

The bounty of Babylonstoren

 By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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Fortunately, my line of work allows me to dine and drink at some of our best local offerings (no complaints here); however last Friday was the first time that I was lucky enough to experience the amazing [Babel](#) at Babylonstoren in Paarl. After hearing many tales of happy bellies after a Babel visit my expectations were suitably high - and I am pleased to say these expectations were met, and then some, after sampling the current winter menu. In fact, eating at Babel had me wishing that more restaurants served food this way: from farm to table with minimal chopping and cooking, just quality, seasonal and fresh produce uniquely and artfully presented and paired.



Harmonious flora and fauna

Before lunch we were treated to one of the guided Babylonstoren Garden tours, which take place every day from 10am. The gardens are extensive and diverse, and are split into little pockets of different flora and fauna: a baby soft chamomile field, bee hive farm, prickly pear maze, indigenous fragrant garden, and much more, are all housed harmoniously on the estate. The tour ends with a shot or two of winter tonic (our brew included roots, berries, turmeric and myrtle) in the more laid-back (and easier to get a booking at) [Greenhouse Restaurant](#). Lunch can be had here, or if you've booked ahead, at the fancier Babel.



Lunch at Babel is well worth the long waiting list (I believe it can take months to get a weekend sitting) and is definitely a dining experience to savour and cherish. The drinks are just as exciting as the food and we started with lip-puckeringly-fresh citrus and honey bush mocktails before moving on to the excellent Babylonstoren Shiraz.

Crisp colour

By far the most visual as well as taste bud tantalising dishes are the starters, with an option of three: green, yellow, and red - you can't make a wrong choice. Each dish only utilises fresh produce of the same colour, so my green plate starter included baby marrow tempura on an tumble of avo puree, cucumber, apple, wild, melon, broccoflower and more. Everything was crisp, fresh and light, and I could practically feel the nutrients flooding my system after emptying the plate. The red starter, which I did a swopsie halfway through with my partner, was equally delicious offering earthier and heartier produce, such as beetroot falafel, beetroot humus and bubble gum-pink sumac yogurt. Heart eyes for days.



The starters are quite substantial, so we had a little breathing spell before falling to our meaty mains. I chose the char-grilled beef fillet with bone marrow and olive and balsamic vinaigrette. Rich and buttery, this was excellently complemented by a side dish of more-ish potato wedges, turnip and baby marrow. My partner had the equally satisfying lamb cutlets with kale, roasted quince and walnut pesto. Are you salivating yet?



Sweet endings

This was by far substantial enough; however there was no way I was leaving Babel without sampling a dessert. We decided

to share the dark chocolate oozy fondant served with the most appealing persimmon ice cream and the uniquely spiced bay leaf meringue served with a softly flavoured rooibos ice cream. So so yum.



A visit to the beautiful Babylonstoren and Babel is an experience than any local should try at least once, with sights, sounds, smells and tastes that awaken the soul in a wonderfully honest, refreshing and non-cheesy way it's an experience not to be missed. I can't wait to go back.

www.babylonstoren.com

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

Ruth is the production manager at Bizcommunity. ruth@bizcommunity.com
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