

# Knysna to host mass Tie-The-Knot same-sex wedding ceremony

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The ceremony was arranged to commemorate the 16th anniversary of the annual Pink Loerie Mardi Gras & Arts Festival. File photo

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**The Garden Route town of Knysna, home to the Pink Loerie Mardi Gras & Arts Festival as well as last year's Mr Gay World competition, will this year host what is being billed as Africa's first mass same-sex wedding ceremony.**

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The ceremony, with 16 gay and lesbian couples, will be officiated by Mayor Georlene Wolmarans on Friday April 29, 2016.

"I am honoured to have been chosen to officiate the marriages/civil unions of the 16 couples," said Wolmarans. "I am also delighted that Knysna was selected to host the very first LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) mass wedding in the country."

She endorsed the extension of legal protection to same-sex unions, saying: "I believe that same-sex couples should have access to all the benefits enjoyed by different-sex couples, as the South African Constitution clearly states that all citizens have the same rights and does not provide for any discrimination on any grounds".

After their historic nuptials, the newlyweds will lead the annual Pink Loerie Parade through the streets of Knysna on Saturday April 30.

The ceremony was arranged to commemorate the 16th anniversary of the annual Pink Loerie Mardi Gras & Arts Festival.

Pink Loerie co-ordinator John O'Neil, explained: "As we celebrate 16 years of making a mark on the LGBTI community, we felt it would be appropriate to highlight one of our most appreciated and sought-after rights; the right to marriage equality. South Africa remains the only nation on the continent to have legalised same-sex marriage, and that's definitely something to celebrate."

Each winning couple will be dressed by either Heinrich Greyling Couturier or Yihan Bronn Couture; receive a titanium ring set to the value of R3,000 per couple from Malebooth; receive a brunch buffet for them and 10 friends at Villa Costollini to the value of R5,400 per couple; receive a wedding photography package by Vernondo Boshoff Photography to the value of R3,500 per couple; take home a Malebooth hamper to the value of R2,000 per couple; and have their hair styled by Bernard Buys aka Betty Bangles to the value of R400 per couple. There's also a chance to win a weekend honeymoon prize at The Getaway Guesthouse in Amanzimtoti to the value of R4,900 per couple.

The organisers have arranged for the flowers and décor to be provided.

The selection of the 16 couples will be via a random draw from correct entries. The details are available on the web at [www.pinkloerie.co.za/2016/tie-the-knot](http://www.pinkloerie.co.za/2016/tie-the-knot). Couples will need to pay their own way to Knysna and must be over 18.

The Pink Loerie Mardi Gras & Arts Festival in Knysna takes place from April 27 to May 1.