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Chantel Dartnall's
BOTANICAL CUISINE

SUMMER 2018

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PHOTOGRAPHY

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RECIPE

Restaurant Mosaic at The Orient presents its equinox 2018 menu: NATURA NATURANS

Natura Naturans: The Earth Laughs in Flowers is the name of Chantel Dartnall's stunning new equinox to equinox menu for 2018 at Restaurant Mosaic at The Orient, rated one of the finest restaurants in Africa. The menu – in which Chantel pays homage to Mother Nature – once again features the chef's signature botanical cuisine, using only the best seasonal produce, with Chantel taking her cue from nature.

MY BENTO BOX

Garden Pea • Spring Marshmallow • Pickled Carrot • Smoked Snoek and 'Patat'

Some of my earliest memories as a young toddler involve helping (yes, I know the adults did not consider my efforts as 'helping') to knead the dough for Saturday afternoon vetkoek, fascinated by the sticky 'stuff' between my fingers. All my life, the greatest fun for me has been to be in our kitchen among my pots and pans, and it was no great surprise that from the earliest times I made myself responsible for packing our lunchboxes every day. Naturally, the first ones were a bit of a surprise for anyone who expected more of a conventional sandwich and not my eclectic collection of flowers, the odd shell, bits of bark, a beautiful stone picked from the riverbed running through our property, or a butterfly wing deposited on my windowsill. To my young mind, everything gifted by Mother Nature was a mesmerising treasure to be in awe of, to savour and preserve.

No wonder this fascination extended into adulthood, and when I discovered the Japanese Bento Boxes it was a dream come true – at last there was someone who understood the fine art of presenting several small morsels of utter delight to entice and enthrall while enjoying your lunch at the office (just imagine the look on your colleagues' faces!).

For this season, I have combined four amuse bouche into one serving to mimic the concept of the Bento Box, as my version of a delightful entrée before the first dishes are served.

Marshmallow

THE BASE:

INGREDIENTS

200ml lemonade
30g dill
10g basil
1/2 cucumber (grated with skin on)
3g salt
2g sugar
2g ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Blend all ingredients together and strain through a fine sieve.
2. Keep the excess that is left in the sieve to dry out for dust.

Making the marshmallow:

INGREDIENTS

300ml liquid
5 sheets gelatine leaves

METHOD

1. Bloom gelatine in 80ml of the liquid, once gelatine is soft, melt in a small pot over medium heat.
2. Strain liquid into remaining 220ml of liquid into a medium size mixing bowl.
3. In a large mixing bowl add 2 cups of ice, 4 cups cold water.
4. Place mixing bowl with liquid over the ice bath and whisk with electric whisk until mixture resembles a stiff peak meringue.
5. Spread marshmallow into desired shape, and let set in the fridge for 4 hours.

Dust

INGREDIENTS

Excess from strained liquid
20g dill

METHOD

1. Dry out in oven on 50°C for 3–4 hours.
2. Blend together in a spice grinder and sieve.
When marshmallow is set, roll cubes gently in dust.

HEFFALUMPS AND WOOLZLES

Almond • Snowflakes • Vanilla



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It was one of those “Can you remember?” days, sitting outside on the porch high up in the Italian Dolomite Alps in Alta Badia, watching the falling snow slowly covering our footprints in the powdery white landscape, sharing stories and laughing until your tummy hurts.

It took me back to my childhood when stories were read in front of the fire, or when my eyes were heavy with sleep, safely tucked up in my bed on cold winter nights. My favourite – Winnie the Pooh Bear and Christopher Robin leading an ‘expedition’ to the North Pole on a cold and blustery day.

I just could not resist – and had to recreate his Wellies leaving footprints in the snow...

RECIPE

FROM THE FROZEN OCEAN

Arctic Salmon • Seaweed • Ocean Broth

I have never been an early riser, but if you want to witness one of the wonders of the modern world, you need to set your alarm for two o'clock in the morning. That is when the Rungis International Market kicks into second gear to start trading, sending fresh produce daily around the globe long before a new dawn breaks over the majestic monuments of Paris. With a dazzling array of fresh fish landed in the harbours of Europe barely a few hours previously, they promise to have your choice in your restaurant's kitchen anywhere in France before the noonday sounds.

Standing transfixed among a sea of containers, staring unashamedly at the sheer exuberance of choices on hand, I knew I had to mimic the process with salmon, as if freshly plucked from the frozen Arctic Ocean but a few hours ago, presented au naturel and in its juiciest state at your table.

To assemble and garnish

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Teapot for the hot broth

For the ocean salad:

INGREDIENTS

- Oyster Leaf
- Ice leaf
- Fennel flowers
- Fennel sprigs
- Pickled mushrooms
- Pickled radish
- Radish flowers
- Asparagus spears

Marinated salmon:

INGREDIENTS

- 500g Norwegian salmon
- 30g dill
- 80g sugar
- 100g coarse salt
- 1 lemon (zest)

METHOD

1. Clean the skin off the salmon, and make sure to remove any bones; you can also ask your fishmonger to do this for you.
2. Chop dill roughly, and mix together with the remaining ingredients.
3. Place the salmon inside a deep container, and place the salt mixture on top. Leave in the fridge overnight to cure the salmon. This is an ancient way of cooking fish. When you have marinated the salmon, it will form a liquid.
4. Remove the salmon from this liquid, and wipe the excess lemon zest and dill from the salmon.
5. Slice the salmon in long rectangular shaped pieces and place it on your plate with your ocean garden salad.

Ocean broth

INGREDIENTS

- 6 cups water
- 1 thumb-size piece fresh ginger, peeled and sliced
- 7 tablespoons white miso (fermented soybean paste)
- 6 large shiitake mushrooms, stemmed, thinly sliced
- 1 sprig fresh basil
- 1 sprig fresh coriander
- 1 sprig fresh fennel
- 1/2 cup fresh seaweed (rinsed very well)
- 2 stalks lemongrass, thinly sliced
- 3/4 teaspoon soy sauce
- Fresh lime juice to taste

METHOD

1. Whisk the white miso and 6 cups water in a medium saucepan over medium heat to combine. Add all the ingredients into the stock and bring to a simmer for 10 minutes (do not boil). Take the pot off the heat and leave to infuse until cooled.
2. Strain the broth and adjust seasoning with fresh lime juice to taste.

Pickled radish

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch radishes about 1/2 pound, stem and root ends removed and cut into 1/8 inch slices
- 1/2 cup white or apple cider vinegar 5% acidity
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon mustard seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 sprig fresh thyme (add thyme flowers when in season)
- 1/2 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper optional

RECIPE

UNDER THE VEIL

Langoustine • White Peach • Hibiscus

Serves 4 (if you are using 2 langoustines as a generous starter)

If you are serving a multicourse meal use one extra-large langoustine per guest)

One of my earliest memories as a young toddler was of my Ouma 'Nanna' hanging out her washing, with me sitting in the linen basket among her fragrant bed sheets smelling faintly of lavender and her 4711 Eau de Cologne. Thinking back, it seems as if my whole childhood was spent in her room, dressing up in her evening gowns, trying on her high heel shoes and putting on lipstick in front of the mirror with her favourite string of pearls adorning my small frame, hanging down to my knees.

What a thrill it was during my first school holidays to pitch a make-believe tent on the carpet in front of her bed, made from her umbrella and one of her bed sheets. We spent many an evening together in 'our tent' – with me curled up on her lap listening to the adventures of Mowgli, read by torchlight. Recalling her soothing voice and warm embrace that soon put me to sleep will forever be one of my sweetest memories. This dish is an ode to all the Oumas out there, who can create magic from a humble item to transport young minds to a world of enchantment...

To garnish

- 2 Poached peach slices (on top of the langoustine)
- 5 Whole pink peppercorns per plate
- White peach and grapefruit pearl (commercial grapefruit pearls are available from Imaginative Cuisine)
- 1 Miniature hibiscus petal per plate
- A drizzle of Aroma Oil just before serving

8 XL langoustines

1. Clean the langoustines by removing the head, shells and vein.
2. Roll up the langoustines, and use a toothpick to hold together.
3. To cook the langoustines, bring the roasted langoustine broth to a light simmer, place the langoustines in consommé for 1 min (or until cooked) to poach.
4. Remove the langoustines from the hot liquid, remove the toothpick and slice the langoustine in half down the back.
5. Place the langoustines in a tray and drizzle with the Aroma Oil along with a seasoning of salt and pepper. Place two slices of the poached peaches on top of the langoustines. Wrap the tray and keep the langoustines in the fridge until required.

Roasted langoustine broth

INGREDIENTS

- 500g Langoustine shells & heads
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 onion
- 1 carrot
- 5g ginger (peeled)
- 45ml sake
- 20ml soy sauce
- 3L water
- 10ml mirin
- 40g egg whites

METHOD

1. In a large pot brown the langoustine bones for about 10 mins, crushing the shells with a wooden spoon to release the flavour.
2. Add onions, carrots, garlic and ginger until soft, deglaze with sake and add water.
3. Bring to a light simmer and cook for 30 mins while skimming off the impurities with a ladle.
4. Add the soy sauce and mirin, and strain through a muslin cloth. In a clean pot add the liquid and beat egg whites until soft peak. Add egg whites on top of the liquid and allow to clarify. Strain through muslin cloth.

Hibiscus jelly, chef's note: Hibiscus tea is brewed from an infusion of deep red magenta hibiscus flower calyces. The most commonly used type of hibiscus is *Hibiscus sabdariffa*, but other varieties can be used too.

INGREDIENTS

- 200ml water
- 40g dried hibiscus
- 2 sachets rosehip & hibiscus tea
- 5ml castor sugar
- 1 sprig lemon verbena
- 3g agar agar

METHOD

1. Bring the above ingredients except the agar agar to the boil and allow to cool down. Strain through a muslin cloth.
2. In a small pot whisk the agar agar into the mixture and boil for 1 min.
3. Pour into a flat tray and allow to set, cut out with a round cutter and carefully lift the hibiscus jelly disc from the tray with a spatula. Arrange it neatly on top of the langoustine and rice paper parcels just before serving.

FRANCOLIN'S FOREST FUNGI

Risotto • Wild Mushroom • Black Truffle



Francolin Conservancy forms part of a small sliver of South Africa's ecosystem called the Middleveld, wedged in between the Highveld to the south and the Lowveld just across the ridge to the north. A small but geologically complex region that lies north of Johannesburg, it is known for its dry winter grasslands, thankful for every drop of rain received during the (normally) wet summer seasons when it is a delight for me to disappear into the forested ravines draining the numerous small fountains from the high rugged cliffs onto the fertile plains where the antelope roam.

It is in these gullies, in the coolness of the shady overhangs of the white stinkwood and wild African olive trees, where you will find lush ferns, wild lilies and extraordinary grass orchids surrounded by the most stunningly beautiful exotic fungi and mushrooms, creating their own miniature wonderland. And if you keep very still, close your eyes and do not make a sound, you may hear the flutter of small wings and imagine you are part of the lost family of the faerie folk again...

Plated on a creation by David Schlapobersky and Felicity Potter from Swellendam, master potters in the truest sense of the world.

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