

## WEEKEND HOTSPOT

### THE ROBERTSON SMALL HOTEL

IT'S not about the destination — it's about the journey. Or the opposite. Or something in between. Which is hardly worth writing about.

Well, you can ice the cake and eat it if your destination is The Robertson Small Hotel.

Take all the M,N and R roads you need to skirt past Stellenbosch, and wind your way up Helsőogte pass to the O'Grady family's Hillcrest Berry Orchards for a bottle, or two, of the superb berry liqueurs, and then on through Pniel (no, there is no counterpart called Pnoes).

Follow in the jet streams of clutches of the rudest, shiniest 4x27s imaginable, worse than Sandton, doll, to Franschoek, South Africa's capital of c-grade wannabe Eurotrash. Don't stop. Drive right through the town, wave regally at the bald and Botoxed, and then hang a left up to the Franschoek pass, surely one of the country's most breathtaking.

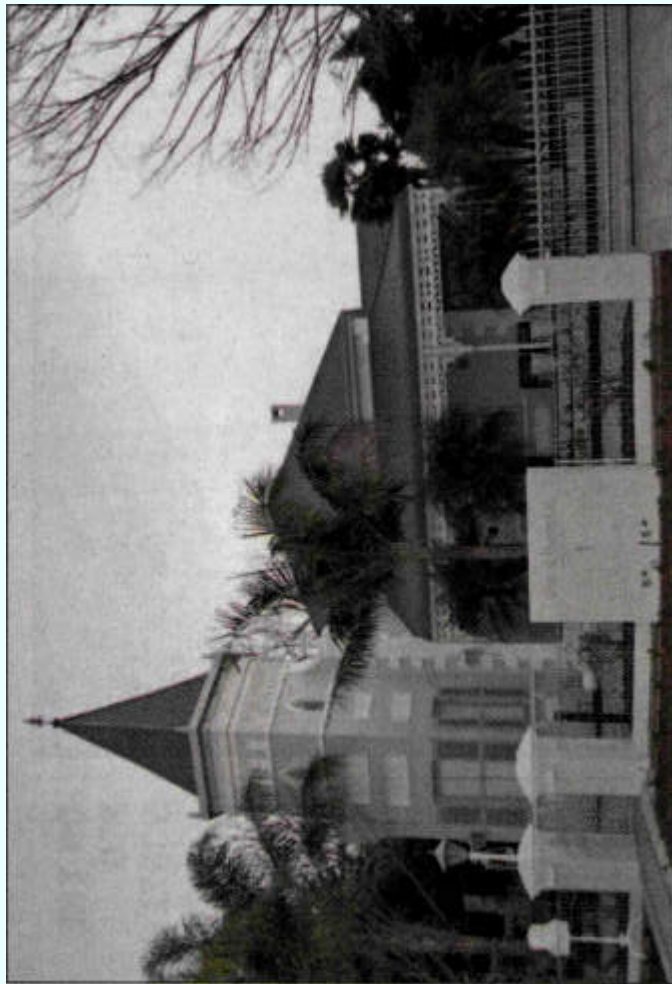
Up, up, up and then down to Villiersdorp, and onward to Robertson, "Valley of wine and roses" and home to Klipdrift brandy, set between the Langeberg and Riviersonderend mountain ranges.

Ask for directions and gather all the brochures on the town at the Tourist Info centre from the young man who'll knock over his chair in his eagerness to be of assistance.

All of this will take you a couple of hours longer than that ubiquitous, magic "only one and-a-half hours" yardstick from the city centre, but you will arrive suitably well disposed to what the hotel quite justifiably boasts is the "sumptuous comfort of country hospitality at its most refined".

The three components of the hotel — the Manor House, a national monument built in 1909, the Stables and the Poolside Suites — work together seamlessly, common design threads tying the three buildings together in a manner that echoes the space, light and mountains of Robertson.

Acclaimed chef Reuben Riffel's Reuben's at The Robertson Small Hotel is a coup. The energetic brigade run by executive chef Aviv Liebenberg, who commands under Riffel's guidance, produces exquisite food with an emphasis on seasonal, local, organic produce. And every farm in the valley is represented on the extensive wine list. Service is impeccable. And even the Bandit would be delighted by the breakfast, the incontestable



highlights of which are a glass of organic, wooded shiraz grape juice and patissier Christien van der Westhuizen's pastries.

The food alone is worth the journey and is perfectly partnered by the comfort and

hospitality. Sumptuous indeed.

To book, call 023-626-7200 or e-mail [reservations@therobertsonsmallhotel.com](mailto:reservations@therobertsonsmallhotel.com) <http://www.therobertsonsmallhotel.com>

— Garth van der Walt

