

## A-TYPICAL INTERVIEW



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# Top SA chef rates mom's roast best

CHANTEL Dartnall is a globally acclaimed chef, having been named the best female chef in the world in 2017 at the prestigious The Best Chef Lady Awards in Poland.

Pretoria-born Dartnall has twice been named South Africa's Chef of the Year, and was placed at number 32 in the Best Chef Awards Top 100 list for 2017, the highest-positioned woman and one of only three to make the top 50.

Dartnall is the owner and head chef of Restaurant Mosaic in Elandsfontein near Pretoria.

### ***What was your favourite meal while growing up?***

My mom's traditional "Sunday Lunch" with roast chicken, sweet potato, *boere boontjies* and rice was my favourite meal while growing up, and still is today.

### ***What is the most creative dish you've made during lockdown?***

"The Coral Reef". This is a dish that I have been working on for my new menu and consists of ethereal shellfish custard, pickled seaweed, tempura of sapphire and calamari tentacles along with a seaweed cream and my home-made coral.

### ***What are the three most popular items in your fridge at the moment?***

Plain double thick Greek yoghurt, lemon curd – I love mixing a bit of lemon curd into my yoghurt for breakfast – and dill pickled cucumbers, which are great with a piece of cheese.

### ***What is the most adventurous thing you have ever eaten?***

During a visit to Seychelles more than 20 years ago I ate fruit bat from a buffet at the hotel we were staying at. It was really tasty and tender. I didn't realise it was a bat until I discovered the wing on my plate.

### ***Your favourite lockdown activities include...?***

My favourite lockdown activities have been gardening, spending wonderful quality time with my family, enjoying leisurely breakfasts together, having the time to work on my new menu, and really having the time to cook creatively

### ***You are able to collaborate on a dish with any chef in the world. Who do you choose and what do you cook?***

It would have to be with chef Michel Bras. I describe my cooking style as "Botanical Cuisine", and the father of botanical cooking is Michel Bras, whose restaurant is on the top of the Aubrac plateau in Laguiole, France. One of his salads has 29 different vegetables and edible herbs and flowers, and this is the one dish that I would love to make with him!

### ***Best restaurant you have been to?***

I have had the great pleasure of dining in so many exceptional restaurants that it is difficult to say which is my favourite as they all stand out in my memory. But if I had to select one that truly stands out every time, it would have to be Le Pré Catelan. Chef Frederic Anton is a master in the kitchen and it is always a highlight to visit the restaurant Le Pré Catelan in the Bois de Boulogne, in Paris

### ***Can you tell us a little bit about the biggest disaster you've had in the kitchen?***

My biggest disaster in the kitchen ever was trying to cook rice in the microwave – I totally burnt the rice to charcoal and literally needed to throw away the bowl. Needless to say the microwave was never the same after that, and even 25 years later the microwave still has a slight smoky smell every time we use it.

### ***You can cook for any three celebs in the world. Who do you choose?***

Sir David Frederick Attenborough

Audrey Justine Tautou (French actress)

Guy Savoy (chef)

### ***Your favourite toppings on a pizza include...?***

My favourite pizza toppings include Parma ham, mushrooms, mozzarella, fresh basil, cherry tomatoes and a drizzle of balsamic glaze

