



Flavours in favour

by Fidelis Zvomuya

South Africa's bounty of top quality fruit is feeding a growing pure juice industry that is fast becoming a force to be reckoned with, both locally and on the export market.

As healthy eating is increasingly becoming an everyday concern for consumers, there has been a marked increase in the demand for natural juices, free from colour and flavour additives and sweeteners.

In the course of the past few years, juice bars have become tropical pioneers, offering naturally sweet alternatives to the cola or coffee break. Going into small, open juice bars in shopping malls one can see varieties of neatly stacked oranges, peaches, melons and mangoes on display, surrounded by customers enjoying tall, frothy glasses of summer filled with these delicacies.

Having become accustomed to the taste of fresh, unadulterated fruit juice, consumers now are loathe to accept anything less, and more and more new products of well known brands are being added to the market, says an employee at Boost Juice SA in Centurion.

Boost Juice Bars offer a healthy alternative to fast food with a range of delicious low fat juices, smoothies, crushes and super snacks. On their website, Boost Juice states that all the products on their menu are at least 98% fat free and contain nothing artificial whatsoever.

Shaun McNamara, a regular customer of Boost Juice, says he loves the taste of oranges in the pure juice brands. "Even pre-packed orange fruit juices are extremely tasty and convenient. As you can see, the market is now flooded with numerous fruit juices in delicious variants and cocktails, including off-season fruits."

Shaun says he enjoys fruit juices because of their wholesome, earthy and natural taste, with no added sugars, colourants or preservatives, and this gives them the pure goodness of nature.

Flavours in demand

Our source says Boost Juice's vast selection of juices is indeed impressive, with the following being the most popular and fast selling flavours: orange, mango tango, tropical, lemon, watermelon, berry,

raspberries, strawberries, blueberries and apple. "Orange, mango and apple are the most popular brands here. These have become so popular with the market demanding original fruit juices squeezed from fresh fruits," he says.

In a snap survey at the Centurion Shopping Mall in Pretoria, orange juice seems to be consumers' favourite juice. Retailers like Pick 'n Pay, Checkers and Woolworths also confirmed high sales on the various brands of orange juice.

Extensive research conducted in early 2010 by Ceres, found that orange, mango, tropical and granadilla variants were the most popular juices on the market.

As a result of these findings, Ceres has launched a new Ceres Fruit Squash range, which is also available in four of these popular flavours. The company is happy with the market performance of this range and says it has further strengthened their brand name in the minds of a wider consumer base.

According to Michelle van Schalkwyk, juices marketing manager at Ceres, the new squash range is positioned as a premium and trusted brand offering quality ingredients from the Ceres valley that have been enriched with vitamins at an affordable price.

The other fast selling brand is the new DairyBelle Fiesta juice range. A blend of milk and fruit juice, it is positioned to offer the goodness of milk with the refreshment of a fruit juice, and is available in orange, peach, pineapple, granadilla, strawberry and tropical variants. The company's Four Seasons range, available in guava, orange and mango-orange, has been also popular, apparently due to its quality nectars with real fruit pieces. The nectars have a real juice content of between 40 and 80%.



Ceres recently launched a new Fruit Squash range

Pure Joy has become another of South Africa's best selling natural fruit juices on the local market and is also enjoying great success as a quality export product. It is a range of 100% pure fruit juices without preservatives, added sugar or additives, packed in aseptic Tetra Brik slim cartons and processed at ultra high temperatures to ensure a twelve month shelf-life while still retaining its natural nutrients and fresh taste.

Wilde Pressed and Squeezed Fruit Juices is also doing well on both the local and international markets, even though it is a fairly recent entrant to particularly the North American market. The company ascribes its success to the fact that their product contains only the juice that has been squeezed from the actual fruit, which allows most of the nutrients to remain in the juice and delivers the taste of pure fruit, almost as if still in the peel.

The clandestine production and sale of adulterated fruit juice is a widespread and highly profitable practice, but consumers are becoming increasingly product savvy, checking labels for mention of additives and selecting purer, healthier options, even at a slight premium. **M&J**