Imminent opening of Three Cities Urban Park Hotel & Spa, Umhlanga

The R150 million Three Cities Urban Park Hotel & Spa, situated on Meridian Drive at the entrance to Umhlanga Ridge Boulevard, Umhlanga, is due for completion on 15 December, 2012. It will comprise 92 self-catering apartments complete with fully-fitted kitchens, state-of-the-art appliances and trendy furnishings.

All rooms will feature Wi-FI, LED television, DVD players, iPod players and ducted air-conditioning. Studio suites, as well as one-, two-, three- and four-bedroomed apartments are on offer for both daily letting and longer leases. In addition to addressing the problems of finding holiday accommodation suitable for larger families during the busy summer holiday season, the Three Cities Urban Park Hotel & Spa is expected to meet the special needs of business travellers.

"We understand the difficulties associated with finding appropriate accommodation for business travellers and know that the conventional hospitality offering is not always suitable, especially when it comes to those undertaking longer trips or short-term contracts. Suites offer more space than a standard hotel room with multiple rooms including a living and dining room, office and kitchen facilities," said Mike Lambert, CEO of the Three Cities group.

"The ability to self-cater, and even share accommodation, made this a far more cost-effective option for companies that offer accommodation for employees or contractors and was a far better option than a bed-and-breakfast facility, which necessitated spending on lunches and dinners," he added.

The added luxury of "hotel" services

He believes that business travellers will not only appreciate additional "personal space" and the ability to entertain clients or friends, but also the added luxury of "hotel" services, such as an indoor swimming pool and gym, a laundromat, as well as an award-winning Camelot Aqua Spa - the second in KwaZulu-Natal and the first corporate Camelot Spa.

The Cosmopolitan Restaurant on the ground floor, as well as the Vida-e coffee kiosk set in an eco-friendly inner courtyard, provide an upmarket leisure and fine-dining offering that is expected to enhance the hotel's package.

Additional features include 24-hour security with CCTV surveillance and convenient undercover parking on the same level as an apartment. Residents also have access to a daily shuttle that links with La Lucia Mall, the Umhlanga Beach and the Gateway Mall.

A growing trend

Lambert pointed out that serviced holiday apartments and suites were a growing trend within the hospitality sector both abroad and locally. According to the third edition of the Global Serviced Apartments Industry Report, despite the recession and collapse of worldwide property markets, the global serviced apartments industry continues to expand, showing an increase of 34.1% in stock between 2010 and 2011. Occupancy rates have showed sustainable growth over the past three years, outperforming the traditional hotel sector.

"Some properties in major business centres, such as New York and Singapore now offer only suites for corporate travellers. Africa - and South Africa in particular - is catching up with this trend. With the north of Durban becoming one of the busiest industrial and commercial development sectors in the country and the location of both regional and national head offices on the Umhlanga Ridge, there is a substantial market for apartments such as those offered by the Three Cities Urban Park Hotel & Spa," he said.

Opening festive season rates (15 December, 2012, to 31 March, 2013) range from R500 for a studio apartment to R1800 for a four-bedroomed apartment per day. To secure a reservation, call +27 (0)31 310 1111. For further information, go to www.threecities.co.za.

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