

Behind the scenes with *Tropika Island of Treasure* winners

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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On 3 December, we were all sitting on the edge of our seats, waiting to see who would win in the epic physical trials the *Tropika Island of Treasure* finalists would endure.



Image supplied: *Tropika Island of Treasure* winners Karlien van Jaarsveld and Ruan Scheepers

The last six contestants survived a gruelling physical challenge that took them to the incredible mountain and ocean terrain of Seychelles.

After a gruelling few weeks, Karlien van Jaarsveld and model Ruan Scheepers took the win - and along with them, their share of the R1m prize money.

Scheepers said, "Before the show, I didn't realise the true meaning behind the proverb "it takes a village". As much as succeeding in the challenges was fully my responsibility I wouldn't have been able to give it my best without the people that supported me all the way. My parents, friends and family truly are my biggest supporters."

We spoke with Van Jaarsveld and Scheepers to get an inside look into how the competition was for them, what reality TV is really like, and what they plan to do with their winnings...

🎖 ***Congratulations on your win! How are you feeling?***

KVJ: Thank you! I am completely blown away by our win! Very very thankful and completely unexpected!

RS: I am blown away and overjoyed by the win. It was truly unexpected and the feeling still hasn't set in yet. It still feels surreal! I think now that the cat is out of the bag and my loved ones can join in my excitement it will start to feel more real. It was really difficult keeping something so exciting a secret.

🎖 ***What was your favourite part about this journey?***

KVJ: My favourite part was the games, I love playing games and getting physical!

RS: My favourite part about the journey was experiencing all the different aspects of the show! I have learnt so much and grown immensely in these short few weeks. I also really enjoyed meeting new people, gaining new friendships and exploring beautiful Seychelles and their culture.

■ ***What did you find most challenging?***

KVJ: It was by far the most challenging being away from my family. But also paddling on the sub in the strong sea currents.

RS: My biggest challenge was motivating myself to keep going enduring the pressure drama and being away from home, my loved ones and my fur babies. Some days the challenges were extremely tough and every day you had to show up as the best version of yourself no matter what. My grandmother also passed away on the first day of shooting in Seychelles, making it very difficult to keep my head in the game.

■ ***Were all the trials and tribulations worth it? Would you do it again?***

KVJ: It was tough - but worth it. However, I would probably not do it again.

RS: It was all 100% worth it, however, I would not do it again. I was humbled by the game and how easy it seemed. *Tropika Island of Treasure* is a gruelling experience and not for the faint of heart!

I'm so grateful for the opportunity and it is something I one day will tell my grandchildren about but it really is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

🎲 *What is the biggest lesson that came out of this experience?*

KVJ: For me, this experience was learning about how the wheel of life works. You get to choose to either spin a wheel of luck by using your own hands and your own ability and your own words, or you can turn the wheel with your hand in God's hand by bending your knee to what He wills. Positive speech is one thing, but surrendering to the agenda God has for the moment truly brings you into a new rhythm.

RS: The lesson I learned from this experience is to never give up. Our team was often seen as the underdogs, and in some challenges we struggled a lot. But everyday we had the opportunity to give our best no matter what. And in the end, it all paid off. So I would say, the lesson is, you can fall seven times but you have to get up eight times.



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🎲 *Give us the scoop - What is it truly like to be on reality TV?*

KVJ: Most of the reality really happens off-camera. A lot like social media. Whenever you know you're being seen, you are not completely who you truly are, and playing a role of what you think would be expected of you to be or say in that moment, and that's the irony of something called 'reality'. Reality is a space within yourself where you are able to face and live in compassion with who you are. That, unfortunately, is a very rare thing seen these days. People live up to the reality of a standard created by people, it's not real.

RS: It is definitely not what I expected. There is a lot that happens behind the scenes and so much work goes into a show like this.

The cameras are always on you, capturing your best and your worst.

🎲 *Any plans with your winnings?*

KVJ: I'm still asking God what He wants to do with the money... I'm not sure if it's for me to keep or for some other plan He has in mind. Waiting to hear, just like you!

RS: Of course! I am investing in my future by using some of the money to pay for my post-graduate studies. And I really want to take my girlfriend on a trip to Europe. And the rest I'll be investing for a rainy day.

And of course, I will be taking my new car from Suzuki on a road trip to see more of our beautiful country.

If you missed the last episode, it will air again tonight (5 December) at 9pm on DStv channel 193, SABC 3, and on the [YouTube channel](#)

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