Fennel-and-tomato soup

We were thrilled to hear that designer Liam Mooney – one of VISI's favourite up-and-coming creatives – has just opened shop in Cape Town's CBD. When Liam's at home, however, he prefers fuss-free meals where soup and crusty bread is served in white porcelain bowls on an uncovered wooden table. Liam's soup of choice? His friend Lyndal Maunder's fennel-and-tomato-soup recipe. We paired this recipe with a soup bowl by Noleen Read (R160).

Ingredients:

- 1 pack dried shiitake mushrooms
- 500ml water
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 fennel bulbs, finely sliced
- 2 onions, finely sliced
- 1 large / 2 small potatoes peeled and cut into 1cm cubes
- 2 cups dry white wine
- 500g box chopped tomatoes
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 250ml cream
- salt and pepper

Method:

To a small pot, add your dried mushrooms and water. Bring to a simmer with the lid on and simmer for 20 minutes; then let it stand for as long as possible to steep. Strain just before using. Chop the leftover mushrooms as finely as possible. In a heavy-based pot, get your butter bubbling. Add the onions, fennel and potato, and season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook on a medium heat for 15 minutes. Add the wine and finely chopped mushrooms, and cook for 15 minutes with the lid off. Add the chopped tomatoes, crushed garlic, tomato paste, mushroom stock and cream, and simmer for another 10 minutes. Check to see if the potatoes are cooked and adjust the seasoning, if necessary. Serve with grated Parmesan, chopped chives and lots of ground pepper.