



PARKER COTTAGE

where opulent, heritage hospitality doesn't cost the earth

The Parker Cottage Guide to Dining in Cape Town

By Location

Whether you're serious about food or not, Cape Town is a place to eat, then drink a bit, and then...eat some more. You'll be truly amazed at the quality, value and service of our restaurants. We're not alone in saying that there are few places on the planet where you'll eat this well for this little. So go wild!

We've divided this guide into two: first, by AREA and secondly by STANDARD (see separate file). You will find the same restaurants listed in both sections, making it easy to choose depending on whether location or style are your particular priority.

Liz Sayigh and Phil Rendel

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We've divided this section of the guide up into four distinct areas. Here they are:

WALKING DISTANCE (less than 10 minutes on foot)

These places are mainly in the Kloof Street and Gardens area. You can walk to them and back safely day and night.

WALKING DISTANCE / SHORT TAXI RIDE (between 10 – 15 minutes on foot, 5 minutes by taxi)

These places are mainly in the centre of old Cape Town or in the business district. You can walk to them but it would be better to take a taxi, especially on the way back if you leave late.

SHORT TAXI RIDE (between 5 - 10 minutes by taxi)

These places are in De Waterkant or the V&A Waterfront. They are too far for a comfortable walk. Take a cab, please.

DRIVE OUT OF TOWN (between 20 - 40 minutes by taxi)

These places are all in other suburbs or towns on the peninsula or in the area of Cape Town

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The Gardens and Kloof Street Area

Kloof Street is the buzzing heart of Gardens, a boho residential suburb of Cape Town. Originally, it was just a main road linking the old town to the residential suburbs south of the centre but now it's a thriving little area by day and by evening (it winds down around 11 p.m.). You should go here for lunch and for dinner as not all the places do both meals and you'd be missing out if you don't try at least one lunch and one dinner here.

The majority of restaurants in this area are owner managed, small, personal, informal and not fine dining. (There are exceptions, though.) Most places have no more than about ten tables, some even less. Expect bustle and laughter, not restraint and refinement.

WALKING DISTANCE (less than 10 minutes on foot)

Saigon – Vietnamese (Cnr Kloof and Camp)	(021) 424 7670
Societi Bistro – Italian/French bistro	(021) 424 2100
Miller's Thumb – Family bistro (Kloofnek)	(021) 424 3838
Limoncello - Italian, relaxed vibe (Gardens)	(082) 218 7252
Kyoto Garden – formal Japanese (Kloofnek)	(021) 422 2001
Manna Epicure – Lunch for serious foodies (Kloof St.)	(021) 426 2413
Melissa's – Deli with eat in (Kloof St)	(021) 424 5540
Puka – smallest café in town (Tamboerskloof Road)	

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Saigon 94 Kloof St (021) 424 5540

www.saigon.co.za



They say: With magnificent views of Table Mountain and soft, muted lights, Saigon has done Vietnamese decor elegantly without giving the restaurant a themed feeling. The menu is mainly Vietnamese with Japanese influences. Some of the more popular mains are the Chicken Cashew Nuts, or our Spicy Beef Basil with chilli sauce. All the main courses can be served with rice or noodles. Saigon's exotic Deep-Fried Ice Cream is a must if you have space.

We say: This is not a fine dining experience but it certainly is a restaurant: the décor is very avant garde with lots of rusted steel and concrete on the outside but a calming and soft flavour inside with lacquer tables and solid wood floors. The best things about Saigon are things they have always done well, like the Ginger Fish and others. Avoid the sushi here: there are much better choices for that in Cape Town. This is very much a locals' place, not geared for tourists at all, so prices are sensible and service chummy and informal.

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Societi Bistro – 50 Orange St (021) 42 42 100
www.societi.co.za



They say: We set out to create a restaurant that you love to spend time in. We focus on simple food: we offer rural food in an urban setting, so it's sensible presentation with strong flavours. Societi's head chef, Stefan Marais, is a self taught, expressive chap who trained in Spain, Italy and France.. You'll find our food a mixture mainly of the French (over the winter) and Italian (over the summer)

We say: Societi is a lot more than just a place to eat. They have a huge al fresco garden full of lavender that you can spend an evening in amongst the candles, or take in the interior, where they have kept everything original and then changed it all (just go and have a look). Things like the focus on home made pasta, superb tomato dishes, and a very young and artistic (but not fancy) approach to food (see the website) make us feel this place is what Jamie Oliver would have opened in his twenties before he became the rather irritating superstar he is now. We really like their inclusivity too. No 'head chef + the nobodies' in the kitchen here.

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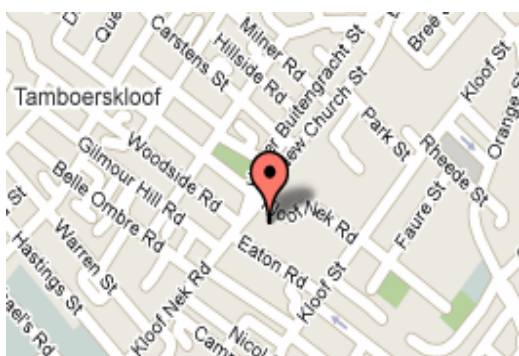
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Miller's Thumb Kloofnek Road (021) 424 3838



They say: A refreshingly-casual seafood restaurant in uptown Cape Town. The deep orange and green hues of the three interleading rooms are offset by tapes of Solly's favourite sixties music, lending a distinctive air to this different seafood venue. Indulge in superbly-prepared mussels, calamari, prawns and linefish. Cajun and Creole dishes have their influence in this kitchen. Solly's fishy version of chilli con carne was a delight with its dark red beans adding colour and textural contrast to delicately-cooked linefish, prawns and squid. There's generally a pasta dish or two on the menu with interesting sauces, complemented by a good choice of wines.

We say: Jane and Solly are a husband and wife team just like Parker. This is not fine dining but it is a real foodie's place. Nothing about Miller's Thumb is predicatable or boring: the seafood is the reason to come here but you'll love the welcome, the rambunctious warmth of the place and the cutlery in the middle of the table in a pot. The restaurant feels like the kind of place you might find doing brisk local trade on a Greek island: you half expect an ouzo sipping gentleman in the corner. Oh sorry, that's Solly.

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Limoncello - 8 Breda Street (021) 461 5100

www.limoncello.co.za



They say: Limoncello, situated at the base of Table Mountain, in the quaint suburb of Gardens, offers a little taste of Southern Italy on your doorstep. At Limoncello we love cooking - and it shows - from the wood burning oven inside the restaurant where we bake and roast a variety of dishes, to our open display kitchen where you can see the cheerful bustle of some of the city's best chefs at work.

We say: This is not a pizza and pasta joint: they actually do real Italian traditional dishes, like vitello al limone (lemon seared veal). You won't find a vast menu and you won't find the 'look at me' crowd here. This is a place you go to replicate those amazing home kitchen meals you only find in tiny towns in Southern Italy. Luca normally only answers the phone in Italian 'Pronto, Limoncello'. You'll only feel welcome.

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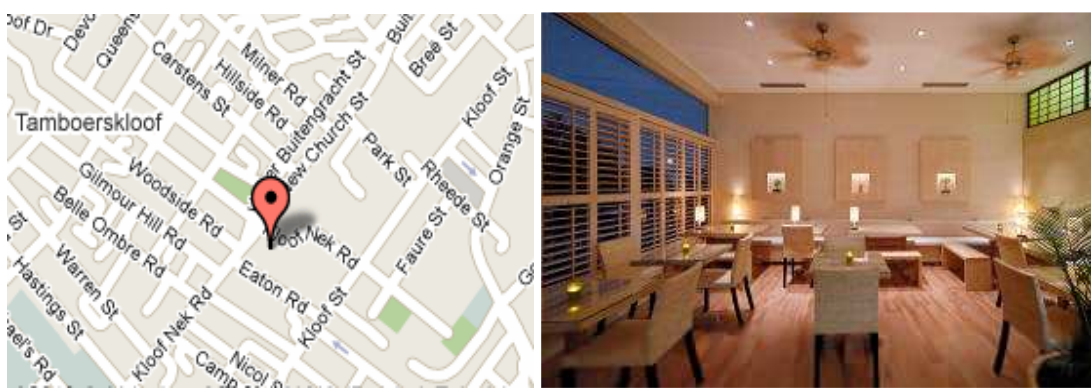
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Kyoto Garden 11 Kloofnek Road (021) 422 2001



They say: Kyoto prides itself in creating a unique cuisine: the kitchen explores innovative combinations that are not over-worked nor over-designed. Seaweed, fresh and moist, makes up a salad of shitake mushrooms, with a choice of wild red salmon from Alaska or Norwegian fjord salmon. Our Japanese inspired cocktail menu includes many unique combinations such as "Green Tea Destiny" with aromatic Japanese green tea, a squeeze of fresh lime, Sake, London dry gin and lemonade.

We say: If you're looking for a place that just embodies the passion of the owner, go to Kyoto. Scott is a mad Los Angelian who came here for a reason lost in the mists of time a few years ago – Kyoto is his third restaurant and it's his pride and joy. It's authentic sushi and other Japanese food, with a twist or two. You'll not go to Kyoto for a quick, light bite. This is a place to be savoured, to get into the mood with. Don't expect snappy service: this is a Zen environment: I always walk away feeling satiated and calmer than when I walked in.

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Manna Epicure 151 Kloof Street (021) 426 2413



They say: The sleek white interior of the stylish Manna Epicure stands in perfect contrast to the delicious, farm style bread and imaginative tapas served in hearty portions. For the convenience of the true connoisseur, the menu is divided into sections for different taste sensations: sweet, bitter, sour and savoury - with the most innovative list of cocktails and freshly squeezed juices perfectly complimenting the epicurean menu.

We say: Manna manages to do the impossible: be warm and welcoming, chic and calming all at the same time. So much for the atmosphere: the food is to match with simply and excellently done flavours often not even blended into dishes but just left to stand on their own. Prices are high for Cape Town, though, so we don't go often. We like to while away an hour here and that is eminently possible: no rush to present you with a bill!

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Melissa's 94 Kloof St (021) 424 5540

www.melissas.co.za



They say: Mark & Melissa van Hoogstraten's love for good old-fashioned things in life inspired them to create places where people love to be and where they could sell their unique product range. Melissa's represents a kind of old-fashioned goodness and an attempt to bring back the real and forgotten things in life. Melissa's unique range of wholesome handmade products is based on the philosophy of uncompromising quality. Melissa's is for people who understand the value of quality and are serious about eating real, good food.

We say: Much more informal than Manna, this is not so much a place to eat as a place to try out what Melissa's (now a national brand) has to sell. The food always has that great 'home made' feel to it and you can either buy and eat in the shop or do a 'weigh-your-own-lunch' style buffet. Lots of funky lifestyle magazines around the place and one of those people-watching benches in the window if you're just after a quick bite.

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The Historic Centre

Long Street and its offshoots are the central streets for the younger, vibier crowd in Cape Town. This area has several high-end eateries: here, the restaurants are typically larger, more ostentatious and have prices to match.

The Centre has a day, an evening and a night time character. By day, you'll find it a bizarre mix of the African, the Western and the Orient all mixed into one. You'll trip over numerous art galleries, museums, cafes, craft shops and markets. In the evening, you'll notice almost all the shops and cafés shut and the restaurants take over. The nighttime vibe on Long can be a little daunting at times: if you prefer your clubs more classy and exclusive, try De Waterkant.

The majority of restaurants in this area are medium sized businesses, most not owner managed. They offer fine dining in the main. (There are exceptions, though.) Most places have between ten and twenty tables, usually not more. Expect high end food and wine for quiet and relatively formal dining.

WALKING DISTANCE / SHORT TAXI RIDE (between 10 – 15 minutes on foot, 5 minutes by taxi)

Savoy Cabbage – Sophisticated and traditional	(021) 424 2626
Bismillah – local Cape Malay food (Bo Kaap)	(021) 423 0850
95 on Keerom – avant garde Italian	(021) 422 0765

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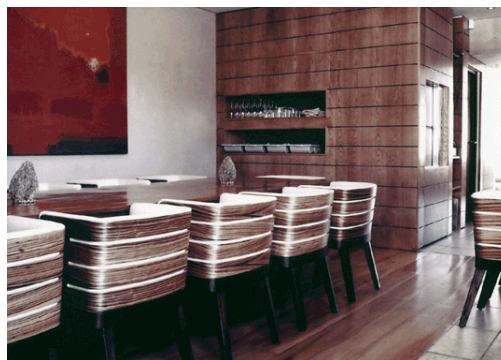


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95 on Keerom –95 Keerom Street (021) 422 0765

www.95keerom.co.za



They say: 95 Keerom Street, circa 1682, originally housed the stables and slave quarters of the Company Gardens. Taking its origins from authentic Milanese cuisine, 95 strives to provide our guests with a glimpse of genuine Italian food, through the use of the highest quality local and imported ingredients. The menu contains firm favourites like our seasonal salads, a full list of raw and cooked carpaccios, fresh fish and ample classic Italian meat creations. Desserts like the liquidcentre white and dark chocolate soufflés are not to be missed.

We say: When you open a restaurant on the same street as the High Court and you open for lunch, you open yourself up to some serious scrutiny. This isn't really what we would call an Italian restaurant: it's just a loose term to describe a really high end dining experience which doesn't really fit any pigeon holes. Rather, sample the whole menu if you can and bear in mind that everything, even the butter, is home made here. A place to savour, if a little snooty at times (but that's really the clientele, not the place).

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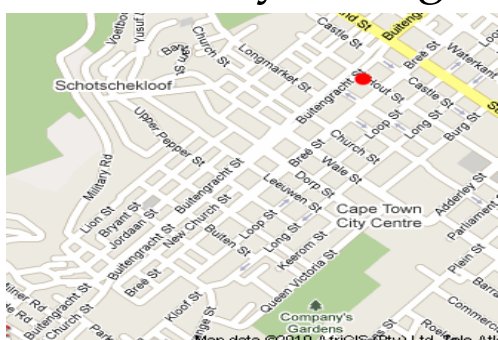


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Savoy Cabbage –101 Hout Street (021) 424 2626

www.savoycabbage.co.za



They say: Enjoy creative contemporary cooking in a visually exciting venue. With its historic Table Mountain stone and old brick that dates back to the 18th Century, architect Leon Saven's design is complemented by glass, concrete and exposed ducting. The look would not be out of place in New York or London and neither would the quality of the whole dining experience. The menu alters daily, using the freshest local produce and combines unusual flavours to excite the palate of the discerning diner.

We say: My (Phil's) favourite restaurant in Cape Town (perhaps the world) is Savoy Cabbage. What keeps drawing me back is that it's owner managed (by Caroline with assistance of Frank and Liz) but it's a top end eatery without all the drawbacks (snotty, overpriced, too formal etc.) You'll find the menu is actually quite traditional, with a poultry, game, red meat, vegetarian and seafood option in the mains every night of the week. The open kitchen, the wine list, the grandeur but intimacy of the place all make this really something so special.

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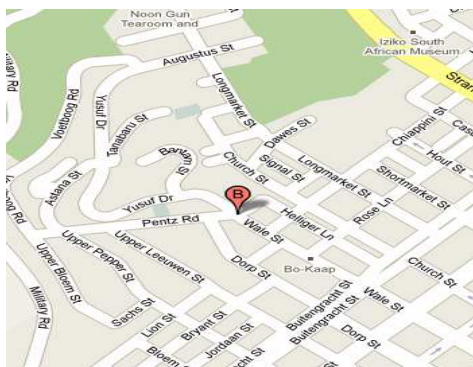
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Bismillah 2 Upper Wale Street (021) 423 0850



We say: a Bo Kaap institution, Beismillah (or Bismillah) has been doing home styled Cape Malay food for longer than anyone can remember. There's no liquor licence, so don't ask for (or bring) wine and don't expect a restaurant. This is as local and as authentic as it gets. This is the kind of place you'll meet a cab driver having his lunch talking to a sociology professor from UCT. Very local. If you don't know Cape Malay food, it's generally mild curry style, with lots of fruit and some egg. You'll love the ambiance and the staff here but don't expect linen table cloths and sir/madam. Take it as it comes and you'll love it.

There's no website and no write up from the owners anywhere – isn't that just wonderful! So the only way to find out what they think of their own place is to go there and ask them yourself. Superb.

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The Foreshore, De Waterkant and the V&A Waterfront

These are three very distinct areas in Cape Town: the Foreshore is our central business district. Busy by day with business people and the like, it's a bit of a dead zone in the evening and at night, so this is not a place to go for a stroll. However, it is redeemed by the truly excellent Bizerca Bistro.

De Waterkant used to be a very down-at-heel district, housing the dockers for the harbour. When the Duncan Dock was built and later the V&A, it became the haunt of the super trendy and is now Cape Town's answer to SoHo. Gay friendly, full of bars, nightclubs and restaurants as well as excellent shopping, it's a scene by day and night.

The V&A Waterfront is either the best thing about Cape Town, a great disappointment or just good fun, depending on your point of view. It's ultimately about commerce (there are six five-star hotels here) but it is very well designed, fun and entertaining. Most eateries here are not really great value for money and can either be excellent or awful depending on the weather, the season, etc. but we've listed the exceptions here.

SHORT TAXI RIDE (between 5 - 10 minutes by taxi)

Bizerca – upmarket bistro (Foreshore)	(021) 418 0001
Andiamo – relaxed Italian (De Waterkant)	(021) 421 3687
Emily's – very upmarket wine (V&A)	(021) 421 1133
Salero – great views of harbour and sunset (V&A)	(021) 421 1916
Den Anker – Belgian, super location (V&A)	(021) 419 0249

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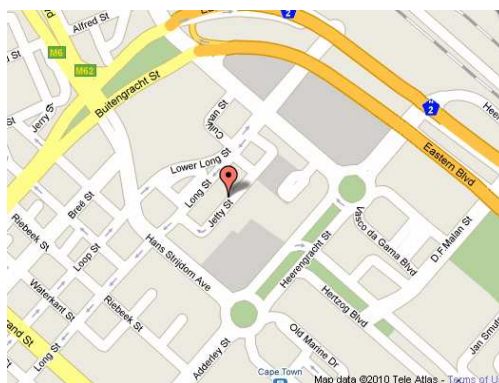
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Bizerca Jetty Street (021) 418 0001
www.bizerca.com



They say: Bizerca Bistro is a place where we serve down-to-earth food with exceptional skill, great passion, and – very often – a good laugh! In France, there is a bistro on every corner, where traditional food is served in a relaxed environment. We've never been traditionalists, and so, while you will find classic French dishes such as cassoulet, you will also find many new dishes from our years in Australia, and now Cape Town. Our signature dish for many years, the braised farmed pigs trotter with seared scallop, is such a dish.

We say: Laurent and Cyrillia took a real leap of faith in opening a modern French bistro in the Foreshore, Cape Town's business district, a few years ago. The venue is a glass garage (really) and the décor is minimalist and chic, not cosy with the food as a wonderful take on the traditional. Ignore the menu and go straight to the huge specials board, which Cyrillia will talk you through in person. This is a real food kind of place, proper portions on a nice round plate.

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Andiamo 72 De Waterkant Street (021) 421 3687

www.andiamo.co.za



*They say: **Andiamo** caters for breakfast, lunch and supper, cocktails and drinks. The food is straightforward and traditional Italian ranging from salads, tramezzinis and antipasti, to pizza, pasta, meat and seafood. Signature dishes include the lamb chops and fish, and the prawn and asparagus pasta. There is also a colourful deli with over 2000 delectable local and imported items to choose from.....sandwiches made on freshly baked breads, salads, meats – all fully imported from Italy – Parma Ham, Bresola, Coppa, Olive Oil, olives, Balsamic, freshly ground coffee and so much more. PLUS the Promotion Table which features displays and tastings from Monday to Sunday.*

We say: one of the best things about Andiamo is the piazza that you eat in, which at New Year's Eve becomes a great mélange of all the local cafés and restaurants there with a central dance floor. The food here is certainly not restaurant fare and yes, it does cater more to the tourist market than the local but considering the other options in De Waterkant, Andiamo shines above them simply for being simple, friendly and not overly complicated. Expect standard Italian fare in a nice setting with great service and you'll not be disappointed. Go with a crowd or meet one there!

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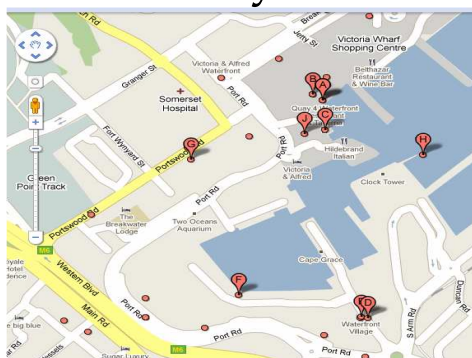
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Emily's Clock Tower (021) 421 1133
www.emily-s.com



They say: My philosophy of cooking is simple: let the ingredients speak for themselves. I am set on flavour and do not follow trends by other chefs, nor do I copy them. I am in love with the flavours of Africa. Often I combine hot and cold on the same plate and frequently contrast flavours or do a counterpoint of similar flavours in order to create a complex canvas. Here at Emily's the food is not waiting to be served: everything on the menu is prepared in my kitchen and it requires time. The restaurant caters for vegans, demi-, lacto-, ovo- and lacto-ovo vegetarians.

We say: Emily's is unique (so far as we know) in being the only restaurant at the V&A that is owner managed. Peter and his chefs are more than just friends: they are partners in creative cuisine. The real reason to go to Emily's is the wine and how well they pair it to the food. It's set in a much more secluded part of the V&A in the Clocktower in a rather ugly building but don't let that or the rather OTT décor put you off. This is a pricey but very welcoming place to eat with consistent standards – quite amazing for the commercial Waterfront.

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Salero Victoria Wharf (021) 421 1916



They say: Salero Tapas Restaurant and Cafe is Spanish owned tapas dining experience, whereby we serve a variety of different wines by the glass to be enjoyed with all the different tapas dishes. For those of you who prefer a full dish, we offer a wide choice of either salads, sandwiches, and pasta dishes, and full meals like Whole Baby Kingklip or our secretly marinated shellfish. We also have a full cocktail bar just to get your evening off to the right start. The views overlook Granger Bay onto Robben Island and beyond through pink sunsets and bright blue morning skies.

We say: If you're seriously into tapas and you want to feel like you're eating authentic home cooked food, Salero is not for you. But if you're at the V&A anyway and want a truly relaxed place with the best waiting staff (ask for Samuel) this area provides, you should go. The biggest selling point is the view over the shorebreak to Robben Island which is sheltered from the elements too, so it's still warm all evening. We love the big arm chairs you sink into and if you're lucky, you'll get to see a whole school of whales playing in the water just a few hundred metres from your table. The food is fairly stock fare, nothing too exciting, but it's decent, well priced and cheerful. Go with friends.

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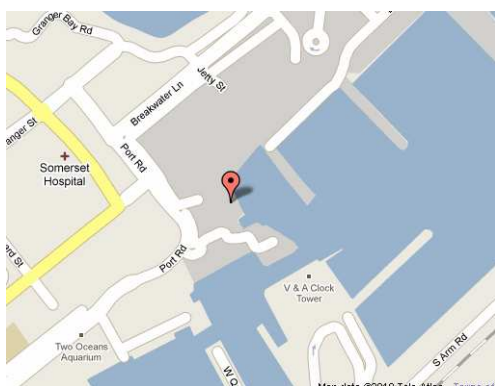


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Den Anker V&A Waterfront (021) 419 0249

www.denanker.co.za



They say: You'll find us on the quayside of Cape Town's Victoria & Alfred Waterfront - we're now celebrating our 12th anniversary! Enjoy the friendly ambience ... our serving staff is attentive and smiling. Menus revolve round fresh, seasonal dishes like just-caught crayfish or herring flown in from Europe. Our beer is Belgian - both top brands and best-selling Anker beer, brewed exclusively for us, are served on tap. Our winelist won gold in the '06 Diners Club International Winelist of the Year Awards.

We say: Probably one of the friendliest and least snotty of all the fish restaurants at the Waterfront, Den Anker is a good place to get an evening meal or a light lunch. In the evening, the twinkling candles on the glass walls and ceiling make this really a rather special place to be. You'll find a lot of the menu isn't strictly South African fish and most of the dishes are not local to this country, but who cares: it's supposed to be Belgian and it does a very good job. Good place for couples or a quiet night out, less good for groups, families, etc.

Liz Sayigh and Phil Rendel

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PARKER COTTAGE

where opulent, heritage hospitality doesn't cost the earth

DRIVE OUT OF TOWN (between 20 - 40 minutes by taxi)

Out of the City Bowl (take a beautiful scenic drive)

The Food Barn – barefoot food, Noordhoek

(021) 789 1390

The Codfather – Camp's Bay

(021) 438 0782

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The Foodbarn Noordhoek (021) 789 1390

www.foodbarn.co.za



They say: The food is civilised without being pretentious, that is to say it has natural taste, smells and textures, and much character. What is paramount is that it is prepared with respect, savvy and love - then, it is the right food for us to eat. Franck: "Pete and I own this place; it is our hard earned cash that is invested here. At the same time, we are also motivated by spending time with our families. I want to train my team to become passionate about food... they are keen to learn". Pete: "Walking through The Foodbarn, enjoying my guests company, and being a great host is when I am happiest".

We say: This is not a small venue and it's not simply a restaurant either. Pete is the cordon bleu, Franck is the bare foot chef, (an escapee from corporate life) and between them, they do everything from cooking demos to events to a deli and restaurant fare all under one roof. Expect down to earth food in a just-walked-from-the-beach style and you'll be very pleasantly surprised. Noordhoek is 20 minutes from Cape Town so rather make this a lunch stop.

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The Codfather Camp's Bay (021) 438 0782



They say: The Codfather opened as a Seafood restaurant about 10 years ago - one of the first Sushi venues in Cape Town. We serve an excellent array of fresh seafood and sushi in a very vibey, yet warm and relaxed environment. The large sliding window frontage allows us to open up to those beautiful warm summer nights the Cape experiences. In addition there is a large, open fireplace situated in the centre of it all for the cold winter nights. Sheer reputation and word of mouth has brought us customers from all over the world - many of them, local and foreign, becoming regular visitors.

We say: you don't go to the Codfather to be seen and you also don't go for the crisp white table cloths and surly waiters. You do go if you're a local, though, and you keep going back. This is seafood the way it should be: a lovely range of fish and shellfish, 90% of which is South African, cooked in the simplest ways with no sauces, herbs or spices. There is no menu at the Codfather: what you eat is what they have in the fridge (never freezer) that day. Wash it all down with their lavish wine list and take in the sea view. Then go back the next night!

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