

The Grand, where only the timber floors are stressed

By [Brian Berkman](#)

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It takes a special kind of visionary to turn a decrepit piece of real estate into a boutique hotel that is recommended by trendy and upscale group Mr and Mrs Smith.



All the view you could want.

The initial visionary that turned shabby into chic was Gael Behr but current owner Suzette Main has not only embraced The Grand's BoHo chic but also expanded on it to also include The Grand Cafe and Room in Camps Bay and The Grand Cafe and Beach at Granger Bay, next to the Waterfront. If ever there were a poster child for up-cycling, she is it. The group's genius is in adding value in ways that turn uninteresting spaces into fabulous ones.

Although graded four stars, there is absolutely nothing that is missing for those who demand five-star standards. Like everything about The Grand, the appeal is in the detail: Instead of the usual terrycloth robe and slippers they offer a Grand-emblazoned Jalapa that because of its difference and funky design costs very little to make but is much more desirable than run-of-the-mill options.

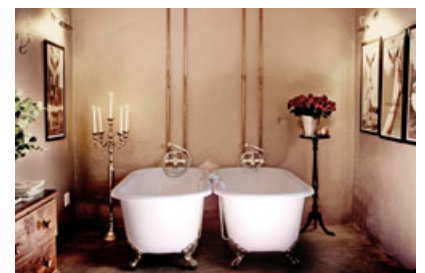
Candy is dandy

There's a huge glass candy jar in the bathroom which, rather than filled with nibbles, has things that are truly useful: There's a black facecloth along with a white one for make-up removal; a high powered hairdryer, a multi-adaptor plug, and other bits and bobs. Instead of offering the ubiquitous Charlotte Rhys range, their in-room amenities are by the much more fabulous Rain. And, while there is a sexy dim-lit vibe about the hotel in general, there are halogen bright lights at the bathroom mirror.

Our room five, upstairs, is one of the largest. All have French-style wrought-iron beds designed for giants and Tokolosh, avoiding folk as they require a velvet-covered foot stool, such as you'd find in an incense-burning church for kneeling on, to reach.

Flop into two of the biggest black sofas imaginable or gaze on the busy surface of porcelain balls, decor and fashion mags, a Lavazza coffee maker, glass-panelled fridge, and another candy glass jar, this time filled with bags of crisps, chocolate bars and the sort of high-sugar snacks people actually want to eat.

There are two change-room style showers and a Victorian bath, right in front of the window overlooking the deck and sea beyond.



Here's lookin' at yah.

Let there be light

The only thing I wished for was more light in the dressing area as I struggled to find things in the huge, dark-wood armoires.

The public spaces at The Grand are as exciting with comfy nooks crammed with books, games, oversized candelabras and vintage couches. Where another hotel might not be able to effectively use a tiny, uninviting space, The Grand makes a feature of it calling it a Petit salon that is so full of wonderful things to buy, smell and look at, it is a wonderment they can also fit in a spa bed and some spa equipment. Under another's touch this would be cramped and pokey, here it is just so.



Or for those times when you'd prefer to luxuriate on your own...

The Grand has been closed for June for a lick of paint and re-waxing of the stressed timber doors and frames and while sprucing up may seem in conflict with the worn and wonderfully frayed-look they offer, I'm certain it will be done with as much quirky, individual style that makes this one of the most interesting hotels I've stayed at and one of the most enjoyable.

If you're after space and privacy rather than sea views, book into The Bathhouse suite named for its two Victorian slipper baths, positioned side by side, and own pool in its enclosed courtyard garden.

The restaurant is a destination of its own and to eat on the deck with the beach, sea, and Keurbooms River in sight is a treat on its own. Our breakfast, included in the room rate but available a la carte for walk-ins, was top notch. This hotel demonstrates what the right look, with the right team and the right location can produce. If I were you, I'd book right now.

For more information: [The Grand](#), [Mr and Mrs Smith](#).

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