

# SA once again dominates Africa travel Oscars

SUREN NAIDOO

**S**OUTH Africa's tourism and hospitality industry has again ruled the influential World Travel Awards Africa Ceremony.

It secured a staggering 32 of the 40 Africa-specific categories at the glamorous awards event at Durban's Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre last week.

The event, which took place at Indaba 2009 – Africa's largest tourism trade show – attracted about 400 tourism industry heavy-weights across the continent and has been touted as the Oscars of the global travel industry by the Wall Street Journal.

The country's national tourism destination marketing agency, South African Tourism, scooped a hat-trick of awards.

Indaba was named Africa's top travel exhibition for the second consecutive time, while the tourism body also won awards as Africa's leading tourism board and Africa's top marketing campaign.

Cape Town retained the title of Africa's leading destination, but also won the inaugural title of Africa's leading port. Durban's ICC retained the coveted title of Africa's leading conference centre, which it won for the ninth time.

Lindiwe Mahlangu, former boss of Durban Africa (now Durban



Indaba, Africa's biggest annual travel trade show in Durban, has scooped the prize as Africa's leading travel exhibition for the second consecutive year at the World Travel Awards Africa Ceremony. Celebrating the international recognition in Durban last week were, from left: South African Tourism chief marketing officer Roshene Singh, Miss South Africa Tatum Keshwar, South African Tourism acting CEO Didi Moyle, Durban Tourism acting chief executive Perry Moodley and World Travel Awards president Graham Cooke.

Tourism) and now the boss of the Johannesburg Tourism Company, scooped a special award for being Africa's personality of the year. Mahlangu was lauded for playing a pivotal role in changing the perceptions of Johannesburg.

She was also behind bringing the Miss World Pageant to South

Africa last year and this year.

Among the other top winners were: Zimbali Lodge & Country Club – Africa's leading sports resort; South African Airways – Africa's leading airline; OR Tambo International Airport – Africa's leading airport; the Palace of the Lost City – Africa's leading casino

resort; The Mount Nelson Hotel – Africa's leading hotel; and Thanda Private Games Reserve – Africa's leading luxury lodge.

More than 200 organisations were nominated in 75 categories for the Africa region and specific country awards, including airlines, airports, hotels, car hire,

destinations, resorts, spas and travel agencies. Votes are cast by about 167 000 travel agents and tourism professionals from 164 participating countries.

Pop group Boney M was the entertainment highlight of the ceremony, which is part of a "grand tour", culminating with the World Travel Awards world finals in Jamaica in December.

Reacting to the news, SA Tourism marketing boss Roshene Singh said the fact that the country had secured the majority of nominations and awards at the World Travel Awards was testament to South Africa's growing influence and stature as a holiday spot internationally.

"Winners at the ceremony are very special brands, dedicated to being the absolute best in all aspects of customer experience. It was a wonderful evening for African tourism and hopefully an inspiration for all nominated.

"We hope that the winners have set a supreme standard of professionalism in Africa, with excellent examples of creativity and business acumen that can stimulate others to raise their performance not only in Africa but worldwide," said Graham Cooke, the World Travel Awards founder.

The event takes place in Durban again during Indaba 2010.

