



# The Queen of the City The Westcliff

*Situated in one of the country's wealthiest suburbs, The Westcliff Hotel sits decked out in her characteristic terracotta pink finery, overlooking the leafy suburbs of surrounding Johannesburg. While she may not yet have the longevity of her brother hotel, the famous Mount Nelson in Cape Town, she has already garnered a name for herself in this part of the world, where people come to indulge in her luxury, toast the sunset from her pool deck and to be seen mingling with the 'who's who' of the city.*

Text: Nicky Furniss  
Images: © Orient-Express Hotels



Arriving at the grand arched entrance to the hotel estate, guests are ushered to the main reception area by porters decked out in traditional uniforms. Based on their appearance, one would expect the hotel to be built in the grandest colonial tradition, but instead, as you wind through its cobbled streets and interlinked courtyards, the image evoked is far more palatial Mediterranean village, than grand country house. Originally built as a housing development, the hotel meanders up the Westcliff hill with guest's rooms clustered around nine different villas – giving a far more intimate feel than typical single-building hotels.

Due to the steepness of the hill, guests are ferried to their rooms via decked-out golf carts and mini buses. However, once unburdened of suitcases and hand luggage, it is worth exploring the estate on foot. Each of the nine villas has its own distinct feel, and a meandering walk will reveal unexpected hidden courtyards of overflowing greenery and tinkling water features; a bench perfectly positioned to take in the hotel's breathtaking views over the city; or even an intimate little pool for a quick dip. A garden terrace bordered with scented pink roses – overlooked by a bank of majestic trees and boasting one of the hotel's best views – is a popular wedding venue; while the main pool deck with its expansive infinity pool offers the unforgettable experience of the 'safari swim.' Where else in the city can one enjoy a leisurely swim to the roaring of lions and the trumpeting of elephants from the zoological gardens just below?

After an exploratory stroll around the estate, the hotel's range of five-star accommodation offers an utterly comfortable and welcoming retreat. Most of the hotel's rooms – ranging from one-bedroomed luxury rooms, to spacious open-planned studio suites and all the way up to the two-bedroomed penthouse presidential suite (complete with wet bar and optional butler service) – have a private balcony overlooking either the city, the zoological gardens or one of the hotel's charming cobbled courtyards. The sumptuous, yet elegantly understated décor is courtesy of South African master designer Graham Viney, and The Westcliff is proud of the fact that every room in the hotel is unique.

Rooms boast the usual in five star accoutrements – spacious marble en-suite bathrooms, illuminated make-up mirrors, digital safes, international plugs, satellite television,

air conditioning and 24-hour in-room dining. But it is the hotel's meticulous attention to detail – based on the Orient-Express Hotels' founder, James B Sherwood's five decades of travel experience – which truly sets The Westcliff apart. Shower taps are located so as not to immerse users in a gush of cold water as they are turned on, all street-facing windows are fully soundproofed, all televisions have integral VCR players and the hotel boasts a complete collection of every Academy Award-winning film ever made, for the exclusive use of their guests.

Business people are also exceptionally well catered for. Rooms in the hotel's Business Wing are located conveniently close to reception, have their own printer/copier/fax machine, modem ports, stationery and an iron and ironing board. There is even a business service assistant available to assist with secretarial functions, including itinerary planning and technical support.

This five-star service is extended to the hotel's dining options – which non-guests are also privileged to partake of. The Westcliff's conservatory has quickly become well known as one of the best places in the city to take afternoon tea. Tea is served in silver services accompanied by tiered cake stands overflowing with tempting petit fours, miniature scones decorated in dollops of jam and cream, tartlets, éclairs and delicate finger sandwiches. Little wonder that The Westcliff's afternoon tea is one of the city's favourite outings.

The Polo Bar and main pool deck, with their breathtaking views, have also become a favourite spot for sundowners and tapas, while French-inspired La Belle Terrasse is an elegant evening dining option with its backdrop of twinkling city lights. The Westcliff's signature restaurant stands out as one of Johannesburg's finest dining establishments.

A visit to The Westcliff is an experience in the finer things in life, in exquisite attention to detail and in pure luxury – one would expect nothing less from this Johannesburg landmark.

The Westcliff Hotel is situated in Johannesburg's Westcliff suburb. For reservations contact +27 11 481 6074/6045 or email [reservations@westcliff.co.za](mailto:reservations@westcliff.co.za). For more information on the hotel visit [www.westcliff.co.za](http://www.westcliff.co.za). ■

