

***Eat Out* 'foodie Oscars' pay tribute to SA's top 10 restaurants and culinary talent**

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The Tasting Room at Le Quartier Français in Franschhoek came out tops in this year's 2007 *Eat Out* Restaurant Awards, heralded as the 'Oscars' of South Africa's restaurant industry.



Competing among 20 nominees featuring the finest restaurants in South Africa, The Tasting Room at Le Quartier Français scooped the most prestigious accolade on the gastronomic calendar: the *Eat Out* Restaurant of the Year 2007 and also received the *Eat Out* 2007 Service Award at a glittering function held at The Rotunda at The Bay Hotel in Camps Bay (Cape Town).

Renowned chef George Jardine of Jardine Restaurant in Cape Town was named *Eat Out* Chef of the Year for the second consecutive year, while legendary food personality Jos Baker was awarded the prestigious *Eat Out* Lifetime Achievement Award. Baker is a food and wine writer of exceptional experience and rare integrity, and her contribution to the world of food and wine remains significant.

Talented trainee chef Simpiwe Siyata of Beluga Restaurant in Cape Town was the recipient of the second annual Woolworths TASTE Bursary award, which will put him firmly on the road to achieving his lifetime dream of taking charge of his own top restaurant kitchen one day. Each year this significant award honours one talented, aspirant chef who shows great potential, affording the winner the opportunity to realize his or her potential by means of a bursary to study at a leading culinary institution. Siyata won a one year bursary to attend the Silwood Kitchen Cordon Bleu Cookery School in Rondebosch.

The 2007 *Eat Out* Top 10 Restaurants were announced by respected convener and editor of *Eat Out* magazine, Abigail Donnelly. The selection of the *Eat Out* Top 10 Restaurants was made following a gruelling judging process with stringent scoring and criteria. This year the judges were Arnold Tanzer (Director of the SA Chefs Association); Food Alchemist Peter Goffe-Wood; Letitia Prinsloo (Principal of the Institute of Culinary Arts); and restaurateur Dario De Angeli who joined the judging team for the first time. Each of the judges individually, and unannounced, visited every one of the 20 restaurants that they, together with convener Abigail Donnelly and the thirty *Eat Out* restaurant reviewers around South Africa, had nominated.

The 2007 *Eat Out* Top 10 Restaurants are:

- The Tasting Room at Le Quartier Français (Franschhoek) - Chef: Margot Janse (Also 2007 EAT OUT Restaurant of the Year and 2007 *Eat Out* Service Award)
- Jardine (Cape Town) - Chef: George Jardine (Also 2007 *Eat Out* Chef of the Year)
- Aubergine (Cape Town) - Chef patron: Harald Bresselschmidt
- Bread & Wine (Franschhoek) - Chef: Neil Jewell

- Restaurant at Grande Provence (Franschhoek) - Chef: Peter Tempelhoff
 - Ginja (Cape Town) - Chef: Mike Bassett
 - Roots at the Forum Homini Boutique Hotel (Johannesburg) - Chef patron: Philippe Wagenfuhrer
 - The Showroom (Cape Town) - Chef: Bruce Robertson
 - Linger Longer (Johannesburg) - Chef: Walter Ulz
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- 9th Avenue Bistro (Durban) - Chef: Carly Goncalves

Abigail Donnelly said that intrepid eaters are in for a treat sampling their way through the winning restaurants. "South Africans are blessed with a smorgasbord of delicious dining opportunities, and chefs are able to offer their clientele anything from organic meat to handmade cheeses and just-harvested vegetables from specialist farmers."

Widely recognised as the highlight of the South African culinary calendar, the 2007 *Eat Out* Restaurant Awards were attended by some 300 food fans, including chefs, media personalities and foodies, who turned out to enjoy the glitz, glamour and delightful anticipation of the evening.

Produced by the publishers of *Eat Out*, New Media, in association with Johnnie Walker Gold, Green & Black's, Mumm Champagne and BBC Food, this year's gourmet extravaganza was themed 'Cirque Culinaire'. Ringmaster and Master of Ceremonies, Capetonian funnyman Marc Lottering delighted guests with his inimitable wit and charm, while the extraordinary entertainment line-up featured a breathtaking aerial act and an authentic food-juggling routine by performers from the Zip-Zap circus, as well as a dazzling dance performance by Craig Smith and Natalie Woolf of Adage.

Guests dined in fine style, courtesy of three talented chefs, Nic van Wyk and Craig Bloemsma as well as Ronelle Mesias of the host venue The Bay Hotel, who presented a delectable four-course meal, paired with top award-winning wines.

EAT OUT is established as the authority on eating out in South Africa, and the awards event also celebrated the 10th anniversary edition of *Eat Out* magazine, which goes on sale at newsagents countrywide tomorrow (Monday 26 November 2007) at the cover price of R39.95. The beautifully presented restaurant reference guide provides reviews of more than 800 restaurants around the country, including the winning 2007 EAT OUT TOP 10 Restaurants. This is complemented by the user-friendly *Eat Out* website, www.eatout.co.za, easily the country's biggest on-line restaurant guide with over 1900 restaurant listings.

At the awards, publisher of *Eat Out* magazine Lani Carstens also announced that next year, New Media will further develop the brand extension of *Eat Out* by launching a 2008 *Eat Out* People's Choice magazine, and will recognize 'readers favourite' restaurants, ensuring that food lovers are equally informed about the *Eat Out* Top 10 Restaurants, as well as their neighbourhood bistros.

MORE ABOUT THE 2007 EAT OUT SPONSORS

Johnnie Walker Gold

The Johnnie Walker brand personifies courage and a pioneering spirit, and is dedicated to recognising individuals who inspire others through their personal achievements. Says Tracey Kirsten, Marketing Manager Reserve Brand Portfolio: "It is particularly fitting for Johnnie Walker to be associated with the Eat Out Restaurant Awards as the brand lives in all of the best eating and drinking establishments in the country and the winning chefs and restaurants are those which have excelled over their peers. It is also fitting that we celebrate tonight's winners with Johnnie Walker Gold Label, because in the house of Walker it is the indulgent blend – the fusion of the proudest Walker traditions and 21st century enjoyment."

www.johnniewalker.com

Green & Black's

Green & Black's Organic Chocolate was first launched in the UK in 1991, and since then it has made its mark as one of the top-selling luxury brands in the country and a firm favourite with international chefs. "We are delighted to be associated with Eat Out, and look forward to introducing South Africa's fine dining community to Green & Black's fine cocoa-rich organic chocolate," says Kim Tobin, Green & Black's Brand Manager in South Africa. On the evening of the awards Johannesburg chef Craig Bloemsma will be making a decadent Green & Black's inspired dessert – Mayan Mystery - using the Maya Gold chocolate variant.

www.greenandblacks.co.za

Mumm Champagne

This classic champagne with a unique character is a legendary blend of the best crus, grape varieties and vintages, and reveals the subtleties of all the great terroirs of the champagne region. Mumm Champagne is a statement of style and sophistication - the marque of Champagne Mumm has grown around the globe over the last 180 years into an enduring symbol of luxury from France to South Africa. Says David De Mardt, Pernod Ricard South Africa Managing Director: "Since Mumm Champagne is fast becoming recognised as exceptional superior Champagne of choice, we consider our association with the Eat Out Restaurant Awards to be perfectly fitting. This is the first year that Mumm Champagne will be sponsoring this event, and we look forward to growing the scope of this sponsorship in future years."

www.mumm.com

BBC Food

BBC Food is dedicated to culinary inspiration, with top chefs demonstrating how to create mouth-watering dishes and showing where their inspiration comes from. Created for everyone with an interest in good food, BBC Food celebrates simple, modern, fresh cooking. Says John Taite, BBC Global Channels Director of Programming: "BBC Food is proud to be sponsoring this year's Eat Out Awards. As you know, we're passionate about food and its power to transform our modern lifestyle. It's great to be associated with the very best South Africa has to offer."

www.bbcfood.com

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