



[Babylonstoren, Franschhoek Wine Valley](#)



[The Newt in Somerset, UK](#)

Dear Friends,

Please join us in welcoming our newest additions to the [Rebecca Recommends portfolio](#): Babylonstoren and The Newt in Somerset. Each is a celebration of its surrounding natural environment, with a focus on cultural and traditional experiences. We are drawn to the authentic, immersive stays guests may have at each iconic destination, whether in South Africa or Somerset, England.

## [Babylonstoren](#)

We are besotted with Babylonstoren, a Cape Winelands farm owned by former magazine editor Karen Roos at the foot of Simonsberg Mountain in the Franschhoek wine valley. Whether waking up between crisp linen sheets or strolling through fruit orchards, or getting to know the farm's chickens, donkeys and other livestock, this is a place where one feels relaxed, refreshed and tuned in to Mother Nature.



With an emphasis on a sense of place, Babylonstoren allows guests to feel as if this is their own estate. Here, on one of the oldest Cape Dutch farms, they have full access to the garden, bread-making classes with the resident bakers, morning harvests with the congenial gardeners, guided fishing trips, the garden spa and more.



The garden is the jewel of the farm, with ties to the mythological hanging gardens of Babylon. No trip is complete without a tour with one of the experienced gardeners, who encourage guests to pick, taste, smell and touch while wandering through the garden. Special collections tours, to the succulent collection and the Healing Garden, and veggie gardens are also available.



Among the many excursions and experiences possible are cellar tours to the underground wine tunnel. Here, guests quickly see why Babylonstoren was voted the best Innovative Wine Tourism Experience by the Best of Wine Tourism Awards in the country in 2022, as they venture past wine-producing vessels, from amphorae clay pots to egg-shaped Nomblot vessels. And, of course, the tour culminates with a master tasting of fine wines paired with farm-grown delicacies.



As one might expect from a working farm estate, dining is a highlight. The very definition of farm-to-fork, the cuisine is seasonal and guided by what is available in the garden. The staff work diligently to use as much of the precious farm and garden harvests as possible, using fruit and veggie offcuts in innovative and delicious ways in soups, sauces and flavorings. Mornings may start with homemade muesli, thick farm-style yogurts and cheeses, while days might culminate with a five-course carnivore evening, celebrating superior meat.



The cornerstone of the dining experience is Babel Restaurant - a delightful setting that proves edgy design can co-exist with rusticity. Within an old cow

shed, contemporary glass walls are set off by traditional Cape Dutch architecture, and diners are treated to tasty, yet unconventional combinations that reflect the farm's "pick, clean and serve" approach.



Guests may stay in one of Babylonstoren's several idyllic settings, including the refined and moody Farmhouse (with a gorgeous honeymoon loft suite), a white-washed garden cottage with a hearty fireplace, the Cape Dutch-style Fynbos Cottage next to the vineyards and orchards, or an exclusive-use Family House, perfect for groups who wish for a peaceful retreat.

Babylonstoren is a 45-minute drive from Cape Town, making it ideal for a day trip if you're staying in the city, or adding on a night or two at the farm when staying for an extended time in the area.

### [The Newt in Somerset](#)



Taking a note from her beloved Babylonstoren, Karen Roos turned her attention to Somerset in the UK. "I like Jane Austen, and many years ago took a trip to Bath," says Karen. "The beauty of the Somerset countryside in spring captivated me." She set to work creating the same scale of immersive experience captured at Babylonstoren, resulting in The Newt in Somerset, named for the great crested newt, a protected species that was discovered on the property.



At this reimagined country estate, guests stay within 30 acres of splendid gardens, woodland, farmland and cyder orchards. While there's a quiet elegance throughout the property, modern comforts and conveniences are in place that complement, not oppose, the hotel's gentility.



Guests are invited to choose from accommodations in Hadspen, the gorgeous Georgian main house, or the original working Stable Yard, which has been transformed into truly one-of-a-kind accommodations.



Similar to Babylonstoren's Family House, The Newt offers the tranquil Farmyard, a half mile from the main house, with its own pool, bar, lounge and all-day kitchen. Once agricultural buildings, 17 rooms with en-suite bathrooms feature charming original elements and hidden nooks. Some offer personal steam pods, while the top floor of the Farmhouse, accessible via a private stairwell, is particularly perfect for families. Bikes and buggy transportation are provided so guests can easily move between The Farmyard and the main house, the gardens and the spa at Hadspen.



Each of The Newt's three restaurants offers seasonal, thoughtfully sourced dining, whether that's estate-grown vegetables, the choicest cuts from the salt room or dayboat fish from the Dorset coast.



The rejuvenating spa allows nature to provide its nurture, through water, heat, steam, earth and air. All guests are offered use of the spa's thermal facilities, two pools and vitality pools, as well as the choice of herbal-infused treatments, or time for self-care in the hammam or mud rasul.



With a daily schedule of wellness classes to include Yoga, Pilates, Sound Healing, an extensive gym, croquet lawns and badminton courts, your clients' well-being needs are catered for throughout their stay.



Guests at The Newt in Somerset are invited to explore their reimagining of a Romano-British villa, inspired by the unearthing of a settlement on the estate dating back to 351AD. Partake in the most incredible honey-tasting experience or discover more about cyder making with daily tasting inside their cathedral-like cellar dedicated to the golden drop. Visit the Story of Gardening and explore the grounds on an insightful journey with their experts.

The Newt is only a 1-hour, 20-minute train ride from London. Again, like Babylonstoren, it is worth a day visit on its own, or if time allows, at least two nights when staying in the London area for an extended visit.

We are smitten with the classical, yet playful nature of both of these serene countryside estates, and their incredible hospitality teams who curate individually designed immersive experiences for each guest, and we know you will be as well. We'd love to make an introduction. Simply reach out to [vip@r-recommends.com](mailto:vip@r-recommends.com) and we'll connect you with the team at either Babylonstoren or The Newt in Somerset.

Fondly,

*Rebecca*

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*Rebecca making friends with the donkeys at Babylonstoren.*

*Rebecca Recommends is a privately-owned company providing representation services in North America for more than 20 years.*

