

Gourmet Delights

At Brasserie One in Martinborough, Miriam Williams found that the owners shared philosophy is to know their producers, to know where their ingredients are coming from, with an emphasis is on fresh, seasonal, local produce.

Sharon Pittard and Jurgen Snyman met while both were working at Wharekauhau Lodge and Country Estate on Wairarapa's rugged south coast.

Jurgen as a chef and Sharon front of house. Sharon says that she couldn't stop watching Jurgen as he worked in the kitchen because everything he did seemed exactly right. She was proud to place his food in front of their guests and she loved the reaction it produced. For his part, Jurgen says that Sharon is unique in that she 'just gets what hospitality is all about'.

Coming from very different backgrounds, theirs is a formidable partnership. Jurgen hails from South Africa and arrived in New Zealand a couple of years ago. He'd been one of the top 3 chefs in his home country, cooking for the rich and famous in a number of 5-star properties when in 2004 he decided to travel to Europe to extend his experience. For three years he worked with celebrity chefs in Michelin-starred establishments before moving 'down under'. Eighteen months as a consultant culminated in the job at Wharekauhau.

Sharon, on the other hand, was living in the South Wairarapa when in 2001 she got a job at the Martinborough Hotel as a kitchenhand. This coincided with the arrival there of chef Ian Garner who saw her potential and gave her the chance to move



Jurgen Snyman

'out front'. Sharon credits Ian with teaching her all she knows about the industry and they worked together first at the Hotel, then at the Green Man in Greytown and finally at Alana Estate. When Ian left the district, Sharon stayed at Alana for a while before moving to Wharekauhau.

When the opportunity arose to take over the restaurant at the Aylstone Boutique Retreat in Martinborough, the couple jumped at the chance to have their own place and Brasserie One was born. Their shared philosophy is to know their producers, to know where their ingredients are coming from. The emphasis is on fresh, seasonal, local produce. The wine list comprises only Wairarapa wines which fit within an unpretentious and moderate price range. Sharon and Jurgen insist that they are not wine experts but have chosen a selection of wines that they like to drink and which complement their food. As a result, the list features some of the area's lesser-known producers.

By keeping the number of covers to less than 40, there is no need to employ other staff. Jurgen works alone in the kitchen and Sharon in the restaurant.

They believe that this is the best way to ensure consistency in their service and to provide their guests with the best possible experience. Jurgen's experience in working in the Franschoek area in South Africa (like Bordeaux - and Martinborough, an important Food and Wine locality) means that he understands the importance of looking after the locals. To this end, the restaurant is open for dinner every night except Wednesday and for lunch on Saturday and Sunday.

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