

Doing hotels The Capital way



By Cari Coetzee

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The Capital Hotels & Apartments recently opened its eighth property in South Africa - the Capital Pearls Resort Hotel, bolstering rooms and business facilities in Umhlanga. The contemporary hotel strikes a balance between the comfort of home and the luxury of resort living, fitting with The Capital's focus on the things that really matter. We chat with Marc Wachsberger, MD at The Capital Hotels and Apartments, about The Capital hotels, the industry and what the future holds.



Marc Wachsberger, MD at The Capital Hotels and Apartments

“ We design our buildings backwards... ”

■ ***What distinguishes The Capital Hotels and Apartments from other hotels in South Africa?***

Guests choose The Capital Hotels and Apartments across South Africa because we are on average 25 percent more cost-effective than other hotels of comparable size and quality. We have eliminated unnecessary costs typical of the hospitality industry and we focus on the things that really matter. We remove the unnecessary frills, keep aesthetics simple and sophisticated without compromising the guest experience – we limit the services but not the quality of service. We offer value-added services that business travellers really appreciate such as complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi, secure parking, and laundry services.

We design our buildings backwards: we start by researching what a corporate client is prepared to pay per night then decide on what we invest in the hotel or apartment. The numbers don't lie, our hotels consistently have the highest-ranking occupancy in Sandton with an average of 83% month-on-month.

Also, in contrast to the rest of the industry, each of our properties is run by a flat management structure. General managers have much more autonomy than they would in other hotels groups, ensuring quick decisions, flexibility and high responsiveness to the market. This entrepreneurial approach ultimately creates a better experience for our guests. The entrepreneurial spirit of how we run our business provides us with valuable insights into what is important to our guests, and we make a concerted effort to understand what's good for business – ours as well as theirs.

■ ***What are the essential ingredients for a Capital hotel?***

The modular design of our hotel apartments means they can be scaled up from a one-bedroom for professionals staying alone, to a three-bedroom apartment with a living area for families or various colleagues each with their own personal living space, and without the original guest having to move. All apartment units include a kitchen – perfect for a cost-effective stay. This feature also bodes well for any length of stay - whether you're in town for a two-day conference or you've brought your entire family along for a 6-month stay, the adaptability of our properties makes it the best option for whatever the customer's needs are.

The Capital Hotels and Apartments are always located in business hubs, maximising convenience for business travellers with their central location.

▣ ***What makes The Capital Hotels and Apartments particularly well suited to the MICE industry?***

In KwaZulu-Natal, we noticed a shortage of business facilities within a proximity to the business hub of Umhlanga, especially close to the beach. With this, we established The Capital Pearls and introduced conferencing facilities for up to 200 people, which provides six different spaces that can be configured and equipped to host any kind of function from banquets to lectures, workshops, private meetings and even fine dining experiences.

We'll also be launching another hotel in the Sandton CBD soon, which will be home to one of the largest conferencing facilities in the area, perfect for large corporates with a national or international footprint who require all delegates to stay over in one, central location.

Our conference facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art audio and lighting technology, as well as high-speed internet connectivity. We offer the same world-class standard of conferencing solutions across our various properties, including The Capital Moloko, The Capital 20 West, The Capital Empire in Sandton, and The Capital Menlyn Maine in Pretoria.

▣ ***Tell us about the opening of The Capital Pearls Resort Hotel and what this means for the brand.***

It is particularly important for us to introduce a presence in and around the Durban Metropolitan region. Establishing an apartment hotel in Umhlanga made sense to us as the area has seen massive growth and has become Kwa-Zulu Natal's business hub in the last few years. Corporates are choosing the area because of its new infrastructure, easy access to highways, and proximity to King Shaka International Airport.



New Umhlanga business and leisure hotel officially opens in December

24 Nov 2017



▣ ***What are your thoughts on the South African hotel industry going into 2018?***

A major challenge in the South African hotel industry is cost management for guests. Corporates are tightening their belts

and procurement managers are implementing stringent cost-cutting measures. Consumers are looking for real value for money and they are faced with overpriced offerings that often don't meet their travel needs. A great opportunity exists to present an offering that addresses this challenge and competes with the traditional, conventional hotel industry.

■ ***What does the future hold for The Capital Hotels and Apartments?***

We aim to open two new properties every year, expanding to all the major cities across South Africa, and offering cost-effective accommodation in central business districts for local and international business travellers. We also have plans to expand into Southern Africa (including Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, etc). Historically, The Capital Hotels and Apartments has purchased or leased existing properties and upgraded them to meet its standards and strategy, but much of the planned investment will be in purpose-designed greenfield properties.

ABOUT CARI COETZEE

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

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