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Stellenbosch is the second oldest town in South Africa and is full of historic buildings. In 1679 Governor Simon van der Stel named the area after himself.

BEAUTY AND HISTORY

Stellenbosch is the second oldest town in the country, and offers a variety of housing stock, winelands right on your doorstep, heritage and plenty of glorious natural attractions

By Blanca Coleman

WHEN Governor Simon van der Stel went exploring beyond the limits of the then Cape Colony, he imaginatively called the first new river he came across Eerste River. In 1679 he named the area on its banks after himself – Stellenbosch.

He planted the oak trees for which the town is famous, earning it the moniker “Eikestad”, or City of Oaks.

Stellenbosch was all but destroyed by a fire in 1710, and only two or three houses were left standing. For some perspective, however, only about 12 succumbed to the flames. The first church was

also destroyed by the fire, and was rebuilt in 1723 on the outskirts of town to avoid a repeat of the disaster. Known as the Moederkerk (mother church), it has been enlarged several times and still stands at the end of Church Street.

Stellenbosch lies in a valley about 50km from Cape Town, surrounded by the Papegaaiberg, Stellenbosch Mountain, Jonkershoek, Drakenstein and Simonsberg mountains. The Helshoogte Pass links it to Franschhoek.

The vineyards and farmlands are ridiculously picturesque, and the charming town – home to one of South Africa’s top universities – evokes a feeling of being somewhere else entirely, rather than less than an hour’s drive from the big city of Cape Town.

Pierre Germishuys, managing director of Seeff Winelands/Boland, says Stellenbosch is one of the most sought-after winelands towns in the country: “It carries a notable status, whether you live or study here. Of course, if you can own a property, especially a historic home or a wine farm, all the better.”

As the second oldest town in the Western Cape, dating to just after the colonial settlement of the Cape, a variety of heritage architecture is evident, including Georgian, but it is particularly renowned for the Cape Dutch style. Inge van Aarde conducts guided walking tours through the town and has a wealth of knowledge on this topic.

Germishuys says: “Stellenbosch is essentially a farming and university town with a fabulous wine and



Prices do tend to be a little on the high side of average, but there is a range of property to suit every lifestyle and budget.

**– PIERRE GERMISHUYS,
MANAGING DIRECTOR SEEFF
WINELANDS/BOLAND**

BY THE NUMBERS

SOURCE: LIGHTSTONE

Suburb demographics



ADULT POPULATION
61599

PREDOMINANT LSM
9 high

Market stock



8021
FREEHOLD



2449
FREEHOLD IN ESTATES



5222
SECTIONAL SCHEME

Age of residents

50-64: 41%
36-49: 27%

Average house prices

Freehold: R1.7m
Sectional title: R1.297m



Houses nestled below a mountain in a secure estate, ideal for families and located about 10 minutes outside the town in the Banhoek Valley. PICTURE: SEEFF

student lifestyle and culture. Streets such as Dorp and Church are lined with cafés, boutiques, art stores and antique shops, including the famous Oom Samie se Winkel."

Property in and around Stellenbosch is an excellent investment and values continue to grow. Prices tend to be a little on the higher side of average, he admits, but he says there is a range of property to suit every lifestyle and budget.

Apartment prices start from around R800000 for a small two-bedroom unit to townhouses at around R1.2million for two bedrooms, and houses upwards of around R1.8m.

"Luxury property tends to range

from around R2.8m upward to as much as R30m, especially a luxury house in an exclusive security estate," says Gernishuys.

"Luxury suburban homes in areas such as Mostertsdrift range from R6m, and in Brandwacht and Dalsig upwards of R4m. It depends what and where you buy."

Secure lifestyle and golf estates like Welgevonden and Croydon Vineyard and Olive Estate enjoy fabulous views and capital growth, says Gernishuys, yet still offer accessible land prices from around R1.4m to R2.2m.

Family houses tend to sell for on average around R2.7m and upwards of R3.8m.



The picturesque Western Cape town is surrounded by mountains and beautiful views.



It is a melting pot of young and old, vibrant and energetic, authentic and classic. Stellenbosch is all about quality, and this includes the lifestyle, wine, restaurants, cultural activities, business, education and hospitality. We are still a small town, but with a huge offering.

- ELMARIE RABE, STELLENBOSCH WINE ROUTES MANAGER



Places of interest and things to do

1 WINE: Top of the list, of course, and one of the biggest tourist attractions in the Western Cape. Stellenbosch Wine Routes represents more than 200 wine and grape producers within the boundaries of the Stellenbosch Wine of Origin classification. These include Rust en Vrede, Overture, Tokara, Jordan, Terroir, Delaire Graff, Beyerskloof, Simonsig, Blaauwklippen, Kanonkop, Lanzerac, and Spier. For more info call 021 886 4310 or 021 882 9063.

2 DINE: Whether it's in the town or on a wine estate, Stellenbosch has numerous eateries and restaurants, from fine dining to casual. "A favourite eating and watering hole is De Warenmarkt (021 883 2274) for its bubbly and oyster bar, and the refreshed menu offers tasty, fresh food and delicious Stellenbosch wines," says Elmarie Rabe. "Jardine Restaurant (021 886 5020) is in Andringa Street. I am a big fan of George Jardine and I love the relaxed fine dining approach in an intimate setting. Then there is Spek en Bone (082 569 8958) where you meet friends for a shared feast of small plates."

3 OUTDOORS: "The Stellenbosch Winelands boast breathtaking landscapes and what better way to clear my head than to hit one of the many trails to find inspiration in nature," says Rabe. Check out Jonkershoek Nature Reserve (021 866 1560) or Dirtopia at Delvera (021 884 4752) and many other wine farms.

4 MARKETS: Weekly markets take place at Blaauwklippen (084 608 6325), Oude Libertas (Slow Food Market, 021 886 8514), and on the corner of the R44 and Annandale Road, Root 44 (021 881 3052), offering fabulous food, wine, activities, arts and crafts, gift ideas and more. The gaudy sculptures at Polkedraai can be disturbing, but it's a great place to go to pick your own strawberries. 021 881 3303.

5 STAY/HISTORY: Oude Werf Hotel in Church Street is where the first pre-fire church was. The church yard was vacant for several decades before being subdivided into lots, which was considered "religious desecration". An inn was opened in 1802. There was another fire a year later, and yet another blaze in the last years of that century. Below the restaurant you can view the remains of its various incarnations. 021 887 4608.