

Q&A with bartender incentive programme winner Nkuli Khanyile

The House of Rémy Martin has launched a competition that culminates in Cognac, France where some of the world's best bartenders go head to head for the title of Best Bartender at the Rémy Martin Bartender Talent Academy.

Nkuli Khanyile from Gauteng was the winner of this competition and will be going to Cognac in October to compete against the world's best. She is truly a great mixologist and one of South Africa's top up-and-coming female bartenders. She plans to show the world that women from Africa are a force to be reckoned with in the bartending industry.



We sat down with her, and this is what she had to share:

Can you tell us a bit more about your life story and where you came from?

I am currently a student at the University of Witwatersrand studying a BCom PPE (politics, philosophy, and economics). Baking has always been my number one passion, so when I decided that I needed to earn some extra money whilst studying, bartending seemed to fit well. I thought it would be an easy job that involves generic shots and mixers – but I could not have been any more wrong. I was introduced to a world of art that I never knew existed. I've had a new profound outlook and respect for this industry in South Africa.

As a female bartender in South Africa, does this present any challenges or advantages?

I feel as though I am part of a community of ladies that are always growing and supporting each other. In this industry, I feel as though men and women are on an equal platform in terms of respect and opportunities, which I deeply value. The only challenge I have witnessed is having the courage to break into certain spirit categories such as cognac and making it known that women too can enjoy drinking and talking about them.



You have secured yourself as one of South Africa's young and upcoming female bartenders. What is it that you want to tell and show the world?

I want to show people that you can find a passion and love for a part-time job. For me, this was an industry that I never knew I could fall in love with and it has influenced my career path in a massive way. Just because you have a working job, does not mean that you have to suffer through it. For me, this is something I've learnt whilst being in this industry and it has slowly taken away the fear that you can be successful in different ways. I am now so much more confident in stepping out and being bold with my career and the drinks I make. Very true to the Rémy Martin One Life/Live Them campaign.

Having earned the chance to go to Cognac, France and compete at the Bartender Talent Academy, what does this mean for you and your career?

It means the world to me. It has sparked a passion for Cognac within me and has given me the opportunity to gain knowledge – something I value greatly for my future in bartending and cooking.

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