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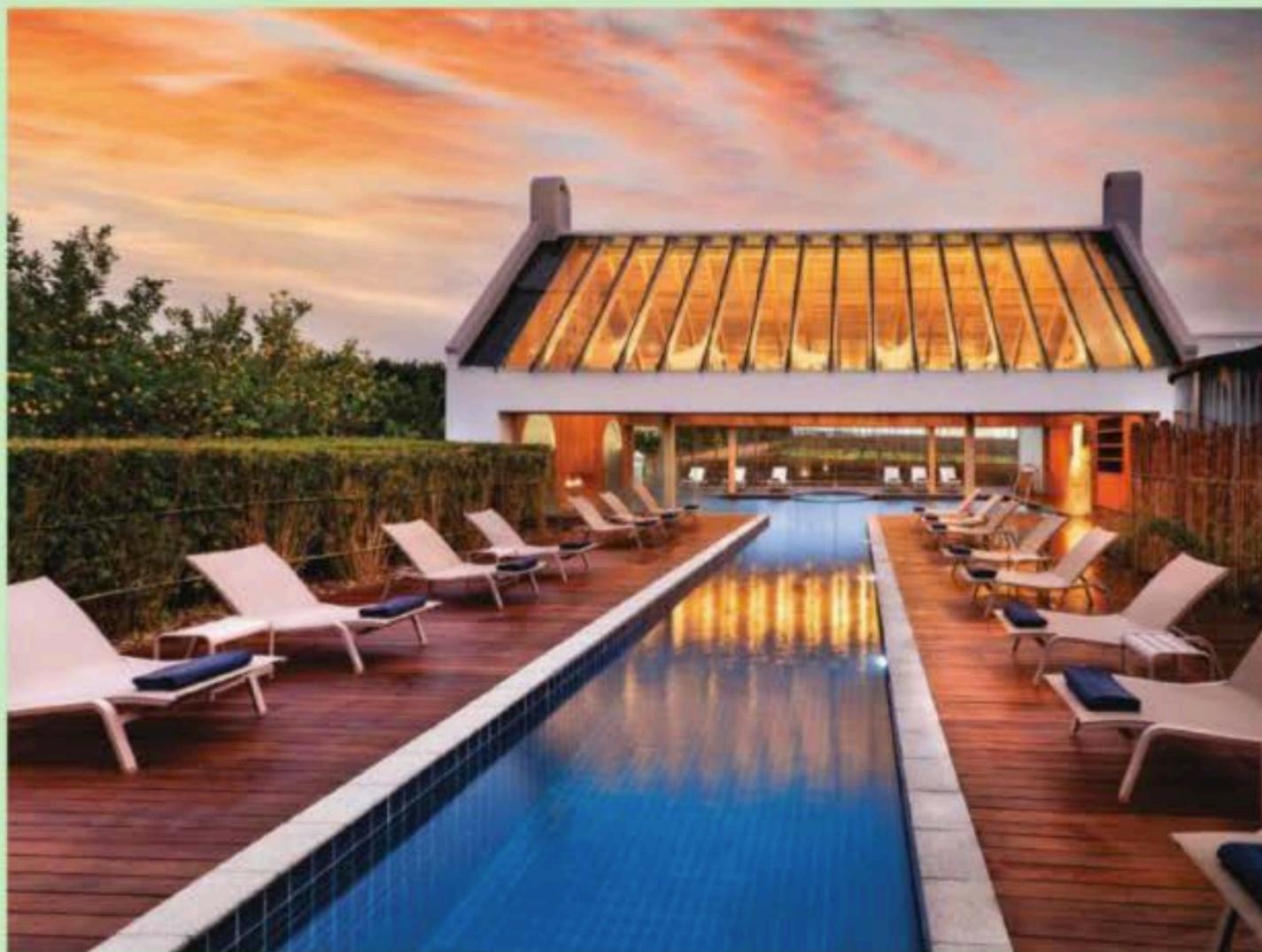
# NEEFISA MKHABELA

IS OWNING HER CROWN:  
ON AND OFF SCREEN

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# ESCAPE TO BLISS



## A day at the Babylonstoren Garden Spa

Tucked within a bamboo forest, this tranquil, soothing environment offers an immersive journey of water, heat and garden-sourced healing.

WORDS BY NONTANDO MPOSO

I spent four hours rejuvenating at the Babylonstoren Garden Spa, indulging in a massage, enjoying the vitality pool, unwinding in the steam room and sauna, and having a leisurely lunch at the Green House. This is my definition of a luxurious self-care day!

The spa beautifully blends the restorative qualities of water, heat and herbs sourced from the farm's stunning garden. At this spa, you can immerse yourself in several therapies, all set within a serene bamboo forest.

The Babylonstoren Garden Spa features several treatment rooms which include a Rasul chamber, tropical rain showers, a sauna and a steam room. It also boasts two authentic *hammams* (Turkish baths), a rare offering in South Africa. The indoor-outdoor pool area includes two vitality pools and a cosy fireplace, along with a unique room constructed entirely from pink Himalayan salt blocks (my favourite room).

Every space is exquisitely designed, each possessing a charm that could easily grace the pages of *Architectural Digest*. The signature treatments provided include the quintessential Garden Spa Experience, which offers a perfect blend of relaxation and rejuvenation. It's a luxurious private water ritual set in an exquisitely designed marble *hammam*.

Spa guests can choose between a full-hour water ritual, complete with a traditional scrub, dynamic stretching and massage, or opt for a soap treatment for two, which features a traditional scrub, soap wash and a relaxing massage. The deep-tissue bamboo massage is another standout option, renowned for its soothing qualities that may just lull you into a peaceful slumber.

"Signature treatments at the Babylonstoren Garden Spa include the quintessential Garden Spa experience – a luxurious water ritual set in an exquisitely designed marble *hammam*"





The use of bamboo, a plant steeped in heritage, enhances the spa experience. In addition to its role in the creation of the outdoor spaces for certain treatments, bamboo's healing and invigorating properties have been employed in massage practices since ancient times.

Another highlight is the *Rasul*, or mud chamber, which introduces a time-honoured holistic wellness experience to Babylonstoren. This treatment combines the benefits of heat, steam and mud to nourish the skin. The signature *Rasul* ritual comprises a four-step process designed to rejuvenate and revitalise, ensuring a memorable experience.

## ABOUT BABYLONSTOREN

Set in South Africa's Cape Winelands, close to Franschhoek and Stellenbosch, you'll find the magical place that is Babylonstoren. More than a farm and hotel, it's an experience in multiple dimensions. Babylonstoren celebrates an unhurried farm lifestyle and encourages a considered approach to quality and craftsmanship. Each and every item you'll find here is a labour of love brought to life by the thoughtful selection of materials and ingredients, many of which are created right here on the farm.

## MUST EXPERIENCE

### 1. The garden

The 5-hectare garden draws inspiration from the erstwhile original Company's Garden in Cape Town. It includes vegetable patches, orchards of fruit and nuts, a cycad garden, edible flowers, fragrant indigenous plants, ducks and chickens, bees for pollinating, a prickly pear maze and a palette of trees of historical or botanical significance. While wandering through the vast grounds, you are allowed to partake in some of the bounty the garden has to offer. Just remember to leave some for everyone else!

## Fun facts about the Babylonstoren Garden Spa

### What can you look forward to in the hot spa area?

The sprawling swimming pool is an indoor-outdoor experience to enjoy in all weather conditions, with a narrow water strip connecting two ambient indoor pools. A sauna, salt room built out of pink Himalayan salt blocks, and two heated vitality pools complete this holistic spa experience.

### Which products are used in the spa?

They use two skin ranges, Esse, a local, natural, organic product and QMS Medicosmetics, a German range.

### Insider tips?

Spa guests do not have to pay the garden entrance fee. The spa food menu offers wholesome, farm-grown options and fresh juices from the next-door Greenhouse Restaurant.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUPPLIED

“The sprawling swimming pool is an indoor-outdoor experience to enjoy in all weather conditions, with a narrow water strip connecting two ambient indoor pools”

## 2. The food

The farm's restaurants all celebrate and incorporate the garden's seasonal bounty. A farm-to-fork philosophy is at the heart of the food offering, which means that seasonal food is served reflecting a "pick, clean and serve" approach. The menus are guided by what is available in the garden. Fresh fruit, vegetables, herbs, eggs and other edible delicacies are harvested daily and transformed into dishes that are both nostalgic and innovative.

## 3. The wine

Babylonstoren's full range of award-winning wines, consisting of four whites, a rosé, four elegant reds and the beloved Sprinkel Cap Classique, can all be tasted.

## 4. The farm

Visitors can get a glimpse of farm operations through various experiences, such as olive oil blending, a garden tour or witnessing the essential oil distillery in the Scented Room. Other in-depth experiences — hosted by gardeners, chefs and specialists on a variety of topics — are offered in regular workshops. The daily garden tours are a special favourite, where guests are guided to lesser known secrets by one of the Babylonstoren master gardeners.

**Opening hours of the Garden Spa:** Open every day of the week from 8am to 5pm for day visitors. Booking essential. Visit [babylonstoren.com/spa](http://babylonstoren.com/spa) or phone +27 (0)21 300 3929. 📞

