Woolworths *Taste*: 20 years and still cooking!

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Launched in 2003 by New Media on behalf of Woolworths, with the intention of becoming "the best food magazine in the world", Woolworths *Taste* celebrates its 20th anniversary this month.

Woolworths *Taste* has always been the highest selling and most commercially successful food magazine in SA, despite being a customer magazine. "In this area - as in so many others - Woolworths is a pioneer," says editor-in-chief Kate Wilson. "They understood the power and importance of true content marketing long before other SA brands."

For the past five years, *Taste* has consistently been the top-selling magazine of all monthly print titles on Woolworths' newsstands in its first week of sale.

The launch of Woolworths *Taste* pre-dated the wave of digital and media transformation that would begin in 2004 with the launch of Facebook and continue to gain momentum in 2007 with the release of the first iPhone. And now, the magazine that won Customer Magazine of the Year seven times before 2013 (when local print media awards ceased), is a multi-channel offering incorporating video, newsletters and a highly engaged online community across its website and six social media platforms.

It reaches an audience of over 800,000 South Africans every month.

Taste has also continued to win awards, now on an international level, receiving 31 US and UK media awards since 2012, 17 of these in the last two years alone.

Says Elizka Ferreira, head of foods marketing for Woolworths: "We are incredibly proud to have published *Taste* so successfully for 20 years. An award winner from launch, *Taste* has never faltered in terms of commercial success or content excellence.

"*Taste* has defied declining newsstand figures and, in the face of some of the most difficult years for both SA and the world, the brand has only become more trusted, and the audience bigger as new channels are introduced.

"It's no coincidence that *Taste* has notched up no fewer than 17 international awards in the past two years, as well as two of the highest-selling issues in over a decade. It's a remarkable achievement and testament to a winning partnership."

Kate Wilson, who became *Taste*'s editor-in-chief in 2015, believes that *Taste*'s success can be attributed to the trust that exists between Woolworths and New Media. "Woolworths has always allowed the *Taste* team an enormous amount of editorial independence, believing that credibility comes from an innovative, curated content offering, rather than hard-sell corporate messaging. That is rare in this category but, clearly, it's an approach that has paid off!"

Woolworths considers *Taste* to be its "food authority" and the editorial team works in close collaboration with the Woolies' foods team to represent South Africa's diverse demographic and offer inspiration and real food solutions.

"Authenticity is at the heart of all the work we do, from print shoots to hosted videos," says Wilson. "The team has cultivated a network of editors, writers, stylists and recipe developers who allow us to create content that speaks to all South Africans."

And there is every indication that *Taste* will continue to speak to the food needs of SA for many years to come.

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