

Robe heads for the Winelands

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Eric van der Watt, founder & owner of Winelands Productions. Photo by Louise Stickland.

Founded in 2024 by Eric van der Watt, Winelands Productions is a dynamic technical production company offering equipment and design services, based in the Winelands region of Cape Town, South Africa.

One of Eric's first lighting investments for the new company was 12 Robe LEDBeam 150s, purchased when Winelands Productions launched. This was followed up the next year with 12 IP-rated iBeam 350s to help ensure the rapidly growing business could continue delivering creative lighting solutions.



Eric van der Watt with the Winelands Productions the team

Focusing primarily on the corporate market, together with sporting events, festivals and music events, expansion has been rapid. Winelands Productions soon had to move out of its small start-up unit and into a new warehouse and office facility in Somerset West to accommodate the growing equipment inventory and its now 12 full-time staff.

Before pouring all his passion and energy into the industry he loves, Eric ran a very successful security enterprise, but his heart has always been in technical production and the thrill of delivering the very best event productions for clients.

His early decision to go with the Robe LEDBeam 150s was partly informed by his observations over the previous 11 years, which underlined the success of many other companies in South Africa that had invested in quality by choosing Robe.

While those original LEDBeam 150s are still perfect for lighting smaller events, as the business has grown, they found themselves needing a larger wash light. Weatherproof fixtures became a must, especially in the Western Cape, where numerous events are outdoors and the weather is highly erratic.

“Servicing the summer workloads was a motivator to get the iBeam 350s,” confirmed Eric, adding that Robe is “rider-friendly, and they can be used as washes or beams, so the versatility and all-round usability are great.”

For Winelands Productions’ Head of Lighting, Lorenzo Martin, Ethernet connectivity was a key feature of the iBeam 350s. It allows for smooth and efficient pixel mapping, as Ethernet control automatically identifies where each pixel is located, enabling the export of MVR files to the video team, who can seamlessly run their content through the lights as required.



Lorenzo, who also designs lighting and visuals, notes that the worlds of lighting and video are increasingly converging, so it's usually helpful to combine the two and be able to run video sources through both lighting fixtures and LED screens.

He echoes Eric's comments on the versatility and IP rating, saying, "The iBeam 350s are great. I can use them for washes or beam effects, as pixel-mapped fixtures, and having the extra brightness is always good." He also mentions that the diffuser has been well designed for practical cleaning and maintenance.

Lorenzo appreciates the LEDBeam 150s for the same reasons, as well as their compact build.

Having first started using Robe at his previous rental company, then as a freelancer, and now back full-time running the Winelands lighting department, he and the rest of the crew are all enjoying working with the fixtures.

Eric also likes the Robe kit because it is robustly built and reliable from an investment and ROI perspective and because the last thing any rental company wants is gear in the shop being repaired.

Winelands' Robe fixtures have been used on a wide range of events, including the ongoing Bok Town fan parks related to the South African Springboks national men's rugby team, where the company provides a complete technical solution every second weekend throughout the rugby season.

The fixtures have also been used on concerts by popular acts including Gipsy Kings and Boney M, as well as at sporting events such as the Beach Pro Tour in Camps Bay, organised by Volleyball World and the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), where Winelands supplied lighting, audio and video.

As the company continues to expand, Robe fixtures remain a key part of Winelands Productions' strategy for delivering flexible, high-quality technical solutions across a diverse range of events.