

## Conference Check Drakensberg – South Africa



# Champagne sports resort

### WHAT IS IT LIKE?

I have had the pleasure of attending six conference events of assorted shapes and sizes, times and durations, this year alone at Champagne Sports – and every one has been an absolute joy. As a professional speaker I'm privileged to attend about 150 conferences globally each year, and I've yet to discover any other venue in South Africa that has the passion, service delivery and work ethic that the staff and management have for their business. I've jokingly referred to two managers there, Philip West and Glynn Peacock, as my family because I see them more than my brother! It's my ideal place to work and play, situated deep in the Drakensberg, and apparently conference planners and organizers countrywide are rediscovering its magnificence - they always seem to have a conference or two going on and another about to happen. I've seen clients there throw nearly impossible requests at the hotel team, and every one gets delivered, almost instantly – and with a genuine smile. Quite simply, I recommend this venue to absolutely everyone.

### WHERE IS IT?

Situated in the Champagne Valley in Central Drakensberg, in the heart of the mountains with spectacular views of Champagne Castle and Cathkin Peak, with the nearest town, Winterton, some 13 km away. The hotel is a comfortable 3½ hour drive from Johannesburg and 2 hours from Durban on tarred roads. There is also an airstrip nearby and a helicopter landing pad.

### CONFERENCE ROOM FACILITIES

The hotel has three main markets: leisure,

timeshare and conferences, and all are given due care and attention. Five conference rooms are available, and any number of indoor and outdoor breakaway rooms and options are available. Sentinel, the largest room can seat up to 1000 delegates, cinema style, in its biggest configuration, and the smallest room, the Injasuti comfortably seats up to 18 in a U-shape. In-between, both the Monks Cowl Centre and The Summit Room can be configured for as few as 80 delegates and as many as 550, whilst the Ondini Room can accommodate between 45 to 150 people. The venue constantly upgrades its equipment and can offer a complete variety of technical support for those who require it, and also as a bonus, has wireless internet available in each area. Theme evenings may be arranged on site, ranging from Medieval Banquets complete with suckling pig, to UK or Irish pubs, an Oktoberfest, Mexican Fiestas, American banquets, African Extravaganzas, and even The Seven Seas. I'm tempted to say that if it isn't on the list, they'll make it happen anyway. Teambuilding is also a popular conference partner, and here the venue offers Odd Ball Olympics and assorted sporting activities on site. Which brings me nicely to the Golf Course, which is an 18 hole championship course designed by Hugh Baiocchi, and is quite simply beautiful and breathtaking in its setting.

### LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Swim, play golf, tennis, or just relax and soak up the experience. Lawn bowls, a squash court, a basketball court, a kids' play park, trampolines, volleyball, a gym with sauna, mountain bikes. Then try birdwatching or

just watch the roaming herds of impala and blesbok. Watch sport on the TV in the pub if you have to. Champagne Sports is more like a luxurious country club than a hotel, a factor reflected in every aspect of the venue. The rooms are comfortable, spotless, and tastefully appointed. The food is the only buffet experience I've ever enjoyed, and it is always different, and very tasty. Hot tip: get off site at least once to the nearby Falcon Ridge, a unique experience where you can see some amazing hunters of the sky swoop for the catch. Shows are held daily at 10.30, dependent on the weather. Call 082 774 6398 for details. There's even a chapel to get married in!

### VERDICT

I'd live there if I could (I'm seriously thinking of buying Timeshare there as it's won just about every Timeshare Award there is). It's better than good. It's bloody marvellous.

### PRICE

Leisure rack rates are around R800 per person sharing, including breakfast, lunch and dinner! Conference rates available on request.

### CONTACT

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### RESERVATIONS

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### CONFERENCES

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