

# SIGNATURE

The Diners Club International Magazine

## 2024 DINERS CLUB WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR

*Kiara Scott Farmer*

Your Guide to Exploring  
the Winelands

Volvo EX90 Unveiled  
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2024 Diners Club  
WineList Awards





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*from the MD*



# Welcome

Esh Naidoo  
**Managing Director**

As we approach the end of another remarkable year, it's a privilege to welcome you to this edition of *Signature*. In true Diners Club tradition, we celebrate the finer things in life - from world-class wine to culinary excellence and unforgettable travel experiences.

This issue is particularly special as we unveil the winners of the prestigious 2024 Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year awards. These accolades continue to recognise the passion, dedication, and innovation that elevate South Africa's winemaking industry to global acclaim. This year's winners embody the spirit of excellence that Diners Club strives to honour.


In addition to our celebration of wine, we toast to perfection in dining

with highlights from the annual Winelist Icon awards. Congratulations to The Saxon Hotel and Verdicchio Restaurant for curating wine lists that are as inspiring as the experiences they offer.

Of course, *Signature* extends beyond wine and dining to bring you captivating stories and insights into the world of travel, lifestyle, and exclusive Diners Club benefits. Whether you're planning your next getaway or looking for inspiration to make the most of your membership, this edition has something for everyone.

I invite you to take a moment to indulge in the pages of *Signature*. Let this edition serve as a reminder that, with Diners Club, every experience can be extraordinary.

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*in this* ISSUE



**TRAVEL**

- 12 **Go There** / Signature Selection of the Finest Travel Hotspots
- 14 **Explore** / Hidden Gems and Hideaways in the Winelands
- 38 **Travel** / Splendour at Constance Belle Mare Plage
- 42 **Travel** / Discover an Urban Sanctuary at AtholPlace

**WINE**

- 20 **Cover** / Kiara Scott Farmer: 2024 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year
- 26 **Winemaker** / Judging the 2024 Winemaker of the Year Competition
- 30 **Winemaker** / 2024 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year Finalists
- 34 **Winemaker** / 2024 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year





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## in this ISSUE

### LIFESTYLE

- 46 **Style** / Signature Selection of Lifestyle Must-haves
- 48 **Fashion** / Give Her a Crown Powered by Jaguar
- 52 **Business** / The Future of Foreign Exchange
- 56 **Motoring** / Volvo EX90 Unveiled in California



64

### ENTERTAINMENT

- 62 **To Entertain** / Snippets of Fun for the Mind, Body & Soul
- 70 **Wellness** / Full-body Rejuvenation at Terre Paisible
- 64 **Photography** / 2024 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year Finalists

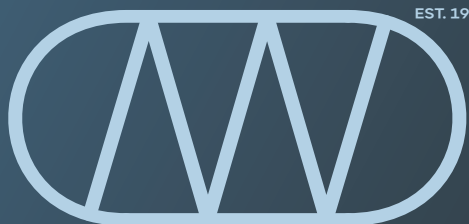


48



56





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# in this ISSUE

## DINERS CLUB

- 05 **Welcome** / Letter from the Managing Director
- 64 **Platter's** / 2025 Platter's by Diners Club SA Wine Guide
- 72 **Winelist Awards** / 2024 Winelist Award Icons



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## GO THERE

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### TABLE MOUNTAIN CABLEWAY TURNS 95

The Table Mountain Aerial Cableway celebrates 95 years of providing unforgettable experiences. Since its opening in 1929, the Cableway has undergone three major upgrades, becoming a must-see attraction in Cape Town. Initially proposed as a railway in the 1870s, the project evolved into a cableway in 1926, thanks to Norwegian engineer Trygve Stromsoe. Over the years, it has welcomed millions of visitors, including celebrities like Oprah Winfrey, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Sir Edmund Hillary. Today, the Cableway remains a beloved icon, transporting around a million visitors annually, with many more adventures on the horizon.



### SUN CITY ICON REBORN

Sun City's legendary hotel is being revitalised, blending rich Tswana culture with modern luxury. Originally opened in 1979, the iconic Sun City Hotel captured South Africa's imagination and later expanded with The Cascades, The Cabanas, and The Palace. Now, with an upgrade led by Blacksmith Interior Inspiration, the hotel will feature bespoke interiors paying homage to its unique surroundings. "The design combines comfort with craft," says director Ryan Ilgner, highlighting details like Tswana-inspired woven patterns, warm savannah tones, and Pilanesberg-themed artwork. The first refreshed rooms opened in time for the Nedbank Golf Challenge that took place in November 2024, inviting guests into an authentic African experience.

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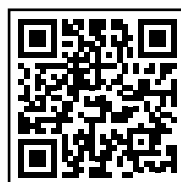
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# FROM VINEYARD TO TABLE

## *Exploring the Best of the South African Winelands*

The South African Winelands is more than a place on the map - it is a vibrant mosaic of lush vineyards, historic estates, and culinary experiences that beckon travellers from around the globe. Just an hour from Cape Town, this region effortlessly combines old-world charm with modern sophistication, offering wine tastings, gourmet dining, and breathtaking views that linger long after the journey ends. Here's your guide to making the most of this enchanting destination, from the finest wines and unforgettable meals to where to stay and what to explore along the way.

Nestled just an hour's drive from Cape Town, the South African Winelands is more than a destination; it's an experience that indulges every sense. Known for its world-class vineyards, charming small towns, and diverse culinary scene, the Winelands is a must-see for anyone who appreciates fine wine, gourmet dining, and breathtaking landscapes. With so much to offer, planning a trip here is about balancing leisurely indulgence with the thrill of discovery.

### WHEN TO GO

The Winelands is delightful year-round, but the best time to visit is between late summer and autumn, from February to April. This period coincides with the grape harvest season, when the vineyards are full of life, and wine estates buzz with activity. Winter (June to August) offers a quieter charm, with fireside tastings and fewer crowds - perfect for those who appreciate a cosy getaway. Spring (September to November) bursts with wildflowers and new growth, making the scenery even more vibrant.



### SIP, SAVOUR, AND EXPLORE

Wine tasting in the Winelands is more than sampling a vintage; it's a journey through centuries-old vineyards, family-run estates, and cutting-edge cellars. Each region offers something unique, from the robust reds of Stellenbosch to the crisp whites of Durbanville.

Stellenbosch is often the first stop, offering iconic estates like Quoin Rock, a

must-visit for its remarkable Sauvignon Blanc and bold Bordeaux-style blends. Set against the Simonsberg mountains, Quoin Rock combines modern architecture with historic charm, creating an atmosphere that's both sophisticated and welcoming. A tasting here is as much about the wines as it is about the stunning views and meticulously designed spaces. For a truly immersive experience, try a pairing at





Gâte Restaurant on-site, where inventive dishes complement the estate's finest vintages, elevating every sip and bite.

Franschhoek is another gem, known as the culinary capital of the region. Hop on the Franschhoek Wine Tram – a charming, hop-on-hop-off service that takes you to a selection of the area's best vineyards, from the classic elegance of La Motte to the family-friendly, picnic-ready grounds of Mont Rochelle. Franschhoek's Huguenot heritage has shaped its wines and cuisine, blending French sophistication with South African heart.

Paarl offers a slightly off-the-beaten-track experience, with Fairview being a must-visit for its combination of wines and artisanal cheeses. For those interested in the production side, the KWV Emporium in Paarl offers cellar tours that delve into the art of brandy and gin alongside their renowned wine selection.

#### **WHERE TO EAT**

In Franschhoek, Le Quartier Français boasts Protégé, a casually elegant eatery where you'll find refined yet unpretentious seasonal dishes that celebrate local ingredients. For a true treat, La Petite Colombe offers multi-course tasting menus that rival the best in Europe, set against stunning vineyard views.

Stellenbosch shines with Jordan Restaurant at Jordan Wine Estate, where Chef George Jardine's flair for seasonal, farm-to-table dishes pairs beautifully with the estate's wines. For an innovative experience, Dusk in Stellenbosch is making waves with its multi-sensory





*Franschhoek Wine Tram*

approach to dining. At Dusk, chefs Darren Badenhorst and Callan Austin take you on a journey of textures, tastes, and scents in a menu that pushes culinary boundaries.

Paarl's Terra Mare is a local favourite, serving Italian-inspired cuisine with a South African influence. Pair your meal with wines from the nearby estates, and you're in for a memorable experience.

#### **STAYING IN STYLE**

From five-star luxury lodges to quaint guesthouses, the Winelands' accommodation options reflect the region's warm hospitality and rich heritage.

Delaire Graff Estate in Stellenbosch offers top-tier luxury with its exclusive lodges featuring private plunge pools and unobstructed vineyard views. For those who want a more immersive experience, Babylonstoren in Franschhoek is a unique working farm where you can wander

through their impressive gardens, relax in the spa, and even help with seasonal farming activities if you're feeling adventurous.

For a more budget-friendly option, De Hoek Manor in Stellenbosch is a beautifully restored guesthouse with an old-world charm, offering easy access to the town's restaurants and wine estates.

If you're looking for something eco-friendly, Boschendal Wine Estate offers luxury tents for a glamping experience like no other, blending rustic charm with modern comforts amidst sprawling vineyard and mountain views.

#### **BEYOND THE VINEYARDS**

While wine is the star of the show, the Winelands offers more than just vineyards. Stellenbosch is a town worth exploring with its oak-lined avenues, art galleries, and historic buildings. The Stellenbosch Village Museum is a time



*Franschhoek Motor Museum*



*Dining at Dusk*

capsule offering insight into the town's history through preserved homes and artefacts dating back to the 18th century.

In Franschhoek, art lovers should visit the Franschhoek Motor Museum for a glimpse into motoring history, which has a collection of rare vintage cars. Alternatively, explore the Franschhoek Art Route – a network of galleries showcasing local talent, with styles ranging from traditional landscapes to contemporary pieces.

Outdoor enthusiasts can take to the hills around Paarl, where trails like Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve offer hikes with rewarding views over the vineyards. Mountain biking and horseback riding are popular activities in the region, perfect for getting a new perspective on the Winelands' picturesque landscape.

#### **A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SENSES**

The South African Winelands invites you to unwind, discover, and indulge in a setting where time slows and beauty abounds. Whether you're savouring the boldness of a Stellenbosch Pinotage, tucking into a Franschhoek tasting menu, or simply soaking in a sunset over Paarl's mountains, every moment here is a reminder of life's finer things. A visit to the Winelands is more than just a holiday – it's an experience that lingers long after the last sip. 🍷

by **bernie hellberg jr**  
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# REWRITING THE NARRATIVE

*Kiara Scott Farmer – 2024 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year*

In the heart of South Africa’s wine country, Kiara Scott Farmer’s journey is rewriting history. As the youngest female head winemaker in South Africa and the 2024 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year, her story is a compelling mix of resilience, ambition, and exceptional talent. Born and raised in Mitchells Plain, a township on the Cape Flats, Kiara’s rise to prominence is a testament to the power of determination.

Mitchells Plain is not where one would expect to find the beginnings of a winemaking career. Growing up amidst the socio-economic challenges of gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse, and violence, Kiara was determined to break free from the cycles that entrapped so many in her community.

Her curiosity about wine emerged in a most unlikely environment. “While growing up, I didn’t want to be like some of the people I was used to seeing – impoverished, aimlessly hanging around on street corners, intoxicated. It was in this environment

that I became curious about wine – how it was made, what it could represent,” Kiara recalls.

Despite initial resistance from her family, who struggled to understand her career choice, Kiara pursued her passion, enrolling at Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute to study Oenology and Viticulture. Later, she augmented her knowledge with business studies at the University of Cape Town’s Graduate School of Business.

Her entry into the wine world was anything but typical, but her tenacity and refusal to conform to societal expectations set her on the path to greatness.









### **MAKING OF A VISIONARY WINEMAKER**

While at Elsenburg, Kiara's talent was recognised by the prestigious Cape Winemakers Guild (CWG) Protégé Programme. This opportunity provided her with unparalleled mentorship, connecting her with some of South Africa's most accomplished winemakers. Among them was Duncan Savage, who saw in Kiara not only immense potential but also an unrelenting passion for the craft.

Under Duncan's guidance, Kiara joined Brookdale Estate as an assistant winemaker, where they collaborated on the estate's maiden vintage, the 2017 Brookdale Chenin Blanc. This wine set a new benchmark for elegance and terroir-driven complexity, establishing Brookdale as a rising star in South Africa's wine scene.

By 2019, Kiara had taken over as Brookdale's sole winemaker at just 26, becoming the youngest head female winemaker in the country. This milestone was celebrated widely, and in 2022, the Western Cape Provincial Parliament formally congratulated

her achievements, stating she serves as an inspiration for young women everywhere.

### **CRAFTING AN AWARD-WINNING CHENIN BLANC**

Kiara's dedication to minimal intervention winemaking and her meticulous attention to detail culminated in the creation of the 2022 Brookdale Old Vine Chenin Blanc, the wine that secured her the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year Award. The Chenin Blanc was crafted from old vines planted in 1985 on decomposed shale and granite soils, showcasing a terroir that Kiara describes as "stony and resilient."

The grapes were hand-picked in stages to optimise ripeness, then aged for 22 months in a combination of 500-litre barrels and 2,000-litre Austrian oak foudres. Despite the challenges posed by the warmer 2022 vintage, the wine retained remarkable elegance, concentration, and acidity.

Tasting notes describe the wine as "subtly keyed, with restrained aromatics of pear skin, honeycomb, and golden





citrus. The palate is deep, concentrated, and layered, with yellow apples, kumquat, and peaches balanced by a savoury finish.” For Kiara, the wine reflects the unique story of the vines, the vintage, and her team’s unwavering dedication.

For Kiara, winemaking is about more than just crafting exceptional wines. It’s about storytelling, showcasing a specific site and vintage, and working with a passionate team to bring the vision to life.

“One of the most rewarding elements of my job is watching and guiding grapes turn into wine, expressing their unique character,” Kiara shares. She takes equal pride in mentoring her team and witnessing their growth, knowing that her leadership extends far beyond the cellar.

#### **CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS**

As a young woman in a male-dominated industry, Kiara has faced her share of challenges. However, she sees her achievements as a way to break stereotypes and inspire others. “When I decided on my career, my family wasn’t too pleased. They wondered where I even came up with this idea,”



she recalls with a laugh. But their initial doubts were no match for Kiara's determination to defy expectations.

Her journey has also reshaped perceptions of South African winemaking, bringing diversity to an industry steeped in tradition.

#### **CULTIVATING A LEGACY**

Kiara's ambitions for the future

are as bold as her achievements. "An important goal for me is acquiring my own farm," she reveals, envisioning a space where she can continue to innovate and inspire others.

She is also deeply committed to sustainability, both in her winemaking practices and in the industry's growth as a whole. By focusing on the unique characteristics of South African terroir,

Kiara aims to elevate the country's reputation on the global stage.

#### **RECOGNITION AND INSPIRATION**

Winning the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year Award is not only a personal milestone for Kiara but also a reflection of the industry's progress. Her success proves that talent and hard work can overcome even the most daunting





barriers, and it serves as a rallying cry for the next generation of winemakers, especially young women from underrepresented backgrounds.

Kiara's story is one of triumph against the odds, and her journey continues to inspire. From her beginnings in Mitchells Plain to her rise as one of South Africa's most celebrated winemakers, she is a beacon of hope, proving that the power of vision and perseverance can transform challenges into achievements.

As Brookdale Estate continues to thrive under her leadership, and as Kiara pursues her goal of owning her own farm, one thing is clear: her legacy is just beginning. With every bottle of wine she crafts, Kiara Scott Farmer tells a story of resilience, passion, and the enduring beauty of South African wine. 🍷

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



# ARBITERS OF TASTE

*Judging the 2024 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year & Young Winemaker of the Year*

The annual Diners Club Winemaker of the Year and Young Winemaker of the Year awards continue to be benchmarks of excellence in South African viticulture. These prestigious accolades honour innovation, skill, and the enduring passion that defines the country's wine industry. This year's awards, focusing on Chenin Blanc for the Winemaker category and "any red wine" for the Young Winemaker category, were judged by an accomplished panel of experts. Their insights reflect both the evolution of South African wines and the unique strengths of the respective categories.

## CARRIE ADAMS

### *Panel Chair*

Carrie Adams is an esteemed wine aficionado and broadcaster with decades of experience in wine evaluation. Known for her sharp palate and engaging discussions about wine, she has chaired numerous prestigious competitions.

"Chenin Blanc is a quintessential South African grape," says Adams. "Once relegated to brandy production, it has become a beacon of versatility and quality. This year, we judged 115 entries, each representing a unique interpretation of this workhorse varietal. From tropical fruit-driven styles to oaked, textured expressions, the diversity was extraordinary. The winning wine embodies the elegance and vibrancy that Chenin Blanc offers."

Adams revels in the boldness of young winemakers: "This year's red wine entries displayed fearless innovation. These are wines made by brave young Turks who challenge convention and reimagine what's possible. Judging this category is always a joy, as it showcases the dynamic creativity driving the future of South African wine."





## YEGAS NAIDOO

### *Judge*

Yegas Naidoo, a connoisseur with a hospitality and fine dining background, has been instrumental in promoting South African wines on the global stage. Her expertise lies in identifying wines with balance, quality, and potential.

“The Chenin Blanc category was exceptional this year,” Naidoo remarks. “Winemakers are delving deeper into terroir, creating wines that tell stories of place and time. This varietal’s capacity for freshness and complexity was on full display.”

Naidoo admires the risk-taking spirit of the entrants: “Young winemakers are embracing uncharted paths while maintaining quality and elegance. Their creations reflect a confident evolution of style that promises a bright future for South African wines.”





**WINNIE BOWMAN**

*Judge*

Winnie Bowman, a Cape Wine Master and experienced international wine judge, brings a wealth of knowledge from her years in the industry. Her passion lies in exploring how winemaking techniques elevate varietals to global prominence.

“Chenin Blanc is enjoying its time in the spotlight, and rightly so,” says Bowman. “This year’s entries showcased everything from accessible everyday

wines to premium, age-worthy icons. It’s clear that South African winemakers have honed their craft, producing expressions that capture the grape’s full potential.”

Bowman celebrates the entrants’ creativity in the Young Winemaker competition: “These young winemakers are crafting exciting blends and varietals, often with grapes new to South Africa. Their work reflects a fusion of tradition and innovation that’s energising the industry.”

**DENZEL SWARTS**

*Judge*

A rising star in the South African wine industry, Denzel Swarts champions sustainable winemaking and terroir-driven authenticity. His focus is on fostering respect for the earth in every bottle.

“This year’s Chenin Blanc entries displayed harmony between vibrant fruit expression and sophisticated structure,” Swarts explains. “The wines reflect a growing respect for terroir and the artistry of winemaking.”

Swarts was also inspired by the young winemakers’ entries’ bold experimentation: “These young winemakers are not just pushing boundaries; they’re redefining them. Their respect for the land and willingness to innovate will keep South Africa’s wine industry ahead of the curve.”







## SHANE MUMBA

### *Judge*

Shane Mumba, known for his expertise in marketing and branding in the wine sector, focuses on how wines express authenticity and tell compelling stories.

Mumba describes the Chenin Blanc entries as “the workhorse wine that became the race horse”, and adds “it was no easy job judging some of the best Chenins because the diversity in style made them very difficult to identify.”

Mumba finds the creativity of the young winemakers invigorating: “I am always excited to taste the young winemakers’ wines. We are fortunate to have talented young winemakers in South Africa that are passionate and ready to push boundaries. The red wines we tasted were vibrant, full of character but yet elegant.”

## JOHANN FOURIE

### *Judge*

Johann Fourie, a winemaker with years of experience crafting award-winning

wines, brings a technical perspective to the judging process. His focus is on craftsmanship and terroir expression.

“Chenin Blanc continues to be a flagbearer for South African wines,” says Fourie. “This year’s entries displayed exceptional quality across the board, making the judging process as challenging as it was rewarding.”

Fourie views the Young Winemaker category as a window into the future: “The creativity and technical skill of these young winemakers are extraordinary. Their ability to innovate while honouring tradition speaks volumes about the bright future of South African wine.”

The 2024 Diners Club awards underline South Africa’s winemaking prowess and the creativity that sets it apart globally. The judges’ insights reveal a thriving industry rooted in tradition but unafraid to embrace bold, forward-thinking approaches. With winners soon to be revealed, one thing is certain: South African wine is in the hands of extraordinary talent. 





# MASTERS AND MAVERICKS

*Celebrating the 2024 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year Finalists*

The Diners Club Winemaker of the Year award has been synonymous with excellence, innovation, and passion in South African winemaking for 44 years. This year's finalists in the masters category embody these qualities, each bringing a unique approach and vision to their craft. From revitalising forgotten vineyards to pushing the boundaries of terroir expression, these winemakers tell stories not just through their words, but through the wines they create.

As 2024 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year finalists, Pierre Wahl, Louis van der Riet, Tertius Boshoff, Henri Swiegers, and Ben Snyman represent the pinnacle of South African winemaking. Each finalist has a unique story, a signature approach, and a commitment to crafting wines that resonate on a personal and cultural level.

## **PIERRE WAHL**

*Crafting Complexity in the Cape*

Born in Port Elizabeth, Pierre Wahl's

path to winemaking began with a deep love for nature. Though initially drawn to nature conservation, it was his father's enthusiasm for agriculture that steered him toward viticulture. "I wanted to be creative, tour the world, and meet interesting people - winemaking ticked all the boxes," he reflects.

A graduate of Elsenburg Agricultural College, Pierre has spent decades refining his approach to Chenin Blanc, a varietal close to his heart. His proudest moment? Winning the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year award in 2016 with a Chenin Blanc

from Tulbagh.

Pierre's finalist wine, the Survivor Terroir Chenin Blanc 2023, exemplifies his innovative spirit. Teaming up with viticulturist DB Rust, Pierre experimented with leaf removal and sunlight exposure in the vineyards. The result? A complex, rich wine showcasing natural yeast fermentation. "It's rewarding to create something that puts a smile on consumers' faces," he says.

Looking ahead, Pierre dreams of making Survivor Wines a household name while consistently producing



wines of exceptional quality.

**BEN SNYMAN**

*Fuelled by Creativity and Connection*

A Stellenbosch native with a BSc in Viticulture and Oenology, Ben Snyman embodies a balance of adventure and artistry in winemaking. His diverse studies, including leadership programmes at Harvard Business School and advanced courses at the Cape Wine Academy, highlight his dedication to mastering his craft.

Ben's proudest moments come from the daily fulfilment of crafting wines that bring happiness to others.

His finalist wine, the 2021 Survivor Reserve Chenin Blanc, created with minimal intervention, allows the natural appeal of fruit and texture to shine through. "It's about examining what lies beneath the surface and creating something artistic," he explains. His attention to detail and commitment to authenticity ensure that every bottle tells a unique story of its own, making each sip a new experience for the drinker.

Looking forward, Ben hopes to draw on his life experiences to fuel his creativity in the cellar, always striving





ensuring that his wines remain authentic expressions of their origins.

**TERTIUS BSHOFF**

*Old Vines, New Stories*

Swellendam-born Tertius Boshoff describes winemaking as both a calling and an art form. His passion for creativity, combined with a meticulous nature, has made him a standout in the industry.

“Winemaking is art,” he says. “It’s about painting stories inside a bottle.”

Tertius achieved his proudest moment in 2023 when he won the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year award for his Blueberry Hill Shiraz 2020. His 2024 finalist wine, the Stellenrust Secrets & Lies Chenin Blanc, honours old-vine heritage, with grapes harvested from

a vineyard planted in 1982. The wine is crafted with minimal interference, allowing the unique character of the 43-year-old vines to shine.

For Tertius, the smiles of wine drinkers as they savour his creations are the ultimate reward. He’s equally passionate about mentoring younger winemakers, fostering a culture of



for superior quality and to continuously push the boundaries of winemaking.

**LOUIS VAN DER RIET**

*A Chenin Blanc Revivalist*

Hailing from Kimberley, Louis van der Riet’s journey into winemaking was somewhat serendipitous. Sunday lunches with his family often featured a sip of wine and lively discussions about its flavours, sparking a lifelong fascination with the transformation of grapes into art. “The idea that something as simple as a grape could become a work of art felt like magic,” he recalls.

After studying Viticulture and Oenology at Elsenburg Stellenbosch, Louis founded Le Sueur Wines. His finalist wine, the 2022 Le Sueur Kluisenaar, is a testament to his dedication. Crafted from Chenin Blanc grapes grown in Meiringspoort, a challenging yet rewarding terroir, this wine celebrates resilience. “The block was abandoned, but we revived it,” he says.

For Louis, the connection between the land, the vineyard, and the people who enjoy his wines is deeply rewarding. He balances innovation with tradition,





learning and innovation. “The only thing they need to do is ask questions,” he advises.

#### **HENRI SWIEGERS**

##### *A Legacy of Passion*

For Henri Swiegers, winemaking runs in the family. Raised in Robertson and educated at Augsburg Agricultural School, Henri spent his childhood immersed in cellar life alongside his father, a winemaker. “Wine was part of growing up, so I guess you could say it was passed down to me,” he notes.

Henri’s finalist wine, the 2023 Badsberg Chenin Blanc Barrel Ferment, exemplifies his dedication to balance and harmony. Sourced from 34-year-old bush vines, this wine marries fruit and wood seamlessly, delivering a complex yet approachable profile.

Throughout his career, Henri has earned numerous accolades, including four General Smuts trophies, but his greatest joy lies in seeing others enjoy his wine. He is committed to mentoring the next generation, ensuring that South Africa’s wine industry continues to thrive. 🍷



# WINEMAKING'S RISING STAR

*Mika Engelbrecht – 2024 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year*

At just 27 years old, Mika Engelbrecht has not only secured her position as the head winemaker at Stellenbosch's iconic Neethlingshof Estate but has also clinched the prestigious 2024 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year award. This remarkable achievement is a testament to her passion, talent, and dedication to the art and science of winemaking, making her one of the most exciting young talents in the South African wine industry.



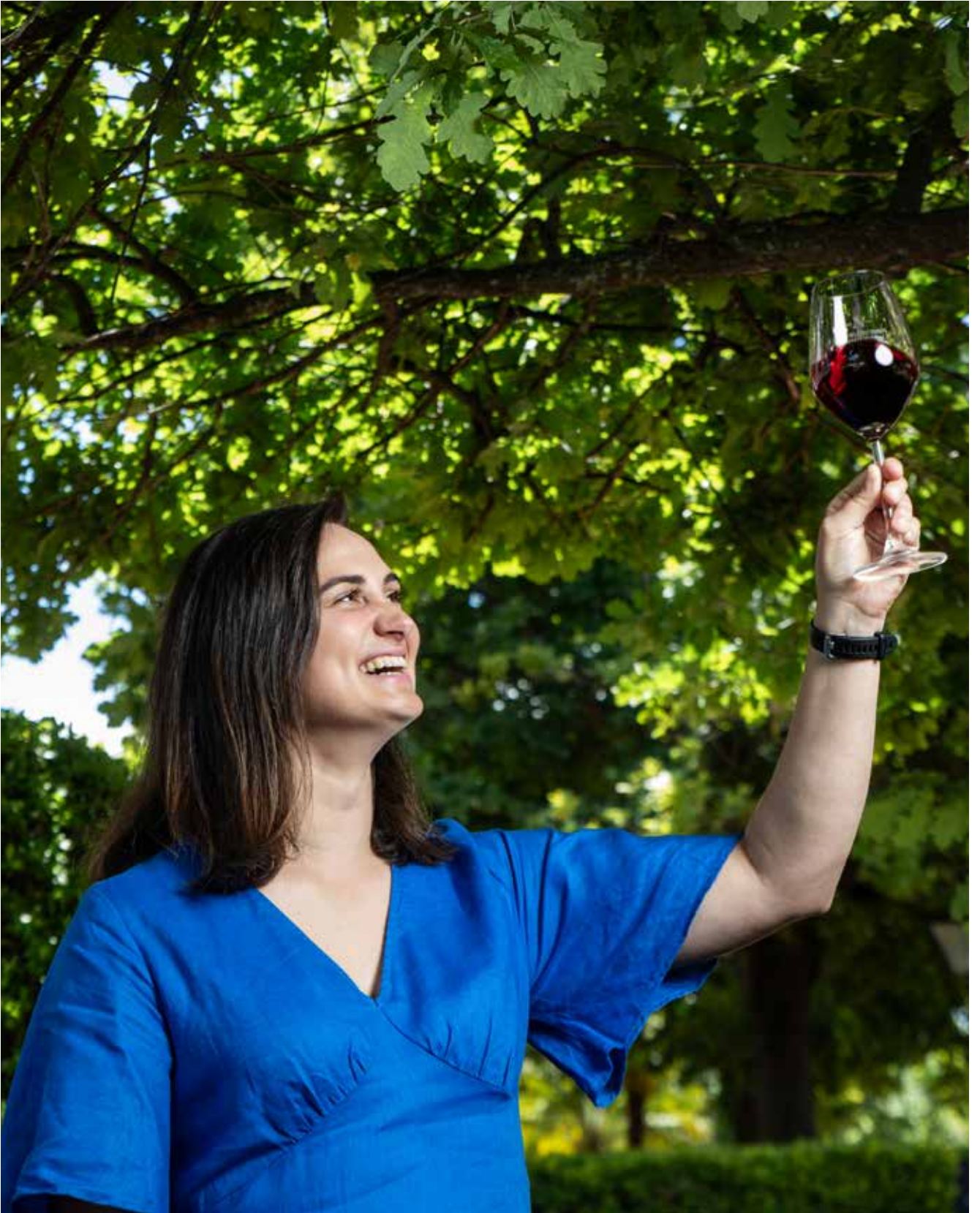
Born and raised in the coastal town of Hermanus, Mika's journey into winemaking was almost serendipitous. She pursued a BSc in Viticulture and Oenology at Stellenbosch University, combining her love for science and nature. Later, she broadened her knowledge by completing a course in *The Business of Wine* at the University of Cape Town's Business School. Her academic foundation laid the groundwork for what has become a deeply fulfilling career in winemaking.

Yet, Mika's entry into the world of wine was not premeditated. "To be honest, it kind of chose me," she says. The opportunity to merge science with art and embrace the dynamic challenges of seasonal variations ignited her passion for the field. "It's not your average nine-to-five job," she adds, reflecting on the unpredictable yet rewarding nature of her chosen path.

## A HOMECOMING AT NEETHLINGSHOF

Mika's connection to Neethlingshof runs deep. She first worked at the estate during the 2019 harvest as part of her final-year practical studies. Little did she know that she would return a few









years later, this time as head winemaker, tasked with shaping the future of one of Stellenbosch's most historic wineries.

Her return to Neethlingshof marked a proud moment in her career. "As a 27-year-old, I would have never thought I'd be given the opportunity to be a winemaker at one of the most historic wine farms in Stellenbosch," she says. This role has allowed her to channel her creativity and leadership into crafting wines that honour the estate's rich heritage while pushing the boundaries of modern winemaking.

### **CRAFTING AN AWARD-WINNING CABERNET SAUVIGNON**

The 2024 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year award recognised Mika for her 2022 Estate Range Cabernet Sauvignon, a wine that exemplifies her meticulous approach to winemaking. The grapes for this wine were harvested from a west-facing block planted in 2011, situated 140 metres above sea level. The soil—a combination of decomposed granite and Table Mountain sandstone—and the block's proximity to the ocean contribute to the wine's exceptional terroir expression.

After being harvested at 25 Baling, the grapes underwent fermentation in a roto tank before malolactic fermentation in stainless steel tanks. The wine was then aged for 12 months in a combination of French and American oak barrels, 40% of which were new. The result is a Cabernet Sauvignon with intense concentration, vibrant fruit characteristics, and a remarkable balance between structure and elegance.

Mika describes the wine as a true reflection of its terroir. "There is a lot of hard work, passion, and attention to detail that goes into creating any wine, but Cabernet Sauvignon in Stellenbosch is a match made in heaven," she says.

### **THE JOY OF THE CRAFT**

For Mika, the most rewarding part of her role is seeing the winemaking process





through from grape to glass. “Working alongside an incredible team and knowing that the final product is enjoyed by family, friends, and fellow wine enthusiasts is incredibly fulfilling,” she says.

Her winemaking philosophy centres on collaboration and respect for nature. Neethlingshof’s sustainability initiatives, such as their owl boxes for natural pest control and the conservation of native renosterveld, resonate deeply with her. These practices enhance the quality of the wines and underscore the estate’s commitment to environmental stewardship.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

Despite her already impressive achievements, Mika remains humble and focused on the journey ahead. Her goals are simple yet profound: to continue learning, enjoy the process, and strive to produce even greater wines. This dedication to her craft ensures that she remains at the forefront of South Africa’s winemaking scene.

As the winemaker at Neethlingshof,

Mika is uniquely positioned to shape the future of an estate steeped in history while embracing innovation. Her work celebrates the delicate balance between tradition and modernity, science and art – a balance that defines her wines and her career.

Mika Engelbrecht’s rise in the wine industry is a story of talent, perseverance, and a deep respect for the craft. Her award-winning 2022 Cabernet Sauvignon is a testament to her ability to harness the unique characteristics of Stellenbosch’s terroir and translate them into wines of exceptional quality.

As she continues to push the boundaries of South African winemaking, Mika’s journey serves as an inspiration to aspiring winemakers and a reminder of the power of passion and hard work. With her vision and dedication, the future of Neethlingshof Estate – and, indeed, South African wine – looks brighter than ever. 🍷





# ESCAPE TO LUXURY

*Constance Belle Mare Plage*

**Tucked away like a hidden treasure on the stunning island of Mauritius, Constance Belle Mare Plage embodies the ultimate tropical escape. Set along the eastern coastline, this resort is a dreamy, luxurious botanical sanctuary that feels like an entire world unto itself, yet it exists within easy reach of the bustling Centre de Flacq. Combining the warmth of the tropics with a touch of Provençale elegance, this sprawling 15-hectare resort is more than just a destination; it's an experience designed to indulge every sense and awaken the spirit of adventure.**

Located some 1,200 kilometres off the coast of Madagascar, Mauritius is renowned for its cultural diversity, rich history, and spectacular landscapes. While it may not boast the private isolation of places like Necker Island or the volcanic drama of the Comoros, it more than compensates with its blend of hospitality, adventure, and world-class cuisine. Mauritius is a land of contrasts, where boutique rum distilleries, intricate artisanal textiles, and vibrant wildlife coexist harmoniously.

When it comes to accommodation, visitors to Constance Belle Mare Plage are genuinely spoiled for choice. This resort is a leader in ultra-luxury, offering a blend of tropical design and refined comfort that makes it stand out among Mauritius's many high-end resorts. Just a short drive from Centre de Flacq, Constance Belle Mare Plage stretches across two kilometres of pristine white sand beach, surrounded by lush tropical gardens and

an air of tranquillity. At the heart of the Constance brand is a commitment to sustainability and responsible tourism. The resort seeks to provide its guests with unforgettable experiences, minimise environmental impact, and contribute positively to local communities and economies. This dedication to eco-conscious hospitality allows guests to relax and unwind with peace of mind, knowing that their paradise escape works harmoniously with nature.

## **MORE THAN A DESTINATION**

Constance Belle Mare Plage is well known for its two championship 18-hole golf courses, making it the top destination for golf enthusiasts visiting Mauritius. But the resort offers far more than just golf. With eight different à la carte and themed buffet restaurants, every meal becomes a journey through the finest local and international cuisine. One standout restaurant is the Deer Hunter, located on the golf course, where you can enjoy an





exquisite meal while soaking in views of the verdant greens. Cooking classes are a must-try experience, allowing guests to learn how to make authentic Mauritian dishes like curry poulet au Garam masala, a traditional chicken curry spiced to perfection. These interactive classes provide more than just a recipe; they offer a deep dive into the island's culinary heritage.

One of the culinary highlights at Constance Belle Mare Plage is breakfast at La Citronnelle. This vibrant restaurant is a feast for the senses, offering everything from freshly squeezed juices to Asian-inspired noodle dishes and indulgent chocolate treats. The juice station is set in a glass boulangerie-pâtisserie, showcasing a dazzling array of fresh tropical fruits that epitomise

the resort's commitment to using the best local ingredients. For oenophiles, the Blue Penny Cellar is an intimate, exclusive dining experience that cannot be missed. Headed by Chef Florian and Head Sommelier Delores Malin, this brick-vaulted wine cellar houses an impressive 35,000 bottles featuring over 2,500 international wine labels. The carefully curated wine pairings and refined tasting menus are designed to complement the rich flavours of Mauritius, offering guests a dining experience that is both luxurious and unforgettable.

Each resort restaurant is set in a magical location, surrounded by the island's lush biodiversity. Dining at Constance Belle Mare Plage is not just about food; it's an experience that delights the eyes and the





soul as much as the taste buds. Whether enjoying a leisurely breakfast mimosa or a gourmet dinner, every meal here feels like a special occasion.

#### STAY IN SPLENDOUR

The resort's accommodations are as luxurious and thoughtfully designed as its restaurants. Guests can choose from a range of rooms, suites, and villas, each offering a unique combination of comfort, style, and breathtaking views of the Indian Ocean. The villas, in particular, provide a more private retreat, each equipped with its own pool area, perfect for those seeking solitude in paradise. Inspired by the beauty of the island's East Coast, the rooms and suites have been designed to maximise natural light and space, creating a sense of airy elegance. The décor reflects the island's natural colours and textures, ensuring that you feel connected to the tropical surroundings even when indoors. From your private balcony or terrace, you can soak in the gentle sea breeze and listen to the soothing sounds of the ocean.

While many guests may come to Constance Belle Mare Plage for a relaxing beach holiday, the resort offers countless

opportunities for adventure. The coral reef just offshore creates the perfect conditions for snorkelling and diving, while the beach is ideal for sunbathing and leisurely strolls. Water sports enthusiasts will find plenty to keep them entertained, from windsurfing to towable tube rides that send you skimming across the waves. The resort also offers cycling tours to nearby Centre de Flacq, where guests can shop for local treasures such as cashmere textiles, adding a cultural dimension to their stay. For those who prefer a more laid-back experience, the resort's spa offers an array of treatments designed to rejuvenate both mind and body. The spa is a sanctuary of tranquillity and features natural, locally sourced products.

Constance Belle Mare Plage is not just for couples or solo travellers. The resort caters to families with the Constance Kids Club, a dedicated space for children aged four to 11. The club's fully qualified and friendly staff ensure that younger guests are entertained with educational and adventurous activities, allowing parents much-needed relaxation. Constance Belle Mare Plage offers something for everyone, whether seeking a romantic getaway, a family vacation, or a solo retreat. Its

serene environment, world-class facilities, and attentive service combine to create an unforgettable experience that lingers in your memory long after you leave its shores.

Serene, family-friendly, and utterly luxurious, Constance Belle Mare Plage has earned its legendary status as one of Mauritius's top resorts. From the first sip of a breakfast mimosa to the last stroll along its pristine beach, every moment at this resort feels like a dream come true. The promise of luxury, adventure, and unparalleled service is delivered in every detail, leaving guests with memories that last a lifetime. If there's one thing Constance Belle Mare Plage guarantees, it's that you'll leave breathless - and longing to return. 📍

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by *iwan jooste*  
/photography by *constance belle mar plage*





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# URBAN SANCTUARY

*Discover Luxury at AtholPlace Hotel & Villa*

Johannesburg, known as the vibrant heart of South Africa, offers much more than its energetic city life. Tucked away in the serene and affluent Atholl neighbourhood lies an urban sanctuary that blends luxury, style, and comfort – AtholPlace Hotel & Villa. Recently relaunched and reimagined under the prestigious Morukuru Family banner, this exclusive property is now the ultimate destination for travellers seeking a refined and intimate escape in the City of Gold.

From the moment you arrive, the experience at AtholPlace feels bespoke. The warm, genuine smiles of the staff are a prelude to the attentive service that awaits you. Whether you're a regular or first-time visitor, you'll instantly feel like you're returning to an elegant home, where every detail has been crafted to make you feel

pampered. The refined ambience evokes an air of sophistication while ensuring guests feel completely at ease.

#### **A NEW CHAPTER IN BOUTIQUE HOSPITALITY**

Formerly known for its exclusivity, AtholPlace Hotel has transformed from a private guesthouse into a boutique haven, now offering nine individually bookable

rooms and suites. Each room maintains the intimate atmosphere that made AtholPlace famous, yet with modern upgrades that give guests a fresh sense of luxury.

The hotel's collection includes four interleaving Deluxe Rooms, ideal for families looking to stay connected while enjoying their own space. For those who desire extra indulgence, the large King Room and four Superior Suites offer a



serene retreat. AtholPlace's thoughtfully designed rooms make for the perfect urban hideaway whether you're travelling for business or pleasure.

Every guest can revel in the feeling of space, privacy, and tranquillity – a rarity in the bustling city. AtholPlace isn't just a hotel; it's a serene escape where thoughtful design and high-end amenities ensure your stay is nothing short of extraordinary.

#### DESIGNED FOR COMFORT & STYLE

AtholPlace's recent renovation has breathed new life into the hotel's interiors. Contemporary elegance is apparent the moment you step inside, with updated floors, lush new carpets, and sleek furnishings that create a soothing aesthetic. The rooms are generously appointed with every convenience the modern traveller could desire. Large flat-screen TVs with state-of-the-art casting systems allow you to stream your favourite shows, while



Nespresso machines provide the perfect

pick-me-up, any time of day.

The refresh extends to the hotel's colour palette, where pastel hues blend seamlessly with locally curated artwork. The owners of AtholPlace have a deep passion for art, which is reflected in their commitment to showcasing South Africa's talented artists. Each piece in the hotel is not just decor but a tribute to the country's rich artistic heritage.

The bathrooms, too, are havens of luxury. Slip into the plush bathrobes and slippers after a long day of exploring Johannesburg, and soak in the peaceful ambience these details bring to your stay. Every corner of AtholPlace reflects a commitment to comfort, elegance, and the finer things in life.

#### GOURMET EXPERIENCES & GARDEN SERENITY

Dining at AtholPlace is designed to please even the most discerning of palates. Guests can indulge in light bites or heartier comfort food from the all-day dining menu, available from 11h00 to 21h00. Breakfast, which is included in the room rate, is a personalised affair, lovingly prepared by the in-house chef to meet your specific tastes. For those looking to explore Johannesburg's culinary scene, the knowledgeable staff is more than happy to recommend nearby restaurants – a treasure trove of flavour awaits in this bustling metropolis.

Fancy a drink after a day of adventure or meetings? The hotel's elegant bar beckons. With a well-curated selection of fine wines and premium spirits, it's the perfect place to toast to memorable moments. Whether relaxing in the bar's inviting ambience or chatting with the friendly barman, every evening at AtholPlace feels like an intimate celebration.

When relaxation is the order of the day, guests can retreat to the garden oasis, which is surrounded by lush greenery. A temperature-controlled pool offers the ideal spot to unwind, while the comfortable loungers invite you to lose yourself in a good book – perhaps a classic from the hotel's quaint library. Whether you're

dipping your toes in the water or simply soaking up the serenity of the space, the garden is the epitome of peaceful luxury.

#### FITNESS AND WELL-BEING


AtholPlace caters to both the body and the mind. For those who want to maintain their fitness routine while travelling, the on-site fitness room is well-equipped for an invigorating workout. Once you've burned off some steam, take a refreshing dip in the pool or relax under the Johannesburg sun. The hotel's serene setting creates a perfect balance between luxury and wellness.

#### A PRIVATE VILLA FOR UNFORGETTABLE ESCAPES

For those travelling in a larger group or seeking an ultra-exclusive experience, AtholPlace Villa is the ultimate hideaway. With its private entrance, four luxurious en-suite bedrooms, a private garden, a swimming pool, and a dedicated host, the villa offers complete privacy and an unmatched level of personalised service. A private chef can be arranged to elevate your stay even further, turning every meal into a gourmet experience. Whether you're celebrating a milestone with friends or enjoying a multi-generational family getaway, the villa offers the intimacy and exclusivity of a private home, with all the amenities of a five-star retreat.

#### PERFECTLY LOCATED FOR EXPLORATION

While AtholPlace Hotel & Villa serves as a serene retreat, its location is also ideal for those wanting to explore Joburg. The property is within close proximity to major attractions such as Sandton City, Nelson Mandela Square, and the Gautrain station, which offers direct access to O.R. Tambo International Airport. Whether you're in town for business or leisure, you'll find everything you need just moments away.

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## LIFESTYLE

### ELEVATE YOUR BUSINESS GAME WITH A BRIGHTER, WHITER SMILE

In the fast-paced world of business, first impressions matter. Whether you're pitching to a potential client, networking at an event, or closing a deal, your confidence and presentation can make all the difference. A bright, white smile can open doors, and with Philips Zoom teeth whitening, you can easily achieve that edge. Your smile is one of the first things people notice about you, and a radiant smile signals good health, attention to detail, and adds to your professional presence. When you feel better about yourself it boosts your confidence and helps you to command attention and build

trust. Your improved confidence makes you feel comfortable and more engaged in conversations, improving communication. Appearing more approachable and trustworthy will also give you the edge to stand out. Showing that you value excellence improves your professional image and personal branding. By investing in yourself you're investing in your future! With practices all over Southern Africa, and safe, effective results of up to eight shades whiter in under an hour, book your Philips Zoom Professional teeth whitening today via [www.zoom.baltimore.africa](http://www.zoom.baltimore.africa) or email [info@zoomwhitening.co.za](mailto:info@zoomwhitening.co.za).



### A DYNAMIC ROSE INFUSED WITH LIGHT

Acqua di Parma introduces Luce di Rosa, a luminous addition to its Signatures of the Sun collection. This gender-neutral fragrance harmonises the delicate Bulgarian Rose with sharp mineral tones, creating a symphonic blend of citrus, spice, and woody base notes that evolve over time. At its heart, Bulgarian Rose and geranium bring a fresh, rich depth, while vetiver, guaiac wood, and cedarwood ground the scent in warm sensuality. The starring Bulgarian Rose is distilled from flowers harvested in the Kazanlak region of Bulgaria through a steam-water process, capturing the essence of the rose at its most vibrant. Acqua di Parma Luce di Rosa is available at Woolworths.

### RICH IN TRADITION

Discover the sweet, smooth, and fruity notes of Tamnavulin Single Malt Whisky, crafted with over 50 years of expertise in Speyside, Scotland. Nestled along the River Livet, Tamnavulin's twice-matured whisky is aged in American oak barrels and finished in Sherry casks, delivering a complex yet approachable flavour profile. This unique single malt captures the spirit of its birthplace, with a rich character inspired by Speyside's temperate microclimate and fertile farmland. Experience the depth and craftsmanship in every sip of Tamnavulin - whisky made to be shared, savoured, and remembered. Available now to enjoy and share responsibly.





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# EMPOWERING THE FUTURE

*The 2024 Give Her a Crown South African Showcase*

The 2024 *Give Her a Crown* South African Showcase was a momentous celebration of fashion, creativity, and empowerment, held at the Jaguar Land Rover Experience Centre. This year, the initiative - now a global platform for female empowerment - focused on **Shifting Perspectives**, a theme inspired by the powerful spoken word of artist Qui Garre. It was more than a showcase of fashion; it was an invitation to reconsider how we perceive the role of women in society and to challenge the stereotypes that still persist.

The 2024 *Give Her a Crown* event saw five visionary South African designers - Manthe Ribane, Gugu Peteni, Thando Ntuli, Keneilwe Mothoa, and Tsakani Mashaba - take centre stage with collections that fused culture, empowerment, and personal storytelling. Their works didn't simply adorn the runway; they told deeply personal stories, each one reflecting the trials, triumphs, and resilience that define the journey of every woman. And just like that, fashion became a tool for change, challenging the status quo.

## SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES: A THEME WOVEN INTO EVERY DESIGN

For these designers, the theme *Shifting Perspectives* resonated deeply. Michele Rhoda, co-curator from ARRCC, highlighted how every piece on display told a unique story - one of transformation and empowerment. "Each design reflected personal journeys, struggles, and triumphs," she noted. As the garments moved from sketches to the runway, they evolved into powerful statements of African creativity and female strength.

Chuks Collins, representing the African Fashion Council, praised the collection for its innovative approach to



both African heritage and global fashion. "These designers didn't just present collections; they made a statement about African fashion's rightful place on the world stage," he said. Their work proved that African design isn't just competing globally – it's leading the charge in redefining fashion as we know it.

#### JAGUAR'S COMMITMENT TO EMPOWERMENT

Jaguar's support for the *Give Her a Crown* initiative underscores the brand's commitment to empowering women and supporting innovation in all industries. Irene Kakooza, Jaguar and Range Rover's Brand Manager, reflected on the journey of these designers, many of whom have gone from local talent to global trailblazers. She remarked that their success embodied the very essence of Jaguar's philosophy: "When women are (em)powered, they drive





*Thando Ntuli*

change across industries.”

By aligning itself with such a transformative initiative, Jaguar is not only fostering female empowerment but also demonstrating how brands can champion change and inclusivity through collaboration. This partnership is an integral part of Jaguar’s pursuit of an all-electric future – a future that embraces diversity, sustainability, and the potential for transformative innovation.

#### **CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CREATIVES**

Beyond celebrating the current wave of female designers, the *Give Her a Crown* initiative continues to focus on nurturing future generations. Proceeds from the Crown Collection directly support the Crown Bursary Fund, which has already assisted 20 young creatives on their journeys to success. The fund aims to help shape the next generation of African designers, ensuring that women’s voices remain central in the ongoing evolution of fashion and beyond.

This focus on future talent is vital in creating a sustainable and inclusive creative ecosystem where young women are given the tools, resources, and opportunities to thrive. By nurturing the next wave of African creatives, Jaguar and the *Give Her a Crown* initiative are sowing the seeds for an even more inclusive and innovative future.

#### **A VISION FOR CHANGE: REDEFINING THE NARRATIVE**

The success of the 2024 *Give Her*



*Keneilwe Motboa*




a *Crown Showcase* was a testament to the power of community, resilience, and collaboration. These designers didn't just showcase their fashion - they rewrote the narrative of what it means to be a woman in today's world. Through their collections, they challenged long-standing stereotypes and used fashion to foster a culture of empowerment.

This showcase wasn't simply about beautiful clothes; it was about a movement. As Jaguar continues to pursue its all-electric future and as the *Give Her a Crown* initiative grows, one thing is clear: when women are given the platform to create and innovate, the possibilities are limitless.

In the end, the 2024 South African Showcase reminded us that with support, determination, and collaboration, women's dreams can become transformative realities - both on the runway and beyond. The *Give Her a Crown* initiative is just the beginning of a much larger cultural shift that celebrates female creativity, strength, and leadership

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by **bernie hellberg jr**  
/photography by **jlr south africa**

in all its forms. 



# FOREX SIMPLIFIED

*International Money Transfers Made Swift, Simple & Savvy*

Moving money internationally? Here's why you shouldn't default to using your bank.

Many South Africans still rely on their bank when transferring money internationally, yet doing so often leads to headaches, impersonal call centres and unexpected costs. While your bank may seem like the obvious choice for sending or receiving international payments, investing offshore or emigrating, their hidden fees, long delays, and lack of compliance assistance are just a few frustrations that'll turn a straightforward transaction into a complex ordeal. Add the inconvenience of physical branch visits and extensive paperwork, and it's clear that they're not equipped to deliver the seamless and affordable experience you're after.

With banks profiting significantly from the foreign exchange space, it's time to ask whether they're the best choice for moving your money internationally.

## WHAT IS YOUR BANK ACTUALLY CHARGING YOU?

Unfortunately, the banks' pitfalls extend beyond their mediocre customer service. While you might think that your bank's advertised rates are all you need to consider, the reality is often quite different. Besides the SWIFT/processing fee, which typically caps at R1,000 and

will usually be disclosed to you upfront, banks charge a far heftier hidden fee known as the "spread". The spread is the difference between the actual exchange rate and the bank's rate.

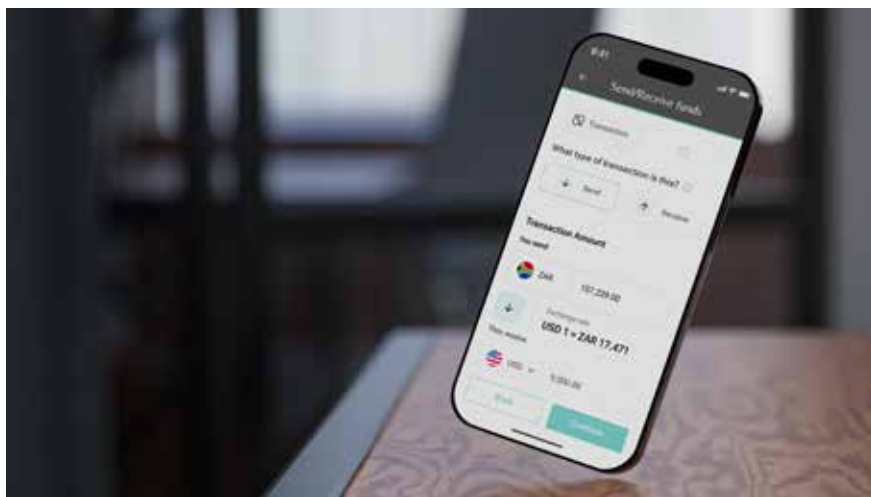
Taking a R1 million transaction as an example, if the spot rate is R18 to \$1, the bank might charge you R18.36 to \$1 and pocket the 36c for each dollar. While this 2% margin doesn't seem significant initially, it actually translates to R20,000 beyond the processing fee. For those planning to invest offshore, purchase property abroad, emigrate, or make large payments into and out of South Africa for any other reason, this spread fee can inevitably erode your investment returns, affect your long-term financial planning and substantially reduce what you've got left on the other side.

## FUTURE FOREX: A SEAMLESS, SECURE AND COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTION

Fortunately, there's a far more efficient and cost-effective way to move your funds internationally. Having recognised the banks' shortcomings, innovative fintech Future Forex (Authorised FSP #51884) has introduced a transparent, efficient, secure and client-first alternative to the industry. "So many South Africans are still being underserved and overcharged for their

*Future Forex CEO Harry Scherzer*





cross-border transactions, and we've set out to change that," says Future Forex CEO Harry Scherzer.

Inspired by global fintech giants Revolut and Wise, Future Forex harnesses a cutting-edge mobile app and fully automated systems to streamline the process. What sets them apart, however, is their philosophy that technology should only enhance, not replace, a personal touch. That's why the company assigns each client a dedicated

Account Manager, a specialist with deep industry expertise who will handle every aspect of your transfer, from your SARS AIT (Approval of International Transfer) applications for transfers over R1 million, to helping submit the correct BoP (Balance of Payment) codes and ensuring your funds are received on the other side. This all comes at no extra cost and without unnecessary complications. Your Future Forex Account Manager is readily available to support you with

your unique process and requirements and is directly contactable via phone, email, or WhatsApp.

"Our approach to pricing is also fundamentally different from that of traditional banks because we believe our clients should know exactly what they're being charged and why. Our strong banking partnerships and economies of scale also allow us to substantially reduce spread fees - often by as much as 50% compared to industry norms," says Scherzer.

Future Forex boasts an exceptional track record, having processed over 36 billion in forex transactions since its inception in 2020. Their commitment to client-first service is evidenced by a stellar 4.9/5 rating on Google, and a series of industry accolades, including being named a finalist in this year's BCX Digital Innovation Awards.

Future Forex understands your need for ease, efficiency and safety while saving on fees. So why settle for outdated, costly banking methods? With an international money transfer partner like Future Forex, you can experience complete peace of mind while saving time and money on every transaction.

*For more information, you can visit [www.futureforex.co.za](http://www.futureforex.co.za) or email [info@futureforex.co.za](mailto:info@futureforex.co.za).*



# A GUIDE TO EXCELLENCE

*South Africa's Favourite Wine Guide Turns 45*

Platter's by Diners Club South African Wine Guide, known simply as 'Platters' by its thousands of fans, celebrates its 45<sup>th</sup> year as South Africa's favourite wine guide with the publication this month of its 2025 edition.

*platter's in your pocket*

Scan to buy the Platter's by Diners Club Wine Guide hardcover book or download the app, for everything you want to know about South African wine. The app is free to download, thereafter an annual subscription applies.



With its eye-catching cover design and wide-ranging content, Platter's by Diners Club South African Wine Guide has been an industry institution and a best-selling hardcover book for decades.

Published in 1980 as *John Platter's Book of South African Wines*, the first "Platter's" was 119 pages long and featured the wines of 171 producers and brands, from Aan de Doorns Co-Operative to Zonnheimer. There were also explanations about how to serve, store and taste wine, South Africa's wine-growing regions and its certification system.

In his foreword, Platter acknowledged his wife Erica had had the idea for the guide, adding "her verve and tenacity in helping to gather and sift information made this a joint venture." Interestingly, Erica and the current MD and editor, Philip van Zyl, are the only two to edit the guide in its 45-year history.

Van Zyl took over from the 1999 edition following its sale by the Platters. Not only does his 27<sup>th</sup> edition run to 720 pages, but it features nearly 9,000 locally produced wines (as well as brandies, husk spirits/grappa and sherry-style wines) and shares insights about the 900 brand owners who grow, make and sell them - from Aaldering to Zorgvliet. (Aan de Doorns still features in the guide - just after Aaldering - but Zonnheimer no longer exists.)

Also, there is all the information wine lovers need to get to grips with the industry, its geography and legislation, its grape varieties and wine styles, and its vintages, as well as those organisations that support the growers and producers. Most importantly for the industry and Platterati alike, there are the upfront pages listing those wines that have received their highest accolade, a five-star rating.

Annually, Platter's assesses a potential 9,000 wines. Those rated 93 points or



more on the 100-point rating scale by the sighted judges are entered into a second round of blind tasting. Here, two tasters, assisted by a second-opinion taster if necessary, assess the wines to award them their final rating. Bottlings judged to be “Superlative, a South African classic”, are given the highest ranking of five stars, equal to 95 points or more. Of the five-star-awarded wines, the top performer within each wine style receives the coveted accolade of Wine of the Year. Then there are the three Winery of the Year awards: Top Performing Winery of the Year (the winery that achieves the most five-star results); Newcomer Winery of the Year (the producer debuting in the guide and achieving highest ratings at the five-star tasting), and Editor’s Award Winery of the Year (recognising a winegrowing team/teams who are ambassadors par excellence for South African wine). In the 45th edition, these awards go to Sadie Family Wines, Terra Loci and Hamilton

Russell Vineyards, respectively.

**WHERE TO FIND PLATTER’S BY DINERS CLUB**

Distributed nationwide, there’s the iconic hardcover version, now nearly 4 cm thick versus 1980’s 1/2½cm. Less visible perhaps, but equally valuable to the wine lover, are the digital versions of the guide – the website ([wineonaplatter.com](http://wineonaplatter.com)), the apps and e-books.

With a range of value-added features such as advanced search, news, shopping and information about wine country accommodation, specialist tour operators and dining options among the vines, the web-based version is the flagship.

For those who like the look of the hardcover but prefer a digital experience, there is the e-book. Downloadable to any device that runs the Kindle free e-reader app, it looks exactly like the book, and offers benefits inherent in the electronic format, like bookmarking, search, multiple navigation options, and hyperlinked



websites and email addresses.

Serving as your digital sommelier, the apps provide the quickest and most direct access to the wine descriptions and ratings. Also, with a single tap, you can see which wineries are in your area and get directions to the venue of your choice via the built-in map.

*For more information, please visit [www.wineonaplatter.com/products](http://www.wineonaplatter.com/products).* ⓘ

by *philip van zyl*  
/photography by *cathy van zyl mw*





# CHARGING **AHEAD**

*Volvo's All-New EX90 Makes its Mark in California*

The automotive world is abuzz with electric innovation, and Volvo has once again set the standard. During a recent visit to Los Angeles - the epitome of modern style and technological progress - we had the privilege of experiencing the Volvo EX90, the brand's new all-electric flagship SUV. Combining Scandinavian elegance, advanced technology, and a forward-thinking approach to sustainability, the EX90 boldly represents Volvo's leap into the electric era.



The EX90 builds on the legacy of the XC90, a model that redefined Volvo's image when it launched in 2014. Where the XC90 propelled the brand into the premium SUV market, the EX90 takes the baton into a fully electric future. This new SUV prioritises sustainability and cutting-edge innovation while staying true to Volvo's core values of safety and simplicity.

Having sampled the EX90 on California's roads, it's clear this vehicle is more than just an SUV - it's a declaration of Volvo's intent to lead in electric mobility.

#### **QUIET SOPHISTICATION MEETS FUTURISTIC EDGE**

At first glance, the EX90 retains the clean lines and minimalist elegance Volvo is known for. Yet, on closer inspection, its futuristic details emerge. Sleek contours, flush door handles, and cutting-edge light designs signal its advanced electric nature.

The front end proudly displays Volvo's "Thor's Hammer" LED light signature, now evolving into adaptive headlights. The mostly sealed grille, a hallmark of electric vehicles, further underscores its modernity. Despite its imposing size, the EX90 maintains a balance of





assertiveness and urban sophistication.

**POWER AND PERFORMANCE:  
ELECTRIC EXCELLENCE**

The EX90 rides on Volvo's SPA2 platform, designed specifically for electric vehicles. Currently, two variants are available: the Twin Motor and the Twin Motor Performance. The entry-level Twin Motor delivers 300 kW, while the Performance model ups the ante to 380 kW and an earth-shaking 910 Nm of torque.

With a range of approximately 600 km under ideal conditions and rapid charging capabilities (10% to 80% in under 30 minutes), the EX90 is built for long journeys without compromise. The Twin Motor Performance model, capable of zero to 100 km/h in just 4.9 seconds, combines sports car agility with SUV practicality.

Driving through the diverse roads of California, the EX90 demonstrated its remarkable poise. Equipped with two-chamber air suspension, it handled both smooth highways and uneven mountain passes with ease, all while riding on

stylish 22" alloys. The quiet, refined cabin, enhanced by active noise cancellation, creates an almost meditative experience for drivers and passengers alike.

**SAFETY FIRST: VOLVO'S  
UNMATCHED COMMITMENT**

Safety remains Volvo's cornerstone, and the EX90 pushes the envelope. With a suite of advanced sensors, including LiDAR technology, the SUV creates a virtual safety shield around its occupants. Capable of detecting obstacles hundreds of metres ahead, the system ensures safer driving even in challenging conditions.

The EX90 also introduces driver monitoring systems, tracking eye movements and steering grip to prevent accidents caused by distraction or fatigue. This commitment to proactive safety reinforces Volvo's vision of eliminating road fatalities.

**THE SCANDINAVIAN SANCTUARY**

At the heart of the EX90 lies Nvidia's Drive Orin AI platform, enabling advanced driver assistance and preparing the SUV



for higher levels of autonomous driving. Over-the-air updates ensure the vehicle remains cutting-edge long after purchase.

Inside, the cabin exemplifies Scandinavian design – light, airy, and serene. The 14.5” portrait-oriented touchscreen integrates Google Assistant, Maps, and the Play Store, with Apple CarPlay arriving soon via software updates. Sustainable materials, such as wool blends and reclaimed wood, add an eco-conscious touch.

The Bowers & Wilkins sound system, combined with active noise cancellation, transforms the cabin into a 360-degree audio haven. Whether navigating LA’s bustling streets or enjoying a countryside escape, the EX90 ensures a premium sensory experience.


Unlike some electric SUVs, the EX90 doesn’t sacrifice interior space. Its flexible three-row layout accommodates up to seven adults comfortably, with clever storage solutions and fold-flat seating options for added versatility.

The seats, upholstered in luxurious yet sustainable materials, offer exceptional

support. The panoramic glass roof amplifies the sense of openness, though an interior cover would be welcome in warmer conditions.

#### **LEADING THE CHARGE**

The Volvo EX90 isn’t just a new model – it’s the embodiment of the brand’s electrified future. Balancing safety, sustainability, and performance, the EX90 is Volvo’s bold statement that luxury and electric mobility can coexist seamlessly.

South African customers can expect the EX90 to arrive in early 2025, with the XC90 continuing to serve those not yet ready for full-electric driving. For now, the EX90 is redefining expectations, proving that Volvo is ready to lead the charge into a greener, more sophisticated future. 



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**GLADIATOR II**

From legendary director Ridley Scott, *Gladiator II* continues the epic saga of power, intrigue, and vengeance set in Ancient Rome. Years after witnessing the death of the revered hero Maximus at the hands of his uncle, Lucius (Mescal) is forced to enter the Colosseum after his home is conquered by the tyrannical Emperors who now lead Rome with an iron fist. With rage in his heart and the future of the Empire at stake, Lucius must look to his past to find strength and honour to return the glory of Rome to its people.



**BY ANY OTHER NAME**

*By Jodi Picoult*

What if Shakespeare was a woman? 1581. Emilia Bassano is allowed no voice of her own but finds a way to bring her work to the stage secretly. Yet by paying a man for the use of his name,

she will write her own out of history. His name? William Shakespeare. Now. Playwright Melina Green is determined to see one of her shows make the stage, but it appears a woman's voice is still worth less than a man's. Women have long been written out of history, but what if they held the pen all along?

**ROBBIE WILLIAMS TO ROCK THE CAPITAL**

Global music icon Robbie Williams will kick off 2025 with an electrifying performance at the SunBet Arena, Pretoria, this January. As part of his acclaimed XXV tour, Robbie will treat



fans to a nostalgic journey through his greatest hits, including timeless anthems like *Angels* and *Rock DJ*. Known for his unmatched stage

presence and charisma, this show promises an unforgettable start to the year. Tickets are selling fast – don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime experience!

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\*Offers subject to availability and subject to change.  
Offers end on September 30, 2024.  
See website for full T&C's.



# THE FUTURE OF THE VINE

## *2024 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year Finalists*

Meet the trailblazers shaping tomorrow's vines. Introducing the 2024 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year finalists.

The 2024 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year finalists represent the future of South African winemaking—each bringing a unique perspective, skill

set, and passion for the craft. These rising stars are not only pushing boundaries with innovative techniques and sustainable practices but are also continuing to uphold the rich heritage of South African wine. 11



*2021 Quoin Rock Red Blend & 2021 Knorhoek Cabernet Sauvignon*





*Pieter Coetzee*

*Michelle Waldeck*



*2021 Benquela Cove Lighthouse Collection  
Moody Lagoon Red*





*Dominique Modena*



2021 Boschendal Stellenbosch  
Cabernet Sauvignon







*Elkanna Bosman*  
*2022 Groot Constantia Merlot*





# THE PINNACLE OF LUXURY & ADVANCED AESTHETICS

*Terre Paisible Medical Rejuvenation & Spa*

**Unsurpassed luxury, innovation and excellence in advanced aesthetics constellation in Franschhoek's Terre Paisible Medical Rejuvenation & Spa**

Situated in the tranquil Franschhoek valley, Terre Paisible Medical Rejuvenation & Spa has set a new benchmark in wellness since its October 2024 opening, combining advanced aesthetic treatments with luxurious facilities. Surrounded by olive groves and vineyards on a boutique farm known for its fine wines and olive oils, this retreat offers a sanctuary for rejuvenation, just 50 minutes from Cape Town.

The name, meaning "Peaceful Land," reflects Terre Paisible's promise of a restorative escape. Managing Director Shirley van Wyk explains, "Our programmes go beyond aesthetic enhancement, encompassing metabolic and hormonal balance for revitalisation at a cellular level. With the most advanced devices, expertise, and personalised regimens, we empower guests to rediscover their best selves."

Led by a team of skilled practitioners, Terre Paisible's treatments are based on rigorous diagnostics and measurable outcomes. Functional medicine practitioner Tania Malan, founder of

the 'Raw to Roar' movement, consults on tests covering hormone and gut biome health. Using DNAnalysis™ and DUTCH™ diagnostics, practitioners craft customised wellness plans. The centre also employs Visia Facial Analysis and Inbody Assessment Analysis for comprehensive health insights.

Aesthetic treatments are spearheaded by Dr Marlé le Roux, known for her expertise in Ultherapy® – a leading non-surgical skin-lifting treatment. Alongside Ultherapy®, Terre Paisible offers exclusive therapies like the Emerald Laser™, the first in South Africa, providing full-body fat reduction on a cellular level. Other options include laser and microneedling treatments, all designed for minimal downtime and long-lasting results. Skincare treatments feature premium lines like Biologique Recherche, Mesoesthetic®, and certified organic Esse Microbiome Skincare, ensuring that clients' skincare journeys can be maintained globally.

The centre's sleek, contemporary spaces, crafted by interior architects Tristan du Plessis Studio, balance modern design with nature's tranquillity.

Eight treatment rooms, including two private suites with separate access, provide complete privacy. Designed with international spa consultant Jacoline Wentzel, these spaces offer customisable LEMI beds, sound bath rituals, and Solfeggio healing vibrations to deepen relaxation. Post-treatment, guests can unwind in the hydrotherapy pool, sauna, or steam room, enjoying a seamless blend of luxury and nature.

The architecture, subtly lit by screens that create peaceful, secluded spaces, encourages a journey inward. Guests can also enjoy panoramic views from the pool, capturing the valley's serene beauty. Terre Paisible's attention to detail and emphasis on natural wellness celebrate the surrounding landscape, making each visit a tribute to well-being and vitality.

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

*by terre paisible medical rejuvenation & spa*



# ICONIC EXCELLENCE

*The Saxon Hotel and Verdicchio Shine at the 2024 Diners Club Winelist Awards*

The 2024 Diners Club Winelist Awards once again honoured the best wine lists across South Africa, celebrating the establishments that go above and beyond in their dedication to curating exceptional wine offerings.

Among the most prestigious accolades of the Diners Club Winelist Awards is the Icon Award, which was awarded to two outstanding venues: the Saxon Hotel, Villas & Spa and Verdicchio Restaurant & Wine Cellar this year. Both of these establishments not only meet but exceed the criteria for the award, which demands

a sophisticated and diverse wine selection, a solid commitment to wine curation, and a full-time sommelier overseeing the list.

### THE SAXON HOTEL, VILLAS & SPA

Located in the heart of Sandton, Johannesburg, the Saxon Hotel, Villas & Spa is widely regarded as one of the finest luxury hotels in South Africa. Its wine list reflects the sophistication of the venue itself, offering a curated selection of international wines alongside a comprehensive range of South African varietals. The hotel's wine cellar is a testament to its dedication to fine dining, with wines from across the globe paired expertly with the exquisite cuisine served in its renowned restaurants. The inclusion of a full-time sommelier ensures that guests enjoy the perfect wine pairing for every meal, and the hotel's intimate atmosphere and world-class service only enhance the experience. Its Icon Award for 2024 recognises not just the breadth and depth of its wine list but also the exceptional service and wine presentation

expertise, elevating the dining experience to international standards.

### VERDICCHIO RESTAURANT & WINE CELLAR

Verdicchio, located in Gauteng, has long been a favourite among wine connoisseurs. Known for its Mediterranean-inspired cuisine and inviting atmosphere, Verdicchio has earned its place among South Africa's best by maintaining a wine list that is as much about passion as it is about quality. The restaurant's wine cellar boasts an impressive collection that strongly focuses on local and international wines. Verdicchio's award-winning list is complemented by an expert team, including its full-time sommelier, ensuring that every bottle on the menu is carefully chosen and perfectly paired with the food. This commitment to quality and curation and its extensive range of vintage selections earned Verdicchio its Icon Award for 2024.

The restaurant is known for its meticulous attention to detail, offering patrons a wine experience that stands out in the competitive South African dining scene.

Both the Saxon and Verdicchio have set the bar for excellence in wine curation, making them shining examples of what it means to truly master the art of the wine list. The 2024 Diners Club Winelist Awards have not only highlighted their achievements but have also underscored the growing sophistication of South Africa's wine culture. 🍷



by *bernie hellberg jr*



# Relax | Refresh | Refuel



**All the Bidvest Premier Lounges are now open and operating at 100% seating capacity.**

Individual lounge operating hours are available on the Bidvest Premier Lounge website. A reminder to all visitors that the food and drink is only for consumption inside the lounges.

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