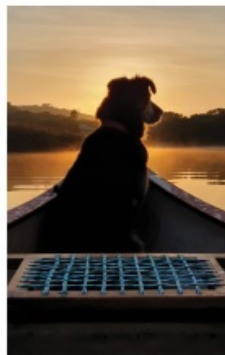


TOP DOG!

Carrie Hampton

Meet some of South Africa's most famous adventurous dogs,
Who go hiking, kayaking and even motorbike riding...



Brody the Sidecar Dog

Honestly, is there anything cooler than a dog sitting in a sidecar wearing a bandana and goggles? Or should we say doggles? He sports the same eyewear designed especially for US Military working dogs. Brody, the mascot of Cape Sidecar Adventures, is so famous he's been on TV, in magazines and even has his own Instagram page @brodysidecar.

Brody was adopted as a puppy by Tim Clarke - owner of Cape Sidecar Adventures - ostensibly to be the "meet & greet" dog at the workshop. However, Brody had other ideas and at just a few months old, went missing only to be found in the sidecar of a motorbike! "He was having a wonderful time," says Tim, "so he became our travelling sidecar dog." Brody usually rides with Tim, but can be booked in a double-seater sidecar with a guest, for the princely sum of a handful of treats and a donation to support his fund-raising efforts for DARG (Domestic Animal Rescue Group in Cape Town), where Brody hails from.

Cape Sidecar Adventures offers a number of trip options ranging from 2-hours, to half-day and full-day rides. An experienced, fully qualified, motorbike driver/guide takes the helm, while you sit comfortably in the sidecar watching the world go by, just like Brody.

Meet Kyla & Mac on the Baviaans Camino

Hikers are in for an unexpected treat on the Baviaans Camino, one of the multi-day slack-packing trails with Baviaans to Bay Adventures. Guests not only meet a pair of champion working sheepdogs but get to see a demonstration by the South African Champion, Kyla!

Kyla became the 2022 SA National Sheepdog Champion at seven years old beating second placed dog by 8-minutes! She's owned by Pierre Strydom, at whose Mooigedacht farm, hikers stay on the penultimate night of the trail. Pierre's delicious homemade potjie stew, which he sends up to a mountain outpost where guests spend a night, is another highlight of the hike. A 15 kilometers walk down to Pierre's farm for lunch and local honeybush tea, provides the opportunity for him to show guests what makes a winning sheepdog - which is, of course, years of patient training and a deep connection with his animals.

Pierre says, "visitors cannot believe the intense concentration of the dogs and how they respond to the slightest command." Kyla's pups are in great demand, because she has "exceptional force". This means, she can speedily move sheep that don't want to budge.

Canoe with Tikka of Eden Adventures

As soon as Tikka sees her owner Chris Leggatt grab a paddle, she runs to the canoe and sits in it. Tikka is a mix of German Shepherd and Border Collie, known for intelligence, empathy and enthusiasm. At 14 years old, she can't keep up with all the exciting activities offered by Eden Adventures in Wilderness, along the Garden Route but she still loves to go canoeing! Long swims and boulder-hopping on the kloofing activity are too much for her now and as for abseiling, Tikka never got the hang of that!

Chris first saw Tikka as a ball of fluff snuggled into a paragliding helmet. He was charmed. She was being fostered at the time, but found her forever home with Chris. He confesses, "Tikka thinks she's human. She can tell the days of the week, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays she trots next door on her own, knowing those are the designated days she's looked after by neighbours".

Tikka loves nothing more than going canoeing with Chris, so if you see man and dog in a canoe at sunrise or sunset on the Wilderness lakes, then it'll be them. Give them a wave.

Never Lose Your Way with Ruby and Charlie on the Chokka Trail

The first day's walk of the slack packing Chokka Trail, along the Eastern Cape's Kouga coastline, is an unguided 18km+ of blissful sea views, ocean breezes and refreshing dips. But Border Collies Ruby and Charlie, who reside at Oyster Kaya - the initial night's stay at Oyster Bay - have decided that people need to be guided (or herded!). Some years ago, the dogs spontaneously appointed themselves as unofficial tour guides and when the bus arrives with hikers to start their walk, "the dogs go ballistic", says Esti Stewart owner of the Chokka Trail experience.

Most dogs stay pretty close to their owners, but Ruby and Charlie feel nothing about leaving their home for the whole day to accompany each set of walkers, returning to Oyster Kaya about 6 hours later. At a fork in the track Ruby lies down to make sure everyone takes the correct path. Charlie brings up the rear, making sure there are no stragglers. The dogs' owner Lindy Lombard says that they've never been trained for herding. It's just in

their nature. "They are very sociable and rather spoiled," Lindy admits, "and if guests let them, they'll sleep on the beds," as was mentioned in Getaway Magazine when they cuddled up to the journalist!

The Chokka Trail is a 62km slackpack hiking holiday along the Garden Route between Oyster Bay, St Francis Bay and Cape St Francis, one of the Baviaans to Bay Adventure offerings.



Bullet goes kayaking with Walker Bay Adventures

Bullet the French Bulldog is super smart. At least that's what owner Susan van der Walt says. Not only because she trained him to a high level of discipline, but because his breed is intuitively empathetic. He makes tourists venturing out to sea for the first time in a kayak on a Walker Bay Adventure, feel at ease.

Bullet sits at the front of the kayak, wearing his own life jacket and even a pod of gigantic southern right whales doesn't faze him. He never barks, or misbehaves, but gets visibly excited when dolphins leap around the boats. Susan says, "he thinks it's a dolphin play date, because he has the same happy face when he goes to his twice weekly doggy day care to meet his friends." Susan admits that Bullet is a spoiled house dog and since he doesn't bark - she says he talks in other ways - he's a terrible guard dog.

Susan only guides for Walker Bay Adventures occasionally, so don't expect to see Bullet too often. His adventure exploits have given him moments of fame on travel programmes, but he hasn't let it go to his head!



101

BEST ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA

