

# Sharing is caring at MAREsOL

 By Cari Coetzee

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If you haven't paid MAREsOL, a new restaurant in one of the prime spots at the V&A Waterfront, a visit yet, it's time. Fantastic views, a social atmosphere and some of the tastiest Portuguese dishes with a Mozambican flair is what you can look forward to. We recently had the pleasure of attending the official launch of the restaurant and shared (being the keyword) a tasting menu - in regular portions - that left me with an urge to go back for more.



The restaurant was cleverly designed by Wolff Architects with an emphasis on the views and surroundings. No matter where you sit, you'll have a great view of two of Africa's most visited destinations, as Andrew Matterson, operations manager at MAREsOL says - Table Mountain on the one side and the V&A on the other. You'll even be greeted by the unexpected view of a monstrous seal sunbathing - happily fattened with offcuts from the fish cleaning station by the Portuguese tuna fishers docking here.



These are the views we got to enjoy while feasting on MAREsOL's fresh and generous bowls and plates. Though of fine dining quality, this is comfort food, home food. The flavours passionately produced by Executive Chef Eva de Jesus, was inspired by her grandmother's very own tried and tested family recipes, making the taste that much more authentic and

special.

## **A menu made for sharing**

This menu was made for sharing - whether between friends or family - and share we did as each dish made its way to the table in quick succession. Some freshly baked Portuguese rolls also found its way to our tables and we used these to mop up the sauce - and saucy it was. Further enhancing the taste of the food, each table is provided with MARESQL's mild hot sauce, made fresh every day. (Please note: Mild in MARESQL means "will burn your lips off").







We started off with calamari and chorizo - now most of the food here has a bit of bite, but this bite was just right. Perfectly cooked, melt-in-your-mouth calamari balanced with the sharper chorizo taste makes the perfect combination. This was followed by a milder, more classic calamari with lemon garlic butter. If you asked me to choose, it would not be possible.

Next up were crunchy, flavourful prawn and veg rissoles followed by chorizo shaped in a horseshoe with roasted peppers marinated in a sauce of garlic, thyme and sherry vinegar (cue fresh Portuguese rolls) and presented on the cutest mini cast iron skillet.

Now, I'm admittedly not the biggest chicken liver fan, but I always taste what is given to me and this was a pleasant surprise... at least at first. The chicken livers were delivered to the table shortly after the chorizo, which I blamed for the burn. I only found out after the livers were taken away, that they are the ones to blame. If you can't handle spicy, beware, if you can, indulge.





Up next was perfectly cooked trinchado - a traditional dish that apparently if you don't get it right, diners that know it well and grew up with it will judge you, tell you that you got it wrong and that it's not like their mother used to make it. The sauce

in which the trinchado is braised takes three hours to make and truly heroes the garlic - and I mean this in a good way. Already at bursting point, we were presented with a neat row of chicken prego and, like the rolls, tasty freshness is what characterises this dish and if you stop by for a quick lunch definitely give them a try - delicious.

Now stay with me, because we've only just finished with the starters. At MAREsOL, you go big or you go home.

For mains we were treated with an old favourite - free range, eyes-rolling-back-in-your-head delicious PiriPiri chicken. Basted in the house PiriPiri sauce, grilled to perfection and just the right level of spicy, you are encouraged to forget all manners related to eating in public and use your hands. The chicken was cooked perfectly - done, but juicy - which is critical. They say if you get your PiriPiri chicken right, you've made it and boy, did they make it.



Our second main was intriguing and mysterious - served in a closed, bronze bowl, you are left in the dark if you don't know what Cataplana is. Upon opening it up, you happily discover that it's a seafood feast of mussels, prawn, calamari and fragrant rice.



Half dazed from fullness, they were still not done with us. Luckily we were allowed a break before they brought out the dessert. After the food-induced coma wore off, they brought out plates of sweet things that finished the deal. These

included Pasteis de Nata (a Portuguese pastry tart), and an almond tart picked proudly by Matterson. Lastly, we were served with a sweet treat made especially for us - Canutillo, the lightest pastry shaped like an ice cream cone and filled with a delicious, equally light cream which we eagerly munched on while trying to figure out how to pronounce its name. What makes these desserts winners, other than the superb taste, is that they aren't too sweet, just the perfect ending to a spectacular meal.





Well-fattened, much like the seal outside, we rolled out of MAREsOL with every intention of visiting again and sharing it with our friends and family.

## ABOUT CARI COETZEE

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.  
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