

## CHEF OF THE MONTH: CHANTEL DARNEL FROM MOSAIC

October 27, 2016

### The fabulous Restaurant Mosaic at The Orient

If there were a definition for everything that's right with the world, award-winning chef Chantel Dartnall would be it. She adjusts her crown and starts her day of running a mini empire, and loving every single step along the way.

She's an inspiration to many young women and has elevated South Africa's status as a gourmet food destination. Chantel is a creator, an inventor and a magician – once you're under her gastronomic spell, there's no escaping!



Image: Supplied

Chantel grew up in the gorgeous Francolin Conservancy in Elandsfontein just outside of Pretoria, and after finishing school she enrolled at the Prue Leith College of Food and Wine in Centurion. After graduating, renowned UK chef Nico Ladenis offered her a position as a commis chef in his restaurant, Chez Nico at 90 Park Lane in London. "It was a big break. At that time, Nico was one of only two British chefs in possession of three Michelin stars, where after I worked with Michael Caines of Gidleigh Park in Devon."



Image: Supplied

Back home in South Africa she worked with Chef Rachel Botes at Carlton Cafe in Pretoria, while her family created Restaurant Mosaic and The Orient. We love the inviting atmosphere and welcoming ambience of this place – you can sense the family pride, the passion for food and for people. It's no wonder Chantel finds inspiration from Mosaic's gorgeous setting in the lush Francolin Conservancy in the Crocodile River Valley. "For me, it's vital to serve visually appealing dishes that tell a story and stimulate diners' senses from the moment the food arrives at the table."



Image: Supplied

When we asked Chantel what food meant to her, she so beautifully said 'food is about featuring Mother Nature on a plate, where each dish is designed to reflect the beauty, harmony and purity that you find in nature.' Restaurant Mosaic was one of the first restaurants in SA to be known for botanical cuisine, incorporating all natural elements and when you open the menu, you'll understand where this love stems from. The menu is ten pages long because each course is identified and explained.



Image: Supplied

Her menu really entices the senses. Although it seems extremely unjust to pick our favorite from the ten courses, we're still dreaming about the Simple Shoots dish of garden veloute, fava bean mousse and pea shoots. Using humble vegetables, Chantel has crafted an art piece, aesthetically pleasing and reminiscent of a green garden freshness.

Chef Chantel is a firm supporter of local suppliers and farmers. "It's very important for any chef to create a strong bond with suppliers – especially the local farmers. I find the best way to do this is to visit the farms where the produce is grown and the animals are reared." Striving to keep sustainability alive and bringing exceptional flair to the culinary world ... we say bravo to our chef of the month!

P.S. We highly recommend you stay over in the spectacular hotel. It's a stone throw away from the restaurant and an absolutely indulgent experience.