brushing of olive oil or a spray of non-stick cooking spray will help prevent the tortillas from sticking.

6 Braai the quesadilla slowly over the coals until golden brown on all sides and heated through. You want all the cheese fully melted, so adjust the height and cooking time according to the heat of the coals. Cut into squares and serve immediately.

Drive & Camp says Use ready-made rotis for a richer, crispier outer layer.



LOADED GEM SQUASH Full to the brim

Gem squash with creamed sweetcorn is a winning combination, and the crispy bacon takes it to the next level.

Ingredients

(serves 10 as a side dish)

- 5 gem squash
- 1 can (420 g) creamed sweetcorn
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 200 g streaky bacon, chopped and fried until crispy

Here's how

1 Boil the whole gem squash in water for 10 minutes, then remove and allow to cool until comfortable to handle. Cut each squash in half, carefully scoop out the seeds, and season the flesh with salt and pepper.

2 Combine the sweetcorn, cheese and crispy bacon. Spoon the mixture generously into the

squash halves. You can also add chopped jalapeños or a pinch of paprika.

3 Place the filled squash halves on a grid over moderate coals. Cover with an inverted braai pan to create a makeshift "oven" and cook until the cheese is melted and bubbling.

Drive & Camp says Shop-bought cheese sauce mixed with biltong, or leftovers from a chilli con carne potjie topped with a sprinkle of cheese, also make delicious fillings for gem squash. Let your imagination run wild and get creative!



CHICKEN MAYO POCKET PIES Part and parcel

You only need a handful of ingredients for this one, and they taste fantastic in a jaffle iron, as toasted sandwiches, or fried into these crispy little "pies".

Ingredients

(makes 12)

- 400 g mini skinless breast fillets
- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for frying
- 1/3 cup creamy mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup chakalaka (tinned or homemade)
- 2 cups grated mozzarella cheese
- 12 slices white bread
- butter, for spreading

Here's how

1 Fry the chicken fillets in the olive oil and season with your favourite braai spice, or simply salt and pepper. Allow the meat to cool, then shred it finely. Mix the chicken with the mayonnaise,

chakalaka and cheese to form the filling.

2 Trim the crusts off the bread slices and spread generously with butter. Spoon a mound of filling onto the centre of six slices (butter-side down) and top with the remaining slices, butter-side up. Press the edges firmly together with a fork to seal the parcels.

3 Pan-fry the bread parcels in a little olive oil until golden brown and crispy all over, with the cheese melted inside – or braai them in a hinged grid over the coals.

Drive & Camp says Shredded leftover braai chicken works just as well in the filling. If you take an air fryer along on your camping trips, you can use that too to crisp up the parcels.



BILTONG-BUTTER CANDLES

Melt-in-the-mouth magic

Spoil your flame during the month of love with a truly special campfire candle feast.

Ingredients

(makes 3 candles)

- 500 g softened butter
- ½ cup biltong powder
- 2 tbsp finely chopped chives or parsley
- 3 food-safe candle wicks (we ordered Simply Bee Candle Wicks from Faithful to Nature)

Here's how

1 Mix the butter, biltong powder and herbs until smooth. Feel free to adjust the flavouring to suit your taste. Spoon or pipe the flavoured butter into three disposable cups, filling them as evenly as possible and smoothing the tops. We used polystyrene drinking cups.

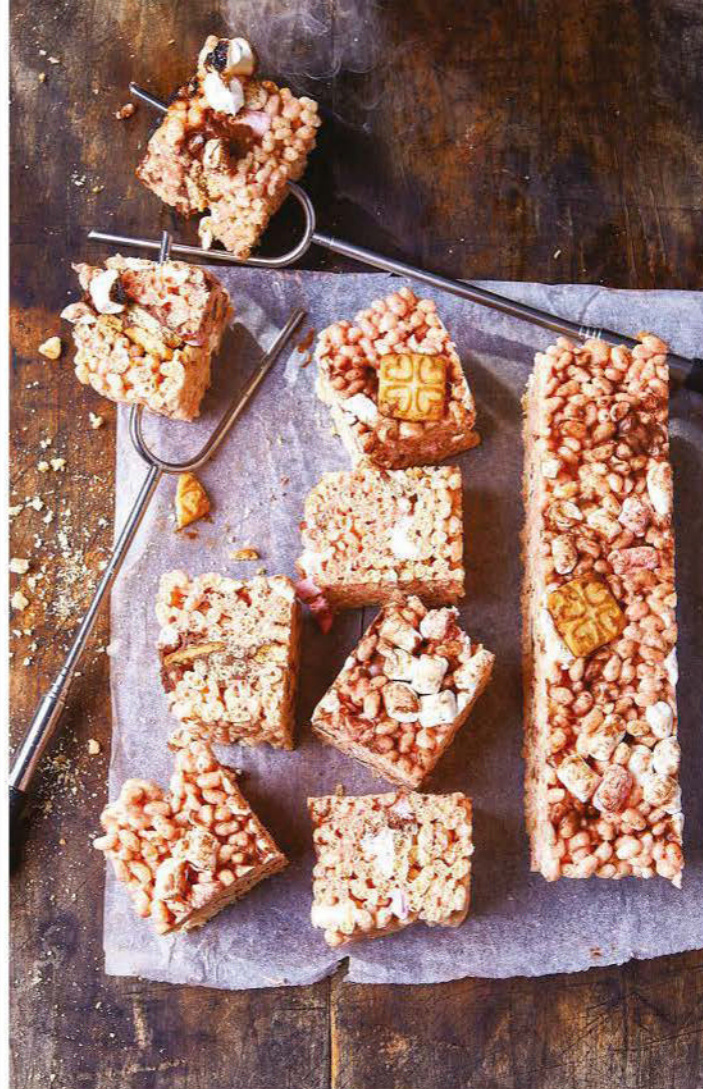
2 Press a candle wick into the centre of each butter candle, trim

it to length and refrigerate until firm. (If you're travelling far, you can even freeze them.)

3 Cut a hole the size of the butter candle into the centre of a fresh sourdough loaf. Slice the remaining bread around the hole, taking care not to cut all the way through.

4 Carefully release the butter candles from the cups (this is where disposable containers really help), place one in the centre of the bread and light the wick. An extra candle in a tin mug or enamel dish is handy in case the butter melts too slowly to keep up with enthusiastic dipping.

Drive & Camp says If you'd rather skip the DIY, you can buy ready-made butter candles from Babylonstoren. A garlic butter candle (180 g) sells for R100.



RICE KRISPIES S'MORES

Please sir, may I have s'more?

These marshmallow-loaded Rice Krispies treats get an extra indulgent layer in the middle – perfect for toasting over campfire coals.

Ingredients

(serves 4)

- ½ cup butter
- 300 g marshmallows
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- a pinch of salt
- 6 cups Rice Krispies
- 1 packet (40 g) mini tennis biscuits
- 1½ cups mini marshmallows (extra)
- 1 slab (80 g) milk chocolate, melted

Here's how

1 Melt the butter in a pot, add the marshmallows and stir over medium heat until melted. Stir in the vanilla and salt, then add all the

Rice Krispies. Remove the pot from the heat.

2 Mix everything vigorously, then spoon half the mixture into a square pan sprayed with non-stick cooking spray.

3 Level the mixture with a spatula and sprinkle over the biscuits, extra mini marshmallows and melted chocolate in an even layer.

4 Immediately spoon the remaining Rice Krispies mixture over the filling and smooth the top. Allow to cool completely and store in an airtight container. Slice into blocks as needed; I tend to ration them myself, otherwise they disappear long before the fire's even lit!

Drive & Camp says If your kids love roasting marshmallows, it's worth investing in a set of braai sticks. The ones shown in our photos are the Camping Telescopic Extendable Marshmallow Roasting S'mores Sticks from [amazon.co.za](https://www.amazon.co.za)

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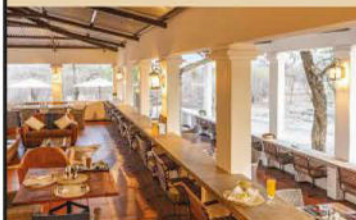
BRITS

YOUR SAFARI ADVENTURE STARTS BY THE CAMPFIRE



On the eastern boundary of Etosha National Park, just 50 metres from the park gate, **Onguma Nature Reserve** offers the ideal base from which to explore this iconic wilderness. Spanning 35,480 hectares, Onguma is home to lion, rhino, elephant, leopard, cheetah, giraffe and abundant plains game. Guests can book sunrise and sundowner drives, join guided bush walks, spend time in the Onkolo Hide, indulge in a spa treatment, or even enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime sleep-out on Onguma's Dream Cruiser. The reserve offers two campsites – **Tamboti and Leadwood** – for those who want to start their safari adventure by the campfire.

So which campsite is for you? **Tamboti or Leadwood?**



TAMBOTI LUXURY CAMPSITE

Enjoy privacy and comfort with your own shower, separate toilet, washing-up space, braai area and power point. The main area includes a restaurant overlooking a waterhole, Wi-Fi (in the main building), a small shop for basics and a swimming pool. Each site is serviced daily.

LEADWOOD CAMPSITE

Shaded by leadwood trees, this campsite offers six sites close to Onguma Bush Camp. Each site is serviced daily and has a shower, toilet, braai and power point, while a shared wash-up area is available between two sites. Guests can use Bush Camp's restaurant (subject to availability) and pool.

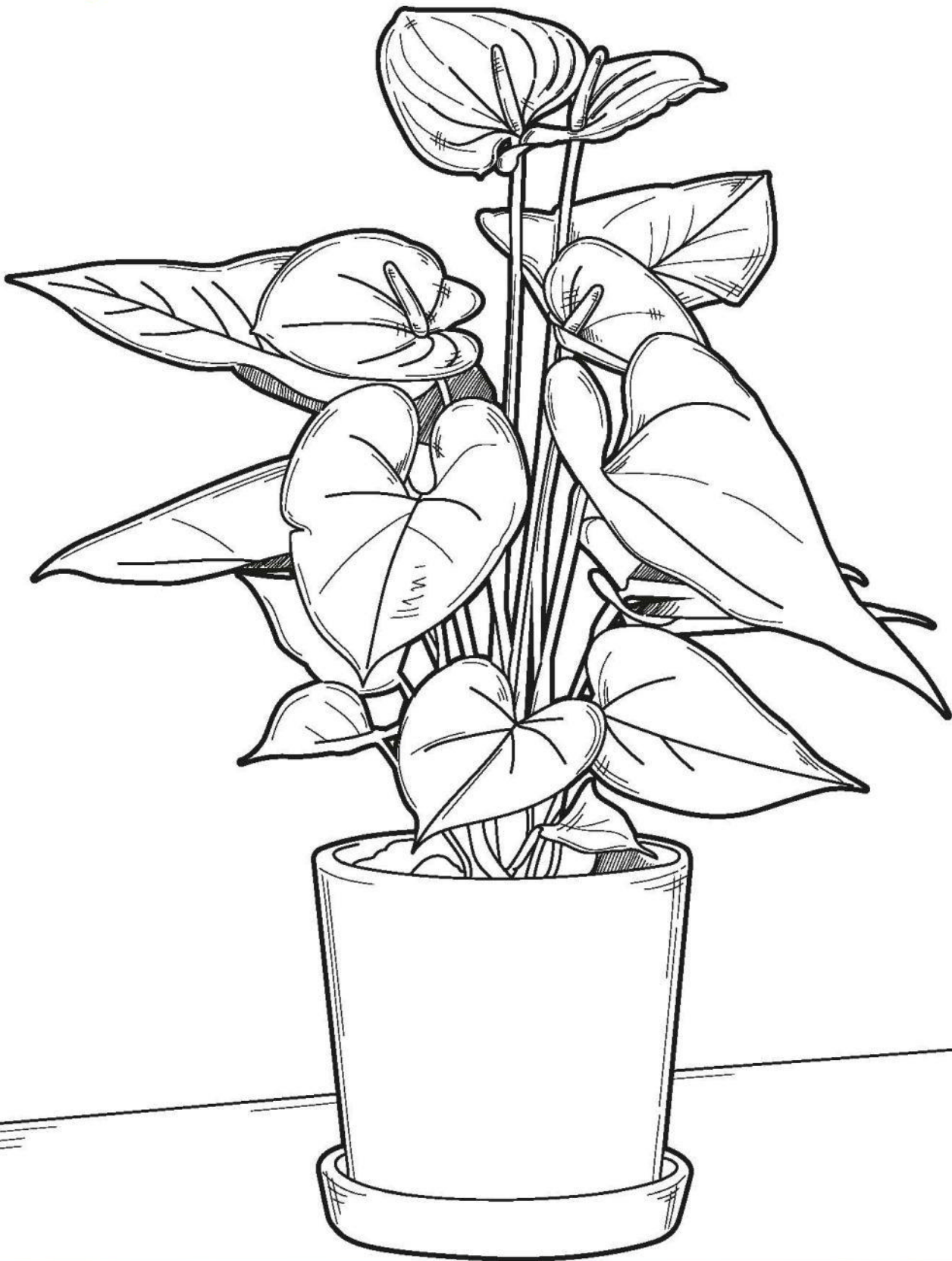
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Onguma
ETOSHA | NAMIBIA

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 108.

			Coastal town on the Garden Route		Lanthanum (symbol)		Silicon (symbol)	Angry		Caves outside Oudtshoorn			
			Amulet			Brown colour				Delete			
			Sun god			Not one							
Demote		Reliable		Lawrencium (symbol)		Poke					Solitary		Fire (3,2)
Gallant guy		Fresh				Lunch or dinner					Some-what		Eat away
									Valencia or navel				
Pupil							Convict		Regarding (archaic)				
Whine									With it				
				Inlet			Pinkish					Silver (symbol)	
							Fairy-like creature						
Torment		Yarn					Yearn				Be in ... minds (undecided)		
		Dashed											
						Sculpture					Cream of the crop		
Liquid distilled from coal				Osmium (symbol)	Word differently		Chess piece						
							@						
Provide amusement										Astrology sign	National park in Mozambique		
			Chow				Type of tree				Macabre		"Of course!"
			Decide				Jaw				Duration		Rodent
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A Nissan bakkie		Gape		Indian garment						Keepsake			Part of a whole
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						Indefinite article							
Bugle note to order attack													
						Eventually (2,4)							
						Acquire				Depart			

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.

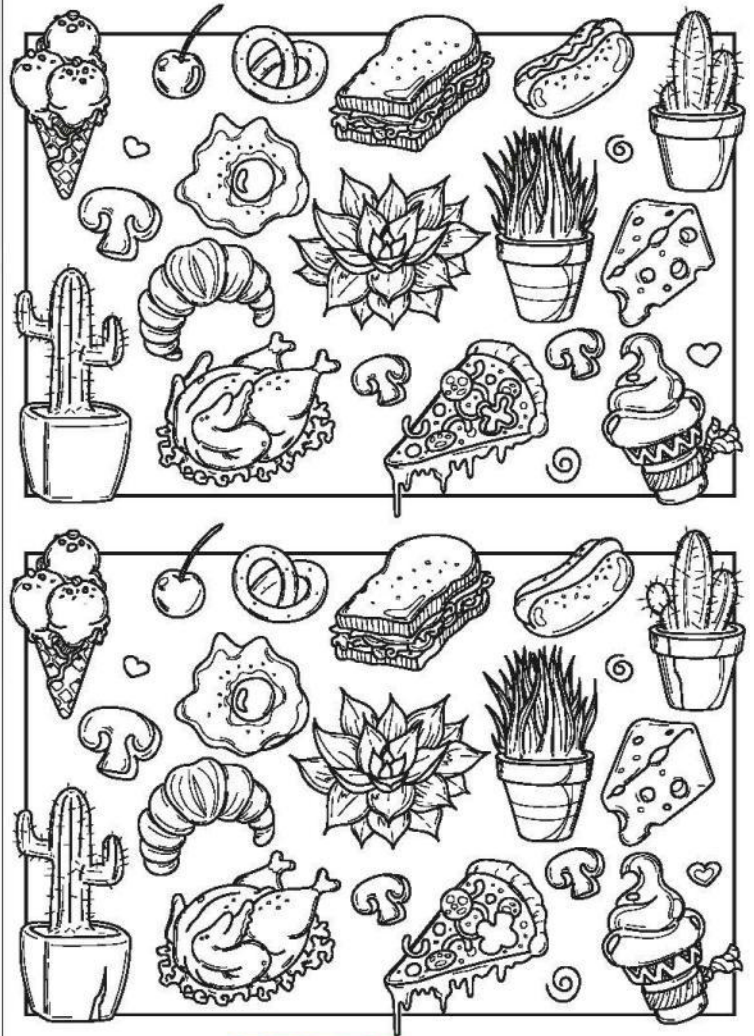
Word search

X O C W T A Y D U I T G B O W L R S D F V H
C Z T N F K T I T Z O W N O K T M H O Y J W
T E J Z Y D U R S A C D Q K W V R K S H A M
N B G Z E W I T Z F Z T I S B V Q M W A W G
I U D V S U T E N O R T O N Z I A O E R Z L
C W W D M T T Q O F W K W I V N T T S L A O
Z J M P J S C N H O N D A Y E C A O E E W F
D J H A W O E T N G F U Q D L E Y G D Y Z E
S R U T G K P J M B B B Y Z W N S U N D W S
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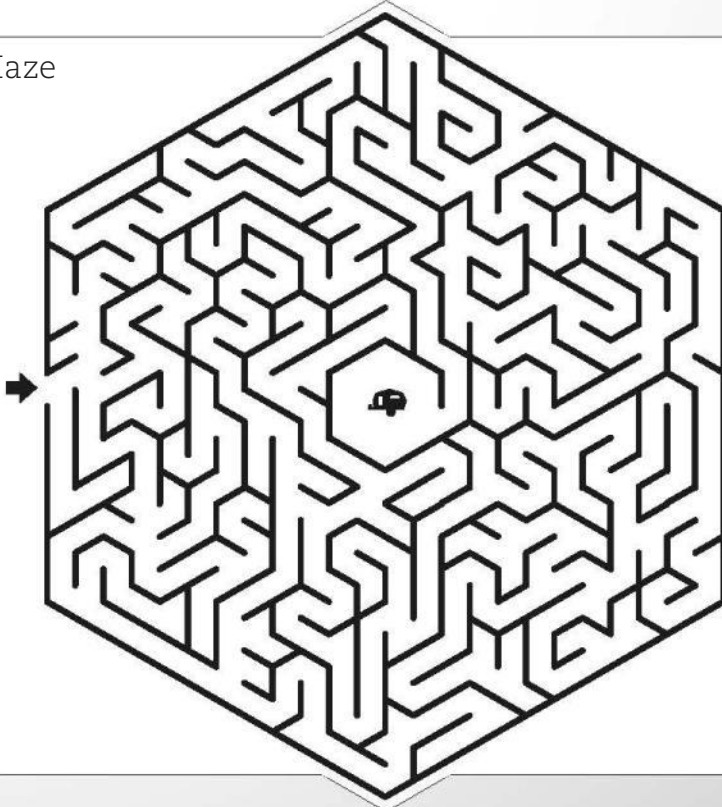
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Kawasaki	Aprilia	Norton
Harley Davidson	Triumph	Bajaj Auto
Suzuki	Moto Guzzi	Vincent
BMW	Benelli	Bimota
Ducati	Indian	

Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts



KUDU (TRAGELAPHUS)

- There are two species of kudu – the greater kudu and the lesser kudu. They look similar but differ in size.
- Adults can grow up to 160 cm tall at the shoulder and weigh as much as 315 kg.
- Males, known as bulls, carry distinctive spiral horns that can reach lengths of up to 180 cm.
- These are the longest horns of any antelope species. Growth begins when a bull is between six and 12 months and is complete by around six years of age.
- Females, known as cows, do not have horns in either kudu species.
- Kudu have grey-brown coats marked by thin white stripes that help them blend into their surroundings.

'New' Hilux on its way

Toyota's strategy for the Hilux is clearly a winner, which is why the manufacturer needs to be very careful not to spoil this winning formula when launching a new model, says **Mic van Zyl**.

A new Toyota Hilux model launch happens only once every decade or so, which is why it's always a much-anticipated event.

Recently, the internet has been inundated with spy shots and predictions around what the new Toyota Hilux Travo, due later this year, will look like, as well as what its specifications are likely to be. After the global reveal in November, it seems as if focus has shifted to a discussion around whether this is a new vehicle or merely a significant facelift, and the topic invited a fair amount of negative comment.

While 10 years is quite a stretch between new-model launches, Toyota does implement upgrades throughout the lifespan of the Hilux, offering changes and improvements to keep the proverbial pot boiling. The 7th generation Hilux, known as the Hilux Vigo, was launched in 2005 and facelifted twice – in 2008 and more significantly in 2011.

The current 8th generation Hilux Revo was launched in 2015 and also updated twice, in 2017 and again in 2020. These updates were limited to the front styling of the vehicle, minor interior improvements, as well as engine upgrades – specifically on the 2.8 1GD-FTV turbo diesel.

Historically, the Hilux has been the top-selling single-model vehicle in South Africa for several decades and a sales leader in several other markets. Toyota's Hilux strategy is clearly a winner, which is why the manufacturer needs to be very careful not to spoil this winning formula when launching a new model. I imagine this to be a very difficult process laced with many challenging decisions.

With the new Hilux Travo, Toyota has been very open about their "don't

fix it if it isn't broken" policy. The new model is still based on an updated version of the Toyota IMV (Innovative international Multi-purpose Vehicle) platform from the previous two generations. There were rumours that the Hilux may switch to the newer TNGA-F (Toyota New Global Architecture) platform as seen in the Land Cruiser 300 and Prado 250, but this would have required significant changes to the Hilux's design, which would have added to development costs.

After previously using around 100 different platforms, Toyota implemented TNGA to simplify the development of new models and reduce development costs. The new platform has five variants, which underpin around 80% of current models globally.

Much of the current Hilux Revo has indeed been carried over to the new Travo. While the front and rear have changed significantly, the cabin structure has been carried over. The venerable 1GD-FTV 2.8 turbo diesel engine and 6-speed gearbox have been carried over as well. With 150 kW of

power and 500 Nm of torque, this engine-gearbox combo is still very relevant and performs flawlessly.

The major changes for the new Hilux include a welcome upgrade to the interior, which reminds me of the new Prado 250 and features a new dashboard and steering wheel. Power steering is now electric, which means better lane-keeping assist. The improved engine and body-to-chassis mountings promise reduced levels of NVH into the cabin.

The 2,4-litre diesel and 2,7-litre petrol engines are no longer. The current mild hybrid is still on offer, and in Thailand, there is an all-electric Hilux for sale. Something I await with bated breath is the new suspension, tuned to address the ride quality.

I have always been a Toyota fan, albeit with a relatively low enthusiasm for the Hilux model for one single reason. As somebody who has focussed on vehicle suspension and ride quality for the last three decades of my career, I can say with some level of authority that the ride in the Hilux has always been unacceptably poor.

My own vehicle for the past two years has been a 2023 Hilux GR-Sport (not the latest wide body variant). This had KYB sport suspension – in my opinion a step backwards from the standard setup. After fitting a high-quality aftermarket suspension kit, I am liking my Hilux more with every trip.

I have also realised that Toyota has changed exactly the things I would want changed in my own bakkie and left the things that work well alone. I am convinced that this was indeed the right move.

With Hilux sales currently still topping the chart in so many important markets with a 10-year-old vehicle, it is a massive apple cart to upset.



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A shocking truth

Camping should be a joyful – and shock-free – experience. So don't play electrician unless you know what you're doing, says Neels van Heerden.

Your caravan's tent is up, the camp chairs are out and you've got something cold in your hand – the perfect start to a relaxing weekend away. Then your significant other brushes against the caravan's aluminium trim... tzzt! A sharp jolt shoots from the metal to her elbow. Not strong enough to cause a scream, but enough for an instinctive, yet restrained: "damn it".

Over the years, I've experienced plenty of these little shocks at friends' and family members' caravans, and almost every time a "professional" is quick to step forward with advice. It's usually the camp neighbour who earned his electrical qualification at the University of YouTube. "The problem is your caravan's earth," he'll announce confidently. "Just knock a spike into the ground, pour some water over it, connect the earth wire to the axle and voilà!" The advice sounds clever, but it's total nonsense.

If I had a rand for every time someone offered some wisdom on a camping forum or around a braai fire, I could have replaced my single-axle Pzazz with my dream rig long ago: a double-axle Pzazz.

In most of these cases, that little shock is nothing more than good old static discharge. Caravans are built from materials like aluminium, wood and insulation, which together create the perfect environment for static electricity to build up. Dry air, dust, your shoes scuffing on the floor and kids bouncing on the bed all play their part. When you touch the caravan, that built-up electricity discharges through your body. Yes, it's annoying when it happens, but it's not particularly dangerous.

Sometimes, though, a shock feels a lot stronger than that polite little "damn it" and escalates rapidly into full-blown sailor's language. This kind of zap usually happens when the caravan is plugged

into mains power, and it's a clear sign that something isn't right with the electrical system. It could be a loose or faulty earth wire, a problem within the caravan's own system, or an issue with the campsite's electrical supply. Don't underestimate the risk that comes with cheap extension cords and multi-plugs either.

Electrical safety starts with your own equipment. Have your caravan's system tested regularly at a reputable service centre, and invest in SABS-approved power cords, plugs and electrical components. Make sure these include built-in safety devices such as residual current devices (RCDs). These clever bits of kit cut the power instantly when a fault is detected.

Even with the best electrical setup in your caravan, things can quickly become dangerous if a cable is damaged, gets wet, or if the campsite's earth is weak or faulty. That's why children should never be allowed to plug the caravan into the campsite power point.

Campsites themselves are required to comply with SABS specifications. Where power is supplied via a standard three-

pin household socket, it must be properly protected against rain, dust and insects. Each caravan stand should also be fitted with its own safety measures, including a device that detects earth leakage and cuts the power in the event of danger (an RCD), as well as a miniature circuit breaker (MCB) to prevent overloads and short circuits.

Finally, power points should never be shared between caravans and must meet the relevant standards at all times.

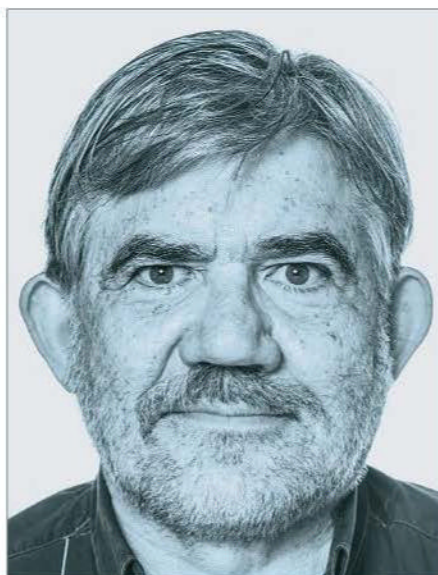
Ensuring compliance with these requirements is the responsibility of grading inspectors when campsites apply for star grading.

The most dangerous part, however, is when people follow poor advice – like simply hammering a metal spike into the ground. This practice exposes you and your loved ones to serious risk because it can create two separate paths for electrical current. If something is already wrong with the campsite's power supply, that extra earth path can prevent the RCD from operating correctly. Put plainly: that spike can stop the power from tripping when something goes wrong – and the consequences can quite literally shake you to your core.

If you ever experience a strong shock while your caravan is connected to a campsite power supply, disconnect immediately. Check all cables for moisture, damage and loose connections. Thoroughly dry any wet components and, once you're home, have the entire system inspected by a qualified electrician.

Any suspect cables, plugs or appliances should be replaced without delay. And if you suspect the problem lies with the campsite's electrical system, notify management immediately.

Remember: the joy of camping lies in relaxing, socialising and braaig – not in "shocking" experiences or dangerous electrical situations.



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Is bad luck inherited?

Holidays in his youth were shaped far more by adversity than by happy memories, **Ali van Wyk** recalls.



ILLUSTRATION DOMINIC WIENAND

There's a reason my children don't know what the word "adversity" means. When I asked, only one of the three teenagers in my house ventured an opinion: "It has something to do with how fast a kettle boils..."

Mechanical mishaps along the roadside are nothing today compared to what they were years ago. You know the story... In my day, proper cars still broke down.

Since the 1970s, vehicles have become dramatically more reliable. Is it a coincidence that the culture of mechanical adversity faded just as Japanese cars started making their mark against the big, old American iron? I don't think so. Once South

Africans realised that the vehicles they'd dubbed "Jap Scrap" were actually reliable and light on fuel, everything changed.

When my dad sold his 1971 Chevy Kommando in 1981, we considered it a major achievement that the "old" car had lasted 10 years and roughly 120 000 km without too much, well, adversity.

These days, I'll happily buy a well-looked-after Toyota Hilux that's far older than 10 years. It's not unusual to see a photo in a small-town newspaper of a neatly dressed gentleman who's clocked more than a million kilometres on his Isuzu. I tend to remember our family holiday routes more in terms of the mishaps that marked those trips like measles than the enjoyable things we actually did. It's sad, but it's true.

First there was that Chevrolet – a station wagon with a 4,1 l straight-six engine. Chevrolets didn't give quite as much trouble as one heard about Fords, but this one still made its fair contribution. The gear mechanism, for instance, had a habit of jamming, leaving you unable to get the car into gear. The little gear lever on the steering column simply didn't offer enough leverage.

That meant popping the bonnet and manually freeing the mechanism; an inconvenient quirk, but not one that would normally bring a holiday to a grinding halt. Unless, of course, the jamming happened at the exact moment a bad-tempered bull elephant on the Lower Sabie-Skukuza road decided your presence was disturbing his inner Zen.

Fortunately, it turned out to be a mock charge. A bruised ego and a few

damp pairs of pants on the back seat were manageable casualties.

Early in the Chev era, my dad borrowed an old, heavy caravan to see whether our family was compatible with the camping life. On a corrugated gravel road in the Drakensberg, one of the caravan's leaf springs liberated itself in a manner worthy of a Looney Tunes car crash. After bouncing twice into the road reserve, the thing finally came to rest among three bewildered Jersey cows. Boing! Boing! Boing!

Without the spring, the relentless jolting caused one of the caravan's cupboard doors to fly open – and a dozen eggs, a litre of milk, a block of butter and a bit of flour were violently churned together into a puddle on the caravan floor. A batter so convincing you'd swear a soufflé could have been baked from it, had we been more inclined to live "in the moment".

After a long game-reserve holiday, the white Chev also developed the puzzling habit of repeatedly losing power, only to regain it again once back on the open road. In White River, a mechanic approached, wiping his hands on a filthy rag. He listened with a protruding lower lip to my dad's long-winded explanation. "ja well no fine, Sir, it's game-park sickness – from driving too slowly. Open her up on the mountain passes and she'll be right."

My dad muttered a few choice words as we pulled away, but eventually swallowed his pride as we powered past Waterval Boven with a caravan in tow, touching gravel only now and then.

The shorter-lived era of the blue Chev arrived towards the end of the seventies. Another Kommando station wagon with a straight-six – this time, a 3,8 l. In hindsight, it was merely the calm before the storm.

Any hint of a new dawn vanished in a cloud of exhaust fumes when my dad succumbed to the madness of 1981 and had a Ford 3 l V6 installed in the back of our new Volkswagen Kombi. An enterprising mechanic in Pretoria, Daan Jacobs, had identified a gap in the market for a vehicle big enough for a large family (a Kombi), yet powerful enough to tow a caravan (a Ford V6).

Had Daan been a Ford executive, he might well have whisked his wife off to Mauritius in 1981 on the strength of his performance bonus, but Daan was just a mechanic.

Well, our pale green Kombi overheated chronically. On top of that, the powerful engine devoured Volkswagen clutches for breakfast and stripped fourth gears for lunch. One December holiday saw us stranded for four weeks in a caravan park near Margate without a vehicle, after the Kombi's gearbox gave up the ghost. The car spent Christmas and New Year in a workshop, and was only ready just in time for our return journey.

It was false hope, though. The Kombi broke down again in Amanzimtoti when the brand-new gearbox packed up. That's right, dear reader: it chews through the teeth of that fourth gear like kernels stripped from a fresh mielie cob.

Another problem was that the engine mountings were simply too flimsy for the burly V6. Bolts would snap, dropping engines onto the road. The time it happened to us, we had just pulled off on a muddy verge near a Malelane farmstall. Although the engine ended up on the ground, it was still attached to the propshaft, and my dad managed to jack it up and bolt it back into place. Other Kombi V6 owners weren't as lucky. Some lost their engines at 120 km/h, with the motor tearing free of the propshaft entirely. Try to picture that particular nightmare, especially with a caravan hitched to the Kombi.

Most V6 owners got rid of their vehicles after the first brush with disaster, but not us. My dad is a glass-half-full kind of guy, and as solutions emerged, he applied them one by one: reinforced engine mountings, a strengthened gearbox, a bigger radiator...

Eventually, all the V6 Kombi's problems were solved – but it took 12 years. Those 12 years happened to coincide neatly with my entire puberty and adolescence. As a result, I spent a large portion of that time at random picnic spots along national roads and in workshops in places like Kaapmuiden, Witbank, Margate, White River and Bergville.

One would think a reasonably intelligent person might extract a few guiding principles from all those years of misfortune; principles like never buy a converted vehicle unless you're a qualified mechanic.

Fast-forward 20 years. An idealistic young journalist buys a Toyota Hilux 2 l engine from a questionable dealer in Elsies River, Cape Town. The journalist has a problem, and he throws money at it. The problem is a 1975 Volkswagen Autovilla camper van without an engine. The original four-cylinder boxer had exhaled its final puff.

One holiday of the journalist and his family has already been more or less ruined by the camper. They left Cape Town at 90 km/h and, three weeks later, limped back home downhill at 40 km/h. The engine's cylinder head had cracked, and several mechanics advised the journalist to rather fit a "Toyota 3Y engine".

Easier said than done. The journalist found a somewhat dubious mechanic, also in Elsies River, who specialised in this sort of conversion. Fine, I'll admit it: that journalist was me, and I acted in full defiance of my better judgement. But the thought of selling the cute little camper without an engine for next to nothing was simply too sad to contemplate.

The Autovilla and the Hilux engine were more compatible than a Kombi and a Ford V6, but old Volkswagen buses were air-cooled, which meant a rather amateurish water-cooling system had to be installed. The first real test of this new marriage was a December holiday drive to Fouriesburg in the eastern Free State for a family gathering.

I don't need to tell the story. The catalogue of adversity speaks for itself: chronic engine overheating; clutch failure and vehicle abandoned at a workshop in Colesberg; the holiday budget destroyed by having to rent a bakkie; three children contracting head lice in a questionable motel room; a campsite perched on a cliff edge with a two-year-old who'd just started walking; relentless torrential rain and a leaking tent; the eldest child vomiting continuously; aunts criticising the parents' child-rearing methods; a grandmother losing her hair to chemotherapy.

In 2007, I sold the camper to someone I warned thoroughly about the curse resting upon it. We bought a Toyota Hilux, and in the 18 years since then, we haven't had a single day of adversity. Nada. Nothing.

I intend to keep it that way. ●

AND FINALLY...

100 years young

Maserati, the luxury carmaker from Bologna, Italy, celebrates its centenary this year. We look back at the marque's glory days.



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1926 MASERATI TIPO 26



1967 MASERATI GIBLI



1971 MASERATI BORA

Maserati was founded in 1914 by brothers Alfieri, Ettore and Ernesto Maserati under the name Ditta Alfieri Maserati. Your maths would be correct if you're quick to point out that this was 112 years ago, but the first car to wear the now-iconic trident badge and the Maserati name only left the workshop in 1926. Incidentally, the emblem was designed by a fourth Maserati brother, Mario, inspired by the statue of Neptune in the heart of Bologna.

That 1926 car was christened the Maserati Tipo 26 and entered into the Targa Florio race in Sicily, where it promptly announced itself by taking victory on debut. The Tipo 26 would go on to win the event a further four times, but its racing success didn't end there. It also claimed victory twice at the American Indianapolis 500 and racked up an astonishing nine Formula 1 race wins. The crowning moment came in 1957, when legendary Argentine driver Juan Manuel Fangio was at the wheel of a Tipo 26 as he secured his fifth – and final – Formula 1 World Championship title.

Other Maseratis that have etched themselves into automotive history include the 1967 Maserati Ghibli,



2018 MASERATI LEVANTE

with its V8 engine and a top speed of 250 km/h (seriously quick for the era), and the 1971 Maserati Bora, which introduced the brand's first mid-engine mounted between the rear axle and the driver seat. These two cars rank among the most beautiful vehicles ever created by the Italian marque.

A more recent model is the Maserati Levante, which we featured in June 2018 (*Drive & Camp* #11). Our verdict at the time summed it up neatly: "It's indescribably enjoyable."

Happy birthday, Maserati!



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