

## WPT Emperors Palace National Poker Championship

The room is silent, the atmosphere – electric. The crowd has risen to its feet to watch what could be the final hand of the WPT Main Event at Emperors Palace. Peter Basel moves all-in and Shaun Govender, a Durban local, says the two words that could earn him R745 000, “I call.”

Let’s rewind the clock a little. The Emperors Palace National Poker Championship began on Thursday, 4 April 2013. It consisted of 4 events, a R44 000 High-Roller (1<sup>st</sup> place Alvin Pillay, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reagan Naidoo), a R22 000 Omaha Challenge won (for the second year in a row) by Mr. Nic Ioannou, a R4 950 Turbo (1<sup>st</sup> Keegan Pillay, 2<sup>nd</sup> Leslee Hsu and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ofer



The Poker Room at Emperors Palace

Assabi) and the R14 300 Main Event. For the preceding weeks, Emperors Palace had also been hosting “satellite” tournaments. These are smaller stakes games, where the prize is

entrance into one of the elite tournaments mentioned above. The beauty of this is that for a few hundred rand, you stand the chance to battle it out with some of Africa’s (and indeed the world’s) top poker professionals for a prize-pool of several million!



Top players, Matt Mulhall and Eugene du Plessis see the funny side at the WPT Final Table.

This week’s events are the first half of poker tournaments the World Poker Tour, in association with Queen-Ten and Emperors Palace, intend to bring to South Africa for 2013. The second half will be hosted at

Emperors Palace from 7 - 17 November and will consist of up to 10 events! This will be an official World Poker Tour stop, and the prestige of such an event will attract poker hopefuls from across the globe, amateur and professional alike. As always, accompanying the WPT will be the unforgettably beautiful and charming Royal Flush Girls, official ambassadors of the Tour.

Getting excited? I feel as though if you have a pulse,



Bob Yearham C.O.O. Group Chief Executive and player Roman Szymonowicz showing off the uniquely designed WPT trophies.

you should be! The pot, however, gets even sweeter. In November, not only can players compete in events tailor-made to suit their style and their pocket, they can also win the prestigious WPT African Player of the Year Award. Queen-Ten awards points to players, based on where they place in the WPT events. The player with the most combined points, between the Emperors Palace National Poker Championship this past week, and the Emperors Palace Poker Classic in November, will take home the Player of the Year title and the magnificent POY sword-trophy! As if that wasn't motivation enough, Queen-Ten and Emperors Palace will also be awarding the winner a 7-night package to a 5-star resort in Mauritius for them and a partner as well a multitude of other prizes.



The WPT Main Event Final 6, Roval Flush Girls and staff.

On Friday 5 April, poker hopefuls from across the continent attempted to outwit and outplay each other in the R13 000 + R1 300 WPT South Africa main event. It took over a full 24 hours of play spread across 3 days, but eventually from a massive 211 entries, we were down to our final 6. Matthew Mulhall, Clint de Klerk, Greg Ronaldson, Eugene du Plessis, Peter Basel and Shaun Govender took their seats to begin this historic final table. There were hours of tactical play, many tough decisions and more than a few bad beats, but in the end, there were two. Peter Basel, the short stack, up against the seemingly unstoppable Durban steam train that is Shaun Govender, who had eliminated almost every player at the final table thus far. The heads-up action was brief, lasting just 5 hands. Peter attempted to double up with Ace-high, but Shaun's pocket Nine's proved too good, earning him the Main Event title, the custom-made trophy, a cheque for almost R750 000 and the lion's share of Queen-Ten WPT African Player of the Year Points.

A big thank you to Emperors Palace and the WPT for a smoothly run, action-packed few days. The total money in the pot for the week came to a monstrous figure of over R5 000 000!! Now all eyes turn forward to the Emperors Palace Poker Classic in November. Shaun is this week's big winner, but who knows, in November it could be you!



Our champion, Shaun Govender.