

Welcome Awards winners announced

The 2009/10 Welcome Awards winners, which represent the pinnacle of service excellence in the tourism industry, were announced earlier this week at an award ceremony at Indaba at the Durban ICC.

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Thokozile Xasa, keynote speaker at the awards evening, congratulated winners on their dedication to making service delivery a top priority, as this has a direct impact on South Africa's reputation to deliver a world-class tourism experience.

The winners were praised for raising the bar of service delivery, providing visitors with excellent service to entice them to come back and visit. Their products and services were innovative, met and went beyond visitors expectations and inculcated a culture of a great hosting nation.

Of great importance when judged, was the overall impression they portrayed of a consistently high standard and that they demonstrated professionalism in their approach to customer service.

The winners

1. Accommodation - Cape Grace, Western Cape
2. Tour Operators - Edge of Africa, Western Cape
3. Tourist Attraction - Vergelegen Wines, Western Cape
4. Restaurants - School of Tourism & Hospitality, Gauteng
5. Parks - Kapama Private Game Reserve, Gauteng
6. Travel Agencies - Flight Centre Gateway, KwaZulu-Natal
7. MESE (MICE) - South African Reserve Bank Conference Centre, Gauteng
8. Tourist Guides - Collen Sibuyi, Mpumalanga
9. Online (Best website) - City Lodge Hotels, Gauteng

Pieter de Bruin, head of the Tourism Division at FNB Commercial, said: "The quality of winners this year truly reflects service excellence. We are inspired by their commitment, passion and hard work to create authentic South African experiences that showcase our diversity, richness and cultural heritage.

"It is of vital importance that the industry strives for service excellence to ignite and encapsulate a welcoming spirit with only month to go to the World Cup. We want visitors to remember us as a warm hospitable nation so that they go home, ambassadors for South Africa," he concluded.

The Welcome Awards entries for 2010/11 will open in July 2010.

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