Overview

Location  The Crags, Plettenberg Bay, South Africa.

Duration  From 2 to 12 weeks.

Dates  All year round.

Requirements
- You must have an Upper Intermediate level of English.
- Special skills: Practical energy and a willingness to embrace the many learning opportunities that can be experienced in viticulture, estate management, wine production, tasting and promotion.

Documents required
- Enrolment form, curriculum vitae, letter of motivation, passport copy, proof of medical insurance.

Day of arrival  Sunday.

Day of departure  Sunday.
Highlights

- Gain thorough hands-on exposure to all practical aspects of boutique wine-estate management, from vineyard preparation and maintenance to harvest and wine maturation.
- Enjoy practical hands-on involvement in the ‘behind-the-scenes’ processes of general farming and wine-estate agricultural practices.
- Participate in the diverse daily activities of a small, busy and highly successful production wine estate plus their highly popular restaurant.
- Stay in a scenic environment where the general routine and bustle of urban living can be escaped.
- Experience the many naturally beautiful areas in the immediate Plettenberg Bay area and broader Garden Route region.
- Choose from a long list of adventure activities to add to your experience – including the world’s highest bridge bungy, swimming with seals, marine safari’s, river-rafting, sky-diving and many more.
- Make new friends from all over the world.

Information about the farm

The farm is a family established, owned and managed boutique wine estate that has successfully grown in size and reputation since its humble beginnings in 2008 when the first pioneering hectare of Sauvignon Blanc was planted. In the intervening years, the estate has developed further vineyards and introduced additional grape cultivar varietals. The wine farm produces both white and red wines plus traditional bottle-fermented champagne known in South Africa as MCC – Method Cap Classique. Cultivars include Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Gewürztraminer, Chenin Blanc, Sangiovese. These wines are available at tasting sessions as well as a standard menu feature of their lunch-time-only restaurant offering ‘uncomplicated farm-style cuisine’ where guests are advised to arrive hungry. The open setting adjacent to a small dam quickly lets one shrug off the routine pressures of urban living and lose track of time.

The owners are justifiably proud of what they have achieved to date, for in every phase they have not only envisaged and planned what was required but have had a direct involvement in its very implementation while working alongside their small team of core staff to direct their training and development. If a water system needed fitting, they did it; if meal menus had to be prepared and tested, they did it. So virtually all aspects of the estate, their produce and the hospitality on offer, have been typified by direct contributions from the owners who have a deep-rooted practical knowledge of what works – something the typical volunteer can draw on to add to their personal set of skills and experience.

In addition, they are positively directed towards the strategic objective of further empowering members of the historically disadvantaged local community by constantly exploring means of broadening their economic participation through adding to their skills via crafts, cash crop cultivation and other means. Volunteers will be expected to contribute of their skills and time to further these activities.
Programme details
Volunteers are involved in a wide range of wine-specific agricultural activities including initial ground-breaking and preparation of new vineyards, trellis construction, irrigation network installation, planting, care of existing and new vines, the busy harvest period, pruning and wine maturation.

To the broad activity list can be added other ‘as-and-when-needed’ duties associated with all farms – water supply, fencing, open space management, invasive alien vegetation removal, property structure and equipment maintenance and repair, workshop fabrication for light metal, woodwork and electrical needs, and much more.

The estate’s hospitality arm includes wine presentations and tastings of their produce plus their kitchen and restaurant, the latter offering seasonally varied ‘farmhouse fare’ menus such as baked goods, cheeses, cold meat assortments, pates and preserves as well as chunky soups and stews during the colder months.

Once volunteers have mastered the technical aspects of what the Redford Lane wines are about and seen how tastings plus the restaurant and kitchen works, they have the opportunity to add variety to their regular routine by participating in these public interface, hospitality elements.

Your role
The general farming activities are on the go seven days a week while restaurant hospitality activities tend to peak from Fridays through to Sundays but are closed on Mondays. By arrangement, you may be requested to work in hospitality for part or all of the weekend and receive other days of the week off in lieu of this.

However, the general routine programme for Mondays to Fridays could look like this:

- From 07.00: Breakfast.
- 07.45 – 07.50: Transfer from your accommodation to the project.
- 08.00 – 13.00: Participation in routine morning activities according to the overall seasonal programme – a mix of farm related activities (vineyards, grapes, harvest, pruning, wine maturation) or kitchen (catering preparation) and restaurant hospitality.
- 13.00 – 14.00: Lunch break – flexible and varied and may be split when involved with the restaurant over this busy time period.
- 14.00 – 17.00: Afternoon programme as required; and after your work transfer from the project to your accommodation.
- 17.00 onwards: Leisure time.
- 19.00 – 19.30: Dinner with the team and leisure time.

Weekends:
- Friday evenings: Traditionally, a braai (BBQ) takes place on Fridays with the meal served around 20.00. The outdoor hot tub is fired up for this evening. You are also free to make arrangements to head into Plettenberg Bay if your wish to enjoy the nightlife there.
- Saturdays: Generally, this is a free day so open to individual choice. You are welcome to sleep late, make your own cooked breakfast and make plans to visit Plettenberg Bay (please note shops, but not supermarkets, close at 13.00 on Saturday and Sunday) for personal pursuits and/or enjoy some of the many local attractions – whether going to the beach, hiking or doing more adrenalin-filled activities.
- Sundays: As on Saturdays, you can enjoy free time. Please note that most shops are closed.

Any public holidays, whether falling on weekdays or weekends, will follow the Saturday/Sunday routine.
Please note that the seasonal nature of the vine and wine cycle PLUS the heightened hospitality demands from October to Easter as well as the peak year-end summer season will result in a different focus on activities at different times of the year, so a placement during the South African summer will be substantially different to one during the more dormant mid-year.

It is important to note that this description serves as an example only. The daily tasks and challenges depend on the volunteer, the time of year and the work that needs to be done. The final job description can therefore vary substantially from the above.

Getting to and from the farm

The project is situated in The Crags, a rural suburb of greater Plettenberg Bay. You need to arrive at George Airport where you will be collected by the volunteer staff. Transport is provided on both your arrival and departure between 08:00 and 17:00 on any day of the week. Alternatively, you can fly directly into Plettenberg Bay. Limited flights are available on Cemair (http://www.flycemair.co.za/) which flies directly to Plettenberg Bay from Cape Town and Johannesburg each week. Please let the Good Hope Volunteers coordinator know if you need more information on these flights.

Accommodation

You will stay in a backpackers’ based in The Crags, a rural suburb of greater Plettenberg Bay. The backpackers’ is set in a 5-hectare small-holding amidst indigenous forest and open grazing pastures. You are accommodated in shared rooms and/or in under-cover luxury Safari bow-tents that come fully equipped with carpets, beds, linen, electric blankets, lights etc. You will, where required, be sharing with one or two other volunteers. There are numerous bathrooms for communal access and use. The main homestead is equipped with an office, TV lounge, two kitchens plus a large verandah, with a residents’ bar, and two fire-hearths for those chilly nights. It is here that guests and hosts gather for social interaction and where evening meals are served for all to enjoy. Immediately adjacent is an outdoor braai (BBQ) area, while close by, is a combination plunge pool/hot-tub (the latter fired up for Fridays) plus a golf practice putting green and a proper boule/petanque track where guests soon get to know their co-guests. Bedding and
towels are provided and your laundry will be regularly done on a wash-and-fold basis by the housekeeper. Free WiFi is available at the main homestead area only.

**Meals**

Three daily meals are provided. You will make your own breakfast and lunch (continental breakfast; lunch consists of sandwiches which you prepare yourself). For dinner, you will be provided with a hot meal usually taken with all residents at the facility. All meals are eaten in the verandah area or the outside entertainment area when required.

A vegetarian option is available and it is also possible to cater for special dietary requirements.

**Free time**

The project is situated in an area where the country’s best activities are offered. You are well placed to participate in a variety of fun activities that can be done over weekends and during your free time in areas like Plettenberg Bay, The Crags, Tsitsikamma, George, Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn, etc. You can go bungee jumping, skydiving, whale watching, swimming with seals, adventure boating, kloofing, kayaking, horse-riding, shark-cage diving, do a tree-top canopy tour, or visit the waterfall Zipline, elephant and snake sanctuaries, wine estates, and many more.

To participate in these activities, just speak with the project coordinator or the staff at the backpackers and they will assist you with the necessary arrangements.

**Local transport**

Daily transport to and from the project is provided.

Transfers to town during your free time can be arranged – but this will be at your own expense.

**What to bring**

There are no special requirements in this regard, but we recommend bringing pocket money/credit and debit cards, personal toiletries, any prescribed medication, sunscreen, mosquito repellents, travelling and practical working clothes, e.g. full length trousers – jeans or cargo pants, long shorts, t-shirts and secure closed shoes for work, a warm and/or waterproof/windbreaking top or jacket, walking shoes, books/laptop, camera, and any items of a personal nature, etc. All these items (and anything else you might need) are readily available in South Africa.

**Your commitment**

Please be aware that in applying for a volunteer project, you are making a firm commitment to the project. Our projects depend on the volunteers. It is necessary that you take this commitment seriously.

Some projects will appoint specific responsibilities to you; others are less structured and require the volunteers to use their initiative. If you prefer the one type over the other, please ask us for the most appropriate project for your preference.

Your daily presence is required and working hours are to be followed strictly. Not fulfilling your obligation can result in your dismissal from the project.
Cell phone use during working hours

Please note that the use of cell phones is strictly prohibited on all of our projects during work hours. This includes taking photos and instant messaging. Volunteers who would like to take photographs of their projects are free to communicate this directly to their project supervisors for guidance and instruction.

What to wear

You are asked to wear sensible clothing and to be culturally sensitive of the communities you are working with. You are expected to wear modest clothing, which includes jeans, leggings, long shorts, and long skirts. Closed shoes are advisable, especially when working outdoors. Underwear is not to be seen under any circumstances.

Not acceptable are low cut tops, short shorts/shirts, bikinis and swimwear, belly tops, shirts/t-shirts with no sleeves for male volunteers as well as flip flops or no shoes.

Any volunteers found inappropriately dressed will be given a written warning and asked to leave the project if the written warning is ignored.

Medical insurance

It is required that you take out medical insurance before travelling to South Africa. For stays exceeding 90 days, it is compulsory to take out South African medical insurance. We recommend NetworX from Compcare, which is specifically designed for people who visit South Africa for 3 to 12 months. You will receive an information leaflet and an application form together with your confirmation of booking.

Health

No vaccinations are required except for travellers going to the north-eastern areas of South Africa, where anti-malaria precautions are recommended. Clients should consult their doctor for recommendations.

A yellow fever certificate is compulsory for those persons who have travelled from, or intend travelling through, countries in the yellow fever belt:


South America: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Surinam, Venezuela, Argentina and Paraguay.

Bring medication just in case you suffer from any travel-related illnesses, e.g. stomach upsets, since your body needs to adjust to the change in food and water during your first few days in South Africa.

It is important to keep in mind at all times that HIV and Aids are widespread diseases in South Africa.

The project is situated in a malaria-free area so no anti-malarial drugs are required.
Safety

Your assignment to the project will be during routine operational hours from Monday to Friday BUT may occasionally extend to some weekends (for which days off during the week will be substituted if required). You will be working with and exposed to agricultural equipment and tools as well as kitchen machinery, all of which can be potentially dangerous to inexperienced or unqualified persons. You must be safety aware at all times and only utilise equipment you have been trained in and are familiar with.

What’s included / not included

Included:
- Project placement
- Airport transfer on arrival and departure (George Airport)
- Accommodation (shared rooms, breakfast, lunch and dinner, laundry)
- Daily transport to and from the project
- Good Hope Volunteers welcome pack
- Weekly site visits by our coordinator
- An orientation at the beginning of your volunteering
- Electronic certificate (printed copy on request)
- Local support, including a 24-hour emergency number
- WiFi

Not included:
- Any other transport
- Excursions for leisure & pleasure
- Meals and refreshments on outings

Visa

You can volunteer in South Africa on a visitor’s visa for up to 90 days.

Nationals from certain countries (e.g. Brazil, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, France, the Netherlands, Spain) will receive their visa when entering South Africa. Other nationals need to apply for a visitor’s visa at a South African Embassy in their home country before travelling.

If you come to South Africa on a visitor’s visa, you can extend once by another 90 days.

If you plan to come for more than 90 days, you need to apply for a volunteer visa at a South African Embassy in your home country. Please ask us for the necessary documents for your visa application.

For the latest information contact the South African Embassy or Good Hope Volunteers.