



Press Release

Southern Sun shines at 2023 Inter Hotel Challenge

Friday, 1 December 2023 – Southern Sun received an impressive array of victories at this year's Inter Hotel Challenge, sponsored by HEINEKEN Beverages. The 2023 winners were announced during a glittering awards ceremony proudly hosted at Southern Sun Cape Sun on Tuesday, 28 November 2023.

54 on Bath's General Manager, Madeleine Roux, was named **General Manager of the Year**, while the same hotel's Sinalo Yanga Ngubo won top honours for **Exquisite Service** and was listed among the **Sommeliers' Academy Top Performers** for 2023. 54 on Bath's accolades did not end there, as Vusumzi Sithole was ranked number 1 in the **Top Three Avanti SA Baristas** in Gauteng & North West Provinces. While in the same category Pumla Hanise from Arabella Hotel & Spa took top place in the Western Cape with Nandipha Msindeli of Southern Sun The Cullinan coming in third place for the region. In KwaZulu-Natal, Sfundu Mhlongo of the Beverly Hills took second place.

Expressing her sentiments upon being named General Manager of the Year, Madeleine Roux said, "I hold a strong belief in the capabilities of my team and expressing my pride in their performance is an understatement. Leading up to the competition, it was a privilege to support them and to see their efforts culminate in well-deserved recognition. Receiving this accolade in my professional capacity is an honour for which I am profoundly grateful. Witnessing the exceptional skills, unwavering determination and dedication displayed by our staff throughout the period of the Heineken Inter-Hotel Challenge has been most gratifying. I take immense pride in being associated with such a dedicated group of individuals."

Employees from across Southern Sun's participating hotels accounted for an impressive 11 of the top spots in the categories awarded by the Inter Hotel Challenge, including:

- **Most Up & Coming Wine Steward and winner of The Wonga Award:**
went to Londeka Mkhize of uMhlanga's iconic Beverly Hills hotel, who received an International Hotel School online bursary worth R30 000 from the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).
- **Most Promising Wine Steward:**
went to Njabulo Prince Zondo of the award-winning InterContinental Johannesburg O.R. Tambo hotel.
- **Academic Excellence in the Cape Wine Academy Top Performers category:**
went to Njabulo Prince Zondo, also of the InterContinental Johannesburg O.R. Tambo hotel.

- Lingelihle Tshemese from the luxury Arabella Hotel, Golf & Spa in Hermanus was named **Most Promising Pastry Chef**.
- In the category **Best Food & Wine Pairing**, Chef Keelyn Scheepers & Wine Steward Ruaan van Helden of the Southern Sun Cape Sun placed first in the Starter course with their pairing of Fish4Africa WWF-SASSI green list Cape Yellowtail tartare | avocado salsa | charcoal tuille | dill cream cheese | Nederburg Double Barrel gluhwein jelly & herb oil with Nederburg The Winemasters Chardonnay 2022.
- In the Dessert course of the **Best Food & Wine Pairing** category, Pastry Chef Nokubonga Dladla & Wine Steward Londeka Mkhize of the Beverly Hills emerged victorious with their pairing of Lancewood Coconut mousse | LemonGold curd | Passion fruit compote | Coconut tuille | Caramelised Italian meringue | Lemon Chantilly cream | Pineapple with Pongrácz Demi Sec MCC.
- The award for **Concierge Of The Year** went to Pleasure Shaku of the InterContinental Johannesburg O.R. Tambo hotel.

Other notable Southern Sun employee accolades included:

- Keelyn Scheepers of the Southern Sun Cape Sun took second place in the **Chef Of The Year** category
- Nokubonga Dladla of the Beverly Hills hotel received third place in the **Lancewood Pastry Chef Of The Year** category
- Wandile Shange from Southern Sun The Cullinan was one of the three **Kitchenaid Africa Bio-Wheat Bakers of the Year**
- Pastry Chef Thando Mahlekelele of Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani was recognised for **Excellent Kitchen Practice by Scanpan**

Commenting on the group's 2023 performance, Southern Sun's chief executive, Marcel von Aulock said, "We are proud to have participated in the Inter Hotel Challenge for over a decade as it contributes to much-needed hospitality skills and promotes development through mentorship. We are also exceptionally proud of our people, and we congratulate them on their outstanding achievements this year."

With over 90 hotels and a workforce of more than 5,000 people, Southern Sun plays an integral role in the development of skills throughout the industry. During the last year, the group provided over 570 formally certificated learning programmes to employees and provided over 480 unemployed students with work-based learning opportunities to enable them to complete their studies and graduate. The results of the 2023 Heineken Inter-Hotel Challenge further highlight Southern Sun's contribution to skills development and emphasise the dedication of the group's award-winning team.

Visit www.southernsun.com to find out more about Southern Sun.

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Southern Sun is Southern Africa’s leading hospitality group comprising over 90 strategically located hotels and resorts, a variety of restaurants and more than 300 conference venues and banqueting facilities in South Africa, Africa, Seychelles and the Middle East. With a rich heritage of excellence and dedication to delivering service with flair, Southern Sun provides guests with unforgettable experiences at destinations that offer unparalleled variety and scale.

The group’s portfolio of brands includes award-winning luxury hotels such as 54 on Bath, Arabella Hotel, Golf & Spa, the Beverly Hills, Mount Grace Hotel & Spa, the Sandton Sun & Towers and Paradise Sun, as well as renowned collections like Southern Sun Hotels, SunSquare, Garden Court, StayEasy and SUN1 hotels, and a selection of Southern Sun Resorts in idyllic settings.

The group is committed to transformation and is proud to be a Level 1 Contributor to B-BBEE in South Africa – demonstrating the spirit in which Southern Sun actively contributes to broad-based black economic empowerment – from maintaining the diversity of its workforce and developing skills to supporting emerging enterprises and contributing to the upliftment of local communities.

Southern Sun is consciously committed to integrating best environmental practices into the group’s core business strategy, thereby balancing its economic, social and environmental outcomes. As such, the group endeavours to ensure that its conduct meets the needs of the present while minimising the cost to future generations.

Escape to the world of Southern Sun, where exceptional experiences are created with passion and every day is a celebration.

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