

Finalists set for glory at national Lilizela Tourism Awards

The fifth edition of the national Lilizela Tourism Awards, organised by South African tourism, takes place on 29 October 2017 at the Sandton Convention Centre to honour the best-of-the-best among business owners, contractors and professionals working in the South African tourism and hospitality industry.

“Not only do all these incredible industry leaders do a sterling job in contributing towards making South Africa a competitive tourism destination, they also contribute to the We Do Tourism initiative, which is an inspiring movement that encourages all South Africans to actively play a role in tourism,” says Tokozile Xasa, national minister of tourism who will lead the toast to service excellence.

Nationwide finalist selection

Over 500 finalists were selected nationwide from more than 1,600 entries, after which provincial winners in the various categories were named to compete in the national finals. Of the total vote, 80% came from members of the public, as well as travel platforms such as TripAdvisor and TGCSA’s Tourism Analytics Programme. The remaining 20% was a score from a panel of high-level judges, whose voting was conducted under the strict supervision of Grant Thornton, director of Oupa Mbokodo, to ensure compliance.

“Based upon the work performed and the results obtained, we can conclude that the judging process of the 2017 Lilizela Tourism Awards was fair and transparent,” confirmed Thornton.



Lilizela Tourism Awards provincial trophies

One of the most exciting categories of Lilizela Tourism Awards is the Emerging Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award (EYETA), which seeks to recognise and motivate black entrepreneurs who operate small, micro and medium tourism- or hospitality-related businesses.

Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, explains the significance of this category tailored specifically for SMMEs: “South African Tourism is committed to partnering with established players in the industry to help achieve inclusive growth while aiding new players to grow.

The significance of transforming the tourism industry cannot be understated, as it has huge potential to become a meaningful job creator for our people and a revenue generator for our economy. It is also vital for South Africa to keep innovating and refreshing our tourism offering to remain globally competitive. EYETA helps motivate and incentivise outstanding tourism start-ups to continue on their path of achievement and excellence.”

Here are some of the hidden gems that captured judges and members of the voting public alike to win the EYETA category in the provincial leg of the Lilizela Tourism Awards. Many of them were featured at Africa’s Travel Indaba in May:

The Workshop ko Kasi, Northern Cape

Ecotourism in the township at its best - that is what is in store for guests at [Workshop ko Kasi The Workshop ko Kasi in Kuruman](#). Built from recycled and natural materials such as pallets, soil, stones, rocks, grass and old tyres, this township café promises the best of local flavours. The venue also offers an African spa, cultural tours on donkey carts, and occasional events such as pop-up markets, poetry and storytelling sessions.

Mthombo’s Place, Eastern Cape

Experience Mdantsane’s finest luxury lounge bar and restaurant, where every element has been carefully selected to be at the forefront of contemporary design and style. During the day, Mthombo’s Place provides an intimate and [relaxed eating space in the luxurious Restro Lounge Bar](#).

Fly SA Wise, Gauteng

Based in the famous Vilakazi Street in Orlando West, Soweto, [Fly SA Wise flies clients around Soweto, Johannesburg and Pretoria using helicopters or fixed-wing aircraft](#). Its services include day charters, scenic flips, corporate events, weddings and special events, aerial photography and cinematography and customised sightseeing. The brainchild of Soweto local Wiseman Ntombela, the company also introduces township learners to careers in aviation, such as piloting helicopters and aeroplanes and cabin crew training.

Ezulwini Guesthouse, KwaZulu-Natal

Situated in Ballito, Hildah Sibanyoni’s Ezulwini is a modern-chic decorated guesthouse with a bit of African flair. It’s situated close to King Shaka International Airport and only few minutes away from the golden North Coast beaches. Visitors can enjoy a memorable stay in six individually decorated rooms, unwind next to the pool and bask in the balmy KwaZulu-Natal climate.

Lapologa Bed & Breakfast, Limpopo

This Tzaneen accommodation establishment offers nine beautifully decorated rooms, each with its own character and atmosphere. Granny Matsaung’s bed and breakfast is perfect for both leisure and business travellers. Rooms are decorated and furnished to suit a variety of guests’ needs and to offer every comfort.

Lowveld Extreme Adventures, Mpumalanga

This [adventure tourism company](#), located near Hazyview, offers activities to tourists, couples, school groups and corporates seeking team-building exercises. It is strategically placed to offer quality and memorable adventures near the area's tourist attractions such as the Kruger National Park. Among the activities offered are tubing, abseiling, hiking trails, teambuilding (outdoor creative games), game drives and site visits, as well as helping to arrange transport and accommodation.

Afrovibe Experiences, Western Cape

Afrovibe Adventure Lodge and Afroville Beach House provide the perfect base from which to explore the Garden Route's attractions. Situated metres away from the beach in the seaside village of Sedgefield, Afroville offers both "mild and wild", where adventure junkies can immerse themselves in kite surfing, paragliding, surfing, SUPing (stand-up paddling), canoeing, hiking and mountain biking.

[Click through to view the full list](#) of Lilizela Tourism Awards' provincial winners.

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