

Paarl Web launches in Gauteng

A BEE partnership between the investment arm of South Africa's national HIV-prevention organisation loveLife's Kurisani Investments and the Paarl Media Group has seen the launch of Paarl Web Gauteng.

The Paarl Media Group has made a R17 million commitment over the next five years to provide a comprehensive training programme for the industry, which was approved by the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) Strategic Industrial Participation Projects.

The investment is made into industry training currently provided by the Printing Industries Federation of Southern Africa's (PIFSA) Cross Media Training Centres in Honeydew and Cape Town, as well as general lifeskills training through loveLife.

In what is a first for the commercial printing world of South Africa, a brand new MAN Roland Lithoman IV was installed at the plant. This 48-page press can deliver 45 000 copies per hour, which is the equivalent of three conventional 16-page web presses or two 24-page presses.

This means that 25 products of 24 pages each can be produced, glued, folded, trimmed and be ready to dispatch every second. In addition, a new MAN Roland Rotoman 16-page press with a print speed of 65 000 impressions per hour was also installed in phase one of the new 16 000m² plant.

CEO Stephen van der Walt says: "The two web presses were custom manufactured at MAN Roland in Germany. They are both fully commercial and suited to all formats, offering inline finishing and high tech automatic control systems to ensure the quality of the ink, colour and registration remains consistent.

"The plant has adequate space to accommodate three additional presses, which due to careful planning can be installed in future with minimum disruption to the workflow. Naturally, the pre-press department will operate fully digital (computer to plate) and initially, the bindery is fitted with two Prima Plus saddle stitching machines amongst other finishing equipment."

With the printing contract for loveLife's monthly magazine, Uncut, in the bag, De Milander is confident that the plant will be able to serve the needs of especially the Paarl Media Group's Gauteng clients and clients in the northern parts of South Africa: "Our new presses operate at a production speed not previously available in South Africa, which will benefit our clients. In addition, these presses are flexible and offer a variety of formats. The print quality is excellent - this is particularly where we aim to differentiate ourselves in the market."

Gary Catterick, CEO of loveLife's Kurisani Investments, says: "Kurisani Investments obtained our 26% stake in Paarl Web Gauteng to generate a sustained flow of income for loveLife through sharing in the printers' profits. We can leverage solid support for Paarl Web Gauteng from our corporate partners and we indirectly benefit as any profits made are shared between Paarl Media Group and Kurisani Investments.

"Our shareholding in the printing plant is our biggest investment to date. We are very excited about it, as loveLife is not only set to benefit from the deal financially, but it could also lead to new employment and

training opportunities for the youth involved in loveLife."

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