

Tasting, testing and toasting success of the #TTKXTheLangaProject

 By Leigh Andrews

5 Jun 2017

The Guga S'thebe arts and culture centre in Langa was humming all afternoon on Saturday and Sunday, 27 and 28 May 2017 with the sold-out-weeks-ago 'The Test Kitchen X Langa' pop-up charity event.

Some sipped their welcome drinks of Graham Beck Brut NV and Cluver & Jack cider, excitedly chatting to fellow fans of delicious food in aid of a good cause – at R250 per head, 140 of us would be eating a four-course meal curated by The Test Kitchen or TTK's Luke Dale-Roberts and Langa-born Wanda Guma each day. This was cleverly packaged as a fundraising event in aid of both Project Archangel and the Noluthando Early Childhood Development Centre, held in the heart of Langa.



Wanda Guma and Luke Dale-Roberts. All images – [Manley Communications' Facebook page](#).

I say 'cleverly packaged' because Cape Town's trendy set clearly couldn't wait to participate and sample some of the fine food served at the country's top restaurant, with over R200,000 raised over the weekend and as workers on the day volunteered their time, all of those proceeds, including ticket sales, donations on the day and winning auction bids, going to the two carefully selected charities. Listen to LDR discuss some of the logistical challenges of hosting the event on 702 below:



The Noluthando Early Childhood Development Centre is an NPO based in Langa, founded by Thenjiwe Beauty Ngqakayi, who told us all about the early days in her dining room with just eight children and how her team now supports roughly 104 youngsters between the ages of one and six, in a safe environment focused on their cognitive, physical, linguistic, literacy, social and emotional development.

Project Archangel, inspired by the 'angels of the highest rank' – think Michael, Gabriel and Raphael – raises funds for public benefit organisation, Plumstead-based St Michael's Home for Abused Teenage Girls. Fitting in this time when the country is left reeling by the recent spate of attacks on women and children.



Image © – Andy Lund on Manley Communications' [Facebook page](#).

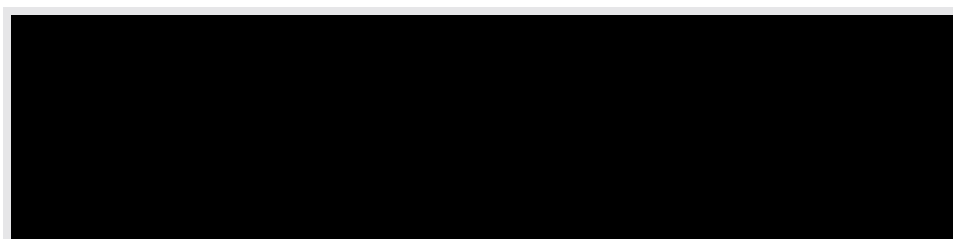
Pockets a little emptier but hearts feeling full, it was time to fill our bellies. And what a meal it was! Once all seated in the main Guga S'thebe theatre-come-eating-hall, cleverly constructed from converted shipping containers many were eying with 'Hmm, I could make this work in my home' envy, we were welcomed by Luke Dale-Roberts himself, who introduced his sommelier Tinashe Nyamudoka. He did a wonderful job of pairing appropriate liquids for the gastronomic delights as follows...

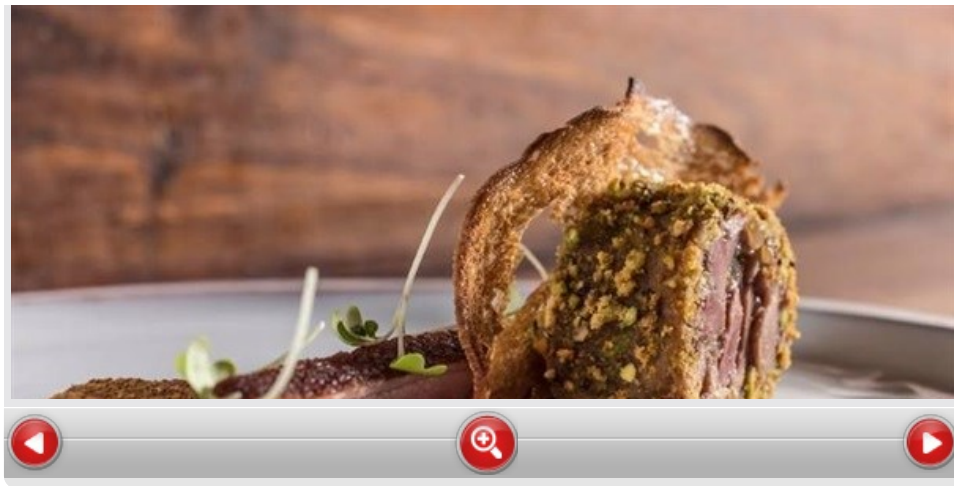
We started with baskets of fresh sour-dough bread and pale butter perfectly offset against vibrant yellow, orange and black table runners – all décor by Dale-Roberts' wife Sandalene – and lit by aeroplane wing-shaped lights. Even better? We got to watch the meals being plated by TTK's outstanding team, in itself a sight to behold as the sauces were drizzled and powders sifted to perfection.

The Test Kitchen X Langa 2017 menu

The first course was perfectly-cooked duck *assiette*, liver parfait and ballantine of leg with pistachio and a lip-smacking smear of cherry caramel, paired with the Bridge of Hope Chardonnay 2016.

While all the dishes were beautifully plated, the second course was a real visual delight, with herb-seared tuna – tofu for those who can't, don't or won't eat fish – and vibrant red cabbage 'three ways', paired with the slightly peachy Warwick First Lady Rose 2016.





For thirds, the meat-lovers were truly satisfied with the smoked beef fillet, drizzle of *café au lait* sauce, ox-heart stuffing, porcini and onion paired with the unusual 'Aslina by Ntsiki Biyela' Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 – even better, the curious could further tantalise their tastebuds by watching the meat being braaiied outside.

We ended with the tart, creamy taste of LDR's lemon tart, strawberry and *amasi* ice cream, paired with sweet sips of Paul Cluver Noble Late Harvest.

With crooning tunes in the background barely audible over the happy hum at the long tables, this was a fine dining experience in the heart of Langa, paired with excellent fundraising for two worthy causes, set to become an annual event – that's the making of an excellent weekend in my books. And if that's just a taste of what to expect at The Test Kitchen, best you make your booking for July to September at their main Woodstock space, stat. Even better, they're offering a winter-perfect blue-chip SA brandy pairing presented by Nyamudoka, as the ideal way to round off your meal.

Click [here](#) for more on the Noluthando Early Childhood Development Centre, [here](#) for more on Project Archangel, follow the #TTKXTheLangaProject hashtag, click [here](#) to make an online booking for The Test Kitchen in Woodstock and [here](#) for my Facebook slideshow of images from the lunch.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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