



Secrets of the sommeliers

The newest member of the Restaurant Mosaic wine team confesses to having a "thing" for Chardonnay, and the head sommelier at The Cape Grace Hotel has two bottles of red with his name on them



MEET TARYN NORTJE...

SOMMELIER AT RESTAURANT MOSAIC AT THE ORIENT

She's dedicated her life to wine, according to her Instagram bio, and we reckon she might have to spend the rest of it at Mosaic trying all 75 000 wines on offer (the award-winning Pretoria restaurant has the best cellar in Africa – pictured left – and one of the best in the world)

I WAS EIGHT WHEN I TOOK MY FIRST SIP OF WINE. It was the Drostdy Hof Adelpracht, which is a natural sweet wine, and I loved its fruity flavour. My palate has changed somewhat! Now I enjoy bone-dry whites and full-bodied reds. **CHARDONNAY IS MY FAVOURITE VARIETAL.** Anyone who has a taste for a Chablis from Burgundy or a New World Chardonnay knows it's a spectacular food wine. One of my favourites is the Hartenberg Chardonnay 2015 with roast chicken or buttered prawns.

EVERY COMPONENT IN CHEF CHANTEL DARTNALL'S dishes is considered when choosing a wine. My ultimate match on her seasonal CosmOrganic menu is Sea Mist (left below) in which the soft aromas of the sea merge with succulent langoustine and scallop with a touch of saffron foam, paired with the Newton Johnson 2014 Chardonnay.

MY TOP WINE-PAIRING TIP is to keep it simple. Start by matching the weight of the food with the weight (body) of the wine. Don't stop experimenting; that way you'll find pairings that work effortlessly.

USING THE RIGHT GLASS IS IMPORTANT. Some wines need more aeration than others. Unwooded light-bodied wines with more acidity benefit from smaller glassware as it keeps the wine chilled for longer. A bigger glass will open up a young tannic red wine. And drink vintage Champagne from white-wine glasses, which show the rich aromatics to the fullest.

MY ADVICE TO ANYONE WHO WANTS TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT BOTTLE to take to a dinner party is to go with bubbly. South Africa has some amazing Méthode Cap Classiques and Silverthorn's The Jewel Box is one of my favourites.

Follow @taryn_thesomm on Instagram

TRY A LIMITED-EDITION BOTTLE (OR TWO)

The head sommelier at the Cape Grace Hotel in Cape Town, Marlvn Gwese, has lent his name and face to the label of two new wines from Mapi Valley, which aims to invest its profits in a new generation of chefs and sommeliers

The brand's name comes from the word "mapinduli", meaning "springboard" and two of the first wines in the range, selected by Marlvn, are the Hiervandaan (below left) and the Grenache 2015 (below right) – both the products of a collaboration with Solms-Delta in Franschoek. The Hiervandaan is a Grenache, Cinsault and Shiraz blend great with sirloin, venison or roast lamb, while Marlvn recommends the Grenache with poultry, especially quail.

mapivalley.com

