

Authentic French restaurant, **Mon Plaisir** has found a cultural home on a picturesque hillside winery in Franschhoek

David Sadeh and Celine Mandaglio



THE PLACE Mon Plaisir restaurant, Chamonix Farm, Franschhoek

ABOUT Israeli chef David Sadeh and his French wife Celine Mandaglio made their South African debut with Mon Plaisir in rural Stellenbosch in 2007. After a year of testing the waters, David (behind the imported range stoves) and Celine (explaining the chalkboard specials of the day) have found a suitably French corner in a Cape Dutch manor house on a wine farm in Franschhoek. They met when David ran a top-end restaurant in Burkina Faso in West Africa, where diplomats and foreigners formed the main clientele. The couple makes an annual pilgrimage to France to try Michelin-starred restaurants. The self-taught chef with mentor friends in the culinary world has been cooking with passionate gusto for 35 years.

ON THE MENU David's bistro fare is based on the classics. To start, try the hot gratinated fresh mussels served on a bed of spinach with white wine sauce; or the delightful textural combinations of cold duck terrine, dotted with pistachios and almonds and served with salad leaves and David's mini baguette. Vegetarians are served creative Puy lentil dishes. Mains include duck in various guises, from Toulouse-style duck leg confit and bean cassoulet to pan-fried magret (duck breast) in a stock-infused black pepper reduction. Rotisserie whole duck is an option if four people order in advance. Meaty alternatives include veal sweetbreads or tournedos of veal (deboned rib) with Normandy sauce – you can't escape rich creamy sauces here. For sweet endings, apple tart fine with caramel sauce and ice cream is a masterpiece on thin home-made puff pastry. There are also brûlées, or

occasionally babas au rhum, yeasty cakes with boozy syrup.

X FACTORS French accents and genuine hospitality make you feel as if you've been transported to France. Stay long enough and David might persuade you to try his personally manufactured cigars. Home-made macarons are sometimes served with your coffee, and are available to take away.

Mon Plaisir, Chamonix Farm, Uitkyk Street, Franschhoek, 021-876-2393, www.monplaisir.co.za. Open Wednesday to Sunday for lunch from 12pm – 3pm and Wednesday to Saturday for dinner from 7pm – 9pm. Starters are from R50, main courses from R95 and desserts from R45. There is a small Franschhoek and Stellenbosch-focused wine list plus French wines from the owners' cellar.