



Taj Cape Town celebrates five years of luxury accommodation in historic city centre
Five star hotel announces winners of #CelebrateCapeTown competition to key city stakeholders

Cape Town, 31 August 2015: Cape Town central's most luxurious hotel, Taj Cape Town is celebrating its fifth anniversary this week and to mark the occasion – and the growing attractiveness of the hotel and CBD to visitors – announced the winners of its #CelebrateCapeTown Instagram competition.

The competition, which attracted more than 1600 entries, celebrates the hotel's unique, historic location in Wale Street and the Cape Town Partnership's new City Walk route. Entrants were invited to capture all that the hotel, its surrounds and the Big 7 City Walk route has to offer. The competition categories were architecture, people, elements of design, nature, and arts and culture, and luxury prizes worth up to R75 000 were on offer.

The #CelebrateCapeTown winners are Bernadette McCabe (Overall Grand Prize Winner), Lara Aucamp (Architecture), Dillon Kin (Elements of Design), Dean Tucker (People), Willem Law (Arts & Culture), Bianca Forlee (Nature), and Hloni Coleman (Most Likes). The winners were announced at Taj Cape Town's fifth birthday celebration on Wednesday, a VIP event attended by key city stakeholders such as the CEOs of Cape Town Partnership, Cape Town Tourism and the Cape Town Central City Improvement District (CCID).

Taj Cape Town General Manager Michael Pownall said: "The stunning photographs of our competition winners showcase the magic of our location and the truly remarkable inner city, one with a rich history and visual story to tell. We believe Cape Town's city centre is a very special place that should be on everyone's bucket list."

Pownall said the urban regeneration efforts by the CCID, Cape Town Partnership, and Taj Cape Town and its neighbouring businesses in the central city, are paying off. "There were skeptics in 2010 who thought a luxury hotel in the central city would not work, but we have proven them wrong. The Taj Cape Town is an enormous success, and all indicators are showing us that Cape Town's CBD has become an exciting destination for business and leisure travelers, as well as investors."



Taj Cape Town's – and the inner city's – growing attractiveness as a business and leisure destination is indicated in the steadily growing occupancy numbers since launch in 2010. Starting with 21 947 visitors in year one, the Taj Cape Town now attracts almost 65 000 visitors per year, and have accommodated 260 000 guests in total over the five years.

Pownall said leisure visitors looking for city breaks were on the increase, indicating improving perceptions of the city. "Domestic and international travelers are becoming more interested in the CBD. Five years ago 7/10 of visitors would have stayed at the V&A Waterfront, but now weekend leisure visitors are increasing, especially domestic visitors. They are finding it is safe, close to entertainment, centrally located, they love our spa, and with the sliding Rand, it's more affordable than going overseas."

Taj Cape Town and its city partners introduce visitors to a number of city attractions, such as the trendy Bree Street and its celebrated foodie hotspots, or the Big 7 City Walk route. The route starts on Taj Cape Town's doorstep and continues to the Company's Gardens, through the leafy pedestrian walkway of St Georges Mall, to Waterkant Street and St Andrew's Square, a public space with street art, street furniture and historic memorials. The Cape Town Partnership also coordinates City Walk Saturdays, with live entertainment, food stalls and more, every third Saturday of the month.

"As we celebrate our fifth birthday, Taj Cape Town is also proud to announce that we now have a full-time, dedicated tour guide who can show our visitors all the best places in the CBD, be they interested in history, the arts, fashion, food or finding the best pubs and bars," said Pownall. Taj Cape Town guests are invited to book a complimentary 90 minute guided walking tour, from Tuesday to Saturday, along the City Walk route, or tailored to their specific interests.

Pownall also credits the fact that the hotel is a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame winner, having earned the certificate five years consecutively, with its high guest return ratio.

Says Tasso Evangelinos, COO of the CCID: "As a city improvement district that has been in operation since 2000, we are very proud of the secure and clean environment that now exists in the Cape Town Central City and which gives guests of Taj Cape Town piece of mind to safely explore our CBD."



Business visitors are increasingly attracted to stay too, because more corporate offices are springing up across the inner city, such as the new Portside building. “And after 5pm, when our corporate travellers change from suits to jeans, they become leisure travelers who love the sights and sounds of the city”, Pownall continues.

Pownall has also seen an increase in interest from property investors who want to acquire luxury residential suites at the Taj Cape Town. Of 22 that were on offer, 15 were sold recently. According to figures released by the CCID, property values in the CBD totaled ZAR 23.9 billion in 2010 and slumped to ZAR 21.5 billion in 2011 during the global financial crisis, but in 2014 returned to ZAR 23.72 billion and are climbing fast.

“We successfully achieved being the first luxury hotel in the central city, a success that tells us it is an attractive location now. Year on year more people are starting to see Taj Cape Town as a wonderful hotel in a great location. We are thrilled about this positive perception change of the city and want the world to know what a wonderful place it is to visit.”