



Bedroom at Jan Harmsgat Country House



Waltevrede Estate underground tasting bunker



Esona Boutique Winery wine-tasting and deli space



Wine-tasting but on stilts at Excelsior Wine Estate

The Robertson wine valley is a firm favourite among wine-lovers, but there's more to this quaint locale than meets the eye. A day spent perusing the delights the town has to offer will leave an indelible mark on your psyche — its charm is contagious. Begin your day on a hearty note at Excelsior Wine Estate's Graze, followed by a ride to the panoramic mountain top. After retreating down the mountainside, blend and bottle your own wine at Excelsior. Take a leisurely joyride through the town to Esona Boutique Winery for a tasting of its premium, internationally lauded vintages — owners Rowan and Caryl Beattie and renovator Etienne Hanekom have poured themselves into every inch of the estate, including Caryl's Deli, which offers locally sourced charcuterie platters alongside a complement of varietals to suit any palate. Next on the list is the well-established Jonker family's Weltevreden Estate — the Philip Jonker Cap Classique Range makes for a particularly fine bubbly experience. Take a tour of this intimate tasting room, a cavernous underground maze, and experience timeless sensory appreciation. The candlelit romance is palpable, and certainly a must for a budding affair! Round up the day's follies at the Jan Harmsgat Country House, which offers five-star accommodation with the warmest service I've ever encountered. This Cape Dutch guesthouse is flanked by pomegranate groves and decorated with impeccable simplicity — it's nirvana for the weary traveller. Dinner in the restaurant is a must: what is served from the farm's own gardens will sate even the finest of palates.

And, on the following morning, a tour through the farm's pomegranate orchards, fresh juice included, is an excellent panacea for the previous day's overindulgences. For a customised Robertson experience, Hot Oven Marketing can be relied on to cater to the desires of an intrepid traveller. Although this was just a taste of the valley's cornucopia, during my weekend expedition I was lulled into loving this town and its deeply infectious, yet understated magic. **Seth Shezi** excelsior.co.za; esona.co.za; janharmsgat.com; weltevredenestate.com

ROBERTSON WINE VALLEY

WIN A MACALLAN WHISKY DINNER

ONE LUCKY WANTED READER STANDS TO WIN A WHISKY-PAIRING DINNER FOR EIGHT AT GEMELLI'S IN BRYANSTON

Wine often dominates food-pairing menus, but whisky is fast becoming a worthy contender. Macallan whisky challenged chef Paulo Santo of Pantry (Gemelli's private dining venue) to craft a masterpiece meal that could live up to The Macallan's artistry, flavours and quality.

STARTER

Chef Paulo paired The Macallan Fine Oak 12 Year Old with a silky smooth duck-liver pâté with onion soubise, apple-mustard chutney, and aged balsamic. The starter is complemented by the creamy sweetness and fruity notes in this particular expression, with the crumbled oatcake matching the vanilla notes that linger on the palate.

MAIN

A venison main was paired with The Macallan Fine Oak 15 Year Old, the nose of which is full, with hints of rose and cinnamon. The springbok loin is a fine match for the rich chocolate notes on the palate. The sweetness of roast garlic and beetroot blends perfectly with the secondary notes of orange and dried fruits, and works wonders as a companion for the crispy camembert cheese.



DESSERT

The Macallan Rare Cask has notes abundant in chocolate and vanilla, with subtle hints of citrus, making it an exceptional choice as a dessert pairing. Santo created a bitter chocolate brownie with ginger crumble and salted caramel gelato to mingle on the palate with their counterparts in the glass, while remaining balanced by the contrasting aromatic and spicy notes on the nose.

HOW TO ENTER

Visit wantedonline.co.za to enter and stand a chance to win an exclusive Macallan food and whisky pairing with seven of your whisky- and food-loving friends — worth more than R7 000. The dinner will be hosted by Wanted editor Jacque Myburgh Chemaly and Macallan ambassador Dada Maseko at Pantry in Johannesburg (Ts and Cs apply).

8 REASONS TO VISIT THE *Robertson Valley* THIS WINTER

Article & Pictures by Jared Ruttenberg



Food, wine, and experience junkies should be prepared to have their hair blown back with a visit to Route 62's Robertson Valley this winter. An alternative to the N2, Route 62 invites travellers to explore a string of charming towns and farms along the way. Robertson is the largest of these, and in and around it there are a host of experiences waiting to be had. Here are some of my highlights, hopefully to help you taste the lifestyle in this special corner of the country.

8 UNMISSABLE EXPERIENCES

1. Going Underground at Weltevrede

Many of the wine farms in the region have underground wine storerooms. They've been long discontinued and at Weltevrede the internal walls of these concrete rooms have been opened up, creating an underground lair of cavernous tunnels. Doing the underground tasting experience, a path of candles leads you to a secret room where you can sit and experience storytelling and chardonnay tastings. Make sure to ask about the owner's philanthropic endeavours that led to the building of a local school, and also his venture of tending a vineyard on none other than Robben Island!

2. Blend your own wine at Zandvliet

Ever thought of trying your hand at blending your own wine? Zandvliet offers a tutored experience that's bound to get any wino excited. After you've finished blending your own bottle, try a tasting in their new Kalkveld Lounge. Their Estate Chardonnay, Kalkveld Shiraz, Vintage Liqueur Wine, and Zandvliet Muscat are paired with spicy panforte, biscotti and smooth dark chocolate, with zesty marmalade – each of the pairings include a citrus element, showcasing the farm's wine and citrus synergy.

3. Tasting Heaven at Four Cousins

A well-established and well-loved name in South Africa, this was to be my first visit to the brand home situated in the town of Robertson itself. A rather impressive array of tasting experiences awaits visitors – certainly something to suit everyone's taste – including two kids' tastings and a whisky option. The restaurant has a selection of seating spaces from informal lounging to chic dining spaces, and beer lovers will love the Boet Brew tasting room.

4. Bubbly at Paul René

For a delightful and intimate bubbly experience, look no further than Paul René. Their MCC graces some of the finest restaurant tables and wine stores around the country, and to have a tasting experience at the brand home is very special. The farm is family owned and run, and their humble but authentic love for the brand is contagious. Tastings cost R50, and also look out for their annual Splash of Pink Bubbly Festival – tickets sell out fast.



5. Trees Telling Stories & Bike Rides at Van Loveren

Guests can explore the beautiful gardens at Van Loveren through a 30-minute guided walk, with several trees that have been planted since 1939 commemorating special family, political and historical occasions. For R50 you can hire a bike and try one of the several routes on the farm or at a similar price enjoy the hiking trail. There are a host of tasting options, so best come hungry and thirsty!

6. Classy Country Dining at BluVine Eatery

The drive into Montagu takes in some astonishingly dramatic scenery, and once you make it into town one of the first buildings to greet you is the brand new BluVine Restaurant. This uber chic eatery is also the new home for Mimosa Wines. Set aside a few hours to take in the gorgeous view over some superb food and wine.

7. Bottle your own wine at Excelsior

With a tasting room built on the dam and a history as long as the earth's been around, an afternoon at Excelsior is a memorable experience. Here you can also blend and bottle your own wine and then enjoy a tasting. Just think how to impress the guests at your next dinner party by pulling out a bottle you've made and labelled yourself!



8. Sensory Tastings at Esona

Some experiences are so spectacular that they take in all five senses. I'd definitely recommend a Taste-the-Difference experience at Esona, where you're able to compare ordinary wine glasses to grape specific crystal glasses. This pairing includes fruit preserves, chocolate, music and art, and is set in an underground tasting venue. Caryl's Bistro is the upstairs-eatery that seems to effortlessly float above the vineyards and offers mouth-watering platters.

3 PLACES TO STAY

1. Village Luxury at the Robertson Small

The Robertson Small Hotel is surely one of South Africa's best-kept secrets. This five-star boutique hotel is located in the leafy suburbs of the town, in a tastefully converted Victorian home. Luxuriously fitted, the rooms offer plush environs to rest in after a day's exploring. The attention to detail and warm hospitality is guaranteed to knock you off your socks. If you're visiting in summer, ask for one of the beautiful rooms that open up directly onto the pool.

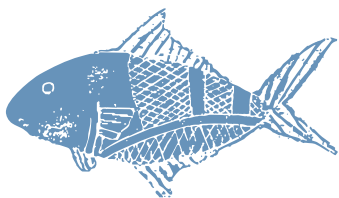
2. Country Cottage in McGregor

If you'd like something a little more homely, coupled with the opportunity to

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explore one of the local villages, look no further than McGregor. My choice was Ons Huisie - a cozy cottage situated on the edge of the town which can be easily explored with a three-minute walk. This charming village has a few hidden gems, so make sure to leave some time to amble through.

3. Mountain Solitude at Windfall Wine

If you're truly wanting to get away from it all, then the modest but inviting country cottages at Windfall Wine should hit the spot. On an almost deserted road out of town, the cottages soon appear in the distance surrounded by countryside that quickly gives way to mountains. There is a variety of cottages, a pool to be enjoyed in winter, and you can also book in for a tasting to sample some of the farm's premium wines.

GETTING AROUND

As always, ensure that you have a designated driver if you're going to be sampling the valley's wines. The great news for those not wanting to drive is that the Wine Valley Safari offers safe, reliable, convenient and extremely fun transport in an open-air safari vehicle, allowing you to fully breathe in the fresh country air and discover the Robertson Wine Valley in all its glory.

You can choose from their self-guided hop-on hop-off routes or even pre-packaged options. Be personally chauffeured while you relax and enjoy a memorable excursion in a socially-buzzed atmosphere. Visit their website at www.winevalleysafari.com for more information on their offerings and routes.

- Jared Ruttenberg travel-blogs under the name [@JAREDINCPT](https://www.jaredincpt.com) – you can read more of his articles at www.jaredincpt.com.





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A SEAT AT THE CHEF'S TABLE



From the easiest cauliflower truffle hake ever to a prawn cocktail that's sure to impress, chef Santi Louzán's menu is worth celebrating.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Supplied by Chef's Table

Cauliflower and truffle fennel hake SERVES 4

4 Hake fillets
Olive oil
250g Butternut, diced
Salt to taste
1 Large fennel, cut into four portions
1 Large cauliflower, diced
Unsalted butter
1 Punnet of porcini and shimeji mushrooms
Truffle oil

Heat the oven to 280°C. Oil an oven tray, add butternut and salt to taste, and place in the oven for 15 minutes. Turn the oven down to 180°C and add the fennel portions. Bake for a further 15 minutes.

In a pot, heat oil and place the diced cauliflower and cook through until golden. Add a dollop of butter and purée or mash the cauliflower. Set aside.

Heat a frying pan with olive oil, mushrooms and add a pinch of salt. Remove the mushrooms once they start to go soft and keep to one side.

In the same frying pan, heat olive oil then place hake, skin down (shake it gently to make sure it doesn't stick), and leave it for four to six minutes. Do not turn over.

While your hake is busy cooking, reheat everything, and take the fennel and butternut out of the oven.

Reheat the puréed cauliflower, adding a bit more butter and salt to taste.

Heat the mushrooms and add a little butter.

Remove the fish pan from the heat and turn it gently, still leaving it in the pan.

Using a large serving

spoon, place a large dollop of cauliflower purée on each plate, take the now cooked-through fish and place it on top of the purée. Add the butternut, fennel and mushrooms. Finally, drizzle truffle oil all over. Enjoy!

Prawn cocktail SERVES 4

4 Large tomatoes
18 Large prawns, peeled
Ice cubes
2 Medium avocados
1 Red chilli, diced
Olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
Balsamic reduction

MARIE ROSE SAUCE

Tomato sauce
Mayonnaise
25ml Brandy
Balsamic vinegar
1 Lemon, juiced
Salt and pepper to taste
1 Punnet of romaine lettuce, finely diced
1 Small leek, finely diced
4 Spring onions, finely diced
Ice cubes

DRESSING

250ml Olive oil
80ml Red wine vinegar
Pinch of salt and pepper

In two medium-sized pots, bring water to the boil and blanch tomatoes in one, and prawns in the other.

Put a handful of ice cubes in a bowl with a little water, keep aside for prawns.

To blanch the prawns, place in boiling water for no more than three minutes, then take out and put in ice water for two minutes. Refrigerate prawns.

Place avocados, diced chilli, two teaspoons of

olive oil, salt and pepper in a blender and purée. Place the mixture in the fridge.

To make the Marie rose sauce, mix two tablespoons of tomato sauce, four tablespoons of mayonnaise, brandy, two teaspoons of balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Mix well until pink in colour with a smooth consistency. Place in the fridge.

Add the romaine, leek and spring onions to the sauce and place back in the fridge.

Place ice and water into a bowl. Take the blanched tomatoes and, on the bottom side with a sharp knife, make a cross just enough to cut the skin. Insert one tomato at a time with a slotted ladle for 10 seconds. Then, with the same knife you crossed them with, peel the skin from the cross point. Once peeled, place into the ice water. Repeat the process with the rest of the tomatoes.

Take a tomato, and on the underside make a round incision slightly larger than a five-rand coin creating an opening and a lid. With a teaspoon, empty the inside of the tomato. Repeat process with the rest of the tomatoes.

Take the prawns and lettuce mix out of the fridge, insert two prawns inside each tomato, add sauce mixture, then add the final two prawns to each tomato and cover with the circle cut-



out. Place all four stuffed tomatoes upside down inside a sealed container and place in the fridge until serving.

For the dressing, mix all the ingredients together in a dressing bottle.

To assemble, take out all the ingredients ready to assemble. Take four pasta bowls, and with a large spoon make a nest in the centre of the bowl with the avocado purée. Invert the tomato on top of the container, as some liquid may come out. Then place the tomato, with the cut-out now facing the avocado, on top. Repeat with the rest of the tomatoes.

When ready to serve, shake dressing well and bathe the tomato. Drizzle with a little balsamic reduction.

ABOUT CHEF SANTI

Originally from Spain, chef Santi Louzán has a career spanning over 20 years, within which he's headed UK Michelin-starred establishments. Now in Cape Town, his social chef's table experience, Chef's Table Cape Town, is visited from foodies all over the world. 6

Enchantment **IN THE VINEYARDS**

Weltevrede Wine Estate is a place of sweeping history, colourful characters, beautiful vistas, thriving birdlife, great food, and a truly exceptional résumé of award-winning wines.

BY THEA BECKMAN

Located in the quaint farming town of Bonnievale along the Robertson Wine Valley route, an approximate 2.5 hours drive to the east of Cape Town, lies the wine farm of Weltevrede, meaning 'peace of mind' and 'well satisfied'. Since 1912, the Jonker family (five generations thereof) have

been the keepers, managers, winemakers, and unquenchable source of passion behind Weltevrede. And the very same vineyards that were planted more than a century ago and in the decades since have remained the progenitors of the beautiful repertoire of wines produced here.

"My vision for the wines of Weltevrede is to be a pure

expression of the terroir in which it is rooted. Our wines should have personality dictated by the soil. It should have a sense of place." - Philip Jonker, owner and winemaker.

Today, the 160-hectare Weltevrede Wine Estate boasts enchanting wine-tasting experiences, gorgeous food, and comfortable accommodation, all in a prime location alongside the Breede River.



OVERNIGHT EXPERIENCE

At Weltevrede Wine Estate, a collection of self-catering cottages with gorgeous vistas over the vineyards offer guests all the amenities they need to enjoy a comfortable night or weekend stay, while arrangements for food platters and, of course, the estate's stunning collection of wine can be made prior to arrival.

Morning on the farm is a special time of day, as the sun's first light spills over the lush vineyards and the cacophony of the weaver, hoopoe, canary, and whydah birdcalls start up. After a coffee overlooking the magnificent view, and perhaps a brisk walk around the periphery of the vineyards, along the banks of the Breede River, there's only one place guests should consider going next and that's to Weltevrede's restaurant for breakfast.

A delightful establishment centred on a courtyard, complete with cherub and fountain, the restaurant at Weltevrede serves up a delectable selection of breakfast and lunch options, but if the plan is to indulge in a wine tasting afterwards – and so it should be – guests cannot go wrong with a hearty farm



breakfast with all the trimmings, which includes a crisp and fruity flute of Philip Jonker "The Ring" brut.

WINE TASTINGS AND CELLAR STORIES

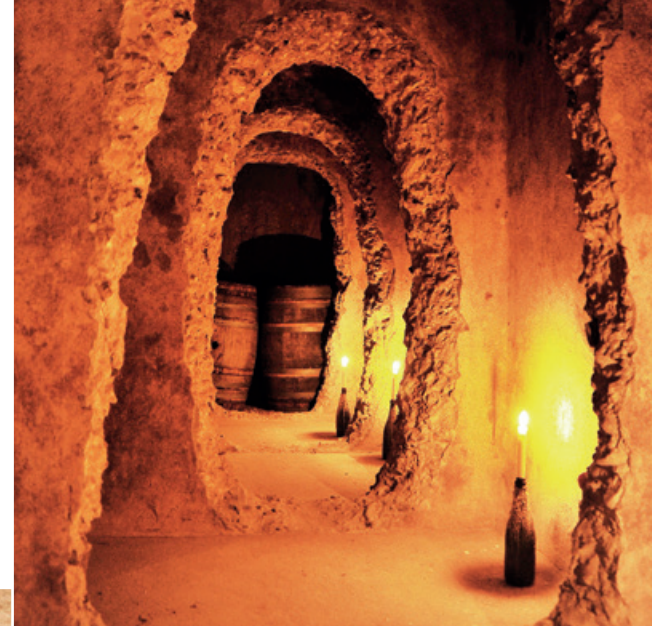
Perhaps Weltevrede's most enchanting offering is a candlelit cellar tour and wine tasting. In the spooky darkness of the estate's underground cellar, where candles are your only source of light and you share the cool with brooding wine bottles and rotund barrels, superstitions and fantasies are aroused, making for a thrilling experience.

Sitting around a central table decked with flickering candles, guests are welcomed to taste their way through Weltevrede's award-winning repertoire of wines, many of which are named after



the soils in which they have been grown, such as the elegant "Place of Rocks" Chardonnay and the intense and sultry "Bedrock Black" Syrah. Then there's the Vanilla Chardonnay from Weltevrede's Simplicity Collection, the Philip Jonker "Entheos" Chardonnay Pinot Noir MCC, the smoky and peppery 1912 Cabernet Sauvignon (2016), and the decadently fruity and creamy 2016 Chardonnay of the same name.

In between sips of wine, guests are treated to stories of Weltevrede's quirky fourth-generation owner and cellar master, Philip Jonker, whose idiosyncratic approach to philanthropy and entrepreneurship makes for the most delightful anecdotes. For those who aren't too fond of dark or close spaces,



“My great-grandfather was the first to plant vineyards in this area. Today, these vines are still anchored deeply in the heart of Weltevrede Estate. One of his vineyards is more than 80 years old and five generations of Jonker's have already tasted the fruit from these same vines. - Philip Jonker”

Weltevrede offers wine tastings in a beautiful tasting room bordering on the restaurant courtyard, where you can also sample the farm's Heritage wines, "Oupa Se Wyn" and "Ouma Se Wyn". These two sweet dessert wines bear the countenances of the estate's founding father, Klaas Jonker, and Philip's grandmother, Lisbeth Jonker respectively.

Sweeping history, quirky

anecdotes, a unique and enchanting candlelit cellar tasting experience, gorgeous wines, accommodation with spectacular views, and delicious fare: Weltevrede Estate truly offers it all, making this an idyllic destination for anyone, local or foreign, looking to experience the Cape winelands at its very best. **SV**

www.weltevrede.com





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truth in WINE

We spent a day at Zandvliet Wine Estate cooking with the most amazing wine, gin and fresh fruit produced by the farm

recipes **TOINETTE DU TOIT** styling **KATE TURNER**
photography **SAMANTHA PINTO**



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TS&CS ON PAGE 74



CAPE CITRUS G&TS

MAKES XX / PREP TIME XX min

COOK TIME XX min

INGREDIENTS

For the citrus syrup

250 g sugar
Peels from **2–3** ClemenGolds
½ cup lime juice
½ cup water
50 ml ClemenGold Gin
1 tbsp lime juice
50 ml orange iced tea
3 dashes orange bitters

METHOD

1. Add the sugar, peels, lime juice and water to a pot and simmer until the sugar dissolves.
2. Bring to the boil and then simmer until syrupy. Strain.
3. Add the remaining ingredients and 2 tsp syrup to a cocktail shaker filled with ice.
4. Serve in a lowball glass filled with ice. Garnish with thyme.

JOIN THE GIN REVOLUTION

CLEMENGOLD GIN

R50 / 40 ML, R365 / 500 ML,
R599 / 1 L



ABOUT ZANDVLIET

Nestled in the Robertson Wine Valley, this home-of-Shiraz is the perfect spot for visitors to enjoy wine tastings as well as blend, bottle, cork, wax and label their own bottle of wine.



@ZANDVLIETWINE

ZANDVLIET.CO.ZA

4. Cut into 6 strips of equal size. Place the strips on top of one another and cut into 6 again.
5. Layer the dough in the prepared tin and cover with a tea towel. Allow to proof in a warm spot for 30–45 minutes, until doubled in size.
6. Preheat oven to 180°C.
7. Pour the cream evenly over the loaf and bake for 30–35 minutes, until golden brown.
8. Allow to cool and rest in the pan for 20–30 minutes. Run a knife along the edge and tip out.

For the home-made salted caramel

1. In a pot over medium heat, add the sugar and butter. Stir constantly until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture has turned a caramel colour.
2. Remove from the heat and slowly whisk in the cream. Be careful as the mixture will bubble up and splatter.
3. Whisk in the vanilla and salt.

For the ice cream

1. Add all the ingredients to a bowl and beat together until just combined, making sure you don't overmix.
2. Freeze until ready to serve. MK

PERFECT PAIRING
ZANDVLIET MUSCAT R110



SAY WHAT?

ClemenGold: A flavoursome, easy-to-peel and virtually seedless mandarin (generally known in SA as a naartjie) that is grown all over the world, including the Robertson wine valley. If you are unable to get your hands on ClemenGolds at your local grocery store, simply use your favourite small, soft citrus.

CINNAMON BUN PULL-APART BREAD WITH ICE CREAM

SERVES 10–15

PREP TIME xx min

COOK TIME xx min

INGREDIENTS

For the bread

- 1 cup caster sugar
- 4 tbsp cinnamon
- 1 batch roosterkoek dough
- 4 tbsp butter, melted

1 cup cream

For the home-made salted caramel

- 1 cup sugar
- 4 tbsp butter
- 1 cup cream
- 1 tbsp vanilla essence
- 1 tsp salt

For the ice cream

- 3 bars chocolate-covered honeycomb, crushed
- 2 L store-bought vanilla ice cream

Handful ClemenGold segments, chopped

METHOD

For the bread

1. Mix together the sugar and cinnamon, and grease and flour a bread tin.
2. On a lightly-floured work surface, gently knead the dough until smooth. Cover and rest for 5 minutes.
3. Roll out into a long rectangle and brush with melted butter. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar.

SPEND THE NIGHT

WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF FARMS TO VISIT AND WINE TO SIP, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO FIT IT ALL INTO ONE DAY. WE EXPLORED THE ROBERTSON WINE VALLEY AND FOUND THE PERFECT PLACES TO END THE DAY

Words *Robyn Lane*



JAN HARMSGAT HISTORIC FARMS AND COUNTRY HOUSE

5-star

Before dinner, we headed through the vineyards and pomegranate orchards in an open-top Jeep, climbing up the hill, past wildebeest, up further, until we reached what one could call the ultimate viewing spot. Fitted with a fire pit for winter evenings, we had a clear 360-degree view of the valley below and enjoyed a breathtaking sunset.

After a tasty two-course meal, we headed through the gardens and past the lap pool leading to our rooms to retire for the night. Breakfast was a feast like no other, and in the colder months, sipping on their home-made pomegranate juice in a seat next to the fireplace is what dreams are made of.

Be sure to get yourself a jar of pomegranate honey before you leave. You will not be disappointed.

janharmgat.com



EXCELSIOR MANOR GUESTHOUSE

4-star

The original farmhouse – which is referred to as a ‘feather palace’, as it was built on the wealth of the ostrich feather boom – has now been converted into a modest guest house. In spite of having undergone some major renovations, the building still boasts original features and style. Each room is decorated with individual flair that feels so homely, and with their windows overlooking the front garden, you might not want to leave.

Breakfast beside the pool was a highlight for us, with a full buffet to indulge in while admiring the vineyards and mountains all around.

It feels like a home away from home, and the perfect way to rest up before continuing the wine-tasting travels at their wine farm next door. There, you can blend, bottle and label your own wine to take home with you!

excelsior.co.za



Route 62

EXPLORE THE AREA
INCLUDING MCGREGOR,
BONNIEVALE AND THE
BREDE RIVER!



Sweet Valley Highs

THE ROBERTSON VALLEY IS BRIMMING WITH A WEALTH OF SECRETS GUARANTEED TO ENHANCE YOUR DRINKING EXPERIENCES. WE CLUE YOU IN ON OUR TOP FOUR



Pomegranate to the People

Rarely seen by South African consumers, harvest-ready export pomegranates are a sight not easily forgotten. They're abundant, they're enormous, and they're handpicked with a cultivated precision necessary to ensure the blemish-free fruit are fit for Insta-worthy shelves on Ikea countertops across Europe. They also contain some of the most powerful antioxidants of all fruits, with cancer-fighting benefits among others. That is why Jan Harmsgat Historic Farm is now juicing a portion of their 38 hectares' worth of pomegranates, ensuring it remains free of colourants, flavourings and additional sugars, and boxing it at source for delis around the country.

📍 janharmsgat.com



IF MICHELIN-STARRED CHEF JAN HENDRIK VAN DER WESTHUIZEN CALLS, ANSWER

That was the lesson learnt by Paul René MCC producer Henk van Niekerk, who nearly rejected a call from an unknown number set on disturbing his nap. Ten minutes later, one thrilled winemaker was to have his sparkling wine on the Francophile's Nice restaurant wine list. But you needn't hop a plane to France to satisfy your craving for bubbles; Paul René MCC's tasting room is now open daily. 'Every day is a reason to celebrate,' as Henk says.

📍 paulrenemcc.co.za



Girl Power at Mont Blois Wine Estate

Winemaker Nina-Mari Bruwer knows a thing or two about forging ahead in a man's world. Not only is she praised by the valley's male-dominant industry (some of whom consider her Groot Streen Chenin Blanc 2016 to be bad-boy rebellious), she has also bucked some of the vinicultural traditions of six generations of Bruwer patriarchs, the outcome being deliciously spicy and candied single-vineyard offerings. Visiting Robertson? Mont Blois' historic homestead is a short distance from the town, along De Hoop Road. By appointment only. 📍 montblois.co.za



Stemware Matters

Championing this belief is Rowan Beattie, owner of boutique winery Esona, who's partnered with master glass makers Riedel to offer wine lovers the glass slipper of tastings. Descend into the 95-year-old building's candle-lit kuite (fermentation tanks) to learn, comparative to grape-specific stemware, just how counterproductive 'joker' glasses are for sipping on fine wines. And the gimmick works: the Esona Chardonnay 2016, with its grapes picked in three stages and paired with orange dark chocolate, is especially rewarding. 📍 esona.co.za

Enchantment **IN THE VINEYARDS**

Weltevrede Wine Estate is a place of sweeping history, colourful characters, beautiful vistas, thriving birdlife, great food, and a truly exceptional résumé of award-winning wines.

BY THEA BECKMAN

Located in the quaint farming town of Bonnievale along the Robertson Wine Valley route, an approximate 2.5 hours drive to the east of Cape Town, lies the wine farm of Weltevrede, meaning 'peace of mind' and 'well satisfied'. Since 1912, the Jonker family (five generations thereof) have

been the keepers, managers, winemakers, and unquenchable source of passion behind Weltevrede. And the very same vineyards that were planted more than a century ago and in the decades since have remained the progenitors of the beautiful repertoire of wines produced here.

"My vision for the wines of Weltevrede is to be a pure

expression of the terroir in which it is rooted. Our wines should have personality dictated by the soil. It should have a sense of place." - Philip Jonker, owner and winemaker.

Today, the 160-hectare Weltevrede Wine Estate boasts enchanting wine-tasting experiences, gorgeous food, and comfortable accommodation, all in a prime location alongside the Breede River.



OVERNIGHT EXPERIENCE

At Weltevrede Wine Estate, a collection of self-catering cottages with gorgeous vistas over the vineyards offer guests all the amenities they need to enjoy a comfortable night or weekend stay, while arrangements for food platters and, of course, the estate's stunning collection of wine can be made prior to arrival.

Morning on the farm is a special time of day, as the sun's first light spills over the lush vineyards and the cacophony of the weaver, hoopoe, canary, and whydah birdcalls start up. After a coffee overlooking the magnificent view, and perhaps a brisk walk around the periphery of the vineyards, along the banks of the Breede River, there's only one place guests should consider going next and that's to Weltevrede's restaurant for breakfast.

A delightful establishment centred on a courtyard, complete with cherub and fountain, the restaurant at Weltevrede serves up a delectable selection of breakfast and lunch options, but if the plan is to indulge in a wine tasting afterwards – and so it should be – guests cannot go wrong with a hearty farm



breakfast with all the trimmings, which includes a crisp and fruity flute of Philip Jonker "The Ring" brut.

WINE TASTINGS AND CELLAR STORIES

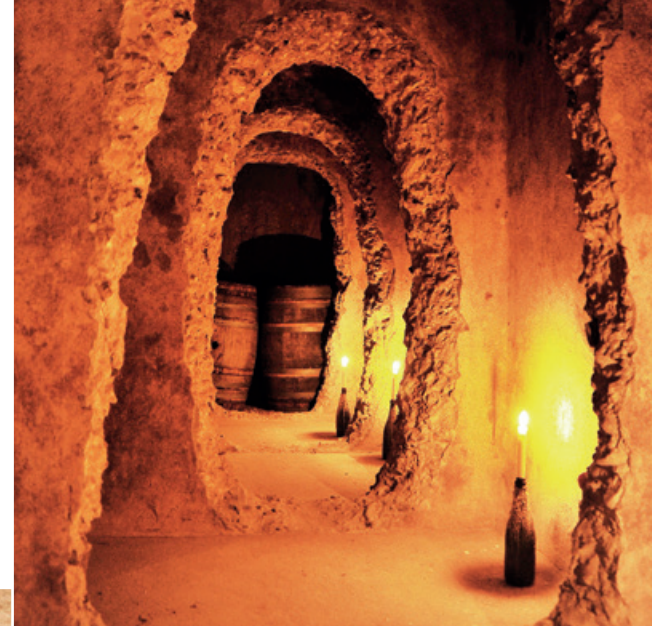
Perhaps Weltevrede's most enchanting offering is a candlelit cellar tour and wine tasting. In the spooky darkness of the estate's underground cellar, where candles are your only source of light and you share the cool with brooding wine bottles and rotund barrels, superstitions and fantasies are aroused, making for a thrilling experience.

Sitting around a central table decked with flickering candles, guests are welcomed to taste their way through Weltevrede's award-winning repertoire of wines, many of which are named after



the soils in which they have been grown, such as the elegant "Place of Rocks" Chardonnay and the intense and sultry "Bedrock Black" Syrah. Then there's the Vanilla Chardonnay from Weltevrede's Simplicity Collection, the Philip Jonker "Entheos" Chardonnay Pinot Noir MCC, the smoky and peppery 1912 Cabernet Sauvignon (2016), and the decadently fruity and creamy 2016 Chardonnay of the same name.

In between sips of wine, guests are treated to stories of Weltevrede's quirky fourth-generation owner and cellar master, Philip Jonker, whose idiosyncratic approach to philanthropy and entrepreneurship makes for the most delightful anecdotes. For those who aren't too fond of dark or close spaces,



“My great-grandfather was the first to plant vineyards in this area. Today, these vines are still anchored deeply in the heart of Weltevrede Estate. One of his vineyards is more than 80 years old and five generations of Jonker's have already tasted the fruit from these same vines. - Philip Jonker”

Weltevrede offers wine tastings in a beautiful tasting room bordering on the restaurant courtyard, where you can also sample the farm's Heritage wines, "Oupa Se Wyn" and "Ouma Se Wyn". These two sweet dessert wines bear the countenances of the estate's founding father, Klaas Jonker, and Philip's grandmother, Lisbeth Jonker respectively.

Sweeping history, quirky

anecdotes, a unique and enchanting candlelit cellar tasting experience, gorgeous wines, accommodation with spectacular views, and delicious fare: Weltevrede Estate truly offers it all, making this an idyllic destination for anyone, local or foreign, looking to experience the Cape winelands at its very best. **SV**

www.weltevrede.com



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📍 janharmsgat.com



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📍 paulrenemcc.co.za



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SPEND THE NIGHT

WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF FARMS TO VISIT AND WINE TO SIP, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO FIT IT ALL INTO ONE DAY. WE EXPLORED THE ROBERTSON WINE VALLEY AND FOUND THE PERFECT PLACES TO END THE DAY

Words *Robyn Lane*



JAN HARMSGAT HISTORIC FARMS AND COUNTRY HOUSE

5-star

Before dinner, we headed through the vineyards and pomegranate orchards in an open-top Jeep, climbing up the hill, past wildebeest, up further, until we reached what one could call the ultimate viewing spot. Fitted with a fire pit for winter evenings, we had a clear 360-degree view of the valley below and enjoyed a breathtaking sunset.

After a tasty two-course meal, we headed through the gardens and past the lap pool leading to our rooms to retire for the night. Breakfast was a feast like no other, and in the colder months, sipping on their home-made pomegranate juice in a seat next to the fireplace is what dreams are made of.

Be sure to get yourself a jar of pomegranate honey before you leave. You will not be disappointed.

janharmgat.com



EXCELSIOR MANOR GUESTHOUSE

4-star

The original farmhouse – which is referred to as a ‘feather palace’, as it was built on the wealth of the ostrich feather boom – has now been converted into a modest guest house. In spite of having undergone some major renovations, the building still boasts original features and style. Each room is decorated with individual flair that feels so homely, and with their windows overlooking the front garden, you might not want to leave.

Breakfast beside the pool was a highlight for us, with a full buffet to indulge in while admiring the vineyards and mountains all around.

It feels like a home away from home, and the perfect way to rest up before continuing the wine-tasting travels at their wine farm next door. There, you can blend, bottle and label your own wine to take home with you!

excelsior.co.za



Route 62

EXPLORE THE AREA
INCLUDING MCGREGOR,
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truth in WINE

We spent a day at Zandvliet Wine Estate cooking with the most amazing wine, gin and fresh fruit produced by the farm

recipes **TOINETTE DU TOIT** styling **KATE TURNER**
photography **SAMANTHA PINTO**



YOU COULD
WIN 1 OF 3
**CLEMENGOLD
GIN HAMPERS**
TO THE VALUE OF
R500 EACH!

SMS 'MKGin' and your
ID number to 44001.
TS&CS ON PAGE 74



CAPE CITRUS G&TS

MAKES XX / PREP TIME XX min

COOK TIME XX min

INGREDIENTS

For the citrus syrup

250 g sugar
Peels from **2–3** ClemenGolds
½ cup lime juice
½ cup water
50 ml ClemenGold Gin
1 tbsp lime juice
50 ml orange iced tea
3 dashes orange bitters

METHOD

1. Add the sugar, peels, lime juice and water to a pot and simmer until the sugar dissolves.
2. Bring to the boil and then simmer until syrupy. Strain.
3. Add the remaining ingredients and 2 tsp syrup to a cocktail shaker filled with ice.
4. Serve in a lowball glass filled with ice. Garnish with thyme.

JOIN THE GIN REVOLUTION

CLEMENGOLD GIN

R50 / 40 ML, R365 / 500 ML,
R599 / 1 L



HOME-MADE SHIRAZ JAM

MAKES xx jars

PREP TIME xx min

COOK TIME xx min

INGREDIENTS

2.5 kg Shiraz grapes
(or red grapes)

2.5 kg sugar

METHOD

1. Add the grapes and sugar to a pot over low heat. Slowly cook until the sugar is dissolved, about 45 minutes.
2. Increase the heat and simmer until the jam thickens to a syrupy consistency.
3. While simmering, the seeds from the grape will float to the surface. Use a ladle to skim these and any foam from the top to ensure a nice clear jam.
4. Store in a sterilised jar that seals tightly.



HOW TO PUT TOGETHER A ZANDVLIET CHARCUTERIE BOARD

The cheese: Blue rock, Camembert, mature Cheddar and Brie

The meat: Coppa ham and Parma ham

The fruit: Seasonal fruit including grapes, kiwis, granadillas, apples and mandarins

The crunch: Roasted cashews, olives and Melba toast

The wine: Zandvliet Chardonnay (R110) and Zandvliet Estate Shiraz (R110)



BUILD YOUR OWN

Set up a build-your-own-shawarma station for your guests with plenty of your favourite toppings. We love sliced tomatoes, sliced pickles, sprouts, fresh herbs, marinated cabbage, marinated red onions, hummus and aioli.

KAROO SHAWARMAS

SERVES xx / PREP TIME xx min

COOK TIME xx min

INGREDIENTS

For the lamb

- 1 boneless leg of lamb
- 10 garlic cloves
- 4 spring onions, chopped
- 1 onion, roughly chopped
- ½ cup dried ClemenGold rings
- 1 thumb ginger, chopped
- 1 cup soy sauce
- 4 tbsp honey
- 1 cup Zandvliet Kalkveld Shiraz
- ½ cup olive oil

3 tbsp chopped coriander

¾ tsp coarse sea salt

For the roosterkoek

2.5 kg flour

10 g instant dry yeast

1 tbsp sugar

1 tbsp salt

500–750 ml warm water

METHOD

For the lamb

1. Butterfly the lamb and sprinkle it with the salt.
2. Add the garlic, spring onions, onion, dried ClemenGold slices (including the rind) and ginger to a food processor. Blend.
3. Add the soy sauce, honey, Shiraz and oil. Blend again.
4. Place the lamb in a ziplock bag and evenly cover with the marinade. Marinate for 4 hours.
5. Braai the lamb over hot coals until nicely charred, for 6 minutes on each side. Then



15 minutes per side. Allow to rest for 10 minutes.

6. Slice the lamb and top with dried ClemenGold slices, coriander, sea salt and lime wedges.

For the roosterkoek

1. Add the flour, yeast, sugar and salt into a bowl and mix well.
2. Gradually add the water and knead. When the dough starts to pull away from your hands and the bowl, it is ready.
3. Use your hands to mould into a rectangular roosterkoek.
4. Braai over medium coals until there are lovely griddle marks on each side and the dough is cooked through.

GET COOKING
ZANDVLIET KALKVELD
SHIRAZ R220

Pop Those Corks

IT'S SUMMERTIME!

BEST BUBBLIES FOR THE SEASON

No one ever needed a reason to pop open a bottle of bubbly – isn't life meant to be celebrated every day? But rather than defaulting to your regular grocery store choice, how about changing it up with one of these delicious, effervescent offerings from lauded local and international wineries? It is the festive season, after all; cheers to that!

BY THEA BECKMAN



**PHILIP JONKER BRUT
ENTHEOS NV**

From Weltevrede Estate that flanks the Breede River Valley in Robertson comes this 60% Chardonnay and 40% Pinot Noir Cap Classique. The Philip Jonker Brut Entheos NV, meaning "enthusiasm", delivers a creamy, biscuity nose with notes of green pear and lemon, and is characterised by fine bubbles, a palate of winter melon, and a slight smokiness.

www.weltevrede.com

Available from: R140

**GRAHAM BECK BLISS
NECTAR ROSÉ**

This alluringly pink-hued rosé style MCC delivers on its promise of "nectar" with a seductive sweetness, honeyed tones, and strawberry aromas complemented by hints of spiced peach, creamy raspberry, and subtle floral nuances. The Graham Beck Bliss Nectar Rosé is the perfect bubbly for those who like something a little less dry in style.

www.grahambeck.com

Available from: R165

**DURBANVILLE HILLS
SPARKLING ROSÉ**

This approachable and affordable sparkling rosé from Durbanville Hills wine estate in the cool climate region of Durbanville is a bouquet of citrus, ripe fruit, rose petals, strawberries, and Turkish delight, followed by flavours of grapefruit, ripe berries, and candyfloss.

www.durbanvillehills.co.za

Available from: R90

LOCAL AND LEKKER**KRONE KAAIMANSGAT
BLANC DE BLANC 2016**

Handcrafted in small batches on Twee Jonge Gezellen estate in Tulbagh, the Krone Blanc de Blancs 2016 is highly expressive of vintage and terroir. This 100% Chardonnay MCC is pale gold in colour and delivers mandarin peel on the nose, classic white-fruited chardonnay elegance, a full, soft mousse, and a flinty finish.

www.kronemcc.com

Available from: R430

**STEENBERG 1682
PINOT NOIR MCC NV**

Having landed the trophy for Best Rosé MCC and Double Gold medal at the Amorim Cap Classique 2019 challenge, Steenberg's 1682 Pinot Noir MCC NV is a reliably excellent choice. Pale pink in hue, this fresh and fruity bubbly has a very fine mousse, aromas of red berries and toasted brioche, a creamy texture, and bright acidity.

www.steenbergfarm.com

Available from: R235

**L'ORMARINS BLANC
DE BLANCS 2013**

From the regal estate of Anthonij Rupert in Franschhoek comes the fresh, citrus-laced, and perfumed L'Ormarins Blanc de Blancs 2013. This MCC delivers a lip-smackingly taut, zesty, and crisp palate that opens up into ripe, fleshy fruits of orange, apple, and stone fruit before a rich creaminess washes over.

www.rupertwines.com

Available from: R220

INTERNATIONAL BUBBLIES

MOËT & CHANDON ICE IMPÉRIAL

Ice Impérial from Moët & Chandon is the first and only Champagne specially created to be enjoyed over ice. This new experience combines fun and fresh sensations while remaining true to the Moët & Chandon style of bright fruitiness, seductive palate, and elegant maturity.

www.moet.com

Available from: R695

DOM PÉRIGNON ROSÉ

One of the world's most recognised names in Champagne, Dom Pérignon from the house of Moët & Chandon has released its 2006 Rosé, a generous, rounded, and rich wine with a rose gold, coppery hue, a rich, creamy nose, pleasant bitterness, and fine mousse.

www.domperignon.com

Available from: R3 900

RUINART BLANC DE BLANCS

Established in 1729, Maison Ruinart is the oldest Champagne house, which sources most of its Chardonnay grapes from the Côte des Blancs and the Montagne de Reims of the Champagne region in France. The pale golden yellow Champagne shows intense freshness and ripe citrus notes on the nose, followed by a supple, harmonious, and rounded palate.

www.ruinart.com

Available from: R995

BOTTEGA GOLD DOCG

This award-winning and internationally acclaimed Prosecco DOCG is recognised for its superb flavour, perlage and freshness. The elegance, freshness, and liveliness of its bubbles stem from the beauty and tradition of its territory, where unmistakable panoramas are shaped by vineyards. This Prosecco boasts a clear fruity and floral nose with an elegant, fresh palate.

www.profumi.co.za

Available from: R499

CHAMPAGNE NICOLAS FEUILLATTE RÉSERVE EXCLUSIVE BRUT ROSÉ NV

The Réserve Brut Rosé is the latest spring offering from Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte, the number one selling Champagne brand in France and the third in the world. A blend of 45% Pinot Noir, 45% Pinot Meunier, and 10% Chardonnay, this bubbly is inspired by the famous Sakura (cherry blossom) season in Japan.

www.nicolas-feuillatte.com

Available from: R780

BOTTEGA WHITE GOLD VENEZIA DOC

Bottega White Gold is a Venezia DOC wine with great character blended from Glera, Chardonnay, and Pinot grapes. This Brut sparkling wine is fresh, elegant, and wholly expressive of the terroir in which its grapes are grown: the provinces of Treviso and Venice.

www.profumi.co.za

Available from: R499

BOTTEGA MOSCATO ROSÉ

This rosé sparkling wine from Bottega is characterised by its distinctive sweet taste and sweet, spicy fragrance of rose, raspberry, sage, thyme, and marjoram.

www.profumi.co.za

Available from: R499

BUBBLY TASTE

ROBERTSON CRUISER

ESCAPE THE CITY AND MEANDER ALONG THE ROBERTSON WINE ROUTE FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF WINE EXPERIENCES WITH LAID-BACK COUNTRY CHARM

Words *Cassidy Nydabl*

A mere two-hour drive outside the bustling city of Cape Town, the Robertson Wine Valley wanders its way between the Langeberg and Riviersonderend mountain ranges, mimicking the curve of the Breede River. It's the perfect location for a quick stop-in while doing a road trip along Route 62, or as a destination in itself – the wineries, scenery and quirky country spots on offer will charm you.

ROOIBERG WINERY

It's hard to miss Rooiberg Winery on a Robertson Wine Valley exploration: The enormous red chair (the biggest in Africa, as it is boasted) sits stately at the entrance, welcoming wine tasters with a crimson greeting. Now celebrating 50 years, Rooiberg is a culmination of what was once a group of eleven wine farms alongside three separate rivers – the result is an estate with an extraordinary diversity in terroir, which gives rise to a wide range of wine styles. Proudly

sustainable, and practising fair trade and ethical labour policies, Rooiberg prides itself in being an innovating winery. Be sure to arrive hungry, as the display of freshly baked pastries and breads at the Bodega de Vinho, the resident restaurant, along with the home-made preserves at its farm stall, make for a scrumptious snack.

Must try: Rooiberg Pinotage Reserve 2016 (R110)

Trading hours for wine tasting and restaurant:

Monday – Friday: 8 am – 5 pm

Saturdays: 9 am – 4 pm

Sundays: Closed

ZANDVLiet WINE ESTATE

Think of Zandvliet, and Shiraz should immediately come to mind. One of the very first wineries in South Africa to bottle this cultivar in the 1870s, Zandvliet now produces some of the best versions to sip on. The magic of the estate is found in the *kalkveld* soil, with its firm acidity,

concentrated flavours and mineral traces that are coaxied from grape to bottle. Savour a taste of its offerings in the estate's plush new tasting room, the aptly named Kalkveld Lounge, which is part of greater renovations to the historic Cape Dutch-style homestead. Zandvliet also offers you a chance to try your hand at creating your own unique wine blend to take home, and a ClemenGold-paired tasting.

Must try: Zandvliet Kalkveld Shiraz 2015 (R215)

Trading hours for wine tasting:

Monday – Friday: 9 am – 5 pm

Saturdays: 10 am – 5 pm

Sundays: Closed

MONT BLOIS WYNLANDGOED

The Mont Blois Wine Estate and the Bruwer family who run it go back a long way – six generations, to be exact. The estate has been in the family since 1869, passed on from one passionate Bruwer winemaker to the next. Ernst Bruwer,

the current owner, and his wife, Nina-Mari, met while studying viticulture and oenology, and are both invested in making site-specific wines that do the Mont Blois family history proud. Nina-Mari has established herself firmly as the resident winemaker par excellence, and produces an exquisite selection of Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc and Muscadel.

Must try: Mont Blois Groot Steen Chenin Blanc 2016 (R295)

Trading hours for wine tasting:
By appointment only

JAN HARMMSGAT

This country house and wine estate has all the assets that make the Robertson wine route so charming: A lustrous history, a stately Overberg-style house with understated elegance and old-school comfort, and a unique, natural approach to winemaking. Jan Harmsgat, named after the first owner of the estate, boasts accommodation in the original homestead, a fine-dining restaurant and a tasting room offering single-block JHG wines, now in their fourth vintage. Their winemaking philosophy is natural and very forward-thinking: Each wine is made from grapes harvested within its six-square hectare units, proudly displaying its unique terroir. Whether you're staying at the guest house or just dropping in for a taste, be sure to make time for a tour through the backlands, and a sunset picnic and wine tasting under the pecan-nut trees.

Must try: JHG Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 (R900 for a case of six bottles)

Trading hours for restaurant (booking essential):

Monday – Sunday: 8 am – 9 pm

EXCELSIOR WINE ESTATE

Good wine is made in the vineyards. At least, that's the philosophy at Excelsior Wine Estate. A wine estate, tasting facility, four-star guest manor, conference centre and deli, this fifth-generation estate is a must-stop along the route. Excelsior is one of the oldest wine farms in the area, and specialises in full-bodied Cabernet Sauvignons that are produced from strict vineyard practices that ensure a well-ripened harvest. Until now, the estate

WINE



Excelsior Wine Estate



Zandvliet Wine Estate



Rooiberg Winery



Jan Harmsgat

WINE

has been exporting 80% of their wines to the thirsty US market, but are focusing more and more on showing local wine tasters what they have to offer. When on a visit, be sure to stop off at their deli, Graze, to pick up a freshly baked *roosterbrood* sandwich (or two), with your choice of fillings, to nibble on the expansive lawn overlooking the farm's dam. A well-positioned jungle gym will keep the little ones entertained.

Must try: Excelsior Evanthius Cabernet Sauvignon 2012 (R156)

Trading hours for wine tasting:

Monday – Friday: 10 am – 4 pm

Saturdays: 10 am – 3 pm

Sundays: Closed

ESONA

A visit to Esona begins by following a snaking path through the vineyards – an apt entrance to a boutique estate that bases their winemaking on celebrating the subtle but distinct differences in each single-block vineyard. Guests are treated to a 'Taste the Difference' wine tasting: Two vintages each of three single-vineyard cultivars, paired with chocolate and music, and served in grape-specific Riedel glasses. The tasting is carefully curated and hosted in a dramatic, candlelit Old Cellar, or *kuip* (100-year-old underground fermentation tank), enticing the tasters to experience the rich history of the estate for themselves. Each tasting guide has been expertly trained, and their passion for the wine is palpable (and infectious). Caryl's Deli upstairs offers a delicious range of snacking boards and sandwiches.

Must try: Esona Frankly My Dear Blanc de Noir (R75)

Trading hours for wine tasting:

Monday – Friday: 9 am – 5 pm

Saturdays and public holidays:

10 am – 4 pm

PAUL RENÉ MCC

A chic brand of bubbly that is made with care and consideration, the location for Paul René MCC perfectly depicts the brand. At a tasting, you'll find yourself sitting in the garden overlooking the picturesque Langeberg Mountains, sipping on vintage MCC brut. The effervescent wine is the passion of Henk van Niekerk and his wife Monica, who have combined their creative skills to thoughtfully develop every aspect of the trend-setting brand. Each bottle of bubbly is fermented for no less than 20 months on the lees, resulting in a vibrant mousse with apricot and green-apple freshness, and a deliciously dry finish.

Must try: Paul René Brut (R185)

Trading hours for wine tasting:

Monday – Friday: 8 am – 5 pm

Saturdays and Sundays:

By appointment only

VAN LOVEREN

Truly a full-day experience for the whole family, Van Loveren (and its brother brand, the much-loved Four Cousins) is run by the four Retief cousins: Hennie, Bussell, Neil and Phillip. The lush gardens are dotted with grand trees, each planted to commemorate a historical, political or family moment in time. Their garden tour is a fascinating walk through the gardens, uncovering these personal and chronicled stories. The estate also offers a cellar tour, uncovering the workings of the winery, mountain-bike and hiking trails and a range of interesting pairings, from cheese to nougat with your wine under the trees. Little ones can join in too and will love the kids' tasting with Papillon grape juice.

Must try: Van Loveren Family Vineyards Christina Van Loveren Sauvignon Blanc 2017 (R115)

Trading hours for wine tasting:

Monday – Friday: 8:30 am – 5 pm

Saturdays and public holidays:

9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Sundays: 11 am – 3 pm



Mont blois



Van Loveren

WIN

R5 000 IN CASH

Automatic entry for all
LivingSpace subscribers.

Details on page 66

THE MAGIC OF ROBERTSON VALLEY

On a recent visit, Phakama Mbonambi saw how the wine estates in this region tap into their rich history and artistry to offer singularly pleasing wines

After a long, hard year, you may be wondering where to go to unwind over the festive season. Robertson Valley – just two hours from Cape Town – is a fantastic option. There's plenty to do there and, as I discovered while spending three days there recently with friends, the valley produces a variety of sublime wines, of which the most impressive is Chardonnay.

Robertson Valley lies on the famous Route 62, which meanders between Cape Town and Oudtshoorn, the Langkloof and Port Elizabeth, offering a shorter, more scenic alternative to the N2 highway. The towns of Ashton, Bonnievale, McGregor, Montagu and Robertson are nestled in the valley.

With such a wide variety of wonderful wine estates to choose from, where do you start? Here's how our trip unfolded...

Day 1 Rooiberg Winery

We started at Rooiberg Winery, situated on the R60 just outside Robertson. It's famous for its range of award-winning creations, such as the Pinotage Reserve,

Chardonnay Reserve, Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, Chenin Blanc, Alexkia Merlot Reserve, Shiraz Reserve and the award-winning Muscadell.

We were treated to a wonderful food and wine pairing, and visitors can also enjoy freshly baked pastries and breads at the on-site Bodega de Vinho restaurant. Situated close to Rooiberg's entrance is a giant red chair – billed as Africa's biggest chair – onto which visitors can climb (with the help of a ladder) to enjoy unparalleled views of the area around the estate. www.rooiberg.co.za

Zandvliet Estate

Next we trooped to Zandvliet Estate on the outskirts of the valley. It's known as the home of Shiraz, upholding a tradition going back to the 1870s, and has won numerous awards for this varietal. In addition to Shiraz and Chardonnay, Zandvliet also produces white and red blends, Rosé and Vintage Liqueur Wine that's made from Shiraz and is known on the farm as "very lekker wyn". We sampled the wines in the comfort of the recently revamped and sumptuously decorated Kalkveld Lounge.

The estate belongs to ANB Investments, owners of

Right: The famous Rooiberg Red Chair.



© Marne Marais



© Marne Marais

Above: Excelsior Estate.

Right: Kibali, from Windfall Wine Farm.

the ClemenGold and Citrogold citrus brands – a huge producer of naartjies and clementines. Clementines are cultivated on the land and are added to a range of delightful, handcrafted products – gin, honey, marmalade and chocolate – to give them a wonderful citrus zing. Whether it's sampling Chardonnay with marmalade or trying a Shiraz with a chocolate or, perhaps, a Muscat with biscotti, pairing products with the right wine is a delightful exercise here. www.zandvliet.co.za

Windfall Wine Farm

Later we headed to the boutique Windfall Wine Farm in the Agterklipphoogte Valley. The place is an absolute gem. The tasting room, set beyond a rolling lawn, is tastefully decorated and when we got there in the late afternoon, the estate was enveloped in stillness.

Windfall produces small quantities of Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, a red blend, a Méthode Cap Classique and a sparkling wine from Chardonnay grapes (Blanc de Blanc), as well as a brandy called The Hunter. We did another wine tasting and food pairing, this time with a platter of cold meats, cheeses, crackers and an assortment of fruit.

Property developer Robert Alexander owns the farm and Kobus van der Merwe is the winemaker. All

the estate's wines are superbly smooth and refined, pairing well with food. Every sip tells you that you're drinking a special boutique wine. By the time we arrived at the Four Cousins Restaurant for dinner, the wine was happily coursing through my veins and, by the time I went to bed I was thoroughly exhausted, but also entirely relaxed.

www.windfallwine.co.za

Day 2 Excelsior Wine Estate

Breakfast at Graze at Excelsior Wine Estate – owned by the De Wet family since 1870 – was followed by a tour of the farm, where three categories of wine –

Reserve Range, Classic Range and Purebred Range – are produced. Not only can you sample the various blends, but you can also create your own red blend, then bottle and label it in the tasting room beside the farm's dam. It's a simple and rewarding exercise and a guide is always on hand to help. www.excelsior.co.za

Weltevrede Estate

Our next stop was Weltevrede Estate in Bonnievale, which has been in the hands of the Jonker family for four generations, since 1912. In a candlelit underground tasting cellar built a century ago, we sampled a range of the estate's wines: the Weltevrede 1912 Chardonnay, the Weltevrede 1912 ➤





Left: Jan Harmsgat Country House.

Below: Weltevrede Estate's underground cellars.

© Andy Lund



It was time to move on to Esona, a small boutique wine estate nestled beside the Breede River, where wine-making is an almost sacred activity.

Cabernet Sauvignon, a Méthode Cape Classique called Entheos Chardonnay-Pinot Noir and Bedrock Black Syrah, as well as two heritage wines (Oupa se Wyn and Ouma se Wyn) that were created in honour of the Jonkers' ancestors. The estate excels at Chardonnay due to the calcareous soils and shale-rock slopes between Bonnievale and Robertson.

With its pale golden colour and intense flavours of ripe lemons and

dried mango with a chalky finish, the Weltevrede 1912 Chardonnay was definitely a winner for me. “*Weltevrede*”, an Afrikaans word meaning “well satisfied”, summed up our feelings as we trooped out of the underground darkness into the glorious sunshine, ready to sample yet another jewel somewhere else in the valley.

www.weltevrede.com

Esona Boutique Wines

It was time to move on to Esona, a small boutique wine estate nestled beside the Breede River, where winemaking is an almost sacred activity. Run by husband-and-wife team Rowan and Caryl Beattie, the estate produces small batches of delectable wine from its single vineyard.

The estate began operating in 2004 and its first bottle

hit the market in 2010. The Beatties haven't looked back, delighting wine lovers with their delectable wines. A small team, which knows every vine through their hand-picking of the grapes, maintains the farm.

An old cellar has been converted into a tasting venue where we did a Taste the Difference pairing that included two vintages of Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Shiraz with comparisons between Joker glasses and Riedel grape-specific glasses, paired with fruit preserves and chocolates. Even the background music was paired with each cultivar. The estate's range includes Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Shiraz and Pinot Noir Blanc de Noir.

“*Esona*”, a isiXhosa word meaning “the very one” – is a perfect description of the vintages made with such dedication and love. Upstairs, on a deck surrounded by vineyards and overlooking the river, we sampled cheeses, breads and fruit at Caryl's Deli. www.esona.co.za

Jan Harmsgat Country House (JHG)

Our journey took us to Jan Harmsgat Country House at the foothills of the Langeberg Mountain, just off the R62 to Swellendam. This historic Cape Dutch farmstead is famous for its wines created from single blocks of the vineyards, which, according to Mitch Boy, head of wine at Jan Harmsgat, means “the wines are of a higher quality because smaller volumes are produced, allowing you to track each bottle of wine back to the vineyard it came from”. ➤

To give the wine its dynamic flavour, JHG uses spontaneous fermentation and no enzymes in the vinification process, which may cause sediment to occur in some of the bottles. Far from being a problem, this is a sign of authenticity.

The estate's signature wine is the Pinotage. Other equally stunning varietals are Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay.

Founded in 1723, Jan Harmsgat Country House epitomises country luxury. Whether it's breakfast or dinner, all the produce served at the Amy Restaurant is sourced from the estate. In addition to exploring the delightful garden or taking a dip in the pool, JHG visitors can pack a picnic basket and relax or read a book under the pecan trees.

Day 3

The day of departure eventually arrived. We were a little sad to leave the valley, but, truth be told, never before had I consumed so much wine in such a short period. I feared a *phuza* face! After a delicious, cold country breakfast at JHG – the pomegranate juice being a standout – we took a tour of the vineyards in a 4x4.

Several hours later we packed and began our journey home, stopping briefly on the way at Van Loveren Family Vineyards and Four Cousins for yet more wine tasting. In the end my poor tastebuds refused any more wine and I opted for a 12-year-old blended Scotch from the Four Cousins empire, but this nectar, we were told, is made by a fifth cousin in Scotland. www.vanloveren.co.za and www.fourcousins.co.za

Right: @Four Cousins' stylish eatery is well worth a visit.

Above right: Mira Weiner, owner of Hot Oven Marketing, one of Robertson Valley's most passionate champions.



EVEN MORE REASONS TO VISIT

Mira Weiner, owner of Hot Oven Marketing, a boutique PR and destination marketing agency for travel, tourism and wine in South Africa, has been a resident of Robertson Valley for many years. She knows the superb hospitality of the Robertson Valley all too well.

Why should wine-lovers come to Robertson Valley?

The Robertson Valley offers incredible country hospitality and the stories of generations of winemakers provide for an authentic and personal experience. Many of the boutique wine farms are run by the owners and winemakers themselves, so you get to connect with people behind the brands.

When's the best time to visit the area? The valley is an incredible region to visit all year round, as each season has a unique charm and beauty.

How can those who can't visit the farms buy their wines? Wines can be purchased online from many of the wine farms or from two wine shops in the area – La Verne Wine Boutique in Voortrekker Street in Robertson, which stocks wines at cellar prices, as well as a wine shop in Ashton called Platform62, which also stocks arts and crafts, jams, preserves, wines and brandies from the valley.

Twitter/Instagram - @LangebergValley. Twitter - @HOT_OVEN. Instagram - @hotovenmarketing





Chefs Table

Chef Santi Louzán's new social dining event is a celebration of good food, wine, and company.

BY THEA BECKMAN

Originally from Galicia in north-eastern Spain, Chef Santi Louzán is a warm and creative soul with an extraordinary appetite for great food, wine, and company. It, therefore, makes perfect sense that he would have adopted the concept of Chefs Table Cape Town, a sublime evening of social dining that sends guests home with a bevy of treasured memories, new friends, and probably just a little bit of a headache the morning after.

BOUTIQUE, INTIMATE DINING

This dining experience is no gimmick – you are literally invited into Chef Santi's home in an apartment above the historic Longmarket Street to spend an evening with him, eating his fabulous creations, listening to his fascinating tales, and connecting with strangers from all over the Cape, the country, and the world. Here, you are welcomed like an old friend and instantly given a glass of something delicious, be it a gin cocktail or the wine of the evening, while waitrons carrying plates of delectable hors d'oeuvres do laps of the room.

On the particular night we attended, Chef Santi had paired his multi-course dining extravaganza with wines from Zandvliet, a beautiful Robertson Wine Valley estate that bears a lofty reputation for producing outstanding Shiraz.

FOOD WITH FLOURISH

Between disappearing into the kitchen to whip together the evening's meal, the vibrant and cheeky Chef Santi does the social rounds, warmly introducing himself and getting to know his

guests. The food of the evening is likely to change depending on his mood, the season, latest inspirations, and the particular winery he has chosen to work with.

On our night, however, we were treated to Chef Santi's modern take on the classic prawn cocktail starter, which was paired with the Zandvliet Sauvignon Blanc, followed by crab, hake, and caviar in a creamy onion sauce. Next up was a zesty and bright chorizo salad (Zandvliet Estate Shiraz 2015), a palate-cleansing cocktail of pineapple, ClemenGold gin, cinnamon, and nutmeg, and then the main course: fillet steak served with mash and carrots, peas, and corn wrapped in a crispy pastry, paired with the extraordinary Kalkveld Shiraz 2015.

Dessert was a full-on production. The table was covered with a protective waterproof cover onto which Chef Santi swished, swilled, and scattered an array of ingredients, from chocolate sauce and custard to blueberries, gooseberries, and pomegranate seed. Directly onto this sweet mess, he slapped great dollops of chocolate mousse, which he topped with a torched marshmallow.

A MUST-TRY SOCIAL DINING EXPERIENCE

Chefs Table Cape Town is, in equal measure, about good food, wine, and company, for what is good food without wine and, moreover, what is a great meal without people to share it with? With these principles as his latest ventures' bedrock, Chef Santi Louzán has successfully created a special, boutique, and intimate social dining experience that we absolutely love. **SV**

Email bookings@chefstablecapetown.com to reserve your seat at Chefs Table Cape Town's upcoming social dining evenings, held most Wednesday and Thursday evenings. For more information, go to www.chefstablecapetown.com

EVENT WHAT'S HOT



WIN(E)DDING DOWN

Life is all about balance. Take the pace down a notch in the vineyard-lined valley of Robertson

WORDS CASSIDY NYDAHL

R

Robertson already has a reputation for being a bubbly and wine Mecca, but it really is so much more. Boasting a handsome number of olive and fruit farms, food stops and unique experiences, Robertson's best asset is its community of warm and passionate gourmands who are eager to share their slower and thoroughly delicious way of life.

WINE

From Graham Beck to Excelsior, and all the niche wineries in between, Robertson has no lack of wine spots to while away the afternoon. Wherever you decide to go, make a day of it as you're guaranteed 360°-views of the mountains, blue skies and warm hospitality. Springfield is one of Robertson's golden girls – the tasting is generous, the lawns long and inviting, and the shade abundant. Dip your toes into the nearby dam for a refresher in between the wine tasting for laid-back sipping at its finest.

DINE

With such good produce growing in abundance nearby, it is no surprise that gastronomes would find their calling here as well. That was exactly the case for Werner Snoek – a five-star chef hailing from Joburg – who, with his wife Melanie, has created a foodie's haven at Restaurant Succulent at Mo & Rose hotel. This is fine dining at its best – warm and unpretentious service makes you feel right at home on the sunny verandah overlooking the hotel's famous succulent garden. From the bread course to dessert, dishes are considered and are as delightfully presented as your surroundings, and excellently paired with local Robertson wines. Werner sources his products as locally as possible – not too difficult considering the passion of his neighbours.

EXPLORE

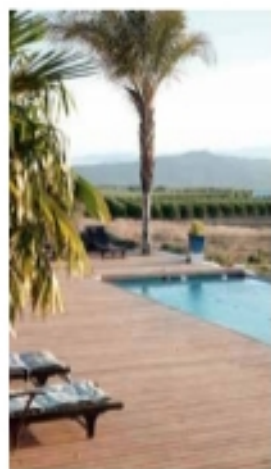
If you're staying at the eco-conscious theLAB, definitely indulge in a spa day and take advantage of the pool, sauna and jacuzzi – that is what any relaxing vacation should include. And when you're off to explore, book an hour on one of their e-scooters. The solar-powered rides will motor you up the steep hills with the wind in your hair and the sun on your skin – it

really is the best and most unhindered way to explore the nearby area. Once you've got a lay of the land, be sure to tick off more than one of the experiences nearby.

Owl's Best is a quaint lavender and olive farm run by Hedley and Patricia, a pair of incomers that have found their place of peace in the Robertson community. Their spot really is a slice of heaven in the foothills of the Langeberg mountains: from floral and refreshing cordials to fragrant creams for the skin, Hedley and Patricia have taken holistic health to

heart; you'll find something to feed the body and the soul.

Just down the road at Marbrin Olive Farm, Peter isn't pushy about his passion for producing delicious products – this passion is clear in the unassuming pride with which he presents them. Just the tasting is a feast of olives, tapenade, oils and vinegars, and as a talented cook and avid hobbyist, Peter is constantly extending his range. Be sure to taste a tot of limoncello before you leave – while he insists it's still a work in progress, it strikes the perfect balance between deliciously tart and sweet.



WHERE TO STAY

theLAB Robertson is perfectly tucked in a peaceful corner of the Langeberg mountains, a short stroll away from many of the best day visits Robertson has to offer. Breakfasts and sunowners are a dream; lounge on the verandah overlooking the pink-tipped mountains and listen to the busy chirping of weaver birds lining the pond nearby. The high-tech rooms are controlled by voice automation, leaving no comfort to the imagination.



GETTING AROUND

The Wine Valley Safari hop-on hop-off bus is the easiest way to explore the Robertson wine valley. No need to worry about driving or navigating – just choose from a range of tours to book online (winevalleysafari.com) and show up to your bus stop on time.



Sunday Times



9 FEBRUARY 2020

Neighbourhood

PROPERTY & LIFESTYLE

Proudly green

Not only is theLAB guesthouses a shining example of next-level sustainability, it also offers the best in wine and location, page 3



2 THREE FAT FISH

4 DO IT IN THE SHADE

6 GETAWAY FOCUS: PLACES TO ESCAPE TO

yourneighbourhood.co.za

Connecting homeowners with great communities

Neighbourhood
PROPERTY & LIFESTYLE



Smart move

theLAB guesthouses offer visitors a truly unique stay

WORDS: CARLA REDELINGHUYTS • IMAGES: JARED RUTTENBERG

By now, most of us are bored to tears by Eskom's ongoing supply woes and would rather have an eyebrow threading session followed by a taxidermy seminar than have another conversation about load shedding and the pros and cons of going "off the grid".

So I won't go there. Except that I kind of have to because one can't write about theLAB guesthouses and not talk about the most important feature: these are proudly green establishments. The locations are managed to be as carbon neutral as possible – solar technology heats the water and provides electricity, and the recycling system ensures as little waste as possible is created. This is done by providing guests with drinks on tap at the bar and still and sparkling water in reusable glass bottles. The on-site vegetable gardens also provide guests with delicious farm-fresh fare.

The three properties, set across the Western Cape in Robertson, Franschhoek and Hout Bay, are perfectly situated so guests can enjoy the best these three spots have to offer, including award-winning wine and food, and some of the best sightseeing and activities the province has to offer.

And the coolest feature of all? The rooms have an automation system with facial recognition and gesture

control applications. Why would you need or want this? Because imagine staying in a room that can make you coffee, switch your TV and shower on and off, and close your blinds when it's time for some shuteye.

Echo awaits your instructions. And she can execute them even if Eskom has decided to call it a day.

GOOD TO KNOW

theLAB was named after the owners' beloved Labrador, Einstein, who passed away at 16 years old. Tributes to him adorn the walls of all the properties.

win

One lucky couple can win a two-night stay at a theLAB guesthouse of their choice. This fabulous prize is worth R5,000 and includes breakfast (both mornings), one dinner on site, e-scooter rides, two mini spa treatments, and a mixed case of wine. To enter, simply visit our Facebook page.



NO 23 TAKING IT SLOW

The Robertson Wine Valley Slow Food & Wine Festival offers a good opportunity to taste exceptional wines from boutique wineries in this wine district.



Probably best known for its Chardonnays, the Robertson valley has been producing some seriously good wines of various varieties in recent years, many of them by young winemakers. It's well worth planning an outing to the area to taste the wines and meet the people during the 12th annual Slow Food & Wine Festival from 9 to 11 August.

The festival is spread out at various wineries and tourism spots. Note that tickets are limited and you need to book with the hosts for special tastings, cellar tours, food-and-wine pairings, winemaker's dinners and cooking classes. There will be an opportunity to meet local winemakers and chefs at the family market on Sunday, 11 August.

robertsonslowfestival.co.za

MONT BLOIS WINE ESTATE

In the Hoopsrivier valley north-east of Robertson you'll find the beautiful newly renovated tasting room in a dreamy setting on Mont Blois, an estate spread over three properties owned by the Bruwers: Ernst is the farmer and Nina-Marie the winemaker.

She focuses on making single-vineyard wines, such as the Kweekkamp Chardonnay and Hoogen Laag Chardonnay, named after the vineyards, growing in limestone soil and red Karoo clay soil, respectively.

Mont Blois has been farmed by the Bruwer family for six generations, but when Nina-Marie released her first vintage two years ago it was the first time in nearly 30 years they bottled wine under their own label. We're bound to hear a lot more about this brand.

Note that Mont Blois is open by appointment only.

montblois.co.za

Mont Blois Pomphuis Muscadet 2016, platinum-award winner at the recent Muskadel SA Awards, R250



ESONA BOUTIQUE WINE ESTATE

Esona, a boutique winery on the banks of the Breede River between Robertson and Bonnievale, produces limited-release wines from single vineyards. It has only nine hectares under vines.

At the tasting venue with its candle-lit underground cellar you can enjoy a Taste-the-Difference wine experience, comparing different vintages and glasses before tasting wines paired with Lindt chocolate and preserves. Upstairs, Caryl's Deli offers a small menu featuring flavours that complement the wines.

esona.co.za

Esona Shiraz 2014, R190



PAUL RENÉ MCC

Wonderfontein Wine Estate, just outside Robertson on the road to McGregor, produces a range of wines, but it is the two Paul René Méthode Cap Classique wines that are garnering more praise and fans with every vintage. Husband and wife Henk and Monica van Niekerk established the brand about 10 years ago, naming it after Monica's grandfather, Paul René Marais (after whom they also named their eldest son). Henk makes the two bubbies, a Brut and a Brut Rosé, and Monica designed the label and packaging.

paulrenemcc.co.za

Paul René Chardonnay Brut MCC 2015, R210



JAN HARMSGAT

This pomegranate, pecan and wine farm with its beautiful guest house and cosy restaurant is situated on the R60, not far from Swellendam.

The wine-making philosophy is to create elegant single-vineyard wines using minimal interference, spontaneous fermentation and no enzymes during the fermentation process. The farm is Fairtrade-accredited. Three white and three red wines - made from single vineyard blocks less than 6 hectares in size - are bottled under the JHG label.

janharmsgat.com

JHG Pinotage 2016, R292



WINDFALL WINE ESTATE

This small estate in the Agterkliphoogte valley produces a range of wines that includes an MCC, a rosé, two white wines, five red wines and a pot-still brandy. At the helm is Kobus van der Merwe, who has many decades of experience in the industry. Windfall wines are for sale on the farm and at La Verne Wine Boutique in Robertson.

The farm also offers self-catering accommodation in five guest cottages.

windfall.co.za

Windfall Barrel 41 2015, a blend of Shiraz, Mourvèdre and Grenache, R150



WE CHATTED TO LESLIE SIPAMBU, MANAGER AT KALKVELD LOUNGE ON ZANDVLIEET WINE ESTATE

Zandvliet, on the outskirts of Ashton, was among the first wine farms in South Africa to bottle Shiraz. A range of low limestone hills on the farm provides a chalky terroir called kalkveld, captured in the name of Zandvliet's flagship wine, the Kalkveld Shiraz. It has also inspired the development of a new tasting room, the Kalkveld Lounge, the first stage of a comprehensive redesign of the Cape Dutch homestead.

Leslie is the manager at Kalkveld Lounge. He and his team introduce visitors to Zandvliet's wines, show

them the underground cellar and the art on display, and present wine pairings and a blend-your-own-wine experience. (You get to cork and label your wine, too, and to take it home.)



"I was born and raised on the farm," says Leslie. "I started out working in the cellar as a general worker, where I learnt the basics. Being demonstrative and talkative, I am in my element in my current position. My passion and first priority is to create a memorable experience for visitors."

zandvliet.co.za

PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES, JAN RAS AND SUPPLIED WORDS KAY-ANN VAN ROOYEN
FIND THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE COMPETITION ON PAGE XXX.

COUNTRY LIFE

Rolling mountain ranges, hidden-away wine farms, breathtaking views and gourmet food... The Robertson Wine Valley is one of the best-kept secrets for a local honeymoon destination

BY ROXY GREEFF

2

WINE PAIRING AT ESONA BOUTIQUE WINE ESTATE

Esona is a truly special spot. Start your afternoon enjoying a bespoke wine pairing in their underground cellar bathed in romantic candlelight. Sip on their signature wines as you're guided through your wine, confectionery, art and music experience, where you'll learn not only about what you're tasting, but also about how wine falls from the rim of your glass on to your palate. You will get to try each wine in perfectly crafted Riedel glasses, followed immediately by a sip from a typical wine glass you'd find at a regular restaurant. The difference will astound you!

Once you're through with your tasting, you can head upstairs and outdoors to Caryl's Bistro, where you can sit on the deck that overlooks the surrounding vineyards, and offers a 360° view of the mountains and lazy Breede River. Their menu is small and simple and focuses on supporting local products for their platters and sandwiches. This is the ultimate spot to while away the day, basking in that late afternoon sun that is singular to South Africa.

Esona Wine Estate, Robertson | Difference Wine Tasting Experience R160 pp | esona.co.za

BLEND AND BOTTLE YOUR OWN WINE AT ZANDVLIET WINE ESTATE

What could be more romantic than spending the day taking in the raw beauty of the underground cellars at the Home of Shiraz? You will be led through the passageways – which used to be lined with beeswax and filled to the brim with wine – to the blending room, where you will be presented with three Zandvliet wines to taste. Then you can decide the percentage of each wine you'd like your own bottle to be made up of. Blend it yourself at your tasting station and feel free to take your time experimenting with different variations until you have a blend that you and your other half love. Once you are happy with your flagship wine, you will be led to the barrels to fill your own bottle according to the wine you have designed. Then you will cork, wax, and label it. Give your wine a name that is significant to you – the plan is to pop the cork and enjoy it together on your first wedding anniversary.

Once the wine has been blended and bottled, retire to the intricately designed Kalkveld Lounge to enjoy your favourite Zandvliet sip, charcuterie and cheeseboard served with their signature Shiraz jam.

Zandvliet Wine Estate, Ashton | Wine blending and bottling: R150 pp | Charcuterie board for two: R165 zandvliet.co.za

SHIRAZ JAM

Make a big batch of Shiraz jam and present it to your wedding guests as favours. It's super easy to make, and your guests will appreciate the personal touch.

visit weddingetc.co.za
weddingetc
for the recipe to wow your guests



WINE IN STYLE

Wondering what makes Riedel wine glasses so special? Professor Claus J Riedel, Austrian businessman in chemistry and a chemical engineer, designed his stemware to perfectly complement different wines, knowing that the smell, taste and overall balance of each wine is largely dependant on the shape of the glasses from which they are enjoyed. Riedel glasses are thin-blown and unadorned, with all the focus being on the shape of the bowl, stem and base for ultimate functionality. If you're major wine lovers, be sure to add a set of these to your registry for your big day.



3

INDULGE THE SENSES AT MONTAGU COUNTRY HOTEL

As soon as you step inside, you are immediately transported to the late 1920s as you become immersed in this hotel's collection of geometric-shaped and boldly coloured decor pieces reminiscent of the bygone Art Deco movement. With a wide variety of rooms on offer, you can continue to indulge by opting for an Art Deco room, or move further back in time by treating yourselves to one of the Victorian rooms.

But considering it's a special occasion (if not the most special occasion), you can book yourselves into the Executive Suite decorated in ornamental baroque style, and boasting a king-sized bed and open-plan bathroom, complete with embellished screen dividers and a claw-foot bathtub.

Breakfast is included in your stay, and you can enjoy it outdoors in the sprawling gardens that Montagu Country Hotel is renowned for. Dinner is a formal affair with a pianist serenading you on their baby grand as you enjoy a romantic dinner by candlelight. Get dressed up and spend your evening feasting on traditional South African classics in true fine-dining style.



Dinner is a formal affair with a pianist serenading you on their baby grand as you enjoy a romantic dinner by candlelight

What makes Montagu Country Hotel even more enticing for your honeymoon is that you can experience the Langeberg Valley in an American Dream car. You can book your own tailor-made wine tour of the Robertson Wine Route in one of three classic cars: A 1956 or 1964 Cadillac Sedan de Ville or, if you are feeling extra classy, the DeSoto Firelite Sportsman. If you're looking for something even more intimate, pack a basket and ask your driver to take you to a great lookout point

EXPLORE MORE OF MONTAGU

Flying Fleet Bicycle tours
montagu.org.za

Hop on a bike for a guided historic or art tour around the area. They also do custom tours.

Protea Farm Tractor Trips
proteafarm.co.za

Take a tractor ride up the Langeberg Mountain to enjoy uninterrupted views of the KOO and Robertson valleys.

Hicks Art Gallery
montagu.org.za

Richard and Joy Hickman open up their home with their art gallery featuring hundreds of local works.

to watch the gorgeous sunset view over the mountaintops. It's also the perfect photo opportunity for you to get some snaps together with a breathtaking backdrop.

Montagu Country Hotel
Montagu 2020 Pricing: Classic rooms: R835 pp | Luxury Art Deco: R1 090 pp | Luxury Victorian R1 465 pp | American Dream Cars Experience: R695 p/h
montagucountryhotel.co.za

4

STAY A WHILE AT JAN HARMSGAT COUNTRY HOUSE

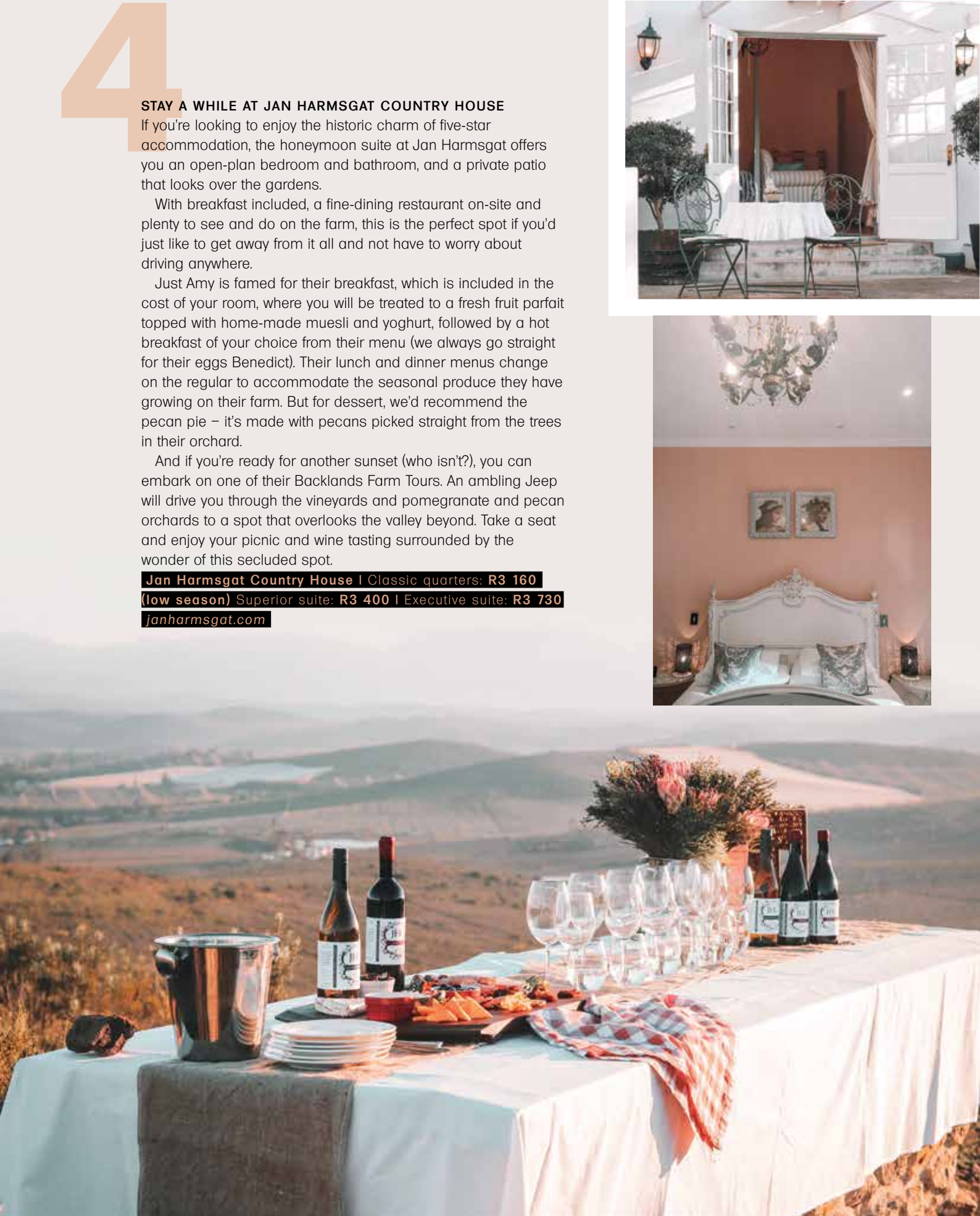
If you're looking to enjoy the historic charm of five-star accommodation, the honeymoon suite at Jan Harmsgat offers you an open-plan bedroom and bathroom, and a private patio that looks over the gardens.

With breakfast included, a fine-dining restaurant on-site and plenty to see and do on the farm, this is the perfect spot if you'd just like to get away from it all and not have to worry about driving anywhere.

Just Amy is famed for their breakfast, which is included in the cost of your room, where you will be treated to a fresh fruit parfait topped with home-made muesli and yoghurt, followed by a hot breakfast of your choice from their menu (we always go straight for their eggs Benedict). Their lunch and dinner menus change on the regular to accommodate the seasonal produce they have growing on their farm. But for dessert, we'd recommend the pecan pie – it's made with pecans picked straight from the trees in their orchard.

And if you're ready for another sunset (who isn't?), you can embark on one of their Backlands Farm Tours. An ambling Jeep will drive you through the vineyards and pomegranate and pecan orchards to a spot that overlooks the valley beyond. Take a seat and enjoy your picnic and wine tasting surrounded by the wonder of this secluded spot.

Jan Harmsgat Country House | Classic quarters: R3 160 (low season) Superior suite: R3 400 | Executive suite: R3 730
janharmsgat.com





FAMILYMOON AT ROSE HOUSE

Whether you want to spend some time with your friends and family before all the craziness of your big day, or celebrate your honeymoon with your loved ones in tow, Rose House has space for everyone! The self-catering Georgian villa offers a refreshing country retreat that is both authentic and comfortable for both couples and larger groups. The living area is open-plan with a cosy fireplace for the winter months, and a spacious private stoep for when it's warmer. There is also a large garden to be explored and a pool to help you cool off on those sweltering summer days.

The villa accommodates 10 people in five rooms, with the main suite downstairs hidden away in a private little alcove with its own bathroom. Oh, and we almost forgot, your furry family members are welcome too, by prior arrangement.

Right on the doorstep of McGregor's village, this home-away-from-home is within walking distance of the Krans Nature Reserve, local eateries and boutique shops. ♥

Rose House | R4 160 pn for 10 people

Bookings: 023 625 1409



ADVENTURE TIME

GO HORSEBACK RIDING facebook.com/HeidilandHA

Take in the beauty of the area by joining one of Heidiland Horseback Adventures' outrides in the hills of the little Karoo.

EXPERIENCE SKYDIVING skydive.co.za

Challenge yourselves at Skydive Robertson where you can get a bird's-eye view of the breathtaking surrounds.

RAFT THE LONGEST WINE ROUTE IN THE WORLD rr62.co.za

Rafting Route 62 invites you to steer yourselves along the pristine waters of the Breede River, followed by a tailor-made wine tour.

STAY A WHILE

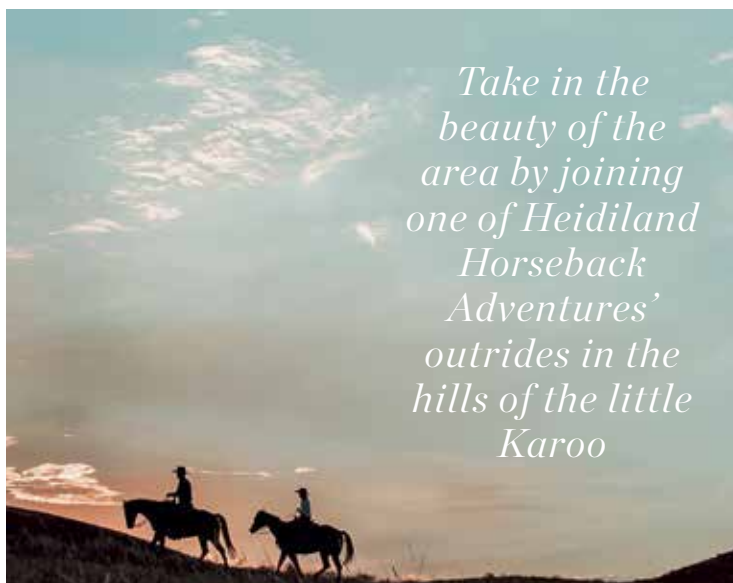
THELAB thelab.africa/robertson

Enjoy the ultimate hi-tech, eco experience, where all rooms are powered with solar-derived energy, and where you can literally ask your room for a cup of coffee, to turn on Netflix and to close the blinds.

LUCKY CRANE VILLAS luckycranevillas.co.za

If a self-catering getaway is more your vibe, you can also explore the Cape floral kingdom in their gardens and wander around McGregor enjoying local eateries, wine bars and live music.

*Take in the
beauty of the
area by joining
one of Heidiland
Horseback
Adventures'
outrides in the
hills of the little
Karoo*



Fall in love with...

...this month's seven exciting wines, hand-picked by Kim Hoepfl



This year, I plan to make good on my New Year's resolution to drink with more focus, and deepen my appreciation of wines I enjoy – but which? The Cape wine scene is fizzing and the range is just beautiful, making the choice almost impossible but, in the end, three varietals stand out.

These three favourites are Chardonnay, Chenin blanc, and old-vine Grenache, a light and spicy red that's well suited to South Africa's climate.

I have tried so many Chardonnays recently – from both traditional warmer areas and up-and-coming cooler spots like Elgin – that have been the stuff of dreams. Now, I'm not talking about the heavy, yellow Chardonnays of a decade or two ago. No, the newer-style makeovers have emerged much less oaky, more delicate, taut, fresh and often with an invigorating lime smack to them.

I also had to squeeze in a Chenin blanc – it's quite possibly what we're doing best right now.

By tasting some of these wines, you will be stretching your palate and drinking adventurously, but well. Wine holds a fascinating story, and these are sure to produce a life-long love affair. Enjoy!

WINE OF THE MONTH

Opstal Carl Everson Chenin Blanc (R175)



It makes sense that a place as picturesque as Slanghoek Valley in the Cape should produce a wine of commensurate beauty. This one is sexy and intense, with an alluring peachy

nose and fresh purity. It's pricey, but a game-changer. Try it with Chinese-style roasted pork belly.



Weltevrede Lemon Zest Unwooded Chardonnay (R59)

From Robertson, where limestone soils give a lively citrus edge to Chardonnay, comes a wine with no wood to mute it. Its pleasing lemon-peel and grapefruit flavours are very pure. A winner with anything featuring lemon and butter.



Sutherland Chardonnay 2016 (R140)

The winemaker's cooler Elgin vineyard has made a more delicate Chardonnay than the one from their Thelema range. Try both to see if you can spot the differences between the cool- and warm-climate wines. Serve this cold with pan-fried hake.



Van Loveren Christina Methode Cap Classique Brut (R109)

Bubbly rosé not quite your style? Then how about this Chardonnay/Pinot Noir brut from Van Loveren? It's classic – rich, creamy and fine-bubbled with pleasantly uplifting acidity. Serve ice-cold as an aperitif with green olives.

INSIDER KNOW-HOW: CHAMPAGNE & PROSECCO

What's the difference? Champagne comes from the French Champagne region, and Prosecco from Veneto in Northern Italy. Champagne can be a blend or single-varietal made from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier; and Prosecco is made from Glera grapes. For both, the still wine undergoes a second fermentation to make it sparkling. In Champagne, yeast and sugar are added to the bottle; but in Prosecco, it's added in a tank. Closer contact with the yeast gives Champagne its toast and citrus flavours; while for Prosecco, it's all about the grape's profile, with pear, apple, and honeysuckle notes. **w&h**



Lothian Vineyards Chardonnay 2016 (R145)

I'm singing the praises of a cool-climate Chardonnay once again! This one has precision, balance, soft acidity and delicacy. It's light and perfumed with peaches and almonds. Great with a lunch of cheese soufflé.



Groote Post Methode Cap Classique Brut Rosé NV (R140)

This lovely salmon-pink blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir balances leesy richness with a tannic bite, and has a fine bubble. A treat served ice-cold over a brunch of eggs Benedict this Valentine's Day.



Spice Route Grenache 2015 (R130)

A red with nerve! Almost see-through (for a red), juicy, fresh and spicy with a gentle tannic grip. It's a pleasant alternative to dark, weighty reds, and you can drink it slightly chilled in the summer. Very good with bobotie, or with charcuterie.



SUBSCRIBE & WIN

Three TASTE readers will make a significant addition to their wine collections with three cases (that's 18 bottles!) of wine from **Weltevrede Wine Estate** worth **R1 758** when subscribing to TASTE for just R28 an issue

There's no doubt that terroir and climate play large roles in making a good wine. But the people at Weltevrede Wine Estate in Bonnievale believe that the human element is just as important. After the estate recently reached its centenary, the fourth generation of the Jonker family, winemaker Philip Jonker, bottled the Weltevrede 1912 collection to mark this momentous occasion. And instead of putting his signature on the label, he decided to record the names of every person living and working in the vineyards and winery at Weltevrede to celebrate their legacy. The result is a full-bodied Chardonnay that's light golden in colour and displays an intense mixture of dried mango, ripe pear and ginger on the nose, with ripe lemons and marmalade on the palate. The Weltevrede 1912 Cabernet Sauvignon bears spice on the nose, with complex flavours of blueberries, blackberries, pomegranate, white pepper and cedar on the palate. Says Philip, "The Weltevrede 1912 wines are a culmination of more than 100 years of family heritage." weltevrede.com



Three easy ways to subscribe

1. Call **087 405 2005**
2. SMS **"Subs Taste"** to 40573 (R1 per SMS)
3. EMAIL **subs@magsathome.co.za**
For digital subscriptions, visit **mysubs.co.za**

* Offer limited to SA. Please allow time for processing and delivery. Please call 021 045 1809 for international subscription rates. Offer ends 23 July 2017.

Dry January: How to Ditch the Dread

Text: Charlotte Rogers
Images © iStockphoto.com | Zari Sparkling Grape



DRY JANUARY WITH ZARI

After the indulgence of the holiday season, it is hard not to look at 'Dry January' as a punishment from above. The wine at Christmas was free flowing, the cocktails on Boxing Day were fruity and stronger than the Cape Town sun, and you can practically still taste the champers from New Years

Eve - why on earth would you want to give up alcohol for an entire month? Well, hear me out ...

Do not get me wrong, I am a big drinker. Not so big that someone needs to hold an intervention, but I definitely like to relax on the weekend with a chilled glass of

Chardonnay or a sparkling glass of bubbles. So, by no means am I a hater of alcohol, but occasionally even I start to feel the after-effects of a particularly festive season.

It is no secret that December is a month of spoiling yourself, saying 'yes' to that extra éclair and not being too worried when you



start drinking before 17h00 (who invented that awful rule anyway?). It just seems to me that after a month of solid drinking, taking a month off could do you some good.

There is very little science in my background, so forgive me if I am horribly off base here, but my grandma always said “everything in moderation”. Since I threw her logic straight out of the window in December, I decided to give up booze this January, as a way to put the festive merriment behind me, and settle into 2019 with a fresh mind-set and renewed focus on my goals. It also helps that there are no massive birthday parties or weddings in my January calendar.

There is simply nothing worse than being at a party, watching as everyone sits with their wine glasses or elegant champagne flutes and you are that person that ruins all the pictures with a can of Coke. I get it, we have all been there, but that time in my life is now over. This is where non-alcoholic drinks come into the picture. With positively Instagram-perfect drinks like the

non-alcoholic gin and tonic, The Duchess, or even the low-alcohol white wine from Four Cousins, drinks without alcohol are becoming more and more fashionable.

Zari Sparkling Grape is my choice this Dry January, and it really does not need to be limited to the one indulgent-free month in a year. It is perfect for enjoying when you are the designated driver for the night – having a drink in your hand that looks like wine will stop all those wildly irritating people saying things like “why are you not drinking? Why are you not allowed to have fun? Here, have some of my Castle Lite”. Um ... No thank you very much, I will pass. Drinking and driving is seriously not a joke, and being responsible means not drinking at all when you plan on getting behind the wheel. So instead, opt for a glass of Zari, or maybe even an alcohol-free beer if wine does not appeal to you.

Starting the new year with a month of not drinking can do your new year’s resolutions a load of good. Want to shed a few pounds? Alcohol has more calories

than I would like to think about, so cutting out your wine with dinner could give you a great new look by 1 February. We all know that losing weight gets easier when you see results, and ditching alcohol will show you those results faster than you think. Maybe your resolution is to spend more time doing adventurous and active things? Ever hiked a mountain with a hangover? I have and I honestly could not decide whether to curl up in a ball and chill with all the bugs on the ground or just fling myself off the mountain. Either way my headache would hopefully subside. Active goals are great goals, and they only get easier when you are not nursing a hangover every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning.

Like I said at the beginning, Dry January is not the worst thing in the world. Will it be tough? Yes. Will I probably have a bottle of wine on 1 February? Yes. But will it be worth it? I damn hope so ...

Happy Dry January everyone! ■

Pure Pleasure

Alcohol-free bubbly fits every lifestyle, without compromising on quality.

Once reserved for royalty, bubbly has long been associated with weddings, New Year's Eve parties and special occasions. Now the quintessential drink of celebrations extends to alcohol-free lifestyles. Ideal for those who choose not to drink alcohol, this new trend allows everyone to enjoy the cork-popping and toasting rituals at summer weddings and festive events.

LOVE AT FIRST SIP

ZARI is cold-pressed from 100% single-cultivar Cape Muscat seedless grapes and is made to be experienced with all the senses — from the diamanté frosting on a chilled bottle and the metallic twist of foil unfurling, to the first pop of the cork, and the pearlescent bubbles rising in the glass. And, nothing is compromised when it comes to flavour — enjoy fruity and floral notes on the palate. A product of the Western Cape's finest grape growing region, this is a drink that's beautiful inside and out.

THE ART OF DRINKING

The international beverage category is being reinvented as soberistas and health conscious markets increasingly shift to reduced or alcohol-free lifestyles. With divine, vine-clad bottles and bespoke Kraft outer cases, ZARI can hold its own as an aspirational alcohol-free choice at stylish event venues and hotel destinations. In pursuit of innovation, ZARI has also collaborated with international food artists to provide mocktail and pairing activations.

Find out more at www.zari.co.za

ZESTY ZARI GRAPEFRUIT SANGRIA

Our Zari take on a traditional sangria for those who prefer a fresh mocktail that isn't too sweet.

Ingredients:

1 cup (250ml) freshly squeezed grapefruit juice
Small handful of fresh mint leaves
6-8 cucumber slices
1 small lime, sliced
2 tbsp grapefruit zest twists
Small handful of fresh blueberries
1 cup (250ml) soda water
2 cups (500ml) ZARI Lifestyle Red
4 dashes of bitters

Method:

1. Pour the grapefruit juice into a large jug.
2. Add the mint leaves, cucumber slices, lime slices, grapefruit zest and blueberries.
3. Top up with soda water and ZARI Lifestyle Red.
4. Add the bitters, stir gently and serve.

Serves: 4



THE ROOIBOS REFRESHER

A refreshing summer mocktail that incorporates the unique flavour of rooibos with lemongrass and lime citrus notes.

Ingredients:

2 rooibos teabags
2 lemongrass stalks, split lengthways
1½ cups (375ml) boiling water
Small handful of fresh basil leaves
1 small lime, sliced
2 cups (500ml) ZARI Lifestyle White
¼ cup (60ml) fresh orange juice
Ice, to serve

Method:

1. Place the rooibos teabags and lemongrass in a small bowl. Pour the boiling water into the bowl and allow to steep for 5 minutes. Remove the teabags from the bowl, then set aside to cool and infuse.
2. Remove the lemongrass stalks from the cooled tea. Pour the tea into a large jug and add the basil leaves and lime slices.
3. Top up with ZARI Lifestyle White and the orange juice.
4. Stir gently, then serve with ice.

Serves: 4-5



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