

'Big moment' as Dreamworld takes shape

Developments tipped to soften recession impact

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TWO MEGA-developments in Cape Town have reached key milestones in the past 48 hours, signifying dramatic confidence in the city in open defiance of the global economic melt-down.

Yesterday the first vertical structures of the Cape Town Film Studios – two 4.5-ton giant grids of structural steel framework – were winched into place by manufacturers Anchor Steel Projects.

A total of 20 of these, weighing almost 100 tons, will make up the outer perimeter of the first of four giant film studios – covering a total of 7 000m² between them. Six storeys high, each studio's roofing structure is specially engineered to carry huge weights – up to 1.8 tons at any point – in order to carry Hollywood innovations such as "flying cam-



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eras", or the suspension of replica aircraft, for example.

"This is a big moment – extremely exciting," said managing director Nico Dekker.

"You will be able to create anything in here – forests, deserts, distant horizons."

The studios' development represents a total expected investment of R430 million – which includes full backing by the City of Cape Town in the form of R30m for roads and by the provincial government in the form of a R30m investment through Wesgro.

Dekker said the four studios would be complete by April 2010 and the 200ha site would then also feature peripheral

development, such as light industry and retail space – expected to eventually cover 100ha on the site.

Dekker said 80 film companies and related businesses had already committed to making the site their home and he expected that it would ultimately draw a number of media companies, forming Africa's first hi-tech "media city", fed by technologies such as fastest-possible broadband internet links, for example.

The Cape Town Film Studio construction site is matched, in the heart of the city by a second massive development, hotel magnate Sol Kerzner's "six-star" One& Only hotel in the V&A Waterfront.

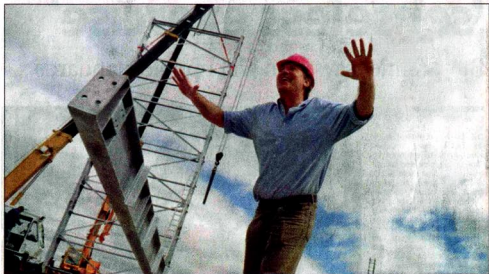
The hotel, designed by local architects Dennis Fabian Berman, consists of two sections: Marina Rise will have 91 rooms and suites, while Villa Island will have 40 suites.

The smallest of the suites is 65m², while the largest – 250m² each – are the presidential and imperial suites, reportedly the biggest in Cape Town.

Kerzner's company's total investment has not been made public, but the hotel will employ 380 people. It is expected to open next month.

Cape Town Partnership head Andrew Boraine said of the film studio's development that the "creative industries" were crucial to the future economic well-being of Cape Town.

"Cape Town will not escape the negative impact of the global recession for the next two years. However, both these projects, together with 2010 infrastructure projects and the planned expansion of the Convention Centre after 2010, will help soften the impact and retain jobs in key economic sectors of the city."



Managing director of Cape Town Film Studios Nico Dekker opts for the hands-on approach at the site of the first of four Hollywood-style studios planned for the city.

PICTURE HENK KRAIGER