

You bought *what* for dinner?!?

By [Kangwe Monkoane](#), issued by [KLA](#)

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It's not always comfortable inviting new neighbours over for dinner; they could be unbearable from the moment they arrive. And then there's the added awkwardness of wearing masks and social distancing! But Mo and Lindi have taken the risk because 1) at some point they'll need a cup of sugar and 2) it's their experience that creating a community where they live, instead of just existing in their complex, can be rewarding. Especially after so many months of solitude.

On the day of the dinner, a problem arises. And it looks to be Mo's fault.

[Lindi arrives home from work, bearing bags of ingredients for the meal.]

Mo: Hello beautiful.

Lindi: Hi love. Did you get the wine for tonight?

M: *[points to wine]* Yebo.

L: What's that?

M: The wine.

L: Why's it in a *box*?

M: It was cheaper and...

L: *[interrupts]* Uh-uh, Mo. Sorry. Noooo. We *cannot* serve box wine to people we're meeting for the first time. Not happening. Nope.

Crunch time. Mo had anticipated Lindi's reaction to the purchase of Bag-in-Box (BiB) wine. And while he knows that victory in most household arguments is beyond him, he's come prepared. He's equipped to defend his purchase. He smiles his best smile.

M: Love, please. Will you listen?

L: *[blinks]*

M: *[relieved]* As I was saying, it's cheaper. The producers don't have to pay for expensive glass, corks and labels. Their distribution costs are also much lower because boxes pack better than bottles. And how's this: Ben Wren, the guy who makes the BiB sitting over there, reckons that for an average glass bottle of vino priced at R80, the wine inside is worth only R10. That's ludicrous!

L: Is Ben Wren even a real person?

M: *[now on a roll]* Also, aren't we, as active citizens, trying to be more conscious of our environmental impact? That BiB right there has a lower carbon footprint, and its packaging is more easily recyclable than glass bottles. That's a big tick for BiB. The wine can also stay fresh up to five months after opening, so it'll never get wasted! Surely it deserves a chance?

L: Mo, darling, those are nice sentiments – but do you know what I think of people who drink box wine? Bloody *skelms* and *mamparas*. If you put that on the table, you can kiss your good first impression goodbye.

M: Listen, I know it's a risk, but if dinner with new neighbours needs anything, it's light-hearted polarisation. That BiB will give us something to talk about! Trust me.

L: Why don't I just tank the chicken and order KFC?

M: I love you.

[*That evening, when the neighbours arrive, Lindi goes to the door.*]

L: Welcome! I'm Lindi.

Ally: I'm Ally. This is my partner Nick.

Nick: [*proffers bottle of Kanonkop Paul Sauer 2015*] Just a little something to thank you for having us over. We really appreciate it. You can age that bottle for the next 20 years or so.

M: [*arrives at the door*] Hi guys. I'm Mo. Good to meet you both properly.

L: Darling, look at this *bottle* of wine Nick brought.

M: Wow. You shouldn't have.

A: D'you know Tim Atkin, the British master of wine? He gave this wine a 100-point rating – it was the first South African wine to ever get a perfect score.

As Nick and Ally move onto the patio, where Mo has set up drinks and snacks, the question that convention demands, *What would you like to drink?*, is trying to escape Mo's mouth but it just won't come. The BiB wine, hiding in plain sight, has a nervous look about it. Mo makes a quick judgement call and decides to go all in.

M: Guys, you may not have noticed it yet, because we've known each other for about 60 seconds, but my wife wants to kick me in the shins right now.

A: [*laughs*] Why?!?

M: I bought box wine to serve at dinner tonight. You brought Paul Sauer.

N: Oh.

Mo lays down his earlier argument for BiB wine. And he can see that he has his guests' attention, especially when he mentions that the *Decanter* magazine recently gave scores of 90 points to some BiB wines from Italy, Argentina and France. Internationally, BiB wine is gaining traction.

But it's clear that Nick and Ally are accustomed to drinking brand-name wines, so he finishes strong by telling them that it's no longer just Autumn Harvest in the box; in fact, the likes of Beyerskloof, Diemersdal and Klein Zalze now box their wine too.

N: [*wryly*] I haven't had a box wine since my varsity days. They've certainly improved the packaging and I guess it intrigues me that the likes of Beyerskloof offer BiB. I love their Pinotage. Let's try it.

M: Great, but let's be a bit more serious about this. I think we can all agree that wine packaging has a material impact on how we – non-sommeliers – rate its colour, nose and taste. So let's make it a blind tasting. I have comparable bottled wine we can use. You up for it?

N: Challenge accepted.

A: *[looks at Lindi; lifts eyebrows; the two are already seeing eye to eye]*

But Mo isn't being totally forthright. He's already read, from research carried out by KLA, that participants in a recent blind tasting survey couldn't tell the difference between boxed and bottled wine. And this is exactly the outcome of the test at Mo and Lindi's house, leaving everyone feeling a little giddy and a little sheepish. Except Mo, who's more than a little smug.

A: If we can't tell the difference in taste and the BiB is cheaper, better for the environment and lasts longer, then I guess the only reason for not buying BiB is the 'papsak' stigma.

M: And that, Ally, is where our conversation gets really interesting.

N: Well, let's get into it. We've got plenty of wine, and it's even on tap!

[Later that night, after a very successful evening and the neighbours have left]

L: You know, Mo, I don't think I had to resort to small talk even once tonight.

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