

Richard Phiri, executive chef at Thanda Private Game Reserve

Born in Malawi where he completed a degree in food production, Richard Phiri also trained in Milan for four years. Now the executive chef at Thanda Private Game Reserve, Phiri has a house in Pietermaritzburg and is married with one son.

1. What inspires you when cooking?

Cooking for me is a huge passion; I love feeding people.

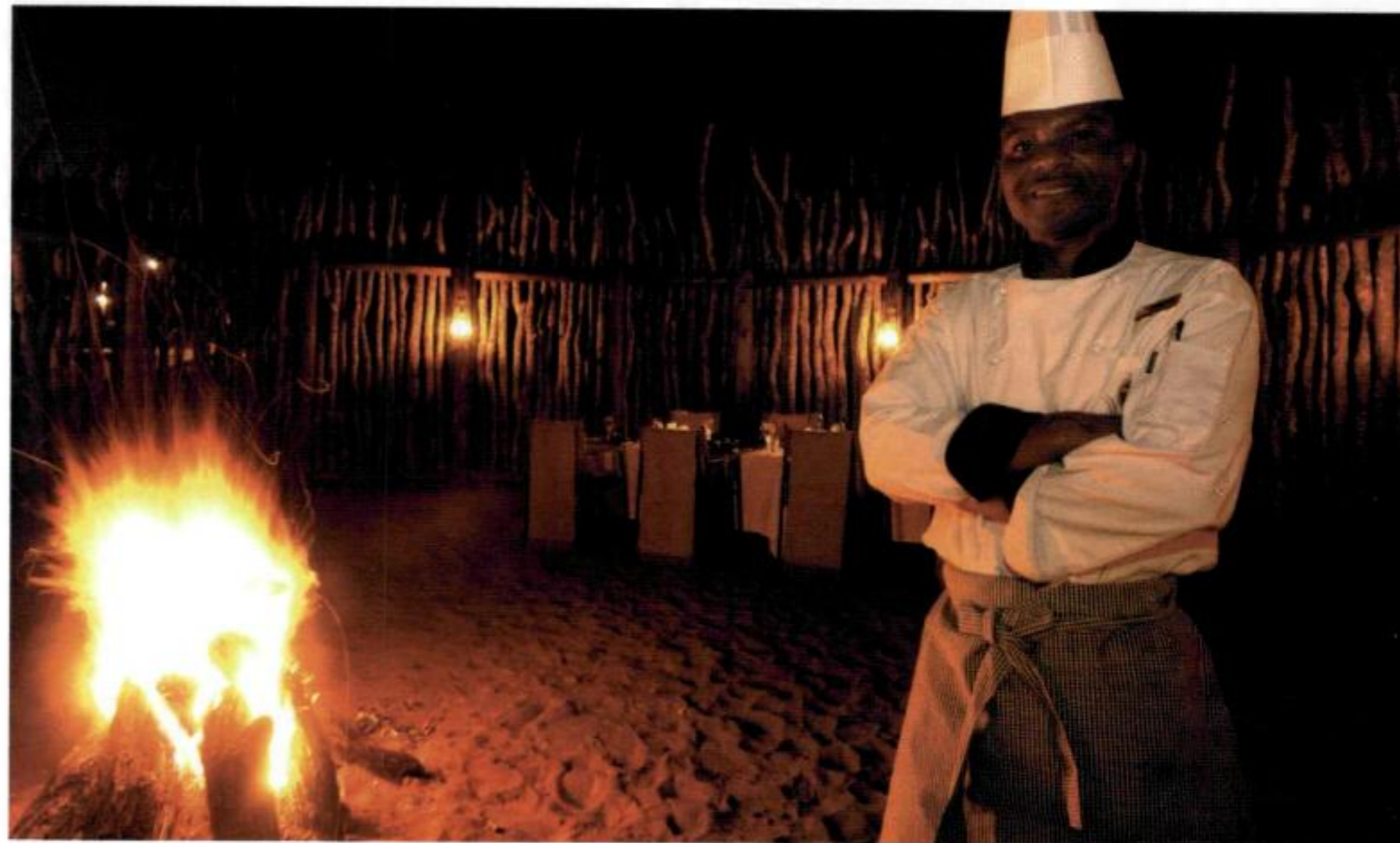
2. What is your philosophy in terms of natural and organic food or ingredients?

I try to use only the freshest ingredients available. We have planted a herb and vegetable garden at the royal suite, which I visit every day.

3. As a chef, what are your greatest challenges?

My biggest challenge is to come up with new ideas constantly. I have to create new set menus all the time and focus on variety. I would not dream of serving the same meal twice.

4. In terms of spicing up catered events, what are your three favourite ways of doing so?



- colours must compliment my food
- who the guests are relative to what I cook for that event
- dietary requirements.

5. What is your signature dish?

Homemade muesli and homemade ice creams.

6. With corporate entertainment and

conferencing budgets still reflecting the signs of difficult times, what are the challenges in creating attractive menus at more conservative rates?

When creating special menus, you need to be more creative.

Using more local and natural ingredients certainly helps.