

Driving the change in wine marketing



By [Robin Fredericks](#)

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Carina Gous, the strategic advisor at Bonnievale Wines, has always had an appreciation for winemaking having grown up on a farm in the Keisie valley near Montagu. Holding an MSC and an MBA, as well as being a chemist by training, Gous has taken her knowledge and love of wine and embarked on a career in wine marketing and international business consultancy.

Gous previously served as head of Distell's marketing and brand division, culminating her recognition as one of South Africa's leading wine marketing experts.

Here, Gous shares more on her challenges, career and message for #WomensMonth...



Carina Gous

What does a day in your life look like?

In a nutshell – busy and diverse. Currently, I work in marketing and international wine business, so my days are filled with brand building activities from brand positioning workshops to packaging design as well as international business discussions and frankly chasing sales! No two days are the same, which I really enjoy.

What made you choose a career in the wine industry? What inspired you to pursue a career as a wine industry specialist?

I grew up on a grape and fruit farm close to Montagu, so I guess it was always in my blood. It is hard to explain but once you start discovering the interesting and complex world of wine, it is hard not to get hooked. I was fortunate enough to turn that passion into a career.

Do you think it's important to have a month dedicated to women?

I think it is important for women to celebrate who they are and to rediscover the strength they have and what they are capable of. To really highlight the contribution of women to society.

■ The role of women in the wine industry – how do you think it has shaped the industry?

We have made such huge strides in so many industries to open opportunities for women and the wine industry is no different. I do not believe women in the industry should be treated any different from men, but it is great to have more diversity and representation across gender and race. It makes the industry far more multi-dimensional and interesting.

■ What barriers did you face, as a woman, becoming successful in your field, and how did you overcome them? Are there any worthwhile challenges that you enjoy?

There were very few barriers in terms of opportunities to do well in my job and to excel in what I did, however when I started my career discrimination against women was horrible in terms of salary, benefits, pension, etc. I spent many hours in discussions with human resources to try and understand the basis of it all and to change it.

■ Based on your experience, what advice would you give to women pursuing a career in your field?

Make sure that you are passionate about the work that you want to do. If you are, working and working really hard and

making the sacrifices to succeed will never feel like an effort.

■ ***Who do you admire most in the industry?***

In my early career, I had huge admiration for Phyllis Hands and learned a lot from people like Bennie Howard, Ernst le Roux, Smartie Genade and Jan Scannell. All experts in their field and really good mentors and leaders.

■ ***What is your message for Women's Month - any words of wisdom you would like to share?***

Believe in yourself. If you can dream it, you can achieve it, but you will have to take the action and drive the change.

ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

Editor at Bizcommunity.

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