

SA's alcohol brand consumption changes dramatically

The top alcohol brand consumed in South Africa is 4th Street Wine, followed by Savanna Dry, Carling Black Label, Brutal Fruit and then Gordons Gin at number five.



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) The past decade has seen the consumption of alcohol by category change significantly in South Africa

A variety of sweet wines from Distell, 4th Street Wine sells well to lower-income consumers and in tough times, with five-litre boxes available for R140 from Pick n Pay (equivalent to R21 for a bottle).

Gordon's dominates the Gin category attracting 41% of all gin consumers, while Brutal Fruit also dominates its category at 61% of all drinkers in that category.

The past decade has seen the consumption of alcohol by category change significantly in South Africa says research by Eighty20*, a consumer strategy, research and analytics business, that specialises in helping brands better understand customers, that unpacked the number of people who drink (but not the volume), and the brands they consume.



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13 Jul 2023



Top 5 alcohol categories

The top five alcohol categories for men in 2023 are beer, gin, cider, liqueur (nearly half of which is Jägermeister) and boxed wine.

The top five a decade ago included whisky and brandy.

For women in 2023 it is the same grouping as men, only gin has been replaced with flavoured alcoholic beverages.

Perhaps also reflecting the current economic climate, 10 years ago, women's top five included champagne and wine in a bottle.

The flavoured alcohol category has grown significantly, as shown by the massive growth in brands like Flying Fish and Brutal Fruit, particularly amongst women



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Beer category

While South African's ubiquitous love for beer is still evident, consumption over the past 10 years has changed in terms of key brands consumed.

In 2013, the top beer was Castle Lager, followed by Castle Light, Carling Black Label, Heineken and Hansa Pilsener.

A decade later, 2023 sees Carling at number one, other brands (which includes a massive influx of small independent brands and craft beers) at second, Castle Light, then Flying Fish and Heineken – bumping Castle Lager from the top five in its entirety.

“Flying Fish, which launched a decade ago is now the third most popular beer brand, ahead of Amstel, Castle Lager and Budweiser - brands that hit significantly harder in terms of ad spend (according to Ornico's *2023 Liquor Industry Report*).

“It is also the most over-indexed beer for women, second only to Black Label which enjoys a whopping 60% more consumption,” says Andrew Fulton, director at Eighty20.

Category loyalty

Category loyalty is another interesting lens through which to view consumption.

Two thirds of craft beer drinkers consume traditional beer (with Flying Fish and Amstel Radler in their top five choices), while only two per cent of traditional beer drinkers consume craft beers.

While beer is the second choice of most hard-tack drinkers, for wine drinkers, and particularly champagne drinkers, beer is much further down the list of their choice of alternatives.

Flavoured alcoholic beverage drinkers also prefer cider to beer, but if they drink beer, it is likely to be one of the 'lite' brands. Interestingly, while only 13% of South Africans who consume beer live in the Western Cape, for craft beer the figure is 37%!

* Eighty20 uses MAPS data, a nationally representative survey of 20 000+ South Africans. Available on Eighty20's Data Portal unpacks the number of people who drink (but not the volume), and the brands they consume.

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