

Sustainable development drives sustainable tourism in Witsand

By  Cari Coetzee

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Last year we spoke to Hugo La Grange, the project manager at Breedezicht Estate, about the Breedezicht development in Witsand - a destination that remains a largely untouched, pristine environment. Breedezicht's vision was that of a development that will complement the unique town of Witsand while creating a sustainable tourism ecosystem through supporting the local community and conserving the environment.



Hugo La Grange

The development has been hard at work to remain true to this vision. We catch up with La Grange again to find out more about Breedezicht's efforts to this end.

What is Breedezicht's environmental ethos?

At Breedezicht Estate we aim to complement the authentic character of Witsand and Port-Beaufort with the addition of more environmentally conscious building techniques. The houses are designed by two SACAP registered architects to include environmentally friendly standard specifications like low-E or double glazed glass, rain water collection tanks and solar geysers. The privately owned houses and communal areas incorporate indigenous plants and grass that requires very little or no water to maintain. We strive to keep bettering ourselves in our ability to develop property in an environmentally friendly and conscious way.

How does the estate fit into the rest of Witsand in terms of maintaining a pristine, unspoiled environment?

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The estate is one of the very first residential areas that are visible to visitors and residents driving into the town. We try and lead by example as we develop the estate, our maintenance team has spent numerous hours outside our boundaries to ensure that the very first impression of Witsand remains pristine, unspoiled and as natural as possible.

How does Breedezicht contribute to the sustainability of Witsand as a destination?

Witsand currently only has a small collection of exclusive holiday accommodation and often long weekends and holidays are fully booked, long in advance. A limited amount of the private house owners will be renting out their properties, this will surely boost the sustainable development of tourism and Witsand as a preferred garden route destination.

The estate also includes a conservancy area with an EMP (Environmental Management Plan) developed according to the guideline document from Department Environmental Affairs and Tourism, EIA Regulations and Environment Conservation Act.





■ ***What are some Green initiatives/technologies employed at the estate?***

Rainwater collection systems, solar geysers, a variety of low energy glass, indigenous water conscious gardens and construction materials with lower maintenance and longer lifespan. Most of our houses are custom designed with a wide range of specs and finishes within our five building styles - we encourage clients to incorporate green technologies.

■ ***How does Breedezicht engage with its surrounding community/communities and support their welfare and development?***

The immediate area around Witsand, Heidelberg, doesn't have any current developments on the same scale as Breedezicht. We use this opportunity to support local builders, businesses and suppliers as much as possible. Currently, we have ±90 local builders and labourers on site full time and numerous suppliers in the area.

Our ongoing marketing efforts attract frequent visitors that support local businesses like restaurants, shops, fuel stations, boat charters and the adventure centre. It's very important for us to maintain good relationships with everyone in our community.

ABOUT CARI COETZEE

- Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.
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