



## **THE FREE STATE PUNCHING ABOVE ITS WEIGHT**

The Parys Golf and Country Estate in Parys recently had a weekend full of speed, velocity recreation and leisure. Speed junkies and engine heads came in numbers from all walks of life to witness the adrenalin rush activities making up the Phakisa Lifestyle Show featuring F1 Powerboat of the past weekend.

On its third year, this event that brings the monstrous Vaal River to life with thousands of people descending on the otherwise tranquil Country Estate has become a must see for outdoor adventurers.

With the first official Powerboat race in the Free State held on the Bloemhof Dam in 2006, the sport has grown in leaps and bounds. The F1Powerboat Racing was established in this country twenty five years ago. This is a sport of power, speed, technology, precision, close competition and adrenaline ensuring a high level of spectator and viewer participation.

This year the event featured exciting Life Style show with a mouth watering line up of activities ranging from art exhibition, wine tasting, vintage car display, Chevrolet club display, kiddies corner, beer garden and food corner and of course the air show and the helicopter rides over the venue, Parys up to Vredefort and Venterskroon where the whole of Vredefortdome could be experienced. This was a true family event never to be missed.

This two day activity started with a spectacular parade of powerboats, bikers, vintage cars Chevy road monsters like Luminus and many more, snaking its way through Tumahole Township, through the heart of Parys Dam up to the shores of the Vaal river in the Parys Golf and Country Estate. This activity attracted more than five thousand spectators from all corners of the Country.

Unable to hide her excitement about the event and its success, MEC Mamiki Qabathe said activities like these should not be seen only as sport but economic drivers using sport to promote the Free State as a tourist destination of choice. Sitting on the banks of the Vaal river, watching speed boats, experiencing the thrill and drama, says the MEC, is the best way for families to spend weekends.

The parade remains part of the MEC's innovative programme of Kasie Tourism meant to encourage people to visit the Townships and make new friends. The residents of Tumahole from the youngest family member to the grandparent came out to witness the parade that was happening right at their doorsteps and did not wait for the second invitation to pack the picnic basket and head to the river.



The special aspect of this event remains the Development Programme, with the young people from the township of Ngwathe having recently participated in the World Series held in Ternopil in the Ukraine. Speaking passionately about these young people the Mayor of Ngwathe Clr Joey Mochela says these are the future of South African Powerboat Racing.

The Free State already boasts of 22 year old Wynand de Jager who races the Phakisa Power Boat and is already making waves in the sport. The water activities included, the development class, juniors A and B classes, Formula 30, Inflatable's, Leisure boats and of course the F1 Powerboats.

The raw power of the V8 engines get the heart racing with speed of up to 200km/h. This is surely not for the faint hearted. The Premier, MECs Qabathe, Mohai, Zwane and Mabe were taken for a spin and people seem to have heard some of them screaming for their close protectors thinking that, the end is near.

The Phakisa Lifestyle Show was certainly a speed's fanatic day and for those who enjoy spending time with their families and friends. With the added lifestyle twist to it, the event has certainly grown bigger to attract a much broader audience.

Accommodation facilities in Parys were indicated to be fully booked just from this single weekend. The annual event indeed showed promise to grow and attract tourists into Parys and the greater Free State. The Highlight of the 2012 F1 Powerboat was the announcement that the Free State will host the 2013 F2 World Championship. Watch this space for details.