

# LEISURE

A photograph of a glass and metal teahouse with a red bench and a table with chairs in front of it. The teahouse has a large arched glass roof and a black metal frame. The interior is visible through the glass, showing tables and chairs. Outside, there is a red metal bench, a small table with a white tablecloth, and two green plastic chairs. The ground is covered in gravel. There are trees and foliage around the teahouse.

## quiet reflection

*A new teahouse at Babylonstoren in the Cape winelands is a reposeful spot for a cuppa*

Text Leigh Robertson Photographs Adam Letch

## LEISURE HOT SPOT



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Owner Karen Roos has held on to the stained-glass panel, situated above the counter, for years; fresh herbs for tea; Delft patterns are a recurring theme; Susan Fortuin presents the homemade cordial. PREVIOUS PAGE The conservatory is a multifunctional space.



If you have not already been lured to beautiful Babylonstoren by its much spoken-about restaurant, Babel, or by its marvellous garden – or even better, a stay in one of its achingly chic whitewashed guest suites – there are even more good reasons to check it out. The extensively restored historical farm near Paarl in the Cape winelands continues to expand its finely tuned offering. Among the latest developments is a rather lovely glass conservatory – a functioning greenhouse – where visitors can enjoy a cup of Mariage Frères tea or a fresh herbal infusion along with a slice of home-baked tart, made with seasonal fruit from the orchard.

Reach the teahouse (it's unnamed in a nod to the space's multifunctionality) via a peach-pit path running alongside the formal garden, designed by famous French landscaper Patrice Taravella. For those there to see the garden alone, the cluster of tables and chairs set about the conservatory, in the welcome shade of tall oaks, offers a restful place to grab a bite or to sip something cool. But the special attention that has been given to the decor and details of this seemingly incidental refreshment stop, and the array of delicious things on the perfectly simple menu, warrant a special trip.

Owner Karen Roos is always spot-on when it comes to creating arresting spaces. Here, while the reflective glass and ornate flourishes of the custom-designed conservatory catch your immediate attention, you soon notice delightful touches: the neon yellow and fire-engine red pops of the furniture – a mix of vintage finds and modern pieces brought in from France – and the mesmerising blue of the Delft patterns on the sheets of paper table cloth. These flashes of Delft are wherever you look, echoing shards of 18th-century china found on the farm during excavations.

As with Babel, the food is overseen by visionary chef Maranda Engelbrecht and fits in with Karen's ideal of keeping things simple and harmonious – 'but always with a sense of abundance,' she says.

Construct your own sandwich from a selection of quality breads, charcuterie and cheese (immaculately presented in a wooden box, with glass jars containing salad leaves, chutney and herb oil). To drink, order tall glasses of plum and verbena cordial, or lemon-thyme lemonade. Or just enjoy the filtered water from the farm's borehole. Simplicity at its best. **Babylonstoren, Klapmuts/Simondium Rd, Franschhoek, [babylonstoren.com](http://babylonstoren.com)**