



Two awards for eco villas

Rawnsley Park Station has taken out two awards at the 2010 South Australian Tourism Awards.

More than 620 people attended the prestigious awards night held at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

The station's eco villas won the ecotourism award and they also received silver in the luxury accommodation category.

Rawnsley Park Station, on the southern face of Wilpena Pound, was settled as part of Arkaba Station in 1851.

Early pastoralists attempted to grow wheat and farm sheep in the area, however a succession of natural disasters, along with the low rainfall and fluctuating prices made earning a living difficult.

In 1895 parts of Arkaba were subdivided for farming allotments, including a 2530 hectare (6253 acre) portion now known as Rawnsley Park Station.

Initially devoted solely to sheep grazing, Rawnsley Park Station ventured into tourism in 1968, when the first cabin was established and sheep shearing demonstrations began.

Though tourism is now the main industry on the property, the station still runs 2000 sheep.

Since 1985 Tony Smith and his wife Julieanne have transformed a small struggling sheep station into an award-winning tourism facility that attracts 20,000 visitors each year.

Active members of the South Australian tourism industry, Tony and Julieanne are passionate about the Flinders Ranges and the tourism opportunities it presents.

They were one of the first tourism operators in South Australia to gain official ecotourism

accreditation and are also interested in developing the "geotourism" sector, which involves understanding how the earth was formed.

Committed to environmentally responsible and sustainable tourism, Tony and Julieanne have entered into a heritage agreement with the South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage in order to protect the diverse vegetation of Rawnsley Bluff.

The eco villas

The Rawnsley Park Station eco villas are the ultimate in Flinders Ranges accommodation and the ideal place to get away from it all.

Set on a private and secluded site, yet within easy reach of the main Rawnsley Park facilities, these stylish and contemporary villas boast uninterrupted views of Wilpena Pound and the surrounding ranges.

Designed to complement the natural surroundings, the villas have the latest environmental design features, including rendered straw bale walls, polished timber floors over suspended concrete slabs and overhanging eaves/wide verandahs to provide shaded walls.

Windows and doors have been located to allow for cooling breezes to pass through the entire building.

Raked ceilings and natural exhaust venting at the apex of the ceiling space provide natural cooling efficiency. The villas have also been designed to take advantage of the large diurnal straw bale walls that provide thermal mass that minimises temperature variation within the villas.

The co-villas received Advanced Ecotourism accreditation in the Ecotourism Australia certification program.



TWO AWARDS: Rawnsley Park Station's Julie and Tony Smith with Rebecca Somerfield.