

# Hospitality industry coins it

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As the last of the festive season holiday-makers left Durban and Cape Town, the hospitality industry was left with heavy pockets.

## Peak season

In what has been described as one of the busiest festive seasons in years, holiday-makers spent at least R2-billion in KwaZulu-Natal coastal city since the start of December.

"That is an achievement because that amount was spent by South African tourists from around the country," said Durban tourism head Philip Sithole.

"It shows that Durban has managed to attract a large number of tourists because it can offer an all-in-one package of beaches, shopping malls, stadium precincts and other facilities at the lowest prices in South Africa."

He said most hotels and B&Bs were 95% booked.

"I wouldn't say it makes up for their losses during the soccer World Cup, when profits did not meet hotel owners' expectations, but they do have something to smile about because this festive season was busy," said Sithole.

"The World Cup put Durban on the map."

## High occupancy

Warren Ozard, East Coast operations manager for the Federated Hospitality Association, said hotel owners expected mass cancellations at the start of a six-day rainy spell but were relieved when holiday-makers continued to flock to Durban.

"Accommodation owners are happy," he said.

The general manager of the Southern Sun Elangeni hotel, Mike Jackson, said all five Southern Sun hotels in Durban had "extremely high" occupancy rates during the festive season.

"It's been a better season than the past few years and that has a lot to do with the revamped beach-front promenade," he said.

"Word got out, and it attracted the leisure market so we had rooms filled from December right up to the first 10 days of 2011."

## **CT tourism up**

Bitterly cold weather might have kept European tourists away from Cape Town, and its gusty winds forced holiday-makers indoors, but tourism in the city increased by 3%.

According to the CEO of Cape Town Routes Unlimited, Calvyn Gilfellan, the slow start gained pace during the second week of December.

"There was an increase in tourist numbers," he said.

At the launch of its summer holiday programme, the Cape Town tourism authority was "worried" when hotel and B&B owners reported room occupancy rates of less than 50%.

"But the rate picked up to 65%. We were happy with that because a lot of tourists stay with friends and family," Gilfellan said.

*Source: The Times*

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