

# hot PROPERTY

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**Hot Tip!**  
Look out for the introduction of a weekend organic market, as well as jazz and soul concerts to be held in the rear public courtyard of the hotel this summer.

## Then and now

A historic building on Bree Street is home to an intimate inner-city hotel, recently under new ownership and sporting a fresh new appeal. Owners Johan and Victoria Nel have successfully completed a series of sensitive renovations to the aptly named Cape Heritage Hotel – originally built in 1771 – imbuing it with a unique sense of style that both honours the building’s rich history and brings it bang up-to-date.

‘We were captivated by the property from the moment we set foot in it,’ says Victoria. ‘Our aim was to carefully upgrade the existing 15 rooms so that the décor would be in keeping with the history and heritage of the hotel, yet reflect the joie de vivre of South Africa and its dynamic cultures. We wanted to portray an atmosphere of “new meets old” and “colonial

meets African”, without the hotel losing its distinct character.’

Working with a top team, the pair completed the renovations within the planned six-week timeframe. Magic Dog headed up the project and Sisanda were the appointed contractors, while Victoria and interior architect Lisa Bond from Painted Porcupine worked closely with Garland Interior Decorators to ensure that every room was creatively and uniquely themed.

The outcome of all of this creative expression? Rooms like: Lovers – complete with an extraordinary bathroom – French-colonial, the Colonial Suite, African, Eclectic and French Romance, among others. Two more soul-soothing suites are currently under construction, both reflecting a fresh, distinctly eco-friendly bent and overlooking Heritage Square.

Located right in the centre of the city, the Square is a character-filled refuge with a relaxing social ambience. It is home to South Africa’s oldest grapevine, which was recently harvested by the owners of the hotel, who intend to auction its wine. Adding to the Square’s culinary attractions is the brand-new eatery, Headquarters.

Victoria has carefully sourced décor items that enhance the local feel of the hotel. Work by lauded local designers is very much in evidence: Heath Nash’s flower-lights, made from recycled materials, add a fresh artistic dimension; Mielie has contributed to curtaining and soft furnishings; and Michael Methven of Moonlight Magic has shaped dramatic wire-and-paper animal trophies. Rooms and passages reflect the skilful blending of modern chic and master-crafted finishes.

Guests would be hard-pressed not to feel at home amid the warm glow of burnished hardwoods, high-beamed teak ceilings, and the beautifully exposed original wall finishes and murals, which are complemented, somewhat surprisingly, by pieces from local artists Richard Scott, Jackson, Ruth Graves and John Angus, as well as a mix of historical pictures of Bree Street and Cape Town.

In the Cape Heritage Hotel’s latest – and possibly greatest – incarnation, the owners were at pains to reflect both the building’s and the city’s real magic through the artful teaming of contemporary chic with historic graciousness that pays respect to the past and gives an equally sanguine nod to the future.

We’d say they’ve done just that. **The Cape Heritage Hotel**, +27 (0)21 424 4646

Words: Kirsten Hill. Photographs: Andy Nix