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2019 BTA AWARDS EDITION

ISSUE 147: JANUARY 2020

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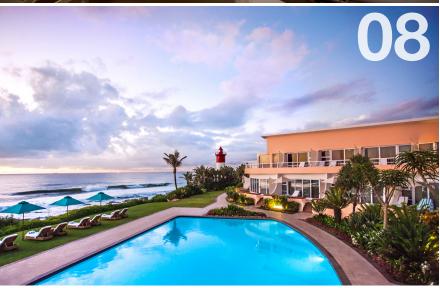
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he original thinking behind the launch of the Business Traveller Africa Conference & Awards event in 2012 was that the South African business travel industry didn't have anything like it. Further to that, as the publishers of Business Traveller Africa magazine, Future Group wanted another platform on which to engage with its clients and the broader industry as a whole.

We also wanted to grow the event, year on year, and we're incredibly proud to have done that between 2012 and 2017, settling on a breakfast format that worked, evolving our voting procedure, strengthening the morning's content, and generally laying on an event that we believe was of great value to the South African business travel community.

Sadly, the South African media and events industry is not immune to the challenges presented by an economy struggling for growth, and, as a result, 2018 and 2019 did not see a Business Traveller Africa Conference & Awards event.

However, that didn't mean we couldn't honour those brands and entities that performed with distinction in those years. As such, we employed the same voting procedure and just decided to announce the winners in our publication.

At its core, the Business Traveller Africa Awards must have a robust and independent research mechanism to ensure its credibility, and we're grateful to our partners - the Association of Southern African Travel Agents (ASATA), the African Business Travel Association (ABTA), the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI), and the Southern Africa Tourism Services Association (SATSA) – for adding their weight and support to the voting process by enlisting their members to vote and produce the winners in each category, supplementing the votes garnered from the broader South African business travel community via Business Traveller Africa magazine's communication channels.

Here's wishing you a prosperous 2020.

Dylan Rogers

dylan@thefuture.co.za

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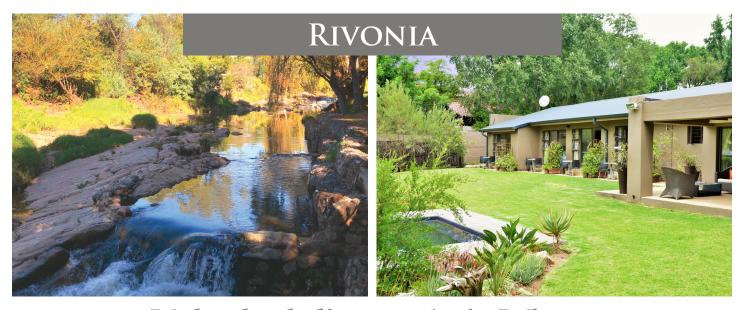
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BEST INTERNATIONAL LONG-HAUL AIRLINE



BEST INTERNATIONAL LONG-HAUL AIRLINE FINALISTS

- British Airways
- Emirates (winner)
- Qatar Airways

CRITERIA

Best non-African airline, covering international airlines that fly into and out of South Africa, and taking into account on-time record, safety, onboard product (including seating, business class product, food and beverage, service), lounge offering, website, loyalty programme, route network, codeshare offering and value for money.







BEST AIRPORT BUSINESS LOUNGE



BEST AIRPORT BUSINESS LOUNGE FINALISTS

- Bidvest Premier (ORTIA International)
- Emirates (ORTIA International) (winner)
- SLOW Lounge (ORTIA International)





CRITERIA

Best airport lounge in South Africa, covering wi-fi, food and beverage, comfort, service, flight schedule information, reading material, plug point options and onsite facilities (showers, toilets etc).

BUSINESS CLASS

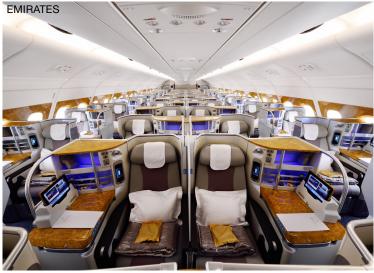


BUSINESS CLASS FINALISTS British Airways Emirates (winner) Qatar Airways

CRITERIA

Best airline business class product of all the airlines flying into and out of South Africa, covering lounge offering (wi-fi, food and beverage, comfort) and onboard product, including and beverage, inflight entertainment, lie-flat option, ability to work onboard and additional services.











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BEST SOUTH AFRICAN HOTEL GROUP



BEST SOUTH AFRICAN HOTEL GROUP FINALISTS

- City Lodge
- Sun International
- Tsogo Sun Hotels (winner)

CRITERIA

Best South African group, with at least two hotel properties in South Africa, and with the most consistent offering in terms of those properties across the country, the quality of those properties and consistency in service, accommodation, facilities, business facilities, variety of locations, meeting & conferencing facilities, wi-fi offering, food and beverage, loyalty programme, additional services and value for money.







BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN SA



BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN SA FINALISTS

- Best Western Fountains Hotel
- Radisson Blu Sandton
- SunSquare Montecasino (winner)

No matter what star grading, the best business hotel in South Africa, taking into account rooms, business services, technology offering, meeting & conferencing facilities, food, service, location, corporate offering, additional services and value for money.







8 | JANUARY2020

BEST LARGE CONFERENCE VENUE

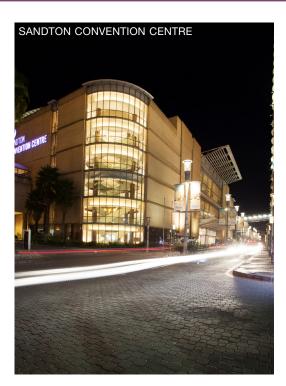


BEST LARGE CONFERENCE VENUE FINALISTS

- Birchwood Hotel & OR Tambo Conference Centre
- Cape Town ICC
- Sandton Convention Centre (winner)

CRITERIA

Best large conference venue in South Africa, catering for 250 delegates and more, that presents the most comprehensive and consistent offering, covering meeting/ conference room or rooms, exhibition options/space, food and beverage, wifi offering, service, technical facilities. location and value for money.



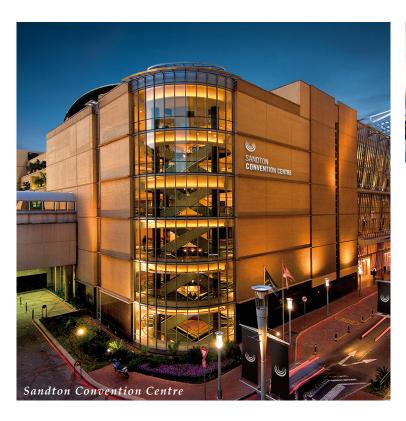






WINNER - TSOGO SUN HOTELS

BEST SA HOTEL GROUP BEST BUSINESS HOTEL (SUNSQUARE MONTECASINO) BEST LARGE CONFERENCE VENUE (SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE)







2019 was a momentous year for Tsogo Sun Hotels – one in which the group not only celebrated its 50th birthday, but also listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and achieved a number of notable milestones.

019 was a year to remember for Tsogo Sun Hotels, culminating in the group being honoured in three categories in the annual Business Traveller Africa Awards.

From an operational and development point of view, it's impossible to detail every achievement, but a few stand out:

- Southern Sun Ridgeway (Lusaka) refurbishment this project resulted in the newly-unveiled rooms and public areas bringing a fresh, contemporary design to one of Zambia's oldest hotels, which first opened in 1953. It also involved upgrades to the hotel's reception area, public toilets, business centre and Musuku Restaurant. An additional boardroom is also now available, seating 16 people.
- An extremely successful Champagne
 Day promotion that was extended
 until the end of November. Tsogo

Sun Hotels is proud to have played a part in South Africa achieving the distinction of being a world leader in champagne and sparkling wine consumption – 15th in the world and first in Africa.

- The purchase of over R1 million worth of fine wines from the Cape Winemakers Guild auction and Cape Fine & Rare Wine Auction, in which Tsogo Sun Hotels was the top bidder, further cementing its reputation for offering exceptional wine lists.
- Tsogo Sun Hotels' top restaurant brands releasing new menus that once again put the group on the culinary map, as food and beverage is a core feature of the Tsogo Sun offering.
- News that **Tsogo Sun Hotels is relaunching its Rosebank property** under the Southern Sun brand in January 2020. This involves a refurb

- including addition of a 'signature restaurant' and comes at a good time, as the Rosebank node is booming.
- The launch of an entirely new hotel brand – hi Hotels – with the first of its kind opening at Montecasino in Johannesburg by the end of January 2020.

Designed to continue delivering on Tsogo Sun's promise of creating great experiences, the new hi Hotels brand is young, authentic and modern.

"There is a segment of the market that is looking for an affordable, comfortable and well-designed space to stay, rather than a hotel with all the bells and whistles," says Tim de Raedt, hi Hotels' Director of Operations. "They want convenience and some creature comforts, and a base from which they can explore the city, go about their business, and enjoy what the neighbourhood has to offer."









The hi Hotels brand is positioned in the select service category, offering room rates at below R1 000. The rooms have luxurious walk-in showers, big windows, blackout curtains, coffee and tea stations, laptop-sized safes, USB ports, and 48-inch TVs. The 'living lobby' provides space to work and play, and a convenient deli offering for a quick snack or coffee on the run.

Technology is an important element for hi Hotels – it will be the first hotel brand within the Tsogo Sun Hotels stable to offer online and self-check-in facilities. The hotel's TV system will allow guests to cast their own content to their room TV in a simple process of connecting to the free uncapped high-speed wi-fi, scanning a QR code and opening the app of their choice.

The first hi Hotel is opening at Montecasino in Johannesburg by late-January 2020, with 123 bedrooms (46 double doubles and 77 queens) that are modern, uncluttered and comfortable. The hotel, which has been built using a modular construction method, offers easy access to the many varied restaurants, bars, theatres, shops, conference and event venues, and other entertainment options in Montecasino, Gauteng's premier entertainment destination.

Several hi Hotels sites have been

identified for a further roll-out of the brand in the next two years.

2020

Looking ahead to the rest of 2020, Tsogo Hotels has already embarked on a soft refurb of the Garden Court Hatfield in Pretoria and there are further refurbs planned for the Garden Court Morningside Sandton and the InterContinental Johannesburg Sandton Towers hotel.

Beyond that, Tsogo Sun is placing renewed focus on its environmental practices, from a sustainability point of view, including a closer look at the single-use plastic currently in use at its hotels.

The group has also embarked on a review of all its hotel brands.

"We're taking a long, hard look at them and we want to refresh them, as well as make sure they remain relevant and up to international standards," says Ravi Nadasen, Chief Operating Officer at Tsogo Sun Hotels.

2020, however, won't be a year of massive expansion, with the group focusing on consolidating its existing extensive portfolio of hotel brands and properties, and exploring the new hotel concept with hi Hotels.

"The economic environment has been tough and the drop-off in

international travel, largely from Europe, is a concern, as South Africa is quite reliant on that business," says Nadasen. "For 2020 to be successful, a lot of the things the country is doing need to start bearing fruit, such as the implementation of e-visas for countries such as Kenya, India and China, and if markets such as those in Europe rebound, then we will have a more stable 2020."

Cheers to that!

ABOUT TSOGO SUN HOTELS

Tsogo Sun Hotels is Africa's leading hospitality company, offering unparalleled variety, footprint and scale through its diverse portfolio of over 100 hotels in South Africa, Africa, the Seychelles and the Middle East, exceptional variety of restaurants and bars, and over 250 conference and banqueting facilities, including the renowned Sandton Convention Centre. Established in 1969, Tsogo Sun Hotels celebrated its 50th birthday in 2019, combining an established heritage with a professional and energised approach.

For more information, go to tsogosun.com, follow the group on Twitter and Instagram @TsogoSun, or like Tsogo Sun on Facebook @TsogoSun. ■

BEST AFRICAN REGIONAL SHORT-HAUL AIRLINE



BEST AFRICAN REGIONAL SHORT-HAUL AIRLINE FINALISTS

- Airlinl
- Comair (Kulula & BA) (winner)
- SAA

CRITERIA

Best African regional airline, covering Southern African airlines that fly to at least one other Southern African country and taking into account ontime record, safety, onboard product (including seating, business class product, food and beverage, service), lounge facilities, website, route network, loyalty programme and value for money.







BEST AFRICAN LOW-COST AIRLINE



BEST AFRICAN LOW-COST AIRLINE FINALISTS

- FlySafair (winner)
- Kulula
- Mango

CRITERIA

Best African low-cost airline, covering African airlines that offer a 'budget' product and taking into account ontime record, safety, onboard product (including seating, food and beverage, service), website, route network and value for money.







WINNER - COMAIR

BEST AFRICAN REGIONAL SHORT-HAUL AIRLINE (BRITISH AIRWAYS & KULULA.COM) FINALIST – BEST AFRICAN LOW-COST AIRLINE







Through a licence agreement with British Airways International, Comair Limited operates its premium offering under the British Airways livery and pioneered the first low-cost airline in South Africa, when it launched kulula.com in 2001.

ritish Airways (operated by Comair) offers a premium full-service offering and recently added an extra 40 flights to its weekly schedule, which now comprises roughly 507 flights a week across Southern Africa, to nine destinations, including routes to Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Harare, Livingstone, Mauritius, Victoria Falls and Windhoek.

When travelling with British Airways, customers have a choice of two cabins, Club (business class) and Traveller (economy class). In Club, customers benefit from dedicated check-in counters, priority baggage handling, and a generous two-piece baggage allowance (up to 32kg per bag), as well as access to the Special Services team. Priority boarding allows customers time to settle in as they are welcomed onboard with pre-drinks and a hot towel. Club customers also enjoy the comfort of business class seats and extra leg-room, whilst further on-board hospitality includes a variety of complimentary alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, as well as freshly-prepared meals.

Another feature of travelling in Club is access to the award-winning SLOW Lounges, with features including

delicious snacks prepared by on-site chefs, rich aromatic coffees, wine tastings from a selection of the finest South African and international wines, a full bar service, living library, private meeting spaces, business facilities and much more.

Customers who choose to fly with British Airways can join the British Airways frequent flyer programme, the Executive Club, via ba.com and enjoy exclusive privileges and rewards.

KULULA.COM

Since its inception in 2001, kulula.com has revolutionised air travel, making it the first choice for any customer looking for affordable travel options in and around South Africa. The low-cost airline was South Africa's first of its kind, giving all South Africans the opportunity to travel more often and making air travel accessible to all. In 2020 the airline celebrates its 19th birthday.

As a pioneer in the low-cost airline industry within South Africa, kulula.com operates more than 420 flights a week across 14 domestic routes, including Johannesburg (O.R. Tambo and Lanseria International airports), Cape Town,

George, East London and Durban. The airline has active codeshare agreements with Kenya Airways, Air France, KLM and Etihad to provide more flexibility and choice for its customers. Kulula.com also has interline agreements with Virgin Atlantic, Hahn Air and Delta Air Lines.

Kulula.com caters for both business and leisure travellers looking for affordable flights and a great customer experience onboard and off. In addition, customers have the choice to purchase various products and services in order to tailor their flight experience. Products include Q-jump, which gives customers the opportunity to speed through the boarding queues, allowing them an opportunity to be the first to board, as well as the ability to pre-purchase one's preferred seat on board and additional excess baggage. Customers flying out of Lanseria International Airport can purchase access to the SLOW XS Lounge, which provides a luxury haven to relax and unwind in, with free wi-fi and complimentary treats before boarding.

To find out more about British Airways (operated by Comair) visit ba.com, and for kulula.com go to www.kulula.com ■

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BEST AFRICAN LONG-HAUL AIRLINE



BEST AFRICAN LONG-HAUL AIRLINE FINALISTS

- Air Mauritius
- Ethiopian Airlines
- SAA (winner)

CRITERIA

Best African airline, covering African airlines that fly to at least one international (non-African) destination and taking into account on-time record, safety, onboard product (including seating, business class product, food and beverage, inflight entertainment, service), lounge facilities, website, loyalty programme, route network, codeshare offering and value for money.









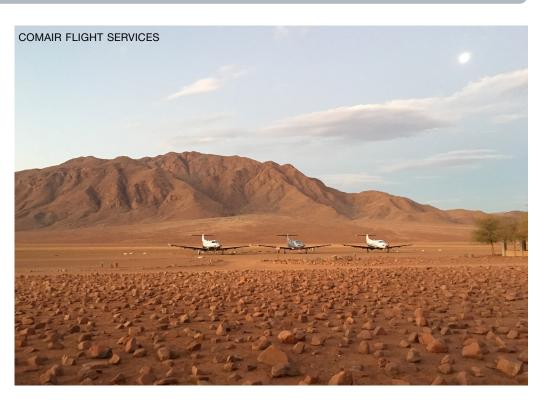


BEST PRIVATE AVIATION OPERATOR



BEST PRIVATE AVIATION OPERATOR FINALISTS Comair Flight Services (winner) ExecuJet

CRITERIA











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BEST CAR RENTAL BRAND

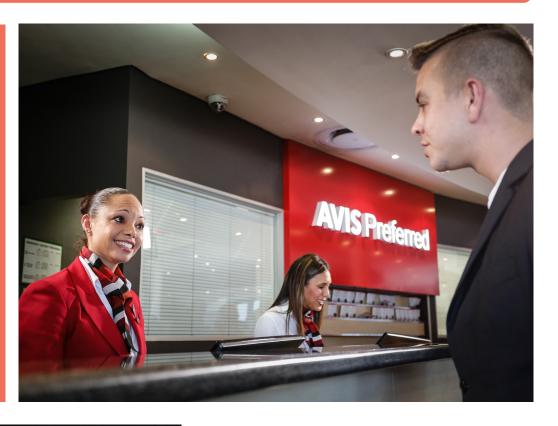


CAR RENTAL COMPANY FINALISTS

- Avis (winner)
- Bidvest Car Renta
- Europcar

CRITERIA

Best car rental brand in South Africa, covering service, online experience, call centre, product quality, variety of vehicles, loyalty programme, corporate offering, South African footprint and value for money.













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Choose your extras upfront



CHOOSE YOUR CAR

Getting something similar is nothing like choosing what you want







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BEST INTERNATIONAL HOTEL GROUP IN SA



BEST INTERNATIONAL HOTEL GROUP IN SA FINALISTS

- Hiltor
- Marriott (winner)
- Radisson Hotels

CRITERIA

Best international group with a presence in South Africa and with the most consistent offering in terms of its properties in South Africa, the quality of those properties and consistency in service, accommodation, facilities, business facilities, variety of locations, meeting & conferencing facilities, wi-fi offering, food and beverage, loyalty programme, additional services and value for money.





















COURTYARD

CITY LODGE HOTEL GROUP FAIRVIEW

BEST LUXURY HOTEL IN SA

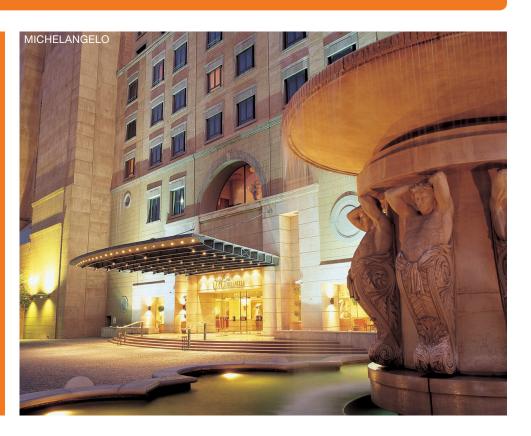


BEST LUXURY HOTEL IN SA FINALISTS

- Michelangelo Hotel (winner)One&Only Cape Town
- The Oyster Box

CRITERIA

Best five-star luxury hotel in South Africa, taking into account rooms, leisure facilities, food and beverage, service, design, layout, and additional services in the form of 'out-the-box' extras.

















BEST TRAVEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY



BEST TRAVEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY FINALISTS

- American Express GBT SA
- Flight Centre Business Travel (winner)
- Thompsons Travel

CRITERIA

Best Travel
Management
Company in South
Africa, covering
service, industry and
product knowledge,
variety of services,
reconciliation
procedures, website,
24-hour response,
crisis management,
African footprint,
corporate offering,
partners, innovation
and value for money.











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BEST VISA SERVICE PROVIDER



BEST VISA SERVICE PROVIDER FINALISTS

- MDS VisaPak
- Visas & Passports Unlimited (winner)
- Visas International

CRITERIA

The most efficient, informed, connected and cost-effective visa service provider in South Africa, with the best knowledge of visa requirements, quickest turnaround times, value for money and general efficiency.







PROFILE





It's been another great year for this Johannesburgbased visa service provider, as Visas & Passports Unlimited celebrates 16 years in the business and a long list of satisfied customers.

The Visas & Passports Unlimited journey to success grew from humble beginnings 16 years ago when Managing Director Debbie Nicholson identified an opportunity in the travel industry. With a key focus on enhancing the customer experience, Visas & Passports Unlimited set a clear and consistent mission to achieve market recognition through constant innovation, integrity, transparency and the best customer service possible.

Specialising in business, leisure and group travel visa facilitation, Visas & Passports Unlimited works closely with various visa application lodgement centres, consulates and embassies to ensure that all visa applications

WINNER – VISAS & PASSPORTS UNLIMITED BEST VISA SERVICE PROVIDER

are handled with complete confidentiality and professionalism. Through consistently maintaining its customer-focused approach, Visas & Passports Unlimited is able to accommodate the needs of its broad customer base, which includes professionals, travel agents and individual travellers, allowing it to better understand and exceed expectations of service delivery.

Visa & Passports Unlimited's state-of-the-art, interactive website has been specifically designed to make updated visa information easily accessible on PC or smart phone, with unique features such as online payment, quoting and visa tracking available to all its registered users. Visas & Passports Unlimited's revolutionary bespoke software allows it to easily communicate visa progress by updating the customer every step of the way via email, sms and the brand new mobi site. Its tracking facility includes updates on receipt of documents, missing information or documentation, visa lodgement, visa collection date, release from the relevant issuing authority, and visa delivery.

The success of Visas & Passports Unlimited would not have been possible without the loyalty and support of its customers and the unwavering dedication of its staff, and for this they would like to thank everyone involved in their journey to success.











Contact Visas Unlimited Johannesburg Office 34 7th Ave Edenvale 011 452 4646

Cape Town Office Unit 61 Roeland Square Drury Lane, Cape Town 021 300 3478

CRUISE OPERATOR



CRUISE OPERATOR FINALISTS

- Cruises InternationalMSC Cruises (winner)Royal Caribbean

CRITERIA









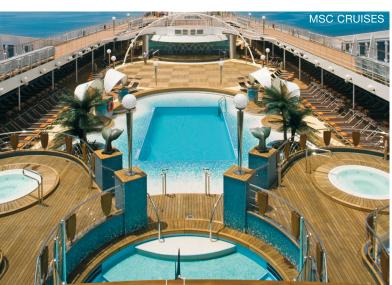














BEST TRAVEL CREDIT CARD PROVIDER



BEST TRAVEL CREDIT CARD PROVIDER FINALISTS

- American Express
- MasterCard
- Visa (winner)

CRITERIA

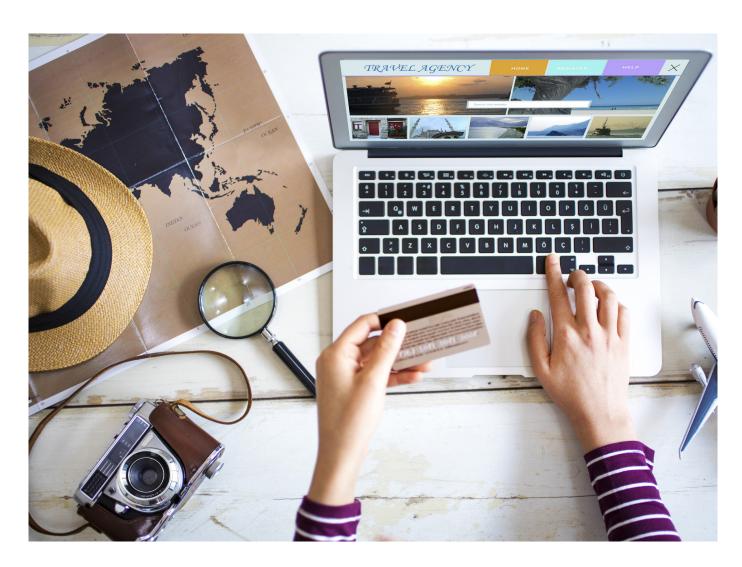
Best travel credit card provider in South Africa, covering the products it offers, ease of use, benefits, reconciliation, processes and general offering.











BEST FOREX SUPPLIER



BEST FOREX SUPPLIER FINALISTS

- Amex Foreign Exchange Bidvest Bank (winner)

CRITERIA

Best forex brand in South Africa that offers the most consistent service, value for money, breadth of offering, variety of currency, online offering, African footprint and reach.







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BEST GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM



BEST GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM FINALISTS

- Amadeus (winner)
- Sahre
- Travelport

CRITERIA

Best global distribution system in the South African market, as used by travel agents and bookers, covering ease of use, service, products and general offering.





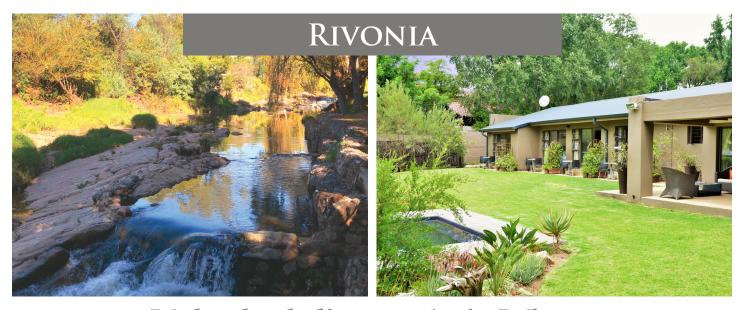












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