



## STIMULUS RESPONSE

It's a bloody long way from Cape Town to New York. Even in business class. After 21 hours of flying, about to start the last leg home to Cape Town, the airhostess (Jane? Sarah? It was something British) could see I was in it for the long haul. No pun intended. 'Sir, we're a little close to take-off, but you look like you could do with a coffee. Can I get you one?' Minutes later, an apparition appeared. A perfectly brewed flat white; delicate foam, beans not burnt, good temperature. It even came with biscotti, for Pete's sake. I could have wept. Skytrax says Etihad Airways has the best business class in the world. I'd have to agree. - RICHARD HOLMES

MINUTES LATER, AN APPARITION APPEARED.  
A PERFECTLY BREWED FLAT WHITE. IT EVEN  
CAME WITH BISCOTTI, FOR PETE'S SAKE



## MAJEKA'S STAR

Your eyes roll back gently in your head, your palate sighs. It's not often that the full run of a four-course menu is impeccable from starter through entrée to dessert. The secret to Majeka House's fine-dining restaurant is 28-year-old chef Anri Diener, who has the delicate touch of a watercolourist. Take her tomato carpaccio. Tomato has a poor reputation in South Africa. It's often no more than a chunk of tasteless red fruit in a sea of bitter greens. Anri creates thin, almost transparent sheets of it served with a drizzle of olive oil and a small hill of fluffy, white aniseed-flavoured sorbet. The topping is a frill of baby basil, barely discernible as a leaf. It is sublime. If she transforms tomatoes, any food stuff shines from there on. She announces her courses sweetly in a light voice, more therapist than chef in charge, but according to Majeka House's owners, Lloyd van der Merwe and Karine Dequeker-van der Merwe, she runs their kitchen with an iron fist. Her taste secret? Local ingredients in season. 'A plate full of intense flavours doesn't work for me. Rather, the elements on the plate should together compose the full flavour of the meal,' she says. She reads widely, and is about to take French leave and spend time with a top French chef, all with the owners' blessing, of course. Stay the night at Majeka. They have a middle-of-winter heated pool that becomes your obligatory gentle exercise between courses. (Oh, and did we mention the chocolate mille-feuille? Swim it off.) For reservations or further information on Majeka House, call 021 880 1549, email [reservations@majekahouse.co.za](mailto:reservations@majekahouse.co.za) or visit [www.majekahouse.co.za](http://www.majekahouse.co.za). - BRIAN BERKMAN