

What to expect from Allée Bleue's #MayDayMeander

 By Leigh Andrews

13 Mar 2019

This March, a select group of bloggers attended the #MayDayMeander media day at Allée Bleue in Franschhoek. The unseasonably, crisp, cool conditions of our visit served as a perfect preview weather-wise of what the #MayDayMeander wine farm visit will be like, and we walked away filled with delicious treats and wines, as well as ample herb-health knowledge. That's a wine win-win! Here's what to expect if you visit Allée Bleue on 1 May 2019.



Think 'Franschhoek' and you're likely to picture quality wine in a picturesque setting. The blue Eucalyptus-lined Allée Bleue 'blue avenue' offers all that, true, but there's much more to it than that.

For example, did you know that Allée Bleue, one of the oldest, yet most undiscovered wine farms in the area, is the biggest persimmon supplier in the Western Cape? And as the 200-hectare estate is ranked amongst the top three herb growers in the province, you're likely sampling their fresh herbs if you buy from your favourite supermarket?

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Nothing - I mean NOTHING - is sweeter than fruit stolen off the vine. These pendulous and ripe bunches of shiraz grapes somehow escaped the harvesters' sheers and so I nipped a berry for "padkos" to enjoy alongside my glass of @alleebleue Platinum range Pinotage. #MayDayMeander #AlleeBleue #AlleeBleueWines #franschhoekwine #Capewineland #franschhoek #franschhoekwineroute #redwine #shiraz #shirazgrapes #vineyard #vineyardtours #wine #winetasting #winelover #vino #wein #wineoclock #winelife #wino #winery #tastewine #winetime #instawine #lovewine #womenwhowine #Southafrica #wanderwomanthea

A post shared by Thea Beckman (@wander_woman_thea) on Mar 7, 2019 at 6:29am PST

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Or that they sell their own port, grappa and balsamic vinegar?

We learned all this directly from the staff within a few minutes of arriving at the classic lavender-pocketed working farm, with sampling flutes of their finest bubbles to warm up before setting on a series of trips and tours around Allée Bleue for the day. This provided first-hand experience of the farming activities that take place in Allée Bleue's vineyards and orchards behind-the-scenes, ahead of their first-ever May Day Meander...

Herbal heaven

That herbal knowledge played strongly throughout the day, as we sampled Chef Gordon Dovey's sweet aniseed-onion marmalade with lashings of a vibrant pesto on the freshest salt-crusted bread with sips of their sparkling blue-label 2018 Starlette Blanc – all this while perched above the enormous wooden barrels in their main warehouse.

The next stop, back at the wine-tasting room, featured tangy lemon tart on a moreish thick base, as well as savoury biscuits laced with thyme to bring out the citrus notes and woodiness of their Chenin Blanc. Here, Deidre shared our first herbal health hint: Thyme is good for both easing a cough and boosting your mood.

A quick dash through the rainy surrounds saw us stopping briefly for shelter and a taste of Chef Dovey's Camembert dressed with ginger syrup, and dollops of mushroom cream cheese on Melba toast paired with one of winemaker Van Zyl du Toit's finest, the Isabeau.

That's Allée Bleue's flagship easy Chardonnay-Semillon-Viognier white blend, a firm favourite on the day. The bites brought out the nutty, spicy tones of the wine, as well as its slight honey character, reminiscent of dried fruit. We also paired basil and sun-dried tomato flavours with Allée Bleue's berry-strong Pinotage. Yum!



Chef Gordon Dovey. All images © Allée Bleue.

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ALLÉE BLEUE | May Day Meander | Yesterday I was invited to explore Allée Bleue and experience their brand new event offering the May Day Meander happening on the 1st of May! We started the day with some breakfast bubbly (the breakfast of wine warriors), then set off on a farm walk around the estate with different wine pairings to enjoy along the way. . Allée Bleue is known for its award-winning wines, but offers a whole lot more than just its vines, they're actually a very large herb producer and grow three different types of olive trees on their estate. All of this they have melded together to bring you a unique food and wine pairing focusing around their wine, herbs and olives: think freshly made herb/olive salsas, pestos and sauces with their moreish fresh farm baked bread paired to perfection with their delicious wines. . All of this and more is what you'll experience should you book to do their May Day Meander ~ spaces are limited so don't snooze 💎💎 . . . #alleebleue #maydaymeander #franschhoek #winepairing #wineandfoodpairing #franschhoeklife #capetownevents

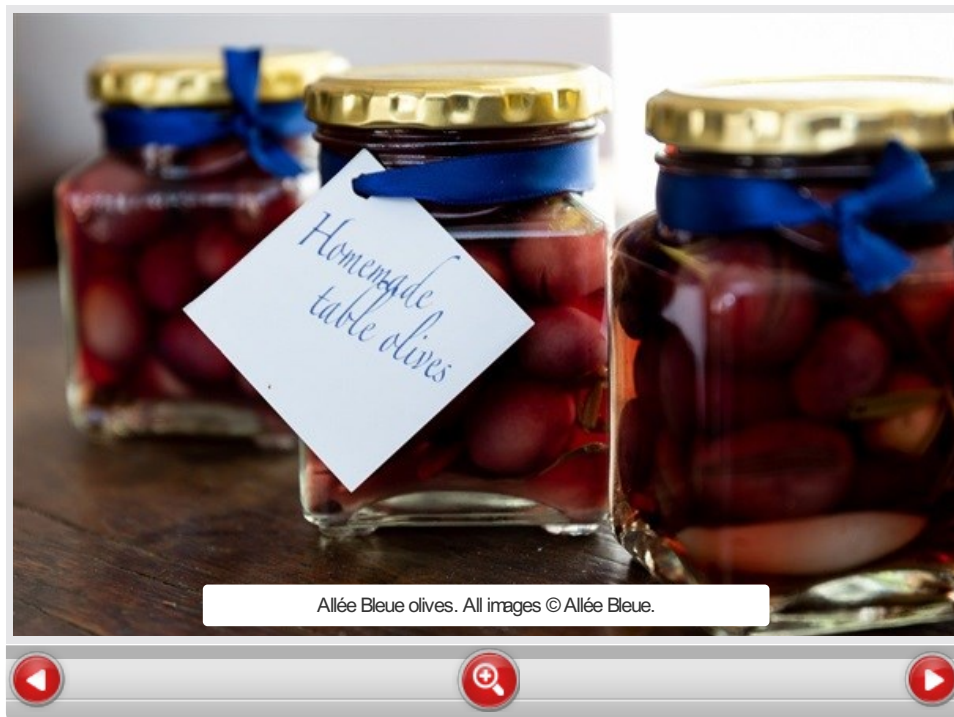
A post shared by [Nicola Jane Nelson](#) 💎💎💎💎 (@the.wine.fox) on Mar 8, 2019 at 3:12am PST

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After another quick amble past many a picturesque farm scene that proved Allée Bleue's popularity as a wedding venue, we were at the olive stop, where the 2014 Cab Sav-Merlot proved it would pair equally well with a meaty dish or the rosemary-rich olive salsa tapenade we sampled.

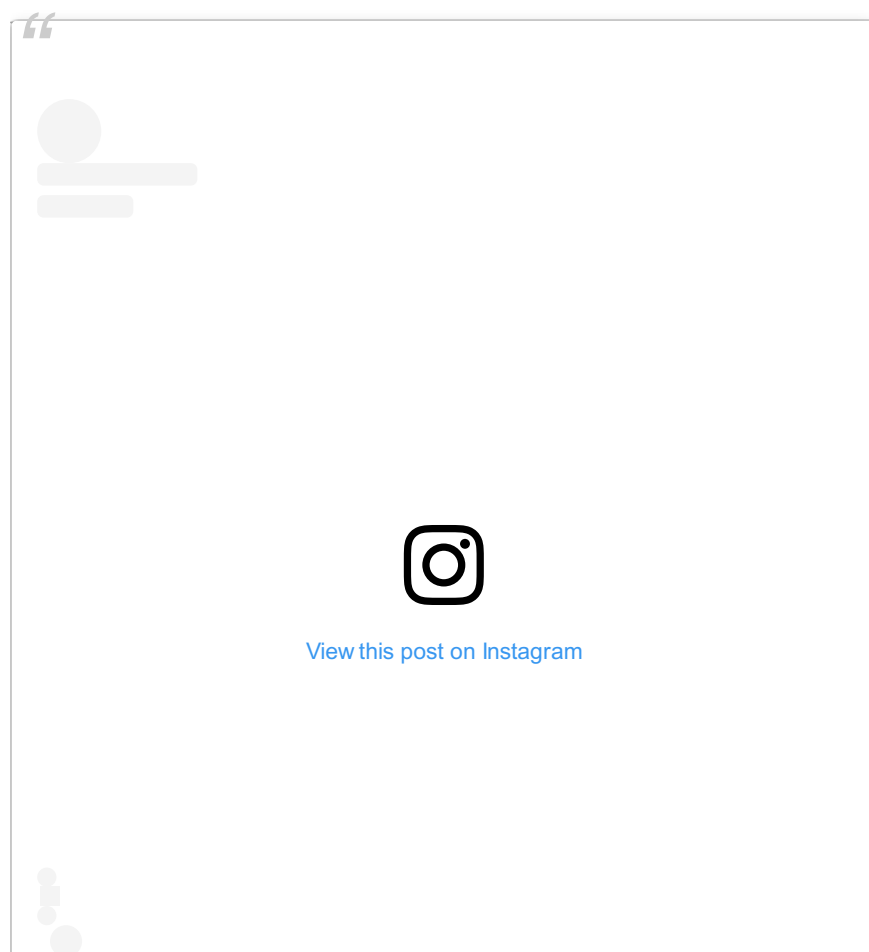
All the olive love

There are nearly six hectares filled with three different types of olive trees on the estate, so expect to sample a few of these on your visit, and pick up some of their cold-pressed, extra-virgin olive oil. We also picked up a further herbal health hint: Rosemary is good for lowering blood sugar.



The next section of our meander saw us admiring the Allée Bleue manor house while sipping on the 2014 brut rose – this is ‘dangerously easy drinking’, with Pinotage adding a fruity zing, especially when paired with Chef Dovey’s delicious mini plum-and-pecan tarts. This pairing is packed with antioxidants and the added value of pecan nuts, known for curbing hunger.

All meandered out by then, we were ready for a shared lunch, long-table buffet style, as we digested all we had learned on the day. The rain was bucketing down by then, so we were happy to sit indoors with a view of the wet landscape outside, while wolfing down a mix of Chef Dovey’s finest pastry dishes.





A taster of what to expect from @alleebleue #maydaymeander 1 Onion marmalade with aniseed, fresh baked bread and herb pesto. Served with Starlette Blanc, a sav bl chenin blend. 2 Lemon curd tart, savoury biscuits and thyme citrus salsa served with Chenin Blanc. 3 Camembert drizzled with sweet ginger, mushrooms on puff pastry and coriander and ginger salsa. Paired with Isabeau a flagship blend of semilion Chardonnay and viogner. 4 Sugar cured beef fillet, plum chutneys day basil salsa. Paired with Platinum pinotage 5 Olive tapenade, olives, rosemary and olive salsa served with Cab sav merlot blend. 6 Plum pecan tart with Brut Rose Mcc All herbs grown on the farm.

A post shared by [Yolisa Qunta \(@yolisaqunta\)](#) on Mar 8, 2019 at 7:30am PST

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The biggest takeaway from our MayDayMeander preview is that the Allée Bleue staff welcome guests wandering the grounds – you can order a picnic blanket and sit watching the squirrels dart around as you take in the peaceful surrounds.

If you'd like to take part in the May Day Meander, remember to wear a touch of red to stand in line for the best-dressed prizes, and wear comfortable shoes as you'll be climbing stairs, weaving around squirrels and possibly kicking back to sit on the lawn as you take in all that Allée Bleue has to offer.

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Allée Bleue Estate is one of the oldest working farms in the Franschhoek region and this year you are invited to experience our “behind-the-scenes” activities at the first-ever May Day Meander (meander - to walk/stroll) which takes place on Wednesday 1 May, a public holiday. Round up friends and family, wear a touch of red to get into the vibe and join us on this easy hour-long walk. Every few minutes you will have a stop where you can learn more about wine, fruit

production, our fresh herbs, olives and olive oil and have a bite to eat and taste wine as you go along. The day starts at 10h00 at the tasting room where “meanderers” are invited to enjoy a welcome drink and their first snack, receive a briefing and a route map, before setting off on their walk through some of the less visited areas of the Estate. The route offers great photo opportunities as well as the chance to ask questions from the experts based at each stop. After arriving back at the main building, you will be treated to a relaxed lunch. Meander packages are for two people sharing and range from R175 pp for a cheese and meat platter at the tasting room to R335 pp sharing for a seated, serviced Chicnic. A slightly more affordable option is the Picnic-on-the-Go package which is available at R320 pp sharing and entails choosing your own spot in our gardens to relax. The kiddies picnic is available at R105 pp. The cost includes the Meander with its tastings and eats as well as the lunch option chosen. The walk is suitable for everyone and a low level of fitness is required, but it is not accessible to wheelchairs as some of the route is uneven due to farming activities. We will have prizes for the best-dressed guests as well as a post-meander lucky draw. Bookings and more information: Visit www.alleebleue.com for more info and bookings and pre-payments are essential to confirm your spot. Contact Nadia at info@alleebleue.com - Bookings close 48 hours before the event.

A post shared by Allee Bleue Wine Estate (@alleebleue) on Feb 18, 2019 at 3:53am PST

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Be ready to start with a welcome drink at the tasting room at 10am, followed by the hour-long farm walk and end with your choice of either cheese and charcuterie platter at the tasting room, ‘chicnic’ basket served at a garden table under an ancient oak tree, or picnic-on-the-go basket, to be enjoyed on the lawns wherever your picnic blanket lands.

Note that the baskets are meant to feed two, and serve as a showcase for all of Allée Bleue’s fresh produce, including those signature herbs.

It’s fresh, French al fresco dining at Franschhoek’s finest.



Chic summer picnics, Allée Bleue style

Leigh Andrews 9 Nov 2016



**Leigh Andrews was a guest at Allée Bleue, situated at the intersection of the R45 and R310. Remember to book your picnic baskets before arriving. Bookings and pre-payment are essential. The May Day Meander costs between R175 and R335 per adult, depending on the lunch option chosen, and R105 per child. The May Day Meander walk requires a low level of fitness, but is unfortunately not wheelchair-accessible, as some areas of the route are uneven due to farming activities.*

Allée Bleue is open each day from 11am to 4pm, including public holidays. For bookings or enquiries, call 021 874 1021 or email Nadia at info@Alléebleue.com. Follow Allée Bleue on Twitter [@AlléeBleue](https://twitter.com/AlléeBleue), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/AlléeBleue) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AlléeBleue) for the latest updates.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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