

Furnishing the future - Pernod Ricard invests R29m in SA artisans

As part of its Phakamisa iSpirit campaign, global wine and spirits producer Pernod Ricard is throwing its weight behind job creation and small business growth by investing R29.7m this year into the development of local artisans.



Image: supplied

Run in collaboration with the Gauteng Department of Economic Development (GDED) and Furntech, the campaign is now capacitating its second cohort of makers. Last year, with the help of Furntech, Phakamisa iSpirit helped train two artisans - Hosea Matlou and Sandile Tsulo - who have since gone on to start their own sustainable businesses that positively contribute to the communities around them. That number will now grow to eight, with three of the makers being women.

As South Africa's only Centre of Excellence for the furniture industry, this year's intake of makers will also have access to Furntech's repository of resources and practitioners. Over the coming years, Phakamisa iSpirit will look to create several sustainable environments for these artisans to run their future businesses by assisting in the expansion of the makers incubation programmes across Gauteng.

Gregory Leymarie, CEO, Pernod Ricard South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa says, "We believe that as a multi-national, it is our responsibility to support the markets where we operate and to invest in the local economy. Within this context Pernod Ricard took a bold decision a few years ago to re-route festive season investment traditionally spent on imports, into the local SA economy instead, and we will continue to do so through our Phakamisa iSpirit campaign."



Phakamisa iSpirit campaign wins at New Generation 2022

So Interactive 14 Oct 2022



This year the number of makers participating in the programme will quadruple, including craftswomen who will be joining the programme for the first time, as women play a crucial part in the revitalisation of South Africa's economy. "These exceptionally talented women have managed to shine in a very male-dominated space," says Leymarie. "As such, we felt it was our duty to give them a platform where they could develop their skills and eventually show the world what we see in them."

Consumers chip in

Over the past two years, over R60m has been invested locally through this campaign. Part of this investment went directly into improving the lives of local makers in the form of training and financial assistance for their businesses, as well as providing them with access to market opportunities. This year, South Africans can help by purchasing a bottle from one of the participating brands – Ballantine's Finest, Absolut Vodka Original, Beefeater London Dry gin, and Chivas Regal 12 yr old – each presented in its own unique packaging - of which R5 from every bottle sold will go towards providing local artisans with SETA-accredited courses covering business management, manufacturing, technology, and accounting, as most artisans do not have formal training.

Revitalising SA's furniture industry

In recent years, the declining investment in skills development and technological innovation has had a marked impact on competitiveness in the local furniture industry. The result is that while the top producing countries make 74% of the world's furniture, South Africa only makes 0.4%. Speaking at the Buy Local Summit and Exhibition earlier this year, Trade, Industry and Competition Deputy Minister, Nomalungelo Gina, explained how the furniture industry had the power to make a meaningful contribution to the country's employment levels.



Pernod Ricard invests R38m into combating unemployment

Emily Stander 24 Nov 2021



"It [the furniture industry] is a labour-intensive industry, with the potential to contribute to the reduction of unemployment and increase the export and development of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs). It also contributes to the geographical spread of economic activity, since the products can be developed in rural areas with minimal investment."

Leymarie concludes, "While it has occasionally been an uphill battle, we recognise that changing people's lives is something that takes patience. You can see how that patience has paid off through the accolades Hosea and Sandile have been able to achieve thus far. By continuing to invest in local artisans, we can build a nation of Hosea's and in the process create thriving local economies that rival any in the world."

Phakamisa iSpirit Millionaire Gameshow

As part of this year's campaign, Pernod Ricard has also introduced a Game Show called Phakamisa iSpirit Millionaire Gameshow where contestants will get a chance to win big. Hosted by Mpho Popps, the game show will run weekly on eTV from 26 November – 31 December 2022 and see participants compete for R4m in cash and prizes which include prizes from the local makers and the R1m grand prize.