

JAN holds onto its Michelin star for 2017

South African chef Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen - the first South African to earn a Michelin star for his eatery which is based in Nice in the south of France - recently learned that his restaurant, JAN retained its Michelin star for 2017.



Van der Westhuizen said: "Since JAN received its first star in 2016 the pressure was clearly on and, like in the movie *Burnt*, our natural instinct was to fear every guest. That's how bad it gets. The psychological pressure is so intense that everything has to be perfect.

"The retention of the star becomes a mind occupation morning, noon and night and, after putting your head on the pillow, it sometimes continues into dreamland," he laughed.

When asked if he now has his sights set on a second star, van der Westhuizen said: "I am not pushing myself or my team towards a second star, but we are pushing ourselves to higher and better. This is just what we do."

Van der Westhuizen admits that 2016 was not an easy year. "The Nice attacks shocked and touched everyone in the Riviera and around the world and left the tourism industry in the South of France with a big

dent that we are all trying to rebuild and make good again."

Looking forward to a busy season

For JAN, they are looking forward to a busy season which might include a few more South Africans joining the team in the kitchen. JAN currently boasts three South Africans working at the restaurant, including Kevin Grobler, Rutger Eysvogel and Scott Armstrong.

"We will also be getting a permanent valet service to take care of the small narrow street parking problem all of Nice struggles with," says van der Westhuizen who is a stickler for ensuring every guest's needs are met. "This will also attract more regulars from Monte Carlo, Cannes and the rest of the Riviera."

Apart from making certain that he includes the best South African wines on his wine list, this incredibly talented and self-taught chef continually looks at ways to reinvent South African dishes that will appeal to a wider market and a more refined palate. Introducing South African flavours and foodstuffs - which many of us connect with a childhood favourite or even a staple meal - to French and international diners.