

Rise of the somms

Sommeliers are the new stars of the restaurant world, capable of turning a chef's great dish into a memorable dining experience

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The Test Kitchen
021 447 2337
thetestkitchen.co.za

Tokara Restaurant
021 885 2550
tokararestaurant.co.za

Makaron Restaurant at Majeka House
021 880 1549
majekahouse.co.za

TINASHE NYAMUDOKA

We asked three of Cape Town's top sommeliers for their favourite wines, pairing tips and tricks of the trade.

Tinashe Nyamudoka
Head sommelier, The Test Kitchen

Q: Highest qualification:

A: Certified Cape Sommelier, Cape Wine Academy

Q: Favourite food to pair with wine?

A: Pork belly, either with a Riesling or Pinot Noir.

Q: Which wine style excites you most?

A: Chenin Blanc. I keep on discovering new styles in different regions. I also love its versatility when it comes to pairing with food. Diners should avoid going against the sommelier's recommended choice for that specific meal. You might regret your choice and have no one to blame.

Q: The wine you'll be selling this summer?

A: Cinsaut. It's a light, elegant red perfect for summer.

Jaap-Henk Koelewijn
Sommelier, Tokara Restaurant

Q: Highest qualification:

A: Diploma in Wine, Cape Wine Academy

Q: Favourite wines for pairing?

A: I enjoy food that is delicate, but still has a lot of complexity; therefore, at the moment I enjoy white blends. Not only the very popular blends from

the Swartland, but also those from cooler climates.

Q: A trick of the trade?

A: Diners should ask for suggestions if they are unfamiliar with the wines on the list. The sommelier isn't there to outdo you – they just want you as the diner to enjoy the wine you choose. If you show a keen interest in wine, the chances are very good the sommelier will give you something interesting he might have open on any given day – be it a new wine, a limited release or a rarity.

Esmé Groenewald
Sommelier, Makaron at Majeka House

Q: Highest qualification:

A: Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET) Level 3

Q: Favourite food to pair with wine?

A: Anything with mushrooms in it. I love the diversity and that whack of umami, paired with Pinot Noir or Fino Sherry. I love seeing single varietals shine on their own. It's sometimes both beautiful and educational to see something like a Petit Verdot or Clairette Blanche without the rough edges filed away through blending.

Q: A trick of the trade?

A: The double decant. Sometimes even the lightest of wines, when very young, can do with a little air. I don't trust those aerators just yet, but a quick once through the decanter and back into the bottle can make the world of difference.



ESMÉ GROENEWALD



JAAP-HENK KOELEWIJN