



Press Release  
August 2023

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**Southern Sun de Wagen announces re-opening just six weeks after devastating flash flood**

*Stellenbosch, 4th August 2023 – Southern Sun de Wagen, an iconic historical hotel located in the heart of South Africa’s most famous wine region, proudly announced its re-opening on Friday, 4th August, just six weeks after a flash flood wreaked havoc on its premises on 14th June 2023. The hotel’s resilience and determination, coupled with the extraordinary efforts of the staff and contractors, have enabled a remarkable refurbishment and restoration process in record time.*

On that fateful day the highest rainfall in 47 years was recorded by the province and the Eerste River burst its banks. Within the hour, the nearby Southern Sun de Wagen was flooding as water gushed through the adjacent street and flowed into the hotel. Hotel manager Abel Pienaar explained, “We were literally knee deep in water, wading through the hotel to assist guests with evacuation. We did everything we could to prevent the water from entering the reception and lounge and other ground floor areas but the flood came so fast that the damage was done. The flood caused significant destruction to the hotel’s ground level, including the Kuyperhuis courtyard pool, woodwork, furniture, joineries, and floors. Once the water subsided, we realised the extent of the damage and it was evident that the entire ground level required a comprehensive refurbishment and repair effort.”

Despite the challenges faced, over the subsequent six weeks, the refurbishment team worked tirelessly to restore the hotel. In addition, they conducted thorough electrical and mechanical systems tests, including on water pumps, pool pumps, air con pumps, heat pumps, and water tanks to ensure the safety and comfort of guests upon the reopening.

“The restoration period has been phenomenally swift, thanks to our project manager and his incredibly determined and dedicated team who have worked around the clock to make sure that the hotel was closed for as short a time as possible and to ensure that it could re-open promptly,” Pienaar added.

Southern Sun de Wagen is more than just a boutique hotel; it is a living testament to South Africa’s rich history and cultural heritage. The hotel first opened in 2021 as a joint vision between Remgro and Southern Sun. A collection of historic farmstead buildings dating back to the early 1900s was restored

and re-imagined creating a unique and charming boutique hotel in Stellenbosch. The hotel's white-walled Cape Dutch heritage, complemented by elegant interiors across its three country houses (Wagenhuis, Kuyperhuis, and Roeshuis), offers a collection of 22 bedrooms. Exposed wooden beams, elegant brass and marble bathrooms, and indigenous flora framing a courtyard pool add to the hotel's historic value.

The flood refurbishment extended beyond the structural elements to preserve the hotel's historical authenticity and special care was taken to repaint the exterior with a unique paint, specially designed for such old homes. The interiors of rooms affected by the flood were also repainted, ensuring that the hotel retains its charm and heritage.

The management of Southern Sun de Wagen expressed their gratitude to the staff members who displayed immense dedication during this time. Some staff members were relocated to other hotels, while those remaining worked tirelessly to keep reservations coming in for August onwards. Additionally, the contractors' dedication and the sense of community displayed by everyone involved contributed to the successful and swift restoration of a unique and very special hotel.

"We are open for business, and we can't wait to welcome our guests back with our warm hospitality. We are delighted to re-open in time to welcome Woordfees visitors to the festival in Stellenbosch," shared Pienaar, expressing the hotel's eagerness to make new memories with guests.

Southern Sun de Wagen invites guests to experience its renewed beauty and boutique hotel charm as it opens its doors once more on Friday, 4 August 2023. For reservations, visit the hotel's website at <https://www.southernsun.com/southern-sun-de-wagen> or call 021 415 4444.



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ISSUED BY SOUTHERN SUN FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

*Candy Tothill* | Head of Corporate Affairs & Marketing | 084 516 7525 |  
candy.tothill@southernsun.com

*Neo Mboniswa* | PR and Communications Manager | 082 466 2161 |  
neo.mboniswa@southernsun.com

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