



ESTD 1922

## DURBAN Country Club

6 May 2010

Dear Member

At our AGM last week our members were understandably a little glum after receiving the Annual Financial Report. Of course the Board cannot hide bad news and we have to tell it like it is.

I write to you because I want to tell you all about the positives at your club and my short term strategy.

The building project ran for a year longer than planned and only at the beginning of 2009 did I come into possession of a club without builders on site. Then I was hit with a double whammy- the big economic melt down. Even so, consider what we achieved at the club last year:

1. Introduction of evening events, quiz night, moms night off, a greek evening (with greek dancers and breaking of plates), grill room specials, curry night, the wine festival, Christmas eve dinner and lunch- all of which were well attended and thoroughly enjoyed.
2. I have developed an excellent relationship with SAB who have generally sponsored some of our major golf events. Members rate the last club champs as the best ever.
3. The Kidzone, now the most popular party venue in Durban. Last week a mother joined the club so that she could host her child's party at the Kidzone.
4. Remember the Renaissance plan was to make the club more user friendly to children. This last year we have had holiday programmes, Halloween party, Christmas Party, Easter egg hunt.
5. For our youth, we have Phuza Friday once a month when the DJ moves into the Waterman Bar.
6. I moved the Durban July marquee from the back row to a front row prime spot and we were booked out.
7. At the end of this year we host the Centenary SA Open golf championship. This did not just fall into our lap. Admittedly we were on the short list and when I went out with the help of Derek Macaskill and secured Euros 400 000 sponsorship contribution from the KZN Government, that clinched it.
8. I enjoy an excellent relationship with the KZN Government and at the beginning of the year the club was chosen by the KZN Premier to host his 200 guests at the launch of the FIFA World Cup in KZN.
9. Many businesses in the hospitality industry have seemingly sat back and waited for world cup patronage to come to them and have been disappointed. In September last year I presented to the Board the need to develop early plans for the club to take advantage of the event. I am pleased to say that on match days, every venue at the club has been booked and paid for. So far we have two golf days fully booked at R850 per head (remember the Sportsmen's, Waterman bar and room, Bistro and Beachwood remain for the use of members during this time).

The benefits of all of this are slowly starting to show. Remember that our catering results for 2009 improved by R1 million compared to 2008. So while the Renaissance Plan may not have produced the instant turn around that some members had hoped for, things are happening. I think it unrealistic to expect an instant turn around after just one year. It takes time to rebuild after such a long period of disruption.



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So what about the future? At our AGM a number of members with successful business backgrounds observed that the prudent course of action is to cut costs. My strategy for now is to continue to fire on all cylinders at least until the end of the world cup.

After the world cup, the club captain has a determined program to replace all the greens at the DCC course in preparation for the SA Open.

While I am very excited about the prospects for the club over the world cup period and hosting the SA Open, I still need you, the members, to be excited and enthusiastic about your club. If you are not going to use your club facilities, if you are not going to entice your friends to join, then the time will come when I will certainly have to recommend to the Board that we cut back on costs which I think will mean having to shut down some of our facilities or curtail our trading hours.

So I offer you a clubhouse which has just undergone a R61 million upgrade and two golf courses, one of which ranks in the world top 100 of the world. It is for you, the members, to use these facilities. Word of mouth is one of the best marketing tools. Tell your friends about us. Brag about your club.

Come and visit your club. Come during the day. Come for lunch, bring some business colleagues or treat your staff. Why not come for lunch on Sunday? Bring your children and tell them to bring their swimming costumes.

Last Easter Sunday, 50 excited children hunted down Easter eggs in the Kidzone, parents enjoyed breakfast in the Bistro, the poolside was abuzz, and 300 members came for lunch in the Belvedere Room. The golf course was fully booked. Our regulars sipped draft beer and watched sport on the big screens in the Waterman Bar. I want to see every Sunday at the club like Easter Sunday.

I would be delighted to meet any member or group of members who are concerned about any aspect of the club.

Best regards

**Ann Robbie**  
CEO