

From wine to whales, what to do in three days in Hermanus

By [Avukile Mabombo](#)

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With one last public holiday before the festive season, take advantage of the long weekend to try out some new things instead of staying at home for a braai. Heritage Day falls on a Sunday, which means you get the Monday off, so if you want to get full relaxation out of your downtime, then South Africa's smaller towns come highly recommended.

Avukile Mabombo, group marketing manager of Protea Hotels by Marriott, is a seasoned traveller, and rates Hermanus as one of his favourite small town destinations. It's just an hour and a half from Cape Town, but you'd be surprised what's on offer. From its own wine route, to whales, to being home to South Africa's version of Nasa, here's what Mabombo recommends you check out.

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1/3 Southern Right Whales, Hermanus, Western Cape, 📍📍📍📍.

A post shared by Ashley Michael Tay (@ashlightman) on Sep 7, 2017 at 10:01pm PDT

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Heaven and Earth – Food and wine

Just before the actual town of Hermanus, take a short left onto the R320 into the [Hemel-en-Aarde](#) (heaven and earth) wine route. The route boasts 15 farms spread out over an easily-manageable 20km, with some of the most scenic views the Overberg on offer.

Taste some prize-worthy Pinot Noir at one of South Africa's top wineries, Bouchard Finlayson. Their flagship wine is called the Galpin Peak, which has won many top wine accolades. Keep heading toward valley, and you'll find a wall of bright pink – that's La Vierge, the winery that invites you into temptation with their Garden of Eden theme. Try some 'Original Sin', and be seduced by their 'Jezebel', and round off with a bit of 'Last Temptation'.

When on a wine tour, make sure that when you break for lunch, the tasting continues. Creation Wine Farms is perfect for this. The [Tasting Room at Creation](#) pairs all their lunch offerings with their wines. So if you're having the pork fillet, burnt caramel and sage, spinach, and king oyster mushroom, it would pair well with the Creation Reserve Pinot Noir 2015, described as a 'gleaming garnet with an inviting bouquet of spice - peppercorn and clove - supplemented by a delicate whiff of dried apricot'. For the more adventurous, there's an entire tasting menu where all of the eight courses are expertly paired. Finish things off by trying the chocolate and wine pairing, combining two classic favourites.

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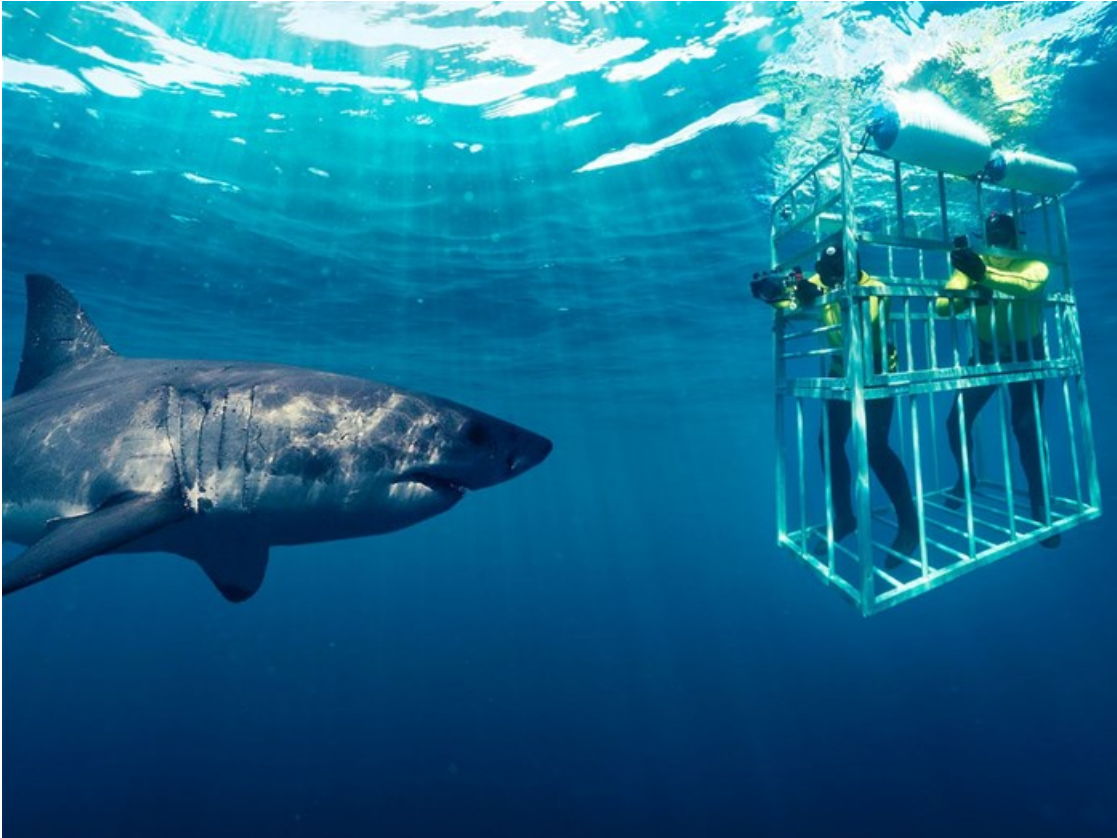
The New Jimmy Hendrix of wine is out on Thursday 💎💎 #syrahgrenache #creationnation

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However, not everyone enjoys a delicate Sauvignon Blanc. For the beer lovers, head out to the [Birkenhead Brewery](#), to sample a wide array of craft beer.

Shark Tale or Shark Tail?

The movie Shark Tale might make the ocean's apex predators look strangely warm and friendly, but for those of us brave enough to get up close and personal, it's a bit of a different story. [Shark cage diving](#) requires nerves of steel, but experiencing these magnificent creatures in the deep blue is something you'll never forget.



Whale whale whale, what have we here?

Bad puns aside, Hermanus is probably best known for its whale watching. The usual time for their arrival starts around May/June, and the stragglers can be seen as late as January. By September it would be peak whale watching time. There's even a whale crier, who sounds the trumpet when a whale is in sight. You can view them from the cliff path, or get right up close on a boat. Seeing these majestic beings is awe-inspiring, and will make you want to come back year after year.

Forget NASA, meet SANSA

Originally called the Hermanus Magnetic Observatory, the [South African National Space Agency](#), which was founded in 1941, was developed with an understanding of the Earth's magnetic field. SANSA's research now includes, among other things, space weather monitoring and space physics – monitoring space weather is crucial, considering a solar storm could short out telecom satellites, radio communications, and power grids.

Now really switch off

Activities are great, but what you also need in your downtime is a bit of pampering (for men and women alike). For the ultimate in relaxation, head to the Arabella Hotel and Spa. Their range of treatments will make you feel rejuvenated from

head to toe and get you ready to tackle the last few months ahead of the festive season break. The spa offers a range of treatments including facials, manicures, and massages that will reclaim your sense of self, one muscle at a time.

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A post shared by Liezel Malherbe (@9livesza) on Jul 10, 2017 at 8:57am PDT

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However, for those of us who prefer staying active, while family members get pampered, there are 18 holes to be conquered on one of the country's top golf courses. You'll be joining the ranks of Ernie Els, Jack Nicklaus, Samuel L. Jackson and Ronan Keating, who have all gone a few rounds there.

So, get cracking on your Heritage Day holiday planning!

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