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CALENDAR

When it comes to quality mountain biking, we are spoilt for choice in South Africa. In addition to the races featured throughout this issue, we have rounded up more events that you might want to keep in mind when allocating your annual leave and adventure budget.



36ONE STORMS RIVER TRAVERSE 8–10 AUGUST

This is a three-day out-and-back stage race based in beautiful Storms River Village on the Garden Route. Designed around the intermediate cyclist looking for an adventure, daily distances range from 50 to 70km and will traverse the mountains, plantations and rugged coastline of the area.
www.the36one.com



TRANS BAVIAANS 24HR MTB MARATHON 16 AUGUST

Billed as the toughest single-stage mountain bike in the world, the 24-hour, 230km race from Willowmore to Jeffrey's Bay offers extremely challenging cycling on spectacular mountain routes that take you right into the heart of the Eastern Cape's Baviaanskloof Wilderness Area. Open to 450 teams of two, three or four cyclists, the entire route is unmarked, so it tests the orientation skills of each rider. With a 10pm start, and a night-time finish, it's a true test of character and endurance.
www.transbaviaans.co.za



POTBERG & DE HOOP MTB 9–10 AUGUST

A weekend of fun races – there's a 75km and 57km route – that take riders through these two nature reserves at the southern tip of the continent. Overnight accommodation is at the De Hoop Collection, where you can book a cottage or camp. It's one of the best whale-watching sites in the country, and the race is in prime whale season, so it promises to be a treat for nature lovers.
www.gardenrouteevents.co.za

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ISIMANGALISO MTB 4-DAY POWERED BY NASHUA 21–24 AUGUST

This 260km, four-day stage race through the iSimangaliso Wetland Park in northern KZN was launched in 2013 and looks set to become a must-do on the annual MTB calendar.

While the race is timed, the ride is more about experiencing this amazing area, which was declared South Africa's first World Heritage Site in 1999. It stretches from Maphelane in the south to Kosi Bay on the Mozambique border, and incorporates the foothills of the Lebombo Mountains and the coastal forests and rolling grasslands around Lake St Lucia. Within its 332 000-hectare boundaries are three major lake systems, eight interlinking ecosystems, most of South Africa's remaining swamp forest and re-introduced species of elephant, wild dog, cheetah, oribi, rhino and buffalo.

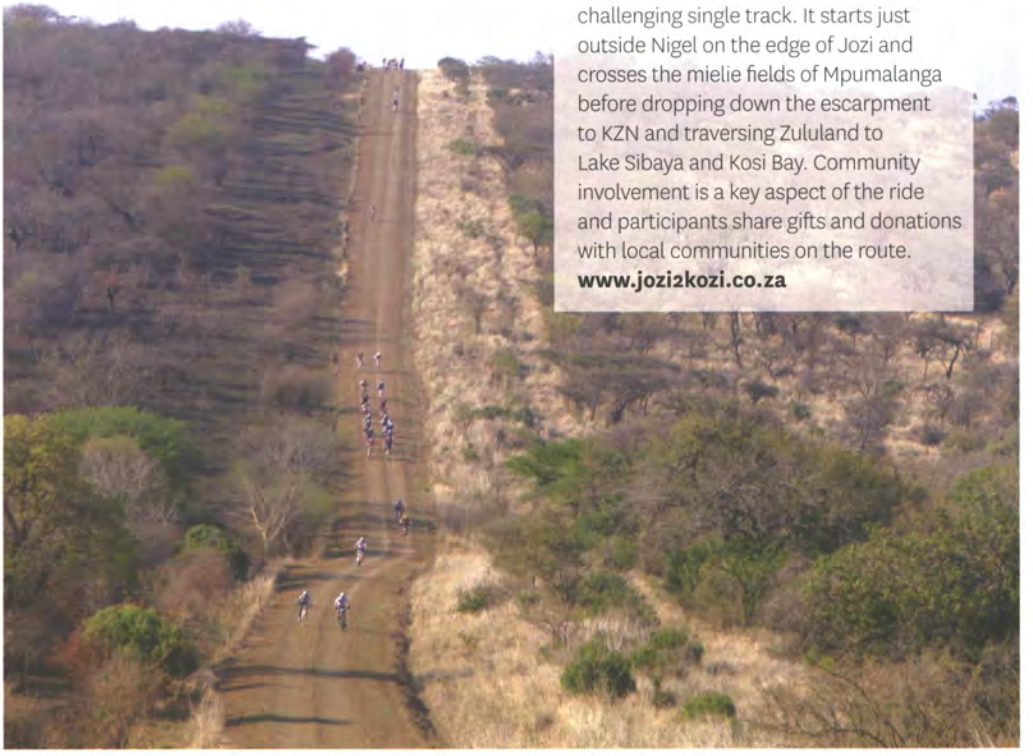
The route follows ancient animal migratory paths from the Lebombo Mountains to the coastal plains, starting at uMkhuze and ending on the coast at St Lucia. Encounters with the Big 5 and other wildlife are a real possibility and there are honorary rangers and marshals stationed at key areas en route to ensure rider safety. Funds raised go towards conservation and community development in the park.

www.isimangaliso-mtb.co.za



PHOTOGRAPHS LOUIS JOHN VAN ROOYEN

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ALTECH AUTOPAGE JOZIZKOZI CYCLE CHALLENGE 23–29 AUGUST

This seven day, 700km challenge is described as a journey of discovery on challenging single track. It starts just outside Nigel on the edge of Jozi and crosses the mielie fields of Mpumalanga before dropping down the escarpment to KZN and traversing Zululand to Lake Sibaya and Kosi Bay. Community involvement is a key aspect of the ride and participants share gifts and donations with local communities on the route.
www.jozi2kozi.co.za



SCOTTBURGH MTB RACE 31 AUGUST

Now in its sixth year, this 45km ride follows the southern KZN coastline between Scottburgh and Umkomaas. It includes great singletrack in the Sappi Cannobrae plantation, some 800m of climbing and a scenic finish on Scottburgh beach. There's also a 28km intermediate ride, as well as a Halfway Toyota Kids Zone that is managed by teachers at Umkomaas Pre School.
www.roag.co.za



GREYTON MTB TOUR 30–31 AUGUST

This two-day stage event offers a weekend of scenic, fun and non-competitive riding in and around the tranquil towns of Greyton and Genadendal in the Cape Overberg. Each of the two stages are approximately 50km and are mostly on gravel roads, with some jeep tracks and singletrack.
www.mtb-adventures.co.za



NAMAQUA QUEST 4–6 SEPTEMBER

Witness a magical display of spring colour on this three-day, 200km stage race through Namaqualand. Starting from Jakkalswater Guest Farm near Springbok, the route traverses the beautiful mountains and valleys of this arid region that comes alive with flowers at this time of year.
www.namaquaquest.co.za



TIP TRANS CEDERBERG XPERIENCE 6 SEPTEMBER

Starting and finishing at Bydidam in Citrusdal, this is a tough but scenic 115km race through the Cederberg that takes riders past the Algeria campsite, Clanwilliam Dam and through the veld flowers that bring this area to colourful life in spring. There's also a 40km option for the not so fit.
www.makadasadventures.co.za





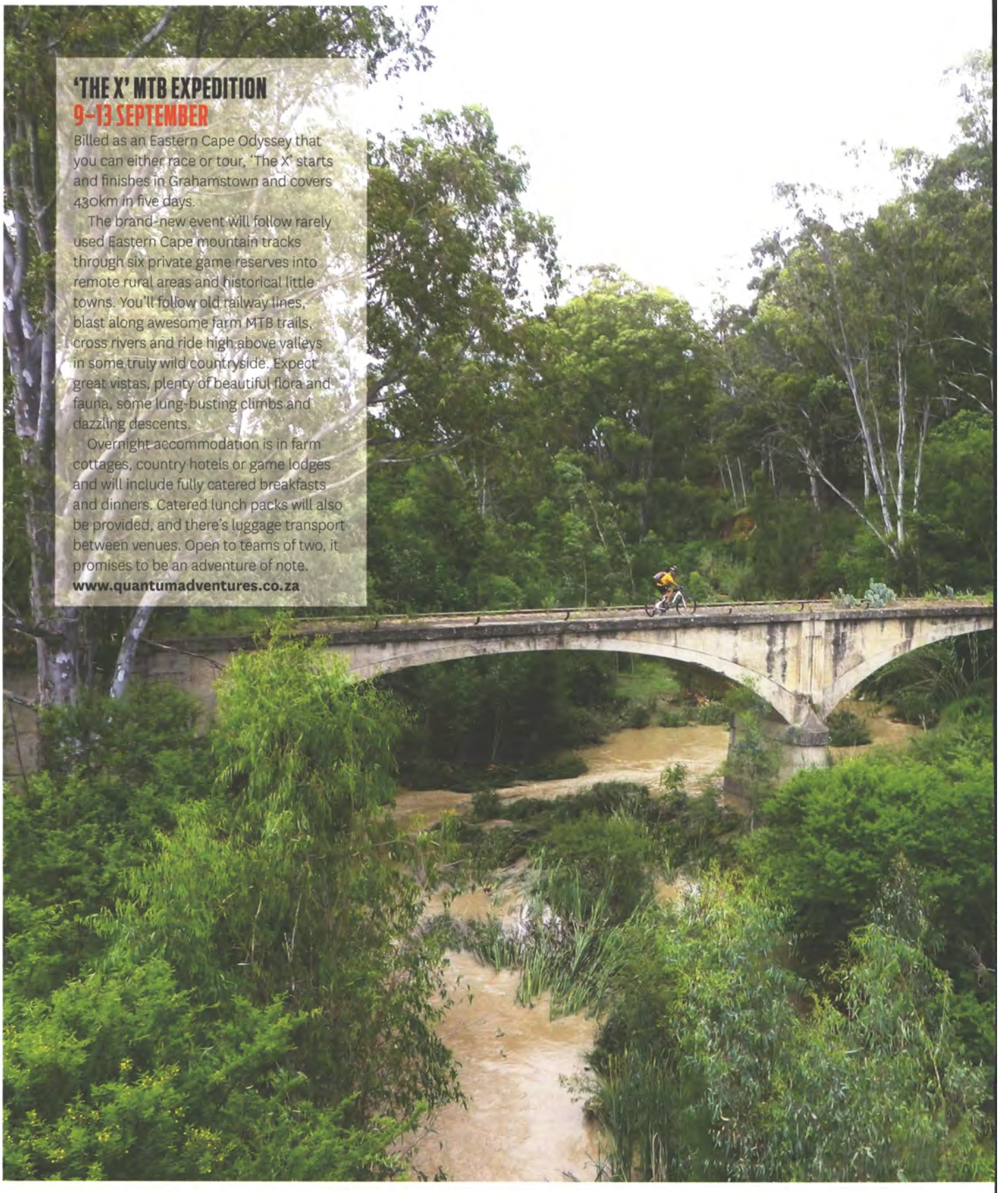
EQSTRA SPRING CLASSIC 7 SEPTEMBER

Joburg's oldest mountain bike race – 19 years old this year – offers one of the most challenging routes on the Gauteng circuit. Starting and finishing at the Avianto Clubhouse in Muldersdrift, some 80% of the riding is on singletrack through the Avianto Trails Bike Park. There's a 45km and a 20km route, both featuring some tough climbs and exhilarating descents.
www.springclassic.co.za

LYNFORD CLOVER CLASSIC 7 SEPTEMBER

Part of the Lynford Country Weekend, which sees a jam-packed programme of events (including a trail run on part of the sani2c route) take place at this independent school in the KZN Midlands, the Clover Classic includes 40km and 20km rides on flowing singletrack – with all riders going into a draw for a 2015 sani2c team entry. This year's ride supports the Woza Moya project, a community-based HIV/Aids project that neighbours Lynford School.
www.lynford.co.za

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'THE X' MTB EXPEDITION
9–13 SEPTEMBER

Billed as an Eastern Cape Odyssey that you can either race or tour, 'The X' starts and finishes in Grahamstown and covers 430km in five days.

The brand-new event will follow rarely used Eastern Cape mountain tracks through six private game reserves into remote rural areas and historical little towns. You'll follow old railway lines, blast along awesome farm MTB trails, cross rivers and ride high above valleys in some truly wild countryside. Expect great vistas, plenty of beautiful flora and fauna, some lung-busting climbs and dazzling descents.

Overnight accommodation is in farm cottages, country hotels or game lodges and will include fully catered breakfasts and dinners. Catered lunch packs will also be provided, and there's luggage transport between venues. Open to teams of two, it promises to be an adventure of note.

www.quantumadventures.co.za



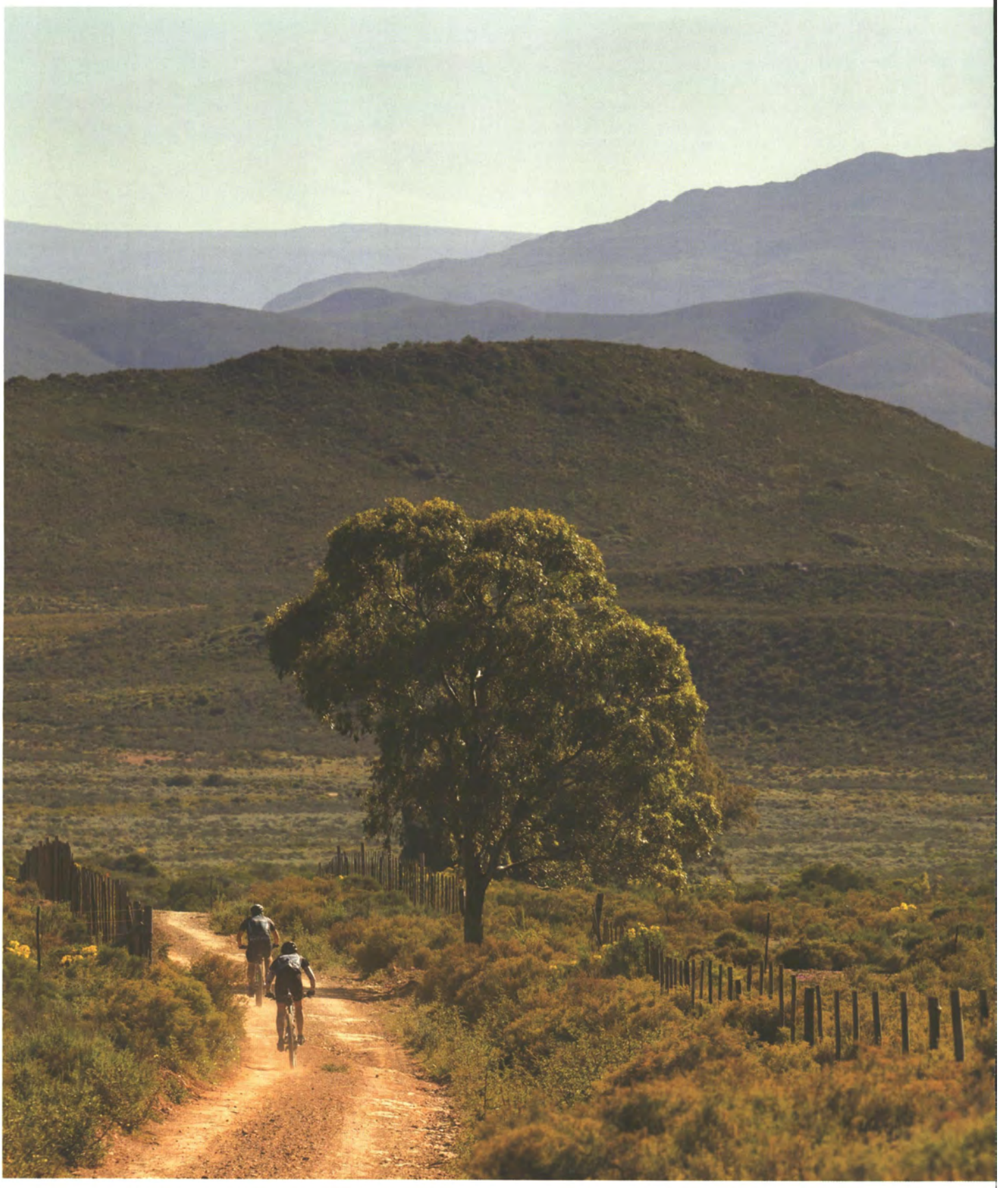







ENTER AT
OWN RISK.
DANGEROUS
GAME

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RIDE2NOWHERE 12–14 SEPTEMBER

Nestled in the Langeberg mountains you'll find the small village of McGregor, known for its art and wine, its friendly community and a main road named 'Road to Nowhere' – so called because it comes to a dead-end in the mountains.

The three-day Ride2Nowhere MTB stage race follows a cloverleaf format, with each of the three routes starting and finishing at the same venue in the town. A perfect event for both racing snakes and weekend warriors, daily distances range from between 40 to 60km. About 60% of the route is on open gravel roads or jeep tracks, with a good combination of flat, rolling hills and one or two steeper climbs. The rest is singletrack, cattle paths or naturally eroded tracks. The terrain is mostly hard rock formation but there are a few loose gravel sections. September is also flower season in the Langeberg so you can expect a colourful picture all around.

The relatively short distances mean riders finish by lunch time, which leaves them plenty of time to experience the charm of McGregor with their loved ones. There's plenty of entertainment on offer, from brass bands to fire dancers, and some local wines to be sampled. Kids are kept entertained with jumping castles, face painting and a MTB obstacle course.

The event is limited to only 250 riders, which means there's no major congestion on the routes and riders experience plenty of quality time in Mother Nature.

www.ride2nowhere.co.za









PHOTOGRAPHS GREG BEADLE AND JOHAN THERON

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MOMENTUM UMNGAZI PONDO PEDAL ADVENTURE 10–14 SEPTEMBER

Cycle along the Eastern Cape's unspoilt Wild Coast on this three-day family adventure break at the award-winning Umngazi River Bungalows & Spa. Each of the three MTB routes, which range between 30 and 35km, start and finish at the luxury resort. They consist of varied terrain, from singletrack and cattle paths to district roads and mangrove trails, and you need to have a fair level of fitness to be able to conquer the numerous Pondoland hills and valleys.
www.pondopedal.com





PIKET-BO-BERG CYCLE CHALLENGE 13 SEPTEMBER

The farming area that nestles in the mountains above the Western Cape town of Piketberg, the Piket-bo-berg is a scenic mix of orchards that produce export-quality fruit and rugged mountain slopes that offer far-reaching views over the Swartland. The cycle challenge – held once a year to raise funds for the local community of farm workers – comprise a variety of routes, from 10km through to 63km, along farm roads and some challenging singletrack that will test your fitness and show off the magnificent scenery.
www.piketbobergcyclechallenge.com

ISUZU TRUCKS PE TO PLETT 13–16 SEPTEMBER

This 356km, four-day stage race takes in glorious Garden Route scenery, including forest track, farmlands, game reserves and fynbos trails, as some 400 mountain bikers travel from Kurland outside Plettenberg Bay to the Boardwalk Hotel & Casino complex in Port Elizabeth.
www.peplett.co.za



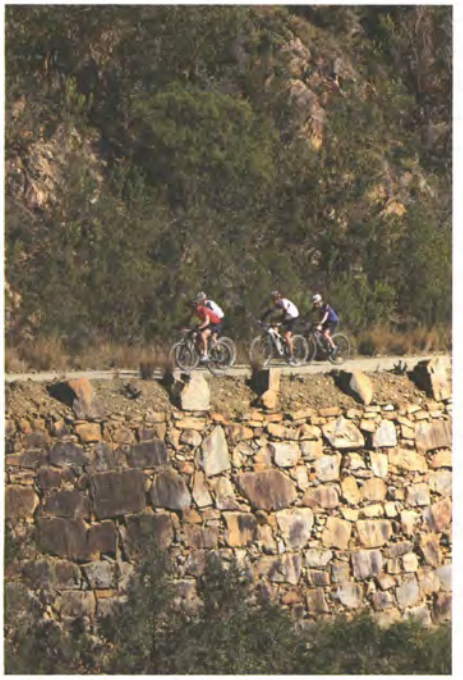
PENNYPINCHERS DR EVIL CLASSIC 18–20 SEPTEMBER

Contrary to its name, this out-and-back stage race based in the sleepy town of Wittedrif near Plettenberg Bay is aimed at the average rider. Each of the three routes, created by Leon Evans who designs the Cape Epic, is under 80km and offers fun cruising along some awesome singletrack, district roads and forest trails.
www.drevilclassic.com



PENNYPINCHERS LIONS KAROO 2 COAST 21 SEPTEMBER

This 100km route from Uniondale to Knysna via the Prince Alfred's Pass is not for the fainthearted with its steep climbs and hairy descents – but it is an official premier seeding event of the 2015 Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour.
www.karootocoast.com





ISUZU 3 TOWERS 3–5 OCTOBER

This Mpumalanga fixture offers three different MTB events over the same weekend, all starting and finishing at Mankele Mountain Biking outside Nelspruit. The area is known for its mind-blowing views and amazing terrain and the routes feature some awesome contour and ravine singletrack.
www.3towers.co.za

URBAN MTB ASSAULT 12 OCTOBER

Race through Jozi's urban jungle on 52km and 22km courses in this exciting new event that aims to show mountain bikers just what adventures the city has to offer. Riders start at Marks Park in Emmarentia, cruise over Emmarentia Dam on a specially created floating bridge and then ride through a golf course, getting their wheels wet in the miniature rapids. The course then rolls through stormwater drains and ventures into the heart of darkness through a network of tunnels – one nearly a kilometre in length. You'll duck under highway bridges, fly over main roads on custom-built scaffolding bridges and ramp into vast expanses you never knew existed.
www.mtbassault.co.za

