

travelogue RYAN VAN ZYL

Concierge at the Cape Royale Luxury Hotel and Residences



"Every day is different — [there is] a lot of variety," says concierge Ryan van Zyl. After learning the ropes at Harare's legendary Meikles Hotel, Van Zyl has worked at some of SA's top hotels including Hunter's Country House and the Mount Nelson Hotel. Part of the Cape Royale Luxury Hotel and Residences' opening team, he's been concierge at this five-star hotel since January 2008.

The most unusual request you've had on duty? A guest who wanted to buy an elephant. **A Cape Town experience a visitor should never miss?** A private Winelands experience. Fly into Franschhoek and do things like the Franschhoek Motor Museum at L'Ormarins and chocolate and wine tasting at Waterford. **A visitor to Cape Town should never leave without** the Meerlust Rubicon — it'll blow your mind. **Top three Cape Town restaurants?** Definitely La Colombe (021 794 2390). The Test Kitchen (021 447 2337) — Luke Dale-Roberts is a magician — and The Roundhouse (021 438 4347) which incidentally has one of my favourite chefs, Eric Bullpitt. **Most inspiring destination you've been to?** Italy. The history, culture, food, art, wine — it's got ticks in every box. And amazing hotels. When we stayed at the Hotel Cipriani in Venice, we arrived on little boats at the front. **Your next destination?** Hong Kong, China. Hotels like the Peninsula are very historical — they've been open for about 120 years now. I've always been fascinated by Asia's food and culture. **Worst travel experience?** I was flying into the UK one year and when the plane came into land it skidded on ice on the runway and actually went off onto grass. I'm still not a big fan of flying. **What is the first thing you do when you check into a hotel room?** Plug into the WiFi — that's the world we live in. **Which three items will you always find in your suitcase?** iPad, my charger cable for my iPad and iPhone. I always like to do research on the places I'm going to, so I'll have a folder with local information. **Favourite travel websites?** TripAdvisor

(www.tripadvisor.com) is the world's biggest review site for hotels, but they're also doing restaurants. Also, Tablet Hotels (www.tablethotels.com) and Hotels.com (www.hotels.com).

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Luke Dale-Roberts of The Test Kitchen. Hotel Cipriani in Venice

The Test Kitchen chef Luke Dale-Roberts has opened a new venture, The Pot Luck Club. See page 38

Contributors

Jackie Bischof is a South African journalist living in New York City.

The most challenging piece of writing you've had to do? I once worked on a developing politics feature that went through several rounds of edits and updates, the last of which reached me while I was at a remote camp in the bush. Responding to the editor's final questions at midnight on a Blackberry in a dark bird hide that



provided two bars of signal, while a jackal paced up and down outside the fence a few metres away from me, made it a truly unique experience. **Most interesting interview subject?** On a personal level it had to be my parents, whom I had the pleasure of interviewing for a memoir piece. **Ultimate holiday destination?** The Namib Desert and Swakopmund in Namibia are at the top of my list.

Palesa Madumo is a freelance fashion and lifestyle writer. She spent the day lunching with the multi-talented Simphiwe Dana. See page 18.

Your favourite music single at the moment? Paradise by Coldplay. **How would you define your style?** At the moment my style is



shambolic chic. **Most memorable moment of your time with Simphiwe?** Simphiwe is a gifted teacher so it's all in her words, but she also makes a mean prawn curry so I'd have to say having Sunday lunch with her was a highlight.

Beauty editor and stylist Leigh Toselli, together with her husband Patrick, own Studio Toselli, and spent a day working with Simphiwe Dana. See page 18.

Local fashion designer whose work you love? There are quite a few but I'm currently loving Clive Rundle and Suzaan Heyns. **Most challenging styling shoot?** A two-week shoot in Mauritius working



14 hours a day in cyclone season. Keeping the models looking fabulous was near impossible; the sweat literally poured off them, sunburn was a challenge for all of us, makeup was melting and the humidity was unbearable. **Your ultimate holiday destination?** New Zealand. I love the South Island: the wild beaches with not a soul in sight.

ISSUE 84 FEBRUARY 2012

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