

Heavy Chef announces top 5 startups in South Africa for 2023

South Africa's top five most innovative and exciting startup businesses were crowned at a 300-strong event held in the historic District 6 Homecoming Theatre late last week. The winners are Bothale AI, Everlectric, Jem, MySocialLife and Strove.



Source: [Heavy Chef](#)

“The five winning startups selected from over 120 nominated by their communities exemplified passion, a sensitivity to sustainability, social need as well as a wholehearted embrace of current technologies including AI,” said Zinhle Novazi, podcaster, competition judge and Heavy Chef Foundation board member.

“The winning criteria were not so much about “the best performing” or “biggest fundraiser” but rather as judges we looked for “the most exciting” startup. We asked ourselves, “Does this startup stir my soul?” Novazi said.

“And soul we found in spades,” she added.

The annual Heavy Chef Top 5 Start Up Awards were introduced in 2017 and are now confirmed as South Africa's premium startup awards celebration. The awards are a collaboration between Heavy Chef, Xero, Xneelo and Workshop17. Support is provided by LinkedIn, Backsberg, Happy Culture, Sir Fruit, Global Citizen, Whipping The Cat, Youth Capital and Now Boarding.

Previous HeavyChef startup winners, include Yoco, SweepSouth, Easy Equities, Aerobotics and Franc - all of which are now firmly entrenched in the economy,

Heavy Chef CEO Fred Roed explains: "This annual celebration showcases amazing small businesses that are driving the economy forward, providing employment opportunities and proving that small business development is one of the most important drivers of growth.

"Entrepreneurs are often too busy to celebrate themselves, so the Top 5 Startups awards event affords our nation's unsung superheroes to let loose their capes for one evening. This is our 7th year and each year our awards celebration is getting bigger and more exciting," he added.

A celebrity panel of entrepreneur judges poured over 120 unique nominations to create a shortlist of 12 for final consideration.

Among the key attributes of the 2023 list of finalists is the role played by artificial intelligence (AI) in their makeup/offering

"AI is clearly becoming increasingly relevant in the role startups play in society. This is very exciting and illustrates that the technology being incorporated in South African businesses is world class," says Roed.

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