

Editor's exclusive

CARLA REDELINGHUYS



Eco angels unite

Whenever I hear of everyday people making a difference in the world, it makes me realise that I, too, need to start making changes for the better. It doesn't have to be huge gestures – if everyone just did their bit, however small, the impact would be huge.

And while getting praise and honours bestowed on you for doing the right thing isn't necessary, it's nice to receive recognition for a job well done. Locally, we have the Eco-Logic Awards, which honours individuals and organisations who continue to make a difference to the environment.

As part of its aim to drive green consciousness among consumers and integrate a "green agenda" into the future of residential property, Pam Golding Properties again sponsored the Eco-Angel Award at this year's awards.

Says Anthony Stroebel, head of strategy, Pam Golding Properties, and a director of the Green Building Council of South Africa, "This is an annual celebration of the visionaries and innovators or 'eco heroes' who are not only actively promoting a more sustainable world, but who are also finding solutions to the earth's most pressing environmental challenges."

This year's Eco-Angel Award winner is Rhian Berning of Plettenberg Bay, founder and pioneer of the Eco Atlas blog, a unique online platform which empowers citizens to vote with their wallets for a better world for people and planet. Rhian also initiated Renew Able Plett, a localised campaign running Eco Brick projects with thousands of children at schools and incentivising businesses and the public to drop single-use plastics, support local suppliers and reduce their waste to landfill.

Rhian got the Schools Environmental and Educational Development (SEED) organisation off the ground with its first funding from the Shuttleworth Foundation and project-managed SEED on the Cape Flats, nurturing food growing at schools and empowering teachers with the tools and skills to use food gardens as a teaching resource. She then went on to found the Nature Network, fostering a sense of interconnection with nature for hundreds of children across Cape Town.

Runner-up Craig Foster of the Sea Change Project, has spent over 30 years making films of great anthropological significance. He has spent countless hours in the kelp forests of False Bay, and has discovered over eight new species and 40 new behaviours, and even had a newly discovered species of shrimp named after him – *Heteromysis Fosteri*.

Craig is co-creator of the Sea Change project, a not-for-profit trust comprising explorers, free divers and storytellers who have come together to conserve our unique Great African Sea Forest.

In third place, Mashudu Makhokha, director of Lapalala Wilderness School, has built up a well-deserved reputation for developing and running a centre of excellence in the field of environmental education at the school. He manages a team of educators who have inspired young people to discover the value of biodiversity in our natural world.

Truly an inspiration to all of us.

Carla

In your hood: Constantia

La Colombe | 021 794 2390 | lacolombe.co.za

A view from the top

The winter lunch special at La Colombe is the perfect excuse to celebrate

WORDS: KIT HEATHCOCK
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Expectations are high as we twist up the steep mountain road above Constantia Nek to La Colombe's treetop eyrie, a world away from the city and everyday life. Its long reputation for fine-dining excellence, continually renewed by chef proprietor Scot Kirton and executive chef James Gaag, makes it a bucket-list dining destination for international foodies, this year again making the World's 50 Best runners-up list.

A sense of enchantment starts at the door: a warm welcome, a delicate speckled egg yuzu palate cleanser, a forest garden theme inspired by sunlit views of trees and mountain tops from every table. The winter lunch menu, superb value at R495pp, professes to be just four courses but includes so many of the treats, snacks and exquisite extras of the longer chef's menu, that you really do get to experience the magic.

Intense microcosms of flavour, snacks of lamb taco with chipotle mayo and enchilada sauce, and marlin tataki on burnt lime, were followed by wagyu beef butter, prepared at the table with luscious shreds of braised oxtail, to dunk our sweet potato bread messily into, finger-licking allowed. The signature La Colombe tuna can features as a blind tasting, guess the spices, guess the varietal of the wine pairing, sommelier Elton Damon challenges the palate here. A beautifully plated quail stuffed with prawn, delicate kerala curry and labneh is next. So much attention to detail and technique goes into the smallest of things – a miniature apple palate cleanser with a touch of pear and celery is a work of art in itself. Then a choice of two mains, dessert, and a garden of petits fours to finish.

The meal flows seamlessly, balancing delightful touches of theatre, immaculate plating with all the technique and sumptuous flavour you'd expect, and engaging service. What we love beyond the superb food, is the warmth that flows from the kitchen to the guests, so that you feel part of the La Colombe family whether it's your first visit or a regular pilgrimage. Head chef Jess van Dyk tells us that it's this sense of family that she fell in love with doing her first-year block from Silwood. She climbed the ranks to sous chef before leaving to travel, returning to her La Colombe family as head chef last year. "Creative-wise I'm still learning a lot from Scot and James; they are mega-talented."

She sums up La Colombe's atmosphere perfectly, "We want to give you a full experience, a little bit of theatre, tasty food, good service, but still feel at home."

We drift out on a high, feeling thoroughly spoiled.

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