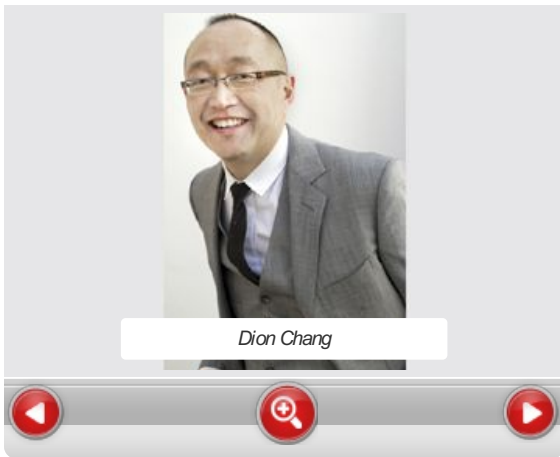


Dion Chang to headline Wine & Food Tourism Conference 2019

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This year's [Wine & Food Tourism Conference](#), taking place at Spier near Stellenbosch on 18 September 2019, will feature South Africa's most respected trends analyst, Dion Chang, as headline speaker.



This year's event, themed "Trends in Wine & Food Tourism", will as per previous years provide an invaluable platform for participants to network and keep abreast of what is hot and happening in South African wine and food tourism. This is the fourth time this annual conference is being presented.

Known as an innovator, creative thinker, and walking ideas bank, Chang takes the unique view of "trends as business strategy".

His company, Flux Trends, specialises in understanding consumer mindset and identifying unexpected business opportunities within shifting tendencies, ensuring that global trends have relevance when translated for African and South African businesses.

Margi Biggs, tourism specialist and convenor of the annual Wine & Food Tourism Conference, says: "Dion's topic at this year's conference will focus on the trends that are shaping tourism in South Africa, with an in-depth look at wine and food tourism sector.

"With tourism in South Africa set to grow as per, and even outgrow, targets set by national and provincial government, based on proven growth figures over the past few years, we need to act now to ensure the wine and food tourism industry develops in an innovative yet sustainable fashion, creating more jobs and increasingly contributing a sizeable portion to especially the economy of the Western Cape."

Tourism in the Western Cape is the region's fastest-growing sector, employing over 200,000 people and generating R17 billion for the economy each year. From a broader perspective; Africa received 67 million international visitors in the past year, a tourism growth of 7%, an encouraging figure given the global average of 6% and a 2.9% increase from the previous period.

Tourism is the new gold in Africa. This was the core message delivered during the closing address by President Cyril Ramaphosa at Africa's Travel Indaba held in Durban in early May. The president stated: "We must exploit the tourism industry to grow and increase our foreign earnings, to bring more people into the mainstream of our economies and to boost related industries. There is so much that we can all do in growing small and medium enterprises, but also making sure that the footprint of this industry is felt in the remote areas of our country, in rural areas." He also said that tourism in Africa had not yet realised its full potential to attract foreign direct investment or to assist SMMEs.

Biggs explains the role of the conference: "With the Wine & Food Tourism Conference, we aim to tap into the potential of food and wine tourism that's still to be explored and deep-delved. We also seek to inspire while creating a space that allows for different stakeholders within the tourism industry to meet up, exchange ideas and do business together. We have a great African story to tell, and as an industry we need to come together to deliver this message through all we do, communicate and represent. What better way to do so than get the professional cage rattler, Dion Chang, to headline our conference!" says Biggs.

Other speakers at this year's conference include successful entrepreneur, Alan Knott-Craig; celebrated South African chef, Bertus Basson; iconic furniture and interior designer, Haldane Martin; chairman of the board of the South African Sommelier Association (SASA), Barry Schofield; as well as Wesgro CEO, Tim Harris; and UK digital mastermind, Judith Lewis; to name a few.

Furthermore, Biggs states that: "Africa's tourism grown potential has also created the impetus for the establishment of the Wine & Food Tourism Awards. The objective of the Wine & Food Tourism Awards is to recognise those individuals and teams who have made exceptional contributions to the development and promotion of the South African wine and food tourism industry. We're running it for the first time this year, and have an impressive line-up of judges," Biggs says.

Jean-Pierre Rossouw serves as the awards chairperson, overseeing the judging panel in three categories: Innovation, Service Excellence and The Authentic South African Experience.

The Innovation category is judged by marketing thought-leader Steve Massey, strategic marketing expert Mac Mabidilala as well as tourism professional and co-founder of the Oranjezicht City Farm, Sheryl Ozinsky; while Service Excellence sees tourism and hospitality expert Horst Frehse, conferencing specialist Gwynneth Matthews, and wine industry marketing and communications consultant André Morgenthal as judges. Wine.co.za founder and owner Judy Brower, hospitality entrepreneur Janet Pillai, and wine marketing fundi Su Birch serve as judges in The Authentic South African Experience category.

There will be a maximum of three honourees in each category.

Participants may nominate as many wine and/or food establishments as they wish, in any or all of the categories.

Nominations could be submitted via the website, www.wineandfood.co.za/awards. The closing date for participants to submit their nominations is 30 June 2019.

The honourees per category of the Wine & Food Tourism Awards 2019 will be announced at the Wine & Food Tourism Conference 2019.

Go to www.wineandfood.co.za for more information, to register for the conference, and to submit awards nominations.

Book your seat for the conference by 30 June 2019, and save 51% (early bird registration).

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