



SwissCham Southern Africa – South Africa Chapter (SCSA-SAC)

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Event Review

SwissCham – Gala-Dinner

26th of November 2010, held at
Summerplace in Hyde Park / Sandton

The SwissCham Gala-Dinner 2010, was held on the enchanting grounds of Summerplace in Hyde Park / Sandton, on Friday the 26th of November 2010.



SwissCham President Dr. Jürg A. Schalch welcomed some 90 guests who had come to enjoy a special evening with live entertainment.



Mr. Jürg A. Schalch, SwissCham President

A special welcome by the President was extended to the Ambassador of Switzerland and his Wife, Mr. and Mrs. Bärffuss, to the Auditor General, Mr. Kurt Grüter, Mrs. Stella Mendonça (Soprano), Mr. Arthur Taugwalder and his Partner Mrs. Cornelia Klein,

He thanked the Members for their continued and much valued support, and wished all present an evening to enjoy and remember.

SwissCham Manager, Daniela Maurer then presented an update on the Chamber's activities over the year.

She extended a special welcome to those members who joined SwissCham this year, those are:

Addicom (Pty) Ltd. (Mr. Peter Dahm), B & S Agencies (Pty) Ltd. (Mr. Charly Dufey), Franke Kitchens (Mr. Alan Palmer), Geberit South Africa (Pty) Ltd. (Mr. Mark Schurr), I-Fundi Customer Solutions (Pty) Ltd. (Mr. Stefan Lauber), Integrated Packaging Systems (Mrs. Ianthe Schell), Interroll SA (Mrs. Rosemarie Mey), Rödl & Partner Inc. (Mr. Dieter Sommer), Schindler Lifts SA (Mr. Pankaj Sinha), SwissMark Distribution (Mrs. Suzanne Howitt), and Systems Anywhere CC (Mr. André Vuilleumier).



Mrs. Daniela Maurer, SwissCham Manager

Followed by a recap of events which had taken place during 2010, with speakers such as:

Mr. Tami Bolani, Chairman of the National Consumer Forum • A special dinner with Mr. Jean-Daniel Gerber, Swiss Secretary of State for Economic Affairs • Another Luncheon in May with Mr. Kuseni Dlamini, CEO of Old Mutual • The SwissCham Annual General Meeting was held on the 27th of May at the Grayston in Sandton • In June we had partnered a reception that was held at the Ambassador's Residence in Pretoria, with the President of the Swiss Confederation Mrs. Doris Leuthard and FIFA President Mr. Josef Blatter • A social event In August, combined with Kyburg Wine Estate took place at the DeHoek Country House, supporting our fellow member Michael Hostenstein during his month of "celebrating Switzerland". An event we are looking forward to make a yearly SwissCham social event, since it has been so much enjoyed by everyone • A luncheon with Mr. Bobby Godsell, Chairman of Business Leadership SA, was held in September • Mr. Jacko Maree, CEO of the Standard Bank Group SA, was hosted at the Westcliff in Johannesburg, just two weeks before the Gala Dinner.

On a different note, she introduced some new services that will be offered on the SwissCham website. As from the new year a "classified" section will be made available for members to place adverts of all sorts, this will also include sections for vacancies, job and general search.

She thanked all the members who supported SwissCham during the year by regularly attending the functions, emphasizing these functions to be an ideal platform for networking and information exchange, and that negotiations were already taking place for a number of highly interesting speakers for 2011.

The Embassy of Switzerland and the Swiss Business Hub, were thanked for their continued support, as well as for the excellent relationship.

She extended “a big Thank you” to Nestlé and Mr. Sullivan O’Carroll who kindly, and to our delight, have sponsored chocolates for each guest.

With the quote from Samuel Butler “He has spent his life best who has enjoyed it most”, she wished all present to enjoy not only a special evening, but food and wine, each other, and live entertainment with Weekend2far – Jane & Colin Matthews.



After a superb first course, Ambassador Bärffuss introduced Mrs. Stella Mendonça (soprano), who not only gave us a taste of her singing, but also introduced us to her career.

Stella Mendonça the native Mozambican who studied voice and music history at the “Conservatoire National d’Art Dramatique” in Paris and Lyon, where she earned a “Bachelor in Music History” and “Master of Voice”. She was perfecting her voice with the Maestros Dennis Hall in Berne and Magda Oliviero in Barcelona, as well as her interpretation with Grace Bumbry in Salzburg. She was invited in 1998 to perform at the World Exposition in Lisbon, followed by debuts as Mimi in

“La Bohème” in the USA and in South Africa, as Helena in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, as Bess in “Porgy & Bess, and as Santuzza in “Cavalleria Rusticana in Switzerland. In 2001/02 she sang the main role in Verdi’s Aida in a concert version

Her late Maestro Dennis Hall appointed her in 2002 to take over his voice school “Studio di belcanto” in Berne.

In the same year, Stella also produced the first opera in the history of Mozambique “Carmen” in which she also was performing the main role as Carmen.

As from 2003, Stella was focusing on recitals with Italian belcanto repertoire and oratorios in the USA, Europe and Africa. In 2007/08 followed a concert tour performing French opera arias in France, Switzerland and Mozambique and “Ein deutsches Requiem”, as well as a guest performance in Baden-Baden in Summer 2008.

Stella, fluent in seven languages also works in different cultural projects in Southern Africa, promoting the education of children and young talents while bridging North and South.



Mrs. Stella Mendonça (soprano)



Mr. Kurt Grüter, Auditor General

Stella’s introduction was followed by an address of the Auditor General, Mr. Kurt Grüter, who gave us a thorough insight into his work, and the profession in general.

After Mr. Grüter’s message, the main course was served and the dance floor opened.









Daniela Maurer for
SwissCham Southern Africa –
South Africa Chapter