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Audacia releases revolutionary ‘Indigenous Wooded’ low-kilojoules wine with landmark nutritional labeling

“We’ve seen the ‘lite!’” quips Trevor Strydom, the man behind South African viticulture innovation: Rooibos and Honeybush Wooded Wines. The Managing Director and partner in Audacia, a Stellenbosch-based boutique winery, first made international headlines in 2013 with the release of the world’s first “No Sulphites or Preservatives Added” wine made using indigenous Rooibos and Honeybush toasted wood chips. Now Strydom and his winemaking team – headed up by award-winning cellarmaster Michael van Niekerk – are making waves once again with their latest innovation: a low-kilojoule, low alcohol wine produced according to the same technology which contains extremely low residual sugars. **As well as potentially being the lowest- kilojoule wine in the world, it will also be the first ever to bear detailed nutritional labeling.**

“For consumers, the guessing game is finally over when it comes to low kilojoule wines,” enthuses Strydom. “Wine drinkers and consumers the world over have become far more health conscious in the past decade. With the global increase in lifestyle-related illnesses, there’s a higher demand for more specific information about what you’re putting into your body, especially if one claims “lower kilojoules.”

“The nutritional label of our new low-kilojoule/low alcohol wine, Audacia Natural Red, is the first in the world to provide a complete breakdown of total energy (kilojoules), sugar content, carbohydrates, fats, dietary fibre and sodium per 100 ml. It’s *the* answer to a global demand!” He adds: “And having been made with our own indigenous Honeybush wood chips (which have been lightly toasted to enhance the wine’s flavour), it’s also a uniquely South African product with a unique value proposition. **There is no denying this wine is a healthier option for kilojoule conscious wine drinkers.** For all these reasons, we believe it’s going to perform exceptionally well on the global wine stage.”

Indigenous Wooded Wine

“Usually, when winemakers produce low alcohol wines, the wines tend to lose structure as alcohol makes up the backbone of the wine and wine makers end up adding grape concentrate to improve flavour,” explains Strydom. “This results in wines that while they may be lower in alcohol, might still contain a lot of residual sugar. In contrast, our indigenous Honeybush wood contains a natural compound called Hesperetin, which enhances the sweetness and flavor of wine without adding to its kilojoule content – Hence the low residual sugars in Audacia Natural Red,” he clarifies.

The result is an easy drinking and accessible red wine containing only 200 kilojoules per 100 ml and only 7.5% alcohol.

‘Healthier Lifestyle’ Wines

Audacia Natural Red is the first low-kilojoule option in a range of exciting ‘healthier lifestyle’ wines released by the Audacia Boutique Winery, joining a portfolio that already boasts with both red and white “No Added Sulphites” wines made with toasted Rooibos and Honeybush wood chips (most of which are available at Pick n Pay stores nationwide), as well as a premium white wine currently available at cellar door and at the Root44 Market on weekends. Additional new products are also in the pipeline.

Global Game Changer

Strydom points to the message from this year’s annual Nedbank VinPro Information Day. According to national statistics on average only 15% of wine grape producers are currently profitable, while 55% break-even, or make a low net income via farming enterprises, while 30% of wine producers are farming at a loss. Producer cellars are also struggling to obtain wine sales prices above those needed to break even. “Input costs are rising sharply, with income simply not keeping up,” explained Christo Conradie, manager of VinPro’s wine cellar division at this year’s event.

Dr Johan van Zyl, former CEO of Sanlam observes: “Change is universal, and the wine industry is not unique in the challenges it faces. Wine businesses need to proactively identify opportunities to turn change into profit, then sharpen their business plans – or develop new plans – and take calculated risks.”

The industry can also only grow its market share and value if all role-players work together.

“There are still too many wineries that fight for the same shelf space on their own, not realising the power that collective efforts can have on building Brand SA,” said Rico Basson, VinPro’s managing director.

Taking the above facts into account Strydom qualifies the decision behind Audacia’s new release and innovation, noting: “If ‘healthier lifestyle’ wines like this – made using our indigenous Rooibos and Honeybush wood chips – are exported and sold across the world, the entire local South African wine industry benefits.”

All-round ‘win’ for Brand SA

Strydom argues: “It’s an absolute win for brand South Africa and the local economy. We are in the process of sharing our breakthrough technology with all other South African wine producers, through a licensing process managed by Red Dawn IP Holdings. All South African producers can now also gain full access to produce similar indigenous wooded wine ranges. “Our end goal is to

have fellow South Africans share and benefit from the technology, in order to uplift and improve the lives of all South Africans. **We believe this is a global scale game changer for the South African wine industry as a whole.**”

RSA Indigenous Wooded Wine Class

Strydom goes on to say, “From a local wine industry perspective the biggest and most important single factor is the vital and urgent need for government to create a new class of wine to differentiate this unique product range in the global marketplace. We are currently working with government and various regulatory bodies to determine the most appropriate term for the wines. **The term, ‘RSA Indigenous Wooded Wine’ has been brought to the table, but we are still in discussion around final official terminology.** It is imperative that the new class be created as soon as possible so as to separate and differentiate South African indigenously ‘wooded’ wines from other wines produced globally using imported oak wood derivatives (oak staves, chips, powders and extracts). The creation of our own indigenous wooded wine class is also critical to establish a distinctive category of South Africa’s own “Healthier Option” wines. This will help avoid confusion in the minds of both wine producers and the global wine drinking public,” he emphasizes.

“We are currently engaged in a consultative process with government and industry stake holders in a process of determining how best to create and position the new wine class. The process will still take a few months to complete. The new wine class also needs to be strictly controlled by government (The Wine and Spirit Board/SAWIS) to ensure that only quality, certified indigenous wooded wines get packaged in South Africa and exported from South Africa, thereby ensuring we do what is in the best interest of the South African wine industry, create jobs locally and grow our economy.” says Strydom.

- **Audacia Natural Red (low kilojoule) wine is available for sale at Audacia cellar door and Audacia’s Root44 weekend market from 1st March 2016.**
- **South African wine producers seeking access and support in producing the range of ‘healthier lifestyle’ RSA indigenous wooded wines such as the Audacia “No Sulphites or Preservatives Added” Rooibos wooded wines or low alcohol/low kilojoules Honeybush wooded wines can contact Red Dawn IP Holdings (www.reddawnip.co.za) for further information.**

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