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Thank you for the day out to canopy slides as this is something we would not have thought of to do and it was an awesome experience. The whole family had a great time. We purchased the DVD and it shows some really funny facial expressions.

Thanks once again
KIM VAN DER MERWE

Evening Alan

What an experience, having hung out of buildings and ridden in aerial devices this was the ultimate. Certainly the tour is better than a once-off zip line as you become comfortable and appreciate the surroundings.

*Thanks for a great day out.
Regards
The Glanvill's*

Alan thanks a ton for organizing yet again an amazing outing. Me and my fear of heights managed to do 6 slides alone and three tandem slides. I would like to extend a special thanks to Thabiso our guide and Oupa our safety officer for making it so unbelievable and relaxed.
Neville Black

SHINGWEDZI 4x4 LONGHAUL (MOZAMBIQUE)

Day One.

Since the beginning of time friendships have been the most important relationship that man has experienced.

The time eventually arrived for members of the *4 x 4 Offroad Adventure Club*, Gauteng to meet at 04:45 on Saturday 27 March 2010 at the N1 Petroport and to begin a new relationship. We would be ten families in total accompanied by our guide, Johan Kriek from **Transfrontier Park Destinations**. Johan Kriek holds a concession to undertake 4x4 wilderness trails into the *Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park* in Mozambique. Our excursion would take us on the *Shingwedzi 4x4 Eco-Trail* through the "Parque Nacional Do Limpopo".

Refueled, 4 families departed northwards to Makuya Nature Reserve in the Limpopo Province situated on the Northwestern border of the Kruger National Park separated only by the Levuvhu River. Three families had departed the previous day due to other obligations and would meet with us at the Makuya entrance gate. The reserve is a big 5 reserve and as we have often encountered it is a hidden gem worth more exploration.

A short stop at the Ranch Star Stop allowed for breakfast and we departed to Bandolierskop where we met with Johan Kriek. Three more families were now behind and enroute to rendezvous at our last fuel stop.

Johan Kriek now led the convoy to Makuya Game reserve and on arrival at the entrance all ten families were present and we proceeded to our campsite for 2 nights. The campsite provides clean rustic facilities with flush toilets and cold showers. With ambient temperatures of 35°+ hot water was not a requirement.



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Camps were set up and all gathered around the camp fire to be briefed about the excursion and also according to the myth, *ancient man used to gather around a new fire to celebrate peace and brotherhood amongst tribe*. Certainly the next 9 days would be an experience of a lifetime and a firm bond would be formed giving justice to the myth.

After an early rise most opted for an early night without the disruption of the city sounds.

Day Two.

The day would be for each one's leisure with the only requirement that families pair up rather than drive alone in an unknown area. The reserve has many T4A mapped roads as well as 2 self-catering tented camps, one situated in the North (Mutale Camp) and the other in the Southern region (Singo Safari Lodge) situated above the Levuvhu River with magnificent views down on to the river. Both these tented camps were visited and are a must for those who prefer not to camp.

That evening at camp, sightings of Elephant, Buffalo, a pride of 10 Lions, Kudu, Waterbuck and many a bird species were reported. Some members of the group had driven to the wonder view lookout point and others had taken a swim in the Levuvhu River.

Around the campfire an air of anticipation prevailed with a planned 08:00 departure to the Pafuri Gate of the KNP.

Day Three.

To many the Kruger National Park creates an air of expectation and after a shower of rain during the night the air was clear and a good nights rest added to the enthusiasm. The river crossing of the Mutale River was abandoned due the overnight rains and the low level bridge was utilised instead of risking a possible breakdown. Entry to the KNP was efficient and a lunch break was enjoyed at the Pafuri Picnic Site with sightings of Fish & Brown Snake Eagle, Kudu, Zebra, Impala, Warthog, Chameleon and Tortoise enroute, the highlight being the sighting of a Leopard for a short while by only a privileged few in the group.

A short stop at Crooks Corner where the Levuvhu River converges with the Limpopo River saw Hippo, Crocodile, Nyala Buck, and Saddle Billed Stork make their appearance. Crooks corner achieved its name from many a person fleeing the RSA, Zimbabwe or Botswana for some or other misdemeanour.

The border crossing into Mozambique at the Pafuri Border Post was uneventful and executed within an hour. We would return to the RSA after covering 430 Km's in this portion of the Transfrontier Park.

A stash of Mozambican beer, which turned out to be very sought after with the extreme heat, was secured by one of the group just outside the border. We then proceeded to our overnight camp on the banks of the Limpopo River.

The area of the camp is the recognised river crossing to access Zimbabwe and on arrival we quickly realised that vehicle tyres would have to be deflated to access the campsite on the riverbank. Although levels are low a river crossing at this time of the year would not be possible.



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Amid many locals using the river to wash their clothes and children swimming, camp was established and bush camping would be the order of the day. It was significant to note that the locals were unfazed by our presence and even left their washing to dry overnight. The hot and muggy weather had many of us head to the waters which we also utilised for bathing later.

The 2 young boys in our group certainly made use of the opportunity of swimming in the shallows and a waxing moon one night from full moon made for a spectacular evening around the campfire. The Mozambique section of our excursion could not have started more impressively.

Day Four.

With the planned departure at 09:00 and a shower of rain during night, the beach area of the river was exited much easier than anticipated. A short stop in the Fever Tree Forest allowed Johan Kriek the opportunity to explain our route on a map and to explain what the day's activities would entail when entering the "Parque Nacional Do Limpopo".

Entry into the park was extremely efficient and after paying our park fees we were now officially on the Mozambique side of the Transfrontier Park which is approximately half the size of the KNP equating to 1 962 362 Ha and our excursion would commence in earnest. The park is entered close to the Limpopo River crossing at Mapai, which is the route via Pafuri to Vilancoulus. This was also the last opportunity to buy beers and other soft drinks.

It is great to see that entry fees are being collected that will go to conservation and park development activities. Obviously this is happening as the entrance has a boomed gate, the officials are donned in uniform and park permits are issued accordingly.

The main track later to be nicknamed the "N1" which goes to Massingir Dam is well defined and mapped on popular GPS software maps. We however left this track to reach Mamba Camp ± 80Km from our camp on the banks of the Limpopo River. The camp provides basic ablutions with hot showers and flushing toilets and comes well recommended.

Full moon over a camp fire in the remote sandveldt area of the Transfrontier Park – this is what we had dreamed of.

Day Five.

Drivers' briefing saw a decision taken to long haul through the wilderness area and reach Sandalo Camp by nightfall where the same facilities would be on offer. By doing so we could camp at Sandalo for 2 nights and undertake a day trip down to the Shingwedzi River - Ngwenya Valley (Shangaan for crocodile).

Early morning repairs to the plumbing and drainage system for the showers delayed the planned 08:00 departure, but soon we were on our way.

We returned to the main Massingir track only to leave it later and travel via GPS into the "wilderness area" of the Park. This area is truly pristine bush, uninhabited with only animal spoor and dung beetles evident.

The wilderness area is traversed along old hunting roads that lead from pan to pan. This ensured good hunting opportunities during that era. We only reached Hlobe Pan late in the afternoon as at



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times the track was difficult to follow due to Elephant movement in the area, breaking down trees and obstructing the mapped route. These numerous stops and a puncture stop resulted in us not reaching Sandalo Camp and opting for a bush camp for the night.

This was the only night we heard Hyena call and later a Barn Owl made an appearance. An evening downpour saw some of the group get very creative around the braai with some huge umbrellas appearing from nowhere. Most of the group retired early after a long days traveling only to be awakened the following morning with the call of Ground Hornbill, Black Crowned Chagra and Swansons Spur Fowl.

Words cannot express the remoteness and untouched beauty of this wilderness area and we were certainly humbled by this experience.

Day Six.

Today we left the wilderness area and headed to Sandalo (previously called Tamboti) camp, often passing natural pans filled with water and covered with lilies. We stopped for an early lunch at Suve Pan, larger than most of those we had passed and with some shade available under a Nyala Berry and Apple Leaf Tree.

Evidence of game is all around yet the denseness of the bush and the noise of a convoy prohibits sightings. Our drive today was short and rejoined the "N1" only to leave it later to reach our camp shortly after lunch.

Camp was set and a lazy afternoon was spent in the camp drying out everything that had been soaked by the rain the previous evening. A relaxed evening was spent around the campfire with the knowledge that we would not have to break camp in the morning.

A shower was greatly appreciated especially in the high humidity we were experiencing.

Day Seven.

Departing camp at 09:00 we noted that the track was very muddy in places and crossing several hills we later reached a viewpoint over the Shingwedzi Valley. The site is comparable to views one has from Olifants Camp in the KNP or from Sinamentella Camp in the Hwange National Park.

Leaving the viewpoint we descended down a rocky track to the Ngwenya Valley where we had lunch on the banks of the Shingwedzi. Again, we were awed by the beauty of the area.

It was soon time to return to camp and after a slow drive along the 4 x 4 track we reached camp late afternoon. Some joined Johan for a visit to the Spane waterhole that unfortunately was dry and were shown the site of the new camp planned for sole use by the concession.

A relaxed and contented atmosphere prevailed around the campfire.

Day Eight.

Today we would reach our last campsite in the *Parque Nacional Do Limpopo* namely *Mbona Kaya Camp*. This camp would also be our last bush camp before returning to civilization.



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As we had noted the previous day the route was muddy and slippery and thus at driver briefing we placed none towing vehicles between those towing in the event that assistance would be required.

Towing trailers and campers through mud changes the generally accepted practice of maintaining momentum as momentum creates a side swaying of trailers in mud that in turn could end in damage, as the passage of travel between the trees is very narrow.

Exiting the sandveldt area we crossed the Shingwedzi and Maduze Rivers and travelled through villages and savannah Bushveld to reach Mbona Kaya Camp, a camp with a breathtaking view over the Shingwedzi.

We arrived at our destination at about midday and were treated to some great bird sightings from our elevated campsite above the river of Open Billed & Saddle Billed Stork, Hammerkop, Three Banded Plover, Egyptian Geese and Spur Wing Goose. Some of us opted to take a walk down to the river and try some fishing in the pools. One small catch and several bites was all we could report.

Down at the river edge we could hear Green Pigeon and Trumpeter Horn Bill however they alluded us. Tonight was our last camp in the park before we headed to KNP and eventually home and thus with some reluctance after a lovely evening around the fire, we all settled down for the night.

Day Nine.

Departing at 08:00 we headed to Giriyondo Border Post to enter the KNP and via Letaba head in the direction of Phalaborwa Gate for our overnight stop at the Forever Resorts Safari Lodge Camp.

Enroute we passed the convergence of the Djala & Maduxe Rivers with the Shingwedzi where a lodge is to be established in the Park.

All along the river courses an area of 5 Km on either side has been reserved for locals to continue with subsistence farming. As the relocation of these communities progresses these farmlands will eventually naturalise back in to grasslands that in turn will attract plains animals together with predators creating an environment great for game viewing.

The first portion of the route wound it's way through villages and was very muddy and rutted in places requiring the recovery of one vehicle from the "middlemannetje" by means of "six manpower" and a recovery strap.

Arriving at the border post on top of the Lebombo Mountains at midday, formalities were completed promptly and we bade farewell to Johan Kriek our guide and mentor who was heading home.

Leaving Giriyondo we headed to Letaba Camp to visit the Elephant Hall, refuel our cars, stock up on some curios and buy some refreshments from the restaurant and then make our way to Phalaborwa for the last and final evening of the trip.



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Spending most of the time available in KNP savouring the last hours of our holiday, most of us arrived at the resort camp late afternoon to enjoy hot showers and "eat outs".

After a final 'kuier' to discuss the experiences of the last nine days, we retreated to our beds to happy dreams of new and lasting friendships and good times. An early morning was envisaged, as we were all now heading home, each family at their own leisure.

Day Ten.

Departures were staggered as we bade farewell to each other after another lifetime experience. Truly friendships made become lifetime relationships only to be reaffirmed at our next meeting.

Conclusion.

To all who accompanied us, thanks for friendship and fellowship. Without your support this tour would not have been so pleasurable. To Jono Owen, thanks for your support and for diligently backing us up every bit of the way.

To Johan Kriek, thanks for your guidance and for sharing your knowledge and experiences. You certainly made this an unforgettable experience for us all.

To Alan, thanks for your initiative in identifying this opportunity and allowing us to take a group of club members under the guidance of Johan on this unforgettable excursion.

Kind regards
Frans & Denise Glanvill
Guide

Alan,

We would like to thank you for organizing a trip of a lifetime for Denise and I. We would like to thank Frans and Denise for their organizing and assistance over the journey. Thanks to Johan Kriek for his enormous input. Everything was so professionally handled. We will cherish these memories for ever.

Many Thanks to all involved.

*Regards,
Nigel and Denise*

Hi Alan,

I really enjoyed our tour over the Shingwedzi Eco Trail in the Limpopo National Park recently – my thanks to you and Johan for setting it up and for affording us the experience and to Frans and Denise for their leadership and guidance on the trip.

Just a heads up – I am emerging from a bout of tick bite fever, no doubt picked up in Moz. Not pleasant. Malaria blood test is negative. I never saw any ticks on me, but some in our group reported seeing them. Symptoms are similar to malaria, but swollen lymph glands near the bite site (if known or apparant) will point to *Rickettsia* infection. Testing for the organism based on own antibody formation levels is pointless, antibodies only get produced a week or so after the symptoms (muscle and joint aches, headaches, light headedness, nausea and hot/cold fevers) develop. Symptoms take 7-10 days to develop after bite – mine appeared 7 days to the day after we crossed back into ZA. So...experiencing real Africa is certainly not for sissies....



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Jonathan Owen

Evening Alan and welcome back, it has certainly been quiet around here..... New frontiers, experiences and especially friendships - we came back refreshed and eager to share our adventure with family and colleagues .

To a great group and Jono Owen as back door a special thanks. Without the mutual support we would not have had the fun we did. To our guide, Johan Kriek from Transfrontier Park Destinations we are deeply indebted for your guidance and assistance, for your knowledge shared with us, and dedication to ensuring our enjoyment & pleasure.

Trans Frontier Park Destinations have a variety of experiences to offer and come highly recommended in their professionalism and variety of excursions. The tour again reminded us how much there is on offer in our own Country and what the transfrontier park concept will eventually offer future generations. Tour operators as well as clubs such as ours can play a significant role in advertising these opportunities.

Once again thanks for the initiative to plan this trip for us and allowing me the opportunity to guide 9 families on an unforgettable experience.

*Kinds regards
Frans & Denise Glanvill*

Hi there Alan
Thanks for the good news that everybody got home safely. We also finally are back at work, got home yesterday. We really enjoy the trip, thank you very much, but also enjoyed the day of rest before coming home

Kind regards and all the best
Erik Storm

Hi Alan, a note of thanks for organizing the Shingwedzi trip. A special thanks to Johan Kriek for guiding us on the trip and to Frans and Denise Glanvill for being such excellent hosts on the club side and the little specials they added like the eggs on Easter Morning.

The trip was an awesome experience for Helen and I with the highlight being seeing our first Leopard in the wild to the lowlight of being the only one to slip into a mud hole and have to be pulled out. The group was great and the camaraderie at the camps and on the legs of the trail was super. Thanks again to all for a really super holiday.

Neville and Helen Black

SWAZI REG RAID

My first ever Reg Raid was quite eventful to say the least. AN uneventful trip down on Friday and registration and scrutineering were completed, departure time 06h22'30". Saturday saw us starting on time and making our first wrong turn even before leaving the clubs grounds, second



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