



PRESS RELEASE

Liliesleaf Farm: Lauding the Legacy of our Liberation

Consistently raising the benchmark for outstanding products within the tourism sector, Southern Spoor Marketing is proud to announce the newest addition to its fold of unique South African products: **Liliesleaf Farm** in Rivonia. Liliesleaf Farm occupies a momentous place in South African history and socio-cultural evolution, as it was the site responsible for breaking the resounding **political 'silence' of the 1960s**. Originally purchased in 1961 by the South African Communist Party Liliesleaf Farm is recognised by the ANC as the birthplace of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), the military wing of the ANC and the Congress Alliance. Liliesleaf's Board of Trustees has embraced the need for a wider public audience to hear the stories of South Africa's political past and has created an interactive museum experience to preserve the stories of the past so that they can be told to future generations.

Liliesleaf Farm will narrate the liberation activities that took place on the property 44 years ago through informative **interactive and experiential displays**, and introduce the visitor to a world which is virtually unknown today. The **research** team undertook an admirable combination of archaeological research and oral recollection to put the pieces of the historical puzzle back together, a procedure which has taken over three years to conceptualise, co-ordinate and complete, and which unearthed seven different types of brick in the process. The authenticity of the site will ensure that visitors can expect a journey of self-visualisation and experience the burden of ideologies that incarcerated a very

unique group of leaders. The impetus behind the project is to recreate the same living and working environments that the struggle activists would have encountered and to impart this practical and experiential knowledge to the broader public..

Complementing the physical infrastructures which once housed the deepest secrets of a nation in racial turmoil, Liliesleaf has established the **Resource Centre** to broaden the channels of learning about **South Africa's political history** and democratic identity. This research centre will avail authentic struggle literature and documents pertaining to the apartheid era, and it is envisaged that National Archives will undertake the upkeep of the Archive Centre. The Resource Centre will form part of the **Learning Centre** which also showcases the historical buildings, Liberation Path, and the Liberation Centre. Once complete, the Liberation Centre will house a **crèche, curio and coffee shop, an information and ticket reception, permanent and temporary exhibits and a sixty-six seat auditorium**. Liberation Centre will also mark the beginning of the visitors' 'journey of enlightenment', from struggle to liberation to transformation. The world-class auditorium will show an introductory film which will set the historical and political context for the visitor. From the Liberation Centre the visitor will make their way through the historical buildings and structures which will offer them an interactive experience.

In addition to the **rare historical documents** which will be kept on the site, the buildings themselves represent beacons on the landscape of local and international memory. Manor house, thatched cottage and the outbuildings will function as a walk-through museum, with interactive touch-screen material to lead visitors through the footsteps of the political revolutionaries who showed South Africa the doorway to 'Unity in Diversity'.

Set to open on 09 June 2008, Liliesleaf will offer commissionable rates to the trade and, aside from its local priorities, also showcase the story of South African

transformation to an international audience. Liliesleaf Farm will be open for **advance bookings from October 2007**. Director of Southern Spoor Marketing, Anita Vernes comments, "Liliesleaf truly reflects the authentic South African character of the products within the portfolio as it represents a huge aspect of South Africa's political position today. So much of South Africa's beauty is packaged and platformed for the world, but our political and historical past remains largely untapped. We have been awaiting a product of this calibre for many years and believe that Liliesleaf will be the key to opening this door for both local visitors and the international traveller".

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