

Accolades galore for Cape Town

The recent raft of international accolades and awards has highlighted Cape Town's position as one of the world's iconic cities, and justifies its global ranking as the top tourist destination in 2014.



Image: www.travelstart.co.za

In addition to being voted as the World Design Capital in 2014 and being acknowledged by both the New York Times and Britain's The Guardian as the top holiday destination this year, Cape Town has also been recognised as the premier destination in 2014 on the Conde Nast Traveller Gold List and achieved second and third position in the Travel and Leisure list and the Lonely Planet Guide, respectively. Cape Town is also garnering high praise from the Far East, where two top Chinese publications, Voyage and MICE China Magazine voted the city as the Best International Destination of the year 2013 and the Best Luxury Travel Destination 2013, respectively.

The positive attention from some of the world's top publications has put Cape Town in the international focus as a top destination and bodes very well for the city's tourist sector in 2014. "Last year marked a welcome increase from 2012 in the number of local and international tourists who visited Cape Town, and all performance indicators from last November and December point towards a record summer season in 2014," commented Michael Pownall, GM of Taj Cape Town.

New record for the Cableway

Enver Duminy, CEO of Cape Town Tourism, concurred: "Many tourism businesses indicated a definite increase compared with December 2012." Cape Town's signature attraction, The Table Mountain Aerial Cableway reported a new record for December with 120 318 visitors making the leisurely summit, while accommodation establishments saw a growth in occupancy of 5.2% in November and 2.6% in December across the board.

"Our city is already the most visited destination in Africa and boasts a number of the country's top tourist destinations, many within walking distance from the Taj Cape Town," remarked Pownall, who is delighted that the city is enjoying the glow of the international spotlight. "I am particularly impressed with the well-planned festive events that the city rolled out, such as the New Year's Celebration on the Grand Parade, which attracted over 80 000 revellers, thereby proving that the gentrification of the city centre is a great success story."

It may be no secret that Cape Town is spoilt with an abundance of natural beauty but many of the city's top attractions are found away from the gorgeous beaches and mountainous skyline. "In order to take advantage of Taj Cape Town's unrivalled position in the heart of city, the hotel has been exceptionally busy planning new activities and unique tours for our guests that showcase the best that Cape Town has to offer," remarked Pownall. "Walking tours to all the nearby attractions are proving especially popular with our guests; in particular, the Prisoner to President Tour, which traces Nelson Mandela's journey from incarceration on Robben Island to the country's highest office, has become one of the hotel's signature offerings."

High-profile branding opportunity

Pownall believes that Cape Town's tenure as the World Design Capital in 2014 has strongly contributed towards the city securing the top positions on five prestigious travel lists. "There are over 460 urban design projects in and around Cape Town, which have been commissioned specifically to entrench the city's position as the design and creative hub of the continent. Cape Town competed against the likes of Dublin in Ireland and Bilbao in Spain for the 2014 honours and can be tremendously proud of this high-profile branding opportunity for the city."

During Cape Town's tenure as World Design Capital, the city and her residents have the responsibility to champion individuals, communities and companies who use the language of design to create solutions for the many challenges faced by cities today. Alderman Patricia de Lille, Executive Mayor of Cape Town commented: "In 2014, we will channel that energy into a series of events that celebrate design as a driver of social and economic change in the urban environment."

According to Pownall it is very difficult to single out just one of Cape Town's many unique attractions. "As one of the seven new wonders of the world, it is impossible not to be awed by Table Mountain's impressive profile, but there are numerous other unique experiences and cultural attractions in the city centre and surrounds that validate Cape Town's position as 2014's must-see destination."

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