

dive, cruise, explore, escape

# CUTTING LOOSE

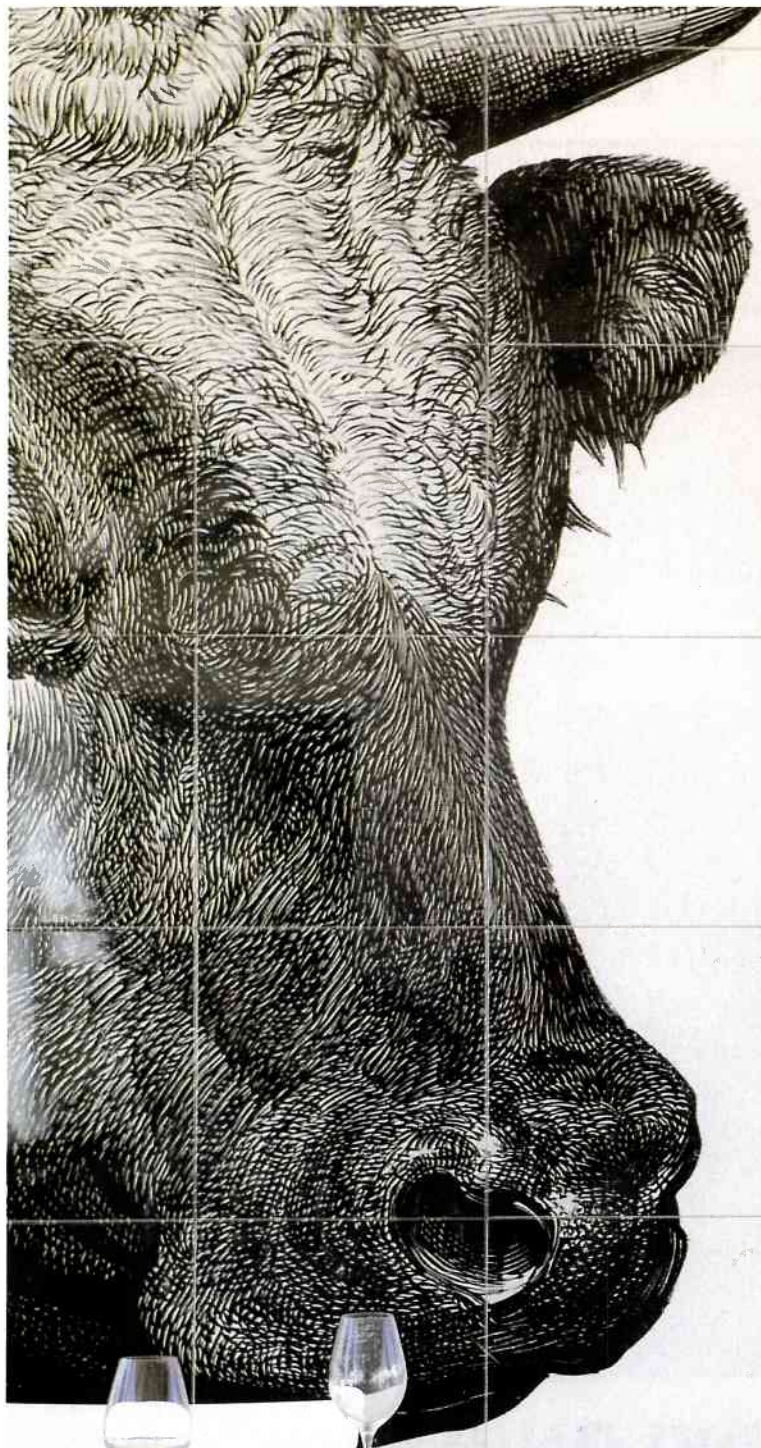


## GARDENS OF BABYLON(STOREN)

**AN HISTORIC WINE AND FRUIT FARM IN FRANSCHHOEK HAS BEEN GIVEN  
A NEW LEASE ON LIFE THANKS TO THE ICONIC EYE OF KAREN ROOS**

It's fortunate that Babylonstoren fell under the gaze of Karen Roos, ex editor of *Elle Decoration* magazine, and her team, as their combined passion for and knowledge of historic Cape Dutch properties and formal Cape gardens has ensured its survival for the future with an authentic yet contemporary restoration.

The original manor house, along with eight double and five single rehabilitated classic Cape Dutch cottages, is set within eight acres of fruit and vegetable gardens made up of 15 sections comprising vegetables, berries, bees for pollinating, indigenous plants, fragrant lawns of thyme and a prickly pear



maze. Inspired by the Company Gardens of Cape Town that supplied ships passing around the Cape with food, all of the more than 300 varieties of plants in the gardens of Babylonstoren are edible. This nod towards authenticity extends to the *leiwater* system, where gravity feeds water from a nearby stream into irrigation waterways and ducks preclude the need for insecticides.

The overall effect is novel in that the boutique offering of spacious cottages laid out like a formal village emulates a 'farm-stay' experience, where guests are encouraged to wander through the magnificent gardens and pick fruit, herbs and vegetables, and even partake in harvesting, pruning and planting if the mood takes them. The only difference is you return to slick quarters at the end of the day in the form of a crisp, cool and very spacious whitewashed cottage with modern, beautifully decorated interiors that simultaneously embrace and defy tradition. With a floor-to-ceiling bookshelf full of interesting books and a glass-encased kitchen and dining area that overlooks the gardens set against an idyllic mountain backdrop, you really have no need to be anywhere but there. And if you're hungry, a quick stroll to Babel, the farm's beautifully appointed conservatory restaurant, delivers a menu (directed by Maranda Engelbrecht of Manna Epicure fame) that celebrates the flavours of the garden in fresh, original and deliciously simple dishes.

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The hotel includes a spa, gymnasium and a farm dam that has been modified into the most stylish of pools.

Accommodation is from R3 950 per cottage per night, including breakfast. An entrance fee of R20 for day visitors to the garden is donated to charity. [www.babylonstoren.com](http://www.babylonstoren.com).



**COUNTRY IDYLL**

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE

Babylonstoren is a blissful escape from urban madness. On this working farm, you can relish the simple life from the comfort of your slick contemporary-meets-country quarters and enjoy delicious, farm-fresh cuisine at Babel, the stylish on-site eatery

