

## Spier's ethical business approach wins gold

The 2020 Inspirational Africa Responsible Tourism Awards has awarded Spier Wine Farm Gold in its Responsible Business category for its commitment to ethical business.

The awards evaluated previous winners in the WTM Africa Responsible Tourism Awards and those for Africa who won Gold in the World Responsible Tourism Awards at WTM London over the last five years (2015-2019) to identify the best of the best.



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For the Responsible Business category, the judges looked for businesses operating in Africa which have taken responsibility to make tourism better across their business. Spier, which won Gold in the Accommodation for Responsible Employment category in the Africa Awards in 2016, was awarded Gold again at the Inspirational Africa Responsible Tourism Awards in recognition of the farm's "transparent reporting and the breadth of their approach to improving the employment conditions of their staff".

The judges recognised Growing for Good, a range of initiatives that Spier supports, empowering communities to make positive social and environmental change. **Among the Spier Growing for Good initiatives the judges highlighted are:**

- Learning Spend: each employee receives money to spend on their personal development. The stipend can be spent on anything that will empower their staff with skills and knowledge, boost health and wellbeing, foster financial wellness or enhance self-awareness and self-knowledge. Some staff members use this money to help pay for their children's school fees.

- Treepreneurs in some of the Cape's poorest communities have been taught how to care for indigenous trees and plants. They are given seedlings to nurture; once these have reached 30cm, they are exchanged for vouchers for food, clothing, agricultural goods, tools, bicycles and educational support. In partnership with Wildlands NGO, Spier launched the programme in Western Cape with land on the farm, free electricity and water and the support of Lesley Joemat, a Spier employee.

Now celebrating 10 years, the project has contributed to improving the lives of 259 Treepreneurs in 12 communities through bartering almost a million trees. These have been donated to schools, NGOs, churches and rehabilitation programmes.

- Spier supports the primary school in Lynedoch Eco-village, by sponsoring a multidisciplinary team of Community Keepers who offer psychological and social services. These include counselling, therapy, assessments, as well as life skills programmes and parenting workshops.

- The Spier Arts Academy offers 25 successful applicants employment-based training in professional mosaic as an art medium in a full-time 18 month learnership, followed by an 18 month apprenticeship that offers tuition in drawing, art history, an accredited business curriculum and applied practical experience in mosaic making.

- The Creative Block project invites artists to transform blocks in any medium they choose. The best are purchased immediately for resale, enabling artists to earn an immediate income and to break out into new artistic territories.

- Spier recruits entry-level staff through Harambee, an initiative which sources, trains and places unemployed young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into their first jobs.

- Every new employee participates in a training course to explore environmental and social challenges, encouraging them to play a positive and meaningful impact as "agents of change".

- Spier currently pays 40% above the minimum wage for hourly earners and 55% above the minimum wage for full-time earners. The staff retention rate is 77%.

- Spier encourages visitors and guests to pack for a purpose, providing information about what is needed.

- Spier recycles 97% of solid waste, 100% of organic waste and 100% of grey- and black-water

In partnership with the Sustainability Institute, the farm has also recruited 13 members of the local community (predominantly from Lynedoch village) to learn how to grow their own fresh, nutritious produce at home. Over the next three months, they are receiving hands-on training in a demonstration garden at Spier, and also receive a nutritious cooked lunch daily.

All staff (regardless of whether or not they are able to work remotely) remain employed and receive full-pay. Spier has also committed to covering the salaries of a number of the micro-enterprises it works with and has assisted these with obtaining Covid-19 financial assistance from other sources.

Throughout the lockdown, Spier has also distributed boxes of food to more than 380 underprivileged households in the community on a weekly basis to ensure they receive adequate nourishment during their time at home.

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