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Excursions ■

Excursions

Many people have trouble tearing themselves away from Cape Town, but if you have the time it's definitely worth escaping the city and taking a day trip. The Western Cape's excellent roads mean it takes as much time and effort to discover the neighbouring sections of the province as it does to explore the Cape Peninsula. Within two hours you can see truly beautiful scenery and interesting old towns, some tucked away in wine country first planted with vines over three centuries ago. There are also pristine, crowd-free beaches, and hikes every bit as spectacular as those of the Table Mountain National Park.

Geographically speaking, the day-trip areas surrounding Cape Town can more or less be broken up into the areas of the Boland, Overberg and West Coast.

The Boland stretches inland and upwards from Cape Town, and is the country's most famous wine-producing region. Its name means 'Upland', a reference to the dramatic mountain ranges that shoot up to over 1500m and on whose fertile slopes the vineyards form a patchwork. The Franschhoek and Bainskloof Passes that crisscross the region are among the country's most spectacular.

Heading further east, all roads from Cape Town suddenly and unforgivably come against a mountainous barrier, forcing you to hit the lower gears. Once you're up and over the top, you're 'over the mountain', the literal meaning of Overberg.

It's a gorgeous and rugged area, roughly comprising the region south and west of the Franschhoek Range, and south of the Wemmershoek and Riviersonderend Ranges, forming a natural barrier with the Breede River Valley.

Heading north of Cape Town brings you to the jagged coastline and windswept hills of the West Coast, a peaceful and undeveloped getaway with quiet whitewashed fishing villages and beautiful lagoons.

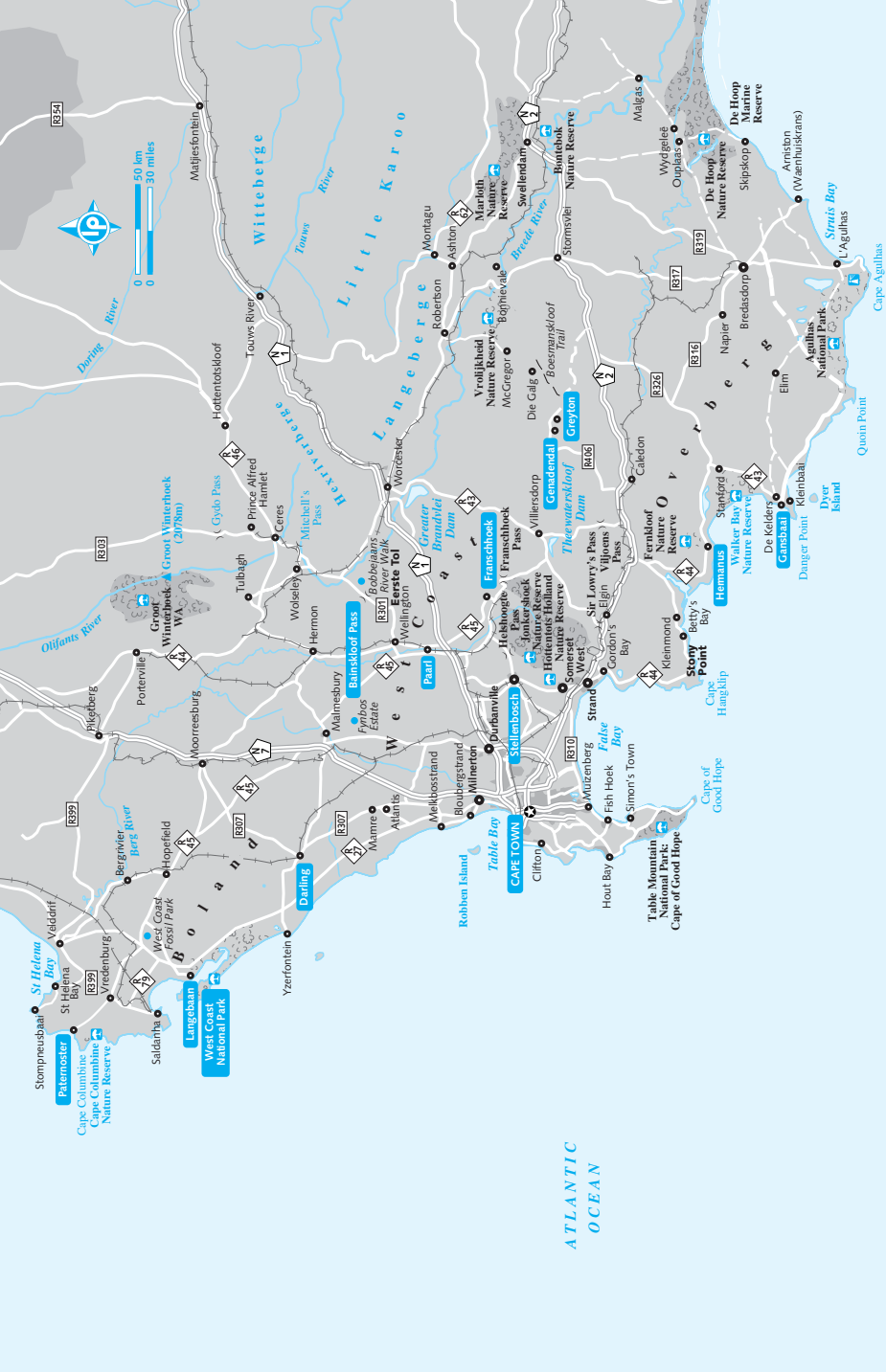
WINE COUNTRY

The most popular wine country is in the Boland, whose centuries-long history of colonial settlement has given it a European feel, particularly in French-themed culinary hot spot **Franschhoek** (p193). Lively student town **Stellenbosch** (p188) offers the most activities, while **Paarl** (p195) is a busy commercial centre with excellent estates. All three towns are within a 90-minute drive of Cape Town, although staying over is recommended. While the Winelands are busy year-round, the estates can become very crowded between November and March thanks to the popularity of picnic lunches and spit-braais held there. During winter, estates are quieter and wetter and often offer discounts on accommodation. It's worth mentioning that there are some up-and-coming estates in the **Darling** (p206) area, with none of the hype.

NATURE & HIKING

Although whales are common during the winter and spring season in **False Bay** (p109), the focus of the **whale-watching** (p201) action is at Hermanus. This pleasant coastal town is also a good base for other nature-focused adventures, including **shark-cage diving** (p153) at nearby Gansbaai and exploring the Fernkloof Nature Reserve and Walker Bay Nature Reserve. Bird-watchers will want to beat a path to the **West Coast National Park** (p203), which hosts huge numbers of migratory wading birds, as well as spectacular stretches of *fynbos* (literally 'fine bush'), the vegetation of Cape Town that consists primarily of proteas, heaths and ericas). Between August and October, after good rainfall, these wild flowers bloom here and just about everywhere between Darling and Clanwilliam, 200km to the north. (Though, take note: this is the only time of year that the West Coast becomes busy.)

If you're in **Greyton** (p202) and have the time, this is a wonderful area in which to hike, the **Boesmanskloof Trail** (p203) across to McGregor being the highlight. If you're looking for a hike or mountain-bike scramble in the Winelands, drive or cycle out from Stellenbosch to the small Jonkershoek Nature Reserve, around 8km southeast of the town along the WR4.



BEACHES & SWIMMING

If you're hoping to swim in the sea rather than make a mad dash in and out of the water to avoid hypothermia (as is often a requirement at beaches such as Clifton for those without a wet suit), False Bay beaches such as **Muizenberg** (p108) offer a respite from the 13°C waters cooled by the Benguela Current, and average around 19°C. Sea temperatures rise as you head further east; the beaches around **Hermanus** (p198), such as Grotto Beach, and **Gansbaai** (p201) are lapped by the Indian Ocean and the last pleasant touches of the warm Mozambique current. For those who insist on personal refrigeration, **Langebaan** (p203) along the West Coast provides a bracing introduction to the south Atlantic.

SCENIC DRIVES

Instead of using the N2 highway to reach the Overberg, try Rte 44 from Strand, towards Hermanus around Cape Hangklip. The trip is about half an hour longer, but it's a breathtaking coastal drive in the same class as Chapman's Peak Dr in Cape Town, and incurs no toll. The Four Passes Rte, heading through Franschhoek, and the **Bainskloof Pass** (p198), northwest of Paarl, are among the most spectacular mountain passes in the country and are worth traversing back and forth to the Winelands in their own right.

VILLAGES & TOWNS

Darling (p206), a charming small town in the Swartland north of Cape Town, is best known as the home of Pieter-Dirk Uys's alter-ego **Evita Bezuidenhout** (see the boxed text, p146) and worth visiting. Further north along the West Coast is the pretty fishing village of **Paternoster** (p205), a romantic getaway famous for its golden sunsets, whitewashed houses and terrific seafood. Even more picturesque is **Greyton** (p202), in the shadow of the Riviersonderendberge, and nearby Genadendal, the oldest mission station in South Africa.

STELLENBOSCH

South Africa's second-oldest European settlement, Stellenbosch, established on the banks of the Eerste River by Governor Van der Stel in 1679, wears many faces. At times it's a rowdy joint, as University of Stellenbosch students celebrate one or another form of freedom in a series of music festivals (the Afrikaans-language University of Stellenbosch, established in 1918, continues to play an important role in Afrikaner politics and culture). At others it's a stately monument to colonial splendour, its quiet oak-lined streets featuring some of the world's finest examples of Cape Dutch, Georgian and Victorian architecture. But most times it's just plain busy, as Capetonians, wine-farm workers and tourists descend on its interesting museums, buzzing markets, quality hotels and varied eating and nightlife options.

The train station is a short walk west of the centre. The train line effectively forms the western boundary of the town, and the Eerste River, the southern. Dorp St, which runs roughly parallel to the river, is the old town's main street and is lined with numerous fine old buildings. The commercial centre lies between Dorp St and the university to the east of the Braak, the old town square. A lovely way to get acquainted with the town is to take a walking tour; ask the Stellenbosch Publicity Association for details.

Should you decide to walk around, lest you search in vain for traditional street signs, it's worth mentioning that streets in Stellenbosch are signposted by black-on-yellow pavement blocks at ground level.

TRANSPORT

Distance from Cape Town to Stellenbosch 46km

Direction East

Travel time One hour

Car Take the N2 and then Rte 310; alternatively continue to the junction with Rte 44.

Train Metro trains run roughly every 1½ hours from Cape Town to Stellenbosch (economy/1st class R7.30/12).

STELLENBOSCH

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Grosvenor House.....	3 D5	Java Café.....	19 C5
Hospital.....	4 D3	L'Olive Café & Deli.....	20 C5
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SHOPPING IN STELLENBOSCH

Stellenbosch's combination of local artists, hip students and day-trippers means it now has a booming shopping scene, with prices often a lot lower than those of similar items in Cape Town.

Apart from the daily outdoor **craft market** (Map p189; ☎ 9am-5pm) near the Braak, which sells African curios and handmade clothing, the **Simonsberg Cheese Factory** (Map p189; ☎ 021-809 1017; 9 Stoffel Smit St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12.30pm Sat) is definitely worth a visit. There's a wonderful range here for fromage aficionados, including Camembert, Brie and a selection of blue cheeses. You can also sample the 'simonzola', a decadent blend of Gorgonzola and blue cheese. There are free tastings and the cheese is relatively inexpensive.

Oom Samie se Winkel (Uncle Sammy's Shop; Map p189; ☎ 021-887 0797; 84 Dorp St; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun), on the Stellenbosch map before Stellenbosch was on the map, is an unashamedly touristy general dealer but still worth visiting for its curious range of goods – from high kitsch to genuine antiques and everything else in between.

Bookshop Ex Libris (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 6871; 18 Andringa St) offers a solid collection of titles, including rare South African publications.

Green Sleeves (Map p189; ☎ 021-883 8374; 2 Crozier St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) features a charming selection of retro, funky and vintage clothing; next door is a sister shop offering similar styles in furniture and homewares.

If you only have a short amount of time for historical sightseeing, your priority should be the **Village Museum**, a group of carefully restored and period-furnished houses dating from 1709 to 1850. The main entrance leads into the oldest of the buildings, the Schreuderhuis. The whole block, bounded by Ryneveld, Plein, Drostdy and Kerk (Church) Sts, is occupied by the museum and includes most of the buildings and some charming gardens. Also part of the museum, on the other side of Drostdy St, is Grosvenor House, which was commissioned by Sebastian Schröder, court magistrate here in the 1840s. It's the oldest townhouse in South Africa.

Another worthwhile stop is the delightfully surprising **Toy & Miniature Museum**. Many of the miniatures are amazingly detailed; the highlights are a model railway set and houses made entirely of icing sugar – get the guide to point out some of the best pieces.

At the north end of the Braak, an open stretch of grass, you'll find the neo-Gothic **St Mary's on the Braak Church**, completed in 1852. To the west is the **VOC Kruithuis**, built in 1777 to store the town's weapons and gunpowder, and now housing a small military museum. On the northwest corner is **Fick House**, also known as the Burgerhuis, a fine example of Cape Dutch style from the late 18th century. Most of this building is now occupied by Historical Homes of South Africa, established to preserve important architecture.

Art-lovers should not miss the **Sasol Art Museum**, which contains an irreplaceable collection of African anthropological treasures, housed here as part of an assemblage by the Anthropology department of the University of Stellenbosch.

Just outside town is the **Jonkershoek Nature Reserve**, which offers excellent hikes and mountain-biking routes, and of course the Stellenbosch area's famous vineyards. For details of recommended wineries in the area, see p45.



St Mary's on the Braak Church (right)

Sights & Information

Jonkershoek Nature Reserve (☎ 021-866 1560, 021-483 2949; car/bicycle R110/5)

St Mary's on the Braak Church (☎ 021-887 6913; Braak; admission free, only by appointment; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri)

Sasol Art Museum (Map p189; ☎ 021-808 3693; 52 Ryneveld St; adult/child R9/5; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat)

Stellenbosch Publicity Association (Map p189; ☎ 021-883 3584; www.tourismstellenbosch.co.za; 36 Market St; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 9am-4pm Sun) The staff here are extremely helpful. Pick up the excellent brochure *Discover Stellenbosch on Foot* (R3), with a walking-tour map and information on many of the historic buildings (also available in French and German). Also useful is the free brochure *Stellenbosch Wine Routes*, which gives information about opening times and tastings at many nearby wineries.

Toy & Miniature Museum (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 9433; 116 Dorp St; adult/child R10/5; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun)

Village Museum (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 2902; 18 Ryneveld St; adult/child R15/10; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun)

VOC Kruithuis (Map p189; Powder House; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-1pm Mon-Fri)

Eating

Java Café (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 6261; cnr Kerk & Andringa Sts; snacks from R15; ☎ 8.30am-11pm) A good range of drinks and snacks is available at this stylish café, with its pavement tables. It also offers Stellenbosch's cheapest Internet access (R18 per hour) and is a wi-fi hot spot.

Greengate (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 6111; 44 Ryneveld St; snacks from R20; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat) An organic and farm-food deli that looks good and smells terrific. It sells nuts, fruits and organic vegetables, and offers a pay-by-weight buffet at R90 per kilogram and a daily changing menu.

L'Olive Café & Deli (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 8985; Shop 1, Oude Hoek, Andringa St; snacks from R25; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat) A stylish deli offering a range of delicious snacks built around the eponymous fruit, of which it offers several varieties.

De Soete Inval (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 4842; 5 Ryneveld St; mains R50; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Known primarily for its choice of 40 different pancakes, this cheerful place also does a fine Indonesian *rijstafel* (rice with many dishes), with six dishes for R75 or a half portion for R50.

Fishmonger (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 7835; cnr Ryneveld & Plein Sts; mains R50; ☎ lunch & dinner) The choice for seafood. It's a snazzy designed place with a relaxed vibe. A platter goes for a reasonable R79.

Decameron (Map p189; ☎ 021-883 3331; 50 Plein St; mains R40-60; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun) Locals are divided about whether or not cheesily designed Decameron is the town's best Italian restaurant. Arguments are commonly settled over a pizza in the outdoor seating area on a balmy summer evening.

96 Winery Rd (Map p46; ☎ 021-842 2945; Zandberg Farm, Winery Rd; mains R70; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun) Off Rte 44 between Stellenbosch and Somerset West, this is one of the most respected restaurants in the area, known for its dry-aged beef. It has a relaxed style and a belief in simply cooked, real food.

De Oewer (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 5431; Aan de Wagenweg St; mains R70; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun) Next to De Volkskombuis, De Oewer has an open-air section shaded by oak trees beside the river. It offers lighter meals with a more-Mediterranean emphasis.

De Volkskombuis (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 2121; Aan de Wagenweg St; mains R75; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun) A local favourite that's open 365 days a year, this no-frills, atmospheric place specialises in traditional Cape Malay cuisine and features a terrace with views of the Stellenbosch Mountain Range. Note that booking is advisable.

Voilà! & Beads (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 8734; cnr Kerk & Ryneveld Sts; mains R30-80; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Two fine eateries in one: in front is bustling deli Voilà!, where you can create your own meal; out back is trendy à la Carte restaurant Beads, frequented by Stellenbosch's beautiful people.

Wijnhuis (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 5844; cnr Kerk & Andringa Sts; mains R50-100; ☎ lunch & dinner) One of the town's most pricey options, but well worth it. There's an extensive menu and a wine list stretching to 350 different labels. Around 20 wines are available by the glass and it does tastings. Try to get a seat in the outdoor section.

Moyo (Map p46; ☎ 021-809 1100; Rte 310, Spier, Vlotenburg; buffet R180, per kg R115; ☎ lunch & dinner) The mandatory face painting is a bit much, but this tourist-pleasing place brings a fantasy vision of Africa to the midst of the Spier wine estate, and guests love it. It's a lot of fun, with roving musicians and dancers, and alfresco dining in tents and up in the trees (you're given a blanket in winter).

Tokara (Map p46; ☎ 021-808 5959; mains R85-125; ☎ lunch & dinner) The highly renowned Tokara offers *nouvelle cuisine* in surprisingly large portions. Booking is advised.

Drinking

Binelli's (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 9009; Black Horse Centre; cnr Dorp & Market Sts) This supremely slick, New York-styled 'event bar' represents more than any other place the changing face of Stellenbosch: it offers a selection of coffees, tapas and cocktails using only high-grade ingredients.

Bohemia (Map p189; ☎ 021-882 8375; cnr Andringa & Victoria Sts) Offers live music every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, and hookahs (R25) with a range of different tobaccos.

De Akker (Map p189; ☎ 021-883 3512; 90 Dorp St) Has pub meals from under R30 and an upstairs cellar for live music.

De Kelder (Map p189; ☎ 021-883 3797; 63 Dorp St) A reasonably pleasant restaurant, bar and beer garden popular with German backpackers.

Dros (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 4856; Drostdy Centre, Bird St) Clustered together with the Terrace (☎ 021-887 1942) and Tollies (☎ 021-886 5497) in the complex just off Bird St and north of the Braak. These are some of the liveliest bars in town; you can eat at all of them, but that's not what most patrons have in mind.

Fandangos Internet Café (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 7501; Drostdy Centre, Bird St) A sophisticated cocktail bar and Internet café in the same complex. There's also another branch (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 4628; Meul St).

Mystic Boer (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 8870; 3 Victoria St) A spot favoured by cool Afrikaner kids, with surroundings perhaps best described as post-transformation era retro-Boer chic.

Nu Bar (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 8998; 51 Plein St) A place to have a beer and a boogie, with a small dance floor beyond the long bar where the DJ pumps out hip-hop and house.

Sleeping

Stumble Inn (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 4049; www.jump.to/stumble; 12 Market St; camp sites per person R40, dm R60, d with shared bathroom R160; ☎) With a lively and welcoming atmosphere, this place is split over two old houses. One has a small pool and the other a pleasant garden, which now offers self-catering apartments for R250. The owners, travellers and wine-lovers themselves, are a good source of information and offer wine discounts for longer stays. They also run Easy Rider Wine Tours (p43) and hire out bicycles for R50 per day.

Stellenbosch Hotel (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 3644; www.stellenbosch.co.za/hotel; 162 Dorp St; s/d incl breakfast from R425/700; ☎) A comfortable country-style hotel with a variety of rooms including some with self-catering facilities and others with four-poster beds. A section dating from 1743 houses the Jan Cats Brasserie, a good spot for a drink.

STELLENBOSCH FESTIVALS

The **Oude Libertas Amphitheatre** (Map p46; ☎ 021-809 7380; www.oudelibrertas.co.za) and the **Spier wine estate** (Map p46; ☎ 021-809 1100; www.spier.co.za) both hold performing-arts festivals between January and March.

The **Stellenbosch Festival** (www.stellenbosch.festival.co.za), which runs for two weeks at the end of September, celebrates music and the arts in various events around the town including a street carnival. The **Wine Festival** (www.wineroute.co.za) in early August offers visitors the chance to sample up to 400 different drops in one spot, as well as attend talks and tutorials on wine.

The **Van der Stel Festival** at the end of September and early October combines with the Stellenbosch and Wine Festivals. If you're into live music, try to catch early February's **Rag Week**, where local bands vie for the attention of freshmen out to celebrate their recent student status.

De Goue Druif (Map p189; ☎ 021-883 3555; www.gouedruif.hypermart.net; 110 Dorp St; s/d incl breakfast R650/700; ☎) In a Cape Dutch building dating back to 1792, this 'Golden Grape' is a charming guesthouse run by a Belgian couple. There is a small gym and sauna.

Wild Mushroom (Map p189; ☎ 021-886 9880; 15 Ryneveld St; s/d incl breakfast R450/780; ☎) Slap-bang in the middle of Stellenbosch's trendy restaurant zone yet surprisingly quiet, this chic multilevel guesthouse offers plush accommodation, all in very stylish shades of brown. There is also a self-catering option.

D'Ouwe Werf (Map p189; ☎ 021-887 4608; www.ouwewerf.com; 30 Kerk St; s/d incl breakfast R900/990; ☎) This is an appealing, old-style hotel (dating back to 1802) with a good restaurant. It's worth dropping by its shady courtyard for lunch. The more expensive luxury rooms are furnished with antiques and brass beds.

Village at Spier (Map p46; ☎ 021-809 1100; www.spier.co.za; Vlotenburg; d/ste incl breakfast R1450/2500; ☎) Forgo the usual Cape Dutch style in favour of a design copying the brightly painted houses found in Cape Town's Bo-Kaap. Rooms are large and well appointed. Spier is located 11km south of Stellenbosch on Rte 310.

Lanzerac Manor (Map p46; ☎ 021-887 1132; www.lanzerac.co.za; Jonkershoek Valley; s/d/ste incl breakfast R1700/2960/4140; ☎) This unashamedly opulent place consists of a 300-year-old manor house and winery. Some suites have private pools. The hotel is on the Lanzerac wine estate in the Jonkershoek Valley, 5km east of town off the T16.

FRANSCHHOEK

The toughest decision you'll face in European-styled Franschhoek (literally 'French Corner'), which bills itself as the country's gastronomic capital, is where to eat. And with a clutch of wine farms and stylish guesthouses thrown in, there's a sense here that this is all too good to be true. It certainly has one of the loveliest settings in the Cape, yet it all feels a bit too much like a theme park. It's a good base from which to visit both Stellenbosch and Paarl as long as you have transport.

The town is clustered around Huguenot St. At the southern end it reaches a T-junction at Huguenot Memorial Park. Here you'll find the mildly diverting **Huguenot Memorial Museum**, which celebrates the 200 French Huguenots who settled in the region in the 17th century. It houses the genealogical records of their descendants, as well as some hefty Cape Dutch furniture. Some of the names of the original settlers, such as Malan, De Villiers, Malherbe and Roux, are among the most famous Afrikaner dynasties in the country. Behind the main complex is a pleasant café, in front is the **Huguenot Monument**, three interlocking arches symbolising the holy trinity, and across the road is the museum's annexe, with displays on the Anglo-Boer War and natural history.

Continue past the end of the town along Rte 45 until you reach the winding roads of the spectacular Franschhoek Pass. Together with the Helshoogte Pass on Rte 310, and Viljoens Pass and Sir Lowry's Pass (the most stunning of the lot) on the N2 highway, this forms part of the roughly circular **Four Pass Route** that makes for a cracking day's driving to and from Cape Town or Stellenbosch.

For details of Franschhoek's wineries, some of which can be visited on foot from the town, see p48. There's also the option of taking a horse-riding tour of the area with the **Mont Rochelle Equestrian Centre**.

Wining and dining apart, there're some decent walks in the surrounding mountains – the staff at Franschhoek Wine Valley Tourism can provide a map of suggested routes and issue permits (R10) for walks in nearby forestry areas. There are also plenty of galleries and designer shops to mop up any spare cash. In particular, visit **Huguenot Fine Chocolates**. An empowerment programme helped give the two locals who run this Belgian-style

TRANSPORT

Distance from Cape Town to Franschhoek 85km
Direction East

Travel time From Cape Town 75 minutes; from Stellenbosch or Paarl 30 minutes.

Car Follow the N2 and then stick on Rte 310 through Stellenbosch and over the Helshoogte Pass to the junction with Rte 45, where you take a right turn.

Taxi take a shared taxi from Stellenbosch to Pniel where you should be able to change to another shared taxi heading to Franschhoek from Paarl.

FRANSCHHOEK

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- Franschhoek Photolab.....2 C2
- Franschhoek Wine Valley Tourism...3 C1
- Grande Provence.....4 B1
- Huguenot Fine Chocolates.....5 C1
- Huguenot Memorial Museum.....6 D2
- Huguenot Memorial Museum Annexe.....7 C2
- Huguenot Monument.....8 C2
- Post Office.....9 C2
- Roubaix House Gallery.....10 C1

EATING (pp194-5)

- Bouillabaise.....11 C2
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- Ici.....13 C2
- Reuben's.....14 C2
- Topsi & Company.....15 C2

SLEEPING (p195)

- Auberge Bligny.....16 C2
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- La Fontaine.....19 C2
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- Le Quartier Français.....21 C2
- Reeden Lodge.....22 B1

chocolate shop a leg up and now people are raving about their confections. Call in advance to arrange a tour and chocolate-making demonstration, which includes tasting of samples (R12). At the **Roubaix House Gallery**, in the beautifully restored home of Franschhoek's first teacher, you can watch David Walters, one of South Africa's most distinguished potters, at work.

Sights & Information

Franschhoek Photolab (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 4911; 28 Huguenot St; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun) There's Internet access here at R40 per hour.

Franschhoek Wine Valley Tourism (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 3603; www.franschhoek.org.za; Huguenot St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 9am-4pm Sun) Housed in a small building on the left of the main street shortly after you enter the town. Staff here can provide you with a map of the area's scenic walks and issue permits (R10) for walks in nearby forestry areas, as well as book accommodation.

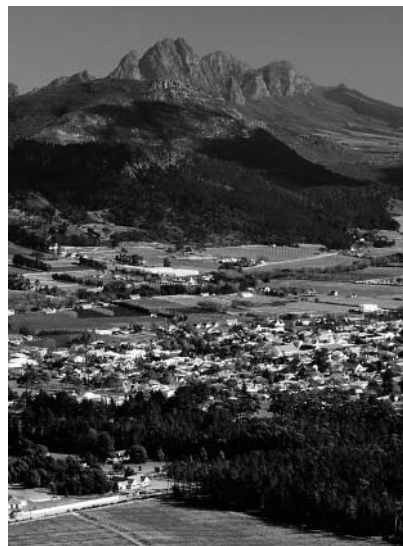
Huguenot Fine Chocolates (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 4096; 62 Huguenot St)

Huguenot Memorial Museum (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 2532; Lambrecht St; adult/child R5/2; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun)

Huguenot Monument (Map p193; adult/child R5/1; ☎ 9am-5pm)

Mont Rochelle Equestrian Centre (☎ 083 300 4368; fax 021-876 2363; per hr R90)

Roubaix House Gallery (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 4304; 24 Dirkie Uys St; ☎ 10am-6pm)



Franschhoek valley and surrounds

Eating

Goederust (Map p49; ☎ 021-876 3687; Main Rd, La Motte; mains R30-40; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sun) A new take on Cape-farm kitchen food is served in this charming old-fashioned farm restaurant set in a pleasant garden. The spicy calamari salad (R40) is a knockout, as are the filled pancakes. Come on Sunday for a spit-lamb buffet (bookings essential). Goederust is easy to reach. Head 3km west out of Franschhoek and look for the large sign on Rte 45.

French Connection (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 4056; 48 Huguenot St; mains R50; ☎ lunch & dinner) Continental no-nonsense bistro-style food using only fresh ingredients is dished up at this deservedly popular place. Chequered red tablecloths give it that *mais oui* factor.

Reuben's (☎ 021-876 3772; 19 Huguenot Rd, Franschhoek; mains R70; ☎ noon-3pm & 7-10.30pm) It would be easy to dismiss Reuben Riffel as black empowerment's poster boy, until you taste the local chef's wonderful food combining comfort with creativity. There's hardly anything on the menu you wouldn't want to try and the chic-but-not-too-hip décor of the restaurant is a delight, too.

Bread & Wine (Map p49; ☎ 021-876 3692; Môreson Wine Farm, Happy Valley Rd, La Motte; mains R60-80; ☎ lunch Wed-Sun) Hidden away down a dirt road as you approach town along Rte 45, this place is worth searching out. It's known for its breads, pizzas, cured meats and tasty Mediterranean-style cuisine. Try the glazed kingklip with clams and artichoke (R70). It's a winner.

Topsi & Company (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 2952; 7 Reservoir St; mains R60-85; ☎ 12.30-3pm & 7.30-10pm Wed-Mon) Run by Topsi Venter, who should be accorded national-treasure status, this eatery is quirky and very relaxed. Topsi pops out from her open kitchen to serve the totally delicious food and chat with guests; you must BYO wine.

La Petite Ferme (☎ 021-876 3016; Franschhoek Pass Rd; mains R80; ☎ noon-4pm) A must-visit for foodies who hanker for romantic views, boutique wines and smoked, deboned salmon trout, the restaurant's delicately flavoured signature dish. There's a helipad should you feel like choppering in from Cape Town and some luxurious rooms if you can't bear to leave.

Haute Cabrière Cellar (☎ 021-876 3688; Franschhoek Pass Rd; mains R80-90; ☎ noon-3pm daily, 7-9pm Wed-Mon) In a dramatic dining space in a cellar cut into the mountain side. Each dish can be had either as a starter or main and all are paired with a Cabrière wine.

Bouillabaise (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 4430; 38 Huguenot St; mains R70-110; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner Mon, Wed-Sat, breakfast & lunch Sun) The Franschhoek jet set just got an upgrade, with this highly opulent champagne and oyster bar featuring blown-glass sculptures, beautiful staff, fresh seafood dishes, an excellent range of bubbles and homemade sorbets such as lime and basil or mint and pear.

Idi (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 2151; 16 Huguenot St; mains R50-R280; ☎ lunch & dinner) The restaurant of Le Quartier Français, this Franschhoek stalwart is now split into two dining options: a stylish bistro offering food such as zebra carpaccio, cape salmon and liquorice and coffee-roasted blesbok (highland antelope) loin; and a set-menu restaurant offering a four-course meal (R280). The hotel's bar does lighter meals for around R60.

Sleeping

Chamonix Guest Cottages (Map p49; ☎ 021-876 2494; www.chamonix.co.za; Uitykyk St; cottages per person from R200) Pleasant cottages sleeping up to four are set in the middle of the Chamonix vineyards, a 10-minute walk uphill, north of Huguenot St. There are considerable winter discounts (May to October).

Cottage (Map p49; ☎ 021-876 2392; thecottage55@iafrica.com; 55 Huguenot St; s/d R260/350) There is just one cottage sleeping two, or four at a pinch, but it's a beauty. It's private, quiet, just a few minutes' walk from the village centre and now has self-catering facilities.

Reeden Lodge (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 3174; www.reedenlodge.co.za; off Cabrière St; cottages from R400; ☎) A terrific option for families, with well-equipped self-catering cottages sleeping up to eight people, situated on a farm about 10 minutes' walk from town. Parents will love the peace and quiet and their kids the sheep, tree house and open space.

PAARL

Less touristy and more spread out than Stellenbosch, Paarl is a large commercial centre surrounded by mountains and vineyards on the banks of the Berg River. There are several vineyards and wineries (see p51) within the sprawling town limits, including the huge Kooperatiewe Wijnbouwers Vereeniging, better known as KWV.

Europeans settled the surrounding valley in the 1680s, and Paarl was established in 1720. It became a centre for wagon building, but the town is most famous for its important role in the development and recognition of Afrikaans as a language in its own right (see the boxed text, p197).

Paarl is not really a town to tour on foot, but there is still quite a lot to see and do. Main St runs 11km along the entire length of the town, parallel to the Berg River and the train line. It's shaded by oaks and jacarandas and is lined with many historic buildings. The busy commercial centre is around Lady Grey St, near where you'll find the fascinating **Paarl Museum**, housed in the Old Parsonage (Oude Pastorie), built in 1714. It has an excellent collection of Cape Dutch antiques and relics of Huguenot and early Afrikaner culture. There's a bookcase modelled on King Solomon's temple and display sections on the 'road to reconciliation', the old mosques of the local Muslim community and the Khoisan (Khoesaan).

A short walk south of the Paarl Museum is the marginally interesting **Afrikaans Language Museum**. The language's birth is chronicled in the former home of Gideon Malherbe, the

Le Ballon Rouge (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 2651; www.leballonrouge.co.za; 7 Reservoir St; s/d incl breakfast R500/650; ☎) A small guesthouse with good-quality rooms and stylish suites (with underfloor heating and stunning bathrooms) all opening onto a patio. It also has a popular restaurant.

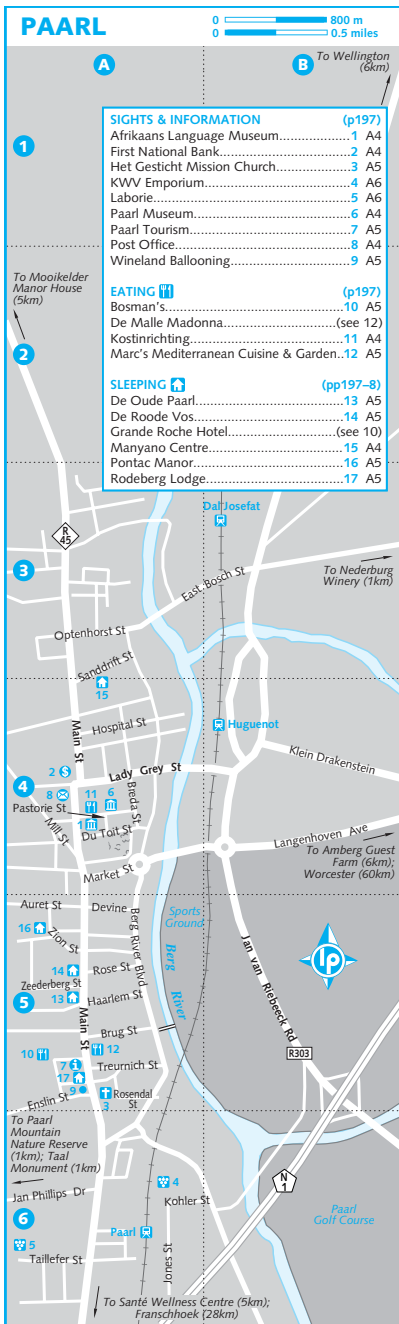
Auberge Bligny (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 3767; www.bligny.co.za; 28 Van Wyk St; d from R650; ☎) Charming décor and heavy-set furniture define this guesthouse set in a Victorian homestead. Travellers, largely European, return regularly for its nine pleasant rooms and shady garden.

La Fontaine (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 2112; www.lafontainefranschhoek.co.za; 21 Dirkie Uys St; s/d incl breakfast R600/R750; ☎) Offering a quieter accommodation alternative off the town's main drag, this is a stylishly appointed family home featuring twelve spacious rooms with wooden floors and mountain views.

La Cabrière Country House (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 4780; www.lacabriere.co.za; Middagkrans Rd; d incl breakfast R1050; ☎) A modern boutique guesthouse that's a refreshing break from all that Cape Dutch architecture. There are four sumptuously decorated rooms, very personal service and sweeping views to the mountains.

La Couronne (Map p49; ☎ 021-876 2110; www.lacouronnehotel.co.za; Robertsvei Rd; d incl breakfast from R1970; ☎) A boutique hotel-restaurant partly built into the hills, this place offers gilt-edged luxury and magnificent views across the valley.

Le Quartier Français (Map p193; ☎ 021-876 2151; www.lequartier.co.za; 16 Huguenot St; d from R2350; ☎) This is one of the best places to stay in the Winelands. Set around a leafy courtyard and pool, guest rooms are very large with fireplaces, huge beds and stylish décor. There's also a fine restaurant here.



TRANSPORT

Distance from Cape Town to Paarl 56km

Direction Northeast

Travel time One hour

Car Take the N1 from Cape Town.

Bus All the major long-distance bus companies (p208) offer services passing through Paarl. The bus segment between Paarl and Cape Town costs R110, so consider taking the cheaper train to Paarl and then linking up with the buses.

Train Metro trains run roughly every hour between Cape Town and Paarl (economy/first class R8.50/14.50, 1¼ hours) from Monday to Friday. The services are less common on weekends. Take care to travel on trains during the busy part of the day, as robberies have been reported. You can travel by train from Paarl to Stellenbosch: take a Cape Town-bound train and change at Muldersvlei.

meeting place for the Association of True Afrikaners and the birthplace of the first Afrikaans newspaper. The house has been painstakingly restored.

Afrikaans is further celebrated at the giant needlelike **Taal Monument** up on the highlands overlooking the town to the west. This is the Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve, which is dominated by three giant granite domes; they apparently glisten like pearls if they're caught by the sun after rain – hence the name 'Paarl'. The reserve has mountain *fynbos* with a large number of proteas. There's a cultivated wild-flower garden in the middle that's a nice spot for a picnic, and many walks with excellent views over the valley.

Access is from the 11km-long Jan Phillips Dr, which skirts the eastern edge of the reserve. The picnic ground is about 4km from Main St. A map showing walking trails is available from Paarl Tourism.

South of the town you'll also find the luxurious Winelands Hotel containing the **Santé Wellness Centre** (p152). Also see (p156) for details of **hot-air balloon** trips you can organise out of Paarl.

Ten kilometres north of Paarl is the sedate and reasonably pretty town of **Wellington**. The Wellington Tourism Bureau, next to the Andrew Murray Church, can provide a brochure and map of the wineries in the Wellington area, which are less touristy than Paarl's, and also point you toward some places to stay. We've recommended a couple, following.

Sights & Information

Afrikaans Language Museum (Map p196; ☎ 021-872 3441; Pastorie Ave; adult/child R5/2; 🕒 9am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri)

Paarl Museum (Map p196; ☎ 021-872 2651; www.museums.org.za/paarlmuseum; 303 Main St; adult/child R5/donation; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Fri)

Paarl Tourism (Map p196; ☎ 021-872 3829; www.paarlonline.com; 216 Main St; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun) Has an excellent supply of information on the whole region and helpful staff.

Santé Wellness Centre (Map p49; ☎ 021-875 8100; www.santewellness.co.za; Winelands Hotel, Klappmuts)

Taal Monument (Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve, Jan Phillips Dr; adult/child R5/2; 🕒 8am-5pm)

Wellington Tourism Bureau (☎ 021-873 4604; www.visitwellington.com; 104 Main St, Wellington)

Eating

Kostinrichting (Map p196; ☎ 021-871 1353; 19 Pastorie Ave; mains R30; 🕒 lunch Mon-Sat) Ideal if you're looking for a pleasant central café. It's in a Victorian building that once was a school, and has an attached crafts shop.

De Malle Madonna (Map p196; ☎ 021-863 3925; 127 Main St; mains R40-65; 🕒 breakfast & lunch Wed-Sun, dinner Wed & Sun) Marc Chagall is the inspiration for this breezy café-bistro, whose emphasis is on 'Mediterranean comfort food'. There's a sunny patio with mountain views, and the biltong and glazed beetroot salad (R41) is a winner.

Marc's Mediterranean Cuisine & Garden (Map p196; ☎ 021-863 3980; 129 Main Rd; mains R60-75; 🕒 lunch Tue-Sun, dinner Mon-Sat) The current favourite of restaurant reviewers, and with good reason. Owner Marc Friedrich has created a light and bright place with food to match and a Provence-style garden to dine in.

Bosman's (Map p196; ☎ 021-863 2727; Grande Roche Hotel, Plantasie St; mains R140; 🕒 lunch & dinner) If money is no object, try this ritzy restaurant. It's undoubtedly classy, with chandeliers inside, flickering candles outside and a wine list that runs to more than 50 pages. There are various set menus starting at R320 for three courses.

Sleeping

Manyano Centre (Map p196; ☎ 021-872 2537; manyano@eject.co.za; Sanddrift St; dm with full board R110) An enormous YMCA-style accommodation complex with basic three-bed dorms; you'll need to bring a sleeping bag. Call in advance, especially on weekends when it fills up with groups. Huguenot Train Station is closer than the main Paarl station.

De Roode Vos (Map p196; ☎ /fax 021-872 5912; 152 Main St; s/d R150/240) This unpretentious guesthouse offers clean lodgings, which are about as cheap as you'll get in central Paarl.

Bakkies B&B (Map p49; ☎ /fax 021-873 5161; www.bakkiesbb.co.za; Bainskloof Rd, Wellington; s/d R170/280; 🕒) An excellent budget base for exploring the Bainskloof area, with good-value, well-equipped rooms. Lunch and dinner are by appointment, and a daily breakfast (R40) is offered.

Rodeberg Lodge (Map p196; ☎ 021-863 3202; www.rodeberglodge.co.za; 74 Main Rd; s/d incl breakfast R290/460; 🕒) Good rooms (some with air-con and TV) are sensibly located away from the busy main road, and there's a family room (R200 per person) in the attic. The hosts are friendly and breakfast is taken in the conservatory, opening onto a leafy garden.

Amberg Guest Farm (Map p49; ☎ /fax 021-862 0982; amberg@mweb.co.za; Rte 101 along Du Toits Kloof Pass; s/d incl breakfast R330/500; 🕒) Accommodation is in cottages (one of which is self-catering for R360) with spectacular views. The amiable hosts also run the Swiss-style Amberg Country Kitchen, serving Swiss specialities.

Berg River Resort (Map p49; ☎ 021-863 1650; berg@mweb.co.za; camp sites R155, d chalets R520; 🕒) An attractive municipal camping ground beside the Berg River, 5km from Paarl on the N45 towards Franschhoek. Facilities include canoes, trampolines and a café.

Hildenbrand Wine & Olive Estate (Map p49; ☎ /fax 021-873 4115; www.wine-estate-hildenbrand.co.za;

THE OFFICIAL BIRTH OF AFRIKAANS

In 1875 Arnoldus Pannevis, a teacher at Paarl Gymnasium High School, inspired a number of Paarl citizens to form the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners (Association of True Afrikaners). They developed and formalised the grammar and vocabulary of a language that was developed over 200 years from the interaction of the Dutch with their slaves and the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape. Many of the founding members of the association were actually descendants of the French Huguenots.

A small press was set up in the house of Gideon Malherbe and the first issue of an Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Afrikaanse Patriot*, was published, followed by many books. Afrikaans was proclaimed an official language in 1925 and is protected under South Africa's new constitution.

DETOUR: BAINSKLOOF PASS

The Bainskloof Pass is one of the country's great mountain passes, with a superb caravan park half-way along. It's a magical drive, which would be even better to experience on bicycle. Colonial engineer Andrew Bain developed the road through the pass between 1848 and 1852. Other than having its surface tarred, the road has not been altered since, and is now a national monument.

Rte 301 runs from Wellington, 13km north of Paarl, across Bainskloof to meet another road running south to Worcester and north to Ceres. There are several nearby walks including the five-hour **Bobbejaans River Walk** to a waterfall. This walk actually starts back at Eerste Tol and you need to buy a permit (R30), which is available from the Cape Nature Conservation desk at Cape Town Tourism (p219).

off Rte 303, Wellington; s/d incl breakfast R370/560; ☎ winery 10am-4pm; 🍷) A popular estate with a restaurant and good accommodation. You can also taste locally grown olives and buy freshly pressed olive oil. Tastings cost R15.

HERMANUS

Hermanus (hair-*maan*-es) was founded as a fishing village and while it retains vestiges of its heritage, its economy is grounded in the fact that it is considered the best land-based whale-watching destination in the world.

The town centre can get very crowded, particularly during the **Hermanus Whale Festival** and during school holidays in December and January. It is easily negotiated on foot and the area east of the new harbour is well endowed with restaurants and shops. There's a small **market** daily at Lemms Corner in Market Sq off Main Rd; on Saturday a craft market is held here, too.

Here you'll also find the old harbour and the small and generally uninteresting **Hermanus Harbour Museum**, and a display of old fishing boats. The museum's annexe, in the old schoolhouse on Market Sq, displays some evocative old photographs of the town and its fishermen.

From the old harbour take the **Cliff Path Walking Trail** that meanders east along the sea to Grotto Beach, a long, narrow surf beach with excellent facilities. The walk takes about 1½ hours and along the way you'll pass Kraaiwater, a good whale-watching lookout, and Langbaai and Voelklip Beaches.

The surrounding rocky hills, vaguely reminiscent of Scotland, offer good walks and the 1400-hectare **Fernkloof Nature Reserve**, 5km east of town, is worth a visit if you are interested in *fynbos*. Around 1100 species have been identified so far. There is a 60km network of hiking trails for all fitness levels.

See p156 for details of sea kayaking in the harbour and p153 for details of shark-cage diving at Gansbaai.

Mooikelder Manor House (Map p49; ☎ 021-869 8787; www.capestay.co.za/mooikelder; Main Rd, Noorder Paarl; s/d incl breakfast R350/650; 🍷 🚗 🚲) Around 5km north of the town centre, in an elegant homestead once occupied by Cecil John Rhodes, this lovely, quiet spot is set amid citrus orchards. There's plenty of antique atmosphere in the rooms.

De Oude Paarl (Map p196; ☎ 021-872 1002; www.deoudepaarl.com; 132 Main St; s/d incl breakfast R650/930; 🍷 🚗 🚲) This is a new boutique-style hotel; the rooms have antique touches and there's a secluded courtyard at the back. Attached are shops selling a good selection of wine and delectable Belgian chocolates.

Pontac Manor (Map p196; ☎ 021-872 0445; www.pontac.com; 16 Zion St; s/d incl breakfast R1090/1400; 🍷 🚗 🚲) A small, stylish Victorian-era hotel that commands a good view of the valley. The rooms are comfortable, and there's one self-catering cottage and a restaurant, which is recommended.

Grande Roche Hotel (Map p196; ☎ 021-863 2727; www.granderoche.co.za; Plantasie St; d from R2420; 🍷 🚗 🚲) An unashamedly opulent hotel set in a Cape Dutch manor house, offering mountain views, a heated pool and the award-winning Bosman's restaurant.

TRANSPORT

Distance from Cape Town to Hermanus 122km
Direction Southeast

Travel time 90 minutes to two hours

Car The fastest route is to take the N2 from Cape Town; if you can spare the time (an extra half hour), come instead via Rte 44 through Strand, Gordon's Bay and around Cape Hangklip.

Bus There are no regular bus services to Hermanus, but plenty of organised bus tours from Cape Town; inquire with Cape Town Tourism (p219).

Sights & Information

Fernkloof Nature Reserve (Map p186; ☎ 028-313 8100; Fir Ave; admission free; 🕒 9am-5pm)

Hermanus Harbour Museum (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 1475; adult/child R2/1; 🕒 9am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Sat, noon-4pm Sun)

Hermanus Tourism (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 2629; www.hermanus.co.za; Old Station Bldg, Mitchell St; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, noon-5pm Sun) Has a large supply of information about the area, including walks and drives in the surrounding hills, and can book accommodation. Note that even with the high number of guesthouses and hotels, during festival season it can be very hard to get a bed. We advise visiting the Hermanus website or calling Hermanus Tourism before travelling to book accommodation, or get a travel agency recommendation.

Hermanus Whale Festival (www.whalefestival.co.za) An annual festival (held in September) with plenty of eating, drinking and shopping opportunities between whale-watching sessions.

Internet City (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 4683; Waterkant Bldg, Main Rd; per hr R20; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sun) Offers reliable and speedy Internet connections.

Eating & Drinking

Zebra Crossing (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 3906; 121 Main Rd; mains R35; 🕒 lunch & dinner) This cheesy DJ bar with a funky zebra theme is, we're told, the late-night party spot on weekends, and popular with backpackers. At other times there's an open fire and pool tables.

Savannah Café (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 4259; Village Theatres Bldg, Marine Dr; mains from R40; 🕒 breakfast &



lunch) Enjoy a 'whale of a breakfast' – eggs, juice, coffee, bacon, chips, mushrooms and boerewors, or a sweet pastry while staring at the sea. There's also a decent selection for vegetarians, vegans and diabetics.

Bientang's Cave (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 3454; Marine Dr; mains R55; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Nestled in the cliffs beside the water, this really is a seaside cave, a remarkable setting that obscures the fact that the restaurant is only so-so. Access is via a steep flight of cliffside stairs.

Casa do Zé (Map p199; ☎ 028-313 0377; 12 Mitchell St; mains R60; 🍴 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) A quaint Portuguese restaurant specialising in fresh grilled fish and the famous LM (Lourenço Marques) prawns. Try the imported Mozambican beer.

Fisherman's Cottage (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 3642; Lemms Cnr; mains R22-75; 🍴 lunch & dinner) The emphasis is on good-value seafood at this restaurant in a whitewashed cottage draped with fishing nets.

Marimba Café (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 2148; 9 Royal Lane; mains R45-85; 🍴 dinner) The lively atmosphere matches the eclectic menu at this rather unekempt but recommended restaurant and bar, where you can eat traditional African dishes from around the continent. It's off Main Rd.

Burgundy Restaurant (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 2800; Marine Dr; mains R60-95; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Booking is essential at this eatery, one of the most acclaimed and popular in the area. It's in the oldest building in town (1875), which has a garden and sea views. The menu is mostly seafood with a different vegetarian dish each day.

Sleeping

Hermanus Backpackers (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 4293; moobag@mweb.co.za; 26 Flower St; dm R75, d with shared/private bathroom R210/230; 📶 🚰) This is

a smashing place with clued-up staff, great décor and facilities, and a reed-roof bar. Free breakfast is served in the morning.

Moby's Traveller's Lodge (Map p199; ☎ 028-313 2361; www.mobys.co.za; 9 Mitchell St; dm R85, s/d with shared bathroom R200/260; 📶 🚰) Travellers give this place rave reviews, and we can see why – it's a whole lot of fun. You can party the night away at the big bar or chill out in the awesome rock pool with its own waterfall. There's a daily pub lunch on offer and an Internet café (R30 per hour).

Hermanus Esplanade (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 3610; info@hermanus.com; 63 Marine Dr; apt from R250) Some of these cheery, colourfully furnished self-catering apartments overlook the sea; the lowest rates on offer actually cover the whale-watching season from May to October.

Zoete Inval Travellers Lodge (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 1242; www.zoeteinval.co.za; 23 Main Rd; dm R85, d with shared bathroom incl breakfast R340) More a guesthouse than a hostel, this is a quiet place with good amenities (including a Jacuzzi) and neatly furnished rooms. Heavy smokers and drinkers should look elsewhere; families are accommodated in four-person doubles.

Potting Shed (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 1712; www.thepottingshedguesthouse.co.za; 28 Albertyn St; s/d incl breakfast from R300/440; 📶 🚰 🚻) An excellent-value guesthouse that's drawn glowing reader reviews. The neat rooms are comfortable, but the bathrooms are shower only. There is wheelchair access to all rooms and the pool area.

Windsor Hotel (Map p199; ☎ 028-312 3727; www.windsorhotel.co.za; 49 Marine Dr; s/d incl breakfast from R650/900) An old stalwart situated on an oceanside cliff; naturally you'll want one of the more-expensive sea-facing rooms that give you the opportunity to view whales without leaving your bed.

COASTAL ROUTE TO HERMANUS

Hugging False Bay, Rte 44 (Map p186) from Cape Town runs through Strand and towards Hermanus around Cape Hangklip. It's a thrilling coastal drive, the best of it between Gordon's Bay and Kleinmond, and the views are stunning. At times it feels as if the road is going to disappear into the sea. On one side is blue-green water, on the other are rock-strewn cliffs.

At **Stony Point**, just before you reach the small, scattered holiday village of Betty's Bay, take a short stroll to the lookout point to see a colony of **African penguins**. It's very picturesque with crashing waves and a sea of black-and-white birds. In Betty's Bay itself you'll find the **Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens** (☎ 028-272 9311; adult/child R8/4; 🕒 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat & Sun, until 7pm Dec & Jan), which are definitely worth visiting. There are paths exploring the indigenous plant life in the area and, at the entrance, tearooms and a formal garden where you can picnic. Try the **Leopard Kloof Trail**, which leads through fern forests and up to a waterfall. It's a 3km round trip, and you'll need to pay a key deposit (R30) and get your key and permit from the main ticket office before 2pm. Coming from Cape Town, look for the turn-off to the gardens after driving through Betty's Bay.

A little further on, by a wild and beautiful beach, is **Kleinmond**. After a recent revival this little town is now rather chic, and is a great place to spend an afternoon, eat some fresh seafood and browse in the art gallery and little shops. The area also has some reliable swells for surfers and some good walking.

WATCHING WHALES

As much as you might prepare for it (and most people who come to Hermanus pack a good sunhat and a pair of binoculars), the first time you see a whale you still don't quite believe it. All you do is stand on the edge of a cliff and look seaward. Suddenly, you spot a shape. You ask yourself if that could be it. And then, just when you think it must be nothing, a graceful, barnacle-bedecked beast leaps from the water and returns with a huge splash. Only the soulless or extremely jaded would fail to be moved.

Still, for years the people of Hermanus either took the seasonal arrival of the whales for granted or sensibly kept it secret. Between June and November, there can be up to 70 whales in the bay at once as southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) come to Walker Bay to calve. Humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) are also sometimes seen.

The tourism potential of this phenomenon has since been recognised, however, and just about every business in town has adopted a whale logo. There's even a **whale crier** (☎ 073-214 6949), who walks around town blowing on a kelp horn and carrying a blackboard that shows where whales have been recently sighted, and the **Hermanus Whale Festival** held in September.

Thankfully, how whales are viewed remains strictly regulated. No boat viewing is allowed in the bay and jet skis are banned. There are only two licensed boat-based operators in Hermanus: **Southern Right Charters** (☎ 082 353 0550) and **Hermanus Whale Cruises** (☎ 028-313 2722). Each charges around R400 for a one- to two-hour trip.

Don't be put off by the popularity. If you can forget the land mammals around you and focus on those out at sea, this natural show can be strangely peaceful amid all the hoopla.

Auberge Burgundy (Map p199; ☎ 028-313 1202; www.hermanus.co.za/accom/auberge; 16 Harbour Rd; s/d incl breakfast R735/980; 📶 🚰) This is a wonderful place, built in the style of a Provençal villa, with fine facilities, wrought-iron balconies and unique art on the walls.

Marine Hermanus (Map p199; ☎ 028-313 1000; www.marine-hermanus.com; Marine Dr; s/d incl breakfast from

R1700/2800; 📶 🚰 🚻) Right on the sea with immaculate grounds and amenities, this place is as posh as a five-star hotel should be. The staff are very friendly and will help you out with what you're looking for – sea views or rooms with balconies. The hotel has two restaurants, both facing the sea, open for dinner only. One serves nouveau South African cuisine (two/three courses R155/195) and the other light seafood lunches (R95) with a view.

GANSBAAI

Rustic and blissfully undeveloped, Gansbaai's star has risen in recent years thanks to the somewhat controversial activity of shark-cage diving. But there's more to the town than baiting marine predators. It boasts a sparkling coastline perfect for those wishing to explore more out-of-the-way Overberg spots. The town is also the nexus of the Danger Point Peninsula area, which includes Kleinbaai. It's here where you'll find most amenities and activities.

Naturally, **whale-watching** and **shark-cage diving** are big draws, but most tour operators are based in Hermanus (see p201 and p153).

Danger Point Lighthouse, dating to 1895, is worth a visit, as is the **Walker Bay Nature Reserve**. This offers excellent walks, such as the Duiwelgat and Fynbos Hiking Trails, and bird-watching, along with the Klippgat caves, site of a recent archaeological discovery of Khoisan artefacts. Tour company iKhaya Laba Thembu offers trips through **Masakhane township**, where handmade products are on sale and traditional Xhosa food can be ordered and eaten in the shade of milkwood trees.

At the time of writing, construction was underway on sealing the road between Gansbaai and Elim, part of the exciting Fynbos Rd project that will link Danger Point Peninsula with Cape Agulhas. Seven kilometres off the Danger Point coast is **Dyer Island**, a breeding colony for African penguins.

TRANSPORT

Distance from Cape Town to Gansbaai 175km

Direction Southeast

Travel time 2½ hours

Car From Cape Town follow the N2 or Rte 44 (coastal road) to Hermanus, then drive through the town before taking Rte 43 past De Kelders into Gansbaai. **Travis Tours** (☎ 072 608 9213) offers daily shuttles to Hermanus (R50, 30 minutes) and Cape Town (R180, two hours).

THE TIP OF AFRICA

While it's tempting to see Cape Point on the Cape Peninsula as the southernmost spot in Africa, that title in fact goes to **Cape Agulhas** (Map p186), located just past the neat village of L'Agulhas, 2½ hours from Cape Town down Rte 317. Early Portuguese seafarers rounding this dangerous stony strip of coastline called the area Agulhas, Portuguese for 'Needles', when they noticed their compass needle showed no variation.

On a stormy day the low, shattered rocks and crashing seas can be atmospheric, and you can take a snap of your loved one next to a plaque officially denoting the place's claim to fame. Otherwise, there's no real reason to linger longer than it takes to peek at the nearby **lighthouse** (☎ 028-435 6222; adult/child R6/3; 🕒 9am-4.15pm Mon-Sat, 9am-2pm Sun). Built in 1848 in Pharos style, this is the second-oldest lighthouse in South Africa. If you're peckish, the **tearoom** (☎ 028-435 7506; light meals R20-30) here isn't bad, serving reasonably priced meals and snacks.

Sights & Information

Danger Point Lighthouse (☎ 021-449 2400)

Dyer Island Cruises (☎ 028-384 0406; Kleinbaai) This company does trips to the penguin colony of Dyer Island, and boat-based whale-watching.

Gansbaai Tourism (☎ 028-384 1439; www.danger-point-peninsula.co.za; cnr Main & Berg Rds; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) Located on the main road into town, this small but efficient office can point you in the direction of good dining and shark diving.

iKhaya Laba Thembu (☎ 072 218 0742) There is no office in town; just call.

Walker Bay Nature Reserve (☎ 028-384 0111)

Sleeping & Eating

Gansbaai Backpackers (☎ 028-384 0641; gansbaaibackpackers@yahoo.com; 6 Strand St; dm R75, s/d with shared bathroom R140/220) Efficient and friendly, this is a great

place to start for either budget accommodation or tour and activity bookings.

Aire del Mar (☎ 028-384 2848; info@airedelmar.co.za; 77 Van Dyk St, Kleinbaai; s/d incl breakfast R350/580; 🍷) Offers a good range of prices, including basic self-catering units for backpackers (R200) and stylish rooms with panoramic sea views out to Dyer Island. It also serves a filling breakfast (R45).

Die Buitestein (☎ 028-384 0601; 3 Dover St, De Kelders; mains R40; 🕒 10am-2am Mon-Sun) A pub, its walls be-decked with perlemoen (abalone) shells, that captures the laid-back ethos of Gansbaai. Thus, it's a perennial favourite with backpackers and local fishermen alike.

Great White House (☎ 028-384 3273; 5 Geelbek St; s/d incl breakfast R300/600, mains R35-70; 🍷 breakfast & lunch year-round, dinner Mon-Sun 15 Dec-15 Jan) A multifarious place that dishes up fresh seafood, clothing, curios, helps with tour information and offers three-star accommodation. It can also arrange pickups to the restaurant from your hotel.

GREYTON & GENADENDAL

The neighbouring villages of Greyton and Genadendal are among the most pleasant in the Overberg region. Somewhat twee and polished, the whitewashed, thatched-roof cottages of Greyton may be a bit artificial but they are becoming very popular with Capetonians on the lookout for a relaxing country retreat. In contrast Genadendal, the oldest mission station in South Africa, founded in 1738, couldn't be more authentic. It's not manicured and is still home to a predominantly coloured community.

Greyton, with plenty of accommodation, comes into its own as a base for **hiking** in the Riviersonderendberge, which rise up in Gothic majesty immediately to the village's north. Apart from the **Boesmanskloof Trail** (below), there are several shorter walks, as well as the two-day **Genadendal Trail** for the serious hiker. This is a 25.3km circular route that begins and ends at Genadendal's Moravian Church; for more details pick up the *Cape Nature Conservation* leaflet at **Greyton's Tourist Information Office**.

Some 3km west of Greyton, Genadendal was, for a brief time, the largest settlement in the colony after Cape Town. Entering the village from Rte 406, head down Main Rd until you arrive at the cluster of national monuments around Church Sq. The **Moravian Church** is a handsome, simply decorated building; opposite you'll find the **Genadendal Tourist Information Centre**. There's a café here selling homemade bread and souvenirs, including pottery.

The village's fascinating history is documented in the fine **Genadendal Mission Museum** based in what was South Africa's first teacher training college. Elsewhere in this historic precinct is a **printing press**, one of the oldest in the country and still in operation, and a **water mill**.

Sights & Information

Genadendal Mission Museum (☎ 028-251 8582; adult/child R8/4; 🕒 9am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Thu, 9am-3.30pm Fri, 9am-1pm Sat)

Genadendal Tourist Information Centre (☎ 028-251 8291; 🕒 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat)

Greyton Tourist Information Office (☎ 028-254 9414; info@greyton.net; 🕒 10am-noon & 2.30-4.30pm Mon-Sat) On the village's main road.

Sleeping & Eating

Post House (☎ 028-254 9995; fax 028-254 9920; 24 Main Rd; d incl breakfast from R400) Based in the town's historic former post house and set around a pretty garden, rooms are named after Beatrix Potter characters (yes, Greyton is twee). Its English-style pub (mains R60),

BOESMANSKLOOF TRAIL

The Boesmanskloof Trail, administered by **Cape Nature Conservation** (www.capenature.org.za; 1-day tour adult/child R20/10, 2-day tour R60/46), runs for roughly 15km through the spectacular *fybos*-dod Riviersonderendberge between Greyton and Die Galg, 15km south of McGregor. The trail takes between four and six hours one way, making an overnight stay in Greyton the preferred option. Alternatively you can stay at **Whipstock Farm** (☎ 023-625 1733; www.whipstock.za.net; s/d R295/590) at the Die Galg end of the trail, 7km from McGregor. The friendly hosts will organise transfers to and from the trail head. At Die Galg you'll notice that the start of the trail marks the end of a long-abandoned project to construct a pass across the range. Only 50 people per day are allowed on the trail, so it's best to book in advance, especially for weekends and during the holidays; make inquiries with the Cape Nature Conservation desk at Cape Town Tourism (p219) or go to the **Greyton Municipal Offices** (☎ 028-254 9620).

LANGEBAAAN & WEST COAST NATIONAL PARK

Its beautiful and unusual location overlooking a lagoon has made Langebaan a favourite holiday destination with Capetonians. As such, the town suffers from a number of poorly conceived property developments (such as the Club Mykonos resort), so if you're looking for untouched scenery you might be happier elsewhere. That said, Langebaan does support the excellent Farmhouse hotel, and has open-air seafood restaurants, phenomenal sunset views, superb sailing and windsurfing on the lagoon and a few good beaches, the best of which is **Langebaan beach**, located in town and a favourite with swimmers.

The town is also the best base for exploring the **West Coast National Park**, 7km south of Langebaan. Encompassing the clear blue waters of the lagoon, home to an enormous number of migratory wading birds, the park covers around 18,000 hectares. It protects wetlands of international significance and important sea-bird breeding colonies. The wading birds flock

TRANSPORT

Distance from Cape Town to Greyton 148km

Direction East

Travel time Two hours

Car From Cape Town follow the N2 to just before Caledon, then take Rte 406, which brings you to the Genadendal turnoff; 3km further along is Greyton.

the Ball & Bass, is a wonderfully atmospheric spot for a drink or meal.

Guinea Fowl (☎ 028-254 9550; jp agencies@telkomsa.net; cnr DS Botha & Oak Sts; s/d incl breakfast from R350/500; 🍷) Comfortable and quiet, this guesthouse has a pool for summer, log fire for winter and good breakfasts year-round.

High Hopes B&B (☎ /fax 028-254 9898; 89 Main Rd; d incl breakfast from R580) Readers love this place, and it's easy to see why: tastefully furnished rooms, lovely gardens with a beautiful koi pond, and a well-stocked library. There's now also a Healing Energy Centre offering massages and other treatments to get you back on track. Convenient for hikers, it's the closest B&B to the start of the Boesmanskloof Trail.

Greyton Lodge (☎ 028-254 9800; www.greytonlodge.com; 46 Main Rd; s/d incl breakfast R500/700; 🍷) An upmarket, gay-friendly hotel in the old police station. Catch the live crooners in the garden terrace from 5pm on Friday. There's a pool and a reasonably priced but unadventurous bistro (mains from R50 to R70; open from 7pm till 9pm).

Rosie's Restaurant (☎ 028-254 9640; 9 High St; mains from R40; 🍷 dinner) The house specialities at this unpretentious place are wood-fired pizzas (which are delicious and huge) and steaks.

Oak & Vigne Café (☎ 028-254 9037; DS Botha St; mains R50; 🍷 breakfast & lunch) Evidence of the gentrification of Greyton is this trendy deli-art gallery-café, which is a fine place to grab a snack, chill out and watch the world go by.

here by the thousands in the summer. The most numerically dominant species is the delicate-looking curlew sandpiper, which migrates north from the sub-Antarctic in huge flocks. Flamingos, Cape gannets, crowned cormorants, numerous gull species and African black oystercatchers are also among the hordes. The offshore islands are home to colonies of African penguins.

The vegetation is predominantly made up of stunted bushes, sedges and many flowering annuals and succulents. There are some coastal *fynbos* in the east, and the park is famous for its wild-flower display, which is usually between August and October. Several animal species can be seen in the part of the park known as the Postberg section, which is open from August to September. Species include a variety of small antelopes, wildebeests, bonteboks and elands.

Note that the roads in the park are unsealed and can be quite heavily corrugated. The return trip from Langebaan to the northern end of the Postberg section is more than 80km; allow yourself plenty of time.

Another place to visit while you're up here is the **West Coast Fossil Park** on Rte 45, about 16km northeast of Langebaan. The first bear discovered south of the Sahara, lion-sized sabre-toothed cats, three-toed horses and short-necked giraffes are all on display here. Tours to the excavation sites depart daily at 11.30am. Children can sieve for their own fossils in a special display area.

Dominated by an enormous iron-ore pier, navy yards and fish-processing factories is **Saldanha**, at the northern end of the same lagoon that Langebaan sits on. Despite this, the town's bays are pleasant and, because they are sheltered, much warmer than the ocean. **Hoedjies Bay**, near the town centre, is the most popular for swimming.

See p155 for details of horse riding and p158 for details of windsurfing in the area.

Sights & Activities

Langebaan Tourist Information Centre (☎ 022-772 1515; www.langebaaninfo.com; Bree St; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat & Sun)

West Coast Fossil Park (☎ 022-766 1606; www.museums.org.za/wcfc; adult/child/pensioner/family R25/12/18/60; ☹ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat & Sun)

West Coast National Park (☎ 022-772 2144; nonflower/flower season R20/30; ☹ 7am-7.30pm Apr-Sep, 6am-8pm Oct-Mar)

Sleeping & Eating

Oliphantskop Farm Inn (☎/fax 022-772 2326; Main Rd; s/d R180/300; 📞) An attractive place around 3km from town, across the road from the Mykonos resort complex. Oliphantskop's restaurant has a good reputation and nice ambience – cool and dark with rough white walls and a wooden ceiling. The menu (mains R50) is meat and seafood oriented and offers no vegetarian options.

Farmhouse (☎ 022-772 2062; www.thefarmhouse.langebaan.co.za; 5 Egret St; s/d incl breakfast R575/

TRANSPORT

Distance from Cape Town to Langebaan 127km

Direction North

Travel time 90 minutes

Car Follow Rte 27 from Cape Town.

Bus West Coast Shuttle (☎ 083 556 1777) runs a minibus service (R60) from Cape Town to Club Mykonos.

Shared taxi There are minibus taxi services from the commercial hub of Vredenburg (R17, 30 minutes).

Air charters Life Out There (☎ 082 413 6149; www.lifeoutthere.co.za) offers aeroplane, microlight and chopper transfers from Cape Town; trips (per flight R2000) in the three-seater crafts last an hour.

850; 📞) This is by far Langebaan's best hotel, on a hill overlooking the bay. Rooms are large, with country décor, their own fireplaces and lovely sunset views. For such a classy place the restaurant is reasonably priced (mains R50 to R80), offering a creative menu and a rustic, intimate dining room.

Club Mykonos (☎ 0800 226 770; theretha@clubmykonos.co.za; 4-person cabins R1550; 📞) A major resort geared towards families, as there is plenty here to entertain the kids, but its Greek-themed pseudo-Mediterranean architecture and crowds mean you'll either love it or hate it. There are six outdoor swimming pools, a casino, several restaurants and an arcade.

Die Strandloper (☎ 022-772 2490; buffet R150; ☹ lunch & dinner) The West Coast life exemplified – a ten-course fish and seafood braai right on the beach. All food is succulent and delicious; our favourites were the snoek (a mackerel-like fish) and mussels cooked in white wine. There's also freshly made bread, bottomless *moerkoffie* (freshly ground coffee) and a local crooner who plays ballads at your table. You can BYO (no corkage) or get drinks from the rustic bar. Bookings essential; call for availability between June and August.

PATERNOSTER

Paternoster, a clutch of simple whitewashed homes with green roofs against the blue sea, sparkles in the sun and is a feast for the eyes. This sleepy fishing village apparently got its name (Latin for 'Our Father') after the locals rescued shipwrecked Portuguese sailors, who gave their thanks with prayer.

It's a low-key kind of place with fishing as its lifeblood – although, as in Kalk Bay, the industry has recently been hit hard by the government decision to cut back on fishing licences. As the locals become impoverished, wealthy Capetonians looking for holiday houses have moved in. Property is now a hot commodity – there are sold signs left and right and new guesthouses are opening every day.

The surrounding countryside is attractive and the rolling hills are scattered with strange granite outcrops. The **Cape Columbine Nature Reserve**, located 3km past the town, protects 263 hectares of coastal *fynbos* around Cape Columbine. Further north along the coast is the similar village of **St Helena Bay**, offering a lovely sheltered stretch of water but no beach to speak of.

Paternoster is rather lacking in street signs, instead look out for the individual guesthouse signs. There are many B&Bs, so it may be worth checking out a few places first. During crayfish season (mid-November to late December) you will see the tasty crustaceans for sale on the side of the road for between R50 and R70.

Sights

Cape Columbine Nature Reserve (☎ 022-752 2718; adult/child R9/6; ☹ 7am-7pm)

Sleeping & Eating

Paternoster Hotel (☎/fax 022-752 2703; paternosterhotel@wol.co.za; s/d R220/440) This rough-edged, lively country hotel is a popular venue for those interested in fishing. Its graffiti-covered walls, and fish and crayfish braais are famous. We warn you, the bar is a feminist's nightmare.

Cape Columbine (☎ 021-449 2400; salato@npa.co.za; cottages from R525) Three kilometres past the town, you can stay in neat self-catering cottages next to the lighthouse (admission R12) in the Cape Columbine Nature Reserve. Further on there's a superbly located but windy camping and caravan park (☎ 022-752 1718; Tietiesbaai; camp sites R30).

TRANSPORT

Distance from Cape Town to Paternoster 156km

Direction North

Travel time 2½ hours

Car From Cape Town follow Rte 27 to its junction with Rte 45, turn left and continue through Vredenburg to the coast.

Paternoster Lodge (☎ 022-752 2023; paterlodge@telkomsa.net; s/d R560/700) A slick enterprise, with seven tidy, minimalist rooms and a breezy restaurant (mains R50 to R70) open all day. From the sun deck you can watch the fishermen bringing in their catch.

Voorstrandt Restaurant (☎ 022-752 2038; Strandloperweg; mains R40-95; ☹ breakfast, lunch & dinner) You can hop from this designer red-and-green-painted beach shack right onto the sand. It specialises in seafood, and is an excellent spot from which to watch the sunset over a beer.

THE OLIVE ROUTE

The Cape's olive-growing industry is drawing some attention away from the region's famous grapes to this similarly sized but radically different (and highly versatile) fruit. Olive-lovers will be pleased to know that many farms now offer tours and tastings, and a fully fledged 'Olive Route' is on the cards. Many farms are open to the public and are spread throughout the Overberg area. The most popular are found in the farming areas between Robertson, McGregor and Hermanus (see Map p186).

Notables include **Olyfberg** (☎ 023-342 5096; Robertson), which offers tours of its processing plant along with olive and olive-oil tastings, while **Rheebokskraal Estate** (☎ 023-625 1951; McGregor) sells olive pâté and delicious dried olives in brine with rosemary and garlic. It's also worth visiting **Olive Grove** (☎ 023-626 1961; Robertson) to see its memorial olive-tree garden dedicated to the victims of HIV/AIDS.

Also check out Hildenbrand Wine & Olive Estate (p197) near Wellington.

DARLING

Named after Lieutenant Governor Charles Henry Darling and founded in 1853, Darling was a quiet country town best known for its good-quality milk until actor and satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys, along with his alter ego Evita Bezuidenhout (see the boxed text, p146), set up stall here. It might be best to first head to **Tourist Information**, but as most Capetonians make the 75km trek north to catch the uniquely South African cabaret at **Evita se Perron**, this is as good a place as any to start. Here, you can also visit the onsite (and splendidly kitsch) coffee shop serving traditional Afrikaans treats, or 'Boerassic Park', a quaint **sculpture garden**.

Don't forget to ask Tourist Information or your guesthouse about the underrated **Darling Wine Experience**, the collective name for the four estates in the vicinity.

Sights & Information

Evita se Perron (Evita's Platform; ☎ 022-492 2851; www.evita.co.za; tickets R90; 🎫 performances 2pm & 8pm Sat, 2pm Sun)

Tourist Information (☎ 022-492 3361; cnr Hill Rd & Pastorie St; 🕒 9am-1pm & 2-4pm Mon-Thu, 9am-1pm & 2-3.30pm Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun)

Sleeping & Eating

Granary (☎ 022-492 3155; 5 Long St; s/d incl breakfast from R300/440) A neat guesthouse with lots of light and windows that make the big rooms feel especially spacious. Breakfast is enough to fill you up for the day. The place welcomes children, though the rooms are up steep wooden steps so not for the frail.

Trinity (☎ 022-492 3430; 19 Long St; s/d incl breakfast from R270/500; 🍷) A painstakingly renovated Victorian homestead with cosy country-style bedrooms where you can try a selection of homemade toiletries. There's also a country-cuisine restaurant (mains R50) that's been voted one of the country's top 100.

Darling Guest Lodge (☎ 022-492 3062; 22 Pastorie St; s/d incl breakfast R360/540; 🍷) An elegant and imaginatively decorated place, one of the first in the area.

TRANSPORT

Distance from Cape Town to Darling 75km

Direction North

Travel time one hour

Car Take the N1 then the N7 north until the turn off onto Rte 307. Alternatively take Rte 27 from Cape Town running through Milnerton and Bloubergstrand and look for the signs to Darling. An alternate route back to Cape Town, which is much more scenic and not as busy as Rte 27, is to head east out of the town and head south down Rte 307. Turn right just before the town of Mamre to rejoin Rte 27. Do not head down Rte 304 past Atlantis.

Train Evita has taken over the station, but you can book a sunset cocktail trip (R195) on the Spier Train (☎ 021-419 5222) on the first Saturday of every month.

Marmalade Cat (☎ 082 448 9298; 19 Main Rd; breakfast R30; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) A hippy-style café with Internet connection (R40 per hour) that also serves sandwiches, delicious cheeses and homemade sweet treats. It also serves up tasty pizzas on Friday nights.

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