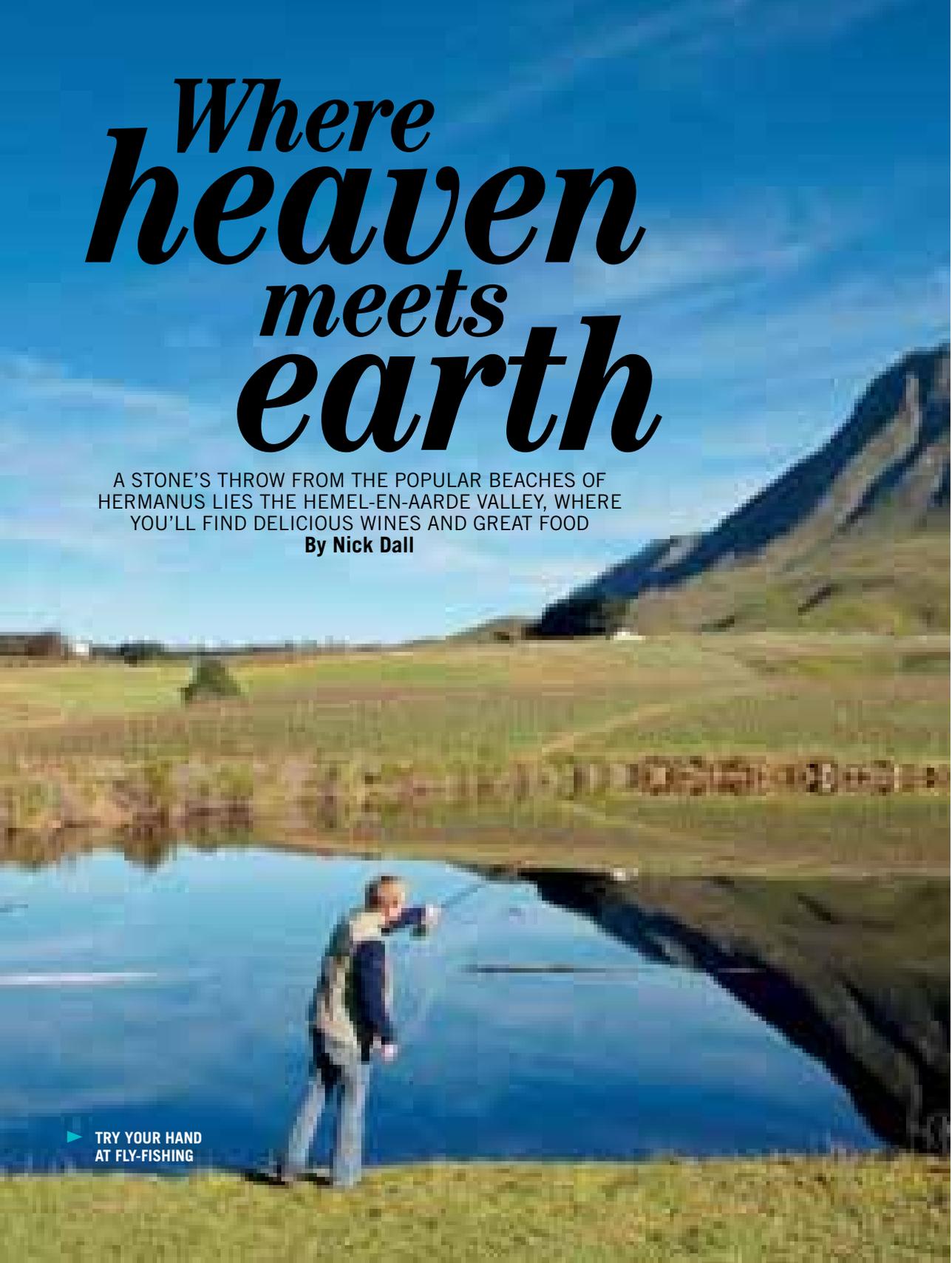


# *Where heaven meets earth*

A STONE'S THROW FROM THE POPULAR BEACHES OF HERMANUS LIES THE HEMEL-EN-AARDE VALLEY, WHERE YOU'LL FIND DELICIOUS WINES AND GREAT FOOD

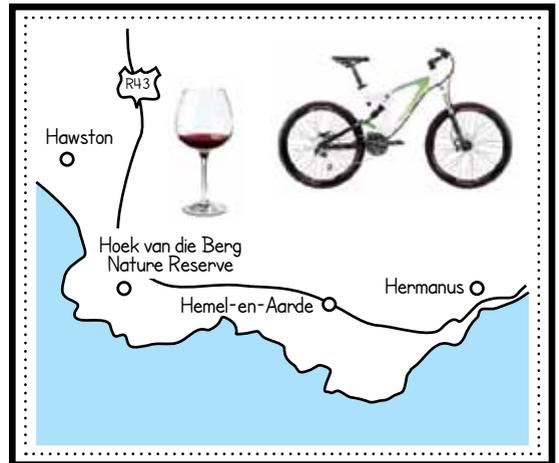
**By Nick Dall**

▶ TRY YOUR HAND  
AT FLY-FISHING





**DISTANCE** 120 km from Cape Town  
**FAST FACT** The Hemel-en-Aarde valley is the Pinot Noir capital of South Africa



## Where to stay

### EARTH COTTAGE



Situated on a tiny slice of land just below the Hamilton Russell Vineyards, this place is affordable and stylishly decorated. The owners breed Arabian horses and golden retrievers, so you'll have plenty of company.

From R500 per night

072 697 0841

[www.earthcottage.co.za](http://www.earthcottage.co.za)

It's a little further up the valley and their four-star cottages are unashamedly luxurious.

From R900–R1 900 per unit (different prices for Christmas and New Year)

028 314 1507

[www.highseasonfarm.co.za](http://www.highseasonfarm.co.za)

### VOLMOED

This religious retreat on stunning grounds offers cheap chalets.

From R210 pp per night

028 312 1282

[www.volmoed.co.za](http://www.volmoed.co.za)

### HIGH SEASON FARM

For a real treat, head to High Season Farm.

It's remarkable to think that a valley so rural and so mountainous could be situated only five kilometres from the bustling seaside town of Hermanus. Part of Hemel-en-Aarde's charm is that there is no urban centre. Instead, restaurants, wine estates and gift shops are strung along the R320. Simply turn off wherever strikes your fancy.

This, and the cool climate that gives the wines a different make-up to their inland counterparts, has made the Hemel-en-Aarde valley immensely popular – despite being one of the newest wine routes in the country.

## Fine wines

One of the first wineries you come across as you make your way up the R320 towards Caledon is the valley's oldest: **Hamilton Russell Vineyards**. The farm was founded by advertising executive and winemaking pioneer, the late Tim Hamilton Russell. After a few more bends, the views get spectacular. The mountains close in around you and from the dam at **Sumaridge**, you can see all the way down to the sea and the town of Kleinmond.

Further up the road, there's **Ataraxia** – with its chapel-like tasting room – and the slick glass-and-steel **Creation**, which is next to what must be one of the prettiest trout dams to go fishing.

# TRIPS ON A TANKFUL



▶ THE SCENERY IN THE VALLEY IS DELIGHTFUL

## GET IN TOUCH

### ATARAXIA

☎ 028 212 2007  
🌐 [www.ataraxiawines.com](http://www.ataraxiawines.com)

### CREATION

☎ 028 212 1107  
🌐 [www.creationwines.com](http://www.creationwines.com)

### DIE PLAASKOMBUIS

☎ 073 230 0788

### EUODIA CYCLES

☎ 028 316 2119  
🌐 [www.euodia.co.za](http://www.euodia.co.za)

### HAMILTON RUSSELL

☎ 028 312 3595  
🌐 [www.hamiltonrussellvineyards.co.za](http://www.hamiltonrussellvineyards.co.za)

### HERMANUS FOREST ADVENTURES

☎ 083 517 3635  
🌐 [www.hermanus-activities.co.za](http://www.hermanus-activities.co.za)

### LA VIERGE

☎ 028 313 2007  
🌐 [www.lavierge.co.za](http://www.lavierge.co.za)

### MOGGS

☎ 076 314 0671  
🌐 [www.moggscookhouse.com](http://www.moggscookhouse.com)

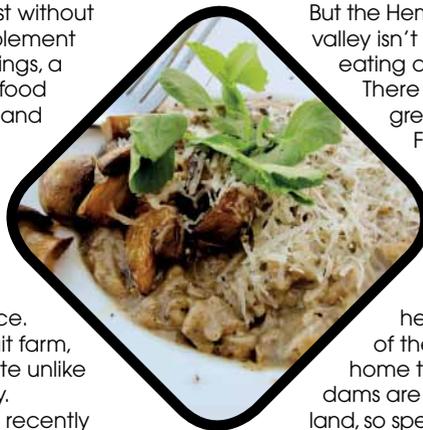
### SUMARIDGE

☎ 028 312 1097  
🌐 [www.sumaridge.co.za](http://www.sumaridge.co.za)

## Good eats

All that wine would be lost without top-quality nosh to complement it. In addition to wine tastings, a few of the wineries have food and wine pairing menus, and some have stand-alone restaurants too. Since 1994, **Moggs Country Cookhouse** has been whipping up gourmet offerings such as their home-made mushroom ravioli with artichoke sauce. Located on a working fruit farm, the wooded setting is quite unlike anything else in the valley.

**Die Plaaskombuis** has recently opened and serves simple yet delicious farm fare. Drive a few hundred metres up the hill and you can't miss **La Vierge**: it's the looming pink edifice at the top. Although La Vierge is a winery, its restaurant is popular (try the mushroom risotto) and the views down to Sandbaai are memorable.



## Move it

But the Hemel-en-Aarde valley isn't only about eating and drinking.

There are some great bike trails.

For more info, contact

**Euodia Cycles.**

Fishing fans would

be happy to hear that many

of the dams are home to trout. (The

dams are on private land, so speak nicely to the owners.)

**Hermanus Forest Adventures** offers

action-filled activities such as paintball, quad

biking and zip-lining through the trees. ♦