



Edition 69

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Tourism for Good this Tourism Month

Tourism month is celebrated during September. This year we are celebrating the theme 'Tourism for Good' by highlighting inspiring stories of businesses impacting the local hospitality space.



The [Dotsure George Arts Theatre](#) is a community-based non-profit organisation which creates a platform and place where local citizens can live out their passion for theatre and or host their own amazing shows. Started as the George Society of Arts in 1948, the society consisted of a handful of members, with one or two plays staged every year in the Old Town Hall for a couple of nights.

Today, the theatre hosts regular productions, and has a costume hire service available. A great example of their contribution to the community is the Shakespeare Schools Festival which helps young people produce and perform their modern interpretation of an abridged Shakespearean play, within a professional theatre environment. The festival is not only about Shakespeare, confidence boosting and skills-building but a vehicle for social change where children are exposed to learners of different cultures and socio-economic groups, in a noncompetitive and neutral space, where they can become peers and friends.

The [Garden Route Botanical Garden](#) (GRBG), a nonprofit and Public Benefit Organisation, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year! Approximately 16 hectares in size, the garden showcases and conserves the incredible biodiversity of the district. Indigenous forests, wetlands, fynbos, and coastal dunes support a wide variety of plant and animal species, including those which are threatened and endemic. Scientists and researchers come to the garden to study the ecosystems and species, as well as make use of the herbarium. Educational programs and interpretive materials are offered.

Declared a nature reserve, there are many things to see and enjoy such as hiking, markets, guided tours, and medicinal plant lectures. There is also a restaurant, parkrun, and indigenous nursery. The garden is a haven for birdwatchers, with numerous bird species calling it home. Bird hides and viewing platforms are available for bird enthusiasts to observe the local avian wildlife.



The **Herold Meander** is a secluded rural settlement of cultural and historical significance. From an abandoned and derelict farm, it has been developed into a sustainable Agri-Village. Environmental, water rights and heritage approvals were obtained to ensure a sustainable farming development, primarily focused on proteas, honeybush tea and sheep. The Honeybush shrub is proudly South African and grows naturally in the Garden Route and Tsitsikamma areas.

The Khoikhoi used honeybush to make medicinal tea. Slightly sweet and caffeine-free, this herbal tea has high antioxidants and low tannins. The project has resulted in upgrades to the infrastructure, capacity building of workers, repair of historical buildings and the creation of local jobs. Herold Meander offers honeybush tea tasting, donkey cart rides, fishing, and accommodation facilities on a pre-booking basis.



Empower is a George-based NPC and PBO. In December 2022, Empower hosted a crowd-funding campaign, Run It Back. Through the efforts of fifteen volunteers who ran 5kms every day for eight days, they raised enough funds to purchase eight generators.

Empower gifted the generators according to set criteria, in partnership with the George Business Chamber, to local businesses. Three out of the eight generators went to **Explore our Hood**, the **Garden Route Botanical Garden** and **George Backpackers**. Explore our Hood is a Thembalethu-based cultural tourism

business, offering authentic township experiences and a bicycle tour of the area.

They provide visitors with a first-hand experience of the culture and 'kasi' vibe and offer engagement with the locals where visitors can connect with amazing people from different walks of life. All tours include lunch. George Backpackers is an affordable overnight accommodation, with dormitories and private rooms. The hosts speak English, Afrikaans, and German.

The **Kula Malaika Foundation** in Wilderness is a non-profit which helps to develop and empower the lives of young people. 'Kula Malaika' means 'The Growing Angel of Love'. The foundation runs crèches, youth centres as well as a farm where skills training and production takes place. They produce beautiful handmade jewellery, mohair mats and woodcraft. The farm also grows an organic garden and runs a café and shop that helps to sustain the foundation.

Visitors can enjoy a freshly brewed cup of coffee and meal at the Bush Café, within a rural African environment. There are also educational tour experiences offered, which include visits to the Life Skills Training Centre, a short tour through the Wilderness area and township of Touwsrante, as well as a visit to the farm shop, with a light lunch. Another tour offering is the African Experience evening where South African food and music is enjoyed.

Discover more about our amazing home and its tourism offering, as well as our destination stories at visitgeorge.co.za.

Visitor Information Centres

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