Spotlight on Somerset West and surrounds

Framed by mountains and the beach, this trio of small towns has a laid-back but dynamic vibe and an irresistible outdoor lifestyle.
Beaches, mountains, historic wine estates and nature reserves – a quick description of Somerset West and its adjoining towns of Strand and Gordon’s Bay reads like the brochure for an ideal holiday destination. And indeed visitors flock here, but for residents, it is so much more than the sum of its tourist attractions.

The once sleepy towns of Somerset West is expanding rapidly, its borders now reaching Strand, as new residents arrive from all over South Africa. But it retains its small-town community feel, with excellent schools, sports clubs, a theatre, and shopping rendering it independent of the big city, at the same time being conveniently close for those who choose to commute to Cape Town daily.

The town’s immediate appeal is its dramatic natural setting: “Somerset West is a beautiful town,” says resident Megan Cooper, “framed by the Helderberg and Hottentots Holland mountain range, and flanked by False Bay with some of the coastline, all the way to Cape Point and its winning lighthouses. Orchards, vineyards and vineyards everywhere all around here. It truly is the best little secret spot with beauty surrounding me. I love the laid-back lifestyle.”

While Somerset West is snugly tucked into a green landscape of mountains and vineyards with the surrounding wetland of Vergenoeg and Lourosmond practically within the town, neighbouring towns are close as well.

The beach, its long sandy expanse is a favourite for families – with a surf school, lifesaver post, dive centre, kayaking and all forms of water sports – and it’s the local surf spot for Somerset West residents, only 10 minutes’ drive away.

Next to it is Gordon’s Bay, with a smaller seaside village feel, gathered around the curve of False Bay before the eagle Hottentots Holland mountains. If you’re looking for a beach sheltered by the harbour, and the longer more beautiful jetty as popular. “When the weather is perfect, there is no better place to live,” says Pat Nowell, who has lived in Gordon’s Bay for 34 years. “The beach is fantastic and for us, a short walk away. The people are friendly and there is a sense of community within Gordon’s Bay. I feel safe walking around, and love that I can look out to sea and the mountains from my home.”

For residents of all three towns, the surrounding vineyards and those stretching towards neighboring Stellenbosch provide a leisure playground – whether they are for fine dining at The Restaurant at Waterkloof, Camps Bay at Vergenoeg, or Overberg at Hidden Valley, regular markets at Lourosmond, Route 62, Houtkappers and the Somerset at Oude Libertas, or mountain-biking trails such as the Helderberg Farm MTB Trail.

While the mountains are constant backdrop, hiking, nature walks and picnics are a natural part of the outdoor lifestyle. The easiest place to start is Helderberg Nature Reserve (which dips right down into the town), with its slopes of indigenous fynbos to hike through, as well as lawns that accommodate small concerts in summer.

For more organized sport, Stellenbosch Park is home to several established clubs and also serves as a community home for dog walking and play along the tree-lined banks of the Lourosmond River. There is also a mixed indoor sports club for hockey, soccer and netball events, and multiple gyms including Women’s GYM, home to many power-lifting champs. Gyms are spot for choice, with Eritwani, Somerset West and Strand golf clubs all in beautiful settings with interesting layouts and excellent facilities.

“Whether you are a fitness freak, a shopaholic or simply laid back, Somerset West really is dynamic and caters for every lifestyle,” says Chan Malan, who has lived in Somerset West most of his life.

While disposables revolve in the slim lengths of Somerset Mall, housing every store imaginable, foodies head to the smaller Waterkloof Deli for its irresistible bagels and the food store, and stock up on organic treats and soft cheeses at the Lourosmond Farmers Market every weekend.

In fact, the bordering part of living in the Somerset West area is deciding what to do each weekend. There are so many exciting events happening on your doorstep as well as the appeal of simply kicking back or watch the sun set across the ocean behind Table Mountain with a glass of excellent local wine in hand.
Eat like a local

- The Restaurant at Waterkloof for fine dining
- Old Bridge Tavern for a casual pub atmosphere with burgers and chicken baskets
- TIE Eatery Bakery Bar for steampunk style with healthy fare, including Sunday dishes
- Buena Vista Social Canteen for nachos and chilli peppers and a great vibe
- Molish Indian Restaurant for a superb curry
- De Brasserie on Strand beachfront for French food, sundowners and sushi
- Trippertsh Brewery in Paarl-vlei for lunchtime mezze platters
- The Thirsty Oyster Tavern for mussels.

What I love most about living in Somerset West is the friendly and hospitable community, the fact that it is so close to the winelands and the sea. There are many things to do in this area, with Strand, Gordon’s Bay, Stellenbosch and smaller towns on our doorstep.

DIAZ MALAN, RESIDENT

Demand

2.5%

Properties listed for sale in Somerset West comprise approximately 2.5% of the total sale listings in the Western Cape.

2%

Properties listed for sale in Strand comprise approximately 2% of the total sale listings in the Western Cape.

1%

Properties listed for sale in Gordon’s Bay comprise approximately 1% of the total sale listings in the Western Cape.

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Median asking prices for Somerset West, Strand and Gordon's Bay properties

**Somerset West**
- **R2,959m**
  - For a typical property (three-bedroom house)

**Strand**
- **R832,000**
  - For a typical property (two-bedroom flat)

**Gordon's Bay**
- **R1,6m**
  - For a typical property (three-bedroom house)

Median monthly asking prices for Somerset West, Strand and Gordon's Bay rentals

**Somerset West**
- **R20,000**
  - For a typical rental property (three-bedroom house)

**Strand**
- **R8,500**
  - For a typical rental property (two-bedroom flat)

**Gordon's Bay**
- **R7,200**
  - For a typical rental property (two-bedroom flat)