

Frost Science Museum, Climate Ribbon, The Underline
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CENTRE

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CONTRIBUTORS

1—SARAH KHAN

After accruing a portfolio of work in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Atlantic*, travel writer Sarah Khan earned esteem as a self-made woman among her New York publishing peers. So, she sought her next challenge. An impulsive trip to South Africa led her to Cape Town, where she now lives and works as a freelance writer. For *Centre*, Khan lends local flavor and expertise to her review of Cape Town’s hottest new restaurant: The Shortmarket Club [page 162]. “I could tell when I walked in that I was set for a very different dining experience,” says Khan, whose passion for travel is matched by her love of food.

4—HANA LÊ VAN

“I love getting the perfect shot. I love fashion.” says Paris-based photographer Hana Lê Van. A bona-fide street style veteran, Lê Van’s work is continually featured by *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan*. After years of experience, she’s learned how to navigate the cut-throat realm of lifestyle media in the fashion capital of the world. “It’s not easy to be surrounded by a mass of people who don’t care about you as they pursue their shots,” which, she says, makes a successful end result all the more satisfying. In “What Paris Is Wearing” [page 84], it is clear Lê Van is more than willing to fight for the perfect photo.

2—BRANDON PRESSER

Working at the Louvre in Paris, apprenticing for a Tokyo-based architect, scuba diving in Thailand: the young Brandon Presser was always set on exploring. This unorthodox path drew him to travel writing, years of which culminated in his coveted host role on Bravo TV’s *Tour Guide*. Having just wrapped a season, Presser is currently “savoring my freelance feature writing, which lets me tell small, human-focused stories.” That includes two wellness pieces in this issue, which took him from the clear waters of Brittany, France [page 196], to the care of a blind Balinese healer in Ubud [page 202]. “Wellness is a great window into local culture, combining elements like food, medicine, religion, design, and music,” says Presser.

5—MARK ELLWOOD

A prominent journalist with a passion for travel, Mark Ellwood has had his share of outrageous experiences: watching Wyoming cowboys rap by a campfire, staying in an all-psychic village, and dancing in the nightclubs of Mozambique. Bermuda, on the other hand, was surprisingly familiar to the British-born Ellwood. “Bermuda has kinship with places like Malta, Hong Kong, and Gibraltar—there’s a distinct vibe to the smaller overseas colonies, territories, and protectorates that once anchored the British Empire. ... Like all those other places, Bermuda is a dance-like-no-one-is-looking escape for normally stiff-upper-lipped Brits.” For this issue, Ellwood captures the energy of the sunny archipelago as it prepares for the America’s Cup regatta in “Bermuda Sails” [page 132].

3—NICK GARCIA

Starting out as an apprentice to his photographer father at age 15, the now-thriving pro Nick Garcia owes much to his mentor. So every year, Garcia returns for a visit to his hometown of Barranquilla, Colombia—“a land of vibrant carnival energy and mysticism”—to photograph the flourish of glitter, feathers, and confetti known as Carnival alongside his dad. In some ways, this practice proved to be invaluable preparation to shoot Miami’s white-hot street style in “What Miami Is Wearing” [page 76].



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South Africa's southernmost city
has officially entered the
global food scene, with the new
Shortmarket Club at the forefront.





Cape Town’s virtues are no secret among the travel-savvy: The dramatic mountainscapes, beguiling beaches, and world-class wines lure many a repeat visitor. But this scenic region also boasts one of the most exciting dining scenes anywhere on the planet, an ambrosial synthesis of unusual ingredients and cutting-edge techniques mastered by creative local chefs. There’s a reason Cape Town topped *Condé Nast Traveler’s* 2016 list of best food cities in the world, beating out usual suspects like London and Tokyo. Quite simply, it’s because new eateries like the Shortmarket Club are transforming South Africa into a major player on the global food scene.

Before you book a flight, you might want to first scope out availability at chef Luke Dale-Roberts’s Test Kitchen: it’s worth planning an entire holiday around the UK-born toque’s avant-garde tasting menu, which helped bump the eatery up to No. 22 on this year’s World’s 50 Best Restaurants list. Its sister restaurant, the Pot Luck Club, introduced Cape Town to the concept of shared plates six years ago, serving up quirky combinations like licorice-glazed sweetbreads

with pancetta, tahini, lemon cream, and pine nut gremolata or rhubarb crumble with ricotta custard. But since the June opening of Dale-Roberts’ Shortmarket Club, Capetonians and visiting foodies alike have new reason to rejoice.

“It’s kind of a modern classic restaurant: comfortable and cozy, a great place to sit for a long time and share a few bottles of wine over some good food,” says Dale-Roberts of his latest venture, which marks a pivotal moment in the chef’s growing South African dining empire.

Aside from the Test Kitchen and the Pot Luck Club, he opened a wine bar, Naturalis, late last year, and made his debut in Johannesburg in May. The Shortmarket Club debut is the first time he’s stepped out of the spotlight, and is instead handing the reigns to Pot Luck Club’s head chef Wesley Randles and general manager Simon Widdison. Dale-Roberts is taking the role of silent partner alongside his wife, Sandalene. “Wesley and Simon had been running Pot Luck Club very well and efficiently, and Wes’s food was starting to grow and evolve into something that was finer dining

than what the Pot Luck Club philosophy was,” he says. “It was obvious to me that he needed a platform of his own to let that shine.”

“I’m a kind of all-or-nothing type of guy, either fully involved or I take a backseat,” he adds. “So I took a backseat. I thought, I could over control this, or I could let brilliant people do a brilliant job.”

The Shortmarket Club is located in the heart of the Central Business District, now in the throes of a revival. Here, steps from Cape Town’s main restaurant artery of Bree Street, and behind a nondescript facade—the entrance is announced by a custom-made bronze manhole cover glimmering discreetly on the ground—lies the city’s most exciting new dining room, envisioned as a modern take on classic restaurants of yore.

To achieve the right look, Sandalene Dale-Roberts sourced an eclectic mix of antique finds and custom-made local art and furniture. After stepping over the manhole, diners clamber up a flight of stairs to enter a small area awash in sumptuous burgundy tones, where tables are informally scattered around a lively open kitchen. Imbibe a pre-dinner drink before passing through a set of immaculately restored Argentinian stained-glass doors—Sandalene salvaged them from a rubbish heap in Woodstock—into a more formal dining room, lined with long rows of plush suede banquettes in gray and black beneath World War II-era military lamps. Dominating the back wall is a behemoth collage of butterflies that, upon closer inspection, reveal themselves to be fashioned from burnt scraps of invoices and order forms from the Pot Luck Club. “It has a 1930s New York style to it, old world in a slight industrial setting,” says Randles.

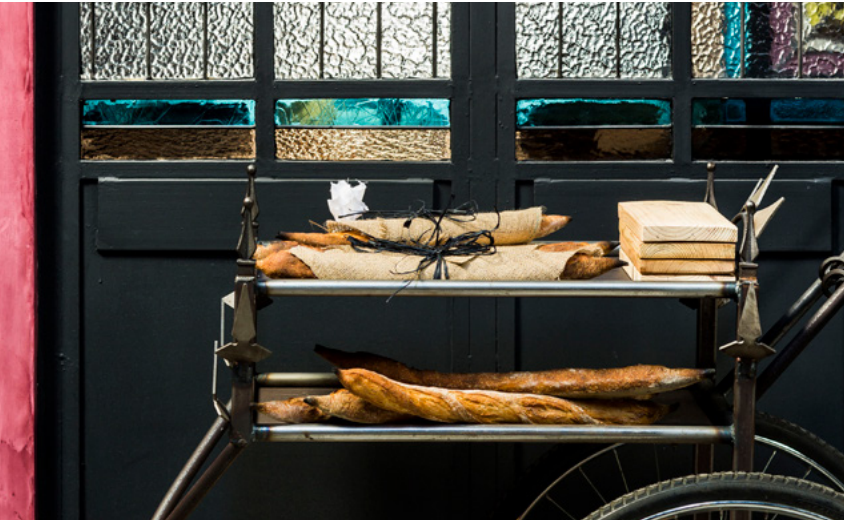
And how does one cook for such a location? “I created the food to match the restaurant—it needs to suit the environment it’s in,” he says. “Taking old-world classics, making them modernized, bringing back old-world dining with fun.”

To wit: “At an older restaurant there would always be calamari with tartar sauce on the menu; I did a crispy octopus with green mango atchar and sesame tamarind dressing.”

Other hits from the broadsheet old-meets-new menu include a scotch egg with wild mushrooms, kale, and grated truffle; whole chicken roasted over chestnuts and fynbos and served with parsnips and sour-dough sauce; and a roast apple pie with celeriac ice cream and brandy custard. In keeping with the retro theme, baguettes come wrapped in hessian sacks and rolled in on trolleys. Something else seemingly plucked from another time: the impeccable service, a bit of a rarity in Cape Town. “People think casual service is cool, but there’s a difference with feeling like you’re being looked after in a non-pretentious setting,” says Randles.

While Dale-Roberts may not have been running the show, he was more than happy to lend his tastebuds whenever needed. “From a menu perspective, Wesley wanted me to try everything,” he says. “We’ve got a very open relationship like that—if he comes to Test Kitchen I’ll give him something to try. We’re very much sounding boards for each other.”

Whether or not Shortmarket Club finds its way to global rankings is yet to be seen, but it’s proving to be a gamechanger in an already-vibrant milieu. “There’s definitely no restaurant like this in Cape Town,” says Randles. “We are going in our own direction.”



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SHORTMARKET CLUB