



Gourmet

Premium Drinking

WHISKY WONDERLAND

Good food is difficult to come by. Breathtaking cuisine with flavours that are intricately teased out, layer by layer, simply through the art of sipping fine whisky is even more unique. While enjoying some down time on the island of Mauritius, I was treated to an Indian culinary experience, paired with a range of South African whiskies that was quite simply out of this world. – Kevin Taylor



Flavour

It was during my stay at LUX* Resorts' Belle Mare, on the east coast of Mauritius, that I experience something quite spectacular. My invitation read: 'Indian cuisine paired with South African whiskies'.

My initial reaction was a wine-purist scoff, asking: "how could the intense and bold flavours of Asian spices possibly work well enough with whisky to make a meal palatable, let alone enjoyable?" My evening ended with me eating a hearty portion of humble pie...

Amari by Vineet is one of LUX* Belle Mare's signature restaurants, run by Michelin-Star winning Chef Vineet Bhatia. Contemporary takes on Asian flavours and favourites had my stomach growling from the moment I walked in.

On the beverage side, Three Ships and Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky were the stars of the evening, both crafted in the Western Cape of South Africa.

The first and second dishes comprised of fiery fish 'Hirvi' with sundried tomato Upma, which is a southern Indian porridge of sorts traditionally served as breakfast and a 'Dhaba' Punjabi chicken masala with potato tikki. Both dishes were paired with Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky with all of its vanilla, banana and toffee notes. The intense spice and flavour of the Upma and flavoured chicken paired perfectly with the subtle ease of the Bain's, and I quickly realised the perfection of this tasting. The third course was a mix of smoked 'Bevda' prawns, flambéed chili-garlic prawns and beetroot Galauti (a type of spice mix) with a smoked white tomato sauce, all paired with Three Ships Bourbon Cask Finish. The whisky, matured in American oak and finished in casks previously used for Bourbon, is slightly sweet and worked perfectly with the white tomato sauce that acted as a foil to the character of the prawns. In two words, it was...simply exquisite!

The penultimate course moved to red meat, with a Ginger Tandoori lamb chop marinated for over a day with a Roganjosh sauce. This was served with the delectable, peaty Three Ships 5YO Premium Select that was outstanding, and my favourite of the evening. It came as no surprise to me that this whisky has won the title of world's best blend and is such an intricate and flavourful whisky that had even the most discerning of palates swooning.

Desert comprised a whisky and coffee mousse – the first time whisky was actually used in one of the dishes – combined with black chocolate truffle and candied walnuts. This was washed down with Three Ships 10YO Single Malt, barreled in old American Oak. Also a peaty taste, but slightly subtler, the 10YO swam perfectly and complemented the sweetness of the chocolate and nuttiness of the walnuts with effortless abandon. ■

For more information visit www.bains.co.za and www.threeshipswhisky.co.za
With thanks to Amari by Vineet and LUX* Resorts
www.luxresorts.com

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