



ONLY THE GOOD

IN THE WORLD OF LUXURY RESORT HOTELS, VERY FEW CAN OFFER AN ISLAND PARADISE IN AN URBAN SETTING, SURROUNDED BY THE SENSE OF PLACE THAT IS CAPE TOWN. **CHRIS BUCHANAN** FOUND THIS AS A GUEST OF THE ONE&ONLY AND BETTER HOSTS WILL BE VERY HARD TO FIND.

The word sommelier is derived from Middle French and describes a court official who was in charge of the procurement of supplies which were delivered, in ancient times, by pack animals. Go into French dialect and Old Provençal and you find the word 'saumalier' – the pack animal driver. So, when we think of a trained wine professional who advises on wine lists and food and wine pairings, we hardly imagine a fella who spends his time driving a pack of mangy mules, topping up the supplies of the medieval court.

I met a sommelier recently who took away all my preconceived ideas that these professionals are born among the vines and suckled on Pinot Noir instead of breastmilk and carry an air of arrogance that makes any wine amateur like me feel inadequate. You see, Luvo Ntezo grew up in hardship, looking at the vines as he walked the road and thinking he would be lucky to get a job, never mind taste the wines those faraway vines would produce.

He got that job, as a beer man for an estate in Cape Town and his absolute enthusiasm, thirst for knowledge and gifted manner with people, have seen him progress to head sommelier at the One&Only resort, internationally recognised and considered the best young sommelier



Jalapeno, Baby spinach salad, Tiger Shrimp Tempura, Beef Teriyaki, Assorted Sushi and a Chocolate Bento Box, which sounds daunting but this food is meant to be enjoyed slowly, allowing time to meld sensational food, wine, people and conversation. And if you thought baby spinach salad was more café bistro than fine dining, this one from Nobu is a masterpiece and we all had seconds.

Now I'm not a big one for spa treatments and pampering unless my body is punishing me for the indulgent downfall of the night before, so my attention to detail on the pre-treatment form was non-existent and 'sensitive feet' went unaccounted for. It was tropical magic on One&Only's Island in a monastically serene environment, every nasty that had ruined my morning was being massaged from my body, and then the masseuse reached my feet. The reflex action bent my knee and sent my heel heading toward her jaw. It missed and we parted as friends and I took solace in a glass of champagne in the quiet of the garden that was not 500m from South Africa's most popular tourist attraction.

The Island is just that – a piece of urban paradise as tropical as your imagination takes you. While the main hotel gives you a perpetual view of Table Mountain, the Island gives you date palms, parquet wooden floors and puts you close to the water of the canals, where



in the country. During a short tasting at Reuben's, he taught me that anybody can learn everything there is to know about wine but only very special people can articulate the knowledge, make me laugh and have me change my perceptions about something I know very little, but I know what I like – or at least I thought I did.

Luvo opened my eyes to Chenin Blanc, which always came across as too floral – not enough citrus or fruit. I now have a better understanding of the wine and its tropical fruit, as I have for Shiraz which, for me before, was a bit too earthy and better as a blending grape. He also opened my eyes to the fine white blends available, and one in particular of Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay from Ashbourne with the sexiest label on any wine shelf. I could have listened to him for hours but a table awaited us at Nobu and the popularity of this restaurant would have had us snacking peanuts at the bar for dinner had we missed our reservation.

Chef prepared us a menu of Edamame, Yellowtail Sashimi with



the fund managers who own penthouses in this neighbourhood paddleboard on a quiet weekend morning. This is where you find the pool and Isola, which serves a contemporary bistro menu al fresco poolside and is unsurprisingly popular as a wedding venue because of the island vibe.

There was a rather festive wedding taking place in the main hotel as we took the institution that is Afternoon Tea in the Vista Bar and Lounge. The marimba band had all sorts of passers-by joining in the dancing, including an elderly gentleman in a robe holding a black book whom we thought was the priest. Turned out he was returning from a spa treatment and couldn't resist a bit of a boogie.

To take full advantage of the view from the One&Only of Table Mountain and the city, you need to spend time on your balcony. A chance to have a quiet dinner without the antics of the night before gave us just that with a seafood platter served in-room and the mountain in all its lit-up glory as the backdrop – until Earth Hour struck and plunged the mountain into a black void. The rest of the city didn't seem to care about Earth Hour and Cape Town looked as if its mountain had forsaken it – just blackness above the last line of lights between streets and mountainside.



It came back, only to remind me why this aspect of the city from the foreshore, back up the mountain, is so iconic and unique and the One&Only feasts on this view from its prime position on the Waterfront.

Prepare for further indulgence at the breakfast table in Reuben's which puts the Champagne and oysters as centrepiece to start your day with a smile of decadence. In true One&Only fashion the options are endless, offering a full buffet, as well as specialities off the menu to take breakfast into brunch and giving reason to take a walk through the V&A Waterfront or have yourself a

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Spa treatment to detox – remembering to complete the pre-treatment form accurately particularly if you have sensitive feet!

When we're talking luxury resorts, there's very little that differentiates the top 1%. They all have beautiful rooms, particulars in operations and setting, and they all intend for the guest to have a spectacular time and hopefully come back.

But the One&Only Cape Town gave me the most personal, intimate and pleasant experience I've had at this level of luxury hotel because of its people. From the gentleman who served us and cleared the table at breakfast, to the sweet housekeeper who cleaned up after us, the smiley faced porter who heaved our luggage to the room, my dear forgiving masseuse who nearly lost her teeth, the front desk staff who led us through an introduction to the resort, the guys at the door and the concierge always ready to help, management who dined with us as friends, and the pauper who became a beer man who became a great sommelier, every one of whom epitomises 'sui generis', the Latin phrase meaning 'of its own kind', 'in a class by itself', 'one and only'. 🍷



"REUBEN INVITES"

After the sell-out success of last year's series, Reuben Invites 2015 commences this April and is the perfect opportunity to meet the personalities behind some of South Africa's most respected restaurants.

25 June – Darren Badenhorst with Grande Provence Wines, Executive Chef at The Restaurant at Grande Provence.

9 July – Cornelle Mini with Babylonstoren Wines, Head Chef at Babel Restaurant on Babylonstoren Estate.

20 August – Michael Deg with Delaire Graff Wines, Executive Chef at contemporary country dining destination Delaire Graff Restaurant.

24 September – Tanja Kruger with Vriesenhof Wines, Head Chef at award winning Stellenbosch concept eatery Makaron Restaurant at Majeka House.

NOBU WINE & DINE

Following a similar format to the Reuben's Wine & Dine series, Nobu will also continue their enormously popular evenings where guests are treated to Head Chef Dil Tamang's and Head Sushi Chef Keisuke 'Keke' Itoh's delightful contemporary Asian cuisine and a selection of specially chosen wines and bubbly from some of the Cape's best estates. Hosted by charismatic MC and One&Only Cape Town's ambassador Aubrey Ngcungama, these festive evenings promise to be a highlight for wine-loving foodies and Nobu fans.

2 July – Graham Beck's MCC collection

6 August – Paul Cluver Wines 🍷

capetown.oneandonlyresorts.com/

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Cape Town's One&Only offers warm atmosphere evenings to keep the cold at bay through the winter. Below are some of the highlights:

REUBEN'S ONE & ONLY WINE & DINE

The ever popular Reuben's One&Only Wine&Dine series where celebrity chef Reuben Riffel and master resident sommelier Luvo Ntezo invite a series of stellar wine and Méthode Cap Classique-producing estate ambassadors to join him in presenting a deluxe 5-course dinner.

30th June – Steenberg Wines

28th July – Morgenster Estate Vertical Masterclass

25th August – Graham Beck Wines



MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

by: EUGENE YIGA

AS THE OWNER AND OPERATOR OF THE ATLANTIS AND ONE&ONLY BRANDS, KERZNER INTERNATIONAL IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING THE ULTIMATE HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE BY STAYING FOCUSED ON THEIR NUMBER ONE CORE VALUE: BLOW AWAY THE CUSTOMER.

"M

y fondest [hotel] memory was staying at Villa d'Este on my honeymoon," says Alan Leibman, chief executive officer of the international hotel group. "In fact, I recently returned there with my wife to celebrate our anniversary and to retrace our steps. It was a different experience from our first time staying there as I think we originally may have had one of the smallest rooms. But [both] stays were magical." Leibman was born in South Africa and moved to the United States when he was 11. He grew up in the world of hospitality and worked in his family's gourmet food and wine companies in Texas before earning an Associate's Degree at the American Culinary Institute in New York. He also obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Hotel and Restaurant Administration from Florida International University. "My number one goal as CEO is to ensure all of our resorts are continuing to provide amazing experiences and everlasting memories for our guests; develop committed

passionate people; and develop and introduce both Atlantis and One&Only resorts in new markets," Leibman says.

At the end of last year, Kerzner International announced that they would be taking over the management of Emirates's Wolgan Valley and rebranding it with One&Only. This happened in February and was hot on the heels of the recent launch of One&Only Hayman Island in the Great Barrier Reef. This also makes it the ninth One&Only property across the globe and gives the group the best of both The Blue Mountains and the Great Barrier Reef in their One&Only portfolio.

"As we continue to aggressively grow, one of our challenges is ensuring we are growing our team at the same pace," Leibman says. "We are always looking for passionate, committed people to blow away our guests."

Indeed, Leibman believes that the people who work at the resorts are the company's greatest asset. This has been the case at One&Only Palmilla in Los Cabos, Mexico. As one of their flagship properties, it reopened on 20 April following Hurricane Odile in September last year.

The spirit of the local community was quite remarkable and the company was delighted that One&Only Palmilla was at the heart of it. And now that the resort is better than ever (and set



to be the dining destination in the region, given the Seared Steakhouse in collaboration with Jean Georges), growth continues with two additional resorts on the Pacific coast of Mexico: One&Only Mandarin and One&Only Santa Maria de Xala. Both will offer a complementary experience to One&Only Palmilla.

"One of our challenges is growing fast enough for our guests—they want more!" Leibman says. "We are aggressive at introducing both One&Only and Atlantis into new markets. However, for both One&Only and Atlantis Resorts, we need to be in the right destinations for us to provide our level of design and service."

The group is also developing One&Only Portonovi (Montenegro), One&Only Bahrain (Persian Gulf), One&Only Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), and One&Only Sanya (in Hainan, China's smallest and southernmost province). All the while they will continue to innovate at their existing resorts in the

in Maldives, Mauritius, Cape Town, and Dubai.

"To lead you need to empower, inspire, and challenge people," Leibman says. "I surround myself with a strong team and put the right people in the right roles. I have an expert Development Team that is committed to excellence in finding the right locations and delivering an exceptional product."

Looking further into the future, the company will continue to focus its efforts on positioning its business for long-term, sustainable growth. To do this, they plan to develop and manage world-class trophy properties with partners who understand that quality commands higher rates, higher asset value and strong operating results. It's about delivering truly memorable experiences and impeccable service.

More specifically, they are expanding both the One&Only and Atlantis brands and intend to take the One&Only brand into primary cities as well as where they know their guests frequently travel.

Right now, key locations include the likes of London, Paris, and New York. (The United States continues to be its number one source market for guests so they are looking at the One&Only concept for this.)

But the company will remain focused on the ultra-luxury segment for One&Only (not mass luxury) while the Atlantis brand, which is more leisure-focused, will continue to grow as an iconic entertainment destination resort offering with wider appeal.

"Hotels play such an important role in memories," Leibman says. "I am excited to be a part of delivering that for guests all over the world" 🏰

One&Only around the world

One&Only Resorts are created exclusively for the luxury resort market. Each award-winning resort is set in some of the world's most beautiful locations. Each also offers guests genuine hospitality and a distinctive style and personality that comes from the local culture.

But when it comes to One&Only, there's no need to choose only one. Here's a list of the resorts around the world, each of which offers the ultimate luxury experience at a villa, penthouse, or presidential suite. That means you can expect a dedicated host and butler team, always nearby to make sure you get whatever you want and need.

1. One&Only Ocean Club, Paradise Island, The Bahamas: Villa Residences
2. One&Only Palmilla, Los Cabos, Mexico: Villa Cortez
3. One&Only Royal Mirage, Dubai: Beach Garden Villa Residence
4. One&Only The Palm, Dubai: Villas and Luxury Mansions
5. One&Only Le Saint Géran, Mauritius: Two-Bedroom Ocean Front Villa Residence with Pool (Nelson Mandela stayed here!)
6. One&Only Reethi Rah, Maldives: Grand Beach Villas
7. One&Only Cape Town: Presidential Suite
8. One&Only Hayman Island, Great Barrier Reef: One-Bedroom Penthouses, Two-Bedroom Diane von Furstenberg Penthouse, and Three-Bedroom Owner's Penthouse
9. Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley: Three-Bedroom Wolgan Suite