

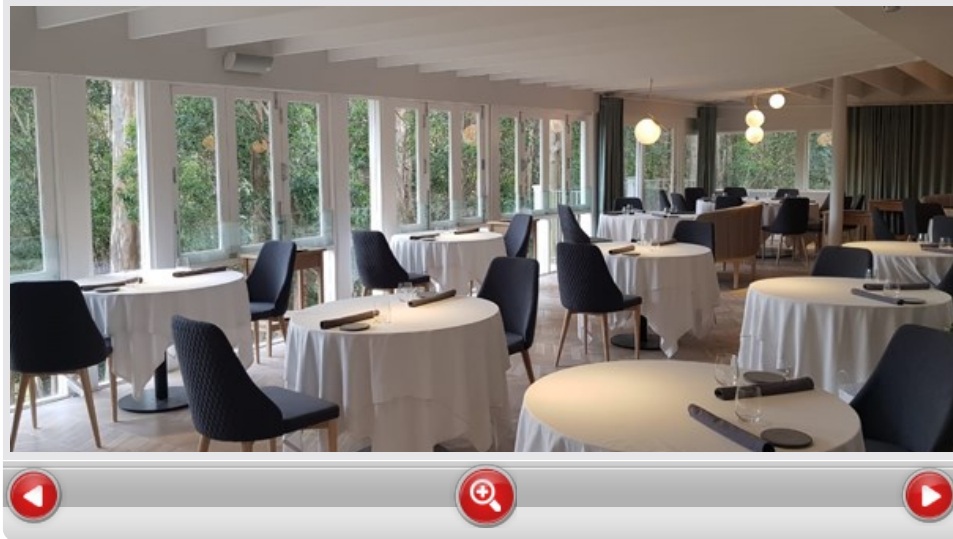
New look and refreshed menu for La Colombe

By  Ruth Cooper

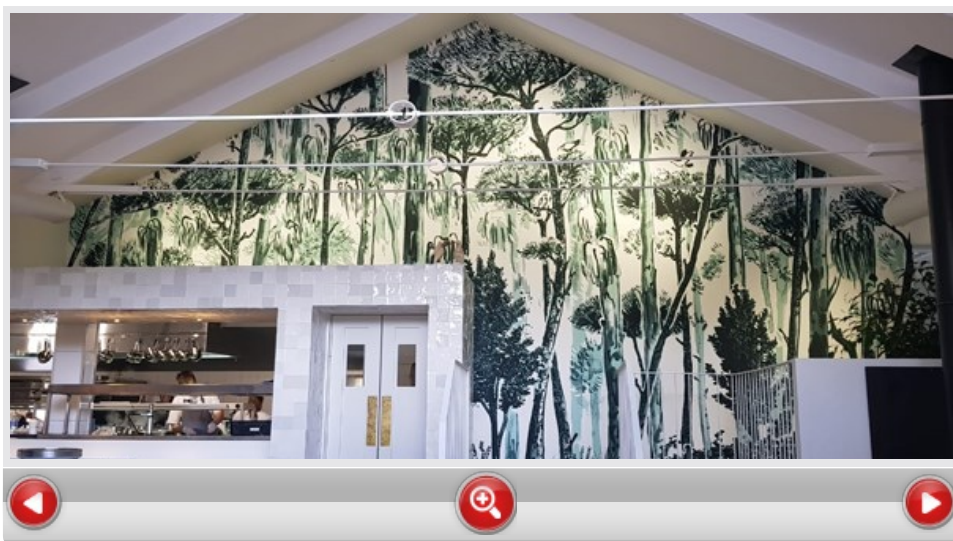
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The multi award-winning and internationally recognised La Colombe in Constantia recently underwent a significant design revamp and now with young Chef James Gaag at the helm and a refreshed menu, a visit would be very well timed.

Now offering a fresh clean, neutral, natural look, the restaurant acts as a blank canvas to the outstanding views of Constantia and the Silvermist Wine Estate blue gums that gently wall most of the glassed window exterior.



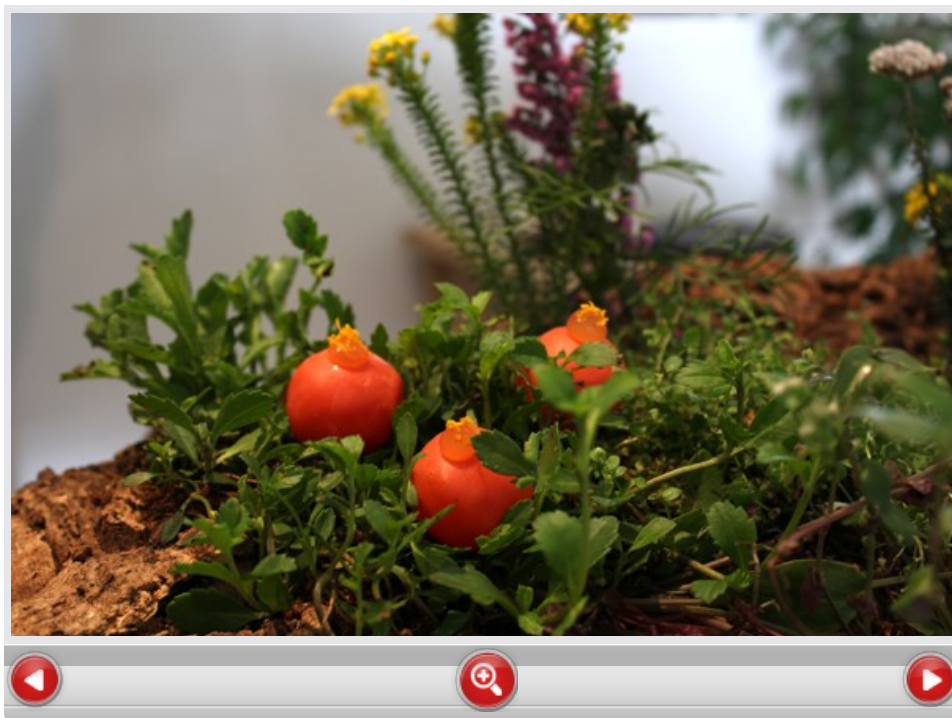
“ Taking into account the restaurant’s majestic setting amongst the trees at Silvermist, we decided to turn the interior into a refined treehouse with a calm, neutral palette, where the forest and the food do the talking,” says interior designer Hayley Turner from Bone Studio. ”



Magical creations

And boy does the food do the talking, the space acting as an uncluttered stage to the outstanding and magical creations that are thoughtfully crafted in the kitchens.

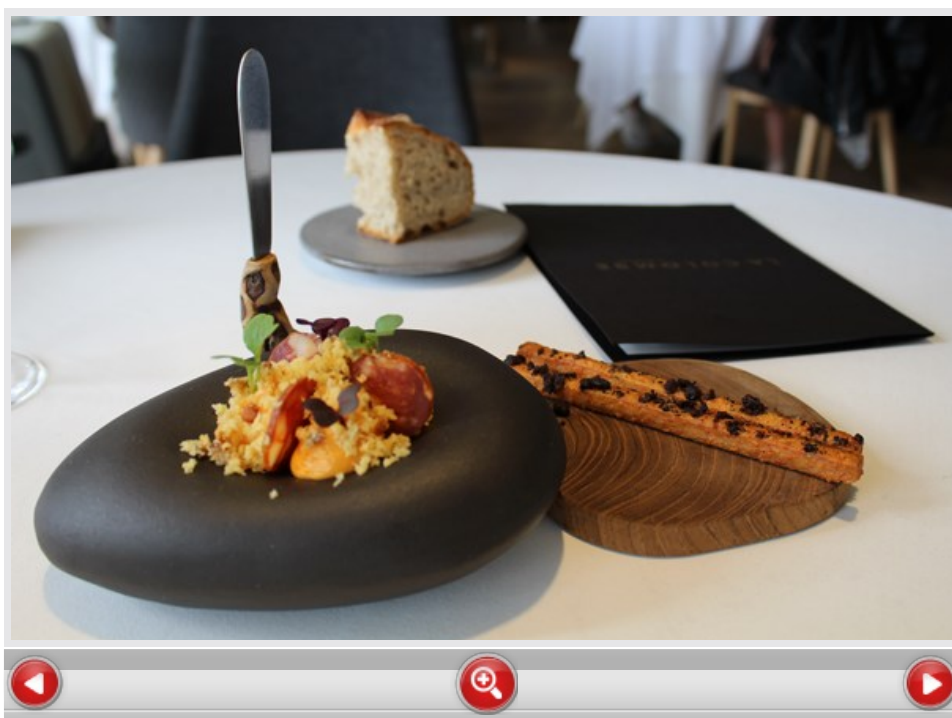
This feeling of magic and wonder is instilled right from the beginning of the dining experience, as you enter you are welcomed by a plant-covered tree trunk that nestles bright orange fruit-like treats. A palate cleanser, of a delicate white chocolate shell that houses a burst of fresh fruity liquid, signals that a deliciously quirky culinary adventure lies ahead.



After this, one is ushered past the beautiful hand-drawn artwork of a forest scene by Lucie de Moyencourt and to a sparse, yet, elegantly set table.

As options for lunch and dinner either include a nine or 11-course meal, as is or paired with some excellent local wine choices, I won't describe all of the dishes consumed as this review might turn into a novel but read on for my absolute highlights.

The breadboard alone is a thing of beauty, fresh and in-house baked warm crusty sourdough was served with a spiced pork chorizo butter and parmesan sable.



This was followed by the 'Cape Malay snacks', little rounds of roti with fried chicken and pickles are served upon a large wooden box that once opened reveals pickled crayfish on seed crackers amongst a puff of smoke - so dramatic and tasty.



Menu staple

Next up, the Tuna 'La Colombe', a dish that plays the poster child for the aesthetic and taste of the food and a staple on the menu for many years. Seared tuna in an umami broth cutely served in a tuna can tin ticks the boxes for taste, presentation, and humour.

The next course that totally wowed me was the Sweetbreads and Sweetcorn. Charred baby sweetcorn is presented at your table on a charcoal grill along with sweetbreads, seared sirloin, and chipotle and buttermilk emulsions. To be honest, the idea of eating brains has never appealed to me, however, that perception has definitely been changed by La Colombe's version; rich and lush, I believe this was my favourite course, further elevated by the excellently paired Kaapzicht Cinsault 2017.





The ever-dramatic passion fruit palate cleanser will be the next plate to wow you. Presented in a fynbos wreath and upon river rocks and some serious dry ice drama are hollowed out passion fruit skins encasing a zingy fresh passion fruit sorbet. This is a course that tends to get the biggest gasps and impressed looks from diners.



For the mains and dessert, you can expect complex and beautiful plates such as linefish with squid and smoked mussels or succulent Karoo lamb with harissa and dukkha.

Sweet harmonies

The Segway dessert of gruyere, rhubarb, and pecan is a salty-sweet harmony and the sweet dessert of coconut and Tonka bean pannacotta with the juiciest Mooiberge strawberries and strawberry sorbet is lush and decadent.





For the closing act, the most magically presented dish is served. Flavours from Our Garden includes macarons, toasted marshmallow, and minty candyfloss dusted with cocoa powder presented on a hollowed out piece of bark. Cleverly mimicking the presentation of the fruity palate cleanser sampled at the beginning of the meal.

And just like that, you have come full circle on your magical culinary journey. Dining at La Colombe is such an experience; theatrical, surprising, amusing, and, above all else, incredibly delicious. I would fully recommend a visit.



The Gourmand menu is R1,390 pp and R2,290 pp with wine pairing. Reduced lunch and vegetarian menus are also offered. For more info or to make a booking go to www.lacolombe.co.za.

**Ruth Cooper was a guest of La Colombe*

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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