



Editor's Exclusive

CLAIRE BARNARDO

Neighbourhood's Spotlight On articles celebrate just how incredibly beautiful South Africa, its cities and its suburbs truly are



JHB

Hyde Park is one of the most sought-after suburbs in the country to call home



PTA

Arcadia, one of Pretoria's oldest suburbs, is known for its rich heritage, greenery and sense of community



PE

In St Francis, quaint coastal villages offer a laid-back, authentically Eastern Cape experience



KZN

Named after a former governor, the suburb of Musgrave is proudly traditional yet unquestionably modern



CT

Surf, sand and glorious sunsets are the recipe for relaxed everyday living in Blouberg on the West Coast



The secret is out

A fresh energy is sweeping Stellenbosch wine estate Hidden Valley – the home of Overture restaurant – as its new owner takes the helm

WORDS: KIT HEATHCOCK • IMAGES: SUPPLIED

Looking for a new challenge after retiring as the CEO of Capitec, Riaan Stassen is now focusing his considerable energy on taking the beautiful Hidden Valley wine estate, tucked into the heights of the Helderberg above Stellenbosch, to the next level.

“What I love about Hidden Valley is that I've got a very good platform to work from, where the main challenge is to create something really special out of what we've got. I don't have to change the vineyards or the winemaking techniques; it's just housekeeping and making sure all the staff are aligned to a common vision,” says Riaan.

This doesn't mean that there's no outlet for the energy and creative planning that took Capitec from start-up to household name. Riaan envisages Hidden Valley as a boutique wine estate that people visit for the whole experience, linking the stunning natural setting and indigenous forest with the excellent food and good wine on offer, and adding intriguing art to the mix. Sculptor Willie Botha will be resident artist here from October, with an open studio, and is dreaming up some dramatic sculptures for the estate.

“Something else I'm looking forward to is the creation of walking trails with picnic spots, which will be ready for this summer,” adds Riaan. He's developing just 20 private picnic spots where guests will be able to savour the special baskets put together by Overture. To reach the spots, guests will take paths that run through indigenous gardens and forest.

Over a fabulous lunch at Overture, where chef patron Bertus Basson combines the comfort food nostalgia of traditional farm kitchens with a contemporary lightness of touch and freshness of flavour, Riaan explains their plans for the restaurant. “Bertus and I share the same creativity and the same objectives: to continue to innovate while maintaining consistency of quality,” he says. “We've agreed to upgrade the restaurant next winter and also to open a new brasserie with a braai theme.” This is to be built on the hillside adjoining the main restaurant before next winter and will double as a functions venue.

Hidden Valley is already on the gourmet's bucket list – Overture's well-deserved reputation has made sure of that – and with these plans for the estate's

enhancement already under way, visitors will discover a place to linger and explore, and to experience food, wine, art and nature in a beautiful setting.

I like challenges, re-engineering, being creative and doing something different. One of my personal goals is to make the farm profitable. It's not just a hobby

RIAAN STASSEN, OWNER: HIDDEN VALLEY

HIDDEN VALLEY WINES

The estate's portfolio of wines – Hidden Secret, Hidden Gems, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinotage – will be joined by a new rosé that will be launched this month. Winemaker Annelie van Dyk is also planning an experimental corner of the vineyard with a view to creating limited-edition wines.



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