

Entrepreneur makes locally made fragrances the in thing

Thembi Shangase was so concerned about the amount of money people spent on fragrances while she was working for a top retailer that she started her own business making them.



Shangase learnt that retailers bought popular and expensive brands of fragrances cheaply from manufacturers and sold them to customers at inflated amounts.

She heard about a training course provided by one of the companies, which supplied her retail employer with fragrances and she took the opportunity.

Now Shangase of uMlazi, south of Durban, runs a fragrance manufacturing business from a back room at her home. Her business, called Shilex, is named after her deceased sister, Shiella, who motivated her to start her own company.

She creates fragrances for celebrities - including the first 'his' and 'hers' fragrance range of Maskandi star Mtshengiseni "Indidane" Gcwensa - expected to be in shops by the end of this year.

Small shop in Durban

While all the manufacturing work is done in a back room at her house, she also runs a little shop in Durban's central business district and supplies products to street vendors who sell to the public.

Shangase says: "What makes my customers come back is the fact that they get value for their money."

When she started out, her customers came looking for fragrances that smelled familiar.

"Now I get a lot of customers looking for something different to be made especially for them. I get a lot of businessmen and women, wanting something exclusive. I sit down with them and get to know them; get to know what they like and their lifestyle. The I design something appropriate," she said.

Shangase said it was concerning that while fragrances by international celebrities were popular and selling in South Africa, few locally manufactured fragrances were making it in the market.

"Connie Ferguson and Nonhle Thema's fragrances have not been so popular locally," she claims.

Shangase said ideally a person should have three difference fragrances. "There is a fragrance suitable for a day at the office, one for dinner and another for the weekend. They all make a different statement for a different occasion," she said.

Source: Sowetan via I-Net Bridge

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