

LUSITO LAND – THE FESTA CONTINUES

The 2018 Lusito Land Festival is fast approaching, and lovers of Portuguese cuisine and culture are in for a treat at the festival's new venue in Cayman Road, Alewynspoort. The festival will take place between 26th April to 1st May, take a two-day break and resume on the 4th to 6th May 2018. This festival promises to be a celebration of exceptional food, music and fun.

Lusito Association spokesperson, Naomi Contente, says the festival organisers assessed last year's Alewynspoort-based event and took patrons' suggestions into account to make this year's festival better than ever.

"Many festival-goers were understandably sad that the event was moved from Wemmer Pan to Alewynspoort last year. Choosing a new venue was, however, a carefully considered move. Not only did we want to accommodate a rapidly growing festival, which was bursting out of its seams in Wemmer Pan, but we wanted to provide a safer venue with ample parking and easy access for all."

In addition to planting grass in to alleviate concerns about dust, the organisers introduced are introducing additional entrance and exit points, that will be manned by traffic operators and substantially ease traffic glitches at the venue.

These entrances and exit points have been identified to make the venue more easily accessible to festival-goers and further reduce traffic congestion. These entrances and exit points will be communicated to the public closer to the time.

Launched in 1981, all funds raised at the festival are donated to the Lusito School for the physically and mentally challenged. "The cost of caring for special-needs children and adults is beyond the means of many families. The proceeds from the festival go a long way towards easing their financial burden and ensuring learners benefit from a good education that takes their special needs into consideration," explains Contente.

To ensure the sustainability of both the festival and the school, the Cayman Road venue was purchased outright and the organisers have great plans for its development. These include building a private school, old-age home and sports academy to further subsidise much-needed funds required by the Lusito Association.

The event, a firm Jozi favourite, voted on several occasions as "Best Festival" by Leisure Options Magazine readers, is proving to be one festival that is concerned with more than just a good time. "We are passionate about our community and the people we serve, and we will continue to support them any way we can," concludes Contente.

The Lusito Association

The Lusito Association was established in 1979 by a group of Portuguese parents who found a need for a school for the differently abled within the Portuguese community and has subsequently grown with the school. Its mission is to support the Lusito School in equipping each learner as best as possible for their passage through life.

The Lusito School

The Lusito School, located in the south of Johannesburg, started off as a small day care centre and has developed into a fully-fledged school for the physically and mentally disabled. Today, the school has more than 80 learners, which are from all cultures and backgrounds and not solely for the Portuguese community. The school has now been divided into two sections, the stimulation centre and the workshop.

Lusito Land

Lusito Land first opened its doors in 1981 as a festival that celebrated the Portuguese tradition and culture. Over the last 36 years, it has evolved into a festival celebrated by the many cultures that make up Johannesburg and Gauteng. The Portuguese tradition has however been sustained in the wonderful traditional flavours of the fine cuisine that is an important facet in the Portuguese heritage.