

Oo la la... Le Franschhoek



By [Rod Baker](#)

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Le Franschhoek was one of those places we've heard about but never quite managed to get to, so when the opportunity came up to try it out, we jumped at the chance - well, as much as a couple of geriatrics can jump at anything, that is. Glad we did.



The thatched roof gives Le Franschhoek Hotel & Spa an inviting "cottagey" look.

Franschhoek is an hour's drive from Cape Town and Le Franschhoek is 3km or so on the other side of the town, so it's an easy drive from the Mother City.

That's the travelogue done and dusted. Now to Le Franschhoek Hotel & Spa...

The setting is great, bang in the mountains and with great views - though unfortunately on the day we were there, the weather was cold and wet and very cloudy, so we didn't get to enjoy as much of the view as we could have.

The hotel itself, with its thatched roof and clean lines, to me had quite a "country cottagey" sort of appeal, but all the modcons are there, with a very attentive and professional staff to ensure the sense of welcome was very evident.

Upon arrival we - Heather, my long-suffering wife of 38 years (no, she's a bit older than that and wild horses wouldn't drag from me her actual age. OK, 56 then... I cannot take the interrogation) - were shown to a table and signed in. Our booking form was on top of the desk already and ready for signing in; pretty impressive.

We ambled around a bit, being guided to the Dish restaurant, where we'd be dining, and then to our room. Very nice... large, en suite bathroom, balcony and - what I liked a lot - underfloor heating. (It's amazing what gets one excited when you're having a night away - with the wife.)



The bedroom - and the bedpost (left) that caused all the trouble.

What I thought is a very sensible idea was the mini-bar... It was empty, other than two complementary bottles of water, the idea being that you then place the order to have it stocked according to your preferences; a good idea.



The little outdoor "gazebos" are great when you want to "get away from it all" without getting away from it all.

Then we explored the hotel, as you will see from the accommodation list, there should be something for everyone, and the same, I think, applied when it comes to dining or simply meeting... I liked the variety of what, I suppose, one could call "gazebos", seating anything from two to six or eight and giving guests the opportunity to "get away from it all" without, actually, "getting away from it all". That means great service is close at hand, but you can enjoy a sense of intimacy and privacy, whether it's just the two of you away for a weekend, or your company task team "off premises" to brainstorm yet another blockbusting strategy.

Dining to die for

Well, not literally, of course, but if you are looking for an excellent dining experience in equally excellent surroundings, you'll go a long way to find better.

First of all, let's get this straight. When it comes to food, I am generally a three-course type of person... burger, fries, onion rings. Likewise, when it comes to wines, I am to wine connoisseurs what Helen Zille is to arc welding (well, I think so,

anyway).



The first course: Compressed pork with apples and croissant crisp and paired with Paul Cluver Riesling.

However, that might now change.

Ricardo, our waiter drew the short straw and had to serve us as we made our way through a six-course menu. Each

dish was matched to a particular wine and while I have sometimes tended to find it a little, er, pretentious, to hear someone describing a wine as being "a trifle impertinent, but with a refreshing youthful aggression tempered by a hint of coyness" once I got into it a little, I started to appreciate things a little more. (Both our sons, by the way, are wine aficionados, so I'm quite alone.)



Third course: Forest mushroom soup with semi dry tomato, paired with Alto Rouge '04. Sorry, the wife raved so I got started before taking the "before" picture. She was right - delicious, but the "before" image would have been far prettier. Take my word for it.

We began with "compressed pork with apples and croissant crisp, and that was paired with Paul Cluver Riesling. And so we worked our way through the six courses (see the menu). Each one as good as the previous and the next, and all the flavours standing alone, but combining for a really excellent dining experience.



Duck bon bon with parsley root puree and veg pickle, also paired with Alto Rouge '04 - a quackingly good combination.

Thereafter we glowingly made our way back to the suite and readied for bed. Gazing at each other with unwavering adoration, we both grabbed our books and settled in for the night.

A blow-by-blow account of an eventful night

It was my fault, I admit that freely... As you will see from the image, the bed is a four-poster; I presume the canopy is popped on top when necessary. Back to the story... At around midnight, I decided to perform a miracle and turn wine into water and out of consideration for my true love, I decided not to turn on my bedside light. The result

was that in the gloom I not only stubbed my toe on the leg of the bed, but simultaneously whacked my head on the post. Literally a double-whammy; I apologise to any fellow guests who might have been awoken when I said "Gosh!" rather loudly.

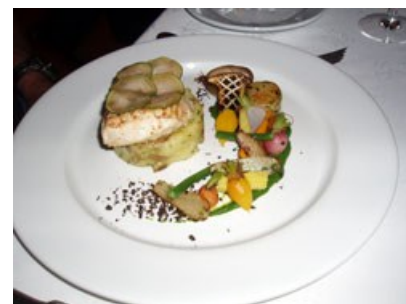
That was the only downside - and of my own making. We ended our stay with a good English breakfast.

Le Franschhoek is well worth a visit and a stay; we didn't get to enjoy the spa, but if it is of the same standard as the rest of the hotel, and I'm sure it is, then don't just sit there - go to the website and see what you're missing.

Accommodation

Room configuration

- 63 bedrooms in total
- 21 standard rooms
- 7 family rooms
- 8 deluxe rooms
- 25 suites rooms
- 2 villas
- cots available on request



Course five: Pan roasted kingklip with new potatoes and garden veggies.

Standard room features



The whole menu - read it for yourself.

[click to enlarge](#)

- Hollywood twins, made up separately or together to form a king size bed
- en suite bathrooms

Family valley rooms

- Hollywood twins, made up separately or together to form a king size bed
- en suite bathrooms
- loft area with two additional single beds

Deluxe room features

- furnished to suit the needs of a discerning traveller
- balconies overlooking vineyards, mountains and landscaped gardens
- king size beds

- en suite bathrooms

Suites

- furnished to suit the needs of a discerning traveller
- balconies overlooking vineyards, mountains and landscaped gardens
- king size beds
- en suite bathrooms

Villas

- kitchenette
- lounge area & patio
- bedrooms (various configurations) with en suite bathrooms

General room information

- air conditioning
- under floor heating
- direct dial telephones
- remote controlled television with selected DStv channels
- hairdryers
- tea & coffee making facilities
- electronic safes
- internet connections

Facilities & services

- 3 restaurants
- 24 hour reception
- ample secure parking
- child minding service
- laundry
- tennis, swimming pool
- wellness centre and spa
- transfer shuttle facilities
- all major credit cards accepted
- conferencing
- travel desk
- bar with a selection of fine cigars

Contact details:

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For a full list of facilities, specials and other information, go to [Le Franschhoek](#).

ABOUT ROD BAKER

Rod Baker is Content Director at Bizcommunity.com. A journalist since before computers, he worked on a wide range of magazines and, in his youth, rose through the ranks from being a lowly and abused sub-editor, to a high and still abused editor and publisher. He has been editor and publisher of a number of magazines, as well as a newspaper. He has edited many books, and written a number too. Email him at rod@bizcommunity.com

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