

WOMEN IN THE SPIRITS AND WINE INDUSTRY

As the business landscape in South Africa's spirits and wine industry continues to transform in the direction of greater gender inclusivity, **JARED RUTTENBERG** asks two industry leaders to weigh in on the growing presence and role of women within the sector

A combination of empowered females and societal and industry changes are playing a significant role in encouraging women to step up and take their place at the forefront of a rapidly changing spirits and wine sector. This, says Pamela Nkuna, corporate affairs director for South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa at Pernod Ricard, is encouraging given the traditionally male environment of the spirits and wine industry.

Nkuna adds that through its Phamakisa iSpirit initiative, Pernod Ricard South Africa is contributing to this transformation by creating equal opportunities for both men and women-led businesses outside the traditional spirits and wine sector to contribute to the industry's growth.

Melanie Campbell, marketing director at Edward Snell & Co, says that there are several opportunities and benefits for women working within the industry. "Women have the opportunity to shape a historically masculine industry to best represent female insights and needs in products – particularly where products are not sold on functional benefits alone, but rich emotional iconography and branded experiences akin to many luxury brands.

"Having women in the industry offers many benefits, including a greater deal of empathy in leadership, helping to build richer organisational cultures, which motivate employees beyond the paycheck. Women are also known to derisk organisations and drive a greater focus on corporate social responsibility. With the industry under pressure to showcase leadership in corporate citizenship and the consumption of alcohol, this should come in handy."

Pamela Nkuna



AREAS OF POTENTIAL GROWTH

"South Africa could still benefit from understanding that there is a shift from employee engagement to employee thriving – the ability to unlock discretionary energy in favour of meaningful work," says Campbell.

She adds that Edward Snell & Co's intention is to focus on the following areas: "Being more flexible on employee benefit/package composition; being more flexible on workplace and time constructs; being more active in encouraging balanced wellbeing (physical, mental and social); being more empathetic to employee needs outside of formal remuneration constructs; and being more transparent on grades, benefits, and development/growth required to move to the next level."

In her current role as chairperson of the South African Liquor Brand Owners Association, Nkuna adds valuable insight: "Although the country has made significant progress toward achieving gender equality in the spirits and wine sector, women still face numerous challenges. For example, the female unemployment rate

remains higher than the male unemployment rate, indicating the existing disparities between men and women. This shows that women still lag in terms of socioeconomic opportunities."

Thankfully there seems to be a shift in companies understanding the need, Nkuna

adds. "Pernod Ricard introduced an internal Women Leadership Programme. This one-year coaching programme supports female leaders within the Pernod Ricard organisation to identify their leadership challenges – raising self-awareness on limiting beliefs and strengths, as well as external constraints and enablers, all while connecting them with other female leaders in a trustful, supporting, and challenging atmosphere."

Campbell says that she's been blessed to be surrounded by remarkable men who have supported her on her journey: "Thank you to those men who mirrored great leadership, but empowered me to be me, showed chivalry in the corridor, but argued bravely and fairly in the boardroom, complimented me, but never objectified me, pushed me and believed in me." ■



Melanie Campbell

AWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Look out for the annual LUMO Awards – two of the four awards recognise women in the industry: "Woman Winemaker of the Year" or "Woman Distiller of the Year". lumoawards.com
- Salome Buys-Vermeulen from Lozarn Wines has now held the title of Woman Winemaker of the Year for two years running and stands out not only for her ability, but also for championing the rare Carménère variety. lozarn.co.za
- Launched by Jordan Wine Estate's Kathy Jordan, the Women in Wine Initiative selects previously disadvantaged female candidates with a passion to pursue a career in the wine industry and offers opportunities in wine education, wine journalism, wine marketing, or wine hospitality. Contact the Premium Independent Wineries of South Africa for info.piwosa.com

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