



# Who gives a continental...?

When I arrived at the pub, I found Fred surrounded by an argumentative bunch. Not being a beer drinker (Klippies and water, no ice) he was acting as a disinterested referee. The argument had to do about the merits of beer. I ordered my Windhoek and entered the fray, flag flying high, as were.

 By Fred Says... 19 Sep 2004

The majority involved in the debate were Castle aficionados and one, having lost his Lion forever, was confused and upset.

"How can they do that?" he bleated unhappily into his Hansa. "They killed a great icon of South African beers! Never again the deep satisfaction of downing a Lion!"

Two of the Castle quaffers were chirping on about Charles Glass and "chuck us a can, Charlie". Another was complaining that, of late, he was tempted to give up beer altogether... something about sinus problems and sulphur additive allergies. Another, with a definite German accent, was extolling the virtues of the "reinheitsgebot" an ancient German law that ensured the purity of beer. Yet another was adamant that all was not well in the South African beer market... too many imports, not as good as ours, was his complaint.

I asked Fred what had set the debate going and he said that it was the latest SAB TV commercial.

"What brand were they advertising?" I asked, not having noticed anything new recently.

The answer was that this was a "corporate" ad, tapping into being "proudly South African". Many racially diverse South Africans, pulling ropes together, dragging foreign countries closer to our beautiful shores. The Statue of Liberty from the USA, Sugar Loaf Mountain and the Christ the Redeemer statue from the Argentine, obliterating our beautiful Table Mountain. The rusty iron bridge and Cockle Shell Opera House from Sydney, apparently displacing Robben Island. Clearly the sample of beer drinkers in the pub were not too enamoured by this global onslaught of our cherished Cape of Good Hope.

Kind of makes sense now that SAB is an international player and has added "Miller" to its name, Fred said

I pondered this and reminded myself that SAB had a fantastic record of destroying many great South African brands, not only in beer. Whatever happened to Food Corporation, Shoe Corporation, Afcol and the OK? Thank goodness they never got control of Edgars, Sun International and SFW (now merged with Distillers Corp, as Distell).

I also reminded myself of the truism that when a company that was founded on great brands starts to advertise itself, rather than the brands it markets, all is not well.

## ABOUT FRED SAYS...

With piercing blue eyes, a full set of clean underwear, his own hair - although it's mostly on his manly chest now - and stealth-like in his entry into his favourite bosveld watering hole, 'FRED' is clearly a legend in his own laager. An insider with so many years experience in the industry that he's forgotten where time began and advertising ended, he will be writing for Bizcommunity.com weekly to bring us the industry news you thought was safely swept under the rug, lurking there with the rest of South Africa's scandals and dirty laundry! If you'd like all correspondence with Fred can be sent via the [editor@biz-community.com](mailto:editor@biz-community.com)  
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