

LIGHT FANTASTIC

# Windows of absolute wonder

The Silo Hotel at the V&A Waterfront is Cape Town style at its best, writes **Andrea Nagel**



VIEW TO A HILL: The hotel is part of the complex which will house the Zeitz Museum Of Contemporary Art Africa



BAR BONANZA: Stunning vistas of the mountain and harbour



TOP OF THE WORLD: The comfy interiors contrast with the industrial frames

LET'S fast forward to waking up in one of the most luxurious hotel bedrooms I've ever been in. The morning light filters in through the jewel-like panes of a convex wall of glass, beyond which are views across Lion's Head and Signal Hill in one direction, and the foreshore and harbour in the other.

The windows of the penthouse lounge frame Table Mountain, overlaying the great landmark with the crisscross patterning of the panes like a modern art work. At breakfast, two floors down at the Granary Cafe, we're momentarily distracted from a delicious display of buffet snacks by climbing ropes being lowered outside the window. Is abseiling an activity offered by the hotel?

Back in the room, the purpose of the ropes becomes clear as two men bearing squeegies suddenly loom outside my bathroom window as I'm preparing to get into the bath.

Apparently, keeping the compound-eye like exterior of the building clean has been a big challenge since it opened on March 1, but the pillowed glass windows, the greatest visible change to the original grain silo's monumental structure, are so arresting that whatever extra maintenance they require is worth it. The windows bulge outward as if gently inflated, and by night they transform the

building into a glowing lantern in the harbour.

This, the newly completed Silo Hotel in Cape Town's V&A Waterfront and the latest five-star addition to the Royal Portfolio of hotels, has been a source of anticipation for anyone interested in the changing architectural face of Cape Town. Indeed, the art world has also been eagerly awaiting the completion of the hotel that forms part of the complex which houses the Zeitz Museum Of Contemporary Art Africa, a project (already much in the news) initiated by German-born businessman Jochen Zeitz. The museum, designed by lauded British designer Thomas

Heatherwick, is scheduled for completion in September.

In the meantime, the hotel has been inundated with fascinated people coming to have a look at how the dramatic exterior translates on the inside.

Liz Biden, the owner of The Royal Portfolio, is behind the meticulous design and decor of the interiors. Each of the 28 rooms is unique. Biden explains. "The Silo Hotel is an exciting and ambitious project which we believe will rank among the best hotels in the world. The building is modern and industrial so the interior design contrasts that with the addition of comfortable, colourful and more playful touches."

## THOSE LITTLE EXTRAS

### FACILITIES

The Granary Café and The Willaston Bar for delicious meals and sophisticated drinks. The Sky Terrace and Rooftop Restaurant for insurmountable views and sundowners. Rooftop swimming pool, Silo spa and gym.

### WHAT'S MORE

Rates include breakfast, access to gym and spa, museum entrance (when it opens), wi-fi.

### DON'T MISS

Sunset cocktails at the Rooftop Bar where 360-degree views of Cape Town await. Have the Iceplant Negroni — Sipsmith gin, Aperol, sweet vermouth, fig and cinnamon.

### CONTACT

Silo Square, V&A Waterfront; reservations info@thesilohotel.com or 021-671-5502; rates vary per season, see theroyalportfolio.com

According to the website, the silo building was the tallest building in sub-Saharan Africa when it opened in August 1924 after three years of construction. It closed in August 2001 after nearly 80 years at the heart of South Africa's industrial and agricultural development.

The building has two parts — the elevator tower, where The Silo Hotel is located, which facilitated the mechanical bulk handling of grain, and the actual storage silos themselves, which will be converted into the cathedral-like space of the museum (Heatherwick has envisioned a huge, egg-like shape being cut through the storage tubes).

Biden has maintained the industrial character of the building

— the historic infrastructure and modern design are contrasted.

"This stark contrast between old and new is augmented by Liz's lively and eclectic style of interior design, a quirky distinction from the cold, raw feel of the building's exterior," says Ross Bowers, marketing and communications manager for the hotel.

Contemporary art and interior objects from Africa and around the world are equally at home as the original machine parts that emerge from various surfaces throughout the building.

Biden says: "My goal is to pay tribute to luxury and comfort for our guests. This means balancing the stark and industrial style of the architecture with aspects of classic glamour and modern comfort."

## BOTTLE OF THE WEEK

# Wild is this Zinfandel indeed — and very, very sexy

NEIL PENDOCK

Bottle of the Week: Grande Provence Zinfandel 2015

How much and where?

R150; www.grandeprovence.co.za

Why?

It took a soul goddess as dark as Nina Simone to transform an insubstantial theme tune from a cheesy 1950s Italian black-and-white melodrama, *Furia*, sung by sleepy Johnny Mathis, into the passionate jazz classic *Wild is the Wind*.



Zinfandel hails from tempestuous southern Italy, where it is called Primitivo, and it took winemaking wild man Karl Lambour to make a benchmark "other cultivar" red. Far more exciting than many of those fat

Shirazes that for some unknown reason impersonate cutting-edge reds in the Cape.

The grapes come from the wrong side of the tracks. From the boiling slopes of Wellington's Groenberg where Lambour has a small but perfectly formed farm. He made it at the toniest address in Franschoek, Grande Provence, owned by Dutch dynamo Alex van Heerden who is

big in New Zealand leisure. Winemaking is now handled by namesake Matthew van Heerden whose Webersburg Cabernet is the hidden gem of the Helderberg.

Lambour's creation is the most exciting red in the food and wine capital of South Africa, as the valley sometimes styles itself. But that was before Bree Street, Cape Town, got into gear. It tastes of goji berries and is jolly good for you. Vibrant raspberry in colour with a dusting of black pepper, this tippie is hipster heaven and would not be out of place at La Tête, Chef's Warehouse, Clarke's, or any one of the divine dining destinations on Fat Street.

Serve slightly chilled to calm down the

wild flavours and prevent them from trashing your buds. I had mine at South China Dim Sum on Long Street and it didn't last long. This is a red to dust out the cobwebs of too much Cabernet. Wild is this Zin indeed and very sexy.

Rating: \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*: Ella Fitzgerald

\*\*\*\*: Aretha Franklin

\*\*\*: Billie Holiday

\*\* : Diana Krall

\*: Celine Dion