

LEISURE

here and now

The reincarnated Four Seasons Hotel The Westcliff Johannesburg has a cool new look and modern ethos

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LEISURE HOT SPOT

After 18 months under the cloak, the Westcliff has emerged with an injection of youth, dusting itself off from a postcolonial elitism to join the 21st century. The sexier, sassier Four Seasons Hotel The Westcliff, Johannesburg, is about luxury and what that means today.

Grandly positioned aloft a hill in Joburg, surveying the Johannesburg Zoo and the urban forest that encompasses it, the hotel's view has always been its selling point and so too its village-like atmosphere, with a steep road that wends through villas and courtyards. But gone is the shell-pink facade and the outsized rim-flow pool. Bold changes such as these have brought the hotel up to speed with the changing times. No more dark wood furniture and damask.

Comfort is king. If you aren't taking a golf cart to the upper reaches of the steep property, you're likely to be beamed up in the sleek new outdoor lift shaft, a glass box that connects guests with the restaurants as well as the hotel's vibey alfresco bar.

Keeping up with the times is at the heart of The Westcliff's big leap. 'We wanted to reposition the hotel with current lifestyle expectations,' says David Barillot, director of sales and marketing, saying that today's millionaires are different to yesterday's. Today's wealthy set have an appetite for art and pop culture, and they devour design.

London firm Blacksheep took on the design of the restaurants, each with its own unique angle. Flames celebrates local braai culture in style, with craft beer, an artisanal barbecue menu and tables under the open sky. Upstairs, signature restaurant View exudes luxury appeal in a sophisticated but unfussy way, with an interior of jet-black marble tiles, shots of acid yellow and bronze orb lights that float overhead. Westcliff Deli, meanwhile, in a completely new building with separate street access, does light streetside fare.

An additional three suites bring the total up to 12 and Jozi's Interior Design by Jacket came on board with a brief of urban chic. Drastically modernised, the rooms have a contemporary aesthetic with sumptuous finishes that subtly nod to Africa. Most prominently, local art has a major presence in the hotel. There are 375 artworks in the bedrooms and passages alone.

With its revived sense of place, firm grasp on the expectations of its guests and radical shift in thinking, The Westcliff is embracing today's lifestyle and putting Joburg on the map as a destination in its own right. **△ The Four Seasons Hotel The Westcliff, 67 Jan Smuts Ave, Johannesburg, 011-481-6000**



The view from Flames restaurant takes in Joburg's vast urban forest over a new, smaller water feature



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT The plush Royal Suite; plates by local artist Theo Kleynhans in Flames; the Royal Suite's cast-iron bath; a hi-tech lift shaft moves between the drive and the restaurants. PREVIOUS PAGE View restaurant.

