



SOUTH AFRICAN  
WINE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

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## Kader Asmal takes wine industry hot seat

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*Fragmentation is one of the major factors preventing the South African wine industry from reaching its full potential, says Professor Kader Asmal, the new chairperson of the SA Wine Council.*



Professor Kader Asmal

"The South African Wine Industry Council will harness different bodies and energies to create a unified vehicle through which the wine industry can increase its competitiveness and grow to the economic pillar it deserves to be."

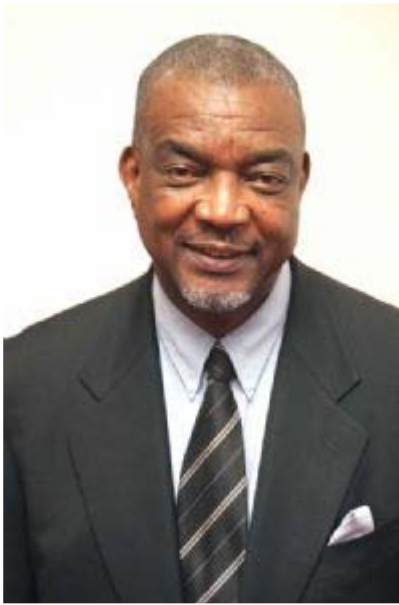
Prof Asmal, a former Minister of Education and Water Affairs, and presently a Member of Parliament, took over on 1 October 2006 as chairperson of the SA Wine Council. This body is aimed at fast-tracking major wine industry issues including transformation, addressing growth opportunities and to streamlining relations between the industry, government and all relevant stakeholders to stimulate competitiveness and development in the local and global market.

The SA Wine Council resulted from the restructuring of the South African Wine & Brandy Company and was launched at the end of June this year.

Prof Asmal, who has experience in the wine industry as trustee of the SA Wine Industry Trust and is also a guild member of the SA Brandy Foundation, says the SA Wine Council had at long last given the industry the muscle to drive two crucial initiatives, namely wine tourism and the generic marketing of wine amongst the South African population.

"With wine tourism and local marketing now forming part of the brief of the SA Wine Council, the wine industry committing itself to two new growth areas," says Prof Asmal. Wines of South Africa (WOSA) will be mandated by the SA Wine Council to implement these two functions.

"This should have happened years ago. The initial eagerness to focus almost exclusively on the export bandwagon was short-sighted. A strong presence in the international market is dependent on the health of the local market. Profits are also generally to be made overseas if your currency is weak – as Argentina and Chile is currently showing the world. But for the greater good of the whole industry – just not for selected producers at the high-end of the market - South Africa's ventures into foreign wine stores have to be complemented by energetic attempts to attract more local consumers," he says.



Maxwell Maisela

"The SA Wine Council is committed to developing local markets and generating initiatives for wine tourism, which is currently a R4bn a year industry. If we want to capitalise on the growth in the tourism market as well as the potential of the 2010 World Cup, wine tourism must receive top-priority at local and national levels. Together with my colleagues at the SA Wine Council, as well as with the SA Wine Industry Trust, I hope to use our collective influence to address the relevant authorities to ensure wine tourism gets all the support and assistance it deserves."

According to Prof Asmal, the structure of the SA Wine Council has allowed for much needed consolidation within the industry.

"The introduction of the Advisory Forum within the SA Wine Council will ensure that potential issues will be dealt with before reaching Board level, allowing the organisation to remain focused on competitiveness and markets. The SA Wine Council's Advisory Forum will consult and engage with the Board of Directors after having agreed on matters requiring Board attention. This Advisory Forum will include representatives from labour, SALBA and the wine trade, farm workers, VinPro, Wine Cellars of South Africa, the South African Wine Industry Trust (SAWIT), BAWSI, NAFU, civil society and the Rural Development Network," he says.

'This Advisory Forum will play a major role in future developments and strategic direction as they represent a diverse sector of stakeholder groups who will advise the SA Wine Council on strategic national issues and also those at grassroots level. The Forum will also assist in defusing sensitive and difficult matters by making recommendations to the Council.'



Dr Johan van Rooyen

Dr Johan van Rooyen, CEO of the SA Wine Council, says Prof Asmal will be a worthy successor to Mr Maisela. "Max played a crucial role during the restructuring of the South African wine industry, especially due to his impartiality and international influence," says Dr Van Rooyen. "Prof Asmal's passion for the wine industry, influence at local and national government level and positive, energetic approach to the task at hands is welcomed by the whole industry."

## COMMENTS ON THIS ARTICLE

[Great news indeed!](#) - Ken Forrester

Congratulations to all concerned, that all augers well for the industry and congratulations on the realisation that a "healthy industry is built in the home market."

Please, please can we start off with a generic television campaign? This could be the very best single investment ever made in the SA wine industry. We already have production companies with hours of footage, this could be a really good value exercise if you utilise the services of the various wine repute associations hwo are all ready willing and able to assist.

[A new broom](#) - Ansgar Flaatten

Congratulation Prof Asmal, you certainly have my support! Now that the political structures are in place let hope we can get on and get a long overdue job done! I would encourage you to look to new role players in this process as some of the present and past have wasted some serous time.