

From fake to fantasy; an art deco delight

By  Brian Berkman: contributing editor, travel 30 Jan 2012

Buildings with "stone" cladding made from plaster or other fake adornments disappoint often me. Yet, somehow the designers and builders of The SunCoast Hotel and Towers have elevated fake to fantasy and created an art deco palace that is a delight.



You can't beat the surroundings.

The location, within spitting distance from the sea, and an easy walk to the Moses Mabhida Stadium, is much more desirable now that Durban has cleaned up its North Beach promenade and paved the area all the way to uShaka Marine World. Besides, the thing about the hotel's position is it has a gate that opens directly onto the promenade. The adjacent SunCoast Casino and Entertainment Complex manages the beach area so you can get loungers and someone to bring you a drink. Equally, if you are visiting to spend your time gaming, there is a discreet corridor directly from the hotel into the casino.

Splendid view

At night, the view of the hotel is splendid. Multicoloured neons snake around the Art Deco façade and it is very easy to imagine one looking instead at South Beach Miami. The Art Deco theming is most expressed inside the Casino and Entertainment complex which is nothing short of fabulous. For me it is much more believable than the Tuscan village in Fourways or the historic Cape one in Goodwood.



Fancy a workout?

Lying next to the hotel-guest only pool on the perfectly coiffured grass, oh, that's not grass, it just looks like grass, listening to the water jets splashing into the pool and the waves ebbing and flowing while it is raining in Cape Town is what makes me love Durban the most - bragging rights and a little more of a tan when I return home. I think it would be useful for the hotel to find another access point to the pool so that guests don't have to walk through the bar and breakfast area first.

Take a look

We were in a spacious Tower Suite with a fabulous bathroom, nearly the size of our bedroom. The suite's roomy entrance hall gives a feeling of luxury. There's a corner balcony to look out from but not to sit on. Entry-level rooms are small and probably not suitable to share with someone that you're not intimate with, as the showers have clear-glass partitions into the room.



Where better to relax with convivial company.

The Penthouse, on the other hand, is large enough to have the whole family over. Views aside, The Penthouse at the SunCoast Hotel and Towers is spectacular and decorated to the highest standard.

Take your laptop along

This is not the sort of hotel where porters rush to your car as you pull up but it is the sort that will have everything you need in a comfortable, clean room. Best to travel with your own computer as one of the most frequent comments on TripAdvisor that the Business Centre is lacking.



Soak up the sun and get a tan - and take a dip anytime you wish.

I didn't see many punters but, then again, I'm not sure what punters look like. There are rooms along the corridor to the casino which I guess they use mainly. When we stayed it seemed the majority of guests were in Durban on business.

Executive chef Xanthos Giannakopoulos is a pleasure to speak to and, if he's there, you will be assured of delicious cuisine. His new focus is on food that is simple, seasonal and fresh. I was impressed by the My Lunch concept which, for R85, can include a packed lunch with a barley salad, crudité, hummus, a pastry, juice, cheese board, fruits, cereal bars and a meat sandwich.

For more information go to www.southernsun.co.za or call +27 (0) 31 314 7878.

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