

Hills tops tourists' to-do list



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By Lisa Pahl

An environmentally friendly winery and a native wildlife park have topped the list of Hills winners at the 2009 SA Tourism Awards.

For the third year running, Cleland Wildlife Park was named SA's best tourist attraction and was inducted into the State Tourism Hall of Fame at the awards night on Saturday.

Norton Summit cellar door Sinclair's Gully took home awards in the ecotourism and tourism wineries, distilleries and boutique breweries category.

It also picked up a gold medal honoring the business' excellence in sustainable tourism.

Five other Hills tourism operators picked up medals in their categories.

Sinclair's Gully co-owner Sean Delaney said the wins came as a "huge surprise".

"When we heard the names read out in the tourism wineries category of the people we were up against, we were almost feeling a bit embarrassed that we were on the list," he said.

"Then we heard that we had won it – we were really, really stoked."

Sinclair's Gully is one of only

- HILLS WINNERS**
- ✓ **Cleland Wildlife Park** – Winner, Tourist Attractions category; State Tourism Hall of Fame inductee
 - ✓ **Sinclair's Gully** – Winner, Ecotourism category; winner, Tourism Wineries category; gold medal in the Excellence in Sustainable Tourism category
 - ✓ **Hannah's Cottage Bed and Breakfast** – Gold medal, Hosted Accommodation category
 - ✓ **Woodhouse Activity Centre** – Silver medal, Standard Accommodation category
 - ✓ **Rich and Lingering** – Silver medal, Tour and/or Transport Operator category
 - ✓ **Chocolate @ No5** – Bronze medal, Tourist Attractions category
 - ✓ **Pobblebonk Bed and Breakfast** – Bronze medal, Delue Accommodation category

two cellar doors in Australia to carry Eco Certified Accreditation.

Owners Sue and Sean Delaney balance nature conservation with sustainable biodynamic vineyard practices, with the property now home to more than 150 species of native plants and 66 types of birds, many listed as endangered or rare.

Mr Delaney said there was a growing awareness among wine consumers and producers of the importance of sustainability issues.

"There's a groundswell in the industry in moving towards these practices," he said.

"We were very much on our own five years ago, two years ago there were a few doing what we do and now

there are a few more still." Department for Environment and Heritage chief executive Allan Holmes said Cleland Wildlife Park's third consecutive win in the tourist attraction category was a credit to the park's staff and volunteers.

"Cleland Wildlife Park has become well-known, both nationally and internationally, as an iconic nature-based tourism experience," he said.

"More than 110,000 people visited the park last year, making it one of Adelaide's most popular tourist destinations."

Both Cleland Wildlife Park and Sinclair's Gully will now represent SA in the Australian Tourism Awards. to be announced in February.



Sinclair's Gully Wines owners Sean and Sue Delaney among the bush on the multi-award winning property, which has picked up two SA Great awards. Photo courtesy Harvey Schiller.