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Cape Town wins Oscar

Cape Town was announced as Africa's leading destination by the prestigious World Travel Awards in May this year.

Executive deputy mayor of Cape Town, Councillor Grant Haskin accepted this top global tourism industry award on behalf of Cape Town and all its partners.

"This award recognises the tireless work of a team striving towards one objective – Cape Town as the top global travel destination – because of our superb products that are presented in a variety of perspectives and in a responsible manner, producing tourist ambassadors the world over," he said.

"This is the best legacy we can leave for Capetonians, before and after the 2010 Fifa Soccer World Cup."

The World Travel Awards were established in 1993 to acknowledge, reward and celebrate the enormous achievements in all sectors of the global travel industry. Travel professionals and their clients regard the awards as the best endorsement that any travel product could receive. Globally, it is considered the Oscars of the travel industry. The spectacular awards ceremony was held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban.

Councillor Simon Grindrod, Cape Town's Mayoral Committee member for Economic, Social Development and Tourism said: "This award further consolidates the position of Cape Town as a world-class tourist destination. Credit must go to our local hospitality industry for working so hard to provide an excellent tourist offering in terms of product and service."

Mansoor Mohamed, City of Cape Town's executive director for Economic

Social Development and Tourism said: "This award will help Cape Town to become more globally competitive as a tourism destination. Cape Town has built and maintained excellent tourism infrastructure and remarkable experiences. We are constantly improving our environmental assets, and we are building skills and improving opportunities in our tourism sector. Our visitor safety record is amongst the best in the world."

"To win this important award in the run up to 2010 is further proof that Cape Town is ready, willing and able to produce a World Cup experience second to none for all who visit our beautiful City," emphasised Haskin, with full support from all the relevant partners.

Calvyn Giffellan, chief executive officer of Cape Town Routes Unlimited remarked: "The award is a wonderful recognition of the excellence of our tourism industry, travel products and our beautiful destination, undoubtedly one of the most exquisite places in the world."

Mariette du Toit-Hembold, CEO of Cape Town Tourism, stated: "Cape Town launched cutting-edge visitor services technology that includes state-of-the-art touch-screen systems and builds upon Cape Town's sophisticated image as a world-class destination. Cape Town Tourism would like to thank the dynamic and passionate tourism industry, stakeholders in local, provincial and government, including organisations like Cape Town Tourism and Cape Town Routes Unlimited (CTRU) and the City of Cape Town who are first and foremost proudly Capetonian. Working together tirelessly as Team Cape Town."

A Place of Remembrance

Liliesleaf Farm was the site where the Rivonia Trialists were arrested in July 1963, and is accepted by the African National Congress as the birthplace of Umkhonto

we Sizwe. On 9 June 2008, Liliesleaf reopened its doors to a dramatically different sociopolitical climate, allowing the original infrastructures to tell the story of the unique group of leaders who were committed to bringing about sociopolitical transformation.

The highly anticipated re-opening of Liliesleaf in Rivonia received endorsement of the highest honour, as local politicians, family and friends of the Rivonia trialists gathered together a week prior to launch the Liliesleaf Legacy Project. The evening commemorated "a strategic point in South African history"; and noted the humanistic sacrifices made by struggle veterans, before the new experiential and interactive museum opened its doors to the public.

ANC Treasurer-General Matthews Phosa opened the evening with a reflection on rootedness and the importance of history in our move toward a united future. Rivonia trialists Dennis Goldberg and Andrew Mlangeni provided candid and humanistic accounts of their own struggles for freedom in South Africa. Goldberg commented on Liliesleaf as an "accident of history", on the chance events that led to the discovery of underground activities on the property in Rivonia. He further elaborated on Liliesleaf as a place of "remembrance, a place of not forgetting", highlighting the historical significance of the site on the landscape of local and international memory. Goldberg reflected on Liliesleaf in line with Batho Pele: putting people first. Liliesleaf presents an exceptional ethos of leadership and proactivity in the face of adversity and the site will continue to pay tribute to this unique group of leaders through the living narratives told by its buildings and the sense of history and national belonging intrinsic to the site. ANC President Jacob Zuma referred to Liliesleaf as the headquarters of "the

people's army" and a gift to the memory of the proud history of our struggle.

Interactive features include: The Resource Centre, which will sustain Liliesleaf's tradition of intellectual discourse and provide academics, scholars and visitors access to historical material, records and critical theoretical writings on the Struggle; The Museum, which consists of manor house, the thatched cottage, the outhouse buildings and the water tank coal bunker, offering an interactive and experiential snapshot of South Africa's recent history; Liberation path, which connects the Resource Centre with the Liberation Centre and is lined with authentic struggle posters; and the Liberation centre, which marks the visitor's entry point to their 'journey of enlightenment', from liberation to transformation.

Old and new

The historical Old Post Office (dating back to the early 1900s) at The Upper Deck Lifestyle centre in Plettenberg Bay has been given a new lease on life by Ara Manuelian and Noelle Bolton, who created an eatery reminiscent of days gone by.

Part of The Upper Deck Lifestyle centre, The Old Post Office was painstakingly restored to its former glory and blends beautifully with the über design of the surrounding chic centre.

States Manuelian and Bolton, "We wanted to show how old and new can complement each other and, of course, to provide a unique yet casual eatery to the upgraded town centre. The food and atmosphere was to bring back the simplicity of wholesome, farm-style food."

Guests (up to 30 can be seated inside and 15 alfresco) can feast on traditional delicacies such as scones with jam and cream, homemade pies, cakes and rolls, but the pièce de résistance is the unique lunch-time Harvest Table menu consisting of items such as salads, Scotch eggs, quiches, potted salmon and croquettes.

The décor was created by Bolton and adorning the walls are paintings, beautiful mirrors, various objects d'art and strategically placed collectables as well as finely crafted furniture; a treasure trove of artefacts which are all for sale.

History of South Africa's liberation

The development of a National Liberation Heritage Route was launched on Chris Hani's 15th assassination anniversary at his birthplace in Sabalele village of the Eastern Cape on 10 April 2008. The public launch was attended by approximately 2 000 people, followed by a memorial lecture at the Queenstown Indoor Sports Complex.

The National Liberation Heritage Route project is aimed at preserving and promoting the significant events, people and places that narrates the history of South Africa's liberation. The route will be proposed to be listed on the World Heritage Site register as the first of its kind to be recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Committee. The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) has already commissioned research in compiling a business case that will forecast the feasibility and economic potential of the route.

The Chris Hani District Municipality in the Eastern Cape has completed the first phase of the pilot research conducted by Rhodes University. The Municipality is also home to leaders, heroes and heroines such as AB Xuma, Walter Sisulu, Chris Hani, Clarence Makwetu, Bathandwa Ndonga, Matthew Goniwe and Lindiwe Msengana-Ndlela. The commemoration of Chris Hani's assassination was seen as a homecoming that was one of the strongest evidence and memories to form part of the Liberation Route.

The economic benefits to the country are beyond tourism attraction. It will reach local economic development at the nodal points of the route where people could start relevant businesses. Developments of infrastructure as well as visitor's centres will also be inspired by the route. Above all, it will protect South Africa's most historic liberation memories that are rooted in the hearts of the people of the continent as globally recognised heritage.

"We are assured by UNESCO's involvement in the processes of establishing this route that it will become a beacon of pride for all South Africans and the African continent. The route will inevitably draw evidence from other countries on the continent where Liberation movements were exiled. We wish this to become extended points of the route. The National Liberation Heritage Route will

also have a high educational element", says Sonwabile Mancotywa, CEO of the NHC.

Celebrating 110 years

The Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk joined various other dignitaries and more than a thousand people to celebrate the Kruger National Park's 110th Anniversary in Skukuza on 14 June 2008.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the park holds a special place in everyone's hearts and, over the last 110 years, it has become an icon for the country on many levels, including conservation, tourism and national pride," said Van Schalkwyk during his keynote address.

The minister added that Kruger proudly boasts over 1.3 million tourists for the last financial year. The magic million was first exceeded during March 2003 and has remained above one million ever since. This has proven that this is without doubt one of South Africa's top tourism destinations.

"This great icon is also not immune to the single greatest driver of biodiversity loss – climate change – which by mid-century will have a dramatic impact on key eco-systems, conservation areas, marine resources and potentially tourism. In the Kruger National Park, we could see more intense rainfall interspersed with possibly more extended dry spells, changes in the tree cover, grass production and greater competition for water with water users upstream of the park.

"We have therefore been assessing how the planning, management and expansion of our national parks can build resilience to climate change. Increasingly, we are integrating a greater variety of habitats and altitudes that reduce the risks to endemic species into our protected areas design," he added.

Termed the KNP's 110 Conservation Celebration, the event at Skukuza was the culmination of a three-week celebration that started on 26 May 2008 with events staged in the various regions of the KNP until the main event in Skukuza.

Other speakers at the event included South African National Parks (SANParks) chief executive Dr David Mabunda; KNP's managing executive Dr Bandile Mkhize; Professor Mathole Motshekga from the Kara Heritage Institute; and KNP Nxanatseni (South) Regional Ranger Mr Louis Olivier, who is the longest serving current ranger in the KNP who has 40 years' service to his credit.