



A cuppa from home bru!

Husband and wife duo Siphso and Mimi, kick-off the first of many profiles in our Coffee Column. Their collective passion for coffee and ambition for the future make them the perfect candidates to start this regular feature.

Siphso Simelane

What is your connection to the coffee industry?

I'm very proud to announce that myself and Mimi have recently founded and launched one of the first 100% black-owned African coffee roastery brand. The name is Homebru Coffee and it is going to be one of the few direct-to-consumer coffee roasters in South Africa. Our slogan is MAYIBUYE! We are bringing good coffee back home.

Where, in your opinion, is the best place to drink coffee?

It has to be a warm and comfortable environment and for me that plays a very big part for the best place to drink coffee. Whilst growing up in a matchbox (township), our kitchen was the smallest, warmest and favourite place as we had the coal stove where all the family converged around and we shared coffee and all in that place.

Do you have a preferred time of the day for coffee?

It is very nice to wake up in the morning and have a "quiet time" with a good cuppa. The morning takes the cup for me. At that time, the day is still young and the smell of coffee in the kitchen is a real clincher and that makes it the perfect time for a cup of coffee!

What is your favourite style of coffee?

It isn't the fancy coffee cups that make this beverage taste so great. It's the recipe of the coffee and of course the way it looks that factors into the equation. We all have a favourite style of coffee and every cup will taste different because of the roast of the coffee bean, the grind, the amount used, the water, the temperature and a variety of other factors. We have all had a go trying to reproduce the coffee goodness from the coffee houses at home, the way we imagine they are supposed to be done, but do we actually know the proper method to use in order to extort the captivating flavours perfectly? My favourite style of coffee is then a Latte: Foam and steam milk to 75°C. The ratio is worked out as 50% coffee and 50% milk. Slowly pour the milk down the side of the coffee cup or glass so it infuses with the coffee shot. The main differentiation between a latte and a cappuccino is that a latte blends the milk and coffee together, whereas the cappuccino keeps the two apart.

I love coffee because...

I like fresh ground coffee that I know. I will never go back to what is stocked on our retail shelves and what I grew up with again. The smell, the rich taste and knowing that it's fresh ground from beans that I roasted grabs my attention right away. The taste is better than chocolate. I would rather have coffee than a dessert.

If you could fix one problem in the coffee industry, what would it be?

It would be fair trade. While the world confronts a terrorist crisis, flooding, and global warming, there is a crisis in the international coffee market. Today's world market prices for coffee are at their lowest point in history. While coffee companies reap huge profits, millions of coffee farmers and workers face unemployment, land seizure, and starvation. Many small coffee farmers receive prices for their coffee that are less than the costs of production, forcing them into a cycle of poverty and debt. With little or no income between harvest months, farmers are usually forced to sell their next crop in advance.



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Mimi Masala

What is your connection to the coffee industry?

I have a connection with anything I spend money on. Delving on the origin of coffee, I initially explored it as a business venture. I was introduced to a very humble coffee grower in Tanzania. People that love coffee talk about it first before the financial rewards; that was truly refreshing. Seeing people compete in making the perfect cup was extraordinary. Soon, I was like them.

Where, in your opinion, is the best place to drink coffee?

That establishment has the ability to convert even the sweetest tooth to appreciate coffee as is. The passion is found in its employees who have their story to tell about coffee. That's awesome! Being there comes close. They don't put much emphasis on latte art. Anyone can make foam, that's not what I'm looking for.

Do you have a preferred time of the day for coffee?

I drink my coffee when I have the time to savour the taste. I also like to observe the preparation, also to engage with the barista or owner of the business.

What is your favourite style of coffee?

I love my cappuccino - double shot as my standard. Fine micro foam, so thick almost like cream. Often when you make this request,

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to savour the taste ... to observe the
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some coffee makers look at you strangely. When I drink it, I need no temperature caution. Prepared right, my lips need no warning. High heat burns the milk which takes away the natural sweet milk taste. Hence people just pour sugar to make up for the bitter taste. This is just as dangerous! You end up with warning signs all over your packaging.

I love coffee because...

It's African, it encourages good company, it can be addictive, but its OK, It's legal.

If you could fix one problem in the coffee industry, what would it be?

Local education. It's definitely a good business preposition; we still have a long way to go for the bulk of our population to take part in this enjoyment.

For now my people enjoy the by products of coffee and not the real thing.

This is the second highest traded commodity in the world. It is so accessible and many more can reap the pleasures and rewards of this motherland commodity. ☺

