

# RECORD NUMBERS AT 2010 SOWETO WINE FESTIVAL



**SOUTH AFRICA, GAUTENG, 6 SEPTEMBER 2010** - What a fantastic weekend for wine lovers at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Soweto Wine Festival held from the 2-4 September at the University of Johannesburg, Soweto Campus. Over the 3-night event, a record number 7 548 mostly-black middle class South Africans tasted their way through 800 wines and enjoyed live music by township Jazz band, Safika, food and wine pairing courses in the Pick n Pay Taste Theatre and local menus from a range of home-grown Soweto restaurants.

**Says Marilyn Cooper, Cape Wine Master; joint founding member of the Soweto Wine Festival and Managing Director of the Cape Wine Academy, who are the organisers of the festival:** *“It was a magnificent sight that makes the heart beat with pride. What a crowd of beautiful people. We are extraordinarily proud of this event and how the trendsetters of Soweto and Gauteng have made the Soweto Wine Festival theirs in every way. We attribute this record number of visitors to the fact that wine is for every South African and that this market is on its way to becoming the primary wine market in South Africa. We suggest wine marketers take note to include this market in their marketing plans from here on in.”*

This year was the first time that the festival had a wine shop hosted by Norman Goodfellows for festival visitors to purchase their favourite wines. Wines sold spanned the spectrum of exhibitors, from sparkling to port to the dry table wines for the more developed palates. Reflecting the diverse audience, the wines sold included the sweeter Pearly Bay Wines and J.C. Le Roux sparkling to the more expensive Chocolate Box and Meerlust.

Foot traffic was incredibly high, with an average sale of R100 for single bottles and bulk sales of up to three cases sold to the more avid wine fans.

**Says Charles Kramer, director at Norman Goodfellows,** *“This is an incredibly exciting and innovative event and the exhibitors were pleased with the service of sales directly to the consumers. Many consumers were particularly interested in taking home their favourite wine for the night. We had a lot of requests for suggestions from consumers and found the engaging enthusiasm from consumers incredibly exciting. Footfall was huge, which means that most consumers purchased at least one bottle to take home. It was a really exciting innovation to be a part of and the feeling I’m left with is a really good one”.*

**Concludes Mnikelo Mangciphu, co-founder and active member of the Soweto Wine Festival and owner of Morara Wine Emporium, which is based in the heart of Soweto,** *“Once again we*

*sold out of tickets on Friday and Saturday evening and were forced to close the gates early, which means the record number of 7548 people would have been higher had we had the space to accommodate them. We were only expecting 6500 but surpassed this figure very early on Saturday evening. The introduction of a 3<sup>rd</sup> evening, Thursday, did not reduce the amount of people on Friday or Saturday either. We just had more people attend on the Thursday. Next year we will have to find a bigger venue in Soweto that can also cope with the parking and the security that is needed for an event of this size.*



Growth in visitors to the festival has steadily grown since its inception in 2005 where the first festival was held over three days at Ubuntu Kraal in Orlando West and was attended by 1500 visitors with 82 wineries exhibiting.

### **Historical Growth**

In 2006, the festival moved to its present premises, University of Johannesburg, Soweto Campus, and had 3000 visitors attending with 88 wineries exhibiting.

In 2007, 4225 visitors came to the festival with 94 wineries exhibiting, and in 2008, 4635 wine enthusiasts and 103 wineries packed the hall to capacity.

In 2009, we had 5525 visitors and 100 wineries, and finally in 2010 there were 7548 visitors and 99 exhibitors.

Another growth area has been in sponsorship support. In 2008, the festival was supported by 7 sponsors, whereas in 2010, there was an outstanding array of 15 big brands supporting the festival such as City Press, DStv, Kaya FM, SAN Parks, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, Pick n Pay, Samsung, Vodacom and Mango Airlines. There were also 5 wineries that upgraded from exhibitors tables to wine lounge sponsorship in order to differentiate themselves and add a touch of lifestyle to their already prominent brands.

Progress can be judged in many different ways, such as growth in visitor numbers, exhibitor numbers, sponsor and media interest, but for the festival founders, it is the enjoyment of seeing this market embracing wine, a lifestyle product, which previously held very little appeal, and flying with it in true Soweto-Style.

More info and images: [www.sowetowinefestival.co.za](http://www.sowetowinefestival.co.za)

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