

Party venue ordered not to bar gays

FINED: *Lesbian couple could not celebrate their wedding*

THE Equality Court has fined a functions venue and ordered it to allow homosexuals on its premises, after it refused to let a lesbian couple celebrate their wedding there.

According to the University of Pretoria's human rights centre, the couple complained that they were not allowed to publicly celebrate their civil union at Sha-Mani functions venue in Alberton last year.

On Tuesday, the court ordered Sha-Mani to pay R20 000 to OUT, a non-governmental organisation that provides health services to gays and lesbians.

Frans Viljoen, of the centre for human rights at the University of Pretoria, said Francis and Liani Buitendag first visited Sha-Mani in March last year while looking for a venue for their wedding.

Viljoen's organisation helped the couple with the case. He said the couple encountered difficulties when they tried to obtain a suitable date for the function immediately after their visit.

Staff at the venue told them that the venue was not available, said Viljoen. "They enlisted the help of

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our heterosexual friends, who found out that the venue was actually available."

Sha-Mani withheld from them the opportunity to hire the venue of their choice, he said.

"Frequent reports about violence against lesbian women underline the serious failure of our laws to undo homophobic attitudes and actions. Viljoen said that according to the couple, Sha-Mani never openly indicated to them that it was discriminating on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

"We really hope this case will help others in the homosexual community to realise they can stand up against unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation," Francis Buitendag said. — *Sapa*.

Court rules in favour of lesbian couple

THE Equality Court has slapped a functions venue with a fine and ordered it to allow homosexuals on its premises, after it refused to let a lesbian couple celebrate their wedding there.

According to the University of Pretoria's (UP) human rights centre, the couple complained that they were not allowed to publicly celebrate their civil union at Sha-Mani functions venue in Alberton last year.

On Tuesday, the court ordered Sha-Mani to pay R20 000 to OUT, a non governmental organisation that provides health services to gays and lesbians.

Frans Viljoen, of the centre for human rights at UP, said Francis and Liani Buitendag first visited Sha-Mani in March last year while looking for a venue for their wedding. They had entered into a civil union earlier in the year.

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"We really hope this case will help others in the homosexual community to stand up against unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation," Francis Buitendag said after the trial. - Sapa

DAILY DISPATCH
02 Aug 2012, p.2

Pair wins gay rights case

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"We really hope this case will help others in the homosexual community to realise they can stand up against unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation," said Francis Buitendag. — *Sapa*

CAPE TIMES (Second Edition)
02 Aug 2012, p.5

Court fines homophobic venue

JOHANNESBURG: The Equality Court has fined a functions venue and ordered it to admit homosexuals after it refused to let a lesbian couple celebrate their wedding there.

According to the University of Pretoria's human rights centre, the cou-

ple complained that they were not allowed to publicly celebrate their civil union at Sha-Mani functions venue in Alberton last year.

In addition, the court ordered Sha-Mani to pay R20 000 to a health services NGO for gays and lesbians. - Sapa

TIMES, THE (Second Edition)
02 Aug 2012, p 5

Equality Court fines venue R20 000

THE Equality Court has fined a venue and ordered it to allow homosexuals onto its premises after it refused to let a lesbian couple marry there.

According to the University of Pretoria's Centre for Human Rights, the couple complained that they were not allowed to publicly celebrate their civil union at Sha-Mani functions venue, in Alberton, last year.

The court yesterday ordered Sha-Mani to pay R20 000 to OUT, a non-governmental organisation that provides health services to gays and lesbians. — Sapa