

HERE'S a certain feeling you get when you walk into an outstanding restaurant. As you enter, you gaze around cautiously, trying to establish who the other food enthusiasts are. Waiters glide about effortlessly, murmuring their recommendations, while guests in hushed tones talk about dietary requirements and wine preferences.

These guests have a look of calmness about them; they're almost in a state of euphoria. Couples lean into each other; larger groups of people laugh and exchange stories heartedly. Yes, a top restaurant exudes class, style and an atmosphere that makes you want to linger.

DW11-13 is one such restaurant. The chef and owner, Marthinus Ferreira, trained at the Institute of Culinary Arts, where he received comprehensive and specialised training based on classic gastronomic principles. Since then, he has worked at award-winning restaurants like the Fat Duck in the UK, and La Colombe in Cape Town. As a chef, he challenges diners to step out of their comfort zone and experience the subtle pleasures of fine dining with all five senses.

DW11-13 has recently introduced a new addition to their a la carte menu. Their tasting menu changes weekly and allows one to experience its different facets. The eight-course meal is priced at R500; R750 with wine pairings. Each course is a combination of textures, a harmony of flavours and sensations. Expect to find unconventional pairings, like soup and sorbet or vanilla cream with salmon. Each bite is savoured; as the flavours envelope your mouth you are left in awe of the medley the chef has created.

Each course challenges the concept of conventional dining and exceeds expectations, on the eye and the palate. Even the bread basket was impressive – we were given a choice of rye, walnut and raisin or olive and rosemary – all freshly baked and delicious.

The first course was Cured Loch Duart Scottish Salmon, with rye soil, pickled cucumber, beetroot sorbet and vanilla and lemon cream. Almost too pretty to eat, the tartness of the vanilla cream complemented the cool sorbet and combined perfectly with the fresh salmon. This was paired with NV Dosnan & Lepage bubbly – a well-



DW 11-13 restaurant.

PICTURES: RISHAV NAIR

## A Sensory experience

Each course challenges the concept of conventional dining and exceeds expectations writes *Hasmita Nair*

rounded, elegant champagne with a fresh acidity that cut through the rich salmon dish. Its fruitiness went well with the sweetness of the beetroot sorbet. The sommelier, Patson, explained each pairing to us in great detail, including the regions each pairing was sourced from, as well as things to look out for on the palate. His passion for wine was striking.

The next course was a sweet potato crème brûlée with sweet potato chutney, shaved black truffle and crispy sweet potato chips. It took some time to comprehend the fact

that what I'd tasted after I penetrated the crispy caramel coating was sweet potato puree and not the rich custard dessert I'm used to. The pairing here was 2011 Castello Colle Massari Vermentino.

After the butternut soup, we moved on to the palate cleanser – a litchi and malibu sorbet with chilli espuma.

For the main course, we were given a choice of two dishes. The first option was coriander crusted springbok loin with honey roasted parsnip puree, onion tarte tatin, sautéed baby carrots and cran-

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berry venison jus paired with a 2011 Capaia red blend, while the second option was butter roasted hake with charred long stem broccoli, tom yum veloute, tempura mussels and coriander salad, paired with a 2011 Capaia Sauvignon Blanc.

We opted for the latter, and were not left disappointed. The fish practically melted in our mouths, with the tom yum velvety sauce adding even more flavour to the hake's crisp, buttery coating.

Dessert was two courses, allowing us to experience savoury and sweet variations.

First we had fresh brie with apricot mousse, rum stewed fruit, brie shards, toasted cashew nut soil, prune pudding and a sourdough cloud, paired with a 2012 Fairview La Beryl Blanc. It was interesting to note that the cheese and wine came from the



Butter Roasted Hake



Cured Loch Duart Scottish Salmon

same farm.

The sweet dessert was apple pannacotta with baked custard, roasted rhubarb, ginger granite, apple sorbet and ginger soil, paired with a 2009 Thelema late harvest Vin de Hel.

In addition to the tasting menu, the regular a la carte menu also offers some delectable dishes, including tuna tataki with smoked tuna tartar, wasabi spheres, orange and soy reduction, cucumber spaghetti, sliced radish and sago crisps, R110, as well as spinach stuffed slow roasted chicken roulade with broccoli puree, porcini soil and sautéed mushrooms, R120. The triple cooked chips, R35, come highly recommended as a side dish.

Prepare to set aside two and a half to three hours for the tasting menu although, during the meal, your waiter will ask if you are happy with the pace of the courses and speed things up if required. It is clear that an evening at DW11-13 is a sensory experience.

DW11-13 is situated at Dunkeld West Shopping Centre, corner Jan Smuts and Bompas Street, Dunkeld West. Call 011 341 0663. Open for lunch Tue-Sun and dinner Tue-Sat.

For more restaurant ideas in and around Joburg, visit *Hasmita's Nair's* blog at: [www.joziliciousblog.co.za](http://www.joziliciousblog.co.za)

## Found – the queen of Jozi's luscious red velvet cakes

### HASMITA NAIR

YOU MAY be surprised to hear that red velvet cake did not get its name from the bottle of food colouring that is added to the batter. The cake was invented during the Great Depression, when foods were rationed.

Bakers used juice from boiled beetroot to enhance the colour of their cakes, and the cake became known as "red velvet" because of the cake's smooth texture and fine crumbs of the cake crumbs. Because of the cake's popularity, red food colouring came on to the market and the rest is history.

Joburg bakeries have been churning out red velvet cakes by the dozen to meet the demand of sweet-toothed customers.

My mission for this article was to find the cream (cheese) of the crop in Jozi. I've tasted them all – dry and stodgy cake, red velvet-



Left to right, the winners are: red velvet cake from Tart, Red Velvet Cake from Annica's, Red Velvet Cupcake from Belle's



cum-black forest cake, and even a cake that was a winner until I found a hair in it.

I'm pleased to announce that my review panel (that is, friends and family) unanimously decided that Belle's Patisserie was miles ahead of the other contenders; it has won my vote as having the best red velvet cake in Joburg.

Belle's red velvet cake, albeit slightly pricey (R450 for a two-layer 30cm cake or a three-layer 20cm cake – both of which fed 12), was moist, light and fluffy, and was topped with the most delicious cream cheese icing that could easily have been eaten on its own.

You can also get your red velvet fix from a Belle's cupcake, R22.

Belle's Patisserie is in the BluBird Shopping Centre, Birnam. Call 011 440 4474.

In second place, I loved the cake from Koljander Home Industry in Melville (011 726 6282), baked by Audrey Parker. At a price of only R76 for a large cake, this is unbelievable value for money, without compromising on taste. The icing tasted

like whipped cream cheese, and the cake itself was an immensely enjoyable red sponge cake, layered with the same scrumptious cream cheese concoction.

Other notable mentions include a red velvet brownie from Tart in the Leaping Frog Centre, Fourways (011 705 3544) – a gooey chocolatey brownie finished with a cream cheese layer.

Although I picked the winner on taste, Tart definitely takes first prize when it comes to presentation. Its red velvet cake comes covered in bright red, slightly curled rose petals.

If you're not a fan of cream cheese, try Annica's at the Michelangelo Towers, Sandton (011 884 9444), for a more fruity red velvet cake. Annica's version is topped with chocolate icing and sandwiched with cream, with a tinge of blueberry jam in the base.