



ANYSBERG

Destination Review

CLEAR THE AIR
The real benefit of a snorkel

DAMPER DOWN!

How to use a winch blanket, the right way



Oil of Decay: Does engine oil really expire within a year?

Cape Route Rally: Q&A with the event's top 3 competitors

Malawi: When plans fail

WIN: Join our mailing list and you could win a 45L fridge worth R6 999!

JOIN our mailing list here and you could WIN a National Luna 45-litre fridge/freezer worth R6 999.

WIN!



Contents

Travel

- 6 Anysberg Nature Reserve – Destination review
- 50 Malawi – When plans fail

Masterclass

- 21 The real benefit of a snorkel
- 37 Does engine oil expire
- 45 How to use a winch damper, the right way

Q&A

- 26 The Cape Route Rally's top 3 competitors

Advertorial

- 19 National Luna 45L Travelbox
- 40 Tuffstuff off-road insurance

Publisher / Editor

Grant Spolander

Sub Editor

Neil Harrison

Design

Grant Spolander

Contributors

Horst Kellerman, Johan De Villiers, Ferdinand Changuion, Glyn Demmer.

Streetview

I've always had a knack for predicting outcomes. My mind races through dozens of possible scenarios and then quickly decides whether an idea is worth pursuing. The problem with this approach is that I often come off a bit cynical, overly pragmatic, and perhaps even dismissive to anyone who hasn't been part of my thought journey.

No-one bears the brunt of this more than my wife Sarah. She'll make a suggestion, I'll mentally churn through the likely possibilities, and then say, "Nah, that's not gonna work". The problem is that, for Sarah, the journey is as important as the outcome. Whereas I'm all about the outcome.

It took me many years of marriage to realise this, and when I did, I thought of it in terms of Google.

I tend to navigate life via a Google Maps perspective – a bird's-eye view which clearly shows the path between two points. Sarah, on the other hand, lives life via Google Streetview. She's not interested in the "best" route, as long as the path eventually gets there and allows her to gather experiences along the way.

And it must be said that she has more fun than I do, probably because she's willing to take greater risks.

Why am I telling you this? Well, it has much to do with my decision to launch this magazine. The business model was unconvincing, and every possible outcome I could think of was negative. In fact, to keep the confidence crisis's at bay I would frequently email myself the following message: "The mag doesn't have to be popular. The mag doesn't have to make tons of money. It just has to serve the smallest viable audience, and I have to have fun doing it."

This is, of course, the Streetview approach, and now I'm beginning to realise its value.

"That's a roundabout way of saying a big thank-you to all of you"

After the first issue went out, the emails flooded in. Thousands of subscribers joined the mailing list. Contributors asked how they could help. And several advertisers offered to support the mag. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Of the hundreds of people who provided feedback, only one said, "Don't get your hopes up". A Google maps kinda guy, I knew exactly where he was coming from.

That's a roundabout way of saying a big thank-you to all of you, for your support and for taking the time to subscribe to the 4WD Revolution newsletter. What's more, congratulations to Stephen Hagglund on winning the National Luna 20-litre fridge giveaway. Stephen's name was randomly drawn from the 4WD Revolution subscriber list.

But don't worry, you can still win! National Luna has generously sponsored another subscriber giveaway, this time their new 45-litre Travel Box worth R6 999 – as featured on page 19.



So, if you'd like a chance to win this unique fridge / freezer that's both a dual and single control unit, subscribe [here](#) to the 4WD Revolution newsletter. It's free and you can unsubscribe anytime.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Please feel free to share your own off-road travel recommendations by emailing grant@4wdrevolution.com

Grant

SHARING IS CARING



"Anysberg, where's that?"

That's the typical response I get whenever I mention one of my favourite South African nature reserves. I've been visiting Anysberg since 2007 and am amazed that it's still largely unknown.

So I write this with mixed emotions. On the one hand, I want to share worthwhile travel destinations in 4WD Revolution, but on the other hand, I also want to keep the magic of Anysberg to myself.

What to do, what to do...

I suspect many visitors to Anysberg grapple with the same problem. On my most recent visit, I sat at the pool chatting to a fellow guest. It was his third visit this year, and he openly stated, "I love coming here. Hardly anyone knows about this place; I hope it stays that way".

“Me too. I hope no one ever hears about this place”

Knowing I was about to publish a story on the reserve, I broke eye contact and stared at the ground. "Yeah. Yeah, me too. I hope no one ever hears about this place".

He asked me how much longer we were staying in the park. I told him one more night in the main campsite, and then we were heading up the mountain trail to wild camp. "What mountain trail?" he asked. "The one behind us", I replied, pointing at the mountain range that sweeps the full length of the Anysberg valley. They form part of the Cape Fold Mountains, to me they resemble a wall of chocolate pudding.



The 4x4 trail runs deep within this chocolate-pudding mountain range.

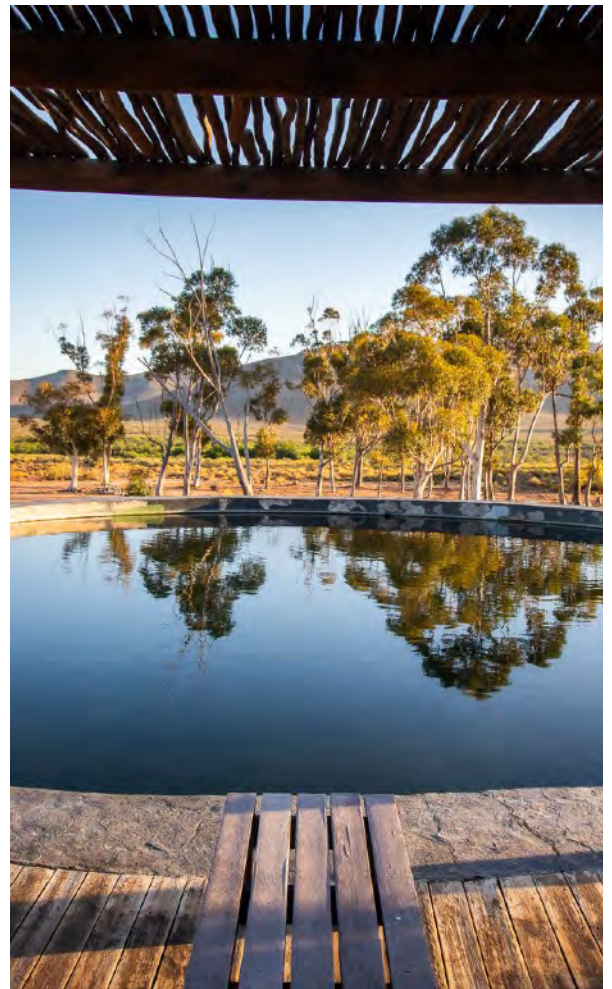


If it's true that a relatively small number of people know about Anysberg, then it has to be true that an even smaller number know about the park's mountain trail. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that more people have visited Namibia's Skeleton Coast than have camped on the Anysberg mountain trail.

Nobody drives this route.

This astounds me because it's one of the most memorable experiences in my off-road bank of memories. It's also, arguably, the most remote place you can camp in the Western Cape.

There's just one caveat...



***“The
mountain trail
isn't
technically
on-the-menu”***

The Anysberg mountain trail isn't technically "on the menu". It's not to be confused with the park's Tapfontein 4x4 Trail, which is strongly marketed on Cape Nature's website and brochures. The mountain trail is a seldom-used track park officials use for wildfire access and conservation work. It also gets the occasional 4x4 visitor.

Unfortunately, the route has been officially closed since 2020, when all maintenance ground to a halt due to lockdowns, however, there's talk of it reopening early next year with a dedicated campsite enroute.



At 34 kilometres in length, it's a big ask to drive the mountain trail in one day; it's incredibly bumpy and a massive slog. Which is why most people don't drive it at all. It's too lengthy for a day trip, and park officials focus their limited resources on providing top-notch accommodation options in the main camp. So, from a maintenance perspective, the mountain trail is not a priority; therefore, it's as wild as it gets. Maybe you're beginning to get why I love it.

The magic starts when you break the route in half with an overnight bush camp. This transforms it from an uncomfortable haul into one of the most unique, varied, and breathtaking 4x4 "strolls" in South Africa.

If all goes according to plan, the trail should be open to 4x4 tour operators and clubs / groups early next year. Given its remote location and lack of cell reception, you're on your own if you break down on the trail. That said, the trail won't be open to solo travellers.

*The route will feature a dedicated
campsite when it reopens –
hopefully early next year.*





Having driven the mountain trail many times before, I recently drove it to provide feedback on its condition for possible reopening. It didn't look bad to me and I've definitely seen it "wilder".



Although the trail isn't overly challenging, you do have to be on the lookout for hidden washouts. These usually occur in sandy patches with lots of surrounding vegetation.

But even when travelling in a group, the trail comes with risks thanks to its tight switchbacks that are ordinarily easy to drive but would be insanely tricky if you had to tow a vehicle. The thought of recovering a 4x4 here gives me the shivers. It's by no means impossible, but it'll be one of the longest days of your life.

A description of this mountain trail wouldn't be complete without mentioning the unbelievable silence you'll experience. It's almost overwhelming, it feels like that tiny bone in your inner ear has suddenly stopped vibrating for the first time in its life, and your brain is trying to decide if that's a cool sensation or something to worry about.

Despite driving the trail many times and being in awe of the silence every time I've been up there, I still can't decide whether I like the sensation. I'll leave it at: It's an unusual feeling.

I know this review's concentrated on the mountain trail up to this point, but don't let me mislead you, Anysberg isn't a one-hit-wonder.

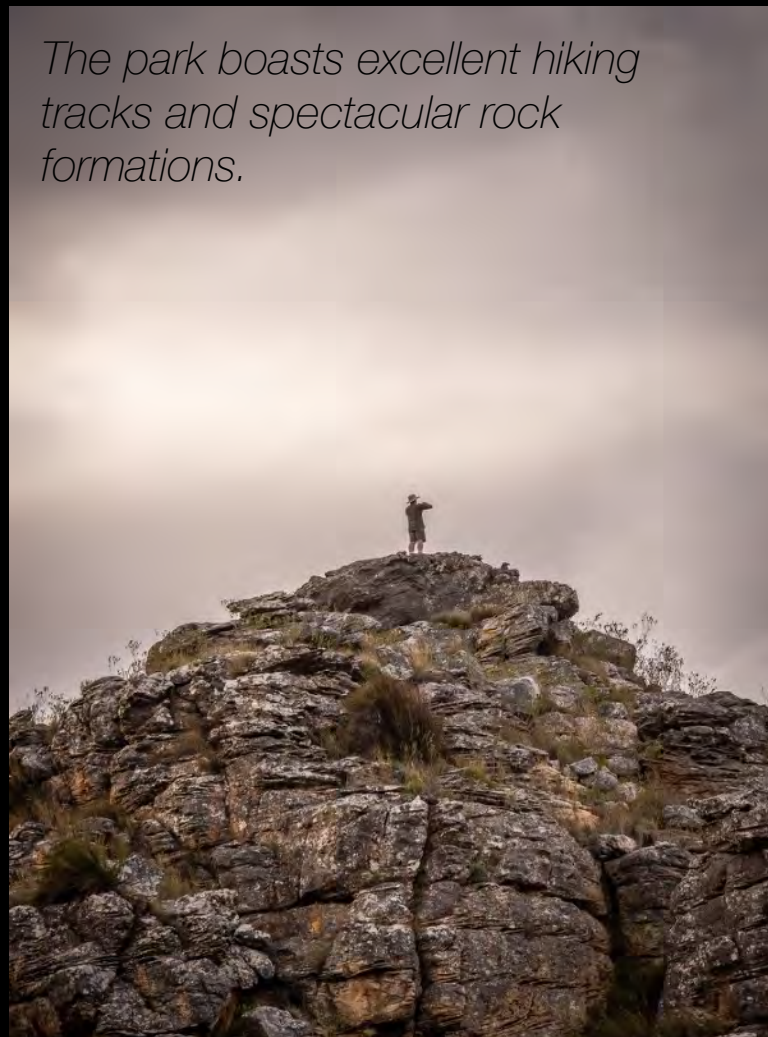
Whether you trek up the mountain trail one day or not, the rest of the park is absolutely worth visiting.

THINGS TO DO

Hiking, biking, game viewing, bird watching, standing under a waterfall, marvelling at bushman paintings, or lounging on the deck around the reservoir pool. Anyberg is a place to disconnect from life's obligations and reconnect with nature.



The park boasts excellent hiking tracks and spectacular rock formations.



WHERE TO STAY

The park features a variety of accommodation options, including 5 cottages which sleep 21 people in total, and 5 campsites which can accommodate up to 6 people each. The cottages are solar and gas-powered, and come with bedding and towels.



The campsites have no electricity, which adds to their appeal. The ablutions are clean, well maintained and feature hot water. There's also a communal kitchen area with gas stoves and a shared fridge / freezer.

The park's management does an exceptional job at maintaining the facilities, and unlike so many other national parks, the staff are super friendly and helpful. You'll find a small shop in the office area where you can buy coal, firelighters and cool drinks. On that note, firewood is no longer allowed in any Cape Nature Reserve due to the risk of Shot-Borer Beetle. However, you can bring your own charcoal or 'ecologs' into the reserve.

WHAT VEHICLE DO YOU NEED?

The park's gravel roads can be driven in a high-clearance 2WD, but the road is bumpy, and punctures are a notable risk if your tyre pressures are too high. A 20% to 30% pressure reduction will radically increase comfort and reduce the chances of a puncture. Don't race through the park, wildlife and sudden ditches can catch you by surprise.

Anysberg features several cottages that are off-grid, but reasonably well equipped.



Excluding my GQ Patrol, I've only driven the mountain trail in stock-standard 4x4s with OEM tyres. Admittedly, this did include some fairly serious hardware like a Patrol pickup, Patrol Y61, Land Cruiser 79 Series, and an Isuzu double-cab.

That said, the route isn't overly technical; most vehicles with low-range and a rear diff-lock will do the job. If your 4x4 isn't equipped with a rear locker, you'll be relying on good suspension travel and momentum to see you through the rough patches.

Most of the trail is relatively easy if you have reasonable off-road experience. You'll spend the bulk of your time in low-range 1st and 2nd gear, but towards the end of the trail – as the climb tapers off and the descent begins – you'll hover around 3rd low.

Good clearance is a must, your average 4x4 bakkie will be fine. I ran my tyre pressures at roughly 1.3 bar for comfort (the trail offers lots of traction), but pressures will depend on how heavily loaded your vehicle is and the strength of your tyres. Don't overly deflate to the point of the sidewalls bulging and being exposed to rock cuts.



Drop your tyre pressures 20% to 30% on the reserve's gravel roads.



As soon as the mountain trail reopens (hopefully early next year), I'll post details in the 4WD Revolution newsletter.

Stay posted [here](#) and you could win a National Luna 45L fridge as a subscriber.



COSTS

Camping: From R210 pn

Conservation fee: From R40 pp

Cottages: From R830 pn

CONTACT

Reserve office: 087 087 3036

Booking: www.capenature.co.za/reserves/anysberg-nature-reserve

HOW TO GET THERE

There are three entrances. The western gate via Touwsrivier on the N1. The eastern gate via Ladismith or Lainsburg. Or the southern gate via Montague. Some older maps and GPS software may show a northern gate, but this route is closed and inaccessible. All three gates remain unlocked because the park's main road is public access.



Photo credit: Gecko Rock

If you're looking for accommodation just outside the reserve (western side), don't miss the opportunity to visit [Gecko Rock](#) – a private nature reserve nestled in the Nougaspoot Valley just 25 km from Touwsrivier.



Map credit: Cape Nature

Do you have a favourite off-road destination you'd like to share?

**Send pics and details to
grant@4wdrevolution.com**



WWW. **TUFFSTUFF**® .CO.ZA

A SPECIALISED INSURANCE PRODUCT FOR 4X4'S & SUV'S

TERRITORIAL LIMITS

AFRICA, SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR, AS SHOWN

SOUTH AFRICA
NAMIBIA
BOTSWANA
ZIMBABWE
MOZAMBIQUE
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA



MALAWI
CONGO
TANZANIA
GABON
DRC
UGANDA
KENYA

MAKE AFRICA YOUR PLAYGROUND



Insurance Brokers (Pty) Ltd
FSP 1422



hellopeter



0861 44 44 00 | info@tuffstuff.co.za

www.tuffstuff.co.za

TUFFSTUFF PRODUCT DISCLAIMER:

TUFFSTUFF is a specialist 4x4 product and registered Trademark. It is underwritten by Western National Insurance Company Ltd. FSP 9465. It is facilitated and administered by REAM Insurance Brokers (Pty) Ltd. FSP 1422. It is not a medical scheme, the cover is not the same as that of a medical scheme and is not a substitute for a medical scheme membership. Terms and Conditions apply*.

SINGLE OR DOUBLE?

Deciding how strong to order a drink is tough.
Deciding which type of camping fridge to buy is even tougher.
But what if you didn't have to choose?



Thanks to a unique divider system, National Luna's all-new TB45 and TB60 Travel Boxes quickly transform from double-compartment fridges to single-compartment layouts in a matter of seconds.



The fridges are also lightweight, easy to wheel around, can be powered by 12V or 220V supply, can reach temperatures as low as -18° , and feature a free UV protection jacket valued at up to R1 400.



The new TB45 and TB60 models are competitively priced at just R6 999 and R7 999 respectively, complementing National Luna's broader range of Travel Box fridges, including the TB20 (R3 999) and TB35 (R5 999).



National Luna's Travel Box range is available nationwide at 4x4 and outdoor stores. View more info [here](#), or find your nearest dealer [here](#).



BREATH

OF FRESH AIR

How does a snorkel really help your 4x4?



A snorkel is one of the most rewarding accessories you can add to a vehicle. It doesn't just enhance your 4x4's features, it provides many advantages, too. Best of all, these benefits often have zero drawbacks.

However, there are several misconceptions surrounding snorkels, and if you're thinking of installing one, you should know what they are.

DOES A 4X4 SNORKEL IMPROVE WADING DEPTH?

There's a common misconception that a snorkel increases a 4x4's wading depth. In reality, a vehicle's ability to wade through deep water is determined by multiple factors, such as the location of the ECU, the mounting position of the fuse box, and the height of the transmission breathers. Air induction is just one aspect of the limitation.

That's not to say a snorkel doesn't reduce the risks associated with water crossings, however, that risk reduction doesn't necessarily equate to a deeper wading depth.

Furthermore, a snorkel's water-fording advantages don't apply to extended periods of submerged intake-box exposure. Instead, they're designed for relatively brief river crossings where a bow wave can be created, and the water can be "pushed" in front of the engine compartment.



"Most vehicles collect air from the wheel well, where dust, small stones and grass seeds are kicked up by the tyre."

DUST – THE TRUE BENEFIT OF A SNORKEL

The main advantage of installing a 4x4 snorkel is its ability to draw clean air from a higher pick-up point. Typically, most vehicles collect air from the wheel well, where dust, small stones and grass seeds are kicked up by the tyre.

This debris can quickly clog an engine's air filter in severe conditions. Collecting cleaner air from a higher position can significantly reduce service costs, improve engine longevity, and enhance fuel economy and throttle response.

FITMENT MISTAKES

Despite their simplicity, 4x4 snorkels are often installed incorrectly, leading to rust and significant gaps that render the snorkel useless.

Special care must be taken when cutting the fender and treating the hole with corrosion protection. However, the most common problems with 4x4 snorkels relate to knock-offs.

Achieving consistent mould results is the greatest challenge for snorkel manufacturers. Sadly, many imitation products fail in this regard, leading to common fitment issues, such as irregular dimensions, gaps, poorly sealed parts, warping, uneven material thickness, and discolouration due to UV damage.

“It’s a difficult thing to ignore if its looking weathered and warped”

From a fitment perspective, installing a low-cost replica is seldom worth the reputation damage caused by installation problems and deteriorating products. It's also not worth the initial savings, which often costs more in the long run.

As mentioned at the start of this feature, a snorkel can do a lot to enhance your 4x4's good looks, but in much the same way, it's a difficult thing to ignore if its looking weathered and warped.

MORE SNORKEL FAQs

When should you turn the snorkel head around so that it's facing backwards?

Bar a plague of locusts or a severe snow storm, there's no reason to turn the snorkel's head around. In fact, doing so will severely affect the snorkel's performance.



Does it increase power?

It can in the sense that a clean air filter will produce more engine power than a badly blocked one, but all things being equal, adding more air to the engine via a ram-air effect is only noticeable when other engine improvements are made, such as the exhaust system and engine mapping.

On that note, if all of the above improvements are made, a 15% power gain can be had depending on the snorkel's design and the engine being tuned.

Can the performance of a snorkel vary between products?

Yes. And it's not that some are noticeably better than others, it's that some are noticeably worse.

New advancements in wind tunnel technology and 3D modelling have shown that older snorkel designs may actually impede air flow.

Unfortunately, these dated designs are often the ones that are copied by imitations, while newer products are improved all the time.



PATRIOT[®]

TIRES



Call (031) 764 7860 to find your nearest dealer

THE HARD LINE

What it takes to tackle the Cape Route Rally

4x4 challenges are nothing new. They often take place in an abandoned quarry or wind-swept dustbowl.

But what about combining extreme obstacles with long-distance travel and remote campsites?

Where there's no way of knowing what challenge lies ahead or how the next late-night recovery or repair job will go?



Although it may sound similar to Australia's infamous Outback Challenge, in this case, it's South Africa's very own Cape Route Rally (CRR), where 16 participants and their co-drivers tackle a string of grade 5 trails connected by long stretches of dirt roads and even longer days (and nights) of low-range rock crawling and extreme dune driving.

Here, the goal isn't to find the easy line, but rather, the intentional hardest for 5 straight days.

Who would want to tackle such a thing? Well, I asked the CRR's top three competitors a few questions to find out.



Name: Petrus Senekal (1st place)

Vehicle: '95 Nissan Patrol GQ

Why this 4x4?

“Growing up, my dad owned a Y61 Patrol and was an avid overlander. My Nissan "verskrik" started early. What's more, after watching lots of Aussie 4x4 winning challenges and seeing how respected and well the Patrols did, I always knew I would own one.



The GQ gives off a real "The GOAT" attitude. With minor upgrades, you can have a real off-road machine. Capability and reliability are what matter most to me”.

Did you drive the previous CRR, and what made you take part?

“No, I just missed it. The FOMO of missing the first one and watching the previous promo video on repeat. I also love the element of surprise, not knowing what tracks or obstacles lie ahead, and the dunes – I never get tired of them. Plus, exploring new trails that very few people will ever drive. It's just an amazing experience”.



What did the event teach you about your 4x4?

I was super impressed with how well the vehicle performed. It's brilliant at everything except top speed and fuel consumption. The GQ runs on smiles to the mile.

With 37" bead locks, re-gearred diffs, incredible suspension flex and twin lockers, traction is always there. But I need more power. The Patrol's TB4S motor delivers reasonable power and is torquey and predictable, but I had to ride on the limiter most of the time to keep up.



Lastly, it's all about chemistry. I've been building the vehicle for three years and know its every strength and weakness.

What changes will you make in the future?

Hopefully, an engine upgrade. I'm leaning towards an LS1 V8, a dream build since I was 14.

What did the CRR teach you about your own limitations?

Your mind can play tricks on you, and it's easy to start second-guessing yourself. Read the situation, make your decision, and then back yourself all the way.

Would you do it again?

That goes without saying. I love driving new trails and pushing the limits. But most of all, the breathtaking views and roads that feed the soul, as well as forming friendships with like-minded guys looking for that next crazy challenge.



Name: Andries Nortier (2nd place)

Vehicle: '01 Nissan Patrol with 6BT Cummins truck motor

Why this 4x4?

It had a Cummins 6BT truck motor conversion running for six years. The much larger and stronger drivetrain, as well as the price, were major factors.



Did you drive the previous CRR, and what made you take part?

Yes. I've always sought extreme trails and mostly do solo trips. I love bush repairs and getting unstuck with nothing but a high-lift jack and shovel. Now, I've found a bunch of madmen who are just as crazy as me about driving extreme trails, in extreme vehicles and over long distances.



What did the event teach you about your 4x4?

The Patrol is even stronger than I thought and handled rocky terrain well. However, due to the weight of the Cummins 6BT truck motor, I installed hydraulic bump stops to absorb the harder hits when navigating steep inclines. I also relocated my primary and second batteries to the back to reduce upfront weight and added an air locker to the front diff.

What changes will you make in the future?

I plan on upgrading from 35-inch tyres to 37s for better flotation in sand. Running 37s has been a long-time dream of mine.

What did the CRR teach you about your own limitations?

Keep an eye on the GPS while driving in dust or at night so I know when sharp corners are coming up.

Would you do it again?

Definitively. Initially, I was worried about there being 16 cars and how slow it might be, but I've never met such a lekker group of guys. Not one person complained or held up the convoy. I've seen my fair share of challenges and scenery, but it was the first time I'd seen so much camaraderie. I'm usually a lone explorer until now.



Name: Jason Richards
(3rd Place)

Vehicle: '19 Nissan Patrol Y62

Why this 4x4?

Before the Y62, I had a tricked-out 1FZ-FE 105 series Land Cruiser, which I loved until trying to get from northern KZN back to Cape Town in the first week of January. I wanted something that could wheel off-road and still overtake trucks without white-knuckle driving.

As Jeremy Clarkson said, "If you have a powerful engine in your car, you can get home at night more quickly, which means you spend more time with your children, which means they're less likely to grow up as glue sniffers".

Did you drive the previous CRR, and what made you take part?

Yes, and I loved every minute. I've been fortunate to do a few boy's 4x4 trips, but none were as action-packed and eye-opening as the CRR. It's the perfect combination of adrenaline, skill, and camaraderie. The learning curve and new skills you gain from each rally are remarkable.



What did the event teach you about your 4x4?

The 2UZ-FE was much peppier than expected; the car did very well everywhere, apart from rocky trails. Sand and gravel were amazing; however, its Active Height Control (AHC) system tends to fall short in the more extreme 4x4 challenges. It overheated a few times, needed to be reset occasionally, and at full extension, the ride comfort was compromised.



The Patrol's biggest weakness is its independent front and rear suspension, so flex isn't great. It also has a complicated hydraulic suspension system that replaces the need for sway bars.

What changes will you make in the future?

Proper bumpers: these plastic bumpers are too delicate for my liking. I also need a set of mud terrains. I had noticeably less traction than the other vehicles. The guys in Australia run 37s on these Y62s, so that could be an option.

What did the CRR teach you about your own limitations?

I went into the previous event confident in my abilities, but I quickly learned how deep our talent pool in South Africa is regarding off-road driving.

Would you do it again?

Absolutely. I unlocked some new skills after watching Brent, Dylan, JP, and the boys carve up a dune. The scenery from the Krakeel Rivier Pass was world-class, akin to being at the top of the Swiss Alps.

The general spirit of the CPP was incredible; everyone had a hand in spotting, rock packing, welding manifolds, and nursing disabled vehicles off the mountain. The challenges were epic, the learning curve steep, and the friendships forged. I'd do it over and over again.

[Click here for more information on the Cape Route Rally, and to watch highlights from the previous event.](#)



KEEP YOUR VEHICLE RUNNING AT PEAK PERFORMANCE, NO MATTER WHERE THE JOURNEY TAKES YOU.

*Experience reliability,
power, and excellence
— Oscar Lubricants,
built for those who dare
to explore.*



Oil of DECAY

It's been a year since your last oil change, but a look at the odometer reveals that your trusty 4x4 has barely clocked 6 000 km in that time. Is it worth doing another oil change, surely the oil is still like new?



It's one of those campfire debates that can go round and round in circles, but the truth is that, besides actual usage, there are several factors which influence the condition of your 4x4's oil over time.

Premium oils are sealed airtight which preserves their integrity for years. But once the seal is broken, all bets are off. And, unlike a sealed container of oil, an engine isn't airtight. The environment in which your vehicle is stored plays a significant role in how quickly the oil degrades.

Key factors to consider include:

HUMIDITY

Every engine features a crankcase breather, which allows air to flow in and out. Even if your 4x4 is not being used, moisture can infiltrate the engine due to ambient humidity, and temperature differentials.

Vehicles which are infrequently used see an accumulation of moisture in the crankcase; normally this is expelled with the help of heat through normal engine operation.

Although certain antioxidant additives in the oil can bond with water to prevent oxidation, these additives have a limited capacity. So, over time, excess moisture can compromise the oil's effectiveness.

BLOW-BY

When an engine is running, there's always some degree of blow-by; this describes the process where combustion gases escape past the piston rings and enter the crankcase. This is especially true in diesel engines, where combustion byproducts like sulphur particulates can mix with the oil, reducing its ability to lubricate and clean engine components effectively.

COOLANT LEAKS

One of the most damaging scenarios is a coolant leak. If even a small amount of coolant mixes with the engine oil, it can wreak havoc. Glycol, a component of engine coolant, severely degrades oil quality and diminishes its lubricating properties, potentially leading to serious engine damage.

CONCLUSION

Your oil has a finite lifespan, and once you've broken the seal on a container of oil, the clock begins to tick. Once the oil is in your engine (an unsealed environment), it's very difficult to determine the level of contamination your oil has experienced over 12 months.

Thus, regular oil changes are essential, regardless of mileage; they ensure that your engine remains protected from the adverse effects of ageing oil. And if the cost of an annual oil change on a seldom used 4x4 causes you aggravation, there's a simple solution, go on more trips!



JOIN our mailing list
here and you could WIN a
National Luna 45-litre fridge
worth R6 999!

WIN!





BREAK DOWN!

It began as an innocuous tapping sound, like a woman walking in high heels across a wooden floor in the next room. But it kept getting louder. To makes things worse, we were deep in the Richtersveld, in low-range, about to descend a steep 4x4 track.

At first, I dismissed it as a worn u-joint. But as a mechanically sympathetic person, drivetrain noises worry me so I picked up the 2-way radio, "Hey Nick, this Landy's making some dodgy noises, dude. Would you mind checking it out?"

Nick's a hands-on guy. He also owns 18 Defenders, so he knows a thing or two about these vehicles. "Umm, I'm afraid that's not a u-joint, mate. Sounds like it's coming from the centre diff. Let's keep an eye on it. If the noise worsens, we'll have to tow you down".

I looked at Nick hoping he was joking. All I saw was his serious face. I waited for the wink. It never came.

That conversation was all it took to upset the high priests of mechanical karma, because the instant we started driving again, the diff noise changed from high heels on a distant wooden floor, to what you'd expect to hear if you dropped a bench vice into a woodchipper.

So, we found ourselves being towed down the mountain track, my foot hard on the brake pedal. Of course, it didn't take long for the brakes to fail and the pedal to plunge to the floor – along with my stomach a half second later.

Many hours later, we arrived at the Sendelingsdrif offices and left the Landy there. Despite being a non-smoker, I had a strong craving for a pack of Camel non-filters. My nerves were shot. Then came the recovery quotes. Tens of thousands of rands to bring the Landy back to Cape Town.



This ordeal (which fortunately happened at the end of our Richtersveld trip) got me thinking about my own vehicle's insurance and whether I'm covered for off-road recoveries. It turns out I'm not. I did what most people do when taking out insurance. I traded coverage for the convenience of bundling our family vehicles together.

I've heard many people speak highly of TUFFSTUFF Insurance and their willingness to go the extra mile to repatriate a 4x4. So, I gave them a call to find out what questions 4x4 owners should be asking their insurance providers regarding off-road coverage.



Comments hereunder are related to the TUFFSTUFF 4x4 insurance product only and which is marketed and managed by REAM Insurance Brokers (Pty) Ltd. FSP 1422

There are more than 50 insurers in South Africa and each has their own product offering. The first step is to familiarise yourself with the product provided to you by your insurer.

It's common knowledge amongst off-road enthusiasts that one should always be prepared and be able to recover yourself from unplanned situations. Whether this takes the form of having the correct recovery equipment handy or having a list of contacts in the area in which you are travelling.

A little bit of googling should provide you with such persons or institutions who can be called upon to aid in the event of a breakdown.



Recovery of any vehicle starts with simple roadside assistance whether you've run out of fuel or following a breakdown or accident. Such roadside assistance will normally be attended to by a host of breakdown operators.



However, such assistance will normally be restricted to National roads (N1 to N21), Provincial Regional routes (R21 to R99), non-regional routes including Minor regional routes (R101 to R799) and Metropolitan routes (M).

Any other road or route which is not within any of these definitions will very possibly not qualify for roadside assistance but may be more of an off-road recovery. Technically, any "road" which does not allow unhindered travel by any automobile without having to increase its ride height or engage or make use of any special means of enhanced traction or gearing, may be considered as "off-road".

If your motor policy does provide roadside assistance, the cost thereof is generally fully catered for at no or very little cost to you within the parameters of a motor policy. Provided this happens in or near a larger metro area. The further away from a decent place of repair, the more it will cost you since policies in general provide limited financial assistance for this.



However, an off-road recovery changes the cost factor very significantly, which may then expose you to an unexpected financial burden. Apart from the cost of getting your 4x4 back home, the additional cost of getting yourself, your family, your trailer etc. back home must also be addressed.



And then there's the possibility of additional expenses due to unplanned accommodation while getting yourself home after such an experience. These costs mount up rapidly.

Add cross-border travel to the mix and the costs discussed above will look almost insignificant in comparison. Cross border recoveries are a great deal more complex.

From a midnight medical emergency call which activates an airborne medical extraction through to dispatching emergency medication, and the unhappy task of arranging the repatriation of loved one's remains. This is another topic, for another time.

REAM Insurance Brokers (Pty) Ltd, has for the past 36 years provided thousands of their clients with insurance advice and products, ranging from all their domestic and private motor insurance requirements through to Commercial, Industrial, Construction, Aviation, and other specialised classes.... including TUFFSTUFF.

TUFFSTUFF is a specialised insurance product which was designed by REAM insurance Brokers (Pty) Ltd, back in 1994. And after 30 years we can still confidently say that TUFFSTUFF is setting the pace as the specialised 4x4 insurance product in South Africa. TUFFSTUFF is underwritten by Western National Insurance Company Ltd. FSP9465

**GET A NO-OBLIGATION TUFFSTUFF QUOTE
HERE**

WWW. **TUFFSTUFF**[®] .CO.ZA

A SPECIALISED INSURANCE PRODUCT FOR 4X4'S & SUV'S

THE MARKET LEADERS IN 4X4 INSURANCE PRODUCTS

Comprehensive day-to-day vehicle insurance
with the added benefit of specialised overland and
cross border 4x4, SUV and lifestyle cover.

MAKE AFRICA YOUR PLAYGROUND



0861 44 44 00 | info@tuffstuff.co.za

www.tuffstuff.co.za

TUFFSTUFF PRODUCT DISCLAIMER:

TUFFSTUFF is a specialist 4x4 product and registered Trademark. It is underwritten by Western National Insurance Company Ltd. FSP 9465. It is facilitated and administered by REAM Insurance Brokers (Pty) Ltd. FSP 1422. It is not a medical scheme, the cover is not the same as that of a medical scheme and is not a substitute for a medical scheme membership. Terms and Conditions apply*.

DAMPER DOWN!

How To Use A Winch Damper. The Right Way.

I tend to gauge 4x4 equipment in a cost-versus-reward ratio.

For example: The cost of a recovery winch is high, but if you desperately need it, the reward of owning one is priceless.

However, there are a few accessories where the costs are crazy low, despite the benefits being exceptionally high. And a winch damper, or “blanket”, is one of them.

So, what does a winch damper do, and, how do you use it the right way? Let's get into it.

HOW DOES A WINCH DAMPER WORK?

The purpose of a winch damper is simple: If your winch cable or snatch strap breaks under load, the damper should weigh the cable down so that it hits the floor and reduces its speed and kinetic energy, while directing any potential impact forces away from the vehicle.

Without a winch damper you run the risk of the broken cable or strap causing significant damage to a vehicle, or worse yet, injuring someone nearby.



BUT DO THEY REALLY WORK?

Are winch dampers genuinely effective, or just gimmicky items that take up space in your recovery bag?

The answer to that depends on a few things:

- **The quality of the winch damper**
- **Where you position it on the cable**
- **How many you use**

It's easy to assume any item could be flopped over a winch cable to dampen its forces, but it's not uncommon for low-quality winch dampers to tear apart in a recovery situation.

This is particularly true for broken snatch straps which release incredible amounts of energy once they fail.

That said, it's likely most winch dampers (even the good ones) will rip in the event of a broken cable or strap, but what you don't want is for the bag to be easily flung off the cable when that happens. The damper needs to stay on the cable long enough to drag it to the floor.

On that note, the effectiveness of the damper significantly improves the moment you fill it with sand or dirt. Which is why the product you purchase should include a pocket of some sort.



The effectiveness of a winch damper radically improves if it's filled with sand or dirt.

However, it should go without saying that you should never fill the damper with rocks.

WHERE TO PLACE IT ON THE CABLE OR STRAP?

The obvious question: Where do you place the bag over the cable, at the front, rear, or in the middle of the cable's length?

There's some debate around which position works best, but it's widely accepted that the best place to position your winch damper is somewhere between the middle- and the far-end of the cable.

This is because most cables typically fail close to the “hook up” point. Or at least: within the last third of the cable’s length.

Ideally, the more dampers you use, the better the result.

Of course, what matters most is that you don’t rush the recovery process, and that you take the time to assess the situation.

At the end of the day, getting home safely is your number one priority.

MORE WINCH DAMPER TIPS

1. Never overfill the bag as the stitching may fail during a “normal” recovery.
2. Failure to fill the bag with enough sand or dirt may significantly reduce its effectiveness. That said, winch dampers with small pocket sizes are generally ineffective.
3. We recommend that a winch damper be used on either end of the recovery system. We generally spec one damper (@ 5m) from each vehicle, and an additional damper along each 5m interval if the rope / cable / strap is long enough.
4. We prefer using winch dampers in conjunction with safety lanyards.
5. Use your winch blanket with kinetic rope recoveries, webbings, winch extension straps, pull straps, winch cables, and plasma ropes.





4X4 FITMENT SPECIALISTS WITH MORE THAN 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Safari Centre Cape Town is a highly respected and specialized 4x4 fitment center located in the Western Cape, South Africa. With over two decades in business, it has built a solid reputation for delivering exceptional products and service to the South African 4x4 community. Renowned for its expertise in off-road and adventure vehicle customization, Safari Centre Cape Town has become a go-to destination for enthusiasts who seek quality, reliability, and rugged performance from their vehicles. Their services include supply and fitment of a wide array of top quality 4x4 accessories, from suspension upgrades, bull bars, and winches to snorkels, roof racks, and dual battery systems. Safari Centre Cape Town sources top-quality products from trusted brands to ensure optimal performance and durability, catering to both everyday drivers and hardcore adventurers alike.



TOP QUALITY 4X4 BRANDS ALONG SIDE TOP QUALITY SERVICE & EXPERT ADVICE

In addition to vehicle upgrades, the team at Safari Centre Cape Town also offers expert advice and guidance, ensuring that each client receives a tailored solution that meets their specific needs. This commitment to customer satisfaction, combined with their extensive industry knowledge, has solidified Safari Centre Cape Town's position as a leading 4x4 fitment center in South Africa. Whether preparing a vehicle for a cross-country trek or simply enhancing its capabilities for off-road exploration, Safari Centre Cape Town provides a reliable and comprehensive service for all 4x4 enthusiasts.

WHEN DARKNESS FALLS

When trips don't go as planned, you're forced to operate outside your comfort zone. Johan and Kim De Villiers recount a trip that pushed all the wrong buttons.

In April of 2021, Kim and I decided to travel to Lake Malawi. Our aim was to tick off tropical freshwater snorkelling from our bucket list. The lake's crystal-clear waters are home to over a thousand species of brightly-coloured cichlid fish, many of which are endemic to this body of water.

While researching the trip and where we might stop off along the way, we stumbled upon the Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve. Covering over 56 000 hectares, this reserve earned its status as a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 2000. It's one of the few spots in Malawi which remains untouched by deforestation.

At over 3 000 m, Mount Mulanje (known locally as the "island in the sky") is the country's highest peak, rising dramatically from the plains of Chizardzulu and the tea-rich Mulanje district.

Eager to hike the mountain and explore its rock pools, waterfalls, and forests, we tracked down a mountain cabin that had availability. We decided to begin our journey with a weekend stay in this rustic abode before moving on to Lake Malawi.

According to my research, the journey from the airport in Blantyre to the village would take no more than 90 minutes. Most of the route was tarred, although online sources did warn about the occasional pothole.

Our flight was scheduled to touch down at 14h00, so I allocated 2 hours for the drive. This included 30 minutes to pick up our rental car at the airport and perhaps refuel. No problem, I thought – we'd reach the village no later than 17h00.

It turned out that the universe had other plans for us. First, our flight was delayed by half an hour. Then we learned that the car rental agency was actually located in Blantyre, some 16 kilometres away, which meant navigating through the city's busy Friday afternoon traffic. We arrived at the agency half an hour after leaving the airport. By then, it was just after 15h00.

We weren't planning on doing any heavy 4x4ing, so we rented a lime-green Suzuki Jimny.

Shortly before 16h00, the licenses, insurance, and paperwork were processed. I pulled up the Tracks4Africa map on my phone, and off we went.



To our dismay, the roads were in terrible shape. To compound matters, being in the semi-tropics, the sun sets at 17h00 in Malawi in April, an hour earlier than I'd counted on.

By the time we reached Mulanje, darkness had set in, there wasn't a single light in sight. The tar road became a dirt track, leading us through villages and fields of maize, bananas, sweet potatoes, and other crops.

Then we found ourselves in the forest. Before long, a river crossing loomed ahead – a daunting expanse of mud and water stretching about 80 meters.

We weren't in my Landy – we were in a liquorice-packet-coloured Suzuki Jimny with standard all-terrain tyres. There was no way we were going to get across all that mud. I made several detours, but each one brought us back to the river.

Each time we found ourselves trapped in another forested dead-end, we'd see multiple pairs of gleaming white eyes watching us. We had no idea what their intentions were. I thought to myself four men could overturn the Jimny very easily if they put their minds to it.

By 19h00, under the pitch darkness of the African night, we were utterly disoriented, yet our GPS stubbornly insisted we tackle the muddy river crossing. As we approached the river once again, I noticed for the first time that the Jimny was equipped with a diff-lock and low range.



“You know what?” I said to Kim, feeling somewhat more confident, “We’re just going to have to wing it.”

With that, we set course for the opposite side of the muddy crossing and plunged in. We held our breath. She wiggled. She waggled. But being so light on her feet as it were, she didn't sink like a heavier vehicle might have. Instead, she skimmed atop the mud, flinging it everywhere.

“We're just going to have to wing it”

Zzzip! Eighty metres of thick mud, and she sailed across it. When we came out the other side, she was caked in mud, but she was like a dog wagging her tail with a ball in her mouth, saying, “See, I told you I could do it!”

I was in awe. The whole experience made me realise just how much I'd underestimated the Jimny. My respect for it grew tenfold. Some seven kilometres later, we reached our cabin, muddy but triumphant.

As I reflected on our adventure, I was reminded of a BBC documentary I had watched years ago. The program featured an engineer who played a part in designing the original Land Rover back in 1948. Clad in a tweed jacket and tie, he was asked about the most crucial aspect of an overlanding truck.

His response was unambiguous: “Tyres, my son. Tyres.”

Tyres are your vehicle's sole contact with the ground. Regardless of the kind of machine you have – even if it's the world's best – its performance hinges on its tyres. Without proper traction, self-cleaning properties, or grip, it will simply spin helplessly in place.

For me, tyres are everything. Never cut corners on them. Always invest in the best you can afford, regardless of your vehicle's condition. Oh, and never underestimate the abilities of a little lime-green Suzuki Jimny!

The above story was republished from Johan’s book “OVERLANDING THROUGH THE BOARDROOM”, which explores the surprising similarities between adventure travel and business leadership.

So, if you’re looking for a motivational read that organically blends business acumen with inspirational travel pieces (written by a fellow 4x4 enthusiast and seasoned traveller), then Overlanding Through The Boardroom is the book for you.





REAM
Insurance Brokers (Pty) Ltd
FSP 1422

WHAT WE OFFER



- ✓ Personalised Advice
- ✓ Quality Products

- ✓ Competitive Premiums
- ✓ Low excesses



PRODUCTS



**TUFFSTUFF 4X4
INSURANCE
PRODUCT**



**TOPMARQ
DOMESTIC
INSURANCE
PRODUCT**



**PRECIOUS
METAL
INSURANCE
PRODUCT**



**YELLOW METAL
INSURANCE
PRODUCT**



**CONTRACT
WORKS
INSURANCE
PRODUCT**



**COMMERCIAL
AND INDUSTRIAL
INSURANCE
PRODUCT**



0861 44 44 00 | www.reambrokers.co.za
info@reambrokers.co.za

REAM Insurance Brokers (Pty) Ltd is an Authorised Financial Services Provider, FSP 1422.

Outdoor 4x4 Parts 4x4 Spares Accessories Shop

- ✓ Tyres
- ✓ Suspensions
- ✓ Wheel Alignment
- ✓ Wheel Balancing

WWW.1STOUTDOOR4X4.CO.ZA
WWW.1STCCA.CO.ZA

 CNR KAYMOR AND WILLOW STREET, STIKLAND, BELLVILLE

1st
OUTDOOR
&
4X4

1st
ALIGNMENT CENTRE



 021 948 2006
021 949 5041

info@1stoutdoor4x4.co.za
johann@1stcca.co.za

TAILOR MADE 4X4 ADVENTURES FOR BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS



NAMIB DESERT AND NAMIBIA SPECIALIST
4X4 DRIVER TRAINING BOTH PRIVATE AND CORPORATE



4X4 RECOVERY TRAINING BOTH PRIVATE AND CORPORATE
DEFENSIVE TRAINING FOR CORPORATE CLIENTS
HIGH PERFORMANCE DRIVER TRAINING



KHWELA
4X4 ADVENTURES | DYNAMIC DRIVING

bernie@khwela4x4.com | 078 630 2853
@khwela_4x4 f @khwela4x4

R1 999



Introducing the new National Luna Ice Maker – now more compact and affordable than the outgoing model, but with the same ice-making performance!

Available at outdoor stores nationwide



Thanks for reading this issue of 4WD Revolution

Get future issues for **FREE** [here](#)

Please send feedback or advice to
info@4wdrevolution.com