

Achieve an A+ luxury Franschhoek stay at Akademie Street Boutique Hotel

By Leigh Andrews

1 May 2019

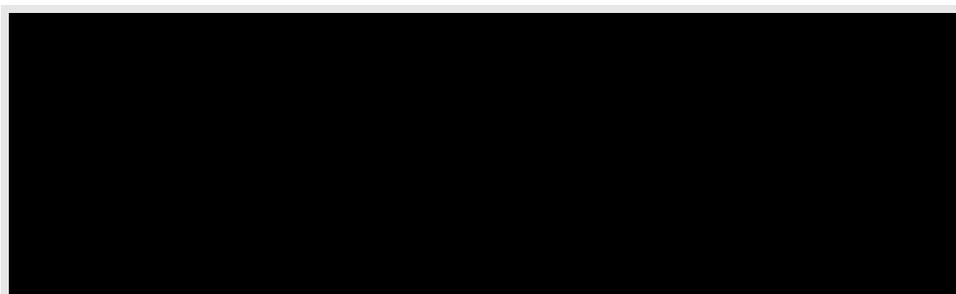
Stepping out of the rain into the warm, woodsy smell, the first thing you see on arriving at the charming façade of the Akademie Street Boutique Hotel is a plethora of glowing plaques announcing their five-star status and Trip Advisor accolades such as Top Small Hotel in the World, Top Luxury Hotel in the World and No 1 Hotel in Franschhoek. After a night's stay - much of it in our suite's secluded, wood-burning hot tub - it's easy to see why.



We had a sense of the professionalism that Akademie Street stands for before we even arrived, because on confirming our stay we were emailed a handy info pack of directions as well as things to do and restaurants in the area – and which we'd need to book ahead for, to secure a table.

But you don't need to venture out for anything else. Hotel manager Declan adds to the charm with his warm Irish accent and welcoming ways – he's the one who shared with us that Akademie Street got its name from running past Franschhoek High School, which is one of the oldest in the country.

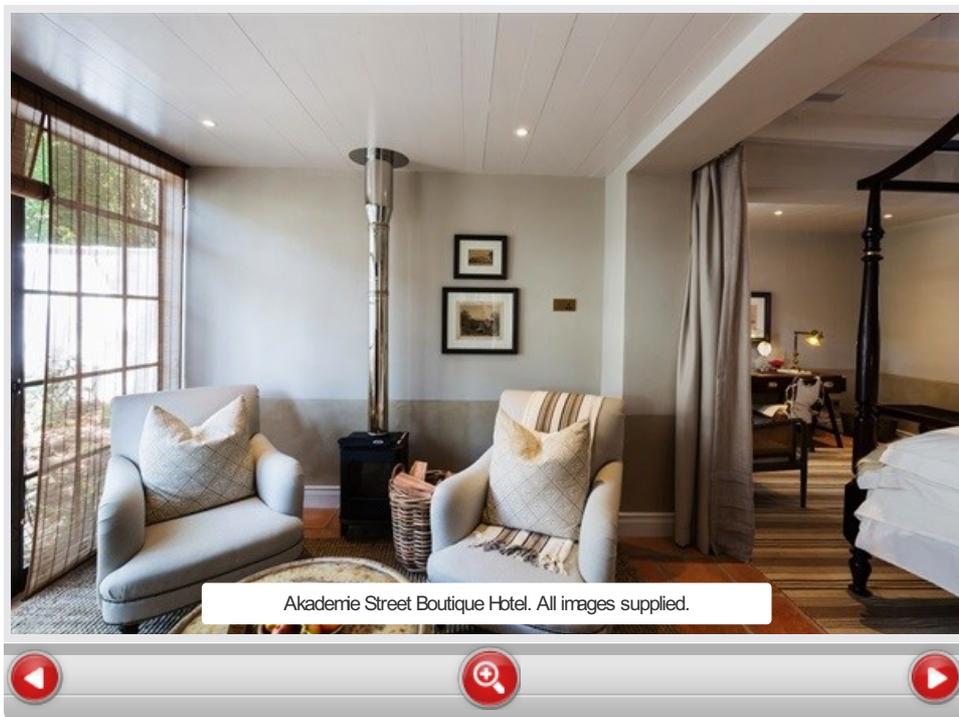
Walking past heated pools, Jacuzzis and hidden art tucked away in corners and lush greens everywhere you look along the gorgeously landscaped grounds, this felt like a blissful escape from reality – even more so on entering our suite, where everything whispered of comfort and luxury.





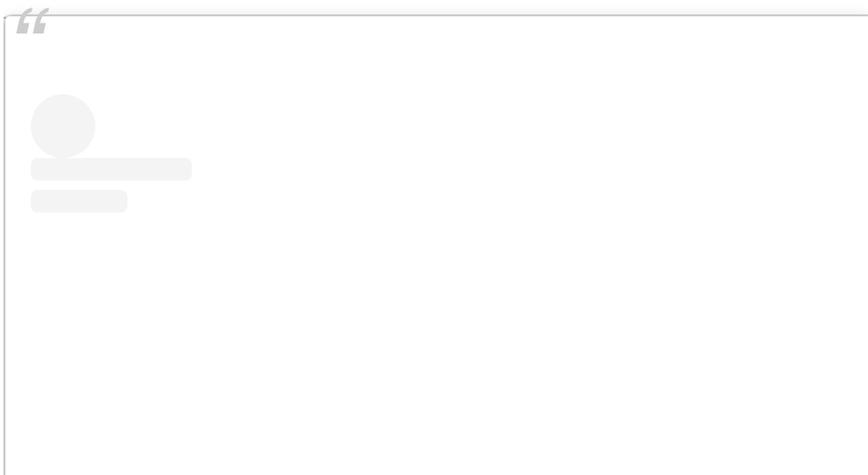
We're talking complimentary Wi-Fi that keeps you logged in wherever you are on the grounds, an in-room cellphone (it's fully charged and there for your use), and a TV that's hidden in your bed frame – it's your call whether you see it or not.

The large bathroom with walk-in shower and bathtub is equipped with face wipes, sunblock, sun hats, and even a toothbrush kit with a toothbrush and tiny tube of toothpaste, next to the hairdryer and safe.



Akademie Street Boutique Hbtel. All images supplied.

There's also a coffee station stocked with Nespresso pods, cookies, nuts and crisps; and a complimentary mini bar stocked with cold drinks and the gorgeously sparkling 'Come quick, I'm tasting the stars' MCC.





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BEST BUBBLY | 💎💎💎💎💎 "Come quickly, I am tasting the stars!" Such a cute label and description of the #sparklingwine #sensation, as experienced at @akademieguest last weekend. 💎💎 More on #blog, link in bio!

A post shared by Leigh Andrews (@ramblinglitchi123) on Apr 19, 2019 at 10:07am PDT



You can connect your phone via Bluetooth to a gramophone-style speaker, which was a lovely touch as it made us feel right at home, listening to our personal favourites while shucking off our travel clothes as soon as the wood-fired hot tub felt warm enough.

We didn't have to wait long for that, but used the opportunity to try out the underfloor heating and seasonal gowns and slippers. True weekend away bliss!

A bookworm's wood-fired hot tub delight

Not that you need those gowns, as privacy is big here – we only saw other guests when venturing to the Orangerie for cocktails and breakfast and your room key set includes one for the front door, so you can come and go as you please.

It's easy to see why the boutique hotel's most recent accolades include being voted the world's most romantic retreat – selected from over 300 nominees across 80 countries – by the World Boutique Hotel Awards, and ranking seventh in the 2019 "Top 25 Most Romantic Hotels in the World" tally by Tripadvisor.



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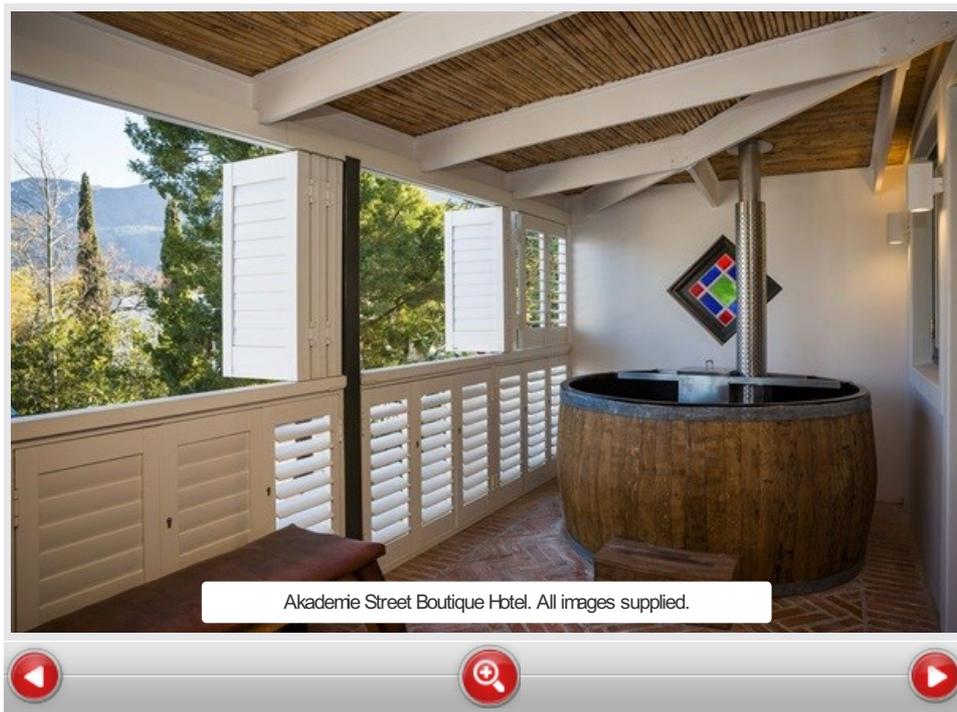
UNEXPECTED ART | ♦♦♦♦ Some of the #bestthings we saw at @akademieguest in @franschhoek_sa were hidden in corners of the #garden. ♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦ More on #blog, link in bio! #travelreview #exploreSA

A post shared by Leigh Andrews (@ramblinglitchi123) on Apr 19, 2019 at 9:43am PDT

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There's also a fireplace indoors in your suite, and one in your private balcony, above your cottage's outdoor pool and Jacuzzi and across from your hot tub to nestle in front of, with a whole wall lined with books to choose from.

This includes a selection of five local must-reads, including: JM Coetzee's *Disgrace*, Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*, Mark Mathabane's *Kaffir Boy*, Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull* and Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*. I'd suggest reading these near, and not in, the hot tub, just in case you get a little too relaxed – you wouldn't want to waterlog these classics!



The biggest selling point for us was definitely the private wood-fired hot tubs, which are reused brandy barrels at their best. You're left with ample wood to stoke the fire yourselves – we stayed in for hours. By then we were a little hungry, which leads to my description of the Orangerie.

Night caps, board games and breakfast in the Orangerie

Don't worry about the lack of restaurant on site, as breakfast is served in the magical hot-house themed Orangerie, where you will also find the potent complementary pre-dinner cocktails like mojitos served with glass straws and garnished to your liking, or a selection of wine or bubbly to sip on and munch away on luxury nuts and crisps in front of yet another blazing fireplace while playing cards or boardgames like Mankiller and a piano begging to have its ivories tickled.



Akaderie Street Boutique Htel. All images supplied.

These are swiftly replaced by nightcap warmers, which you discover when you visit the Orangerie again once you've returned from your meal in town. We loved the cartoon-style map of the town we found in our suite to guide us on our moonlit walk, where we chose from some of the country's top restaurants.

Everything feels safe and otherworldly in Franschoek – there was even a *Harry Potter*-esque owl hooting mystically at night, which Declan confirmed at breakfast the next morning, has been visiting for the past three years.

Speaking of breakfast, we headed back to the Orangerie to find each individual table now topped with 14 to 17 fruits in season, a smoothie jar of the same, as well as thick yoghurt, Eucalyptus honey and stewed fruit, as well as wonderful honeyed nutty muesli to top it. We were also presented with fresh coffee in an individual Le Creuset press – you can order fancier blends if you like, and tea is also an option.



Akaderie Street Boutique Htel. All images supplied.

The cold weather meant this was the first time Declan had to turn on the heaters this year, which added just the warmth we

needed before deciding on hot breakfasts with locally sourced ingredients used in our choices of pancakes with bacon for the lady and the classic eggs benedict with bacon for the mister. It was a delicious and delightful experience, as fitting with the overall Akademie Street Boutique Hotel.

Possibly the biggest plus of all, though? Once you've booked your stay, everything is included – from breakfast to those nightcaps and luxe snacks, which makes the check-out process a breeze.

So after breakfast, we headed back to our suite a delicious Sunday morning nap before venturing out in the rain - that seamless checkout is the final tick box confirming Akademie Street gets an A+ from me. Click through to [my blog](#) to see the pics we took during our stay.

Go to relax, go for romance, go for those private wood-fired hot tubs! Also take advantage of the three specials Akademie Street hotel is running over the winter months...

1. In the first, German born Chef Nadin Demmler is running a culinary masterclass for Saturday night guests from May to August, where you get to feast on the variety of seasonal dishes created for dinner.
2. In the second, you can extend your Saturday night stay with the Romantic Weekend Special, where you get a 50% discount on your Friday night booking.
3. In the third, take advantage of the Winter Warmer 2-for-1 Special, which includes two nights for the price of one from Sundays to Thursdays.

**Leigh Andrews was a guest at Akademie Street Boutique Hotel. For more information, email info@aka.co.za, call 082 517 0405 or visit www.aka.co.za, and book for the culinary school masterclass by quoting voucher code “CS2019”, book for the romantic weekend special by quoting voucher code “RW2019” or book for the Winter Warmer 2-for-1 Special by quoting voucher code “WW2019”. Note that the promotions cannot be used in combination with any other promotions.*

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief, Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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- *Next-level pairings with Stellenbosch Hills' popcorn-and-Polkadraai - 30 Jan 2020*
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