BIZCOMMUNITY

French flair with a local twist for Grande Provence's new winter menu

By Ruth Cooper

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No need to travel to Paris or Bordeaux to experience quality French food, beautiful settings and award-winning wine, because our very own quaint French town Franschhoek, houses a multitude of outstanding eateries and wine farms to sate any Francophile appetite. At the top of the list is the highly acclaimed Grande Provence, a heritage wine estate, on the outskirts of Franschhoek, sure to get you into a *joie de vivre* frame of mind.



On entering the grounds, one is immediately welcomed by a row of French Cyprus and olive trees (so French!) while the restaurant's interior is light and bright with crisp white linen, contrasted against charcoal walls and accented by bright bursts of gold and pale green. The estate also houses a contemporary art gallery, a tasting room, sculpture garden and boutique store.





Opulent plate perfection

I was recently invited to test out the new winter menu from executive chef, Darren Badenhorst and took my mom along as my guest. Order indecision and envy is real guys so we both jumped at the offer of Chef Darren surprising us with what we would be sampling that day. We were treated to a diverse and complex four-course menu which showcased exactly what the new winter menu is all about.



“I would like my guests to feel challenged by my methods and ingredients while simultaneously imparting a sense of comfort and familiarity of the home style characteristics and depth of flavour. This is the key to satisfying the wide spectrum of nationalities who visit our restaurant and at the same time staying true to what South Africa as a whole has to offer.” says Chef Darren.



Sampling Grande Provence's sensational sensory summer lunch 2016

Leigh Andrews 30 Nov 2016

Starters included local tuna yukhoe, spiced guacamole, burnt tomato crème, yuzu caviar, potato Korokke and toasted black sesame truffle. As well as cold-smoked Angus beef and estate smoked bacon tartar, 62 degree egg yolk and roasted caraway labneh, pickled wild mustard, roasted date puree and potato nest. Intensely elaborate yet artfully plated these dishes were a riot of unique flavours and textures and our most favourite courses of the lunch.



After this we were both presented with the line fish which is interestingly encased in pork crackling(!) and is accompanied by barrel-smoked pommes, pea sprout salad, asparagus, cucumber and pickled seaweed terroir and coastal foraged samphire. Incredibly crunchy and even popping as it arrived at the table the pork crackling excellently encased the fish which was moist and light. Our only complaint was the dish could have used a touch more salt or acidity as to better enhance the subtle fish and creamy mash.



Lux slow-cooking

This was followed by hearty yet still delicately plated slow-cooked meals; the slow-cooked Karoo lamb neck with roast garlic and parsnip purée, minted halloumi, charred baby broccoli shoot and varieties of pea. And the 12-hour sous-vide beef cheek with foraged local mushrooms, potato, pickled mustard, BBQ pearl onion and bone marrow jus gras. Perfect dishes to indulge in on a winter's day with a glass of the delicious and oaky Grande Provence Red.





In need of a little breather we explored the gallery and boutique store before settling down to some truly unique and jaw-dropping desserts. Both the almond and orange calisson with whipped rose water parfait and white chocolate crunch pearls and the condensed milk teurgoule-style sago pudding with frozen pistachio crème, shaved coconut and basil were outstandingly good-looking and tasty. The sago pudding was served with a strong espresso and truffle and I loved the unusual texture of the springy sago gel balls.



So, if ever in the mood for some sophisticated French indulgence, look no further than Grande Provence.

The à la carte menu is served daily with a three-course lunch option at R450.00 per person, and dinner at R725.00 per person with an additional course and other surprises on the night.

An elaborate 6-course gourmand dégustation menu is available by prior arrangement. For the ultimate indulgence, Chef Darren hosts a Chef's Table in the stately Jonkershuis private dining room for a table of six or more.



For restaurant bookings, call 021-876 8600 or email. For accommodation and more information on the Heartland Offer email Grande Provence or click here to visit the website.

**Ruth Cooper was a guest of Grande Provence*

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

Ruth is the production manager at Bizcommunity. ruth@bizcommunity.com

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