

# Understanding 5-star hotel grading

Conjure up an image of a five star establishment and it's likely that you'll be imagining the very last word in luxury, from the softest snow white bath sheets, to the crisp Egyptian cotton linen on the king size, extra length bed; not to mention gastronomical delights of every description whenever your heart desires. While you may not be far off the mark, it's always a good idea to know what a five star grading means for an establishment, and what you can expect when you splash out.



Menlyn Boutique Hotel

## What is grading?

For starters, what is grading? Essentially, it refers to an independent quality assessment on an establishment's overall quality, services and facilities and is usually illustrated in the form of stars (from one to five that are displayed at the entrance to the establishment and on its advertising material).

In South Africa, grading is done by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) and it helps travellers to know what they should expect from an establishment - a credible global assurance that the establishment has been benchmarked according to particular criteria for certain standards of quality.

"When it comes to a grading of five stars, you can expect the highest standard of international hospitality in terms of quality and service, be it a large hotel, a smaller guest house or B&B (which are all graded according to their own specific criteria), five stars is an indication that you can expect all the bells and whistles." says Quintin Wiehahn, MD of The Menlyn Boutique Hotel in Pretoria.

## What to expect?

To this end, a five star establishment will be equipped with a concierge, porter service and baggage handling. This type of luxury accommodation will have a central business area, and bedrooms will also offer either a fixed or wireless internet connection.

"You should be able to look forward to a range of other services, including babysitting and child-minding, a message service, shoe polishing, ironing and laundry service, as well as daily newspaper delivery and 24 hour in-room service, not to mention full daily servicing of rooms. Although not all of these are necessary for a five star grading" states Wiehahn.

Indeed, five star accommodation means that every offering made by the establishment is of the highest quality, based on stringent international standards. Each guest should receive a personal greeting in their room on arrival, along with a turndown service at night which is also customary, as is a doorman and valet service.

"Ultimately, what sets a five star establishment apart will be the emphasis on personalised service and guest relations, however as its difficult for an assessor to measure these aspects most of the grading is done on services and facilities offered" points out Wiehahn. Indeed, at the Menlyn Boutique Hotel and one of the Group's flagship establishments, added value and the personal touch means that guests are offered a relaxed and personal experience, not to mention luxurious accommodation, premium conferencing facilities and fine dining at the hotel's five star signature restaurant, The Black Bamboo.

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