

the Soapbox

Fashion | Food | Art | Design

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Silverspoon

A touch of thread and fabric for good measure.

Ginger Pops

About the yummy cakes that Beck makes.

The Music Kitchen

Backstage and up close with Mark Doward.

Critical Mass

Pedal through Port Elizabeth patiently please.

Friendly Strangers

Getting Cozy with a Friendly Stranger.



A Taste of Perfection

Behind the counter with Masterton's.

It's an old fashioned love story. A young man meets a young lady, and they fall in love. But the world is a practical place, and the young man needs to provide for his young lady. So he decides to start his own business. A tea and coffee business, to be exact.

But before we go any further, let's go back to the beginning for a second. He grew up in some tough times. It was an age of 'do or die'. Young boys were forced to become young men very quickly. Self made men were the order of the day.

He fought his way through the First World War, but in the years to come he never spoke about his experiences during that time, at all. After the war, he hopped on a ship and left for sunny South Africa, had his heart stolen by a young lady and, well, you know the rest.

Fast forward to the part where he falls in love: So he travels half-way across the globe to Ceylon (Modern day Sri Lanka), the then centre of the Tea world, to learn from the great tea masters themselves. He came back to South Africa (Port Elizabeth to be exact), and set up shop in what is now Govan Mbeki Ave. His doors opened for the first time on December the 4th, 1924.

His name, was Ronald 'Jock' Masterton, and he was just 27 years old.

Coffee advertisements will try to convince you that the coffee trade involves lots of time spent patiently waiting around for the occasional white-clad South American farmer to show up with a coffee sack-laden donkey in tow behind him. The reality is that coffee is

big business. It is the second most traded commodity in the world after oil. No wonder it's commonly referred to as 'Black Gold'.

The Masterton's store in Russell Road is the local hub of this global coffee trade. Don't let this building's charming old world facade fool you, for within its cool and aromatic depths lie a world that is every bit as busy and bustling as a stock exchange floor.

"My father used to put his hat on, and with briefcase in hand would walk to Summerstrand visiting clients along the way. He always got the sale," says James Masterton with a note of pride in his voice.

That work ethic passed on to everyone that works in the business. There is a strong sense of accomplishment among family and staff. A dedication towards not only getting the job done, but getting it done properly. Their motto is "constantly in pursuit of excellence" which is fitting because this kind of a job never has an ending.

Photography

There are many other family members who have worked in the store at one time or another, and then moved on to other careers. But there have been a few who have decided to make a life of it.

"I'm going into my 55th year here at Masterton's," said Bea, Jock's daughter, "and my sister Jean has been here for 41 years." Jean adds: "Working here gives me a strong sense of purpose. I don't really want to retire, but I'll be here as long as I can." "I can be on holiday, but my mind will always be here with the rest of them in spirit during the routines of the day," she said. "I will shed a lot of tears the day I have to leave this place for good. But the day I can't get up those stairs in the front of the store, is the day I need to retire," said Bea. "But then again," she said with a thoughtful look on her face, "no one ever truly retires from this place."

Not too many people know (although they really should) that Masterton's not only sells coffee, but they are master blenders as well. They have the technical expertise to develop a custom blend to your exacting tastes, free of charge. Your special recipe will be filed away, and be faithfully reproduced on your next visit. Their working database of personal customer blends goes back in time as far back at the 1950's.

A master roaster and blender of coffee not only has to be well trained, but needs years of experience to be able to produce the desired effects. Current master roaster and blender James Masterton has been in the industry for more than 40 years. He first cut his teeth in

the business at a Tea and Coffee firm other than his father's. "I started out as a shipping clerk, and then moved on to sales. I worked there for many years, eventually I helped to set up a large-scale coffee processing factory in Cape Town. In 1969, my father asked me to join him and I accepted his offer. But long before that date, he taught me about many aspects of the business. He was this huge reservoir of knowledge and experience, and I was very privileged to have learned so much from him."

James took over after Jock's passing, having been at the helm since 1980. So the wheels continue turning, and a new generation of Mastertons came of age and began their careers at Masterton's. Like with the generation before them, some have gone on to other careers, and others have stayed. About a decade ago, Jock's grandson Ryler joined the business. A highly efficient administrator, he is committed to bringing Masterton's into the digital era.

"Back when I started," said Ryler, "we had a department of people who would manually capture and process invoices and orders. Just about all of that is done digitally now. We are also making good use of readily available technologies. For instance, we now have an online ordering system in place on our website".

"It's an exciting industry to be in." Said Ryler. "Every day is different, and you encounter things that affect what you do from all quarters. Things like earthquakes

in Guatemala or political instability in one of our many coffee producing countries for instance will affect coffee prices." The world has shrunk with the advent of faster forms of communication. And this has made the coffee game an ever more complex one.

Coffee equals passion. And life has a wonderful way of creating patterns that ripple through it like the surface of a lake. Ryler has just recently gotten married to his lovely wife Nicole, who now works beside him. Their relationship is a reflection of their work surroundings in a microcosm. It is a place run on love and highly charged creativity. It is a place where new ideas and time honoured tradition are married together to produce awe-inspiring flavours which are harmonious and invigorating to the body and soul.

When the doors to the store open this December the 4th it will be 88 years to the day since Jock Masterton first opened for business. By all accounts he was a hard working, decent, well-respected and well loved man. And in many ways, he left behind his greatest blend: a perfect and loving working relationship between his descendants and the loyal staff that support them. Jock Masterton left behind more than a just a business. He left behind a Legacy.

For the full article, go to
www.the-soapbox.co.za



Wianéle Photography



Port Elizabeth-based photographer, Wianéle Briers, offers an exquisite collection of fine art photographic prints. Her images enhance the interiors of businesses, hotels, guesthouses and homes across South Africa in a flexible range of formats created for corporate & residential clients.

"As an artist I capture the core essence of my subject"

info@wianellephotography.co.za
or wianelle@gmail.com
Mobile: +27-83-403-4737

Silverspoon comes clean with The Soapbox...

Silver Spoon supplies 25 stores country wide, but it's definitely worth it to stop by the store attached to their Richmond Hill studio. "Coming into our store means that you might find a few pieces that weren't included in our season's collection as we test new cuts by putting them in our store. All the shops we supply are fantastic, but coming to us gives you a little sneak peek into the machine, as our store is part of our factory."

The Silver Spoon range is also available online. We asked them if buying clothes online was a smart move. "You should. We were quite sceptical of the SA online market to start with, but with free deliveries and free returns what is there really to lose? You like something, you click, it's delivered to your house within 2 days and if you don't like it, you phone and get it collected. Sometimes it is just nicer trying something on at home, plus you can mix and try it with what you already have."

In a moment of introspection, Stefanie and Dieter explain their design ethos. "Silver Spoon is a line that makes us happy. We make functional pieces with character; things you could wear to the market. Or the park. Or a visit to your distant aunt for your usual cup of tea. It's you, with a touch of thread and fabric thrown in for good measure."

You can buy Silver Spoon online through;
www.36boutiques.com and www.prettyplease.co.za.



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Yum Love: Ginger Pops treats the Soapbox :)

Ginger Pops creations are always one of a kind, and they get noticed by the most unlikely people. "I was commissioned to make a 'Mythbusters' cake. So I make a 3-tier one with little figurines of Adam Savage and Jamie Hyneman on the top. Somehow Adam Savage saw it and re-tweeted it on Twitter. I had a ridiculous amount of traffic on all my sites that weekend!"

I get a lot of inspiration from Japanese anime, generally the bright colours, big eyes, cute and fun looking expressions, as well as comics, tv games, movies etc. I also love flowers, vintage lace and soft pastel combinations that warms us with the nostalgia of our Grandparents' and parents' eras. "

Aside from the cake making, she also has a very popular line of desserts and sweets. "I will have a stall at 3 different markets, The Chinese market in Kabega Park on the first Sunday of every month; the Granary market on the first Wednesday of every month (for the duration of Summer); and the Brioche market."

She will have plenty of your favourite goodies for sale at these markets: delicious macrons in many different colors and flavours; decadent peanut butter chocolate brownies and bite-sized cake pops.

"Cake can't just look good, it must taste good too!"

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An Interview with Mark Doward

The man behind the Music Kitchen

The music scene can be cut-throat. And the PE music scene even more so. Professional musicians who are reasonably unknown in the city find it hard to break into the PE music scene. But once they become a known quantity, then Port Elizabethians will stand by them until the end of time. We're kinda like hillbillies that way.

So it's safe to say that aspiring local musicians stand a close to zero chance of NEVER getting off the ground because it is just so hard to get a break in this town. And it's not like we don't have the talent. What they really need is a foot in the door. If you think you've got what it takes, then Mark James Doward may very well be that figurative foot.

The Music Kitchen is Mark's charming brainchild. It is both a high concept local music development platform, as well as a full on premier music night spot, a match made in heaven.

The Music Kitchen is one of the most down-to-earth music venues in town. They've had some pretty high flyers in their line-ups: Arno Carstens; Karen Zoid; Zebra & Giraffe; The Lucas Reunion and Albert Frost but to name a few. But the genius of the Music Kitchen is its accessibility to those unknowns who have talent, and just need a packed audience to perform to. That's what sets it apart from any other stage or pub venue.

"I have two nights a week that's open for that kind of thing," Mark explains. "We call it the 'Muso's Sing for their Supper' evening, on Wednesdays. What happens is that they get up on stage and play five or six songs and then in return they get a free meal. The critical factor, is that they have to be re-invited back. So that's the difference. Anyone can come play the first time

but they need to be re-invited. That helps us maintain a decent standard of entertainment."

"We also have the 4 Winds Music Club here every Thursday evening, which has been going since 1969 and is one of the oldest clubs in the country. It's just a group of guys that get together to play folk music. They also play all their new music with no entrance fee. So that's another avenue for new musicians to get great exposure."

Music isn't the only thing on offer either. If you're feeling particularly cerebral, you may want to try out the Trivia Tuesday quiz evenings. It's R20 per person or R100 per team of 6. There is a league as well, so it doesn't have to just be a once off event.

There's not much written about Mark Doward. And for good reason. He's very approachable, but a bit on the quiet side. There's a very good reason for this. "I believe that the musicians are why everyone is here, so they need to be in the limelight. I don't need to be. I am not a musician, but I love music the same way any musician would. All I do is help to facilitate between artists and their audiences."

Check out our website to read about one of the most awesome things to happen to Mark since he opened his doors.

For the full article, go to www.the-soapbox.co.za



69 Mangold Street
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The Music Kitchen is a versatile live music / function venue with an established pub and restaurant. Host of regular national acts and many local favourites.

Consider holding your special event
(birthday to teambuilding) with us.



Upcoming gigs at the Music Kitchen

Every Tuesday - Tuesday Trivia - EAT DRINK & THINK
Every Thursday - Four Winds Music Club - LOCAL LIVE & LEKKER

- 21 Nov - Sing for Your Supper (Muso's only) and Steak special (R50 - 300g Steak egg & chips)
- 23 Nov - Joe van de Linden & Wendy Oldfield - R70
- 24 Nov - Lucas Reunion - Free Entry
- 25 Nov - Music Kitchen Bash for Ash (Benefit) - R30
- 30 Nov - Pistola - R50
- 01 Dec - Claire Venn's 30th - Lucas Reunion - Free entry
- 08 Dec - The Music Kitchen ROCKS
Benefit for Dorian du Tiot - R50
- 12 Dec - The Jason Hartman Band - All or nothing tour - R50
- 14 Dec - Koos Kombuis - R100
- 20 Dec - Blues Broers - R100
- 21 Dec - The Music Kitchen ROCKS the end of the world!!!
- 22 Dec - Black South Easter - R40
- 27 Dec - Stefan Dixen & Stuart Reece - R30
- 28/9 Dec - Elvis Blue - R120
- 31 Dec - NEW YEARS EVE BASH
Stuart Reece Band w/ Lindey Schouw
- 05 Jan - Natalie Chaptman - Rtbc
- 25 Jan - Shannon Hope - R50
- 1/2 Feb - Centre Stage CCR tribute



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The Soapbox gets Kung Fu fit with Shun Wu Tang

The human body wasn't made to run on a treadmill like a hamster. It was made to be used.

Traditional Chinese Martial Arts was created to develop functional fitness. "What makes Kung Fu so effective is that it is a discipline that covers all the bases: Flexibility; strength; agility; speed and mental well being." says Clifton James, a Kung Fu 'Shifu' or 'Teacher'. "We also offer traditional Chinese Lion Dance training; as well as traditional Battle Formation drills which is very rare in South Africa."

"Ladies shouldn't be put off by the confrontational aspects of the Martial Arts. A good school introduces these elements gradually, as and when a student is ready to take things to the next level. We spend about a year or so doing plenty of contact drills to get you used to contact before introducing you to sparring training."

For Shifu Clifton, it's not all about the combat aspects of Kung Fu.

"Learning how to fight is a by-product of what you'll learn here. You will soon realize that the person who you'll be working the hardest to beat, is yourself." he said.



The Soapbox relaxes with River's Rest

Nestled in the beautiful Bushman's River village, the River's Rest holiday-house is an oasis of peace and tranquility.

"I wanted people to have a home-away-from home." said Owner and Manager Liz Lilley "There aren't many seaside holiday destinations that offer safe, affordable accommodation for an entire extended family under one roof." River's Rest can accommodate a total of 14 people.

You'll never be bored here as the house is packed with entertainment opportunities. "We have a games room that offers snooker; table tennis and darts." You also don't have to be far away from your favourite sport or movies. "We also have a DSTV decoder (Bring your own smartcard); Huge LCD TV screen and sound system. We recommend having evening braais under our beautiful Milkwood tree. We're less than a 5 minute walk away from the river and beach as well!"

Another outstanding feature of the house is the outdoor shower. "While the house itself has 3 full bathrooms, we also offer a private and secluded outdoor shower. No holiday is complete without a wonderful warm shower on a summer's evening, under bright African stars."

River's rest is the Bushman's River's best kept secret.



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"I want to ride my bicycle"...

Critical Mass is a global movement of cyclists who get together to promote safe cycling; to create a city cycling community and to help people engage with their city by bike. All are welcome to join, so Lycra is not a prerequisite! Just wear what you are comfortable in - shorts, jeans, fancy dress....

The Critical Mass Ride is always on the Last Friday of the Month. It starts from Kings beach parking at 6:30pm and takes the route chosen by the people at the front of the ride. It is very leisurely and usually involves a half way stop. It is by definition an unorganized and organic ride that changes with the people who join.

Some ride in solidarity with those who have died on the roads; others ride for the thrill of being on a bike! You have responsibility for yourself and for making the ride fun, safe and accessible to everyone. Please bring a cheerful attitude; bike spares; and look out for each other on the ride.

It is NOT about 'reclaiming the road' from cars. It is about showing all road users that it is fun; enjoyable and possible to cycle in PE, that we can co-exist with other road users.

Joint Critical Mass on: 28th Dec & 25th Jan



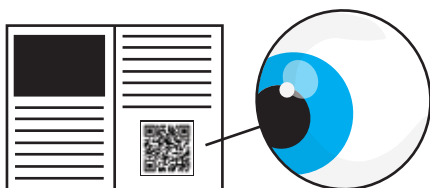
THE HOW TO... ?



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"We love PE. It's not only our home, but yours as well"...

Whether you know it or not, Port Elizabeth is an incredible place to be. It's full of friendly and incredibly bright and talented people.

These are the kinds of people that not only have dreams of their own but they're out there every day working towards getting closer to realising them.

These people are driven, but humble. It becomes second nature to them to downplay what they do. Limelight does not sit easily with most of us, but sometimes you just need to shine.

The Soapbox was designed to showcase the people behind the products. It will always be a place where fans can get just a little closer to their heroes.

We would like to dedicate our first ever issue to you, the wonderful people of Port Elizabeth.

We love the city, and you should too :)

We look forward to introducing you to more amazing people that live in our city.

Sincerely,
the Guys from the Soapbox



Events Guide Sponsored by The Granary



An Exhibition of Ron Belling's amazing aviation paintings @
The Ron Belling Art Gallery throughout December and January

The Boss Iced Tea Music Sessions Every Wed ,Friday and Saturdays @
The Friendly Stranger

- Artists include Gary Thomas and Hands in Pockets among others

Exhibitions @ the Friendly Stranger during December 2012

- Wesley Van Eeden of The Hope Project - **Illustrator**

The Granary Night Market 4pm til late

- 5 December 2012

Critical Mass Ride 28 December - Kings Beach Parking lot, 6:30 PM

The Famous Port Elizabeth Ghost Walk

- Throughout December.

Contact Rose Trehaven @ 041 583 2584

Exhibitions @ the Friendly Stranger during January 2013

- Amy Scheepers - Fashion Photographer

- Jedd Mcneilage - **Illustrator**

The Granary Night Market, 4pm til late

- 2 January 2013

Critical Mass Ride 25 January

- Kings Beach Parking lot, 6:30 PM



Genius at work

Getting cozy with a Friendly Stranger

It takes a leap of faith to follow your dreams. Tabita and Dameon happened to share one.

Finding the right premises was a very important issue. "Originally the idea was for a much larger warehouse-type of space, which would serve as a creative hub. So there would be spaces which people could hire out, a graphic designer here, an artist there, an architect in that space, with the coffee shop below. And at night it would be transformed into a music venue," said Tabita.

"We wanted a place where we could feed the local artistic community, literally and figuratively." Said Dameon. "We also wanted to do it in a way that was honest, and not at all pretentious."

"While these large spaces exist, security would be an issue. Then this area, the old Shamrock House, became available, and so we decided to go on a smaller scale."

In many ways, their lack of formal industry training has aided them in their quest to stay true to their vision for the space. "This space is very much a true reflection of Dameon and myself. We tried to work out a synthesis between contemporary and old mix. I wanted something fresh, but not to lose that homey feeling."

"I feel that most people, as much as they love contemporary, want to feel comfortable at the end of the day. That little bit of untidiness, but still organized chaos. That comfortable, lived in feeling that it brings. We are very much against trends. If something is trendy, my immediate reaction is to say 'lets not do that, and make our own style instead'. Trendy people will follow the trend of the moment. But then when the trend shifts, they will leave you and go off onto the next trendy thing. Trends are horrible!"

To view the Friendly Stranger as any other run-of-the-mill coffee shop would be to do it an injustice. It must be seen as a living, breathing work of performance art that is constantly changing and evolving. This really is the result two people's search for the ultimate in self-expression, made real. "We have so many great ideas in store for this place," says Tabita, "we just need to find the time to get to it!"

They suffered a minor setback at the end of October. It rained heavily, and many businesses in town were affected. The Friendly Stranger was not spared. "Water started flooding our lower floor through the wall and floor that's built into the hillside. So we had to shut down for repairs." Said Dameon. "We were running a pump that did something like 1000L an hour and it still wasn't enough to get all the water out."

Shamrock House has an interesting past. Some say it was the offices for the Harbour Captain during the early years of the city.

Rain is a blessing in African culture. We asked if they thought that the highly unusual event of 10 days of heavy rain and the subsequent flooding that affected them, was perhaps the ghost of the old Harbour Captain giving them his blessing.

"Yes, I think so." Said Tabita, with a mischievous smile on her face.

For the full article, go to www.the-soapbox.co.za



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