

# FNB Stadium nominated for prestigious award

Home of the Soweto derby, 'The Calabash' will compete against the likes of Liverpool's popular Anfield



**AFRICAN POT OF GOLD:** FNB Stadium management prides itself on being a multi-purpose facility able to host world-class sporting, religious, political and musical events, as well as being a sustainable business model. (Inset) an aerial view of FNB Stadium.

PICTURE: SIMPHIWE MBOKAZI



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ON ITS biggest days, more than 90 000 can pack into FNB Stadium, to enjoy its offerings of sport and entertainment.

That's why Africa's largest stadium has been nominated for another prestigious international award – the Fan Experience of the Year accolade at the Stadium Business Awards in Ireland in June.

FNB Stadium has clinched several awards, locally and abroad, for its design and functionality.

"The Calabash" has been nominated in the Fan Experi-

ence of the Year category, for the 2016 Carling Black Label Champion Cup between Soweto giants Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates.

The game, which was sold out 17 days prior to kick-off, saw Chiefs emerge victorious with a 2-0 win over bitter-rivals Pirates.

FNB Stadium, which is run by Stadium Management SA, will come up against some of the most popular sports stadiums in the world, such as Liverpool's Anfield, Celtic's Celtic Park and Manchester City's Etihad Stadium.

This week, the chief executive of FNB Stadium, Jacques Grobbelaar, gave some insight into running South Africa's biggest stadium.

How tough is it to manage South Africa's biggest stadium?

"It's a mammoth task and also a great honour. We always strive towards bringing world-class events to the venue, be it sports, music concerts or religious gatherings, and at the same time ensure the facility itself is properly managed and maintained to its world-class level.

"We host 105 different events a year. I still get goosebumps whenever I drive to or walk around this facility because of its breathtaking design, which remains a popular attraction with our visitors."

What are some of the biggest challenges you have faced

since taking over as chief executive in 2009?

"It costs in the millions a month to maintain our facilities. When the markets are affected, we, too, feel the pinch.

"There were a lot of top-class international sporting and music acts we would have loved to have brought through to South Africa, but it ended up not being feasible.

"For us to even bring that act it would mean that we'd have to ask for an unreasonable charge on the ticket for our patrons... just to cover the costs and to break even."

Which, would you say was the most successful event that FNB Stadium has held?

"Sold-out acts like U2, Rihanna, Bon Jovi and Justin

Bieber (who is returning to perform at FNB Stadium next month on May 14).

"We've had great relationships with churches that use our facilities. We've hosted two Springbok rugby Tests, and obviously being a part of the 2010 Fifa World Cup and the 2013 CAF Africa Cup of Nations.

"For me, the challenge and excitement that goes in to hosting the Soweto derby (Chiefs and Pirates) is beyond amazing.

"This is the biggest sporting showpiece in the southern hemisphere and one of the greatest products to come out of South Africa."

What are the biggest changes you've brought to

FNB Stadium?

"Being able to make this venue a multi-purpose facility that can host sporting, religious, political and music activities.

"Then, being in a position of bringing economic windfall and sustainable business and contributing towards our surrounding Soweto communities.

"Don't forget, in terms of our business model, we run the facilities and our events on a full-financial risk basis and don't take a cent from taxpayers.

"As other venues depend on municipalities to be sustainable, we're the only facility with this model in the country. I can only thank the collective

work we have with our partners and co-anchors."

If you could host any three events at FNB Stadium, which would they be?

"The Soweto derby will always be No 1 to me. As much as we already host it at FNB Stadium, I would still have this fixture and the experience of being a part of it.

"I'm driven to take rugby back to the community (too), having done so with the Springboks Tests here and with the Blue Bulls at Orlando Stadium.

"Having international artist and talented singer, Beyoncé, perform at one of the biggest venues in the world will be a great event to bring to South Africans."

## UK city that went naked in name of art finally sees results

LONDON: The 3 200 people who agreed to go nude to celebrate Hull's year as Britain's City of Culture were yesterday given a preview of an exhibition of the day they stripped naked in the name of art.

Reflecting Hull's maritime history, the stunning and hugely anticipated images from artist Spencer Tunick's *Sea of Hull* project are being shown for the first time.

Participants from across the world painted their skin with blue body paint and took part in the largest nude installation in Britain in July last year.

Three of the *Sea of Hull* photographs will join the high-quality permanent collection at the Ferens Art Gallery in the city while the Friends of the Ferens are to raise money for a fourth work to be chosen by the public.

Councillor Terry Geraghty, chair of Hull Culture and Leisure, said: "This bold and ambitious exhibition is one of the gallery's major highlights for 2017.

"The scale and quality of the work on display as part of SKIN reinforces the gallery's ambition to present new, contemporary work alongside its permanent collection aiming to attract new audiences to the gallery."

Kirsten Simister, curator of art at Ferens Art Gallery, said: "The team have worked hard to deliver this exhibition and it is fantastic to have seen the idea through from Hull's bid for City of Culture made four years ago."

Tunick has described his *Sea of Hull* installation as one of his most fantastic projects. The photographs form part of a major exhibition at the Ferens Art Gallery which will run until August 13.

The exhibition will also feature major works by artists Lucian Freud and Ron Mueck. Four paintings by German-born British painter, Lucian Freud, considered one of the world's greatest realist painters, have been loaned for the exhibition.

At the centre of the Ferens Art Gallery exhibition is Edouard Manet's historic preparatory study for *Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe* (1862-63).

Manet's painting of a nude woman seated with clothed men scandalised 19th century audiences. – Xinhua

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**VICKY HALLETT**

MAYBE you already smoke (medicinal) pot or get into downward dog when you're stressed.

"But if you haven't combined the two, you're in for a treat," writes yoga instructor Dee Dussault in her new book, *Ganja Yoga*. That's also the name of the "cannabis-enhanced" classes she has created and teaches in San Francisco. Now she's hoping

## Avoid going to pot with ganja, yoga

to spread the practice by compiling her philosophy and advice.

Chapter 1 provides a quick outline of marijuana as medicine, citing the number of conditions it's used to treat, including pain, anxiety and depression. The next chapter tackles yoga, and how relaxation and movement can make anyone feel better.

Add it all up, Dussault says, and the benefits are off the chart.

"Think about it like peanut butter and chocolate: each is fantastic on its own, but when they come together, each makes the other better," she writes. In her case, she says, marijuana deepens her senses, which has allowed her to treat her chronic back

pain by "really feeling and releasing tiny muscular or energetic holds."

But Dussault writes that there are dangers to the duo, although she's most worried about over-stretching, which can happen in any yoga class.

She emphasises the importance of selecting a strain of marijuana and a style of yoga that "are in alignment with our intention for the practice." Otherwise, you might end up too anxious. – The Washington Post

**JIA NAQVI**

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## Study: antidepressants not as harmful during pregnancy as previously thought

**JIA NAQVI**

WOMEN who take antidepressants early in pregnancy are not at a higher risk of having children who develop autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), contrary to earlier reports, a study has found.

The study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, found only a slight increase in the risk of premature birth for infants of mothers who used antidepressants during the first trimester of their pregnancy.

But the researchers found no increase in the risk of autism, ADHD or reduced foetal growth among children exposed to antidepressants during foetal development. One strength of the study is that it included siblings from the same mothers, comparing children who were exposed to antidepressants during pregnancy with their brothers or sisters who were not. Those children grew up in similar environments and had similar genes, which would make it more likely that the effect of antidepressants during pregnancy would stand out.

The study, conducted in collaboration with researchers at Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health and at Karolinska Institute in Sweden, analysed data on all live births in Sweden from 1996 to 2012. Data about the coun-

try's antidepressant prescriptions in adults, autism and ADHD diagnoses in children, parents' age and education levels, genetic relationships between parents and children and other characteristics were also incorporated in the study, which allowed researchers to control for other risk factors for developmental disorders.

Researchers were able to study around 950 000 mothers and 1.6 million children, which enabled them to look at rare outcomes. And researchers were able to get measures of antidepressant use based both on mothers' self-report and when they were given the medications from a pharmacy. The study controlled for a number of factors to isolate the effects of medication.

"The fact that we got consistent answers when we used all of these designs gives us more confidence in our conclusion," said Professor Brian D'Onofrio, senior author of the study at Indiana University.

A majority of the antidepressants examined were selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, commonly known as SSRIs, which are the most common type of antidepressants. Prozac, Celexa and Zoloft are a few of these commonly used SSRIs. The study also looked at antidepressant use in fathers, as well as mothers' use of antidepressants before but not during pregnancy. – The Washington Post