

In your hood: **Franschhoek**



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Franschhoek escape

Enjoy peace and old-fashioned charm in the secluded Akademie Street Boutique Hotel

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Akademie Street Boutique Hotel in Franschhoek feels like the gracious home of old family friends. With shelves full of books and a grand piano in the lounge and framed prints in the hall, the guesthouse takes you a century back in time. However, the old-fashioned country house charm is complemented by plenty of modern comforts and earned the venue the title of World's Best Boutique Hotel 2017 at the World Boutique Hotel Awards.

We were given Vreugde, a peaceful cottage with a private courtyard shaded by oak trees, its own access onto the quiet side street and a solar-heated swimming pool that tempted us to jump in. It included antique furniture and a huge wrought-iron canopied bed with gorgeous linen,

soft pillows and downy duvet, which enfold you with understated luxury rather than designer glitz. The glorious brass bathtub was purely ornamental in the current drought, but the rain shower compensated well. And, in a way, I wished it was cold enough to need the cosy winter touches, such as underfloor heating, a wood-burning fireplace in the bedroom and even an outdoor wood-fired hot tub, conjuring images of still nights soaking in steaming water while watching the stars with a glass of bubbly in hand.

The hospitality is generous. Once you've checked in, everything is included, from the half bottle of MCC, the miniatures and snacks in our kitchen fridge, to the pre-dinner cocktails and wine accompanied by live piano music,

and the nightcaps in the lounge when you return home from dinner.

Board games are set out in the afternoons and breakfast is served here on cooler mornings. A lavish platter of every fresh fruit currently in season, crunchy homemade muesli, Greek yoghurt, stewed fruit and a jug of fruit smoothie started us off, then we went on to the cooked breakfast menu ranging from traditional bacon and eggs to avocado on toast and eggs Benedict.

It was hard to leave and we felt we needed more than one night to explore Franschhoek and relax properly into this peaceful retreat. Luckily, Akademie Street is offering two nights for the price of one in May and August – the perfect excuse to escape to Franschhoek, catch up on one or two top restaurants and indulge.