



# IT'S ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE

*Wine Advice from Sommelier Wikus Human*

**Creating the perfect pairing of wine and food is both an art and a science. Yet, it is something that anyone can learn to do, with the right guidance...**

**W**ikus Human is Head Sommelier at the Marble Group for Marble and Saint Restaurants, and winner of the South African Sommeliers Association's (SASA) 2017 *Moët & Chandon Best Young Sommelier* competition. He is also passionate about pairing wine with fine cuisine, whether at Marble or Saints, or at home, and exclusively shares his wine pairing tips with *Signature*.

## **USE THE SOMMELIER**

The concept of a sommelier is a new one to most South Africans. Traditionally, sommeliers have exclusively been present at high-end fine-dining restaurants, predominantly in the Winelands. These days, however, they are regular features in several more accessible establishments across the country.

The goal of the perfect sommelier who loves wine and, like Wikus Human, have made it their career, is to share their passion and knowledge, and to enhance the guest's overall dining experience. Alongside curating

the restaurants' wine list, Wikus loves being able to challenge people's palates and debunk wine myths. His first piece of advice is to enjoy what's in your glass and what's on your plate – don't overthink it.

## **IT'S NOT ABOUT RANDBS; IT'S ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE**

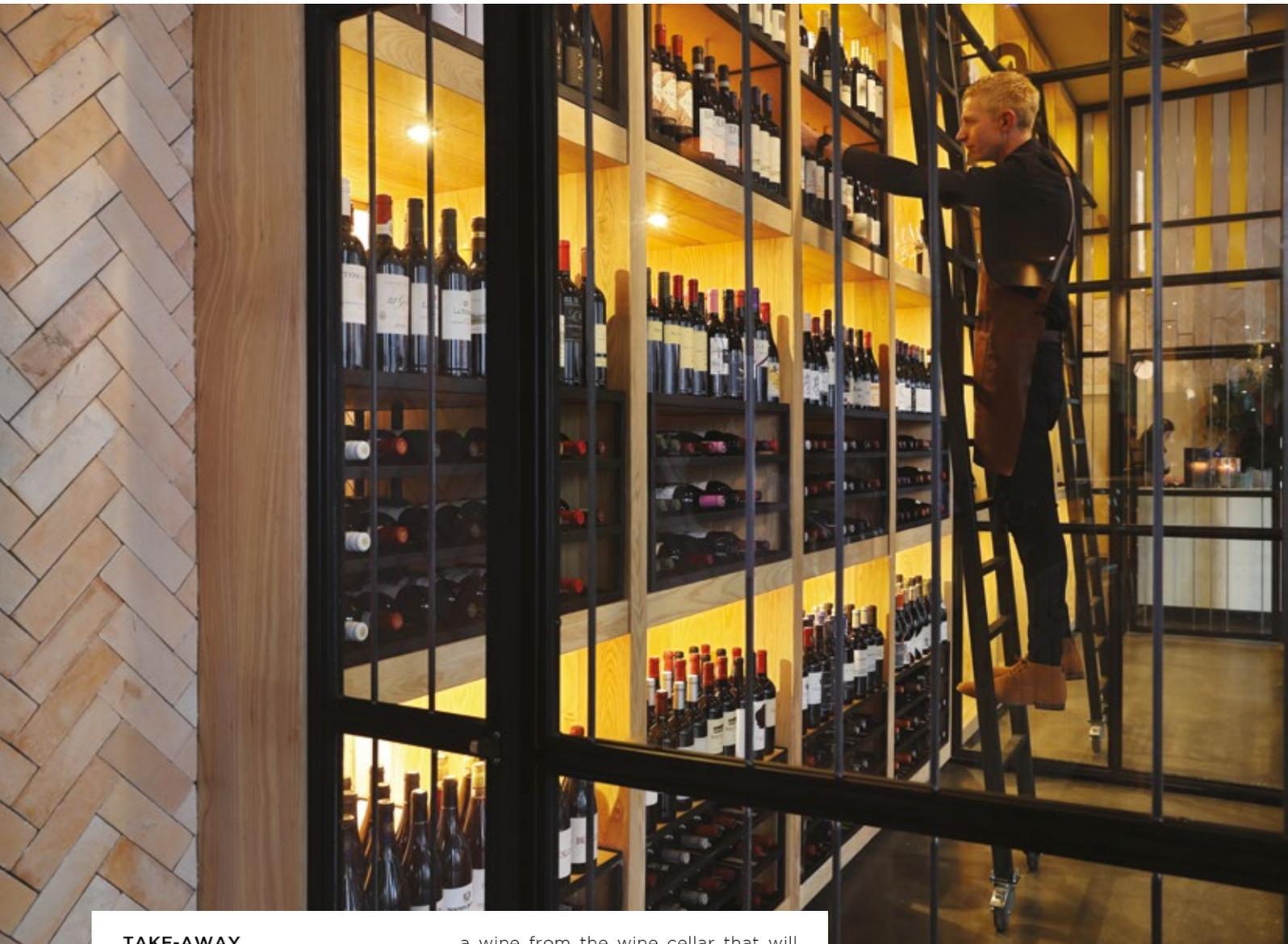
When one visits a restaurant, it is not the role of the sommelier to get you to buy the most expensive, limited-edition vintage bottle of wine available. The task of the sommelier is to ensure that what you order from the menu and from the wine list, pairs well, to afford you the best meal and the best experience possible.

## **FISH WITH RED? TRY IT...**

For the longest time, the only advice people were given for wine pairing was that white wine pairs with fish, and red wine with red meat. That is a misconception that Wikus is happy to debunk. What does pair well, is flavour – what spices does your dish contain, the saltiness of the dish, the fattiness of the protein, and even the sides you've ordered all count. It's not just about the main component.



- If you're having something spicy, we'll recommend a wine that is lighter in alcohol, or if you have something saltier on your plate, then a high acid wine will work better.
- Red meats that are leaner or have no fat, can pair well with lighter red wines – as can fish.
- Champagne pairs well with fatty or high protein dishes.



### TAKE-AWAY THE KNOWLEDGE

Get to know the sommelier at your favourite restaurant and ask lots of questions. The sommelier's knowledge is also knowledge that you can take home for your next Sunday lunch or dinner party. Once you have saved a selection of wines for special occasions, matching the food to the specific wine is going to be much easier than matching the wine to a particular dish.

### FOLLOW THESE TRICKS FOR HOME WINE PAIRING

At home, you also have the advantage of time. Sommeliers often only have about two minutes to select

a wine from the wine cellar that will be suitable to the customers' wallet, food choice and wine preferences – not always easy.

The basics are:

- High acid food prefers high acid wines
- Spicy food prefers sweeter, low alcohol wines
- Fatty Proteins / Meats prefer wine with high tannins
- Oily fish prefers high acid white wines
- Sweet food prefers sweet wines 🍷

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