

Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneur of the Year Award – 2015 Finalists

Lizelle Maurice

Park Place Boutique Guesthouse

Eastern Cape

Vital statistics

Years in business	: 2
Employees	: 30
Annual growth	: ↑ 50.2%
Annual turnover	: < R10 million
Business classification	: Exempt Micro Enterprise (EME)
Nature of business	: Accommodation establishment

Park Place Boutique Guesthouse is a four-star, award-winning Victorian manor house in East London, offering luxury accommodation to business and leisure travellers. “We have 27 rooms – 12 standard and 15 luxury – as well as conference facilities, a fully licenced bar, and a restaurant called the Scarlet Ibis, which means we offer breakfast, lunch and dinner to our guests,” says owner Lizelle Maurice.

Lizelle started the business "because being hospitable runs in her family's blood". “I think that we Caribbean people are naturally hospitable,” she says. “We love entertaining and we have travelled quite extensively.” The Maurices realised that there was an opportunity in the market for a luxury guesthouse in East London – and set about establishing one.

Expansion is on the cards, because, says Lizelle, “we have always believed in reinventing ourselves to make sure we don't become stagnant or complacent. We recently acquired the property next door, which we are renting out until we are ready to expand. We want to grow to a 50-room guesthouse, but first we are concentrating on extending our conference centre from three venues to seven.”

Lizelle says that Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs has grown her expertise and knowledge. “The workshops are absolutely amazing and the coaching sessions have taught me to be fearless – they have encouraged me to be better. Being part of the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs makes me believe that the

sky is the limit. I streamlined my business as a result and have passed on learnings to my employees.”

She adds that Tsogo Sun has also given the business exposure and contributed to the marketing of the guesthouse. “When you are associated with a big name in the industry, you automatically become more credible in the eyes of the public. You are suddenly no longer a junior entrepreneur; it’s almost as if “big daddy” is mentoring you and people trust your product for that reason.”

Lizelle is also involved in local social development and she is an executive member of the Business Women’s Association, overseeing their mentorship portfolio. Park Place also supports an NGO called Salem Baby Day-care.