

# le quartier français

auberge and restaurants in a village



## Executive Chef's profile: Margot Janse

### History

Margot Janse is the incredibly talented woman and the Executive Chef at the award winning, Relais and Châteaux Le Quartier Français Hotel in Franschhoek. Born and educated in The Netherlands her creative talents were evident right from the start and her tertiary studies included drama and some photography, which laid the foundation for her early work with a photographic school in Johannesburg, South Africa.

However at the age of 23 the 'Magic of the Kitchen' beckoned and she approached Ciro Molinaro, a highly respected Johannesburg restaurateur, who agreed to teach her in his own kitchen. It was two years of long shifts and hard work but Margot learned every aspect of managing a kitchen. More importantly Ciro encouraged her to experiment and play with food, creating in Margot an ability to explore beyond traditional 'food boundaries'.

In 1995 Margot joined the culinary team at Le Quartier Français. The hotel restaurant was already considered one of South Africa's best, so it was an enormous challenge for Margot when she was asked to take over as Executive Chef shortly after her arrival. However, sixteen years and many national and international awards later, Margot continues to thrive in the career of her choice and enthrall serious diners from around the globe. Margot travels extensively to continually be inspired by new ideas and stay abreast of emerging trends. Her stimulating African inspired surprise menu changes regularly based on the seasonal fresh produce which she sources from Le Quartier's own indigenous garden and small local producers. The result is a kitchen buzzing with on-going innovative and creative energy and Margot and her talented team serve course after course of exquisite culinary delights from this truly fine dining restaurant.

Margot lives in Franschhoek with her husband Duncan and son, Thomas, seven.

## Philosophy

For sixteen years Margot Janse has been captivating diners, visiting Le Quartier Français, from around the world.

It is Margot's belief that food is constantly evolving; and unforgettable dishes always have an element of surprise and nostalgia about them. This approach ensures that Margot's kitchen consistently overflows with innovative and creative energy. In this space Margot prides herself on developing exceptional and engaging culinary delights. Every dish of Margot's is truly refined and, at the same time, unexpectedly exciting. It is this contradiction that results in her menu's outstanding balance and ensures that her cuisine is theatre.

Margot finds it difficult to put her constantly evolving style in a box. Instead she prefers to allow herself the room to be creative, to experiment with new things. She works fearlessly with textures and balance because she believes that each dish has to say something. As she once famously exclaimed "I don't like bland food. I don't like safe food." This - more than anything else - sums up her food and life philosophies.

In fact it's this philosophy that has led to Margot's unique approach extending further than just phenomenal cuisine; it has moved into the captivating realm of stories and magic. A place where each dish, and its African inspired elements, have the ability to captivate the hearts and minds of diners.

## Accolades:

Margot has received numerous accolades from some of the world's most respected publications including:

- San Pellegrino Top 50 best restaurants awards 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2002;
- Best Restaurant in Africa and the Middle East 2011, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2005;
- Relais & Châteaux Inaugural Rising Chef Trophy 2006
- First Relais & Châteaux Grande Chef in Africa 2007;
- Virtuoso Best of the Best culinary experience 2008
- Hotel Magazine USA - Top Ten Restaurants in the world 2008

## International Appearances

Margot has appeared as a guest chef, in both acclaimed restaurants and festivals worldwide, in numerous countries.

- Guest Chef at Relais & Châteaux- Ponta los Ganchos, Florianopolis, Brazil 2007;
- Guest Chef at Olympe Restaurant with Claude Troisgros in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 2007;
- Guest chef in The Hanger 7 programme, Salzburg Austria, 2008;
- Guest chef at Ciel Blue in Amsterdam, Holland 2008;
- Guest Chef of SA Tourism at TTG INCONRTI PADIGLIONE B1 in Italy, 2009;
- Designed KLM Business Class Menu served on all flights out of Amsterdam worldwide, December 2009 -October 2010;
- Guest Chef at the Sukhothai Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand 2010;
- A lauded female chef participant at the guest XIII Festival Cultura e Gastronomia Tiradentes Brazil, 2010;
- Margot's most recent international appearance was in Australia at the world-renowned Savour Tasmania, Australia 2011;
- Guest Speaker at African Lunch at Virtuoso Travelmart, Las Vegas USA 2011

Margot is already set to feature in a number of kitchens and festivals in 2012.