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## The Healthier Lifestyle Rooibos Wine Taking The World By Storm



By Khyerne Danu.

[Audacia Boutique Winery](#) is taking the world by storm with the first-ever Rooibos Wooded Healthier Lifestyle Wines. They're not just a new flavour; they're an innovation. Thanks to founder Trevor Strydom, we can now drink indigenous, sustainable wine that is free of added sulphur and preservatives, as well as being low-alcohol and low carb.

The secret lies in its simplicity. One spring Sunday, I found myself among the hustle and bustle of Stellenbosch's Root44 Audacia market. Standing across from Clayton, the gracious wine presenter, excitement was building: I was about to have my first taste of Audacia Rooibos Wooded Wine.

Normally I am not one to drink alcohol, but after hearing Trevor Strydom’s story, I was genuinely intrigued to experience this “pure” wine.

Firstly, Audacia wines do not taste like rooibos tea – quite the contrary. I found the deep aromatic flavours rolled smoothly over my tongue. It lacked the rough edge that I find with most other wines. Even my partner agreed there was something surprisingly clear and easy about this wine.

## **Wine Makers Heaven**



Nineteen years ago, Trevor Strydom had a vision of an idyllic life ambling among the picturesque fields of a wine farm. He surrendered his high-flying Johannesburg lifestyle, packed up his family and moved to a rundown wine farm in Stellenbosch. There was one small problem: he knew nothing about wine-farming.

After much trial and error, Strydom began making good wine – very good wine. But he couldn’t sell it. In the world of winemaking, he felt that only the “big guys” get the labels.

“It’s a controlled environment,” explains Strydom. “The well-known brands come with great history and tradition; they have been around for years. You can’t compete. It’s impossible.”

He was at a loss. He didn’t put blood sweat and tears into the farm just to have his beautiful product dumped in a “papsack”.

So Strydom looked outside the box. He decided to find an ingredient to patent. Winemakers the world over have a choice of 85 natural and chemical winemaking ingredients, none of which are patented. Strydom realised that this could be the game-changer. He decided to try to replace oak with another wood. After six months of failed attempts, his daughter placed a box of rooibos tea on the table, saying: “Daddy, you need to have faith.”

The one wood he hadn't tried was rooibos. It worked.

## **Rooibos Antioxidants**



Strydom's patenting attorney, a former microbiologist, pointed out that rooibos didn't just replace the oak, it could also replace the sulphur, the normal preservative used in wine. Sulphur dioxide, a common preservative in foods and drinks, is known to cause allergic reactions. Rooibos is one of the most potent antioxidants known, as is honeybush.

Stellenbosch University conducted the research and verified rooibos and honeybush woods to be effective natural preservatives for wines. Armed with this knowledge, Strydom connected with Cape Natural Tea Products, a certified organic rooibos and honeybush farm in Stellenbosch. He was motivated to strip his ingredients down to the bare minimum: rooibos and honeybush wood chips, fermented grapes, yeast and a few enzymes. The result was a delicious and unique wine. And so the patenting process began.

## Low Alcohol & Low Carb



The big cherry on top is Audacia’s new category of “healthier lifestyle” wines. The honeybush-wooded wine is low in alcohol and sugar-free. Normally when making low-alcohol wines, the sweetness is lost. “If you take wine and put it in a spinning tone, you can take the alcohol from 15% down to 7,5%,” explains Strydom. “The moment you take the alcohol out of wine, it tastes vile.

The alcohol holds everything together.” Normally the flavour is balanced by adding sugar from grape concentrate, up to 16g per bottle. However, Strydom has stumbled across a natural ingredient in honeybush that sweetens with no glycaemic content. Hesperetin enhances the sweet taste of reduced-sugar foods and drinks without unfavourably affecting their flavour profile. This enabled Audacia to produce the first-ever 7,5% alcohol, artificial preservative and sugarfree wine. With half the kilojoules of traditional vino, the honeybush-wooded beverage is in a league of its own.

Available in three cultivars – Merlot, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon – you can sit back and relax while drinking the healthiest wine in the world, guilt-free.

## The Wine Evolution



Together with Strydom’s patent partner, KWV, the international rooibos and honeybush patent for wine, craft beer and cider was created. Understanding the struggle of local small-scale winemakers,

Strydom and his partners knew he had stumbled onto something that could benefit everyone; therefore, the patent was opened to all South African producers.

Strydom envisages the values of the Rooibos brand are integrity, authenticity, responsibility, innovation and above all else respect for self, others and the environment. Rooibos and Honeybush have recently been recognised by The European Union as geographical indicators. In

February, the DTI declared unauthorised use of Rooibos a criminal offence. “All of these facts have certainly aided our South African wine-making cause,” shares Strydom.

The ‘Ubuntu’ patent is registered under Red Dawn IP Holdings, a company that invites South African wine makers to compete in the international market under a new unique category of “healthier lifestyle” alcoholic beverages, viewable at [www.reddawnip.co.za](http://www.reddawnip.co.za). The integrity of the patent is clear; Rooibos wooded wines have with ‘no sulphites added’ and Honeybush wooded wines are also ‘low sugar/low alcohol’ wine. Plus they offer a shelflife comparative alternative to artificial preservative-laden products. France has Champagne and we now have Rooibos and Honeybush Wooded Wine.

This internationally recognised trademark status allows the South African wine industry to have a handle on the international market. They are able to operate in 83 international jurisdictions cleared of competition for the next 18 years. Strydom explains: “We are going to ensure that South African wine can be made this way, using our own indigenous products. It’s going to be bottled in this country and exported. And that’s going to create a massive amount of jobs and employment.” Not only does this create a sustainable future for the producers, but also the farmers of organic indigenous plants.

At this time it is not mandatory to disclose the use of GM livestock feed, or GM growth hormones such as rBST (recombinant bovine somatotropin) used in livestock. The conference concluded that, without adequate traceability, GM labelling might be misleading.

Woolworths has chosen to remove GMO from its food and label the products that do contain GMO. But according to Robyn Smith, owner of Faithful to Nature, one of South Africa’s biggest online health stores, “The GMO issue is like a tangled ball of fish hooks. There isn’t actually a global certifying body for GMO at the moment. If the product is certified organic, only then can you be sure the GMO content is less than 0,9%.” Smith feels contamination is so rife that it’s better to avoid even the organic version of the big contenders such as corn (maize), soy, canola and sugar beets.”

Cohen points out that, on top of it all, South Africa is the only country that permits its staple food (maize) to be genetically modified.

## Intercropping



“Imagine if you could plant the rooibos in the vines?” says Strydom. “We are currently working with Stellenbosch University on an intercropping project.” After checking the soil, Stellenbosch began

cultivating rooibos and honeybush plants to begin the pilot study of intercropping in the Audacia vines. “Now we need to study the root system to see how close to grow them.” So far there are two clear advantages. “Snails hate rooibos and our biggest problem with the vines is snails. Plus rooibos and honeybush are the best plants in South Africa for taking carbon dioxide out of the air and fixing nitrogen in the soil.” Strydom feels intercropping makes sense on so many levels that he is confident the project is going to work.

There is no doubt that Audacia wines have discovered a bright, shining red gem. The powerful healing effect of the resveratrol in wine is well known. But when combined with indigenous wood, and free of chemicals or sugar, you can really call it healthy wine. To enjoy the gifts of this “red revolution”, pop along to Pick n Pay and look for the Audacia Rooibos and Honeybush Wooded labels. You will be in for a treat.

## Rooibos Health Benefits



Rooibos is the only known source of aspalathin, a dihydrochalcone C-glucoside, one of its major flavonoids and antioxidants. Rooibos has been found effective in preventing chemically induced liver damage, inflammation, lipid oxidation, hyperglycaemia and oxidative stress, according to the *Journal of Meat Science* study from Stellenbosch University in 2013. This constituent has also gained prominence for its antidiabetic properties.

To put this into perspective, we can look at the antioxidant measurement known as the Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity, or ORAC, scale. Rooibos tea extract is calculated at 375 000, while origanum oil is only 152 007, vitamin C 189 000 and blueberries 4 669.

Lead researcher of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Prof Jeanine Marnewick, and her team studied the effect of extracts of the herbal tea on UV-induced skin tumours in mice.

The conclusions of the study were that polyphenol-rich extracts from rooibos and honeybush had antitumour and photoprotective properties.

Researchers revealed that the plant's polyphenols, which are known to be anti-inflammatory, also moderate the immune system. It seems clear that our innocent red bush tea is, in fact, a powerful medicine.

## **THE AUTHOR**



### **Kheyne Danu**

*About the author: Kheyne Danu has spent the last seven years working with women through personal coaching and workshops on natural wellness; she is also the brainchild of the Super Thrive brand, a natural product for stress support. Kheyne first studied interior design, but soon switched to natural wellness, a subject that has fascinated her for over 16 years. She also trained as a kinesiologist, a doula and yoga instructor, as well as being a professional dance teacher and bodywork practitioner. Kheyne feels that life really shines through when one has a great understanding of and relationship with one's own body. She is a writer for Longevity magazine.*