

CUISINIER EXTRAORDINAIRE



Having a conversation with Harald Bresselschmidt you cannot help but feel that you are in the presence of someone in complete control. He speaks calmly, with the quiet confidence that thirty years in the kitchen has given him. Born and educated in Germany, he worked in several top European kitchens, including the Savoy Hotel in London, before moving to South Africa to take the Executive Chef position at the Grande Roche Hotel in Paarl. He was there for two years and effectively put the restaurant on the map. After a brief stint in Paris followed by some time at Rhebokskloof restaurant, he started Aubergine restaurant in 1996. From there, the story of Harald Bresselschmidt and Aubergine are one and the same. Aubergine is highly lauded and holds a consistent place in the top ten restaurants in the country.

The food at Aubergine draws a regular crowd year round because, as Bresselschmidt says, “We believe in à la minute cooking – preparing everything from fresh ingredients, on order. This creates more pressure, but is worth it.” He casually mentions that the restaurant has over ninety suppliers to ensure they get the freshest ingredients. Quality is paramount. “I grew up on a dairy farm, so I know the difference between something grown naturally and otherwise,” he adds, “This set a benchmark for life.”

Fine dining is a tough business to continually excel in, and creativity is a big expectation these days. But Aubergine has managed to bring in new trends and techniques without losing its classic base. “I don’t cook for myself or my ego, but for a certain clientele. We don’t believe in creativity for creativity’s sake,” he says, and

then smiles, adding. “Sometimes the best creativity comes under pressure. Sometimes you get great ideas, not because you try but because you have to.”

Harald is also a chef with a big wine interest. Because of this and his dedicated sommeliers, Aubergine is as renowned for its impressive wine cellar as its food. It is also the foundation for his new venture, Auslese, a wine and food pairing venue. “I’ve been cooking for thirty years, so this is something new: a place where wine is first, with food close behind. It’s just another part of gastronomy, which is really my work. Not just cooking, but creating a whole experience.”

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