

HOT SPOTS | JOHN BRUNTON

# The Silo Hotel. Cape Town



**WHAT IS IT?** Quite simply the “hottest” hotel in Africa right now, The Silo can be found in the heart of Cape Town’s harbour area, atop the Zeitz MOCAA, a world-class museum dedicated to contemporary African art and opened to international acclaim last October. Both the hotel and museum are housed in a grain silo that was the tallest building in Sub-Saharan Africa when it was built, in 1924. Grain storing operations ceased in 2001, when the long process of transforming the building into a unique museum and hotel began. This is industrial chic taken to the extreme; the museum’s cutting-edge artwork is showcased in the stark grain halls. Up above, the hotel is an extension of MOCAA in spirit, decor and design, though it maintains an aura of exclusiveness that only has tongues wagging even more vigorously. It soars like a Lego tower in what was the silo’s grain lift shaft. Into the building’s austere skeleton has been inserted a geometric mosaic of pillowed glass panels that bulge as if they have been gently inflated. Set against the waterfront and Table Mountain, The Silo dominates Cape Town’s skyline.

**HAS ANY OF THE ART FROM BELOW SEEPED INTO THE HOTEL?** Yes; vibrant avant-garde art is everywhere in The Silo, much of it by the same artists exhibited downstairs. Each room comes with a glossy catalogue of the works hanging on the wall, and even the hotel’s basement car park entrance doubles as a gallery, known as The Vault and featuring rising stars of the African art scene.

**SO WHAT ARE THE ROOMS LIKE?** Even the standard Silo room manages to impress, with the immense bubble-like windows stretching up some five metres from floor to ceiling. The

decor is an eclectic mix of African artisan, vintage designer furniture, brightly coloured velvet sofas, twinkling crystal chandeliers and a stand-alone tub in which to soak while gazing out over all of Cape Town. The mere 28 rooms and suites include an extravagant 2,000 sq ft penthouse.

#### WHAT DO THE LOCALS MAKE OF IT?

Judging by those supping drinks in the rooftop bar (far left, middle), they approve. The number of non-guests admitted is strictly limited but every evening, the place is packed with chic Capetonians sipping Bloody Marys and MCC, the local bubbly, as the sun sets. From an open-air *braai* – South Africa’s version of a barbecue – diners gaze out over Table Mountain while feasting on chargrilled steaks.

#### IS IT WORTH MAKING A RESERVATION AT THE RESTAURANT?

The Granary Cafe, which shares the sixth floor of the building with the hotel lobby, is the ultimate dining spot in Cape Town right now, serving power breakfasts, fashionista-thronged lunches and romantic candlelit dinners. Guests enjoy stunning views over the city while friendly waiters suggest either a craft gin and tonic or one of a long list of stellar South African wines served by the glass. The cuisine is daring, modern and sometimes a little surprising, combining fresh local organic ingredients in dishes such as ostrich tartare with buttermilk labneh and confit egg yolk or the vegan combination of roasted sweet potatoes, red quinoa, cranberries and kale pesto.

**WHAT’S THE DAMAGE?** Rates start at 13,500 rand (HK\$8,900) for a double room, and include full breakfast. ■

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