

jen's journeys of flavour

home and away



taste



travel



train



WHIRLWIND OF TASTES

Posted on [November 2, 2015](#) by [Jenny Handley](#)

What a whirlwind week! After a last supper in Cape Town (that would have impressed a gourmand wine or connoisseur from anywhere in the world) we took the early flight to Joburg for a week of feasting.

MOSAIC AT THE ORIENT

A 90-minute drive of facing traffic, taxis and roadworks, and we made it in one piece to the entrance of Mosaic. It was like moving from one world to another, and waiting patiently on the approach road for a large tortoise to move out of our way, gave us time to unwind in order to appreciate all on offer at what is known as “the sanctuary of senses”. A warm welcome from Mari and we were escorted to Marrakesh, our home for the night. This royal suite included a dayroom, private balcony where we would have breakfast the next morning, and a Moroccan-inspired bedroom and bathroom that took our breath away. One can book a night in each room and enjoy their version of a trip on the spice route! We immediately appreciated the infinite attention to detail from decor to reading matter. Tea and an hour at the pool, and we were ready for pre-dinner drinks in a tranquil garden.

Dinner took our senses to new heights. Diminutive chef Chantel Dartnell welcomes each guest and explains the journey. When I complimented her on her innovation, humble and charming, she claimed “There are no new ideas, it is simply your interpretation. When you create something, an element of it has been seen before.” Every nuance of this evening is etched in my senses, from the bread and butter to last morsel. There is botanical inspiration in all her dishes, it was a symphony of sensory explosions from start to finish. I had the non-alcoholic drinks pairing and my man, the grande degustation menu. I have to make note of two dishes – one being the Alchemist's Infusion, the other the Garden of Eden, which I swear had more than fifty delicately plated components.

Our morning walk on the guinea fowl trail was in hope that we would be ready for more of the epicurean experience. We met zebra, buck (but no guinea fowl) and popped in to appreciate the museum. A new dish called ‘crack of dawn’ was presented with aplomb on our balcony, after pastries, fruit and yoghurt, the standards of excellence and flavour reminiscent of the night before. It was hard to tear ourselves away from what I am determined will not be a one-in-a-lifetime experience, but twice-in-a-lifetime, as I would like to return.

Dad Dartnell is focused on the figures of the ‘restaurant with rooms’ as Chantel describes The Orient, so that effervescent Chantel and her mom Mari can be playful and have fun. Her food, like Chantel, is playful, energetic and joyous. As we were departing the next morning, she ran down the steps to say goodbye. Chantel is not just pretty. She is pretty amazing, and her food is commanding a new space in the SA culinary world.



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