

Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneur of the Year Award – 2015 Finalists

Benita Cyster
Lumley's Place
Western Cape

Vital statistics

Years in business : 7
Employees : 6
Annual growth : ↑ 11.1%
Annual turnover : < R10 million
Business classification : Exempt Micro Enterprise (EME)
Nature of business : Accommodation establishment

Lumley's Place is a four-star bed and breakfast, situated in the village of Pniel in the Cape winelands, and it's a first generation family business. "We started the business in December 2008 to leave a legacy for our children. We believe that in the current economy, entrepreneurship is the way to go," explains owner, Benita Cyster.

Benita says the family chose this business "because everybody needs to sleep and everybody needs to eat – and we like working with people." When it comes to what makes Lumley's Place memorable, Benita says, "It's the personal attention we provide to our guests, our community involvement, our emotionally intelligent staff, and the family values that we portray." Her approach to repeat business is simple, "The people we interact with always say that they would stay here again. We have a genuine care for our guests and we go out of our way to meet their needs."

The guesthouse caters for a wide range of customers, whether they are on holiday, attending events, on business, or local students. "We are also on many of the local wine farms' databases and guests are sent to us when they host events. We receive a number of international travellers too, particularly German tourists."

At the moment, a further two rooms and a cottage are under construction at Lumley's Place, after which, Cyster's dream is to build a conference centre to accommodate the many requests they receive to host events and functions.

Training is an important part of the business and Benita says she trains her employees every day. "I need my passion to rub off on my staff. They interact with my guests and our aim is to make our guests' day, every day!" Lumley's Place has a staff compliment of 6 people, including three full time employees and the Cyster family themselves.

Benita says that being part of Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs has already opened doors for her business – and organisations such as Stats SA and the Auditor General have made use of her accommodation facilities as a result. "Being a Tsogo Sun Entrepreneur is life-changing," she says.