

# CHEF ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Just outside Hartbeespoort, Chantel Dartnall, the world's best female chef lives out her passion for delicious and beautiful food. At her exclusive restaurant, clients can be assured of works of art on their plates.

The petite, pretty woman with a big smile and bright eyes has just been voted as the world's best female chef. And rightly so. Chantel Dartnall of the Mosaic Restaurant at the Orient Hotel between Hartbeespoort and Pretoria was awarded with this great honour at

the Best Chef Awards in Warsaw, Poland in October 2017. Chantel has also twice won the title of Chef of the Year at the Eat Out Mercedes-Benz Restaurant Awards and was placed at number 32 in the Best Chef Awards Top 100 list for 2017. This makes her the highest placed woman in the world and one of only three women in the top 50. She was also the only South African chef listed in the top 100. "When the shortlist was announced, I thought these are my ultimate foodie heroes in the world. Just to have been nominated amongst the top 18 female chefs in the world was already the ultimate reward", smiles Chantel. "It was a great honour to have been selected as the Best Female Chef at the awards. It was such an incredible moment." To dine through Chantel's multi-course menu is one of the ultimate culinary experiences. The combination of design, smell and taste is a signature of Chantel's expertise.

"I am exposed to so many beautiful things that my mind is constantly trying to make sense of it. This is where the ideas for my food and menu come from. I believe that your environment projects what you feel", explains Chantel. "I always wanted to cook. Since I was very small there simply was no other option for me. My passion for food and cooking is who I am. It is entirely me. The passion is driven by everything I experience – everything I have around me. I create my dishes by experiencing what is around me – what I see, what I feel and smell, and my emotions. What I create from this is what goes on a plate", she says with that trademark big smile and bright eyes. "Cooking to me is a creative experience. "Food is my passion, I am married to the restaurant and I believe the presentation is just as important as the taste. People must be visually

astounded by what they see. All their senses must be stimulated, that is the secret of outstanding dishes," she says. After finishing school Chantel enrolled at the Prue Leith College of Food and Wine in Centurion (now the Prue Leith Chef's Academy). After graduating, esteemed UK chef, Nico Ladenis, offered her the position of commis chef in the kitchen of his Michelin three-star restaurant, Chez Nico. Chantel later also trained under top chef, Michael Caines, of Gidleigh Park in Devon. Chantel has had a passion for food since she was a little girl. "Not to eat, but to prepare. My restaurant is a childhood dream come true and I really don't want to do anything else." She cannot see herself tire of the restaurant business. "I have so many ideas and when we built the restaurant, we designed it carefully and with love. My family is also involved, so everything I love is right

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here. I am married to the business and food." "My ideal customer is someone who enjoys beauty. Our lives are so rushed. To sit down and just enjoy the perfect meal for a moment makes life perfect." "I have to thank all the amazing people in my life who work just as hard to guide and assist me in this journey and help to make all these wonderful dreams a reality. I also want to thank all the Mosaic customers who have supported me during the 11 years Restaurant Mosaic has been in operation", she says, flashing that big smile as bright as her amazing food.

Photo: Merwelene van der Merwe

