

Steenberg Hotel: a luxury Cape Town escape

By  Eugene Yiga

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Established in 1682, Steenberg is the Cape's oldest farm. Fast-forward to the present day, and it's still going strong thanks to its luxurious offering for locals and tourists alike.

The farm (originally known as *Swaaneweide*, The Feeding Place of Swans even though it was and still is home to spur-winged geese) is just half an hour from the Cape Town CBD. But given how far away it is from the noise of city life it feels like a world of its own.



The five-star Steenberg Hotel, whose buildings have been restored and declared a National Monument, has 24 rooms. In addition to the standard luxury rooms, superior rooms, family rooms, premier rooms, a premier suite, and a manor suite, there are also three heritage suites – Dutch East India, Cape Colonial Heritage, and Khoi Khoi – that are each decorated in line with their respective themes.

A taste of winning wines

First thing to do after you've checked in is to go up to the tasting room to sip on their award-winning wines, twelve of which achieved scores of at least 91 out of 100 points on [the latest Tim Atkin's South African Special Report](#). If you're in a group of ten or more, you can even opt for a tutored tasting (or cheese and wine pairing) in the Executive Tasting room.



But if you want something more relaxed, choose the Icon Tasting (of two bubblies), the Classic Tasting (of the Steenberg Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc and four elegant wines), or the Flagship Tasting (Steenberg 1682 Chardonnay MCC and five distinguished flagship wines). Our visit happened to be on one the most beautiful spring days imaginable so spending time outdoors and sipping on fine wine was a good choice.

Casual restaurant experience

From the tasting room, it's a quick stroll (or stumble) to Bistro Sixteen82, the casual restaurant that first opened in 2009 and now serves popular bistro-style fare and late afternoon tapas with spectacular mountain views. Bistro Sixteen82 was included in the list of twenty of the World's Best Winery Restaurants by Canada's renowned Wine Access magazine. It was also featured on the lists for [inspired brunch spots](#), [best tapas spots](#), and [ultimate Sunday lunches](#) by Eat Out.



Chef Kerry Kilpin

"My greatest inspirations are derived from significant occasions in my life. On my travels to Thailand I developed a love and passion for Asian food. From shopping at the local food markets to creating my first authentic Thai dish, I was in heaven. You will notice a common thread in what I do and who I am: love. I cook with love and my food is love," says Kerry Kilpin, executive chef.

Indeed, judging by the new summer menu – including three brand new heavenly creations for dessert – there's a lot for patrons to love too.

Contemporary fine dining

There's more to enjoy this summer at Catharina's, the contemporary fine dining restaurant named after Steenberg's intrepid 17th century founder, Catharina Ustings Ras, whose life story is woven into the striking décor. Keeping things light and uncomplicated, the new one-course lunch menu offers plenty of choice for a relaxed, no-fuss summer meal, but if you want something more substantial, you can order more items à la carte or choose the five-course tasting menu (available for lunch, dinner, and vegetarians too).



"Being vegetarian should never deprive you of a full dining experience with just a few options to choose from amongst a plethora of meat dishes," says Archie Maclean, executive chef who has come to realise that we should all think of reducing our meat intake in the interest of sustaining our planet. "I most certainly love my meat, but animal husbandry does leave a much larger footprint on the environment than vegetables or fruit, so we should all become more conscious of what we consume on a daily basis."

Time to unwind

The restaurant also offers a hearty breakfast buffet as well as a lavish lunch feast with live music on Sundays at noon, but if you'd prefer to get up and get active, you can take a walk through the vineyards, play a round of golf at the championship 18-hole course, or treat yourself to some downtime at the spa.



Whereas many spas I've been to make it hard to relax with all the ambient sounds reminding you that real life is just outside the walls, it was easy to feel the bliss at Steenberg, given that the birdsong was real and not from a CD. Treatments end with a refreshing tea ceremony in the relaxation room, the perfect place to linger for as long as you can.

Eugene Yiga was a guest of Steenberg Hotel, Steenberg Road, Constantia Valley, Cape Town. Call +27 (21) 713 2222, email info@steenberghotel.com, or visit www.steenbergfarm.com.

ABOUT EUGENE YIGA

Eugene graduated from the University of Cape Town with distinctions in financial accounting and classical piano. He then spent over two-and-a-half years working in branding and communications at two of South Africa's top market research companies. Eugene also spent over three-and-a-half years at an eLearning start-up, all while building his business as an award-winning writer. Visit www.eugeneyiga.com, follow @eugeneyiga on Twitter, or email hello@eugeneyiga.com to say, um, hello.

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