

Good brand hunting at the Good Food & Wine Show 2017

 By [Terry Levin](#)

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Not a regular attendee of foodie events, I wandered from the furthest reaches of the CTICC parking, already full by 10.30am on Saturday 3 June, to collect my accreditation into the halls of the Good Food and Wine Show 2017.

Turns out I was just in time to catch the demo by global celebrity chef Marco Pierre White. Despite the fact that I am one of a handful of people in the world who do not consider cooking a spectator sport, I headed in the direction of the Chefs' Open Theatre to witness the demi-god of foodie circles inviting people up on stage to help him prepare lobster stock. Marco was great and I also caught Jenny Morris and Reza Mahammad entertaining an enraptured crowd later in the day, but my mission for the day was to find local packaged brands on show.



Jenny Morris and Reza Mahammad entertaining the crowd. ©Terry Levin

In awe of raw

I am in awe of those who turn raw ingredients into revenue streams. One category which seems to yield an infinite amount of opportunity in this regard is that of relishes. Some of which represented at the GFWS2017 are Worcester-based Laharna Farms, The Real Food Company apparently exhibiting for the 10th year, African Infused Gourmet Foods, Delagoa Bay Piri-Piri from Durban, Epa Sauces from Gauteng, Joe's Karoo Flavours from Calvinia and one brand simply called Relish.

Relish the thought

Surely most relish is delish, so apart from the ingenuity and skill of the makers, what enhances the chances of turning produce into products?

A combination of passion, hard work and marketing savvy undoubtedly, but memorable product names, brand stories, well-thought out logos and packaging design are great assets too, especially in a parity category. These days a web, social (Facebook or Instagram) or e-commerce presence for post-trade show follow-up enquiries is also a must.



The Real Food Factory. ©Terry Levin

Affection for confection

Artisanal sweets and choccies seem to be a category in which South African foodies excel, the marketing of which Sally Williams has turned into an art form to inspire for aspirant confectioners.

The sweet taste of success

One of these is 4-year old outfit Darling Sweets, from the Western Cape hamlet of Darling, who are ticking all the boxes - cute name, great packaging and display, solid web and social media presence. You go darlings!



The wonderful display of Darling Sweets. ©Terry Levin

Hitting the sweet spots

Another company hitting the sweet spot is Afrikoa Chocolate whose payoff line 'Bean to Bar' communicates the company's brand promise of being the only South African chocolate made from cocoa beans sourced directly from Tanzanian farmers, with no middle man so all profits go direct to source. (As their website continues the story, instead of being exported to Europe turned into chocolates and exported back to us.) Quelle Horreur!

Cape Town-based for the past 10 years, Italian chocolatier Nino Allegra explained to me how the colours of the packaging were inspired by the traditional colours of the region from which they are sourced. It is this kind of authenticity and rare Pan-African ethos that have all the makings of a proudly local global brand. Nino tells me that the 2-year old company is retail and export-ready, Halal and Kosher certified and the Milnerton-based factory has a capacity of 10,000 bars a day. I would like nothing better than to see these sorts of enterprises give 100-year-old purple brands and others, a run for their money. #justsaying



Afrikoa Bean to Bar. ©Terry Levin

Very g-interesting

Walking around the GF&W Show it's amazing how delighted people are to be asked to tell their brand stories, and this one's a goodie.

Hand-labelled and hand-embellished General's Gin is made in Wellington, Western Cape by Sebastian Vannevel, who has blended his Belgian and SA affinities in his gin brand, inspired by a South Africa General apparently from Muizenberg known as Little Tim, who led his troops through the Battle of Passchendaele in Belgium (where Sebastian is from) during the First World War.

The foiled packaging is a show stopper and the product, infused with indie ingredients such as wild buchu, naartjie peel, honeybush, angelica root and spicy coriander, speaks for itself.

Still life

Andre, the son half of Pienaar & Son, distilling botanical vodkas in the heart of Cape Town's city bowl offers another example of a great story, attention to detail and gorgeous packaging by Cassandra Leigh that is deserving of attention and shelf space.



Pienaar & Son launch Waskis, their new vodka range

Juanita Pienaar 23 May 2017



Triple 3 Three Estate Distillery has been producing gin since December 2015. The conservative packaging by Route 360 does not seem as innovative as the former examples I have seen, but maker Regina Zeitvogel shares with me that the brand is doing well and is available on the shelves of major retailers so good for them.

Tucked away in the beverage section I find former construction guy Larry Berger, who had a lightbulb moment and started making rooibos infused vodka in his garage. The infusion has subsequently been awarded a Most Innovative Medal at the Michelangelo International Wine and Spirits Competition 2016 and a silver medal in the New York International Spirits Competition.

The Spirit of Rooibos is bylined 'A Proudly Cape of Storms Infusion'. I tell Larry he's is a great example in my quest for proudly local brands, and we agree that it is our politicians who take pride off our faces. Couple this with often unfavourable and bureaucratic terms imposed by organisations as Wesgro and the bigger issues that need to be addressed in the quest for entrepreneurial economies emerge.

Brand-y stories

Hopefully, Jack Parow's own brandy brand, with suitably edgy design by Merwe Marchant and Rodeo Productions, currently available in Checkers, Tops and Ultras, will not encounter similar obstructions to market success.



Jack Parow Brandy. ©Terry levin

I am also holding thumbs for the lovely duo Rosemary Padi and Mosibudi Makgato, seeking Cape Town stockists for their yummy YaMama Gemmer ginger beer made to their mother's own recipes in Jozi.

Available in Durban, JHB and well-known surfing centres such as Jeffreys Bay and Cape St Francis, Graham Bird's brewing enterprise, Poison City has been going for about two years. According to their flyer the packaging of the flagship

The Bird Lager, shows “a finger in the face of conformity”, and hopefully in the face of bureaucrats, naysayers, uninspiring brands, international competitors, resource plunderers and assorted hindrances to entrepreneurial activity in our region too.

Thanks to the Good Food and Wine Show!

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