

## AU.RA: The Pinnacle of Luxury





The La Montagne Luxury Villa in Bishopscourt was the venue for the Cape Town launch of South Africa's longest-matured pot-still brandy, named AU.RA.

This 30-year-old collector's item has been made at the Van Ryn's Distillery near Stellenbosch from a blend of extremely rare pot-still brandies. Mostly 30 years' old, the AU.RA blend also includes components that have been aged for as long as 40 years. However, according to South African brandy legislation, the age claim on the bottle must reflect that of the youngest elements in the blend.

Delicious brandy cocktails, gourmet canapés prepared by the highly praised chef Bertus Bester, and the seductive notes of a pretty chanteuse serenading guests in the gorgeous location set the tone for the event which attracted some well-known personalities including socialite Edith Venter and actor Rapulana Seiphemo who hosted the evening.

AU.RA comes in crystal decanters blown by renowned glass artist David Reade. Their shape, which appears to be suspending the liquid gold, resembles a drop, recalling the first drop of the heart of the spirit captured in the double-distillation process. The tear silhouette is also echoed in each hand-made stopper, as well as the hand-made silver pendants that adorn each decanter. These have been made by local jewellery designer Bridget Zietkewicz.

Each crystal decanter is housed in a hand-turned solid oak case, created by architect and specialist furniture designer James Mudge and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.

The name of this unique product is derived from the chemical term (Au) for gold and the Egyptian sun god Ra. Only 107 750ml crystal decanters of the special release have been issued to mark the 107 years that brandy has been produced at the exclusive, chateau-like Van Ryn's Distillery.

According to brandy master Marlene Bester, this is a once-off edition and cannot be repeated, given the lack of sufficiently matured brandies. "The lack of availability of such venerable brandies is not confined to Van Ryn's. They just don't exist in South Africa."

AU.RA is sold exclusively from Van Ryn's where a private phone line has been installed for those interested in acquiring a bottle. Please go to [www.vanryns.co.za](http://www.vanryns.co.za) for more information.

To view a video clip of the event, please go to <http://youtu.be/vjdyanILHZk>.

Photography by Andrew Swartz.

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