

Behind the scenes of SA's top festivals with Steyn Entertainment

By  Ruth Cooper

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Last year, events company Steyn Entertainment took on the daunting task of managing Rocking the Daisies. We got in touch with Steyn Entertainment director George Avakian to go behind the scenes of what it takes to successfully manage one of South Africa's biggest and most popular music fests for #EntrepreneurMonth.



George Avakian and Dale de Ruig

▣ What were the main reasons for uniting both Rocking the Daisies and Oppikoppi?

The collaboration was born due to the fact that international artists coming into the territory take a minimum of two shows if they have to travel this far. We knew it would set a great example for the industry seeing two of the biggest festivals collaborating on this scale.



Steyn Entertainment buys Rocking The Daisies and In The City

19 Apr 2016



▣ What were the challenges on simultaneously working on two such major events?

Both events are highly technical when it comes to the logistics, luckily with all the industry experience between the two festivals; we were able to knock it out the park. We had an incredible experience working with the Oppi team.

▣ *What have been the major initiatives and changes you have made to the festival set-up since coming on board?*

In terms of entertainment, we focused our energy on the four main stages that pull audiences at a festival - main stage, hip-hop, beach bar and electronic dome - each stage was carefully designed and fabricated with the leading industry specialists.

This year, we introduced two new stages - the Marabi club experience, hosted by the hottest jazz offering in the country and the psychedelic lick which had queues of people lining up to get in and the karaoke bar - which gave festivals goers their own opportunity to headline a stage.

Instead of having two campsite stages, we brought the festival to the main stage on Thursday and threw an opening party. Waste management was done in-house; we built a grey water filtration system and offset our carbon footprint like never before!

▣ ***What has been your social media strategy?***

We took a different approach this year, making sure we didn't bombard people with unnecessary information. We introduced new social media tools that had never been used before in the entertainment space.

▣ ***How do you plan to turn the festivals into events with more international pull?***

We are a destination the world is very interested in visiting; all we need to do is make sure we are a well-polished product with a world-class offering. There is no marketing that can compete with someone giving you a recommendation. Once I am confident we are ready, I will be knocking down every door in tourism demanding their assistance.



▣ ***What's next for Steyn Entertainment?***

Making Rocking the Daisies the best festival in the world.

▣ ***What advice would you give to other young entrepreneurs wanting to make a name for themselves in the music or events industry?***

Start small; build your way up, one step at a time. Listen to people's opinions but ALWAYS follow your gut, remember that the most important part of your business is the product/offering; everything else is built around that. Remember that everything in this life is relative to time, don't waste it, and be courageous.

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ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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