



MEDIA RELEASE

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!Xaus Lodge Proudly Certified by FTTSA

Indaba 2011 kicks off with the news that !Xaus Lodge is the newest member of the FTTSA family and the second Northern Cape business to become FTTSA-certified.

!Xaus Lodge (pronounced as “Kaus” or with a palatal “click” and meaning “heart” in Nama) is a community-owned lodge in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park that offers guests a full-service experience including all meals and 4* accommodation, wilderness walks with trackers, game drives and opportunities to meet local San artists while they create their traditional crafts. The lodge is located on a 50,000 hectare concession within the Park that was awarded to the Mier and Khomani San communities through a historic land claim settlement. The lodge is now operated under a management agreement with a private partner, Transfrontier Parks Destinations.

The FTTSA certification process examines social, economic and environmental performance, seeking a balance of all three principles of sustainable development. FTTSA certification is offered on a voluntary basis to providers of tourist accommodation, activities, attractions and volunteer programmes in South Africa. This cost-effective quality management system addresses fourteen operational areas of a tourism business, namely:

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| 1. Legal and General Requirements | 8. Community / Social Investment |
| 2. Labour Standards | 9. Cultural Sensitivity |
| 3. Human Resource Practice | 10. Environmental Management & Conservation |
| 4. Skills Development | 11. Health & Safety |
| 5. Employment Equity | 12. Quality & Reliability |
| 6. Ownership & Control | 13. Workplace Culture |
| 7. Procurement | 14. HIV/AIDS & Related Issues |

While !Xaus Lodge is an attractive destination for international and local tourists alike, it is also an asset that the beneficiary communities can be proud of. Community members are involved in various capacities throughout the business' operations; this includes direct employment and as suppliers of beautiful craft whose business has grown through direct access to and interaction with guests. Of course, being a wholly community-owned lodge, an additional direct, financial benefit accrues through levies that are paid out to both the Khomani San and Mier communities.

A good example of how this pride-in-action plays out in the workplace is the 'Kalahari Cuisine' menu developed for the lodge by Mier Community Chef Ellen Bok and her team. Chef Ellen takes pride in sharing home-cooked Mier meals and the menu is personally introduced to guests. Last year Chef Ellen (who is also part of the management team) represented !Xaus Lodge and the community when she accepted the 2010 Imvelo Award for Best Practice – Economic Impact at FEDHASA's annual award ceremony in Johannesburg,

!Xaus Lodge operates on an unfenced concession in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and in accordance with the idea that it is "a place to experience, not just observe". The Lodge infrastructure and management is based on a 'tread lightly' philosophy, with minimum use of natural resources. In this water-scarce area, numerous initiatives are in place to reduce water use, one of which is to inform guests at every opportunity about how they can help to conserve this precious resource. Electricity is available for only a very limited period each day (up to 5 hours), encouraging guests to 'live off the grid'. Sensitivity to the local environment is further enhanced by taking guests tracking through the dunes to learn about the plants and small living creatures that are never seen from game-drive vehicles. Overall, the visitor experience is focused around learning about, and living with, this unique natural environment.

In the words of Eleanor Muller, Marketing Representative for !Xaus Lodge: “All !Xaus Lodge stakeholders are delighted with the FTTSA certification because it provides expert confirmation that how !Xaus Lodge operates meets ‘international best practice’ in Fair Trade standards. This is particularly important because !Xaus Lodge is positioning community-based tourism as a competitive product within the commercial tourism industry. The opportunity to be associated with other like-managed operations is of great benefit to !Xaus Lodge.”

In announcing this latest milestone for FTTSA, Executive Director Jennifer Seif stated that “The certification of !Xaus extends FTTSA’s reach into even the most remote corners of our country, further strengthening the FTTSA network of responsible tourism products. Seventeen per cent of this network is currently comprised of community-owned enterprises, which is something we are especially proud of.”

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For more information about FTTSA and all certified businesses, consult our website: www.fairtourismsa.org.za