

Rooibos Earth's Essence: South Africa's world-first twist on wine, beer, and cider

Rooibos Earth's Essence is shaking up the liquor market in South Africa by creating the world's first naturally preserved range of wine, beer, and cider – crafted with rooibos and honeybush extracts and now available exclusively at 25 Checkers LiquorShop stores across the Western Cape.

In 2010, after a long day in a Stellenbosch wine cellar, a simple cup of rooibos tea sparked a bold idea - to use antioxidants from indigenous fynbos plants to replace sulphur as a synthetic preservative in wine.

The breakthrough changed everything for founder and winemaker Trevor Strydom, owner of Audacia Wines in Stellenbosch. The real work, he says, began in 2011 when he patented his innovation to safeguard its unique process.

Over the past fourteen years, close collaboration with local industries, universities, and brewers has refined the science, ensuring every product meets the highest standards of quality and consistency.

"From day one, the mission has been clear — to create a more natural way to preserve and enjoy [wine](#), [beer](#) and [cider](#) while celebrating South Africa's indigenous plants," says Trevor Strydom, Founder of Earth's Essence.

In 2022, Trevor met with a team from the Shoprite Group to explore ways to bring his range to a wider audience. Recognising its potential, the retailer invited the brand to join its [SMME supplier network](#), providing mentorship, technical support, and valuable shelf space in one of South Africa's most competitive retail categories.

"We received crucial guidance on product listings, from brand packaging to consumer testing and pricing, from the Checkers team. With their assistance, everything suddenly became possible." - Trevor Strydom, Founder of Earth's Essence.

By mid-2024, the Rooibos Earth's Essence range - including a naturally preserved [wine](#), a 3.8% ABV [apple cider](#), and a 3.8% ABV [beer](#) - was ready for the shelves, marking the brand's first significant step into national retail.

"For a small start-up, finding a reliable route to market, gaining shelf space and visibility is without a doubt the hardest step — and this partnership with Checkers has been a game changer," says Trevor.

"It's given us the credibility, visibility, and reach that a small brand could never achieve alone — and it's clear Checkers genuinely cares about our success," he adds.

The next step, he says, is to grow awareness through tastings, social media, and collaborations — helping health- and sustainability-minded consumers connect with the brand's story and discover something local, innovative, and better for them.

Rooibos Earth's Essence wines are produced at Trevor's 23-hectare wine farm in Stellenbosch which produces in the region of 135 tons of grapes annually, and its 3.8% ABV beer and cider are brewed at [Darling Brewery](#).

“Sustainability is the very foundation of everything we stand for,” enthuses Trevor. “By using fynbos antioxidants, both naturally abundant and indigenous to South Africa, we support local farmers and avoid synthetic additives or chemical preservatives.

Even the winemaking, cider fermenting, and brewing processes follow a minimal-intervention approach, he adds. The goal is simple: to create products that are better for people, gentler on the planet, and celebrate the incredible natural resources of the Cape.

"We believe what you drink should taste exceptional and make you feel good – naturally. No nasties. No preservatives. Just bold flavour naturally preserved. Our dream is to see Earth's Essence become a globally recognised South African success story," says Trevor.

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