



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Tourism Excellence Celebrated at the 7th Annual Lilizela Tourism Awards

09 November 2019

JOHANNESBURG: The annual Lilizela Tourism Awards took place on Saturday, 09 November 2019, honouring excellence in South Africa's tourism and hospitality industry - which drives the industry to levels of greatness through providing the highest standards of service excellence.

A cross-section of South African tourism accommodation establishments, visitor experiences, tour operators, tour guides, emerging entrepreneurs were celebrated alongside several industry luminaries, during an awards ceremony that saw performances by the likes of Sibongle Khumalo and The Ndlovu Youth Choir.

Tourism Minister, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane paid special tribute to South Africa's outstanding tourism businesses, some of which have been beneficiaries of the National Department of Tourism's market access and enterprise development programmes.

"Thank you to the men and women who, in their area of work, go an extra mile to ensure that tourists that travel to our country enjoy a memorable experience. Providing real authentic experiences to tourists is what will sustain and grow our tourism sector. All of us should do this cognisant of the fact that tourists have no obligation to choose South Africa as a tourist destination," she said.

"Tourism is a very competitive sector and demands from all of us to offer tourists a distinct, authentically South African and memorable experience so that they can return to our country again and again, or even better entice others to come along with them in their subsequent visits. As we cast our eyes into the future, we must continue to ensure that we transform our sector inclusively and to showcase more authentic and uniquely South African experiences," she said.

This year's awards coincide with South Africa's 25 years of democracy commemorations and honoured the tourism excellence born as a result of this phenomenal history. In support of Government's efforts to promote sustainable tourism and youth employment, a Sustainability Village showcased SA's arts and craft.

The Minister and other special guests toured the Sustainable Village curated space for selected black-owned businesses to market their products at the venue, all of which are proudly made in South Africa. Many of their products are also inspired by South African culture and heritage, and are beautifully handcrafted using sustainable materials which is why we are proud to support this initiative. In total, 66 awards under eight categories were handed out to deserving recipients.

In an effort to recognise the wider tourism industry, nine new award sub-categories have been introduced.

These are:

- In-hotel conference centre
- Events venue
- Function venue

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- Conference Centre
- Convention & exhibition centre
- Meetings, exhibitions and special events
- Apartment hotel
- Boutique Hotel
- Small Hotel

Bheki Dube of Curiosity Backpackers was awarded the prestigious “I Do Tourism” award. Introduced in 2018, this award recognises proudly South African organisations or individuals who, through sheer dedication and passion, have excelled in positioning the country as a tourism destination of choice, contributing to the vibrancy and growth of the sector.

Established in 2013, the Lilizela Tourism Awards are an initiative of the National Department of Tourism and are spearheaded by South African Tourism. The awards recognise and reward exemplary service among businesses in the local tourism sector, ranging from accommodation establishments and tour operators to scenic attractions and cultural heritage sites. The Lilizela Tourism Awards are adjudicated through public votes and by a panel of industry judges, and are audited by Nexia SAB&T.

Entry to the Lilizela National Tourism Awards is free and tourism businesses of all sizes are encouraged to enter in a bid to help develop, grow and transform the industry while celebrating its achievements. For a full list of the 2019 Lilizela Tourism Award winners, visit www.lilizela.co.za.

To receive regular updates, like the Lilizela Tourism Awards Facebook page or follow @Lilizela_Awards on Twitter.

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