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HOLLYWOOD SOUTH AFRICAN STYLE

Ever dreamed of walking down Hollywood Boulevard? This might be your big chance. Picture it: the Hollywood Walk of Fame and Table Mountain in the background.

The city of Cape Town is an actress known the world over. She is a night-time San Francisco, complete with twinkling lights and calm waters in the background. She is New Orleans, featuring Long Street's lacy old balconies, all tarted up to play the part of that steamy city in Louisiana. She is a street in France and sometimes a German landscape. And at other times she is simply an anonymous but breathtaking backdrop, awash with a sun-kissed beach, green mountainside or dark forest. South Africa's oldest city is also one of the industry's top high profile actresses.

But the story of South Africa's popularity with film-makers both locally and abroad goes way back to the Anglo-Boer war, when the first newsreels were shot. The world's longest-running weekly newsreel, African Mirror, was launched in 1913 and ran until the 1980s. We've come a long way since then.

Long a favourite for fashion shoots and advertising stills, the city has everything from breathtaking scenery and sunny skies to experienced film crews and luxury hotels. These days Cape Town, albeit 9 992 km from Hollywood, has a solid reputation as a premier destination for film-makers, ■■■

No longer satisfied with being just a pretty destination, the Mother City is poised for a growth spurt that will knock the socks off movie-makers the world over: the first custom-built, Hollywood-style studios.

with more than 30 international feature films shot on location every year. Many of these films would have stayed in the country longer had studios been available for them to complete both indoor and outdoor filming. The solution has come in a move that will knock the socks off movie-makers the world over – the first custom-built, Hollywood-style studios in South African history.

“Imagine films like *The Matrix*, *Dark Knight*, *Mission Impossible* and *James Bond*, all filmed right here in the Mother City. This is what the new development of Cape Town Film Studios means for the film production industry in South Africa,” says CEO Nico Dekker.

Renowned studio designer Veronica Sive, who designed Fox Studios in Sydney and was involved in the Warner Studios in Melbourne, is the design brain behind these custom-built studios. Finally, the vital element that has been missing from the local film industry, and which has resulted in South Africa potentially losing billions of rands in revenue, will come to fruition with these internationally competitive studios.

This infrastructure means that the local film industry can attract and maintain larger budget films, in the process creating a whole range of job opportunities for locals, from film technicians to dressmakers and even construction workers.

The film studios project came about after the Western Cape Provincial Government identified the industry as a long term growth sector for the Western Cape. In February 2004, Cape Town Film Studios, then known as Dreamworld



Charlize Theron, right, and mother Gerda on tour of Robben Island.

Film City Ltd, was confirmed as the developer for this world-class film studio in Cape Town.

What gives Cape Town Film Studios an enormous advantage is the fact that the majority shareholders are also highly regarded in the international film arena. Videovision's Anant Singh, also chairman of Cape Town Film Studios, and etv's Marcel Golding command vast networks of international contacts in film-producing regions around the world.

What does this mean in terms of economic impact? Well, if Cape Town Film Studios hosts two large feature film productions per year, easily at US\$50 million per production, by applying the economic impact multiplier of 2.5, two productions of this nature equate to US\$250 million per annum spent in South Africa. This translates to an economic impact of R2 billion per annum from the start of operations in 2010. Describing the project, Dekker says, “This will truly be an all-encompassing, one-stop production centre that offers the possibility both to do business and live with the stars. It is a very exciting time to be based in the Western Cape if you work in the movie industry.”

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Studio access is very important in film making as it provides the film maker with a totally controllable environment. When directors work with international stars, tight time frames and budgets, filming in studios becomes vital for keeping the film on track.



Aerial view of Cape Town Film Studios development.