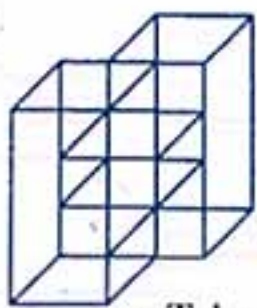




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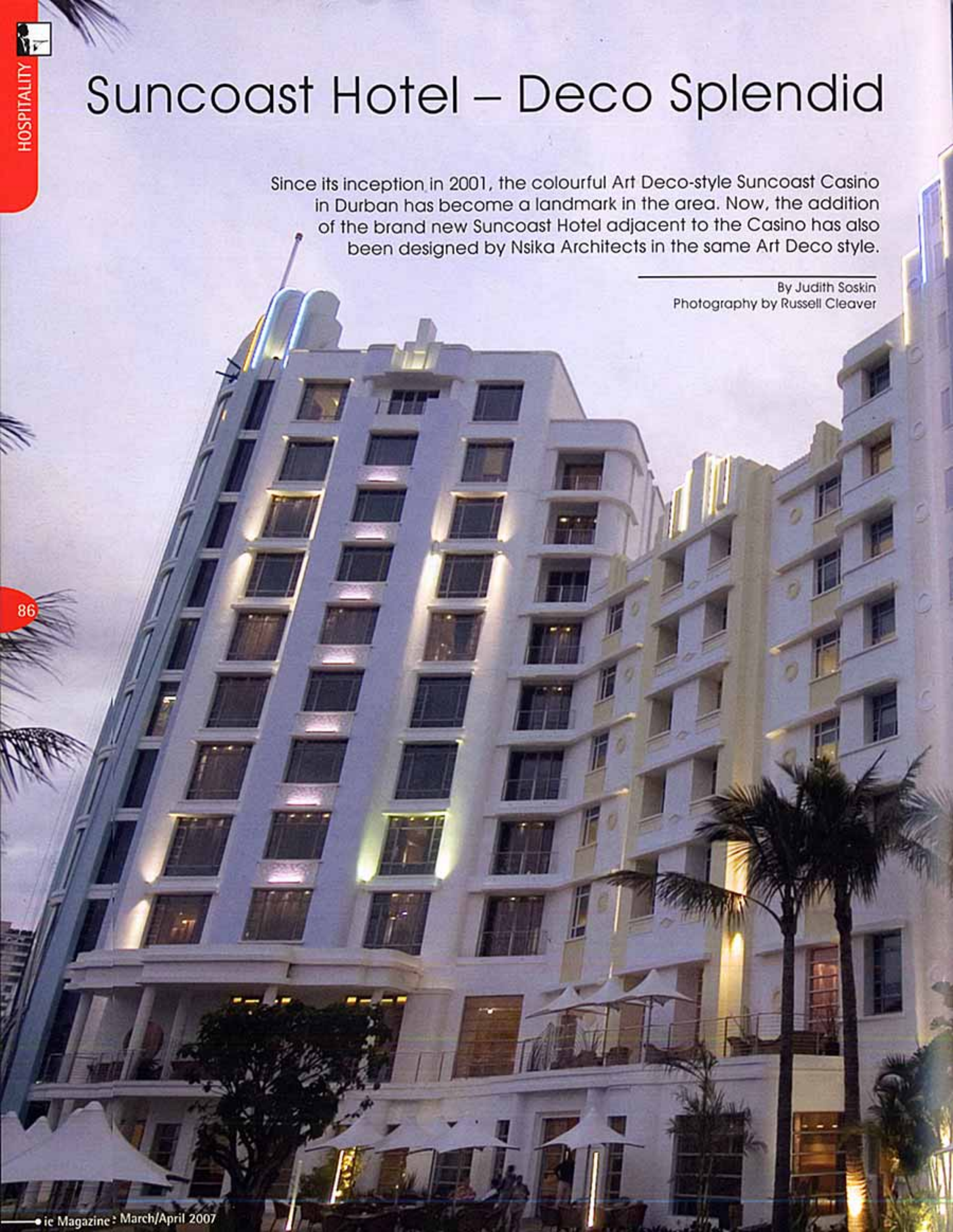
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# Suncoast Hotel – Deco Splendid

Since its inception in 2001, the colourful Art Deco-style Suncoast Casino in Durban has become a landmark in the area. Now, the addition of the brand new Suncoast Hotel adjacent to the Casino has also been designed by Nsika Architects in the same Art Deco style.

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By Judith Soskin  
Photography by Russell Cleaver





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While international centres like New York and Europe might be more famous for their original Art Deco architecture, it is the singular 'beach Deco' style of Miami that has inspired Suncoast Casino and the new Suncoast Hotel. Nsika point out that there are several original Art Deco buildings to be found in Durban – notably Berea Mansions and Surrey Mansions on the Berea, which were used as precedent.

Suncoast Casino is owned by Tsogo Sun, the

same company that owns Montecasino, and it was they who tasked the architects to design the hotel in keeping with the theme of the Casino next door. MDS Architecture conceived the original Suncoast Casino in the now-famous Deco style. They served as architects of record on this project and helped ensure its successful completion in December 2006.

"This was an extremely challenging project due to the unusual scale of the hotel which is actually quite small, but looks vast," note Nsika.

A long, narrow site has meant that designing a hotel with approximately 166 rooms next to a sprawling Casino complex of only two and a half floors has necessitated some extremely creative thinking. In essence, the hotel is broken up into four facades— three of the buildings comprise the standard Sunsquare room modules while the fourth contains the suites. What looks like four separate buildings, complete with stainless steel spires on top, is actually one long building cleverly disguised. What the casual observer

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sees, however, is three separate facades and one tower – all in the Deco style. "The limitations of the site have meant that we have used a series of building facades to resolve the scale," comments Nsika.

The tower is V-shaped which not only helped to define the space as a 'precinct' but also increases the sea frontage affording beautiful views along the coastline – to this end, the architects have included glass viewing lifts on either side of the curved glass main lobby to take further advantage of the sea views. Levels were another crucial factor in the design – half of the hotel sits behind a nine meter high sand dune. So as not to compromise the view, the hotel lobby is raised.

Designing in the Art Deco style also necessitated some specialist detailing and the architects have been extremely careful to work in authentic Deco features into the building. These include elaborate and detailed special patterned mouldings, designed by Nsika, and constructed out of fiberglass and glass reinforced concrete which 'introduce a level of craft and fine art into the building' – a significant feature of the Deco style. Another of these key Deco features are 'eyebrows' that are built over windows in horizontal bands of concrete. "Here we have used structure to create detail," notes Nsika.

Paul Pamboukian has also designed lighting for the hotel in the Deco style, which is carried through from the Casino next door. He calls the style 'stylised Miami Deco which is quite over the top' and it is defined by colourful neon and accentuated motifs. Deco style chandeliers in the hotel do introduce a more subtle, toned down type of styling and is a conscious move away from the loud Durban beachfront look so favoured by other buildings nearby.

FLOOR TILES THAT  
FIT SEAMLESSLY.

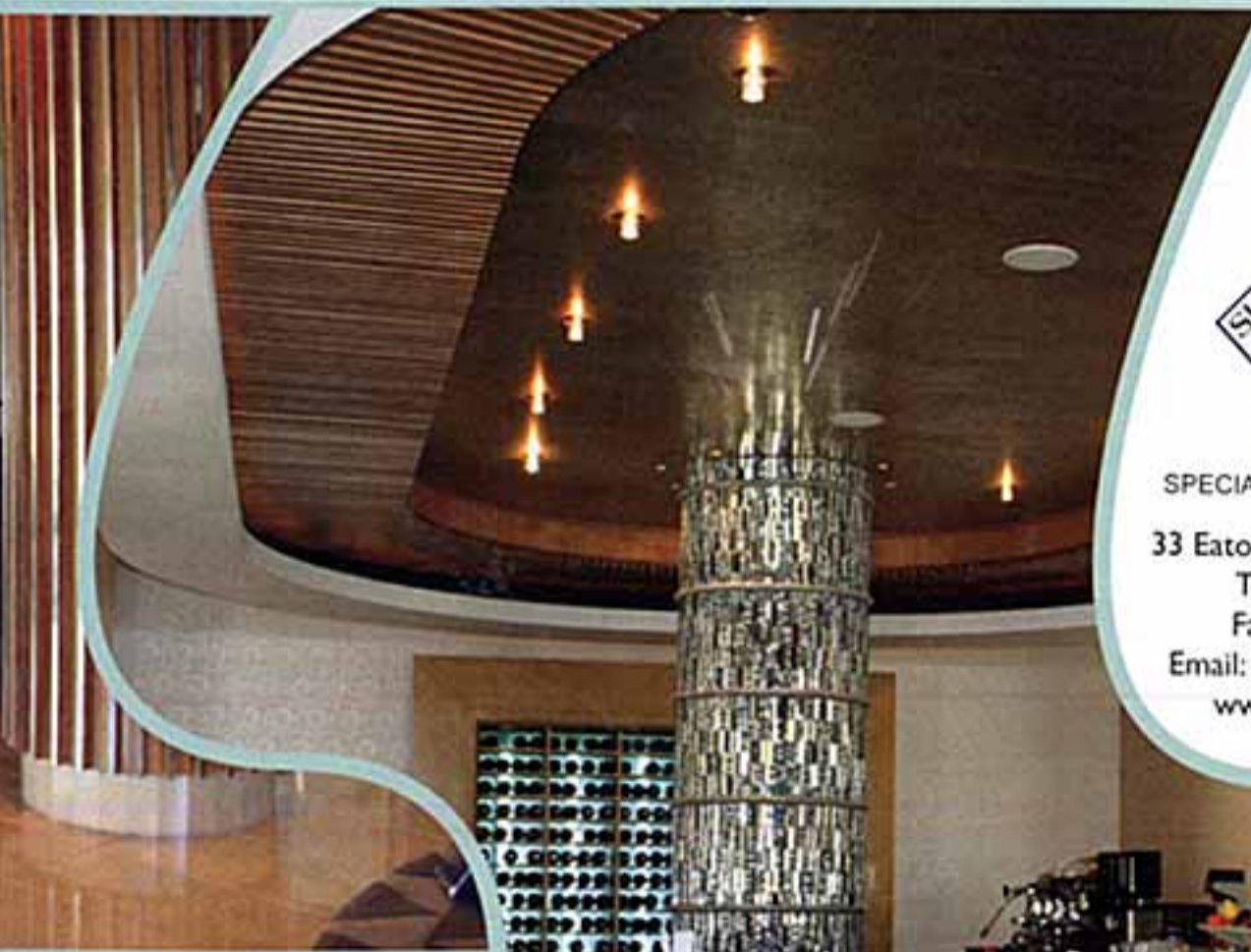


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Interiors for the Towers portion of the Suncoast Hotel, which included public areas, rooms and suites, the Spa and the Presidential Suite, were designed by Keith Architects and Designers and they also cite Miami Deco as their main influence. "Our design features classic Deco with a sense of sophistication and elegance. Circles form a major theme of our design and we have introduced them in different ways to bring through the Deco element, and this matches the circular shape that was used architecturally in exterior mouldings and large round porthole windows. A round, recessed bulkhead over the grand stair aligns with the exterior round window and varying sized dropped ring bulkheads in the restaurant section creates interest in a long, narrow space. Circular shapes also come through in the carpet design, the polished stainless steel balustrade, a feature ball mobile and the round window in the lobby," comments Keith Architects and Designers.



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The designers have also made use of light coloured woods with accents of stainless steel except for certain areas such as the Premier Check-In Desk and the Spa where an African Mahogany stained chocolate brown has been used instead. "It was important to keep the spaces light and spacious," comments Keith Architects and Designers. "So, for example, the floors are light golden or crème polished." Colours include light blue/aqua, brown and green. "These materials and colours became the key to the design," add the designers.

The Suncoast Hotel carries on a proud tradition of cheerful, Art Deco design on the Durban beachfront – an area that has suffered somewhat in the past few years. Serious design principles underline this fun, holiday-makers destination and the real skill has been to combine the two elements in this successful new building. *ic*



*Main Contractor: WBHO – TBP Joint Venture*  
*Project Managers: Bovell Freeman Holley (design) / Diagonal Projects (site)*  
*Concept Architects: Nsika Architecture & Design*  
*Architects of Record and Principal Agents: MDS Architecture / Enanela Architecture*  
*Interior Designers: Keith Architects & Designers / Moago Interiors*  
*Quantity Surveyors: Brian Heineberg & Associates / DRPS*  
*Structural Engineers: LC Consulting / Ndodana Consulting Engineers*  
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