



Baines Kloof *baptism*

Story and photos Simon Lewis

A beautiful day, an early start ... Bush Lapa's Roomier behind me and the windy-windy road up to Bain's Kloof in front of me. It was the right time to tow.

Bush Lapa's factory in Worcester was pumping – I hadn't expected this. For a smaller operation they were operating on a large scale. Five or six well-finished trailer campers were getting the finishing touches, while a whole bunch of others were undergoing various stages of construction and cosmetic surgery. Everywhere was hustle and bustle ... and I was feeling a touch intimidated seeing as the most I had towed previously was far too much on a flatbed trailer during one of our countless house moves over 17 years of marriage. I wouldn't have minded had Malcolm (the seasoned pro) offered to drive us out of the narrow factory doors ... but he lobbed the keys to me. Don't scrape the sides while Bush Lapa's 20 staff watch their latest release hit the road!

It's difficult to take too much credit here, as towing Roomier with the insane

Tweede Tol campsite is situated right on the babbling river and offers wonderful mountain views.





ABOVE Rooimier's solid, tough exterior belies the comfort offered inside. Once everything is setup and secure against the elements it offers great space

and comfort, not to mention shelter from the sun and heat. The optional extra solar panel is a worthwhile investment.

power of the new Isuzu KB bakkie is not the stuff of which legendary caravan editors are made. But at this stage I was happy to cruise under the radar and obey the simple rules. Don't accelerate too quick. Take the corners wide and easy. Keep to the speed limit.

The entire journey my head was turning to look from the one side mirror to the other to make sure I was keeping the trailer away from the gravel on the side of the road as well as away from the white line down the middle.

'Stop watching tennis,' Malcolm laughed, but I couldn't risk it.

Thankfully everything fell into place and it was great fun towing Rooimier and letting the gorgeous scenery around us drift slowly by at 85 km/h. I started to really enjoy it ... until we hit the R303 and Bain's Kloof Pass, where my knuckles turned white from clenching a tad too enthusiastically to the steering wheel. It's a narrow, windy road, meant more for a Matiz towing a lawnmower rather than a giant Isuzu bakkie with a Rooimier behind. On the one flank the well-restrained fynbos was tapping

Rooimier on the side, while on the other the bakkie kept kissing the white line.

Without incident I proudly guided Rooimier through the gates at Tweede Tol around 11.30 am. It was a hot, hot day, so we set to work selecting a spot to set it all up. As the man with the camera, my task was to document the trailer being opened up and the tent pitched. Someone had to. That left Malcolm alone to do the pitching, pulling and tightening. Did I mention that it was a hot, hot day?

Malcolm has camped for many years, so he knows the ropes and was able to get Rooimier camping-ready largely on his own. I lent a hand as much as I could, as you definitely need two people at certain times, but overall Malcolm proved that one man can get it almost shipshape in just over an hour. Malcolm and I had a slight problem opening up the one part of the tent's roof, as one of the metal runners had slid out of position on the road up to the campsite. We stopped as soon as we heard a slight ripping sound and readjusted everything. At this point you

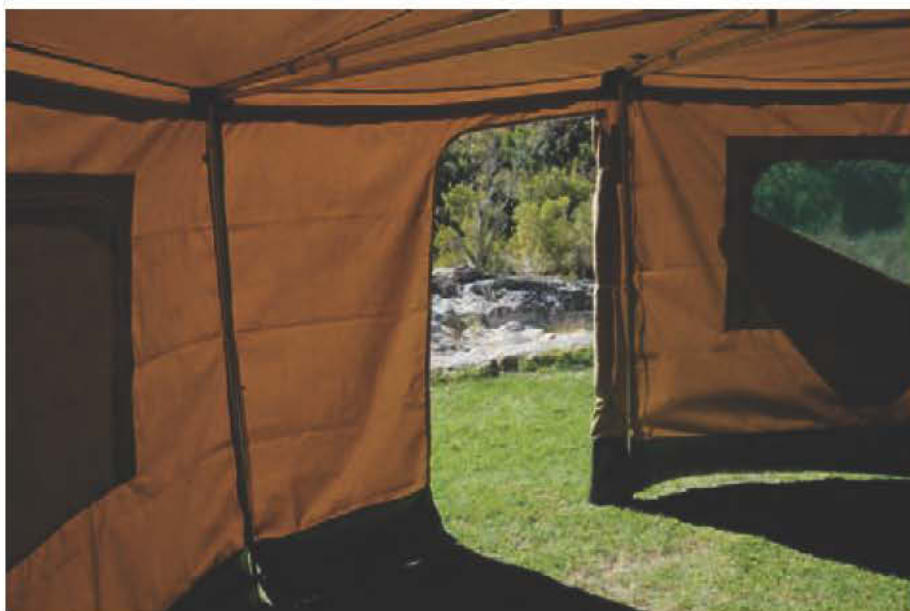


ABOVE This is where you need that extra pair of hands, but not muscle ... just someone to guide and provide a little support. Once up, Rooimier's side tent is spacious, solid and secure. You could make it home for a week or more, no sweat.



ABOVE The grip-and-twist tent poles work superbly ... but, again, it's best to have a friend to help due to the weight of the tent ceiling.

CARAVAN REVIEW



ABOVE There's a pleasant draft that wafts through an open tent door on a hot summer's day. **TOP RIGHT** The outside kitchen has a large, solid mesh window for views and a touch of ventilation ... and the kitchen itself is well stocked with storage space. **BELOW** The local inhabitants were interested in our temporary home.

definitely need that extra pair of hands (or two), even just to hold and guide poles and flaps.

With Bain's Kloof looking as pretty as a picture, and Rooimier standing proud and strong and ready for camping, I wondered for a moment if it would be possible for us to call our respective spouses to pack the car and dash out to join us for a few days. But, sadly, with

time pressing and the sun starting to drop (and no cellphone reception to speak of) we packed up and pushed back to return Rooimier.

It felt wrong to have done all that work, driven all that way, not to be able to enjoy the fruits of our labour (well, Malcolm's labour), so we agreed to bring spouses and children the next time so that we could enjoy some

family chatter around a Tweede Tol campfire.

Bush Lapa 023 347 4333, www.bushlapa.com

SPECIFICATIONS BUSH LAPA'S ROOIMIER 2-BED, 4X4 CARAVAN

Load capacity	700 kg
Towing length	3360 mm
Towing height	1900 mm
Total width	1850mm
Ground clearance (to axle)	330 mm
Sleeps	2

Want to experience the tranquillity of Tweede Tol? Contact Cape Nature for details and reservations, www.capenature.co.za (see our voucher offer next month for winter specials). Alternatively, download our recording of the Bain's Kloof river water rushing past our temporary campsite (www.caravansa.co.za).

