

Renowned chefs debate restaurant industry challenges

The Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa (FEDHASA) Cape recently hosted a Restaurateur's Think Tank to discuss challenges facing the restaurant industry.



From left to right: Chef Jocelyn Myers-Adams (Executive Chef, Table Bay Hotel); Chef Pete Goffe-Wood (Celebrity Chef and Industry Consultant), Chef Carl van Rooyen (Executive Chef, Vineyard Hotel) and Chef Bertus Basson (Owner Overture Restaurant).

An interactive sitting at the Vineyard Hotel led by FEDHASA Cape's restaurant chairperson, Carl van Rooyen saw chefs Jocelyn Meyer-Adams, Bertus Basson and Pete Goffe-Wood debate issues facing the restaurant industry.

Key challenges

According to van Rooyen one of the key challenges is inadequate staff training and the issue around food inflation.

"We need to face facts, the days of cheap food are over. Restaurant prices will go up because inputs are getting more and more expensive. With regards to staff training, which is a problem, restaurateurs can't take it for granted that staff will magically appear every time a job advert is placed. All restaurant operators, large and small, need to actively be part of the solution to the staff shortage. What that solution is may vary, however, everyone is responsible – the time of hoping the problem will resolve itself is over. I prefer old fashioned apprentices who are then formally trained on a block release programme," Van Rooyen says.

The water crisis

Other discussions during this event also included sustainability and water saving, as well as guest complaints. Van Rooyen says establishments are all doing "whatever we can" to save water, adding that some restaurants have started watering their gardens with the same water used to blanch vegetables.

"Everyone is doing what they can do and is taking this crisis very seriously. Overall, it was a very engaging session and a lot of good insights came from it," he says.

David Heuvel, member relations manager for FEDHASA Cape described the Think Tank as "very engaging with a lot of great content and brainstorming around challenges." He said during this session, FEDHASA Cape also communicated issues that the association is lobbying as the private sector's voice to government and other relevant role players.

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