

Five things to do in Paarl and Wellington

 By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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Living in the fair Cape gives locals plenty of options when it comes to a weekend getaway, however, those small towns closer to home can often be overlooked. I recently spent an enjoyable two days exploring, dining and drinking in Paarl and Wellington. Here are my top five activities when spending a weekend round these small-town parts.

Take a hike up to Paarl Rock

A hike or visit to Paarl Rock situated in the beautiful Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve is an excellent way to work up an appetite when visiting Paarl. Boasting amazing 360 views of Paarl and surrounds atop the iconic massive round granite rocks, a day trip to the reserve is highly recommended. The Paarl Mountain Reserve is just beautiful and offers many hiking and biking routes of various lengths and difficulties, designated picnic and braai spots and a Wild Flower Garden.

Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve is open throughout the year, including weekends and all public holidays. Entrance fee is R48 per vehicle plus R16 per occupant, which can be bought at the reserve main gate. For more info click [here](#).



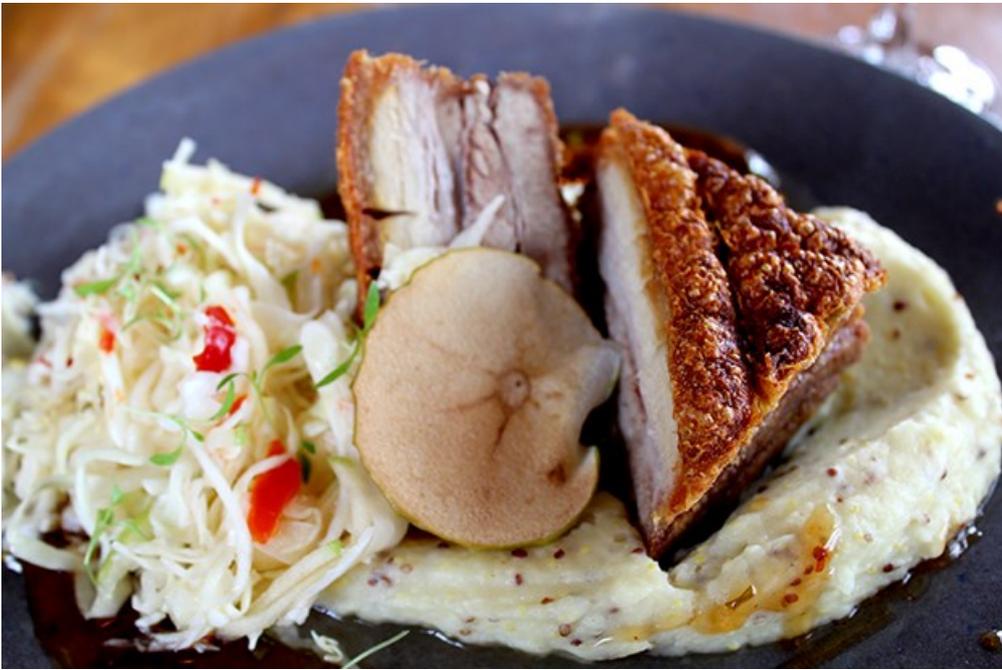


Visit BlackSmith's Kitchen for lunch

Once an appetite is sufficiently piqued, next stop on the itinerary should be lunch or dinner at BlackSmith's Kitchen at Pearl Mountain. Boasting Instagram worthy views of the Berg River Valley this family-run restaurant offers homely yet classy bistro style food. I ordered the Pork Belly with mustard mash, coleslaw and sweet chili sauce. Not often am I 100% certain that I picked the perfect plate at the perfect time, however, that pork belly with crisper than crisp crackling, tangy mash and light and fresh coleslaw paired with a glass of chilled white was faultless. I vowed as we left to encounter that dish again at some point.

Blacksmith's Kitchen is open Tuesday-Saturday: 11.30am-9.30pm, Sunday: 11.30am-4.00pm. For reservations and general enquiries call +27 21 870 1550 or visit their [site](#).





Take a tour of the James Sedgwick's Distillery

The James Sedgwick's Distillery in Wellington, which is home to the internationally award-winning range of Three Ships and Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky, has just opened to the public. Now a tour and whisky pairing can be booked on Fridays or Saturdays, this includes a tour of the distillery followed by a whisky and food pairing in the tasting room. I recently attended a tour and was blown away by the quality of the pairing. Forget the usual type of alcohol plus snack combos, this one was unique and substantial and included the signature whiskys paired with dried apple chips, blue cheese mousse, salmon pate, pulled pork, chocolate mousse and a pumpkin pie.

For more information contact The James Sedgwick Distillery at info@jamesseidgwickdistillery.co.za, or 072 415 3440 or visit www.bains.co.za and www.threeshipswhisky.co.za. All tours and tastings are for over 18s only with booking in advance essential at www.webtickets.co.za.





Sample the wine and spend a night at Under Oaks

Under Oaks, another family run estate offers wine tastings, a popular pizzeria and charming accommodation on the outskirts of Northern Paarl. We sampled some of the estates reds; the 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve and the delicious 2010 Limited Release Cabernet Sauvignon. Afterwards, we popped next door to sample the moreish pizzas at the pizzeria with a bottle of the cutely labelled entry-level wine; the Bla Bla Bla red blend. With all the wine quaffing it was ideal to spend a night in one of the luxury rooms which includes a patio with spectacular vineyard, dam and mountain views.

For more info or to make a reservation go to underoaks.co.za





Enjoy a nature drive at Bartholomeus Klip

Bartholomeus Klip in the Riebeek Valley just outside of Wellington offers sightings of eland, springbok, black wildebeest, zebra, bontebok, the endangered geometric tortoise and more on their 10,000 acre nature reserve. We enjoyed a pleasant albeit windy game drive (luckily blankets and ponchos are supplied) spotting many buck, zebra and a few of the geometric tortoises. Bartholomeus Klip is also a working farm and offers luxurious farm house style accommodation in a truly serene setting. I have made a point to pay a visit to Bartholomeus Klip for a night or two in the near future as, besides dreamy accommodation and the nature drive, the reserve also offers a pool with loungers, dam for fishing, kayaking and windsurfing and many hike and bike routes.

For more info or to make a booking go to www.bartholomeusklip.com





So next time you're planning a weekend getaway in the Western Cape put Paarl and Wellington on your list. For more info go to www.paarlonline.com and www.wellington.co.za.

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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