



# Let's do lunch

**An old favourite, Aubergine is all about good food, good wine and relaxed conversation**

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**S**ummer weekday lunch at Aubergine is one of those Cape Town best-kept secrets that regulars hope will stay under the radar. The iconic fine-dining destination welcomes guests in relaxed mode at lunchtime, a sunny enclosed courtyard, à la carte menu changing weekly, and renowned chef-patron Harald Bresselschmidt keeping things simple and classic. “Staying close to the seasons, we can be differently creative for lunch. It’s often a playground for us to try out new dishes for the dinner menu,” he says.

The short menu made choosing starters



easy for us: fresh wild porcini and blusher mushrooms – an unexpected treat courtesy of the unseasonal November rains – simply tossed with garlic, tarragon and raspberry vinegar, they exploded with flavour. And summery hot-smoked hake served Mediterranean-style with asparagus, olive tapenade and heirloom tomatoes.

One of the joys was discovering the varied Aubergine label wines, available by the glass, which sommelier Ralph Reynolds selected as impromptu pairings. A superb Chenin Blanc 2007 from Teddy Hall with the mushrooms, and a beautifully fresh Swartland Chenin Blanc 2018 from Wildehurst with the fish. Created and bottled exclusively for Aubergine they’re collaborations between chef Harald and the producers, relationships that he has developed along with his extensive cellars over 24 years. It’s all about creating wines to go with food, Ralph tells us. And vice versa. “Sometimes Chef will tell you that he’s not making food for you, he’s making it for the wine that you’re having.”

More intriguing wines with stories were the seasoning to our main courses. With a gorgeously rich springbok on pumpkin, berries, kale and bitter chocolate jus, Ralph suggested an intense Signal Hill Syrah 2007 grown on a tiny pocket of vines in Oranjezicht. Then the unusual Lost Observatory Carignan/Syrah 2005 made by Tom Lubbe in the Swartland and forgotten for years at the back of a cellar – sipped together with aromatic masala chicken, aubergine curry and spinach bhajia, the spices practically danced on the palate.

We finished with a lovely light crème brûlée, the sweetness balanced by a sea buckthorn sorbet, and a chocolate and raspberry delight paired with Chenin Blanc Noble Late Harvest 2008 again from Teddy Hall. Whether you indulge in three courses and wine pairings, or pop in for a quick one-course lunch and a glass of wine, there’s an equally warm welcome.

Lunch served Wednesdays to Fridays throughout summer.

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