

# CHANTEL DARTNELL

*Chef-Owner of Restaurant Mosaic at The Orient*

## WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ULTIMATE FOOD DESTINATION?

Anywhere in the Far East, as I have always had a great affinity for the cuisine from the Orient. The vibrancy, colours and aromas are totally intoxicating. Having travelled to the East previously I have developed an understanding for their delicate nuances of flavours, combining savoury, sweet and sour in one dish resulting in a creation that is light, fresh and very flavourful. I have also found that there is such an endless variety of interpretations of the same dish that it is like re-discovering the dish as you taste the different nuances of spices used from region to region. I don't only find oriental cuisine inspiring, it is also comforting, and I love preparing a fragrant red curry or spicy duck salad for a relaxing evening at home.

## ADVICE FOR YOUNG FEMALE CHEFS:

It is sometimes a difficult choice for young female chefs to decide whether

to embark on a career in the hospitality industry or to rather focus on their families. But once you have made the decision to pursue a career as a chef, it is important to understand that our industry is growing ever more demanding and chefs are continually striving towards creating the next unforgettable dish. In doing this, chefs need to be confident, creative and develop their own unique style. As a young female chef you have to invest in your own future, it is important to gain as much practical experience in a variety of kitchen environments where you can develop your skills and palate. Work hard and stay committed. It takes years of experience before you will become confident enough to start developing a unique personal style that will represent your personality on the plate.

## WHAT IS YOUR FOODIE MOTTO?

"Fresh is Best"

This motto has so many different uses





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in the kitchen: one of them is that it is very important for any chef to create a strong bond with his/her suppliers especially the farmers. The best way to do this is to personally visit the farms where the fresh produce is grown or the animals are raised. Chefs need to have an intimate knowledge of their suppliers, and their suppliers need to get to know them. Once the bond is established suppliers will go to great lengths to ensure that you receive the freshest most beautiful produce you can imagine.

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## CHANTEL'S *Alchemist's Infusion*

### INGREDIENTS

For the vegetable consommé:  
3 large ripe Italian vine tomatoes,  
roughly chopped  
1 medium beetroot, peeled and  
chopped  
1 fennel bulb, sliced  
125g brown sugar  
15ml (1 tbsp) salt  
1 bay leaf  
6 lemongrass sticks, chopped  
1 big bunch fresh basil  
1 sprig fresh rosemary  
1 sprig fresh fennel  
2 hibiscus teabags

3,5L cold water  
100ml lime juice  
For the tea infusion:  
5ml (1 tsp) hibiscus tea leaves  
For the marinade:  
100 ml lemon olive oil  
50 ml white balsamic  
1 pinch salt  
2 g chopped fennel  
1 pinch sugar  
For the blanching:  
2 courgettes, cut into ribbons using  
a peeler  
200g shelled baby peas  
3 candy-stripe beetroot, cut into  
quarters  
For the lobster:  
2 West Coast rock lobster tails,  
removed from shell (reserve the  
shells) and cut into 1,5cm-thick slices  
1 fennel flower  
1 lemongrass stick  
For the garnish:  
12 rolled baby carrot strips  
Handful baby basil leaves  
Handful pea tendrils  
Handful baby viola flowers  
Handful fuchsia flower petals  
Handful nasturtium flowers and  
leaves

1. For the vegetable consommé,  
place all of the ingredients in a  
stock pot and slowly bring to a  
boil. Reduce the heat and allow to  
simmer gently, about 20 minutes.  
Remove from heat and strain

through a chinoise (conical-  
shaped sieve) lined with fine muslin  
cloth. Reserve the consommé in a  
saucepan until required.  
2. Dissolve the hibiscus tea  
leaves into 1 litre of the vegetable  
consommé.  
3. For the marinade, mix all the  
ingredients together and refrigerate.  
4. Place a pot of salted water over  
medium-high heat and bring to a  
rolling boil. Blanch the vegetables  
(courgettes, baby peas and  
beetroots) separately in the boiling  
salted water for a few seconds,  
remove them from the water and  
refresh the vegetables by placing  
them in a bowl of ice water. Strain  
the vegetables before placing them  
in the well-chilled marinade, and  
refrigerate for 30 minutes.  
5. In a separate pot, quickly blanch  
the lobster in salted water for 30  
seconds and set aside until later  
use.  
6. Place the lobster shells in a  
preheated oven of 180 °C and roast  
for 3 minutes. Place the shells a  
cona cup or alternatively a siphon  
style coffee maker with the lemon  
grass and flowers.  
7. Place 2 – 3 slices lobster tail in  
the bottom of a serving bowl and  
arrange all of the vegetables around  
the lobster. Garnish with edible  
organic flowers and herbs of your  
choice. ■