

# Meet Kwanele Nyawo, CEO and cofounder of Khulu Wines

Ahead of the [Johannesburg Cap Classique & Champagne Festival](#), Kwanele Nyawo, CEO and cofounder of Khulu Wines and producer behind Izigidi Cap Classique shares how it all began and what bubbly lovers can expect from her Cap Classique.



L to R: Chef Sizo Henna, Kwanele Nyawo and Niël van Staden. Image supplied

## ■ ***Can you tell us about the people behind Khulu Wines?***

Khulu was founded by me, Kwanele Nyawo and my business partner Niël van Staden. I spent 13 and a half years working for one of South Africa's biggest insurance companies before embarking on an entrepreneurship journey. I am also a former radio talk show host and serve on the executive committees of two NGOs.

Niël worked at a leading global investment bank in London for 12 years across a variety of roles gaining extensive experience in investment services, global markets and asset management. After returning to South Africa, he founded several tech companies and serves on a number of boards.

## ■ ***How did you meet?***

Niël and I met on a bizarre Zoom call while I was working on an event for a client. We met at the said event a few weeks later and immediately hit it off. We started Mzansi Craft Wine together and Khulu shortly thereafter.

## ■ ***Where are you based?***

I split my time between Johannesburg and Paarl. I generally spend one week a month in Paarl because that is where our operations are based.

## ■ ***Tell us about the name 'Khulu'***

Khulu means 'great' or 'extravagant' in isiZulu. Niël and I wanted to create a luxury wine brand those words would apply to, as we both love the good things in life.



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### Who is your winemaker?

We have a number of wine makers across the Cape winelands who make wines for us based on our specific requirements. We are very involved in the winemaking process although we are not winemakers ourselves.

### Can you tell us about your range?

We currently have three red wines and a Cap Classique. Our red wine range consists of a Cabernet Sauvignon, a Shiraz and a Cabernet blend and our bubbly is called Izigidi which means 'millions'.



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### Can you tell us a bit about Izigidi which you will be showcasing at the festival?

Bubbly lovers can expect a beautiful Blanc de Blanc Cap Classique made from 100% chardonnay grapes. It is complex and indulgent with secondary aromas of orange blossom and lemon zest on the nose.

### What are the best foods to pair with Izigidi?

Definitely seafood, salads and cheese. I'm a cheese lover, so cheese always makes my list of pairings.

### Where do you see Khulu in five years' time?

I see Khulu as an established wine brand associated with quality and luxury. We would love for our Cap Classique to be one of the best rated bubbles in South Africa.

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