

LEISURE

le petit hôtel

*A new retreat in the heart of Cape Town
is brimming with Gallic romance*

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LEISURE HOT SPOT

The guest bedrooms (pictured here and previous page) are decorated with hand-embroidered quilts and curtains.



Upon entering new guesthouse La Grenadine, you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd just stepped into a Provençal villa. A brisk walk up a short alley off the bustling Park Street in Cape Town's Gardens, through weathered wooden doors, leaves the city far behind.

Of course, it doesn't take much to emulate a typical French feel: tiny two-seater tables, 'Tournée du Chat Noir' prints and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec visions of the Moulin Rouge on the walls, enough gilding to make Louis XIV proud, and the elegiac sounds of Edith Piaf singing 'Non, je ne regrette rien'. The *très* chic La Grenadine's garden is dotted with tiny two-seater tables, and its oh-so-French owners, Maxime Deluc and Mélodie Abad, are partial to playing an Edith Piaf vinyl on the record player, but there's nothing faux about it.

The eponymous pomegranate trees set the scene in the courtyard alongside guava, lemon, avocado and olive trees, a burbling fountain and the grand table – a handcrafted, salvaged-wood 10-seater – presiding over a verdant lawn that spills out before the whitewashed walls of 'le petit hôtel'.

The 19th-century building seemed hardly the choice location for a couple who had looked at industrial city apartments, yet it couldn't have been more ideal. The pair recruited their family and friends, as well as some South African designers and, with the addition of a few raised shutters here, a knocked down wall there, not to mention a lot of hard work, the largely detached area was transformed into the inclusive, welcoming abode and guesthouse it is today.

Alterations were not limited to the exterior, though. Each of the five bedrooms is accented with hand-embroidered curtains and cotton sheets, and industrial-style en-suite bathrooms complement the country-house charm.

Mornings in the salon are a typically Gallic breakfast scene: a spread of pain au chocolat, fresh breads, home-made jams, pomegranate rubies and croissants still warm from the oven, alongside a selection of coffee, teas and hot chocolate, as well as pomegranate cordial made from the fruit of the tree outside.

While the look and feel of the space are inviting, the true allure of La Grenadine comes down to its charismatic owners. You may arrive as a guest, but after a glass of wine or a *café noir* with Maxime and Mélodie, you will leave a friend. □

La Grenadine, 15 Park St, Gardens, Cape Town, 021-424-1358, lagrenadine.co.za; available for private functions.



The salon and mezzanine level. BELOW Maxime and Mélodie sit below the pomegranate trees in the courtyard.

