

Capital

THE VOICE OF BUSINESS

ISSUE 5 • 2018

Featuring

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

- Meet the city's leading ladies
- The magical LeAnne Dlamini

BIG ON ART

- Wizard of weld
- Art at WORQ

ELECTRICITY TARIFFS

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Committed to serve the interests of business and our country



As I was pondering what should be the content of my message, I remembered a passage by Charles Dickens in *The Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". In our current political environment these words are so apt. The political climate under which business currently operates is tough and so unpredictable. The issue of globalization means that all of us cannot remain unscathed, even if political decisions taken by some super powers have no direct link to us as a country. The Trump factor continues to create uncertainty in the global markets. As business we need to continue to review our strategies on an on-going basis.

Our local political landscape is as fluid and tough like never before. Interparty and intraparty conflicts and contestations pose new challenges to the economic development, employment and survival of business. We however, need to stay positive and seek new ways of dealing with business and societal challenges. It is imperative that policy uncertainties, whether real or perceived, are addressed. This will remove nervousness regarding local investment in the economy. Investments and more investments will provide requisite stimulus towards economic growth which will pave the way towards increased employment opportunities.

Volatility and instability of our currency, including high crude oil price, have seen an unprecedented rise in fuel price. Most emerging markets are in a similar situation. This has a negative impact on economic growth and job creation. Our country is in a technical recession. This unfortunate situation will see a steady rise in inflation and poverty levels. Most of our citizens will find it hard to afford the bare necessities. A number of other social ills will become more evident. Business, together with all sectors of society should commit themselves to working together to find lasting solutions.

As a chamber, we have found it disheartening to see a number of businesses in our city closing down. The closure of any business has a negative ripple effect across society. More people are added into the unemployment pool, resulting in less rates and taxes to deliver services to our communities. Predictions are that tough times still lie ahead.

As a chamber, we remain committed to serve the interest of business and our country. We continually engage all stakeholders including the municipality, provincial government, state-owned enterprises and other interest groups in order to find solutions to problems that beset business growth. We value the importance of cooperation between business and political leadership. PCB through its hardworking Chief Executive Officer and staff was recently able to resolve the impasse regarding the recycling tariff that our city unilaterally had imposed.

As a chamber, we are taking an active role in facilitating the attraction of businesses into our city. We will continue working with government departments to assist in creating a business-friendly environment for our city and province. A few months ago we hosted a delegation from Indonesia, led by its ambassador to South Africa. A number of business opportunities were discussed and these are currently being followed by our CEO with other relevant role players.

As a chamber, we have participated in discussions regarding the role and nature of the chamber movement in South Africa. These are on-going discussions as we seek to add more value in the economic development in our country.

Bongzi Mshengu
President — Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business

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The yearly PWC-sponsored PCB Golf Day produced its quota of hits, drives, putts, chips and misses. That scores mattered less than the fun and laughter, was par for the course.

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Any addition, I'm told, is an improvement to the countenance I was dealt by Providence. I tend to agree, which is why I tried a purple wig, says Derek Alberts.





There is strength in standing together to call for ethical City leadership that delivers reliable services, creates an enabling environment for growth and development, that brings about greater equity and that alleviates poverty.

VALUE STATEMENT

As an association and as individuals we embrace diversity and value unity, integrity, personal and corporate excellence, mutual respect and co-operation. We are committed to serving our members and are passionate about economic and enterprise development.

We undertake to listen and to respond, to our members needs and to positively pursue innovative solutions to business challenges.

VISION

To be the united voice of business in the greater Pietermaritzburg area, representing and supporting businesses of all sizes and across sectors, in order that we might facilitate economic and enterprise development.

www.pcb.org.za

It is not enough to acknowledge difference — you have to see the value in it

This publication is put together to share the success stories of our region, to give voice to the many reasons why people choose to live and work here, and to serve as a source of intelligence, inspiration and encouragement. I trust that this issue will serve that purpose.

We have chosen to feature some successful local women in this edition, which has prompted me to talk about the value of diversity (one of my favourite subjects!).

As a women executive, a question I often get asked is whether I am treated differently because I am a woman. I must admit that I find it quite a confusing question.

I always respond by saying that comparison isn't actually possible, because I've always been a woman and I have no idea whether men, given similar circumstances, would experience things differently. What I can say is that I subscribe to the thinking that passion, courage and hard work make all the difference, that everyone needs to earn their stripes and that diversity makes good business sense. The thing is, that it is not enough to acknowledge difference, you have to see the value in it. I believe that more women should be included, because it is a wise business decision to do so, because women are capable of bringing unique perspectives and skills to the work environment.

Research shows, that women in general, including in business, tend to organize in a different manner than men, because we frequently multi-task. We are naturally very perceptive, making us excellent negotiators, and we're better at delegation.

In an article in Forbes.com, Institute for Leading Diversity & Inclusion faculty member, Glenn Llopis, talks about 4 Skills that give women a sustainable advantage over men. He talks about innate abilities that women possess, which are redefining today's business landscape.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Bongi Mshengu (President - PCB), Melanie Veness (CEO - PCB) and Edward West (Business Editor - The Witness).

According to Llopis, women are "opportunity experts". He says that, much like immigrants, we are naturally wired to think, act and innovate. "Women," he says, "more than men, have the ability to see what others don't, do what others won't and keep pushing their ideas and ideals when prudence says quit."

We have the ability to see opportunity and give our ideas life and we are able to inspire others to do the same. He goes on to say, that when we are given the opportunity to be ourselves, we are natural leaders.

He then makes the point that we are "networking professionals", skilled at navigating the business landscape and putting our ideas to the test. We tend to follow-up and make sure that we talk to people that can take our ideas forward, and our inherent ability to be creative allows us to see opportunities that others often miss.

Thirdly, he says, we are "relationship specialists", skilled at cultivating relationships that are "purposeful, genuine, and meaningful". We also spend time sustaining these relationships once we have established them.

In the fourth instance, we are "natural givers", who seek to give to our communities (which is probably why most non-profit organizations are run by women). Women are often driven by causes that serve the advancement of societal needs. We are great at inspiring and lifting those around us, which is why most women leaders are such good long-term strategic thinkers. Women are less likely to rally behind a short-term strategy if a more sustainable approach can be adopted.

My final point relates to performance. Catalyst, a non-profit research organization based in the United States, established a link between female board directors and corporate performance. The report found higher financial performance for companies with higher representation of women board directors.

It goes without saying that there many areas in which men excel, and it is not my intention to say that women are better than men, just different, and that this difference has value. It makes good business sense to appoint women leaders, because we bring a different heart to the table, which can contribute to a balanced, holistic approach to business, which, in all likelihood, will improve the bottom line.

Let me end by thanking you for your support of this publication (whether you've advertised, contributed or simply read it) and by inviting you to capitalize on the opportunities that diversity presents.

In closing, I must say that producing this publication in this economy takes more than skill and talent. It requires tenacity and determination, and it would be remiss of me if I didn't thank the team who worked tirelessly to put it together. I'm eternally grateful to our editor, Derek Alberts, our design-guru extraordinaire, Carmen Brander from Tricycle, Pat Franken from Kaleidoscope Media on the advertising sales side and my fabulous team at the chamber.

Melanie Veness
CEO— Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business

PS: You'll notice that I've chosen to stay clear of matters political and economic for now. I'll just leave you with a thought from Sri Lankan author Thisuri Wanniarachchi, who said: "Life is at its best when everything has fallen out of place, and you decide that you're going to fight to get them right, not when everything is going your way and everyone is praising you." I guess she has a point.

COVER STORY

Words and pictures
by Derek Alberts



MAN OF STEEL



*Few genres lends itself to wider interpretation than forging art from steel. The process typically involves the application of searing heat, such as welding, to steel, to render the metal into an image in the eye of its creator. To learn more about this unique art form, **Derek Alberts** sat down with **Stafford Botha**.*

There is more to Stafford Botha that meets the eye, that was clear from the day I strolled over to his stand at the Farmer's Market.

Tall, thin and bearded, Botha cut a languid, almost Bohemian figure totally at home among an ensemble of other-worldly creatures and contraptions on an impeccably white table cloth.

Perfunctory greetings out of the way, and on closer inspection, it's clear the army of metal mutations was not a science experiment gone rogue. For one, these creatures radiated humour and quirkiness, no tortured and twisted misogyny here, and secondly they spoke of Botha's idiosyncratic take on giving pieces of scrap a second chance.

"Ja, it's fun using the bits and bobs from my other jobs to make something different," he said.

"I never know how anything is going to turn out, it all depends what the piece of metal is, and how I see it fit somewhere."

His real job is a welder, an accomplished professional with more than 16 years experience wielding the rod behind a dark visor and helmet. The range of his formal work is extensive in the shape of palisade fencing, gates, burglar guards, basically anything that needs welding.

But the conversation veered back to his dream of giving full flight to his artistic ambitions. Currently, the *objets d'arte* on the white table cloth are produced and sold under the *Pot of Old* label in what is a perfectly good, if non-agricultural, exhibit at the Farmers Market and similar outlets.

But Botha has other ambitions, that of sculpting work on commission that won't be out of place in a gallery. It is a long-standing dream, and he is well on his way to fulfill his passion.

"I have been passionate about art since my school days,

but never felt that my paintings and drawings were good enough to showcase," he said.

"But through welding everyday, I gradually came to the realisation that I could incorporate my artistic talent through welding and creating unique pieces," he said.

The skills gave him the confidence to experiment with unusual techniques, such as welding together steel rods in an approximate shape and then working the outside skin with a grinder and rasp.

"It produces a lustrous finish, and the rods also allow for a textured finish," he said.

To demonstrate the concept, he took hold of a rhino head under construction, and extended a section of flat bar bent to resemble its spine.

"A rhino's ribs are visible through its skin and the rods welded vertically will allow for the rippled effect," he said.

The same technique is evident in a completed work, a life-size raven with scary eyes, but without the rippled look. Instead, the surface has been ground and polished to show off its sleek plumage. The bird's menacing stance is hard to ignore, especially among collectors who track trends.

"There has been a lot of interest with people saying my pieces belong in the hospitality industry as a decorative focal point, or in a contemporary art collection," he said.

Botha is philosophical about the vagaries of art and its appeal.

"Art is in the heart of the beholder, as a creative person I have to accept that. That is why I get so much joy from people taking pleasure in my work. I know it's real."

A bright future beckons on the back of Botha's growing reputation for truly unique once-off collectibles.

"I'm fortunate that I love what I do, and hopefully, my passion is reflected in all my work."

OUT & ABOUT : PCB & BFC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

26 JULY 2018



Outgoing president Leo Quayle with new president Bongi Mshengu.



Ann Havinga, Tinus Havinga and Melanie Veness.



Frank Mchunu and Fameeda Kikia.



Ali Engelbrecht and Kay Makan.



Colin Dunsdon, Dave Poole and Hilton Tredgold.

OUT & ABOUT : WOMEN IN BUSINESS LUNCHEON

3 AUGUST 2018



Melanie Veness and Xoli Dlamini.



Fameeda Kikia and Reneesha Mohabir.



Nazma Mullah, Urisha Sarjoo, Sherilyn David, Letisha Subramanien, Avanti Anandlal.



Nana Msomi, Phindile Molefe, Lerato Motete and Ntando Dlungwane.



Sarah Alcock, Nikki Veenstra, Saydee Chetty and Precious Kusi-Mills.

OUT & ABOUT : THE PCB GOLF DAY

7 SEPTEMBER 2018



Talitha Louw, John Louw and Brad Robinson.



Greg Sparrow, Hayden Jordaan, John Louw and Brad Robinson.



Paul Laing, Mitesh Rampersad, Kevin Ellis and Bongi Mshengu.



Ash Roopchand, Harvey Bowler, Gary Coull, Brett Teichmann.

OUT & ABOUT : PCB FORUMS & TRAINING



Leadership forum: Sean Daly, Hilton Tredgold, Duncan Paul, Melanie Veness, Leo Quayle and Tony Merrifield.



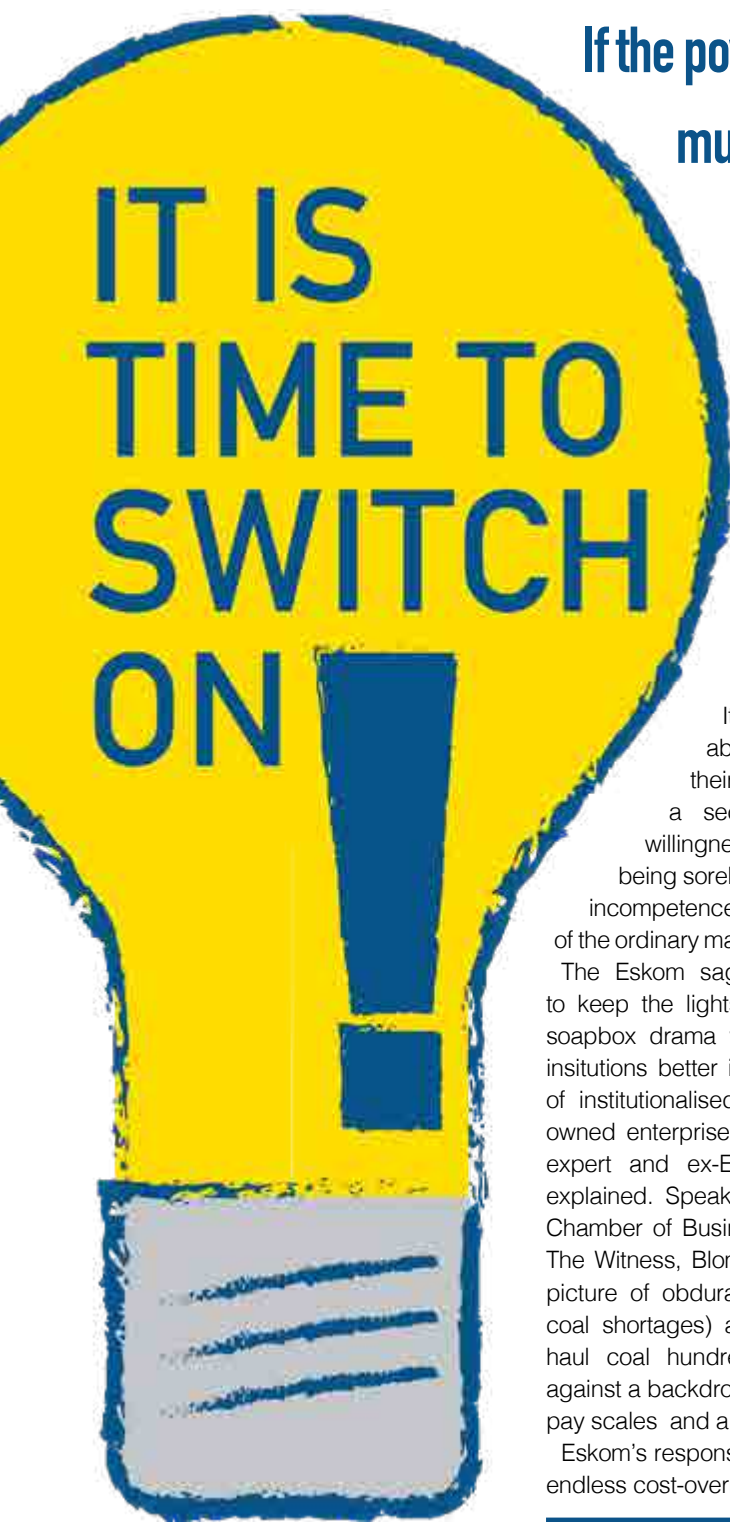
Chamber lunch: Naraine Peters, Grace Edwards and Kensy Savari.



Tech Talks forum: Anthea Forder, Melanie Veness, Bongi Mshengu, Christi Naude and Leo Quayle.



Chamber lunch: Khule Zondi, Nikita Brassel, Justine Dawbes and Kirsten Hughes.



If the powers-that-be have their way, consumers must continue to pay for their electricity and shut up. But that's not how the game is going to be played out, not if two men who share the same vision, but with very different agendas, have their way.

WORDS BY **Derek Alberts**

TED BLOM

It's the nature of law-abiding citizens to pay their rates and taxes without a second thought. But that willingness to do the right thing is being sorely tested by corruption and incompetence, often beyond the control of the ordinary man and woman in the street. The Eskom saga and its machinations to keep the lights on is a deeply familiar soapbox drama with South Africans. Few institutions better illustrate the phenomenon of institutionalised incompetence at state-owned enterprises than Eskom, as energy expert and ex-Eskom official Ted Blom explained. Speaking at a Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business forum sponsored by The Witness, Blom painted a jaw-dropping picture of obdurate denials (about critical coal shortages) and farcical decisions (to haul coal hundreds of kilometres away) against a backdrop of unaffordable executive pay scales and a bloated workforce.

Eskom's response to its own inefficiencies, endless cost-overruns and an inflated salary

bill, is to increase tariffs. "To keep going (the way it is operating currently), Eskom needs tariff increases of 45% over the next three years," Blom said.

In spite of the much-publicised cleanout of tainted Eskom executives recently, corruption is deeply entrenched throughout the utility, in most divisions. It is a cancer white-anting the organisation for greed and self-beneficiation, said Blom. Until such time that these cabals and rogue elements are purged, long-suffering consumers will continue to fund these excesses and inefficiencies.

With first-hand experience of Outa's battle against e-tolling in Gauteng, Blom has picked up the cudgels on behalf of consumers to fight the corruption and mismanagement at Eskom, Blom urged business and the public to resist efforts to "do business as usual" and force the utility to redress its own shortcomings. The call to action was supported by the gathering that mandated CEO Melanie Veness to establish a task team.

For more about Ted Blom's fight with Eskom, visit <https://eeco.co.za>.



PCB president Bongzi Mshengu, guest speaker Ted Blom and The Witness editor Yves van der Haeghen.



Tariff optimisation expert Alan Gevers of Accountable Utilities.

ALAN GEVERS

Consumers have been conditioned to believe that using less power is the only way to reduce energy spend. But there are other ways to save money, including through better tariff optimisation without reducing consumption, says Alan Gevers of Accountable Utilities that have saved its clients millions per annum.

"Tariffs may appear simple, but in the realm of bulk power users, electricity measurement becomes a highly technical exercise with many variables coming into play," Gevers says.

Part of the problem is that the technical nature of electricity measurement means that a business' projections on its power spend is based on historical utility costs plus the annual Nersa increase.

Secondly, electricity terms are used interchangeably without regard for what they actually mean and how they are calculated, says Gevers. Understanding the terminology is a necessary first step, in order to distinguish between "rate of

kwh use" and "net cumulative kwh use", as is getting to grips with reactive - or wasted - energy.

Not surprisingly, most consumers are in the dark about the underlying factors that determine an acceptable net rate per kwh of electricity. A vehicle's running costs is a useful comparison. In the same way that the net rate/km figure would include fuel, servicing, tyres, licences, insurance, and finance costs, so too would all electricity-related costs inform the net rate/kwh cost. Only once the figure becomes untenable, does one investigate the underlying factors in a bid to reduce costs.

Electricity is a prerequisite for most businesses, and it is the responsibility of consumers to inform themselves of their cost-saving options. "We need to be vigilant and adaptive to cost-saving opportunities that often are disguised in the detail of the tariff landscape," says Gevers.

For more about tariff optimisation: www.accountableutilities.co.za

WHAT THE TERMS MEAN

Kwh (kilowatt hour) is the measurement of actual energy consumed. Kva relates to the rate at which the kwh are consumed.

Kwh is a cumulative measurement. Kva is measured in 30-minute cycles where the worst half hour (simultaneous use) effectively decides the net kva demand charge.

Notified demand is based on expected kva, while demand charges are based on actual kva.

Bulk supplies do not necessarily trip at notified maximum demand (NMD) levels, but rather incur penalties for exceeding NMD and usually have a knock on effect for 12 months.

Kva demand can have threshold values whereby theoretical demand is billed regardless of actual demand.

Kvar (reactive or wasted energy) may or may not be individually measured and billed, but it does form part of the kva value regardless.

Power factor correction only becomes necessary if kvar is more than 30% of kwh consumption and will only show savings on the "demand charge component" of the tariff.

Power factor correction requires ongoing monitoring and servicing – power is not lost when power factor correction fails, the supply merely becomes less efficient and expensive again.

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Our corporate and commercial attorneys are business-minded and have a strong focus on providing practical advice and drafting contracts which are simple and comprehensible, without any loss of professionalism or precision. Our firm has committed to plain English drafting and our documents are well-structured and understandable. Our team is able to provide advice on a full range of commercial issues, and to draft or review commercial contracts.



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STRIKING A CHORD

WORDS BY **Derek Alberts**

PHOTOS BY AGENT BOOTH

*LeAnne Dlamini is a rising star and for a brief interlude, about 400 women - and a clutch of token men - were mesmerised by her prodigious talent at the glittering **FNB Women in Business Luncheon**, supported by Liberty Midlands Mall.*

A STELLAR CAST:

Singer LeAnne Dlamini, ECR radio presenter Darren Maule, FNB innovation specialist Tracy-Lee Bolton, PCB CEO Melanie Veness and FNB banking executive Xolani Dlamini all played a part in making the FNB Women in Business luncheon a glittering success.





Glamour and chic: Stacy-Lee Bolton and Melanie Veness.



Funny man, Darren Maule.

LeAnne Dlamini can sing. And dance. And entertain. And motivate. This, and more, she did at the FNB-sponsored PCB Women in Business luncheon as the official provider of entertainment. An elastic definition at best, Dlamini stretched the role into a rollicking performance that showcased her full repertoire of talents.

Dlamini shared the stage with Stacey-Lee Bolon, head of innovation at FNB Business Banking, and East Coast Radio presenter Darren Maule for another memorable edition of the PCB signature event.

But it was Dlamini who stole the show. Glamorous, vivacious and charismatic, Dlamini was born to perform. At 13, she started singing in her church choir, and three years later was leading praise and worship. That precocious gospel talent has matured and blossomed into a professional singing and songwriting career. Her debut album *Simply Luvlee* won a MetroFM award for Best Female R&B Album in 2011, and was followed by *The Journey*. She has also opened for international acts including Akon, Mika, Fat Joe, Kanye West, Sean

Paul, Joss Stone, Snoop Dogg and Pharrell Williams. Most recently, she has released *Warrior* that is available at both digital and physical music stores.

It is about affirming solidarity

Dlamini is not shy to step out in her dancing shoes and was one of the celebrities competing in the seventh season of the SABC3 reality competition series, *Strictly Come Dancing*, with her professional dance partner Johannes Radebe.

Not surprisingly, the packed-out Pietermaritzburg audience lapped her up. Dlamini struck a loud, twanging chord with the women who were moved by her message of empowerment and self-belief. So enthralled was the audience with her

power of persuasion that it rose as one to echo her chant, more like a mantra, about proudly taking charge of their lives as women.

Radiating sophistication and confidence, Dlamini seamlessly knitted her personal campaign - #endgirlhate - into her performance. Like some of the other themes threading through her life, the campaign celebrates empowerment as much as it aims to break down barriers that women so frequently erect among themselves. In her own words, it's about affirming solidarity among, and extending support to, the sisters.

Much as she is an enthusiastic pin-up model for the sisterhood, Dlamini effusively acknowledges the support of the man whose surname she has taken, Siphosiso. Also a mover and shaker in the music industry, husband and wife are self-assured in their strive to keep their careers separate.

It speaks of trust, and of all the qualities she shared that Friday afternoon, it's the confidence in who she is, that resonated loudest with the 400-odd women. That, and the courage to be confident. ■

The #endgirlhate campaign

Born out of the need to simply encourage women and girls to start supporting one another, the initiative found its voice as a social media campaign. At first Dlamini posted encouraging quotes, but it soon turned into a movement that aims to unite, empower, inspire and connect women and girls through the power of the sisterhood. So popular is the movement that within two years, it has welcomed two branches beyond the borders of South Africa, the End Girl Hate Botswana and End Girl Hate Canada branches. endgirlhate.com



LeAnne Dlamini sharing her magic.

A Salute to Women in Business

We pay tribute to some of Pietermaritzburg's leading women in business who play leadership roles in their respective companies, enterprises or organisations. Apart from being proud business leaders and role models, the women share two other key attributes - a determination to make a difference, and a passion for Pietermaritzburg.



Elinor Faul

Executive Manager: Optimisation
Real Estate Expert

A wife, a mother and a grandmother, Elinor Faul is also an accomplished executive with nearly 30 years experience in both the property and the financial sector. As an Executive Manager at Tsheleka Finance and dynamic Realtor Agent with Walter Meyer Properties, she has managed to embrace and enhance her role in business with drive and determination. Elinor is a team builder with particular expertise in strategic thinking, planning and execution resulting in organisational growth. Her compassionate attitude towards her staff does not deter her "hands on" approach when facing challenges. She has been dubbed "Iron Lady" as she has the ability to stand strong in demanding business circumstances and forge focussed business solutions that adapt to our changing business environment. As an advocate of the creed to succeed in business one must have a high work ethic and attention to detail. Elinor believes it is important to recognise, praise and support when others do good work. As a woman, one should not be afraid to be the voice that sets the pace, agenda and business narrative supplemented by a tenacious drive to make things happen.

Elinor Faul

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Janet Finch

CEO. Communication 101

Janet Finch is first and foremost a mother of two boys – Wayde, a mechanical engineer, living and working in London, and Nicholas, currently studying at Vega Advertising College, living in Cape Town. Professionally, Janet is a Chartered Public Relations Practitioner (CPRP - PRISA) with over 25 years of experience in Public Relations and Communication Management, as well as Sponsorship, Event Management, Advertising, Brand Relations and Marketing. Utilising her many years' experience, Janet founded a communication-based training company, in 2012, which recently rebranded as COMMUNICATION 101. Communication 101 was born out of her observations regarding the difficulties many people have within the area of communication. Her passion for communication is evident in her relaxed and engaging facilitation style, developed over the past 18 years. Janet and her partner, Dudley, enjoy spending time outdoors walking along the beachfront, cycling, camping or hiking. Their combined passion for cooking often results in good-natured banter while cooking up a storm. Janet is an avid reader and enjoys the relaxing nature of adult colouring.

Janet Finch

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www.comm101.co.za



Josette Manuel

Partner

Josette Manuel qualified with an LLB degree at University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pmb), and was mentored by Thoba Poyo-Dlwati during her articles. She joined Shepstone & Wylie in September 2011, where she was thrown into the deep end in the litigation department. Josette became an associate a year later and was promoted to senior associate in 2017, then partnership in 2018. She now heads up the Shepstone & Wylie Pietermaritzburg agency and local litigation department, attending to both general and commercial litigation covering a wide range of legal issues, including family law, liquidations, debt recoveries, breaches of contract, leases, evictions, drafting and opposing of Attorneys bills of costs. Josette enjoys the challenges, variety and flexibility of her position in the legal profession and successfully juggles work and family commitments. She has a dedicated work team as well as a strong support system at home. Notwithstanding her busy work schedule, Josette still makes time for outside interests including designing and decorating, baking, watching movies and hiking and camping.

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www.wylie.co.za



Maritsa Gouws

Owner
Locksmith Association of South Africa (LASA) chair

Maritsa Gouws (aka Super M) is always on her way to save the day. She is the owner of the successful locksmith shop, Lock and Key Solutions, at 163 Boom Street. The brightly painted building is easy to spot; just look out for the Super Hero on a very yellow shop!

Maritsa has locked many people into her business with excellent service, because this is, she believes, the key to their business. As a qualified assessor in the locksmithing industry, Maritsa conducts RPL (recognition of prior learning) assessments on new and current locksmiths and also owns an active locksmith training school.

Maritsa is the national chair for the Locksmith Association of South Africa and also the KZN Locksmith Association Branch chair.

She has won several entrepreneurship awards and plans to take Lock and Key Solutions to new heights going forward. The vision includes the rolling out of the Lock and Key Solutions franchise. She generously assists many non-profit organisations in as many ways as possible, from giving her time to lending active support.

Maritsa Gouws

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Uplifting women into leadership

Self motivated and focused. A go-getter. Dynamite. These are some of the words used to describe Xolisile Dlamini.

Xolisile Dlamini's leadership traits were evident when she became an FNB Business Innovators and Transformers Finalist.

The current FNB Sales Head in Kwazulu-Natal inland went on to be selected for the 2011 Leaders in Corporate Programme, the 2013 Leaders in Branch Programme and later headed the bank's Local Market in the Pietermaritzburg area.

Hard working and ambitious, Dlamini started her journey with the bank in 2003 as a branch manager, armed with a Bachelor's in Management Leadership and a Diploma in Marketing. She worked her way up through to cell leader and then to the executive level position that she currently holds.

Resilient women like Dlamini have not only affected positive change for women in the financial sector but have also encouraged FNB to nurture and drive more female employees towards leadership positions.

Encouraged by the fact that 38% of all new business accounts opened with FNB Business are either led or owned by women, FNB Business created Women in Business (WIB) to grow female-owned and led businesses in South Africa. Through partnerships with entities such as SME growth fund, Vumela, WIB provides extended support in the incubation stage of the selected businesses.

The bank also intends to track jobs created through such initiatives to ensure that business owners are not the only beneficiaries but that they also increase the overall number of women participating in business in South Africa.

Dlamini's years of experience have given her an extensive understanding of the FNB brand and business, while her role has contributed to building and maintaining the bank's commitment to enhancing business success for women.

Known for her friendly and approachable nature, Dlamini is consistent in mentoring the sector's younger talent and continues to strive for excellence.

Dlamini is proof that, through women-empowering initiatives, access to fair opportunities is possible for the next generation of female leaders.

To find out more about FNB's Women in Business initiatives, please contact Xolisile Dlamini, Head of Sales - KZN Inland, on 087 335 3075.

How can we help you?

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Merrill King
Managing Director

Pietermaritzburg has an unsung ambassador in Merrill King, joint CEO of Capitol Caterers. Chic, vivacious and articulate, King is the perfect foil for fellow CEO Russell Nzimande and their management of Capitol Caterers and its 100-plus contracts. While King's engagement with clients is of a culinary nature, she represents the city in as much as Pietermaritzburg is home to one of the country's premier outsourced contract catering companies. Jointly managing a business with an annual turnover of R350 million and 2 000 staff, is a challenge King finds both stimulating and satisfying. King is also a long-serving board member of the South African Confederation of Sport and Olympic Committee (SASCOC). She is also a competitive canoeist and has bagged numerous age-category gold medals in the Dusi and Fish River Marathons as well as silver with seasoned partner, Sonja Bohnsack, at last year's World Marathon Canoeing Championships in Pietermaritzburg. When not working, King loves spending time with husband Giles, who founded Capitol Caterers in 1993, their three children and grandson.

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Capitol
CATERERS
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Michelle Hiscutt
Owner, Pietermaritzburg InfoProp

The Pietermaritzburg franchise of one of the fastest-growing real estate companies in South Africa, Infoprop, is headed by Michelle Hiscutt. She has been involved with Infoprop since its inception and opened the agency in Pietermaritzburg in 2012 before investing in permanent premises in Ingleside Office Park, off Howick Road last year. With an honours degree in Psychology and an MBA in strategic management, Hiscutt worked in the corporate environment before settling on an entrepreneurial career. Her experience in retail, training and management helped to inform her understanding of property investment and the unique circumstances and conditions of the Pietermaritzburg and surrounding economy. Hiscutt believes in a team-work ethic and places great emphasis on sound relationships with both buyers and sellers. A member of the Pietermaritzburg of Chamber, Hiscutt is active in various business forums and networks. She is passionate about Pietermaritzburg and believes an exciting future beckons for the capital of KwaZulu-Natal.

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Nerasha Singh
Hospital Manager

Akeso Psychiatric Hospital could not have wished for a more caring and dedicated general manager than Nerasha Singh. She brings experience, expertise and passion to a demanding position. Nerasha first tried her hand in the finance field, but found her calling in the health profession, and has been realising her passion for people and their wellbeing for 14 years. Before joining Akeso, Nerasha served as the director for corporate services in the Eastern Cape Department of Health. Always endeavouring to expand her knowledge, Nerasha's academic credentials include an MBA in health sciences, BCom Honours HRM, business management, project management, and financial management qualifications, as well as a scholarship in advanced public health management at the Yale School of Health. Akeso represents the pinnacle of psychiatric care, and Nerasha proudly leads a therapeutic team of psychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists, nurses and admin staff, all dedicated to the wellbeing of patients. Happily married with two boys, Nerasha loves spending quality time with family and friends.

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akeso
Specialised Psychiatric Clinics
PIETERMARITZBURG

www.akeso.co.za

Leading ladies in the Pietermaritzburg community.



Debbi Robinson

Area Client Manager: Pietermaritzburg and Hinterland

Serving the community with tailored solutions for individuals, families and businesses is the goal for Debbi Robinson, Nedbank Business Banking Area Client Manager, Pietermaritzburg and Hinterland, and her team. Robinson says her deep connection with the community is what forms both her personal and professional values, and she believes that her strong grounding in the Pietermaritzburg community enables her to understand and provide a unique, personal service to clients.

Robinson, who went to school in Pietermaritzburg and studied at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), is a member of the Business Banking team at 460 Townbush Office Park, Cascades. 'The **Nedbank Pietermaritzburg regional team is committed to helping clients with professional advice, industry-specific solutions** and a comprehensive range of financial products and services', says Robinson.



Minette Moodley

Manager: Credit

Business Banking Platinum Credit Manager Minette Moodley is also deeply rooted in the community, having grown up in Pietermaritzburg in a family of entrepreneurs and being married to a financial advisor.

She attended school in the city, and graduated from UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, majoring in management, supply chain management, accounting, auditing, as well as tax and management accounting. Minette has also completed her South African Institute of Chartered Accounting (SAICA) articles. 'As a team, we are all committed to ensuring that our clients receive tailored solutions', says Moodley.



Phili Sithole

Branch Manager: Longmarket Street

The Nedbank team includes Longmarket Street branch manager Philisiwe (Phili) Sithole, who grew up in Durban and now calls Pietermaritzburg home.

She runs Pietermaritzburg's new-image branch and holds a Bachelor of Business Management degree from UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus and a Bachelor of Business Management Certificate in Banking from Milpark Business School. Sithole and her family are involved in community development in the city, and she mentors young girls in her church, which shows that the **Nedbank team is committed to living the brand purpose to do good.**

For more information please email DebbieRob@Nedbank.co.za.

see money differently

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SPONGE 5799



Priscilla Bhika

Director/Principal

Priscilla Bhika has been the backbone of the fashion industry in Pietermaritzburg since 1965, and students of her college, School of Fashion Design supply clothing stores with designer garments. Priscilla modified her syllabus so that full-time students are able to go into business after completing their first year. The course covers design, draft, cut and stitch, creativity and colour techniques, the art of hat-making, shoe-covering, gloves and accessories, as well as business skills. Priscilla is passionate about uplifting communities and works closely with government departments that fund studies at her college. The aim is for the previously disadvantaged to learn a trade that allows them to sustain themselves. Priscilla is driven to encourage women to take care of themselves; emotionally and financially. Equipped with the knowledge gained at the college, her students can pass their skills onto others in their communities. When Priscilla heard that there were many people who were eager to learn, but unable to get to the city, she arranged for her teachers to travel to rural areas such as Applesborsh, Richmand, Pateni and Edendale.

Priscilla Bhika

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Thirusha Govender

Managing Director

An industry expert with more than 15 successful years in the financial sector, Thirusha Govender has a proven ability to develop businesses through rapid and continuous growth in difficult times. Her entrepreneurial instincts and clarity of vision have enabled her to manage and mitigate the risks associated with business failure. Thirusha is distinguished by her passion for business, her focus on business controls as well as her commitment to meeting customer and market demands. Her contagious enthusiasm empowers business owners in an environment where innovation, strategic thinking and compliance are needed. Thirusha holds a B Com Hons (Auditing) degree. She is also a Certified Internal Auditor (CIA), Certified Risk Management Assurer (CRMA), Certified Financial Accountant (CFA) and a Business Accountant (BAP (SA)). She is currently the Managing Director of ControlPro (Pty) Ltd, a company that specialises in business development. Due to her extensive business acumen and compliance expertise, she sits on various Advisory Boards. Thirusha's passion for business development is unparalleled.

Thirusha Govender

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Whyona Sithapersad

Director

Pietermaritzburg born-and-bred, Whyona Sithapersad heads the Family Law Department at J Leslie Smith & Company Inc. She attended the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) where she obtained an LLB degree. She was admitted as an attorney and acquired several years of practice.

Throughout her life, Whyona has always been one of those people who identifies what needs to be done, and goes about doing it. Whyona is deeply passionate about her field of expertise and, as such, provides great service to clients. It is important to Whyona to establish good relationships with clients in order to understand the unique factors specific to their family law-related matter and to maintain civility in often emotionally-charged situations.

Whyona has always believed that education is important in life and, coming from a large family of educators, the pursuit of knowledge is part of who she is. Raised in a culture of learning, education and study, Whyona considers these as essential tools to keep abreast of the changing legal landscape.

Whyona Sithapersad

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IN PURSUIT OF CULINARY EXCELLENCE

A pioneering training initiative aimed at sharpening culinary skills is adding extra shine to Pietermaritzburg's formidable tertiary educational sphere.

WORDS BY **Derek Alberts**

A historic Scottsville home virtually across the road from Comrades House in Connaught Road has been given a new lease of life as the headquarters of the freshly-minted Midlands Hospitality Academy (MHA).

Effectively the training division of Capitol Caterers, MHA is envisioned to substantially increase culinary skills in compliance with a host of regulatory protocols. First base was securing appropriate premises, a search that took youthful MHA director Kelvin Phillips all over the city for the better part of six months.

"17 Connaught Road is perfect," he said, "it was previously occupied by quantity surveyors who had done most of the open-plan remodelling."

Fitting out the state-of-the-art kitchen with 10 workstations and installing the support infrastructure pushed the total investment tag to the R1.8 million mark, said Merrill King, joint CEO of Capitol Caterers.



■ Kelvin Phillips, the director of the Midlands Hospitality Academy and Merrill King, joint CEO of Capitol Catering.

"We view MHA as an investment in future skills, and proper skills simply can't be taught in an inferior environment," she said.

The primary motivation behind MHA is to build a repository of skills to satisfy Capitol Caterers' voracious appetite for growth, but also to both deepen and widen the levels of proficiency in the industry.

"Culinary skills are the lowest common denominator in the catering and food industry, and whatever training we impart, is likely to benefit us as much as the sector," she said.

MHA sought accreditation as a training institution with QCTO (Quality Council of Trade Occupations) in order to offer an industry-leading qualification over three years. The QCTO accreditation, in tandem with its Cathsseta (Culinary, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority) endorsement, allows MHA to offer a veritable smorgasbord of culinary qualifications, from one-year learnerships to the premium three-year course.

"It's a particularly demanding course with a strong theoretical foundation supported by practical training and workplace experience," said Phillips.

In time, MHA plans to throw open its doors to housewives, students, business people and foodies, in fact, anyone keen to expand their knowledge about food.

"We'd love to offer courses on the preparation of tapas, or Thai cuisine, or specialised Asian and Indian cooking, the sky's the limit," said King.

The proposed repertoire is likely to include unusual activities dressed with healthy lashings of fun, according to King.

"I can't wait for the first team-building exercise in the kitchen," she said, "imagine a bunch of accountants in three-man teams trying to plate a meal with a paw-paw and pumpernickel!" **■**

Giving the Bearded Vulture Wings

South Africa is blessed with more varieties of birds of prey than almost anywhere else in the world. With 81 species ranging from the Marshall Eagle, which weighs in at six kilograms and stands 70 cm tall, to the diminutive African Scops Owl, just 10cm tall and a mere 50–90 grams in weight, we have hawks, falcons, kites, kestrels, eagles, owls, owlets, buzzards, and vultures of all shapes and sizes. But almost a quarter of these are now listed in the Red Data Book as rare, threatened or endangered. To ensure their survival, active conservation management is required. The African Raptor Centre's Sanctuary bird park, located just outside Pietermaritzburg, is doing valuable education to raise public awareness about raptors. Established in 2005, the centre also facilitates raptor research and conservation breeding, and rescues and rehabilitates injured or sick birds of prey behind the scenes. This is to ensure that these wild birds are not habituated to humans, so that a high release success rate can be achieved. All non-profit work in this regard is run under the auspices of the African Raptor Trust (ART), a non-governmental, non-profit organisation.

BREEDING PROGRAMME

The centre's current conservation project deals with the breeding and releasing of the endangered Bearded Vulture, and creating awareness about this locally rare bird. An isolated population inhabits the Drakensberg and there are thought to be under 400 birds remaining in the wild.

Known also as the lammergeyer (after the German Lämmergeier, which means "lamb-vulture" and so-called for the belief that it attacked lambs, or ossifrage (bonebreaker), these birds are the only living bird species that specialise in feeding on bone marrow. They have learned to carry heavy bones to a height of 50–150 m and then drop them onto rocks to smash the bones and expose the marrow.

The African Raptor Centre works with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, which maintains a database of Bearded Vulture nest sites reported by community members in the Maluti-Drakensberg mountains. Shannon Hoffman, the CEO of the African Raptor Centre, and volunteers visit the Drakensberg in the winter, as this is the breeding season for these birds, and harvest eggs from the precariously perched nests.



WORDS BY **Barry du Plessis**

PHOTOS SUPPLIED



The African Rapture Centre's rehabilitation work extends to all species, including the Cape Vulture.

"It's incredibly difficult to see into these nests," says Hoffman, who explains how they are often built into high cliff potholes in remote mountainous areas, "and it's usually only possible to get a view by climbing the crags and cliffs, or by using a helicopter.

"The first year we used ponies, but I'll hopefully never do that again. I've never prayed so hard that the pony would stay surefooted," she laughs.

Helicopters can be even more nerve-racking. In 2016, while trying to view nests on the Drakensberg escarpment, the helicopter carrying Hoffman and three others crashed on top of a mountain.

"The nose of the helicopter broke off and we were able to climb out of the wreckage," she says.

Moments later the aircraft burst into flames. Although they were fortunate in that none of the occupants were seriously injured, they had to spend another four and a half hours on the snow-covered peak before they were rescued.

The reason Hoffman goes to these

extremes is because of a quirk in the Bearded Vulture breeding habits, known as "Cainism". Bearded Vultures lay two eggs, as a kind of insurance policy should one egg not hatch. However, due to the harsh conditions in which these birds survive, the parents are unable to raise two chicks to maturity. And so, when the second chick hatches its older sibling kills it. Rescuing this second egg means that each one that survives is another potential breeding bird. And breeding Bearded Vultures in captivity is the aim.

"When a population drops below 1000, the IUCN [International Union for Conservation of Nature] says a breeding programme should be initiated to create a genetic reservoir, in order to avoid that animal's extinction," explains Hoffman.

The aim, she says, is to raise 20 to 30 Bearded Vultures of a similar age from rescued second eggs, so that there is enough genetic diversity for them to breed and raise the numbers of the species.

"In Europe, their Bearded Vultures have

been repopulated this way," Hoffman says. "They have bred and released more of these birds through their captive breeding programme than we have here in the wild."

In South Africa, Hoffman is the only person running a Bearded Vulture programme and it's become something of a vocation for her.

"I've managed birds for 16 years," she says, "and I honestly have an odd selection of skills. I truly hope that all my experience has led me to this point, to try and make a difference to save our Bearded Vulture."

These birds are fortunate to have such a passionate champion, because they are not easy birds to save. Threatened by poisons used by agriculture, lead poisoning (the source of which is still being debated) and ever more ubiquitous power lines, they are also susceptible to a stress and heat-induced respiratory illness that can be fatal, mostly to young birds. It's also an expensive process. Accessing the rugged Drakensberg area requires 4x4s, helicopter time and climbing gear. The breeding programme itself involves vet fees and a lot of time.



RESCUE AND REHABILITATION

Another big focus of the African Raptor Trust has been the development of Raptor Rescue, its rehabilitation unit. It is the only specialist bird of prey rescue and rehabilitation centre in the country.

Because of the threatened status of many raptor species, casualties need to be actively treated, says Ben Hoffman, who runs Raptor Rescue. The rescue centre treats around 150 birds of prey every year and together with Dr Oliver Tatham, is now a leader in the field of African raptor veterinary and rehabilitation practice.

Most injuries to these birds occur when they come into contact with humankind, and most of the injured birds are brought to the rescue centre by people in the community. While this is largely from the KZN area, it can also include birds from across the country.

Birds are kept in special treatment boxes while being treated for their injuries, after which they are moved to recovery

enclosures that open onto a specially built 72-metre flight tunnel that enables the healed birds to rebuild their flight strength before release.

AFRICAN BIRD OF PREY SANCTUARY

The African Bird of Prey Sanctuary is the public face of the African Raptor Trust. Birds that cannot be released back into the wild — either as a result of injuries that cannot be rehabilitated by the Raptor Rescue facility, or because they are birds that have been rescued from elsewhere but are irrevocably habituated to humans — are kept in micro-environment enclosures, where they act as raptor ambassadors to the public. It is a safe haven for the widest selection of indigenous raptors in southern Africa — including the only Pel's Fishing Owl in captivity, Taita Falcons and, of course, the magnificent Bearded Vultures — and is an excellent opportunity for the public to get up close and experience South Africa's magnificent aerial predators first hand.

Daily live flying displays are conducted for visitors at the centre, where various raptors' flying and hunting skills are shown off and information imparted during the show.

About 4000 learners visited the centre last year from schools in the greater Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas, as well as 5000 adults, says Shannon Hoffman, who together with seven staff members and volunteers runs the centre.

"We educate in order to conserve," Hoffman says. "Education about birds of prey, and the threats that they face, is an important part of raptor conservation. No amount of research can be effective unless the results of the projects are shared with the greater public. Neither can conservation methods be successfully implemented unless people know and understand what both the raptors and related conservation projects are all about."

The project has partnered with the Mayibuye community, which owns the land on which the facility is built, and shares a percentage of all gate takings at the centre.

All Aboard!

In these tough times of austerity, all efforts should be made to cut costs and maximise financial resources. More the reason then to weigh up the cost of flying from Pietermaritzburg to Johannesburg.

WORDS BY *Derek Alberts*

PHOTO BY MIKE WRIGHT



The decision by Airlink to expand its schedule to five return flights between Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg has been a boon for business people and residents alike.

The service uses two aeroplanes - the Embraer 190 and the state-of-the-art 170 E-jet that offers a business class service.

The value of the service extends to beyond the city and its immediate surrounds, evidenced by the support from what is known as the Pietermaritzburg catchment area. Essentially encompassing the Midlands, northern and western KZN, and the entire Drakensberg region, it includes communities in Wartburg, Greytown, Ladysmith, Newcastle, Vryheid, Winterton, Estcourt, Mooi River, Underberg, Ixopo, Richmond, and Camperdown.

The direct flight service to and from Pietermaritzburg has also struck a chord with travellers in the Outer West region of Durban that includes Cato Ridge, Shongweni, Hillcrest, Kloof, and even Pinetown.

At issue is the convenience, but also the cost savings, made possible by the direct flights from Pietermaritzburg.

Notwithstanding the facts of the matter, a common perception is that a flight ticket from the Pietermaritzburg Airport to Oliver Tambo International (OTI) does not justify its price. At around R3500 a return ticket, detractors are quick to point out that fares between King Shaka International and OTI are cheaper. They are right of course, and the reason is that flying is a numbers game; the more bums on seats, the cheaper a flight ticket tends to become. With several operators servicing that route, competition is stiff with cut-price deals the norm. Ticket prices vary enormously, especially when specials are considered, but on average a return ticket between Durban and Johannesburg would cost around R1 600.

But the price of a ticket is just one of the cost inputs, the other costs tend to be hidden, or are ignored. Put differently, a cost comparison needs to factor in the total package, especially if a passenger from Pietermaritzburg drives to KSI, and back, to catch a flight.

For perspective on the debate, we have compared total costs for a return flight between KSI and OTI, and Pietermaritzburg Airport and OTI.

For practical reasons, we have not factored in travelling time to the Pietermaritzburg Airport, nor any vehicle costs in our calculation.

To determine the fuel and a vehicle's running costs, we take counsel from the AA's rates, generally regarded as an authoritative measure, and have calculated as they would apply to a relatively fuel-efficient 1.4 cc sedan. The cost, including fuel and wear-and-tear, amounts to R3.98 a km. Naturally, a bigger engined-car or SUV would command a bigger figure.

The distance is 100 km that simplifies the calculation. Less clear cut is converting the time on the road into a monetary value, and for reference, we settled on a conservative R450 per hour that a professional may charge for his or her time.

While the drive to KSI is supposed to take about 80 minutes, a more realistic time frame is closer to 120 minutes, or two hours, to account for the time it takes to exit Pietermaritzburg, slow traffic, time to park the car, and get to the terminal building. And that is one way!

We've done the sums and the answer is that it is more cost-effective to fly from Pietermaritzburg.

King Shaka International — OTI — KSI		
Distance to KSI: 100 km @ R3.98/km	R	398
Parking 6 hours	R	60
Travel time 4 hours @R450/hr	R	1 800
Toll fees @R11.50 x 2	R	23
Return ticket		R 1 600
TOTAL:		R 3 871

Pietermaritzburg Airport — OTI — PMB		
Parking 6 hours	R	60
Return ticket		R 3 500
TOTAL:		R 3 560

Bear in mind the AA rates would not have factored in the most recent fuel hikes.

STATE OF MIND

WORDS AND PHOTO BY *Barry du Plessis*

“If you want it, be prepared to work hard for it.” This is the philosophy of Craig Steel, the developer of Athlone Circle, Pietermaritzburg’s newest upmarket boutique lifestyle shopping centre and office park. By his own admission he pursued the owner of the land on which the shopping centre is now being built for two years before he eventually achieved his vision. It’s the kind of single-mindedness and can-do-will-do attitude that runs through all his responses to the questions *Capital* magazine posed to him in a recent interview at his head offices in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. It is also likely the kind of attitude that has played no small role in seeing him, by the age of 35 becoming the founder of six successful companies — including the SHF brand — with an impressive property portfolio, and the developer of projects that defy the apparent present economic mood of the country.

Wearing jeans and a powder-blue, open-neck shirt when we meet him, Craig Steel’s relaxed dress style belies an obviously intense character. The man walks fast, talks fast and does things his way. By his own admission he “can’t switch off”.

“I’m always thinking,” he says. “If I’m not doing this work I’m terrible to live with”.

Steel inhabits a world of his own making, a world on which he maintains a tight grasp, and he surrounds himself with people that share his vision.

“My people are cut from the same cloth as me,” he explains, and admits that he’s “a very hands-on business owner”.

Steel knows every product in every range intimately because, as he soon reveals, every piece of furniture made by SHF, of which he is the founder, is designed by him — for both their annual summer and winter ranges.

And the business is growing. Steel takes us for a (fast-paced) tour of the new 22 800 square metre facility nearing completion at SHF’s headquarters just outside Howick. It’s being built to better handle the shipping of various imported items and furniture they make on site at the company’s factory.

Trucks leave every morning to deliver our products countrywide,” explains Steel. “Our existing facility is no longer adequate.”

SHF’s operational nerve centre is situated on this site, which is highly visible from the N3. In the early days of his business, Steel relocated his furniture manufacturing business from a small house in Greyling Street in Pietermaritzburg to this location. The land only had a shed on it then, but it gave Steel bigger premises to operate from. A trip to Johannesburg to shop his furniture

designs around to big buyers followed. It was a runaway success, he says, and further bolstered his business.

“I returned with plenty of orders.”

Within two years he had bought the land and set up a showroom for SHF on it, right alongside one of the busiest routes in the country.

“I put a sign on the highway and people began to stop in from Johannesburg to visit what became known as this ‘gem in the Midlands’,” he smiles. “The timing was superb.”

Branches in Durban and Johannesburg were soon established. Today there are seven SHF outlets in the country and Steel plans to open another in Cape Town, adding that his aim is to get to 14 ‘galleries’, as the company terms their showrooms.

Today the site outside Howick also contains the Midlands Business Estate, developed by Steel’s company Willmeg Investments, and is most recognisable to the casual passer-by on the highway as the site of Fairfield Dairy, the main tenant on the site. It is just one of a number of projects Steel has been involved in over the years as a developer, a business that he’s been in almost as long as he’s been in furniture.

Steel bought his first property in the Pietermaritzburg CBD in 1994, from where he ran his original furniture restoring business. Other property purchases followed as house prices in the city centre fell during the 1990s, when demographics in South Africa’s previously segregated areas began to change. Steel saw an opportunity to rent these spaces to people pouring into the city in search of work and set up ways to maximise returns on these properties.

Then the city rezoned areas in the city centre to allow previously residential properties to be used for business, and Steel cashed in, realising a substantial profit on his investments.

Today he is involved in much bigger property deals. He won’t divulge figures for publication, but he confirms that in addition to the Athlone Circle development, he is presently involved in a “very big” development in Bloemfontein, another in Cape Town and one in Umhlanga. He is also building himself his dream home in one of Pietermaritzburg’s northern suburbs.

For some, it may seem curious that someone with business interests all over the country would choose to stay so loyal to Pietermaritzburg. Most migrate to the bigger centres like Cape Town, Johannesburg or Durban.

Steel smiles.

“Look at where I work,” he says, referring to the rolling green countryside that surrounds his head office. “And we have the best schools. And our airport has direct flights to Johannesburg.”

“Besides, I feel safest in Pietermaritzburg. It doesn’t have the kind of crime you find in bigger places,” he says.

“This city is full of opportunity.”

Steel’s upbeat outlook extends to the rest of the country too.

“There’s a lot of opportunity in South Africa,” he says. “We [SHF] have grown every year and I believe the gaps are definitely still there to capitalise on.

“I don’t believe in politics or get caught up in what is happening in the world. We operate in our own space.

“People need to think differently,” Steel suggests. “How you think is key”.





WORKSPACE REVOLUTION @ #WORQ

WORDS BY *Derek Alberts*

PHOTOS SUPPLIED UNLESS CREDITED OTHERWISE



The work space revolution is upon the world, and in Pietermaritzburg, WORQ has set the benchmark. Located in the vibrant Victoria Road precinct, WORQ was purpose-built to accommodate creative entrepreneurs in an energising environment to challenge convention.

WORQ is the brainchild of the Hall brothers, Martin and Andrew, who are implementing a pioneering campus-like complex on the site bordered by Victoria Road and Peter Kerchoff Street.



AGENT BOOTH



VIBRANCY AT WORQ

To keep the creative juices flowing, WORQ boasts high-speed digital connectivity, shared administrative services, and arguably its strongest attribute, a culture of innovative thinking among like-minded people. Worq controls all fixed expenses and manages community culture.

WORQ is the brainchild of the Hall brothers, Martin and Andrew, who are implementing a pioneering campus-like complex on the site bordered by Victoria Road and Peter Kerchoff Street. Already boasting the state-of-the-art Hall's Retail outlet, and WORQ, the next piece of the puzzle is the redevelopment of the service station and an enticing initiative focussed on food.

GO BIG - IT'S ART

One wouldn't have expected anything less than a full-tilt commitment to celebrate contemporary art in its unrestrained glory from the WORQ team. Given the power of creativity underpinning the WORQ ethic, the display of original art under the BigArt label is a natural feel-good fit. It is also a parallel initiative that intends to

empower artists, be it hanging from the walls, standing on the floor, or dangling from the rafters.

And yet, the art is not displayed as it would be in a gallery. The works may belong in a gallery, but at WORQ they project more than just a sanitised salute to talent. Instead, the art speaks of heart-felt pride and a sense of ownership, of basking in the glory of artistic greatness, courtesy of the creative contribution by the sons and daughters of the city and its surrounds.

Two key themes dominate the space - the contemporaneity of the art, and a focus on popularising local artists. Naturally, neither these criteria are cast in stone, but the vibrancy of WORQ demands a commitment that goes deeper than the paint on a canvas, and that also celebrates the creative spirit.

Fortunately, the city is awash with artistic talent and the WORQ team doesn't foresee a drought of worthy works anytime soon.

Currently, the work of Siyabonga Sikosana, Louise Hall, Jaap Jacobs, and Dave Gush, among others, are adorning the space.



ONE WOULDN'T
HAVE EXPECTED
ANYTHING LESS

A project is underway for Pietermaritzburg to raise the standard as the country's most technologically progressive and innovative city. It's an ambitious vision to be flighted by a giant flag atop a monument designed and owned by the city's people. Capital caught up with the architects of the vision, Martin Hall and Amal M'aani.

Since time immemorial, man has built monuments to commemorate the dead and celebrate the living. From the grandiose pyramids in honour of a fallen pharaoh, to the triumphant epitaphs of soldiers on rearing horses or an obelisk piercing the sky, monuments have come to represent human milestones, of one kind or another.

Most monuments have both physical presence and symbolic status, and German art historian Helmut Scharf pointed out that a monument's creation speaks of a "consciousness of a specific historical and social situation".

It is this contextual framework that Martin Hall, the visionary behind WORQ, ascribes to. Having brought the WORQ vision of a co-operative work space to reality, Hall has turned his attention to another collaborative endeavour, but at a grander scale.

Simply known as the "flag project", a monument is envisaged to be a tangible manifestation of a much deeper metaphorical reach into the soul of the city.

Destined to replace the existing TOTAL tower, the proposed structure will be the flag bearer for the city's new identity, one that

is defined by creativity, community, contribution, inclusiveness, innovation, ownership, and pride. The nexus is the physical monument and in the spirit of community ownership, Hall has issued

a call for the design of the structure. Entry is free and unrestricted, and on the understanding that a 3D rendition would be required if shortlisted. There are also no rules or guidelines about its design, or what form the structure should take.

"We at WORQ are deliberately vague about the design, we want to see creativity and innovation," said Amal M'aani.

The only prerequisite is the display of sponsors' names, and due regard for building and traffic visibility on a busy intersection, said M'aani.

Much as ownership is important, Hall believes the project needs community buy-in for it to strike a chord with the city.

"The positive effect of pride of one's community and teaching new generations to do the same, could prove to be the single largest contributor to a mass value shift within a community, no matter its size," he said.

"History has taught us that with every recorded paradigm shift, the community had a mass shift in values."

CALL FOR ARTIST PARTICIPATION

- Concept drawings for a monument that will also anchor the flagmast of an outsized national flag.
- Concept must be renditioned in 3D if an entry is short listed.
- The site is the existing TOTAL tower sign, corner of Victoria and Peter Kerchhoff (Chapel) streets.
- The structure must not obscure traffic or impede the vision of motorists.
- Structure's base to measure 2 metres x 2 metres with maximum height of 4 metres.
- The structure must allow for multiple sponsors' plaques to be affixed.
- Submit entries by email to safilag@worq.co.za by no later than 16 December 2018.



THE WONDER OF WARTBURG

There is more to Wartburg than its rich German heritage, not least a buzzing hive of entrepreneurship and a flourishing small business culture.

WORDS BY **Derek Alberts**

Wartburg is synonymous with all things German. Settled in 1849 by a small cluster of German families, Wartburg took its name from the castle in Eisenach where Martin Luther had translated the Bible into German, about 300 years earlier.

Faith runs deep in the community, starting with the name of the ship the immigrants sailed in, the Luther Rose. The ship duly was immortalised in the town's crest, as was the call to "pray and work". That motto still rings true, 170 years later, as contemporary Wartburg's ripples of influence continue to wash over the hamlets of Harburg, New Hanover, Kirchdorf, Lilienthal, Schroeders and Hermannsburg.

Much of that influence is attributable to the fourth-generation German descendants who have forged enterprises and business in the north-eastern reaches of the KZN Midlands.

With an annual rainfall of around 730 mm and a temperate climate, the area lent itself to timber, maize and sugarcane cultivation. The primary agricultural output has diversified into other pursuits, notably beef, chicken and pork, and also spurred the downstream development of secondary industry, and in time, a services sector.

It is fair to say that the overwhelming majority of businesses categorised as secondary and tertiary enterprises, are servicing the geographical area, spanning about 1 900 square km.

Like most urbanised nodes in mainly rural environments, Wartburg's business

culture is driven by networks, contacts and referrals. Important as local economic dynamics are, there is growing recognition among visionary leaders to align themselves with regional business structures. The Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business (PCB) has found support from several businesses in Wartburg (see box) in what is proving to be a mutually-beneficial relationship. The benefits of membership associated with organised business aside, the advances in technology make it possible for a Wartburg-based business to offer its services elsewhere, including the PCB membership base.

The PCB is the voice of business in the city, but also in the surrounding communities, including Wartburg. It is a role the PCB takes seriously, and more so in the context of challenges posed by under-capacitated local government structures.

Speaking of local government, Wartburg is the seat of the uMshwathi Local Municipality that with six other local municipalities, makes up the uMgungundlovu District Municipality that is headquartered in Pietermaritzburg.

But, as residents point out, Wartburg's character is defined by its people and their love for the quaint town and its unique attractions. These include the landmark Orion Wartburger Hof and the 137-year-old Wartburg Kirchdorf School, renowned for its stellar academic achievements, that is a source of collective pride among residents.

So too is the immaculate Wartburg Bowling Club that plays host to both competitive

and social bowls. An institution on Friday evenings is the gathering of social bowlers whose antics on and off the greens are cause for much merriment.

PCB MEMBERS IN WARTBURG

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16 Fountain Hill
www.bouwfin.co.za

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WALTER MEYER PROPERTIES

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033 503 1393
36 Noodsberg Road
www.waltermeyerprop.co.za



The Blue Train counts among the world's top luxury rail journeys that, notwithstanding appearances, demands a veritable behind-the-scenes army to keep the moving five-star hotel on the tracks. One of the men below the radar is Wartburg old boy and part-time musician Eckhart Uken.

WORDS BY **Derek Alberts**

PHOTOS SUPPLIED



HOMEBOY TOOTIN ON THE TRACKS

In the murky world of locomotives and the motors that drive them, mega tenders are the lifeblood of the heavy-duty technical supply and logistics sector. Specialised applications and the sheer cost of equipment make for stratospheric price tags that can only be backed by financial institutions.

The tender process is highly contested territory in South Africa, complicated by its unique empowerment overlay and onerous compliance. Typically the preserve of large multi-national companies joining forces with empowerment entities, the tender process does not smile on small players, says Eckhart Uken, the Managing Director of Workstation Supplies.

The call in January 2017 for five generator sets, each cranking out 550 kVA, the equivalent of 590 horsepower, made it clear to Eckhart this was a big-boy play.

Eckhart and colleague Marius van Rensburg only discovered at the compulsory briefing that the generators would actually power the Blue Train. Rating their chances "less than 1%", Eckhart deferred to Marius, who doggedly attacked the mountain of paperwork over many hours. Counting in their favour was its Kipor generator supplier, Smith Power, who assisted with the technical part of the tender.

Much was the surprise when in May 2017, Eckhart's company Workstation Supplies was short-listed against all of the well-known, established generator suppliers. Against all odds, Workstation Supplies

landed the contract in what was a triumph for small business determination and endeavour, and validation of a transparent tender adjudication process.

Eckhart said the first engines powering the Blue Train 50 years ago were Rolls Royce. After 25 years, they were replaced by Perkins engines which, now also 25 years later, are making way for Deutz engines.

The Perkins engines clocked up some 50 000 hours during their 25-year lifespan.

"If the engine averaged a speed of 100 km/h over those 50 000 hours, each engine would have travelled a distance of five million km over those 25 years," he said.

Reflecting on life and its journey, Eckhart readily concedes that Gauteng and the Blue Train is way down the tracks from his roots in Wartburg in KZN.

Born in Port Shepstone in 1958, Eckhart matriculated from Wartburg Kirchdorf School as a boarder at the Schulerheim, and trod the familiar path to the Pietermaritzburg campus of the then University of Natal.

In between studying towards a B Proc degree, he pursued another life-long passion, that of music. A familiar figure on the local music scene, Eckhart performed at the hotspots in Pietermaritzburg and Durban during the 1980s. Starting out as an one-man band at students' pubs at the Polo Tavern and Imperial in Pietermaritzburg.

He was joined from time to time by his brother Dieter, and together they performed as Brother to Brother.

Eckhart's first full-time, professional gig was at the Margate Hotel, where he took

over from Alan Garrity who had left for Europe in 1982. Thereafter Eckhart played all the major hotel groups throughout South Africa for 13 years, including other KZN venues such as Capital Towers and The Royal Hotel.

Times may have changed, but Eckhart still finds the time to do three or four gigs a month in and around Pretoria.

"Music is still my passion and my favourite past time. While others relax on a weekend golfing or fishing, I prefer doing a laid back Sunday afternoon restaurant gig to recharge my batteries."





The Perfect Place to Retire

There is something deeply alluring about Pietermaritzburg, an ineffable quality that makes it the city of choice among people desiring an exceptional quality of life. One of those people is Professor Ernst Uken who settled in the city after an illustrious career as an energy scientist. CAPITAL caught up with him.

WORDS BY **Derek Alberts**
PHOTOS SUPPLIED

THE WONDER OF LOVE

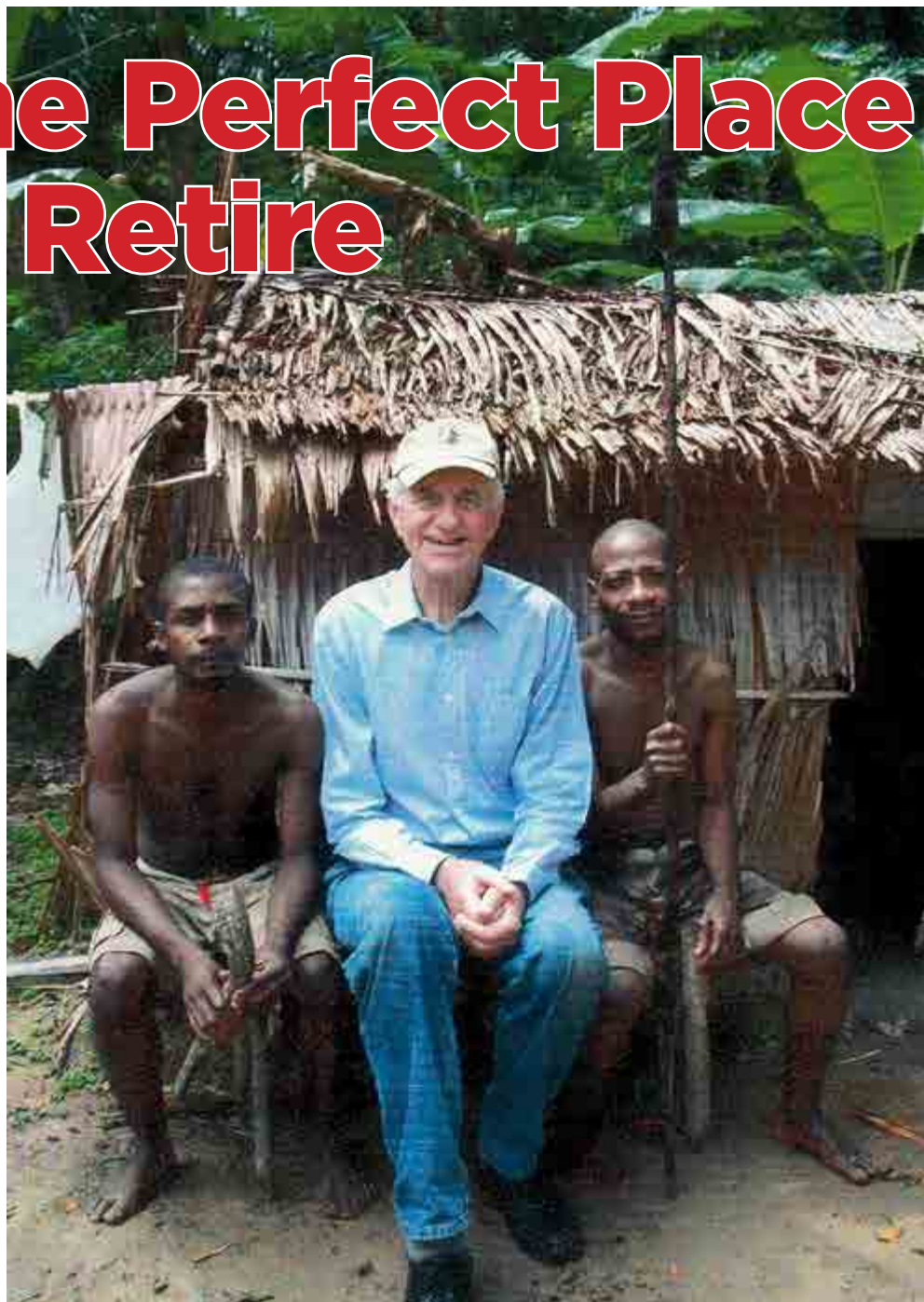
Having worked and studied in Germany, the United States, Gauteng and Cape Town for more than 55 years, Ernst made Pietermaritzburg his City of Choice. Partly motivated to find a place where he could peacefully write and finish his book, 'Essential Interplay of Technology and Culture', he was drawn to the city and its surrounds.

"The beautiful, natural setting of Pietermaritzburg is conducive to creativity in the fields of arts, the sciences, research and development," he said.

"Colleagues and friends thought I was crazy leaving the fantastic sea-views of Camps Bay to settle elsewhere."

However, locals understood only too well why a widower of 10 years would seek the company of family and childhood friends, no matter where they lived.

Ernst conceded Pietermaritzburg was akin to a culture shock, especially having lived in big cities all his life and having to adapt to a slower pace, and coming to terms with an



Ernst Uken discussing Energy Issues with some locals in a remote area of Cameroon.

inherent scepticism to new ideas.

He joined the PAMS (Pietermaritzburg Amateur Music Society) Choir with gusto.

"Rehearsing for the Messiah once again gave me hope and purpose in life," he said.

And so, through the Lutheran Church where he serves as lay-preacher and PADCA (Pietermaritzburg and District Care for the Aged), he met Engela, the chair of the Hayfields Haymakers, and his future wife.

"Neither of us had plans to remarry, but fortunately the arrow of the Pietermaritzburg Cupid hit us fairly and squarely," he said.

Happily settled in a security village, "decorated by the most beautiful gardens in front of each home", it took Ernst and Engela a while getting used to living in a complex.

With an average age of 80 among residents, Ernst observed that older folks are very kind, and that their "ubuntu becomes infectious".

"An anonymous author once claimed that one day we will not be remembered by our achievements, but rather by our compassion towards each other," he says.

The companionship resonates with love, and inspired by the beauty of the area, Ernst and Engela are also having loads of fun visiting various sites, hotels and restaurants. Reflections on these encounters he submits to the global travel portal, TripAdvisor.

"I have been able to reach over 23 000 travellers during the past three months," he said.

"Isn't that wonderful?"



Ernst and Engela Uken have settled into a happy retirement lifestyle in Pietermaritzburg.

A LIFE OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The third son of a missionary family, young Ernst Uken attended school in Wartburg. He could only speak German and Zulu, but quickly mastered English and Afrikaans in order to follow lessons.

To earn pocket money, young Ernst worked at the local trading store during school holidays. It turned out to be a fortuitous opportunity when the owner, who called Ernst "manager", arranged a private study loan to attend the University of Natal. With a BSc (Hons) in Chemistry under his belt, he left to work on the mines where salaries were very good. To quench his thirst for knowledge, he pursued an MSc in Radiochemistry before joining the Mineral Technology Council (MINTEK) as Group Research Leader.

He was seconded to the Nuclear Physics Research Unit of Wits University to commission South Africa's first neutron generator. Imported from the UK, the technology allowed for the monitoring in situ of gold-bearing rock before processing it in the reduction works.

Following the establishment of Pelindaba, MINTEK concentrated on the identification and analyses of trace elements in ore bodies, using the only nuclear reactor in Africa.

As a PhD candidate in neutron activation analysis, Ernst conducted further research at an US university of his choice, with the Texas A&M University cracking the nod. The attraction was NASA's research group, based at the university, was gearing up for the analyses of moon rock samples.

On completion of his PhD, Ernst returned to South Africa to become the Professional Secretary of the Prime Minister's Scientific Advisory Council. Three years later, he became the Director in the Department of Transport, in charge of traffic safety.

Under his watch, and with support from the CSIR and the four provinces at the time, the compulsory wearing of seat belts was introduced. Other new road safety measures included breathalyser testing with the maximum equivalent alcohol-in-blood level of 0,08 and stricter law enforcement. This seven-year period were the only consecutive years on record when road deaths were actually declining.

The world of energy was beckoning, and Ernst completed his MSc (Eng) part-time at Wits. To apply his background in statistics, he accepted a three-year contract as CEO of FEDHASA (Federation of Hotel Associations of Southern Africa). Next up was becoming the first full-time Director of Research (Dean) for all faculties at a Technikon.

At the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, he helped to establish South Africa's first Tourism Research Unit, modelling the flow of tourists throughout the country.

He also helped to establish an Energy Institute which, for the past 26 years, has been organising the international, annual Domestic Use of Energy Conferences and for the past 15 years, the Industrial and Commercial Use of Energy Conferences.

Since energy policy decisions should be taken along economic lines, he completed his MA (Econ) at UCT in "Employment Opportunities in the Tourism Industry".

He is also the holder of two patents (see inset) and has published 124 scientific papers in refereed journals. Through the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, he presented at international conferences in 25 countries. As a founder member of the African-German Network of Excellence in Science (AGNES), he was elected interim chair and still serves as an Evaluator for Mobility Grants for PhD candidates in Africa.



PATENT 1

The first battery-less, solar PV sewing machine at the Energy Institute of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology that holds the patent (SA Pat 96/3405). First prototype exhibited at the US Renewable Energy Laboratories, Colorado Springs. Followed by USAID grant of R550 000R to develop technology at Kliprand, Northern Cape. It comprises 20 converted PV solar sewing machines and five PV solar over-lockers.

PATENT 2

Helped a student develop a concept on wave power and became a co-inventor. Concept registered with the CPUT, but not developed further. A "dual power generation" mechanism, based on incoming and outgoing waves, was tested at the University of Stellenbosch marine laboratory. Project terminated in view of expensive testing and uncompetitive technology.

THE BOOK

'Essential Interplay of Technology and Culture' (ISBN978-3-330-00819-9), aimed at assisting organisations involved in promoting technology in developing communities. Copies available in Pietermaritzburg from Adams Booksellers.



In Superior Company

Tucked away off the main road through the city's south-eastern thornveld suburb of Lincoln Meade, lies one of the city's finest accommodation establishments, Lincoln Cottages.

WORDS BY **Derek Alberts**
PHOTOS BY AGENT BOOTH



AN AWARD-WINNING ESTABLISHMENT

Lincoln Cottages owners Monica and Ken Phillips have every reason to be proud of being voted 'Best Self-Catering Cottages in Pietermaritzburg' in the first-ever SA-Venues.com Guests' Choice Awards.

For one, the voting was by happy guests, mainly in the form of feedback but also through positive guest reviews, surveys done with past guests, and repeat bookings made. This kind of validation has several benefits, not least the association with other award-winning entities, and keeping company with equally quality-focussed establishments.

The award is courtesy of SA-Venues.com portal, meaning that Lincoln Cottages' digital presence has received a significant bump, in a space that is fast becoming the go-to repository for current information.

However, as anyone with insight into the hospitality industry will point out, the glowing guest reviews tend to amplify to a wider audience what locals know already, that Lincoln Cottages count among the city's leading hospitality establishments.

Its reputation is firmly plugged into the power of word-of-mouth, that ineffable quality that cannot be bought for love or money. The eight luxuriously appointed cottages speak for themselves, and also of the passion of the owners who, quite literally, built Lincoln Cottages from the ground up.

Each of the units was built to the exacting specifications of the owners to exceed the demands of contemporary self-catering standards. Fastidious attention was paid to the interior finishes and the landscaped gardens. Fastidious attention was paid to the interior finishes and the landscaped gardens.

Visitors to the city, novice and repeat, are attracted to the

easy charm of Lincoln Cottages. Its proximity to anywhere in Pietermaritzburg means the "full house" sign goes up during most of the city's drawcard events.

GOOD NEWS FOR RETIRED FOLK

Such is the demand for its accommodation offerings, that Lincoln Cottages also offer a month-to-month, on a semi-permanent basis, a package to seniors. The full-service arrangement is in effect a 'bridging home' for elderly folk waiting to get into a permanent retirement home.

The package aims to add value to the "home from home" experience and includes a nutritious meal daily. Health matters are also seen to with a qualified nursing sister on call, just minutes away.

For convenience, trips to shopping centres, and transport to doctors rooms, hair-dressers, and the like, can be arranged, while an on-site cleaning and laundry service is available.

The area is secure and offers off-street parking for retirees who drive and have cars.

Set in lovely maintained gardens, away from the short-term rental guests - who generally attend functions and events in the city - the "home from home" cottages are located in a quiet and secluded area.

Retirees will appreciate the attention to detail, a hallmark of the Lincoln Cottages experience, and will love the hospitality for a wonderful stay.

Monica has an open-door policy and welcomes any enquiries on 072 218 6346 or email info@lincolncottages.co.za

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Packaging prowess on display

WORDS AND PHOTO BY *Derek Alberts*

A new carton folding and gluing machine adds a further string to the bow of Colour Display Print in its aim to offer a complete printing solution.

Few people in business understand the importance of diversifying operations better than Colin Dunsdon, MD of Colour Display Print. The printer's most recent foray into packaging not only underscores the principle, but also speaks of a coherent growth strategy that keeps pace with the rapidly evolving market.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, Colour Display Print started off as a paint-depositing facility that specialised in the manufacture of colour charts for the paint industry. The niche operation was the only one of its kind in South Africa to reproduce colours in all their hues accurately. Serving primarily Plascon and Dulux for many years, Dunsdon anticipated that change was inevitable.

"In time, printing technology developed to the point where colour charts of acceptable quality could be printed. That was our cue to move with the market and look at a printing press," he said.

The decision to invest in a six-colour press was an easy one, said Dunsdon.

"We wanted to leverage our expertise in colour matching, and a state-of-the-art press that could reproduce colour to exacting standards, seemed the obvious choice," he said.

The press rapidly found favour with a host of clients demanding print excellence, from glossy magazines to journals. Soon Colour Display Print set the benchmark for high quality colour printing.

"We're fortunate to call on some truly world-class skills and expertise in Gary Gratwicke who knows how to extract the most from the technology," he said.

Spurred by growth, more investment followed in what became a complementary assembly of equipment, a theme that resonates loudly throughout the company's growth.



"At the end of the day, it's about diversifying our operations, and that meant investing in print finishing equipment," he said. Among the new hardware making it onto the floor was a folding machine, gang-stitcher, and PUR binder.

Next up was the third diversity leap into the world of packaging, through an investment in a "carton folding and gluing machine", that pretty much describes what it does.

"It's a remarkably versatile machine that is able to fold and glue

cartons of various sizes and thicknesses at speeds up to 8 000 units an hour," he said.

The machine slotted in seamlessly into Colour Display Print's existing arsenal of printing technology.

"Our die cutter, for example, works in tandem with the carton folding and gluing machine to offer intricate packaging solutions, including "crash-lock" capability, (the inter-linking of flaps at the bottom of a box) at an affordable cost," he said.

MD Colin Dunsdon (left) and factory manager Kevin Williams with the carton folding and gluing machine.



Phase 3 facts

Total cost R400 million

Gross lettable area: 22 000 sq/m

Concrete poured: 40 000 tonnes

Reinforcing steel 1 13 tonnes

Brickwork: 1.5million bricks

Structural steel: 370 tonnes

Glass to shopfronts: 1 730m2

ICONIC DOMINANCE

The Phase 3 extension has cemented the dominance of Liberty Midlands Mall in the regional retail space.

WORDS AND PHOTO BY **Derek Alberts**

Where architecture meets retail

There is no doubt that the Phase 3 extension has added a fresh perspective to the Liberty Midlands Mall, not least a number of architectural features to impart an iconic touch.

Arguably the most prominent stand-out element of Phase 3 is the piazza and the array of outlets, specifically the three sustenance-offering outlets of *Rocomamas*, *Mo-zam-bik* and *The Daily Coffee Cafe*. Patrons at these three establishments overlook a splashpad — a ground level fountain with multiple spouts that has been

designed to induce a soothing ambience and, on a hot summer day, a cooling effect.

A fountain with multiple spouts that has been designed to induce a soothing ambience and, on a hot summer day, a cooling effect.

There is nothing mild about the retail experience though. The state-of-the-art Checkers outlet that anchors Phase 3 is a red-hot favourite with shoppers, certainly judging by the rave reviews on social media.

No less impressive is the sense of laid-back luxury at Coricraft, a theme that resonates with other retailers in the tenant mix, including Pick 'n Pay Clothing, Cell Plus, Mattress King, The Hub, Leather Gallery, Just Plastics, and Bargain Books.

Also in the mix is a significant expansion of Woolworths, while Midlands Laser Clinic and Planet Fitness balance the overwhelmingly heavy retail dominance. In the interests of convenience and accessibility, about 50% of the additional parking is under cover.

Having opened about nine months ago, the

new phase has added an additional 22 000 square metres of retail space to the mall that now boasts an impressive total gross lettable area (GLA) of 76 000 sq/m.

Much as the mall represents a sizable chunk of real estate, its real attraction is the convenient concentration of retail space.

Co-owned by JSE-listed Liberty2Degrees and the Liberty Group, the expanded mall is now valued at R2.2 billion.

Much as the mall represents a sizable chunk of real estate, both in physical extent and monetary valuation, its real attraction is the convenient concentration of retail and related facilities. With the Phase 3 extension, the mall now boasts more than 200 outlets across the shopping spectrum, including banks, cinemas, and a host of niche retailers.

Add an active programme of events, exhibits and activities throughout the year, and it is clear that Liberty Midlands Mall will continue to dominate the retail landscape. ■

Go, Nolan!

Tropika Island Winner Persues his BCom Strategic Management Degree with the IIE's Varsity College

Words and photo supplied

When looking at Nolan Jonathan, one would never expect that he not only spent a couple of weeks on an island with South Africa's most esteemed celebrities, including the likes of Tracey McGregor and DJ Zinhle, in the Tropika Island of Treasures gameshow, but that he also walked away the winner of a million Rand.

Jonathan is a part-time IIE BCom Strategic Management student at The IIE's Varsity College Pietermaritzburg and an aspiring musician and business owner.

Says Jonathan: "My decision to study part-time at The IIE's Varsity College Pietermaritzburg has been the most

valuable investment into my career thus far. I co-own and run a business specialising in the commercial vehicle industry and studying towards my degree has helped me to increase profits and my business simply runs better. This, I believe, is due to the skills and knowledge I have acquired so far in my part-time studies."

Jonathan displayed a determination on the gameshow Tropika Island of Treasure and has carried this into his work and his part-time studies at The IIE's Varsity College Pietermaritzburg. He cites his 3 year old son as his main reason for pursuing a tertiary education later on in his life - to provide him a better life and show his son that if one

wants something, one must go for it as it is never too late.

Verona Khan, Vice Principal The IIE's Varsity College Pietermaritzburg part time division added that, when meeting with Jonathan 4 years ago, it was evident that this was the right qualification for him. "I am glad that Nolan saw the value in my advice to him regarding our part-time IIE BCom Strategic Management Degree. I am so proud to have been part of his journey with us as he currently pursues his 4th year of study. Nolan should indeed be very proud of himself as we all are at The IIE's Varsity College Pietermaritzburg Campus. Well done Nolan!"



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Guest speaker and entertainer extraordinaire Siv Ngesi with the Pronel team (ltr) Chantal Ganesh, Laurelle Rayners, Kaitlin Mornet, Siv Ngesi, Bridget Jones, Sarah Hancock, Liezel van Antwerp and Kerry Lyn Townes.

It's about people

Pronel has its origins in George, in the southern Cape, when a 21-year younger Brigid Jones, with more than 10 years experience in the recruitment industry behind her, set up shop. Fast forward to the present in Pietermaritzburg, and a much wiser Jones is able to reflect on the company's longevity, and the reasons for Pronel's success.

With a combined industry experience of 65 years, from the managing director to the frontline office support administrator, Pronel has clearly stood the test of time..

Much of the success can be attributed to a culture of credibility, consistency, candidate and client relationships, and a sound control of cash flow, she said.

It's been an eventful journey in which Jones has had her fair share of challenges, including an office that burnt down, a thieving payroll administrator, not to mention a litany of labour brokering issues.

To keep going, Jones and her team embraced change in its many manifestations, and kept the passion alight.

"We've invested hugely in the value of human capital and believe that no robot can replace the skill of an individual," she said.

Jones identified two key themes - many of the skills shortages in South Africa are also experienced by the global market, and that the screening of candidates became infinitely more complex.

The objective is to add value to a client's experience

"References, ITC, criminal checks and verification of matric and other qualification verifications are the norm, as is an overview of any public social media platforms," she said.

Jones pointed out that matric no longer was the minimum requirement. "A related tertiary qualification is very often a prerequisite now for most vacancies," she said.


In this regard, Pronel goes to great lengths to prepare work seekers for the world of work by helping them to compile their CVs and prepare for interviews, with particular emphasis on the expectations of the employment industry.

"I also undertake training at various educational institutions and as a group, Pronel invites unemployed people to do short course to improve their employment prospects, at our offices," she said,

For a number of years, Jones also chaired the regional Linx Personnel, an association of recruitment companies that aims to upskill consultants. "The objective is to add value to a client's experience by working with one service provider, but also to draw on the networking power of fellow professionals to allow for the placement of the most suitable candidate," she said.

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The management team at Nedbank Business Banking in Pietermaritzburg prides itself on being entrenched in the greater Pietermaritzburg and Hinterland community. The team is headed by Lancelot Mhlomo, Regional Manager for Retail and Business Banking.



Debbi Robinson, Area Client Manager: Business Banking Commercial, says a deep connection with the community is what underlies both her personal and professional values.

Debbi believes that her strong grounding in the Pietermaritzburg community enables her to understand and provide a unique, personal service to clients. Barry Philip, Area Client Manager: Business Banking Agriculture believes the local knowledge of

|| Nedbank Pietermaritzburg regional team, are committed to assisting clients with professional advice... ||

agricultural intricacies and conditions gives Nedbank the leading edge in terms of advice and offerings to their clients.

Robinson, who was schooled in the city and studied at UKZN, is the Nedbank Business Banking Area Client Manager for Pietermaritzburg and Hinterland. She prides herself on being part of the community that Nedbank strives to reach through its diverse offerings, and says it is this connection that makes her perform her duties with passion. Philip is also based in Pietermaritzburg and actively involved in the community.

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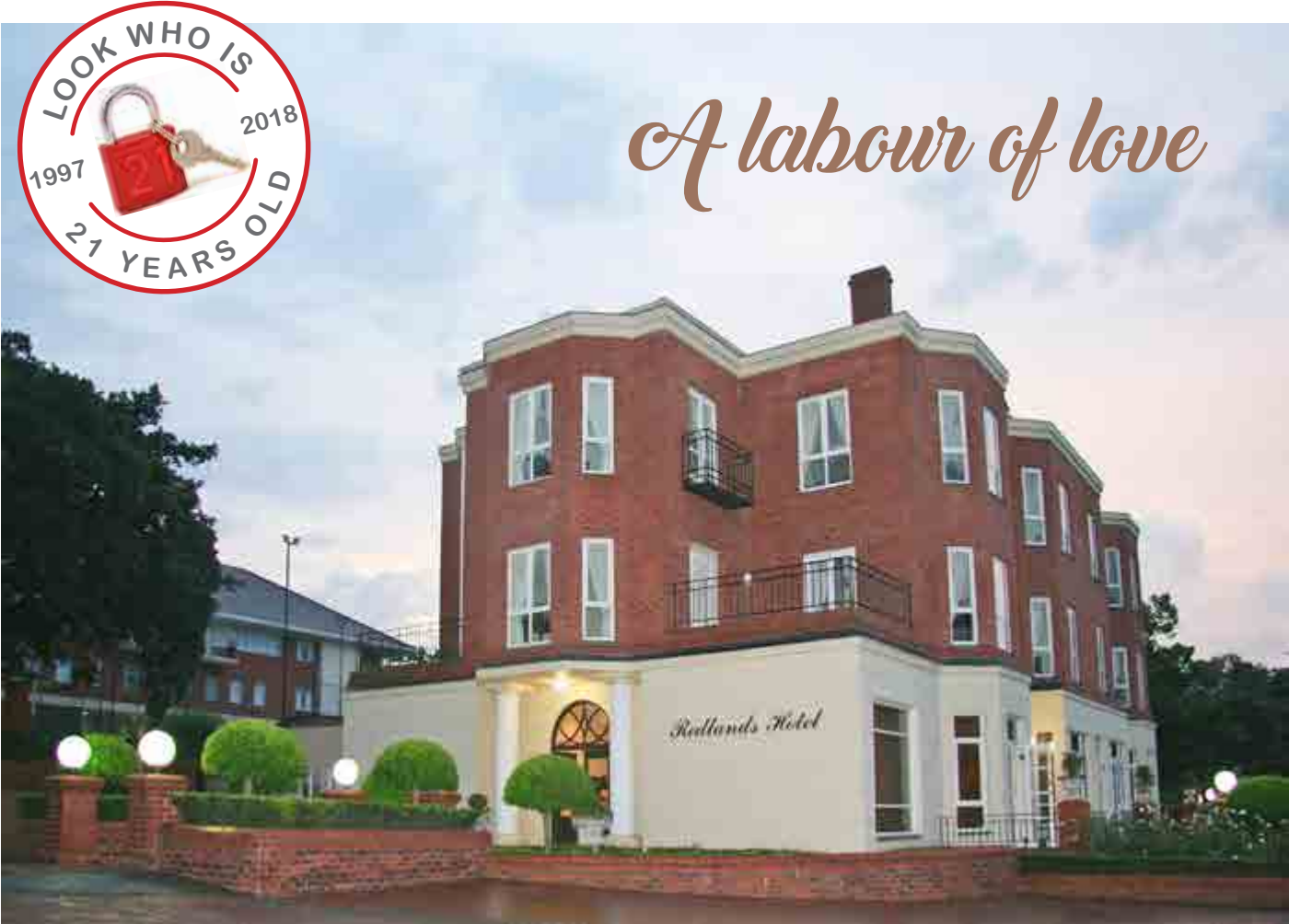


Debbi Robinson and the Nedbank Pietermaritzburg team

The Business Banking team is stationed at 460 Townbush Office Park, Cascades. They, along with the Nedbank Pietermaritzburg regional team, are committed to assisting clients with professional advice, industry-specific solutions and a comprehensive range of financial products and services.

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REDLANDS HOTEL

Redlands Hotel is among a few establishments to boast a Valentine's Day anniversary, when on February 14 in 1997, Janis Hesse unveiled what had been a labour of love. With husband Glenn, Janis imparted an opulent ambience with a judicious selection of decor, much of which was sourced from her antique shop.

In the early days, Janis juggled her time between three children, the antique shop and Redlands. But as the children grew up, she was able to dedicate more of her time to the hotel.

Redlands' growing popularity saw the addition of 10 new deluxe rooms in 2007, and four additional self-catering lodges for a full complement of 26 rooms.

To do justice to the hotel's growth, general manager Paul Laing was appointed to tend to the day-to-day running. Despite not having any formal hotel background, Laing's passion for the industry and his willingness to learn made him the perfect fit. With more than eight years at CCA (Now & Beyond), mainly at the uber-luxurious Londolozi and Phinda reserves, Laing has brought an exceptional customer ethic to Redlands.

"I'm incredibly fortunate to translate the love of hosting guests in the bush to what the team is able to offer our guests at Redlands," he said.

Striving to create a relaxing environment for guests to unwind after a days work

Laing takes pride in the dedication and growth of the Redlands team. A case in point is assistant manager Brenda Memela who arrived as a receptionist and steadily progressed through the ranks.

"Lindi Mbambo, Florence Dladla, Maureen Majozi, Audrey Mhlungu and Nicholas Majozi have been here since the start and

a number of staff are not that far behind," he said.

The hotel is the centrepiece of the Redlands Estate that was developed by Glenn. Its tranquil setting belies its proximity minutes away from the city's historic CBD.

"Our central location ensures that we're well supported by visiting corporate and government guests, not to mention parents who visit their children at the private schools in the surrounding area," he said.

Laing said repeat business and word-of-mouth referrals are key to the success of Redlands Hotel. "We strive to create a relaxing environment for our guests to unwind after a days work," he said.

Redlands has two dedicated function rooms and specialises in smaller, more intimate functions and weddings, Laing said. Depending on seating configurations, the boardroom can accommodate up to 20 delegates comfortably, while the Redlands Room can seat up to 80 guests cinema-style.

The acclaimed dining room is open to the public daily for breakfast, lunches and dinner, Laing said, "We're proud of our menus, but booking is essential."



The good, the bad and everybody else...

WORDS BY **Derek Alberts**
PHOTOS BY AGENT BOOTH

Golf is not for everyone, but don't tell that to someone who takes the game seriously if they're not very good at it. Not that it mattered too much at this year's PCB golf day, sponsored by PWC, at the Victoria Country Club. Traditionally less about the golf and more about the spirit of the game, this year was no different.





Grouped in teams of fours, golfers found themselves beholden to the law of averages where everybody's ability was on a par, or out on a limb because they were either very good or very poor.

What is not in dispute is the fun and camaraderie on and off the course.

Regardless, the teams soldiered on and completed the 18 holes with some foursomes claiming a deeper acquaintance with the course than others.

When all is said and done, the day produced both great and entertaining golf, depending on the perspective. What is not in dispute is the fun and camaraderie on and off the course.

For the record, the foursome of Tim de la Hey (Aintree Lodge), Rodney Klute (PWC), Paul Campbell (Natal Property) and Mark Coetzee (Private Property) returned the winning score of 96, while Mark Moodley (PWC) played closest to pin, and Mark Coetzee also hit the longest drive.

It's a funny game

Golfers may not think so, but their actions often is the stuff of comedy.

Here are 10 reasons why:

one

The clothes they wear.

two

Swinging at a ball and missing it.

three

Hitting a ball where it is not supposed to go.

four

Losing a ball in the water trap.

five

Hunting for a ball in the rough.

six

Digging a ball out of a bunker.

seven

Putting for the hole more than five times.

eight

Driving a golf cart into a tree.

nine

Losing one's way around a golf course.

ten

Snapping a club in half out of frustration.



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DEREK ALBERTS HAS THE LAST WORD

Having a really Bad Hair Day

The colour purple does not suit me, never has, and never will. I was reminded, again, at the Women in Business shindig at the Royal Show, of the colour's utter unsuitability to my countenance.

The opposite is true for my significant other. Her favourite colour is purple that indirectly accounts for the name of the company, Purple Boa Creations, we founded way back in 2001.

But I digress. Standing in the queue with hundreds of other women, I felt exposed and vulnerable. One of a handful of token men at the event, I was being treated with kid gloves and as an object of polite curiosity by the veritable army of women. We, the male specimens, were in a miniscule minority, and it showed.

So, when the offer, more like a command, was issued for photographs to be taken, I meekly took my place because I couldn't think of a reason not to. To be clear, I normally find myself on the other side of the camera and the prospect of being captured, even digitally, made me fidget and sweat.

Trust another outnumbered male, to wit Agent Booth, aka Garth Kemp, to observe the discomfort and present a part solution - a wig in all its purple glory, to soften those manly features. Under the circumstances, a crown of thorns would have done the trick, anything to deflect attention from my lumbering awkwardness.

By contrast, Tracy was her composed self. Resplendent in a red feather boa, also courtesy of Agent Booth, she cut a serene figure of elegance and grace.

At first, the purple wig did little to inspire confidence or hide the awkwardness; if anything, it harked back to the saying about a sow's ear and a silk purse. In all fairness to the wig with its ticklish mass of plastic hair, it wasn't meant to improve the appearance of its wearer. Rather, it's role was to introduce an element of fun to the unfamiliar proceedings. Judging by the merriment all round, this the purple wig had achieved and more, that is, once I saw myself in the mirror, and had to chortle at my bad hair day.



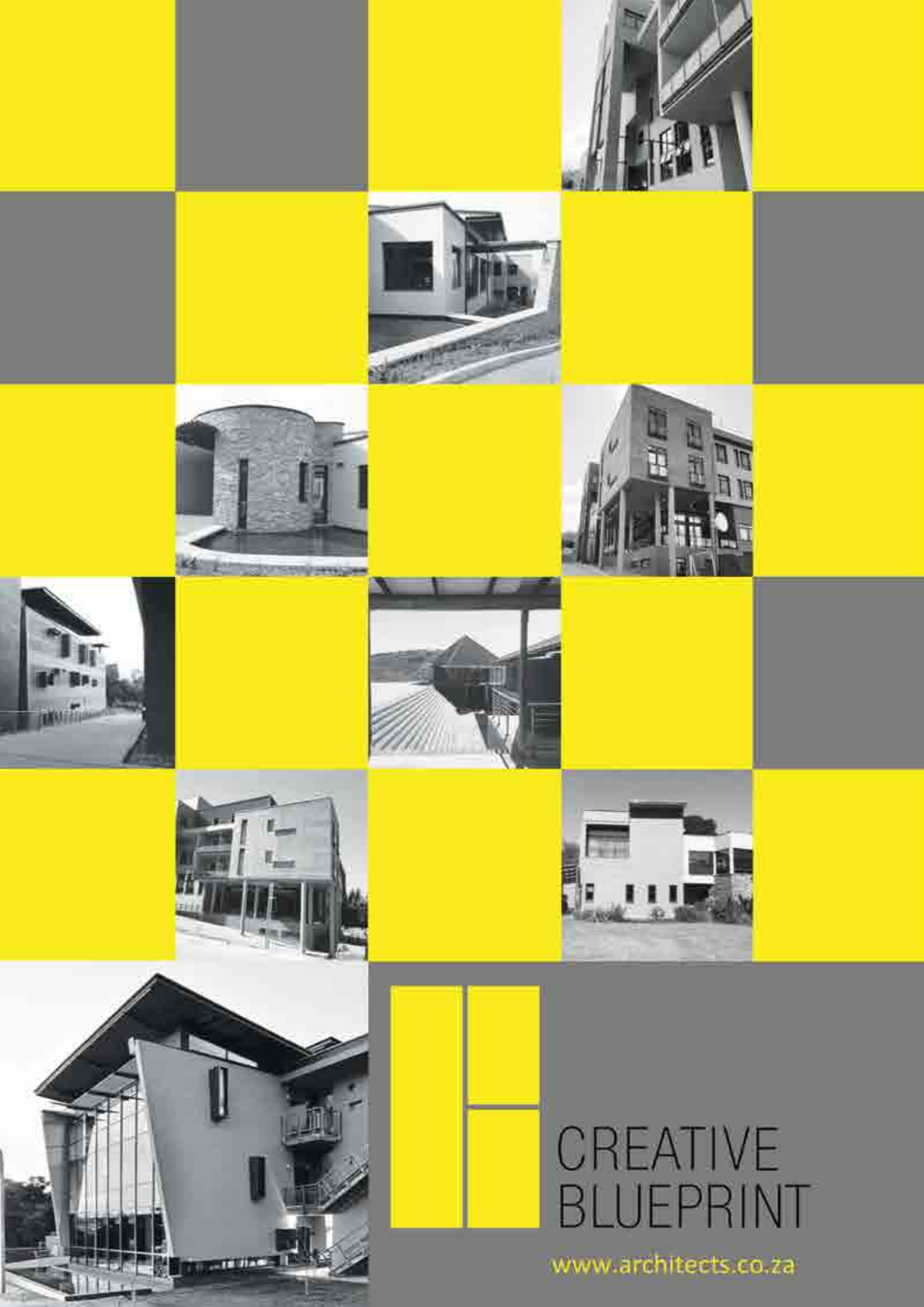
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