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SECRET CAPE TOWN



JONGLEZ PUBLISHING

THE HERITAGE VINE

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Probably the oldest wine-producing vine in the southern hemisphere

Corner of Bree and Shortmarket Streets
 Courtyard accessible via Heritage Square Hotel
 Free entry



In a courtyard surrounded by historic townhouses grows an ancient vine that still produces a few litres of wine each year. Estimated to have been planted in 1771, it's likely that this is not only the oldest vine in South Africa, but also the oldest wine-producing vine in the southern hemisphere.

Wine-making in the Cape dates back to the first days of the Dutch settlement. Scurvy, caused by Vitamin C deficiency, was the scourge of sailors of the day. It was the main reason Jan van Riebeeck was sent to establish a refreshment station at the Cape in 1652. Commander van Riebeeck had been an assistant surgeon in Batavia and believed (incorrectly) that wine could cure scurvy. Naturally, planting vines was among his first actions on arrival. Seven years later, on 2 February 1659, he wrote in his diary, "Today, praise be to God, wine was made for the first time from Cape grapes."

The vines of The Company Gardens did not last long before wine-making moved first to Constantia then Franschoek, Paarl and Stellenbosch. However, it remained common for the burghers of Cape Town to plant vines in their gardens and make their own wine. This was probably the case with the vine at Heritage Square. The townhouses were built in 1771 and in a journal dated 1785 the first landlord wrote, "Drinking wine under the grape tree." In 2008 (223 years later) the vine again produced 15 litres of excellent wine, made on the premises and bottled with the label 'Heritage 1771'.

That the vine exists at all is something of a miracle. In the mid-1800s, European vineyards were obliterated by the Phylloxera aphid in The Great French Wine Blight. Phylloxera spread to the Cape in 1866, causing widespread devastation. Probably owing to its isolation, the Heritage vine escaped the blight, making it one of the few remaining original French vinifera rootstock surviving today.

Then, in the 1960s, the townhouses were threatened with demolition in order to build a multi-storey car park. For over a decade, the square was left abandoned and the vine survived untended, fed only by rainwater. Luckily, the car park project fell through and the Cape Town Heritage Trust, formed in 1987, undertook to renovate the square.

The Heritage vine is so old that it is difficult to accurately identify the variety. Initial research suggested it was a Crouchen Blanc, one of the first varieties to arrive in the Cape from the western Pyrenees. However, when winemaker and viticulturist Jean Vincent Rindon sent cuttings to the French National Institute for Agricultural Research, he was told the vine is probably a Gros Chenin, better known as Chenin Blanc.

CITY KAYAKING AT THREE ANCHOR BAY

8

Some of the Cape's finest views

Three Anchor Bay beach
Kaskazi rents out kayaks at 179 Beach Road
083-346-1146
kayak.co.za



Three Anchor Bay is an ideal city location from which to launch a kayak and explore the Table Bay coastline. Paddle north around Green Point to Granger Bay or south towards Clifton Beach and you'll be treated to some of the Cape's finest views.

There's prolific bird life on the rocks and in the water, with various species of nesting cormorants, seagulls, terns and gannets, as well as African penguins making the occasional appearance. Seals and dolphins often cruise along beside the kayaks. If you're lucky, you might encounter southern right or humpback whales, especially during winter and spring.

At the fuel station beside the beach, there's a shop that sells and rents out kayaks, as well as offering day tours on the water. The kayaks are stored in boathouses tucked beneath the promenade above the beach.

The Suicide of Ingrid Jonker

Ingrid Jonker was a liberal Afrikaans poet considered to be 'the Sylvia Plath of South Africa'. In the early hours of 19 July 1965, at the age of 31, Jonker walked into the sea at Three Anchor Bay and committed suicide by drowning.

Although Jonker wrote in Afrikaans, her poems have been widely translated. Her sensitive and progressive outlook has made her a literary icon for a new generation of South Africans who've rediscovered her relevance.

Jonker's conservative father was chairman of a parliamentary committee responsible for censorship laws. To his great embarrassment, Ingrid was strongly opposed to these laws and he publicly disowned her.

The poet led a tempestuous life and had many affairs, notably with two well-known writers, André Brink and Jack Cope. One of these liaisons resulted in a pregnancy and subsequent abortion. The mental distress of the abortion and her father's rejection contributed to Jonker entering Valkenberg Psychiatric Hospital in 1961.

Her second volume of poetry brought her wide acclaim. She became part of Die Sestigers, a group of writers who sought to challenge the conservative Afrikaans literary establishment.

By early 1965 Ingrid was on medication, drinking heavily and experiencing another breakdown. Just before her death, she witnessed a scene in which a black baby was shot in his mother's arms. Nelson Mandela read her poem '*Die Kind Wat Doodgeskiet is Deur Soldate by Nyanga*' (The Child Who Was Shot Dead by Soldiers at Nyanga) during his address at the opening of South Africa's first democratically elected parliament in 1994.

SECRET CAVE

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Picnic at a geological contact point

*Chapman's Peak Drive
30 metres below the main lookout point*



There's a sheltered sandstone cave on Chapman's Peak Drive that boasts one of Cape Town's finest views. The cave lies just above an interesting 'contact line', easily distinguished by the different coloured rocks (ochre and red above, grey below).

Drive south out of Hout Bay, up Chapman's Peak until you reach the main lookout point at the summit of the drive. Park and walk to the end of the lookout point. Slip through the railings and follow a narrow path to the left that seems to disappear over the edge of the cliff.

There's enough space for a few groups to enjoy a picnic and take in the dreamy blues of sea and sky. Best of all is sundowners here: toasting the sun as it dips into the Atlantic beyond the Sentinel. Far below, you may spot whales, dolphins or fishing boats chugging out of Hout Bay harbour.

Chapman's Peak is one of the most dramatic drives in South Africa. The western flank of Constantiaberg falls steeply for hundreds of metres into the Atlantic. The road that hugs the near-vertical face of the mountain from Hout Bay to Noordhoek was hacked out of the face between 1915 and 1922. At the time, it was regarded as a supreme feat of engineering.

The upper part of Chapman's Peak consists of flat sedimentary rocks (younger than 520 million years old) related to the sandstone that forms Table Mountain. The base of the mountain, however, consists of Cape Granite (older than 540 million years) and the two formations meet at a geological unconformity that is world-famous among earth scientists.

Two different endangered vegetation types can be found along this road. The vegetation corresponds to the two main geological formations: Peninsula Sandstone Fynbos (above) and Cape Granite Fynbos (below), which are both endemic to Cape Town.

Chapman's Peak Drive

Chapman's Peak is named after John Chapman, the captain's mate of a Royal Navy ship that was becalmed in Hout Bay in 1607. The skipper sent his pilot, John Chapman, ashore in the hope of finding provisions. The pilot later recorded the bay as Chapman's Chaunce (chance) and the name stuck, becoming official on all East India charts.

In the early 1900s, Sir Nicolas Fredrick de Waal, first administrator of the Cape Province, ordered the construction of a road linking Hout Bay to Noordhoek. It was cleverly planned to follow the Cape Granite contour, while the many roadside cuttings could be carved out of the more workable sandstone sediments. The road took seven years to complete and was opened in 1922.

CHAMPION TREES AT THE ARDERNE GARDENS

15

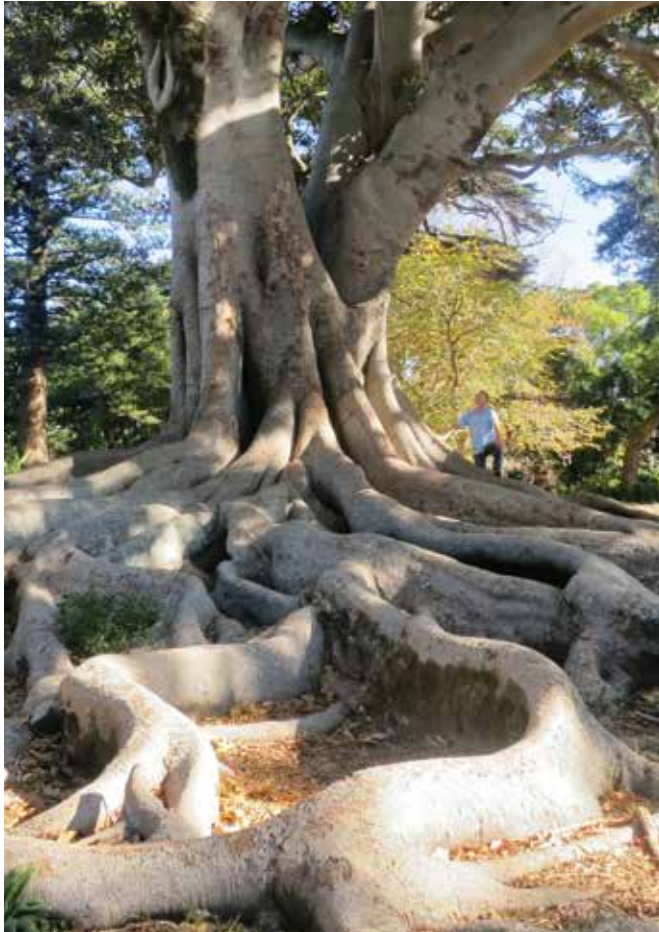
The largest collection of remarkable trees in South Africa

222 Main Road, Claremont

Daily 8am–6pm

Free entry / Donation box

A map of its noteworthy trees can be bought from the Scala pharmacy across the street



A small botanical garden in the heart of Claremont features six of South Africa's most remarkable trees. When the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry introduced a law in 2003 protecting designated 'Champion Trees' (i.e. trees of exceptional importance and heritage value), the Arderne Gardens turned out to have the largest single collection of trees worthy of protection.

Most impressive, perhaps, is a 37-metre (120-foot) tall Moreton Bay fig. With its sinuous spreading roots, it's one of the largest trees in South Africa and is affectionately known as the Wedding Tree, as many generations of Capetonians have had their wedding photographs taken with it. An Aleppo pine, towering to a height of 40 metres (130 feet) is double the usual height for the species and thought to be the largest of its kind in the world. And a 43-metre (140 foot) high Norfolk Island pine is the ancestor of the first Norfolk Island pine in South Africa. Bought for the princely sum of £5, the original tree was planted at the centre of the gardens in 1847, but died in 1914. It is possible that all Norfolk Island pines in South Africa trace their origin to it. The three other designated champion trees – an ancient Turkey oak, a wizened cork oak, and a Queensland kauri – are possibly less spectacular, though no less beautiful.

Most of the trees were planted by the gardens' creator, Ralph Henry Arderne, a timber merchant who bought the land (originally part of the old Stellenberg Estate) in 1845. Using his connections in the timber trade, Arderne was able to gratify his love of exotic trees and plants, amassing one of the finest collections in South Africa. An amble around the gardens will take you past a monstrous dragon tree from the Canary Islands, Australian bunya bunnys with 5kg cones, giant tree ferns from New Zealand, parana pines from Brazil, Himalayan deodars from India, Californian redwoods and probably the only *Rule araucaria* from New Caledonia in South Africa. After his death, Arderne's equally passionate son Henry continued to add to the collection, most notably with the rare flowering *Watsonia borbonica Ardernii* – which was named after him when he discovered it on a hike in the Cederberg.

The gardens are now a national monument, maintained by the City of Cape Town and the Friends of the Arderne Gardens.

SLANGKOP LIGHTHOUSE

③

Cape Town's highest lantern

Lighthouse Road, Kommetjie
021-783-1717
Daily 10am-3pm

Slangkop is the tallest lighthouse on the South African coastline. It's a graceful structure set above the rocks on the Kommetjie shore and comprises a 33-metre circular tower with various administrative and diesel-generator buildings around its base. The lantern houses a revolving electric light that flashes four times every 30 seconds and has a range of 33 nautical miles.

In the building beside the tower there's a small museum to lighthouses that's worth a visit. Then ascend the tower's spiral staircase until you reach the beautiful lantern. If it's not too windy, step out onto the balcony for breath-taking views of Kommetjie.

The tower was erected as a result of the findings of the Lighthouse Commission, appointed by Sir Francis Hely-Hutchinson in 1906. Sir Francis, governor of the Cape, called for proposals to improve safety measures for shipping around the Cape coast.

The commission's recommendations included the urgent construc-

tion of a lighthouse at Slangkop due to the many wrecks that occurred between Table Bay and Cape Point. Ships leaving Cape Town soon lost sight of the Robben Island Light and had to pass Duiker Point before coming into range of the Cape Point Light. Furthermore, Cape Point was often shrouded by cloud or mist. The erection of a lighthouse at Kommetjie was the ideal solution. It was also recommended that the light be positioned close to the waterline, rather than up on the hill, where it would be frequently blanketed by fog.

In 1913 tenders were invited by WT Douglas, consulting engineer to the high commissioner of the Union. The tower was constructed from cast-iron segments weighing 500kg each. When completed, it stood 30 metres tall from the ground to the gallery. The original specification stipulated that the date '1914' be cast above the doorway. No one could have foreseen that World War I would interfere with the plan.

The lighthouse was eventually commissioned on 4 March 1919. In 1936, a 4kW electric lamp was installed, increasing the candlepower to 16,750,000cd. The lighting equipment has since been replaced and has slightly reduced power.

Being close to civilisation on a beautiful stretch of coast, Slangkop has been a popular station for lighthouse-keeping families. Although now fully automated, the facility is still manned for security reasons and to allow visitors.



THE CUPID AT CASA LABIA

⑦

A mistake made by one of Europe's most important 18th-century painters

192 Main Road, Muizenberg

Tuesday–Sunday 10am–4pm; closed on Mondays

Free entry



On either side of the ballroom doors in Casa Labia hang two tapestry designs by France's most famous artist of the Rococo period, François Boucher. The one on the right reveals a secret: Madame de Pompadour's favourite painter made a bit of a booboo.

The painting, entitled 'Love's Offering', depicts Cupid pointing at a statue of himself. But what neither Cupid nor Boucher himself seem to have realised is that the statue of Cupid has two left feet. No one knows why the mistake was made, but Casa Labia's curator likes to speculate that the painter was distracted by the beauty of the ladies in Madame de Pompadour's salon.

Nonetheless, the Labias must have enjoyed the flawed painting as there is a hand-coloured engraving of it in the next room. Due to the smaller size of the copy, it's not possible to see whether the engraver corrected the error in the original.

While its name (like the Labia Cinema in the City Centre) may sometimes give rise to giggles, Casa Labia, set between the seaside and the mountain on the main road between Muizenberg and Kalk Bay, is a beautiful building with a noble history.

Count Natale Labia was a Venetian nobleman sent to South Africa in 1916 as the Italian consul. He married Ida, the daughter of the Randlord JB Robinson, and was later appointed Italy's first minister plenipotentiary.

In 1930, the Labias built Casa Labia to be both the embassy and a family home. They wanted to give it a Venetian flavour – creating a southern reflection of the Palazzo Labia, which stands on the Cannaregio Canal in Venice. The furniture, chandeliers, mirrors, ceiling panels and wall fabrics were all imported from Venice, along with an interior decorator. The count even shipped over a gondola and gondolier, but the Cape weather immediately rendered this idea impractical.

The house was decorated with various pieces selected from the Labia family's priceless art collection, including works by François Boucher. As a key artist of the Rococo Period, Boucher's sentimental, pink and blue toned paintings of pastoral and mythical scenes helped to define the style of that century. He also designed many tapestries for the Beauvais Tapestry works, for which these two designs were intended.

The Casa Labia art collection also features several English and Italian masters as well as contemporary works by South African artists such as Irma Stern, Gerard Sekoto and John Muafangejo. Upstairs is an art gallery featuring exhibitions by contemporary local artists.

MUIZENBERG STATION

8

The city's only teak clock tower

Just above Muizenberg Beach on Main Road



With its elegant teak clock tower, Muizenberg Station is the prettiest railway station on the Cape Town to Simon's Town line. This grand building is the symbolic gateway to False Bay, marking the start of arguably the most scenic railway line in South Africa. Designed by a pupil of Sir Herbert Baker, the fine proportions and generosity of its interior spaces are a typical example of glamorous Edwardian architecture.

Today, this red brick structure with arched sandstone entrances graces the skyline of Muizenberg as it did a century ago. The stairs and paving are of quarry flagstone from Elsie's Peak, Fish Hoek, while the dressed sandstone is from Kalk Bay. The interiors, with their original high ceilings and wooden floors, transport you back to an era when men in black suits and top hats enjoyed tea on the station's open-air balcony. Make sure you don't miss the two cannons mounted on the seaside platform: a British 9-pounder (circa 1760) and a Swedish 24-pounder (circa 1782).

With the growth of Muizenberg in the 19th century came the need for a station. The architectural department of South African Railways set about creating a statement in stone to acknowledge Muizenberg's importance as the Cape's first 'beach resort' town – the Brighton of South Africa. With the arrival of the railway in 1883, thousands of day-trippers now had access to the seaside – previously the sole privilege of the wealthy, who owned horses and traps.

The building we see today is not the original station, but rather one that replaced the simple structure of the 1880s. The new station was opened by the Minister of Transport, the Honourable Henry Burton, on 7 June 1913. The original plans show a booking office, stationmaster and station foreman's offices, a porter's office, luggage rooms, cloakrooms, rest room and toilets.

A few years later, the decorative wrought iron balustrade on the balconies was replaced with brickwork due to the corrosive effects of the sea and strong southeasterly winds. All embellishments and ironwork were removed to make the building maintenance-free. The upstairs rooms were also converted into a residence for the stationmaster and his family.

This grand old lady of the suburban line was declared a national monument in 1981. However, the building continued to deteriorate. In 1991 all commuter stations, including Muizenberg, fell under the control of the newly formed SARCC (SA Rail Commuter Corporation). Extensive renovations were conducted in 1992.

MA TZU TEMPLE

⑥

A privately-funded Taiwanese temple for fishermen

5A Ily Industrial Park, Stella Road, Montagu Gardens
Daily 9.30am–4.30pm

In Montagu Gardens, hidden away in a concrete bungalow in the middle of an industrial park, is a Taiwanese temple dedicated to the goddess Ma Tzu. The Taoist patron goddess of seafarers, Ma Tzu (also spelt Mazu and Matsu), is the deity most commonly worshipped by Taiwanese islanders.

According to legend, Ma Tzu (meaning ‘mother-ancestor’) was born on 23 March in the year 960 during the Song Dynasty. She was the seventh daughter of a fisherman’s family. Stories about her vary, but all agree that she would stand on the shore in a red dress to guide fishing boats home. Ma Tzu has become an important figure for overseas Chinese and Taiwanese around the world.

Cape Town harbour is one of the most significant ports of call for Taiwanese fishing fleets. Crew members come here to pray, give thanks

for her blessing and protection, and to ask for guidance. The temple is privately funded by the local Taiwanese community but visitors of all cultures are welcome. Special activities are held for Ma Tzu’s birthday festival in March each year.

When you visit, walk through the antechamber into the central room and take four incense sticks (you can place a donation in the red box). Light them and then go back into the antechamber and pray to heaven. Put one stick of incense into the big bowl in the antechamber, place fruit or a gift on the large table in the main room then go to the front altar to pray to Ma Tzu (the central figure), placing another incense stick in front of her. Move right to pray to Tai Suey and place a third stick of incense in that bowl. Lastly, go back into the antechamber to pray to the Five Tiger Generals, who represent the earth.

To find out what your future holds, go again to the altar of Ma Tzu and pray for guidance to formulate your question. Then draw a stick from the oracle bowl and throw the two rounded wooden pieces next to the bowl: if one flat side faces up and the other down, you have the correct stick. Take the stick to Mr Hong, the temple’s priest, who will interpret its meaning for you.



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SECRET

CAPE TOWN

A captain who lived on the wreck of the *Kakapo* for three years; Table Mountain's most exclusive hiking; a restaurant in a maximum security prison; the arboreal evidence of apartheid's earliest manifestation; a woman disguised as a male doctor for 56 years; a beach on top of Table Mountain; a fascinating secret collection of vintage and classic cars; a magical tree renowned for its spiritual healing properties; a heated pool on a military base that's open to the public; a secret night-time nature tour; a hamster wheel for humans; a beautiful little-known tidal pool; a fantastic and smart way to send a letter back home in the 17th century; run a stick along metal pipes to hear the famous freedom tune "Mannenberg" ...

Far from the crowds and the usual clichés, Cape Town is a reserve of well-concealed treasures, revealed only to those residents or visitors prepared to wander off the beaten track.

An indispensable guide for those who think they know Cape Town well and those who would like to discover the hidden face of the city.

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