

North Coast resort scoops award

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THE R700-million Fairmont Zimbali Resort on the North Coast has been judged the best new hotel investment in Africa in 2010.

The five-star beach resort – the first of its kind on the South African coastline – was awarded the accolade by the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), and presented at the Hospitality Investment Conference Africa Awards in Johannesburg.

Auditors Grant Thornton Strategic Solutions said the resort had edged out blue chip hospitality brands Radisson Blu Dakar and the Crystal Towers and Spa Cape Town in a closely contested final.

The resort, owned by the



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Dubai-based IFA Hotels & Resorts, is the largest investment in tourism by a foreign company in the country.

A company spokesman said yesterday this R700m investment would more than treble with the planned new, mixed-use Zimbali Lakes Resort.

TBCSA chief executive Mmatsatsi Marobe praised IFA Hotels & Resorts at the awards ceremony for having faith in the future of the tourism industry on the continent despite the tough economic conditions.

Economic Development and Tourism MEC Michael Mabuayakhulu congratulated Wessel Witthuhn, the president of IFA Hotels & Resorts (Africa and Indian Ocean), when they later met up in Thailand to jointly accept the handover of the World Golfer's Championship to South Africa, to be hosted at the Fairmont Zimbali Resort next year.

The award was both a victory for the hotel company and a vote of confidence for the hospitality industry in KZN and the country, Mabuayakhulu said.