

Beloved founder of City Lodge Hotel Group dies

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It is with enormous sadness that the City Lodge Hotel Group announces that Hans Rudolf Enderle, founder and past chairperson, has died on 9 November 2019 at the age of 77. He passed away peacefully after complications of surgery.



His interests included golf, skiing and spending time with his family. He considered his close-knit family his best personal achievement, and is survived by his wife Barbara Jean Enderle and children, Stephen (married to Amanda) and Julie (married to Oliver Marshall) and three grandchildren: Jamie, Hannah and Myles Marshall.

Hans was born on 17 September 1942 in Switzerland and his career in hotels started at age 15, first delivering bread for a bakery and soon training to be a chef. He decided the kitchen wasn't for him and began his training in hotel management at the Hotel School in Lausanne, Switzerland. Later he worked as a waiter and after meeting a South African and hearing how great the country was, and in a bid to improve his English, he took up the post of receptionist at the Langham Hotel in Johannesburg in 1959, earning a princely R100 per month. He wasn't immediately taken with the place and soon returned to Switzerland.

Some years later in 1970 he returned at the launch of the Holiday Inn chain of hotels, working as general manager of the Holiday Inn at then-named Jan Smuts Airport. Hans was appointed regional manager of Holiday Inn in 1977 and in 1983 was selected by the late Charles Fiddian Green to be MD and chairperson. In 1985, when Rennies sold Holiday Inn to the Southern Sun Group, Hans bought a property together with the Mines Pension Fund and on 1 August 1985, the auspicious Swiss National Day, the City Lodge Hotel Group was launched.

It was during a trip to the USA in the 1980s, when he came across select services hotels, that Hans had the idea of developing this concept in South Africa. Previously local hotels were all about opulence and luxury, not making it accessible to those who needed to travel for business, or wanted to take the family somewhere affordable.

Hans developed his idea for a practical, home-away-from-home style of accommodation offering in the group's first hotel, the City Lodge Hotel Bryanston (then called City Lodge Randburg). Guests instantly took to the concept of a hotel that lived by the principle of TLC (tip top, loving, clean). City Lodge Hotel remains the group's three-star brand today.

The group has its roots in what was then a new concept, the select services hotels, which streamlined properties to the comfortable attributes that most travellers want and are prepared to pay for, without the opulence. Hans's research of talking to guests revealed that cleanliness, friendliness and quality service are valued more than luxuries by travellers. In 1990 the two-star Town Lodge brand was launched. The group listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on 18 November 1992. In 1995 came the launch of the one-star Road Lodge and acquisition of four-star Courtyard Hotels.

Hans stepped down as CEO of the City Lodge Hotel Group in 1994, relocating to Erinvale Golf Estate in Somerset West, Cape Town, and retired as a non-executive at age 67 on 1 August 2010. He has remained a significant shareholder in the group.

Hans revolutionised the hotel industry in South Africa during his career, garnering awards and accolades along the way. He is fondly remembered for starting many a meeting at Holiday Inn South Africa with his signature Swiss yodel and, later,

for attending reunions of that iconic group.

In an interview in 2004, Hans described his philosophy on life as: “Keep on dreaming. Believe in yourself and persevere. Look forward and not backward. Be honest and fair. Enjoy and have fun in your work, or quit. Life and work must be fun. In work, pick the right people and delegate generously. The most important feeling, both in life and at work, is ‘the feeling of belonging’.”

City Lodge Hotel Group CEO Andrew Widegger says, “We are deeply saddened by the passing of our founder, leader, mentor and friend Hans Enderle. His passion for the hospitality industry and ability to revolutionise with new accommodation concepts in an ever-changing marketplace was extraordinary. He embraced the challenges and marked the celebrations with his signature cheerful, can-do attitude. We have all benefited enormously from his guidance and wisdom over the years, and he will be sorely missed. On behalf of my fellow directors and all at the City Lodge Hotel Group, we extend our deepest condolences to Barbara, Stephen, Julie and families.”

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City Lodge Hotel

City Lodge Hotel Group has a variety of hotels dedicated to providing you with comfort at a level that suits you. With 5 Courtyard Hotels (480 rooms), 19 City Lodge Hotels (3281 rooms), 12 Town Lodges (1507 rooms) and 23 Road Lodges (2 272 rooms), the Group has a total of 7540 rooms and ranks among the 250 largest hotel chains in the world. We are dedicated to providing quality accommodation for business, leisure and 'bleisure' travellers in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Mozambique. From basic, functional rooms to magnificent luxury studios, we have the range and experience to give you unbelievable service and exceptional accommodation at a price you can afford and in a location near to where you want to be. Go to www.clhg.com for more information.

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