

The power of paper showcased at restaurant awards

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Country's top chefs and restaurateurs were celebrated at the 2022 Eat Out Woolworths Restaurant Awards in Cape Town. After a two-year hiatus, the illustrious event saw some of South Africa's respected culinary professionals applaud the people and places that make our mouths water.

Behind every great chef or every marvellous meal is an unsung hero: paper. Whether it's the list of ingredients or the method to the madness and magic, paper is part of every cook's journey. From Ouma's faded handwritten recipe, coupled with bags of flour and sugar, to the ever-useful paper towel, paper's versatility has made it a staple in kitchens for generations.

"Paper is not easy to promote as it is inextricably woven into everyday life, almost hidden in plain sight as a silent ingredient," says [Paper Manufacturers Association of South Africa](#) (PAMSA) executive director Jane Molony, adding that we only miss paper if it's not there. "At events such as the Eat Out Awards, paper was there, subtly playing a role as printed menus, programmes and place cards, and napkins."

"Many of the guests perhaps did not even realise that the beautiful décor pieces, enhancing the glamour of the event, were largely made from paper, literally."



Giant flowers made from paper bringing colour to the stage at the 2022 Eat Out Woolworths Restaurant Awards in Cape Town.

From practical to pretty

As a partner to the event, PAMSA sponsored a number of paper-based installations and decorative pieces, celebrating the material's sustainability, versatility, and beauty.

Vibrant oversized paper flowers and leaves adorned the room. These were specially curated by Madelein van der Merwe of [MiaBella Paper Flower Couture](#) and Lizel Cloete at [Create Studio](#).

Cloete shares, "We are proud to have created such an installation for this amazing event, using the wonderful resource of paper to bring it to life.

"We both worked tirelessly and through many nights, with Madelein making the flowers and solving every 'oversize' challenge, while my right-hand assistant Shana and I put together the media wall, made all the flower leaves, designed and made the intricate paper cut-outs with their gold-dust details to round off the installation." The team spent two days on site installing the arena flowers and media wall.



A close up of a daisy made by Cape Town-based MiaBella Paper Flower Couture and Create Studio.

Accommodating a last minute request for ‘something’ for the stage lectern, the flower power team spent hours creating 12 magnificent white flowers with nine flower buds and greenery.

[Xanita](#), a Cape Town-based manufacturer of honeycomb board products, reproduced the Eat Out star motif as giant cardboard chandeliers. Using a clever design and capitalising on the material’s great strength-to-weight properties allowed designer Daniel Augustyn to create something that was beautiful, functional and reusable. The use of kraft board combined with a gold foiled star made for an impressive visual when lit up from below.

Xanita also produced PAMSA-branded information stands with simple messaging around paper and cardboard’s natural renewability.

The event goodie bag also contained paper elements: a PAMSA-branded coaster made by Xanita, a carton of water from [Boxy Water](#), magazines and leaflets, an array of items in paper packaging, or with paper labels, tags or wraps.

Planet-friendly packaging

With consumers becoming more environmentally conscious, businesses have had to rethink how packaging and food influences the planet. That has been especially true for the restaurant industry. Tessa Purdon from Eat Out says, “The past few years have been incredibly challenging for restaurants, but times of difficulty are often when innovation thrives.

“Since we have been gone, we have seen some incredible things from establishments across the spectrum. One trend we have noticed is the shift toward paper packaging and the innovative ways that some restaurateurs have chosen to go about it. We are happy to have PAMSA with us to give insight on how to maximise the potential of paper in our industry.”

Molony says: “Paper can be found, in all forms in almost any restaurant – packaging for fresh produce and pantry basics, beverage cartons, recipe books, menus, takeaway food packaging, and even table coverings and activities for kids. What’s more, it is recyclable.”

PAMSA congratulates the [recipients of the Eat Out One Star, Two Stars and Three Stars awards, as well as those restaurants who clinched special awards.](#)

Some fun facts about the paper flower installation:

- 20 oversized flowers each measured approximately 1m in diameter.
- Oversized flowers all stood between 1.8m and 2.2m tall on heavy metal bases.
- 24 green moss-like mats were sewn together by hand to cover the 2.4m x 4m media wall.
- 60 handmade paper flowers were inserted to the moss-covered media wall (variety of small, medium, large; 40–60cm diameter)
- 160 double-sided leaves were drawn onto paper, hand-cut and glued with a wire inner.
- At least 500 flower petals were hand-cut (with scissors), shaped and glued.
- Plenty of hand-cut insects and birds-on-wires were hand-painted with gold-dust details.

For more information on PAMSA, visit:

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