

Restored Angolan locomotive to be unveiled at heritage festival

On 1 April, Josefina Pitra Diakite, the Angolan ambassador to South Africa, will open the Stars of Sandstone 2017 Steam and Heritage Festival in the Eastern Free-State and officiate at a naming ceremony where one of the seven authentically restored Angolan narrow gauge steam locomotives dating back to the early part of the last century, will be named after her, Josefina.



Stars 2015 David Benn afternoon train climbing to Mboihook

The occasion will commemorate a historical collaboration between the Angolan authorities and the Sandstone Heritage Trust, whereby nearly three months were spent during 2002 evaluating the number of heritage two-ft narrow gauge locomotives which survived the Angolan hostilities, which ended with the death of Jonas Savimbi of UNITA that year.

Several locomotives were found to be intact near a number of sugar mills in Angola, resulting in seven of these relics being restored by the Sandstone Heritage Trust, which has, after many years of commitment to this milestone project, completed the task and now unveiling the authentically restored locomotives, some complete with their original nameplates.

The Sandstone Heritage Trust will release these steam locomotives, originally ordered from the manufacturers in mostly O&K (Orenstein & Koppel) in Germany and Decauville in France, for use should Angola rebuild its heritage railways. All costs relating to the recovery, transportation, and restoration of the locomotives were absorbed by the Sandstone Heritage Trust in this bilateral agreement between Sandstone and Angola.

The Stars of Sandstone Steam and Heritage Festival

Launched in 1999, the Stars of Sandstone Steam and Heritage Festival takes place in the picturesque Eastern Free-State of South Africa from 30 March to 9 April 2017.

The award-winning Sandstone Estates will provide world-class entertainment for all ages, with vistas of the magnificent Maluti Mountains, cosmos flowers as far as the eye can see, 30km of private railway track, with steam trains, military vehicles, trek oxen, tractors, vintage vehicles and classic aircraft to provide fun for local as well as international visitors.

Described as probably the most diverse and spectacular steam and heritage event in the world, the Sandstone Heritage Trust endeavours to save, restore and utilise heritage assets across a broad spectrum to live up to its motto of: "Saving the best of the past for the future."

The directors' efforts have been recognised with the 2016 Business of the Year Gold Winner for Tourism award in the annual ROCCI/FNB Business Awards in November 2016.

Register to attend the [Stars 2017](#) event.

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