

# Tsogo's first foreign venture

By **RICHARD WEILERS**

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**RICHARD WEILERS** has 40 years experience in the hospitality industry of which 38 is with the Tsogo Sun Group. He has held senior executive positions including Operations Director and General Manager in South Africa and Spain. His portfolio includes South Africa, Africa, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean Islands. He holds a national diploma in Hotel School Management and is a graduate of IMD, Lausanne. He was awarded an Emeritus from the Hotel School of South Africa for his contribution to the hotel industry.

**T**sogo Sun is the leading hotels, gaming and entertainment company in South Africa, providing a vast variety of hospitality and entertainment and leisure experiences. Combining an established heritage with a professional and energised approach, the group proudly encompasses 14 casinos and over 95 hotels in South Africa, Africa and Seychelles.

In 1988, the Tsogo Sun Group embarked on its first offshore venture, outside of South Africa, into Seychelles to expand its footprint in one of the most beautiful areas of the world. It is our opinion that the Seychelles islands are among the most pristine and archeologically diverse, attracting travellers in search of solitude and supreme beauty.

In 1990, the Group redeveloped their hotel acquisition, the Paradise Sun Hotel on Praslin, from a 42 to an 80 roomed four star resort. The hotel is a Seychelles gem, which is embraced by the warmth of the Indian Ocean, with white coral sands of the Cote d'Or, arguably one of Seychelles' most beautiful and pristine beaches. Paradise Sun has benefited consistently from the highest hotel occupancy since the inception of the new product.

In 2006, the Tsogo Sun Group partnered with a local

entrepreneur and businessman, Joseph Albert, to develop MAIA Luxury Resort & Spa, an exclusive 30 villa resort nestled on over 30 acres of a secluded and a private peninsula on the southwest coast of the island of Mahé in the Seychelles. Each of the spacious 250m<sup>2</sup> villas feature the latest facilities and have uninterrupted ocean views, a spacious gazebo with oversized day-bed, a 25ft infinity pool and outdoor sunken bath tub. The hotel's service philosophy is delivered by MAIA's expert personal butlers, each of whom is assigned to a specific villa.

The confidence that the Tsogo Sun Group has in the Seychelles, is a consequence of the Seychelles investment code, which has continued to provide support from the Seychelles authorities. The Seychelles government has a very clear and engaging tourism strategy to support the tourism infrastructure. The Seychelles Tourism Board is extremely accessible and supportive in collaborating ideas with the hospitality and tour operators in ensuring that these islands are one of the most sought after and unique destinations in the world.

The recently appointed Minister of Tourism, Alain St. Ange, has played an active role in ensuring the continuous growth of the airline capacity, as well as spearheading a leadership role in bringing new markets

to the destination. The establishment of a hotel school a number of years ago has created a culture and a service ethic by the Seychellois, which brings the warmth of the Creole hospitality and culture to the hotel guests.

The Tsogo Sun Group continues to be very optimistic about the potential of travel and tourism in the Seychelles, in which it has operated successfully for the past 25 years. We look forward to welcoming many more guests to our hotels and wish the people of the Seychelles prosperous times ahead. **F**

