



OBJECT TROUVÉ
Silent memories

TEXT JAMES GREEN

If these knives could speak, what would they say? Perhaps they'd speak of their creation. A man needed a knife. He needed a knife but he had no money to buy one, and in the desert of Western Sudan where he lived there wasn't even a knife to buy. No money, no knife, only his ingenuity to rely upon. And then around him he saw the shape of a knife in materials which had never imagined being a knife at all.

He took pieces of coloured plastic from broken washing bowls and bent these to make the sheaths, a few bullet casings from the last civil war were crushed flat to form the pommels, and he reused abandoned copper wire to bind the whole thing together

—hiding this beneath leather scraps. Then he had a knife, strong and fit for its purpose.

If these knives could speak, perhaps they'd speak of their parts. They'd tell us how the plastic bowls had found their way into the desert some time in the last 40 years and what that journey had felt like. The metal too, which he transformed into the blades, would tell us where it had begun its life. "I was deep within the engine of a German motorbike," shouts one. "I was intimately involved with a Japanese washing machine. No more suds," shouts the other. Trying to work out where the materials come from is, of course, a matter of the most extreme and directionless guesswork.

Still, you'll have to take me at my word. The blades are sharp and it feels like they've been used; some areas show a "good patina of use" as the auction catalogue says, which simply means that they are darkly stained with layers and layers of old blood. Goat blood, sheep blood... Ah, if objects could speak, imagine the stories they'd tell us.

But thank goodness they can't for precisely the same reason. Knives by their nature must have lived through some harrowing moments, and who would want a sad object shouting in the house? Even worse would be the din of chatter from the happier items, enough to drive any collector mad. So here's to silent objects ingeniously made, and to our imaginations for coming up with histories for them.

For knives like these expect to pay between R700 and R1 200

THE GREEN (R)EVOLUTION
Raw Food & Juice Bar

TEXT D-EMPRESS PHOTOGRAPHY GARETH JACOBS

As New Year detox and healthy living resolutions wane, consider the boon of raw food. Raw foodism is a growing movement in SA and is gaining traction among people from all walks of life.

Essentially, raw foodists follow a diet comprising mostly uncooked and unprocessed foods. Think veggies, nuts and all things natural creatively assembled as a raw food meal. Surprisingly tasty and filling, eating raw food brings you closer to nature, is bursting with nutrition, creates boundless energy and is kind to the earth.

Former advertising agency exec Shelley Robertson opened SA's first set menu raw food restaurant in Joburg in October last year. Nestled in the tranquil surrounds of the 44 Stanley designer boutique complex, the restaurant, simply named Raw Food and Juice Bar, is a gourmet raw nirvana. Over the past three months, the space has become a firm favourite for everything from smoothies to pizzas.

Robertson lives the life she loves and loves the life she lives as a raw foodist. Currently living a 70% raw lifestyle,



Robertson, who chose to be vegan for ethical reasons, is working up to a 100% raw diet. Propelled by a vision to share her journey, she translates her experience into beautifully presented, seasonal dishes.

In Robertson's words: "The best thing about eating at Raw is that it's an experience. You walk away feeling invigorated and alive."

Raw Food and Juice Bar, 44 Stanley Avenue, Milpark, 074 179 4670, www.facebook.com/rawfoodandjuice



LOSING YOUR WAY
The Gray Restaurant

TEXT JONATHAN CANE PHOTOGRAPHY GARETH JACOBS

If I admit that I got lost three times on the way there and once on the way home, that the only other time I visited Boksburg was to go to a sleazy club in a warehouse with transvestites wearing cheap makeup and car mechanics with dirty fingernails, or when driving past on the way to a trout farm or somewhere equally waspy then you might suspect me of being the snob that I most likely am.

Being a snob means missing out on lots of interesting things. Like transvestites in China City eyelashes with Asian tattoos in all the wrong places. And really delicious food like a chicken liver and port parfait with nutty brioche, followed by pan seared Scottish salmon on a bed of tagliatelle and fresh peas in all the wrong places.

In the case of The Gray Restaurant the wrong place is next to the Harley Davidson dealership on North Rand Road, very, very far away from home. And it's not just the location that feels wrong, but the interiors as well. Actually, I'd like to add to the list of wrongs: the music, the plating and the patrons. In fact, everything is wrong except the food.

But, oh the food, how technically adept, how well cooked the daily-planned five-course set meal. If you can just close your eyes and block your ears, and focus on the bold and cheeky curried butternut espuma, perfectly balanced by

Five course set meal R275

- Curried butternut espuma served with toasted almonds
- Chicken liver and port parfait with nutty brioche
- Pan seared Scottish salmon on a bed of tagliatelle, fresh peas, lemon and thyme sauce
- Char-grilled popseye steak
- Rosemary pomme purée, harissa, glazed baby carrots and black pepper jus
- Lemon tart served with a fruit sorbet and berry coulis

crunchy almond flakes, you will be rewarded for getting lost. If you can just ignore the out-of-mode 1997-style plating you will find it hard not to smile at, and dig your fingers into, the chicken liver parfait. Each new plate that is delivered to the table is perfectly balanced in itself, and in relation to the story of flavours and textures of the whole meal.

That the food is technically excellent did not detract from the enormous question hanging over my meal. Not what is espuma — this one the knowledgeable staff can answer — but why? Why this kind of food now? Why foaming swirls of coulis, square food? Why here, in the shadow of landing airplanes? How are we getting it so wrong in Joburg I thought as I drove home, feeling more lost than ever, even though my trip home took only a third of the time.

The Gray Restaurant, 38 North Rand Road, Hughes, Boksburg, 011 823 4184, www.gray-restaurant.com. Booking essential for dinner on Friday and Saturday

