

41 DELICIOUS REASONS TO TRAVEL p.55

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Q&A  
**South Africa's  
 Next Food City**

Acclaimed chef **Luke Dale-Roberts** sheds light on Johannesburg's evolving culinary scene.

by SARAH KHAN



**Tell us about your restaurant, Luke Dale Roberts X The Saxon.**

I did a pop-up at the iconic Saxon Hotel in 2016, and it was so successful that I opened it permanently. There isn't much fine dining in Johannesburg, so I'm happy to fill that spot. The hotel's aesthetic is modern African, and the restaurant's design follows suit: There are handpainted indigenous flowers on the walls by South African artist Shaune Rogatschnig, and we use crockery by local ceramicist John Bauer. We also added a few grande dame-style touches, such as wood paneling and brass fixtures.

**How do you incorporate South African ingredients into your dishes?**

I like to experiment with *fynbos* [vegetation indigenous to South Africa's western Cape], but you need to be careful, because it can be very medicinal in flavor. One example

of that would be *buchu* leaves, which I use in cures and oils. We use a lot of wild game, such as springbok, and local seafood, including *snoek*, which is an ugly little fish that's not well known overseas. We smoke it and make a pâté out of it.

**What should guests order?**

There's a fantastic springbok tartare with leek ash mayonnaise, and we have a sea bass tartare that's served with lovage pesto. I recently added a crab, ginger, coriander, and corn ravioli, and bok choy with a kimchi dressing.

**How does the dining scene in Joburg compare to the one in Cape Town?**

Cape Town and the Winelands that surround it offer the most cutting-edge dining, but that's changing. Great chefs are conquering the Joburg scene. David Higgs, formerly of the Saxon, has opened Marble. EB Social Kitchen & Bar in the suburb of Hyde Park has an Australian chef, Russell Armstrong, who does Pacific Rim-inspired cuisine—quite a refreshing addition.



We asked Meadowood bar manager Sam Levy to create a travel-inspired cocktail. Check out the recipe for "Near and Afar" at [afar.com/nearandafar](http://afar.com/nearandafar).

**BAR NOTES  
 Spill It**

One of the Napa Valley's renowned retreats for food lovers has an under-the-radar local hangout. AFAR's deputy editor reports from **Meadowood**.

by JENNIFER FLOWERS

For those of us who travel to eat, a stay at the 250-acre Meadowood in St. Helena goes hand in hand with an extraordinary meal at the resort's three-Michelin-star restaurant, where chef Christopher Kostow serves a tasting menu inspired by the surrounding landscape. But what

outsiders might not know is that this temple to gastronomy is also a magnet for locals looking for something more casual. Right next to the main dining room, the Rotunda Bar and Lounge opened in 2013 with a lofty wood-beamed ceiling, two roaring fireplaces, and books and board

games that invite visitors to linger. The main draw is the roster of inventive cocktails by bar manager Sam Levy, whose seasonal concoctions are simply named after their spirit (Beluga Vodka is a blend of mint, ginger beer, and lime; Brown Butter Bourbon has oaked maple syrup, sarsaparilla, aged

balsamic vinegar, and lemon). Sam will also gladly whip up something new based on your preferred tippie. Hungry? Book one of five seats at the bar for a three-course dinner, which offers an abbreviated snapshot of what's being served next door. But if you're just feeling peckish, order the bar bites, which might include Kostow's ethereally light fried squash blossoms or his habanero-covered buffalo wings—no reservation needed. [therestaurantatmeadowood.com](http://therestaurantatmeadowood.com).