



Southern Sun

Press release

24 November 2022

Beacon Island Resort celebrates 50 golden years of hospitality

Beacon Island Resort, Southern Sun's landmark Plettenberg Bay hotel, overlooking the Indian Ocean and the Robberg beach in the Garden Route region of the Western Cape, is celebrating five decades of creating unforgettable holidays for generations of families from South Africa and abroad.

The hotel first opened in December 1972, introducing holiday makers to a new resort experience that brought a wealth of business and job creation opportunities to the then small seaside town, and placing Plettenberg Bay on the vacation destination map over the last fifty years.

Laurance Hodes, Chairman of the Board of the Beacon Island Resort, says that in addition to the resort's exceptional offerings and service to guests, its contribution to local economic development and job creation in Plettenberg Bay has been significant. "Beacon Island is a resort with a difference – its impact on the town of Plettenberg Bay and the surrounding communities has seen it become central to the identity of this beautiful coastal town and have a strong impact on those who reside in the area. It also has a special place in the hearts of the many guests who come back year after year to make memories with their families at this one-of-a-kind holiday resort."

Barend Olivier, who has been the GM of the resort since 2020 says that Southern Sun's commitment to excellence in hospitality has seen the resort receive a wide range of awards over the years. These have included Travellers Choice and TripAdvisor Awards, GNEX – Perspective Magazine Awards, Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards, and Fedhasa Hospitality Awards, all recognising the resort's exceptional offerings as well as its role in the environment where it is situated.

Commenting on the resort's milestone, Olivier says, "It is an honour to be the General Manager of the Beacon Island Resort as it celebrates its fiftieth year, and to have the opportunity to commemorate the special place that it holds for so many – from our great team of employees to past hotel general managers, to our loyal contractors and suppliers, to the local community – and, to our most valued guests who return time and again to share their own milestones and memories with us."

The *Beacon Isle Hotel*, as it was first known, was the brainchild of visionary hotelier, Sol Kerzner, who recognised the potential of the site where the hotel is built – a natural outcrop of land between Plettenberg Bay's Main Beach and Robberg Beach, giving it the impression of being an island. The site has a distinctive history having been a whaling station at the turn of the twentieth century which became the location of a small hotel in 1940. In 1972, this was demolished and replaced with the six-storey *Beacon Isle Hotel* developed by the Brian Stocks Group and designed by architect, André Hoffe.

Today, the Beacon Island Resort commands one of the finest positions in Plettenberg Bay and attracts travellers from around the globe, offering escapism, picturesque beauty and a range of fine facilities, with a magnificent location in one of the world's most spectacular destinations. With a choice of 200 nautically themed rooms creating an atmosphere of comfort and relaxation, and as one of Southern

Sun's timeshare resorts, it offers lifetime holidays to guests who enjoy shared ownership through timeshare.

Beacon Island was the first building in South Africa designed with a large multi-storey atrium and features six tiers of access galleries that lead to the rooms, positioned around the sky-lit space. The whole hotel structure is supported by two great arches that come down to ground at four points.

Samantha Croft, Operations Director for Southern Sun Timesharing explains that the hotel was a ground-breaking design in South Africa, showcasing the vast proportions of the atrium, while also offering a wealth of carefully detailed intimate spaces: "Since Beacon Island opened, our hotel has been through a few major refurbishments to keep it fresh and contemporary – always delivering excellence in accommodation and the ultimate holiday experience. We have also made sure that our entertainment, facilities and food and beverage cater to every holiday need and are delivered with warm hospitality by our knowledgeable and friendly team of staff."

The three most recent refurbishments entailed fully refurbishing 200 bedrooms, bathrooms, indoor pool, Cascades floor, Lagoon Room, Beacon Café, Gazebo Lounge, Captain's Cabin, Robberg Room and the Sea Lounge Bar. The foyer was upgraded during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The resort's fifty-year legacy is personified by its dedicated team of staff, some of whom started when it opened. Joe Moodley, who joined the resort's team as concierge in 1972 and stayed on until he retired with 40 years long-service, says that he was first appointed by Sol Kerzner on a one-year contract. "One year was never going to be enough, and when I was asked to stay on, I was delighted to do so – I like Plettenberg Bay and I love the hotel."

He adds that over the years, he met several South African greats, including Dr Chris Barnard and Gary Player, and worked for many excellent general managers. "I have also had the privilege of seeing loyal guests coming back to the resort again and again, and then seeing their children coming to stay with the next generation of children. There's no doubt in my mind that the Beacon Island Resort is the best resort in the country, and I'm sure one of the best in the world."

On Monday, 21 November 2022, members of the Beacon Island Resort Board, Southern Sun executives and employees gathered to celebrate the resort's milestone anniversary. Patty Butterworth, CEO of Plett Tourism congratulated the Beacon Island Resort on fifty years of hospitality, and Laurance Hodes, Chairman of the Board of the Beacon Island Resort raised a toast to welcoming guests for many more decades to come.



Beacon Island Resort - 21 November 2022: Mr. John van Rooyen, Beacon Island Resort Board Member; Adv. Laurance Hodes, Beacon Island Resort Board Chairperson; Mr. Barend Olivier, Beacon Island Resort General Manager; Ms. Samantha Croft, Southern Sun Resorts Operations Director; Mr. Gary Kaplan, Beacon Island Resort Board Member; Mr. Robert Segal, Beacon Island Resort Board Member; Mr. Tony Ridl, Beacon Island Resort Board Member

ISSUED BY SOUTHERN SUN. FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

Candy Tothill | General Manager of Corporate Affairs | 084 516 7525 | candy.tothill@southernsun.com
OR *Neo Mboniswa* | PR and Communications Manager | 082 466 2161 | neo.mboniswa@southernsun.com

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