

What's next for award winning Fyn?

Japan and Africa share a rich history of storytelling, spinning spells, spirits, Mahō, and magic. This sorcery comes to the fore at Fyn, the culinary jewel of the Cape Town CBD's culinary jewel that was recently named the world's most sustainable restaurant, taking the Flor de Caña Sustainable Restaurant Award 2023 at the famed The World's 50 Best Restaurants 2023.



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Weaving together spell-binding synergies and ancient arts, Fyn, which has many other notable awards under its belt, borrows Japan's use of heat, salt, and acid to bring the best out of seasonal South African ingredients.

This is food that tells a story. It transports you to the Cape's blanched beaches a thousand years ago, when kelp was collected to cook food over fire. It's Africa's spirited freedom tempered by Japan's artistic restraint. It's juju and witchcraft woven into one compelling story.



Fyn Restaurant awarded the coveted Flor de Caña Sustainable Restaurant Award 2023

22 Jun 2023



Here, the Cape Town Central City Improvement District (CCID) – which is dedicated to supporting local Cape Town inner-city businesses like Fyn – asks Chef Patron Peter Tempelhoff, executive chef Ashley Moss and general manager Jennifer Hugé to reveal what magic is coming out of the kitchen next.

What makes Fyn unique?

Fyn distinguishes itself by skilfully presenting African ingredients using Japanese culinary techniques. As the pioneer of an Afro-Japanese menu in Cape Town, Fyn has significantly impacted the culinary landscape, introducing innovative dishes that reflect this distinctive merging of cultures.

Diners can anticipate a palate-refreshing experience with novel flavours, complemented by a selection of exceptional beverage choices, including rare gem wine varietals, sake pairings, and artisanal cocktails.

■ *What's the Fyn inspiration and story?*

In 2008, a transformative trip to Japan left Chef Peter Tempelhoff deeply moved. While not disenchanted with French or Italian culinary methods, delving into Japan's kitchens offered him a profound glimpse into a distinct gastronomic tradition.

Tempelhoff was captivated by the Japanese approach to using raw ingredients, precise heat application, and the strategic use of salt and acid to extract intense flavours from produce.

This encounter became a mild obsession. When the opportunity to establish his own restaurant arose in 2018, he seized it with a clear vision – a commitment to Japanese techniques infused with a South African twist, utilising local, endemic ingredients.

Fyn, stands as a unique culinary venture, driven by Tempelhoff's dedication to marrying Japanese culinary finesse with the rich palette of South African flavours.

■ *What are the top food/ restaurant trends for 2024 and how is Fyn spearheading its own ripples in the sector?*

Luxury and self-expression: In the evolving landscape of 2024, as rising prices underscore the importance of value, consumers are increasingly drawn to experiences that blend luxury with self-expression, seeking indulgent flavours and colours that resonate with their personal values. This demand for authenticity is reflected in the emerging desire for genuine alternatives to popular products, a niche that savvy establishments like Fyn are well-poised to explore.

Better-for-you choices: Amid the quest for better-for-you products, consumers are prioritising options that signal benefits such as gut health, relaxation, and energy. Fyn, with its commitment to high-quality ingredients and the celebration of excellent African ingredients, offers a dining experience that not only tantalises the tastebuds but also aligns with the growing preference for health-conscious choices.

New not norms: The breaking of traditional norms is another theme shaping consumer preferences, with an inclination towards rich, vibrant colours, unconventional flavour combinations, and tastes from under-represented regions, such as the African continent.

A breaking of boundaries: Over-and-above this presentation of African flavours, Fyn – where the kitchen and dining area coalesce – challenges the conventional separation between these two spaces within a restaurant. This innovative approach not only reflects the trend of rule-breaking but also showcases Fyn's dedication to pushing boundaries and redefining the dining experience. In this setting, diners are not just patrons; they are active participants in a culinary journey that transcends traditional confines, embracing the bold and the unexpected.



2023 Eat Out Woolworths Restaurant Award winners

20 Nov 2023



▣ ***What are your favourite dishes on the menu and why?***

Ashley Moss: I don't really have a favourite dish. I like to think of the menu as a whole. Each dish is a part of the whole experience. It is the sum of the parts that makes the overall piece exquisite.

Peter Tempelhoff: It's as hard as choosing one's favourite child ... we all have one, but just can't say!

Jennifer Hugé: For me, right now, it would have to be our seared gamefish dish. It is about how pure and clean this dish is, yet with complexity coming through from the sauce on the side with which it's paired. We make a chirezu sauce at the table, using fresh pomelo, Korean chili, fresh daikon, chives, and spring onion finished with ponzu-infused pomelo.

What I really enjoy with this dish is my pairing – I love clean and pure wine, and this is an opportunity to showcase unique wines such as an aged Sauvignon Blanc, Colombard, or Vermentino.

▣ ***The dish that took the longest to conceptualise and craft – and why?***

Moss: Our dishes are constantly evolving. We may start with a certain concept or idea, but it doesn't stop there. The dishes change as we find new inspirations. We adjust according to the changing ingredients, and, because of this, the process of conceptualising and crafting is ongoing.

Tempelhoff: Fyn dishes evolve organically; ever-improving, tweaking, and perfecting – yet never seeing perfection. We conceptualise, discuss, taste, develop and finally launch a dish when we think it is good enough to be on the menu, which must be better than the last.

If we can't improve on a dish with the replacement one, then we don't put it on and we get back to the drawing board. Sometimes this process takes time; how much time it takes is relevant to the strength of the dish before it as well as the concept of the new dish.

▣ ***How do you get the team so perfectly in sync?***

Tempelhoff: Longevity, if a team stays together, they learn each other's strengths and weaknesses which enables them to synchronise harmoniously.

Moss: Many members of the team have been with us from the very beginning when Fyn was only a concept, and have a true understanding of the Fyn ethos.

▣ ***What does the Flor de Caña Sustainable Restaurant Award mean to Fyn?***

It's a great compliment to be awarded and recognised for a job that gives us such pleasure doing.

▣ ***What's next for Fyn?***

Tempelhoff: We are considering a couple of large things in the New Year but can't let too much out of the bag...

Moss: We will continue to explore, innovate, and create. We constantly evolve the dining experience, keeping things fresh and inspiring for ourselves and our guests.

▣ ***Can you hint at a soon-to-launch new dish on the menu?***

Tempelhoff: A dish with raw prawns and lactose-fermented cherries is being conceived at the moment!

In 2022, Fyn was ranked no. 37 in The World's 50 Best Restaurants list and was also named The Best Restaurant in Africa. This year it was named a 3-Star Restaurant in the Eat Out Woolworths Restaurant Awards and also clinched the first Green Philosophy Plate award by South Africa's JHP Gourmet Guide.

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