

# Pouring Empowerment

AMANDLA WINES

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Upon introspection of my two decades in the hospitality and drinks industry, a persistent truth emerges: the wine industry and its producers have consistently remained predominantly White and male. This exclusivity has significantly influenced the perception of wine consumers, who are frequently confined to a limited and narrow view that often doesn't include us.

However, the tides of change have been gaining momentum, particularly after the watershed year of 2020, when the call for specifically Black-specific diversity echoed across industries, including the wine sector.

This paradigm shift has been given impetus by the emergence of Black-owned drinks brands that are making their mark on a global scale. Notably, Black wine producers have risen to prominence across continents, with Europe, the USA, and South Africa becoming hubs of this exciting movement. This shift has been particularly intriguing given the complex intricacies of import and export, further compounded by events such as Brexit when bringing products into the UK.

Amid these transformations, a compelling and purposeful brand emerged – the arrival of Amandla, a South African wine brand that touched down on British shores just one year ago. Its impact was immediate, securing distribution in two major retail giants, Sainsbury's and Waitrose, whilst building community primarily within the Black in hospitality spaces. Amandla stands as an embodiment of progress, exuding the vibrant spirit of a modern, inclusive lifestyle. The brand is part of the HER Wine Collection, with everyone in the company being Black and female. From the visionary Managing Director and talented winemaker to the viticulturist, accountant, logistics manager, and stock controller, each role is masterfully filled by exceptional Black women. Beyond the realm of wine, Amandla serves as a celebration of South Africa's diverse history, the pulsating vitality of Black culture, and the stories of the team behind the wine.

My experience as a former wine buyer and current wine enthusiast gives me a unique vantage point to appreciate this shift. The captivating label designs, adorned with elegant depictions of Black women, draw a sense of relatability I had never encountered before. Amandla's

marketing strategies convey camaraderie, resonating with the essence of a night out or a cosy night in with friends. In these artistic choices, the brand has captured the very essence of its demographic and unveiled a mirror reflecting the reality of Black women as consumers and creators in the wine industry.

Amandla, a Zulu and Xhosa term employed as a rallying cry during the Apartheid resistance, encapsulates the essence of empowerment and unity. It reverberates with the declaration of "power to the people," underscoring a shared sentiment of strength and collective progress. This ethos resonates powerfully throughout Amandla's wine range, where each wine name aligns with the vision of the Managing Director, Praisylamini. With names like POWER Shiraz-Zinfandel, FUTURE Sauvignon Blanc, and FREEDOM Blush, the wines symbolise the championing of freedom, the celebration of power, and the unwavering resilience that defines women. Through their existence, Praisylamini's vision is that these wines inspire present and future generations to rise above challenges and embrace their potential.

The Amandla range, a culmination of this vision, is meticulously crafted from vineyards in the Western Cape, South Africa, and the very presence of Amandla's wines on the shelves of Waitrose and Sainsbury's heralds a new era of change within the wine industry. Amandla is also a symbol of progress, inviting us all to raise a glass to the changing face of wine, which finally includes us.

Amandla is available to buy in Waitrose and Sainsbury's.

[www.amandlawines.com](http://www.amandlawines.com)

