

Siba Mtongana opens pop-up restaurant as permanent fixture

Celebrity chef Siba Mtongana and Sun International have taken their joint restaurant venture to the next level by making Siba - The Restaurant a permanent fixture at The Table Bay hotel.



Image supplied: Siba Mtongana

The restaurant first opened as a pop-up in March 2021 to test demand. Even though South Africa was still beset with Covid-19 regulations at the time, the restaurant bucked trends and proved to be a phenomenal success.

Earlier this year, Sun International agreed to provide funding to expand and redevelop the size of the existing restaurant, almost doubling the floor space to provide 60 seats for fine dining or 100 seats for events.

The new lightweight steel and glass structure does not detract from the views. Previously, the outdoor patio space was only ever been functional in favourable weather, so a decision was taken to incorporate the space into the restaurant. Diners can now enjoy an extraordinary fine dining experience while taking in views of the jetty and boats moving in and out of the V&A Waterfront.

Sun International's CEO Anthony Leeming said that a chance encounter with Siba at the 2020 Miss South Africa Pageant that was held at The Table Bay hotel led to further discussions.



“At that time restaurants were under enormous pressure so opening a new restaurant took vision and courage, but we knew that the pandemic would pass and together with Siba we could create an exceptional dining experience that perfectly fits a five-star hotel like ours. She is exceptionally talented and we are extremely proud that she has chosen to partner with us for her first restaurant venture,” Leeming said.

The stylish Afro-lux restaurant is glamorous yet welcoming, balancing elegance and sophistication with touches of Siba's childhood heritage.

“I want people to feel comfortable and unrushed when they sit down. The setting is elegant yet minimalistic and brings the outdoors in,” Siba said. “People have always asked me if they can come and eat at my home, so I have included a family aspect in pictures of my husband Brian and our four kids, which can be seen around the restaurant, making it feel like an extension of our home.”

Siba, who hails from Mdantsane in the Eastern Cape, has described her food as a fusion of her African roots and her world travels which she combines to create an authentic and unique fine dining experience.

“I wanted to elevate African cuisine to a world-class standard and classics such as our dombolo steamed buns have become firm favourites with our patrons from all around the world” she said. “I have travelled the world and found there is not enough representation of African food, so I aim to ensure that my food makes locals, as well as international guests, go ‘wow’.”

Diners can whet their palate with a pre-starter of Wagyu Beef on roasted cauliflower purée, plantain chip, crispy bone marrow and biltong sprinkle, a melt-in-your-mouth beetroot goat's cheese cannelloni, Siba's polenta mfinno bites with Cape Malay chakalaka emulsion and smoked snoek pate.



The bread course includes traditional Xhosa-inspired steamed buns, similar to an Asian bao with flavoured butters. The starter goes Afro-Asian with sesame seed crusted and seared tuna with charred baby corn, edamame beans, and compressed cucumber with sweet soy dressing.

Mains include an Asian cured duck breast with creamy samp and mushroom risotto, a slow-braised beef short rib with potato pave and seasonal vegetables and sustainable line fish with Thai green curry sauce.

To wrap up the meal there is a sweet and salty dessert course in Siba's salted caramel and popcorn ice cream cake on a nutty praline, chocolate, berry coulis, and fresh berries.

Leeming said, "Unlike many well-known chefs who merely lend their name to a restaurant, Siba has made time to personally train each and every staff member in her restaurant. She is regularly seen there, chatting to guests and even serving them. It is this attention to detail that we believe will make Siba – The Restaurant a success for many years to come."

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