

# *Liliesleaf Farm*

## **Press Release**

12 May 2007

Durban Tourism Indaba

### **Liliesleaf Farm announces it will take bookings from October 2007**

Liliesleaf Farm today announced that it would begin taking international and domestic bookings in October 2007, with an official opening to follow in June 2008. The Farm is the legacy and heritage site built on the restored and preserved historic structures and buildings where Nelson Mandela and other senior ANC and Congress Alliance leaders operated, and from where the majority of the Rivonia Trialists were arrested.

Once open, local and international tourists, academics, scholars, and the public, will have access to the historical structures and buildings, material records and critical theoretical writings on the struggle, providing an insight into the events and ideology that defined the liberation struggle against the apartheid regime. Visitors will be able to walk in the footsteps of some of the world's most famous freedom fighters and experience sections of the Farm as the Rivonia Trialists did almost forty years ago.

Liliesleaf Farm was the secret headquarters of the high command of MK, the military wing of the ANC. The Farm is acknowledged to be the birth place of Umkhonto-we-Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation), the African National Congress' (ANC) military wing, with Nelson Mandela as its first commander in chief. Lilliesleaf Farm, situated just outside Johannesburg, was also used as a meeting and safe place for ANC activists in the struggle against Apartheid.

It was at Liliesleaf Farm that the most prominent leaders of the struggle against Apartheid sought shelter, and attended meetings. Some of these included Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki (father of South Africa's current president Thabo Mbeki), Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Bram Fischer, Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Raymond

Mhaba, Rusty Bernstein, Bob Hepple, Harold Wolpe, and Denis Goldberg. Many of these individuals were arrested in the police's raid on Liliesleaf farm on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1963, and tried in the subsequent Rivonia Trial. They were to later spend over 25 years in prison.

To date, the Liliesleaf Trust has raised a total of R63m from both the private sector, and the South African government, with government contributing R27.8m. The Trust aims to ensure that the unique heritage, history and legacy of Liliesleaf Farm is preserved. A core focus of the Trust's activities is the preservation of the site's historical buildings and structures, to ensure that the essence, spirit and soul of Liliesleaf Farm is maintained for current and future generations. The Farm will offer a snapshot of South Africa's recent history and will provide an interactive learning experience.

From October 2008, bookings to visit the Farm will be open via the Farm's website [www.liliesleaftrust.co.za](http://www.liliesleaftrust.co.za). During the Indaba, please visit Liliesleaf at stand 215.

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**For more information please contact**

- Nicholas Wolpe (Liliesleaf) +27 83 268 6898
- Carol Roos (Brunswick) +27 11 268 5750  
+28 82 490 4182