

HASMITA NAIR

JoZilicious

Twitter: @Hasmita



THE ONLY thing I like more than discovering a new restaurant, is meeting a new foodie. I'm always up for meeting like-minded people, especially those who can share their favourite hidden gems. Where better to meet a foodie than in a good restaurant? However, unless you're at a party, it's not that easy to go up to another table at dinner and strike up a conversation, which is where pop up dining comes in.

Essentially a pop up dinner is held in a space that is not ordinarily a restaurant. Usually, long tables are set up, and you'll be seated next to strangers, inevitably ending up breaking bread with them. Over the past year, dinners like this have been popping up all over the place, with plenty of bright-eyed entrepreneurs quickly (over) filling the gap in the market, typically charging way more than the actual food is worth (because you're paying for the experience, too).

While I think the concept is novel, I'm not sure if I would want to hang out with strangers every weekend, but it certainly is a unique way to spend an evening, albeit at a premium.

I've attended a few of these dinners, the most well-known probably being SecretEATS. The idea to bring together talented chefs and adventurous food lovers in surprise venues was born in New York, and has taken both Cape Town and Jozi by storm. Dinners are held every few weeks, and you need to receive an invitation to be able to attend. Tickets are pricey, at R650 per person – this includes a three-course meal and wine. The venue is a surprise and is only revealed by SMS on the morning of the event.

The dinner I was hosted at was underwhelming, the food wasn't amazing, there was one brand of wine available on tap, service was incredibly slow (we waited more than an hour between courses),



Guests enjoy a SecretEATS experience

Dinner with strangers is Jozi's newest foodie trend

and the venue was in a shopping centre in Sunninghill with fluorescent lighting and zero character. Having heard of previous dinners being held at charming inner city locations like Market on Main, I was disappointed, but have since been assured by the organiser that I unfortunately attended the one event he wasn't personally involved in, and future events will be of a much higher standard. Visit www.secret eats.com for more.

At the Table in Parkhurst is a similar concept, created by sisters Hermi King and Elmi Le Roux. No more than 20 guests at a time gather around a large table which

is the centrepiece of a warm, intimate space, and converse over hearty home-cooked meals. Each evening has a theme, often focused on a guest speaker. These themes range from showcasing a particular artist's work, to discussing spirituality. "It's almost recreating that 'Kitchen Table Wisdom' that defined communities over the centuries," says Le Roux. "It's about getting someone to share their experience, knowledge, insights and opinions and then getting everyone at the table to both gain from that and also contribute to the conversation."

The usual format of the evening

is to begin with starters and then listen to a 30-minute talk, which flows into a dinner party. Tickets are around R300-R350. Visit www.atthetable.co.za for more.

A new element to pop up dining is food trucks, which are huge offshore (there are more than 9 000 registered mobile food vendors in the US) and are starting to take on locally. Balkan Burgers, of Fourways Farmers' Market and Neighbourgoods Market fame, have recently launched a food truck that parks at different locations each day. These burgers are unique in that they are done Serbian style – there is no tomato sauce, mayon-

naise or mustard, rather, a traditional roasted red pepper sauce is added to spice up the burgers. The patty is flame grilled, and served in soft bread instead of a bun. The result is a delicious burger that easily rivals some top steakhouses. To find out where the Balkan Burger bus is today, follow them on Twitter: @balkanburgerbus

Another fun food truck is Full of Beans, a mobile food and coffee concept which takes the form of a sexy black three-wheeled Vespa. Coffee is supplied by Tribeca, while some of the tasty confectionaries on offer include fresh doughnuts and croissants. Visit www.fullofbeans.co.za

For more restaurant ideas, see Hasmita's blog: www.jozilicious-blog.co.za

New treatment ensures it's hair today, gone... in minutes

HASMITA NAIR

BEING a female is hard work. In order to look mildly acceptable, we have to religiously make waxing appointments and endure having the hair ripped off our bodies. If one opts to shave, torturous side effects are experienced, like ingrown hairs and quick regrowth. Until recently, there really has been no easy way out of this predicament. With more than my fair share of hair on my body, I've been desperately seeking an effective hair removal solution for years. I've spent hundreds of rands on IPL treatments at various salons, and even tried an epilator machine at one point. Nothing seemed to work, and I kept going back to my trusty old razor.

Understandably, I was a bit sceptical when I read about SPL (square pulsed light). This is a more advanced version of the more widely known IPL (intense pulsed light). The square pulse means that light is equally dispersed under the skin, so it takes a lot less energy to achieve the same effect as a "standard" pulse. The light

targets the melanin (which is the pigment) in hair, causing virtually all actively growing hairs to fall out in the treated area, one to three weeks after treatment. The darker the hair, the better the effect. Lighter hair can be removed, but may require more treatments. White and red hair cannot be successfully removed. Because of its wide spectrum, SPL is more versatile than IPL, and successfully treats a wide range of skin ailments like pigmentation and puffiness.

Goddessa Beauty, in Atholl Square, Sandton, invited me to try their revolutionary SPL machine, imported from France. I went for one session on my underarms, and was quite apprehensive, until I was told that Goddessa offers guaranteed removal of 90 percent of unwanted hair in a few sessions. I was shown to a room, where I was asked to put on a pair of sunglasses to protect my eyes from the laser. A gel was applied to my underarms to assist with cooling, and then my treatment started. It took all of five minutes, and consisted



SPL machine in action: SPL – a new generation of hair removal.

PICTURE: SUPPLIED

of three to four "zaps", which felt like an elastic band lightly snapped against my skin. I had no side effects,

and the next day, I noticed that more than half the hair had disappeared. I was advised to have six treatments in

total, with a wait time of six weeks between treatments.

I was so impressed with the results from my underarms that I then proceeded to laser my whole body, including my face and legs, and spent the equivalent of a few bond repayments in the process. The treatments were pricey, but being able to wear whatever I want without having to worry about shaving or waxing my legs or underarms makes it worth it. Underarm sessions are R500 each, while a half leg treatment is priced at R1 500 per session. Goddessa does laser treatments on all areas of the body, for men and women.

Contact Goddessa Nail and Beauty Boutique to find out more about SPL. Address: 116 Wierda Road East, Corner Katherine Drive, Sandton. Tel: 011 783 2732. Visit www.goddessa-beauty.co.za

Goddessa Beauty provided Hasmita with underarm treatments at no charge; other treatments were funded by Hasmita in her personal capacity