

Two Local Chefs Among Nederburg Auction 'Food Masters'

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The Nederburg Auction's four food masters: (FLTR) Fritz Schoon (Schoon de Companje, Stellenbosch), Chris Erasmus (Foliage, Franschhoek), Neil Jewell (Bread & Wine, Mōreson, Franschhoek), Gustaaf Boshoff (Stir Food, Somerset West).

Four local 'food masters' combined their respective culinary talents to create a fascinating lunch menu for guests attending the Nederburg Auction on 11 and 12 September.

Stir Food's Gustaaf Boshoff and baker Fritz Schoon of Schoon de Companje, together with Franschhoekers Chris Erasmus from Foliage restaurant and Neil Jewell from Mōreson Estate's Bread & Wine restaurant presented a menu that promoted sustainable food options beyond tomorrow.

Dishes included salads made with seasonal foraged leaves, beef cooked in a stock made from hand-collected forest floor and burnt bark and served with forest mushrooms, and buchu ice-cream.

"We initially thought of bringing together modern cooking techniques, but decided in the end to make the menu more relevant to South Africa and came up with the idea of sustainable food options beyond tomorrow," says Boshoff. These include supporting local, small farmers producing specialist, heirloom grains, and using sustainable techniques of foraging for ingredients used in the dishes served at the Auction.

Chris Erasmus and his team collected pine rings,

mushrooms and stalks for their "terroir-peri" – ingredients used in making a "forest floor" braising stock for their beef main course. "We are more conscious of nature, of weather changes and the implications of what we are doing to our environment. It's great that the organisers aligned this philosophy with the auction," he said.

Baker Fritz Schoon started a grain movement with Free State grain farmer James Moffat to source and plant the oldest varieties and heirloom varieties of wheat. These were used to bake bread and baguettes at the auction, including Highland hard red wheat sourdough loaves, banana and chocolate loaves, and baguettes rolled in coarse-milled organic mealie meal.

Through this movement, Schoon believes, they are helping to create whole new industries. "In a couple of years, every bakery will have naturally farmed flour because of this movement, and farmers will be winning all the way."

Charcutier Neil Jewell agrees. "I think South Africa is going in a better direction with its food by supporting small farmers and local producers." ■

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