

#BehindtheSelfie with... Zola Nene

 By Leigh Andrews

20 Dec 2017

This week, we go behind the selfie with technophobe chef and food stylist, Zola Nene. She's the resident chef on SABC3's *Expresso* and was a judge for the 2017 Galliova Awards for excellence in food and health writing, as well as the recently aired third season of *Great SA Bake Off*.



"My face every time I hear a Champagne cork pop!"

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live in Green Point, work in Sea Point and play anywhere where's there's good food and wine!

2. What's your claim to fame?

I'm a chef and food stylist who cooks on TV.

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It's beginning to look a lot like #christmas 🎄🎄🎄🎄🎄 . 🎄🎄 @_danielamartins_

A post shared by [Zola Nene \(@zola_nene\)](#) on Dec 17, 2017 at 9:59pm PST

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3. Describe your career so far.

My career has been a fun ride so far as I get to cook on TV. I also released my international award-winning cookbook in February 2016.



The egg-and-chicken race of the #GalliovaAwards2017

Leigh Andrews 26 Oct 2017



I won the TV award for 'best female host and placed second in the category 'best TV chef cookbook (English) at the 2017 Gourmand World Cookbook Awards.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

- Travel is one of my favourite things, I love discovering the food culture of other countries.
- Sneakers, I love sneakers – it's always comfort first for me.
- I'm also obsessed with African print head wraps, as well as statement neckpieces.

5. What do you love about your industry?

I love that the food industry is ever-changing. Every day, chefs are creating new dishes and discovering new ingredients. I also love that food is a unifier, it brings people together.

6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

I wake up at about 6AM, head over to the set of *Expresso*, get my make-up done, then cook live on the show. Once the show wraps, I brief my assistant on the content for the following day's food content. I take care of any admin related to the food content. I write recipes for food clients, then meet with the clients to brainstorm ideas for campaigns. I squeeze in a food shoot with the insert crew on location.

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It's 3 hours before the #sabakeoff 2017 finale...just enough time to shop, make and bake my BLACKBERRY ORANGE YOGHURT CAKE 💎💎 ...The creations in tonight's episode are going to make you crave something sweet in the realest way, so be prepared - you've been warned! 💎💎💎💎
#recipe #linkinbio . . #cake #bake #bakefeed #blackberry #orange #baking #bakersofinstagram
#sweettreats #yum #chef #foodie #fruit #zolanene . 💎💎 @guntherschubert

A post shared by Zola Nene (@zola_nene) on Dec 12, 2017 at 6:59am PST

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Once the work day is “over,” I usually head over to a food event to network and discover a new food product or restaurant. Then I finally go to bed, sleep for six hours if I'm lucky, then wake up to start all over again.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

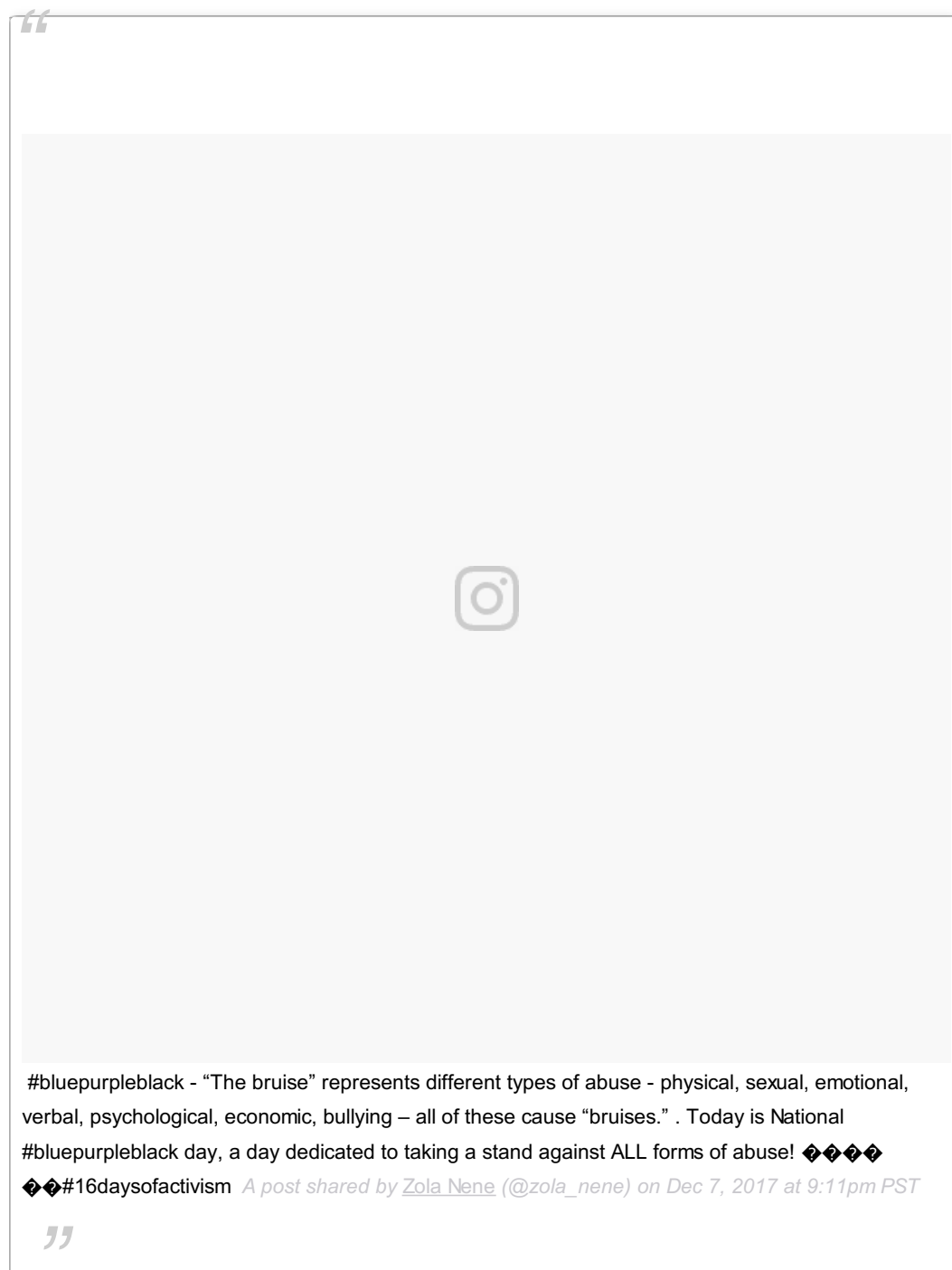
The basic essentials for a chef are a sharp chef's knife, a sturdy chopping board and a sturdy set of pots and pans... of course, you need a stove and an oven too, otherwise, there wouldn't be much cooking going on!

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

There are so many chefs getting it right, we have so many great restaurants producing world-class food in SA that it wouldn't be fair to pinpoint just one.

9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

We could definitely use more female chefs in head chef positions. The industry is still very male-dominated, and I think a lot of us female chefs have a lot to offer.



I also think that we could celebrate our own heritage more through food. More restaurants using local ingredients and traditional recipes would be a plus.

10. What are you working on right now?

I'm working on a few exciting projects for 2018, but I'd rather keep it, mum, until the projects launch officially.

11. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

- Artisanal
- Seasonal
- Gastronomy
- Michelin Star
- Cultural appropriation (yes, it also happens in the food industry!)

“ We're chefs, not a cooks... We studied hard for three years to earn the title, please refer to us as such. ”

If you haven't been sworn at and had things thrown at you in the heat of a Saturday restaurant service, you haven't lived.
#cheflife

12. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

While shopping at markets and in the middle of the night, when I wake up to go to the loo!

13. What's your secret talent/party trick?

I've been known to do a little twerking at weddings... only at the request of the bride, of course!

14. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

Pictures of food, pictures of me, pictures from my travels, pictures of my friends.

15. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

Persistence is key. If food is your passion, then follow through with it and keep at it. Like with everything when you first start out, it's tough. But it's all worth it in the end to do something you truly love.

Simple as that. Click here for more on Nene, and interact with her on the following social media platforms: [website](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#).

*Interviewed by [Leigh Andrews](#).

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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