

New head chef at Gondwana Game Reserve

Jakob Christoffel has joined Gondwana Game Reserve as the new head chef and promises to bring an exciting flair to Gondwana's fine dining in the Garden Route.



Often called "MacGyver in the Kitchen", JC always knew he would be a chef. "The sights, smells, and social atmosphere of the open markets drew me in. I learned of the terroir philosophy from my uncle; meaning "of the earth" and as translated: enjoy the food of a region and use what is fresh and in the moment. Creativity comes easily when the food is the star and flavours are in full bloom."

Born and educated in George, JC joined his first kitchen, Montego Bay, in 1999 as a trainee chef. Thanks to an opportunity to travel, he left SA for England and it was here that the real adventure began. After working in various restaurants and studying at the Marco Pierre White Restaurant School in London, JC joined the reality cooking show, Gordon Ramsay F-Word. Winning second place, he was offered a job to join Jamie Oliver in London. He later won: Chef of the Year 2011 Jamie's Italian; and Surrey Gastro-Pub Award 2003 and 2004 for Percy Arms.

"My passion is to work with chefs who have not been afforded the same opportunities as me. I would love to be able to share my knowledge, which I have gained working for three of the world's most renowned chefs."

Community awareness and the sharing of knowledge

Today, on any given early morning you will find him foraging in the nearby local food markets looking for the best local produce and then sharing it with other local chefs, and creating dishes with them. Community awareness and the sharing of knowledge is a key component of Gondwana Lodge, which JC hopes to encourage further. "I believe fresh, natural food tastes better. I believe in supporting our local organic farmers and those practicing sustainable agriculture. I believe balance in life, nature and food is difficult and worth the effort. I like to pay homage to the great dishes and styles of cooking that have evolved since the beginning of time and put our own little spin on them. I want Gondwana to be a positive force in the lives of the people who become involved with it and improve their lives as a result."

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