

One Ingredient, two thumbs up

By  Sindy Peters

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How many courses can you prepare using, say, mushrooms, fennel, or perhaps bacon? Can you imagine a delicious dessert with fennel in it? Chef Matt Manning can; showing off his culinary skills at the One Ingredient new venue launch, he conjured up a titillating tasting menu.



Wild mushrooms, truffle mayonnaise and brioche



Smoked tomato, yellow tail ceviche and black olive

From wild mushrooms, truffle mayonnaise and brioche to liquorice marshmallow, lemon curd, and candied fennel, we were treated to nine canapés and tasting dishes from the various menus Manning has prepared and served before. Now, I'm not particularly adventurous when it comes to food - I prefer to stick to what I know - but these delightful little mouthfuls have opened my palate up to trying unfamiliar combinations.

How it works

The One Ingredient dinners are held monthly at the new premises at Black River Park's 7th Floor Innovation Centre - an apt spot for the creative concoctions cooked up in Manning's kitchen.



Beef shin croquette, chilli aioli, chilli salt



Mackerel, quince chutney, beetroot, celery and walnut

The 26-year-old chef usually selects an ingredient based on what's in season. He then demonstrates the preparation of the four-course meal to his guests, showing off just how much can be done with one ingredient, and before they get to tuck in, guests recreate two of the courses, so be prepared to get hands-on.

"I speak to my veg supplier and see what's in season - or even if it's just something interesting like bacon - and just take it from there," explains Manning on how he selects his ingredients. "I design a menu and then I come up with what the guests are going to do, because I do most of it for them, otherwise it will taste sh*t."

Road to One Ingredient

Manning started in the kitchen at 16 in a 20-seater restaurant in Norfolk in the UK, prepping vegetables and doing all the skivvy jobs. Not long after he went to college, he found himself in London working at restaurant Petrus with Gordon Ramsay, and chef patron Marcus Wareing. After two years there, he went to Odette's in Primrose Hill, run by award-winning chef Bryn Williams. He then made his way to Cape Town, worked at La Colombe for two years and thereafter decided to go solo, resulting in the launch of One Ingredient.



Tom Prior and Matt Manning

"Cape Town loves food and everyone knows at least one dish that they think they can cook well, so the idea of coming and experiencing how many things you can cook with one ingredient and then having a go and doing it yourself was an idea that I thought people would be interested in, and it's been going for a year, so it seems to be working," says Manning.

All the ingredients used at the events are locally sourced, and organic - or as much as can be, says Manning.

The One Ingredient supper club recently found its home within Cape Town's Black River Park in Observatory, but Manning does plan on taking the novel concept to Joburg soon.

For more information, go to www.matt-manning.com. One Ingredient is at the 7th Floor Innovation Centre in Black River Park, Observatory.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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