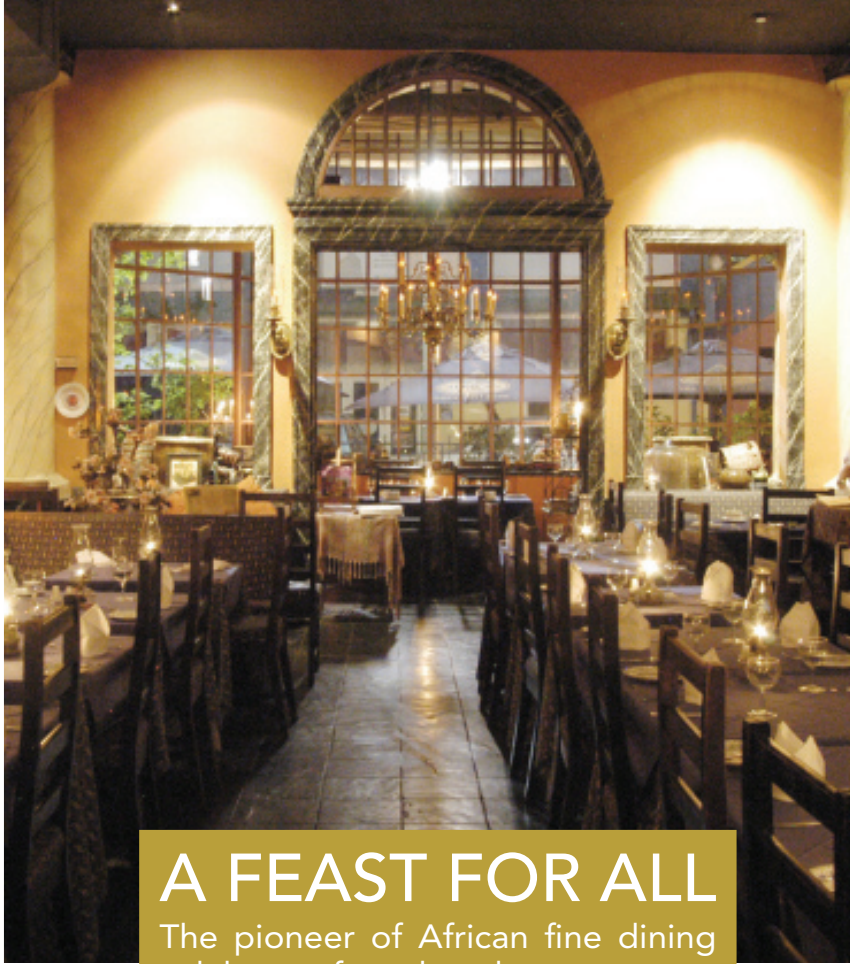


escapes food



A FEAST FOR ALL

The pioneer of African fine dining celebrates four decades

In the dark days of apartheid, Gramadoelas was among the first nonracial eateries in Johannesburg, and Eduan Naudé and Brian Shalkoff's early exploration of the fine-dining potential of African food was as revolutionary as their admissions policy.

When asked about the changes that have taken place over time, Brian says: 'Forty years ago we would always jump up to greet our guests. Under current conditions we still try to jump up but our legs don't always follow.' Eduan and Brian might feel slower on their feet than they once did, but their food and service style is still superbly up to speed.

They have cooked for everyone from Queen Elizabeth II and Stevie Wonder to former Presidents Bill Clinton and Nelson Mandela. Brian recalls that when Elton John and his entourage visited, 'One of the guests had had just a wee droopy too much to drink and passed out, face first – splash – into the soup! He could have drowned but for the fast reaction of the bodyguard, who lifted him out by the hair and mopped his face with a napkin. While Elton carried on eating as if nothing had happened.'

Walter Sisulu used to sneak in from time to time for oxtail stew, 'but he made us promise not to tell his wife'. Tata Sisulu has sadly passed on but all his food favourites live on at Gramadoelas: the *bredies* are unbeatable and Eduan and Brian are the uncrowned *umngqusho* (samp) kings. Long may they reign.

• Market Theatre Complex, Bree Street, Newtown, 011-838-6960



ABOVE The African buffet has samoosas, pumpkin fritters, tripe, curries and crocodile; (right) Gramadoelas is reminiscent of an old-time banqueting hall; (top) Brian Shalkoff has hosted many famous folk at his restaurant – here with Thabo Mbeki and John Kani, among others
LEFT Renata Coetzee and chef Shaun Schoeman, who has been 'playing happily' with indigenous herbs

HISTORIC HARVEST

Renata Coetzee is a champion of indigenous ingredients and traditional SA food cultures, and her latest book is a magnificent culinary collectable dealing with Khoi food history and culture, including how to grow an indigenous veld-food garden. Renata's handiwork can be admired and tasted at the Solms-Delta wine estate in Franschhoek, where a nursery is being used to propagate indigenous vegetables. The produce is put to delicious use by chef Shaun Schoeman at the estate's Fyndraai Restaurant – his menu includes buchu-seasoned kingklip, confetti-bos macerated quail and malva pudding with sour-fig sauce.

• Fyndraai Restaurant, 021-874-3937. Renata's book is *Koekemranka: Khoi-Khoi-Kultuurgoes en kom-Kuier-Kos* (Lapa Publishers, R230). An English edition will be published in 2011.

GOURMET
GETAWAY

On The Hop

The KZN Brew Route offers boozy bliss for thirsty travellers

Unlike the super-commercialised Cape wine routes, this KZN beer-based gourmet adventure still has the feel of enthusiastic amateurs wanting to share their passion. Visitors can sample a range of the region's liquid output, from boutique microbrewers and traditional Zulu sorghum-beer makers to large-scale commercial producers. Whether savouring the flavours of the Nottingham Road Brewing Co at Rawdon's Hotel (and feasting on the very fine eisbein at the Bierfassl Restaurant), sipping on Zulu Blonde from Zululand Brewery in Eshowe, or marvelling at the industrial grandeur of Ijuba-United National Breweries near the battlefields of Dundee, it's all deliciously different. Even those whose travel plans do not allow them to leave the Durban metropolitan area can still fit in a visit to Firkin Hophouse Micro Brewery & Pub at

the Pavillion Shopping Centre in Westville. 082-775-9998, kzn.org.za (click on 'Routes')



New Year Nutrition

If festive-season overindulgence has left you in need of a detox diet, have a sensible start at these eateries:

The Red Chamber, Johannesburg

For those who despair at the high levels of monosodium glutamate often found in Chinese food, chef Emma Chen offers a healthier, MSG-free Asian alternative. The Mandarin-style hot and sour soup and prawn dumplings are as elegant as they are appetising and chemical free.

• Upper Level, Hyde Park Shopping Centre, Jan Smuts Avenue, Hyde Park; 011-325-6048

Patel Vegetarian Refreshment Room, Durban

The Patel family has been satisfying the KwaZulu-Natal 'desire for fire' for 90 years from their absurdly cheap and cheerful eatery. The bean and lentil curries are aromatic epics, but this is not the place for fastidious foodies or people who value style over substance. However, to taste the culture of a community at its most authentic, Patel's is perfection on a plate.

• 202 Dr Yusuf Dadoo (formerly Grey) Street, CBD; 031-306-1774

The Guinea Fowl Restaurant, Cape Town

Game is organic and good for you. Cleanse the body and satisfy the taste buds with balsamic-macerated guinea-fowl breast and springbok liver with apple compote. Then abandon the diet and dive into the rooibos-infused crème caramel.

• Saxenburg Wine Farm, Polkadraai Road (M12), Kuils River, 021-903-6113

Brewmaster and adventurer Richard Chennell's charming new book, *The Wandering Keg*, explores the tastes, brewing techniques, social and environmental conditions of 30 breweries in South Africa, Uganda, Mozambique and Namibia. Food fanatics will love the beer-and-

food pairing suggestions and recipe section. R250 at brewery shops or call 035-474-2298.

