



It's here. Robots to serve, guide and assist guests with anything they may need at the new high-tech Hotel Sky in Sandton, soon also opening at Cape Town's Waterfront

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**V**eteran hotelier Paul Kelley had a unique vision for the new Hotel Sky in Sandton – to offer guests an unprecedented hospitality experience using the power of technology, which also supports each of the hotel's staff members. "Hotel Sky has been a long-term dream and project," says Kelley, "one that would put South Africa's hospitality industry on par with global trends and demands."

Apart from a goal to offer corporate travellers comfort,

convenience and affordability, it was also imperative to do so in secure prime locations. "We feel we've achieved this in both Johannesburg and Cape Town," he says.

The technology implemented at the hotel is in line with global hospitality trends and best practice, with a focus on utilising technological solutions to streamline operations and deliver a more efficient experience for employees and guests alike.

#### ROBOTS AT YOUR SERVICE

The hotel's technology includes app-based check-in and room access, a self-playing grand piano, and wait for it: AI-powered robots to assist with guest relations, room service delivery and luggage.

According to Kelley, app-based check-in and room access is particularly important in light of pandemic health protocols as it further protects guests who use their own device for these services. Guests can also order food on the app, make reservations and call other rooms in the hotel or reception.

Although the three AI-powered robots are a unique and functional drawcard, they don't replace humans, they only add to the guests' experience. Named Micah, Lexi, and Ariel, each robot has its own style. They do room service and answer questions about the hotel itself, nearby attractions as well as share some general knowledge.

The technology operating the robots was developed by South African company CTRL Robotics. They created a platform that serves as the robots' cloud-based brain, and all requests and information are stored on the cloud planner and relayed to each robot as required. The robots can work independently or

together to assist the hotel with increasing guest engagement and efficiencies. While the robots don't impact jobs or replace humans, the option of robotic room service delivery is another important factor in minimising human contact in the hotel considering Covid-19 protocols.

#### HOW IT WORKS

One of the ways guests can use the services of a robot is to order room service via the Hotel Sky mobile app to one of its 453 exclusively designed rooms and suites. Food from any of the outlets within the hotel can be ordered and the hotel staff will see to the order using the services of the robots.

During this process, the robot will communicate with the guest via live messaging. It will continue to update them on their order until the robot is standing outside their room door from where it will send an arrival message for the guest to collect their food.

#### TECH-DRIVEN BUSINESS FACILITIES

Hotel Sky in Sandton also offers world-class business and technological amenities. These include conference and eventing facilities such as the 190-seater Infinity auditorium, which is fitted with top-class audiovisual and presentation technology.

"Our vision is to offer a hotel experience like no other," says Hotel Sky Sandton general manager, Herman Brits. "Therefore, we've spared no expense in developing a world-class hotel with business travellers as key focus. Our rooms and spaces are exclusively designed, offer comfort and are affordable and practical."

Hotel Sky opened in Sandton in November last year and will launch at Convention Square near the V&A Waterfront in April this year.

#### Tile luxury

Italtile, a company specialising in premium quality porcelain and ceramic tiles, had their commercial's JV Partner in Gauteng, Dale Hermanson, collaborate with Richland Properties, Paragon Architects and Archstone Construction to install large-scale, luxurious and contemporary tiles at the Hotel Sky.

Hermanson chose Marvel Pro XL Calacatta Lappato porcelain tiles by Italian tile masters Atlas Concorde because they're an exclusive Italtile commercial import and also for their luxurious visual impact and authentic marbled finish.

The giant slabs were fitted on large scale to create a near seamless floor and walls with fewer and thinner grout lines.

Marvel Pro XL Calacatta Lappato tiles require adhesives developed specifically for these monumental slabs, as well as specialist installation by trained professional teams.

