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A long lived Heritage

Philip Stucken shares his family's history with us.

Philip Stucken is a well-known, and respected, figure in the Nelson Mandela Bay business community. As the Chairman of Stucken & Co, he shared with us the incredible history of his family's business. It has transformed itself over the period of a century and a half, from a German trading company to one of the leading, rare and speciality fibre companies in the world.

"One hundred and fifty years ago, on the 1st of January 1863, Georg Adolph Stucken, together with his brother-in-law Wilhelm Klugkist, founded the trading house Adolph Stucken & Co. These partners were one of the first Bremen business-

men to begin trading wool from overseas. They also owned a fleet of commercial sailing ships, one of which - the Elvira - undertook its first voyage to Cape Town and further to the East."

"Born in the mid 1850's, the eldest son of Adolph Stucken, Engelbert Stucken, saw opportunities in the Russian wool trade and joined his uncle Carl Stucken in Moscow, trading under the name Stucken & Co. With the establishment of primary processing, the Wolga Spinnerei Manufaktur spinning mill and two wool washing facilities in the 1880's, the Stucken traders participated in the industrialisation of Tsarist Russia."

"The third generation - Johann Aurel, known as Hans Stucken (Born in 1881) - joined the company shortly before World War I. The wool business of Stucken & Co. had grown considerably when the Russian Revolution of 1917 signalled its end. The company and all its assets were lost."

"After the war Hans Stucken resumed wool trading activity. Since 1934, the business has run under the name of H. Stucken & Co." The arrival of National Socialism gave rise to an authoritarian economic system, making free wool trading difficult. "Hans Stucken's eldest son, Rudolf (Rudi) Stucken (who sadly passed on in 1995), was sent to Romania to buy wool for the Bremen Wool Association. After the war, he helped rebuild the Bremen Company but decided to concentrate on

Textiles

establishing a wool business in South Africa where a branch - Blenkinsop & Stucken - had existed before the war."

"The wool trading company Stucken & Co. was established in 1951 in Port Elizabeth and Rudi Stucken, together with skilled wool-man Otto Isenbeck, expanded the business rapidly. By the mid 1970s, Stucken & Co had become the leading buyer, processor and exporter of wool in South Africa."

"Since 1992 I have led the group, following in the footsteps of my father Rudi Stucken. The operative side of the business in South Africa is already being run by the sixth generation, namely my nephew Anthony Kirsten, and sons Daniel and Nicholas Stucken."

"One of the key contributing factors to the long term stability of Stucken & Co has been the multi-fibre aspect of the business. In Bremen, the establishment of a hair department in the late 1950's and the subsequent merger with the rare fibre division of C. Melchers & Co (to form Stucken Melchers & Co) has allowed the company to become one of the European Union's key speciality fibre businesses."

In South Africa, the development of the mohair combing business in the late 1970's gave the textile segment an important second leg. The mohair division was further consolidated with the establishment of Mohair Spinners SA (MSSA) and most recently the processing chain completed with the addition of a mohair blanket weaving mill, Hinterveld, located in Uitenhage.

"Looking back, the establishment of mohair combing in South Africa was an important milestone. Up until this point, South Africa had exported nearly all its greasy mohair to processors and spinners worldwide but mainly to the UK and Europe. Then in the late 1970s, Stucken South Africa opened mohair top making facilities in their mill Gubb & Inggs where adult mohair was, for the first time, combed on Schlumberger combs. This was new technology resulting in lower conversion costs, helping to make South Africa the largest exporter of mohair tops to Asian countries such as Japan, Korea and Taiwan."

"Later in 1996 we opened our first mohair spinning facility in South Africa, 100 years after my forefathers established spinning operations in Russia. Our niche spinning mill not only works with mohair, but also wool, silk and alpaca blends. Key is also the mohair buying operation in Texas — Texas International Mohair — which supplies mohair for processing in the group's combing mill in South Africa."



© Karl Schoemaker

Stucken Melchers is the 'extended arm' of Stucken PE in Germany and other European countries. "Our niche silk and other rare fibre business in Bremen is based on long standing and reliable relationships in China. Combined with long established wool business for the felting industry, these factors help Stucken Melchers set itself apart.

"We source all our silk, angora, camel hair, cashmere, yak, ramie, hemp, bamboo, soya and linen from China, with mohair coming from South Africa or Argentina. Through Stucken Melchers we have formed the perfect alliance for the sourcing of cashmere and other rare fibres in China. As the speciality fibre business is based on reliability of supply, a good relationship with China is key."

As the only carbonising mill, open top supplier and superwash facility in South Africa, Stucken has become a niche wool supplier. This is complemented by the company's leading position in mohair tops and yarns.

"It is also an advantage to have the raw material on our doorstep, allowing us to source a wider selection for our standard types, as well as facilitating new developments of scoured, carbonised, tops and yarn qualities."

"During the 1970's we built up strong connections with Japanese trading houses and mohair users and our presence in that market was enhanced by the discovery that we actually had family in that country that had come to Kobe in the 1880's, descended from the Edmund Stucken line in Russia."

The group shows no signs of slowing down, with regard to its future expansion plans.

"Our spinning mill is looking to establish a new top dyeing facility to supply high quality weft yarn. Recently, a further substantial investment was made in state of the art spinning, winding and roving machinery for MSSA. Work is also being done at Gubb & Inggs to ensure more eco-friendly wool and mohair scouring processes, in line with EU requirements."

"On the weaving side we are in the process of broadening our blanket, throws and shawl weaving capabilities into the ladies fabric market. Here too, more modern looms have recently been purchased to allow for greater variety in our blanket manufacture."

"Our vision for growth is the further expansion of value-added products in spinning, weaving and knitting as, with the strong Chinese competition for our raw materials, the opportunity for growing our primary wool processing is limited."

"Continuity is a maxim of our operation, another is flexibility." He explained. "Supported by a well-functioning network, our family's traders succeeded to realise ideas, surviving economic and political crises, to pursue their goals with conviction. To retain success each generation had to re-invent itself and on several occasions take a risk on new beginnings. This has contributed to our growth into a global trading business."

The dedication and experience which the Stucken heritage is famous for is now available in Nelson Mandela Bay via various retail outlets.

For more info visit: www.hinterveld.com or contact our head office: 041 992 4880



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A Rich History

Exploring Wedgewood's Heritage.

Wedgewood Golf and Country Club has been quite newsworthy these last few years. For those of a younger generation, it would seem like just another new and expensive housing development gone awry due to the global recession.

Wedgewood, however, goes back many, many more years (almost 70!) and can claim quite an illustrious history. Started by the Port Elizabeth Jewish community in the late 1940's, it went on to become synonymous with some pretty big names. For starters, the Club was named in honour of British Statesman, Baron Josiah Clement Wedgwood. Wedgwood was a strong campaigner for social justice, and was directly instrumental in saving the lives of many Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Europe. He later went on to receive a title (that of Baron) and became a Lord as a reward for his humanitarian efforts.

The original golf course was designed by the renowned architect Bob Grimsdell. Back in the day, Bob Grimsdell was the last word in golf course architecture in the entire world. It was like getting Picasso to re-paint the Main Library's interior. The

course was beautifully crafted out of a parkland environment, making sure that the indigenous vegetation, flame orange aloes and magnificent blue gum trees remained undisturbed.

The Wedgwood Park Golf Club is the former host of the South African international classic golf tournament, the General Motors Open. It has seen the likes of Gary Player; Lee Trevino; Seve Ballesteros; Peter Oosterhuis; Harold Henning and Hugh Baiocchi playing the course. Wedgwood holds very special memories for South Africa's own Gary Player, because it was here that he won his 100th professional tournament.



As the decades wore on, so did Wedgwood itself. Recently it was earmarked to be re-developed into a top-class golf housing estate, which fell through due to a downturn in the market. The Baron Wedgwood came from a long line of people who never gave up in the face of adversity, and true to its namesake it is once again rising from the ashes.

Look out for the front cover of our October issue to read all about the Cardinet group's stellar efforts to re-awaken this sleeping giant.

www.wedgewoodvillage.co.za





A Culture of Mobility

A Chat with the team behind the Coffee Culture app.

In our grandparent's generation, it used to be the case where your list of 'don't leave home without' essentials included your house keys; wallet/purse and a clean hanky. Today, a cellular phone tops that list hands down. Ryan le Roux of SNAPP Mobile Technologies is a firm believer that mobile apps are the way of the future.

"We are entering a phase in South Africa where the emphasis is moving away from websites," explains Ryan. Websites, while informative, suffer from two major flaws. Firstly, full websites are essentially deskbound. E-commerce websites work well when you are at your desk with a mouse and keyboard, but are clunky and cumbersome to use on a cellphone. Secondly, websites don't work well at sending and receiving information from users at a very personal level. Mobile applications on cellphones work very well in that regard."

"An example of a successful implementation is our Father's House app. Usually if people wanted to join the Church or to volunteer, they would have to manually fill in a paper response card which would have to be data captured by a person. Now, congregants fill in the response card on the app, and that information is sent to the church administrators in a form where the data is already captured."

"If you would like an app made, we can sit down for a free consultation for you to let me know what your expectations are. If it looks feasible we'll make up screenshots for you to see what the finished product would look like."

SNAPP mobile technologies teamed up with well known coffee authority Shaun Aupiais and together they are the creative team behind the very successful Coffee Culture app.

"We quickly realised that coffee shops don't have the budgets to finance their own apps. It then became apparent to us that most people won't stick to just one coffee shop - they will visit numerous ones in the course of a typical week. So we then decided that we would go about creating a collection, or community of coffee shops on a single app."

One very good reason to download the Coffee Culture app is because of its great loyalty program. "Every time you buy a coffee from a participating store, the app will log that purchase. Log enough coffee purchases in that particular store and you will be rewarded with a free coffee."

How it works is that each participating store has a square Coffee Culture QR code behind the till. Every time you buy any kind of coffee,

request that your waiter bring over the QR code for you to scan. Just hit the 'free beans' button on the Coffee Culture app home page; find the name of the coffee shop you are in, and scan the code.

"Very soon, we will have version 2 of Coffee Culture out. You won't have to re-download a completely different app either. A notification will appear on your phone informing you that the new version is ready. Just press a button and it will auto update. It will be easier to use in every respect. We've even given the new version a 'face'." That 'face' is the logo that accompanies this article. As yet, this little man is unnamed. "We might be running a naming competition, so keep a lookout on our Facebook page."

"Coffee Culture also hosts regular industry building 'Barista Jams' where we get some of the top Baristas in the same room and they battle it out. The public are most welcome to attend as it's a chance for you to see some great coffee art in the making; to enjoy awesome live music and to sample some delicious brews. Keep watching our Coffee Culture Facebook page or our app for the next upcoming event."

"For us, it's about building a collaborative community in the coffee industry. The coffee industry is incredibly competitive, and that is not a bad thing. Good strong competition leads to extremely high standards when it comes to the ingredients and preparation that go into your daily cappuccino."



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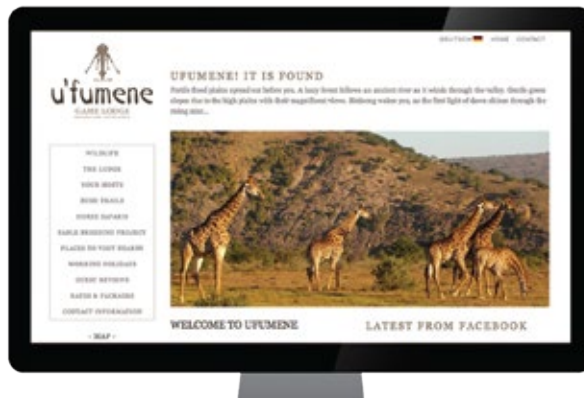
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Oh, and visit us too! www.media-axis.co.za



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Never forget where we come from, what we've been through as individuals; as a City; as a Nation.

Our heritage is important, because without it we are culturally adrift. We are ignorant and unmindful of all the truths and hopes that are the hard won fruits of our predecessors. Without a heritage, we live without any connecting hope passed from generation to generation.

Whether we like it or not our culture grounds us and will influence many of the decisions we make on a daily basis. It gives us identity and informs our view of the world, and our place in it. Societies can only exist when built upon co-operation, and culture is the vehicle by which we are taught our morals, and our ethics.

Always remember that we are a society that is stronger when we stand together, and weakest when we remain apart.

This issue of the Soapbox is dedicated to all the different cultures and beliefs that make up our wonderful nation. Stand together. Respect the culture of those different to you, and embrace your own.

Important message! The Soapbox will soon be launching our app! Look out for more information in our next issue!



Latest edition of The Soapbox available at:
Exclusive Books, Masterton's, Friendly Stranger, Rhubarb & Lime, The Music Kitchen & Como Caffé, POP! Shoppe and RAAK.

Upcoming gigs at The Music Kitchen

Tuesdays: Trivia Night - EAT DRINK & THINK
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| 6 Sep | - Lou 'n Dale – Free |
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| 20 Sep | - LIVE music – Free |
| 21 Sep | - Woodstock Mafia – R50 |
| 22 Sep | - What Now (from UK) – R100 |
| 27 Sep | - Hugo Kleinhans – Free entry |
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Supporting Excellence

Masterton's offers Port Elizabeth a fantastic new coffee.

Long-standing companies come with long histories. All too often Conservatism, masked as Tradition, will start to harden the proverbial arteries of even the most dynamic of enterprises.

You will be thrilled to know that the same can't be said about your favourite local coffee and tea specialists - Mastertons.

Masterton's is a name synonymous with quality; longevity and excellence. And, as a company that's been around for 80+ years, they're continually pushing the envelope.

"We have a lot of new developments in the pipeline which are extremely exciting," says Ryler Masterton. "We're keeping most of them under our hats for now, and all I can say is to keep watching our Facebook page closely over the next few months." "What I CAN tell you, is that we have something very special on offer in-store as we speak."

That 'something special' is a type of coffee called 'Flores del Café' (translated it means Flowers of Coffee) and the significance behind it is profound. "Flores del Café' originates in Nicaragua, and what makes it special is that it is grown entirely by

women. The coffee growing trade is quite a male dominated industry, and as in most male dominated industries, women tend to be sidelined. The project under which 'Flores del Café' is produced ensures both protections for women coffee growers as well as fair prices when traded internationally."

Far from being just another mediocre 'feel-good' product it is coffee of the highest grade as it is certified as both 'fancy' and 'SHB'. These two top grades (Fancy and SHB) total less than 2.5% of all coffee produced globally!

For non-coffee geeks, 'SHB' stands for "strictly hard bean". It usually refers to coffee grown at altitudes higher than about 4,500 feet above sea level. Beans grown at high altitudes mature more slowly and grow to be harder and denser than beans grown at lower elevations. The inherent consistency and taste attributes of high grown beans makes them more desirable than coffees grown at lower elevations.

The 'fancy' classification looks at the coffee beans' size (bigger is better); shape; moisture

content (which equals more flavour); and number of defects it contains. Essentially what this means is that only the largest, most moisture-heavy and blemish-free coffee beans make the grade. The difference in flavour is substantially better.

"Possibly the most opportune way in which to advance women and promote women's rights in the coffee sector is through women's associations, like the Flores del Café initiative. The initiative ensures things like joint agreement on objectives; that issues and matters of particular interest to women can be discussed freely; and that it is done so in an environment where there is an absence of peer pressure," explains Ryler.

"This is what makes Flores del Café such a great project to support. It's about giving women the due recognition and rewards that are rightfully theirs because of their hard work. When you own something, you take better care of it. We are extremely thrilled to share this fantastic coffee with the rest of PE."

Ask for a few bags of 'Flores del Café', and support a worthy cause while enjoying your next delicious cup of Masterton's coffee.

114 Russell Road, Central. PE
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