



NEW VENTURE . . . Mantis Group chief executive Adrian Gardiner (left) and Liliesleaf Trust head Nicholas Wolpe have announced plans for a new Mantis Group boutique hotel on the famous Liliesleaf farm site in Rivonia, Johannesburg. Much of the ANC leadership was arrested in 1963 at Liliesleaf, which led to the subsequent Rivonia Trial.  
Picture: IVOR MARKMAN

# Mantis Group to build hotel at historic Liliesleaf

■ Site on farm in Rivonia where ANC leaders arrested

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EASTERN Cape hotel magnate Adrian Gardiner is aiming to mark one of the most famous events in the turbulent pre-democracy history of the country in his latest joint project.

It is a R75-million boutique hotel at the site of the famous Rivonia Trial farm of Liliesleaf, with the development announced by the Deal Party-based Mantis Group and Liliesleaf Trust.

Already a memorandum of understanding to develop, manage and market the new hotel has been signed.

"Construction will, hopefully, start in May, 2010," Mantis chief executive Gardiner said. "At the moment we are going through the process of getting all the plans passed."

The new five-star hotel will be two-storeys high and will have 48 rooms in four blocks of 12. When the hotel opens in 2011 rates are expected to be between R2 000 and R4 000 a room per night.

The hotel will be aimed at the business market, the tourist market and the government or political market.

"The rooms will be themed according to the personalities of the 12 people who were arrested there," said Gardiner.

"There will also be conferencing facilities, a spa, a business centre with facilities such as e-mail and faxes for businessmen, restaurants and a wine cellar.

"It is imperative that any design takes cognisance of the historical significance and ambiance of the site. The hotel forms part of the uniqueness of the site and does not usurp, dwarf or consume it," said Gardiner. He pointed out the Mantis market-

ing support structures have offices in most of the major countries worldwide and said he believed his group was chosen because of its record and success in conserving a vanishing way of life.

Liliesleaf Trust chief executive Nicholas Wolpe said: "It has always been our objective that a hotel would form part of the Liliesleaf legacy project development. It would be a place where people can come,

and not only experience the importance of Liliesleaf, but engage in constructive dialogue," he said.

"We want to make it possible for people who don't have the opportunity to go into the research centre to get a flavour of what the site means.

"Exact plans have not yet been decided

upon. These will unfold as we go along and we are not prescribing what Mantis must display as it may not suit the ambience of the hotel.

"This hotel is the final cog in the (Liliesleaf) project. What's fantastic is the Mantis Group shares this enthusiasm and recognises its importance. I am extremely excited about this relationship developing and blossoming over the months and years to come.

"They're conserving, we're preserving and conserving and preserving to all intents and purposes have the same meaning and the same objective and I think that is very important," said Wolpe.

Those sentenced for treason in the trial - named for the Johannesburg suburb where the farm is located and where ANC leaders were arrested - included Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, Ahmed Kathrada and Denis Goldberg.

