

ESCAPE TO LUXURY



THE MASLOW – GAUTENG

by Esther Moloji

After defying the traffic of Sandton, I was happy to arrive at The Maslow. The friendly staff was ready to welcome me for my brief stay, and ushered me to a luxury suite with a private balcony.

The first thing I did was enjoy the beautiful views of Sandton. The suite was stylish – think of a spacious, contemporary bachelor pad in the heart of the city – featuring contemporary decor and fine finishes (including a bed fit for a king).

I enjoyed a wonderful dinner with a few friends at the Lacuna Bistro – I recommend the hake tempura with jalapeno dressing. The Lacuna Bar is also a great venue for unwinding after a long week at work.

Breakfast the next morning had me powered up for a session of rest and relaxation at the Africology spa. But first, I had to soak up some sun on a lounge at the pool. It was so peaceful that I forgot we were in the heart of the busiest part of Johannesburg.

My visit to the Africology spa sealed the deal for me. I went for The Maslow Journey, where Meagan's magical hands released the tension from my neck and back, and a facial using natural serums that left my face feeling refreshed.

The Maslow is the perfect getaway when you choose to reward yourself for all of your hard work, but don't want to leave the city to do so.

Suninternational.com/maslow



With the holidays almost within reach, many of us will be planning – or at least thinking of – that summer vacation, and the best places to stay to ensure a comfortable and relaxing time away. After 11 months of hands to the grindstone, that escape should offer the utmost luxury, and remind us why we work so hard during the year.

To make your decision that bit easier, the *SA Home Owner* team visited a few of South Africa's top luxury accommodation destinations across Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, to get a first-hand feel of what they have to offer. All you need to do now is make your reservation, pack your bags, and go!



SAXON HOTEL, VILLAS AND SPA – GAUTENG

by Janine Jorgensen

Driving up to the entrance of the Saxon Hotel, I was full of anticipation. Aside from its reputation for five-star hospitality, and its historical connection as Madiba's choice of location to write *Long Walk to Freedom*, there's something luxurious about a night away in a magnificent hotel just a few kilometres from home.

And there's no shortage of luxury at the Saxon: from the valet on arrival (my car was definitely one of the smallest in the lot!) and friendly concierge, to my large, restful room, complete with complimentary bar and butler.

Watching the sun set with a generous G&T at The Terrace was one of the highlights, following which I returned to my room, soaked in the bath with imported Molton Brown treats, then wrapped up in a cosy robe, and sipped on the bubbly that had been waiting on ice for me. I particularly enjoyed the ultimate hotel indulgence: room service presented on a silver platter.

Thank goodness I set my alarm for breakfast, as I wouldn't have wanted to miss out on the buffet at the Qunu Grill, which included an array of fresh fruit, pastries and even oysters. My hot breakfast was served with the most delicious orange juice, which the attentive staff kept topping up.

The hotel also benefits from a spa, with the signature Sound Therapy, using Tibetan singing bowls to restore balance, a must. Lying on the lounge after a massage and time in the flotation pool, I felt pampered by my whole overnight experience, and in no hurry to check out and collect my car key from the front desk.

Saxon.co.za



MAKARANGA – KWAZULU-NATAL
by Jessica Binns

Stepping into the reception area at Makaranga, you are instantly transported into the treetops of the glorious gardens that await you behind the hotel.

Greeted with a friendly face for check-in, I was shown to my home for the night: the presidential suite, situated in the newest part of the hotel. The views, also directed over the gardens, can be enjoyed from two spacious balconies. Accommodating a lounge area, super-king four-poster bed and a bathroom that I almost got lost in, Makaranga goes out of its way to ensure comfort is experienced on another level.

Dinner was taken in the Nonna Restaurant, a popular spot for guests and locals alike. The lamb knuckle hit the spot perfectly on this particular chilly spring evening.

The morning brought with it one of Makaranga's signature experiences, a personal guided tour of the exquisite and therapeutic gardens, finished off with a very generous breakfast picnic from the Makaranga Deli, next to one of the many picturesque ponds. Being chauffeured on a golf buggy with a cappuccino in hand was a nice touch, especially as this allows everyone the opportunity to experience the gardens, whatever your age.

What became apparent from my stay at Makaranga is that children are welcome. This does mean a four-star rating, but if you are looking for all of the qualities of a five-star with the added bonus of bringing the kids along, Makaranga not only meets, but exceeds, those needs.

Makaranga.com



MADIKWE SAFARI LODGE – NORTH WEST
by Shereen Lurie

Some define luxury as indulgence in an opulent lifestyle, where you are partial to the best of everything; for others it's something far less tangible – access to time and peacefulness, to find solitude amid the hectic pace of everyday life. For me, it's a combination of both.

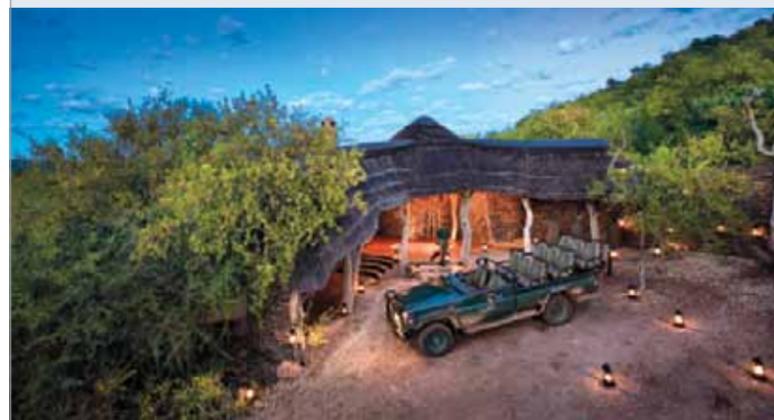
My family and I were recently invited to experience the hospitality of Madikwe Safari Lodge, one of the top lodges in the 75 000ha malaria-free Madikwe Game Reserve. Of the three lodges in the Madikwe Safari Lodge group (Lelapa, Kopano and Dithaba), we were based at Lelapa Lodge, which offers a five-star safari experience for the whole family.

From arrival until departure, we were treated like royalty by Lelapa's incredibly attentive staff. The package includes luxury accommodation, all meals (including a sumptuous high tea) and two daily game drives. While this is expected at a five-star bush resort, it's the endless list of extras (personalised water bottles, chalkboard notes from our housekeeper, hot towels on our return from game drives, and a surprise bush dinner – complete with drumming session) that made our stay truly memorable.

In between game drives, we divided our time relaxing in our spacious suite and curling up with a good book in the stylishly decorated lounge area. It was a real treat to know that our son was kept entertained with a plethora of fun and educational activities, while we stole a few hours for ourselves.

Madikwe Safari Lodge surpassed all of our expectations, providing the ultimate in luxury, and allowing us the opportunity to enjoy time out in the most tranquil and picturesque of settings.

Madikwesafarilodge.co.za



TINTSWALO AT WATERFALL – GAUTENG
by Kerry Hayes

It's difficult to imagine a tranquil escape amid the hustle and bustle of life in Johannesburg. But drive through the gates of Tintswalo at Waterfall, and you enter an unexpected world of luxury, beauty and relaxation.

Tintswalo at Waterfall has an equestrian flavour, which is in perfect synergy with the equestrian spirit of Kyalami, where it is situated. This is drawn into various elements of the five-star boutique hotel, from artwork and decor to the stable-inspired collection of guest rooms. I was stabled in the Lipizzaner room, a stately room with huge en-suite bathroom, flanked by a balcony that overlooks a tranquil dam.

The peaceful croaking of frogs and early-evening birdsong extracted all remnants of stress, and prepared me for a hearty meal at the in-house restaurant. With elegant table



settings and exquisite views across the estate gardens, the restaurant offers an adventurous menu that proved difficult to choose from, but I finally decided on the signature lamb burger with beetroot relish, followed by a tiramisu.

What stood out for me most was the exceptional service from the staff – from the concierge and welcoming crew to the restaurant waitron, who looked after me as if I were royalty.

A good night's sleep in a luxurious king-size bed, complete with feather pillows (there was a touch-and-go battle of wills to vacate the bed in the morning), ended with a fresh early-morning breakfast, and a friendly wave from the staff as I ended a marvellous overnight stay.

Tintswalo at Waterfall also has excellent conferencing facilities, should you wish to brainstorm that 2016 strategy in a truly inspiring venue.

Tintswalo.com

LAWHILL LUXURY APARTMENTS – WESTERN CAPE
by Kerry Hayes

If you are travelling to Cape Town for business or leisure, and prefer a stay on the more luxurious side, the Lawhill Luxury Apartments at the Marina, V&A Waterfront, is an excellent accommodation destination.

Consisting of two blocks of luxury self-catering apartments in a waterfront estate, Lawhill is exquisitely designed with elements of luxury in every room – from a fully equipped kitchen to the finest finishings, and a beautiful bathroom.

Overlooking the One & Only waterway, the setting is peaceful and inspiring, and being within walking distance of the V&A Waterfront completes the package.

Security is par excellence, with a unique visual identity system linked to your security tag, allowing you exclusive and safe passage in and out of the estate – should you wish to pop across to the One & Only for a sumptuous breakfast or dinner, or take a shopping trip to the V&A.

A daily cleaning service ensures your room is pristine after a busy day out, and the knowledgeable and friendly



reception staff is more than happy to assist you with suggestions of where to go and what to do if you're on holiday, and anything else you may need. For a Cape Town stay, Lawhill is my accommodation destination of choice.

Lawhillluxuryapartments.com



AFRICAN PRIDE MOUNT GRACE COUNTRY HOUSE AND SPA – GAUTENG

by **Hasmita Amtha**

After having heard wonderful reviews on Mount Grace Country House and Spa, I could not wait to be on the road and on my way. Ideal for a weekend out of the city, Mount Grace Country House and Spa is situated in the lusciously green hills of Magaliesburg.

If you're driving from Jo'burg, it takes only an hour and a bit to get to the country retreat; and once you arrive, the team welcomes you with a delicious drink, while you check in.

With a true country feel, the hotel and spa has a strong European flair, with cottages that house luxury guest villas across the rolling hills on which Mount Grace is situated.

Each room has contemporary decor, mixed with old-world luxury and a dash of boldness with splashes of colour. A rather inviting space that made me feel at home, as I could quite easily put my feet up and relax as peace and privacy prevail.

Both dinner and breakfast were amazing. If you do visit Mount Grace, ensure that you make a dinner reservation at the Rambling Vine restaurant for its gourmet food and wine pairing; or enjoy an intimate dinner with a menu that boasts a five-course meal to satisfy the most discerning palate.

To ensure you work up an appetite, arrive early and indulge in some activities on offer like walks around the koppies, mountain biking or just lazing at the pool. And if you love a good spa treatment, try out the aromatherapy massage – it's just perfect to relieve any knots.

As the team at Mount Grace says: "Leave your stress in the city, and enjoy the luxury of time in a world where your every desire is not only met, but exceeded."

Africanpridehotels.com



AFRICAN PRIDE 15 ON ORANGE – WESTERN CAPE by **Caroline Dott**

The cool marble foyer of African Pride 15 On Orange provides welcome relief on a sweltering Cape Town day. A smiling concierge directs me upstairs, to the reception area. The flight of stairs is palatial – a deep red with glittered accents, flanked by classic white marble and illuminated by soft pendant lights.

The receptionists are polite and friendly, and I am given a tour of the hotel's ground-floor facilities, which include the dining room and hotel bar, leading onto a large outside deck.

Upstairs to my suite, which is spacious and elegant, for a quick freshen-up. A view into the city is offered from large windows on the boundary wall, in front of which a lounge suite beckons the weary traveller. Complimentary eats and a personalised welcome card have been laid out for me – a personal touch that leaves a happy impression.

After a quick look around the bathroom – open shower, gorgeous bathtub and marble vanity unit – I venture upstairs. The top floor hosts the hotel's spa and rooftop pool, both of which are ideal for a relaxing cool-down.

It's late afternoon, and the bar seems a sensible place to be. I brave the heat and choose to sit on the deck to enjoy a cocktail, followed by an early dinner. The food is beautifully presented, and of five-star quality. The warm air and hubbub of the city offer a vibrant ambience and clear contrast to the cool, quiet interior – which is where I eventually retreat for a cosy end to the excitement of the day.

Africanpridehotels.com 📍

