

# The Abalone Experience

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Text: Robyn Davies  
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Out of all the words that may come to mind when trying to capture one's experience at Abalone House and Spa, there is one in particular that encapsulates it: comity - a state of mutual harmony, friendship, and respect. Located in the charming fishing village of Paternoster on the West Coast - less than 200 km outside of the Mother City - Abalone House is a lavish five-star boutique hotel that offers the ultimate getaway from the rush-hour lifestyle. Grandeur and style flow seamlessly throughout the hotel. The garden courtyard that all the suites have been built around is a sanctuary bursting with nuances of organic beauty and striking bric-a-brac. The comfort and attention to detail invested into each room - combined with time spent in the Jacuzzi with gorgeous panoramic views of the ocean - makes it extremely difficult to get up in the morning and greet the sunrise.

The distinct design elements that adorn Abalone House are tributes to the colourful works of revered artist Vladimir Tretchikoff, from whom the boutique hotel takes inspiration. Guests relish in opulence: French-style doors, Persian rugs that dress the stone walls with their rich tones, signature Tretchikoff wall prints, African ornaments, and brightly-coloured textiles. Cape Town interior designer, David Strauss, is the mastermind of the hotel's bohemian-meets-luxury aesthetic. Abalone House is a labyrinth of colourful flamboyancy that takes form in "lovingly resorted antiques,

treasured memorabilia and *objets d'art* from the owners' personal collection that share the welcoming spaces beside crystal chandeliers, wooden ceilings, modern furnishings, and old silverware."

The service at Abalone House is professional, informative, and always delivered with a smile - a true tribute to the collective energy you feel when in Paternoster. This is especially noted when dining at the esteemed Reuben's Restaurant, the culinary brainchild of Chef Reuben Riffel. "The menu will be ever-changing, though we will certainly keep the signature dishes," says Riffel, who holds Paternoster close to his heart, visiting for the first time when he was 14-years-old. Using only the freshest local ingredients, menu options range from double-baked snoek soufflé with salted apricots, to roasted pork belly with chilli-lime and ginger caramel. Dessert choices burst with flavours in the malva pudding with buttermilk sherbet and Amarula custard, or, in one of the recent 2015 additions from the collaboration between Abalone House, Riffel, and the South African Brandy Association, a brandy-inspired cocktail such as the "Bojito" or "Brandy in the Bos". The restaurant serves lunch and dinner to both the public and guests, however, it is advised one phones in advance to book a seat to avoid disappointment!

The ultimate Abalone House experience is not complete without embracing the

ancient African traditions of healing and energy at the on-site Healing Earth Spa. Founded by Elisabeth Brandt, the spa contains four treatment rooms, one of which is designed especially for couples and was nominated for the World Luxury Spa Awards 2016. Choose from an expansive selection of face and body treatments that make use of indigenous ingredients, including marula and Kalahari melon, as well as the Pinotage grape range - "a vinotherapy range with powerful anti-oxidant qualities that is also thoroughly South African".

This hidden West Coast paradise also serves as the ideal location for a conference venue; the executive boardroom hosts up to 16 delegates and is equipped with state of the art media and audio-visual equipment. The pristine setting and luxurious, quirky interior make Abalone House a gracious host for an intimate and unforgettable wedding ceremony. The natural splendour of Paternoster lends to the abundant coastal activities, from exquisite sunrise walks on the beach to relaxing and watching the local fisherman set out for their catch of the day. The magnitude of this historical town's charm that you can experience when staying at Abalone House will linger with you long after you head home.

For more information on Abalone House and Spa, visit [www.abalonehouse.co.za](http://www.abalonehouse.co.za), email [info@abalonehouse.co.za](mailto:info@abalonehouse.co.za), or phone +27 22 752 2044. ■