

MEET THE CHEF

KEEGAN MAISTRY

Executive Chef at the Courtyard Hotel

As the Executive Chef for The Protea Restaurant and The Highline Tapas Lounge at the Courtyard Hotel in Waterfall City, Keegan strives for excellence and has a high respect for food and the kitchen.

Q. Name & Surname

A: Keegan Maistry

Q. Restaurant name & cuisine served

A: The Protea Restaurant – contemporary casual dining. The Highline – tapas lounge.

Q. When did you decide to become a chef and why?

A: The kitchen found me in the early 2000s while watching my mother prepare delicious meals and trying to assist her.

Q. Did you study? If so, where?

A: I studied at the ICESA Hotel School in Durban and hold a National diploma NQF5.



Q. Do you have any accolades?

A: I cooked for the Prince and Princess of Monaco, attained second place in the National Burger Challenge and have catered for many celebrities in South Africa and abroad.

Q. What is your cooking style?

A: French contemporary and fusion-inspired dishes.

Q. What is your inspiration for new recipes/dishes?

A: Seasonal produce, new trends and kitchen team brainstorming ideas.

Q. What is your favourite dish to prepare on your current menu? Why?

A: Smoked tandoori chicken thighs with a spicy butter chicken sauce and lentil salad. I love the different depths of flavour and key elements of smoky, spicy, sweet and fresh. A chef's dream is to achieve all those taste profiles on one plate.

Q. What is your favourite home-cooked meal?

A: A spicy lamb chop chutney.

Q. In your opinion, what is the most underrated ingredient? Why?

A: The humble tomato, because of its versatility. It can be sweet or savoury, used as a thickening agent, a salad, bruschetta or garnish. It can be confit, fried, dried or hydrated. The applications are endless!

Q. If you could cook with only three ingredients, what would they be?

A: Lard, a protein and seasoning.

Q. What is one kitchen tool or appliance you cannot function without?

A: It's every chef's answer: my beloved chef's knife.



The Smoked tandoori chicken thighs with a spicy butter chicken sauce and lentil salad is Chef Keegan's favourite dish to prepare on The Protea Restaurant's menu.



Q. What are your favourite kitchen appliances, if money was no option?

A: A Thermomix.

Q. Who is your chef idol? Why?

A: Jacques Pépin. He transforms simple ingredients into French classics. Very inspiring!

Q. If you could prepare a meal for one celebrity, who would it be and what would you serve?

A: Gordon Ramsay. I'd cook my version of pasta alla vodka for him.

Q. What do you think of cooking shows? Do you have a favourite?

A: They are entertaining, especially the competitive ones. *Iron Chef* is good – it shows you exactly how the environment is in a professional kitchen.

Q. What is your favourite South African dish/product to eat?

A: Lamb bunny chow.

Q. What will we always find in your fridge?

A: Beer and lamb.

Q. If you could choose your last meal before you die, what would it be?

A: My mom's braised sheep head curry and mealie rice.

Q. What fast food is your secret indulgence?

A: Burgers, every time.

Q. Pro or anti air fryers?

A: Pro...it's convenient after a long day.

Q. If you weren't a chef, what would you be?

A: An electrical engineer.

Q. Any interesting career anecdote you would like to share?

A: I was working with a huge team at the famous Oyster Box Hotel in Umhlanga, blending up a 10-litre sauce in a giant swing blender, and I realised that I had to fetch the cream from the fridge. So I left the blender and went to the fridge. Long story short, the blender tipped, swinging left to right, splashing my entire team with saucy rainfall! I was the only one left 'unscathed'...



Chef Keegan would like to make Gordon Ramsay his version of pasta alla vodka.

To sample Chef Keegan's culinary delights and book a table at either of the Courtyard Hotel eateries, contact them on:
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