

vida e caffè store



vida e caffè store - concept

“vida e caffè” is portuguese for “life and coffee” the concept was born out of the heritage of a truly european espresso bar, a reaction to the insipid coffee shop culture that is prevalent in our daily lives. vida e caffè is a simple, focused concept that delivers an authentically european experience in espresso and coffee drinking.

vida e caffè as a concept has existed, in one form or another, for centuries. walk down any street in lisboa, porto, rome, paris or barcelona, and you will see the sidewalk cafés that have been our inspiration. a shrine for the wonderful bean and the drinking of it in its purest form; the espresso. the simplicity of the interior, the focused menu, and the nature of the service, have all been designed with european street culture as the foundation. the vida e caffè espresso bars aim to deliver the highest quality coffee and pastries, prepared to european standards. our menu is based on the fare typical of a street café in lisboa, a slice of europe on african streets.

vida’s mission is a simple one:

we strive to serve the best espresso, or espresso based caffè, as well as offer the best atmosphere and food on the planet.



vida e caffè - caffès

vida e caffè, opened its flagship store on cape town's dynamic kloof street in october 2001. since then we have opened branches in the v & a waterfront, greenpoint, wembley, cavendish, willowbridge, stellenbosch, knysna, jhb, durban, bloemfontein and many more nationally, totaling 33 stores, with a target of 40 by mid 2009. expansion plans are in place for the first international store in 2008 as well. vida e caffè conducts a comprehensive site selection process to determine the optimum positioning of all its espresso bars. factors such as foot traffic, proximity to offices, rentals, parking and exposure are considered before choosing the right site for a new store. for store info and addresses, go to vidaecaffe.com and select 'store' link.



vida e caffè - caffès

greenpoint store



vida e caffè - menu

vida e caffè's menu has existed, in one form or another, for centuries. walk down any street in lisboa, porto, rome, paris or barcelona, and you will see the sidewalk cafés that have been our inspiration. a shrine for the wonderful bean and the drinking of it in its purest form; the espresso. the focused menu, and the nature of the service, have all been designed with european street culture as the foundation. the vida e caffè espresso bars aim to deliver the highest quality coffee and pastries, prepared to european standards. our menu is simple and based on the fare typical of a street café in lisboa, a slice of europe on african streets. traditional pasteis, chourico rolls, sweet and savoury muffins are readily available and made fresh every day from scratch.



vida e caffè - menu

glass display unit



menu boards



vida e caffè - menu

double espresso



*meia de leite -
our signature drink*



single latte



vida e caffè - menu

*lindt chocolate quente -
lindt hot chocolate*



*lindt chocolate frio -
iced lindt chocolate & crushed ice*



gelado



vida e caffè - menu

quattro muffins



espresso choc chip muffins



pastei de coco



vida e caffè - menu

pastei de nata



*assortment of rolls -
chourico misto, chourico com ovo, pão com carne*



vida e caffè - shop fittings

imported & exclusive espresso, solo cups & mucho cups

left & below: cork cladded crest detail and full crest



vida e caffè - shop fittings

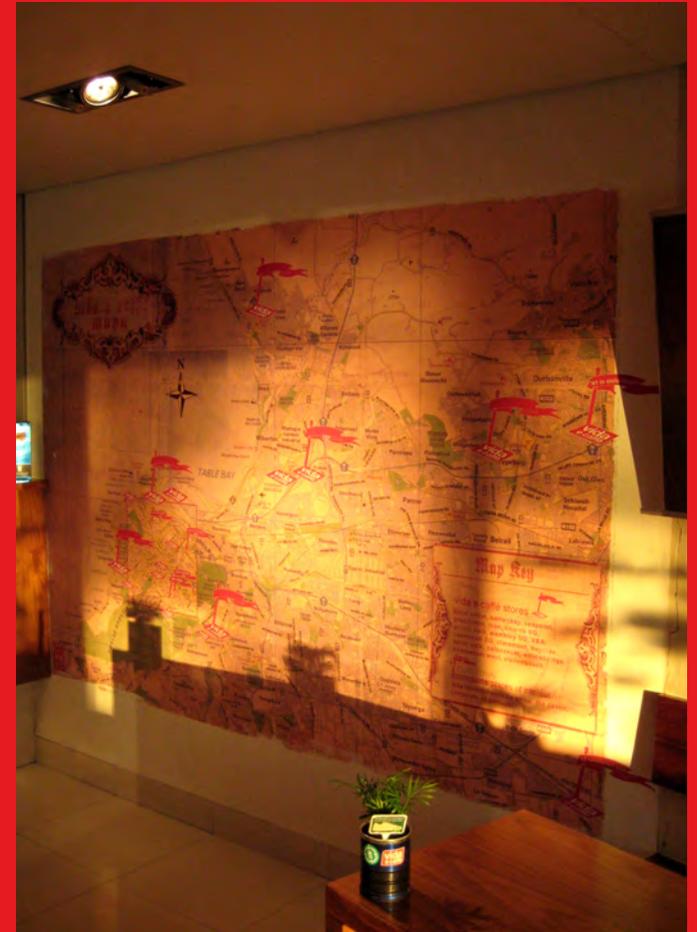
american walnut crest



star and spot lights



greenpoint wall display



vida e caffè - shop fittings

american walnut counter tops



american walnut benches & long mirror



american walnut display unit



vida e caffè - shop fittings

lightbox detail

crest lightbox detail

crest lightbox

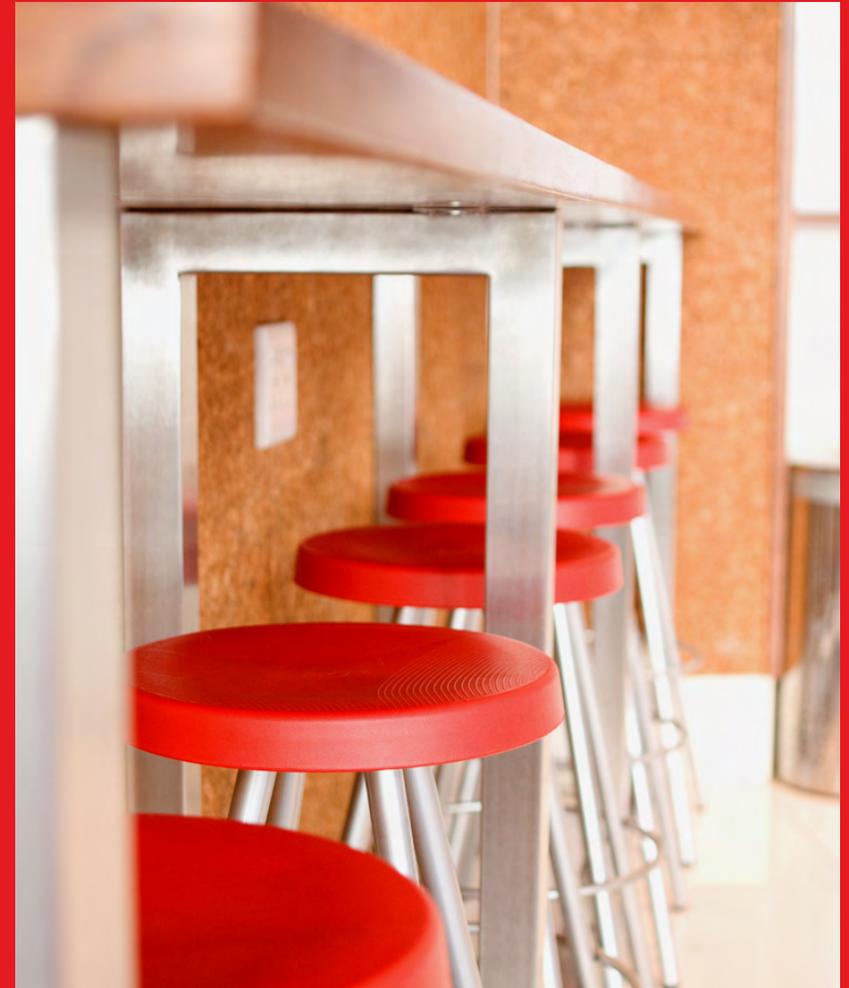


vida e caffè - shop fittings

leaf logo lightbox



red bar stools



vida e caffè - estrela organico

estrela organico

*our organic beans are grown on a single, family owned farm in the honduras without the use of chemical fertilizers. we protect the rain forests and the birds' habitat by growing our coffee only under the natural shade of the trees. the birds, in turn, are a defense against bugs so we don't have to use harmful pesticides.
you are what you drink!*



vida e caffè - estrela blend & decaf blend

why estrela blend?

an exquisite selection of arabica coffees, grown at heights of between 1,000 and 2,000 metres above sea level. low in caffeine, with a delicious aroma, light body and just a touch of acidity to highlight all of its qualities. the overall combination is a coffee with an intense flavour, with hints of caramel, sweet and very aromatic.

descafeinado - estrela blend

it's a smoother, higher quality, custom gourmet roast made of 100% arabica... we've changed from an arabica-robusta blend to 100% arabica in our quest to serve the best espresso on the planet! using a sophisticated natural steam process, we have managed to extract the caffeine from green coffee without the use of chemical products. as this process is non-aggressive, it allows the coffee to retain all its original body, aroma and acidity.



vida e caffè - media

vida e caffè has attracted large volumes of media attention for a relatively young brand, from magazines to tv slots, vida e caffè has been rated, "the best looking coffee shops in the world. hands down." - wallpaper magazine. receiving accolades from the likes of tyler brule's financial times column, to being mentioned as a 'rising star' in the sunday times brand survey. let the media speak for itself.

NEWSPAPER UPFRONT

Hotter coffee
FOR A SMARTER FIX, TRY THE ISRAELI COFFEE CHAINS TAKING ON STARBUCKS' WORLDWIDE.

based Cafe Hillel is eyeing Europe (France, the UK and perhaps Romania), and Espresso Bar is looking at Cyprus and eastern Europe.

With Starbucks already on every North American corner and Europe well stocked with traditional and 21st-century coffee houses, can Israel replicate its local success in the global battle for four-dollar double-skim lattes? "We're an entirely different concept," says Espresso Bar owner Nuri Rasch, a mamiita echoed by all her cafe-industry countrymen. "We're a more chic, European-type environment, while they [read Starbucks] are more like typical fast food."

Not everyone is convinced about the global push. Cap 'O' Joe, Israel's second-largest chain, is sticking to the home market, a move its American-immigrant owners say reflects their more pragmatic mentality. "Israelis see a magic in operating outside the country," says co-owner Dov Goldfarb. "We don't share this mindset."

Still, Israel does have a track record of exporting compelling Epicurean food concepts. Max Brenner, its largest premium chocolate firm, debuted a line of chocolate cafes that operate successfully in Australia and Asia, as well as in Israel. The cafes pair retail outlets with seating for up to 150 and serve hot and cold chocolate drinks, sandwiches, salads and coffee. The firm is now looking to expand, most likely in America.

It's too soon to gauge Israel's chances of success in its quest for global coffee domination. But the country does have history on its side. "Remember, coffee culture originated in the Middle East," observes Daniel Rogov, food and spirits critic for the local *Haretz* daily. So Israel may be a young country, but it has been doing coffee for a very long time. ★

WRITER: DAVID KAUFMAN

Cafés with culture
OUR FAVOURITE COFFEE BAR CHAINS AROUND THE WORLD

1. **Aida** (Vienna) This chain of coffee shops, in trademark pink, has been around since before the Second World War. There are now 26 branches across Vienna. The pastries are, of course, a treat. www.aida.at
2. **Gloria Jean's** (across the world) It started up in Chicago in 1979, but Gloria Jean's big push has been down to its Australian franchisee, which has opened almost 200 outlets in Australia over the last ten years. www.gloriajans.com
3. **Black Canyon** (Thailand) Thailand's favourite coffee shop now has branches across South-East Asia. "Try its interesting fusion dishes, such as spaghetti and green curry sauce. Or maybe just stick to the coffee." blackcanyoncoffee.com
4. **Wayne's Coffee** (Sweden, Finland and Estonia) Excellent Dajm Bar cake and soup of the day. www.waynescoffee.se
5. **The Coffee Club** (Australia and New Zealand, and moving into Korea) A stylish Australian chain of coffee bars and eateries that is now expanding. wherewillitgo.com
6. **Blue Fig** (Jordan) A smart chain beating back Starbucks in Jordan. www.bluefig.com
7. **Armasend de Café** (Rio) Every Carlos's top coffee shop. www.armasendocafe.br
8. **Kilo** (Quebec) Serves some of the best cheese-cakes in North America. www.kilo.ca
9. **Vida e Caffè** (below) (Cape Town and soon Johannesburg) The best-looking coffee shops in the world. Hands down. www.caffe.co.za
10. **Monmouth Coffee** (London) It has only three branches, but this is the best little coffee shop chain in England. And it sells the beans to be seen with. www.monmouthcoffee.co.uk
11. **Peet's Coffee & Tea** (California and creeping across the States) Established in Berkeley in 1966, Peet's has been a favourite of coffee-mad Californians ever since. "Peetnie" go mad for the malt balls and so do we. www.peets.com
12. **Dean & DeLuca** (US and Japan) The famous Sotelo dell'ium-coffee-shop now has branches across the States, as well as a growing presence in Japan. Still an irresistible stop-off. www.deandluca.com

MAY 2006

Wallpaper*

INTERNATIONAL DESIGN INTERIORS LIFESTYLE

TOUGH LOVE
Why we're coveting concrete

GUNS AND POSES
From a well-armed Miami penthouse to a well-hung Manhattan bachelor pad

SWEDISH TALENT RIVIERA CHIC HONG KONG REPORT



vida e caffè - media

MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

New boys on coffee-shop block make it hip to be seen in Vida

Their cups are small and prices are big, but they have shaken up the market in a huge way, writes Kenéc Bonorchis

GABBING a cup of coffee is no longer a minor event. In recent years, South Africans have been quick to change. From Mugg & Bean to Seattle, Europe and more, coffee shops have sprung up like mushrooms on a wet day. In fact it seemed there was almost too much choice. Until Vida e Caffè came along. That is, then, despite the small cups, the large prices and the modest competition, Vida gave everyone's coffee cup a good shake.



Spreading out from Cape Town, Vida is now setting comfortably into trendy spots across Johannesburg. From there, who knows? Dublin, other African cities and on the cards. But to start at the beginning, Vida was once known as the House of Coffee, marketing director and joint owner of the business, says founder Brad Armitage and the store started with French in Dublin and in November 2001 opened the first outlet in Khay-Tees, Cape Town.

Noted up against Lane's Head in the Mother City, Khay-Tees used to be known merely as a good street but people started to hop out of the city bowl and over the 'old' into Cape Town. Not so any more – hip and happening places abound. Vida, a business, began what is one of its trademark's today – setting up in great locations.

Vida, as Bond says, is about lifestyle. It is a place to be seen. The likes of television presenter Colin Mee and actor 'Nala Buzine' have been spotted chugging their suspension at Vida in Rosebank.

In Bond these guys are MYS – Most Valuable Personities. An early Vida campaign actively encouraged these MYS to be seen out at coffee shops. It made the place look good and it resulted in the MYS's having been coming back for more.

"Vida has done a hell of a good job helping to give the coffee category. It has introduced younger people into coffee shops and we have witnessed the success of competitors. Even Helderwick, chief operating officer of a major brand, the company that operates the House of Coffee, the Brazilian coffee shops and Wimpy, it's hip to go Vida."

In fact, Vida is the third place, says Bond. There's work, there's a house and then there's Vida, the third place for people to hang out where the baristas will give you by name. Kind of like going around to meet old friends.

Another factor that sets Vida apart is its Portuguese Bissau. There's a coffee farm in Portugal, linked to the Estoril family, that grows the beans. Some are using a secret process and they export directly to the UK.

Bond, like the founders once in a while, is adamant that respect is what Vida is all about and sets more than once that Vida will not meet or even serve tea.

Between 2001 and the end of 2003, Estoril and Armitage had opened only a total of six stores. Bond and his buddy, Leanne Dutton, were discussing bigger. Dutton, now MD specialised in business, which became effective in April last year. The deal was said to be worth more than \$20m.

"Vida has done a good job. It has introduced younger people into café society"

concentrated commodity in the world after petrol.

It is also trying to establish a greater presence in SA. There, Wimpy has been upgrading its coffee. Helderwick says SA's move to coffee is not just a global trend and it doesn't necessarily have anything to do with a growing coffee addiction. Drinking good coffee, he says, is a sign of an even Helderwick admits, people like Vida.

There can be 100 competitors out there, but perfect coffee is what we want people to come back for – that, and the personal touch," says Bond.

At Vida the food is an array of Portuguese pastries, sandwiches and occasionally flavoured muffins,

with dripping with chocolate and more. And where else can you go on a Sunday morning for a kid's express, an atypical pastry and a dose of hot jazz? Shops in Stellenbosch, Green Point, Greenwood and Rondebosch offer live jazz and soon there will be a Vida jazz club.

But there is another rat-sewer ingredient that makes Vida tick. Anyone who has ventured inside will know what this is – it is the staff. Cheerful, shifty and well-matched, the staff's behaviour makes the Vida experience all that more different.

What is it about coffee shops that make them a good place to work? In the latest Forrester magazine, Starbucks came in at number 16 on the list of 100 best companies to work for in the US.

But while Starbucks also boasts revenues of \$16m, Vida is far from making a fortune. Right now, any money Vida makes goes right back into the business. Bond says one of the directors is selling his house to raise more cash. Bond just sold his beloved long-triangle.

But the owners are not complaining on keeping staff happy. It pays above-average wages and at Cape Town, because transport can be a real problem, the business has bought two staff vans. Kind of like a dip, says Bond.

There was talk all last year, talk which Bond says is confirmed by Starbucks, the giant US chain, will be opening its doors in the local chain, Seattle, in June reported last month. Starbucks is selling more staff, from bar food to bar music, in more places than ever before.

"Right now, big Green runs 12 400 locations worldwide, but the goal is 40 000, which would trump even McDonald's," says Bond.

But Starbucks model is a challenge in SA in Helderwick's opinion. Because its success is founded on having lots of people "on the street".

Some strains find that a hard market to penetrate. South African entrepreneurs haven't been sitting waiting for brands to come to us," says Helderwick.

On the one hand, the introduction of Starbucks may do wonders for coffee drinking in SA. But on the other hand, says Bond, there will be a dip in the market for Vida.

If Vida is established in the major centres by the time Starbucks hits it if ever does, it may keep its customers.

In Vida's future is the fact that its premium brand has less of a longer than others. But even Vida's biggest cup is a small coffee that backs and even Seattle, where a grande will be a customer's go-to for quite a while.

"We'll never have a grande," says Bond. "Because we want to remain true to the street side-cake. It's not about quantity but quality."

Estoril's brand is also gearing up for competition. Wimpy ran an entertaining and lengthy ad campaign last year about its new range of coffees, from macchiatos to mochas.



"There was talk all last year that Starbucks, the giant US chain, will open its doors in SA"

Lloyd Stocks, Paul Osborne, Grant Dutton, William Dutton and Shaun Bond Vida e Caffè

So you want to be the one who snags up the next Vida for your neighbourhood? Well, too bad. Even if it looks like a franchise, with Vida e Caffè popping up around the country (proof positive: you can now get your Vida in, ahem, Bloem), it's not. The current owners – Lloyd Stocks, Paul Osborne, Grant Dutton, William Dutton and Shaun Bond (left to right) – have no plans to hand over their coffee-branding genius to just anybody. In true upmarket brand-speak they'll tell you that Vida "can be everywhere, but not just anywhere". Their plan is to ease up on rapid expansion at the end of the year, right after they hit thirty outlets, one of which may be at a trendy shopping complex near you.



photographed by vally shekard, distilled by jessica pillmer, photographed at vida e caffè in greenpoint, 18 october 2007



vida e caffè - media

CAPE TOWN
URBAN LIFE



INSIDER'S GUIDE

BRONWYN DAVIES
Fashion stylist Bronwyn Davies lives in Tamboerskloof, in the happening heart of the city bowl, but is happy to cross the city in search of her perfect light lunch, muscledracker fish, a local delicacy, which she says is done best by **LIBERTADOR RESTAURANT** in Camps Bay (T 438 0782). "I like to go for Sunday lunch, but it's worth getting there early before they sell out of the muscledracker. I've got a sweet tooth, so afterwards I'd head to **CHOCOLATE** (T 426 2368) in the Kaap (the old Malay quarter that is already gentrified) for pudding. Then, like most residents, I like to while away the afternoon on the beach. Obviously, the choice of beach is a complete social nightmare. Conventional wisdom is that the Clifton beaches are the ones to go for and that the Beach Four crowd is the prettiest and hippest, but my tip is to try Glen Beach. It's not as glamorous as Clifton, but it's friendly and unpretentious like the best bits of the city. After an afternoon there, I'd head to **CLIFFON** (T 788 1566) for a drink, which is right on the water's edge in Kalk Bay."

TO DO

All the wine-tasting parties that are on offer are great, but if you're looking for a more sophisticated experience, head to the **WINE SOCIETY** in the heart of the city. They offer a range of wine-tasting experiences, from the classic to the more adventurous. For more information, visit www.winesociety.co.za.

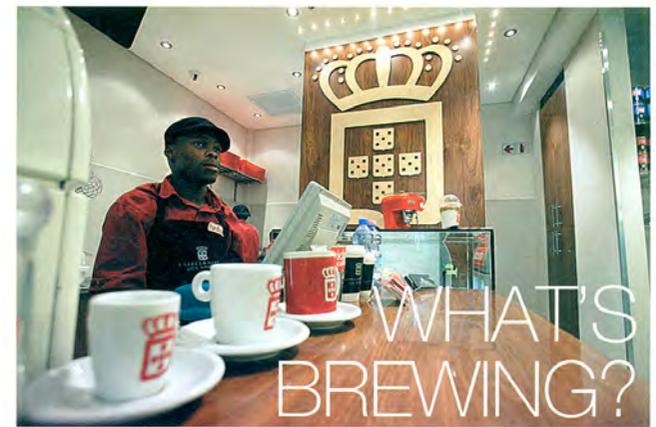
VIDA E CÀFFÈ

This fast and so-so coffee shop chain is located at the very top of the Kaap Street, and is a perfect spot for breakfast. It's also a great place to grab an afternoon coffee. For more information, visit www.vidaecaffe.co.za.



Wallpaper*
SEPTEMBER 2005 "INTERNATIONAL DESIGN INTERIORS LIFESTYLE"
INSIDE:
The six cities you should revisit now (and why)
Navigator*
BARCELONA, CAPE TOWN, LAS VEGAS, RIO DE JANEIRO, ST PETERSBURG, SINGAPORE
INTERNATIONAL STYLE SPECIAL
Dispatches from Dubai, Kuwait, Phoenix and Copenhagen
At home with a media mogul
Rupert Murdoch's London lair

... if you don't know, then wake up and smell the coffee, says **Dylan Muhlberg**



WHAT'S BREWING?

WHED magazine recently calculated that all the tea in China is now worth \$1 500 633 400, while all the coffee in Brazil alone would fetch an impressive \$6 645 461 089. Coffee is huge. Clearly, it's the most drunk beverage in the world after water, a social lubricant, the context of a break, a subtle precursor to sex, and the substance that four local entrepreneurs are building an empire on.

Vida, or Vida e Caffè if you want to be all formal about it, has got the who's-who frequenting it, and *Wallpaper** calling it the best-looking shop in the world, hands down. Fuelling LSM 9-10 types via both blue-chip shopping centres and the high street, the seed planted six years ago has grown to become the benchmark in café society.

Shawn Bond is the man concerned with all things marketing at Vida. He's sitting in his think tank, a better-sheltered third-floor office on Buitengracht Street flanked by motorcycle dealerships. Together with his head of design, Bennett Atkinson, Shawn is working on vehicle decals that will tell the story of Vida's newest flavour of the month — Estrela organico 100% certified arabica organic coffee — through a graphic language. Joao Estrela, patron saint of coffee and the face of Vida, beams his thousand-yard stare across the office, seems pleased.

The revolution begins with the first shot. In this case it was April 1, 2006. Grant Dutton, who was originally a joint-venture partner in one of the stores, headed the takeover — putting an offer down on paper and putting the "dream team" together: brother William, Lloyd Stocks and Shawn, with a small private-equity firm as back-up. Shawn had 10 years of advertising experience. Lloyd was a World Wakeboard Champion and the sole agent for

Nixon and Wolcom in SA, and the Dutton brothers came from highly successful franchising backgrounds.

Although he's not prepared to make the figure public, Shawn hints at a large sum. "It was a great deal for them — they'd been doing it for so long and I think they were ready for a break," says Shawn. "We still hook up and chat and maintain an amicable relationship with the original guys. Rui's (one of the original guys) father, Manny Esteves, is actually our coffee supplier in Portugal."

Although the Estrela blend is its own marketing tool, Shawn has upped Vida's ante through guerrilla campaigns and below-the-line initiatives. "When we got the brand it had an already established footprint and our drive was to keep that while taking it to the next level," says Shawn, who has since teamed up with Levi's and Nokia to promote a short-film festival of films shot entirely on cellphone cameras. They've also hosted a design competition, exhibited local artists and produced a jazz album. "We don't actually have money to spend on marketing because all our money is going into store openings (Vida has gone from six stores to 14, with a further 16 planned), but we don't let a lack of cash flow stifle us. We'll scratch and scrounge and bring in like-minded brand partners to make things happen."

Instead of putting out print ads, Vida publishes its own magazine — *Obrigo*. This is smart, yes, but perhaps the most ingenious strategy has been the MVP card concept that they inherited. Shawn explains: "Kloof started with a marketing plan where the Most Valuable Personalities have a card that entitles them to a free coffee and food every single day. Cokesy Falkow, Quentin Chong, the McGregor sisters, the Cowley sisters, Shimi and Shaikh Brits... anyone in the public eye. Our thing is that we won't say

we're cool. Other people say it for us."

The clientele that Vida attracts is undoubtedly as important as its coffee. However, more important are the men at the heart of the organisation — the baristas. The Five Zulus are Vida's building blocks and have been a part of Vida since day one. Today there are 180 staff members on Vida's books. "We're on an upliftment drive," says Shawn. "Yes we've got a good product, we've got a great brand, but if you look at our staff you'll agree that they are one of our most vital marketing tools. People will come to Vida for a coffee and to chat with Bongani, everyone knows S'bu, Tso Shortt... these guys are brand ambassadors and are absolutely part of the experience. The guys have fun at work. Let's give them great uniforms, they're not told to keep quiet, they're not sitting in the back making coffee all day... they have a job. We make sure that the guys are happy and in turn they instil a happy, vey environment."

Atmosphere, that all important element which can make or break a business, is the reason why Vida won't be going Starbucks anytime soon. Instead, the brand plans to keep the figures low enough to stay true to what the brand is about and maintain a personal touch.

So then just how proudly South African is Vida? Very, says Shawn, who believes that in the interests of taste Vida shouldn't have to dress their baristas in leopard skins and stamp Afro-curio-shop kitsch all over the brand. "It's an African concept with a Euro touch to it. The concept is foreign, but then so is coffee. It's a South African brainchild and the only thing that isn't South African in our store is the coffee. Everything else is local."

www.vidaecaffe.com



FMFOX

Stock markets in numbers



R5,73 trillion is the market capitalisation of the JSE at the end of May. At the end of 2006 it was R5,04 trillion, in 2004 R2,57 trillion.

18 is the JSE's position in the global league of stock markets ranked by market capitalisation in US dollars. The JSE market cap is \$802bn.

\$16,1 trillion is the market cap of the New York Stock Exchange (end-May), the world's largest. The Tokyo Stock Exchange's market cap of \$4,7 trillion ranks it 2nd, Euronext's \$4,2 trillion 3rd and London's \$4,02 trillion 4th.

\$2,9bn is the market cap of the Bermuda Stock Exchange, the world's smallest, followed by Mauritius's \$5,5bn.

\$55,3 trillion is the market value of all shares listed on the 51 markets affiliated to the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE).

388 shares are listed on the JSE, of which 59 have a dual listing.

40 839 shares were listed on WFE markets in May, headed by the Bombay Stock Exchange with 4 833 stocks.

\$7,3 trillion was the value of shares traded on all WFE markets in May. On the JSE monthly trading was R250bn in 6,1bn deals.

Source: JSE, WFE

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PROFILE

On a caffeine kick

Co-owner of trendy coffee chain Vida e Caffé Grant Dutton prefers his *meia de leite* (espresso with steamed milk) with a Lindt chocolate on the side and no sugar, thank you.

Like his company, Dutton is on a caffeine kick. With 19 Vida stores in prime locations across the country and another 11 to open by the end of this year, Vida has cornered a lucrative share of the speciality coffee market in SA in just six years.

In 2005 Dutton sold everything he had to buy the Vida brand from its two founders, Brad Armitage and Rui Esteves. With funding from venture capital firm Alpha Capital, Dutton teamed up with three other entrepreneurs and has built the brand into a multimillion-rand coffee empire.

"We focused on keeping it simple," says Dutton. "We didn't go the franchise route. It leaves too much potential for the concept to be watered down."

The company's first shop opened in 2001 in Kloof Street, Cape Town. Since then, the company has expanded into other hip places around the country.

"Our strategy has been to open shops in busy areas, with a sidewalk atmosphere," says Dutton. "But our shops in malls are doing particularly well."

The vibe is lively and the décor fresh. Above the noise of fresh cappuccinos and macchiatos being prepared, the staff break out into a collective "obrigado" — "thank you" in Portuguese — every time a customer pays.

Go onto Vida's website and you can translate phrases such as "Tea is for my grandmother" and "Espresso is good for you" at the touch of a button.

"Creating a vibrant coffee culture was crucial in building the brand," says Dutton. "We wanted to get South Africans to be more discerning not only about the type of coffee they drink, but where they drink it."

Dutton liked the idea of a Portuguese-style coffee shop instead

of the standard Italian version. A serial franchisee, he has owned a Wimpy, a BP garage and a Primi Piatti. But when he helped open the third Vida e Caffé in Cape Town, he saw the potential in the brand.

Shopfloor staff receive hefty incentives through bonuses, and talented staff are encouraged to move quickly up the management ranks. With more than 300 staff, Vida's empowerment credentials are looking good; all 40-odd store managers are black and more regional managers are black than white.

Dutton also provides housing for some of his staff. "We start at 6 am every morning, so it's crucial that our guys are close to the shop and don't have to travel too far. It also makes for more energised staff."

Advertisers are keen to access high-end Vida customers and the company has sold innovative advertising space to selected partners. Virgin Money buys space on Vida's take-away cups; Vida managers drive Minis; staff uniforms are sponsored by Levi's, and they wear shoes by Converse. "We've had tons of proposals, but we're looking for like-minded brand partners," says Dutton. **Jaquiel Wilmut**



Grant Dutton Portuguese style

ERNST & YOUNG
WORLD ENTREPRENEUR
SA FINALISTS
2007

Not another Italian job

Coffee chain on fresh roll-out



Doesn't feel like work. Grant Dutton

AS SOMEONE WHO started his business life as a franchisee, Vida e Caffé MD Grant Dutton is surprisingly dismissive of the model. "I built and opened one of the most successful Primi Piatti (a chain of urban-style Italian restaurants) in Bloubergstrand in 2001 but I couldn't take the business further. Like many franchise businesses, they believed in one store, one operator. I eventually sold it to my cousin four years later. For me, ownership is helluva important."

In October 2005, Dutton (30) — a finalist in this year's SA chapter in the emerging category of the Ernst & Young World Entrepreneur, organised in association with Rand Merchant Bank — finally got his chance to own and manage his own chain of coffee

outlets when he bought Vida e Caffé from its owners.

"Before the buyout we ran a joint venture under which we opened seven stores — but I still had no ownership and the structure was all wrong. The previous owners diluted their stake every time a new store was opened and of course that made them reluctant to expand. I found a funder in Alpha Capital and bought the business outright — the investors were regular customers at Vida," says Dutton.

There were three Vida outlets before Dutton joined the business. He'll open another six or so cafes before year-end to bring the total to 30. The current management team (including Dutton's brother William, who's operational director) all have stakes in Vida. Dutton gave shares at a discount and even structured finance for his team. "They're highly incentivised and we all work seven days a week."

As for the franchising model, Dutton says he's still learning. "Of JSE-listed Famous Brands' hundreds of outlets, all are franchisees. On the other hand, Nando's overseas outlets are all corporate owned. At the moment we have five franchisees but we've turned the concept on its head. We run the stores so it's really just a way for us of getting capital."

Born in Johannesburg, Dutton holds a BCom in information systems and technology (IST) from the University of Cape Town. He studied at UCT on a rugby scholarship, but breaking his leg put paid to his sports career. Dutton says he hasn't used his IST skills in the company. "To be honest, the only thing that I've been able to apply is the semester of business law."

Dutton is the son of Ed Dutton, controversial businessman who successfully fought extradition from Australia after shipping bail in SA in the Nineties on charges of R150m forex fraud involving his company Interboard. Ed Dutton claims he was the victim

of an Apartheid dirty tricks campaign.

And the secret of Vida e Caffé's success amid all the competition? "Sure, we have many competitors. But when we started quality was still a major issue. The coffee culture was growing, but few of our competitors had the handle on quality and consistency of the coffee."

"If I have to choose one secret to our success, it's service delivery and staff. Everybody mentions the atmosphere inside Vida e Caffé. We encourage our staff to show their personality. You won't see one of us standing behind the counter telling them what to do," says Dutton.

The Portuguese character of the coffee shops is also well established — the coffee is still roasted in and imported from Portugal and the food has Portuguese influences. The hip and stylish in-store magazine is called *Obrigado*. "Well, we're not Italian," quips Dutton.

While many companies in the service industry would mention employees as their number one asset, Vida has put its money where its mouth is. "We've bought houses close to our outlets for our staff to live. Obviously, if you don't have to get up at 4am in the morning to commute or run the risk of being robbed on your way back at night you're a different person at work."

"All our systems are also centrally managed and we've pulled a lot of admin out of the shops. Staff run the show. Our roll-out programme has also meant that succession is rapid — you can be a dishwasher today and a few months later run a store."

First half 2008 will be one of consolidation for Vida. Says Dutton: "Thirty is a big number for us. We'll be pulling back a bit and will concentrate more on our practices and staff. Even so, we're looking at another 12 or so stores in 2008. We're also planning an outlet in Britain in the near future. I'm involved 24/7, but it doesn't feel like work. I start my day with a coffee, talking to customers, and finish the day in the shop too. We've had offers to buy, but I'm still enjoying the business too much."

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vida
e caffè



vida e caffè - brand partners

vida e caffè has aligned ourselves with like minded brand partners which include:

LEVIS® - staff uniform, incl jeans, t's aprons & barista hats

ADIDAS - staff footwear

APPLE - in store iPod listening stations as well as store computers

MINI - branded vehicles for regional managers

LINDT - chocolate supply for all caffè's and hot chocolates

VIRGIN MONEY

