



# THE WORLD OF FINE WINE

Email Newsletter

Enter Your Email Address

SIGN UP



- Home
- About Us
- 2018 Results
- Sponsors
- Previous Results

5 NOVEMBER 2018

## "It is the people making the wines that capture our imagination", says Mari Dartnall, Maître d'Hotel of Restaurant Mosaic at The Orient



Restaurant Mosaic at the Orient has been making its way up the table since the World's Best Wine Lists Awards first honored the restaurant in 2014. Mosaic is dripping in Art Nouveau style, inspired by Chef Chantel Dartnall's trips to Paris, and designed by South African impressionist artists and interior decorators. The restaurant is simultaneously romantic and quirky, and Chantel can often be found in the dining room, discussing the menu with her guests.

WFW spoke to Mari Dartnall, Maître d'Hotel of Restaurant Mosaic at The Orient, Pretoria, South Africa, following the restaurant's win at the 5th World's Best Wine Lists Awards, 2018.

**Congratulations on the success of Restaurant Mosaic in the World Best Wine Lists Awards 2018; the restaurant was awarded the titles of Best Hotel Wine List in the World as well as a Jury Prize and regional wins for Best By-the-Glass, Best Champagne & Sparkling, Best Dessert & Fortified and Best Long Wine List.**



It was a fantastic feeling. It has always been Mosaic's vision to build the finest cellar on the African continent and one that would rival some of the best in the world. The recognition is wonderful. All the hard work that our team of people – led by our cellar master Cobus du Plessis and sommeliers such as Eric Botha, Taryn Nortje and Moses Magwaza – has put into this for more than a decade is now reaping the rewards. We are clearly on the right track.

### How did you and the team celebrate?

We made a serious dent in our Champagne stock!

### Can you describe your wine list?

Restaurant Mosaic has one of the most comprehensive wine cellars in South Africa, comprising more than 75,000 bottles of wine under 6,000 different local and international labels. We also have an extensive range of Champagnes, Brandies, Armagnac and Calvados. We stock both the famous names as well as those from well known specialist estates.

We also host regular wine dinners. This year we've played host to, among others, Jean-Marie Fourrier from France's Domaine Fourrier, Antoine Gouges from Domaine Henri Gouges; Pablo Alvarez from Spain's Vega Sicilia; Hannes Storm from Storm Wines; Beyers Truter from Beyerskloof and Carl Schultz from Hartenberg, to name but a few.

### What inspires your wine list?

We travel extensively – both locally and internationally – to find the wines we really like. It's also the people making the wines that capture our imagination.

### Have you noticed any trends in the wine or the restaurant scene?

We consume a lot of champagne and there's a rise in interest of Récoltant-Manipulant Champagnes as people discover the smaller producers producing excellent Champagnes. Diners are also beginning to explore still wines from smaller estates and not the same well-known brands they've been drinking year after year. It's about which wine provides the best pairing with a dish – it doesn't matter if it comes from Burgundy or Hemel-en-Aarde.

### Which wine regions or producers have inspired you recently?

Earlier this year we took the Mosaic Sommelier Team to Champagne and visited a number of great houses and estates including the House of Salon in Mesnil-sur-Oger; Maison Krug and several small producers spread through the whole of the Champagne region.

### What would you say to encourage others to enter the World's Best Wine Lists Awards?

If you are passionate about your wine lists and cellar, go for it. The experience will change your perception of how to approach compiling your wine list and enhance your knowledge.

### Having been named Best Hotel Wine List in the World 2018, how would you say Restaurant Mosaic's identity is influenced by being part of The Orient and vice versa?

Restaurant Mosaic is The Orient and The Orient is Restaurant Mosaic. We are a destination venue and it is a symbiotic relationship. There cannot be one without the other.

### As well as your global win and many regional ones, the judges were particularly keen to also award a Jury Prize. This was based on Restaurant Mosaic's phenomenal South African by-the-glass offering. Is it important to you to champion regional wines and offer them by-the-glass?

The vast majority of our customers do a wine and food pairing with Chef Chantel's Degustation menu and we offer wines by the glass from regions around the globe. You'll find Paul Cluver Close Encounter Riesling 2015 from Elgin alongside William Fevre Montmains 2015 from Chablis or Avray Family Winery Edesem 2011 from Hungary with Chateau Belingard Cuvee Blanche de Bosredon 2003 from Monbazillac. We like nothing better than telling the stories behind both our food and our wine.

### Favorite dish on the menu?

Our new Spring Menu (it changes seasonally) is called Natura Naturans: The Earth Laughs in Flowers. I am particularly proud of the dish Under the Veil – a composition of langoustine, white peach and hibiscus – as it was inspired by Chef Chantel's beloved Ouma (grandmother). She always smelt faintly of lavender and 4711 Eau de Cologne and let her dress up in her room and use her lipstick and pearls. This is Chantel's tribute to her and to all the grandmothers out there who can create magic from a humble item to transport young minds to a world of enchantment. We pair the dish with either the South African The Maestro White 2014 from De Morgenzon or the Jacquart Champagne Brut Mosaïque NV.

### What is your go-to wine or drink to relax after work?

After work I often decide to just have a drink from our non-alcoholic pairing menu. At Mosaic, we are passionate about the entire food and drink experience. For the teetotalers, we put as much thought into the non-alcoholic pairing with drinks specially chosen to complement their meal. They are truly delicious so I would probably opt for the Gyokuro Shaded green tea from Japan or, after a long, hot day in the kitchen, an alcohol-free Bavaria Pomegranate Beer.

### Top tip for a local drinking spot?

Restaurant Mosaic is located in The Orient Private Hotel in the Francolin Conservancy, a beautiful and tranquil nature reserve so I don't really have a local. However, if I am in Johannesburg the bar at Marble – with its panoramic vistas of this vibrant city – is a must. Similarly, The Leopard Bar at The Twelve Apostles Hotel in Cape Town overlooking the Atlantic Ocean or The Lighthouse Bar at the Oyster Box outside Durban are must visits. All have impressive cocktail and wine lists.

### Cork or screw cap?

We know all the arguments for and against both methods. However, for me, UK restaurant critic Jay Rayner summed it up when he said "The crack of a screw top is not the same as the pop of a wine cork." Think about it – the popping of a Champagne cork has an instant effect and immediately makes one happy.

## GOLD STAR PROFILES



Constance Prince Maurice



Constance Lémuria, Seychelles



Constance Moofushi Maldives

