

There's more to 'sea' than whales in Hermanus

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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As the seaside village of Hermanus on the southern coast of the Western Cape gears up to celebrate the 24th Annual Hermanus Whale Festival from 2-4 October 2015, there will be more than just whales on show as there are many other activities throughout the year...

Here are several pointers on why you should add Hermanus to your travel list:

Hermanus, known as the 'best land-based whale watching destination' in the world, plays host to thousands of visitors who flock to the seaside resort to take in the natural environment, watch the whales and revel in music, enjoy great food and enjoy the many activities available during the festival. For more about The Hermanus Whale Festival, go to www.satourisonline.com.



With the rise of wine tourism in South Africa, the not-much-talked-about Hermanus wine route boasts a multi-sensory experience for young and old, offering magnificent views, hospitality, food and of course, glorious wines.

Starting at Benguela Cove, just across the Bot River on the last stretch to Hermanus, this introduction leads to the rest of the route which is found on the Hemel-en-Aarde Road, R320, where the wine village forms the gateway to a host of wineries, culminating in one of the very best wine tasting experiences I've had at Creation Wines.

Wineries worth visiting include:

- [Whalehaven](#). What's unique about this boutique winery is that you are able to pair your wines with selected chocolates and jams.
- [Southern Right](#). It's no surprise here that this winery is named after the whales that frequent Walker Bay. It was in 1994 that Anthony Hamilton-Russell founded Southern Right Cellars. His belief is that Pinotage performs best in cooler, maritime areas.
- [Bouchard Finlayson](#). Renowned as one of South Africa's top wineries; this can be attributed to their philosophy and focus to produce wines of the best quality. This winery's flagship wine is the Galpin Peak Pinot Noir, which has gone on to win many [accolades](#).
- [Creation Wines](#): This was ultimately my best wine-tasting experience ever. It wasn't only about the wine, but the whole experience that has won it a Klink Award for Best Food and Wine Pairing on a Wine Farm in 2012 and 2014, and of course earning many other accolades. This is one venue everyone has to experience, as it's more than just a wine farm.

When the weather is perfect, there's nothing better than to walk along the cliff paths, which also act as a perfect vantage point to view whales during the season. The 12km path along the coastline hosts public benches for you to have the perfect picnic or just sit back, relax and enjoy the whales and of course the view.

During the [Hermanus FynArts Festival](#), which attracts visitors during the winter season, visitors can find beautifully shaped sculptures by award-winning South African artists along the path.

Dates for the Hermanus FynArts Festival 2016 have not yet been confirmed, but this growing arts festival is something not to be missed with 2015 having several sold out shows. Stay up to date by subscribing to the [newsletter](#).

Speaking of arts, First Fridays Artwalk in Hermanus is part of a worldwide initiative to make art and art galleries more accessible to the public. On the first Friday of every month, several art galleries in the centre of Hermanus remain open until 8pm. The remaining walk for 2015 will take place 2 October, 6 November and 4 December. Find out which galleries will be open by liking [Hermanus First Fridays Artwalk](#) on Facebook.

Wild cats in Hermanus? Panthera Cat Sanctuary's main purpose is to be an educational platform where awareness about conditions big cats face in captivity, and how animal welfare and enrichment can play a vital role in giving them the best captive life possible. Panthera Africa, approximately 40 hectares, with future plans to expand, is not a commercial tourist destination but a safe haven for the rescued creatures. For more, go to pantherafrica.co.za. Note: booking is essential.

If you're looking for a completely different experience, Romantiques is certainly one of the stops you have to make while staying in Hermanus. This is an antique/collectables store that really caters for all ages. Every single room in this venue has a theme and takes you back in time to relive those memories of growing up. Collectables are in the form of old military gear, glassware, pottery, signage and just about everything else. You will be entirely fascinated by some of the magical items you will find and prepare to stay there for a few hours if this is your thing.

Unfortunately Romantiques does not have a website (yet) but you can find them at 14 Aberdeen Street, Hermanus or call 028 312 4226.

For more about Hermanus, go to www.hermanustourism.info.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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