



Benoni fans cheer on their heroes at their favourite tavern

The mood is good and business is booming down at the Oasis Restaurant and Pub in Actonville, Benoni, where the fans converge to cheer on their favourite World Cup teams.

The Oasis is one of a thousand taverns dotted across the country that are kitted out by Coca-Cola and converted into an unofficial FIFA World Cup™ viewing site.

Owner Max Magjee says the World Cup has definitely brought a new dimension to his business and the addition of a big screen TV and Coca-Cola branding has been a big hit among his regular patrons.

“We are running a small establishment with many loyal customers who come in regularly for a meal or a drink,” says Magjee who has owned the Oasis for the past 11 years.

“The matches that are screened live definitely add to the vibe. With the opening match with Bafana Bafana the place was overflowing and other matches involving African sides are proving to be very popular,” says Magjee.

The township tavern initiative from Coca-Cola is designed to cater for the millions of South Africans who won’t be able to attend a match – and many who do not even own a television set to watch this historic tournament.

This community upliftment initiative ensures that fans who can’t afford to be at the stadiums can still celebrate the greatest sporting spectacle on earth in snazzy venues that bring the electrifying atmosphere of the Beautiful Game straight to the people. Of these, around 150 are large, Coca-Cola dominated taverns, with the remainder being outlets with adequate Coca-Cola presence. Many are in townships such as Actonville or rural areas, with others being located in urban hubs such as Rockey Street in Yeoville-Johannesburg.

Spearheaded by Peter Nemaenzhe, Operations Marketing Manager at Coca-Cola South Africa, the project aims to bring classy partying out of the suburbs and into the townships. “My people also want to be treated with dignity and pride when they go out,” says Nemaenzhe. “They want a community hotspot around which they can converge with family and friends and that is within walking distance from where they live.”

With varying degrees of sponsorship for the different outlets, all of these soccer “hot spots” are noticeable by their distinctive red Coca-Cola branding – particularly the FIFA “lollipop” football outside. Many will sport stylish tables, comfortable chairs and large LCD televisions screening all the games live for the array of football lovers that flock there to soak up the vibe.

Magjee says the branding has definitely helped to make his pub stand-out in the neighbourhood. “People are looking for an enjoyable environment in which to watch the games and the branding definitely adds to the atmosphere,” he says.

But it’s not only the fans that are benefiting from this initiative: it’s all about job creation and entrepreneur empowerment as well. Tavern owners have received training from the beverage giant on basic business principles such as pricing, customer service and operational aspects – helping to ensure that their establishments are run sustainably and profitably, while retaining that unique “shebeen” atmosphere that is a mainstay of authentic South African culture.

With vuvuzelas blaring, happy hours, regular football quizzes for the fundis, screenings of past games on DVD, special Coke-and-food combos, and prizes galore up for grabs on spin ‘n win wheels of fortune, these *ekasi* “iconic taverns” are definitely the buzzing places to be during the FIFA World Cup™ – where you can make marvellous once-in-a-lifetime memories while getting your soccer fix. The taverns project includes a Mixability programme where owners can learn about imaginative Coca-Cola mixes and cocktails with a local twist, to make each venue’s environment that much more festive. One such example is the famous African Katemba, which is a mixture of Coke and red wine.

Leaving behind a meaningful legacy that will endure beyond 2010, Nemaenzhe says these donations of equipment and furniture, as well as the business training, is aimed at encouraging larger taverns to entrench quality service and giving the smaller venues an incentive to grow their business.

- To find out if your favourite local tavern is catching football fever, look out for the unmistakable Coca-Cola/FIFA soccer ball outside each venue.

For more information, please visit www.cocacola.co.za/2010

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