

# Africa's first Radisson RED celebrates its first anniversary

By  Eugene Yiga

14 Nov 2018

Eugene Yiga talks to the curator of Radisson RED in Cape Town, Dale Simpson, about the new hotel.



Dale Simpson

## ■ ***When did Radisson RED begin?***

We opened our first Radisson RED hotel near the European Union parliament in Brussels (Belgium) in April 2016 and followed with our second property in Minneapolis (USA) in November of 2016. Cape Town opened its doors in the V&A Waterfront and has since been followed by Campinas (Brazil), Glasgow (Scotland), and Portland (USA).

## ■ ***Who is Radisson RED targeting?***

There isn't a typical Radisson RED guest. But close to it will be someone who has a millennial mindset; someone who is social and enjoys sharing. A Radisson RED guest will prioritise a great experience and enjoy the sense of place that the hotel will create. A Radisson RED guest also experiences the wonderful local cultures from the hotel.



### ■ How are you capitalising on the growth of the millennial mindset?

These trends are presenting opportunities to work with talented people and share the journey. For example, in brewing our own beer, 'Baxter's Bitchin' Blonde', we engaged with a local brewer at [Banana Jam Café](#). Then we wanted to create a tattoo sleeve beer glass so we engaged with a local tattoo artist and a local glassmaker to produce these. This one activation was completed in conjunction with talented local people. Radisson RED embraces that localisation.

### ■ How did you hire your staff?

We ran a casting day at [Youngblood](#) gallery in Cape Town where we put our applicants through their paces and chose only those with a personality to deliver. We haven't hired any managers; we hire leads and there is a clear difference in expectation. Would you rather be known as a manager, leader, or director? Probably a leader. Our team are known as 'creatives' and we don't like the word 'departments'. Departments often create silos and demand an overload of processes.



### ■ What sets Radisson RED apart?

The sense of place that our product offers: the inspirations of music, art, and fashion and our approach to service in that we put the experience and genuine passion ahead of any processes. We work as one team with one aim: creating an exceptional guest experience, delivered by genuine people (not processes). Name badges? Never. We'll just say hello.



Dale Simpson, Radisson RED Cape Town's fearless curator

Cari Coetzee 8 May 2017



### ■ **What's the appeal of Radisson RED around the world?**

I think Radisson RED appeals because it offers those social hives: a space to work, relax, or be on your 'near-own'. Radisson RED also has fun creating lots of operational activations around our inspirations, which encourages great content. But it's also different. You don't expect to be offered the option of taking a RED skateboard to the office or to listen to a saxophone at breakfast or enjoy sunset yoga on our RED Roof.



### ■ **How do you feel about your competition?**

I think it's no longer straightforward in these markets to say "here are five hotel competitors" because we compete on so many levels. For a morning coffee, we compete against the local artisan roastery. For a swim and an afternoon cocktail, we have several great rooftops in Cape Town. For a music evening, there are many great venues. And when it comes to a room, there are hotels, Airbnb, and guesthouses all innovating and reaching for that goal of unique positioning. But we need all our competitors. We work together to make Cape Town the destination to come to and, after that, we'll try and get them to Radisson RED.

[www.radissonred.com/cape-town](http://www.radissonred.com/cape-town)

## ABOUT EUGENE YIGA

Eugene graduated from the University of Cape Town with distinctions in financial accounting and classical piano. He then spent over two-and-a-half years working in branding and communications at two of South Africa's top market research companies. Eugene also spent over three-and-a-half years at an eLearning start-up, all while building his business as an award-winning writer. Visit [www.eugeneyiga.com](http://www.eugeneyiga.com), follow @eugeneyiga on Twitter, or email [hello@eugeneyiga.com](mailto:hello@eugeneyiga.com) to say, um, hello.

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