

Savour Hemel-en-Aarde's harmoniously matched food and wine at Creation Wine Estate

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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Part of the smallest but most diverse floral kingdom in the world, Hermanus is known as a whale-watcher's haven, but wine-lovers have ample reason to visit this sleepy hollow on the Walker Bay Wine Route, starting with Creation Wine Estate in the heavenly Hemel-en-Aarde Valley.

Creation Wine Estate, situated on Hemel-en-Aarde Road offers a truly sensory food-and-wine experience. We arrived at noon on the dot despite a dirt road detour and were met by owner Carolyn Martin and public relations representative Michael Farr, who swiftly led us through the day's already jam-packed tables to one of the best tables in the house, with a view through the glass walls to the majestic Babylon Toren mountains beyond.



Creation has been named as one of the top 50 wine estates in the world to visit, while also recognised as the Best Cellar Door Experience of all wine estates in South Africa by UK master of wine, Tim Atkin, and it's easy to see why.

Harvesting had just commenced the week of our visit, so the grounds were a hive of activity. The topography and geography of the region, coupled with the cool climate created by that salty ocean air and protection of the mountain ridge clearly play an important role in the terroir of Creation Wine Estate, which effectively its own microclimate.

Over 10 wines in Creation's portfolio have scored 90 points or more and they're a top producer of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, having scored 96 points each for their Art of Chardonnay and Art of Pinot Noir. These are all the better sampled with their Harvest Love Story pairing menu, and if Carolyn or husband Jean-Claude (call him JC) are around, or even fourth-generation viticulturalist and oenophile son Glen, who designed the label for their celebratory MCC – they'll pop over to your table to ensure you're happy and to share tidbits of the estate's rich story.

“ *The story of Creation Wines is as old as the hills – dating back to when Mother Nature created South Africa's beautiful Hemel-en-Aarde and bestowed upon it exceptional winegrowing conditions. At the same time, Creation's story is as young as the vibrant team, who since 2002 has been investing their talents to create a wine range of great distinction.* ”

Dubbed an 'exciting and unique taste adventure' on the special A3 menu for the Harvest Love Story pairing, you are in for a treat, as the menu can be easily customised so as to offer a fully vegan, vegetarian or pescatarian offering that sings of balance and finesse in the kitchen – also the hallmarks of every bottle of Creation Wine.

The plates are intended to highlight the versatile, food-friendly nature of each Creation cultivar or blend and boy, do they do so in style. Each dish brings pleasure to the palate and is a beauty to behold, with each of the seven pairing chapters joyfully labeled – but before you even begin, you're treated to a delicious bowl of chilled lovage and lettuce soup, with a long crouton of gluten-free Cape seed loaf served in a local potter's gorgeous Pinot Noir leaf-shaped bowl, and a flute of Creation's exceptionally dry Elation MCC to stimulate the palate.

Delightfully dreamy, we were soon ready to begin our Creation food-and-wine experience...

Chapter 1: Creation Sensation. For this course, we were presented with a bird's nest of warm cornbread, with the flour ground and milled and loaves wood-fired on the premises, as well as gorgeous grey-blue maize *bratzeli* that looked more like Aztec mementos than something to place on the tongue.



But piled high with chive-dotted sour cream or vegan cream cheese if you prefer, along with amazing grapes pickled in verjuice and authentic *chakalaka*-style dips, this was just the thing to bring out the clean, slightly lemony burst of the Creation Sauvignon Blanc 2019, which leads with a papaya-passion fruit aroma and would be equally wonderful with sushi – one of my favourite pairings of the day.

Chapter 2: Creation Innovation. For a sensory break, we were presented with a stunning 'shell phone' to place to our ears for a reminder of the haunting lullaby of the sea, while sniffing on salt served in shimmery abalone shells, as this awakens the senses and enhances anything tasted.



Carolyn Martin and "shell phone"

Now, we were ready for the farmed abalone dish – sashimi-grade, this is served in a pillow of white wine-coconut milk foam with seaweed and deep-fried capers, or as oyster-mushroom for those who don't eat fish, this is looked like a wave on a plate and tasted like the perfect cloud of deliciousness to swiftly spoon away between sips of the creamy Creation Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2018. The salty bouquet of this terroir-expressive, Bordeaux-style white paired beautifully with the food flavours and had us sipping to the bottom of the glass, though classy silver spittoons are provided if you're after just a taste.

Chapter 3: Creation celebration. The caponata tortellini cradling a bunch of baby herbs was the star of this course, with Carolyn sharing that it 12kg of tomatoes create 1kg of the moreish confit. This dish features slivers of dried tomato for extra texture is paired with the Creation Reserve Chardonnay 2018, grown in a single vineyard on the grounds and proving so popular that customers just don't give it time to age. The wine is honeycomb-grapefruit on the nose with a complex, silky palate just perfect with the tomato-ey pasta. We also tasted the Art of Creation Chardonnay with this course, which we hear has changed many from an 'Anything but Chardonnay' to 'All Bottles of Chardonnay' mindset.

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HEAVENLY HEMEL-EN-AARDE HARVEST | 🍷🍷🍷🍷 We were treated to the 7-course Harvest Love Story feast at @creationwines in @hermanuswines' picturesque @hemelenaardevillage this afternoon. 🍷🍷 All the words in my #review on @bizcommunity's #bizlounge soon! 🍷🍷🍷🍷 #HarvestLoveStory #foodreview #winereview #foodandwine #winepairing #foodpairing #wineglass #CreationWines #Hermanus #wineroute #whaleroute #SAwines #instafood #instawine #winelove #forthe love of wine #seashells #soundoftheocean #ginoclock #wineoclock #prettyplating #finewine #premiumwine #chickenbroth #breadnest #damview #tortellini #framboise

A post shared by Leigh Andrews (@ramblinglitchi123) on Feb 29, 2020 at 8:09am PST

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Chapter 4: Creation dedication. Signifying a shift from white to red cultivars, this chapter featured the only protein dish of the day – in an ecologically sound call to pair a wine with chicken in summer or game in winter, as opposed to beef, we sampled a fragrant sumac-dusted tender roast chicken breast from Elgin farms.

This was served with pickled onions, asparagus spears and king oyster mushroom in a jus that sings of fig, paired with a glass of the red berry and clove-spicy Creation Reserve Pinot Noir 2019 – yes, you can pair chicken with red wine. With its subtle tannins and fruity mouth feel, this wine would even be a win with salmon. Its amazing versatility makes it the ultimate ‘food wine’.

Chapter 5: Creation ovation. Protein primed, it was time to let aubergine shine with the ‘Jackson Parsley’ – a play on artist Jackson’s Pollock’s creativity, this dish sees the vegetable pan-seared and served with puree, parmesan shavings and a bright parsley sauce.



We enjoyed this with the full-bodied, Rhone-style Creation Syrah Grenache 2018 blend that picked out the *umami* of the meal just perfectly. We learned that butter is the secret ingredient to this chapter, as the fattiness of each forkful makes the wine more accessible in a way that wouldn't work with seafood or dessert.

Chapter 6: Creation inspiration. Finally, it was time for something sweet! We nibbled on a delicate dish of light raspberry *framboise* paired with yuzu, plum gel and pretty pink chocolate shards inspired by the ruby chocolate trend, all washed down with the coral-berry Creation Grenache Noir Viognier 2019 blend. The lingering rosiness made this blend a fresh favourite.



Chapter 7: Creation surprise. Just when we thought we'd seen it all, we were presented with a table of *friandise*, meant to be eaten in order from set jelly cubes to coffee-rich macarons and gold-dusted, fudgey brownie squares. These work extremely well with a glass of the Creation Fine Cape Vintage 2018, a dense purpley-red anise with velvety mouth feel that ends off the meal to perfection.

We ended the four-hour tasting afternoon with a round of strong cappuccinos while taking in the view, and also sampled the estate's port and brag-worthy Chardonnay and Pinot Noir gins, beautifully served in glasses with berries and blossoms.

This truly is a feast, but if you're looking for something a little more pocket- and tummy-friendly, there's something for everyone on the menu:

For the early birds, the 10am brunch pairing features a three-course breakfast, each paired with a premium Creation wine and starting with a glass of Creation's Elation MCC. For the more adventurous, there's a 'blind tasting', which features darkened wine glasses so you truly rely on your senses of taste and smell to determine which wine you favoured.



The 'Harvest Story of Creation' is wine pairing at its best

Ruth Cooper 18 Apr 2019



The tee-totallers or designated drivers of the group will delight at all the usual soft drinks as well as fresh, homemade cordials – inspired by Prague's cordial creations when they couldn't get hold of the typical carbonated soft drinks from

behind the Iron Curtain, the berry and watermelon versions are particularly refreshing.

You can also imbibe all manner of teas, pure fruit juices and even an aromatic, non-alcoholic Story of Creation TWG tea pairing. Children's palates are also catered to, with the menu offering everything from mild toasted sandwiches and chicken strips to the more exotic berry-laden brioche French toast and cinnamon churro bowl complete with popping candy and caramel.

Creation clearly cares for all of creation, in heaven and earth, as they show their harmony with nature in complying with the Integrated Production of Wine scheme's sustainability guidelines and most recent releases boast the 'green seal' as proof. While 55% of the wines they product is for export, you can also buy from the estate or place an [order online](#).

They also offer freshly purified still water from the dam on the estate, as part of their reverse osmosis cycle – this means there's zero carbon footprint for either transportation or disposal, as the glass bottles are recycled and reused in the Creation tasting room, where they're also up for sale.

Carolyn added that they only use fresh local produce from their own estate or the larger Overberg region, with figs, herbs, flowers and fruit sourced at Hermanus' Sophia Farm, gelato from Stanford's House of Don Gelato – winner of the 2017 SA Dairy Championship's Qualite Award; Caledon-based Praise the Lard and Glen Oaks Pig Farm providing handcrafted charcuterie based on Glen Oaks Pig Farm's pasture-reared pork dry-cured with Oryx desert salt, and the finest sourced seafood from Hermanus' What Coast Seafoods and local fishermen.



Their love of this self-sustaining community is clear, with two of Creation's local assistant wine-makers from Mount Pleasant – Urle Hansen and Kirsten Myburgh – having recently released their own wines. Urle made, bottled and labeled his own Pinot Noir named Emily, as a reminder of the baby that he and his girlfriend lost at 22 weeks, while Kirsten has bottled a promising barrel-fermented Sauvignon Blanc and is off to New Zealand soon.

Extending their care beyond their own estate, Creation is also a member of the Pebbles Hemel-en-Aarde Education Project, giving visitors the option of adding a voluntary R25 donation to the bill to assist with this educational project aimed at improving nutrition, vaccinations and basic health of the families of farmworkers in the region. This initiative has raised over R100m in the last few years, including the results of wine auctions, donations of bicycles and even saw 'SA's own Bear Grylls', Cape to Rio kayaker Riaan Manser give an inspirational talk at the local school aimed at developing a more responsible society, aware of the danger to the region if they start fires or kill snakes.

We could feel the love from the warm smiles of all we encountered on the Estate, and that sense of community lingered as we made our way out of the heavenly Hemel-en-Aarde valley to our Hermanus home base for the night.

Leigh Andrews was a guest of Creation Wines and Ocean Eleven Guest House. The Creation Harvest Love Story seven-course pairing is R795 per person. Book ahead of your visit on www.creationwines.com and follow their latest updates on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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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