

A TASTE of HOME



ACROSS SUSSEX AND LONDON, TWO VERY DIFFERENT KITCHENS TELL A SHARED STORY. ONE OF AMBITION, MIGRATION, AND MEMORY – AND OF CHEFS WHO HAVE CARRIED THE ESSENCE OF SOUTH AFRICA INTO SPACES THAT NOW FEEL DISTINCTLY THEIR OWN
COMPILED BY JARED RUTTENBERG



South Africa's culinary credentials need no home-front affirmation, but when our talent is lauded abroad, it's the icing on the cake. While this happens as returning tourists spread the word, the real magic lies in global kitchens led by South African chefs. I visited two in England for a bona fide taste of home: Restaurant Interlude's Michelin-starred Jean Delpont in West Sussex, and Kudu's Patrick Williams in London.

KUDU MARYLEBONE, LONDON

When out in London, it doesn't take long for someone to respond to a South African accent with: "Have you been to Kudu yet?" Patrick Williams and Amy Corbin opened the Peckham-based eatery in 2018, later expanding to include two other Kudu experiences. The South African-themed restaurant resonated not only with homesick Saffas but with a broader, incredibly devoted audience.

Patrick is vivacious, words spilling out of him with infectious enthusiasm as he shares his story with me. After his chef brother encouraged him to enter the culinary world, he quickly worked through some of the country's most celebrated restaurants. At a pivotal point, his mentor, brother, and best friend all simultaneously encouraged him to work abroad. Fortunately, England led him to meeting his now wife, Amy, and then the birth of Kudu.



IT'S ALL IN THE DETAIL:
From the moody lighting to the presentation of each meal, every moment at Kudu creates a proudly South African feeling



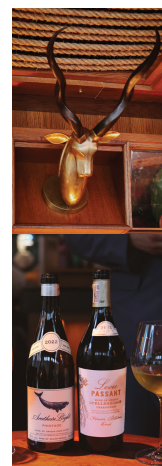
"We opened Kudu probably about a month before my 30th birthday. Amy was like, 'Well, there's your 30th birthday gift!' Eighteen months after opening Kudu, we launched Smokey Kudu, our cocktail bar just a stone's throw away. Then we opened Curious Kudu, our private room. And finally, Kudu Grill, focused solely on fire-cooked dishes."

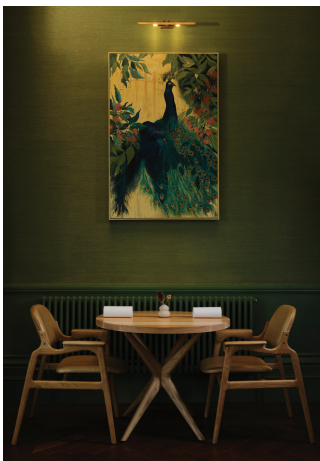
A string of hearty reviews and a Bib Gourmand in the first eight months helped build momentum. Fast forward to late 2025 when all the Kudos were brought together into one stylish Marylebone venue, where I discovered that flame-cooked food, homegrown wines, and warm service create dining experiences that evoke the spirit of South Africa.

The taste journey begins with melted Cape Malay butter served with fluffy mossbolletjies and harissa-spiced chopped beef. Mains include a braised duo of pork loin with monkey gland sauce and a lamb Barnsley chop with tomato verger. For dessert, the titles of Durban Pineapple, Kudu 'Kit Kat', and Chocolate Malva Pudding leave no doubt about the Kudu's proud heritage. Patrick shared: "I think that's been our biggest goal – to ensure what we offer remains relevant to what we do back home, but also accessible for tourists or locals to see what we're about."

I asked him about the stream of homesick South Africans who find their way through the doors. "That, for me, is probably the best exchange I have with a guest. It's been somebody who's a local or even guys that are from Durban, but don't know I'm from Durban. They all think I'm from Cape Town because obviously every chef's from Cape Town, right? And I just absolutely love that engagement. I really get warmth out of that."

kuducollective.com





RESTAURANT INTERLUDE LEONARDSLEE GARDENS, WEST SUSSEX

After winter dormancy, the pinotage vines were waking from their sleep, with tiny buds eagerly soaking up the spring sunlight. Behind me, Anton Smit's towering *Faith* sculpture stood with hands reaching out to the heavens, also rejoicing in the light. While this scene could be anywhere in the Cape Winelands, I was standing in the heart of Sussex. The pinotage plantings are one of the Mzansi delights at Leonardslee Gardens.

South African-based owner Penny Streeter needs little introduction – in South Africa, her Hermanus Estate Benguela Cove has featured several times in the World's Best Vineyards rankings. Penny bought the neglected English property in 2017, with plans to fully restore it, reopening the 240-acre gardens to the public. This included the opening of Restaurant Interlude, led by South African Chef Jean Delport.



Speaking with Jean ahead of my dinner at Interlude, his determination was evident. Fiercely driven, he knew from the age of 16 what his goal was: to earn a Michelin star. Having worked with Penny back home, he was given the opportunity to establish a kitchen at Leonardslee. "It was very overwhelming at first. The place had been left to wrack and ruin for about 10 years; the house was falling apart, and the gardens were completely overgrown."

With his passionate determination and Penny's gift for recognising potential, Interlude had not even been open a year when the email arrived – his eyes moistened as he recalled: "It came during an exceptionally busy period. Anya and I were busy packing as we were moving. I briefly opened my computer, and the email popped up from Michelin saying that we'd been invited to the awards. I went completely cold. I started crying. Fast forward to the event, we were called on stage and won the star. You don't want to believe it until it happens, and then it's a great relief. Of course, the whole team was really, really excited about it!"



"The email popped up from Michelin saying that we'd been invited to the awards... Fast forward to the event, we were called on stage and won the star"



I leave Jean for evening preparations, taking the opportunity to explore the vast gardens, lakes, and sculptures dotted across the estate. Back at Leonardslee House, Interlude's wine service maestro leads a tasting of the three British bubbles made on the estate: a crisp brut reserve, an intriguing rosé with 10 percent homegrown pinotage, and then an impressive 48-months-matured blanc de blancs. Further impressed, it's time for a short repose; my room for the night is Rhododendron, a spacious period suite on the top floor of the 19th-century Italianate-style house.

The clock strikes six, and guests gather in the bar for an aperitif, where the first snack-style courses arrive. Next, we're led to the foyer, where a cleverly opened cabinet reveals some clues about the evening's menu. Finally, we're invited into the dining room, effortlessly elegant with high ceilings and green-shaded walls. Each course is accompanied by small cards – almost menu replacements – that sit in little silver pheasant statues on the table. A clever way to showcase many of the estate's foraged finds, which guests can take home as souvenirs.

Some four hours and possibly 19 courses later, it's time to retire. Thanking Jean, I ask what's next on the horizon. He's quick to answer: "The immediate goal is two stars – that's what we've been pushing for, and I personally think we're quite close." My stomach and heart agree, looking forward to returning for more of the Leonardslee magic.

leonardsleegardens.co.uk,
restaurant-interlude.co.uk ■



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