

SA wine industry launches new code to promote sober drinking habits

The South African wine industry has joined other liquor industries in introducing a new code that will serve as a guideline for responsible marketing of alcoholic products in the local market. Under the auspices of the Association for Alcohol Responsibility and Education (Aware.org), the [Code for Commercial Communications](#) aims to provide clear guidelines for the responsible marketing of wine and other liquor products, and thereby curbing alcohol abuse in communities.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

"The wine industry supports the code wholeheartedly," says Rico Basson, managing director of the wine industry body Vinpro. "We understand the necessity of self-regulation in an environment in which the misuse of our products can have far-reaching negative effects. By adhering to the code, each cellar, retailer and marketing agency takes ownership and commits to being more mindful of the way in which we present our products to the general public."

The code is the outcome of a two-year consultation process between the alcohol sector and various national departments amidst proposed legislation that aims to restrict the marketing of liquor products.

Guidelines in the code include:

- The prohibition of billboards within 500 m of schools,
- Places of worship or community centres,

- Age verification for users to gain access to websites, and
- Clear responsible messaging on brands' social media platforms.

It also includes restrictions on the times and way in which alcohol is advertised on the radio, television and in movie theatres.

"It is crucial that everyone in our industry implements the Code. Vinpro is already in discussion with our members to ensure its implementation," says Basson.

The wine industry is also committed to the over-arching goals of Aware.org and collaborates on initiatives that focus on curbing alcohol abuse among minors, binge drinking and walking or driving under the influence of alcohol, as well as curbing foetal alcohol syndrome in vulnerable communities.

The Aware.org Vinpro Foundation Wine Project provides social worker support to more than ten wine industry communities, with a specific focus on these and other related socio-economic issues.

According to Ingrid Louw, CEO of Aware.org, the code has not been introduced to wag a finger at the industry. However, it presents an opportunity for the respective industries to work collectively on conveying a message about their products that is strategic, creative and responsible, whether on television, radio, billboards or in digital media.

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