

## 2015 Business Traveller Africa Awards winners announced

SAA, Emirates, Tsogo Sun, HRG Rennies Travel and Avis were the big winners at the fourth annual Business Traveller Africa Conference & Awards, held in association with Absa at the Maslow Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg.



Both SAA and Emirates were 'double' winners, with SAA picking up the top award in the 'Best African Regional Short-Haul Airline' and 'Best African Long-Haul Airline' categories, whilst it lost out in the 'Best Business Class' category to Middle Eastern airline Emirates, which also picked up the 'Best International Long-Haul Airline' prize.

In the main hotel category, the 'Best South African Hotel Group' award went the way of Tsogo Sun, as it has done in the past three years, ahead of fellow nominees City Lodge, Legacy Hotels & Resorts, and Sun International. Protea Hotels has traditionally been a nominee in this category, but since the Marriott International acquisition of Protea Hotels in 2014, the group has since become a brand of Marriott. As a result, it was Marriott who walked away with the 'Best International Hotel Group' award, thanks in large to its significant South African presence through Protea.

Another repeat winner was HRG Rennies Travel, which edged out American Express Travel Services, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, and Travel with Flair in the 'Best Travel Management Company' category.

Avis also successfully defended its 'Best Car Rental Company' title, holding off the challenge of Bidvest Car Rental, Europcar, First, Hertz and Thrifty.

This year saw one new category being contested - 'Best African Low-Cost Airline' - with Comair's Kulula the inaugural winner in this category, ahead of Fastjet, FlyAfrica, FlySafair, and Mango.

As in previous years, the Business Traveller Africa Conference & Awards handed out the 'Business Travel Personality of the Year'. The 2015 recipients - in a joint award - are the Association of Southern African Travel Agents (ASATA) CEO Otto de Vries and the Southern African Tourism Services Association (SATSA) CEO David Frost, for the tireless work they've done in challenging the changes to South Africa's immigration regulations on behalf of their members and the broader

industry.

Frost took part in one of two business travel-related panel discussions at the event, with his discussion looking specifically at the industry implications of the changes to this immigration legislation. The other took the form of the event's first ever 'corporate travel buyer roundtable', and the audience was able to gain some useful insight into this element of South African business travel.

The 2015 Business Traveller Africa Conference & Awards also featured an opening address from South Africa's Minister of Tourism Derek Hanekom, and a keynote speech from Mavuso Msimang, the Chairman of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa.

The Business Traveller Africa Conference & Awards was hosted by Times Media Events and Business Traveller Africa magazine - in association with headline sponsor Absa and corporate partners ABTA (African Business Travel Association), Air France-KLM, ASATA, British Airways, ExecuJet Africa, Kerzner International, Thebe Reed Exhibitions, and Travelport.

Launched in 2012 in association with Business Traveller Africa magazine, the awards ceremony is an event for the South African business travel trade, covering all aspects of business travel, including hotels, airlines, car rental and travel management, along with related categories such as travel credit card provider, foreign exchange, visas, private aviation and conferencing.

## **And the winners are...**

**African Long-Haul Airline:** SAA

**African Low-Cost Airline:** Kulula

**African Regional Short-Haul Airline:** SAA

**Airport Business Lounge:** Virgin Atlantic (ORTIA - International)

**Business Class:** Emirates (winner)

**Business Hotel in SA:** The Maslow Hotel

**Car Rental Company:** Avis

**Forex Supplier:** American Express Foreign Exchange

**Global Distribution System:** Travelport

**International Hotel Group:** Marriott

**International Long-Haul Airline:** Emirates

**Large Conference Venue:** Sandton Convention Centre

**Luxury Hotel in SA:** One&Only Cape Town

**Private Aviation Operator:** ExecuJet

**Small Conference Venue:** Fairway Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort

**South African Hotel Group:** Tsogo Sun

**Travel Credit Card Provider:** Diners Club

**Travel Management Company:** HRG Rennies Travel

**Travel Sales Team:** Corporate Traveller

**Visa Service Provider:** Blade Express

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>