

Macarons and more at Majeka House this May

By Leigh Andrews

9 May 2016

The landscaped gardens of Majeka House are dotted with touches of bright blue furniture among that lush greenery Stellenbosch is known for - there are even trees my husband would climb, if age was on his side. But it's what's inside the rooms that truly adds that touch of magic.



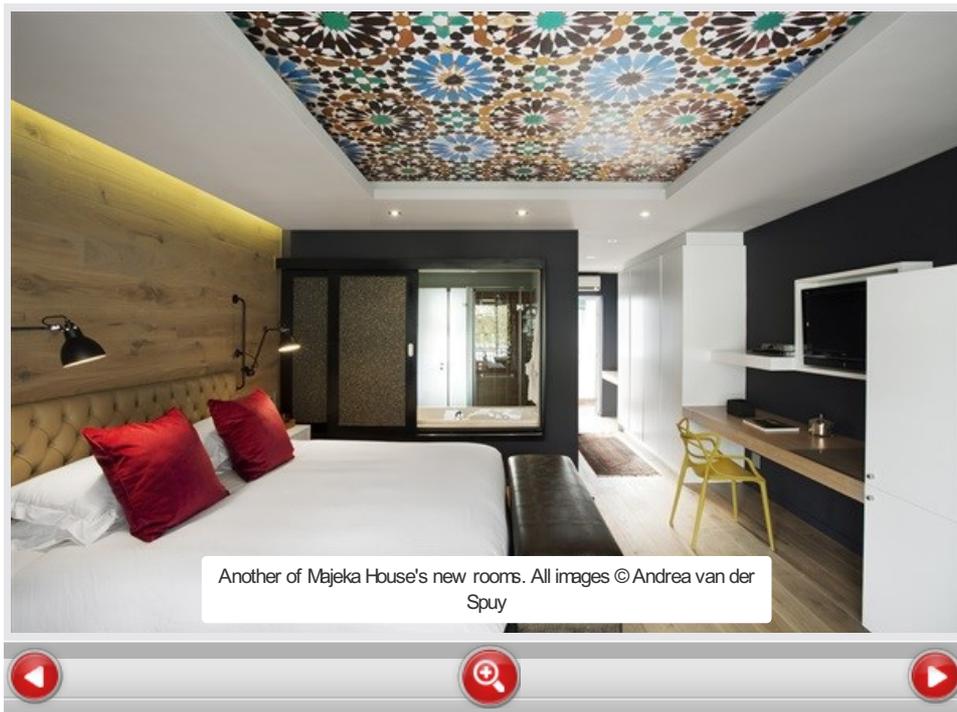
One of the newly renovated rooms. All images © Andrea van der Spuy

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May's typically the month we move into hibernation mode in Cape Town. The wintry wind and pelting rain picks up, skies are grey at best and the thought of a weekend away becomes all the more appealing, especially when that weekend includes a suite with its very own fireplace, dinner in the acclaimed Makaron restaurant and an hour-long spa treatment for you and your partner. From the heated towel rail and fluffiest white robes that felt like the best bunny hug to the kitchen corner's honesty bar, dominated by a Lavazza Guzzini espresso machine with six complimentary pods and homemade cookies that are slightly warm and just the right blend of crunch and peanut butter chewiness, you know you're in for a relaxing stay at this five-star boutique hotel, even if it is just for one night.

And a relaxing stay is just what we had. Our premium suite was a modern grey, with metallic silver and touches of natural wood throughout – even the bed posts. Admiring the frame, we looked up and laughed at the water colour suspended from the ceiling – that's one way to bring the nature in, and with the wind howling outside the patios leading off from our suite were sadly off limits, but by happy coincidence *Star Wars: A New Hope* was showing on one of the DSTV channels, so my husband was happy to relax on the

'inside-out smores bed' for a while – with a firm biscuity base and the softest down duvet and pillows, it promised a wonderful night's sleep.



But before we got to that point, we experienced the ultimate in winding down, as the couples' package includes a 60-minute full body massage each at the Majeka Spa, where the darkened rooms and skilled oiled hands did the trick of unraveling the work-stress knots and big city niggles we'd brought with us. The soothing background white noise of harps, birdsong and gentle waves left us in just the right frame of mind for the wonderful night ahead. We extended the relaxation with a soak in the heated indoor pool and jacuzzi, and breathed in healing thoughts in the tiny steam room, all accessible all night long to guests, so if a (quiet) midnight swim is on your bucket list, Majeka House should sift higher up your bucket list.

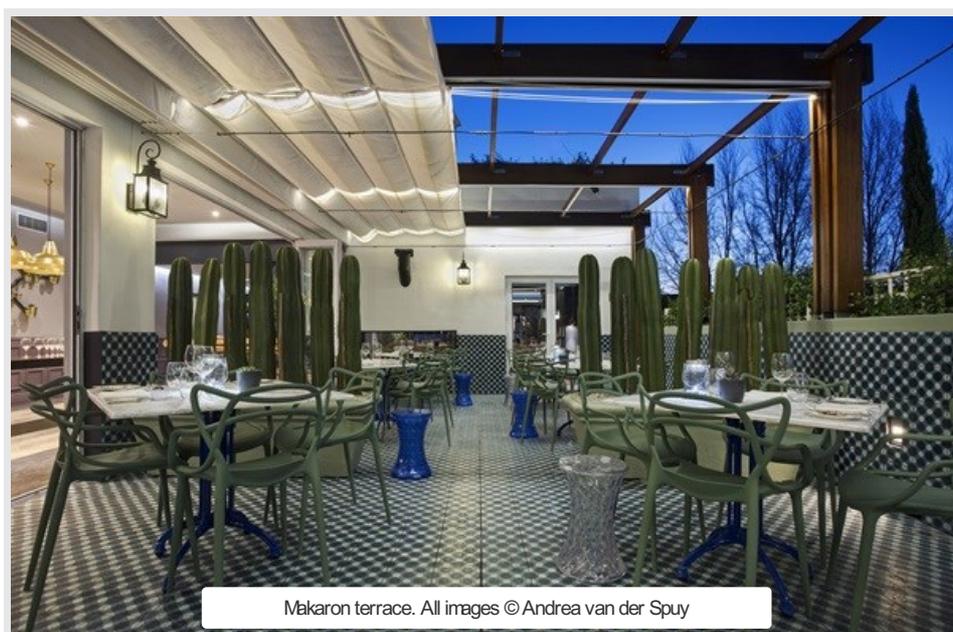
We were delighted to find the 'room fairies' had magicked up some juice and snacks in our absence from the suite – there's a handy 'do not disturb' button to activate if you'd rather keep things private. And then we went down for dinner...

Blue bar lights and gastronomic delights

Starting off with a complimentary cocktail in the M Bar, it was a frothy vanilla-espresso martini for me and standard Long Island Ice Tea for my husband. We were surrounded by slightly surreal blue lights in the bar and quickly moved across to the inviting fireplace, surrounded by quirky pigs, ghost chairs and 'bookcase walls' that were actually wallpapered by Halogen House. Drinks downed, we made our way to the main Makaron dining area, which is truly bistro chic at its best, with consultant chef Pete Goffe-Wood of *Masterchef SA* fame and newly appointed head chef Lucas Carstens. They have a shared philosophical focus of good cooking being all about the seasonal flavours on the plate, rather than any disguises or pretence which we could actually see and taste. Starting with complimentary still or sparkling water we were treated to a breadboard packed with mini vetkoek, crisp ciabatta and seeded onion bread, along with aubergine-y baba ganoush and the silkiest lemon of butter.

Having read through the menu a few times, my husband started with the prawn linguini, followed by the line fish mains (it was yellowtail on the night) and the 'caramel bar' dessert. In an attempt to keep things colourful I went for the rainbow beets and goats cheese chantilly, the beef gnocchi, and the vanilla creme brûlée dessert. Before we even had time to settle the napkins in our laps we were presented with an amuse bouche of saffron, chive and creme fraiche roulade, which set things off to a creamy canter.

Our starters followed soon after, with the bright blue plate offsetting the vibrant reds, yellows, and green leafy accents just as well as the creamy goats' cheese smoothed over the sharp tang of those beets. At the other end of the table, my husband found the squid inky-tomato sauce so good he mopped it up with the last of our complimentary bread.



Stomachs sufficiently lined, it was time for the main attraction. I can't resist gnocchi when I see it listed, thanks to my Italian heritage, and my goodness if this wasn't among the best I've ever had, with the accompanying steak perfectly cooked and complemented by swirls of cauliflower paste.

And then, dessert. Senses almost overwhelmed after such a flavourful meal, we'd both been eyeing each other's choice and so ended up switching places mid-mouthful. I found the yuzu a touch strong for the otherwise soft, vanilla-flavoured brûlée, and even with its crisp sesame seed tulle and delightful caramel shards, the caramel bar dessert was the clear winner on the night.

Vrouekeur says it best (that's the caramel bar on the right):

“ Karamel en kokosneut soos nooit tevore [@Luc_Carstens](#) [@MajekaHouse](#). Beslis iets om oor huis toe te skryf [@manleycom pic.twitter.com/9OY06nfspJ](#)— Vrouekeur (@Vrouekeur) [April 24, 2016](#) ”

It outshone the brûlée with its mix of textures and strong notes of coffee, caramel, and toffee, particularly in the melt-in-your-mouth coffee macaron that topped it (and we obviously saved for last). Washed down with a tot of KWV 5-year-old brandy, my husband called it the best dessert he's ever had.

On return to the suite we found our room fairy had turned down the bedding and left us a sweet fudge bite for sweet dreams and a note on the following day's weather and local events to experience, such as the Sunday morning Blaauwklippen and Route 44 markets. After a sweet, dreamy night we returned to Makaron for its delicious continental breakfast spread, and a delightful a la carte menu with hot meal options like oats with whiskey and honey, flapjacks with blueberries, French toast with bacon and eggs Florentine, Benedict or Royale – no prices listed for these, as breakfast is included in your accommodation.

All in all a magical stay at Majeka House this May. The **couple's package** runs throughout the month at R1,800 per person sharing, and includes one night's accommodation in a premier room, a cocktail of choice each in the M Lounge, three-course dinner at Makaron for two (excluding beverages), a 'pick and mix' 60-minute spa treatment per person, as well as breakfast for two the next morning.



Makaron Restaurant's breakfast spread. All images © Andrea van der Spuy

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**Leigh Andrews was a guest at Majeka House and Makaron. For bookings, call 021 880 1549 or email reservations@majekahouse.co.za, and visit www.majekahouse.co.za for more. Majeka House Spa and Makaron restaurant, which features an ever-changing [Sunday brunch](#) and roast lunch, is situated at 26-32 Houtkapper Street, Paradyskloof, Stellenbosch.*

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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