



As with all such places, practice prudence and keep a close eye on your belongings.

Hungry?

You won't have to go far for a good meal. There are a number of eateries in the immediate area. Why not try out the weird and wonderful 'Fabulous Cranks' right next door to the market? There are, of course, restaurants and shops of the more tame and commercial persuasion throughout the area.

Additionally, if you feel like a seriously monster shop, rather wait until Sunday when the adjacent B&B Rooftop Market also takes place. Over 600 stalls offer quality clothing, ceramics, arts and crafts, furniture and jewellery as well as an array of culinary delights in the International Food Court and Deli section. Voted as Joburg's Premier Market for eleven consecutive years, the Rooftop Market is a paradise for shoppers of all creeds.

For more information call +27 (0)11 442-4488

Fast Facts

- **Where?** Both markets are located on Cradock Avenue at the Mall of Rosebank
- **When?** Opening hours: The African Craft Market is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Rooftop Market is open on Sundays and public holidays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Method of payment?** Credit cards and cash are accepted

Author's best buy:

The leather-covered decorative baskets from Niger which can be found on the upper level of the African Craft Market. At R700, these are a wonderful addition to any home.

Africa under one roof

Begun in 2001, the Rosebank African Craft Market is glued to the flank of the Rosebank Mall proper and is imbued with a suitably ethnic ambience. I am immediately struck by the earthy smell of the place. Not an offensive scent by any means, yet strangely appropriate in a place crammed with all things African. The African-themed music also plays a role in creating a truly 'African feel'. Text Jackie Gray

The market is spread out over two levels. The bottom level is, if you'll pardon the pun, much more down to earth, whereas the top level is commercialized and quieter. You won't be invited to participate in any impromptu drumming lessons here as I was downstairs.

Not surprisingly, the stalls offer a veritable plethora of objects for sale: ubiquitous painted ostrich eggs, ivory utensils, beaded brick-a-brac, baskets, jewellery, soapstone chess sets, shields, pencil holders, ashtrays, miniature drums, Ndebele dolls, rare Lesotho mohair, wooden giraffes, tribal masks, bronzes, whimsical statuettes, T-shirts, caps, belts, hats, shoes, wildlife effigies of every kind... the list goes on. Suffice to say, if you want it, chances are you'll find it here.

Unique?

Stall number 12 hiccuped yet another enthusiastic stall owner named Sammy, who was adamant about how completely unique his carved ebony candlesticks were. Strangely enough I was struck by their 'uniqueness' again just two stalls later.

And here in lies the crux of the matter: Although there is the inevitable product parity and kitsch memorabilia (you won't have to go far to find a Mandela-embossed something or other) there are also plenty of products that are truly unique. For example, where else could you find an intricately carved door all the way from the Ivory Coast?

Entrepreneurs to the core
Practically everyone at the market is entrepreneurial to some extent. Many of those to whom I spoke were self taught, produced the

crafts themselves, or sourced them independently from as far a field as Egypt and the Congo. Numerous individuals were, in fact, busy creating pieces as I browsed.

The inventiveness and resourcefulness behind the crafts was also apparent. All manner of materials has been used to create products that are either decorative or functional or both.

Hints and tips

Generally speaking, the products sold at the market are of a very good quality and are reasonably priced. It is advisable, however, to shop around and compare as some prices have been escalated to cater to the tourist market. The majority of the vendors are friendly and willing to haggle and it's well worth it as there are good bargains to be had.