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The Capital of Cool

This month, Pretoria sees the launch of the second Cool Capital Biennale. Billed as the world's first uncensored, DIY, guerrilla art and design festival, the event puts the city into the hands of its creative community with an array of pop-up artworks and imaginative events. Photographer and Pretoria enthusiast, Carla Crafford, was part of the team that travelled to Italy to represent Cool Capital at this year's Venice Biennale. We asked her what makes Pretoria so cool.

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001. It Has Awesome Views & Purple Hues

Our warm, sunny, dry winter days are followed by long-awaited spring rains in October and November. Every October, Pretoria puts on her purple finery and a sweet perfume fills the air. By late spring, the city is filled with colour – in the city gardens and on streets lined with Jacaranda trees. It's impossible to grow tired of Pretoria sunsets. The city sits at an altitude of around 1,340 m and is surrounded by hills, so there are multiple viewpoints. But for something extra-sublime, visit the botanical gardens and ogle breathtaking Highveld views from the *koppie*. www.sanbi.org/gardens/Pretoria

002. It Offers Historical Insights

A visit to Freedom Park is an opportunity to reconcile with our nation's turbulent past. "It's a chance to come to terms with who we are," says Carla. Situated on Salvokop, Freedom Park tells the story of the African continent, focussing on South Africa from the dawn of humanity through various epochs, including the tragic phases in more recent history. Its architecture and exhibitions celebrate the many cultural differences and similarities within Africa. The interactive museum, *//hapo*, unravels the complex tale of Africa across both time and space, and its Wall of Names remembers the many heroic figures who have helped our nation achieve freedom. www.freedompark.co.za

003. Artists Are Everywhere

"Pretoria produces more artists than any other place in our country," says Carla. "By far the best place to see good contemporary art is at the Fried Contemporary Gallery (friedcontemporary.com), where discerning exhibitions happen all year round. Nearby is a smaller gem, Trent Gallery (198 Long Street, Waterkloof), with almost weekly openings showcasing the diversity of the local art scene. Adjoining Trent is Long Street Art Lovers, with an exquisite collection of locally made jewellery. In Arcadia, Harrie's (harriespancakes.com) on Eastwood Street is famous for delicious pancakes, but is also worth visiting for the art on display – a new collection goes up every three months."

004. Its Statues Are Solid...

Thanks to having the largest number of foundries in the country, Pretoria can be considered South Africa's sculpture capital. Angus Taylor's Dionysus Sculpture Works is the most technologically advanced we have, and Renzo Vignali, which opened in 1931, is the oldest. Plus there are public sculptures everywhere. At the Union Buildings, a towering 9 m bronze of Madiba gazes at Coert Steynberg's statue of former president General Louis Botha. The first Cool Capital Biennale in 2014 included the Sculpture Capital project which aimed specifically at creating a legacy of sculptural

works in Pretoria. Among this year's flagship projects is *Saadjies*, celebrating this year's Biennale theme of "small is big". The aim is to produce a travelling sculpture exhibition comprising tiny sculptures – none of them will be taller, wider or deeper than 180 mm.

005. ...and Modern Architecture Abounds

Pretoria is packed with architecture representing a diversity of styles and influences, and there's a particularly fine collection of Modernist and Brutalist buildings constructed between World War II and the 1960s. In the city centre, worth checking out are the second Netherlands Bank building and Polley's Arcade, both by famed Pretoria architect Norman Eaton. On the campus of the University of Pretoria, about 100 years' of architectural styles are represented and it's as though the Modern era never ended. Among the most beautiful examples are designs by architect Karl Jooste, who was born in Pretoria in 1926. He worked for Eaton before going solo and one of his finest buildings on the university campus is the Musaion Theatre (up.ac.za).

006. There's Fine French Food...

Pretoria has quite a happening dining scene. Another Karl Jooste building, the Waterkloof Ridge home he designed for himself and lived in until his death in 1971, has been transformed into one of Pretoria's

First Page Top: African history is celebrated at Freedom Park.
First Page Bottom Left: One of Tswhane's famed Jacaranda-lined streets.
First Page Bottom Right: Artisanal ales at Capital Craft Beer Academy.
Second Page: An event at African Beer Emporium.
This Page: Scenes from Market @ The Sheds, possibly Pretoria's coolest monthly gathering.

most impressive fine-dining venues, Brasserie de Paris (www.brasserieparis.co.za). The French-influenced menu celebrates Jooste's connection with French master architect Le Corbusier – expect to find classics like steak tartar, chateaubriand and crème brûlée, as well as a wine-paired degustation menu.

007. ...and Hipsters Can Eat, Too!

The city also has its share of casual dining spots and hipster hangouts. In Lynnwood, Lucky Rodrigo is a "hipster" bar with a funky 1970s design and a menu that includes burgers with a gourmet twist (luckyrodrigo.co.za). Clever-sounding fusion burgers with names like The Three Stooges and The Lance Armstrong are the mainstay at Burger Bistro (burgerbistro.co.za), a chain with a branch at The Village, a restaurant "hotspot" that opened in Hazelwood at the beginning of the year. For pizza that's in a class of its own, go to Toni's in Menlo Park (tonipizza.co.za). Or to feel the buzz of the latest rugby match, head for Thirst @ 28° East (012/991-3261), a sports bar in Faerie Glen that never seems to close its doors.

008. It's Youthful and Lively

"The most obviously cool thing about Pretoria," says Carla, "is its diversity of cultures and its youthfulness." You get a sense of this mix of bright young things at U-The Space, a lively venue that recently relocated to the city centre (146 Minnaar Street). "It offers the best of excellent and unpretentious local bands and is a hub of young artists, great coffee and local flavour," says Carla. "It's a must for the curious and young-at-heart."

Showcasing local bands in front of a hip and happening crowd, Park Acoustics (parkacoustics.co.za) is a monthly concert held at Fort Schanskop, part of the Voortrekker Monument Nature Reserve. It's the city's most energetic live music event, held in a marvellous outdoor setting.

009. It's Creatively Hip

Aside from serious coffee and good comfort food, the tiny +27 Café in Hatfield also serves up jazz performances and



exhibitions of art and design. The +27 design brand was started by siblings Hannes and Riaan Visser, an architect and an engineer respectively. Their cosy café courtyard features shared tables and free Wi-Fi, plus a chance to try out the brothers' furniture and other design work – they even have their own men's fashion range in the shop attached to the café (www.plus27design.com).

010. You'll Never Go Thirsty

You can taste and quaff the best of locally produced beer at Capital Craft Beer Academy (capitalcraft.co.za). The bar in the Greenlyn Village Centre hosts fantastic food events and has over 220 different beers on offer. Or, for a slightly different atmosphere, head to the African Beer Emporium (africanbeeremporium.com) in the CBD. It's a fresh-looking indoor-outdoor restaurant

and bar where it's possible to get insight into culinary traditions from different parts of the continent. Plus, of course, there's a vast range of beers and ales from across Africa.

011. Mornings Are a Joy...

Along with several other excellent weekend markets, a great place to imbibe Pretoria's rich mix of cultures, fashion, music, food and beer is at 012 Central's monthly Market @ The Sheds in the city centre (marketatthesheds.co.za). In July, the market also played host to Pretoria's first early-morning Secret Sunrise event. Mindfully combining yoga, meditation, make-believe and dancing, Secret Sunrise is a playful gathering designed to kickstart the day on a high note – participants are given wireless headphones and guided by a team of fun-loving, far-out instructors



tasked with encouraging everyone to simply let go and have a blast (secretsunrise.com).

012. ...and Everyone's Welcome to Join In

Cool Capital is a DIY event, encouraging participation. 2014's inaugural biennale saw some 250 creative pop-up art and design projects infiltrating the metro, showcasing the vibrant and creative side of the city. One group of guerrilla artists "fabric bombed" Pretoria's Fountains Circle at 03h00 on a Monday morning. Another creative project saw Paul Kruger's statue being pimped up with a covering of tin foil, and one project bedecked the Voortrekker Monument in pink and purple lighting. The festival's mission is to give everyone a chance to explore opportunities for creative expression whether through art, architecture, public installations, urban and graphic design, film screenings or musical performances. Anyone wanting to express their love for the city, or showcase ideas about how to improve it, is encouraged to participate. It's all happening between 23rd September and 31st October 2016. Visit www.coolcapital.co.za for more information.