



OLD TOWN ITALY, UMHLANGA

New bambino on Umhlanga's block, Old Town Italy is as authentically Italian as you can hope to find this side of the Mediterranean. A restaurant – Café Italiano – and food emporium in one, it occupies an unlikely spot among car showrooms. Step inside though, and you're

transported to a bustling Italian market square.

Temptation waits at every turn – at the artisanal bakery, the wall of wine and beer, and at the cheese counter, where great wheels of proper Parmesan stare you in the face. Best to not shop for food on an empty stomach, so start with an excellent meal in the café. We've been twice and recommend tagliatelle al funghi e tartufo,

gnocchi al Gorgonzola, melanzane alla Parmigiana and lasagne Emiliane. For dessert, choose from the delectables displayed in the pasticceria (bakery), like the heavenly olive oil cake. Top marks, though, to the gelato – home-made artisan ice cream in the true Italian tradition. *Deliziosa!* 39 Meridian Drive, Meridian Park, Umhlanga Rocks, Durban; 031-566-5008; oldtown.co.za. *By Andrea Abbott*

EAT OUT @

CORNUCOPIA, JOBURG

A cornucopia or 'horn of plenty' is a symbol of abundance and nourishment – and this hidden gem, owned by Danny Naidoo and his wife, Gonie, promises just that. Combined with a spaza shop, its walls adorned with heavy wooden frames, the restaurant area boasts characterful wooden slats, brick and mismatched chairs.

A kaleidoscope of mosaic lamps decorate the ceiling, while the teal walls provide a cheerful colour scheme. Patrons gabble away over thick, flavourful curries, loaves of hearty bunny chow... Head chef, Phillemon Hlahletji, and his assistant, Michael Ncube, learnt their trade from an Indian chef specialising in North Indian cuisine, resulting in some mean-tasting curries, their speciality being Durban-style curries. We start with a refreshing mango lassi and crisp samoosas. The butter chicken easily rivals some the best I've had, while my partner describes the Durban-style lamb curry as 'moreish and fiery'. And, don't miss the paneer palak, tempered with Cornucopia's secret spices! Also open for breakfast (basic offerings with an Indian twist), the restaurant caters for all tastes. Danny and Gonie base their culinary philosophy on three ideas: fresh, home-cooked and simple. They close at 6pm so get your takeaway orders in early! At Cornucopia, there is never a 'dhal' moment. Dunkeld West Centre, corner Jan Smuts and Bompas; 011-268-1937; cornucopiadunkeld.co.za. *By Jessica Oliver*

TOKARA DELI, CAPE TOWN

Spring has sprung! And what better way to celebrate the good weather than by spending the day at Tokara Deli? There's something casual and relaxing about walking into that bright, open space. Our lunch began with a mixed platter for two: chef's selection of prosciutto, salami, chorizo, bresaola served with caperberries and freshly baked bread. It was such a big spread that we feared there might not be enough room for the rest of the meal! My friend had a spiced calamari and papaya salad (with pickled red cabbage and spiced lemon dressing), an unusual combination that worked well. Meanwhile, I had the smoked-salmon pizza (with buffalo-milk mozzarella and mascarpone), which came straight from the new wood-fired oven and had a light, crusty base that compelled me to finish the whole thing. The Deli Shop features a tempting array, from breads and cheeses to handmade chocolate truffles. Another option is the 10th annual Wine Made Art exhibition (ends January 2016). Here you can see how good food, good wine and good art all come together to make a good life! Helshoogte Pass, R310, Stellenbosch; 021-808-5950; tokara.co.za.

By Eugene Yiga

