



CAPE WINE

BRAAI MASTERS



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WINEGROWING AREAS OF SOUTH AFRICA

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THE GREAT SOUTH AFRICAN BRAAI TRADITION

South Africans have a very long history of cooking over open fires. As the first real men to cook this way, clearly we know how to do it properly. The barbecue is just a pale imitation of the real thing. It is not just *what* we braai; it is also *how* we braai, *when* we braai and *where* we braai. These finer details make the braai so vastly superior to the barbecue.

So, what do real men braai? Meat and more meat. Tender chops, juicy steaks and spicy *boerewors* (farmers' sausage) are traditional staples at the South African braai. Then there are those typical West Coast crayfish braais; the Karoo lamb-shank potjie, laced with port; a traditional snoek braai with *soetpatats* (sweet potatoes), *potbrood* (bread baked in a pot or tin) and grape jam; or freshly caught linefish barbecued on the beach. Don't forget free-range chicken on the Weber; a rack of Kalahari lamb ribs, spiced with coriander seeds and coarse salt, slow-cooked high above the fire; township-flavoured *shisa nyama* (which literally translates from isiZulu as 'burn the meat') with *bogobe* (maize meal porridge or *pap*) and *chakalaka* (a spicy tomato-based relish). If you want something more glamorous, you can opt for marinated prawn-and-kingklip skewers. And there's much more. Over the generations, our braai culture has developed to embrace not only the basics, but side dishes as well: potatoes in their jackets, wrapped in foil; butternuts cooked in their skins; sweet onions bursting out of their smoky skins. Add to these char-grilled *mealies* (corn) on the cob; whole black mushrooms, dripping with garlic butter; crisp green salads and, of course, a generous quota of Cape wine.

HOW WE BRAAI...

There is nothing simple about a South African braai and it's definitely a man thing. Standing around the fire, staring into the flames, cradling a beer or a glass of wine. Arguing about the coals. And the height of the grid.

And when to turn the boerewors. And which rugby team will win the test match. Then there's the type of wood to use. There are those who swear by *wingerdstompies* (vine stumps) and others who make their braai fires with *kameeldoring* (camel thorn) or *rooikrans* (a species of acacia). And while we all know that in Europe would-be braaiers often cook outside with gas, no South African braaier could use gas and be taken seriously.

WHEN WE BRAAI...

South Africans are an inventive lot and will braai anywhere, any time and in any weather. There is always an excuse to braai, whether it be a rugby match or a school fund-raiser; celebrating the end of exams or weathering a visit from the in-laws.

WHERE WE BRAAI...

In the backyard, in the veld, over a campfire, in the parking lot after a big game and, whenever possible, with family and friends. No outdoor fireplace? A half-drum or a pit in the ground is all that's needed. No braai grid available? Use a clean spade (rinse it off and sterilise it in the flames first) or thread the boerewors on sticks.

There are many ways to braai, and many different ingredients and recipes. But one characteristic all South African braais share is the camaraderie of sitting around a fire, sipping a glass or two of wine and chatting as the food sizzles on the coals. And if you just happen to drop in, there will always be an extra plate of food and a drink for you.

The greeting you will hear as you approach the fire? Welcome! *Welkom! Wamkelekile!*

Clearly, if you are in South Africa, you are going to be braaing, probably sooner rather than later. You're a novice? No problem – the practical guidelines on the art of braaing which follow will gently guide you. And, who knows? Perhaps even the experts might pick up a tip or two...

TO BRAAI OR NOT TO BRAAI

— THERE'S NO QUESTION!

Obviously, the braai has played a central role in our advancement as a species. The oldest archaeological evidence of the braai was discovered at the Sterkfontein Caves in the north of our country and is about one million years old. So South Africans invented the braai.

But that's only partially accurate. All cognitive human beings originated in southern Africa, only trekking north 50 to 60 000 years ago, so I guess we have to share this special tradition with all people. It just happened to start in our backyard. It's therefore fitting that we celebrate a National Braai Day in September every year, the figurehead of which is our favourite man of God and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

As the awakening sun stretches ever earlier over the Hottentots Holland mountains and the days shrug off their blanket of winter cloud, there's a distracting itch that starts deep down in my central brain, where my sense of smell resides. I can't quite put a finger on it, let alone give it a good scratch. It's nagging me. It's a constant, disconsolate, ancient buzz and it's messing up my weekend.

Maybe it's all those emails I didn't get to by Friday, or the microbiological stability results we are waiting for to start bottling another massive run of Kumala. But now it's early Sunday morning and the kids have jumped on my head to wake me up, and I can't shake this feeling that I should be doing something critically important to my very being.

My eldest boy looks out of the window, up to the mountain and the crisp, clear, light blue sky. "Dad," he says slowly, then pauses and thinks silently. He seems transfixed by the shimmering granite slopes soaring benevolently above us.

"Dad, it actually looks like a day for the braai," he says in a very clear, measured tone.

That's it! That's the itch that needs scratching, the buzz that needs quieting. It's been far too long since we braai'd and, I realise, that's the problem with the world.

Positive traditions are important. They are the cradle-matrix of our precarious existence, creating a flexible but powerful connectivity through pivotal elements of a shared history.

This connectivity is a fabric woven of myths and heroes. One of the biggest issues dysfunctional pockets of society share is a void of positive myths. The same way we need water and food to sustain the body, we need positive myths and traditions to sustain a functioning, equal, sustainable society.

In an instant I am on the phone calling up a few friends. Still groggy from sleep, I can hear them perk up on the other side of the line while I outline the plan. If they had other commitments, they quickly weigh up their priorities and readily offer to bring the peripheral braai essentials.

Of course, it's very dangerous to accept such generosity, because it may open the door to braai abuse. Braai abuse is an insidious, widespread problem, born from the delusion that your friends can braai better than you.

I make the mistake of accepting some freshly homebaked bread and the friend jumps in with audacity to offer a marinade as well. Ha! I decline with the most incredulous laugh I can manage although, deep down, I know she makes a really delicious braai marinade from a secret recipe her grandmother passed on to her and her alone. Still, there is pride at stake here.

It must have been early, because I also accept an organic rocket salad from another, and the pirate immediately asks if he can bring some meat from his farm. No, damn it! I don't care if it's biodynamic, free-range, royal Khoisan-crossed, Great Karoo lamb that's only ever eaten life-enhancing, medicinal scrubland herbs all its life. Triumphantly, I ignore him completely, blame his mobile phone reception and put the receiver down.

If the Sterkfontein Caves were the site of illuminating archaeological digs, giving us enormous insight into how we developed as an early species, discoveries along the southern Cape coast seem to indicate this was where humans first started thinking like humans – where cognitive thought blossomed.

And here, too, the braai played a hugely significant role. It seems our ancestors learnt how to transform stone into tools and weapons by throwing pieces into the coals of the braai – this is arguably the oldest evidence of cognitive thought, preceding even the 77 000-year-old clay mathematical tablet found at Blombos Cave recently.

I've always tried to make wine that complements brilliant cuisine – wine that I can show with confidence alongside any food in the world, no matter how fine or exotic; and no matter in which far-flung city or culture I find myself. But the real test for my winemaking is a braai with my friends.

South Africa may be the miracle nation. We may have four Nobel Peace Prize laureates. We may be hosting the Soccer World Cup. We may be the rugby world champions. We may be the birthplace of the human species. Indeed, we may be the Promised Land for all I can tell.

But far, far more importantly, we are also the spiritual keepers of the oldest surviving human tradition – the braai. And as a South African winemaker, your wine had better stand up to that gastronomic inheritance and responsibility.

As said friends start to arrive, the first glass of Sauvignon Blanc is poured.

"You might not be able to braai," someone quips, "but you make a damn fine Sauvignon Blanc."

"Anyone can make a decent wine from Elim grapes," I say. This is true.

A new tribe of kids are scurrying around. Books and toys are forgotten upstairs as they excitedly collect old newspaper from the recycling bin and last year's vine cane kindling to start their own braai. If a six-year-old boy can't build his own braai and cook his own Cape salmon fillet in my house, he isn't allowed to braai marshmallows on a stick for pudding.

Before I have shaken my friends' hands, the chirping has started. It is immediately pointed out that I've rolled the newspaper too tightly for effective combustion. My sauces are smelt cautiously, almost suspiciously, and the kudu fillet prodded, as though they can tell from this action how it was shot and hung.

With atavistic reverence and a little prayer to God and our ancestors, I build the vine cuttings and black wattle hard wood over the newspaper. Then a match is struck and the day really begins. Soon the smell of braai smoke calls forth some reds, and the Dragon Tree is opened, and I am again told how much better my winemaking is than my braaing.

It's only later, in the short, deep silence that follows the first considered mouthful, that respect is communicated. And this is fitting, because after so many hundreds of thousands of years of practice, us humans really don't have much interest in a bad braai.

– Bruce Jack, *Constellation South Africa*



BRAAI BASICS

Learn the basics and you'll soon master the sociable and satisfying art of cooking over an open fire. And remember, practice makes perfect, so light a fire, open a bottle of wine and get braaing!

PREPARING THE GRID

Ideally, you should use a 100% stainless steel grid. Wash it with soap and water if you have the facilities, or 'burn' the grid in the fire, brush it with a steel-bristled brush and wipe it with an oiled piece of newspaper – the oil prevents the meat from sticking. Remember that it's far easier to clean a warm grid than one encrusted in dried grime the next day or next time you braai.

MAKING THE FIRE

The secret of successful braaing lies in controlling the heat and ensuring that it's evenly distributed. Make sure you start off with enough wood to form plenty of coals, and that you have a plentiful supply of wood close to hand to stoke the fire. Hard woods that produce long-lasting coals are suitable, eg rooikrans, camel thorn or vine stumps. Stacking wood for a braai is as contentious as the timing around turning the meat. Everybody has their way of piling the crumpled paper, kindling, bits of wood, then bigger cuts or logs. A traditional South African square stacking allows for good aeration and even burning, but needs management in order to secure a critical mass of 'core' heat which results in a pile of coals. While the square stacking method is more of an accountant or perfectionist's approach, the tepee style seems to be more practical and needs less management. Both produce the same results, though. It's all very personal, and everybody should try and develop their own style. However you stack, keep upward and sideways air movement in mind as this is the lifeblood of your fire. Also plan ahead to have space for a secondary fire – you'll soon have to move the bigger pieces aside when you put on the meat and tools like a small shovel are handy. With an indoor braai/hearth, stack well to the back and in a corner, as the design calls for this approach in order for the chimney's draft to draw up the smoke. Then it's easy to pull coals to the centre for the braai area. Finally, keep fire hazards in mind and stack accordingly, because as much as wind is your friend, it can be your enemy. Keep water, a bucket of sand or a fire extinguisher handy.

TESTING THE HEAT

Grilling food at the right level of heat and height is fundamental to a good braai. A foolproof and easy way of testing the heat of your fire is the hand test. Extend your palm over the fire about 25 centimetres above a bed of coals or 12,5 centimetres above the grid of a Weber. Remember to roll your sleeve back and always pull your hand away before it gets so hot that it hurts. If you need to pull your hand away after 2–4 seconds the heat is high; 5–7 seconds, it is medium; and 8–10 seconds, it is low.

DEALING WITH FLARE-UPS

Flare-ups occur when fat drips into the coals and catches fire. Trim excess fat to help stop this from happening. However, remember that a little bit of flame is fine, even desirable, as it sears the surface of the food. But if the flames get so high that they shoot right through your grid, the food is in danger of burning, particularly if there is sugar in the marinade you're using. You need to act fast and move the food over to an indirect area of heat. The fat in the fire burns off quickly and you can then return your food to the direct heat.

BRAAI ESSENTIALS

Wood or charcoal • Fire lighters • Long matches • A small table or surface for utensils and ingredients
• Flameproof apron • Oven gloves • A hinged and a flat grid • Long- and short-handled tongs
• Basting brush • Aluminium foil • Fire extinguisher, water or a bucket of sand



Creation Wines – Ever since Swiss national Jean-Claude (JC) Martin moved here with his South African-born wife Carolyn, he’s been flooded with tips by well-meaning locals every time he mans the braai.

HEAVEN & EARTH

“Many South Africans assume they’re the only people in the world who really know how to braai,” comments affable winemaker JC. “But I don’t need much advice. In Switzerland we often cook over the open fire outdoors and indoors, it’s big there. The other day we did a raclette braai here, it was superb!”

This property on the Hemel-en-Aarde (Heaven and Earth) Ridge, a ward in the Walker Bay district on the outskirts of Hermanus, is co-owned by the Martins and the Kasers. The vineyards are planted some 350 metres above sea level on the slopes of the towering Babilonstoring mountain. As members of the Biodiversity & Wine Initiative, they are committed to preserving their rich natural vegetation, which is also reflected in the fynbos garden surrounding the cellar and tasting room.

Gourmet venison braais and other events are regularly presented at Creation by Season Restaurant. See www.creationwines.com for details.



TEA-SMOKED SPRINGBOK SALAD

SERVES 4-6

1 springbok loin, sinew removed (or use any South African antelope)

SMOKE MARINADE

20ml rooibos tea leaves

20ml jasmine tea leaves

Zest of 1 orange

Handful of dried naartjie peels (or you can use Satsuma orange peels)

45ml brown sugar

3 star anise, crushed

3 cassia sticks

10ml Szechuan peppercorns, crushed

Rub the marinade onto the loin and leave in the fridge overnight. The next day, add oak shavings to a smoker. Place the meat in the smoker for about 35 minutes or until it has a smoky aroma. Rub off the marinade with a clean cloth and slice the loin as thinly as possible.

BALSAMIC DRESSING

50ml balsamic vinegar

150ml olive oil

3-5ml Dijon mustard

5ml honey (or to taste)

5ml white sugar (or to taste)

Freshly ground salt & black pepper

Place all the ingredients in a bowl and gently whisk together.

SALAD

200g mixed salad leaves

150g cherry tomatoes

½ cucumber, sliced into ribbons

1 punnet sugar snap peas, blanched

½ punnet baby corn, cut in half lengthwise

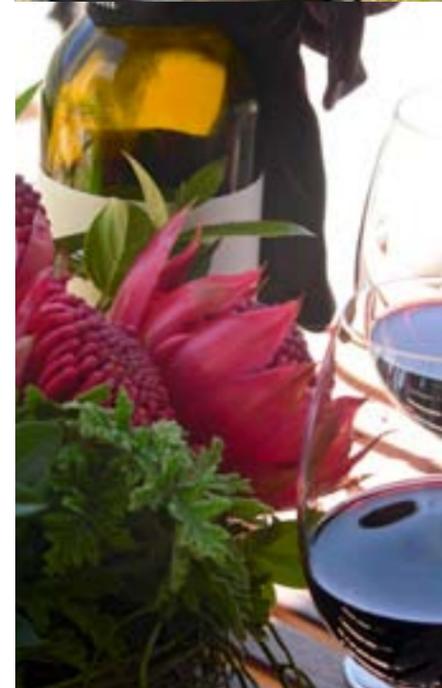
Bunch of green asparagus, blanched

4 tablespoons olives

Cup of croutons

Maldon sea salt & freshly ground black pepper

Toss all the ingredients together, season to taste and drizzle with the balsamic dressing. Scatter the thin slices of smoked loin on top and serve.





SPRINGBOK LEG STEAKS

SERVES 6

6x250g (or to requirements) springbok leg steaks (or use any South African antelope)

Pre-order the steaks from your local butcher.

BUTTERMILK MARINADE

500ml buttermilk

5 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

Handful of fresh rosemary needles, chopped

Cover the meat with the above ingredients and leave to marinate overnight. Remove the meat from the marinade and let most of it drip off before placing meat over medium coals. Springbok steaks cook quite quickly (about 4–5 minutes per side) so keep a watchful eye on them. Season the meat as you turn it.

BRAAI TIPS

- The venison should have been hung in a cold room to ripen for at least 7–10 days.
- The buttermilk marinade tenderises the venison.
- The hand test: If you hold your palm just above the fireplace and feel the heat in 5 seconds, the coals are at the correct temperature (medium) for cooking the venison steaks. If you need to move your hand away after 2–4 seconds, the coals are too hot.
- The steaks should be pink in the middle, as venison becomes dry if overcooked.

WINE NOTE

Creation Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot-Petit Verdot, an elegant red blend with generous blackberry and blueberry aromas backed by smoky oak, is a good match for venison. The Bordeaux-style blend category is well represented in the Cape.



Blaauwklippen – One of the oldest working farms in South Africa, this property in Stellenbosch is a blend of historic Cape Dutch charm and contemporary appeal.

BUGGIES & BRAAIS

A museum houses a collection of antique horse carriages, and buggy rides around the farm are a draw card for visitors to this child-friendly farm. All Blaauwklippen's wine blends are named after carriages in the collection.

Viticulturist Christo Hamman loves to braai – “It’s a typically Afrikaans thing!” – and especially likes making fires using *wingerdstompies* (vine stumps) or blue gum wood; these alien trees are being cleared from the estate as Christo is embracing a totally eco-friendly approach to the vineyards. Chef Daniel Botha is as at home cooking over an open fire as he is heading up the kitchen at Blaauwklippen's Barouche Restaurant – it's a skill he honed during his tenure at a Relais & Chateaux safari lodge. And sociable estate manager and winemaker, German-born Rolf Zeitvogel, is always on hand to recommend and open a bottle of wine to go with Daniel's gourmet barbecue fare: “Nothing beats a braai!”



BLACK TIGER PRAWN & KINGKLIP SKEWERS

MAKES 5 SKEWERS

Kingklip is classified as 'orange' by WWF's Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative. This means that an increased demand could compromise a sustainable supply, so consumers should ensure that what they buy was legally and responsibly sourced.

Per skewer:

300g fresh kingklip (or any firm white fish), skinned & pinned (fine bones removed)

5 black tiger prawns

5 bay leaves

Cut the kingklip into pieces, about 4x4cm. Slice the prawns down the back of the tail and remove the vein. Thread the kingklip, prawns and bay leaves onto skewers, alternating (and making sure that the skewer goes through the head as well as the tail of the prawns). Marinate the skewers for at least 3–4 hours.

CHILLI & ORANGE MARINADE

1 red chilli

2 whole oranges

1 tablespoon honey

1 tablespoon teriyaki sauce

50ml sunflower oil

Salt & coarse black pepper to taste

Slice the chilli down the centre, remove the pips and slice thinly widthways. Grate the oranges on the finest grater (try not to get any of the white pith into the grated orange). Add this to the chilli. Slice the oranges in half and squeeze the juice out through a sieve or colander. Add this to the chilli and orange zest mix, and then add the honey, teriyaki sauce and sunflower oil. Taste and season with salt and black pepper.

BRANDY & APRICOT JAM BASTING SAUCE

450g tin smooth apricot jam

100ml brandy

Mix the ingredients together. For a more fiery taste, an extra chilli can be finely diced and added to the basting sauce.

WINE NOTE

Blaauwklippen's White Zinfandel, made in a Blanc de Noir style and matured on fine lees, is bone dry but with sweet fruit, the perfect foil for these skewers. Blaauwklippen is one of only a handful of Zinfandel producers in the Cape.

BRAAI TIPS

- Daniel sprinkles Maldon salt flakes over the skewers while they're braaing: "The fish swam in salt so they need salt!"
- These skewers need a slow fire and coals that are not too hot – the marinade and basting can burn and blacken easily due to the sugar content.



***BRAAIVLEIS* translates as meat barbecue. And the traditional South African braai is all about meat, meat and more meat – steak, chops and sausage. Everyone brings their contribution to add to the grid, everyone tucks in, and the cholesterol word is never mentioned.**





Cederberg Private Cellar – When the Nieuwoudts say that their farm is remote, it’s definitely not marketing speak.

GREAT OUTDOORS

Turn off the highway at Algeria, some two hours from Cape Town, cross the river and you’ll drive on mainly dirt roads through the spectacular Cederberg mountains for another hour to reach some of the highest altitude vineyards in the Cape.

David Nieuwoudt is the fifth generation custodian of this farm situated in the pristine Cederberg wilderness area, famous for its unique craggy rock formations. He is a committed braai guy: “Definitely no frills here!” The meat, especially the lamb, from this region bordering on the Karoo is of an excellent quality.

He relies on Sisteon Louw, a pig farmer and one of the local butchers in the town of Clanwilliam, about an hour-and-a-half away, for top-grade meat. “She produces the best!” enthuses David, who has also persuaded her to part with some of her tried-and-trusted recipes over the years, like this one for stuffed pork neck roll. Pork neck is a flavourful, meltingly tender cut and this dish has become a favourite when entertaining guests or enjoying a relaxing braai with his family.



BRAAI TIPS

- First seal the meat over hot coals.
- Move the hot coals to one side, leaving a thin layer of cooler coals to cook over.
- Cover the pork neck using the top of a domed oven dish or a Weber braai lid to ensure that it doesn't dry out while cooking.

STUFFED PORK NECK ROLL WITH PORT SAUCE

SERVES 6

1,5kg deboned pork neck (you can ask your butcher to do it for you)
200g crushed pineapple (fresh or tinned)
10 dried Karoo prunes (or whatever is locally available), pips removed
150g chorizo (or any rich, dried spicy sausage), thinly sliced
Freshly ground salt & black pepper
Sprig of fresh rosemary

Place the pork neck on a board, fat side down. Make a lengthwise cut in the pork neck to about one-third of the depth. Mix the pineapple, prunes and chorizo together, and season. Spread the filling out over the length of the neck. Close it up and tie with butcher's twine. Tuck in a sprig of fresh rosemary. Slow cook covered over coals for an hour or until done. Remove the string and rosemary; cut into slices, allowing for at least two per person.

PORT SAUCE

1 cup port-style wine (preferably Late Bottled Vintage)
1 cup fresh chicken stock
75g quince or apple jelly
150ml Shiraz
Sprig of fresh rosemary
150ml cream (you can use more or less to taste)

Place all the ingredients except the cream in a saucepan and cook slowly until reduced to 250ml of sauce. Remove the rosemary and add the cream. Serve with the pork neck roll or any braai'd meat.

WINE NOTE

David deems his maiden Cap Classique "perfect after a swim in one of our crystal-clear mountain pools or for sundowners at the river". But it's the Cederberg Five Generations Chenin Blanc with its creaminess on the palate that pairs beautifully with the lean meat and rich, fruity flavours of this dish. Chenin, the Cape's most widely planted grape variety, is made in many food-friendly styles.



A BUTTERNUT is not a nut but a pumpkin-coloured squash. Wrapped in foil and slowly baked for a long time, it is the sweetest vegetable you have ever tasted.





Kanonkop Estate – Johann and Marié Krige have braaing snoek down to a fine art on this prestigious family owned and run estate.

CANNONS & COALS

They instinctively turn the grid in tandem as the frequently basted, flavoursome fish grills over hot coals. “It cooks really fast, about six to 10 minutes maximum,” explains Johann. Snoek is a large-schooling predator fish, known as barracouta (not to be confused with the game fish barracuda) in Australia and New Zealand. It is found and caught in abundance along the Cape coast in season. “Snoek is known as ‘the poor man’s meal’ because it’s very affordable and a large fish can easily feed six to eight people,” he continues.

Johann and his brother Paul are the fourth generation of Kriges on this family estate on the slopes of the Simonsberg near Stellenbosch. The name Kanonkop is derived from the *kopje* (hillock) from which a cannon was fired in the 17th century, its reverberation alerting farmers in outlying areas that ships sailing between Europe and the Far East had entered Table Bay. The farmers would then load their wagons, inspan their oxen and set off to Cape Town to barter their produce – mainly fresh fruit and vegetables – to the sailors and travellers who had spent many months at sea.

While the focus here remains firmly on producing quality red wines, Kanonkop’s traditional snoek braais have gained an international reputation too over the past 20 years. Accompaniments are typically Cape: *soetpatats* (sweet potatoes), *korrelkonfyt* (grape jam) and *potbrood* (pot bread) with a crisp green salad.

Kanonkop’s traditional snoek braais are offered all year round by appointment only (minimum 15 people).



How to braai a snoek

Select a large, firm snoek (if snoek is not available you can use any firm-fleshed white fish). Salting the snoek straight after it's been caught helps to keep it firm. You can clean and fleck (cut open along the spine) it yourself or ask your fishmonger to do it for you. The best time of year for catching or buying fresh snoek in the Cape is towards winter – the season is short, usually from April to July. Braai the snoek skin side down first, then turn it over to colour the flesh. Use a hinged grid to prevent the fish from breaking or falling out when turning it. Be liberal with the basting sauce and splash it on frequently (see recipe) to keep the snoek from drying out. Cooking time is 6–10 minutes and the fish is ready when the opaque white flesh can be easily separated from the bones. Snoek freezes exceptionally well so it's a good idea to stock your freezer for those summer braais – defrost the fish slowly in the refrigerator to keep its texture before cooking.

BRAAI TIPS

- The fish are fatter in the late summer – the larger the snoek, the better the flavour.
- Make sure that your accompaniments are ready before starting to braai the snoek as the cooking time is only 6–10 minutes.

WINE NOTE

Snoek is a full-flavoured fish and pairs well with Kanonkop's second-label Kadette, a full-bodied blend of Pinotage, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc matured in 2nd- and 3rd-fill French Nevers 225-litre barrels. There are a number of Pinotage-based blends to be found in the Cape which would perfectly partner braaied snoek; a Bordeaux-style blend would work equally well.



SNOEK ON THE COALS

Snoek is such a flavourful fish that it tastes best with a simple basting sauce, but a mixture of butter, lemon juice and apricot jam is also popular in the Cape.

BASTING SAUCE

- 100ml white wine
- 100ml olive or canola oil
- 50ml lemon juice

Mix ingredients together in a screwcap wine bottle – makes enough to baste two snoek. Pierce holes in the lid and splash liberally over fish while braaing (takes about 6–10 minutes).

SWEET POTATOES WITH ORANGE & GINGER

(Soetpatats in Afrikaans)

SERVES 10

- 2kg sweet potatoes, peeled
- 2 cups white sugar, caramelised
- 1 orange
- 2cm fresh ginger, grated
- A few cassia sticks

Slice the sweet potatoes into thick rounds, place them in a casserole dish and pour the caramelised sugar over them. Squeeze the juice of the orange over, then add the squeezed orange, grated ginger and cassia sticks to the dish. Bake in the oven at 180°C for about 60 minutes. Turn twice in the first half-hour.





STOKBROOD (stick bread) is made from dough wound around a wooden dowel or green stick, and baked over moderately hot coals. For a real treat, when done remove the stick and fill the hollow with butter, cheese and/or jam.



Durbanville Hills – On a clear day, the views from this modern winery across the bay to landmark Table Mountain are legendary.

FLAVOUR OF THE CAPE

Cellarmaster Martin Moore is not only passionate about conservation (Durbanville Hills is a Biodiversity & Wine Initiative member) and famous for his tales of the bushveld, he is also a keen and accomplished cook. When the sun is shining and the hardworking team can take time out of their busy schedules, they love to enjoy a braai with their *gesellige* (convivial) boss.

Five hundred years ago, sailors from Europe braved uncharted seas to round the Cape in search of exotic spices. Table Bay became a refreshment stop en route and eastern influences still linger on in the cuisine of the Cape. The word *sosatie* derives from *satay*, a similar Indonesian dish. *Sosaties* are made from cubes of meat threaded onto thin wooden or bamboo skewers.

Martin uses a thick, sweet Cape-Malay curry marinade for both his skewers and pork (or lamb) chops. While he's preparing the meat, he wraps peeled onions, splashed with balsamic vinegar, and seasoned with a twist of salt and pepper, in foil and slow roasts them on the coals – the balsamic imparts a delicious sweetness.



SOSATIE-MARINATED CHOPS

SERVES 6

6 large pork chops (you can also use lamb chops)

CURRY MARINADE

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, bruised with the side of a knife
- 15ml mild curry powder (any generic brand will do)
- 5ml ground coriander
- 5ml turmeric
- 5ml fresh ginger, peeled & chopped
- 375ml water
- 50ml grape vinegar
- 25ml smooth apricot jam
- 2 bay leaves

In a saucepan, fry the onion and garlic until soft. Reduce heat and add the curry powder, spices and ginger; fry lightly for 2 minutes. Add water, vinegar, jam and bay leaves, and simmer for 2 minutes. Trim the chops of excess fat and arrange in a glass bowl. Cover with the mixture and marinate uncovered for a day, turning over occasionally. Braai the chops over hot coals and heat any leftover marinade to serve as a sauce.



BRAAI TIPS

- If using bamboo skewers (which is preferable), soak them in cold water overnight so that they don't burn easily.
- You can coat the skewers with olive oil before threading to prevent the meat from sticking.
- Do not thread the ingredients too closely together on the skewers.

SOSATIES

MAKES 12 SKEWERS

12 skewers, soaked in water overnight

1,5kg leg of lamb, thick rib or shoulder, deboned & cut into 25mm cubes

2 medium onions, halved lengthways, peeled & blanched in boiling water for 5 minutes (retain water), refreshed in ice water & layers separated

100g (2/3 cup) dried apricots, soaked in onion water

CURRY MARINADE

4 large onions, sliced

15ml mild curry powder (any generic brand will do)

1 clove garlic, crushed

30ml cooking oil

750ml vinegar

45ml sugar

45ml apricot jam (or 30ml brown sugar)

4 bay leaves

7ml salt

5ml turmeric

Pinch of pepper

Pinch of chilli powder

Sauté the onion in heated cooking oil until transparent. Add the curry powder and fry for about 2 minutes. Add all the remaining ingredients and simmer for a few minutes more. Set aside to cool. Drain the meat, cover with the curry marinade, and leave to marinate overnight. Thread the skewers, alternating the meat, apricots and onion pieces. Grill slowly over hot coals.

WINE NOTE

Durbanville Hills winery draws its grapes from a group of neighbouring historic farms, mostly established at the turn of the 17th and the 18th centuries. The lightly wooded Durbanville Hills Chardonnay has hints of apricot, a superb counterfoil to the spicy marinade. Cool-climate Durbanville is ideal for growing white varieties like Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.





The *BRAIBROODJIE* is the South African version of the toasted sandwich, ideal for placating hungry children who are tired of waiting for the men to finally stop talking and start cooking the meat. There are two opposing schools of methodology: the one ties the sandwich – filled with cheese, tomato and onion – up with string like a parcel, the other wouldn't dream of doing that.



Obikwa – “I only braai on certain days of the week,” says outdoor-loving winemaker Michael Bucholz. “Days with a ‘y’ in them!”

SLOW GRILLED

“Come rain, come shine, we South Africans love to braai. In the summertime it’s fish, chicken or meat in the Weber, in the winter it’s a potjie,” he says.

Michael is the winemaker responsible for the range of Obikwa wines made at Distell’s Adam Tas Cellar in Stellenbosch. When it comes to winemaking, he’s a firm believer in minimal intervention. He uses this approach to braaing too. A favourite is gemsbok fillet, marinated overnight, slow cooked on the Weber, and served with potatoes wrapped in foil and cooked on the coals, with a crisp green salad on the side.



GEMSBOK FILLET IN RED WINE & SOYA SAUCE

1,5kg gemsbok fillet (or any South African antelope)

MARINADE

3 cups red wine (preferably Merlot)

½ cup soya sauce

½ cup olive oil

1 heaped tablespoon soft brown sugar

4 cloves garlic, grated (add more if you like)

3–4cm fresh ginger, peeled & grated

1 heaped tablespoon coriander seeds, dry-fried & coarsely crushed

2 fresh chillies, deseeded & finely sliced (add more if you like)

1 tablespoon salt for seasoning

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Spring onions for garnishing

Combine all ingredients for the marinade. Place the meat in a tight-fitting bowl, pour the marinade over it and leave covered in the fridge overnight. Turn the meat from time to time. Strain the marinade off the meat and retain for basting. Place the meat on a braai grid over hot coals (the fire needs to be hot enough to ensure good browning of the meat without charring). Season both sides with salt and pepper. Baste the meat regularly and cook for 20 minutes on each side for a well-browned, slightly caramelised coating and a fillet that is rare to medium-rare. Allow the meat to rest for at least 10–15 minutes, slice, garnish with spring onion cut into slivers lengthwise and serve.

WINE NOTE

Michael enjoys a glass of Obikwa Merlot with venison. A classic blending partner for Cabernet, Merlot is increasingly being bottled as an easy-drinking varietal wine.



BRAAI TIPS

- Fill the Weber chimney starter to the rim with charcoal – this will provide the right amount of coals for braaing a fillet.
- Charcoal coals burn hotter and more evenly, so are ideal for cooking a whole fillet.



Excelsior Estate – During the ostrich boom, Peter de Wet’s great-grandfather Kowie was a successful ostrich breeder in the Robertson district on his farm, Excelsior.

HOME BURGERS

Ostrich plumes were high fashion at the turn of the 19th century and the resultant affluence was showcased in the ‘feather palaces’ of the time. The original farmhouse, now a guest lodge, reflects this old-time splendour. The ostrich industry collapsed when the motorcar was invented – soon feathered bonnets and boas were replaced with jaunty driving hats and scarves. Kowie and his son Oscar went back to breeding horses and growing vines. Today, the farm is under the ownership of Oscar’s son Freddie de Wet and his son Peter.

Peter and his wife Mandy love to braai in front of their house with its sweeping vineyard and mountain views. A favourite is ostrich fillets served in *roosterkoek* (griddle cakes), their truly South African take on the traditional hamburger with its ground beef patty. Tasty, lean ostrich meat is considered healthy because it is low in cholesterol.



BRAAI TIPS

- Ostrich fillets are best eaten rare as they become tougher when well done; 2–3 minutes a side is ample, depending on the heat of the coals and personal preference.
- “Plan and think about the coals when it comes to the roosterkoek as they need a longer cooking time on cooler coals for the dough to be cooked through,” Peter cautions.
- Brush the roosterkoek with olive oil so that they don’t stick and burn.
- Turn them quickly and often until they are hardened up on the outside with visible grid lines.

OSTRICH & BLUE CHEESE BURGER

SERVES 4

- 4 ostrich fillets
- 1 red onion, sliced into rings
- 2 tomatoes, sliced
- Handful of rocket leaves
- Freshly ground salt & black pepper

Sear the ostrich fillet on a hot fire and season lightly. Cut the roosterkoek open when browned on cooler coals and build your burger, starting with the ostrich fillet, and ending with the onion and tomato, topped with the blue cheese sauce. Garnish with rocket leaves and enjoy.

BLUE CHEESE SAUCE

- 250g blue-veined cheese, crumbled
- 60g butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons sweet white wine
- 2 teaspoons fresh mint, chopped
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary needles
- 2 teaspoons fresh origanum, chopped
- 100g crème fraîche or sour cream
- Salt & pepper to taste

Beat the cheese and butter in a bowl (an electric beater is ideal) until smooth and creamy. Add the wine and herbs, and mix well. Fold through the crème fraîche. Season to taste.

ROOSTERKOEK

- 1kg flour
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 250g butter, cubed
- 250ml sour cream

Mix the dry ingredients together. Cut the butter cubes into the flour mixture. Add the sour cream until it forms a medium-stiff dough. Roll out to 1cm thick and cut into blocks to make hamburger-sized rolls – remember that they rise slightly during the cooking process. Cook these on the fire over a low heat.

WINE NOTE

Excelsior Cabernet Sauvignon, with its ripe berry flavours and soft palate, is the perfect companion to this casual barbecue fare. Cabernet is widely planted across the diverse wine regions of the Cape and produces wines with good ageing potential.





KWV Wines – Roasting lamb on the spit is a popular way of entertaining in South Africa and the appetising aromas build big appetites.

SOCIABLE SPIT BRAAIS

A spit is a slender rod with pointed ends on which the meat is impaled and then barbecued rotisserie-style. Succulent and tender, free-range Karoo lamb is infused with the herby flavours of the indigenous veld they graze on.

Nomonde Kubheka, winemaker at KWV in Paarl, packs a lot into her busy day. When some time out is required, Nomonde and her workmates organise a social and informal get-together at the pool, where they enjoy a spit braai.

These casual get-togethers give them a chance to chat about work and their lives in the winelands over a few glasses of wine. “Beats a girls’ night out or the book club!” grins Nomonde.



How to roast a lamb on the spit

Start your fire in the early morning in order to serve the lamb at lunchtime. Make sure you have sufficient logs to feed the fire during cooking time. Truss the lamb, attaching it to the iron cross by pushing the one pointed end of the rod through the flesh from tail to neck; then attach the hind legs to the crossbar. Season or baste to taste. A mixture of olive oil, lemon and rosemary (garlic optional) is popular although some purists prefer to cook the lamb without seasoning or basting sauce to bring out the flavour of the meat itself.

Start cooking by facing the belly/bone side to the fire. End the process by turning the belly/bone side away from the fire so that the skin on the outside becomes nice and crispy – you can rake some more coals under the lamb to ensure even cooking and crisping. Cooking time is 2–3 hours, depending on the size of the lamb. When the internal temperature of the leg reaches approximately 60°C on a meat thermometer and the juices run pink, the lamb is done. Transfer the lamb to a work surface and allow it to rest for about 20 minutes before carving it.

BRAAI TIP

The legs take longer to cook so it's a good idea to make higher mounds of coal under them at the start of the braai. These can be evened out with a rake after about half an hour of cooking time.

WINE NOTE

KWV's Lifestyle range is made for enjoying at any social or outdoor occasion. A glass of chilled Sauvignon Blanc is perfect for poolside sipping. Nomonde's choice to pair with lamb is the KWV Lifestyle Shiraz, made in an easy-drinking style. The Paarl area is renowned for the quality of its Shiraz.



Boplaas Family Vineyards – Calitzdorp, a town on Route 62 which winds its way through the vast plains of the Klein Karoo, is known as the port capital of South Africa.

POTJIE & PORT

It's also where you'll find Boplaas, a family concern celebrated for the quality of its port-style and table wines.

Carel Nel, now joined by his daughters Margaux in the cellar and Rozanne as marketer, likes nothing better than to make a *potjie* (a one-pot meal) for family and friends on the weekend. "We've planted *spekboom* to make up for all the wood we burn," he laughs, referring to *Portulacaria afra*, one of the most efficient of the many succulents found around Calitzdorp when it comes to sequestering carbon. Boplaas is a leader in sustainable solutions and has a negative carbon footprint.

"I use a Falkirk 03 if there are not too many people. I find that a smaller potjie makes for a tastier meal," says Carel, referring to the local brand synonymous with these sturdy three-legged cast-iron pots. "Making a potjie takes real discipline. And patience. We measure cooking time in bottles consumed, not hours – but just remember to pace yourself or you'll be ready before the potjie! Oh, and give your guests enough wine too, in case the potjie turns out to be not your best..."

Potjies are mainly based on what's seasonal and close to hand. And everyone has their own secret ingredient. So what's Carel's? "I use only Boplaas port!"



LAMB SHANK & PORT POTJIE

SERVES 8

Prepare a stock of the following:

- 2 litres water
- 2 lamb shank bones
- 2 onions, peeled & halved
- 4 cloves, stuck into the onions
- Small bunch of parsley & thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 large carrot, peeled & cut into chunks

Simmer for 2–3 hours on lowest heat possible, strain and set aside.

- 8 Karoo lamb shanks (or use whatever is locally available)
- 1 bottle port-style wine (preferably Cape Ruby)
- 3 large heads garlic, papery outer skin removed & halved crosswise
- 20 small pickling onions, peeled
- 16 baby carrots, peeled
- 500g button mushrooms (adding some *Boletus edulis* – also known as cep or porcini – increases the earthiness and concentration of flavours)
- Sprigs of thyme
- Freshly ground salt & pepper

Add a generous splash of olive oil to a cast-iron pot and heat over moderate coals. Brown the meat. Add the pickling onions, garlic, thyme, and freshly ground salt and pepper to taste. Add the port-style wine and enough stock for the liquid to cover the shanks. Cover tightly with the lid, inserting a layer of foil if necessary. Raise the potjie, or move sideways to a position where you can manage the heat, and simmer over the coals until the meat is almost done (about two-and-a-half hours). Add the rest of the vegetables and simmer for a further half-hour, or until the vegetables are done and the meat is very tender and falling off the bone. Lift the shanks and vegetables out, and set aside on a serving dish. Strain the rest of the cooking juices, add juices back to the pot, pour in the rest of the stock (if any remaining) and reduce on rapid heat until thickened, ensuring there's enough for everyone to enjoy with mashed potato or crusty bread, served on the side.

WINE NOTE

While he's preparing and watching over the potjie, Carel enjoys a chilled bottle of Sauvignon Blanc from their new Cool Bay range, but he recommends switching to Boplaas Ring of Rocks, a spicy blend of Cabernet, Merlot and Touriga Nacional, for the meal as it marries well with the lamb shanks. Portuguese varieties flourish in this area, where you'll find several dry red blends that include one or more of them, as well as single varietal bottlings.

BRAAI TIPS

- Start with quite hot coals when browning the meat, then move the potjie a bit higher up or sideways onto fewer coals for less heat.
- Use a tight-fitting lid and simmer very slowly.
- A cork pushed through under the handle makes for easy lifting of the lid but don't do that too often: "It's a bad habit to look into the pot!"
- The chef must drink a generous quantity of wine: "It's part of the process!" concludes Carel.



South Africans are an innovative lot and will make a fire to braai on in just about any container. Half an old petrol drum, a spot of welding and this inventive contribution to recycling creates our favourite braai receptacle, the *BLIKBRAAI*.





M’hudi Wines – In African culture, celebrations and gatherings invariably feature *shisa nyama* (derived from isiZulu, it literally means ‘burn the meat’).

AFRICAN RELISH

The Rangakas enjoy keeping up this sociable tradition at their family owned Stellenbosch farm.

Accompanying these meaty feasts you’ll typically find *chakalaka*, a spicy vegetable relish which originated in the townships, and *bogobe* (also called *pap*, it’s made from maize meal, which is similar to polenta), the staple of many African diets.

“Pap plays a strong supporting role in the company of the meat and works well for soaking up juices and to carry flavour,” says patriarch Diale Rangaka, whose wife Malmsey is an expert at cooking bogobe in a cast-iron pot over the coals.



BOGOBE

(Pap in Afrikaans)

SERVES 8

- 1 litre water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups maize meal (or substitute polenta)
- 1 dessertspoon butter

Bring the water to the boil. Add the salt and butter, then the maize meal. Let the water boil with the maize meal on top for 5 minutes, then stir the maize meal in – you can use a wooden spoon or a whisk. Cook it with the lid on over cooler coals for about 15–25 minutes. The consistency of the pap should be that of a thick cereal and your spoon should be able to stand up straight in it.

MALMSEY'S CHAKALAKA

SERVES 8

There are many versions of chakalaka – some recipes include cauliflower and/or broccoli florets.

- 30ml oil
- 1 large onion, finely sliced
- 1 large green pepper, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled & crushed
- 2–3cm fresh ginger, peeled & grated
- 4 large, ripe tomatoes, skinned & chopped
- 2 large carrots, grated
- 5ml turmeric
- Chilli powder to taste
- 1x410g tin baked beans in tomato sauce
- Pinch of salt
- Handful of fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped

Heat the oil and sauté onion, garlic, ginger and green pepper with the turmeric and chilli powder for 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes and carrots, season with salt and simmer for about 15 minutes until soft. Add the beans, heat through. Allow to cool and serve garnished with the coriander leaves.

WINE NOTE

Diale enjoys M'hudi Pinotage at their braais. Unique to South Africa, Pinotage is a cross between Pinot Noir and Cinsaut (Hermitage) that produces rich, spicy wines. Many fine examples in different styles are to be found across the regions.



BRAAI TIP

"I use a lot of wood, preferably from vines, to get enough coals to cook a feast!"



Paul Cluver Wines – When members of the close-knit Cluver clan gather together in the family kitchen on their estate, De Rust, it is a real family affair.

FAMILY FEAST

Patriarch Dr Paul Cluver makes his famous tomato salad selected from over 100 varieties grown in the nearby vegetable and herb garden, a project he's involved in together with Norwegian celebrity chef Andries Viestad. His wife Songvei prepares her delicious baby spinach and berry salad, as well as Hasselback potatoes. One of their three daughters involved in the family wine business, marketing manager Liesl provides a moreish winelands fondue with griddled baby vegetables as a starter. Son Paul Jnr, who has taken over as MD from his neurosurgeon father, does his 'can-can' free-range chickens in the Weber for mains: "If you're cooking for a lot of people, this is easy to do. Pop them on, enjoy a glass of wine and before you know it, they're ready!" And the wine (made by sister Inge's husband Andries Burger), stories and laughter flow while the grandchildren run about as freely as the indigenous Boschveld chickens they love to feed.

De Rust Estate is located in the cool-climate Elgin ward within part of a World Heritage site, the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, and is also on the Green Mountain Eco Route – local growers are committed to promoting biodiversity.



PAUL CLUVER JNR'S CAN-CAN CHICKEN IN THE WEBER

SERVES 4–6 (You can double up the recipe for two chickens)

"I usually don't measure anything exactly but pretty much go by taste. I love this recipe for its simplicity, and it makes the chicken nice and juicy!"

One large free-range chicken, giblets removed

MARINADE

100g butter

125ml red wine vinegar

100ml olive oil

Handful of Italian flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

3–5 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 red onion, finely chopped

Freshly ground salt & black pepper

1 can Appletiser (any unsweetened sparkling apple juice or good cider can be substituted)

Melt the butter, then add all the other ingredients except for the Appletiser. Marinate the chicken in a large bowl – leave it for at least an hour. This will also give you time to prepare the Weber. You need to place the charcoal on the sides and make sure you have a drip tray in the middle. Open the can of Appletiser, put the chicken over it and place it in the middle of the Weber. It takes about an hour to cook.

HASSELBACK POTATOES

8 medium potatoes

2 tablespoons olive oil

30g butter

Freshly ground sea salt & black pepper

Preheat oven to 220°C. Place a potato in a wooden spoon or on a chopping board. Starting from one end, cut each potato almost all the way through, at about 3–4mm intervals. Arrange the potatoes on a baking tray, dab some butter on top of each one, drizzle with olive oil and season. Bake the potatoes for about 40 minutes or until they turn crispy and the flesh is soft.



BRAAI TIPS

- Paul Jnr uses hard wood from apple or plum trees, or else blackwood or wattle, both of which are alien trees.
- Give your Weber kettle braai moisture – Appletiser (a 100% pure sparkling apple juice) keeps the chicken succulent.
- Lift the lid to allow some heat to escape if the coals get too hot, or else the parsley in the marinade tends to burn.



DR CLUVER'S TOMATO SALAD

SERVES 8

Selection of different tomatoes from the garden – as many as 20 varieties if available (or use as many different varieties of organically grown vine-ripened tomatoes as you can source)

Red onions

Chillies

Shredded basil leaves

Balsamic vinegar

Olive oil

Dash of lemon juice

Freshly ground rock salt & black pepper

Chop up, mix together, season to taste and enjoy!

WINE NOTE

Liesl serves Paul Cluver Sauvignon Blanc with her winelands fondue. The naturally fermented Paul Cluver Chardonnay with its minerality and well-integrated wood is her choice to partner the can-can chicken but her brother Paul opts for his favourite variety, the elegant Paul Cluver Pinot Noir. The high, cool Elgin mountain plateau with its proximity to the sea is suited for growing slower-ripening grapes which impart a delicacy characteristic of these wines and those from other similar cool-climate maritime pockets across the winelands.



Onderkloof Vines & Wines – “I was born on the shores of False Bay and have always loved to eat freshly caught fish.”

OCEAN RANGER

“Tuna is definitely one of my favourites!” exclaims Daniël Truter, a keen sailor, winemaker and co-owner of this boutique winery which lies on the slopes of the Schapenberg, just six kilometres from the ocean.

Catch your own fresh longfin or yellowfin tuna (bluefin and bigeye tuna are endangered) if you’re lucky enough to be able to, or carefully select one from a reputable fishmonger. “Try to buy the tuna that is aimed at the sashimi market, as this assures complete freshness,” he advises.



BRAAI TIPS

- Put your hand above the coals – when you can hold it there for 10 counts, that’s where you place the grid.
- Sear the tuna on one side. Turn it over and maybe turn it back once but “don’t handle it too much,” Daniël cautions.
- Take care not to overcook the tuna.

TUNA ON THE COALS

Marinate the tuna steaks (they must be at least 20mm thick) or a whole fillet, if you prefer, in olive oil for at least two hours. You can also add the following to taste as a variation on the theme: soya sauce, finely chopped garlic and/or chilli. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Braai over a medium fire for approximately 10 minutes on either side if cut into steaks. If cooking a whole fillet, cook for slightly longer, ensuring that the outside is seared and the inside is pink, then cut into thick steaks. Serve with the Mediterranean bean salad and garden greens with warm nut dressing.

MEDITERRANEAN BEAN SALAD

Pan-fry crushed garlic, chopped spring onion and sliced red pepper over the fire until soft. Add tinned, drained cannellini beans, black olives and lemon rind.

GARDEN GREENS WITH WARM NUT DRESSING

Combine salad greens such as rocket, watercress and various kinds of lettuce leaves. Top with crumbled feta cheese and sliced avocado. Slowly roast pecan nuts in a little olive oil over the fire; add salt and fresh lemon juice. Pour the warm dressing over the salad and serve immediately.

WINE NOTE

Onderkloof Pinotage is Daniël’s choice with the tuna as its rich, fruity flavours complement this full-flavoured, meaty game fish. This local South African variety is often grown on low-yielding bushvines.





The choice of the correct TONGS is only slightly less important than the protocol for turning the meat. It is essential that all the men around the fire give advice on when to turn the meat, but only the host or 'tong master' will decide on the optimum moment, and only he may execute the move.



Spier – “I’m never in a hurry when I braai,” says Frans Smit, cellar master at Spier, one of the Cape’s premium wineries and a popular tourist attraction.

KALAHARI CALLING

“Two hours or two bottles of wine is the time it takes from making the fire to serving the food...”

When Frans takes a break, he and his family head off to Olifantshoek in the Green Kalahari, Northern Cape. They stay at the family farm, which belonged to Frans’ father-in-law, in a house dating back 100 years. “If ever there was a classic spot to relax around a braai, the farmhouse must be it!” says Frans. “At night, the only lighting is myriads of stars.”

Frans’ favourite ‘*vleisparadys*’ (‘meat paradise’ or perfect spot for cooking meat) is a patch on the farmhouse porch – sand as far as the eye can see and a single lonely gum. Plentiful wood is available for those who are in the know: “The root of the *vaalkameel* (mini acacia tree) is the best braai fodder for miles around,” says Frans.

Back in Stellenbosch, when the Smits long for the solitude of the farm, they braai Kalahari lamb. The sound of the fat dripping into the fire and the appetising smell of the meat mingled with coriander transport them back to the farmhouse in no time.



FRANS SMIT'S KALAHARI LAMB BRAAI

For starters, Frans cooks sausages that he makes himself on the farm. These are usually a combination of fresh beef and lamb, with a little fat for flavour. The only seasoning needed here is coriander seeds, which he grinds and adds to the skin as the sausages sizzle away. When cooking ribs, he hangs the lamb, fresh but dried, above the coals at a height that slowly singes the fat, keeping the moisture in the meat. He seasons the ribs with coarse Kalahari salt and whole coriander seeds, crushed with a pepper grinder. Towards the end of the cooking process, he adds a touch of lemon juice – not too much though, he cautions. The result is superbly crusted, juicy and flavoursome meat that melts in the mouth. Frans uses a similar method for cooking lamb loin chops: season simply, and serve straight from the coals.

WINE NOTE

Frans likes to drink mostly white wines, though with the lamb he prefers a good red blend. The reds are often served as the side of lamb is done, and the stars reach their zenith in the Kalahari sky. "The Creative Block Sauvignon Blanc-Semillon is the wine we drink at the braai in the daytime under the hot sun," says Frans. With the meal, it's Frans K Smit, a seamless Bordeaux-style blend which joins an elite band of red blends emanating from the Cape and highly regarded internationally.



BRAAI TIP

- "The trick, I believe, is to dry the meat in the cool house for two days. This concentrates the flavours, producing a spicy juice from the simplest of seasonings," says Frans.



De Wetshof Estate – Smoked snoek is an old Cape tradition and a favourite with many South Africans, including the De Wet family whose lovely estate lies in the Robertson valley.

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

Most of the farms here are family owned and have been for generations – the De Wet ancestors arrived at the Cape in 1694. The valley is only an hour or two away from coastal villages like Arniston, Cape Agulhas and Struisbaai, where many of these wine families go on holiday. Here they catch fresh fish like Cape salmon, yellowtail and *kabeljou* (cob), which they braai over the coals. But when schools of snoek, a nomadic fish, are running further down the coast, the De Wets make the trip to Cape Town, dash back to the farm and haul out their smoker. It's an ingenious contraption made from an old stainless steel drum, once used to transport wine, welded onto a wheelbarrow.

Winemaker Peter de Wet, who has joined his father Danie in the cellar, shares his mother Lesca's love of cooking: "We use oak shavings to smoke the snoek to golden perfection..." Smoked snoek can be served in a number of ways – the De Wets serve theirs as a light lunch with a green salad, or made into a creamy pâté or as *smoorsnoek* (braised snoek).



How to smoke a snoek

Pick a fresh, 'fat' snoek as they smoke better than dry snoek (you can also use any other flavoursome, firm-fleshed white fish). Clean the snoek carefully and salt it. Cover it with dry paper and place it in the refrigerator until the smoker is ready. Light a fire under the smoker about half an hour before starting to smoke the snoek. The De Wets use *wingerdstompies* (vine stumps). Choose your wood shavings – the De Wets recommend oak, which they get fresh from their cooper. Dampen the shavings slightly with water if they are very dry. Cover the snoek with a thinly spread layer of olive or sunflower oil. Place the snoek on the rack and add the shavings to the heat source, keeping the snoek as far away from it as possible (this depends on your type of smoker). Monitor the snoek and temperature for about 30 minutes – it's important to keep the temperature constant. Smoke the snoek for longer if you want a smokier flavour. Remove the snoek from the smoker and allow it to cool.

SMOKING TIPS

- "I prefer using very fresh, non-salted snoek. I fleck it along the spine, butterfly it open and then salt it myself," says Peter.
- Peter first puts the fish in the smoker for about 7 minutes and then throws in the wood shavings. Done this way, the snoek smokes in about 15–20 minutes (after the initial time without shavings), depending on how fat it is.
- Lesca puts the oak shavings in before the fish and smokes it for a full 30 minutes, again depending on the size of its waistline.

WINE NOTE

De Wetshof's unwooded Limestone Hill Chardonnay is just-dry with hints of citrus and minerality. It's a complex, structured wine which pairs well with the smoky fish. The Robertson valley, with its lime-rich soils, is known for the quality of its Chardonnay.



SMOORSNOEK

The amounts can be scaled up or down depending on how much snoek you have.

- 1 kg smoked snoek, skinned, boned & flaked
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons sunflower oil
- 2 large potatoes, cubed
- 1 large onion, chopped
- Ground nutmeg to taste
- Salt & pepper to taste

Boil or steam the potato cubes until just soft. Drain, keeping the remaining water to one side; keep the potato cubes warm. Heat the oil and butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Fry the onions until they start to brown. Add the potato cubes. Keep stirring to make sure the mixture does not burn. Add the flaked fish and simmer gently until the flavours start to blend. If the saucepan is too dry, add as much of the remaining potato water as required. Add salt, pepper and nutmeg to taste. Serve on rice with lemon wedges, and garnish with ground nutmeg and fresh fennel.

SMOKED SNOEK PATE

SERVES 8-10

- 500g smoked snoek, boned & flaked
- 70g cream cheese
- 125g mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice (according to taste)
- Pinch of ground pepper
- Fresh parsley, roughly chopped

Combine all the ingredients and mix together well with a fork. Serve with toasted homemade seed loaf or melba toast.





Cloof – “You don’t know what a *drankstompie* is?” asks an incredulous Oscar Foulkes, braai tongs in one hand, a glass of wine in the other.

FIRED UP

“It’s a piece of wood you put on the fire to prolong the moment before braaing the food, so as to drink more wine...” he explains, doing just that.

Darling’s annual wild flower show – there’s a selection of 1 200 flowering species to be found here – makes it a focal point of the Cape Floral Kingdom. In 2006, Cloof was named a Biodiversity & Wine Initiative Champion in recognition of the steps they’ve taken to conserve pristine natural vegetation and to rehabilitate previously cultivated areas.

Part of the team that won the SA National BBQ Championships two years running, Oscar has long crusaded for the humble braai to be taken seriously as cuisine in its own right and initiated Cloof’s Gourmet BBQs. Rustic outdoor spaces, with uninterrupted views over vineyards, plains and distant mountains, make it the perfect venue.

The wood-fired oven yields delicious results – trays of beetroot drizzled with olive oil and simply seasoned with thyme, salt and pepper, or Rosa tomatoes generously splashed with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and flavoured with rosemary, develop a smoky taste and concentrated flavours. Oscar stirs pesto through the wood-roasted tomatoes, adds a tin of peeled tomatoes to give it a ragù-style base, and tosses the resultant sauce with pasta cooked al dente as a simple but satisfying accompaniment to a braai.

The Gourmet BBQs, now headed by chef Jonno Proudfoot, are held on Sundays – see www.cloof.co.za for dates and menus. Booking essential.



BOBOTIE-SPICED OSTRICH FAN FILLET

SERVES 6

Bobotie, a popular Cape-Malay dish with a lovely blend of flavours, inspired this recipe. Ostrich is a lean, healthy meat and the fan fillet is the most tender and flavourful cut.

1,2kg ostrich fan fillet

BOBOTIE SPICE PASTE

- 1 cup oil
- ½ cup vinegar
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 cup dried apricots
- 4 tablespoons deseeded raisins
- 2 tablespoons soft brown sugar
- 10 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes
- 1 cup fresh coriander (cilantro), roughly chopped

Toast the spices in a dry pan until they become fragrant. Add the spices to the remaining ingredients in a food processor and blend to make a thick paste. Marinate the fillet in a covered dish for a few hours or overnight. Remove the fillet and sear over hot coals, turning and basting with the marinade regularly to build up a flavourful crust. Cook until pink inside or done to your personal preference. Heat any leftover marinade and serve it as a sauce.

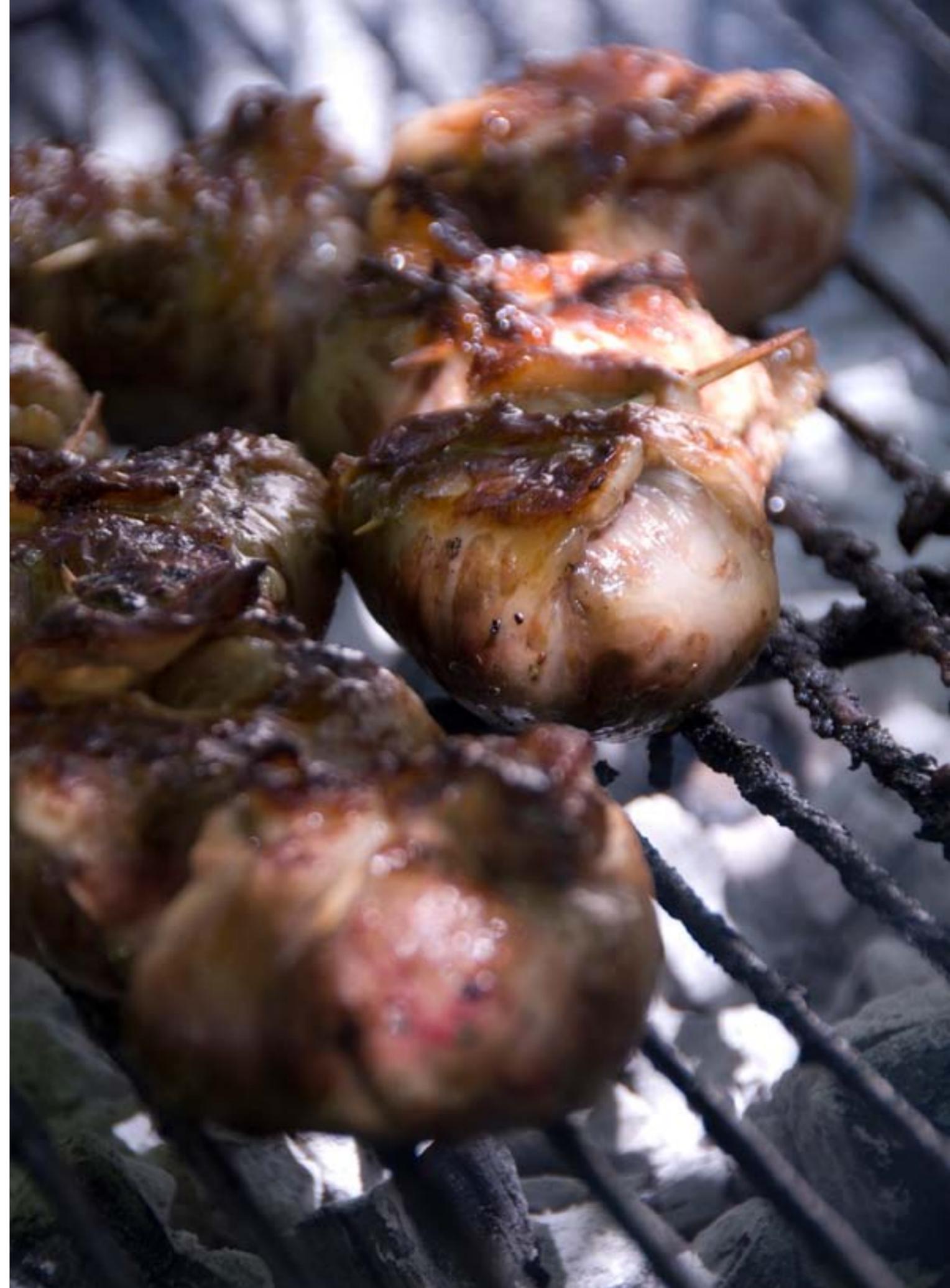
WINE NOTE

The men at Cloof aren't afraid to drink pink: Rosy Darling Rosé and its sister wine, Daisy Darling Chenin Blanc-Sauvignon Blanc, are their pre-braai wines of preference. But it's The Very Sexy Shiraz that's "not at all intimidated" by the spices in the bobotie marinade. "It's a big, bold wine that has no problem holding its own!" There are a number of wineries across the Cape producing Shiraz with concentrated flavours from low-yielding bush vines.

BRAAI TIPS

- Build up a crust on the outside of the fillet by turning and basting it a good few times if it's a thick cut.
- Just before turning the meat, get flames going, almost 'frying' the outside. "A bit of flame doesn't bother me!" says Oscar, the gleam of a committed braai fanatic in his eyes.





SKILPADJIES translates as ‘little tortoises’, so called because of the shape of these very traditional delicacies. They are made of lambs’ liver, neatly parcelled and wrapped in caul fat. The fat burns away on the braai, keeping the liver moist and tender.



Arniston Bay – Endless stretches of white sand lapped by azure seas, fishermen’s cottages, brightly painted boats and limestone caves...

CATCH OF THE DAY

Arniston is the kind of place you visit once and never want to leave. It’s a place so special that it inspired one of South Africa’s favourite lifestyle wines.

Arniston is also where you’ll find Kassiesbaai, a 200-year-old fishing village that is a National Heritage site. Many of the locals who live in these charming lime-washed thatched cottages still make their living from the sea. Visitors eagerly await the fishing boats coming back into the bay with their catch of the day.



FISH BRAAI ON THE BEACH

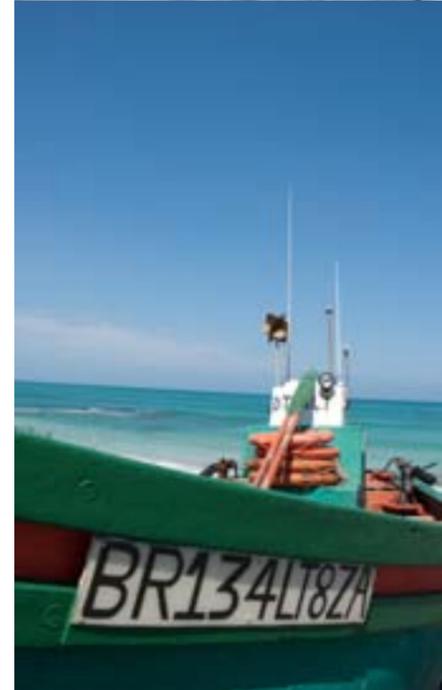
Nothing is quite as tasty as a fresh linefish grilled directly over the hot coals. Use a hinged grid to prevent the fish from breaking or falling out. Squeeze lemon juice over the fish while braaiing it or use your choice of basting mixture, eg lemon butter or olive oil. The fish is cooked when it's opaque but not dry. You can test it with a small paring knife – the flesh should part with no resistance. A lean game fish like yellowtail is best cooked fast over high heat. Place the fish flesh side down 3–4cm from the coals until it starts to brown, then turn it over and brown the skin – this way you retain the juices. If you braai it skin side down first, then turn it over to brown the flesh, all the juices will run out, and the fish will lose some of its flavour and become dry. To remove the fish from the grid easily and without breaking it, turn it so that the flesh side of the fish is facing downwards. Open the grid and then place a serving platter or chopping board upside down over the skin side. Close the grid over the platter, invert the grid and then remove the platter with the fish on it.

WINE NOTE

Arniston Bay Chenin Blanc-Chardonnay, a crisp, fresh white blend to be enjoyed with seafood, salads and antipasti encapsulates the laid-back Arniston lifestyle. Chenin is a favourite blending partner in the popular easy-drinking food-friendly white blends of the Cape.

BRAAI TIPS

- Don't scale the fish if you're going to braai it. The scales offer protection against the fierce heat of the coals.
- The grid should be oiled thoroughly before braaiing the fish to prevent it from sticking.





Rietvallei Wine Estate – Elizabeth Burger knows a thing or two about preparing food, and game in particular. Just as well, because her husband Kobus is a keen hunter.

NATURAL BOUNTY

“The freezer is always full!” she says of her husband’s regular hunting trips to the Eastern Cape and her birthplace Namibia, where she grew up on a farm. The fillet of the springbok is a choice cut and the couple love to treat their friends and family to what is “*beslis die grootste treffer in ons huis!*” (“definitely the biggest hit in our house!”), which she serves with delicious accompaniments.

Kobus is the sixth generation of the Burger family on Rietvallei, one of the oldest farms in the Robertson valley. He makes the wine and manages the business, while his father Johnny, who represents the fifth generation, farms their land and oversees the vines.



GAME FILLET IN CAUL FAT

1 whole game fillet of your choice (“We really just use whatever is in our deep-freeze...”)

Caul fat (you can order it from your local butcher; soak it in a weak solution of vinegar and salt for at least an hour before using it)

MARINADE

- 100ml red muscadel
- 250ml soya sauce
- 250ml olive oil
- 60ml lemon juice
- 3–5 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

Mix all the ingredients together and marinate the meat in it for at least 4 hours, turning it every so often. Remove from the marinade, dry the meat, encase it in the caul fat and fasten it well with toothpicks. Braai the fillet on warm coals until done to your liking.

After you’ve removed the meat, put the remaining marinade in a saucepan, add 100ml balsamic vinegar and 50ml Cabernet Sauvignon, and let it simmer for a while. Slice the fillet and serve it with the heated marinade sauce.

WINE NOTE

Named after the couple’s daughters, Esté and Anna, the Rietvallei Estéanna is a velvety blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot that pairs beautifully with game meat. Many classic red blends with the structure and fruit to mature well emanate from the Robertson valley and across the Cape.

BRAAI TIPS

- Game meat tends to be dry but the caul fat helps to keep it moist. You can order caul fat from your butcher. Make sure the caul fat is the thin type – the thicker one takes longer to crisp up and the meat then dries out.
- It’s best to buy and use the caul fat fresh but if that’s not possible you can store it in the freezer for later use.
- The caul fat drips and causes the coals to flame, so be careful not to burn the meat.





BAKED VEGETABLES IN PHYLLO FLOWERS

SERVES 6-8

- 1 medium-sized butternut, peeled & diced
- 250g mushrooms, wiped & sliced
- 350g baby marrows (zucchini), rinsed & sliced in rounds
- 1x60g packet white onion soup
- 250ml cream

Microwave or parboil the butternut for a few minutes. Mix the three vegetables together in an ovenproof dish. Mix the soup powder and cream together and pour over the vegetables. Bake at 180°C for about 40 minutes.

PHYLLO FLOWERS

These phyllo flowers can be stored in an airtight container for up to three months.

500g phyllo pastry

Cut the phyllo pastry into squares that fit neatly into the indents of a muffin pan with just the corners sticking out (you can also use ramekins). Taking three squares at a time, lightly brush each one with oil and layer them so that the corners are offset into the shape of flowers. Repeat with the remaining squares. Gently push them down into the indents (or ramekins). Bake at 190°C for about 10 minutes until golden brown. Spoon the vegetable mixture into the phyllo cases and serve.

ROAST POTATOES

Cook the potatoes in their skins until done. Peel the skins off when they've cooled and slice into smaller pieces. Scratch the surface with a fork, deep-fry in oil, drain on paper towel and serve immediately.

CAPRESE SALAD

SERVES 6-8

- 1kg ripe Rosa tomatoes, quartered
- 500g fresh mozzarella (buffalo milk is best), sliced
- ¼ cup olive oil (or to taste)
- Freshly ground salt & black pepper
- 8-12 fresh basil leaves, shredded

Place the tomato quarters on a platter, lay the mozzarella slices over them, sprinkle the basil leaves on top, drizzle with olive oil, season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve.



Bellingham – Experimental by nature, winemaker Niël Groenewald’s approach to food and wine invariably pushes a boundary or two.

BLUE SKY BRUNCH

“I serve Chenin with any meal, including brunch!” says this two-metre (six-foot-seven) gentle giant of pairing his favourite food-friendly wine with this versatile barbecue pie, adapted from a recipe passed on by an old family friend. “The men usually start drinking wine around the fire and take too long to put the food on the grid, so it became known as the ‘*kwaai braai paai*!’” (Loosely translated, this means the ‘cross braai pie’.)

Niël enjoys cooking and believes that “every man must be able to braai something – I love to braai steak, saddle chops, sosaties, lamb on the spit, and game fish”. In his spare time between harvests and marketing sorties, Niël goes on camping trips to Namibia, Botswana and southern Mozambique, a favourite destination where you’ll find him “chilling under a mango tree, diving or reading a good book – there’s no cellphone reception and no television!” The beauty of the braai pie is that you can improvise with what you have to hand when it comes to ingredients and use leftovers, like steak and sausage, from the previous night’s braai.

When time constraints do not allow for camping trips, the Bellingham *werf* (farmstead), enclosed by a *ringmuur* (circular wall), provides a tranquil escape. Part of the wall dates back to 1685; the remainder, along with extensive renovations to the manor house, gardens and vineyards, was completed in the mid-1940s by 13 skilled Italian prisoners of war who were billeted on the farm during WWII. A Friday brunch gives Niël and the marketing team a chance to catch up over a braai and a few glasses of wine.



KWAAI BRAAI PIE

SERVES 6

This is a recipe to experiment with – amounts are not exact and you can add more or less of any ingredient, or improvise with whatever you have available for the filling.

- 2x500g ready-to-bake puff pastry
- 1 bunch of spinach, coarsely chopped
- 3 smoked chicken breasts, sliced
- 250g bacon, diced
- 250g button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 yellow pepper, deseeded & sliced
- 10 sweet piquanté peppers, sliced
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ½ cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1 cup grated mozzarella cheese
- Freshly ground salt & black pepper

Roll dough out into two equal pieces. Fry the onion, bacon and peppers in olive oil. Add seasoning. Layer the ingredients in the following order on the one sheet of dough: Half of the raw spinach; smoked chicken; onion, bacon and peppers; mushrooms; scatter the three cheeses; add the rest of the spinach. Cover with the second sheet of dough. Make a parcel of the layered, filled sheets of dough. Brush with olive oil on both sides. Place on a hinged braai grid and close gently – do not latch it, though, or else the pie will get pinched – and cook over the coals for about 15 minutes, turning regularly, until golden brown.

WINE NOTE

Bellingham's hand-crafted The Bernard Series honours its founder, wine pioneer Bernard Podlashuk. The Bernard Series Old Vine Chenin Blanc, made in a rich and ripe style from fruit sourced from three mature, low-yielding vineyard blocks, has well-integrated wood and a crisp acidity that cuts through the fattiness of the cheese in the pie. There are many superb examples of complex Chenin Blancs made from old bush vines which would complement this braai pie or any similar dish.

BRAAI TIPS

- Niël's wood of choice is *kameeldoring* (camel thorn) as it's a hard, slow-burning wood: "You can blow off the ash and make coffee on the coals the next morning!"
- Turn the braai pie regularly to prevent the pastry from burning.
- You know it's ready when holes form and the cheese oozes through.





There is a definite status attached to the wood used for the fire. In the Cape, *WINGERDSTOMPIES* [the stumps of uprooted vines] are highly prized, suggesting that you either own or know someone with a vineyard.



Van Loveren Private Cellar – Four Cousins is a popular wine brand in South Africa. It is not just a marketing name: there really are four cousins from the Retief family jointly running the Van Loveren family business in the Robertson valley.

COOKING COUSINS

Neil and Hennie are viticulturists, Bussell is a winemaker and Phillip takes care of marketing. Neil and his wife Stefanie's house features an all-weather braai room with a massive fireplace and glass doors which slide right back to let the outside in. Getting together over a braai is the best way to chew over business challenges. "Somehow round a fire, with a glass of cold wine, we come up with the best and most creative solutions," says Neil. He is the number one braaier but everyone brings along their speciality.

Stefanie mixes the marinade and prepares a creamy mushroom sauce to pour over the meat; Phillip's wife Charl-Mari makes a green salad; Bussell's wife Anne-Marie arrives with a baking tray full of vegetable stacks to pop under the grill; and Hennie's wife, Chrislene, adds her warm new potato and bacon salad to the spread: "Great with any braai and just as nice the next day!" she beams.



BUTTERFLIED LEG OF LAMB

SERVES 4

1 leg of lamb, deboned and butterflied (you can ask your butcher to do this for you)

MARINADE

250ml olive oil

150ml fresh lemon juice

10ml fresh rosemary needles, crushed

5ml origanum

2 cloves garlic

Freshly ground salt & black pepper

Mix all ingredients except the salt together and marinate the leg for 24 hours or more. Add salt during the braai process, using 5ml of salt for every 500g of meat. It takes about 45 minutes for medium to rare meat – a lot depends on the thickness of the meat, the heat of the coals and how well done you want the meat. Let the leg rest for 15 minutes before cutting it. The sliced meat can be served with a sauce of your choice.

CREAMY MUSHROOM SAUCE

250g button mushrooms, sliced

1–2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons flour

½ cup milk

½ cup reduced fat cream

Pinch of hot English mustard powder

1 cup quality meat stock

Freshly ground salt & black pepper

Fry the sliced mushrooms in butter and add the crushed garlic. Keep aside when done. Make a basic white sauce, using half cream/half milk. Add a pinch of hot English mustard powder. Turn the heat up to high and add the cup of stock. Turn the heat down to medium and add the mushrooms. The sauce will start to thicken. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve poured over the slices of lamb.

WINE NOTE

Van Loveren Cramond, a fruit-driven dry white blend of Sauvignon Blanc and lightly oaked Chardonnay, is the cousins' choice while chatting around the fireplace, but they switch to the Wolverine Creek Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon as a match for the butterflied leg of lamb. This noble variety is one of the most widely planted and best-performing varieties in South Africa.

BRAAI TIPS

- Neil likes using dry apricot wood and always makes a side fire in case he needs more coals.
- The coals must be warm "but not so hot that the marinade takes flame!"
- Remember to rest the meat for about 15 minutes after you take it off the coals.





VEGETABLE STACKS

You can use any vegetables of your choice in whatever quantities required.

Aubergines (eggplants); baby marrows (zucchini); green, red & yellow bell peppers; & mushrooms

Garlic butter

Mozzarella cheese

Mixed fresh herbs of your choice

Olive oil

Balsamic vinegar

Freshly ground salt & black pepper

Cut the aubergines into thick rounds. Salt the slices and stand in a colander for about 30 minutes. Rinse off thoroughly in water and dry with a kitchen towel. Season aubergines, drizzle with olive oil and roast them under the grill on both sides. Roast the peppers under the grill until the skins blister and blacken. Wrap with clingfilm for 5 minutes. Peel away the skins and quarter the peppers. Fry the baby marrows in a griddle pan in some olive oil. Slice the mushrooms and fry them in garlic butter. Stack the vegetables in layers on top of the aubergine rounds, drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, season with salt and pepper, and top with a slice of mozzarella cheese and some herbs. Bake at 200°C for about 15 minutes. Pop under the grill for a few minutes to brown the cheese if you like.

WARM NEW POTATO & BACON SALAD

500g new potatoes

300g baby marrows (zucchini), sliced in thick chunks

300g baby carrots

200g bacon, chopped

1 bulb fennel, cut into pieces

300g button mushrooms, wiped & halved

250g feta cheese

Handful of Italian flat-leaf parsley, chopped

Freshly ground salt & black pepper

Boil the potatoes in their skins until just done. Lightly steam the carrots and baby marrows, ensuring that they are still crisp and crunchy. Fry the bacon and drain it on paper towel. Fry the mushrooms and fennel in the bacon oil. Arrange in an ovenproof dish and season. Crumble the feta over it, grill until the cheese turns golden, then pour the dressing and sprinkle the parsley over it.

DRESSING

90ml olive oil

40ml apple cider vinegar

10ml wholegrain mustard

Zest of 1 lemon

Freshly ground salt & black pepper

Mix together in a glass container and store in the fridge until needed.



West Coast Wine Route – “How many crayfish do you need for the ceviche, Monika?” asks Jan Ponk of Fryer’s Cove from the deep rock pool in front of the beach house at Strandfontein.

HUNTER GATHERERS

“Two or three,” she responds from the stoep and five minutes later he’s back with his bounty from the sea.

This popular coastal resort is an hour’s drive from Vredendal, which is the heart of the West Coast Wine Route of which Monika Greeff is the manager. The West Coast is a wonderful place where up to 2 500 plant species can be found in one single square metre of this remarkable earth. In the spring, when the veld is transformed into a brightly coloured carpet of indigenous flowers, visitors from all over the world come to view this natural splendour.

Brands range from volume producers Namaqua Wines and Lutzville Cape Diamond Vineyards to small high-end boutique wineries such as Fryer’s Cove Vineyards and Sir Lambert Wines. But what all the winemakers have in common is a passion for the sea and for entertaining at the beach, around a fire, and a reputation for hospitality as warm as the sea is icy.

During summer these winemakers, viticulturists and marketers head for the coast where they dive and fish, feasting on abundant crayfish in season, mussels for the picking and just-caught linefish. “We don’t take any crayfish home – we rather come back the next weekend and do it again!” they say.



How to prepare crayfish the West Coast way

It's kinder to drown the crayfish before cooking by immersing them in cold, fresh water for about 30 minutes. Another method is to pierce the head between the eyes with a sharp knife, or between the carapace and the tail. Fill a large pot two-thirds full with sea water and bring it to the boil. Add the crayfish (they must not be completely covered in water). Bring the pot to the boil again and simmer the crayfish for about 15 minutes. Remove and hang over the edge of the pot so that all the water can drain out. Split them in half and enjoy with homemade mayonnaise.

To braai, cut the cooked crayfish in half. Brush with olive oil and garlic (optional). Braai on the shell side for a few minutes, then turn over and grill the flesh for a smoky char-grilled taste. Alternatively, you can braai the crayfish whole in their shells and when cooked halve them and braai them, shell-side down. Always remove the alimentary canal from the cooked crayfish before serving or braaiing it (or when still raw if using the crayfish for ceviche).

BRAAI TIPS

- If possible, use sea water to cook the crayfish in.
- Take care not to overcook the crayfish – the flesh should be opaque but still succulent.
- Cooked crayfish should have a bright red colour.

WINE NOTE

When these West Coast wine folk gather together, everyone brings a bottle of their favourite wine. Namaqua Guinevere has the distinction of being the first Cap Classique produced on the West Coast and Len Knoetze, their production manager, recommends this coral-pink bubbly with the crayfish. Otherwise, it's a Sauvignon and seafood festival: Fryer's Cove Sauvignon Blanc and Bay to Bay Sauvignon Blanc; Lutzville Diamond Collection Sauvignon Blanc; and Sir Lambert Sauvignon Blanc. This winegrowing area produces some noteworthy Sauvignon Blancs.



SWEET POTATO CHIPS WITH SAFFRON MAYONNAISE

2kg sweet potatoes

Enough sunflower oil to cover the chips

Peel the sweet potatoes, cut them into chips and fry them in a heavy-based cast-iron pot on the fire. Drain on paper towel and serve piping hot with homemade mayonnaise.

HOMEMADE MAYONNAISE WITH SAFFRON

100ml Sauvignon Blanc

3g saffron

2 egg yolks

200ml olive oil

¼ teaspoon salt

Pinch of pepper

4 cloves garlic, crushed

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

Chilli-infused oil & 2 chillies (optional)

Start by infusing the wine with the saffron. Place the egg yolks in a mixing bowl and whisk together. While steadily whisking the yolks, begin to slowly drizzle the oil into them in a very thin, steady stream. The yolks and oil will start to form a smooth, creamy mixture. When about half the oil has been added, and the mixture is starting to resemble mayonnaise, add salt, pepper and garlic. Whisk together, then continue to drizzle in the oil while whisking. Stop before you've used all the oil. Add the saffron-infused wine and whisk it in. Add the lemon juice, stir it in well, then taste. If it needs more salt, lemon juice, pepper or garlic, add some in now and whisk it in until it tastes right. It should be thick and creamy, not overly garlicky, with none of the other flavours too strong. Add the rest of the oil if necessary. For some added heat, substitute 20ml of the olive oil with chilli-infused oil, and add 2 deseeded and finely chopped red chillies.

CRAYFISH CEVICHE

This dish, which originates from South America, is usually made using a firm white fish – the raw fish becomes opaque, the citrus and salt effectively cooking it. There are many variations on the basic recipe below, such as the addition of onions, tomatoes, coriander (cilantro) and/or chilli, but the unique flavour of the crayfish is best enhanced using the simplest of ingredients.

2–3 raw crayfish tails, cleaned

4 limes (you can also use lemons)

Olive oil

Freshly ground salt

Cut the crayfish into cubes, place in a bowl, and squeeze the limes over them, adding a splash of olive oil and a grinding of salt. Cover and set aside for a few hours (at least 3–4), until they become opaque. Drain off some liquid if needs be and finish with a drizzle of olive oil. Garnish with fresh chives or coriander.





MONIKA'S WEST COAST SEAFOOD POTJIE

SERVES 8

- 125g butter
- 4 large onions, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 green peppers, diced
- 250g mushrooms, sliced
- 3 cups uncooked white rice
- 8 cups fresh chicken stock (or use 4 chicken stock cubes & 8 cups warm water)
- 300g hake*, cubed
- 300g calamari*
- 300g prawns*
- 400g mussels*
- 4 crayfish tails
- 1 cup Sauvignon Blanc
- 250ml cream
- 1 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt & lemon pepper

**Use frozen if fresh is not available*

Use a flat-based cast-iron pot. Heat butter and add the uncooked rice, onions, garlic, green peppers and mushrooms, cooking until the onion softens. Add chicken stock and warm water. Cook until the rice is almost done and most of the water has evaporated. Add the seafood (remove the alimentary canal from the raw crayfish tails and cut them into rings). Add the wine. Flavour with salt and lots of lemon pepper. Cook until the seafood is done. Add the cream and mix in the fresh parsley. Serve with lemon wedges.



The thee-legged *POTJIE* or cast-iron pot has been used in Africa for centuries and the Falkirk is the real deal. There is an elaborate procedure around 'curing' the potjie when used for the first time and creating a potjie stew has been elevated to an art form. Potjie cooking competitions are held throughout South Africa at school fêtes, church bazaars and camping sites.





La Motte – This Franschhoek estate, home to fine wines, floriculture and ethereal oils, is owned by Hanneli Rupert-Koegelenberg and managed by her husband Hein Koegelenberg.

NATURE IN HARMONY

La Motte stands out for its focus on conservation. The farm, a Biodiversity & Wine Initiative Champion, is protecting hectares of natural habitat on the Wemmershoek mountains. The vineyards are being converted to organic, and the farm is now commercially growing rare flower species such as disa and blushing brides, formerly only found in the wild. The ethereal oil operation produces flavours and fragrances from various plants, including buchu and Cape snow bush, for use in perfumes, lotions, soaps and even food.

La Motte's knowledgeable horticulturist Neels van der Linde is also a talented cook. Fittingly, one of his favourite traditional South African recipes is for a *waterblommetjie potjie*, an all-in-one dish he makes in his much-used Le Creuset cast-iron pot. Waterblommetjies (*Aponogeton distachyos*) translates as water flowers and these indigenous fleshy buds, found on the ponds and dams of the Cape winelands, are considered a delicacy.



WATERBLOMMETJIE POTJIE

750g waterblommetjies (about one basketful or two bunches; you can substitute tinned waterblommetjies if fresh are not available)

4 tablespoons butter

Splash of cooking oil

1,5kg mutton (rib, neck & tails)

4 onions

2 cloves garlic, peeled

8 potatoes, peeled & halved

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

Sprig of rosemary

2 cloves

Juice of two lemons*

1 cup water

White wine – enough to cover

** Instead of lemon juice, you can use a bunch of fresh sorrel, finely chopped*

Start by destemming the waterblommetjies and removing tough leaflets. Rinse thoroughly under a running tap. Now bring water to the boil in a medium-sized potjie, add the waterblommetjies, cook for 5 minutes and drain. It's important to rinse the waterblommetjies once more. Now you're ready to prepare your potjie. Heat the butter and oil in the potjie. Roast meat in this mixture until brown on both sides, but not done. In the meantime, slice the onions and bruise the garlic cloves, then add to the meat. Braise onion and garlic gently until golden but not brown or burnt. Arrange meat over the onions and garlic; layer the waterblommetjies on top, then the potatoes. Flavour with salt and abundant black pepper, and add the sprig of rosemary and the cloves. Squeeze lemon juice over then add the water and enough wine to cover the potjie ingredients. Place the lid on the potjie and simmer until the meat is done and the potatoes are soft. Add more water if necessary. Serve with brown rice.

WINE NOTE

Turn this waterblommetjie potjie into a feast by serving it with a bottle of chilled La Motte Chardonnay, an elegant, well-integrated wine. Cape Chardonnay is made in a wide variety of styles, both wooded and unwooded, that work well with a variety of dishes, from rich and creamy to spicy.

BRAAI TIPS

- It's important to rinse the waterblommetjies very thoroughly.
- Brown the meat over fairly hot coals. Add the other ingredients then move the potjie higher or to the side to control the heat and ensure a long, slow cooking time.
- "Now sit back, relax ... and let the potjie decide the pace while you enjoy a glass of wine!" recommends Neels.





Boekenhoutskloof Winery – While travelling in the Caribbean, cellarmaster Marc Kent discovered an “outrageous” sauce at a rib shack on the island of Anguilla.

SMOKING HOT

He brought the recipe back home to this acclaimed winery in the Franschhoek valley, adapted it slightly and rates it as “easily the best ‘wing’ or ‘rib’ sauce I have ever tried”.

Marc has rigged up an inventive pulley system incorporating a bicycle cog, pedal and chain to lower the grid. He first seals the T-bone steaks and then seasons them with Maldon sea salt and Madagascan white pepper. “Then you ‘wind it’ (be generous) with the basting sauce and enjoy them cooked just the way you like!” he says.

This spicy sauce can be used on anything from chicken to steak as either a basting and/or accompaniment.



KENT'S KILLA SPICY SMOKED BBQ SAUCE

- 20 medium tomatoes (preferably Roma)
- 2 medium onions
- Fresh chillies (variety and quantity depends on desired heat level)
- 1 cup tomato sauce (ketchup)
- 1 cup Italian tomato purée
- 1 ½ cups apple cider vinegar
- 4 tablespoons aged dark rum or brandy
- ½ cup orange juice (optional)
- 4 tablespoons mild molasses
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons smoked Spanish paprika
- 4 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 8 large cloves garlic, crushed
- Ground chilli (to taste)

Cut tomatoes in half lengthwise, and scoop or squeeze out the seeds. Peel onions. Place tomatoes cut side up in a smoker on the opposite side to the heat source. Place onions and whole chillies in the smoker as well and smoke until tender. Remove tomatoes, chillies and onions from the smoker. Peel the tomatoes (saving as much juice as possible) and chillies once they are cool enough to handle. Roughly chop the tomatoes, chillies and onions. Heat 8 tablespoons of oil (preferably olive or peanut oil) in a large vessel and add all the ingredients, including orange juice if you like, and stir over a high heat until the ingredients begin to boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer uncovered for at least two hours (be sure to stir occasionally) until the sauce thickens considerably. Let the sauce cool and then transfer it to a blender (you may have to blend the sauce in batches) and blend into a smooth, thick purée. At this point you should taste the sauce and add more ground chilli, if you desire. However, if you add more chilli, be sure to blend it well.

Note: This is a salt-free recipe but you may wish to add salt to taste.

WINE NOTE

Boekenhouts Kloof's multi-regional red blend The Chocolate Block has a spicy, aromatic profile, "consistent with the smoked and charred taste of the sauce". Many Franschhoek winemakers are blending full-flavoured reds, sourcing grapes from several regions in order to achieve both balance of fruit and elegance.

BRAAI TIPS

- Used wine barrels are a great source of sawdust for smoking, "preferable to a commercial off-the-shelf product..." says Marc.
- The turning and basting are important so that all sides of the chicken wings, ribs or meat get covered with the sauce. Turning needs to happen frequently enough to avoid charring.
- Heat leftover sauce in a thick-bottomed saucepan over the coals and serve with the meat.





Boerewors (which translates as farmers' sausage) is fundamental to a good South African braai.

A FARM TRADITION

So seriously is this taken that there is an annual national competition to find the best boerewors. It's made from a mixture of beef and pork mixed with speck (pork fat) and vinegar, and typically seasoned with various spices like allspice, cloves and coriander. The meat mixture is then piped into casings – pork casings are the best for boerewors. Traditional recipes are closely guarded secrets and differ slightly from family to family, and butcher to butcher. Some people add herbs like marjoram, sage or thyme, or a hint of chilli or garlic. Others use wine – from dry white or red to sweet muscadel – instead of vinegar.



ELMA BRUWER'S 'OUTYDSE' BOEREWORS

(*Outydse* means old-fashioned.)

- 4,5kg boneless beef
- 900g boneless pork
- 1,35kg speck (pork fat)
- 3 tablespoons salt
- 1 tablespoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons coriander seeds
- 1 tablespoon ground cloves
- 1 tablespoon ground allspice
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup vinegar

Scorch the coriander seeds in a pan, taking care not to burn them (you know they're ready when they release an aroma that you can smell). Grind the seeds in a pestle and mortar, and then sift them. Cut the meat into cubes and mix the spices in, taking care not to over-handle the meat. Mince the meat. Dice the speck into 3mm cubes. Add the speck and vinegar to the minced meat and mix together lightly but thoroughly. Fill the casings loosely.

HINTS

- Always use good quality, fresh meat (frozen meat discolours the sausage).
- The casings must be washed thoroughly under running water.
- Do not fill the casings too tightly or they will burst while cooking.
- Do not allow air bubbles to form under the casing.

RECIPE & LOCATION

Springfield Estate, Robertson

BRAAI TIPS

- Grill the boerewors in one piece over hot coals in a closed hinged grid.
- Place the grid high in the beginning.
- Listen for the sizzle – that means it's cooking.
- Gently turn the boerewors regularly so that it browns on all sides.
- Do not prick the boerewors as it will lose meat juices and become dry and flavourless.



At the campsite, the first person up rekindles the embers of the previous night's fire and puts on the trusty enamel pot for the morning COFFEE. Coarsely ground coffee, blended with chicory, makes a cup of coffee so strong that only the addition of a huge dollop of sweetened condensed milk renders it drinkable.





CULINARY COMPLEMENTS

South Africa has an abundance of fresh seasonal produce available. Accompanying the main braai of fish, poultry or red meat you'll find a variety of side dishes, from crunchy green salads to vegetables baked in foil, followed by delicious desserts or cheese and preserves.

WINELANDS CHEESE FONDUE

There are many artisanal cheeseries situated on or near wine farms across the Cape winelands.

2 round cheeses (camembert or brie)

ROOT VEGETABLE CRISPS

Enough root vegetables to cover a baking tray (any root vegetables or a combination of them can be used – potatoes, sweet potatoes, beetroot, carrots and parsnips) • Freshly ground sea salt & black pepper

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Peel the vegetables and then, using the peeler or a mandolin, slice them very thinly. Dry the slices well with paper towel (if using potatoes, wash the slices in water first to remove excess starch). Put the slices in a bowl and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil. Lay the slices out flat in a single layer on a baking sheet, season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, and bake for 4–7 minutes (beetroot, carrots and parsnips take 4 minutes, and potatoes and sweet potatoes about 5–7 minutes). Remove the sheet from the oven and carefully remove the crisps from the baking sheet. Put on a rack or paper towel to cool.

GRIDDLED BABY MARROWS & BUTTERNUT

300g baby marrows (zucchini) • 300g baby butternut

Preheat a griddle pan to medium heat and drizzle with olive oil. Griddle courgettes and baby butternut in griddle pan over medium heat on stove or braai for no longer than 5 minutes. Once the vegetables have been removed, lightly drizzle the pan with some more olive oil. Place the cheese in the griddle pan and leave on medium heat for 3 minutes per side until slightly melted. Serve immediately. – Paul Cluver Wines



POT BREAD

300g bread flour • 10g instant yeast
 • 2 teaspoons sugar • 1½ teaspoons salt
 • 125–185ml milk • 4 tablespoons lukewarm water • 15g butter, melted

Place the flour, yeast, sugar and salt into a bowl, and make a well in the centre. Add the lukewarm milk, water and melted butter, and mix to form a soft dough. Knead until smooth and elastic. Place the dough in a greased bowl and lightly cover it with a sheet of greased plastic wrap. Leave it to rise in a warm place until the dough has doubled in size. Punch down the dough and place in a large greased tin, let it prove for another 20 minutes and then bake in a pre-heated oven at 180°C for about 40 minutes or until the top is golden brown.

– Spier



GRAPE JAM

(*Korrelkonfyt* in Afrikaans)

4kg grapes (Marié Krige uses cinsaut)
 • 3kg white sugar • Squeeze of lemon juice

Heat ingredients in a pot slowly, taking care not to let the mixture burn, until all the sugar has melted. Take off the heat, give it a good stir, let stand for a few seconds and scoop off as many pips as possible. The jam is ready when it covers the back of a cold metal spoon.

– Kanonkop



GREEN FIG PRESERVE

500g green figs • 500ml sugar • 125g calcium hydroxide (slaked lime) • 3 whole dried star anise • 3 dried allspice berries • 3–4cm piece of fresh ginger, peeled (optional)

Wipe the green figs well and scrape along their sides with a sharp knife to remove fuzziness. Cut a cross at the base of the fig. Dissolve the calcium hydroxide in 2½ litres of water and place the prepared figs in the water to soak overnight. The next day, drain the figs well to remove all traces of the calcium. Dissolve all the sugar in 2 litres of water, add the dried spices and boil until you have a syrupy consistency. Carefully add the figs and the piece of ginger root and boil until the figs are just tender – they have to be quite crisp on the outside but soft enough for a skewer to go through with ease. During the cooking process you will notice that foam accumulates at the top of the syrup; constantly remove this with a metal spoon. Pack the figs in sterilised glass jars, seal and leave to mature for 6 weeks.



CHEESE PLATTER

A braai in South Africa often ends with a cheese platter, featuring local cheeses and olives, preserved fruit like green figs and *waatlemoen* (watermelon), and various homemade chutneys, jams, pickles and relishes.



SUMMER SAMP SALAD

500g cooked, rinsed sump (crushed maize kernels) • ¼ cucumber, cut into cubes
 • 2 peaches, peeled & sliced • 1 red pepper, cut into cubes • 5 spring onions, chopped • 100ml pine nuts • 100ml chopped coriander (cilantro)
 • 100ml chopped basil • 100ml chopped mint
 • 1 clove garlic, finely chopped • Salt & freshly ground black pepper • 150ml salad oil • 50ml white spirit vinegar • 50ml sweet mustard
 • 30ml sugar • Pumpkin seeds

Mix the sump, cucumber, peaches, red pepper, spring onions and pine nuts together in a mixing bowl. Spoon the mixture into a salad bowl. Mix together the chopped herbs, garlic, salt, pepper, salad oil, vinegar, sweet mustard and sugar. Drizzle the dressing over the salad and mix well. Keep refrigerated until needed. Sprinkle with toasted pumpkin seeds and serve.

– KWV (Gar'nish Executive Catering)



PUMPKIN FRITTERS

Makes ± 3 dozen

500ml cooked pumpkin (or use butternut)
 • 120g cake flour • 10ml baking powder
 • 2ml salt • 1 egg, beaten • Sunflower oil for shallow-frying • Cinnamon sugar for sprinkling

Purée the cooked pumpkin (or butternut) until very fine. Add the flour, baking powder, salt and egg, and mix well. Add spoonfuls to hot oil in a pan and flatten. Fry on both sides until golden brown and done. Drain on paper towel before putting on a serving platter.

SYRUP

15g butter • 300g sugar • 200ml milk
 • 15ml custard powder • 175ml cold water

Heat butter, sugar and milk. Mix custard powder with cold water and mix into hot milk mixture – bring to the boil. Drizzle the hot syrup over the fritters and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar while still hot. Serve immediately.

– KWV (Gar'nish Executive Catering)



LENTIL & BARLEY SALAD

200g lentils, cooked al dente & rinsed well
 • 200g barley, cooked al dente & rinsed well
 • 1 onion, finely chopped • 2 cloves garlic, chopped • 1 punnet Rosa cherry tomatoes, washed • 1 punnet mange tout, halved lengthwise • 5 spring onions, sliced
 • ½ cucumber, thinly sliced • 200ml chopped flat-leaf parsley • 100ml chopped coriander (cilantro) • 200ml chopped fresh basil • Salt & freshly ground black pepper • 175ml salad oil
 • 75ml white spirit vinegar • 30ml sugar/honey
 • Sunflower seeds

Mix the cooked lentils and barley together. Add the onion, Rosa tomatoes, mange tout and spring onions, and mix well. Spoon the mixture into a salad bowl and fan the cucumber rounds along the inside of the bowl. Mix together the garlic, parsley, coriander, basil, salt and pepper, salad oil, spirit vinegar and honey or sugar, and pour over the salad. Sprinkle with sunflower seeds before serving. Refrigerate until needed.

– KWV (Gar'nish Executive Catering)



BEAN SALAD WITH LEMONGRASS PESTO

The traditional three-bean salad is a combination of tinned beans in a vinaigrette dressing. This contemporary version uses fresh legumes dressed with a tangy pesto.

140g shelled fava beans • 350g fine green beans • 200g shelled fresh *petits pois* (fresh baby peas) • 12 spring onions • ½ cup flat-leaf parsley

Steam the fava beans, plunge into iced water and remove their skins to reveal the bright green beans inside. Steam the beans, peas and spring onions until tender. Plunge into iced water to retain the colour. Roughly chop the parsley and add to the greens.

LEMONGRASS PESTO

2 stems lemongrass, chopped • ½ cup olive oil • 100g pine nuts • Garlic cloves to taste • Lemon juice to taste • Salt & fine white pepper to taste

Blend the lemongrass, olive oil, pine nuts and garlic to a smooth paste, adding more oil if necessary. Add lemon juice and seasonings to taste. Add pesto to the greens. Toss and serve.



SUMMER CARROT SALAD

2 tablespoons orange juice • 1 tablespoon lemon juice • 2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil • Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper • ½ teaspoon ground cumin • ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon • 4 cups peeled and coarsely grated carrots • 1 fresh pineapple, peeled & grated or chopped into small chunks • 2 oranges, peeled, white pith removed, cut crossways & then into small segments • ½ cup sun-dried raisins

Combine the orange juice, lemon juice, olive oil, sea salt, pepper, cumin and cinnamon in a bowl, and whisk. Add the grated carrot, pineapple, orange segments and raisins.



GREEN SALAD WITH BASIL VINAIGRETTE

250g mixed baby salad leaves • 1 cucumber, sliced into ribbons • 6 baby marrows (zucchini), sliced into ribbons • 30g mange tout, julienned • 1 avocado, cubed • 100g sprouts

Mix all the green ingredients together and top with the sprouts.

BASIL VINAIGRETTE

5ml wholegrain mustard • 5ml honey • 30ml basil pesto • Juice of 1 lemon • 45ml olive oil • Salt & freshly ground black pepper

Mix all the ingredients together and serve with the green salad.

– Obikwa



SPICY BRAAI POTATOES

250g potatoes, parboiled & diced • 200g red pepper • 12 cherry tomatoes, halved • 2 cloves garlic, chopped • 2 tablespoons parsley, chopped • 1 good pinch of turmeric • 1 good pinch of paprika • 2 good pinches of salt • 2 good pinches of pepper • 75ml Colombar (or any suitable semi-sweet alternative) • 75ml olive oil

Mix the potatoes, peppers and tomatoes together in a bowl. Add the chopped garlic and seasonings. Squeeze the mixture lightly to squash the tomatoes. Take a piece of foil large enough to contain all the ingredients and fold it twice, creating a 'bag'. Place the prepared ingredients in the foil bag, together with the Colombar and olive oil, and firmly seal it. Place onto a hot braai and cook for about 25 minutes over a high heat. When cooked, the potatoes, peppers and tomatoes should be soft, and the juices emulsified. Open the foil and leave in the oven under the grill, while the rest of braai is completed, for the sauce to thicken and the potatoes to brown. Sprinkle chopped parsley over the potatoes and serve.

– Oranjerivier Wine Cellars



TOMATO CUPS

800g ripe Roma tomatoes • 300g mozzarella cheese • 125g pesto • Olive oil for drizzling • Freshly ground black pepper

Cut the tops of the tomatoes three-quarters of the way through to form lids. Scoop out the seeds. Fill the tomatoes with cubes of mozzarella cheese, dab with pesto and close the lids. Stand side by side in a dish suitable for use on the fire, drizzle with olive oil, season with black pepper and cook slowly on medium-heat coals until the tomatoes are soft and the cheese is melted.

– Welmoed



SONGVEI'S BABY SPINACH SALAD

"I love toasted pine nuts so I often add them after tossing the salad, it gives it a really yummy flavour."

3–4 120g packs baby spinach leaves, washed
 • 3 kiwi fruit per packet of leaves • 1 generous handful of berries (raspberries, strawberries or blueberries) per pack

Spread the baby spinach leaves on two platters, and top with kiwi fruit and berries. Pour the dressing over just before serving.

DRESSING

Enough for 3–4 120g packs of baby spinach

2 teaspoons sesame seeds • 1 teaspoon poppy seeds • ½ cup sunflower oil • ½ cup apple cider vinegar • ¼ to ½ cup sugar, according to taste • 1 teaspoon Worcester sauce • ½ teaspoon paprika • 2 heaped teaspoons grated onion

You can mix all the ingredients (except for the grated onion) in a jar a day or two ahead and store it in the fridge; only add the onion on the day the salad is to be eaten. – Paul Cluver Wines



NORMA RATCLIFFE'S PINOTAGE CHUTNEY

2kg pinotage grapes, pitted • 1 cup chopped onion • ½ cup brown sugar • ¼ cup balsamic vinegar • ½ teaspoon salt • 1¼ teaspoon mustard seeds • ½ cup Pinotage • ¼ cup currants (optional) • 2 teaspoons allspice • 1 teaspoon ground ginger • 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Pour yourself a glass of wine, put on some good music and relax. Then cook all the ingredients for about 30 minutes; reduce the heat and simmer for another 30 minutes until the fruit is soft and the mixture is thick – it makes about 2 cups. Use indulgently on your boerewors roll or serve with any other braai creation.

– Warwick Estate



VEGETABLE SKEWERS

16 baby potatoes • 1 butternut, cubed
 • 1 red onion, peeled • 1 white onion, peeled
 • 16 cherry tomatoes • 4 baby marrows (zucchini), ribboned • ½ lemon • Olive oil
 • Coarse sea salt & milled black pepper
 • 8 wooden skewers

(You can use any fresh seasonal vegetables if the ones mentioned are not available.)

Soak the wooden skewers in water overnight to prevent them from charring. Rinse the vegetables. Parboil the potatoes and butternut. Slice the onions lengthwise to create wedges and put aside. Slice the baby marrows lengthwise into strips using a peeler. Thread vegetables onto the soaked skewers. Rolling the marrow strips into spirals adds visual interest. Alternate colours as this also makes for more attractive skewers. Squeeze half a lemon over the skewers and season. Roast on slow coals until the vegetables are cooked through, basting with olive oil to help retain the moisture. Serve and enjoy.

– Cederberg Private Cellar



FILLED BUTTERNUT

1 medium- to large-sized butternut • 100g mild, creamy goat's milk cheese • 2 handfuls of wild rocket • 1 large red pepper, grilled over the coals and skinned • 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 • Olive oil for drizzling • Freshly ground salt & black pepper

Cook the butternut wrapped in foil, shiny side in, on the coals (a medium-sized butternut takes about an hour to cook). Cut the cooked butternut in half lengthwise, scrape out the seeds and fibres, and remove some of the flesh to form a hollow the same shape as the butternut. Divide the ingredients between the two halves. Line the hollows with the rocket so that it wilts slightly against the hot butternut. Top with goat's milk cheese, garlic and strips of red pepper, season and drizzle with olive oil to taste. There are many variations on this filling – a popular combination is spinach, mushrooms and feta.



COLESLAW WITH YOGURT DRESSING

This is a healthy take on a conventional coleslaw with mayonnaise.

- 1 baby purple cabbage, finely shredded
- 1 baby green cabbage, finely shredded
- 2 bulbs fennel, cut into thin strips or chunks
- Bunch of fresh mint leaves • Handful of walnuts • Sea salt

Place the cabbage in a salad bowl, sprinkle with salt and toss well. Mix in the fennel, mint and walnuts.

DRESSING

- 5–6 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 5–6 tablespoons vegetable oil • Salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste • 1 cup Bulgarian yogurt

In a small bowl stir a little bit of ground pepper into the vinegar and whisk in the oil, then add the yogurt. Pour over the salad, toss well, and let stand for a while to blend the flavours.



SLAPHAKSKEENTJIES

This is a traditional South African onion salad recipe. The idea is that you adjust it to your own taste. In the days of old every cook made it to her own taste without a recipe. The Afrikaans name, *slaphakskeentjies*, literally means 'little limp heels'.

- 1 kg pickling onions, peeled

DRESSING

- 2 large eggs • ½ cup sugar • 1 ½ teaspoons mustard powder • ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper • White wine vinegar

Blanch the onions in salted water until just tender. Beat eggs well; add mustard powder to the sugar and slowly add to the eggs. Beat until sugar is incorporated. Add the vinegar slowly to the beaten eggs; add seasoning. It should have a sweet-and-sour taste. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, bring the mixture almost to a simmer, stirring continuously. It should be the consistency of mayonnaise – pourable but thick. Pour the hot dressing over the onions and leave to cool. Serve at room temperature. Keeps well in the fridge for a few days.



CORN ON THE COB

Nothing beats *mealies* (corn on the cob) char-grilled over the coals and served piping hot, dripping with melted butter, and seasoned with freshly ground salt and pepper. For a more sophisticated variation, roll the mealies in chilli butter, sour cream, and grated parmesan or pecorino cheese.



SOUSBOONTJIES

- 500g red speckled sugar beans • 1 cup white wine vinegar • ½ cup brown sugar • 10ml salt
- 2 ½ ml black pepper

Soak the beans overnight. Drain them well, then boil in fresh water (do not add any salt) for about 2 hours (or in a slow cooker for about 6 hours). Combine the other ingredients and add them to the beans, cook for a further 10–15 minutes over a low heat, stirring frequently. Gently mash about ⅔ of the beans. Adapt to personal taste by adding more vinegar, sugar, salt or pepper. Sousboontjies can be served hot or cold. They can also be bottled in sterilised jars.

– Durbanville Hills



VETKOEK

1kg cake flour • 2 teaspoons dry yeast
 • 2 teaspoons sugar • 2 teaspoons salt • 1 litre water plus half a cup for mixing the yeast
 • 1 litre vegetable oil for deep-frying

Mix the yeast and sugar with half a cup of lukewarm water in a two-cup container. Allow to stand until the liquid has risen and is foamy. Mix this with the flour and the salt, and add the rest of the water, which must be about body temperature. The dough should be soft in consistency but not runny. If necessary, add more water. Knead thoroughly and allow to rise. When risen, punch down the dough and allow to rise again. Then form little balls with your hands and drop these into hot oil in a deep frying pan. When golden brown on both sides, remove the vetkoek from the pan and place on a paper towel to absorb the excess oil. The vetkoek are now ready for serving. Delicious with grape jam!

– De Wetshof



MILK TART

A local favourite with a slightly sweetened shortcrust pastry. Buy or make your own dough. Roll out into 5mm thickness and line a loose-bottomed 25cm tin. Press dough lightly into tin, neaten edges, prick with a fork and brush with lightly beaten egg white.

FILLING

500ml sugar • 50ml flour • Pinch of salt
 • 1 litre milk • 5ml vanilla essence • 4 cardamom pods • 2 sticks cinnamon • 9 eggs, separated • 30g butter • 30ml cinnamon sugar

Mix half the sugar with flour and salt. Bring milk to the boil. Carefully stir the flour mixture into the milk; continue stirring over low heat until the mixture thickens. Remove from heat; add vanilla essence, cardamom and cinnamon. Beat egg yolks; add the rest of the sugar; beat until light and creamy. Stir egg mixture into milk mixture. Leave to cool slightly and remove cardamom pods and cinnamon sticks. Beat egg whites until stiff; fold into filling. Spoon filling into unbaked crust. Dot with butter and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Bake at 180°C for 30 minutes. Reduce heat to 160°C and bake until crust is golden.

– Full recipe in Cass Abrahams Cooks Cape Malay: Food from Africa



HOT CHOCOLATE CUPS

¼ cup cream • ¼ cup sugar (if you have a sweeter palate) • 5 eggs • 200g dark chocolate
 • Chilli to taste (optional)

Melt the chocolate in the top half of a double boiler. Separate the eggs. Beat the egg whites until stiff and set aside. Beat the egg yolks. Slowly add the melted chocolate and the cream. Gently fold the egg whites into the mixture. Pour into small ramekins or enamel cups. Create a bain-marie by using a braai dish that has a tight-fitting lid. Settle the cups into the dish and add water up to their middle. Set on a grid over hot coals and leave to simmer slowly. Alternatively, bake in a bain-marie in the oven at 180°C for 15–20 minutes. The chocolate mixture should rise slightly and be gooey in the centre. Serve hot or cold around the fireside. (Option: Press a block of chocolate into the heart of the mixture in each cup and let it melt during cooking to create a delectable oozy chocolate centre.)



FIRE-BAKED APPLE CRUMBLE

2 packets tennis biscuits (coconut tea biscuits)
 • 150g butter, melted • 2x900g tins pie apples
 • 1 tin condensed milk • 3 teaspoons ground cinnamon • 6 tablespoons sugar • 4 teaspoons vanilla essence • 1 cup raisins • 1 cup cream

Crush the biscuits until very fine. Add the melted butter to them and mix well. Add more butter if needed. Brush a cast-iron pot with melted butter. Press the biscuit crumb mixture against the sides and base of the pot. Keep some to sprinkle on the top. Mix together the apples, raisins, cinnamon, sugar and vanilla essence. Spoon the apple mixture into the tart base. Pour the condensed milk and cream over it. Sprinkle the rest of the crumbs over it and put the lid on. Put the pot on low coals, remembering to place some coals on the lid. Bake for ± 50 minutes until the top turns golden brown and crisp. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream.

– KVV (Gar'nish Executive Catering)

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- sosaties, lamb 41
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skilpadjies 92

USEFUL CONVERSIONS

Measurements	Liquid measures	Weights	Oven temperature equivalents			
5mm	¼ inch	15g	½oz	<i>Celcius</i>	<i>Fahrenheit</i>	<i>Gas Mark</i>
1cm	½ inch	30g	1oz	160°C	325°F	3
2,5cm	1 inch	150g	1lb	180°C	350°F	4
		62ml	¼ cup	200°C	400°F	6
		165ml	⅔ cup	220°C	425°F	7
		250ml	1 cup			

slaphakskeentjies 150

snoek

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- smoked snoek pâté 87
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- snoek on the coals, basting sauce 33

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- tea-smoked springbok salad 13

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stuffed pork neck roll with port sauce 25

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For more information on sustainable fishing: www.wvfsassi.co.za

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