

# *La Cabriere Country House*

## FRANSCHHOEK

### **Dining out in Franschhoek**



Franschhoek is the culinary capital of South Africa. An extremely high concentration of world-class restaurants are to be found in this little valley.

Due to the fact that most people descend on Franschhoek exactly for this reason, we have given a very brief overview of the restaurants. There is such a vast selection, and most people only stay in the valley for a few days, so we hope this subjective guide helps making your decisions a little easier.

We urge you to let us know as soon as you have made your choices (especially in the peak season - October to March), as many of these restaurants (in particular the Tasting Room and Reuben's) are reserved months in advance, and we would hate for you to miss out on your favourites!

2010 was an interesting year for Franschhoek – a number of new developments have popped up and along with these a large selection of new restaurants to choose from!

## **SNACKS & COFFEE SHOPS**

There are some great coffee shops in the village, just in case our enormous Continental and English Breakfast didn't quite fill the gap! Or for when you have shopped until you have dropped and just need to stop for a cuppa!

Kalfi's is a great spot to get any type of meal at any time of the day. This is a popular restaurant with the locals – and is very much family-orientated. An informal atmosphere, combined with friendly service and really good food (including take-aways at night) make this a winning choice if you are all cuisined-out!

Essence is across the road from Kalfi's. They have great cakes (their carrot cake in particular), as well as a perfectly adequate selection of light meals and snacks. This is a cosy spot to be indoors in the winter, but also has a lovely terrace to sit outside during the summer months.

The newest additions to Franschhoek include:

Café Des Artes which has replaced the location of the legendary Topsy & Co. (Topsy is, however still to be seen around and about the restaurant). Café Des Artes – as its name would imply – provides a very arty ambience. The antique furniture contrasts with the modern and trendy artwork in the restaurant to give a very bohemian yet classy feel. Coffees are home brewed and are possibly the freshest coffees in town thanks to their in-house barista.

Ryan's kitchen in the gardens of Rusthof Guest house provides a great spot on the main street from which visitors can enjoy high tea whilst watching the world go by.

## **PICNIC SPOTS & SOUTH AFRICAN CUISINE**

A little further out of Franschhoek (about ten minutes) you will find 'The Riverside'. This is a great spot on days when the mercury is rapidly rising,

and you just want to find somewhere to cool off as quickly as possible. Laze under the shade of the Plane Trees or under the Lapa at the edge of the River! Open spaces to run around and explore make 'The Riverside' a great choice when travelling with children. You are also able to take your own picnics to the Riverside, or have a barbeque (braai). The restaurant has many traditional South-African dishes. Try the 'bobotie' or 'lamb curry' – these dishes are deliciously tender and very generous portions are served.

Boschendal is the most popular picnic spot with guests staying at La Cabriere Country House. Boschendal is a very large wine estate on the Helshoogte Pass towards Stellenbosch. The estate also has a restaurant, but nothing beats the French-style picnic which can be enjoyed in a romantic setting under the shade of fragrant pine trees. We can book this for you in advance (pick up time for your basket is between 12:15 and 1:30pm). Other picnic spots include: The 'Country Kitchen' at Mont Rochelle and 'Rickety Bridge' Wine estate.

## LUNCH SPOTS

In the direction of the La Franschhoek Hotel and Stony Brook Winery, you will discover a little paradise for breakfast and lunch – Café Bon Bon is a true 'gem' and is fast becoming one of the most popular wedding venues in Franschhoek. The restaurant overlooks the orchards of La Petite Dauphine and we find the breakfasts to be magical. Enjoy the delicious home-made jams with your toast under the shade of the trees on a beautiful summer morning!

In the heart of the village, you will find the Salmon Bar, serving local Three Streams Smokehouse salmon trout in every way, shape and form you could dare to imagine. The restaurant was recently redesigned and re-orientated within the Courtyard, filling the niche that Bouillabaisse left behind when they very sadly closed their doors earlier this year.

Slightly further out of town is Bread and Wine'. This popular lunch spot located on the Moreson wine estate offers visitors the opportunity to sample home-baked breads and very original dishes, along with the estate's own fine wines.

We can also organise bread-baking courses by prior arrangement.

For fine-dining combined with great views – ‘La Petite Ferme’ is the place to be. It is situated on the Franschoek Pass, overlooking the valley and there is a helipad if you wish to fly in to Franschoek. The cuisine is described as having African, Malay and international influences.

## CASUAL DINING

If you are staying more than a couple of days, there will probably come a time when you want something less formal. Here are a few suggestions for casual dining:

Col Cacchio is the local pizzeria. There is a large amount of seating outside for those warmer evenings. This restaurant also offers pastas and a wide range of delicious salads.

We have already mentioned Kalfi’s family restaurant, and very close to Kalfi’s you will find Taki’s – A Greek-owned restaurant. Then in the vineyards we recommend ‘The Country Kitchen’, on the Mont Rochelle Estate – this is a lovely laid-back spot for summer.

If you are looking for something in-between fine-dining and casual – give Allora, French Connection or the ‘Grill Room’ a try – they still require reservations in the high season, but you will find the experience a lot less formal. Allora is an Italian restaurant a couple of kilometers out of town, and the French Connection is in the heart of the village. French Connection has excellent food but is not at all pretentious and very reasonably priced. It is a stone’s-throw away from our local pub ‘The Elephant and Barrel’, a great spot to end off your evening. The newest addition to the village is ‘The Grill Room’ – this large new sophisticated Steakhouse has become quite a hit in the valley – Extremely generous portions on offer for those who appreciate delicious food in healthy quantities! The desserts at the Grill Room are particularly decadent and it would be a shame to miss out so make sure you save room! (Especially for the chocoholics amongst us!)

## **COCKTAILS, SUNDOWNERS & ENTERTAINMENT**

Dieu Donne would be our top choice for cocktails at sunset. This estate provides the best location for watching the sun go down in Franschoek. The restaurant is a little way beyond the Chamonix estate, arguably enjoying the best position in the valley for its exquisite views. We find the food itself to be inferior to many of the other restaurants on offer in the valley – we would advise you make your way back down into town for dinner a little later after sunset.

The Friday night jazz evenings at La Brasserie have been replaced by the music nights at La Petite Ferme for the summer months. Commencing at 6pm on a Friday with R150 per person to include a starter, main meal and a bottle of wine per couple! Although these music evenings are still in the infant stage, reviews thus far have been positive and we would highly recommend this for a bit of Friday night entertainment.

## **FINE DINING**

Pierre Hendriks of Le Bon Vivant offers Nouvelle cuisine and prepares it to perfection (we have dubbed his food as 'Art on a Plate') Most recently I have tried the item on the dessert menu entitled 'All of the Above' which is exactly what it implies – a taster of every type of dessert on the menu! An absolute decadence but 'oh so satisfying' when you know you haven't missed out on any of your friend's choices!! The restaurant is in a garden setting with a romantic ambience. One thing to bear in mind when making your selections is that Le Bon Vivant is closed on a Wednesday.

Award-winning 'Reuben Riffel' is the chef at Reuben's Restaurant. He is a Franschoek local, and after spending a few years expanding his culinary knowledge in London, he returned to the valley. The restaurant is owned by the partners of Boekenhoutskloof winery, resulting in an extensive choice of wines, many of which are not available retail.

Grande Provence is perfect for those who would prefer to be out of the hustle and bustle of village life. It is about 5 minutes from the village in a

setting of utmost calm, beauty and tranquility. The food is outstanding and the décor understated yet glamorous.

La Quartier Francais 'Tasting Room' has been ranked amongst the top 50 restaurants in the world. It owes its success to award-winning chef Margot Janse. You can opt for the 9-course African Tasting menu (highly recommended!), or if you are a little less ambitious you could always go the 5-course route. Bear in mind that the 5-course portions are definitely larger so don't be fooled into thinking this will be a 'lighter' meal. We strongly advise that you select the food & wine pairing option – this is the best way to experience world-class cuisine & world-class wine combined to perfection!

Haute Cabriere up on the Franschoek Pass is a cosy spot to be, especially in the winter months. The cavernous nature of the restaurant creates a romantic and intimate ambience. Chef Matthew Gordon (also of the Grill Room) prepares world class cuisine. The only drawback may be that visitors can only choose from the Haute Cabriere/ Pierre Jourdan wines, a factor to be taken into account when making your restaurant selections.

New additions to the fine dining in Franschoek include: Pierneef at La Motte, as well as Ryan's Kitchen

Pierneef is situated on the La Motte Wine Estate. Feedback from our guests has only been positive. The restaurant is described as having an arty, airy and light feel to it. One can dine in the conservatory, courtyard or in the chic interior of the restaurant.

Ryan's Kitchen on the Franschoek main street, is a very intimate classic and elegant restaurant serving contemporary South African cuisine in a relaxed and comfy environment. The nature of the restaurant lends itself to one-on-one interaction with the chef while he is preparing your meal.

## DINING FURTHER AFIELD

About 20km outside Franschhoek you will find 'Cotage Fromage', a restaurant and deli located within the beautiful setting of the Vrede en Lust wine estate.

Tokara and Delaire Graff are another two restaurants well worth visiting if you are on the Stellenbosch wine-route. Both restaurants are situated on the Helshoogte Pass, and some of the best views in the Western Cape can be enjoyed from terraces whilst sipping on their award winning wines.

In Stellenbosch you will find a large number of very good restaurants. To name just a few, these include: Die Wijnhuis, Cape Town Fish Market and Bakara, as well as the restaurant on the Spier Wine Estate.

In the direction of Somerset West you will come across the famous Waterford Estate, next door to this is a relatively new wine estate "Dornier". Their restaurant 'The Dornier Bodega' is housed in the pastoral allure of a historic barn and pursues the perfect marriage between modern food preparation and classic elegance that has come to be expected from Dornier Wines.

We hope this brief overview has tantalized your tastebuds! We look forward to hearing from you regarding your choices!