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CLASS IN A GLASS IN SOWETO

Soweto, Johannesburg, 29 August 2007 –

Like age old stories told by our grandparents the world over, the concept of how a wine festival happened to make it into Soweto should be one of the truly inspirational stories passed on in years to come.

An inkling of a wine festival in Soweto was seeded around a typical South African braai one sunny afternoon in Pretoria (Tshwana) in 2004. Sitting around the braai, chatting, were friends and neighbours, Lyn Woodward (an original member) and Mnikelo Mangcipu (co-founding active member). They were sipping wine out of Soweto Beer Festival glasses, and several glasses later, thought it would be a great idea to have a wine festival in Soweto instead! Three years later, the Standard Bank Soweto Wines Festival is becoming one of South Africa's great success stories.

*Soweto is the most populous black urban residential area in the country, putting its population at approximately 1.5million. Soweto is South Africa's largest township housing 40% of Gauteng population with over 80% speaking English (*Source: City of Joburg). The Sowetan locals are by and large a warm and hard-working group of people, successfully pushing their economic giant into history. It is therefore fitting that **The Standard Bank Soweto Wine Festival** is making history by being the most successful trend-setting annual event held in Soweto.

Realising the importance of the Standard Bank Soweto Wine Festival, though multi-pronged, primarily lies in the need to grow new local wine consumers whilst stimulating the Sowetan economy, and tourism into Soweto, through utilising local accommodation and local food outlets for visitor catering during the event. With local wine consumption dropping from 9,1 to 8,7 litres per person per year, and the 5000 new wine consumers expected at the 2007 Standard Bank Soweto Wine Festival, increasing the number of new wine drinkers through new domestic markets, more specifically South Africa's up-and-coming 'black diamond' consumers, makes business sense.

The festival also provides a significant platform for networking on multiple levels. Apart from the over 100 editors and journalists expected, all the sponsors are inviting their top-level clients and management to the festival. With sponsors like Standard Bank, Sunday Times, Pick n Pay Hypermarkets, Vodacom, Johannesburg Tourism Company, Mitsubishi, DStv

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(BBC Food), to name a few, this makes for some heavyweight corporate presence. It is what Soweto was born for.

On a social level, the festival is a truly African experience for local Sowetans. Blending with celebrities, VIP's, wine estate owners and winemakers from Western Cape and learning first hand, in a non-pressure environment, on the hundreds of different wines available, whilst applying the art of swirl, smell, taste and spit in style, makes for a unique and wonderful experience for all. The festival's local visitors, in marketing terms, are mostly innovators and early adopters, which through Soweto's natural rate of diffusion should, within the next two years, filter to the early majority of resident Sowetans within LSM groups 4 to 7. If this is the case, this festival will triple in size within the next two years.

Over 94 wine estates, with over 800 wines between them, will be exhibiting this year like old favourites Nederberg and Spier (Spier's Eleonor Visser has been named Woman Winemaker of the Year) to successful BEE farms like Women in Wine, a wine producing company that was formed by a group of 20 professional black women from different backgrounds; Vunani Wines, an empowerment venture, headed up by MD Vumile Nkewu, that sources premium wines and bottles them under the Ekasi label, and Flagstone Winery's BEE initiative, a new range called Ses'fikile, which means 'we have arrived' in isiXhosa, that is 100% black and female owned. Three of the four black women owners are schoolteachers. This is South Africa. This is Soweto. This is what makes us proud. Heita Soweto!

Additional info:

VIP Lounge

Two Jazz artists will be performing at the festival in the VIP Lounge –

[Saxophonist McCoy Mrubata - SAMA Award Winner in 2006](#)

[Electric bassist Concord Nkabinde - Standard Bank Young Artist Award Winner in 2006](#)

Main Hall

[MC - T-Bose Mokwele](#)

Festival Details:

Standard Bank Soweto Wine Festival

Friday & Saturday, 7 & 8 September

630pm to 10pm

Soweto Campus

University of Johannesburg

Old Potch Rd

R40 entrance.

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