

A 'Winelands' getaway, away from the Winelands

 By Jessica Tennant

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As ex-Capetonians who would drive 40 minutes to Stellenbosch for breakfast on a rainy day, my husband and I are always looking for the positives to prove that 'Joburg' isn't as bad as non-Joburgers make it out to be, and [Kievits Kroon](#) is one of them.

Less than an hour from where we now call home, we found ourselves turning off a dirt road into a Jacaranda-lined lane leading to a Cape Dutch-style country estate, almost transporting us back to our roots and readying us with anticipation of the rest and relaxation to come.



We had arrived at the self-proclaimed 'Winelands in Gauteng'. Sitting in the library bar lounge in the Manor House beside a fireplace on a grey afternoon made us not mind the wait to be checked in so much. In fact, it allowed me to sink back into a notably comfortable wingback chair into a state of wonder at the thought of being 10 minutes outside Pretoria, when my view through the window resembled a landscape 10 minutes outside Stellenbosch.



We were directed on a map to our junior suite that we would call home for the night. The estate is laid out like a village and offers a range of accommodation options, from rooms for disabled guests and standard rooms, to luxury rooms and VIP suites, conferencing and other function facilities, bars and restaurants and a wellness spa. We were able to park directly outside our detached suite, which looked like a little house from the outside. It was tastefully furnished and spacious with a lounge to enjoy a cup of tea and homemade biscuits, leading into our en suite bedroom with a comfortable king-size bed, a cupboard stocked with two cosy gowns and slippers, a TV cabinet and desk.

Soon after settling in, a romantic picnic on the beautiful grounds on a fresh autumn day and playing croquet was just grand, we thought, sipping on champagne and enjoying the endless contents of our picnic basket – everything mini you can imagine. Our favourites were the salmon roses and the fudgy chocolate brownies.

Lunch was followed by a visit to the spa, and we couldn't have asked for more perfect 'spa weather'. After taking some much-needed me-time to unwind in the sauna, we met up to share a jacuzzi followed by a Swedish shower and a second sauna session to warm up before our treatment. The hydro facilities were impressive, however, we wished the water had been a little bit warmer to ease the bite of the chilly weather.



Wrapped up in our fleecy winter gowns, we had a peaceful nap in the silent waiting area before being called. We had the 'Winelands signature treatment', which is a full body massage with hot stone reflexology followed by a luxurious hot oil scalp massage. Nothing makes you feel more like a queen than having oil poured over your crown followed by a scalp massage (totally worth having to wash your hair twice) and I've always thought hot stones feel like melting blocks of butter on your body. This to the distant sound of rain beating down onto the roof. Need I say more?

Our spa evening was followed by a five-course meal and wine paring at the estate's flagship restaurant, Granita. The winning dish in our books was the trio of carpaccio including ostrich, crocodile and an incredibly flavoursome smoked kudu. We also loved the biltong-rubbed springbok loin, the typical richness of which was harmoniously balanced with its accompanying coffee-smoked lamb rib and sweetened by grilled fig, sweet potato fondant and pea purée. The warm service we received here and a brief chat with the chef after the meal made us feel even more at home.



The combination of the cold weather, a full stomach and the perfect amount of wine, meant a sleep-in was in order. We woke in the most comfortable state to a clear, sunny morning, followed by a leisurely stroll to brunch at Kingsley's Restaurant, where from an endless array of buffet options we opted for our usual plain croissants, yoghurt, granola and fruit, followed by omelettes made fresh using our pick of ingredients.

While the picturesque Winelands backdrop did not quite match the overall hospitality, we were well rested at the end of our stay and left Kievits Kroon happier people. Roald Dahl once said, “the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places,” and that is especially true here.

For more info or to make a booking go to www.kievitskroon.co.za

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