

La Grenadine Petit Hotel has a certain je ne sais quoi

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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They've been open for business for roughly 11 months and this new kid on the block is already 70% booked out until next May! So what's so great about La Grenadine Petit Hotel, a guest house tucked away deep in the heart of Cape Town's CBD?

The La Grenadine Petit Hotel is run by an endearing French family who are very much a part of the appeal. Humble as can be, yet peppered with a certain je ne sais quoi, Maxime and Mélodie welcomed me into their home-cum-guest house to see what all the fuss is about.



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Mélodie led me on a tour of the La Grenadine and I instantly fell in love. Steeped in art and culture, you'll find French flair tastefully combined with South African arts and crafts, and yet it's not intimidating in the least - in fact it's quite homely. The first renovations made to the original plans of the building date way back to the 1890s, so it's safe to say that the property is brimming with history.

"We walked in here and it was so different, a wall separated the garden, there were bricks everywhere, the people had four dogs, the place was a little run down, but full of charm," said Mélodie.

From home to guest house

The house belonged to an old lady who rented out half the place to her family; she was very attached to the house and wasn't prepared to have a block of flats built in its place. After meeting Maxime and Mélodie, and understanding that they were not going to knock the place down, she sold it to them. Two-and-a-half years later, after waiting for approval from the city council and plenty of renovations, La Grenadine Petit Hotel opened its doors.



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Now, I wouldn't exactly blame you for mistaking Maxime and Mélodie for interior designers, because it's quite amazing what they've managed to do with the place; the couple have impeccable taste and natural design sense - they're all about working with what you have, recycling materials from the house during renovations and using them creatively in conjunction with the new. Most of the new is locally sourced and rarely imported; they prefer working with local start-ups and artists - you'll find decor from Moon Basket and interesting artworks from Cameron Platter, among others.

"We're not interior designers," said Mélodie, "we really always go with our hearts. We always work with people with whom we have a connection. It's not about business; everything always has something to do with passion."

Step out into the garden (Yes, a garden in the middle of town!) and you'll find an abundance of fruit trees - lemon, avocado, guava and pomegranate - from which the guest house gets its name. Help yourself to an amazing continental spread for breakfast and be sure to try the madeleines: a sponge cake treat originating from 18th-century France.

Trendy Kloof area

La Grenadine Petit Hotel is located in the trendy area of Kloof Street in an alley just opposite Rick's Café. If you'd like a bit of fine dining from the restaurant, but would like the cosy comfort of the guest house, no problem, Rick's waiters just cart your meal across the road, so you can enjoy a secluded meal as if it were home. This is exactly how Mélodie and Maxime would like you to feel - at home.



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"We always said that we want people to feel at home, whether it's in the rooms or the kitchen, the garden ... We really want people to feel they're not in a hotel," explained Mélodie.

Maxime chimed in: "With guest houses in France, you really go to people's houses, while here, I feel like it's a bit more like a small hotel. Everything is made for customers, but they're a bit, for me, impersonal."

"Most important for us is to make them feel that they can really do what they want - and for the amount of time that they're here, whether it's two days or three weeks, it's theirs completely," said Mélodie.

I arrived home late one night to the delightful sounds of some Chanson Française wafting through the communal lounging area that's populated with vinyls, books and DVDs for those nights when you just don't feel like going out. The warmth of the sounds made me stop and smile before I happily made my way to my mountain-view room on the first floor to sleep on my 100% cotton sheets produced by Mélodie's father.

Plenty to do

If you're an out-of-towner, there's plenty to do in the area: Kloof Street has its array of restaurants to try out and little shopping boutiques littered everywhere; Long Street is but a five-minute walk away and there are plenty of touristy hot spots to explore. As a tourist, Maxime suggests that you take the CitySightSeeing Red Bus and delve into some Cape Town history, while Mélodie suggests a trip to Robben Island and a township tour to get to grips with local township culture. You've also got one of Nature's Seven Wonders of the World, Table Mountain, on your doorstep.



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La Grenadine Petit Hotel also hosts interactive events that its guests can participate in - from a cooking evening to a handbags launch to a tango evening; the couple are open to all suggestions.

If you'd like more info on La Grenadine Petit Hotel, go to www.lagrenadine.co.za.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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