



UNDER THE OAK TREES

A Moment of Culinary Excellence at Le chêne

When it comes to local fine dining, Chef Darren Badenhorst is celebrated as the producer of some of the most mouth-watering cuisine in the country. His latest venture is Le chêne, which is perfectly perched in the fully-renovated observatory at the Manor House on the exclusive Leeu Estate in Franschoek. Le chêne – meaning ‘the oak tree’ in French, is the sister property to Badenhorst’s original award-winning establishment, Le coin Français. But, in true Badenhorst style, a visit to Le chêne offers guests far more than simply a meal out.





To best describe the Le chêne experience, it is crucial to picture the setting, as it truly is like no other. From inside the glass observatory at the exclusive Manor House, guests are met with sweeping panoramic views of the manicured gardens, framed by sprawling vineyards and the mountains beyond. The setting can be likened to a scene from a beautiful work of art. Filled with natural light and a calm, peaceful ambience, the glass-enclosed dining room lends itself perfectly to the overall charm and natural beauty of Leeu Estates in Franschoek.



MEET THE TEAM

The team at Le chêne work together like a well-oiled machine. Chef Darren is known for leading diners on a journey through his interpretations of nostalgic food memories. However, there is nothing run-of-the-mill about his dishes. Working under multiple-award-winning Chef de Cuisine and owner Chef Darren, is Head Chef Oelof Vorster. Having worked internationally and in some of South Africa's most renowned establishments, Chef Oelof brings innovation, creativity, and an out-of-the-box approach to Le chêne. Chef Oelof and Chef Badenhorst both blend classic French techniques with modern flair and ingenuity. The Group Sommelier at both Le chêne and Le coin Français is Shane Mumba, a force to be reckoned with in the South African wine industry. The 'founders cellar' is situated beneath the restaurant, allowing Shane access to world-class varieties and rare vintages which date back to the 1960s. With a knack for carefully selecting the perfect wines, Shane showcases the exceptional wine offering of The Mullineux & Leeu Family Wines, as well as a wide selection of world-class wines.

The Maitre d' at Le chêne is Elroy

Parson – a warm young man who brings with him a style of excellence, finesse, and passion. His knowledge of fine dining and experience in several world-class establishments have equipped Parson with what he needs to guide guests through a unique and sophisticated dining experience.

ON THE MENU

The menu at Le chêne is a true testament to the splendour and diversity of the region. Using only the finest local ingredients off the estate itself, the menu offers a selection of two- or three-course dining experiences with the option to add on various courses to create a full tasting menu experience. There are several menus on offer at Le chêne, including a breakfast menu, an outside menu, a two/three-course tasting menu, and a kids menu.

The breakfast menu offers both a cold and hot selection. The cold selection includes locally sourced fine cheeses, a selection of breads and pastries from the bakery, devilled quails' eggs, a variety of individual yoghurt blends, summer fruit, and Bavarian yoghurt verrine. The hot section offers a sophisticated twist on breakfast favourites, including croque



CHEETAH PLAINS

Exclusively yours, multiple award-winning Cheetah Plains Private Houses, play host to your **private safari experience** of a lifetime. A sophisticated, innovative, eco-luxe destination for the modern age, three **exclusive-use Plains Houses** provide a sensual backdrop to your inspired, **exclusive, private safari adventure.**

SABI SAND

WWW.CHEETAHPLAINS.COM | HELLO@CHEETAHPLAINS.COM



AFRICAN
SECRETS
MANAGEMENT

WWW.JACISLODGES.CO.ZA | HELLO@JACISLODGES.CO.ZA

MADIKWE

Jaci's Lodges

Jaci's Lodges offers guests the ideal destination for **unrivalled game-viewing, authentic luxury accommodation** options, outstanding service and **unique safari activities.** Experience the submerged photographic hide, private treehouse sleep-out and newly constructed viewing deck - the perfect settings to take in all the golden hour tranquility that Madikwe is famous for.



monsieur served with toasted ciabatta, and Neil Jewell smoked ham, foraged cream of wild mushroom ragout, and toasted walnut brioche French toast.

The dinner/lunch menu is vast, with something for everyone. Starter options include foraged porcini-cured Springbok tartare, a burrata salad, and a beetroot-cured sustainable sea bass ceviche. There are various main course options, with one of the standouts being the 18-hour confit Karoo lamb neck served with a mountain nettle and rivercress puree, edamame, pearl onion cups, and a lamb *jus gras*. The menu's vegetarian option is the salt-cured and parmesan-baked cauliflower with a vanilla puree and almond textures. The desserts on both the standard lunch/dinner menu and the tasting menu are a genuine pleasure to experience. The "Tribute to Local Honey" comprises bavarois, molten glaze, bee pollen, brûlée meringue, and rose caviar. The "Monochrome of Summer Berries" is refreshing and bursting with flavour. The dessert options are a further testament to the variety offered at Le chêne.

A visit to Le chêne is far more than just a meal out. The food is innovative, surprising, and, of course, incredibly appetising. But, in true Badenhorst style, it is never really just a plate of food. The menu is a careful balance between science and art, and the team at Le chêne are experts in what they do. Uncompromisingly dedicated to serving authentic dishes made from the finest local ingredients, Darren Badenhorst has once again set the bar incredibly high for fine dining in South Africa.

To make a reservation, or for more information, visit www.lechene.co.za.



by maxine volker & bernie hellberg jr / photography by ryan abbott