

Candice Baker

 By [Louise Marsland](#)

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Creating a taste for whisky and marketing the allure of Scottish whiskies to a South African public is something Candice Baker is passionate about. This includes creating a market for female whisky drinkers.

Baker is the Brand Ambassador for The Edrington Group and is responsible for brand partnerships, training, events and exclusive consumer tastings to introduce people to the whisky ranges she works across: The Macallan, Highland Park, Famous Grouse and Cutty Sark whiskies.

"This diversity of brands, flavour profiles and price ranges gives me something to talk about with most people, no matter their palates or pockets," says Baker.

"I have always been driven by doing something I am passionate about and with whisky, I have found my passion." Women already make up a significant part of the market but it is personal style that defines what whiskies people drink, she says.

"I can't speak for all women, but I think there are a number of reasons for this appeal. Whisky is generally seen as quite a refined, sophisticated drink, so I think that will naturally draw many women into the category.

"Whisky, once you learn how to appreciate it, is a truly marvellous drink, filled with phenomenal flavours and aromas. So, if women generally appreciate a fine wine, or a great cognac, whisky is a natural choice based on its abundance of flavour. Thirdly, it is also seen as a 'healthier' alternative to other alcohols, so maybe a few women focus on that element too when opting for a whisky."

Whisky as a category has shown strong growth in recent years, with a younger generation wanting a new generation of whiskies.

"There are also changes occurring in the industry that are challenging old beliefs such as 'older whisky is better'. Whisky consumers are starting to question distilleries and challenge them as to what actually makes their whisky different, better or more unique in the already busy single malt market," Baker explains.

ABOUT CANDICE BAKER

Candice Baker is Brand Ambassador for The Edrington Group and helps market The Macallan, Highland Park, Famous Grouse and Cutty Sark whiskies to consumers through bespoke events, tastings and through partnerships with other leading brands. She worked her way up through the industry by learning everything she could working with whisky, starting out as a Junior Whisky Sommelier at the Bascule Bar, Cape Grace, Cape Town. She originally studied PR and has a PR Diploma



Q: How did you develop a taste for whisky?

A: I was working at the Cape Grace hotel and the bar manager at the time asked me if I would like to come learn about whisky and manage the "whisky side of things", including the members club and the whisky collection.

Q: What is your main business challenge?

A: Getting consumers to taste whisky for flavour vs image or purely age.

Q: How has the category demographic changed?

A: It's great to see more and more women acquiring a palate for single malts - it's by no means a man's drink any more.

Q: Most important attribute needed to do your job?

A: Knowledge and passion. Especially as a woman in an industry previously dominated by men, it is vital to have a high level of knowledge, and to chat about such a beautiful world, you need passion to fuel it.

Q: What is the difference between 'whisky' and 'whiskey'?

A: Whisky in Scotland is always spelled without the 'e', in Ireland it is always with the 'e'.

Q: How will you make an impact?

A: I like to think by fuelling consumers knowledge and passion on whisky, to really get people understanding the beautiful golden spirit, and getting them to 'judge' whisky on what their palate likes, vs what they are 'told' to drink via billboards or competitions.

Q: Do you have a favourite whisky?

A: I like a peatier style single malt.

Q: What inspires you?

A: Without sounding cliché: Life! We really live in a world that can be taken away from us any moment, so I look at each moment as precious, and something to live in - now.

Q: Tell us something about yourself not generally known?

A: I prefer doing a yoga class than having a crazy night out!

Q: At the top of my 'bucket list' is...

A: More travel.

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FVCG Files newsletter. Web: www.sourceagency.co.za.

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