

# From nothing to running a successful B&B in Joburg

Delia Ferguson proves you can do it – against all odds

KRISTEN VAN SCHIE

IT WAS 1970 and 20-year-old Delia Ferguson stood before the pub owner. She had left her KwaZulu-Natal boarding school without finishing matric and had just failed a secretarial course in London, “Because I couldn’t spell,” she said. Now, practically unemployable, she found herself in the Cotswolds, England, looking for a job.

“What can you do?” asked the pub owner.

“Nothing,” she replied. He took a step back and paused. “I like your honesty. Are you willing to learn?”

And just like that, Ferguson was hired and taking her first steps into the hospitality industry.

Thirty years later she is the owner and manager of Rutland House Bed & Breakfast in Craighall Park, Joburg.

“I spent nine years at the most expensive boarding school in South Africa and learned absolutely nothing,” said Ferguson, joking that there’s evidently hope for people without a matric certificate. “I learned more from working six months in a pub. My career path turned out to be perfect for what I do now.”

The guest house is built on Ferguson’s property, which she bought 22 years ago. After five years of providing catering from the outbuildings, she converted them for accommodation in 1994.

“It took a hell of a long time,” she laughed.

But the work paid off. The guest

house is now a nest of small cottages, each with a distinct countryside charm. It’s the kind of place for losing yourself in a Jane Austen novel, tucked away drinking tea in an overflowing, evergreen garden.

At night, Ferguson brings her guests home-cooked meals – chicken pasta, lasagna, curry and rice. The silence is broken only by the owls flying over from Delta Park.

The breakfast room in the main house is warm and welcoming, a fireplace at one end, Ferguson at the other, bustling behind the open

“Everyone that I spoke to said I was mad”

kitchen counter and chatting with her guests.

“The beauty of a B&B is when you meet fabulous people and have wonderful discussions over breakfast,” she said. “My ambition is that guests get up from the breakfast table smiling, that they start the morning by having a laugh.”

Before her B&B days, Ferguson travelled the world with her cooking. “I always wanted to travel. All the cooking jobs I ever did were so I could travel.”

She spent five years on and off in England, where she worked for an exclusive company that catered to high society. One of the delivery

boys was Hugh Grant – in the days before fame. “He was between jobs and he was absolutely divine.”

She also visited the US three times. It was while running chalets for two winter seasons in Switzerland that she decided to make the jump to the accommodation industry.

But business was hard in those first few years. There was no Internet, no way for Ferguson to get her name out and attract clients.

“Everybody I spoke to said I was mad because everybody stays in hotels,” she remembered. “There were only a few of us and we were all fighting for the same business.”

Just 16 years later, Craighall Park and the surrounding neighbourhoods contain a teeming mass of B&Bs. In 2000, they banded together to form the Rosebank Region B&B Association. Starting out with eight members, it now has 32.

Ferguson’s personal contribution was an availability list. Every day, each guest house belonging to the association loads its available rooms onto the group’s website. If a customer comes a-calling and Ferguson is fully booked, she can consult the list and refer the client to one of the other guest houses in the neighbourhood. It’s this system of working as a unit that helps not only the guests, but the B&B business, too.

“We haven’t really felt the effect of the economic crash because of the networking of the association,” said Ferguson.

Despite this success, she admits to being nervous about the World Cup. Rut-



FOUND HER NICHE: Delia Ferguson, owner of Rutland House, a bed and breakfast in Craighall Park, Joburg, is in her element working in the hospitality industry.

PICTURE: JENNIFER BRUCE

land House is signed up with Match, the company appointed by Fifa to organise accommodation for the tournament.

“We were all invited to a presentation where they said we would not

get business unless we gave all our rooms to them. Each month they tell us what rooms are booked, what they’re holding, and what they’re releasing back to us.”

And so far, only a few of her

rooms have been booked for only part of the tournament. It’s frustrating, as Ferguson gets about five direct overseas inquiries every day – and has to refer them all to Match.

“I signed a contract,” she sighed.

In the meantime, Rutland House is readying itself anyway. There’s the electrical work and the lighting, the towels that need replacing, the gate that needs painting, the website that needs updating...

## Nigerians face fine of R1.8m over hotel

BARBARA COLE

THE NIGERIAN Football Federation’s to switch from a hotel in Ballito to one in Richards Bay a month before the World Cup starts will see them pay a big fine to Fifa in penalties.

Idah Peterside, a spokesman for the Super Eagles, said last night that he did not know how much the fine would be, but ESPN’s Soccernet website has reported a \$250 000 (R1.85 million) fine.

The team was initially booked into the new three-star Hampshire Hotel in Ballito, which was not originally on Fifa’s list of accredited hotels.

A government delegation visited the Hampshire after a media outcry in Nigeria about the suitability of the hotel.

Nigerian Sports Minister Ibrahim Bio red-carded the Hampshire, which is close to the N2, over noise and security.

He said the team would move to the Protea Hotel Waterfront in Richards Bay.

Nigeria will be slapped with a hefty fine because Fifa said last week that no hotel changes were possible.

Asked about the issue, a Fifa spokeswoman, Delia Fischer, said she would get back with a reply. At the time of going to press, there had been no response.

Rodney Bull, the general manager of the Hampshire Hotel, said yesterday that he had no comment to make.

The Nigerian team originally planned to arrive in mid-May and stay in Richards Bay before moving to their Ballito base.

Now the team is expected to arrive in Richards Bay on May 31 and pay for their accommodation until June 5.

Bheki Gumbi, the local municipality’s 2010 spokesman, said this would be considered their training camp.

Then Fifa would pay their accommodation from June 5 until June 30. This would be their base camp.

They would train at the nearby, new R120m sports stadium in Richards Bay, which is a 15-minute drive away.

### Project Management

**Duration:** Part-time over 15 Weeks  
Classes for this short learning programme are held once a week in the evening or on a Saturday morning.

#### School of Business & Technology

**Programme Outline**  
Contracts and Tender documentation • Scope management and work breakdown structure • Price, cost and estimation methodologies and strategies • Project estimating • Cost management • Critical path method and optimisation • Procurement • Project scheduling and time management • Resource management • Communication reporting and documentation control • Future trends in project management.

**Who Should Attend**  
This short learning programme has been developed to meet the needs of any manager or aspirant manager whose position requires:

- Planning and completion of projects in the shortest possible time.
- Containment of costs within project budgets.
- Responsibility of ensuring that quality specifications are met.

**Certification**  
The Project Management Diploma is a short learning programme (SLP) that is certified by the Independent Institute of Education and endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Business Management (CIBM).

**Next Programme Starts**  
Saturday 29 May 2010 (09:00 - 12:00) and/or Monday 31 May 2010 (18:00 - 21:00)

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### Fundamentals of Project Management

**Duration:** Part-time over 15 Weeks  
Classes for this short learning programme are held once a week in the evening or on a Saturday morning.

#### School of Business & Technology

**Programme Outline**  
• Tools and Techniques of Project Management  
• Project Management Process • Project Lifecycle • Scope Management • Work Breakdown Structure • Critical Path Method • Gantt Charts • Procurement Schedule • Resource Planning • Project Cash Flow • Communication Management • Project Team and Organisation Structures • Managing Small Projects.

**Who Should Attend**  
• Project team members who need to understand the basic principles of project management and project administration functions within the project office.  
• Those who are new to the field of project management and wish to obtain a solid platform of project management tools and techniques.

**Certification**  
The Fundamentals of Project Management Certificate is a short learning programme (SLP) that is certified by the Independent Institute of Education and endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Business Management (CIBM).

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### Marketing Management

**Duration:** Part-time over 20 Weeks  
Classes for this short learning programme are held twice a week in the evening or on a Saturday morning.

#### School of Business & Technology

**Programme Outline**  
Understanding Marketing • Strategic Approach • Finding Market Opportunities • Understanding Consumer Behaviour • Product Strategy • Pricing Strategy • Distribution Strategy • Promotional Strategy • Marketing Research • Strategy Development.

**Who Should Attend**  
This short learning programme has been developed to meet the needs of:

- Those requiring the skills needed to analyse and solve marketing problems in order to achieve strategic advantage.
- Those who wish to broaden their career expertise from sales to marketing and enhance their earning potential.
- Graduates wanting to enter the marketing workplace who wish to add a recognised job-related qualification to their CV.

**Certification**  
The Marketing Management Diploma is a short learning programme (SLP) that is certified by the Independent Institute of Education and endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Business Management (CIBM).

**Next Programme Starts**  
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### Business Management

**Duration:** Classes for this short learning programme are held twice a week in the evening over 24 weeks or on a Saturday morning over 28 weeks.

#### School of Business & Technology

**Programme Outline**  
**Finance:** Preparation and interpretation of Financial Statements (Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Financial Position and Cash Flow Statement) • Cost behaviour and break-even analysis • Budgets • Discounted cash flow • Cost of Capital • Working capital management • **Marketing:** Consumer behaviour • Product decisions • Communication and promotion • Pricing • Distribution • Marketing strategy • **Human Resource Management:** Recruitment and selection • Training and development • Compensation • Employee motivation • Industrial Relations • **Business Law:** Selected aspects of corporate law • **Corporate Strategy:** Environmental, company and competition analysis • Formulation and implementation of strategic plans.

**Who Should Attend**  
This short learning programme has been developed to meet the needs of:

- Those already in varying levels of management who wish to enhance their professional management skills.
- Those whose future prospects depend on the acquisition of skills in areas with which they are not familiar.
- Graduates in non-business related disciplines who will benefit from equipping themselves with the skills required in today’s commercial environment.

**Certification**  
The Business Management Diploma is a short learning programme (SLP) that is certified by the Independent Institute of Education and endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Business Management (CIBM).

**Next Programme Starts**  
Saturday 29 May 2010 (08:30 - 12:45) and/or Monday 31 May 2010 (18:30 - 21:00)

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### Human Resource Management & Training

**Duration:** Part-time over 15 Weeks  
Classes for this short learning programme are held once a week in the evening or on a Saturday morning.

#### School of Business & Technology

**Programme Outline**  
**Personnel Management:** Key challenges facing South Africa • Managing Diversity • Recruitment, Selection and Induction • Performance Management • **Industrial Relations:** Labour Relations Act • Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) • Collective Bargaining • Unfair Labour Practices • Strikes and Lockouts • **Training and Development:** Needs analysis • Programme design • Evaluation.

**Who Should Attend**  
This short learning programme has been developed to meet the needs of:

- Those already in the field who need to update their knowledge and skills base.
- Those intending entering this challenging field.
- Managers involved in the recruitment, selection and induction of new employees.

**Certification**  
The Human Resource Management & Training Diploma is a short learning programme (SLP) that is certified by the Independent Institute of Education and endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Business Management (CIBM).

**Next Programme Starts**  
Saturday 29 May 2010 (09:00 - 12:00) and/or Tuesday 01 June 2010 (18:00 - 21:00)

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### Business Management & Administration

**Duration:** Part-time over 27 Weeks  
Classes for this short learning programme are held twice a week in the evening or on a Saturday morning.

#### School of Business & Technology

**Programme Outline**  
• **Finance for Non-Financial Managers**  
- The analysis and interpretation of financial statements.  
- Understanding costs and break-even analysis.  
- Preparing budgets.  
• **Sales and Marketing**  
- The importance of the marketing mix.  
- Demand estimation and forecasting.  
- Business-to-Business marketing.  
• **Principles of Human Resource Management**  
- Recruitment, selection and induction.  
- Employment Equity.  
- Dispute Resolution.  
• **Administration and Communication**  
- Improving communication.  
- Office administration.  
- Supervision and motivation.

**Who Should Attend**  
• Newly appointed managers and team leaders

who have not had formal training and wish to update their skills.

- People identified as potential managers within their organisations.
- People involved in specialist disciplines, such as marketing or finance, and wish to improve their overall management skills.

**Certification**  
This Business Management & Administration Diploma is a short learning programme (SLP) that is certified by the Independent Institute of Education and endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Business Management (CIBM).

**Next Programme Starts**  
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