



earthy textiles set against cosy-chic mountain-lodge-inspired accents, all brightened by floor-to-ceiling windows. The clean, modern design mixes raw materials that lend an inviting warmth with luxurious touches like radiant heated floors and a DStv-equipped flat-screen TV – and the location can't be beat. Our suite had a base palette of taupe, grey and off-white, an indoor seating for admiring the view or reading, a great balcony, plenty of storage and a freestanding bath from where you can lie back and see the vineyards. A huge viewing window faced the garden, which in summer is shrouded with flowers freshly dampened by the rain. The eternal landscape, nature-filled views and sky-blazing sunrises are what sold it to the owners – it's not hard to fall under the same spell. For breakfast, the menu is rustic but wholesome and inventive. The deceptively virtuous 'South African omelette' – filled with cheese, sliced biltong and caramelised onion, served with deliciously golden-brown homemade bread – tastes sensational. A mere hop up or down the road reveals a host of working farms, outdoorsy



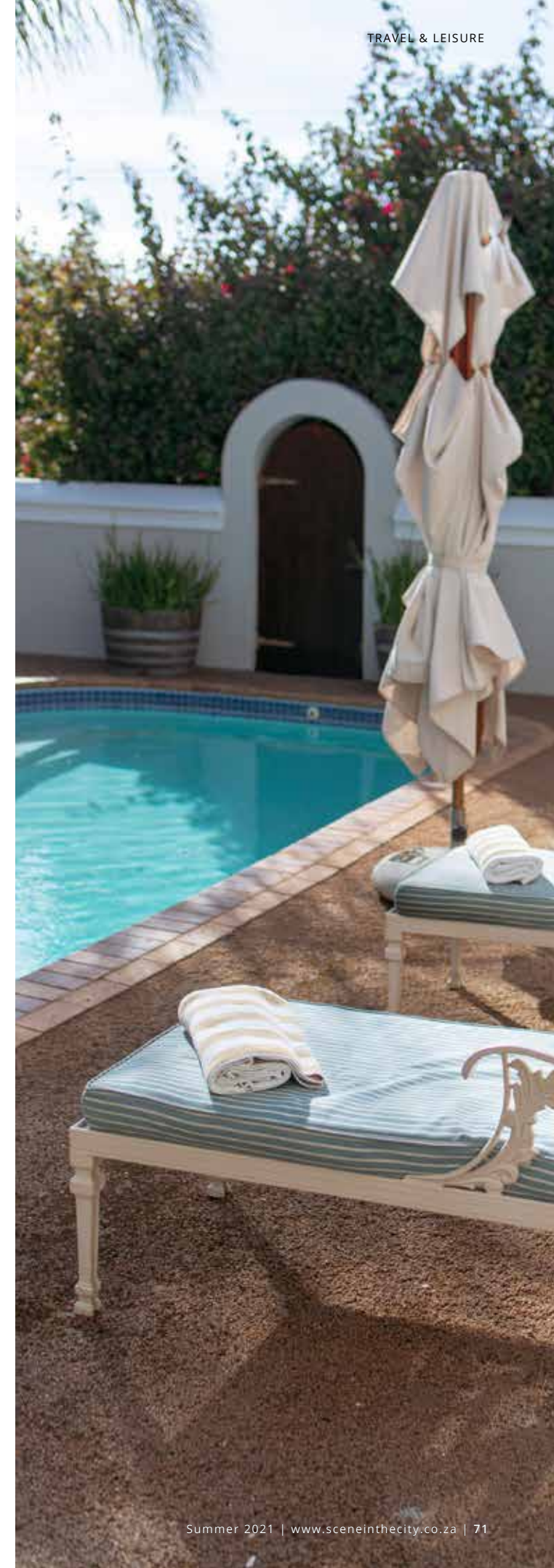
FOR WINE BUFFS

BANHOEK LODGE

A secret walking holiday to stretch your legs

The temptations of the Cape Winelands are hard to resist, but they're not without their behind-the-scenes stressors. There's the Google mapping, the hours-checking and, of course, the driving. One of the joys of a visit to Banhoek Lodge is the ability to pop from winery to winery with ease. Set amid hectares of hillside splendour on Helshoogte Pass, where the roads are practically paved with cabernet sauvignon and merlot, you can sip and stroll your way through the idyllic Banhoek Valley. The seven-room hideaway is sweet, intimate and easy to get comfortable in. If you took impeccable South African manners, mixed in a clear sense of pride in the property, and added a genuine desire to delight, you'd have the Banhoek Lodge staff. They're always ready to help you find your way around and have excellent recommendations for restaurants and to-dos. You'll find that everything is straightforward and seamless. There are thoughtfully decorated Luxury Rooms here, but the Suites and Deluxe Suites are, if anything, even better. Inside is an open-plan masterpiece of air and light: Calm and sufficiently spacious, with muted





diversions and, of course, excellent winery stops set against the Hottentots Holland Mountains. Zorgvliet Wine Estate and Thelema Mountain Vineyards are right on the doorstep – walk down with your complimentary wine-tasting vouchers after breakfast before the crowds spill in. Then, spend the afternoon exploring Camberley Wines, Le Pommier Wine Estate and Bartinney Wines, compact enough to do on foot through fields and twisting mountain roads. Two can't-miss wineries are Tokara Wine Estate (get the MCC Blanc de Blancs made from 100% chardonnay) and Delaire Graff Estate (try the Cabernet Franc Rosé). Stop for lunch at Tokara Restaurant – the apple cider-braised pork belly, served with parsnip, toasted almond flakes, Brussels sprouts, mange tout, and a bacon and maple jus, is the talk of the town. Nearby, the beloved Boschendal is a fun stop with a sleek restaurant where you can sample the 1685 or premium range. While winter allows for less-crowded tasting rooms and the blossoms of springtime provide breathtaking scenery, true oenophiles opt for harvest season, during January, February and March.

Sleeps: Two

Cost: Scene in the City readers qualify for a 10% discount for direct bookings made 14 days or more in advance

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