

# LEISURE

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## jozi's new hue

Joburg's favourite small hotel gets a fresh new look, favouring comfort over pretence

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Devotees of Johannesburg's Athol Place Boutique Hotel are abuzz with the news of its recent update. Without doubt one of the city's most sought after small-scale hotels, and one of few to take the 'boutique' tag in its intended direction, it's an address that stands for unpretentious style (not a porcupine quill lampshade in sight).

The name behind the fresh new look is interior designer Sumari Krige of La Grange Interiors, who once called the property home, later converting it into the Athol Place we all fell in love with. When it was acquired by luxe lodge group Morukuru two years ago, they turned to the hotel's maker to interpret the brand's inimitable sense of luxury and fuse it with her own bent for crafting liveable spaces. 'An important part of the brief was to introduce more colour,' Sumari explains. When it first opened, the graphic black-and-white interior was on trend, but Sumari has injected an array of delicious new hues. Taking her cue from the King Protea, she has introduced a flush of dirty pink. Charcoal, mulberry, indigo and then dandelion follow, calling for harmony rather than contrast.

The nine suites remain sumptuous as ever with contemporary updates to upholstery and bathrooms. However her focus was on the public areas. Once an awkwardly placed bar below the stairs, an inky blue, velvet sofa is a handsome substitute in what's now an alluring seating area. Vastly different, the restaurant leans toward Scandinavian by way of its blonde oak panelling, cladding the floors, walls and ceiling, while the dining chairs have been reupholstered in a shade so dreamy it remains with you long after you've left. A decked veranda makes the most of the property's lush garden with tables spilling out under cover and a lounge area boasts a skilfully layered combination of graphic patterning, saturated hues and woven grass matting.

Another of the hotel's seductive corners to hole up in is the library and bar area (the latter having moved from below the staircase). It has the richness of a gentleman's club, but the warmth of your best friend's lounge (the friend with all the style). Who could say no to a tan chesterfield sofa, open fireplace, a bookcase filled with enticing reads and an intimate bar?

A master in low-key luxury, Sumari has balanced the scales with equal doses of design cred and familiarity. 'Although it's a hotel, I still wanted it to read as a lavish



'ALTHOUGH IT'S A HOTEL, I STILL WANTED IT TO READ AS A LAVISH HOME AWAY FROM HOME'



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