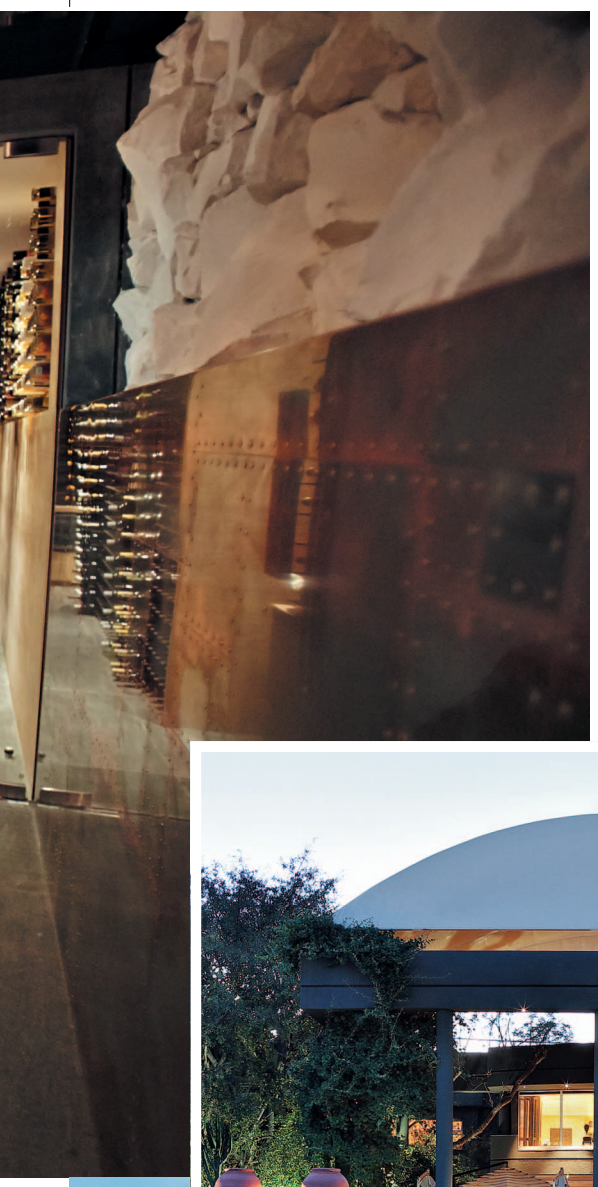

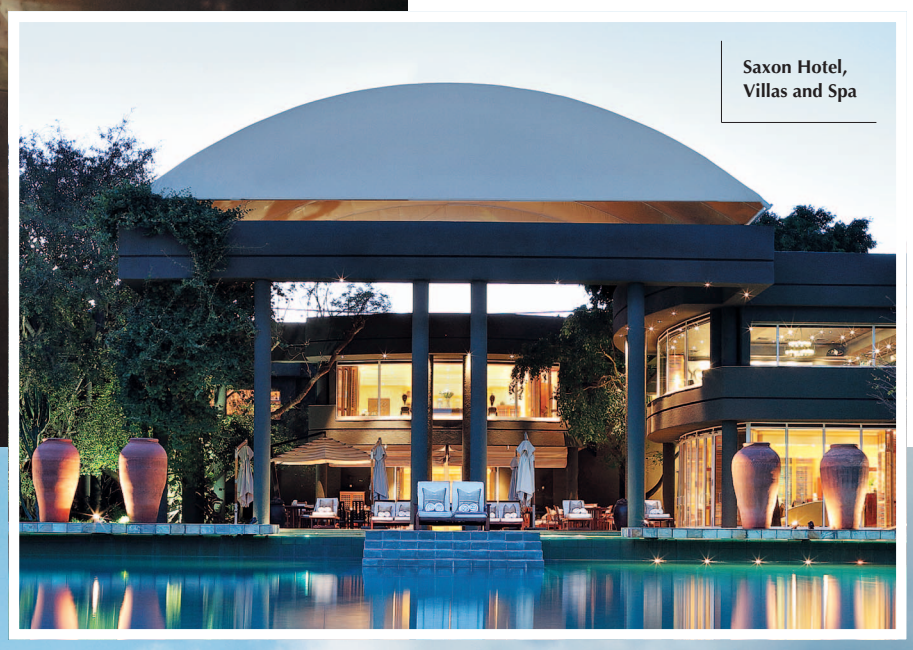

Saxon Hotel, Villas and Spa

is a synergy of raw energy — the warm Indian Ocean and the isolated setting mean you sleep well, and heal well, sun-kissed and energised by the surroundings.

GM Jeremy Clayton believes personalisation, experience and location define the category. "Boutique, in essence, should be authentic and intimate, allowing guests to feel at home. Knowing our guests on a first name basis, and acknowledging their desires and preferences goes a long way in building confidence and a meaningful relationship, which all translates into a distinctive experience, happy customers and repeat business."

It is surely these diverse, visceral contexts that differentiate our local boutique offerings from those abroad. As McGrath so accurately states: "We can offer our guest an experience that includes the likes of whales, wine, mountains, sea and beach — all in supreme luxury."

W Hospitality Group's recent report, *Hotel Chain Development Pipelines in Africa*, finds that sub-Saharan Africa is proving to be the hotel growth story of the 21st century. More hotel chains are opening development offices in Africa (or in the Middle East with a focus on the continent) and growing their resource base, in order to take advantage of the strong economies on the continent and the hotel deals that arise as a result.

W Hospitality Group MD Trevor Ward notes that "most of the continent is so lacking in quality hotel rooms, not just in the capitals but also in the secondary cities, that it is our belief that the hotel development pipelines in sub-Saharan Africa will continue to grow, and that even more international players will enter the market".

SA's hospitality sector stands to benefit from a resurgence in global hotel lending and investment. This is expected to offset a shortage of finance that affected the industry in 2012. According to Gillian Saunders of audit firm Grant Thornton: "The global financial crisis has given birth to a superior environment for hotel finance. Lenders, learning from past mistakes, have undergone significant changes and are ramping up their levels of sophistication to better understand hotel businesses."

The boutique industry globally is in good health. Here at home the offering has matured remarkably and hoteliers are getting it right, to the point where we are receiving global awards. With the continued rand weakness and a surge in sector development finance, the future is looking balmy.

"Travellers come from all over the world to visit our incredible country and it is therefore important we deliver to world class standards in terms of the luxury market's expectations," says More. "To this we add the warmth and sincerity of the South African spirit which gets to shine through our people and to provide them with something uniquely South African they can only find with us".

In contrast, the objective of a successful boutique hotel model is to pay homage to the hotel's location, style and reason for being

White Pearl Resorts