

Discover quality wines in a magnificent valley

The Hemel-and-Aarde valley near Hermanus offers an unforgettable wine experience in the Overberg.

The wines produced in this region are unique to South Africa and similar to ones from Northern France, due to a cool sea breeze and clay soil. Two of the most popular wines are a chardonnay and an exceptional pinot noir. The Hemel-en-Aarde valley is unlike others in the Overberg. With its magnificent mountains and breathtaking views, the valley offers a wide range of award-winning wine cellars, restaurants and picnic sites – perfect for the whole family.

Entrance to the valley is where the R43 to Hermanus and R320 to Caledon meet. At this intersection is the Hemel-en-Aarde Wine Village. Here you will find 600 producers and 1600 labels of quality wine. The village stocks the very best the valley has to offer and wine experts are on hand to give professional advice regarding the various types of wine.

Near the village is Whalehaven – a boutique winery that specialises in traditional fine wines. Their flagship Pinot noir and Viognier-Chardonnay have already received considerable acclaim. They are also the producers of the prestige IDIOM label.

The Whalehaven tasting room is open Mondays to Fridays from 09:30 to 17:00 and on Saturdays and public holidays from 10:30 to 16:30. Whalehaven wines with the IDIOM label cost R5 per person to taste.

Leaving the village, turn onto the R320 towards Caledon. Just a few kilometres into the valley, you will find an acclaimed winery, Hamilton Russell. This wine estate has two award-winning wines - a Pinot noir and Chardonnay, which were among only 17 wines out of more than 5000 awarded 5 stars in the 2005 John Platter Guide.

The cellar has a wonderful picnic site. Pack a basket with delicious goodies and spend a warm, lazy summer afternoon with your family or you could spoil that special person in your life, while sampling some of Hamilton Russell's wine.

Near Hamilton Russell you will find Bouchard Finlayson. The tasting room at this prestigious winery is adjacent to the wine cellar and exudes old world charm. They have seven wines to offer, including a pinot noir and galpin peak.

Sales- and marketing manager, Karen Davison, says the Pinot noir has a woody character, which makes it unique in comparison to other South African pinot noirs.

The Bouchard Finlayson tasting room is open on weekdays from 09:00 to 17:00 and on Saturdays from 09:30 to 12:30.

As you travel further into the valley, you will come across Sumaridge Wine Estate. The beautiful stone cellar and restaurant has a scenic view of a dam and the valley.

Sumaridge Wine Estate, a boutique winery, has seven wines to offer. Tasting costs R10 per person. The cellar has won several prizes and is especially renowned for its Pinot noir, Chardonnay and Sauvignon blanc.

Gavin Patterson, the wine maker and manager of the cellar, says their wines have a savoury forest character and minerality, which comes from the proximity of the ocean and unique composition of the soil.

The Sumaridge Wine Estate tasting room is open seven days a week from 10:00 to 15:00 and has a restaurant where you can enjoy a light meal.

Further on the road to Caledon you will find Newton Johnson Wines, owned and managed by the Johnson family. Here you can taste wines like Chardonnay, Felicité, Syrah Mourvédre, Pinot noir and Cabernet sauvignon.

Newton Johnson Wines also has a restaurant, appropriately called Heaven, where you can rest and relax. The tasting room is open on weekdays from 09:00 to 16:30 and on Saturdays from 10:00 to 14:00.

For a virtual tour of the Hemel en Aarde Valley, click [here](#).