

## Twelve Apostles candidates to participate in 2016 Cape Legends Inter Hotel Challenge

Part of the Red Carnation Hotel Collection, The Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa's young chef and wine steward have been picked by executive chef Christo Pretorius and head sommelier Gregory Mutambe, to pit their talents against some of the rising stars in South Africa's hospitality firmament during the [Cape Legends Inter Hotel Challenge](#), now in its fourth year.



Brainchild of Showcook team Annette Kesler and Chania Morritt-Smith, the Cape Legends Inter Hotel Challenge promotes mentorship, staff upliftment, and skills transfer within the South African hotel and tourism industry. Says Kesler: "This leg up will benefit not only our candidates but ultimately assists a flourishing tourism, the new gold of South Africa. What is becoming so evident is that the hotel industry in SA has had a huge impact on the social fabric of this country, a development which is not widely recognised."

The Inter Hotel Challenge features chef and wine steward trainees from some of South Africa's top hotels, under the guidance of their executive chefs and sommeliers, teamed with the expertise of winemakers from leading Cape Legends wine estates. This year, for the first time, the wine stewards will also be able to broaden their knowledge thanks to the introduction of whiskey, brandy and cognac. The nationwide competition sees 23 leading hotels from the Cape to Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal competing. The candidate chef prize winner will have the opportunity to travel to the Radisson Blu Alcron in Prague in the Czech Republic for three weeks' work experience in their Michelin-star restaurant, while the winning wine steward will travel to London, Scotland, and France to learn about whisky, brandy and Bisquit cognac, one of the great producers in France.

The challenge dovetails with Red Carnation's philosophy of highlighting a culture of mentorship, recognising and rewarding achievements, and ensuring genuine career progression and a happy, fulfilled work life for its staff. Owned by the Tollman family, the Red Carnation Hotel Collection, which includes four- and five-star properties in South Africa, Europe and the USA, is renowned for placing its employees at the heart of its operations, and for hiring talented individuals from all walks of life who are presented with the best available training and development opportunities. Staff members are encouraged to move within properties and often remain part of the Red Carnation family for many years. The group was recently listed in the UK Sunday Times 'Top 100 Companies to Work For' in the third place - a remarkable achievement considering that the group debuted on the prestigious list for the first time three years ago, at number 71.

As part of the Cape Legends Inter Hotel Challenge, executive chefs and sommeliers introduced their 2016 chef and wine steward candidates to industry and press at luncheons held in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. This was followed by a special 'Grape to Glass Experience and Workshop' in Cape Town for all wine steward candidates. Held in association with the prestigious South African Sommeliers Association and Cape Wine Academy, it enabled candidates to meet with the winemakers at each of the wine estates they are paired with. Individual cook-offs for candidate chefs and wine stewards in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg are scheduled for June, with Heinz Brunner heading the team of erudite judges. The winners will be announced during an exclusive black-tie Gala Awards Dinner, to be held at the Belmond Mount Nelson on Friday 29 July 2016.

StreetSmart SA will be the recipient of funds raised during the StreetSmart SA Wine & Dine Week, 4 - 9 July, where each hotel is invited to showcase their candidates' menu to the public.

## **The Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa candidates**

### **Thobela Tyokwana – chef candidate**

Thobela Tyokwana (22) comes from Nyanga township, Cape Town. Aged nine he became involved with The Amy Biehl Foundation and credits much of his current success to taking part in the culinary courses run by the foundation. After high school, he worked at the Alphen Hotel where, without any formal training, he was rapidly promoted to commis chef.

He joined The Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa in November 2015, initially as a sculler, but he was moved to the kitchen within only two days by executive chef Christo Pretorius, who immediately noticed his talent. The young chef is currently working in the demanding saucier, meat and vegetable section, while also studying part-time for his chef diploma at South African Chefs Academy. On his reason for choosing Tyokwana as The Twelve Apostles Hotel's Inter Hotel Challenge candidate, chef Pretorius says that "it has to do with his attitude towards life and his passion for becoming a great chef. I think he is destined to go far."

### **Alfred Kudzanai Muswaka – wine steward candidate**

Alfred Kudzanai Muswaka (25) was born and raised in Harare, Zimbabwe. He was forced to drop out of university due to financial constraints and moved to Cape Town to find work to further fund his studies. In November 2011, Muswaka found a job as a banqueting waiter and discovered a great interest in wine, albeit untutored.

He joined The Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa in December 2013, where he is now being mentored by head sommelier and esteemed wine judge Gregory Mutambe. Muswaka has shown great zeal in learning about wine and, sponsored by The Twelve Apostles Hotel, also did exceptionally well in his Front of House course at the Cape Wine Academy, which he completed last year. Gregory Mutambe, in a quest to further expose the young wine steward to the industry, has been mentoring the young candidate and inviting him to various tastings. At the South African Wine Tasting Championships in 2015 Muswaka had the opportunity to put his palate to the test against some of the country's best and managed to do very well for a wine novice.

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