Maltina raises stake as Argungu Fishing Festival beckons

In line with its new brand proposition of "sharing happiness" Maltina, leading non-alcoholic malt brand from the stable of Nigerian Breweries Plc has promised all visitors more happiness in this year's edition of the Argungu International Fishing and Cultural Festival billed to take place in Argungu, Kebbi State on 19 March 2011.

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The brand will be giving out exciting prizes to the winners of the competition this year. The overall winner of the competition will go home with N1 million and a tricycle; the first runner-up will cart away N300 000 and a motorcycle while the second runner up will get N200 000 and a generator. The brand had in the past given out a brand-new 14-seater Toyota HiAce bus and a Honda Civic car to winners; it has also assisted the organizers with cash donations.

According to Ngozi Nkwoji, senior brand manager Maltina, apart from being the official drink of the festival, Maltina will also activate a roadshow to drum up support for the festival and create awareness about its impact on tourism and social cohesion in the country. In addition, Nkwoji stated that a "sharing pavilion" will be created where consumers can come and share their happy moments and experience the brands new proposition, an MC will be present to welcome consumers. "If you will recollect, we, early last month re-launched and refreshed the brand in line with consumer expectations and contemporary packaging trends. What we are going to do in Argungu is to further reinforce the proposition and to let the consumers know that Maltina would be there for them always." She added.

Sponsorship is affirmation of belief in tourism potential

Jaco van der Linden, marketing director Nigerian Breweries Plc, said Maltina, which has been the official drink of Argungu Fishing Festival since 2005 is with this year's partnership reaffirming its strong belief in the tourism potential of the country. "We believe that Argungu is an important international event that is capable of attracting foreign tourists to Nigeria , and that is why we have been the official drink of the competition for years now. This is being done to encourage Nigerians to believe in and be proud of their culture and rich tradition."

Apart from the Argungu fishing and cultural festival, the brewery is noted for exploring creative avenues to consistently engage and reward its teeming consumers. One of these creative consumer engagement platforms is the popular Maltina Dance All (MDA) TV reality show - a platform for promoting family values and bonding. There is also the Maltina Gig, an exciting music and dance activation that will be witnessed in 250 cities and towns across Nigeria.

The festival

The Argungu Fishing Festival, which began in 1934, is an annual cultural and fishing festival which takes place in Argungu Kebbi State in north-western Nigeria; it is the culmination of a four-day cultural event held in the emirate.

The festival was used to mark peace between the former Sokoto Caliphate and the Kebbi Kingdom. The two empires had fought for centuries, and hostilities only ceased with the arrival of the British. The Sultan of Sokoto and his entourage are oftentimes among the dignitaries that grace the festival.

On the final day of the festival, thousands of fishermen line up like an ancient army, carrying their traditional nets and gourds. At the sound of a gun, they pound towards the narrow Matan Fada River and leap into the water. They have just one hour to catch the biggest fish. The winner can take home as much as US$7500 and a brand new bus. However the prize money may increase this year. Competitors are only allowed to use traditional fishing tools and many prefer to catch fish entirely by hand (a practice also popular elsewhere and known as 'noodling' in the United States) to demonstrate their prowess.

The fishing festival takes place to the beat of drummers who move through the surging water on their canoes. The annual competition is growing in size and popularity and is seen as a major tourist event in Nigeria. Last year some of the fishermen struggled to find space to enter the water.

At the end of the hour, the fish are piled up at the foot of the weighing machine. Last year's winning fish weighed 75kg. Four men were needed to hoist it onto the scales. A man lies on his calabash - used for flotation, and to store fish - and waits for the speeches to finish.

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