

## The Clico

IT'S UNUSUAL, to say the least, to have a weekend getaway less than 5km from where you live, but it's amazing how your mind still slips into a relaxed holiday mode even though you're just down the road.

The Clico is a 60-year-old Cape Dutch-styled Boutique Hotel situated in a tree-lined residential avenue a few blocks down from the Rosebank Mall, giving guests walking-access to everything Rosebank has to offer. But having said that the Hotel, behind its high walls, does offer a sense of seclusion that many may prefer to the Mall's hustle and bustle.

The name, by the way, was inspired by owner Jeanette Schwegman's passion for champagne – with her favourite being Veuve Clicquot.

Being a five-star Boutique hotel, with only nine en-suite rooms (six queen and three king) you know

you're going to get the personal touch from the staff and manager – and that's pretty much what we got.

The hotel has more of a home than business feel to it, and we had no problem grabbing a couch in the lounge and playing chess while Nicolene, the friendly manageress, put together a very-decent cheese board for us to snack on.

With the cold weather we took the lizard approach and snuggled around the fireplace before and after dinner, but the garden offers a pool with deck chairs for relaxing summer sundowners.

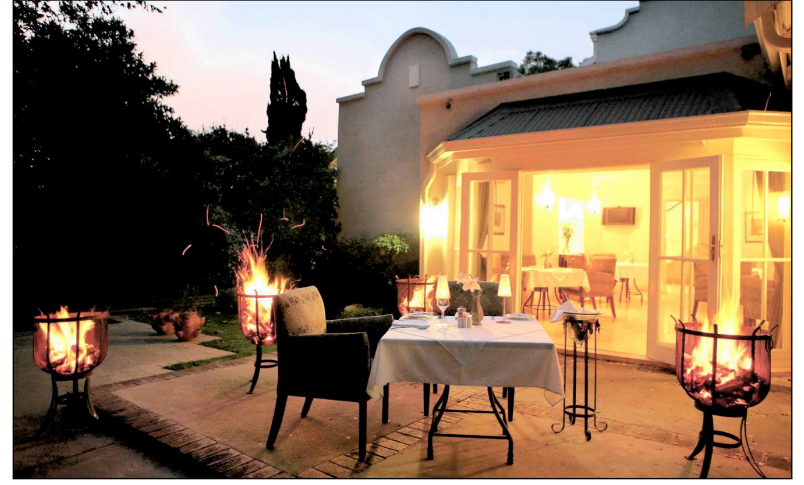
The bar inside works on an honesty system (didn't have a thing, promise) and offers a wine menu that should satisfy even the discerning palate.

Dinner takes place in an intimate dining room, with seasonal menus that change daily and guests are chatted to about their dietary preferences. I think it's safe to say that the food was the highlight of

the stay, with the chef preparing possibly the most succulent piece of salmon I've had yet (and I've had my fair share of salmon, it's a favourite). It was the melt-in-your-mouth kind, grilled to perfection. The eggs benedict for breakfast the next morning would also put a few five-star hotels to shame.

The hotel rooms are cosy and garden-facing, with most upstairs ones offering balconies to varying degrees. We had a large room with most of the luxury amenities you'd expect. I especially liked the under-carpet heating and the heater-element within the bathroom light-fitting, but call me old-fashioned – I would have preferred a bathroom door versus the walk-in layout. The free Wi-Fi was also one of the quickest I've experienced to date (sorry about the various iTunes downloads, Jeanette).

Being so close to the Gautrain and business nodes like Sandton and Rosebank, the hotel offers a



The Clico

complete conference facility, with the conference area also ready to host small functions.

You could also arrange just about anything with the hotel, from special wine-pairing menus and

tasting dinners to pyjama parties.

It being winter, there are special weekend packages on offer too.

The Clico: 011 252 3300; www.clicohotel.com -- **Minesh Bhagaloo**

## The Parkwood

FOR AS long as I can remember, I've always been obsessed with tree-lined streets. My favourite suburbs to get lost in are definitely the "Parks" – Parkview, Parktown, Parkhurst, Parkwood... each one more beautiful than the next.

Parkwood is located on one such street in the suburb of the same name. Upon driving in, you almost feel as if you're visiting a family member – you're greeted by name on arrival, there is no laborious check-in process and after walking through a welcoming lounge and narrow corridor, you're settled in your room within minutes.

Our room was spacious – an executive suite, overlooking the pool and garden, complete with under-floor heating, an enclosed garden patio, lounge and private outdoor shower, which was a bit of a waste in winter but certainly a "nice to have". The "home away from home" theme continued with full-size Charlotte Rhys amenities in the bathroom and an "honesty" mini-bar in the lounge area of our room. We had a limited DSTV selection with a choice of two TVs – one in the lounge and one in the bedroom; both were much smaller than I would've liked though.

We went on a week night, so I as-



The Parkwood relaxation area

sume that most of the other guests there were in town on business – they seemed to be at home; some were relaxing in the plush common lounge while I spotted others working on their laptops over a drink... there is an honesty bar, allowing you to drink as much as you want, as long as you make a note of what you've had.

While there is no restaurant on site for dinner, there is a "home-style" dinner menu if guests don't wish to leave the lodge in the evenings. There is secure parking with a guard on duty 24 hours a day, so I'd recommend hiring a car to take advantage of the abundance of good restaurants in the vicinity.

Rosebank Mall, and the 4th Av-

enue strip in Parkhurst are situated conveniently close.

Breakfast, however, is available and comes complimentary with your room rate, served in the dining room alongside the lounge. The selection is relatively small with cereal, fruit, yoghurt and your choice of eggs on offer – I missed having the option of enjoying a croissant with a selection of cheeses.

Rooms range from R1 850 to R2 150 per room for two people sharing, including breakfast.

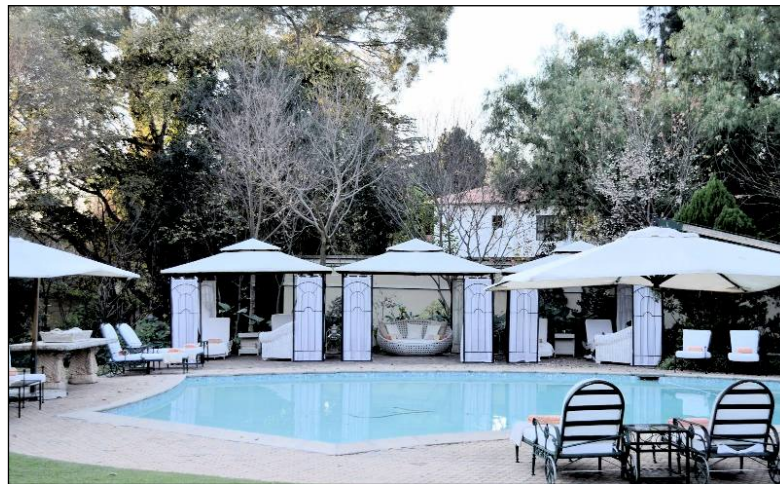
[www.theparkwood.co.za](http://www.theparkwood.co.za)

The Parkwood is situated at 71 Worcester Road, Parkwood. Call 011 880 1748 – **Hasmita Nair**

## Fairlawns Boutique Hotel & Spa

WHEN I think "five-star hotel in Sandton", I immediately think "high rise chain hotel" – the ones where the staff have a stock standard greeting for each guest, rooms are decorated in the same way, the service is predictably good, and your stay is comfortable, but not memorable. Fairlawns is the antithesis of this. The fact that it is located on an estate, alone, sets it apart from most of its five star Sandton peers, but the rooms are the key attraction, with each of the 40 suites designed individually – architecturally and decoratively.

The hotel really lends itself to a relaxing weekend away, while being perfectly located minutes away from the Sandton CBD. Not short of space in the least, the sprawling, lush gardens are its key attraction-spectacular, even in winter. We arrived on a Sunday afternoon and, as one does, headed straight to the spa. An attraction in itself, the Balinese themed spa has recently won the Best Spa award in South Africa in the World Luxury Spa awards. The entrance of the spa is a little dull and dark for my liking, but the



The pool area at Fairlawns

couple's suite we enjoyed our treatment in is anything but. Overlooking the bamboo groves in the Balinese spa garden, the suite comes complete with double massage beds, and a private lounge area to relax in post treatment.

After being massaged into a state of delirium, we checked into our room, an executive suite. We were wowed by the size; in addition to a separate guest toilet at the entrance, we had a huge bathroom

with his and hers basins, a spa bath and large shower, which I was later to discover came with a shower head that could adjust to the pressure of my choice.

I spent some time wandering around the room admiring everything from the cosy fireplace to the antique furnishings – each item of decor seemed to tell a story. In addition to a large living area, complete with a coffee table, there was also a veranda overlooking the gardens.

# Jozilicious places to stay

*Travelling within their own city – three Jozi writers check into some exclusive boutique hotels. Arja Salafranca, Hasmita Nair and Minesh Bhagaloo bring you a special edition of Jozilicious*

We popped over to Sandton City to catch an evening movie, and were back at the hotel in time for dinner, served in the elegant Terrace restaurant. With all-white furnishings and floor to ceiling glass windows, it's no surprise that the restaurant often finds itself fully booked – by hotel guests and outside visitors.

We didn't have a very good start to our meal – the starter special of the day, "roast tomato soup", was surprisingly green upon presentation. After asking twice to check if it was in fact what we had ordered and having this confirmed by the waiter, we prodded some more (being confident in our knowledge of tomatoes and their range of colours) and discovered the kitchen had run out of tomato soup so decided to serve roasted broccoli soup instead. Informing us we'd've been nice, but considering we are not broccoli lovers, the soup was actually very tasty. The rest of the meal was excellent; a highlight was the "lamb plate" main, R145, smoked lamb loin, lamb cutlet and lamb parcel, on creamed barley, pea puree with a splash of port wine jus and a dollop of café de Paris butter. I also caught a glimpse

of a group of guests enjoying a meal in the private dining room, which struck me as great option for a corporate dinner or a sophisticated birthday party.

We requested to have dessert and coffee in the lounge area, close to the fireplace, to which the waiters happily obliged. Sitting in the oversized leather couches, in what felt like a living room, with the fire keeping the chocolate in my fondant dessert just melted; I forgot for a moment that I was in a hotel and pretended that Fairlawns was my home.

This is what I enjoyed most about the hotel – it doesn't compromise on all the added extras and spoils you get from big five star hotel chains, such as free Wi-Fi, a dedicated concierge and an expansive breakfast buffet, but it still manages to retain a feeling of homeliness, exclusivity and privacy.

Fairlawns is currently running a "Winter Warmer" package – bed and breakfast is priced at R2 795 per suite, with hot chocolate and gourmet cookies on arrival.

Fairlawns is situated at 1 Alma Road, Morningside Manor. Visit [www.fairlawns-hotel.co.za](http://www.fairlawns-hotel.co.za). Call 011 804 2540. – **Hasmita Nair**