



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Minister Van Schalkwyk launches Sommelier Training Programme

12 November 2012

Just like the French terms *maître d'hotél*, *concierge* and *pâtissier*, the term *sommelier* will also soon become an established part of the South African hospitality industry. Also known as 'wine stewarding', it is a much sought-after skill in the culinary world. Following the successful launch and implementation of the National Department of Tourism's Youth Chef training programme, the Department took the initiative also to include sommelier training for young people which was launched at the La Motte Vineyards in Franschoek this morning. After all, the saying goes: "Good food deserves good wine."

Sommelier skills have been identified as a scarce skill in South Africa. In efforts to address this skills shortage, the National Department of Tourism invested an amount of R11 million to present a 12-month training programme to 200 unemployed youth between the ages of 18 to 34, in partnership with the Cape Wine Academy.

"I am also delighted to note that the Cape Wine Academy has signed up some of the best hospitality lecturers, including Cape Wine Masters Lizette Tolken and Derek Ramsden, to ensure that the students get the best education to enable them to compete professionally anywhere in South Africa and the world," says Minister of Tourism Marthinus van Schalkwyk.

The sommelier programme forms part of the broader perspective of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS), which addresses the need for job creation and economic growth, as outlined in government's New Growth Path. The Department of Tourism is committed, through its Social Responsibility Implementation programme, to facilitate the development of skills and encourage a supply of skilled manpower that will benefit the local hospitality industry.

The 12-month training programme incorporates four six-week practical work segments in the wine industry. For the first practical, which has now been completed, distributors and wholesalers such as Distell, Meridian and DGB, Vinimark, Smollens, Liquidity, Panniers, Wine Logistics, Swirls, NixAn Wines, Nicholson Smith, International Wines, together with Beyerskloof, Delheim, Simonsig, Vergelegen and Spier, all took in learners. These practicals will also include front-of-house training in restaurants, retail outlets and hotels such as Southern Sun, Ultra Liquors, Spar, Shoprite Checkers, The Butcher Shop & Grill and The Baron Group.

Minister Van Schalkwyk appealed to the private sector to support and enhance the programmes of the Department, and thanked them for the important role they have played in the development and promotion of tourism.

“It is well known that the private sector bears the major risks of tourism investment, as well as a large part of the responsibility to satisfy tourists. Through its training programmes, government is committed to encouraging the further growth, development and profitability of the tourism private sector by providing already-trained staff, such as these sommeliers, who are immediately able to fulfil a productive role in the hospitality sector,” the Minister concluded.

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Issued by The Department of Tourism