

Stellenbosch strikes Wine Tourism gold twice in a row

Wine route voted Best Promotional Body for second consecutive year

South Africa's oldest wine route, the **Stellenbosch American Express® Wine Routes**, was voted the **Best Promotional Body** at the **Wine Tourism Awards 2015** of the authoritative Drinks International magazine, one of the most trusted and respected global drinks journals, for the second consecutive year.

In addition, this coveted competition which serves as an industry benchmark for excellence in the field of wine tourism, also lauded the Stellenbosch Wine Routes as a Highly Commended contender in the Best Digital & Social Media Initiative category for their interactive StellenBlog. This blog was launched in 2014, when the Stellenbosch Wine Routes and the town's tourism outfit, Stellenbosch 360, embarked on a joint wine tourism campaign, *Stellenbosch Experience*, to broaden the area's tourism footprint on an international scale.

"It is great to see that our innovative wine tourism efforts to promote the region are getting international recognition. Research has shown that more and more visitors opt for experiential, multi-dimensional destinations and memorable experiences rather than merely being passive spectators when on leisure or business trips and Stellenbosch certainly has it all and more. More attention, more comfort and more exciting experiences for the whole family," shares Annareth Bolton, CEO of the Stellenbosch Wine Routes.

When visiting this 'Forever Young' town one soon discovers that it is worth far more than just a day trip to indulge in world-class wines. As the country's Gourmet and Wine Capital it boasts four of the 2014 Eat Out Top Ten Restaurants – with all four of them based on wine farms. They are The Restaurant at Jordan; Overture nestled at Hidden Valley; Rust en Vrede Restaurant, and Terroir at Kleine Zalze.

"This highlights the area's growing trend of good quality restaurants opening their doors on wine farms and our town's booming success as a top wine *and* dine destination," adds Bolton.

Stellenbosch wins Wine Tourism Award two and last.../

Besides excellent restaurants, a plethora of accommodation offerings ranging from budget-friendly to top end luxury, a vibrant street café culture and world-class art, the quaint town of Stellenbosch is also fuelled with a rich cultural mix.

“A major draw card of Stellenbosch is its people and the town cradles no less than six neighbouring communities: Cloetesville, Ida’s Valley, Jamestown, Kayamandi, Klapmuts and Raithby. Through our responsible tourism initiatives these communities take centre stage to showcase the abundance of inherent talent, natural resources and authentic offerings that make Stellenbosch such a real and memorable destination,” shares Annemarie Ferns, CEO of Stellenbosch 360.

One such encounter that encourages tourists to travel with a cultural interest is Stellenbosch 360’s new Route 360 Tours through Kayamandi. Intrepid explorers in search of more inspirational experiences and enlightening excursion off the beaten track can now engage with the vibrant locals of this pulsating community through fun-filled tours on foot. During these walkabouts tourists can for example engage in performing and visual arts; enroll for a private Xhosa cooking lesson with Mama Swartbooi in her home and witness authentic customs such as a ‘Smiley’ (sheep head) being prepared, right there on the pavement.

2015 highlights on the *Stellenbosch Experience’s* programme include an all new Winelands Chocolate Festival from 5 to 7 June as well as the hosting of top international media and social media influencers to share their Stellenbosch experiences with the world.

Visit the user-friendly *StellenBlog* <http://blog.wineroute.co.za/> for the latest success stories and attractions through various categories featured on the catchy blog wall. Or contact Stellenbosch 360 at Tel: 021 883 3584 or at their information centre at 36 Market Street. Also make sure to visit the Stellenbosch Wine Routes’ brand new Wine Tourism Visitor Centre at 47 Church Street, where free wifi, good coffee and casual wine tastings come standard.

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