



From left Rob Collins, Jabu Mabuza, Nelson Mandela and Graham Wood

**A** large black and white photograph of happy children hangs in Madiba's home office. It is said that every time he rises from his chair, he smiles at the scene.

A gift from Southern Sun to Nelson Mandela, the photograph was inspired by a similar image that hangs in the group's Maia hotel in the Seychelles. When Tsogo Sun CEO Jabu Mabuza first saw the image, the warmth it radiated reminded him immediately of Mandela, so he set about commissioning the photographer, Paul Turncote, to capture a similar image in the Seychelles to give to our most revered icon.

Once the perfect photograph had been selected, it was framed and presented to Mandela in May this year by Jabu, Southern Sun MD Graham Wood and MD of Tsogo Sun Gaming, Rob Collins.

The meeting was brief but the incredible aura of this living legend had a profound impact on Graham.

'Madiba projects an overwhelming sense of calm, coupled with humility and integrity,' he says. 'The most important characteristic that anyone could aspire to is Madiba's humility – there is absolutely no arrogance in the man, despite the past and the fight he endured. Even today, it's not about him. What remains is the dedication he has to the greater good of human beings. It's about what he can do and how he can help the rest of the world.'

## THE GREATEST OF GIFTS

Managing Director Graham Wood describes a gift to Nelson Mandela as an act of gratitude. Yet the true gift was the one Madiba gave back

The gift was, as Graham describes it, 'a personal gesture from the hotel group, demonstrating our gratitude to Madiba for what he has done for us as individuals, as an organisation and as a country.'

Graham has met Madiba on two previous occasions, but this was the first time in an informal environment. 'Despite Mr Mandela's frailty, his mind is as alert as ever. The more we spoke, the more I realised how much I look up to what he stands for as a leader. Every day I try to refer to the values he portrays and work to bring them into our business and how I live my own life ... values such as being humble, having integrity, listening to others and having respect for who people are, not for their title or so-called standing in society.'

Earlier this year, on Madiba's birthday (the 18th of July, now recognised internationally as Nelson Mandela Day), millions of people around the world devoted 67 minutes of their time to helping others – one for every year that Mandela has been

an agent of acts of kindness. Graham says that Southern Sun staff were encouraged to make a positive difference in someone else's life that day, be it within their family or community, or just somebody in need. 'This is such a simple gesture of goodwill, but one that I hope will help us to continue the legacy of Mr Mandela's selfless actions.'

If you're wondering why they're wearing Bafana Bafana soccer kit in the photograph above, it's not only because of Madiba's well-known love of the game, but because it just happened to be Football Friday, a Southern Sun initiative that encourages staff and guests to wear their favourite soccer team's shirt to promote the 2010 World Cup.

So while Jabu, Rob and Graham wore their hearts on their sleeves, they agreed that though the Fifa World Cup may be the greatest event to come to SA, it would never have happened without the foundations being laid by one of our country's greatest men. Thank you, Madiba. ●