

It is remarkable to be part of a group that has – for 40 years – consistently remained one of the leading players in South Africa's hospitality industry. Southern Sun's stature and branding is so strong that we are one of the largest accommodation suppliers for the 2010 World Cup. We are the official hotel sponsor for: SA Rugby and the Springbok team, Cricket SA and the Proteas and the official supplier to Sifa, Bafana Bafana and other soccer teams. Visiting international sports teams also choose Southern Sun as their official accommodation partner.

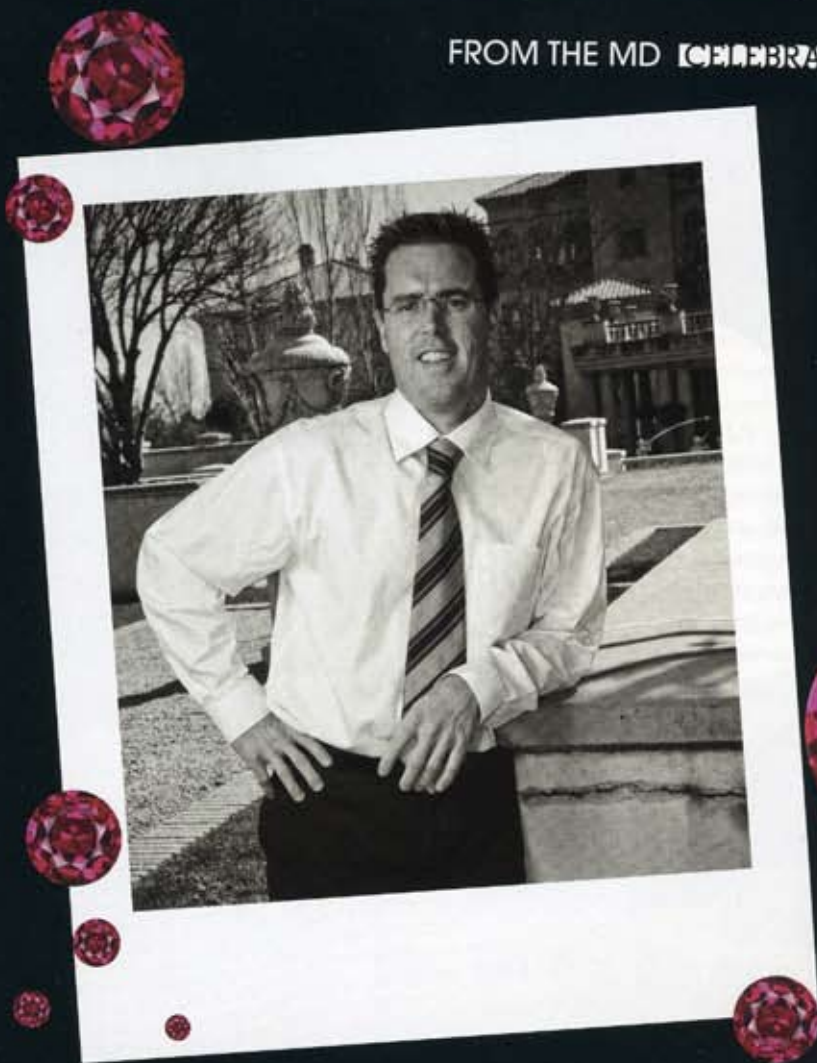
But it's not all brawn. In December 2008 we hosted the world's greatest beauties at the Sandton Convention Centre in the Miss World pageant. This year we sponsored the Southern Sun Swimwear show at the Arise Africa Fashion Week as part of our support of the growing local fashion industry. Both events were huge successes. And last but certainly not least are the innumerable high-profile businesspeople and celebrities who have come to rely on the quality of the service we offer.

Turning 40 is a significant milestone and to mark it, we're having a month-long celebration in September. This gives us the chance to focus on the thousands of people who have contributed to the longevity of the group's success, be that staff or Frequent Guests, loyal or new patrons. In a fun, week-long 94.7 Highveld Stereo campaign, we will give people an opportunity to experience our Southern Sun hospitality.

But it's not all about partying. I think it's important that we use this milestone to share our history, proving why we are where we are today and recognising our vision for the future, which is bright, healthy and expanding. We see this celebration as an opportunity to remind guests of how much we offer them and show them how, going forward, we intend to build on the consistency and value that everyone recognises – and expects – from us.

Evidence of our focus on the future can be seen in our 2010 plan, with the opening of the new Southern Sun Montecasino, Garden Court Umhlanga and StayEasy Pietermaritzburg. These are examples of what I call 'the building of opportunities'.

Building hotels is about sustainable growth. The hospitality and tourism industry contributes eight percent to the



SALUTE TO THE SUN

Southern Sun's birthday is an occasion to celebrate past successes, champion the people who helped achieve these heights and look forward to a very sunny future, says managing director Graham Wood

GDP of this country and there is no reason why it shouldn't contribute more, especially with the hosting of the 2010 World Cup. Our StayEasy brand developments make sound commercial sense as they extend beyond the current recession, with some hotels only due for completion when the economic landscape has shifted.

Ultimately though, without the support of our guests and in particular the 70 000 Frequent Guest members, we wouldn't be in a position to keep adding product to our portfolio. The same can be said of our staff, some of whom have been with us for 30 to

40 years. These people have effectively dedicated their lives to a career with Southern Sun and that does not go unrecognised.

This is a special year for Southern Sun, and for me too, as we were both born in 1969. The group's birthday celebrations also mark my first year with the group and I can honestly say that joining the Southern Sun family has been a rewarding experience.

Our future looks bright. I am so looking forward to being part of the team that takes Southern Sun to even greater heights.