



As we enter the cool, crisp and often windless days of Cape Town's winter months, we invite you, our valued partners, to peruse our first newsletter of 2016. In this edition, we focus on the multitude of active experiences on offer in the diverse region of the Cape, in conjunction with an update on other developments across the Mother City. As always, the newsletter will be punctuated with 'insider tips' that enable you to derive maximum value from the information presented.

We trust that this edition will provide valuable insight and assist you in the creation of the perfect active Cape Town Touring itinerary.



SHINE THE LIGHT ON "ACTIVE CAPE EXPERIENCES"

Aside from the smorgasbord of cultural, sight-seeing and culinary touring options available in Cape Town, the region is famous for its natural beauty and diverse landscapes, ranging from awe-inspiring mountains and rolling vineyards to the surrounding Atlantic Ocean, brimming with marine-life. Given the proximity of these natural areas to the city, guests are encouraged to leave the hum of the vehicle engine far behind and explore on foot, bikes, kayaks or even from ropes and boards! Activities are suitable for all ages, fitness levels, shapes and sizes and can be seamlessly woven into any of our tours, without sacrificing any of the 'must see' highlights. Whether you're cycling through the breath-taking wine country, abseiling from the sheer cliffs of Table Mountain or kayaking with African penguins, the region really does offer something for everyone, so get out of that vehicle, a wonderland awaits!! Happy reading!



ACTIVE OPTIONS – LAND

CYCLING THROUGH THE WINELANDS

There are few better ways of exploring the Cape Winelands than from the seat of a bicycle. Your specialist cycling guide will gear you up for a leisurely ride through historic vineyards, stopping at various estates to sample the nectar of the Gods. The length of the ride and routing can be varied depending on preferences and fitness levels. This is an experience that the entire family will enjoy and, as a bonus, you'll burn off that breakfast!

We offer exciting cycling routes through the Constantia Wine Valley too, the oldest wine producing area in Africa!

INSIDER TIP: For repeat Cape Town guests or those that prefer exploring 'off the beaten track' boutique wineries, we highly recommend cycling through the Wellington Wine Valley as an alternative to Stellenbosch or Franschhoek. The Wellington Valley is breathtakingly scenic and remains undiscovered.

[Click here for more information.](#)



CYCLING THROUGH CAPE POINT NATIONAL PARK

After a scenic coastal drive, you'll enter the floral kingdom of the Cape Point National Park where your specialist cycling guide awaits. Climb onto your hybrid bike and explore the mesmerizing fauna and flora of one of the most diverse floral kingdoms on earth, surrounded by breath-taking landscapes and fresh sea air. Surprises can be found around every bend, from troops of mischievous Chacma baboons and majestic Eland to wild ostriches, unforgettable sightings, especially when viewed from a bicycle!!

INSIDER TIP: The full day Peninsula Tour covers a large distance during which guests spend a significant amount of time in the vehicle. Cycling through the Cape Point National Park affords guests the opportunity to leave the vehicle behind, stretch their legs and soak up that cool sea breeze.

[Click here for more information.](#)



HIKING – TABLE MOUNTAIN

For guests keen on burning off those mounting vacation calories, summiting Table Mountain on foot is an unforgettable experience. There are dozens of exhilarating hiking routes to choose from, each with their own highlights and unique challenges. They vary in length, technical aspects, scenery and overall experience and your preferred route should be selected with all of these factors in mind.

From a steep 2 hour zig-zagging ascent to the top to a full day expedition, beginning at the renowned Kirstenbosch Gardens, passing through landscapes punctuated by King Proteas and ending at the upper Cableway, this mountain offers a route for all hikers, from expert to novice. Your expert hiking guide will accompany you, keeping you on the trail and providing interesting information on the fauna and flora encountered on one of the planets oldest mountains.

INSIDER TIP: For those guests who prefer a less strenuous activity, a hike up to the summit of Lions Head is an attractive option as it offers panoramic views of the city and can be accomplished in under 2 hours.

[Click here for more information.](#)

ABSEILING (ALSO KNOWN AS REPELLING)

Step off the top at 1000 metres above sea level, and Abseil into mind-blowing vertical space.

The panoramic views from the top of Table Mountain are breath taking, but the views from the abseil are even better. Descending down the side of a sheer cliff you will have Camps Bay, the Atlantic Seaboard and the deep blue ocean at your feet with the Twelve Apostles at your side. The Table Mountain Abseil is guaranteed to get your pulse racing.

They operate on a daily basis, weather permitting, between 9:30am and 3:30pm.

The overall experience will take about 45 min to an hour and includes:

- Signing and Harnessing up
- A Safety briefing
- Accessing the Abseiling site
- Doing the Abseil
- A pleasant hike back to the to the top
- No experience is needed, the guides show you the ropes and talk you through the whole process.

INSIDER TIP: For the very fit and active, skip the lines at the cableway and hike up Platteklip Gorge to the abseil site at the summit. Hikers are able to enjoy the pleasure of being surrounded by unspoiled nature. The floral species found on Table Mountain form part of the Fynbos (fine leaved) biome and are characterised by hard, tough and leathery leaves. More than 70% of these species are endemic to the area and found nowhere else in the world.





SANDBOARDING

The magnificent Atlantis Dune field on Cape Town's West Coast is a perfect spot to try your hand (or feet!!) at sandboarding. The location offers amazing views across Table Bay and towering white sand dunes ranging up to 114 feet high. This a must-do adventure activity while in the Cape.

INSIDER TIP: For a great family day out on the West Coast, combine with a visit to !Khwa ttu San Cultural Centre and The West Coast Fossil Park.



CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING

An exciting new activity in the winelands! Clay Pigeons are catapulted into the air in varying formations; the goal being to obliterate the quickly-disappearing target before it hits the ground. I had loads of fun trying to hit as many as possible whilst the hosts made sure that I was suitably challenged! This activity is great for families (minimum age is 6), is safe and will keep the non-drinkers entertained for hours.

INSIDER TIP: Shooting not your cup of tea? Head up to the tasting room and sample a few of the estate's fine wines whilst watching the action from the comfort of a raised deck. There's even a unique Biltong & Wine pairing on offer for the adventurous!



HORSE RIDING

Ride in one of the most scenic area of the Western Cape, Franschhoek, on purebred Arabian Horses with guide Pieter Hugo, SA National Team Endurance Rider (Springbok). Experienced and novice riders welcome. Take a scenic ride in the valley or add an option to do some wine tasting at local wineries (approx.. 4 hours).

ACTIVE OPTIONS – AIR

ZIP LINING IN ELGIN

A first for South Africa, the Cape Canopy Tour, is situated in a pristine World Heritage Site within the breath-taking Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve, 45 minutes from Cape Town. This adventure activity consists of 12 platforms constructed on the cliffs and slopes above a deep gorge offering thrilling slides of up to 1000 feet long. Guests also get to experience a unique bridge crossing between a narrow sandstone gorge high above a spectacular double waterfall.

The two-and-a-half-hour tour also includes a 4x4 journey through the nature reserve, refreshments on one of the cliff-side platforms and a light lunch.

INSIDER TIP: This exciting activity is suitable for almost all ages (5 - 75 is the recommended limit), will operate in most weather conditions and is easily incorporated into a winelands tour.



ZIP LINING IN CONSTANTIA

The second zip lining experience was launched a year ago and is located in the picturesque Constantia Wine Valley, only 15 minutes' drive from Cape Town. This activity is geared towards our younger guests (minimum 8 years) and is easily incorporated into our City and Constantia Tours.

INSIDER TIP: Leave the little ones in the care of the zip lining guide and while they soak up the thrill of slicing through the air, far above the trees, you can break away to visit one of the nearby award-winning wine estates! You must sample the world-famous Vin De Constance, once the favorite after-dinner tippie of Napoleon!

PARAGLIDING

Cape Town is one of the most spectacular places in the world to paraglide and there is no better way to see this beautiful city than from above.

The imposing Lion's Head and Signal Hill are the sites from which this adventure activity launches. In almost total silence you'll soar like an eagle gazing down on the iconic suburb of Clifton and the pearl white sands and azure blue waters of her prestigious beaches. You'll take in the towering peaks of the Twelve Apostles while the vast Atlantic Ocean stretching as far as your eye can see. This is a bucket-list experience for the adrenalin junkies!

INSIDER TIP: South Africa has a strict licensing system that ensures that the tandem flight instructors are highly experienced with an excellent safety record.



ACTIVE OPTIONS – SEA

KAYAKING TO THE PENGUINS

Boulders is one of the most unique beaches in the world as it is the home of an African penguin colony. This is not only unusual as most breeding colonies prefer the safety of an island on which to rear their vulnerable young but also as it is located on the periphery of the bustling suburbs of Simonstown! Residents sometimes awake to find penguins frolicking in their swimming pools! The best way to view it is from the water and the kayaking trip leaves from Simon's Town Harbor. We paddle past the Naval docks, the associated naval vessels towering above us, and out to the beach to see the penguins. If the time and tides are in our favor, we may stop on a beach for a swimming break and will generally be able to get a close up look at penguins on the rocks nearby.

INSIDER TIP: This family friendly activity is best experienced over the winter months when the Cape's infamous south-easterly wind is less likely to affect ocean conditions.

[Click here for more information.](#)



SURFING

Cape Town has an abundance of surf spots along its coast, from coves generating gentle swells, to expansive beaches boasting bone-crunching waves. Rather surprisingly, the typically icy Cape Peninsula water temperatures rise during winter, ensuring that the months of June, July and August are ideal for a surf; not to mention that the winter storms make for big, exciting swells!

INSIDER TIP: The Surfer's Corner at Muizenberg beach is a popular learning spot and is easily incorporated into a Peninsula Tour. The waves characteristic of this favored stretch of beach are gentle and are ideal under the wind conditions prevalent over Cape Town's winter months.

SNORKELLING WITH SEALS

Looking to try something completely different?! Take the plunge into the cool Atlantic Ocean and snorkel with hundreds of inquisitive, playful Cape Fur seals!! Interact with them in their environment and on their terms. This excursion can be added into a Peninsula tour day and operates from the working fishing harbor of Hout Bay.



STAND UP PADDLE BOARDING

Stand Up Paddleboarding is one of the fastest growing watersports in the world and Cape Town is one of the best locations to discover this new exhilarating experience. It can be a social sport and great to do with family and friends or even to discover by yourself – no one need be left out. For beginners this is the perfect introduction to learn how to stand up paddleboard. You will learn about hazards, self-rescue, posture, balance and equipment. You will become familiar with the board and the basic paddle techniques. Next you will learn how to Stand Up Paddleboard, first lying on your board and then kneel paddling before learning how to stand up. The lesson is jam packed with useful tips and techniques so you quickly gain confidence.

However all levels are catered for and we have a variety of Stand Up Paddleboarding experiences available.

INSIDER TIP: Combine with a Peninsula tour and paddle with the penguins!



CULINARY CORNER

We are extremely proud (and a little smug!!) to announce that Cape Town has trumped the likes of Dubai and Tel Aviv to win Condé Nast Traveler's Best Food City in its recent Reader's Choice awards. Over the past few years, the city has firmly cemented its name as one of the finest 'foodie' destinations on earth and innovative new restaurants are constantly being added to the dynamic culinary landscape.



We are, of course, constantly keeping an eye on this ever changing local restaurant scene and below is our top 5 pick of a mix of new and the established restaurants in Cape Town. Always a difficult task, but we did our best!

AUBERGINE – Cosy and sophisticated. Tranquil garden courtyard. Multi award-winner Harald Bressenschmidt has made a sizeable impact on the local culinary scene, and his lofty culinary standards are still a beacon even in a city that serves gourmets well. Dishes are meticulously crafted and pay homage to Africa in their interpretation.

NATURALIS – Naturalis sits in a set of revived containers, designed by architect Gregg Scott, who too designed the beautiful Pot Luck Club. The containers are situated in The Old Biscuit Mill where the restaurant is a model for upcycling and a brilliant display of experimental cooking - of course we would not expect anything less from Luke Dale-Roberts.



THE ROUNDHOUSE – This building which dates back to 1756, served in the early 1800's as a hunting lodge to governor, Lord Charles Somerset. Set in the glen between Table Mountain and Lion's Head, it enjoys beautiful views over Camps Bay and the Atlantic coastline. Arrive early to enjoy sundowners on their terrace before experiencing the superb 4, 5 or 6-course menus, paired with local wines served in elegant decanters.

The space is a development kitchen in which Dale-Roberts takes things back to basics, using simple ingredients and age old methods of preparing food, like fermentation, curing, culturing and drying.

Note: only open from Monday to Friday 12:00 - 14:00 – no bookings, first come first served!

Also open for special dinners and events.

THE GREENHOUSE – This little gem regularly appears in the top restaurant award lists. Based at the Cellars Hohenort in a more intimate dining space, diners are treated to tasting menus - either 6 or 4 courses, conjured up by the masterful Peter Templehoff. Presentation and flavors are both exceptional, every dish a multi-dimensional flavor experience.

LA MOUETTE - La Mouette, meaning seagull in French, was named after the seagulls so often seen riding the breeze in Seapoint. La Mouette offers modern French cuisine with a distinctly Mediterranean flair, imitating the climate and produce of Southern France. Only the freshest local produce is used, all of it sourced by Henry and his Senior Sous chef, Darren Shinnars, to ensure only the finest quality cuisine.



Take a look at a full listing of our recommended restaurants, please [CLICK HERE](#) to view our Recommended Restaurants page.

THE LEGACY OF THE FLAGSHIP COMES TO AN END

It was with heavy hearts that the management of The Flagship announced that the popular restaurant would close for business for the last time on the 15th of April 2016.

In 2011 the idea to create a lunch destination on the Peninsula grew into a magical place and a unique concept, The Boat House with Chef Bruce in Scarborough, was born. After a few successful years they moved to Simon's Town and the restaurant metamorphosed into The Flagship. Then, at the end of 2015, Chef Bruce was tragically and suddenly taken from us. Duncan Dougherty stepped in and made his own mark, keeping The Flagship flying. Every story has to come to an end and, after much consideration, it was agreed that the time to close a very special chapter had arrived.



BITES AND SITES

There is a unique new walking tour through the historic streets of Stellenbosch designed for guests interested in sampling South Africa's local culinary delights. As you amble through this quaint student town you'll pop into artisanal bakeries, family-owned butcheries, eccentric shops and boutique wine producers, and sample the authentic South African fare each has to offer.

You'll explore the diverse South African cultures and discover the vibrant history of our second-oldest town whilst admiring the romantic oak-lined streets, amazing architectural diversity and palpable energy of this bustling university town.

COOKING, WINING AND DINING IN NOORDHOEK

We are excited to introduce a brand new dining experience hosted in the beautiful home of one of Cape Town's most passionate chefs.

Nadège spent the first twenty years of her life in a small village not far from Cherbourg, France, where she developed her love for cooking. Now residing in the charming, rural suburb of Noordhoek she thrives on sharing this passion for food with visitors from around the world.

Nadège says 'We call South Africa the Rainbow nation and we can relate to this term for South African recipes too. The Boers, Indian, Malay people, French and British all play a role in South African gastronomy. During my South African cooking classes, I explain the different eating habits, diets and tastes amongst the various cultures in South Africa with an opportunity to taste some of their delicious recipes such as snoek pâté, curries, bobotie, ostrich, kudu, springbok, malva pudding, milk tart and Don Pedros!'

Join Nadège for a relaxing, social evening and learn to cook some of these unique dishes, whilst simultaneously enjoying the Cape's fine wines! The interactive lessons are roughly three hours and conclude with the guests joining Nadege and her husband at the family dining room table to enjoy the food that you've prepared (accompanied by lots of the Cape's fine wines, of course!)



INSIDER TIP: This experience combines perfectly with a Peninsula Tour during which guests can collect fresh, wild mussels off the rocks in Scarborough and learn how to cook them for dinner later that evening! Nothing beats a creamy white wine mussel hotpot, particularly when you've collected the ingredients and prepared the dish yourself!

WINTER HIGHLIGHTS IN THE CAPE

As the days begin to shorten and evening chills set in, there's no doubt that winter's blanket is slowly settling on the Mother City! Over the past month, the forests that punctuate the city have treated us to kaleidoscopic displays as leaves transform from emerald green to the riotous reds and yellows of autumn. The scenery in the winelands is particularly striking at this time of year as quilt-like patchworks of colourful vines create landscapes that could easily be mistaken for famous oil paintings.

We have spotted the first Southern Right Whales in Table Bay, signalling the onset of the famous annual spectacle known as the Whale Season. Over the next few months thousands of whales will arrive from their feeding grounds in the icy waters of the Antarctic to give birth and nurse their young calves in the relative calm of our protected bays. The viewing is nothing short of spectacular!

[Click here for more information on the Hermanus with Whale Watching Tour.](#)

[Click here for more information on the Peninsula with Whale Watching Tour.](#)

Winter months in the Cape are synonymous with wild ocean storms, good red wine enjoyed in front of crackling wood fires and, you guessed it, Great White Sharks!! These behemoths of the deep concentrate in unusually high numbers around Seal Island, False Bay.

This small island is home to over 60 000 Cape fur seals, the favourite prey of the Great White and is one of only a few locations on the planet where guests can witness the sharks 'breaching', a term used to describe an extraordinarily unique hunting technique. The sharks launch themselves from the water, often somersaulting through the air, in pursuit of their agile prey. A descent into the cage to view these super-predators underwater is an awe-inspiring experience and one that will not soon be forgotten. This is a bucket list experience!!

[Click here for more information on the Peninsula with Shark Diving Tour.](#)

Guests travelling along the West Coast in August may be treated to the brilliance of the annual 'flower season' as a blanket of flowers begins to blossom in unison, covering vast tracts of land. It is a sight that'll not soon be forgotten.

[Click here for more information on the West Coast Tour.](#)

[For more information regarding Wilderness Touring Cape's offering please click here.](#)

INSIDER TIP: This once-in-a-lifetime activity is only offered in False Bay, Simonstown in the winter months and differs from the 'all-year-around' Gansbaai shark-diving experience in that the sharks in Gansbaai are not likely to breach. For detailed information please refer to our 1st quarterly newsletter.



AND IN OTHER NEWS

Wilderness Touring is proud and excited to announce the introduction of its ELITE Touring offering in Cape Town. With the acquisition of two brand-new Land Rover Discovery 4s, your guests will be able to tour the Western Cape in extraordinary luxury.

After stringent review and detailed testing of all the latest luxury SUV models on the market, the Land Rover Discovery was selected as the undisputed victor in terms of luxury, and most importantly, comfort.





UPCOMING EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS

SA CHEESE FESTIVAL, FRANSCHHOEK

Where: out of town – Bien Donné, R45 between Paarl & Franschhoek

When: late April every year

Cheese and cheer abound at this outdoorsy bacchanal of gourmet food and fine wines. The festival features a marquee brimming with cheesy delights and a live music area – a must for cheese-lovers.

V&A WATERFRONT WINE AFFAIR

Where: V&A Waterfront, Dock Road, Foreshore

When: early May

Probably the easiest way to drink your way through the Winelands without leaving the city, this Waterfront tippie spectacular showcases the wares of over 75 Western Cape wine estates in one convenient sip-and-saunter venue.

FINE WINING PRESENTED BY CREATION WINES

Where: HQ Restaurant, 100 Shortmarket St, Cape Town

When: 4 May, 19h00

With summer coming to an end, HQ presents a winter series of 'Fine Wining'. Perfect for those colder Cape Town evenings.

RIEBEEK VALLEY OLIVE FESTIVAL

Where: out of town – Riebeeck Valley

When: early May

The quaint villages of Riebeeck Kasteel and Riebeeck West team up for the biggest olive festival in the country. In between olive and olive-oil tastings, visitors can explore the olive groves, go on wine-cellar tours or pick and mix fresh produce at the local farmers market. Or simply kick back and listen to live music.

FRANSCHHOEK LITERARY FESTIVAL

Where: out of town – various locations in Franschhoek

When: mid-May

Novelists, publishers and hordes of bibliophiles from here and abroad converge on the touristy but oh-so-lovely town of Franschhoek during this relatively new literary festival started by award-winning author Christopher Hope. Apart from book and poetry readings, there are also plays and music to help set the cultured mood.

GOOD FOOD & WINE SHOW

Where: CTICC

When: late May

Eat, drink and get ready to be overwhelmed by the heady smells of hundreds of restaurant and food stalls all putting their best culinary feet forward. When you've eaten your fill, head to one of the state-of-the-art demo kitchen theatres where you'll spot BBC chefs comparing knife sizes with the local master cooks.

VODACOM FUNNY FESTIVAL

Where: Baxter Theatre

When: June-July

Although this comedy festival is on the small side, it still elicits big laughs.

KNYSNA OYSTER FESTIVAL & MARATHON

Where: Knysna Forest, N2, Knysna, outside Cape Town

When: mid-July

Mollusc maniacs can work off their over-indulgence during this beautiful marathon which is part of the Knysna Oyster Festival. The trail winds its way through the majestic Knysna Forest, and there is a 21km half and 42km full marathon, so both the fiddling fit and leisurely lopers will be able to see the woods for the trees.



Your destination host

We would be delighted to hear your feedback and suggestions on this Talking Touring newsletter.
Please feel free to email us at jamesr@wilderness-touring.co.za and howardo@wilderness-touring.co.za