

# Art students honoured by Hotel Verde

Dr Ivan Meyer, Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, along with 250 guests, attended the recent Hotel Verde Art Project Awards Ceremony at the newly opened, Africa's Greenest Hotel.

Students from Wynberg High, Cedar High, Isilemela High and Alexander Sinton High School were awarded certificates and prizes in recognition for their contribution, hard work and initiative shown throughout the year-long project.

Addressing the audience and eager school children, Dr Meyer said "The partnership with the Frank Joubert Art Centre and the Ibhabhathane Project speaks of a hotel group that understands the importance of sustainability not only as it relates to technology but also people and more importantly the youth".

The project, initiated and funded by the hotel owners, Annemarie and Mario Delicio, enabled Grade 11 art students to decorate the walls of Hotel Verde. Annemarie Delicio's passion for art and social upliftment is what initiated the project.

She says, "Our thought behind this project was to help these students, who have limited, if any, access to art studies at their schools, by giving them the best tools, teachers and facilities available to do what they love and what they are good at."

The project was facilitated by the Frank Joubert Art Centre in Newlands, Cape Town. Director Liesl Hartman explains, "This real life project has been extremely beneficial for the learners, not only have they researched environmental issues within their own neighbourhood, but they have also learnt how to produce work for a real client."

Driven by Niklas Zimmer, art consultant to Hotel Verde and masters graduate of the Michaelis School of Fine Art (UCT), 45 Grade 11 learners from four schools within Cape Town were selected and taken through the Frank Joubert Art Centre Programme. In keeping with the owners "green" vision, the learners were tasked with researching environmental responsibility and conceptualising and producing artworks to illustrate their research in a variety of media.

"The progress and dedication has been amazing", says Zimmer. "We started with 21 schools and narrowed it down to four, from which we selected 45 students - these students have at times worked 18 hours non-stop on their art pieces."

The learners finished artworks were then taken to local, specialist crafters, who, according to Zimmer, "took the children's works so seriously and dedicated up to three months to turn the works into various final pieces ranging from mosaics to woven and beaded pieces which now adorn the passages of the hotel. A testimony to remind us that art lives and works in this world."

Guy Stehlik, founder of BON Hotels, who manages and operates Hotel Verde, has embraced the project and believes that "creative ways for BON Hotels to collaborate with their immediate and broader community is an essential part of what we do

daily and what we stand for: Good people. Good thinking. Good feeling."

Stehlik says that the Delicio family has incorporated their vision for the hotel into education, and with the assistance of Frank Joubert Art Centre and Niklas Zimmer, they have successfully realised a meaningful art project.

The artwork that adorns Hotel Verde's passageways provides a legacy for generations to come, comments Mario Delicio, "We love art and our hotel will always remain a home for local talent!"

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