

Zanie Misbach, Malay cook who had a cooking program on TV last year.

"I grew up in the 60's at the top [of Bo-kaap] near the Noon Gun. Whenever I walk up and down, I always stop and look out over the Bo-kaap. I went this way to school and to town. This is my memory of the Bo-kaap. From there you can see three minarets, the harbor and the mountain. The name of this street is called 'Stadszicht', which means 'city view' in Dutch.

"I opened my first restaurant in the Bo-kaap. This community knows me as 'food'. It was a tent in the garden with green chiffon draped to the floor. People sat on the floor on cushions. It was a job serving the food, always bending over. I liked the idea of owning a restaurant. I sold it about 1994 and we started the Noon Gun Restaurant. It's my mom and dad's. My sister was up in arms when I made my version of 'bobotie'. 'Mama never made it like this,' she said. I taught her and her daughter to make other recipes. It's like that in families.

"The houses were all white before the bright colors. Thirty years ago I was the first to paint my house pink. In the guides it says it was a protest against Apartheid. For me it was a protest against white walls.

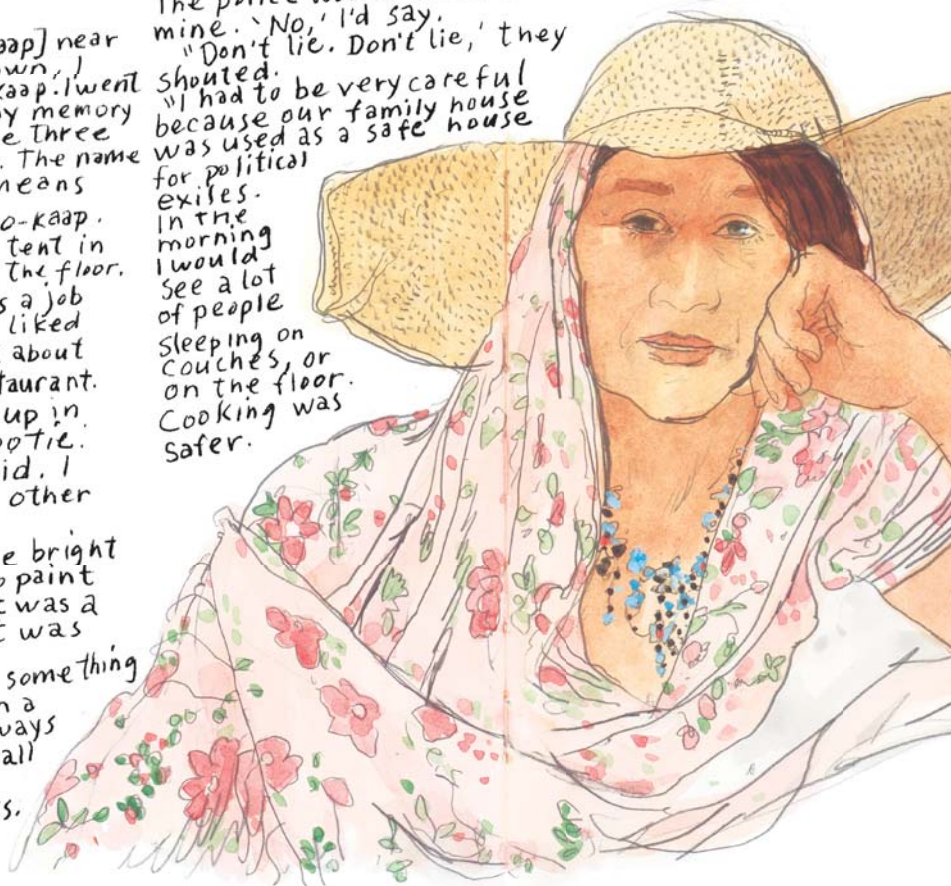
"No, not really. My real protest was something else. Non-whites weren't allowed to own a business during the apartheid, and I always had a business. I made wedding and ball dresses. We had become part western. You can see it, at weddings, in our dress. We're half-way. I had a white manageress who was a friend stand in front. I had to stand in the back of the shop.

The police would come and ask if the shop was mine. 'No,' I'd say.

"Don't lie. Don't lie," they shouted.

"I had to be very careful because our family house was used as a safe house for political exiles.

In the morning I would see a lot of people sleeping on couches, or on the floor. Cooking was safer.



Fozia: "My sister Shereen wrote a book about the Bo-kaap. Zanie, my other sister, hosted cooking programs on TV.

"When we were in school, our parents would put us in the family car and we would travel somewhere for a short vacation. When we travelled east and into the mountains, at some point my dad would pull over to the side of the road and look ahead. 'See those three peaks?' he would ask.



Ali, "We have a big family. My cousins and I do everything together. We look after each other." A workman passes by with a toolbox. "My uncle," he says.



I came to the Noon Gun Restaurant for their famous bobotie. It arrived with a loud bang. The Noon Gun - there really is one - above the restaurant on Signal Hill, fired off a round at noon every day since 1806.

My bobotie looked similar to Shepherd's pie with a yellow topping. Like a lot of oven dishes its not its visual beauty but rather its smell and taste that make this dish so popular.

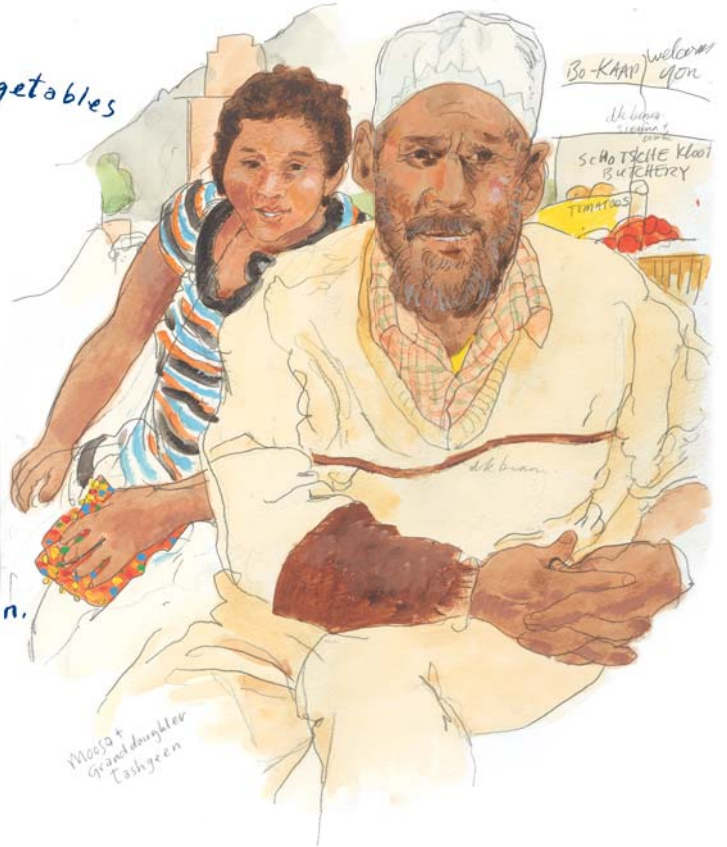
'They are called the three sisters.' we stared at them, thinking maybe they were named for us. Then we drove on. The restaurant is seasonal and now starting to get busy. I wish we had time to see each other more, like the old days."

Born in District 6, Moosa sells vegetables on Pentz road in the Bo-kaap. His grandchildren come by after school. He lets them collect money and give change to customers. He smiles watching them.

"I come here every morning at six. Everyone in Bo-kaap know me. Selling vegetables is the only living I can make. I can't write. I was very sick as a child and did not go to school. I could not walk. Doctors in Somerset hospital put iron on my legs to get them straight. "It is a nice place here. Some sell and go far away.

Where I live is nice but not like here. The higher you go up the Bo-kaap, the more money you pay. It is a better view and cooler in summer. But you can't live forever. You can have a lot of money but the money can't go with you down.

"I am satisfied. God let me live. He gave me another chance."



Moosa's Granddaughter Eashyeen

Emily Njengere
— Chef at the Gold
Restaurant, next to the
Gold Museum on the
edge of Bo-kaap.

"I was born in Cape Town. I watch my mother cook. I cook Indian, African and Malay recipes mostly. I like to cook stews and curry dishes. I always taste my food because it's important in a chef. I got a passion on cooking.

"Summer we have light meals. Couscous is nice and cool. Not a lot of spices. We serve it with chicken. Tagine chicken, cumin spice. Roast it a bit. Serve with couscous. I make nice mealie [corn porridge] soup. Portuguese introduced corn to Africa. We call it mealie. I also make Cape Malay pari crisps and chicken Satay from East Indies. I cook a nice bobotie. It's for winter time. It is a 'Cape Malay' dish and the national dish of South Africa. "It's also a historical dish. When the slaves from the east came to the Cape in the 17th century, the ingredients for the recipe were already growing in the gardens. All they needed were the spices like masala, turmeric, cumin, coriander, etcetera. It was one more blend of east and west. "When you come here," Emily advises, "you must come with an empty stomach."

