



Flights of fancy

Eugene Yiga touches down at the InterContinental OR Tambo Airport Hotel.

Hey, jet-setter! Don't feel like driving an hour into the city after spending all day on a plane? Then check yourself into the InterContinental OR Tambo Airport Hotel. Winner of Best Airport Hotel in Africa at the Skytrax World Airport Awards for 2016, it's only 68.7m from the international arrivals hall at OR Tambo. A porter can meet you at the terminal, with your name on an electronic sign as if you're a flight unto yourself. He'll show you to your room or suite – all 138 of which have triple-glazed floor-to-ceiling windows to block out the chaos outside.

Décor blends traditional and contemporary, with the spirit of Africa present throughout. The reception area's open vista features acacia trees, with ceilings symbolising a starry African sky. Zambian Makenge baskets, traditionally used to mix dough, make for a remarkable lobby-wall display. And opposite the concierge desk, feathered wedding hats from Cameroon Pygmy tribes adorn the

wall, while East African Bamalaki stools, traditionally used by generals or chiefs, serve as tables in the lounge.

Dogon doors from Mali, traditionally used to secure grain stores, decorate the bar, while a collage of African masks watches over Quills Restaurant, named after the striking 18-metre long porcupine-quill mobile hanging from the ceiling (no porcupines were harmed in the handcrafting and painting of the 3 000 quills).

Chef Yoshan Naidu, winner of reality television show *Chopped* in 2015, greets guests and makes personal recommendations from the specialities in African and oriental cuisine. A highlight is the symphony of salmon starter: a salmon spring roll set upon a mild curry sauce, salmon mousse with edible confetti, and a salmon and prawn roulade.

For mains, savour the orange and thyme-marinated duck breast served

with a lemongrass and sweet-potato purée, sesame-scented bok choy, and roasted baby beets with citrus *beurre blanc*. And for dessert? The *imazi* panna cotta with macerated berries and pistachio cake. Or a Dom Pedro. Or both, because you're a jet-setter.

If you're too tired for a formal sit-down meal, room service (like the restaurant) is available 24/7, with breakfast delivered as early as 3am. But if you've got time, head up to the top floor and the always-open fitness centre, where you can beat the jet lag by running yourself to sleep.

After a signature treatment at the Zen-like Camelot Spa, take a dip in the heated pool, where you might find French tourists guzzling champagne. Want to join them for the party? Just don't miss your flight!

OR Tambo International Airport, Jo'burg, 011 961 5400, icairport.com. ■

pictures: supplied