



**I**t is South Africa's second oldest town and is known worldwide for its wine. Grapes were first planted near Stellenbosch at the end of the 17th century and although it has taken a few years – well OK, a few centuries – beer is starting to forge its own renegade route among the many vineyards. The oldest wineries in Stellenbosch date back to 1682. By comparison, the region's oldest breweries – Wild Clover and Stellenbrau – were founded as recently as 2012. But while the breweries might lack historical pedigree, they do share one thing in common with the surrounding wineries: they are all worthy destinations, offering tours, family-friendly activities, great views and of course, plenty of chances to taste.

#### THE BEER

The town centre is alive with fine restaurants and a couple of decent craft beer bars, but much like the wineries, Stellenbosch's breweries all lie out of town. Take the R44 north and in just under 5km you reach **LilyPatrick Craft Brewery** ([facebook.com/LilyPatrick](https://www.facebook.com/LilyPatrick)). Opened in 2015, it's a rustic taproom on a working fruit farm. There are two permanent beers on

tap – Speak Easy Pale Ale and Rough Day IPA, a session IPA utilising all American hops. The third tap is a rotating beer – when I visited they were pouring a very sessionable stout, but in summer you can expect to find a blonde or weiss in its place. LilyPatrick doesn't serve food, but they do hand out menus from a local pizza joint that delivers to your table.

It's less than 2km from LilyPatrick to **Sir Thomas Brewing Co.** ([sirthomasbrew.com](http://sirthomasbrew.com)), a great place to break for lunch. Grab a wood-fired pizza and a taster tray of their five beers: Lighthouse Weiss, Honey Lager, Rooi Baard Amber, Hangklip IPA and the Brewers Blond. The star is the Rooi Baard, showcasing subtle amounts of that most South African of ingredients, rooibos. I'm not normally a big fan of rooibos in beer, but here it is balanced, offering just a touch of red berries and a slight woodiness to the amber ale's caramel character. Once you've got your chosen beer, grab a seat outside and soak up the fine views, often with a soundtrack of live music.

One of the region's longest running breweries sits 10km away on the R304. Ampie Kruger and Karel Coetzee launched **Wild Clover Breweries** ([wildcloverbreweries.co.za](http://wildcloverbreweries.co.za)) in 2012 following several years as homebrewers.

Since then the brewery has grown from a self-built set of tanks to a 2000-litre shiny Spadoni system with a dedicated taproom and restaurant. As well as the Wild Clover range – Eagle Weiss, Blind Mole Pils, Double Owl Brown Ale and the flagship Black Dog porter – some of Wild Clover's contract brands are available for tasting.

From here it's a mere 3km drive to **Stellenbosch Brewing Company** ([stelliesbeer.com](http://stelliesbeer.com)) – a cheery and always bustling, family-run brewery at Joostenberg farm. If you're travelling with the kids, this is the brewery you're looking for, with vast lawns to run around on, horse and cart rides, a jungle gym and an obstacle course with ziplines and a climbing wall. Back at the brewery, there's always something new and experimental on tap alongside the core range, anchored by the award-winning Hoenderhok Bock. Food is simple and arrives quickly – don't pass up a freshly made canelé paired with a taster of the Eike Stout.

#### BEYOND THE BREWERY

Not everyone travels for beer, and even those that do occasionally want to sample something else as well. You can't visit Stellenbosch