

Mossel Bay in media spotlight

Mossel Bay's been in the news recently - for all the right reasons.

"The holy grail of marketing is when the media picks up and runs with a good-news story," said Debra Bouwer, Mossel Bay Tourism's marketing manager.

"If they like it, they'll spread it - and you can't get better publicity than that.

"In the past few months, the people of Mossel Bay have created opportunities for a number of successes - from Ryan Johnson's Sharkville to Curtis Marean's Nobel Conference Lecture," she said.

"And then, of course, Mossel Bay Tourism and the Eden District Municipality are always actively working to attract the interest of magazines like Travelution, a Dutch trade magazine that carries information on new, potential and growing destinations.

"As an initiative of the District Municipality, the magazine's Winni Verdoold and Robert



Winni Verdoold and Robert Boetje - of the Dutch Tourism Trade Magazine Travelution - recently visited the region in the company of Eden District Municipality's Mareve Biljon (centre).

Boetje visited us from the 13th to the 17th of October in the company of Eden's Mareve Biljon - and in Mossel Bay they stayed at The Point Hotel, had dinner at the Bahia Dos Vaqueiros Restaurant at the Diaz Beach Hotel and visited the Diaz Museum Complex and Nyaru Game Lodge for an Eco Quad Safari.

"Travelution will be distributed at the Utrecht Vakantiebeurs in the Netherlands and at important travel shows and events in Belgium - and the editorial can be ex-

pected to be geared towards marketing the region for 2010," said Ms Bouwer.

Curtis Marean - who is Professor of Anthropology at the Institute of Human Origins at the Arizona State University - is the leader of the largest project of its kind in the world today, the Mossel Bay Archaeology Project, which concentrates on the findings in the Pinnacle Point Caves - which have revealed evidence that modern humans evolved from a small 'progenitor population' of about

600 individuals who lived in this area 165,000 years ago.

"Curtis' was invited to deliver the opening lecture at this year's Nobel Conference," said Ms Bouwer.

"He spoke on 'The African Evidence for the Origins of Modern Human Behavior' - and the web cast of his speech drew widespread attention in the media - including a half page in the main body of South Africa's biggest weekly newspaper, The Sunday Times," she said.

"That's publicity money could never buy."

Sharkville (the documentary about Mossel Bay's marine environment - and particularly its suitability to the study of great white sharks in their natural habitat - by Mossel Bay scientist Ryan Johnson and his South African Marine Predators Laboratory) is currently showing on international channels of the popular National Geographic television network - and is expected to reach a total audience of as many as 100 million viewers during the five years of its broadcast life.

"All those people will be learning about how well-preserved and pollution-free this Bay is - and that'll underscore Mossel Bay's value as an eco-destination," said Ms Bouwer.

But, said Mr Johnson, "It's also been a big week for us in attracting film crews to Mossel Bay.

"Over the last few days we've hosted

Thallisa - a French program - and Carte Blanche is coming next week, while Discovery's History Channel will be here on the weekend and SABC 3's Coast-to-Coast is here the following weekend.

"Exciting times!"

"Yes," joked Louis Cook, Chairman of Mossel Bay Tourism, "these are exciting times indeed - and if Mossel Bay keeps attracting all these film crews, we might have to rename the town:

"Sollywood - the Hollywood of the Southern Cape!"