

# TASTE

WOOLWORTHS

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TIME TO MAKE A FRESH START

**OUR COOKING  
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Abigail Donnelly's  
seafood braai

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**12 SUPER  
FOODS**  
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SNACKS**  
grown-ups  
will love

Watermelon  
"pizza"  
(page 8)



# Feelgood food

**YOUR COOLEST SUMMER EVER**

**PLUS OUR DESSERT OF THE YEAR! BAKED ICE CREAM & MERINGUE BERRY BOMBE**



BREAKFAST BLOOD ORANGE  
AND RICOTTA ROULADE

# The butcher, the baker & the cheesemaker

PHOTOGRAPHS  
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BABYLONSTOREN  
TEXT  
ANNETTE  
KLINGER

Just when you thought Babylonstoren has done it all, it goes and blows your mind all over again with not one, but three, new food additions – a bakery, a cheese room and a meat room specialising in an exotic breed of cattle





Above, from left: Baker Ernie Beck kneads a batch of pizza dough; fresh rosemary hangs in the butchery; cheese-maker Alta Eybers slices one of Babylonstoren's breakfast blood orange-and-ricotta roulades.

**B**abylonstoren is like that infuriatingly perfect friend we all have. You know the one: effortlessly stylish, too many talents to mention. Each time you visit, she has a cool, new project, making you feel like you should seriously step up your game. Yet, every time you go round, you're made to feel so... welcome.

The first time I made the acquaintance of Babylonstoren – way back in 2010 – it was the 3.5-hectare garden with its winding paths and meditative mazes that charmed me. That, and the fact that the produce growing in its meticulous beds and on its espalliered trees spilled over onto colour-coordinated plates at Babel (way before arranging ingredients according to their CMYK value was a trend).

On another visit, I was invited to participate in the maiden harvest of a paddy of carnaroli rice. No mechanised threshers, only sickles and quaint conical rice hats made of straw. And plenty of furious hacking. Never mind the fact that no-one in the Western Cape had ever grown risotto rice before...

There was also the time I took my in-laws to the then new Greenhouse tea garden, set next to a 26-metre vintage

steel-and-glass conservatory from France, and I discovered the artisanal bread I was eating was made from wheat that was now grown on the farm. Of course!

Do I ever find myself thinking, "Ag, now you're just showing off, Babylonstoren?" Yes. Do I find myself going back time and again? Always.

**"BREAD IS ALIVE; IT CAN SENSE WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT WORK IN A FOUL MOOD. ESPECIALLY WITH THE FLOUR I USE; IT NEEDS A LOT OF LOVE"**  
– ERNIE BECK

The latest irresistible reason to drop by? An artisanal bakery, cheesery and meat room, all completed earlier this year in the courtyard behind the farm shop.

**"BREAD IS ALIVE;** it can sense when you arrive at work in a foul mood," says Ernie Beck, who bakes around 60 loaves a day during the week and 200 over weekends. "The flour I use needs a lot of love." Ground from white wheat berries and

rye grown on the farm, the stoneground flours are coarser than commercial flours, with no stretchers or additives. "I'm on a first-name basis with the miller in Caledon, so I make sure of it!"

As is the lot of the baker, Ernie starts the day when most of us are nowhere near awake. The wood-fired oven, fed with invasive wattle and bluegum stumps from the farm, is already glowing steadily when he arrives and gets down to the task of kneading loaf after loaf; each with its own idiosyncrasy. The slow-and-steady ciabattas with their moist, open crumb and *scarpetti* shape perfect for scooping up sauces; the "stubborn" rye to which he adds just a dash of buttermilk to help kick-start the fermentation; the crusty-on-the-outside, soft-on-the-inside baguettes... eight types of loaves in total. All made with a starter he diligently feeds every day. "Because of the drought, we had to stop making our pear-and-Gorgonzola breads for a while, but people practically came here with their pitchforks demanding we start baking it again," says Ernie, smiling.

The bakery also includes a straight-out-of-the-décor-pages (naturally), sit-down area where folks gather for weekly Italian-themed evenings hosted by Alta Eybers, who also heads up the cheesery



Butcher Jaco Koegelenberg with a Chianina carcass in the Himalayan salt-brick-lined ageing room.



MIDDLE EASTERN  
STEAK SAUCE

next door. “They’re relaxed get-togethers, with lots of wine and laughter,” says Alta, whose unaged cheeses star alongside Ernie’s pizza bases and breads.

“We use whatever’s growing in the garden to inspire the menu, then let everyone help themselves from big platters.”

In another stroke of genius, waitrons continuously do the rounds offering trays of pizza straight from the oven, so guests can always have a piping-hot slice – think toppings such as roast vine tomatoes with lemon ricotta, or fennel, blue cheese and roast grapes – with their glass of vino. “Because who likes half-cold pizza?” laughs Alta.

**“BEING A BUTCHER IS ALL ABOUT APPRECIATING THE CARCASS AND PUTTING THOUGHT INTO HOW YOU’RE GOING TO USE EVERY SINGLE PART”**

– JACO KOEGELENBERG

**ALTA, WHO USED TO BE** in charge of the Greenhouse, trained as a chef at the Institute of Culinary Arts outside Stellenbosch. When Babylonstoren asked for volunteers to head up the proposed new cheese room, she jumped at the chance. “I was sent to Italy to do an apprenticeship at La Casara Roncolato in Ronca near Verona, and a cheese-making course at the Italian Culinary Institute in Calabria,” she says. “It was absolutely amazing.” At the cheese room, she now specialises in making unaged cheeses: fior di latte, laboriously hand-stretched until beautifully stringy; creamy, crumbly ricotta; and squeaky halloumi. “The halloumi is actually a ‘by-product’, because its whey makes the best ricotta by far.” Like Ernie, Alta maintains that milk, too, is a fickle mistress. “I like to think of it as a temperamental woman who needs to be treated just right to be happy,” she says, grinning.

With its white subway-tiled walls, gleaming stainless-steel equipment and mandatory work outfit of skullcap and overall, the vibe in the cheese room is pretty straight-laced compared to the neighbouring butchery, with its quirky

curation of antique meat grinders, sausage stuffers, branded tins and figurines (the bright-red Ferdinand-the-bull lookalike gets my vote). “Every day when I come into work, I feel like a naughty kid in a toy shop,” says butcher Jaco Koegelenberg. After ten years of butchery, he says it’s a real treat to work with one breed exclusively, the Chianina, and to get to know the beasts intimately. “Chianinas are big animals – within a year they grow to about 700 kg,” he explains. “The carcasses have much more meat and much less fat than other breeds I’ve worked with. Being a butcher is all about appreciating the carcass you’re given and putting thought into how you’re going to use every single part.” Before Jaco breaks down the animals, they’re hung in an ageing room lined with pink Himalayan salt bricks for 28 days. “The salt helps to draw excess moisture out of the room and also creates a much softer, slower ageing process for the meat.”

Why a dedicated Chianina butchery? “It’s another way to differentiate Babylonstoren,” says Christo Botha, who rears the animals on the farm across the road. “You definitely can’t go into your local supermarket and buy yourself a Chianina steak!”

Flicking through photos of the lanky-legged, white-haired bovines on his phone, Christo explains the appeal of the meat: coarsely grained with a singular flavour. “It’s considered by many as the tastiest type of beef in the world. All it needs is a quick tap on a hot grill.” Which is exactly the treatment it gets over at Babel in the Josper oven, after which it’s served with a Babylonstoren red-wine sauce and slow-roasted olives. Alta’s cheeses, too, appear on the Babel menu (currently, her fior di latte is served wrapped in young vine leaves), as do Ernie’s sourdough loaves. And, of course, the carnaroli rice – in a waterblommetjie risotto with bobotie cream. Plus, the seasonal spoils of the garden, divided into red, green and yellow salad platters.

It’s all so ... to use the millennials’ appropriation of the word, *extra*. So annoyingly amazing. “Good game, Babylonstoren; can’t wait to see what you come up with next time,” I think to myself as I exit the estate through the vineyards to my altogether more ordinary existence.

[babylonstoren.com](http://babylonstoren.com)



From top: It doesn’t get any fresher than this; sourdough is baked in a wood-fired oven; house-made full-cream yoghurt and ricotta.



DABYLONSTOREN



BREAKFAST BLOOD ORANGE-  
AND-RICOTTA ROULADE**Makes 8–10 slices****EASY****GREAT VALUE****Preparation: 10 minutes, plus  
2–3 hours' chilling time****Babylonstoren ricotta** 2 cups  
**ground cinnamon** 1 t  
**blood oranges** 2, peeled and segmented  
**Babylonstoren fynbos honey**, to taste  
**rose geranium leaves**, to garnish

**1** Place a sheet of clingwrap on a flat surface. Turn the cheese onto the clingwrap, flatten by hand and shape into a square about 1 cm thick. **2** Place the blood orange segments on the cheese and sprinkle with cinnamon. Roll up like a sushi roll and secure tightly with clingwrap. Chill for 2–3 hours to set. **3** Serve sliced on warm toast and drizzle with honey. Top with rose geranium leaves. Serve with Babylonstoren sparkling grape juice.

**FAT-CONSCIOUS, MEAT-FREE**MIDDLE EASTERN  
STEAK SAUCE**Makes 2 cups****EASY****GREAT VALUE****Preparation: 15 minutes  
Cooking: 10 minutes****olive oil** 3 T  
**onion** 1, chopped  
**cinnamon** 1 T  
**tomato paste** 3 T  
**ground coriander** 1 t  
**fig balsamic glaze** 4 T  
**dates** 6, pitted  
**fresh bay leaves** 3  
**almonds** 200 g, toasted and coarsely ground  
**vegetable stock** 2 cups  
**lemon** 1, zested  
**baby vine tomatoes** 1 cup  
**sea salt and freshly ground black pepper**, to taste  
**basil**, to garnish

**1** Heat the oil in a pan and fry the onion over a medium heat until cooked through. Add the cinnamon and the tomato paste and cook for 5 minutes. **2** Add the remaining ingredients, except the vine tomatoes and basil, and reduce to a thick

sauce. Season to taste. **3** Roast the tomatoes at 200°C for 10 minutes and add to the completed sauce. Top with fresh basil leaves. Serve with steak of your choice.

**WHEAT- AND GLUTEN-FREE****WINE: Babylonstoren Nebukadnesar**

**“I LIKE TO THINK  
OF MILK AS  
A TEMPERAMENTAL  
WOMAN WHO NEEDS  
TO BE TREATED JUST  
RIGHT TO BE HAPPY”  
– ALTA EYBERS**

## GREEN-OLIVE TAPENADE

**Makes 2 cups****EASY****GREAT VALUE****Preparation: 5 minutes****green olives** 1 cup, pitted  
**garlic** 2 cloves, crushed  
**raw almonds** 1 x 100 g packet  
**dill seeds** 1 t, toasted  
**anchovy fillets** 2 (optional)  
**capers** 2 t  
**Babylonstoren Frantoio extra virgin olive oil** ¼ cup  
**lemon zest** 2 t

Coarsely blend all the ingredients in a food processor. Add a bit more oil if the mixture is too dry. Serve with warm crusty bread, such as olive bread.

**CARB-CONSCIOUS, DAIRY-FREE,****WHEAT- AND GLUTEN-FREE****WINE: Babel Red**HERB, KALE AND ROAST  
PISTACHIO HUMMUS**Makes 2 cups****EASY****GREAT VALUE****Preparation: 10 minutes****herbs such as coriander, mint, basil, dill, origanum, marjoram, fennel, parsley** 2 cups  
**chickpeas** 2 x 400 g cans, drained  
**pistachios** 100 g, shelled  
**kale** 4 leaves, blanched  
**lemons** 3, zested and juiced  
**Babylonstoren extra-virgin olive oil** ½ cup  
**garlic** 3 cloves, crushed  
**cayenne pepper** 1 t**tahini** 1 T**sea salt and freshly ground black pepper**, to taste

Blend all the ingredients into a paste using a food processor. Season to taste. Serve with crudité or baby vegetables.

**Cook's note:** Add a little Babylonstoren Chenin Blanc to the hummus if you like.**CARB-CONSCIOUS, HEALTH-CONSCIOUS, MEAT-FREE, WHEAT- AND GLUTEN-FREE****WINE: Babylonstoren Chenin Blanc**WOOD-FIRED PIZZA  
WITH SLOW-ROASTED  
GRAPES, FENNEL  
AND BABYLONSTOREN  
FIOR DI LATTE**Makes 2****EASY****GREAT VALUE****Preparation: 30 minutes****Cooking: 1½ hours****For the slow-roasted grapes:**  
**seedless green or black grapes**  
1 bunch, washed**For the pizzas:**  
**readymade pizza bases** 2  
**basil pesto** 2 T  
**baby fennel stalks with bulbs**  
3, sliced horizontally  
**Babylonstoren fior di latte cheese**  
2 balls, torn  
**roasted fennel seeds** 1 t  
**freshly ground black pepper**, to taste  
**Babylonstoren extra-virgin olive oil**,  
for drizzling  
**fresh basil leaves** a handful

**1** To make the slow-roasted grapes, preheat the oven to 140°C. Place the grapes on a baking tray and roast for 1 hour or more. Do not let them dry out completely. Allow to cool. **2** To make the pizzas, spread the basil pesto onto the pizza bases. Top with the slow-roasted grapes, fennel, fior di latte and fennel seeds and place into a wood-fired oven. **3** Cook until crisp, then remove from the fire. Top with freshly ground black pepper and a drizzle of olive oil. Scatter with basil. Serve immediately.

**Cook's note:** The grapes can be replaced with figs, pears or plums. Add other herbs such as mint, sage, marjoram or origanum.  
**HEALTH-CONSCIOUS, MEAT-FREE**  
**WINE: Babel Chenin Blanc**



WOOD-FIRED PIZZA WITH SLOW-ROASTED GRAPES, FENNEL  
AND BABYLONSTOREN FIOR DI LATTE