



# FINDING **JE NE SAIS QUOI** IN FRANSCHHOEK

*Franschhoek Country House & Villas and Monneaux Restaurant*

**J**e Ne Sais Quoi is one of those French terms that simply cannot be translated. Referring to an illustrious quality of something unknown, it is the feeling that overwhelms one when you arrive at the Franschhoek Country House and Villas for the first time. Once you have experienced the beguiling hotel, and savoured the sumptuous flavours of Monneaux Restaurant, the feeling

## LIVING IT UP

quickly evolves into the realisation that you have escaped to a life of luxury.

Set in the heart of South Africa's gastronomic capital, Franschhoek, where vineyards and mountains fill the surroundings with unmatched beauty, the Franschhoek Country House and Villas offers the most discerning travellers an exclusive boutique hotel encounter.

Beyond an exceptional five-star accommodation experience, the Franschhoek Country House and Villas also offers the perfect base from where to explore the area's wines and attractions, or simply enjoy the exceptional Franschhoek Country House and Villas experience.

The original Country House offers 14 particularly well-equipped rooms - including six standard rooms, five luxury rooms and two cottages, which have all been designed with the utmost comfort

and charm in mind. All en-suite rooms are individually appointed with all the luxuries one may desire, as well as locally-sourced amenities, and comfortable, lush duvets with embroidered percale cotton linen. In addition, the 12 luxurious Villa Suites offer guests opulence and space, and an unmatched luxurious accommodation experience. When not exploring the surrounding area, guests can also relax in the hotel pool with its picture-perfect backdrop.

## DINING FINERY

The Franschhoek Country House and Villas' bespoke accommodation experience is matched in style only by Monneaux Restaurant, the hotel's on-site fine-dining establishment.

Recently fully transformed in both look and feel, Monneaux invites guests to experience their refreshed, conscious take on dining.

Living up to the gastronomic promise of Franschhoek, Monneaux stands tall among the village's culinary contenders.

In its reconceptualisation, the restaurant has introduced self-sustainable initiatives, as well as a hyper-local focus, from pass to plate. These changes have been spearheaded by its young visionary Executive Chef, Calvin Metior.

"Calvin brings along impressive skill, passion and limitless creativity, and - importantly - shares our vision of elevating Monneaux to an exciting new level. He





is young, imaginative and energetic but also 'calm and collected', which is precisely the type of chef we wanted to inspire and lead this new direction," says Franschoek Country House & Villas owner, Jean-Pierre Snyman.

Chef Calvin rose to the challenge of developing Monneaux Restaurant's revitalised offering and new contemporary menus. "Having the freedom to dream, to make my concepts a reality and to produce my own food is incredible", says Chef Calvin of his opportunity, "and to be able to do so at Monneaux Restaurant, in this beautiful country-style setting and surrounded by so much natural inspiration and superb produce in the Cape Winelands, is a dream come true."

Chef Calvin's philosophy is one of natural food with a minimalist style. Produce is selected at its peak to showcase the natural character of the ingredient. Seasonality, comfort and

value are priorities when it comes to menu design. Chef Calvin explains: "Food should be enjoyable throughout - from the way it looks to the way in which it is eaten, and ultimately how it tastes."

To source the best produce, local producers and artisans are passionately sought, as this helps to keep the restaurant's carbon footprint to a minimum, while improving the eatery's self-sustainability. Micro gardens have been established throughout the property to produce a rotating supply of fresh herbs and vegetables.

In the kitchen, Calvin has several projects already underway - including making his own miso, hot sauces and fish sauce, smoking and curing his own meat and fish, making charcuterie from scratch, and dry- and wet ageing of fish and meat. "I believe that small change is good change. By sourcing produce responsibly and locally, reducing waste and reliance on outside suppliers, recycling, turning food trimmings into compost and trying to produce as much ourselves as possible, we'll be making a difference," says Chef Calvin.

Guests and visitors to Monneaux can visit for a meal to suit their appetite, whether that be for breakfast, lunch or dinner. When it comes to breakfast, Chef Calvin asks: "What's better than knowing where the eggs on your plates are from, or that your breakfast sausages are made in-house?" The lunch and dinner menus

are designed to invite diners to customise their Monneaux Restaurant experience with a wide selection of starters and mains, as well as lighter "snack style" dishes.

Chef Calvin's experimental cooking style means patrons can expect the Monneaux Restaurant menus to change regularly with the seasons, offering both intrigue and a new experience with every visit. Guests at Franschoek Country House and Villas enjoy complimentary offerings, including daily breakfast and afternoon drinks.

Monneaux Restaurant's variety of seating areas lend themselves seamlessly to suit all preferences. The restaurant's stylish interior is discretely divided into three individual dining rooms, creating an intimate atmosphere. Sit outdoors by the fountain terrace, beneath the dappled shade of a spreading pepper tree - ideal for lazy summer lunches and sundowners, and alfresco dinners beneath twinkling fairy lights on balmy evenings.

"This is a very exciting chapter, and we anticipate a long and successful future with Calvin. In the culinary hub of Franschoek, it is important to differentiate and develop, while continuing to offer quality and authenticity. We believe that our new offering truly sets the Monneaux Restaurant apart as a must-visit dining destination," concludes Jean-Pierre.

*For more information, please visit [www.monneaux.co.za](http://www.monneaux.co.za).* 📍