

New Winelands portal to unlock the future of wine and wine tourism

With the launch of the wine tourism portal www.visitwinelands.co.za, a one-stop searchable wine tourism gateway to the Winelands, the area and its tourism offerings are now just a click away and aims to inspire visitors to discover and explore the best South Africa has to offer in wine tourism.



Ongama and Innocent at Jordan Wines. Image by I See A Different You

The portal forms part of a new national wine tourism strategy and marketing initiative and is a key project of the Wine Industry Strategic Exercise (WISE). It aims to bring the wine and tourism sector together to attract a larger share of international and domestic travellers keen to experience destinations through distinctive cultural, culinary and outdoor experiences, ensuring that visitors explore beyond the well-known tourism regions. The initiative promotes collaboration and alignment between various stakeholders operating in the wine and tourism sectors, as well as government and the private sector.

With the continued growth of mobile devices worldwide and its undisputed importance in the fields of leisure and travel, the new portal delivers moments of inspiration to travellers, providing a coordinated platform on wine tourism with relevant information, links and online bookings also in the pipeline. The website steers visitors effectively across a wider network of wine routes and regions, providing big and small wine regions with a platform to promote themselves more effectively.

“We believe that this new platform will facilitate cooperation and communication within the wine industry, and allow each of our diverse wine routes to showcase their distinct offerings, stimulating local economic development where it is most needed, at the rural and local level,” says Siobhan Thompson, CEO of Wines of South Africa.



Stellenbosch Wine Routes event

Working towards a sustainable food and wine tourism community

With the tourism industry a major contributor to the South African economy and employment contributing about 9% to the country's gross domestic product – and wine and food tourism being central to tourism – marketing this sector as a unit can only increase its economic and social contribution.

“In the Western Cape, approximately 250,000 jobs are in the tourism industry and the gross value added (GVA) contribution to the province is R3.5bn,” says Tim Harris, CEO of Wesgro. “Many of these jobs are in food and wine related businesses.”

For VinPro MD Rico Basson, working towards a sustainable community is what VinPro is all about. “This platform will help us to unlock the future of the industry, to the benefit of all,” he says.

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Felicity Carter, editor-in-chief of Meininger's Wine Business International, the world's only global English language wine business magazine, said at the recent MUST Wine Summit in Portugal: “Wine tourism is a subset of experiential tourism. Most people aren't wine geeks and they embed the wine in a larger context, usually in gastronomy tourism, which is growing.” She had a strong message for the wine industry: “Wine tourism will be the salvation of the wine trade if they can get it right.”



Delaire Graff Wine Lounge

“The South African Wine Routes Forum is excited about the new initiative and we believe that it will encourage visitors to visit our respective regions. To date, we have been working individually to promote and market our regions. Competition is tough and resources limited, so we see this collaborative effort as a positive move forward for the industry as a whole,” says Melody Botha, chairperson of the South African Wine Routes Forum.

Visit the [new portal](#), browse the site by area or category, tailor-make an experience – from gourmet feasts to off the grid adventures - and discover the best each wine route has to offer.

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