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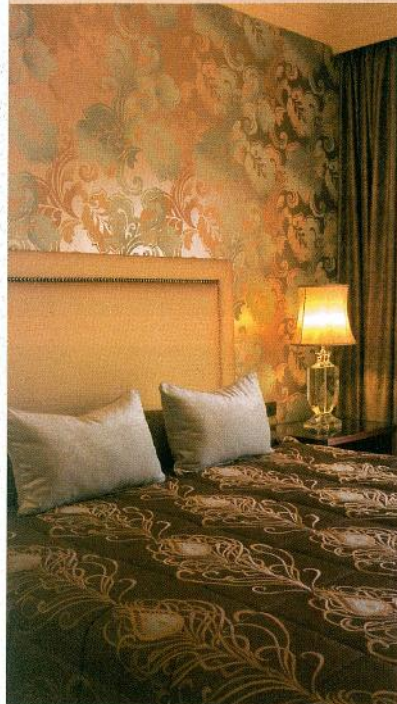
## SEX AND THE CITY'S SARAH JESSICA PARKER

opens up to us on long-time love, bad fashion choices, kissing on the job and designer diapers

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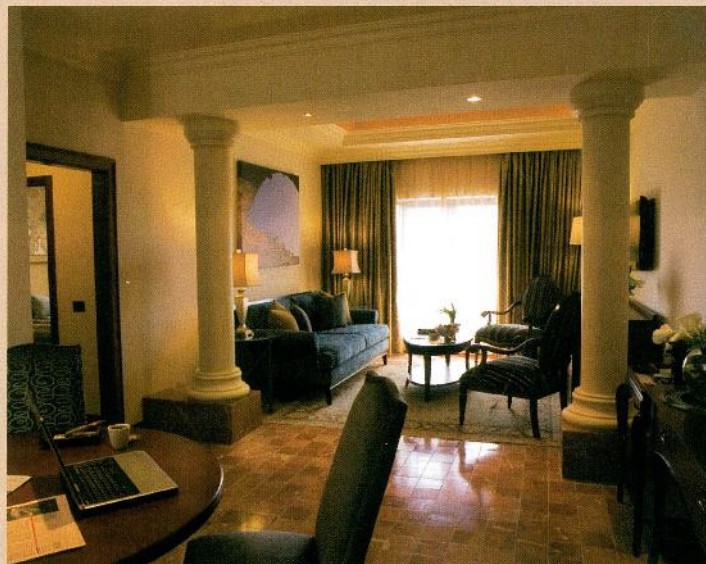




### THE MICHELANGELO

On entering The Michelangelo you are wowed by the hotel's distinct Italian atmosphere. 'The actual form of the hotel is special,' says Lionel Levin, who credits the creation of The Michelangelo to a spiritual awakening. 'It's very long and narrow, with marvellous Italian-looking spaces. It's a unified complex... you can look at parts of it from everywhere. The lift wall itself is glass, and the view is amazing. Also, we commissioned people to do sculptures for the hotel that look as authentic as possible.' All carpet designs are in Renaissance patterns and the public spaces all flow into one another. 'The Michelangelo had very particular requirements,' he adds. 'The actual theme is taken from Nelson Mandela Square, which is itself based on the traditional Italian piazza. It seemed perverse not to carry the theme through, and I think it works. We had a definite approach to detail. All the rooms maintain the Renaissance theme and, even though it was a very condensed, fast-tracking project, attention to detail was critical. At the end of the day, the hotel had to cater for every possible requirement of the largely overseas business clientele it expects to attract.' Making sure that the hotel caters for all the various needs of its guests, The Michelangelo is able to welcome a grand total of 484 guests, and offers a range of suites comprising 242 rooms, all recently refurbished with a renewed sense of elegance and grace. The refreshment came through the eyes of DIAD (Darley Interior Architectural Design), a company that has brought international sophistication to local hotel design. 'I think hotel design is wonderful because it incorporates so many different aspects,' says Shiree Darley, managing director of DIAD. 'When you design a hotel there are so many different elements, and it really gives you the freedom to exercise your creativity in a number of different fields, from the guest rooms to the public areas and the commercial side, in terms of conference rooms, convention centres and meeting areas, as well as the spa facilities and the retail aspect,' said Shiree. The brief given to DIAD required all rooms to be given a more contemporary edge, while still maintaining the classic Renaissance feel for which The Michelangelo had become famous, to thus enhance the overall luxury experience for guests. However, the trick behind this refurbishment was that the hotel had to stay open while the changes were made. This proved to be an easy task for the DIAD team. 'We took our inspiration from the existing identity of the hotel, and looked at ways of brightening the rooms, introducing more light and a feeling of airiness to the atmosphere. To do this, we introduced more modern fabrics that still had a Renaissance feel, yet were lighter and brighter. We also looked at several other design elements.'

New carpets were custom-designed and manufactured for all the public areas, including the corridors. 'The major challenge in this design was to develop the theme of the hotel without undermining the original integrity of the design.' Other changes that were made to the rooms include the addition of big, comfortable couches and armchairs that were almost sculptural in their positioning, as well as new plasma-screen TVs. The interior décor was also given a fresh new look, and guest rooms now boast two colour schemes – a grand gold, and a more contemporary ice-blue and brown scheme. The artworks in the guest rooms were modernised, with close-ups of well-known Italian architecture all set in antique-style frames. 'The project was a resounding success, thanks to the assistance of the staff at Legacy, who were instrumental in project managing and implementing the designs,' Shiree added. 'We are pleased with the outcome of the project and hope that guests will be as delighted with the results as we are. The refurbishment of the rooms and suites is a project that has been very close to our hearts, as it was our first project together as DIAD. It was a wonderful experience to work on this iconic hotel, a place which has become such a well-known South African landmark.'



### RAPHAEL PENTHOUSE SUITES

Situated overlooking the prestigious Nelson Mandela Square of Sandton, the Raphael is an address that draws visitors from far and wide. On leaving the Raphael Penthouse Suites, visitors can truly say that they have indulged in the ultimate luxury experience. With 60 suites all fully equipped with the latest in technology and modern necessities, such as the complementary, high-speed Internet access, these modern suites leave little to be desired. Boasting a modern classic style with a touch of a gold palette, the Raphael Penthouse Suites make for luxurious accommodation by any standard. The suites are designed to accommodate business travellers as well as guests who simply want to sit back, relax and enjoy the modern style of living in the buzzing heart of Sandton. If you are lucky enough to find yourself in the paradise that is the Grand Suite, you most certainly won't be disappointed. The private splash pool and dining balcony have an exquisite view of the bustling piazza of Nelson Mandela Square, oozing tranquility and peacefulness. A stunning arrangement of the indoor greenery is set around a colourful three-storey mural that helps to bring a fresh combination of flora and art to inner-city living. This premier location has seen the faces of many African presidents and their families passing through its doors and is the chosen destination for numerous captains of industry, celebrities and world stars who find the style and class that radiates from the Raphael Penthouse Suites to offer a venue that, for them, truly is home from home.

