



## La Residence



*Courtesy The Royal Portfolio South Africa*

### At a Glance

Originally designed as the private home of Phil and Liz Biden (a South African power couple who also own the esteemed [Royal Malewane](#) and [Birkenhead House](#)), La Residence, in Franschhoek, feels exquisitely personal.

**The Standout:** Each of the 11 rooms in the main house is different from the one next door, but all are opulent—filled with antiques, art, colorful fabrics and flower-filled vases.

**Don't Miss:** Sitting in your room! Maybe in your tub. Smelling the gardenias. Sipping a glass of wine made from the vineyards outside, which fill every window's view before rising to a circle of green mountains that touch solid blue skies. Comforting, spoiling, uplifting: this is La Residence.

# Indagare Loves

- Interiors that make you never want to leave your room
- Superior Rooms, which have corner locations and sweeping views
- The wonderful staff who will arrange private meals and special activities, such as wine tasting and horseback riding

## La Residence Review

When you stand on the lawn at La Residence, the Cape Winelands' most decadent boutique hotel, mountains completely encircle you. Steel-blue silhouettes and craggy gray cliffs plunge to a blanket of pine trees, which border a patchwork of crops: plums, grapes, olive trees. Then, in the foreground, the property's parterres spill over with white roses. That the interiors are just as dreamy and dramatic seems only appropriate.

Originally designed as the private home of Phil and Liz Biden (a South African power couple who also own the esteemed [Royal Malewane](#) and [Birkenhead House](#)), La Residence feels exquisitely personal. The hotel is centered on a Provençal courtyard, with ochre stucco walls and a pool surrounded by wildflowers. There are just 11 guest rooms, each unique and over-the-top fabulous. Liz was once a fashion designer, and her passion and panache is evident in every detail. This is a place of persimmon silk pillows, crushed pink velvet, Chinese screens, 15-foot ceilings, gilt garlands adorning antique dressers and a croquet lawn that doubles as a helipad. Cheeky eclecticism reigns, leading to amusing juxtapositions: in the main lodge, delicate crystal chandeliers hang from gnarled poplar beams salvaged from a barn in Mombasa. The art is serious; the mood is opulent. Each room has a theme, with abundant use of jewel tones and luxurious textures. The Frangipani Suite, for instance, has a four-poster bed made of marble and a crystal chandelier in the palatial bathroom.

The hotel allows for children over 10 years in the main hotel. For families with small children, or guests wanting more privacy, the property has five vineyard villas, set apart from the main hotel ranging from one to three bedrooms. There is also a second pool and club house for guests of the villas to enjoy.

As fabulous as the rooms are, one of the best parts of the La Residence experience is mealtime. Whether you are having breakfast amidst the mainly peacocks that roam the estate, or a specially arranged private dinner, the wonderful staff will arrange a table for you near one of the towering stone fireplaces, seating you in tall red leather armchairs by a crackling fire, and serving you local wines and fresh fare. While grand and opulent, La Residence is somehow cozy and intimate at the same time: just another day in your own private château.

# Who Should Stay

Sybarites, fantasists, indulgers. Full of color and life and imagination, La Residence is for travelers who like drama, interior design and intimate service. Children are allowed in the vineyard villas (equipped with their own pools), but not in the main house.

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- *Eliza Harris on February 24, 2014*

