

# New season, new head chef for Societi Bistro

 By [Angie White](#)

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Societi Bistro has long been a favourite of mine, so with the appointment of a new head chef, Robert Giljam, I had to confirm that my old favourite still offered all the greatness I have come to love. I was not disappointed.

Giljam graduated from the City & Guilds accredited Capsicum Culinary Studios and established his reputation at the popular Japanese fusion restaurant, Umi, in Camps Bay. He joined the Societi Bistro team in September and has since proven his steel in blowing diners away with his culinary talent.

After a very warm welcome, taking in the beautiful scenery and architecture, and having our superbly prepared and charismatic waiter, Brendon, run through the menu and provide advice on dishes we may prefer, we settled in for an evening of what we were soon to discover would be filled with earnest food and service second to none.

## Starters

We agonised over what to order because honestly, everything sounded so amazing. Eventually, we chose Lindiwe's Cicchetti (changes daily) and the Societi Chicken Waldorf for starters – something different to the norm for us.

Lindiwe's Cicchetti, which is only available on the spring menu, comprised a selection of snack-bread, prosciutto and cheeses – a great-tasting Italian alternative to your conventional starter, we really enjoyed it.

Surprisingly, this was the first time I had ever tried a Waldorf salad (I'm usually put off by the walnuts), but the Chicken Waldorf was one of the favourites of the evening (this one contains pecans, which I love). The combination of apple, pecan nut and lemon mayo offer a fresh and delicious way to start any meal, personally I could eat this on its own as my main meal and be completely happy.



*Robert Giljam*



## Second course

For our second course, we had Chef Giljam's recommendation of the Poppy Evans and Societi's very popular Mushroom Risotto. I loved the Poppy Evans, which includes prosciutto, cream, pea, Grana Padano (a hard, slow-ripened, semi-fat Italian cheese) with spaghetti. We detected a hint of mint in the dish which, for me, just hit the spot in the most delightful way. It's a very different pasta dish compared to any I've had, and a very memorable one.

The Mushroom Risotto is always a winner, complete with cream, spinach and Grana Padano, the truffle oil flavour is prominent but not overpowering in any way – the best kind of dish for mushroom-lovers and pescatarians alike.



## Mains

Our main course consisted of the Prof Dube and the Richard Holmes. The Prof Dube is a ½ chicken, flattened with a brick, complemented by peas à la Française. This dish takes a little time to prepare (allow for 25mins), but it is extremely flavourful and definitely worth the wait. You may be wondering about the ‘flattened with a brick’ part (as I was) – they heat the brick in an oven and use it to crisp the skin of the chicken and not, as our waiter joked, to kill the actual chicken!

The Richard Holmes, was both my guest and my favourite food dish (the hero of the evening is still to be revealed) – the lamb shank which was on the previous version of the menu has been replaced with the equally-tasty lamb shoulder, accompanied by paloise (the same as Béarnaise Sauce, except that mint replaces tarragon), crispy potatoes and greens. With two of our previous dishes also including mint, we asked that the paloise be served on the side so that my guest, who is not so much a mint lover as I am, could enjoy just a little bit of it and I could smother my portion in the sauce. Tender, perfectly-roasted lamb with potatoes and gravy – who could resist, right?



## Desserts

As we started to round up one of the best dining experiences we've possibly ever experienced, we went with the Chocolate Nemesis and Baked Cheesecake for dessert, *and* the Butterscotch Pot De Crème, which we were told we simply *had* to try. All the chocolate lovers in the house, raise your hands in the air and wave them at your Societi Bistro waiter so you can order the Chocolate Nemesis! (Not really, that would be rude, but you know what I mean).

The Baked Cheesecake is *thee* most amazing cheesecake E.V.E.R. It was so good we had to order some more to take home. You know those days when you are craving something, but you can't pinpoint what it is you're craving? This cheesecake is it! (This is the hero I mentioned before, by the way.)

Chef Giljam once again made the recommendation for us to try the Butterscotch Pot De Crème, which is a different take on crème brûlée, with the inclusion of butterscotch (of course) and no burnt sugar on top. It's served in a small shot-like ramakin because of its rich nature. If you're a crème brûlée (or butterscotch) fan, you'll be pleasantly surprised by this decadent little wonder.





### Service with a smile

There's been a lot of hype around company culture lately, specifically how important it is for both the internal and external structure of a company. I've very rarely felt or seen a truly great company culture successfully implemented, but Societi Bistro has it down to a fine art. The staff are consistently on top of their game, both attentive and intuitive, from the waiters to the head chef and including management. I can say in all honesty that this restaurant will ever remain my all-time favourite.



For bookings or more info, visit [societi.co.za](https://societi.co.za) or contact + 27 21 42 42 100.

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