

WHY NOT PUT A CORK IN IT?

***INVERROCHE* GIN ILLUSTRATES KEY ASPECTS OF ARTISANAL BRANDING**

BY

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THESIS

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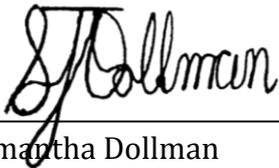
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DECLARATION

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23 October 2015

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to identify and explore the key aspects of artisanal branding and how these aspects are applied to building craft distilled spirit brands. The importance of the research is to explore how artisanal spirits brand themselves and how these aspects of artisanal branding can be applied to building an artisanal distilled spirit brand. The research is a case study on the Inverroche gin brand and the artisanal branding aspects that it has applied to building its brand.

The research also looks at what artisanal branding is and how it can be a successful strategy tool for building an authentic brand that differentiates itself from its competitors. The research is extremely feasible because one can approach it from numerous directions. My research is an explorative study on the artisanal branding aspects applied by other craft spirits and explores how that helps build an authentic brand image.

The research methodology involved a phenomenological approach where qualitative methods were used to analyse the data obtained. The qualitative methods chosen were a semi-structured interview held with owner and manager of Inverroche, Lorna Scott, a participant observation where consumer experience at the distillery was recorded and observed, and lastly, a semiotic analysis was conducted by observing Inverroche's packaging and label design.

My key research findings are that Inverroche illustrates all of the key aspects of artisanal branding, however, it focused on two key aspects of artisanal branding to drive the unique selling point of the product. These two key aspects were the novelty of the Inverroche gin brand and its crafted story. Inverroche was able to become an iconic, authentic brand by crafting three diverse gins with fynbos that explores the story of a dynamic place that cannot be repeated by competitors. In addition, Inverroche is an authentic brand because they do not just put the word 'artisanal' on the label but allow for consumers to actively engage with the brand.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

“In South Africa there is now a resolute and growing band of craft or artisanal distillers responding to this need for unique specialist spirits. Eau-de-vie, pot still brandy, cask aged whisky, gin, vodka, grappa, agave spirit and absinthe can now be found, all made in small quantities to exacting standards. Craft distillation is about quality, choice and individuality. Artisanal distillers are hands-on specialists who transcend the gap between art and alchemy to create unique spirits for individuals.” – Jorgensen’s craft distillery.

Entering micro distilleries becomes a whole new world in itself as it introduces individuals to exclusive, local and premium spirits carefully constructed by the hands of craft distillers. One endures the distinctive quality of the culturally rooted, hand made product (ITC, 2003: 4) as soon as they inhale the sweet scent of the ‘grain to glass’ embodiment. The first taste of the finest craft spirit creates a passionate and personal experience for the consumer where they truly feel this artisanal brand was composed specifically for them (Smith 2015, online). There is a shared belief among craft brewers and distillers that even with the incredible growth in demand for craft, the thirst for their products is far from satisfied. South Africa may have the finest and the greatest handcrafted wines, brandies, and beer, but the one thing that these artisans lack is diversification (Ungerer, et al, 2015: 267). Craft distillers are not thinking ‘outside the bottle’ to offer innovative and unique distilled spirit brands to the consumer.

This study deals with understanding contemporary artisanal branding through the case study of the *Inverroche* gin brand. Artisanal products can be regarded as handcrafted products that are then sold at a premium price at retail outlets (ITC, 2003: 6). This research aims to explore the concept of artisanal branding and identify what the key aspects of artisanal branding that are illustrated by the *Inverroche* gin brand. These key aspects identified can be incorporated to

enhance a craft distillery's brand image, differentiate itself from its competitors and build an authentic brand in the eye of consumers.

Inverroche is a micro distillery in South Africa that manually distils three different types of gins using fynbos as an additive to distinguish the flavour of their products (Inverroche 2013, online). There is limited academic research on artisanal branding, especially in relation to craft distilled spirit brands in South Africa. Therefore, the *Inverroche* gin brand, a successful South African craft distilled spirit, is a very new and distinctive topic to analyse.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Problem Statement

The purpose of this research study is to explore the key aspects of artisanal branding illustrated by the *Inverroche* gin brand.

Primary Research Question

What key aspects of artisanal branding are illustrated by the *Inverroche* gin brand?

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to identify what are the most effective aspects of artisanal branding illustrated through the case study of the *Inverroche* gin brand.

SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is an artisanal brand? Or what does it mean to be 'artisanal'?
- What is an artisanal distilled spirit?
- What aspects of artisanal branding have been used in building other distilled spirit brands?

- What aspect(s) of artisanal branding has been used by the *Inverroche* gin brand?
- By applying these aspects of artisanal branding, how does it build the *Inverroche* gin brand's authenticity in the eye of consumers?
- How does artisanal branding help *Inverroche* maintain a competitive advantage in the micro-distilling industry?

SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand what it means to be an artisanal product and the artisanal branding aspects that apply.
- To establish the most effective aspects of artisanal branding illustrated through the case study of the *Inverroche* gin brand.
- To reveal *Inverroche's* artisanal branding principles applied in building their craft gin brand.
- To establish whether the *Inverroche* gin brand is an authentic brand illustrated through their artisanal branding.

LITERATURE REVIEW

'Artisan' is pronounced *ahr-tuh-zuhn*, and is defined as either a craft person skilled in an applied art or as a person or company that makes a high-quality, distinctive product in small quantities, usually by hand and using traditional methods (GoodFood World Staff 2011, online). The word 'artisanal' is an adjective that has become the marketing word linking the notion of hand-made craftsmanship with every imaginable type of food product (GoodFood World Staff 2011, online).

One can recognise distinctive qualities that artisanal brands adhere to that differ themselves from mainstream products. One is most likely to see this artisanal quality dimension in cheese, chocolate or wine. However, there has been a trend in craft distillers building artisanal distilled spirit brands in South Africa. Craft distillers are also artisans that believe in imparting individual qualities to each distilled batch because these products are subject to the differences that come with handcrafted production (Beverland, 2009: 67).

Craft distillers follow no rules but apply specific aspects of artisanal branding when building their own craft distilled spirit brand. The literature review provides a conceptual framework in exploring not one aspect of artisanal branding but all the main aspects of artisanal branding illustrated in building other craft distilled spirit brands. The main key aspects of artisanal branding that have been identified are under the following chapters: Crafted by hands; Turning garbage-into-gold; Local is *lekker*; Thinking ‘outside the bottle’; The Crafted Story; Put a cork in it; and Artisanal authentic marketing.

Each chapter of the literature review represents a key aspect of artisanal branding illustrated in craft distilled spirits. **Crafted by hands** explores what it means for a brand to be ‘handcrafted’; **Turning garbage-into-gold** explores the environmentally sustainable methods applied by craft distillers; **Local is lekker** explores the importance of using local ingredients in spirits; **Thinking ‘outside the bottle’** explores how many craft distilled spirits have applied a novelty characteristic to their brand; **The Crafted Story** explores the importance of building a brand story around a product and how it builds consumer-brand relationships; **Put a cork in it** explores the packaging and label design of artisanal distilled spirits; and lastly, **Artisanal authentic marketing** explores how craft distillers market their products based on consumer experience with very little mainstream advertising.

The aspects of artisanal branding identified in the literature review will then be explored and discussed through the case study of the *Inverroche* gin brand. *Inverroche’s* gin brand can be regarded as a phenomenon to the South African

craft distilling industry because they were able to build a strong artisanal brand that distinguished itself from its South African competitors. This research aims to explore the key aspects of artisanal branding incorporated by the *Inverroche* gin brand and understand how *Inverroche* applied these artisanal branding principles to 'unleash its local spirits upon the world!'

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Phenomenological Approach

The approach to this study would be a phenomenological approach because it attempts to understand perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation or phenomenon. (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 15). The researcher assumes an interpretative position and might discover revelation findings or findings that are surprising from the perception outside the specific social context that is being studied (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 15). The phenomenological approach will draw upon more qualitative than quantitative methods because the goal is to describe a "lived experience" of a phenomenon (Waters 2015, online).

Research Tools

The research tools anticipated consists of a semi-structured interview, a participant observation and a semiotic analysis.

The semi-structured interview will be held with owner and manager of *Inverroche*, Lorna Scott, at the *Inverroche* distillery in Stilbaai. The interview will focus on questions relating to the topic in question and the structure of the interview will allow the interviewee to have leeway in answering.

The participant observation will be held during the *Inverroche* gin tour and tasting at the distillery in Stilbaai. The participant observation will analyse the experience consumers' take away from attending the *Inverroche* distillery without disrupting the process. The layout and design of the *Inverroche* distillery based on experience will be observed and recorded for further analysis.

A semiotic analysis will be conducted for analysis of *Inverroche's* packaging and label design. The semiotic analysis will observe the *Inverroche* packaging and label design on denotative and connotative level.

Sample

The sample size for this research study will be relatively small as it is the analyse of one case study – the *Inverroche* gin brand and the possible consumers that attend the tour and tasting at the *Inverroche* gin distillery during the researcher's analysis and time spent at the distillery.

POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

To identify the aspects of artisanal branding illustrated by craft distilled spirits.

To introduce the *Inverroche* gin brand and bring awareness of the brand's artisanal and authentic status.

To reveal the key aspects of artisanal branding illustrated by the *Inverroche* gin brand.

A chance for aspiring craft distillers to understand the aspects of artisanal branding and apply them to building their own craft distilled spirit brand.

POSSIBLE CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

The research sample is relatively small as it is a case study that focuses mainly on only one craft distilled spirit brand.

There is limited academic literature on the research topic and relevant resources may not be locally accessible.

The research and data analysis would be more subjective opposed to objective.

Responses from the interviewee could be quite complex to analyse.

Those involved in the research study may not understand the concept of artisanal branding as it goes by name

PROPOSED LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the study

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Research Findings

Chapter 5: Conclusion

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The craft distilling movement began to prosper in 1993 where a young 25-year-old man named Fritz Maytag launched Anchor Distilling and became one of the first craft distillers (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 11). Fritz learnt his artisan skills and the 'grain to glass' approach from Jorg Rupf, America's first modern craft distiller, who launched St George Spirits in 1982 (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 11). Craft distillers are artisans that believe in imparting individual qualities to each distilled batch because these products are subject to the differences that come with handcrafted production (Beverland, 2009: 67). Soon most craft distillers were creating products distinctly their own, such as corn whiskeys that retain a natural popcorn flavor and gins with a distinctive smell of the mountains nearby the distillery (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 11). Eventually these crafted products turned into some of the most successful and unforgettable brands of all time. Craft distillers need to understand that there are no simple rules to follow for the success with building an artisanal brand.

However, there are specific artisanal branding aspects that a craft distiller should adhere to. The first principle explores the concept of being a 'hand crafted' product. In other words, the consumer's sensory appeal tells them that the spirit has been crafted with local ingredients by the hands of the craft distiller. Another principle that craft distillers aim to achieve is turning 'garbage-into-gold' by producing premium craft spirits using environmentally sustainable methods. Every craft spirit should ideally have a novelty quality and a story that will truly capture the heart and soul of the craft distiller and their brand. Lastly, craft spirits need an innovative package design that stands out from the crowd of traditional packaging seen on the shelves at local bottle stores.

CRAFTED BY HANDS

A spirit is a distilled beverage with a significant level of alcohol, usually 20% alcohol volume (ABV) or above, and it is often unsweetened (Harrison & Ridley,

2014: 19). A spirit is formed through a distillation process. Distillation is the separation of alcohol from water and there are few ways in which this can be done (Harrison & Ridley, 2014: 20). Pot stills are large copper kettles that funnel into a tight neck at the top that allows alcohol vapours to be compressed and taken away to a spirit receiver (Harrison & Ridley, 2014: 20). Using pot stills is a much more traditional way of distilling and craft distillers use pot stills to produce their spirits in distinct batches (Harrison & Ridley, 2014: 20). These spirits are produced by the hands of the distiller and referred to as 'handcrafted' spirits.

'Handcrafted' can be an extremely vague term because one questions what it really means to make something with one's hands. The ambiguous term 'handcrafted' can often lead to misleading advertisements by brands that should not be labeling themselves as 'handcrafted' products (Groener 2013, online). Misleading advertisements also cause a loss of trust within consumers who paid more for brands that claimed to be 'handcrafted' products (Groener 2013, online). Distilled spirits cannot be regarded as 'handcrafted' when one purchases a large amount of neutral spirit from and out-sourced industrial distillery and then simply rectifies the spirit by adding local ingredients or rebottling it (Groener 2013, online). Some argue that adding local botanicals or distilling the spirit a certain number of times can label the spirit to be 'handcrafted'. However, this does not capture the true essence of 'handcrafted' products. Germain-Robert claims that being a handcrafted brand; "it must reflect the creative individuality of a single human working with small, hand-operated equipment to produce high quality distilled spirits (Craft Distillers 2015, online)".

Potter of the Brewers Association define the term 'handcrafted' in relation to the brewery or distillery being small where about 6 million barrels or less are produced annually and also that the brewery or distillery is independent where members of the beverage alcohol industry can own no more than 25% of the company (Lozier, 2014: 62). In contrast, Rogue Ales and Spirits brand their products as handcrafted even though they have over 300 employees and sell their products in 50 states in America (Christensen, 2013: 37). It appeared that

Rogue Ale and Spirits had not obtained its craft standards, however, this was not entirely true. Rogue Ale and Spirits still adopted craft distilling methods by building his own still and growing his own ingredients for the production of his beer (Christensen, 2013: 38). Therefore, one can argue that an artisanal brand can be large in industry size, however, must still adhere to handcrafted principles.

This would suggest that the notion of being a 'handcrafted' brand cannot be purely based on distillery size and that being 'handcrafted' is more characterised towards the dedication to quality (Lozier, 2014: 62). Hoffman from Fulton's Brewery claims that the success of their craft brewery relies on the taste of their beer and whether or not it captures the consumers' attention (Garrison, 2015: 9). Hoffman assures that quality matters more because "when you have a great product, you put as much time and energy in continually making it as great as you possibly can. Then the rest of the stuff can take care of itself (Garrison, 2015: 9)". The question still remains that "if a small distiller succeeds and grows, do they somehow cease to be craft? (Lozier, 2014: 62)"

TURNING 'GARBAGE-INTO-GOLD'

The distillation process of spirits produces huge amounts of waste (Besse, 2014: 25) and is regarded as the highest contributor to a spirits carbon footprint, accounting for a third of its emissions (Shanker 2013, online). During alcohol production, large amounts of waste and wastewater are produced and these may have a considerable environmental impact by polluting both water and soil (GATE, 2000: 1). This can also cause a critical climatic effect and odour irritation (GATE, 2000: 1). However, both distillery waste and wastewater do have a great nutrient and energy potential that can be utilised for fertilising or power generating purposes (GATE, 2000: 1).

Artisanal distillers need to think of innovative methods to reduce the amount of waste during the crafting of their distilled spirits. An artisanal brand with environmentally friendly methods builds a healthy brand image. Many craft distillers are adopting a 'grain to glass' approach, where the grain to make spirits

is grown within an 80 to 160 km radius of a distillery and the craft spirits are made with sustainability in mind (McCammon, 2012: 21). This does not only keep the craft distillery 'green' but it also helps build healthy relationships with communities by being environmentally friendly (McCammon, 2012: 21).

The Bombay Sapphire Distillery has been awarded a BREEAM award for being one of the most ecological and sustainable distilleries across the world (Bombay Sapphire Distillery 2014, online). One of their methods that they have adopted is using the ash produced by the biomass boiler to fertilize the soil on local farms and also the biomass boiler provides heat and hot water using botanical by-products of the distillation process as a fuel source (Bombay Sapphire Distillery 2014, online).

Environmentally sustainable methods do not need to occur just around the distillery, but also within the spirit one produces. Many craft distillers are creating organic spirits because most consumers want to reduce their exposure to harmful chemicals and additives and most individuals think that organic tastes better (Nagy 2015, online). Since 1995, Del Maguey has been creating 100% certified organic Mezcal produced by hand in the traditional way (Nagy 2015, online). Del Maguey only uses agave and water in fermentation, which results in these Mezcal to have a pure and authentic taste (Nagy 2015, online). Artisanal distilleries should adopt environmentally sustainable methods during the distillation process of spirits to ensure that its artisanal brand has a healthy image.

LOCAL IS LEKKER

“Many of those upstart companies are more crafty than craft, laboring to conceal the source of their liquor with provincial names and marketing that taps the wildly trendy locavore movement.” – Jason Blevins

One needs to be aware that most local liquor may not be so local after all. Often labels can be deceiving when it comes to claiming that spirits are handcrafted and locally produced. Distillers often try cheat by making their spirits appear to be handcrafted and locally produced. However, distillers will eventually get

caught out because craft consumers are getting clever in asking distillers numerous questions about the handcrafted methods and the local ingredients they use. Tito's hand made vodka labeled to be handcrafted 'in an old fashioned pot still' producing 15 million bottles annually (Blevins 2014, online). However, the vodka was made and produced with outsourced ingredients in massive buildings by automated machinery bottling 500 cases of spirits an hour (Blevins 2014, online). This is considered the antithesis of being a 'handmade' and 'local' brand (Blevins 2014, online).

Using local ingredients plays a major factor in consumer influence to purchasing a craft distilled spirit (Ungerer, et al. 2015: 265). Key aspects to a wine distillery are locally sourced ingredients because a wine distillery will need to use fresh grapes and fruits on site to provide a wide variety of products to satisfy the need of consumers (Besse, 2014: 7) In addition, using local flavours in one's crafted spirits can help enhance one's artisanal brand strategy. Although macro distilleries have a greater advantage in generating profit and sales through mass distribution, small craft distilleries have the advantage in their artisanal brand building strategies (Garrison, 2015: 8). Most of the products used in the macro distilling industry are outsourced and often this diminishes the premium flavour of the product (Garrison, 2015: 8).

However, small craft distilleries use local ingredients and this often improves the smoothness and taste of the distilled spirit (Ungerer, et al. 2015: 263). Ventura Spirit's core mission is to produce spirits with Santa Barbara- County ingredients such as strawberries for their vodka, prickly pear cactus for their tequila, and bay leaves called *chuchupata* for their gin (McKinnon 2015, online). Macro distilleries are at a disadvantage because they are not able to be as specific or as flexible in their distilled spirit offerings especially when consumer tastes and opinions constantly change (Garrison, 2015: 9).

The small distribution of beers can work in microbreweries' favour. For example, Sweetwater Brewery does not pasteurise their beer, as it loses the flavour of the beer from their local ingredients used in the brewing process (Garrison, 2015:

9). Most craft distillers use the grain-to glass-approach where they grow their own grain and do their own distilling, blending, aging, and bottling (McKinnon 2015, online). Although this is considered an expensive method to produce spirits, this aspect is what distinguishes craft spirit brands from mass-produced spirit brands and consumers are usually willing to pay a higher price for the premium quality provided (McKinnon 2015, online). Therefore, using local ingredients and proper distillation methods can enhance your artisanal brand and places it at a strategic advantage.

THINKING 'OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE'

Another key aspect to artisanal branding is having an innovative craft product. A novelty aspect within an artisanal brand can be deemed extremely useful and powerful. Adding and enhancing a creative feature in one's product can cause a difference in consumer expectations (Sheinin, Varki & Ashley, 2011: 6). In other words, consumers would be able to remember a specific product that had an innovative characteristic. "Consumers crave novelty and will pay a premium to be surprised and delighted with what is in their glass" (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 91). Ten out of twenty-three respondents felt that the novelty aspect of their products is extremely important (Ungerer, et al. 2015: 266). When it comes to craft spirits, it is more about the eagerness to discover something new (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 91). This is an important feature for artisanal brands because they would need to differentiate themselves from their competitors within the competitive market (Ungerer, et al. 2015: 260). Handcrafted methods and local ingredients can be a novelty aspect of artisanal branding. However, it does not create a competitive advantage over other craft distilleries because most craft distilleries use handcrafted methods and local ingredients already.

One novelty aspect that can be incorporated into artisanal branding is the process of being the first and only craft distiller to offer a unique product. This is the process of adding or perhaps doing something to one's distilled spirit that has never quite been executed before. For example, vodka is a high purity spirit that is made from any type of grain such as corn, potatoes and whey (Besse,

2014: 11). The Jorgensen's craft distillery in South Africa is adding an innovative method to produce their vodka. Instead of using potatoes to make vodka, Jorgensen's craft distillery plans on making South Africa's first unique vodka from Pinotage wine (Jorgensen's Distillery 2015, online). This will definitely add an innovative quality to the Jorgensen's craft spirit brand because it reinvents the traditional method of making vodka and it creates an unique product to South Africa's craft distilling industry. Another example is the James Sedgwick distillery for being known for crafting South Africa's first and only 100% single grain whiskey (Jeff Sedgwick Distillery 2011, online). This novelty aspect enhances their artisanal brand because it offers something unique to the South African craft distilling industry and creates a competitive advantage over other artisanal brands.

THE CRAFTED STORY

Another key aspect of artisanal branding is the heritage of one's brand and the brand's personal story. A brand with a past and a story to tell can create a stronger emotional relationship with its consumers (Templeton, 2013: 10) and also creates a personal feature to one's artisanal brand. The heritage of an artisanal brand is also used for the marketing of craft distilled spirits. There are certain principles that some distillers' have used to enrich the heritage of their brand.

Heritage of location is one principle that distillers can use to enhance their brand. For example, the Glendalough Distillery was set to revive the heritage of craft distilling in Ireland because after the 18th and 19th century there was an decrease in the number of Irish craft distilleries (Glendalough Distillery 2015, online). Glendalough became Ireland's first craft distillery that produces innovative spirits that stay true to Irelands ancestors (Glendalough Distillery 2015, online). In addition, the location of the distillery opens the spirit brand to eyes of the consumer. One may not have a beautiful location but one can create a virtual reality for your brand that is appealing and engaging for the consumers so that they can experience the distiller's world (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 125).

Patron, one of the vanguards of new "premium"-level tequilas in the 1990s decided last year to emphasize the small-batch aspects of the brand, from small pot stills to the heritage of its distiller, Francisco Alcaraz (Haynes-Peterson 2015, online). This year, they unveiled the Roca Patron expressions, highlighting the use of traditional tahona stone-wheel processing of the agave pulp prior to distillation (Haynes-Peterson 2015, online).

Another principle that distilleries can use is the heritage of their labels. Many distilled spirit bottles have a coat of arms or a symbol that reflects the brand's heritage and story. For example, *Jameson* whiskey has a coat of arms on its' labels that reflects their Irish heritage, whereas *Johnnie Walker* bottles have the tiny symbol of the Johnny Walker that reflects the journey of the *Johnnie Walker* brand. Although these examples illustrate the heritage exposure of globally known distilled brands, such as the *Johnnie Walker* and *Jameson* brand, craft distiller can also use some of the principles to reveal the heritage of their artisanal product. For example, *Iris* is a botanically crafted liqueur that has the noble iris flower on its label. The iris flower is the official emblem of Florence and the nobility since Renaissance times (Rutter, 2013: 16). *Iris* acclaims its renowned history in a refined botanical liqueur derived from pure iris root (Rutter, 2013: 16).

In fact, there's something to be said for brands with heritage. Many of the industry's most prominent distillers have been working twice as long as their craft counterparts have been alive. Tom Nichol, master blender at Tanqueray, grew up around whiskey, has been a distiller for 40 years, and still references the original 1830s recipe book created by Charles Tanqueray (Haynes-Peterson 2015, online). As established labels have begun noting the emphasis consumers put on small-batch, artisanal and craft spirits, they've begun taking the time to market their own products as having craft roots (Haynes-Peterson 2015, online).

PUT CORK IN IT!

“Consumers see packaging as an integral part of a product’s value proposition. This includes the language conveyed on the packaging, the materials used and the graphical schema employed that includes colours, typography and symbols.” – Chris Arning (2015: 26).

Innovative packaging and label design is also seen as an important aspect of artisanal branding. Consumers form personal relationships with artisanal brands and one way to build a consumer-brand relationship between target market and craft distilled spirits is through innovative and high quality packaging and label design (Silayoi & Speece, 2004: 607). Innovative packaging can add value to the artisanal brand by being unique, attractive, environmentally friendly and high quality (Silayoi & Speece, 2004: 608). These are some of the qualities of innovative packaging and label design that an artisanal brand should incorporate to ensure a strong and unique brand image for a positive influence on consumers’ purchase decision (Silayoi & Speece, 2004: 612).

Firstly, some artisanal distilled spirits are regarded as premium products. Therefore, their labelling and packaging should reflect high quality and not low quality. Most craft distilled spirits are presented in glass bottles as apposed to plastic because glass bottles have a superior quality characteristic (Babington 2013, online). Glass bottles can also be recycled, however, once the bottle has been printed with a type of ink that can contain harmful chemicals, it can be no longer be recycled. Nowadays, craft distilleries are using materials that can be safely exposed and destroyed during the recycle process whilst still providing high-quality, sustainable glass bottling for craft distilleries (Rutter, 2013: 42).

Innovative label design tells the consumer three important things. Labels tell them the name of one’s brand, the origin and story of the brand, and also the quality of the product. Not all craft distilled spirit labels are the same even when they are produced under the same craft distillery. For example, Maine Craft Distilling line of spirits has its own logo design, colour and type treatment (Scott Whitehouse 2015, online). Maine Craft Distillery’s label design (**see figure 1**) was created to enhance the brand’s vintage aspect, however, also giving it a

modern appeal (Scott Whitehouse 2015, online). Brand recognition is demonstrated through the identical bottle and label shapes, top labels and red logos of the Maine's crafted spirits (see figure 2a and 2b). The innovative packaging and labelling of artisanal brands should reflect premium quality, distinctive label design for each line of spirits, and create brand recognition.



FIGURE 1: MAINE CRAFT DISTILLING LINE OF SPIRITS' LABEL DESIGN



FIGURE 2A



FIGURE 2B

FIGURE 2A AND 2B: LABEL DESIGN OF MAINE CRAFT SPIRITS

Other craft spirits design their labeling and packaging that makes a connection between the brand and the local history. Hletko and Lawrence Neisler were thinking of how to make a connection between the Few's brand and its local history. This led them to creating a brand story on the wonders of the Chicago world's Fair of 1893 and what the people who attended the World's Fair experienced (Beurteaux 2012, online). "When we started our design process, we were looking for packaging that was going to convey the overall brand message of being classic yet contemporary," Hletko says (Beurteaux 2012, online)'. All of Few's bottle labels' contain a hidden history lesson where each features an illustration of a creation revealed at the fair (Beurteaux 2012, online). On the rye whiskey label, which is blue (see figure 3), is the first electric fountain, which reportedly shot water 150 ft. into the air at the World's Fair (Beurteaux 2012, online). The images on the Few's labeling were inspired by archival photographs (Beurteaux 2012, online). The shape and color of the label was inspired by the playing cards of the 1890s era and the side label was designed to look like a ticket stub influenced by the World's Fair (Beurteaux 2012, online).



FIGURE 3: LABEL DESIGN OF FEW'S RYE WHISKEY

Another thing that craft distillers need to consider when creating their packaging and label design is bottle closure decisions (Jelinek, 2014: 85). The bottle closure is one of the critical components of packaging and is the final product presented to the consumer (Jelinek, 2014: 85). The bottle closure serves as the both a functional role in that it seals the bottle for transport and as an emotional role in that the package appearance will influence consumer decisions (Jelinek, 2014: 85). There are many options craft distillers can use for designing their closure such as, using screw caps or bar tops for sealing the product. Craft distillers should also consider the type of spirit entering the bottle because this will influence the colour and shape of the glass bottle design (Jelinek, 2014: 85).

There are many innovative labelling and packaging designs used by craft distilled spirit brands but there are certain properties that craft distillers need to consider when designing their packaging and labels. This will determine how the product will stand out from other products on the shelf, how its design will reflect the brand's story, and the aesthetic appeal it will have on the consumer.

ARTISANAL AUTHENTIC MARKETING

According to Beverland (2009: 70), there are certain themes that generate perceptions of authenticity within artisanal brands because they provide a comparison to mainstream, marketing-driven brands. These themes are closely linked to the authentic marketing of artisanal brands. The first theme is associated with the artisan who 'originally had little idea of what they were doing, just lots of passion' (Beverland, 2009: 70). For example, Vapour distillery all started in a modest garage where Ted Palmer began producing what is now their award winning Rhok Gin with just a simple 3-gallon pot still. The very same still can be seen in the backroom of Vapour distillery and serves to remind them of their very unassuming beginnings (Vapordistillery.com, 2015). Although this could lead to average results, artisanal brands use stories that enhance their aura and mystique that contrasts themselves from mainstream, market-driven brands (Beverland, 2009: 71).

Most artisanal distillers do not do extensive marketing of their craft distilled spirits. The most important form of marketing for craft spirits is making the consumer believe and fall in love with the story of the brand. “Marketing a craft brand starts with understanding the founder’s story, which is a very different thing to deciding what the story should be” (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 125). The best person to tell the story would be the distiller because it will generate an authentic experience with the consumer to the introduction of the brand (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 125).

It is critical for the consumer to be amazed and fascinated with the brand during their visit to the craft distillery and online. “Websites should be designed with the same sense of place that defines the distillery” (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 125) because it is a place where consumers engage and interact with the brand. The website reflects the brand’s story and it is a great media tool to spread word-of-mouth of their story of its artisanal spirit brand (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 126). These marketing activities provide artisanal brands with rich history and a story that reflects a distillers’ conclusive desire – loving what they do best.

HOW ABOUT A G&T?

Many craft distillers focus upon certain aspects of artisanal branding for building their craft spirit brand. Some choose to adhere to the true authenticity of being a ‘crafted’ product whereas other craft distillers prefer to modernise their craft product whilst still incorporating the standards of the craft distillation methods. Artisanal branding is complex because there is no right or wrong way to build an artisanal brand and every craft distiller adopts different approaches and methods of artisanal branding to differentiate themselves and maintain a competitive advantage within the distilling industry. Artisanal branding is about focusing on a specific approach to create a distinguished, high quality, product that is also handcrafted, culturally rooted and has a distinctive aesthetic appeal.

In South Africa, there is a need for unique craft specialised spirits (Jorgensen's Craft Distillery, 2015). South Africa is famous for its craft brandy, beer and whiskey. South Africa is home to the Oude Molen Distillery that produces an award-winning, premium brandy (Oude Molen Distiller, 2012, online), the Cape Brewing Company creating nine distinctive beer flavours (Cape Brewing Company 2015, online), and also the James Sedgwick Distillery that introduced South Africa's first single grain whiskey (Jeff Sedgwick Distillery 2011, online).

Inverroche decided to *put a cork in it* and take on the country's biggest craft distillers by starting a gin micro distillery in 2007 outside a small town called Stilbaai. *Inverroche* craft distillery was established by entrepreneur, Lorna Scott and with her son and partner, Rohan (Schafer, 2013: 58). *Inverroche* is regarded as prestigious brand that handcrafts four artisanal types of gin and is sold at up-market restaurants across the country as well as exported internationally.

Inverroche can be regarded as an artisanal brand because it produces products that are distinguished by the fact that they are small batched, handcrafted alcoholic products of excellent quality, incorporating a range of rare indigenous flora and fauna qualities (Inverroche, online). These fynbos flowers include buchu, wild geranium, suurvygie, aloe, kankerbossie and rooibos (Schafer, 2013: 59). *Inverroche's* gin brand can be regarded as a phenomenon to the South African craft distilling industry because they were able to build a strong artisanal brand that distinguished itself from its South African competitors. This research will explore the key aspects of artisanal branding incorporated by the *Inverroche* gin brand and understand how *Inverroche* put these craft principles into use to 'unleash its local spirits upon the world!

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

APPROACH

Craft distilled spirit brands in South Africa are not thinking ‘outside the bottle’ to offer innovative and unique products to the consumer. Craft distillers should preferably develop a niche product targeted at a consumer market segment interested in customised offerings of handcrafted, locally produced ingredients with a distinguishing taste and smoothness (Ungerer, et. al, 2015: 267). However, not all craft distillers use the same methods of artisanal branding because each craft distiller tries to distinguish their brand from others. The research approach aims to explore and understand the key aspects of artisanal branding illustrated through the phenomenon of the *Inverroche* gin brand. Therefore, the approach to this study would be a phenomenological approach because it involves the process of human behaviour and their social world from their point of view (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 15). The researcher assumes an interpretative position and might discover revelation findings or findings that are surprising from the perception outside the specific phenomenon that is being studied (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 15).

DESIGN OF STUDY

A case study is conducted to understand a complex social phenomena and the method allows the researcher to retain the universal and significant characteristics of actual events (Kohlbacher, 2006). When using a case study, the researcher has little control over events and a case study is a preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being presented (Kohlbacher, 2006). Furthermore, a case design explores a specific phenomenon. The type of case study that will be explored is an explanatory case, which will “derive a detailed understanding of a particular phenomenon separate from more quantitative methods” (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 112). A case study design is appropriate for this topic of analysis because it involves the exploration of key aspects of artisanal

branding and how *Inverroche* used these key aspects to build their artisanal brand.

RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Appropriate research methods to analyse the topic of study is very important to achieve the aim of the study. Qualitative research aims to understand some aspect of social life and the method consists of the collection and analysis of non-numerical data such as words, pictures and actions whilst drawing upon subjective conclusions (Patton & Cochran, 2002: 2). A qualitative method was conducted for this research because the topic deals with a phenomenon of the *Inverroche* gin brand and a qualitative method allows the researcher to make interpretations of the artisanal branding illustrated by *Inverroche* gin brand. The three qualitative data methods conducted were a semi-structured interview with Lorna Scott, participant observation at the *Inverroche* distillery and a semiotic analysis on *Inverroche's* packaging and label design.

An interview's purpose is to gather the explanations of the life experiences of the interviewee with respect to understanding the meaning of the described phenomena (Opdenakker 2006, online). A semi-structured interview involves a list of questions relating to the topic of discussion and this will allow the interviewee to have leeway in how to reply (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 225). An observation provides a direct approach to the phenomena to be reflected without disrupting the research process and the researcher remains a passive observer whilst not disrupting the subject of observation. (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 244). Semiotics is the analysis of signs and symbols in everyday life and can be used in relation to data because of its assurance to treating phenomena as texts (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 225).

DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview begins with a clear focus and ensures that specific subjects and issues are addressed related to the topic of research (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 227). The semi-structured interview was held in person with Lorna

Scott, owner and manager of *Inverroche*, at the *Inverroche* Distillery in Stilbaai. The interview consisted of questions relating to the key aspects of artisanal branding illustrated by the *Inverroche* gin brand. This involved a list of questions relating to the topic of discussion and it allowed the interviewee to have leeway in how to reply. The semi-structured interview was then transcribed for analysis.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is one of the best-known methods of data collection and participant observation always takes place within the location that is believed to have relevance to the research questions whilst recording all accounts and observations in a notebook (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 244). A participant observation was conducted when attending the *Inverroche* distillery in Stilbaai to further understand and explore the artisanal branding of the *Inverroche* gin brand. An observation also occurred during three gin tour and tastings at the *Inverroche* gin distillery in Stilbaai. Consumers' reactions to the experience towards tour and tasting of the gin was observed and recorded.

Semiotic Analysis

Semiotic analysis focuses on the way that messages are communicated as systems of culture meaning. A semiotic approach was conducted during the analysis of *Inverroche's* packaging and label design. According to Chris Arning (2015: 26), "the use of semiotics research is penetrating the sphere of packaging design, giving brands a tremendous head start in communicating core values, personality and brand positioning to the market." The semiotic analysis included the exploration of the denotative and connotative meaning illustrated in *Inverroche's* packaging and label design.

POPULATION & SAMPLING

Population

The population was manageable for this research, as it involved the analysis of one case study – the *Inverroche* gin brand. In addition, the population involved consumers that attended the *Inverroche* gin distillery. Thus, the small-varied group of population will represent the entire population.

Sampling

The targeted population was about 23 consumers who specifically came into the *Inverroche* gin distillery to taste the gin. The consumers' demographics were not taken into consideration for this qualitative analysis of the *Inverroche* gin brand.

ANALYSIS TOOLS

A case study does not have its own specific techniques for the analysing of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 359). However, two techniques were used to analyse the collection of data. These were a thematic analysis and a coding analysis. Coding is the starting point for qualitative data analysis and implies that the original data will be interpreted and re-presented by the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 336). Coding also condenses data and condensing refers to the process of "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in full corpus of written-up field notes, interview transcripts, documents and other empirical materials" (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 336). A thematic analysis is a flexible method where its aim is to identify, analyse and describe patterns or themes, across the collection of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 350). "Determining the theme and the prominence of the theme relates to how it captures important meaning with reference to the research question" (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 350).

The data of the interview was sound recorded on a cellular device and notes were written during the interview. The interviewee was aware that they were being recorded. The recorded interview was then transcribed accurately and kept as a record. The participant observation of the research was uninterrupted because the researcher remained passive and wrote down notes that were later transcribed. For semiotic analysis, "the recipient of the message must actively interpret the signifier in order to establish its meaning by drawing on his or her cultural knowledge" (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 356). A visual description analysis tool was chosen for the semiotic analysis of *Inverroche's* packaging and label design. The researcher wrote down the visual appearance and then decoded the messages and signs illustrated by *Inverroche's* packaging and label design. A daily interpretative analysis of the interview, observation and semiotic data was

conducted because it is important to interpret the information obtained as accurately as possible as one needs to ensure that the integrity of the data is not threatened.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity

The data collected for the primary research cannot be valid or invalid, however, the conclusions that will be extracted from the data will be classified as either valid or invalid.

Reliability

For the purpose of this research study, the interview and semiotic analysis of *Inverroche* gin brand will be able to acquire intended information. However, the participant observation tool may vary as the population, the various subjects and the sample size may alter. The factors affecting reliability negatively will be identified and minimized to produce true information as part of the qualitative information obtained.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher remained unbiased and impartial towards the subject of analysis and interpretations. The researcher has obtained permission to mention the *Inverroche* gin brand for the purpose of the study. The researcher obtained permission from the interviewee to conduct the interview whereby none of the data obtained has been manipulated or been used out of context. In addition, any irrelevant information gathered from the research that may damage the *Inverroche* gin brand's reputation would not be mentioned at all.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

CRAFTED BY HANDS – INVERROCHE IN CRAFTED HANDS

“It’s a very labour intensive business. We do everything by hand.” - Lorna Scott

The key to *Inverroche* being a handcrafted product is not only by labeling their spirits to be ‘handcrafted’ but also demonstrating the essence of being a ‘handcrafted’ spirit through the principles of the distillery. The observation at the *Inverroche* distillery demonstrated to consumers what it truly means to be a handcrafted product. During the tour of the distillery, the workers were busy handpicking the fynbos to be distilled and each label is signed and dated by the artisanal distiller that packaged the bottle. “They see the fynbos growing, they see us picking it and bottling our gin”, says Lorna. Lorna believes that demonstrating *Inverroche* to be ‘handcrafted’ is one of the most important elements in developing their brand’s identity as an artisanal product.

Being ‘handcrafted’ is also associated with the size of the distillery’s distribution (Lozier, 2014: 62) and when asked whether or not the *Inverroche* gin brand wishes to grow bigger, Lorna answered that their vision is to “stay small, but think big”. In other words, the *Inverroche* gin brand does not want to lose its craftsmanship by distributing greater volumes because “[they] got to a point where [they] have reached [their] maximum capacity where it has been difficult to meet the demand,” says Lorna Scott. *Inverroche* distributes a maximum of 8000 bottles a month, excluding their exports. Lorna wishes to expand the brand, but without changing the authenticity and hand crafted quality of her brand. How she is going to achieve this is “by adopting a production node that functions around a 1000 litre pot still and the idea is to duplicate and get another pot still”. *Inverroche* has also expanded their product range by releasing a new product, which is seven year aged pot still rum. Therefore, *Inverroche* demonstrates that there is a way for an artisanal brand to expand without losing its handcrafted authenticity.

TURNING GARBAGE-INTO-GOLD OR INTO RUM COBBLES

Although the distillation of spirits produces an enormous amount of waste, the *Inverroche* gin brand uses environmentally sustainable methods throughout the distillery and the production of their spirits. Being an environmentalist, Lorna has a zero-waste policy that she demonstrates at the distillery. “We believe in preserving our environment, and everything on my estate has been designed with this principle in mind”. During the interview, Lorna discussed the different environmentally sustainable methods that they use to ensure the eco-friendly status of their *Inverroche* brand and the *Inverroche* distillery.

All of *Inverroche*'s buildings have been constructed from limestone sourced from the property in the process of creating a huge underground cellar where future ages of rums and liquors will mature. “All our waste includes our botanical waste, the fynbos after it has been used, the citrus waste and the molasses waste where we combine it all into big tanks and we mix it with cement to create rum cobbles”. The paths, the verandah and the shop are all made from rum cobbles and bricks.

Inverroche's unpolluted rainwater is collected and stored and the groundwater is pumped to the surface by a windmill and piped through a storage system. “All our botanical material is turned into compost to feed the fynbos, which grows plentifully in the wild” explains Lorna, “in addition, our pot still is wood-fired using invasive alien vegetation such as Acacia Cyclops or rooipytie, Port Jackson and black wattle which pose a huge fire hazard. Harvesting this material reduces the risk of wildfires and provides work for the community too.”

Adopting environmentally sustainable methods is an important aspect of building the *Inverroche* gin brand because *Inverroche* uses indigenous fynbos and often this would lead to dispute of whether or not *Inverroche* is deemed a healthy brand. *Inverroche* builds sustainable relationships by never taking more than it gives. *Inverroche* achieves this by practicing sustainable methods that reduce waste and protects the fynbos in the region as *Inverroche* cultivates their own

fynbos for their gin. Therefore, *Inverroche* can be deemed a healthy brand as it finds ways to utilise more sustainable and healthy production methods (Cook, Erwin & et. al., 2014: 14). The use of environmentally sustainable methods appeals to many consumers who are concerned with the environment and *Inverroche* has indicated that this is a key aspect of artisanal branding.

LOCAL IS LEKKER WITH FYNBOS

Inverroche is a proudly South African product that uses fynbos as ingredients in their gin. The idea of using indigenous fynbos in gin began with Lorna's involvement with emergent farms and a group of women in Albertina who were looking at the land and whether or not it had economic potential through growing something that could be sold. This brought upon her idea of using indigenous fynbos that spoke about *Inverroche's* brand story of new South Africa. What *Inverroche* was trying to do with its brand was to combine a sense of place through ingredients and the sense of place that encompasses the history of the fynbos that is truly unique to South Africa.

Using local ingredients for craft distilling plays a major factor in consumer influence to purchasing a craft distilled spirit. Consumer feedback during the gin tour and tasting at the *Inverroche* distillery was mostly positive where consumers expressed their thoughts and opinions on the taste of the gin. 16 out of 23 consumers (69,5%) each purchased a bottle of gin after the tasting. However, there was also slight negative commentary on the *Inverroche* gin product where two consumers mentioned that they prefer their gin more restrained and traditional.

The use of the local fynbos ingredients improves the quality of the traditional method of distilling gin. The fynbos botanicals used in the *Inverroche* gin complement and share a flavour similar to the flavour profile traditionally used in the production of gin (Inverroche online, 2013). In the southern tip of Africa, the climate has extreme vacancies that cause the fynbos to vary slightly each year. This means that every harvest produces subtle differences in the taste of each gin and this is why each year is regarded as a vintage year (Inverroche

online, 2013). Therefore, using local ingredients promotes the artisanal quality of the *Inverroche* gin brand because it creates a sense of South African pride and improves the quality and diversity in the taste of the *Inverroche* gin products.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE - "WHY NOT DO THREE?"

"You need more than one product that can really bring that kind of impetus to changing peoples' awareness and having choice and to say 'look there is an alternative to just Gilbey's and Bombay Sapphire etc.'" - Lorna Scott

"To my knowledge, I do not think there is any other brand that has three different types of gin," says Lorna during the interview. This is one of the *Inverroche* gin brand's creative features in their products that cause a difference in consumer expectations. *Inverroche* does not have an innovative characteristic within one bottle of gin but within all three bottles of gin. Lorna explained that she did not make three different gins deliberately but serendipity played a large role where she began to recognize the potential. Lorna ended up with three gins while she was experimenting with the different botanicals. "We ended up putting them with what tastes nice and so I ended up with three little heaps," says Lorna.

"I thought why not do three. Why do only one? If I am trying to tell a story of such a complicated, huge region; why must I restrict myself to only doing one?" Each little heap coincidentally happened to represent the different sub-regions of the fynbos. The gin Verdant represents the floral fynbos region with its infusion of late summer blooms; the gin Classic represents the woody, mountain fynbos region with its drier, richer flavour; and the gin Amber represents the coastal region with its distinctive citrus undertones (Inverroche online, 2013). Creating three distinctive gins is an excellent branding tool for capturing consumers. As mentioned, consumers "crave novelty and will pay a premium to be surprised and delighted with what is in their glass" (Entrepreneur Magazine, 2015: 91). *Inverroche* has done just that by providing consumers three different gins that would suit their personal taste. Observing the tasting of the 23 consumers at the distillery, one began to notice that consumers would buy the gin that they were particularly fond of. One Scottish consumer went away with

purchasing six bottles of her two favourites: the Amber and Verdant gin for herself and gifts for her friends and family. *Inverroche* created a distinctive brand that could cater for a larger audience compared to other small-batched artisanal products.

In addition, *Inverroche* is the “only distillery that specialize in fynbos” explains Lorna. They reinvented a traditional alcoholic gin recipe and added fynbos that has never been done before in South Africa. “The thing about fynbos is that it cannot be grown anywhere, its not possible,” explains Lorna. “Since the beginning of the advent of all spirits; all brands just copy. Whether it is a whiskey or whether it is a vodka, brands are not using anything that is unique.” Therefore, the *Inverroche* gin brand brings awareness to the local and the international market of using unusual and uniquely South African ingredients that have never been executed before and this is what drives their brand’s unique selling point.

THE CRAFTED STORY OF A COMPLEX REGION

“To tell a story about a place we needed a world class product that speaks about a country, about culture, about an ethic of skill that is unique about a place.” – Lorna Scott.

Inverroche told the story of their brand through the heritage of a location and this is an authentic aspect of the *Inverroche* gin brand. They chose to tell a story of a new, modern South Africa and a complicated region, which has the richest floral biome in the world. During the interview, Lorna explained that she looked at the region to what it had that was unique. Lorna discovered that there were the blombos caves, the pinnacle point with its rich history and the fact that Stilbaai is right in the middle of what is known as the world’s richest floral biome.

Lorna explains, “When you think of brands like Gucci or Chanel, you immediately associate that brand with a country. If you think of France, you think sophistication and when you think of Italy you think stylish craftsmanship.” *Inverroche’s* personal brand story wanted to speak about new South Africa, not

old South Africa because “all the products that we have we think about elephants, leopards, and the big five, and it’s all draped in either old or wild Africa, but what is there about new South Africa?”

The *Inverroche* brand reflects the incredible history as well as the modern diversity of South Africa. Lorna considered how she could put the fynbos story of this unique location into a bottle and the most suitable spirit she could think of was gin. The *Inverroche* gin brand drives the product because what *Inverroche* is trying to do is to create awareness of the uniqueness of a place, which surpasses the unique selling point of the product. “Its not that it just looks different or that it tastes different” says Lorna, “but the fact that it speaks particularly of a place that cannot be repeated”.

According to Michael Beverland, stories of a place are central in cases where local characteristics give rise to unique product aspects (2008: 58). *Inverroche’s* aspect of telling a story of a unique, historic place reinforces notions of heritage, quality, and sincerity, “and is usually seen as central to claims of authenticity, even when there remain only tenuous links between a particular place and the brand (Beverland, 2009: 58). Telling the story of the place through a brand is so powerful that many consumers commence journeys to famous regions in order to enhance their own experience of the brand (Beverland, 2009: 58). During the gin tour and tasting at the distillery, 23 people over a period of three days came from different parts of the country to experience the *Inverroche* brand and hear their story.

PUT A CORK IN IT! OLD TRADITIONAL SOUTH AFRICA

“It was quite a journey and the temptation was there to pick some sort of African name or Koi name and then I thought that considering what I was trying to do with our brand was to combine a sense of place through ingredients and the sense of place that encompasses the history” – Lorna Scott.

A semiotic analysis on *Inverroche's* packaging and label design showed that the *Inverroche* design was aimed to position themselves as a luxury, premium product that spoke about modern, new South Africa.

On a denotative level, the packaging of the *Inverroche* gin brand is very simplistic with a cork-top glass bottle, placed carefully into a rectangular cardboard box. Each gin has a different colour scheme, for example the *Inverroche* gin Amber has a black-silver colour scheme (see figure 4A), *Inverroche* gin Verdant has a gold-white colour scheme (see figure 4B), and the *Inverroche* gin Classic has a silver-blue colour scheme (see figure 4C).

On a connotative level the design of the *Inverroche* gin brand packaging speaks of luxury and sophistication. Lorna explains that most gins are packaged commercially with screw tops and she wanted to design the packaging that would put it into a category where one would compare it to a perfume bottle, such as Chanel.

“It speaks as a handcrafted, exceptional and luxury product where it would sit on the shelf in its simple elegant form and one would recognize it and would want to see what is in it when you take the bottle out of the box,” explains Lorna.

The colours are bold, vibrant and modern compared to traditional South African packaging and label design that normally communicate wild, old South Africa. The different colour schemes that *Inverroche* has used for each gin would generate intrigue and interest in the consumer because one would begin to question why is this product is different to the other. The aesthetic shape and design choice of the bottle is different because the cork tops have an artisanal quality where the idea is “for the consumer to open the cork like a perfume bottle to smell the rich fynbos aromas inside”. The glass is transparent which gives the aesthetic appeal of the bottle a very modern yet natural look where one can see the different colours of each gin.

There are also connotative associations with the story of the *Inverroche* gin brand through symbols and signs reflected within the packaging and label design. Firstly, the design of the *Inverroche* logo (see figure 5) is a simple geometric shape that resembles the outline of a flower. However, there is a whole symbolic message in the logo because the logo represents the water that moves through the limestone that feeds and interacts with the fynbos used in the *Inverroche* gin. Lorna explains that the shape of the logo reflects an interconnectedness where the “geometric shape is a continuous movement reflecting what [their] entire brand is about”

The name *Inverroche* is a combined word that also tells the story of the *Inverroche* gin brand. *Inver* is a Gaelic word for the confluence of waters. Also *Inver* is the prefix for little towns “like Stilbaai where the river would flow out and meet the ocean,” explains Lorna. *Roche* is the French word for stone and “put *Inver* and *Roche* together and it creates the cycle of life.” The combined brand name reflects the connectedness the brand has to creating a product that tells a story and forms a personal relationship with the consumer. Therefore, the logo and name on the *Inverroche* packaging and label design reflects a combination of symbols that reveal the unique personality at the heart of the brand.

Inverroche's gin packaging design differentiate itself from their competitors in the sense that they have packaged their bottles in boxes to generate consumer interest, the aesthetic quality of the product is bold, modern, and simplistic where the brand is positioned as a premium product. Lastly, the brand's name and logo design is symbolic in representing the brand's story and this is a clever technique in the fact that no other brand can speak of the diverse rich complexity of this particular place.



FIGURE 4A: INVERROCHE GIN AMBER PRODUCT



FIGURE 4B: INVERROCHE GIN VERDANT PRODUCT



FIGURE 4C: INVERROCHE GIN CLASSIC PRODUCT

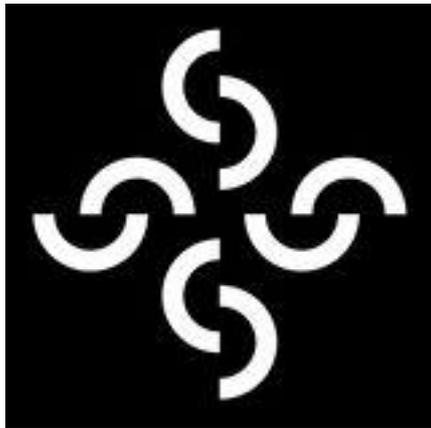


FIGURE 5: INVERROCHE LOGO DESIGN

ARTISANAL AUTHENTIC MARKETING THROUGH WORD-OF-MOUTH

“Our entire brand has been built through word-of-mouth, I have never advertised” – Lorna Scott

The *Inverroche* gin brand reflects artisanal authentic marketing and they have excelled their brand awareness by not even spending one cent on commercial, mainstream advertising. *Inverroche* has managed to achieve this by creating an unforgettable experience at the distillery for consumers, through the layout design of the distillery and the website as it enhances *Inverroche's* image as an authentic brand with a story to tell.

Observing the design of the distillery, one is immediately encapsulated by the *Inverroche* brand's story. Upon entrance, the limestone walls protecting the indigenous fynbos guard the distillery. The smell of distilled gin and rum linger in the air, which allows one to endure a sensory experience of *Inverroche*. Upon entering the shop of the distillery, there is modern aesthetic with gold, bronze and copper colours, which give the brand a premium, modern appeal. All these sensory factors enhance *Inverroche's* brand presence where the consumer becomes physically involved and engaged with the brand.

In addition, the experience of the distillery is extremely vibrant and fun. *Inverroche* positioned themselves as a premium product and one was expecting sophisticated, upper-class consumers to walk through the *Inverroche* distillery doors. However, upon observation most of the individuals were young, middle-class, consumers intrigued upon hearing of the *Inverroche* gin brand.

“What I thought was my target market as being more premium and sophisticated and upper income group was not true. I think people just liked the product, particularly all South Africans, and I'm not just talking race groups, or socio-economic or cultural groups; everybody resonates what we are trying to say about who we are and what we are trying to do,” explains Lorna Scott.

The *Inverroche* gin brand's aesthetic quality would appeal to upper class consumers, however, *Inverroche* does not limit their target market because they feel that it would simply be unethical and does not reflect what the brand stands for. Lorna mentions, "The idea is creating a brand that all people can take ownership of and make it feel that it belongs to you. It is something that is South African and it should be shared."

Inverroche remains consistent through their aspiration to tell the story of their brand as one experiences this on their website page. Their website takes one on a journey of the *Inverroche* gin brand and gives them the sense of the place whilst listening ocean sounds in the background on their website (Inverroche, online: 2013). The website also reflects the experience at the distillery and it can be regarded as a great marketing tool because it generates intrigue of the *Inverroche* gin brand and would spread brand awareness through word-of-mouth.

Lastly, the tasting of the gin can be regarded as a branding tool. Lorna explains that the idea of the tasting is to broaden the appeal that there is history that needs to be changed.

"If you think of Madam & Eve, the little cartoon, and you think of madam drinking the gin, the tasting of our product aims to show that gin can be modern and funky for surfers to enjoy too!" Says Lorna.

This gin tasting experience broadens the appeal of the brand in the eye of the consumer. The tasting of the gin at the *Inverroche* distillery is not only for the experience of tasting gin, but also for the opportunity to tell about the *Inverroche* gin brand's purpose and message.

"We give them an experience to introduce them to a product that they would take away and something that is going to sit on their dining room

table not just on the shelf, but something that becomes a focal point and a conversation piece with their own friends and family,” explains Lorna.

These three artisanal marketing aspects are all about experience with the *Inverroche* gin brand and face-to-face consumer interaction. Performing an experience at the distillery where consumers will start a conversation about the *Inverroche* story will not only generate a sense of pride but builds an authentic relationship with the consumer and the brand. It is a marketing tool that pushes mainstream brands aside on the shelf and spreads word-of-mouth about an intriguing product encouraging consumers to go and experience this brand at the distillery for themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This research study explored the key aspects of artisanal branding illustrated by the *Inverroche* gin brand. In conclusion, the *Inverroche* gin brand illustrates all the key aspects of artisanal branding by being a small-batched, handcrafted, local South African distilled spirit infused with indigenous fynbos. However, the *Inverroche* gin brand focused on two key aspects of artisanal branding as their unique selling point of their product. The two key aspects they focused upon for building their artisanal craft spirit are the novelty and crafted story of their brand. The *Inverroche* gin brand illustrated through these two key aspects that they were able to build a brand around a story that cannot be repeated and being the first to use indigenous South African ingredients to produce three diverse gins. This allows for the *Inverroche* gin brand to stand out from their competitors.

Furthermore, the *Inverroche* gin can be regarded as an authentic and iconic brand because they did not just place the word 'artisanal' on their label. *Inverroche* built their authenticity of their product through the marketing experience of their brand. The *Inverroche* gin brand reflects that if one wants to build their own artisanal distilled spirit, they should do this by staying true to the principles of craftsmanship and tell a story that is unique but also true. Like *Inverroche*, one should demonstrate their brand through consumer interaction because it is often one of the elements that are neglected because it speaks about the brand identity of product as an authentic, artisanal distilled spirit.

With the rise of craft distilleries in South Africa, aspirational craft distillers are leaning towards handcrafted goods with a distinctive character, as opposed to bland, featureless mass-produced products. The aspects of artisanal branding explored in this research can definitely provide useful insight for artisanal distillers to building their own product. Artisans need to market the authentic uniqueness of their product by always staying true to their artisanal branding principles to assure their product's success.

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