



# Wine, olives AND A BIT OF GOLF

Stellenbosch is a beautiful part of South Africa, and thankfully there are enough tidy golf courses to justify sending **Nick Krige** on a trip to wine country.



It was shaping up to be a pretty good weekend – there were a couple of rounds of golf lined up for me, including a Saturday-afternoon round at Stellenbosch and a Sunday-morning game at Devonvale.

My only predicament was that I needed a place to rest my head and keep the clubs dry.

Fortunately, one of the perks of the job is that I am regularly invited on press trips to places not ideally suited to a journalist's salary – and this time it was the L'Olivier Wine and Olive Estate, only a few minutes from Stellenbosch, which offered me a spot to relax and air out my golf shoes.

I left Cape Town on Saturday morning and began cruising down the N2 at break-neck speed towards Stellenbosch. Don't worry, I wasn't speeding – I just have a very weak neck. I was late – oversleeping has always been a source of trouble for me – but at least it was semi-explainable on that Saturday morning.

I was due at L'Olivier by 10am and had only managed to roll out of bed at 9:30 – thanks mainly to my year-old Jack Russell who found my alarm's power cable to be quite a tasty midnight snack.

Thankfully Stellenbosch is only 45 minutes out of Cape Town, so I was only about 25 minutes late.

The atmosphere was very relaxed; everyone was waiting for me but didn't seem very stressed about it. After accepting a cup of coffee I settled in to listen to the last five minutes of the introduction speech.

We were then led down into the basement. I half-joked about it being punishment for being late – a short chuckle, wicked smile and the fact that our host didn't correct me caused me to worry

for the briefest of moments, until I realised everyone else was laughing at me, still dressed in my party clothes from the night before.

Rather than punishment, a delectable reward awaited – an 11am wine and olive oil tasting. As a guest, it would have been rude to say no and just as well – the cabernet sauvignon was delicious.

We were then told we could enjoy the farm as we pleased, but I had to dart off for my afternoon golf game at Stellenbosch.

I completely misjudged how long it would take me to get to the club and after what couldn't have been more than a 10-minute drive I arrived at the course well before my tee time or my opponent, Logan, so I took the time to have a little look around the club.

Stellenbosch at the worst of times is a very beautiful place and the views from the clubhouse balcony give you a pretty good idea how the area got its reputation.

I also found out that it is the fourth-oldest golf club in the country – unless they lied to impress me – and of course, being nestled in the middle of wine country, the wine selection at the bar is pretty hard to beat.

I was very impressed with how the course played, even though it had rained pretty heavily the night before. The wind was hardly a factor, to my great pleasure.

I was very pleased with my round, probably one of the reasons I liked the course so much, especially my birdie on the signature 7th, which I will never admit was a complete and utter fluke.

The result was that most of the time spent in the relaxing bar area, enjoying some of the best wines in the world, was sponsored by my playing partner.

When I got back to L'Olivier, the

farm manager, Andre, took us on a drive to the top of one of the nearby hills. L'Olivier has a good relationship with neighbouring farms, and we enjoyed the sunset with a glass of wine and the whole of Stellenbosch below us. There are definitely worse ways to spend a Saturday night.

I woke up very early the next morning and headed out to Devonvale Golf and Wine Estate to rub salt in Logan's wounds.

Devonvale is quite a bit further from L'Olivier than Stellenbosch, but still well within a reasonable driving distance.

I don't know if it was the sundowners with Andre, the very early morning or the fact that I had never played Devonvale before, but Logan absolutely destroyed me on the course.

Thankfully I was able to use the fact that it was still quite early and a Sunday to prevent a massive hole being burned in my pocket at the 19th hole.

I got back to L'Olivier around lunchtime and was glad the golf had finished early as it meant I had some time to really have a look around the wine and olive estate.

It was definitely quite interesting eating lunch while Andre led a stampede of horses past the house.

After a short quad-bike ride followed by a horseback ride, my fun was ruined by the rain, which was a little unfortunate, but it was almost time to head back to Cape Town anyway.

After picking up a few bottles of cabernet sauvignon and a box of olive oil, I was on my back to Cape Town, ready to recommend L'Olivier to anyone wanting to spend some time in Stellenbosch playing golf – or enjoying some of the region's finest export material.



## L'OLIVIER

### How to get there

Take the N2 towards Somerset West. Take the Baden Powell off-ramp. Drive past Spier until you reach a T-junction. Turn left onto the N12. Drive past Neethlingshof on the right. Take the Stellenbosch Kloof road and turn right at the fourth gravel road.

### THE COST

#### Main house

(per night, sleeps eight)

Winter: R3 500

High season: R8 250

Christmas: R12 000

#### Cottages (per night)

Winter: R650

Shoulder season: R950

High season: R1 150

#### Contact

Email: info@lolivierestate.com

Tel: 021 881 3218

Website: www.lolivierestate.com

## NEARBY COURSES

### Stellenbosch Golf Club

R44, Stellenbosch

Email: bookings@stellenboschgolfclub.com

Tel: 021 880 0103

#### Website:

www.stellenboschgolfclub.com

Greenfees: Affiliated R275,

non-affiliated R450

### Devonvale Golf & Wine Estate

Off Bottelary Road, Stellenbosch

Email: proshop@devonvale.co.za

Tel: 021 888 4735

Website: www.devonvale.co.za

Greenfees: Affiliated R260,

non-affiliated R380

### De Zalze

R44, Stellenbosch

Email: info@golfdezalze.com

Tel: 021 880 7300

Website: www.dezalzegolf.com

Greenfees: Affiliated R371,

non-affiliated R551