

# Chef Rikku Ó'Donnchú brings theatrical and interactive dining to the Winelands with new restaurant Gåte

 By [Ruth Cooper](#)

26 Nov 2018

Calling all foodies, there's a new restaurant in town and you're gonna wanna make sure you make a booking. Destined for top 10 *Eat Out* Best Restaurant lists, the Gåte Restaurant at Quoin Rock in Stellenbosch is a one-of-a-kind 16 (!) course theatrical and interactive feast for the senses.

Brought to you by UK Chef Ó'Donnchú - who has worked for Heston Blumenthal at The Fat Duck and for Thomas Keller at The French Laundry in Yountville, California - the menu shows great influence from these culinary legends.



Executive Chef, Rikku O'Donnchú © Michael le Grange

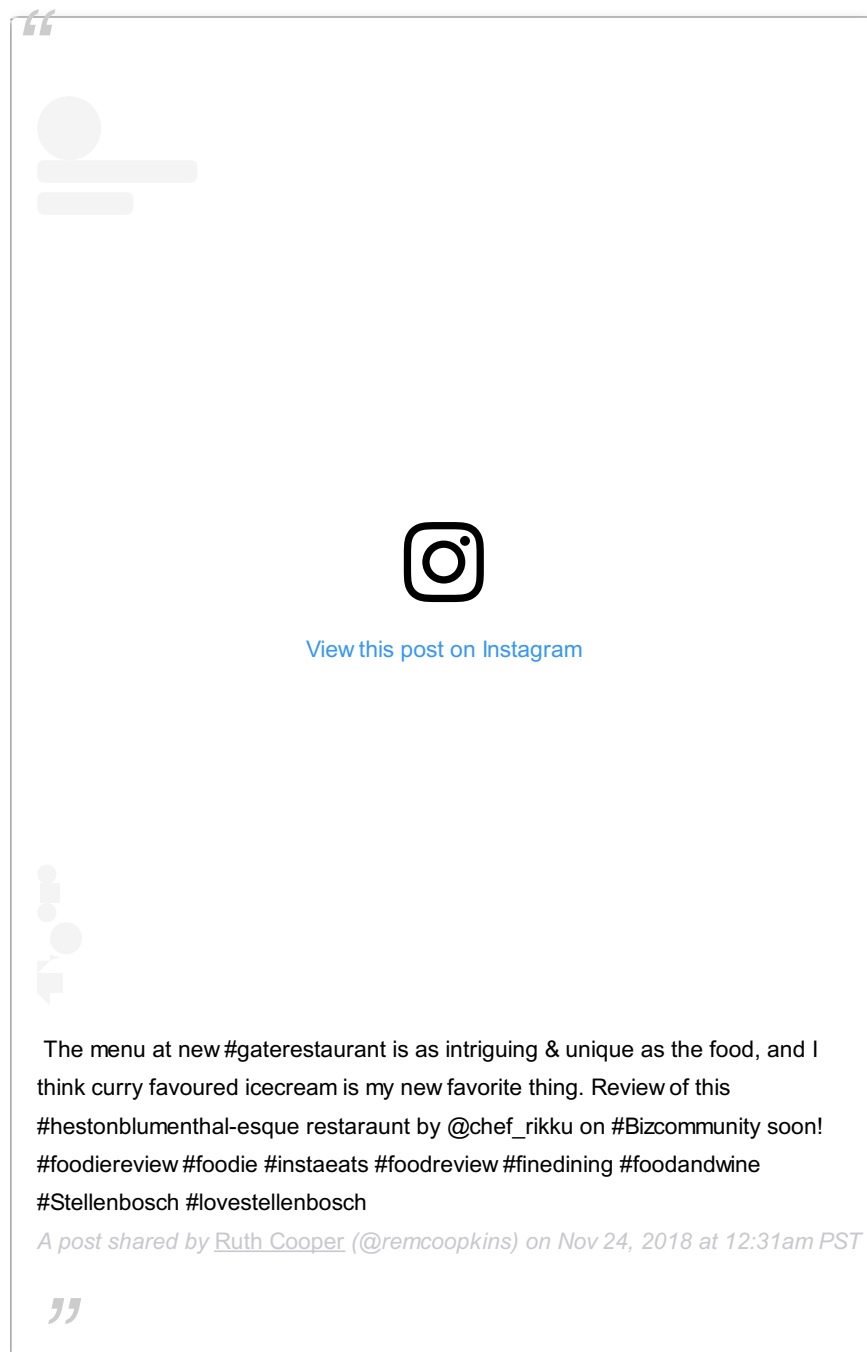


## A culinary circus

But it's Grant Atchez from Chicago's Alinea – currently #34 on The World's 50 Best list – that Ò'Donnchú is most inspired by.

“*“I have a very similar food philosophy to Atchez,” says Ò'Donnchú. “Food should be playful, it should be enjoyable. It shouldn't just be about eating. It needs to be a circus for the mind and the body.”*”

Gåte is the Norwegian word for 'riddle' and that is exactly what one will encounter when seated, quite literally, as the menu takes the form of a brass icosahedron on which each course is inscribed. Offering poetic titles such as *Birth of Liver* and *Not an Ashtray* and *From Russia with Love*, you know you will be in for a treat as you decipher the menu and gaze out over the beautiful Simonsberg mountain range.



## Earthy aesthetic

The restaurant itself is eye-catching with many stunning details. A cascading water feature around a vine branch sculpture

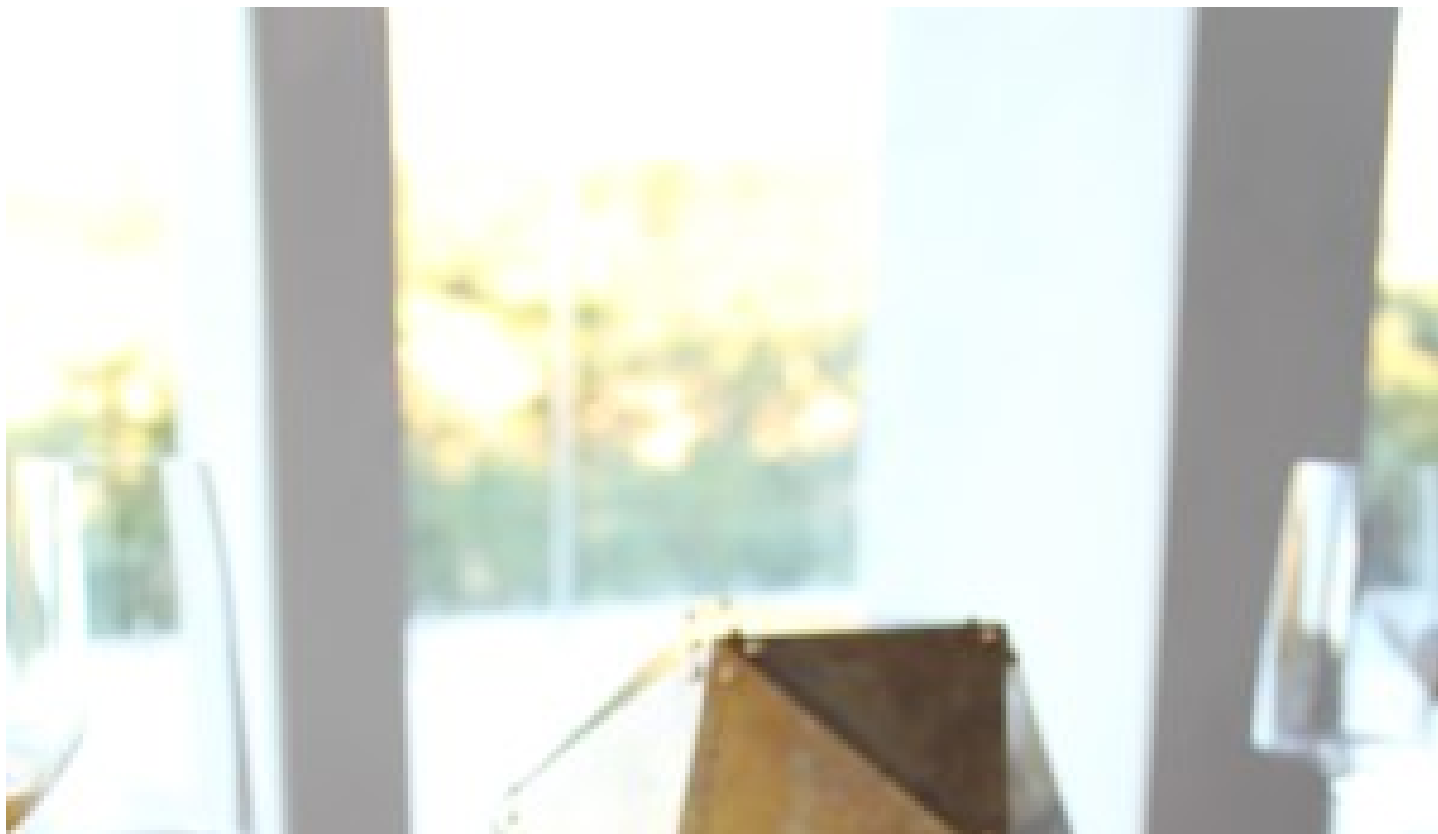
as you enter, a spacy circular bar made from old wine vats in the centre of the room, leather-apron-clad waiters and outlandish crockery and cutlery all give the place a unique yet earthy aesthetic.



© Greg Cox

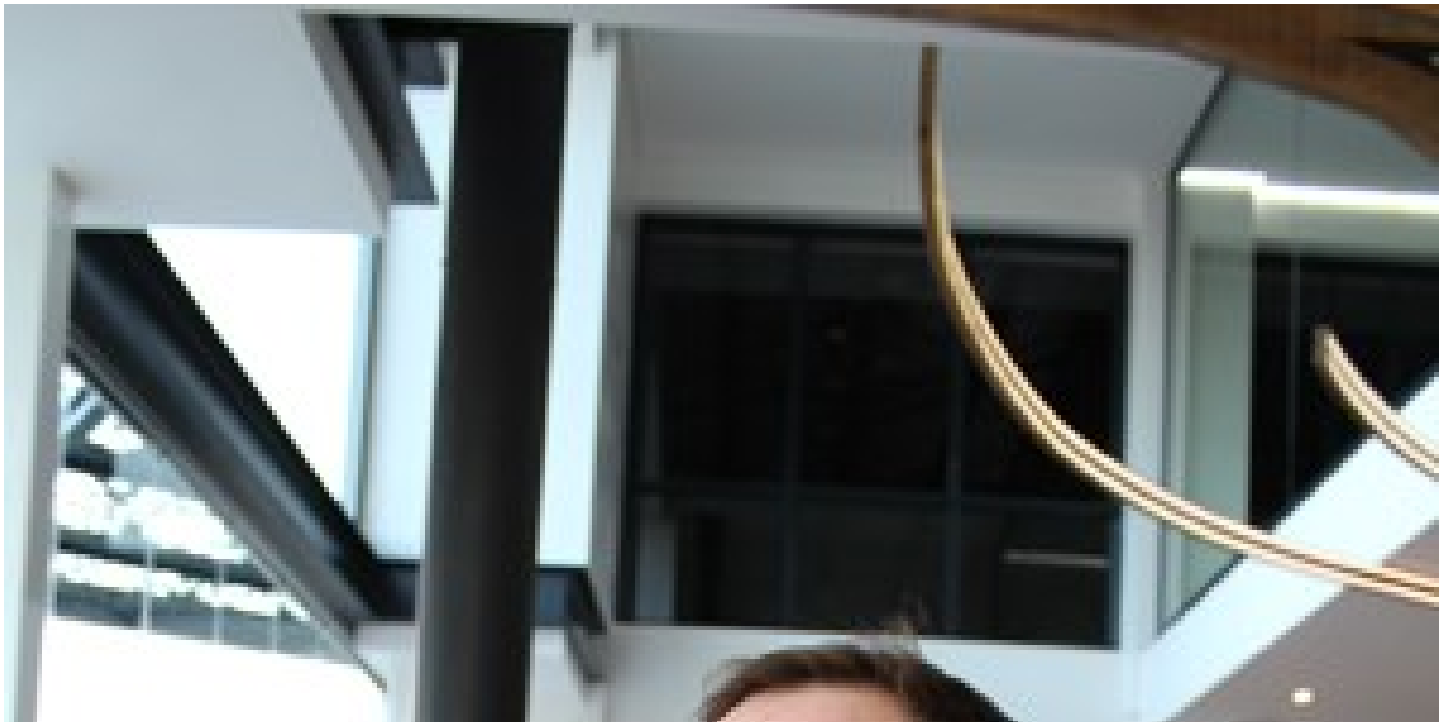
As there are 16 courses, I'll just share my absolute highlights because there should be a few surprises for those visiting and err word count. Let's dive right in shall we?

The bread course titled *Not an Ashtray*, which includes a cigar-shaped tube of rye bread and a literally smoking ashtray of delicious black garlic mousse and smoked tomato ash immediately lets you know you are in for something quite different. Better buckle up, pop open the top button of your pants and enjoy the ride.





© Ruth Cooper





© Ruth Cooper

Next cured oysters in a puff of dry ice appear at your table, a pure inhalation of ocean.

This is followed by *Birth of Liver* an “egg” that, once cracked open, reveals ethically sourced foie gras, chocolate and miso and is served alongside caramelised banana bread, so rich and decadent with a happy harmony of typically non-paired ingredients.



© Ruth Cooper

Another noteworthy dish is the *Cauli-Cheese* a technically driven yet still comforting dish of cauliflower in various preparations; charred, pickled, confit, and puréed and three ages of parmesan in velouté, foam and crisp form. Sweet, creamy and umami - my kind of food.

## Wagu my way

The *Ramen*, one of the most intriguing and interactive dishes is also one of the most delicious. A syringe of honey noodles is gently injected into a delicate broth of egg, radish, and seaweed and served with a slice of buttery Wagyu beef that one DIY sears atop a sizzling hot stone. Don't mind me I'm just drooling at the memory.

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A post shared by [Gâte \(@gate\\_restaurant\)](#) on Oct 8, 2018 at 11:16pm PDT

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*Balloon* is a helium-filled balloon of beetroot juice dusted with beetroot powder that one inhales in a sticky puff. So buoyant as to alter the voice of the eater and if released will make a break for freedom, as we witnessed happen to one of the diners.

*Curry Candyfloss* was one of my absolute favourite dishes and included red-curry flavoured ice-cream (my new favourite thing), white chocolate, smoked meringue, candy floss, and forms of mango. Spicy, fragrant, and tangy – a perfect pairing.

The only dish that lets technique overshadow flavour was the *Caprese*, with muted flavours and perhaps a little too much liquid nitrogen in play, I felt this version didn't surpass the flavours and textures of a simple classic Caprese salad.

Other noteworthy mentions go to the succulent peacock and the *Black Russian* nightcap served with delectable petit fours, however, there are *many* more surprises.

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We're excited to announce our opening. Located on @quoinrockwines our 40-seater restaurant offers a 16-course tasting menu in an intimate setting. The menu is inspired by seasonal produce, was conceptualised by culinary executive @chef\_rikku and is masterfully executed by head chef @chefking29 and his team. Join us for a unique dining experience. Book via our website. URL in our bio. . . . . #gaterestaurantsa #quoinrockwines #gastronomy #finedining #foodporn #gourmet #foodstagram #eeeeeeats

*A post shared by Gåte (@gate\_restaurant) on Sep 26, 2018 at 11:54am PDT*

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## Ethical ethos

Not only groundbreaking in flavours, presentation, and technique, Gåte strives to sustainably source all produce from the farm and on-site, with greenhouses and vegetable gardens planted with seasonal produce and a hydroponic system installed in the kitchen to provide fresh micro-greens. Mushroom cultivation huts provide everything from enoki to shiitake mushrooms, while in season pine rings and porcini will be foraged wild from the woodlands on the farm.

Gåte officially opens on 1 December 2018, don't miss out!

*A vegetarian 16-course menu is also offered on pre-order, both menus cost R1,250 and R1,950 with wine pairing.*





**Contact details:**

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Quoin Rock Wine Estate,  
Knorhoek Road, Knorhoek Valley,  
Stellenbosch, 7600

**Opening hours:**

Tuesday to Saturday: 6.30pm - 10pm

Sunday: 12pm - 4pm

For more information visit: [gaterestaurant.co.za](http://gaterestaurant.co.za) or follow @gate\_restaurant on [Instagram](#).

## ABOUT RUTH COOPER

Ruth is the production manager at Bizcommunity. [ruth@bizcommunity.com](mailto:ruth@bizcommunity.com)

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