



THE FARM

How old is the farm?

The farm dates back to 1692. The oldest buildings were erected in the late 17th century, with the manor house dating back to 1777. After the property was bought by the current owner in 2007, French architect Patrice Taravella, owner of Prieuré Notre Dame d'Orsan (near Bourges in France), designed the garden. Over the next few years pergolas, gravel pathways and water canals were built. During 2009 the gardeners started preparing the soil and did most of the planting for the formal garden. Babylonstoren opened its doors to the public in November 2010.

Every single one of the plants in the formal 3,5 hectare (8 acre) garden was planted by our gardeners, with the only exception a single Brazilian pepper tree. On both sides of the formal garden there are some majestic old oaks and beautiful indigenous wild olive trees that are still growing as we found them between the hotel cottages and along the natural stream.

How big is the farm?

Hotel guests are free to explore 200 hectares (almost 500 acres) of the property. At its heart lies the 3,5 hectare (8 acre) garden of cultivated fruit and vegetables.

Who is the owner?

The farm is owned by former magazine editor Karen Roos.

What does the logo represent?

The Babylonstoren logo, which consists of the pipe (representing the lifestyle of the farmer), the flower (representing the garden) and the bird (representing nature), combines the very essence of Babylonstoren – keeping things simple and as true to the earth as possible.

Where does the name come from?

Babylonstoren's life started in 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. It was dubbed, in Dutch, Babilonische Tooren, later Babilonstoring or Babylonstoren, as the 17th-century farmers thought its shape resembled the Tower of Babel mentioned in the Bible. An interesting but unproven speculation is that it also suggests the linguistic melting pot the valley became at that time, with Dutch, French, German and various Khoi and San languages intermingling, and exotic

Asian words sailing in with the spice trade – all of which evoke the biblical story of the Tower of Babel.

How did Babylonstoren become such a travel hub?

Karen Roos says: “Above all, we’d like visitors to ground themselves again. To enjoy the mountains all around as much as we do, pick their own healthy fruit and veg, play pétanque, swim in the farm dam, enjoy an hour in the spa, eat a simple fresh dish at one of the restaurants, walk up the conical Babylonstoren hill, await sunset with a glass of wine in hand, and then slip in between sheets of crisp linen and drift away ... more or less.”

Can you describe the grounds and some other highlights of the property?

Babylonstoren is a historic Cape Dutch farm that boasts one of the best preserved *plaaswerwe* (farmyards) in the Cape. Beloved for its garden that is laid out over 3,5 magnificent hectares (8 acres), the structure divides into 15 sections that include fruit, berries, bees for pollinating, indigenous plants, fragrant lawns, a prickly pear maze, a clivia tunnel and a plethora of trees of historical and botanical import.

Babylonstoren sits at the heart of the wine country, with Simonsberg as backdrop and possibly the finest terroir in the Cape. The Tasting Room opened to coincide with our first Méthode Cap Classique sparkling wine, called Sprankel. Varieties on the farm are chardonnay, chenin blanc, viognier, shiraz, mourvèdre, sémillon, pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot, malbec, petit verdot and pinotage.

Every aspect of Babylonstoren (including the contemporary Farm Hotel and Spa, the Farm Shop and Bakery) is informed by the ever-changing tapestry and botanical diversity of the garden.

What is the entrance fee used for?

When visitors come to Babylonstoren, whether it’s for lunch or a garden tour, they often express surprise at the entrance fee at the gate. On weekends and public holidays entry costs R20 per person (R10 per child under 12), but on weekdays it is R10 for all. Babylonstoren places great value on the upliftment of the community and therefore all entrance fees are contributed towards our Babylonstoren Trust. The Trust raises funds for community projects such as the Learning Centre where our farm workers’ children are cared for while their parents are hard at work in our vineyards and orchards. Meals are provided as well as help with school work. School fees of older children are covered and those who excel can be sent to a private school. The Trust also funds sporting equipment and clothes (such as soccer and netball kits) as well as transport to and from sports days.

SLEEP

What accommodation options does Babylonstoren offer guests?

Guests are welcome to choose between our Farmhouse and our Farm Hotel. We also have additional accommodation available in Koornhuis and the Owner’s House.

The **Farm Hotel** has 13 guest cottages next to the garden, of which seven have basic kitchens. These were newly built in the Cape Dutch architect style on the footprints of the original labourers' cottages.

The 13 guest cottages include the following:

- Six one-bedroom suites
- Three one-bedroom cottages with a lounge area
- Four two-bedroom cottages with a lounge area

The Green Room opposite Babel Restaurant is a lounge for the use of all our hotel guests, offering a good selection of books and board games, a chess set as well as an easel for painting. Guests can mingle with one another or relax with a special drink in front of the fireplace.

Set beneath a copse of trees, the **Farmhouse** combines authentic architecture with modern design: refined and moody. As with the original Farm Hotel, these suites offer the authentic yet contemporary experience that defines Babylonstoren.

The Farmhouse consists of nine luxurious suites with access to a swimming pool, vitality pool, sauna and salt room. The Butterfly Room is a lounge and library for the use of our Farmhouse guests. It offers a good selection of books and board games, as well as a choice of drinks. A rare collection of birdwing butterflies, collected over many years by entomologist Henk Geertsema, is exhibited here. It includes impressive specimens of the three main groups *Ornithoptera*, *Trogonoptera* and *Troides*, which are highly sought after by collectors.

Koornhuis has two bedrooms and a kitchen. It is located next to the Wheat Barn and is often used by bridal parties making use of our function venues.

The exclusive **Owner's House** is available on special request. It has five bedrooms, accommodating ten guests. The interior has been beautifully restored to its former glory, but with a definite contemporary touch. Bookshelves are filled with a wonderful selection of books and the traditional farm kitchen boasts a roaring old wood-burning stove. Guests have access to the garden at all times, with games set up on the private lawn.

Is the hotel child friendly?

Families are most welcome at Babylonstoren, and we like to think of the hotel as parent friendly. Although there is no separate play area for children, they love the animals and space outside. We offer a farm and garden experience – kids enjoy feeding the donkeys, harvesting, baking bread, collecting eggs and cycling on the farm.

What activities do you offer hotel guests?

Apart from the activities offered to our day visitors, hotel guests can join our daily farm walk up the Babylonstoren koppie and through the orchards – the views and fynbos vegetation are spectacular, making it well worth the effort. Guests may also choose to canoe on the farm dam, cycle through the vineyards and orchards or amble down the stream that is lined with thousands of clivias. There are 200 hectares (almost 500 acres) of this working farm to explore. Stretch out on the chamomile lawn, join our chefs when they pick veggies for the evening meal,

spend gentle hours birdwatching, enjoy a relaxing treatment at the Garden Spa or simply relax ...

EAT

Meals for hotel guests

Housed in the old cow shed, Babel Restaurant is a wonderful mix of Cape Dutch architecture and contemporary glass walls that makes for a simple yet edgy environment in which to try our tasty yet often unconventional combinations. We have a farm-to-fork philosophy which means we like to serve food that is seasonal and that reflects our “pick, clean and serve” approach.

Babel Restaurant is open for lunch from Wednesday to Sunday, and for breakfast and dinner from Monday to Sunday. Our menu is seasonal and is always guided by what is available in the garden.

How many restaurants do you have at Babylonstoren?

We have two restaurants: Babel, our intimate signature restaurant, and the Greenhouse tea garden, where visitors to the garden can enjoy tea under the majestic old oaks. Guests can also enjoy wine tasting and delicious platters at the Tasting Room.

Is everything you serve in the restaurants grown or made on the farm?

All fresh produce used in our restaurant dishes is planted and harvested in our garden. What we cannot produce ourselves, we source locally. It sometimes happens that the fruit or vegetables in our garden need a day or two longer to ripen. We would rather wait to harvest at optimal ripeness – at such times we source locally, supporting our neighbours and other suppliers in the area.

What is Maranda Engelbrecht’s role?

Maranda Engelbrecht is an award-winning stylist and food consultant. As part of the Babylonstoren team she works with our chefs, gardeners, winemakers and farmers to help create an extraordinary place offering unique experiences. Maranda is also the author of our cookbook, *Babel*.

BABEL RESTAURANT

Is Babel open to the public?

Yes, Babel Restaurant is open for breakfast and dinner every day of the week and for lunch from Wednesday to Sunday. Our menu is seasonal and is always guided by what is available in the garden. Depending on the weather, guests can take their meal in the glass-enclosed restaurant or under the plane trees in the courtyard.

What type of restaurant is Babel?

Babel has a unique new style of menu, which focuses on fresh produce from the garden and the region. Like so much else at Babylonstoren, a meal at Babel promises to be both an adventure and a rediscovery of the honest essence of things. Babel’s food is directed by what the garden offers.

- For breakfast, our menu is focused on texture.
- Our starters focus on the visual effect of our salads: a choice of red, yellow or green.
- Main meals consist of a protein with delicious veggies from the garden and our famous potato wedges.
- Dessert subscribes to four flavours: salty, bitter, sweet and sour.

Our food always reflects the season, and so in summer we may serve a yellow salad of pineapple, gooseberries, granadillas, yellow tomatoes and apricots while in winter a slow-cooked leg of lamb in red wine is more likely.

What is your food philosophy or style?

Simple, generous and honest. Fresh, seasonal food that is closely tied to its origins in the garden. Our style of food leans towards simplicity, but we play with unexpected flavour combinations and new varieties of fruit and vegetables in every meal. And while our meals are creative, we don't like to tamper unduly with our food. Our meals are always clear in structure, so that fruit and vegetables gathered daily from the garden is often served whole or with the skin on – we believe our guests must be able to see what they are eating. Our helpings are generous.

Who is the head chef at Babel?

Cornelle Minie is the current head chef. She works closely with our baker and gardeners, and with our food designer and stylist, Maranda Engelbrecht.

THE GREENHOUSE

What are the hours at the Greenhouse?

The tea garden is open Monday to Sunday from 10h00 to 16h00. No reservation is required – we allocate tables as they become available. The Greenhouse is at the rear of the garden and offers seating inside the vintage conservatory or outside under the oak trees. The Greenhouse is a wonderful refreshment station for guests after their walk through the garden.

What type of restaurant is the Greenhouse?

We offer light snacks as well as more substantial meals of artisanal breads with handcrafted cheeses and dressed meats, as well as fresh garden salads. We also have delicious cakes, buttermilk scones, coffee, tea, fresh garden juices and homemade popsicles.

What is the food style at the Greenhouse?

The Greenhouse menu subscribes to the self-same “pick, clean and serve” philosophy as Babel, but with a strong emphasis on honest food with little to no fuss. All our food is served picnic-style in wooden crates with the preserves, jams and salads packaged in weck jars, while fresh bread from our wood-fired oven comes wrapped in the iconic blue-and-white Babylonstoren paper.

Is the Greenhouse actually used as a greenhouse?

Despite its obvious aesthetic appeal and its function as a refreshment station, the Greenhouse also performs a vital role in the garden. It is here where plants are brought when they struggle

outside in the Western Cape's winter rainfall or at the lack of humidity in summer. Exotic granadillas, ginger, cardamom, pineapples, dragonfruit and vanilla all reside here.

VISIT

What activities do you offer day visitors?

- We have a daily garden tour at 10h00. Alternatively, day visitors can explore the garden on their own.
- At the Tasting Room, guests can taste our range of wines. They are also welcome to join us for a tour of our wine cellar and our olive press.
- Then there is the Farm Shop and Bakery, where visitors can buy freshly baked bread and exclusive products inspired by the garden.
- Next door you will find yourself surrounded with the most mesmerising fragrances in our Scented Room.
- At the rear of the garden, tucked away between the oak trees, our Greenhouse Restaurant offers guests meals and drinks, much like the tea gardens in old city parks.
- The Garden Spa is also open to day visitors.

Is Babylonstoren wheelchair friendly?

Babylonstoren offers a farm and garden experience engaging all the senses. The nature and extent of the garden, with uneven paths of gravel, pips and sticks, make it very challenging for wheelchairs. We do not have staff available to escort guests but offer wheelchairs at the Farm Shop for those with strong family members or friends that are able to assist.

THE GARDEN

The garden looks very established. How old is the garden?

The current owner bought Babylonstoren in 2007. In 2008, architect Patrice Taravella, from Prieuré d'Orsan (near Bourges in France), designed the garden. The ground was cleaned, levels pegged and hard landscaping with pergolas, paths and water canals built. During 2009 the gardeners started preparing the soil and did most of the planting for the formal garden. Babylonstoren opened its doors to the public in November 2010.

Every single one of the plants in the formal 3,5 hectare (8 acre) garden was planted by our gardeners when we started with this project in 2009, except for the large, old wild pepper tree (*Schinus terebinthifolia*) at the top of the garden, providing welcome shade to visitors. On both sides of the formal garden there are some majestic old oaks and beautiful indigenous wild olive trees that are still growing as we found them between the hotel cottages and along the natural stream flowing at the edge of the garden. This stream flows from Simonsberg to the Berg River, creating a space for indigenous wild olives to flourish. In their shade a collection of some 7 000 clivia lilies explode in a spectacular display every spring. Our head gardener Liesl van der Walt and her team tend the plants that have flourished beyond expectation – so much so that it's quite hard to believe that the garden is still relatively young.

How big is the garden?

The garden spans 3,5 hectares (8 acres). Patrice Taravella gave the garden geometric bones. His creation sits on an axis that extends east to west along the traditional lines of the old whitewashed Cape Dutch *werf* (farmyard), then north to south from Babel Restaurant to the Babylonstoren koppie. It comprises 15 clusters spanning vegetable areas, stone and pome fruits, nuts, citrus, berries, bees, herbs, ducks, chickens as well as a prickly pear maze. Gravity feeds water from a stream by rills into the garden, flowing through ponds planted with edible lotus, nymphaea lilies and waterblommetjies.

How many gardeners work in the garden?

We have 19 gardeners. You are welcome to stop and chat to them about plants and gardening. On the garden tours you are most likely to walk with gardeners Liesl van der Walt, Gundula Deutschlander, Talitha Cherry or Constance Stuurman – picking and tasting whatever is in season.

Is the garden organic?

We want guests to be able to pick and eat at any time. Therefore we garden according to organic and natural principles and do not follow a routine spraying programme. Protecting the diversity in the garden is also very important to us – to include as many different plants, animals, birds, insects as well as micro-organisms as possible.

What is the inspiration behind the design of the garden?

The historical Cape Dutch farmhouse with its formal fruit and vegetable garden is the heart of the farm. The garden's design was inspired by the original Company's Garden in Cape Town, which supplied sailing ships of the Dutch East India Company with fresh fruit and vegetables during the days when the Cape was a halfway station between Europe and Asia. But we also link back to the mythological hanging gardens of Babylon. Those were thought to have been created by Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century BC, for his wife who longed for the mountains and valleys of her youth.

In 2007, owner Karen Roos commissioned the architect Patrice Taravella to plan the layout of the garden. His work at Prieuré Notre Dame d'Orsan in France had impressed her greatly. There Patrice had reconstructed a medieval cloistered garden on the site of a restored 12th-century monastery. "I was drawn to Patrice's inherent discipline. It is almost Cartesian in the tradition of classical French gardens," says Karen. "And he's remarkable in that he really understands the movement of people: how to make a garden hold you and calm you down."

What do you do with all the fruit and vegetables in the garden?

Every one of the 300 varieties of plants in the garden is edible or has medicinal value. They are grown as organically as possible and in a biologically sustainable manner. We use the fruit and vegetables for our fresh garden juices. Visitors to the garden are encouraged to pick and eat as they walk through. In the hotel we welcome our guests with wooden boxes filled with seasonal fruits. We also harvest fruit and vegetables all year round for use in our two farm-to-fork restaurants. When the garden cannot provide enough, we supplement with fruit harvested from the farm's orchards. Any surplus fruit is distilled or used to make jams, cordials and preserves for our Farm Shop.

What is the best time to visit the garden?

The experienced and energetic head gardener at Prieuré d'Orsan, Gilles Guillot, has this beautiful saying that a garden is like someone you love – there is something beautiful about them in every season. It also depends on what you would like to see when you visit: blossoms in August, clivias in September, blooming rose towers in November or berries, plums and lotus flowers in December.

What are the stories of some of the remarkable trees in your garden?

- Shakespeare's mulberry and Newton's Flower of Kent apple tree are offspring of the original trees linked to these famous historical figures.
- The avenue of large guava trees is estimated to be at least 70 years old, maybe older. These trees were transplanted as mature trees from a farm near Paarl.
- The weeping mulberry in the middle of the garden for wild birds is at least 150 years old. This tree used to grow near the historical Cape Dutch home where it was overshadowed by larger trees, but was moved to this prominent position in 2009.
- The wild pepper tree *Schinus terebinthifolia* at the top of the garden is the only tree that was not planted in the formal historical fruit and vegetable garden.
- Outside the garden walls and on the farm the stories of more beautiful and famous trees continue with Napoleon's willow, ancient indigenous wild olives, impressive sugar gum eucalyptus and magnificent oaks.

Do you have a guided garden tour?

We offer guided garden tours from Monday to Sunday. The tour starts at the Farm Shop at 10h00. Booking is essential. Garden tours are free, but an entrance fee is payable at the main gate.

Do you have any volunteer programmes?

As we are passionate about our garden at Babylonstoren, we welcome fellow gardeners, horticulturists, botanists or those who are interested in learning more about gardening. If you're happy to get your hands dirty (you'll be planting, harvesting, pruning and mulching) and eager to learn and/or share your knowledge, we'd love to welcome you as volunteer at Babylonstoren. You'll work with our gardeners in every aspect of the garden but most importantly get a chance to contribute to the garden in a real way. To enquire about our intern programme, or to volunteer in the garden, please contact liesl@babylonstoren.com.

Do you offer any workshops on the farm?

We have regular workshops at Babylonstoren as we see it as an ideal opportunity to share what we've learned – not only about our garden but about gardening in general. We also regularly invite guests who are experts in their fields to host these workshops in collaboration with our gardening team. Our workshops tend to be small, with no more than 20 people per group. Workshops are quite hands-on so you will get to try out the skill, technique or discipline that you're learning about. All our workshops include a walk through the garden and as such it's usually a full-day affair.

ANIMALS

Are there any wild animals on the farm?

Although this is not big five country, guests may come across our resident donkeys as well as the tortoises, chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese and squirrels that all roam happily. Now and again you may even be lucky enough to see a wild steenbok or the Cape silver-backed fox. There is abundant bird life – we have spotted 58 bird species on the farm (such as spotted eagle owl, barn owl, blue crane, sunbird, guinea fowl and even fish eagle).

Are you pet friendly?

We do not allow pets, but guide dogs are welcome. We have tortoises, ducks, chickens and children on the farm, and we would not want to potentially harm them.

Where can guests find food for the donkeys?

Our hotel guests are welcome to join our gardening team when they feed the donkeys early in the morning. Visitors can also ask for some of the previous day's left-over bread at the Farm Shop.

What is the purpose of the donkeys?

The donkeys are here for the entertainment of our guest. The children simply love feeding them carrots and bread. We even have donkey masks for sale in our Farm Shop. When we host weddings or other events on the farm, guest are welcome to feed the donkeys through an open hedge within the venue building. This provides great entertainment! We do have a few donkey cars on the farm but do not offer rides as yet.

What are the donkeys called and where are they from?

Meisiekind is the oldest donkey on the farm and has been with us on the farm since we can remember. In 2009 we got Ben from a farm in Kwazulu-Natal. The two fell in love and enjoyed the luxury farm life on Babylonstoren for a few years before starting a family. Lulu was born to this beautiful couple in November 2012.

In 2014 Lulu went on holiday to Kimberley where she met a Catalan Spanish Jack. It was love at first sight and on 29 May 2015, after 370 days of pregnancy, Trompie was born at Babylonstoren. He has since been moved to his own private camp, leaving the job of visitor entertainment to his mum and granny. Ben has also had to leave us to go and work on neighbouring Solms-Delta.

FARMING

What do you farm “outside the garden”?

We grow plums and citrus for export. For our own use we have olives, grapes, figs, prickly pears, persimmons and now also blood oranges, specially for our garden juices. In addition, we grow mealies, rye, wheat, alfalfa and risotto rice. We alternate the rice with waterblommetjies – after the rice harvest, waterblommetjies are planted in the same dams. Our almond and pecan trees do not produce nuts yet but are growing beautifully and before long, we'll have our first harvest. We make our own rooibos and honey bush teas. We also grow proteas and make

our own compost for use in the garden and on the farm. A big camp is being built at the moment. This is where we'll house our own free-range pigs.

Do you reuse any old wooden material and dead stumps?

We use a wood chipper for all old wood. The chips are worked into the soil as the organic material helps to maintain soil moisture.

Do you produce your own olive oil?

Yes, we have our own olive oil plant and make delicious extra virgin olive oil. Our 2015 oil was a blend of five cultivars while our 2016 oil is a blend of four. In addition, we now have a single-cultivar oil made of the Frantoio olive.

How many olive trees do you have?

We grow eight olive varieties, some better for table olives, but most of them for their olive oil qualities. There are 8 800 trees in total. On Babylonstoren we grow the following:

- Leccino – produces an oil with soft, subtle herbaceous flavours.
- Frantoio – a typical Tuscan variety, with strong, green overtones.
- Coratina – can produce a rather bitter oil.
- FS 17 – specifically selected for oil production.
- Mission – more suited to table olive production, but produces a delicate oil which is best consumed within six to nine months.
- Don Carlo – more suited for olive oil with a very fruity aroma.
- Calamata – we use it as table olive, but it makes a very delicate oil.
- Nocellara – we use it as table olive; although it is not often used for oil, it does produce an oil with a very fruity aroma.

OUR WINES

What is the history of the wine cellar?

Our wines are produced in a state-of-the-art winery and are made to showcase the soils and climate where its grapes are grown. We have 72 hectares (178 acres) under vine and produce 13 different grape varieties with our highest vines – pinot noir and chardonnay – lying against Simonsberg at some 600 metres above sea level. Some of the vines on the farm were planted by the farm's previous owners, the Louw family, who lived here for four generations. The Louws were grape growers for the former Simondium Co-operative Winery and other large wineries in the area. In addition, there are plantings established during 2008 and 2009 under the stewardship of viticulturist Hannes Aucamp.

How big is your wine cellar and who designed it?

Echoing the farm's 17th-century Cape Dutch architectural vernacular, Babylonstoren's modern winery was designed by renowned Cape cellar architect Gerard de Villiers to accommodate a maximum of 500 tonnes. It has been fitted with custom-made processing equipment that caters for gravity-fed production on a single level. This includes three types of red-wine fermenters – stainless steel, raised concrete and 7 500-litre French oak vats. The adjacent building houses the underground barrel maturation cellar that is temperature and humidity controlled.

Who is the winemaker?

Our cellar master is Charl Coetzee (formerly of Kaapzicht and Clos Malverne) and the winemaker is Klaas Stoffberg (formerly of Ernie Els Wines).

What is the philosophy of your winemakers?

Our wines are best exemplified by the Babylonstoren logo, which consists of the pipe (representing the farmer), the flower (representing the garden) and the bird (representing nature). It's a combination of the very essence of Babylonstoren, in other words keeping things as simple and as true to the earth as possible. "It is this that we strive to achieve in our wine," says Charl Coetzee. "Truth to the area we are situated in on the slopes of Simonsberg, and simplicity by making elegant and balanced wines as natural as possible."

How many wines do you have in your wine portfolio?

There are eight wines in the Babylonstoren stable.

Chenin Blanc

A light, crisp, elegant dry wine that is fruit driven and juicy. It is unwooded and refreshing with lovely guava and melon flavours, rounded off with a hint of freshly cut grass and Packham pear undertones. Serve chilled with salads, light fish dishes or on its own.

Viognier

This dry, slightly wooded, medium-bodied white wine is creamy with a floral nose and lime zest finish that provides the perfect balance to the depth of wood. Silver medal winner at the 2015 Michelangelo Wine Awards. Serve chilled with spicy dishes such as curry.

Chardonnay

This dry, full-bodied white is matured for 12 months in new 300-litre French oak barrels. It is characterised by tangy citrus fruits softened by undertones of vanilla and a nutty complexity. Awarded double silver at the National Wine Challenge 2015, this is a big wine for special occasions. Serve chilled. Good with creamy dishes, white fish, chicken and sushi.

Mourvèdre Rosé

With raspberries and rose petals on the nose and strawberry yoghurt on the palate, there's a fresh acidity to this wine that lingers long in the mouth. Served chilled, this is a great wine for fish dishes, especially salmon and trout.

Babel Red

This dry full-bodied red wine is a fusion of blackcurrant and chocolate rounded off with a hint of spice. Serve at room temperature; great with lamb or a good piece of beef.

Shiraz

Matured in French oak, this wine has a surprisingly fresh mid-palate with cherry and soft prune dark flavours and a hint of spice. It won gold at the International Wine Challenge in London, and was voted in the Top 20 Shiraz at the Shiraz SA Challenge. Best served at room temperature, and good with venison or game dishes.

Nebukadnesar

Our flagship Bordeaux blend is set to be a classic with an intriguing fragrance of violets and thyme. Dry and full-bodied, it is a well balanced wine with a spicy warmth and intense undertones of blackcurrant and tobacco. The 2013 vintage won a double Michelangelo International Wine Award in South Africa. Serve at room temperature with robust red meat dishes and stews.

Sprankel

This Méthode Cap Classique was made from the very first grapes that were ever harvested by the Babylonstoren Cellar in 2011. Sprankel has a fresh and well balanced taste with a very fine mousse and soft acidity to balance the almond skin and passion fruit tones. Delicious lime and grapefruit with beautiful minerality and long finish.

Do you only use your own grapes?

Our aim is to use only our own grapes and we do so, except for a bit of mourvèdre that we buy in as demand for the rosé has grown so dramatically in the past few years. We have since planted more mourvèdre, but the vineyards are still too young to deliver sufficient volumes.

Where can we buy your wines?

Our preferred outlet is our [online shop](#) where you can buy wines at cellar door prices. We ship to Europe, the UK, China and the USA. Babylonstoren wines are also available in a variety of fine wine shops in and around Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Do you offer tastings and what is the cost?

The Tasting Room is open daily – from 10h00 to 18h00 in summer and 10h00 to 17h00 in winter. The cost of wine tasting starts at R25 for five wines, but we charge a little extra for our flagship wines (Chardonnay @ R10, Nebukadnesar @ R15 & Sprankel @ R25).

Do you offer cellar tours and what is the cost?

Daily cellar tours take place every hour on the hour, between 11h00 and 15h00 and cost R50 p.p. We start at the Tasting Room, our first stop being the olive oil production plant. We then proceed to the production cellar and underground barrel cellar and end our tour with an informative wine tasting in the Tasting Room.

Who designed the Tasting Room and its interior?

The concept was the owner's idea and TV3 architects made it possible on paper, with the help of Tonic Design for the interiors.

Can guests order food in the Tasting Room?

Yes, we offer a selection of delicious platters. They are designed to be shared as a light snack either in conjunction with the basic wine tasting or a glass of wine.

SPA

Is your spa open to day visitors?

Our Garden Spa is open for day visitors every day of the week from 8h00 to 17h00.

What is your signature treatments?

The quintessential Garden Spa experience is the private hammam water ritual that takes place in our beautiful, purpose-built marble hammam. Choose between the full-hour water ritual with a traditional scrub, dynamic stretching and massage, or the traditional soap treatment for two that consists of a traditional scrub, soap wash and massage. Another option is the intensive Babylonstoren honey and salt scrub that stimulates blood circulation and encourages cell renewal.

Our deep-tissue bamboo massage is so relaxing it may well send you to sleep. Our fascination with this plant is rooted in heritage – we've used it to create outdoor spaces in which we perform our rejuvenation treatments. For centuries this wondrous perennial has been popular for food and construction and was used to make household items, musical instruments, writing surfaces, medicine and even weapons. And, of course, bamboo's healing and invigorating properties have been used in massage since ancient times. We start off our 90 minutes of therapy with a soothing foot bath, followed by a series of stretches that prepare the body for the deep-tissue massage, using heated sticks of bamboo. Our preference is for golden goddess bamboo – grown, dried and trimmed to perfection on the farm. The round shape and heat-retaining quality of these tubes make them ideal massaging tools to spark circulation, relieve muscle tension and de-stress body and mind.

In addition, we have a wonderful selection of classic treatments that can be enjoyed in our light and spacious spa rooms. From hydrating body wraps to bespoke facials and deluxe pedicures, our spa menu will cater to your every need.

Do you offer yoga at the spa?

Private yoga classes are offered on request, exclusively for our hotel guests. Bookings have to be made 24 hours in advance.

Which products do you use in the spa?

We use two natural, organic product ranges at the Garden Spa. Dr. Hauschka is a German product and Esse a local product.

How many treatment rooms do you have?

Our spa has five treatment rooms: one single treatment room, three double treatment rooms as well as our traditional hammam. In total the spa can accommodate nine people at a time.

FARM SHOP**Do you sell South African products in the Farm Shop?**

The original 18th-century stables today house our Farm Shop and Scented Room. We are proud to sell many local products in our Farm Shop, but we do also import some. We have delicious homemade products – freshly baked breads, wine from our own cellar, wheat flour and cordials, charcuterie, biltong and preserves, as well as cheese from a neighbouring farm. We stock various coffee table books, such as *South African Style in Decor* written by Karen Roos and Annemarie Meintjies. Our beautiful bolts of linen, printed in South Africa, are designed by Maranda Engelbrecht, who draws inspiration for their patterns and colours from

our garden and farm. We also import some of our products, such as classic panama hats from Ecuador, unique Babylonstoren soap from France and glass products from Europe.

Do you sell any preserves originating from the garden?

Throughout the seasons we harvest fruit and vegetables to provide the farm's two restaurants with fresh produce. The rest is distilled or used to make jams, cordials, chutneys and whole preserved fruit. When, from time to time, the garden cannot supply in the demand, we also use fruit harvested from the farm's orchards. These products, as well as our honey and olives, are sold in the Farm Shop and change according to the season.

What can you tell us about the Bakery?

We grow our own wheat on the farm. After the harvest, the wheat is taken to Caledon where it is stored in silos and later stoneground. This flour is sold in the Farm Shop, but is also used by our own bakers who, under the guidance of our head baker Ernie Beck, make sure we have freshly baked bread early every morning for our restaurants, Tasting Room and Farm Shop. We have a variety of breads, including sourdough, rye, white and whole wheat.

What combination of products would you suggest for hotel guests who would like to enjoy supper in their hotel rooms?

Guest can buy delicious freshly baked bread, handcrafted cheese and preserves at the shop to enjoy in combination with the fruit and vegetables they have harvested from the garden. An accompanying glass of Babylonstoren white or red will make this meal all the more festive.

What can you tell us about the book *Babel*?

Babel tells the stories of creating an extraordinary place that brings together the lives and work of culinary artists, horticulturists, winemakers, farmers and many other talented people. It shows our own kind of cooking: simple, generous and honest, with fresh, seasonal food that is closely tied to its origins in the garden. This is not a conventional cookbook; neither is Babylonstoren a run-of-the-mill farm. The book was written by Maranda Engelbrecht and is available in English, Afrikaans and German.

Do you stock the ranges of any other well known designers in your shop?

The Farm Shop sells products created by talented artists:

- Margy Malan, an artist from Zimbabwe, has created a range of unique pottery designs inspired by the Babylonstoren garden. It is available exclusively from our shop. Each piece has been made by hand. She works with red and white earthen clay, painted with underglaze pigments.
- Cape Town designer Diana Ferreira creates our shop's beautiful pebble plates. Her love for design started with the combination of glass and ceramics, but she currently focuses on making moulds and slip-cast ceramics.
- Mervyn Gers Ceramics specialise in handmade bespoke dinnerware. The bull plate, also used in Babel Restaurant, has been created exclusively for us by this talented Cape Town artist.

What are the opening hours of the Farm Shop?

The Farm Shop is open daily from 9h00 to 17h00.

SCENTED ROOM

Our captivating Scented Room is a quiet oasis where guests are mesmerised by the lingering scents of waterblommetjies, roses, fynbos and many more. The images and scents of the garden are captured in our soaps (both imported and locally produced), candles, bath oils, linen cloth and handbags. A range of natural products, soon to be used in our hotel and spa, is also for sale here.

WEDDINGS AND EVENTS

With one of the best preserved Cape Dutch farmyards in the Cape, Babylonstoren is a historic yet contemporary farm stay that is also an authentic, versatile venue. The ever-changing tapestry and rich bounty of the garden at Babylonstoren inform everything from the facilities and activities on offer to the themes of our functions that range from weddings to private celebrations and workshops.

Simplicity, style and a focus on the abundance of nature are core to any event at Babylonstoren. We have three beautiful venues: Old Cellar, Wheat Barn and White Studio. All are housed in original, beautifully restored Cape Dutch farm buildings which, with their whitewashed walls, ornate gables and thatched roofs, provide an elegant environment for a wedding party or any event for up to 100 guests.

Do you have accommodation for wedding guests?

The venues have their own accommodation too with Koornhuis, a two-bedroomed cottage attached to the venue area, that is made available for the bridal party and included in the venue fee for two evenings. In addition, there are nine one-bedroom suites in the Farmhouse. Further to this, the Farm Hotel has Cape Dutch cottages adjacent to the main garden that lead up to the Greenhouse Restaurant and the Garden Spa. These can be booked for guests attending a wedding here, but are subject to availability.

What can you offer in terms of ceremony?

Typically, our wedding ceremonies take place outdoors (weather permitting) and we tend to host pre-reception drinks on sun-dappled green lawns overlooking vineyards and the majestic Drakenstein Mountains, whilst wedding photographs can be taken in various locations around the garden.

Do you have different venue options on the farm?

Old Cellar is an original, historic barn-style building with crisp, whitewashed walls and a high-pitched thatch ceiling that can accommodate up to 100 guests at one long table.

The **Wheat Barn** with its ancient wooden floors, exposed stone walls and thatched ceiling is a more moody, atmospheric venue that can seat 50 guests at one long table. This area is also very popular as a dance floor or lounge area when dessert is served in the White Studio.

The **White Studio** is a modern, versatile space that, with its all-white floors, walls and a white pitched roof, is ideal for smaller, more intimate functions that can seat 38 guests at one long

table. It is also very popular as an installation area for a bigger wedding where a surprise set-up of all-white desserts and cheeses are displayed to spectacular effect.

All three of our venues can be used in conjunction with the others, so that a dinner can be held in the White Studio with a dance floor set up in the Wheat Barn. Whatever your choice, our experienced event co-ordinators will ensure that your wishes are met (within the capabilities of the venue) to ensure your special day is a memorable, flawlessly executed affair.

LOCATION

Where are you located?

Babylonstoren is located in the Cape Winelands of South Africa, about an hour's drive from Cape Town and close to popular culinary destination Franschhoek and the bustling student town Stellenbosch.

What is your physical address?

Babylonstoren Farm
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7670

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Instagram: [@babylonstoren](https://www.instagram.com/babylonstoren)
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