

# Most popular forecourt retailer

*The Times* and *Sowetan* 2009 Retail Awards, conducted by TNS Research Surveys, has determined the most popular forecourt retailer. Engen Quick Shop was first with BP Express second with only 1% between the votes, again proved that the retail environment is highly competitive with small differences in ratings.

The hotly contested awards, in its second year, broadened its scope to go beyond Gauteng and become a national survey, conducted interviews with consumers over the age of 18 from all lifestyles to determine their favourite retailers in 30 different categories, of which 'forecourt convenience stores' was one.

Karin du Chenne, managing executive of TNS Research Surveys says the 'forecourt convenience store' category was an interesting one with a close battle. "Today it's almost a novelty to find a petrol station that does not have a C-store. Fuel retailers are splashing out on ever-growing product lines in a bid to differentiate from the competition and reap the rewards a thriving forecourt store can bring. And the public do notice when a fuel retailer has made the effort," she points out.

BP Express shop's market presence was particularly high, and it outpaced its nearest competitors Woolworths Food Stop at Engen and Shell Select by 1% and 4% respectively, while Total Bonjour/La Boutique and Caltex Star Mart trailed behind by 9% and 14%.

Joe Mahlo, head of marketing at BP attributes BP Express' success to the Wild Bean Café, an innovative food and coffee concept situated within the larger format BP Express shop, which is on a par with some of the finest fast food outlets in the world. "We are delighted with the recognition and ongoing support we receive from the public. It is great to know that BP Express is foremost in people's minds when thinking of a forecourt retail brand," he says.

BP's Wild Bean Café also proved to be a true contender in the 'coffee shops' category, beating popular brands such as House of Coffees, Café Newscafe and Dulce Café.