

#BehindtheSelfie with... Glynn Venter

This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Glynn Venter, executive creative director of Haas Advertising Collective and SA chair of the John Caples Awards, New York.



Haas it, my brew!

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Venter: I live in an industrial loft in Woodstock, above a factory – like in the movies. I work in Cape Town's Design and Innovation Precinct; in a beautiful, old heritage building that we bought to host The Haas Collective. The collective consists of three businesses: Haas Advertising, Haas Coffee and Haas Art & Design. I play at work. If you've ever been to Haas, you'll know what I mean.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Venter: My claim to fame would be making other people famous. I believe in the sentiment that "you are only as good as those you surround yourself with" – so I surround myself with best breed of people that have the same values and goals. People who are passionate and self-driven... and, of course, winning a few awards while having fun. At heart, I'm an entrepreneur, I am a creative businessman and I believe that you can solve business problems with creative ideas.

3. Describe your career so far.

Venter: I studied for seven years (locally and internationally) and completed my master's degree. My career started at

Delaney's, I made creative director at the age of 26, and started my own advertising agency (part of the Old Shanghai Firecracker group) at 28. I sold that to the IPG group (FCB South Africa) and joined FCB South Africa.

I headed up four different divisions at FCB, merged all the creative studios into one integrated studio and, with creative partner, Francois de Villiers, headed the studio up as ECD. I was also an FCB board member (SA), an FCB holding board member (Africa) and part of the group's creative exco.

I've won and judged some of the most prestigious award shows around the world, including Cannes Lions, D&AD, John Caples, Loeries, Pendering, Assegais, Apex and more, and I currently hold the South African chair for the John Caples Awards in New York.

After 12 years with the FCB group, I left to start my own business again. Now, operating for almost five years, with creative partners and legends like Francois de Villiers, Francois Irvine and Tarryn Burton, we have created one of the most exciting ventures I've ever been involved in – The Haas Collective.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Venter: I'm a fitness fanatic, a collector of art and a collector of cars – my prize possession being my 1967 Mustang Fastback. I love the outdoors and camping and have recently taken up surfing, not an easy task!

5. What do you love about your industry?

Venter: I love the fact that the people within the industry can be friends. Although we compete, there is a united front that's present when it comes to the industry. The other business that I am in, the coffee business, is the complete opposite. So it's always refreshing to see how we "behave" in the ad industry... Yes there are egos, but frankly, I don't care about anyone with an ego.

6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

Venter: Work starts at 9am for me and as I'm trying to stay fit and in shape, my workday also includes trying to get seven meals into my body. I eat a lot, as it powers my mind and body to do the things I need to do.

Haas Advertising is an informal environment. We are not a sweat shop and I'd never want it to be one. We allow our people to do the things they love – we don't work weekends (unless we are pitching) and make sure everyone has a life outside the agency.

My day consists of reviews, brainstorming and meetings, new business developments, strategic sessions, new product development or brand extensions. I also dedicate some of my time to the coffee and restaurant business and then to the whole collective as well, so the day just does not have enough hours. I end my day off on a high by training at gym and usually arrive home after 8pm.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Venter: A creative mind, taking chances, collaborating, measuring success and learning from mistakes.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Venter: Without a doubt, Joe Public! I have huge respect for Pepe and Gareth and, of course, not forgetting my pride – Xolisa Dyeshana.

9. What are you working on right now?

Venter: We have recently won two new accounts: [Solar Capital](#), the biggest renewable energy company in the southern hemisphere; and LottoStar, an online betting company, as well as a new venture for the Haas Collective (the fourth business pillar) and the day-to-day running of all the businesses.

10. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

Venter: Digital... everyone is talking digital and few really know what it means. The rest of the buzzwords I leave to the strategic guys. There's one that I really like – “massclusivity” – I mean, how bizarre is that statement?

11. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

Venter: No specific place or time, sometimes they come, sometimes they don't.

12. What's your secret talent/party trick?

Venter: I don't think I can mention it here!

13. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Venter: I love technology... when it works. The one thing that I've learned is “Restart your computer” or “Is your machine switched on?”

14. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

Venter: Endless conversations and a huge amount of photographs.

15. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

Venter: Be prepared to work, take orders and make good coffee.

Simple as that. You can read more about Haas by [clicking here](#), and interact with Venter via [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

**Interviewed by [Leigh Andrews](#).*

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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