Top of The Table - now there's a baie slim idea

By Brian Berkman: contributing editor, travel

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When it came to selecting a location for new photographs reflecting the new, slimmer me, I thought immediately of The Table Bay Hotel. I asked Fabiani's Waterfront store to lend me garments to use for the shoot for which I'd hired photographer Hetty Zantman.



What makes this hotel such a perfect shoot location is also what makes it so desirable for people to visit: on the one hand it is smack in the centre of the Waterfront's action (and thus minimised the risk of any of the costly Fabiani items being damaged in transit) but on the other it has so many areas that look and feel different from the next that make it almost feels like you're in a resort hotel.

What struck me on a previous visit was the high level of intimate service which, given this is a large and busy hotel, really impressed me. I found the service as excellent this visit too and think it makes this hotel stand apart from many of its competitors.

Fancy some shopping?

Either you like that it's connected at the hip to a Mall or you don't. I'm not suggesting that there is any greater risk to security if you're staying at nearby The Victoria & Alfred, The Cape Grace or, indeed, The One & Only, but The Table Bay's direct access to The Victoria Wharf Mall is really useful, especially when it comes to dining or taking in a movie at night. It also means that Cape Town can have the fiercest weather and you'll be none the wiser if your goal is to shop until your drop.



I loved the pool and found it well protected from the wind and the hotel gets a big thumbs-up for having quality magazines, paperback books and sun lotions available free to use at the pool. Also, it is a really great touch in the gym, which is adjacent to the pool, to have chilled bottled water at no charge.

Generous breakfasts for a great start to the day

To escape the brightness of the white on white on blue of the pool, we headed into the bar. The wood-panelled Union Bar has a gentrified, gentlemen's clubby feel to it with its studded leather chairs and historic prints. Hotel PR manager Sarah Prins told me there were plans to convert the bar into a hip, Tappas-style eatery and show kitchen while the Atlantic Grill will remain for breakfasts - the stuff of legend in hotel circles and mentioned by nearly every TripAdvisor commenter for its vastness and generosity. I can't think of another breakfast buffet that has Peking Duck and pancakes on it.



We couldn't use the hotel lounge for photographs as it remains an all-day meeting place for the Afternoon Tea-brigade and for business meetings so Sarah arranged one of the suites. The Presidential Suite was, indeed, occupied by a President when we stayed there, and I had more than a bit of a thrill when photographer Hetty held up foot traffic, including the aforementioned President's security detail, so that she could get the shot.

The suites are supremely comfortable and the bathrooms generously appointed with Molton Brown amenities. Having free and fast Wi-Fi that works on all your devices

anywhere in the hotel is a huge boon. Try to get a Table Mountain-facing suite with a balcony for private sunbathing, if you can.

For more information, go to www.TableBayHotel.com

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