

FIVE MINUTES WITH IRNA VAN ZYL

Researching the Overberg's underworld of shark-cage diving and perlemoen smuggling for her crime thriller was thirsty work, but it also gave the author plenty of opportunity to pop into her favourite restaurant, Havercrofts in Stanford



> WHY THE LOVE FOR HAVERCROFTS?

Life always seems easier on the other side of the mountain and I love the owners, Innes and Brydon Havercroft. I have not found a hostess as welcoming, funny and intelligent as Innes anywhere and I really like Brydon's no-nonsense, unpretentious food.

> WHICH OF THE DISHES TICKLE YOUR FANCY?

Brydon's soufflé for starters, the fish curry or pork belly for mains and the divine lemon tart. But you haven't lived unless you've shared a glass of "vino collapso" with Innes, preferably a local Raka Biography Shiraz or Creation Sauvignon Blanc.

> WE HEARD YOUR NEW CRIME THRILLER, *DEAD IN THE WATER*, IS SET IN THE AREA?

It's set in Hermanus, Gansbaai and Pearly Beach. The floods about three years ago, the Klein River washing away the road, the increase in shark-cage diving tourism in Gansbaai and uncontrolled perlemoen

poaching in the region made it an excellent background for a murder story with a female detective named Storm van der Merwe.

> WHAT FUELS YOU DURING THE CREATIVE WRITING PROCESS?

I can't stay away from black Nespresso while I'm in my study.

> YOU ALSO WRITE A FOOD COLUMN?

It's called "The Accidental Foodie". The editor-in-chief of *Eat Out*, Anelde Greeff, came up with the title. Being more of an accidental foodie than a real one, my column is more about the atmosphere, the company and the general happenings out there than the food. I try to write for ordinary people looking for an interesting meal during the week.

> BEING AN ACCIDENTAL FOODIE, DO YOU COOK?

I am desperately trying to expand my repertoire but fillet steak on the braai, cooked with pepper and lemon, seems to be the fallback option when entertaining.

Comfort food is salmon (yes!), sweet potato mash and Tenderstem broccoli. In our household I call it the "classic".

> YOU'RE A WINE LOVER, WE HEAR. WHAT'S YOUR POISON?

My favourites change all the time, but currently I love Shiraz (although Pinot Noir is creeping up the list) and sometimes Chenin Blanc. I'm liking De Trafford Blueprint Shiraz or its sister Sijnn Shiraz (if you can get hold of it!). Merwida Chenin Blanc and Ghost Corner Sauvignon Blanc are also high up on the list. I'm very much a local wine drinker and even when abroad I seek out South African wines.

Follow @irnavanzyl on Twitter. *Dead in the Water* (Penguin) (Moordvis in Afrikaans) is available at all good book stores.

