



The South African Brandy Foundation

NEWSLETTER AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2011

IN THIS ISSUE

South Africa continues to beat the world's best in the brandy stakes

Brandy personality : Meet marathon man Max Modise

Hot tot – Collison's sexiest barman announced

Take it slow at Laborie Lazy Days Market

Profiling the brandy masters: Dave Acker

Self-taught Black Pearl winemaker wins award for brandy excellence

SOUTH AFRICA CONTINUES TO BEAT THE WORLD'S BEST IN THE BRANDY STAKES

IWSC RESULTS

'Amazing... Glorious...Tremendous...Wonderful!' The Van Ryn's Collectors Reserve 20 Year Old from Distell's stable of premium brandies had the judges at the 2011 International Wine & Spirit Competition (IWSC) in London in raptures and crowning it 'Best Brandy in the World' for 2011.

Not only is it the second time this product has won (2008 was also a victory year), it is also the fourth time this sought-after international trophy has been awarded to a Van Ryn's brandy: it went to the Van Ryn's Collection Reserve 12 Year Old in 2004 and 2005.

"It's a proud moment for the entire South African brandy industry," says Dr Caroline Snyman, chairperson of the South African Brandy Foundation. "What makes this year's result even more significant is that it brings the number of times a local brandy has triumphed at IWSC to an astonishing ten times in the past 13 years. It also represents the fifth consecutive year that a South African brandy has ruled the roost at this prestigious international award."



"It's a proud moment for the entire South African brandy industry," says Dr Caroline Snyman, chairperson of the South African Brandy Foundation. "What makes this year's result even more significant is that it brings the number of times a local brandy has triumphed at IWSC to an astonishing ten times in the past 13 years. It also represents the fifth consecutive year that a South African brandy has ruled the roost at this prestigious international award."

The other three previous Best Brandy in the World winners were KVV's Laborie Alambic Potstill (2010), Southern Cape Vineyards' Joseph Barry 10 Year Old Pot Still (2009) and KVV 15 Year Old (2007).

Marlene Bester, head of production at the Van Ryn Brandy Cellar in Stellenbosch says the 20 Year Old, with its lively fragrances of dried pear, prunes and spices and decadent satin texture, again showed why it is the crown jewel in the Van Ryn's collection.

Success across all styles

Not only did the country's premium brandies rout the competition, but several blended brandies also stood out.

No fewer than nine local brandies went up for final judging for what is arguably the pinnacle of achievement in this category in the global wine and spirits show arena. Also eligible were four other Distell labels: Van Ryn's 10 year Old Vintage Brandy, Uitkyk Grand Reserve 10 Year Old Estate Brandy, Klipdrift Gold Potstill Brandy and Klipdrift Export. Joining this elite group was small independent Elgin distillery Oude Molen's Oude Molen

and Kipani Export joining this elite group was small independent origin distillery, Oude Molen's Oude Molen VOV.

Also judged best in their class – all be they silver medallists, indicative of the rigour of the judging criteria – and, as such, having also been considered for top honours were yet another Distell brandy (the blended brandy Mellow Wood 5) and two brandies from small, independent distilleries: Joseph Barry Traditional Cape Pot Still Brandy 5 Year Old and Oude Molen Solera Grand Reserve.

The other South African gold medallists were Van Ryn's 15 Year Old Fine Cask Reserve, Van Ryn's 12 Year Old Distillers Reserve, Oude Meester Reserve 12 Year Old Potstill Brandy, LadiSmith Klein Karoo Pot Still Brandy 8 Year Old and Olof Bergh Solera Brandy.

Distiller and local and international wine and spirits judge of longstanding repute, Dave Hughes, commented: "there was a much higher percentage of SA brandies in the top slot this year. In the final tasting for the trophy, the last seven were all local and the final three all came from one distillery!"

Distinctive style of modern SA brandies

'What is emerging is that the international panels of judges, predominantly leading UK and European spirits buyers and distillers from across the world – including Cognac – are particularly enjoying the new, distinctive style of modern South African brandies,' says Dave.

He points out that South African brandy makers have become world experts on the effects of wood-ageing on fine wine spirit following research by a local brandy master. The change in style from the traditionally heavily wooded cognac, which many countries are still trying to copy, has come, not through compromising our unusually stringent regulations on brandy making (including wood maturation) based on the Cognac tradition, but through better management of the ageing of the spirit in carefully cured and selected barrels.

"Our modern brandies are more fruity, elegant, a distinctive product of our sun-warmed vines. Remember, it takes a long time, years, to change a style of a brandy, particularly those in the categories of long wood-aged products. But even those remain world beaters."

** The Van Ryn's 20 Year Old Collectors Reserve, the 2011 'Best Brandy in the World', is available from the Van Ryn Brandy Cellar tasting room in Stellenbosch for R1 155 a bottle. It will also be found at specialist wine and spirits shops.*

BRANDY PERSONALITY

MEET MARATHON MAN MAX MODISE

Maximillian Modise has five Comrades ultra-marathons, two Two Oceans marathons and a couple of 50km races (Om die Dam and Loskop, for the information of the runners reading this) behind his name.



It's no small indication that this is a man with endurance, perseverance and a clear idea of the end goal; attributes he brings to his position of KWV Brand Director for Spirits, charged with establishing the way forward for the marketing of KWV's stable of brandies (the KWV 3, 5, 10, 15 and 20 Year Old and Imoya).

He also brings years of experience in the repositioning and rebranding of such diverse products as group scheme insurance, transport and banking, but he's no stranger to the wine and spirits world, having spent 10 years with Stellenbosch Farmers' Winery (which later became part of Distell).

"This is the industry that gave me the opportunity to find my passion for marketing. So the KWV position was just too irresistible, especially after I'd learnt a few more valuable lessons in brand and service marketing, which I would not have picked up if I had stayed in the industry. To help reposition, first the KWV brandies and, in the process, hopefully the category as a whole... that is for me very exciting!"

'Intrinsic knowledge of your product as a marketer is important. I'm still learning about brandy, but I keep convincing myself, and others of course, that marketing savvy about how to build brands is even more important.' He also has part-time studies at former Techovs (Free State Technikon) and the executive management programme at Wits Business School under his belt.

Create lifestyle moments with brandy

His take on the marketing of brandy and different brands is that consumers, both current and potential, be seen in the context of lifestyle groupings first and foremost: demographics, age, gender and race, though still important, are secondary.

"For example, from my early observations, it would seem the KWV 3 seems to appeal to the more fun-loving, outgoing market; the 5 to a more mature, outdoor group; the 10 to a more "vintage", slightly sophisticated urbanite to whom a good choice of brandy is important. As for the 15 and 20; well, therein lies the opportunity to appeal to the more mature people with more disposable income!"

He believes marketers in the modern South African environment should move beyond race and gender. "These days the spenders [women and men, black and white] go to the same institutions, the same workplace. We need to create more lifestyle moments with our brandies; it is not always about the drink, it is more about the setting."

Running the race

As any marathon runner will know, running the race is relatively easy. It's the months of training in preparation that's hard and calls for the most discipline and planning. And, especially apt for a product that requires particular patience and skill in the making, is a marketer like Max Modise, versed in the lore of running, to take KWV's fine brandies to a widening audience increasingly appreciative of the aesthetic.

"KWV's brandies have enjoyed a unique aura of mystique among many South Africans, as the brands have not always been available to the local market. The challenge is to reposition the mysterious into the current, something that potential consumers can identify with as truly special."

Q & A with Max

Home is: 'Lombardy East, where I stay with my wife (mother of our two sons of 22 and 16 and a daughter of 14). The family also includes my wife's sister! Oh, and four dogs!'

Down time: 'Reading and running. Currently reading Elephant Whisperer by Lawrence Anthony, riveting. Favourite book: The Monk who Sold his Ferrari. And I enjoy reading my Bible.'

Heading out: 'France, Malaysia, Durban, the Karoo (plaas boytjie that I am).'

Dish of choice: 'Pasta; my wife's macaroni, mince and cheese.'

Inspirational brandy person: 'Our brandy master Kobus Gelderblom – cool guy!'

Favourite brand: 'KWV 10. I now joke with friends who've been drinking it for years, saying it was my "destiny" to work on this brand!'

Favoured way of enjoying brandy: 'I have a sweetish tooth, so with a dash of water and ginger ale or white Grapetizer!'

Famous relatives: 'None that I know of; the Modises are like the Van der Merwes; they are found everywhere in southern Africa!'

HOT TOT – COLLISON'S SEXIEST BARMAN ANNOUNCED



l to r : Winner Ryan Cameron,
Poppy from 5fm &
Johnny Bezuidenhout

Move over Justin Bieber. Ryan Cameron of Jozie's Latinova Club is the man. He was voted South Africa's hottest barman in the Cosmopolitan challenge sponsored by Collison's White Gold. The B Com Law student from Pretoria, who works weekends in Jo'burg says the secret to a great cocktail is a "bit of love". He also admits you have to be able to read people's minds a little to recognise what they enjoy.

The national search for Mzansi's man behind the bar drew the best of best contestants from South Africa's most awesome cocktail and night spots. Ten candidates were shortlisted, each having to work their mixology magic before the crowds at the glitzy finals held at the aptly-named Clapham Gold in Johannesburg. Ryan, whose resemblance to Justin Bieber didn't exactly hurt, came away as the clear winner with R20 000 in his pocket.

Collison's Between the Sheets

Ingredients

30 mls Collison's White Gold
30 mls orange liqueur
30 mls dark rum
Dash of lemon slice
Slice of fresh lime to garnish

Method

Pour all the ingredients into a cocktail shaker filled with crushed ice. Strain and pour the liquid into a martini glass. Trim the rim of the glass with the lime slice.

TAKE IT SLOW AT LABORIE LAZY DAYS MARKET

Laborie is not only famed for its multi-award winning Laborie Alambic Brandy, as the Laborie Lazy Days Market held on Saturday mornings have become a firm favourite of locavores and tourists alike. They come in their droves for the freshly baked breads



their groves for the freshly baked breads, coffee, cheese, olives, honey, charcuterie and other fresh local produce.

"Laborie is an ideal meeting place in Paarl and the market a perfect opportunity for family and friends to enjoy a Saturday morning in a scenic and relaxed setting," comments Laborie Wine Farm Manager, Cobus van Graan.



Good to know

- Laborie Lazy Day Market takes place every Saturday from 09h00 until 13h00. Visit www.laboriewines.co.za for details.
- Laborie Alambic brandy, a five-year-old pure potstill, is an unusual blend of mainly chardonnay with a touch of pinotage matured in old red wine oak barrels. Its many accolades include the title IWSC 2010 Worldwide Best Brandy. It is produced in limited quantities and is available from the Laborie Cellar tasting room and KWV Wines' Wine Emporium in Paarl at R126 for a 500ml bottle.
- Visitors can overnight in the tranquil guest house and enjoy a delicious meal at the Laborie Restaurant.

PROFILING THE BRANDY MASTERS

DAVE ACKER: ON IDIOSYNCRASIES AND VINTAGE MERCS

Dave Acker is the creative force behind the small, independent, award-winning distillery Oude Molen in Elgin/Grabouw, home of the country's largest copper pot still 'Big Bertha' (25 000l).



Born in KwaZulu Natal and qualified in biochemistry, microbiology and analytical chemistry, he learnt his distilling craft from a London distiller in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) and worked in England, Scotland, Germany, France, Holland, Switzerland and the USA.

He has made and always enjoyed drinking 'all the jolly juices' (brandy, whisky, gin, rum, wine, beer...) and has been Master Distiller in charge of processing and product research and development at Oude Molen since 1991 (then known as Whitby's Distillery).

This legendary brandy stalwart plays the role of both composer and conductor, practising his alchemist art to standing ovations: Oude Molen VOV 14 Year Old Brandy twice brought home the IWSC award for Best Brandy in the World (1999, 2001). At the 2011 IWSC it won gold for Best in Class.

He and wife Jana have two sons, studying marketing/advertising and photography respectively.

Quoting Dave:

On tasting and exploring: 'For anyone aspiring to the higher echelons of spirits, there're three musts: education, education and education.'

Inspiration: 'To see the often idiosyncratic development of each batch of brandy, from what you do to it in year one to how it ends up looking in year four, five; it's a marvellous process; sometimes it can even make one feel a little like patting oneself on the back...'

Favourite surprising statistic: 'All things being equal, the distillation cost of a premium brandy compared with a malt whisky per litre is R28 vs R16.44.'

New brandy developments: 'The solera method of making brandy and the bottling of single-barrel brandies.'

Top reads: 'Steven Pressfield on mostly military history from ancient and classical times.'

Greatest challenge: 'To make a brandy that subscribes to the "expected taste" of the loyal consumer, but then also to produce something different that will pleasantly surprise.'

Why SA brandy is tops: 'The law, exceptional in the world of brandy, that all our brandies in all three categories (blended, potstill and vintage) contain a minimum of 30% full-bodied potstill.'

Hobbies: 'Tinkering with vintage Mercs; I have about 10, the oldest a 1952 Mercedes Benz 300.'

Special dish: 'Cape brandy date pudding well soaked in a full-bodied brandy.'

NEWS SNIPPET: SCORE WITH OUDE MOLEN

Oude Molen Distillery presents a Tri-Nations and World Cup 2011 Rugby Box package to companies until October 2011. This package offers a great way to socialise with clients, as a business or with a circle of

friends while supporting the Springboks. Up to 30 people can be accommodated per game. For half-time an Oude Molen brandy tasting can be included. Booking for this exclusive events is essential. For information or to book contact Dre on 082 379 2632 or email rooikombuis@mweb.co.za.

SELF-TAUGHT BLACK PEARL WINEMAKER WINS AWARD FOR BRANDY EXCELLENCE

Newly graduated Cape Wine Master (CMW) Mary-Lou Nash is the 2011 winner of the Van Ryn's Award for Brandy Excellence, achieving the highest score in the section of the Cape Wine Academy's Cape Wine Masters' examination, devoted to brandy.

Mary-Lou is the co-owner, winemaker, viticulturist, tractor driver, marketer, and general "Jill of all trades" at Black Pearl Wines. She received a Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude, with a major in anthropology from the University of New Hampshire in 1989, and then taught English in Japan for two years before going on a three-year world tour.

She finally joined her father in 1995 on his farm, Rhenosterkop in Agter Paarl, where she began to cultivate and develop her interest in wine and winemaking.

The brandy module, added to the course in 2006, comprises a written and a tasting test involving brandies from round the world. Says Cape Wine Academy principal, Marilyn Cooper: "To win the Award for Brandy Excellence one must have an exceptional conversancy with brandy, both as a taster and in one's theoretical knowledge. It requires not only dedicated study but passion, and genuine interest. As a self-taught winemaker, these are qualities Mary-Lou undoubtedly possesses and has had an opportunity to flaunt in this course.



Bennie Howard, Mary-Lou Nash & Shelley Ellse of Van Ryn's

"It is essential for Cape Wine Masters to become experienced brandy tasters in their role as ambassadors for the entire wine industry; an industry which includes and embraces spirits made from grapes. The brandy segment of the examination enables CMW candidates to acquaint themselves with the excellence of South Africa's brandies."



Your Guide to South African Brandy

Go to www.sabrandy.co.za to order your **free** copy of this guide. Filled with interesting brandy information and facts, trends, cocktails and a product guide.

The South African Brandy Foundation | P.O. Box 363, Stellenbosch, 7599
Tel: +27 21 882 8954 | Fax: +27 21 886 6381
info@sabrandy.co.za | www.sabrandy.co.za