

8TH CONSULAR BALL

Raises R1,8 million for charities

The 8th Consular Ball took place at the Kelvin Grove Ballroom on 3 December for the first time since Covid struck and managed to raise a record amount of **R1,8 million** for its six chosen charities.



The glittering event was attended by diplomats and honorary consuls representing **23 countries**, as well as their friends and business associates. The premier of Western Cape, Alan Winde, was the guest of honour and the mayor of Cape Town, Geordin Hill-Lewis, and the local business community also purchased tables to support the fundraising event that has become a highlight on Cape Town's calendar over the past decade.



"This year's Consular Ball was exceptional on so many levels", said Isabel Verwey, wife of the Deputy Dean of the Corps and organizer of the event. "It was the first Consular Ball in 3 years and people were hungry for an event like this. It was a joyous occasion that had a special energy. Guests were greeted by our saxophone and guitar-duo outside and enjoyed bubbly while mingling – we had a tough time to get them into the beautifully transformed Ballroom for the function to start!"



Well-known comedian and actor **Alan Committie** was the MC and auctioneer for



the evening and had everyone in stitches with his quick wit and interaction with the guests. The entertainment was provided by **Amira von Willighagen**, the 18 year old soprano



who won the *Holland's got talent* TV- show when she was 9 years old. She enthralled the distinguished guests with her pure and soaring voice and set the tone for the rest of the evening when Alan Committie auctioned her off on the spot for R55 000 to give a private performance for the highest bidder.

Later that evening the husband and wife duo, **RAAF**, provided toe-tapping music for the audience to listen and dance to and their energy and expertise with the array of guitars made them instant favourites.

The **Tombola** has always been a fun part of the evening when guests can buy tickets at R100 each to win prizes donated by the various consulates. This year saw various offers of accom-modation at 5-star hotels and guest-houses, like the Shelley Point Hotel, the Colosseum Hotel, Camissa House and - courtesy of the Portuguese Consulate - the Mount Nelson and the Silo Hotel.



The Consular Ball is known for its unique auction items that cannot be bought in a shop and this year guests were spoilt for choice with a feast of extra-ordinary items.

"We had literally something to suit every taste!" said Isabel. "For art-lovers we had a magnificent sculpture, *Dolores*, by Sandro Trapani, and for wine-connoisseurs there

This year the Consular Ball's beneficiaries are **Durbanville Children's Home, Proud Partners, African Scholars Fund, Ashton in Action, Breadline Africa and Mothers that Care.**



was a 9-litre Kanonkop Paul Sauer AND a rare 48-year-old Muscat d'Alexandrie from our generous wine sponsor of the evening, **Deetlefs**. For music lovers we had a unique performance on Africa's only Carillon up in the tower of the City Hall and for the more spiritually inclined, there was a pulpit hanging containing the wise and immortal words of our beloved Archbishop Desmond Tutu – complete with his blessing. We also had quite a few other wonderful items donated and sponsored by various consulates!"

On offer were a Paella for 20 friends with the Consul General of Spain, Jesus Silva Fernandez and his wife, Sara, at the Spanish residence, a Fondue for 10 persons with the Consul General of Switzerland, Markus Thur and his wife, Jucara, at the Swiss residence, and a scenic drive in a vintage car to brunch with the Honorary Consul of Peru, Advocate Mark Nowitz. The Honorary Consul of Vanuatu, Christian Brendel and his wife Maren, sponsored a 3-night stay at the 5-star Gamagara Africa Private Nature Reserve,



and the Consul General of Romania, Andrei Zaharescu and his wife, Cosmina, organized a dinner for 20 persons at Ghenwa's Culinary Club at Lourensford Estate.

One of the auction items that was so popular that it was auctioned of twice was a dinner for 20 persons with struggle icon, Justice Albie Sachs and his wife, Vanessa, courtesy



of the Honorary Consul of Mauritius, Mukhtar Joonas.

Another item that grabbed everyone's attention was an intimate dinner for 6 friends with Dr. Imtiaz Sooliman, founder of the Gift of the Givers Foundation, courtesy of Isabel Verwey, wife of the Honorary Consul General of Slovenia, Prieur du Plessis.

The dinner fetched R100 000 and was also auctioned off twice. It will be prepared and served in the highest bidders' own homes by chefs from Bertus Basson's *Eike* restaurant.



For the adventurous there were plenty of options – including a conservation safari for 2 couples with 3 days packed with close encounters at the Manyoni Game Reserve in KwaZulu-Natal. One of the activities will be the dehorning of a rhino to save it from poachers and since this item was sold twice, the Consular Ball can take credit for saving the lives of two rhinos!

Another item that caught everyone's imagination was a one-day trip to Antarctica



for the couple who has travelled to all the "normal" destinations. It involves an ice-tunnel hike, a sauna and cycling in the Arctic mountains and was generously sponsored by the Honorary Consul of Paraguay, Mirella Kruger. It seemed that our guests had an appetite for the extra-ordinary as the bidding was so fierce that Mirella agreed to give the trip to the 3 highest bidders!

And finally, there was a handcrafted luxury trip for 2 persons to Istanbul and magical Cappadocia in Turkey. As always, **Turkish Airlines** sponsored the business class flights to Istanbul and with the help of the Consul General of Turkey, Senan Yesildag, **TSA** came on board to sponsor all the 5-star accommodation, private tours, special dinner and hot-air balloon trip in Cappadocia.

"It is heartening to me that even post Covid, when people are struggling financially, individuals like Mirella Kruger and companies like Deetlefs, Turkish Airlines and TSA are willing to give freely to a good cause," said Isabel. "The real winners of the evening are the many children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who will benefit from the funds raised."