

Understand Cape Town

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Since its stint as World Design Capital in 2014, how has the city benefited – and what are the ongoing urban challenges?

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From the Khoekhoen and San peoples to Zille and De Lille, Cape Town's history is rich in characters and events.

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One city, many cultures – Cape Town is a rich creole melting pot of different people and lifestyles.

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A stone castle, graceful Cape Dutch, florid Victoriana and art deco towers are all part of the architectural mix.

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Cape Town's vibrant mix of communities and cultures inspire the arts, from literature and cinema to painting and music.

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Shaped over millions of years, the Cape's dramatic features are carpeted by the richest floral kingdom in the world.

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The forces that created this 350-year-old industry, and how it is tackling the working practices that blighted its past.

Cape Town Today

The legacy of the city's stint as World Design Capital 2014 (WDC2014); the threat of electricity blackouts (known as 'load shedding') due to a struggling national grid; political tussles between the Democratic Alliance (DA), who run the city and the Western Cape, and national governing party the African National Congress (ANC); and is Cape Town the most racist city in South Africa? These are among the ongoing conversation topics across the Mother City.

Best on Film

Black Butterflies Biopic about Afrikaans poet Ingrid Jonkers (a powerful performance by Carice van Houten) set in Cape Town in the 1950s and '60s.

Sea Point Days (www.seapointdays.co.za) Documentary by François Verster focusing on the suburb and its promenade as a multicultural crossroads.

Love the One You Love A phone-sex operator, a dog handler and an IT technician are the main characters in Jenna Bass' debut feature, set in Cape Town.

Best in Print

A City Imagined (ed Stephen Watson) Fine selection of original essays by local writers, revealing different aspects of the Mother City.

Reports from before Daybreak (Brent Meersman) Cape Town is the principal setting for this impressive novel about the turbulent decade before democracy and its damaging effect on people of all races. Also read the follow-up *Five Lives at Noon*.

The Last Train to Zona Verde (Paul Theroux) The great travel writer shines a light on Cape Town at the start of an overland trip to Angola in 2011.

WDC2014 Legacy

The impact and lessons learned from the 460 official WDC2014 projects – some new, others ongoing – were under the microscope at the start of 2015. From the city's point of view, it's the event's legacy that's crucial, in particular a change of mindset from identifying problems to solving them. Such a collaborative approach was captured by switching the city government's slogan from 'This City Works for You' to 'Making Progress Possible. Together.'

What will you notice as a visitor, apart from the Yellow Frames angled at Table Mountain? A list of ongoing initiatives can be found at www.capetown.gov.za/WDC2014 and makes for enlightening reading. Projects of note include 543 public-housing units created in Ocean View, built partly from stone found in the location – the construction of which trained a score of locals in stonemasonry; the Art54 project, to be used as a model for temporary public art around the city; and a series of co-creation workshops, such as the one on developing the tourism and community potential of Khayelitsha's Lookout Hill.

The Politics of Name-Calling

The renaming of Table Bay Boulevard to FW de Klerk Boulevard in early 2015 proved controversial. Both the ANC and the Congress of SA Trade Unions came out against the name change, citing the former president's role under apartheid. It was a similar story with the revamped Company Garden's Restaurant. It had reopened in November 2014 as Haarlem & Hope (after the Dutch ship, the *Nieuwe Haarlem*, shipwrecked in Table Bay in 1647), but when this was branded a 'callous celebration of colonial power' by activist Zackie Achmat on social media, the restaurant decided to revert back to the original name.