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July 2025



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the African Stars!*

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CHALLENGE (PART 1)

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Bushveld KFC



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KIA SORENTO

Confidence, comfort, and clever kit

There's something deeply satisfying about a vehicle that just gets everything right – from its road manners to the way it treats its passengers. The new Kia Sorento, launched recently in typically dramatic Western Cape weather, proved to be exactly that kind of SUV. While we lamented over the wind and wet conditions, the Sorento remained unfazed – calmly soaking up the kilometres and cementing its place as a serious contender in the premium family SUV market.

From the outside in, a big step forward

It's not often that a facelift feels like an entirely new vehicle, but that's precisely the vibe the new Sorento gives off. The exterior refresh brings it bang up to date with Kia's so-called Opposites United design philosophy. The look is modern and muscular, with vertical star-map DRLs and a chiselled bonnet giving it real kerb presence. The redesigned front bumper, new 20-inch wheels and connected taillight design at the rear round off a package that oozes confidence and style. It's a marked step up from its predecessor – and one that doesn't try too hard to shout, yet turns heads anyway.

Comfort with a capital C

The Sorento is still a seven-seater, but now it's a properly posh one. Inside, the layout is clean and contemporary, with a strong emphasis on comfort and tech. The panoramic curved display that combines both the 12.3-inch driver cluster and infotainment screen is a visual treat, while thoughtful touches like ambient lighting, a redesigned shift-by-wire gear knob, and USB-C ports in all three rows add a touch of everyday luxury.

Even in the miserable Cape weather, the Sorento impressed with its quiet, smooth ride. The cabin remains cocooned from road and wind noise, and the suspension is beautifully tuned to soak up everything from potholes to highway imperfections. It genuinely glides over the tarmac, and feels properly planted when the road gets slick.

Packing a punch under the bonnet

Powering all Sorento variants is a tried-and-tested 2.2-litre CRDi turbodiesel engine, which produces 148kW and a healthy 440Nm of torque. It's matched to Kia's slick new eight-





speed dual-clutch transmission (8DCT), which manages to be both responsive and refined. There's enough muscle for easy overtakes and confident highway cruising, without drinking diesel at a frightening rate. In short, it does what it says on the tin – no fuss, just dependable performance.

Three trim levels, all thoroughly kitted out

The Sorento range is available in three trim levels – EX+, SX and the range-topping SXL – and Kia hasn't skimped on features in any of them.

The EX+ kicks things off with a very healthy list of standard features, including smart entry with push-button start, wireless smartphone charging, automatic dual-zone air conditioning, a panoramic sunroof, LED lighting all-round, a 12.3-inch infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and a leather-clad steering wheel and gear shifter. Safety-wise, there are six airbags, rear cross-traffic alert, trailer stability assist, and parking sensors front and rear, plus a reverse camera. It's also the only variant that comes in 2WD, for those who prefer their SUVs without the extra traction.

Move up to the SX, and things get even more indulgent. Apart from all the goodies found in the EX+, you gain power-adjustable front seats (with ventilation and heating), rear sun blinds, rain-sensing wipers, smart cruise control, and a smart power tailgate. The SX also steps up the safety game with advanced driver aids like lane following assist, blind-spot collision avoidance, and forward collision avoidance with junction turning and evasive steering.

Then there's the top dog – the SXL. This is where Kia really throws everything in, including a head-up display, 12-speaker Bose surround sound system, digital rear-view mirror, 360-degree camera system, and additional safety features like parking collision avoidance assist and a blind spot monitor. It's properly plush and feels every bit the flagship.

Safety in every direction

The new Sorento comes with up to seven airbags, including a front centre airbag – a nifty innovation designed to prevent head contact between front passengers during a crash. The ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance Systems)



suite is robust and reassuring, especially for family buyers, and the new tech now includes lane change assist, evasive steering assist, and junction-turning crash prevention.

Spacious and flexible

One of the most useful aspects of the Sorento is its interior flexibility. The third row can be folded flat individually, which means you don't have to sacrifice all your boot space just to bring along granny or a friend from school rugby. It's genuinely spacious in all three rows, and the wide-opening doors make it easy to clamber in and out. As a proper family vehicle, it ticks all the boxes – comfort, safety, space and convenience.

Final thoughts

With the refreshed Sorento, Kia hasn't just kept up with the Joneses – it's taken a confident stride ahead. The level of refinement, comfort, space and tech on offer here would have been the preserve of much pricier nameplates not too long ago.

Now, South Africans have a large SUV option that feels every bit premium, without breaking the bank. If this is the new benchmark for Kia, then the rest of the market needs to sit up and take notice.



Model line-up and pricing

- 2.2 CRDi 7-Seater EX+ 2WD 8DCT: R999 995
- 2.2 CRDi 7-Seater SX AWD 8DCT: R1 199 995
- 2.2 CRDi 7-Seater SXL AWD 8DCT: R1 299 995

*All Sorento models are sold standard with Kia's unlimited-kilometre/5-year warranty (inclusive of roadside assistance), along with a 6-year/90 000km maintenance plan.





NISSAN NAVARA STEALTH

Built in Mzansi... for Africa

Nissan South Africa is on a roll – and after the recent debut of the flagship Navara Warrior, it has now unleashed the Navara Stealth, a stylish new special edition with bold blacked-out flair and an extra dose of rugged refinement. We attended the local launch in Magaliesberg, where the Stealth took us from tar to trail in impressive comfort and confidence.

Slotting into the local Navara double-cab range as the sixth derivative, the new Stealth is based on the LE+ grade and follows hot on the heels of the Warrior, which launched just four months ago. That gives Nissan a healthy mix of offerings, from the work-ready XE and SE, to the more luxurious LE, the battle-hardened Warrior, and now, the bold and broody Stealth.

Unlike the Navara Warrior, which costs north of R900 000, the Stealth offers similar attitude and additional kit at a more accessible price point, with two versions available. The 2WD variant kicks off at R695 200, while the 4x4 version will set you back R779 200.

Mean on the outside, comfy on the inside

The Stealth package adds a curated list of exterior goodies. These include model-specific nudge and sports bars, 17-inch black alloys wrapped in all-terrain tyres, and stealth-finished grille, roof rails, door handles, and side steps. Subtle (but stylish) decals on the doors and tailgate add just enough branding without going full Fast & Furious.

Step inside, and the all-black cabin theme continues with leather-trimmed seats, a touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and a six-speaker sound system that cranks up your road trip playlist with ease. USB-C ports front and rear keep everyone's devices juiced, and overall refinement is up there with the best in class – no noisy plastics or clunky interfaces here.

Built for the long road (and no road)

Under the bonnet, things are familiar – and that's no bad thing. Power comes from the trusty 2.5-litre DDTi turbodiesel engine, delivering 140 kW and 450 Nm of torque, and paired to a seven-speed automatic gearbox.

Where the Stealth really shines is in its ride comfort and handling. Nissan's decision to stick with the coil-sprung five-link rear suspension pays off in spades, offering a level of compliance and control that's more SUV than bakkie. On tar, gravel and even a proper off-road trail through the Magaliesberg hills, the Stealth kept its cool.





New for this model are recalibrated dampers, designed for faster rebound and better ride stability. This might sound technical, but all you need to know is that it helps the bakkie recover more quickly after dips or bumps, keeping things smooth and planted whether you're on a dirt road or dodging potholes in the urban jungle.

The all-rounder with attitude

It's clear that the Navara Stealth is aimed at buyers who want a bit more than just practicality. It's not quite the hardcore Warrior, but it's also more than just a cosmetic upgrade. For R35 000 more than the standard LE, you get unique exterior touches, recalibrated suspension, upgraded wheels and tyres, and a cabin that oozes understated confidence.

Whether you're hauling gear during the week, heading for the hills on weekends, the Stealth strikes a solid balance between form and function.

Built in Mzansi, for Africa

Like its siblings, the Stealth is built at Nissan's Rosslyn plant just north of Pretoria. The facility's flexibility to produce multiple derivatives without disrupting production timelines is part of Nissan's broader African strategy – one that sees the Navara platform being used across Egypt, Morocco and now further afield on the continent.

Final thoughts

The Nissan Navara Stealth is a welcome addition to the double-cab segment –



particularly for those who want something tough and capable, but also like their bakkie with a side of stealthy style. It's not just a pretty face either: the Stealth impressed us across every surface we threw at it during the launch, and we're looking forward to spending more time with it soon. For now, we'll just say this: if you like your bakkie comfortable, and ready for action, the Stealth is worth a serious look.



Nissan Navara Stealth Model line-up and pricing

- Navara 2.5DDTi Stealth DC Stealth AT: R695 200
- Navara 2.5DDTi 4x4 Stealth DC Stealth AT: R779 200

*Prices include a 6-year/90 000km service plan and a matching warranty that is good for 150 000km.





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Botswana beckons

A 50th Anniversary Safari with ARB





The call from Deon Venter of 4x4 Megaworld came in early June: an exclusive invitation to join ARB Australia on a seven-day expedition through Botswana, in celebration of their remarkable 50th anniversary. For any off-road enthusiast, this was an opportunity not to be missed.

-by Anton Willemse

Back in 1975, Anthony Ronald Brown built his first bull bar – the humble beginnings of what would become ARB. Today, they're a global giant, having acquired off-road brands like Old Man Emu (OME), and this golden milestone marks a half-century of innovation. The Botswana trip formed part of a six-part global video series, spanning Australia, Malaysia, Europe, South America, the US, and now Africa – and I was fortunate to join the adventure.

The convoy assembles

On Saturday, 14 June, I arrived at 4x4 Megaworld Edenvale to find an impressive convoy of kitted-out vehicles. The fleet included a Land Cruiser 79 V8 Double Cab, a 79 2.8 GD6 Double Cab, tour leader Bernie Williams' 79 V6 Single Cab, a Ford Ranger Double Cab, a new Suzuki Jimny 5-door Auto, a Land Cruiser Prado 250, and a classic Land Cruiser 80 4.5.





We departed around 08:00, making our way to the Stockpoort border post – an easy crossing with paperwork sorted in under 45 minutes. From there, a short stretch of gravel gave us a taste of what was to come before we reconnected with the tar en route to Mahalapye.

Jimny surprises and rhino no-shows

I kicked off the trip in the plucky Suzuki Jimny, sharing the cabin with Dylan from 4x4 Megaworld. A man with rallying roots, he confidently pushed the Jimny to 100km/h on gravel – and the all-new OME suspension took it in its stride. It was a revelation: composed, compliant, and impressively planted.

We arrived at Khama Rhino Sanctuary at 15:00 and made a quick detour to Malema Pan in search of the elusive rhinos. Alas, it was my sixth visit... and still no sightings. I'm beginning to suspect the rhinos have better hiding spots than we do camp chairs!

That night, I slept in the Jimny using its ARB Esperance rooftop tent. Don't let the compact appearance fool you – it's surprisingly roomy once opened. While the first pitch took some figuring out, I had it mastered by the third night, popping it up or packing it away in under three minutes. Magic.





Long road to Maun

Day two was a 500km push to Maun. While the GPS predicted a five-and-a-half-hour journey, Botswana's stringent speed limits through every village stretched it closer to eight. The Jimny cruised comfortably at 110-115km/h despite being loaded to the roof, while the thirsty Cruiser 80 kept pace with admirable effort.

Once in Maun, we stopped to refuel at Riley's Garage before heading to Crocodile Camp. A dinner of roast meat, local fruit (both sweet and sour in the same bite), and a lively traditional dance performance rounded out a brilliant evening. The Thamalakane River was dry – though word was the Delta floodwaters were on their way.

Maun to Mababe – the joy of suspension

We collected meat supplies from Delta Meat Deli – my favourite butchery in Maun – before hitting the notorious road to Mababe. Though only about 140km, it's slow going, thanks to constant truck traffic and deep ruts. We expected a three- to five-hour slog, and we weren't wrong.

I had the pleasure of driving Jason's 79 2.8 GD6 Double Cab, fitted with BP-51 suspension and parabolic leaf springs. What a bakkie! It floated over corrugations like a German saloon, while smart touches like cruise control and a replacement steering wheel added refinement. This was my first time on these rough roads with BP-51s, and I was genuinely impressed.



We reached our Xwabaxwa campsite by late afternoon, greeted by an elephant sipping at a nearby pan. Our nightly routine became a picture-perfect laager of vehicles around the fire. Bernie's Starlink setup meant we could still post updates – a luxury in the bush!

A Sitatunga surprise

Day three saw us heading into Moremi Game Reserve via North Gate, bound for Camp Xakanaxa. Though only 50-60km, the water-logged tracks and winding routes made for a three-hour drive – standard Moremi pace!

This time, I joined Deon in the new Land Cruiser Prado 250, another off-road gem. With OME suspension, it tackled water crossings with ease. One particularly deep section tempted fate, but we pushed through slowly and came out the other side grinning.

Moremi is magnificent. Towering mopane, jackalberry, and leadwood trees form a lush cathedral, with elephants at nearly every turn. We weren't lucky with predators, but did spot a herd of Puku, and later – the rarest treat – two Sitatunga antelope on a Delta boat cruise.

Back at camp, we shared lamb chops around the fire, serenaded by hyenas and, later, distant lion roars. The Esperance tent once again offered a warm, effortless sleep – a traveller's dream.



The magic of Khwai

Day four was spent exploring the Khwai community concession. This unfenced, wild playground borders Moremi and is alive with game. Herds of 80-plus elephants, hippos wallowing in shallow pools, and giraffes peeking through mopane made for spectacular sights.

We even had a Ranger recovery moment caught on film – nothing serious, but enough for some exciting footage. Nights around the campfire here were deeply grounding. The bush has a way of slowing time, reminding you why we love adventure.

Heading home with a heart full of memories

On our final morning, we broke camp and hit the road for Francistown – a 680km trek. The first 150km through Mababe was predictably slow, followed by another 500km of tar. The Maun–Nata road, which cuts between Moremi and Nxai Pan, delivered one last gift: elephants crossing the road like they owned it.

We had lunch at Nata Lodge (a place at which I'd happily overnight), skipped the detour to Elephant Sands, and pressed on. At Woodlands Lodge in Francistown, a proper bed and a hot shower felt downright decadent after a week in the wild.

We crossed back into South Africa the next day via Stockpoort – quick, easy, and just as smooth as the start. Rolling into Johannesburg just after 19:00, I reflected on a trip that was as much about the people and vehicles as the scenery.



Final thoughts

This ARB 50th celebration tour through Botswana was more than a road trip – it was a tribute to the gear that makes these adventures possible. The BP-51 suspension, the Summit Mark II bumpers with their bold mesh design, and the Esperance tent all proved their mettle.

From the sands of Mababe to the lush floodplains of Moremi, this was a journey I'll never forget – and one that proves ARB's spirit of exploration is still alive and well, 50 years on.





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THE IMPOSSIBLE CHALLENGE

PART 1



They called it *The Impossible Challenge* – and after what we experienced over the first three days, we now understand why. From drifting through rain-slicked dunes to crawling up granite mounds and testing every ounce of traction and teamwork on a near-vertical mountain pass, the Cape Route Rally's latest Northern Cape adventure has already proven to be one for the books. And we're only halfway through.

This is the story of part one – the first three days of our six-day journey. A journey that began in the familiar sands of Lambert's Bay and ended clinging to the cliffs of the Orange River on the Namibian border.



Words by Dieter Pey | Images by Kyle London



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Day one: Dune drifting and sand in the gears

Our adventure kicked off in the red-sand wonderland of the Lambert's Bay dunes – one of South Africa's most spectacular coastal dune belts. Often overlooked in favour of Atlantis, Lambert's Bay has its own unique charm: deep red dunes sculpted by sea winds, with a salty breeze in the air and Atlantic spray not far off.

The prologue stage was designed as a mechanical shakedown – a chance to test the vehicles, stretch their legs, and identify any gremlins before the real challenges began. Overnight rain had compacted the dunes, creating a deceptive crust over the notoriously soft Kalahari sand. Underneath? Still the same power-sapping powder that swallows tyres without warning.

JP from The V8 Shop made his presence known immediately. His thunderous V8-powered Nissan Patrol danced across the ridgelines like a sandboarder on steroids – drifting, sliding, and sending rooster tails of red sand into the grey sky. The rest of us soon joined the fun: dune surfing, throttle control drills, and a couple of classic recoveries (and de-beads) that reminded us what the rally is all about – pushing limits, fixing things, and laughing through it all.

As the sun set behind the dunes, the sky turned purple. We exited the sand, sandy and satisfied, and crossed the road to our first accommodation. Spirits were high. Mechanicals were checked. And tomorrow, the real journey north would begin.





Day two: Granite giants and grit

The next morning, under clearing skies, we pointed our noses northward and headed for the Kamieskroon region. The route was a patchwork of gravel roads and muddy puddles, which gave the rigs some extra character!

Eventually, just off the N7 near Kamieskroon, we were granted access to a stretch of private land that hid something special – three massive granite mounds rising like stone whales from the Karoo plains. Our guide and local farmer, Hansie, gave us the go-ahead to explore.

Each granite dome increased in difficulty, creating a natural progression challenge. The first mound was wide, gently sloped, and grippy despite its intimidating appearance. We dropped pressures and crawled up with relative ease. It felt surreal – like driving across a Utah landscape, with massive slabs of granite stretching into the horizon.

The second mound raised the stakes. Steeper and more technical, it required careful tyre placement and just the right balance of torque and traction. Again, the group ascended in full, with no major issues.

But it was the third mound – an unconquered beast with a 43-degree incline (by our best estimation) – that called the brave. Until now, no one had made it to the top. That changed today.

Andries, in his Cummins-powered Nissan Patrol, scouted a new line and made the first successful summit. JP, still buzzing from the dunes, followed in his V8 Patrol. Louis from DSX came third, piloting his vehicle with quiet determination to the top. And finally, against all odds, Hansie himself drove his near-stock Toyota Hilux up the granite slab – proving that local knowledge and raw courage sometimes beat all the mods in the world.

The sun hung low as we descended and made our way to Okiep, checking into the Okiep Country Lodge for a warm shower and a hearty meal. The hardest day, we thought, was behind us.

We were wrong!





Day three: The impossible pass

If day two tested our traction, day three tested our resolve.

We left Okiep early and headed deeper into the Northern Cape, towards the Orange River and the borderlands of Namibia. The route was magnificent – endless skies, undulating gravel, and the kind of timeless silence only the Karoo can offer. But the peace didn't last.

Midway through the day, we reached a hidden track known locally as the Impassable Pass – a crumbling mountain trail that leads down to an abandoned mine... and then dares you to drive back up the same way.

At first glance, the descent didn't seem too bad. But as we began picking our way down the loose, rocky track, it quickly became clear that this wasn't a casual mountain drive. The terrain was steep, off-camber and exposed. The wind howled around us. Braking was barely effective – you simply slid down, wrestling for control as your vehicle bounced through hairpins and into rock-strewn gutters. And always, just a few feet away, a vertical drop loomed large in the corner of your eye.

At the bottom, we paused. Regrouped. Breathed. And stared back up at the route we now had to climb. One by one, we started the ascent – lockers engaged, tyres aired down to 0.5–0.8 bar, adrenaline on full tap.



The big boys – Patrols and Cruisers – clawed their way up with determination. Every inch demanded commitment. I had to dance the throttle on my twin-locked Hilux to climb switchbacks slick with loose shale. After several attempts, I found the line and surged upward.

Then came Michiel, in a single-locked Hilux on 33s. The terrain proved too much. One of the steepest pitches caused a de-bead mid-climb. Tension in the team spiked as a hasty repair was done. The winch came out, anchoring to one of the fixed points locals had long ago installed – a silent warning of what this pass can do to the unprepared.





Even so, we all made it out. Battered, buzzing with adrenaline, but grinning.

As we regrouped on the ridgeline and rolled towards Oewerbosch, we passed through some of the most breathtaking landscapes we'd ever seen. Cruising across the top of the plateaus, we were surrounded by silence and scenery – not a single building in sight. As the sun dipped, its final rays shimmered off the surface of the Orange River. Namibia lay just across the water, glowing gold in the twilight. We rolled into camp at Oewerbosch



and toasted the toughest day of the rally – and the fact that we'd faced the impossible... and come out on top.



What comes next?

We're only halfway through this epic six-day journey. Already, we've crossed dunes, conquered granite, and faced down mountains. But the second half promises even more technical driving, unexpected breakages and untamed adventure.

The Cape Route Rally isn't a race. It's a test – of machines, of minds, of teamwork. It's about finding the toughest lines and the most beautiful backroads South Africa has to offer, and tackling them as a community.

So stay tuned for part two, where we leave the cliffs behind and dive into the heart of the Kalahari – where breakdowns, bush fixes and breathtaking scenery await.

If you want to get involved with the Cape Route Rally, drop us a mail: enquiries@caperouterally.com



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EXTREME MOUNTAIN PASSES OF SA

Part 1 - Donkey pass

East of Harrismith a tall sandstone mountain called Platberg, blocks the view to the east, which plays host to the fabled Donkey Pass, one of South Africa's extreme mountain passes. This pass should not be confused with Donkies Pass not too far away in KZN. In the middle of this mountain is a deep cleft and it is up this gorge that the Donkey Pass climbs very steeply to the summit, making it the 6th highest and second steepest pass in South Africa. The road traverses a nature reserve and permits need to be obtained. Whilst the entire route with sections as steep as 1:3 is concrete stripped to aid traction, it is not suitable for normal cars. Low range is essential. For those that do get to drive this amazing pass, you will be one of a select few to have done so. Trygve Roberts, of [Mountain Passes South Africa](#), reveals more.

There is only one way in and out of the Platberg Reserve. From Harrismith head east towards the obvious big flat-topped mountain, following the signs to the Platberg Nature Reserve. Once inside the reserve, there are five forks along the approach road to the Donkey Pass. All of these are sign posted, so keep a sharp look out for them as they are quite small and faded.

There is a farmhouse on the right-hand side of the road to use as a landmark. Keep left at the fork and head northwest for 250m, crossing a small stream to arrive at the fifth fork, which is also the start of the Donkey Pass. Turn right to commence the ascent of the pass.

This pass is for the more serious off-roader and permits need to be obtained from the guard at the entrance to the reserve. Only high clearance 4WD vehicles with low range will manage this route, which has extreme gradients and dangerous drop offs. Despite the entire route being concrete stripped, we don't recommend this pass for normal sedan vehicles.

With a summit altitude of 2 394m, this is the sixth highest pass in South Africa. The views from the summit are simply beautiful, especially to the east, where the N3 can be seen snaking its way down the escarpment. Donkey Pass also gives access to the Gibson Dam – a high-altitude dam hidden in the folds of the Drakensberg.

The pass is only 3.19km long and gains 356 vertical metres over that distance, producing a very steep average gradient of 1:9, making it onto our extreme passes top 10 rankings on two counts – the sixth highest and the second steepest pass in South Africa. More importantly, the steepest sections, which occur over the first kilometre are as steep as 1:2.6. This one is definitely not for sissies!

The first kilometre has 20 sharp corners and climbs 242 vertical metres in that short distance, producing some eye-popping gradients. Look out for a lovely waterfall on the right (east) at the 900m mark. This first, very steep section has been concrete stripped, which allows for reasonable traction – even in wet weather. Remember to unlock your vehicle's centre diff to avoid axle wind up, whilst on the concrete sections. At the 1.2km mark and an altitude of





2 280m above sea level, the gradients suddenly ease off to a more respectable 1:15 as the track follows the western bank of the headwaters of the stream that bisects the gorge.

At the 2.2km mark, the road bends sharply away to the east, and although the gradients are reasonably easy, the mountain is often wet, and vehicles can easily get bogged down. So, be sure to remain on the concrete. In inclement weather this section will be dangerous and needless to say, the pass receives regular and deep snowfalls in winter, coupled with sub-zero temperatures. Go well prepared for any emergency and take extra rations and warm clothing in case of a breakdown.

The final kilometre bends steadily into the east and follows the ridge of the mountain towards three radio towers at the summit. This final bit has several sections which are concrete stripped to improve safety and traction. You can now descend the same way you arrived.

FACT FILE

- **GPS START: S28.280732 E29.200426**
- **GPS SUMMIT: S28.270202 E29.212965**
- **GPS END: S28.270202 E29.212965**
- **AVE GRADIENT: 1:9**
- **MAX GRADIENT: 1:3**
- **ELEVATION START: 2 037M**
- **ELEVATION SUMMIT: 2 391M**
- **HEIGHT GAIN/LOSS: 353M**
- **DISTANCE: 3.2 KM**
- **SURFACE: CONCRETE & PAVING STONES**
- **NEAREST TOWN: HARRISMITH (23KM)**

Points to consider before driving the pass:

- Do not attempt this pass unless you are in a 4x4, preferably with low range.
- Donkey Pass is inside the Platberg Nature Reserve, so there is only one possible entry and exit point, which is the gate to the reserve.
- You do not need to prearrange a permit, just arrive at the gate, which is open from 06:00 to 18:00.
- No motorcycles or quads are allowed inside the reserve.
- You have to pay an entrance fee – currently, R25 per vehicle, and R15 per person.
- You must inform the gate guard that you want to drive Donkey Pass, as he will have to give you a key for the gate, which is at the bottom of the pass. If you are the first person, he will give you the key and tell you to leave the gate unlocked. If you pass anyone else on your way back, and you have locked the gate, remember to hand the key over to them.
- The approach road to the pass involves quite a few turns, but each turn is well signposted. There are small signs at each intersection, but you need to read each sign carefully.
- Take a saw and/or axe with you. The road is narrow, and it is possible that you will encounter some fallen trees.
- The entire pass, from the gate to the towers, is paved, so traction is not an issue.
- If you encounter another vehicle on the way up or down, it is going to be a big problem, as it is impossible for two vehicles to pass each other. One of the vehicles will have to reverse to one of the passing places, of which there are only three.
- From the Platberg Nature Reserve gate to the top of the pass takes at least 45 minutes, so factoring in some time spent at the summit, allow an absolute minimum of two hours for the whole trip. This is in good weather with dry roads.





Rugged, reliable and ready

-by Tony Yeo

TOURING WITH THE RAM KAPPIE CANOPY

When we moved away from the Toyota Fortuner and acquired the Hilux bakkie, a range of accessories had to be fitted to complement our overland tours. One of the most important – and the first we looked for – was a canopy. This would not only protect all our valuable equipment but also be a massive safety feature.

The hunt began. And as we all know, there's a huge range of canopies available on the market. After speaking to many of the manufacturers, I had no success with a possible deal – and besides the pricing, it was clear that most options simply wouldn't fit our budget.

This led me to the second-hand market. But again, the pricing was not far off new. Then I came across a manufacturer in Boksburg and took a chance on a visit to investigate their product.

On arrival, I was met by the friendliest and most helpful team of people you can imagine. They took me on a walk around the factory while we discussed options and possibilities. Well, before I knew it, our bakkie was reversed into the fitting bay and – bingo – a Ram Kappie canopy was fitted.





What we had installed was what they referred to as the “first generation” canopy. I was happy – firstly, because the price was extremely attractive, and secondly, because I now had the protection I was after.

The canopy wasn’t 100% to my liking, as it had side windows in the gull-wing doors, which I hadn’t really been looking for. But as the old cliché goes: beggars can’t be choosers. I was still extremely excited that I now had a canopy – which meant I could load up and depart on our first adventure tour with my new addition just two days later.

A few short months down the line, I received a call to say my new canopy was ready. Surprised, confused and excited all at once, I rushed back to the Ram Kappie factory in Boksburg. Anton from Adventure Afrika had graciously arranged the upgrade, and without any delay, the old canopy was off, our rooftop tent was transferred, and the “new generation” Ram Kappie canopy was mounted.

If you thought I was happy the first time around, looking at the new canopy had me giggling like a two-year-old with a large box of Smarties. This was, as the saying goes, the bee’s knees.

This canopy wasn’t just what I wanted – the colour and the solid side doors – it was also, well... sexy. The door edges have great lines, and the gull-wing doors (fitted with gas struts for easy opening) have minimal flex, which is rather surprising for such a long door – ours is fitted to an Xtra Cab.

This canopy looks expensive, and the quality is exceptional. Made from stainless steel, my eye was immediately drawn to the neat, professional weld lines. Solid and rugged was the first impression. It weighs in at 75kg and has a carrying capacity of 500kg. There’s no concern whatsoever when it comes to carrying a massive clamshell rooftop tent – even over long and rough roads.

The cab window is a standard sliding type, and the rear door window has a safety guard to protect all the goodies loaded inside. One key fits all the locks, and adding accessories is simple and easy. Ramkappie has a large range of additional fitments, such as sliders, table mounts, gas and fuel holders, and so on.

It’s now been close on a year of touring with our canopy, and it has simply been a joy to have. There are no signs of wear and no issues to report.





However, we all have one common issue when fitting a canopy – and that is dust ingress. It does take a bit of ingenuity to seal up a few holes, but to be fair, it's not the canopy that needs the work – it's the bakkie itself. Between the rear taillights and the many holes in the load bin, dust has plenty of entry points. These have since been sealed, and with the two genius (yet wonderfully simple) air vents in the canopy for positive pressure, we now have none – or at worst, minimal – dust ingress.

The Ram Kappie phrase – "*Jou jag en kampmaat*" – is perfectly suited and true to all our needs.

For more information contact Ram Kappie

www.ramkappie.co.za





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Discovering the SA you love

-by Liana Reiners





There's something about a proper South African road trip that soothes the soul. It's not just the destination – it's the journey. The pit stops. The playlists. The potholes. The biltong wrappers collecting in the door bins. And, of course, the right travel companion. In our case, it happened to have four wheels, a roaring six-cylinder heart, and the unmistakable silhouette of a Land Rover Discovery 350D.

The brief? Explore the country and #DiscovertheSAyoulove. The destination? The magnificent Cape Vulture Lodge outside Hoedspruit. The route? Packed with small towns, sweeping passes, and the kind of scenery that makes you forget to check your phone. The crew? Yours truly and my Adventure Afrika partner-in-crime, Mary Willemse.

Packing the boot and plotting the route

We set off from Pretoria in the early morning light, coffee in hand, sunglasses on, and the Discovery's navigation set for a gentle meander northeast. The boot swallowed our overpacked bags without so much as a sigh, and with 922 litres of space behind the second row (and up to 2 391 litres if you're going full adventure mode), we could've brought the kitchen sink too.

First stop: Alzu Petroport on the N4 – the unofficial halfway-house for anyone heading from Gauteng towards Mpumalanga. We grabbed cappuccinos, admired the rhinos in the wildlife enclosure, and did the traditional snack haul. Biltong, chips, sweets – you know the drill. Then it was time to hit the road properly.

As we pulled out of Alzu, we couldn't help but notice how many people gave the Discovery a second glance. It has that kind of presence – confident, modern and unmistakably premium, without being flashy. The latest generation trades





the boxier look of its predecessors for a sleeker, more sculpted silhouette, with smooth curves, flush door handles, and a distinctive stepped roofline that still hints at its off-road DNA. From the front, the Discovery's bold grille and signature LED lighting give it a commanding face, while the squared-off rear lights and subtly raked tailgate add a touch of contemporary flair. It's the kind of vehicle that looks just as at home outside a five-star lodge as it does splattered in mud on a remote gravel track. And let's be honest – it's also the kind of vehicle that makes you feel just a little smug when you catch your reflection in a shop window.

Our route took us through the town of Belfast, before winding our way up into Dullstroom – trout fishing capital and purveyor of all things quaint. Dullstroom's cobbled streets and stone cottages are almost European in feel, but it's the local eateries, whisky bars, and art galleries that keep the foot traffic buzzing. We resisted the urge to stop for pancakes and waffles and pressed on through Lydenburg, where the mountains start rising and the scenery becomes dramatic.

Ohrigstad was next – a blink-and-you'll-miss-it dorp with a big heart and friendly locals – and finally, we wound our way towards the lodge, just outside Hoedspruit.

The tar gave way to gravel, but the Discovery didn't flinch. With its intelligent Terrain Response system and silky air suspension, we may as well have been on a freshly graded highway.

More than just a pretty grille

Let's talk about the real MVP of the trip. The Land Rover Discovery 350D is the kind of vehicle that doesn't shout about its capabilities – it just quietly gets on with the job, whether that's cruising at 120 km/h in comfort or crawling up a rocky incline with poise.

Under the bonnet is a 3.0-litre six-cylinder turbodiesel engine pumping out 257kW and a massive 700Nm of torque. Paired with an automatic transmission and All-Wheel Drive, it delivers effortless acceleration – 0 to 100km/h in just 6.3 seconds – and silky-smooth overtaking on long rural stretches. We never felt underpowered, even when the road climbed steeply out of Dullstroom or curved through the passes of the Blyde River Canyon region.

What really impressed, though, was the blend of power and poise. The Discovery feels substantial on the road but never cumbersome. Adaptive dynamics and electronic air suspension keep things level and plush, even





when the road surface forgets how to behave. And when the tar ends, the real magic begins. With 285mm of ground clearance in off-road mode, a wading depth of 900mm, and tech like Hill Descent Control and Wade Sensing, the Disco laughs in the face of rough stuff.

Inside, it's a cocoon of comfort. Ours came with massage seats (20-way adjustable, nogal), four-zone climate control, a cabin air purification system and the sort of infotainment setup that makes traffic jams bearable. Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are wireless, the sound system is from Meridian (read: excellent), and there's a head-up display so you can keep your eyes on the road while the tech whispers sweet nothings in your periphery.

Peace, quiet and vultures

Arriving at Cape Vulture Lodge felt like entering another world – one where deadlines don't exist, the food is always delicious, and the only honking you'll hear is from a distant hornbill. Perched on a ridge with sweeping views over the Blyde River Canyon and the undulating bushveld below, this eco-conscious lodge offers a slice of lowveld tranquillity that's hard to beat.

The lodge is nestled within a private 2 500-hectare reserve that forms part of a broader conservation initiative aimed at protecting the region's delicate ecosystems and, of course, its namesake: the critically endangered Cape Vulture. With no Big Five





roaming the property, the pace here is gentler – focused on appreciation rather than adrenaline. The absence of apex predators makes it a haven for walkers, birders, and those seeking a more reflective bush experience.

Accommodation at Cape Vulture Lodge is intimate and tasteful, with just eight suites spread out along the ridge. Each suite is built from locally sourced materials and designed to blend seamlessly into the natural surroundings, with earthy tones, stone finishes, and large glass doors that frame the views like living artworks. Inside, it's all about comfort – plush beds, quality linens, thoughtful touches, and a huge shower to wash off the dust after a day in the bush. (There's even an outside shower for those brave enough to take on the brisk early morning or evening air... we weren't those people.) Each unit has its own private deck where you can sip a sundowner while the bush comes alive with evening sounds.

The main lodge area features an open-plan lounge, dining room and bar – all centred around a firepit that crackles into the night under a blanket of stars. Meals are served communally but never feel intrusive. The kitchen draws inspiration from the surrounding landscape and the onsite permaculture garden, which supplies a bounty of herbs, vegetables and greens. This thriving garden isn't just a token patch of parsley either – it's a carefully managed, self-sustaining ecosystem that reflects the lodge's deep commitment to regenerative practices. Companion planting, composting, and natural pest control are all part of the process, and the staff are more than happy to show curious guests around. It's not every day you enjoy your lunch knowing the rocket in your salad was harvested just hours before. Expect farm-to-table fare that's as nourishing as it is tasty – hearty breakfasts, creative salads,





slow-cooked stews and the kind of fresh-baked bread that makes you contemplate seconds before you've finished your first helping.

But it's not just the food and the views that make this place special – it's the ethos. The lodge was built with sustainability as its cornerstone, and that vision runs through every aspect of the experience. Solar power keeps the lights on, greywater systems reduce waste, and every effort is made to tread lightly. There's a sense of purpose here that's hard to articulate but easy to feel.

The Cape Vultures, of course, are the beating heart of it all. The reserve is home to one of the few remaining breeding colonies in the region, and from carefully positioned viewing hides you can watch these extraordinary birds as they wheel through the sky or perch along the cliffs. Interpretive signage and on-site guides help bring the conservation story to life and trust me – once you've seen one of these giants launch into the thermals, you'll never look at a scavenger the same way again.

For those keen to stretch their legs, guided nature walks and mountain bike rides offer a deeper look at the area's biodiversity. Led by knowledgeable guides, these activities uncover the smaller wonders of the bush – from

medicinal plants and insect trails to the quiet drama of a dassie alarm call. There are also leisurely bush drives on offer – not game viewing in the Big Five sense, but slow, sensory journeys through the reserve that invite you to notice textures, colours and sounds.

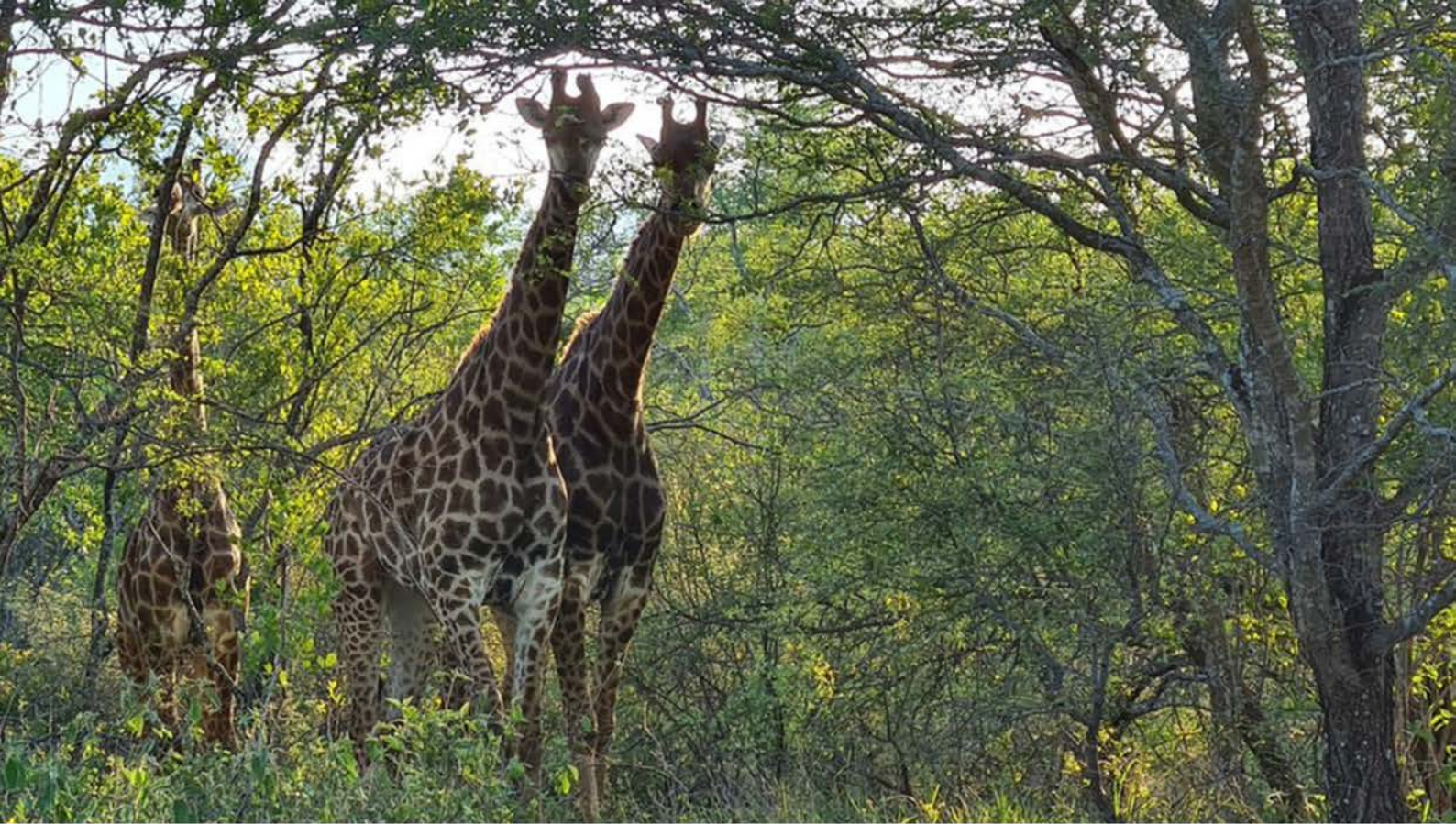
Whether you're there to switch off and soak up the scenery or to get stuck in and explore the property, Cape Vulture Lodge offers a rare and enriching kind of bush experience – one where luxury and purpose exist side by side, and where even the silence feels sacred.

A vehicle made for adventure – and everything in between

Back on the road (reluctantly), it was time to reflect on what made the Discovery 350D such a perfect partner for this journey. It's more than just luxury and looks – although it has those in spades. It's the practicality that makes it shine.

With seven full-sized seats and endless configuration options, it's a family car, a safari cruiser, and a lifestyle companion all rolled into one. It can tow 3 500kg with ease, fit everything from mountain bikes to fishing gear, and still have room for the wine you "accidentally" bought at a farm stall. Safety features like Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Keep Assist and a





3D surround camera system meant every moment behind the wheel felt confident and calm.

And then there's the heritage. Land Rover has long been the go-to for explorers, adventurers, and those who just like their weekends a little wilder. The Discovery continues that legacy with quiet confidence, blending cutting-edge tech with the kind of go-anywhere attitude that South Africans appreciate.

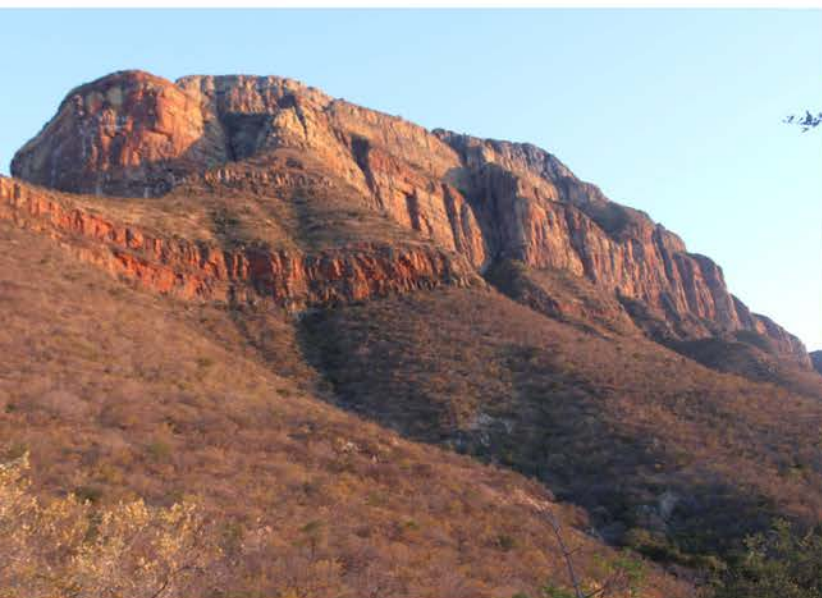
This is how you road trip

Four days. Over 1 200km travelled. Two relaxed and recharged journalists, and an absolutely unforgettable experience. The Discovery 350D didn't just take us to Cape Vulture Lodge – it

made the journey part of the destination. It was our oasis on the road, our steady rock on gravel, and our very fancy friend when we pulled up to the lodge gate

Whether you're heading for the bush, the berg or the coast, the Land Rover Discovery is more than ready to help you #DiscovertheSAyoulove. And if that just happens to involve gourmet food, gorgeous scenery and vulture-spotting at sunrise – well, all the better.

For more information on the Cape Vulture Lodge please visit www.capevulturelodge.co.za



Expedition:

Lions & Lakes

18 SEP - 14 OCT
2025

R42 500

PER PERSON SHARING



TOUR DETAILS

- Destinations: Kapishya Hot Springs, Katavi NP, Lake Tanganyika, Ruaha NP and Lake Malawi
- Duration: 28 Days
- Accommodation: Camping
- Meals: Self-Catered
- Included:
 - 2 dinners
 - Camping and Park Fees
 - Guide Fee



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OFF-ROAD TRAILERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

5 rugged picks to consider

Off-road trailers are the perfect answer for adventurers who want to travel light, stay agile, and carry what truly matters – without the bulk of a caravan. Designed for rough roads, they pack tough chassis, serious suspension, and pop-up tents or rooftop units into compact, off-road-ready packages. Below are five standout models available locally, each offering a unique take on trail-ready travel.

Conqueror Comfort Platinum – luxury with legacy

South African brand Conqueror is the gold standard in off-road trailers, with over three decades of expertise and numerous “Off-Road Trailer of the Year” awards. The Comfort Platinum is their flagship model, a mobile glamping suite built to tackle tough terrain with finesse and creature comforts.

Key features: King-size bed, on-demand shower, L-shaped kitchen with dual-basin, 150-litre water tank, dual batteries, 610-litre nosecone, multiple awning options.

Dimensions: 4 190 × 1 785 × 1 765mm (excluding tent)

Tare / GVM: 590kg / 1 500kg

Price: From R290 665

More information: www.conqueror.co.za



Summit Everest – SA innovation with real off-road muscle

Summit Off-Road, based in Pretoria, crafts trailers engineered for African terrain. The Everest is their flagship compact camper trailer, boasting a low stance for towing ease, yet offering full off-road readiness and comfort for two adults (plus optional add-a-room).

Key features: Galvanised body and chassis, low profile for easy towing, pop-up rear tent with queen-size bed, 245-litre under-bed drawer storage, slide-out kitchen, twin 80-litre belly water tanks, 100Ah battery with inverter, solar-ready, 270° awning, independent lights and annex-ready

Dimensions: 3 780 × 1 725 × 1 365mm

Tare / GVM: 480kg / 1 800kg

Price: From R279 999

More information: www.summitoffroad.co.za



Echo 4x4 Echo 4 Legend – nimble aluminium trail-hound

Echo 4x4 is all about lightweight toughness, and the Echo 4 is their flagship. With a strong aluminium body and agile design, it's a great match for smaller 4x4s or those prioritising fuel efficiency and easy manoeuvrability.

Key features: Aluminium construction, pop-up roof tent, rear kitchen slide, fold-down tailgate, battery/water systems, solar-ready

Dimensions: 3 350 x 1 880 x 1 530mm

Tare / GVM: 390kg / 1 500kg

Price: From R145 000

More information: www.echo4x4.co.za



Invader Duo X – compact elegance with expandable comfort

Local manufacturer Invader knows how to make compact count. The Duo X is a smart trailer that starts small and grows – ideal for couples or solo travellers who want heaps of flexibility and modern touches without the bulk.

Key features: Fast pop-up queen-bed tent, annex option, Victron battery/inverter, fridge slide, kitchen with 2-plate stove, 100-litre water tank, solar-ready, external awning

Dimensions: 4 250 x 1 850 x 1 850mm

Tare / GVM: 910kg / 1 550kg

Price: From R425 000

More information: www.invader.co.za

Bushwakka Safari Tourer – rugged simplicity for two

Bushwakka, a South African workshop-based builder, champions minimalist engineering, robust quality and flexible design. The Safari Tourer is a compact trailer with essentials done well – perfect for explorers who want simple but solid setups.

Key features: Steel ladder chassis, leaf-spring axle, compact alloy pop-top, minimalist kitchen

slide, internal water and battery, optional extras such as caravan-length awnings

Dimensions: 3 845 x 1 880 x 1 500mm

Tare / GVM: 945kg / 1 700kg

Price: From R375 000

More information: www.bushwakka.africa



Final word

SA's off-road trailer scene goes from luxe to light with impressive diversity. Whether you're a creature-comfort seeker, a tech-savvy couple, or a solo wanderer, there's a trailer to fit your vibe.



GEAR & GADGETS



INDEFLATE 4HOSE UNIT

The Indeflate 4HOSE UNIT is based on the same design and functionality as the original Indeflate, and allows you to equalise, inflate or deflate 4 tyres at once.

Technical specifications

- The Indeflate bodies are made from aluminium and are precision machined
- To ensure the highest quality. After machining, the bodies go through a military spec hard anodising process which make them highly durable and scratch resistant.
- Boasts a 700kpa/100psi combination gauge that is manufactured by one of the world's leading suppliers of high quality pressure and temperature measurement products.
- 2 x 7m air hoses that are highly flexible and easy to use; abrasion and ozone resistant and can withstand pressures of up to 2000kpa(300psi) and temperatures of -10°C to +60°C.
- Patented dump valve system allows for quick and easy inflation, deflation and equalisation of two tyres.
- 4 x clip-on chucks make it simple and safe to connect to tyre valves.
- Strong and durable carry bag makes it convenient to store.

-New and improved internal valve allows for various inflation fittings to be used.

-Includes 2 x CNC machined inflation fittings:

-Schrader valve fitting

-H2C male quick coupler fitting.

-Indeflate Hook included



R 3 312.00

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GEAR & GADGETS



40L ICE CUBE DRAWER FRIDGE / FREEZER

Maximise your cabin space and keep your food and drinks cold with the Ironman 4x4 40L drawer fridge. It will keep your food fresh and your drinks ice-cold.

With its robust powder coated steel exterior and stainless steel drawer, this fridge combines durability with sleek design.

Without compromising space, this compact unit mounts in the rear of your vehicle, without the need for a fridge slide.

Additionally, it features an internal LED light as well as a basket and divider, making it effortless to locate items in low-light conditions.

KEY FEATURES

- 40-litre capacity
- Removable basket and divider included
- 12/24 V DC operation with 50A Anderson plug connection
- Ironman 4x4 cooling system
- Electronic temperature control
- Internal LED light
- Mounting bracket kit included



R12 500.00

{IRONMAN}
4X4



Get ready to braai

Bushveld KFC



If you're looking to elevate your next braai, this recipe for crispy crumbed chicken thighs is an absolute game-changer. Forget your usual marinades; we're diving into a deliciously crunchy coating that promises a burst of flavour with every bite. Perfect for an outdoor cookout, this "Bushveld Fried Chicken" is surprisingly simple to make and guaranteed to be a crowd-pleaser. Get your fire ready, because these golden-brown thighs are about to become your new braai favourite!



Ingredients:

- Chicken thighs
- Southern Coating (blue bag or box)
- Breadcrumbs
- Chicken spice (1/4 bottle for a good kick!)
- Egg

Instructions:

- Prepare the coating: In a bowl, thoroughly mix the Southern Coating, breadcrumbs, and chicken spice together. This blend will give your chicken that irresistible crunch and flavour.
- Egg wash: Dip each chicken thigh into a beaten egg to ensure the coating adheres well.
- Coat the chicken: Generously coat the egg-dipped chicken thighs with the prepared spice mixture, pressing gently to make sure it sticks.
- Braai to perfection: Place the coated chicken thighs on your braai grid and cook them over hot coals until they are golden brown and cooked through.



Enjoy your delicious Bushveld Fried Chicken, a true taste of the outdoors!

