

Collected treasures

A scenic two-hour drive from Cape Town brings visitors to the beautiful Robertson Wine Valley, which is packed with highlights



There are dozens of estates in the Robertson Wine Valley. For more information, go to robertsonwinevalley.com.

Paul René MCC: for the personal touch

To celebrate your arrival, start with a glass or two at Paul René MCC, where Henk van Niekerk has created two award-winning bubbly: a Brut (100% chardonnay) and a Brut Rosé (75% pinot noir and 25% chardonnay). Call ahead for a personal tasting where you'll hear the fascinating story behind the brand's name, learn about the ribbons introduced to the bottles, and perhaps get to enjoy your experience on the veranda of the Van Niekerk's beautiful family home.

paulrenemcc.co.za

Weltevrede Wine Estate: for the story

Weltevrede Wine Estate was so named by winemaker Philip Jonker's great-grandfather in 1912, because he was 'well satisfied' with the land. Enthéos, a blend of 60% chardonnay and 40% pinot noir, is the Greek word for 'full of God' and the root of the word 'enthusiasm'. And The Ring, a Blanc de Blanc (100% chardonnay),

is named after the proposal to Jonker's wife Lindelize under an old oak tree in the Karoo. Jonker also rehabilitated vineyards on Robben Island and used the grapes to make a fortified wine called The Parable, which he presented to the late Nelson Mandela for his 94th birthday.

weltevrede.com

Esona Boutique Wines: for the setting

You'll feel at home in a building created almost 100 years ago for the sole purpose of fermenting wines. The tasting is a feast for all the senses, with background music to accompany the pairings (Lindt chocolate and fruit preserves), as well as different shapes and types of crystal glasses to enhance the flavour profiles of each varietal. Then, from the darkness, you emerge into the light and enjoy a different kind of feast with generous lunch platters.

esona.co.za



Van Loveren Family Vineyards: for the garden

Start with a garden tour, free and open to the public, where you'll see trees that were all planted to mark special historical, political and family moments in time. From there, go on a 7.5km circular hiking trail (about three hours to complete) that includes two river crossings, panoramic views, and the chance to spot up to 100 species of bird. A quicker option for the more active is a mountain biking experience (routes range from 12km to 32km and bikes are available to rent if you don't have your own) before settling down for a refreshing drink.

vanloveren.co.za

Four Cousins: for the variety

Four Cousins is named after the four real-life Retief cousins who, after completing their studies, joined the Van Loveren family farm. Four Cousins has three restaurants (casual, upmarket, and in-between) and

is a popular place over weekends. And beyond wine pairings, you can opt for Scottish Cousin Whisky (with nougat and toffee), Fiver coolers (with Turkish delight), Boet Beer (with biltong and droëwors), and cream liqueurs, reserve brandy, and five types of infused gin.

fourcousins.co.za

Mimosa Wines: for the food

The BluVines Experience on Route 62 story begins around 14 years ago, when Swiss chef Bernhard Hess and his wife Fida started Mimosa Wines as a hobby. Later, when Richard Weilers bought Bloupunt Winery in Montagu's Long Street, the partnership between wine brand and winery brought new life to the original farm. The restaurant, housed in the refurbished farmhouse, is staffed by alumni from the Rural Arts Development Foundation. This NGO introduces visual and performing arts to rural youth to inspire, engage and educate them.

mimosa.co.za

Excelsior Wine Estate: for the hands-on experience

Here, you'll find a wonderful hands-on experience, from playing fetch with the resident sheepdog to blending your own wine. The De Wet family have farmed at the estate since 1859, but you don't need five generations of knowledge to bottle your own vintage. The experience includes suggested proportions that you can try out before you commit to the exact amounts you'd like to mix. Once you're done, you can cork your creation and design a label to print and apply.

excelsior.co.za

Zandvliet Wine Estate: for the luxury

Another estate offering blending is Zandvliet, where you can feel like a scientist about to unearth an exciting new discovery as you measure out the required portions in your beaker. But if you'd prefer to skip the hands-on experience, you can keep things totally hands-off (and feet up) at the estate's new luxury accommodation. The spacious villa has six en-suite bedrooms, making it ideal for a group or family getaway. There's also a pool to splash about on summer afternoons by the braai, seating on the deck to sip a sundowner while marvelling at the beautiful view, and a cosy dining area that's an ideal place to enjoy a meal with friends, talking and laughing late into the night.

zandvliet.co.za

Windfall Wine Estate: for the escape

Keep things simple at Windfall Wine Estate. There are five self-catering cottages, all named after different wines. The venue also includes a jungle gym for kids, a swimming pool, a dam for fishing, a boma with braai facilities, and no phone reception to disturb peaceful time away from city life.

windfallwine.co.za

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Enjoy a slow, indulgent day trip from Cape Town in Robertson.

How to get there



Airlink has daily flights to Cape Town. Go to page 35 for schedules. www.flyairlink.com/flightschedule