

Perfectly timed Wacky Wine adventure



By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

8 Jun 2017

A beautiful, sunny morning greeted us as our designated driver (à la my baby brother) steered our car towards Robertson on the famed Route 62, excited to start our Wacky Wine Festival adventure and to take part in all of the wining festivities...

After picking up our passports at the Robertson Wine Valley offices, we decided to drive through to Ashton to start our tasting trip from there, driving back in the Robertson/Worcester direction. Unfortunately we could only attend the festival on the Saturday and because it started at 10:00am and ended at 16:00pm, we didn't have a lot of time and had to be selective in what we wanted to see and where we wanted to go, since there were more than 40 wine farms to visit. Included in your goodie bag was a map, a wine glass and tasting coupons. The map came in pretty handy since time was of the essence. We had to read up and do proper research in advance about what was on offer at each venue before we started our Wacky adventure. Thus, I truly believe every single person attending the festival had their own tailor-made Wacky Wine experience.

Platform 62

Platform 62 Tourism Centre with its historic steam locomotive in front of the building, had a variety of wines available, including a White Merlot from Wolfkloof and a delicious selection of muscadel, port and liqueur wines from all over the Robertson Wine Valley. They also had a selection of homemade jams and chilli sauces on display that visitors could taste. There were live performances by some local artists on a small stage inside and some of the festivalgoers were invited to enjoy the sunshine in the garden at the back of the rustic venue, while sipping on their favourite wines.



Arabella Wine Estate

After spending about 30 minutes at Platform 62, we moved on to the next stop on our list, Arabella Wine Estate. I was excited to visit the estate since the Arabella's Chenin Blanc is one of my favourite wines. There were already quite a lot of guests gathered at the entrance of the venue when we arrived since tastings were taking place on the stoep. I got a chance to taste their Pink Panacea, a fruity wine with a beautiful blush colour and a bit of a dry finish that lingered on the tongue. I also tasted their In Unison Reserve, a spicy, full bodied, beautiful red wine. Needless to say we walked away with quite a few bottles to add to our collection at home.



On the lawns there were a few food trucks and stalls and a live band was performing on a big stage that was also set up. A designated smoking lounge looked pretty inviting with comfy bean bags scattered around and colourful dream catchers rustling in the breeze. Further along we saw teams of school kids from different schools waiting to compete in tug of war competition. While the tasting section was buzzing with excited tasters sampling the lovely wine, onlookers of the tug of war competition cheered on their favourite teams.

Marbrin Olive farm

We decided to take a break from the wine tasting for a bit and took a right turn off Route 62 to visit the Marbrin Olive farm. It was quite an enjoyable little drive through the olive orchard and I was delighted when I spotted bee hives and some curious ducks, greeting us further down when we passed a small dam. We were pleasantly surprised when we followed the relaxing, folk music and entered the tasting zone at the back of the beautiful, old farmhouse. It was as if we fell into a rabbit's hole, transferred to a hippy/Zen garden – we even saw a few Buddha statues in the garden, adding to tranquil vibe.



Outside patrons were peacefully enjoying and relaxing under umbrellas, while they were served delicious pizzas and cold craft beers from the Stellenbosch Brewing Company. Inside you had to pay a fee and book for the olive oil tastings and there were a couple of delicious-looking cheeses on display that you could purchase as well.

Rietvallei Wine Estate

We left Hippyville and visited the next stop on our list, Rietvallei Wine Estate. What a treat it turned out to be because Rietvallei had something very unique in store for festivalgoers, a fondue braai! Guests could choose their own meat, sausage, chicken or veggies to braai on a Weber braai unit filled with hot coals in the middle of their table that was fitted around the unit. How clever! Some other activities included hitting a few golf balls between the vines, testing your mates' golfing skills.



I was eager to taste their wines and started with a John B Rosé and the Rietvallei Red Muscadel, both pleasant and delightful. I also enjoyed the Rietvallei JMB Cabernet Franc, a woody and earthy, full-bodied red wine. We savoured the taste of it, while admiring the beauty of this gorgeous wine estate. I made a mental note to make a second trip to this stunning farm.

Klipdrift

Next, we quickly paid a visit to the Robertson winery, which was very crowded and decided to move on to the Klipdrift tasting venue, situated right next to the Robertson's. A queue of people waited to enter, but we could see visitors lounging next to a big bar, sipping on drinks and snacking on what looked like mouth-watering treats. Luckily we didn't wait too long before we entered the popular venue. Inside a selection of handmade deep dish pies were on display with delicious fillings like lamb shank, curry chicken, bobotie and venison. At the bar there were some tasty Klipdrift cocktails on offer and private brandy tastings with pairings such as cinnamon – macadamia nut brittle/chocolate – caramel – mallow bite/cranberry and Pistachio nougat were enjoyed inside. A premier tasting experience!

Rooiberg Winery

Our last stop of the day was the Rooiberg winery, which you simply could not miss, with the biggest (and very red) chair in Africa catching your eye driving past. We could climb up the red ladder and take pictures at the top of the structure. Rooiberg also had a love wall next to the chair, where lovers could purchase red padlocks (or bring their own) with their names on and add it to the wall. Inside the big, white wine tent, a bar offered samples of the Rooiberg wine stock to excited tasters and a couple of farm stalls selling biltong, gourmet chocolate treats, scrumptious baked goods and clothing added to the festival atmosphere.



It was 15:45 when we left, tired, wired and very happy with our wine purchases. The late afternoon sun hidden by a group of dark rain clouds forming. Perfect timing, I thought as we headed home.

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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