

#73

CAMP CUISINE HOT POTATOES FOR COLD NIGHTS

JUNE-JULY 2026 | ISSUE 73

go!

Drive & Camp

Kalahari

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Hit the road and explore this Eastern Cape gem

VANDERKLOOF

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kykNET EXPO

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MY WHEELS A reader's red-hot towing combination for gravel roads | **DRIVE IMPRESSION** Omoda C9 SHS the best of both worlds | **CARAVAN TEST** Tuff Cats Mbada 2d Max hits the spot | **TOW TEST** Nissan Navara Warrior built for battle | **ELECTRIC VEHICLES** The bubble is bursting, says Mic | **MAKE ROOM FOR THE DOGS!** 8 campsites where your fur babies are welcome

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AVAILABLE IN
Kalahari

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MOBI LODGE XL

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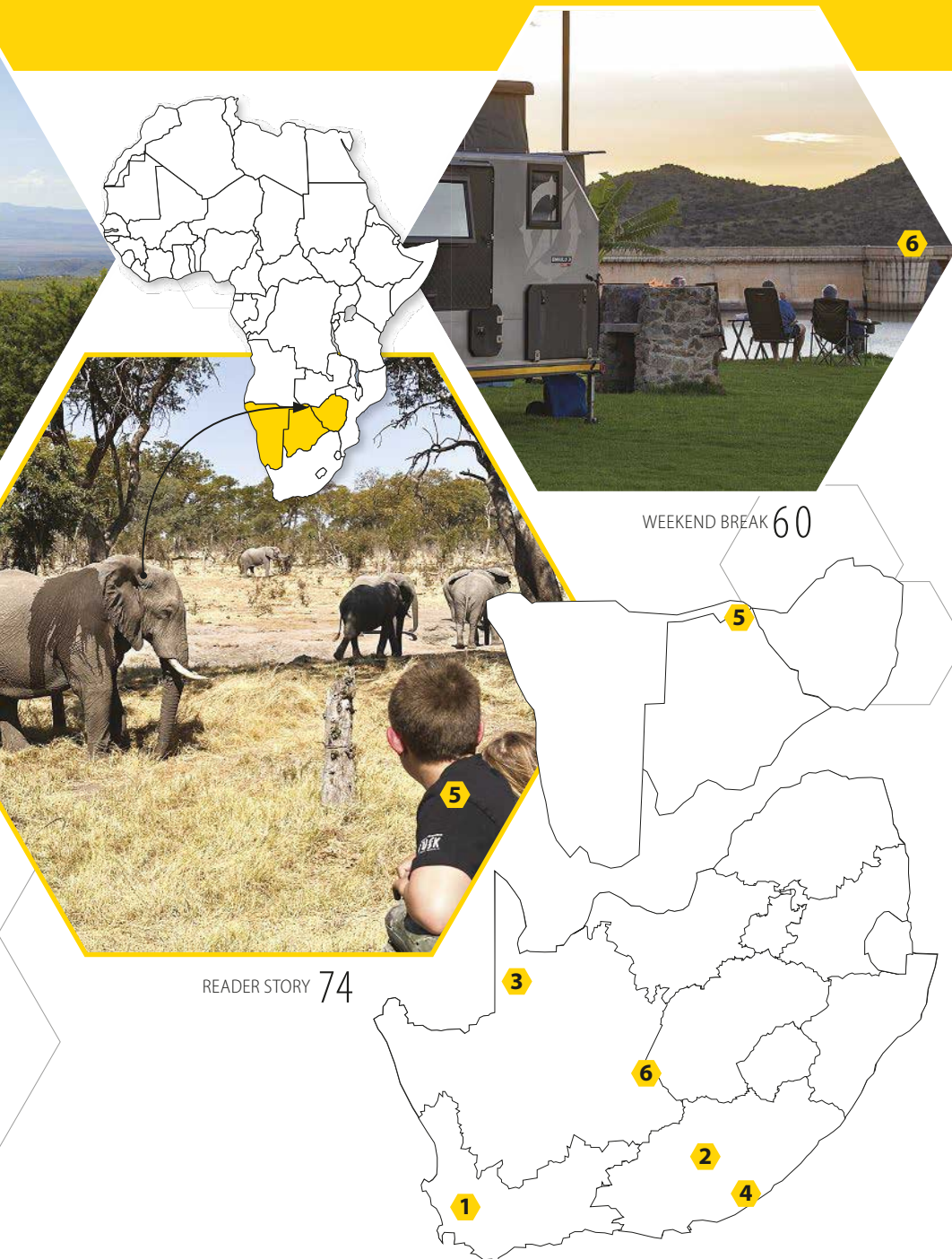


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MEDIA24



#73 COVER IMAGE – LEON BOTHA

“ If you haven’t visited Upington recently, try to make a plan because there are a few new campsites worth visiting. Oranjerus, an old favourite, has been completely revamped after being acquired by N.C. Famous Lodges (read more on p. 30), while Kambiki (photo) is brand new, located just outside of town, and offers private bathrooms for everyone. Turn to p. 36 to read more about Kambiki in this month’s camping feature. ”

Camera & settings Canon EOS 6D Mk. II, f8,
 2 000/s, 24 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

- > 320GSM SAFARI RIPSTOP CANVAS
- > 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

ROOFTOP TENTS

VEHICLE SHOWER CUBICLE



R2 850⁰⁰

- > Size: 1.0m x 1.0m (Adjustable height)
- > Material: 420D Aluminum Coated Nylon
- > Frame: Aluminum Coated Nylon
- > 1 Door

270° LARGE FREE STANDING AWNING



R12 500⁰⁰

- > Size: 2.5 Wide
- > Material: Safari Ripstop Canvas 280gsm
- > Weatherproof UV ROT & Mildew
- > Heavy duty PVC Zip closure bag
- > Includes L-Shape mounting brackets
- > Huge COVER Area

CLAM SHELL 1.45M WIDE



- > Spacious inside
- > Foot lift for extra space
- > Easy and Fast to set up
- > Streamline Design (only 18cm Thick)
- > Includes Mattress & Telescopic Ladder

R33 500⁰⁰

1.2M ROOFTOP TENT



R14 700⁰⁰
1.2m x 2.4m x 1.25m

1.4M ROOFTOP TENT



R16 660⁰⁰
1.4m x 2.4m x 1.25m

1.6M ROOFTOP TENT



R17 490⁰⁰
1.6m x 2.4m x 1.25m

2.0M ROOFTOP TENT



R22 390⁰⁰
2.0m x 2.4m x 1.25m

Material: Safari Ripstop Canvas 260gsm Weatherproof UV, ROT & Mildew

GAZEBOS



SENIOR GAZEBO
R3 410⁰⁰



JUMBO GAZEBO
R4 550⁰⁰



DINING SHELTER
R8 020⁰⁰



DINING SHELTER DELUXE
R14 750⁰⁰

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New
range



ROLLED TOP BACKPACK

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- > Reflective zip sliders
- > Approximate size 30cm x 10cm x 60cm



R265⁰⁰



MULTI LEVEL TABLE



R1 500⁰⁰

EZI-UP LARGE STRETCHER

Max carry weight:
200kg



R1 100⁰⁰

ALUMINIUM STORAGE CASE

30 L **R1 000⁰⁰**

49 L **R1 950⁰⁰**

95 L **R2 700⁰⁰**



- > Lockable
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- > Water resistant
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R650⁰⁰



DC-4

600 D OXFORD COVER AND STEEL FRAME



R999⁰⁰

DC-3

COMPACT FOLDING DESIGN



R720⁰⁰

4-SHELF DELUXE CUPBOARD

CONVERTS INTO
HANGING SPACE



R1 700⁰⁰

*Contents not included

3-SHELF DELUXE CUPBOARD

HARD SHELVES
SHADE NET ZIP
UP DOOR

R1 150⁰⁰



KITCHEN CABINET DELUXE



R1 450⁰⁰

PICNIC TABLE



R399⁰⁰

**STEEL MULTI FUNCTION
FOLDING TABLE**



R1 100⁰⁰

**EZI-UP STANDARD
STRETCHER**

Max carry weight:
130kg



R850⁰⁰

**DELUXE STANDARD
STRETCHER**

Max carry weight:
150kg



R1 300⁰⁰

**DELUXE LARGE
STRETCHER**

Max carry weight:
180kg



R1 450⁰⁰

PORTA POTTI 20L

R1 299⁰⁰

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R770⁰⁰



DINNER SET (6 PERSON)

R2 120⁰⁰



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- > 4 x 15cm Bowls
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R620⁰⁰



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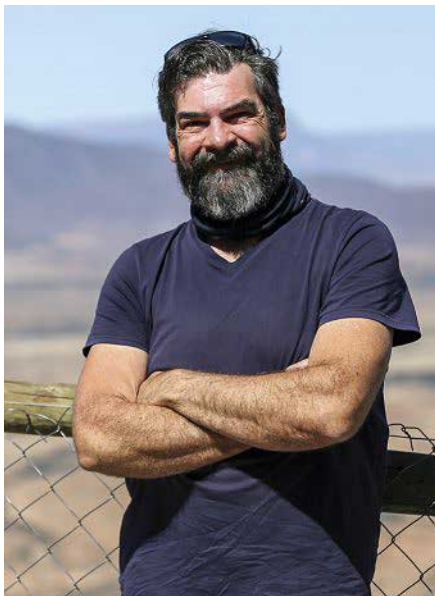
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I was rather annoyed by how blatant winter was when it decided to make its appearance a week or three ago. You would think it would've had the decency to send a WhatsApp to see if you were home, or at least knock gently on the door to warn you that it was here. But not this time.

No, this year it simply kicked the door open and announced with a big bang that it was moving in. The audacity.

I don't want to bore you with the myriad reasons why I'm not a winter person. There simply isn't enough space on this page. And I'm sure there are many people who agree with me.

However, my aversion to this season only applies to my everyday existence. Because strangely enough, there is actually a special charm to a winter camp for me. The air is crisper and fresher, the stars shine brighter and that bone-chilling cold almost forces you to take things slower. As if you become more aware of every moment.

When the sun dips below the horizon, and the cold of the winter surroundings envelops you, the campfire takes on a different meaning, because it is your source of warmth, light and togetherness.

The warmth of a winter camp

In my early days at the magazine, eager to impress and with more naivety than was good for me, I suggested to my editor that I'd go and see what was happening in the Northern Free State for the next camping article... right in the middle of winter.

My parents went with me on that trip. At one point we had two fires going – a braai fire on one side and a large campfire on the other – and yet it was barely enough to dispel the biting Free State cold.

At night, we had to use every jacket, blanket or hot water bottle to feel the life in our fingertips. I smile when I remember those few days today, because they are one of my most precious memories.

We talked deep into the night while we kept the fire burning. The warmth was as much in our time together as in the coals.

I understand that not everyone is equally enthusiastic about winter camping. And that some of us are now turning into "Swallows" who are heading for the warmer parts of the country. But I do believe that winter is not a time to close the curtains and hide in the house on weekends. Take a chance and go experience the wonder of the campfire again.

It is these moments – when we move closer to each other

and conversations become deeper and more meaningful – that the cold reminds us of how precious the warmth within our circle is.

So pack the campfire high this winter. Throw on another log and don't let the cold scare you. Maybe a winter camp will teach you something about the simplicity of life outside the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

If it feels like I'm preaching to the people in the front pews, please let me know why winter camping is special to you. Share your stories and memories and who knows, maybe you'll encourage someone else to brave the winter cold and discover the warmth of the outdoors.

Travel safely.

Schalk

EDITOR

schalk.jonker@media24.com





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FREELINE CAMPERS

VAGABOND



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

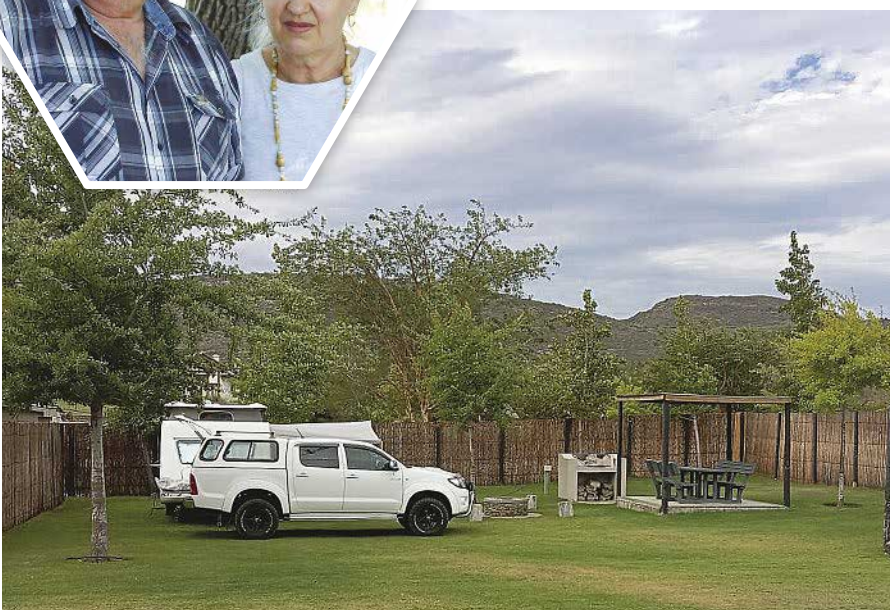
A real oasis in the Karoo



It seems to me that Montagu is becoming ever more popular as a camping and outdoor destination.

Glen Eden is just one of the many places in the area. We camped here for the first time in March this year and I was pleasantly surprised. One expects drought, dust and rocks when you camp in the Karoo, but here it's green. It almost feels like an oasis with the kind of lawn you definitely don't expect in this part of the world.

Your site is spacious and private, and everything is nicely demarcated and big enough that you don't step on your neighbour's toes. It's easy to drive in and out of the level sites and there's plenty of room for your towing vehicle. You get a braai for cooking purposes and a fire pit for a nice social gathering. Each site also has a canopy with a picnic table that can comfortably seat six people. For me, these are the kind of amenities that make me want to stay longer.



WINNING
LETTER

Gert 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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Comfort that follows *YOU*



KLIPSPRINGER

Built for the Wild: Where Craftsmanship Meets Capability

There's a difference between a caravan that travels, and one that belongs in the wild.

The Stealth Kudu, Klipspringer, and Springbok, is engineered with a clear purpose: to take on South Africa's toughest terrain without compromise. From the first glance, their bold, rugged design signals intent. But it's in the detail where they truly set themselves apart. Precision craftsmanship, premium materials, and a design philosophy rooted in durability ensure that each unit is more than just a caravan, it's a reliable companion built for life beyond the tar.

Three Icons, One Standard: Kudu, Klipspringer & Springbok

Each model in the Stealth lineup carries its own personality while upholding the same uncompromising standard. The Kudu stands as the flagship, powerful, spacious, and designed for extended off-grid adventures.

The Klipspringer, nimble and versatile, is built for those who chase remote destinations where agility matters most. Meanwhile, the Springbok strikes the perfect balance, offering comfort and capability in equal measure.

Despite their differences, all three share a DNA of strength, innovation, and meticulous attention to detail, a testament to a brand that refuses to cut corners.

Stealth: Built tough with next-level craftsmanship, designed to endure the harshest terrain and take you further, every time.



STEALTH
SPRINGBOK



SPRINGBOK



KUDU



STEALTH
KUDU

The Ultimate Test: Joburg to Cape Town via Tankwa

A true measure of any off-road caravan lies in the journey, not the showroom. Recently, the Stealth trio took on the demanding route from Johannesburg to Cape Town via Tankwa, a stretch known for its unforgiving conditions, relentless dust, and rugged terrain. It was here, far from comfort and convenience, that their engineering proved its worth. The caravans handled the challenge with confidence, absorbing the punishment while maintaining comfort and stability. This wasn't just a trip; it was a statement. A demonstration that when design, durability, and craftsmanship come together, the result is something exceptional, a caravan range that doesn't just endure the wild, but thrives in it.

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

The wood-fired hot tub adds a special touch. Hot water, crackling flames and stars above you. You get the wood for the hot tub when you arrive and pay when you leave with an honesty system for the amount you used.

There's a peaceful atmosphere here, and although you're private, you're not isolated. You greet the neighbours, even stop by their campfire and before you know it, you've made new friends. That's part of camping, after all.

There's also glamping accommodation here for people looking for something different. These are

old gypsy caravans with tents and private bathroom and kitchen facilities.

The micro-rooms next to the campsite are for those looking for a quick sleepover. If you stay here, you'll share the campers' facilities.

The restaurant, swimming pool next to the children's playground and the pizza oven where you can buy something to eat, also deserve a mention. Other activities include archery, kayaking, hiking and cycling, while the children can meet the donkeys and peacocks up close.

We spoke to the owner and according to him, come

December, extra stands with private facilities will be available.

Glen Eden is clearly popular, as even in the middle of the week the campsite was busy. There were even guests from Portugal and other countries who stayed here while participating in the Cape Epic multi-stage mountain bike race. They said that they especially enjoyed the tranquillity and the pizzas, which were delivered to their campsite.

It's a place we'll definitely come back to. Next time, for a few more days.

GERT KALIS
Bellville



Like a fine wine

One can definitely learn from the older folks, because a camper doesn't get older; he just gets more organised.

We recently spent 12 days in the Kruger National Park at camps such as Letaba, Satara, Skukuza and Lower Sabie, and it's wonderful to see how many seniors tour the country with caravans to experience all the beauty there is. It's striking how well organised they are and how the elders help each other from the moment they stop until everything is nicely set up.

My wife, Sanet, and I are both over 60 and were amazed at how the elderly manage everything themselves while younger couples struggle and despite a lot of effort, don't accomplish much.

Well done to our campers who have already passed the 70 mark. You are truly an example to a lot of younger people. It is people like you who give us courage for the future of camping.

We salute you!

NICKY BARNARD
Brackenfell



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COMMENT OF THE MONTH!



DOES GREY WATER IN THE CAMPSITE BOTHER YOU? This is what our Facebook friends have to say.



Chris and Alida Laing

It's not nice to stand in other people's wastewater with your tent. Please collect the water and think of your fellow campers. We could smell wastewater in the ground where it dried up until a little rain fell and the smell disappeared.

Reinette van der Lith

Please collect it and give it to the plants. I don't want to pitch my camp in the previous camper's water that has pooled in the middle of the stand.

Danie Malan

Simply use the campsite's showers and washing area.

Maria Alleta Lombard

This is unacceptable.

Abri and Catharina Kruger

For grass and toilets yes, but for the rest you need clean water, please.

Minari Nel

I cringe at the thought of my sick grandchild having to play on the grass where someone's shower and toothbrush water has been spilt. There are bathrooms after all.

Melissa Demaio

It's gross. I don't want to see your bits of food, oil, toothpaste or soapy scum all over the campsite. In the Kruger, a fellow camper had a long pipe that led the wastewater away from his caravan but flowed into our site.

Wastewater belongs in the drain, just like at home. There's also no guarantee that people use biodegradable soap.

George Klopper

It's not sewage and therefore not harmful at all. On the contrary, it's good for the grass.

Marianna van Heerden

George, I want to invite you to look at where our greywater runs out onto the plants. It forms a grey, slimy layer on the ground that we have to remove every now and then and cover with new soil, otherwise it stinks. I will not pitch my camp on a previous camper's mud or, even worse, my neighbour's.

Izak D. Olivier

This should not be allowed. 🙄

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



Instagram



HOME, SWEET HOME.
Photo @dust_and_diesel_overlanding



PRIORITIES
Photo @noel_cloete



KRAALSHOEK, SLANGHOEK VALLEY,
WESTERN CAPE
Photo @noel_cloete



SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS...
Photo @nylriverbushcamp

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Mornings at Môreson

The Western Cape kykNET Outdoor Expo, held annually on the Môreson farm outside Malmesbury, has become an institution where one often meets new faces.

BUSH LAPA

Bush Lapa has expanded its range with two additional models, the Shongololo and Gravel X.

The Shongololo is Bush Lapa's smallest caravan and also the only one in the range that can be towed with a regular driver's licence.

The manufacturer used a teardrop trailer as inspiration. According to Hanno Uys, the mechanical engineer who worked on the project, the idea was a 750 kg GVM right from the start, to appeal to people with a standard licence. Other requirements were a refrigerator and side doors that could swing open 180°.

Bush Lapa owner Jannie Oeschger says that although the Shongololo is cheaper, the quality is still what you would expect from the brand. The body and chassis are made of stainless steel and the interior of aluminium.

The front panel above the A-frame deserves a mention because one can open it to let air and light into the camper. Like other teardrop models, this one also has an outdoor kitchen at the rear.

Standard equipment includes a two-burner gas stove, 105 Ah deep-cycle battery, Victron charging system and various interior and exterior lights.

The tare weight is 460 kg, the bed measures 1,95 x 1,35 m and the GVM is 750 kg (unbraked).

The new Gravel X is a gravelroader with a single axle and sleeping space for three people. The dinette in the nose converts into a third bed.

Just like the Shongololo, the Gravel X has a window in the form of a panel



BUSH LAPA GRAVEL X



BUSH LAPA GRAVEL X



BUSH LAPA GRAVEL X



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BUSH LAPA SHONGOLOLO

that opens above the A-frame. The caravan is 6,42 m long and when the slide-out bed in the middle of the caravan is extended, there is plenty of space inside. The shower and toilet combination is positioned at the rear.

Equipment included in the standard purchase includes the electric pop-up roof, a two-burner gas stove, Victron smart charging system (with a 340 W solar panel and 100 Ah lithium battery), 140 ℓ stainless steel water tank and 14 ℓ gas-electric geyser.

Price Shongololo R189 750; Gravel X R787 750.

Contact ☎ 021 870 1277

🌐 bushlapa.com



BUSH LAPA SHONGOLOLO



BUSHWAKKA RUGGED



BUSHWAKKA

Bushwakka's Rugged 2 is getting a new variant: The Rugged 4. As the number in the name suggests, the newcomer now sleeps four people. The existing queen-size bed folds out of the right-hand panel and the second bed folds out over the A-frame.

Although the external dimensions remain unchanged (4,6 x 1,9 x 2,1 m), the weights have been adjusted slightly. The Rugged 4's tare weight has been increased by 125 kg and now stands at 1 000 kg and the GVM has been reduced by 200 kg to 1 500 kg. The axle is still rated for 2,5 t with 15-inch wheels, and it also has a 175 ℓ water tank.

Price R460 000.

Contact ☎ 023 342 3438

✉ info@bushwakka.africa

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OBIQUA DRIFTER

OBIQUA CAMPERS

This Cape caravan manufacturer launched its first bush caravan, the Drifter 2, here in 2025, and this year owner André van der Merwe came to show off his Drifter 1.

The newcomer is a more compact bush caravan than the Drifter 2 and its combination of a rear door and a slide-out bed in the right panel is a clever layout to make the most of a small bush caravan's limited space.

André explains that, with the Drifter 1, they wanted a bush caravan that was shorter than 4 m (it's 3,9 m long compared to the 5,05 m of the Drifter 2) and one that would fit in a standard garage with its awning while still having inside amenities such as a double bed and hand basin.

At 780 kg, the Drifter 1 prototype is 220 kg lighter than the Drifter 2, but André says he is aiming for 650 kg for the production models so that a GVM of 750 kg can be an option for smaller towing vehicles. The standard GVM is 1 600 kg, and together with the 1,6 t axle, one can easily load 820 kg in the camper.

The washing-up area is still at the back, but because space has been made for the door, the Drifter 1 only has one sink bowl. Inside, the Drifter 1 has a sink and space for a cassette toilet.

Standard equipment includes the nose box, a 75 ℓ water tank, 270° swing-out awning, outside shower, outside fridge



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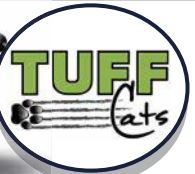


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sliding frame with a fridge and the two-burner gas stove. In terms of electrical equipment, the caravan comes with a 100 Ah lithium battery, multiple power points (12 V and 220 V), DC-DC charger and is solar-ready. The Drifter 1 uses only one gas cylinder (5 kg).

Optional extras include a microwave or air fryer, a second 75 l water tank, a second 100 Ah lithium battery, an inverter, air conditioning, solar panels and an electric pop-up roof.

Price R470 000.

Contact ☎ 083 275 7016

✉ info@obiquacampers.co.za

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OBIQUA DRIFTER



BUNDU LODGE



BUNDU LODGE

Bundu Lodge was able to blow out the first candle on its birthday cake this year after the manufacturer made its debut here a year ago with its Rhino 2 and Elephant 4.

This year, both were back with a few improvements and extra options. The inside of the pop-up roof has a new panel with a sleeker finish than the old aluminium layer. It also helps to prevent condensation and muffles sounds from outside. It is a honeycomb composition with a material finish that one would expect in a hotel suite, and buyers can even choose from a few colours.

Owners can also choose a folding table on the inside of the door. The door opens 180° when you need to get in, which means that the table will be used outside in most cases. It is a much better idea than a wine bottle rack or tarpaulin bags that manufacturers usually install here.

The standard models get a freestanding gas stove, but one now has the option of choosing a permanent stove that sits on the edge of the fridge-freezer sliding frame. It's a better option than having the stove fixed to the worktop like many manufacturers. This way you can move around the stove.

Price Rhino 2 R499 900; Elephant 4 R524 900.

Contact ☎ 079 842 8400 ✉ info@bundu-lodge.co.za

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National Luna 12V 25Amp DC-DC Auxiliary Battery Box With Cables & Hardware (Left), **Trailboss** 160L Compressor (Center) and **SnowMaster** 60L SMEX Fridge & Freezer (Right)



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GECKO XTREME

Gecko Xtreme made history at the show with only the second model to be unveiled in its almost 20 years of existence. The Gecko Xtreme Max is a larger version of the standard Xtreme model.

While the standard Gecko model may look like just an ordinary road caravan, this is not the case at all, as behind all the soft lines lies a bush caravan like few others. The Xtreme was a pioneer in this segment of the caravan market

at the time and the handiwork of Keith Teubes, who built them in Haenertsburg, Limpopo.

After 221 models, Johan Taljaard, the owner of CMC Caravans, bought the business in late 2024 and moved it to Krugersdorp where the 252nd caravan has just been completed.

The Max's body measures 4,95 m, making it a metre longer than the standard model. The most obvious difference from the outside is the extra cupboard in the outside kitchen that fits between the fridge-freezer and the grocery cupboard with space for the gas stove and microwave. Previously these

were in the cupboard next to it.

The first model has 15-inch wheels, while the Max gets 17-inch wheels, and the axle has been upgraded from 2 t to 3 t. This means a ground clearance that is raised from 50 cm to 53 cm; the width of the hull is unchanged (1,94 m) and the track width on both is 1,6 m.

The bathroom is still built into the rear – to the right of the door as one gets in – but it is more spacious and the shower now has a door. The bed is still in the nose section, and the floor-to-ceiling height has been raised from 1,91 m to 2,04 m.

The Max comes fully equipped with



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GECKO XTREME MAX



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GECKO XTREME MAX





over 50 pieces of equipment, including three 3 kg gas cylinders, a gas geyser, built-in shower, cassette toilet, 160 l water tank with water level reader, sliding frame with 90 l refrigerator, 20 l microwave, 9 000 BTU inverter air conditioner, sliders and a reverse camera. The power system includes a 3 kW inverter, two 380 W solar panels on the roof and two 105 Ah lithium batteries.

The tare weight is set at 1 640 kg with a GVM of 2 700 kg.

For the Xtreme's Limited variant, buyers now also get the additional option of an outdoor kitchen like the Max's. For this, the slide-out frame with the gas stove and two dishes on the tip changes: The gas stove is now freestanding and the dish next to the stove moves further away, resulting in more workspace.

Price Gecko Xtreme Max R997 000; Gecko Xtreme Limited R687 000.

Contact ☎ 082 416 1991 or 063 599 5338

✉ johan@gecko-offroad.co.za

🌐 gecko-offroad.co.za

NAYELA

Nayela continues to build on its initial Okapi model with the Oribi as the base model, the Okapi itself, the Okapi X and then the Sahara X. The Oribi is the latest addition and offers sleeping space for four compared to the two of the others. Now the Oribi is getting a next variant that again sleeps two and has a modified interior.

The owner, Niel Marais, says going forward, the two Oribi models will be differentiated with the original Oribi now being called the Oribi IV and the newcomer the Oribi II.

The bunk bed in the back of the Oribi IV is one of the model's unique features – the rest has a bathroom in the back with a toilet and shower. The Oribi II offers a mix of the two: Instead of the bunk beds, one gets a toilet and interior sink. The Oribi models cost the same.

Price Oribi II and IV R520 000

Contact ☎ 058 863 1027

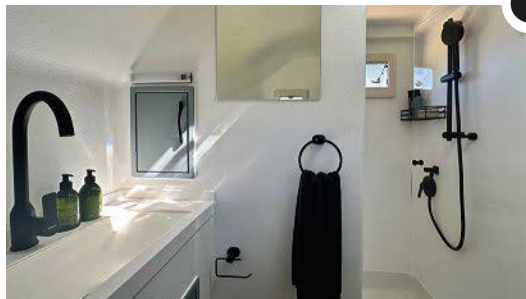
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Oranjerus gets a new look



He has always dreamed of owning a river lodge, says Jean Lambrechts, owner of N.C. Famous Lifestyle Lodges who last year became the owner of Oranjerus, a well-known campsite on the banks of the Orange River.

He closed this campsite, 25 km downstream from Upington, and renovated all infrastructure – from the power to the water and sewage systems. Campers could find themselves at a brand

new Oranjerus from December.

Oranjerus has been through several floods, with recent cases in 2011, 2021, 2023 and 2025. Today, says Jean, they are ready for the water masses with weirs at the 2011 flood line.

N.C. Famous Lifestyle Lodges is known for its luxurious campsites, such as Letsatsi next to Vanrhynsdorp and Kalahari Lifestyle (see this camping destination on p.36) in Upington. This is also the case at Oranjerus, although the

place does retain its own character with a resort atmosphere.

Jean says it is important for a resort to be on a tourist route. In this case, the area is a popular destination in its own right. However, one should not underestimate local supporters. He says it is not unusual for Upington residents to set up camp by Thursday evening and move in for the weekend on Friday.

There are 38 stands, 26 of which have communal bathrooms in two separate



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buildings. The remaining stands are on the riverbank and have private facilities.

According to Jean, they are currently undergoing a second phase of renovations that includes storage facilities for caravans. If you want to come and camp, just let them know, and the resort people will ensure that your cleaned caravan is ready at your stand when you arrive.

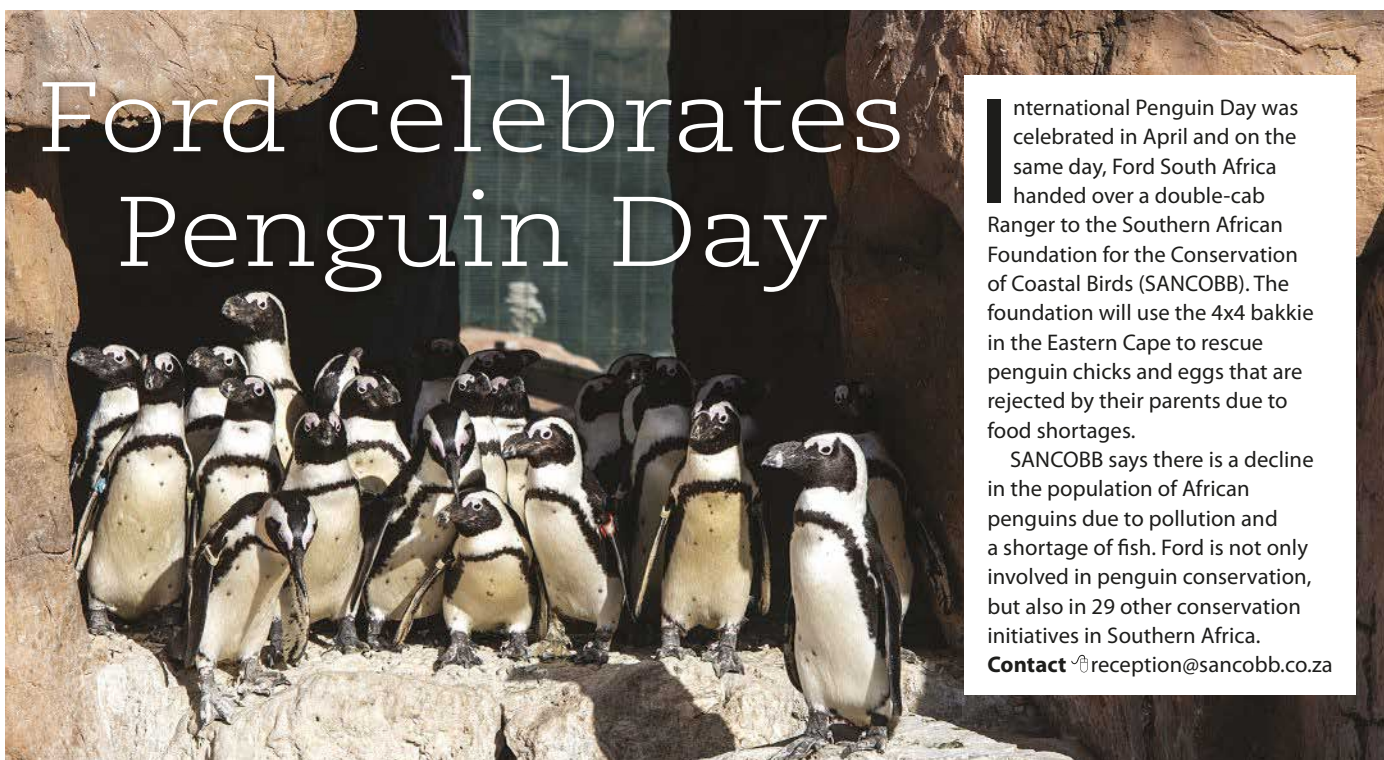
Jean started a restaurant franchise in the early nineties that eventually had more than 60 branches, sold it at the turn of the century and invested in the Kalahari. He farms sheep, cattle and game, and in addition to the lodges and campsite, the famous Red Ox Steakhouse is also part of N.C. Famous Lodges.

Price Depending on the stand, R500 or R800 p.n. for up to 4 people.

Contact ☎ 082 772 5896 📧 info@oranjerus.com 🌐 ncfamouslodges.com



Ford celebrates Penguin Day



International Penguin Day was celebrated in April and on the same day, Ford South Africa handed over a double-cab Ranger to the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCOBB). The foundation will use the 4x4 bakkie in the Eastern Cape to rescue penguin chicks and eggs that are rejected by their parents due to food shortages.

SANCOBB says there is a decline in the population of African penguins due to pollution and a shortage of fish. Ford is not only involved in penguin conservation, but also in 29 other conservation initiatives in Southern Africa.

Contact 📧 reception@sancobb.co.za



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Nayela

Chery invests in SA

Some Jetour models will now be manufactured in South Africa. Jetour is a subsidiary of Chinese car manufacturer Chery, which recently bought Nissan's plant in Rosslyn, Pretoria, to be a local manufacturer rather than an importer. Chery says the plant will create 3 000 new jobs from early next year. The goal is to manufacture 50 000 vehicles per year here.

Chery says that in the 18 months since Jetour was brought to South Africa, it has launched four models with internal combustion engines and two with electric drive. Its T-series in particular has been a hit with local customers – a total of 4 500 units of the Jetour T1 and T2 have been sold.



Hyundai supports golf



Stanley Anderson, CEO of Hyundai South Africa, has presented two brand new cars to two local golfers to use during this year's Sunshine Series.

Herman Loubser received a Hyundai Creta to travel from one tournament to another, while MJ Viljoen received a Hyundai Tucson.

The 27-year-old Loubser is currently ranked 489th in the world and is predicted to have a bright future. Viljoen (31) made his mark especially in this year's SDC Open tournament, where he climbed more than 300 places to establish himself among the world's top 470 players.

Hyundai South Africa says it supports local golf and is therefore an official sponsor of the 2026 Sunshine Series and promising South African players.



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Camping all the way to Kgalagadi

The straight stretch of road between Upington and Askham may feel like the last thing you need when you're on your way to the Kgalagadi. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

One of the many things that makes camping in the Kgalagadi so enjoyable is the fact that a regular sedan vehicle will get you here. Unfortunately, this also means that those very boring and last flat stretches of the R360 until you get here feel like they'll never end.

The alternative is the R31 between Van Zylsrus and Askham, but the precarious

150 km long dirt road will break your speed. The most popular access to the Kgalagadi is therefore from Upington. It's a comfortable tar road of 250 km, but by then you've had enough.

It makes sense for a quick stop in Upington and start fresh the next morning, otherwise there's the option of pushing through and stretching the legs at a few campsites after 180 km.

By then you are only an hour from your destination, which means you can drive through the Kgalagadi gate wide awake the next morning.

If you decide to overnight, two campsites in Upington are perfect for your needs. The Kalahari Lifestyle Lodge is a five-star campsite in town with some of the best facilities we have ever encountered.



The gate is on the N14 that connects Johannesburg and Springbok, which means you drive along the highway until you reach your destination.

Kambiki is a new campsite with private stands that are top-notch. The turnoff to the site is 6 km before Upington if you are coming from Johannesburg.

If you decide to push through on the R360, you can pull in at Dregghorn. It's 30 km past Askham, and this is where you'll encounter the area's distinctive red sand. Each of the four stands has private facilities where you feel pampered as you deeply breathe in the fresh Kalahari air.

It may be boring, but the 173 km between Upington and Askham allows you to acclimatise before entering the Kalahari.

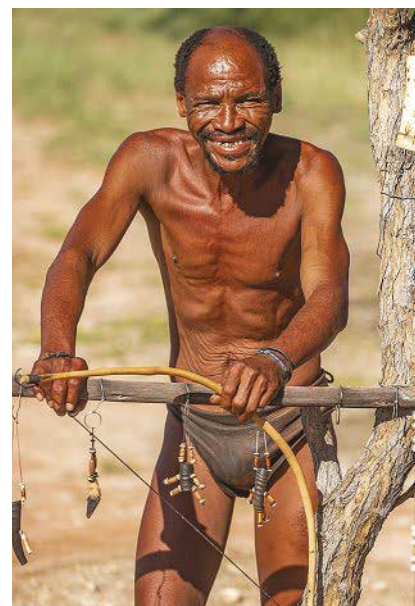
Oddly enough, you even see warning signs for bicycles on this long road... the last kind of traffic you expect here. Other strange signs warn against speeding traffic with vehicles travelling up to 250 km/h. This is because some car manufacturers apparently use part of the R360 to test how their vehicles perform under high temperatures and high speeds.

However quickly you want to get the R360 done and dusted, make provision for a few extra minutes and take a good look, because 13 km on the other side of Askham, where you turn off to the Kgalagadi for the last time, several Khoisan people stand along the road selling their handicrafts. It's just the kind of memento you'd like to take home as a Kalahari souvenir.

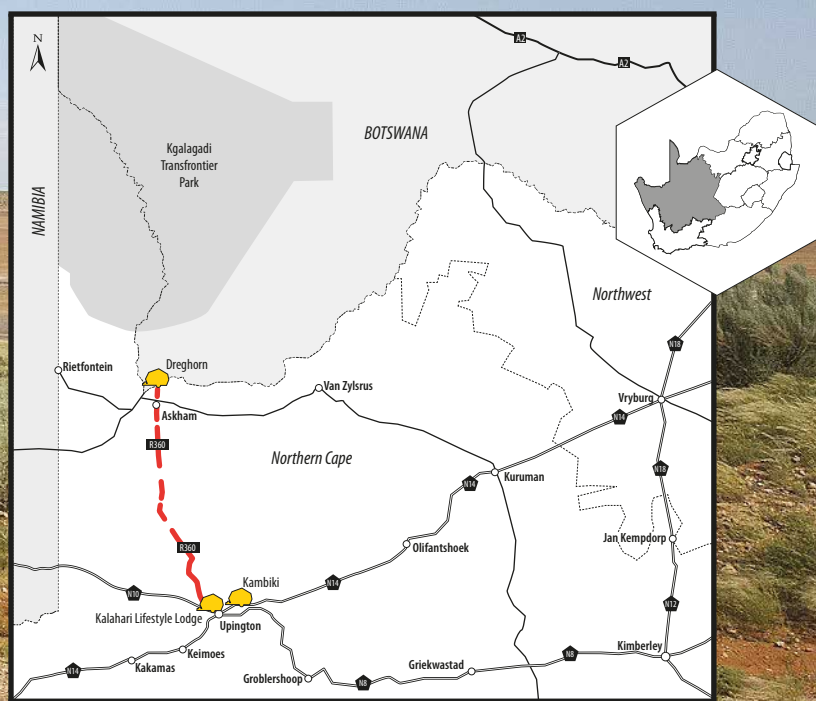
We meet Dawid Gooi a few hundred metres beyond the entrance to the Molopo Kalahari Lodge. Dawid stands shoulder-high and looks radiantly healthy in his animal hide loincloth, even though he's gained a wrinkle or two.

Twelve years ago, we met Dawid here for the first time. Back then, he told me he was related to Dawid Kruiper who became famous after Jamie Uys's *God's Must Be Crazy* films.

He explains that his handmade ornament in the shape of a heart is made from wild lemon thorn, and the hanging decoration is made from three-thorn, camel thorn, porcupine quills, tsamma melon seeds and small beads made from ostrich eggshell. We buy something for the people at home and say goodbye to Dawid until next time.



WELCOME SIGHT. If you see this sign, the biggest part of your drive to the Kgalagadi is behind you. It is like the front door to the Kalahari; the red sand – now next to you – is a regular sight.



DREGHORN

A Scotsman between the red dunes

A Scotsman is the last person one would expect in this part of the world, but the name “Dreghorn” is indeed as Scottish as it gets. The surveyor Rodger “Malkop” Duke Jackson, who was born in South Africa but was of Scottish descent, surveyed farms in the area, and it was apparently common practice to give names as well.

Jackson also gave Askham its name: Some believe it refers to Askam in England and others think it is an inflexion of “ask ham”.

The English left quite an impression on the area. South Africa was under British control until a century ago and Botswana only gained independence in 1966.

The last 12 km you drive on the edge between these two countries, and the turnoff is just before the Gemsbok border post on the right. Tonight, you will camp barely a kilometre from the border.

Dreghorn’s turnoff is clearly marked and the building looming ahead of you on the ridge is the farmhouse where Hercules du Preez is waiting for you.

He introduces you to Luna, the very alert sheepdog: “Meet your new camp friend,” he says, adding that Luna will probably be in the campsite that night. Guests are welcome to share a bone or two.

Hercules reminds you of the scorpions at night. You just have to watch where you step, especially after ten o’clock at night and when the wind picks up. There are also puff adders and Cape cobras here, but Hercules reassures you that they didn’t see any tracks today.

Hercules drives ahead with Luna running behind and opens a farm gate 300 m further on. Here you leave the farm activities behind and drive into the Kalahari. The red sand road through the grass is well-trodden.

After 200 m you drive over a bend, and then the campsite appears before you. Two of the stands are on the left, about 30 m apart, while the other two are on your right and more secluded.

Hercules turns left and stops next to a handful of camel thorn trees with a building behind it. He points to the

“

He points to the grassy dune a little further on and suggests that you sit on top of the dune at dusk

”



THE TREE WEARS THE CROWN. Camel thorns are everywhere in this area and at Dreghorn this is where you pitch your tent. Don’t get a late-night freight when you hear something fall on your vehicle that’s parked underneath. It’s the pods.





In short | Dreghorn



Campsite 4 private stands on Kalahari sand with camel thorn trees for shade. There is a fire pit, but no grill.

Ablution facilities Your own. An open and covered veranda as a kitchen with a separate toilet and bathroom. A gas geyser heats the water.

Price R600 p.n. for the first 2 people, then R100 p.p. Maximum 6 people per stand.

Arrival and departure time 14:00 and 10:00, but flexible in less busy times.

Contact ☎ 060 578 6095

✉ info@dreghornfarm.co.za

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Nearest town Askham 32 km.

What is the road like? 14 km of gravel road, the last kilometre or so of which is a farm road with a short stretch of sand to the campsite. It's well-trodden and four-wheel drive won't be necessary.

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Drive & Camp says The cell phone signal is very erratic – don't rely on it.

grassy dune a little further on and suggests that you sit on top of the dune at dusk. From there, you look out onto a waterhole.

You camp on the red sand, of course, but it's also pretty well-trodden. The building next to you has an open covered porch with sinks and shelves against the wall. The door on the right opens into your bathroom and the toilet is on the left end of the building. This is also where the 12 V battery is – the meter on the wall behind it reads 292 Ah. A power cable runs from here through the wall to under the sink and has a Brad Harrison plug if you want to keep your camp fridge going. There's no other power here, but next to the meter there are also two USB sockets.

The basin is in front of you as you open the bathroom door with a mirror behind it. A gas geyser provides hot water. The head-high wall to your right consists of fist-sized stones stacked between wire mesh. The shower is separated on the left by a wall without

DESTINATION

a door.

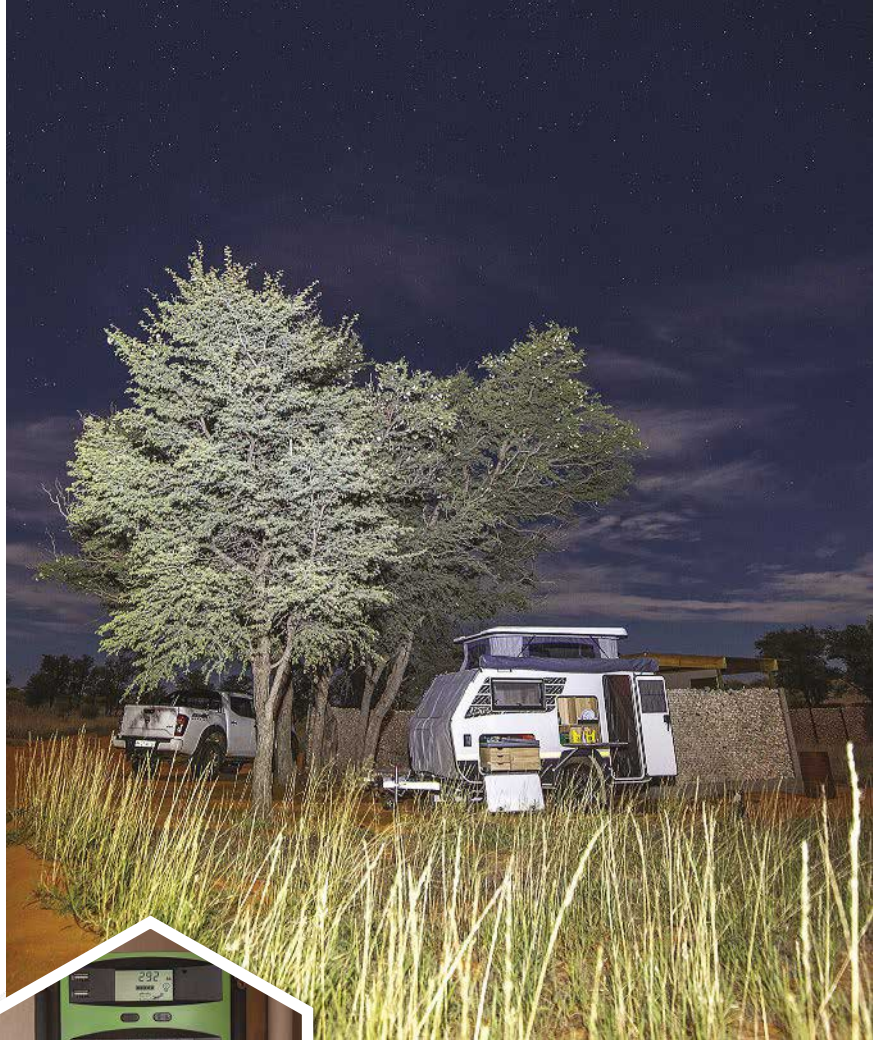
Another stone wall next to your stand gives you more privacy. You are not caged in at all and nature is still visible.

In the middle of the camp is a square wall around a fire pit. It is a nice place for a group to hang out. The fire pit at your stand is in the shape of a keyhole.

As the sun sets, an enormous centipede walks by and two agile agamas scurry away in the grass. Cherize van Zyl, with whom you made the reservation, drives up at 16:00 and asks if all is in order. She hands over a tray with a potbrood (pot bread) with butter and homemade apricot jam. You will come back for more of this delicious bread.

You have to turn left over the dune at the farthest stand to drive out of the campsite. If you stop in front of it, you will have to engage 4x4, because it has a slight slope, and with a weight on the hook the wheels will want to dig. Fortunately, you can make a long turn in front of the dune, past some of the other stands, and then drive over with a little bit of momentum. With a normal two-wheel drive, you can easily manage.

On the other side of the dune, about 120 m from the point where you drive over it, there are a few houses if you prefer not to camp. The swimming pool is also here.



ALMOST WITHOUT POWER. There is no 220 V power, but a solar power system with a battery – even with a Brad Harrison plug – in case your camp fridge needs a boost.



KAMBIKI

Brand spanking new

It doesn't happen too often that you arrive at a campsite and are the very first to make yourself at home.

At Kambiki, four new buildings stand next to each other – these are the private bathrooms for eight stands. Between the bathroom buildings is a tidy block of fine gravel on which two vehicles will easily fit, and between the second and third buildings there is a large shade tree.

The rest is open and in the sun, but fortunately part of your building is a covered veranda with a table and chairs that you can use as an open dining area. This is also where the dishwashing sink is – you can temporarily set up this part as your camp kitchen. There is a double plug for power against the wall, but there is also a power point at the back of the building. (Kambiki provides its own electricity and is not connected to Eskom's network.)

There is already a neat lawn around the first two stands and you can decide exactly where to pull in with your caravan once you know where you need to fit in.

The fence runs behind the buildings, which means you can't drive through. You will have to push your caravan back into place if you want to pull in next to your building. Of course, this is not a problem if your caravan is equipped with movers.

Because your caravan's outdoor kitchen is on the left, you will have to push back at half of the stands and enter the other nose first to get your kitchen next to the building. Of course, you are not limited with a tent, and to a lesser extent with an off-road trailer. You can also pull your caravan at a right angle to the building at the head of your stand – this then leaves open space on the gravel surface where you can light the fire for a cosy camping corner.

Next to the kitchen, there are two doors next to each other: One opens to your bathroom and the other to the toilet with its own hand basin.

As we have already mentioned, the facilities are new. The shower area is spacious enough that you could rather call it a family bathroom. Inside there is more than enough space on the table next to the basin and the bench in the shower. The shower cubicle itself is in





“

You have a room with a shower and hand basin and a separate toilet

”



In short | Kambiki



Campsite 12 sites each with private facilities: 4 bathrooms are in one building a short distance from your site, and 8 are next to your site (this includes a kitchen with table and chairs). Wifi is available at the office.

Ablution facilities Your own, of which 8 are brand new.

Price Depending on your site R400 p.d or R600 p.d. for up to 4 people. Arrival and departure time Flexible, but you must depart by 12:00.

Contact ☎ 082 334 2243

✉ desert4x4@upington.co.za

📍 Kambiki Farm Camping

Nearest town Upington 12 km.

What is the road like? Tar up to the gate and neat dirt road into the campsite.

GPS S28.420238 E21.361783

Drive & Camp says The owners, Marietjie and Walt van der Walt, meet you at the gate and drive ahead to show you which stand has been allocated to you.





a corner as you open the door.

The braai is a loose rim on legs – some with swinging grids. They are sturdy and someone will need to help you carry it if there isn't one at your stand and you want one closer.

Just beyond the fence, part of a 26 km long canal runs past you, with the Orange River itself about 700 m away.

Kambiki's gate is next to the road and the office is in front of you as you arrive. Depending on where you camp, you either keep left or right of the building.

The new stands are on the right 100 m further down the hill; for the stands that have been here for a year, you keep left. These stands also have their own bathrooms, but they are in one building about 40 m from the stands. You have a room with a shower and hand basin and a separate toilet.

The four stands are next to each other under shaded trees on a neat lawn, and each has a power point.

The play park is behind the reception. Here there is a small splash pool with a diameter of about 4 m and a top of about shoulder height. Inside there is seating - you climb a spiral staircase to a small platform before you can get in.

There are also a few swings and a climbing frame, and the ground is covered with the same type of gravel as that next to your private bathroom.

From here you have a nice view of the campsite, especially to the west where the sun is setting. You can even see the 205 m high tower of the Khi Solar One solar power plant beyond Upington, which is a good 30 km away.

JUST FOR YOU.
Even though there are two groups of stands, you still get your own bathroom. The one group's four bathrooms are in one building about 40 m away, and the other one's next to the stands.



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This type of campsite is almost unparalleled in South Africa, especially when you look at all the facilities...

”



KALAHARI LIFESTYLE LODGE The cat's whiskers

Kalahari Lifestyle Lodge is part of N.C. Famous Lifestyle Lodges, and Molopo Kalahari Lodge, where we met Dawid near Askham, is part of this group. (See our May 2020 issue for more details about the campsite.)

This type of campsite is almost unparalleled in South Africa, especially when you look at all the facilities on your site.

When you drive through the gate, it is clear that the resort people have the interests of caravanners at heart. There is a sign here showing which direction you should go, and as you drive in, the receptionist steps out to show you where to park.

You are now in Upington, and the extremely neat and lovely garden is breathtaking. There are even a few springbok grazing here, who look as if they are used to all the camp traffic.

Two old Vespa scooters are part of the office furniture next to the modern building's floor-to-ceiling windows, and Cora Venter shows you exactly which way to go to get to your stand.

In the meantime, you also get two vouchers: one is for a free Irish coffee at the Red Ox restaurant in town, and the other for a free breakfast at the Silver Spoon Bistro here in the resort. Even if you leave the next morning at first light, you don't lose your free breakfast. You then get a food package the night before for the long journey to Kgalagadi or home.

Also on the menu is a braaibroodjie that is delivered to your stand, and you also get a bag with an Ouma rusk, sugar, instant coffee, tea and coffee creamer plus a bottle of spring water to take with you to your stand.

You have to keep your wits about you, because you can only enter your stand from a certain direction. On the pamphlet

in the office showing how the stands are laid out, the route to the different stands is indicated with arrows.

As you drive into the camping area, Fransiena Koper beckons you closer. There are six buildings and two rows for the 12 stands. The garden up to this point looks like the work of a landscape architect – one almost feels sorry for the lush green grass next to the building you have to park on.

A low white pole fence separates you from your fellow campers next door, and the right sides of you and your neighbours' caravans face each other. You are therefore private enough, because your outdoor kitchen opens onto your side of the bathroom building.

You can camp here for weeks on end if you want, but it is rather intended for overnight stays. Of course, nothing stops you from staying a day or three longer and exploring Upington.

There is almost no need to unhitch; you



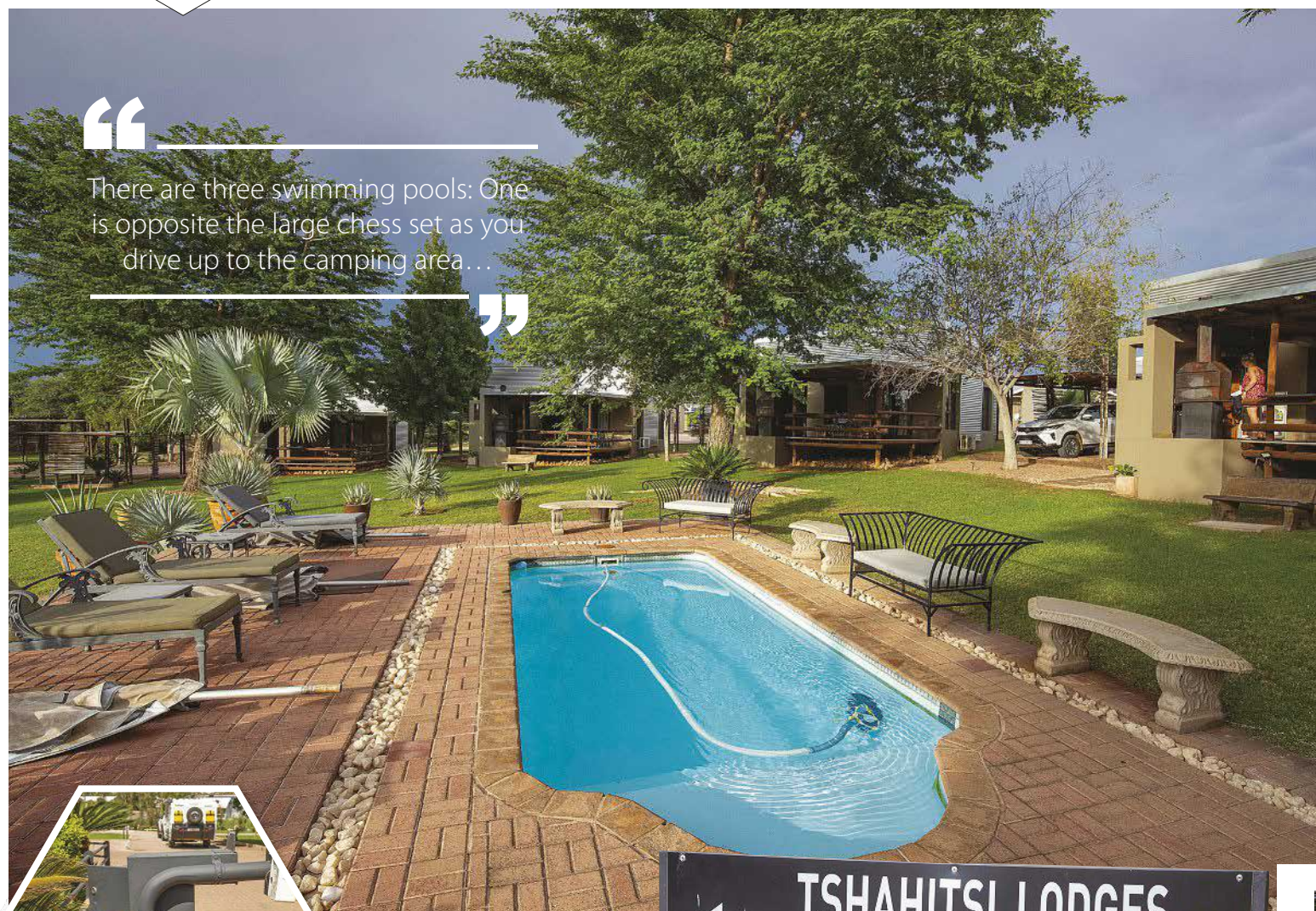
A REAL TREAT. You bring your place to sleep and Kalahari Lifestyle Lodge takes care of the rest: your own bathroom, kitchen and braai. Meanwhile the garden around looks like something out of a designer's manual. There are even some wandering springbok.



“

There are three swimming pools: One is opposite the large chess set as you drive up to the camping area...

”



POWER ON DEMAND. The power point is on the corner of your bathroom building, right where your caravan is parked.





don't even have to swing out the awning, because what you need is already in the building next to your stand.

Just as the garden should be the handiwork of a designer, the same applies to the buildings at the stands. You get the feeling of extremely neat and modern homes in a security complex.

There is an open covered kitchen with a table and chairs, enormous worktops with an induction hob, a meat casserole, a microwave, glasses, plates, an ice bucket, electric kettle, cutlery, a saucepan, slow cooker, upright fridge, TV screen and a built-in braai. A hand grill neatly closed in a transparent plastic bag is the icing on the cake. In it you there is also braai tongs, matches and fire lighters.

Above the fire pit is a cross and a check mark. You make a fire on the right, under the check mark, and then scrape the coals to the left where you braai, because here there is a light that shines perfectly on your grill.

The washing-up area is to one side, and

In short | Kalahari Lifestyle Lodge



Campsite 12 hyper-luxurious and private stands on the most beautiful grass with all the facilities imaginable, ranging from a modern bathroom to a fully equipped kitchen.

Ablution facilities Your own, which you can compare to those of a hotel any day.

Price R900 p.n. for the first 4, then R300 p.p. A maximum of 6 people per stand is allowed.

Arrival and departure time 14:00 and 10:00.

Contact 054 333 1126

info@klodge.co.za ncfamouslodges.com/kalahari-lifestyle-camping/

Nearest town In Upington.

What is the road like? Tar all the way.

GPS S28.437461 E21.281861

Drive & Camp says The campsite is on the main road and sometimes a truck can make some noise, but that's a small price to pay for what you get as a camper at the resort.

a further door gives you access to your bathroom. It feels like you're entering the amenities of a hotel with the large open shower behind an equally large glass panel. There's also a modern basin and a mirror on the wall, plus an opaque glass door to the side of the room. This opens onto the outdoor shower and you get the impression you're standing in a tall, galvanised drum. So even if you camp as luxurious as it gets, you can shower under the blue sky, as if you're standing in the bush.

There are power points in the kitchen, but also power points at the corner of the building with three-point and Fredlin sockets.

The two stands at the far ends of the two rows are reserved for people with rooftop tents and motorhomes.

There are three swimming pools: One is opposite the large chess set as you drive up to the camping area, another one at the far end near the gym, and one between the villas (campers may also cool down here).

Following the Fish to the sea

You know the Fish River and its canyon that winds through the Namib Desert, but South Africa's Great Fish River is... well, a different kettle of fish.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**

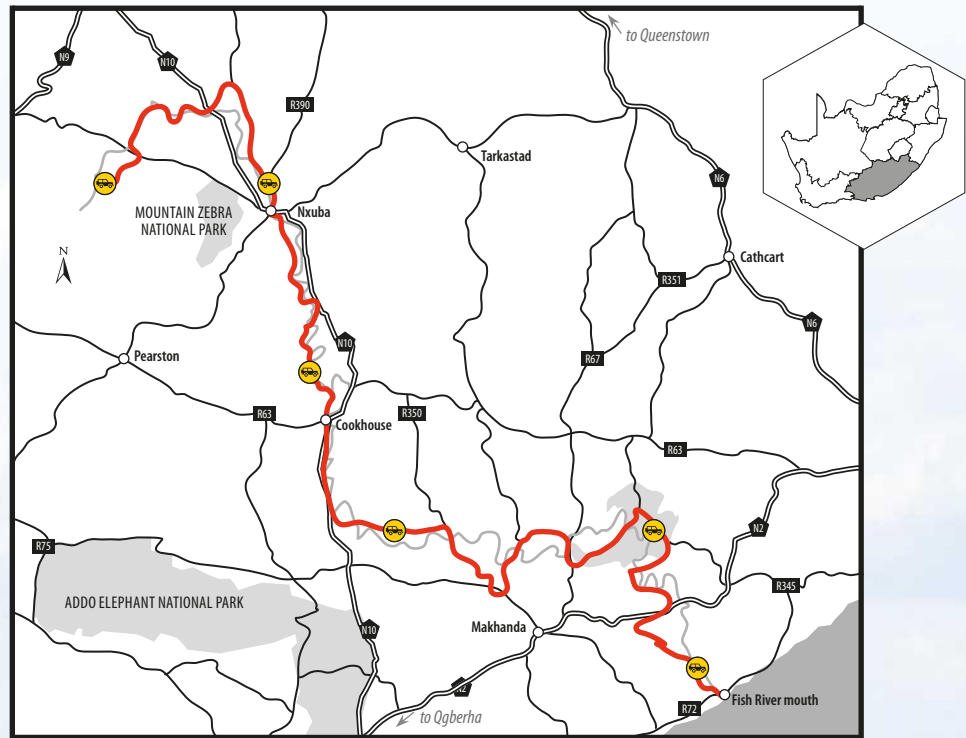
On this tour, there are three main attractions to look forward to. The first is the Slagtersnek Pass, followed by the Great Fish River Nature Reserve and finally the Coombs Road near the coast. There are also interesting historical attractions along the Great Fish River, an abundance of gravel mountain passes and, of course, excellent fishing waters. Fasten your seatbelt and come along for the ride.

You hit the road halfway between Graaff-Reinet (now Robert Sobukwe Town) and Cradock (now Nxuba) on the R61 regional road, at a 20 m long bridge over the Great Fish River. The GPS coordinate is S32.00323 E25.13844. The stream is barely a metre wide and the water is ankle-deep. We did not see any fish here, but if there were, it was probably no bigger than the tiny Eastern Cape redbfin (*Pseudobarbus afer*).

The source of the Great Fish is actually

31 km from here on a farm deep in the rolling hills. Follow the R61 tar road from the bridge towards Cradock and after 3 km, turn right at the sign for Kwaggashoek. Then follow the dirt road for 17 km over the Beletskloof Pass to a farm gate at S32.10484 E25.05816 – the upper reaches of the Great Fish River are just 200 m behind the gate.

We happened to run into the farmer of the farm in question near his gate. He offered to take us to the source of the



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Now that you know where the Great Fish more or less begins, it is time to turn around and follow it all the way to the ocean

”



Great Fish after he had dropped off his workers, but he doesn't want an influx of visitors and therefore prefers that we don't mention his name or that of his farm. So rather see the farm gate as the starting point of the Great Fish River.

Now that you know where the Great Fish more or less begins, it is time to turn around and follow it all the way to the ocean. Drive over Beletskloof Pass once

more, turn right onto the R61 and follow the tar road to Cradock. (It is striking that not a single person we spoke to, regardless of their ethnicity, used the new name.)

The town was proclaimed in 1814 and the first plots were sold in 1818 without any streets being laid out. The town grew organically, and the first 30 houses were built in random locations. Order was

only created when the first cornerstone of the Dutch Reformed Church was laid in 1824.

The very same Dutch Reformed Church is one of the three main attractions here. The other two are the Great Fish River Museum and the Schreiner House. The town's cultural history is on display in the museum – it includes photographs



STREAM. The upper reaches of the Great Fish (below and right) is barely a metre wide and ankle deep. It grows substantially and is fairly wide at its mouth despite losing a lot of water to the canal system



of its most prominent natives such as novelist and playwright, George Weideman, and the writer and poet Guy Butler. There is also a gallery for the Cradock Four. These four anti-apartheid activists were murdered by members of the security forces in 1985 and the incident is considered as one of the major reasons that led to the abolition of apartheid. The museum is open on

weekdays between 09:00 and 15:00, and although admission is free, a donation would be appreciated.

The Schreiner House at 9 Cross Street is the place where the writer Olive Schreiner grew up. She was 12 years old when she and two of her siblings, Will (15) and Ettie (17), moved in with their eldest brother, Theo (23). Olive would later work as a governess on various

farms in the Cradock area and complete her book *The Story of an African Farm*.

Drive out of Cradock on Church Street and then take the Gilfillan Bridge over the Great Fish River. The bridge is named after William Gilfillan, an 1820 British settler (read more about the British settlers on p. 53). Gilfillan landed here in 1812 as a 16-year-old ensign in the British navy and settled here full-time as

a young lieutenant on half pay in 1820.

Shortly after the Gilfillan Bridge, turn left onto the R390 regional road. The first part of the road is tarred but beware of the potholes. Thankfully, 13 km farther on it becomes a pleasant gravel road that follows the Great Fish River past several farms. 40 km after the Gilfillan Bridge turn right onto the busy N10 highway, where you turn right again after less than 5 km when you come across a road sign for Dassiedeur.

You are now driving on a special road with quite a few historical attractions ahead. Follow the wide gravel road for 2,8 km to a farm gate and then drive over an active train track at S32.46991 E25.76976 (be careful!), followed by a second farm gate on the other side of the railway. Remember to leave the gates as you found them.

Drive over a low-water bridge to cross the Great Fish River and follow a twin-track up a shallow mountain pass. The Dassiedeur Tunnel is 9 km after you turn off the N10 at S32.50303 E25.74697. This 271 m tunnel was built in 1879. The rail that you crossed a while ago originally ran along this route, but the last train's steam billowed out of the tunnel in 1957. The track has since been lifted and moved to where it now lies, and the good news is that you can now drive your bakkie through the train tunnel.

From here, a dirt road runs down the mountain to the new train track. The last part of the road was blocked by a large pile of rocks during our visit, which had clearly been dumped shortly before, because there were no weeds. We would later learn that quite a few roads in the region were closed in the fight against foot-and-mouth disease. If the road is still blocked by the time you visit the area, you will, like us, have to turn around and drive back to the N10, but a visit to the tunnel is definitely worth your while.

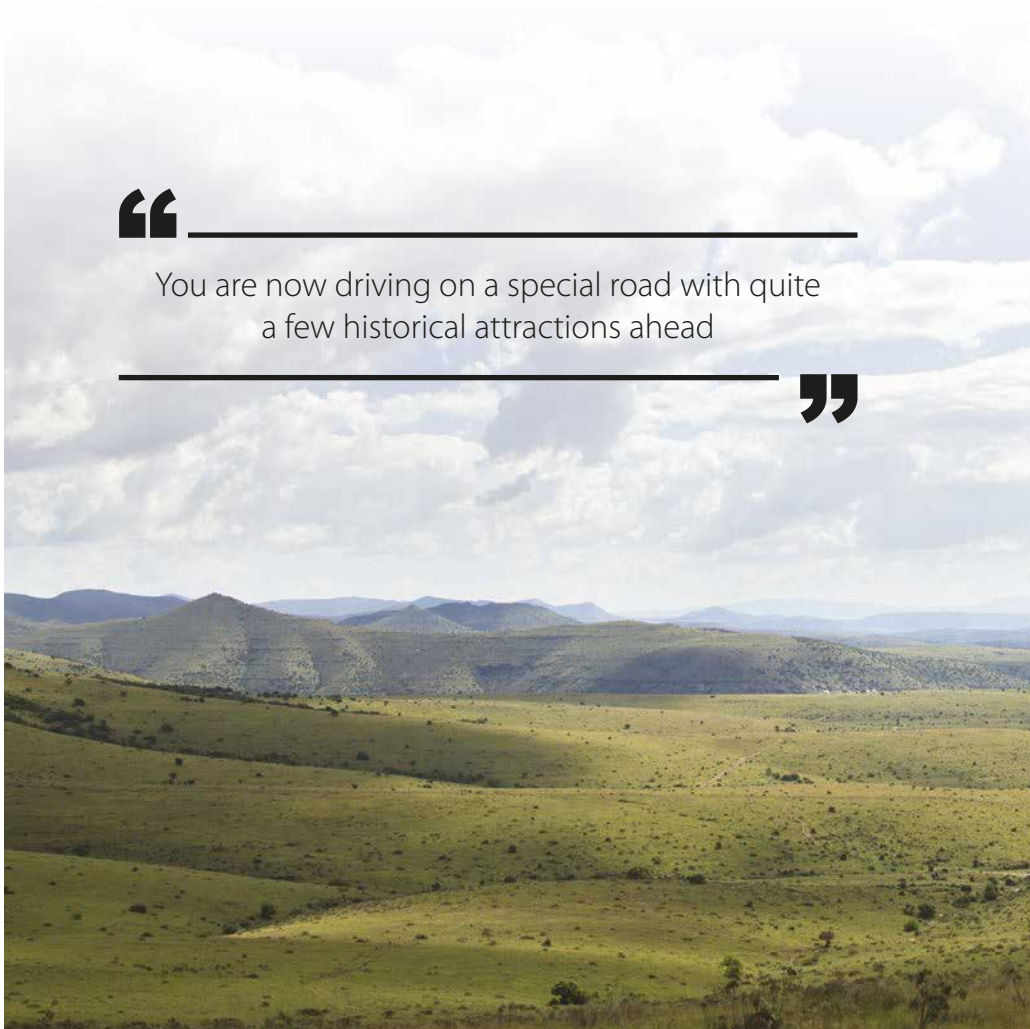
The gravel road, once it is reopened, runs from here past the Elandsdrift Dam, which was completed in 1973. This irrigation dam holds 9 740 cubic metres of water behind a 26 m high concrete wall and feeds a canal system from the Great Fish River.

Barely 3 km from the dam wall is a road sign for Witmos. Turn right here and drive 7 km to the Witmos Oxwagon Camp, your place to sleep for the night.

“

You are now driving on a special road with quite a few historical attractions ahead

”





HISTORY. The Great Fish River Museum (left) holds the cultural heritage of Cradock and the Schreiner House (top) has a few personal effects that once belonged to Olive Schreiner as well as a copy of every book she had ever written. Unfortunately it's not open to the public..



The 1820 British Settlers

The UK government had its hands full after the Napoleonic Wars. Not only were thousands of its citizens unemployed, but the eastern border of its Cape colony in Africa was threatened by the amaXhosa.

The United Kingdom decided to ship its desperate masses to the Eastern Cape to kill two birds with one stone. The settlers could protect the border from indigenous people and make the English language dominant over Afrikaans in the colony.

Nearly 90 000 Britons immediately volunteered, but only 19 000 were initially approved. Of those 19 000, only 4 000 could be sent to the Cape due to financial constraints. Most of the "lucky" settlers were shipped to the area of present-day Bathurst, but they were not all natural-born farmers and quite a few threw in the towel and instead moved to settlements such as Grahamstown and East London to practice the old trades they were familiar with.

Some British settlers were mistakenly dropped off at Saldanha from where they were transported to the Namaqualand. Families like the Stone and Archer families were therefore separated from other English speakers and their only recourse to survive was to integrate with the Afrikaans-speaking community around them. These misplaced settlers later fought against Britain as Boer brethren! You can learn more about these "English Boers" in the book *Die Stones van Namakwaland* (H. Stone, 2018, Bienenfell Publishers, Pretoria).



This unique campsite is located in the Witmoskloof and you sleep in a restored 200-year-old oxwagon. There are seven of them and each has a king-size mattress. It costs R1 150 p.n. for two people, but Anton and Katrina Nel, your hosts, will happily allow you to camp in your own rooftop tent or off-road trailer for R150 p.p.p.n. However, we recommend that you spend the night in one of the oxwagons for a unique experience. Witmos lies at the foot of the Tarka-Botha Pass at S32.54205 E25.67140.

Tonight, you braai under a roof of stars before you call it a night. Tomorrow a long drive awaits. Sleep well.

Don't sleep in too late, because there is a lot of travelling today, unless you want to divide the route into three parts

rather than two, like us. Then we have a suggestion for a three-day route...

Return the way you came, but instead of turning left towards the Elandsdrift Dam (which you visited yesterday), you now turn right onto a gravel road in the direction of Cookhouse. You cross the Great Fish and its tributaries repeatedly with a mix of old stone bridges and new concrete bridges until you encounter the Slagtersnek Pass – the pass is at S32.68791 E25.82706.

Slagtersnek got its name from a tragic incident in 1816 in the vicinity. Frederik Bezuidenhout was a farmer who was summoned to court in 1815 on charges of mistreating a labourer. Bezuidenhout ignored the summons and hid in a nearby cave, where he later was involved in a gunfight with British

soldiers and was ultimately fatally wounded.

Frederik's brother, Johannes Bezuidenhout, swore revenge and rebelled against the British authorities along with other farmers. The rebels were eventually trapped and arrested, but Johannes, like his brother, was killed during a shoot-out.

Later, five of the rebels, who had surrendered voluntarily, were sentenced to death and executed on 9 March 1816. However, four of the gallows' ropes broke and the four strangled survivors were hanged a second time – in the forced presence of their wives and children. This gruesome execution would be one of the main triggers for the Great Trek.

If Slagtersnek Pass is closed for whatever reason, which apparently



“

Drive over a low-water bridge to cross the Great Fish River and follow a twin-track up a shallow mountain pass

”



PASS. The Dassiedeur pass leads you past several farmsteads and crosses the Great Fish at least once on its way to the Dassiedeur tunnel. You might even see some game along the way.



happens a lot, and was indeed the case with us, you should take the Kokskraal Road to the N10 and from there drive to Cookhouse, the next town on our tour. The turnoff to the Kokskraal Road is not marked, but at S32.60579 E25.74998. Anton and Katrina Nel at Witmos will supply good directions.

Cookhouse lies on the western bank of the Great Fish River. It is a deserted hamlet that owes its origin to a train station. But apart from the petrol pumps, there is not really any good reason to stop here.

Get back on the N10 and follow the road further south for exactly 30 km to the turnoff to Seldon at S33.00988 E25.81618. When we visited in April this year, there was a foot-and-mouth control point where we had to stop. We had to get out and dip our shoe soles in a bath

while our vehicle's tyres were sprayed with disinfectants.

The Seldon Road is 40 km long and follows the Great Fish River. You drive over beautiful bridges and past game farms until you join the tarred R350 regional road. Here, turn right in the direction of Makhanda (previously Grahamstown) and drive over the Helspoort Pass.

The R350 tarred road is badly damaged – keep your eyes peeled for what feels like a million potholes. The torture ends after 31 km at the road sign for the R344 gravel road, also known as the Krantzdrift Road (S33.22051 E26.39869), where you turn right. When we visited, there was another foot-and-mouth control point, the second of many along the route.

The R344 takes you over the De



SIGHTS! The Dassiedeur tunnel (top) used to be a train tunnel but nowadays you can drive your own vehicle through it. The Salgtersnek pass (above) follows the Great Fish closely and takes you over both old and new bridges. The Elandsdrift dam (opposite top) takes a big gulp out of the Great Fish.





Bruinspoort Pass, and 25 km after turning off the R350, at S33.04363 E26.44568, there is a signpost for Kingo Hills where you turn right. There are many game reserves and hunting farms in the area, and you often see zebras, buffalo and antelope along the road. Security guards ask to see your ID and they disinfect your wheels and write down your vehicle's registration number, but you do not have to pay to drive on the road. The authorities do however warn that the behaviour of transients will determine how long the roads remain open to the public.

The Kingo Hills Road ends at the tarred R67 regional road and you turn right here, again in the direction of Makhanda, and cross the Great Fish River with the Carlisle Bridge. A plaque on the bridge notes that the original Carlisle Bridge was built in 1863, but was destroyed in a flood in 1874, after which it was replaced two years later, in 1876, with a steel bridge. However, this bridge was also destroyed by floodwaters in 1932, and the concrete bridge as you see it today was built in 1933 by the then Murray & Stewart construction company – later Murray & Roberts.

The next settlement on your route is Fort Brown. Here there is a stone fort that was built in 1835 and manned until 1861 to guard against Xhosa warriors, or impi as they were called. The fort now stands on the grounds of a police station and you simply have to ask if you want to take a closer look. Admission is free, provided the station commander gives permission.

The next big attraction, and hopefully your place to sleep tonight, is the Great Fish River Nature Reserve. It is an amalgamation of the former Andries Vosloo Kudu Reserve, Bucklands Nature Reserve, Dubbeldrif Reserve and the Sam Knot Nature Reserve.

1,6 km past Fort Brown, turn left onto the DR02043 dirt road at a signpost for Committees Drift. The entrance to the Great Fish River Nature Reserve is 2 km farther on and here a gatekeeper will have either good news or bad news for you. For us, there was bad news, because this drift through the Great Fish River was flooded and the entrance was therefore closed.

The next passable entrance to the nature reserve, the Breakfast Vlei gate,



“ There are many game reserves and hunting farms in the area, and you often see zebras, buffalo and antelope... ”

Where we stayed

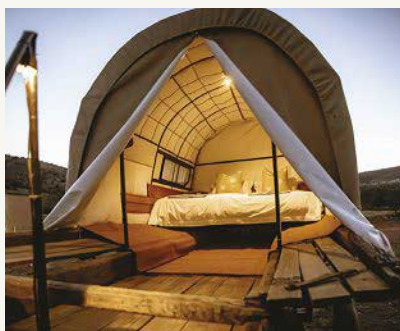
WITMOS OXWAGON CAMP, WITMOS

There are 7 oxwagons, each with a king-size mattress, pulled into a lair. How could it be otherwise? There are sheltered braai facilities and a homestead with a fully-equipped kitchen and a dining table that seats 12 people. Electricity is provided by solar power, and although the cell phone signal is weak, there is free Wi-Fi. The ablution facilities are shared by all guests. Dogs are allowed, but only by prior arrangement.

Price R1 200 p.n. for 2. Camp rates and braai packages are available on request.

Contact ☎ 073 880 0263 (Katrina Nel)

🌐 oxwagonscamp.co.za



FISH RIVER DINER CARAVAN PARK, GREAT FISH RIVER MOUTH

The entrance to the campsite is behind the roadside café of the same name. The “diner” may not look like much from the outside, but inside there is a friendly holiday spirit. There are about 50 stands, each with electricity. There is ample braai space, but you have to bring your own grill and stand. You also have to accept that this is a local fishing spot rather than a luxury holiday resort.

Price R400 p.n. for 2.

Contact ☎ 040 676 1058 (Thea Swart)

🌐 fishriverdiner@outlook.com



BENDS. The Great Fish makes a photogenic turn inside the Great Fish River Nature Reserve (above). The Coombs Road runs through several nature reserves (below) where you can view game for free. If the foot-and-mouth disease is still a thing when you visit, you'll have to stop often to allow guards to spray your tyres. You know you're nearing the coast when you see pineapples (opposite middle) everywhere around you.





PHOTO: EASTERN CAPE TOURISM



is 40 km from here, and since we had inclement weather, we decided to instead head for the route's end at the ocean. However, if the weather and river level cooperate on your visit, you will be rewarded with a remarkable view of one of the Great Fish River's meanders, reminiscent of the Blyde River Canyon. We highly recommend a stay here to break up the trip into three days. Regardless of whether you stay at the Great Fish River Nature Reserve or head for the coast, you must leave the Committees Drift Road near where it

crosses the Great Fish River at S33.16122 E26.82724. Follow this dirt road past more private reserves where you can view game for free until you reach the N2 highway.

Turn right onto South Africa's longest tarred road towards Makhanda but leave the road again after 10 km and turn left onto the Coombs Road (S33.28576 E26.86222). This dirt road is possibly the most scenic on this route and you see so much wildlife (albeit through a fence) that you almost get bored. You also drive through the Kap River Nature Reserve and eventually join the R72 coastal road.

And here you are! The Great Fish River empties into the ocean in front of you. Anglers say that Cape stumpnose (*Rhabdosargus holubi*) are plentiful, and when it comes to accommodation, you can choose between the Fish River Diner Campsite or the luxurious Fish River Sun with its 18-hole golf course designed by Gary Player.

South Africa's rivers may not be as impressive as the Thames of England, the Volga of Russia or the Danube of Europe, but the Great Fish is big enough to leave a lasting impression. 📍



“

And here you are! The Great Fish River empties into the ocean in front of you

”

Pull in next to the Orange River



It is a mere two-hour drive to go from the city lights in the central part of the country to the beautiful scenery of Vanderkloof Dam.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**



From Bloemfontein and Kimberley, you can quickly pack, hitch up and drive to Vanderkloof Dam on a Friday afternoon, as it's barely 200 km to get there. You can buy your groceries here and also fill up on fuel if you left home with half a tank.

Although the Vanderkloof Damwal Caravan Park is half a kilometre before town, you'll have to stop in town anyway because you have to check in at the Monte Crous Hotel in Madeliefie Street.

Don't be apprehensive about how narrow Madeliefie Street is when you

arrive here with a long tow combination. The street ends further on, but there is ample room to turn around. However, you should not drive through the Monte Crous gate, as things can be a bit tricky if you want to turn around.

During our visit, there were a lot of Harley Davidson motorcycles, but there was a large space in front of the gate where we could park.

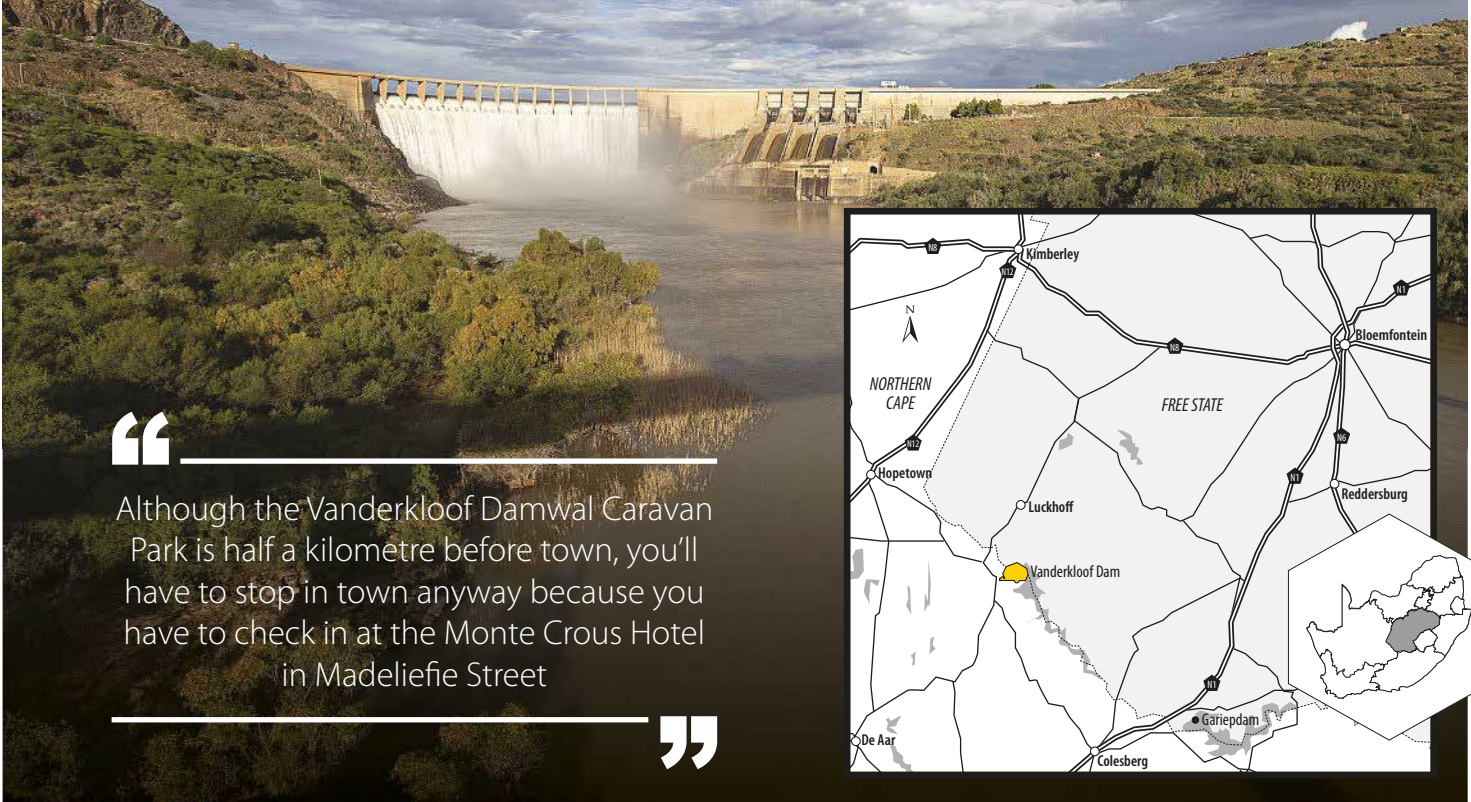
If you want to top up your rations, drive 400 m straight from Madeliefie Street and keep left where the road forks opposite the police station. You are now

in Vanderkloof's business centre. The fuel station is on this corner.

We stop at the Karoo Kontrei Winkel, a shop where we get boerewors, garlic bread, potato salad and a few bottles of water. We also grab a big bag of braai wood (R80) at the door and make our way to the campsite.

To the water!

The tar road winds the last 700 m down the hill and provides a beautiful view of the dam, the campsite below in front of you and the dam wall on the left.



“

Although the Vanderkloof Damwal Caravan Park is half a kilometre before town, you'll have to stop in town anyway because you have to check in at the Monte Crous Hotel in Madeliefie Street

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IF ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. There is nothing fancy about Vanderkloof. It is a lovely country town with nice people and an equally nice caravan park. It is across from the dam wall on a neat lawn. If you need anything, you can get help in town: from fuel to groceries.



The 12 stands are next to the water and to your right as you drive in and are laid out in a row on a lush green lawn. The building to the left of the stands is one of the bathrooms.

Here, two or three trees provide shade for the middle stands, while some of the other campsites have tall shade nets.

The cornerstone of your stand is the stone-built braai area on the water's side, and the lamppost next to it provides enough light for your steak and boerewors. There is also a grill here that is attached with a chain. The power

point, tap and garbage bin are against the driveway.

Next to the first bathroom building is a large open roof and behind it a small building that is used as a tuck shop during busy times. The swimming pool is in front of the roof, and the second bathroom is at the end of the building. Here there is also one of those life-size chess sets.

The toilets are in the second ablution building and the shower facilities in the first, with separate facilities for men and women. The shower room basins and

their mirrors are on the right against the wall, and the shower cubicles in a row against the opposite wall. The cubicles do not have a dry spot and there is only a shower curtain between you and your camp neighbour who is brushing his teeth at the basin. There is however a hook for your towel. The scullery for dishes is on the outside.

When you drive past the first 12 stands, you will find the next group of 12. These stands are arranged around a shared centre and also on a nice lawn, but it does seem as if some of the stands have



In short | Vanderkloof Dam



Campsite 12 stands on a well-kept lawn on the bank of the dam and another 12 stands to one side in a circle, also on grass.

Price Depending on the season, R450 or R550 per stand for up to 4 people, after that R150 p.p. The shade net is R100 p.d. extra.

Arrival and departure time The resort owners are not strict about when you arrive, but you must depart by 10:00.

Contact ☎ 067 394 0025

✉ karavaanpark@vanderkloof.co.za

🌐 vanderkloof.co.za

Nearest town Vanderkloof, 1,4 km.

What's the road like? Tar all the way.

GPS S29.995536 E24.735504

Drive & Camp says Vanderkloof is the perfect place to stop overnight between Gauteng and the Cape – that extra 50 km is well worth it.

a slight slope. There are also a few shade nets here, but a lot more trees providing shade. We didn't see any power points, but power points and Wi-Fi – for all the sites – are apparently also in the pipeline.

Wall of prestige

The town, which was granted municipal status in 1980, owes its existence to the workers who built the dam. According to the 2011 census figures, just over 1 000 people live here.

The Vanderkloof Dam's embankment, at 108 m, is the highest in South Africa (and the only one higher than 100 m). The dam wall of the Sterkfontein (93 m) and Pongolapoort Dams (89 m) are the closest to it. The dam wall of Vanderkloof's upstream neighbour dam, the Gariep, is 88 m high. However, in terms of volume, the Gariep is the largest dam in the

country, followed by the Vanderkloof.

When the dam is full, the water pushes up to 100 km from the dam wall, but the other side of the wall is equally impressive. From the Free State side, you first drive past the dam wall at the bottom, which is about 730 m away from you. You can hardly see the bottom where the water tumbles into the river and the fog cloud extends a good 50 m high. The bridge is a single lane and about 300 m long.

It is only now that you understand where the constant noise in the campsite comes from. You are only 500 m from the wall, and you can hear the lively waters late at night from your camp bed. It is a wonderful sleep channel that takes you deep into dreamland for the most beautiful sunrise over the waters the next morning.



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Etiquette on your overland trip

New and seasoned campers and overland travellers can benefit from keeping these few etiquette tips in mind.

Words **Lea Erasmus, Ultimate Routes**

We all too often see people venting their frustrations on social media about camping facilities, noisy neighbours or poor behaviour in the bush. Why are people so quick to criticise online when you could do something about it right there and then? This is how you encourage a culture of encouragement and constructive feedback.

Just be nice

If something is bothering you or you experience a problem that you want to solve, bring it to the attention of your travel agent or the campsite's management before you vent your anger on social media. This is the fastest way to resolve any issue and change something that will benefit people after you. This also prevents emotional reactions.

Here are a few tips to make sure everyone enjoys the experience: Respect your reservation and the stand you are assigned. Buy wood for your campfire rather than searching the surrounding bushveld. Remove all your rubbish when you leave and leave your stand cleaner than you found it. Be friendly and respectful to the staff.

Follow the camp rules and play your

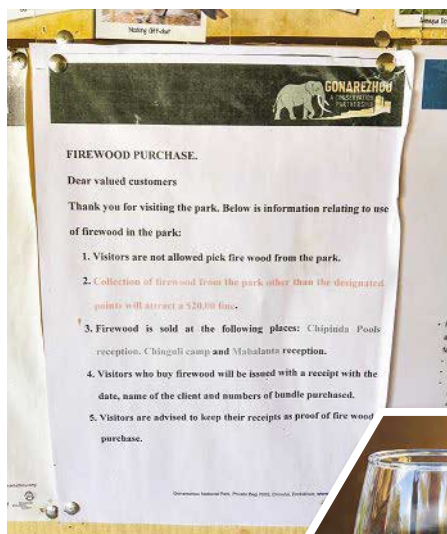




Photo Gerald Kirsten

music softly (or not at all), be quiet after 22:00 and only braai where you are allowed.

Behave behind the wheel

Only drive on designated roads, especially on remote routes or in the rainy season, warns experienced overland traveller Kobus Smit. It is strictly forbidden to drive on other roads. Engage 4x4 when driving on dirt roads, as this helps protect the road surface and makes you better prepared for any unexpected obstacles.

When you see animals and there are many vehicles, position your vehicle in such a way that you get a good view. Take your photos or videos and give others a chance too.

In a convoy, the slowest vehicle should always drive in front, with radio communication between the front and rear vehicles to keep everyone in touch. If you get stuck, it is good practice to offer your own equipment to recover your vehicle.

For the birds

Do not feed animals or birds. It may seem innocent enough, but it can cause big problems because animals start to associate campsites with food, and this only causes trouble.

Keep your food covered during the day and make sure your garbage is out of reach overnight by hanging it in a tree or locking it in your vehicle. Pack away your shoes and other loose items, because hyenas (and even lions) can tear them to shreds.

Also, never wake up a sleeping animal or try to make one move. Remember, you are here to enjoy nature, not to disturb it.

When nature calls...

When you enter the wilderness, ablution facilities are not always cleaned regularly. So do your part to keep them clean and hygienic.

If you nature calls in the middle of nowhere, take someone with you or make sure the area is safe. Dig a hole 15-20 cm deep, fill it in afterwards and plant an upright stick to mark the spot. Burn your white golf if possible.

This is how you do it

Gandhi once said an ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching. Here are some examples of good etiquette.

Steve Geier, who has just returned from a very wet Okavango Delta, tells how his group had to brave several large water and mud crossings on the way between Magotho and Mababe. A fellow traveller warned them that there were large concrete blocks under the water that

could cause serious damage. "However, there was a construction foreman who safely guided us around the hidden dangers and thanks to this shared insight and help, we reached Maun without incident."

At a very basic campsite in the Caprivi, Awie Erasmus noticed that the ablution facilities had no place to hang his towel and clothes when he showered. He immediately made two metal hooks and attached them neatly to a wooden panel.

He informed the camp management about this when he left and encouraged them to do something similar in the other bathrooms. They were very happy with this.

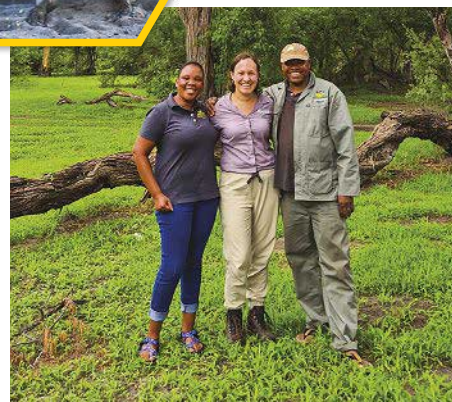
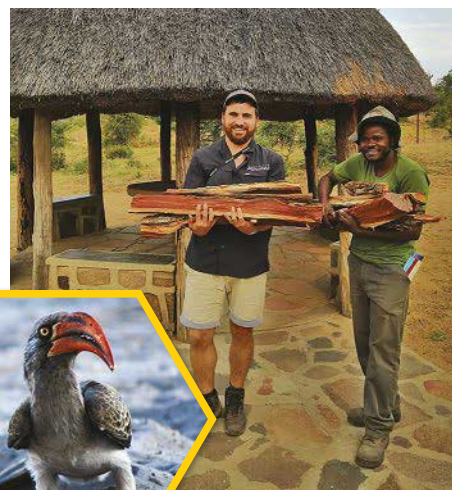
Add value if you can

The infrastructure at many campsites on the other side of the border may not have been upgraded for a long time and the facilities are not always cleaned regularly.

We know of many travellers who, for example, deliberately leave a braai grill at a campsite or give the workers extra garbage bags to use. Such gestures make a big difference. We do not praise poor standards, but we do encourage initiative. 🙌



CONTACT
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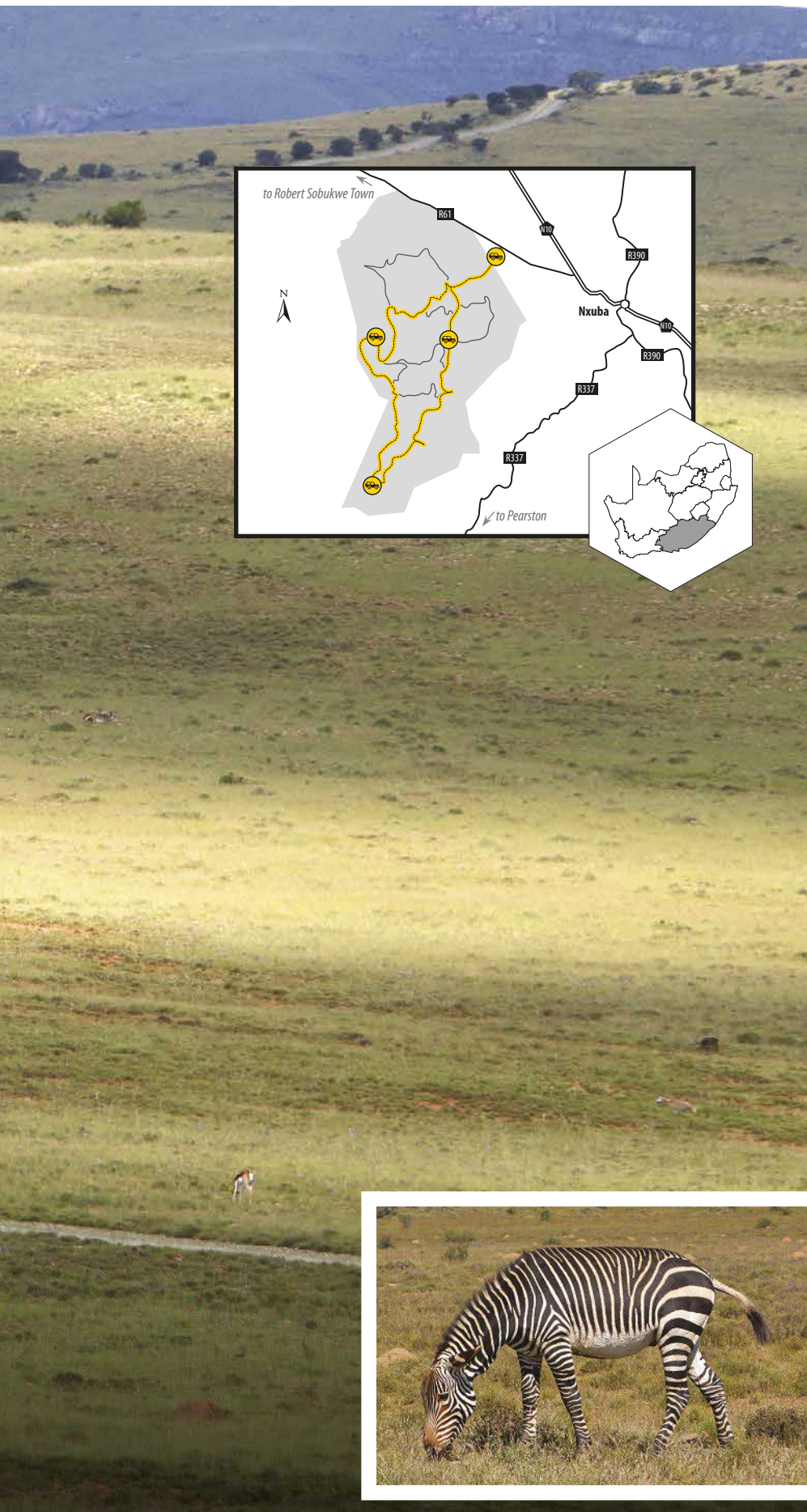


Roadside meetings with the mountain zebra



The Mountain Zebra National Park is not only great for game viewing, but also has pleasant routes waiting to be explored.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**



In 1937, the numbers of the Cape mountain zebra dwindled to such an extent that a group of concerned Eastern Cape farmers decided to do something about it. To protect the animals, they had 1 712 ha of land proclaimed, after which Hans Lombard, a farmer from the area, donated the first 11 animals.

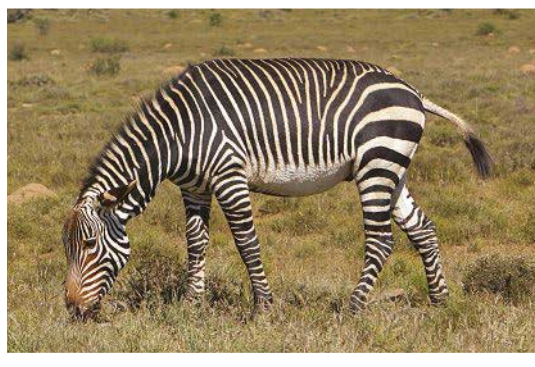
The Mountain Zebra National Park has grown over the years, and today there are more than 1 000 zebras on the 28 386 ha. For the first time in more than a century, there are also lions, buffalo and cheetahs in the area again.

Your exploration begins at the park's main gate (S32.14088 E25.50962), about 2 km after you leave the R61 regional road. After filling in a register, a guard at the gate tells you to report to reception for a permit. Follow the signs to the office where you pay a conservation fee of R73 p.p. There is also a petrol station, which is manned between 07:30 and 14:00 every day. Unleaded petrol and 50 ppm diesel cost the same as it would in the nearest town. However, the petrol station does not have a compressor, so remember to bring your own pump if you want to deflate your tyres.

We suggest driving through the park anti-clockwise. You are allowed to drive clockwise, but the road is sometimes too narrow to pass oncoming traffic, especially on the mountain passes.

Therefore, drive back the way you came in the direction of the main gate, but instead of driving all the way to the gate, turn left at beacon 1. The Ubejane Loop's dirt road winds through a rolling grassland, and this is where you're likely to see the most wildlife. We saw gemsbok, red hartebeest, black wildebeest, buffalo and zebra grazing in the tall grass. Follow the Link Road to beacon 7. Here the landscape becomes mountainous.

Turn right at beacon 7 onto the Rooiplaat Loop and follow the road to beacon 8.





**WELCOME
TO
MOUNTAIN ZEBRA
NATIONAL PARK**

GATE TIMES

1 October - 31 March	07h00 - 19h00
1 April - 30 September	07h00 - 18h00



COME AND SEE. The landscape becomes more mountainous the deeper you drive into the park, but the roads remain easy to navigate. These pictures were snapped in April 2026, shortly after the rainy season, which is why the veld is so lust and green. Unlike antelope, zebra are non-seasonal breeders so there's always a chance to see foals, though we were not so lucky.



There is a lookout point overlooking almost the entire park along the road. You may disembark here but wait five minutes and look around and listen for lions before you do. As a notice says, SANParks is not liable if you end up in the jaws of a big cat.

At beacon 9 you take the Kranskop Loop, which takes you even deeper into the mountains. Follow the steep mountain pass down into a valley with a second lookout point where you can also get out. The warning against the possibility of lions also applies here. We saw quite a few kudus in the gorge, but

not a single lion.

At S32.28624 E25.41241 the road makes a sharp turn to the right and takes you through the Wilgerboom River. If the river is in flood during your visit, turn around and drive back the way you came, but if you can drive through, the road takes you to the Laastekloof River where you drive over a low-water bridge, followed by the Langkloof, Kortkloof and Berghofkloof Rivers. There was water in all of them when we were here, but it was shallow enough for a normal vehicle.

Turn right at beacon 11 and visit the Weltevredeloof picnic spot. The picnic

area has an electric fence to make sure the lions don't join you as uninvited guests. You press a button to open the automated gate.

The picnic spot has more than 20 braai spots, an ablution block and a swimming pool built from natural stone. Remember to bring your camping table and chairs. If the facilities here are a bit too basic for your liking, you can drive farther on to the second picnic spot which is more suitable for families with children.

Stay on the Kranskop Loop and stop at beacon 13, as there is a lookout point next to a large dam at the foot of



“

...the road is sometimes too narrow to pass oncoming traffic, especially on the mountain passes

”

Rondekop. Bring your zoom lens camera if you want to photograph birds, as you have to stay in your vehicle here.

The Doringhoek picnic spot at beacon 14 is also fenced with an automatic gate. There are more than 20 braai spots with benches and tables, plus a pool, jungle gym, swings and slides for the little ones. The ablution block is a neat stone building with toilets and sinks.

After a nice braai and cooling off in the pool, it's time to drive the last 2 km back to the reception building and campsite. We hope you decided to spend the night here, because there are three 4x4 routes

you'll have to tackle tomorrow.

First up is the 10 km Juriesdam 4x4 trail. It is not particularly challenging, but it was closed during our visit due to flood damage. In fact, the rangers strongly advised us against attempting any of the 4x4 trails with our Omoda C9. (Read our driving impression of this vehicle on p. 84).

The second route, the 14 km Sonnenrust 4x4 trail, starts at beacon 3 and takes you through the low-lying part of the park. We were naughty and ignored the rangers' warning about our vehicle. It was foolish, as we had to turn



Need to know



Maximum number of vehicles?

Unlimited. However, SANParks will decide if there are too many vehicles in the park.

Do I get a map? Yes, a neat printed one.

Will my vehicle get scratched? On the 4x4 trails maybe, but not on the main roads.

Should I bring a compressor? Just to pump up deflated tyres.

Can I braai along the way? There are picnic spots where you can indeed braai.

Is there cellphone signal? Mostly yes, but there are a few dead spots.

Best time of year? Any time of year.

Can I take my family with me? Definitely.

Day trip or weekend? You need two days to cover all the roads in the park.

How long does it take? The route as we explain it here, is 60 km long, but the park has a total of 100 km of roads.

Are there ablutions? Only at certain points, as we mention here.

Directions The entrance to the park is on the R61 that connects Graaff-Reinet (now Robert Sobukwe Town) and Cradock (now Nxuba).

Contact ☎ 048 801 5700 (park office)

✉ mountainzebra@sanparks.org

🌐 sanparks.org

around after barely 1 km because the mud holes were indeed too challenging for our vehicle. You don't want to get stuck in lion country...

The Umngeni 4x4 trail is the last and apparently the most difficult of the three. It starts at beacon 6, and although the route is only 8 km long, it will take at least an hour. We didn't even consider it because our vehicle was simply too low.

So yes! You not only saw game, but also drove enjoyable routes. The Mountain Zebra National Park may not be the biggest jewel in the crown of SANParks, but it is certainly special. 📍

Better in red



He had always wanted a Jimny, as it's a vehicle that would offer him double the pleasure, says **Paul de Kock** of Moorreesburg

He had been camping all his life, but when Paul retired three years ago, it not only marked the beginning of the next chapter in his life, but also the time to explore a new way of camping.

Paul said goodbye to his career in information technology, and with it also to his tent, when he bought himself a 4x4 and a camper. His requirement for a vehicle was one that would take him to his preferred campsites – places usually not accessible via ordinary roads. The Suzuki Jimny was Paul's first choice, and he opted for a red five-door model.

In the meantime, he also met Christie Coetzee from Mission Outdoor at a show just outside Malmesbury. After striking up a conversation, Paul was able to collect a very special camper. He tells us.

“ I have camped across the Western Cape, but mostly with a tent. A few years ago, I converted a VW Kombi into a kind of motorhome, and my friends Jasper Visser and Ruan Stapelberg joined me on a camping trip. The woven groundsheet is thrown out next to the Kombi and a tent attached to the Kombi is pitched over it.

The tent looks like an add-a-room that zips onto your caravan's tent as an additional living space. Inside the tent, I had shelves to keep everything neatly organised.

When I'm not camping with friends, my brother Dreyer usually joins me. However, my working life is coming to an end and it's time to consider a new vehicle.

In 2024, I became the owner of a new

Suzuki Jimny, but it wasn't simply a matter of walking in and buying one. I speak to a dealer in Goodwood and consider a green one, the Jungle Green colour, but then a red one piques my interest.

This means a slightly longer wait. But I am patient, because I have a vehicle at my disposal. The dealer tracks down a red Jimny in Worcester, and I don't even have to wait three weeks.

Back home, with Mr. Red in the driveway, I immediately made a few changes in order for the new wheels to better suit my camping lifestyle. (At that stage, I was still camping with a tent.)

I remove the Jimny's rear seats for extra storage space and also to fit my fridge-freezer.

The Jimny's tailgate opens from the left



“

Back home, with Mr. Red in the driveway, I immediately made a few changes in order for the new wheels to better suit my camping lifestyle

”



A TEMPORARY FIX. This must have been the only new Jimny in the country with a built-in fridge - that was until the Mission joined the towing combination.





and swings to the right. The fridge-freezer, a 66 l SnoMaster, is mounted on a sliding frame on the left, and on the right, there is storage space for a loose solar panel, storage boxes and water containers. I can still use both rear doors and therefore do not only have access to my load compartment from the rear.

I meet Christie at the kykNET outdoor expo in March last year, where Mission is launching several new models. These include the Cargo, Lite and Lite+.

The Lite grabs my attention because it has a gross vehicle mass of 750 kg, and because it also comes with standard overrun brakes, it fits in nicely with the Jimny. On top of that, you're spoiled with all the Lite's standard equipment, such as the two 20 l fridge-freezers, a water tank, two-burner gas stove, Flexo power system, LED lights and a rooftop tent.

I have no problem with a rooftop tent and the ladder you need for it. I even have an awning attached. Also a gas geyser.

Part of the launch is that you can get the trailer in the colour of your choice. That is the birth of a red Mission Lite, and as far as I know, it's the only red one in the country.

It's all well and good to have the Mission, but without a towbar, we're not going anywhere.

In Johannesburg, I track down a new Brink towbar for half the regular price. The bar fits easily, as all the bolts are already in place and more than strong



CAMP TRACKS. You start camping and move through camping gear as life goes on. Paul started with tents and a converted Kombi, today he drives into the campsite with his Suzuki Jimny and a Mission Lite.





enough for the Mission. You can tow a load of 1 300 kg and the nose weight is set at 75 kg.

The bar actually makes my modifications to the Jimny unnecessary, as the Lite has plenty of storage space and its own fridges. So back go the rear seats and the Jimny looks like the day I bought it.

Some of my first routes with the Jimny took me to Lamberts Bay, with a fuel consumption of 7,7-8,3 l/100 km (12-13 km/l). That's pretty much in line with Suzuki's official figures of 6,4 l/100 km.

When I tow, there is no significant change: 9,1 l/100 km (11 km/l). This means that with its 40 l tank I have a range of 480 km without anything in tow (and 40 km less with the Mission at the back).

Remember, it's a 1 500 cc engine and I have the manual transmission model. You have five gears at your disposal, I tow at 100 km/h and the engine delivers a decent 130 Nm. Of course the speed needle drops on an uphill, but no one is in such a hurry.

Even though it's a new towing combination, it's not completely strange to me, because I've towed before and with



What about your wheels?

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the Mission, it's nothing but pleasure. You simply don't know about the trailer because it trots along quietly in the Jimny's track.

On the way to the first campsite, the Jimny has to show and tell: We have to drive over the Piekenierskloof Pass to turn off to the Koningskop campsite. But it's done without any problems at all, and setting up is just as easy.

I choose a spot and move into place, after which I get the Mission level. The rooftop tent goes up and I also get the outdoor kitchen ready.

Packing up is just as easy, but the awning is a bit of a hassle, as it is the first time I am doing it, and an awning at first is not everyone's cup of tea. The second time, at ATKV Goudini Spa, things proceed much more smoothly.

The Jimny now has 10 000 km on the clock and I am very satisfied – it just runs! There are still many places to discover.

As it is, I am on my way to Klipkrans near Worcester, the same area I visited with the Kombi earlier.

It is for three or four days, and my brother-in-law, Hugo Meyer, is coming along because I hear the carp are running like crazy!

A short but epic tour

For 18 days – and over 8 000 km – South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe treated **Nolene Kotze** and her family to something truly special. These Namibians however were also somewhat tested...



In 2008, the Kotze family decided to purchase a vehicle for their adventures. The Toyota Prado they bought became part of the family over time, and with over 400 000 km on the clock, today it is more than a vehicle, it is also a witness to all their travels.

In 2024, Nolene, who lives in Swakopmund, Namibia, tackled a journey through South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe with her husband, André, and their children, Lehan (11) and Zoë (10). Many border posts and even more unforgettable moments were waiting for them. Nolene tells...



“Our camping holiday starts at Leentjiesklip in Langebaan, where you have the option of booking a stand with a private bathroom if you don't fancy the shared facilities.

Langebaan with its lagoon is an iconic destination with lots to do, and the kids enjoy hanging out at Sky Park, where they can hang up to 15m in the air before descending to the ground on a zip line.

From here we head to Cape Town and find ourselves at the Ou Skip caravan park in Melkbosstrand. It's a good base from which to explore the Cape properly and visit places like Cool Runnings in Tygervally, the V&A Waterfront, the Bo-Kaap with its colourful houses and of course Table Mountain for

a selfie.

Camps Bay is beautiful. We enjoy the beach and restaurants, and after a day packed with activities we relax wonderfully at the Barnyard Theatre.

However, it's time to hit the road again and we cover the 1 200 km to Twee Rivieren in one day. However, we are just too late to still enter the Kgalagadi and have to camp at the Kalahari Lodge, where our stand also has its own bathroom facilities.

This landscape is simply special, especially when you dig your toes into the Kalahari sand.

We are very excited to camp at the Twee Rivieren campsite in the Kgalagadi. Here they require you to stay for at

least two nights and not just drive through in one day. It's a lovely campsite with shared ablution facilities and power at your stand.

We explore the park for two days and are quite disappointed not to encounter lions, but we do see a leopard and a cheetah. In the picnic area we do see lion tracks... it makes you look around while you eat.

There are a lot of antelope here and the most beautiful landscapes, which make for an incredible experience.

It feels like we are in no man's land, because our passports have the stamps showing that we left South Africa, but there are not entry stamps for Botswana. At the latter we would later have

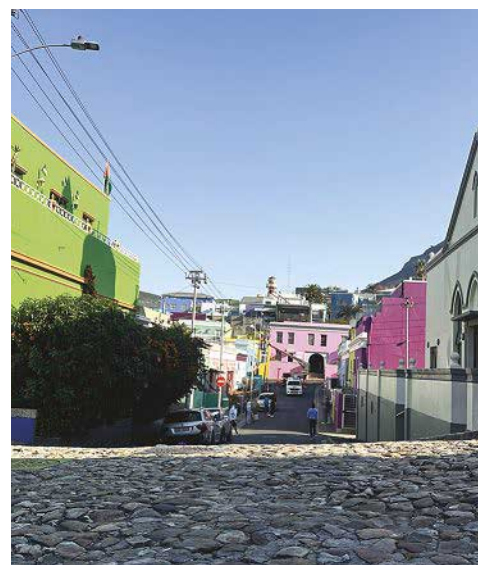
a bit of drama because there are no card facilities and we do not have pula, and we therefore had to pay the road tax at the airport in Maun.

The drive between Twee Rivieren and the Kaa Gate is long and challenging, and it takes us six hours on the dirt road. The campsite here is very wild, which means you have to be completely self-sufficient.

We have another long day ahead of us, as the plan is to drive from the gate to Ghanzi. However, we first have to stop at the permit station on the way and pay the toll to use the road and drive through the village. In Ghanzi we spend the night at Palm Afrique, a beautiful place with grass and electricity at the stands, and the next day we set off for



A DETOUR TO CAPE TOWN. The Kotze family starts their trip in the Cape and travel along the West Coast to Cape Town, where they stay over in Melkbosstrand. From here, they visited a whole host of attractions.



Moremi.

Here misfortune strikes us when a truck swerves into us while we are trying to overtake a car just outside Maun. Fortunately, it hits the trailer and not the Prado, and although we are all unhurt, the shock of the impact is something that makes you shake. An incident like this is definitely not something you want to experience in a foreign country.

Our trailer's axle was damaged in the process, and

we wonder if we will be able to travel further with it. Some of the locals helped to fix it as best they could, but we are still wondering whether we should continue. The jockey wheel is also missing, which means we won't be able to unhook the trailer for the rest of the tour.

We spend the night at Island Safari Lodge and the next morning we have to report the incident to the police station. They decide we are not liable and say we can go. The same does however not apply to the truck driver.

We drive to Ome 4x4 in

Maun where they check the trailer, but we cannot find a new jockey wheel there. Now we have to decide whether we go back home or whether it's a good idea to attempt the remaining 4 000 km of our journey without unhooking the trailer.

Deep inside, we were not yet ready to turn around, and with the trailer's door held in place with duct tape, we turn in the direction of Moremi as we leave Maun.

The road to the Moremi National Park takes us

through incredibly beautiful scenery and we see many animals, including elephants and lions. In Khwai, on the way to Chobe, we see a group of wild dogs, which was a highlight of our trip.

Our favourite campsite in Moremi is Xakanaxa, where you camp in the open without fences along the Okavango Delta. Just before we start to make our camp, we see a lioness barely 500 m from our campsite. Shortly before we were in the middle of a herd of elephants with one very cheeky bull. Here there are



THE TROUBLE STARTS... From the beginning, the adventure turned out to be challenging when the Kotze family was involved in an accident outside Maun. Luckily nobody was injured but the camper was badly damaged (photo below).

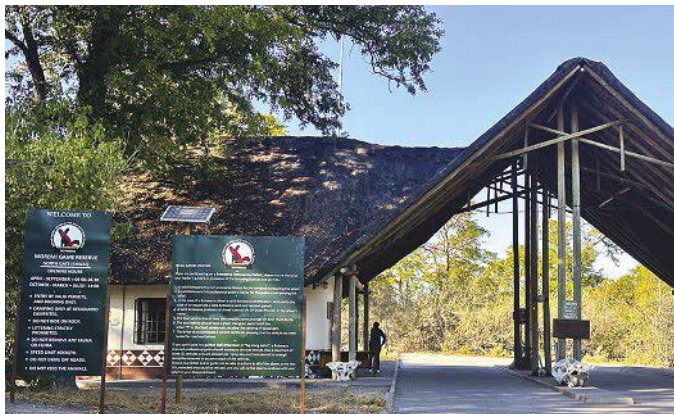
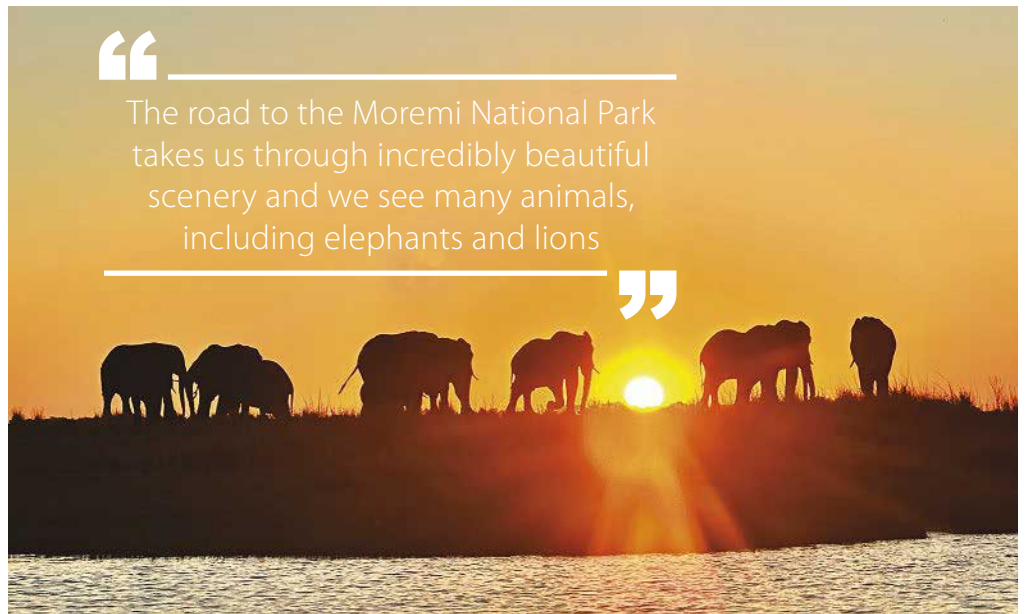




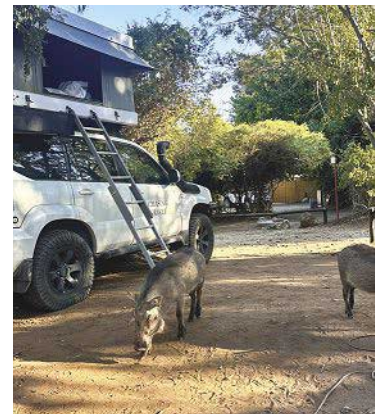
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The road to the Moremi National Park takes us through incredibly beautiful scenery and we see many animals, including elephants and lions

”



ONWARDS! With a patched camper, they decided to travel further – and they are rewarded with a handful of wonderful and beautiful experiences.



hippos and crocodiles in the waterholes and in the rest of the park there are many zebras and antelopes.

Xakanaxa has shared ablution facilities, and solar power provides the hot water, which means you have to think carefully when you want to take a shower.

The road from Moremi to Kasane is challenging. We follow the south-to-north route through Chobe, and it is difficult and challenging: First the trailer comes loose

and then the roof rack gets damaged. We now need creative solutions because the trailer's hook is still attached with only one nut. We unhook it and fix it, but a short distance further we are left with the broken roof rack. Overland travel is great fun, isn't it?

Apart from a few giraffes, elephants, warthogs and antelope, we don't see many animals in Chobe. It's about an eight-hour drive from Chobe's Mababe Gate to

Kasane and you need a day permit. In Kasane we camp at the Chobe Safari Lodge and enjoy a well-deserved break that refreshes the soul. There is a bushbuck in the campsite and a warthog family that comes to visit every morning.

The view of the Chobe River and all the wildlife we see here makes us forget all the challenges we have had to overcome on this trip. On a boat trip we see elephants swimming down the river from Botswana to Namibia

while the sun is busy sinking below the horizon. The boat gets so close to the buffalo that you could almost touch them... if you didn't know better, of course. We also see herds of kudu, zebra, springbok, giraffe and even a sable. The river and all the animals here are simply incredible and a wonderful experience.

Our next destination is Zimbabwe, and we are aiming for the Victoria Falls. It is

READER'S STORY

quite busy here and you feel like you are in another world. And you pay in US dollars for everything, which means it is not cheap at all.

We decide on a package deal that includes all the most important activities to make the most of our time here. We visit the Victoria Falls, the children play on a zip line at the Look Out Café in the gorge, we experience a cocktail cruise on the Zambezi River, walk on the bridge from Zimbabwe to Zambia, and go see the 2 000-year-old baobab tree and taste its fruit.

We camp at Shearwater, but there is one more thing that the children really want to do: a visit to the crocodile centre. They love holding the little ones and having snakes hang around their necks. I am not a big fan of animals in captivity and prefer to experience them in the wild, but it is important to consider that places like this help with conservation.

Due to the high prices, we eat very little while wandering about and save the big meals and drinks for when we get back to our camper.

Despite the US dollar, it is an incredible experience to wake up in the morning with the 'smoke' of the water hanging around you and you realise that it is one of the seven natural wonders of the world talking to you. One must experience the power and grandeur of this waterfall at least once in your life. It is a difficult experience to describe, and you only realise its wonder when you see it with your own eyes.

And then you have to hope that overwhelming feeling of joy still prevails when you arrive at the local border post, because it makes even us who come from a SADC country roll our eyes. In Zambia the border fee is a staggering



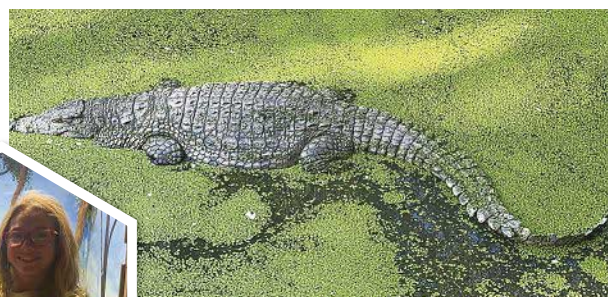
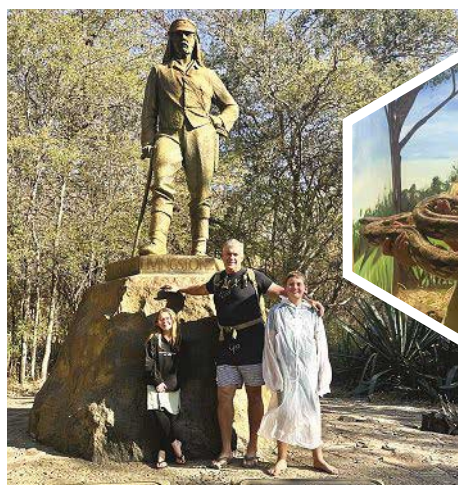
“

it is an incredible experience to wake up in the morning with the 'smoke' of the water hanging around you...

”



CHEERS, MY BOY! It is human nature to be overly cautious when you have to pay in US dollars, but if you're smart, like Nolene and her family, you can enjoy Victoria Falls and all its attractions without taking out a second mortgage on your home.





US\$50 per person... that's R900 for each of us.

Things go very smoothly at the border post between Zimbabwe and Botswana, where we have to walk through a disinfectant. If you were further north in Africa, you would also be medically examined, but fortunately this was not necessary for us.

We watch the sun set over the Chobe River for the last time and the next day we brave the border post between Botswana and Namibia. On the Botswana side, the officials

want everyone's shoes so they can be disinfected, but after that things go smoothly. Namibia welcomes us back as only this country can when we find an elephant and giraffe before we have even driven 50 km.

Our tour was full of challenges, but also full of incredible moments and beautiful scenery. The Metalian finally made it home in one piece and Bruzer, our faithful Prado, was immediately ready for the

next adventure.

We are grateful when we think back on this trip. We realise once again that the best memories are made on deserted dirt roads and under the stars.

Until next time, when we hit the road again and write new chapters in our family's story.



If you want to follow Nolene and her family's adventures, search for "travel_with_nolene" on Instagram.



Nolene wins a cooler bag worth R575. Whether you're a camper, fisherman or sports fan next to a cricket pitch, this cooler bag has room for a lunch box and a 1,5 l cooldrink bottle. The lid also has space for a coffee flask. The interior is lined with PVC, which makes it easy to keep the bag clean and hygienic. The bag has a short strap that reaches over the top and attaches with a Velcro strip, as well as a longer shoulder strap if you're going to

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Man's best friend . . .

The only reason your dogs are barking non-stop these days is because they want to go camping!

Compiled by **Leon Botha**

KAMP WEGBREEK



Pet conditions All animals are welcome.
Have we been here before? No.

Campsite A new campsite on a farm with 4 stands and space for up to 16 people. You book the entire private campsite for your group. The stands have grass, some shade and there are 2 braai areas.

Ablution facilities 1 ablution building with 2 separate bathrooms and a solar system that provides hot water. The scullery is between the bathrooms, each of which has a shower and toilet.

Arrival and departure times 14:00 and 10:00.

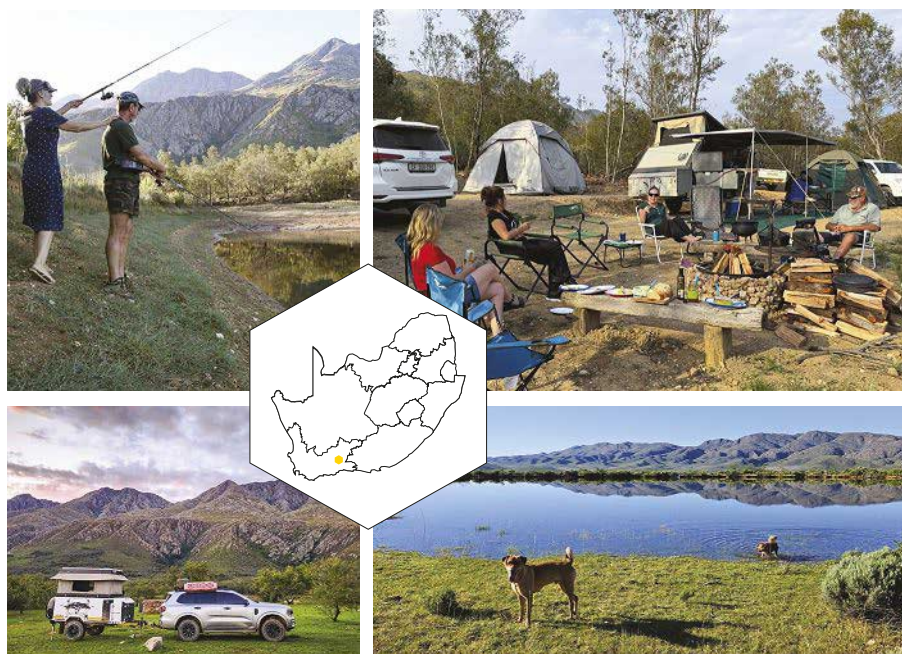
Contact ☎ 082 292 8989 ✉ admin@vleihoek.co.za 🌐 plaaswegbreek.co.za

Nearest town Barrydale, 7 km.

What's the road like? You can tow your standard road caravan on the dirt road to here but be careful when it rains.

GPS S33.893393 E20.767075

SWARTBERG WILDS



Pet conditions Keep a close eye on your four-legged friends, as they should not be a nuisance to your camp neighbours.
Have we been here before? No.

Campsite 5 separate campsites approximately 500 m apart with facilities ranging from communal stands to private camps.

Ablution facilities Separate showers and toilets in Camp 1 and 2. There is hot water here and everyone can use the facilities.

Arrival and departure times No set times but check with the resort owners first.

Contact ☎ 071 534 4632 ✉ info@swartbergwilds.com 🌐 swartbergwilds.com

Nearest town Oudtshoorn, 45 km.

What is the road like? The last 2 km of gravel road is not suitable for regular road caravans.

GPS S33.390507 E22.038585

BREEDE ESCAPE



Pet conditions You must arrange in advance if you are bringing your pets and then they must be used to camping. American pit bull terriers or related breeds are not allowed.

Have we been here before? No.

Campsite 4 fenced sites with electricity, a scullery and built-in braai and fire pit. You stand on grass under shade trees.

Ablution facilities Your own bathroom on your site with a toilet, basin and shower and gas geyser.

Arrival and departure times 13:00 and 10:00. However, on Sundays and public holidays you can stay until late afternoon.

Contact ☎ 082 895 7951

✉ info@breedeescape.co.za

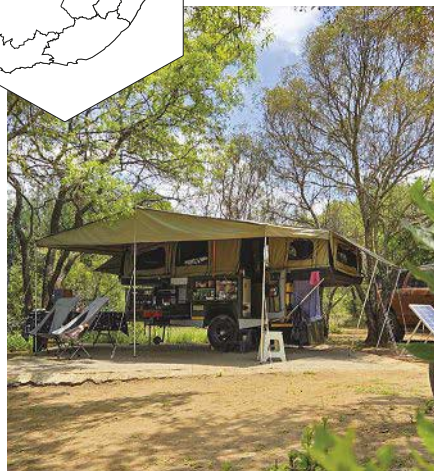
🌐 breedeescape.co.za

Nearest town Bonnievale, 15 km.

What is the road like? The last 3 km is a good gravel road.

GPS S33.980492 E20.198005

GROETKLIP RIVER CAMP



Pet conditions The resort owners prefer small and medium-sized dogs.

Have we been here before? No.

Campsite 9 sites along the Elands River with trees in between for privacy. Each site has a built-in braai area and a 6 x 6 m paved area for your caravan. The middle sites share a splash pool and boma. There is no electricity here, but there are solar lights and the WhatsApp signal is hit-and-miss. There are walking trails.

Ablution facilities Separate facilities for men and women and a communal kitchen with solar lights. A donkey provides hot water, and the resort provides the firewood.

Arrival and departure time No set times – you can arrange if you want to arrive early.

Contact ☎ 082 378 2776

✉ groetklip@gmail.com

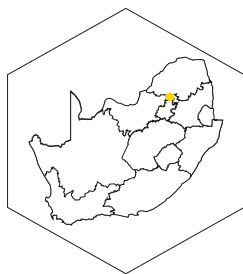
🌐 groetkliprivercamp.co.za

Nearest town Koster, 14 km.

What is the road like? 3 km dirt road to the gate and 1,5 km to the campsite.

GPS S25.822565 E26.762833

DRIE EENHEID BOERDERY BUSH CAMP



Pet conditions Dogs must be on a leash and under control at all times. It is also your responsibility to clean up after them.

Have we been here before? No.

Campsite 15 unmarked stands on grass with plenty of shade trees. The camp is surrounded by an electric fence. The resort owners offer game drives on a trailer behind a tractor and a guided walking tour of the game camp, and there is a 4x4 trail.

Ablution facilities 2 very basic showers and 2 toilets with 12 V lights for everyone's use. The owners fuel a donkey for hot water.

Arrival and departure time No set times.

Contact ☎ 083 304 1565

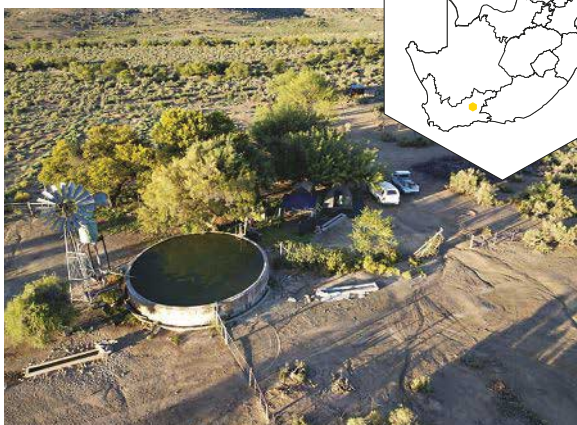
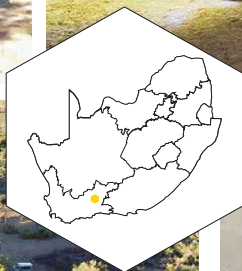
✉ wildlifsecure@gmail.com

Nearest town Pienarsrivier, 9 km.

What is the road like? 3 km off the Rust de Winter tarmac road, but it is a self-tarmacked farm road, the last 800 m of which is a good gravel road.

GPS S25.212696 E28.389480

GROOTWATERVAL



Pet conditions All animals are welcome, but an extra fee applies.

Have we been here before? No.

Campsite Stands with space for 3 to 5 groups between ridges on a farm in the heart of the Karoo. Here there are shade trees, 2 to 3 patches of grass acting as a stand, and you swim in a round farm dam. Only 12 V power is available if you want to run a camp fridge.

Ablution facilities 3 buildings each with a basin, toilet and shower (2 have an enclosed outdoor shower). The scullery areas are near the bathrooms and the hot water is from a gas geyser.

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

Contact ☎ 083 444 3869 or 083 265 4270

✉ grootwaterval@gmail.com

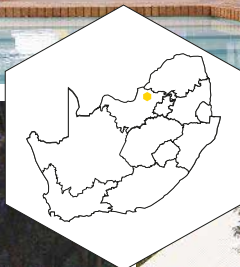
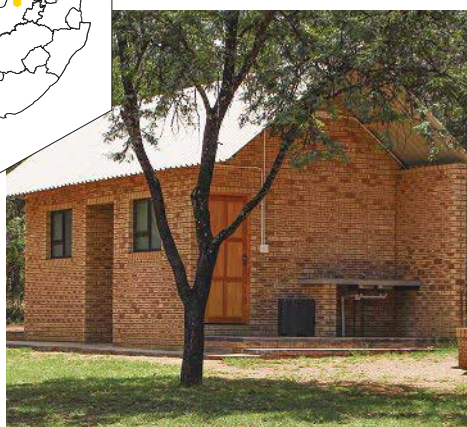
🌐 grootwaterval.co.za

Nearest town Prince Albert, 45 km.

What is the road like? 45 km of gravel road, and the last 7 km is a farm road.

GPS S32.998293 E22.210237

KAREE KRANS



Pet conditions Your pets must be on a leash and may not roam around on their own.

Have we been here before? No.

Campsite 10 stands with power and private bathroom facilities. Some of the stands have grass and each has its own boma with braai area. The cell phone signal is not equally strong everywhere.

Ablution facilities The bathroom has a shower, basin, toilet and washing-up area.

Arrival and departure time 13:00 and 11:00.

Contact ☎ 082 827 9604

✉ bookings@kareekrans.co.za

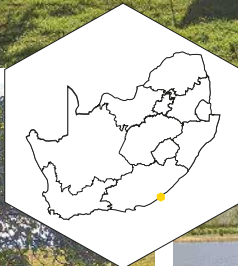
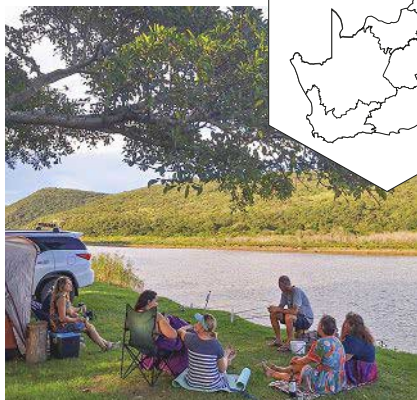
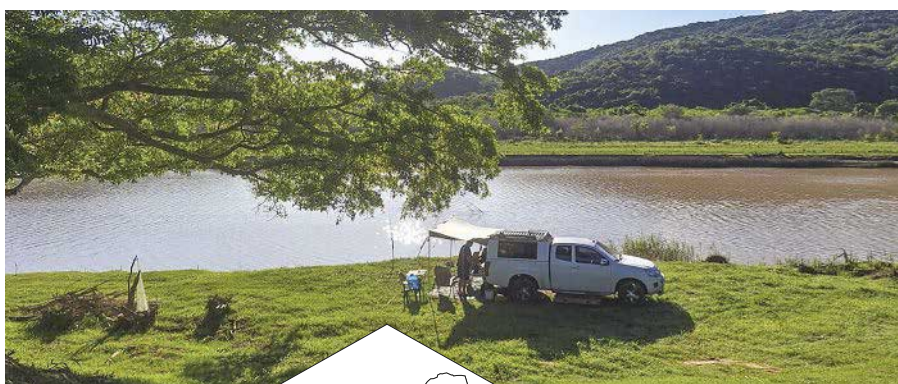
🌐 kareekrans.co.za

Nearest town Rustenburg, 35 km.

What is the road like? The last 10 km is a good gravel road, suitable for a road caravan.

GPS S25.576257 E26.890410

INKWAZI KEI



Pet conditions Your dogs are only welcome during more quiet times. They must be well-behaved and not run amok.

Have we been here before? No.

Campsite A new campsite with unmarked grass stands on the banks of the Kei River with braai areas and some shade spots.

Ablution facilities A hot shower and a chemical toilet.

Arrival and departure time No set times.

Contact ☎ 073 562 0801

✉ inkwazikei@gmail.com

📍 Inkwazi Kei Eco Resort

Nearest town Kei Mouth, 8 km.

What is the road like? The last 7 km is a gravel road that you will only manage with a higher clearance vehicle and an off-road trailer.

GPS S32.640083 E28.352574

OMODA C9

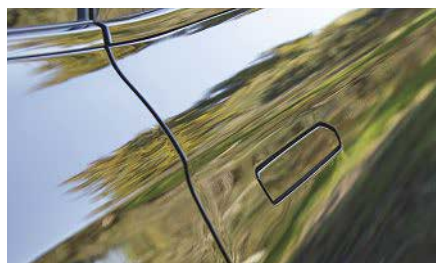
Batteries in charge!

With the Omoda C9 SHS's hybrid drive system, you can choose between its petrol engine or battery power. We test which one works best under which conditions.

Words and photos **Cyril Kloppe**



LOOKS. The daytime running lights is a strip of LEDs that run the width of the car (above) and the door handles sink into the body (below right) like those of a Range Rover. The four beefy exhaust pipes (below) are fake and the two real ones are actually tiny and hidden within the chassis.



When we heard we were getting an electric test vehicle, our first thought was to visit a nearby game reserve and quietly sneak up on a herd of antelope to get photos from close-up. But when we heard it was a hybrid vehicle, more doors opened for us because we could now visit a more remote national park. That's why we set off for the Mountain Zebra National Park in the Eastern Cape to see how the Omoda C9 SHS would manage.

What do we have here?

Omoda is part of the Chinese Chery group, but the brand is meant to be a bit more upmarket than its parent company. The flagship C9 is indeed luxurious, reminiscent of a Volvo crossed with a Mercedes-Benz and a Range Rover.

The C9 SHS's hybrid system comprises a 1.5-litre turbocharged petrol engine under the bonnet that produces 105 kW and 215 Nm, and three electric motors that boost output to a whopping 440 kW and 915 Nm.

Interior

The interior is so luxurious that you almost feel like you have to check if you're clean enough to sit on the crisp white seats. In front of you are two digital screens disguised as one continuous screen. Together they show information such as your speed, tyre pressure, battery charge, fuel level and more. The only information we are used to that is not available is a tachometer and the engine temperature.

You shift the automatic transmission with a stalk to the right of the steering wheel. Lift the stalk to select R for reverse and press it down to select D for drive. There is no starter button or handbrake. You simply get in the car, fasten your seat belt, push the stalk to D and off you go!

The indicator and wiper stalk are to the right of the steering wheel, and we must sheepishly admit that in the first few minutes behind the wheel, we frequently engaged reverse when we actually wanted to turn left. You quickly get used to it though.

All the seats are electrically adjustable and the buttons for the front two are on the doors rather than on the seats themselves as most other manufacturers do. The backrest of the rear bench is adjustable, and if you sit in the rear left, you can even control the seat in front of you with your own set of buttons.

The front and rear seats can be heated and

cooled – talk about luxury! Little Sis can also choose to warm up the air conditioning on her side of the car while Big Brother prefers his side cooler. And above all the occupants there is an enormous sunroof that stretches from the front right to the back.

How does it drive?

In short, like a dream. The Omoda C9 SHS has six driving modes: eco, normal, sport, snow, mud and off-road. We are sure that at least one of these modes will appeal to you.

We were satisfied with the normal driving mode, because you get a nice balance of the Omoda's ride quality. However, if you prefer stiffer suspension, heavier steering and sharper braking, then the sport mode will be your favourite.

We set the Omoda's computer to rely equally on battery and engine power for the long drive to the Eastern Cape. It returned a fuel consumption of 5.5 l/100 km, which is quite decent. However, the battery charge had dropped to 25%.

As we approached the Mountain Zebra National Park, we told the computer to rely more on the engine, and the battery was charged to 75% within half an hour – fuel consumption rose to 6.7 l/100 km though. This enabled us to explore the entire park on pure battery power without the sound of an engine. Quite a few animals were startled when we unexpectedly appeared behind them. It was so quiet that we could hear the chirping of every bird.

Our only complaint about the ride is the Omoda's safety system. If you look around too much according to the computer's liking, an alarm alerts with a message that you are being distracted. This happens not only when you are driving slowly among game, but also on a highway when you are trying to focus on overtaking a truck.

The competition

These days there are quite a few competitors in the hybrid market, but few of them have the Omoda's range of 1 000 km (in hybrid mode) and 150 km on pure electric.

Although we haven't driven them all, we choose the BYD Sealion 6, Chery Tiggo 8 and Volvo XC90, because they all offer plenty of legroom and good fuel economy. You can also charge their batteries at home with 220 V power, like the Omoda C9 SHS.

However, the Omoda battery takes the longest to charge – 12 hours from 10% to 100% – but in return, you also get the best



RANGE. A large portion of the chassis is taken up by the battery (above), but Omoda didn't shrink the fuel tank and you can still carry a respectable 70 l of petrol. Unfortunately the spare wheel was sacrificed to make room and in stead you'll have to contend with a can of puncture repair foam (included), which is far from ideal.



SPECIFICATIONS

Model	C9 SHS
Engine	1.5 l petrol engine and three electric motors
Power	440 kW
Torque	915 Nm
Gearbox	Three-speed dedicated hybrid transmission (DHT)
Drive	All-wheel drive
Ground clearance	165 mm
Tank	70 l
Fuel consumption	5,5 l/100 km (tested)
Tyre size	245/50 R20
Weight (GVW)	2 717 kg
Dimensions	4 775 (l) x 1 920 (w) x 1 671 mm (h)
Towing capacity	1 500 kg (braked)
Safety rating	★★★★★ (Euro NCAP)
Warranty	7 years/200 000 km (general) and 10 years (battery)
Service plan	7 years/100 000 km
PRICE	R999 000

“

The only other downside to the large battery is that the C9 SHS has no spare wheel...

”

range on pure battery power. The only other downside to the large battery is that the C9 SHS has no spare wheel...

Conclusion

We were impressed by the Omoda C9 SHS, because it didn't give us any trouble. Apart from the alarm that frequently broke our attention with its warning that we needed to pay attention, the drive was uneventful – not even a flat tyre with those huge 20-inch rims, which is just as well since there is no spare.

Yes, at R1 million it's expensive, but it feels like it's worth the money. One is just hesitant to shell out that much money for a brand that's only been in the country for 18 months, right?



FROM THE COMPETITORS
Plug-in hybrid vehicles from cheapest to most expensive.



R689 900

BYD Sealion 6 Premium

You get 70 km on pure battery power, after that it guzzles petrol.



R729 900

Chery Tiggo 8 CSH

Similar figures to the Omoda because it is a stablemate, albeit less luxurious.



R1 936 500

Volvo XC90 Ultra Dark

You can drive on pure battery power, but only for short hops. It's super luxurious, though!

A reliable trooper



NISSAN NAVARA PRO-4X WARRIOR

We head to the Kalahari and tow 3 000 km over 12 days to see how the armoured Nissan Navara Pro-4X Warrior performs with a caravan in tow.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

With its upgraded tyres, suspension, ground clearance, wheel track and approach and departure angles, the Warrior is even better geared for off-road conditions than the standard Navara Pro-4X model.

But how does this affect someone who mainly travels on tarmac – or at most a short stretch of gravel – to the campsite?

We hook up Okto's first off-road caravan, the Wasp, and take on tarmac roads (some littered with potholes), red Kalahari sand, rocky and corrugated gravel roads and deep puddles of water with the Warrior.

What is the difference?

Apart from the cosmetic changes, such as the front bumper and wide wheel arches, there are quite a few significant differences between the Pro-4X and the Warrior,

a conversion by a company called Premcar. (navarawarrior.co.za).

Although it doesn't matter too much in a tow test, the Warrior's approach and departure angles are 3,5° and 0,5° better than the Pro-4X's, respectively. Its 275/65 R17 tyres are also wider than the standard model's 255/65 R17 tyres, which affects the wheel's centre height. The Warrior's tyre sidewall is 13 mm higher, and because the wheel's circumference is now 26 mm more than the standard tyre, the revs are slightly lower at your towing speed. It is therefore quite appropriate for a diesel engine like this where more torque is available at lower revs.

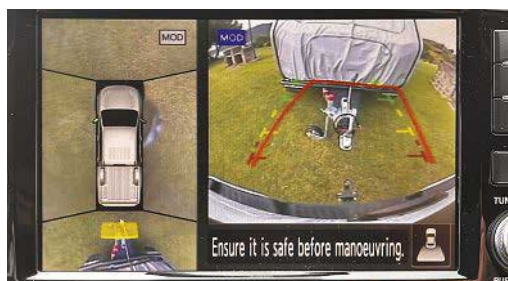
At 1 875 mm, the Warrior is 30 mm higher, but its ground clearance is 40 mm better according to the specifications. Finally, it leaves a track 30 mm wider than the regular Pro-4X's.

In terms of similarities, the Warrior has the same 2,5 ℓ diesel engine with 450 Nm of torque output and its 80 ℓ fuel tank, seven-speed automatic transmission, gross combination mass (GCM), gross vehicle mass (GVM) and towing capacity are also the same.

Hook up!

Rear-view cameras are common among newer towing vehicles, and they remain an excellent tool if you want to hook up the trailer while your travelling companions are still lingering. The Warrior's system is extremely capable, and you realise it the first time you hitch. Just remember to first raise the trailer's coupler at least 55 cm with the jockey wheel so that it is high enough for the ball to fit under it.

When you engage reverse gear, you see the image backwards on the screen in the



centre panel. The static index lines curve as you turn the steering wheel to come straight up to the trailer's coupler – until the sensors warn that the caravan is in the way. The button to silence the alarm is at your right knee.

The screen works well, and the automatic transmission is just as responsive when you slowly push the bakkie back to engage.

The towbar is from Bosal and is standard. It is rated for a nose weight of 140 kg and a towing weight of 3 500 kg, which matches the Navara's towing capacity.

The LED light in the base of the harness socket is a clever idea. This light turns on for a short while when you unlock the Warrior with its remote control. You are therefore able to see where the trailer's light plug needs to go, even if it's completely dark. In

addition, your shin is also safer if you walk behind the bakkie at night, because you can see where you are going.

The computer unfortunately does not recognise the caravan; so it starts beeping when you push back and the system thinks you are going to hit something. In addition, it also warns you that there is something in your blind spot.

During the day, the blind spot sensors are not a nuisance. They are very alert and warn you in time when someone is passing where you cannot see. It is a different story at night when the sensors seem to be more sensitive – we got a few false alarms, mainly from the one on the right.

Under the Wasp's nose weight of 80 kg, the rear of the bakkie dipped 35 mm, which means the headlights shine higher. On one 500 km shift shortly before midnight, most

vehicles coming from the front complained that the lights were shining in their eyes, but we couldn't find a way to adjust the angle of the lights.

As for the tyres, the Maxxis RAZR all-terrain tyres have a tread that goes approximately a third to the sidewall. One would therefore assume that the tires would be very noisy when towing all the way on tar, especially considering the serious grooves that you could fit your finger in. However, this is not the case, and we didn't notice any significant road noise, even with the windows down.

The Navara bakkies are not shy when you want to overtake. We were regularly able to tow comfortably at 100-120 km/h when road conditions allowed. We were of course more careful on gravel roads, but it is clear that this is the Warrior's preferred playground. We did

TOW TEST



find that you have to be gentle on the pedal initially, because the rear wheels want to spin when pulling away.

One would expect a fairly heavy fuel consumption, especially after our previous Navara experience when we travelled 1 400 km through Mpumalanga. The figure then was 12,05 ℓ/100 km. The GT Camper Exclusive that we towed then has a tare weight of 1 020 kg and is also smaller and lighter than the Wasp (1 180 kg) this time. It also fit neatly into the bakkie's slipstream, while the Wasp created more drag.

We filled the Warrior's fuel tank 14 times, and the average consumption was 14 ℓ/100 km, with the best figure being 12 ℓ/100 km and the worst being 17.2 ℓ/100 km (35,6% higher). In ideal conditions, you will be able to tow an off-road caravan similar to the Wasp for 664 km, but if you head for the mountains and get a headwind, you will only get 464 km. Most people who tow can live with the average figure of 568 km.

Our colleague Cyril Klopper also tested the Warrior at the end of last year for his Drive Impression article in our December 2025-January 2026 issue. He set off from Johannesburg for the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands and achieved a fuel consumption of 10.1 ℓ/100 km – without a caravan of course. 🚗

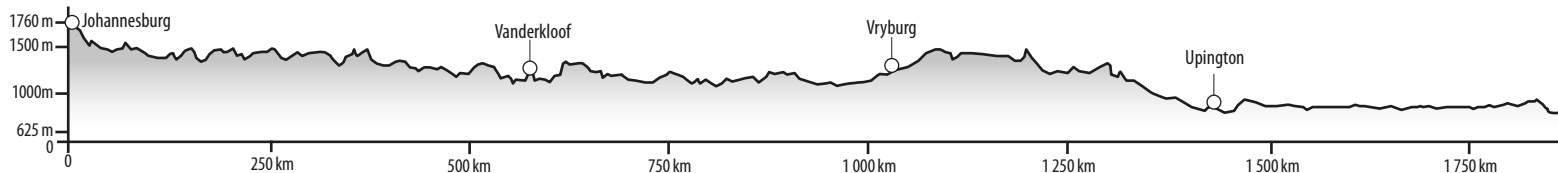


TOW KING. Even though the Warrior is ready for the veld, there is nothing wrong with its towing capabilities. With a tare weight of more than 2 000 kg, you will be allowed to tow most caravans.



TOW PROFILE

Elevation



Total distance 3 073 km **Duration** 12 days **Road** Highways, back roads, urban areas, and dirt and sand roads



The caravan

Make Okto
Model Wasp
Year 2026
GVW 1 600 kg

Drive & Camp borrowed the Okto Wasp from Loftus Caravan City. ☎ 011 792 1456

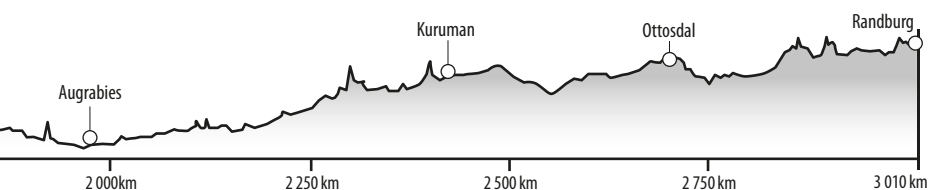
✉ info@loftuscaravans.co.za 🌐 loftuscaravans.co.za

SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Pro-4X Warrior
Engine	4-cylinder turbodiesel
Power	140 kW @ 3 600 r.p.m.
Torque	450 Nm @ 2 000 r.p.m.
Gearbox	7-speed automatic
Drive	Rear wheels or 4x4 with differential lock
Tank	80 ℓ
Fuel consumption with caravan	14 ℓ/100 km (7,1 km/ℓ)
Range with caravan	568 km
Tare weight (license disc)	2 023 kg
GVM	3 115 kg
GCM	6 130 kg
Towing capacity	3 500 kg
Tow bar rating	3 500 kg
Tow bar maximum vertical weight	140 kg
Is the bar removable?	No, just the bar arm and ball
PRICE	R924 000

Drive & Camp says

The Warrior has proven itself over 3 000 km as a comfortable towing vehicle. You feel at home behind the wheel, and nowhere was it necessary to take a break and get the blood flowing through the legs again.



The cat's return

The Mbada from Tuff Cats is available in three variants, with the 2D Max an example of the latest trends.

Words and photos **Leon Botha**

TUFF CATS MBADA 2D MAX



All models in the Tuff Cats series are named after the Shona names for three of Africa's big cats: the Shumba (lion), Dindingwe (cheetah) and Mbada (leopard).

The three Mbada models have recently been upgraded. The most noticeable change is the electric pop-up roof that has been extended over the nosecone to give these caravans a new look. The Mbada 2 Max sleeps two people, while the Mbada 4 Max accommodates four. Our test model, the Mbada 2D Max, is also designed for two people and has two doors.

Some of the standard equipment includes the two-burner gas stove, gas geyser, Victron power system with charger, solar panel controller and 100 Ah deep cycle battery, the rear scullery and a shower tent, shower head and basin, and the swing-out awning.



Out the door

The extra door not only provides more openness to the outside but is also the door to the bathroom. The doors are opposite each other at the rear end. The shower tent folds up around the second door, thus creating extra private space on the outside. The spacious partition (2.2 x 1.5 m) does not have a roof but is private enough that you can even leave the door open to create air flow through the caravan.

On the inside of the door, there is a stainless-steel shelf for your bathroom items that folds down at a convenient height. The gas geyser is in the outer cabinet next to the door and the shower head, which is attached to its extension pipe, hooks into the right of the geyser.

The basin is mounted under the geyser in the lower part of the cabinet against the body; you simply fold it down when you want to use the basin.

There is a square mirror in the cupboard door with hooks above it for washcloths and the like. The lid for the 120 l water tank is on the left under the cupboard.

The frame for the basin is 182 x 40 cm and is folded away at the back of the caravan against the body. The loose drying rack fits into the frame on the left and two trays fit in on the right with storage space in between. The mixer tap with its swivel head is behind the door above the two trays, and one can use the small cupboard above it for the dishcloths and dishwashing soap.

Even if you are outside, you are under cover here, because the awning swings 270° and extends over the entire outdoor kitchen and scullery. Some of the awning's cross bars have a ridge pole that folds up. There is also a loose ridge pole that fits into the middle of the awning so that the water runs off better when it rains.

The awning's support poles at the ends of the cross bars are connected with a hinge, and one can adjust them in length if you are pitching on uneven ground.

Tuff Cats uses straps to anchor the poles. This works well because one can tighten them. The tent pegs are 37 cm long.

The cupboard above the A-frame has a trapezoid shape, and the headboard of the bed fits into the upper part of this while the space below it is the nose box. The gas cylinder is on the left and on the right is open storage space.

The doors behind the nose box, on either side of the body, are "window doors" with mesh for bugs. The one on the right is larger (115 x 47 cm) than the one in the outdoor kitchen, but both open upwards with gas struts. There are two cupboards below the right window, both with storage space.



WALK THROUGH.
The two doors are opposite each other. The entrance door is next to the kitchen at the back and the other one opens where you erect the outside bathroom.



Kitchen wall

The entire left side of the Mbada is one large outdoor kitchen behind five cupboard doors. The fridge-freezer is on a sliding frame on the far left with the gas stove at the end of the drawer. It's more practical than a fixed stove on a worktop because one can move around it and doesn't have to stretch over a saucepan to reach something on a shelf behind it.

The two-burner stove is made out of cast iron and has a low screen all around. One can pull out the drawer under the stove to easily clean the oil splashes.

Two flat shelves (32 x 23 cm) also pull out on either side of the stove for work space, and at the front there are two drawers lined with foam rubber. All the plates, glasses and mugs fit in these.

A cupboard with two plastic bins, each on a sliding frame, pulls out of the cupboard next to the fridge-freezer, and the worktop (95 x 44 cm) folds flat next to it, above the wheel. It's an open top made of stainless steel and is easy to keep clean because there is no edge.

The three shelves for groceries have canvas doors at the back and can also be accessed from the inside. The same goes for two of the shelves in the upper cupboard. The door of this cupboard swings upwards, like a roof above the worktop.

Four wine glasses fit in the smaller cupboard on the left with space for wine bottles below.

Inside

The doors have the same recessed step inside, and a loose step is also used in front of the door on both sides. It's a characteristic step of Tuff Cats, because the step is actually a lid for a trunk in which all sorts of small items can be stored.

A mesh zips up in both doors to keep the bugs out, and although one doesn't see it on all off-road caravans, it should be standard equipment.



Drive & Camp says All new Mbadas are checked free of charge after 6 months and the first service after a year is your responsibility. *(This applies to All Out Caravan & Leisure Cara-Camp if you bought the caravan here).*



The switches for, among other things, the water pump, lights, power sockets, the voltmeter reading and the battery monitor are in the frame to the left of the door, as is the button for the electric pop-up roof. Four actuators ensure that the roof lifts 65 cm. The panel under the buttons can be opened if access to the charger, solar panel controller, fuses and circuit breakers is needed.

The entire inner wall between the two doors is one large cupboard with several zipped canvas doors – there is even a cupboard to hang up clothes.

If one turns around and looks at the front of the Mbada, the back of the outdoor kitchen is to the left with a single bench on the opposite side.

There is a hand basin with storage space on either side, plus a small mirror behind it between

the bench and the bed.

The double bed is wall-to-wall in length (1,9 x 1,36 m) and three plastic drawers extend out from under the bed on the left, each on a sliding frame. Next to this is a power point (12 V and 220 V) for various types of sockets.

The winner is the open space above the bed thanks to the new roof design. Each occupant has a narrow shelf next to it and their own power points.



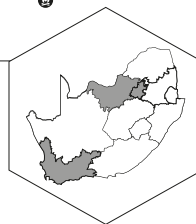
Shopping list

In addition to the standard equipment we have already mentioned, the following items are also part of the standard caravan: 4 corner steadies and the heavy-duty jockey wheel, a 120 l water tank with the water pump and interior basin, the mesh net in both doors, a mattress and reading lights, several LEDs, and 220 V and 12 V sockets.

Optional extras include a cassette toilet (R2 995), DC-DC-50 A charger (R7 924), 100 Ah lithium batteries with cabinets and wiring (R9 097), an additional MPPT100/20 solar panel controller (R4 830), 20 l microwave (R2 484), movers (R30 337), a 9 000 BTU dual unit air conditioner (R17 365) and a 400-500 W fixed solar panel on the roof (R5 727).

SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer	Tuff Cats Offroad Caravans
Model	Mbada 2D Max
Sleeps	2
Size	5,28 x 1,9 x 2,2 m
Tare	1 010 kg
Load capacity	790 kg
GVM	1 800 kg
Axle	2 t
Wheel size	17 inches
Chassis	Galvanised
Body	Aluminium
Price	R535 000



Dealer network Head office and factory in Centurion plus 8 dealers in Gauteng, North West and the Western Cape. **Contact** 082 301 2393 sales@tuffcats.co.za tuffcats.co.za



R535 000 TUFF CATS MBADA 2D MAX GVM 1 800 kg

FROM THE COMPETITORS*
Off-road caravans that sleep 2 and have a second door for an outdoor shower tent.



R485 000 BUNDU X GVM 1 800 kg

Body of steel, aluminium and honeycomb panels, galvanised chassis and 2,5 t axle.



R561 200 BUSH LAPA BAOBAB 315 GVM 1 800 kg

Stainless steel body and chassis with a 2,5 t axle.



R589 000 AFRISPOOR WILD CAT 2 GVM 1 950 kg

Stainless steel body, galvanised chassis and 2,5 t axle.

* The price is an indication of a standard caravan – how each model is equipped differs from manufacturer to manufacturer.

Drive & Camp borrowed the Mbada 2D Max from All Out Caravan & Leisure Cara-Camp, a Tuff Cats dealer. Get in touch with Ernie Jacobs on 083 290 3389 if you would like to take a look at the caravan.

Electric overland travels

Electric and hybrid vehicles are becoming increasingly popular, but there are still questions about their suitability for overland travel. We discuss a number of advantages and disadvantages.

Words **Cyril Klopper** Photos **provided**

Range

Purely electric vehicles are obviously not suitable for overland travel. There are not nearly enough fast chargers in Southern Africa to set out into the wild with your electric overlander. In fact, there aren't even enough fuel stations, which is why overland travellers typically carry jerrycans with them.

You can charge an electric vehicle with regular 220 V power, but it takes forever. It will drive you crazy if you have to stop every hour to ask a good Samaritan if you can plug in at their house for a few hours.

Electric vehicles often have significantly more torque than an engine-powered vehicle, which certainly counts in your favour on a 4x4 trail. But those obstacles also burn through a battery's charge. If you're dismayed at how quickly the Central Kalahari Game Reserve's sand roads drain your fuel tank, you'll get the shock of your life when you see how quickly sand roads can drain a battery.

Hybrid vehicles – whether mild or plug-in – on the other hand are better for overland travel, especially if a manufacturer allows you to choose whether you want to use the battery or the internal combustion engine or a combination of the two.

Fire hazard

There are claims that electric vehicles are more likely to catch fire than vehicles with an internal combustion engine, but statistics indicate the opposite to be true. The chances of your engine-powered rig overheating and spontaneously catching fire are higher than those of an electric vehicle.

The problem, however, is the nature of the fire. If you see smoke billowing from your car's bonnet, chances are you'll have plenty of time to grab a fire extinguisher and put out the fire



before it causes serious damage. But if the battery of an electric or hybrid vehicle starts smoking, it's too late to do anything about it and you might just run for your life – you probably won't even have time to grab your passport and wallet.

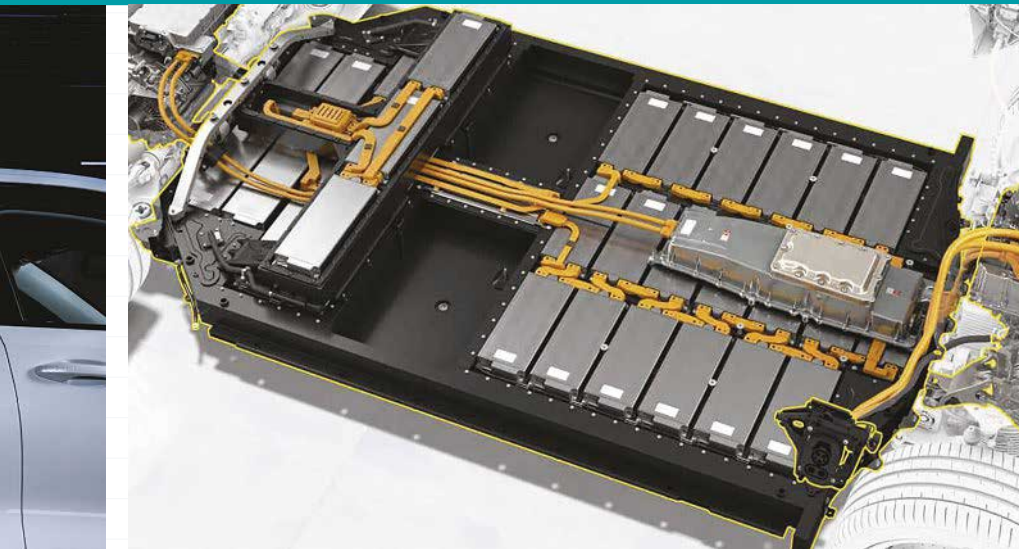
Manufacturers will also need to add underbody protection because the chassis of hybrid 4x4 vehicles, where the battery is usually located, is easily damaged on an overland trip. The chemical fire of an electric or hybrid vehicle is also very difficult to put out.

Modifications

It's ridiculously easy to make changes to a regular 4x4 vehicle. A Jeep Wrangler, for example, is built in such a way that owners can fit larger tyres if they want.

In the case of a Wrangler, you will also then need to re-gear the gearbox, because the gear revolutions increase due to the larger wheel circumference. This type of conversion is considerably more difficult with an electric vehicle, but technically not impossible with a hybrid vehicle.

It's also nice to invite a friend to help you



install a fridge freezer. The worst that typically happens when you do something stupid with the vehicle's wiring is a blown fuse. If you mess too much with the wiring of an electric or hybrid vehicle, it can have disastrous consequences.

Repairs

In every town, big or small, there is someone who knows how an internal combustion engine works and can fix it for you if you have problems – you might even find an auto electrician. But electric vehicles are

considerably more complicated.

It is also dangerous to work on the battery system of an electric vehicle and you need someone who has special training to service such a vehicle.

As things stand, the manufacturers of electric and hybrid vehicles do not want just anyone to be trained in the technology. After all, it is extra income for the manufacturer if you are compelled to have your vehicle serviced at an official service centre instead of a private mechanic. Even the diagnostic equipment you need to service an electric

vehicle is jealously guarded by manufacturers.

This is bad news for someone who likes to work on their own vehicle and wants the knowledge to do repairs in the middle of nowhere with their own tool kit.

Conversion

There is also good news. In countries like America and Britain, there are more and more companies these days that convert older vehicles into electric or hybrid vehicles. For example, you can replace your Series I Land Rover's internal combustion engine with electric motors and a battery – or keep the engine but make space for a hybrid system.

These electrical systems are often simple enough that anyone with the necessary knowledge can work on them, while these companies say that they will retain the vehicle's original operation as much as possible. This includes things like low-range gears and differential lockers.

The technological innovations on your Landy are also installed with a view to anticipated new legislation. It is no longer a secret that activists worldwide want to ban the internal combustion engine.

Safety

We are not going to deny that new vehicles are safer than their predecessors. These days, some bakkies brake on their own when a cow or a kudu suddenly appears in front of you. If you could choose which vehicle you were going to go over the edge of a cliff in, you'd rather be in a Defender PHEV than a Series I Land Rover, right?

However, there are a few electronic gadgets that we think are more of a hindrance than an asset. Take for example the electronic parking brake of electric vehicles that operates at the push of a button. This type of brake is either fully engaged or not at all, whereas you can operate a traditional handbrake by pulling it as lightly or tightly as required.

Europeans also complain that the LED headlights of their electric vehicles are not warm enough to melt snow, which makes roads more dangerous in winter. Electric vehicles that automatically brake on descents to regeneratively charge the battery also seem to lose traction on icy roads.

Conclusion

Electric vehicles are not suitable for overland travel – in fact, it can even be detrimental. Hybrid vehicles are more suitable for this, but not completely, because there are more than a few hitches that still need to be ironed out. 🚗

Bush cooking at its best!

With these products, you can properly spoil your travelling companions with a feast when camping.

Words **Cyril Klopper** Photos **Cyril Klopper** and **provided** Main image **Getty Images**

Fancy a steak? Maybe a stew, fish or pizza? These popular products, old and new, transform your camp kitchen into a place where you can cook all these favourite dishes.



BRAAIMAXX GAS STOVE AND FRYING PAN

Portable host

This gas stove uses standardised 227 g gas cartridges and 227 g "Born Free" butane canisters that are easily obtainable.

The stove has a built-in piezo igniter, and you can adjust the flame height with a knob on the front. A gas cartridge holds enough gas for about 90 minutes of cooking time on the highest flame.

You also get a frying pan that is big enough for a kilo of boerewors or six large eggs. The pan has a glass lid so you can keep an eye on your brekkie.

Price R1 600 at Outdoor Warehouse.



AFRITRAIL PIZZA OVEN

Italy on your braai

Afritrail says its pizza oven can reach a temperature of up to 300 °C, which means you can cook a pizza in under a minute – with a crispy crust and all. The oven has a stone slab and has enough space for one large pizza.

It is portable and you can use wood coals, charcoal or even a gas flame to heat the oven. The handle and body are heat-resistant to prevent burns when removing it from the fire.

The manufacturer says the oven is not limited to just pizza; you can also cook flatbread, vegetables and even meat in it.

Price R1 345 at Camp & Climb.

CADAC GRILLOGAS REVERSABLE GRILL

Flip-and-turn

The Cadac gas cooker is a staple at any campsite, and we would be remiss if we did not mention it here. Without its gas cylinder, it stands 70 cm high with the grill measuring 38 cm wide. The grill is made of cast iron and you can cook bacon and eggs on the flat side or turn it around to braai your meat on the griddle side.

It only weighs 5 kg and uses 204 g of gas per hour if you have the flame at its highest.

Price R1 200 at Outdoor Warehouse (excluding gas cylinder).



COBB KITCHEN

All-in-one

The manufacturer claims this little gadget is the world's most versatile portable braai and we tend to agree. The set consists of a basket, two barrels, a braai grid and a lid. The basket holds hot coals, and the lid and two barrels that fit inside each other ensure that hot air circulates to cook your food evenly.

Cobb also provides a cookbook that shows you how to braai meat, steam vegetables, smoke fish, bake bread, boil eggs and much more.

Price R1 600 at Outdoor Warehouse.



FIRESIDE GRILLING PAN

Breakfast and dinner

The Fireside grilling pan is very similar to Cadac's Grillogas. One side is a griddle pan for grilling steak and the other side is flat for anything from pancakes to breakfast.

The cast iron pan is 40 x 25 cm and weighs 3 kg. The metal is pre-oiled and you can use it on a wood fire and a gas flame.

Price R500 at Outdoor Warehouse.





DREEM FIRE KURU BRAAI BOX

We braai with wood!

The Kuru braai is made by South Africans for South Africans. It looks like a suitcase made of steel, but when you open it, there is a basket in the middle in which you stoke a fire with two trays on either side, which you scrape the hot coals onto.

There is space for a potjie above one tray, and the other has space for a height-adjustable braai grid. The Kuru braai weighs 20 kg and fits into an ammo box (included) when folded.

The braai grid is 3 mm thick and is made of 304 stainless steel, while your burning wood is on rods of 316 stainless steel (10 mm thick).

Price R7 495 at Just Like Papa.

FOREVER FIRE REUSABLE FIRE STARTER

A pot full of campfire

This is a perfect gift for the special braai master in your life. Forever Fire has a handmade ceramic pot that you fill with oil – you get 1 l of oil included. You then use a metal wand to dip a reusable wick into the oil, and with this, you light a fire.

It's a classy way to light your fireplace – and a good way to impress the guys around the braai.

Price R1 000 at Outdoor Warehouse.



KAMADO JAN JNR BRAAI

Travel snacks in an egg

This egg-shaped braai is based on a Japanese Mushikamado oven made of copper and pottery.

It works the same as a Weber – you burn charcoal in it to cook your food. The Kamado in the photo on the left is 41 cm wide and made of ceramic. Its braai grid is 34 cm wide.

It has a thermometer in the lid so you can see if your meal is ready, and it's light and small enough for one person to carry to the beach.

Price R9 950 at Kamado Jan.



LK'S SMOKER

Delicious snoek!

Smoked fish, ham or sausage are all big favourites, and with this smoker you can do it yourself. With dimensions of 553 (l) x 300(w) x 230 (d) mm, it is big enough for a snoek.

It has two grids that fit on top of each other, so you can smoke two snoek at the same time. The purchase price includes the smoker, a bag of sawdust and smoking wool, but not the methylated spirits.

Price R2 000 at Outdoor Warehouse.



TENTCO BRAAI GRID BAG

Take care of your grid

Tentco's bag is made of PVC material that is easy to clean and won't tear when you pack a braai grid in (provided you wait until the grid has cooled down, of course...).

At the front of the bag is a shade net compartment in which you can store firelighters and a steel brush. The bag closes with velcro strips and its dimensions are 57 x 47 cm.

Price R185 at Camp & Climb.



WONDERBAG

Bag it up

The Wonderbag is a South African invention that is now sold worldwide. The idea is that you heat a pot of food at home – it doesn't have to be fully cooked – and then just load it into the bag. The food will continue to cook for an hour or so with a heat loss of less than 30%. The food should be ready by the time you arrive at the campsite or church fair.

The bag's inner dimensions are 47 x 22 cm and are therefore large enough for a 10 l cooking pot. Thanks to the remarkable insulation of the Wonderbag, you can also use it to keep water bottles or cool drinks cold.

Price R459 at Outdoor Warehouse.



STANLEY-WILDFIRE CORE DINING SET

All the gear

Getting food cooked is one thing, but what about side dishes and your plates, bowls and cutlery when it's time to sit down? Stanley's 26-piece Wildfire Core set includes a 3.8-litre saucepan, 20-cm frying pan, cutting board, ladle, spatula and plates, porridge bowls, sporks and tablespoons for four people.

The whole lot fits into the saucepan and weighs a total of 2 kg. It's especially suitable for a family holidaying in a regular car.

Price R2 000 at Outdoor Warehouse. 🇿🇦



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Potatoes... everyone's favourite

Baked, fried, boiled or mashed – the humble potato is the king of the braai fire and the heart of tasty potjiekos.

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

STEAMED GREEN BEANS

Nostalgia on your plate

The beans in this comfort food dish don't even try to keep their colour. They're supposed to become soft and bland. Nostalgia in a bowl!

Ingredients

(serves 6 as a side dish)

- 400 g lamb ribs
- 400 g green beans, cut into 2 cm pieces
- 3 medium-sized potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 cube of beef stock
- 1 lemon
- a knob of butter

Here's how

1 Cut the meat off the bone and into small cubes. Then heat it in a cold pan until hot and fry the meat over a fairly high heat until all the pieces are golden brown and crispy. Season it well with salt and black or white pepper. I like to grate a little nutmeg, and if the meat is not fatty enough, a drizzle of olive oil.

2 Stir the beans and potato into the hot pan and add just enough hot water to cover the vegetables. Crumble the stock and put the lid on.

3 Steam all together for at least 40 minutes until the meat and potatoes are tender. Remove the lid and broil it for a while, if necessary, as it should be juicy and not soggy.

4 Remove the pan from the heat, grate the lemon zest and season the beans with a dash of lemon juice. Dot it with the butter that will melt over the dish.

Drive & Camp says This side dish traditionally has less potato, and at the end everything is mashed together. I prefer not to mash it and like the extra potato. Decide for yourself. You can also replace the lamb with shredded bacon.

CURRY CHICKEN POT

Curry rules the roost

This curry is sweet and fragrant rather than extremely hot and should appeal to the whole family. I especially like that the potatoes soak up the sauce so well. If you like, stir in a cup of frozen peas at the end of the cooking time for extra vegetables and heat until warm.

Ingredients

(serves 6)

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 4 cardamom pods, finely crushed
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 2 bay leaves (fresh or dried)
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 2cm piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 green chilli, seeds scraped out and finely chopped (or use more to taste)
- 1 teaspoon dried turmeric
- 2 tablespoons roasted masala or mild curry powder
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon apricot jam
- ¼ cup chutney
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 4 chicken thighs and 4 skinless thighs
- 6 medium-sized potatoes, peeled and each cut into 6 pieces
- a sprinkling of chopped fresh coriander leaves (optional)

- 1 cup plain thick yoghurt

Here's how

1 Heat the oil in your potjie and slowly fry the onions with the whole spices until the onions are soft. If time permits, add a little water to the pot from time to time and let it boil dry so that the flavour slowly builds and fry. After about 20 minutes, the onions should be caramel-coloured.

2 Stir in the garlic, ginger, chilli, turmeric and masala and fry everything together for a few minutes. Stir in the vinegar, jam, chutney and stock.

3 Season the chicken pieces well with salt and pepper and place them in the sauce followed by the potatoes and another sprinkle of salt. Now fill the liquid with just enough water to cover the potatoes. Simmer slowly for at least an hour with the lid on.

4 Simmer without a lid and make sure the chicken is tender and the sauce is thick enough. I like to mash a few of the potatoes to thicken the sauce rather than just boiling it down.

5 Sprinkle with coriander and stir in half the yoghurt. Serve the chicken with steamed rice and the rest of the yoghurt.

Drive & Camp says The chicken and potatoes don't have to stay in layers like in a traditional potjie. You can mix it from the get-go so that the potatoes and curry combine nicely.



PARMESAN SMASHED POTATOES

Flat, flatter... flawless!

I use small potatoes for these golden brown treats, because it's easier to turn them in the butter and oil. If you don't have whole herbs, simply leave them out or season the potato with a pinch of dried thyme.

Ingredients

(serves 6 as a side dish)

- 1 kg small potatoes
- salted water
- ½ cup butter
- a dash of olive oil to prevent the butter from burning
- a few sprigs of hard herbs such as thyme, rosemary or sage (optional)
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese

Here's how

1 Boil the potatoes in salt water until just tender. Drain and let them cool slightly.

2 Heat a large ovenproof pan or griddle over the coals and melt a large knob of the butter and a little oil in it. If you are using herbs, add them to flavour the butter.

3 Flatten the cooked potatoes on top of the melted butter. You can use anything from an enamel mug to a small frying pan as long as the bottom of the object is flat and won't break when you press on it. If you don't want to do this over the coals, do it first and then heat the pan with the flat potatoes.

4 Fry the potatoes, turning them over until both sides are browned. Dot them with the remaining butter as needed. Season them well with salt and pepper.

5 Sprinkle with the cheese and turn the potatoes one last time once the cheese has melted so that it can also get some colour. Serve immediately.

Drive & Camp says Get a cast-iron plancha if you don't already have one. I snagged one for next to nothing at the Milnerton Market in Cape Town. Mine is a griddle pan on one side and smooth on the other – so it's very versatile. The handles are useful for moving it around easily, but not essential.



FOIL POTATOES

Cool on the coals!

Apart from a little patience, the big secret to this recipe is a double layer of foil!

Ingredients

(serves 8)

- 8 medium-sized potatoes
- olive oil
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 can (400 g) beans
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese

Here's how

1 Wash the potatoes well, rub them dry and prick them all over with a fork. Then roll them in olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Now wrap each potato in a double layer of foil.

2 Bake the potatoes directly in

a bed of white-hot coals for about an hour. (Also pack some coals on top.) Turn the potatoes after 30 minutes and cover them with coals again to make sure they bake evenly.

3 Let the potatoes rest for a while while you heat the beans in a pan.

4 Unfold the foil, cut a cross in each hot potato and add a knob of butter. Serve it with the hot beans, sour cream and cheese, one for each person. It is a filling meal on its own, but without the beans it also makes a nice side dish with a braai.

Drive & Camp says Baked potatoes like this are a great way to turn leftover camp food into a feast. Make a self-help buffet with any leftover braai meat, potjiekos and the like as topping ingredients.

OOH LA LA CREAM POTATOES

Rich and creamy

This potjie is the perfect side dish with chicken and a side salad... just to be on the healthy side.

Ingredients

(serves 8 as a side dish)

- 6-8 medium-sized potatoes, cut into 1cm thick slices
- 3 thick smoked pork rashers, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons butter (you can go big, this is not a low-fat dish!)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 200 g mushrooms, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- a sprig of fresh thyme (optional)
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup sour cream (you can also use long-life cream that you acidify with a little lemon juice)
- 1 cup stock
- 2 camembert cheese rounds, 150 g each, cut horizontally in half

Here's how

1 Boil the potatoes in salt water until half-cooked. Drain carefully.

2 Fry the bacon in the butter and oil until nicely browned. Add the onion and mushrooms and continue frying until everything looks mouthwatering. Stir in the garlic and a few sprigs of thyme and fry for another minute.

3 Stir in the wine and cook quickly until it has reduced by half.

4 Arrange the potatoes and bacon mixture in layers in a greased flat-bottom potjie, remembering to add enough salt and black pepper between the layers.

5 Pour over the cream and just enough stock so that it covers the top layer of potatoes. Arrange the circles of cheese, cut sides down, on top.

6 Place a few coals under the pot and on the lid and simmer the potatoes with the lid on for about 30 minutes until the potatoes are cooked through and the cheese is melted. If you can manage it, let the potjie stand for at least another 30 minutes before serving. The cooked potatoes will absorb some of the extra moisture. If you serve it right away, it will still be a little runny.

Drive & Camp says Peel the potatoes only if you really want to.



FASTEST GNOCCHI EVER

Take a shortcut

When it's cold and the braai master doesn't want to stand in the rain for hours cooking, it helps to have a shortcut recipe like this on the menu.

Ingredients

(serves 4 hungry people)

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
- a generous pinch of dried chilli flakes (to taste)
- 300 g cherry tomatoes, halved (you can also use a tin of cherry tomatoes if you need to)
- a pinch each of salt and sugar
- a pinch of fresh or dried thyme (optional)
- 2 packages (500 g each) long-life potato gnocchi (look for Gnocchi di Patate)
- 200 g smoked ham, shredded
- ¾ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Here's how

1 Melt the butter and oil together in a heavy-bottomed pan. Fry the garlic and chilli flakes over medium heat until fragrant. Stir in the tomatoes, a pinch of salt and sugar and continue to fry slowly while you make the gnocchi. A sprinkling of dried or fresh thyme is optional but delicious.

2 Boil a pot of water. As soon as the water is bubbling, stir in the gnocchi and a pinch of salt. As soon as the morsels float, scoop them out directly into the pan with the tomatoes.

3 Stir in the ham and half of the cheese, season everything with salt and black pepper and heat together until warm. Serve immediately with the rest of the cheese on top so everyone can help themselves.

Drive & Camp says Here the portion size is debatable, but in my house 500 g of gnocchi is too little for my family of four. You can of course make less if you want.

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- ▶ Rated Cooling Capacity **3500W**
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- ▶ Installation opening dimensions in roof (mm) 370 x 370



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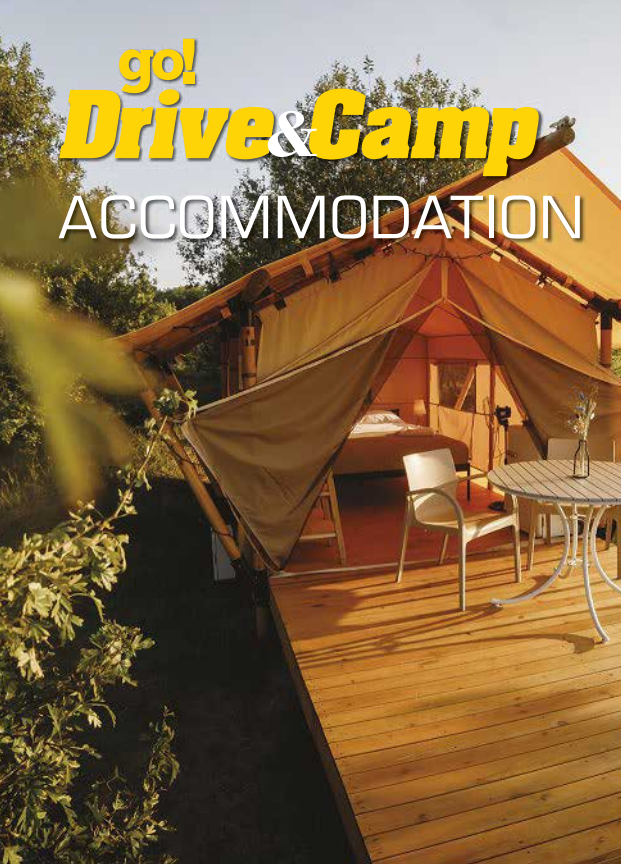
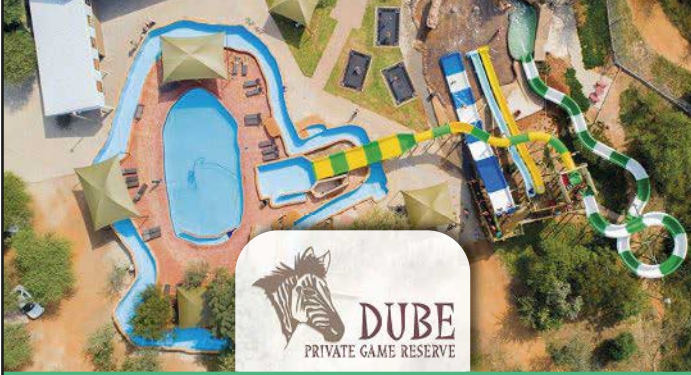
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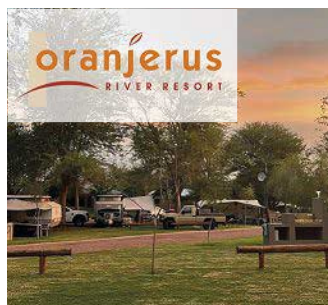
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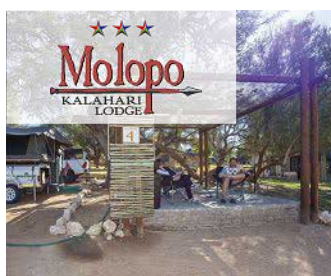
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Self-catering

All our self-catering units have air conditioners. Complementary coffee, tea, sugar, milk and rusks. Included are white towels, a hairdryer, room spray, shampoo, body wash, hand wash etc. The kitchen: cutlery and crockery. A fridge/freezer, kettle, toaster and microwave. Built-in braai area. Swimming pool. Guests can enjoy a buffet breakfast at the on-site Silver Spoon Bistro.

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Campsite | Self-catering

60 km before Kgalagadi. Each campsite has a carport, scullery, bathroom, braai, and canopy. Each stand is equipped with 220V power points. The restaurant and swimming pool are only a short stroll from the campsite. You can pre-order salads | braai pack at the restaurant. Wood and ice are available. Self-catering units available.

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Self-catering

The chalets share the kitchen and living room of the main building. This is perfect for a family or group of friends. Ceiling fan | DSTV. Bedding supplied. Shared braai area and swimming pools. The main building kitchen offers a stove, microwave, fridge/freezer, cutlery and crockery. Braai packs can be pre-ordered. Please note you need a vehicle with ground clearance to reach the lodge.

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ASKHAM

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

UPINGTON

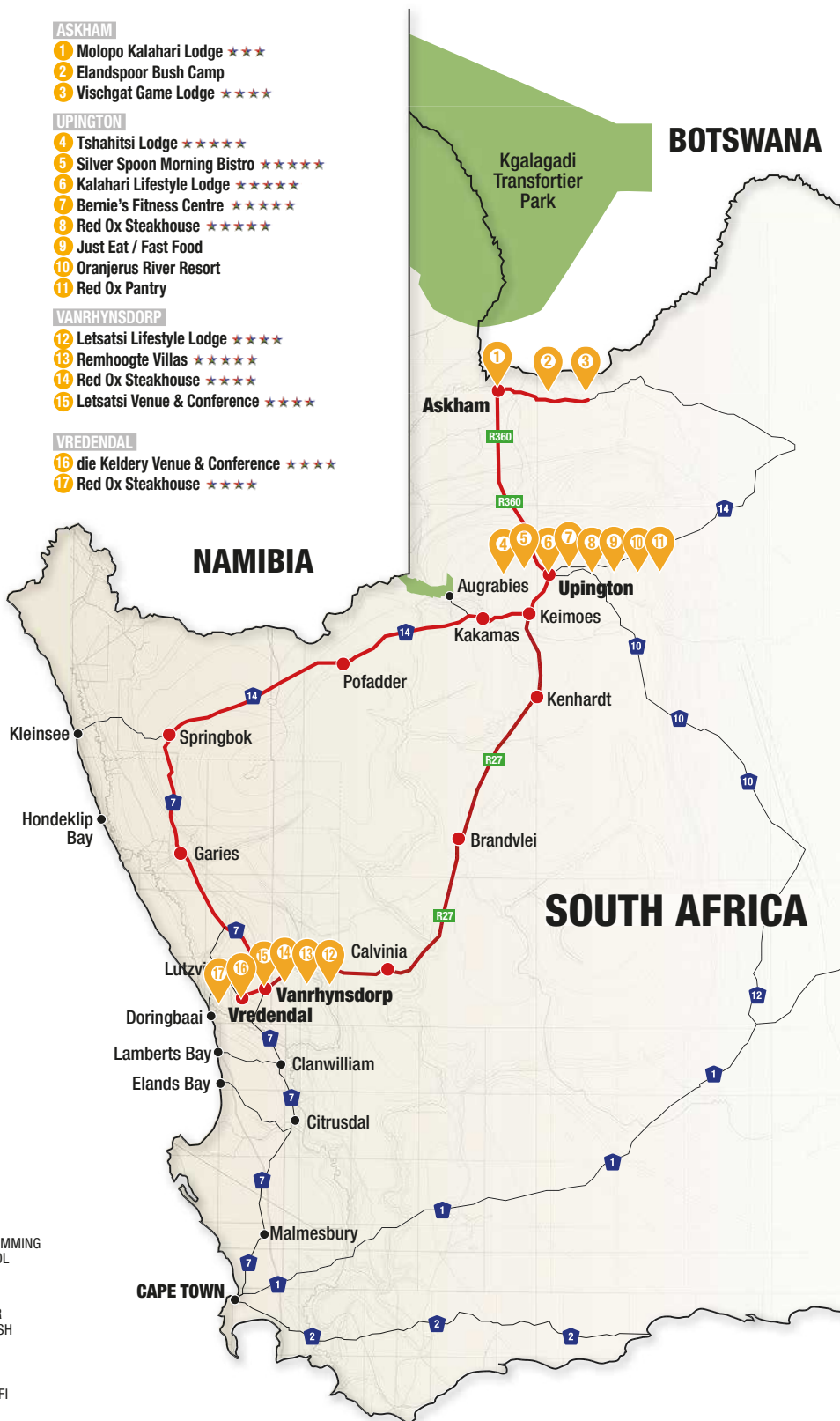
- 4 Tshahitsi Lodge ★★ ★ ★ ★
- 5 Silver Spoon Morning Bistro ★★ ★ ★ ★
- 6 Kalahari Lifestyle Lodge ★★ ★ ★ ★
- 7 Bernie's Fitness Centre ★★ ★ ★ ★
- 8 Red Ox Steakhouse ★★ ★ ★ ★
- 9 Just Eat / Fast Food
- 10 Oranjerus River Resort
- 11 Red Ox Pantry

VANRHYNSDORP

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

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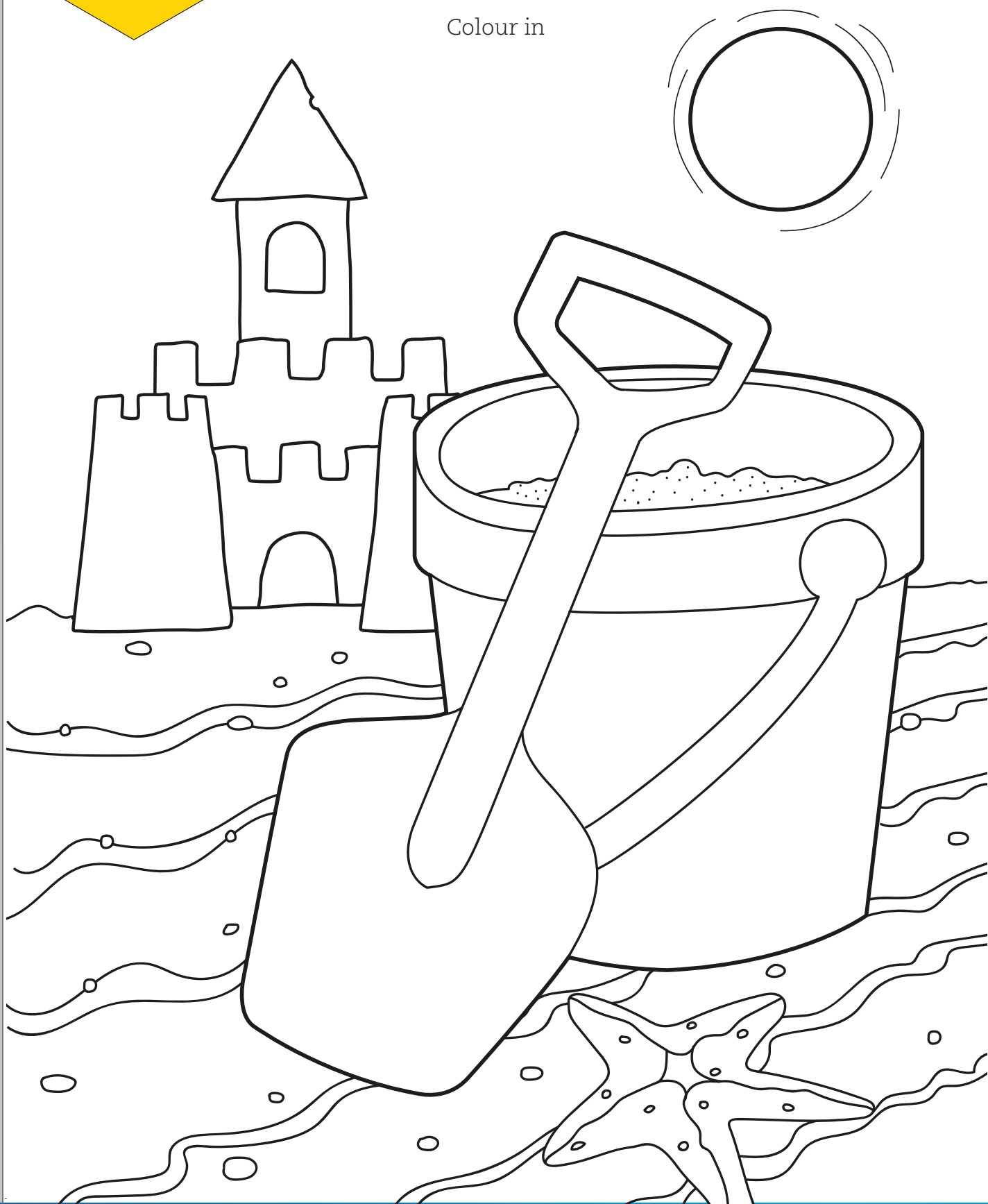


MAGZTER

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 107.

				Town in Zimbabwe (8,5)	Tile floor cover	"Never!"	Rubbish	Camp on the West Coast					
				Enormous	Ripped				Toward sunrise				
					Cobalt (symbol)								
Develop photos here	Majestic Encounter (3,4)	Engrave				Munched			Embankment	Bureaus			
		Message							Entangle	Close tightly			
Re. the moon					Glues								
Blade					Osmium (symbol)								
				Scintilla			Run of luck						
				Work register			A thing						
Crowns						Chest bone			Snake-like fish				
A bit						Swamps							
					Greek cheese				Mountain range in the Tankwa Karoo				
Astatine (symbol)			Recorded				Argon (symbol)						
							Fibre						
Nearby					Fine spray		... de Janeiro						
				Cowboy's rope				Move		Hide		Trendy (inf)	
								Nihonium (symbol)		Satirical sketch			
						Phoned				Blade			
						Indefinite article				Re. kidneys			
				Purpose	Sun god (Egypt)		Senior (abbr)						
				Proceed			Cucumber						
Heritage Route outside Clan-william		Extinct bird		Type of soup				April, eg				Blood vessel	
		Lubricate		Prohibit				Crazy				Zygote	
						Wail					"Carry ...!"		
Deny													
Military rank							Festive occasion			Oganesson (symbol)			
						Interference							

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.

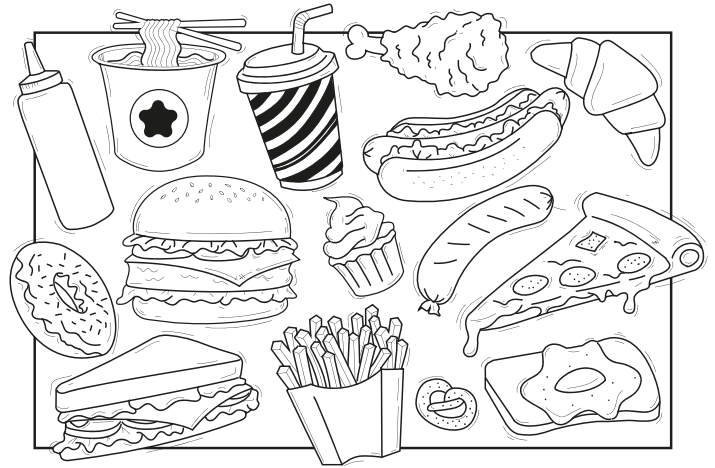
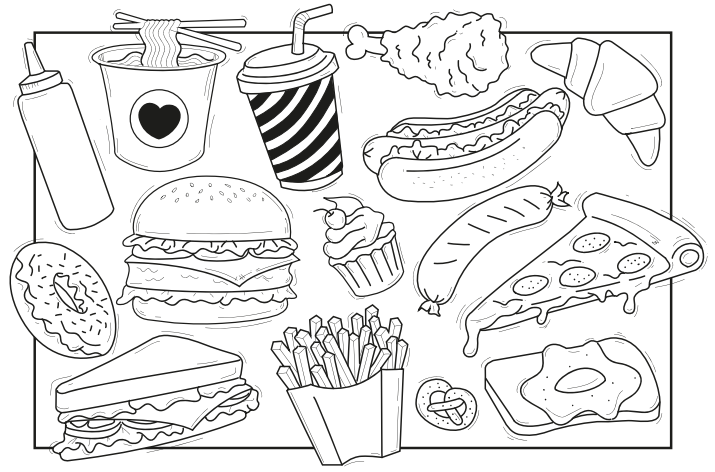
Word search

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

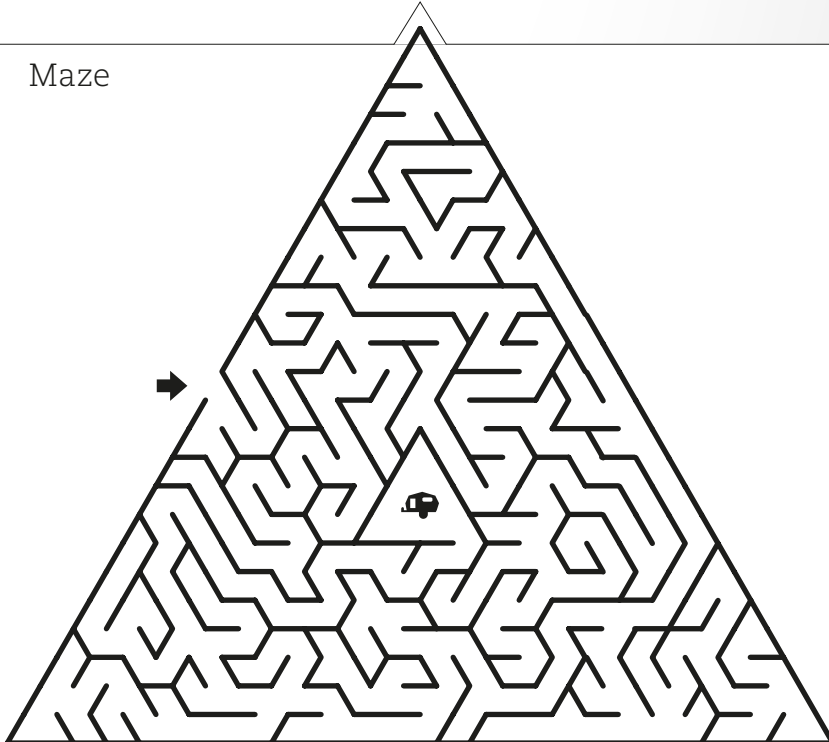
DISNEY CHARACTERS

Mickey Mouse	Timon	Ariel
Minnie Mouse	Pumbaa	Belle
Donald Duck	Elsa	Beast
Goofy	Anna	Aladdin
Pluto	Olaf	Jasmine
Simba	Moana	Genie
Nala	Maui	

Spot the differences



Maze



Animal facts



MEERKAT (*SURICATA SURICATA*)

- Meerkats are squirrel-sized mammals from the Mongoose family living in groups up to 40 members.
- They are some of the most organized groups in the animal kingdom when it comes to working as one.
- Meerkats live under ground in the deserts and grasslands of Southern Africa.
- They are small omnivores of about 50 cm and are extremely cute with bushy, brown-striped fur.
- They go outside in the daytime, looking for food which include fruits and insects.
- For safety they appoint sentries, individuals who find a high point, perk up on their hind legs and keep watch while the rest of the family gather food.

The end of EV euphoria

The electric vehicles bubble is bursting, and it is going to hurt those manufacturers who blindly jumped in headfirst, says **Mic van Zyl**.

I have never been much of a newspaper reader or a news follower. Socioeconomics, politics, human conflict and warfare and general human bizarreness have never been high on my list of interests.

While this may potentially make me somewhat ignorant, I figured that I could always find something better to do than to let the “noise” of the world occupy my head and my free time. I did, however, come across a headline in the *Financial Times* recently which piqued my interest enough to not only read the article, but to also delve deeper into what may turn out to be of significance to just about every current and prospective vehicle owner on the planet.

According to the article, the rapidly advancing end to the euphoria around electric vehicles (EVs) is currently triggering an estimated \$65 billion write-off for carmakers who are rethinking their American strategy. That is a staggering R1 072 000 000 000 000.

At least 12 major global car manufacturers are rolling back on their EV programs with massive financial implications. Honda recently announced its first loss in over 70 years after cancelling an EV joint venture with Sony. Ford, Stellantis and General Motors are facing write-downs of at least \$75 billion over the past year due to the cancellation of EV models and investments.

Several factors are driving this setback. Most notably, the scaling back of government-backed subsidies for EV makers and buyers has revealed

weaker-than-expected demand for electric vehicles. Without subsidies, EVs cost more upfront, and there is growing awareness of the serious pollution and other environmental harms linked to lithium-battery production.

In addition, few EVs achieve the driving range manufacturers claim, with numerous tests on YouTube demonstrating this. Charging the vehicle away from home also remains inconvenient.

Many vehicle manufacturers were seemingly also swayed by the early success of Tesla, who were making a lot of EVs and doing it very profitably. Chinese manufacturer BYD enjoyed similar success initially, but what few people realise is that both Tesla and BYD are renewable energy companies who then started manufacturing vehicles. This is clearly a better strategy than a car company trying to make a renewable energy vehicle.



It has just not worked as well for them. The proverbial bubble is bursting, and it is going to hurt many of the manufacturers who invested so heavily in EV development. In a bit of a perfect storm, the onslaught of the Chinese brands into traditional markets is adding insult to injury.

While the Chinese brands have yet to garner any brand cachet, they are making better cars cheaper and improving all the time – relentlessly. This is swaying more people away from embattled legacy brand vehicles. There is a lot of speculation around how much these brands will be affected and, more importantly, around who might not survive.

There are a couple of car companies, however, who did not plunge headfirst into EVs. These companies did not quite believe the hype and were not led up the garden path by governments and environmental agencies.

Instead, they chose to busy themselves with a broader approach to vehicle propulsion technologies, not being swayed by others or hot trends. Toyota and BMW are two companies that will not be heavily affected by the current EV strategy reversal.

Both companies chose hybrid and hydrogen propulsion as their areas of technological investment. Hybrid tech is turning out to be quite palatable for a growing number of car buyers as opposed to full EVs.

Most importantly, buyers of vehicles from these two brands will not be contributing to helping recover the losses that much of the motor industry now faces.

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

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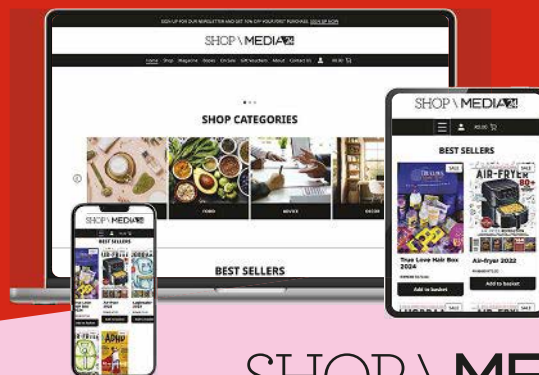


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The camping industry's Airbnb

A platform where owners of trailers and other camping equipment can offer it for rent is exactly what the industry needs, says **Neels van Heerden**.

The family business Kampi was started in 2021 in an attempt to connect owners of trailers and camping equipment with people who can rent it from them. The idea of this personal rental platform is to make the entire process smooth and safe and to take care of things like insurance, deposits, confirming identities and other administration.

The business started small, but grew quickly, and today it offers a variety of choices across the country. With more than 360 advertisers, almost 3 400 bookings and a rental value of more than R22 million to date, there is clearly a need for this.

I asked two friends to visit Kampi's website and share their impressions with me. The first friend had last camped with his grandparents at Scottburgh as a toddler in the 1980s and had little to no experience of this. His first impression was that it was not just another regular camping website, and he compared it to an Airbnb for campers and equipment.

"For someone like me, who can't remember anything about my previous camping experiences, Kampi makes things much easier. I have no idea what it would cost to buy camping equipment, so I first looked at the prices and what was on offer," he says.

This friend was surprised by the variety of choices: from small, simple campers to large, fully equipped mobile homes with beds, kitchens and even showers. The prices vary depending on the type of vehicle and the owner, but there are

many affordable options available.

He was also impressed by the simplicity of the platform. "You can search based on your destination, travel dates and the type of equipment you need. This is very helpful, especially for a beginner, because things like towing rules and driving licenses can be quite overwhelming."

According to him the extra amenities such as insurance and confirmation of the identity of the renter and the owner also deserve praise. "It gives peace of mind. And the fact that someone can set up your camp at your destination makes it even easier. Kampi makes camping accessible and affordable, especially if you are thinking of a longer trip."

The second friend has been a member of a caravan club for years and camps regularly. He says Kampi is a practical

platform – a place where people can share their camping equipment with others who want to camp, without having to own everything themselves.

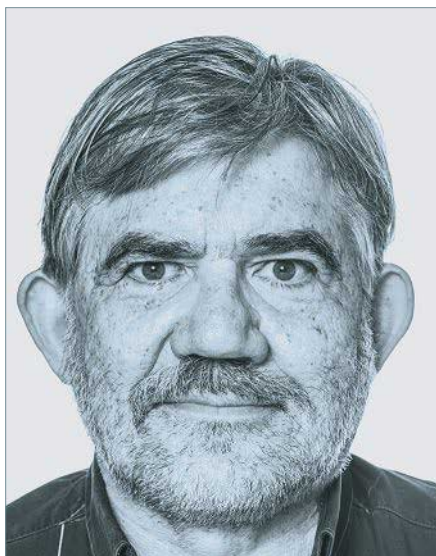
"Depending on your travel plans, you can leave your own camping gear at home and rent someone else's. It's not just a simple 'rent and tow' affair. Everything is well laid out – from the types of vehicles and prices to insurance and verification."

He appreciates the practical search filters that allow you to choose according to your needs: the type of vehicle, budget, driving license requirements and even additional equipment. "The choices make it easy to find something that suits your pocket and needs."

He says that the fact that owners set their own prices and rules makes sense to him. "It keeps the market dynamic, because prices and availability adjust as demand changes – especially over long weekends and school holidays."

In my opinion, Kampi not only offers a list of camping equipment, but it also creates a vibrant marketplace where travellers and owners can find each other. Whether you're looking for a quick weekend getaway or planning a big adventure, Kampi enables you to find the right gear at the right price in the right region.

With less hassle, less expense, and more time to enjoy the campfire, the open road, and the great outdoors. Kampi makes the camping lifestyle easy, accessible and fun for everyone, from beginners to seasoned campers. 



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Kruger is my second home

Kruger is where she feeds her soul – even on a quick visit,
says Liryn de Jager.

Two things in life puzzle me. To tell the truth, it actually bothers me to no end. The first is people who don't know who Bruce Springsteen is and the other is someone who has never been to the Kruger National Park.

Kruger is Kruger. It's there, in the name. It is not the Kruger Reserve. It is the Kruger Park. When you talk about Kruger, you don't need to explain anything. It is as simple as that.

As a child, I visited the *willettuin* (as we De Jagers call it) even before I watched my first television program. Although I don't remember much about it, I will never forget the red T-shirt I got with the picture of a rhino on it. Or the yellow Audi we were driving at that stage, come to think of it. I had a distinct dislike for that car.

When I am in Kruger these days, I thank my parents again for that first visit as a little girl. It is my happy place and the place in the world where I feel most at home and where I feed my soul. I have been through those gates more than a hundred times and have traversed the park countless times from south to north.

The Kruger National Park is 100 years old this year. On 31 May 1926, it was declared South Africa's first national park when the Sabi and Shingwedzi game reserves merged.

Visitors were first allowed into the Pretoriuskop area in August 1927, and to do so, they first had to obtain a permit from either the secretary of the Parks Board in Pretoria or from the wardens at Skukuza or Pretoriuskop. At that time, however, there were no

overnight facilities, which meant and visitors had to leave the area the same day. A little over a year later, when the first rondavels were built between 1928 and 1929 at Pretoriuskop, Satara and Skukuza, you could book overnight accommodation in the park.

I am a Capetonian these days and have to plan my visits to Kruger carefully. Shortly before the Easter weekend I get a sudden yearning and decide to get my fill in my second home. I realise it would be pure madness to undertake the journey up north with a trailer and tent for nothing more than a quick visit and I therefore decide to travel there and back by plane instead.

To celebrate the Kruger's 100th birthday in my own way, I book accommodation in the Pretoriuskop rest camp, in one of the rondavels without facilities – they are very similar to those from years before. I also rent a small car and only have my hand luggage with me when I board the flight to Mbombela.

I drive through the Malelane gate and follow the H3 past Renosterpan, the Afsaal picnic spot and the turnoff to the private Jock Safari Camp until I get to the T-junction with the H1-1. Here I turn left towards Pretoriuskop for four days of profound joy. At reception I meet a grey-haired man who is also busy checking in. He looks to me like someone who enjoys camping, but he says he has encountered some problems. "Man, I've just picked up some serious trouble. My Prado is on a flatbed on the way to Hazyview, the prop shaft packed up." We walk out together and see him

get into a Suzuki S-Presso. I doubt there will be any more camping in the foreseeable future.

After settling in, it's time for the Kruger rituals. I light my fire – with wood, of course, because my father will turn in his grave if I dare use anything else. I crack an ice-cold beer and later throw a few lamb chops, boerewors and a potato wrapped in foil onto the coals. Afterwards I pour a generous shot of Amarula over a few ice cubes for the *afdrukkertjie*, as my grandfather Tjaart called it.

Early in the morning my first stop is at a dam, or somewhere where there is a pool of water, for coffee and rusks and to watch the sunrise as it can only be seen in Kruger. Late in the afternoon I go for a drive with an ice cream in hand, the windows open and my eyes scanning the landscape from side to side. The hours in between I spend with the map book planning my next routes and with my binoculars within reach, just in case the "stone lion" is a real one.

One could probably add driving on corrugated roads to this list, although I'm not sure you could call it a ritual. A few years ago, the S39 dirt road between the Timbavati picnic spot and the H7 tarmac road cost me a few wheel bearings, a flat tyre and a lost number plate. I can smile about it now, but if it hadn't been for a few lions feeding on a zebra carcass, the flames would have been very low that night in the Tamboti tented camp.

The camp gates are open all year round from as early as 04:30 until as

late as 18:30, and I use the long hours in between as a journey of discovery. Sometimes it yields a lot and other times not much... or so some people might say.

For me, it's about much more than just a checklist to tick off and chasing the Big Five. My father made me realise 45 years ago that one's time here is not just about elephants and lions. When the camp neighbours come to ask in the evening what you saw that day, you can reply with great amazement: "A big, fat, hairy worm!"

It's about the five pied kingfishers next to each other on the low-level bridge over the Sand River near Skukuza, with one suddenly shooting high into the air and then diving down and finally landing right in front of you with its catch. Or two black-backed jackals playfully chasing each other and playing hide-and-seek behind large termite mounds. Or the distinctive call of a nighjar.

And the sky sparkles at night like nowhere else.

People and their ways are equally interesting.

When I'm making breakfast at a picnic spot somewhere, I can't help but take a peek to see what the other people are whipping up for their meal. It's usually anything from yoghurt, muesli and fruit to last night's chops and braaibroodjies.

Then there's the elderly couple I once encountered at Nwanetsi near Satara. While I was glancing from a distance, the gentleman tipped about half a bottle of oil into the skottel braai for the onions, mushrooms and bacon he was frying. I was about to tell myself that these two were clearly not too health-conscious when his wife asked if she could bring the eggs.

What I realised on the last morning of my recent visit is that not every person you come across in Kruger is necessarily a visitor.

Jennifer is a waitress at the Wimpy

in Pretoriuskop and she says she was born and raised here. I ask if she enjoys it and expect a fairly predictable answer, but she says it's difficult, because her three-year-old son lives with her parents in Mozambique. She works here and sends money home, but she misses him very much and visits whenever she can.

The feeling hits me quite hard. Yes, the Kruger is where my heart belongs, but it's also Jennifer's place of work... while her heart is with her son across the border.

I head for the Phabeni gate to get back to Mbombela, because it's time to go back to the Cape. I take the S3 and stop at the Mestel Dam to breathe in the bush air one last time. A herd of more than 300 buffalo amble along, as if they've just come to greet me.

I hesitantly hand my permit to the security guard and a short while later Springsteen starts playing in my head and I instinctively hum along... "It's gonna be a long walk home..." 🎧



ILLUSTRATION DOMINIC WIENAND

A Scottish car in Namaqualand

Following the article about the origin of the teardrop camper in our December 2024-January 2025 issue, Unisa professor and *Drive & Camp* reader **Jo-Ansie van Wyk** shared her own find from way back when.



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

Prof Van Wyk came across a letter to the editor in the British publication *The Autocar* dated 20 April 1912 in which one Ernest R. Woakes writes about his Arrol-Johnston. Woakes' Arrol-Johnston 15.9 arrived in Namaqualand in December 1911. (It is supposed that Woakes lived in Springbok because Port Nolloth is the only port on the West Coast where light cargo ships can dock.) In the letter, he boasts that he had already clocked 600 miles at the time, and that his vehicle, built in Scotland, performs well on local dirt roads. However, the radiator supplied by Renault was reportedly no match for the Namaqualand heat.

He adds in the letter that the local mail coach – a six-horse-drawn cart – has to struggle through the mountains for 18 hours to cover the 85 miles between Garies and Springbok. Woakes could apparently cover the same distance in his Arrol-Johnston in eight hours, although it was a challenging and nerve-racking affair.

Nowhere in his letter does Woakes mention which way he drove from Namaqualand to the Bushmanland, but he claims to be the first motorist to tackle the route in a motor car. If one compares his photos with modern photos of the region (especially the type of rocks) and rereads his letter, it sounds as if "Baviaan's Poort", where he got stuck in a dry riverbed of an unnamed river, could be the same poort through the Oerhoepe River at the foot of Baviaanskop in the modern-day Namaqua 4x4 Eco Trail.

Cyril Klopper drove this route for *Drive & Camp* in 2020, but his photo, which appears to be closest to where the Arrol-Johnston got stuck in 1912, was taken 95 years later, in 2007.

Arrol-Johnston built cars between 1896 and 1931, and the 15.9 in the model's name refers to the 15.9 hp the engine could produce. There were a few versions of the 15.9 – Woakes's was the two-seater Arrol-Johnston 15.9 Boat-tailed Roadster,



NEWS. It must have been sensational to read about a British car built for 'civilised' roads driving around Africa and the South Pole.



which could carry more luggage but fewer people than the standard four-seater model.

Incidentally, Arrol-Johnston also built a bespoke car for Ernest Shackleton's 1907 Nimrod expedition to the South Pole – the very first automobile in Antarctica – but that vehicle also overheated despite

the chill (the pic above left show a lack of radiator). Woakes ends his letter by boasting that he was going to drive all the way to Cape Town in the same year (1912). We hope you made it, Ernest! 🇿

Sources 🌐coolantarctica.com
🌐thetruthaboutcars.com



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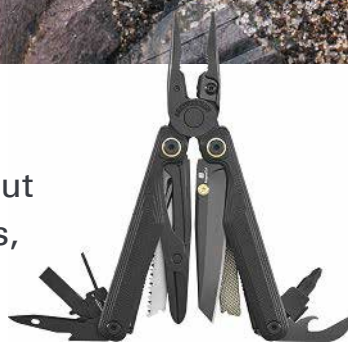
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