

# Rags-to-riches: wining and dining with Penny Streeter (2/2)

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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In 2010, Streeter and her husband buy a house in the prestigious [Benguela Cove estate](#) on the Bot River Lagoon near Hermanus. Shortly afterwards the developer dies and the property development slowed to a crawl, causing the homeowners to wonder about their investment.

[Read part one: Rags-to-riches: the journey of Penny Streeter.](#)

"We launched a rescue effort in 2013 and bought the 200 hectare estate," Streeter says.

The 70-hectares under vine, the olive groves and lavender fields came as an added bonus.



Benguela Cove arial view

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## Among the vines

It was only when Streeter took over the estate, that the true potential of the vineyard became evident.

"We discovered that the setting provides a unique environment to produce wine, because of its proximity to the sea," she says.

Within the cool climate of Walker Bay, the estate produces three white cultivars and two red cultivars. The range of white includes a chardonnay, semillion and sauvignon blanc, while the reds include shiraz and a cabernet sauvignon.

These all can be sampled at the estate's tasting room, where they are paired with chocolate, cheese and charcuterie.

Besides the residential property, Benguela Cove also boasts 14 luxury hotel suites.

## A movable feast

"Our next step is to get the wine known outside of the estate," says Streeter. This includes the novel approach of setting up cellar-door experiences in venues other than on the estate. And the idea is to create spaces that are reminiscent of Benguela Cove where visitors can enjoy good food and wine while enjoying views over water.

## The pearl of the Knysna Lagoon

The first is the [Benguela Cove Brasserie and Restaurant](#) in Sedgefield, where tapas, cheese and meat planks, seafood and steaks are served up from fresh seasonal produce sourced from farms in the Garden Route during the day.



Benguela Brasserie Restaurant interior

But it is at night that it struts its stuff and transforms itself into a grand lady. The lighting becomes softer, the hand-painted stars on the ceiling shine and so do the dishes. The dinner menu features delights such as the dukka chicken and beef fillet with onion puree, root vegetables and jus, and a fish dish with battered mussels, potato fondant and blistered tomatoes that are to die for.

## In the land of the swallows

Somerset West is the home of the swallows, where on any given day a Babel of languages (mostly European) can be heard on the streets, spoken by residents who follow the sun.

Streeter's latest baby, Benguela Cove on Main, can be found in the town.

The downstairs restaurant offers a fine dining experience with some interesting flavour combinations, again featuring the best locally-sourced produce.

The airy, light space is enhanced by the tinkling of a self-playing grand piano, probably a tip of the hat to Streeter's sense of quirkiness.

Upstairs is the tasting room and wine shop, where you can sample Benguela Cove's range paired with cheese and chocolate, surrounded by original artwork that again reveal something of the owner's personality.

## In deepest, darkest England

Streeter says no other wine region in the world matches South Africa in terms of its cellar-door offering. So there are plans to move Benguela Cove even further afield. She envisages taking a touch of that experience to deepest, darkest England.

"We are in the process of taking transfer of a farm in East Sussex," she says, where people in the UK will have an

opportunity to taste Benguela Cove's wines in a tasting room setting similar to the original. All that will be missing are the whales.



Penny Streeter

### Take the plunge in luxury

"We also discovered that part of the property was earmarked for tourism," she explains. There are also plans to host a number of extreme sport events.

According to Streeter, the beautiful Kogelberg Biosphere, which embraces the estate, makes it the perfect venue for adventure sports.

Benguela Cove hosted its first lagoon swim on 18 October and is planning an Adventure Weekend at the end of November.

Enthusiasts can explore new trail running routes, take a plunge in the Hermanus Lagoon and participate in a sundowner mountain biking event over the course of the weekend.

There's also a night trail run, says Streeter.

Streeter's is a Cinderella story, where the ability to pick yourself up and start over shines through.

## ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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