

# Quarry owner is Sanlam Business Woman of the Year

*Charmaine sums up her relationship with her employees as being like family. "They are just like family and I want them to be happy. As a result we try to go out of our way to make sure they are and believe that this is one of the biggest factors in the success of our operation."*

Amidst the dust and heat of a large-scale quarry in the Eastern Cape, former school teacher, Charmaine Botha has excelled in the tough world of aggregate mining to such an extent that she was recently recognised as the overall winner of the Sanlam Knysna Business Woman of the year for 2013.

The awards recognise business people who are determined to spur change in the community and advance the quest for innovation, quality and productivity within the region. Charmaine was recognised for her efforts in growing the business from a small specialised quarry to one of the most important quarries in the area for civil and building materials. The quarry is one of two women-owned quarries in the business and includes a separate sand quarry in Harkerville, a transport company to service clients and plant hire to local contractors.

In the mid nineties Charmaine and Peter arrived in the town of Knysna separately and began looking for employment as a teacher and panel beater respectively. Peter eventually started his own plant hire operation and soon employed the still out of work Charmaine as his bookkeeper. Later the company became responsible for mining operations at the Phantom Quarry and their success eventually led them to explore and later purchase outright the much larger Robberg operation.

## **Bold move**

"There were many challenges not least of which was adapting our methods to embrace the large blast-type operation with much bigger volumes. In addition the purchase of the quarry was fraught with challenges.

"Since then we have grown to become one of the most respected quarries in the industry, have joined the Aggregate and Sand Producers Association (Aspasa) and we maintain a good relationship with the Department of Mineral Resources. We produce quality materials that are suitable for building and civils and the quality of materials produced are superb. Staff morale is also high and thanks to our

highly respected quarry manager, Rickus Julyan, we have a workforce of dedicated employees who keep all the different operations at full production at all times."

She concludes that with the company's investment in a complete new fleet of trucks, as well as the establishment of a highly successful readymix plant, the business has reached the point where it is able to service the construction industry with the best products and the best

service. It is her wish that more women get involved in this type of operation, because she has proved that anything is possible through hard work and determination.

