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CAPE TOWN

COOL

There's a palpable energy on the streets of Cape Town this year, as it takes on the mantle of World Design Capital 2014. We dig out the coolest of the many cool places, so you know where the best action is. BY SARAH KHAN

MARK MY WORDS: this will be Cape Town's year. Its already stylish citizens are rising to the occasion of the label of World Design Capital 2014 with a host of new dining and shopping openings, but local classics are also generating new buzz. As a recently transplanted Capetonian, I've reveled in uncovering the city's gems. There's no dearth of chic places to lay your head in Cape Town, in a mix of locations ranging from the beach to the center of town. One of the city's most exclusive addresses? Ellerman House, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean from a bluff in posh Bantry Bay. A former residence converted into a 13-room hotel with two private villas, the sleek property is laden with contemporary art and boasts an über-modern wine cellar stocked with 6,000 bottles. If you prefer being in the heart of town, I recommend the rose-hued Mount Nelson. It's a Mother

City institution, with elegant grounds and a gracious high tea—one of my personal favorites. You'll be greeted by a familiar face after you've made your way down the long, palm-fringed driveway: a statue of Mahatma Gandhi presides over the entrance. For the ultimate wow factor, the One&Only Cape Town in the central V&A Waterfront area is the place to book. It was the very first place I stayed when I first arrived in Cape Town, and I was blown away when I saw what lies beyond the floor-to-ceiling windows: they merely serve as expansive picture frames for capturing the stellar views of Table Mountain.

So you've booked your flight and reserved your room; now what? The next thing to do as soon as you have all that squared away is to reserve one of the coveted tables at the Test Kitchen or the Pot Luck Club, the two restaurants by celebrated local chef Luke Dale-Roberts. Both eateries are located in the hip Old Biscuit Mill and serve his inventive cuisine; if you only have time for one, I'd recommend the Pot Luck Club, with its great vantage point overlooking the city and more casual ambience. Every weekend, the Old Biscuit Mill turns into the city's best outdoor party, and that's where you'll find me most Saturdays: dozens of local food vendors open up stalls in this former Victorian warehouse, selling everything from ostrich jerky to shawarmas to steak pies. For pricey Asian tapas that are worth every rand, head to Haiku. Bonus: the sleek new location at the popular V&A Waterfront mall shares a roof with Bukhara, Cape Town's best Indian restaurant, which means you can order off either menu—perfect for when I'm craving some dim sum paired with

1. Book in advance at The Test Kitchen, the popular restaurant run by Chef Luke Dale-Roberts 2. Take in the plush side view at the One&Only 3. The Shimmy Beach Club is a great place for food and party 4. Sample some gourmet cheese at the outskirts of Cape Town 5. Quirky curio boutiques line this stylish town

Good food Cape Town

Steak salomie: Spicy, curried beef wrapped in a flaky, buttery Malaysian-style roti

Bobotie: A classic Cape Malay dish of minced beef topped with egg custard

Biltong: SA-style dried jerky—beef is the most popular, but varieties range from ostrich to tuna

Beerwors: Sausage rolls—get one from one of the many street carts that sprout up along Long Street, they're perfect for a late-night snack

Gatsby: The ultimate sandwich, a huge hoagie stuffed with spicy meats and French fries. One can feed four



1



2



3



5



4

INDIA PICTURE



Celebrate any special occasion with Mount Nelson Hotel and get a sparkling wine, a one-hour massage, breakfast, as well as transfers to Table Mountain and more.

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chicken *makhni*! En route to the Cape of Good Hope, I've stopped by the scenic village of Scarborough, where top chef Bruce Robertson invites diners into his personal beach home for two intimate lunch sittings a day. He serves a multi-course seafood meal along with some rollicking anecdotes—he's quite the character. For a sugary treat, I head to Jason Bakery, where a local version of New York's cult cronut is on offer (around here, though, it's known as a dough-ssant).

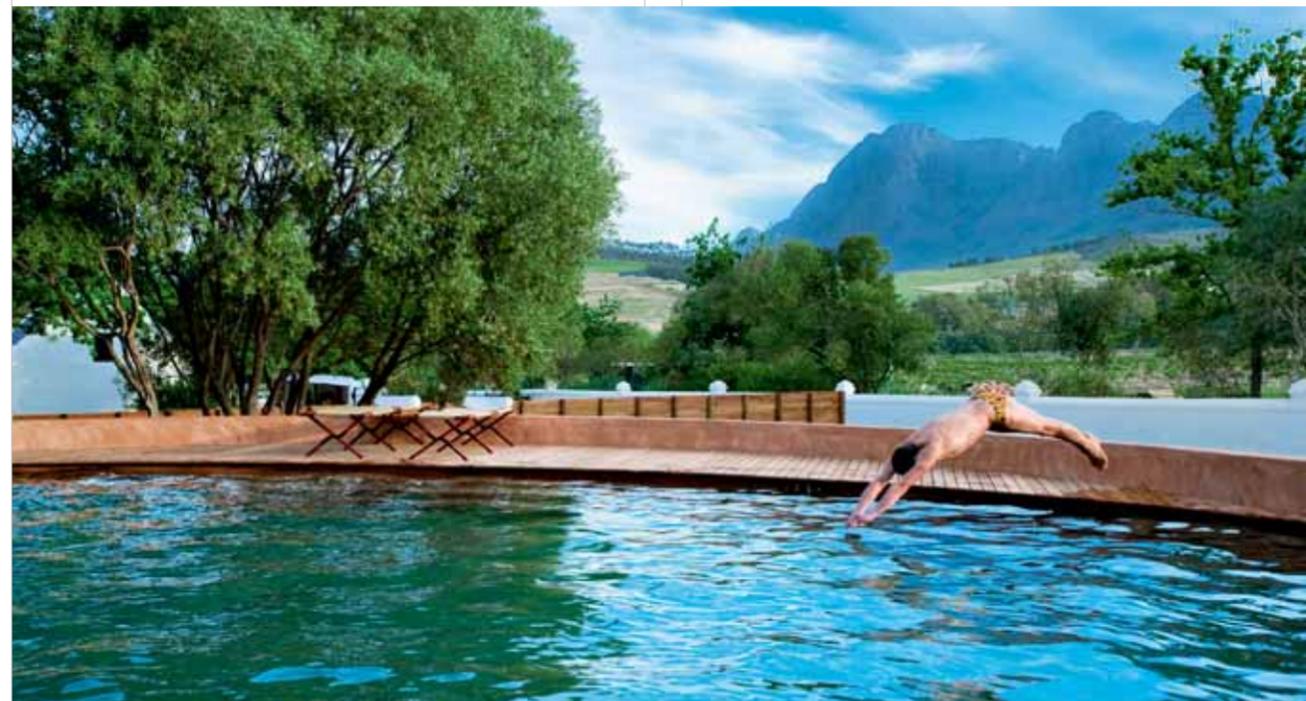
When I'm looking to exercise my wallet, I usually drive straight to the fabulous mall at the V&A Waterfront. But let's be honest: a mall is a mall. If you're on the hunt for some finds that are a little more unique, Long Street and Kloof Street are peppered with chic boutiques and indie shops catering to a more niche clientele. Lately, I've noticed that Cape Town's stylish set are descending in droves on nearby Bree Street, which has undergone quite a transformation in the past two years. At Skinny LaMinx, illustrator and designer Heather Moore sells quirky textiles and home goods that make for fun souvenirs, like boldly patterned tea towels and colourful satchels. You can't miss British fashion label Paul Smith thanks to the bright blue façade, behind which you'll find edgy men's and womenswear with the designer's signature striped motif. I adore the supple bags, belts, and iPad cases by Chloe Townsend for her luxury leather label Missibaba, where she incorporates her world travels into her work. The Robert Sherwood Design Showroom on Bree is a must-stop on the itinerary for anyone who dabbles in interior design—the locally and globally sourced range of pop art, industrial-style lamps, and contemporary furniture has been curated carefully.

Capetonians are famously laidback, but that doesn't mean they don't know how to party. The sultry Asoka bar,

with its Asian-inspired Zen aesthetic, has been plying chic Capetonians with cocktails for years, and remains a fixture on the nightlife scene. For an even more festive, beach-party vibe, I like Shimmy Beach Club, which opened last year on the water and has quickly become the place to be. '&Union' helped herald Bree Street's resurgence a few years ago, and has since become something of an institution, thanks mostly to its craft beers. There's a different live act every night at the Piano Bar, making it the perfect venue for a low-key, jazzy night out. It brings a New York-style music scene to Cape Town, but with local flair—and as a New Yorker in Cape Town, I appreciate that vibe.

Come December, summer is in full swing in Cape Town, and sun-starved people are drawn to the sprawling expanses of pristine beaches and glittering waters—Bay and Clifton are the top attractions. The most scenic swath of sand, however, remains under the radar: Llandudno beach is devoid of shops and businesses, and feels like it's miles away from the city. If you're not keen on being a beach bum, there are plenty of other stunning sights to keep you occupied as well. From the moment your plane descends toward Cape Town it's hard to miss the iconic Table Mountain, a hulking plateau seemingly dropped from above right into the center of the city. It's worth taking the cable car to the top on your first day, both to let the

The saltwater pool at Babylonstoren, a less known vineyard farm house perfect for a cool escape



Dine at top Chef Bruce Robertson personal beach home in the scenic village of Scarborough. Great seafood & conversation

staggering ocean and city views blow your mind, but also to get yourself oriented with the landscape below. Active types may want to hike it instead of taking the easy route, but I recommend climbing Lion's Head mountain next door instead—you get the same jaw-dropping vistas, only these include Table Mountain itself as well. And take it from me, a confirmed city girl who's far from athletic: it's not that strenuous a trek to the top. One of my favorite things to show visitors to Cape Town is the drive toward the Cape of Good Hope, which is easily one of the world's most scenic routes.

There's plenty to keep you occupied in Cape Town for days, but as lovely as my adopted hometown is, sometimes I crave a quiet escape. A mere 45 minute drive east of the city will take you to the heart of the Winelands, where South Africa's world-famous bottles are produced. Stellenbosch and Franschhoek are lovely towns with fabulous restaurants, but I also urge visitors to spend a night or two at Babylonstoren, a super-chic farm resort with impeccable design and impeccable food—it doesn't get more farm-to-table than this. An hour and a half up the coast, Paternoster is a breathtakingly beautiful seaside village notable for its lovely whitewashed cottages that seem to blend into the ivory sand. Book a getaway at the ultra-modern Strandloper Ocean Boutique Hotel, which has 16 cozy white-on-white rooms and suites, and thank your luck that you decided to come to Cape Town.

At a Glance

STAY **Ellerman House:** 180 Kloof Road, Bantry Bay; +27 21 430 3200; ellerman.co.za
Mount Nelson Hotel: 76 Orange Street; +27 21 483 1000; mountnelson.co.za
One&Only Cape Town: Dock Road, Victoria & Alfred Waterfront; + 27 21 431 5800; www.capetown.oneandonlyresorts.com

EAT **Test Kitchen:** The Old Biscuit Mill, 375 Albert Road, Woodstock; +27 (0) 21 447 2337 thetestkitchen.co.za
Pot Luck Club: +27 21 447 0804; thepotluckclub.co.za
Haiku: 58 Burg Street; +27 21 424 7000
Chef's Bruce Robertson Table: www.chefbruce.robertson.com/p/boathouse.html

Jason Bakery: 185, Bree Street; jasonbakery.com

SHOP **Skinny LaMinx:** 201 Bree St; skinnylaminx.com
Missibaba: 229 BREE STREET; missibaba.com

Robert Sherwood Design Showroom: 173 Bree Street; robertsherwooddesign.com

SEE **Llandudno beach:** on Victoria Road, Babylonstoren; + 27 (0) 21 863 3852; babylonstoren.com

FUN **Asoka bar:** 68 Kloof Street; asokabar.co.za
Shimmy Beach Club: South Arm Road, V&A Waterfront; shimmybeachclub.com
&Union: 110, Bree St
Piano Bar: 47, Napier St; thepianoar.co.za