

Menlyn Boutique Hotel - from Havana to heavenly



By [Brian Berkman](#)

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Menlyn Boutique Hotel was initially built as a Cuban diplomatic residence - a good start, on which has been built a real gem of a hotel.



Service and comfort are the watchwords.

One of the biggest challenges when travelling is getting around within your destination. Having a hired car for the full duration of a visit may not make financial sense yet two or additional private transfers tend to cost as much as renting a full-time vehicle. An added complication for people who fly in and take the train back, as we did, is how and where to return your car.

Selecting The Menlyn Park Boutique Hotel in Pretoria as a destination before taking The Blue Train back to Cape Town was linked to the proximity of an Avis office - a pleasant 1km walk from the hotel although the Avis chap kindly offered to drop us off

and seemed surprised when we elected to walk. You should know they close at noon on a Sunday so you must drop off your car before that (Blue Train departs Pretoria early Monday morning).

Feel like some retail therapy?

The five-star Menlyn Boutique Hotel is within spitting distance of The Menlyn Park Mall if you can spit over a highway interchange, that is. I mention this because despite being exceedingly close via GPS, a short car journey is required to get there. Fortunately the lovely staff at The Menlyn Hotel has a vehicle for this very purpose and will happily encourage your shopping habit with their complimentary shuttle. As malls go this one easily rivals Canal Walk and Sandton City in terms of variety and expansiveness. The staff was also more than happy to look after our luggage when we arrived at 11am and gave us access to the Wi-Fi and pointed us to the restaurant for a late breakfast if we felt like it. A great start to a hospitality experience that truly is about giving you, the guest, what you want (within reason.)

While we're chatting about shopping centres you should be aware that the traffic buzz seems to get louder as the night deepens, which while counter-intuitive made the earplugs we always travel with essential. I also alerted management to additional noise emanating from their Room 21 presidential suite; it seems to come from the geyser or central air-conditioning unit and they confirmed they're looking into how to resolve it.

These are the only drawbacks from our experience and I cannot stress enough how much the young and dynamic staff added value to our stay.

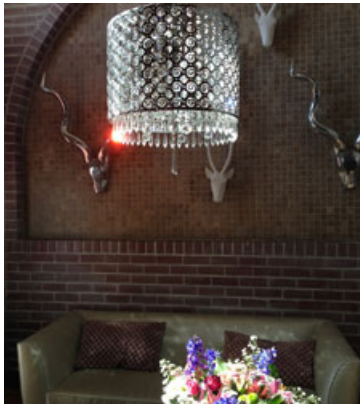
Senor... this is... super

Initially built as a Cuban diplomatic residence, it expanded its guesthouse status (for which it was awarded Best Guest Lodge in the 2012 Tshwane Tourism Awards) into Boutique Hotel and recently opened a new wing of rooms. We were in their second-floor presidential suite, which is a fabulous, modern room with all you could ask for - everything from a desktop computer and giant TV set to a Nespresso machine. I loved how the high windows were shaded with automatic blinds and having a glass sliding door and outside veranda with table and chairs is a bonus.



A modern room with all you could ask for – everything from a desktop computer and giant TV set to a Nespresso machine.

The Black Bamboo Restaurant is a highlight both in terms of its superb cellar and coffee baristas and because of Chef Pellie Grobler and his focus on excellent ingredients simply, yet respectfully and elegantly prepared.



A staggering 90% of their guests return

The WH Leisure Group's managing director Quintin Wiehahn oversees this property, which is also linked to Molenvleit wines in Stellenbosch and Molenvleit game lodge in the Waterberg, three hours from Johannesburg.

And they just keep coming back - that tells your something

According to their media handout, a staggering 90% of their guests return. "We really get to know our guests, and we have found that the smaller, more personal and relaxed experience we offer our guests is far more preferable to the sometimes stiff and intimidating atmosphere of a larger hotel," says Wiehahn. "We have created a hotel and restaurant experience that truly is a step above the norm, and our relationship with our guests is testament to that.

"The Menlyn Boutique Hotel's 5-star facilities include 14 beautifully designed standard rooms, 2 fully equipped self-catering units, 9 spacious executive rooms, and of course, their remarkable Presidential Suite. The hotel's conference facilities can accommodate a variety of group sizes, from small, intimate groups to medium sized boardrooms and spaces comfortably holding up to 120.

They also have a variety of appealing packages for functions to suit any event requirements, be it a birthday or a business function."

I very much look forward to returning.

For more information go to the [Menlyn Hotel website](#).



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