

THE RESTAURANTS



'Heffalumps and
Woozles', after
Winnie the Pooh

A SPRING IN HER STEP

We're witnessing the rise and rise of culinary alchemist, Chantel Dartnall, as recognition for her Restaurant Mosaic at the Orient that keeps growing locally and internationally, writes Janine Walker

RESTAURANT MOSAIC

**The Orient Private Boutique Hotel,
Francolin Conservancy,
Elandsfontein. Tel: 012-371-2902**

She is SA's gastronomic queen, having graced the cover of the prestigious US publication, Wine Spectator and a local women's magazine recently and the accolades keep rolling as the team leaves in October; first to attend the Best Chefs awards in Milan and then the New York Wine Experience Grand Awards banquet, to receive the 2018 Grand Award they received from Wine Spectator for Restaurant Mosaic's incomparable wine list, in what is a first for a restaurant in Africa.

Dartnall has also been named one of the 300 top international chefs in the Best Chef Awards for 2018. The only other South African chefs are in the Western Cape – Peter Tempelhoff from The Greenhouse at the Cellars Hohenort Hotel, Gregory Czarnecki from Restaurant at Waterkloof and Michael Deg at Delaire Graff Restaurant. The winners will be announced in Milan on October 1.

Dartnall was placed at No 32 last year in this competition, ahead of luminaries such as celebrity chef Heston Blumenthal at No 37 and Australia's Peter Gilmore at No 40. She was also named the world's best female chef at the awards.

Her current degustation menu at Restaurant Mosaic is titled Samsarana, from the ancient



*I was motivated
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of dawn's spice-
filled air*

CHANTEL DARTNALL
Restaurant Mosaic



Sanskrit text depicting the cyclical nature of life. Each dish has a story, and each is presented on tableware especially created by artisanal South African craftsmen or chosen by Dartnall on her trips around the world.

Ancient Grains – rabbit paired with sorghum – was inspired by sommelier Moses Magwaza during the restaurant's weekly staff wine tastings.

Explains Dartnall: "We were discussing magical ancient grains of the world when Moses mentioned our own sorghum used in the traditional beer umqombothi. This dish was the result."

Flavours of Indochine – suckling pig with one component served in a red coconut curry – marks a departure for Dartnall because of its spicy flavours. It is the result of a trip to Laos and Vietnam last year.

"I was motivated by the fragrance of the early morning dawn's spice-filled air. Testing the patience of Chef Hai at Hue's Belmond River Palace, I came up with this recipe."

The whimsy in the plating is evident in dishes such as the dessert Heffalumps and Woozles, named after a song from the 1968 Walt Disney film *Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day*: "It took me back to my childhood. My favourite, Winnie the Pooh ... leading an 'expedition' to the North Pole on a cold and blustery day. I just could not resist ..."

Says Dartnall: "While the recognition is wonderful, we just focus on being the best we can and enjoying what we do. Currently, every spare minute is spent tying down the details and minutiae for the new dishes we will unveil with our new spring menu."

restaurantmosaic.com.