

Jean Vos Rescue Mission

In this report I will be giving you an overview from my point of view and hopefully getting some revenge. So please forgive my indulgences. 😊

A post by Jean Vos requesting advice on how to get a motor to Francistown in Botswana appeared on the Overland forum on Christmas morning.

Eric Sommer, Mike Cliff and I along with our partners (Margaret, Estelle and Elmarie) discussed the issue over some prawns which Mike had cooked. It was decided that we would drop the motor off for Jean. Plans were put in place and the packing began. Perfect excuse for an impromptu trip and potential of spending New Years in a remote part of the bush.



The planning committee.

Eric and Margret would tow the engine on Mikes bike trailer behind Eric's Toyota Land Cruiser and I along with my wife Elmarie and Mike (our Boy) as passenger/communications manager/barman/etc would follow with my Land Rover 110 Puma with Xplorer in tow. (might as well be comfortable!)

On Wednesday 29th December we were to meet at 4am, but due to a massive rain storm I was running a little late. We eventually met at 4.30am. Last minute checks were done including the radio check and we were off to the Swartkoppies border post near the small town of Ramotswa.

The trip was uneventful and our biggest concern was getting the engine and gearbox through the border.

The border crossing was easy and took less than 10minutes. A customs official asked Eric if he had papers and didn't even take time to take a good look at them. We made it through easily. Phew! I didn't have the registration papers for neither my Defender nor the Xplorer. No questions asked..... phew!

After a quick shopping trip in Gaborone, we headed towards Francistown with the odd nature break along the road.

Road was good and progress was quick. We averaged at around 95km/h.

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(we should of hijacked the little grave hut – would have been suitable to cover the 2.8 powerstroke for the funeral procession home!)

After Francistown's traffic tested our patience, we arrived at the Woodlands campsite just north of Francistown at around 3.50pm. Introductions to Jean and his group were done and work was started immediately. We set up camp and headed for the swimming pool.



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The motor was put in then taken out after a problem was discovered with lining up the motor to the gearbox. This was rectified and the motor was the fitted.



Let me yank your chain!

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Woodlands is not a bad campsite with nice green grass and power points – oh, and a pool. My only complaints were the dirty bathroom with blocked toilet, the campsite is very small with many sites on top of each other and the campsite was infested with ants. Still, not a bad place for a single night stop over. (Take bug spray – the ants are bad! And they BITE)

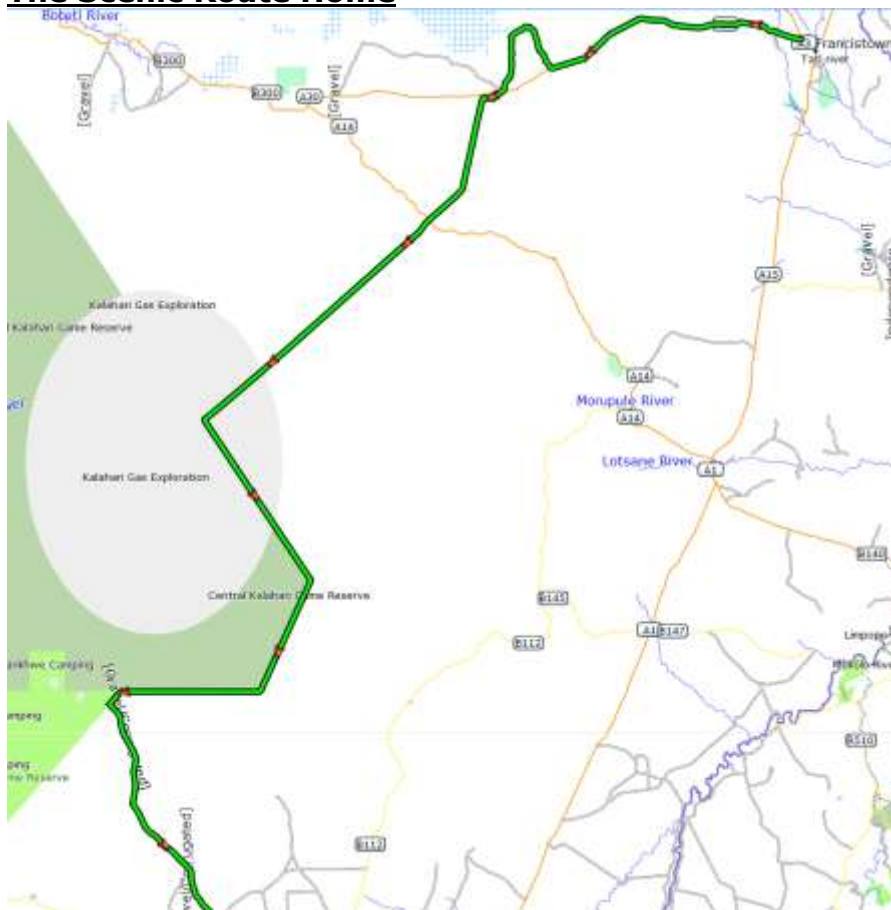
Around the fire we started discussing the days events and Margaret (I think) came up with the idea that we should turn this little trip into an adventure. Mike and Eric then said we should head to the pans and travel the cut lines. Elmarie and I were ecstatic as we had never traveled the cut lines before.

We were treated to an awesome meal by Jean and his group and after I had endured much abuse from everyone and Mike force feeding me a few too many Captains, we were off to bed. (no, I didn't go to bed with Mike I went to bed with Elmarie)

I slept like a log and awoke to clear blue Botswana skies.

Jean and Johan had employed the services of two locals, Pajero and Mazda and were already hard at work fitting everything to the now installed motor, we offered some assistance but there were already 4 people working on it so it was not needed. We started to pack up. The route was decided and headed to Francistown to get some supplies for the cut line trip.

The Scenic Route Home



From Francistown we headed to Orapa and took the turn off at S21.23271 E26.42989 towards Mea Pan.

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In my opinion this section has the best scenery of the entire trip.



I caught Eric kneeling in front of the Landy!!!

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After a long day in the saddle we found a suitable campsite with dry wood near by and set up camp.



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It was decided before hand that we would take turns in cooking and on the first night it was Margaret and Eric's turn. Let me just say they set the standards very high and put pressure on the rest of us... ☺



Introducing Eric Sommer....Pizza for starters anyone?



The sunsets were amazing each night! (well, except the last)

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Our "Boy" (Mike) and the Captain's pose. Scary!! (Tinkerbell)

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That night the wind started picking up and we could see lightning on the horizon. At about 2am, we were hit with a big storm, lots of wind and rain but fortunately everyone kept dry.

The next morning we awoke to another outstanding meal by Margret and Eric, packed up and headed along the cut line.



(Breakfast the next morning – left over pizza ingredients!)

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The road was corrugated in some section and progress was slow. We only did around 120kms for the day before setting up camp for the night.



I thought it was only Landy drivers who drove with their elbows sticking out of the window. 😊



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Final sunset for 2010.

It was Elmarie and my turn to make dinner and apart from an incident with me and some vegetables all went smoothly.

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The next morning we awoke to a cool morning with thunderstorms all around us. At one stage we counted 7. After breakfast we headed off.



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This crèche ran in front of us for a long way!



This little guy was spotted in the wheel ruts. We stopped and put him safely off the road. Well, we tried, he kept heading for the shade under the cruiser. Finally, we got him into something he liked (gave us a dirty hARRY sort of look though!)

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At S22.94731 E25.44665 we stopped to open a gate and headed between two game fences on a track that appeared to have had very little use. Some sections had very thick sand which required a drop in gear. I traveled in mostly 2nd and 3rd HR. We did not see any game apart from a small cat running at about 40km/h and a few small buck.



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Hmmmm!! this log looks like it could be good for the fire! Turned out to be VERY heavy!

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Our Final Campsite.

It was Mikes turn to cook and the rest of us relaxed. He had to show off and make starters as well as a brilliant main course. We had to stop him from cooking everything as he would have fed an army. ☺ Another great meal!!



That night, we again had a lot of rain so we spent most of the evening under the awning of the Xplorer. (Thank you Bruce! ☺)

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Eric decided to make some pop corn ☺



(Eric's note: I've been wanting to do this as a party trick for a long time – was hilariously funny, especially seeing as at the time it was absolutely chucking it down! Tasted good too!)

The next day would be a long days driving. We had around 65 kms until we reached the Khutse South gate and then around 103 kms of dirt road until we reached the tar at Lethlakeng and then 450kms until we reached home.



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The dirt road was flooded in sections and provided some entertainment.



Finally I had christened the Landy with a proper trip and with proper mud.



For me what started out as a trip in order to help a fellow Overlander, turned out to be a great adventure with good people.

The lows of the trips are the stupid drivers on the tar roads and the highs of the trip are everything else.

Thank you to Eric, Margaret, Mike (and Estelle for letting Mike come with us), and Elmarie (my wife) for always being keen for an adventure as long as she sleeps comfortably. ☺
It was a pleasure to travel with you all.....sometimes! ☺