

Food, Wine, Nature & A Good Time

Exploring the Bergrivier Region

The Bergrivier region and the beautiful towns within it – which are right on Cape Town’s doorstep – offer something for everyone this summer and are also close enough for day-trippers to enjoy. There are a vast array of activities, accommodation options, and some of the most pristine and untouched nature reserves, wetlands, lagoons, mountain landscapes, and more.

VELDDRIF

The hugely popular West Coast village of Velddrif is one of the most popular birdwatching sites in South Africa, and the estuary is rated as one of the most important birding areas in the world. Velddrif offers a myriad of watersports, including skiing, sailing, canoeing, windsurfing, kiteboarding, boating and stand-up paddle boarding. Fishing enthusiasts will be rewarded as the river contains abundant fish species. The Fisheries Museum is well worth a visit to learn about the colourful history of the fishing industry along this coast. The area also offers 4x4ing, hiking, mountain climbing, and a shooting range at nearby Klein Tafelberg.

A boat cruise up the river on the Cracklin Rosie, or with Knot Xtreme, is a must-do experience, and Bokkomlaan – the oldest road in the town that snakes up the edge of the Berg River – is a great place to relax and watch the tide come in while sipping artisanal coffee. Or sit on a jetty with a cocktail. Also, visit the art gallery and eclectic shops dotted along this quaint dirt road.

Bokkomlaan is named after the salted mullet strung into bunches and hung to dry like biltong. It is the signature local delicacy in this area. Velddrif is a foodie’s paradise. Some recommended experiences include wine and biltong tasting at Gedeelte Wines, Bokkom tasting at Ek & Djy restaurant, a craft beer tasting at Charlie’s Brewhouse, gin tasting at the Poetic License Distillery and an artisanal cheese tasting at Kokerboom Kaas.

PIKETBERG

Inland from Velddrif is the town of Piketberg, nestled at the foot of the Piketberg Mountain range. This historic village offers abundant outdoor activities, good food and wine, attractive architecture, warm country hospitality and rich heritage.

The self-guided Piketberg Historical Route (which can be done on foot) is the best way to experience the town, with its beautifully restored cottages and the imposing neo-gothic style Dutch Reformed Church. And don’t miss Piketberg’s increasingly popular Last Friday – a food and art festival that takes place across the village on the last Friday of every month. Visitors can expect a celebration of arts, culture, live music and delicious artisanal foods and drinks.

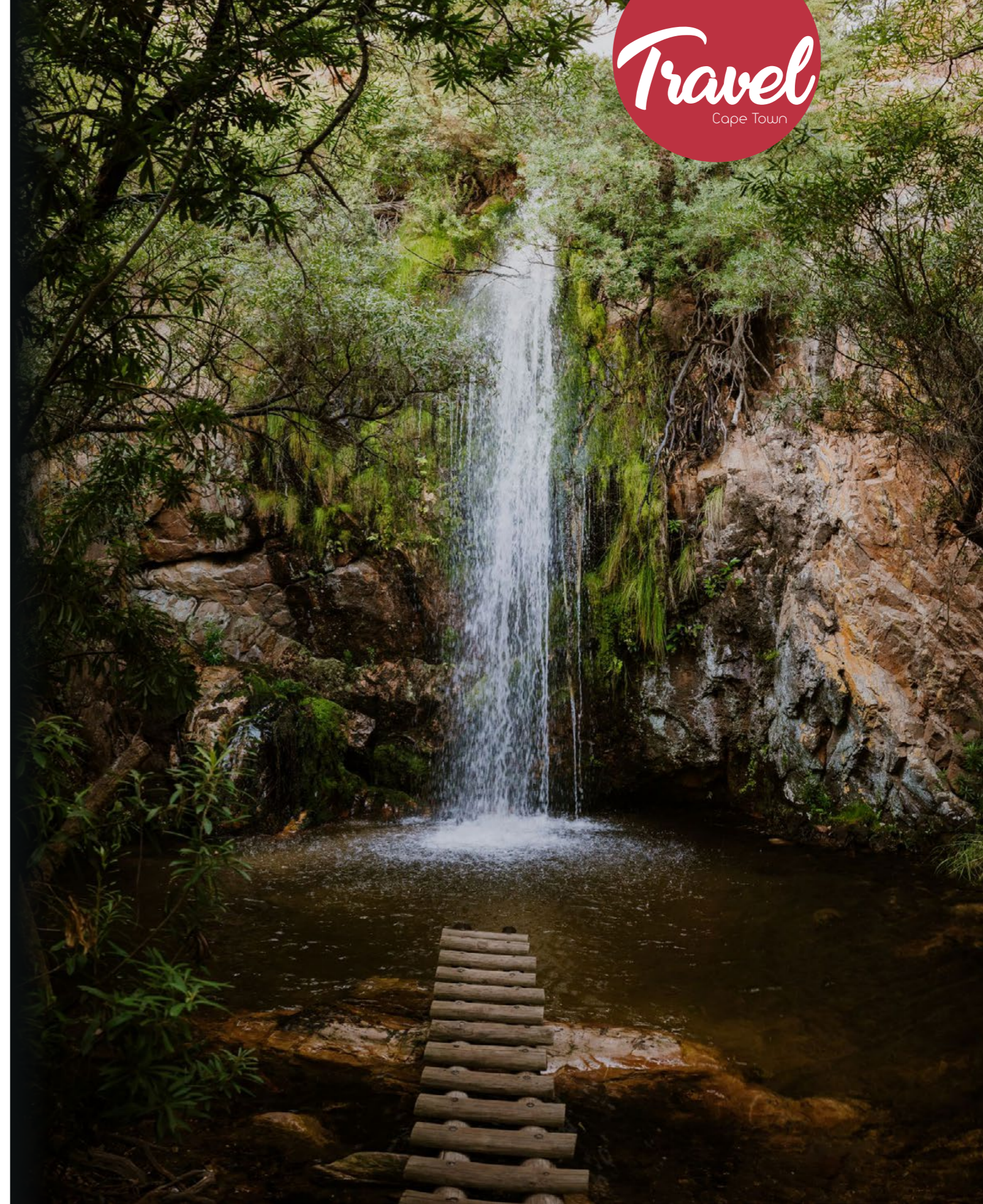
For wine lovers, a visit to Org-de-Rac, the local organic winery, to sample the fruits of the local vineyards is highly recommended, and the wine and cheese pairing on offer, as well as the fresh oysters and MCC, are a must. There is a wealth of activities to enjoy while staying in Piketberg – amongst these is horse riding, with beautiful 90-minute and three-hour trails on offer in Piket-Bo-Berg, as well as hiking in this stunning terrain overlooking the valley.

PORTERVILLE

Last but certainly not least on the list of highly recommended towns to visit this summer is Porterville, a quaint village nestled on the slopes of the Olifant’s River mountains

at the base of the Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Area.

This beautiful town – once considered a hidden gem – has now been dubbed one





of the most desirable and popular country towns in the Western Cape. There are many coffee shops, restaurants and eateries to explore for foodies. Amongst these are two exciting new offerings – Ben’s Diner, a 50’s themed American style diner at the Porterville Hotel, and Ystermeisie at the Flyers Lodge, which serves fresh artisanal meals with lovely views over the surrounding fields. Gin enthusiasts can enjoy a gin-tasting and tapas experience at the boutique distillery in the mountains above Porterville. An art experience at Die Lighuis Art and Coffee Shop is also highly recommended (Porterville is home to a large community of artists).

Outdoor enthusiasts are also in for a treat with a visit to Porterville, which offers a variety of hiking trails to fascinating destinations like De Hel (the hell) and De Tronk (the jail). There is also an uphill waterfall trail dotted with 22 waterfalls snaking their way down the mountainside, interspersed with crystal-clear pools for a cooling dip. Mountain bikers will love the many trails that wind their way through the surrounding countryside. A camping stay at Beaverlac is also always a good idea.

Whether it is birdwatching, river cruising, canoeing, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, horse-riding, shopping, enjoying delicious

food and great wine, gin-tasting, or just relaxing and re-energising in nature, there is so much to do in the Bergrivier area that visitors are truly spoilt for choice, which is excellent news for people looking for something to do this summer. These towns

promise a great escape for the entire family and memories to be made.

For more information, visit bergriviertourism.co.za.

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