

Meet the Maker: Sugarbird Cape Fynbos Gin



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BY: SAMANTHA SNEDORF

I've had my eye on Sugarbird Cape Fynbos gin for some months now, biding my time for the perfect opportunity to sample it.



The delicate 500ml bottle decorated with a beautiful copper toned Sugarbird somehow makes it both unassuming and stand out at the same time. As an entrepreneurial female in my 30's, it turns out that I am 100% their target market which stands tribute to their expert marketing skills. That being said; after chatting to Brendan Witherspoon, Sugarbird's brand ambassador and trade marketing manager, I discovered that their consumer base extends quite beyond Sugarbird gin's expectations which no one is complaining about!

"We want to be a cool, approachable brand," said Witherspoon, which once again they have perfected not only in the aesthetic but also in the price point which sits at around the R279-R299 mark.

A gin that speaks for itself

With the craft gin market booming, there is a large hype around the inaccessibility of craft gin and the makers. I can certainly vouch for that even as a gin blogger, as I have encountered aloofness from the larger brands on several occasions.

Sugarbird gin stands on the polar opposite side of this scale, having stripped away the fancy bottles and all of the pretentiousness, leaving only a great gin behind.

All of the botanicals are listed on the label and it was much to my surprise that I noted rooibos, fynbos and the mention of hibiscus, not just because they are bold botanicals but also because the gin itself is clear. Usually, craft gins containing any of these botanicals will opt to add the colour (usually after distillation) to use as a selling point, but once again, remaining true to their core values of simplicity, Sugarbird has chosen to let the gin sell itself.



Brendan Witherspoon

"Just good gin is our motto," stated Witherspoon which, it is safe to say, they have accomplished. On the nose, I was met with an intricate combination of citrus and floral with some slightly spiced undertones hidden at the bottom. Sipping it neat as I always do, it is sweet with little to no alcoholic burn on your lips or tongue. The gin is as delicate as the bottle would suggest.

"We pride ourselves on the sweetness and elegance of it," claimed Witherspoon, after much of my oohing and aahing. They did not want a juniper-forward gin but rather a soft gin that would even hold its own, even on the rocks with no mixer.

Sugarbird Gin - infused with the spirit of entrepreneurship



This hip and young brand is headed by Nzeka Biyela as the managing director and Rob Heyns as the CEO. I was interested to find out that Biyela and Heyns had worked together previously during the craft beer surge. Thereafter, they separated and went their own ways, but once more joined forces to create Sugarbird. Talk about destiny.

The three of them make a killer team able to focus on keeping their gin true to its core values.

The team wanted Sugarbird to be a "conversion" product meaning that anyone who is not normally a gin drinker might become a gin believer after a few sips of Sugarbird. Brendan happens to be a convert himself and takes his neat with a cinnamon stick to fully appreciate all the flavours.



It is also to be appreciated by gin connoisseurs such as myself and it is true, it's a gin I will continue to drink.

The Sugarbird team tries to source all of its botanicals in the Cape and do also have a large social responsibility campaign which is incredibly selfless and once again a tribute to the accessibility of this business. For every bottle sold, they contribute towards various projects that are aimed at empowering South African entrepreneurs extending their reach far beyond themselves.

For more info on where to buy Sugarbird Cape Fynbos gin, check out their [website](#).

Read the [original Meet the Maker](#) on SamSamButDifferent.

ABOUT SAMANTHA SNEDORF

Snedorf is a qualified journalist and full-time blogger. She is obsessed with gin and is trying to bring light to the enormous number of gins and talented crafters that we have in South Africa. She films weekly videos where she samples different gins and focuses on their different botanicals. In the near future, she would love to host gin tastings and sell the handcrafted botanical bags she creates. She adores travel and wants to explore the world whilst drinking gin and taking beautiful photos.

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