

The Queen - fit for a king

 By [Brian Berkman](#) 18 Jul 2014

When you're staying in the land's third oldest hotel you expect to see cracks showing and the plaster crumbling from the walls.



Comfort combined with charm

Good news is that the new owners of the four-star graded The Queen's Hotel in Oudtshoorn are a dedicated bunch who are doing everything possible to ensure a great stay that is steeped in nostalgia and homely values of yesteryear but with fast Wi-Fi and an appreciation of 21st century needs.

I've visited the hotel many times over the years for breakfast in their famed downstairs space or a classic cream tea in Cafe Brule but this is the first time I've stayed overnight and dined at their Colony restaurant. I'm a sucker for country hotels and this one earns extra points for having the hotel name printed on the teacup: Tea seems to taste better because of it.

Olde worlde charm

The refurbished rooms are very nicely done. Bathrooms haven't been rebuilt so still have the older style amenities like a glass shelf on the bathroom wall affixed to the wall with supports. I hope they don't lose these retro fabulous details as they continue their upgrade.



The food is top quality.

The main hotel can accommodate 82 guests. We visited in May and I was surprised at how busy the hotel was.

I can imagine a challenge for the new owners is to get institutionalised staff - I bet some of the team are second or third generationals who were there when Elizabeth was still a princess - to buy in to the demand of running a profitable hotel in 2014. They are probably the hotel's greatest asset, brimming with warm-hearted Karoo hospitality. I was so taken with a matronly woman cooking my breakfast I almost poached h

'Oh, aye say... If it isn't Karen'

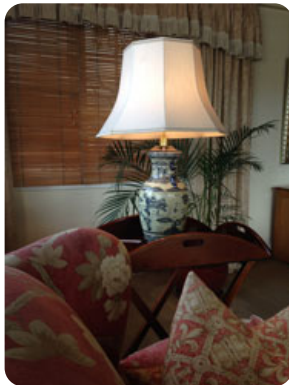
Dinner at the first-floor atmospheric Colony Restaurant was extremely good - unexpectedly so, but the highlight of the stay was the hotel itself with its framed photos of the 1947 Royal visit and celebratory photos of new year's eve parties over the years.



The rooms have been refurbished, introducing the modern into the old - without losing the essence of the latter.

When Oudtshoorn was a boomtown this must have been *the* place to be. I can almost imagine Denys Finch Hatton and Karen Blixen meeting here among the potted palms when holidaying away from Kenya.

Managing Director Henco Rademeyer leads the new blood. "We only took the hotel over in February this year and were faced with some challenges, especially starting in peak season," he told me. "We have a comprehensive upgrade and refurbishment plan in place over the next 18 months. As we speak the garden is being re-done, new pool paving will be done by July while room upgrades planned for later this winter include aircons, new lighting, carpets, digital safes and bathroom changes."



Some light relief... now where's Karen?

"We have already concluded the upgrades of both kitchens and the painting of the exterior - all this had to happen without any inconvenience to our guests - truly a challenge of note!

"As the third oldest hotel in South Africa the Queens Hotel is a colonial masterpiece. We are passionate about the town and the industry and are without doubt going to establish the Queens as the top accommodation establishment around."

I've seen Henco in action wearing a different hat before and guarantee you he will achieve his goals. I can't wait to visit again and see how he has succeeded in revitalising such a grande dame.

For more information, visit [Queen Hotel](#).

ABOUT BRIAN BERKMAN

Brian Berkman can be contacted on 083-441-8765 or email Brian@BrianBerkman.com
View my profile and articles...

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>