



By Nicole Lenoir-Jourdan

the westcliff, johannesburg

Forget what you know about Johannesburg. This is the golden city boasting more than 35 per cent of South Africa's GDP. With gold and diamond mines in abundance, you'd expect this city to have a truly lavish signature hotel and it does: The Westcliff. This is a decadent refuge for the rich and privileged in a deeply foreign land. The guest list reads like invitees to a royal wedding, boasting such discerning travellers as Brad Pitt, U2, Oprah Winfrey, President Clinton, Beyonce and, not surprisingly, Nelson Mandela.

Don those Donna Karan sunnies to blend in with this Tuscan celebrity opulence at its most remarkable. Cobblestone paths snake up Westcliff's gated hill through fountains, pristine pools and sculpted gardens. Once at the summit, a view of prolific jacaranda blooms and African animals in the distance is your prize. There's also a complimentary shuttle to your room which is perfect if you've just returned from a shopping spree.

With the Australian dollar buying over five rand, shopping in Johannesburg is a must. Groovy young South African designers, gold and diamonds are all within a few minutes of the hotel. A free shuttle will take you to your choice of elegant shopping districts including Hyde Park, Rosebank and Sandton. This is definitely the place to be if diamonds are your best friend.

Then return home with your booty to the sanctuary of The Westcliff's cascading village. Comfort is at an optimum in any of the 115 extremely large and plushly-appointed bedrooms with pop-up televisions at the foot of the beds. The guest is certainly the focus; each room has full butler service, drop-leaf dining tables, elegant napery and fine cuisine to be savoured either inside your room or al fresco from the comfort of your balcony or terrace.

Yet the stand-out in dining is outlined in the room service menu. It offers cocktail parties and canapés within four hours notice. Your balcony would be the perfect place to soak up the sun, sipping your G&T and making like you're on safari gazing out over the botanic and zoological gardens. Jo'burg is a city that has suffered a lot in reputation but it's a true unpolished gem whose sparkle is starting to be noticed. Get in whilst it's still affordable. •

how to book

For more information, phone +27 11 481 6000 or visit www.westcliff.co.za

