



The
South African
Brandy
Foundation

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2011

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BRANDY MAKER IN PROFILE: MEET MARLENE BESTER

Sisters are doin' it for themselves...! Indeed they are. And, as music legends Annie Lennox and Aretha Franklin put it in the classic '80s 'girl-power anthem' performed at the recent 2011 Grammy Awards: *'The "inferior sex" has got a new exterior / We got doctors, lawyers, politicians too'....*

And to this mix of highly qualified, colourful professionals we might add 'brandy makers', like Marlene Bester.

Marlene heads up the team in charge of brandy production at Distell's flagship Van Ryn's Brandy Cellar in Stellenbosch. Her role includes responsibility for the ancillary brandy distillery at Dal Josafat in Paarl. And she's the only woman among six distillery managers reporting to Distell's Group General Manager for Spirits under the company's production director Johan Venter (one of South Africa's leading brandy masters).

An unusual job for a 'sistah'? 'Yes, it is. When I started working at Distell in 2001, Caroline [Snyman, Business Director for Spirits] and I were the only two women in spirits. Now we are five, including our technical manager for spirits, the distillation technologist at James Sedgwick Distillery and the maturation controller at Van Ryn's. There are also two women in the field at KWV.'

Besides overseeing the distillation and maturation of brandy at the Van Ryn's and Dal Josafat distilleries, Marlene handles the administration of both 'in the most cost-effective way while producing products of the highest quality'. This includes the development of product quality and personnel, as well as budgeting and managing the work environment.

From sheep farm to brandy cellar to Paris

Her work calls for a wide-ranging set of skills. The daughter of a sheep farmer, Marlene matriculated in Calvinia and headed for Stellenbosch University in 1995, completing a BSc in Microbiology and Genetics followed by an Honours and Masters in Wine Biotechnology.

Forays into the rarified world of international brandy production have thrilled her, appealing to both her thirst for management skills development and her unadulterated love of brandy. One of 34 South Africans from various industries chosen for the first JIPSA JMDP training programme, a joint initiative between the local and French governments to develop scarce skills in South Africa, Marlene spent two weeks in Paris receiving formal training in international strategy, negotiations and marketing, intercultural management and project management. She was equally delighted with a crash course in French!

She labels a four-week internship at Cognac's Bisquit distillery as 'an opportunity of a lifetime!' While there, she visited several Cognac and Armagnac distilleries, as well as cooperages, and managed to fit in a flying visit to a Spanish distillery to see how things are done, returning home with a few new ideas.



Marlene Bester

Is she a brandy drinker? 'Absolutely! I love pot-still and vintage brandies because of their purity, aroma and taste. In summer I enjoy a good brandy on ice. When I'm thirsty, with ginger ale or cranberry juice and lots of ice; fantastic when it's 40°C out! Oh, and in winter, by the fire, nothing beats a glass of Van Ryn's 20 Year Old.'

And in a modern twist to the old adage 'Behind every successful man' Marlene finds tremendous support from the man on her side: "he was willing to look after our son, an extremely lively four-year-old, while I spent six weeks in France!"

Marlene Bester: away from work:

- Down time: 'Camping with the family; reading a good book.'
- Soul food: 'Mitch Albom's Tuesdays with Morrie: it makes you think about your own life and what you do with it.'
- Special interest: 'Photography; I love being behind the lens of a camera, capturing special moments or beautiful scenery.'
- Heading out: 'The Garden Route for the weather, scenery, things to do; the South of France: for friendly people (even if they can't understand you!), beautiful surroundings and good food.'
- Dish of choice: 'Seafood. And chocolate desserts, particularly those with a high cocoa content, brilliant with most brandies!'

- Ultimate brandy cocktail: 'Pot-still brandy, lemonade, strips of ginger and cucumber, with lots of ice.'
- Something unexpected about me: 'I love riding motorbikes (with my husband) and am working towards my licence.'

SOLERA BRANDEWYN SÊ OLÉ

Wat het die land van tapas, flamenco en Don Quixote en sjerrie te make met ons brandewyn? Vat 'n teugie aan een van die Suid-Afrikaanse brandewyne verouder in die Spaanse solera-tradisie en jy roep uit olé pleks van 'gesondheid'



Oude Molen brandy master Dave Acker

In 'n artikel "Spesifiek uit die Solera" wat op 6 Februarie in Rapport verskyn het, beskryf die bekende wynskrywer Melvyn Minnaar Solera-brandewyn as "iets unieks, nie sommer hiert-jy nie. Daar's 'n storie aan verbonde." Hier volg "n verkorte weergawe van Melvyn se artikel:

Oor 'n helder glasie Olof Bergh bepeins die geselskap nou-die-vroegaand die herkoms van brandewyn. Dis 'n wye en diep gesprek, en juis lekker omdat ons op Afrikaans dié dop so kleurvol en poëties op sy naam kan noem. (Die 'dam' in hierdie geval in onse glase, is die heerlike soetwater wat diegene wat daarvan weet, gereeld uit die Springs Way-stroompie in Nuweland gaan trek.)

Dis nou oestyd in die Kaap se wynlande en, wys een van die wysneuse in die gesprek ons daarop, brandewyn is, soos wyn en sy oesjare, seisoengebonde. Jy kry, soos met wyn, met een maal 'n jaar kans. En, brandewyn is uiteraard 'n lang proses, een van jare. Eintlik 'n langtermyn-belegging.

En, natuurlik, het brandewyn net so 'n spesifieke geografiese karakter soos die beste terroir-wyne met hul unieke eienskappe wat in fynproewers se glase flankeer.

Dis teen hierdie agtergrond wat ons die Olof Bergh weer van nader beskou. Die etiket pronk met die beskrywing: 'Olof Bergh Solera Brandewijn Maatschappij Bpk. Goudini, Breëriviervallei'.

Daar is tans net drie solera-brandewyne van plaaslike oorsprong op die rakke. Olof Bergh, een van Distell se handelsmerke, is die oudste. Toe die Nederburg-opstal 'n jaar of tien terug gerestoureer is, is besluit dat dié prestige-handelsmerk ook 'n solera-brandewyn kry. Meer onlangs is die Oude Molen se solera, deel van dié puik-portefeulje se prestige-reeks.

Solera-brandewyn is iets unieks, nie sommer hiert-jy nie. Daar's 'n storie aan verbonde. En daar is al die romantiek van die proses as menslike uitvindsel, waar die versnit van verskillende oesjare as't ware natuurlik en tydsaam plaasvind.

Die oorspronklike Spaanse woord kom van 'n manier waarop houtvaatjies soos 'n piramide opgestapel word en waarvan die inhoud geleidelik van die jongste, heel bo, tot die oudste, heel onder, aflei. Met ander woorde, die varste word bo ingegooi en die oudste onder afgetrek.

Elke ry vatjies kan 'n bepaalde tyd verteenwoordig: 'n ry kan byvoorbeeld een jaar se voorraad wees. Teen die tyd dat die onderste afgetap word, is dit presies soos die vorige tapsel.

Oorspronklik het dié praktiese analoog-proses die doel gehad om klassieke Spaanse sjerrie-wyne (wat met 'flor' verouder) se styl deurlopend te hou. Met die ontwikkeling van Spanje se eie brandewyn as gewilde drankie, is die metode ook hiervoor ingespan.



Solera casks at Nederburg

Om aan te skaf

Enige van hierdie drie uiteenlopende brandewyne is van die soort wat jy versigtig uit 'n ordentlike stingel-glas sal proe - na die eerste snuif, met bietjie goeie water. Of jy kan dit in 'n gesonde lae glas met meer water en ys geniet. In 'n seker sin, ook prysgewys, verteenwoordig elkeen iets anders op die skaal van voortreflikheid. Die Olof Bergh is sprankelend van kleur, vrugtig en blommerig op die neus, met appelkoos, piesang en sagte kruid wat saggies in die mond rondspoel. Lekker lang nasmaak.

Die Nederburg is meer goudkleurig met meer sitrusgeure en selfs laventel; elegant met talmende nasmaak. Die Oude Molen is die meer komplekse van die drie met droë en vars vrugte en blomgeur. Harmonieus en ryk. En dan is daar 'n tipiese sjerrie-klankie aan die aromas. (Hierdie is ook van die mooiste verpakings op die rakke. Die etiket sê daar is net 4 421 bottels wat jaarliks uit die solera van 54 vate getap word.)

Werd om te weet

- Suid-Afrika se talle brandewynkelders is interessante plekke om te besoek. Nederburg is natuurlik uiters toeriste-vriendelik, terwyl die Oude Molen-kelder in die dorpie Grabouw op die N2 se skuinstes gevind word. Die Olof Bergh Solera-kelder is duskant Goudini, naby Rawsonville.
- Dankie aan Melvyn Minnaar en Rapport vir vergunning om die artikel te plaas

MARKETING EXPERT JOINS SOUTH AFRICAN BRANDY FOUNDATION

The future looks bright for South African brandy. A fresh new face on the brandy scene makes it even more so. The South African Brandy Foundation appointed Christelle Reade-Jahn, a professional marketing strategist, as director to take the Foundation's activities to the next level.



"Christelle's appointment in this newly created role is a great boost for the South African Brandy Foundation as we enter a new phase of augmented local and international marketing activities," says Riaan Marais, chairman of the Foundation.

Christelle will apply her wide communication experience by placing special focus on new media and social networks. She honed her marketing expertise over 20 years working locally and abroad, covering a variety of sectors from FMCG, retail and manufacturing to engineering and IT; as well as marketing research work for blue-chip clients. She holds a degree from Stellenbosch University and a diploma in Marketing Management from Wits Business School.

According to Christelle factors driving the growth potential of the South African brandy market include its consistently high quality underpinned by stringent legislation; its strong base in the spirits market and the range of product offerings to various market segments.



Christelle Reade-Jahn, director of the South African Brandy Foundation

Focusing on contemporary ways to promote South African brandy, she views the highly marketable characteristics of brandy as a cornerstone for promotional activities aimed at brandy education, raising awareness and getting people excited about brandy.

Keeping her finger on the pulse of what consumers want, she sees their increasing need to connect as pivotal. "There is plenty of scope for a variety of promotional media including the application of electronic and social networking tools to connect with current and new segments of the market."

The economic climate fuels rather than dampens her optimistic outlook. "People still want to treat themselves with little luxuries in more austere times. It comes as no surprise that trend forecasters expect sales of personal luxuries to increase as consumers look towards indulging in these products without breaking the bank."

Contact Christelle at the SA Brandy Foundation, tel 021 882 8954 or email christelle@sabrandy.co.za.

GET INTO THE SPIRIT AT THE 2011 FINE BRANDY FESTIVAL

Savour the best that South African brandy has to offer at the Fine Brandy Festival, on at the Sandton Convention Centre from 25 to 27 May 2011.

The most stylish event on the drinks calendar is back in town, and newly revamped, this year's Fine Brandy Festival is not-to-be-missed.

Now in its 4th year, this flagship event for the South African brandy industry will showcase brandy as never before with its hot new looks, innovative lifestyle attractions and social vibe. This magnificent South African product has been hailed as the world's finest – and well-deserving an event dedicated to the celebration of this double-distilled grape spirit.

Upping the ante

The festival is bigger and more luxe than ever. Due to the phenomenal growth in festival attendance, the event moved to a larger venue to accommodate visitors, new exhibitors, lifestyle activities and top-notch entertainment. From world-acclaimed champion brandies, new product launches and chill-out lounges to cutting edge men's fashion, super cars and brandy-enhancing food, the festival line-up promises to be a crowd pleaser.



Catching the spirit at the Fine Brandy Festival

New to the festival is a series of entertaining and informative Masterclass® talks featuring a line-up of illustrious international experts and local gurus. From muddling, mixing and floating to twists and swirls, guests can discover the myriad possibilities lingering in a cocktail glass at the new **Round Bar**. Adding to the multi-faceted sensual experience, the **Brandy Aroma Wheel** titillates the nose with the subtle and complex flavours in fine brandies.

The **Walk of Fame** puts the pioneers of the industry in the limelight, showcasing all the brandy greats which were crowned the best in the world. The festival also puts the spotlight on artisanal estate brandies made in precious small amounts.

The Fine Brandy Festival supports moderate and responsible enjoyment of brandy. Corporate Cab services are available.

Stay on top of festival events and workshop line up by regularly visiting www.brandyfestival.co.za.

Practical details:
Fine Brandy Festival
25 to 27 May 2011, Sandton Convention Centre, Sandton.
Times: 17h00 – 21h00 (no entry after 20h30)
Cost: R195, include a brandy glass and beverage vouchers
Tickets available from Computicket or at the door.
No visitors under 18 years.

ANYONE FOR A SLICE OF COCKTAIL?

The cocktail boom has led to a whole new generation of cocktailians - from modern mixologists and enterprising amateurs to star chefs – to give the classics a contemporary twist. Now it's the home cook bringing icons from the bar counter into the kitchen. Enter the Brandy Alexander Pie.

The Brandy Alexander is one of those cocktail legends that have as much staying power as James Bond. Some of its cult status is rooted in the fact that it was John Lennon's favourite drink which he fondly referred to as his 'milk shake'.

It is quite likely that the creamy, chocolaty drink was created with the fairer sex in mind, as it was – according to cocktail lore – first served at the wedding of Lord Lascelles and Princess Mary in London in 1922. It first appeared in print in 1930 in a book by Harry Craddock, a maestro of the bar at the Savoy Hotel in London.

A combination of brandy, cream, and dark crème de cacao, hazelnut liqueur and gently dusted with fresh grated nutmeg, the Brandy Alexander was known for years as a "drink for the girls." Some say that this did not refer to its sweetish character but rather the drink interfering with a lady's natural ability to say no! Despite its reputation, it is much more than a sweet carrier of alcohol. All the ingredients have to work in harmony to lift out the well balanced flavours of the brandy.

Brandy Alexander goes avant-garde

Herman Lensing, now multi award-winning food editor at *Sarie Magazine*, illustrated at a previously held Fine Brandy Festival that the Brandy Alexander has what it takes to keep up with even the most modern mixology trends.

He transformed the classic drink into an über-cool edible cocktail: a chocolate shell filled with a brandy mousse and wrapped in nutmeg candy floss suspended above a hazelnut marshmallow.

Cocktail in a Pie

A much less trendy interpretation is the Brandy Alexander Pie, an American dessert pie so popular that when the recipe was published in the *New York Times* in 1970 it was such a hit that it became one of the paper's three most-requested recipes ever. This took the fame of this unassuming, wobbly and deliciously boozy mousse to new heights.



The pie traces its origin back to the post-Prohibition days when alcoholic drinks and liqueurs could again legally be added to dishes during cooking. The ingredients in the cocktail and the pie are similar - brandy, crème de cacao and cream. The pie's crumb crust is made from crackers, sugar and butter, filled with a fluffy, spiked chiffon mixture. The retro-style garnish with chocolate curls is optional. Some creative cooks do however stray from tradition, replacing the graham cracker crust with ginger snaps or chocolate wafer cookies and adding top quality white chocolate to both the crust and filling.



Brandy Alexander Pie. Image from relishmag.com

Prefer your Brandy Alexander the classic way in a cocktail glass? Then this recipe's for you:

Make your own Brandy Alexander Cocktail

40 ml brandy
10 ml light cocoa
40 ml half-and-half (cream and milk)
20 ml Kahlua
nutmeg to garnish

Shake the ingredients together. Strain into a martini glass. Garnish with a sprinkle of nutmeg and serve.

BRANDY BACK HOME AT BOSMAN'S CROSSING

Groucho Marx once quipped 'home is where you hang your head.' The South African Brandy Foundation has found a much more agreeable new home at Bosman's Crossing, at the foot of the Papegaaiberg where the spirit of distilling runs deep.

Distillery Road, Bosman's Crossing.... the SA Brandy Foundation could not have chosen a better address to relocate to. Situated on the western side of Stellenbosch, Bosman's Crossing presents a historic gateway to the winelands, linking the past and present, the old with the new.

The Dorp Street Square, where the new offices are, is part of the urban renewal activities which regenerated the area and brought the Bosman's Crossing area's rich industrial heritage to life again. The architecture of the building reflects its industrial sense of place with brick, concrete and steel.

From bricks and jam to distilling

Over the past three hundred years numerous industrial activities were established in the area. From the mid-18th century the clayey spur of Papegaaiberg were quarried and used for moulding bricks, which were ovenfired on the site. In 1798 a tannery and bark mill was founded. It also once housed the Shepherd's Jam factory.

Brandy distillation came to Bosman's Crossing in 1875 with the establishment of the Collison Distillery. In 1880 Daniel Ferdinand Bosman, after whom Bosman's Crossing was named, distilled sugar into spirits at the site in rather large amounts. A small railroad track was laid from his factory to aid the loading of the spirits-filled vats taken to the main station. This was also used to load brandy from the many distilleries along the Plankenbrug River.

According to www.bosmanscrossing.co.za the Santhagen's Distillery followed in the early 1900s and at the same time William Charles Winshaw, seen as the father of modern winery in SA, rented the tannery buildings to produce wine from raisins after tanning operations failed.

Bosman's Crossing became the KWV's Stellenbosch headquarters shortly after its inception in 1918. Once KWV stopped production there in 1995, it subdivided the site into twelve smaller sites and rezoned them for light industrial.

Today Bosman's Crossing is once again a distilling hub, and home to the refined grappa of the father and son team Giorgio and George Dalla Cia. Having an espresso 'corrected' with a tot of grappa in the Italian food & wine bar - Pane e Vino - next to the distillery is one way to call up the spirits of the past.

Another way is to drop in at the South African Brandy Foundation office for a chat about brandy's past, present and future.

- SA Brandy Foundation, Unit 49, Dorp Street Square, Distillery Road, Bosman's Crossing.
- The new tel. nr. 021 882 8954 and fax nr. 021 886 6381
- The postal address remains PO Box 363, Stellenbosch, 7599
- Email info@sabrandy.co.za or visit www.sabrandy.co.za

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