



GRAND ESCAPE. The museum complex at the Francolin Conservancy demands to be noticed. The striking courtyard gives you an indication of what's to come. Pictures: Supplied

A great Boshoff 'artscape'

TRINITY: MUSEUM IS HOUSED ALONGSIDE A GRAND HOTEL AND WORLD-CLASS RESTAURANT

» A single 40-strong collection is elevating the art of fine dining to new heights in Elandsfontein.

Adriaan Roets

Impressionist paintings are difficult to place for many. Some see them as easy to live with, others value the fine detail.

Creating a museum with the largest collection of a single impressionist artist is ambitious.

Creating it in a secluded conservancy where the public can only visit by pre-arrangement makes even more of a statement.

But ironically, that is not what the Adriaan Boshoff Museum at the Francolin Conservancy Museum Complex set out to do.

The aim was geared towards honouring the master of South African impressionism in a rich space that allows a collection of 140 works to speak for itself.

Thanks to the museum in Elandsfontein, which also houses one of the world's best restaurants, Restaurant Mosaic, the largest wine cellar in Africa and the Orient Hotel, there's a new breath of excellence.

The museum isn't folly about the fun of collecting – there's a real sense of purpose and the man behind it all, Cobus du Plessis, has spent four decades building a striking collection.

If there's a bid on a Boshoff at a secondary art auction, the likelihood is that Du Plessis is behind it.

It's a high-stakes game because not only was Boshoff a friend before his death in 2007, Du Plessis has the makings of an art economist, seeing the value in expanding the impressive collection.

The reasoning is simple – Boshoff had a unique colour palette, a singular style and, above all, was self taught having grown up in poverty.

Many of the themes he explored were deeply personal, and that is the value of the museum – it explores humanity. Nobody will be able to leave without seeing a little of themselves – which is a rare and visceral experience.

At the conservancy there's a symbiotic relationship at play.

Even prior to the museum, the Orient Hotel and Restaurant Mosaic were already known for art and the dishes that emerge from Chef Chantel Dartnall's kitchen.

These, too, combine cuisine and art, where plating has become so refined and excellent that the conservancy even houses a "plate museum".

Dartnall changes the menu twice a year and each new menu comes with new plates, sourced and collected the same way Du Plessis amassed his art collection.

Dining at Restaurant Mosaic won't be a *coup d'état* where the museum or grand menu have to battle it out.

No, here they coexist in harmony in celebration of South African creativity.

But the work is still not done.

When complete, the museum complex will house more than 500 works of art that will be on permanent display, including pieces from Alexander Rose-Innes, Gregoire Boonzaier, Rob-



HOLY GRAIL. One of the museum's priceless pieces is *Streets of My Youth*, the final canvas Adriaan Boshoff prepared. On April 17, 2007, he died in front of it following a long battle with cancer.

ert Gwelo Goodman, Terence McCaw, Hugo Naudé and Frans Oerder.

Various sculptures and ceramics will also be exhibited at the museum alongside more contemporary artists such as Hennie Niemann Snr, Conrad Theys and Lynne-Marie Eatwell.

This will cement the conservancy as South Africa's true art escape.

info

► The public can only visit the gallery by prior arrangement, but guests staying overnight at The Orient or dining at Restaurant Mosaic, will have the exclusive opportunity to stroll through the venue to view a feast of fabulous art at leisure.



AIRY. An inside-outside build ensures there's nothing stuffy about it.



SPLENDID. The museum doesn't take anything from the splendour of Restaurant Mosaic, offering instead a linger longer experience.