

PRESS RELEASE AND INFORMATION

WINE AND BRANDY FESTIVAL HITS SOWETO **Nurturing Wine Lovers in Soweto**

The second Soweto Wine Festival takes place from 1–3 September 2006. Max Maisela, Managing Director of NBC Consultants and actuaries and past Chair of the South African Wine and Brandy Foundation will officially open the show on Friday 1st September 2006.

Maisela was nominated Chair of the South African Wine Industry Council to oversee the restructuring process but this position will be handed over to Prof Kader Asmal as from 1st October 2006. Maisela will then become the first Honorary Chair of the South African Wine Industry Council to act as the first South African Wine Ambassador – a position that will be extended to accommodate other well-known South Africans and “friends-of-the-wine industry.

More than 100 wineries will be present at the festival, showcasing in excess of 600 different wines and brandies, allowing visitors to taste and savour a wide range of styles and cultivars: red and white, sweet and dry, as well as sparkling, cap classique and a wide range of brandy styles. South Africa is known throughout the world for its ability to produce wines and brandies that reflect discerning and singularly unique tastes.

The selection of refined and eloquent wines on display at the Soweto Wine Festival is not only for wine connoisseurs, but also for beginners and ‘wannabee’ wine enthusiasts, presented in an informal and friendly environment. This event has now become a popular annual addition to the Gauteng social calendar.

Due to the success of the first Wine Festival, Soweto’s very first exclusive wine retailer, Morara Wine and Spirit Emporium, based in Mofolo central, was opened by two of the festival’s founders, Mnikelo Mangciphu and Thami Xaba.

Said Xaba, “Why Soweto? We couldn’t think of a better place to host this prestigious event. Soweto is abundant with culture and metropolitan sophistication! It’s a hub of innovation, growth, trendsetters, all built on the rock-hard foundations of a rich and colourful history that changed an entire nation”.

This year the show has been expanded to include brandy. Mr. Pietman Retief, past Director of the South African Brandy Foundation says, "Soweto deserves a Brandy festival. The support that brandy has received from this area over many years is phenomenal".

Brandy is big in South Africa, but not just in the way it used to be. For decades, consigned to highball glasses and drowned with coke, it is now coming out of its original shell. Increasingly savoured solo in designer tumblers or brandy snifters, brandy has become the new currency of chic with some unique, luxury, limited-edition handcrafted offerings entering the market.

Cynthia Luthuli, Distell Premium Brandy Ambassador says, "After years of languishing at levels of around 40 million litres per annum, brandy volumes sold in South Africa have jumped to almost 46 million litres a year. The South African taste for luxury is by no means a local phenomenon but is consistent with trends in the UK, Europe, the US and Asia." Cynthia continues, "The demand for prestige, connoisseur goods that denote status and success is evident in both developed and developing countries. The preference for luxury niche fragrances, designer jewellery, customised furniture and now exclusive brandies allows people to express their individuality while spoiling themselves. When you work hard, you feel entitled to a reward".

A new larger and more accessible venue has been chosen for this year's festival – the University of Johannesburg, (previously known as Vista University) which is situated on the main entrance to Soweto, Old Potch Road and down the road from Chris Hani Hospital. The larger premises will accommodate the expanded and bigger show this year.

The Cape Wine Academy has been engaged to co-ordinate the festival. In 2005 more than 50 waiters from selected Soweto Key Outlets received extensive wine training through the Academy, which was sponsored by WOSA (Wines of South Africa). In 2006, 60 students from the University of Johannesburg, Soweto Campus, will attend the ABC wine course and be employed for the duration of the show. The training, which is being sponsored by the Cape Wine Academy, demonstrates their commitment to imparting skills to the community with a view to improving the student's employment possibilities.

VIP Guest Evening – Friday 1st September

Friday, 1st September 2006, is the VIP evening by invitation only for the Sowetan stakeholders, press, restaurateurs, pub and shebeen owners, sponsors and retailers.

The Festival Weekend - Saturday and Sunday 2nd and 3rd September.

The doors open for the public at University of Johannesburg Old Potch Road, Soweto:

Saturday 2nd September 2006 18h30 – 22h00

Sunday 3rd September 2006 16h00 – 20h00

We thank you so much for your valued and continued support.

Marilyn Cooper

Principal

Cape Wine Academy

For more details and information:

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