

Reborn 'glug-glug' ads deserve accolades

By  [Brendan Seery](#)

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Defy and Finish, pick up your respective Onions. And remember: I've told you a billion times not to exaggerate.



Screen grab from the ad.

The Sasol “glug-glug” ads were, back in the day – going on three decades ago – some of the best-liked around and helped build the profile for the then-parastatal fuel company.

My favourite (everyone who was around then has theirs) was the Afrikaans version, where Ouma and Oupa – *oppie stoep, natuurlik* – are trying to convince grandson in the pram to make his first spoken words either “Oupa” or “Ouma”. He, of course, says “Glug glug” and then “Sasol” and, wheel-spinning the pram, roars off.

In answer to Oupa’s question about where he’s off to, Ouma replies: “*Seker nie ver nie*” (surely not far).

Since those heydays, Sasol has been privatised and is now a significant player in the global fuel and chemical industries. Its ads, though, have been less than memorable.

Now, with the help of ad agency FCB Joburg, the glug-glug storyline is being revived... even though it has been given a 21st century spin and the basic idea hasn’t changed (that Sasol pumps up your performance).



This time, we see a cute little girl being given the same toy Sasol pump, which featured in the original ad all those years ago – and it has the same magical properties.

In the first ad, the little boy's eyes go wide as his toy Ferrari roars off after its Sasol boost. In the new ad, the little girl points the pump at everything she sees and is amazed by the transformations.

So a delivery tuk-tuk blows past a sportscar; a man out walking his small dog suddenly has to start running when the dog heads for the hills. Finally, the magic pump is aimed at a footballer taking a crucial penalty.

“ It's charming and a healthy sign of a brand comfortable in its own skin. One fuel is pretty much like another in the minds of most motorists, so growing an emotional bond with your brand helps it stand out. ”

I don't think it's as good as the originals, which were really ground-breaking. But it nevertheless does stand out in today's advertising for its simplicity and, dare I say it, innocence.

Orchids to Sasol and to FCB Joburg.

It's easy to bamboozle South Africans – and I'm not even talking about all the snake-oil currently being dispensed by our politicians.

My particular peeve at the moment is directed at Defy, which is punting its dishwashers as amazing savers of water.

In conjunction with dishwasher cleaning agent-maker Finish, Defy claims its appliances are the solution to any water crisis.

According to Defy and Finish, you can save “up to 50 litres” of water with every normal washing-up session if you use a dishwasher.





Very impressive – unless you actually question that number. I have found that the average dishwasher uses between 10l and 15l of water to clean a six-place set of dishes and pots.

That implies that you will use more than 60l to do the same wash.

As someone who does this regularly, using two basins (one for washing and one for rinsing), I use 13l of water for the same task. How do I know this? Well I calculated the actual volume of each of the basins (using real measurements) and multiplied it by two.

So that's your first lie, Defy and Finish. Unless you fill your pond to do your washing up, a dishwasher is NOT going to save you 50l a session.



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Next, Defy goes on to state that by buying a dishwasher, you will be joining “millions of other South Africans” in helping to save the planet.

Using that word, means, literally, more than two million South Africans own a dishwasher. That is patently bollocks. No matter how much washing, how much spinning you do, Defy (and Finish), fake facts are not going to disappear.

So, pick up your respective Onions. And remember: I've told you a billion times not to exaggerate...

ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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