

NAMIBIAN CHEFS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 6175, Ausspannplatz
Windhoek, Namibia
email: secretariat@namibianchefs.com



Sanet Prinseloo's Story

I was born and bred in Windhoek. Attended Dagbreek and Eros Primary schools and then moved on to WHS. I never really enjoyed cooking as a youngster, but well the eating part. I wanted to study drama, but my Dad said I should first get a proper degree behind my name, so I decided to do a BSc Home Economics degree at Kovsies in Bloemfontein. During my studies, which were very scientific, I started entertaining and cooking for friends.



I finished my degree at the end of '91, Namibia was 1 year old and became part of the Commonwealth, which meant that Namibian youngsters could get a 2-year working holiday Visa for the UK, so Sanet was first in line.

After a week of job seeking in London, a friend called to say the breakfast chef in the hotel restaurant she managed, started enjoying the cooking wine too much and decided to sleep through breakfast. I went in immediately and offered my services, and thus began my cooking career. Now, you must understand that I was a complete novice. On my second day in the kitchen, the man who taught me so much, Chef Chris Millar, sent me to the butcher for a "LEG OF SALMON", and I went! After a week Chef Millar told me politely that he will understand if I do not want to come back in the morning to cry over more poached eggs. That is when I decided to show him that I can do it. I proceeded to stay on at Bistro 190, under the watchful eye of Chef Anthony Worrall Thompson for 2 years, and this opened a whole new world to me. I became addicted to the adrenalin rush of putting out 300 plates in a busy 2-hour dinner service, the long hours on your feet, the camaraderie between the chefs and the tastes that explode in your mouth if you get it right.

I came back to Windhoek to work in my Dad's publishing business, but soon discovered I was not made to sit behind a desk, so I started cooking after hours and over week ends. I also discovered that I could make more money from a weekend filled with functions, than my monthly income from publishing, so I started cooking full time. I opened a coffee shop, Fiela's, with a friend and ran that very successfully for 2 years, but the kitchen got too small and I bought Blue Olive Delicatessen.

In between all of this, I did some catering on a hunting farm in the Kalahari and one week end the farmer's son came home. He drank a bottle of brandy, pinned me to the kitchen table and a year later we were married. It is now 17 years later and I am still sticking to my Drilling Contractor man, Kobus Prinsloo, and we have 3 mini drillers Jak (12), Herman (11) and Rudi (8) – hopefully they will also love cooking one day.

After my kids were born, I started scaling down on the outside catering, and started up a home baking business.

To keep myself busy I help organizing the Meatco National Braai Competition every year, for the last five years I organize a Chefs theater for Checkers at the Tourism Expo. I judge various cooking competitions –of which the Checkers boerewors is the biggest, write food articles for magazines, did a lot of promotion work for Bokomo Namibia, a cooking program on the radio for Checkers at one stage, and of course I run the Namibian Chefs Association.

I was bullied into the Chefs Association by Chef Terry Jenkinson and Tom Mutavdzic about 5 years ago. I am so proud of how far we have come over the last few years and for this I have to thank my co-sufferers Tom Mutavdzic Chantelle Loteryman, Elke Mutavdzic, Anthony Rossouw, Janina Clinning, David Thomas, Annelise van der Merwe, telephonic advice from Chef Gamma, lots of advice from my friends in the South African chefs fraternity, too many fantastic people to mention. Thank you to every person that ever took part in a competition, helped or judged a competition, bought a ticket to a gala dinner or any other meal we served, people who bought our chefs on a chefs' auction. Thank you to my husband and my kids that have to eat take-aways and fish fingers because mommy is a chef who cooks for other people.

And then came Barbara and Wolfgang. I am one of those people who are lucky enough to get angels thrown across my path by a higher power from time to time. These are people who help me lift my wings to accomplish things I think impossible –Barbara and Wolfgang Schenck are such people. I think we share the vision of turning young, talented Namibian cooks into well appreciated and well paid proud Namibian Chefs!



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www.namibianchefs.com
NamChefs Fax2Mail: 088614422
President: Sanet Prinsloo, cell 081-1240623
Secretariat: Barbara Huber-Schenck, tel. 061-253542