



river view



The new Summerfields River Café is a conservatory-style restaurant designed by architect Klippie du Toit, which brings a new and unique dining experience to the Lowveld



Owners Ilse and Andre van Heerden had always dreamed of owning this style of restaurant and the design was inspired by a similar restaurant Ilse visited while in the Netherlands. "I was told I must visit a place called de Kas in Amsterdam. It is an old greenhouse that has been turned into a restaurant with vegetables and fruit trees growing in it. It was just beautiful."

Ilse explains the need for a new restaurant space. "The new River Cafe was long overdue. The old River Cafe was a disaster when it rained in summer and it was very cold in winter. The new River Cafe is light, it smells of nature, it's a happy place and when you enter you automatically smile!"

The building wows thanks to the use of glass and steel structures. All sides open completely; there is a very high, transparent roof, which controls the space's temperature; a fireplace with a state-of-the-art chimney and flowerboxes with herbs, lemons and edible flowers.

"This was EarthSwitch Architects' first design for such a style building," explains Klippie du Toit. "It was an exploration of new ideas and building features, so the new River Cafe does not feature any of our signature features."

"We wanted to integrate with the natural surroundings, so much so that an existing tree was kept and the space was designed to incorporate the tree," he continues.

A rock-clad wall was kept from the original structure and converted into a reading corner. To overcome the cold fronts of Lowveld winters a large fireplace and chimney were cleverly designed to fit the space.

Klippie's favourite part of this original design is the views. "I love the views from every angle. The curved roof shape and height of the structure create an amazing experience inside the structure too."

"Now our lodge guests can walk with ease to the River Cafe for a long lazy lunch, breakfast or a romantic dinner," says Ilse. "We hope all our guests will leave totally amazed by the beauty of the structure and our organic food."

food bite

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served. Fresh from the farm to the table. Summerfields grow their own herbs, vegetables, and fruit and their hens are responsible for the organic eggs. They only use grass-fed beef, lamb and duck, with trout coming from Dullstroom.

INFO Opening times: Breakfast 8 to 11am, lunch 12 to 3.30pm, dinner 6.30 to 9pm. 013 737 6500, 082 611 6956 or book direct on Dineplan.





Lateral Design

