

Getaway

● **WIN!** A Two-night Stay at The Marine Hermanus

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A PLACE OF WONDER

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Lake Kariba,
Zimbabwe



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48 HOURS

OPEN SPACES AND SUVs

OPEN ROADS, SCENIC VIEWS AND SPENDING TIME IN NATURE ARE THE BEST
WAYS TO EXPERIENCE STANFORD WHILE TEST-DRIVING FANTASTIC SUVs

Words **Oliver Keohane**





The sun was waking up behind the Kogelberg Nature Reserve, saying good morning to Kleinmond and warming my face. It feels as though summer never says goodbye in Cape Town, and winter's greeting is as frosty as its dark mornings.

We'd left the city at 5.30 am, stopping briefly in Gordon's Bay before winding around Clarence Drive as dawn broke to make it to a small harbour in Kleinmond. While I basked in the sunlight, our photographer had his camera pointed in the other direction, ready for the sunrise shot. Thirteen competitors lined up against the backdrop of the bay for the first scene of the 2025 *Car* magazine SUV Shoot-out.

For over a decade, the oldest motoring publication in South Africa has pitted performance cars against each other in an annual Performance Shoot-out sponsored by Continental Tyre South Africa. Taking the shape of a road trip, with some days spent on a racing track, the Shoot-outs examine which vehicle delivers the most comprehensive package for its category. This year's was different, though. The budget was R500 000, and instead of lap times and maximum power outputs, the aim was to explore the practicality and value for money in one of South Africa's most popular segments: the compact SUV.

We placed a pram in each vehicle to test its boot space, strapped a baby seat into the back and a device representative of a 1.8 m-tall adult to test the legroom in each back row of seats. Ride quality and creature comforts were among the other vital components to consider as we set off on our route.

The compact SUV has quickly grown into a leading motoring segment in South Africa, aimed at families seeking practicality and comfort, and a vehicle that can go from city runaround to weekend road tripper. Our route represented a typical trip many families, at least in the Western Cape, would appreciate.

We went from Kleinmond through Hermanus to our home base at the AfriCamps in Stanford Hills, Stanford. Hermanus seems to get bigger every time I drive through it, but its beauty and allure remain the same. The town balances a quiet bustle with a distinct sense of calm, and in early May, the crisp, sunny conditions make for a wonderful coastal cruise.

Just 20 minutes from Hermanus, Stanford Hills rests at the foot of the striking Kleinrivier Mountains. Ten luxury AfriCamps glamping tents dot the wine and protea farm, with views of the rolling hills that become a sea of proteas and pincushions from late August to November.

The Stanford Hills site is one of 19 AfriCamps locations countrywide and offers a great taste of the Overberg. The drive, just over two hours from Cape Town, is scenic and calm, and once you have arrived, you have equal access to coastal and mountain activities. Trail running and hiking, swimming



TOP 2025's SUV Shoot-out contenders, driven by Continental Tyre South Africa.

ABOVE Sunset is always a spectacle from an AfriCamps deck.

RIGHT Proteas and pincushions decorate Stanford Hills in spring.

BELOW Walker Bay Nature Reserve offers stunning horse-riding routes.



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY IMAGES

and fishing in the farm dam, and food and wine tasting at the Tasting Room Restaurant are among the activities to enjoy at Stanford Hills

A short drive down the gravel path and back onto the road, you find yourself in Stanford. A little further along the coast is Gansbaai, famous for shark cage diving, or you can double back for a day in Hermanus and visit either Grotto Beach or Voelklip Beach. The Walker Bay Nature Reserve is nearby and a must-do for hikers, cyclists, and horse riders. Come August, as a sea of proteas emerges at Stanford Hills, the Hermanus seas are abundant with hundreds of southern right whales until November. It's best to visit Walker Bay during this period.

While our time for activities in and around the area was limited, we spent much of the week driving up and down, soaking in the serenity of a town where the mountain meets the sea in a beautiful union of blue and green. We also enjoyed braaiing every night on AfriCamps' extensive stoep, watching the green hills turn golden before night set in.

My affection for motoring is rooted in the access it gives us to the world. While *Car* magazine will only announce the winner of the 2025 Compact SUV Shoot-out in the July issue, I was the beneficiary of experiencing a small part of our beautiful country on four wheels. I usually spend time in the Overberg at a family home in Arniston, further down the N2. This past week was a reminder of the pockets of beauty like Stanford and Hermanus that are closer to home, accessed via some of the country's best coastal land, set against the backdrop of magnificent mountains. **G**

AfriCamps

AfriCamps, established in response to a growing demand for nature-based travel with modern comforts, has expanded to 19 locations countrywide, each in a unique natural or agricultural setting, from wine farms and mountain reserves to coastal landscapes and wildlife areas. The self-catering, boutique canvas tents draw inspiration from traditional safari tents and bridge the gap between camping and conventional lodging. The tents are built on timber platforms and include two bedrooms, a bathroom with a hot shower and flushing toilet, an open-plan kitchen and lounge, and a spacious deck with outdoor furniture and a built-in braai. Some locations also offer wood-fired hot tubs.

Guests can expect a private, stand-alone unit with hotel-style amenities like extra-length beds with quality linen and electric blankets in each bedroom. The rooms also

share a central air-conditioning unit. The kitchen has a gas stove, fridge and adequate cookware and crockery, while the dining area seats five comfortably. The cosy living space has a fireplace and compact couch, but the highlight has to be the outdoor deck, a lofty vantage point that allows you to enjoy views of surrounding landscapes, in our case, the rolling greens of Stanford Hills.

Depending on the site, AfriCamps locations typically offer access to nearby activities like hiking, swimming, fishing, wine tasting, mountain biking or birdwatching. While the accommodation is self-catering, most camps are near farm stalls or restaurants, and some offer pre-packed meal options. The experience prioritises flexibility and comfort while immersing guests in nature. The experience is ideal for couples, families or small groups of friends.

 [africamps.com](https://www.africamps.com)

