

A NEW CHAPTER

**DIRK GIESELMANN,
EXECUTIVE CHEF AT THE
NEW FOUR SEASONS
HOTEL, THE WESTCLIFF,
IS SET TO BREAK
CULINARY BOUNDARIES
AT HIS TWO RESTAURANTS
IN JOHANNESBURG**

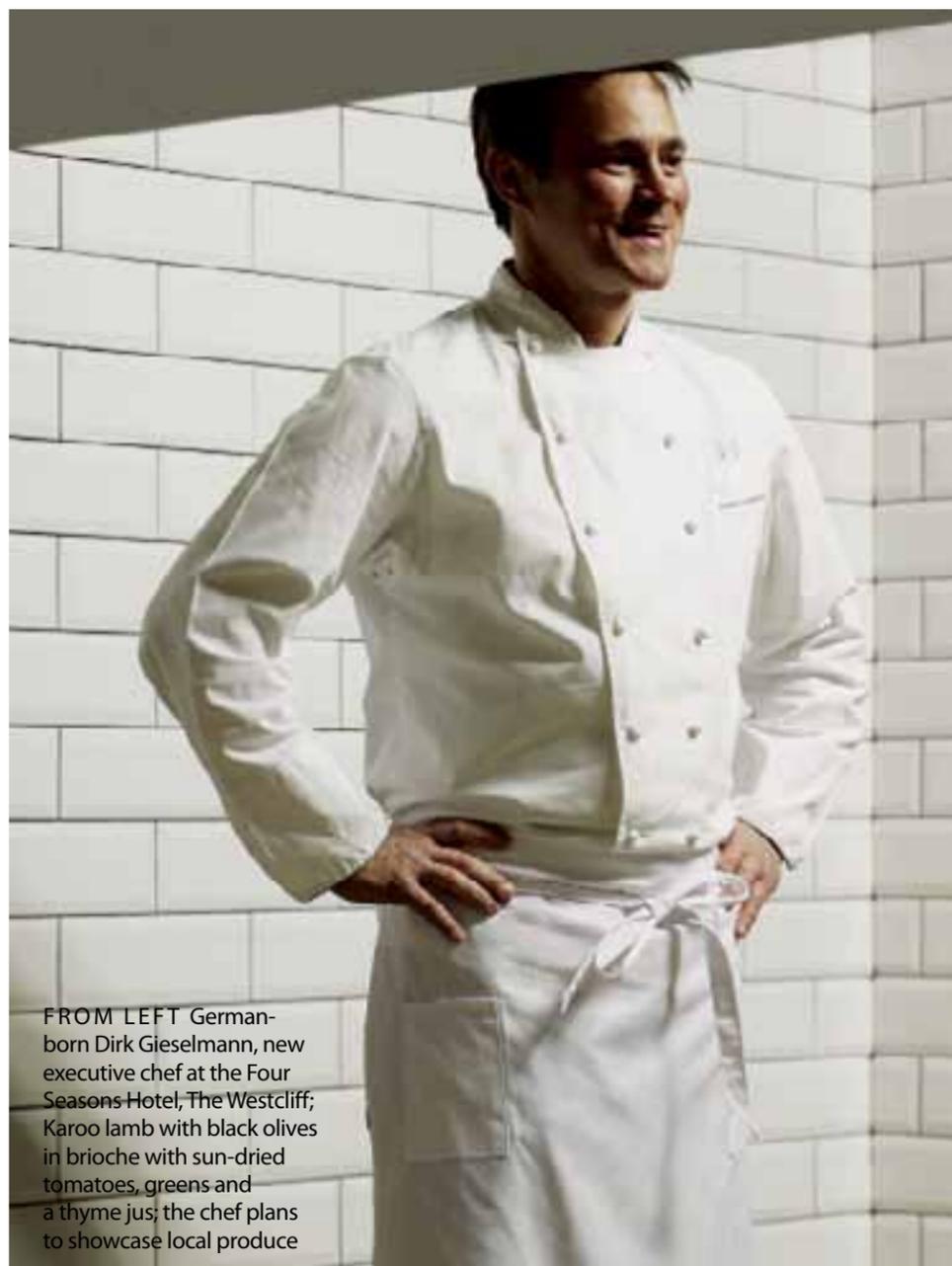
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This is the story of a German engineering student who once cooked a disastrous meal of frozen lobster for his girlfriend – and swiftly realised he needed to hone his kitchen skills. It's the story of a man who gave up his studies to work as an apprentice at a Michelin-starred restaurant in Aachen; a man whose passion for food took him from the Gala Restaurant in Germany to Le Negresco in Nice, Le Cirque in New

York and on to Auberge de L'ill in Alsace. (The restaurant held three Michelin stars for the seven years that he worked as its chef de cuisine.) It's about a chef who now finds himself at the top of a hill overlooking the city of Johannesburg from his vantage point at the new and luxurious Four Seasons Hotel, The Westcliff.

'The move to Johannesburg opens an exciting new chapter for me,' says Dirk, whose two new restaurants, View and Flames, are bound to shake up the Joburg

culinary scene. 'Flames is a modern take on the South African braai,' he says. The firepit, which forms the stage, is right on trend with the open-fire cooking methods practised at the likes of Asador Etxebarri in Spain, to name but one. 'It's a concept I've always wanted to explore,' he adds. 'Cooking on an open fire demands good knowledge of heat and the produce you have in front of you. It's always a challenge for the chef – you have to be very attentive to what you are doing.' ▶



FROM LEFT German-born Dirk Gieselmann, new executive chef at the Four Seasons Hotel, The Westcliff; Karoo lamb with black olives in brioche with sun-dried tomatoes, greens and a thyme jus; the chef plans to showcase local produce

'I'M COMMITTED TO SOURCING THE VERY BEST SEASONAL INGREDIENTS FROM THE AREA'

Dirk Gieselmann

Not everything is cooked on the braai, even though the theme is the fire. There are other methods, such as en papillotes or smoking. There is also a wood-fire pizza oven for slow-cooked stews that go in at the end of the day and simmer gently for hours.

'It's an obvious choice,' says Dirk. 'South Africa is a big meat-eating nation – and rightly so. There is a wide variety of cattle breeds of exceptional quality, lamb from the Karoo and fantastic venison.'

Situated on a large terrace overlooking the city and Johannesburg Zoo below, Flames is open all day, offering a fixed menu, changing chalkboard specials and a cocktail list to while away the hours as a DJ occasionally spins some tracks.

View is Dirk's signature restaurant. This is where you'll find pure, seasonal cuisine with decadent delicacies like marron and foie gras. 'It's an expression of myself,' says Dirk. 'My take on food.' International design firm Blacksheep, which counts

Jamie Oliver among its celebrity clients, has maximized the glorious Highveld panoramas with interiors that open onto a sunset terrace.

Can diners expect to find some of the signature dishes from Auberge de L'III? The answer is no. 'To me, a dish is the expression of a moment or a place, making the best of local produce,' explains Dirk. 'My cooking may have European roots, but I am committed to sourcing the very best seasonal ingredients from here to

craft my dishes.' View showcases both an à la carte and a tasting menu (with or without wine pairings). Either way, diners are in for a treat.

While travel and being mentored by some of the world's great chefs has helped shape Dirk's career, he believes that varying cultures and culinary traditions should be 'soaked up' by every chef who wishes to advance. 'Reading is as important as travel. Even if you can't taste or smell the food, it's inspiring to learn about different

techniques. When I first started out, I had all the French classics from Auguste Escoffier to Alain Chapel, Frédy Girardet and Joël Robuchon. The books by Ferran Adrià, which were revolutionary, were inspirational. Travel, stories, food – they are all interconnected.' Dirk's own story may have started in Germany and then moved to Johannesburg for a new chapter, but it's a story that has only just begun.

View %011 481 6180; 8viewrestaurant.co.za
8Flames%0114816190; flamesrestaurant.co.za



SEAFOOD CEVICHE WITH GARDEN GREENS AND HERBS

Serves 4

8 baby potatoes, skins on
1 small bay leaf
1t fresh basil pesto
2 lemons
150ml extra-virgin olive oil, fruity and of the best quality
4 langoustines
4 small calamari with tentacles
1 shallot, diced
500g fresh mussels, rinsed and cleaned
1 sprig thyme
100ml dry white wine
1 small linefish (such as Hottentot sea bream), filleted
250g fresh salmon fillet
1 mini fennel bulb
2 red radishes, greens on
1 small cucumber
4 patty pans
2 baby carrots, greens on
2 green asparagus
8 cherry tomatoes, halved
100g garden peas, shelled and blanched
1 spring onion, cut into bâtonnets (strips)
mixed herbs such as basil, fennel, coriander, tarragon, chervil, chives and mint
1 mild chilli, deseeded, sliced
Maldon salt

freshly ground black pepper
edible flowers (optional)

1. Cook the baby potatoes in salted water with the bay leaf until soft. Strain and peel while still hot. Slice into 5mm slices and marinate in the pesto. Set aside at room temperature.
2. Peel one of the lemons with a vegetable peeler and julienne the skin. Peel any remaining skin and pith with a knife and remove the segments of the lemon. To keep all the juices, work over a small bowl. Cut the segments into cubes and reserve.
3. Squeeze the juice from the second lemon and add to the lemon juice in the bowl.
4. Blanch the julienne lemon three times. Put these strips into a small casserole dish with 200ml water and bring to a boil. Strain, refresh and repeat the process twice more. Set aside.
5. Bring a litre of lightly salted water to a boil and add 1T of lemon juice.
6. Stir the rest of the lemon juice into the olive oil, keeping 1T of oil for the mussels, and pour 1/3 of it onto a deep plate, reserving the remainder.
7. Put the langoustines into the boiling water, remove from the heat and let them poach for 90 seconds. Remove them from the water, remove the shells and put them into the oil and lemon marinade.
8. Place the casserole dish back onto the heat. Cut the

calamari into bite-sized pieces and poach with the tentacles for 30 seconds. Strain and add to the langoustines.
9. Sweat the shallot with the remaining oil in a saucepan for 3 minutes. Add the mussels and the thyme and increase the temperature. Add the white wine, bring to a boil and cover with a lid for 2 minutes. When the mussels are open, strain them, but reserve the juices. Shell the mussels and add them to the marinade.
10. Pour 1/3 of the oil and lemon mixture onto a second plate. Slice the linefish and the salmon fillets thinly with a sharp knife, similar to carpaccio. Put the slices into the marinade, salt and pepper the fish, and place the lemon cubes on top. Lightly move the fish around for 5 minutes to marinate and cure it.
11. With a mandoline, thinly slice the fennel, radishes, cucumber, patty pans, carrots and asparagus.
12. Add 1T of the mussel juices to the remaining oil and lemon marinade.
13. Place all the ingredients neatly on the serving plates, starting with the fish and the seafood. Next add the potatoes, the tomatoes, peas and spring onion.
14. Drizzle the marinade on top and add the herbs, julienne lemon and chilli. Finish with some salt and pepper, the remaining lemon cubes and the edible flowers, if using.



Ceviche with garden greens and herbs OPPOSITE PAGE
FROM TOP Duo of steamed sea bass and crayfish with garden peas; Dirk enjoying the views from the hotel terrace