

Gorgeous bistro delights at Glenelly Estate



By Leigh Andrews

12 Dec 2016

On a relaxed Saturday in early summer - that's December in the Cape - we were met with warm smiles at the elegantly trendy, [recently renovated](#) Glenelly Estate to review their new culinary venture, headed up by Christophe Dehosse. We were promised 'South African food with a French flair' and simply satisfying haute cuisine. Here's how The Vine Bistro delivered.

Glenelly Estate has a 13-year history with May de Lencquesaing at its helm and has been transformed from the 123-hectare Nazareth fruit farm into a South African vineyard of note. Now in her 90s, 'Madame' certainly knows her wines as owner and managing director of her family's estate, the Château Pichon-Lalande for three decades, and proud bearer of wine magazine *Decanter's* title 'Woman of the Year' back in 1994. She's also said to be the inspiration behind the French madame (holding a glass from her collection) while side-saddle atop an African rhino on the Estate's quirky logo. That precious glass is likely filled with Glenelly Estate's winemaker Luke O'Cuinneagain's best, as he's fast gaining recognition for his classic Bordeaux-inspired Cape varietals of cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, merlot, petit verdot, cabernet franc and chardonnay. Following an extensive year-plus renovation, the venue is set to gain further recognition from foodies.

Glenelly's arty, glassy goodness

Keen to step from the culture-steeped past into the present, we made our way up the winding driveway surrounded by tall trees and rows of growing grapes to the main building. With lots of glass featuring in the construction and views of the wooden deck and beyond to the hills, vines and woods, it offered a side of Stellenbosch we'd not yet seen at the beginning of the Helshoogte Pass, and tucked into the southern slopes of the Slmonsberg mountain, we were soon enveloped by greenery. (That's obviously fitting as [greenery](#) is the Pantone shade for 2017.) Seated at chic Parisian-inspired wooden tables and chairs tastefully furnished with [Skinny laMinx](#) napkins and well-lit with the natural light streaming in as well as from above by bulbs in jars, we started with the crisp 2015 unoaked chardonnay just perfect for the weather and perfect to accompany a bread platter for two comprising ciabatta and rye with blocks of instantly spreadable butter.



Glenelly Estate's cellar and vineyards.

The setting encouraged us to relax and take in all that greenery, and before we knew it we were presented with our starters: a cold red-pepper soup and the pork trotter terrine. The soup bowl was deep; the soup thick, chilled and spicy with a crunchy crisp to dunk in and strips of chorizo and octopus tentacle making for an interesting flavour mix. So tasty, it was, that we mopped up the last of the soup with our buttered bread. The pork trotter was a similar hit: Not the cartilage-filled hooves I'd imagined when bravely ordering what I'd considered the most outlandish item on the menu, this was marvellously moreish, with that comforting pork flavour shining through, atop a mayo bed dotted with finely chopped herbs and tiny onion and tomato jewels. Both starters were delicious and the portions generous.

Hearty haute cuisine in the heart of Stellenbosch

For mains then, we went for the blueberry duck and the lemon-chive hake. Those plump, hot blueberries burst delightfully on forkfuls of rich gravied duck breast, served with grilled baby marrow, purple onion and seared cauliflower. Just delicious. The poached hake was impressive, served boneless yet still in its skin, surrounded by baby carrots and potatoes as well as broccoli and cauliflower in a delightfully creamy, chivy lemon sauce. Paired with the smooth 2012 vineyard unoaked Chardonnay, this was pure summer-lunch happiness.



Seating options at Glenelly Estate's The Vine Bistro.

By then feeling pleasantly satiated, we simply couldn't pass up on dessert. Craving something chocolatey I opted for the 'warm melting chocolate biscuit', with poached pear and yoghurt chantilly, with my husband opting for the classic crème caramel in a syrupy butterscotch. There's lots on offer for the dessert-minded among us, as the day's menu included a mysterious 'floating island' with berry compote, vanilla sauce and caramelized Lowerland pecans, as well as a sorbet selection, artisanal African cheeses and canelés with fynbos honey, rooibos ice cream and caramelised pineapple.

Our recommendation? The cold spicy soup, followed by the blueberry duck and the chocolate dessert - I'd go back just for that. It's fudgy in texture but not too sweet, and oozes an amazing dark chocolate sauce that's tempered by the tart yoghurt and spicy poached pears. Paired with a short, strong cappuccino, it served as a delicious farewell French kiss to

the meal. Lacking any Parisian pretension, the menu is comfortingly South African with a touch of French sophistication that's seasonal, so expect flavours fitting of the weather.



Also recommended is a brief tour of the grounds to take in more of the wine and glass de Lencquesaing is known for. Just take a quick trip upstairs to the tasting room with its spectacular views across the estate and beyond, and then a trip downstairs to the cellar, to view the impressive new presentation of Madame's unique hand-blown glass collection, once the largest in all of Europe with over 1,000 pieces dating from 50BC to today. Simply gorgeous.

**Leigh Andrews was a guest of The Vine Bistro at Glenelly Estate. Its situated in Ida's Valley on Lelie St, Stellenbosch.*

Contact the Vine Bistro at Glenelly Estate on bistro@glenelly.co.za or call 021 809 6444 to make a booking. Also [click here](#) for more on Glenelly Estate's recent renovation.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

- Make Ocean Eleven luxury guesthouse your Hermanus homebase - 20 Mar 2020
- Savour Hemel-en-Aarde's harmoniously matched food and wine at Creation Wine Estate - 18 Mar 2020
- Next-level pairings with Stellenbosch Hills' popcorn-and-Polkadraai - 30 Jan 2020
- Haute Cabrière brightens Franschoek mornings with breakfast - 15 Jan 2020
- Feel charmingly rejuvenated at Kove Collection's renovated The Marly - 14 Jan 2020

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>