

# Cape filming opens Hollywood eyes

## Executives impressed with the local know-how and potential

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THE CREW and craftsmanship at the Cape Town Film Studios have won high praise from top Hollywood executives touring the country.

They declared before flying out yesterday that their major expectations were met and even exceeded.

The 10-day tour by the Tinsel Town bigwigs, announced in Weekend Argus last Sunday, was labelled a resounding success by both the international production companies represented, and the South African film industry.

Last Sunday Weekend Argus reported that the tour could set Cape Town up as one of the most filmed cities and locations.

The executives were from major film studios Warner Brothers, Paramount, Disney and the Producers Guild of America (PGA). They were here to foster international film industry relationships and familiarise themselves with South Africa as a viable film-making destination.

At a press conference at Cape Town International Airport yesterday, PGA executive director Vance van Petten confirmed he was "more than sat-

isfied" after meeting local producers and production companies, who he described as "incredibly impressive".

"We had the opportunity to go to Cape Town Film Studios, and the level of crew and craftsmanship... surpassed expectations.

Sara Spring, Paramount's senior vice-president of feature production, said she saw a number of projects being shot. The levels of expertise among local production crew and facilities set South Africa as a worthy competitor against South Korea and the Czech Republic.

But Cape Town Film Studios chief executive Nico Decker said frankly that the local film industry had a "long road ahead".

He singled out the challenge of translating the energy and creativity of local film-makers into making films, through partnerships.

With 29 000 people employed within three years, R1.6 billion spent on production, and R5bn brought into the country as a result, Decker said the positive spin-offs could only grow, as long as partnerships materialised.

The next step, he suggested was to create wider-ranging film productions, with



**MOVIE MAGIC:** Hollywood and local executives at a press conference at Cape Town International Airport yesterday. They are, from left, Cape Town Film Studios chief executive Nico Decker; executive director of the Producers Guild of America Vance van Petten; Wesgro chief executive Nils Flaaten and Wesgro film manager Monica Rorvik; Paramount senior vice-president of feature production Sara Spring; Warner Brothers senior vice-president of physical production Kate Beyda and Mary Ann Hughes, the vice-president of film and TV production planning at Disney.

PICTURE: IAN LANDSBERG

partnerships and financial collaboration.

Mary Ann Hughes, vice-president of film and TV production planning at Disney, said the group had gained a wealth of information on the trip, and had fostered relation-

ships that had seen the planting of many seeds to take local production to the "next level".

Talks had included arranging for local producers to be trained in the US, development in television, the possibility of big budget films coming to

South Africa, and future partnerships to boost knowledge and skills transfer.

Mpumi Mabuza, of BrandSA, said that the visit had showcased South Africa in its entirety, with positive feedback coming from the interna-

tional executives.

"They've given us insight and input on how other countries are doing it, and what they look for, and it helps our country to be more competitive... It puts us on an equal playing field."