

MAYOR'S SPEECH FOR THE WINE TASTING EVENT AT THE DURBAN INDABA 2011 ON SUNDAY 08 MAY 2011

Let me first acknowledge the presence of the following people:

Chairperson of the Gauteng Tourism Authority Board Mr Khehla Mthembu,
CEO of Gauteng Tourism Authority Ms Dawn Robertson
Gauteng Tourism Authority Regional Manager in West Rand Mr Thabo Matsafu
Dr Heine Wiese
Mr Khulu Mbongo and also take this opportunity to acknowledge our sponsors who made this exhibition a success.

Stonehaven on Vaal represented by Rosemary Anderson
Avis Car Rental represented by Carole Mahlangu
Vaal Meander represented by Wayne Pienaar
Vaal River Meander
Riverside Lifestyle Resort
Zorgvliet Spa
Riviera on Vaal
Annona Day Spa
Makro Vaal
Call of the Wild Video and Photography

Ladies and gentlemen, let me also thank you for making time to visit our stand. There must have been other invitations from other exhibitors, but you chose to accommodate us, I thank you for that.

Without any waste of time, let me give you a brief background of the Sedibeng region. Our region, previously known as Lekoa Vaal, found its name from the Vaal River as the natural resource. The river is our area's greatest asset which has the potential to attract local, national and international tourist. It is the District which is primarily an eco- tourism and heritage destination because of massive Vaal River and historical happenings that have occurred in the area.

The Sedibeng District was established in the year 2000 on the rich history of Evaton, Heidelberg, Sharpeville, Boipatong, Sebokeng, Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Vaal Oewers, Vaal Marina, Suikerbosrand and many more interesting sites.

Our region is situated in the South Eastern Gauteng, approximately 60 km from Johannesburg, along the scenic Vaal, Klip and Suikerbos Rivers. A variety of attractions are offered encapsulating a vast cultural heritage and historical events, including the political breakthroughs that led to the country's turn about.

Such events include the Vereeniging Peace Treaty, which led to the end of the Anglo Boer war, the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the end of Apartheid in the 1990's. Later, in 1994, democratic elections were held and that led to the signing of the Constitution in Sharpeville.

An abundance of attractions make the Sedibeng District any tourist's dream-come-true. One of these attractions is the *Vaal River Wine Route*. The project came into being following the partnership between the wine estates and product owners (**ie the hotel owners and other stakeholders**) in the Vaal. The main aim of the Wine Route when it started was to give our region the same prominence that is enjoyed by areas in the Western Cape and the Northern Cape. And I think we have succeeded but we are still working hard to take this to another level.

We invited you here today to get a feel of what we can offer when it comes to our wines. Every winter for about 5 weeks a dozen or more Vaal venues align themselves with the best South African Wine Estates and for those 5 weeks each become a mini Wine Estate, representing wines from those Vineyards and immersing themselves in treating guests to an experience of fine wine tasting. This year, the month-long inland wine route will take place from the **9th of July to the 14th of August 2011** on every Saturday and Sunday from **Midday to 18h00**.

Our venues range from the relaxed ambience of a Country Inn, to sipping wine on the terrace of a luxury hotel, moving on to a tranquil garden setting on the river shore or even sitting in front of a roaring fireplace of a cosy river pub. You can't ask for more. The Vaal is home to a frenzy of activities and things to do, so if you feel like a great winter weekend break, come to the Vaal and celebrate South African Wines.

Thank you for coming.