

# Bon Hotel Bloemfontein Central wins WTM Responsible Tourism Global Award

BON Hotel Bloemfontein Central has been announced as the winner of the WTM Responsible Tourism Global Award. The announcement was made on 7 November at the WTM London event. Guy Stehlik, CEO of BON Hotels, received the award on behalf of the hotel's staff and its GM, Pieter Van Rooyen.

"Fifty years on and Bon Hotel Bloemfontein Central is still rated as one of the best hotels in South Africa," said Stehlik. "And while it has a long history and strong roots in the Bloemfontein community, it's ahead of the curve when it comes to issues of empowerment, sustainability, and responsible tourism."



Source: Supplied | Bon Hotel Bloemfontein Central suite

Situated in the popular Bloem Plaza shopping centre in the Free State's capital city, the hotel boasts a unique shareholding structure, a world-class training and development programme, and a long-standing partnership with Towers of Hope, an NGO that is located across the street from the hotel and that works to improve the lives of marginalised citizens in the inner-city of Bloemfontein.

"Looking at the calibre of all the nominees, we were absolutely honoured to receive the regional WTMRT Gold Award and even more so to scoop the Global Award. The recognition for the work that we've put in feels wonderful, but the real joy comes from knowing that our efforts are truly making a difference in the lives of our staff members and of those within our community," comments Van Rooyen.

## Inclusive workplace

The hotel is owned by three shareholders, with the remaining 51% of the shares in the business being allocated to staff. "The staff have ownership, which facilitates staff retention through development and promotion—and enhances service delivery. Most of our management team have progressed through the ranks," explains Van Rooyen.

"We're very proud of Bon Hotel Bloemfontein Central's recent achievements and send our heartiest congratulations to each and every member of the team. We look forward to seeing how this hotel and all the others within our portfolio will continue to make their mark on the African tourism industry and in the hearts of all who visit our magical continent," concludes Stehlik.

**Those recognised for 2022 included:**

- Asian Trails – destination management company in Thailand
- Asilia Africa – authentic safari experience, Kenya & South Africa
- Audley Travel – tailor-made specialist, UK
- Better Places – tailor-made tours specialist, Netherlands
- Cinnamon Hotels – luxury hotel brand, Sri Lanka
- Exodus – adventure operator, UK
- Explore Worldwide – adventure travel company, UK
- Futurismo Azores Adventures – adventure tourism operator, the Azores
- Gorilla Highlands – tailor-made tours in Rwanda, Uganda and DR Congo
- Hilton Grand Vacations – vacation ownership operator, USA
- Ilunion Hotels – hotel chain in Spain
- InOut Hostel – sustainable hostel in Barcelona, Spain
- Japan-San – Japan
- Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project – ensures the fair and ethical treatment of porters
- Killarney Park Hotel – Ireland
- Lemon Tree Hotels – India
- PT Pran Indo Permata Abadi (P.I.P.A.) – Indonesia
- Royal Mountain Travel – travel experiences curated by locals in Nepal
- TEMES, Costa Navarino destination developer – Greece
- TFPD: Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge – South Africa
- The Travel Corporation – USA
- Therme – wellbeing resorts, Romania
- Trans Bhutan Trail – Bhutan
- TUI Care Foundation – Cyprus
- Water Street, Kerala – experiential tourism project, India
- Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge – South Africa

The panel of industry professionals filtered through masses of applications to choose the finalists among entries in eight categories:

- Decarbonising travel and tourism
- Sustaining employees and communities through the pandemic
- Destinations Building Back Better Post-Covid
- Increasing diversity in tourism: How Inclusive is our Industry?

- Reducing plastic Waste in the Environment
- Growing the Local Economic Benefit
- Access for the Differently-Abled: as Travellers, Employees and Holidaymakers
- Increasing Tourism's Contribution to Natural Heritage and Biodiversity
- Conserving Water and Improving Water Security and Supply for Neighbours
- Contributing to Cultural Heritage

On the awards, WTM Responsible Tourism Adviser and Chair of the Judges, Harold Goodwin, says: "To be recognised in the WTM Responsible Tourism Awards is a significant achievement. The Awards single out recognition for those who are determined to take responsibility, have a positive impact and make tourism better. Once again, we were overwhelmed with the quality of entries from tourism business and leaders who are making a difference."

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