

9 Apr 2018

I love nothing better than indulging in Italian food when we start approaching the winter months. My waistline may not love it, but my taste buds certainly do. That's why I jumped at the chance (pity that doesn't count as exercise) to sample the #risottopopup that's running at 95 Keerom from 9 April to 5 May.



The Risotto Pop Up at 95 Keerom.

A lovely, bubbly crowd from the Cape Town food-writer set chatted away and absorbed some unseasonable warmth from the sunny upstairs space of 95 Keerom. We were there by special invitation and boy, were we excited. With good reason, too.

Chef-proprietor Giorgio Nava never disappoints in providing authentic flavours with a modern twist.



Add Italian Friday lunches at 95 Keerom to your to-do list

Leigh Andrews 1 Mar 2018



Now, he's paired with chefs Nicolás (Nico) Rovarini and Federico (Fede) Rocca, straight out of Milan and soon to open a Cape Town fish restaurant with an Italian flair called Riva.

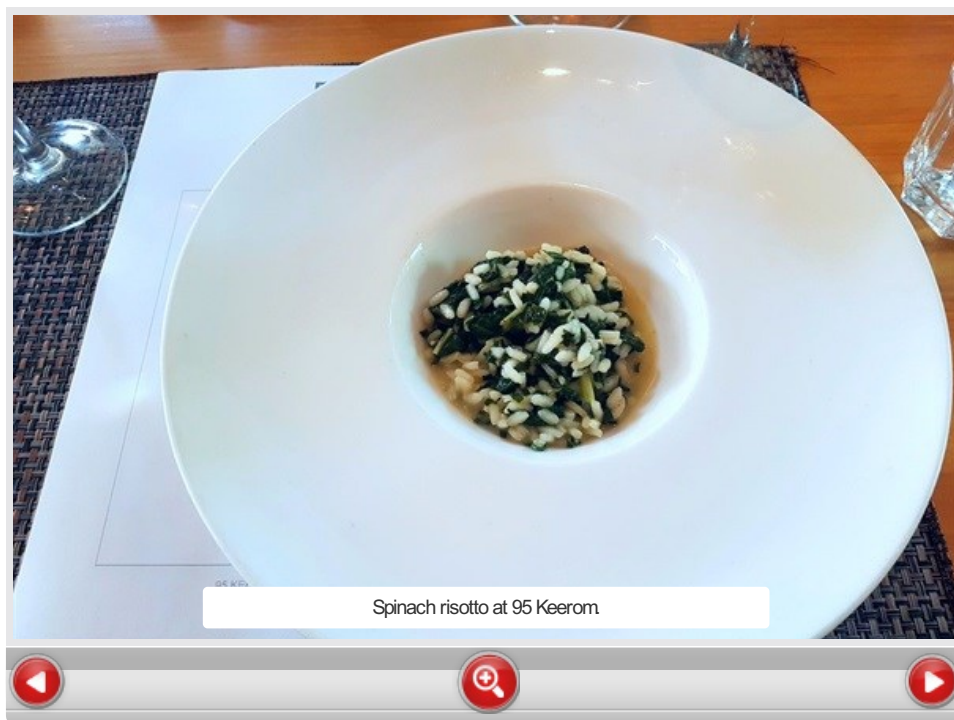


Chefs Nicoló (Nico) Rovarini, Giorgio Nava and Federico (Fede) Rocca.

They're providing a risotto-only pop-up experience at Nava's flagship 95 Keerom restaurant over the next few weeks. If you like risotto, you'll love the risotto pop up experience.

Ravenous for risotto

First up, as the lone non-fish-eater at the table, I happily tucked into a deeply satisfying mini-portion of salty spinach risotto, just perfect when paired with a glass of white Steenberg Semillon. The rest of the table devoured bowls of *il Risotto alle Cozze*, with fresh mussels and an anchovy crumble that was pronounced "deliciously fresh" and a true taste of the sea.



Plates polished clean, we were ready for the following four vegetarian risotto dishes. Keeping things classic, we began with *il Risotto al Pomodoro e Stracciatella* featuring fresh basil, tangy tomatoes and something Nava fans clap their hands excitedly over – the softest shreds of *Burrata stracciatella* mozzarella.

A fantastic plate paired with the red Steenberg Nebbiolo, this is a next-level 'cheese and tomato' dish! It was creamy and tart in all the right places.



il Risotto al Pomodoro e Stracciatella at 95 Keerom

Next up was the third course of *il Risotto al Formaggio e Noci*. The most moreish so far, this was extremely nutty and cheesy, in the best possible way, thanks to the generous portions of Taleggio cheese and pecan nuts.



il Risotto al Formaggio e Noci at 95 Keerom

We had all eaten every mouthful of the previous courses, so were worried we were going to have trouble with the final courses, especially as these were now full portions.

But our fears flew out the window as these were so moreish in the way only risotto can be, and tested that conventional ideal of 'risotto as a boring rice dish'. Anything but, my fellow foodies!

Savour the flavour

The fourth course of beetroot and blue cheese – *il Risotto alle Barbabietole e Gorgonzola* – was the one to beat, a pleasing bright pink with light Gorgonzola zing, served with a strong Parmesan crisp.



il Risotto alle Barbabietole e Gorgonzola at 95 Keerom

The final course gave the sweet-toothed among us something to smile about – *il Risotto alla Zucca e Amaretti* – a ‘dessert risotto’ treat of butternut bites and fine almond biscuit crumb.

While we never steered from creamy risotto, the flavours were brimming with warmth and made us go ‘Mmm!’ With all five plates emptied and our wine glasses drained, we stood with a touch of sadness and left the lovely meal.



|| Risotto alla Zucca e Amaretti at 95 Parks.

Note that the Risotto Pop Up experience runs from Monday, 9 April to Saturday, 5 May 2018 at 95 Keerom and there will be 16 different risotto dishes on offer in all – four per night, changing weekly.

These will feature everything from the classics of mushroom risotto and *il Risotto alla Milanese* with saffron, to the more extravagantly flavoured risotto with butternut and goats’ cheese, asparagus risotto with prawns or crispy pancetta, and risotto with mascarpone and walnuts. So your Risotto Pop Up flavour experience may well be different to mine!

The weekly menus will be available every Monday throughout the month, on the [95 Keerom website](#).

**Leigh Andrews was a guest of 95 Keerom. The restaurant is situated at 95 Keerom Street, and is open for dinner from Monday to Saturday from 6:30pm to 10pm, and for Friday lunch. Parking on Keerom Street itself is limited so rather use the parking lot behind the building, on Queen Victoria Street. For bookings, call 021 422 0765 or email info@95keerom.com. Follow 95 Keerom on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) and Riva [on Instagram](#).*

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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