

# *Plett Restaurant Operators Association*

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## NEWSLETTER 1-MARCH/APRIL 2010

### Formation of the Association

After some months of preliminary meetings and discussions, the Association was finally “incorporated” by the signing of the constitution at a meeting of the inaugural Executive Committee on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Thereafter owing to the “busy season” it was agreed that the initiative would be continued after all involved had recovered from the festive season, annual holidays etc.

A bank account was opened with Nedbank, Plettenberg Bay and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010 the first “formal” Executive Committee meeting was held which commenced the membership drive as well as other initiatives for the benefit of members.

To date we have 28 restaurants who have elected to join the Association which is an amazing achievement by way of a percentage bearing in mind the short period of time that the Association has been in existence.

### The Executive Committee

After some minor adjustments, the first Executive Committee of the Association comprise the following persons:-

Malcolm Katz (Chairman)	Mugg and Bean
Chris Stroebel (vice Chairman)	The Lookout Deck
Marianne Mould	The Med
Wayne Craig (marketing)	Off the Hook
Ian Watson	Miguels
Cameron Attwood	Kitchen Café
Bruce Richardson (Secretary/Treasurer)	

Your Committee are committed to providing you with an effective service and value for your money.

### What the Association has Achieved Thus Far

1. The preparation and circulation to members of an analysis of the smoking legislation and as to how it affects members. Your scribe has undertaken to call at members premises in order to discuss each members particular situation so as to avoid the considerable fines which may be imposed for infringement of the legislation. Should you require a copy of the document, likewise contact your scribe. His contact details are at the head of this document.

2. The preparation and circulation to members of a document dealing with the impact of liquor licensing legislation pertaining to the world cup. If you want a copy, contact your scribe.
3. Participation for then members in the GAA accommodation/restaurant map at a very much reduced fee of R100 as opposed to the original asking fee of R250.
4. The launching of a Plett Restaurant website in which members can participate. Have a look at [www.restaurantsinplett.co.za](http://www.restaurantsinplett.co.za) and let us have your comments/suggestions.
5. The negotiation of a fantastic deal with the Show Me website which is a very powerful multi-access website that all restaurants need to be on. The very reasonable monthly fee is R150 and if we can get at least 30 Plett Restaurant Operators Association members in good standing to participate they will waive the R1000 establishment fee for each restaurant for design work etc. Please pay your annual membership fee and encourage others to join the Association so that all can benefit from these exceptional deals. Yolandi of Show Me will be contacting you with details and inviting your participation. The benefit from this one initiative alone will equate to a saving of your annual membership fee.
6. We are in the process of negotiating with one of the major banking institutions for a banking package which will be of benefit to members in terms of savings on banking fees, credit card charges etc. Again this will be a volume driven issue to make it worth the banks while to offer the enhanced package so again the need to be a paid up member and encourage other restaurants to join.

#### Membership Fees

A disproportional number of members who have elected to join the Association have as yet to pay their membership fees. Your Committee is working extremely hard to bring benefit to members but many of the benefits are volume and finance driven and their progress is being hampered by the failure of members to place themselves in a position of being in good standing with the association. Please pay your fees and encourage all restaurants with whom you are in contact to join the Association and do likewise. Should you wish to introduce a new member please send your scribe their contact details and he will make contact with them.

#### Tourism Board

Your Committee is pleased to report that after a lot of hard work and frustration, the new Plett Tourism Board is now firmly in place with all formalities having been completed and with the total acceptance and support of the Municipality. They are an awesome group of experienced individuals and a member of your committee sits on the board and has no doubt that this development will make a massive difference to the inflow of tourists into the town and consequent improvement in through flows for the restaurants.

The success of a tourism board does, however, largely depend on strong underpinnings in the form of strong and representative sectoral associations such as that formed by the restaurants. A lot of hard work over several years has gone into achieving this state of affairs and if participants in the tourism industry do not support the initiative and fail to fully avail themselves of the opportunities presented by these developments then they only have themselves to blame if their businesses do not succeed in the way they would like them to. Individually restaurants have little ability to influence events but as a strong body of restaurants the Association will be in a strong position to influence events going forward.

### Crime and The Restaurant Owner

In the last year or so there have been four robberies involving restaurants which is not only traumatic for those affected but is bad for tourism in the town. This has culminated in the very tragic and senseless recent murder of a member of staff at a popular Plett restaurant venue.

Your scribe, for his many sins, is also the current Chairman of the Community Police Forum and met with senior police officials yesterday to discuss the spate of incidents culminating in the recent murder. We are blessed in having a very committed and successful SAPS contingent in Plett and your scribe is pleased to report that three of the four participants in the robbery have been arrested and has no doubt that their arrest will result in the arrest of the final participant. The police are of the view that these are the persons behind all the robberies that have taken place as the modus operandi in each case has been similar. Needless to say they are not locals but "visitors" from neighbouring cities who, quite correctly, have preyed on Plett as being a "soft target".

The main purpose of the discussion was to seek input from the police as to how we can avoid these type of crimes in the future. From the discussion emerged two principle issues as follows:-

1. Plett residents generally are very careless when it comes to exposing themselves to criminal activity. This makes us an easy target for criminals who are attracted to our town for this reason. We all need to become more pro-active. We are effectively, much to the frustration of our local police force, "paying" criminals to come to Plett. We need to change this.
2. Something your scribe learned many years ago-if you handle large sums of money in exactly the same way every day, you create a pattern which is easy for criminals to track and exploit. In short it is then only a matter of time.

The following are some suggestions arising from your scribe's meeting with the police as to how to conduct your affairs so as to minimise the possibility of an "event" and to make it difficult for criminals to carry out their activities successfully:-

1. Make sure that the members of staff who are responsible for cashing up etc carry panic buttons and that the buttons are functioning by testing them regularly. A panic button in a drawer somewhere will not do the trick!! It needs to be on your person.
2. Make sure that your security company understands the laid down procedure for panic button activation. No telephone call to satisfy themselves that the activation is genuine but immediate notification to the police and the immediate despatch of armed response.
3. If you are in the habit of having a security guard present whilst cashing-up is taking place, use the service effectively:-
  - Do not allow the security to accompany your "cashing up" employee whilst he/she carries out the cashing up duties. It is possible he may be an informer. No third party should be in a position to observe what takes place or the sums involved. In fact the fewer the persons in the know the better.
  - Locate your security guard in a location from which he can clearly observe the premises and make sure that no person approaches or enters the premises. This will enable him to raise the alarm before any event takes place. Having him accompanying the employee makes it very simple for a criminal with a gun to neutralise both the security guard and the employee at the same time.

- Make sure that the guard is properly equipped and understands what is required of him. A radio and panic button should be minimum requirements. A cell phone does not suffice-it takes too long.
4. Install a drop safe and prominently display a sign saying that there is a drop safe and that no employee on the premises has the keys to the safe.
  5. Install a CCTV system. Apparently an effective unit which can be connected to your computer can be bought from Game for about R850. The system need not be operating all the time but should be switched on during “sensitive” periods.
  6. Work more closely with the police. If you are in possession of a large sum of cash and are removing it from the premises or feel otherwise exposed, contact the patrol van on 0798641646 or our sector manager, Inspector Taylor, on 0798941645 and they will arrange a police presence whilst you carry out the necessary exercise.
  7. Report any unusual activity to the police such as if a suspicious looking vehicle or persons approach your restaurant at about closing time. Better a false alarm than an incident. This is what your security guard should be looking out for.
  8. Always lock the entrance to the restaurant when you are cashing up and be particularly observant when leaving thereafter.
  9. Consider installing a strategically located exterior beam which will give a warning in the event of an approach to the restaurant after hours.
  10. Have a safe place in the restaurant with a locking door to which an employee can retreat in the event that they feel threatened. They are then able to call the police or your security company from the safety of the “safe room”.
  11. Change the way you do things from time to time such as:-
    - a. Getting the bulk of cash off site before closing time; or
    - b. Seal waitron envelopes at closing time and get off site ASAP and cash up before opening the next morning.
  12. Be observant as regards what is going on in the area and react if you are in any way suspicious. Rather be wrong and call the police unnecessarily than fail to react when you need to.
  13. Operate on a strict need to know basis. Hits on restaurants are unlikely to be random events. Someone either intentionally or unwittingly is passing on information. A very high percentage of crimes arise from inside information being passed on.

Together if we follow the above guidelines we can help prevent any further incidents of this nature.

### Words of Wisdom

“We think too small. Like the frog at the bottom of the well. He thinks the sky is only as big as the top of the well. If he surfaced he would have a completely different view.” Mao Tse-Tung.

**Lets have a big vision and achieve great things together**

Until the next newsletter

Your scribe  
Bruce Richardson  
Secretary/Treasurer