

Origin 2014 - a journey of rediscovery



By [Brandon Williams](#)

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If ever you find yourself casting aside all responsibility, severing yourself from society and embarking on a pilgrimage that will have you traversing over 100km of undulating hills through the blistering heat, it best be for a cause you firmly believe in. The Origin Festival is one of those causes - a reformation of faith in the colours of trance and the power of nature's splendour. It is a testament to the magic of the human spirit, a dazzling tapestry woven from the fabrics our intellect, emotions, fears, passions, and creativity.

I suppose the same could be said of most trance festivals, yet each festival is unique in its own little way. And one thing that makes Origin stand out from the start is the journey there. The mountainous drive from Cape Town to Elandsbloof was absolutely breathtaking. In fact, it felt like I was bartering my life-giving oxygen supply with the Overberg in exchange for awe and amazement. We had a whole economy going. From on high, the vast vistas offered picture-perfect panoramas of the countryside in all its wheaty golden glory.



We ride for Rivendell

It was a journey that could only be crowned by arriving at an equally exquisite encampment nestled sweetly in a lush green valley somewhere between Villiersdorp and Greyton. Its welcoming woods teeming with oaks, yellow and redwoods shaded and blanketed party-goers tents under a luscious adoring canopy. Fresh-flowing streams and a tranquil dam hugged the edge of the campsite, while towering mountain peaks encircled the expansive land like vigilant stalwart bastions. Home is not a place, it's a feeling - and when you can take a deep breath of the purest air and exhale all your worries into the dissipating breeze, you know you're home.

Greeting visitors as they arrived was a small but sufficient wheelbarrow-wielding workforce, which assisted in the transfer of gear and groceries from cars to camping spots. This truly was a pleasant surprise. Having to morph into a pack mule upon arrival has always been a dreaded aspect of trance festivals. This was an excellent touch of consideration on behalf of event organisers.

Nightfall was gradually ushered in by the introduction of the main stage music. As the Origin floor grew louder, the woods grew brighter. The multi-coloured walkway lights came on, transforming the entire venue from weary refugee camp to an enchanted forest abuzz with activity. As fellow star travellers streamed through the gates, each trippier-looking than the last, the unfolding scuffles of tents, clanking of hammers, and pssshhhh of the first beers resonated through the atmosphere. As most were still settling in and befriending their neighbours, they elected to enjoy the funky tech tunes of IPcress (UK) from

a distance. Yet this was no ordinary techno house. Drawing from influences as far afield as psych rock, acid folk and minimal electronica, the set encompassed a wide range of sounds as diverse as the intercontinental crowd - all the while maintaining a groovy psychedelic edge that wet the psytrance pallet and let party-goers know something heavy was amassing over the horizon.



Creatures of the night

Once lung and liver had been tended to and introductions had been made, all heads turned towards the dance floor and a mass migration ensued. Colourful creatures of the night literally came out of the woodwork to play. Adorned with bestial masks, luminescent accessories, radiant attire, flowing scarves, and dazzling props, they made their way to the dance floor through a vast open plain wherein several food stalls, catering to a wide range of tastes, could be found. This Agora also featured several accessory stores, a fully stocked bar, a woman summoning demons (glass blowing) as well as two chilled-out communal areas littered with logs where people could sit and intimately interact with one another. I thought the log lounges were another nice touch as festivals are about interacting, bonding and connecting with your fellow similarly minded human beings as opposed to the vast majority of the superficial Cape Town commercial hip hop, RnB and house scenes, where most men are showing off to impress some girl and greeting someone is enough to warrant fist fight.

As the IPcress set came to its conclusion, it was time commence the party, psy-style! The stage area fell into silence, it rang louder than a thousand bells, no wait, those were the thousands of crickets hanging from the décor and hopping around the dance floor. Yes actual night-crawling insect crickets. Then Portal firmly established his presence, like a cowboy kicking in the swinging saloon doors, with funky bass-infused progressive psytrance, which blew the silence apart.



Come clarity

That was it! The epiphany, the ahaaah moment before plunging yourself into the party; the moment where you said to yourself: "This is the reason I made this mission; this is the shit I live for! Come crickets, come! Let us rush as one." Portal's high-energy beats generated a rift in time and space, which had the vast majority of the crowd instantly teleported to the dimension of the dance floor. As it became packed, man and cricket erupted into an untameable, synchronous, stomping mass.

From as far back as the camping area people could be seen "stomp walking" towards the main floor. Yes, even the way people walk is altered when the liberating power of trance courses through their veins, as if transcended beyond the confines of gravity. I'm sure you all know that walk, the one you do when you're really feeling a beat but you haven't reached the floor yet, or you're leaving the floor to go somewhere else? This explosive set was by far my favourite of the night - it culminated at around 12:30am when I remember thinking to myself: "Damn this is some of the funkiest, hottest trance I've ever heard, this guy should be more famous." Other impressive artists who kept the progressive beats banging throughout the night included Sad Paradise and Groove Addict (India). Although there was nothing sad about this paradise, au contraire, Friday was pretty dope to say the least. When I retired to my bio-dome at around 4.30am, I was quite content.

Since we're all about time travel in heezy, let's jump back to 10.30pm, when something began to stir within me. "What is this feeling? Oh no! Turns out I'm human after all, I need to pee." So I set off to find a lavatory, which wasn't very difficult, but I do declare, Origin 2014 sported some of the most meticulously maintained "melting pots" I've ever come across at a festival. Seriously though man, okay the pump-action mini basins in them weren't functional and the soap dispensers were wearing invisibility cloaks, but they had round-the-clock upkeep and ample toilet paper. The smell wasn't that foul at all and I wasn't greeted with any nasty surprises at any point in the party. Well done Origin, yet another sweet touch. However, the physical number of porta-potties was just a little insufficient as I found myself in a queue several times. And, as usual, the female toilet queue looked like the old Home Affairs, but only really at peak traffic times. Yes, I said the old Home Affairs because they've really upped their game these days, in the Western Cape at least.



Hydration station of improvisation

The toilets, however, didn't have taps anywhere close to them, which meant that countless people didn't bother washing their hands. Do you even realise how disgusting that is? I had to sanitise my hands with the vodka and orange juice I had in my Bonaqua pump bottle, and then walk all the way to the one drinking water area comprising only three taps, to rinse my hands. If there were any other taps, they weren't made very apparent. If another drinking water area was installed that would be so good. The water was good though.

Waking up at around 8.30am on Saturday was to the bellowing barnyard beats of DJ Cow and DJ Chicken, whose sets were playing on a third unofficial dance floor near the west end of the campsite. When asked what he thought of the sets, the fox declined to comment. Temperatures rose rapidly and it quickly dawned on me that I would have to chow most of my food before it turned sour. So after a lovely bracing breakfast, the day's drinking could commence. By 10am most of our fallen brethren had regained consciousness and the hills were once again alive with the sounds of laughter and conversation.

It always astounds me how complete strangers can come together and revel in one another's company, share precious resources, encourage each other and forge friendships that pick up exactly where they left off at the next festival. Back at home you're instantly nervous when a stranger says "excuse me" even if it's done politely. Saturday also marked the inauguration of the Beats Stage; tucked away in a cozy little corner amongst the trees on a luscious lawn next to the dreamy dam. Despite it being a space devoted to techno and tech house jams, it certainly proved a popular spot among party-goers as they lined the emerald lawns along the dam's banks. Ultimately, the day could be summed up as totally chilled; the forest and its abundance of shade had been transformed into a bustling elven society complete its own water park.



I have heard the summons

As the sun set and the cool soothing waters emptied, the refreshed and renewed crowd began responding to the beckoning bass lines of the main stage as it boomed over the airwaves like a mother calling her flock to the dinner table. Saturday night, this was the big one, the main event, the all-nighter! The Psychedelic Temple décor lit up transforming the tarp-covered dome-like structure into an encircling ring of bat mages channelling their energies nine metres above ground to call forth a swirling ion storm that rained down its spiritually cleansing spires in turbulent columns of purple-blue crosswinds that whisked the crowd away to an alternative realm. Even the bins had been draped with décor; most covered in a woollack material on which floral elements had been hand painted. Once again, I thought this was a nice touch as nothing screams "row of filth" more than those unsightly black bins do.

By 9pm the campsite had become a ghost town as The Renegade DJ, The Commercial Hippies and Regan literally clawed at the souls of the massive crowd that had somehow managed to squeeze into the giant Origin Stage. By the time Digoa, Glitch and Killawatt had bombarded the crowd with their acoustic airstrike, the dance floor was so hot it was like a whistling

kettle with its lid violently shaking as the steam surged beneath it. And I don't mean in the temperature sense; that's just how darn good it felt to be there on that dance floor among fellow stompers going as hard and wild as your heart desires. When morning's brown brink brightened the sky, and first light pierced the veil of the delicious darkness that had cradled the main stage in its cool embrace all night long, you could almost feel the remaining crowd silently applauding themselves on the inside. You made it till morning, you're a survivor! The right to feed is earned at a festival, bought with the cosmic credits you accumulate while stomping. The harder you go, the greater your sense of entitlement to that pizza from one of the fast food stands; the most rewarding way to end an epic Saturday night.



Later that day the sun came out guns blazing, no wonder they call it Sunday - budumtiss, where are all those crickets now? It also saw many wrenched from their slumbers as sleep is pretty much impossible when you're trying to do it in a clay oven. But after an endless weekend of non-stop intoxicated stomping, many were in dire need of respite - and nothing beats a sobering Sunday session in the lazy river. As its healing waters flow over you they revive, revitalise and replenish. Okay, it wasn't exactly a river as much as it was a flowing body of water big enough goof off in, but it was bliss nonetheless. There's no better way to prepare for the mammoth task of tackling the N2 all the way home. It's safe to say that most people spent the final few hours of the party around the river and market area. And how couldn't they? Both features were adjacent to the main dance floor. Despite many people opting to chill in one of the shaded log lounges, the dance floor was still packed to capacity. When you have some of SA's most acclaimed DJs, like Loud, Headroom and Broken Toy giving you back to back blast waves of beastly beats, you won't get a more sublime send-off anywhere else.

Playtime is ending

But man, oh man, when you overhear someone telling their friend the time, your heart literally shatters into a million vermillion crystals. As vague memories of responsibility slowly creep about your mind, this is the time when every party-goer takes a personal moment or two to make peace with the fact that playtime is ending. It's the time you take to muster up the strength and courage to make the slow agonising trek back to the tent to break camp. Every step away from the main floor is more emotionally draining than the last. Packing up and carrying all your gear back to the car is always the worst part of any festival, but I have to hand to Origin, a great sense of relief washed over me when, once again, the wheelbarrow workers literally just materialised out of dark matter in the blink of an eye, to whisk away all my heavy belongings to the car. That really went a long long long way to alleviate the feeling of 'uuuuurg' experienced by each and every party-goer on the last day. I can't praise the event organisers enough for having thought of something so damned considerate.

What did leave a bit of bad taste in my mouth was the general attitude of these workers. After giving my assistant a R20 tip, he turned around and outright told me: "Eish, R20? Haaa wena make it fifty." And this guy just stood there until my girlfriend eventually gave him another R10. Thanking him and letting him know he could take his leave, he then said: "Do you have beer? Give me some of that." Un-freaking-believable. The nerve! And this happened to quite a few people I know. So in future I'd like to see event organisers briefing their hired hands that we are not walking "R" symbols and that the tasks they were hired to perform are part of their job description and not a favour they're doing.



Origin 2014 was, by and large, the most chilled festival I've ever been to. There were even tons of foreign nationals from Europe and North America; just goes to show how amazing this festival was, people came from far and wide to experience its majesty. The event organiser certainly had lots of great ideas for making the festival a more pleasant experience, but in some cases it juuuuust wasn't 100% implemented. But I'm sure next year some of those bugs will be extinguished. No no, you should NEVER extinguish bugs! Every life-force plays a role in a delicately fragile ecosystem. An ecosystem if which altered could ultimately affect you in the end! WHY DON'T PEOPLE SEE? Apologies I . . . uh . . . lost myself there for a second. As I was saying by next year I'm confident Origin will have ironed out most of the teething problems with their great and considerate ideas.

If life had a reset button it would be this festival. It is a place free from the corruption of the city, a place where the energy of mother Gaia cleanses and uplifts your spirit, a place where all that encumbers is stripped away. It is a place where you can go back to basics in order to reawaken your core, to reaffirm your sense of self, to rediscover your Origin.

Images sourced from citylifer.co.za

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