

# CLHG's Hotelier of the Year is Ian Laughland, GM of City Lodge Hotel Ortia!

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City Lodge Hotel Group held its Annual Leadership Conference at the beautiful Kievits Kroon Gauteng Wine Estate in Pretoria in April. This is the first time since 2019 and the pandemic that management has been able to gather en masse, brainstorm and present on an array of topics that will ensure the group embraces the changing travel, tourism and hospitality environment and delivers the best service excellence to guests.



CLHG senior management at Annual Leadership Conference 2023

The highlight of the conference was the gala dinner on 19 April 2023, with the following deserving people and properties being recognised:

- **CEO's Award – Hotelier of the Year:** Ian Laughland, general manager at City Lodge Hotel at OR Tambo International Airport
- **Hotel Operation of the Year Awards, by brand:**
  - Courtyard Hotel Waterfall City
  - **Overall winner:** City Lodge Hotel at OR Tambo International Airport
  - Town Lodge Bellville
  - Road Lodge Pietermaritzburg
- **Revenue Driver Award:** Brendan Luttig, general manager at Courtyard Hotel Waterfall City, and Wentzel von Wielligh, general manager at City Lodge Hotel V&A Waterfront
- **Rising Star Award:** Sherwin Anthoo, assistant Group financial manager
- **Player's Player Award:** Trevor Boyd, Group operations manager: F&B
- **People Award:** Wentzel von Wielligh, general manager at City Lodge Hotel V&A Waterfront

Ian Laughland, general manager at City Lodge Hotel at OR Tambo International Airport, won the prestigious CEO's Award – Hotelier of the Year, and this property was the brand winner for City Lodge Hotels and overall winner of the Hotel Operation of the Year Award. Running at 100% occupancies most of the time, this hotel has a unique set of circumstances that challenge the most proficient, experienced hotelier. Its super-convenient location within the airport precinct of the biggest and busiest airport in Africa appeals to guests needing a comfortable, upmarket place to stay within walking distance of the domestic and international arrivals and departures terminals.

*“...as they say, it takes a village, and our aim at City Lodge Hotel Group is to ensure that every guest and staff member feels valued, appreciated and recognised during their time with us.”*

– CEO Andrew Widegger

The hotel has 365 well-appointed rooms, spacious #Café restaurant and Sundowner Bar, expansive lobby lounge, flight information boards in the public area, three boardrooms, and conference facilities for 46 delegates, fitness room, outside swimming pool in a stylish courtyard, uncapped WiFi, and easy access to all of the retailer, banking and dining facilities within the airport building.

They have significantly grown the food and beverage offering, under the capable leadership of executive chef Devandra Narismulu. Its kitchen was expanded and upgraded in September 2022, allowing the team to extend the overall offering to 24-hour food service. Travelling guests keeping irregular hours can now enjoy a speedy buffet dinner in addition to the more leisurely pace of the à la carte menu, right the way through to the early hours of the morning. Breakfast also starts much earlier for those guests needing to leave on a red-eye flight, and room service is available at all hours.



CLHG Hotelier of the Year Ian Laughland, centre, with chairman Bulelani Ngcuka, left, and CEO Andrew Widegger, right

Ian Laughland says: “This hotel is a constant buzz of activity with a diverse mix of local and international guests and a key role player in the airport stakeholder community. Through our dedicated chefs and service teams, we have created a 24/7 food and beverage offering which is well received by guests who are arriving and departing around the clock.”

As a highly experienced hotelier, Ian believes in transformational leadership, creating an environment that supports innovation with all team member involvement. He adds: “These awards mean a lot to the team – they’re motivated and excited about the future!”

Criteria for the Hotelier of the Year Award include (in no particular order): professionalism, resilience and grit, preparation and anticipation, service excellence as rated by external agencies, operational savvy, property management, transformation, financial administration, profitability, sustainability, cash management, and dedication in all they do to the group’s philosophy of ‘people caring for people’.

CEO Andrew Widegger says of this year’s event: “We value this time together after a very busy post-pandemic recovery process last year and this year. It gave us time to renew our focus, commitment and energy as a team to ensuring our properties, operations and service levels continue to meet and exceed changing guests’ expectations. We used the opportunity to reinstitute our annual awards, and are enormously proud of those who have been recognised. However, we also give a massive shout-out to the teams at all our hotels as well as support office for all they do to make hospitality

excellence possible – as they say, it takes a village, and our aim at City Lodge Hotel Group is to ensure that every guest and staff member feels valued, appreciated and recognised during their time with us.”

- **Planet vs. Plastics: City Lodge Hotels' eco-initiatives make sustainability easy** 23 Apr 2024
- **Sleep Easy with City Lodge Hotels! Bedtime Stories for Business People launched** 20 Mar 2024
- **Calling all last resorters: City Lodge Hotels' quarterly break saves the day!** 14 Mar 2024
- **Cheers to St Patrick's Day! Guinness specials and more at City Lodge Hotels!** 11 Mar 2024
- **City Lodge Hotels introduces Suhoor Breakfasts for Ramadan guests** 8 Mar 2024

#### **City Lodge Hotel**

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City Lodge Hotel Group has a variety of hotels dedicated to providing you with comfort at a level that suits you. With 5 Courtyard Hotels (480 rooms), 19 City Lodge Hotels (3281 rooms), 12 Town Lodges (1507 rooms) and 23 Road Lodges (2 272 rooms), the Group has a total of 7540 rooms and ranks among the 250 largest hotel chains in the world. We are dedicated to providing quality accommodation for business, leisure and 'bleisure' travellers in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Mozambique. From basic, functional rooms to magnificent luxury studios, we have the range and experience to give you unbelievable service and exceptional accommodation at a price you can afford and in a location near to where you want to be. Go to [www.clhg.com](http://www.clhg.com) for more information.

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