

# SIGNATURE

The Diners Club International Magazine

## RAISE A TOAST

to the 2020 Diners Club  
Winemaker of the Year

*Johan Malan*

Isak Pretorius –  
Wildlife Photographer

Porsche 911 Turbo S

Meditation in the  
21<sup>st</sup> Century

40<sup>th</sup> WINEMAKER  
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*from the* MD



# Welcome

Esh Naidoo  
**Managing Director**

There is substantial power in celebrating heritage. This truth is perhaps best embodied by the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year competition, which this year celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Over these four decades, Diners Club Winemaker of the Year has not only established itself as a premier wine competition in South Africa, it has also achieved the enviable distinction of being one of the longest running competitions of its kind. Its approach to honour the winemakers while championing the excellent wines that they produce is unique.

Today, a new generation of winemakers aspire to be recognised by the competition, just as their predecessors sought to do. For this select group of young winemakers, the Diners Club Young Winemaker

of the Year competition has become the preeminent contest by which their winemaking skills are measured. Just as the Winemaker competition, the Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year contest also celebrates a venerable milestone, as this competition celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> successful running.

As I look back at the history of the Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year competition, I cannot help but feel a sense of overwhelming pride at the significance that the competition holds in the South African wine industry. Over the years we have created something special, something lasting, and I invite you to join us on this journey as we look towards another 40 years of achieving excellence for Diners Club, and for the competition. ⑩

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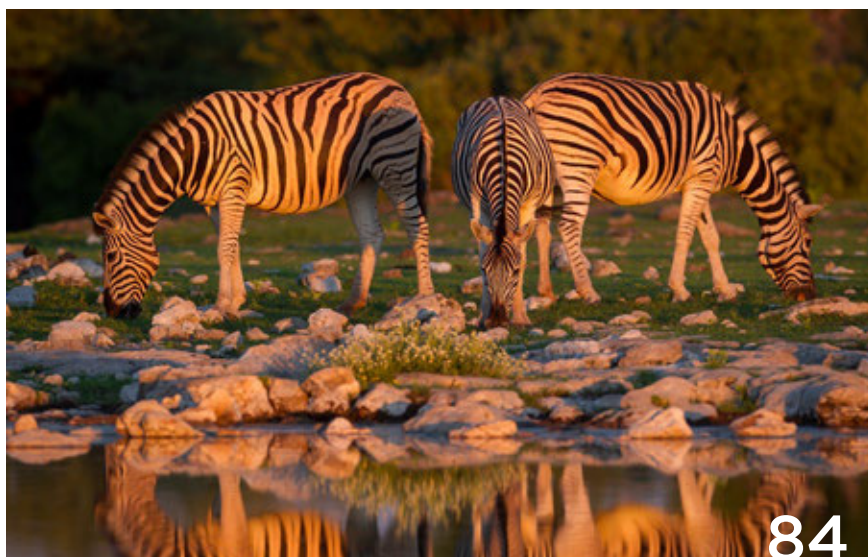
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## GO THERE



### TASTE OF STELLENBOSCH HILLS

Stellenbosch Hills cranks up the festive season this year, giving visitors to the winery a never-before experience to taste its flagship wines by the glass. And because it's the time for giving, there are a few extra special surprises thrown into the mix. From now until the end of February 2021, wine-lovers who sign up for one of the winery's popular pairing experiences will receive a complimentary glass of its elegant Sense of Place Anna Christina MCC 2019 on arrival. When purchasing three bottles or more of this MCC, a free bottle stopper will help keep your leftover bubbly fresher for longer (and this deal's available if you buy online too). Each of the top-tier experiences takes between 30 and 60 minutes. [www.stellenbosch-hills.co.za](http://www.stellenbosch-hills.co.za)

### PARK OFF FOR A PINT

Visitors to Franschhoek can now "Park off for a pint" and indulge in the new and exciting cuisine offering at Tuk Tuk Microbrewery, courtesy of the world-renowned local chef and restaurateur, Darren Badenhorst, in what promises to be an exciting and fresh offering to what has quickly become a landmark Microbrewery in Franschhoek's main street. The all-day dining menu is a globally inspired offering showcasing casual regional favourites from Italy, Germany, India, Mexico, USA, and Great Britain. Specialities include incredible tacos, traditional Eisbein, wood-fired pizzas, classically made mutton rogan josh, creative s' mores and CBC beer batter fish and chips. The brewery features the beloved Tuk Tuk craft beer range which boasts five specially crafted brews that are unique to the microbrewery as well as a selection of five craft beers from the CBC range with tasting options for both ranges. Follow Tuk Tuk Microbrewery on social media (@tuktukbrew), or visit [www.tuktuk.co.za](http://www.tuktuk.co.za).



### WILD IN PINK

Illustrious luxury home fragrance brand, Cape Island, recently announced the sixth in their distinctive line of signature fragrances inspired by Africa. Now, although you may not be travelling to the Wild Coast this year, you can experience the essence of the region with this sweetly seductive scent, aptly named Wild Coast – masterfully crafted by creative visionary, Suzanne Snowdowne. The new scent aims to be a fragrance that speaks to the diversity of the region, its beautiful people, unspoiled beaches, sub-tropical climate and magical landscape. The provocative scent blends hints of elegant iris, black currant, and wild jasmine, all grounded with rich praline and patchouli. Available online and at selected retailers. [www.capeisland.co.za](http://www.capeisland.co.za)





# Bakubung Villas

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Less than two hours' drive from JHB, you could have your very own private luxury lodge within Bakubung Bush Lodge, which is known as one of South Africa's iconic bushveld resorts and is situated in the stunning, Big 5, malaria-free Pilanesberg National Park.

The Bakubung Villas project is a very unique property investment opportunity which rarely presents itself, allowing investors to acquire their very own piece of this prestigious resort for themselves, with only 22 private stands.

Investors can now enjoy the best of both worlds, by owning your very own private lodge with the Big 5 roaming within meters of your patio, yet still enjoy all the incredible services and facilities offered by the resort and its hotel. Some of which include a luxurious new day spa, a variety of dining experiences and bars, wildlife centre, game drives and bush walks into the park, direct daily shuttles into Sun City.

Investors will also have the option of incorporating their lodge into Legacy's commercial rental program, providing owners with an immediate financial return. In terms of ownership, accessibility, as well as the broad array of services and facilities both onsite and neighbouring the resort, you will struggle to find a similar property opportunity which offers you what the Bakubung Villas do.



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# MOST CITED SMALL CITIES

## *Top Five Small Cities to Visit in 2021*

**Condé Nast Traveler** recently asked their readers to select five of the world's most alluring small cities. The result was so spectacular, that *Signature* would like to share these favourites with you.

While world cities such as Cape Town, Paris, London, New York and Amsterdam will always rank high on the *Signature* "most loved cities" list, there is a certain allure to exploring smaller, more intimate world cities. We offer a selection of the most preferred.

### 5. VALLETTA, MALTA

Malta's forgotten gem, the city of Valletta, is often referred to as the "Capital of Culture". As such, the city has almost endless cultural options on offer besides its stunning baroque architecture. Indulge in fresh seafood – the pasta Rizzi (sea urchin) at favourite local restaurant, Da Pippo's, is a must-try. Stay at The Phoenicia Hotel in front of Valletta's City Gate, which offers stunning views of the city and harbours, along with one of the best hotel breakfasts on the island. If history is your bag, take a guided tour through the private rooms of Casa Rocca Piccola, a 400-year-old Baroque palace, for a glimpse into how Valletta's noble families once lived. Or, discover some excellent live jazz on the steps of the ancient bastions at Bridge Bar on a Friday night.







BELOW: *Valetta, Malta by Zoltan Tasi*



BELOW: *Monte Carlo, Monaco*



#### 4. MONTE CARLO, MONACO

Surrounded by the Maritime Alps on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, Monaco's glamorous city of Monte Carlo has been romanticised in pop culture for its depiction in various films including *To Catch a Thief*, and the James Bond classic, *GoldenEye*. It would be unthinkable to Monte Carlo visit without stopping at the Casino de Monte-Carlo to play a game of baccarat and do your best James Bond impression. Go just outside the city limits to the Jardin Exotique for stellar views and the world's most extensive collection of succulents and cacti, or to Le Rocher, an old cliffside town with winding, narrow alleyways dating back to the Middle Ages. Stay a few minutes' drive out of town at Le Cap Estel, for spectacular views over the Mediterranean.





LEFT: Mérida, Mexico

### 3. MÉRIDA, MEXICO

The streets of Mérida burst with the vibrant facades of Spanish colonial architecture, but the capital of Mexico's Yucatan state is also steeped in Mayan history. Centrally located on the Yucatan Peninsula, UNESCO World Heritage sites like the ancient cities of Uxmal and Chichen Itza is an easy day trip, or head 40 minutes north to the beaches on the Gulf shore in Progreso. Locals recommend visiting Fundación de Artistas, a non-profit organisation featuring art exhibits in a 19th-century home; Gran Museo del Mundo Maya - a modern cultural museum; and the traditional Yucatecan food at the super casual Manjar Blanco.

### 2. CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

The laid-back city of Chiang Mai is the ideal place to unwind at the end of a longer trip around southeast Asia. Check in to the sleek Anantara Chiang Mai Resort, where rooms feature floor-to-ceiling windows



Chiang Mai, Thailand





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“Four hours northwest of Mexico City, the jewel of San Miguel de Allende spreads out across the Mexican landscape.”

overlooking the river and outdoor daybeds to relax after a day spent browsing Warorot Market or temple hopping. On the outskirts of the city, visit the spa at The Dhara Dhevi for a Lanna massage or reflexology treatment in a private villa. You can't leave Chiang Mai without trying a bowl of khao soy, a traditional Thai dish of braised chicken and fried noodles in a coconut curry soup.

### 1. SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE, MEXICO

Four hours northwest of Mexico City, the jewel of San Miguel de Allende spreads out across the Mexican landscape. A hub for expat artists, this highland city is known for its Spanish Colonial

architecture and colourful facades. Spend a few hours browsing the galleries and pop-up shops at Fabrica La Aurora, a former textile factory that is now home to local artisans. Or visit The Rosewood San Miguel de Allende – a hidden oasis in the heart of the city, with grand rooms featuring hand-carved furnishings and 360-degree views of the skyline from the rooftop tapas bar. For dinner, book the chef's table at Aperi for one of the best dining experiences in the city, featuring the freshest regional flavours. ⑩

by *condé nast traveler* (edited by *bernie hellberg jr*) /  
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*San Miguel de Allende, Mexico by Jexael Melgoza*





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# THE MASTERS OF MÉTHODE

*We Toast the 2020 Winemaker of the Year Finalists*

On the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year competition, the judging panel set out to find South Africa's master Méthode Cap Classique craftsmen. Join us as we say "Cheers!" to these fine fellows.







### *Alexander Grier*

#### **VILLIERA TRADITION BRUT NV**

Alexander (Xander) Grier, son of extreme adventurer, inspirational speaker, and chef, David Grier, is the first of the fourth generation of Griers to join the family wine business. Born in 1984, a year after the Grier family purchased Villiera in 1983, Xander knew from early on that he wanted to be a winemaker, and ultimately graduated from Stellenbosch University in 2010, with a BSC degree in Food Science (Bio).

Before and during his studies, Xander worked at Villiera, and completed the Cape Wine Academy Certificate course. He also worked as a chef, barman and lifeguard in various countries including South Africa, Mozambique, and the USA.

Xander's hands-off approach to producing great wines comes from working various vintages across the globe. Naturally at Villiera itself, but also in the USA, Australia, Tasmania and in Domaine Grier in France.

Xander's winemaking career began in 2013 when he was a consulting winemaker at Highlands Road estate in Elgin, before joining La Vierge in the Hemel-en-Aarde valley for three vintages. Finally, Xander moved to Villiera Wines as a full-time winemaker in May 2017, where he is

responsible for a variety of wines, including his finalist product, Tradition Brut.

Besides making great wines, Xander is an avid surfer, enjoys hiking, and is quite adept in the kitchen as well.

### *Jasper Raats*

#### **LONGRIDGE BRUT NV**

Longridge Wine Estate – a certified organic and biodynamic winery – is situated on the slopes of the Helderberg mountain south of Stellenbosch. Here, cellar master Jasper Raats oversees the production of the estate's list of acclaimed wines, including his 2020 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year finalist, Longridge Brut NV.

Although Jasper's involvement as a shareholder and managing director





of Longridge is well established, he is also the proprietor of Jasper Raats Single Vineyard Wines, and is a partner in Vignerons Consulting, an international consulting firm that shares knowledge of cultivating grapes, winemaking and the wine industry, with a select group of local and international clients.

Jasper's involvement in and passion for the wine runs wide and deep. He gained prominence for the wines he created in New Zealand as well as with Raats Family Wines in South Africa, and has successfully established Longridge as one of the leading organic wine producers in South Africa. Longridge was recently voted top winery in Stellenbosch in the Stellenbosch Wine Revue as well as the best biodynamic producer in South Africa.

More than producing world-class wines, Jasper is also passionate about biodynamic and organic farming, and strictly adheres to these practices in his vineyard and cellar by not using any pesticides, herbicides, or chemical sprays. The wine is made in a very natural way with no commercial yeast, enzymes, fining agents or filtration used during production.

No stranger to the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year competition – he was a finalist in 2016 with his Chenin Blanc – Jasper loves

spending time with his children, or taking on the great outdoors on a 4x4 safari, and enjoys kayaking, hunting, and cooking.

### *Matthew Krone*

#### **2017 ALEXANDRA DE LA MARQUE**

As Matthew Krone shares his love and passion for producing bespoke vintages, one cannot help but be enthused by his passion for winemaking. With a rich family history of winemaking innovation stretching back for over 300 years, Matthew counts himself fortunate for growing up on his family's old wine estate, learning the finer arts of winemaking under the nurturing eyes of his father (Nicky Krone) and late grandfather (N.C. Krone).

"It was humbling learning from two of South Africa's winemaking legends," recalls Matthew. "Over the years, they gently developed my knowledge and skills by encouraging and challenging me every day; teaching me to work in harmony with nature and always to give back more than you take. It was always about making wines from the heart."

When the Krone family lost their old family farm, Matthew came very close to walking away from the wine industry to pursue other business interests. However, Matthew was persuaded to stay the course,





*“It was humbling learning from two of South Africa’s winemaking legends,” recalls Matthen. “Over the years, they gently developed my knowledge and skills by encouraging and challenging me every day; teaching me to work in harmony with nature and always to give back more than you take.”*



and has continued his family’s proud winemaking heritage since that day.

As the proprietor of his own wine brands and co-owner and director of several successful wine companies, Matthew produces his own range of premium quality wines and sparkling wines that are sold worldwide to international acclaim. He also consults for numerous prestigious South African wine estates.

Matthew’s familial history with the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year competition began when his father won the first Cap Classique trophy in 1995. Now, his finalist entry – 2017 Alexandra de la Marque – is a limited-production release named after his eldest daughter.

### *Stephan de Beer*

#### **2017 KRONE BOREALIS VINTAGE CUVÉE BRUT**

As is the case with many of his peers, Stephan de Beer grew up in the wineries and cellars of the Western Cape, as his father worked for Vredendal Winery and Tulbagh Winery during Stephan’s childhood.

Exposed to winemaking and wine cellars from this early age, inspired Stephan to study the art of winemaking, ultimately completing his in BSc. Agriculture in Oenology and Viticulture degree at the

University of Stellenbosch in 2006. During this time, Stephan honed his skills at Boschendal and Durbanville Hills, learning as much as he can about the practical side of making wine.

Stephan notes his fascination with the second fermentation process as the driving force behind his dream of producing bottle-fermented sparkling wine, and finally received the opportunity when he joined Twee Jonge Gezellen as Assistant Winemaker in 2009. Ultimately, in 2014, Stephan ascended to the position of Winemaker at Twee Jonge Gezellen, where he is responsible for the production of Krone MCC.

For Stephan, wine production is a labour of love, and this is most apparent in his finalist entry, Krone Borealis Vintage Cuveé Brut. ⑩





# Café Enrista

*Sachet Convenience* Just add hot water







# THE MAKINGS OF A CLASSIQUE

*Johan Malan Takes the Crown as the  
2020 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year*

With his 2015 Kaapse Vonkel Brut, winemaker Johan Malan of Simonsig Estate stole the show at this year's awards. *Signature* had the distinct privilege of spending time with this giant of the South African wine establishment.

A n avenue of stately trees leads one up to the tasting centre and restaurant at Simonsig Wine Estate, home to the Malan family and their 66 years of distinguished winemaking tradition.

Steeped in character, his venerable Stellenbosch homestead is not only the birthplace of Johan Malan himself, but also that of Cap Classique itself, where the current proprietor Johan's father and legendary winemaker, Frans Malan, pioneered what would later be named, the Méthod Cap Classique in 1971.

One of three brothers, Johan spent his childhood working on the Simonsig estate, helping his father prepare the soil, plant the vineyard, cultivate the vines, harvest and even to make the wine from an early age.

After graduating from Stellenbosch University, Johan promptly joined his late father at the estate in 1981, and has been producing some of South Africa's most esteemed wines there ever since.

A keen traveller – in particular to the Champagne region of France – to keep abreast of the latest techniques. Locally, Johan and his wife, Diane, enjoy travelling to the Skeleton Coast, where Johan also enjoys fishing.

In 1992, Johan founded the Cap Classique Association, which led to the



category showing immense growth in the domestic and international markets. Johan has been a member of the Cape Winemakers Guild since 1985, and has twice served as its chairman.

Johan is the third-generation winemaker at this legendary wine estate. However, he recalls the proud moment that his son, Michael Frans joined the Simonsig team as red winemaker after working in Australia and closer to home in the Hemel en Aarde Valley. Michael Frans is the third generation Malan to qualify with a BSc Viticulture and Oenology from Stellenbosch University.

#### **ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER**

Johan has undoubtedly left a lasting imprint on the wines of Simonsig during







a career spanning 38 vintages. It was a memorable milestone in the history of this family-owned estate when the 50th anniversary of Simonsig was celebrated in 2018 to commemorate the first bottling of Simonsig Steen in 1968.

Perhaps more importantly, however, is how the international reputation of the famous Kaapse Vonkel Cap Classique flourished under Johan's guidance with the expansion of the range with a Brut Rosé, Satin Nectar Demi Sec, Satin Nectar Demi Sec Rosé and the multi-award-winning Cuvée Royale Blanc de Blancs.

The secret to the success of Kaapse Vonkel lies not only in its composition, but in remaining innovative in the content approach to this Cape classic. According to Johan, Kaapse Vonkel was initially made with Chenin Blanc and some Clairette Blanche until 1987, when he changed the blend to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

In 1997, Kaapse Vonkel became the first Cap Classique to include all three main Champagne varieties. Kaapse Vonkel Brut Rosé consists of Pinot Noir and about one-third Pinotage with a touch of Pinot Meunier.

Johan is no stranger to winemaking accolades – Simonsig Estate has, after all, won the authoritative Cap Classique Challenge an unprecedented four times. Although Simonsig's numerous honours and awards are on proud display, Johan's disarming humility is undoubtedly one of his best qualities.

Another is Johan's sincere passion for winemaking and for his family estate – as any who has had the privilege to be escorted by the winemaker on an impromptu private tour of the estate will attest.

This is most evident when Johan speaks of his father's legacy and the role that Kaapse Vonkel specifically, has played in



the recent growth of the Simonsig brand. It would not be an understatement to say that Johan has Cap Classique flowing through his veins, although it would be a mistake to assume that innovation is not top of mind for this winemaker.

Drawing from the estate's history of innovation, Johan has released two groundbreaking new wines under The Grapesmith label. It focusses on white Rhône grape varieties like Roussanne, Marsanne and Grenache blanc, some of which made their debut at the Guild Auction.

If passion for perfection, for the craft of winemaking, and for the wine industry were the only requirements to compete for the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year title, Johan Malan would be a leading contender every year. Ultimately, however, it comes down to the wine, and having myself had the pleasure of sampling the fruits of Johan's labour, he certainly deserves the accolade of being the 40<sup>th</sup> titleholder of this most coveted of accolades. ⑩







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# WHERE **SKILL & PASSION** MEET

*Phillip Theron Wins the  
Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year Award*

**As the 20<sup>th</sup> Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year, Phillip Theron of Glen Carlou, has stamped his absolute authority on his future in the wine industry.**

**T**he Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year award, now in its 20th year, was established to encourage winemakers under the age of 30 to develop their skills, express their individuality, and add to the future prestige of South African wines internationally. The awards focus on quality and recognition of excellence, and are widely regarded as the country's most prestigious and well-respected wine industry competition.

While wine awards generally focus on the wine itself, the Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year, celebrate the individual skills and talents of the vintners.

For Phillip Theron, whose 2018 Glen

Carlou Collection Tanat, and co-finalist 2019 Glen Carlou Collection Malbec had the 2020 competition judges enthralled, the Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year contest is familiar territory.

The young winemaker's first nomination came in 2018, when both of his submissions for that year's contest – a 2017 Merlot and 2017 Curator's Collection Malbec – were selected as finalists. Although the prize was ultimately awarded to Rüdger Van Wyk from Stark-Condé Wines for his 2016 Stellenbosch Syrah, the cellar door now stood ajar for Phillip to work towards another Diners Club nomination.

That, in both instances of his participation, two of Phillip's wines made it to finalist status, is as much a reflection










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*“For a man who, at this early juncture in his career already stands firmly on the cusp of greatness, Phillip’s natural demeanour is almost needlessly unassuming.”*

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on the high quality of Glen Carlou wines, as it is on the natural skill that Phillip so obviously possesses.

Phillip calls Bellville, home. Here he attended Bellville High School and matriculated in 2011. After school, he turned his attention to studying agricultural management at Boland College in Worcester, where a required practical in his first year saw Phillip participate in a harvest at Daschbosch winery. The experience piqued Phillip’s interest in the winemaking industry.

Upon completing his third year of study, Phillip yet again participated in a practical learning experience, albeit this time over a 12-month period at Glen Carlou Vineyards.

“In the same year, Glen Carlou offered me the opportunity to experience a harvest in Burgundy, France, where I also attended a short course on the winemaking of the area, and after that, I harvested at Domain de Comte Armand, in Pommard,” comments Phillip.

Investing in the young winemaker paid off for Glen Carlou, and the promising vintner was appointed as assistant winemaker in 2018.

It would be gratuitous to say that Phillip Theron shows an enormous amount of raw talent for winemaking. For a man who, at this early juncture in his career already



stands firmly on the cusp of greatness, Phillip’s natural demeanour is almost needlessly unassuming. Yet, it would be wise not to disregard Phillip based on his seemingly quiet demeanour. As a young winemaker, Phillip is the true embodiment of the ideals of the Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year competition, and a very worthy winner of its 20<sup>th</sup> running. ⑩

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*by bernie hellberg jr / photography by ryan abbott*





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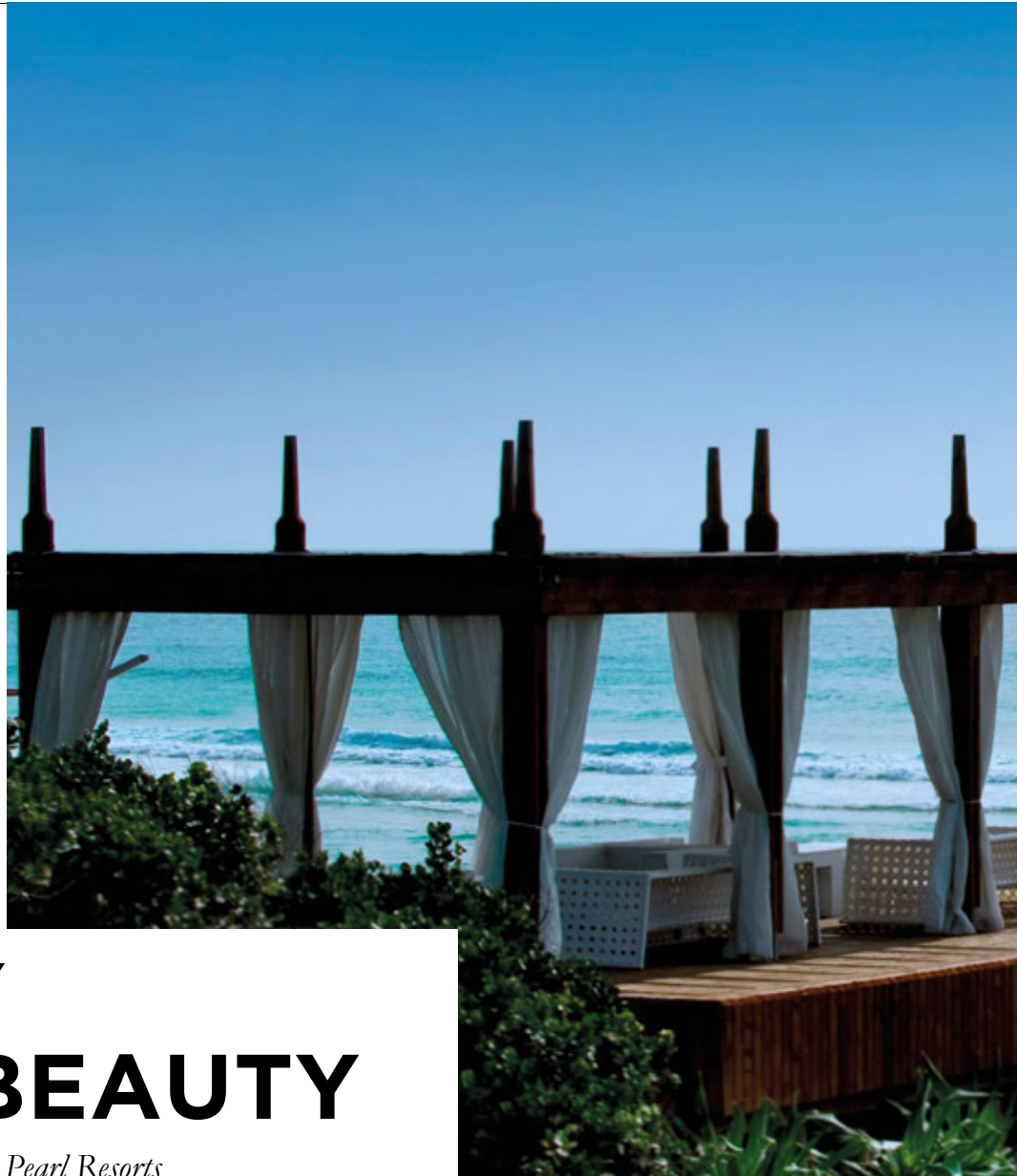
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# LUXURY MEETS BEAUTY

*The Untouched Magic of White Pearl Resorts*

One does not often get the opportunity to spend time in a place of sublime, untouched beauty. White Pearl Resorts in Zitundo, Mozambique, offers an escape unlike any other, perfect for a long weekend break, or an extended dream holiday.

Why settle for a commercialised resort, oozing with tourist paraphernalia and as removed as can be from the natural beauty that Africa has to offer? Doesn't a secret slice of paradise, tucked away in a secluded bay sound a

treat? Now that sounds like the makings of an experience to remember.

What is even more appealing, is that this strip of secluded shoreline is situated right on South Africa's doorstep – 25 kilometres from the Kosi Bay border, or a quick 30-minute helicopter transfer from Maputo.

Nestled among the dunes and the lush





evergreen bush of Ponta Mamoli, one finds White Pearl Resorts – a five-star beach destination that has earned its status as “The Pearl of the Indian Ocean”.

#### **TEEMING WITH MARINE LIFE**

Due to the region’s status as a marine reserve area, White Pearl Resorts can offer guests once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to engage with marine animals in their natural habitat. Although whale season has passed for this year – it is generally from July to November each year – during this time, majestic humpback whales pass by on their



When you're not on the boat searching for whales and dolphins, you can enjoy an afternoon of surfing, kayaking, and stand-up paddling. When you return to the shoreline, there'll be no wrestling with thousands of other holidaymakers for a small spot of sunbathing space. Instead, you will have the option to enjoy a private beach picnic complemented by the sound of the gently crashing waves.

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The atmosphere of serenity translates into the attractive guest areas and your elegant, air-conditioned suite. The guest areas have been designed with downtime in mind, and provide the perfect backdrop for opening up a good book, taking on the challenge of learning *ntchuya* ("African chess"), or indulging in a pampering spa treatment. The 22 luxurious suites of White Pearl Resorts have been sensitively designed with the natural beauty of their surroundings in mind: think wooden stilts, outdoor showers, a secluded atmosphere, and, of course, panoramic ocean views from every single suite.

The tactfully placed suites and emphasis on privacy will ensure that you feel like the only guest in the resort, and your personal butler will ensure that your every need is catered to. All you'll need to do is order a cocktail and bask in your private plunge pool.

It's time to rethink everything you thought you knew about beach resorts. White Pearl Resorts strikes a rare balance between chic luxury and raw beauty, giving you the chance to relax in style and see the wonders of nature up close. Are you ready to book your next holiday yet?

For more information, visit [www.whitepearlresorts.com](http://www.whitepearlresorts.com). 



annual migration. When the time is right, from the comfort of White Pearl Resorts' ocean safari boat, guests can observe the whales blowing, breaching, lob-tailing, and playing. In the later part of the season, you may be lucky enough to encounter the newborns as they find their fins. Outside of whale season, you may still be lucky enough to encounter pods of gregarious bottlenose dolphins during the regularly scheduled snorkelling trips.

A few months later, some equally magnificent visitors grace Ponta Mamoli's shores. Between November and February, hundreds of loggerhead turtles return to the beaches from which they first departed as hatchlings, to continue the cycle and lay eggs of their own. In partnership with the Southern Mozambique Marine Turtle Nesting Monitoring, Tagging and Conservation Programme, the resort works to monitor and protect these endangered creatures. Guests can witness the amazing hatching process first-hand during organised turtle walks.

One thing's for sure, you won't be able to tear yourself away from the temperate, glittering ocean – and you won't have to.

by **white pearl resorts** /  
photography by **peter pinnock, white pearl resorts**





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# REWARDING EXCELLENCE

*Introducing the 2020 Winemaker of the Year Judges*

Over the years, Cap Classique has established itself as a legitimate class of bubbly in its own right, with South African producers shifting their focus from measuring their success on a champagne-like character, to a Cap Classique-like character. This view of one of this year's judging panel perfectly summarises the essence of the South African bubbly industry, setting the scene for *Signature* when we spent some time getting to know the 2020 Winemaker of the Year judges.



## *Remington Norman* INTERNATIONAL JUDGE

In keeping with the grand occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year competition, the highly regarded international judge, Remington Norman joined the 2020 judging panel for the first time.

Remington, a wine merchant and multi-award-winning author who has written extensively on Burgundy and Rhone-style wines, as well as many others, became a Master of Wine in 1984, and is the two-time winner of the Andre Simon Prize for his books on wine. In 1996, Remington's contribution to wine knowledge and appreciation was duly recognised when he was elected to the Academie Internationale du Vin.

This year's Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year competition benefitted greatly from Remington's experience and expertise. Considering the breadth of the Cap Classique lineup, says Remington, "one is bound to find some lovely wines, and indeed there were. One will always also find wines that are produced more for the commercial market and wouldn't be considered as fine wine. Both categories demonstrated that, but with the Cap Classique, in particular, there were some charming wines. Nicely made,



with beautiful balance and good fruit, not aggressive fermentation or over-oaked, just lovely wines.

"Coming from a British background, where we love older-styles of wine, I was looking for wines that would age well. My experience of Cap Classique in South Africa is that there are some exceptionally well-made wines that are truly age-worthy. For some, the temptation is always there to try to map everything onto champagne, but we were mindful of comparing like with like in this competition. We looked at the intrinsic qualities of the wine – the balance, the depth of fruit, the structure of the wine, and the ones that came out on top were really good in those respects."

In terms of the Young Winemaker of the Year entries, it is always challenging to compare different varietals in a lineup of wines that differ significantly from one another. Says Remington, "again, one has to look at the intrinsic qualities of the wine. In my opinion, texture is terribly important when it comes to fine wine. It has got to have the fruit and the balance, and sensitivity to the application of new wood is of critical importance. One of the great things that have happened in the South African wine industry over the past few years is that winemakers have been more restrained and sensitive in their use of new wood. When it says Syrah or Tannat on the label, you want to taste that grape. The oak is part of the overall spectrum of the wine, but much like when you're cooking with garlic, if you overdo it, you end up ruining your meal."

### *Carrie Adams* **CHIEF JUDGE**

"I was excited to have Cap Classique in this year's competition," says Chief Judge Carrie Adams as we discuss her take on the entries in this year's Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year competition. "Tasting bubbly is challenging



because it is so acidic. It is necessary to pace yourself during the course of the tasting."

As Chief Judge, Carrie is responsible for ensuring that the panel is suited to the task. For that reason she brought Heidi Duminy and Remington Norman – both highly-regarded specialists with regards to bubbly – onto the panel this year.

"This year's competition was surprisingly rewarding," opines Carrie on the Cap Classique entries. "It is extremely complex to create good bubbles as there is so much that can go wrong in the process. On balance, the standard of the bubbly that we tasted was extremely high."

"I was torn between the top contenders from the 108-bubbly lineup. From those wines presenting lean, mean, linear granny smith apple flavours, to the warmer, butterscotchy, comfortable options. Across the spectrum of the top six wines, we got an excellent

representation of what South Africa's winemakers are bringing to the party. As a country, we truly punch above our weight when it comes to making good bubbly."

With the Young Winemaker contestants, Carrie commented on the high standard of cleanliness and superb oak management almost across the board. "Of the 55 wines in this category, barely a handful showed any signs of bacteria or other unpleasant features, which bodes extremely well for the future of our wine industry," she concludes. "I found it quite interesting that Shiraz/Syrah seemed to be the cultivar of choice this year, it certainly made up the bulk of entries in the competition."

"The winning wine is just an extraordinarily, beautifully made wine. Tannat is an extremely difficult grape to work with, and whoever made it has done an excellent job of it."



## Heidi Duminy

### JUDGE

Affectionately referred to as South Africa's "Mrs Bubbles", Heidi Duminy first began her Cap Classique tasting journey 12 years ago. Also, as celebrated Wine Master, and newly-appointed principal of the Cape Wine Academy, Heidi not only has the experience required to judge such a sophisticated category as Cap Classique, she is also equipped with the undisputed technical expertise to bolster an already imposing lineup of local judges.

"There was a tremendous show of entries in this year's competition, confirming that there is a lot of confidence at the top end of the industry," says Heidi as we sit down to discuss her views on both categories of this year's competition. "What stood out for me was the diversity and styles this year. Everything from the Bruts, to the Blanc de Blancs, to the Rosés entered – even two Demi Secs were entered – shows how diverse the local Cap Classique category has become.

"Stylistically there was great diversity in this year's lineup. From the goût Anglais

styles with their really nice hug of lees, to the more riveting and pristine 'green apple' goût Français style wines. Ultimately it came to a bride and groom pair of excellent bubbles, and it was tough to choose between the two."

In the Young Winemaker category, Heidi commended the winemakers' courage to experiment this year. "There seems to be a lot of interest in Shiraz/Syrah this year. What's quite nice about that is that there is far more restraint observed in the oak and much more tender pressing. Although there was a lot of freshness and vibrancy in the wines, some were too friendly, with not enough intricacy displayed to rise to the top.

"There were also wonderful Bordeaux blends with a lot of muscle and weight, and quite judiciously oaked so that the integration and expression were truly pleasant. There were truly some exciting wines in the lineup, and by all accounts, I can't wait to see what happens in the future."

## Michael Crossley

### JUDGE

Michael is certainly no newcomer to the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year judging

panel, and while this year was his first judging Cap Classique, he has a particular love for the style. For Michael, the most important initial factor to consider when judging Cap Classique is the temperature of the wine when tasting. "When tasted too warm, the wine tends to be a little clumsy, so it follows that serving Cap Classique perfectly chilled is key to enjoying a great bubbly.

"Of all the entries, the Blanc de Blancs and more linear styles were fantastic to taste, as well as some of the non-vintage wines. Often, we presume that, to be taken seriously, a wine needs to be classified as a vintage, but the backbone of the industry comes from non-vintage, and it is good to see that the quality there is outstanding.





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"There was an interesting lineup of red wines this year," says Michael as our conversation turned to the Young Winemaker category. "It becomes quite a complex exercise to taste so many different varietals, so I grouped them together as best I could, to ensure that, when judging a specific varietal, I could compare them to their peers in the competition."

"Although Shiraz/Syrah was by far the largest class, there was a lot of diversity in the offerings. Some wines were really lovely, while others still were somewhat disappointing. Of course, it wasn't any of the Shiraz entries who took the title, of course. While my personal favourite was with the shortlisted Cinsaut, the ultimate winning Tannat is an absolutely beautifully made wine that deserves the title."

## *Ntsiki Biyela*

### **JUDGE**

As an experienced wine producer in her own right, and seasoned Diners Club Winemaker of the Year judge, Ntsiki Biyela has seen wines styles, and particularly the overall quality of wines change remarkably over the last few years. Excited to be part of the Cap Classique panel this year, Ntsiki makes it clear where her personal preferences in terms of Cap Classique style lies. "I'm not a Granny Smith apple kind of person when it comes to Cap Classique. I prefer the richer goût Anglais styles. That said, by far the majority of bubbly entered this year were beautiful examples of the category, which made judging all the more challenging, although very rewarding."

"With the Young Winemaker of the Year category I was excited because there was so much adventure in this year's entries. There is no denying that the picture we used to have about South Africa's young winemakers has changed. If it weren't



for the age difference, I believe that the young ones could compete at the same level as many of their senior counterparts. In the past, you could easily tell when a younger, more inexperienced winemaker had produced a wine, but it has become significantly harder, if not impossible, to discern in recent years.

"Overall, the most prominent aspect of the competition is how the quality of wines presented, had improved. It is a noticeable change from even just a few short years ago." ⑩

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by *bernie hellberg jr* /  
photography by *ryan abbott*





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A couple is seen from behind, relaxing in a rooftop swimming pool. The man is on the left, shirtless, and the woman is on the right, wearing a silver chain-link bikini. They are both leaning their arms on the pool's edge, looking out over a dense city skyline with numerous skyscrapers. The water in the pool is blue and rippling. The background shows a hazy cityscape under a soft, warm light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. A large white curved shape is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text and social media icons.

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# TUK-TUK REIMAGINED

## *A New Chapter for a Franschhoek Staple*

**Chef Darren Badenhorst is a name synonymous with both high-quality food offerings and the stunning Wineland town of Franschhoek. As a consistent feature on the local best chef and restaurant lists, Chef Darren knows the Franschhoek restaurant scene better than most and his latest project, Tuk Tuk Microbrewery, promises to be another feather in his cap.**

Franschhoek is synonymous with sensational culinary experiences. Boasting some of the best restaurants in the country, this quaint Wineland town has long attracted tourists with a passion for good food and great wine. Any seasoned foodie will know the name Darren Badenhorst, the charismatic master of French cuisine in Franschhoek. After turning his chef's knife on his second project in town, the wonder that is Le Chene at Leeu Estates, he is now in partnership with the award-winning Cape Brewing Company team.

Visitors to Franschhoek will soon be able to "Park off for a pint" and indulge in the new and exciting cuisine offering at Tuk Tuk Microbrewery, courtesy of the world-renowned local chef and restaurateur, Darren Badenhorst, in what promises to be an exciting and fresh offering to what has quickly become a landmark Microbrewery in Franschhoek's main street, set to open later this month.

The all-Day dining menu will be a globally inspired offering showcasing casual regional favourites from Italy, Germany, India, Mexico, USA, and Great Britain. Specialities include incredible tacos, traditional Eisbein,

wood-fired pizzas, classically made mutton rogan josh, creative s' mores and CBC beer batter fish and chips.

The brewery will feature the beloved Tuk Tuk craft beer range which boasts five specially crafted brews that are unique to the microbrewery as well as a selection of five craft beers from the CBC range with tasting options for both ranges.

Added to the beverage list will be The Kloof Street wine range from Mullineux and Leeu Family Wines. Plus a creative cocktail menu which will offer everything from the classic staples to bespoke mixtures crafted by the team of skilled mixologists. Guests



can be seated indoors where the interiors exude an industrial feel with vaulted ceilings, exposed brick and sandblasted walls, and copper and stainless steel service pipes running overhead. Sitting inside offers guests the chance to watch the Tuk Tuk craft beer range being expertly crafted right in front of their eyes. On a warm Franschhoek day, outside seating is the perfect choice as patrons can relax with a cold beer or cocktail and watch their pizza being baked in the handcrafted imported pizza oven, while the world goes by on the bustling main street.

Tuk Tuk will be open daily from 11am to 9pm during low season, and daily from 11am to 11pm during high season. Selected takeaway meals are also on offer.

"I am thrilled at the challenge afforded to me by Mr Singh, AKA Bas. Our long-standing and successful relationship and alignment is growing exponentially, and I couldn't be happier with this new exciting chapter in our collective growth," says Darren Badenhorst.

The decision to pass on the reins at Tuk Tuk Microbrewery comes on the heels of the decision made by Leeu Collection Founder, Analjit Singh, to "welcome top chefs and their restaurants into the Leeu Collection properties, to enhance the guest experience. While we at Leeu Collection provide the infrastructure and functionality, focusing on lifestyle aspects such as beautifully curated interiors, exquisitely landscaped gardens, stunning pieces of art and immersive Mullineux & Leeu Family Wine tastings, we can allow the experts to cook up a magical storm in our kitchens."

*For further updates follow Tuk Tuk Microbrewery on social media (@tuktukbrew) and visit their website [www.tuktuk.co.za](http://www.tuktuk.co.za).* ①

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by **tuk-tuk microbrewery**



# *Le coin Français*

By Darren Badenhorst



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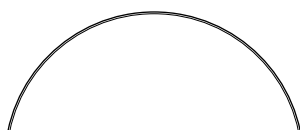
The newest addition to the Franschhoek scene is a restaurant truly designed for Franschhoek. Both in concept and in name, the aptly named Le coin Français, the French derivative of Franschhoek, embodies the essence of the valley in heritage, cuisine, art, and wine. Featuring cutting edge methods that meet time-tested French elegance in cuisine, Le coin Français offers two structures of fine dining tasting menus for dinner – both with excellent pairing options – as well as an a la carte menu for lunch which enables people that are less adventurous (in mind and in pocket) to experience the same caliber and sophistication of cuisine in a more casual and approachable setting. Bookings are essential at least 2 weeks in advance, and can be made online at [www.lecoinfrancais.co.za](http://www.lecoinfrancais.co.za)

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## LIFESTYLE

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Japanese, Suntory Whiskies are subtle, refined and complex. Traditionally crafted following Suntory's Art of Blending philosophy, Toki Whisky features the quintessential characteristics of a Suntory blend: exquisite balance, harmony and oneness. Suntory Toki whisky is available from all major retailers. [whisky.suntory.com/en/global](http://whisky.suntory.com/en/global)

#### WIN!

One lucky *Signature* reader will win a bottle of Suntory Toki. To enter, SMS the word **SIGNATURE** followed by the word **TOKI** and your **NAME & EMAIL** to 35131. SMS charged at R1.50. Free & bundled SMS' do not apply. Ts & Cs apply. Competition closes 28 February 2021.



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style as the 1927 original. It fascinates, entices, and marks the beginning of a bold new adventure. Bring on the night with Rémy Martin VSOP, a voyage into a world of positive vibrations and authentic French *savoir-faire*. Try it neat or in a classic Rémy Ginger. Available at leading nationwide at R640.







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# CAPTURE A MOMENT OF TIME

*Boutique Haute Horlogerie Opens at the V&A Waterfront*

**A new chapter is written in the world of international luxury brands in South Africa, as the Boutique Haute Horlogerie flagship store opens at Cape Town's Victoria & Alfred Waterfront.**

**A**rchitects of Time is excited to announce the opening of its new watch and jewellery multi-brand Boutique in South Africa.

The BHH new concept store has revolutionised the Cape Town retail landscape and enhances lifestyle experiences with the introduction of a unique shopping and leisure destination unlike any other in South Africa.

With its minimalistic design and vibrant interiors, the BHH store occupies over 150 square meters of retail space, offering clients the opportunity to immerse themselves in the different worlds of the brands carried in this contemporary, state of the art Boutique.

The sumptuous private lounge, available to customers to view and fit on the exceptional pieces on offer, adds to the feeling of classical elegance and understated luxury.

Located in Cape Town's prime shopping district, the prestigious V&A Waterfront Mall, the BHH store allows customers to shop for the most exclusive and unique jewellery and watches in a shopping environment that reinforces the brand's commitment to craftsmanship, innovation, heritage and uniqueness.

At the new Boutique Haute Horlogerie flagship store you can find 11 of the world's most prestigious brands of watches and jewellery. While La Maison Chopard is a new permanent, dedicated space to the Universe of Chopard watches and jewellery, the store's multi-brand gallery has been designed in such a way that licensed brands will rotate according to evolving trends, with the dedicated Chopard space, and the main boutique space, connecting to one another and link at a private lounge.


The design features internal architecture advanced with a truth to materials, alongside core BHH principles of modernity, precision, and restrained luxury. The boutique was developed by Rogue Projects with Richard Moss, in collaboration with Tyen Maysten of Phase 3 Architecture and Ali Esen Studio. Klein Concepts was appointed as the local architect in South Africa.

The inimitable BHH environment is about natural tones, clean finishes, and organic textures, and meticulous attention was paid to create a lasting, tactile feel. To this end, stone finishes – a timeless, natural material – was employed to enhance the watches in something of a sanctum exhibition space. Stone has a unique history and character that compliments both centennial and new-age watch designs. In the main boutique, each brand is separated by two vertical stone fins that synergise with the terrazzo

flooring; and the light, off-white hue of the stone works alongside our lighting design to showcase each individual timepiece. The fins extend to a subtle, vaulted ceiling that encloses an inviting and intimate space.

At BHH, watch enthusiasts and connoisseurs alike can shop for the most exclusive collections of Ulysse Nardin, H. Moser & Cie, Parmigiani and Zenith timepieces, as well as the new mesmerising collections from Dior Haute Couture, Hermes, and Ebel watches.

The final touch of sparkle to this exclusive assortment is offered by the mould-breaking and rocking Messika diamond jewellery, as well as the playful, stylish *prêt-à-porter* luxury Italian fine fashion jeweller, Pomellato.

*Visit the BHH boutique at shop 6223 in the Victoria Wharf at the V&A Waterfront, call +27 21 418 1889 / +27 21 421 4296, email [bhhct@archtime.co.za](mailto:bhhct@archtime.co.za), or call Architects of Time on +27 11 669 0790. *

by *boutique haute horlogerie*





# FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION

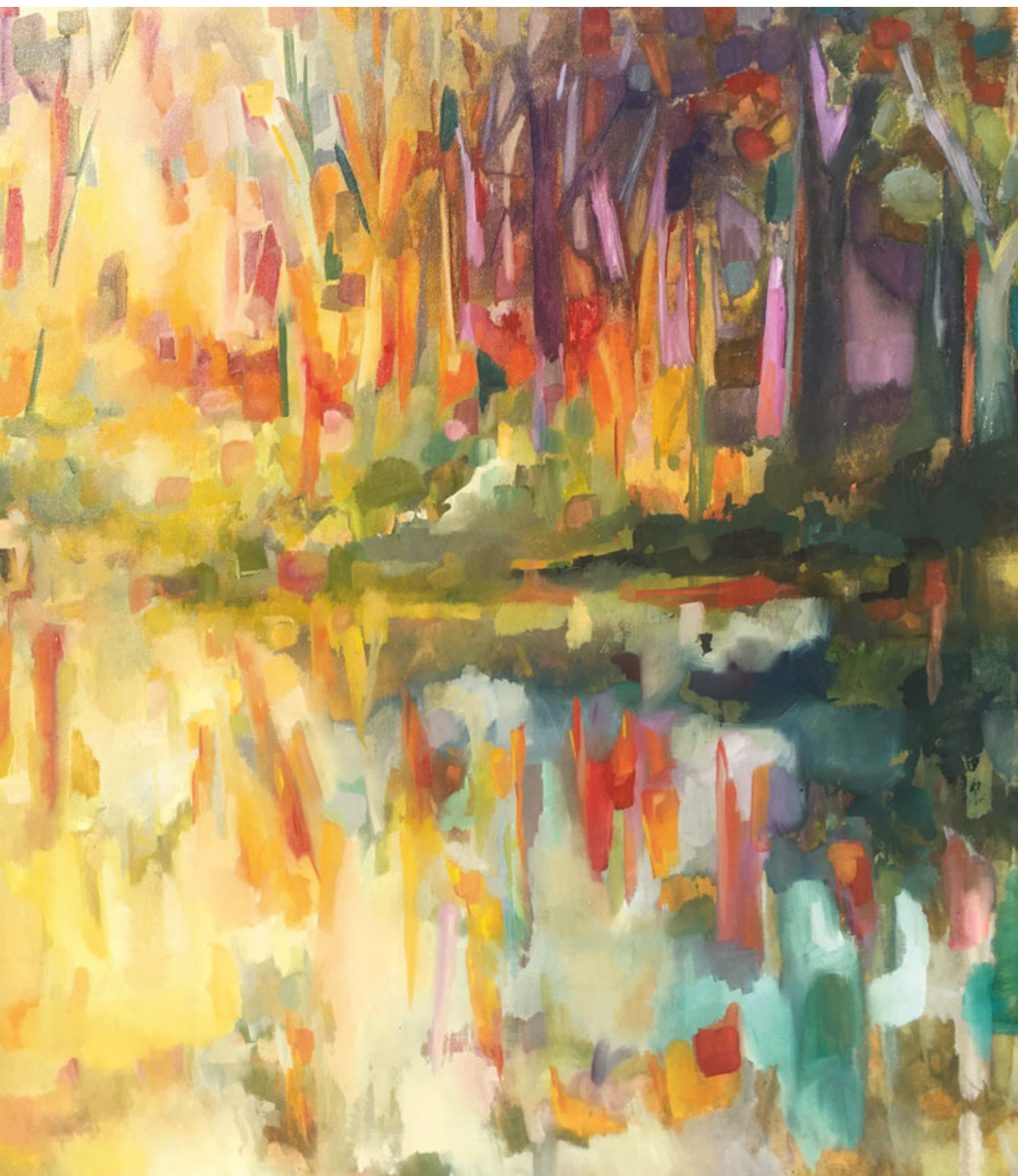
*Lindsay Patton Presents an Exploration of Her Mind and Feelings on Canvas*

Talking with Lindsay Patton in her picturesque Franschhoek home feels less like an interview and more like walking through the pages of a magazine. There is an air of total calm surrounded by beauty and she speaks about what she loves with gentle precision. Lindsay draws inspiration both from within and without and her paintings are infused with a sense of calm expectation.

Lindsay Patton, born in Harare, Zimbabwe, is far more than a painter. After graduating from high school, she moved to Johannesburg, where she founded her own interior decorating – Bella Casa Interiors – in Sandton. Living in both Mexico and New York had a significant influence on Patton's design style, materialising in love for neutral textures, contemporary











décor and splashes of colour. When it comes to interior decorating, her focus is on a fresh and holistic approach combining both an eclectic contemporary feel and classic comfort. It was, however, during her time abroad that Patton rediscovered her passion for painting, buying a canvas and small set of primary oils and exploring. After returning home and setting up a workshop in her garden shed, the artist embarked on a journey which she initially envisioned as nothing more than a small passion project.

However, as her skills developed further, and she found her artistic niche, Patton realised that she needed to explore this avenue professionally.

She recalls how one evening, the power went out, leading her to experiment with painting in the dark. "I created my first work – a nude. I took the painting to the interior-decorating showroom and popped it up to dry outside the front door. While it was drying, a woman from Germany enquired about the work, which led to the first official sale of my art. It wasn't about the money; it was about the significance of appreciation in a new-found passion and later, a profession."

Lindsay has a thirst for travel, and that worldliness shows in her work. After the death of her father in 1998, Lindsay and her sister decided to follow their dream to explore the globe, and

headed to the Cote d'Azur in the south of France to live, paint and experience. Armed with a Harley-Davidson, canvas and a few paintbrushes, they set out to explore the countryside. Upon returning to South Africa years later, Lindsay's passion for painting began to morph into a full-time profession. A subsequent move to Mexico in 2002 and later on to New York allowed the artist to focus purely on creating and she thrived.

As she developed her skills and explored various avenues, she found herself gravitating towards contemporary impressionism, specifically in the medium of oil on canvas. An impressionistic style dominates her predominantly life-sized canvases. Bold, vivid brush strokes result in artworks which come alive. Lindsay's nude paintings, which on a few occasions have been modelled on her own form, are approached with gentle colours. She is known for her balance of muted and vivid colours, incorporating thick and yet somehow delicate brushstrokes. Her large mixed media artworks of oil, acrylic and charcoal are skilful expressions of unique colour combinations.

For Lindsay, the opportunity to visualise where her works will hang allows her to create art that complements the surroundings and captures a feeling. When asked what she hopes viewers will see when looking at her paintings, she says that it is more about a sense of satisfaction and inspiration than it is about making viewers see something specific. "For me, art is about something that pleases



and promotes a feeling of happiness and wellness. I hope to promote a sense of well-being through the eyes to let the heart feel – take you by the throat in a gentle way and then takes your breath. Like quenching a thirst.”

When it comes to how she feels when she paints, she describes a totally calm mind. “It is an experience I am sharing with the world, a love letter that I am writing to the world. It is an intimate feeling of both mind and body.”


The artist is inspired by the drama in nature, which is right on her doorstep. Painting from her studio and home in the Franschhoek Valley means there’s no lack of inspiration. This country lifestyle lends itself to her painting, her love for photography and her passion for beautiful things. Painting is integrated into her everyday life

easels are set up to take advantage of nature’s backdrop, and days are spent under the patio vines overlooking an expanse of mountains and vineyards.

“My artworks portray all the five senses that I feel in that one moment, in that one place – on one canvas. What else can one purchase that demands nothing and fulfils one’s needs, for all of eternity? A painting. Art is like looking at a piece of the artist’s soul,” she believes.

She acknowledges that being a professional artist is somewhat of a give and take. “My favourite aspect is that art portrays an honest opinion of one’s self for the world to observe. Having the opportunity and capability to create is an open and vulnerable process. For me, it’s my postcard to the world. My least favourite aspect is that it involves time and money. The

process includes a focus on finance, which can be distracting. Ideally, I would like to give every piece of art away to people who love my work.”

Creating a piece that allows a variety of interpretations and ideas to coexist in the viewer’s mind lies at the core of Lindsay Patton’s work. The expressive and holistic way in which she approaches the world reflects in her paintings. Brilliant in conception and inspired by their surroundings, her work evokes an emotional response in viewers – but is rarely the same in every viewing. Patton is keenly aware of the beauty of the everyday, and uses this notion as creative fuel. 

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by **maxine volker** /  
photography by **ryan abbott**



BELOW: *Leobo Private Reserve*





# ESCAPE THE MADDENING CROWDS

*Stylish SA Bush Breaks to Add to Your Bucket List*

Isolation is the word on everybody's lips during these unprecedented times. Luckily, as South Africans, we are blessed with an abundance of vast open spaces and luxury lodges that may be the perfect antidote to curing our insatiable wanderlust.



Studies have proven that holidays are incredibly positive for our health, and a safari, in particular, is excellent for lowering blood pressure, improving sleep patterns, and recharging your batteries. The expert team at award-winning safari company Ker & Downey® Africa offer personalised trips throughout South Africa with a mission to connect clients to nature, as well as leave a positive legacy behind. Here are some of our favourite easily accessible luxury escapes that will do wonders for your emotional, physical and spiritual well-being:

## **JOCK SAFARI LODGE**

Situated in the stunning southern region of the Kruger National Park, Jock Safari Lodge lies within 6,000 hectares of pristine wilderness – miles away from the maddening crowds. An exclusive concession, the wildlife (including the iconic Big Five) survive and thrive, undisturbed by humankind. Exuding elegance and five-star grandeur, the lodge is all about the finer things in life, offering guests a chance to recharge and unwind in style, with all the modern comforts considered and taken to

the next level of luxury. Fine wine, dining and world-class game viewing in this intimate, unbroken landscape is everything it promises to be: untamed, untouched, unforgettable.

## **LEOBO PRIVATE RESERVE**

If a dose of adventure is what you need to escape reality, look no further than Leobo Private Reserve. Situated on 8,000 hectares of the Waterberg region in Limpopo, this is a luxury safari lodge with a difference. Here, traditional game drive vehicles are rarely used. Instead, guests experience the bush on horseback, quad bikes, or onboard a helicopter. There are no scheduled itineraries, no time constraints, and no rules (excluding from the essential safety regulations, of course). Apart from its most celebrated activity – helicopter paintball – Leobo offers an array of heart-stopping, adrenaline-filled activities in an environment that continually stimulates the senses. The extraordinary Observatory Bush Villa is available for exclusive use only, complete with a private butler and personal chef. There is nothing quite like it in the world – an idyllic escape where guests can disconnect from the outside world, be one with nature and have the

ultimate adrenaline-filled adventure.

## **SANBONA DWYKA LODGE**

The name Sanbona represents the vision of the San people to restore harmony between man and nature and restore the interconnectedness of all living beings. Seated at the foot of the Warmwaterberg Mountains, in the heart of the Klein Karoo, Dwyka Lodge is located in the Sanbona reserve – the largest privately-owned wildlife reserve in the Western Cape. Ideally positioned on a horseshoe bend of a dried-up Karoo ravine, surrounded by the most incredible rock formations, the feeling of delicious isolation and seclusion in an entirely hidden landscape makes one feel like a pioneering adventurer. The reserve has reintroduced not only the Big Five and other indigenous game back to this landscape but also the rare White Lion – offering these sacred animals a safe space to wander freely and live in peace. Think nights spent stargazing and making friends around the fire, and days spent exploring the incredible landscape between bouts of utter relaxation and world-class dining in absolute luxury and you're almost there...



LEFT: Dnyeka Tented Lodge

#### MANTIS BIYELA LODGE

Described as “a place in the heavens”, Mantis Biyela Lodge is located in the heart of Zululand in Kwa-Zulu Natal, as part of a newly formed concession to the Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park. The ultra-luxurious lodge comprises 12 expansive villas, offering either a plunge pool or day bed with a private balcony, ensuring sheer seclusion from the outside world. Overlooking the White uMfolozi River, elevated above a valley on a rocky cliff, guests can enjoy the thriving population of wildlife from the comfort of their villas. Well known for its abundance of wild dogs and vultures, as well as the Big Five, game drives are an exhilarating experience and, because the lodge has exclusive traversing rights within the game reserve, viewings are uninterrupted making them intimate and genuinely unforgettable. It is the perfect place to disengage from the outside world, and experience isolation in heavenly surroundings.

#### CAMP JABULANI

This luxury camp, located in Kapama Game Reserve between the northern Drakensberg mountains and the Greater Kruger Park, comes with a beautiful story. It is the home of Jabulani the elephant – a rescue elephant who now leads a herd of 12 Zimbabwean elephants who were also rescued by the camp’s owner, Lente Roode. The story itself is one of hope and consolation, and the very essence of the camp reflects this incredible journey that began 20 years ago with the brave little elephant who fought against the odds to survive. Recognised as one of the country’s most respected five-star safari lodges, it is an idyllic escape where guests have an opportunity to interact with these majestic creatures and understand them on a deeper level – both physically and emotionally. The Jabulani elephant experience, described as being both “soulful and insightful” is a one-of-a-kind safari experience and one that will undoubtedly remain embedded in your heart forever.

BELOW: *Camp Jabulani*







### TINTSWALO SAFARI LODGE

Located in the pristine Manyeleti Game Reserve – which shares an unfenced border with the Kruger National Park – Tintswalo Safari Lodge provides the pinnacle private safari experience with the iconic Tintswalo-flair. The reserve is renowned for its minimal vehicle density, and abundance of Big Five and other game, offering an exclusive experience. So, if isolation is what you're after, you've come to the right place. Relax amongst the ancient sycamores after a day of game viewing, enjoying a drink in your private plunge pool in one of the six luxuriously appointed suites, watching the wildlife wander along the seasonal riverbed along which the lodge is situated. This is untouched African wilderness at its very best, and five-star service that is unparalleled.

*Get in touch with one of Ker & Downey® Africa's LuxVenture® Designers to plan your dream South African isolation escape today. Visit [www.ker-downeyafrica.com](http://www.ker-downeyafrica.com). ⑩*



ABOVE: Tintswalo Safari Lodge

# WINES WITH ALTITUDE

*Cederberg Cellars*

There is something special, almost magical, about the Cederberg region – a rugged, mountainous area between Clanwilliam and Citrusdal that, geologically speaking, is home to the unique Pakhuis Sediments – dark, soft shale beds and pinnacles that keep snow on these peaks long after other snowfalls have melted elsewhere.





**T**ourists and wine lovers increasingly flock to the Cederberg Cellar, because the region offers a comprehensive sensory experience that juxtaposes striking visuals with a sense of tranquillity. Visually, the months of August and September (depending on the rains) offer a display of colourful wildflowers, frequently even in the vineyards, and the sheer magnificence of the Cederberg Mountains when the vineyards are at rest.

And it is in this pure, virus-free environment that award-winning vines have found their niche – taking advantage of the relatively cool Mediterranean climate and rainfall which varies between 400 and 600 millimetres per year.

#### **WHERE IT BEGAN**

Although the first Nieuwoudts arrived at the Cape in the 1700s, their descendants eventually ended up in areas such as Klapmuts and Vredendal before settling on the farm Vogelfontein, followed by their subsequent final destination at Cederberg Cellar.

Starting as a fruit farm, it was the third generation of Nieuwoudts who eventually tried their hands at winemaking in 1972 – symbolically, the year in which current winemaker/owner, David Nieuwoudt, was born.

As head of the family which started farming this superb, and occasionally challenging, environment since 1893, David Nieuwoudt and his team make full

use of terroir – that vital combination of soil type, climate, topography and geology – in a rugged region where only the hardiest plants and people survive. It was this move by the Nieuwoudt clan to the farm Dwarsrivier – a spectacularly beautiful, fynbos-covered area on the edge of the succulent Karoo biome – which launched their legendary wines.

With only 55 hectares under vine, and aiming to expand to 80 hectares planted at altitudes ranging from 782 to 1,034 metres above sea level, this remarkable cellar has managed to produce wines of quality which are increasingly becoming popular locally as well as abroad.

#### **BREAKTHROUGH**

One of the first breakthroughs came in 2004, when the Cederberg Shiraz 2002 won the Fairbairn Capital Wine Trophy for the best Shiraz, as well as the trophy for the best red wine in South Africa with its Shiraz 2013 at the Six Nations Wine Challenge.

This proved, once and for all, the fallacy of the widely held view that all South Africa's premier wines must originate from one of the more than 900 estates straddling the N1 or adjoining the roads of surrounding towns such as Paarl, Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, as well as Robertson and Worcester.

#### **VISIONARY OR MAVERICK?**

Assisted by husband-and-wife winemakers – Alex Nel (white wines and beer brewer), and Tammy Turck-Nel (red



BELOW: *Spectacular view from the cellar*



wines and blends), David Nieuwoudt's skill and dedication is a byword in the industry with numerous awards for a variety of cultivars – ranging from Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon to Pinot Noir – over the years, not forgetting the iconic Shiraz.

Whether one regards David Nieuwoudt as a maverick or as a visionary, his versatility and sense of adventure is hard to copy. After all, who else in our country would be brave enough to develop 10.91 hectares of the almost forgotten Bukettraube cultivar (the largest single block in the world), paradoxically, has been described as producing the oldest new wine in the world.

In fact, Bukettraube is just waiting to be “discovered” by those gourmands who are searching for that elusive wine partner for curries,





spicy, chicken, blue cheese and Cape Malay Bobotie.

With the oldest Cederberg plantings in 1994, it is generally accepted that Bukettraube was cultivated in Alsace, France, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Other sources, however, point out that Bukettraube originated in the Randersacker region on the outskirts of Würzburg in Bavaria – and that it is a cross between Sylvaner B and Frankenthaler. It matures relatively early with good sugar, making it a prized component in blends.

### GETTING THERE

Being somewhat isolated deep in the heart of the Cederberg mountain range between the towns of Clanwilliam and Citrusdal, this wine cellar does not have to host seasonal busloads of tourists. Still, it is a happy place for

those discerning wine lovers. They are prepared to, literally, go the extra mile to experience great and bespoke self-catering accommodation at the nearby Sanddrif resort, which also forms part of the Cederberg Cellar.

Cederberg Cellar is a monument to the Nieuwoudt family's hard work, dedication and the almost uncanny ability to produce quality wines in an environment which would have defeated lesser individuals.

If you, like me and wine lovers in general, have found the wines of Cederberg to be a somewhat unknown entity in the past, rest assured that once you've tried the various cultivars, this label will soon find a premier spot in your private cellar too. ⑩



### Win with Cederberg Cellars

Two lucky *Signature* readers will each win a mixed case of Cederberg Cellar Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Sauvignon. To enter, SMS the word **SIGNATURE** followed by the word **CEDERBERG** and your **NAME** to 35131. *SMS charged at R1.50. Free & Bundled SMS' do not apply. Ts & Cs apply. Competition closes 28 February 2021.*



# LADY LUXURY

*A Glimpse Into the Life of Rolls-Royce Designer, Sina Maria Eggel*

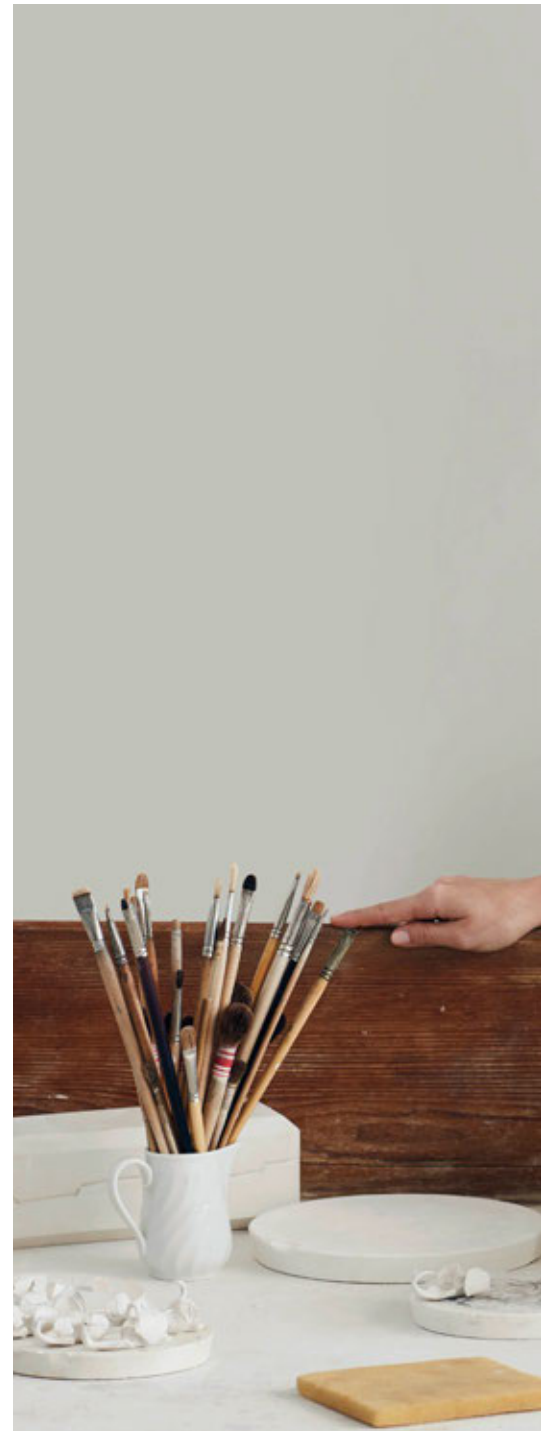
**If Rolls-Royce motor cars are the epitome of bespoke luxury, their creators are the custodians of the genre. The tastemakers that define “bespoke”, often hail from divergent backgrounds, yet their impact on our concept of luxury is lasting.**

Born and raised in Munich, Germany, Sina Maria Eggel graduated from Munich University of Applied Sciences with a bachelor’s degree in Industrial Design. Despite her interest in the medical field, Sina entered an *Elle Decoration* competition and won an internship with the world’s most renowned glassmaker, Theresienthal, who she later collaborated with for a Rolls-Royce Cocktail Hamper. Although a career in design seemed initially remote, Sina’s experience with the glassmaker introduced her to the realm of bespoke luxury, as she worked on collectable pieces for customers across the globe.

Sina then joined Rolls-Royce Motor Cars as an intern. After completing her internship, she continued as an accessory designer, gradually focusing her work on colour and trim design for Rolls-Royce Collection Cars. In a quest to continuously redefine the content of bespoke luxury, Sina actively develops new features, from the smallest details to the most profound statements of individualisation.

Sina has been involved in exciting projects for the Rolls-Royce brand, including commissioning artists to create illustrative interpretations of the “The Gallery” inside the new Phantom – the uninterrupted application of glass running across the car’s fascia that provides an unprecedented opportunity to exhibit artwork within the vehicle. This highly unique space was created in the acknowledgement that Rolls-Royce patrons are often collectors of fine and contemporary art.

Considering the impact of the global pandemic, we asked Sina how her view of bespoke luxury has changed, and how this has affected its future. Especially so as she has worked on many Roll-Royce projects with highly bespoke, and often rare qualities. “We have seen the development of what we call ‘post-opulence’ for some time now,” she says. “If customers want something more eccentric we will gladly assist, but it is our duty as designers to guide our customers. Simple designs are incredibly difficult to work with. You have to deliver perfection because any mistake will be immediately







visible. Our customers inherently appreciate the environment wherein they find themselves. For them, their vehicle becomes a sanctuary where they can recharge. As such, it falls on the designer to work with Rolls-Royce craftsmen and women, to steer them towards the world of minimalist design, especially where it comes to using natural materials.”

Much of Sina’s time is spent exploring innovative materials that the Rolls-Royce Bespoke Collective then incorporate into motor cars. When working on the limited edition Rolls-Royce Cocktail Hamper, for example, the designer visited elite London members’ clubs and bars, researching the accoutrement which a mixologist needs to make the perfect cocktail. Combining both beauty and practicality, this exclusive accessory contains everything required to enjoy the finest cocktails in the company of guests. Sina considered every detail meticulously, from the delicate cotton napkins to the American walnut muddler and a laser-cut cocktail strainer. She then developed the leather, wood, and textiles, in a quest to make the hamper incredibly modern.

Whether she furthers iconic Rolls-Royce intricacies, such as the starlight headliner, or expands her knowledge of new, unique and luxurious materials, Sina ensures that she always delivers the best quality pieces. She finds inspiration from travelling around the world. Indeed, the bespoke designer finds castles, grand manor houses and modern architecture particularly awe-inspiring because she values highly intricate, often personal, embellishments and considers their elaborate details through a contemporary lens.

With current circumstances being as fluid as they are, Sina has been unable to pursue much of her usual travel schedule, and now finds inspiration in a variety of other places. "The Bespoke Collective has begun looking inward, and have started to work with what we have around us. Inspiration is a mind-set that has to do with one's positive attitude, and I have much inspiration in my apartment, especially in the furniture pieces," she explains. "When looking for furnishings, art or decorations for my personal space, I look for pieces that are well made and can last forever. My personal space is meant to recharge me, especially after heavily creative days. During the lockdown, I

started redecorating with the things that I already had in my apartment, reintroducing decoration pieces and finally doing the things that I have meant to do for years. In the same way, as a creative team at Rolls-Royce, we have noticed a movement towards simplicity and minimalism that has taken root. The days of large diamonds and extreme opulence have passed, and we now anticipate a resurgence in simplicity."

In her spare time, Sina cultivates her interest in high jewellery design by training to become a hobby silversmith. She is passionate about different forms of etiquette, including the formalities of a traditional Chinese tea ceremony, the perfect way of arranging a festive table or the curation of an Asian or European garden.

"What I love at Rolls-Royce is that not only do you achieve perfection, but also elegance. A huge part of my job is to chase elegance, to create elegance and to, hopefully, achieve elegance as well." ⑩







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# THE GOLD STANDARD

## *The Good, the Better, and the Best of Gold Investing*

Gold is — and always has been — the world's favourite investment safe haven. That is, during times of uncertainty, insecurity, economic or political upset, war, devaluations and more, gold has always come out as number one. And this impressive track record goes back more than 5,000 years.

There is not a single item or investment that can come anywhere close to beating gold's vast, long-term track record. Throughout history, gold has always maintained its purchasing power.

In general, investors looking to invest in gold directly have three choices: purchase the physical asset; purchase shares of a mutual or exchange-traded fund (ETF) that replicates the price of gold; or trade futures and options in the commodities market. Average investors, for example, might buy gold coins, while sophisticated investors implement strategies using options on gold futures.

Compared to other commodities, gold is more accessible to the average investor, because an individual can easily purchase gold bullion (the actual yellow metal, in coin or bar form), from a precious metals dealer or, in some cases, from a bank or brokerage.

### **GOLD BULLION**

Bullion bars are available in sizes ranging from quarter-ounce wafers or coins – the most prolific gold coin in the world being South Africa's own Krugerrand – to a 400-ounce brick. Coins are typically the choice for new investors. Not to be confused with vintage numismatic coins, these are new issues priced on their gold content, plus a 1% to 5% premium. For maximum liquidity, most buyers stick with the most







widely circulated gold coins, including the Krugerrand, the American Eagle, and the Canadian Maple Leaf. Whatever you prefer, be sure that you always purchase from a reputable dealer, either in person or via the Internet. Gold coins obviously require safekeeping – either in a home safe or a bank safe deposit box.

#### **GOLD JEWELLERY**

Gold jewellery also allows the investor in gold to experience the enjoyment of wearing it. Gold is often combined with other precious gems and metals to enhance the overall value and appearance of the jewellery. Pieces are often passed down to the next generation as family heirlooms, adding sentimental value beyond that of the piece itself.

Jewellery is not typically the best option if your aim is strictly to invest, as the retail price will likely exceed the meltdown value. This is due to the craftsmanship involved and the retail mark-up. Always determine the purity of the gold before buying gold jewellery, to ensure that you don't pay for 18 karats when you are only getting a 14-karat piece.

Jewellery is covered by most homeowner insurance policies, which is an advantage should it be lost or stolen.

#### **TRADING GOLD**

Although physical gold is substantially more feasible than buying a barrel of oil,

*“There is not a single item or investment that can come anywhere close to beating gold’s vast, long-term track record. Throughout history, gold has always maintained its purchasing power.”*



owning physical gold is not without its challenges: transaction fees, the cost of storage, and insurance. Investors interested in a more liquid and low-cost entry into the gold market might instead consider mutual funds and exchange-traded funds (ETF) that replicate the movements of the commodity.

Generally, gold stocks rise and fall faster than the price of gold itself. Individual companies are also subject to problems unrelated to bullion prices – including political factors or environmental concerns. Investing in an ETF that owns gold stocks is a higher-risk way to play, but it does offer appreciation potential – which investing in bullion does not.

More experienced investors who don't want to risk their capital might consider options on gold futures or options on a gold ETF. These contracts represent the

right – but not the obligation – to buy or sell gold at a specific price for a certain amount of time. Options can be used whether you think the price of gold is going up or going down. If you guess wrong, the maximum risk associated with buying options is the premium you paid to enter the contract.

#### **GOLD MINING STOCKS**

If you can't lay your hands directly on any gold, you may also want to consider gold mining stocks. Keep in mind, however, that gold stocks do not necessarily move in concert with bullion prices, since mining companies succeed or fail based on their individual operating performance and how they deploy their capital and generate profits. You don't have the security of physical possession of the metal if the companies you buy are unsuccessful.

As is the case with most prudent

investment plans, gold works best if you're buying gold as part of a portfolio diversification strategy, and for this purpose, ETFs are likely the most sensible way to go. On the other hand, if you aim to hedge against the event of a system-wide crisis, the physical metal is a considerably safer investment. ⓘ

*This article is intended to be informative and does not constitute financial advice.*

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by **bernie hellberg jr.** /  
photography by **shutterstock**





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## TO ENTERTAIN



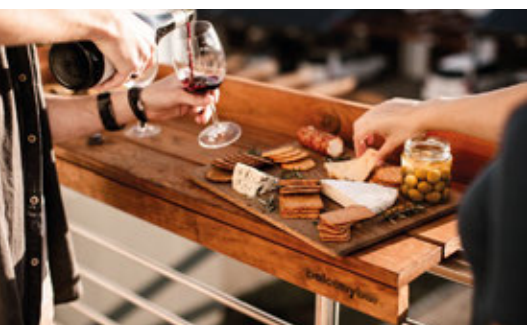
### 7 WAYS BY JAMIE OLIVER

Jamie Oliver has done his homework and looked at the top ingredients we buy week in, and week out. We're talking about those meal staples we all pick up on autopilot: chicken breasts, mince, eggs, potatoes, and broccoli, to name a few. We're all busy, but that shouldn't stop us from having a tasty, nutritious meal after a long day. Jamie shares seven achievable, exciting and tasty ways to cook 19 hero ingredients, with each recipe having no more than eight ingredients in it. At least five recipes from each seven ways will be everyday options from both an ease and nutritional point of view, meaning that you're covered for every day of the week. With everything from fake-aways and tray-bakes to family and freezer favourites, you'll find bags of inspiration to help you mix things up in the kitchen.



### ALMOST FRENCH

When South African-born artist, Louis Jansen van Vuuren, first arrived in Paris in the late 1990s, he would never have thought that, one day, he would own a *château* in the French countryside. In his book, *Almost French*, Louis recalls his French journey of discovery, complete with stately duchesses and holier-than-thou waiters, the notorious French bureaucracy, and countless *faux pas* in the French language. Transforming the dilapidated Château de la Creuzette into a boutique hotel with his life partner, Hardy Olivier, exacted a heavy toll of patience and determination on the couple, and taught them many a life lesson that Louis shares in his book. He also regales what some of their guests would get up to over the years, along with their own travels across France in search of flea markets and adventure. *Almost French* is a veritable must read for Francophiles and bibliophiles alike.



### BAR ON YOUR BALCONY

Catching up with friends over drinks outside, or enjoying a braai with the family are part of a truly South African summer. However, bulky furniture can clutter small outdoor living spaces, making them feel overcrowded. Locally manufactured balconybar helps maximise the floor space on your balcony for the ultimate entertainment area. The balconybar attaches to the top of your railing and is perfect for that classic bar look. The balconydesk hangs from your railing and is perfect for an outside office. This style can also double up as an outside dining area. Both options retail for R1,899 and are available in three colours. balconybar products are moulded from kiln-dried and weather-treated South African pine. [www.balconybar.co.za](http://www.balconybar.co.za)



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# AS SCENE IN THE WILD

*Isak Pretorius Shares his Passion for Wildlife Photography*

Fuelled by his passion for wildlife photography, Isak Pretorius curates some of the most breathtaking scenes of the Southern African wilderness exclusively for *Signature*.





ABOVE: *African Fish Eagle, Nguni Voyager, Botswana*

Isak Pretorius is a specialist South African wildlife photographic guide. His discovery of nature's special moments at a young age shaped his aspirations of today: to showcase the beauty of this continent's natural wonders in a creative way.

His bird and wildlife images have won multiple awards and have been celebrated nationally and internationally in many

publications and exhibitions. His preferred genre of fine art bird photography is easily recognisable by their authentic style, simplistic design and technical skill.

The reminiscence of a classic Africa fuels Isak's passion for nature, and he aims to create conservation awareness for his continent's natural wonders. He not only focusses his attention on photographic assignments throughout the African continent, but Isak also offers private

photographic safaris with avid amateur and professional photographers.

Having hosted many groups of photographers in Africa, Isak has taken a keen interest in educating photographers about their surroundings as well as teaching them the art of wildlife photography.

Visit [www.theafricanphotographer.com](http://www.theafricanphotographer.com) for more information on Isak's work. ⑩



ABOVE  
*Namibia Landscape, Namibrand, Namibia*  
 LEFT  
*African Bullfrog, Madikwe Game Reserve,  
 South Africa*



RIGHT  
*Impella, Kruger National Park in South Africa*  
BELOW  
*Lion, Kruger National Park in South Africa*







LEFT  
*Impala, Etosha National Park, Namibia*  
 RIGHT  
*Pied Kingfisher, Nguni Voyager, Botswana*  
 BELOW  
*Elephant, Masbatu Game Reserve, Botswana*







# WE HAVE LIFT-OFF!

## *Porsche 911 Turbo S*

Lots of modern cars are fast, but the 911 Turbo has always offered just that much more poise in the process.

Introduced at the 1974 Paris Motor Show, the original (930) 911 Turbo was born of Porsche's desire to homologate its racing cars for the forthcoming season. At that stage, boasting more than a decade's worth of experience with turbocharging, the brand looked to incorporate this technology into the minimum required production run of road-going cars in order to quickly get back to winning ways on racetracks around the world.

The resultant road car would quickly both redefine the meaning of

straight-line pace, but also form the foundation for a legacy of very fast, yet ultimately impressively useable turbocharged Porsche coupés.

### **INTRICACIES IN DESIGN**

A defining feature since the 930, has been the design and shape of the wing adorning the rear of each generation of Turbo. Dubbed "whale tail" on the original car, the obvious benefit of such an appendage is in keeping the rear of the vehicle planted as speeds increase. A second







advantage, and one once again prevalent on the eighth-generation 922 model, is the incorporation within this pinion of air vents designed to direct passing air into the rear-mounted, force-fed, flat-six engine. Positioned proud on the first Turbo, each evolution of Porsche's flagship model has explored ways for the wing arrangement to add both increased function and, of course, distinction to its respective package.

If the carefully crafted lines of the 992-generation 911 pay intricate homage to Porsche models past, the 1,900 mm spans of the latest Turbo's rear end conveys a message of newfound performance potential. Positioned above a suitably enlarged engine bay is a flat-board wing that now adjusts in both height and plane based on prevailing driving conditions - including doubling as an air brake under extreme braking events.

#### **PROPELLOR POWER**

Boasting 478 kW and 800



Nm of torque from a new 3.8-litre bi-turbocharged engine, it's the reassurance of a sturdy braking system that plays a perpetual role in the driving experience of the new Turbo S. Featuring a new air intake system (incorporating those aforementioned rear lid grilles), as well as larger, symmetrical variable-geometry turbochargers, the most

powerful 992 to date is capable of launching from standstill to 100 km/h in a just 2.7-seconds, scything past the 200 km/h mark in 8.9-seconds, and reaching a top speed of 330 km/h. More impressive than this (literally) breath-taking acceleration, however, is the fluidity with which this new drivetrain - mated with an eight-speed PDK transmission - interprets





“If the carefully crafted lines of the 992-generation 911 pay intricate homage to Porsche models past, the 1,900 mm spans of the latest Turbo’s rear end conveys a message of newfound performance potential.”

throttle inputs into a steady stream of torque delivery to all four wheels; while favouring the substantial 315/30 ZR21 rear duo.

#### BEHIND THE WHEEL

And yet, despite all the numbers listed above, our Cape-based launch route saw us slot effortlessly into early-morning congestion long before finding any opportunity to stretch the

Turbo S’ legs. Not strictly necessary, such is this car’s breadth of ability, but a toggle away from Normal into either Sport or, indeed, Sport Plus driving mode, in-turn heightens the sensitivity levels of systems like the electrically-assisted steering and throttle response, while pressing play on an altogether richer, more characterful soundtrack (amplified via an optional sport exhaust setup, including oval tailpipes).

Press on and, true to the mandate of the 911 Turbo, the otherwise impressively comfortable and (notably in the new 992) well-appointed cabin wraps tightly around its occupants. Introduced in the 991, the now standard rear-wheel steering is less intrusive than before making turn-in that much more predictable. Aided by an extendable front spoiler lip, new active anti-roll bars and a reconfigured active suspension system (adjustable up to 200 times per second), the new car’s front-end is able to maintain levels of grip that guarantee the flanking muscles in your neck get as much of a workout as the aft items did under the hard acceleration. Able to corner impressively flat, only an extremely reckless application of the right foot would unsettle a rear-end otherwise capable of sling-shotting the Turbo S

away from the apex of a corner.

That aforementioned air brake ably assisted by standard 420 mm ceramic brakes up front, with 390 mm items at the rear.

#### CONCLUSION

Is there a modern supercar with a broader mandate when it comes to deliverables? Unburdened somewhat by the imminent arrival of more focused family members, including the GT3, the role of the Turbo within Porsche’s coupé line-up is historically one of offering maximum performance in a package that can just as easily be driven on a daily grocery shop run. That the brand has elected to launch the S model ahead of the “standard” version points to customer demand that – despite what the economy might otherwise suggest – craves pinnacle processions.

Whisper it, but the slightly less powerful 992-gen 911 Turbo (427 kW/750 Nm) may well be all the modern everyday sportscar you need. That said, the new Turbo S meets its mandate, and then some. ⑩

# BEYOND SPIRITUALITY

*The Role of Meditation in Mental Health*

Meditation has traditionally been associated with Eastern mysticism but science is beginning to show that cultivating a “heightened” state of consciousness can have a major impact on our brain, the way our bodies function and our levels of resilience.



Clinicians are increasingly looking for effective, preventative, non-pharmacological options to treat mental illness. And meditation techniques – such as quietening the mind, understanding the self and exercising control – show promise as an alternative tool to regulate emotions, mood and stress.

## BODY

Meditation influences the body

in unexpected ways. Experienced meditators, for instance, can speed or slow their metabolism by more than 60% and raise their body temperature by as much as 8°C.

Even a little training in meditation can make people calmer, less stressed and more relaxed. As little as 20 minutes a day leads to physical changes, such as reduced blood pressure, lower heart rate, deeper and calmer breathing. Improvements in blood pressure as a result of meditation have also been

linked to a lower risk of heart attack.

Meditation is also beginning to prove effective as a treatment for chronic and acute pain. One experiment showed that four days of mindfulness meditation substantially reduced the participant's experience of unpleasantness and the intensity of their pain.

## MIND, BRAIN AND BEYOND

Meditation increases left-sided, frontal brain activity, an area of the brain associated with positive mood.





## THE CONVERSATION

who completed an eight-week course in mindfulness training.

So even a limited stint of meditation has the potential to change the structure of the brain.

### AGEING

The cortex in the brain usually thins as we age – a type of atrophy related to dementia. Intriguingly, those who have meditated around an hour a day for six years display increased cortical thickness. Older meditators also show decreased age-related decline in cortical thickness compared to non-meditators of the same age.

Meditation may increase longevity by protecting the brain and heart from the damaging effects of stress. One study reported that meditation and yoga help to prevent cellular damage caused by chronic psychological stress. It has even been suggested that meditation may slow cellular aging.

### EMOTIONAL STABILITY

The causes and effects of emotional experience exist throughout the body and the brain, and as such they are deeply linked to physical and psychological stress.

Meditation enhances positive emotions and mood, and appears to make people less vulnerable to the stresses and upsets of daily life. Research shows that meditators are better at regulating immediate responses to negative stimuli and have reduced activity in the amygdala – a region implicated in response to threat. These findings reflect greater emotional resilience among meditators as well as

less psychological distress and anxiety.

Mindfulness, which can be cultivated through meditation, is just one technique that can increase mental health and wellbeing. Several therapeutic techniques have been based on these practices, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. These treatments have had success in treating anxiety and mood disorders.

### NEXT STEPS IN RESEARCH

Research has shown us that meditation improves our mood, reduces the body's response to stress and, over time, alters the structure of the brain.

Our team at the University of Sydney is attempting to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge of how meditation acts on the mind and the body to calm emotional reactions. We're currently investigating the effects of meditation on brain and body function during emotional provocation, such as viewing disturbing photographic images.

We want to better understand the effects of short, intensive periods of meditation on brain and body functions associated with regulation of emotional responses. We are also examining the genetic factors that may help determine what types of people benefit most from meditation training.

If we can demonstrate the efficacy of intensive meditation on emotion regulation, and characterise those who will benefit most, we will have established a significant role for meditation in improving mental and physical health.⑩

Interestingly, this increase in left-brain activity is also linked with improvements in immune system activity. And the more you practise meditation, the greater your immune function is likely to be.

Studies have shown that long-term meditators have increased volumes of grey matter in the right orbito-frontal cortex and hippocampus regions of their brain which are responsible for regulating emotion. Similar changes have also been found in non-meditators

# HAPPY MUMMYVERSARY!

*Now Go and Wash your Insides with Wine – Like a Pharaoh*



Scorpion I.  
No, it's not the hottest new vanity license plate, nor is it the name of the latest James Bond movie villain.

Scorpion I, was a Pharaoh, and as Pharaoh names go, it is rather frightening.

"Run. Here comes Scorpion I," would have certainly had me tearing across the desert in my leather sandals. Much more than, say, Hatshepsut.

"Run, here comes Hatshepsut." To which I may have responded, "Bless you. Now, who's coming?"

Anyway, the reason old Scorpion I is top of mind for me this year, is that 2020 is the 5,270<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. His death, however, unveiled a bizarre Egyptian tradition that archaeologists discovered when they dug him up. He was buried with 700 wine jars. All full of wine at the time. The belief was that our mummified monarch would spend the afterlife developing a bit of a thirst.

So that's one famous anniversary wine enthusiasts can add to their calendars.

Another anniversary that took place this year was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of prohibition coming into effect in the United States. In South Africa, we celebrated with our very own prohibition

celebrations during lockdown.

This year is also the 796<sup>th</sup> anniversary of what is believed to have been the first international wine tasting in France. A poem was even written to mark this auspicious event. Then I read somewhere that a Cypriot wine won, and suddenly I was questioning the integrity of this historic event.

Also, 2020 is the 157<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a wine varietal that Pablo Escobar would've excelled at. In 1863, a wine called Vin Mariani was unveiled. It contained cocaine. It was a massive hit amongst the nobility; even Pope Leo XIII endorsed it. I think Pablo missed a beat here. He could have truly branched out with his own wine. If celebrities can do it, and professional golfers, why not Pablo? A little Meth Merlot perhaps? Cabernet Cannabis? A Bogota Bordeaux?

What's interesting, though, is that in wedding anniversary terms, wine only appears as a 17<sup>th</sup>-anniversary gift. The first is paper. Good luck with that. "Hi love. You mean so much to me. Here's some paper". The fifth is wood. I'm thinking she's likely to tell you to go braai yourself. The 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary is air. I think that whoever decided these things believes that if you've been

married for 23 years, you've figured out the secret to life. So you can just as well figure out what an air gift is. The 48<sup>th</sup> is home improvement. "Happy 48<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary my darling husband. I bought you a globe, so you can finally change the light in the study".

But back to our friend, Scorpion I. Apparently, the Egyptians used wine to wash out the corpses of the pharaohs before they were covered in Elastoplast. They would slice them open and wash their insides with wine.

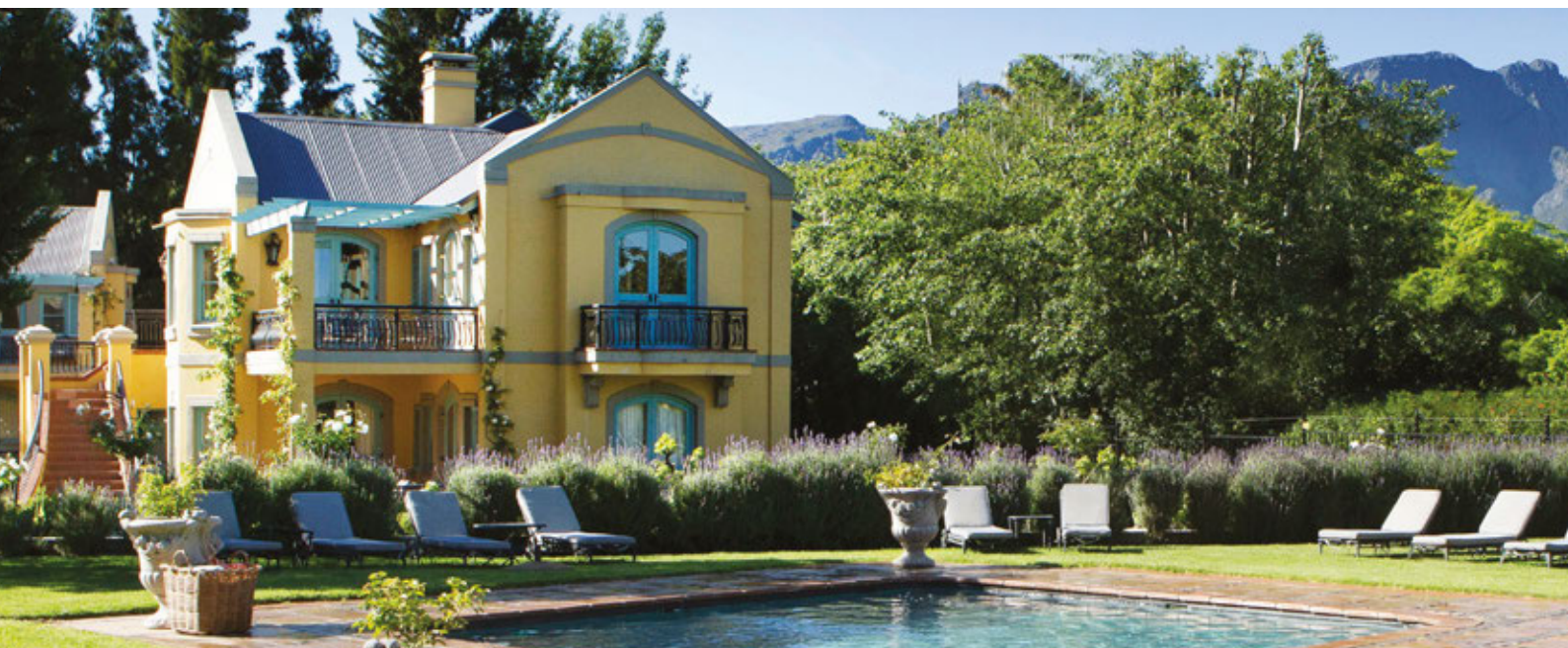
Step 1 involved taking a hook and pulling a part of the brain out the nose. Lovely. Step 3 - remove internal organs. Step 4 - let internal organs dry. Step 5 - pass out. I made up Step 5. But there it was in Step 7 - Rinse the inside of the body with wine and spices.

So, here's a toast to an anniversary I am incredibly grateful for - the Umpteenth Anniversary that we stopped washing people's insides with wine, and started to let them do this themselves in a more civilised manner.

By drinking it. ☺

by **michael vlismas** /  
photography by **shutterstock**





# FRANSCHHOEK

## COUNTRY HOUSE & VILLAS



Positioned in the most romantic valley on earth, Franschhoek Country House & Villas is an exclusive boutique hotel reminiscent of a village in Provence yet with an elegant Cape sensibility. Set in gardens of lemon trees, lavender and vines – with fynbos draping the nearby mountains – the original, charming country maison includes 14 standard and luxury rooms as well as the award-winning Monneaux Restaurant while the 12 Villa suites are havens of privacy & understated opulence. Swimming pools, a candle-lit cellar, a treatment room and sun-down verandas are all a traveller needs as you live la vie extraordinaire.



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