



**Luke Dale-Roberts**

Chef-patron of The Test Kitchen in Cape Town, he won Restaurant of the Year at the most recent *Eat Out* Mercedes-Benz Restaurant Awards. This British expatriate is extraordinarily talented, charming and irreverent. He's also delighted South African cuisine is becoming globally recognised as more chefs experiment with local flavours. 'The Test Kitchen was always about putting together a small restaurant that explored flavour as far as we could – and we're still exactly that. We still work to that same brief.'

PHOTOGRAPHS BRETT RUBIN, JAN RAS, SUPPLIED

**What do you serve vegans?**

Who better than food bloggers to ask two *Eat Out* Mercedes-Benz Restaurant Award-winning chefs some hot, on the spot questions?



**What would you serve to a group of vegans who want to experience your mantra, 'Taste! Taste! Taste!'?**

**Usha Singh,**  
[www.healthyvegetarianfoods.co.za](http://www.healthyvegetarianfoods.co.za)

I might marinate tofu in miso to get depth of flavour, and barbecue some veggies. I'd also juice up a carrot or beetroot or fennel, reduce it down and then enhance with spices to make a light dressing. That would add more power to the barbecued vegetables.



**What is your favourite offal to cook for guests?**

**Thando Moleketi,**  
[www.jozifoodiefix.co.za](http://www.jozifoodiefix.co.za)

I love sweetbreads [the pancreas and thymus glands] – and they're something everyone can prepare. You just need to clean them, poach them and fry until they're crispy. Delicious!



**Which South African ingredient do you think is under-used and should get more attention? Have you cooked with it?**

**Thuli Gogela,**  
[www.mzansistylecuisine.co.za](http://www.mzansistylecuisine.co.za)

I use madumbi [amadumbe or African potato] quite a lot – I smoke it for king-klip croquettes. It's a lovely starch but you have to be careful with it because it contains a small amount of cyanide. In the UK it's called arrowroot, and we once made crisps with it. Our throats got itchy and we all nearly stopped breathing. After that I read up on madumbi – at a certain time of the year you should ferment it before cooking.



**Your biggest culinary disaster to date?**

**Katelyn Williams,**  
[the-kate-tin.blogspot.com](http://the-kate-tin.blogspot.com)

During a cooking demo, I had to make a *pâte à bombe* [mousse base]. For that you need to make a sabayon [egg yolks beaten with a liquid over simmering water] and add sugar at a certain temperature so the sabayon holds. To time it was a challenge. I needed to heat all the sugars to 176 °C simultaneously, so I was running back and forth from one kitchen to the next like a mad thing, whisking and adding and whisking and adding. In the end, I think I took the best one and said it was mine.



**What is the biggest mistake young chefs make in the kitchen? And what dish on your menu would you recommend as proudly South African?**

**Katchie Nzama,**  
[www.travelmzantsi.com](http://www.travelmzantsi.com)

When young chefs feel a need to prove themselves, they tend to overcomplicate the dish instead of focusing on the purity of the ingredients. For a truly South African dish, I'd recommend our rooibos and tomato risotto. The flavour of the tea comes through exquisitely and the langoustines are beautiful, reflecting the great produce we've got in South Africa.



**What is your personal food-lust wish for the local dining scene?**

**Alida Ryder,**  
[www.simply-delicious-food.com](http://www.simply-delicious-food.com)

I'd really like to see more support for our local producers. If more chefs supported them, they could expand their quality livestock and products. At this stage organic, free-range produce is expensive because it's sold in such limited quantities. But it's much more rewarding to buy white asparagus from a local supplier than importing it.



**“ I’VE ALWAYS** said that one day when I’m grown up I would have a kitchen filled with copper pots.

**Chantel Dartnall**

Head chef and owner of Restaurant Mosaic in Pretoria, she scooped S. Pellegrino Chef of the Year at the *Eat Out* Mercedes-Benz Awards and is known for her exquisite botanical cuisine. The restaurant is located in The Orient Boutique Hotel in the lush Crocodile River Valley, where Chantel creates innovative dishes influenced by French cuisine and featuring scapes from nature.



**Have you ever prepared a dish that was not well received by patrons?**

**Ishay Govender-Ypma,**  
[www.foodandthefabulous.com](http://www.foodandthefabulous.com)

We go through such an intensive process of tasting and testing that it really doesn't happen all that often. Occasionally I'll experiment with a new ingredient and guests might not like the texture. We do a lovely dish called The Snail's Trail with artisan vegetables and beautiful Burgundy snails, but some diners just don't like snails.



Experience a foraging trip in the GLA 45 AMG with Kobus van der Merwe, winner of the Nederburg Rising Star award at the *Eat Out* Mercedes-Benz Restaurant Awards.



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