

# SIGNATURE

The Diners Club International Magazine

## CAPTURING THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

*Rio de Janeiro*

Drostdy Hotel:  
A Karoo Institution

2025 Diners Club  
Winelist Icon Awards

The Pinnacle of Range Rover  
Luxury & Technology



Diners Club  
INTERNATIONAL

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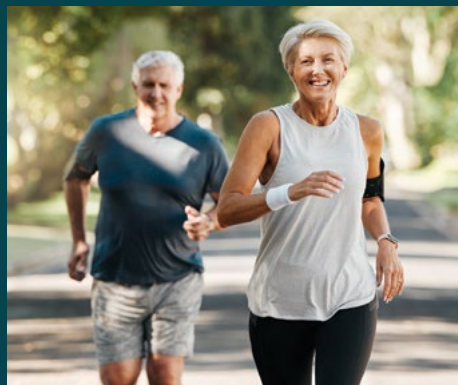
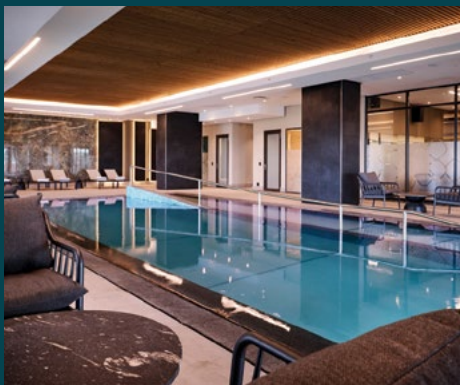
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*from the* MD



## Welcome

Esh Naidoo  
**Managing Director**

Icons occupy a unique place in our lives. They transcend trends, outlast fashions, and remain relevant by consistently delivering excellence. Whether found in travel, fashion, motoring, hospitality or business, iconic brands and experiences earn their status over time through trust, quality and a relentless commitment to their craft.

That spirit forms the foundation of this edition of *Signature*, where we explore a collection of places, brands and experiences that have earned their place among the exceptional. From destinations that continue to captivate travellers from around the world to hospitality establishments that have welcomed generations of guests, we celebrate the rare icons that evolve while remaining true to their identity.

It is also fitting that this edition shines a spotlight on the 2025 Diners Club Winelist Icon Awards. These awards recognise

establishments that have made a lasting contribution to South Africa's wine and dining culture through unwavering excellence and a dedication to creating memorable experiences.

Of course, Diners Club itself represents many of the qualities that define an icon. For decades, the brand has built its reputation on offering members access to exceptional experiences, meaningful benefits and a sense of belonging to a truly exclusive community. In an increasingly connected world, the focus on creating genuine value and fostering connection remains as relevant as ever.

Perhaps that is what ultimately defines an icon. It is not simply longevity or recognition. It is the ability to create lasting relationships, deliver consistent excellence and remain meaningful across generations.

As always, I hope this edition informs, inspires and introduces you to experiences worthy of their iconic status.

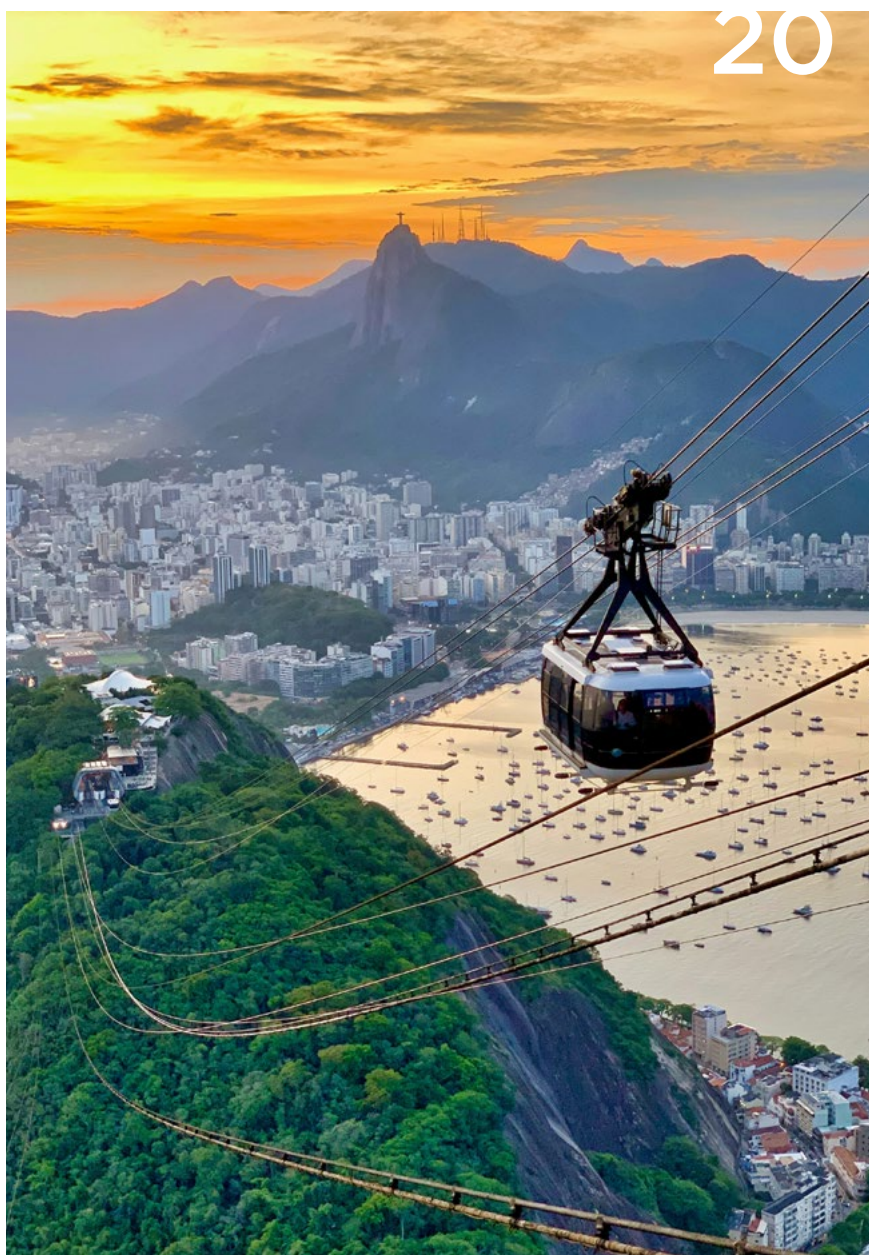
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Member Service Centre 0860 Diners (0860 346377) or +27 11 358 8406

Email [signature@dinersclub.co.za](mailto:signature@dinersclub.co.za)

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DRINK RESPONSIBLY. NOT FOR PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18.

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### DINERS CLUB INTERNATIONAL

**Managing Director**  
Esh Naidoo

**Marketing and Events Manager**  
Debbie Ashton

### TJT MEDIA (PTY) LTD

**Publishing Director**  
Bernie Hellberg Jr / [bernie@tjtmedia.co.za](mailto:bernie@tjtmedia.co.za)  
+27 82 350 2857

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Deidre Loots

**Design & Layout**  
Virtual da Vinci Creative Room

**Media Traffic**  
Chantal Barton / [chantal@tjtmedia.co.za](mailto:chantal@tjtmedia.co.za)

**Accounts**  
Ilze du Plooy / [accounts@tcbmedia.co.za](mailto:accounts@tcbmedia.co.za)

### ADVERTISING SALES

**National Sales Manager (Business Development)**  
Chantal Barton / [chantal@tjtmedia.co.za](mailto:chantal@tjtmedia.co.za)  
+27 79 626 0782

**National Sales Manager (Regional & SADC)**  
Bryan Kayavhu / [bryan@tjtmedia.co.za](mailto:bryan@tjtmedia.co.za)  
+27 83 785 6691

### GAUTENG

173 Veale Street, Nieuw Muckleneuk, Pretoria, 0181

[www.tjtmedia.co.za](http://www.tjtmedia.co.za)  
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Escape to Elegance in the

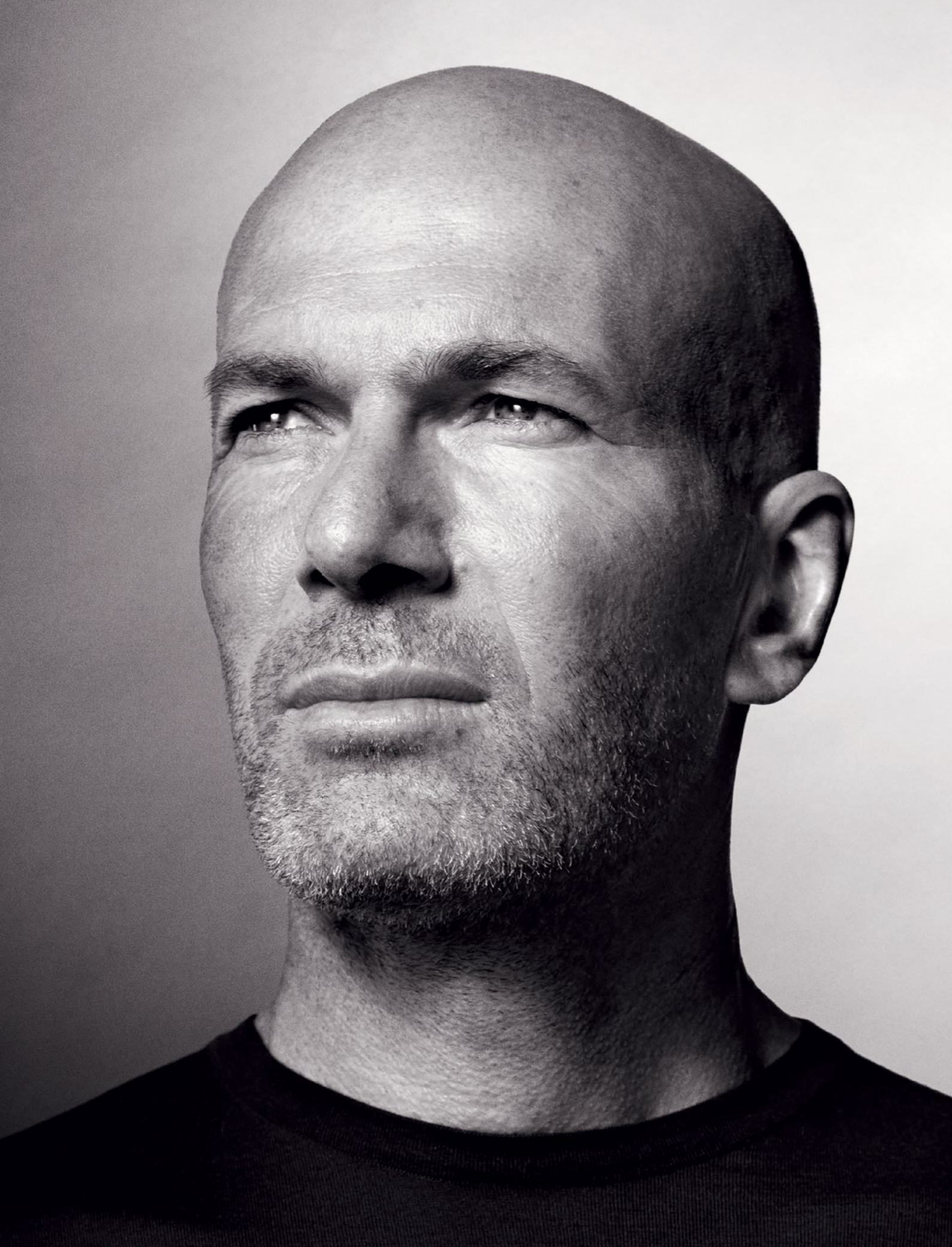
# Heart of the Winelands

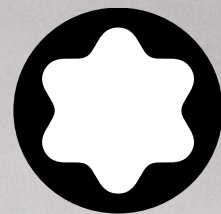
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## LEGEND

### ELIXIR

*Zinedine Zidane*



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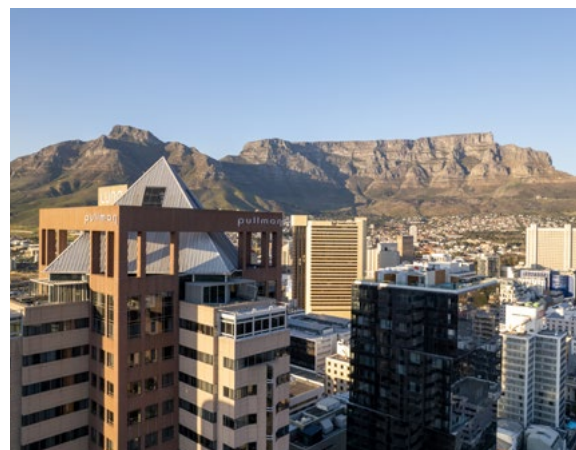
## GO THERE

### RICHARD CARSTENS JOINS LA PETITE FERME

La Petite Ferme has appointed acclaimed South African chef Richard Carstens as its new Head Chef. Joining the Franschhoek estate in March 2026, Carstens brings decades of fine dining experience and a modern French culinary philosophy rooted in seasonal, locally sourced ingredients. Formerly Chef Patron at Arkeste, he earned South Africa's highest Eat Out Three Star accolade in 2023. His career also includes

leadership roles at Tokara, Lynton Hall and Le Provençal. Founded in 1984, La Petite Ferme has grown into one of the Cape Winelands' premier luxury destinations, known for its boutique hotel, award-winning wines, and panoramic views of the Franschhoek Valley. Carstens' inaugural menu is paired with the estate's wines and inspired by the surrounding Winelands.

[www.lapetiteferme.co.za](http://www.lapetiteferme.co.za)



### THE PULSE OF THE MOTHER CITY

In Cape Town, location isn't just a convenience; it's the heartbeat of your stay. Pullman Cape Town City Centre sits where the business district's energy meets the city's creative soul. Step out, and you're immediately on Bree Street, the local go-to for wine bars and the kind of restaurants that define the city's food scene. A few blocks over, the bright, cobbled lanes of Bo-Kaap offer a quieter, historic contrast. With a shuttle linking you to the V&A Waterfront and Table Mountain framing the horizon, the logistics fall away. It's a seamless base that puts the best of the Cape within easy reach.

[www.pullmancape town.com](http://www.pullmancape town.com)

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# EAT YOUR WAY THROUGH BANGKOK

## *A South African Guide to the City's Street Food Markets*

**As South African travellers increasingly seek experience-led travel, Bangkok is fast earning global recognition as one of the world's leading food capitals.**

**Recently ranked among the top destinations for food by international travellers, the Thai capital's vibrant street food markets offer one of the most authentic ways to connect with local culture.**

In Bangkok, street food isn't something you plan around, it's simply part of the city's pulse. But as more South Africans lean into travel that prioritises connection over convention, food has fast become one of the most meaningful ways to experience a destination. In Thailand's capital, that connection happens on crowded pavements and wok-filled corners, in lively night markets glowing under neon lights, where eating feels like stepping straight into everyday Thai life.

For South African travellers who tend to chase feeling over formality, Bangkok's street food scene is one of the easiest ways to get under the skin of the city. It's where office workers stop for a quick meal after work, where families gather over shared dishes, and where visitors find themselves shoulder to shoulder with locals, drawn in by the same thing, good food, done well.

"Food plays an essential role in how travellers experience Thailand," says Ahman Mad Adam, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Dubai Office. "Street food, in particular, allows visitors to engage directly with Thai culture. It's where

tradition, community and everyday life come together."

What makes Bangkok particularly appealing is that the city doesn't separate its culinary experiences into tourist attractions and local favourites. The places that attract international visitors are often the same places where Bangkok residents eat every day. That authenticity is part of the appeal. Whether you are ordering from a roadside cart or sitting on a plastic stool at a market stall, there is a sense that you are experiencing something genuine rather than a version of Thai culture curated specifically for visitors.

### **A CITY BUILT AROUND FOOD**

Nowhere captures that energy quite like Chinatown's Yaowarat Road. As the evening sets in, the street transforms into a full-blown open-air kitchen. Flames leap from woks, seafood is grilled to order, and vendors call out over the hum of conversation. It's busy, a little chaotic, and completely unforgettable, the kind of place where you don't overthink what to eat, you simply follow your instincts and the crowds.

Yaowarat is particularly famous for its seafood offerings. Giant prawns, grilled



*Yaowarat Road, Chinatown*

squid, crab dishes and steaming noodle soups line the pavements, while the scent of garlic, chilli and charcoal drifts through the air. Even for travellers who consider themselves adventurous eaters, the sheer variety can be overwhelming in the best possible way. The trick is not to settle on a single meal, but rather to sample as much as possible from different vendors.

Then there's Chatuchak Weekend Market, which feels like its own city within a city. While it's known for shopping, the food is what keeps you going. Between stalls,

you'll find everything from grilled meats and fresh tropical fruit to coconut-heavy desserts and ice-cold drinks, small pauses that break up the pace of exploring one of the largest markets in the world.

The beauty of Chatuchak lies in its variety. One moment you might be enjoying freshly cut mango or pineapple, and the next you are discovering a regional Thai dish that you have never encountered before. It turns a day of browsing into a culinary adventure, with every section of the market offering something new to taste.

For something more contemporary, Ratchada Train Night Market leans into a younger, more social energy. It's the kind of place you go with time on your hands, wandering between food stalls, picking at different dishes, and settling in as the night unfolds around you. It's less about ticking off must-eats and more about soaking up the atmosphere.

#### **THE MARKETS COME ALIVE AFTER DARK**

The market has become popular with younger locals and visitors alike because it combines food with entertainment. Live music, vibrant lighting and a lively social scene create an environment where dining feels like only part of the experience. It is easy to arrive for dinner and end up staying for hours.

Bangkok's night markets reveal another side of the city after sunset. As temperatures cool and the streets become busier, locals and visitors alike emerge to socialise, eat and unwind. Unlike traditional restaurants where meals are often the sole focus, these spaces encourage lingering. People move between stalls, sample different dishes and enjoy



the energy that comes from thousands of people sharing the same experience.

For travellers, it offers a chance to slow down and observe the city at work. Conversations drift through the air, food vendors perform their craft with remarkable speed and confidence, and every corner seems to present another tempting aroma. It is this sensory overload that makes Bangkok's street food culture so memorable.

#### FLAVOURS THAT DEFINE BANGKOK

Of course, there are dishes you'll come across again and again. Pad Thai, cooked fresh in front of you. Som Tam, sharp, spicy and impossible to ignore. Mango sticky rice,

soft and sweet, rounding things off. But what stands out isn't just the flavour, it's the balance, heat, sweetness, acidity and texture, everything working together in a way that feels effortless.

For many South Africans, Thai cuisine offers familiar elements presented in entirely new ways. There is a shared appreciation for bold flavours, generous hospitality and meals that bring people together. Yet Bangkok's street food culture introduces combinations and techniques that can feel refreshingly different. Tamarind, fish sauce, fresh herbs and aromatic spices create layers of flavour that are both complex and approachable.

One of the most rewarding aspects of exploring Bangkok through its food is the opportunity to step outside your comfort zone. Some of the city's most memorable dishes are the ones travellers might never have considered ordering back home. A bowl of boat noodles from a vendor tucked beneath a bridge, freshly grilled skewers from a roadside stall, or a dessert purchased on impulse from a market stand can become highlights of an entire trip.

Street food also offers remarkable value. Bangkok's culinary reputation is not built on expensive restaurants alone. Some of the city's most celebrated dishes are served from humble stalls that have perfected a single recipe over decades. For travellers looking to stretch their budget without sacrificing quality, the city's food scene delivers an experience that is both affordable and exceptional.

Beyond the food itself, there is something undeniably human about the experience. Watching a vendor prepare a dish using techniques passed down through generations creates a connection that transcends language barriers. Even brief interactions become memorable, a smile



*Ratchada Night Market*



from a stall owner, a recommendation from a local diner, or the shared excitement of trying something new.

With more South Africans seeking out immersive, culturally rich travel experiences, the Tourism Authority of Thailand continues to position Bangkok as a destination best explored through its food. The city's markets, street corners and food stalls provide an open invitation to experience Thailand beyond the guidebooks.

More often than not, the moments that stay with you aren't the ones you planned, but the ones that happen in between. Standing on a busy street, plate in hand, eating something you didn't expect to love as much as you do. Listening to the sounds of the city around you while watching another dish emerge from a steaming wok. Discovering that some of the most meaningful travel experiences come not from grand landmarks or carefully curated itineraries, but from something as simple as a meal shared among strangers.

In Bangkok, street food is far more than a convenient way to eat. It is a gateway into the rhythms of the city, a reflection of its culture, and one of the most rewarding ways to experience Thailand's vibrant capital. For South Africans searching for authentic travel experiences, it might just be the perfect place to start. 🇹🇭

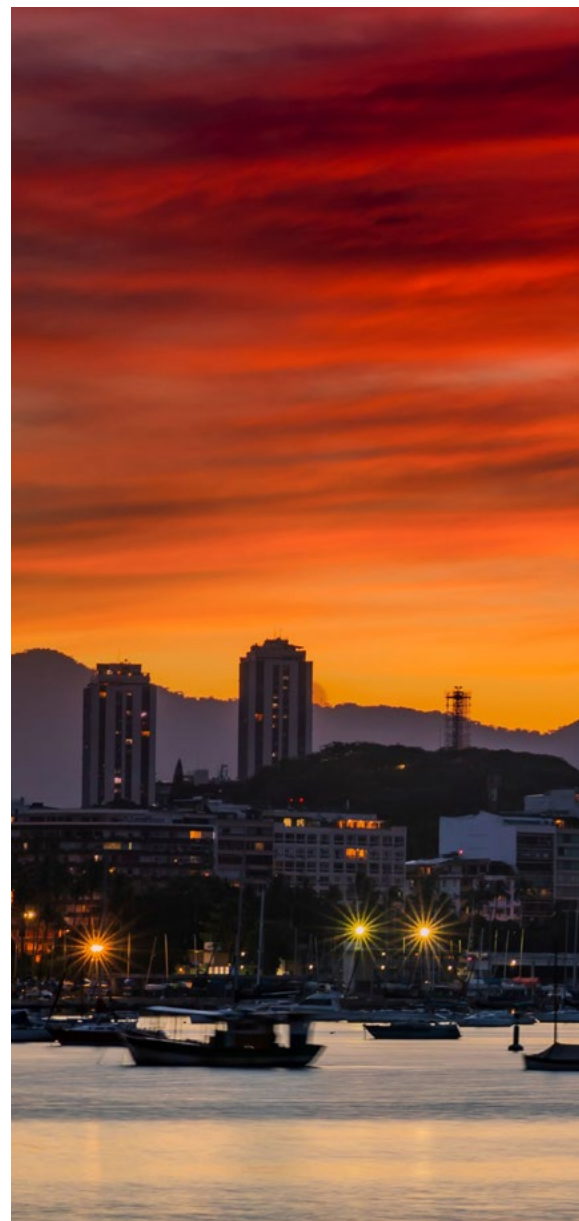
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# RYTHM OF RIO DE JANEIRO

*A First-timer's Guide to Brazil's Most Captivating City*

Certain destinations seem to exist in a world of their own. Cities that appear larger than life in photographs, films and travel documentaries, only to leave visitors wondering whether reality can possibly live up to the hype. Rio de Janeiro is not one of them. Brazil's Cidade Maravilhosa, or Marvellous City, somehow exceeds every expectation.

For South Africans, Rio has never been more accessible. The return of direct South African Airways flights to São Paulo has reignited interest in South America, while LATAM Airlines' upcoming Cape Town to São Paulo service promises to make Brazil even easier to reach. What was once a complicated long-haul adventure is now firmly within reach, opening the door to one of the world's most spectacular urban playgrounds.





Nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and dramatic granite mountains, Rio offers a rare blend of natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, world-class hospitality and infectious energy. It is a city where luxury hotels overlook legendary beaches, samba rhythms drift through historic neighbourhoods, and every sunset feels worthy of applause.

For first-time visitors, few destinations deliver such a complete travel experience.

#### **ARRIVING IN THE MARVELLOUS CITY**

Most South African travellers arrive via São Paulo, a flight of roughly nine to ten hours. From there, Rio is a short domestic hop away, although some adventurous visitors opt for the overnight sleeper bus between the two cities, enjoying a comfortable and surprisingly affordable trip through Brazil's changing landscapes.

One of the first pleasant surprises for many visitors is the value. Compared with numerous European destinations, Rio can

be remarkably affordable, allowing travellers to enjoy luxury accommodation, excellent dining and unforgettable experiences without completely emptying their wallets.

Timing your visit is equally important. While Rio enjoys a warm climate throughout the year, the period between March and November generally offers the most comfortable conditions. April to June and September to October are particularly appealing, combining pleasant weather with fewer crowds. Those dreaming of experiencing the



world's most famous carnival should target February, although planning well in advance is essential.

#### **AN ICON WATCHING OVER THE CITY**

No first visit to Rio is complete without making the pilgrimage to Christ the Redeemer.

Perched atop Corcovado Mountain, the towering statue has become synonymous with Brazil itself. While photographs have made the monument familiar to millions around the world, standing beneath its outstretched arms remains an emotional experience.

The journey is just as memorable as the destination.

Visitors pass through Tijuca Forest, one of the world's largest urban rainforests, before ascending towards the summit. Dense greenery gives way

to panoramic views that reveal Rio in all its glory. From this elevated vantage point, the city's unique geography becomes clear. Beaches curve along the coastline, mountains rise dramatically from the sea, and entire neighbourhoods seem to spill between the natural contours of the landscape.

Arriving early in the morning is highly recommended. The crowds are smaller, temperatures are cooler, and

the likelihood of uninterrupted views is significantly greater.

#### **BEACHES THAT DEFINE A LIFESTYLE**

In many cities, beaches are simply attractions. In Rio, they are a way of life.

Copacabana and Ipanema remain the beating heart of the city, serving as gathering places for locals and visitors alike. From sunrise until sunset, these stretches of golden sand become social

theatres where joggers, volleyball players, families and sunseekers share the same space.

Luxury hotels line the beachfront, many offering spectacular ocean views, rooftop pools and refined dining experiences. Yet the true magic lies in joining everyday Carioca life.

Order fresh coconut water from a beach vendor. Sample iced mate tea paired with crunchy Biscoito Globo. Slip on a pair of Havaianas and embrace Rio's wonderfully inclusive beach culture. Here, confidence matters far more than perfection.

If you have a body and you're on the beach, you have a beach body, and that philosophy alone might be one of Rio's greatest exports.

#### **SUGARLOAF AND A SUNSET TO REMEMBER**

While Christ the Redeemer may dominate postcards, seasoned travellers often argue that the finest views belong to Sugarloaf Mountain.

Accessible via a series of cable cars, the granite peak rises dramatically above Guanabara Bay, offering a perspective that captures the full grandeur of Rio's geography.

The ideal strategy is simple. Arrive in the late afternoon and stay until sunset.

As the sun slowly descends, the city transforms. The beaches glow gold, the mountains soften into silhouette, and the lights of Rio gradually begin to sparkle. It is one of those rare travel moments that feels every bit as magical as promised.

For an even more authentic sunset experience, make your way to Mureta da Urca afterwards. This low wall beside the bay has become a favourite gathering place for locals. Armed with a caipirinha and accompanied by ambient music, visitors watch daylight fade as they soak up the city's unmistakably relaxed spirit.

#### **CULTURE BEYOND THE POSTCARDS**

Rio's greatest treasures extend well beyond its famous landmarks.



The city's identity has been shaped by Indigenous heritage, Portuguese colonial influence and centuries of African traditions. Together, they have created one of the world's most vibrant cultural landscapes.

Among the most rewarding neighbourhoods to explore is Santa Teresa. Perched above the city centre, this bohemian enclave offers a slower pace and a welcome contrast to the beachfront glamour. Colourful colonial homes line narrow streets, while galleries, cafés and artist studios occupy beautifully restored buildings.

It is the kind of neighbourhood that rewards aimless wandering. A stroll along Rua Aprazível may lead to a hidden restaurant, a local artist's workshop or a panoramic viewpoint overlooking the city below.

Nearby, the famous Escadaria Selarón showcases another side of Rio's creativity. Constructed by Chilean-born artist Jorge Selarón, the colourful mosaic staircase has become one of the city's most photographed landmarks.

Yet despite its popularity, it retains a genuine sense of artistic expression and cultural pride.

#### **GREEN SPACES AND HIDDEN GEMS**

Rio's natural beauty extends far beyond its beaches. One of the city's most enchanting hidden treasures is Parque Lage, located at the foot of Corcovado Mountain. This lush public park combines tropical gardens, fountains, caves and walking paths with a magnificent historic mansion that now houses an art school and café.

There is something wonderfully Rio about enjoying a strong cafézinho and freshly baked pão de queijo while gazing towards Christ the Redeemer framed by dense rainforest.

The city excels at creating moments where urban sophistication and natural beauty coexist effortlessly.

#### **EAT, DRINK, REPEAT**

South Africans will feel immediately at home in Brazil's food culture. A visit to a traditional churrascaria is practically

compulsory. At establishments such as Carretão in Copacabana, servers circulate continuously with skewers of expertly grilled meats, slicing portions directly onto diners' plates. The prized picanha cut is particularly beloved and quickly earns its reputation.

The experience is wonderfully simple. Order a caipirinha, flip your table card to green and enjoy the feast. Beyond the steakhouses lies a rich culinary landscape waiting to be discovered. Feijoada, Brazil's iconic black bean and pork stew, delivers comfort in every spoonful. Street markets offer crispy coxinhas and freshly fried pastéis, while local cafés serve excellent coffee that rivals any found elsewhere in the world.

For travellers willing to venture beyond the obvious tourist routes, Feira de São Cristóvão offers an authentic taste of northeastern Brazilian cuisine and culture that is rarely encountered in guidebooks. And then there is the nightlife.

Lapa comes alive after dark. Beneath the historic Carioca Aqueduct, musicians, dancers and revellers





gather in an atmosphere that perfectly captures Rio's passion for celebration. Samba rhythms spill from bars and live music venues, creating an energy that is impossible to resist.

#### A CITY THAT STAYS WITH YOU

The most remarkable thing about Rio de Janeiro is not its landmarks, beaches or luxury hotels.

There is an openness, warmth and vitality that becomes increasingly difficult to leave behind. Visitors arrive expecting famous sights and beautiful scenery. They depart remembering conversations with locals, spontaneous evenings filled with music and moments that never appeared in any travel brochure.

Rio has an extraordinary ability to get under your skin. Perhaps that is why so many first-time visitors leave already planning their return. For South Africans seeking a destination that combines luxury, culture, natural beauty and genuine value, Rio delivers on every front. Some cities impress. Rio enchants. 🇧🇷



by **bernie hellberg jr**  
/photography by **unsplash.com**

# A SHIFT BEYOND SUN AND SAND

## *Zanzibar's Tourism Surges*

**Zanzibar's tourism growth is accelerating, reshaping the island's investment landscape, with official data suggesting that demand is beginning to outstrip the range of experiences available to visitors beyond its hotels and beaches.**

According to the Tourism Statistical Release for December 2025, Zanzibar welcomed 100,729 international visitors during the month, marking a 10% year-on-year increase and a 38.3% rise compared with November. Across the full year, international arrivals reached 917,167, up from 736,755 in 2024, reinforcing a sustained growth trajectory rather than a short-lived post-pandemic rebound.

Accommodation performance points to mounting capacity pressure, with bed occupancy levels approaching 89% in December and more than 815,000 bed nights sold in a single month. The average intended length of stay stood at just over eight nights.

"These figures confirm that Zanzibar is firmly in a growth phase,

with longer stays and rising demand placing increasing pressure on tourism infrastructure," said Dr Aboud Suleiman Jumbe, Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Heritage. "This growth creates clear opportunities for strategic investment that deepens the visitor experience while supporting national development priorities."

### GLOBAL BRANDS TAKE NOTICE

International hotel groups and boutique operators have responded swiftly to these market signals. TUI Group has strengthened its East African hotel portfolio through additional resort capacity in Zanzibar, positioning the island as a key pillar of its long-haul leisure strategy. Hilton has announced its entry into the market with a branded beachfront resort, a move widely regarded as a catalyst for further global interest in the brand.



ENVI Lodges is developing a new eco-luxury beachfront property that combines low-impact design with experiential travel, while Minor Hotels has confirmed a significant expansion of its Anantara portfolio through a new agreement with Infinity Group. The addition further strengthens Zanzibar's growing pipeline of luxury and lifestyle developments, underlining increasing confidence in the



destination's long-term appeal among experience-driven travellers.

#### **CONNECTIVITY DRIVING MOMENTUM**

Beyond accommodation, infrastructure investment is reshaping Zanzibar's connectivity profile. Upgrades to airport and aviation capacity have accelerated the introduction of additional direct

international flights to the islands, both chartered and scheduled, improving access from key source markets.

According to Mr Seif Abdallah Juma, Director General of the Zanzibar Airport Authority, approximately 575 aircraft landings were recorded in January, marginally higher than December. The figure reflects continued growth in airline activity and highlights aviation



expansion as another indicator of Zanzibar's tourism momentum.

While these developments underscore strong investor confidence in Zanzibar's fundamentals, industry observers note that the island's tourism offerings remain heavily weighted towards accommodation. Comparatively limited investment has been directed towards family-friendly attractions, cultural and interpretive assets, marinas, museums and large-scale experiential infrastructure. These are often the elements that transform beach destinations into longer-stay, higher-spend markets.

"There is strong demand, but the depth of product has not yet caught up with the volume of arrivals," noted one investment adviser active in East Africa. "That gap creates an opportunity for investors who are looking beyond hotels and towards experiences that lengthen stays and diversify spend."

#### **LOOKING BEYOND HOTELS**

Rising demand is also reflected in investment in transport and logistics. Azam Marine, the region's leading ferry operator, has recently commissioned Kilimanjaro Number 9, a modern high-capacity passenger vessel representing an investment of USD 12.9 million. The vessel can carry more than 600 passengers per trip and operates up to 13 sailings a day, serving key routes between Dar es Salaam, Unguja and Pemba. The investment has also expanded operational staffing, signalling expectations of sustained growth in passenger volumes.

"In island economies, transport capacity is a leading indicator," said a senior executive at Azam Marine. "You do not invest at this scale unless you have confidence in long-term demand."

Investors are also increasingly exploring opportunities beyond traditional tourism assets, particularly



in eco-tourism and forestry-linked developments. Zanzibar is home to 11 officially designated forest conservation areas, six of which have already attracted investment interest. The trend highlights growing demand for projects that combine conservation, sustainability and nature-based tourism, aligning with broader development priorities for the islands.

Government officials believe the current environment presents a strategic window for early-stage investment in the next phase of Zanzibar's tourism evolution, particularly in attractions, cultural infrastructure, family experiences, eco-tourism and integrated leisure developments that complement the rapid expansion of hotel capacity.

"We are actively encouraging investment that adds depth, diversity and resilience to Zanzibar's tourism offering," Dr Jumbe said. "Investors who come in

now have an opportunity not only to benefit from growth, but to help shape the destination's tourism landscape for the next decade."

With demand indicators continuing to rise, global brands committing capital, air connectivity expanding, and transport capacity scaling up in parallel, industry analysts believe Zanzibar is approaching an inflexion point familiar to island destinations worldwide. Those who invest early in experiential, cultural and sustainable infrastructure may well help define the next chapter of the island's tourism story. ⑩





# A KAROO INSTITUTION

*Drostdy Hotel's Enduring Appeal*

There are certain places that become part of your travel story. Destinations you return to so often that they begin to feel less like hotels and more like familiar landmarks in your own life. For me, Drostdy Hotel in Graaff-Reinet is one of those places.

I have been visiting Drostdy Hotel in Graaff-Reinet, on and off, for the better part of four decades. During that time, I have watched it evolve as a kid, from a charming historic hotel into what is undoubtedly one of my favourite places to stay when travelling through the Karoo. While the reasons for my visits have changed over the years, from family holidays to more recent work assignments, one thing has remained remarkably consistent. Every time I arrive, Drostdy provides a welcome sense of calm and comfort amid the vast, semi-arid landscape that surrounds it.



Situated in the heart of Graaff-Reinet, South Africa's fourth-oldest town, the hotel is perfectly positioned to complement its rich heritage. The town itself is often described as the gem of the Karoo, and for good reason. Framed by the dramatic Camdeboo mountains and characterised by wide streets lined with Cape Dutch, Victorian, and Karoo-style architecture, Graaff-Reinet possesses a timeless quality that few destinations can match.

Drostdy Hotel sits at the centre of this historical tapestry. Its origins stretch back to the early 19th century, and the property has long been



intertwined with the story of the town itself. Over the years, careful restoration and thoughtful development have allowed the hotel to preserve its historic character while introducing the modern comforts expected by contemporary travellers.

Many heritage properties struggle to find the sweet spot between authenticity and luxury. Some become overly polished and lose their sense of place. Others lean so heavily into nostalgia that comfort becomes secondary. Drostdy manages to avoid both pitfalls. It embraces its history without becoming trapped by it.

## HISTORY MEETS MODERN COMFORT

The whitewashed walls, elegant Cape Dutch architecture and manicured courtyards immediately establish a sense of arrival. Yet beneath the historical façade lies a hotel that feels entirely relevant to modern travel. The rooms are spacious and tastefully appointed, offering a blend of period charm and contemporary convenience. Throughout the property, attention to detail is evident without ever feeling ostentatious.

Perhaps that is why the hotel feels so comfortable. There is no need for it to prove anything. Its confidence stems

from generations of hospitality rather than fleeting trends.

One of the greatest pleasures of staying at Drostdy is simply slowing down. The Karoo has a unique way of altering one's sense of time. Distances appear endless, traffic becomes almost non-existent, and the pace of life settles into something far gentler than what most urban dwellers experience daily.

After hours spent driving across South Africa's expansive interior, arriving at the hotel feels almost therapeutic. The cool courtyards, shaded verandas and tranquil atmosphere provide an immediate contrast to the heat and dust that accompany a Karoo journey. It is a place that encourages you to pause, unpack, and stay a little longer than originally planned.

The hotel's swimming pools are particularly inviting during the warmer months, offering a welcome refuge from the Karoo sun. Meanwhile, the various communal spaces encourage quiet reflection, whether over a morning coffee, an afternoon book or a glass of wine as the day's heat begins to subside.



#### A TASTE OF THE KAROO

Food also plays an important role in the Drostdy experience. The restaurant celebrates regional flavours while

maintaining a level of refinement befitting one of the Eastern Cape's premier hospitality establishments. Karoo lamb naturally takes centre stage, while seasonal ingredients and local influences help create a dining experience that feels connected to the surrounding landscape.

Yet the appeal of Drostdy extends well beyond its physical comforts.

What continues to draw me back is the way it serves as a gateway to one of South Africa's most fascinating regions. Graaff-Reinet offers visitors an exceptional blend of history, culture and natural beauty. The town's numerous museums provide insight into South Africa's colonial past, while its churches, monuments and heritage buildings reward those who enjoy exploring on foot.

Just beyond town lies one of the country's most remarkable natural attractions. The Valley of Desolation, with its towering dolerite columns and sweeping views across the Camdeboo plains, remains





every bit as spectacular today as it was when I first visited many years ago. Watching the late afternoon light paint the landscape in shades of gold and amber is an experience that never loses its magic.

### THE PERFECT KAROO BASE

For travellers undertaking long-distance road trips between Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape, Graaff-Reinet is also strategically convenient. Yet reducing the town to merely an overnight stop would be doing it a great disservice. Destinations like this deserve time. They reward curiosity.

Drostdy Hotel encourages guests to engage with the destination rather than simply pass through it. Whether staying for a single night or several days, there is an unmistakable sense that the hotel forms part of the broader Graaff-Reinet experience rather than existing separately from it.

Looking back over forty years of visits, I realise that my appreciation for the hotel has grown alongside the



property itself. I have watched it adapt to changing traveller expectations while retaining the character that first made it special. In an era when many hotels seem increasingly interchangeable, that sense of identity has become one of its greatest strengths.

The Karoo remains one of South Africa's most captivating regions, defined by vast horizons, dramatic landscapes, and an almost meditative sense of space. Within that setting, Drostdy Hotel stands

as a sanctuary of comfort, history and understated elegance.

For me, it is far more than a place to spend the night. It is a familiar refuge on the road, a reminder of how rewarding slow travel can be, and a destination that continues to welcome me back. ①

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by **bernie hellberg jr** / photography by **drostdy hotel**

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## LIFESTYLE

### MAGNETIC PRESENCE

Jimmy Choo introduces Jimmy Choo Man Parfum – the house's most opulent expression of masculine fragrance to date. An intensified evolution of the iconic Jimmy Choo Man line, the parfum embodies modern sophistication, daring sensuality, and unmistakable magnetism. Crafted for the man who commands attention with effortless confidence, the scent is both seductive and refined, balancing audacious energy with timeless elegance. Encased in a striking gold-hued bottle that reflects the maison's

dedication to glamour and craftsmanship, the fragrance unfolds with luminous bergamot and vibrant black pepper, revealing a heart of lavender and orange blossom. A rich, lingering base of benzoin and patchouli leaves an unforgettable trail of warmth and depth. Luxurious, charismatic, and unapologetically bold, Jimmy Choo Man Parfum captures the essence of contemporary masculinity with a decadent edge that endures long after nightfall. Available in select retail stores nationwide.



### TIME HONOURED, CAPE TOWN BOUND

After 127 years at the pinnacle of South African luxury, Charles Greig Jewellers has unveiled its striking new Rolex Boutique at Cape Town's iconic V&A Waterfront. Founded in Johannesburg in 1899 by Scottish master watchmaker Charles Greig, the family-led house has become synonymous with timeless craftsmanship, refined elegance and exceptional horology across five generations. Its enduring partnership with Rolex – one of the oldest retailer relationships in the world – reflects a shared devotion to precision, innovation and legacy. The new flagship boutique elegantly unites Johannesburg's cosmopolitan energy with Cape Town's coastal sophistication, marking a powerful new chapter for the storied jeweller. Poetically positioned where Charles Greig himself first arrived by mail ship in 1894, the boutique stands beneath Table Mountain as a celebration of heritage, craftsmanship and the art of time itself.

### ENGINEERED FOR THE WAY LIFE MOVES

In a world that rarely slows down, the homes we return to deserve nothing less than exceptional care. The Roborock F25 Series is the product of relentless engineering refinement – conceived not merely to clean, but to quietly elevate the rhythm of everyday living. Powerful wet-and-dry performance addresses the full spectrum of household demand, moving effortlessly from fine dust to stubborn residue in a single, unhurried pass. Intelligent sensors read each surface with precision, calibrating cleaning power instinctively – a seamless intelligence that anticipates rather than reacts. Thoughtfully proportioned and impeccably balanced, the F25 Series navigates the contours of a home with quiet confidence. Its self-cleaning system removes the burden of maintenance entirely, returning time to those who value it most. For discerning homeowners who hold their living spaces to the highest standard, the Roborock F25 Series represents a new chapter in home care. Not louder. Not faster for its own sake. Simply better, in every way that matters. Premium technology. Impeccable results. A smarter home, beautifully kept. [www.roborock.com](http://www.roborock.com)



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# AN ICONIC QUARTET

*Four Restaurants Earn Top Honours at the  
2025 Diners Club Winelist Awards*

In a country blessed with world-class wines and an increasingly sophisticated dining scene, a great wine list can be the difference between a memorable meal and an exceptional one. Each year, the Diners Club Winelist Awards celebrate the restaurants that have elevated the art of wine curation, recognising establishments that not only showcase outstanding local and international labels but also create truly world-class experiences for their guests. For 2025, four restaurants earned the prestigious Icon Award, the highest honour in the programme.

For more than 30 years, the Diners Club Winelist Awards have recognised excellence in wine programmes across South Africa's hospitality industry. In 2025, four restaurants earned the competition's highest accolade, the coveted Icon Award, underscoring their status as among the country's leading wine destinations.





This year's Diners Club Winelist Icon Award recipients are:

- Kievits Kroon Gauteng Wine Estate, Pretoria
- Verdicchio Restaurant & Wine Cellar, Fourways
- Saxon Hotel, Villas and Spa, Sandton
- Rooi at One&Only, Cape Town

LEFT TO RIGHT: *Esh Naidoo (Diners Club SA Managing Director), Nadine Quinn (Kievits Kroon Deputy General Manager), and Francois Stremmelaar (Kievits Kroon General Manager)*





LEFT TO RIGHT: *Lloyd Jusa (Saxon Head Sommelier),  
Ayanda Magele (Saxon Hotel Sommelier),  
and Esh Naidoo (Diners Club SA Managing Director)*

## THE PINNACLE OF WINE EXCELLENCE

Presented annually as part of the Diners Club Winelist Awards, the Icon distinction represents the pinnacle of wine list achievement in South Africa. Restaurants awarded Icon status are judged to offer wine programmes of international calibre, combining exceptional depth, diversity and curation with a commitment to outstanding guest experiences.

The awards are structured into five tiers: Silver, Gold, Platinum, Diamond, and Icon. While Diamond status already signifies an exceptional wine offering, the Icon Award is reserved for establishments that go even further.

To qualify, restaurants must demonstrate an extensive international wine selection, strong representation across multiple wine categories,

noteworthy reserve and vintage collections, and a carefully considered approach to wine curation. A dedicated full-time sommelier is also a prerequisite.

### SETTING THE BENCHMARK

The 2025 awards were adjudicated by a panel comprising respected figures from South Africa's wine, food and hospitality sectors. Their assessment reflected both local excellence and international trends in wine service and presentation.

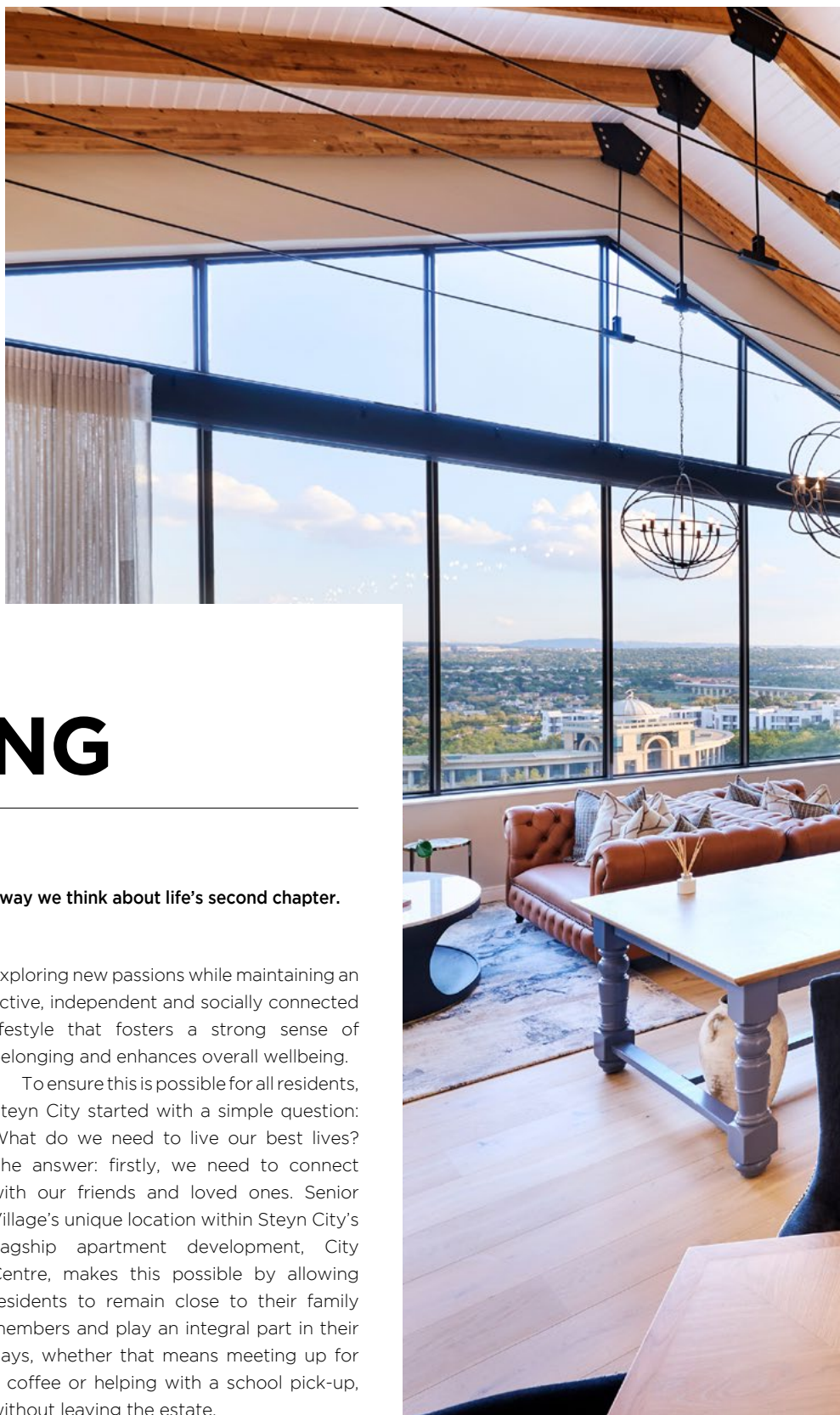
Three of the four Icon Award winners are located in Gauteng, highlighting the province's growing reputation as a destination for serious wine enthusiasts. Meanwhile, Cape Town's Rooi at One&Only secured the Western Cape's sole Icon Award, reinforcing the city's standing as one of the country's premier culinary and wine destinations.

Introduced in 2018, the Icon Award remains the highest recognition available within the Diners Club Winelist Awards programme. Its stringent criteria ensure that only a select group of restaurants achieve the distinction each year.

The awards continue to evolve with global hospitality trends, reflecting Diners Club's longstanding commitment to service excellence and to promoting world-class dining experiences in South Africa.

For more, visit [www.dinersclub.co.za/news-events/winelist-awards](http://www.dinersclub.co.za/news-events/winelist-awards). 

by *diners club*



# KEEP EXPLORING

## *Steyn City Senior Village*

**Steyn City's Senior Village has reinvented the way we think about life's second chapter.**

When Steyn City announced the launch of a development that would transform the estate into a multi-generational community, expectations were high. After all, it had already established a reputation for offering homes and an extraordinary lifestyle that shatters convention and sets new standards.

There is no question that Steyn City's new Senior Village has lived up to those expectations; above all, because of its fresh take on the golden years. Every aspect of this beautiful development has been carefully planned to ensure that residents can make the most of every minute

exploring new passions while maintaining an active, independent and socially connected lifestyle that fosters a strong sense of belonging and enhances overall wellbeing.

To ensure this is possible for all residents, Steyn City started with a simple question: What do we need to live our best lives? The answer: firstly, we need to connect with our friends and loved ones. Senior Village's unique location within Steyn City's flagship apartment development, City Centre, makes this possible by allowing residents to remain close to their family members and play an integral part in their days, whether that means meeting up for a coffee or helping with a school pick-up, without leaving the estate.



*Senior Village Sky Bar and Lounge*

Senior Village has also provided welcoming spaces that are just right for a catch-up: grab a coffee at the Village's Sky Bar and Lounge, for example, enjoy a lunch date at Paputzis Restaurant, or spend some quiet time in the Gardens.

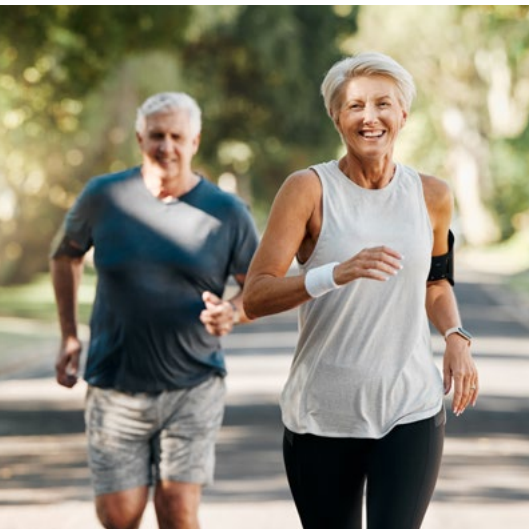
### KEEP ACTIVE, LIVE WELL

Steyn City has always understood that keeping active is central to living well. The estate's facilities, all geared towards providing avenues to explore your interests, speak to this ethos – hence the enormous array of amenities, from the 18-hole Nicklaus Design Championship golf course, the 45-kilometre floodlit promenade, perfect for brisk walks or a scenic stroll and some birdwatching, and the 50km MTB track. Fans of racquetball are catered for with floodlit tennis, pickleball and padel courts; plus, there's the 300m lagoon for water-

based activities, lawn bowls, fitness centres and equestrian activities at a purpose-built centre. Senior Village residents have access to all of these facilities; plus, the development offers even more activities at the Village's Hydro Centre. Here, there's a heated swimming pool (complete with wheelchair access) and a studio where classes include low-impact stretching, dance, mat Pilates, or yoga. And, for those who love weight training or need to get a heart rate going with cardio, that's on offer, too.

Finish up the workout with a shower in the well-equipped changeroom, then grab a juice at the counter before heading out.

Because wellness is obviously a key priority, Steyn City has ensured that a range of services are available for Senior Village residents. If it's simply an aching back or a niggling knee that needs



*Senior Village Care Centre*



attention, you can book a consultation with one of the on-site professionals.

However, for more comprehensive care, Steyn City has joined forces with one of South Africa's leading care providers, TOTALCARE. This means that, no matter what your needs are, you have complete peace of mind: perhaps you simply want to know that you can check in with a professional to have your vitals, such as blood pressure, monitored, or maybe you would like assistance with daily tasks. You can even opt for in-home care; essentially, tailoring a plan that keeps you as independent as possible for as long as possible.

At those times when you need extra medical attention, you can enjoy round-the-clock care from the specialised on-

site 23-bed care centre facility.

It's a great relief to realise that everything you need for a day full of comfort and convenience is available right on site, from having your car professionally valeted to accessing office services at PostNet. There's even a laundry and dry-cleaning service, along with self-care essentials like Clicks and Sorbet salon. City Centre even has a range of retailers to browse, and a choice of eateries to suit your every mood.

All of this means that the stage is set, and all that is left now is for you to keep exploring your favourite hobbies.

Senior Village is open to residents aged 60 and older on a Life Right model.

For more information, please visit [www.steyncity.co.za](http://www.steyncity.co.za). 

*Senior Village Hydro Centre*

# UNLOCKING PARADISE

## *Invest in Vela Zanzibar*

**South Africans seeking high-yield investments, lifestyle upgrades, or a tropical second home are increasingly turning their gaze to Zanzibar. Among the standout opportunities is Vela Zanzibar, a luxury eco-conscious condominium development in Paje on the island's southeast coast. With strong projected returns, investor-friendly policies, and proximity to South Africa, Vela offers a compelling case for diversification beyond local markets.**

**P**roximity and Accessibility make Zanzibar particularly attractive. Direct or short-connecting flights from Johannesburg or Cape Town take just a few hours, far easier than reaching European or Asian destinations. This convenience allows owners to enjoy frequent visits without major disruption, ideal for personal use or overseeing investments. The South African Rand's strength relative to the US dollar (in which properties are often priced) can further enhance purchasing power.

High Rental Yields and Strong ROI stand out as core financial benefits. Vela properties, professionally managed as condo-hotels, deliver projected annual returns of 12-23%, supported by year-round tourism demand in Paje. The island welcomed over 917,000 visitors in 2025, with expectations exceeding 1.2 million in 2026. Limited new supply (only 600-800 quality units annually) drives both

occupancy and nightly rates. Units at Vela come fully furnished and integrated with resort amenities, enabling hands-off ownership with breakeven periods as short as 4-5 years at 85% occupancy.

Capital appreciation adds further upside. Paje's prime beachfront location, combined with infrastructure investments exceeding \$500 million, positions properties for 10%+ annual price growth and potential 45-80% appreciation over several years. South African investors benefit from low entry prices starting around \$75,000-\$80,000 for studios, scaling to higher-end penthouses, offering accessible luxury compared to domestic coastal markets or other international hotspots.

Legal Security and Tax Advantages provide peace of mind. Foreigners invest via secure 99-year leaseholds through ZIPA-approved developments like Vela, which ensures clear titles under the Condominium Act. Vela's compliance with these frameworks protects ownership rights, enabling easy resale,





leasing, and profit repatriation.

Tax incentives are particularly appealing for South Africans. Minimal annual property taxes (around \$22), no VAT on rentals or first sales in many cases, and halved capital gains tax (5% for first-time buyers) enhance net returns. As a non-resident or via the investor permit, worldwide income remains untaxed locally, offering potential tax efficiency when structured correctly alongside South African obligations.

Golden Visa Residency is a game-changer. Investing \$100,000+ in a qualifying project like Vela grants a renewable two-year Class C residence permit to the buyer, spouse, and up to four children. This provides extended stays, potential retirement appeal, and a foothold in East Africa without full relocation. Many South Africans value this dual benefit: investment returns plus a personal tropical escape.<sup>7</sup>

Lifestyle and Sustainability elevate Vela beyond pure finance. Paje blends kitesurfing beaches, boutique dining, and village charm with modern amenities: lagoon pools, gyms, co-working spaces, restaurants, and tropical gardens. Eco-features like solar power and water conservation align with responsible investing. Owners enjoy turnkey luxury while contributing to local communities through Zanzibari-sourced materials and labour.

Flexible payment plans (an initial deposit of \$3,000 followed by staged construction payments) ease entry. Professional management handles everything from bookings to maintenance, delivering truly passive income.

In a world of volatile markets, Vela Zanzibar represents diversification into a high-growth, tourism-driven asset class. For South Africans, it combines



geographic convenience, superior yields, legal protections, residency perks, and an enviable lifestyle in one package. As tourism booms and supply lags, early investors stand to gain the most.

With limited units available, now is a good time to explore this rare opportunity. Vela isn't just property, it's a gateway to paradise and prosperity. ⑩

# PINNACLE OF RANGE ROVER LUXURY & TECHNOLOGY

*Range Rover SV Ultra*

**New Range Rover SV Ultra is the pinnacle of Range Rover luxury and distinction, elegantly blending elevated finishes with world-first audio technology to enrich the connection between comfort, wellbeing and the listening experience.**

The stalwart saloon from Mercedes-Benz, the inimitable S-Class, has received the most extensive mid-cycle update in the model's history, with over 2,700 parts (roughly 50% of the car) either newly developed or heavily revised. Production begins later this year at Factory 56 in Sindelfingen, although local customers will have to wait until 2027 for deliveries, despite the anticipation that already seems electric.

The Range Rover SV Ultra is the most luxurious and technologically advanced Range Rover yet. The array of immersive audio technologies in Range Rover SV Ultra now includes revolutionary SV Electrostatic Sound, which turns the cabin into a concert hall, alongside Body and Soul Seats (BASS) and Sensory Haptic Floor.

## ELEGANT DESIGN

Range Rover SV Ultra's exterior is

offered in multiple colour choices, and introduces Titan Silver, exclusive to SV Ultra due to its specialised formulation. This new paint finish embodies a sophisticated representation of authentic metal in liquid form. Titan Silver uses real, fine aluminium flake and advanced pigment technology to create a lustrous, highly reflective surface with an iridescent, mirror-like quality. The result is a finish that feels both distinctive and meticulously crafted.

Satin Platinum Atlas and Silver Chrome accents complement the Titan Silver exterior finish, elevating the grille and side graphic. In contrast, 23-inch alloy wheels are finished with Satin Platinum inserts and new Range Rover centre caps.

Inside, SV Ultra reveals a new and exclusive light duo-tone Orchid White and Cinder Grey Ultrafabrics™ interior, combining advanced material innovation with a serene, design-led sanctuary. The seating features an intricate new laser-crafted mosaic pattern for the first





time, applied across the sculpted upper sections and carried through the inserts and backrests, creating a unified, highly detailed surface treatment.

A new rattan palm veneer introduces subtle texture and material depth to the interior through its natural structural harmony. Using a patented technique that preserves its natural characteristics, the veneer's unique grain is enhanced with an Orchid White tint that emphasises its open-pore texture and linear form.

Its tubular cellular structure allows precise cross-section cuts that absorb

dye, creating a warm undertone derived from the material's natural resins. For SV Ultra, the veneer is finished in a brighter tone to deliver a more contemporary appearance. It extends beneath the single touchscreen and continues through the cabin to the electrically-deployable club table in the rear, as well as the powered door of the integrated cooler compartment.

Range Rover SV's signature gloss white ceramic finish continues the light theme, alongside colour-matched Orchid Pearl SV speakers, Orchid White seatbelts and SV Ultra-branded treadplates.

A new elongated scatter cushion incorporates Kvadrat Remix textile, a non-leather alternative made from a durable wool and recycled polyester blend, offering a soft, contemporary shape thoughtfully optimised for comfort.

Phoebe Lindsay, Range Rover Materiality Manager, said: "SV Ultra represents our most modernist interpretation of materiality, combining clean lines with a carefully balanced, neutral palette and a disciplined use of natural materials. Our choice of Ultrafabrics™ over leather was intentional; its engineered softness allows for the fine laser-crafted pattern and intricate perforation that defines the interior. The palm veneer brings a completely new material expression to the cabin, with its natural open pore and light-coloured topcoat increasing visual brightness and reinforcing a sense of calm, cohesive design."

#### **WORLD-FIRST IN-CAR AUDIO TECHNOLOGY**

Range Rover SV Ultra brings concert hall sound quality to the best seats in the house, introducing high-fidelity electrostatic sound technology to a vehicle for the very first time. The new SV Electrostatic Sound system (available exclusively on SV models) ensures that every harmonious note and crisp detail puts the occupant at the heart of every performance, reproducing music faithfully as the artist intended.

The Electrostatic Sound system features 21 lightweight thin-film transducers to create personal auditoriums for each seat. The 21 electrostatic panels are integrated into redesigned winged headrests, seatbacks, and existing speaker locations – including those in the headlining – delivering a consistent audio flow, a seamless frequency range, and coherent, uncoloured clarity. The electrostatic speakers are supported by five existing bass loudspeakers plus Body and Soul Seats to provide unrivalled bass support.

Designed to transmit natural, clear audio with detail and precision, each electrostatic speaker contains an ultra-light, ultra-responsive membrane just 1mm thick. The membrane sits between two perforated metallic plates across which



an audio signal is applied, responding up to 1,000 times faster than a traditional speaker, for the kind of immersive, crisp, and detailed soundstage normally experienced in a studio or through the finest headphones, with minimal vibration or distortion.

Electrostatic speaker technology brings additional benefits, requiring up to 90% less power and saving 90% of mass compared to the conventional coil speakers they replace. Additionally, they are manufactured with zero rare-earth elements and are 100% upcycled and recyclable by mass.

SV Electrostatic Sound has also been through the signature Range Rover testing and development programme, with more than 1,000 hours of testing in extreme hot and cold weather conditions, from as low as -20°C and as high as 65°C.

#### **FULL-BODY AUDIO EXPERIENCE**

SV Electrostatic Sound works in harmony with Range Rover's Body and Soul Seat and Sensory Floor technologies to bring a multi-dimensional audio experience to occupants like never before, allowing them to feel the music within their bodies.

Body and Soul Seat technology uses AI-optimised software to analyse media in real time, generating in-seat pulsations for a deeply immersive listening experience. Available in both first and second rows of the Range Rover SV Ultra, BASS uses seat-integrated transducers so occupants can feel as well as hear every performance.

First introduced on Range Rover SV Black and now available on SV Ultra, Sensory Floor adds haptic feedback through four transducers beneath the floor mats in each passenger footwell,



working in concert with BASS to extend the experience beyond the seats and fully envelop passengers in every performance.

Moving beyond pure listening enjoyment, clients can select one of six BASS wellness programmes for the ultimate in relaxation and focus. Body and Soul Seats and Sensory Floor can help calm and soothe occupants with one of six modes – ranging from ‘Calm’ to ‘Invigorating’. Each programme could offer measurable benefits for passengers’ heart-rate variability (HRV), either helping to reduce anxiety or support improved cognitive response.

Martin Limpert, Global Managing Director, Range Rover, said: “Range Rover SV Ultra is one of the finest expressions of Range Rover luxury we have ever created. Its distinct character is defined by new and exclusive exterior and interior finishes, and by world-first

in-car audio technologies that set a new benchmark for immersion and wellbeing. This is far more than Ultra in name.

“Range Rover is proud to be the first automotive brand to offer this unique and exclusive experience to its clients. The listening experience is a step change from anything that has been fitted to any vehicle previously, delivering a powerful, emotional and truly immersive experience.”

Priced from R5,729,100, the Range Rover SV Ultra is available with a P615 V8 powertrain.

*For more information, please visit [www.rangerover.com](http://www.rangerover.com). *

# UNPLUG & REBOOT (FOR REAL THIS TIME)

*The Brahma Kumaris*

**Modern life rarely slows down. Between notifications, social media and constant connectivity, many people spend more time staring at screens than engaging with the world around them. While technology has made life easier in many ways, it has also made it harder to truly switch off.**

There was a time when a phone buzzing wasn't treated like an emergency. Now, though, most of us react instantly. The second there's a quiet moment, a hint of boredom or even mild discomfort, out comes the phone.

It's become automatic. And honestly, it's not difficult to see why. School, work, entertainment and social interaction all happen online these days. Young people, especially, are expected to stay connected almost permanently.

Technology itself isn't the problem. Nobody's suggesting we throw our phones away and disappear into the bush without WiFi. The issue is balance. Somewhere along the line, screen life started replacing real life instead of simply complementing it. We've forgotten how to switch off properly.

## **SO WHAT'S ACTUALLY HAPPENING?**

The conversation about screen time has been ongoing for years, but most people barely pay attention anymore. The real issue isn't just how long we spend online. It's what constant connectivity does to the mind. Notifications never stop. Social media keeps demanding attention. There's always another message, another video or another update waiting to pull you back in.

That constant stimulation trains the brain to crave more of it. Social media also gives quick dopamine hits, which is why being away from your phone can feel uncomfortable. Then there's the pressure that comes with staying online all the time, whether it's keeping up with trends, replying immediately or trying not to miss out. It's exhausting when you really think about it.

Ironically, even though we're more connected digitally than ever before, genuine human connection often feels weaker. Likes and views can't replace proper conversations or real friendships.

## **THE REAL MEANING OF "UNPLUG AND REBOOT"**

That's where the idea of "Unplug and Reboot" comes in. It's not about abandoning technology altogether. It's simply about stepping away from the noise long enough to reset your mind and regain some balance.

The good news is that it doesn't require a dramatic lifestyle change. Small adjustments can make a surprisingly big difference. Start by taking short breaks from your phone during the day. Even ten minutes without notifications gives your brain a chance to breathe.

Spend time doing something offline simply because you enjoy it. Go for

a walk, read a physical book, cook something or spend time with friends without everyone staring at a screen. Setting boundaries also helps. Avoid scrolling first thing in the morning and try not to use your phone right before bed. Those first and last moments of the day affect your mental state more than most people realise.

It's also important to let your mind slow down occasionally. Modern life pushes us to stay busy every second of the day, but constantly consuming information leaves very little room for reflection. Oddly enough, boredom still serves a purpose. It encourages creativity and gives your mind space to think independently. In a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and automation, imagination and original thought remain incredibly valuable.

Taking time to unplug isn't just about reducing screen time. It's about reconnecting with yourself again. It helps you think more clearly, feel more present and strengthen genuine relationships away from the digital world.

Most importantly, it reminds you that your value isn't measured by notifications, followers or online validation. Real confidence comes from how you live, how you grow and how you treat the people around you.



So when next life feels overwhelming or mentally cluttered, try something simple. Put the phone down for a while, step away from the screen and give yourself the chance to unplug and reboot properly. 📵

#### **DURBAN**

143 Belmont Rd, Durban  
+27 83 430 8926 / +27 31 563 3502  
durban@za.brahmakumaris.org

#### **JOHANNESBURG**

28 Judith Street, Observatory

+27 66 495 1367  
johannesburg@za.brahmakumaris.org

#### **CAPE TOWN**

7 Dunluce Avenue, Claremont  
+27 77 374 1967  
capetown@za.brahmakumaris.org

#### **GQEBERHA**

8 Dan Pienaar Road, Glenningdale,  
Gqeberha  
+27 72 117 1468  
portelizabeth@za.brahmakumaris.org



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# HAND, MADE COLOUR

## *Plascon's Celebrates The Enduring Appeal of the Human Touch*

**In a year where individuality and craftsmanship are taking centre stage, Plascon's 2026 colour forecast embraces the beauty of imperfection. The HAND, made theme explores the enduring connection between colour, creativity, and the human experience through four vibrant, contrasting palettes.**

As our society's fascination with artificial intelligence settles into our everyday lives, a renewed appreciation for craftsmanship, individuality and authenticity is beginning to emerge. Reflecting this shift, Plascon's 2026 colour forecast embraces HAND, made as its overarching theme, placing the focus firmly on the transformative power of the human touch.

According to Leslie Frank, Head of Marketing at Plascon, painting remains an inherently human process. From selecting

shades and testing swatches to applying the final coat, every stage is guided by the hand, bringing texture, character and authenticity to a space. The company's latest colour combinations have been developed to celebrate imperfection and individuality, while responding to the realities of everyday life.

Drawing inspiration from expansive horizons, flowing water, bustling city streets and untamed gardens, the Plascon team developed four distinctive colour worlds. The result is a collection that celebrates both contrast and harmony, combining earthy tones with

bold accents and understated neutrals with expressive bursts of colour.

The four curated palettes are named Butter + Sky, Land + Sea, Fashion + Candy and Orchard + Blooms.

### **BUTTER + SKY**

Optimistic and uplifting, Butter + Sky draws inspiration from clear blue skies and warm golden hues. The palette comprises Chocolate Chunk (O2-D1-1), Blazing Sun (Y4-A1-4), Sapphire (B7-A1-1), Athena's Dream (B4-A2-1), Cave Painting (O2-C1-1), Julia (Y3-A2-2) and Signal Red (G7).



### LAND + SEA

Inspired by the textures and colours of earth and water, Land + Sea embraces natural materials and biophilic design influences. Colours in this collection include African Mud (O2-E1-1), Olive (G2-E1-2), Frog Pond (Y6-D1-1), Bashful Blue (B3-C1-4), Sparkling Lemon Lime (Y6-A1-1), Daily Lily Dream (O2-A1-1) and Evening Stroll (G6-C2-1).



### FASHION + CANDY

Bold, energetic and expressive, Fashion + Candy takes its cues from street style, nightlife and contemporary pop culture. The palette features Eclair (R7-D1-1), Ruby Tuesday (R5-B2-2), Bellagio Blue (B6-B2-1), Hot-N-Spicy (R6-B1-1), White Maas (Y2-A2-2), Lemon Essence (Y5-A1-2) and Ginger Biscuit (O1-C1-1).



#### ORCHARD + BLOOMS

Inspired by vibrant fruit markets and flourishing garden centres, Orchard + Blooms celebrates abundance, vitality and natural beauty. Colours include Chocolate Delight (R6-E1-1), Hudson (26), Spanish Brocade (O2-B1-3), Swazi (R2-C1-1), Wanda (Y4-C1-1), Good Day Sunshine (O6-A1-1) and Just Terracotta (R7-C1-1).

Each of these colour worlds is built around existing Plascon shades, carefully curated to reflect contemporary moods and design trends. Available in a variety

of Plascon coating products through leading retailers, the palettes offer homeowners, designers and businesses an accessible way to introduce fresh colour inspiration into their spaces.

At its core, the HAND, made forecast serves as a reminder that colour remains a deeply personal form of expression. From the first swatch to the final brushstroke, the process continues to celebrate creativity, craftsmanship and the enduring value of the human touch.

For more information, visit [www.plascon.co.za](http://www.plascon.co.za). 

# BLURRING EXECUTIVE LINES

*Volvo Reinvents the Executive Sedan*

Volvo's new ES90 rethinks what a flagship sedan should be in the electric age. Drawing on a lineage that stretches back through some of the brand's most iconic saloons, while quietly nodding to more unconventional shapes of the past, the ES90 blends familiar elegance with a distinctly modern twist. It is at once a sedan, a fastback, and something approaching an SUV in stance, yet it never quite abandons its identity as a large executive car. The result is a design that challenges traditional categories, while signalling Volvo's vision for its electric future with understated confidence.

When designing the new full-electric ES90, successor to the S90 flagship sedan in Volvo's vehicle range, the creative team must have taken some inspiration from the coupe-like shape of the PV544 to create a vehicle that combines "the refined elegance of a sedan, the adaptability of a fastback, and the spacious interior and higher ground clearance associated with SUVs".

According to Jeremy Offer, former head of Volvo global design and the man responsible for the ES90, the team adapted the sedan silhouette and added a hatchback for functional reasons. They also leveraged the electric platform's proportions to give the car a higher stance and an elevated driving position. Yet he maintains that it is still fundamentally a large sedan.

While it may hark back to the PV544

in some respects, the ES90 lineage can be traced back to sedans like the Volvo Amazon, the 164 (the company's first true luxury sedan), the 760 GLE, the 780, the 960 (which 30 years ago became the first S90), the S80, and the second-generation S90 of a decade ago.

In its execution, the ES90 also follows in the tracks of the pioneering Jaguar I-Pace, introduced eight years ago. The I-Pace also blurred the lines between an elegant luxury sedan, a four-door coupe, a hatchback, and an SUV. Despite its interesting positioning and advanced technology, it was no great success, and production ended in 2024, about the same time Volvo announced the V551 project, the full electric replacement for the S90 sedan.

Now the ES90 is here, less than a year after its world debut, and although its styling may be divisive in terms of formal classification, the fastback sedan is quite



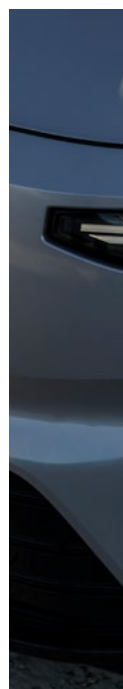


Like the EX90, the new ES90 is underpinned by the Geely/Volvo SPA2 electric vehicle platform. It is the first Volvo model to feature a dual Nvidia Drive AGX Orin configuration, with the computer's abilities to perform 508 trillion operations per second (TOPS).

The newcomer has an advanced 800-volt electric architecture supporting fast

charging, and according to Volvo, it can be recharged from 10% to 80% in only 25 minutes. With a 92 kWh battery, Volvo claims the ES90 can drive up to 755 km (based on the WLTP test standard) on a single charge, while maintaining an exceptionally low energy consumption of only 15.9 kWh/100 km.

This makes the ES90 well-suited for



South Africa's long distances, more so when considering that around 300 km of electric range can be added in 10 minutes at 350 kW rapid charging stations – just long enough for a cup of coffee and a quick leg stretch. The only problem is that currently, such chargers are very limited in the country.

#### **QUIET INTERIOR      PERFORMANCE, CALM**

Even with rear-wheel drive only, the ES90 is a powerful performer. The single rear-mounted motor delivers a hefty 245 kW and 480 Nm of torque – enough to catapult the luxury limousine linearly from zero to 100 km/h in only 6.6 seconds.

An all-wheel-drive version with twin motors producing 330 kW and 670 Nm of torque (or an eye-watering 500 kW and 870 Nm in the Performance model) is available overseas and is under consideration for local introduction. However, given the rear-wheel-

drive model's ample performance, one must wonder whether these derivatives (with their associated price increases) are necessary.

The ES90 is available in Core, Plus, and Ultra trim levels, all of which include advanced safety and driver-assist systems, including Pilot Assist (without LiDAR), a standard panoramic sunroof, seven exterior colour choices, and wheel sizes ranging from 20" to 22".

We embarked upon the snaking KwaZulu-Natal test route from Durban to the Natal Midlands in the Ultra derivative, and this flagship model (with standard 360-degree camera system) impressed with its supersmooth ride quality and quiet comfort – mostly attributable to its adaptive dampening system and dual-chamber air suspension (as also found in the EX90) – although its 21" tyres sometimes caused it to tramline over undulated road surfaces.

The roomy cabin of the understated



Swede is an ideal space for long-distance travel, and its minimalist Scandinavian layout and discreet design, along with comfortable, heated and cooled leather seats (yes, leather is now available again in Volvos) and trim made of high-quality materials, contribute to a relaxed cabin ambience.

A high-quality Bowers & Wilkins sound system further amplifies the comfy lounge feeling, but, in my view, the electrochromic sunroof with variable settings does not really work in our sunny conditions. Also, the fact that virtually every command or setting must be made on the big central touchscreen, even for side mirrors and steering, is an irritation.

The ES90 has ample luggage space (446 litres with all seats in place, a generous 1,427 litres with the back seats folded down, and 27 litres in the frunk). The luxury sedan's long wheelbase (3,102 mm) and low centre of gravity (thanks to the underfloor battery) ensure well-balanced handling in corners, although its weight can be felt under braking. Its large wheels and high ground clearance (178-188 mm) further improve ride comfort.

In the premium electric sedan market, the ES90 competes against the BMW i5 eDrive40 and the Mercedes-Benz EQE 350+, as well as the Lexus RZ 500e (although its

natural rival in the Lexus stable should in fact be the similarly named ES model) and with pricing from R1,590,000 for the Core, R1,655,00 for the Plus and R1,795,000 for the Ultra, the ES90 is competitively priced within the segment.

The retail prices also include a five-year/100,000 km warranty and service plan, an eight-year battery warranty, a GridCars wall charger and installation, three years of in-car data, and two years of free public charging.

With its balanced combination of Scandinavian luxury, future-focused

technology, relaxed ambience, and added long-distance prowess, the ES90 flagship sedan is an excellent addition to the Volvo portfolio. However, it is clearly aimed at the Chinese market, where luxury sedans, particularly extended-wheelbase sedans, are highly popular.

The I-Pace was ahead of its time in South Africa and was never accepted. In contrast to China, this market segment is shrinking locally. Even so, this impressive electric hatchback sedan deserves to be received better here than the I-Pace was back then. ①

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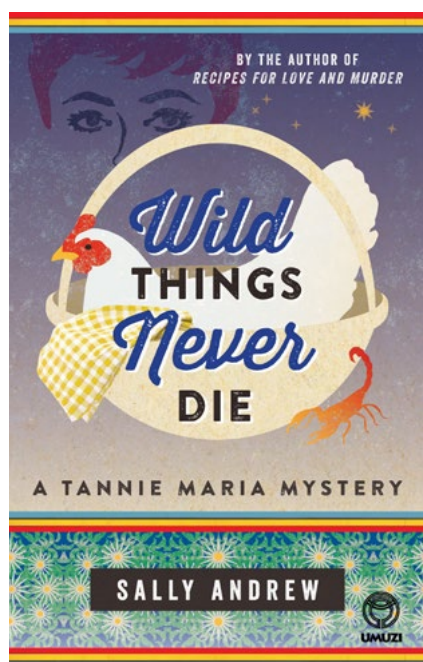
## TO ENTERTAIN

### POWER BALLAD

Cast: Paul Rudd, Nick Jonas & Peter McDonald

Director: John Carney

When Rick (Rudd), a past-his-prime wedding singer, meets fading boy-band star Danny (Jonas) during a gig, the two bond over music and a late-night jam session. But when Danny turns one of Rick's songs into the hit that reignites his career, Rick sets out to reclaim the recognition he believes he deserves – even if it means risking everything he cares about. *Power Ballad* is a feel-good story about music, self-respect, friendship, and the price of ambition.



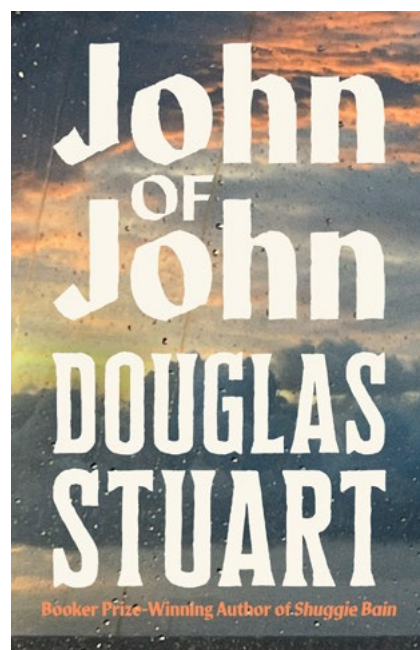
### WILD THINGS NEVER DIE

Tannie Maria is wrestling with a fear of the dark, and Henrietta has PTSD. But this doesn't stop the intrepid agony aunt – and her hen – from going undercover with Maria's fiancé, Detective Henk Kannemeyer, to the Karoo Wilderness

Reserve. Their mission: save the vetplantjies (succulents)! At the luxury game lodge, they spy on guests and support the Anti-Poaching Unit in a battle against dangerous gangsters. Then, there is a murder. Our favourite Ladismith sleuths engage with some colourful suspects, including a barefoot artist, a botanist cowboy, a singing gardener, and a sangoma. Between solving murders, writing agony-aunt letters, and having spiritual epiphanies, Maria and Henk get fashion tips from a couturier and his Baroness. But fashion is forgotten when their own lives are at stake.

### JOHN OF JOHN

Out of money and with little to show for his art school education, John-Calum Macleod takes the ferry home to the island of Harris to find that not much has changed except for him. In the windswept croft where he grew up, Cal resumes his old life, caught between the two poles of his childhood: his father John, a sheep farmer, weaver, and pillar of their local Presbyterian church, and his Glaswegian grandmother Ella, who has kept a faltering peace with her son-in-law for decades. While Cal wonders



if any lonely men might be found on the barren hillsides of home, John is dismayed by his son's long hair and how he seems unwilling to be "saved". As the seasons pass, everything is poised to change, as the threads holding the fragile community together become increasingly entangled.



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# DEFINING MOMENTS IN FRAGRANCE

*An Edit of Iconic Scents for Every Identity*

As fragrance continues to evolve as a form of personal expression, this season's selection celebrates individuality through a collection of iconic scents. From luminous musks and rich woods to fresh aquatic notes and timeless citrus accords, these fragrances showcase the artistry of modern perfumery while offering a scent for every personality and occasion.

In a season defined by individuality and self-expression, fragrance takes centre stage, offering far more than scent alone. It becomes a reflection of identity, mood and personal style. This curated edit brings together a collection of iconic fragrance houses, each offering its own interpretation of sensuality, freshness and modern masculinity.

This season's fragrance selection strikes a compelling balance between elegance, confidence and versatility. Each scent delivers a distinct character while celebrating the craftsmanship and creativity that continue to define the world of fine fragrance.

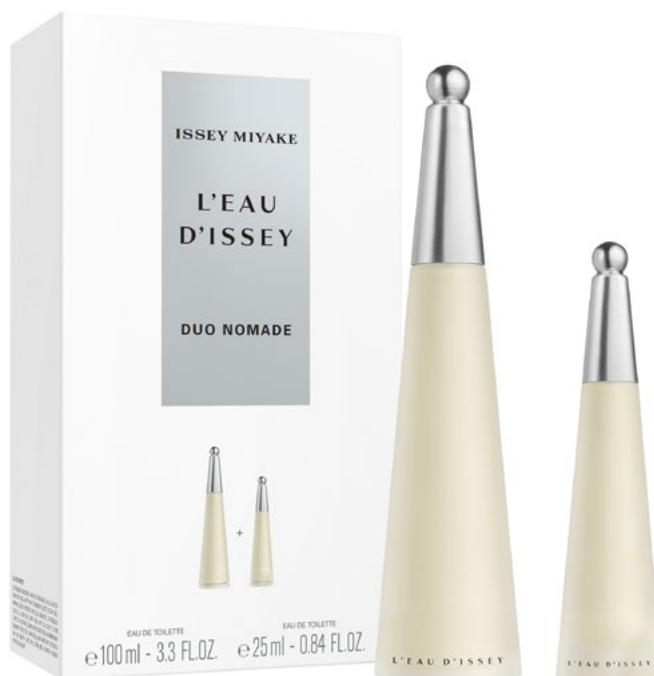
## THE WINTER COLLECTION

*Narciso Rodriguez For Her Pure Musc Blanc Eau de Parfum Intense* embodies understated elegance through a luminous, second-skin musk composition. Delicately radiant yet deeply sensual, it captures a soft intimacy that lingers long after application, making it an ideal signature scent for those who appreciate purity with a sophisticated edge.



For a deeper, more enveloping expression, *Narciso Rodriguez For Him Musc Santal Eau de Parfum Intense* introduces a rich, woody warmth. Anchored by creamy sandalwood and layered with musky undertones, it reflects modern masculinity at its most confident, balancing strength with refined sophistication.

A timeless icon, *Issey Miyake L'Eau d'Issey Eau de Toilette* continues to define fresh elegance with its signature aquatic-floral composition. Crisp, light and effortlessly graceful, it evokes the



purity of water and the beauty of nature, maintaining its status as a fragrance that transcends passing trends.

In contrast, *Issey Miyake L'Eau d'Issey Pour Homme Eau de Toilette* offers a clean and invigorating interpretation of masculinity. Bright citrus notes combine with refined woody accords to create a freshness that feels both classic and contemporary, making it well-suited to everyday wear. ⑩



# CREATIVITY TAKES CENTRE STAGE

*South African Fashion Week Returns with a Bold New Vision*

For nearly three decades, South African Fashion Week has served as the country's premier platform for fashion designers, connecting creativity with commerce and providing emerging and established talent with a stage to grow their brands. As the industry continues to evolve, SAFW remains focused on giving designers the visibility, support and opportunities needed to thrive in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

South African Fashion Week's return signals far more than another season of runway shows. It marks the continuation of an important mission to support local designers and strengthen South Africa's fashion industry through meaningful exposure, industry connections and commercial opportunities.

As the country's only dedicated business-to-business fashion platform, SAFW has long played a pivotal role in helping designers build sustainable brands. Even during its recent strategic pause, the organisation remained active behind the scenes, rolling out targeted digital campaigns that kept local fashion in the spotlight and delivered significant value for participating designers.

This year's event introduced several exciting developments, including a spectacular new home at the state-of-the-art VRTUOSUS film studio in Hyde Park, which provided an impressive backdrop for the latest collections from some of South Africa's most celebrated creative talents.

The week began with a flourish as Gert-Johan Coetzee presented *Behind*



*Gert-Johan Coetzee*





*Helon Melon*



*The Crimson Door*, an ambitious theatrical production blending couture, aerial performance and storytelling. From there, the spotlight shifted to designers such as Helen Gibbs and Jacques van der Watt of Black Coffee, whose collections continue to push creative boundaries while reflecting the diversity, innovation and craftsmanship that define South African fashion.

Supported by partners who recognise the cultural and economic significance of the creative

industries, South African Fashion Week once again demonstrates why fashion remains one of the country's most powerful forms of expression. ⑩

*Black Coffee*



*NaoSerati (by Tlaenda)*

*Naked Ape*



*Naked Ape*



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A full-page advertisement for Jimmy Choo Man Parfum. The background features a man with dark, curly hair and a beard, wearing a black tuxedo jacket over an open white shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The text 'JIMMY CHOO' is written in large, gold, serif capital letters across the middle of his chest. Below it, 'MAN' and 'PARFUM' are written in smaller, gold, serif capital letters. In the bottom right corner, there is a gold-colored rectangular bottle of the fragrance with a black cap. The bottle has the text 'JIMMY CHOO', 'MAN', and 'PARFUM' printed on it. At the bottom center, the text 'THE NEW FRAGRANCE' is written in white, sans-serif capital letters.

# JIMMY CHOO

## MAN PARFUM

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