

Q & A



Neil Pendock spoke to De Wet Lategan at Bergsig, one of the hottest wine producers in the Breedekloof region

Take a chance on Touriga

Q Your Touriga Nacional is one of the undiscovered gems of SA wine. Previous vintages were exported. Is SA now ready for Touriga?

A Although I've always been hesitant in expanding our range, I just couldn't ignore the cultivar any more. The Touriga Nacional regularly outperforms many of its more noble competition in my early season barrel tastings. Robert Joseph's remarks in John Platter '04 also influenced me in putting in more care with this vineyard and wine. We only have one block of Touriga Nacional and production is limited.

Q Does Breedekloof get its fair share of coverage from industry bodies such as WOSA, the exporters' association?

A No, like all the others we also want more, but I appreciate their job is to keep everybody happy while showing SA's best to the world.

Q Value for money is obviously one advantage Breedekloof has over other appellations. Are there any others?

A We were lucky to be spared the often much-desired investments in our region. This now means we are free from housing developments, golf courses, factories, roads, cars, etc. Breedekloof also lies in a catchment area with no agricultural or other developments above us.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Australian cuisine has come a long way from the days of the pie floater: a meat pie liberally doused in tomato sauce floating in a thick green pea soup. Aussie palates have moved on and pan-roasted scallops served on marinated pig cheeks are now much more common fare.

After 10 years Down Under, husband-and-wife team Cyrillia van der Merwe and Laurent Deslandes have washed up on Cape Town's trendy Foreshore at Bizerea Bistro near two Mother City landmarks that strike terror into the fatty heart of a gourmet: opposite the Virgin Active Gym and round the corner from the Receiver of Revenue.

BB is a pea out of the brutalist pod of industrial architecture: pigmented concrete-screed floors that are coolly refreshing to summer feet, steamed lobster pink in plastic Croc sandals. Entrance is through a steel roller-shutter garage door and the exposed aluminium air-conditioning ducts supply cool air with a mini Pompidou Centre frisson, reinforced by giant fish-on-a-stick sculptures made from coat hangers in school-of-Zimbabwe street-hawker style, in the piazza outside. Something by French sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska would have been even better.

Cyrillia and Laurent met in his native France and spent their first five years running a bistro on Sydney's trendy Victoria Street by day and partying up a storm by night. When Armand, the first of their two children, arrived, they shifted down a gear and moved out to the rural Blue Mountains — to Collits' Inn, a two-and-a-half hour drive west of Sydney.

Rated "two hats" by the Aussie food press, their restaurant was

No pies on this

Leaving their restaurant in Sydney, a partner team have opened a fine little bistro on the Mother City's Foreshore

voted Best New South Wales Regional Restaurant by the Sydney Morning Herald. Arriving in South Africa earlier this year to get married in the bush (Cyrillia hails from Pretoria), they decided to stay on, which had their friends questioning their sanity and supplying a restaurant name for them: Bizerea

The menu is small, focused on fresh ingredients with an unmistakable Aussie sensibility. Try the tarte fine with *witlof*, confit tomato plus Gorgonzola with beetroot sorbet, or the raw Norwegian salmon with goats' milk cheese, soy ginger and *échalote*

dressing. The farmed pork plate is a "meatatarian" delight of feet and cheeks, with Babe sourced from a farm on the west coast that also supplies the giant free-range chickens served

with spicy Boudin blanc and polenta.

Style is Bordeaux meets Moony Ponds with *échalote* jam, tomato coulis and celeriac purées galore. With ingredients so exotic, the menu sounds like it is written in wine-speak and although green pepper was not on the menu, when it does turn up, I bet they call it capsicum. The Granny Smith Apple Sorbet with Calvados (R38) is not to be missed.

Prices are reasonable — around R80 for a main course with coffee a particular bargain at R10 a cup (add R1 for soy milk)

although it does seem berserk to pay an extra R2 for decaffeinated coffee.

The eclectic wine list is a 50:50 blend of SA and France with Jean Hugel's Gentil spicy white blend from Alsace a gift at R28 per glass. Didier Dagueneau's brilliant Pouilly Fumé at R225 is only R2 more than Peter Finlayson's Mission Vale Chardonnay, although I think we may have drunk the last bottle. But then I was at lunch with an SA wine marketer and you have to



UP FROM DOWN: Cyrillia van der Merwe in Bizerea's kitchen

keep abreast of the competition, don't you know. — Neil Pendock

● Bizerea Bistro, Jetty Street, Cape Town Foreshore, tel: 021-418-0001. Open Mondays to Fridays, lunch 12pm to 3pm, Mondays to Saturdays, dinner 6pm to 10pm.

The farmed pork plate is a "meatatarian" delight of feet and cheeks

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