

Arts & Architecture

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Arts & Architecture

Perhaps it's the blend of cultures and alternative perspectives on life, nurtured by inspiring surroundings, that has made Cape Town such a fruitful location for art and architecture. As one of the richest places in a rich country, the funds are there to support and encourage the arts. And in the townships, an abundance of energy, inventiveness and creativity makes up for a lack of cash.

From the 17th-century Castle of Good Hope to the 21st-century towers rising on the Foreshore, Cape Town's stock of arresting architecture is one of its most attractive features. Much that might have been destroyed in other places has been preserved, and a walking tour of Cape Town's City Bowl (p114) is a great way to get a feel for the built history of the city. At the same time you'll gain an insight into the city's vibrant visual-arts scene, from kaleidoscopic and inventive crafts to arty photography and sculpture.

Music is part of the lifeblood of the Mother City, which has a particularly strong reputation for jazz. The performing-arts scene is also healthy, with comedy and small fringe productions offering up the best dividends. If none of that appeals, then there's no shortage of books by local and international writers that shed light into the dark, hidden corners of the city's soul.

ARCHITECTURE

DUTCH COLONIAL

When the Dutch colonists arrived in 1652, they brought their European ideas of architecture with them, but had to adapt to the local conditions and materials. There was plenty of stone on hand from Table Mountain to build the Castle of Good Hope (p93) between 1666 and 1679.

Although the castle is frequently cited as South Africa's oldest surviving colonial structure, Jan van Riebeeck's vegetable garden, forerunner of the Company's Gardens (p93), predates it by 14 years. And, the first incarnation of the Slave Lodge (p96), at the gardens' northern end, was built in 1660 as a single-storey building to house up to 1000 wretched souls. (It was substantially changed under later British administrations.)

To begin with, houses were utilitarian structures, such as the thatched and whitewashed *Posthuys* (Map p257; ☎ 021-788 7972; Main Rd, Muizenberg; admission by donation; ☎ 10am-2pm), dating from 1673. This simple rustic style of building is one that you'll still find today along the Western Cape coast, particularly in fishing villages such as Paternoster (p205).

Thanks to Britain's wars with France, the British turned to the Cape for wine, the Dutch colonists prospered and, during the 18th and 19th centuries, the colonists were able to build many of the impressive estates that survive today. Governor Simon van der Stel's quintessential manor house, Groot Constantia (p44), went up in 1692, establishing the prototype for other glorious estates to follow in the Winelands further inland, such as Vergelegen (p47) and Boschendal (p48).

Bordering the Company's Gardens is the lovely Tuynhuis (Map pp248-9) dating from 1700, but altered during the British administration of the 19th century. From the front gate you'll just about be able to make out the monogram of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; VOC) on the building's pediment – as close as you'll get since Tuynhuis is now the official residence of South Africa's president, and off limits to tourists.

ARCHITECTURE BOOKS

- *Cape Dutch Houses & Other Old Favourites*, by Philida Brooke Simons, contains good photographs and lively text that make this a fine review of the Cape's most elegant old homes.
- All the inventive design and vibrant colours of township architecture are displayed in the coffee-table book *Shack Chic*, photographed by Craig Fraser.

On Strand St, the fancy façade of the late-18th-century Koopmans-de Wet House (p95) is attributed to Louis Thibault, who, as the VOC's lieutenant of engineers, was responsible for the design of most of Cape Town's public buildings in this period. Thibault also had a hand in the handsome Rust en Vreugd (p98), which dates from 1777 to 1778 and is notable for its delicately carved rococo fanlight above the main door and its double balconies and portico.

Of course, not everyone lived in such a grand manner. In the city centre, the best place to get an idea of what Cape Town looked like during the 18th century to ordinary folk is to take a stroll through the Bo-Kaap (p92). You'll notice flat roofs instead of gables, and a lack of shutters on the windows. These features are the result of building regulations instituted by the VOC in the wake of fires that swept the city.

BRITISH COLONIAL

When the British took over from the Dutch in the early 19th century, they had their own ways of doing things, and this extended to the architectural look of the city. British governor Lord Charles Somerset made the biggest impact during his 1814-to-1826 tenure. It was he who ordered the restyling of Tuynhuis to bring it into line with Regency tastes for verandas and front gardens.

Built in about 1840, the two-storey brick Bertram House (p97), at the southern end of Government Ave, is an example of late-Georgian style.

As the British Empire reached its zenith in the late 19th century, Cape Town boomed and a slew of monumental buildings were erected. Walk down Adderley St and through the Company's Gardens and you'll pass the 1880 Standard Bank with its pediment, dome and soaring columns; the 1885 Houses of Parliament (p95), outside which stands a statue (1890) of Queen Victoria; and the Byzantine-influenced Old Synagogue (p98) dating from 1862. The neighbouring and neo-Egyptian-styled Great Synagogue with its twin towers is from 1905.

Long St is where you can see Victorian Cape Town at its most appealing, with the wrought-iron balconies and varying façades of shops and buildings, such as the Long St Baths (p152). In the adjacent suburbs of Tamboerskloof and Oranjezicht, many mansions of that era still survive.

Cecil John Rhodes, prime minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896, commissioned young English architect Herbert Baker (p32) to redesign his home, Groote Schuur (p104), in Rondebosch, thus kicking off the style known as Cape Dutch Revival. Another famous Baker building, also commissioned by Rhodes, is Rust-en-Vrede (p108) by the sea at Muizenberg, completed in 1902 just after the statesman died at the neighbouring cottage.

As the Victorian era came to a close, Cape Town's grandest public building, the Old Town Hall (Map pp248-9), rose on the southwest side of Grand Pde in 1905; it was from the building's balcony that Nelson Mandela made his first public address as a free man in 1990.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Edwardian Cape Town is best represented by the Centre for the Book (Map pp248-9), which opened in 1913 as the headquarters of the now-defunct University of Good Hope. More recently it has become an annexe of the National Library of South Africa, and gained some notoriety as the venue for the inquiry into cricket match fixing in 2000.

A second building boom in the 1920s and '30s led to the construction of many fine Art Deco buildings in the city centre. Prime examples include the blocks around Greenmarket Sq and the handsome 1939 Mutual Heights (p97), the continent's first skyscraper, decorated with friezes and frescoes, all with South African themes. To get acquainted with Cape Town's Art Deco architecture, follow the walk on p114.

Meanwhile, the economic boom that provided funds for the new city-centre buildings also stoked demand for cheap coloured and black labour. These people needed somewhere to live and the solution was found out on the empty, sandy Cape Flats. Langa, meaning 'Sun', was established in 1927 and is South Africa's oldest planned township. As in many townships, the roads are wide and in excellent condition, thus allowing for quick access by the authorities should there be trouble. Although it's shacks that are most widely associated with the townships, a walk around Langa or other townships today reveals that this is far from the only architecture in these areas (see p30).

THE EVOLUTION OF TOWNSHIP ARCHITECTURE

Contrary to popular belief, the townships are not uniformly comprised of slum dwellings. Everyone from the poor to the reasonably well-off live in these suburbs, and the buildings you'll find can be broken into five main categories:

- **Shacks** – it's estimated that there are around one million people living in squatter camps or 'informal settlements' of self-built shacks. Cobbled together from a variety of materials, including old packing crates, and decorated with, among other things, magazine pages and old food-tin labels, the design and structure of a shack depends on the financial situation of the owner and how long they have lived there. Vicky's B&B (p184) in Khayelitsha is a good example of a long-established shack.
- **Hostels** – built originally for migrant labourers before WWII, these two-level brick dormitories were broken up into basic units, each accommodating 16 men, who shared one shower, one toilet and one small kitchen. Tiny bedrooms housed up to three men each. After the pass laws (which stated that those who didn't have a job outside the Homelands were not allowed to leave) were abolished, most men brought their families to live with them. Each unit became home to up to 16 families, each room sleeping up to three families. Although some families still live in such conditions, other hostels have been modernised to provide less-cramped and much more habitable apartments.
- **Terrace housing** – in the older townships of Langa and Guguletu you'll come across one-storey terrace housing, built between the 1920s and 1940s. Like the hostels, conditions in these 30-sq-metre 'railway carriage' houses were very basic and crowded. Since the end of apartheid these houses have been owned by the former tenants, who are now responsible for their maintenance. Residents have sometimes expanded them, when they can, into the front and back yards.
- **Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses** – in the last 10 years, tens of thousands of these low-cost houses have been built in the townships. Averaging around 28 sq metres in size, these 'matchbox' houses are little more than four concrete-block walls topped with a corrugated-iron roof. Even so, for many people they are a great improvement on the fire-prone shacks they lived in previously. Also see p112 for information on a group of township women who successfully designed and built their own homes.
- **Township villas** – there are areas of Langa and Khayelitsha that are very middle class and where you'll find spacious bungalow-style houses and villas of a high standard. The area where Minah Radebe's very convivial B&B (p184) is located in Langa is known locally as 'Beverly Hills'.

MODERN

The economic recession brought on by international sanctions meant there was little good architectural development in Cape Town during the apartheid era. Examples of rationalist architecture include the hideous Artscape arts centre (p145) and the adjoining Civic Centre (see opposite) on the Foreshore, which demonstrate the obsession with concrete that was typical of international modernism.

The best building to come out of this era is the Baxter Theatre (p146) in Rondebosch. Designed by Jack Barnett, its flat roof is famously dimpled with orange fibreglass downlights that glow fabulously at night. Also notable is the striking Taal Monument (p196) in Paarl, with a 57m concrete tower designed by Jan van Wijk.

The less said about the total lack of planning or official architectural concern for the townships the better, although it is worth mentioning the tremendous ingenuity and resilience that residents show in creating livable homes from scrap. A visit to the townships today reveals colourfully painted shacks and murals, homes and churches made from shipping crates, and more recent imaginative structures, such as the Guga S'Thebe Arts & Cultural Centre (p111) in Langa.

For the vast majority of visitors, contemporary Capetonian architecture is summed up in the redevelopment of the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront (p99). Recent architectural additions to the Waterfront include the Nelson Mandela Gateway (p100) and Clock Tower Precinct, built in 2001 as the new departure point for Robben Island, and the ritzy millionaire's playground of the **V&A Marina** (www.waterfrontmarina.co.za), with some 600 apartments and 200 boat moorings. After a slow start, foundations are now being dug for casino and luxury-hotel magnate Sol Kerzner's One and Only, a R450-million resort project next to the Marina.

The Cape Town International Convention Centre (p146), with its shiplike prow and sleek glass-and-steel hotel, is another new building drawing favourable nods and helping push the City Bowl back towards the waterfront, from which it has been cut off for decades. Next up will be the R390-million residential, commercial and retail centre Icon, Cape Town's first major black-empowerment development designed by DHK architects.

The Cape Town property boom is also creating an environment for some interesting new residential buildings and conversions of old office blocks into apartments, such as Mutual Heights (p97) and the three old buildings that are part of **Rhodes Mandela Place** (www.eurocapeinvest.com/mrp/index.html). Winning prizes for its work is architectural practice **Van der Merwe Miszewski** (Map pp248–9; www.vandermerwemiszewski.com; 163 Bree St); its **Tree House** (Map p254; 30 Glen Cres, Higgovale) was voted best building in South Africa in an opinion poll organised by the South African Institute for Architects. The practice's offices are based in one of the more unusual and beautiful of the City Bowl's listed buildings.

ARCHITECTURAL HITS & MISSES

The Best

- **Baxter Theatre** (p146) – a rare architectural achievement of the 1970s.
- **Groote Schuur** (p104) – the Cape Dutch revival started here with the work of Sir Herbert Baker.
- **Guga S'Thebe Arts & Cultural Centre** (p111) – this colourful and creative building is a star of township architecture.
- **Mutual Heights** (p97) – now luxury apartments, this old insurance-company building is an Art Deco treasure.
- **Rust en Vreugd** (p98) – the finest surviving example of an 18th-century Cape Dutch townhouse.
- **Nelson Mandela Gateway** (p100) – this contemporary architectural standout is the museum and departure point for ferries to Robben Island.

The Rest

- **Athlone Power Station** (Map pp244–5) – are the giant 'salt and pepper shaker' towers a benefit or blight on the Cape Town skyline? You decide as you pass them en route to the city from the airport.
- **Civic Centre** (Map pp248–9) – *Death Star* of apartheid-era Cape Town, this ugly building is so badly located that the road running under it has been known to turn into a savage wind tunnel capable of flipping cars over.
- **Unfinished Hwy** (Map pp248–9) – beloved by action-movie directors as a ready-made set, there is at least one less highway to cut off downtown Cape Town from the sea.
- **Disa Park** (Map pp246–7) – known as the Tampon Towers, these three cylindrical towers clutter up the view to Devil's Peak from the city.
- **Good Hope Centre** (Map pp248–9) – isn't it time this hideous concrete tentlike structure was pensioned off now that Cape Town has a modern convention centre?
- **Tree House** (above) – the public and fellow architects may love it, but having been inside this design icon we think its layout clumsy and ill-conceived. Maybe that's why it was for sale.



Baxter Theatre (p146), Rondebosch

SIR HERBERT BAKER

Like his patron Cecil Rhodes, Herbert Baker (1862–1946) was an ambitious young Englishman who seized the chance to make his mark in South Africa. Baker arrived in Cape Town in 1892 and a year later, through family connections, had gained himself an audience with Rhodes and been commissioned to remodel Groote Schuur (p104), the prime minister's mansion on the slopes of Table Mountain.

Many more commissions followed, and Cape Town is littered with buildings of Baker's design, including several cottages in Muizenberg (where Baker lived for a while), St George's Cathedral, and First National Bank on Ardlerly St. In 1900 Rhodes sent Baker to Italy, Greece and Egypt to study their classical architecture in order to inspire him to design the sort of grand buildings he wished to see constructed in South Africa. Two years later, though, Rhodes was dead and Baker was designing his memorial.

Among Baker's grandest work is the imposing Union Buildings in Pretoria (1909). In 1912 he left South Africa to join Edwin Lutyens in designing the Secretariat buildings in New Delhi. Back in the UK he worked on South Africa House in London's Trafalgar Sq and was knighted in 1926. He's buried in Westminster Abbey.

ARTS VISUAL ARTS

A wander around any of Cape Town's major public and private galleries demonstrates that the contemporary art scene is tremendously exciting and imaginative. Visual art's history on the Cape, however, stretches back to the original San inhabitants – they left their mark on the landscape in the form of rock paintings and subtle rock engravings. Despite having been faded by aeons of exposure, these works of art are remarkable; a fantastic example is the Linton Panel in the South African Museum (p99). Today San motifs are commonly employed on tourist art such as decorative mats and carved ostrich eggs.

The city has many examples of public art, including the bright murals and mosaics of the townships and Brett Murray's amusing, iconoclastic *Africa* sculpture (p114). In St George's Mall, it still turns heads today, as do his distinctive 'Boogie Lights' series of wall lamps, which can be bought at various shops around the city including African Image (p161). Murray's most significant work, *Baobabs, Stormclouds, Animals and People*, hangs at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (p146). This collaboration with the late San artist Tuoi Steffaans Samcuia, of the IXun and Khwe San Art and Cultural Project, is astonishing in its scale and design – huge steel figures, animals and trees standing out against the maple wall panels. Also check out the new sculptures of South Africa's Nobel prize winners at the Waterfront's Nobel Sq (p101).

Other local artists to look out for include Conrad Botes (see opposite), Sanell Aggenbach, winner of the ABSA Atelier Award in 2003, Willie Bester, whose mixed-media creations of township life are very powerful, and the more conventional John Krammer, who captures the ordinary, serene quality of the South African landscape. At the SA National Gallery (p98), you'll be able to find the paintings of the republic's leading artist William Kentridge, as well as those of Gerard Sekoto, a black artist whose works capture the vibrancy of District Six.

At the Irma Stern Museum (p104) you can view the vivid works of the leading South African female painter of her time. Stern's art was influenced by German expressionism and incorporated elements of traditional African art.

Some people come to Cape Town in search of works by the famous Russian-born artist Vladimir Tretchikoff, who still lives (in ill health) in the leafy suburb of Bishopscourt. His signature images – mesmerising portraits of blue-faced Eurasian and African beauties – have become icons of the kitsch lounge-music generation. You won't find any of the originals in the main Cape Town galleries, but in the bar of Head South Lodge (p178) you'll find a fantastic collection of his prints, which are increasingly rare.

For a preview of the Capetonian art scene check out the website www.artthrob.co.za, which showcases the best in South African contemporary art and has plenty of up-to-the-minute news. Also look into what's going on at **Greatmore Studios** (Map pp246–7; ☎ 021-447 9699; www.greatmoreart.org; 47-49 Greatmore St, Woodstock), where South African and international artists work together, exchanging ideas and techniques.

Traditional Artworks

For decades, African art was dismissed by European colonisers as 'mere craft', as distinct from 'art'. Be prepared to surrender this artificial Western distinction as you root around the craft shops and markets of Cape Town.

The art of the Bantu-speaking peoples is similar to that of the San as a result of their long history of cultural interaction. Their traditional nomadic lifestyle led to their artefacts being portable and generally utilitarian. Headrests, spoons and beadwork are not created as mere commodities: they are individual statements of self and have always entailed long hours of careful labour.

POTTERY

The master potters of the Venda people, who live in the northeastern corner of Northern Province, are all women. Their hand-fashioned pots come in 10 different sizes and designs. Each one has a different function: cooking, serving food or liquids, or storage. The pots feature brightly coloured geometric designs and are more ornamental than functional.

Traditional African designs have influenced the creations of Capetonian potters such as Clementina van der Walt (p170), Carrol Boyes (p166) and Barbara Jackson, whose vases can be bought at Africa Nova (p163). There are also many talented young coloured and black ceramicists crafting pots for the Potter's Shop & Studio (p170) in Kalk Bay and Muizenberg.

BEADWORK

The traditional African craft of beadwork has really taken off in Cape Town, spearheaded by the success of Monkeybiz (p162). There is some very significant new art being created in beads. Qalo, a studio of 16 Xhosa beaders based in Cape Town, has worked with leading local artists, such as Conrad Botes, Julia Clark and Doreen Southwood, on a project commissioned by the **Hollard Contemporary Bead Collection** (www.coeo.co.za) and exhibited recently at the Michaelis Collection (p96).

Apart from the modern interpretations, you'll still come across traditional Zulu beadwork used for decoration and traditional ceremonies. It takes many forms, from the small, square *umgexo* (necklace), which is widely available and makes a good gift, to the more elaborate *amadavathi*, a short skirt or tasselled belt worn by girls from puberty until they are married. *Amadavathi* (bead anklets) are worn by men and women.

Beads are also traditionally used as a means of communication, especially as love letters. Messages are 'spelt out' by the colour and arrangement of the beads. For example, red symbolises passion or anger; black, difficulties or night; blue, yearning; white or pale blue, pure love; brown, disgust or despondency; and green, peace or bliss. To find out more, head to the Bead Centre of Africa (p161), which has a small display area devoted to traditional African beadwork.

BASKETWORK

Zulu hand-woven baskets, although created in a variety of styles and colours, almost always have a function. The raw materials vary depending on their seasonal availability – a basket could be woven from various grasses, palm fronds, bark, or even telephone wire.

Two decorative basket patterns predominate: the triangle, which denotes the male, and the diamond, which denotes the female. A design on the basket of two triangular shapes above one another in an hourglass form indicates that the male owner of the basket is married; similarly, two diamonds so arranged means the female owner of the basket is married.

CONRAD BOTES

Winner of the ABSA Atelier Award 2004, Conrad Botes made his mark on the South African art scene with his strange, weird cult comic *Bitterkomix*, founded along with Anton Kannemeyer. He also collaborated with Brett Murray on designing the 'Boogie Lights' series of wall lamps. His colourful graphic images, both beautiful and horrific, have been shown in exhibitions in New York, the UK and Italy, as well as at the Havana Biennale in 2006. In Cape Town you can view his work – which, apart from comics, takes the form of silkscreen prints, lithographs and paintings on glass – at the Photographers Gallery (p164). Also read his biography and see examples of his work at www.artthrob.co.za (navigate to the Artbio section).



Crafts, Monkeybiz (p162), Bo-Kaap

TOWNSHIP CRAFTS

New and imaginative crafts have sprung up in the townships, borrowing from old traditions but using materials that are readily available. For example, old soft-drink cans and food tins are used to make hats, picture frames, toy cars and planes, while wire and metal bottle tops are used for bags and vases. Complex wirework sculptures and mixed-media paintings and collages are common. Printing and rug-making are also taking off.

One of the most successful projects has been Kommetjie Environmental Awareness Group (KEAG), based at Imhoff Farm (p109). Using waste plastic, tin cans and glass they have created many inventive decorative objects; you'll see their multicoloured tassel curtains and plastic animal heads in shops such as African Image (p161). Other notable craft projects include Streetwires (p163), Miele (p169) at the Montebello centre, Wola Nani (p163) and the Philani Nutrition Centre (p111).

WOODWORK

Venda woodcarvings are also commonly sold in Cape Town's African antique and curio shops. Traditionally, woodcarving was a men-only occupation, but these days expert female woodcarvers can be found. A number of local woods are used, including *mudzwini*, *mutango* and *musimbiri*. Carved items include bowls, spoons, trays, pots, walking sticks, chains attached to calabashes, and knobkerries (sticks with a round knob at one end, used as clubs or missiles).

MUSIC

Jazz

Cape Town is one of the world's jazz capitals and is home to some internationally known musicians, including the singer-songwriter **Jonathan Butler** (www.jonathanbutler.com), and the saxophonists Robbie Jansen (known as the Cape Doctor) and **Winston 'Ngozi' Mankunku** (www.sheer.co.za/winston.html).

The elder statesman of the scene is pianist **Abdullah Ibrahim** (www.abdullahibrahim.com/indexf.html). Born Adolph Johannes Brand in the District Six area of Cape Town in 1934, he began performing at 15 under the name Dollar Brand, and formed the Jazz Epistles with

the legendary Hugh Masekela. In 1962, after moving to Zurich, he was spotted by Duke Ellington, who arranged recording sessions for him at Reprise Records and sponsored his appearance at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1965. Brand converted to Islam in 1968 and took the name Abdullah Ibrahim. He returned briefly to South Africa in the mid-1970s and in 1974 recorded the seminal album *Manenberg* with saxophonist Basil Coetzee.

Other respected local artists to watch out for include guitarist **Jimmy Dludlu** (www.music.org.za), pianist **Paul Hammer** (www.sheer.co.za/paul.html) and singer **Judith Sephuma** (www.music.org.za). All these musicians occasionally play in town – your best chance of catching them will be at a jazz festival, such as the Cape Town International Jazz Festival (p10) in March.

Dance, Rock & Pop

Bridging the divide between jazz and electronic dance music are **Goldfish** (www.goldfishlive.com). David Poole and Dominic Peters combine samplers, a groove box, keyboards, vocoder, upright bass, flute and saxophone in their live performances; catch them in regular gigs at Planet (p139) and Baraza (p140), as well as other venues around town.

Techno, trance and jungle have all found their way into Cape Town's dance clubs. Here you can also tune in to *kwaito*, the local dance-music sensation that's a mix of *mbaqanga* jive, hip-hop, house and ragga. The music of local singing superstar Brenda Fassie has a strong *kwaito* flavour. Dubbed 'Madonna of the Townships' by *Time* magazine, Langa-born Fassie led a troubled life and died in 2004 at the age of 39.

Hip-hop is also big, with bands including **Godessa** (www.godessa.com), the very cool trio of township girls. Moodphase 5ive is one of the better groups around that mixes hip-hop with soul; check out their 2003 release *Super Deluxe Mode*. Few Afro-fusion groups have been as big recently as **Freshly Ground** (www.freshlyground.com). This multi-racial seven-piece band, based in Cape Town, went double platinum with their latest album *Nomvula* and draw huge crowds whenever they play in town.

On the rock and pop scene, Cape Town has also produced some notable acts – look out for concerts by Skallabrak and Kobus! and Kallitz (a play on 'coloureds') who hail from the Cape Flats and perform gangsta rap in Afrikaans.

Singer-songwriters include the acoustic roots rocker **Robin Auld** (www.robinauld.co.za/home.asp), whose latest release is *Jungle of One*, and **Arno Carstens** (www.arnocarstens.com), lead singer of the defunct Springbok Nude Girls who's having even more success now he's gone solo. Before he hit the international big time with his musical *Kat and the Kings*, **David Kramer** (www.davidkramer.co.za) was already hugely popular as the journeyman guitarist who sang in Afrikaans; hear his songs on the album *Bukgat*.

LITERATURE

Apart from fellow Capetonian JM Coetzee (see p37), the contemporary fiction writer most associated with the Mother City is André Brink. Professor of English at the University of Cape Town, Brink has been writing since the 1960s and has published over 40 novels, including: *A Dry White Season* (1979), about the search for justice during the apartheid era, and made into a movie starring Donald Sutherland and Marlon Brandon; *A Chain of Voices* (1982), about slavery in the 18th-century Cape; *The Other Side of Silence* (2002), a story set in colonial Africa in the early 20th century; and *An Instant in the Wind* (1976)

TOP FIVE CAPE TOWN SOUNDTRACKS

- *Nomvula*, by Freshly Ground – the multiracial Afro-fusion combo's follow-up to their equally foot-tapping debut *Jika Jika*.
- *Healing Destination*, by the Goema Captains of Cape Town – jazz composer laureate Mac McKenzie leads an all-star orchestra, including pianist Hilton Schilder and saxophonist Robbie Jansen.
- *Diamond of Day*, by Robin Auld – catchy acoustic guitar tunes by the Kommetjie surfer rock legend.
- *Caught in the Loop*, by Goldfish – electronic jazz and break beats by a talented Capetonian duo.
- *The Hello Goodbye Boys*, by Arno Carstens – the pretty-boy rocker proves he's more than South Africa's Bryan Adams.

TOP TEN NOVELS

- *'Buckingham Palace', District Six* (1986), by Richard Rive, contains eloquent stories about the inhabitants of five houses in the heart of District Six.
- Set in Stellenbosch, the dual narrative of *Coldsleep Lullaby* (2005), by Andrew Brown, skilfully entwines a modern-day police thriller with a tale of a 17th-century wine maker lusting after a slave girl.
- The Booker Prize-winning *Disgrace* (1999), by JM Coetzee, is a powerful tale of a Capetonian professor's disastrous move to a rural farm following an ill-judged affair with a student.
- *Mother to Mother* (1998), by Sindiwe Magona, is a fictionalised account of the murder of white American Amy Biehl, sensitively told through the eyes of her mother and the mother of the killer.
- *The Reluctant Passenger* (2003), by Michael Heyns, is a lively satire about a mad plan to develop Cape Point and the efforts of the protagonist to save the baboons.
- *Rights of Desire* (2001), by André Brink, is a lurid tale of incest, murder and rape set in modern-day Cape Town.
- *Sachs Street* (2001), by Rayda Jacobs, is the tale of a young girl growing up in Cape Town's Bo-Kaap in the 1950s, listening to stories from her grandmother.
- There's magical realism in the tender and witty *A Time of Angels* (2003), by Patricia Schonstein, a tale about a Jewish clairvoyant who reads people's futures on Long St.
- Set in Hermanus, *The Whale Caller* (2005) is the fifth novel of acclaimed black writer Zakes Mda, and is an imaginative tale about that eternal triangle: man, woman and whale!
- *You Can't Get Lost In Cape Town* (2000), by Zoë Wicomb, is a coming-of-age tale that paints a complex and evocative picture about the experience of the coloured community in Cape Town during the apartheid era.

and *Rumours of Rain* (1978), both short-listed for the Booker Prize. His latest novel, *Preying Mantis* (2005), mixes comedy and tragedy in the story of Cupido Cockroach, the first Khoi missionary ordained on the Cape.

Out of the coloured experience in District Six came two notable writers, Alex La Guma and Richard Rive. La Guma's books include *A Walk in the Night*, a collection of short stories set in District Six, and *And a Threefold Cord*, which examines the poverty, misery and loneliness of slum life. He died in exile in Havana, Cuba in 1985. Rive's most notable book is *Buckingham Palace*, a thought-provoking and sensitive set of stories from District Six that serves as a memory of life there before the forced removals. Rive was murdered at his Cape Town home in 1989, aged 59.

Acclaimed writer Bessie Head (1937–86) was born in South Africa but spent most of her life in Botswana. *The Cardinals*, believed to be the first long piece of fiction she produced, is the only one set in South Africa. It draws on her experiences as a young journalist and coloured woman in Cape Town in the early 1960s.

Sindiwe Magona was born in a village in the Transkei but grew up in the Cape Town township of Guguletu. *To My Children's Children* (1990) and *Forced to Grow* (1992) are both autobiographical, while *Mother to Mother* (1998) is a fictionalised account of the correspondence between the mother of Amy Biehl, a white American woman murdered in the Cape Flats in 1993, and the mother of her killer.

PERFORMING ARTS

Theatre

There's an understandable lack of interest from most economically challenged Capetonians in theatre, matched by an equal paucity of government subsidy for the performing arts. So it's surprising how lively and diverse the local theatre scene is, offering everything from big-scale musicals and one-man shows to edgy dramas reflecting modern South Africa.

Enfant terrible Brett Bailey's theatre company **Third World Bunfight** (www.thirdworldbunfight.co.za) is certainly one troupe to watch. Bailey specialises in using black actors to tell uniquely African stories in productions such as *Mumbo Jumbo*, which explores the interaction between the realms of theatre and ritual. The production, which has also been performed at London's Barbican Theatre, hit the front pages of the South African newspapers when the

cast sacrificed a real chicken at its season finale in Cape Town. Third World Bunfight is the resident performing company at the Spier wine estate (p47), and in 2006 scored a critical hit with *Orpheus*, Bailey's reimagining of Orpheus' journey into the Underworld.

Another innovative company is Theatre for Africa, run by the Capetonian theatrical family of father Nicholas and sons Matthew and Luke Ellenbogen. Their award-winning productions often combine music, mime (usually of African wildlife) and acting with traditional African stories. In recent years they've mounted productions in the Old Zoo (p147) on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, an atmospheric venue that is worth attending in its own right.

Songwriter and director David Kramer and musician Taliep Peterson teamed up to work on two musicals, *District Six* and *Poison*, before hitting the big time with their jazz homage *Kat and the Kings*, which swept up awards in London in 1999 and received standing ovations on Broadway. Their latest collaboration *Goema*, celebrating the tradition of Afrikaans folks songs, was a huge success when it premiered in Cape Town in 2005; even though it's largely in Afrikaans, the structure of the musical, which also traces the history of Cape Town and the contribution made by the slaves and their descendants, is easy to follow and enormous fun to watch.

Traditional Shakespearean theatre gets a run in the open air every summer at Maynardville (p147); the festival celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006. It's also well worth checking out the productions held at the Spier estate during the Spier Arts Summer Season festival (p9).

Dance

Alongside Capetonians' love of music is their love of dance. The city supports several dance companies, including the **Cape Town City Ballet** (www.capetowncityballet.org.za), **Jazzart Dance Theatre** (www.jazzart.co.za), South Africa's oldest modern dance company, and **Cape Dance Company** (www.capedancecompany.bizland.com), made up of talented youths from 13 to 23.

Former professional dancer Phillip Boyd's **Dance For All** (☎ 021-633 4363; www.danceforall.co.za) trains young dancers from the townships and poverty-stricken suburbs of the Cape. Programme graduate Theo Ndindwa has gone on to study at London's Rambert Ballet School and perform at Sadlers Wells. Contact the company to find out about tours of its teaching venues run from 2.45pm Monday to Thursday.

A similar project operating with street kids in Green Point and children in the township at Hout Bay is **Jikeleza** (☎ 021-712 1255; www.jikeleza.co.za), which means 'Turn Around' and teaches life skills as well as contemporary dance. Both Jikeleza and Dance For All stage end-of-year concerts that are well worth attending.

CAPE TOWN'S MAN OF LETTERS

Born in Cape Town in 1940, JM Coetzee (pronounced 'kut-say-uh') is the first writer to have won the coveted Booker Prize twice. He was also awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 2003, the Swedish Academy hailing him for being a 'scrupulous doubter, ruthless in his criticism of the cruel rationalism and cosmetic morality of Western Civilisation'.

For some clues into what informed this world view, start by reading his childhood memoir *Boyhood* (1997). Coetzee (the J and M stand for John Maxwell) studied English and mathematics at Cape Town University. His first novel *Dusklands* was published in 1974, while he was teaching in the US, but it was his third, *Waiting For The Barbarians* (1980), that made readers and critics aware of his singular talent.

The Life and Times of Michael K (1983), which imagined a South Africa embroiled in civil war, won him his first Booker Prize. Thankfully life didn't imitate Coetzee's art, although in his second Booker winner *Disgrace* (1999), the supposedly peaceful postapartheid landscape is cruelly exposed. *Age of Iron* (1990) is another novel set in South Africa about the lives of the homeless. In *Foe* (1986) he rewrites Robinson Crusoe from a female castaway's perspective, while the St Petersburg of Dostoevsky is the setting for *Master of Petersburg* (1994).

Youth (2002) is a fictionalised account based on the time Coetzee spent as a computer programmer in England during the 1960s. The line between fact and fiction in his books became even more blurred with *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), in which the title character, a novelist in her sixties, gives a series of lectures, which in turn are based on similar lectures Coetzee himself delivered at Princeton in 1999. Ms Costello turns up again in his latest novel *Slow Man* (2005), about a man coming to terms with the amputation of his leg. It's set in Adelaide, Australia, where Coetzee immigrated in 2002, and where he became a citizen in 2006.

CINEMA

South African cinema appears to be on a roll. *Yesterday*, winner of Best African Film in 2004, became the nation's first film to be nominated for an Oscar in the Best Foreign Language category in 2005. The following year the Oscar was in the bag for Gavin Hood's stylish and hard-hitting township gangster drama *Tsotsi*.

Cape Town is a major centre for South African cinema and movie-making. The city acts as a magnet for many talented people in the industry and you'll frequently see production crews shooting on location around town. Many of the crews make commercials for overseas clients who love Cape Town's bright weather, its picturesque locations and its generally low-cost, high-quality labour.

All this said, you'll search in vain at Cape Town's multiplexes for locally made movies. The Labia's African Screen (p148) is the only Cape Town cinema that regularly screens South African movies. Your best chance of catching home-grown product is at the city's several film festivals or on the shelves of DVD shops.

Releases to look out for include the American documentary *Long Night's Journey into Day*, nominated for Best Documentary at the 2001 Oscars. This very moving Sundance Film Festival winner follows four cases from the Truth & Reconciliation Commission hearings, including that of Amy Biehl, the white American murdered in the Cape Flats in 1993.

Scooping up prizes at the Sundance Film Festival in 2002 was the documentary feature *Amandla*, a South African-US coproduction about the role of protest songs in the country's struggle to rid itself of apartheid. Among the many star South African performers testifying in the film is Cape Town's world-famous jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, who coins the immortal phrase that South Africa is the only country in the world to have undergone 'a revolution in four-part harmony'.

John Boorman has directed *In My Country*, the movie version of Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull*, starring Samuel L Jackson and Juliette Binoche to generally respectful reviews. Another recent movie dealing with the horrors of the apartheid era is *Red Dust*, starring Hilary Swank.

Proteus, by John Greyson and Jack Lewis, based on a true 18th-century story, is an imaginatively filmed gay love story set among the colonial-era prisoners of Robben Island. *U-Carmen e Khayelitsha*, Golden Bear winner at the 2005 Berlin International Film Festival, is based on Bizet's opera *Carmen* and was shot entirely on location in Khayelitsha. It's the first movie for local drama group **Dimpho Di Kopane** (www.ddk.org.za). Their follow-up *Son of Man*, a controversial reworking of the Gospels in modern Africa, is also gathering prizes and glowing reviews on the festival circuit.

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A visit to Cape Town without tasting the local wines would be like going to Scotland and avoiding whisky. This is where South Africa's wine industry – now the ninth largest in the world – began back in the 17th century. Today, within a day's drive of the city, there are over 200 wineries; there're even plans for a new one inside Rhodes Mandela Place in the city centre, making wine from grapes grown in a tiny vineyard in Vredehoek.

Scores of new wine producers join the industry each year, and while many are content to remain as micro-wineries, honing their wines to perfection, others are seeking to capitalise on the industry's popularity by adding museums, restaurants, accommodation and other attractions. We've reviewed some of the more notable of these in this chapter, along with vineyards that are renowned for their fine wines – all are within easy reach of the city. For those without their own wheels, there are plenty of tours of the Winelands (p43).

If you're looking to broaden your knowledge of the local wines further, you can take one of the wine-appreciation courses run by the **Cape Wine Academy** (Map p46; ☎ 021-889 8844; www.capewineacademy.co.za). Although the headquarters are in Stellenbosch, there are courses held in Cape Town in two locations: the **Cellar Cuvee Classique** (Map pp246–7; Palms Décor & Lifestyle Centre, 145 Sir Lowry Rd, Foreshore) and **Manuka Café & Fine Wines** (Map pp244–5; Steenberg Lifestyle Village, Tokai). You'll need about six weeks to complete a course. The Nose Wine Bar (p138), in Cape Town, also offers a six-week course for R300. A hands-on wine-making course (R50 per person) is run by **Fynbos Estate** (Map p186; ☎ 022-487 1153; www.fynbosestate.co.za) in the Paardeberg mountains, 15km outside Malmesbury, an hour's drive from Cape Town.

The annual guide **John Platter South African Wines** (www.platteronline.com) is *the* book to consult if you want full tasting notes on the thousands of different local wines. Also worth searching out is Jean-Pierre Roussow's *Mixed Case – A Unique Guide to the Cape Winelands*. You can also read Roussow's quirky reviews on his website www.handtomouth.co.za.

If you don't have time to get out to the wineries, there are several wine shops in Cape Town with excellent selections, including Vaughan Johnson's Wine & Cigar Shop (p167) and Wine Concepts (p165).

TOP FIVE TIPPLES *Al Simmonds*

The following are South Africa's most popular red and white wines by retail price, according to Vaughan Johnson's Wine & Cigar Shop (p167).

Reds

- Chateau Libertas (R25) – perhaps the most reliable table wine in the country. Depending on which bottle you get, this velvety blend can have you disbelieving the price tag.
- Beyerskloof Pinotage (R40) – a fruity choice, and a great introduction to this uniquely South African cultivar.
- Rupert & Rothschild Classique (R85) – an elegant cabernet sauvignon-merlot with blackcurrant overtones. Hugely popular.
- Meerlust Rubicon (R195) – this South African standard-bearer is a simply exquisite wine that every moneyed wine-lover in the country buys for their wedding anniversary and then can't bring themselves to open.
- Rustenberg Peter Barlow (R360) – an intensely concentrated blackberry-aroma cabernet-merlot that's a good seller despite the hefty price tag.

Whites

- Du Toitskloof Sauvignon Blanc (R25) – a lively white perfect for a seafood braai.
- Haute Cabrière (R49) – consistently delicious medium-bodied chardonnay-pinot noir from the Franschoek winery.
- Steenberg Sauvignon Blanc (R70) – a fresh, fragrant perennial favourite with hints of gooseberry and lemon.
- Thelema Chardonnay (R90) – a long-standing robust dry wine with citrus and hazelnut on the nose.
- Hamilton Russell Chardonnay (R176) – a classic chardonnay with biscuit aromas and a mineral flavour.

HISTORY

'Today, praise be the Lord, wine was pressed for the first time from Cape grapes.'

Jan van Riebeeck, 2 February 1659

Although the founder of the Cape Colony, Jan van Riebeeck, planted vines and made wine himself, it was not until the arrival of Governor Simon van der Stel in 1679 that wine-making began in earnest. Van der Stel created Groot Constantia, the superb estate on the flanks of Table Mountain, and passed on his wine-making skills to the burghers who settled around Stellenbosch.

Between 1688 and 1690, some 200 Huguenots arrived in the country. They were granted land in the region, particularly around Franschoek (which translates as 'French Corner'), and, although only a few had wine-making experience, they gave the infant industry fresh impetus.

For a long time, Cape wines other than those produced at Groot Constantia were not in great demand and most grapes ended up in brandy. The industry received a boost in the early 19th century as war between Britain and France meant more South African wine was imported to the UK.

Apartheid-era sanctions and the power of the Kooperatiewe Wijnbouwers Vereeniging (KWV; the cooperative formed in 1918 to control minimum prices, production areas and quota limits) didn't exactly encourage innovation and instead hampered the industry. Since 1992 the KWV, now a private company, has lost much of its former influence.

Many new and progressive wine makers are leading South Africa's reemergence onto the world market. New wine-producing areas are being established away from the hotter inland areas, in particular in the cooler coastal areas east of Cape Town around Mossel Bay, Walker Bay and Elgin, and to the north around Durbanville and Darling.

WORKERS' WINES

The black and coloured workforce on the vineyards numbers some 350,000 toiling in vineyards owned by around 4500 whites. Workers often receive the minimum monthly wage in the industry of R650, or less if they are women. The infamous 'tot' system, whereby the wages of labourers are paid partly in wine still happens, and the consequences, socially and physiologically, have been disastrous.

Labour legislation protects workers, but it's not always complied with. Many workers are unaware of their rights and few farm workers are organised. However, after years of slow progress, a step in the right direction was made in November 2002 with the establishment of the nonprofit **Wine Industry and Ethical Trade Association** (WIETA; www.wieta.org.za), whose aim it is to lobby for a better deal for those working in the wine industry. UK wine retailers Tesco, Co-op, Marks & Spencer and ASDA have signed up as members and other UK retailers have shown their support for the scheme, which has already accredited 12 vineyards for following its ethical code; check its website for details.

Various individual wineries are leading the way, too. Out at Solms-Delta (p50), owner Mark Solms has set up the Wijn de Caab Trust to represent the estate's resident employees and their families. Profits from the wine estate are shared on a 40/60 basis with the wine company and the trust beneficiaries. In the Robertson region, 150km east of Cape Town, the Retief family of **Van Loveren Private Cellar** (☎ 023-615 1505; www.vanloveren.co.za) is transferring one of its farms to a trust to be managed by the workers.

The number of wineries that are fully or partly owned by coloured and black workers is growing. **Thabani** (☎ 021-412 9302; www.thabani.co.za; 🚫 not open to the public), in Stellenbosch, is South Africa's first wholly black-owned wine company. It hit the big time in the US when Oprah Winfrey served its lively sauvignon blanc at a party for poet Maya

TOP FIVE WINERIES

The following are our five favourite wineries to visit:

- **Boschendal (p48)** – this classic estate has a fairy-tale location and fine wine, food and architecture.
- **Buitenverwachting (p44)** – enjoy a lovely picnic on an immaculate lawn, and wash it down with the quaffable chardonnay or Rhine riesling.
- **Cabrière Estate (p48)** – attend the Saturday-morning cellar tour to witness the owner slice off the top of a sparkling bottle of wine with his sabre.
- **Fairview (p51)** – sample from a selection of some 23 wines, including the workers' empowerment wine, Fair Valley, as well as many goat's- and cow's-milk cheeses.
- **Vergelegen (p47)** – the Winelands' most elegant estate produces some equally stylish wines, the flagship being its very fruity Vergelegen red.

Angelou. Students of Thabani wine maker Jabulani Ntshangase are now being snapped up by big vineyards, including KWV.

Going from strength to strength is **Thandi** (☎ 021-881 3870; www.thandi.co.za; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat), located in the Elgin area. Thandi (Xhosa for 'Love' or 'Cherish') is the first winery in the world to be Fairtrade certified and its wines, which are available at Tesco in the UK, are beginning to win awards.

Hoping to emulate both of these operations' success is Tseliso Rangaka, a former Johannesburg (Jo'burg) copywriter turned Stellenbosch wine maker. His brand M'hudi is being helped along by Villiera (p47).

The **Fair Valley Workers Association** (Map p49; ☎ 021-863 2450) is a 17-hectare workers' farm next to Fairview. It's still developing its own vineyards, but has already produced several seasons of chenin blanc (sold through the UK wine chain Oddbins) made

with grapes bought in from Fairview, as well as a sauvignon blanc and a pinotage. Tastings and sales are available at Fairview (p51).

At **Nelson's Creek** (Map p49; ☎ 021-869 8453; www.nelsoncreek.co.za; Rte 44, tastings free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat), north of Paarl, the owner has donated part of the estate to his workers to produce their own wines. Under the label New Beginnings, these wines – a classic dry red, a rosé and a dry white – are being sold in the UK, the Netherlands and Japan.

Tukulu (☎ 021-809 7000; www.tukulu.co.za; ☎ not open to the public), from the Darling area, is the flagship Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) brand in the stable of industry giant Distell. This highly successful operation has won awards for its pinotage and is receiving rave reviews for its chenin blanc.

VARIETIES OF WINE

The big news in South African wine circles is the use of new and rarer grape varieties. Keep an eye out for wines aiming to be the white pinotage, made with either tempranillo or the South African-developed nouvelle grape (a crossing of semillon and crouchen blanc, better known as Cape riesling).

Regular pinotage, a cross between pinot noir and *cinsault* (shiraz), which produces a very bold wine, is the Cape's signature grape. Together with other robust red varieties such as shiraz (Syrah) and cabernet sauvignon, it's being challenged by lighter blends of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, shiraz and cabernet franc, making a style closer to Bordeaux styles. The reds attracting the highest prices are cabernet sauvignon and the Bordeaux-style blends. A Cape blend must contain at least 30% pinotage.

The most common variety of white wine is *steen* (chenin blanc). In the last decade or so, more fashionable varieties such as chardonnay and sauvignon blanc have been planted on a wide scale. Other widely planted whites include colombard, semillon, Cape riesling and sweet muscats. Table whites, especially chardonnay, once tended to be heavily oaked and high in alcohol, but lighter, more fruity whites are now in the ascendancy. For good sauvignon blancs, look to wineries in the cooler regions of Constantia, Elgin and Hermanus.

Cap Classique is the name that South Africa's wine industry has come up with for its Champenoise-style wines – many are as good as the real thing, with recommendations being the sparklers of Graham Beck (p48), Cabrière Estate (p48) and Villiera (p47). The very first bottle-fermented sparkling wine produced at the Cape by the Huguenots was called Kaapse Vonkel (Cape Sparkle).

The Worcester region is the country's leading producer of fortified wines, including port, brandy and South Africa's own hanepoot. This dessert wine is made from the Mediterranean grape variety known as muscat of Alexandria to produce a sweet, high-alcohol tippie for the domestic market. In Worcester you'll also find the KWV Brandy Cellar, the largest in the world and the final stop on the Brandy Route, which runs from Van Ryn Brandy Cellar (p47). For more information contact the **South African Brandy Foundation** (☎ 021-887 3157; www.sabrandy.co.za).

WINERY TOURS

With so many nice wines to sample, it's understandable that you may feel anxious about driving yourself around and staying sober. To the rescue come several tour companies that run from Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Franschhoek.

You'll need to make an advance booking for tours. Most tour companies will pick you up from your accommodation and will, depending on the size of the group, tailor the tour to your individual wishes.

CAPE WINE TOURS

☎ 021-462 1121, 083 659 8434;

capewinetours@telkomsa.net; **day tour R365**

A tour of the Winelands kicks off at Villiera in the Stellenbosch region where you'll go on a cellar tour and learn about sparkling wine-making. Other wineries visited include Spier (to see the cheetah project), Fairview and Tokara on the way to Franschhoek.

CHEESE & WINE TOURS

☎ 086 124 3373; www.cheeseandwine.co.za;

tour R675

Meet cheese and wine makers at niche farms and vineyards on this tour, departing from Cape Town Tourism in City Bowl (Map pp248–9) and Waterfront (Map pp252–3).

EASY RIDER WINE TOURS

Map p189
☎ 021-886 4651; www.jump.to/stumble; **tour R250**

Backpackers and travellers have been enjoying Easy Rider's fun wine tours out of Stellenbosch for years. They kick off with a cellar tour and include visits to at least four or five wineries in the region, usually covering Boschendal and Fairview.

FERDINAND'S TOURS & ADVENTURES

☎ 021-913 8800, 072 132 2482;

ferdinand@telkomsa.net; **tour R350**

The boozy backpackers' wine tour. You'll get to visit Durbanville Hills, Simonsig in

Stellenbosch, Seidelberg in Paarl, a cheese farm and a brandy distillery.

FRANSCHHOEK TRAILS

☎ 021-876 2983; erica@hautespoir.co.za; **tour R350**

This company specialises in a range of vineyard walks, with tastings, snacks and nature trails thrown in.

GOURMET WINE TOURS

☎ 021-705 4317, 083 229 3581; www.gourmetwinetours.co.za

Stephen Fleisch, a former chairman of the Wine Taster Guild of South Africa, has over 35 years of wine-tasting experience and runs tours to the wineries of your choice. Rates for a full/half day are R1100/750 for one person and R450/300 for each additional person.

VINEYARD VENTURES

☎ 021-434 8888; www.vineyardventures.co.za;

tour R500

This long-running specialist wine-tour company can customise a wine tour to your needs or suggest places to visit off the beaten track.

WINE DESK AT THE WATERFRONT

Map pp252-3

☎ 021-405 4550; www.winedeskwaterfront.co.za;

Clocktower, Waterfront; tour R490

Drop by the desk at the Waterfront to find out about the daily wine tours, which take in a different selection of wineries each day. The company's Saturday-morning wine club visits two or three different wineries, ending with a meal on one of the farms.

WINE WALKS

☎ 083 631 5944; info@winewalks.co.za; **tour R395**

Local expert Anne Lee Steyn takes visitors on an 8km walking tour of wineries in the Simonsberg area. The walk includes a picnic lunch and tastings; ask Anne about group discounts.

WINE REGIONS

CONSTANTIA

On the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, Constantia is the oldest of South Africa's wine-growing regions. Groot Constantia, the original estate established by Simon van der Stel in 1685, was divided up after his death in 1712, so today you can also visit Buitenverwachting and Klein Constantia, both originally part of the Van der Stel estates. Steenberg Vineyards, which also makes wine for the nearby Constantia Uitsig estate, completes the Constantia wine route.

If you're short of time, head for Groot Constantia, which is among the grandest vineyards and homesteads in the Cape. A delightful way to spend a day, though, is to take a cycling tour of this lush area with Downhill Adventures (p150).

BUITENVERWACHTING Map pp244-5

☎ 021-794 5190; www.buitenverwachting.co.za; Klein Constantia Rd; tastings free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat

Buitenverwachting means 'Beyond Expectations', which is certainly the feeling one gets on visiting this 100-hectare estate that's known for offering good working and living conditions for its employees. For R90 per person you can enjoy a picnic lunch in front of the 1786 manor house (book on ☎ 083 257 6083 or 082 974 8543). The internationally renowned Christine claret usually sells out on the day of its release each year (around November) and the chardonnay and Rhine riesling are among its standout whites.

CONSTANTIA UITSIG Map pp244-5

☎ 021-794 1810; www.uitsig.co.za; Spaanschemat River Rd; tastings free; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3.30pm Sat & Sun

The wine on sale here is actually made at the nearby Steenberg Vineyards. You can also taste wines from some 60 other estates. It's one for foodies since it boasts three excellent restaurants – Constantia Uitsig, La Colombe (p132) and the River Café (p132) – and a luxury hotel (p181).

GROOT CONSTANTIA Map pp244-5

☎ 021-794 5128; www.grootconstantia.co.za; Groot Constantia Rd, High Constantia; tastings incl glass R25; ☎ 9am-6pm Dec-Apr, 9am-5pm May-Nov A superb example of Cape Dutch architecture, Groot Constantia is set in beautiful grounds. Not surprisingly, it can become busy with tour groups, but the estate is big enough for you to escape the crowds, if needs be. In the 18th century, Constantia wines were exported around the world and were highly acclaimed; today you should try its sauvignon blanc, riesling and pinotage.

The beautifully restored homestead is a museum (☎ 021-795 5140; www.museums.org.za/grootcon; adult/child R8/2; ☎ 10am-5pm) and is appropriately furnished; take a look at the tiny slave quarters beneath the main building. The Cloete Cellar, the estate's original wine cellar, now houses old carriages and a display of storage vessels. Book for tours of the modern cellar, which run every hour in summer. It's a lovely spot to bring a picnic, although there are also a couple of restaurants on the estate, including Jonkerhuis (p132).

KLEIN CONSTANTIA Map pp244-5

☎ 021-794 5188; www.kleinconstantia.com; Klein Constantia Rd; tastings free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat

This winery, part of the original Constantia estate, is famous for its Vin de Constance, a deliciously sweet muscat wine (R245). It was Napoleon's solace on St Helena, and Jane Austen had one of her heroines recommend it for having the power to heal 'a disappointed heart'. We can't guarantee that, but we can say that while Klein Constantia doesn't offer the frills and bonuses of other wineries, it's still worth visiting for its excellent tasting room and informative displays. Also try the riesling, sauvignon blanc and Marlbrook, a classic Bordeaux-style blend. At the estate's entrance, pause to look at the *karamat* (saint's tomb) of Sheik Abdurachman Matebe Shah; he was buried in 1661.

STEEBERG VINEYARDS Map pp244-5

☎ 021-713 2211; www.steenberg-vineyards.com; Steenberg Rd; tastings free; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-1.30pm Sat

The oldest Cape wine estate after Constantia, Steenberg began life under the name Swaane-weide (Feeding Place of the Swans) in 1682. Its great merlot, sauvignon blanc reserve and semillon are the wines to sample. The estate also encompasses Steenberg Hotel, a five-star country hotel in the original restored manor house, and an 18-hole golf course. Cellar tours are by appointment and run at 10am and 3pm Monday to Friday (R15).

DURBANVILLE

The other major wine-growing area within Cape Town's metropolitan borders is Durbanville (Map p186; www.durbanvillewine.co.za), around 20 minutes' drive north of the city centre. Vines have been grown here since 1698 and the area's signature grape is sauvignon blanc, which benefits from the cooler winds the hills receive off the coast. Spend a pleasant day with time to spare exploring the eight wineries in the area.

DURBANVILLE HILLS

☎ 021-558 1300; www.durbanvillehills.co.za; M13, Durbanville; tastings R10, tour & tastings R20; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2.30pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun

Tired of the Cape Dutch-style wine cellars? Then visit this winery in an ultramodern

building commanding a hilltop above the Durbanville vineyards. There's a splendid view of Table Bay and Table Mountain from its stone-clad bastion. Best known for its merlot and its sauvignon blanc, the winery also has a good restaurant, @The Hills (meals around R70; ☎ noon-3pm Tue-Sun, 7-10pm Wed-Sat Oct-Mar, call for dinner opening times in other months).

MEERENDAL

☎ 021-975 1655; www.meerendal.co.za; M48 Visserhok, Durbanville; tastings R10; ☎ 8am-5pm With some of the oldest pinotage and shiraz vineyards in South Africa, Meerendal certainly has a pedigree for its wines. Its fortunes have really taken off since 2004 when new owners took over the historic farm. Locals rave about the quality of its formal restaurant Wheatfields, the more casual Barn & Lawn bistro, and its deli food, which can be enjoyed with a drop of its sauvignon blanc on the wooden deck. Book for the Sunday buffet (adult/child R120/45).

STELLENBOSCH

It was Stellenbosch in the 1970s that first promoted a 'wine route', an idea that has since been enthusiastically taken up by every wine-growing region in South Africa. For details of wineries in this area not listed here, contact the Stellenbosch Wine Routes (☎ 021-886 4310; www.wine.route.co.za), or the 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). For information on other sights in the area, and for sleeping and eating options, see p188.

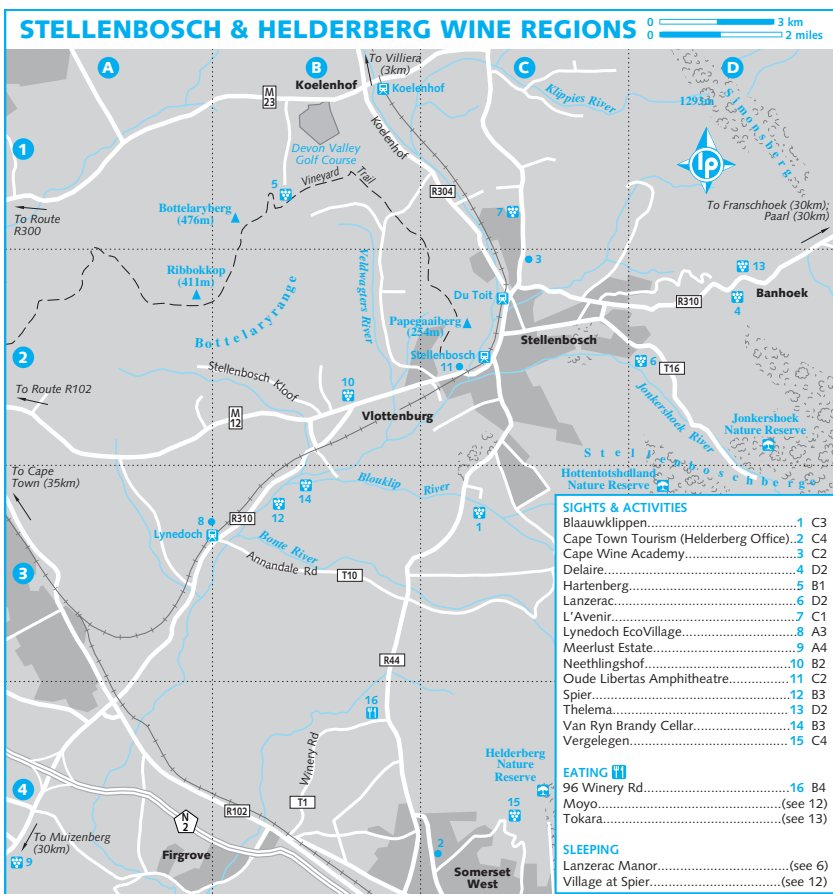
BLAAUWKLIIPPEN Map p46

☎ 021-880 0133; www.blaauwklippen.com; Rte 44; tastings R25; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 9am-4pm Sun

This rustic, 300-year-old estate with several fine Cape Dutch buildings is known for its excellent red wines, particularly its cabernet sauvignon and zinfandel. Cellar tours are by appointment and lunch is available (call for times, as they change according to the season). It's a good one for kids on weekends when it has horse-and-carriage rides around the estate (R10).



Manor house, Groot Constantia (above)

**DELAIRE** Map p46☎ 021-885 1756; www.delairewinery.co.za;

Rte 310; tastings R10; ☎ 10am-5pm

Known as the 'vineyard in the sky' because of its location at the top of the Helshoogte Pass on Rte 310, the views are, naturally, stunning. Delaire is a friendly place, and has wheelchair access to the restaurant, picnics available October to April (bookings essential), and log cabin accommodation. Try the cabernet sauvignon and merlot.

HARTENBERG Map p46☎ 021-882 2541; www.hartenbergestate.com;

off M23; tastings free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri,

9am-3pm Sat

Thanks to a favourable microclimate, this estate, founded in 1692, produces many

award-winning wines, notably its cabernet sauvignon, merlot and shiraz. Lunch is available at Hartenberg from noon to 2pm (bookings are essential). The estate is located off Bottelary Rd, 10km northwest of Stellenbosch.

LANZERAC Map p46☎ 021-886 5641; www.lanzeracwines.co.za; off

Jonkershoek Rd, Jonkershoek Valley; tastings R16;

☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-4pm Fri, 10am-2pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun

Lanzerac produces a very good merlot and quaffable cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay. The tastings include a free glass and biscuits. Here you'll also find Stellenbosch's most luxurious hotel, Lanzerac Manor (p192).

L'AVENIR Map p46

☎ 021-889 5001; www.lavenir.co.za; Rte 44; tastings R10-20; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat

Its name means 'the Future', but it's this estate's track record that earns it repeat visitors, who come not for the facilities (there's no restaurant) but for the simply splendid wines: the chenin blanc is divine and the pinotage has won more awards for this cultivar than any other in the country. Ask about staying overnight in the cottages. The estate is 5km out of Stellenbosch on the way to Paarl.

MEERLUST ESTATE Map p46☎ 021-843 3587; www.meerlust.co.za; Rte 310;

tastings R20; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat

One of South Africa's most celebrated wine estates (in operation since 1693), Meerlust turns out Rubicon, a wine that John Platner's guide calls the 'preeminent Cape claret'. Its new tasting room, decorated with the owner's collection of posters and a fine history of the winery, is worth a look.

NEETHLINGSHOF Map p46☎ 021-883 8898; www.neethlingshof.co.za; M12;

tastings R20; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat-Sun

A stunning tree-lined approach leads to a charming 300-year-old estate with a rose garden and tearoom. There are cellar and vineyard tours, and the pinotage and cabernet sauvignon, from this, one of the most popular estates in the Winelands, have won several awards.

SPIER Map p46☎ 021-809 1100; www.spier.co.za; Rte 310;

tastings R12; ☎ 9am-5pm

There's something for everyone at this mega-estate, which offers steam-train trips (☎ 021-419 5222; www.vintagetrains.co.za) from Cape Town, horse riding, a cheetah-conservation project, a performing-arts centre, beautifully restored Cape Dutch buildings and several restaurants, including the spectacular if somewhat cheesy African-themed Moyo (p191). Its wines are nothing to shout about, but during the tasting you can try lots of other vineyards' wines. Check out the annual arts festival (p9) that runs from January to March – it's as good a reason as any for coming here. If you want to stay over there's a good Cape Malay-style hotel, the *Village at Spier* (p192).

THELEMA Map p46☎ 021-885 1924; www.thelema.co.za; Rte 310;

tastings free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat

At the head of the Helshoogte Pass, opposite Delaire, this relatively young winery overlooking the Drakenstein Mountains has already earned a sterling reputation thanks to its fine cabernet sauvignon, merlot and chardonnay wines.

VAN RYN BRANDY CELLAR Map p46☎ 021-881 3875; www.distell.co.za; Van Ryn Rd, off Rte 310, Vlootenburg; tastings R15;

☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1.30pm Sat

Van Ryn is at the start of the Western Cape Brandy Route. They generally run three tours daily here and include a tasting. In the boardroom you can view fine South African artworks, including works by Irma Stern and the incredibly lifelike sculptures of Anton van Wouw. It's 8km southwest of Stellenbosch.

VILLIERA☎ 021-865 2002; www.villiera.com; Koelenhof; tastings free;

☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat

Apart from supplying wines to Woolworths in South Africa and Marks & Spencer in the UK (its Crows Fountain range), this winery also produces several excellent méthode cap classique wines, which include a brut natural made from naturally fermented chardonnay with no added sulphur. It also works with M'hudi wines, a black-owned neighbouring wine farm, producing a chenin blanc, sauvignon blanc and pinotage.

HELDERBERG

This area around Somerset West, which is 20km south of Stellenbosch, has some 20 wineries, including Vergelegen, arguably the most beautiful estate in the Cape. For more information on the area contact the Helderberg office of Cape Town Tourism (Map p46; ☎ 021-840 1400; www.tourismcapetown.co.za; 186 Main Rd, Somerset West).

VERGELEGEN Map p46☎ 021-847 1334; www.vergelegen.co.za;

Lourensford Rd, Somerset West; admission R10, tastings R20.50-10; ☎ 9.30am-4pm

Simon van der Stel's son Willem first planted vines here in 1700. The buildings and elegant grounds have ravishing mountain views and a 'stately home' feel to

them. On the dining front you can choose from the casual Rose Terrace overlooking the Rose Garden, the upmarket Lady Phillips Restaurant, or a picnic hamper (R110 per person) – bookings are essential for the last two options; neither is available between April and September.

FRANSCHHOEK

Many of Franschhoek's wineries are within walking distance of the town centre, but to get to others (indeed, to reach the town), you're best off with your own transport. To find out about more wineries in the area see www.franschhoekwines.co.za.

BACKSBERG

Map p49
 ☎ 021-875 5141; www.backsberg.co.za; Rte 310; tastings R15; 🕒 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun Sep-Jun
 An immensely popular estate thanks to its reliable label and lavish outdoor lunches, Backsberg is more or less equidistant between Franschhoek and Stellenbosch. Its white wines have won awards, but, along with L'Avenir (p47), this is one of the country's best examples of the home-grown pinotage cultivar.

BOSCHENDAL

Map p49
 ☎ 021-870 4210; www.boschendal.com; Rte 310; 🕒 8.30am-4.30pm Nov-Apr, 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Sat May-Oct
 Tucked beneath some awesome mountains, this is the classic Winelands estate, with lovely architecture, food and wine. Note the Taphuis wine-tasting area (where tastings cost R15, or R22 for a formal tasting with a guide) is at the opposite end of the estate from the Groote Drakenstein manor house (admission R10) and restaurants. Its reds, including cabernet sauvignon and merlot, get top marks. The blowout buffet lunch (R195) in the main restaurant is mainly a group affair. Far nicer, especially in fine weather, is Le Café where you can have a snack or something more substantial. Also very popular are 'Le Pique Nique' hampers (R95 per person, minimum two people) served under parasols on the lawn from mid-October to the end of April (for bookings call ☎ 021-870 4274). Boschendal is on Rte 310 towards Stellenbosch.

CABRIÈRE ESTATE

Map p193
 ☎ 021-876 8500; www.cabriere.co.za; Berg St; tastings with/without cellar tour R25/20; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-3.30pm Sat, tours 11am & 3pm Mon-Fri, 11am Sat
 The tastings at this estate include a couple of sparkling wines and one of the vineyard's excellent range of white, red and dessert wines and brandies. No wonder it's so popular. At the Saturday session, stand by for the proprietor's party trick of slicing open a bottle of bubbly with a sabre. Try the wines in paired combinations with food at the Haute Cabrière Cellar (p194).

CHAMONIX

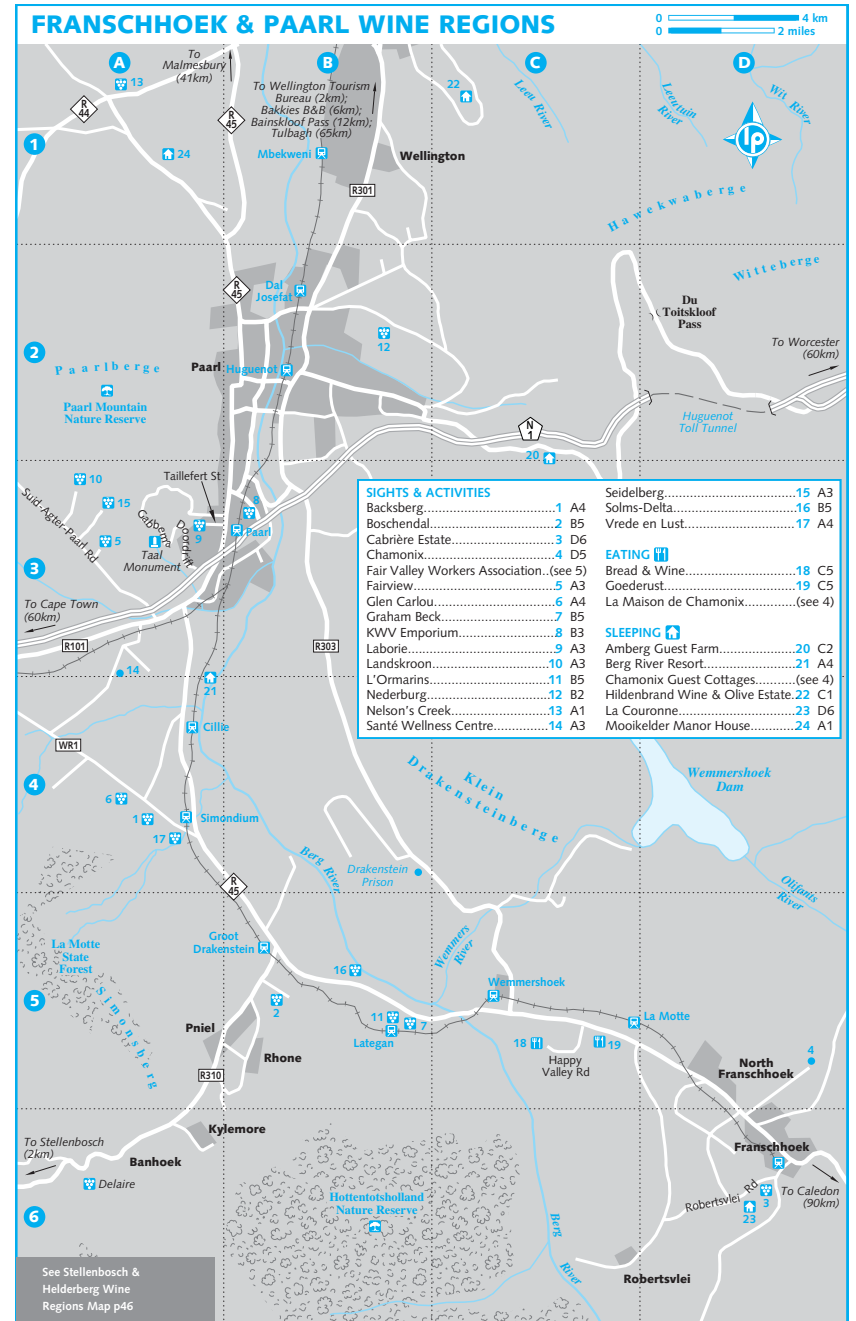
Map p49
 ☎ 021-876 2494; www.chamonix.co.za; Uitkyk St; tastings R15; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm, cellar tours 11am & 3pm by appointment
 The tasting room at this winery is in a converted blacksmith's workshop; there's also a range of schnapps and mineral water to sample. The pretty restaurant La Maison de Chamonix (mains R70-90; 🕒 lunch Mon-Sun, dinner Fri & Sat) has a reasonably priced lunch menu. You can also stay in self-catered cottages (R200 per person) amid the vineyards.

GRAHAM BECK

Map p49
 ☎ 021-874 1258; www.grahambeckwines.co.za; Rte 45; tastings free; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat
 As at the main estate out at Robertson, the buildings here are all determinedly modern with some striking contemporary sculptures to match. Its eminently drinkable products include fizzers that give French champagnes a run for their money, and the Rhona Muscadel that's heaven in a glass.

GRANDE PROVENCE

Map p193
 ☎ 021-876 8600; www.grandeprovence.co.za; Main Rd, Franschhoek; tastings R12; 🕒 10am-6pm Nov-Apr, 9am-5pm May-Oct
 A beautifully revamped 18th-century manor house is home to a stylish restaurant and a splendid gallery showcasing the best local artists. In the tasting room you can try the very easy-drinking Angel Tears blends or the more upmarket Grande Provence wines. The Jonkershuis lounge (used for meetings and conferences) is worth a look and if you really want to push the boat out, the luxurious Owner's Cottage is available to sleep in.



WINE FOR BEGINNERS *by Al Simmonds*

Just starting out? Use this handy guide and you'll never be caught confusing your vin rouge with your vanity.

Starting Off

It's a good idea to decide on a cellar before you head off, and to call ahead to make sure they're open and that they have space for tasting (many can get very busy from December to March). Allow around an hour for every estate you visit (not including stopping for food). It's worth joining at least one cellar tour; these can be fascinating. Appoint a designated driver.

Tasting

Most cellars will ask you to buy a tasting glass, or include one in the tasting price. These are generally marked with the estate logo, so double as souvenirs. Don't ask for too much wine; estates tend to put a cap on how much they'll let you drink. When tasting, try to ask for wines by cultivar (see below) – this makes it seem like you're choosing a wine by type and taste rather than if it's drinkable (or cheap). Try to start with dry white wines, then move on to red, and sweet/dessert wines last. Smell the wine and pour some into your mouth. Do not swallow, and spit it out after a few swirls into a spittoon. Clear your palate with some water and continue. Note that smoking is not allowed in tasting rooms.

Ageing

The age of a wine can determine when it should be drunk. Usually the wine maker decides how long a wine will age in the bottle before it is released. Most wines are made to be drunk soon after being bought; finer wines, usually reds, benefit from additional 'ageing' by the consumer. Ask the estate when its wines will be ready for drinking, and match this with your needs.

Buying

You can buy wines by the bottle or case to take with you, but most estates have home-delivery services and will allow you to buy mixed cases (bottles of different labels). Wines start at about R30 per bottle, with a very good wine usually costing around R60 per bottle. Fork out R100 and up, and you'll get a smashing bottle of vino.

Quick Glossary

aroma – the smell of a wine; some people use the term aroma for younger wines and bouquet for those that have been aged

blend – a mix of two or more cultivars in one wine, eg colombard-chardonnay

body – the tactile impression of wine in your mouth

cru – a particular vineyard of merit

cultivar – also known as 'varietal', this refers to the type of grape grown and used in cultivation, eg zinfandel, pinotage, riesling

dry – a wine that is not sweet, one that can feel rough or dry in the mouth

estate wine – wine made from grapes grown only on the estate in question, as opposed to that made with grapes bought from another estate

finish – the impression a wine leaves in the mouth after it is drunk, particularly in terms of length and persistence of flavour

plonk – a corruption of 'blanc', used to refer to cheap or poor-tasting wine

vintage – the year in which the grapes used in making a particular wine were harvested, often applied to an excellent label

L'ORMARINS *Map p49*

☎ 021-874 1026; www.lormarins.co.za; off Rte 45; tastings R20; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, tours by appointment

A pleasant enough estate, but it's the wines that have punters coming back for more. Try its excellent selection of dry white blends.

SOLMS-DELTA *Map p49*

☎ 021-874 3937; www.solms-delta.com; Delta Rd, off R45, Franschoek; tastings free; ☎ 9am-5pm Only a couple of wines have been produced so far by the current owners of this 300-year-old wine farm, but a visit here is highly recommended to view the Museum

Van de Caab, in the original wine cellar. This remarkable museum tells the story of the Delta wine farm from the perspective of the people who worked and still work on it – the presentation of extensive research is excellent. Outside you can see the archaeological site of the farm's first homesteads. Sixty percent of the vineyard's profits goes back to the employees.

VREDE EN LUST *Map p49*

☎ 021-874 1611; www.vnl.co.za; cnr Rte 45 & Klapmuts Rd, Simondium; tastings R15; ☎ 10am-5pm

The first vintage for this replanted vineyard was released in 2002, although the estate dates back to 1688 when original owner Jacques de Savoye named it 'Peace and Eagerness'. It specialises in blends. The location and buildings are very attractive and there's a deli and restaurant where you can try locally made cheeses and bread.

PAARL

For information about wineries in the area other than those listed here, contact Paarl Vintners (☎ 021-872 3841). For information on other sights in the area, and for sleeping and eating options, see p195.

FAIRVIEW *Map p49*

☎ 021-863 2450; www.fairview.co.za; Suid-Agter-Paarl Rd, off Rte 101; tastings R10; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat

This is a wonderful winery, though perhaps not the place to come for a calm wine tasting. Peacocks and goats in a tower (apparently goats love to climb) greet you on arrival, and tastings are great value since they cover two dozen wines and a wide range of goat's- and cow's-milk cheeses. You can sample and buy the pinotage and chenin blanc of the Fair Valley Workers Association (p42) here too.

GLEN CARLOU *Map p49*

☎ 021-875 5528; www.glencarlou.co.za; Simondium Rd, Klapmuts; tastings free; ☎ 9am-4.45pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sun A quaint estate, with a new gallery and tasting room with panoramic views of Tortoise Hill. Its shiraz is made with a small percentage of viognier and mourvèdre grapes.

KWV EMPORIUM *Map p49*

☎ 021-807 3007; www.kwv-international.com; Kohler St; tastings R20; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Sat This is one of the country's best-known wineries because its products are mostly sold overseas. Some KWV port and sherry is available inside South Africa, and its fortified wines, in particular, are among the world's best. Cellar tours are at its complex near the railway line. Call for times of cellar tours (R20), which are worth taking if only to see the enormous Cathedral Cellar that was built in 1930.

LABORIE *Map p49*

☎ 021-807 3390; www.kwv-international.com; Taillefert St; tastings R9; ☎ 9am-5pm Oct-Apr, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat May-Sep Laborie is KWV's attractive showcase vineyard, located just off Main Rd. It's known for its shiraz and Alambic Brandy. The restaurant (☎ 021-807 3095; mains R45-70) is in an old Cape Dutch building and serves dishes such as springbok shanks and kingklip.

LANDSKROON *Map p49*

☎ 021-863 1039; Suid-Agter-Paarl Rd, off Rte 101; tastings R10; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat

Five generations of the De Villiers family have been perfecting their wine-making skills on this pleasant estate. Overlooking the vines, there's a nice terrace on which you can quaff the cabernet sauvignon and celebrated port.

NEDERBURG *Map p49*

☎ 021-862 3104; www.nederburg.co.za; off Meaker Rd; tastings R10; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat year-round, 10am-4pm Sat, 11am-4pm Sun Dec-Mar

This is one of South Africa's most well known labels. It's a big but professional and welcoming operation featuring a vast range of wines. It offers an informative food and wine tasting (R20) that teaches you which types of flavour the wines will work best with. The picnic lunches cost R90 per person (December to March only, bookings essential) and are very popular. Nederburg is off the N1 exit 62, 7km east of Paarl.

SEIDELBERG Map p49

☎ 021-863 3495; www.seidelberg.co.za;

Suid-Agter-Paarl Rd, off Rte 101; tastings with/without cellar tour R18/12; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun

Tucked in between Fairview and Landskroon, serene Seidelberg offers an escape from the bacchanalian hordes. Uniquely it features tours and demonstrations of on-site bronze casting and glass-blowing, with a corresponding gallery. There's a restaurant offering light meals and terrific views, perfectly complemented by a strong selection of reds.

OTHER WINE REGIONS

If you have more time, a trip further afield to the wine-growing regions of Robertson (Map p186), Tulbagh (Map p186) and Darling (Map p186) should prove rewarding. Named, respectively, the **Robertson Wine Valley** (☎ 023-626 3167; www.robertsonwinevalley.com), the **Tulbagh Wine Route** (☎ 023-230 1348; www.tulbaghwineroute.com) and the **Darling Wine Experience** (☎ 022-492 3361), these areas are not as tourist-heavy as the Cape Winelands yet still boast beautiful estates and excellent wines.

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THE RECENT PAST

Bush fires may be a natural part of Table Mountain's life cycle, but that doesn't make them any more welcome. In January 2006 a cigarette butt allegedly tossed by an English tourist set off a fire on the northern flank of Table Mountain that eventually engulfed a 700-hectare area from Devil's Peak to Lion's Head. A 65-year-old British tourist died from smoke inhalation but, although hundreds of people were evacuated, no homes were damaged.

In contrast, regular blazes throughout the year lay waste to hundreds of shacks in the townships, leaving thousands with nothing other than the clothes they stand in. The clearly overstretched fire brigade complains of underpay and poor working conditions – some members hadn't even received a new uniform since the time of apartheid.

Fires of quite another type were also snuffed out on Clifton Beach No 2 in late January 2006. Audiences of around 1000 were attending the Monday-night drumming circle on the beach, accompanied by the pyrotechnics of a group of fire dancers. The well-heeled residents of Clifton complained, prompting a squadron of police to raid the beach, snuffing out spectators' candles, searching bags for alcohol (illegal on the beach) and other substances, and generally being spoilsports.

Also messing up Cape Town's life was the troubled Koeberg nuclear power station, which at full capacity provides just under half of the Western Cape's peak electricity demand. On Christmas Day 2005, one of Koeberg's two generation units was shut down due to damage caused by a loose bolt left behind during routine maintenance. Intermittent power cuts followed and became more frequent when Koeberg's second power unit failed a couple of months later. There was chaos as the robots (traffic lights) failed and cash registers and computers seized up. Sales of generators soared.

The power cuts, combined with charges of corruption and cronyism levelled at the city's African National Congress (ANC)-controlled council, led to the party narrowly losing out to the Democratic Alliance (DA) in the municipal elections of March 2006. Although the third-placed Independent Party refused to work with the DA, negotiations with other smaller parties secured the DA's Helen Zille as Cape Town's new mayor. That same day the country's last white president, FW de Klerk, celebrated his 70th birthday at a party in the Mount Nelson Hotel where Nelson Mandela was the surprise guest of honour on a list that read like a who's who of modern South Africa.

FROM THE BEGINNING

THE SAN & KHOIKHOI PEOPLES

South Africa lays strong claim to being the cradle of mankind. At Langebaan Lagoon (north of Cape Town), the discovery of 117,000-year-old fossilised footprints prompted one researcher to speculate that 'Eve' (the very first human, the common ancestor of us all) lived here.

Little is known about these first humans, but there are signs that they conducted funerals, an indication of at least basic culture. Academics don't know whether the earliest-recorded inhabitants of South Africa – the San people – are direct descendants or if they returned to the area after aeons of travel anything between 40,000 and 25,000 years ago.

The term Khoisan is used to describe both the San who were nomadic hunters and gatherers, and the Khoikhoi (also known as Khoekhoen, possibly meaning 'Men of Men') who were seminomadic hunters and pastoralists. It is believed the Khoikhoi developed from San

TOP FIVE BOOKS ON CAPE TOWN'S HISTORY

- *A Travellers History of South Africa* (2003), by David Mason, is the latest edition of an easy-to-understand historical account of the country, covering a fair amount of historical happenings in Cape Town. It includes a chronology of major events and an A-to-Z gazetteer.
- *Cape Town: The Making of a City and Cape Town in the Twentieth Century* (1999), by Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden, are a pair of well-illustrated books on local history written by a trio of academics from the University of Cape Town. The former covers events up to 1899, the latter covers the following century; they're less dry than you'd expect.
- The finely illustrated *A Prisoner in the Garden: Opening Nelson Mandela's Prison Archive* (2005) reveals the history of the official Prison Archive of the apartheid era. It is published together for the first time with the piece of the archive connected with Mandela's incarceration. It's part of the great man's Centre of Memory project begun in 2004.
- *Recalling Community in Cape Town* (2001), edited by Ciraj Rassool and Sundra Posalendis, is an illustrated account of the District Six area demolished during apartheid and how its memory was kept alive by those who once lived there.
- Allister Sparks, one of South Africa's most respected journalists, provides a realistic, optimistic view of the country's future in *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa* (2003).

groups in present-day Botswana. For centuries, perhaps even millennia, the San and the Khoikhoi intermarried and coexisted, so the distinction was by no means clear.

Culturally and physically, the Khoisan developed differently from the Negroid peoples of Africa, although it's possible that they came into contact with pastoralist Bantu-speaking tribes as, in addition to hunting and gathering food, they became pastoralists, with cattle and sheep. The Khoisan migrated south, reaching the Cape of Good Hope about 2000 years ago. It was not uncommon for impoverished Khoikhoi to revert to a hunter-gatherer existence, or for the San to acquire domestic animals.

FIRST EUROPEAN VISITORS

The first recorded Europeans to sight the Cape were the Portuguese, who passed by on their search for a sea route to India and for the most precious of medieval commodities: spices. Bartholomeu Dias rounded the Cape in 1488, naming it Cabo da Boa Esperança (Cape of Good Hope), but didn't linger long, as his sights were fixed on the trade riches of the east coast of Africa and the Indies.

The Portuguese had no interest in a permanent settlement. The Cape offered them little more than fresh water, since their attempts to trade with the Khoisan often ended in violence, and the coast and its fierce weather posed a terrible threat to their tiny caravels.

By the end of the 16th century, English and Dutch traders were beginning to challenge the Portuguese, and the Cape became a regular stopover for their scurvy-ridden crews. In 1647 a Dutch vessel was wrecked in Table Bay; its crew built a fort and stayed for a year before they were rescued.

This crystallised the value of a permanent settlement in the minds of the directors of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; VOC). They had no intention of colonising the country, but simply wanted to establish a secure base where ships could shelter and stock up on fresh supplies of meat, fruit and vegetables.

THE DUTCH ARRIVE

Jan van Riebeeck was chosen by the VOC to lead an expedition of 80 company employees – mainly poorly educated soldiers and sailors – charged with building a fort, bartering with the Khoisan for meat, and planting a garden. He reached Table Bay on 6 April 1652, built a mud-walled fort not far from the site of the stone Castle of Good Hope (p93) that survives today, and planted the gardens now known as the Company's Gardens (p93).

TIMELINE c 100,000 BC

San people settle Southern Africa

AD 1488

Bartholomeu Dias sails around the Cape of Good Hope

1652

The Dutch establish a settlement in Table Bay (Cape Town)

c 1690

Boers move into the hinterland around present-day Cape Town



Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens (p105)

The Dutch were not greeted with open arms by either the San (later to be called Bushmen by the European settlers) or the Khoikhoi (likewise called Hottentots); intermittent hostilities broke out. In 1660, in a gesture that took on an awful symbolism, Van Riebeeck planted a wild almond hedge to protect his European settlement from the Khoisan. The hedge ran around the western foot of Table Mountain down to Table Bay, and a section of it can still be seen in the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens (p105). The irony was that contact between the Europeans and the Khoisan would prove far more dangerous for the locals, who were mortally vulnerable to the guns and diseases of the colonists.

The Khoisan proving uncooperative, the Cape settlement was soon suffering a chronic labour shortage. From 1657 Van Riebeeck started releasing VOC employees, allowing them to farm land independently, thus beginning the colonisation process of Southern Africa and giving birth to the Boers (see opposite). The following year he began to import slaves from West Africa, Madagascar, India, Ceylon, Malaya and Indonesia, among other places. By the time the slave trade was ended in 1807, some 60,000 slaves had been brought to the Cape, laying the foundations for the unique mix of cultures and races found here today.

THE SETTLEMENT GROWS

The process of colonisation kicked off a series of wars between the Khoikhoi and the Dutch in which the locals were obviously no match for the well-armed and organised Europeans. The Dutch, who were keen to bolster their numbers, allowed some 200 Huguenots, French Calvinists fleeing persecution by King Louis XIV, to settle on the Cape in 1688.

There was a shortage of women in the colony, so female slaves and Khoisan women were exploited both for labour and for sex. In time, the slaves intermixed with the Khoisan, too. The offspring of these unions form the basis of sections of today's coloured population.

Under the VOC's almost complete control, Kaapstad (the Dutch name for Cape Town) provided a comfortable European lifestyle for a growing number of artisans and entrepreneurs servicing ships and crews. By the middle of the 18th century there were around 3000 people living in the riotous port, known as the 'Tavern of the Seas' by every navigator, privateer and merchant travelling between Europe and the East (including Australia).

1795

British capture Cape Town

1808

Slave trade abolished

THE BRITISH TAKE OVER

As the 18th century progressed, the global power of the Dutch was waning and under challenge by the British. The fourth Anglo-Dutch War was fought between 1780 and 1783. French regiments were sent to Cape Town to help the Dutch defend the city, but the British eventually prevailed at the Battle of Muizenberg in 1795 and took control of the Cape from the VOC, which by then was bankrupt.

The Treaty of Amiens (1803) had the British cede the Cape back to the Dutch, but this proved just a lull in the Napoleonic Wars. In 1806 at Bloubergstrand, 25km north of Cape Town, the British again defeated the Dutch. The colony was ceded to the British on 13 August 1814.

The British abolished the slave trade in 1808 and the remaining Khoisan were finally given the explicit protection of the law (including the right to own land) in 1828. These moves contributed to Afrikaners' dissatisfaction and their mass migration, which came to be known as the Great Trek, inland from the Cape Colony.

Despite outlawing slavery, the British introduced new laws that laid the basis for an exploitive labour system little different from slavery. Thousands of dispossessed blacks sought work in the colony, but it was made a crime to be in the colony without a pass – and without work. It was also a crime to leave a job.

CAPE ECONOMY BOOMS

The British introduced free trade, which greatly benefited Cape Town's economy. Cape wines, in particular, were a huge hit, accounting for some 10% of British wine consumption by 1822. During the first half of the 19th century, before the Suez Canal opened, British officers serving in India would holiday at the Cape.

Capetonians successfully managed to stop the British government's attempt to turn the colony into another Australia when their governor, Sir Harry Smith, forbade 282 British prisoners from leaving the ship *Neptune* when it docked in Cape Town in 1849. The *Neptune* continued to Tasmania and the Capetonians, who had challenged the might of the empire, became bolder in their demands for self-government.

In 1854 a representative parliament was formed in Cape Town, but much to the dismay of Dutch and English farmers to the north and east, the British government and Cape liberals insisted on a multiracial constituency (albeit with financial requirements that excluded the vast majority of blacks and coloureds).

In 1860 construction of the Alfred Basin in the docks commenced, which finally provided Cape Town with a stormproof port. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 dramatically decreased the amount of shipping that sailed via the Cape, but the discovery of diamonds and gold in the centre of South Africa in the 1870s and '80s helped Cape Town maintain its position as the country's premier port.

Immigrants flooded into the city and the population trebled from 33,000 in 1875 to over 100,000 people at the turn of the 20th century.

WHO ARE THE BOERS?

The Afrikaner population of South Africa today has its roots in the Dutch and early European settlers of the Cape. The more independent of these settlers soon began drifting away from the strict regime of the VOC into the countryside. These were the first of the Trekboers (literally 'Trekking Farmers'), who were later known just as Boers.

Fiercely independent, with livelihoods based on rearing cattle, the Boers were not so different from the Khoisan they came into conflict with as they colonised the interior. Many Boers were illiterate and most had no source of information other than the Bible. Isolated from other Europeans, they developed their own separate culture and eventually their own language, Afrikaans, derived from the argot of their slaves.

1814

Cape Colony ceded to British

1834

Slaves emancipated

ISLAMIC CAPE TOWN

Islam first came to the Cape with the slaves brought by the Dutch from the Indian subcontinent and Indonesia. Although the religion could not be practised openly in the colony until 1804, the presence of influential and charismatic political and religious figures among the slaves helped a cohesive Cape Muslim community to develop. One such political dissident was the exiled Islamic leader Tuan Guru from Tidore, who arrived in 1780. During his 13 years on Robben Island Tuan Guru accurately copied the Quran from memory. In 1798 he helped establish the Owl Mosque, the city's first mosque, in the Bo-Kaap, thus making this area the heart of the Islamic community in Cape Town, as it still is today.

Tuan Guru is buried in the Bo-Kaap's Tana Baru cemetery, one of the oldest in South Africa, at the western end of Longmarket St. His grave is one of the 20 or so *karamats* (tombs of Muslim saints) encircling Cape Town and visited by the faithful on mini pilgrimages. Other *karamats* are found on Robben Island (that of Sayed Abdurahman Matura), at the gate to the Klein Constantia wine estate (that of Sheik Abdurachman Matebe Shah), and by the Eerste River in Macassar (that of Sheik Yussof, the most significant Muslim leader of his time).

Despite fears during the 1990s that Cape Town could become embroiled in violent Islamic fundamentalism (see p63), religious divisions and suspicion are not something that mark the city today. You'll encounter many friendly faces while wandering around the Bo-Kaap, where you can drop by the local museum (p93) to find out more about the community. A sizable Muslim community also lived in Simon's Town before the Group Areas Act evictions of the late 1960s. Its history can be traced at the Heritage Museum (p108) in Simon's Town.

One of the most important events in Islamic Cape Town's calendar is Eid, the last night of Ramadan, falling at the end of October or early November. Some 6000 Muslims bring a picnic to break the fast and gather along Sea Point's promenade to watch the moon rise.

BOER WAR & AFTER

After the Great Trek, the Boers established several independent republics, the largest being the Orange Free State (today's Free State province) and the Transvaal (today's Northern Province, Gauteng and Mpumalanga).

When the world's richest gold reef was found in the Transvaal (a village called Johannesburg sprang up beside it), the British were miffed that the Boers should control such wealth and precipitated war in 1899. The Boers were vastly outnumbered but their tenacity and knowledge of the country resulted in a long and bitter conflict. The British finally defeated them in 1902.

Cape Town was not directly involved in any of the fighting but it did play a key role in landing and supplying the half a million imperial and colonial troops who fought on the British side. The Mount Nelson Hotel was used as headquarters by Lords Roberts and Kitchener.

Bubonic plague in 1901 gave the government an excuse to introduce racial segregation, even though the disease had actually arrived in the Cape on a ship from Argentina. Blacks were moved to two locations, one near the docks and the other at Ndabeni on the western flank of Table Mountain. This was the start of what later would develop into the townships of the Cape Flats.

After the war, the British made some efforts towards reconciliation, and instituted moves towards the union of the separate South African provinces. In the Cape, blacks and coloureds retained a limited franchise (although only whites could become members of the national parliament, and eligible blacks and coloureds constituted only around 7% of the electorate), but did not have the vote in other provinces.

The issue of which city should become the capital was solved by the unwieldy compromise of making Cape Town the seat of the legislature, Pretoria the administrative capital, and Bloemfontein the judicial capital. The Union of South Africa came into being in the year of 1910.

1881

Boers defeat British, and Transvaal becomes South African Republic

1899

Anglo-Boer War starts; finishes in 1902

APARTHEID RULES

Afrikaners were economically and socially disadvantaged when compared with the English-speaking minority, which controlled most of the capital and industry in the new country. This, plus lingering bitterness over the war and Afrikaners' distaste at having to compete with blacks and coloureds for low-paying jobs, led to strident Afrikaner nationalism and the formation of the National Party (NP).

In 1948 the National Party came to power on a platform of apartheid (literally, 'the state of being apart'). In a series of bitter court and constitutional battles, the right of coloureds to vote in the Cape was removed (blacks had been denied the vote since 1910) and the insane apparatus of apartheid was erected.

Mixed marriages were prohibited, interracial sex was made illegal and every person was classified by race. The Group Areas Act defined where people of each 'race' could live and the Separate Amenities Act created separate public facilities: separate beaches, separate buses, separate toilets, separate schools and separate park benches. Blacks were compelled to carry passes at all times and were prohibited from living in or even visiting towns without specific permission.

The Dutch Reformed Church justified apartheid on religious grounds, claiming the separateness of the races was divinely ordained. The *volk* (literally, the 'people', but it really meant just Afrikaners) had a holy mission to preserve the purity of the white race in its promised land.

FICTIONAL HOMELANDS

A system of Homelands was set up in 1951, whereby the proportion of land available for black ownership in South Africa increased very slightly to 13%. Blacks then made up about 75% of the population. The Homelands idea was that each black group had a traditional area where it belonged – and must now stay. The government defined 10 such groups, which were based largely on dubious 19th-century scholarship. The area around Cape Town was declared a 'coloured preference area', which meant that no black person could be employed unless it could be proved that there was no coloured person suitable for the job.

Apart from the inequity of the land allocation, not to mention the injustice of making decisions for and about people who were not allowed to vote, this plan ignored the huge numbers of blacks who had never lived in their 'Homeland'. Millions of people who had lived in other areas for generations were forcibly removed and dumped in bleak, unproductive areas with no infrastructure.

The Homelands were regarded as self-governing states and it was planned that they would become independent countries. Four of the 10 Homelands were nominally independent by the time apartheid was demolished (they were not recognised as independent countries by the UN), and their dictators held power with the help of the South African military.

Of course, the white population depended on cheap black labour to keep the economy booming, so many black 'guest workers' were admitted to South Africa. But, unless a black had a job and a pass, they were liable to be jailed and sent back to their Homeland. This caused massive disruption to black communities and families. Not surprisingly, people without jobs gravitated to cities such as Cape Town to be near their husbands, wives and parents.

No new black housing was built, and as a result, illegal squatter camps mushroomed on the sandy plains to the east of Cape Town. In response, government bulldozers flattened the shanties, and their occupants were dragged away and dumped in the Homelands. Within weeks, inevitably, the shanties would rise again.

1910

Union of South Africa created, federating the British colonies and the old Boer republics; blacks denied the vote

1923

Black Urban Areas Act passed, a main element in the development of segregation and discrimination

MANDELA JAILED

In 1960 the ANC and the Pan-African Congress (PAC) organised marches against the hated pass laws, which required blacks and coloureds to carry passbooks authorising them to be in a particular area. At Langa and Nyanga on the Cape Flats, police killed five protesters. The Sharpeville massacres in Gauteng were concurrent and resulted in the banning of the ANC and PAC.

In response to the crisis, a warrant for the arrest of Nelson Mandela (see the boxed text, opposite) and other ANC leaders was issued. In mid-1963 Mandela was captured and sentenced to life imprisonment. Like many black leaders before him, Mandela was imprisoned on Robben Island (p100), in the middle of Table Bay. He remained here until 1982 when he was moved to Pollsmoor Prison south of Constantia on the Cape. His final place of incarceration was Victor Vester Prison near Paarl.

The government tried for decades to eradicate squatter towns, such as Crossroads, which were focal points for black resistance to the apartheid regime. In its last attempt between May and June 1986, an estimated 70,000 people were driven from their homes and hundreds were killed. Even this brutal attack was unsuccessful in eradicating the towns, and the government accepted the inevitable and began to upgrade conditions. Since then vast townships have sprung up across the Cape Flats. No-one knows exactly how many people call them home, but it could be more than 1.5 million. For more about the history of the townships see p110.

THE COLOURED EXPERIENCE

Apartheid's divide-and-rule tactics – favouring coloureds above blacks – stoked the animosity that lingers between the Cape's coloured and black communities today (see p12). Even so, coloureds did suffer under apartheid, and none more so than those living in the poor inner-city area known as District Six.

In its time District Six, immediately east of the city centre, was the suburb that, more than any other, gave Cape Town its cosmopolitan atmosphere and life. Every race lived there and the streets were alive with people, from children to traders, buskers to petty criminals. Jazz was its life blood and the district was home to many musicians, including the internationally renowned pianist Dollar Brand (now called Abdullah Ibrahim, see p34).

In 1966 District Six was classified as a white area. Its 50,000 people, some of whose families had been there for five generations, were gradually evicted and dumped in bleak and soulless townships like Athlone, Mitchell's Plain and Atlantis. Friends, neighbours, and even relations were separated. Bulldozers moved in and the multiracial heart was ripped out of the city, while in the townships, depressed and dispirited youths increasingly joined gangs and turned to crime.

The coloured Cape Muslim community of the Bo-Kaap, on the northeastern edge of Signal Hill, was more fortunate. Home to Cape Town's first mosque (the Owl Mosque on Dorp St dates back to 1798), the district was once known as the Malay Quarter because it was where many of the imported slaves from the start of the Cape Colony lived with their masters.

In 1952 the entire Bo-Kaap region was declared to be a coloured area under the terms of the Group Areas Act. There were forced removals, but the residents of the community, which was more homogeneous than that of District Six, banded together in order to successfully fight for and retain ownership of their homes, many of which were declared National Monuments in the 1960s (so, fortunately, at least they were saved from the bulldozers).

NELSON MANDELA

His Xhosa name Rolihlahla translates as 'Trouble Maker' although today Nelson Mandela is more often called Madiba, an honorary title adopted by elders of his clan – a mark of respect for a man without whom the country would most likely not be the peaceful and successful place it is today. A Nobel-peace-prize winner (together with FW de Klerk in 1993), he's been awarded honorary doctorates by countless universities around the world, and even had a nuclear particle named after him.

On 2 May 1994, after 27 years in prison and even more fighting the apartheid system, he said, 'This is the time to heal the old wounds and build a new South Africa'. It's a testament to his force of personality, transparent decency and integrity that Mandela, a man once vilified by the ruling whites, helped unite all South Africans at the most crucial of times.

The son of the third wife of a Xhosa chief, Mandela was born on 18 July 1918 in the small village of Mveo on the Mbashe River. A bright and determined child, he eventually overcame prejudice and his own poverty to qualify as a lawyer, setting up a practice with Oliver Tambo in Johannesburg (Jo'burg). In 1944 he helped form the Youth League of the African National Congress (ANC) with Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo. Its aim was to end the racist policies of the white South African government.

Mandela's stature as a future leader of the country grew during the 1950s when he and 156 other ANC and Communist Party members were charged with and later cleared of treason. Such was Mandela's threat to the government that he was forced to go underground to continue the struggle. He was captured and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1963.

It wouldn't be until 1990 that he would be freed. A year later he was elected president of the ANC and continued the long negotiations (which had started secretly while he was in prison) to end minority rule. In the first free elections in 1994, he was elected president of South Africa.

The prison years inevitably took their toll not only on his health but also on his marriage to the increasingly renegade Winnie; in 1992, the couple separated, and were divorced in 1996.

In 1998, a year after he retired as ANC president, he married Graca Machel, the widow of a former president of Mozambique, on his 80th birthday. Despite announcing his official retirement from the international stage in 2004, this charismatic man remains pretty active. Some of his time is taken up with the Nelson Mandela Foundation (www.nelsonmandela.org), which tackles the problems faced by people with HIV/AIDS and children in rural schools in South Africa.

For more information read Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, the first draft of which was written while he was still on Robben Island, and Anthony Sampson's exhaustive *Mandela: The Authorized Biography*. Also check out www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/mandela, the informative website of a documentary series on Mandela, and the Mandela page of the ANC's website (www.anc.org.za/people/mandela/).



1948

National Party wins government and retains control until 1994; apartheid laws begin to be passed

1960

Sharpeville massacres; ANC and PAC banned

1963

Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and others jailed for life

1985

State of emergency declared in South Africa; official murder and torture become rife, black resistance strengthens

NOOR EBRAHIM'S STORY

'I used to live at 247 Caledon St,' begins Noor Ebrahim, pointing at the street map covering the floor of the District Six Museum. Noor is one of the 60,000-plus people forcibly removed from the inner-city district during the 1960s and '70s. His story is one of the many you can discover on a visit to the District Six Museum (p94).

Noor's grandfather came to Cape Town in 1890 from Surat in India. An energetic man who had four wives and 30 children, he built up a good business making ginger beer. Noor's father was one of the old man's sons to his first wife, a Scot called Fanny Grainger, and Noor grew up in the heart of District Six. 'It was a very cosmopolitan area. Many whites lived there – they owned the shops. There were blacks, Portuguese, Chinese and Hindus all living as one big happy family.'

'We didn't know it was going to happen,' remembers Noor of the 1966 order declaring District Six a white area under the Group Areas Act. 'We saw the headlines in the paper and people were angry and sad but for a while little happened.' Then in 1970 the demolitions started and gradually the residents moved out.

Noor's family hung on until 1976, when they were given two weeks to vacate the house that his grandfather had bought some 70 years previously. By that time they'd seen families, neighbours and friends split up and sent to separate townships determined by their race. They'd prepared by buying a new home in the coloured township of Athlone – otherwise they'd have been forced to go to Mitchell's Plain, today one of the most violent suburbs on the Cape Flats.

Noor will never forget the day he left District Six. 'I got in the car with my wife and two children and drove off, but only got as far as the corner before I had to stop. I got out of the car and started to cry as I saw the bulldozers move in immediately. Many people died of broken hearts – that's what apartheid was. It was really sick.'

As a way of reclaiming his destroyed past, Noor, like several other former District Six residents, wrote a book and, since 1994, has worked as a guide at the museum. He was naturally delighted when the land was officially handed back to former residents in 2000, although he is yet to return.

'My life was in District Six,' he says. 'My heart and home was there. I'm really looking forward to going back.'

PATH TO DEMOCRACY

In the 1980s the apartheid regime began to crumble amid deepening economic gloom caused by international sanctions and the increasing militancy of black opposition groups (which began with the Soweto student uprising in 1976).

In 1982 Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders were moved from Robben Island to Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. (In 1986 senior politicians began secretly talking with them.) In 1983 the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed when 15,000 anti-apartheid activists gathered at Mitchell's Plain in the Cape Flats. At the same time the state's military crackdowns in the townships became even more brutal.

In early 1990 President FW de Klerk began to repeal discriminatory laws, and the ANC, PAC and Communist Party were legalised. On 11 February Nelson Mandela was released. His first public speech since he had been incarcerated 27 years earlier was delivered from the balcony of City Hall to a massive crowd filling the Grand Pde.

From this time onwards virtually all the old apartheid regulations were repealed and, in late 1991, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) began negotiations on the formation of a multiracial transitional government and a new constitution extending political rights to all groups.

Months of negotiations and brinkmanship finally produced a compromise and an election date, although at considerable human cost. Political violence exploded across the country during this time, some of it sparked by the police and the army. Despite this, the 1994 election was amazingly peaceful.

The ANC won 62.7% of the vote, less than the 66.7% that would have enabled it to rewrite the constitution. In Western Cape, though, the majority coloured population voted in the NP as the provincial government, seemingly happier to live with the devil they knew than with the ANC.

RISE & FALL OF PAGAD

During the 1990s drugs and the associated crime became such a problem in the Cape that communities, and in particular the coloured community, began to take matters into their own hands. People against Gangsterism and Drugs (Pagad) was formed in 1995, as an offshoot of the Islamic organisation Qibla. The group saw itself as defending the coloured community from the crooked cops and drug lords who allowed gangs to control the coloured townships.

At first the police tolerated Pagad, but their vigilante tactics turned sour in 1996 with the horrific (and televised) death of gangster Rashaad Staggie. A lynch mob burned then repeatedly shot the dying gangster. Other gang leaders were killed but Cape Town really began to worry when bombs, believed to have been planted by the more radical of Pagad's members, began to go off around the city. One of the worst was in 1998 at Planet Hollywood at the Waterfront, although by 2000 many other explosions had happened at police stations, synagogues and a gay nightclub. In September 2000 a magistrate presiding in a case involving Pagad members was murdered in a drive-by shooting.

Although Pagad leader Abdus Salaam Ebrahim was imprisoned in 2002 for seven years for public violence, no-one has been convicted, let alone charged for the Cape Town bombings, which thankfully seem to have stopped. Pagad, now designated a terrorist organisation by the government, keeps a much lower and quieter profile.

SHIFTING ALLIANCES

In December 1997 Mandela stepped down as ANC president and was succeeded by his deputy, Thabo Mbeki. Two years later South Africa held its second free elections. There had been speculation that the ANC vote might drop, but in fact it increased, putting the party within one seat of the two-thirds majority that would allow it to alter the constitution.

In the Western Cape elections in 2000, however, the ANC fared worse. The pact between the old NP, restyled as the New National Party (NNP), and the Democratic Party (DP) to create the Democratic Alliance (DA), brought them victory not only in the provincial elections but also in the metropolitan elections. Two years later, in a previously unthinkable alliance, the NNP ditched the DP to join forces with the ANC, putting the ANC in control of Cape Town for the first time and bringing the city its very first black female mayor, Nomandla Mfeketo.

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

One of the first acts of the new ANC government was to set up the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to expose the crimes of the apartheid era. This admirable institution carried out Archbishop Desmond Tutu's dictum: 'Without forgiveness there is no future, but without confession there can be no forgiveness'. Many stories of horrific brutality and injustice were heard by the commission during its five-year life, offering some catharsis to individuals and communities shattered by their past.

The TRC operated by allowing victims to tell their stories and perpetrators to confess their guilt, with amnesty offered to those who made a clean breast of it. Those who chose not to appear before the commission face criminal prosecution if their guilt can be proven, and that's the problem. Although some soldiers, police and 'ordinary' citizens have confessed their crimes, it seems unlikely that those who gave the orders and dictated the policies will ever come forward (former president PW Botha was one famous no-show), and gathering evidence against them has proven difficult.

For more about the TRC read the award-winning account *Country of My Skull* by journalist and poet Antjie Krog, or Desmond Tutu's balanced and honest *No Future Without Forgiveness*.

1990

ANC, PAC and Communist Party bans lifted; Nelson Mandela freed

1991

Talks on a new constitution begin, political violence escalates

1993

New constitution enacted, signalling end of apartheid and birth of new South Africa

1994

Democratic elections held; Nelson Mandela succeeds FW de Klerk as South African president

Conscious of their core vote in the Cape Flats the ANC-led city council vowed to improve the lot of township folk by upgrading the infrastructure in the informal settlements and investing more in decent low-cost housing, such as the N2 Gateway Project along the motor corridor linking the city with the airport. Urban renewal projects were also announced for Mitchells Plain, one of the most populous coloured areas of the city. Meanwhile, the City Bowl and surrounding areas continued to benefit from increased security and the development of ritzy, loft-style apartments in grand, old structures such as Mutual Heights (p97).

Full integration of the city's mixed population, though, is a long way off, if it's achievable at all. The vast majority of Capetonians continue to live in the bleak, impoverished communities of the Cape Flats, split along racial lines and suffering horrendous economic, social and health problems.

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1997

Mandela retires as ANC president, succeeded by Thabo Mbeki

2004

First of the returnees to District Six are handed keys to their rebuilt homes