



Lindy Truter, Julie Truter, Sean Hobson, Kerryn Ross, Madeleine Mahieu and Karina Louw

# Ranchers take the Karoo to the capital

Philippa Francis

**GRAAFF-REINET – Farmers, filmmakers and photographers took Gauteng by storm last week when Karoo Ranching hit Pretoria and Johannesburg with the hopes of raising the profile of farming in South Africa.**

With less than three weeks to go before the third annual Karoo Ranching Film Festival, some of the 2017 nominees for Best Short Filmmaker, Best Photographer and Flagship Stud were interviewed on Grootplaas, a TV programme which airs on the DSTV channel kykNET at 05:30 from Monday to Friday. With the first segment hitting screens around the country in June, viewers will be given a glimpse of the nominees' creative work and imagery, and be encouraged to vote for a winner in each category. Dressed in full farming gear, Karoo Ranching founder, Julie Truter, who traverses between Johannesburg and the working family farm, Elandskloof, situated in the mountains between Middelburg and Graaff-Reinet, said the aim of the annual film festival is for participants - ranging from writers and videographers to agricultural companies and brands - to use their sphere of influence to portray the farming profession and industry in a positive light.

"People come here to our little part of the Karoo from all over to offer what they have, and we hope that they leave with something more," the Elandskloof farmer said.

"I come from farming stock and I am a proud farmer's daughter, but I was never going to fit the conventional model of a farmer. I wanted to explore why it wasn't sexy for my generation to flood back to the profession." According to Julie, that is where the idea of Karoo Ranching stemmed from.

"We're showing the authentic side of farming, and portraying agriculture in a light which builds investor confidence instead of fear and negativity," she added. Julie's younger sister Lindy, who was nominated for her short film titled "When the dust settles", is already a well-respected photographer but wanted to try something different at last year's film festival. "I don't have much experience in filmmaking, but this was an opportunity to learn a new skill. What stood out for me was the camaraderie at the festival; everyone helped one another out but it was also a competition. I certainly have a new respect for filmmakers," she said. Established videographer Karina Louw was also shortlisted for her short film, "Mountains". Well-known Eastern Cape livestock photographer Kerryn Ross was nominated along with Port Elizabeth-based Madeleine Mahieu for the Best Photographer prize. Sean Hobson represented Martyrsford Angora Stud for the Jansenville farm's nomination for Flagship Stud. At a private media event in Johannesburg on 22 May, Julie made special mention of 20-year-old Loyiso



Sean Hobson

LEFT: Karoo Ranching founder, Julie Truter, hails from the farm Elandskloof, situated in the mountains between Middelburg and Graaff-Reinet.

Swartbooi, who passed away on 16 May after the motorcycle he was riding collided with a courier vehicle on the N9 near Graaff-Reinet. Swartbooi, who was a promising student at Grootfontein College of Agriculture, had originally intended to join the media tour to Gauteng. She described him as an incredible young man, and part of a talented generation of young farmers coming through the ranks. Hobson, whose family owns one of the oldest surviving Angora studs in South Africa, said it is imperative to foster and provide mentorships for promising youngsters who are interested in farming. "We want to build our relationship with the agricultural colleges, like Grootfontein, because these are the youngsters who will make it as commercial farmers. Then we can tell the positive stories, but first we need to create those stories," he explained. The annual Karoo Ranching Film Festival takes place from 13 to 17 June. Visit [karooranching.co.za](http://karooranching.co.za) for more details or send an email to [info@karooranching.co.za](mailto:info@karooranching.co.za).

## Plenty of goodies at church bazaar

**GRAAFF-REINET — A wonderful friendly atmosphere was apparent at the annual St James Bazaar held last Saturday, and yet another successful function can be credited to convenor Felicity Minnaar and her enthusiastic team.**

The day started off rather chilly, but soon warmed up and then the outside tea garden did a brisk trade. The plants this year were situated near the tea garden, which made for occasional traffic jams but gave higher visibility to the excellent selection available.

The books this year were inside the hall, and some wonderful bargains were to be had with all books selling at R5 each. In front of this was the needlework stall, with a colourful selection of meticulously crafted items.

On the other side of the hall was the white elephant stall, and this did great business from well before the official opening time! Ladies (and a few gents) were seen carrying out armfuls of plastic containers, ornaments and other assorted bargains.

The rest of the stalls were devoted to food, always a favourite at bazaars. A wonderful selection of typical "bazaar puddings" was available, either to eat in or take away. The pancake ladies flipped their way through a huge amount of batter, and at the front of the hall was a mouth-watering selection of home-baked cakes and savouries. Frozen meat was available to take home, mostly

beef and venison, at very reasonable prices.

Two raffles were on offer on the day. Tickets for a painting of a beautiful Karoo landscape, painted by Marge Arnott, will be available still for several months, and can be obtained from her until December. She can be contacted on 049 891 0369. One of her paintings was also raffled in 2016, bringing in R3 500!

The other raffle was for a pig, generously donated by a member of the congregation – this will be on offer until all the tickets are sold. Anyone who would still like to have a chance of winning a large supply of pork can contact bazaar convenor Felicity Minnaar on 049 892 3488.

To round off the morning, lunches were served, with guests getting a plateful of roast mutton, rice and vegetables. Dessert was bazaar pudding, with juice, tea and coffee available.

This was the first St James Bazaar for the rector, Rev Dr Mark Marais, and he was very

pleased with the consistent, cooperative organising of the tables and the atmosphere which prevailed throughout the morning, as well as the funds raised. "I, among others, was able to have good conversation with numerous people on both sides of the tables. It was a 'good morning'!" said Rev Dr Marais



Convenor Felicity Minnaar and Evette Holmes



Marge Arnott with the beautiful painting that is being raffled.



The pancake ladies flipped their way through a huge amount of batter.

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