



MEDIA STATEMENT

HONOURING SERVICE EXCELLENCE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

27 SEPTEMBER 2019

“Honouring the best of the best in South Africa” was the theme that collaborated very well with tourism products finalists and winners of the 2019 Lilizela Tourism Awards efforts of providing the best service to travellers. In its 7th year running, the premier awards ceremony that recognises service excellence in the tourism industry was held on the 26th September 2019 at a black owned lodge, Imvelo Safari just outside Bloemfontein.

Tourism is the new gold, it is a sector that is thriving and has tremendous potential for further growth, and more particularly for job creation. With programmes like Lilizela Awards, government intends to recognize and celebrate tourism businesses for tourism excellence, for their contribution to South Africa’s global competitiveness, and for growing tourism’s contribution towards GDP and job creation.

This year, 55 products from the province had entered for the awards and 23 winners were announced. The winners were from different categories which included lodges, guest houses, country houses, roots and culture, hotels, auction and adventure. The competitors was divided into three categories, namely The MEC’s Award, Service Excellence, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Development. The winners include:

NAME OF ESTABLISHMENT	CATEGORY	STATUS
Dithabeng Tours	MEC Award	Winner
Gariiep A Forever Resort Conference Centre	Conference centre	Winner
Mont d’ Or Hotel	In-hotel conference centre	Winner
Clarens Xtreme Adventures	Action and adventure	Winner
Skydive Parys	Action and adventure	Finalist
Basotho cultural village	Roots and culture	Finalist
Gariiep A Forever Resort Chalets	Self-catering shared vacation	Winner
Bethesda Exclusive Accommodation	Self-catering exclusive	Winner
Monte Bello lodge	Country house	Winner
Letsatsi game lodge	Game lodge	Winner
Allegro guest house	Guest house	Winner
Kamohelong luxury accommodation	Guest house	Winner
Two Bells guest house	Guest house	Finalist

Castello guest house	Guest house	Finalist
Monte Bello lodge	Lodge	Winner
Lions Rest Country Estate	Lodge	Winner
Protea Hotel by Marriot Clarens	Hotel	Winner
Anta Boga Hotel	Hotel	Winner
City Lodge Bloemfontein	Hotel	Winner
Road Lodge Bloemfontein	Hotel	Winner
City Living Boutique Hotel	Hotel	Finalist

The prices were as follows:

- A trophy and certificate
- Winners for tourist guiding received a certificate and recognition badge
- Finalists received certificates and
- MEC Award winner received R20 000.00

Congratulating and giving advice to the finalists and winners, MEC for DESTEA Makalo Mohale said “people who visit our province should experience hospitality, friendly service and professionalism, above all they should experience value for money, quality night sleep, cleanness, quality of our food, gushing rivers, singing birds and enjoy sitting around the fire, and enjoy the open sky”.

To show the seriousness of the department to develop and improve the tourism sector, MEC mentioned the interventions to ensure this which includes, setting up of Free State Tourism Council where the MEC will engage with municipalities and all role players to see what could be done to ensure that Free State improves visitor experience and achieves its mandate to be the destination of choice. Similarly, the HOD is heading the FS Tourism Forum where he is engaging with MMs, LED Managers, officials as well as other tourism practitioners.

Speaking to the emotional winner in the category of MEC’s Award Mr. Joseph Rantseke of Dithabeng Tours, he said that he has been in the tourism industry since 2002 and he has never received such an award. “I was emotional when receiving the award because in the 17 years of being a tour guide and an environmental educator, it has been nothing but dedication, passion and commitment to the work that I do, and today my work has been recognised” he explained.

With the money that he had won, Ntate Rantseke mentioned that he is going to invest back into business. His future plan is to expand his tour guiding business to Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique.

The winners of Lilizela will compete with other provinces during the national competition which will take place on October 2019.

End!!!

Issued by the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs

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