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The Hedonist What to see and where to be seen

Johannesburg

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Welcome to "Jozi", the much-talked about soon-to-be host of the Fifa World

Cup 2010. While it's not normally considered a go-to tourist destination – in fact, it's been described as the most dangerous city on earth – travellers seeking decadent hangouts have long flocked here for a taste of the exotic. Formerly a destination reserved for international business travellers and tourists in transit for other Southern African destinations, things in Jozi are finally kicking off – and not just in a sporting way.

From the recently refurbished OR Tambo International airport, I transfer to the wealthy Sandton area, a distance of around 20 miles. It's a great place to be, with a slew of happening hotels, bars, restaurants and other hedonistic

haunts. It's also a lot safer than some of the other spaces surrounding the Central Business District.

Most of the international hotel chains are here, but I try something local and more intimate in the fabulous form of **The Saxon** (00 27 11 292 6000; theaxon.com). This hip hotel boasts interiors that are a well-executed exercise in contemporary African elegance. I'm led up to my room, and it doesn't disappoint – it's outrageously opulent to say the least.

The Saxon is set in beautiful gardens, which I mean-der around later with a chilled glass of champagne from the hotel bar. It also has an incredible spa – and once I've unpacked and taken a light breakfast by the pool, I make my way to it for a full-body treatment to work the unpleasantnesses of the 11-hour flight from London out of my body.

From there I head over to **Fishmonger** (00 27 11 268 0067) in Illovo, a suburb of Johannesburg that borders Hyde Park, one of the city's smartest areas. The languid lunches on offer here run well into the afternoon, with copious amounts of shellfish and good, crisp chardonnays. Now I feel ready to really cut loose.

I hail a cab to the West-cliff Hotel; it is here I sup on sundowners at the prestigious **Polo Bar** (00 27 11 481 6000; westcliff.co.za), all the while overlooking the urban jungle that spreads out before me and listening to the calls of the wild from the zoo below.

Time for dinner, and I soon find myself in **Gramadoelas** in New Town (00 27 11 838 6960; gramadoelas.co.za), which has seen a roster of high-profile regulars pass through its doors in recent times. Most come for exotic dishes such as



Wild at heart: the decadent interiors of Moloko

mopani worms and crocodile steaks.

Now that I'm well fed and lubricated, it's time to get that itch out of my feet. I follow in the fabulous footsteps of the Jozi elite at **Moloko** in the self-proclaimed Design Quarter of Rosebank (00 27 11 447 1082; molokojoburg.com). With decadent interiors and an even more decadent

dress code, guests need to be bang on trend to duck beneath these velvet ropes. Fortunately, I make the cut and head inside for some pumping Kwaito (a genre of house music combined with distinctly African beats) and a succession of drinks at the long bar.

I don't recall how, but I end up at **Truth in Midrand** (00 27 11 315 9295;

www.truthjhb.co.za), cosy-ing up with some of Jozi's jet-set on the dance floor. I pull on my shades and leave at dawn, heading back to The Saxon to curl up between crisp sheets.

A Hedonist's Guide to... (Hg2) is a luxury city guide series for the more decadent traveller. For more information, see www.hg2.com