

# It's a Francophile's folly

 By [Brian Berkman](#): contributing editor, travel

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Franschhoek establishments take their French connection very seriously. Perhaps none more than the Franschhoek Country House & Villas that have created a Francophile's folly with fountains, lavender hedges and wrought-iron archways. This is a model for the French-country look and given the main house's historic use as a perfumery, not entirely inauthentic.



Monneaux Restaurant shot to fame when Reuben Riffel was at the range and the fact that they still have his awards dating back many years on the wall is, perhaps, a little sad. Not that they have any reason to hanker after the past. We found their restaurant to be spot-on. The devilled livers (ordered hot) for R58 were delicious - especially with the fruity raisin chutney, while the herb encrusted rack of lamb, pink and juicy, is stellar. The winning taste though is the whole grain mustard and caramelized onion risotto which accompanies the dish. (Cost: R135).

## Very nice set-up, pity about the internet access

In the years since my last visit, they've expanded their foothold and built villas around the landscaped courtyards. Ours, suite 25, offers a massive 100m of accommodation with an entrance hall with tea and coffee station and mini bar, a very large sitting room with flat-screen TV, DVD, full satellite and audio system that is wired through-out the suite and a gas fireplace that whooshes into flame at the press of a button.

From the bedroom there are large windows and double doors that open to the balcony with special onward views of the Stellenbosch mountains.

If you're looking for a romantic spot for a honeymoon or just a luxurious getaway weekend, this spot is hard to beat. For me the fireplaces in the suites make all the difference. Everything about Franschhoek Country House is romantic - the bathroom for example has one of those freestanding Victorian slipper baths in front of a window and there is a wrought-iron washstand with towels and lavender bath salts.

## Not cheap, but...

At R5000 per night the suites are costly but given the space and comforts they are very desirable. You could also find a room in the four-star graded main house for R2000 a night.

Although there are two pools, one of which is heated, I'd come here in winter when the snow-capped mountains provide another reason not to leave the king size bed or step beyond the under-floor heating.

I like that there's a free shuttle into Franschhoek village, which is about 10 minutes away, but think it's a bit mean to bill for wireless internet access.

For more information go to [www.fch.co.za](http://www.fch.co.za) or call +27 (0) 21 876 3386.



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