

# Chef Hennie Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen named winner of SAB2's *Proefessioneel*

Capsicum Culinary Studio graduate, Hennie Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen has been awarded top honours in the SAB2 competition, *Proefessioneel*, hosted by celebrity chef, Reuben Riffel.

Van Nieuwenhuizen defeated 19 other competitors, taking the title and picking up R135,000, and securing a position at Eight Restaurant at Spier under chef Lorianne Heyns.



Hendrik Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen

Van Nieuwenhuizen explains why he decided to enter *Proefessioneel*. “I have a long history of loving the spotlight, the mechanics of any theatre and the performance, as well as a deep-seated need to be creative and the will to win. The hardest moment of the show was waiting for the results, especially when you know that you have been cooking for such big names in the industry. That was really nerve-racking.”

The genial chef has always been brave when it comes to following his passion. After graduating with a music degree, Van Nieuwenhuizen was involved in the arts before deciding to embark on a radical career change and enrol at the professional chefs' school. “I have always been passionate about food. Capsicum helped me take my love of cooking from amateur to professional while teaching me important lessons about the industry.

It is not always a career for the faint-hearted. It gets busy, sharp and hot, but it is ever evolving, creative, interactive and exciting! You are constantly working at high energy levels, banging out orders and have to have a mix of knowledge, talent and skill while working like a rabbit by cooking like a tortoise.

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#pastry #sugarcraft finals! Three layered mousse chocolate and hazelnut entremet with chocolate and macaron garnish, chocolate and Chantilly cream eclairs, hazelnut mousse stuffed macarons and lovers' knot buns with herbed butter... #pastrylife #pastrychef #futurechef #chocolate #hazelnut #chocolatemousse #eclair #baking #foodporn #dessert #nailedit #macarons #sweet @capsicumcooking

A post shared by Hennie Van Nieuwenhuizen (@hennie\_jvn) on May 26, 2017 at 12:22pm PDT

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Winning *Proefessioneel* has again changed my life – my confidence has grown and I have been able to show what I am capable of.” said Van Nieuwenhuizen.

## Who has been your greatest mentor and why?

I don't think I can single out any of my mentors as I have learnt a great deal from each of the chefs that I have had the honour of training under. Chef Jaco van Niekerk at Pretoria Capsicum Culinary Studio had a major impact on my cooking, especially on my pastry and plating skills. Chef Jovan Bester gave me a thirst for the eclectic and Chef Janus Smith laid the best foundation! My new mentor, Chef Lorianne Heyns at Spier, is amazing to work for and I am already learning so much.”

## What three famous chefs do you follow and why?

I follow Chef Tom Aikens, I love his organic approach to food and the seasonal, locally farmed produce on his menus. Then, Chef Antonio Bachour for his sensational and breathtakingly beautiful approach to pastry, and of course, Chef Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen, because local is *lekker*!

## Apart from knives what is your best piece of kitchen equipment?

A stand mixer. With a stand mixer, you can make the heartiest of crunchy breads right down to the finest of pastries. Also, my hands... So I suppose it's a tie. My hands or a stand mixer!

## What three ingredients would you always find in your pantry?

Only three? Eggs, cream and butter – you cannot go wrong then.

## **What would you not eat?**

I am a chef. I must taste everything! How else would I be able to make an informed decision about what I am serving my guests?

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