

FOR STARTERS: *WELLINGTON ROUND-UP*

While you're in the Cape, don't miss the gourmet paradise of Wellington...
by Diana Wemyss

Wellington is just a 45-minute drive up the N1 from Cape Town. You can nip out on a Saturday morning and come home laden with hormone-free game, mushrooms, goat's cheese, organic olive oils and wines, buffalo mozzarella, fresh or dried fruit and fine liquor (there are 26 wineries and five distillers in the area). Or take a weekend break at one of the many guest houses and self-catering cottages.



Diemersfontein

DIEMERSFONTEIN WINE ESTATE

This estate, put on the map by its pinotage, has a classically furnished guest house and the fine Seasons restaurant. The annual Pinotage on Tap is a popular music and wine party. Seasons 021-864-5060; wine tasting and guest house, 021-864-5050.

BONTEBOK RIDGE GAME RESERVE

Part of the Renosterveld conservancy in the Limietberg Valley, this is home to many buck species and the once extinct quagga. Wild boar feast in vineyards that provide 400 tons of grapes for the Tall Horse brand. Game drives, R265 a person, minimum four people. Sausage, biltong and venison can be ordered. Call Tom Turner, 082 576 9657.

FOXENBURG ESTATE Owned by Marianne and Jan Hemmes, this farm has a large herd of pretty white Swiss Saanen goats and produces a fine selection of goat's cheeses as well as a delicious Greek-style yoghurt, sold by appointment or through the Wellness Warehouse in Cape Town. The Hemmes also grow oyster mushrooms

and produce grapes and olives on this certified organic farm. Call 021-873-5617 or 082 600 5689.

WELVANPAS

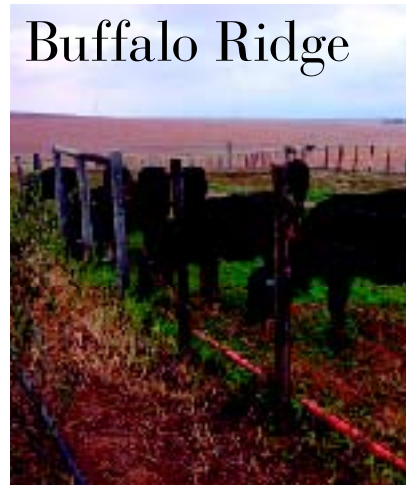
Founded in 1705 and owned by the Retief family, descendants of the trekker Piet Retief, this farm hosts an annual Bain's Trail Run through the vineyards, fynbos and along a mountain stream. You can do the trail throughout the year, permit R20, open on weekdays from 9am to 5pm and on weekends from 8am to 3pm. There is a coffee shop in the old farm mill for light meals, and farm produce and wines for sale. Call 021-864-1239.



Jorgensen's

JORGENSEN'S DISTILLERY Roger Jorgensen has distilled rich Savingnac brandies in Wellington since 1994 and you can taste them at this charming Huguenot farm in the centre of town or take a tour to other brandy distillers in the area. Visit www.savingnac.com.

BUFFALO RIDGE MOZZARELLA Wayne Rademeyer gave up his law career in order to import a herd of water buffalo, and now owns South Africa's



Buffalo Ridge

first and only farm producing original mozzarella from the milk of these huge animals. No ecologically harmful substances are used, and the buffalo are pasture-fed, producing milk high in protein and calcium. Call 082 375 0977.

GRAND DEDALE COUNTRY HOUSE

Bright rooms, sparkling mirrors, crystal chandeliers, beautiful fabrics and French furnishings give this boutique hotel – secluded in a secret, narrow valley – world-class appeal. Great food paired with Doolhof estate's full range of wines. Call 021-873-4089.

UPLANDS ORGANIC WINE AND BRANDY ESTATE

Everything here is organic: the brandy, grappa (voted best in the world in an international competition), port, wine, olives, oils and porcini mushrooms. Veterinarian Dr Edmund Oettlé and his wife Elsie live in an early 19th century house; guests can hire the more modern chalet, R250 per person a night. Call 082 731 4774.

Wellington Tourism Office, 021-873-4604 or email info@wellington.co.za.

Photographs courtesy of Wellington Tourism Office