

Why The Houghton Hotel makes for the optimal staycation, bleisure spot

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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With South Africa deep in the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the country shifting to Adjusted Alert Level 4, the message being reiterated yet again is 'Stay home. Stay safe'. For those in Gauteng, currently the epicentre of the outbreak in SA, unless you're travelling for business, this isn't optional under the current restrictions.



Source: Supplied

The other clarion call is to support local businesses, particularly those in the tourism and hospitality sector, as once again their opportunities to earn an income have been curtailed by the measures put in place to flatten the curve. Restaurants won't see seated customers, waiters won't make tips, and the trickle of international arrivals visiting hotels will dry up once again.

One local establishment that Gauteng residents and business travellers visiting the province can support is [The Houghton Hotel](#), an urban oasis in the heart of Johannesburg. Pre-third wave, I had the pleasure of checking in here and enjoying some of its many amenities*. Here's why The Houghton makes for the optimal staycation and bleisure spot.



Source: Supplied

Accessible luxury

From the moment you walk into the lobby, you get The Houghton Hotel five-star treatment. And even though this is a luxury establishment in every sense of the word, there's a warm, inviting atmosphere that makes you feel right at home. This ethos is built into the way the hotel operates, says CEO Arnold Forman, and is shared through the passion of its staff: "We're a people business, in the business of making friends." There's no pretentiousness of exclusivity at The Houghton - whether you're a rock star looking to clock out for a bit, a business traveller needing to suit up or sign out for the day, or a family looking to social distance from the hustle and bustle synonymous with Joburg city life, The Houghton caters to all.



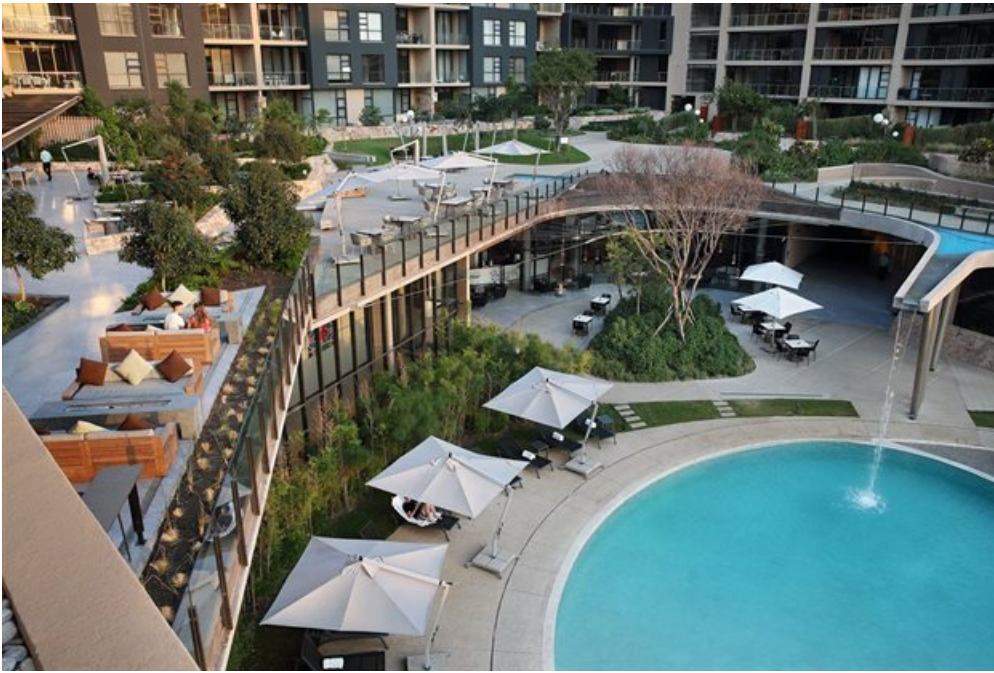
Source: Supplied

While there are many private areas to entertain and unwind, the hotel offers an expansive, inclusive space that epitomises urban resort living.

Endless amenities

There's an endless list of amenities of which to take advantage, including a 3000m² piazza, offering plenty of space to soak

up some sun, as well as the pool-side Pebbles Bar, a firm favourite in warmer weather.



Source: Supplied

Avid golfers have the 6,434-metre Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course at their disposal, and if there's no time for a full round, a nine-hole course is available to put you through your putting paces.

Need to get pumped for a meeting or just craving a midday endorphin pick-me-up? There's the Fit Bar for that and it's unlike any of the gym facilities you'll find at most other hotels, with ample modern equipment and space. If you'd rather take your workout outdoors, there's a secure 8km parkland running/walking track within the hotel grounds.



Source: Supplied



Source: Supplied

If it's tranquillity you seek, The Houghton makes for the ideal spa getaway. On the menu are all the essentials one would expect - from manicures to massages, as well as an indoor heated Zen pool, Rasul treatments, and an exclusive couple's suite with private Jacuzzi and outdoor shower.

A gastronomic journey

Having lunched at [Nova Bistro](#) and dined at [Sejour**](#), both equally delight on the gastronomic front, and are probably reason enough to pay a visit to The Houghton Hotel.



Source: Supplied

The grilled salmon at Nova came highly recommended and did not disappoint. Accompanied with garlic spinach, and a homemade teriyaki sauce, it was melt-in-your-mouth magnificent. If fish is not for you, another firm favourite off the menu, and loved by Forman, is the chicken espetada. Nova is the perfect spot if you enjoy well-lit wide open spaces, and there's always the option of outside seating should the weather play along.

If you want to impress a romantic (or business) partner, you'll do well to wine and dine them at Sejour. It's the ultimate elevated dining experience, with an exquisite menu from Chef Freddie Dias who any Cape Town foodie worth their salt will recognise as previous head chef of The Pot luck Club. Promised a culinary journey, that's exactly what was served up.

I have a mean sweet tooth, but the winning course for me was Dias' crispy calamari with coconut, ginger, lemongrass sauce, pickled watermelon rind, tomato and mustard chutney, finished off with a rice cracker and homemade togarashi. This Asian-inspired dish will have your taste buds singing for more.

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How The Houghton's paying it forward

Yet another reason to take a short left to The Houghton is that through its [Houghton Hotel Hospitality Academy](#), run in partnership with Afrika Tikkun Services, it is helping train underprivileged youth gain theoretical insight and practical experience in the industry.

The academy receives pre-approved candidates who have been assessed by Afrika Tikkun Services and are enrolled into The Houghton Hotel Academy on a 12-month programme. When speaking of the future of the academy, Forman expressed his hopes that other like-minded establishments in the hospitality industry will leverage the initiative created by the partnership.



Source: Supplied

Click [here](#) for more on The Houghton Hotel.

**Sindy Peters was a guest of The Houghton Hotel.*

***Under the current Adjusted Alert Level 4 restrictions, Nova Bistro is doing takeaways only, while Sejour is closed during this period.*

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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