

Warming up winter at Terroir

By  Eugene Yiga

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If you're looking for hearty local cuisine to keep you warm this winter, look no further than Terroir.

Located on the family-owned Kleine Zalze wine estate, Terroir opened in October 2004. Since then, the restaurant has made it into the 'Top 10' at the annual Eat Out Awards eight times and celebrated its 10th anniversary with the launch of [Terroir - the cookbook](#).

"Less is definitely more," explains Chef Michael Broughton of his deceptively simple cooking style. "The challenge of being creative is in knowing when to exercise restraint. What I leave off the plate is just as important as what I put on it."



Now that the seasons are changing, it's not surprising that Broughton has created something special for winter. His goal was to portray warmth, comfort, and generosity on the plate, while still offering value for money.

"The Winter Plate (two options for the main course, paired with wine for R195) is a hearty meal in itself, but it may just as easily form part of a two- or three-course meal by choosing extra courses from the a la carte menu," he says. "It depends on the occasion or how hungry you are."



Since my friend and I arrived for lunch feeling more than a little peckish, we were happy to go all out (for journalism) and have a full three-course meal. And so, while we sipped on some bubbly and enjoyed the fresh bread, our waiter set up the chalkboard menu on an easel, like a work of art.

Rather than bombard you with choice, the winter menu keeps things tight. Broughton explains that this is so they can change it more often, depending on the available produce, the weather, and what they feel like cooking on any given day (hence the name 'Terroir').



For my starter, I went with the prawn risotto, which the waiter said would be illegal not to try, while my friend enjoyed the colour and contrast of the fried buffalo mozzarella, grapefruit, brown butter, and baby beets.

For my main course, I had the pan-seared kingklip with mussel ragout (and truffle macaroni on the side), while my friend went with the dry-aged sirloin. Both included two well-paired glasses of wine, available for sale in the Tasting Room, which is covered in trophies and awards.



Of course, we couldn't leave without dessert. As I'd gone with the lighter of the two main options, I was happy to indulge in a chocolate palette with orange sorbet, pistachio, and a caramel sauce that created a yummy volcano on my plate. But my friend seemed just as happy with his cheese plate and fresh fruit.

We ended our meal with a walk through the gardens, chasing patches of sunlight on that autumnal day. And as we drove out of the estate, with its golf course and quiet homes, the sun came out in full. How nice that our meal at Terroir left us feeling warm inside and out!

Eugene Yiga was a guest of Terroir. The Winter Plates include a generous glass of award-winning Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection wine (a choice of red or white) and costs R195 per person. It is available, together with the a la carte chalkboard menu, for lunch and dinner, from 1 May to 30 September, Monday to Sunday (including Sunday lunch) but not available to tables or groups of nine people or more. Call +27 (0)21 880 8167 or email restaurant@kleinezalze.co.za, bearing in mind that the restaurant will be closed from 29 June to 14 July for its annual winter break.

Take advantage of the well-priced Terroir Package and stay the night at the comfortable [Kleine Zalze Lodge](#). With 47 rooms and suites, the lodge enjoys breathtaking views of the Stellenbosch Mountains and is surrounded by 120 hectares of vineyards. This package starts from R650 per person sharing per night and includes one night B&B accommodation in a Standard Room, a Winter Plate at Terroir (including a glass of Kleine Zalze wine), a complimentary wine tasting at the Kleine Zalze Cellar Door, and a complimentary bottle of wine on arrival. It is available from 1 May to 30 September. Call +27 (0)21 880 0740 or email accommodation@kleinezalze.co.za.

ABOUT EUGENE YIGA

Eugene graduated from the University of Cape Town with distinctions in financial accounting and classical piano. He then spent over two-and-a-half years working in branding and communications at two of South Africa's top market research companies. Eugene also spent over three-and-a-half years at an eLearning start-up, all while building his business as an award-winning writer. Visit www.eugeneyiga.com, follow @eugeneyiga on Twitter, or email hello@eugeneyiga.com to say, um, hello.

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