

Coopmanhuijs - where the comfortable becomes the remarkable

 By [Brian Berkman](#)

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Copies of *The Hollywood Reporter* magazine in the lounge at Coopmanhuijs Hotel, in Stellenbosch, seem out of place among the books on wine, art and the historic treasures of the area.

The atmospheric fireplace is timber-framed with painted porcelain tiles with one saying "Bewoon Sedert 1713" confirming we are in the ancient heart of old Stellenbosch and the elegant yet comfortable farmhouse furnishings spell out five-star boutique hotel.



Old world charm - at it's best.

As the first hotel, anyway in the world, that I've noticed copies of *The Hollywood Reporter* magazine, I ask General Manager Ilzebet Oosthuizen about it. "Do you remember the film e'Lollipop," she asks, and continues to tell me that the hotel's owner Andre Pieterse, a former executive Vice President of MGM International, made e'Lollipop and because of his connection to the hotel, many people in the film industry choose to stay at Coopmanhuijs when in South Africa.

Other hospitality staff take note: This is charming service

The chance of rubbing shoulders with a movie mogul over breakfast aside, the biggest appeal of staying at Coopmanhuijs is Ilzebet Oosthuizen, and her fabulous staff, that infuse ever room and every moment you spend there with the warmth of the loveliest grandmother and the elegance of a 1930s starlet.

Everyone we interacted with - from the valet staff that seamlessly took our baggage while stopping the traffic in busy Church street and then parked our car in their secure underground space off site, to the restaurant staff were accomplished and charming, a combination I wish more hospitality staff might have.

Even the homely comforts are taken care of

They really manage to live up to their slogan: "Where the comfortable becomes the remarkable" and this is the best way I can describe this property. Every five-star convenience you expect is there but, what you don't expect, are the homely comforts that sometimes make grand hotel stays less enjoyable. Furnishings make you want to flop down into the couches or cosy up next to the fire or sit and read in the comfortable armchair that's right next to the window of your bedroom, and bathed in afternoon light.

There is a pool with loungers and spa with steam room and tables and chairs in the private courtyard.

The breakfast room is a created space in the house's original open courtyard with the kitchen wedged under the timber stairs (there is also a lift) so that smells of baking pastries and home-baked breads waft up to wake you in the morning.

A view on the passing parade

A highlight is the front "stoep" that overlooks Church Street's goings-on letting you be at the centre of the action but just sufficiently elevated above it that beggars don't intrude.

We dined at their Helena's Restaurant outside and just the experience of being there, hearing the great church clock chime on the hour, evoked memories of what life must have been like 300 years ago when, I'm guessing, they were dining on



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hippopotamus fat rather than the Banting dinner their chef prepared for me. My meal consisted of duck liver parfait with low-carb seed crackers, beef fillet with Béarnaise sauce, roasted leeks and cauliflower puree and then something they certainly would not have eaten 300 years ago, luscious sugar-free ice cream made by Stellenbosch artisan producer, Cold Gold.

If there is a drawback, it is that street-facing rooms are noisier than rooms at the back of the building but for all the hustle and bustle of Stellenbosch during the day, by 11pm at night it might as well have been 1713 with just the Church bell for company.

For more information go to the [hotel' website](#).

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