

## Eat and drink

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**Wine tasting**

The Swartland has developed a reputation for its Shiraz in particular, and two dozen wine farms dot the hills of the Kasteelberg, Perdeberg and beyond. One great place to dip a toe in the barrel is The Wine Collective (*Short Street, 022 448 1008, [www.thewinecollective.co.za](http://www.thewinecollective.co.za)*), where the quaffing commies pour the Swartland's finest beneath their red-star emblem. Riebeek Cellars (*Pieter Cruythoff Avenue, 022 448 1171, [www.riebeekcellars.com](http://www.riebeekcellars.com)*) has a shop on the main square, while wine estates within a just a few minutes' drive out of town include Allesverloren (*R311, 022 4612320, [www.allesverloren.co.za](http://www.allesverloren.co.za)*), which is renowned for its Port; and also Kloovenburg (*R46, 022 4481 635, [www.kloovenburg.com](http://www.kloovenburg.com)*), where you can sample Pieter du Toit's olive- and wine products.

# CASTLE IN THE COUNTRY

Among the Swartland's wheat fields, olive groves and vineyards, historic Riebeek-Kasteel is one of the Cape's prettiest towns and a favourite weekend getaway with its quaint main square, offbeat restaurants and shops. By JAMES BAINBRIDGE



## Eat and drink

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**Olive tasting**

The area is famous for olives, with a tourist route dedicated to olives and vino (download a map from [www.swartlandwineandolives.co.za](http://www.swartlandwineandolives.co.za)) and an annual festival celebrating the tasty hors d'oeuvre. This year's Riebeek Valley Olive Festival ([www.riebeekvalleyolivefestival.co.za](http://www.riebeekvalleyolivefestival.co.za)) takes place over the first weekend in May, when you will certainly find a tapenade to taste in the 'golden olive triangle' of the Olive Boutique (*49 Church St, 022 448 1368, [www.olive-boutique.co.za](http://www.olive-boutique.co.za)*), Het Vlock Casteel (*R311, 022 448 1433, [www.hetvlockcasteel.co.za](http://www.hetvlockcasteel.co.za)*) and Kloovenburg estates. Year round, the Olive Boutique is a good hunting ground for distinctive Swartland souvenirs, selling olive products from mustard to lip balm.



### Out and about

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#### Jan Smuts Museum

In neighbouring Riebeeck West, you can see the childhood home of the great 20th-century statesman, philosopher and commander in the South African War and both World Wars. The cottage where Jan Smuts was born in 1870 – destined for a life of farming until his older brother died and Jan was sent to school – sits in a leafy glade on the PPC cement-factory grounds. It's an incongruous setting and, when signing in at the gate, you can write 'Jan Smuts' under 'Visiting'. The humble thatched homestead features period furniture and evokes life in the late 1800s, while the museum covers Smuts' numerous achievements, which include drafting the opening of the United Nations foundation charter.

R311, 022 461 8000

### Eat and drink

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#### Microbreweries

Flagship Brew (9 Church Street, 082 413 8332, [flagshipbrew.co.za](http://flagshipbrew.co.za)) produces craft beers from a crisp lager to a hoppy IPA, made in small batches using Swartland ingredients. Pop into their taproom on the town's main road to see the brewery in action, or retire to the garden with a beer-tasting tray and some local cheese, charcuterie and olives. Alternatively, grab a stool amid the exposed brick of Garagista's (Main St, 022 448 1125, [www.garagista.co.za](http://www.garagista.co.za)) contemporary interior to taste their quirkily named beers and ciders.

### Eat and drink

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#### Mama Cucina

This stylish Italian *ristorante*, with its chequered tablecloths, blackboard menus and hefty pizza oven, is a safe choice for both delicious lunches and atmospheric evenings. The delicious Mediterranean menu features a few romantically named pizzas, such as the Sophia Loren, the Contessa and, err ... the Keith Special. Tim Noakes fans can choose between dishes from a chef's salad to a Banting lamb burger – a Swartland special with a green peppercorn and Shiraz sauce. Sarel Cilliers St, 022 448 1676, [www.mamacucina.co.za](http://www.mamacucina.co.za)

### Eat and drink

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#### Eve's Eatery

This eccentric stalwart assembles a hodgepodge of playful decor, from mannequins in the garden to black-and-white photos above the fireplace. Seasonal produce forms the menu of dishes from meatballs to mussels, eggs Benedict to butter chicken – and of course the popular Sunday roast. In winter, pair a book and wine by the roaring fire; in summer, chat to friendly owner Eve over a cold beer.

Short St, 022 448 1331, [www.facebook.com/EvesEatery](http://www.facebook.com/EvesEatery)

### Out and about

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#### Antiques and home decor

You can spend a pleasant afternoon on and around the square, exploring the little curio-packed shops piled high with various finds from local farms, contemporary artworks, and decor. The likes of King Olaf (21 Sarel Cilliers St, 082 517 3249, [www.facebook.com/KingOlafFurniture](http://www.facebook.com/KingOlafFurniture)), with its eclectic jumble of African masks, old vinyls, vintage toys, sturdy furniture and everything in between, are as much collectors' hoards as shops. We were wryly informed that customers were limited to one item each because it was the best shop in the world. For contemporary decor, head to nearby Crystal & Twine (18 Sarel Cilliers St, 022 448 1290, [www.facebook.com/CrystalandTwine](http://www.facebook.com/CrystalandTwine)), where the French-inspired collection of objets d'art, kitchenware and furniture is displayed between corrugated iron and exposed wooden beams.

## AA Quality Assured accommodation in and around Riebeeck-Kasteel

AAQA

### The Royal Hotel

#### (AA Quality Assured Superior status)

If you're looking for the grandest accommodation in Riebeeck-Kasteel, look no further than the Royal Hotel. Dating back well over a century, it's the oldest of its kind in the Western Cape. Newly refurbished, it boasts beautifully appointed rooms and genuinely warm country hospitality.

All rooms are en suite, with air conditioning, minibars, DSTV, and 24-hour room service. The hotel has a number of bars and restaurants to cater to your dining needs, while the pristine gardens are the perfect spot for an outdoor wedding.

There's a raised pool, with bar and deck, and a function room for small conferences. And when you're there, take note of the longest steep south of the Limpopo.

33 Main Street

[info@royalinriebeek.com](mailto:info@royalinriebeek.com)

022 448 1378, [www.royalinriebeek.com](http://www.royalinriebeek.com)

### Monte Vidéo Guest House

#### (AA Quality Assured Highly Recommended status)

It's not in Riebeeck-Kasteel itself, but 30 km away in the neighbouring town of Wellington is where you'll find Monte Vidéo Guest House. Its decor is new and contemporary, with nine stylishly decorated rooms, each with en-suite facilities, air conditioning and DSTV.

The conference room can seat 40 people. The setting is hard to beat, especially with uninterrupted views of the surrounding mountains.

Whether it's for business or a holiday stay, Monte Vidéo will accommodate you in total comfort.

[info@montevideo.co.za](mailto:info@montevideo.co.za)

021 873 4765, 083 460 8060

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