

Pink Loerie Festival 2016

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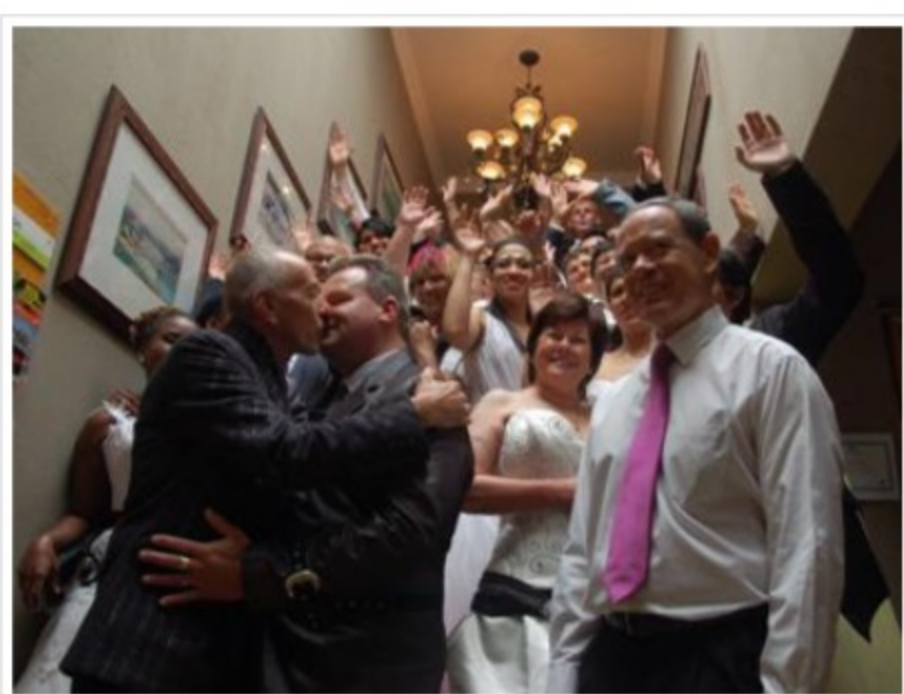
Knysna was definitely tickled pink on the 27th of April 2016 as the 16th annual Pink Loerie Festival kicked off.

In 2015, Mr Gay World was a first for Knysna and this year's festivities featured the first ever mass same-sex wedding in Africa – great national and international exposure for the our sleepy little town.

Tie-the-knot (Mass Same-sex Wedding)

The wedding celebrations were held at the Villa Castollini Guesthouse and venue, between Brenton and Knysna on Friday the 29th of April 2016. And even though the day started out windy, icy and cold, as heavy rain swept over Knysna, this did very little to dampen the excitement of the 15 gay couples who said their I do's.

The couples arrived looking absolutely exquisite in their designer wedding attire, designed either by Heinrich Greyling Couturier or Yihan Bronn Couture. Smiles and a whole lot of love radiated from each of them, as they went through the traditional motions of declaring their undying love for each other.



Festival organiser John O'Niel explained "As we celebrate 16 years of making a mark on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community, and the 10 years since same-sex marriage in our country was legalised, we felt it only appropriate to highlight one of the most appreciated and sought-after rights – the right to marriage equality."

Well known locals from Hoekwil, Vernon and Tony Gibbs-Halls were invited to renew their vows. The couple initially married on December 1, 2006, when the same-sex marriage law came into effect and this was the perfect way to re-celebrate their union after 10 years. Both, Vernon and Tony are pleased that the country had come a long way in their attitudes towards the LGBTI community.

Knysna's Deputy Mayor, Esme Edge and advocate Julie Seton also decided to be a part of this special affair by renewing the vows they had taken earlier this year.

Knysna tourism body Knysna and Partners chief executive Greg Vogt said, "One of the greatest things about our area is its people and their ease with which they embrace people from different nationalities, cultures, creeds and race. Having the first African LGBTI mass-wedding taking place in our beautiful area just once again proves how we work together to create shared values in a place that so many have chosen to now call home."

Couples were chosen from across the nation by the organisers. They not only experienced a once in a lifetime opportunity, but were also showered with a variety of amazing prizes, including a full wedding package with suits, dresses, rings, photographs and a honeymoon package.

Tie-the-knot Gallery

