

Innovation in hospitality sector builds resilience while fulfilling a need

Following president Cyril Ramaphosa's announcement of the nationwide lockdown easing for some parts of the country from Level 4 to Level 3 at the end of May, some players in the hospitality industry have made innovative plans, not only to survive the Covid-19 storm, but also by meeting customers' needs.

With Cape Town at its epicentre, there are over 10,000 reported cases of Covid-19 in the Western Cape. The Capital Hotels and Apartments realised that business executives and families may need somewhere safe and sanitised to stay or work other than their regular homes.

The hotel therefore offers their one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments as sanitised spaces available for self-isolation and social distancing at its Cape Town property, The Capital Mirage. These rooms come at discounts of up to 70% for the duration of the lockdown, and beyond, making the company the first hotel to provide sanitised sanctuaries for those seeking a refuge to self-isolate or quarantine. The Capital Mirage's entire supply chain – including food – has been secured for safe living.

Flexi-rental accommodation

Totalstay, a Cape Town-based aparthotel operator running a private collection of fully managed, hotel-grade vacation rentals including hotels, villas and

serviced apartments, is offering flexible monthly rentals free of lease agreements, at prices starting at just R8,500 per month.

With South Africa still under lockdown, Totalstay has adapted to local conditions, says co-owner and director Rael Phillips, meeting the needs of people under financial pressure who want hassle-free rentals. "This also builds an element of resilience into our business, to see us through to the level when domestic travel is permitted again and local tourism starts picking up," he adds.

Totalstay's collection includes one-, two- and three-bedroom offerings, such as Latitude Aparthotel in Sea Point (32 apartments), Strand Beach in Sea Point (21 apartments), The Verge Aparthotel in Sea Point (22 apartments), and Urban Artisan Aparthotel in Woodstock (20 apartments). All properties offer a 24-hour concierge service, full kitchens, free WiFi and hotel-grade amenities.

In general, however, he notes that "aparthotels have been able to respond to the pandemic far quicker and withstand more of the commercial impact it's presented because of the nature of an apartment or villa versus a conventional hotel room – it offers more space and facilities, and is more flexible. It's expected that, once people are allowed to travel again, they'll be drawn to staying in serviced apartments

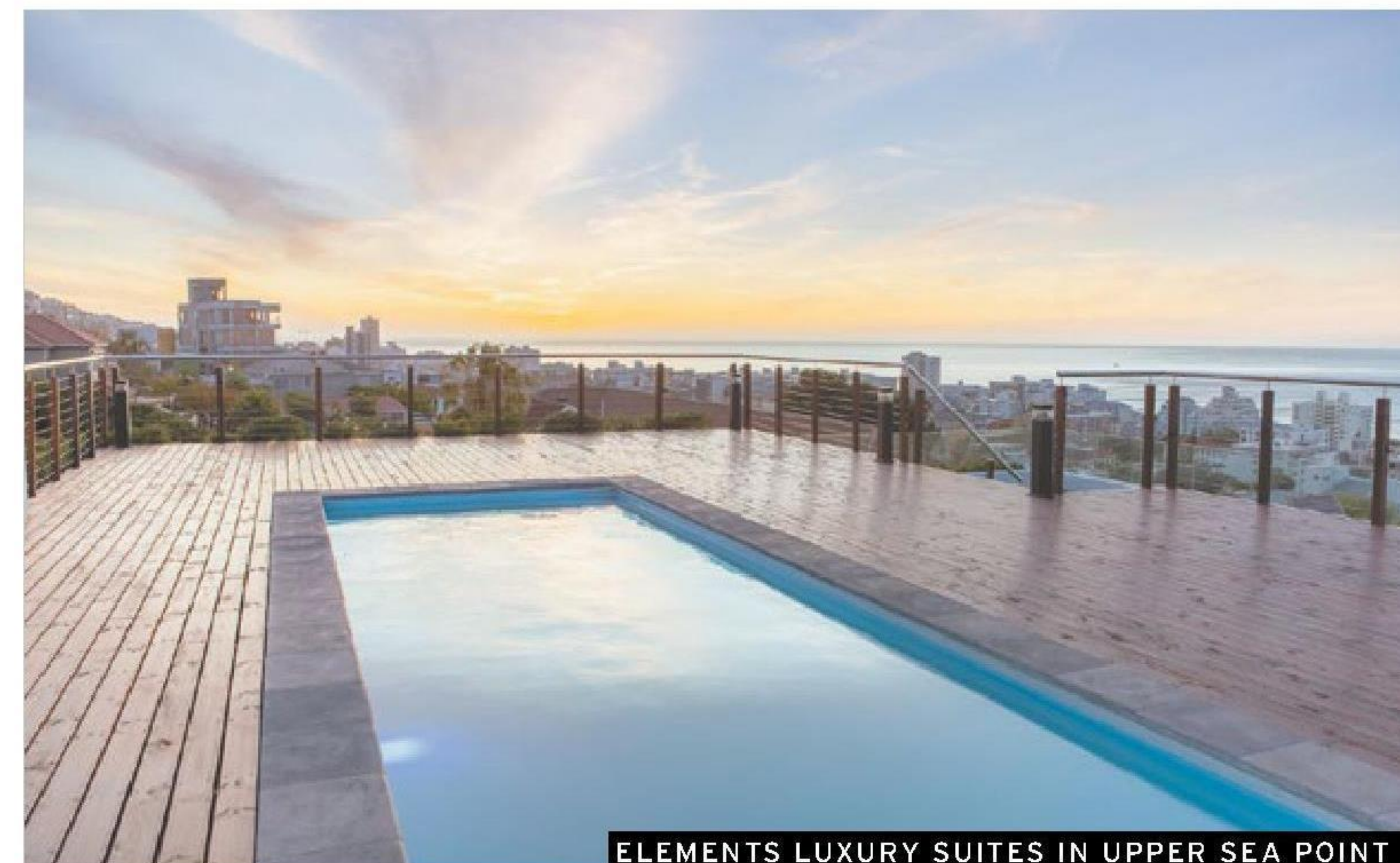
because they're much more self-sufficient and individualistic, which enables social distancing. The risk of contaminated food is low because you're able to cook for yourself, and you have greater control over what you can wash and clean."

Property leasing

A flexible approach is something that worked well in the commercial property-leasing market, even before the Covid-19 pandemic hit South African shores. Inospace, a Cape Town-based operator of serviced business parks that provides a wide range of industrial, office and storage space, offers terms with flexibility at their core. Rael Levitt, CEO, Inospace, says, "South Africa's weakening macro-economic climate and all the uncertainty it presented was fuelling demand for short-term, flexible leases, but the recent disruption to the economy has turbo-boosted that demand."

The company is now offering monthly on-demand rentals on a pay-as-you-go basis, although for tenants who want a greater level of certainty, two- to three-year leases are offered, with a two-month lease break granted in the tenant's favour.

Flexibility and agile responsiveness have been saving graces for companies such as Capital Hotels and Apartments, Totalstay and Inospace, which are independent, privately owned and entrepreneurially led.



ELEMENTS LUXURY SUITES IN UPPER SEA POINT

