

## Mosaic at the Orient Hotel



*Crystal Espin*

There's nothing like having a morning that reads like a Ben Stiller movie – rushing to catch a bus in Bryanston, having no potting clue how to get there, coupled with your bloody GPS going on strike, spilling milk in your car (I really should stop eating breakfast in my car on the way to work), having no time to mop up said milk, and nothing but time on a 45 minute bus trip to the Magaliesberg to think about the stench said spilt milk is now causing in your sun bathed car on a 29 degree day. It's an understatement to say I was flustered when I arrived at the Orient on that sunny Friday afternoon. But stepping out of the mini bus, into the sweltering lunch time heat, and onto the driveway of the Orient I couldn't help but forget all about the comedy of errors that was the previous few hours. I had been transported to a wondrous and fascinating place, and there was no time to cry over spilt milk!

Walking around the premises of The Orient Hotel, it struck me that this isn't somewhere you come for a meal – it's a **place to linger for a while, a place to escape from the hustle and bustle of Joburg**. There's so much to discover on the property – **an art museum, the most beautiful classic car collection, and even an old school cinema** where weekly Wednesday movie nights are held. I was struck by how beautiful the property and the surrounds are, and by the **attention to detail found in every corner**. After a brief tour of the property we were led into the hotel and up to Mosaic – inside, the same meticulous attention to detail is clear and you can't help but think the hotel is a **secret portal to the orient**.

I'd heard so much about Mosaic before I arrived – award winning food, one of the **top 20 restaurants in the country**, and a chef who was voted **South African Chef of the Year** – but nothing could prepare me for the **gastronomic experience** I was about to have. Seated at a large table in a private dining room, we were taken on an **8-course journey of food and wine** like I've never experienced. Dish after dish was **nothing short of art on a plate** – from the presentation, to the flavour combinations and wine pairing, it was all just kismet. **Their wine selection is truly outstanding**, with unique and rare finds from all around the world selected by their sommelier, **Cape Wine Master Junel Vermeulen**.



Although I was mesmerised by every dish, honourable mention must go to **By The Sea Side** – an **outstanding seafood combination of clam**,



**smoked oyster, prawn cracker and Tilipia with Garden Pea and Fava Bean Rogout** – and **the Glazed Debonded Quail with Globe Artichoke Crème**, which was served with the most delicious gravy I have ever tasted. Dessert was also a treat - authentic **Peach Belinnis served with Lemon Verbena Scented Sorbet** – heaven!

8 courses and several glasses of exquisitely paired wine later and I completely understood what **Chef Chantel Dartnall** is trying to achieve at Mosaic. Their courses are **designed to tempt and tantalise the eyes and the taste buds in small mouthfuls**. The small courses force you to linger, take in your surroundings, and appreciate the company you've invited along with you. But don't let the small servings fool you! **After 8 courses I was sufficiently satisfied** and couldn't possibly put another morsel in my mouth – no matter how delicious it was!

So how much does 8 courses at one of the best restaurants in the country cost? The **Grande Degustation** Spring 2012 menu is **R775 per person**, excluding wine pairing, which is **R300 per person** for the **connoisseur's selection** or **R160 per person** for the **enthusiast's selection**. There's also the option of their **Petit Degustation** Spring 2012 menu at **R475 per person**, excluding wine pairing which is **R220 per person** for the **connoisseur's selection** or **R125 per person** for the **enthusiast's selection**. There's also an **ala carte menu** for those who don't want to indulge in the 8-course spectacular.

While Mosaic is by no means cheap, it is most definitely a special occasions restaurant – a place to celebrate with and treat those you love. It's one of those places you just have to visit, for an experience you won't easily forget.

