

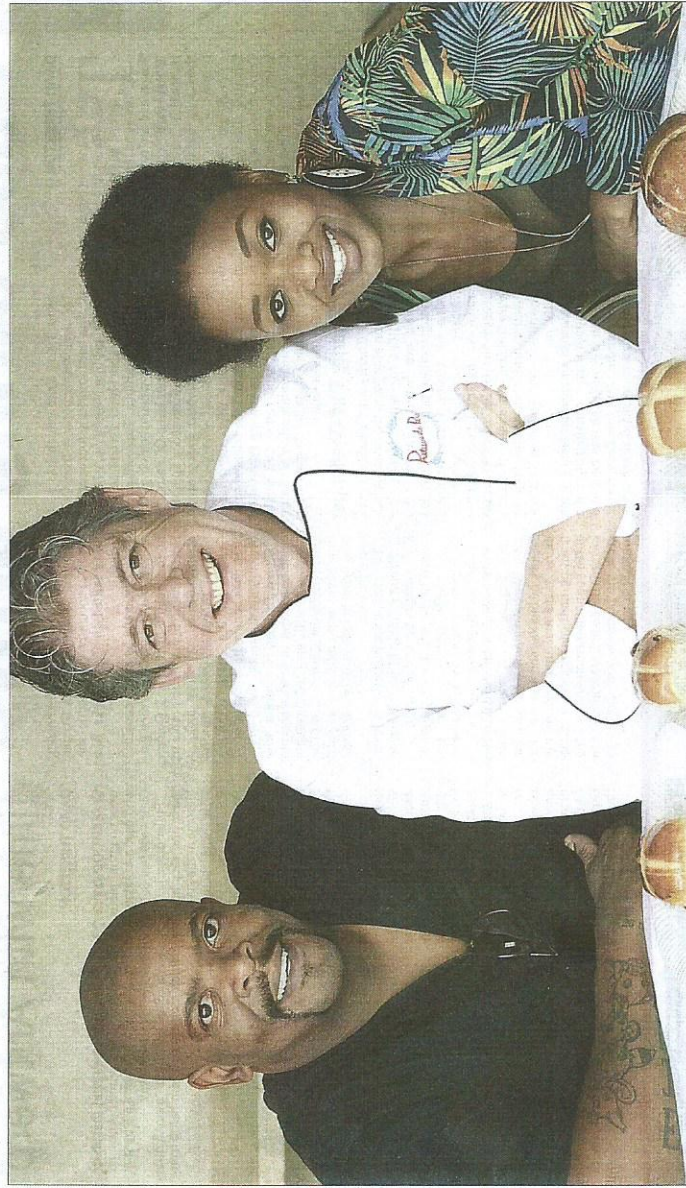
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TESTING TIMES FOR HOT CROSS BUNS



Angela Day asks a panel to test a selection of hot cross buns from supermarkets and bakeries



With Easter just a few weeks away, supermarkets shelves are stocked with an assortment of hot cross buns, the traditional fave eaten on Good Friday.

I chose a selection of buns from supermarkets' in-store bakeries as well as some off the shelf.

This was a blind tasting and the members of our panel were unaware of the origins of each sample.

They were asked to judge each bun for its appearance, the amount of fruit and spice present, texture, and value for money.

The buns were served plain, without being heated and without butter so the true flavour could be evaluated.

To judge the selection of buns, I invited Paul Zwick, pastry chef and owner of Pâtisserie de Paris in Blairgowrie, Trevor Gumbi, Blightgowrie, writer and food critic, who is best known as the host of the voice-over artistry of the Mzansi

Magic entertainment magazine show *Headline*, and Ntombi Ngcobo, singer, television presenter and actress, who is best known as a member, with her siblings, of the *maskandi* group Amantoni.

Zwick, with his knowledge of the shape and texture the buns should have, gave a lot of technical input. Gumbi was far more interested in what the buns tasted like and his preference was for less spicy buns. Ngcobo examined each bun to see if it was symmetrical and that the crosses on top looked neat.

Overall the winning bun stood out by far. Although it was expensive, all said they would be happy to pay more for such a good quality and delicious bun.

Most of the buns lacked the spiciness you would expect and many contained little fruit.

● The Woolworths luxury buns that came top for our tasting are available from stores that have in-store bakers.

The judges... Trevor Gumbi, well known actor and comedian, Paul Zwick, pastry chef and owner of Pâtisserie de Paris in Blairgowrie, and Ntombi Ngcobo, singer, actress and TV presenter.



1 Cheders Bakery, Cresco Shopping Centre, R12,99/6

Zwick: Taste of the spices really comes through.
Gumbi: A bit hard, but they had a good amount of fruit and spice.
Ngcobo: Appeared quite dark but had lots of raisins and a good spicy taste.



2 Fournos Bakery, in Little Falls, R18,00/6

Zwick: Very pretty to look at, but not enough spice for my taste.
Gumbi: Amazing, really enjoyed it, the best ever!
Ngcobo: Lovely and fresh, with not too much spice.



3 Baked by the Pick n Pay Hypermarket in Boksburg, R12,00/6

Zwick: Very nice-looking bun with a good taste and enough fruit, but very bland in Gumbi: Nice fluffy texture, but a bit raisins.
Ngcobo: Lovely nice-looking, but it has a strange after taste.



4 Bakery at Pinelopes Spar in Fourways, R13,99/6

Zwick: Nice-sized bun with lots of fruit, but not enough spice.
Gumbi: Nice and fluffy with lots of fruit and a slight cinnamon taste.
Ngcobo: Nothing special about the bun and it has no gaze.



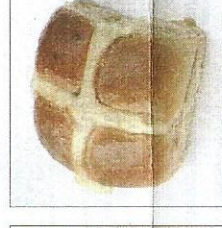
5 Woolworths Luxury, Nicoway shopping centre, R7,95 each

Zwick: Beautiful-looking. The most amazing amount of fruit and a good spicy taste. I would buy this bun any day.
Gumbi: Like a fruit explosion in my mouth.
Ngcobo: To every variety of fruit, expensive, but worth it.



6 Woolworths traditional buns available in all stores, R16,99/6

Zwick: Not impressive to look at, but it does have a nice spicy flavour.
Gumbi: Nothing special about this bun.
Ngcobo: A bit flat and unimpressive.



7 Food Lovers Market bakery, Nicoway shopping centre, Bystraston, R14,95/6

Zwick: This must be a budget version as there is no fruit in the bun.
Gumbi: Not bad-looking, but it's hard to find any fruit in it.
Ngcobo: Not a bad taste, but could do with more fruit.

PICTURES: CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE