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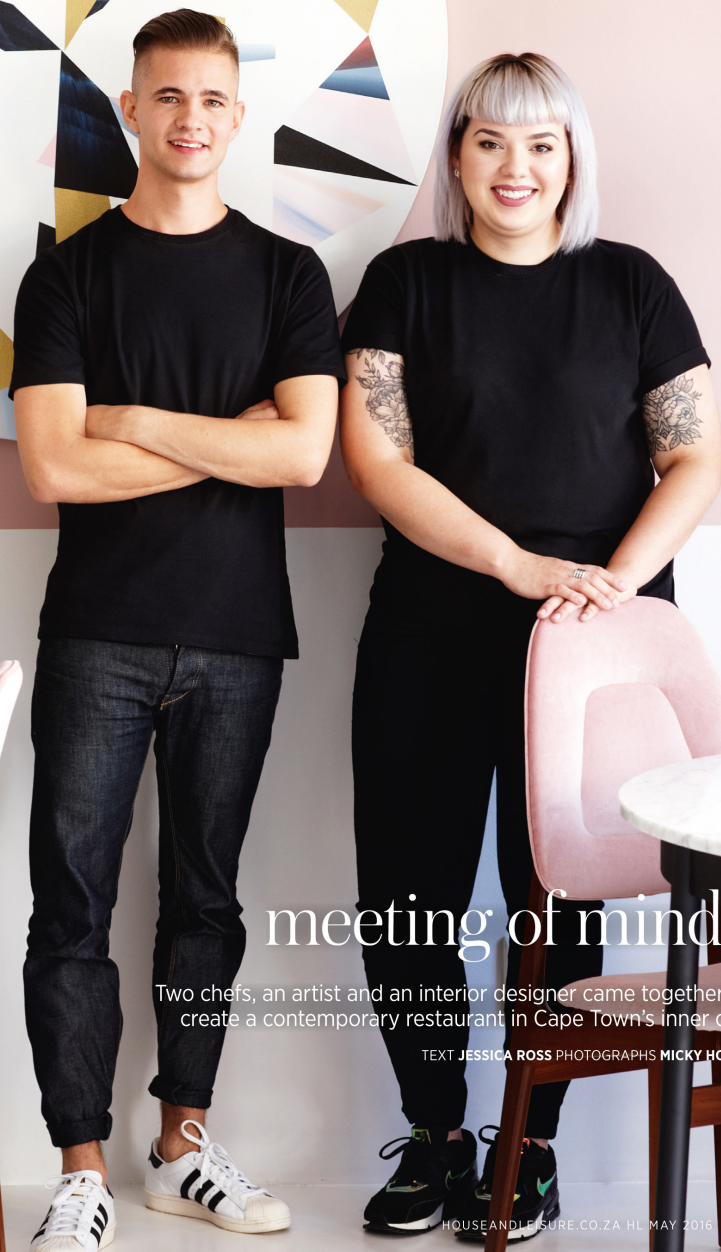
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meeting of minds

Two chefs, an artist and an interior designer came together to create a contemporary restaurant in Cape Town's inner city

TEXT JESSICA ROSS PHOTOGRAPHS MICKY HOYLE



Walking through SoHo, New York, you may find yourself on the corner of Mulberry Street and Prince. It's a lively spot where you'll discover a delicatessen, a shoe store, a bookshop, a Catholic church, a bric-a-brac market and old apartment blocks with crumbling facades. The neighbourhood is fun and bohemian, beloved by locals and hidden from crowds of tourists, and it's where Cornel Mostert and Cynthia Rivera would spend much of their downtime while studying at the Culinary Institute of America. Cornel, a Capetonian, had moved to New York to pursue his love of cooking at the CIA, where he met New Yorker Cynthia. 'After travelling, working and eating our way all over, we wanted to take what we had absorbed and start something of our own,' Cornel says.

Cynthia and Cornel soon found a place to house their project – back in Cape Town's Pepper Street, an inner-city location not unlike that street corner in New York. The name, Mulberry & Prince, followed naturally: 'New York is my favourite city and Cynthia's hometown; it just seemed right.'

'We got lucky,' Cynthia says. 'The building is heritage, and on knocking down some walls we discovered the old bricks and natural stone hidden behind the plaster.'

'Understated elegance' was the brief for interior designer Adri van Zyl of Atelier, who put together a palette that makes

heroes of the marble, stone and wood of the interior. Inside dusty pinks mingle with gold, warm copper and earth tones, while modern design lends a sophisticated look. It's a restaurant that makes you feel at home, while a refined aesthetic reminds you that you're in for a treat.

'It's a recipe for success,' artist Kurt Pio quips. After meeting Cornel and Cynthia, Kurt knew immediately that he wanted to be involved in creating Mulberry & Prince, and the pieces he painted to hang in the dining area mirror Adri's decor scheme. 'I wanted the viewer to be able to be involved in completing the works,' Kurt explains. 'Just like an actual diamond that changes and reflects the light and colours around it, so these take on endless colours of new facets from the minds of individual observers who visit.'

Then there's the menu: slow-cooked pork in brodo with charred leeks and cucumbers; ricotta gnudi served in a Parmesan broth with mushrooms; cod with ajo blanco and butterbeans; stracciatella cheese with sorrel and charred sourdough... It's 'New American' style, and a 'melting pot of cultures and cuisines,' says Cornel. Expect classic dishes with a modern spin – nothing pretentious, only feel-good grub coming together in perfect harmony with art and design. ☐ 12 Pepper Street, Cape Town, mulberryandprince.co.za



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT Mulberry & Prince's palette of pink and copper is complemented with natural textures; the shop's facade; dishes such as stracciatella on charred sourdough offer freshness on the Cape Town eatery's menu. PREVIOUS PAGE Cornel Mostert and Cynthia Rivera.