

# guy bower

This Joburg foodie and ex advertising man can't live without whisky, pork and a plentiful supply of fresh fennel

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I hate the word “catering,” Guy Bower admits over the din at a busy café after his Monday lunch order rush.

It's easy to see why – the word is unduly two dimensional for what he's about.

The Bowery, as his fine-food-purveying brand is called, launched late last year and he has just set up a permanent *très* cool, design-savvy canteen with killer coffee. It supplies unfussy authentic fare for events, as well as inspired, organic, free-range meals delivered daily to hungry Joburgers who struggle to leave their desks. Dubbed the Food Club, this latter endeavour has shot from 10 to as many as 100 orders a day from people all too glad to forgo a greasy toasted sarmie in favour of, say, a grilled rump and chickpea salad. ‘It's important to me that my food is visually appealing rather than tasty alone,’ Guy says.

Without any major culinary influences growing up, Guy's food journey really got going when he was 19. ‘I lived in Milan with my step-aunt,’ he says. ‘Her husband's family had a farm outside the city with wild rabbits. I spent a lot of time in the kitchen.’

Looking ahead, the chef and avid cyclist plans to launch a series of events combining a 200km route with fine food and live entertainment at the finish. [thebowery.co.za](http://thebowery.co.za)

## ‘ENTERTAINING? MAKE SURE EVERYONE'S GLASS IS FULL.’

**What taste reminds you of childhood?** My gran's cherry cake. **If you were a drink, what would it be?** Whisky. It's old school and a classic gentleman's drink. **What's for supper tonight?** Spaghetti carbonara done the Roman way. **Where did you have your most memorable meal?** In a little Chinese restaurant in Milan in the 1990s, where I had gnocchi in a clear Asian sweet sauce that had been ordered for my five-year-old cousin. I ate it all and they had to order another one. **If you could take only five food items with you to a desert island, what would they be?** A pig, potatoes, fresh fennel, pepper and a good bottle of whisky. **What would be on the menu for your last meal?** Slow-cooked lamb shank and crispy roast potatoes with

a bottle of BlankBottle. **What's your main source of inspiration?** I am dyslexic and don't really read recipes or books. I get my inspiration visually from great food photos, well-shot recipe books and Instagram.

**Favourite sandwich filling?** Good smoked bacon and great cheese. **Weirdest thing you've ever eaten?** Some traditional dishes in Kenya that I'm not sure how to spell, goat liver stew being one of them. **Which wine are you enjoying right now?** Kaapzicht Cabernet Sauvignon. **What's your signature dish?** Pork belly. I have many styles and types but my favourite is a ginger, orange and chilli belly, roasted on halved oranges. **What's your favourite ice-cream flavour?** Pistachio. **A food aroma you love?** Bacon. **Absolute food weakness?** Mayonnaise. **What's your entertainment style?** Impromptu and experimental. I'm always arranging dinner parties at the last minute, which allows me to try new dishes. **Top tips for seamless entertaining?** Make sure everyone's glass is full and your menu isn't demanding of your time; use your oven more than your stove. **Soundtrack to the perfect dinner party?** Turntable Kitchen's monthly mixtape or a self-made playlist featuring a good mix from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. **What did**

**you want to be when you were young?** A professional skateboarder or an architect. **What do you think the next food trend will be?** Three-ingredient dishes bringing simple, great tasting food to life. **Advice for aspiring chefs?** Never stop experimenting; buy the best seasonal local ingredients you can afford; remember that recipes can evolve. Oh, and never freeze your meat. **Biggest culinary influence?** Seasonal farm feasts: simple food, beautifully presented, no fuss. It's going to be a big trend soon. **Favourite ingredient?** This is the hardest question. I don't have just one. Pork and fresh fennel. ☺

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