



Parker Cottage's Self-Drive Tour of the Cape Winelands

We've designed this tour with a few things in mind:

- Not trying to do too much in one day
- Taking in as much of the majestic landscapes of the wine country as possible
- Having some wine (but not too much!)
- Exploring some the architectural and social heritage of the wine country, and,
- Avoiding the crowds!

You should be able to complete this tour in a day (although it's a long and busy one) but it's impossible to everything on this itinerary in the times suggested, so start by crossing off at least one or two of the stops!

Here's a summary of where this tour takes you:

09h00 Leave Parker Cottage after a fantastic breakfast

10h00 Rust en Vrede: A large historic (1694) estate in a splendid setting. Great reds!

11h00 Stellenbosch: historic university town and centre of the wine industry

12h00 The Helshoogte Pass: scenic mountain pass: cycle it if you dare.

12h30 Rainbow's End: small and beautiful family-run estate with laid back vibe.

13h20 Solms Delta: An avant garde wine estate with great social responsibility and museum

14h20 Franschhoek: A world famous small wine town, snobby but pretty.

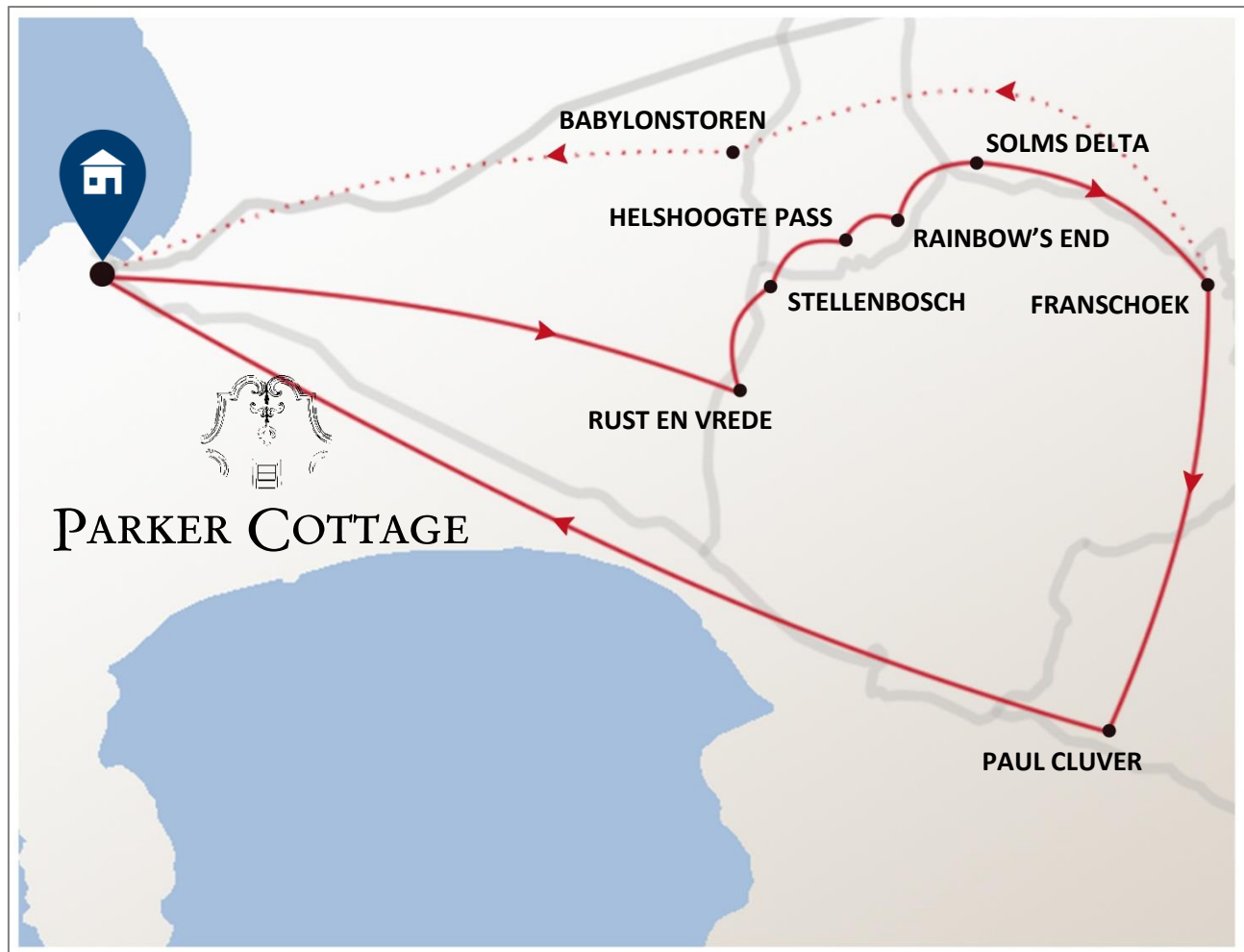
16h00 Paul Cluver: An exclusively family run estate

OR

16h00 Babylonstoren: A superb collection of gardens, history, wine and afternoon tea.

Parker Cottage

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If you'd like a map for the whole route please ask us for detailed maps as you need them for the tricky bits!

09h00 Leave Cape Town on the N2 following signs for the airport

09h30 Take the R310 to Stellenbosch

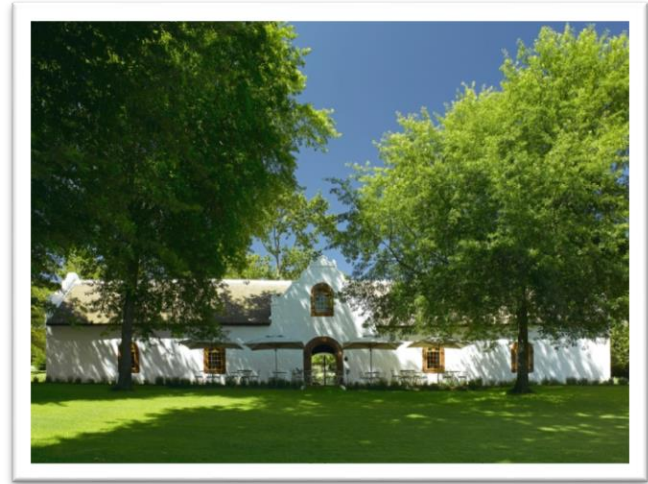
09h40 When you see the sign to 'Stellenbosch Annandale Road', take it.

09h50 When you reach the R44 cross it and keep on the Annandale Road

09h55 Follow the road for another kilometer or so, and on your left you'll come to your first estate, Rust en Vrede.

Rust en Vrede Wine Estate

Tel (021) 880-0717 | www.rustenvrede.co.za



Steeped in history, both ancient and modern, Rust en Vrede (meaning 'Peace and Freedom' in Cape Dutch) was founded in 1694 and was the first South African estate to get a wine in the Top 100 Wines of the World in the US wine magazine Wine Spectator.

Nelson Mandela chose their wines for his inauguration in 1993. Don't let this kind of achievement fool you into thinking that they are resting on their laurels: John Platter, whose wine guide is South Africa's perennial Christmas present, rates no less than three of Rust en Vrede's six wines as four to five star, which is no mean feat.

This estate specializes in reds, which are big, punchy, opulent things, full of flavour.

Don't miss: if you've a chance, try their 1694 Classification – lovely stuff. If you started this tour late, do yourself a favour and stay for lunch at the restaurant: it's housed in a national monument, originally the wine 'cellar' of the estate.

11h00 Turn right out of Rust and Vrede and head towards Stellenbosch itself.

Stellenbosch

Tel (021) 883-3584 | www.stellenboschtourism.co.za



Stellenbosch is an old town by South African standards, founded by Simon van der Stel in 1679. Although named after a Dutch governor, it was French settlers (Huguenots) who started the tradition of planting vines here. Stellenbosch is now much more than just a wine town: its university, founded in 1863, dominates the town and is one of the top universities in the country. Stellenbosch drips architectural heritage and you need to spend an hour or two just walking around the oak lined streets and soaking it all up.

Things which you'll enjoy are Oom Samie Se Winkel on Dorp Street, a bit of a tourist trap but very pretty and worth the time if you need some souvenirs.

Don't miss: Man'ouche on Andringa. You won't believe it's possible to eat Lebanese food this good in Africa but really, it is. Added to that, the vibe of the antique shops and café life on Andringa is just super.

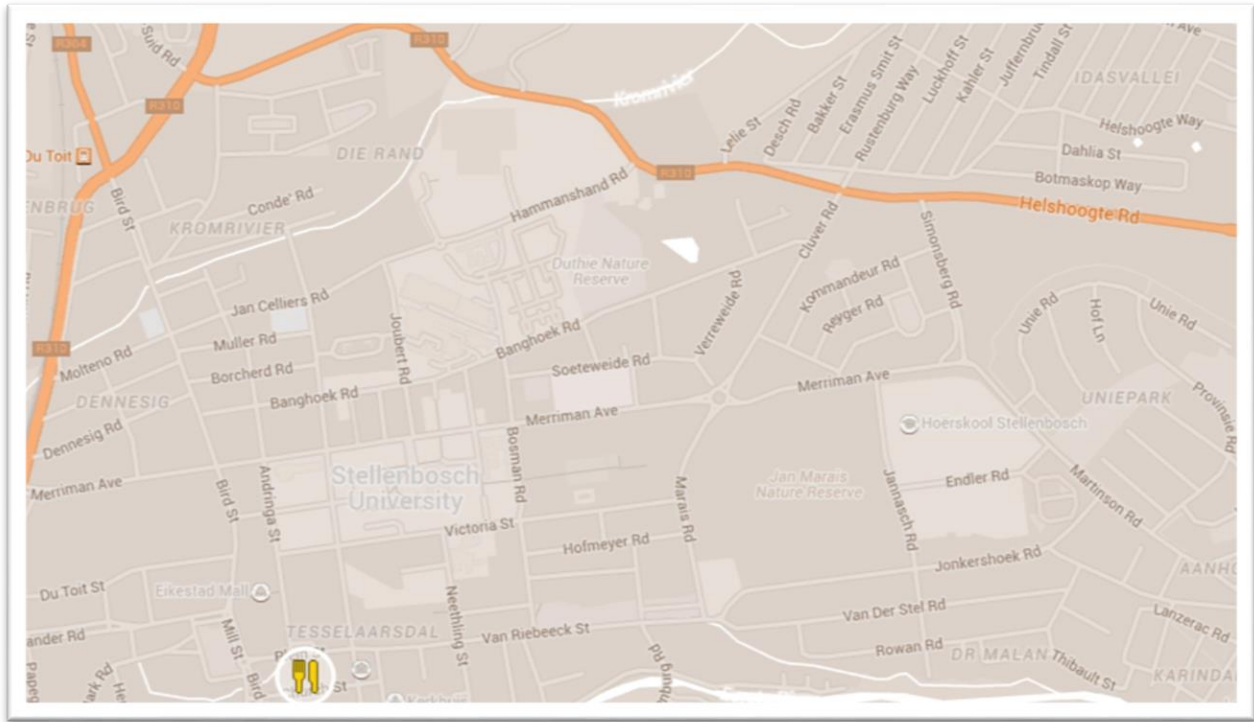
Right:
Chef Jean of Man'ouche, Stellenbosch.



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12h00 Leave Stellenbosch on the R310, Helshoogte Pass Road.
(This road is badly sign posted, so here's a little map to help you find it.)



The Helshoogte Pass (R310)

Probably one of the most beautiful mountain passes in the world, the Helshoogte Pass is the road between Stellenbosch and Franschoek.

It's very popular with motor and mountain bikers so go very easy up (and down) it and try not to get too distracted by the view!



12h30 Stop off at the small and family run Rainbow's End.

Rainbow's End

Tel (021) 885-1719 | www.rainbowsend.co.za



The latter is a diminutive family affair run by brothers Anton and Francois Malan and is *by appointment only* so please do phone ahead!

This is a truly rural wine estate and stands in very stark contrast to the likes of Rust en Vrede! If you're very serious about your wine, we'd advise trying Rainbow's End's Cabernet Franc 07 ... this was such a hit with some of our guests that we ordered two mixed cases and were not disappointed at all.

Don't miss: the chance to go up the estate in the family Landrover to check out the view. There's a small charge for this.

13h00 Leave Rainbow's End and continue on your way to Franschhoek, passing through the village of Pniel. Following the signs for Franschhoek, turn right onto the R45.

13h20 Turn off into Solms Delta.

Solms Delta Estate

Tel (021) 874-3937 | www.solms-delta.co.za



Solms Delta: a great mix of music, heritage, wine and food.

Again in contrast to the two (or three) estates you've visited so far, you'll find Mark Solms' estate a wonderful blend of history, social responsibility and excellent wine. In the restaurant (yes, it's lunch time now so go ahead!) you'll find a glass floor with the dug remains of the original Cape Dutch farmhouse beneath which occupied this land centuries ago. Alternatively, ask for a picnic hamper instead. The estate also boasts its very own music festival, the Oesfees; every year which celebrates local, indigenous music and celebration and is definitely worth stopping off for if your visit coincides with it. Wines here are truly excellent also.

Don't miss the Amalie, a Viognier blend that will have you buying a case before you know what's happening.

14h20 Leave Solms Delta and carry on using the same road into Franschhoek itself.

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Franschhoek

Tel (021) 876-3603 | www.franschhoek.org.za



Sunset over the vineyards and the Huguenot Memorial in Franschhoek

Once a sleepy little town in the Winelands, Franschhoek was discovered by wealthy Capetonian émigrés about twenty years ago. Property prices in the old town went through the roof and now, Franschhoek is a very pretty and up market town surrounded by stunning scenery and agri / viticulture.

From its name and those of the surrounding farms you'll be able to tell that this is a very French part of South Africa, so expect excellent food and wine along with a very proud cultural history.

If you thought house prices were bad in Camps Bay, think again for the price of a two bed cottage here!

We suggest that you park up somewhere on main road and then go and explore the town on foot.

The place is bursting with all sorts of little boutiques and some great restaurants too: rather avoid the overpriced and pretentious Le Quartier and instead, try some of the smaller local eateries.

On weekends in the summer, you'll battle to get a table.

15h20 If you've managed to see all you want to see in Franschhoek in one hour, well done!

From here, you have two choices: the shorter route or the longer route home ...

The Shorter Route ...

Drive South out of Franschoek on the R45, following signs for Villiersdorp. This road takes you through another wonderful mountain pass which opens out on to the Theewaterskloof Reservoir, where most of Cape Town's water is stored. It's a huge artificial lake, the shores of which are warm and sunny, so if you fancy a swim, give this a go.

16h00 *When you arrive at the junction with the R321, follow signs for Grabouw and N2 Cape Town (don't follow the Villiersdorp signs now). This way, you'll come back into Cape Town in about one hour via Sir Lowry's Pass*

If you've still got time, you could stop off on the way at Paul Cluver's truly excellent estate at Elgin.

(Just to confuse you, the way to get to Paul's is to turn LEFT when you reach the N2 from Theewaterskloof rather than RIGHT to go back to Cape Town. Follow the signs for N2 Caledon and you should be fine.)

Paul Cluver

Tel (021) 844-0605 | www.cluver.com



Paul Cluver has its own amphitheatre and organizes bush hikes too.

Cluver wines are something else: our personal favourite is the Chardonnay...and we don't drink Chardonnay! The really special thing about Cluver is that this is genuinely a family owned and run business, not just a family owned business. On almost any given day of the week, you'll meet one of the family and if you're really lucky, you'll time it with one of their summer concerts, which, if you've been sticking to the itinerary

will bring you into the estate at the perfect time. Soak it all up, but remember you've still about an hour on the road to get back to Parker.

The Longer Route ...

Drive North out of Franschoek, going back past Solms Delta but instead of turning off to the Helshoogte Pass road; continue past that junction on the R45 direction Paarl.

15h45 Bear left following the signs for Rupert and Rothschild on your left, but go past them.

16h00 On your right, you'll spot a sign to Babylonstoren. Turn in here.

Babylonstoren

Tel (021) 884-4352 | www.babylonstoren.com



Babylonstoren is a strange and rather amazing place. It's one of the oldest farmsteads in the Winelands (1777) and architecturally, it's a real treat. But far more than some old buildings and some good wine, this place has a truly superb garden, laid out in the grandest of styles, with a splendid conservatory where they serve amazing teas, most of the ingredients of which come from the garden itself. Even just walking around the garden is something unforgettable.

The staff of 200 (yes, you read that correctly), are such a professional and friendly bunch, you'll want to take them all home. And don't miss Babel, the restaurant, either. Lovely to look at and so relaxed. Even the car park of the place is beautiful!

17h30 From Babylonstoren, turn left direction N1. Be careful of the very confusing four way stop on this road- lots of accidents here in recent years (if you don't know how these work, the basic principle is that whoever arrives first has right of way).

Keep following signs for N1 Wellington, even though you are going N1 Cape Town.

Parker Cottage



Keep going along this road until you get to the N1 and follow the signs for Cape Town. This will bring you all the way back into town.