

THE GOURMET GUIDE

JEN'S JOURNEY OF FLAVOUR

MONTHLY JOURNEYS

SWISS ON BOARD

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As a Capetonian there is nothing better than escaping North for a bath or two, and to witness some torrential rain. What could be better than that? A day at Mosaic with world-renowned, three-plated chef Chantel Dartnall and her team, representatives of Swiss International Air Lines, and media.

The rain stopped, so I stopped to appreciate the sign that suggests one takes 10 steps to enjoy the view over the rim of a Champagne glass! The first indication that no attention to detail is spared. Having stayed in The Orient Hotel on a previous occasion, I was whisked into the restaurant to get ready for media and VIP guests from SWISS, who were arriving to formally applaud chef Chantel, as the worthy winner of the inaugural SWISS Culinary Innovation Award in the 2018 JHP Gourmet Guide™.



The festive occasion started in the Champagne cellar with sommelier Moses Magwaza, serving us Champagne and canapés, at 14°C! Before beginning our five-course adventure it was my pleasure to welcome guests to culinary heaven and the opportunity of experiencing innovation on a plate. Plates are the focus of my work – researching globally, interviewing chefs and reviewing restaurants and then curating them for plate awards. With SWISS as our partner we want people to fly more! Three plates are awarded for destination dining – worthy of a flight, two plates for those worthy of a detour, and one plate awarded for exceptional cuisine. An eating experience is not just what you see on a plate – including many ingredients for success that include provenance, produce, philosophy and most importantly, people.



The philosophy of the guide is based on appreciating, showcasing and rewarding chefs, and we are honoured to have teamed up with SWISS. No-one was more delighted than I when Dr André Schultz, General Manager in Southern Africa of Swiss International Air Lines, announced that they will be on board for 2019 – for the second SWISS Culinary Innovation Award. Media present applauded enthusiastically!

Dr Schulz said, "We are thrilled that Chantel has been awarded the first SWISS Culinary Innovation Award and are excited to see how she will incorporate what she picks up from her unique culinary experience overseas into the cuisine at Restaurant Mosaic. SWISS will continue to support top chefs in South Africa by showcasing their work and pushing them to reach new heights in terms of culinary innovation, while rewarding them for their outstanding work."

After a small prelude of tantalizing morsels, we submerged ourselves in 'Song of the Sea', a combination of salmon, kombucha and seaweed, beautifully presented. Over to 'Some birds don't fly' - a trio of imaginative ostrich components of which the ostrich ravioli in a delicate consommé made my taste buds sing.



Who says you cannot judge a book by its cover? The spectacular dish on the cover of the 2018 guide is Chantel's 'Soupe du Jour' – goose liver mousse gently hiding in Brussel sprouts with a cauliflower sauce that had everyone nostalgically reminiscing about childhood veggie fetishes! A terrarium (green tuile-topped glass of sublime flavours) followed. There were three main course options, and I wrestled between ordering the quail with artichoke and lavender, goat tagine with capretto, prunes and Argan oil (creatively served on a shoulder bone), and the line fish. The latter won for me, and we all then debated who had order envy. Generously everyone shared. Final flavours comprised the eye-opener cheese trolley and two desserts – 'The Gift of Quetzalcoatl' is a decadent Valrhona chocolate work of art, and 'The Clash of Constellations' – passion fruit, mango and fresh berries that seriously took diners out of their orbits. Coffee, tea and petits fours with, of course, Frey chocolate that you nibble on when soaring with SWISS.



Chantel returned to our dining room for a standing ovation, in-between service in the main restaurant. With a thousand superlatives flying through my mind I stopped and admitted that I had been rendered – speechless!

Before leaving Chantel and I whispered a few words about her forthcoming trip to Europe for culinary inspiration, flying business class with a partner on board SWISS. Luxury all the way! Chantel is passionate and humble, and loves learning from other iconic chefs all over the world. What a joy to be planning with her what will be the trip of a lifetime.