

Golf estate raises R120,000 for rhino conservation

In September, Pearl Valley Golf & Country Estate's annual Celebrity Golf Day raised R120,000 for the Forever Wild Rhino Protection Initiative, a programme of the Wilderness Foundation.



Katlego Maboe

The event attracted the support of various celebrities, including South Africa's top women's golfer and Pearl Valley ambassador Lee-Anne Pace, cricketers Dale Steyn and Vernon Philander, Springbok legends Rob Louw and Tiaan Strauss, chef Reuben Riffel, television personality Katlego Maboe and actor Neels van Jaarsveld.

"We can't be successful with our various projects on our own. We rely on the support and collaboration of our strategic partners to ensure that we protect this iconic species for future generations," said Andrew Muir, CEO of the Wilderness Foundation Africa. "The funds raised by the Pearl Valley Celebrity Golf Day will contribute to our logistical and operational support for conservation and law enforcement agencies responsible for rhino security."

Pearl Valley invited Bridge House School near Franschhoek to participate in the event by means of an art project. Under the guidance of David Fuller, the school's head of visual art, 45 pupils aged 12 to 17 crafted ceramic rhinos and seven large rhino sculptures, which were made available for auction on the day and contributed to the funds raised.

Enthusiastic participation

"We're truly thankful to the many celebrities, event sponsor Abacus Asset Management, additional sponsors and role players for their enthusiastic participation," says Gawie Marx, Pearl Valley general manager. "The interest from various quarters in supporting this fundraising initiative is clear testament to what we can together achieve for wildlife conservation."

Earlier this year, Pearl Valley became a conservation partner of the Wilderness Foundation. Golfers have the option to add R10 to their rounds on an ongoing basis, donated directly to the Forever Wild Rhino Protection initiative, while exclusive golf-club head covers in the shape of a rhino can be purchased at the on-site golf shop, with proceeds donated directly to the programme.

Established in 1972 by the late conservation pioneer, Dr Ian Player, the Wilderness Foundation played an integral part in saving the white rhino from extinction in the 1960s. Four decades later, the Wilderness Foundation launched the Forever Wild Conservation Programme in response to the growing rhino poaching pandemic, which in 2013 expanded to include lion, leopard, elephant, gorilla and shark conservation initiatives.

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