

Championing local flavours in the South African market

Issued by [Burger King](#)

25 Feb 2019

Ezelna Jones, group marketing executive at Burger King® South Africa, explains what it takes to build a global brand in our local market



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The inaugural [FOOD XX Symposium and Awards](#), took place on 12 February 2019. The event creates a platform for women in the food industry to share insights, opinions and knowledge with their peers.

Ezelna Jones, Group Marketing Executive at [Burger King® South Africa](#) shared her experience on successfully maintaining a global brand in the South African market.

Burger King® SA opened its doors in 2013. “The journey has been challenging, yet rewarding, says Jones, “and I look forward to the road ahead as our digital and physical footprint continues to expand.”

Jones explains that BK® strives to provide an inclusive, authentic restaurant experience and serve guests with great tasting food, fast. “As you can imagine, this requires a lot of work behind the scenes.” Jones adds that much of the brand’s success is owed to constant menu innovation, recruiting a diverse workforce, always listening and learning, and staying true to the brand’s purpose.

“When it comes to the menu we are always looking for new ways to excite our guests, says Jones.

“We work with suppliers to ensure that the ingredients in our food adhere to the global [Trust in Taste](#) policy, and that there are no short cuts along the way,” says Jones.

For example, when launching a uniquely South African product like the Boerewors Burger (with caramelised onions and chutney), BK® underwent a rigorous process to ensure the product consists of real, quality ingredients. “We didn’t want to introduce a simple boerewors flavoured patty. Instead, we created something truly delicious with [Freddy Hirsch](#) which lives up to the BK® standard in taste and quality.” This was followed by a global approval process. According to Jones, there were a few (humorous) conversations around *chutney*. “We had to do a lot of reassuring that we weren’t adding fruit to our burger. Fortunately, once the global team tasted the burger, they embraced the flavours,” laughs Jones.

The brand also introduced the Milktart Milkshake to the menu in September 2018. To launch this, the team knew they had to do something unique. BK® decided to work with South African Ouma’s & Oupa’s – the true custodians of the dessert. “We knew that if we received their [stamp of approval](#), the rest of the country would love it too.”

The milkshake was only going to be available for a limited time, but the dessert has performed so well, BK® made it a permanent menu offering, and are looking to expand the menu with more local flavours. “Guests also love the Boerewors Burger & Milktart Milkshake offer we include on the App for a limited time.”

At the end of the day, Burger King® has an American heritage, but “our team continuously explores new ways to cater to the South African market and are proud to serve our guests every day,” concludes Jones.

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