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Warming Up To Winter

WINTER 2023 R59.90 (INCL VAT)



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WELL,



HELLO WINTER

For those in search of a place to check in and tune out, there's an inland delight and seaside sanctuary for you. At Babylonstoren and The Twelve Apostles, a day at the spa is worthy of five stars. As for the accommodation? Perfection reigns supreme

RIGHT From sound to touch, water forms an integral part of the spa.

LEFT The hammam treatment chambers are a sight to behold with their mosaic ceilings and marble finishes.

WINTER IN THE WESTERN CAPE IS A TEMPESTUOUS ORDEAL, DISRUPTING LIFE'S TENDER DELIGHTS SUCH AS WARMTH AND DAYLIGHT. WHILE THE RAIN AND SNUG DAYS HOLD THEIR ALLURE, A MOMENT ARRIVES WHEN MENTAL AND PHYSICAL RESPITE BECKONS. THE ELIXIR OF VITAMIN D MIGHT BE OFF THE CARDS, BUT A SOUL-WARMING DAY AT THE SPA CERTAINLY ISN'T.

HAMMAM ON EARTH

A Boland blessing awaits at Babylonstoren's hot spa, where a hammam soap treatment convinced Robyn Simpson that heaven is a place on Earth

Within the embrace of Babylonstoren, a tapestry of tranquility unfolds. Peace emanates from every corner of the sprawling, working farm. No ordinary destination, this is a microcosm dedicated to complete rejuvenation, where the journey towards self-care transcends conventional treatments; it commences with the sacredness of space itself.

Babylonstoren's enchantment begins in the garden, amid fruit-laden orchards and bountiful vegetable patches, soothing streams and age-old trees. It is here that the process of grounding begins – a prelude to the ethereal experience that awaits at the spa, located on the fringes of the garden near the Greenhouse restaurant.

Beyond the spa's entrance, a coveted haven awaits, where both esteemed hotel guests and day visitors are welcome. Inside, interlocking pathways are arranged like a labyrinth, calling you to explore its hidden wonders. You'll pass pretty treatment rooms and an outdoor pool that looks much like a pond, peaceful places to hide away and a 'beach' akin to a *karesansui* garden. Adventure further, and you'll uncover the communal space, adorned with spectacular spa facilities.

A water channel connects two circular vitality pools to create an indoor-outdoor heated pool that can be enjoyed year-round. On one end, the first vitality pool is surrounded by a larger body of water, all encased in a greenhouse-like structure. The big pool features mosaic alcoves with cold running water (the difference in temperature encourages blood flow, giving the body an energising boost). A fireplace provides added warmth during colder months. On the opposite end of the channel is the second vitality circle, accompanied by a sauna, a steam room and a salt room built from blocks of raw Himalayan salt.



All things bright and bountiful await at Babylonstoren

Adjacent to the communal area, back towards the entrance, are Babylonstoren's new hammam and Rasul treatment rooms, exotic additions to the existing offerings, which include more familiar treatments such as massages, hydrating body wraps, bespoke facials, pedicures and beauty treatments. Dare to try something different and go for a hammam experience.

Do so and you'll be greeted with warm smiles and handed a plush dressing gown. The treatment is a fresh take on ancient Arabian public baths that have offered both physical and spiritual renewal for centuries. Offered by a few in South Africa, this is a private version that's as delightful as it is rare. Don't be confused by therapists in bathing suits as you'll soon realise that this is a water ritual and everyone, and everything, gets wet. Slip out of your robe and into the marble chamber, where tradition is echoed in the vaulted ceilings and intricate mosaics. Inside, thick air rises, ready to cleanse busy minds and ease tired muscles.



LEFT The indoor pool is the perfect place to bask in winter sun, unaffected by breezy conditions outside. The fireplace will take care of nippy air that creeps in.
BELOW A hammam treatment, where water works magic.

Stretched out on a heated marble slab, prepare to be swooshed with heavenly buckets of warm water, skillfully collected and tossed. You'll feel the weight of the liquid flow from your toes until it pours over your shoulders, hugging your body's contours and curves before gently letting go. Simultaneously, each deep breath carries steam from the outside in, mirroring the external ceremony.

After being bathed with expert orchestration, there's a stimulating full-body scrub to look forward to. Water continues to gush from an opening in the wall – white noise for stubborn thoughts that have yet to yield. What worries remain will be carried away with the clouds as frothy soap is shepherded across your body. It feels like silk, levitating from above, is touching the surface of your skin ever so slightly. It is perhaps the closest you'll come to feeling weightless.

Finally, a massage – a sublime amalgamation of touch and intention – guides you on a transformative passage back to your corporeal existence. In the crescendo of this odyssey, there's a final baptism of ice-cold water on your back. It's a shock that pierces the air, eliciting an involuntary gasp. You'll leave feeling as if you've re-entered the world, reborn.

Bookings are essential for hotel guests, day visitors and groups. Half- (R2 300, 2 hours) and full-day (R3 300, 3 hours) packages, as well as vouchers, are also available. You can order something delicious, like a wholewheat-crustied pie or seasonal garden salad, from the Greenhouse's menu between treatments. Read more about Babylonstoren's accommodation options on page 78.

Babylonstoren, Klapmuts Simondium Road, Simondium
021 863 3852 | enquiries@babylonstoren.com
babylonstoren.com

BOOK IT IN

Private hammam water ritual: R2 700, 60 min
Hammam traditional soap treatment: R2 700/couple, 60 min
Hammam traditional soap treatment for one: R1 800, 40 min
Hammam honey and salt scrub with steam: R1 300, 30 min
Rasul for two with duo massage: R3 450, 90 min
021 300 3929, spa@babylonstoren.com, babylonstoren.com/spa



HUMBLED BY GIANTS

Clutching onto the craggy precipices that separate Camps Bay from the sea, The Twelve Apostles stands resplendent in its timeless allure. Leandri de Kock discovers that this coastal oasis balances opulence with a familiar feeling of home, beautifully.

Since opening in 2002, The Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa has garnered a remarkable collection of accolades, adorning its mantle with prestigious titles such as Africa's Leading Luxury Hotel and South Africa's Leading Spa Resort. A single evening spent within its hallowed halls scarcely does justice to the abundant offerings, yet even amid a tightly-packed itinerary, a solitary night offers guests an opportunity to pause and immerse in rejuvenation. March forth towards the spa, a spectacular spot to start winding down.

Even in the face of relentless rain and gusting winds, the spa emanates an air of calm. Enveloped within the ambiance of the warm, sauna-like atmosphere, accompanied by the intoxicating aroma of essential oils, this haven is where weary visitors should go to recharge. In alignment with The Twelve Apostles' overarching commitment to excellence, the treatment menu celebrates all things elite. You have the choice of enjoying more familiar offerings, many centred on pampering hands and feet, or submit to the unusual ... how about a full-body Middle Eastern mud ritual?

Beyond the treatment rooms is a complete sanctuary dedicated to all-encompassing wellness. You will discover

Pedicures, pool time and, for those who stay, a pillow menu

hydrotherapy pools, a salt-water flotation pool and a tranquility lounge, complete with a Rasul chamber and rain shower. Within this custom-built cocoon, mineral-rich mud is lathered onto your body, drawing out toxins while the steam-filled room goes to work on your internal being. Or opt for the Swedish Back, Neck, Head and Shoulder Massage, which consists of a blissful 45 min where hot stones, oils and skilled hands are used to melt away tension ... and the outside world. Despite being located in one of Cape Town's busiest areas, it's easy to get lost in this restorative realm. The Twelve Apostles is, by all means, a retreat.

Between pedis and pool time, hotel guests and spa day visitors alike can tuck into the Health Bar buffet, offering a selection of healthy homemade snacks and fresh fruit juices. If sharing isn't your thing, you can order from the exclusive spa menu, which features an array of light meals (at an additional cost). Relax, mimosas are in no short supply.



LEFT The Rasul chamber and rain shower, where being smothered in mud doesn't get more glamorous.

BOOK IT IN

Swedish Back, Neck, Head and Shoulder massage: R1 050, 45 min
Traditional Arabic Rasul treatment: R950 per person or R1 650 per couple (plus bubbly), 45 min
Valid until 31 March 2024 | Seasonal rates apply (15 December 2023–15 January 2024)
Celebration packages, group bookings and full-day experiences are available
Bookings at 021 437 9060, thespa@12apostles.co.za or 12apostleshotel.com/wellness

BELOW The Twelve Apostles sits on one of South Africa's most scenic routes. Here, Lion's Head is visible in all its splendour.

The Twelve Apostles: it's easy to get lost in this restorative realm



LEFT A delicious masterpiece created by Chef Christo Pretorius.
BELOW A peek inside one of the elegant suites that overlook the ocean.



MAKE A MEAL OF IT

It's unlikely that you'll want to leave the comfort of the spa, but if you do, it's guaranteed to be a delicious adventure. Breakfast at The Twelve Apostles is always a decadent affair, with salmon and oysters cemented on the menu. There's a special emphasis placed on celebrating occasions, whatever it may be, thus making champagne for brekkie totally acceptable, nay, encouraged.

Sitting down at The Cafe Grill for lunch means experiencing upmarket takes on meals like the classic fish and chips or a buttermilk fried chicken burger. When it comes to culinary experiences, you're spoilt for choice. Next, head over to the Leopard Bar. You might think a room layered in leopard print and old-fashioned fabrics will be tacky, but Bea Tollman, president and founder of the Red Carnation group, manages to pull it off with sophistication. Whether you like your cocktail shaken or stirred, you can enjoy it on the open-air terrace, or on one of the plush couches while live music lingers.

Executive chef Christo Pretorius is the man who prepares what's on your plates next. The beautiful Azure restaurant was deservedly awarded South Africa's Best Hotel Restaurant at the 2020 World Culinary Awards, championing local ingredients and sustainable fishing practices, plus there's a mind-boggling wine list. If you want to elevate your dining experience, Azure offers a five-course dégustation menu with a wine pairing, aptly named 'Journey through the Cape'.

SWEET SLUMBER

At some point you need to rest your head, and what's better than choosing any pillow your heart desires? Rooms come with all the trimmings, including personalised additions like neck support pillows, and our favourite, a soap menu. All rooms are decorated differently and have a private balcony where you can sip coffee and enjoy the surrounds – mountain or sea, depending on your booking. Because there's no need to ever leave the hotel, it's best to book your experiences in advance. The same goes for the gin tastings, the gin making experience, picnics, high tea and use of the cinema. Furthermore, the hotel and spa often have special offers available, which is perfect as a gift to yourself or for a loved one.

The Twelve Apostles has masterfully balanced supremacy with the comforts of home, made possible by the exceptionally warm staff members that pull everything together. A stay here is so much more than what a postcard could ever say. Classic Rooms are from R4 160 pn, Luxury Rooms are from R6 050 pn, breakfast included.

Victoria Road, Camps Bay, Cape Town | 021 437 9000
reservations@12apostles.co.za | 12apostleshotel.com

PHOTOGRAPHY BABELONSTOREN, RED CARNATION HOTEL COLLECTION

CHECK IN



THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH

Midway between Franschhoek and Paarl, a magical microcosm weaves together the essence of a matchless hotel and a bustling farm. **Robyn Simpson** unearths the best of both worlds at Babylonstoren

Part working farm, part wholesome hideaway, Babylonstoren is visited by people from around the world longing to see the enchanting grounds, with even Capetonians making the trip to the Winelands – testament to its magnificence. Upon arrival, you'll likely be met with the irresistible inclination to wander and hastily capture as much of the farm as possible. An impossible task, the best of this revered spot is saved for those who stay a while.

With time on your side, you can dive deeper and uncover the elements that reveal themselves slowly as your soul settles and your mind quietens. It is in this stillness that you might feel the farm's vivid energy and deep spiritual aura, which are constantly bubbling beneath the surface. This is the beginning of a radical grounding journey, where rich history collides with the spirit of unhurried nature to fortify what might just be the happiest place on Earth.

THE CREAM OF THE CROP

Babylonstoren, under the ownership of Karen Roos and Koos Bekker, opened to the public in 2010 and, in just over a decade, has become one of the Cape's brightest stars. The farm's growth has been exponential, fuelled by the relentless pursuit of innovation and prosperity. Yet still, it is deeply attached to rich historical roots, resulting in a uniquely layered experience. The past, present and future somehow feel simultaneous, coexisting in tandem to formulate a realm where mere mortals can experience those things usually reserved for the divine.

A timeless, weightless atmosphere awaits, where possibilities appear endless and limitations are nipped in the bud. Where to begin this ethereal journey, you might be wondering? In the garden, which is very much reminiscent of an earthly Eden. Here, among the guava trees and salad leaves, is a fabulous way to not only get your bearings but also peel back the first layer of the farm and travel a little deeper under Babylonstoren's skin.

COUNTRY ESCAPE / Babylonstoren



GENESIS: THE GARDEN

Unlike most working farms dedicated to the mass production of a single crop, Babylonstoren's sustainable approach celebrates variety. Hectares of land, adorned with fruits and flowers, vegetables and spices, stretch from the main grounds towards the Simonsberg mountains. Pretty pathways and pristine patches seamlessly transition into a wilder landscape, where fynbos and other indigenous delights grow freely.

Babylonstoren has a plethora of farm tours to embark on. For hotel guests, they are all included in your stay. The Garden Tour begins at the bakery. Keep an eye out for Ernst, a botanical garden guru, who will likely be surrounded by chickens and a turkey or two. If not Ernst, one of Babylonstoren's expert staff members, all of whom bear bright smiles and clear name badges, will show you around. Your journey into the space begins with the foundation of knowledge. You'll be introduced to the land with a history lesson, which dates back to 1692, when Governor Simon van der Stel granted the free burgher Pieter van der Byl a piece of land at the foot of a conical hill.

LEFT Hotel guests shouldn't pass up on a farm drive, which takes you up the mountain to a gorgeous viewpoint. You'll be treated to a picnic and a new perspective of the grounds.

ABOVE The gardens are there to be enjoyed by all. Visitors and resident chickens alike are free to wander wherever the heart desires.

OPPOSITE A Fynbos Cottage with a view.



COUNTRY ESCAPE / Babylonstoren

What you see today is the brainchild of famed architect Patrice Taravella. 'He is remarkable in that he really understands the movement of people: how to make a garden hold you and calm you down,' says Karen. You'll find yourself floating through pathways and over bridges, indulging in frequent breaks to learn something new or delight your senses. Sink your teeth into a freshly picked guava or nibble on a fallen carob pod. The Healing Garden invites tranquility, while the Karoo Succulent House showcases the unique beauty of arid plants from that region. The one-hectare Kitchen Garden, also known as the Moestuin, flourishes with an assortment of seasonal vegetables, while the Spice House thrives with tropical plant species. The Spice House can be booked out for private lunches and events.

Though heavenly, no fruit is forbidden in this garden. 'There are no rules,' said Ernst. Babylonstoren has been created for pure pleasure. The grass is there to be walked on, and the fruit is there to be plucked and tasted. Everything is geared towards complete sensory satisfaction... and fun. The hour-long tour is the perfect introduction to the farm and conveniently ends at the Garden Restaurant, where you can order a plate that celebrates all you have experienced on the ground. You'll find that the knowledge you harvest in the garden echoes in all the abundant offerings Babylonstoren has curated.

Adventure is calling and you must answer



TAKE A TOUR

The farm values exclusivity for its esteemed guests. These tours are for those who stay, and are included in your overall booking.

Mountain Drive

For guests who stay two nights or longer. 2 pm and 4 pm in winter and at 3 pm and 5 pm in summer.

Bread Baking

Flour it up with a master baker every morning at 11 am.

Essential Oil Tour

Learn about the steam distillation method used to extract essential oils from plants. Start at reception at 11.30 am on weekdays.

Farm Walk

Daily guided farm walk before breakfast.

Water Buffalo Tour to Rietvlei

An early-morning visit to the lower part of the farm, where the more than 100 water buffalo graze and bathe. Witness the daily milking process and join in feeding the calves. After the tour, enjoy mozzarella, yoghurt, and butter made from water buffalo milk at Babel breakfast or a scoop of water buffalo gelato in the Gelato Room.

Guided Cellar Tour

Head underground to experience Babylonstoren's grape-to-bottle process. Tastings and snacks are included. Tours start at 10 am, 1 pm and 4 pm daily.

The Story of Wine Museum

A visual documentary of the history and cultivation of wine. Open daily.

Olive Oil and Balsamic Vinegar Tours

Witness the process and taste along the way. Tours take place at 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm daily.

Babylonstoren Balance

A good stretch and breathing session in the garden. Mondays –Fridays from 8 am–9 am, meet at reception.

Activities for young guests

Feed the donkeys, collect eggs and help harvest fruit and vegetables from the garden, especially for the breakfast table. Children are also welcome to help bakers knead and bake delicious farm breads.

Harvest fruit and vegetables

Join the chefs every day to harvest fruit and vegetables for the restaurants.

The Dam

Canoe (at your own leisure) or try your hand at fly fishing at the onsite dam. You can cook your catch in your cottage or ask one of the chefs to prepare it for you at your restaurant of choice.

For Special Seasonal Workshops:

babylonstoren.com/workshops
There are select tours open for the public to enjoy. Explore options and bookings online. babylonstoren.com



ABOVE The Greenhouse Restaurant is the perfect place to taste all that you've experienced in the garden.

RIGHT Purchase ingredients from the butchery, cheesery and farm shop to cook up in your cottage.
BELOW Breakfast at Babel is sure to lure you out of bed, even on nippy winter mornings.



NO SHORTCUTS

In contemporary discourse, expressions such as 'farm to fork' and 'free range' have become commonplace, often losing their precise significance. However, Babylonstoren gives these phrases new life and truth. From edibles to essential oils, everything is transparently showcased, encouraging an intimate affair with the fruits of the land. This philosophy applies to everything harvested: grape to bottle, olive to oil, and so on.

'Farm to fork' is fully actualised at each Babylonstoren eatery: The Greenhouse, The Bakery and Babel, where you'll always enjoy the garden's seasonal offerings. Dinner at Babel is something to savour. The three-course menu includes various proteins and sides, perfect for sharing, and sharing is *advised*. The portions are more than generous; they are huge. A protein for yourself and sides to share is a delicious strategy. Pray that when you visit, the whole-roasted sweet potato, complete with almond hummus and lemon, is on the menu. It's spectacular. As is the delicate vegetable broth to start, the Glen Oaks pork, served on the bone, with quince and hyssop, and the baked water buffalo yoghurt with pomegranate and rosemary meringue for dessert. Remember, the menu changes with the seasons and with what's available from the garden. Unchanging, however, is that every meal at Babylonstoren is a celebration of the farm's harvest.



LEFT Remember to snap a picture at Babel's iconic entrance.
BELOW Adjacent to the Fynbos Cottages is a pool area and bar. Help yourself to drinks.

COUNTRY ESCAPE / Babylonstoren

LINGER LONGER

The Fynbos Cottages are unique in that they are positioned a few hundred metres from the main grounds. Their location, coupled with the Cape's wild fynbos landscape, vineyards and mountain views, makes this the perfect secluded escape. Within this retreat, Babylonstoren's artful fusion of antiquity and innovation continues to shine. The cottages are framed by floor-to-ceiling windows that encase the heart of the home – the kitchen. Amenities for self-catering are included, offering guests the opportunity to experiment with goodies purchased from the farm shop or foraged throughout the day's adventures.

Throughout, Oregon pine floors lay the foundation, while the decor, with its organic tones and textures, enhances the innate beauty of the surroundings. Each room becomes a testament to thoughtful design. The lounge, bedroom, and en-suite bathroom, each with its own distinctive character, feature elements that elevate the sensory experience. A wooden bookshelf, exuding warmth and inviting contemplation, graces the lounge. In the en-suite bathroom, a Chinese bath and delicate gold finishes provide a striking contrast against the pristine white backdrop. Meanwhile, the bedroom unveils a sanctuary of slumber, where a four-poster bed beckons and electronic skylights grant access to the celestial canopy above.

Opposite the kitchen, beyond the expanse of the lounge, lies a revelation awaiting discovery. As the double doors swing open, they unveil a captivating vista stretching across the entirety of the farm. A sight to behold, particularly at dusk and dawn. Thoughtfully placed pathways invite unhindered exploration. You may chance upon a pond where there's a bench to sit and enjoy the daily sky shows, accompanied by resident ducks that frequently visit. If you're in Cottage 34, this enchanting scene will be on your doorstep. To get to dinner faster, your cottage is complete with bicycles and a golf cart.



ABOVE The Fynbos Cottages have 360-degree views. Open everything up or draw the blinds to create a private hideaway.
TOP Bath time is something of a ceremony. Pluck a few sprigs from the bouquet placed on the mantelshelf to infuse into your water.

A realm where mere mortals can experience those things usually reserved for the divine

YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET
 Visiting for the day to explore the gardens, enjoy a lunch at one of the on-site restaurants or perhaps embark on a tour is enough to whet your appetite. It's a delicious amuse-bouche before a main meal. As Kobus said on an evening farm drive, exclusive to staying guests, 'You ain't seen nothing yet'.

Over time, it is not only the produce that has expanded, where avocados and dragon fruits have made an entrance, or that way has been made for blood oranges over the usual kind to meet popular demand. The accommodation offerings are ever-evolving. Among these abodes, the venerable Cape Dutch Manor House stands as a testament to history, with its origins dating back to the year 1777. Today, it stands beautifully restored with added contemporary flair – just enough to not impose on the bones of the place, which include a traditional farm kitchen with an old wood-burning stove. Then there's the Farm Hotel, the Garden Cottages and the Farmhouse Suites. A short distance from the heart of the farm, you'll find the newest accommodations, the Fynbos Cottages and the Fynbos Family House.



COUNTRY ESCAPE / Babylonstoren

At Babylonstoren, the boundaries of exploration are delightfully dissolved. Pools and lawns, lodgings and a splendid spa (read more about the spa on pg 28) call on weathered souls. Accompanied by the gentle rustle of donkeys wearing in their winter coats and harmonious melodies emanating from contented farm animals, your imagination takes flight. The property unveils itself as a playground where adults and children alike can surrender to the enchantment of discovery. Within this haven of wholesomeness, joy manifests in its purest form, becoming the ultimate souvenir to be cherished.

Babylonstoren, Klamputs Simondium Road, Simondium
021 863 3852 | enquiries@babylonstoren.com
babylonstoren.com



Boundaries of exploration are delightfully dissolved

BOOK IT IN

One-bedroom

Fynbos Cottage

Sleeps 2, 1 bedroom,
1 bathroom, kitchen, lounge
1 May–31 Aug 2023: R12 300,
2 guests or R9 200, 1 guest
1 Jan–30 Apr 2023 and
1 Sep–31 Dec 2023: R16 500,
2 guests or R12 300, 1 guest
babylonstoren.com/hotel/fynbos

Two-bedroom

Fynbos Cottage

Sleeps 4, 2 bedrooms, 2
bathrooms, kitchen, lounge
1 May–31 Aug 2023: R18 700,
4 guests or R17 600, 3 guests
1 Jan–30 Apr 2023 and
1 Sep–31 Dec 2023: R25 200,
4 guests or R23 000, 3 guests
babylonstoren.com/hotel/fynbos

Fynbos Family House

Sleeps 10, 5 en-suite bedrooms,
fully equipped kitchen, spacious
lounge, private pool and courtyard
1 May–31 Aug 2023: R72 600,
10 guests
1 Jan–30 Apr 2023 and
1 Sep–31 Dec 2023: R81 800,
10 guests
babylonstoren.com/hotel/manor-house

All Fynbos accommodation offerings include:

A Babylonstoren Breakfast |
Access to the garden and farm
facilities at all times | All tours |
Bicycles and a private golf cart |
Laundry, six items per day |
Personalised larder in the rooms |
15% VAT (subject to change)

All Fynbos accommodation offerings exclude:

Meals other than breakfast | All
drinks other than personalised
larder in rooms | Spa treatments
| 1% tourism levy per room,
per night | All transfers

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY IMAGES

