

B A B E L M E N U

EARLY WINTER

The earth starts to turn inward and produces fattened roots and plump fruits of arresting flavours and surprising sweetness. The rains bring waterblommetjies and swell citrus fruits to ripe juiciness.

STARTERS	MAINS	DESSERT
<p>GREEN 85 Yuzu-infused miso broth with a deep-fried ricotta cluster and toasted chestnut pesto</p> <p><i>Yuzu: This rare citrus came as a happy surprise when incorrectly labelled trees in the garden rewarded us with an abundance of flavourful fruits. A yuzu looks like a small grapefruit, tastes like a floral lime, and has three times the vitamin C of a normal lemon. We grow more than 30 citrus varieties. This favourite in Japanese cooking can be used in sweet and savoury dishes. We used both the juice and fragrant zest to balance the acidity in the broth.</i></p> <p><i>Chestnut: This year, the young chestnut tree shading the chicken pen gave its first harvest of shiny, brown nuts, protected inside spiky burrs, which we carefully collected before the squirrels could enjoy this delicacy. We scored the fruit before roasting it over an open fire to give it a rounded, nutty taste as chestnuts taste slightly astringent when eaten raw.</i></p> <p><i>Ricotta: We are thrilled to serve you the first of our freshly made ricotta cheese. Babylonstoren's cheesemaker learnt the traditional art of making ricotta from local and Italian cheesemakers. We do hope you enjoy this small delicacy as much as the ancient Roman aristocracy did ...</i></p> <p>RED 95 Carpaccio of lightly smoked Franschoek trout seared with warm Babylonstoren Frantoio extra virgin olive oil with julienned candy-stripe beetroot, kohlrabi, radish, baby ginger, toasted sesame seeds and red Russian kale</p> <p><i>Frantoio: Babylonstoren's extra virgin Frantoio olive oil is extracted from a single Italian cultivar. Savour the layers of creaminess interspersed with notes of green grass, almonds, wildflowers and green apple.</i></p> <p><i>Kohlrabi: Kohlrabi is commonly referred to as "cabbage turnip". With its swollen, fleshy stem just above ground, it is nothing unusual in our garden, where it grows easily as one of the main winter vegetables.</i></p> <p><i>Red Russian kale: Red Russian kale is a pretty, non-heading cabbage that gives a regular crop of leaves, which become even more colourful and sweeter as the weather grows colder.</i></p> <p>YELLOW 110 Hot pot of lightly smoked quail, waterblommetjie and bobotie cream with fried curry & lemon leaves, served with a medjool date and toasted coconut sambal, and lightly steamed parsnips</p> <p><i>Bobotie: Bobotie first appeared in a Dutch cookbook in 1609 and was brought to South Africa via Dutch settlers, where it became popular with the Cape Malay community. Here, we have incorporated ginger, marjoram, lemon rind and our own blend of curry powder into a rich cream that pays homage to the cultural history of bobotie. A sambal is traditionally served with bobotie.</i></p> <p><i>Curry & lemon leaves: The curry leaf plant and the lemon tree are both part of the family, Rutaceae. Their leaves are rich with aromatic oils and flavours.</i></p> <p><i>Waterblommetjie: A much-loved local water plant, waterblommetjie thrives with the winter rains and grows wild in the wetlands and ponds on the farm.</i></p>	<p>FISH 210 Spicy, slow-roasted tomato soup with chunky line fish, prawns and West Coast mussels, topped with mint pesto and fried haloumi</p> <p><i>Haloumi: Haloumi originated in Cyprus and is eaten throughout the Middle East. Ours is fresh from our Cheese Room. To make haloumi, the curd is heated, shaped and then placed in brine.</i></p> <p><i>Mint: We grow seven varieties of mint, including peppermint, spearmint, indigenous mint, apple, chocolate, eau de cologne and Moroccan mint. The unexpected use of mint with tomato provides a delicious twist.</i></p> <p>BEEF 260 Beef fillet on the bone with a smoked bone marrow Bordelaise sauce and fermented beetroot</p> <p><i>Fermentation: Fermented foods provide a new flavour sensation and are equally great for gut health. We are currently experimenting with innovative flavour combinations. Please join us for a workshop on fermentation – our website has all the booking details.</i></p> <p>LAMB 255 Double lamb cutlets with fresh horseradish, roasted quince, pink peppercorns and chervil, sprinkled with myrtle and lemon salt</p> <p><i>Horseradish: The roots of the horseradish plant have a strong, distinctive taste. Because the roots spread widely as they grow, we contain this herb by keeping it in a neatly edged bed.</i></p> <p><i>Pink peppercorns: Pink peppercorns are the berries of the Schinus molle or Peruvian peppertree. We pick these dainty fruits from hardy trees that have naturalised on the farm. Peruvian pepper trees are tough survivors that have followed people wherever they have settled in South Africa.</i></p> <p><i>Myrtle: Striking purple myrtle berries can be found on the shrubby hedges surrounding the chamomile lawn. They have a slightly bittersweet taste when eaten fresh. We prefer to dry and then grind them for use as a seasoning salt.</i></p> <p>PORK 195 Rolled roast pork belly with fermented black garlic, guava and sage, and pickled Granny Smith apple</p> <p><i>Guava: We estimate the age of the guava trees lining the avenue as you enter the garden to be around 80 years old. They were transplanted from a farm nearby and are pruned low to make harvesting easier.</i></p> <p>VEGETARIAN 165 Beetroot carnaroli risotto with star anise and whipped goat's cheese with capers</p> <p><i>Carnaroli: We built our rice paddy in January 2014 with the help of an Italian agronomist and harvested our first rice by hand 150 days later. We have since acquired a rice mill from Italy and proudly serve our polished rice to you.</i></p>	<p>SWEET & SOUR 95 White chocolate terrine with kale served with a lime and granadilla salt</p> <p><i>Kale: Cavolo nero – which is also known as black kale, black cabbage, Tuscan kale or Italian boerenkool – is a classic heirloom vegetable. We love it so much we grow it throughout the year, but winters are best.</i></p> <p>SAVOURY & SWEET 90 Mushroom panna cotta and prosciutto crisp with honey caramelised apple, caraway and lemon balm</p> <p><i>Babylonstoren honey: We have a series of hives in the garden and on the farm and collect honey that is made from the nectar of a variety of herbs, fruit blossoms and eucalyptus.</i></p> <p><i>Lemon balm: Melissa officinalis is a calming, soothing herb that grows in our Healing Garden.</i></p> <p>SOUR 65 Sugar-free rooibos-poached guava with double cream yoghurt and yuzu sorbet</p> <p><i>Yoghurt: Our double cream, Jersey milk yoghurt is made daily in our dairy. It's an indulgent treat for breakfast, dessert and everything in between ...</i></p> <p><i>Babylonstoren rooibos tea: Rooibos is one of the best indigenous healing plants. We are celebrating our second rooibos harvest – it is grown on the farm, in the fertile, deep clay soil of the Simonsberg – and are thrilled with its unique flavour.</i></p> <p>SWEET & BITTER 85 Chocolate and espresso fondant with medlar jelly</p> <p><i>Medlar: Medlar fruit is hard and acidic. It becomes soft and edible when it is "bled" by frost or ripens naturally in storage, attaining the consistency of applesauce. To make the jelly, we combine apples with the medlar. The most famous literary reference to medlar fruit, or Mespilus germanica, appears in William Shakespeare's play, Romeo and Juliet.</i></p> <p>DEEP WINTER</p> <p>For our upcoming, deep winter menu we look forward to introducing blood oranges to our dishes. This cold season on the farm has seen an incredible yield of the crimson-fleshed fruit. We planted several varieties about four years ago, but it was the blush-skinned, red-hearted Moro, which originally hails from Sicily, that flourished best in our soil.</p>

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