

Port Alfred's The Thistle receives Diners Club platinum award

The Thistle at the Royal St. Andrews Hotel in Port Alfred, opened less than a year ago, joins a handful of Eastern Cape restaurants featured in the annual Diners Club Winelist Awards. The Thistle received a platinum award for 2016.



From the left: Royal St. Andrew's general manager Wessel Benson, executive head chef Debby van Wyk and senior assistant food and beverage manager Robin Hyde.

According to Diners Club Winelist Award convenor Jean-Pierre Rossouw the criteria for judging were content, balance, suitability, and presentation. "Our brief to Et-Marie Fourie, who made the initial selection of wines for the Thistle was to reflect the character of the Thistle with estates and vintages which would make the dining experience at the Thistle unique," says Royal St. Andrews general manager Wessel Benson.

Wines are carefully stored in the Thistle Restaurant's own temperature and humidity-controlled wine cellar. It is one of the only restaurants on the Sunshine Coast to have its own cellar.

The Thistle's wine list includes a selection from DeMorgenZon, an estate which plays "harmonious and melodious" music through speakers placed in its vineyards and cellars. Another is Vergelegen, which in 2005 was South Africa's first Biodiversity in Wine Initiative (BWI) Champion. "Both reflect the fine dining experience at the Thistle, where Chef Debby adds a special twist to all the dishes," says Benson.

Meals start with an amuse-bouche designed to wake up and excite the taste buds. The menu itself captures the flavours of the Sunshine Coast, with Chef Debby van Wyk sourcing the freshest and finest ingredients locally wherever possible. Fish is bought off the boat in Port Alfred, lamb and springbok sourced from the Karoo, venison from the surrounding farms and greens and vegetables from organic growers.

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