

Agbiz and South Africa Wine Host Successful Media Day at Picardi Farm

Paarl, South Africa — On 1 November 2024, Agbiz, in collaboration with South Africa Wine, hosted a successful Media Day at the picturesque Picardi Farm in Paarl. This event brought together industry leaders, stakeholders, and media representatives to discuss pressing issues, explore innovative solutions, and strengthen partnerships between the agricultural and wine sectors in South Africa. With a lineup of insightful presentations, an engaging panel discussion, and a unique wine-tasting experience, the event provided a valuable platform for collaboration and knowledge-sharing in the wine industry.

Opening Remarks and Keynote Address

The day began with a warm welcome and introduction by Temba Msiza, Digital Communications Manager at Agbiz, who outlined the event's objectives. Msiza emphasised the importance of industry collaboration and knowledge-sharing to address shared challenges and drive progress in the agricultural and wine sectors.

Kachné Ross, People Development Manager at South Africa Wine, delivered a keynote on the significance of talent development within the wine industry. Ross highlighted a structured approach to skills development, including creating sustainable career pathways and supporting young talent as essential components of industry growth. She introduced the [South Africa Wine Learner Management System](#) (SA Wine LMS), a cloud-based platform addressing skills gaps and supporting structured training and continuous professional development. Additionally, she outlined the Graduate Placement Program, which connects young professionals with meaningful opportunities in the industry.

Industry Insights on Research, Development, and Sustainability

Gerard Martin, Research Development and Innovation Executive at South Africa Wine, presented key insights into the industry's research, development, and innovation strategies with a focus on sustainability. His presentation covered areas such as climate resilience, water efficiency, and plant breeding, emphasising the importance of partnerships and data-driven research to drive sustainable practices across the wine value chain. Martin highlighted flagship RDI programs targeting climate change adaptation and disease tolerance, both critical to strengthening South Africa's competitive edge in the global market.

Panel Discussion: ESG in the Wine Industry

A central feature of the day was a panel discussion on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices within the wine industry. Facilitated by Ivor Price, Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Food For Mzansi*, the panel included Frans van Wyk (Agrifusion), Gerard Martin (South Africa Wine), Dr. Etienne Terblanche (Vinpro), Elriza Theron (Crop Life), and Annelize Crosby (Head of Legal Intelligence, Agbiz).

Van Wyk introduced the topic, underscoring that sustainability requires consistent, long-term commitment from all stakeholders. Panellists discussed a range of pressing ESG issues, including responsible pesticide use, carbon management, and social governance. They also explored how industry-wide collaboration and individual accountability can drive impactful, sustainable changes.

Tourism and Wine Production Insights

Maryna Calow, Communications Manager at Wines of South Africa (WoSA), highlighted the growing role of tourism in the wine industry's development. She discussed recent achievements in wine tourism and the significant impact international interest has had on South Africa's wine exports. Calow emphasised that wine tourism not only supports economic growth but also showcases South African wines to a global audience, helping elevate the country's profile on the world stage.

The event concluded with a live wine tasting and production demonstration led by Francois Viljoen, viticulturist at Vinpro. This interactive session gave attendees a firsthand look at the wine-making process, from vine to glass, providing a fitting end to a day of informative presentations and discussions.

Agbiz Media Day 2024 succeeded in fostering a spirit of collaboration and innovation among participants. Through engaging presentations, in-depth discussions, and experiential learning, the event underscored Agbiz and South Africa Wine's shared commitment to a sustainable and resilient wine sector. With valuable insights into talent development, RDI strategies, and ESG practices, attendees left with a renewed sense of purpose and direction for the future of South African wine.

By Temba Msiza