

Heineken SA entrepreneur profiles for Women's Month: Apiwe Nxusani-Mawela, CEO of Brewsters Craft

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Apiwe Nxusani-Mawela has more than 12 years practical brewing experience within both macro and micro brewing industries. She holds a BSc Honours in microbiology from University of Pretoria, a master brewer qualification from the Institute of Brewing and Distilling and was the first person in South Africa to complete the NQF6 National Diploma in clear fermented beverages.



This #WomensMonth, Heineken South Africa has partnered with Bizcommunity to showcase the phenomenal work and impact of women entrepreneurs such as Nxusani-Mawela.

1. Can you please tell us a bit about yourself?

I am originally from Butterworth, Eastern Cape and studied microbiology through the University of Pretoria. I was trained as a brewer and I started out working at a beer company, before starting my own business, [Brewsters Craft](#), back in 2015. We initially focused on training and consulting services in the brewing industry, adding a brewery in 2017, creating beer for 10 different brands. We also have our own in-house brand, [Tolokazibeer](#) taken from my clan name. Through this brand I get to celebrate women from my clan, but also women in brewing around the continent and showcase to the world what African beer can offer. I use local, regional ingredients including a rooibos cider and hibiscus hop brew.

2. How did you get into brewing?

I got into brewing through my passion and love for sciences. I originally wanted to become a doctor, but after attending an open day at RAU (now the University of Johannesburg), I was introduced to the study of microbiology and biotechnology. I researched this field further and realised it can enable one to become a brewer and that led me on the path I am on 'til today.

3. You're the founder of Brewsters Craft. Tell us more about the company and your role here?

The company is called [Brewsters Craft](#), because Brewster is a term used for a woman brewer. Through the company I get to celebrate women in brewing as most of the employees and brewers are women. As the founder I handle everything from admin through to top-level sales and marketing strategy for the business.

4. You've been very vocal during the lockdown expressing how the alcohol restriction has impacted on your business, can you tell us more about this?

The lockdown has negatively affected every business in the alcohol industry. Not being able to do any trade has hit us hard. In the beginning, some of my employees were even asking whether they will continue to be paid. I tried a few ways to get by during the first stint of alcohol trade restrictions including trying to make hand sanitiser in-house. However, I was unsuccessful as it was a lengthy process with red tape to get the sanitiser certified. Luckily, during the first round of the restrictions I started working on a recipe for a non-alcoholic beer called Tolokazi Hibiscus Hop, which we were able to launch during the lockdown.

“ Nowthat the ban is lifted, help us protect our livelihood

[#LockdownLevel2](#) [#savemylivelihood](#) [@BeerSA_org](#)

[@CraftBrew_SA](#) [@SABreweries](#) pic.twitter.com/83hgYA6XoU—

Brewsters Craft ([@thebrewsterZA](#)) [August 18, 2020](#) ”

5. How can other people support your craft brewery?

Many craft brewers around South Africa have been going through difficult times due to the alcohol trade restrictions. I know of one operating as a soup kitchen for the needy while others have reconfigured to offer juice or non-alcoholic beverages. Please do pre-order drinks to help out those businesses, for example people can purchase our products online: <https://www.bestcraftbeer.co.za>. We are working towards listing on Takealot so watch that space!

Nxusani-Mawela serves on various industry bodies including as chairperson of the Africa section of the Institute of Brewing and Distilling, as well as the Beer Association of South Africa. In addition, she is on the board of directors of both the Craft Brewers Association of South Africa, and African Manufacturers Association.

Facebook - [@thebrewsterza](#)

Website - <https://brewsterscraft.co.za/>

Twitter - [@thebrewsterZA](#)

About Heineken South Africa:

Heineken South Africa is a key player in the beer and cider industry in the country, with an impressive portfolio of brands, including Heineken®, Sol, Desperados, Windhoek, Miller Genuine Draft, Amstel, Strongbow, Fox, Soweto Gold, and Tafel. Heineken South Africa is a joint venture between Heineken NV and Namibia Breweries. Visit www.heinekensouthafrica.co.za

About Brewsters Craft

Brewsters Craft is the first Black women majority-owned brewing company in South Africa. The company was founded by Apiwe Nxusani-Mawela in 2015 and is currently the leading provider of training, quality analysis and consultant services within the South Africa brewing industry.



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