

SOUTHERN AFRICAN

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FOR ORGANISERS OF TOURS

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Northern Cape set to sparkle

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Hard work for big pay-off

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Cape Town marries tourism and film

↳ **Clarissa Hughes**

The recent opening of the state-of-the-art Cape Town Film Studios signals a boom for the local tourism industry.

Nico Dekker, CEO of Cape Town Film Studios, explains. "There is a direct correlation between the film industry and the tourism industry. Studies have shown that for every unit of money spent on making a film in a country there is a two-and-a-half-times impact factor on the larger economy. So for a film like Judge Dredd, which is currently being filmed, the R100 million (€11m) spent has a knock-on effect of R250 million (€27m)."

The magnification of a destination through film-making is multifaceted. Firstly, the crew's own experiences are spread via valuable word-of-mouth marketing. Then recognisable landmarks are literally launched on to the big screen and exposed to a wide movie-going audience.

"It's like putting a brochure into the hands of millions of potential tourists in a direct marketing exercise," Dekker comments. "Through film an audience develops an emotional relationship with a place. It's real rather than abstract."

Furthermore, there's the fan following of a film. Many people simply want to see where the film was made and get the feel of being close to the action.

The impact of the film industry on the tourism

industry is so profound that Dekker is convinced there is room to create an interface between the two in Cape Town. "We need to strategically explore linkages to see how we can maximise opportunities," he says.

As far as direct tourism opportunities are concerned, each film is different. Some films take months to shoot. For instance, the Judge Dredd crew will be in Cape Town for about six months. In these cases, personnel usually rent high-end apartments for the period. During that time, film executives will usually look at short getaways between shoots – around two to three days. The attractions they seek are wildlife, secluded seaside retreats, good food, wine tours and cosmopolitan nightlife.

With the four sound stages and a total of 17 000 sqm of production facility space situated between Table Mountain and the Hottentots Holland mountains, it's hard to conceive that this spectacular scenery won't creep into the films – or the memories of the crew. Then there's vibrant Khayelitsha just over the highway. The beaches of Muizenberg are within spitting distance, as is Cape Town's nightlife, the Cape Winelands and picturesque coastal settlements.

"Our goal is for Cape Town Film Studios to become the film-making gateway between Africa and the international world," Dekker remarks. ↩

inbrief

Lions released in Karoo National Park

The Karoo National Park has welcomed the arrival of lions in the park for the first time after an absence of 170 years. Two male lions, two lionesses and four cubs were released from the boma in Karoo National Park, becoming the first wild, free-ranging lions in the Great Karoo. The eight lions have been resident in the park bomas since last year to allow them to adjust to their new environment. The lions were brought in from Addo Elephant National Park in the Eastern Cape, where the establishment of a lion population has been successful. South African National Parks decided to introduce lions to the Karoo National Park in its efforts to restore the natural predator-prey balance in the ecosystem.