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WHAT'S INSIDE

CARMEN SHABANGU
10 years of turning moments into memories and The Art of Experience.

UMJOLO
The highs & lows at navigating the modern day dating scene.

EXCLUSIVE
SABZ
THE SOUL TRAIN
How Mbabane Born & Bred Powerhouse DJ & Producer is Making Waves Across Mzansi & Beyond!

A RETURN TO THE AFRICAN FUTURE

EAT. SWAY. LOVE: Discover the Nguni Foodways culinary storytelling, fashion inspired by Kwasukasukela and a Pan-Africa musical experience at Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival.

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EDITORIAL TEAM

Managing Editor
Phesheya Mkhonta

Issue Editor
Slindelo Nkosi

Reporters & Content Contributors
Ayanda Dlamini, Fezile Mkhatshwa, Nothando Masilela, Delisa Thwala, Standard Bank Luju Festival, COSPE, World Vision

BUSINESS SERVICES

Publishers
Raspers Media (PTY) LTD
Office No. 7 | Ground Floor | Sokhamlilo Building
Dzwliwe Street | Mbabane | Kingdom of Eswatini
Email: info@affinityinc.africa
Tel: (+268) 7661 8219

Brand & Business Development
Phesheya Mkhonta - Head of Business Development
Zwakele Hlanze - Head of Brand & Creative Strategy
Zamokuhle Dlamini - Accounts & Admin

Advertising & Sales
Affinity Incorporated T/A Affinity
info@affinityinc.africa
+268 345 00062 / 7813 1313 / 7622 3121

Digital Channels
Nkhosinathi Manyika - IT & Multimedia Specialist
Nothando Masilela - Social Media Assistant

Retail Distribution
Affinity

Corporate Distribution
Affinity

PRODUCTION

Design & Multimedia
Zwakele Hlanze, Lindokuhle Shabangu, Sifiso Masilela (Craft Space)

Printing
REMATA Print & Communication

Remata Print & Communications
International Business Gateway Park
Cnr New Rd & Sixth St | Midrand | Gauteng
South Africa
Tel: +27 11 848 0000 | Fax +27 11 848 0036
www.remata.co.za

CONTACT DETAILS

Kulture
Affinity Incorporated (PTY) LTD
Office No. 7 | Ground Floor | Sokhamlilo Building
Dzwliwe Street | Mbabane | Kingdom of Eswatini
Email: info@insidebiz.co.za | Tel: (+268) 7661 8219

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FROM THE TEAM DESK

Ready, Set... SPRING!

Forget about the climate change and possibilities of having to endure four seasons in a day...the dawn of a new season is blossoming! The ladies have begun pulling out their floral dresses and the gents are looking superb in their shorts, caps and shades....Spring is here, so let the fun begin!...not that winter stopped us anyway....

Meanwhile, I've been sitting in my little cocoon excitedly observing how Eswatini is fast growing into one of the regions burgeoning entertainment hubs with so many arts and cultural events lined up with block-buster entertainers each month – this is definitely a great time to be a Swati citizen.

As you page through Issue 5 of #Kulture, you'll notice a special editorial focus on the upcoming 8th Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival, set against the picturesque backdrop of Malandela's lawns at House on Fire in Malkerns. This year's edition promises to be one of the festival's biggest and most memorable yet.

In this issue, we give you a taste of what to expect with exclusive interviews featuring the acclaimed "Son of the Soil," Bholoja, soulful R&B songstress Mandisa Mamba, and the inimitable Umntfwana weLive, Sancheziey. The artists open up about their musical journeys, what inspires their craft, and what audiences can expect from their performances at this year's festival. Dive in and enjoy the read.

Of course, the festival programme is second to none, bringing the vibrant spirit of Africa to life through an exciting mix of live music, fashion showcases, culinary demonstrations, art, wellness experiences, and immersive activations. In this issue, we unpack what to expect across Luju's signature #EatSwayLove pillars, giving you a preview of the standout performances and experiences set to take centre stage.

And because no Luju experience is complete without the perfect outfit, we've also included our Luju Fashion Overview. Whether you're putting the finishing touches on your look or still searching for inspiration, this style guide has everything you need to curate a festival-ready ensemble for the Festival ahead.(And,because I'm quite sure that the fits are already lying in bed ready for the weekend...Well done!)

Beyond our Luju Festival coverage, we've also profiled one of Eswatini's musical success stories. Meet Sabelo "DJ Sabz" Kunene, whose inspiring journey has taken him to the heart of South Africa's dance music scene, where he now works with some of its biggest players.

With the improvement that the local entertainment scene has added to its portfolio, we set down with recently appointed Chairperson of the Eswatini Music Association; Lindelwa Mafa, "The General". She shares with us her vision, her plans and the wisdom she will certainly introduce to the local music industry.

The #Kulture team also has your relationships at heart. In this issue, we explore the realities of Umjolo, offering practical insights into building healthy, meaningful connections. As we all navigate the ups and downs of love, we hope this feature encourages greater understanding, respect and kindness—because healthy relationships are key to ending the vicious cycle of gender-based violence and creating a culture of love and compassion.

I definitely do not intend to spoil the read. Page through each article with a fine eye as you might find something relevant to you.

Eat. Sway. Love

Enjoy!

- Sli



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CONTENTS
IN THIS ISSUE









On The Cover

A RETURN TO THE AFRICAN FUTURE

The Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival returns with its biggest edition yet, attracting over 10,000 visitors while driving tourism, empowering entrepreneurs, celebrating African creativity and strengthening Eswatini's creative economy. **P14**

Features

SABZ

"The Soul Train" takes us on his journey from Mbabane dreamer to respected DJ and producer **P6**

CARMEN & THE ART OF EXPERIENCE

Carmen Shabangu transforms celebrations into meaningful, memorable experiences with creativity and purpose. **P36**

IS RUNNING THE NEW TINDER?

Running clubs are booming, medals are trending and friendships are forming. Guest writer Delisa Thwala explores why Eswatini's latest wellness obsession might be about more than fitness.. **P40**

Regulars

TRENDING

Lindelwa Mafa shares on her drive to lead Eswatini's music industry into excellence. **P9**

Spring 2026 Event Guide - Upcoming events not to miss **P9**

ENTERTAINMENT

SWAY: The Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival unveils star-studded line-up celebrating Africa's diverse sound **P24**

FOOD, TRAVEL & LEISURE

EAT: Explore Nguni cuisine, heritage and Africa's evolving culinary landscape at the Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival **P16**

The Wine Boutique unveils refreshed space and experiences. **P41**

Mbabane welcomes Mugg & Bean's world-class café experience, food and coffee. **P46**

STYLE

LOVE: Fashion celebrating African heritage through storytelling, innovation and creative expression at the 2026 Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival **P30**

WELLBEING

Modern Parenting with Angel's Crib **P42**

This & That! - Umjolo 101 In The 21st Century **P44**



Sabz

Staying Hungry, Staying Humble within the buzz

By: Fezile Mkhatshwa | **Photo Cred:** Supplied

Sabelo 'Sabz' Kunene, Eswatini-born DJ, producer and event organizer has spent years carving out a spot for himself in Johannesburg's highly competitive music scene. Along the way, he has earned residencies, collaborated with respected artists, and built relationships with some of the best captains of the industry.

From sneaking into his sister's birthday party in Mbabane to performing at some of South Africa's most recognized venues, Sabz has built a career driven by passion, persistence and a refusal to be complacent.

Yet despite the achievements, Sabz remains grounded in the values that shaped him growing up.

"Growing up, we were always taught to respect people, remain humble, always be eager to learn and resilience. I still follow those values today and they have helped me achieve a lot."

The gentle soul was born and raised in Mbabane, where he did his schooling at Sifundzani and then spent a year at Waterford Kamhlaba before moving to South Africa, acquiring a Degree in Political Science and Economics from the University of Johannesburg.

The Party That Changed Everything

For Sabz, the dream started when he was just ten years old!

His sister was celebrating her 21st birthday at their family home in Mbabane. Although he and his brother were not allowed to attend, curiosity got the better of them.

"My sister was a student in one of Durban's universities at the time and all her friends from varsity were invited to the Kingdom. All I can say is, it was the mother of all parties! There was a guy from Durban on the turntables playing records and the crowd was on a frenzy and that immediately caught my attention."

Rather than joining the celebrations, the young Sabz found himself captivated by the person controlling the music.

"I hid and watched him play until I fell asleep. The next morning I knew I wanted to do what that guy was doing."

The fascination never disappeared.

"Three years later, I was 13 and that bug of wanting to be a DJ just wouldn't leave me."

His older brother eventually introduced him to DJ Xtra Luv Thang, born Terrance Ginindza, who was among Eswatini's most respected DJs at the time."He taught me everything I know now. By the age of 14, I could play on turntables, even better than the guy who played at my sister's birthday....Interestingly, that guy and I are actually friends today." He reminisces.

Unlike many young DJs, Sabz never viewed music as a hobby.

"I never wanted to do it for fun. I always wanted to do it as a profession." His insistence on remaining professional has paid off.



Learning to Survive in Johannesburg

Building a career in Johannesburg was never going to be easy.

"Johannesburg is really intense when it comes to competition, especially in the DJ and production space. Not everyone gets to make it."

His break came shortly after completing university.

"While I was looking for a nine-to-five job, I got an offer from the biggest club at the time called ZAR. It was owned by Gayton McKenzie and Kenny Kunene."

An opportunity that changed the direction of his life, he shares.

"I immediately stopped looking for a job and never looked back. I was making twice the salary of someone who had been in a nine-to-five for years."

The experience taught him the importance of relationships and networking.

"From then, my hunger to do bigger things grew. I was privileged to network and use my connections to get more work."

That mindset eventually led him to work alongside respected industry figures such as Vincent Motshegoa known as Vinny Da Vinci and Christos born Christos Katsaitis, two people he considers among his greatest influences.

"After ZAR, I started working closely with Vinny and Christos who opened up another world of great opportunities for me."

Today, one lesson continues to guide him; Sticking to his path.

"The most important thing in Joburg is to stay in your lane and never, ever get comfortable." he insists.

Driven by Music

Ask Sabz what keeps him motivated and the answer will come quickly.

"I am very passionate about deejaying, producing and doing events. Everything I do is calculated and I put so much work into it."

His love for music goes beyond simply playing songs.

"I love music so much. It excites me to share it with people through deejaying and taking them on a journey on The Soul Train." he says with a smile.

Living in Johannesburg has also helped shape his musical identity.

"Joburg definitely influences your sound as a DJ. The DJs here really play and produce some of the freshest music."

Over the years, he has built friendships with producers and artists across South Africa.

"I've travelled all the provinces and met amazing, talented DJs and producers. My sound is influenced by energy, and Johannesburg energy is on another level."

That environment continues to fuel his creativity.

"It constantly makes me want to create more music, create more experiences and make people happy on the dance floor."

Starting Again After COVID

Like many entertainers, Sabz faced uncertainty when the COVID-19 pandemic brought the industry to a standstill.



"COVID is basically the biggest challenge I've faced in my career by far because everything just stopped."

Even after restrictions eased, the industry struggled to recover.

"The limitations didn't allow us to do what we do best."

Fortunately, new opportunities emerged during the crisis.

"A friend of mine started a stream called Tequila Gang and asked me to be part of it. We had a sponsor, so we had income from the recordings we did."

He was also invited to contribute to Vinny's House, which aired on DStv's Mzansi Music channel.

"That also brought in some income during the pandemic."

Despite those opportunities, the impact was severe.

"It was a really difficult period because we had to start from scratch. Many clubs we played for before didn't survive, so it meant making new connections and building everything again."





"...After ZAR, I started working closely with Vinny and Christos who opened up another world of great opportunities for me..."

Life Behind the Decks

While audiences see the performances, Sabz says the real work often happens away from the spotlight.

"Life behind the scenes of being a DJ, producer and event host is not so rosy, my week is always filled with meetings with sponsors, knocking on doors for gigs and spending time in studio."

The advice from his mentors remains central to his approach.

"Christos and Vinny always taught me never to be comfortable and assume bookings will just come. You have to go out and hustle."

Bringing The Soul Train Home- Oryx Fridays

Although his career continued to grow in South Africa, there was a period when Sabz felt disconnected from home.

"Honestly speaking, for a while I had lost connection with Eswatini because promoters never booked me there."

The situation was frustrating.

"It really hurt me that in South Africa I was growing and getting booked all the time, but nothing was coming from home."

Instead of waiting for opportunities, he decided to create them.

"That's when I teamed up with Smish and Selby and suggested that we start something instead of waiting to be booked."

The result was Oryx Fridays with The Soul Train, a platform that regularly brings South African guest DJs to Eswatini.

"There is also a big event I want to do in Eswatini this summer, but I'll share more information soon."

Looking Forward

Sabz's recent work includes collaborations with artists such as Cool Affair Music, Ladi Adiosoul, Earful Soul and Kabza De Small.

One project particularly close to his heart is SIBIZIWE.

"Sibiziwe is my niece's name. I've always loved her name, and of course I love her too," chuckling, he continued about his niece, "We're very close and I always told her that one day I would name a project after her...."

Released under Kabza De Small's Piano Hub platform, the project has already surpassed a whooping 1.6 million streams.

Looking ahead, Sabz sees his future extending beyond music alone.

"Five years from now, I want to see Sabz as a big player in the events space at an international level."

He also plans to continue growing his label, Self Centric Music, while supporting emerging talent from Eswatini.

As his career continues to evolve, one principle remains unchanged, "Treat people with respect, even when it's not returned."

For Sabz, it is more than advice. It is a philosophy that has guided him from a curious child watching a DJ at a birthday party in Mbabane to an established name in one of Africa's most competitive music industries.



Quick fire with Sabz

Local artists people should watch:

- **!Sooks -** Global takeover...
- **Smish** - Has begun production and he does a good job...
- **Aya City** - Full round brand work, intentional networking...

3 things that would shock people

- I play Golf
- I'm really scared of people
- I listen to a lot of Jazz

LEADING THE RHYTHM OF CHANGE

By: Slindelo Nkosi | **Pics:** Supplied

Fresh from being named Head of the Eswatini Music Association, Lindelwa "The General" Mafa has taken on her new role with a lot of humility. She's quick to recognise everyone she's worked with over the years to raise up local talent, never taking all the credit for herself. Really, she's been working quietly in the background, pushing the public to notice and appreciate home-grown music.

We got a chance to sit down with Eswatini's own "Lipantsula Le-Radio," a nickname she picked up during her 18-year career in broadcasting. She shared her thoughts, her feelings, and what she's got planned as Chairperson of the music industry, a field she truly loves. So, let's jump right in.

You've been a champion for local talent, especially music in Eswatini, and you've worked hard for years to get people to pay attention to just how much musical skill this country has. What does this appointment mean to you?

Honestly, it means everything. I've always believed in Eswatini's creative power, and I've championed local music because I see it as a real treasure. Being appointed Chairperson feels like validation, not just for me, but for everyone who's been quietly fighting to shift people's mindset and get them to see local music as something to be proud of. Now, I get to serve on a bigger stage, unite the music industry, and speed up the progress we've started. I'm ready to push even harder for every artist in the kingdom.

You've been around forever in the entertainment scene here. From your perspective, what's changed? How have things developed to a point where the nation is finally waking up to all this talent?

So much has changed. First off, the quality of music has jumped way up. You see artists investing in good studios, teaming up with talented producers, really digging into songwriting and storytelling. Songs aren't just songs anymore—they have identity and meaning. Digital media also changed the game. Now, with YouTube, Tik Tok, Apple Music—our artists aren't just local, they can go global in seconds. One release from Eswatini can reach someone in New York or London overnight. That kind of reach gives artists confidence and visibility we just didn't have before. It's not just the artists stepping up—the promoters and event organisers are too. More local acts are getting booked, companies are starting to back them financially. It created this virtuous cycle: when music gets better, people respond, and everyone starts to believe the investments are worth it. There's talk about professionalising and monetizing entertainment in the Kingdom.

Talking about monetizing the industry, how do you feel about that—both as a person and professionally?

I feel so encouraged right now. Personally, I've been waiting years for artists to be able to make a real, dignified living from their talent. Professionally, I think it's exactly what our sector needs so it can grow for the long-term. ESWACOS (Eswatini Copyrights & Neighbouring Rights Society) is doing great work pushing for royalties to finally be paid this year—that's historic! It's a loud and clear recognition of creative work and what it's worth. Building a professional artists' database adds structure and visibility, and we need to keep pushing locals to listen to local music. When we support our own content, we build a stronger economic base. Monetization isn't a dream anymore—it's happening. Our next step is to focus on educating artists, ensuring transparency, and making sure money gets distributed fairly, so creatives can work on their art without having to stress about their next meal.

After all these years in the industry, did you ever actually expect things to change this much?

Absolutely. I never doubted we'd reach this point, even during the tough periods. Everyone—industry leaders, promoters, labels, government—have put a lot of work in behind the scenes to get this sector off the ground. The efforts have finally paid off. Seeing the seeds we planted years ago finally bloom is just unbelievable.

Now that you're Chairperson, and the industry's really opening up, what's your biggest hope for local talent from here?

My biggest hope is that artists move from just surviving to actually building sustainable careers. I want the arts to make a real, measurable contribution to the country's GDP—so everyone can see the positive impact creatives have here. I want artists to confidently pursue music, tell their stories, promote Swati culture, and take their work to the world through real, strategic collaborations. Honestly, we can offer so much more. I'd also urge companies to invest in local creatives—not just as charity, but as a smart investment in youth development, cultural pride, and real economic growth.

To cap it off, Lindelwa (or "L-D"—she's got a bunch of nicknames) told us, "As Chairperson, my commitment is to build structures, create opportunities, and help every serious artist thrive. The future is bright, and I can't wait to see what we achieve together!"



#KULTURE LIFESTYLE Events & Entertainment

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AUG - SEPT '26

MASKANDI FEST (AFRICAN TOUR)
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15 August 2026

PIANO REPUBLIC
Sibane Sami Hotel
22 August 2026

SWAZI RALLY ESWATINI 2026
Rider's Ranch
28 - 30 August 2026

ESWATINI INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR 2026
Mavuso Trade & Exhibition Centre
28 Aug - 6 September 2026

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SWAZI BOY ENTERTAINMENT'S 20TH CELEBRATION
Happy Valley Hotel
25 - 27 September 2026

MLAWULA CAMPFIRE FEST
Mlawula Game Reserve
25 – 27 September 2026

FARMERS MARKET
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MANDISI DYANTYIS NASTY C
LIQUIDEEP BHOLOJA MALEH
SHWI MANTOMBAZANE NEYMA
THE MASEKELA BAND TMAN XPRESS
THANDO ZIDE WANDILE MBAMBENI BATHINI
KYLE SHEPHERD TRIO JUDAH SOUL WONDERBOOM
VUYO VIWE MANDISA MAMBA DJ BOB CECE & RINA
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A RETURN TO THE AFRICAN FUTURE

LUJU RETURNS
WITH ITS BIGGEST CELEBRATION YET

By: Ayanda Dlamini | **Pics:** Standard Bank Luju Festival

The stage is set for the biggest Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival yet as the event returns to the iconic House On Fire in the Malkerns Valley on 1–2 August 2026. Now expanded into a vibrant full two-day celebration, the festival promises to boost tourism, strengthen the creative economy and unlock new opportunities for entrepreneurs, artists and local businesses across Eswatini and the region.

Now in its eighth edition, the internationally acclaimed festival is expected to welcome more than 10,000 visitors from over 26 countries under the theme "A Return to the African Future." Bringing together African gastronomy, fashion, music, art and entrepreneurship, Luju continues to position itself as more than a cultural event, it is increasingly recognised as an important platform for economic growth, regional collaboration and investment in the Kingdom's creative industries.



Launching the festival, the Prime Minister Russell Dlamini through representation by the Minister of Sport, Culture and Youth Affairs, Bongani Nzima, described Luju as a reflection of Eswatini's cultural and economic momentum, saying the country's heritage should be viewed as a valuable economic asset.

"Our food, our fashion and our culture are not on the margins of our economy; they are part of its very foundation."

He said festivals such as Luju demonstrate that preserving African identity and building competitive businesses can go hand in hand.

"What the Luju Festival reminds us, intentionally, is that modern enterprise and cultural authenticity are not mutually exclusive. They are deeply intertwined."

The Minister further highlighted the importance of the country's MSME sector, noting that Eswatini has approximately 70,000 small and medium enterprises employing more than 90,000 people, supported through Government initiatives including the SME Revolving Fund, entrepreneurship programmes and the National MSME Policy 2025–2029.

He said Luju provides an important commercial platform where local entrepreneurs can showcase products to regional and international markets.

"When our chefs draw from this year's Culinary Theme, Nguni Foodways, and when our designers source from this year's Fashion Theme, Kwasukasukela, they are not only celebrating heritage. They are building distinctive, competitive brands with real market value."

This year's programme embraces African storytelling through the fashion theme Kwasukasukela (Once Upon a Time), inviting designers and festivalgoers alike to reinterpret African folklore through contemporary fashion.

Meanwhile, the culinary programme celebrates Nguni Foodways, highlighting indigenous ingredients, traditional recipes and innovative African cuisine through chef demonstrations and curated dining experiences.

The festival's expansion into a full two-day event is expected to increase visitor spending while extending stays across accommodation establishments, restaurants and tourism operators.









The Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Jane Mkhonta-Simelane also shared the Prime Minister's sentiments in welcoming the extended, full two-day festival milestone, with the Prime Minister having said, "We welcome this incredible milestone that will extend visitor stays, increase trading opportunities for our SMEs, and deepen the event's economic footprint across the Kingdom and the Southern African region at large."

He added that the quality of creativity showcased at Luju reflects an industry that is increasingly gaining international recognition.

"What we have seen unveiled this evening reflects an industry that is professionalising on its own terms and drawing from the depths of our African heritage to produce something genuinely world-class. This is a powerful signal to investors, tourists and traders alike."

With expanded programming, stronger regional promotion and Standard Bank Eswatini's continued investment in the festival, the 2026 edition is expected to reinforce Luju's growing reputation as one of Southern Africa's premier lifestyle events while showcasing Eswatini's cultural excellence to the continent and beyond.

LUJU'S HIVES & STAGES ENHANCE THE FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

Beyond its acclaimed food, fashion and music, the 2026 Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival will feature a collection of themed Hives and vibrant entertainment stages, offering visitors an immersive celebration of African creativity, cuisine and entrepreneurship.

The Premium Lounge delivers an exclusive hospitality experience overlooking the main stage, while the Heritage Food Garden showcases authentic African cuisine and indigenous flavours. The Fashion Café, curated by Dala Spaces, spotlights premium fashion, beauty products and handcrafted designs by local and regional creatives, while the Sweet Spot offers artisan desserts, chocolates, pastries and specialty beverages.

Visitors can also enjoy wine tastings at The Grapevine Wine Saloon, interactive brand experiences at the Corporate Bazaar, and family-friendly activities at The Beehive, home to the popular Luju Junior Cook-Off Competition.

Adding youthful energy to the weekend is The Buzz, a dynamic stage featuring DJs, live performances and entertainment throughout the festival.

Together, the Hives and stages create an engaging festival environment where culture, commerce and creativity come together, while providing valuable exposure for Eswatini's entrepreneurs and creative industries.



...the 2026 edition is expected to reinforce Luju's growing reputation as one of Southern Africa's premier lifestyle events while showcasing Eswatini's cultural excellence to the continent and beyond...











PHOKOPHELA Sinawe

at Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival

By: Slindelo Nkosi | **Pics:** Standard Bank Luju Festival

The 8th edition of the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival promises to present a rich and dynamically curated two-day entertainment cocktail of the finest Fashion, Food and Music menu.



Raising the execution bar this year, the Festival's Director Jiggs Thorne put emphasis on the "Call-to-Action" for all Africans to start reclaiming their identity.

"The Festival is intentionally underpinned with a conscious tagline; **A Return to The African Future** - simply seeking to bring together heritage and innovation while exploring and reclaiming our African identity. Redefining our identity in a world where narratives being pushed aren't our own is particularly important so that we may find our ground and the Festival seeks to do exactly that - to profile Africa's unique identity"

Bringing in a financial commitment towards profiling local and the rest of Africa's rich talents is Standard Bank Eswatini through its latest brand campaign, "Phokophela Sinawe" which according to the bank's Manager Intergrated Marketing and Communications Lethukuthula Ndwandwe is a campaign focused on encouraging all its customers and those planning to join the bank in the future towards achieving their lifelong dreams.

"This campaign aligns well with the Festival's theme because we seek to prove to the nation,and especially our clients that we are more than just a bank. We are not about simple finanancial transactions but seeing our clients achieving and securing more for their future emanating from the bank's purpose - being with our clients all the way."

He empahsised that the campaign is aimed at supporting people at different stages of their personal and business journeys. "Whether it is an entrepreneur starting a business, an artist sharing their talent with the world, a family building a future or someone trying to build a career, our message is that they do not have to walk that journey alone."













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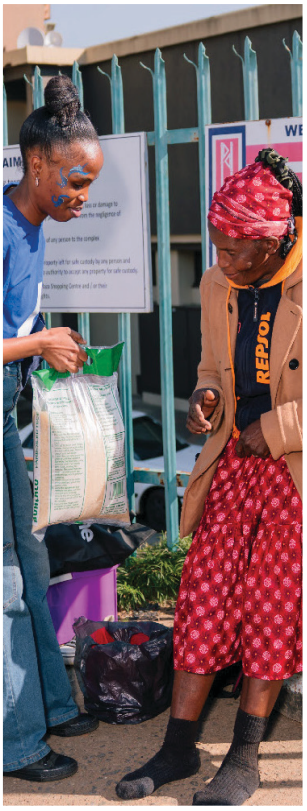
With Standard Bank's strategic partnership with the festival, more local brands and SMEs are expected to gain greater visibility and access to meaningful support through the festival's various programmes.

The Festival Director, said the festival has evolved into an important platform for entrepreneurs, artists and small businesses to showcase their products and services while connecting with new markets.

"There are programmes, trading environments and talk shops that are offered at the festival. It is through these spaces where we are able to show support to the growth and development of local brands and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)."

Thorne added that the festival's long-standing partnership with Standard Bank has been instrumental in strengthening the creative economy by providing opportunities that extend beyond the event itself.

"The creation of a platform that actively supports the arts is critical which is generally a shared mandate between House on Fire and Standard Bank. The promotion of a broader eco-system through the various programs offered during the Festival is vital because it stimulates growth of the arts industry. At the same time, it grows the bank's portfolio in keeping with its slogan - Africa is our home, we drive her growth."





EAT@ LUJU 2026

A RETURN TO THE AFRICAN FUTURE

By: Ayanda Dlamini | **Photo Cred:** Supplied

Serving Up Nguni Foodways

as a Celebration of Heritage, Innovation& Africa's Culinary Future



The Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival is inviting festivalgoers to rediscover Africa's culinary heritage through a fresh, sophisticated lens as it unveils Nguni Foodways as the official culinary theme for its 2026 edition.

More than showcasing exceptional cuisine, Luju 2026 promises an immersive exploration of the traditions, techniques and stories that have shaped Nguni communities across Southern Africa for centuries. The festival will celebrate how indigenous food knowledge continues to inspire contemporary gastronomy while creating opportunities for sustainability, entrepreneurship and cultural preservation.

A Living Culinary Heritage

According to Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival Culinary Creative Director Sasha Thorne, this year's culinary focus goes far beyond nostalgia.

"Nguni Foodways is not about looking backwards with sentimentality. It is about recognising that the culinary knowledge passed down through generations remains deeply relevant today. Our indigenous food traditions hold remarkable lessons in sustainability, resilience, biodiversity and innovation. At Luju, we want to celebrate these traditions while

creating new conversations around how they can shape the future of African cuisine."
She explained that food has always served as one of the strongest expressions of identity within Nguni societies.
"Every ingredient, every preparation method and every shared meal tells a story about who we are, where we come from and how communities have adapted over generations. We are inviting people to experience those stories through taste, conversation and creativity."
For Luju, Nguni Foodways represents a living culinary ecosystem that stretches across Eswatini, South Africa, Zimbabwe and neighbouring regions. It reflects centuries of migration, trade and cultural exchange while remaining firmly rooted in indigenous knowledge systems.
Festivalgoers can look forward to an exceptional culinary programme featuring celebrated chefs from across Southern Africa. Highlights include Chef Mmabatho Molefe, presenting a refined Nguni fine dining experience inspired by her Zulu heritage; Coco and J, showcasing vibrant Afro Fusion soul food rooted in Xhosa traditions; Chef Prince Sivalo Mahlangu (Magriza Made Me Cook), leading fermentation and ancestral foraging experiences influenced by Zimbabwean Ndebele culture; and Eswatini's own Chef Sive Bhembe, unveiling an innovative Nguni-inspired dessert. The programme will also feature traditional beer brewing and nose-to-tail cooking demonstrations celebrating Africa's rich culinary heritage.

Ancient Techniques Meet Contemporary Gastronomy

Visitors can expect to encounter ancient culinary techniques such as fermentation, smoking, drying, wood-fire cooking and traditional preservation methods—practices that have sustained communities for generations and are increasingly finding renewed appreciation within modern fine dining.
Thorne believes these age-old techniques have become increasingly relevant as the global hospitality industry seeks more sustainable approaches to food production.
"What many people now describe as innovation has existed within African communities for generations. Long before sustainability became an international trend, our ancestors were already practising regenerative agriculture, seasonal eating, zero-waste cooking and natural food preservation. Luju provides an opportunity to reposition that knowledge as world-class culinary excellence," said Thorne.







Representing Eswatini, Sive Bhembe


Chef Mmabatho Molefe


Coco & J


Chef Prince Sivalo Mahlangu

An Immersive Feast for the Senses

This year's culinary programme has been carefully curated to transform the festival grounds into an interactive celebration of indigenous gastronomy. Festivalgoers will enjoy live cooking demonstrations, immersive sonic food experiences, botanical workshops, Nguni-inspired fine dining showcases and curated tasting experiences designed to stimulate every sense. Brewing masterclasses and sommelier-led tastings will explore Africa's rich fermentation traditions, while livestock exhibitions will highlight the cultural and economic importance of indigenous breeds within Nguni communities.

Farm-to-Fork Returns

One of the festival's signature attractions, the Farm-to-Fork Cook-Off, also returns with a renewed emphasis on indigenous ingredients and regenerative farming. Teams of chefs and local producers will collaborate to create contemporary dishes rooted in traditional flavours, demonstrating how African ingredients can compete confidently on the global culinary stage.

The Food Indaba Sparks Important Conversations

Equally significant is the return of the Food Indaba, which will once again bring together chefs, academics, farmers, entrepreneurs and cultural custodians for thought-provoking discussions around the future of African food systems.
The conversations will examine how indigenous knowledge can strengthen food security, promote biodiversity, preserve culinary heritage and unlock new economic opportunities within Africa's growing food economy.
For Thorne, these discussions are as important as the meals themselves.
"Food is one of the most powerful ways to connect people. Around every table there is knowledge, memory and community. Through the Food Indaba, we want to encourage collaboration between researchers, chefs, farmers and entrepreneurs so that traditional food knowledge continues to evolve and create meaningful opportunities for future generations."

Building Africa's Culinary Future

Beyond the festival weekend, Luju's commitment extends to developing Africa's hospitality industry through professional capacity-building initiatives. Workshops for chefs, food vendors and hospitality practitioners will focus on culinary skills, innovation and entrepreneurship, ensuring that indigenous food traditions continue to inspire both cultural pride and economic growth.
The approach aligns with Luju's broader vision of positioning African creativity as a driver of sustainable development while celebrating excellence across food, fashion, music and the creative industries.



COSPE & LUJU FESTIVAL

Strengthen Partnership to Advance Sustainable Food Systems

The collaboration between COSPE Southern Africa and the Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival (Luju Festival) is recognised as a platform for reimagining food systems in Eswatini. What began as a strategic engagement to showcase indigenous food is evolving into a dynamic partnership that connects farmers, chefs, consumers, and cultural practitioners around a shared vision: restoring the value of indigenous seeds, promoting agroecology, and building sustainable, locally rooted economies.

The Luju Festival, widely recognized as one of Eswatini's premier cultural and culinary events, provides a unique space where food, music, fashion, and storytelling intersect. Its emphasis on African identity and heritage aligns closely with COSPE's work across the Transfrontier Conservation Area in the Lubombo region, particularly in advancing Traditional African Vegetables (TAVs), indigenous seed systems, and farmer-led value chains. This alignment has made the festival an ideal platform for COSPE to amplify its mission while creating meaningful opportunities for local communities.

Initially participating through product showcases, COSPE is using the festival as a space to introduce audiences to the richness and potential of indigenous foods with the previous festival engagement focusing on raising awareness through the display of modern-traditional dishes, sharing knowledge on agroecological practices, and promoting Lubombo Eco Products (LEP) developed by local cooperatives.

A key milestone in this journey has been the sponsorship and development of the Farm-to-Fork Cook-Off, an initiative that bridges the gap between smallholder farmers and the culinary industry. By supplying indigenous ingredients directly to chefs and competitors, COSPE has helped demonstrate how traditional crops can be transformed into innovative, market-ready dishes. This initiative has not only elevated indigenous ingredients within contemporary cuisine but has also created a tangible link between production and consumption.

The 2025 Luju Festival marked a significant moment in this evolving collaboration. Under the theme "The Forgotten Seeds," COSPE's presence was both strategic and impactful. Through a combination of sponsorship, immersive stall design, and curated food experiences, the organization showcased the full value chain of indigenous food systems which guided festival goers through seed preservation to product integration.

At the heart of COSPE's 2025 participation was its collaboration with women farmers and processors in the Lubombo region. These women, often the custodians of indigenous knowledge and biodiversity, were brought to the forefront as key actors in sustainable food systems. Their products, stories, and expertise were integrated into every aspect of COSPE's presence, from the Farm-to-Fork Cook-Off to the tasting menus offered at the exhibition stall.

The stall itself became more than just a display; it was an interactive learning and tasting space. Designed as an indigenous pantry, it invited festival-goers to engage with seeds, explore traditional ingredients, and experience modern interpretations of local dishes. Menu items such as okra pizza, amaranth wraps, and African eggplant dishes challenged perceptions of indigenous food as outdated or limited, instead presenting it as innovative, nutritious, and commercially viable.

Beyond visibility, COSPE's participation generated real economic opportunities. LEP products were sold directly to consumers, creating income streams for community groups while also testing market demand. At the same time, participating cooperatives gained valuable exposure, training, and experience in operating within a high-profile commercial environment.

Looking ahead to the 2026 Luju Festival, COSPE is poised to build on these experiences with a more strategic and expansive approach. The vision for 2026 goes beyond participation. It is about consolidation, scale, and deeper impact.

Standard Bank
LUJU
FOOD & LIFESTYLE FESTIVAL













One key expectation is the strengthening of market access pathways for farmer groups. Rather than a single point of engagement during the festival, COSPE aims to create sustained linkages between producers and buyers, ensuring that the visibility gained translates into long-term economic opportunities. This includes refining product offerings, improving packaging and branding, and supporting cooperatives to meet market standards consistently.

Strategic collaborations will take centre stage in this initiative. Partnerships with organizations such as the International Trade Centre (ITC) and PELUM Eswatini will ensure that agroecological principles and farmer-led perspectives remain at the core of all activities. PELUM Eswatini continues to play a critical role in ensuring visibility of and advocating for the preservation of indigenous food systems and the promotion of agroecology, while ITC will enhance market access and storytelling. Their contribution includes investing in a dedicated trade market stall for farmers during the festival and supporting the production of high-quality multimedia content that captures farmers' journeys, the transformation of ingredients, and the cultural significance of indigenous foods.

These stories will not only enrich the festival experience but will also serve as powerful tools for advocacy, fundraising, and knowledge sharing. Through co-branded initiatives and joint programming, these partnerships will further strengthen the visibility, reach, and impact of this networked approach, building on the success of the previous year.

Importantly, COSPE is also expected to expand its role in shaping the festival's food narrative. By introducing new engagement formats such as pre-Luju festival live demonstrations with the women farmers and processors, facilitated by Chef Sive Bhembe (Farm to fork Cook-off winner 2025), dialogues at the food indaba, and trader training sessions for the women farmers with the House on Fire team. The organization can further position indigenous food systems as an important aspect of the Luju festival.

Ultimately, the COSPE-LUJU collaboration represents more than an event partnership. It is a growing movement that seeks to reclaim indigenous knowledge, celebrate local innovation, and build resilient food systems rooted in culture and community. As the 2026 Luju festival approaches, the focus is clear: to move from showcasing possibilities to scaling impact, ensuring that the seeds planted through this collaboration continue to grow into lasting change.

Telling Africa's Story One Plate at a Time...

For many people, food is simply something to eat. For Prince Sivalo Mahlangu, every meal carries a story.

By: Fezile Mkhatshwa | Pics: Magriza Made Me Cook

It tells of migration, family, identity and generations of knowledge passed from one kitchen to another. It speaks of forgotten ingredients, cultural rituals and the wisdom of elders who understood the land long before recipes were ever written down. It is this belief that has shaped the work of the Zimbabwean chef, filmmaker and cultural researcher behind the growing platform, ***"Magriza Made Me Cook"***

This year, Mahlangu brings that philosophy to the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival, where he joins the culinary programme under the festival's overarching theme, A Return to the African Future, with a culinary focus on Nguni Foodways. Rather than concentrating solely on flavours and presentation, his demonstrations invite audiences to explore the deeper story behind the food, examining its origins, cultural significance, and what it reveals about African identity, heritage, and the enduring connection between people, place, and tradition.

A Grandmother's Legacy

The name Magriza Made Me Cook is a tribute to the woman who first introduced Mahlangu to the kitchen.

"She would call us when she was cooking and tell us all these recipes, and explained the meanings behind them because another thing that is lacking is that we know the recipes, but we don't understand the naming and where these ingredients come from."

'Magriza' (slang for Gogo) was the affectionate name he and those around him used for his maternal grandmother, who raised him from the age of 12. Although she never received formal education, she became his greatest teacher.

For Mahlangu, learning to cook was never just about preparing food. His grandmother taught him that every ingredient has a history, every dish belongs to a community and every recipe reflects a way of life.



MAGRIZA
MADE ME COOK



Even after her passing two years ago, her lessons continue to shape his work.

More Than a Cooking Show

Although many first discover Magriza Made Me Cook through its recipes, the platform quickly reveals itself to be much more than a cooking program.

Each episode explores the relationship between food, culture, language, traditional medicine and indigenous knowledge. Mahlangu combines his skills as a filmmaker and storyteller to document customs that are slowly disappearing, creating an archive that celebrates African heritage through everyday life.

"I don't believe food exists on its own, it actually is an important cultural expression."

His documentaries frequently feature elderly women, rural communities and traditional knowledge holders whose voices are rarely heard in mainstream media. Through their stories, viewers learn not only how food is prepared but why it matters.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Interestingly, Mahlangu's professional journey did not begin in culinary school.

He holds a degree in Business Management and later completed postgraduate studies in Corporate Finance. Yet his passion eventually led him in a very different direction.

"I did not go to chef school for the cooking that I'm doing now, I also did not go to film school for the documentaries that I'm doing."

Instead, he credits his grandmother and the communities he has visited across Africa for becoming his teachers.

"I don't believe in being self-taught, there always is people who came before you and sacrificed for you to be where you are today."

That philosophy has influenced the way he approaches every new destination. Wherever he travels, he arrives as a student first.

One lesson from his grandmother has stayed with him throughout his career is to see himself in another.

"She told me, 'Go out and learn how other people cook. Learn their language and you also learn their culture. Then come back and see the similarities we have as African people.'"

Discovering Africa Through Food

Over the past several years, Mahlangu has travelled widely across the continent documenting indigenous cuisines and cultural traditions.

One journey that left a lasting impression was his visit to the country during last year's Umhlanga Reed Dance.

"Magriza had roots in Eswatini and often spoke about Umhlanga, inspiring me to experience it for myself. When I finally visited, I was fortunate to meet a well-informed gentleman, Simendzelwe Vilane, who spent time with me throughout my stay and gave me a refreshing local perspective on Eswatini, its culture, and its cuisine."

While documenting local food traditions, he was struck by how familiar many of the dishes were.

"Everything was almost one hundred percent what we have back home, what differs are the names or maybe slightly the cooking methods. For instance, we also have 'lipalishi, chuchuza

The similarities reinforced his belief that African communities share far more than many people realise.

His travels have also taken him to Botswana, where he explored traditional ceremonies and the preparation of seswaa, a slow-cooked meat dish that reflects the shared roles of men and women in food preparation.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia introduced him to a completely different relationship with food.

"There is no one who speaks badly about injera," he laughs. "They live their food. They talk about it everywhere."

For Mahlangu, these journeys are not about comparing cultures but recognising the threads that connect them.

Preserving Knowledge Before It Disappears

The idea behind Magriza Made Me Cook gained momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While considering further studies, Mahlangu spent time in rural communities where elderly women gathered to weave traditional mats while exchanging stories about plants, recipes and everyday life.

Listening to them changed his perspective.

"Society says these people are not educated," he says. "But I was amazed by the amount of information that existed within that space."

Using nothing more than an iPhone 7, he began documenting those conversations.

"I learnt that the best camera is the one that you have," he says.

What mattered most was never expensive equipment but preserving stories before they disappeared.

That decision has since grown into one of southern Africa's most distinctive food storytelling platforms.

Bringing That Story to the Luju Festival

When Luju's organisers approached Mahlangu earlier this year, the invitation felt almost unexpected.

After attending the Umhlanga Reed Dance, he learned about the Luju Festival through a local photographer who urged him to return to the Kingdom and experience it firsthand.

Months later, an Instagram message from the Luju Festival culinary team arrived.

At first, he thought it was some kind of joke.Only after receiving an official email did he realise the invitation was genuine.

The festival's theme immediately resonated with the work he has already spent years doing.

"When I saw the theme, A Return to the African Future, it embodied exactly what we've been doing through Magriza Made Me Cook."

Without revealing too much, Mahlangu says his demonstration will explore indigenous grains, foraged ingredients, migration, Nguni food traditions and the role women have played in preserving African food knowledge.

He also hopes audiences leave with a new appreciation for ingredients that are often dismissed as old-fashioned or "poverty food."

"I want people to remember that our food is beautiful," he says. "Food embodies our culture. Food embodies our heritage."

For him, the future of African cuisine does not depend on replacing traditional food with modern trends. Instead, it lies in rediscovering the ingredients, recipes and stories that have always belonged to the continent.





The Sweet Taste of Impact

How The Luju Festival is Transforming Livelihoods

By: Ayanda Dlamini | Photo Cred: Supplied

A strategic partnership between the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival and World Vision Eswatini is helping transform beekeeping into a viable commercial enterprise for rural communities, empowering smallholder farmers with sustainable livelihoods while contributing to the growth of the agricultural sector.

Implemented between July 2025 and June 2026, the community beekeeping and honey production project has empowered four farming communities in Malkerns, Ngwenyameni, Lobamba Lomdzala and Tubungu with modern beekeeping skills, equipment, technical support and improved market access.

The programme has supported the four beekeeping groups comprising 50 members, including young people, by enabling them to develop sustainable income-generating skills and diversify into value-added products such as scented candles and beeswax oils. During the reporting period, the groups collectively harvested more than 260 litres of honey, contributing to a 17 per cent increase in overall production while creating additional revenue streams beyond raw honey sales.

The initiative demonstrates how partnerships between the private sector, development organisations and local communities can create sustainable livelihoods while supporting biodiversity, food security and climate-smart agriculture.

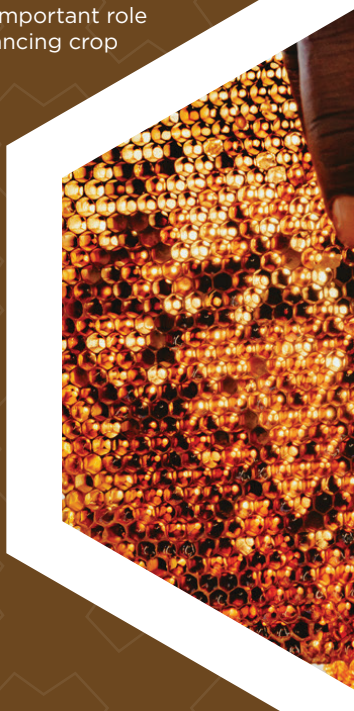
Backed by an initial investment of E250,000, comprising E148,490 from the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival and E101,510 from World Vision Eswatini, the project equipped participating farmers with 125 Langstroth beehives, 10 trap boxes and essential beekeeping equipment, including smokers, hive tools, protective clothing and harvesting accessories.

Beyond providing equipment, the project prioritised skills development through practical training in hive management, honey harvesting, processing, packaging and quality standards. Ongoing mentorship has also helped prepare farmers to access formal markets and improve production efficiency.

While some groups continue to face challenges related to hive population, environmental conditions and technical experience, the project has shown strong potential for long-term growth.

One of its most notable successes has been the partnership between local beekeepers and commercial macadamia farmers. The placement of beehives in macadamia orchards has improved pollination, benefiting both honey production and agricultural yields. Emerald Farm, for example, reported an increase in macadamia harvests from 8,900 kilograms in the 2024/25 season to 41,000 kilograms in 2025/26, highlighting the important role bees play in enhancing crop productivity.

To ensure the project's long-term sustainability, World Vision Eswatini has partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture's Honey Support Unit and the National Honey Association to provide continued technical support,





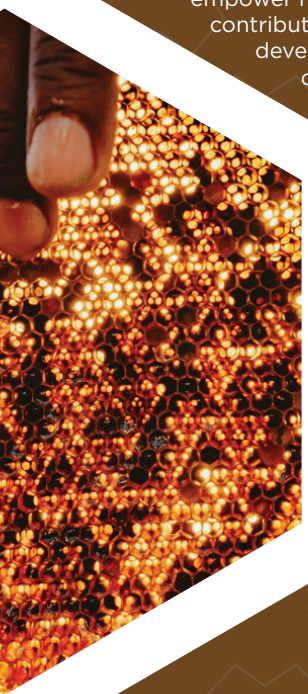
> "Luju provides more than a festival experience; it creates a platform where emerging businesses can connect directly with consumers, retailers, chefs and industry stakeholders."



mentorship and coaching. This ongoing collaboration is expected to strengthen hive management, improve production efficiency and product quality, and help participating farmers build thriving, commercially viable beekeeping enterprises.

Speaking on the importance of the initiative, Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival Communications Manager Phiwo Dhlamini said the festival remains committed to creating meaningful opportunities that extend beyond the two-day celebration of food, fashion and culture.

"The Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival has always been about celebrating African excellence while creating meaningful opportunities that uplift communities. Our partnership with World Vision Eswatini demonstrates how collaboration can unlock economic potential, empower rural entrepreneurs and contribute to sustainable development. We are delighted to see local beekeepers growing in confidence, increasing production and developing products that are ready for the market."



Dhlamini said the initiative reflects the festival's broader vision of supporting local enterprise while promoting products proudly made in Eswatini.

"The Luju Festival provides more than a festival experience; it creates a platform where emerging businesses can connect directly with consumers, retailers, chefs and industry stakeholders. We are proud that these beekeepers will have the opportunity to showcase their honey and value-added products to thousands of visitors, giving them exposure that could translate into long-term commercial opportunities. Supporting initiatives such as this allows us to celebrate authentic Eswatini products while strengthening local value chains."

World Vision Eswatini noted that the project has also strengthened relationships between producers and markets by creating opportunities for farmers to produce honey that meets commercial standards. Participants have received practical training in extracting honey from honeycombs, processing it hygienically and packaging it for sale, enabling them to compete in formal retail and hospitality markets.

The festival recently presented World Vision Eswatini with a cheque for E52,990 to support a community beekeeping project in the Lobamba Lomdzala Inkhundla, the very community that hosts the celebrated cultural and lifestyle event.

The donation forms part of the festival's commitment to sustainable community development, with E10 from every ticket sold dedicated to the initiative. The funding will further strengthen the four operational beekeeping groups, helping to increase honey production while promoting sustainable livelihoods, environmental conservation and local economic development in the Lobamba Lomdzala Inkhundla.

The programme will also introduce structured business development training covering branding, packaging, pricing strategies, bookkeeping, inventory management and cooperative governance. Farmers will be supported to develop bankable business plans and cash-flow forecasts while being linked to financing opportunities such as the Youth Enterprise Fund.

In addition, the project will formalise supply agreements with buyers, improve market linkages through strategic partners such as Emlembe Beverages and continue using the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival as a platform to connect producers with retailers, chefs, agribusinesses and consumers.



SWAY

Africa's Rhythm Comes Alive at Luju 2026

By: Fezile Mkhatshwa | **Pics:** Standard Bank Luju Festival // Supplied

Every year, music gives the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival its heartbeat. It brings people together across cultures, generations and borders, turning every performance into a shared celebration of African creativity. Under the festival's signature Eat, Sway, Love experience, the Sway pillar returns first weekend of August 2026 with a line-up that reflects this year's theme.



Zola 7

'Return to the African Future'

The festival's music programme celebrates both where African music comes from and where it is heading. It brings together legendary performers, established stars and exciting contemporary artists whose work reflects the diversity of the continent's sound.

This programme blends heritage with innovation, reminding audiences that Africa's future is being shaped by artists who continue to draw inspiration from their roots while creating music that speaks to the world.

A journey across the continent

This year's line-up takes festivalgoers on a musical journey through Southern Africa and beyond.

South African kwaito pioneer **Zola 7** headlines a programme that celebrates artists whose music has shaped generations. His performance brings one of South Africa's most influential music movements to the Luju stage, celebrating a catalogue that continues to resonate decades after its release.

Joining him is acclaimed trumpeter, composer and vocalist **Mandisi Dyantyis**, whose celebrated work Intlambululo: Ukuhlambulula combines jazz, orchestral arrangements and African storytelling into a deeply moving musical experience.

Hip hop also takes centre stage with **Nasty C**, whose international success has made him one of Africa's biggest rap exports. His appearance reflects Luju's commitment to showcasing artists who continue to influence the global music conversation while remaining connected to their African identity.

Representing the ever-growing Amapiano movement is **TMan Xpress**, bringing one of the continent's most popular dance sounds to festival audiences, affectionately not for his banger hit 'ebhasini' and many others.

Honouring musical heritage

While contemporary music features strongly, the programme also celebrates artists whose work continues to preserve African musical traditions.

Maskandi icon **Shwi Mantombazane**, formerly associated with the seperated duo 'Shwi Nomtekhala', will honour generations of Zulu storytelling through traditional music that has remained relevant across decades.

Award-winning duo Liquideep returns with the soulful electronic sound that has earned them a loyal following across Southern Africa, while singer-songwriter Wandile Mbambeni brings his distinctive blend of folk and country storytelling to the festival.



sound that has earned them a loyal following across Southern Africa, while singer-songwriter Wandile Mbambeni brings his distinctive blend of folk and country storytelling to the festival.

Tribute

Festivalgoers will also experience the genre-crossing atmosphere alongside the soulful fusion of jazz, African soul and contemporary RnB.

One of the festival's most significant performances will come from **The Masekela Band**, the touring ensemble drawn from the final years of Hugh Masekela's career. Their appearance serves as a celebration of one of Africa's greatest musical pioneers while introducing his legacy to new audiences.

Adding another layer to the jazz offering, the **Kyle Shepherd Trio** will perform a tribute to celebrated South African composer and pianist Abdullah Ibrahim.

Meanwhile, alternative rock finds its place through **WONDERboom**, while Johannesburg DJ duo Circles & Squarespromise an energetic blend of house, disco, broken beat and bossa nova.

The programme also celebrates regional diversity through performances by Mozambique's Marrabenta star **Neyma**, the Eswatini-Mozambique ensemble **ka-Tembe Connexion**, and Lesotho's Afro-soul singer **Maleh**.

A platform for Eswatini's talent

As always, local artists remain central to the Luju experience.

The 2026 edition showcases some of Eswatini's most recognised performers, demonstrating the depth of talent within the country's music industry.

Festival favourites **Cece & Rina** will reunite for a special collaborative performance, while Afro-pop artist **Sancheziey** continues to champion his signature Umgidvo sound.

Swazi soul pioneer **Bholoja** returns with his contemporary African folk music, while award-winning vocalist **Mandisa Mamba** brings her soulful sound to this year's programme.



Neyma



Judah Soul

Afro-soul artist **Judah Soul** continues to represent Eswatini's growing contemporary music scene, while Afro-pop trio **Emagagu** celebrates indigenous rhythms and storytelling.

Completing the local line-up is **Oriiginelle**, who will perform music from her latest album. The powerhouse also breaks into the program after so much traction locally and beyond having also recently launched her own distribution company, the Oriigins with the main aim of opening up the space for the next generation of creatives.

Together, these performances demonstrate Luju's continued commitment to providing a platform where local artists share the stage alongside internationally recognised names.

More than entertainment

The Sway pillar has always been more than a series of concerts. It represents one of the ways Luju tells Africa's story through music.

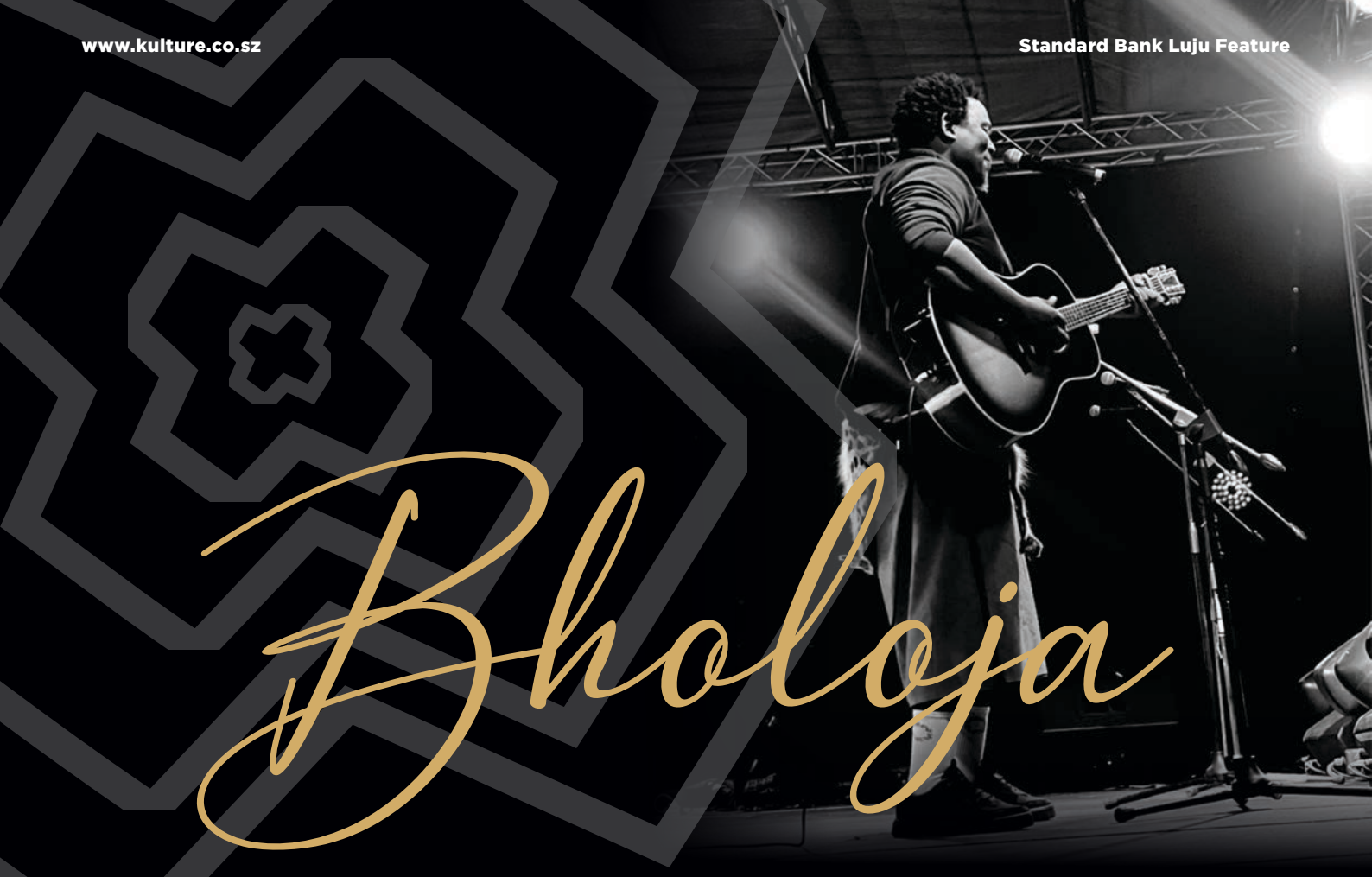
This year's programme mirrors the festival theme by showing that Africa's future is built on the strength of its past. Traditional storytelling exists comfortably alongside hip hop, jazz shares space with Amapiano, and long-established legends perform alongside artists shaping the next generation of African music.

It is a reminder that African music continues to evolve without losing sight of the cultures and communities that inspire it.

Truly ***"A Return to the African Future"***



Oriiginelle



Bholoja

READY TO REMIND LUJU FESTIVAL-GOERS ABOUT THEIR AFRICANISM

By: Slindelo Nkosi | **Pics:** Supplied

Eswatini's very own multi-talented musician, Bholoja born Mbongiseni Ngubane is scheduled for a performance at the upcoming Standard Bank Eswatini Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival billed for the 1st & 2nd of August 2026 at the House on Fire lawn.

Describing his much-anticipated performance, all he could say was "Prepare yourselves for nostalgic moments that will take each of us back to our true African roots!"



Aligning himself with the festival's theme "Going back to the African Future" curved around the ***#EatSwayLove*** phenomena, Bholoja explained how the theme perfectly resonates with his craft which will enable him to be at his best on stage subsequently giving festival-attendees the best times of their lives!

While acknowledging that the world is evolving with technology introducing and replacing some African-based practises, the 47-year-old artist is passionate about the importance of Africans not losing their identities; "The Festival's theme is basically reminding us about our identity, whom we have evolved into must not affect our African being. We must remain rooted to our culture and traditions so that we are not easily influenced by external traditions. Our core identities as Africans is about buntfu (humility), morals, culture, tradition and unity."

Using multiple African-inspired musical instruments including Sitolotolo, Mbira and Traditional Drumming styles, Bholoja easily attracts one's attention even before the sound of his African-crisped voice hits the mic on stage. He has always told his stories through art and play with some stories being personal while others inspired by the general day-to-day business governing people around him.

With an infectious sense of humour in his lyrics, Bholoja has remained one of Eswatini's greatest spirit-filled artists who expresses the true art of professionalism in the entertainment scene while delivering exceptionally unforgettable live performances each time he is on stage.

Speaking of exceptional performances, the 8th edition of the festival promises to be a stellar two-day event with a glorious line-up marking it as one of the most anticipated home-brewed festivals that will attract attendees from Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana & Namibia.

MANDISA MAMBA

Set to Captivate Luju as a New Era of Music and Meaning Unfolds

By: Ayanda Dlamini | **Pics:** Mandisa Mamba



Sultry R&B songstress Mandisa Mamba is preparing for one of the defining moments of her career as she gets ready to make her debut at the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival, a stage celebrated for showcasing some of the regions finest musical talent, fashion, cuisine and creative expression.

For the acclaimed singer-songwriter, the Luju Festival stage represents far more than another performance. It marks a milestone in a journey that has been shaped by resilience, reinvention and an unwavering commitment to creating music that speaks to the heart.

Known for her velvety vocals and emotionally rich songwriting, Mandisa has steadily carved out a distinctive place within Eswatini's contemporary music landscape since releasing her debut music in 2017. While audiences have come to know her through her captivating performances and soulful sound, the woman behind the microphone embodies many different roles.

Beyond music, she is a wife, mother, entrepreneur, actress and youth advocate who believes creativity has the power to transform lives.

"Everything I do is rooted in creating meaningful experiences," she says. "Whether it's through music, acting, youth initiatives or building my luxury handbag brand, Regal, I want my work to inspire, heal and bring people together."

That philosophy has become the foundation of an artistic career built not only on talent but also on authenticity.

Mandisa explains that music first became her outlet because it allowed her to communicate emotions that ordinary conversations often could not.

"My journey into music began from a genuine love for singing and writing," she says. "Over time, I realised music was the language that allowed me to express emotions I couldn't always put into conversation."

Finding Strength Through Growth

Nearly a decade into her recording career, she reflects on a path filled with memorable achievements, including prestigious award recognition, international nominations and performances on major stages. Yet she believes her greatest lessons came during the quieter moments.

Becoming a mother, stepping away from the spotlight for a season and navigating life's uncertainties fundamentally changed the way she approaches her craft.

Those experiences taught her that success is not measured solely by accolades but by personal growth and remaining true to oneself.

"Earlier in my career I focused on making good songs," she explains. "Today, I'm more intentional about making people feel something. My goal isn't simply to entertain. It's to create music that people can find themselves in."

That emotional honesty has become the defining characteristic of her evolving artistry.

A Luju Debut Worth Waiting For...

Her debut appearance at Luju festival feels especially fitting because the festival celebrates far more than live performances. It is a cultural showcase where music intersects with fashion, storytelling, food and African identity, values that closely mirror her own creative philosophy.

"Performing at Luju is incredibly special because it's one of the most respected lifestyle festivals on the continent," she says. "To be part of a platform that celebrates African excellence feels like an honour."

For Mandisa, the invitation represents both a personal triumph and a professional opportunity.

"Personally, it represents another answered prayer and a reminder that growth often comes one opportunity at a time. Professionally, it's an opportunity to introduce my music to new audiences while standing alongside artists whose work I admire."

She believes music should never exist in isolation.

Instead, it should complement fashion, visual art, culture and human connection to create unforgettable experiences.

"I love creating experiences that feel intentional, from the music itself to the visuals, the styling and the emotions people walk away with. Luju celebrates exactly that kind of creative expression."

SANCHEZIEY

The Sound of Heritage, Reimagined.

By: Fezile Mkhatshwa | **Pics:** Supplied

As the vibrant rhythms of the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival once again prepare to echo through the Malkerns Valley, festivalgoers can look forward to more than just world-class entertainment. Under this year's theme, "A Return to the African Future," the festival celebrates the rich traditions, stories, and cultural influences that continue to inspire and shape our evolving creative landscape.

Among the artists bringing this vision to life is SANCHEZIEY, born Mkhuleko Mangwe, whose music has become synonymous with Eswatini's distinctive Umgidvo sound. Through his authentic style and deep connection to local culture, Sancheziey embodies the festival's celebration of heritage while showcasing the future of Swati music.

Over the years, Sancheziey has built a reputation by doing something many artists find difficult; Staying rooted in tradition while creating music that resonates with younger listeners. His songs carry the pulse of Swazi culture, woven together with contemporary production and melodies that allow indigenous music to feel as relevant today as ever.

For the artist, preserving culture has never meant standing still - "I believe tradition is the foundation of everything I create. The Umgidvo sound represents who we are as emaSwati, and I want to preserve that identity."

That commitment has become the foundation of his career. Yet he is equally aware that music must continue to evolve if it is to speak to new generations.

"I understand that younger audiences enjoy music that feels current, so I blend traditional rhythms and storytelling with modern production and fresh melodies. It's about respecting our roots while allowing the music to grow with each generation."

This approach reflects a continental shift taking place across African music. More artists are choosing to celebrate local languages, indigenous sounds and cultural identity instead of chasing global trends. For Sancheziey, that movement represents an exciting future for African creativity.

"Local music is one of the strongest ways we tell our stories, carrying our languages, traditions and values into the future."

He believes Africa's greatest creative strength lies in its authenticity.

"Our creative identity will become even stronger when artists embrace their own cultures instead of trying to imitate others. Our unique sounds are what make us stand out, and they deserve to be heard on the biggest stages in the world."

That philosophy is evident in the direction his own music continues to take.

Having established himself as one of the country's leading voices in indigenous contemporary music, Sancheziey says he is entering a new chapter defined by purpose rather than popularity.

While listeners can expect fresh musical ideas, they should not expect him to abandon the sound that introduced him to audiences.

“I'm exploring new musical ideas while staying true to the Umgidvo sound that people know me for."

Every artist has a career defining moment, and for Sancheziey, that breakthrough came with the release of 'Siyabonga Gogo'. The song introduced his music to a much wider audience and proved that indigenous music could achieve mainstream success. Its impact is reflected in its growing digital reach, with the original track surpassing 114,000 YouTube views, while the 'Siyabonga Gogo' Remix featuring Lodanda, Young Zesh, and the Limkokwing Choir has attracted nearly 200,000 views on the platform.

"That song opened many doors for me, introduced my music to a wider audience and gave me the confidence to believe that indigenous music could reach people across different generations."

Since then, he has witnessed a noticeable change in how audiences respond to his music.

"I think people are much prouder of their culture today than they were a few years ago. Audiences are looking for music that feels authentic and represents who they are."

That growing appreciation makes the Luju Festival a fitting stage for an artist whose work is deeply connected to cultural identity.

When festivalgoers gather to watch his performance, Sancheziey hopes they will take away more than memories of energetic songs and vibrant performances and an increased love for Swati culture and music.

"I hope they leave feeling proud of who they are and where they come from. I want them to remember the energy, the joy and the cultural richness of the performance. More than anything, I want people to see that our traditions are alive, relevant and something we should continue celebrating."

Beyond the Luju Festival, fans can look forward to new music that continues to showcase Sancheziey's evolving artistry while staying rooted in tradition. Among the projects on the horizon is his upcoming album, teased by the release of "Utawuva Ngengoma," a collaboration with Lodanda that offers a glimpse of what's to come.



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LOVE

LUJU 2026 ***Weaves*** African Heritage Into A Bold New ***Fashion*** Narrative

By : Ayanda Dlamini | **Photo Cred:** Standard Bank Luju Festival // Will Brown // Supplied

The Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival is once again redefining the intersection of fashion, culture and commerce, unveiling a sophisticated fashion programme that celebrates African heritage while showcasing the future of the continent's creative industry.

Set to take place in a few weeks at House on Fire in the Malkerns Valley, the eighth edition of the festival is expected to attract more than 10,000 visitors from over 26 countries. Guided by its founding philosophy, "A Return to the African Future," this year's festival introduces Kwasukasukela (Once Upon a Time) as its fashion theme, inviting designers and festivalgoers to draw inspiration from African storytelling traditions and indigenous knowledge systems.

Festival organisers, Phiwo Dhlamini, Communications Manager for the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival to be precise, says this year's programme goes beyond showcasing beautiful garments, instead using fashion as a medium to preserve culture, celebrate identity and inspire innovation.

"The Luju Fashion Programme has become one of the festival's defining pillars because it demonstrates that African fashion is much more than aesthetics. It is culture, entrepreneurship, identity and storytelling," said Dhlamini.

"Through Kwasukasukela, we wanted to create a platform where designers could draw inspiration from the wisdom of our ancestors while confidently presenting a vision of Africa's future. Every collection becomes a conversation between heritage and innovation."

Fashion Rooted In Storytelling

The siSwati expression Kwasukasukela, traditionally used to begin folktales, serves as the creative heartbeat of this year's fashion programme. The concept encourages designers to transform oral traditions into visual narratives through fabric, texture, colour and silhouette.

Instead of simply creating fashionable collections, designers have been challenged to produce garments that carry stories inspired by legendary figures, nature, ancestral wisdom and the traditions that have shaped African communities for generations. Organisers believe the theme reflects Luju's commitment to ensuring Africa's past remains a source of inspiration for its future.



Luju Fashion Runway headliner **Mzukisi Mbane**

The concept also extends to festivalgoers, who are encouraged to embrace the storytelling spirit by creating fashion looks that reflect the richness of African heritage throughout the two-day celebration.

International excellence meets local creativity as Mzukisi Mbane headlines

One of the highlights of this year's programme will be the Luju Fashion Runway, headlined by acclaimed South African designer Mzukisi Mbane, founder and creative director of Imprint South Africa.

Recognised internationally for his Afro-futuristic aesthetic, Mbane recently won Africa Fashion Up 2026 and was named South Africa's Best Heritage and Cultural Designer. His collections have gained recognition for blending indigenous African identity with contemporary luxury fashion, making him a fitting ambassador for this year's theme.

Alongside Mbane, eleven of Eswatini's most exciting designers will unveil original collections inspired by Kwasukasukela. Their work is expected to showcase the diversity of the country's growing fashion industry while demonstrating how local designers continue to redefine African design through innovation and craftsmanship.

Participating designers include Adonis Threads by Calvin DuPont, Blackdegree by Kwenzie Zwane, Flow Wearz by Zikode Zwane, Philz Creations by Philile Nkwanyana, Rose Peti by Nothando Dlamini, Tash Creations by Thando Ndlangamandla, Uniq_uity by Sinakekelwe Mhlanga, Zerushi by Zen Shiba, Karo Textile by Nomfundo Simelane, Batfobile Edit by Batfobile Dlamini and Wels Craft by Welile Dlamini.

Together, their collections will present a powerful celebration of Eswatini's evolving fashion identity.

Creating opportunities beyond the catwalk

While the runway remains one of Luju's biggest attractions, organisers say the festival's vision extends far beyond a single showcase.

"One of our greatest priorities is creating genuine economic opportunities for Eswatini's creative sector," Dhlamini said.

"The runway offers visibility, but our goal extends far beyond the catwalk. We want designers to build sustainable businesses, establish commercial relationships and access new markets. Luju exists to celebrate creativity while strengthening the entire fashion value chain."

That commitment is reflected in Luju's continued partnership with Far East Textiles, which returns for a second consecutive year to support participating designers.

Through the collaboration, each designer received fabrics of their choice to create their runway collections while also participating in a factory visit and engagement session hosted by Far East Textiles Managing Director Tokky Hou. Organisers say the partnership equips designers with practical industry knowledge while strengthening links between fashion design and textile manufacturing.

Beyond the runway itself, Luju has integrated fashion into its wider festival economy through initiatives such as the Fashion Café and curated MSME activations. These platforms provide designers and artisans with valuable opportunities to showcase their products, connect with customers and build lasting commercial relationships.

By creating spaces where creativity meets business, Luju continues to position fashion as an important contributor to Eswatini's growing creative economy.

Conversations shaping the future of African fashion

Knowledge sharing will once again form a central part of the festival through the return of the Fashion Indaba.

The platform will bring together designers, retailers, stylists, manufacturers, fabric producers and industry organisations to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing Africa's fashion industry.

This year's discussions will focus on building stronger fashion ecosystems across the continent, developing successful fashion businesses beyond creativity alone and exploring how indigenous knowledge and sustainability can shape the future of African fashion.

Organisers believe these conversations are essential in ensuring that African fashion is recognised not only for its artistic value but also for its economic significance.

Everyone has a role to play

Fashion at Luju extends beyond professional designers, inviting every festivalgoer to become part of the experience.

Visitors are encouraged to embrace this year's theme by wearing two distinctive outfits over the festival weekend, each inspired by African storytelling through colour, natural materials and symbolic design. The popular Best Dressed Competition is expected to once again become one of the festival's most anticipated attractions.

The Luju Photo Booth will also return, allowing guests to capture memorable images while celebrating individuality, creativity and personal style.

"Every year we encourage festivalgoers to participate rather than simply observe," Dhlamini said.

"Fashion at Luju is not reserved for designers alone, it belongs to every guest who embraces the theme and contributes their own interpretation. That collective creativity is what makes Luju unlike any other festival."

A celebration of Africa's past and future

With additional fashion announcements still to come before the festival opens, Luju 2026 is shaping up to deliver one of its most ambitious and culturally significant fashion programmes yet.

Far more than a runway spectacle, this year's programme demonstrates how fashion can preserve heritage, empower entrepreneurs and celebrate African identity while inspiring future generations.

As thousands prepare to descend on House on Fire next month, Luju's message is clear: every stitch tells a story, every garment preserves a legacy, and every designer contributes to a future that remains proudly and unmistakably African.



Kwasukasukela... What's your story?

Photographer: Will Brown @willl.brown | Styling: Hlanhla Lukhele & Vanessa Gwebu @sasa_lu_eswatini @vanessag-webu | Art Direction: Noentla Khumalo @makhosinoentla | Production: Philippa Thorne @philithorne

The Kwasukasukela Storybook:

A Style Guide to Once Upon a Time

By: Philippa Thorne | **Photography:** Will Brown

Each chapter explores a different way to interpret Kwasukasukela (Once Upon a Time) through contemporary African fashion. Drawing on memory, storytelling, craftsmanship and imagination, these editorials celebrate fashion as a living narrative.

From folklore and oral histories to heritage, symbolism and the landscapes that shape us, expect captivating interpretations brought to life through contemporary African style. Whether inspired by an African hero, heroine, legend or iconic character, past, present or imagined, this is your opportunity to tell a story through fashion.



Khatima Adorn

Fashion Inspiration: Accessories that Speak - Using jewellery and ochre to standout

Accessories are never just accessories. Throughout Africa, adornment has expressed identity, celebration, craftsmanship and belonging. Let your jewellery, headpiece, belt, handbag or handcrafted details become part of your story. Think sculptural earrings, stacked beads, woven bags, embellished hats and contemporary interpretations of ceremonial adornment.

Designer: Flow Wearz Model: Geoffrey Candwong @gxoffr.xy **Accessories:** Jaber Na, Azuri Brass



Cabangisisa Reflect

Fashion Inspiration: Once Upon a Time

Every great story begins with a character. Draw inspiration from an African or Swazi hero, heroine, legend, animal, landscape or folktale - not as costume, but as creative interpretation. Capture the essence of your chosen story through colour, silhouette, craftsmanship or symbolism.

Don't recreate the story. Reimagine it.

Designer: Karo Textiles,Batfobile Edit, House of Dandy, @lin_del_wa Chloe Thorne **Model:** Thubelihle Masina @thubinarrative, Katleho Sojane @_katleho_s **Accessories:** Benanial, Lupondvo Design



Bumba Mould

Fashion Inspiration: The African Future - Traditional Reimagined and Renewed through Contemporary Fashion

Kwasukasukela doesn't end in the past - it imagines the future. What would tomorrow's storyteller wear? Think sculptural silhouettes, unexpected tailoring, reinterpret heritage rather than wearing traditional dress literally.

Designer: Uniq_uity **Accessories:** Gone Rural @gonerural, Lupondvo Design



Khula | Grow

Fashion Inspiration: Stories That Shaped You

The first stories we wear are often our own. A school uniform. Sunday best. A grandmother's dress. A scout scarf. A childhood jersey. Explore how memories of growing up can inspire contemporary fashion. Familiar collars, pleats, blazers, badges and uniforms become elevated silhouettes that celebrate where your story began.

Designer: Adonis Threads **Model:** Thubelihle Masina @thubinarrative

Khumbula | Remember

Fashion Inspiration: Using Craft to Reimagine our Heritage

Rather than recreating tradition, reinterpret it. Look to the craftsmanship, materials and cultural references that have shaped generations and imagine them anew. A lihiya-inspired wrap becomes an evening cape. Traditional beadwork transforms into contemporary jewellery. A woven basket inspires the silhouette of a handbag. Heritage becomes inspiration, not imitation.

Designer: Tash Creations **Model:** Katleho Sojane, @Katleho
Accessories: Azuri brass





Umhlaba | Belonging

Fashion Inspiration: Landscape

Every landscape holds a memory. Explore the deep connection between people, place, and identity through designs inspired by rolling hills, winding rivers, vast skies, and the textures of the natural world. Transform the colours, contours, and rhythms of the land into contemporary fashion that reflects a sense of home, heritage, and belonging. Celebrate the enduring relationship between nature and community, where every garment becomes a reflection of the places that shape us and the stories that connect us.

Designer: Adonis Threads, Blackdegree, Zerushi
Models: Geoffrey Candwong, Katleho Sojane @_katleho_s
Accessories: Bag; Sine Leather, Head Khokho, Bracelets Azuri

Phupha | Dream

Fashion Inspiration: Looking to Tomorrow

Step beyond the boundaries of the ordinary and into a world shaped by imagination. Explore fantasy, aspiration, and possibility through fashion, drawing from ethereal forms, unexpected colour palettes, and dreamlike narratives. Create collections that blur the line between reality and imagination, celebrating creativity without limits. Let garments become vessels for vision, hope, and self-expression, where every look tells the story of a dream brought to life.

Designer: Rose Peti **Model:**Katleho Sojane @_katleho_s
Accessories: Maverikz



Designers Create with LOVE

Step into the vibrant world of African fashion as emerging designers unveil collections that celebrate innovation, craftsmanship and contemporary storytelling. Showcased at the Fashion Café during the 2026 **Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival**, these pop-up runway presentations shine a spotlight on bold creativity, cultural expression and the next generation of design talent. Discover standout clothing and accessories that blend heritage with modern style, offering a glimpse into the exciting future of African fashion.



Designer: Tash Creations @tashcreations_thando **Model:** Katleho Sojane, @Katleho **Accessories:** Azuri Brass @azuri_brass



Designer: Wels Craft @wels.crafts
Model: Thubelihle Masina @thubinarrative
Earings: Lupondvo Design @lupondvodesign
Baskets: Gone Rural @gonerural



Designer: Flow Wearz @flow_wearz_clothing
Model: GeoffreyCandwong @gxoffr.xy
Accessories: Head piece - Jaber Na @jaber.na.jewellery, Bracelet - Azuri Brass @azuri_brass



Designer: Uniq_uity @uniq_uity2024
Model: Thubelihle Masina @thubinarrative
Accessories: Head piece - Gone Rural @gonerural, Jewellery - Lupondvo Design @lupondvodesign



Designer: Rose Peti @rosepeti_ Model:Katleho Sojane @_katleho_s **Accessories:** Ring - Jaber Na @jaber.na.jewellery, Earring - Tandla Tami @tandla_tami



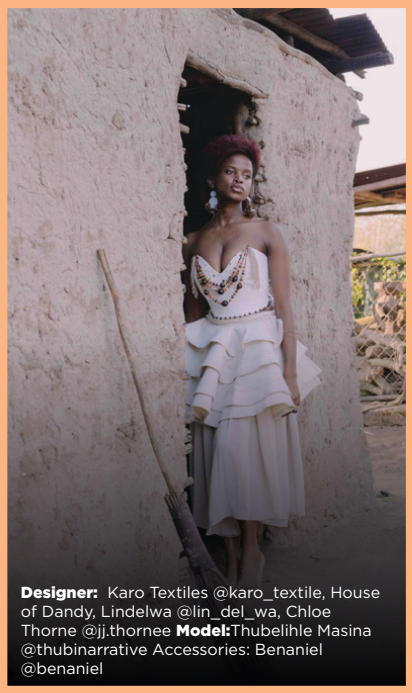
Designer: Blackdegree @blackdegree_pbd
Model: Geoffrey Candwong @gxoffr.xy
Accessories: Bag - Sine Leather @sine_leather_eswatini , head piece - Khokho @khokho_collection



Designer: Zerushi @zerushi_studio
Model: Katleho Sojane @_katleho_s
Accessories: Azuri Brass @azuri_brass



Designer: Philz Creations @philzcreations
Model: Katleho Sojane @_katleho_s
Accessories: Benaniel @benaniel



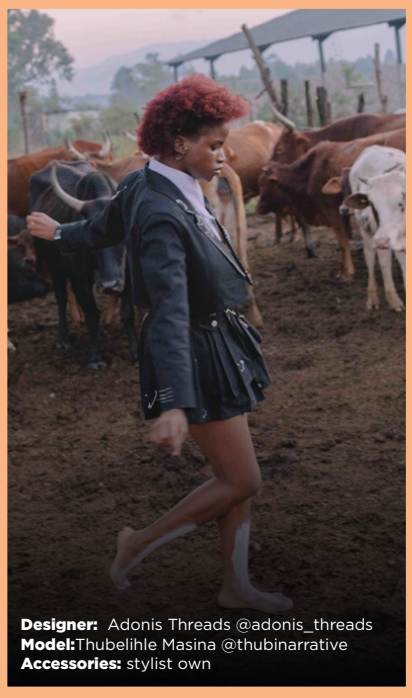
Designer: Karo Textiles @karo_textile, House of Dandy, Lindelwa @lin_del_wa, Chloe Thorne @jj.thornee **Model:**Thubelihle Masina @thubinarrative Accessories: Benaniel @benaniel



Designer: Batfobile Edit @batfobile.edit, House of Dandy @the_house_of_dandy, Lin @lin_del_wa, Chloe Thorne @jj.thornee
Model: Katleho Sojane @_katleho_s
Accessories: Lupondvo Design @lupondvodesign



Designer: Flow Wearz @flow_wearz_clothing
Model: Katleho Sojane @_katleho_s



Designer: Adonis Threads @adonis_threads
Model: Thubelihle Masina @thubinarrative
Accessories: stylist own

Credits for Fashion Concept Shoot LUJU 2026

Photographer: Will Brown @willl.brown
Styling: Hlanhla Lukhele & Vanessa Gwebu @sasa_lu_eswatini @vanessagwebu
Art Direction: Noentla Khumalo @makhosinoentla
Production: Philippa Thorne @philithorne
Research & Creative Direction Assistant: Chloe Thorne @jj.thornee
Fashion Assistant: Ella Login McGinn @ella_mcginn11
Styling Assistant: Makha Nxumalo
Accessories Supported By: Dala Spaces @dala.spaces



Every Detail. Every Moment. Every Memory.

Carmen Shabangu & The Art of Experience

By: Ayanda Dlamini // **Pics:** Supplied // Mia Jude Photography

Some careers are carefully planned, while others unfold through purpose, passion and opportunity. For Carmen Shabangu, Founder and Director of The Art of Experience, the path into event management was never accidental. Looking back, she believes every stage of her life prepared her for a profession centred on creating meaningful experiences, strengthening connections and transforming special moments into lasting memories.

Today, Carmen is recognised as one of Eswatini's dedicated event professionals, known for orchestrating weddings, corporate functions and milestone celebrations with precision, creativity and authenticity. Yet beyond the beautifully styled venues, carefully planned timelines and seamless execution is a woman whose greatest fulfilment lies not only in the events themselves, but in the people, emotions and stories they represent.

For Carmen, every celebration tells a story, and every successful event is an opportunity to create memories that will endure for years to come.

A foundation built on family and hospitality

Although she has established herself within the events industry, Carmen describes herself first and foremost as a wife and mother. Family, she says, remains the foundation upon which every aspect of her personal and professional life is built.

Raised in a home where hospitality was a way of life, she developed an appreciation for welcoming people and creating environments where they felt comfortable and valued. Hosting family and friends became second nature, and over time, that passion naturally evolved into a career dedicated to bringing people together.

Her home continues to reflect those values today. Carmen shares that her husband no longer asks who is coming over whenever preparations begin. Instead, he simply asks how many chairs need to be set up, having embraced a household where family, friends and community are always welcome.

It is this philosophy that inspired the establishment of The Art of Experience. Rather than merely organising events, the company was created around the belief that celebrations should become meaningful spaces where people connect, honour milestones and create treasured memories. "My work is really an extension of the life I love living," she says.

Outside the demands of event planning, Carmen enjoys exploring new culinary experiences, experimenting with recipes and spending time by the ocean, which she describes as a place of peace and renewal. These moments of reflection restore her creativity and provide inspiration that she brings into every project.



For Carmen, every celebration tells a story, and every successful event is an opportunity to create memories that will endure for years to come.



Discovering a calling

Although Carmen would later establish a successful career in event management, her academic journey initially followed a different direction.

She pursued a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology in South Africa, a discipline that provided valuable insight into human behaviour, communication and relationships — skills that would later become essential in her profession.

While completing her studies, she worked as an Administrative Assistant before returning to Eswatini to join House on Fire in an administrative role.

It was there that her professional journey changed. Having joined shortly before the internationally acclaimed MTN Bushfire Festival, Carmen found herself immersed in one of Africa's largest creative and cultural events. Witnessing thousands of festival-goers gathered beneath illuminated stages, united through music, art and culture, became a defining moment in her career.

"The energy was extraordinary," she recalls. "It was one of those rare moments that stays with you forever."

That experience awakened a passion she had unknowingly carried for many years. She realised that events were not simply gatherings; they were opportunities to create connections and experiences that could leave a lasting impact. A year later, an opportunity arose to become an Events Coordinator, marking the beginning of what has now been more than a decade dedicated to the events industry.

Looking back, Carmen believes her fascination with celebrations existed long before she entered the profession. As a young woman, she was captivated by wedding programmes such as Say Yes to the Dress, drawn not only to the elegance of the ceremonies but to the emotions, symbolism and meaning behind each occasion.





Learning the art behind the experience

Working at House on Fire provided Carmen with invaluable industry experience and exposed her to the complexities of managing large-scale events.

Behind every successful festival, corporate function or private celebration, she discovered, lies months of meticulous planning, disciplined coordination and effective teamwork. The final experience may appear effortless to guests, but it is built on countless hours of preparation, problem-solving and attention to detail.

Those formative years instilled in her an unwavering commitment to professionalism, resilience and excellence.

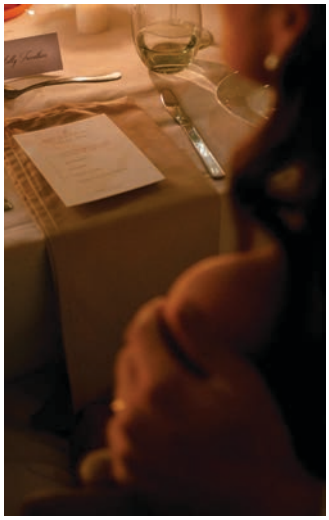
More importantly, they reinforced an understanding that exceptional events are never created by chance. They are the result of thoughtful planning, adaptability and a collective commitment to delivering something meaningful. These lessons would later become the cornerstone of her own business philosophy.

Building the Art of Experience

Establishing The Art of Experience represented one of the most significant milestones in Carmen's professional journey.

Transitioning from employment to entrepreneurship demanded courage, resilience and confidence. Every decision, from business strategy to client relationships, became her responsibility. Like many entrepreneurs, Carmen acknowledges that the journey has not been without moments of uncertainty.





One of the greatest challenges she has faced has been overcoming impostor syndrome, questioning whether she truly belonged in certain professional spaces despite years of experience and knowledge. Rather than allowing those moments to define her, she chose to embrace continuous learning.

She believes confidence is not built upon knowing everything, but upon remaining willing to learn, adapt and improve. The events industry continues to evolve, and Carmen views every project as an opportunity to refine her craft. She actively follows leading event professionals around the world, believing that excellence is achieved through lifelong learning rather than complacency.

The glamour often associated with event management rarely reflects the reality behind the scenes. Every successful event requires months of planning, long working hours, countless logistical decisions and the ability to respond calmly when unexpected challenges arise.

For Carmen, however, these demands are among the most rewarding aspects of the profession. She has learnt that challenges are inevitable, but professionalism is demonstrated through composure, adaptability and solution-driven leadership. Rather than becoming overwhelmed by obstacles, she focuses her energy on resolving them efficiently while ensuring her clients remain confident throughout the process.

This calm and considered approach has become one of the defining characteristics of her leadership style. Above all, Carmen remains inspired by the trust clients place in her. Every wedding, corporate function or private celebration represents a significant milestone in someone's life, and she considers it both an honour and responsibility to be entrusted with those occasions.



Motherhood as a leadership lesson

While entrepreneurship has shaped Carmen's professional identity, motherhood has profoundly influenced the leader she has become.

She believes balance is not a destination but an ongoing commitment that requires intentional choices every day. The support of her husband and extended family has been instrumental in enabling her to pursue her ambitions while remaining present for her children. Their encouragement has also taught her that asking for support is not a sign of weakness, but an important part of building a sustainable life and career.

Motherhood has transformed the way she approaches leadership. It has cultivated greater patience, empathy and perspective while reinforcing the importance of leading by example. Recognising that children learn more from observation than instruction has inspired her to demonstrate values of integrity, kindness and resilience both at home and in business.

Excellence through service

For Carmen, successful event management extends far beyond beautiful décor or flawless logistics. It is fundamentally about service.

She believes the client experience begins with the first consultation and continues long after the conclusion of the event. Every interaction, conversation and carefully considered detail contributes to the overall experience. Her philosophy is simple yet profound: people may not remember every decorative element, but they will always remember how an experience made them feel.

This commitment to intentional service continues to distinguish The Art of Experience and has earned Carmen the confidence of clients who entrust her with some of the most significant moments of their lives.

An exciting chapter ahead

For Carmen, successful event manageAs her business continues to grow, Carmen is embracing new opportunities that further strengthen her presence within the industry. Among her current projects is coordinating the culinary programme for the 2026 Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival, one of Eswatini's premier celebrations of food, fashion, music and culture.

Looking to the future, she intends to expand the range of services offered through The Art of Experience while continuing to build a brand recognised for excellence, creativity and intentional client service. Her ambition extends beyond commercial success. She hopes to establish a legacy defined by professionalism, meaningful human connection and memorable experiences.

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Is Running the New Tinder?

By: Delisa Thwala | **Pics:** Magnific

...Uuuuuhmmmm, why are we running again??

Earlier this year, if someone had told me that I would voluntarily wake up before sunrise on weekends, sign up for walks and races, collect medals, and somehow become interested in conversations about hydration and running shoes, I would have laughed.

Yet here I am. I have taken part in walks, marathons and hikes, hardly for the fitness really, but for the photo dumps and Strava streaks, mainly.

Somewhere between the Times of Eswatini Marathon, the SPAR Women's Challenge, the Lidwala Walk and Pick n' Pay's Bean There, Run That Coffee Run, I realised something interesting is happening: running has become the new cool.

The country is moving, and I mean literally. More importantly, people genuinely seem to want to move.

This year alone has seen a noticeable increase in community walks, marathons and wellness initiatives, with even more events still to come, including the KwaMagogo Run in Manzini, the Nhlangano Half Marathon and what is increasingly becoming one of the country's biggest races, the Imbube Marathon.

Perhaps this should not come as a surprise. For years, the Ministry of Health and health experts have championed the message that health is wealth, encouraging us to become more active and take better care of themselves.

Maybe we are finally listening. Or maybe it's a cry for help?? Or do people genuinely love waking up in the early hours just to run? I could even add that perhaps they are running away from themselves. Or maybe we all have a serious case of FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out). Because somewhere along the way, running became cool.

A few years ago, running was not exactly considered trendy. Most people associated it with elite athletes, school sports or those incredibly disciplined individuals who somehow enjoyed waking up at four in the morning.

Today, however, running has become a culture of its own. Running clubs are popping up everywhere, and if you're looking for a regular fix, the Mbabane Club-hosted 5km Mbabane Parkrun has become a popular weekly gathering. Social media is filled with AI-generated posters advertising races. It's also filled with race-day pictures, sunrise runs and post-run coffee dates.

People proudly share their medals and personal records, while others have somehow mastered the art of filming themselves while running without looking like they are fighting for their lives.

I recently discovered that "PR" means personal record. Until a few months ago, I thought it had something to do with public relations.

Just the other day, I was heaving, fighting for my life through a 10km run, and here's my secret: I never prepare or generally work out. I woke up today, decided to run a 10km tomorrow (that's how accessible they are), and off I go. I think I will do it for the goodie bags.

This growing culture is not unique to our beloved Eswatini. Globally, running has experienced a massive resurgence, particularly among young people and women.

What was once viewed as a solitary sport has become deeply social. Running clubs have become communities, offering people an opportunity to connect offline in a world that increasingly exists online. The truth is everyone wants to belong somewhere. Running offers that sense of belonging.

I struggle with unfamiliar social situations, but during these marathons and hikes, I find myself talking to people, taking pictures and finding my colour again. Just like the best plug for athleisure wear is PEP.

It gives people a reason to leave their homes, meet new people and become part of something bigger than themselves. Friendships are being formed on running routes, networking opportunities are emerging during community events and, judging by some conversations online, there may even be a little romance involved.

Which brings me back to my original question: Is running the new Tinder? I ask this jokingly, of course.

But there is something undeniably appealing about meeting people through a shared interest rather than through an app and awkward small talk.

In many ways, running has become a modern-day community where people support one another, celebrate each other's achievements and encourage one another to keep going, whether in running or in life itself.

At a time when loneliness and burnout seem to affect so many people, there is something refreshing about seeing hundreds of strangers willingly gather at six in the morning simply to walk, run and spend time together.

Social media has also played its role in this wellness boom. Running simply looks fun—hear me, fun, not easy.

The IG-ready photographs are great. The race shirts are nice. The medals make for excellent content, and every event somehow ends with coffee, laughter and memorable group pictures.

Naturally, this creates a little fear of missing out. I suspect that not everyone initially joins because they genuinely enjoy running.

Some people simply want to experience what everyone else seems to be talking about, and honestly, there is nothing wrong with that.

If fear of missing out encourages people to exercise, spend more time outdoors and prioritise their wellbeing, then perhaps it is one of the healthier trends we could participate in.

Besides, there are certainly worse things to build your personality around because, yes, running has also become a personality.

People proudly identify themselves as runners. They collect medals, plan their calendars around races and casually mention distances that still sound impossible to some of us.

I will have you know that this month alone I'm sitting on 34 kilometres of running and walking.

In the same breath, I still do not fully understand why someone completes a 10-kilometre race and immediately decides that the next logical step is a half-marathon.

I also do not understand how runners somehow manage to look presentable after several kilometres while the rest of us are simply trying to remember how breathing works.

Yet despite my confusion, I completely understand why people keep coming back.

As someone who has participated in more than five walks and races this year alone, I have come to realise that the appeal goes far beyond fitness.

Some people run to improve their health. Others run to clear their minds. Some run because it gives them structure, discipline and routine.

Others simply enjoy the sense of community that comes with being surrounded by people who are all trying to become slightly better versions of themselves.

Perhaps this running boom is not really about running at all. Maybe it is about people searching for joy, connection and healthier ways of navigating modern life.

Whatever the reason may be, we are clearly embracing wellness in a way that feels exciting and long overdue.

So, is running the new Tinder? Because lately, it seems as though a lot of our running mates aren't just chasing personal records, they're also bumping into potential partners along the route. Maybe. Is it a cry for help? Possibly.

Or perhaps we are simply witnessing a generation of people choosing community over isolation, movement over stagnation and wellness over burnout.

Either way, if you happen to see me signing up for yet another race despite repeatedly saying I would never do this again, please mind your business.

I, too, have become one of those people.

So, let's meet at the next one, on 8 August at the KwaMagogo Run in Manzini, at 6:00 a.m. sharp!!

The Wine Boutique

new look, more space, and more reasons to sip...

By: Ayanda Dlamini // **Pics:** The Wine Boutique // Mantenga Lifestyle // Mumu Dlamini









Wine lovers in Eswatini have yet another reason to raise a glass. The Wine Boutique in Ezulwini has officially unveiled its newly refurbished and expanded space, offering guests a more inviting setting to relax, connect and discover exceptional wines through thoughtfully curated experiences.

The transformation marks an exciting new chapter for the boutique, which has steadily established itself as one of Eswatini's premier destinations for wine enthusiasts. With more indoor seating, a refreshed contemporary look and innovative tasting experiences, The Wine Boutique is redefining what it means to enjoy wine in the Kingdom.

Leading the new offerings are two carefully crafted tasting packages designed to elevate every visit. Guests can indulge in the Chocolate & Wine Pairing, inspired by the renowned Franschhoek wine experience, where rich, handcrafted chocolates are expertly matched with selected wines to create a memorable sensory journey.

For those who prefer something savoury, the new Pizza & Wine Pairing combines handcrafted pizzas with specially selected wines, allowing every flavour to shine through in perfect harmony.

Whether it is a romantic date night, an evening out with friends or simply a well-deserved Friday treat, the expanded venue provides a warm and sophisticated atmosphere where guests can unwind while exploring wines from around the world.

"The refurbishment is about creating an even better experience for our customers," said The Wine Boutique Owner and Director, Lungile Motsa. "We wanted a space where people can feel comfortable, learn about wine, create memories and enjoy experiences that go beyond simply buying a bottle. Every detail has been designed to make each visit special."

The renovation also reflects the boutique's broader vision of cultivating a vibrant wine culture in Eswatini. Beyond offering premium wines, The Wine Boutique continues to position itself as a lifestyle destination where education, hospitality and meaningful social experiences come together.

> *We wanted a space where people can feel comfortable, learn about wine, create memories and enjoy experiences that go beyond simply buying a bottle.*

"This is only the beginning," added Motsa. "Our goal is to build a vibrant wine culture in Eswatini, one that celebrates craftsmanship, supports local hospitality and connects us with global wine communities."

That vision has already become evident through the boutique's signature Wine & Dine evenings, where guests enjoy expertly curated food and wine pairings in an elegant setting illuminated by candlelight. These intimate gatherings have become a favourite among patrons seeking refined culinary experiences while discovering new wines.

Adding to the excitement, preparations are already underway for The Wine Boutique's much-anticipated annual event. While details remain under wraps, Motsa revealed that guests can expect another unforgettable celebration, with more information set to be unveiled in the next issue.

Today, The Wine Boutique stands proudly in Ezulwini as more than a wine retailer. It represents Motsa's entrepreneurial journey and Eswatini's growing confidence in embracing global wine trends while celebrating local hospitality and identity.

As guests continue to toast new beginnings within its beautifully transformed space, one thing remains certain: The Wine Boutique is not simply serving wine, it is creating a culture, one glass, one story and one shared experience at a time.



BOOK YOUR ULTIMATE WINE TASTING EXPERIENCE TODAY

Follow our socials or visit www.wineboutique.net for more information





ANGEL'S CRIB

Supporting The Ones Raising the Future of Eswatini

By: Slindelo Nkosi // **Pics:** Supplied + Magnific



Angels' Crib
Nurturing Children, Supporting Parents

> Formed in 2018, Angel's Crib was established to provide support to parents while they nurture their children...the program has quickly become a space for engaging parents through informal discussions and educational sessions...

A few weeks ago, my acquaintances and I were merely excited by the fact that our preschool-going children were on their mid-term break. Not just a 2-day break, I mean a week with an extra day-long holiday!

Anyone that does the school morning runs for ten good straight months out of the twelve knows exactly why we were excited by this; A much-deserved break from the crazy and fast-paced mornings along with 5-year-olds who have absolutely no idea what the meaning of "time-efficiency" means.

While on the same conversation, we had another parent who has both her children now living with her as young adults; they have completed school along with tertiary. She said, "I'm glad I completed my morning runs but now I miss my children while they are with me right in the house because they're glued on their phones,"

The scenarios above are exactly some of the reasons behind the establishment of Angel's Crib, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that was formed back in 2018 as an Early Childhood Development Daycare Centre inspired by Maserame Mtshali serving as the organization's Founding Director. To provide support to parents while they nurture their children.

Maserame shared that her fair share of experiences as a parent struggling to find reliable, safe and nurturing childcare prompted her to form the initiative. "Like other parents, I encountered care-givers who were either inconsistent in their commitment or lacked the knowledge and skills necessary to provide quality care and stimulation for young children"

Over and above the provision of a safe and developmentally appropriate environment for children where they can receive quality care from caregivers trained in Early Childhood Development (ECD), the program has quickly become a space for engaging parents through informal discussions and educational sessions focused on a number of topical child-related issues including child development, positive parenting and family well-being. "These conversations with parents laid the foundation for what would later become a continuous series of conversations themed ***"The Nurtured Parent Series"*** she explained.



The organization has so far hosted two Parent Series in the past with another one scheduled for this month focusing on the need for parents to learn the skill of releasing their children to the world without losing the connection at the same time – "Letting Go Without Losing the Connection". With this, the Director was asked about the lessons and facts that have been realized and uncovered about parents in Eswatini, she said "Many parents here are attempting to raise their children differently from how they themselves were raised. While some are avoiding the harsh punishments that they received from their parents, others are overcompensating their children and this creates uncertainty on their children instead of building confidence."

She further explained that a lot of conflict between parents and their children stems from one misunderstanding the other, which most of the times is confused with "lack of love". "Children experience varying stages in their lives and during these stages they will try to push boundaries in an attempt to making sense of their new-found world which most parents will interpret as bad behaviour labelling it as disrespect, defiance or rebellious."

She says children and young people generally seek their own independence and in doing so they will test boundaries and question certain authorities all in a bid towards exploring their identity.

Advising, the Founder says conflict between parents and children can be reduced simply by trying to understand and acknowledge the various developmental stages that children experience. She also recognizes the fact that many parents need just as much support as well.

Maserame Explains How The Nurtured Parents Series Works...

One of the most unique features of The Nurtured Parent Series is that before each session, every registered parent receives a link for their child or young person to complete an anonymous survey. This is an opportunity for children to honestly share what they wish their parents knew, understood, or did differently.

The children's feedback then becomes a central part of the conversation. We do not collect it merely to generate interesting statistics; we use it to challenge assumptions, guide learning and help parents better understand the lived experiences of their children. One of the most powerful lessons we have learned is that children often experience our parenting differently from how we intend it. While parents may not always agree with every comment, the feedback provides a valuable opportunity for reflection, growth and a stronger connection.



Questions asked on the link...

What would you like us to discuss with your parents? What do your parents do that makes you feel safe? What do you wish adults understood about children and young people?

Although the responses vary across age groups and family circumstances, several themes emerge consistently. Children repeatedly ask parents to stop yelling and instead listen calmly. They want adults to understand that some things that appear simple to adults can feel overwhelming to them. They consistently report feeling safest and most loved when parents spend quality time with them. Perhaps most touching of all, many children tell us that even though they sometimes argue and disagree with their parents, they still love and need their parents.

Our goal, therefore, should not be to be perfect parents but rather to raise children who feel loved, heard, valued, understood and ultimately who won't spend their adult years recovering from their childhoods.



"THIS & THAT!"
...Umjolo 101 in the 21st Century

By: Slindelo Nkosi **Pics:** Supplied // Magnific

Once the question "Sentani?" pops up from one of you – unfortunately Sey'bhemile!!!

This project (umjolo)...I'll call it a "project" because wow!

Okay, this project has been given so many labels, from it being called a "Scam", a "Pandemic" to a "Demon", it has however survived the test of time and it remains standing because it involves LOVE – Well, it's supposed to involve love and love is one of the most beautiful aspects of life. It began with God afterall - He taught us what it really is through His life on earth but it seems like the world has somehow missed the whole plot now hence dating nowadays has become somewhat difficult or rather a challenge.

Nobody really knows what Umjolo is and how it should be handled but most of us appreciate the fact that dating is meant to be special and sacred (not secret!) and hopefully lead to a greater union for both the people involved (I still believe dating is strictly between two people, anything else outside of this is a mess!)

Anyhow, however the case may be, dating in the 21st century has proven itself to be more of an extreme sport that has left a huge number of people to opt for permanent single life. I honestly understand where their decisions stems from; the positive emotional, physical and financial input usually has negative results consequently leaving one with a lot of baggage to single-handedly manage and most of the time such results never leave one the same again, EVER! From such experiences, one is usually left either depressed and struggling to regain the confidence they previously had and as a result they will keep to themselves, remain indoors and lose out on much greater opportunities that may be waiting for them out there or behaves completely out of character by being rebellious, irresponsible and outrageously dramatic while they are best known to be saints that share a seat with the Lord - "Ngiyawesaba umjolo."

An acquaintance once likened dating these days to a doctor's handwriting mentioning that at some point "it gets so confusing that you don't even understand what's going on"!



However, not all is gloomy in this dating game actually because it all depends on how one views it and life in general. Our lives are meant to be enjoyed and fruitful and this comes with responsibilities and sacrifice of course. There is absolutely no point in pin-pointing fingers at each other and blaming the other for viewing life from a point of privilege. While I acknowledge that there are unfortunate life circumstances that nobody asks or applies for but we are afforded the opportunities to change the unfortunate to fortunate situations. I mean, we made it through covid! We saw opportunities there and some of us grabbed them while others nursed the situation until it was over but the common factor here is, we survived it and those that did not survive it tried their absolute best to pull through – they tried.

The same applies with umjolo – we need to push through, we need to try, we need to be patient with each other, we need to be realistic and honest with ourselves; we all need a friend, a companion "It is not good for the man to live alone..." and we know for a fact that what is covered by the book of life (the Bible) is life!

We may argue and use very valid justifications to validate the reasons why we choose to be alone but we were unfortunately not made to live this life alone – trying it would be difficult but fortunately many have found ways of dealing with it, it however remains difficult & lonely.





Unhealed people don't listen with their ears, they listen with their triggers. They hear wounds, not words.

The internet alludes to dating in the 21st century as a technology-driven, fast-paced and highly personalized experience. It continues to explain that dating in our days prioritizes shared values and personal growth alongside traditional romance. However, it seems as though the latter part of the explanation is not relevant to the current status quo of Umjolo.

We seem not to prioritize the values we probably thought we shared on our first meet-ups, they seem to fall off by the wayside and quickly being replaced by self-gratification and selfish needs that are expected to be provided by the other person "in our lives". We are no longer patient with each other let alone patient with self hence we find ourselves somewhat frustrated by the very same union we got ourselves into – Umjolo.

A friend concluded that this misdemeanour is caused by the fact that "we are at a point of settlement not searching." By this she meant – naturally, people above the ages 30 are supposed to be have settled down by now with their partners and managing marriages, however here we are, above the age of 30 still searching.

I must point out though that we not wrong for searching. We are not wrong for wanting to be happy with someone, to be in a loving relationship and not stopping the search until we find our happiness but what is important is that it all starts with self. Search for happiness within yourself first then you MAY find someone else to share that happiness with.

Love yourself first, you MAY find someone else to share the love with. Visualize a happy and long-lasting relationship and maybe you will find someone else to share and make that vision come to life.

Umjolo in the 21st century needs a balancing act due to a number of dynamics; we are divorcees, we share children with people we no longer want to be with, we are indirectly traumatizing our children by refusing to be cordial with each other simply because we are no longer in-love with each other, we are trying to heal while being disturbed by other life's situations...it's a lot!

In all this, some people will allow the healing process to take its course to a point of full recovery and be ready enough to get themselves involved in another relationship, however the big question is – will they meet and fall head over heels in-love with someone that has equally healed? If the answer to this question is "NO", then the sad cycle begins - The healed person will have to continuously manage and nurse the unhealed partner's triggers and traumas while trying to build a new relationship and at some point it will get tiring because it will seem unfair and unnecessary for the partner that successfully dealt with their past traumas – Akupheli!!!!

I think we seriously underestimate how difficult it is to find a genuine partner

Sometimes we take good relationships with patient people for granted until we realize after battles of searching that we lost a good one.

We can only win this battle by being intentional about our relationships – international for them to work, NOT being obsessive (there's a difference).

By being kind to one another, patient, graceful to each other, forgiving, more considerate, selfless and serving across the board.

Let us try to avoid pushing the negative narrative yemjolo and love – let's be international about making life easier for our children and those yet to be born by pushing a positive agenda around Umjolo.

Love is beautiful. Enjoy it!













A FRESH BREW FOR MBABANE

Mugg & Bean elevates the capital's café culture

By: Ayanda Dlamini // **Pics:** Affinity // Mugg & Bean Eswatini

Mbabane's café scene has been elevated to new heights with the opening of the newest Mugg & Bean outlet, bringing the brand's signature blend of quality, comfort and flavour to the heart of the capital.

Conveniently located at the Swazi Plaza (Corporate Place), at the centre's Food Court, the new café offers more than just great food and coffee. It delivers a modern, inviting dining experience and aesthetics on par with Mugg & Bean outlets in major cities around the world.

From the moment guests step inside, they are welcomed by an elegant, contemporary interior designed to create a warm and relaxing atmosphere.

The stylish décor, spacious seating and thoughtfully curated ambience make it the ideal venue for everything from business meetings and casual catch-ups to family breakfasts and solo coffee dates.

True to the brand's reputation, the menu offers something for every palate. Whether you are craving a hearty breakfast, a freshly prepared lunch, a wholesome dinner or a light snack between meetings, every meal is prepared with generous portions and premium ingredients.

The café's bakery selection is equally irresistible. Towering giant muffins, freshly baked breads and indulgent cakes line the display, offering the perfect accompaniment to any meal or coffee break. Every bite reflects the quality and freshness that Mugg & Bean has become renowned for across Southern Africa.

Coffee lovers will undoubtedly feel at home. Expertly crafted from carefully selected beans, the café serves an extensive range of coffees, from smooth cappuccinos and creamy lattes to rich americanos and indulgent speciality beverages. Every cup is brewed to perfection, making each visit a memorable experience for both casual coffee drinkers and true connoisseurs.

For customers constantly on the move, Mugg & Bean also offers a convenient takeaway service, allowing guests to enjoy freshly brewed coffee, café-style meals, decadent cakes and signature giant muffins wherever the day takes them. Busy professionals, students and travellers can also order online for a quick and satisfying pick-me-up.

The Swazi Plaza opening marks the brand's third outlet in Eswatini, joining the popular restaurant at The Gables Shopping Centre in Ezulwini, renowned for its breathtaking views of the Ezulwini Valley, and Mugg & Bean On The Move at the Total Energies Gardens Filling Station in Mbabane, a favourite stop for early morning coffee and quick meals.

With its world-class atmosphere, exceptional menu and signature hospitality, the new Mugg & Bean at Swazi Plaza Properties is redefining the café experience in Mbabane. Whether you're stopping in for your morning brew, meeting friends over lunch or treating yourself to one of its famous baked delights, this latest addition is set to become one of the city's favourite lifestyle destinations.









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