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FREE GUIDE · NO OBLIGATION

Late Light, Early Shadow

Sunrise tables are written for a flat horizon. This valley does not have one. Here is the day the mountain actually gives you, hour by hour — and what belongs on the glass at each one.

Almost every piece of shading advice you will read was written for a house on open ground. Jonkershoek is the opposite of open ground: a working valley floor of vineyards and stone werf buildings, running back into mountains that CapeNature administers as a reserve of roughly 11,000 hectares, with the Eerste River rising somewhere up in them.¹ Those mountain walls sit between most windows in this valley and the actual horizon, and they change the brief more than the compass does.

Measure your own skyline before anyone quotes you

You can do this in a minute, with no instrument. Stand at the window that bothers you and look at the skyline — the ridge, not your own roof. Hold a fist out at arm's length: a fist covers roughly ten degrees of sky. Stack fists from the horizon up to the ridge line, and you have the angle your window is waiting on.

The rest is arithmetic. The earth turns fifteen degrees an hour, but at Stellenbosch's latitude of about 33.9°S² that works out to the sun gaining somewhere near eleven to twelve degrees of *altitude* an hour in the first part of the morning. A two-fist skyline — twenty degrees — holds the sun off for about an hour and three-quarters after the almanac's sunrise. A three-fist skyline costs closer to two and a half hours. The ridge on the other side takes the evening back at the same rate. Anything in the sums above is easy to check for your own address against a public solar calculator.³

That single number tells you more than the aspect does. It decides whether a room's real problem is heat, glare or cold — and those are three different problems wanting three different products.

BEFORE 08:00 The shadow the almanac doesn't print	08:00–11:00 The sun arrives all at once
11:00–14:00 Straight over the roof	14:00–17:00 The wind comes up the valley
AFTER 17:00 The ridge takes it back	THE OTHER HALF OF THE YEAR Wet, low and gusting



Everything here is free to use

This guide is the reasoning we bring to a Jonkershoek measure before anyone talks about price. Read it, argue with it, and if it helps, book the measure at the bottom — there is no charge and no obligation either way.

[Book a free in-home measure](#)

BEFORE 08:00

The shadow the almanac doesn't print

On the shaded side of the valley the first hours of the day are genuinely cold, and they are cold for longer than the town below is. Wine writing on the ward notes plainly that the south-facing slopes here run significantly cooler than the rest of

the Stellenbosch area⁴ — useful for grapes, less useful for a bedroom with a stone gable wall that has been giving up heat all night.

What people describe when they phone us about this hour is almost never glare. It is a room that will not warm up, condensation beading on the inside of old glass, and bedding that smells faintly of the river. That is an insulation problem, not a light problem, and the honest answer is a cellular honeycomb blind: the fabric is pleated into closed cells, each cell traps a layer of still air against the pane, and that trapped air is what does the work. It is the one fabric blind that measurably changes how a cold room feels rather than just how it looks.

The trade-off, said plainly: a cellular blind does not tilt, so you cannot steer light with it, and it will not take scrubbing — which rules it out of a scullery or a bathroom that steams. Where a room needs both warmth and view control, we would pair it rather than pretend one product does everything.

08:00–11:00

The sun arrives all at once

This is the part that surprises people who have moved up from flatter ground. There is no gradual dawn here. The sun does not creep over a hedge at five degrees; it steps out from behind a ridge already twenty or thirty degrees up, at full strength, into an east or north-east window that was in deep shade ninety seconds earlier. Nothing about that is dangerous, but it is startling, and it is why a fixed fabric blind so often disappoints in a Jonkershoek morning room: fully up you are blinded, fully down you have swapped the mountain for a wall.

A slatted blind answers the hour better than a flat one because it can be tilted rather than raised. Turn the slats up and the light bounces off the ceiling into the room; turn them down and it goes to the floor; turn them level and you have the view back. On the older homesteads, where the openings are small, deep-set and often a few millimetres out of square, timber slats at 50 mm sit at roughly the rhythm of the original glazing bars, so the window keeps its own face.

The trade-off: timber slats collect dust and want an occasional wipe, and past about two metres of width we would split the opening or motorise it rather than

hand you a heavy tilt. Wet rooms get aluminium slats instead — same geometry, no swelling.



A first-hours room: thick stone, a wood stove, and a window that will not see direct sun for a while yet.

Nothing on this page is a heritage opinion. Where we mention permits or approvals, that is us telling you a step exists — the decision belongs to Heritage Western Cape and your own professional team.

11:00–14:00

Straight over the roof

Run the standard passive-design sum for this latitude — noon altitude is ninety degrees minus the latitude, plus or minus the earth's 23.44° tilt — and the December sun stands at roughly 79° over Jonkershoek at midday, with the June sun at roughly 33° .³ Eighty degrees is very nearly straight down. A wall in midsummer barely gets touched at noon; even a modest eave shades it. The surfaces that suffer instead are the ones facing *up*.

That is why the hardest midday problems in this valley are rarely ordinary windows. They are the barn conversion's raked gable glass, the skylight over a stair, the tall triangular window somebody put in to catch the mountain. Those take near-vertical sun square on, and standard rectangular fabric will not hold to a slope. Tensioned skylight and shaped systems, made to the actual pitch and running in side channels so the fabric cannot sag away from the glass, are the honest answer — made to order for one opening, so they cost more and take longer than a rectangle.

The other midday fact worth having is ultraviolet. The greater Cape runs a summer UV index in the 11–13 band that the World Health Organization labels extreme, strongest between roughly ten and two.⁵ That is a fading argument as much as a comfort one: it is what takes the colour out of a kelim, a stinkwood table top and a curtain lining. Stopping that outside the glass — external venetian slats, a roller shutter, a screen — keeps it away from the room's contents entirely, where an internal blind can only intercept it after the pane has already let it in.

14:00–17:00

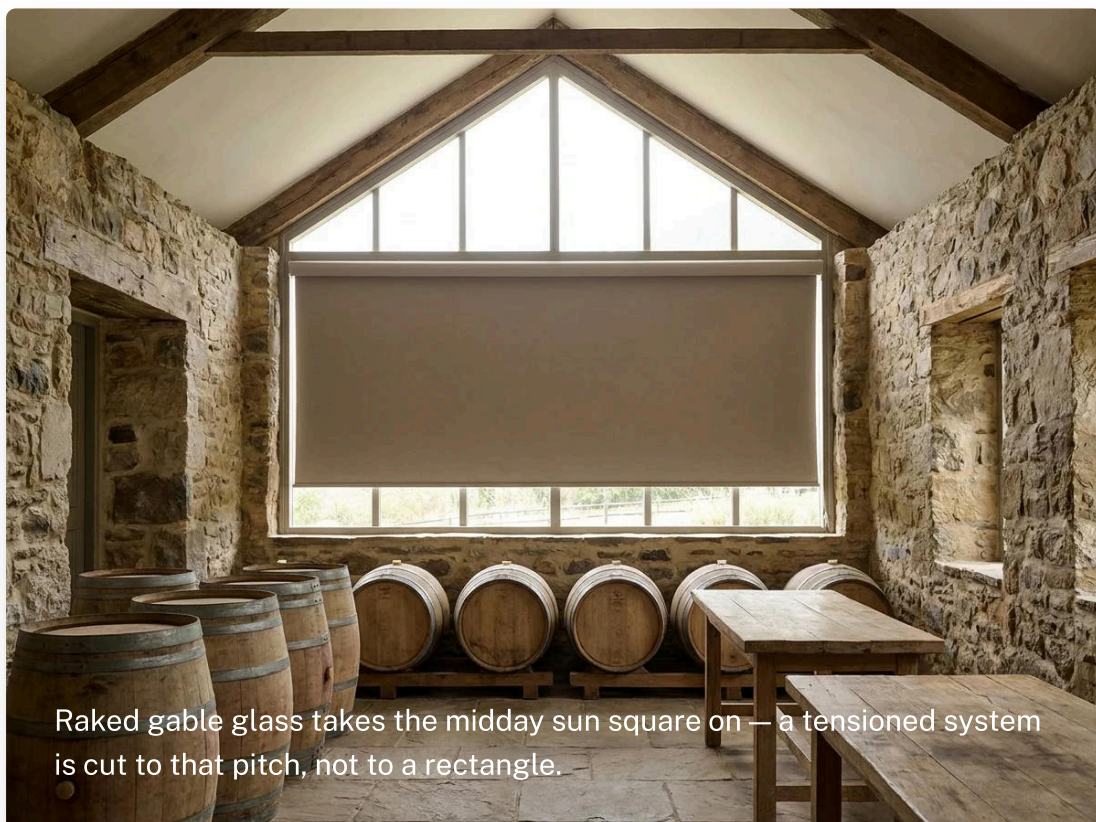
The wind comes up the valley

Summer afternoons here run to a timetable. A south-easterly funnels up the valley floor through the warm months, and it is a documented part of why the vineyards on this ward behave the way they do — it cools the vines and keeps disease down.⁴

Standing on a stoep at three o'clock in January, it is less an abstraction: it is a wind with a shape, arriving from the same quarter, most days, at roughly the same time.

Everything we fit outside the glass here is specified with that in mind. A folding-arm awning over a braai deck should be motorised with a wind sensor, so it retracts itself when the gust builds rather than waiting for somebody to remember. A zip screen — mesh held in tension inside aluminium side channels — copes with air an open awning arm cannot, which is what makes it the better choice on the exposed stoeps further up the valley road, and what lets it turn a windy terrace back into a usable room.

The trade-off both ways: awning fabric is a consumable and a rechargeable motor wants charging once or twice a year; a zip screen in fixed channels avoids all of that, but it is a heavier install and it does not fold away out of sight in the way an awning does. Neither is a security product, and we would rather say so on a free guide than have anyone assume otherwise.



Raked gable glass takes the midday sun square on — a tensioned system is cut to that pitch, not to a rectangle.

The awkward openings are the normal ones here

Gables, stair voids, out-of-square homestead reveals and glass that runs floor to ceiling. We measure each one on its own rather than pricing a house by the window count.

[Ask about a shaped opening](#)

AFTER 17:00

The ridge takes it back

The evening ends the way the morning began, in reverse and just as abruptly. Long before the printed sunset, the light goes flat, the temperature drops several degrees in a matter of minutes, and the valley reads as one colour. It is the best hour of the day up here and the one most people build their living room around.

Two practical things follow. First, sunscreen mesh reverses at dusk. All day it gives you daytime privacy and keeps the view; the moment your lamps are the brightest thing around, the mesh works the other way and the lit room becomes the show. In a farmhouse with no neighbour for a kilometre that may not matter at all — in a cluster of cottages or anything near the valley road, it matters a great deal, and a double roller (mesh in front, blackout behind, on one bracket) is the usual fix.

Second, this is a reserve-edge valley. Light spilling out of an unscreened wall of glass pulls in every moth in the fynbos and, on a warm night with the doors open, everything that follows the moths. A blind that actually closes the opening at dusk earns its keep for reasons that have nothing to do with sun.

THE OTHER HALF OF THE YEAR

Wet, low and gusting

Everything above describes summer. Winter here is not the same problem turned down — it is a different problem. Stellenbosch's climate record puts the wettest months in June and July at roughly 100–120 mm each, against under 20 mm in high summer, on an annual total near 787 mm.⁶ This is a winter-rainfall valley: the wet season and the windy season are not the same season, and shading here is stress-tested by rain-bearing fronts rather than by summer storms.

Those fronts can be serious. In the May 2026 event, stacked cold fronts drove gusts reported at 100–120 km/h over parts of the Cape Winelands, with Stellenbosch Municipality dealing with downed trees and roof damage.⁷ Anything we hang on the outside of a building in this valley is specified against that, not against an average day.

The low winter sun is the flip side, and it is a gift rather than a problem. At roughly 33° at noon it reaches metres into a north-facing room, straight past the eave that shaded that same wall in January. Over-specifying north glass with a heavy blackout throws away free June warmth along with the glare. North wants something you can adjust through the day; west is where the money should go.

“The mountain gives this valley a shorter day and a harder middle. Specify for the hours you actually get, not the ones the table prints.”

HOW WE READ A JONKERSHOEK ELEVATION



A screen-facing desk is the one room where fully down, mid-afternoon, is the right answer.

Two building eras, one farm road

Drive from the valley mouth to the reserve boundary and you pass two completely different kinds of building, often on the same title deed. There is the old werf core — lime-washed masonry, thick walls, small deep-set openings that were designed to keep summer out long before anyone glazed a whole wall. And there is the

newer wing: a cellar office, a guest cottage, a living room rebuilt in the last twenty years specifically to hold the mountain in frame.

They are not the same job. Under the National Heritage Resources Act, any structure — or part of one — older than sixty years may not be altered or demolished without a permit from the provincial heritage authority.⁸ That is the whole reason we draw the line where we do:

- ✓ **Inside the reveal is a furnishing decision.** A blind fitted within the opening changes nothing on the protected face of the building, which is why the old core almost always gets an internal answer.
- ✓ **Outside the glass is a building decision.** A headbox, a set of guide channels, an awning cassette — all of that is a change to the exterior, and on a building over sixty years old it is a permit conversation before it is a colour conversation.
- ✓ **Thatch changes the fixing detail.** South Africa's thatch rules set clearances for conductive material near a thatched roof. ⁹ On the older roofs up here that is a genuine site item — where a bracket may land, and what may not be run up under the eave — not boilerplate.
- ✓ **The new wing carries the heavy work.** External venetian slats and roller shutters, both of which stop heat before it reaches the pane, are usually viable on a modern wing with no heritage constraint at all — which is exactly where the big glass is.

What only standing in the room can settle

Five things decide a Jonkershoek specification, and not one of them can be read off a plan:

1. **Your skyline angle, window by window.** The first test above, done properly at each opening — two rooms on the same wall can wait different amounts of time for the same sun.
2. **Reveal depth, measured at several points.** Old homestead openings are seldom square, and the difference between a deep and a shallow reveal decides whether a headbox sits inside the joinery or proud of it.

3. **What the wall is actually made of.** Solid masonry, a later cavity wall or a rebuilt stud wall take different fixings, and the substrate decides whether an external system is viable there at all.
 4. **Wind exposure at your own stoep.** A sheltered courtyard near the valley mouth and an open deck further up behave nothing alike in a February southeaster — that choice is awning versus zip screen.
 5. **Power, and any sign-off the building needs.** Whether a motor can be reached, whether a battery tube can be recharged without a ladder, and whether the age of the structure puts a permit in front of the order.
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That is the honest reason the measure is free: it is far better for both of us to find these out before a quote than after a fitting.



Roller blinds

Timber venetians

Cellular honeycomb

Folding-arm awnings

THE NEXT STEP

The next step, if you want one

A consultant comes out with fabric and slat samples, does the skyline angle at every opening, measures properly and leaves you with a written quote itemised per window. It is free, it carries no obligation, and you are welcome to use the guide above and go no further.

SOURCING

Every figure on this page, traced

Every factual claim above about the valley, the sun, the climate, the winter storms and the heritage rule traces to one of these. The sun-altitude and skyline-delay figures are arithmetic from a sourced latitude, not a citation — they are marked as such so you can redo them yourself.

¹ Wikipedia — [Jonkershoek Nature Reserve](#) (approximately 11,000 hectares, CapeNature-administered; the Eerste River rises in the reserve).

- 2 Wikipedia — [Stellenbosch](#) (33°56'S, town elevation about 136 m; the valley runs back into the mountains behind the town).
- 3 NOAA Global Monitoring Laboratory — [Solar Calculator](#). Our noon-altitude figures (about 79° in December, about 33° in June) and the eleven-to-twelve-degrees-an-hour climb rate are standard solar geometry computed from the latitude in source 2, not quoted from a publication. Put your own coordinates in and check them.
- 4 WineWiki — [Jonkershoek Valley](#) (a summer south-easterly funnels up the valley and cools the vineyards; the valley's south-facing slopes run significantly cooler than the surrounding Stellenbosch area).
- 5 Institut de Recherche pour le Développement — [Extreme solar UV radiation exposure in Cape Town](#) (the greater Cape's summer UV index reaches the “extreme” band, strongest through the middle of the day).
- 6 Climate-Data.org — [Stellenbosch climate](#) (Mediterranean; annual rainfall about 787 mm; wettest June–July at roughly 100–120 mm a month, driest January–February under 20 mm).
- 7 The South African — [Western Cape wind damage, May 2026](#) (gusts reported at 100–120 km/h over parts of the Cape Winelands; Stellenbosch Municipality responding to fallen trees and roof damage).
- 8 Government of South Africa — [National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999](#) (Section 34: no structure, or part of a structure, older than sixty years may be altered or demolished without a permit from the provincial heritage resources authority).
- 9 Thatchers' Association — [Thatch roof regulations](#) (clearance requirements for thatched roofs, including conductive material near or under the thatch).