

# DUJOUR



## Room Request! The Oyster Box Hotel

Find modern glamour and comforts in an untapped corner of South Africa

Written by Evan Silvera

Unlike its landlocked counterpart Johannesburg, the coastal city of Durban – a popular weekend destination for “Joburg” residents – has escaped international attention. But with warm-water beaches and a bustling nightlife, the vibrant South African outpost won’t be a well-kept secret for long. Just beyond the city limits, in the resort town of Umhlanga, sits the iconic Oyster Box hotel. Housed in a cottage originally built in 1863 to help with ocean navigation, the hotel is made of Burmese teak, corrugated iron, and reinforced concrete, and provides unfettered ocean views. These days, the freshly renovated, 86-room hotel delivers decadence and while preserving its original glory with such luxuries as an award-winning spa, colonial influences like a grand revolving door, and Indian antiques scattered throughout.

Here, General Manager Wayne Coetzer walks us through his favorite spots at the hotel.

### **What’s the most requested room?**

One of our most requested and most loved rooms is the Buthelezi Suite.



*The Buthelezi Suite*

### **What makes it so special?**

It’s sea-facing and total luxury. With its own lounge area and outdoor patio, it is beautifully appointed in hues of blue and white, reflecting the ocean outside. The Buthelezi Suite was also a special project for the co-owner, Bea Tollman, who spent a lot of time ensuring that it was perfect. The Presidential Suite, the largest in the hotel, is also very popular. It’s been a home away from home for a number of international movie stars, heads of state, and world leaders.



*The Buthelezi Suite*

**What is the rate?**

The Buthelezi Suite starts at \$958 per night. The Presidential Suite starts at \$3,840 per night.



*The Presidential Suite*

**What's an interesting tidbit about the hotel that speaks to its status as an icon?**

In 1953, co-owner Stanley Tollman put a bet on a horse called Flash On, who went on to win the prestigious Durban July horse race. To commemorate this win, a suite at the hotel is named after the horse. Legend also has it that Mr. Tollman bought Mrs. Tollman's engagement ring with his winnings.

**What's your personal favorite room?**

The Buthelezi Suite, for all the reasons above.



*Bathroom, Presidential Suite*

**Can you name any celebrity guests?**

The Buthelezi Suite is a favorite of return A-listers, including Princess Charlene of Monaco and Prince Harry. We have had so many [celebrity guests] over the years, from musical celebs and film stars to royalty, chefs, and professional soccer players.



*Pool at the Oyster Box hotel*

**How about one more fun fact about the property?**

During the renovation of the hotel, the Presidential Suite's 1-ton marble bath had to be lowered through the ceiling, and the floor below reinforced with special steel to support its weight.