

BOSCHENDAL'S BACKING HELPS SILVERMINE PROTECTION SERVICES FLOURISH

It is beginning to be recognised in the Franschhoek valley and further afield that the new management of Boschendal, having committed themselves to backing certain local entrepreneurs from among their staff and the local community, are now seeing significant successes in these entrepreneurial exercises.

The first and currently fastest growing of the new businesses has been Silvermine Protection Services. This provides daily 24\7 guarding and protection services to Boschendal itself, to Solms Crest estate and one-off services to the organisers of a wide variety of functions and events-- everything from weddings to the Out of Africa and Film Africa events. They have also been very much evidence at Boschendal's mountain biking and other events, particularly the Cape Epic.

Silvermine Protection Services is managed by Ricardo Adams and Deon Lucas, both now in their early forties. Both worked formerly for a national security company and this is where they learned the basics of their business. Lucas, who was raised by a single parent at Worcester, moved later to Pretoria, rose to become one of the senior staff in the national company and was responsible for problem solving and the establishment of new operations. Since matriculating, Adams has been in security all his life, for many years working in the Paarl area. In recent years, before branching out on their own, both were involved in and had dealings with Boschendal.

Although grateful to their former employers, from who they learned a great deal, the two men had grown doubtful about the ability of big security organisations to engender a really positive morale and to provide a top class service. Absenteeism and staff discontent, says Adams, seemed to be prevalent in many companies of this kind.

"The bigger the organisation becomes, the more likely it is to treat its employees as numbers not as individuals and as a result standards and efficiencies then decline," said Lucas.

When, therefore, Rob Lundie, CEO of Boschendal, entered into talks with Adams and Lucas with a view to setting up an independent guarding company to serve Boschendal, they responded enthusiastically, seeing at once that this would enable them to "do things the way we believe they should be done".

“The first aspects of the new operation on which we focused,” said Adams, “were selection and training. From the start we were extremely careful about whom we took on, rejecting eight out of ten applicants, all of whom in any case had to have a matric certificate. Then, to keep up standards we made farm wide induction training compulsory and insisted that every member of staff undergo follow-up training at least every three to four months.”

Recognising the need for paying ‘decent’ wages, Adams and Lucas from the start set the wages they paid above the going rate and, in addition, paid bonuses monthly for good attendance and for any special effort put in.

The new Silvermine Protection Services managers and the Boschendal management also recognised from the outset that what the new team needed most desperately was competent accounting, clerical and back office support as well as advice in negotiating business deals of any kind. Boschendal’s staff stepped into the breach and Adams and Lucas today are only too willing to recognise that without the input of the estate’s financial director Raymond Herron and his staff they could not have grown as they have.

Today Silvermine Protection Services employs 36 people and they are still growing. All too aware of the dangers of over-rapid growth they are in no rush to get big and are focusing instead on improving their existing services. The many security beats at Boschendal now include the guarding of the cars and visitors to the Werf area and the picnic site as well as the overnight guest accommodation cottages. In general, however, said Adams, the estate is far more secure today than it ever was before because the new owners have installed new fencing and have improved the guarding at the entrances. This has prevented casual trespassers and those intent on taking short cuts from entering and leaving the estate as they please.

Rob Lundie, said that the support systems set up by his team are working particularly well at Silvermine Protection Services and he is hopeful that the success of this new enterprise will inspire others in communities close to Boschendal to consult with him on other possible entrepreneurial start-ups.

For info: Capeinfo.com article Homegrown Security



Homegrown Security

Ricardo Adams and Deon Lucas of Silvermine Protection Services with Silvermine Peak in the background

Ricardo Adams and Deon Lucas are locals and worked on Boschendal for Coin Security for many years. When Rob Lundie arrived as CEO, he heard that they were both going to leave so he called a meeting with them. Deon recalls Rob saying, "If you don't want to work for me, don't you want your own business?"

That took them both by surprise. They had prepared a business plan to work for themselves a few years before that, and presented it to Chris Nissen... but heard nothing back. When Rob asked them if they had a name for their business, they told him about Silvermine Protection Services. In the 1700s, a charlatan (or maybe just a wishful gambler) led a lavish lifestyle while mining on the slopes of Simonsberg and Ricardo & Deon's endeavour is to stamp out all skullduggery!

Their company - a partnership with Boschendal which provides admin services - now employs 29 people. It has managed outside contracts for the film industry for some time and has started providing services to other farms in the area.

They're no novices - they have 19 and 22 years respectively of experience in the security industry and they know the wrongs and rights of the industry.

Most petty crime is local, and they know the locals better than anyone else. They know the farm better than anyone else too... and who should be where. They use reason rather than heavy-handedness, and they're also committed to helping uplift the local community.