

WINELANDS

Locavore dining, artists' studios, nature trails & spectacular vistas

BABYLONSTOREN

Getting there: take the N1 towards Paarl, take Exit 47, then the R44 to Klampmuts
Distance: 55km

Klampmuts, Simondium Road, Franschhoek
Tel 021 863 3852

www.babylonstoren.com

12 suites, R3,135 to R4,900

INNOVATIVE FARM HOTEL

Because of a vegetable garden that's fast becoming one of the key attractions of the Winelands district, a hotel had to be built, and then a restaurant. And then the garden expanded and a wine-tasting facility and a bakery came into being. Babylonstoren's reputation is phenomenal given it's the newest kid on the block. Although the Cape Dutch farmstead it's associated with is more than a couple of centuries old – the Tower of Babel, named after a nearby soaring peak – everything about this extraordinary place happened recently and grew organically. Its owners considered that their eight-acre vegetable garden would attract visitors who might like to pick its produce, so they provided a simple hotel, with cottages, in the garden, where guests cater for themselves, and Babel, the restaurant where, alternatively, guests eat the fresh produce cooked by chefs. On the other hand, a chef could cook for you in your cottage – and so it goes on. Babylonstoren is extravagantly inspirational and effortlessly stylish. Every part of it, right down to the last all-white bathroom in a guest cottage with its curious mix of clean contemporary styling and bursts of colour, is almost religious in its simplicity. The old farmhouse is also available to rent on an exclusive use basis. The simplicity of its original 18th-century interiors perfectly matches the restraint in the design of the contemporary furniture chosen to fill it.

Winter or summer Babylonstoren is a perfect place to unwind and re-source.

BARTHOLOMEUS KLIP

Getting there: take the N1 towards Paarl, then Exit 47 onto R44 to Stellenbosch then 1 km after Hermon/Riebeeck Kasteel turnoff,

turn left into Bo Hermon

Distance: 67km

Elandsberg Farms, Bo Hermon Road, Hermon, Riebeeck Kasteel

Tel 022 448 1087, www.bartholomeusklip.com

4 rooms, 1 suite, 1 self-catering house, R3,320 to R5,380

COUNTRY HOUSE RETREAT

There are plenty of reasons to visit the Swartland around Riebeeck Kasteel. Fifteen minutes from the village, surrounded by golden wheat fields on one side and rare *renosterveld* and fynbos protected by the Elandsberg Nature Reserve on the other, Edwardian Bartholomeus Klip is a place to see the landscape bloom in spring. Walks and game drives reveal a magnificent natural wealth. En suite rooms are simply decorated – “Agapanthus” and “Disa” face the wide *stoep* and look into an old oak-shaded “Cape” garden. A pool, fashioned out of an old farm dam, is well positioned for views across the landscape and to the mountains beyond. A suite in the garden is set away from the house and is completely private and, since this is a childfree zone, the self-catering Wild Olive House, set still further away with its own pool, is for families. Up at the main house a dining room in the conservatory is open to all guests for brunch and dinner. You need never leave this idyllic spot. However, this is a terrific, civilized base from which to see the West Coast flowers, explore Riebeeck Kasteel, taste Swartland wines and sample its olives at May's Olive Festival.

COOPMANHUIJS HOTEL

Getting there: take the N1, turn off at Exit 39 and follow the signs to Stellenbosch on the R304, distance: about 50km
33 Church Street, Stellenbosch

Tel 021 883 8207, www.coopmanhuijs.co.za
16 rooms, R2,240 to R2,840

MANOR HOUSE, CENTRAL

Looking out of the windows into Church Street, it's easy to understand why Stellenbosch has another, more colloquial name: Eikestad, Oak Town. Housed in a venerable early 18th-century mansion, this cosy, traditional-style hotel is right at the leafy heart of where it's all happening in this university town. Church Street and the surrounding neighbourhood are filled with museums, galleries, shops and cafés and in-house dining at Helena's Restaurant is the quiet option if you want contemporary South African cooking. There's a spa and a courtyard pool – a necessity in the summer after a day out exploring the surrounding winelands.

DELAIRE GRAFF

Getting there: take the N1, turn off at Exit 39 and follow the signs to Stellenbosch on the R304, then left onto R44

Distance: about 60km

Delaire Graff Estate,

Helshoogte Pass, Stellenbosch

Tel 021 885 8160, www.delaire.co.za

10 lodges, R7,150 to R26,500

GLAMOROUS, EXCLUSIVE

This is haute couture in the vineyards. And it's perfectly tailored to anybody unwilling to compromise just because they're having a holiday. The estate straddles a vantage point in the Banhoek, between Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, from which there are magnificent views out over the winelands to Table Mountain in the distance. Set in a manicured wilderness designed by Keith Kirsten, ten lodges each with its own plunge pool, the Delaire Graff Spa (which uses the Swiss Perfection range) and two restaurants – Indochine for Asian dining, and Delaire Graff Restaurant with what it's called “bistrot-chic” cuisine – have been meticulously designed by David Collins who is best known for decorating various dining hotspots in London. The Delaire Graff Restaurant in

particular, has Cape Town's best outdoor dining terrace. Everywhere – lodges, restaurants, public areas, wine tasting lounge, gardens – has a collection of mostly South African art and sculpture, put together by owner Laurence Graff (the diamond king) with help from the Goodman Gallery.

LA CLÉ DES MONTAGNES

Getting there: take the N1, then Exit 59 towards Paarl on R301, then left onto R45 to Franschhoek, distance: 80km

13 Daniel Hugo Street, Franschhoek

Tel 021 876 4646, www.lacle.co.za

4 villas, R9,000 to R12,500

LUXURY SERVICED VILLAS

In an area where provenance is all, and a French one is critical, La Clé des Montagnes has it all. A series of villas is arranged around an old farmhouse built by a Huguenot immigrant early in the 19th century. One of them, La Grange, the original barn, was latterly home to a famous interiors shop also called La Grange whose style it has somehow imbibed, and which set off a tsunami of decorating across the Franschhoek valley in the 1990s as the district was “discovered”. The signature style of La Grange notwithstanding, the other villas highlight a decor sometimes neo-African baroque, sometimes colour-me-fabulous, the pungent lacquers in green and blues, oranges and yellows a startling find in the middle of the vineyards. Le Colonial hints at North African style, bringing Morocco or Tunisia to the Winelands. La Galerie is more edgy – what South Africans might call “*boere* baroque”, others ‘theatrical naff’ (black walls, faux leopard upholstery and lots of purple). Le Manoir occupies the old farmhouse and is conservative by comparison. Each a “private” dwelling with kitchen and dining area, *stoep* and view overlooking the vines and orchards that make the district famous. A chef can prepare your meals “at home” or walk to the village where myriad restaurants line the main street.

Overberg's top dining destination. The menu changes weekly, though regulars will recognize dishes that often reappear. Marianna – who refers to herself as a cook, not a chef – uses only seasonal, local and sustainable ingredients to create refined yet wholesome dishes. Start with the gruyère soufflé, springbok rillettes, or a simple plate of heritage beans, perfectly dressed; then move on to “oink neck” (tender roasted pork neck), confit duck, or a light and fragrant fish curry. Dessert revolves around the *dood skoot* (coup de grace) – glasses of grappa, amaretto and sometimes *witblits* (moonshine) and espresso with homemade ice cream. Wines are carefully chosen from the surrounding area, a highlight of which is the Jackson Pinotage, whose vineyards can be seen from the *stoep* (veranda) and the Hermanuspietersfontein Bloos rosé from Hemel-en-Aarde valley nearby. Note that children aren't allowed, credit cards aren't accepted and booking is essential.

LA PENTOLA

Shop 4, Ocean View,
87 Marine Drive, Hermanus
Tel 028 313 1685, hermanus.lapentola.co.za
À la carte R235
Closed Monday

FAMILY FAVOURITE

Service is relaxed and warm in this casual balcony restaurant with soothing sea views over Walker Bay. The menu offers a wide range of fusion dishes and the cooking is assured and appetizing. Try the bacon-wrapped “angel” snails – the house speciality – or gooseberry-dressed salmon carpaccio to start. All seafood on the menu is caught on the day, so the succulent roast line fish is a must. Tough guys looking for a classic African culinary experience will enjoy the game menu, where such delicacies as Crocodile Pastry – cubes of crocodile tail in a curry sauce wrapped in phyllo pastry – and honey-mustard warthog lie in wait. A small children's menu is also available.

MOGG'S COUNTRY COOKHOUSE

Nuwe Pos Farm, Hemel-en-Aarde Valley
Tel 076 314 0671
www.moggscookhouse.com
À la carte R200

Closed Monday and Tuesday

COMFY COUNTRY

Mogg's is a bit like frequenting the home of an elderly relative: robust wooden furniture abounds and the fruits of the amateur pottery class take pride of place on various surfaces. That's inside, though, which in fact is very cosy in winter when the fire gets going. Outside, on the veranda, lush vegetation and bucolic views make the restaurant a favourite spot for winding down. The cooking – soups, salads, pies, roasts – is homely, traditional and nourishing. Wines are well priced, mostly from the prestigious estates nearby such as Bouchard Finlayson and Newton Johnson, but bringing your own is quite acceptable.

PECCADILLOS

23 Main Road, Greyton
Tel 028 254 9066, www.peccadillos.co.za
À la carte R170

Closed Tuesday and Wednesday

EASY COUNTRY

The village of Greyton, with its quiet, rose-bush studded streets, manicured lawns and upscale country cottages is a favourite weekend getaway destination for frazzled Cape Town urbanites. Peccadillos, a snug little restaurant on the main road that offers informal, tasty cuisine, is widely regarded as the best in town. Locals swear by the wood-fired pizza and the lamb curry with all the trimmings. The wine list on a chalkboard revolves around an interesting selection of boutique wines from the area, such as the Lismore Chardonnay or Andy Mitchel Syrah rosé.

RED INDIGO

Grootbos Private Nature Reserve,
13km past Stanford towards Gansbaai
on the R43
Tel 028 384 8000, www.grootbos.com
À la carte R250

ECO LODGE

The first thing guests notice at Red Indigo, Grootbos Private Nature Reserve's eco-friendly restaurant, is the sea, the mountains and a whole lot of sky. The views leap out at you from every corner of the dining room, thanks to wraparound windows and the restaurant's location on a pristine fynbos covered hill. All the restaurant produce is grown at Grootbos or bought from locals trained by the owners. Standouts on the menu include roast butternut and thyme panna cotta starter and the smoked beef fillet with cider fondant.

THE TASTING ROOM

Creation Wines, Hemel-en-Aarde Road,
Hemel-en-Aarde Valley
Tel 028 212 1107
www.creationwines.com
Fixed-price menu R125, à la carte R150
Closed for dinner

GOURMET FUSION, STUNNING VIEWS

When the address is Hemel-en-Aarde (Heaven-and-Earth in Afrikaans), there is only one thing to expect: the most spectacular views of the Overberg mountains and plains stretching to the sea. The Tasting Room restaurant at Creation Wines, whose vintages appear in South Africa's top 100 wine list, offers jaw-dropping views of the surrounding mountainside and vineyards. While you're waiting to order, tuck into the freshly baked bread with accompanying award-winning Adamskloof extra virgin olive oil produced from the oil grove next to the estate's signature Pinot Noir. The menu is compact and designed to complement the farm's own wines. If the eight-course tasting menu doesn't appeal then the venison pie, from the à la carte menu, is a highlight.

WINELANDS

Locavore dining, artists' studios, nature trails & spectacular vistas

BABEL

Babylonstoren, Simondium Road,
off Route 45, Klapmuts
Tel 021 863 3852
www.babylonstoren.com
À la carte R240

Closed Monday and Tuesday

CHIC COUNTRY

Located on an old farm surrounding an historic Cape Dutch homestead, it's situated right in amongst the vineyards. The views are bucolic. The restaurant also faces and is part of an immaculate vegetable garden from which fresh produce is brought daily for use in the construction of the menu. It has everything – herbs, vegetables, salad and whatever's ordered is picked virtually five minutes before it reaches the table. This is sustainable living the correct way. Babel itself is housed in a former cowshed and, kitted out as food lab-meets-farm kitchen-meets-butcher shop, it's dominated by a huge tiled panel of a cow's head which the owner, Karen Roos, found at the Milan Furniture Fair. Chef Simone Rossouw has put together fresh ingredients in a series of intriguing and unusual combinations – try the “red” salad of beetroot, berries, wine jelly and red garden lettuce with strawberry and rose geranium dressing, for starters. Main courses are equally inventive: the salmon trout, for example, comes with strawberry-lemon thyme crème fraîche and a strawberry-viognier drizzle; the succulent beef fillet with chopped calamata olives and Shiraz butter sauce. Wine options, all very reasonably priced, include those of the Babylonstoren estate such as an elegant 2012 Viognier and peppery 2011 Shiraz.

ARCHITECTURE AND GARDENS

BABYLONSTOREN

Simondium Road, off Route 45, Klapmuts
Tel 021 863 3852, www.babylonstoren.com
Open daily 9am to 4pm

CONTEMPORARY VEGETABLE GARDEN, AN AFRICAN EDEN

The planning for the gardens on the old Cape Dutch farm of Babylonstoren involved a visit by its new owners to medieval monastic gardens at Notre-Dame d'Orsan in France, revived by Patrice Taravella. Karen Roos, former editor of South African *Elle*, and her husband, media tycoon, Koos Bekker, also took inspiration from the 17th- and 18th-century Company's Garden in Cape Town and from surrounding farm gardens for the walls and other structures. Today, eight acres of formally planted fruit and vegetables provide ultra-fresh produce for the adjacent restaurant, Babel, and for the farm hotel. Standouts are the Prickly Pear Maze, the Babel Labyrinth, the Indigenous Fragrant Garden and the Lotus Ponds. Walks on the farm, as splendid as anything Marie-Antoinette could have conjured up, should start, or finish, with lunch at Babel restaurant.

CENTRAL METHODIST MISSION

Longmarket Street, CBD
Tel 021 422 2744, www.cmm.org.za
Open daily 9am to 5pm

GOthic REVIVAL CHURCH

This admired Gothic Revival church by Charles Freeman (1878) has a fine surviving period interior including elaborate finishes and fittings, organ, choir, pulpit and communion table. In the 19th century, so pervasive was the idea that Gothic was the proper style for churches, that many denominations which might have preferred something more austere capitulated to it. This is one of them. When

it opened it became famous for the standard of its preaching and for its outstanding choirs. The first radio broadcast of a church service in South Africa was beamed out from here in 1928 and large crowds gathered outside to hear it.

CAPE TOWN GEREFORMEERDE KERK

Corner of Hof and Orange Streets, Gardens, City Bowl
Tel 021 558 9453

Open Sunday 9am to 11am,
or by appointment

ICONIC 1950S EDIFICE

On the corner of Hof Street stands Cape Town's single most important work by Gerard Moerdyk (1890–1958), South Africa's best-known Afrikaans architect. Looking to the Romanesque of the Mediterranean for inspiration, he found that the centralized plans of the eastern Christian tradition best suited the purposes of Dutch Calvinism – where the liturgy centres on the preaching of the doctrine so didn't require an apse for sacramental ritual. At Hof Street the plan becomes an amphitheatre whose focus is the pulpit. And what makes the Cape Town Dutch Reformed Church the perfect auditorium are the acoustics, the effectiveness of which in most of his ecclesiastical projects made Moerdyk something of a star.

CITY HALL

Darling Street, CBD
Tel 021 400 2239
Open 7:30am to 5:30pm, closed Sunday

VICTORIAN EDIFICE

Built to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, the French Renaissance-style City Hall is a fitting symbol of an empire at its pinnacle. Designed by Reid & Green (1894), the conceptual juxtaposition of the site, with Table Mountain behind, the historic Grand Parade in front and the Castle of Good Hope nearby, is inspirational. It was the last major Victorian building erected in

Cape Town. There's an opulent interior – the Grand Hall in particular, with its elaborate ceilings and stuccoed wall surfaces, became the premier venue for concerts, balls and political meetings. The Cape Philharmonic Orchestra continues to play here. However, the City Council is now seated elsewhere and the City Hall awaits the next chapter in its life.

COMPANY'S GARDEN

19 Queen Victoria Street, Gardens, City Bowl
Open daily 7am to 7pm

PUBLIC PARK

Originally the garden that provided fresh fruit and vegetables for battered and scurvy-ridden sailors on their way from Europe to the East, the Company's Garden was laid out in 1652 and once covered a larger area than it does today. By the middle of the 1800s it had morphed into a botanical and specimen garden expressive of a romanticism that featured curved lines, flowing contours and idealized "natural" planting. Walkways and seating, a rose garden, aviaries and a café are all part of its charm today. At its heart a statue of Cecil Rhodes points north, accompanied by the inscription "your hinterland is there". Rhodes was responsible for introducing the prolific – and entertaining – grey squirrel. Botanically important specimen trees and shrubs are well tended and the garden continues to develop as fashions in horticulture change.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

28 Strand Street, CBD
Tel 021 421 5854
Open 10am to 2pm,
closed Saturday

18TH-CENTURY CHURCH

Only in 1779 did the Dutch East India Company permit the Lutherans to establish their own church and by 1792 the warehouse where they'd covertly worshipped for decades was transformed by Anton Anreith. His magnificent baroque

pulpit is still inside – one of the treasures of the city. It's supported by two life-sized figures of Hercules, each one carrying on his back one of the two front corners of the pulpit, his head and neck bent forward in that pose employed across Europe in many baroque buildings to support a balcony or a door case. Behind, massive growling mastiffs support the weight of the back of the pulpit.

GROOTE KERK

43 Adderley Street, CBD
Tel 021 422 0569, www.grootekerk.org.za
Open 10am to 2pm, Sunday during services
closed Saturday

19TH-CENTURY CHURCH

The mother of all Dutch Reformed churches in South Africa has been completely altered over the centuries, latterly by Herman Schutte (1761–1844). All that survives of the original building (1678) is the clock tower. Conforming to Dutch Reformed religious practice, the church was a "preaching box" in which worshippers sat facing the pulpit, the design of which often inspired the creation of elaborate structures. Here, raised on a pedestal of lions, the pulpit (1789) is a triumph of the work of Anton Anreith, renowned for his high baroque style. Another, also by Anreith, survives in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Parliament Street, CBD
Tel 021 403 2911
www.parliament.gov.za

VICTORIAN INTERIORS

The best view of the Houses of Parliament is from Government Avenue where its most striking characteristics are on display: a massive Corinthian portico and red brick and white stucco facades. Completed by Henry Greaves (1884), much of it is still Victorian to the last brass keyhole. Within, a guided tour reveals the marbled King's Hall, the old Senate chamber and the original House of Assembly that, along