

Aubergine

where the connoisseur leads the cuisine

Classic, steadfast, no surprises. It's comforting to recognize the interiors and friendly faces as you enter the historic building in Gardens, Cape Town, your quest for the best sated when you leave.

The degustation menu is accompanied by the finest wines, or you can select dishes from the a la carte menu, ably guided when choosing from the enviable, impressive connoisseur catalogue. 'Finds' and 'treats' are listed up front, the finest Cape estate, rare local vintages and international wines follow. As the cellar offers something optimum for enjoyment, a seasonal dish to complement it will be presented. All elements of the gastronomic tale are ably and extensively explained by the passionate service team.

"I let the wine lead the food. I cook from the bottom up; it starts with top-class ingredients. Then there must be the balance," explains chef patron Harald Bresselschmidt. He adds technique, texture and interest to the classics. The game fish duo is the first indication that Harald loves Oriental flavours too – the ceviche and tataki, spiced shu-shu with mango, ponzu and wakame is exquisite. His cannelloni of confit duck on bright lights spinach is a coup – delicate slices of cured breast with cauliflower puree and hazelnuts plus a feather-light triad of duck-filled pasta. The beetroot dish is a delicately plated ring of tiny parts that make up an interesting whole. Temperatures vary from the ice of the sheep yoghurt and basil sorbet to the piping hot vegetable encased in the flakiest pastry.

Harald is an integral part of the foundation of gastronomy in this country. German-born, he truly understands and allows the fruit of the vine to be the protagonist. Many fine young chefs earned their stripes in his kitchen. As you pop the last sweet treat into your mouth and support Streetsmart, you know that Aubergine's 26 years of success has earned it's place.

Address: 39 Barnet Street, Gardens, Cape Town
Website: www.aubergine.co.za

Timeless and traditional, sophisticated yet subtle, here no flavour overpowers another, instead it's harmony enveloped in familiarity. It's like going home for a heartwarming hug. In the words of one of our reviewers, "It's always just bloody marvellous!"